

How to get there



From Sant Celoni cross the C-35 road going towards Sant Martí de Montnegre and the Can Coll, Boscos de Montnegre and Cal Batlle housing developments. Once you have gone past the motorway bridge you will find on the left a signpost marking the beginning of the route.

Recommendations



Information

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The Legend of Soler de Vilardell's sword

Once upon a time a fierce dragon dwelt around Sant Celoni, which spread fear throughout the region and many unfortunate passersby travelling along the royal road died in its claws.

At the foot of Montnegre lived Soler, the lord of the small Castle of Vilardell. One day a beggar knocked on his door begging for food and Soler went in to look for bread but when he came back the poor beggar was gone. In his place was a magnificent sword. Soler was perplexed and picked up the sword. He struck an old oak tree and split it in half. He then struck a stone which also was easily split in two by the sword. **The knight realised that this was a sword of virtue and that it had been sent to him from heaven with one purpose in mind: to slay the dragon.**

The next day he went to the church of Sant Martí de Pertegàs to commend himself to God and then he set off towards the Dragon rock, the beast's den, protected by his shining armour and the sword of virtue. **When he came face to face with the dragon, it took fright on seeing itself reflected in the armour and the shield that shined like mirrors. Soler de Vilardell was quick to act. He brandished his sword and cut off the dragon's head.**

Pleased with his feat, he went to look for the people of Sant Celoni, who were anxiously waiting for him at the Fortress gate. He then raised his sword dripping in blood and proclaimed:

"Arm of virtue,
knight's sword,
You have split the rock,
and the dragon also"

Soler de Vilardell made a mistake in giving more importance to his own arm than to the sword of virtue, which was what had really slain the dragon. The blood that gushed from the sword infected him and he died. The words he should have uttered were:

"Sword of virtue,
knight's arm,
you have split the rock,
and the dragon also"

The legend has a bitter sweet ending where both the protagonists die but it makes a beautiful allegation against pride and arrogance. Historically, the Vilardell sword, which was a sword of virtue, was very well known in medieval times. It ended up in the armoury of the Counts of Barcelona, as mentioned in the will and testament of King Peter the Ceremonious and was used to win various battles.

Sant Llorenç de Vilardell Church



Although the church is very old and according to some historians dates back to the pre-Romanesque period, there is no written documentation of the building until 1279. **It must have been built in the XIII century, in the popular Romanesque style and has undergone various renovations and additions over the centuries.** The pastoral visits of 1379 and 1425 ordered repairs to be made on the roof. Works were also commissioned in 1508 and 1511. The current rectory was built in the XVII century along with the church's beautiful portico.

The interior consists of a single rectangular nave divided into three sections covered by a slightly pointed barrel vault. In front of the facade is a spacious portico with a gable roof held up by three pillars. Above the facade stands the belfry with two half pointed arches for the bells.

On one side is the very simple rectory and the cemetery is located on the other side. The church vault was in a bad state and was restored in 2010.



Ajuntament de
Sant Celoni

Vilardell and the Dragon Rock

Testimonials of
the Soler legend



This route takes you to *La Roca del Drac*, a quartz deposit which, according to the Soler de Vilardell legend, was once the den of the ferocious dragon, and then to Sant Llorenç de Vilardell church. The walk enables you to discover the different contrasts of the rural, urban and forest landscapes as well as to find the footprints of our past



Soler de Vilardell's triumphant entry into Sant Celoni Fort after slaying the dragon. A coloured engraving by Marià Vigas, circa 1965

The path runs parallel to the AP-7 motorway for 150m until you get to the Molí d'en Coll crossroad. It then follows along the foot of the mountain and continues leaving behind the Tordera river bed on your left. Although the river is crossed by the AP-7 it still retains the charm of domesticated landscapes: Vegetable plots, planted fields, greenhouses, farm houses...

You will very soon come to the Molí d'en Coll and reach the shade of an age old oak tree. Here you must take the elevated path that runs around this plain, which offers you good views of a different side of the Montseny, looking on to Valle de Santa Fe, Morou hill and even Montsoriu hill. The colours and textures of the landscape help you to discern what you see: Crops, pinewoods, Holm oak woods and beech forests higher up on the Montaña de Arriba...

You will then come across Sant Jordi fountain on your left, surrounded by plane trees and black locust trees. To get to the Roca del Dragón follow the path alongside the garden center fence, which once again will take you down close to the motorway.

If you want to visit the Iglesia de Sant Llorenç de Vilardell you must turn back towards the Fuente de Sant Jordi and go up the forest path up to the careening. Then follow the signs that mark out a path behind the houses in the Boscos del Montnegre housing development until you reach the street that leads to the church.

Before you get there you will come across a surprising tree: the "surolí de Vilardell", a hybrid cross between an acorn and a Holm oak tree which is sporadically found in some regions where these two species grow side by side.

Molí d'en Coll

In 1553 Joan Coll, a local of Vilardell, was granted permission by the general mayor of Catalonia to build a flour mill with two millstones. **This mill constituted a fundamental element in the economy of the Vilardell district.** The canal, that brought the water needed to operate the mill, ran from a pond located at the foot of Bocs bridge and followed alongside the right bank of the Tordera river. But it disappeared when the motorway was built. The mill continued operating after the civil war until it finally closed down in 1954. Most of the building of the mill is still standing and has been restored by the owners.

Molí d'en Coll Oak tree

This is one of the largest oak trees in Sant Celoni municipality and it would have been even bigger had not one of its main branches been broken. It fell during the period when the mill had been abandoned, after the Civil War. Over the years, reeds piled onto its wounds and this led to serious rotting and holes in the wood made by white oak borer beetles.



Quercus pubescens L.
Downy oak
Altitude 115 m

Size (year 2004)
Height: 20 m
Trunk perimeter: 3.7 m
Bow diameter: 23 m



Roca del Drac

The Dragon rock or cave is a large quartz outcrop that has been left standing alone due to the effect of erosion from the river. A hackberry has taken root on it. **The rock has a hole in the middle that according to tradition used to be the dragon's den.** The white colour of the rock and the fact that it stands out amidst the surrounding plain with fields of crops, near the royal road, must have awakened people's fantasies and it was soon made out to be the hiding place of a beast.

