



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 Lavander 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.





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. ●

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





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 flight. 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 Austro Hungarian visitors seeking a winter escape.

IVA BELAJ ŠANTIĆ

Director, Hvar Tourist Board

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. ●