
CROATIA
Full of Life

Croatia
Full of Life!

Photographed & Written by Dimitry Loiseau



Croatia is the Adriatic's shining star, yet, is unlike any other European destination. The country's mix of old world European charm, easy Mediterranean lifestyle, stunning 3,625 miles of coastline dotted by more than 1,000 islands, islets and reefs, fascinating history, rich culture, delectable cuisine and natural beauty, not to mention ten awe-inspiring UNESCO World Heritage sites and eight magnificent National Parks — it is no wonder that Croatia captured my heart during my visit. With so much to see, it can seem overwhelming. Nonetheless, I will guide you through some of the most fascinating locations, food and wine options and hopefully, plenty more reasons to make your way to Croatia!



When contemplating a true holiday or vacation, what typically comes to mind? If you're like me, I look for a combination of relaxation, fun activities and sightseeing tours, all for amazing memories. If you haven't already done so, be sure to place Croatia on your bucket list, as in now!

From the moment you touch down, you realize that ***Croatia is Full of Life!*** And, really it's no exaggeration. Whether it's the friendly nature of the locals, the beautiful landscape and scenery, as well as the variety of fresh foods and delicious wines, you're instantly immersed in another world. Croatia is not much of a secret to those that have already discovered this small country. However, I think it's safe to say, that no matter how often you visit, there are secret gems waiting to surprise you.

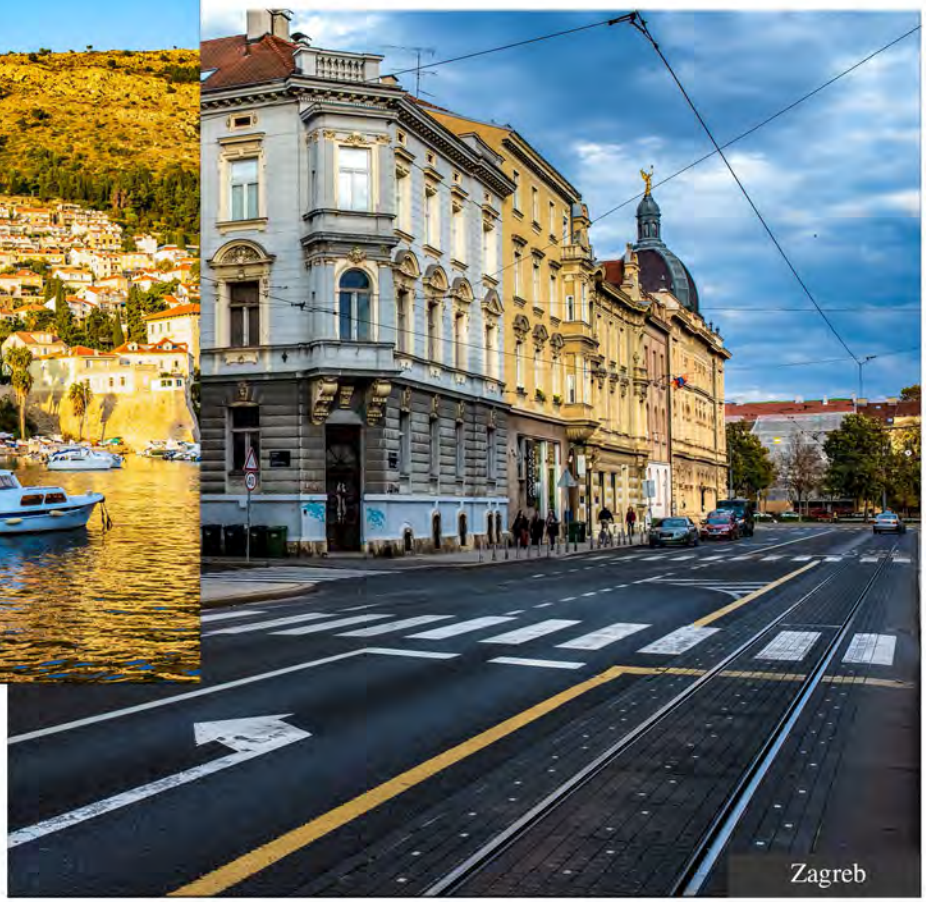
There's so much to discover in Croatia, but for the purpose of this article, we'll focus on three distinct areas: Dubrovnik, Hvar, and Zagreb. These are three different cities, with different vibes and tempo, and yet, the qualities that define Croatia is evident in all three.



Hvar



Dubrovnik



Zagreb



Onofrio Fountain

Dubrovnik is an enchanting city. It's no surprise that HBO used this quaint location to film *Game of Thrones*. Oh yes, if you're a fan of *GoT*, you'll instantly feel at home. What makes Dubrovnik so captivating is how the old world, the old city has been maintained, for so long.

When you enter into the city walls, you're met by Onofrio's Fountain, built in 1438. The Italian architect Onofrio, had the seemingly insurmountable task of bringing water to the city. And today, this fountain continues to serve as proof of a job well done. Can you drink from it? Absolutely! It's pretty normal to see people from all walks of life either use a cup or their hands and even tilt their heads, to quench their thirst.

As you walk through the cobblestone streets, one of the most fascinating things about this city, is how easily you can get lost sightseeing. From the narrow alleys behind Stradun (the main street), to the many steep flights of stairs that would put the most in-shape person to shame, there's no shortage of options in the old city. Inside the city walls appears to be old world, and technically, it is. Nonetheless, the options for dining and wines seem endless. Yet, the old city operates much like a new city, which includes banks, churches and market space for local vendors.

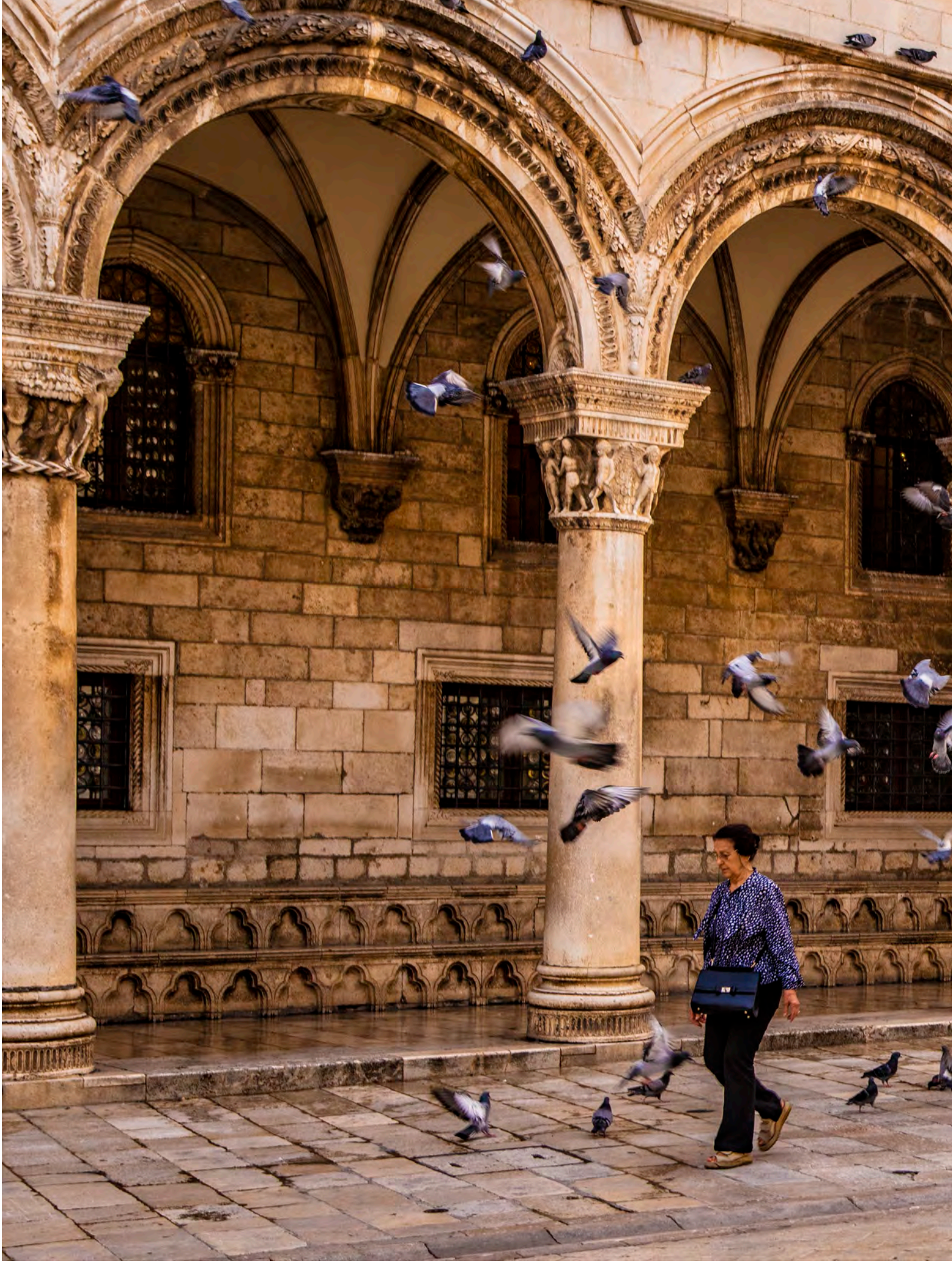


Pile Gate





The Old City, Dubrovnik





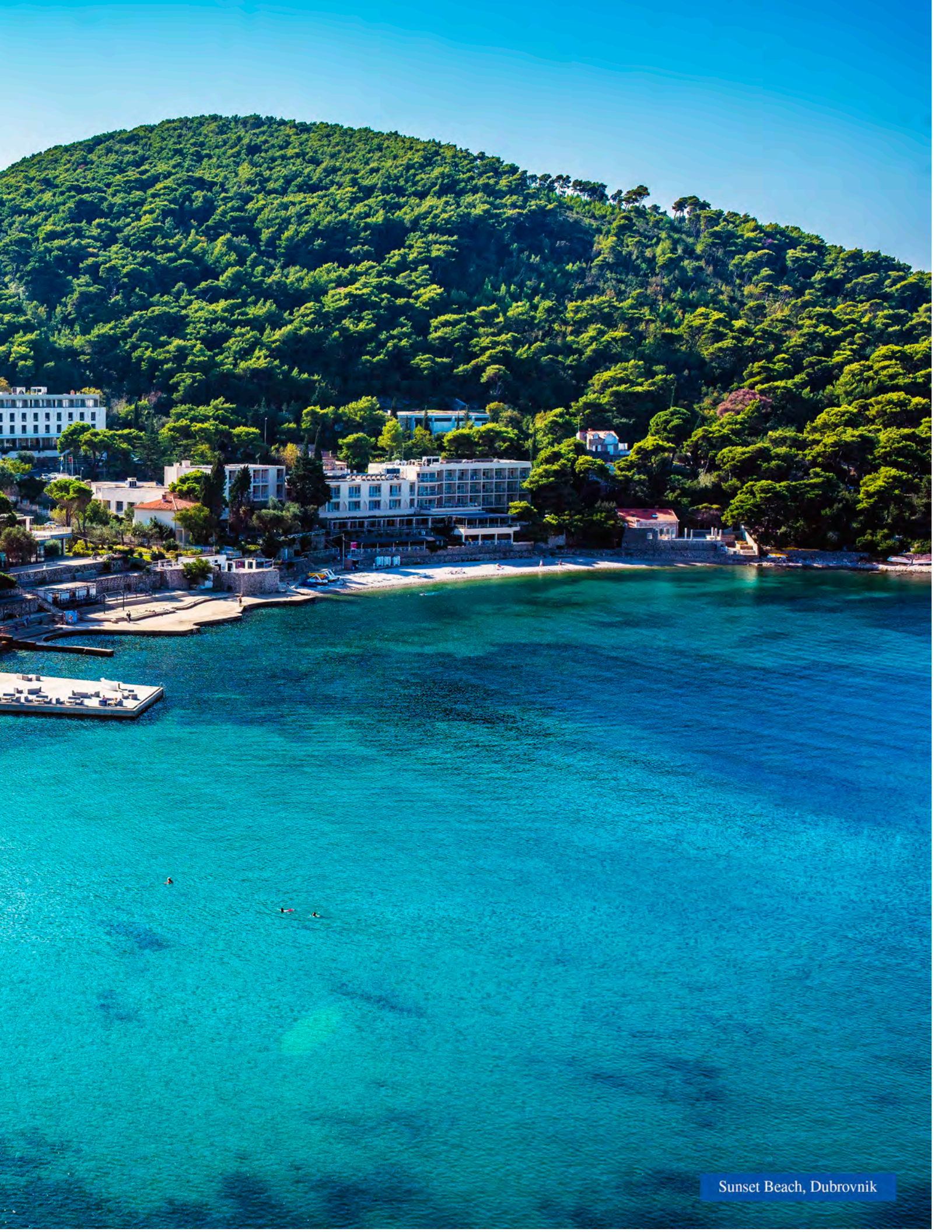
Cultural History Museum, Dubrovnik





Old Port, Dubrovnik





Sunset Beach, Dubrovnik

Dubrovnik is known as the Pearl of the Adriatic. It has become a year-round destination thanks to its geographical location and mild climate. Visitors fall in love with its natural beauty, historic treasures, genuine hospitality, and engaging festivals through out the year, such as the Winter Festival and Advent, Carnival and the Summer Festival.



GOOD FOOD & WINE FESTIVAL

One of the things that makes Dubrovnik unique is its annual *Good Food & Wine Festival*. It's pretty self-explanatory, but allow me to dive in and break it down for you. When you check the map and see that Dubrovnik is not much more than a stone's throw away from Italy, all of this will start to make sense. The *Good Food Festival* takes place in the Fall, usually in October. This is typically a week long event where the best chefs, local eateries and wine houses put their best foot forward. And, let me tell you, they do not disappoint.







Dubrovnik Long Table





The highlight of the festival is the famous Dubrovnik Table. The reason that this table is so famous, is namely because of its length. This table, full of food, sweets and wine, is 200 meters long. And for my American friends, that's just over the length of 2 football fields! Impressive? You better believe it. Local hotels, restaurants, bakeries, and vineyards all participate to give you a taste, literally, of what they have to offer. Of course, you have to buy a ticket and stand in line. But, once they cut the ropes and the public gets the green light, it's every person for themselves, in a fun way. My suggestion is that you get a team of friends, even if you don't know them and every person is responsible for extracting something from the table. Now, this may take a little preparation, but trust me, it works. That means, one person gets some appetizers, another on a few entree items, someone else on dessert, and don't forget to have your most stable set of hands to bring back the wine. My team and I were pretty successful and enjoyed a nice picnic of sorts at Onofrio Fountain. It's well worth the efforts!

Besides the impressive culinary display on this massive table, what stood out to me was the cause behind this event. The proceeds raised from the Dubrovnik Table benefits the Down Syndrome Association of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County and the Association of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities Rina Masera. That being said, if you're in the position to do so, purchase an extra ticket, even if you don't use it. You can be sure that your efforts are being well spent and is going to a worthwhile cause.


SUNSET
BEACH



Croatia Full of Michelin Stars

In 2018, 360º situated in Dubrovnik along with Pelegrini in Šibenik earned their first Michelin Star, joining Rovinj's Monte who earned their star in 2017. In March of 2019, Croatia gastronomy continues to gain prominence as two restaurants are added to this prestigious list: Noel in Zagreb and Draga di Lovrana in Lovran each received a Michelin star. Now, let's get into the Dubrovnik based restaurants that will be worth your while during your visit.

MARCO POLO RESTAURANT

While there are plenty to choose from, here are the ones we personally experienced and recommend. First up is Marco Polo. This restaurant is located in the old city. It's an intimate setting even during the daytime. The downstairs dining seats maybe 40 people max, with a small kitchen just a room over and I hear that the owner lives upstairs. It doesn't get more intimate than that. On the menu: Oysters on Ice, Salted Anchovies and Lemon Marinated Anchovies, Croatian Cheese and Dalmatian Smoked Ham on a slice of warm bread. The perfect match on the wine list is the Sauvignon Blanc from the Danube Region in Central Croatia.



RESTAURANT KOPUN

This restaurant is located just at top of the Dubrovnik's *"Spanish Steps"* in the old city, in a piazza across from St. Ignatius church and a Jesuit school. With these coordinates, you certainly can't miss it. On the menu is the Octopus Salad, which is a thing in Croatia. Besides the octopus, some of the other ingredients include chopped onions, garlic, salt, pepper, capers, olives and dressed in local olive oil. Oh, it's so good. Other dishes to try are the Beef Pasta and Black Risotto. There's plenty of wine to select from. For tastings, I went with the Malvasia Dubrovačka white wine by Tezoro. And for those with a leaning towards a red, try the Merlot by Negromant.



TAVULIN BISTRO

It's easy to see why this restaurant is in the Michelin Guide, providing a mix of Croatian dishes with a flair of the Mediterranean, all for an affordable price. A good idea for lunch are the Fresh Oysters, Dalmatian Smoked Ham, and Beef Carpaccio. That's just the appetizers. The portions are small enough to keep you going for an afternoon break or wet your appetite for one of the entrées. If you're the latter, put your order in for the Grilled Squid or Tuna Steak. My recommendations for the wines are the Maraština, which is an indigenous white grape and the Plavac, a primary red grape, both grown along the Dalmatian coast and are great local wines that compliment these menu options.



LUCIN KANTUN

You wouldn't be on true holiday if you didn't have dessert in the middle of day! Parents, don't feel bad, it's part of the culture. The Lucin Kantun is located in one of the corridors in the old city, right before you get to steps that will give you a run for your money. Come to think of it, maybe those steps are there to help burn off all this food. But back to this delicious treat, although it's a tapas bar, they do serve some known Croatian dishes and Mediterranean options. The desserts are to die for. If you have a "cheat day" from your normal diet, spend it here. Ask for the chocolate soufflé and cheesecake. At that point, you might as well go all in and top it off with the dessert wines. As I mentioned, those tall city stairs will get you back in shape, or you could be taking a nap halfway through the climb. Either way, it would have been well worth it.





CHEF RICARDO LUQUE

What a treat to have been entertained by Chef Ricardo. And, we're not just talking about the dining. Ricardo is also a musician. As the lead singer, he and his band Cubismo gave us a reason to party. The eventful evening took place at the Kantenari restaurant, located on Sunset Beach with a gorgeous view of Uvala Bay. If you can imagine overlooking gorgeous sunsets, boats passing by and people walking on the beach, you'd want to make your reservation right away. As the sunset started to fade and evening settled, we walked into the restaurant to meet the charismatic Chef Ricardo. Ricardo is originally from Venezuela and came to Croatia for a holiday in the late 90s. He, like most, was captivated by the Dalmatian coast and decided to stay. For the evening, we enjoyed a Latin American dinner, musical entertainment and of course, dancing! Here are the details from this wonderful dining experience.



Appetizer: AREPITAS CON QUESO (Small Arepas with cheese, pre-cooked white corn flour, mozzarella and salted cheese)

Soup: PISCA ANDINA (Soup from the Andes with chicken, potatoes, cilantro, milk, cheese)

Entree: ASADO NEGRO (National dish that includes beef round steak, manioc, plantain, tricolor salad with beets, carrots & potatoes, rice and guasacaca sauce)

Dessert: DULCE DE ÑAME CON SARRAPIA (Sweet yam dessert with tonka bean)

The wine menu was pretty endless and complete. These included Sparkling, White, Red, Rosé and Sweet Wines.











Chef Ricardo Luque

CHEF DINO GALVAGNO

I met Chef Dino at the Amfora Restaurant located across from Sunset Beach in Dubrovnik. Dino, like most chefs, was in the zone when I stepped into the kitchen to see him work. What stood out to me was how personable he was, great sense of humor, but so detailed with every single facet of preparing what we were going to embark on. The 5-course dinner was nothing short of amazing, coupled with some musical entertainment. Here are the details for dining.


Chef Dino Galvagno

1st Course

- *Mussel water slurped with mussels, oysters, crystallized green apples (vacuum infused with lemon juice), quick pickled shallots and green bitter orange zest and juice*
- *Sprouted rye & holm oak acorn sour dough focaccia with wild rocket butter and raw mahi mahi*

2nd Course

- *Heirloom corn masa-polenta (nixtamalized corn) with moray brodetto, goat ricotta cream with Neretva Valley tangerine and chilies caviar*

3rd Course

- *Braised grey mullet in it's smoked jus, strawberry tree fruit coulis, cilantro salad and olive oil mash potato*

4th Course

- *Roast black Slavonian pig shoulder with celeriac millefeuille, glazed shallot and sautéed kale*

5th Course

- *Walnut curdled cream with pumpkin cake and autumn fruit skins*









Jo Ahearne

The evening included tastings of wine provided by Jo Ahearne. Jo is a English-born Master of Wine. She started her winery in Hvar, Croatia a few years ago. She produces four different wines: Rosina (a rosé), two whites, Pošip (a white), Wild Skins (a blended maceration wine); and South Side (a barrique-aged Plavac Mali). The combination of Chef Dino and Jo Ahearne was definitely one to remember.

Welcome to Hvar!

Hvar, the Dalmatian hotspot has come a long way from its roots as a celebrity resort when it was established in 1868 when the Hvar Health Society was founded. Since then, the island just wrapped up celebrating its 150th anniversary of organized tourism in 2018. This island is one of the trendiest in the country, a magnet for sun and celebrity-seekers, alike. It's no wonder why A-list celebrities like Beyoncé, Tom Cruise, Bono and Prince Harry have all found reasons to fall in love with the island. However, the destination also offers astonishing history and culture, with four UNESCO heritages and rich viniculture with the first vines planted here by the Greeks more than 2,200 years ago, on Stari Grad Plain – a UNESCO cultural heritage. The ultimate beach destination, Hvar can boast the most amount of sun of any island in Europe, and great food, wine and nightlife scene year round.




HVAR 1580

The island of Hvar is truly breathtaking! From Dubrovnik, you can get there by catching a flight or a ferry. I opted to take the catamaran (ferry). Although it takes a little bit longer, about 3 hours, the views along the way are well worth the trip. Plus, you avoid the pains of airport security and lines. No doubt, you'll enjoy the smooth ride and the opportunity to see other smaller islands en route, like Korcula, the birthplace of Marco Polo and Brač, home to one of the country's most famous beaches, Zlatni Rat.



Port of Hvar

When you first come into the port, you immediately notice the small town ambiance. From the main cafe, which locals call appropriately call *"The Living Room,"* to the small mom and pop shops, to the dessert bars, it's a town where you instantly feel at ease. Along the waterway are restaurants and dive bars for every aesthetic, outdoor patios and seating lounges, all with a view of the yachts coming and leaving the bay.



The Living Room



Kroz Burak

stories

CROATIAN UNIQUE HOTELS

YOU ARE THE WRITER

Richer for a new experience.



stories is the new association of unique luxury hotels in Croatia that encompasses 17 carefully selected hotels. Each hotel in the Stories Association offers unique experiences worth sharing.

P — MARTINIS MARCHI

storiescroatia.com





Adriana Hvar Spa Hotel


Adriana
hvar spa hotel
Sensori spa
Adriana
hvar spa hotel

Croatia's Unique Luxury Brand

One of the highlights of this trip was staying at the Adriana Hvar Spa Hotel. The Adriana, is part of the Stories group, an association of unique luxury hotels in Croatia. The group has 17 uber luxury properties located throughout Croatia, that have been carefully curated for their unique heritage, immaculate design, unrivaled personalized service and architectural heritage. These hotels are located in city palaces, hidden in the rocks, above the sea, or in olive groves of feudal manors. Each property has its own unique luxury offering woven into their foundations and architecture, and each of them has a unique *story* to tell. For more information on Stories, please visit **www.storiescroatia.com**



stories

CROATIAN UNIQUE HOTELS







The Adriana Hvar Spa Hotel was no different. The majority of the rooms have a view of the riva, or marina, of Hvar. The hotel was remodeled prior to my stay and what a treat that was. One of the most relaxing features of the hotel was the spa facilities. The are four different types of saunas, massage services, an indoor pool and a gym. The Top Bar and Val Marina restaurant are a perfect touch for hanging with friends and enjoying some cocktails while enjoying panoramic views of the town and marina.





The Top Bar






BOAT LINE - HVAR - ISLANDS







The island of Hvar is rich with natural beauty and lots of culture. While you're there, I recommend that you get a look inside the 400-year-old public theatre, which was close to completing renovations while I was there.

Hvar recently celebrated 150 years of tourism in 2018. And the small town was packed with hoteliers and others in the hospitality industry with amazing plans coming soon to the island. If you have the chance, make your way to Fort Spanjola, which is located at the top of the city. On the way up, you'll notice the monastery where Benedictine sisters made lace from the agave plant for centuries.

The efforts from these nuns were so special, that today it is protected by UNESCO. Some of the pieces can be found in the Vatican and serve as a representation of Hvar.







Fort Spanjola





Aron Scwarz

CORAL SHOP

Just across the marina from the Adriana Hvar Spa Hotel, next to the Nonica Caffe Bar, you'll find some beautiful gems, known as the Coral Shop. The shop is owned by Aaron Scwarz, a very laid back, matter of fact type of guy.

He and his wife Lukrecija came up with the concept of sourcing and selling the corals. Aaron, a businessman and Lukrecija having a background in fashion design teamed up to create this beautiful shop that should not be missed. The corals are beautiful, precious, timeless and very much en vogue.

His pieces, although mostly eclectic, ranges from simple to the very complicated. Even so, each piece looks like it was custom made for every client. And trust me, you'll end up wanting to buy all of them. It's the perfect accessory to have on you while you're on the island.

When it comes to sight seeing, there's plenty to choose from. However, here are the ones I personally experienced and recommend. Stari Grad is one of the oldest towns in all of Europe. The town is well over 2,000 years old and is still lined with vineyards and produces olive trees and lavender. Throughout history, the Greeks, Romans, Venetians, Turks and Astro-Hungarian empire all occupied this town at some point. It's easy to see some of their influences still existing in the area. Even though the town is not that large, you can still ride bikes, take hikes, or take a stroll to explore the character of Stari Grad and leave with memories. Do not miss UNESCO protected site, Stari Grad Plain, where the Greeks settled and established agricultural roots in the 4th century B.C.



STARI GRAD

Jelsa is a port town on Hvar island. You can take part in lots of outdoor activities like windsurfing, paddle boarding and other water sports. But I really enjoyed seeing the normal way of life in this town. Small markets, apartments with clothes air drying on the line and people sitting outside the coffee shops just enjoying life. You can also take a walk through St. Ivan's Square, which is a small plaza of sorts surrounded by a church with a fortress. Old world indeed!

JELSA



This part of town is more historical but equally fascinating. Malo Grablje is an abandoned part of Hvar island. The last person that lived there, left in the 1962. Prior to them leaving, the village was situated perfectly nestled in the mountains and were undetectable to pirates who were on the coast of nearby Milna. So, why did they leave and abandon the village? In the late 19th century the phylloxera epidemic destroyed most of the vineyards for wine grapes. And, because most of the people who lived in Malo Grablje were farmers, there was nothing for them to harvest. This was one of the worst periods for vineyards in the area. As a result, many who left the island of Hvar, moved to California because of the similarity in climate to produce wine. Today, you can find quite a few winemakers in Napa Valley with roots in Hvar, Croatia.



MALO GRABLJE

Technically, the town is still abandoned. And, like with anything else, there's always an exception to the rule. There's a restaurant, *Stori Komin*, in that abandoned village is owned and operated by a man named Tudor. All the owners of the homes left behind share the same name, Tudor. There's no electricity, no running water, and yet it's been said that this is one of the most authentic Croatian restaurants on the island.

STORI KOMIN



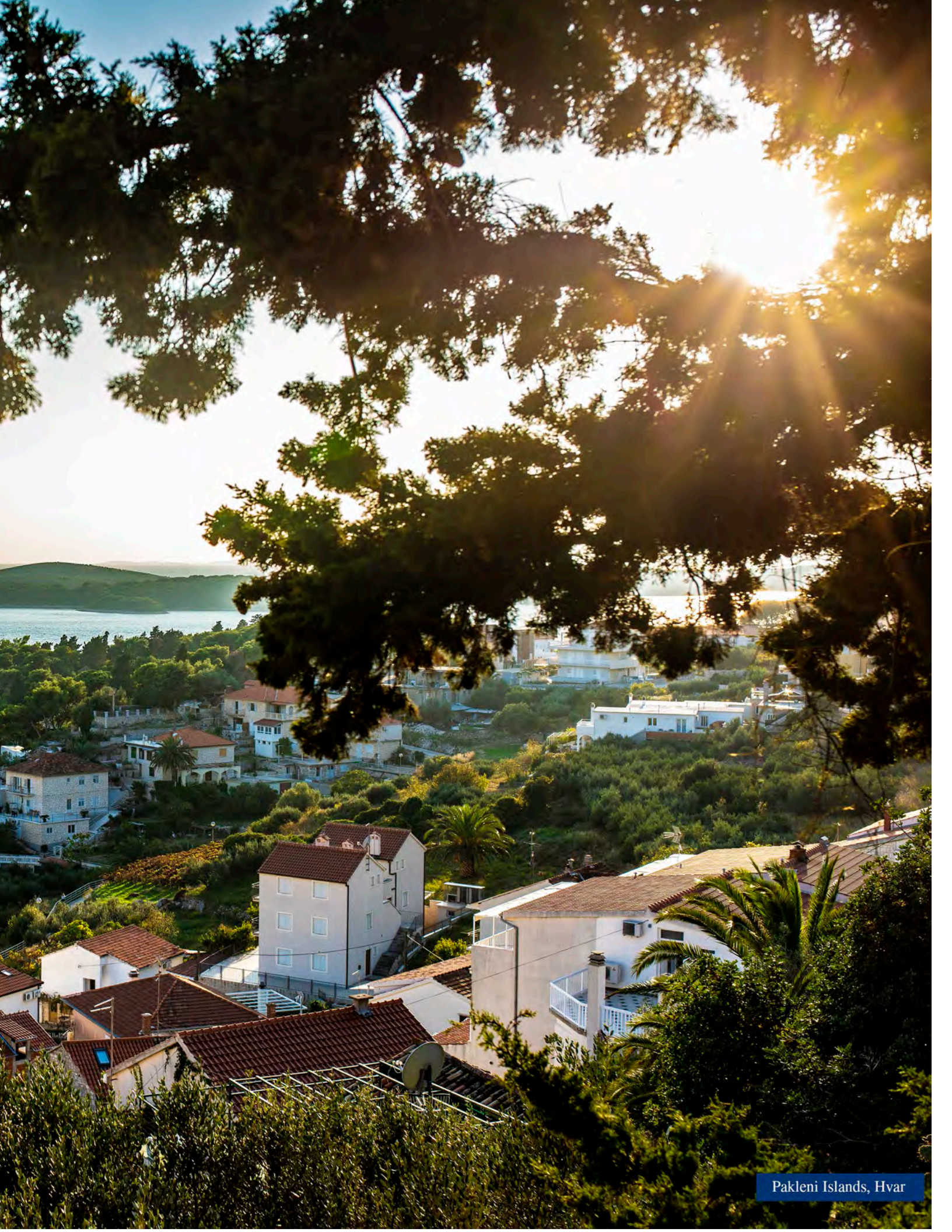
DUBOVICA BEACH

Listed as one of the best beaches on Hvar island, Dubovica is well worth the drive. It's located off the main road between the old town and Stari Grad. When you get down the hill and come out of the tunnel, you'll have to park your car and take a little hike down the path to one of the most beautiful beaches on the island. You can also access this beach by water taxi and if you really have it like that, you can charter your own private yacht. This little cove is peaceful and offers enough tranquility to sooth your mind. An added bonus to your hard work on the hike is being met by a coffee shop and cocktail bar. The water is crystal clear, and refreshing. The stone houses on the coast line is so picturesque, it will make you feel like you're on an exotic movie set.









Pakleni Islands, Hvar


Mihanovićeva
ULICA

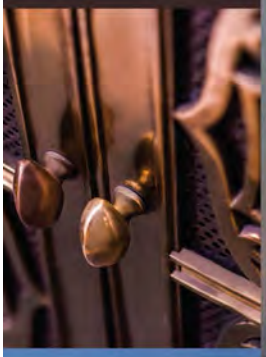


Welcome to Zagreb!

The capital city of Zagreb has much to offer and to explore from history and culture, to architecture. These elements are reflective of significant periods in its rich history. The bright yellow Croatian National Theatre building, which was built in the 1800's, is the cultural heartbeat of the city and reflects the Viennese style, iconic neo-Gothic cathedral and St. Mark's Church from the early 13th century, red umbrellas of Dolac's open-air market, and lush greenery of its public parks and gardens. A really cool aspect of Zagreb is the contrast between the old and new architecture. As you travel through the city's upper and lower towns, you get a feel for the modern and traditional events as well as the festivals that take place. Zagreb has an inspiring emerging food scene grounded in centuries of deep traditions with new modern approaches. It certainly is a destination with activities and attractions for everyone.

ESPLANADE

ZAGREB HOTEL







INSPIRING. REFINED. TIMELESS.



Esplanade Zagreb Hotel

Tradition, exceptional design, glamour and style
in the heart of Zagreb

Zagreb's prestigious Esplanade Hotel, renowned for decades as a temple of exceptional gastronomy, tradition, design, and pleasure, was built in 1925 for the purpose of offering luxury accommodation and service to travelers of the famous Orient Express, which ran the Paris-Istanbul line.



Since its very beginnings, this architectural gem has served as the site of the capital's key social events, and so it comes as no surprise that celebrities have always flocked to the Esplanade. Among these renowned guests are members of royal families, statesmen, and film and music stars.

The elegantly modern interiors and enchanting combination of Art Nouveau architecture, highly personalized service, and state-of-the-art trends in technology afford each guest an unforgettable stay in this historic hotel, located near all the city's notable landmarks.



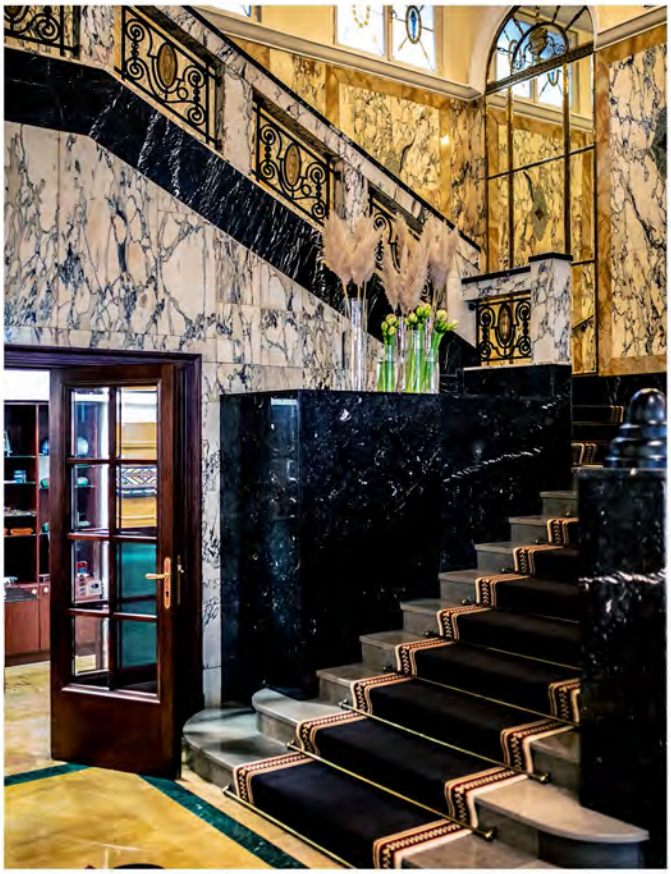
Each of the thoughtfully designed and spacious rooms and suites offers not only traditional Hollywood glamour and a true sense of 'home', but also free Wi-Fi, access to the hotel's Health Club, and many other innovative services. The accommodation is supplemented by the exceptional culinary experiences made possible through Chef Ana Grgić's uniquely modern interpretation of traditional Croatian cuisine.

The sophisticated ambience and elegance of the Zinfandel's Restaurant, with its well-known Oleander terrace and view of the park and fountain, offer an unforgettable fine dining experience, while the lively Le Bistro provides a pleasant Parisian atmosphere. Inspired by the ambience of the 1920s, the cosmopolitan Esplanade 1925 Lounge Bar offers a creative selection of cocktails and delicious bites, while a DJ takes care of the music.



In addition, the Esplanade provides a number of possibilities as well as numerous spaces to organize events and gala festivities, among which the magnificent Emerald Ballroom, with its domed roof, particularly stands out. A symbol of the city itself and a synonym for top-quality service and elegance, the Esplanade has succeeded in eaarning true regional star status, underlined by the numerous impeccable service awards it has been presented with. The melding of tradition, refined taste, sophistication, extraordinary service and a unique, sincere tie to the city of Zagreb, its residents, and each and every guest all render the Esplanade one of the world's must-visit unique hotels.

ESPLANADE ZAGREB
LUXURY HOTEL



In my opinion, one of the highlights if you're in city of Zagreb, is the Esplanade Zagreb Hotel, located in the lower town. The hotel is all about luxury and the essence of class. From the marble floors in the foyer to the pillars in and around the property, this is luxury at its finest. The hotel is located in the heart of the city, walking distance to museums, fine dining and trains to get from one end of the city to the next.

The Esplanade was originally built in 1925. It was designed to provide accommodation for passengers on the Orient Express when it stopped in Zagreb on its journey between Paris to Istanbul. The hotel was the focal point of Zagreb society and the guests that have stayed there leaves no doubt to this fact.



The hotel was renovated several years ago. Although there are modern touches to functionality, the decor still carries over from the luxury once experienced in the old world. If you still doubt the idea of luxury that the Esplanade Hotel offers, here's a partial list of celebrities and influential people that have stayed there in years past: Josephine Baker, Charles Lindbergh, Leonid Brezhnev, the Price of Monaco, Orson Welles, Elizabeth Taylor, Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, Ike & Tina Turner and Alfred Hitchcock. More recently, David Beckham, U2, Backstreet Boys, Orlando Bloom, Shakira, Sting and Hilary Clinton. Just recently, Hotel Esplanade won the title of Historic Hotel of the Year at the 2019 European Hotel Awards. I think it's safe to say that you'll be in great hands at the Esplanade!





Cathedral of Zagreb



Kravata Store, Zagreb



Zrinjevac Park, Zagreb



Love Locks, Upper Town Zagreb





Art Pavilion, Zagreb

Croatia

A Look Behind The Scenes

DESIGNERS

ACTORS

ARTIST

TOURISM + MORE!

Featured Designers: Matija Vuica, Kristina Burga, Jasmina Arnautovic
Featured Actors: Frano Maskovic & Borko Peric
Featured Artist: Zoran Simunovic










Matija Vuica, Silk Chiffon Plisse Red Gown,
MatijaVuica.com

Matija Vuica

EVERY WOMAN IS A GODDESS

Photography: Dimitry Loiseau
Hair: Darija Matković-Živković
Make-up: Marija Matković- Nikolić
Wardrobe Styling: Joanna Konjevod
Model: Ana Jakovljević
Location: City of Zagreb & Esplanade Hotel





Matija Vuica, Crystal Pearls and Lace Black Gown, MatijaVuica.com


Matija Vuica, Silk Chiffon Plisse Red Gown,
MatijaVuica.com



Matija Vuica, Silver Crystal Crinoline Short Dress, MatijaVuica.com



To say that you're a legend in your native land of Croatia is quite the understatement. You're well accomplished, both musically and as a designer. When did your love for the arts begin and how did you start to turn it into a business?

I was born in Dalmatia, in a small town called Metković, located between Dubrovnik and Split. Those of us from this province have a hard work ethic built into our genes, which has allowed many of us to realize our dreams and goals of success to fruition. In the 1980's, my love of fashion began. During the 80's money was tight, but the era allowed a freedom in clothing that could be afforded, seeing that so much of the artistic freedom and expression though clothing came from inspiration from the street scene. Traveling was not really an option for me at the time due to finances, but that in turn brought out my true creativity and revealed my true hidden talent. I've been blessed. Many people never get the opportunity because they never get discovered. I was lucky to be recognized by the art community in Zagreb.

My career actually started in music. I was the lead singer of an alternative rock band called, Trotakt Project. It was in 1981 that I moved to Zagreb and we had our first solo concert. Times were different then, there was no social media or television advertisements. Nonetheless, things were happening slowly but surely. My first fashion line was based on those times. In the early 90's war broke out in Croatia; but by the mid 90's when Croatia started on the path to economic renewal, I thought of having a little business. It took a lot of time, perseverance, work and faith, but the timing was right. I was far from having a lot of money, but I started getting some singing gigs and earning enough money to purchase some fabrics. Little by little, one dress at a time I started my first collection. My way has always been different, and I always created my own lane no matter what other people thought. It turns out I was correct, because it is what ultimately drove my designs to Hollywood. My fashion line has really come to fruition throughout the last 10 years, but it has been 25 years in the making.

How has music influenced your career as a designer and how have you been able to incorporate it in the dresses and gowns you've created?

There is a harmony between music and fashion, and my creations stem from the same place. My life partner, Jurica Popović, who was also the co-founder of Trotakt Project, is still my major collaborator. His music, even to this day, has provided every soundtrack to all of my fashion shows. Together we have been changing the music. Every time life brings on new challenges, so changes his music and my creations. His music is the essential component when I think of my collection. With its strength and romance, we have relied on that atmosphere for our inspiration. On the music scene, as in fashion, there is wealth and freedom to express yourself, we are borderless. Just as there are many types of music, there are just as many styles of fashion, but both still allow you to be able to convey the same message to the world. You can really go to the outer limits to connect to the heart of your audience.

What we love about your designs is that no matter how intricate, elaborate and larger than life your dresses may be, there's always a level of femininity and class that is clearly seen. Why is this aspect of your creations so important to you?

Thank you, I am happy you see that in my work. The idea of a woman's beauty within the world of fashion has been constantly changing throughout history. Every woman is a goddess and that is where I focus with my brand. For me, the attention is in the details, I use only the finest silks and lace, even if I can only afford to purchase enough fabric for two dresses. I will not compromise. I love to enhance a woman's beauty with the fabrics. I make every piece and all of the details with my own hands. At the end of the day, our femininity enhances our sexuality, beauty and power. I did not grow up in glitz and glamour, though I always admired it. So, I am thrilled to give it to my clients.

To sustain a business, especially in the fashion industry is not easy. There's competition, great quality brands and fast fashion all mixed in. What are some of the challenges you face as a designer and how are you able to stay competitive and still maintain your authenticity as a brand?

Honestly, here, none of this is a problem. I live in a country with 4 million people, so there isn't a major fashion industry. Fashion, in the sense of industrialization and commercialization have never been one of our countries major interests. Since I started my line, I have been in complete control of the production of every dress and its uniqueness. It may interest you to know that I have never made the same evening dress twice. I spend 12 hours a day in the atelier, until I am satisfied with my applications. I never seem to tire out when I am focused and working. I am known for this. My authenticity is un-compromised, that is why my clients love my work.

Based on your experience thus far, what advice would you give to other fashion designers getting into the industry?

I would say, take your time and do things right. It takes dedication every single day to do your work, and you must continuously be learning. It is vital to outline your plan and goals with your abilities. The fashion world is both divine and cruel. If you are not in love, and if doing this work doesn't bring you great excitement, look into something else.

What kind of woman will want to wear Matija Vuica?

The one who can recognize the character of the dress, because the garments have character. My dresses are for a woman that wants to be seen above all else, because the admiration of a woman is the most important and also one who can recognize power and positive energy.

Besides wearing your own brand, what other designers and styles appeals to your personality the most?

I wear mostly my designs to events, but I do wear different designers too. I cannot say that I favor one line. I don't purchase because of the designer, I purchase what I like. I do like Australian designer, Ellery. I enjoy British fashion house, Marquis Almeida by Portugueses designers Marta Marques and Paolo Almeida, and Swiss fashion house, Vetement. But, if you really want to know the truth, I am an absolute freak for shoes! I have a massive collection and I still cannot get enough. I go by the well known saying "A woman can carry a bag, but it is the shoe that carries the woman."

I love to mix colors and styles. I wear what I feel good in, but you will never see me without high heels on my feet.

One of your most recent accomplishments includes having several of your dresses on the Oscars red carpet this year. How thrilling was that for you to witness?

I had been given a call by Ivan Bitton Style House, he represents my line in Los Angeles. He informed me that my gowns had been chosen by three different stars to be worn for the event. Of course, I was overjoyed! I called my friend and PR agent, Zvona Vuković to come over to my house to watch the Oscars with me. I made some crepes and we got ready for the show. It is an absolute honor no matter where you are from in this world, to have one of your dresses worn there. But, I was honored to have three beautiful women wearing my dresses to this prestigious event. I am the first Croatian designer to ever be worn at The Oscars. The stars were truly on my side and I am grateful for my reps, Zvona and Ivan who look after me and my line.

This interview is also the result of them and their wonderful energies that merged together. Working with REGARD Magazine and shooting with Dimitry Loiseau in Zagreb, was a wonderful day I will never forget. Thank you for that.

We can't wait to see more from you. What new projects do you have coming up in the near future?

It is wedding season, so I am currently busy with my wedding dresses. But, at the same time, I am expanding my new collection. I am currently looking for a new location for my fashion show. The last few years I have held it at the magnificent Trakoscan Castle, but it is hard to out do that one. Croatia is beautiful, so I know there will not be any problems finding a new location. And I definitely have plans to come and visit Los Angeles!

Instagram: @MatijaVuica
Facebook: Matija Vuica
Website: MatijaVuica.com





DESIGNER PROFILE

Kristina Burja

STRONG PERSONALITY

Photography: Dimitry Loiseau
Hair: Darija Matković-Živković
Make-up: Marija Matković- Nikolić
Wardrobe Styling: Joanna Konjevod
Model: Paula Puskas
Location: City of Zagreb & Esplanade Hotel



Krie Design, Crystal Pink Velvet Top ($201),
Crystal Pink Velvet Pants ($154), KrieDesign.hr



Krie Design, Ticino Wrap Dress,
KrieDesign.hr



Krie Design, Crystal Pink Velvet Top ($201),
Crystal Pink Velvet Pants ($154), KrieDesign.hr





Krie Design, Crystal Rose Dress, $309
KrieDesign.hr

When did you know that you wanted to be a designer and how did you initially get your start?

I always knew that fashion design was going to be my life. I had my first collection at the age of nine. It was a jeans collection for kids. I tried to offer the collection to my father's business partner, who was producing very boring clothes at the time. But, they didn't take me seriously and thought I was just a nine year old kid. It was then that I realized I was going to do this on my own.

Croatia is a country with a rich history in the arts. What were some motivating factors in your life that influenced your decisions to creating the designs you now have?

I personally like all the things that have some deeper message. A background that could talk about higher values. So the most important thing to me, is to create items which are more than a beautiful dress or statement coat. My clothes convey their own story and people should feel it when they wear it. Being different is the one and only motivation that I have in my work and having a beautiful homeland like Croatia provides never ending inspiration too.

One thing of note with your brand is that you are environmentally responsible by using organic and recycled materials for your garments. Why was this decision important to you?

Krie Design's core belief is that fashion can be at the same time ethical and affordable and that is something we always promote. As materials play the key role in our brand sustainability, we buy left over fabric that would otherwise go to waste. This principle of production requires more innovations, higher creativity and working more hours for dressmaking, but we are proud of it .

You have such an eclectic array of options in your collections. What kind of woman would want to wear Krie Design?

Krie Design clothes is made for individuals with styling preferences, something people all around the world want to gain. There are no age limits – equally desirable by teenagers, business women and ladies that age with style. The only thing that our consumer has in common is a strong personality. We don't want to promote a specific ideal for only one type of woman or age, but rather show a variety of styles.

The brand itself is manufactured in Croatia, which provides stability for the employees that work for you. What are some the challenges you face as an entrepreneur in the business of fashion?

When I started designing, the challenge was to be creative, different and unique. Another factor that can make the business challenging is having to be the creative person and making decisions that are often not so creative. As a designer, you are dealing with a lot of work behind your work and creativity. The hardest thing for me is to make some compromises between what the market is looking for and the art of designing clothes. But the art in me is always pushing forward as you can see in my statement pieces.

Based on your experience thus far, what advice would you give to other fashion designers getting into the industry?

I think that sustainability in fashion is the future. We already can see that human awareness is changing and that the fashion industry that is such a big polluter, must in time be limited to further environmental degradation. In history we could witness what happened to the tobacco industry and what kind of restriction it has today. So, along with a good business plan and product, sustainability in fashion is a long-term smart business.

Besides wearing your own brand, what other designers and styles appeals to your personality the most?

For me, fashion is a universal language. When something is "in fashion" there are no barriers, whether ethical, ethnic background, or geographical... none. That is how fashion connects people. So when I see some "art piece" from unknown or very well known fashion designers, I fall in love immediately. For years, I had a crush with Alber Elbaz's work.

Thank you for sharing with us a little bit of life behind Krie Design. What new projects do you have coming up in the near future?

Our goal is to create fashion with a message. We want to be the fashion messengers of the new age that comes for humanity. We want to make clothes that have a sustainable background story and high-end fashion garments, all at once.

Twitter: @KrieDesign
Instagram: @KrieDesign
Facebook: Krie Design
Website: KrieDesign.hr





Jasmina Arnautović

HISTORY MEETS MODERN

Photography: Dimitry Loiseau
Hair: Darija Matković-Živković
Make-up: Marija Matković- Nikolić
Wardrobe Styling: Joanna Konjevod
Model: Petar Kvirin
Location: City of Zagreb & Esplanade Hotel



Jet Lag Studio, Double Breasted Black Waterproof Jacket,
Jet Lag Studio, Black Skinny Jeans
Jet Lag Studio, Knitted Cotton Black T-shirt,
JetLagStudioDesign.com


Jet Lag Studio, Plaid Wool Suit with Leather Details,
Khaki Cotton Shirt with Metal Details,
JetLagStudioDesign.com

Jet Lag Studio, Double Breasted Black Waterproof Jacket,
Jet Lag Studio, Black Skinny Jeans
Jet Lag Studio, Knitted Cotton Black T-shirt,
JetLagStudioDesign.com




Jet Lag Studio, Beige Cotton Shirt with
Dislocated Shoulder Strap Details,
Khaki Cotton Cargo Pants with Metal Details,
JetLagStudioDesign.com

Jet Lag Studio, Double Breasted Black Waterproof Jacket,
Jet Lag Studio, Black Skinny Jeans
Jet Lag Studio, Knitted Cotton Black T-shirt,
JetLagStudioDesign.com



You have a background in costume designing and now, you're designing sophisticated street style for men and women. When were you first interested in fashion and how did you get your start in the business?

Street style indeed.....which I consider to be a very practical and functional everyday necessity and I enjoy playing with it. I learned that quite early as an intern, working for a Croatian street style textile company, just by observing all the steps of the process and in particular the demand.
Of course, I've had a passion for fashion ever since I can remember. Naturally, I love the history of fashion and I'm enjoying playing with it combining, mixing and matching with modern times, textiles, textures and fabrics. I am definitely fascinated by the width of it. It's endless. That has also brought me to costume design throughout the media sector. I am so lucky to often work on projects where I get to be REALLY creative!

Which designers have influenced the sense of style that you've incorporated into your own brand?

There are so many brilliant designers out there, it's hard to point out the best. Aesthetically, I am drawn to Prada, Diesel, Fendi and Alexander McQueen. Those are just some of the names that stand out.

When walking down the streets of Zagreb, Croatia, it is easy to see how your designs fit well into the scenery. What kind of man and woman would want to style themselves in a JET LAG piece?

I appreciate that question, thank you. JET LAG men and women love to travel. My brand is inspired by traveling, cosmopolitan cities, architecture, history and culture. Some of the collections in the past were reminiscent of New York, Sydney, Amsterdam, London, Paris and California. Men and women who love traveling embrace JET LAG as a comfortable and functional garment. These men and women live fast urban lives, they also love to look good and stand out, but again are casual with a twist. It's all in the details which are often unique, but wearable.

What are some of your challenges that you've faced as an entrepreneur and a fashion designer in this business?

The most important thing to me is that I'm giving 100% of my effort. Managing and making sure of the smallest details of my work and that I accomplish all tasks needed is endless, whether it be a collection or costume design. But, most importantly, to enjoy the journey and the process. And, of course, never stop learning!

Recently, you've had several celebrities in the U.S. wear your pieces. How has this helped change your visibility in Croatia?

To be honest, I am very proud. I am so lucky to be recognized by the U.S market and I'm very thankful as this is a new chapter for JET LAG! I'm so excited and very much looking forward to this collaboration and waiting with anticipation for new ventures that this will bring. It has been fun!

We look forward to seeing more from you. What do you have coming up next in the near future for JET LAG Studio?

'Going back to the roots,' meaning what I'm working on is greatly inspired by the charming coastal town of Šibenik. It's ethnicity and architecture is JET LAG's favorite game. History meets modern.

Instagram: @JETLAG_studio
Web: www.JetlagStudioDesign.com
Facebook: Jet Lag





Left to Right:
On Borko, Black Tuxedo by Martin Arbanas
On Frano, Black Tuxedo by Tina Smiljanec Klemar

Borko Peric + Frano Maskovic

THE EIGHTH COMMISSIONER

Photography: Dimitry Loiseau

Grooming: Melissa Bedi
Wardrobe Styling: Joanna Konjevod



Paisley & Gray, Grosvenor Peak Tuxedo Jacket,
Black & Silver Brocade, PaisleyAndGray.com


Black Tuxedo, Martin Arbanas



Paisley & Gray, Ashton Peak Blazer White & Black Windowpane, PaisleyAndGray.com



Black Tuxedo by Tina Smiljanec Klemar





Left to Right
On Frano: Paisley & Gray, Grosvenor Peak Tuxedo Jacket, Black & Silver Brocade, PaisleyAndGray.com

On Borko: Paisley & Gray, Ashton Peak Blazer White & Black Windowpane, PaisleyAndGray.com

When did you know that you wanted to be an actor and how did you get started as a performer?

I became interested in acting while in high school, after landing a role in the drama group. It was that very first experience and the mixture of art and research really interested me and I wanted to broaden my knowledge and experience. Therefore, the next step was a very easy and logical one – I enrolled into the Academy of Dramatic Art in Zagreb.

Za glumu sam se poceo zanimati u srednjoj skoli,nakon prve odigrane predstave u dramskoj grupi. Ta umjetnost i istrazivanje su mi se jako svidjeli i logican slijed bio je upis na Akademiju dramske umjetnosti u Zagrebu.

Which actors' body of work impressed you and had an impact on your own career?

I admire all artists who are dedicated to their craft and are uncompromising in their drive to work on their skills and success. I look up to people who have the ability to tell a story in a poignant, piercing, and provocative way that will make us think and act upon it. All the people that try hard to make this world a better place are the people who inspire me.

Divim se svim umjetnicima koji beskompromisno rade svoj posao. Divim se ljudima koji u bilo kojem mediju znaju ispricat pricu koja me dirne, prodrma, natjera da mislim i djelujem! Jednostavno divim se ljudima koji ovaj svijet cine barem malo lijepsim mjestom.

Which type of characters are you drawn to and which ones are you excited to play on screen?

I've always been drawn by so called real-life characters who cope with bouts of fear, the ones who choose passion over integrity and vice versa, the characters that fight downfalls and depression, etc. Flesh and blood characters strike me the most and they are the ones that I'm excited to play on screen.

Volim igrat zive ljude sa svim njihovim strastima, strahovima,usponima i padovima. Likove od krvi, mesa i emocije.

You were recently in the film, *The Eighth Commissioner*, which was submitted to the Oscars foreign film category. How were you first introduced to the film and what was your reason for wanting to be a part of it?

I read the novel *"Eighth Commissioner"* by Renato Baretic in my 20's and the story blew me away because it stood out from a typical Croatian novel back in the day. Luckily for me, it was 13 years from development to production of the film, and I was fortunate to get a chance to be part of telling the story.

Roman Osmi povjerenik citao sam jos na Akademiji dramske umjetnosti, prica mi se odmah svidjela. Na zalost tj. na moju srecu od objavljivanja romana do ekranizacije proslo je 13godina. Nakon sto sam procitao ponudeni mi scenarij znao sam da moram i zelim biti dio te predivne price.

For those who haven't seen the film yet, what can you tell us about your character, Sinisa Mesjak, and what you enjoyed about playing him on screen?

Sinisa Mesjak, a corrupted politician, has to pay his dues to the leading political party for his indiscretions and is given a special assignment on a beautiful imaginary island on the Croatian Adriatic coast. What seemed to be an unattainable assignment and punishment, turns into a life changing experience for him. There, he learns how to be a good and loving man. I enjoyed every second of acting in this film.

Sinisa Mesjak je naizgled jedan korumpirani politicat koji se po kazni pojavi na jednom predivnom imaginarnom Jadranskom otoku gdje ponovno nauci biti covjek u najdivnijem smislu te rijeci. Uzivao sam u svakoj sekundi rada na ovom filmu.

When it comes to fashion, which designers and styles appeal to you most?

I'm not a fashion fiend. I like to dress comfortable and smart casual. For formal events and receptions, I prefer to wear classic and well-fitted suits.

Volim da su stvari koje nosim prvenstveno ugodne, nosive i da odgovaraju prigodi za koju se odjevam. Klasika je po meni uvijek najbolji izbor.

We look forward to seeing more of your work. What projects do you have coming up in the near future?

I just wrapped up working on *"These Land"* with a young and talented film director Michael Alloyan. In July and August, I will be playing Hamlet at Dubrovnik Summer Festival. The play is set in one of the most beautiful locations of my hometown in Dubrovnik; the fortress of Lovrijenac. I'm very much looking forward to the Summer Festival and inviting you all to come visit us in Croatia.

Trenutno zavrsavam snimanje filma *These Land* s redateljem Michaelom Alloyanom a ovog cu ljeta na Dubrovackim ljetnim igrama odigrati Hamleta na jednoj od najljepsih dubrovackih tvrdava Lovrijencu. Veseli me taj izazov i pozivam vas na jednu od izvedbi u najljepsi grad na svijetu Dubrovnik :))



Frano Maskovic
Instagram: @FranoMaskovic
Facebook: Frano.Maskovicmacak

When did you know that you wanted to be an actor and how did you get started as a performer?

I don't think I ever knew that I wanted to be an actor. It just happened somehow. I was not a good student, when I look back in the past, especially in elementary school. So, as a way to punish me, my teacher sent me to be part of the poetry group. I wanted to make fun of everyone during the performance and I thought that people were going to laugh, but they did not. Instead, they where moved and everyone said that I have to go into theater. There was an audition for an ensemble. I developed the courage, applied for the role, passed an entrance exam, And now, here I am. It's as simple as that.

Which actors body of work impressed you and had an impact on your own career?

There are a lot of actors whose work has impacted me. Actors like Gene Wilder, Gene Hackman, Robert De Niro, Ivo Gregurevic, Mustafa Nadarevic, Peter O'toole, Pavle Vujsic, and a lot more.

Which type of characters are you drawn to and which ones are you excited to play on screen?

Usually, I prefer unusual characters where their personality is not based on social norms. I always love characters that are different. They are full of emotions and they have a bit mystery and in the same way a sense of humor, which is the basis of every human situation. If you haven't figure out by now, I love humor. Haha!

You were recently in the film, *The Eighth Commissioner,* which was submitted to the Oscars foreign film category. How were you first introduced to the film and what was your reason for wanting to be a part of it?

My story with that movie is a bit strange. I knew the film was going to be shot, but I had never thought I was going to be part of it. So, I was very surprised when I received a call from the director. I am really happy and honored that I had the chance and privilege to do that amazing project with all those great friends and colleagues, but especially, great professionals.

For those that haven't seen the film yet, what can you tell us about your character, Tonino Smeraldic, and what you enjoyed about playing him on screen?

Tonino is young man from island of Trecic. Generally, he's a tragicomic figure. He is kind, polite, very fragile and at the same time, funny.

The thing that I love the most about him is that he has a unique personality and he always sees the positive side in others. Although he may be naive, at the same time, he's a very strong person, especially when you consider his relationship with his father and when he falls in love.

When it comes to fashion, which designers and styles appeal to you most?

I don't know much about fashion. I prefer to wear things that I like. I'm completely lost when it comes to brand names.

We look forward to seeing more of your work. What projects do you have coming up in the near future?

For now, I have few offers to film a few movies and I'm looking forward to doing that. But, I'm also preparing myself to work on a film as a director. It is going to be my debut in that role. I am very excited and can't wait to finish the end of the script and finally start shooting. Besides that, my standard routine is in the Kerempuh Theater, where I perform shows regularly throughout the year.

Instagram:@PericBorko
Facebook: Borko Peric





Zoran Šimunović

THERE ARE NO LIMITS

Photography: Dimitry Loiseau









It seems a bit strange to ask an artist when they knew that they were going to be an artist. Because, more than likely, you were born with the gift of the arts. Nonetheless, we're going to ask you anyway! When did you realize that being an artist was going to be the path you take in life?

My family is successfully engaged in agriculture, and it was to be expected that I would follow the same path. I was enrolled in and studied the science of soil management and crop production at the Agronomy College. I quickly realized that direction was not for me. Through the process of getting to know myself, I recognized that my art was my great love. Of course, I battled within myself because I did not want to disappoint my parents, but to my great fortune, they completely supported my dreams and my desire to study art and enroll in the art academy. As you all mentioned, artists are born with a gift, the only question is when it will reveal itself and when we come to accept it.

Were there any specific individuals or circumstances that influenced your decisions as an artist and made a positive impact on your life and career?

After graduating from the Academy of Fine Arts I was employed in the award-winning Museum in the city of Vukovar as the curator of art collections. Of course, this has opened up new views of art, and in that way, I learned to think and critically accentuate my work and art. It has given me a different approach to my work with a professional presentation that has proved to be successful and you opened the door to the world. My wife, Ivana has been a huge supporter of me and my work. Ivana was the one who really pointed out that the art world was the place where I belonged. Since then, I have dedicated my life to art, and it was the best decision I have ever made.

Generally speaking, when we see the work of artist, we see the end result. Take us through your process of creating one of your pieces.

No matter how simple it may seem, actually, in this process of painting I have to constantly be vigilant and think about every next move. The images require a lot of reflection on the image itself so that each picture is painted in thoughts before it is painted on the canvas. I find the desire to create interesting work, there are no limits. Art, for me, is an inexhaustible topic that day by day positively excites me. I can simply surrender and exclude the world around me and I become the happiest man in the world.

What are some the obstacles you encounter in your field and how are you able to meet these challenges?

At the moment, I have a bigger challenge when I work full time in the museum to find enough time for painting. That's exactly why I'm doing this at night and weekends. Sometimes my biggest challenge is to find the ideal balance between daily commitments and free time. As a young author, it is a great challenge, as well as doing all the marketing and promotional work related to my painting, I am arranging exhibitions, selling artwork, intriguing and other promotional activities. Sometimes everything can be exhausting, but with a good organization and understanding of the near thing nothing is irresistible.

As you look back on your many accomplishments, which ones have been some of your fondest memories personally and professionally?

My MFA and PHD are achievements that I am quite proud of. Currently, what fills me is the fact that my art work is recognized both in Croatia and Internationally. Every new exhibition fills me personally and professionally. I anxiously await each show with the same excitement, as if I were my first one. Of course, it is an achievement for a Croatian artist is to be in a magazine such as REGARD. It has been a great experience to participate in the entire process related to this interview.

Croatians are known to be full of life. What aspects of life provides you with inspiration to create the art you display?

The space that surrounds me, defines me ultimately. In Croatia, people are very attached to their home. For me personally, the home is something that speaks, so it is also seems logical for me to paint what surrounds me.

Everyday decorative and wearable objects pose for my deconstruction of my home space and at the same time create my visual universe. Every corner of my artwork is personal and carries a label that tells stories of my memories and my passion. I find inspiration in innocuous figurines and even my dog's toys, they have captured my mind and creativity. I capture them on the canvas as the artifacts of a single being. Upon entering my home you will notice plenty of colorful details…..those same details.

Of course, art is subjective. However, what advice would you give other aspiring artists getting into the business?

I am confident that work and effort are always recognized and that young artists should never give up their dreams. The ambitions that carry you and your dreams of great success can often remain unfulfilled, but your hard work will later become recognized and become your reality. Education is everything, that needs to be taken seriously. One cannot pretend to be "someone" and pretending to do so will not make one a better artist.

Thank you for sharing your background and business with us. What do you have coming up in the near future?

Thank you for showing your interest in my work. The next few months will be turbulent, while I wait to open 6 exhibitions (5 independent and 1 international) and, of course, I will continue to create new work. May 1, 2019 I have a show in Osijek at Crna Svinja. May 30 in Poreć at Mala Galerija. June 7 Čakovec, Muzej Medimurja. September 16 Graz.

Instagram: @ZSimunovic6
Facebook: Zoran Šimunović
Web: ZoranSimunovic.com

Zvona Vucković

ALWAYS BE READY TO WORK

Photography: Dimitry Loiseau



You are the epitome of style and grace. Your work as an international model speaks for itself. But, let's take a trip down memory lane. When did you first decide that you were going to work as a model and how did you get your start?

As a young girl, I had a dreams of being a classical ballerina. I was a girl studying classical ballet in Zagreb, and became a part of the ensemble for The National Theatre. At just 13 years old I hit a growth spurt and outgrew the height requirement for the ballet company, and was forced to abandon classical ballet. At that moment, I fell into a deep depression and I truly believed my dreams were over. Not too long after that happened, some girlfriends from school invited me to join them for an opening party of a new boutique in town. Upon my entrance, the owner of the store recognized my modeling potential, the next day he took me to a local modeling agency for an introduction meeting. As they say, as one door closes, another opens. My height, as it turns out, became the catalyst for my destiny.

The idea of being a model today, is quite different than it was when you first started, largely due to the seemingly "easy" way that we see models on social media. What was it really like working as a professional model?

I was born in Yugoslavia, and during my era we actually had a very strong fashion and textile industry during Socialism, and models were actually quite well paid. But just like business in a small country, I had to make my way to Western Europe; the UK, France, Italy or Germany to really take my career to the next level. Back in those days it wasn't just a click of a button or a Skype call for casting, or having more than 10,000 followers on Instagram. I had to pound the pavement with my modeling book in hand. I was in a room directly competing with the other women up for the job. I actually feel bad for models these days, they will never know what it was like back in the day. I have some of my most fond memories walking around the streets of Milan with my heavy leather bound portfolio. Because of that, I was able to make relationships with some world renowned designers.

You've had the opportunity to model for some of the world's biggest fashion houses. What were some of your fondest memories with those experiences?

I am so blessed with my career, I have so many fond memories. My international career started when I was quite young. I was invited to go to Paris and shoot with one of the most famous fashion photographers, Gunnar Larson. That experience then lead me Florence, Italy working as a fit model for the fashion houses of Farragamo, Roberto Cavalli and Gucci, which gave me a profound understanding of the world I was in.

Once, I was in Monte Carlo in the 1980's walking for an Armani Show. The runway was in the most splendid villa constructed over a pool. During the rehearsal, Gorgio asked if anyone wants to jump into the pool after the show? Of course, I was so eager to volunteer; although I didn't take into account that I was wearing a metal gown! I nearly drowned at the end of the show! (laughs) This all lead me to work with my love and all time favorite designer, Jean Paul Gauthier. Jean Paul is dramatic and silly all at the same time! We had such an amazing time working together.

As we mentioned before, the modeling industry has changed quite a bit. What advice would you give to models who want to get into the business professionally?

Daily, I have aspiring models reaching out to me on public platforms like Instagram, asking that exact question. My answer is always the same; Stay in school, fashion is a business and you will need to have the knowledge to negotiate and care for yourself. Find an agent who is really willing to work for you. Ideally, if you have the support of your family. Most importantly, have a mission and a plan to follow your dreams to fruition. Stay professional, this is a career; keep yourself heathy and always be ready to work. Professional, loyal and consistent are words often used to describe me. I take great pride in that. And finally, you will have to find your path on your own. Trying and failing are the only ways to learn; but if you stay true to your path, believe in yourself, you will be on your right personal avenue of success.

When it comes to your personal style, which designers are your favorites and appeal to your personality the most?

This is a hard and easy question all at once. I have built my own style over the years, it is so important to me to both feel comfortable and good. My personal style has never really been a romantic sweet girl look. I love trousers or suits, an androgenic look. I buy myself a new Jean Paul Gauthier jacket every year, his designs really speak to me. The times when the event calls for an evening gown, my go to is local designer from Zagreb, Matija Vuica. I wore one of Matija's dresses when I was invited to be a judge for the Miss World China competition. It was a special occasion and an incredible privilege. Matija's designs are the perfect combination of powerful and elegant at the same time. Matija and I are also business partners, I represent the Personal Relations side of her business. We make a fabulous dream team.

We appreciate you taking the time to provide us with insight into your life as a model and professional in the fashion industry. What is next for you?

That's the most exciting part of these days, everyday is the NEXT day and new things never stop coming my way. I have been pursuing some acting work, and it's been wonderful. Last few years I was cast in a few small roles; one in *"Star Wars,"* it was an honor and an unbelievable experience being a part of such a legendary iconic film. I played wife of the Swazi-English actor, Richard E. Grant in a small UK series called, *"Dig."* Richard was recently nominated for an Oscar for Best Supporting Role for *"Can You Ever Forgive Me."* I am continuing to focus in that direction. Thankfully, my energy is inexhaustible, I love the challenge, it gives me endless motivation. And of course, my continued collaboration with Matija Vuica.

Instagram: @ZvonaVuckovic8
Facebook: Zvona Vuckovic
Website: Zvona-Vuckovic.com



Kristjan Stanicic

Taking Croatia to New Heights

Photography: Dimitry Loiseau

What can you tell us about your background and how you got involved with the board of tourism in Croatia?

I started my career in diplomacy, but after a certain period of time I realized that I had a desire to work in the private sector, namely in the hotel industry, where my educational background lies. I worked as an assistant to the Director of Marketing and Sales for Hotel Novi, later moving on to be a Board member of the same company. I continued my career in Opatija, where I was President of the Board of one of the largest hotel firms in Croatia, Liburnia Riviera Hotels. My love of tourism started while as a small child. I greeted the guests staying at my grandmother's, helping to make and serve the guests breakfast. I worked my way through various tourism jobs including night doorman, dishwasher, receptionist, and finally working my way up to Director of the hotel, then President of the Board of Directors and now Director of the Croatian National Tourist Board (CNTB).

Besides getting people to travel to Croatia, what are some of your major responsibilities and initiatives working on the board?

Along with strong ethics, morals and professionalism, I find it extremely important to have a really good work atmosphere amongst employees, at all levels within the CNTB. Their satisfaction and work dynamic directly affects the success of the organization. This is why communication is key and only by way of joint effort can we succeed in creating a comfortable, positive and motivated work environment.

Croatia has been known mostly by Europeans. What would you hope to convey to the rest of the world about your beautiful country?

Croatia has long been primarily focused on its European guests and this is still where the largest number of our tourists come from. However, we are also now strongly focused on long-haul markets, especially the USA and Canada, China, South Korea, Japan and Australia. These markets are particularly of interest when it comes to pre and post-season, as their primary motivation to visit isn't necessarily the sun and sea, but rather fine cuisine and wine, our cultural offering, active tourism, as well as our pristine and untouched nature. It is these markets where we are seeing year-on-year double-digit growth over the last few years. For example, the USA market had a 20% growth, similar to that of Canada, while the Chinese market showed a 40% growth in comparison to last year. This is why we have opted to increase our marketing activities to better position ourselves in these particular markets, while also opening new offices in Shanghai, Seoul and Los Angeles.

You and your staff were a big part of promoting the film, The Eighth Commissioner. And, although it wasn't nominated for the Academy Award, what did you enjoy about the process and having the film show in Hollywood?

The great turnout and the overflowing legendary Egyptian Theatre on Hollywood Boulevard is proof positive of the high quality of Croatian films and the Croatian film industry and professionals/creatives, while also affirming the great interest for Croatia as a hit tourist destination on the U.S. market. We are aware that many tourists come to visit specifically because of the interesting filming locations that they have seen in movies and television and as such have become tourism beacons. We are quite sure that Croatia will continue to be of interest as the backdrop for Hollywood productions. We are proud that together with the Croatian Audiovisual Center, that we were able to organize such a pre-Oscar event, whereby we promoted both Croatia's film industry, but also its cuisine and Croatia as a tourist destination as a whole. It was an evening to remember, a merging of film, friendship, good food, excellent wine and music.

Since you had an opportunity to come to Hollywood, what were some of the things you enjoyed being in the land of movies and television?

I thoroughly enjoyed the abundance of various cultures that one is able to find in a city such as Los Angeles. I also greatly enjoyed the mild weather, given that at that time of year it was snowing in Croatia. I was impressed by the rich and diverse offering of various cuisines, excellent films, but also the opportunity to meet with numerous successful business people of Croatian origin. I was also convinced of the great promotional effect these events provide and I am sure we will organize something similar in the near future in Los Angeles, where we will be opening an office in the near future.

Thank you for sharing your perspective on tourism. What are some new ventures and initiatives you have planned for the board of tourism in Croatia?

In the near term, I see the CNTB transforming into a national promotional/marketing agency for tourism, where within its remit, we nurture, create and execute all activities tied to increasing the nation's tourism brand. At the same time, I continue to rely heavily on our close cooperation with the entire tourism industry, as well as other stakeholders that are either directly or indirectly tied to the industry, because high-quality tourism relies on the synergy between all who work on creating the tourist offering, as well as promoting it.

