



## Cannobio - Cippo Pantani



The uphill route along the banks of the **Cannobino Creek**, where every day at dawn and dusk "**border crossers**," i.e., those who go to work in neighbouring Canton Ticino, pass through; thanks to them, there are still several villages that populate the valley, there where the sun has always warmed fields, meadows and houses.

The finish line is where the memorial stone is dedicated to **Marco Pantani**, one of the most excellent hikers of all time.

It starts from Cannobio at the beginning of the **Cannobina Valley SP 75**.

The first 2 km are flat with a short descent right at the beginning.

After the first kilometre, on the left is the famous **Fonte Carlina**, which, thanks to its therapeutic properties, was the center of a renowned spa complex over a century and a half ago with guests from the most important European courts. All that remains from that era are memories and the ruins of the mansion that once was. Here, topping up the water bottle is a must-all for the benefit of our liver.

Just after the Fountain, the actual climb begins.

After a few hundred meters, on the right, there is a chance to detour to **Orrido di Sant'Anna** (St. Anna's Gorge): it takes half an hour, but the natural spectacle you witness is worthwhile.

Continuing to our destination, the first stretch of ascent, around 8-10%, is about 2 km, then the road continues along a falsopiano, followed by a short but tortuous descent that leads to the other bank of the **Cannobino**. Here, you meet the first detour on the right to **Cavaglio San Donnino** and **Gurrone**, where you will find one of the toughest and most difficult climbs in the entire province: try it for yourself!

Leaving the bridge to Cavaglio on the right, continue straight to the villages of **Nivetta** and **Lunecco**, once the headquarters of the local Mountain Community. Here, the historic mule track to **Crealla**, with its 1,500-plus stone steps, begins.

After Lunecco, another falsopiano is encountered, with **Falmenta** on the left and **Cavaglio Spoccia** on the right.

After several crossings of the stream that gives the valley its name, you pass through **Ponte Spoccia** until reaching the **junction to Gurro**. This village owes its fame to its alleged Scottish origins but, above all, to the challenging climb that characterizes it and that attracts many road

cycling enthusiasts, thanks also to the promotion done by Le Salite del VCO, a province-wide cycling event.

In this case, however, continue to the right along SP 75, facing immediately after the curve a viaduct with gradients that soon make themselves felt in the legs.

After a series of hairpin bends, you reach the **junction to Orasso** (on the right); here, the challenging climb is over, and the pedaling becomes looser along a succession of curves and counter-curves, with a roadway that is always somewhat narrow.

Then the road suddenly widens and climbs gradually for a couple of km to the **junction to Cursolo** (on the right) and the new tunnels leading to the Finero plateau.

After the first section of tunnel, on the left is the entrance to the old road, the one leading to Sasso di Finero with the memorial stone in memory of **Alfredo Di Dio** and **Attilio Moneta**, partisan commanders who fell under Nazi-Fascist fire on October 12, 1944.

As you exit the tunnels, still slightly downhill, the picturesque basin of **Finero** and its alpine pastures appear. For the record, you went from Verbano to Ossola.

After a short flat section, return uphill, crossing the **Rio Creoes**, until reaching the small square of **St. Gotthard Church**, a classic refreshment point, complete with a fountain and a well-stocked food store.

Fuelling up, return to the saddle to tackle the last kilometre to the finish line.

A kilometre full of exciting things to see, starting with the mural by the artist **Angelo del Devero**, dedicated to the fallen for freedom, located at the exit of the village, and the next **WWF Naturalistic Oasis "Pian dei Sali"**, characterized by a marshy bottom and many small ponds in which amphibians (such as the "frog temporaria" that is well adapted to high altitudes) and small reptiles find their ideal habitat.

From the Oasis plateau to the pass over Malesco and the Vigezzo valley (Passo dello Scopello), there are a few hundred meters to go, all uphill, along a couple of wide hairpin bends, at the end of which you are finally in front of the **memorial stone** dedicated to the Cesenatico champion, **Marco Pantani**.

The memorial stone was unveiled in September 2004, just six months after the death of the "Pirate." It was authored by members of the **Pantani Fan Club of Cannobio** and their president, Carlo Precuzzi, owner of the well-known Cicli Prezzan store in the lake town. The work's material author is sculptor Luciano Danda.

Each cyclist is free to decide whether to continue (turn back and deal with some variation, go on to Malesco, and return via Centovalli-Locarno or Masera-Mergozzo-Verbania).

## TECHNICAL ASPECTS

It is a climb of more than 21 km, but it has only a couple of somewhat challenging stretches; the rest depends on whether you stay on the main artery or decide to explore some of the many side variations.

You can easily do it with a 36/26 —better, a couple of extra teeth if you decide to try some variation. Beware, for Gurrone, even a 36/32 may be insufficient.

## CRITICAL POINTS

1. First two kilometres after the Fonte Carlina.
2. Viaduct after the junction to Gurro.

## TECHNICAL DATA

Relevant geographical area:	Verbano / Alto Verbano / Valle Cannobina
Place of departure:	Cannobio
Place of arrival:	Cippo Pantani / Passo dello Scopello
Number of Legs:	1
Length:	21.5 km
Height difference	736 m
Total ascent:	860 m indicative
Total descent:	120 m indicative
Difficulty:	MEDIUM
Average duration:	2 hours 00 minutes
Minimum altitude:	212 m.a.s.l.
Highest altitude reached:	960 m.a.s.l.
Degree of cyclability:	total
Recommended period:	April-October
Presence of dedicated signage:	no
Target audience:	amateur cyclist/cyclo-hiker

## EATERIES

Lunecco, Finero.

## TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICES

CANNOBIO - Via Giovanola c/o Palazzo Parasio - 28822 Cannobio (VB) - +39 0323 71212 - info@turismocannobio.it

## BIKE SERVICE

Cicli Prezan di Precuzzi Carlo, **Sale-Shop-Hire**, Viale Vittorio Veneto 9, 28822 CANNOBIO (VB), (+39) 0323 71230, prezancicli@gmail.com, <http://www.cicliprezan.it/>

## CHARGING STATIONS

Lido di Cannobio, private - 28822 CANNOBIO (VB)

Chiesa Traffiume, private - 28822 CANNOBIO (VB)

## PLACES OF INTEREST

### Along the route

Fonte Carlina, partisan memorial stone at Sasso di Finero, a mural dedicated to Freedom of Finero, WWF Oasis Pian dei Sali, Pantani memorial stone.

### Nearby

#### CANNOBIO

Porto vecchio, Palazzo della Ragione 13th century, Casa Pironi, Palazzo Omacini, Santuario SS Pietà, Collegiate Church of San Vittore, ancient church of S. Bartolomeo "in Montibus," Lido Park, Sunday Market, Malpaga Castles, Orrido di Sant'Anna, Fonte Carlina.

#### GURRO

Ethnographic Museum of Gurro and the Cannobina Valley.

VALLE CANNOBINA (established in 2019 by the merger of the three municipalities of Cavaglio Spocchia, Falmenta, and Cursolo Orasso)

The Romanesque bell tower of the church of San Donnino, 15th century in Cavaglio, the parish church of San Materno, 16th century in Orasso, and the parish church of San Lorenzo, 16th century in Falmenta.