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Forbes

Coastal Croatia

Destination Sustainability: All along the Coast of Croatia & throughout its islands, you will find stunning walled cities & crystal clear water. Throughout the region these towns and small cities are leading the way towards a vision of responsible tourism, where

preserving heritage & protecting the community matters much more than making a fast buck. These marvels on the Adriatic have become firmly established as some of the most compelling European sea-side destinations in summer & during the off-season as well.



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ROVINJ REIGNS OVER ISTRIAN TOURISM

“We are a multi-ethnic and multicultural community of Croats, Serbs, Italians and Slovenians,” says Marko Paliaga, the Mayor of Rovinj. “There is a lot of tolerance and respect among the people living here.” Originally an island, Rovinj was only connected to the mainland in 1763 when authorities decided to fill in the channel and create a small peninsula jutting into the Adriatic. Surviving untouched through all the political and social changes since then, in recent years the town has evolved into one of the most charming and atmospheric of all the towns along the Istrian coast, Rovinj has long been celebrated for its architectural elegance, cultural heritage and natural wonders. From the Bell Tower that looks down on the harbour from the town’s highest point, bearing a striking resemblance to the tower of St. Mark’s in Venice, to the piazzas and cobbled streets where locals gather in the evenings, the influence of Italy can be seen in all corners of this picturesque medieval fishing port. Part of the Kingdom of Italy until as recently as 1947, Italian is an official language of Rovinj and to this day is widely spoken across the town.

There are ample opportunities here to explore the area’s rich maritime heritage, including the Batana Eco-museum, which showcases the unique flat-bottomed boats used by the fishermen. Tourists can watch the boats being built or ride them on the



waters around the old town, accompanied by the evocative sounds of bitinadas, the extraordinary folk songs of the local fisher folk, followed perhaps by a dinner of local specialties and wines.

With such a romantic atmosphere, it is no surprise that Rovinj has become a celebrated source of artistic inspiration. Painters, sculptors and other artists from around the world have transformed cobbled Grisija street.

Also, charming hotels are in easy reach of the environmental adventures, including protected green areas, an ornithological reserve, as well as archaeological sites. With 67 kilometers of beaches and a coastline cluttered with scenic cliffs, reefs and islets. Odetė Sapač, director of the Rovinj Tourist Board puts it: “We like to say that Rovinj is a place of endless possibilities.” ●



Interview with: **ODETE SAPAČ**

Director, Tourist Board Rovinj

How are you promoting off-season tourism?

Rovinj is the leading destination in Croatia with over 4.3 million overnight stays, earning us the title of tourism champions in the country. Our strategic plan for tourism development until 2030 focuses on diversifying our visitor base and extending the booking period beyond the peak season. With a total capacity of 40,000 beds, evenly distributed between hotels and surrounding villages, we offer a unique advantage compared to other regions. We capitalize on our infrastructure and organize sports activities, cultural events, and tours to attract visitors during the preseason and winter months. We have improved transportation and connectivity, particularly since entering the Schengen area and this has contributed to our success. In fact, our bookings increased by 21% last year, and this year we are already 10% ahead. Our wide range of accommodations, including 5-star options and family-friendly hotels, ensures we cater to diverse preferences of all of our guests.



Interview with: **MARKO PALIAGA**

Mayor of Rovinj

How important is innovation & sustainability for the city?

We are highly recognized for our sustainability efforts, including being the first to implement spatial plans with reduced construction zones. One of our significant projects is the construction of a comprehensive sewage network and purification facility, ensuring zero untreated sewage water is released into the sea. We have adopted a new tourism development strategy focused on higher quality and long-term reduction of accommodation units. Our commitment to sustainability extends to energy efficiency and green city development. Furthermore, we prioritize protection and sustainability and innovation, such as establishing an entrepreneurial incubator and addressing traffic congestion.




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SUSTAINABLE ISTRIA: WHERE TOURISM COMBINES WITH QUALITY

Nature, culture, tradition and people are important aspects of green tourism on the Croatian peninsula Istria. Protecting and preserving its natural resources and cultural heritage, Istria has a wealth of natural beauty spots and parks to visit. Brijuni National Park, Lim Bay, Kamenjak Nature Park, the riverbank of its longest river Mirna and many trails through picturesque countryside and along the coast through small fishing villages - all ideal for hikers, bikers, swimmers and nature-lovers. When it comes to protecting the sea and the coastal areas, in Istria, the number of Blue Flags increases every year, so far 42 beaches and 6 marinas have been awarded one. The peninsula is proud to also have Green Beach labelled flag on 4 beaches. As great strides have been made in strengthening the ecological ethos for tourist accommodation, 25 hotels have been awarded the Travelife Gold Award



certification and several campsites with EU Ecolabel and Ecocamping. Through the Eco Domus program, 45 family-run accommodation units have also put changes in place to comply with green standards.

Widely celebrated for its seafood, truffles, wines and olive oils, the cuisine of Istria is one of the undisputed cultural treasures of Croatia, delighting gourmets and connoisseurs from around the world.

Known as the Tuscany of Croatia, the region is famed for healthy and inventive Mediterranean dishes that can rival anything produced in Italy. No visitor comes away from Istria without raving

about the quality of the cuisine, whether it be the seafood of the coastal areas or the succulent meat-based dishes of the interior.

Although Istria has no one signature food, it is perhaps most famous for its truffles: the region's white truffles judged by many to be finer than even the truffles of Italy. Grown from September until January, white truffle shavings are often used in steak, fish and pasta dishes, while ice cream and chocolate cake with truffles make for some uniquely Istrian desserts.

Gourmets say that a fortunate combination of salt and fresh water around the coastline of the Istrian peninsula gives the seafood harvested here a unique and unmistakable flavor. The Adriatic squid is another much prized delicacy which is hunted only in winter when the sea is cold. Caught with special hooks, they can either be baked whole, stuffed, or pan-fried with herbs, lime or spices. Foodies should also be sure to try the legendary sea scallops of Novigrad and at least one fish or mussel dish cooked in the famous buzara style with garlic, parsley, olive oil and white wine.

When it comes to wine and olive oil, thanks to its climate and terrain, Istria is in a league of its own. The region's olive oils, often produced by small cooperatives or single farmers, are regularly ranked among the world's very finest and are characterized by their artisanal, individual quality. ●



LABIN: A HILLTOP GEM ABOVE THE BAY

Overlooking Kvarner Bay, the beach town of Rabac and the island of Cres, the small town of Labin today is rich in architectural heritage and cultural events, with the narrow streets and alleys of the old town lined by art galleries, cafes, boutiques and elegant pink-hued buildings in the Venetian style.

It was first mentioned in Roman records way back in 285 A.D., and with Celtic ruins hundreds of years older even than that, in recent years the town of Labin has been transformed from a center of mining and industry into one of the most interesting destinations in eastern Istria.

The terraces of this charming cobbled



district afford unforgettable views out to sea, while looking inland tourists can see all eastern Istria laid out for their delight.

While the mines may have shut down and the factory workers moved out, Labin is far from being a ghost town. Artists from Istria and beyond have moved to Labin in high numbers and open their studios and ateliers to the public in the summer months, when the town's streets become home to a popular festival of theatre, concerts and outdoor performances – Labin Art Republic.

The town has also been careful to preserve the mining heritage that was so important in its past. Tourists can visit a muse-

um which celebrates Labin's mining history and can even explore a long tunnel where miners used to carve coal out of the hillside.

Gastronomy also plays a vital role in the life of its citizens who highly value the local and regional products of olive oil, fresh fish, seafood and its amazing regional wines.

Mayor Valter Glavičić adds “We have all grown up with tourism in our region, and that is why we are good hosts. We pass this hospitality down to our children and it is a way of life. This is why I believe that tourists from Austria, Germany, and Switzerland love coming to our town. They feel comfortable and at home here, and it is also a great place to live. As a tourist myself, I do not want to be in a crowded place, but rather to learn and educate myself while on vacation. I hope that our visitors will appreciate their vacation here not only as a time of relaxation but also as a time of learning and discovery and in the future it will be even easier for tourists to visit this most charming of hilltop towns.” ●



In collaboration with:



Grad Labin



SONJA JELUŠIĆ MARIĆ

Director, Bakar Tourist Board

worth mentioning that Bakar’s tourism industry started from scratch in 2009, with zero private accommodations and has since grown to over 500 beds. This transformation is remarkable for a town previously associated solely with its coke oven industry.

What sets you apart from other towns in Kvarner?

We stand out as a distinctive destination in Istria and Kvarner. Overcoming our previous reputation, we are gradually gaining popularity, particularly in the off-season. We offer diverse attractions and benefit from our proximity to Rijeka and the Kukuljanovo industrial zone. Collaborating with local tourist associations, we focus on outdoor activities such as hiking, cycling, and walking. The town preserves its cultural heritage through innovative interpretive walks and games, earning international recognition. The project “Playful Bakar” offers year-round themed tours and guides, contributing to its distinction as an eco-friendly destination. Sustainable tourism and meaningful experiences take precedence over mass tourism. The “Tuna Fest” gastronomic program caters to German and Austrian visitors, showcasing our tuna fishing heritage in Bakar Bay.

What tourism products are available during the off-season?

While our main cultural and entertainment event unfolds during the summer, we also prioritize carnival celebrations in winter, tapping into the region’s rich carnival tradition. Additionally, we organize events such as classical concerts, literary evenings, and exhibitions in collaboration with active local associations. Regarding sports, we aim to enhance our overall sports offerings and capitalize on our natural landscape, which is conducive to training preparations for athletes. Plans are underway to construct a comprehensive sports complex with swimming pools. We have also become recognized for the innovative presentation of our cultural heritage and rich history through award-winning projects. ●

BAKAR: A RENAISSANCE THROUGH MEANINGFUL TOURISM

You are one of the oldest towns in the northern Adriatic, can you give our readers a brief overview of your rich cultural past?

The town of Bakar, a coastal gem, boasts a rich history as a prominent port and commercial center for over 5,000 years. It was the largest and most populous city in Croatia at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, Empress Maria Theresa declared it a free royal city in 1779.

How significant is the contribution of Austrian, German, & Swiss tourists to your overall tourism numbers?

Our strategic location makes us an intriguing destination and our proximity to source markets like Austria and Germany adds to our appeal. German and Austrian visitors have traditionally been key to our tourism, totaling 42% of overnight stays. In 2020, amidst the pandemic, German guests reached 47% of overnight stays, with an impressive average stay of 9 days. It is



BAKAR: A TINY PEARL OF GREAT STORIES

Nestled deep inside of the impressive Bakar Bay on the Adriatic coast is the Croatian town of Bakar. With its rich history and stunning surroundings void of mass tourism, Bakar offers guests an authentic destination. Bakar boasts a fascinating history that dates back centuries and its well-preserved architecture and historical sites are a testament to its heritage that stretches to ancient times as a strategic Roman fortress. Bakar flourished as a bustling trading port, leaving an indelible mark on its culture and architecture.

One historical sight that is a must-visit in Bakar is the impressive Frankopan Castle. Situated atop a hill overlooking the town, this medieval fortress stands as a testament to Bakar’s history and strategic importance. Built by the influential Frankopan family in the 13th century, the castle offers panoramic views of the surrounding landscape and the Adriatic Sea. Inside, visitors can explore and admire its Gothic and Renaissance architectural elements, as well as learn about the noble Frankopan dynasty that once ruled the region.

As Germany, Austria and Switzerland have long been at the forefront of sustainable tourism, their environmentally conscious travelers seeking destinations that prioritize

eco-friendly practices, Bakar’s commitment to smart development aligns perfectly with the preferences of these tourists. The town’s commitment to tourism lies in its efforts to preserve its past while embracing the future. By implementing the standards of careful touristic resource management, Bakar aims to protect its cultural and nat-



ural wonders. One noteworthy example of this commitment is the town’s dedication to preserving its traditional customs and rituals, ensuring that they are passed down to future generations.

Blessed with breathtaking natural beauty, offering a wealth of outdoor activities for adventure enthusiasts and nature lovers, Bakar is dedicated to preserving its surroundings by promoting responsible outdoor practices and encourages visitors to explore landscapes while minimizing their impact on the environment. From hiking along the scenic trails to participating in eco-friendly water sports, tourists can immerse themselves in the splendor of Bakar.

Bakar takes pride in delectable culinary traditions, which showcase rich flavors and local ingredients. Tourists can indulge in mouthwatering specialties like Bakarska torta (Bakar cake) or the simple yet irresistible Baškoti. Its commitment to dining extends to promoting producers of traditional specialties such as Bakarska Vodica, a unique sparkling wine that can only be tasted here in limited editions with environmentally conscious production.

Bakar presents a mesmerizing tapestry of historical curiosities, discoveries, and an impressive landscape where every step you take is a new adventure. ●



POREČ: A CITY WITH A 1,000 YEAR HISTORY

World renowned for the treasured sixth-century Euphrasian Basilica complex and the Euphrasian Basilica, these stunning monuments have been recognized as some of the most important historic sites in Croatia. They are a rare example of art and gem-studded Byzantine mosaics that are still preserved today.

It is best to visit in the off-season when the crowds are scarce, you can absorb a wealth of history exploring this exciting center. Decumanus, the square Trg Marafar, and the ruins of the temples of Neptune and Mars, are evidence of the early Roman occupation.

The harbour contains reminders of Venetian dominance until the 18th century, when Poreč was ruled by Napoleon and then the Habsburgs. Recently, the city's historic quarter has been renovated and restored to host musical, artistic, as well as top sporting and culinary events throughout the year..

Whatever you're in the mood for, Poreč

also boasts a plethora of beaches for those who love fun in the sun tourism and its islands have 37km of coastline, where guests can choose between 21 beaches bearing the Blue Flag, an international symbol of clean sea and well-kept beaches. The quality of the seawater has been monitored for the past 25 years, and incredibly 20% of all Blue Flag beaches in Croatia are located in Poreč!

Poreč offers well-equipped marinas that have recognized, high-quality services. These marinas are well linked to other forms of transportation in the region. Additionally, for those who love nature, sports abound. The region is full of bike paths that stretch along the seashore as well as those which go through the rural hinterland, forests, castles, forts, churches and rustic villas. There is also first class trekking, fishing, tennis, golf and hunting.

Main music festivals include the Valamar Jazz Festival in July with concerts in the Euphrasian Basilica and on the island of Sveti Nikola.

Mr. Nenad Velenik, the Director of the Poreč Tourist Board sums it up, "Poreč is undeniably a tourism hotspot, renowned for its unbeatable geographical position that appeals to every type of traveler. Our destination is increasingly recognized as a place where life is comfortable year-round, thanks to the pleasant climate and abundant opportunities available. We are a preferred choice for year-round living, particularly among visitors from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. With universal appeal and a diversity of reasons to visit, there's something here for every type of traveler to cherish." ●

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Poreč
myporec.com

BOL: WHERE CROATIA'S BEST BEACH COMBINES WITH STUNNING SCENERY

The town of Bol in Croatia is a renowned vacation destination on the southern coast of Brač Island.

Nestled beneath the imposing mountain Vidova Gora, it enchants with amazing beaches, a beautiful stone village and incredible scenery.

It is especially famous for its Golden Horn, one of the most spectacular beaches in Croatia and is very much a paradise for water sports.

While Zlatni rat, the Golden Horn beach is the most famous, there are other beaches that offer different activities. The most pop-



ular sport is windsurfing, but many other sports and sea adventures are available too. Diving, jet-ski, banana, parasailing, kayaking, paddle-canoes, motorboats, water-skiing – can be found in various locations.

Bol is a must on the windsurfers' map. Enthusiasts from all over the world are coming here to catch some of beautiful waves as the windy sea channel between the islands of Brač and Hvar provide perfect conditions for windsurfing. As well, the pleasant Maestral wind makes Bol favorable place for kitesurfing.

In addition to sports, the town offers

romantic gourmet restaurants that are nestled into tiny stone alleyways and cobbled streets.

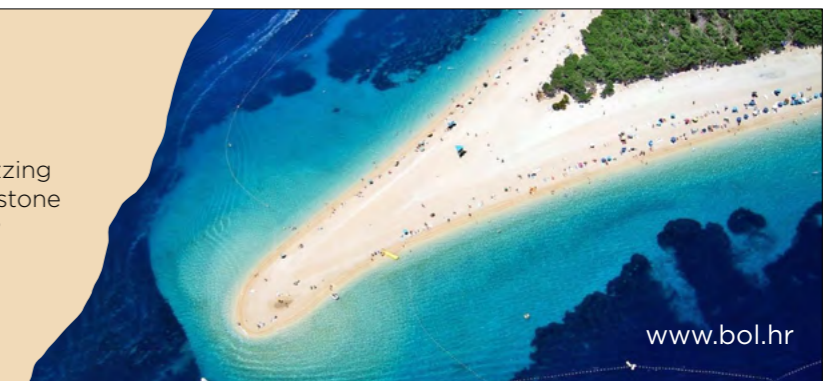
Not to be missed are the beautiful stone houses, churches and most structures that fill the town. The stone is actually quarried on the island and is so famous that the White House in the USA was actually built from stones from Brač!

With a bustling summer vibe, Bol is not to be missed, whether in the summer or the off-season, it is a true Adriatic retreat and getaway for those that are seeking the best of the Croatian island experience. ●

SYMBOL OF THE ADRIATIC.

This beach, translucent sea, madly buzzing locusts, permeating aroma of pines, a stone Venetian village beneath granite cliffs?
It cannot exist.

TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE



www.bol.hr



BORIS MILETIĆ

President, The Region of Istria

The markets of Austria, Germany, and Switzerland are vital to us, as reflected in the numbers. Many residents from these countries choose Istria as their holiday destination due to its proximity and accessibility by car. As a predominantly car-oriented region, almost two-thirds of our total tourists come from neighboring countries. These past two years we have showcased the advantage of our proximity and car accessibility, outperforming air destinations. While these markets are crucial, our priority lies in ensuring that everyone feels at home in Istria. Our region attracts numerous returning visitors, affectionately known as our “traditional guests” and friends.

Can you highlight any important infrastructure projects happening at the moment?

In terms of infrastructure, we have been focused on taking control of our region’s future. We are actively engaged in the European Union’s Green Deal, which involves transitioning our energy production from fossil fuels to renewable sources. This initiative aims to achieve Istria’s energy self-sufficiency and sustainability by constructing approximately 400 megawatts of solar power and around 160 megawatts from offshore wind farms. Additionally, we are committed to developing battery systems for e-mobility and producing green hydrogen. Energy sustainability and self-sufficiency are the primary infrastructure priorities for our county.

How is health tourism in Istria?

One growing segment within the tourism industry is health tourism, which is crucial for diversifying our tourist product. While summer holidays centered on sun and sea remain popular, gastronomy plays a significant role in attracting visitors. Our region boasts high-quality food, locally sourced ingredients, exceptional wines, and top-notch olive oil production. In the realm of health tourism, dental tourism takes the lead as well as unique rehabilitation centers. Additionally, neighboring Opatija offers thalassotherapy services. This niche has immense potential for growth in the future.

What is your final message for the readers of Forbes?

Istria is a safe and welcoming multicultural region that embraces diversity. The latest trends reflect the growth in both investment and the influx of people from Europe. We boast stunning natural beauty, pristine sea, land, and air, along with a rich cultural heritage. These advantages attract individuals who seek the benefits of a conducive environment for online businesses and a high quality of life. Being part of the European Union provides absolute legal certainty. With our entry into the Schengen area and the Eurozone, Istria offers a unique experience. Come and visit Istria, a truly exceptional destination. ●

ISTRIA: FOCUSED ON ENERGY, SELF-SUFFICIENCY & SUSTAINABILITY

Are there investment incentives that you offer to your European neighbors?

Lately, we have witnessed a remarkable surge in investments, particularly from Europeans, with notable interest coming from Austria, Germany, & Switzerland after Croatia’s entry into the European Union.

Furthermore, our recent inclusion in the Eurozone and the Schengen area has brought additional simplifications, prompting us to invest in numerous programs. These investments extend beyond individual and corporate ventures, and significant funds are available through the National Resilience and Recovery Program, facilitated by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports.

How have you strengthened ties with Austria, Germany, & Switzerland?



DENIS IVOŠEVIĆ

Istria Tourism Board Director



SUSTAINABLE ISTRIA: QUALITY TOURISM

What significance do high-end German, Austrian, & Swiss tourists hold for Istria?

German-speaking tourists are vital to our tourism industry, constituting over 56% of total arrivals and a sizable international presence. Our focus on high-end services goes beyond luxury; we strive to create extraordinary experiences. By combining Istria’s captivating coastal beauty with its historically rich inland, known for its wine, truffles, boutique hotels, and ancient towns, we offer an authentic and genuine adventure. We are dedicated to providing the finest services to our guests.

What makes Istria unique and how does location play into that?

Our strategic geographic position allows guests to reach us from Munich within five hours. However, our success goes beyond location. Through extensive planning and sustainable development, we have achieved competitiveness, shifted away from mass tourism, and prioritized our residents’ quality of life. We are committed to sustainable and responsible development, starting with the care of our planet and extending to the well-being and



lifestyle choices of individuals. By promoting a healthy population, we contribute to a healthier planet overall. In gastronomy, for example, we are exploring the importance of antioxidants in our nutrient-rich cuisine. After a five-year study, we have identified the top 10 Istrian ingredients with the highest antioxidant potential. This research is now being transformed into marketing and real products for our visitors.

How have you prioritized sustainability in the region?

I always emphasize the combination of sustainable and responsible development because it goes beyond the trendy use of the word sustainability. Our own development journey exemplifies truly sustainable practices. In 1995, we transitioned from mass tourism to investing in quality and the revitalization of Istria’s abandoned inland villages. Over 240 villages, untouched for over 50 years, presented a tremendous opportunity. Through the establishment of boutique hotels, rural villas, agri-tourism restaurants, wine routes, and truffle activities, we have rejuvenated more than 200 villages. This has not only brought sustainability to the area but also invited young families to return, breathe new life into the land, and make a living on our land from vineyards and orchards. This holistic approach to sustainability encompasses both environmental and social aspects, showcasing the broader impact of our responsible development.

Do you have a final message for readers?

When evaluating what is important in life, many individuals initially prioritize wealth. However, we believe that quality of life surpasses material riches. We emphasize the combination of quality of life and standard of living, recognizing that a high standard does not guarantee a high quality of life. Comparing life in Istria with a bustling European metropolis, we enjoy an additional one and a half hours each day due to less time spent in traffic, queues at banks, and searching for parking. This enhanced quality of life becomes even more significant when combined with our focus on gastronomy and tourism, which contribute to both our well-being and financial stability. Striving for a balance between an excellent quality of life and a favorable standard of living is what sets us apart. I invite readers to come and experience it for themselves. ●

BEAUTIFUL KVARNER: OPEN YEAR ROUND

It is no surprise that the Kvarner region of northern Croatia welcomes discerning tourists from across Europe all year round.

The sheer diversity of Kvarner is breathtaking. On the same day, tourists can take an early morning dip in pristine waters of an Adriatic cove, hike across a barren island of unsurpassed beauty, marvel at dolphins and rare vultures, and then as evening falls wander the narrow streets and walls of a medieval town center, feast on some of the finest cuisine in the country.

Tourism in the region dates back to the late 19th century. It was on the shores of Kvarner Bay that Croatia, then a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, first began developing sheltered seaside towns into exclusive resorts patronized by the likes of



Emperor Franz Joseph and his glamorous wife Sissi. The legacy of that time is particularly visible in the belle epoque architecture of the energetic port city of Rijeka and in upscale resorts such as Opatija.

As tourism authorities in the region promote sectors such as health and gastronomic tourism, increasing numbers of visitors are now coming to Kvarner to experience the

mainland's mild winter climate and explore its cultural treasures and culinary delights.

Dr. Irena Peršić Živadinov Director, Kvarner Region Tourist Board adds, "We often refer to our region as Croatia's hidden gem. Think of our region as a diamond with a million facets, each one shining a different brilliant color. You are sure to find something that catches your eye." ●



JADROLINIJA FERRIES: LIFELINE TO THE ISLANDS

Since the end of the 19th century, the pristine sea, fresh mountain air and enchanting history of Coastal Croatia have delighted tourists of all types and turned this scenic region into one of the most beloved destinations in South-Eastern Europe.

Jadrolinija, of course, is the state owned ferry company that services the many and stunning islands along the equally beautiful Croatian coast, also serving some foreign ports, mainly in Italy. The company commenced operations in 1947 when the fleet was

comprised of numerous ships. Since then and after Croatia gained its independence in the nineties, Jadrolinija has flourished.

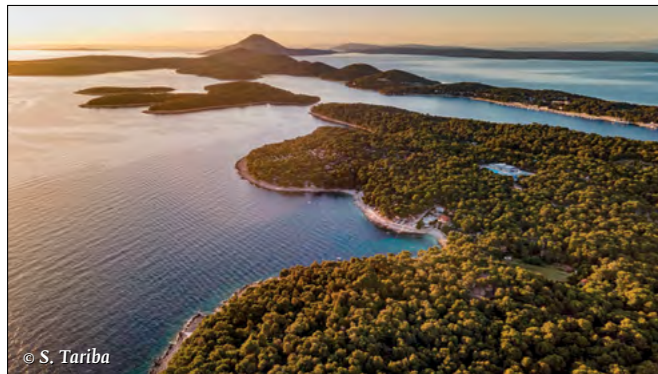
It is no exaggeration to say that without the company's ferry operations, the rapid expansion of Croatian tourism in recent years would simply not have been possible.

As the continued success of Jadrolinija depends on the satisfaction of its customers, the company is working hard to understand what today's maritime passengers are looking for and to exceed their expectations. The firm has stepped up its investments in training and professional development, with crew members and onshore personnel dedicated to improving skills, solving problems and putting the customer first, while at the same time create a renewed emphasis on quality management and data

analysis that is positioning the company for a new era of growth.

David Sopta the CEO, states, "With close connections to local island communities, we have transported supplies and equipment for more than 75 years and our company serves as a crucial lifeline. We transport not only food and people, but also invest in new housing, hotels, waste management, gasoline and emergency services.

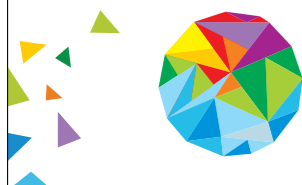
We are on the frontline of promoting sustainable development and economic growth by working with port municipalities. Each year, we take steps to modernize by incorporating green solutions, such as the digitalization of ticket sales and investing in more environmentally-conscious equipment." ●



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ANTE BILIĆ
Mayor of Trogir

STUNNING TROGIR IS THRIVING

What are the town's draws for tourists, especially those coming from Germany, Austria, & Switzerland?

Trogir is a top destination for nautical tourism, especially for German tourists who make up over 30% of all nautical traffic. Last year, our city won the best nautical tourism destination award from the Croatian Tourist Board. Trogir is also a UNESCO heritage site, which makes it an unmissable destination for cultural tourism. The city's gastronomy scene is thriving and expected to continue growing, and our well-connected infrastructure makes it easy to travel to and from Split airport, Zagreb, and other destinations in Croatia.

How has Trogir's heritage city branding strategy for cultural tourism unfolded in recent years, and what impact has it had on tourism?

We want people to understand that our city has more to offer than just its beaches. We are committed to showcasing a different side of tourism that highlights the richness of our community, including our city center. Our community takes pride in preserving key landmarks in the city's historic center. Our efforts are aimed not only at attracting tourists, but also at improving the quality of life for our citizens. We invite visitors to see how we live and experience the unique offering of our city beyond the typical beach attractions.

How important is sustainability & how is the EU program "Choose A Bike" making a difference in Trogir?

Our city is dedicated to sustainable mobility and has already started with three bike stations. We aim to reduce car traffic in the city center by promoting cycling and plan to install three more bike



MARIN PIVETA
Director, Trogir Tourist Board



stations soon. We are also connected to neighboring municipalities, allowing cyclists to travel to other destinations. We are investing heavily in sustainable projects, such as energy-efficient sewage systems and solar panels, to meet European standards. We are also currently working with the Central Dalmatia Tourist Board to develop old bike routes across the city and nearby islands, complementing our bike station project. This initiative is aimed at improving the cycling infrastructure in the city.

How do you balance preserving the city's historic center as a UNESCO world heritage site with modern development & tourism?

We aim to strike a balance between tourism and the needs of our citizens, avoiding over-tourism in the summer and ensuring year-round availability of essential services. We prioritize preserving the city's functioning for its residents, particularly in the city center, and preserving the city's historic charm. We've done this successfully so far through restrictions on restaurants and terraces and by preserving non-tourism-related businesses in the center.

Do you have a final message to our readers?

Our goal is to offer quality tourism, not just sun and sea, and differentiate ourselves from other destinations. We have diverse appeal to visitors seeking active tourism, gastronomy, and a taste of life in a culturally rich Croatian town. We are not solely dependent on tourism and have foreign investments in industries such as shipbuilding and repairs. Come and enjoy the slow rhythm of life in Trogir and explore all we have to offer. ●

TROGIR: A UNESCO & MARITIME TREASURE NOT TO BE MISSED

Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1997, Trogir is the best-preserved Romanesque-Gothic complex, not only in the Adriatic, but in all of Central Europe. So it comes as no surprise that tourism is the most important economic factor for the town and



the region where tourists visit all year long.

Built in the Romanesque and Baroque style, it is home to several amazing historic monuments, number one being the Cathedral of Saint Lawrence, which is a must see. Also, not to miss are the Kamerlengo Fortress, there is a spectacular view of city and surrounding area from the largest and oldest tower; Saint Mark's Tower, located in the Northeastern part of the islet; and the historic old center of the city. As well as multiple churches, palaces, towers and even a fortress to investigate.

According to Marin Piveta the Director of the Trogir Tourist Board, "Our town is a big draw for tourists, especially those coming from Germany, Austria, & Switzerland, where Trogir is a top destination for nautical tourism, especially for German tourists who make up over 30%

of all nautical traffic."

The Mayor Trogir Ante Bilić adds, "Last year, our city won the best nautical tourism destination award from the Croatian Tourist Board and is a not to be missed destination for cultural tourism. Additionally, our gastronomy scene is thriving and is expected to continue to grow. Our well-connected infrastructure makes it easy to travel to and from Split airport, Zagreb, and other destinations in Croatia."

In the summer numerous concerts and shows take place in Trogir, making it a real, living town for all who visit. This ancient and magnificent little gem of the past demands an audience to perform for. Its cobbled streets call out to the world travelers to stop by and stay for a while, at least long enough to rejuvenate before moving on to other destinations on their bucket list. ●



Since the Greeks, TROGIR has been home to artists, writers, culturists, bohemians and travellers.

Each of them drawn by this beautiful city of light & color, a UNESCO gem surrounded by the sea.

TROGIR, the city of masters



www.visitrogir.hr



MR. NENAD VELENIK
Director, Poreč Tourist Board

POREČ: A PIONEERING TOURISM DESTINATION FOR ECO-CONSCIOUS INITIATIVES

How important are high-end German, Austrian, & Swiss tourists, & does your geographical location contribute to attracting visitors from these regions?

The German-speaking market is crucial for our destination, accounting for 40% of annual overnight stays. Geographic and cultural proximity to this market is a crucial factor for guests when deciding on vacation destinations. As Poreč is accessible by car, it attracts visitors from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland who value proximity, safety, and clean beaches. We are a favored destination for these markets.

What makes Poreč unique?

Our city stands out as a premier tourist destination due to its infrastructure investments and a vibrant calendar of up to a hundred annual events. During the pre-season and sub-season, we excel in

comparison to similar destinations, including those in neighboring Italy. Moreover, Poreč is renowned as a sports city, hosting around a dozen sporting events each year. Our exceptional climate and sports facilities set us apart from other destinations in the region. We also stand out with our diverse culinary offerings, with 25 restaurants and taverns within the city. Additionally, there is a dedicated prosciutto house, along with thirty wine tastings and 25 olive oil tastings, with the olive oil being recognized as one of the best globally. Visitors can indulge in excellent wine, delicious cuisine, and the world's finest olive oil.

How do you balance substantiality with new projects in tourism?

We take pride in being a pioneering destination for eco-conscious initiatives. Each year, several ecological actions, including the notable "blue flag" program, are carried out. Poreč leads Croatia and Europe in raising 21 "blue flags" annually, symbolizing the city's commitment to a clean coastline and preventing pollution. Environmental awareness remains a top priority.

What is your final message to the readers of Forbes?

Poreč is undeniably a tourism hotspot, renowned for its unbeatable geographical position that appeals to every type of traveler. Our destination is increasingly recognized as a place where life is comfortable year-round, thanks to the pleasant climate and abundant opportunities available throughout the calendar. We are a preferred choice for year-round living, particularly among visitors from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Even outside the tourist season, our city continues to attract interest from these markets, as guests recognize it as a destination offering a relaxed and enjoyable lifestyle throughout the year. With year round appeal and a diversity of reasons to visit, there's something here for every type of traveler to cherish. ●



VALTER GLAVIČIĆ
Mayor of Labin



ASTRID GLAVIČIĆ
Director, Labin Tourist Board

How can you compete with Italian coastal towns or other Croatian coastal towns and cities?

To stand out in the competitive tourism industry in Istria, we have really invested in preserving the natural beauty and environment in Labin. Visitors can tell that we take care of our stunning beaches on the eastern coast. Additionally, we are proud to be a winner of the European Commission's European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity Awards, as it recognizes our commitment to inclusiveness, diversity, multiculturalism, and equality. The competition recognizes our efforts to promote inclusion and create a society without discrimination. Labin feels like a winner already, and the recognition from the European Commission is a great achievement.

What is the historical significance of Labin, once a fisherman's village that has become one of the jewels of Istria?

Rabac was once a fishing village connected to the old town by a road. In the 1960s, hotels were built, resulting in a higher ratio of quality hotels and apartments than in other coastal areas and a reputation of excellence. We have generations of hospitality experience, and this tradition is a source of pride for us. Rabac's transformation into a tourist destination was planned with the help of the World Bank and state support, resulting in a rational and successful development. Rabac stands out among other towns because we have avoided overdevelopment of apartments by staying true to our historical and cultural roots.

Final message for readers of Forbes?

We have all grown up with tourism in our region, and that is why we are good hosts. We pass this hospitality down to our children and it is part of our way of life. This is why I believe that tourists from Austria, Germany, and Switzerland love coming to our region. They feel comfortable and at home here, and it is also a great place to live. As a tourist myself, I do not want to be in a crowded place, but rather to learn and educate myself while on vacation. I hope that our visitors will appreciate their vacation here not only as a time of relaxation but also as a time of learning and discovery. ●

LABIN: OFF-SEASON OUTDOOR AMBITIONS

How are you currently working to promote the off-season in Labin?

We are investing in focus on the pre-season and off-season, especially for outdoor activities. Unlike other tourist destinations, Istria's Labin and Rabac have the advantage of lower peak attendance. Our ambition is not to fill every bed, but to provide a unique experience through our hilly landscape and natural footpaths. We prioritize environmental preservation and maintaining our natural resources.

What is Labin's unique appeal to German, Austrian and Swiss tourists?

Foremost, we are an ideal destination for car travelers so we draw many tourists from these countries. Apart from our many other reasons to visit, we also have a rich cultural heritage in the old town of Labin, which our Austrian and German visitors appreciate deeply. Tourists from these countries specifically recognize the weight and value of our historical attractions because of our historical ties.





IRENA PERŠIĆ ŽIVADINOV
Managing Director, Kvarner Region Tourist Board



DISCOVERING KVARNER'S HIDDEN GEMS

How are you working to develop the off-season?

Tourism is the backbone of the economy in the region and the entire country of Croatia, contributing to around 25-30% of the GDP. Over the last decade, there has been a 50% increase in total tourism overnight stays in the region, with a nearly 90% increase in pre- and post-season visits. The focus is on distributing visitors throughout the year and not just the peak summer season, which is better for our economy, sustainability, and provides a more enjoyable experience for visitors and residents.

What draws visitors to the Kvarner region?

The Kvarner region has a lot to offer, including outdoor activities, health and wellness, medical tourism, gastronomy, culture, and stunning natural beauty. Sustainability is a priority and the authorities are working on different European projects to promote tourism while preserving the natural and cultural heritage of the region. Additionally, some of the region's cities and areas have received green destination awards. The area is home to numerous protected landscapes, forest parks, caves, providing peaceful atmospheres, original flavors, and outdoor activities for tourists to experience.

What can you tell us about the gastronomy in the region?

Gastronomy is a major reason to visit Kvarner, especially in the pre-season and off-season, with some of the best restaurants and excellent local wines. The Tourist Board gives a quality rating to restaurants, and many local products have received high praise. The region has unique local wine varieties and our natural resources make fresh, high-quality ingredients widely available. The region's diversity, with its sea, islands, and mountains offers different types of gastronomy, including seafood, typical regional dishes, forest products like mushrooms, and wild game.

How do you balance sustainability with new tourism projects?

For the region of Croatia, including Kvarner, sustainability is

crucial as the number of tourists increase every year. The focus is on maintaining quality and sustainability, rather than mass tourism. The aim is to have sustainable businesses integrated into all areas, including hotels, campsites, and tours. Raising the quality of the tourist experience may mean fewer tourists, but they will spend more in the region in the long-term and maintain a high quality of life for residents. The preservation of over 30 protected natural areas in the region is a major attraction for tourists, and many destinations are working towards becoming sustainable. The region's sustainability culture is being passed down through an EU project to preserve it for future generations.

Do you have a final message for the readers of Forbes?

We often refer to our region as Croatia's hidden gem and I wholeheartedly encourage visitors to come explore. Our region prides itself on providing high-quality products and experiences to our guests. It is a destination that will not disappoint, with something to offer year-round. Think of the Kvarner region as a diamond with a million facets, each one shining a different brilliant color. You are sure to find something that catches your eye. ●



DAVID SOPTA
CEO, Jadrolinija

FERRIES FUELING CROATIAN TOURISM

Jadrolinija's ferries are an institution of Croatian Tourism. How are you growing and improving your services with the tourism boom happening in Croatia?

We specialize in operating on the Croatian Coast, facing unique challenges due to the many uninhabited islands. With close connections to local island communities, we have transported supplies and equipment for more than 75 years. We are on the frontlines of promoting sustainable development and economic growth on the islands by working with port municipalities. Each year, we are taking steps to modernize by incorporating green solutions, for example the digitalization of ticket sales and investing in more environmentally-conscious equipment.

What is your relationship with the local island communities & their economies?

Our company serves as a crucial lifeline for the islands. We transport not only food and people, but also invest in various aspects such as new housing, hotels, waste management, and gasoline. Additionally, we provide support for the emergency services like first aid and firefighting. The islands we serve each have relatively small populations, which means they have closer ties with the mainland for services like education and healthcare. Therefore, we adjust

our sailing timetable based on the needs of the local community, ensuring that we cater to their needs effectively. For instance, we time our trips to accommodate school and work schedules.

How many vessels, including passenger ships & ferries, are in your fleet?

Currently, we operate 53 vessels, including fast ferries, passenger ships, and night ferries. We are in the process of selling one night ferry and purchasing another, as we constantly renew our fleet to meet demand. By year-end, we plan to increase our roll-on/roll-off ferries up from 37 to accommodate island transportation. We are also exploring the possibility of building a new family roll-on/roll-off ferry, taking into account the island bridges and neighborhood taxes. We adjust our vessels to meet the unique needs of each island, including capacity for cars and passengers.

What big projects are on the horizon for your company?

We are exploring green technologies for our European fleet and beyond. To make this happen, we collaborate with port authorities to ensure they are ready to handle the new fuels and technologies. During the busy season, we work to manage traffic flow smoothly, requiring port modernization and investment in digitalization and equipment. Our goal is to support our new ships with updated ports.

A final message for our readers?

We are thrilled to welcome you to Croatia, a safe, clean, and breathtakingly beautiful country. Our ships are ready to take you on a journey of a lifetime, as we believe that the first step to a great holiday is the comfort and luxury on board our vessels. You can easily book your tickets through our website and embark on a journey of exploring the magnificent Croatian islands. We cannot wait to receive you and provide you with an unforgettable experience. So, come and join us in Croatia and enjoy the best of what we have to offer! ●



HVAR: RENAISSANCE ARCHITECTURE ABOUNDS ON THIS GLORIOUS ISLAND

Hvar's stunning beaches, clear waters and pulsating nightlife have turned this once undiscovered destination into Croatia's undisputed capital of sun-and-sea holidays. **The Mayor Rikardo Novak adds, "The city has a rich cultural heritage dating back to the time of the Greeks, Romans, and Venetian Republic. It started its tourism**

journey in 1868 and has been recognized as one of the top 10 islands in Europe and worldwide for many years, receiving the award for the best island in Europe in 2019. Although there are beautiful and successful islands in Croatia, Hvar consistently ranks among the top in the world."

It has no fewer than six UNESCO-recognized cultural attractions that can be explored. Of these five, perhaps the most celebrated is the Mediterranean diet: it is hard to think of any cuisine that is healthier than Hvar's, which is characterized by light food, fresh fish, home-made olive oil and wines made from indigenous grapes that have basked in sunshine year-round.

Meanwhile, authorities are also investing in an increasing number of sporting events and cultural attractions, such as

the long-standing Hvar Summer Lavender Festival.

While Hvar still offers a warm welcome to young and carefree tourists from around the world, the island is also developing its appeal to older and more affluent visitors. Five-star hotels have opened to cater to this demographic and the frequency of ferry crossings to the mainland is increasing.

Tourists have also chosen to discover the narrow streets and Renaissance buildings of the old town, a relaxed and atmospheric port town which is lined with art galleries, ice-cream parlors and welcoming restaurants. One of the oldest continuously inhabited settlements in all of Europe, around Stari Grad there are olive fields and vineyards that have been cultivated without interruption since the arrival of the first Greek settlers in the fourth century BC. ●



A unique fusion of luxurious Mediterranean nature, rich cultural and historical heritage. Hvar Island leaves guests with unforgettable experiences.



HVAR: RICH IN HOSPITALITY & CULTURE

What is unique about Hvar island?

The city has a rich cultural heritage dating back to the time of the Greeks, Romans, and Venetian Republic. It started its tourism journey in 1868 and has been recognized as one of the top 10 islands in Europe and worldwide for many years, receiving the award for the best island in Europe in 2019. Although there are beautiful and successful islands in Croatia, Hvar consistently ranks among the top 10 in the world.

What tourism brand does the island want to portray?

Over the past 30 years, tourism here has transformed, with guests staying for shorter periods, but nautical tourism remains significant. The city aims to focus on cultural tourism and showcase its rich history year-round. However, during the peak season of July and August, sea, sun and fun tourism also attracts crowds.

Croatia has become an increasingly popular destination for digital nomads. Would you encourage digital nomads to come settle in Hvar?

Digital nomads have already started migrating to our island, and this is both our present and future. People from big cities and other countries have purchased properties and settled down here for extended periods. The pandemic has contributed to this trend as people have left their apartments in urban areas and come to our island to enjoy nature. I believe that this trend will continue, with more digital nomads making our island their permanent or temporary home, and we welcome them.

How has the new fast ferry from Split affected tourism?

Ten years ago, transporting tourists by ship was difficult due to the limited number of lines, but over the years, the transportation options have increased significantly. Now, there are several daily connections by catamarans, boats, and ferries from Dubrovnik, Korčula, and Split during the busy season that lasts for about three months. It has really increased the number of visitors we have

RIKARDO NOVAK

Mayor of Hvar

that only come for day trips, even though Hvar deserves more than just a one day stay!

Could you highlight on going or future development projects for Hvar?

While new 5-star hotels have opened in Hvar and Starigrad, there is limited space for new hotel construction according to spatial plans. Instead, luxury villas are being developed gradually. However, overcrowding the island with too many hotels and tourists would spoil its beauty. We would now like to focus on housing for the workers on the island during the tourist season.

Do you have a final message for the readers of Forbes?

Your readers should choose to come to Hvar and experience the beauty of nature in Croatia, with its cristal clear sea, bright blue sky and hidden coves. The hospitality of the city of Hvar has been recognized globally, with 155 years of experience in tourism, ensuring that guests have a relaxing and pressure-free vacation. Visitors can enjoy good food, entertainment, and comfortable accommodation while being taken care of by hospitable locals. Experience a feeling of freedom and timelessness while enjoying the natural beauty and hospitality that Hvar has to offer. ●





ZLATKO KOMADINA

Prefect, Primorje-Gorski Kotar County

What are the investment incentives available in your region?

Our county is widely renowned for its exceptional geostrategic location. Situated at the intersection where the Mediterranean deeply permeates Central Europe, this advantage has propelled us to become the primary Croatian port and a prominent transit hub. Furthermore, we proudly serve as the energy center of Croatia. Notably, we host the largest refinery on the Adriatic and the LNG terminal, alongside an extensive transportation system facilitating oil logistics. Significant investments are underway in expanding our port facilities to accommodate the largest ships, leveraging its status as the deepest sea in this Mediterranean region. These ongoing developments are closely intertwined with major road infrastructure projects, connecting the terminal to the highway, and effectively linking our capital, Rijeka. In conjunction with these endeavors, substantial investments are being made to establish logistics zones that encompass sports and services. While Primorje-Gorski Kotar is undeniably a popular tourist destination, distinguishing itself from other counties is the fact it encompasses the largest Adriatic islands. It is also home to Croatia's picturesque Gorski Kotar, characterized by forested and hilly landscapes. In line with our tourist slogan, "Wealth of Diversity," each part of our county boasts its own unique climate, captivating landscapes, intriguing historical narratives, and rich cultural heritage. It is this multifaceted charm that truly exemplifies the wealth of diversity within our region. Here, we truly have a little bit of everything.

Do you have a final message for the readers of Forbes?

Our reputation stems from our exceptional hospitality, openness, and regional characteristics. Within Croatia, our region is renowned as a multicultural and multi-ethnic region, encompassing diverse nationalities and religions. However, what truly sets us apart is the captivating tapestry of stories that can be encountered daily here. In fact, one can explore a different destination each day for a full week, an experience that is difficult to envision elsewhere in Croatia or even in Europe. Our region's richness lies not only in its natural beauty but also in the mosaic of cultures, traditions, and experiences that converge harmoniously within our borders. It is this extraordinary blend that makes us an exceptional and truly unique destination. ●

PRIMORJE-GORSKI KOTAR COUNTY: RENOWNED FOR ITS EXCEPTIONAL GEOSTRATEGIC LOCATION

What has been the impact of the Euro on the local economy and how will it better business in the region?

Croatia has undergone a remarkable journey as a nation, marked by its separation from Yugoslavia and subsequent achievements. The country has made significant strides in fully integrating into the European Union, while also working towards the introduction of the euro and joining the Schengen area. These accomplishments represent extraordinary milestones for Croatia, offering tremendous prospects for enhanced quality of life and economic growth, free from barriers. It is important to note that Croatia's entry into the European Union occurred during a challenging period, yet it has emerged as a testament to the country's resilience and determination. The introduction of the euro has brought about some initial adjustments, including a moderate increase in prices, but overall, it sets the stage for a prosperous future for Croatia.



IVA BELAJ ŠANTIĆ

Director, Hvar Tourist Board

HVAR: THE ISLAND TO INDULGE ALL FIVE SENSES!

What makes Hvar a unique destination?

Guests from Austria, Germany, and Switzerland can discover a true paradise here with just a two hour drive. Hvar has been frequently promoted as party destination but it is so much more than just a party, it offers a rich cultural and historical heritage beyond the town itself. Cultural tourists can explore numerous archaeological sites, including Greek and Roman mosaics. We boast great weather, excellent gastronomy and superb wines, a variety of outdoor activities, and six UNESCO World Heritage inscriptions. Visitors can indulge all five senses and experience the island's vibrant energy and captivating beauty.

What tourism brand does the island want to portray?

We offer year-round activities, with summer being ideal for outdoor enthusiasts. From March to October, visitors can enjoy hiking, outdoor activities, and natural beauty. In peak season, the town becomes a vibrant multicultural hub. Despite hosting 167,000 visitors last year, Hvar offers secluded beaches for people seeking a peaceful escape. We have a long tradition of providing quality tourism that began over 155 years ago with visitors from the Austro-Hungarian empire seeking a winter escape.

Croatia has become increasingly popular for digital nomads, Hvar being a top destination. Would you encourage digital nomads to come settle here?

I highly encourage digital nomads to consider Hvar island as a destination, as we can offer everything that larger cities can provide with the stunning natural surroundings and beaches of the island. Our community is open-minded and welcoming, supporting those who decide to make Hvar their home. With the Split airport only one hour away, it's easy to access other European cities.

Could you highlight ongoing or any future development project for the island?

There are two ongoing projects involving the construction of a new health center and a sports center. These new facilities will provide opportunities for different competitions, as well as the potential to welcome international clubs for winter preparation or to host health-related projects. The health center, in particular, will help the area return to its roots of health tourism and is a major investment project for Hvar.

While Croatia does not claim to offer the same tropical experience as some Pacific islands, the number of days of sunshine are among the highest in Europe!

You have a final message for readers?

Hvar provides a way of living that was once common in Europe in the 1980s, with a vibrant tourism season that transforms it into a metropolis of the sea. Hvar is a paradise for long or short stays, and we welcome digital nomads to work and live to enjoy the beautiful surroundings and tight-knit community. Whether you're seeking peace and quiet or a bustling atmosphere, Hvar has it all. ●

**TOURISM'S
POTENTIAL
IS NOW
RECOGNIZED
MORE WIDELY
THAN EVER**



“The restart of tourism everywhere brings hope. It is the ultimate cross-cutting and people-to-people sector. It touches on almost everything we do – and everything we care about. The most important assets in tourism are its people and the planet. We must ensure the best support for both,”
Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General of the UNWTO.



United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres also states, “Tourism has the power to foster inclusion, protect nature & promote cultural understanding. We must rethink and reinvent the sector to ensure its sustainability.”

BOL: A SUSTAINABLE & YEAR-ROUND APPEAL FOR TOURISM

Interview with ANTE TRUTANIĆ
Director, Bol Tourist Board

What are your city's upcoming projects?

Our top priority is investing in a larger marina, as our current harbor can only accommodate 50 sailboats or yachts. Additionally, we are exploring the possibility of restoring and reopening a large hotel that is very special to the city. This initiative has the potential to revitalize the area and bring new life to the old town, making it a bustling hub of activity in addition to the popular Golden Horn beach.

How important are Germany, Austria, and Switzerland to your market?

We are pleased to work closely with visitors from all of these countries. The German market has the most significant presence in Bol, with more than 11,000 German visitors last year. Austria follows closely behind in overnight stays, making it a strong market for the town. While there is room for improvement in attracting Swiss visitors, Bol aims to change this in the coming years by emphasizing our diverse, sustainable and year-round appeal.

Bol is widely known for its outdoor tourism attractions, particularly its numerous tracking and cycling routes. We plan to expand

these opportunities throughout the entire island, by connecting with smaller towns and cities and creating a more integrated network of roads. With the growing popularity of electric bicycles, it's easier than ever to explore the island on two wheels. Starting in Bol and finishing in Supetar, you can now embark on an electric bicycle journey across the island with ease.

How do Bol's tracking and cycling routes diversify the tourist season?

While Bol is known for its beach tourism during the peak season from July to August, we recognize that visitors are seeking other activities in spring and autumn when swimming may not be ideal but the weather is still extremely pleasant. This is where our outdoor tourism attractions come into play, with our cycling and hiking routes being popular options that draw many visitors. Even during the cooler months, such as February, with temperatures around 20 degrees Celsius, visitors can still explore the beautiful outdoors without needing a jacket.

Apart from the marina, what are the city's other infrastructure plans?

In today's world, sustainability is at the forefront of our plans and we are committed to investing in projects that demonstrate our independence and self-sustainability as an island community. One of our key initiatives is to expand the cultivation of vineyards and olive trees. Brač is already a major producer of Croatian olive oil, accounting for about 30% of the country's total output, and we aim to establish more olive tree farms and vineyards in the region, particularly in Bol.

Do you have a final message to our readers?

Bol has it all, and with ferry connections and a convenient autobahn connection, visitors from Austria, Germany, and Switzerland can easily reach us. Our island boasts natural beauty and locally produced olive oil, top-quality vineyards, and delicious seafood caught fresh by restaurant owners. Our restaurants offer a wide range of local cuisine that is sure to delight foodies. Come enjoy all that Bol has to offer. ●

COASTAL CROATIA: A STRATEGIC SAILING DESTINATION

For sailors of all ages and all abilities, from complete novices or even young families to teenagers on party boats or even hardened ocean-going skippers, there are few adventures in yachting which can match the experience of cruising along the Croatian coast.

As well as the pure joy of discovering hidden beaches, islets, sheltered bays and historic harbors along the Adriatic, with the

excitement of navigating these turquoise waters under ever-changing wind and sea conditions, Croatia provides sailors with some of the finest marinas in the region, with affordable berths and world-class facilities helping crews refresh and relax after a long day at sea.

From May to the end of September, as the sun comes out and the waters warm up, the Adriatic becomes one of the world's undisputed yachting capitals, with sailing schools and chartering companies welcoming tourists from all corners of the planet, many of whom will be experiencing the joy of sailing for the very first time.

The most popular option is for passengers to charter a boat with a qualified skipper, often starting from northern Dalmatian cities such as Zadar and Šibenik. The yachts will then sail leisurely along the Adriatic coast-

line for a week, visiting the northern islands of Krk, Cres, and even down to Split, making frequent stops for swimming off the beaches and coves of islands such as Hvar, Korčula and Brač. More experienced, certified sailors can join a flotilla or charter their own boats for the ultimate Adriatic adventure.

For nautical visitors looking for an even more exclusive experience, Croatia also offers the one-of-a-kind chance to overnight in a series of heritage lighthouses all along the coast. Plovput, the state maritime safety company which owns and maintains the lighthouses, has begun working with private sector partners to renovate the structures and lease them as high-end holiday apartments. "It is a truly unique opportunity," says Mate Perišić, Director of Plovput. "All of our lighthouses are still functioning, with their lights spinning above our guests in the dark. ●



Sailing in Hvar island's aquatorium.

PLACES NOT TO BE MISSED ON THE COAST!



FILIP ZORIČIĆ

Mayor, Pula

Pula: The city where the past lives in the present

Pula offers a wealth of cultural treasures waiting to be discovered. We have an incredible Roman amphitheater, a smaller Roman arena, and even a massive fortress from the Austrian-Hungarian empire. It is amazing to see how we have turned 3,000 years of history and culture into an exciting tourist experience today. We are thrilled to share these gems with the world. Our prime location, fascinating history, and vibrant culture are gifts we want to spread far and wide, all while keeping Pula sustainable and thriving.



VESNA FERENAC

Director, Novigrad Tourist Board

Novigrad: Breathtaking & beautiful, a town with soul

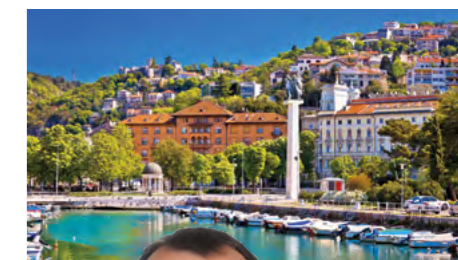
When visitors come to our town, they find a place that is not only breathtakingly beautiful but also retains a distinct Mediterranean charm, as if it has a soul. They often remark about the presence of the locals who still call this place home, like the fisherman they spot every morning. This sense of a living community is something truly special. Moreover, our town is incredibly pleasant and vibrant, characterized by the striking sight of colorful umbrellas adorning the streets. These umbrellas have become an integral part of our town's identity and branding, complementing the colorful image we established a few years ago. It's an experience that engages all the senses and fosters a genuine connection with our tight-knit community.

MARKO FILIPOVIĆ

Mayor, Rijeka

Rijeka: Where Culture & Authenticity Abound

In 2020, Rijeka proudly held the title of European Capital of Culture. The legacy of this project lies in the development of the cultural infrastructure and the immense knowledge gained by the dedicated team involved. The Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, the new Museum of the City of Rijeka, and the City Library stand as lasting achievements of this event. The Art Quarter known as Benčić has also been a significant cultural investment since Croatia's independence. Our art and culture experiences have fostered international contacts and established a valuable network that continues to benefit us today. Our priority remains the well-being of the citizens of Rijeka and all those involved in cultural programs.



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