
INTERVIEW CHIAPPINI PINO - 5/03/2026

This was an institutional concern: worrying about the development of the territory, we were trying to find a way to unite the coast to the hinterland, because Montenero is a bit like Petacciato - the village is up, the coast is down - while in Termoli there is a substantial solution of continuity between the coast and the inhabited centre. Only Petacciato and Montenero live the same situation. Petacciato is much closer; Montenero, as the crow flies, is more or less 8 km away, but travelling along the provincial roads you get to 15 km, about 20 minutes from the sea. They are few, very few. Those who live in the city and are 20 minutes from the workplace jump for joy; there are people who instead have to get up two or three hours earlier in the morning to go to work there.

The master plan of the time, in a certain way, was affected by a proposal for industrialisation. We border with San Salvo on the one hand, and therefore with the industrial area of San Salvo — I will talk about this later when we talk about the purifier. San Salvo was an industrial area born well in advance of Montenero: San Salvo was a small village, but very small, and substantially thanks to industrialisation - with the settlement of Pilkington, which today is called differently, which produced glass for cars, and Magneti Marelli, which today I don't remember what it's called, which manufactured all the electric parts, then electric scooters, scooters for car windows and so on - thanks to this intense intense industrialisation, it had almost saturated the entire area of its territory, initially identified as an industrial and artisanal settlement area.

So, when we were making the master plan, we posed this problem: being on the border, at the time when San Salvo had saturated its areas, our area immediately adjacent to the San Salvo industry could represent a road of industrial development. There were two hypotheses on the balance: an industrial development, which would have been the consequence and the expansion of the San Salvo industrial zone, and a tourist development, which would have looked more at the coast.

Initially, these two ideas of development suffered a considerable influence, because the Municipality of Montenero received a very important proposal for an industrial settlement: there was talk of almost 100 hectares of land to be allocated to this productive settlement, 1,000 jobs. An industry that would have produced substantially equipment for the construction industry — forkcheves, Bobcat, this type of machinery — and was a very large Japanese company. The only thing they asked for in return was: "We are coming, but we need a lot of energy and we would like to create a turbogas plant to power our industry."

He understands well that putting such a power plant in a territory immediately overlooking the sea - because then the settlement of this large industry would have occupied the entire area beyond the railway, going towards Montenero, immediately adjacent to the San Salvo industrial area, where now those who go to San Salvo see, for example, Amazon - clearly

meant that tourism development would have gotten worse. Other than safeguarding the mouth, the maritime area and stuff like that. But 1,000 jobs were a significant counterpart, which could have changed the fate of a country. Also because, compared to the decrease in population, Montenero had even 9,000 inhabitants and now has 5,000, thanks in part to the non-EU presence that have come to settle among us - and let's face it all, the demographic increase cannot compensate for the departures. Most students who finish high school go out and hardly return. So an industrial development would probably have given many the opportunity to stay: staying means new houses, work, wealth for the whole community and for the whole municipality, becoming attractive as San Salvo and Termoli had been.

In the 70s, when I started this school — in '72 — there was practically nothing here. There was the little church of the Madonnina delle Grazie, the institute for surveyors on one side and accounting on the other; this central part absolutely did not exist. Everything that comes upstream was not there. Termoli has functioned as a pole of attraction for all neighbouring countries: on the side of Foggiano, Chieuti, Campomarino - they gravitated on Termoli from a school and then also work point of view - Portocannone, Ururi, San Martino in Pensilis, Larino, Guardialfiera, Casacalenda. Many of these people who found work at FIAT or in the industrial area moved here. The same thing happened, with a large preponderance of citizens who came from Abruzzo municipalities.

However, we had a good reserve, and I come to the speech of the purifier, because what did politics do at the time? The industry placed it in San Salvo, the purifier in the municipality of Montenero, and the counterpart was that many Montera residents would be favoured in being hired in the industries of the San Salvo area.

Now let's take a step back on the issue of this large industry and the turbogas power plant that they would have liked to settle in that territory. The industry that wanted to make this investment was Mitsubishi — a famous Japanese car brand, which was strong, but which also had other sectors, including this talk of bobcats and so on. We were competing - they wouldn't give it to us - with the port of Taranto, with Gioia Tauro and with another Spanish port at the entrance to Gibraltar, whose name I don't remember now. We won this challenge, so things seemed done, except that it happened, for the first time, that a Mitsubishi car had a problem. The house was reported and sentenced to replace the defective part free of charge on over 5 million cars. What happened? Contrary to what happens in Italy, where you never know whose responsibilities are, the CEO of Mitsubishi at the time resigned for the dishonour of this trouble - which I don't think was his fault, but which had brought enormous economic damage to the company. These economic damages automatically pushed away the hypothesis of the factory settling in our area.

Only the talk of turbogas remained. They said: "No, we offer economic compensation to dampen the environmental impact, and in any case a cable is enough: I connect and I can sell the energy everywhere, I don't necessarily have to have the factory below." Having said that, we started thinking. I was among those — not all, the majority agreed — who refused the pact. I said: without a factory you can't do anything about it, let's focus on tourism development. And so the master plan started with a strong tourist and territory protection emphasis.

If you have been on the beach, on the promenade, and look to the left towards San Salvo, you will see that that area is characterised by huge buildings, condominiums and so on. On our side, apart from that single restaurant-hotel that is right on the sea and some other construction, the rest are all houses that have taken into account a balanced development of the territory: all houses built from 2007-2009 onwards have a maximum height of 7.50 metres, so ground floor and a first floor. Clearly in the idea of those who had devised and implemented that plan there was a strong propensity for tourism.

Unfortunately, dreams belong to those who realise them. When you want to sell your dream to someone else, if they haven't lived it, if they haven't felt it, things go differently. And now I'll explain another critical issue of that area.

The people of Monteria, out of habit, did not go to the Costa Verde - where you were - because that area was a practically impractically impracticable stone. Almost no one went to the sea there: some fishermen with a boat and some small beaches, because in the meantime, starting from the 60s, there had been a strong maritime erosion that had eliminated almost 150 metres of beach. Take the beach in front of the Hotel Strand: from there put 350 metres more beach and see what is missing — the beach arrived beyond the rocks, beyond the barrier of the current port.

In addition, adequate direct connections with the maritime part of Montenero were missing at the time. The Monteria beach preferred the beach of Petacciato, because it was very well connected: one took the bus to Montenero, got off at Petacciato, crossed the state road and went directly to the beach. On the other side, there was no direct bus: you had to go to San Salvo, and from there there was no connection to Montenero. The real goal was therefore to convince the people of Montera to take advantage of their beach, and it was not an easy battle - it is not yet a battle won, because many go to Marina di Petacciato, San Salvo or even Vasto.

And when you are convinced of this, you manage to be attractive even for tourists outside. Unfortunately, this is not yet a *fait accompli*. Marina di Montenero is not yet a concrete job opportunity for the local kids. I, at your age, came to spend the seasons in the restaurants of Termoli, or I went to the Romagna Riviera. But if I had a restaurant or a hotel in Montenero Marina, I wouldn't go to Rimini — I was staying here, it was something else entirely. The guys from Montenero, 15 years after the start of the development of the coastal area, are still struggling to find work on the Costa Verde, because there is no direct connection. In the morning there should be a bus that leaves at seven from Montenero and arrives there at eight, so that the boys can work in the various campsites. There are opportunities, but they can't be exploited: those who don't have a driver's license can't go there, you can't even go there by bike or motorcycle.

I need this to introduce the discussion: what would change substantially if the mouth of the Trigno became a park? How are things now? I see that we still believe very little about this tourist opportunity in general, not to mention the one in particular related to having a marine park. If I only think of the Tremiti Islands Marine Park, which is the closest to us — people go there for diving, it's an incredible attraction — we have a marina that could act as a shuttlecock. Activities could be born, for example of people who rent boats for tours, divers, etc. There is real potential, but it is still not believed.

I must say that the current administration has done something: there is this bike path that is an incredible connection, which even starts from Trieste and reaches Capo Colonna. It could be a very important route to promote that stretch of the Molise coast, and if people go through it, the idea of creating a marine park automatically takes on a much higher price.

To tell you this, I make you another premise. I started in the municipal administration of Montenero in 1997 with a delegation to tourism. Since I had that authorisation I have moved, weapons and luggage, from Petacciato to Marina di Montenero - my wife used to tell me: "But here, which stone, how do I spread a towel?" But I accepted the challenge, because I believed in the development of the Montenero navy.

Today that area is known by many as Costa Verde, but the name Costa Verde is quite recent. The historical name of the gulf that goes from Vasto to Termoli was "Seno Bucano". Remember: seno evokes a curve, a conca; Bucano because, according to a historical tradition that does not yet find documentary or archeological confirmations, in this conca was the ancient Roman city of Buca. So Seno Bucano, referring to the ancient city of Buca. According to some, this city was located towards Termoli, according to others even after Vasto; still others place it more or less at the height of that rock tower that meets along the State road 16, at the height of the municipality of Petacciato. Someone says that that ancient town, Buca, was dragged into the sea - a bit like it is happening for example in certain coastal cities today - because of a landslide: if one from the state road looks towards Petacciato, you can see the ridge that has gone down.

I'll tell you about this thing that I recently discovered, because it gives me the opportunity to introduce a character who believed a lot in this area and its coastal development - the precursor of tourism, or a tourist idea, in Montenero Marina. He was a Romagna who managed tourist activities — some hotels, some campsites — in Emilia-Romagna. Then he had created a campsite in the Marche and was looking for other opportunities. He was also a hunter, and I imagine that he found himself arriving in this area, where he saw that it was swampy - that's why that area is called Padula, precisely because it was a swamp - but he fell in love with it, because it was green: there was this green immediately in front of the sea, these reeds, the colour that that territory had thanks to the dense marshy vegetation. He called it Costa Verde precisely for this reason. He fell in love with that territory and decided to make it a development point for his tourist activities.

He managed to transform what was a swamp into a liveable area as you saw it. How? The development of that area was concomitant with the industrial development of San Salvo: all the resulting land - when the land where the ponds were levelled and so on - he had it loaded, saying "this is my land, don't throw it away", and he levelled the whole area. That's why north of Trigno we have a fairly consolidated building area, while south of Trigno - going towards Termoli - you can see that the sea is eating a lot, and if you don't intervene with a cliff consolidation operation, sooner or later you'll get below the state road. The rocks currently present on the sea are intended to be reinforced and repositioned on the coastline to protect against storm surges.

In the south, on the other hand, this operation was not carried out: it remained substantially swampy. When there are storms, a lot of seawater invades the ground, which becomes

salty; salt water does not allow normal vegetation. It was an old swamp that was only partially reclaimed.

One of the other problems, when approving the zoning plan, we had when we discovered - we administrators did not know it - that part of the area of the Montenero marina was a SIC zone, or an Area of Community Interest. This means that there were important faunal presences in that area. We discovered the existence of this SIC area when the Region approved the master plan: the private owners of the land, who had obtained specific uses - here you make the house, here a hotel - had gone to present the projects, and the Region had said: "Attention, here there is a faunal area of Community importance."

I knew about SICs, but I didn't know there were any in Montenero. And in Montenero we even kept two: one in correlation with the craft area, where all the tailors are located, and the other in the sea area, north and south of the Trigno river.

There is a small problem that this discovery has brought out to us: the artisanal area of Montenero had started in the 70s-80s, with important settlements, industrial warehouses and so on. The SIC plan was made in the 1990s. What made us deduce this? That those who had made the SIC plan had not even gone to inspect the area, but had taken for granted the repetition of some situations, taking a look at the paper and drawing lines. We made an appeal and we won it. But the awareness of having this SIC area - with these particular birds, with the migratory fauna that stops in that area at certain times of the year - we acquired it in those years, because I repeat, we didn't go there, it was not known, we were not attracted to anything about what was there.

We had a lot of problems on this issue. The southern area, the one most densely affected by the bird stop, the nesting of the Frattino and so on, was more marshy than the northern one: so it remained as it is. The gentleman who reclaimed came much earlier, when it was really an impassable swamp.

There is a legend - perhaps I have widened too much - that speaks of the fact that Hannibal, when he went to fight the battle of Canne in Puglia, passed through Montenero di Bisaccia. In Montenero, in the nativity scene area, there is a source called Fonte Cassù, where the legend - documented by the historian of the village, unfortunately without documents - says that Hannibal passed by when he was heading to Cannes. Going down along the Adriatic coast, arrived at San Salvo, he found the swamp and could not continue - with elephants and horses it was impractical. Then he went back up, about 8-10 km further inland, where he found a ford that allowed him to cross the Trigno in October, when it was not yet in flood. He then got on what was the Tratturo Pescasseroli, which led to Puglia and that reached all the way into Montenero, and then descended towards Guglionesi and its surroundings. That swamp was almost insurmountable: to enhance that territory in any way it was necessary to intervene, but at the time there were still no regulations or the awareness of what that type of heritage could be.

Let's go back to the treatment of the purifier. The purifier is clearly a problem for the mouth of the Trigno, because the purified water is discharged there. What have we been able to detect in recent years? Apart from the problem of odours - which, I must say, with the commitment of the current mayor has been mitigated at certain times of the year - we have

only managed to obtain that in the summer periods of greater tourist presence the spillage of certain waste that requires the use of chemical sorbents is avoided. Because basically the smell that is felt down in the sea is almost sulphur: there is a chemical reaction that produces this smell, which also becomes unbreathable in some cases. In winter, either because of the different ventilation, or because there are no people, you feel less; but in summer, when the area is full, there have been several complaints.

The other thing is that there are often phenomena of spilling waste that does not pass through the purifier: more control would be needed. I'll tell you a personal experience: they told me that someone was spilling, so I went to the place at night. I found a truck that had put the pipe in the middle of the canal. I called the carabinieri, the police, the Forestry — when they arrived, the truck had already left. I filed a complaint, but it's useless, because when they do these things they already organise in advance, maybe with fake plates. Another time they were dumping directly into the purge wells. There are videos in which you can see the colour of the water in the downstream section of the purifier. In other situations the spill came directly from the purifier itself, because when the economic interests are very high, there are people who close their eyes, cover their mouths and sell the territory. I also do not rule out connections with environments related to waste traffic.

It's a bit like the speech of the Land of Fires: when we are used to talking about the plain towards Caserta, but under Campobasso it's the same thing - they buried everything - and it's no coincidence that the tumour incidence in that area is very high compared to other areas of Molise.

So what happens: if you want to build a marine park it's a beautiful idea, but you need to have the tools to manage it and make it grow. Because if I make the park and do promotion - "come to Molise" - and then people arrive and instead of natural beauties find floating waste and non-swimmable waters, it's not good. We don't have the Blue Flag — there are many conditions also related to services — but the fact of the purifier certainly doesn't help. When the ARPAM makes the withdrawals, you understand something strange: facts beyond the port gives certain values, made over here - towards the mouth - the values change substantially. If it were a fixed problem, one could say that it cannot be done otherwise; but if one day yes and one day no, in the morning yes and in the evening no, at night yes and the day no — this type of variability is typical of a discontinuous spill. I feel the night, because I live there: I have a house there, I invested in that area. In summer I move to the beach, but I also go there in winter, because if it's a nice day I stand there with the windows open and work — today it's enough to have an internet connection.

This area could be an excellent opportunity to recall a certain type of tourism linked to naturalism, the appreciation of biodiversity, and above all designed for those who live in big cities and are looking for 10, 15 days - a month, who can afford it - of life in close contact with nature. It is an offer that this Molise area can give. It's just that you have to pay a lot of attention and have a serious schedule.

Because, as for the SIC zone: if I take a pencil and say "this is a SIC zone", perfect - but then what are the activities allowed? For example, in the northern area, some of the land built after the port, when they discovered the SIC area, the first thing they did - guess what - was to go there with a tractor and ploughed everything, peace of the brothers, turtles and so

on. There is little left. The brothers are birds that always return to the same place: not everyone has returned, but those few who have returned - if you take a walk north after the harbour you will see the first large beach that seems almost dirty - that was left like that on purpose, because the Fratino goes there. Some parts are fenced because turtles go there. So what kind of protection can you guarantee when you make this park? It's an important thing.

On the issue of Molise with Abruzzo: no, absolutely not. I much prefer to stay small and manage things - as long as there are people capable of doing it, which is another type of problem - rather than queueing me in Abruzzo. It's a bit like those who say: I prefer to be the king in Rome rather than the emperor in Constantinople. The reunion of the two regions would not have brought any progress; on the contrary, it would have further damaged that area, because Abruzzo would have continued to favour its own settlements.

So it's complicated to talk about a park if you don't tackle certain broader situations. The Region, for example - just as it has the power to establish a park - also has the power to say to that plant: "You must only purify wastewater of anthropogenic origin, you must not treat waste with a high chemical impact." Because to treat certain waste you have to use even more chemical substances, and the result is that smell of sulphur that sometimes becomes unbreathable.

We come to another criticality. What would change if the mouth of the Trigno became a park? The Costa Verde is an incredible source of income for the municipality, because they are all second homes there. Making an average, there will be over 300-400 apartments that as second homes pay at least 600 euros per year of IMU each. It's a lot of money that should be invested in that area, where it comes from. Yet there is a lack of basic services, starting with transport.

When the Costa Verde Shopping Centre started, many people from Montenero wanted to work there. Many have succeeded, but if I count the people in Montenero who work there, they are really on the fingers of one hand — again for the connection. The problem is a regional competence, not municipal. And it also clashes with the interest of local merchants in the centre: "If I do a service that leads citizens to shop on the Costa Verde, the shops in the centre close." It's true. However, if you articulate the service on working hours, the problem does not arise: you don't leave the first bus at seven to go shopping, but to go to work. And a bus leaves from the Costa Verde at one or two, on normal public transport schedules. Indeed, perhaps the best thing would be to let buses to Termoli pass through that area as well, even if it would mean a few more minutes of travel. It would take a greater connection to be able to hypothesise any idea of development, marine park included - which in my opinion is absolutely valid - but then you have to give it substance with adequate service support.

On the issue of the beach and erosion: when I arrived in 1997, talking to the elderly people who have always lived there, they told me that putting a barrier parallel to the coast does not solve the problem, because erosion circulates. If, on the other hand, you put vertical barriers with respect to the beach, sand is recovered. And in fact, where this facilitation was made, for example at the Costa Verde campsite and the Maronda campsite - the one that is practically on the border with the river - a lot of beach has been recovered. The port itself is

like a transverse pinnacle that favours the regrowth of the beach to the north: the harbour barrier stopped the sand coming from San Salvo, and so the beach was rebuilt. On the other hand, instead, the coastal Defence positioned horizontally with respect to the coastline, to facilitate the entry of ships into the harbour, had such a deviation that the currents eat the entire beach. Maybe it was better to give her a different direction. But everyone is a little satisfied, once one and once another, and then you find yourself with these troubles. It's a visible thing.

Good. I'm counting on you. Know that I graduated from this school: when I entered they told me "let's go to the Vittoria room" - and Vittoria was my accounting teacher. I owe her a lot, not only for teaching the subject that later became my profession, but because - we were a very united class - she taught us to use the brain.

You have this opportunity for discussion, this proposal that comes from the project. Learn to use your head, to reflect on issues, and give me an idea of what could be a possible improvement in this area. Your project should go in the direction of stimulating those who today have the power to say yes. Do it not only by emphasising that realising a marine park is advantageous, but showing how the project must then be managed to really become a harbinger of opportunities. If the connection is not created, the opportunities are not taken. If one wants to guide this marine park, the structures must be created - for example of the observers - because the marine park is not only those who dive: there is all the talk of flora and fauna, nesting, migration.

And then there's the issue of waste: we need to develop a culture of environmental protection, because if there are people who go there to throw bags, rubble, refrigerators, washing machines in the canals and on the banks, it's not good. Some aquatic environments are very sensitive: if the conditions are not there, the fauna cannot survive. So think and try to make sure that this proposal — which is absolutely valid and can bring many benefits to tourism in this region — also has the antibodies to resist: in terms of services, education, control.

I had imagined this meeting - given my membership in the Council of the Order of Accountants of Termoli, and since your teacher is the wife of a colleague of mine - as the first of a series of orientation meetings, perhaps already starting from the third year, because when I attended accounting the third year was fundamental: if one engaged in the third, fourth and fifth it was almost a formality. I was talking about it in the Council, and I thought, also for everything that binds me to this school, to organise something similar. It was a pleasure. Goodbye.