

# PAST TIME PERFECT

## SEVEN CAPSULES OF HVAR

*Blend with Hvar over a week of exploring its heritage, tradition, gastronomy, and nature;  
transform, become one with the island and leave a trace for the future.*

## Capsule 1

Have you ever wanted to take a peek at a worn, handwritten notebook of a Hvar nona, with recipes full of fresh, colorful, fragrant Mediterranean ingredients? Ingredients that are cooked oh so slowly to thoroughly simmer and bring you to an incredibly delicious culinary highlight. Mediterranean cuisine is both creative and simple, delicious and healthy; it is proven to preserve our vitality, extend our lives and, no less important, make us very good-looking people. In our small traditional cooking school with top chefs you'll learn what kind of food UNESCO has put on the list of intangible world heritage and what keeps Hvar's hot and passionate temperament at an enviable level.

### NANNY'S CHEST OF SECRETS

Hedonism as we know it today originated in the Mediterranean, from its long and turbulent past. In the fine texture of Mediterranean cuisines, so alike yet so unlike one another, ancient culinary techniques and an eternal need for innovation intertwine. The Mediterranean landscape has long been shrouded in the alluring fantasy of the eternal summer. In this area, where lemons and oranges grow, history has been relived through convivial and hospitable repasts. This in fact ungenerous landscape has been formed by the idea of harmony between man and environment, the idea of cultivation rather than submission. This very idea of the Mediterranean diet was added to UNESCO's Representative list of intangible cultural heritage.



The Mediterranean diet is the cheerful company gathered around a table set under a treetop. Its meals are local and in tune with the rhythm of nature, such as the scented salsa in the summer or foraged plants seasoned with olive oil and wild orange juice in the winter. The Dalmatian cuisine is recognizably Mediterranean, but as any cuisine, it blends ancient, Ottoman, Venetian, and many other influences that stew inside Mediterranean pots. The Hvar cuisine has preserved ancient culinary techniques such as *peka* (the bell) and *gradele* (the grill grate), the simplicity of recipes such as the *pećica na tećici*, a delicious warm desert made of fresh goat cheese and honey, but also the refined renaissance affinity for spicy cakes with ingredients still procured from pharmacies.



Heritage dishes such as *panada* (made from old bread) or *paštica* (beef stew) remind us of past modesty and respect for food, but also the wealth of celebratory menus. The recipe that perhaps best epitomized all the tastes of the island, all the history and culture of this outstanding area is undoubtedly *starogrojski paprenjok*. The famous gingerbread of Stari Grad has been a faithful companion of travelers since the Renaissance days, and it is also a meteorological device. Apart from honey, olive oil and *prošek* (dessert wine), it contains a mixture of once invaluable spices – cinnamon, clove, and saffron, which used to fill the coffers of Renaissance Hvar townships with gold. Don't miss out on buying some Hvar saffron: its color and scent will bring you back to the island wherever you may be.

*Get to know the wealth of local produce, such as wild asparagus or Hvar artichokes; learn which flower buds are edible; try the unusual flowers that will make you visit the pharmacy, rose liqueurs, the lovely prošek... Is there a better way to take a part of the rich cultural history of this outstanding island than by learning to make some of the Hvar dishes?*

## Capsule 2

*Are you a wanderer or maybe you've always wanted to be? Do you sometimes wonder what Hvar really looks like, somewhere far from the famous tourist sites? Want to explore the past of the island and its people, the people who created this island in ways that are unimaginable to us today? Wondering what the islanders' daily life looked like, a life that belongs today to a past time perfect? Thinking about how the UNESCO-protected dry-stone walls that transformed the Hvar landscape into beautiful lace made of stone, lavender, olives, and vines were created? Want to see where the most beautiful stone houses on Hvar are located? If you love the magic of unexplored spaces, if you are ready to get to know the romantic but also the harsh side of life, if you enjoy discovering secrets and intend to do all the things that tourists don't normally do - you will enjoy this day.*

### FROM SOIL TO SOUL

If you move just several kilometers away from the summer bustle towards the inland, a window into hidden, unknown Mediterranean and authentic island life will open. These forgotten places boast marvelous beauty. Six ethno-eco villages on Hvar are an ideal choice for an escape to peace and quiet, a sight for sore eyes and other senses. It is there that all the stress is forgotten, and the ancient art of coexistence with nature to nature and all that this island has bestowed on Hvar through history is introduced.

To reach the westernmost ethno-eco village of Brusje, you'll take a six-kilometer winding road from the town of Hvar.



Brusje is located amidst the largest monument of valuable islanders: piles and dry-stone walls and olive and lavender plantations. In the shadows of its alleyways, it hides interesting examples of folk architecture and art, such as St George's church, cemeteries, the local loggia, a never completed Hure family home, and a recently closed farm shop. This is where the best island rosemary honey comes from, once one of the main export products of Brusje. A little further from the village you'll see the ruins of the Moncirovo mansion, a rare example of a country house and homestead. Brusje will only be part of our tour if you insist on it, because there is little time in one day and there is a lot to visit.

A place we are sure to visit is located in the valley with one of the most beautiful views of the central Adriatic. Velo Grablje, a place that rightfully earned Hvar the title of "lavender island". After devastating grapevine illnesses forced the locals to find a better life across the pond at the turn of the century, those that remained slowly embraced a new, relatively unknown plant: the lavender. The rest is a history of love, a love that has not always been easy or romantic. With the help of lavender and the already established cultivation of rosemary and pyrethrum, Velo Grablje managed to flourish. That's how it used to be. Today, the village has less than ten inhabitants and attracts attention due to its pristine beauty, heritage that tells a warm story of Hvar's ancestors, a festival dedicated to lavender, and excellent gastronomic offer.



The most exciting place on Hvar is a hamlet of Velo Grablje, called Malo Grablje. It hid in a ravine between high cliffs for protection from pirates, Turks, and various enemies who have roamed the area throughout history. No one lives in Malo Grablje today; a Hvar legend says the village was closed by one goat, one donkey, and Mr. Lorenzo Tudor, Hvar's king of lavender. In 1965, he packed up, sat on his ass, tied it to a goat, and left Malo Grablje forever to move where everyone else had gone before him, to nearby Milna, a tourist spot on the seafront. Although abandoned, this village still has the energy of vibrant life and preserves the memories of the past: a local church, a school, a public well, and an exquisitely preserved olive mill from 1894.

Zaraće, the last ethno-eco village of the Hvar municipality, is situated on a high cliff, offering a stunning view of the open sea. There are only several houses there and an abandoned school building. The other, newer part of the village is located on the seashore, around a votive church dedicated to Our Lady of Health from the 16th century. Nearby are the remains of a house for the hermit monks who cared for this church. An interesting geological configuration, that is, rocks jutting out into the sea towards the west and east, or as the Hvar people say Zub od Zoraća (The Tooth of Zoraće), created places ideal for swimming and lazing in the sun.

A few kilometers north of the oldest island town, Stari Grad, and the most fertile field on the Adriatic islands, Ager, we reach the village of Male Rudine. The picturesque little square houses an olive mill and a grape press, a testimony to the efforts of the people of Rudine who, in their history, often had to scrape off karst and stubborn stone in order to survive. This village will be left out of today's walk for the same reason as Brusje.

The last ethno-eco village, Humac, is located in the spatial and historical heart of the island. In the nearby Grapčeva Cave lies the birthplace of Hvar culture, Neolithic pottery with interesting ornaments. Humac itself has never had permanent residents; it was created as a shepherd's settlement, a seasonal home for the people of Vrisnik, who came to Humac because of livestock grazing and agricultural work. The houses in Humac are beautiful, made entirely of stone, built with the ancient dry-stone wall technique, and some retain the testimony of the former sharing of goods: stone gutters bridging the passageways between houses, through which rainwater would flow into a common gutter or well. The past times were truly perfect in some respects.

Hvar's ethno-eco villages await you in their magical, mesmerizing silence. Regardless of all the information you read about them or the videos you look at, only an interested personal encounter, discovering all the hidden details and merging with the energy of the spaces, can briefly revive these dormant places, awaken their authenticity, allow you to be inspired by their beauty and encouraged by their story.

*Do you have the courage to be princes and princesses who will give the Hvar Sleeping Beauties the kiss of life?*

*Are you ready to find out what Hvar really is?*



## Capsule 3

*It's quite possible that you spent a few days of your life aboard or at least dreamed of those days. This is the story of such a day, yet a quite different one; the story of life and love that has lasted forever in this region. This story is told through the materials of which the ship was made, the ways in which it was created, and its roles throughout history. This is the love story of its captain who feels the ship as his darling mistress. This is the story of its enamored passengers after they touch the wooden deck with their feet and grasp its ropes with their hands. When ship sails are finally hoisted, it is clear why people, like ships, can only work wonders when their sails are filled. This is a day when you might encounter new horizons, sense new challenges. All one has to do is surrender to navigation, joyfully and with faith in the good sea.*

### SAILORS'S DELIGHT

Navigate you must, for if you do not, life is not worth living – those were the famous words the Roman military leader Pompey used to call on his officers to travel towards Rome in freight ships regardless of the threatening storm. Although they tried to talk him out of it due to imminent danger, he said: “Navigare necesse est, vivere non est necesse!” Sailing, voyaging, steaming, navigating – this remained eternal.

Some 2500 years ago, the first inhabitants of Hvar also had to navigate to reach its shores and establish the first settlements. Followed by the scrape of oars in oarlocks and lateens on the mast, their calloused hands brought them from the distant Pharos to the shores of Hvar. They fell in love with its beauty, warmth, peace. They found a new home.



In times long past, the people of Hvar preserved a tradition of the sea; they were born, they lived and died with the sea. The sea connected generations living on the island in a perpetual chain. The sea and the island. They sailed the sea as well in traditional sailboats such as the *pasara*, *guc*, *bracera*, *trabakul*, *batana*, *galijun*, *galija*... From island to island, from day to night, from birth to death. The busy hands of the island builders worked diligently to make a live boat out of live wood, a boat to weep in, to revel in, to sing, drink, and sorrow in... To live in.

They say that the heart of the builder beats between the ribs of the boat, of the man who gave it life and closed the gateways of the sea in order to keep the boat afloat and provide the seafarers with safety, rescue amidst storms and the angry sea, the joy of morning calm, and the smiles of the ones waiting ashore for their loved ones to return. The love the builders put into the building can be compared with the love a parent feels for his child, ready to sacrifice his life in order for it to sail calmly and happily, proud, persistent, and steadfast.

Today, two thousand years later, one must navigate again, but to celebrate life, to express passion for the sea, the new, undiscovered, blue infinity that welcomes its explorers, travelers, the curious, its new lovers full of expectation and passion with always a new smile.

The builders and wooden boats have been replaced by automatized shipyards and plastic motor boats that provide plenty of comfort and safety to their crews, but the heart that beats in every boat the goes out to sea has been preserved in tradition, engraved in every wind-beaten, salt-ridden wrinkle on sailors' faces.



In order to revive a part of the past, feel the power of the sea, hear its breath whistling in the sails, inhale the spray of water lifted in the waves, maybe even close your eyes for a moment and imagine yourselves as those who saw the shores of our island from a distance a thousand years ago... we'll take our wooden boat, the same one our grandfathers used to sail in, loosen the bollards, lift the lateen, tie the ropes, and let the wind fill our sails. And once our heart becomes one with the heart of the wooden boat, beating together, we'll see before us images of times past, the faces of sailors and seafarers, the quiet of the calm and the thunder of storms, libeccio, and tramontana, and a chest hiding stories and secrets of boats will open to anyone who wants to discover them.

*In this rapture, we will sail to all parts of the world, to the horizon and beyond, without borders and free from fear, surrounded by the sea luring us with its blue, the boat that keeps us safe, and the love that binds us together.*

*After all, navigate we must.*



## Capsule 4

*Let all your senses be at the ready today for you will pass through Hvar from its heart to its feet. Along the way, you will learn how and when this island got its belly, the CHORA FAROU, which fed it in its infancy and which is today protected by UNESCO; you will meet the locals who make top quality wines and enjoy their flavors shamelessly; you will meet Hvarians whose creative approach creates added value for the powerful olive oil and lose yourselves in it; you'll socialize with the people of Hvar who will provide you with top quality snacks in a place that combines local gastronomy, island tradition, timeless beauty, and fuzzy human emotions. The hardworking people of Hvar take you through today's exciting and delicious Hvar story.*

### TASTE OF LIFE

I remember when I was a kid, I used to go to the family fields with my father. These were the moments where I saw him shine like never and nowhere before. We used to walk together among long rows of spoiled vines that continued into rows of gloomy potatoes, uninterested chard and spinach, playful tomatoes and peppers, eggplants and cucumbers. In another field, we would pass the cheerful purple lavender tufts, a large and loyal almond tree planted by my mother from the seeds given to her by my grandmother; we would pass small trees of delicate peaches, steady apples and peculiar plums, after which we would be greeted by giant sweet cherries and astringent sour cherries, behind which serious olive trees used to stand and keep guard. In the third field, we would fill baskets with persistent tangerines and go home. Me, proud because I have such a hard-working father; he, proud of his growing plants...



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I dedicate the capsule named "Taste of Life" to my father Stjepan Moškato, a Hvar farmer, but also to all the nameless farmers of Hvar throughout its history.

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Hvar, as we will discover together today, is the sum and the perfect product of coincidence, customs, habits, and events that had taken place throughout centuries on the same ground.

It is the all-pervading wealth of Hvar that has led us to look back at the most powerful, blessed place, filled with abundance of experience and a particular beauty – the Stari Grad Plain.

Hvar is an island of dynamic landscape. The island's back stretches from west to east with a length of 68 km, making Hvar the longest Croatian island. The highest peak, St Nicholas (628 m), offers views of both sides of the island and the sea. In the northwestern part, the ridge forms into hills along which the villages of Hvar are situated surrounded by terraced vineyards, and then further into fields along the sea on the edges of which the towns of Hvar island grew.

On the south side of the island, near Sveta Nedjelja, the ridge is cut into cliffs, while for the most part it slopes steeply towards the sea on the east side, forming karst sinkholes, cliffsides, and routes that end in beautiful pebble beaches, which is why the famous vineyards on the south side of the island were named "Hvar beaches".

As time went on, the face of our island was shaped by two factors: the Mediterranean climate and Hvar farmers. The karst fields with their shallow soil and full of rocks were transformed into arable land by Hvar farmers. The removed stones were stacked around the cleared plots, thus building dry-stone walls, one of the symbols of the island of Hvar. Imagine how much effort it took to create the landscape of Hvar as we see it today! Today, the dry-stone walls are protected by UNESCO as the intangible cultural heritage of humanity.

Vineyards, olive groves, orchards, purple fields of lavender, flowering meadows, and green forests are intertwined with dry walls and mounds, so from the aerial view, our island looks like a mosaic. In winter and early spring, we are delighted by the sounds of streams that flow throughout the island.

One such stream, the ancient Farion River, was one of the reasons why Greek settlers chose this particular island.

Below Svirče, Vrbanj, and Dol stretches the Stari Grad Plain, also called Chora Farou or Ager Pharensis. This is exactly where the 2400-year-long Hvar story of wine and olive oil begins.

Six miles long and up to two kilometers wide, the Stari Grad Plain is currently the largest fertile plain among all Croatian islands, a plain that tells a story written in every scent, sound, and scene of the landscape.

The first chapters of this story were told by the ancient Greeks. In 385 BC, a town called Faros emerged at the bottom of the bay of Stari Grad, and the Stari Grad field was divided into so-called strige (plots) with the intention of planting what this soil could support - Mediterranean crops such as olives, vines, lentils, but also grain for basic needs.

At the central part of the field, the Greeks set up omphalos, the center from which they stretched their paths; they erected dry-stone walls, thus creating about 70 plots of land which they distributed to their settlers. We doubt that the first inhabitants of Faros, having planted the first olive tree on one of the plots of the Stari Grad Plain, were aware that they were leaving behind a source of invaluable experience for future visitors in the then unthinkable 21st century. It might have made them happy to know that this very ground will be a universal source of inspiration for us, the future generations.

There is no remnant of Greek architecture in the field except for the observation tower on the north side of the field - Maslinovik. It was an observation post where the guards were stationed, and which functioned together with the Tor tower above Jelsa. Upon perceived danger, the guards on the Tor would start a fire and, through Maslinovik, alert to danger from the sea that threatened Faros.

After the Greeks, the Romans adapted the city and the field to their living needs, thus writing the basic chapters of the book before us. Rustic villas, farm and country houses of sorts, were built in the field, out of which two were explored and presented: one below Dol, called Kupinovik, and one near Vrboška, called Mirje. There were about 20 such villas in the field, and they were always built on elevated positions near water sources.

At the Kupinovik site, remains of two olive presses and a mill with a millstone were also found!

With the fall of the Roman Empire, the newly arrived population inherited the economic component of the field but changed its cults. The best example is the Church of St Vid on Hum hill and the Chapel of St Jelina. According to ancient Slavic beliefs, there used to be an old triangle dedicated to the gods Perun, Veles, and the goddess Mokoš. With the Christianization of the island, Perun was replaced by St Vid, goddess Mokos was replaced by St Jelina, and Veles was replaced by St Michael ... But, let's go back to the field.



Various varieties of grapevine are cultivated in the field: *plavac mali*, *bogdanuša*, *parč*, *kuč*, *maraština*, *toscanao trebbiano*, *muscat*, and more recently *cabernet sauvignon*, *syrah*, *merlot*, and others. The field experienced another renaissance in the 19th century, when wine growing on the island began. Wine was exported to France and Italy, whose vineyards had been plagued by phylloxera. At that time, the island reached its culmination with winemaking, but also seafaring and trade.

Other crops were cultivated along the vineyards in the field, most notably olives and lavender, but also vegetables and fruit.

Olive growing also experienced its economic boom in early 19th century; its resurgence began in 1990 and has continued to this day. Today, olive trees in Hvar are still grown in the traditional way. The most widespread variety is oblica and it is widespread because it is drought-resistant and suitable for cultivation on scanty, shallow, and rocky soil. The olive oil of the oblica is slightly spicy and bitter, with pronounced sweetness, and it is produced in three old and four new oil mills on the island. Unlike the fully mechanized production method in large olive growing countries, our traditional method of olive cultivation respects the environment and is a sustainable way of producing oil. There are not enough words in this story to describe the gastronomic highlights and the pleasure that oozes out of every drop of Hvar's liquid gold. Only a personal experience can enrich the taster, and the challenges lie in understanding the blended traditional and contemporary flavors.



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*"Taste of Life" is a story that is wisely told to us through silence by over 220,000 old olive trees surrounded by dry-stone walls, supporting every moment of our hedonism against the tumultuous and rich past of the Stari Grad Plain. It is the story of the loyal love of the olive trees, the fickle love of the vines, the painstaking work in the field, the respect for nature, the tradition, and the culture of all those who have been hosted by this field.*

*Poems, essays, and history books have been written about the Stari Grad Plain, paintings have been painted, and photographs have been taken of it. The field loves and cares for the island and all its inhabitants like a mother. The love of the people who cultivated this field through the millennia goes back to this same man, as well as to all who want to truly experience, feel, taste, and connect with it at all levels possible.*



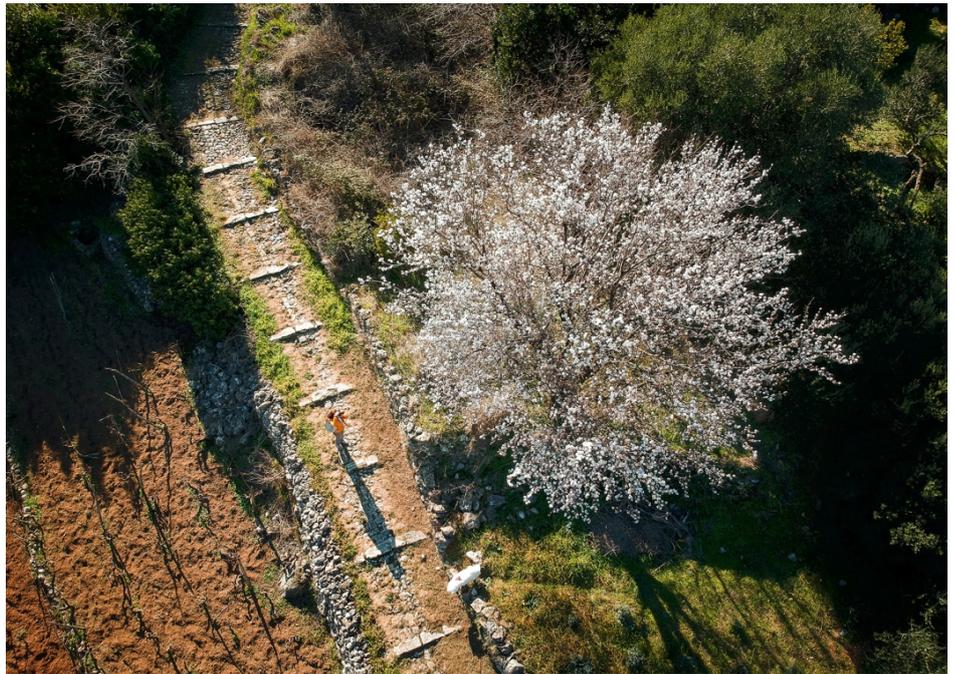
## Capsule 5

*Everything in this day is magical. The destination, but also the journey. We call this day a tour, but a more appropriate word might be transformation. All that is asked of you is the willingness and openness to cooperate with the main stars of the day, the Hvar plants. Allow the plants to stimulate your mind, your heart, all your senses, so that the experience of the field paths to the highest peak of Hvar can be transformed into a unique and unforgettable experience of returning to nature and yourself. What is included in the transformational walk are the wizards of Hvar, who will teach you in practice what kind of magic you can create when you include plants in the game. There will be spectacular vistas and olfactory wonders, but also small earthly joys that we want to keep secret, at least for now...*

### TOUR OF NATURE'S CURE

In the fabulous island of Hvar, which bathes in the sun more than any other island in the Adriatic, the Mediterranean climate and the allegedly scanty soil were truly generous when it comes to herbs.

The amazing natural wealth has helped preserve the health of many generations of Hvarians, who, although detached from the world or maybe because of it, handed down the secrets of aromatic plants and their medicinal properties from generation to generation. We don't know exactly which *nono* was first to recognize and use sage, St. John's wort or immortelle or what the name of the *nona* whose calloused hands



were first to create potions and lotions was, but we believe that some of these plants, as well as their incredible power, were discovered on the trails leading to the highest peak of the island.

The abundant flora of Hvar boasts over 1000 plants, which have kept their place here since the beginning. The most renowned ones are used in therapy or for medicinal purposes, but also as fragrant herbs that the classical Mediterranean cuisine is well-known for. The Mediterranean diet has been protected by UNESCO as one of the healthiest diets in the world for good reason. Fish, vegetables, olive oil, home-made vinegar, and irresistible herbs are what makes the Mediterranean diet so healthy and special.

As you walk around the island, you'll come across plants that have always been part of the islanders' lives. One of them is the powerful laurel leaf. Laurel wreaths used to garland the heads of victorious warriors and heroes, and today laurel is an indispensable part of gastronomic feasts in the Dalmatian cuisine. The essential oils of the laurel leaf are a genuine health treasure: they reduce the lousy cholesterol, they have anticarcinogenic properties, they reduce burns and scaly skin.

We can't imagine what Hvar would look or smell like without the irresistible rosemary. The pleasant woody scent of this omni-powerful plant enriches every dish, and research has shown that it boosts concentration and memory. Apart from medicinal purposes, rosemary is used in cosmetics as well. The lovely rosemary is our personal favorite!

During your walk, you'll get to know a plant that has become increasingly important in the cosmetics industry – immortelle, whose name derives from the word "immortal", and it gained this reputation due to its medicinal and cosmetic properties: immortelle rejuvenates the skin and revitalizes your beauty.

Let's not skip lavender since we're famous for it. The purple beauty is known for its lively color and potent, hypnotizing smell. Lavender tea calms the mind and helps treat depression. Lavender oil is used for respiratory issues, helps regulate hormones, boost immunity. It is also used in skin and hair care. It boosts the skin with shine and smell, and who wouldn't want that? By the way, can you tell the difference between lavender and lavandin?



Among plants with edible fruits we'll single out pomegranate and carob. The small pomegranate seeds are full of vitamins, and due to its rejuvenating properties, you'll often find pomegranate in anti-age cremes, shampoos, and shower gels. Dried carob has been used for centuries, and it used to be particularly popular among singers because of its benefits in maintaining vocal health. It is far healthier than chocolate, which people often compare it to, so if you want an energy kick – replace chocolate with carob for snack time.

Out of the lesser known species we'll mention the strawberry tree, for more reasons than one. It is visually appealing and has a multitude of benefits: it is used as an aphrodisiac; the matured fruits are used to make spirits and spectacular marmalades; and it is also rich in vitamin C, which makes it indispensable an ingredient in facial creams. It deserved to be mentioned.

Let's end this quick overview of the Hvar floral stars of our personal choice with one of the most recognizable Hvar scents. The Aleppo pine! The essential oils from the pine needs has been known for centuries as a remedy for respiratory illnesses. While you're enjoying your walk, take deep breaths of the endlessly clean and aromatic Hvar air and thank the pines along the way.

If you wish to get to know the beauty of Hvar nature up close and learn through practice the wonders that can happen once you give the plants a chance – allow us to take you on a fragrant journey through the pristine flora of Hvar and reveal the unbelievable magic preserved by nature from time immemorial...



## Capsule 6

*Find out how the Passion connects six places on the island of Hvar, motivating the people of Hvar to walk barefoot with a large and heavy piece of wood on their backs along the island roads in the dead of night, and why the waiting lists for this experience are much longer than those for Hermes Birkin bags? Get to know the phenomenon that has been gathering all generations of islanders for five centuries, find out what it looks like when music you don't understand gives you chills, and why in Hvar, at this time of year, even the hardest hearts know how to shed a tear. What is the secret of the procession that UNESCO decided to include on the list of humanity's intangible heritage? It will be an interesting day for those who are inclined to spirituality, and even more so for those who are not interested in spirituality at all. But we won't keep it all focused on the spirit - we'll make sure to cater for your body as well.*

## STRINGS OF HERITAGE

Where do stories end and where does reality begin, and vice versa, where does reality end and stories begin?

Have you ever thought of customs that for centuries, just like threads in fine weaving, have been intertwined with people's lives, marking and shaping people in certain ways without them often being aware of it?

Isn't life demanding sometimes, and all you need is a quiet, but steady help along the way? Does it occur to you occasionally that in this civilization unconditional love has simply disappeared and you feel melancholy, or perhaps sadness, because of it? Do you feel an undefined sense of guilt and wonder where it comes from? Has it ever occurred to you how wonderful it would be if there was no fear; if there was only faith, hope, and love? And is there a place where this is possible?

A single night in Hvar can prompt you to ask all these and many other questions. It is not a night at a Hvar club, although Hvar is currently most famous for them. This night is tied to a different club; it is a bit more challenging, interesting, and much more exciting. Ideally, you'll experience the night of Good Thursday to Good Friday in person and "live". If you are unable to do so, our task today is to provoke your questions and lead you on the path to seeking answers.



It is said that the tradition of carrying the cross in the night procession from Good Thursday to Good Friday is over 500 years old; the earliest written records date from the first half of the 16th century. Its origin is connected with the practice of the penitent processions practiced at the time by the so-called flagellant brotherhoods in Western Europe, which have absolutely nothing to do with 50 Shades of Grey. It is also related to an event that took place in Hvar on February 6, 1510, when, according to historical resources, a small crucifix bled out in a private home; today, this crucifix is kept in the Cathedral of Hvar.

This most famous procession is not the only island procession in which the cross is followed during this night. The locals of Dol go down to Stari Grad and return to Dol. The locals of Sveta Nedjelja go all the way to Jagodna and back. The people of Poljica go to Zastrazišće, while the people of Zastrazišće go to Poljica. The locals of Gdinje go to Bogomolje and vice versa. The locals of Sućuraj circle the roads around their village. All these processions actually take place only in the morning, and although the meaning and purpose are the same, they are energetically and emotionally incomparable with the experience of the **Za Križen** procession we are talking about today.

Just as everything in life is changing, it seems that the way this procession has been maintained throughout history has changed as well. Initially, only two neighboring villages used to visit one another, and in time the custom has evolved to what we have today: on the aforementioned night, within a radius of some 20 kilometers, comprising Jelsa, Pitve, Vrisnik, Svirče, Vrbanj and Vrboska, at the same time, at 10 pm, six separate processions begin from the parish churches. The processions are clockwise. Each procession enters each parish church as well as some smaller churches, attending the solemnly arranged *Božji greb* (the Tomb of Jesus), and ending with a return to the original parish church in the early hours of Good Friday.

Great care is invested into two processions never meeting, one at the exit and the other at the entrance to a place, both because of order and because it is believed that it might bring bad luck. Everything used to be a little more romantic and difficult, so the processions moved along the old gravel roads that connected the villages across the hills, through forests and fields, while today they mostly move along paved roads. Although the route is predetermined, some decisions depend on the cross bearer and his entourage, such as the choice of some churches to enter into and the decision whether to take an asphalt road or the old gravel road. Those who feel they have to give extra thanks for all the gifts in their lives or have special requests for the Almighty usually take the hard way. Yes, a parallel can be drawn between the procession and real life...



The **Za Križen** procession is not only a spiritual, emotional, energetic, physical but also a wonderful visual experience. At the head of the procession is the cross bearer carrying a crucifix covered with a black veil accompanied by candle (torches and candelabra) carriers of his own choosing. They are all dressed in white tunics that were once worn by fraternity members. This is visually important in creating emotions.

The motive for carrying a heavy wooden cross is usually a personal or family vow. It is carried either as an expression of penance or as a request or in gratitude for the mercy shown. Some cross bearers choose to carry the cross barefoot, only with knit socks on their feet, and the future cross bearer is listed for the carrying at a very young age since some of them have to wait for their turn for over twenty years. All this, of course, creates a particularly strong emotional charge throughout the story.

...

The parish priests generally do not join the processions; they welcome processions from other parishes. Locals participate in the processions, and more and more often they are joined by many guests. In each procession there is a traditional order: the cross bearer is at the front with his group, followed by men (yup!), and then women (yup!). It is interesting to see how,

over the years, the "women's issue" has dissolved even in the most rigid, most persistent traditional contexts. Namely, lately it has been noticed that some women do not want to respect the established order, so they create a so-called traditional confusion in the procession. The procession itself is transformed along the way; people in groups pray, sing, and some even talk, but the aim is to preserve the traditional structure of the procession.

There are wonderful moments in the procession where meditative music accompanies the spiritual journey. Specifically, 4 to 5 specially chosen *kantaduri* (singers) sing *Gospin plač* (the Lament of Our Lady) before the tomb of God in every church at every station of the procession. Part of the Lament is always the same verse with which the singers invite the participants to think specifically about who died on the cross for us that day: *Nut mislimo ovdan danas, ki na križu umri za nas...* The language of the Lament is archaic, and the melody, although similar in general, varies greatly from place to place. There are extremely cathartic moments of this procession that books can be written about, and the reader would still not be clear what the secret is. At such moments, it seems as if man is merging with man and with God in the eternal triangle of Catholic sin, torment, and salvation.

The island women do not leave the church in a hurry afterwards but stay a little behind to come closer to the tomb of God, because they have to evaluate whose tomb is more beautiful and to pray personally at the grave.



In the early hours of Good Friday, believers who did not participate in the procession (mostly children and the elderly) begin to gather in front of their churches in anticipation of the return of their cross bearers. In Jelsa, a new, emotionally charged and especially interesting custom has emerged: after having carried the cross the entire night, a tired but inspired cross bearer runs for the last hundred meters or so to the parish priest who is waiting for him. The cross bearer kneels, and the parish priest kisses both the cross and the cross bearer, and together they continue to walk to the church where they

pray and sing, and where the cross bearer blesses everyone present with the cross that he had humbly and patiently – in the true manner of *Ora et Labora* – carried to its destination, on which all the present believers finally congratulate him.

The cross bearer is obliged to provide breakfast for the members of the escort, and a big celebratory lunch is prepared a week after the procession. The celebration is reminiscent of a wedding party, and cross bearers are also bought presents. There are both men and women at the lunch; local men joyfully celebrate and feast, while local women joyfully prepare and serve.

The importance of the **Za Križen** procession for the people is evidenced by the fact that it has taken place continuously and in very difficult historical circumstances. During World War II, it was once banned or approved by the Italian occupation forces in such a way that only cross bearers and several escort members were allowed to hold the procession! For the second time, it was completely banned by German occupation forces, but by a strange coincidence the procession took place at a refugee camp in El-Shat, Egypt. The refugees proudly brought with them the crosses they carried there, and they are still located in the parish churches of Hvar.

The **Za Križen** procession was added to UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage in 2009.

*It seems to us that there is nothing more to add. We can't wait to bring you along the paths of the procession and show you the details on the spot, the ones we mentioned, but also the ones we didn't.*

## Capsule 7

*We are in love with Hvar as it used to be and all that our ancestors left us with. With daily capsules that we have created for you that bear the name PAST TIME PERFECT, we intend to bring to you the experience of the Hvar past in the Hvar present. We'll stop at nothing in our endeavors. We use the senses of taste and smell, sounds and colors, the beauty of hidden spaces, the presence of our beloved islanders, the enchanting nature, but also very intimate personal feelings, such as the sense of belonging to this island.*

*This is our favorite capsule, our favorite day, precisely because it blends past and future, because it believes in tomorrow. It is an opportunity for you to leave something really worthwhile on Hvar - the tree we plant together will be waiting for you in the same place when everything else is gone.*

## SEEDS OF THE FUTURE

Can we compare the life of an island with the life of a man? Can the rules that bring spiritual, moral, and material well-being and that apply to a quality and balanced human life be applied to the life of the island; to the principles of sustainability, success, and progress? Are we looking at the island as an object through which we will realize our desires, or at the island as an active subject? Do we see the island as a unit of life, as one who gives and creates life by infusing its space, historical, cultural, and economic heritage into one that belongs to it, into man?



**The island existed on Earth far before man, and it will exist when man is gone.**

The island will be steadfastly defending itself and fighting for its life, it will persevere in its intention to outlive us, regardless of all our actions. The hard rock on which it was created has resisted for millions of years, but at the same time, it has inherited beauty, tenderness, roughness, hubris, warmth, and strength. All that was gained was given to the man to choose from.

We wonder if we are the ones who manage the fate and life of the island, or whether it is the island that gives us the opportunity to live our lives in harmony with it, alongside it, for it?

In order to compare man and island, let us think for a moment about what we are, what drives us, what we build our successes on, what makes us happy, fulfils us, what we strive for, and in the end - what we are ready to give in return. Considering all the above, we can find many connections between the life of a man and the life of an island. Once we become aware of all these links, we will clearly know in what capacity and how we should act to make the island as happy, fulfilled and joyful, successful and recognized, real and active, alive as we are.

It is our duty to dispose of the resources of the island that we have been given to use wisely, with measure and care, guided above all by the principle that we are to manage the resources, not use them. It is our duty to work on our own enlightenment, to learn and get to know the space of our lives and growth, and to pass on our knowledge to our families, friends, acquaintances, visitors.

Let us experience the island as an organism that lives with us, that grows, develops, and with which we interact, live, grow, and develop. Let us provide that organism with a sustainable life; let us not insist on excessive growth but strive for its development to be in line with his and our capabilities.

...

If Hvar were human, it would undoubtedly be a person who wins at first sight and leaves an impression that is not easily forgotten.

While its churches, chapels, and cobblestone streets, decorated with ropes on which the sheets of Hvar ladies dry, tell of the rich cultural heritage and centuries-old tradition, it is inevitable that every Hvar visitor will absorb all these scenes and at the same time create a unique and individual story; a story in which the past meets the future.

Every moment you spend with Hvar and the Hvar people, all the energy, all the scenes, scents and flavours that await you will become part of your personal Hvar story, a story that you will gladly tell others and return to with even greater zeal. Your story will be more tender with each new return, because that's the way love goes.

In addition to the cultural and archaeological heritage that many authors point to as the most valuable and richest heritage of the Adriatic islands, the island of Hvar has the undefined X factor. The sweet aroma of *prošek* and *brudet* from nearby taverns, spiced with the smell of the sea and pine forests, will conquer your senses and motivate you to learn, experience, and taste more. With the Mediterranean cuisine, the healthiest in the world, there is a gastronomic delight created from fresh ingredients grown on Hvar soil. You will douse fish with top-quality olive oil, and you will "bless" all of it with the fine wines of our islanders, which will nourish your soul in addition to local stories, customs, and klapa songs.



When you step away from the city bustle and scenery from the streets of Hvar, the UNESCO-protected Stari Grad Field will fascinate you with its natural and unobtrusive beauty. Equally unobtrusive and irresistibly attractive are the picturesque ethno-eco villages, which have also been protected by conservation authorities.

From the heart of the island you return to the sea, you always return to the sea, and there is an amazing sight waiting for you, featuring over twenty islands, islets, and cliffs in a blue embrace. They are called Pakleni or, as the people of Hvar would say, Paklinski Islands. Not so far from them, Zavala is guarded by the island of Šćedro, lesser known than Pakleni, but no less beautiful and recognized as far back as 1972, when it was justifiably proclaimed a significant landscape.

As beauty is not always visible at first glance, explorers at heart will enjoy the Grapčeva Cave or the cave in Pokrivenik, which are also valuable archaeological sites.



*At the end of the journey, once the island is good to you and you are enchanted by it, it is a good time to thank it and show your noble intentions.*

*The tree we plant together on Hvar will be waiting on your next visit to the island. Even if you never come back, your tree will still be there. Year after year it will keep all those precious memories; year after year it will be a reminder of one beautiful love affair, the one between the island and each and every one of its people...*

# VILLAS

H V A R

VILLAS HVAR would like to thank the authors and our friends for their love and commitment in supporting our work in the common intention of creating a tourist product that will create an unforgettable experience of the island of Hvar for those who use it. It is our wish that you, along with us, enjoy consuming the entire Hvar therapy or individual capsules and leave your mark on the life of our island during your stay.

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