



UNEXPECTED EXPERIENCE *of Zagreb County*



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Close to the capital, in whichever direction you go, it is easy to come across gentle landscapes and impressive lookouts. But this area offers so much more than expected. Each of the three wine roads hides its surprises. The Plešivica wine road will treat your palate with top-quality sparkling wines, natural wines and amphora wines, and there is also the first Croatian country gourmet restaurant that uses only natural, local ingredients. The Samobor wine road is home to bermet, and the Zelina wine road is ruled by the Kraljevina variety (kraljevina meaning kingdom). If you turn off the wine road and head towards Ivanić Grad, you will encounter the experience of tasting wine enriched with urban music and art. If you find yourself in Rude, you will have the opportunity to taste the first protected gastronomic product in Zagreb County - rudarska greblica (miner's cake).



We mentioned truffles and yes, they can really be found in the soil of Turopolje forests and no, they are no different from the famous Istrian truffles. The only difference is perhaps that the Turopolje truffles will occasionally be on the menu of one of the oldest indigenous species of pigs, in addition to the menus of local restaurants! The Turopolje pig does not tolerate typical indoor breeding, but spends a full two years running in the woods, which is why its meat, interspersed with intermuscular fat, has been declared one of the highest quality foods.

Below the surface of the earth in the vicinity of Ivanić Grad, there is another valuable rarity: naphthenic oil, from which naphthalene is obtained by distillation, a mineral oil whose benefits for human health were also written

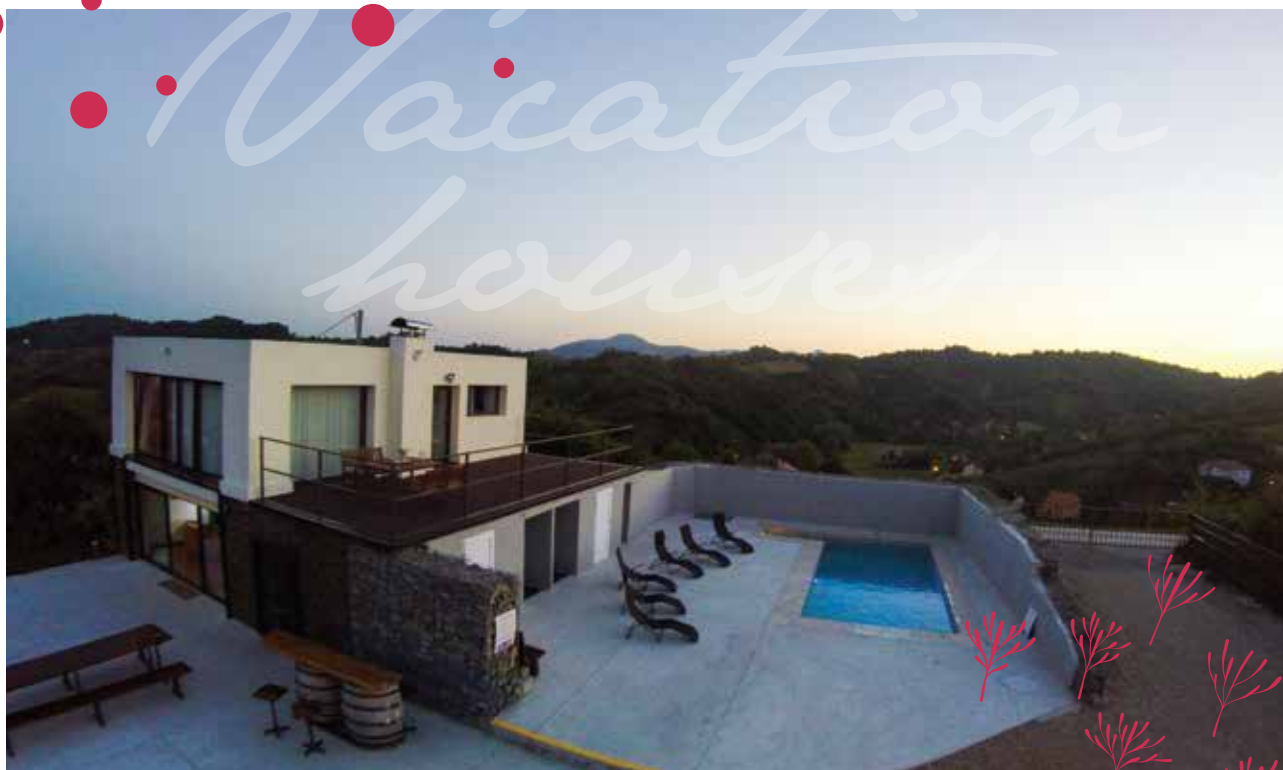
about by Marco Polo. Today, Special Hospital for Medical Rehabilitation Naftalan uses this mineral oil and healing thermal water to help treat rheumatism, joint diseases and skin diseases, and for many it is a welcome detachment from classic wellness treatments.

Although the entire Zagreb County is within easy reach from the capital and as such perfect for a one day trip, to really immerse yourself in all the experiences hidden here, it is not out of the question to spend the night in one of the traditional or very modern holiday homes in this area. Whether you want to end your day in a Turopolje wooden house, with a fireplace and a romantic dinner with truffles that you gathered earlier that day... or watch the sunset from a terrace and toast with one of the bottles of fine wine of this region, unexpected experiences of Zagreb County are waiting for you to enjoy and share them with others.



■ VACATION HOUSES

First of all, travelling is an escape from a familiar routine, and holiday is rest and relaxation in a safe and pleasant environment. On top of that, imagine having a whole house and a garden just for yourself, without having to travel far – it sounds like a perfect combination. Our upper-class ancestors used to have country houses and spend their weekends there. There's no reason not to follow their example today. Tucked away in Zagreb's green surroundings, there are comfortable holiday houses made to become the new countryside paradise. They offer privacy, peace and quiet, freedom, beautiful nature and idyllic rural landscape – life far more simple than the one you know. Even though it sounds like a dream in these turbulent times, tailor-made holiday to suit your own needs has never been closer.



■ GASTRONOMY

The phrase “from the farm to the table” is not just a modern trend in Zagreb County. It is, and always has been, a way of life. And the table is by no means small.



The Green Ring surrounding Zagreb is primarily a rural region; the food from these fertile fields has always reached Zagreb. A good portion of the best known and loved traditional recipes originated here, in these villages, from ingredients that were always nearby and available, as the hardworking hands turned them into simple everyday dishes or family feasts. Eggs, dairy products, flour, semolina, seasonal fruits and vegetables from the garden, less often meat – these form the foundation of the homestyle cuisine of Zagreb County. The entire region, including Prigorje, Moslavina, Turopolje, Jastrebarsko, Samobor and Zaprešić, all nurture a similar culinary identity, though each of these areas have their own distinctive, local delicacies. The restaurants and households of Zagreb County respect tradition, and are waiting to tell their story on your plate – it is up to you to visit them and explore.

■ WINE ROAD

If the chance takes you to one of the wine roads of Zagreb County, you can be sure that you will have not only the experience of top wines, but also a series of incredible adventures, regardless of whether you are traveling with a special person, larger company or family.



The Plešivica Wine Road will take you straight among the magical hills along which kilometers of vineyards stretch out. In recent years, Plešivica has established itself as a serious wine region, and is most recognizable for its top-quality sparkling wines. In addition to sparkling wines, here you will find something completely unexpected - wines from the amphora. In line with world trends, more and more Plešivica winemakers are turning to completely natural production and the same goes for food. Inspired by a long tradition of producing their own food, which has been the standard here for many generations, Žumberak restaurants will delight you with local traditional and haute cuisine. In addition to the wine road, there is also the cheese road, numerous bike paths, and if you climb to the top of Plešivica, you will round off your experience with stunning views.

The Zelina Wine Road is ruled by the Kraljevina variety (kraljevina meaning kingdom). It is an autochthonous variety of wine that you will find only here and it is characterized by lightness and freshness and is therefore traditionally used for larger gatherings and is ideal for warm summer days. In addition to the Kraljevina, there is also Kraljica (the Queen), a sparkling wine made from the same variety. Zelina is also home to a traditional knights' tournament, and if you miss this medieval event, you can visit one of the local farms where the youngest will be entertained by domestic animals and a handful of outdoor activities. The green hills and vineyards, that once belonged to the counts, will welcome you with open arms, as well as the hosts of small farms, wineries and restaurants.

Samobor is a traditional picnic spot for the people of Zagreb, immortalized even in the Croatian cult film "Tko pjeva, zlo ne misli - Who Sings, Doesn't Think Evil". Today, in Samobor, top treats await you - and we don't just mean the frothy Samobor cream cakes! There is a traditional special aromatized wine called bermet, to which carob, raisins and figs are added during the fermentation process and wormwood, which gives bermet a characteristic bitter note. Unexpected Samobor flavor combinations don't stop there; muštarda is a mustard to which red grape jam and red wine are combined. The result is a spicy and sweet side dish to meat dishes. However, not all Samobor attractions are in a glass or on a plate - some are hidden deep underground, such as Grgos' Cave, in which you can take a walk under the guidance of the finder himself.

Ivanić Grad takes you along the paths of škrlet, a wine ideal with light dishes such as fish and pasta, but it will also take you to another unexpected experience that awakens all the senses while combining authentic and modern. The idea of combining wine and music, that affects the experience of aromas, tastes and associations of individual wines, was realized in the concept of wine tasting with a DJ. Sometimes the day is too short for all that Zagreb County wine roads can offer. That is why there are holiday homes, from modern to traditional wooden ones, that will turn a trip into an unforgettable weekend experience.



■ BIKING

Through nature is the favorite form of recreation to many, and the green Zagreb area seems like it was made for cyclotourism. Other than the basic amenities such as neat infrastructure and marked routes, cyclists appreciate enjoying a clean landscape without much traffic, surrounded by the beauty of nature and adorned with some more notabilities that make the trip worth visiting. Of course, homemade food and a good drop somewhere along the way are always welcome for boosting motivation. Besides that, the terrain of the Green Ring of Zagreb is versatile enough to provide all travelers with different riding experiences according to their personal taste and preferences. The areas towards west are hilly and spotted with lakes, and on the way to south and east, there are forests and floodplains. Each microregion is dedicated to encouragement and development of cyclotourism, so they all offer multiple routes adjusted to all types of cyclists, from the adventurers who want more extreme rides, to family holidaymakers who have a moderate pace in mind.



■ NAFTALAN – unique healing treasure from the depths of the earth



Despite the fact that the commercial use of naftalan for medical purposes is a relatively new phenomenon, people have been aware of its beneficial properties for centuries. The first notes on naftalan were written by world traveler Marco Polo, but the notes referred to the sources in Azerbaijan, on the Silk Road. In Ivanić, it is successfully used to treat rheumatic diseases, spinal joint diseases, and skin diseases. The naftalan oil bath is a unique experience that has beneficial effects on your skin and body. Other than using naftalan for oil baths, experts have created special, naftalan-based cosmetic products: lotions, oils and shampoos. The products are used to complement treatments done in the Hospital, but are also available on the market.

People come to Naftalan for the powerful, black-brown oil treatment, and for the benefits of healing thermal water. Thermal water is also a remainder of the Pannonian Sea, and it is sourced 1300 meters below the ground. The salty oil water that is rich in minerals can prevent and treat numerous health issues, and is generally beneficial to the body. Regardless of its focus on a broad spectrum of health treatments, Naftalan is also a well-known wellness and spa destination. Naftalan offers accommodation with 137 beds, 26 of which come with top-standard service. A sports park near the Hospital complements everything Naftalan has to offer, and the Moslavina region, with its developed rural and wine tourism, has all merits needed to amaze the visitors who want to explore the region.

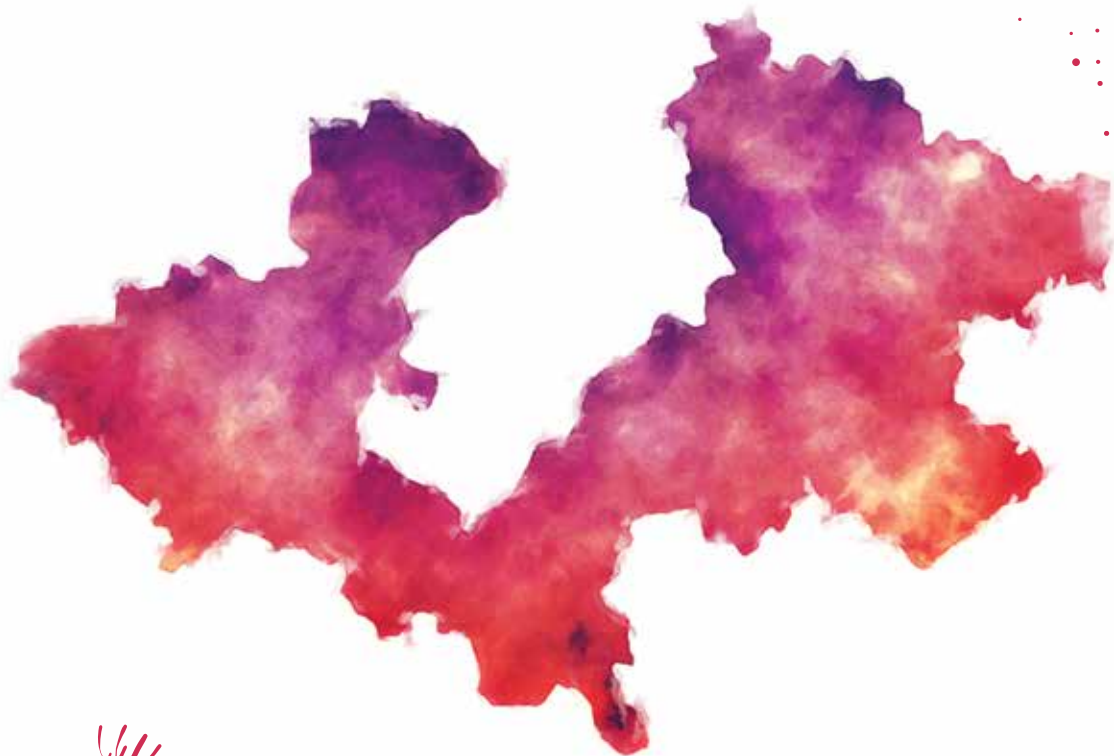
■ INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE GREEN RING OF ZAGREB

The life in smaller places and villages that surround Zagreb is calmer and simpler than in the big city, so it is easier to create, and especially to take care of local traditions, some of which are centuries old. The tame and fertile land of the Green Ring of Zagreb has been inhabited for a long time and it has a rich history. Even though the whole belt shares many similarities, each area proudly protects its peculiarities. Something that, to a modern spectator, may seem like an obsolete tradition and romantic folklore, is actually a part of the inhabitants' identity, and an important piece of a treasure trove of Croatian culture. The List of Intangible Cultural Heritage is a praise to the authenticity and beauty of culture that has been developing for centuries in the nation, among ordinary people who have not written history, but who have certainly lived it. The Zagreb area has contributed to the Croatian catalogue of cultural heritage with versatile and interesting elements of tradition.



ŽUMBERAK - SEA OF GREEN

Set between the Slovenian border on the west and Zagreb on the east, there is the Žumberak Hill, whose peak Sveta Gera, at an altitude of 1178 meters, is the highest peak of continental Croatia. Here stands, or to say, here hides the harmonious and peculiar microregion known under the name Žumberak. Nature is in control there—a small number of locals live in a few wooden villages. A better part of these villages is protected as a part of the Nature Park Žumberak–Samobor Hills. People come here to relax and engage in recreational activities in the pristine nature, to enjoy the rich flora and fauna as well as the remains of the compelling history. The ways and the destination you choose will primarily depend on your personal preferences, and on the fact if you are an exhilarated, sports personality type, or if you are a hiker who prefers lighter pace.



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