

ITALY

# Artemis

by Erika Pezzoli





Courmayeur (Aosta). Carola at the end of a day's hunting. Once killed, the hunted animal is gutted where it fell and its internal organs are left behind for wild carnivores. When Carola returns to the valley, the carcass must be taken to the Forest Guard to verify that the animal meets the relevant criteria. Further controls are then carried out on the animal in order to understand the state of health of the ungulate population in the area in question.



## HUNTING AS AN ETHICAL AND SUSTAINABLE CHOICE

**Carola is a hunter from Italy. She eats meat from the deer, chamois and roe deer that she shoots.**

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In a world in which there are usually several degrees of separation between the consumption of meat and actually having to go out and kill it, for Carola hunting represents a natural way to close the circle of life.

As a “predator” Carola feels like an active part of the food chain. This choice, in addition to having a clear ethical meaning, also has an ecological aspect: her environmental impact is drastically reduced by only consuming the meat of wild animals. In the Valle d’Aosta, hunting has always been selective and a way to protect biodiversity. Nowadays it

is monitored strictly by the Assessor for Agriculture’s office, the Forest Guard and the Hunting Management Committee.

Carola Picchiottino, from Courmayeur, is one of the rare examples in Valle d’Aosta of a female hunter and is the first to have obtained the family licence: her father and grandfather were both hunters.

Throughout these deep valleys hunting is an ancient tradition handed down from generation to generation. It requires deep knowledge of the local area, adaptation to the seasons and the patience and skill to study the animals’ behaviour.

There are also meticulous procedures, such as the preparation of the meat and skins. Carola deals with the killed animals herself, following rigorous techniques to avoid any waste or pollution.





Courmayeur (Aosta). Carola in her parents' home. Carola's family have been hunters for three generations and the knowledge has been handed down from one generation to the next. Carola has learnt much from her father and grandfather.





Carola prepares the rifle for the next day's hunting. The rifle is the most commonly used weapon for hunting.





For years Carola has been keeping a diary of her days out hunting, in which she writes down what happened as well as illustrating some of the places she has been.





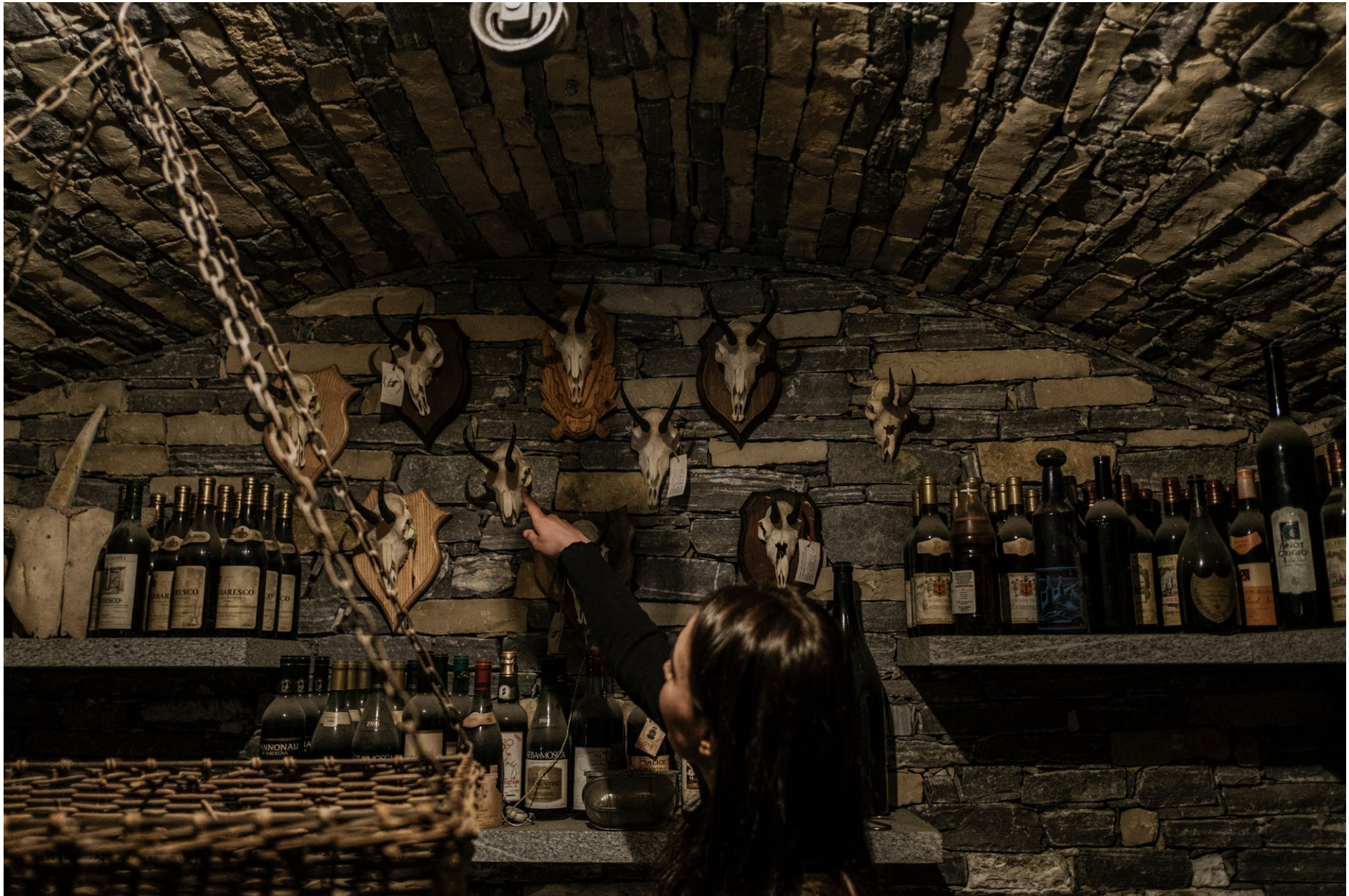
Courmayeur (Aosta). A snowfall during the wildlife census. Carola has chosen to remain on lookout until a specific time agreed with the other hunters.





Every year Carola (here in the family home with her dog Laila) looks forward to the hunting season that begins in mid-September and concludes in the first half of December. Each hunter is assigned a number of animals that they are allowed to kill: the species, sex, age and the appropriate valley or area in which they can be hunted are all specified in advance.





Courmayeur (Aosta). Carola in her parents' home. In the basement of the house, Carola and her family have hung up a number of hunting trophies of chamois and deer that they have shot over the years.





Carola butchers the animals herself between three and five days after shooting them. The animal must first be skinned and quartered before its meat can be butchered.



Courmayeur (Aosta). To show her respect and gratitude to nature, Carola prepares a bunch of wild flowers to place in the mouth of the wild animal she has just killed.







Lago Combal, Val Veny (Aosta). The dawn of a day's hunting.





Courmayeur (Aosta). Laila, one of Carola's dogs, in the family home. Not every part of the hunted animal can be eaten by humans, but the ethical choice to avoid any waste is non-negotiable for Carola. She uses any leftover parts for her dogs, which are also involved in hunting activities and live like members of the family.



Courmayeur (Aosta). Carola during a day's hunting.







The meat is stored in the freezer so that it can be eaten months later.





The skins are sent to a tannery. With or without fur, they can be used for furnishings, accessories, clothing or ornaments.



The natural lake above the town of La Salle (Aosta), around 2,000 metres above sea level. Carola has a profound connection and relationship with nature, of which she feels an integral part.







There are precise rules governing how hunters are to handle their guns. For example, the rifles must be carried in special cases.





Courmayeur (Aosta). Carola observes the natural world through her binoculars. She does this almost instinctively also when out on walks and not only in situations strictly linked to hunting.





Game meat can be prepared in various ways. On this occasion Carola's family has chosen to make venison burgers.





Courmayeur (Aosta). Carola in her parents' home. Some wildlife control plans involve the culling of some particular animals. One such case is when there is an outbreak of rabies, a disease that can easily affect foxes. It is the task of the hunters, coordinated by the Forest Guard, to cull the sick animals in order to protect the healthy ones.





Courmayeur (Aosta). Carola in the woods. Every year, between April and June, a census is conducted on the number of roe deer, deer and chamois before the beginning of the hunting season in order to monitor the local wildlife. The census is performed by hunters in collaboration with the Forest Guard.



