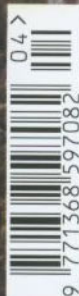




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View of the waterfront from Hotel Adriana

Round up The five best hotels on Croatia's Dalmatian coast

Hot spots in Dalmatia

Croatia's coastline has a mix of inexpensive, simple and well-run hotels and newer, more luxurious places. **Paul Miles** chooses his favourites

HOTEL ADRIANA, HVAR

The 1,400-square-metre spa at the Hotel Adriana, a multi-million-pound makeover of the former Adriatic Hotel, is spread over three floors and includes a heated seawater pool on the roof. It is the first spa on the island of Hvar. There is an outdoor Jacuzzi, and tented treatment cabins where you can enjoy a massage while admiring views of the old town and little boats

bobbing in the harbour. Also on the top floor is a funky, open-sided bar where DJs spin chill-out tracks. Very few of the rooms have balconies or access to outside space, but they are beautifully decorated in contemporary style, with wooden floors, large wicker lampshades like fish traps and accent colours of lilac and black against the predominant white. Of the 59 rooms, nine

are suites with enormous bathrooms with Jacuzzis and large showers. The speciality at the ground-floor restaurant is *hvarska gregada*, a local fish stew.

BEST FOR The idle rich.

WHY GO The spa, sundeck, bar and bedrooms all have wonderfully relaxing views.

00 385 21 750750;

www.suncaniharvar.com/adriana.

Doubles from €190

HOTEL KASTIL, BRAC

UNDER
£100

Hotel Kaštil is a 16th-century mansion right on the seafront in the harbour village of Bol, on the island of Brač. There are 32 rooms, all facing the sea. The best views are from the second and third floors, across the harbour towards Hvar, and 10 rooms have little wrought-iron balconies. This three-star hotel is simple and basic, but everything is spotless. All the en-suite bedrooms have mini-bars, safes, TVs and comfortable beds. Breakfast is served under a pergola, on a terrace above the restaurant. The Varadero Cocktail Bar, which opens on to the street, serves local spirits and Mojitos in the shade of incongruous thatch parasols. Brač has a wonderful beach – a half-kilometre-long spit of white shingle called Zlatni Rat, 20 minutes' walk from Hotel Kastil. Its only drawback is the presence of all-inclusive resorts and rows of sunbeds, but go in spring or autumn and you might have the beach all to yourself.

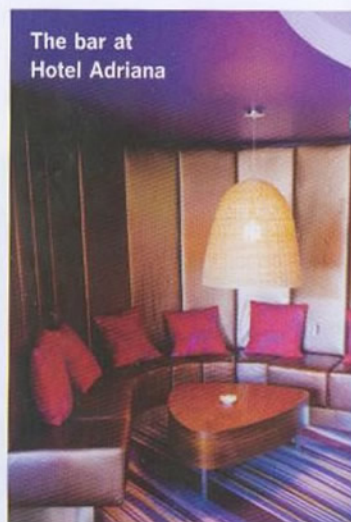
BEST FOR Child-free, active types interested in history.

WHY Go hike the mountains, swim from the beach and explore the island's Illyrian hill fort and 15th-century monastery. But not in July or August.

00 385 21 635995; www.kastil.hr.

Doubles from €65

The bar at Hotel Adriana



Where to stay



Dining terrace at Hotel Sipan

An early 20th-century villa serves as the hotel restaurant, where excellent fresh seafood is served with wines made on the island

HOTEL SIPAN, SIPAN

UNDER £100 Dubrovnik's elite used to holiday on the quiet island of Sipan, less than an hour's ferry ride from the walled city. The Hotel Sipan's 84 pleasantly neutral rooms – some in a former olive-oil factory – were all refurbished in 2007. Only six rooms have balconies, the one in Suite 218 offering the best view; five rooms have vine-shaded, ground-floor patios. At night, you can sleep with your shutters open and listen to the sea slapping on the harbour wall and halyards pinging against the yachts' masts. Breakfast is served on the patio facing the bay, which is so long and enclosed it looks more like a lake. An early 20th-century villa serves as the hotel restaurant; sommelier Davor Krmpotic may recommend a wine from the island. The car-free village is tiny and the best way to get around is to walk or hire a bicycle.

BEST FOR Outdoorsy foodies.

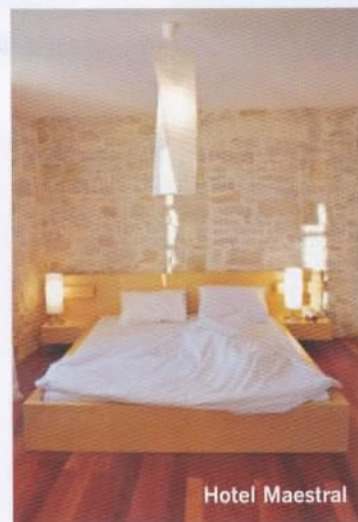
WHY GO Work up an appetite

for excellent fresh seafood at the hotel's Restaurant Pjat, or at Marko's, a stroll away, by hiking through the island's olive groves, kayaking, cycling, swimming and scuba diving.

00 385 20 754900; www.hotel-sipan.com. Doubles from €112

HOTEL MAESTRAL, PRIVIC

UNDER £100 This former school is on the village square next to the harbour, on the tiny and delightful island of Prvić, just 40 minutes by ferry



Hotel Maestral

from Sibenik. The 12-bedroom hotel is the only one on the island (population 450). The bedrooms are simple and clean, decorated in neutral tones with wooden floors and exposed stone walls. The one spacious 'suite' (there's a futon, card table and deckchairs as well as the bed) has five shuttered windows overlooking the square. Most rooms have sea views. The bar and restaurant (which also serves as reception) is a meeting place for locals who sit at the bar drinking beers or espressos. The restaurant serves tasty *peka*, a speciality dish of vegetables and either octopus or veal, baked in barbecue coals. The hotel is popular with the UK company Swintrek, which organises guided swims around islands. There's not much to do other than swim, although there is a wacky, family-run 'museum' dedicated to the 16th-century inventor of the parachute, who lived in Prvić. **BEST FOR** Swimmers and easy-going amblers who are happy to wander from village to village.

WHY GO It's completely car-free with a charming, slow pace of life (off season, anyway). But the church bells may keep you awake at night.

00 385 22 448300; www.hotel-maestral.com. Doubles from €40

HOTEL RIVA, HVAR

UNDER £100 With its open-plan bathrooms and glass lido doors, Riva, Croatia's first member of the Small Luxury Hotels group, has had a daring makeover. The Riva-Hvar Yacht Harbor Hotel (to give it its full name) was once two 18th-century villas; more recently, one of the stone buildings was the headquarters of the Croatian Navy. The 54 contemporary, Wi-Fi-enabled bedrooms are businesslike and small; it is the hotel's position on the harbour, with its gleaming yachts and lavish cruisers, that really makes it special. A handful of rooms have balconies, but only

A sea-view balcony at Hotel Riva



the suites have the luxury of an extra guest lido. The hotel's laid-back, alfresco lounge-bar is a wonderful place to relax in the summer with a Hvar Delight cocktail, people-watching and listening to live jazz.

BEST FOR Those who like to see and be seen.

WHY GO It's next to the celebrated Carpe Diem club, although not everyone will like the noise in high season.

00 385 21 750750; www.suncanihar.com/riva. Doubles from €117