

THE TRAVEL PUBLICATION FOR ENGAGED COUPLES & ROMANCE TRAVELERS

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SPRING 2018

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fashion
ISSUE
30 Fabulous Pages

REAL-LIFE

weddings

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WEDDING
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DISPLAY UNTIL MAY 8, 2018

\$6.95

81>



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Slovenia

Europe's Little
Green Gem

WORDS BY STACEY MARCUS

“Where is Slovenia?” is a natural question one may ask if you did not study the geography of Central Europe or missed the memo about the birthplace of the First Lady. “It borders the Adriatic Sea and touches Italy, Austria, Croatia, Hungary and your heart,” is the response of anyone lucky enough to visit the fairy tale land that is green as a field of wildflowers and whose story is as ancient as medieval castles.

While Slovenia is only about the size of New Hampshire, its landscape is diverse and full of ways to celebrate love. “You can go skiing in the morning, sail the Adriatic in the afternoon and finish your day at one of the natural spas. Combined with great food, wines, fascinating historical monuments and

affordable prices, Slovenia is a rising star among honeymoon destinations,” says Aleksandra Jezeršek Matjašič, of the Slovenian Tourist Board.

We began our adventure by renting a car at the airport in the capital city of Ljubljana. The trip to Hotel Plesnik in the Logar Valley winds through mountainous roads ribboned with breathtaking green scenes and dotted with pastoral animals. The trek around hairpin turns is truly heart thumping, so be sure to make it in daylight. You will want to enjoy the full impact of the Alpine peaks and Palenk waterfall upon arrival. The family-owned, eco-friendly hotel has 32 renovated rooms outfitted with natural materials, but the real beauty of the property is perfect placement; a panoramic lens to a nature lover's paradise.

Our next stop was Terme Olimia. Glamping in Olimia Adria Village is a great option for couples who adore the outdoors and water activities, as it is adjacent to a huge waterpark. We loved looking at the stars atop the linden trees and zipping into our luxury tent, but the true highlight of the experience was enjoying the ‘spa’ the next day. We learned about the extensive sauna programs at Terme Olimia where guests (in the buff) enjoy aromatherapy activities and competitions.

The next stop was Otočec Castle Hotel, a Relais & Châteaux property, located on an islet in the middle of the Krka River. Here, honeymooners can enjoy a stay in any of the gorgeously appointed 16 rooms and suites. The grounds of the Otočec Castle Hotel are spectacular and include an 18-hole golf course. The property can also arrange canoeing on the Krka River with dinner



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Otočec Castle Hotel



Grand Hotel Toplice



Hotel Plesnik



Terme Olimia



Terme Olimia



Ljubljana

in a Kostanjevica cave or a romantic getaway and bear observing in the Kočevje region.

What better place to end the trip than beloved Lake Bled? The Grand Hotel Toplice is the perfect place to get a front row seat to the iconic Bled Castle and majestic church steeple. Here guests can breathe in the alpine air, row around the glacial lake and steal a smooch on the Kissing Pond. Legend says that if you ring the church bell, all your wishes will come true. What better way to begin your sLOVEnia story than in a land where love is written in its name? **ido!**

Photos courtesy of (top to bottom, left to right): Castle Otočec Terme Krka (1st & 6th), Tomo Jeseničnik, Terme Olimia (3rd & 5th), Sava Hotels & Resorts (4th) & Matej Vrančič - www.slovenia.info (7th)

