

## Attempt to climb up Monte Tamaro by North ridge from Quartino

The delusions are often much larger than the expectations were higher. I put this itinerary in good evidence in the stack of my dreams but I waited for many good reasons, first of all the North exposure that discouraged me by the snow in winter. I am inspired by the reports of **360** that had just followed this line down from the summit and **Omega3** that had climbed up this route and I wanted to emulate him. Like many people here I had already reached the Monte Tamaro in many ways but this immediately attracted me, perhaps because of the difficulties due to the absence of marked trail from Forcarella to Poncino della Croce, together with the discrete slope starting Quartino (216m ) and coming to Tamaro (1961m). Also the length of the route of 8.2 km complicated everything.

So yesterday I left, armed with my latest purchase (Garmin Dakota 20) on which I hoped to tackle the trail section unmarked (*hic sunt leones!*).

I left the quiet and orderly village Quartino and immediately tackled the ascent coming soon the place Al Sasso. Ignoring here for a while the claims of my GPS and an indication mark I followed a wrong path in the Trodo Valley where, in addition to spend energy because of my error, I could watch, being a bit intimidated by the din, the shooting tests performed on the other side (M. Ceneri) by the Swiss Armed Forces. Finally getting aware of the GPS out of route indication I went back on my feet and finally chose the right direction. After Al Sasso the path is marked progressively worst; really my instrument was helpful in many situations in identifying the right path (I feel horrified many purist, but .... it is really a safety).

I have to say it was easier to walk in the woods where the grass was almost absent (but branches, weeds and other evidence of disuse not). Instead, in the glades, it was more difficult to understand where to direct myself because a grass height of around 50 cm; moreover I often met areas of ferns almost as tall as me where the best of my efforts was to simultaneously have a look from above, open with sticks the ferns, look down to see where to put my feet to avoid to trample the tail of a reptile; you know this would be really unpleasant for both!

Sometimes the appearance of rocks in the middle of vegetation comforted me because I allowed "out" for a while from trouble. Around 950m high, near Forcarella, the reasonable part of my brain was beginning to tell me that perhaps it was better to turn around and go home but the obstinacy and the hope that the nightmare would end in a pretty hard but "normal" route I urged to continue. Even I exulted when some red stamps appeared indicating a direction next to a power line (do not follow it!). That does not mean that the problems fall, indeed, but I was seeing the red marks and I followed them among thousands of small adventures, ignoring the out of route indicated again by my GPS. Eventually, understanding that my position was about 30m below and right of Forcarella, I tried last chance: a direct ascent to my left but after a while I gave up for the appearance of a muscle strain in my leg. Perhaps the certainty that my problems would cease when reached Forcarella (without a machete I had only a little Swiss knife!) would help me but really what I had seen suggested me otherwise. So I chose a panoramic location and stopped, then I ate my frugal meal and took my only pictures, then asked my GPS the "trackback" to get me back to Quartino because it was still difficult even find the route. And after a couple of hours, helped by technology, flair and sense of direction that helps me however for many years, I returned to base. Why? This was the question that led me along the back. My friend Pinuccio, master of many adventures and climbing, uses to say that sometimes a "blow" helps to resize the realities of our opportunities and to relate better with the difficulties that the mountain opposes to us. In fact the answer I gave me was that if I had feared the snow, I should also feared the vegetation and I should have noted the dates of the trips which I referred: October and November 2009 respectively. Instead I had not noticed them while it was really important. This is also a lesson for the future. I'll see if next autumn, before the snow, the path that was very hard for me to walk today will be more

feasible.

**Key data of the planned route:**

1738m altitude difference

Total length 8.2 km

Average slope 25%

Climb: 5:00 estimated @ 5km / h (SLF)

Descent: 3:40 estimated @ 7 km / h (SLF)

SLF 24.33 km

**Key data of the actual path:**

Vertical drop 837m

Total length 4.25 km (including my error)

Average slope 20%

Ascent 4.25 km

Descent 3.12 km

Ascent 2:47

Descent 2:23 (including time for lunch 20')

SLF (up) 12.62 km @ 4.53 km / h

(down) 11.49 km @ 4.82 km / h