



We can assure you that the Visoko mansion is a place of many inspirations, which will continue to guide us in further developing what we have to offer our visitors – so do visit us and spend a pleasant day in the embrace of the greenery and peacefulness of the Visoko homestead.

What the estate looked like at the time when it was taken over by its first master Filip Kalan in 1651 remains unknown. It can be assumed that a storied brick granary was already in existence, which was vaulted and lavishly decorated and painted, and converted into a dining room by Friulian builders around 1726, as commissioned by Jurij Kalan. In all probability, the southern part of the basement with chamber and the large central hall, as well as the entire western part of the building, were added at the same time. The house must have therefore been made to the size of today's floor plan between the second half of the 18th century and 1824. The estate came to life again with the enterprising Johan Kalan, when a storey was brought very close to that of a townhouse. Johan also had a double hayrack built in 1863, which is still part of the property today. In addition to the buildings that still stand at Visoko, there were also others, which no longer exist – a woodshed, a shed, as well as a drying room for fruit and flax. Visoko also had a mill for its own needs in Horovlja.

The famous Tavčar mansion at Visoko in the idyllic surroundings of Poljanska dolina is known almost all over Slovenia, given that children learn about the fate of the Kalan family from *The Visoko Chronicle*, as written by the former owner of the mansion, the famous writer, dr. Ivan Tavčar, a compatriot from the nearby Poljane. And precisely as homage to the Kalan and Tavčar family, we can proudly say that the jewel of cultural heritage, which lay dormant behind closed doors for so long, is a thing of the past!

Miljan Čadež, mayor of the Gorenja vas - Poljane municipality

THE VISOKO MANSION

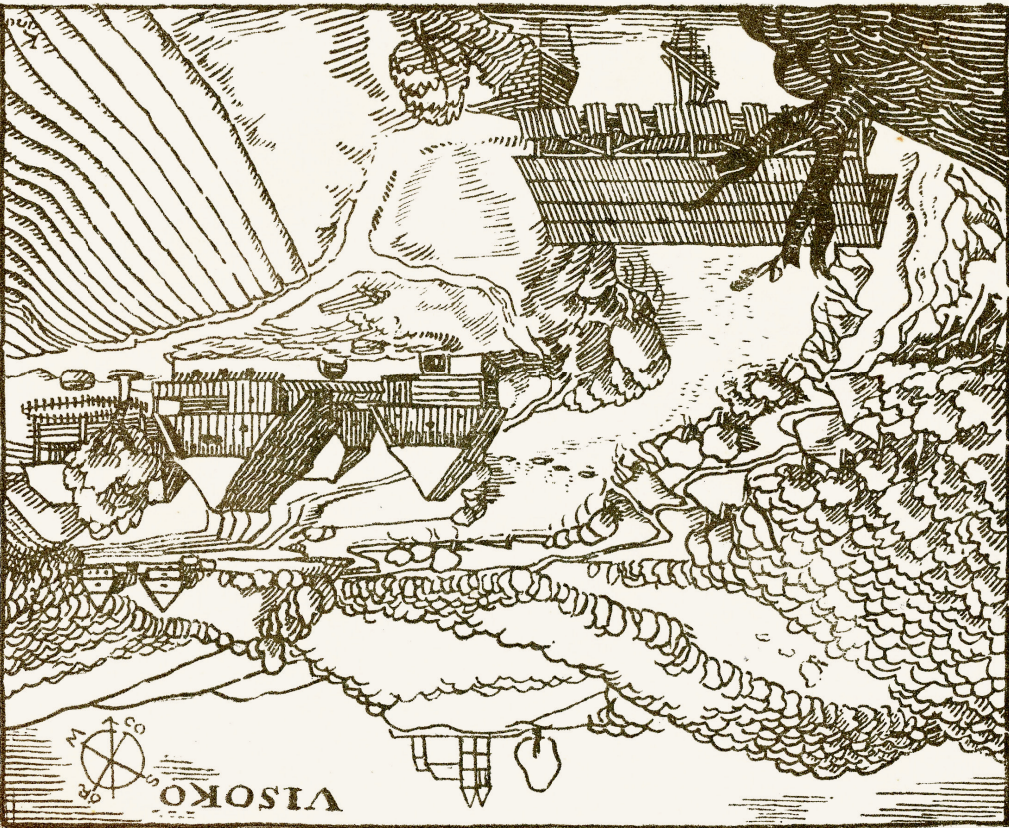


The Visoko homestead, which is often also called the Tavčar homestead, or the Tavčar and Kalan mansion, is one of the most important architectural monuments in Slovenia. It represents the pinnacle in the development of rural architecture and reflects the economic power and spiritual horizons of the richest of the peasant class in the second half of the 18th century in Slovenia. Its appearance today comes as a result of gradual formation from the first mention in the records of the 13th century, to the recent changes in the 20th century.

The architectural history of the Visoko homestead is displayed in the hallway, which has been undergoing restoration over the last few years. The exhibition presents how the homestead changed from the time of the Kalan family, who lived there from the mid-17th century till the 19th century, when the renovations brought its appearance much closer to that of a townhouse. In the last year, however, the Visoko homestead has been getting its old look back with the help of the Institute for Protection of Cultural Heritage.

Damjana Pedčec Teršeglav,
Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia – Ljubljana Regional Office

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE VISOKO HOMESTEAD



The Visoko Homestead, illustrated by Boris Kobe for The Visoko Chronicle by Tavčar, 1950.



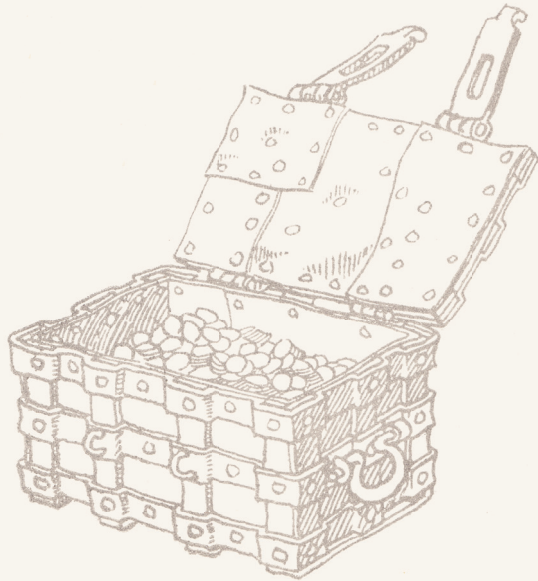


THE KALAN FAMILY

Biljana Ristić, Škofja Loka Museum

The exhibition presents the Kalan family, who managed Visoko from the mid-17th century up to almost the end of the 19th century. They were under the jurisdiction of a feudal lord and had to pay their duties every year as well as perform socage.

The masters of Visoko were more or less successful in managing the property. Filip Kalan (1628–1703) was considered a good and respected master. Martin Kalan (1666–1716) was not a particularly enterprising master. Jurij Kalan (1706–1777) was considered to be authoritative, stubborn and relentless. Štefan Kalan (1737–1796) was a forward-thinking and educated master. His successor Jožef Kalan (1783–1831) had no great interest for the estate. When Johan Kalan (1814–1874) became master, he had the buildings restored. He enjoyed a great reputation and respect. The estate began to collapse under his successor Janez Kalan (1842–1882). Since he and his wife had no children, the estate passed into the hands of his sister, Ana Kalan (1845–1893). Ana left the property to her son Anton who, however, had no interest in managing Visoko. He sold the property to dr. Ivan Tavčar in 1893. When Ana learnt of her son's actions she killed herself. This is how the job of managing Visoko by the Kalan family came to an end.



THE COLLECTION OF IVAN AND FRANJA TAVČAR

Biljana Ristić, Škofja Loka Museum

The exhibition is dedicated to the Tavčar couple. Ivan Tavčar (1851–1923) is presented as a writer, politician and mayor of Ljubljana, as well as a man who was attached to his native valley of Poljanska dolina. His wife Franja (1868–1938) is presented as a prominent national lady, the (co)founder of associations and a humanitarian worker. The Tavčar couple managed the Visoko homestead for 45 years. Both are buried in the family tomb not far from the Visoko homestead.



View of the Ivan and Franja Tavčar collection.
Photo Vito.

politics, history and law. He quickly became established in public life with his gift of speaking. His contemporaries describe him as a lively and candid speaker, who was proud and sharp in debate.

Tavčar as a writer

Ivan Tavčar was one of the most prominent writers of Slovenian realism. He began writing already as a secondary school pupil. Initially, he wrote poetry on the theme of love, but soon also discovered prose. He idealized the Slovenian farmer and undefiled nature in his works. Many of his narratives are placed in Poljanska dolina and the surrounding hills (*Among the Mountains, Vita vitae meae, The Castle Scribe, In the Zala Valley, Flowers in Autumn, The Visoko Chronicle, etc.*).

Tavčar as a person

Ivan Tavčar was born in Poljane, where he started his elementary schooling, continuing in Ljubljana. He attended secondary school in Ljubljana and Novo mesto. After that, he decided to study law at the University of Vienna. In 1884, he opened his own law firm in Ljubljana. He later married Franja Košenini, with whom he had five children. The couple were known for showing great support to young writers and artists. Tavčar was very knowledgeable in general affairs,

Tavčar as a politician

He also established himself as a politician, economist, honorary member and officer of associations and cities.

Tavčar was a liberal politician. He developed his beliefs at public appearances and speeches, and published his thoughts in newspaper articles. In 1911, he was elected as mayor of Ljubljana, and was ceremoniously appointed in January 1912. During the First World War, he went to great lengths to ensure the city could pursue a normal life despite wartime conditions.



The Lady and Gentleman of Visoko

Tavčar liked to return to Poljanska dolina, where he sought rest and inspiration for writing. In 1893, the Tavčar couple bought the Visoko homestead.

The surroundings at Visoko were arranged mirroring the models of German mansions. And in 1897, the first tennis court in Slovenia was set up here. The house was full of artworks by artists, painters and sculptors. The Tavčar family would receive important guests and cultural workers at Visoko, even Marija Karadordević, the Queen consort of Yugoslavia.

Portrait photograph of Ivan Tavčar, taken by Avgust Berthold. Kept by the National and University Library of Ljubljana.

THE VISOKO KITCHEN IN THE 19th CENTURY

Mojca Šifrer Bulovec, Škofja Loka Museum

The Visoko Kitchen collection is an authentically placed kitchen from the 19th century, kept by the last housekeeper of Visoko, Ana Kalan, m. Hafner, between 1887 and 1892. The collection knocks down the stereotypes about the technology of cooking and eating of the people in the Loka countryside, where they supposedly only prepared food in the black kitchen and just ate »porridge, 'sok' or 'močnik' (a watery dish, made from flour, cooked in water or milk), 'žganci' (mush or grits made from wheat, buckwheat or maize flour, or sometimes potatoes), sauerkraut or turnip«. This is testified by the restored and reconstructed kitchen with a kitchen hood, which remains preserved at Visoko, and the recipes presented in the exhibition. They are adapted from 'Ta dobra stara kuha' (The Good Old Cuisine), written by Ana's grandson Paul Hafner following his memories of her, and from 'Kubarske bukke' (The Cookery Books) written by Ana Kalan herself. Here described, for example, is the method of preparing 'French soup', cherry cake, 'Linzer' cake, cinnamon and ham 'noodles' as well as other dishes.

Ana Kalan, m. Hafner, the last housewife at Visoko, first learnt how to cook from her mother Barbara, before going to Ljubljana to the school of the Ursuline Sisters in 1857. After school, she spent another year learning in the diocese kitchen and adding to her store of knowledge with the help of German and Slovenian cookbooks.



View of the collection The Visoko Kitchen in the 19th Century.
Photo Vito.

At Visoko in the 19th century, food was cooked and baked in the bread oven and on the open fireplace in clay, cast iron or copper dishes. A smoke collector or kitchen hood is preserved above the fire hearth the place of a kitchen stove, where the smoke passed through the chimney coil into the smoke chamber, where meat was dried, and continued through the chimney outside. This type of kitchen was used in Slovenian cities in as early as the 17th century.



View of the fireplace and hearth of the kitchen stove.
Photo Vito.

Four to five meals were had per day, depending on the season and the farm work being performed. The house staff would sit at the large maple table in the hall or in the kitchen area at 6 in the morning together with the housekeeper. After their morning prayers, they would eat breakfast. The Kalan family ate in the 'chamber', which is today's wedding hall.

On weekdays, the food at Visoko was simple: milk, flour-based dishes, potatoes and vegetables. Meals were occasionally livened up with partially fresh, partially dried beef and pork. The menu on church holidays was set in advance at the Kalan household. On New Year, 'Prem soup' and roast chicken with seasoned 'mlinci', a type of flatbread,

was served, topped up by cooked plums and 'potica' for dessert. On the Three Kings' Day they ate beef stew, roast pork, baked potatoes and compote of dried apple segments. The menu on Palm Sunday was green spring soup, Visoko roast pork, baked sauerkraut, potato dumplings and fried prunes. Following custom, the meals at Easter included baked ham with horseradish and hard-boiled decorated eggs, fire-grilled meat, stewed carrots, boiled potatoes baked in the oven and 'potica'. The first course on Pentecost Sunday was warmed up 'yellow soup', and the meal continued with cooked beef with garlic horseradish, roasted breast of lamb and potatoes, spiced with caraway. 'Bobi' (doughnuts) were served at the end. On Fair Sunday, the day of St Volbenk, which falls on 31st October, hunger was kept at bay by bean soup, young pork baked in the oven served with kale, seasoned with cracklings and mashed potatoes. 'Bobi' (doughnuts) were served as a matter of course. On All Saints Day beef soup with homemade noodles was eaten, boiled beef with warm horseradish and potatoes with kale. Cooked chestnuts were served as dessert at the end.

THE TALES OF THE VISOKO HOMESTEAD

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