REGIONE DEL VENETO

TERRACED LANDSCAPES CHOOSING THE FUTURE

Croatia I Kvarner

Cres town natural amphitheatre

Centuries-old olive groves are full of life

The island of Cres, located in the north of the Adriatic Sea, is characterised by typical karst topography and covered by a dense net of dry stone wall structures. The most complex and interesting of them are the terraces lying on the slopes around the town of Cres, reaching out all the way to the sea, as if they have always been a part of the landscape's natural appearance.

Even though the first terraces had been built in the Middle Ages, more intensive construction began in the 16th century, when the town of Cres became the administrative centre of the island and the number of inhabitants started to grow. The lack of arable land forced the inhabitants to create new fields for planting vines, which were later replaced by olive trees. Today the stone wall terraces represent one of the most prominent element of the rural anthropogenic heritage on the island, in both pragmatic and aesthetical way, and show the centuries-long work done by the islanders during their battle for survival.

Although it is evident that part of traditional island agriculture is gradually vanishing, those old terraces are still home of active agriculture and they continue to silently teach us the unwritten history, meanings and ties that the local community has had with the surrounding land. Even today, in the midst of the socio-economic changes, most of the island's families continue the tradition inherited from their ancestors to cultivate the olives in such difficult conditions. In the end, they obtain a high-quality oil that is marketed under the protected designation of origin "Extra virgin olive oil Cres".

Photo: Robi Sablić

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Photo: Paolo Dunković

Photo: Ugo Toić

Photo: Nadir Mavrović

Photo: Robi Sablić

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Photo: Goran Anđlar

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