

# **From Bassano to the Hexagon cities**

## **“Slow” routes by Dario Favrin for Conca d'Oro**

*Quiet paths, far from congested streets, discovering new horizons close to Bassano. This guide integrates an outstanding work, written about twenty years ago, known as "Bassano bici e vai", now out of stock*

### **CYCLING FROM BASSANO TO THE HEXAGON CITIES**

The six “Hexagon cities” are located at the bottom of the Venetian foothills of Asiago and Monte Grappa, between the provinces of Vicenza, Treviso and Padova: large areas left untouched by mass tourism, probably due to ignorance and underestimation, with many opportunities left overlooked. Although situated in a densely populated and industrialized area, these cities are real treasures of art, ancient and modern history. Five of them are walled, with many records of the 1915-18 Great War and impressive museums. Many great artists were born in this land: among them, the sculptor Antonio Canova and painters Mantegna, Giorgione and Jacopo da Ponte. Gastronomic products are varied and the quality is great, with typical and well known products.

With this brief work, I am very pleased to give a contribution to the knowledge of these beautiful places, also included in a project presented in 1985 during the World Cycling Championship, which unfortunately didn't get its well deserved credit and never really took off because of some absurd and ridiculous local parochialism. Anyway, this is a land where it's easy to cycle gently on quiet roads, suitable for everyone: with the exception of a few surveys in the hills of Asolo and Possagno, in fact, the fertile Venetian land is plain. In this guide, I'll give a detailed description of six short routes to various locations and a bigger one, 91 kilometers long, that connects all of them, offering a slow and lovely trip through landscapes to discover, and some surprises as well. Cycling means ecology and freedom, it does not add years to life but life to years. And of course, the future of tourism might as well be “riding a bicycle.”

A brief outline of the six cities:

#### **Bassano del Grappa (VI)**

A beautiful and lively city, known for the famous Ponte Vecchio (or “Alpini bridge”) on the river Brenta. Interesting places to visit are the elegant historic center, Montevecchio, Libertà and Garibaldi squares, along with the XIV century church of San Francesco; the “loggia” of the town hall, the Civic Museum with a remarkable Art Gallery, the Museum of Ceramics and Remondini's prints at the Sturm palace near the river, and the Porta Dieda (Dieda gate). The view from viale dei Martiri is splendid. Bassano is the capital of grappa spirit and the white asparagus. The Tourist Information Office is in largo Corona d'Italia, near viale delle Fosse. Tel. 0424 524351.

#### **Marostica (VI)**

One of the finest walled towns in Europe, with ramparts that completely surround it from the higher castle to the lower one and the Chess Square nearby, which hosts the famous Game every two years (the even ones). The typical historical center is well worth a visit. Marostica is also known for the delicious cherries that grow on its hills, full of white flowers from late March to early April: a truly unmissable show. Marostica is labeled as an “Orange flag” by the Touring Club Italiano. The Tourist Information Office is in Piazza degli Scacchi, at the entrance of the castle. Tel. 0424 72127.

### Asolo (TV)

The pearl of Marca Trevigiana, the city of a hundred horizons. One of the most amazing towns in Italy. Interesting places to visit are the beautiful medieval town center, the Cathedral with fine paintings, the Loggia del Capitano with its Museum and the Fortress (information at the Tourist Office). From a naturalistic point of view, the small chain of hills that join Asolo to Cornuda offer a splendid four hours' trip. Tourist Information Office is in piazza Garibaldi, in the local Museum. Tel. 0423 529046

### Castelfranco Veneto (TV)

A walled city in the plain with a small old-town within the walls, still surrounded by a large moat. The great painter Giorgione was born here, and his small house is just beside the Cathedral: a visit is highly recommended, mainly to see the famous "Altarpiece of the Madonna." The beautiful painted mansions and the large square (where the grain was once gathered during the market) are very interesting. The Academic Theatre and the big park of Villa Revedin Bolasco (about 500 meters east of the Clock Tower) are also recommended. The city is known for a famous variety of radicchio, called "the Rose of Castelfranco". Tourist Information Office is in via Preti, just outside the west wall. Tel. 0423 491416.

### Cittadella (PD)

A walled city in the plain. The extensive historical center is surrounded by a beautiful circle of well-preserved high walls (with a big gash in the north, remainder of the war of the League of Cambrai against the Republic of Venice in 1510). Recommended visits: the Praetorian Palace and the Tower of Malta at the Porta Padovana (south wall), a place also mentioned in Dante's Divine Comedy as the terrible Ezzelino's prison. Tourist Information Office is in Porta Bassano. Tel. 049 9404485.

### Possagno (TV)

The birthplace of the great neoclassical sculptor Antonio Canova. We recommend to visit his house and the adjoining museum Gipsoteca, with the collection of plaster sculptures. The great marble temple, based on the model and size of Rome's Pantheon, designed by Canova himself, is just next to it.

## MISCELLANEOUS TIPS

I always recommend wearing the safety helmet, still not so common on Italian streets. It's the first accessory to buy, after the bike itself: protecting the head is vital and prevents hits that might have fatal consequences. I just do not understand those cyclists (most of them in our country) that for some reason feel ridiculous wearing a helmet: it surely should be the opposite. Very light products are available on the market, weighting just a bit more than a heavy cloth cap. Other than that, you'll only need a standard bike with gears, good brakes, inflated tires, a small repair kit, a pump and a spare air chamber. With this equipment you can ride happily and quietly while respecting the road laws.

### IMPORTANT:

The following roads are quiet and good alternatives to the major, busy and therefore dangerous arteries, which unfortunately are still run by some cyclists.

Route 1, from Bassano to Marostica, as an alternative to the "infamous" SR248;

Route 4, from Bassano to Asolo, as an alternative to the same SR248;

Route 3, from Bassano to Cittadella as an alternative to SR 47;

Route 7, from Bassano, Cittadella to Castelfranco Veneto, as an alternative to SR 53 Postumia;

Route 7, from Bassano, Castelfranco Veneto to Asolo, as an alternative to the strada provinciale.

Finally, route 6, from Bassano to Castelfranco Veneto, can be seen as an extension of the eagerly awaited Venice-Monaco bicycle track, still in the works.

Dario Favrin, 2010  
Updated February, 2012

## ROUTES

### **1-From Bassano to Marostica: km 8,5**

From Ponte degli Alpini go straight through via Angarano. At the traffic lights, go straight again till the end of the road. Turn right on via Santissima Trinità, then go straight past the beautiful church through via Asiago until the roundabout. Turn left onto viale Palladio, then take the second right, via Rivana. Go straight on the narrow street through the fields, pointing to the east. At the end, cross via Gobetti and take via Scomazzoni. On the second left, go down towards the state road, flanking the modern church. Here, just to the right, take the short cycling track (about 300 meters long) to the side of the state road that goes to the sports facilities (cycling at the back of a school), turns left at the stop roadsign and merges with the state road. Take the latter one and go straight for 900 meters, then turn right on via Cima da Conegliano, which leads to via Canale at the feet of San Benedetto hills. Go left for a while, then take via Quarello. At the stop, go straight through via Beato Lorenzino, where you can find the beautiful Santa Maria Assunta church, decorated with bronze panels designed by the famous sculptor Gigi Carron. Proceeding on the left, you'll get to Porta Bassano: get off the bike and enter it on the sidewalk. Go on for 10 meters, then turn right onto via Callesello until the end. Turn left on via Rialto, going west at the feet of Pausolino hill and continuing in via Carmini. Turn left again on via 24 Maggio, and go straight until the stop roadsign. At the left, through corso Mazzini, you'll get to the main square, which is just 200 meters away. There are many ways to visit this beautiful town: I'll let you choose which ones. A lot of information is available at the local Tourist Office. To get back to Bassano, follow the same route backwards: take via Stazione on the left, at the end turn left again through via Pizzamano. Take the second right, via Prospero Alpino, until the stop roadsign. Turn left on via Cecchin, then right on via Ponte Quarello: from here, go backwards until you reach Bassano again.

Another possible way back to Bassano through a quiet road (a 12 kilometers trip) is from Porta di piazza degli scacchi (chess square): from there, turn right at the traffic lights on via Roma, go on for 40 meters, then turn left on via T. Pivato. Go straight until the stop sign, cross the road and go straight on via Quattro Martiri. Take via Dante Alighieri until the stop, then left on via Levà for 60 meters. Turn right on via Boscaglie, which goes down with a turning course until an old house with a well on the front. Now turn left to the hills: at the fork, turn right between the houses. After some bends, you'll get in front of some industrial buildings (via Viviani). Turn left in strada Marchesane. At the stop, turn left in the strada provinciale and go straight for 600 meters. Turn in via Rolandi, then straight until the roadsign. Turn right in via Guariento, at the stop turn left until the traffic lights. Turn right again on via della Ceramica, then straight until the busy viale Aldo Moro. Cross it and go on via Cavallare until the end of viale Pecori Giraldi. Go right on viale Vicenza, then right again on viale Diaz. At the roundabout with the fountain, go left on viale Scalabrini. At the traffic lights, turn right towards Ponte degli Alpini.

### **2-Heading forward to Cittadella and Nove**

When you get to Marostica, go right at the stop of Via Dante Alighieri, following via Levà southwards (from here, you can see some beautiful flowering cherry trees in late March and early April) until the narrow bridge over the stream Longhella. Go right, straight on and after the highway cross the provinciale (county road) Marostica-Nove. On the left, you'll briefly reach the center of

Nove, with piazza De Fabris, Museum of Ceramics and so on. Nove is one of the most important cities in Italy for the production of ceramic art. At the traffic lights, go straight to the church and the Brenta river, crossing the footbridge at its side. For those wishing to come back to Bassano from Nove, turn left at the traffic lights for 60 meters, then follow the new cycling track until its end and the Marchesane road sign. Here, proceed on the provinciale until a bridge. Turn right, then left on via Sette case and go on through the fields going to the Brenta river and Marchesane. Turn left at the traffic lights, back to via della Ceramica and so on. After the Brenta river you'll reach a roundabout: turn right to the center of Cartigliano, on via Monte Grappa. At the following roundabout, go straight on via Cappello, running in front of the big villa (the town hall). At the stop, turn right carefully on a narrow street, reaching a church with a valuable chapel decorated by the famous painter Jacopo Da Ponte. Go straight through via S. Pio X, then on via Jacopo Da Ponte, keeping the industrial area at your right. Take via Rive, and go straight until you reach a car dealer on the right. Turn left on via Sole, then go on until the next stop in Granella town. Turn right on via Marconi, at the traffic lights turn left on via Cavazzoni, proceeding to via S. Anna. Turn right on the cycling track going to the industrial area. Take the first on the left, via del Lavoro, until the end of it. Road turns right at a crossing, going straight on for 600 meters. Turn left on via 8 Settembre, on a cycling track (at first it's on the right, then left and right again), going east and reaching, just before some warehouses, the Bassano-Cittadella route, between the end of via Colosseo in S. Pietro di Rosà and the road near Laghi. 14 kilometers from Marostica.

### **3-From Bassano to Cittadella: 17km**

From Ponte degli Alpini, go straight on via Angarano until you reach the traffic lights. Turn left, then left again at the roundabout with a fountain. Go past Ponte della Vittoria (with a nice sight of the wooden bridge), then right on viale De Gasperi until the second roundabout. Turn left on via Rosmini, go past two traffic lights, then turn right on via Carpellina, just a few meters before the road coming from Padova (state road 47). Head south, past San Bassiano hospital, following some parts of the cycling track. After the track ends the road becomes narrow, until a stop in Rosà. Turn right, then go straight until the roundabout after the big park of Villa Dolfin. Turn left on via Roncalli, then go straight until San Pietro di Rosà. On the cycling road, go past the church, then straight on until another roundabout (this area still shows some traces of the Roman "centuria"). Go straight on via San Pietro. When the road bends, stay on the right, heading to a small village. Take via degli Alpini, then turn left on via 8 Settembre. At the stop, the next crossroad, go on until you reach Laghi. At the stop go left then turn right, in front of the church, on via Don G.Lago. After the Caduti memorial, go south, reaching the next crossroad. Here, turn right for 100 meters, then left in front of a trattoria. This is the only Roman consular road, the Postumia, that crosses all the pianura Padana, from Genova to Aquileia. Go left on via Casaretta, then left again entering the Cittadella ringroad. Go right for 200 meters, then leave the road and go down on the right, turning left to enter this historical and nice city. From here, you can see the big medieval walls. Once you reach Porta Vicenza, turn right on Riva 4 Novembre until the stop road sign, then left, entering Porta Padova with the famous Torre di Malta, quoted in the Divina Commedia as a hellish place. To go back to Bassano, follow the same route backwards.

## **Returning to Bassano on the same itinerary**

### **4-From Asolo to Bassano (17km), through Possagno (20km)**

From Conca d'Oro farm, go south to the town center on strada Rivoltella Bassa. At the end of it, turn left on via Volta, then go past a short downhill to get on via S.Vito. Turn right for a short stretch, then go left just before the nice church. After a railway flyover, go straight on via San G.Bosco. Go

past six crossroads, then turn right after the no entry road sign on via Monte Cauriol. At the stop, turn left on via Monte Canin. At the next stop, turn left on via Monte Grappa. Shortly after, at a crossroad, turn right on via Velo, going straight on until the stop just after the school of Romano d'Ezzelino. Turn right on via Giardino, in front of the church, then turn left again on via Veneto. Go straight on for a while, then take via Mardignon. After a short slope, enter Mussolente on via delle Statue, which ends in via 11 Febbraio with an uphill. After a steep downhill, at the stop turn left on via Cimberle, heading north until you reach the traffic lights. Turn right on via Piana d'Oriente, via Borgo Rossetti, entering Liedolo, locality of San Zenone degli Ezzelini. Go straight on via Mezzocial, at the stop road sign turn right on via Sopracastello for a while, then left on via Fontanazzi for a long time, until you reach the Fonte Alto road sign. At the stop, go straight on and after 50 meters turn left on a light slope, then take the second right between some houses. Go past a bridge on a torrent (important: here you can also take the route to Possagno). Go straight on until the stop road sign, then cross the Fonte-Paderno del Grappa road. Go straight down for long, slightly downhill, on via Cogorer. At the next confluence, go right for a short while until the bridge near the Antico Maglio di Pagnano d'Asolo. Here starts a difficult climb, which, in less than 2 kilometers, will get you to the center of Asolo, a beautiful and romantic city. To get back to Bassano, follow the same route backwards.

## **5-Detour to Possagno: 20 km total from Bassano**

Just after the bridge (see the previous route), go left in via Meneghetti on the made-up road that reaches some houses, heading north. At the stop, go straight beside a horse track. Just in front of you stands the massive Grappa, with the round Cesen on the right after the Piave valley. When you reach the Fonte road sign, near a typical trattoria, go straight on a light slope until the road sign "Paderno del Grappa". Take via Colli, and go straight at the stop. Here you'll find the sign "Bici in vacanza, terza tappa, Tra acque e ville del Trevigiano: a several days' route around the Marca trevigiana, very recommended to well trained cyclists. Right past a small church, the slope goes up for some meters, then becomes easier again near the town church. Turn right, slightly downhill, passing in front of the big sports center of Filippin schools, until the stop road sign in town. Turn left, following the direction to Possagno. Here the road goes up a bit: at the fork keep your right, following the residents' sign, until the confluence with the provinciale, in Fietta locality. Turn right, following the direction to Possagno, which is just 4 kilometers away, for the most part downhill and easy to cycle by. Please note that this road is quite busy, so proceed with caution. When you get to town, go straight at the roundabout on via Canova. Road goes up a bit until it gets in front of the beautiful Gipsoteca, home of the great sculptor Antonio Canova. At the top left, you'll also see the nice Temple, built by the artist himself. To get back to Bassano, follow the same route backwards.

## **6-Castelfranco: 25 km**

For the first part of the route, please see the Asolo itinerary until San Vito church, then go straight until the first road on the left, via Passalacqua. After a railroad overpass, take the first on the right, via Quarta Armata, until the traffic lights. Go straight on via Bernucci and via Basso. At the end, turn left in front of a big industrial building. On via Trozzetti, go straight until the confluence with via Gaidon, then turn right on it. At the traffic lights, go straight until some meters before the railroad, then turn left on via Vettorello. Go straight until the confluence with via Col della Berretta. Turn right on via Monte Asolon, then go past the rail crossing. Take the first on the left, via Concato (in front of Nico stores). When you reach the next rail crossing, don't go past it: instead, go straight on via Rosà for a while. Turn left on via De Gasperi, and after a crossing (please pay attention to the traffic) go straight on via Roma until Cassola centre. Go past the railroad, until you get in front of the church. Turn left on via Zennari and on via Baroni, in the town's outskirts, until you reach a crossing. Go straight on, on via Pergolesi, until the next crossing (direction Bessica di Loria). Turn immediately right, then left in via Bissa. At the stop road sign, near a St. Martino' capital, go straight.

The tree-lined road narrows down and turns right before getting to another crossing. Go left on via Dal Pozzo, following some bends and pointing a small town (Ramon di Campagna). At the stop, turn left until the next one, then turn left again and immediately right on another tree-lined road. Go on until you reach the town center. When you get to the “no entry” roadsign, turn right, pointing to the church. At the stop turn left, then turn left again at the crossing, going straight for 50 meters. Turn right in front of a small church (direction Poggiana, Riese Pio X). From here you can see a beautiful view of the Prealpi, from Pasubio to the Asiago plateau, the Grappa, the Cesen and more. After a bridge, you'll reach the center of Poggiana. Go past the church, then take the first road on the right, via Masaccio. This is not the famous artist, but the battle nickname of a great partisan leader, Primo Visentin, whose grave is in the nearby cemetery.

Go straight on, southwards, until a roundabout in Castello di Godego, then turn left just after the small industrial area. Go straight on for a long way (watch out for the intense traffic), then turn right on via 27 Aprile. Although it's a narrow road, it's quite popular to local drivers and therefore busy. Go straight until Bella Venezia, where you'll cross the old via Postumia, the Roman consular road dated 148 B.C. Go straight for 500 meters, past the traffic lights of the Castelfranco's ringroad. Go straight on via Damini, until the stop roadsign. Turn left and in a short while you'll reach the nice and historical city. To get back to Bassano, follow the route backwards.

## **7- Round trip of the Hexagon's six historical places**

### **From Bassano to Possagno, Asolo, Castelfranco, Cittadella and Marostica (91,5 km)**

Starting from Possagno and the Canova's Gipsoteca, go back on the street (named after the artist himself) for a while, then take the first road on the left, via Morera. The street goes down until the crossroad with the ringroad. Following the directions to Castellucchio, you can cycle between some brickworks (Possagno is also known for tiles), just before taking a long downhill slope to the town. At the roundabout, go straight for a hundreds meters, then turn left following directions to Asolo. Next is another slope between the hills, with the town of Monfumo on the left. When you get to Casonetto locality, turn right at the stop, reaching Pagnano in a short while. Go straight again, starting the difficult climb of via Foresto del Casonetto. The road will get you to Asolo in about 2 kilometers. Asolo, very old prehistoric site, was also an important Roman town, and now is known as the “city of a hundreds horizons”. It is one of the most beautiful towns in Italy. A visit is practically mandatory. Route is 9 kilometers in total.

### **Heading to Castelfranco**

From the square take the beautiful arcade street Browning to porta Loreggia. Just a few meters before it, turn left. After the last houses, turn left and begin the long downhill slope to Casella d'Asolo. As an interesting alternative, at the traffic lights you can also go down on via Foresto Vecchio, one of the oldest and nicest roads that links the path to the plain. It's a recommended route, also because it merges with the previous one just before the Casella traffic lights. From here, go straight southwards on via Giorgione, then turn right towards the church, direction via Loreggia (the name comes from via Aurelia, an old Roman road which connected Patavium-Padova to Acelum-Asolo and Feltria-Feltre). The road is quiet, with very few traffic. After a long time, you'll reach a roundabout. Go left and take some time for a short detour to San Vito di Altivole: here, at the local cemetery, you may visit the Brion monumental grave, built by the great architect Carlo Scarpa: a real masterpiece, known and studied worldwide. The detour is 3 kilometers total. When you get back to the roundabout, go right southwards on via Aurelia. After two crossroads, you'll reach another roundabout (on the right, you can see the roadsign to Riese Pio X, hometown of the Pope San Pio X). Go straight to Vallà until you reach the road from Caerano San Marco to Castelfranco: cross it, following the sign to via Vemedi. At the next crossroad, follow the bend to the left, then straight

again (direction “Bici in vacanza”) until you reach via Postumia in San Floriano. Watch out for the heavy traffic, then go right on a straight stretch until the stop sign. Go left, following the sidewalk until you reach the traffic lights in Castelfranco. Cross the road, then enter the city center on via San Pio X, in Giorgione square. Route is 18 kilometers total.

### **Heading to Cittadella**

From the square, follow via Borgo Monte Grappa, then turn right on via Damini until the roundabout and the traffic lights. Go past them, then straight to Bella Venezia hamlet. Turn left on via Postioma dei Prai (the old road Postumia), heading west on via Chiesa. Turn left and after a few bends go past a canal to get to the state road Bassano-Castelfranco. Turn left for 30 meters, then right on via Poisolo and via Paiola, following the direction “Bici in vacanza”. After the sign indicating the exit of Villarazzo, go past a rail crossing, then follow some bends until the stop. Here, turn left on via Pagnana, always following the direction “Bici in vacanza”, then turn right on a dirt road between some fields. In about 400 meters you'll get to a made-up road at the via Motte fork. This small detour is useful to skip a part of the very busy state road. Turn left on the narrow via Motte, a dirt road. This archeological area was active since the 12<sup>th</sup> century B.C., with a settlement of the Bronze age made of a big square surrounded by a stockade that defended the village. When you go back to via Motte crossroad, go north and get back to via Postumia, on the left. Now go west, following the “Bici in vacanza” sign, then turn left in front of a red house. Go straight for a while, at the stop go past the “provinciale” road. After some bends, you'll reach via Maglio (the old Postumia). Go straight on it, and after a small town you'll reach the industrial area of Galliera Veneta. Keep going on via Postumia di Levante (SP24), past Cà Onorai locality and the railroad. After you reach some traffic lights by a school, go straight for 100 meters, then turn left on via Zucca. Go straight until the “no entry” sign, then turn right on via Borgo di Levante, which runs parallel to the regional road. After 500 meters the street joins via Pozzetto, then via Borgo Bassano. Turn left, heading to the town center: at the “no entry” sign, go left, then take the second right, following the direction to the city center and the old walls (via Monte Pertica). When you reach the walls, go right for 100 meters, then left entering Porta Bassano and piazza Pierobon (18 kilometers total). From the square, go right to Porta Vicentina, then Borgo Vicenza. After the ringroad, turn right on via Casaretta, then follow route number 3 backwards. Tourist information office is in Porta Bassano, where the interesting route “Cammino di Ronda” (around the walls) also starts.

### **Heading to Marostica**

Follow the route from Bassano to Marostica until Laghi locality, then take the Nove-Marostica route (18 kilometers) backwards. From there, follow the Marostica-Bassano route backwards again (8,5 kilometers). From Conca d'Oro onlus farm, you can reach Ponte degli Alpini (central Bassano) with a 2 kilometers trip, going south on via Rivoltella Bassa. At the stop sign, turn right on via Volta, following the river Brenta on via Erizzo, via San Sebastiano, via Margnan, the downhill slope to the river and via Pusterla. The big around trip of the hexagon cities is 91,5 kilometers total.

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