

Vertshusen Region

This region is bounded by mountains to the west, north and south, with passes at the north-east leading to the town of Ensom; and the south-east, leading to the Skorra region. The road west goes to Heimdal town, and beyond, to the great city of Dunor. The whole area is dominated by the small city of Vertshusen (population ~7,000) whose main industries are fine quality alcohol and dairy products, and logging of very fine woods, including the famed red hickory, so favoured by mages for their wands and staffs. The region is ruled by a theocracy headed by Matriarch Putreska Trumpinov, spiritual head of the Church dedicated to the Goddess Frigga.

Following are the notable sites in the region:

Elsinova Forest: This mixed deciduous/coniferous land is inhabited by reclusive, somewhat xenophobic woodelves. Trespassers definitely forbidden, and orcs are slain on the spot.

Ribentrop Canyon: This blight at the edge of the forest came about several decades ago with a magic blast from an elven sorcerer-chieftain, Sarin, to hold off a full-scale invasion from allied goblins and orcs, with the help of a band of greedy foresters. The invaders were all slain, but much of the forest was laid waste, and the sorcerer was severely incapacitated – see below

Ruined town of Varisov: The elves sought revenge for the invasion, and the loss of their sorcerous chieftain by razing the timber town of Varisov to the ground. Also destroyed were logging camps along the Karimov River

Hamlet of Asinov: This small settlement remains very cautious in its dealings with the elves, and almost their only industry is the ferry over the Karimov River and the Jerin to Vertshusen.

Sarin Tower: This lonely tower is now the home to the severely disabled, and very bitter, sorcerer, Sarin the Blue. Only the foolhardy dare come close, and the land around is reputedly full of traps.

Drinshov Village: Another farming village with some logging – the elves in this forest keep a close eye on activities, and enforce a sustainable industry – the villages are too intimidated by the events in Asinov to do other than comply.

Goloshin Hills: These barren hills are fairly inhospitable, and broken by steep slopes and rocky gullies. Only wild animals, big and small, live here – but you never know!

Mt Falinoski: On the southern slopes live some of the most vicious orcs in the whole Dunor valley, the Snake-Tooth Clan. They were driven here by the vengeful woodelves of Elsinova Forest, but are nursing evil plans for a strike against their foes. Their caves lead to deeper subterranean realms.

Mt Sarolin: A forbidding barrier preventing any easy egress to the south, reportedly home of aggressive giant eagles, and even rumours of a dragon – never confirmed, of course.

Mt Borodin: Another orc-ridden stronghold, but of a more neighbourly ilk, the Clan of the Cave Wolves, even trading stone and some metals with Vertshusen merchants. Raids are not unheard of, but not that common. Perhaps those critters can be civilized after all. Isn't capitalism great!

Lake Yeltsov: Created by the dam at Vertshusen, this lake is teeming with fish, and a giant water monster has been sighted by a few unreliable drunks – the Loch Yeltsov Monster! To the south is a ford used by pilgrims on their way to the icy lands of

Skorra. And a ruined keep stands witness to an historic treaty between Vertshusen and the Cave Wolf orcs after a bloody battle and siege of the keep. The wise merchants saw more profit in trading with their traditional enemies, rather than perpetual war; and so did the orcs, who were often preyed upon by their cousins, the Snake-Teeths.

River Karimov: A strongly flowing river, but not navigable because of rapids along its length.

Jenin River: This river is navigable by small ships to the wharves of Vertshusen. The city has cannily dammed the river beyond the city to make this the last port of call, and so increasing its wealth at the expense of any potential settlement further upstream.

Molidov Stream: navigable by smaller boats up stream to supply the small logging communities here. Many logs are also floated down the Jenin river from the forests to the north, where they are taken from the river near the weir and used in the thriving timber trade in Vertshusen.