



Gravellona Toce - Quarne

 MEDIUM

We start in **Gravellona Toce**, near the confluence of the **Strona stream** into the **Toce River**, once the site of an ancient Roman river port and now an extensive commercial center.

After the obligatory passage from the four roundabouts along SP229 in the direction of Lake Orta, at the fourth one (the one at the top of the Santa Maria climb), we turn right for Casale Corte Cerro, from where we begin to have a view over the **Corcera Valley**, the one that connects Lake Orta to Lake Maggiore.

It is a climb of about two km, with the most challenging sections (around 9%) in the first km leading to the hamlet of **Cereda**. The remaining km is gentler and ends near the Town Hall of **Casale Corte Cerro**.

From the town hall square, we continue left toward the church of San Giorgio and what was once the site of a well-known cutlery factory. Proceeding straight toward Montebuglio, after a long bottleneck, we approach the **Rimembranza Park**, then climb toward the schools, a couple of bends on the flat, and start climbing again toward the highest hamlet of Casale, passing through **Tanchello**.

Passing by the church of St. Thomas the Apostle, the spiritual home of the approximately two hundred inhabitants of **Montebuglio**, we continue to the fork for Gattugno-San Fermo shortly after the cemetery.

We turn left and descend into Omegna territory, passing through **San Fermo** and **Santa Rita**. Shortly after the small church dedicated to the saint of the "impossible," a very narrow road emerges from the central square of **Crusinallo** (on the left), where the **Romanesque church of San Gaudenzio** and the **Castle** dominates.

Passing through **Dogna**, we reach the **Fabbricone bridge**, a crossroad with the Strona Valley. Here, we turn left onto Via De Angeli, cross the bridge, and, after a few hundred meters, take a right onto Via Ugo Foscolo toward the town cemetery.

The climb up **via Dall** to **Cireggio** is tough, far more arduous than the gradient the GPS marks. The secret is to take it as calmly as possible; it is just under five hundred meters, at the end of which there is a roundabout, with a small church on the left. We continue straight on for a kilometer all on the level, passing by what was once the headquarters of a well-known housewares company (the one that used to make "Girrrrmi" in Carosello), the schools, the cemetery, the bottleneck, and the monument dedicated to Captain **Filippo Maria Beltrami** (a martyr to freedom in that of Megolo), to the church of Santa Maria Assunta. Then, facing the double curve to the left and the Circle on the right, the ascent to the two Quarne begins.

The road to Quarna Sotto is about 6 kilometers and runs along about twenty hairpin bends, some offering broad panoramic glimpses of Omegna, Mottarone, Lake Orta, and the less famous lakes of Nonio.

In particular, we admire the high ground of **Monte Zuoli**, where a few years ago, "The Gardens of the Pie in the Sky," an entertainment area inspired by the stories of a world-famous Omegna resident: children's writer **Gianni Rodari**, who was born here in 1920.

The ascent continues with gradients that never exceed 10%.

About a kilometer from the town of **Quarna Sotto**, a sign reminds us that this is the town of music, where musical instruments are still made today (Rampone & Cazzani company) and where it is possible to visit the local **Ethnographic and Wind Musical Instrument Museum**.

Also here, in the larger one of two municipalities with about 380 inhabitants (Quarna Sopra has about 250), the origins of the champion **Fausto Coppi**, whose surname is widespread locally, are traced.

After passing the cemetery (on the left), a few curves separate the town with a lot of "wall" signs showing the distance from Omegna (km 7) and the altitude (809 m.a.s.l.).

Two works by local sculptor Renato Beltrami are installed a few meters ahead. Past the pharmacy, we come near the main church dedicated to San Nicolao and the Locanda Posta. Between the walls, at the church's base, there is a niche complete with a fountain and a valuable map of the area.

We continue uphill, passing in front of the Ethnographic Museum, until we reach the Santa Rita Square parking lot with the way to Alpe Camasca on the left (recommended for the more daring) and the way to our destination on the right.

A few hundred meters, we enter the territory of **Quarna Sopra**.

The main square, titled XXIV Maggio, where the Town Hall is located, is also called "**Burghitt**," and a few hundred meters away is Piazza San Rocco, called "**Pasquer**," where the "credenza," or council of elders, was once held.

By contrast, the parish church of Santo Stefano, which towers above the town and is home to one of Piedmont and Italy's most essential and valuable pipe organs, dates back to the 1500s.

Returning to the present day, the art of **murals and mosaics** has taken hold for nearly five years, and today, the village can boast an art trail of as many as **24 works**.

Another recent and significant presence can be found leaving the center of the village for its **Belvedere**. Here, beside the public area that is a natural balcony over the entire basin of Cusio Lake Orta, the **Mandali Center**, has been based for the past few years, with guests worldwide.

On the way back, we pass through Omegna again, passing by Quattro Strade, Bagnella, and the Gramsci lakefront to the city center.

Suppose you want to transit along the **Nigoglia** (famous for the sayings "La Niguaia la va in sùù and la legg la fùma nu," because of its course to the north). In that case, we suggest the passage from Largo Cobianchi (next to the Town Hall), skirting the Oratory, and reaching the entrance to the **Fantasy Park** dedicated to **Gianni Rodari**. This is home to the **Forum**, a center of exhibitions devoted to the art and memory of what was the capital of housewares until a few decades ago (four names out of all: Girmi, Alessi, Lagostina, Bialetti).

From the Forum, we exit directly onto Via Verta, passing the **Ludoteca**, the local high school and the roundabout boasting a dove dedicated to the fallen at work (in future memory of those who lost their lives in what was one of the first steel factories in the province, first Cobianchi and then Pietra). Going straight on, we leave the Circolo della **Verta** on the right, and after about a kilometer, we come to the fork for **Granerolo**, just after the junction of what, until a few years ago, was Omegna's traffic-saving tunnel.

In all, it is just over two kilometers of climbing, not very difficult, leading to the charming hamlet of Gravellona.

Vast panoramic views accompany the ascent, then descend along the **Val Guerra**, a wooded area with a narrow road characterized by large erratic boulders, votive chapels, shacks, old agricultural settlements, and the last still active stables near the strategic **Castello del Motto** of medieval memory; until coming out on the SS33 at the southern entrance to **Gravellona Toce**. From here to the tour's conclusion, "through Val Corcera and Quarne" is just under a kilometer away. It's time to look around and decide how to end the day ... with a good beer or/and do some shopping.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS

It is not a challenging tour, but a demanding one, yes. It is pedaled up and down halfway from start to finish.

The roads have little traffic and offer several vantage points over the valley below that separates Lake Orta from Lake Maggiore.

The slopes, particularly those in Montebuglio, Quarne, and Val Guerra, often have blind curves, so caution is recommended.

The only "poisoned tooth" of the ride is the ascent of the Dall, which can be avoided by continuing along Via De Angeli, Piazza Beltrami, Via Tito Speri, and ascending to Cireggio along Via G. Matteotti. A 26/36 may suffice--if you avoid the Dall!

POINTS OF ATTENTION

1. Descent on San Fermo from Gattugno junction with blind and dangerous curves.
1. Dall ascent with a max slope close to 18%.
2. Descent from Quarne with its twenty or so often tight and dangerous switchbacks.
3. Descent of Val Guerra with a narrow road and, at times, slippery surface.

TECHNICAL DATA.

Relevant geographical area:	Cusio/Val Corcera, Quarne
Place of departure and arrival:	Gravellona Toce, shopping area
Number of legs:	1
Length:	38.3 km
Height difference:	673 m
Total ascent:	1001m indicative
Difficulty:	MEDIUM
Average duration:	3 hours and 30 minutes
Minimum altitude:	212 m.a.s.l.
Highest altitude reached:	885 m.a.s.l.
Degree of cyclability:	total
Recommended period:	March-October
Presence of dedicated signage:	no
Target audience:	amateur cyclist/cyclo-hiker

SCENIC POINTS

Along the hairpin bends leading to Quarne with views of Monte Zuoli, Pontebria Lake, and Lake Orta, Quarna Sopra belvedere with views of Omegna, Lake Orta and Mottarone, Granerolo with views of the Corcera Valley.

REFRESHMENT POINTS

At the main towns crossed, where there is no shortage of fountains.

TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICES

OMEGNA - Piazza XXV Aprile 17 - 28887 Omegna (VB) - +39 0323 61930/+39 338 8870913 - info@proloco.omegna.vb.it

BIKE SERVICE

Sport è bike - Knutti Massimo, **Sale-Repair shop-Rental**, Via Fratelli di Dio 61, 28887 OMEGNA (VB), (+39) 339 5924089, massimoknutti@gmail.com, www.knuttibike.com/index.php/en/

Bike Store Omegna, **Sale-Repair shop**, Via Tito Speri 3, 28887 OMEGNA (VB), (+39) 0323 350295, bikestoreomegna@gmail.com, www.facebook.com/BikeStoreOmegna

E-Traction, **Rental**, Via Borca 6, 28887 OMEGNA (VB), (+39) 392 4899480, info@etraction.it, https://www.etraction.it/

E-Bike Garage, **Sale-Rental**, Via Sant'Anna 31, 28881 CASALE CORTE CERRO (VB), (+39) 0323 348044, info@e-bikesgarage.com, www.e-bikesgarage.com/

Sportway Megastore, **Sale-Repair shop**, Parco Commerciale Laghi, Via Trattati di Roma, 62 - 28883 GRAVELLONA TOCE (VB), Tel. +39 0323 865206, www.sportway.it/punti-sale/sportway-gravellona-toce-verbania/

CHARGING STATIONS

Etraction, Via Borca, 6 - 28887 OMEGNA (VB)

Bar Ristorante Salera, Piazza Salera, 16 - 28887 OMEGNA (VB)

Canottieri, Lungolago Buoizzi, 37 - 28887 OMEGNA (VB)

Sport è Knutti, Via Fratelli Di Dio, 61 - 28887 OMEGNA (VB)

Public baths, gardens Lungolago A. Gramsci - 28887 OMEGNA (VB)

Oasi della vita, Via Fucine, 7 - Bagnella - 28887 OMEGNA (VB)

Piazza XXIV Maggio, 6 - 28898 QUARNA SOPRA (VB)

Locanda Posta, Piazza IV Novembre, 5 - 28896 QUARNA SOTTO (VB)

GRAVELLONA TOCE

PLACES OF INTEREST

Antiquarium "Memories from the Past," Minimuseum "Felice Pattaroni," Motto Castle, Parish Church of St. Peter 12th century, Romanesque Church of San Maurizio sec.

CASALE CORTE CERRO

Museum of the Latteria Turnaria, Getzemani Complex, Parco delle Rimembranze

OMEGNA

Birthplace of Gianni Rodari, Fantasy Park, Rhymes on the Streets, Forum Arts and Industry Museum Foundation, Collegiate Church of Sant'Ambrogio, De Angeli-Frua Area, Vatican District, Porta Romana, Crusinallo Castle

QUARNA SOTTO

Ethnographic and Wind Musical Instrument Museum

QUARNA SOPRA

Painted walls, Belvedere, Mandali Center