

Alpha by the River

"I wish I had a river so long. I would teach my feet to fly" Joni Mitchell. Alpha Woodward once lived in a float home near the mouth of the Fraser River, an industrial, satiated and muddy brown confluence of urban waste and nutrient rich soil. But in 2004 Alpha moved to Bosnia and Herzegovina where another river, the Naretva, entered her life. This tempestuous and willful raging torrent that rushes through the town of Mostar, inspires much of this blog. ...but there is more here than rivers

Saturday, November 01, 2014

The Dragon sleeps forever ... The Legend of Umoljani

The Village of Umoljani ... saved from the dragon because the whole village prayed. Umoljani - means 'of the prayers' and the legend of the powerful hodza (muslim priest) who defeated the dangerous dragon lives on today - but couldnt save it from the last war. The entire village was destroyed except for the mosque - it was spared because the commander remembered that his son was healed through the prayers of the hodza in that mosque. It is the only mosque of its kind that survived the war. So we stared at this massif until we could make out the dragon's sinewy tail and spiny back...and mused over the myths that kept children awake at night in the generations gone by.



The dragon - frozen in eternity...

Winter - or summer - I have found that the magic of this amazing area doesn't change because snow has covered the rocks and put the plants to sleep.



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About Me



 **Alpha By The River**

I live ... for now.

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The valley where the dragon was frozen in stone by the local hodza may be a myth, but the aura of the dragon in this forgotten gorge, that sleeps like Glochamorra, follows us as we walked along its river last summer.



But it really is winter now and we are tiptoeing as best we can - on snowshoe - leaving the dragon, and the small village behind us.



This is a typical hut in Gradina - the summer highland village for the shepherds. You can see Gradina from Umoljani, which is where the shepherds live in the winter.

Gradina in the summer looks desolate.... but the highlands are not easy places to live - and in Lukomir, where the climate is even more harsh, the villagers remain all year round..



We are facing east on this rise and slightly to the north hidden from our view is Lukomir village...the last of the traditional highlanders.



Remember Andrew from camp Fazana? - he picked up some energy and is definitely showing good form now! just 5 months later. In fact, this was first snow trip ever, but - youth aside - he outshone the snow experts big time.



an extraordinary day... but still very exhausting... as time goes on, each step seems to carry more snow.



All just a little too cheezy and tidy if you ask me... but fun anyway. If you click to enlarge this picture, you will see Umoljani below us.
Tim Clancey(U.S.), Andrew(Holland), azzi(dutch antilles), me(Canada) and Alex(U.S.)



Posted by [Alpha By The River](#) at 4:25 AM 



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1 comment:

Brad said...

you are really starting to develop an eye for good photo composition! Great pics!

12:19:00 PM

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