

Cultural Happenings across Montenegro Coast

Summertime today, coastal towns become meeting places for some of the most globally renown names in culture and the arts, performing for audiences of visitors from all parts of the world.

Apart from the usual music, film, literary and children's festivals, there are also special theatrical plays, classical, pop and ethnic music festivals, art exhibitions and even Poet's Nights. Some events reflect the special offerings of each town such as masked balls, beach fiestas, Bokelian Music Nights, Fishermen's Feasts and fiestas on the sea, to name a few.

Mediterranean Music Festival - Budva

This leading national pop and folk music festival is held every year in late June in the vicinity of the ancient town walls. This festival promotes Mediterranean music launching dozens of new hits every year, with their catchy tunes that are remembered and sung everywhere. This three-day weekend musical event, apart from the well-known names, it also highlights the new and young who want to join the world of pop musicians. It is also becoming a popular international event, since there is an evergrowing number of guests from neighbouring Mediterranean countries and beyond in recent years. This festival has a well-designed concept including, apart from the competition for awards in both Mediterranean folk and pop music, there are also performances by native and foreign guests as well as fashion shows featuring world-renown models and fashion designers. Special guests of festivals past have been; Al Bano, Bajaga, Matia Bazzar, Goran Bregovic, Zdravko Colic, Toto Cutugno, Sloba Kovacevic, Knez, Ivana Spagna and many others. In order to select the festival's participants, a public competition is announced and the final pieces are chosen to be performed at the festival, while the awards rest with the jury.

„Theatre City" Festival - Budva

This renowned international festival of theatre, music, literary and artistic creation is organised in open-air theatres each summer in Budva from July 1st to August 20th. During past seasons, so many of the theatrical productions enlivened this festival that they are now a predominant part of all of Serbia and Montenegro's theatre scene. With highly acclaimed visiting theatre groups from neighbouring countries and the whole world, this Montenegrin tourist centre becomes a summertime international arts capital as well. Along with such theatrical performances, there are also many-concerts of prominent national and international performers of classical music. Quite often, musicians perform in some acoustically amazing ancient sacral buildings around Budva. There are also many artistic events in Budva's art galleries. Both seasoned painters and those fresh from the Academy of Ms in Cetinje present their works here. The world-famous „Poets Square" has a long tradition of taking part within the Jheatre City" events, gathering in summertime some of

the most highly regarded writers from both Serbia and Montenegro and abroad. The most successful authors receive the „Poets Square Award“, as well as the prestigious „Stefan Mitrov Ljubisa“ award for literary achievement, which is given during this occasion.

Bar Chronicles

A well-established summer cultural event in this port and tourist centre, „Bar Chronicles“ gathers theatre, artistic, music and literary authors in July and August. In recent years it has also had its own theatre production.

Fasinada

Gospa od Skrpjela (The Lady of the Rock) is a picturesque little church - island off the Perast shores. It is an artificial island that was formed by piling rocks and submerging old and confiscated ships laden with stones around a sea rock that was named „Skrpijel“. The explanation for such a gesture is told by a legend which says that some Perast fishermen miraculously found the icon of the Virgin Mary and Christ on this rock, which got stuck there probably during some ship wreck. Today the icon is displayed on the main marble altar behind which, when you stick your hand in, you can feel the original rock. Since then, the custom called „Fasinada“ when stones are thrown upon the isle continues even nowadays, in the form of a boat procession every July 22nd, as the local population lays down stones to enlarge the island. The church's treasures include the interior as well as a variety of valuable artefacts that were most often, superstitious seafarers' gifts throughout the centuries.

Bokelian Night

Once Venetian, now „Bokelian Night“ is held every year on the first Saturday in August on the waters of Kotor Bay.

The convoy of some thirty richly decorated boats encircle the harbour, accompanied by the sound of music played by the town's brass band, with fireworks that offer special effects when reflecting on the sea. After the most beautiful boat is selected, thousands of observers move into the old town to continue partying throughout the night, singing, dancing and sampling the rich assortment of local seafood specialities and drinks.

Herceg Novi Film Festival

In early August, the Herceg Novi Film Festival has taken place at the town's „Kanli-kula“ since 1988. This event attracts native film-makers and is an organized competition, with a five-member jury which awards the festival's Grand prix, gold, silver and bronze „Mimosas“.

Bar International TV Festival

Every year in late summer, Bar hosts its International TV & Film Festival, an event where almost all segments of TV production, both foreign and domestic are presented and given awards. At the same time, this is an opportunity for TV writers and guests usually from several countries, to share experiences and learn about the latest technological developments within such fields. The traditional award that is given to winners is called „The Golden Olive". Together with screenings, there are also round table discussions for experts in certain fields, according to categories. This festival is continuing to gain in both popularity and quality of professionalism.

International Book Fair -Herceg Novi

Every year at the end of July and the beginning of August in this „ancient town of writers", a unique International Book fair is held. It's an event that attracts hundreds of national and international publishers as well as dozens of distinguished authors. In this „largest open-air book shop in the Balkans", readers have a chance to find out about and buy the latest titles in fiction and diverse professional literature at favourable prices. Among others, the fair offers the prestigious award called, „The Golden Palm" for the best publishing venture of the year.

Mimosa Festival - Herceg Novi

For more than four decades, the traditional festival called „Praznik mimoze" has been held in Herceg Novi , every year from late December to the first days of March. This festival was established by the local tourism industry and a group of journalists to celebrate the first winter flower, the local yellow mimosa, which heralds spring.

During the eight to nine weeks of this festival there are numerous theatre, music, artistic, literary and sport events going on in the town. Still, the most popular events are the masked balls for children and adults, at the „Plaza Hotel", fishermen's feasts and mimosa harvests along Herceg Novi's coast, as well as an attractive international floral exhibition held each year for several days in the hotel „Topla'. Among the festival events, there is also the International Winter Artistic Showroom of Herceg Novi organised each year at the „Benkovic" gallery, gathering artists from all of the former Yugoslavia, for the time being. Also during „Praznik mimoze" there are special parades with majorettes, a brass marching band and masked parade followers waving the first mimosa flowers, that tour larger towns within Montenegro.

Kotor's „St. Tryphon's Day" festivities

Tripundan (St. Tryphon's Day) is the most significant festivity in the Boka. Held ever since the 9th century, and linked with the observance of St. Tryphon, a martyr during the time of the Roman Emperor Decius in the 3rd century AD. The veneration of St. Tryphon is very strong in Kotor, the whole Boka and in Bari, Italy. The Holy Relics of St. Tryphon were brought to Kotor in 809AD. thus honouring this town with holy relics before Dubrovnik, Zadar and Bari.

Legend has it that Kotor sailors participated in the reception of the ship carrying the relics of the saint on January 13th, 809 and their participation in the festivities has been kept ever since. Today the Tripundan festivities start in Kotor in late January with lode" - eulogies to St. Tryphon, the patron saint of Kotor and its Catholic Diocese. The removal of the cathedral flag on the 11th of February marks the end of festivities. The restored cathedral, dedicated to the saint, which is a symbol of the town and its most significant monument, is a gathering place of Roman Catholic believers as well as all people of good will, because the day of the town's patron saint is celebrated by all and sundry, not just the Roman

Catholics.

Kotor Carnival

Along the famous Kotor promenade, during carnival festivities in February each year, this event gathers hundreds of masked locals and visitors alike. With a traditional procession through the town's streets and squares, the main culprit for all the misfortunes in the past year, the Karneval edifice is set on fire on the promenade. The event ends in a traditional masked ball in the hotel „Fjord“, where awards are given to the most impressive masks.

Kotor's New Year's celebrations include an annual Theatre Festival for Children, an International Fashion Show, diverse fiestas and the great, open New Year's party held on all the old town squares.

„HAPS“ - Herceg Novi April Theatre Festival

Since 1995, „HAPS“ is held every year from the 1st to 15th of April. That is an event that draws participants of the young and amateur theatre groups from around Montenegro and Serbia.