

This leaflet was in collaboration between Parco naturale delle Alpi Marittime and Parc national du Mercantour. These two cross-border protected areas have been twinned since 1987 and together were awarded the European Diploma for the environment. The area protected by the two parks covers about one hundred thousand hectares and is remarkable for its strong cultural identity and high level of biodiversity: the parks protect and enhance these elements through study programmes and safeguards, inspired by the principles of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism.

Parks without frontiers

Logo strip containing various partner organizations and government logos, including the European Union, the Alpine Club, and regional authorities like the Alpes-Maritimes and Alpes-Côte d'Azur departments.

A refuge, by definition, is a place in which you search for shelter and protection for the body but also, not infrequently, for the spirit. Medieval hospices responded to this dual function serving travellers and pilgrims engaged in crossing the Alps. Generally guarded by one or more monks, these properties stood close to the main Alpine passes, from the San Bernardo to the Monginevro, from the Maddalena to the Tenda and Finestre passes.

With the foundation of the Alpine clubs, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, the first refuges serving the mountaineers were created. These are the years in which the Alps take the form of a small unknown continent placed in the centre of “civilized” Europe. The world at that time had by then been explored by length and breadth, therefore the attention of the pioneers turned further upwards: attracted by the abundance of unknown land, crowds of Italian, French, German, Swiss, American and English mountaineers passed through the Alps to climb mountains, baptise them and represent them on maps. In the race to the Alps, the bivouacs and refuges represented the “conquest of the night”, the precious opportunity to spend the hours between sunset and sunrise in places that just a few years before, were doubted if they could be reached in the light of day. In 1889 in the Maritime Alps, the construction of the “Barma refuge” began, near the Lac del la Fous, on the French side. Created under a large rock by mountaineers of Nice, it was a base for the climbs in the Gelas-Maledia-Clapier group.

The National Congress of the Italian Alpine Club in 1896 recognized the need to enhance the Maritime Alps, still not very popular at the time, entrusting the task of building a new refuge to the Ligurian Section. In the particular it was intended to make the climb to the Argentera Peak, the highest on the sector (3297 metres) more accessible. After countless visits, the upper gias Monighet was singled out, in the deep Rovina valley. The building, in honour of the promoting section, was named “Genova Refuge”. Eighty years on the old Genova would be submerged by the waters of the artificial Chiotas basin and replaced by a new building created on the banks of the nearby Brocan Lake.

In the following years, the Ligurians still increased the availability of bases in the Maritime Alps. In 1913 at the base of the Maledia Peak, at 2650 metres in altitude, the doors of the Pagari Refuge opened, whose structures arrived directly from the Turin International Exposition of two years earlier. In 1921 the Bozano was built in the deep valley of Argentera and in 1925 the Questa was built in the deep Valasco valley. Starting from the period between the two wars, the Cuneo Section of the Alpine Club came on the scene and inaugurated its first refuge in 1931: the Morelli-Buzzi, in the Lourousa valley and in the sixties, the Soria, Remondino, Livio Bianco and the Barbero.

The names of the refuges tell, through the dedication to the deceased protagonists, the first seasons of Liguria and Cuneo in conquering the Maritime Alps. Almost no-one is missing: there is Moe Figari, the mountaineer without picks, who arrived in the Maritime Alps, departing from the sea of Genova; his climbing partner Emilio Questa: together with Lorenzo Bozano, who underwent 13 hours travel from the coast to reach the Gesso Valley; there is Federico Federici, who climbed the mountains and died in the sea during the Second World War and Ettore Marchesini, who left his companions of the section, his library and the funds to build the refuge; there is Costanzo Morelli, killed by a blizzard at the foot of the Monviso and Colonel Alvaro Buzzi, who didn't manage to completely see the refuge he had contributed to renovating; Edoardo “Dado” Soria and Gianni Ellena joined in memory, also appear, who were two of the greatest mountaineering exponents from Cuneo in the years between the two wars; there is also their companion Dante Livio Bianco, mountaineer and partisan;

Refuges for the body and spirit

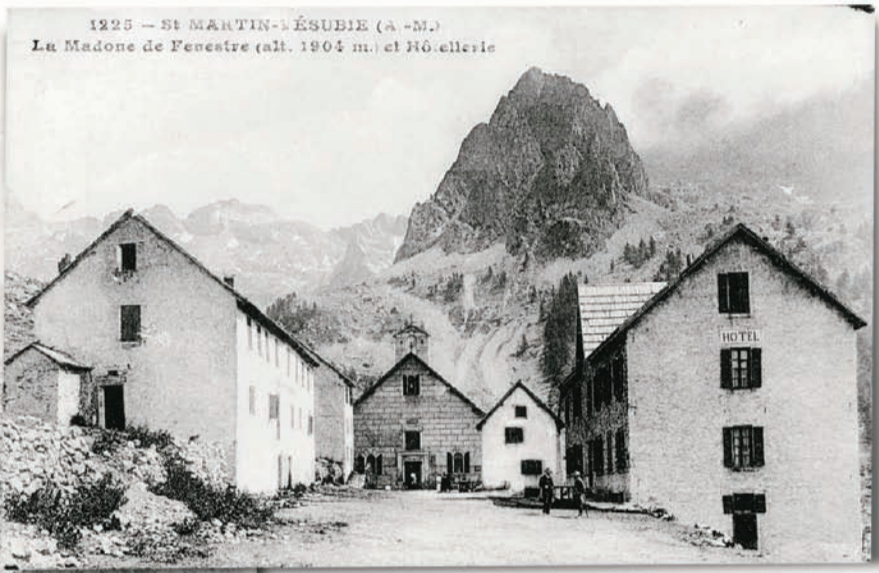


Franco Remondino, sub lieutenant of the Alpine troops and promising young mountaineer, who died on a wall at the age of 21, and Roberto Barbero, who fell on the Catene delle Guide.

The bivouacs complete the memory, moderately evoking to the visitors today of the absence of who, by accident or for passion, sometimes for both reasons, has seen his name linked forever to these mountains. Originally, the refuges were simple and basic: four walls with a plank to sleep on, a table and some chairs. Therefore little more than an isolated cabin in the mountains, base for a “chosen” few dedicated to climbing the main peaks of the Alps. In time the shelters have been modified and expanded to accommodate the ever growing public of mountain enthusiasts. And so a kitchenette, bunk beds, wool blankets and gas light appear. The role of “keeper” came about, a person who lives in one of the towns of the valley bottom and stores the keys of the refuges. The keeper – the memory of the legendary Tino Piacenza from Sant'anna di Valdieri, who divided himself between the Bianco, Remondino and Morelli refuges, is still very much alive in the Gesso Valley – generally goes up to the refuge at weekends to ensure that the guests have the few basic necessities and to show his experience and great knowledge of the mountains.

It often happens that in the dim light of the lamps and over a glass of red wine, mutual respect and trust is created between the mountain dwelling keeper and the mountain enthusiasts, coming from all backgrounds and walks of life,

With the nineties of last century, the refuges changed: the new regulations on a national and community level imposed this, but also the change in the needs of the public. Renovated and finally “according to the law”, the refuges became small hotels at high altitude, equipped with electricity, hot water, telephone... and today even with internet, web cam for weather forecasts and credit card systems to pay the bill. The managers have become professional experts in logistics and catering: hospitality at altitude has become serious business. Over time the identity and role of the refuge have changed so greatly: the old perception of the refuge as an isolated place, is safely moored in the sea of the mountains and is by now a distant memory. Today the refuges and bivouacs of the Maritime Alps Park territory are among the favourite destinations of tourists who visit the protected area.



From logistics bases to climb up to the peaks, these buildings have become a reference point for those wishing to unhurriedly enjoy the contact with mountain nature, taking the opportunity to surprise, against the backdrop of a sunrise or sunset, the animals immersed in their environment. Today, as yesterday, the refuge gives you the opportunity to spend the night, filling your eyes with the starry sky of the high altitudes, but in addition, it now offers visitors the opportunity to taste the local products, to attend concerts performed among the peaks and to take part in themed evenings. Whether it's a little or a lot, to get to a refuge you have to walk. The right amount of commitment and effort is needed to fully enjoy what we expect “up above”. On opening the door of the refuge with a mixture of relief and trepidation, there is the distinct feeling of being in a particular place, where the most basic rules of cohabitation come into play: respect for the work of the manager, sharing common space and time with other hikers, the pleasant and compulsory frugality, imposed by the place, the salutary knowledge that any hasty actions may have negative effects for the conservation of the fragile environment that surrounds the small building. You must move cautiously and lightly, both inside and outside the welcoming structure of the refuge. For the pleasure of reaching a comfortable destination, immersed in a unique environment, for the experience of spending a few hours in the presence of the Alpine nature without having to hurry back down to the valley, for the privilege of listening to music with the mountains as a sounding board, for the opportunities of meeting and exchanging among the people it offers, a stay in the refuge is therefore an experience able to leave a mark which goes beyond just the simple pleasure of fun and relaxation.

- Departure
- Height difference; ascent time; itinerary type
- Owner; manager
- Opening period
- Beds (beds in winter)
- Cuisine
- Telephone number
- E-mail address; web site
- Main climbs
- Credit cards accepted
- Credit cards not accepted

legend

Hiking refuges

L'Albergh	1400 m
Owned by the Park, it stands in Palanfré, in Valle Vermeagna, at the foot of an ancient banned beech wood that protects the village from avalanches. Open all year, it is on the GTA itinerary and is the departure base for hiking on foot, with snow shoes and with skis. At the premises you can taste a cuisine that has traditional local flavours and the delicious cheeses produced on the premises.	
	Parco naturale Alpi Marittime, Silvana Giordano
	all year
	piedmontese
	+39 340 6973954
	info@palanfre.it - www.palanfre.it
	Nature path of the banned beech wood, La Via di Têt culture path, Albergh Lake 2038 m, Rocca d'Orel 2439 m

Bivouacs

Moncalieri	2710 m
	San Giacomo di Entraque 1250 m
	1500 m; 4 hours
	Giovane Montagna Moncalieri
	always open
Baus	2650 m
	Lago della Rovina 1535 m (Entraque)
	1100 m; 3.30 hours
	CAI Ligurian Section
	always open
Sergio Groppo	2468 m
	Sant'Anna di Valdieri 1011 m
	1450 m; 4 hours
	Private
	always open
Capanna sociale Barbero	1665 m
	Ponte della Vagliotta 1115 m (Sant'Anna di Valdieri)
	550 m; 1.45 hours
	CAI Cuneo Section, keys: tel. 0171 67998
	closed
Costi-Falchero	2280 m
	Ponte della Vagliotta 1115 m (Sant'Anna di Valdieri)
	1100 m; 3.30 hours
	CAI Ligurian Section
	always open
Gandolfo	1847 m
	Ponte della Vagliotta 1115 m (Sant'Anna di Valdieri)
	750 m; 2 hours
	Club Alpino Accademico Italiano
	always open
Varrone	2235 m
	Terme di Valdieri 1368 m
	950 m; 2.30 hours
	CAI Cuneo Section
	always open
Guiglia	2421 m
	Gias delle Mosche 1591 m (Terme di Valdieri)
	850 m; 2.30 hours
	CAI Ligurian Section
	always open

Locanda del Sorriso	1096 m
Once a primary school of the quiet and sunny hamlet of Trinità di Entraque, the inn, owned by the Park, is open in the summer season, during holiday periods and at weekends. It is a GTA stop off place and departure point of hiking itineraries with snow shoes and skis. In the welcoming dining room the Occitan cuisine can be tasted, based on products of the area.	
	Parco naturale Alpi Marittime, Carla Degioanni
	summer, Christmas, Easter and weekends on booking
	piedmontese
	+39 0171 978388
	info@locandadelsorriso.com - www.locandadelsorriso.com
	West Pass of Sabbione 2328 m; Caire di Porcera 1818 m; Entraque for Vallone Bousset

San Giacomo	1250 m
The Hiking Refuge is situated at the centre of a handful of houses in San Giacomo, a name that evokes ancient pilgrimages along the Santiago road. The fascination of the place is strengthened by the presence of the historical royal hunting lodge, immersed in a centuries-old beech wood. An ideal base to depart for some of the most beautiful trips in the protected area, the Refuge is open from spring to late autumn. The premises, that offers only overnight stays, relies on the adjacent inn, Baita Monte Gelas for eating.	
	Parco naturale Alpi Marittime, Gerbino family
	from april to november
	piedmontese
	+39 0171 978704
	baitamontegelas@yahoo.it - www.parks.it/rif/san.giacomo
	Mount Aiera 2713 m; Vej del Bouc Lake 2054 m; Carbonè Pass 2800 m

The Mercantour refuges

Cougourde	2100 m
upper Boréon car park	
	430 m; 1.30 hours; pathway (E)
	CAF Nice Mercantour, M. Martin (summer), A. Goirand
	all year
	+33 (0)4 93032600, +33 671726704
	www.cafresa.org
Madone de Fenestre	1905 m
by car from Saint-Martin-Vésubie (11 km)	
	asphalt road
	CAF Nice Mercantour, Patrick Miraillet
	15/6 - 15/9
	+33 (0)4 93028319, +33 (0)4 93039102
	www.cafresa.org
De Cessolle (Nice)	2232 m
Pont du Count 1690 m	
	550 m; 2 hours; mule track (E)
	CAF Nice Mercantour, Christophe Fournier
	15/6 - 30/9
	+33 (0)6 61975938
	www.cafresa.org
Valmasque	2233 m
Casterino-Peyrafica road, altitude 1700 m	
	550 m; 2 hours; mule track (E)
	CAF Nice Mercantour, Michel Duranti
	15/6 - 30/9
	+33 (0)4 92319120
	www.cafresa.org
Merveilles	2130 m
Lake Mesches car park 1380 m	
	750 m; 3 hours; trail (E)
	CAF Nice Mercantour, Alex Ferrier
	15/6 - 30/9
	+33 (0)4 93046464, +33 (0)4 93046922
	www.cafresa.org
Fontanalba	2018 m
Casterino 1543 m	
	450 m; 1.30 hours; pista (E)
	Sci Club di Nizza, Yvette Ferrieuer
	15/6 - 15/9
	+33 (0)4 93 04 89 19

paths and refuges of the Maritime Alps and Mercantour

On-line refuge booking

An internet service is active in which you can book most of the refuges in the Maritime Alps-Mercantour area. The initiative has been promoted by the parks of the Maritime Alps and Mercantour and by the Club sections of the Alpine troop owners of the refuges, together with the managers of the premises at altitude that are part of the Eco-Tourism in Maritime association.

Online booking is a concrete action and support in improving the process of the tourist offer that the two protected area have undertaken according to indications on the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism.

www.parcocalpimaritime.it/booking.php

Alpine refuges

Federici-Marchesini al Pagari 2650 m



Pagari, with its 2650 metres in altitude and the 5 hour walk to reach it, offers the hiker the pleasure and satisfaction of things hard-earned. Within its walls it is pleasant to enjoy the atmosphere of the Refuge "d'antan" and the manager's welcome, who will reveal every secret of these mountains. Among the many precious recommendations is the one to suggest that you get up at dawn to catch the red reflection of the aurora on the incredible wall of the Maledia, images that you will take back down to the valley, captured by camera and indelibly printed in your memory.

- ▶ San Giacomo di Entracque 1215 m
- ▲ 1450 m; 5 hours; trail and mule track (E)
- 🏠 CAI Ligurian Section, Andrea "Aladar" Pittavino
- 🕒 15/6 – 15/9; other periods by booking
- 🍳 home cooking
- 🍴 +39 0171 97351; +39 328 3567556
- ✉ info@rifugiovalasco.it - www.rifugiovalasco.it
- 📍 Como Stella 3050 m, South Peak of Argentera 3297 m, Mount Clapier 3045 m, Maledia Peak 3061 m, Mount Gelas 3143 m

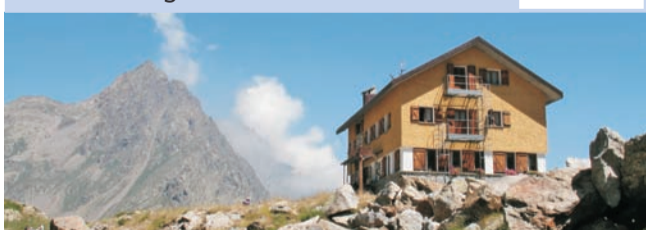
Ellena-Soria 1840 m



Each stone of the itinerary towards Soria could tell a story about the pilgrims, Popes, Kings, armies, smugglers and animals laden with salt and fabrics, that were busy in crossing the Alps by the Finestra Pass. A much frequented route in the Middle Ages to find after hospice for the travellers. Whoever goes over these mounts today finds a modern and particularly welcoming Refuge along the way.

- ▶ San Giacomo di Entracque 1215 m
- ▲ 650 m; 2,30 hours; trail (T) practicable also by mountain bike (OC)
- 🏠 CAI Cuneo Section; Mary Bacani
- 🕒 15/6-15/9; weekends between 1/4-15/6 and 15/9-15/10; other periods on booking
- 🍳 regional and Filipino
- 🍴 +39 0171 978382; +39 340 2240558
- ✉ info@rifugiosoriaellena.com - www.rifugiosoriaellena.com
- 📍 Mount Gelas 3143 m, Saint Robert Peak 2917 m, Agnel Peak 2927 m

Genova-Figari 2015 m



The Genova Refuge stands at the foot of the eastern side of the massif of Argentera and is surrounded by the blue waters of the Brocan and Chiotas lakes. The latter, an artificial basin is fed by one of the largest hydroelectric power stations in Europe. The wonderful environment, the frequent sightings of chamois and ibex, the opportunity to observe the saxifrage of Argentera – the most precious botanical endemism of the Park – are all elements of irresistible attraction, especially for families.

- ▶ Rovina Lake 1535 m
- ▲ 500 m; 1,45 hours; 1) mule track and trail (E); 2) path and trail (E)
- 🏠 CAI Ligurian Section, Dario Giorsetti
- 🕒 15/6 – 15/9; other periods on booking
- 🍳 regional and vegetarian dishes
- 🍴 +39 0171 978138; +39 340 4614189
- ✉ gestore@rifugiogenova.it - www.rifugiogenova.it
- 📍 South Peak of Argentera 3297 m, Brocan Peak 3054 m, Caire dell'Agnel 2935 m

Franco Remondino 2430 m



Visible from the start of the path, you get nearer to the Refuge step by step along an intense and spectacular itinerary: high up, some parts of the three thousand metres of the south-western Alps stand out, among which, Argentera, the "roof" of the Maritime Alps. From the Remondino refuge where nearby, ibex, chamois and stoats can be frequently spotted, the eye is captured by the west by the rocky crag that culminates in the peaks of Fremamorta, Bresses and Tablases.

- ▶ Pian della Casa 1760 m
- ▲ 700 m; 2 hours; path (E)
- 🏠 CAI Cuneo Section, Franca Torre
- 🕒 15/6 – 15/9; other periods on booking
- 🍳 regional
- 🍴 +39 0171 97327; +39 328 5440495
- ✉ info@rifugioromondino.it - www.rifugioromondino.it
- 📍 South Peak of Argentera 3297 m, Nasta Peak 3108 m, Paganini Peak 3051 m

Lorenzo Bozano 2453 m



In the Southern Alps, there is not one landscape that can be compared for majesty and grandeur to the one of the western side of Argentera and Cornu Stella that towers over the Refuge.

- ▶ Gias delle Mosche 1591 m
- ▲ 900 m; 2,45 hours; path (E)
- 🏠 CAI Ligurian Section, Marco Quaglia
- 🕒 15/6 – 15/9; other periods by booking
- 🍳 home cooking
- 🍴 +39 0171 97351; +39 328 3567556
- ✉ rifugiobozano@yahoo.it - www.rifugiobozano.com
- 📍 Cornu Stella 3050 m, South Peak of Argentera 3297 m, Catena delle Guide 2737 m

Morelli-Buzzi 2351 m



You climb up to the Refuge on a mule track of the ancient royal hunting reserve that lazily snakes among centuries old larch trees. Coming out of the wood, you come across new sights every step you take: the romantic Lagarot di Lourousa, the steep side of Cornu Stella, the strange herd of "Sigaro". At the Refuge you will stand open-mouthed in front of the thousand metres of vertiginous rocks of Mount Stella, while towards the valley, framed by the profile of a typical glacial valley, Mount Matto rises, the castle of the highest peaks, standing at three thousand metres.

- ▶ Terme di Valdieri 1368 m
- ▲ 900 m; 3,15 hours; mule track and path (E)
- 🏠 CAI Cuneo Section, Andrea Cismondi
- 🕒 15/6 – 15/9; other periods by booking
- 🍳 regional and vegetarian dishes on request
- 🍴 +39 0171 97394; +39 347 0531456
- ✉ rifugiomorelli@libero.it - www.parks.it/rif/morelli-buzzi
- 📍 North Peak of Argentera 3286 m, Oriol Peak 2943 m, Mondini Peak 2915 m

Regina Elena 1834 m



Leaning against the mountain to defend itself from the great avalanche that comes down in the spring from the deep valley of Balma Ghilie, is, without a doubt, the easiest Refuge to reach inside the Park. In the early morning it is often surrounded by chamois. The building, simple and essential, is managed with passion and cheerfulness by the voluntary partners of the National Alpine Troops Association in Genova.

- ▶ Pian della Casa 1760 m
- ▲ 100 m; 20 mins; path (E)
- 🏠 ANA Genova section, voluntary partners
- 🍳 summer
- 🍳 regional
- 🍴 +39 0171 97559; +39 010 587236
- ✉ genova@ana.it - www.alpinigenova.org
- 📍 Ghilie Peak 2998 m, Mercantour Peak 2775 m, Fremamorta Peak 2731 m

Emilio Questa 2388 m



Last of the old style Refuges left in the Park, the Questa is particularly appreciated by those who want to taste the mountains without too much comfort. Reached by military mule tracks, authentic works of art by the military engineering, it found a stones throw away from France and along the line of the historic "Alpine Wall". From the Refuge, overlooking the perfect blue circle of the Portette Lake, the panorama that you take in is a summary of the Maritime Alps; your eyes embrace the massif of Matto and Serra of Argentera, the bold Cresta Savoia and the green Pian del Valasco.

- ▶ Terme di Valdieri 1390 m
- ▲ 1000 m; 3,15 hours; trail and mule track (E), by the Valcursa Lakes also by Mtb (OCA)
- 🏠 CAI Ligurian Section, Flavio Poggio
- 🕒 15/6 – 15/9
- 🍳 regional
- 🍴 +39 0171 97338; +39 347 7959051
- ✉ gestore@rifugioquesta.it - www.rifugioquesta.it
- 📍 Testa del Claus 2889 m, Tablases Peak 2851 m, Testa del Malinvern 2939 m

Valasco, royal hunting lodge 1764 m



Valasco is an oasis of peace that like magic, opens out at the bottom of an impervious deep valley, dug into the sharp sides of Mount Matto and the Rocca di San Giovanni. It is the core of the Park and on this wide pasture plain, Victor Emanuel II had a hunting lodge built in the mid-nineteenth century, a singular square "fort" with battlemented towers. Today this historic building has been renovated and transformed into a Refuge to offer everyone a stay "fit for a King".

- ▶ Terme di Valdieri 1390 m
- ▲ 400 m; 1,15 hours; mule track (E) or practicable also by Mtb (OC)
- 🏠 private, Flavio Poggio
- 🕒 1/6 - 30/9; at weekends from march to november, other periods by booking
- 🍳 home cooking
- 🍴 +39 348 3230266; +39 011 19825118 (skype)
- ✉ info@rifugiovalasco.it - www.rifugiovalasco.it
- 📍 Mount Matto 3097 m, Rocca di Valmiana 3006 m, Rocca della Paur 2972 m, South head of Bresses 2820 m, Mount Malinvern 2939 m

Dante Livio Bianco 1910 m



It is a quiet and romantic spot where the Refuge stands: sunk in a cushion of grass dotted with larch trees and rhododendrons overlooking the flat expanse of the lower Sella lake.

- ▶ Sant'Anna di Valdieri 1011 m
- ▲ 900 m; 3 hours; mule track (E)
- 🏠 CAI Cuneo Section, Livio Bertaina
- 🕒 15/6 - 15/9; at weekends from march to november on booking
- 🍳 regional
- 🍴 +39 0171 97328; +39 335 5461677
- ✉ info@rifugiolivobianco.it - www.rifugiolivobianco.it
- 📍 Mount Matto 3097 m, Rocca di Valmiana 3006 m, Rocca della Paur 2972 m

Malinvern - City of Ceva 1839 m



If your looking for a corner of wild nature that is easy to reach, the deep Rio Freddo Valley, home to the Malinvern Refuge is the place for you. A walk alongside the river, always full of water, as well as a short walk in the shade of the majestic conifers and in the sun of the grasslands around are not to be missed. The fascinating landscape and the impressive northern side of the Malinvern dominate the scene, where the snows stay until late summer.

- ▶ Vinadio, Vallone di Rio Freddo 1526 m
- ▲ 300 m; 1,15 hours; dirt track (T) practicable also by mountain bike (BC)
- 🏠 CAI Ceva Section, Massimo Gemma
- 🕒 1/06 – 30/09
- 🍳 regional
- 🍴 +39 0171 959605; +39 347 2725194
- ✉ maxigemma@libero.it
- 📍 Mount Malinvern 2939 m, Paur Lake 2357 m, Orgials Pass 2600 m

