



## THE GANNET

# croatian rhapsody

Baroque quartets, beguiling wines and superb cuisine: the isle of Korcula is a feast for the senses

Successful investment bankers can do many things in their retirement – play a lot of golf, buy a racehorse, mess about in boats – but few can have achieved as much as hotelier, restaurateur and patron of the arts Michael Unsworth.

Determined to build the Croatian island of Korcula a reputation for high-end tourism, he turned an old palace into a top-notch boutique hotel and restaurant – the Lesic Dimitri Palace – and in 2012, indulging another of his passions, launched an annual baroque music festival that chimes

harmoniously with the island's glorious medieval architecture.

The Gannet flew by in spring, during Korcula's food and drink festival: the island boasts not just excellent restaurants, but some terrific wines (Grk and Posip, two indigenous white grape varieties, are particularly beguiling), lovely olive oils and a pasta – makaruni – traditionally made by wrapping discs of dough around knitting needles. The restaurant terrace at the

hotel, overlooking crystal waters, is the perfect setting to enjoy chef Marko Gajski's skilful ways with local produce.

### Raw red prawns are served atop little puddles of hollandaise

And judging by Gajski's painterly approach to plating, he has an artistic streak too. Raw red prawns (pictured) – sweet, sticky, delicious – are served with their crisp, feathery, deep-fried shells; beneath, little puddles of hollandaise

and tiny flecks of spring onion add savour. A joyous tangle of squid bathes in a rich pool of bottarga and sea urchin-flavoured

sauce; a sizeable chunk of seabass, its skin perfectly crisp, is partnered with braised chicory and a clever assembly of pumpkin seeds, cuttlefish and Ibérico ham. A dessert of chocolate caramel features pointillist dabs of cream and orange jelly, tiny shards of preserved orange zest and a scattering of sea salt. Gajski's food is not merely pretty, however: his palate is the equal of his palette.

Korcula is on the same latitude as southern Tuscany and the landscape – olive groves, vineyards and cypress trees – is similarly verdant. Drop by Eko Skoj, a delightful organic food shop and tasting room a few minutes' drive from the hilly warren of lanes in Korcula Old Town, to try its homemade olive oils and grappa-based liqueurs flavoured with damask rose, fig, carob, orange and hillside herbs, then head for lunch at Konoba Mate and install yourself on the terrace.

The makaruni here is terrific, sauced with whatever is in season: almond pesto, perhaps, or fennel and cream. I had it with a simple tomato sauce and it was superb, as were gnudi made with ricotta from goats that feast on wild herbs, bitter wild greens and nutmeg, then finished with sage and brown butter. A fluffy frittata, made with smoked ham and wild asparagus, was excellent, too, and the local wines flowed like water.

Korcula has a thoroughly civilised, laidback, grown-up aura about it and – in terms of food and drink – punches well above its weight: music to my ears, even without the strains of a string quartet in the background. **BILL KNOTT**

**LESIC DIMITRI PALACE**, UJL DON PAVLA 1 (LDPALACE.COM). **EKO SKOJ**, BARINA 96, ZRNOVO 225 (EKOSKOJ.COM). **KONOBA MATE**, PUPNAT 28, PUPNAT 20274 (KONOBAMATE.HR).

## THE GOBLET

# ale and arty

Craft beers from creative microdistilleries are becoming the toast of the art world at Tate Modern

There are many reasons I love the Tate Modern: it's a place where you can lose yourself for hours in front of a single Rothko, or unleash the children on vast installations in the spectacular Turbine Hall; where you can witness performance art in the morning and avant-garde gigs at night, admire (or lament) 360 degree views of London from the top of the Switch House, eat delicious food and find gifts for that person who has everything.

I love what the Tate is doing for craft beer too. At any one time, you can find around a dozen interesting craft brews behind the bar on Level 1 (plus a bespoke gin from microdistillery Sacred). And it regularly commissions limited edition brews from interesting microbreweries all over the country to mark special exhibitions or milestones in the institution's history.

To celebrate the opening of the Switch House in 2016, the Tate collaborated with Bermondsey

brewery Fourpure on a one-off pale ale. The futuristic-looking can it came in was designed by Peter Saville, the artist behind iconic album covers for Joy Division, Roxy Music and New Order. Other collaborations have included a Lichtenstein pale ale with Scotland's BrewDog, a Paul Klee wheat beer with London Fields Brewery and an LS Lowry ale with Manchester's Marble Brewery (all with matching artwork).

And the Tate has done more quirky experiments too. For the *Artist and Empire* exhibition it commissioned an extra-hoppy IPA from Harbour Brewing Co in Cornwall and shipped it by sea to Tate Liverpool, in a nod to the original India pale ales that were heavily hopped to last the voyage from England to India. "Beer is just four ingredients, but it can be done a thousand ways," says Tate's beer-mad ops director Andrew Downs. "There are so many things you can play with – different yeasts, barrel

ageing, acidity, hops, the type of malt – and so much room for creativity."

On the last Thursday of each month, the Tate Modern hosts a Tap Takeover where you can meet a guest brewer and taste a range of its beers for just £15. Recent highlights have been Welsh microbrewery West by Three and the fantastic Burning Sky in East Sussex (which does some exceptional saisons). A lot of these breweries also have great artwork – and the Tate likes them to make a feature of it. When Alphabet did a

takeover, it brought its illustrator and encouraged people to design their own labels. Burnt Mill from Suffolk created a short film for its event.

Upcoming takeovers include Gipsy Hill in October and a double-header from Northern Monk and Wylam in November. And from what Downs tells me, there are plenty more new beers in the pipeline. "The Tate is about giving a platform to creative people," he says, "and this is just another way of doing that." **ALICE LASCELLES**

**TATE MODERN**, TATE.ORG.UK.

