



**CULTURAL
HERITAGE IN
SOUTH OSTRO-
BOTHNIA**



FINCH
Interreg Europe



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

Heritage is a living cultural resource

Cultural heritage in South Ostrobothnia is illustrative of Western Finnish ways of life with twists that make the region's cultural heritage distinctive. The two-storey red log farmhouses and the rich variety of folk dresses with accessories, such as the decorated knives, manifest the long traditions of rural life and the manifold craft skills.

But South Ostrobothnian heritage is more than this. It includes modern layers of heritage and modernised customs that are parts of everyday life and festivities. Of these exemplify old factory environments refurbished for cultural activities, the diversity of musical

genres from folk rock to tango and opera, modern architecture and art. Through FINCH we at Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia wish to cast brighter light on how to cherish and invigorate our tangible and intangible riches that South Ostrobothnian heritage holds!

Feel warmly welcome to the expanses of South Ostrobothnia!

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FINCH in brief

FINCH (Financing impact on regional development of cultural heritage valorisation), a project of the Interreg Europe programme, promotes the sustainable adoption of alternative funding structures within the cultural heritage sphere. The project supports the implementation of light financial instruments targeted to private actors and public-private partnerships. The objective is to encourage local and regional actors and decisionmakers to move towards meaningful cultural heritage policies. Investments in cultural heritage have a direct impact on growth and hold considerable potential for creating activities and job opportunities that spur long-term social and economic benefits.



South Ostrobothnia – wide perspectives to the future

Located in Western Finland, South Ostrobothnia (in Finnish: Etelä-Pohjanmaa) sets a stage of natural beauty for living out South Ostrobothnian identities of different kinds. The region is renowned for its wide lowlands stretching to horizon and the shimmering rivers winding through the lush countryside dotted with villages and towns.

With its expanses of farmland, South Ostrobothnia is known as the Food Province of Finland. The region actively heads to find

solutions both in the food sector and bio-economy. The tech industry in the region, technologically advanced and internationally oriented, is a growing sector and the wood product and construction businesses have a strong foothold in the area.

South Ostrobothnia is often characterized as an exceptionally entrepreneurial province and holds a high number of SMEs. Communication between development actors and companies is well rooted and appreciated in the region's

business culture.

The regional centre of South Ostrobothnia is Seinäjoki, home for ca. 62,000 inhabitants. The excellent connections make the region easily accessible both for tourists and commuters. It takes only 3 hours by train from the capital city Helsinki and the nearby Vaasa airport offers connections also to Stockholm.



Ostrobothnian Farmhouse – heritage of sustainable housing

The Ostrobothnian house is an icon of South Ostrobothnian culture. Thinking of this traditional house one typically pictures a Swedish red ('punamulta') half- or two-storey log house with white corners and decorative window trims.

Building this type of house became popular in the 18th century. Typical to these large peasant houses was the spacious kitchen-living room ('tupa') with the combined fireplace/stove/baking oven. Often the large house was a home for an extended family of three generations, or more.

The traditional Ostrobothnian house is exemplary of sustainable building and highly-skilled joinery that had developed in the area through trades of ship and church building. Although the trims and the porches of the

houses were often built in decorative style, the details had functions in, for example, channelling rain away from the wooden structure. Built of logs, it was possible to enlarge a house, according to need, in width and height, but they can also be disassembled, moved and rebuilt. The idea of expediency was omnipresent also in the interior with the bunk beds, cupboards and necessary tools such as the spinning wheel and the loom in the 'tupa'.

The Ostrobothnian house is appreciated also today. Some are dedicated to restoring an inherited house or buy an old house to this end. Public bodies, such as The Finnish Heritage Agency and the Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, subsidise the restoring work. Some appreciate the way of living in a traditional log house due



to health reasons while others appreciate the traditional aesthetics of the wooden, red house with white corners even if the structure would not always be of the traditional kind.

Keeping to this tradition can help in finding sense of cultural continuity in the

tumultuous world. The bilingual association for cherishing Ostrobothnian built heritage, Pohjalainen rakennusperintö ry / Österbottens byggnadsvård rf, was established in 2013.



Cultural environment work in Ähtäri

The City of Ähtäri has been actively working on their cultural environment and heritage programme, 'Waterways to the villages and the church', for ten years. Several localities in Ähtäri are classified as 'nationally significant built cultural environments' and include for example the ironworks community and railway station in the Inha village, the old cardboard factory in Vääräkoski and the Ähtäri Church surroundings.

In 2015, a culture trail, consisting of 19 points of interest, was opened in the old downtown area. Soon after, 'The Water Trail' was established to introduce visitors and locals with the works of art created by the sculptor, professor Eero Hiironen (1938–2018). For the maintenance of one of these sculptures, the Ähtäri-Seura, local heritage association, launched the practice of 'godparenting' art.

Companies and individuals can choose to act as the godparent for Hiironen's sculpture 'Upstream waters'. A duty that lasts for one year, the godparent is responsible for the keeping costs of the sculpture. In return, the godparent is prized with local media visibility and cultural rewards.

In addition to this, interest in archaeological relic areas is increasing. In 2019, the City of Ähtäri, together with the National Museum of Finland, will implement a participatory project aimed at high school students, who are introduced to archaeology through actual excavations.

The cultural environment programme was completed by the Cultural Environment Working Group consisting of representatives from the City of Ähtäri, villages, companies as well as the regional council and museum.





Tango in South Ostrobothnia

For over a century ago, international musical influences met the characteristically Finnish mentality of yearning and as a result, Finnish tango culture was born. It has since found a solid basis in South Ostrobothnia. Every summer from 1985 onwards, Seinäjoki has unveiled itself as the Finnish tango capital and staged the Tangomarkkinat Festival, organised by Seinäjoen Tangomarkkinat Oy. People from all over the world travel to Seinäjoki to share the exceptional feel and passion that Finns have for tango. A connection between the two tango cities, Seinäjoki and Buenos Aires, has been created.

Finnish tango brings together orchestral music, singing and dancing, composing new Finnish tangos and, all in all, a way of being. The paramount is the Tangomarkkinat singing

contest for the titles of the Tango King and the Tango Queen. This annual 'coronation ceremony' engages the attention of hundreds of thousands of people (up to 1,5 million by television and radios).

An important part of Finnish popular culture, Finnish tango welcomes all ages. Tango is popular at dance houses and pavilions, where dance orchestras and singers perform. Tango Kings and Queens are audience attractors and karaoke lounges give the opportunity for anyone to let his/her inner Olavi Virta/Annikki Tähti shine through. The association promoting Finnish tango culture, Suomalaisen tangon Satumaa ry, organises singing competitions for children and the young and even senior singers have their own contest.

Finnish tango has been listed on Finland's National List of Intangible Heritage and the Satumaa ry for one works for including Finnish tango to the UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list.



Kalevan navetta – the new art centre in Seinäjoki

The old Kalevan navetta ('Kaleva's barn') in Seinäjoki is being renovated to meet the needs of the new millennium. The barn was built at the initiative of life insurance company Kaleva's agronomist Karl Fredrik Edlund in the 1890s. Protected today in the city plan as a historical building, it never housed cattle, but instead served for decades as the Defence Forces' warehouse.

The building is located near Seinäjoki city centre and holds space of 5000 square meters on three floors. The massive restauration work is carried out by the building's owner, Petri Pihlajaniemi, who has specialised in saving historical buildings. The development project of the Kalevan navetta is driven by the

Cultural Services of the City of Seinäjoki and funded through the LEADER programme. The operational mode of the art centre is created in a user-oriented manner together with the new house residents, the free art field and citizens.

The art centre Kalevan navetta, which will open in 2020, will host various cultural actors, such as Seinäjoki Art Hall and Seinäjoki City Cultural Office, Regional Crafts Association Taito Etelä-Pohjanmaa ry, Restaurant Onnen Juurella, Sibeliuss Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki / Seinäjoki Unit as well as Seinäjoki Civic Institute and Children's Culture Centre Louhimo.



Culture and Business Centre Vanha Paukku in Lapua

Vanha Paukku ('The Old Bang') is a previous red brick factory turned into a cultural and business centre. The name takes after the initial use of the buildings as the 1923 established State Cartridge Factory (later taken over by Nammo Lapua). The redevelopment of the factory area was planned by architect Helena Teräväinen.

Since 1998, the factory area has housed, among other things, a public library and an adult education centre, a music conservatory and the Lapua art museum. Vanha Paukku offers a community living room and possibilities to experience local culture and art.



Places to visit in South Ostrobothnia



- 1 Kalevan navetta (Seinäjoki)
- 2 Vanha Paukku (Lapua)
- 3 PowerPark (Kauhava)
- 4 Lappajärvi Crater Lake (Lappajärvi)
- 5 Tuuri Shopping Village (Alavus)
- 6 Ähtäri Zoo & Culture Trails (Ähtäri)





ETELÄ-POHJANMAAN LIITTO

REGIONAL COUNCIL OF SOUTH OSTROBOTHNIA

The Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia is a development authority of the 17 member municipalities in the region. Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia promotes the creation of a competitive and co-operative region known for its high-level education, know-how, welfare and entrepreneurship.

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