

Dubrovnik is a picturesque town of stone and red tile roofs against the green mountains and completely wrapped in its 13th century wall.

photos by WICKY JONES

## A second — inexpensive — look at Europe

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Last week we published a letter from two couples who want to visit Europe together. They've all backpacked the continent at one time or another, and now they want to do it comfortably, but economically. We explored traveling by bed and breakfast through the Republic of Ireland, with possible post-trips to the United Kingdom; all English-speaking. This week we'll explore a southern alternative, coastal Yugoslavia.

Stand on the wall that surrounds the perfectly preserved old city of Dubrovnik and look out to sea. Venetian sailing ships once filled the harbor below, but the sailing masts that mark the docks now have come in from holiday resorts and islands up and down the Dalmatian coast of Yugoslavia.

Tiny white wake lines crease the blue water, ferries cruising back and forth from Dubrovnik to Italy, 110 miles away across the Adriatic Sea, to Venice, in its silted lagoons, and to some of the thousand islands that scatter the 500-mile strip of seacoast from Italy in the north to forbidden Albania in the south.

It is easy to imagine the Greek galleys, the Roman merchantmen, the war ships of Hungary and Turkey, the long boats and the round boats of Venice, the sea vessels of all those invaders who ruled here one century after another.

Tourism is the main coastal industry now, so invaders still come from all directions, on sailboats, in tour buses and cars along the Magistrala, decorating the ancient beaches, exploring walled cities in their storybook settings along the Adriatic Sea.

The sun worshippers drive in from Europe or get off their planes from the United States. Every single one of them is headed for Dubrovnik.

Dubrovnik is the modern name of the old city-state of Ragusa, which once had a fleet of 2,000 ships. The word ragusa is a corruption of ragus or regus, meaning a ship of Ragusa.

ACCORDING TO Viktor, a local man who drove us downhill to the old city, the present highway follows the route that caravans took into the city in the ninth century, bringing silks and spices from the east to the merchantmen of the west.

"There is a disco now in the Lazarett, where the caravans were quarantined outside the walls for 40 days before they could enter the city," he said.

Dubrovnik is the most popular tourist destination in Yugoslavia, so I had seen the postcard pictures tak-

en from the mountaintops, from the cable car that lifts above the town and from the hotels that climb down cliffs on either side of the old city.

Nothing prepares you for the picturesque town, sitting there in stone and red tile roofs against the green mountains, completely wrapped in its 13th century wall. Legend says that Richard the Lion Hearted was shipwrecked near the offshore island of Lokrum on his way to the Crusades and lived to rule England.

Neither cars nor bicycles can enter the old city. We walked through the Pila Gate and down the wide main street, the Plaza, for about 600 yards, between historic buildings and tiny shop fronts to the opposite wall and the harbor.

Teens in jeans and T-shirts sat on the stone bridge that crosses the moat, and around the Onofrio Fountain. We walked the undamaged medieval wall, toured the Church of Sveti Pas, which survived the devastating 1667 earthquake, and bought aspirin in one of Europe's oldest pharmacies, built in 1318 in a Franciscan monastery.

STUDENTS FLEW balloons and ate ice cream around Roland's Column, where state decisions have been announced by the town crier for 500 years. Around this plaza are Dubrovnik's treasures — the Clock Tower, the Sponza Palace, the Rector's Palace.

We had lunch at a colorful sidewalk cafe and then climbed the staircase streets that lead a few blocks uphill to the wall. Children played with dolls in ancient doorways. Women sat in the sun or shook quilts out windows. Men did the ongoing work of restoration.

Tourists overwhelm Dubrovnik. Only intrepid travelers brave the crowds of July and August, when the city is a stage for the Dubrovnik Summer Festival. We rented a car and drove south to Montenegro, smallest of Yugoslavia's six republics. The name means literally black mountains.

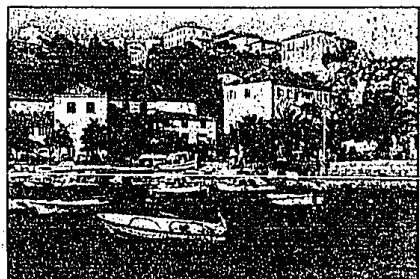
Life is not all ancient history on the Adriatic coast of Yugoslavia. There are cars and casinos and seafood restaurants in new towns outside every walled city. We could have looked for Roman and Greek artifacts in Cavtat, but we sat instead under colorful umbrellas and watched the windsurfers and the sailboats go by.

Sunbathers can choose their beach style — sand beaches, pebble beaches, nude beaches. There are even beaches in Cavtat and Igalo where you can plaster yourself with thermal mud and let it dry in the sun.

Igalo is at the entrance to Boka Kotorska, known in English as the Gulf of Kotar and in local as The Boka. Like the eight-mile sea pro-



There's plenty of shopping to be found in Dubrovnik's old city, which neither cars nor bicycles can enter, while boats dot the harbor of Herceg-Novi.



menade to Herceg-Novi.

If you are lucky, a Yugoslav like Barney Popovic will walk you downhill past 600 years of Turkish, Venetian and Spanish forts to the sea. Barney was on vacation when we found him. Without him we would never have seen the red and green markers on the houses.

"MONTENEGRO WAS the center of the 1979 earthquake and all our old buildings are being restored," Barney said. "Red means it was damaged so badly that it must be torn down. Green means that it's OK or can be restored. This kind of historic preservation is very important to Yugoslavia."

"The workers of Serbia gave 1 percent of their wages for 10 years to restore Montenegro."

It is great fun to take the car ferry across the 300-yard-wide strait that cinches the Boka in half like an hour glass, but we saved that for the return trip and drove the Magistrala highway, by now a ledge between mountain and sea, to Risan, where Illyria's last queen threw herself into the sea rather than succumb to the Romans. Then on to Perast, to the two tiny islands that sit 400 yards offshore.

One island was built by nature and holds the ruins of a Benedictine monastery and a stand of cypress trees that mark the graves of ancient sailors. The second island, made by man, holds the Church of Our Lady of Skrpjelo.

Sister Sophia was waiting when our small boat pulled up to the church, known in English as Our Lady of the Rock, its blue dome and blue bell tower are bright against mountain and sea. Sister Rozamunda, the only other resident, was fishing nearby.

"Any luck?" Sister Rozamunda raised her shoulders in a universal shrug.

"No dinner tonight," Sister Sophia said with a grin, as she led us into the church, past walls covered with silver votive plaques given by grateful sailors over the centuries.

"FIFTEENTH century fishermen found a painting of the Madonna and child on a reef below this spot," she said, pointing to a brightly colored painting in a golden frame. "The people of Perast decided that the Madonna wanted a church built here, so they began to dump old fishing boats, rocks and debris on the reef and eventually they created an island."

Time has a different tempo here on the Adriatic, than it does on Fifth Avenue or Rodeo Drive. It was 200 years before the island was born and the church built. They still bring

debris on garlanded fishing boats to shore up the island during the annual summer festival. Islands don't stand by themselves; they need work.

Perast is a national monument because of its importance in maritime history. The admirals and sailors of medieval Venice learned their craft at the naval school here. Peter the Great sent 60 young Russians to Perast in 1698 to create the first Russian fleet.

The seafarers of Montenegro are a fiercely independent people. When the Turks tried to invade this bay they were stopped by a huge chain strung across the entrance to the harbor.

Ten miles beyond Perast, where the Boka ends its 20-mile journey in from the sea, is the medieval city of Kotor, tucked into a steep mountain fold that rises directly out of the sea into the sky. All of these medieval towns have a Venetian style, right down to the clock tower and the plaza, but I know of no other city in the world wrapped in a wall from the sea to the top of a mountain and down again.

KOTOR WAS BADLY damaged by the 1979 quake. The first building restored was the naval museum, with its maritime history of the Boka, where the first maritime fraternity in the Mediterranean area was formed in 809.

Old stories always start with "according to legend," and according to legend, Kotor bought its patron saint and associated relics for 300 pieces of gold from a ship driven into port by a storm in the year 890 AD, its hold full of sacred relics from the Near East.

If you go to Yugoslavia, try to get a package tour that covers air and hotel and then either rent a car or a sailboat. Hotels like the Belvedere in Dubrovnik or the Croatia in Cavtat are large, but may have group rates. Yugoslavs recommend the Argentine hotel for \$50 to \$75 in Dubrovnik.

I would love to stay at the Dvorac Sorkocevic in a manor house six miles out of town at the Dubrovnik Marina, about \$50 for two. Don't miss overnight or a meal at the Hotel Sveti Stefan, down the coast beyond Budva, \$50 to \$75 off-season. It's a walled island, once a fishing village, now a hotel.

Sailors should know that the Adriatic Club of Yugoslavia and Zadar SAS are building marinas and expanding charter fleets. For more information, contact the Yugoslav National Tourist Office, 630 Fifth Ave., Suite 210, New York, N.Y. 10020.

If you have a travel question for Iris Sanderson Jones, send it to Street Scene, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.