

ITALY

# Young nomads

a project by Bruno Zanzottera and Elena Dak





## A YEAR WITH ALICE, FABIO, MARTIN AND A THOUSAND SHEEP

**From Alpine pastures to the Po Valley and back: this is the geographical area covered by northern Italy's migrant shepherds. Our feature tells the story of Alice and Fabio, a young couple who decided to live in a caravan like real 21st century nomadic shepherds.**

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During the summer season they move around various pastures in the Dolomites, but when the weather starts to get cold, they take their flock, which consists of a thousand sheep, to less difficult climates. In the winter months and up until May the following year they live in a caravan like real modern nomads. Every day they move between the countryside and

villages, looking for the leftovers from the harvest in unused fields and trying to carve out a space among people who don't want to have anything to do with them. From time to time, they are helped by a young African shepherd.

A year ago, Alice and Fabio had a baby boy, Martin, and their life has been enriched by a new experience and more challenges. Alice continues to follow the flock, alternating feeding the baby with looking after the lambs, changing nappies with negotiating the sale of sheep, and singing lullabies with shouting either at the sheep or the sheepdogs.

A year of sheep farming featuring hard work, nomadic motherhood and African shepherds.

*This work is part of the ANCORA IN CAMMINO (STILL ON THE MOVE) project on nomadism in the 21st century, for which we previously produced a feature on the [Rabari sheperds](#) in Gujarat (India).*



## **AUTUMN**

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**In autumn the shepherds come down from the Dolomites to the Po Valley along the 53 kilometres of the 348 “regional road”, the so-called Feltrina, which connects Feltre to Treviso.**



In November Fabio leads his flock of a thousand sheep towards the plain. For this part of the journey he walks along the Feltrina “regional road” which connects Feltre to Treviso in the Veneto region.







The off-road vehicle that Fabio and Alice use for pulling the caravan in which they live for most of the year. The blue bow is for the birth of their son Martin.





Alice, with Martin in his pushchair, leads the flock of sheep in the Monfumo Valley, between the provinces of Belluno and Treviso.





A ewe licks the lamb that she has just given birth to; next to them is one of the three sheepdogs whose job it is to defend the flock from wolves when the sheep are in the Alpine pastures.





Fabio chooses the sheep that are to be sold to a trader who has come to Rossano Veneto from Emilia.





## **WINTER**

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**Short daily trips in the Po Valley to unused fields.**



Fabio leads the flock along a “regional road” near the village of San Martino di Lupari, in the province of Padua.





Alice washes Martin before changing his nappy, in the caravan where they live for most of the year.



Alice and Martin, together with the sheepdogs that look after the flock, at the door of the caravan where they live for most of the year.







Alice milks a she-goat in order to have some fresh milk for Martin, her baby.



## **SPRING**

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**When the weather starts to get warmer it's time for shearing and heading up to the mountains. This time trucks are used for transporting the sheep.**





A field where the owners have put up a sign to prevent sheep from grazing. For most of the year nomadic shepherds like Fabio and Alice graze their sheep in unused fields that don't belong to them. This can lead to arguments with the fields' owners.





An aerial view of Fabio as he walks with his flock in the Po Valley, near Villafranca Padovana.





Alice, Fabio and Martin in the caravan where they live for most of the year.



Fabio with his flock during a storm in the industrial area in Arsego, in the province of Padua. Here he will load the sheep onto trucks in order to take them to the Belluno Dolomites as the summer approaches.







Fabio and Alice's sheep are sheared near Bronzola, in the province of Padua. This is done by professionals from New Zealand.





Alice plays with her baby Martin in front of the caravan where they live for most of the year.





Fabio and Alice's sheep are sheared near Bronzola, in the province of Padua. This is done by professionals from New Zealand.





Mohammed, a Fula Muslim shepherd from Senegal who works with Fabio and Alice, during one of his daily prayer sessions.



Alice and Fabio's flock at night in the industrial area in Arsego, in the province of Padua. Here the sheep will be loaded onto trucks in order to take them to the Belluno Dolomites as the summer approaches.







Two donkeys, which belong to Fabio and Alice's flock, in the industrial area in Arsego (in the province of Padua). Here the sheep will be loaded onto trucks in order to be taken to the Belluno Dolomites as the summer approaches. The donkeys living with the flock are part of the shepherding tradition.





Alice leads the flock towards the village of Bronzola in the province of Padua, carrying her baby Martin in her arms.





## SUMMER

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**Heading up towards the various Alpine pastures in the Belluno Dolomites and moving from one pasture to another.**





Fabio leads his flock along a footpath in order to move the sheep from one summer pasture to another, in the Belluno Dolomites.



Fabio leads his flock of a thousand sheep across the Fochet pastures, in the Belluno Dolomites, above the village of Falcade.







Alice with Martin, who is beginning to walk, and with the dog Molly near the village of Falcade in the Belluno Dolomites, where the family spends the summer, in the Alpine pastures.





Fabio checks his flock during in a break as they head up towards the Col Mont pastures, in the Belluno Dolomites.





Fabio, at dawn, with his flock in the Col Becher pasture in the Belluno Dolomites, where he spends most of the summer.





Alice with her baby Martin at lunchtime near Falcade, in the Belluno Dolomites; at the same time, Alice also keeps an eye on the flock.



Fabio gets up before dawn in the farmhouse in the Col Becher pasture in the Belluno Dolomites, where he spends most of the summer.







Fabio and Alice with their flock, in the rain, head up towards the Col Mont pastures in the Belluno Dolomites.





Alice carries the little lambs that aren't capable of following the flock as it moves across the Col Becher and Fochet summer pastures in the Belluno Dolomites.





## TOWARDS A NEW SEASON

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**The year of “wandering pasture” comes to an end and a new cycle begins. Martin is now one year old and is starting to walk.**





Martin in the trailer where Alice and Fabio put those lambs that aren't capable of following the flock by themselves as it heads towards the various summer pastures in the Belluno Dolomites.





At the end of September the journey down to the Valley begins. Fabio leads the flock past the mountain huts in the village of Fregona, near Falcade in the Belluno Dolomites.



Martin is now one and has started to walk. He's already following the flock with his father.





