

VARAŽDIN

A Town with Style

Situated on a natural crossroads in northern Croatia, the city of Varaždin has been, for centuries, a great place to visit. The town received its royal free charter as early as 1209, and reached its full bloom in the resplendent *Baroque* period at which time it was the capital of Croatia. The nobility, craftsmen and traders, artists and scientists all created the town's history and have left an abundant legacy of palatial Baroque buildings, works, collections and music. The labours of many generations have been preserved resulting in the rich heritage seen today in the museum collections, under the balustrades of monasteries and in hidden courtyards.

Varaždin with its 50,000 inhabitants has always been a meeting point for people, ideas and visionaries who have left their works behind. Today, as a part of the Central European circle, the City is open to new technologies and economic development, trying to be better, innovative and advanced, to be a lovely place in which to live, work and create. It is in such a creative environment that craftsmen still use their bare hands to make clay, wood, and glass comes alive. Rich cultural history and continuous economic activities started by crafts and trade are today marked by the Technology Park and the most attractive free zones in Croatia. They have all defined today's Varaždin as the central city of educational, economic and cultural activities in the region.

What makes Varaždin different from other cities is its unique art and monumental heritage, with its best preserved and rich Baroque urban complex. In a rather confined area, besides the Old Town complex, there are Rococo and Secession palaces and villas, and one of the oldest city halls in Europe. In Varaždin, the examples of secular architecture find their place among the known sacral structures like churches and monasteries offering their rich collections. The City Cemetery, an unavoidable *intermezzo* of your walk, Varaždin's old city core trimmed by pearls of park architecture: The first Varaždin Park was designed at the end 19th century by the gardener Zeppelin, known by his design of the Vienna's Ring garden.

Today, the city pulses with new life of open and hospitable people, artists ready to share their joy of creation with you, craftsmen who will make their handicrafts in front of your very eyes. From spring to winter, the old part of the city becomes a stage featuring young musicians, actors, performers and artists inviting you to join in and simply enjoy!