



Turistička zajednica  
grada Rovinja-Rovigno  
Ente per il turismo  
della città di Rovinj-Rovigno

1953 — 2023

70

godina zajedno  
stvaramo doživljaje  
anni diamo vita  
a nuove esperienze

ROVINJ • ROVIGNO

## PRESS RELEASE

The Tourist Board of the city of Rovinj-Rovigno is celebrating the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the Rovinj Tourist Society on May 18, 2023. On this occasion, we deemed it necessary to reflect on significant events related to the development of tourism in Rovinj that have marked this period, starting from 1952 until today. The development of tourism in Rovinj as we know it today, began in the aftermath of World War II. As they foresaw at the time, Rovinj was beautiful, charming, and idyllic with its stunning islands, surroundings, and picturesque architecture, which indicated that it would gradually become part of the European trends of the post-war phenomenon - tourism.

The development of commercial tourism can be traced back to 1952 with the establishment of the City Hospitality Company 'Jadran', which included the namesake hotel with a capacity of 45 beds and 7 catering establishments, along with the first recorded foreign guests. The tourism facilities initially developed on the islands of Katarina and Crveni Otok (Red Island, now known as the island of St. Andrew), which initially served as a pioneering colony and a trade union resort. Two years later, they transformed into hospitality companies with capacities designed for commercial guests.

At the Founding Assembly on May 18, 1953, with the presence of representatives from the Union of Tourism Societies for Istria, Croatian Littoral, and Gorski Kotar, the Tourist Office of the Rovinj Tourism Society was established. Vladimir Švagelj was elected as the first President of the Management Board, and the society operated in premises located below the city clock on the main square. That year, the Tourism Office initiated activities to improve public parks in the Rovinj area and the old town core, aiming to highlight the city's beauty and accelerate tourism development. It should be noted that during that time, the focus was on building communal infrastructure and water supply due to water scarcity, improving the power supply, which was limited, and paving of roads in the city. Initially, the Tourism Office provided tourist information to guests, signed the first international agreements for attracting visitors, and assisted private renters, known as "household industry," in opening and categorizing accommodation facilities and promoting their sales. *The Tourism Society played a pivotal role in initiating the introduction of the first sojourn tax, which the Municipality of Rovinj implemented in 1954.*

*In 1955, the People's Committee of the Municipality of Rovinj established the first Tourism Commission, which was supposed to oversee the allocation of funds collected from the sojourn tax and other contributions for the improvement of tourism and their investments primarily in the development of municipal infrastructure and public amenities, as well as investments in promotional activities under the jurisdiction of the Tourist Office.*

In order to expand its authority and activities in tourism development, a new Tourism Society was established in 1956. The existing Tourist Office of the Rovinj Tourism Society became part of this new society, and Milan Pauletić was elected as the new president. The purpose of this society was to improve the operations of the former Tourism Society, consolidate all providers of tourist and hospitality services in Rovinj, stimulate tourism development and destination management, publish

promotional materials, assist in the realization of the first tourism investments, and later organize cultural, sports, and entertainment events.

In the same year, *the People's Committee of the Municipality of Rovinj established the Fund for Beautification of the Town and Tourism Improvement*. This fund was responsible for enhancing bathing areas and beaches, parks, promenades, organizing events, covering promotional expenses, and administrative costs of the Tourism Society. The funds were generated from collected sojourn taxes, fees, and contributions from legally regulated companies.

The development of tourism heavily relied on the construction of water supply systems, roads, and other municipal infrastructure. Starting from 1957, investments intensified, leading to the paving of the Rovinj – Sošići access road and the completion of the water supply system by 1959.

During the 1957 season, Rovinj had 320 tourist beds available. The accommodations were modernized and equipped with TVs. That year, the roads from Mirna to Valdibora and from Križ to the present-day Trg na lokvi, as well as the road from the Mirna factory to the hospital, were asphalted.

In 1960, the hospitality companies in Rovinj integrated into the hospitality company Jadran, the precursor to today's Maistra. The Count Milewski's castle on the island of Katarina was renovated, and the Školjka restaurant with a large dance terrace was constructed. Numerous taverns were also renovated, including Viecia Batana and the Mliječni Restaurant. The "Beograd" Holiday Community opened the first campsite on a large meadow, where the Eden Hotel stands today.

Investments in new accommodation facilities intensified, resulting in the construction of the first hotel, Monte Mulini, along with two annex buildings, the International Youth Center Škaraba, and annexes on the island of Katarina, in 1962 and 1963. By that time, the total capacity of Rovinj, including private accommodations, reached 7,095 beds/spaces. In 1963, the first Rovinj Night event took place, which later became a traditional event.

In 1964, investments continued with the construction of the Lone Hotel, at its present location, and in 1965, with the construction of the then-flagship of Rovinj tourism, the Park Hotel. In the same year, the first Grisia event took place. Both hotels received annex buildings in 1967, and the construction of the Rovinj Hotel began in the old city.

In 1964, during the peak season, the price of full board per person at the Katarina Hotel was 3,600 dinars, with an additional sojourn tax of 120 dinars. The most expensive accommodation price per person in private accommodations in 1965 was 1 dollar, while the cheapest was 0.5 dollars.

In 1968, Hotel Istra was constructed on the island of Crveni Otok, and that same year, the Tourist Resort and the Valalta Naturist Campsite were established.

In the same year, the Rovinj Municipal Assembly passed a Decision to establish the Rovinj Municipality Tourism Fund, which financed all activities within the scope of the Tourism Society's work, as well as programs aimed at tourism development, destination improvement, and more.

The Beograd Holiday Community left Zlatni Rt and relocated to Valdaliso Bay in 1969, further intensifying tourism investments the following year.

The year 1971 witnessed the birth of the Eden Hotel, standing proudly on the grounds where the former campsite once flourished. The construction of the initial phases of the Villas Rubin resort and the Polari campsite was completed, and the Porton Biondi campsite was built. The Valalta campsite expanded as well. These developments led to the first million overnight stays in the destination, followed by the subsequent year's milestone of the first million overnight stays by foreign visitors.

The Monsena tourist resort was built in 1975, and the Valalta and Villas Rubin resorts were further expanded.

The year 1978 was significant for the development of tourism in Rovinj, as it marked the establishment of the Complex Organization of Associated Labor (COAL) 'Jadran'. Until 1990, COAL Jadran operated as a complex enterprise consisting of social enterprises such as Jadran-turist, Jadran-komerc, and Jadran-produkt. Following the transformation in 1993, they were registered as Jadran-turist hotelijerstvo, turizam, trgovina i proizvodnja d.d. Rovinj. That year the destination surpassed the remarkable milestone of over two million overnight stays for the first time.

In 1982, Rovinj experienced another wave of strong investments in the tourism industry. The construction projects during that time included the Montauro Hotel, the Veštar campsite, and the Monvi entertainment centre. In 1984, the ACI marina with 375 berths was built near the Park Hotel, which underwent extensive reconstruction in 1985. Additionally, the Istra Hotel on Crveni Otok was constructed and large warehouses were built in Lamanova to cater to the needs of Jadran-komerc.

**The tourism year of 1985 will be remembered for Rovinj's historic achievement of being crowned the Champion of Tourism in Yugoslavia for the first time.** The following year, 1986, will be forever etched in memory for its record-breaking number of overnight stays, exceeding three million - a record that would only be surpassed in 2015.

Efforts to improve the municipal infrastructure intensified, and in 1987, a new Health Center and pharmacy were built in Rovinj. Additionally, FKK Valalta made significant investments in expanding their own capacities. Rovinj saw a notable increase in its accommodation capacity, reaching a total of 32,704 beds.

In 1990, the reconstruction of the Jadran Hotel (now the Adriatic Hotel) took place, and ongoing efforts were made to enhance the municipal infrastructure in Rovinj.

In the following year, when the war in Croatia began, tourism in Croatia came to a halt. In 1991, Croatia declared its independence and became a separate and independent country.

In 1992, the Rovinj Tourism Society ceased its operations, and on May 28 the Tourism Association of the Municipality of Rovinj was established as its legal successor.

In the following years, despite the challenging wartime conditions, efforts were made to maintain the tourism season.

In 1994, the Tourist Board of the City of Rovinj - Comunità turistica della città di Rovigno was established as the legal successor of the Tourism Association of the Municipality of Rovinj. **In the same year, Rovinj achieved the prestigious title of the first Champion of Tourism in independent Croatia.**

In 1996, the construction company Aldo Rismondo d.d. established the company Rovinj-Turist d.d. for the tourism sector in the Valdaliso area. Subsequently, Zagrebačka banka acquired the majority ownership of Jadran-turist d.d. Rovinj, and the management of its operations was taken over by CHR (Croatian Hotels and Resorts). In 1998, management was transferred to Sol Melia from Spain, which established the company Hrvatski hoteli i ljetovališta d.o.o.

By aligning the accommodation capacities of the destination with the new Regulations on Classification, Minimum Conditions, and Categorization of Hospitality Facilities in 1999, the total number of beds reached 30,287. In the same year, an Austrian company purchased the accommodation facilities on Katarina Island from Jadran-turist d.d., forming a new company called Alpina mare d.o.o.

In 2001, a significant turning point occurred in the development of tourism in Rovinj when the Rovinj Tobacco Factory (TDR), through its wholly-owned subsidiary Adria Resorts, acquired a majority stake in Jadran-turist d.d. and became its majority owner. In 2003, the Adris Group was established, and the same year saw the adoption of the Master Plan of Tourism Development for the Rovinj, Bale, and Kanfanar cluster for the period from 2004 to 2012.

In 2004, the Adris Group initiated a large cycle of investment in tourism facilities, starting with the reconstruction of the Park Hotel. Following the discontinuation of the Monsena Naturist Resort, the property underwent extensive renovation and was reintroduced to the market under the new name TN Amarin.

In 2005, the companies Jadran-turist d.d. in Rovinj and Anita d.d. in Vrsar merged to form the company Maistra d.d. as part of the Adris Group, which manages the tourism segment of its business.

In 2006, investments were made in the reconstruction of the 4\* Istra Hotel on the island of St. Andrew, 4\* Eden Hotel, AC Polari, and AC Veštar, and the construction of the passenger ship Rubinum, and the ferry Šturago. In 2007, the Montauro Hotel and the Monte Mulini Hotel with its annexes were demolished, and in 2009 was replaced by the 5\* Monte Mulini Hotel as we know it today.

It should be noted that in 2007, the Association 'Kuća o batani / Casa della batana' was established, and the same year, the program 'Povorka batane sa večerom u spaciu' (Batana boat parade with dinner at spacio) was awarded the Blue Flower for the most attractive tourist product on the Adriatic and received the Zlatna koza – Capra d'oro (Golden Goat) Award from the Istria County Tourist Board.

In the Croatian Chamber of Economy (HGK) and Croatian Radiotelevision (HRT) initiative 'Tourism Flower - Quality for Croatia', the city of Rovinj-Rovigno became the Tourism Champion of Croatia for the year 2008.

Due to the alignment with the new law, the founding assembly of the Rovinj Tourist Board was held on December 23, 2009, resulting in changes to the Statute and a change of name to the 'Tourist Board of the City of Rovinj-Rovigno - Comunità turistica della città di Rovinj-Rovigno'.

In 2010, the Master Plan of the Tourism Development of the City of Rovinj-Rovigno for the period 2010-2020 was adopted. The company Rovinjturist d.d. with facilities in the Valdaliso area was merged with Maistra d.d. Additionally, the construction of the 5\* Lone Hotel commenced in 2010 and opened its doors in 2011.

By 2013, investments in TN Amarin 4\* were completed, and the outdoor pool complexes were constructed for the hotels Eden and Lone. A new sports hall was opened within the Rovinj Gymnasium. In 2014, the Mulini beach complex was inaugurated, and a roundabout was built at the entrance to the city near Turnina. The Red Bull Air Race, which took place the same year, was recognized as the Tourism Event of the Year at the Tourism Flower - Quality for Croatia awards. The city of Rovinj-Rovigno was once again honoured as the Tourism Champion of Croatia for the year 2014.

In 2015, the Monvi entertainment centre was demolished, and the 4\* Adriatic Hotel was completely reconstructed, including the city café. In 2016, the Amarin 4\* family-friendly hotel was opened, and Valalta d.o.o. inaugurated the new Val Saline 4\* campsite (textile).

In 2017, the demolition of the Park Hotel marked the beginning of the construction of a new hotel and a new ACI marina project was initiated. The campsites of Polari and Veštar saw improvements as well, with the installation of 250 new mobile homes and the enhancement of camping pitches and accompanying amenities. Valalta d.o.o. invested in the construction of a wastewater treatment plant,

expansion of camping pitches, and infrastructure improvements, and the first medical-therapeutic beach in the country was established as part of the Rovinj Hospital for Orthopaedic and Rehabilitation 'Martin Horvat'. The city also saw the development of public amenities, such as the Val de Lesso public beach, and received international recognition with the inclusion of the Ecomuseum 'Kuća o batani' in UNESCO's Register of Best Safeguarding Practices for Intangible Cultural Heritage. Additionally, the renowned restaurant Monte became the first restaurant in Croatia to receive a Michelin star.

In 2019, the new 5\* Grand Park Hotel Rovinj was opened, along with the new 5-anchor ACI marina. The Steel Venue entertainment centre was also inaugurated, and investments in the city's infrastructure by the public sector continued. At the Days of Croatian Tourism, the city of Rovinj-Rovigno was declared the most successful destination for resort tourism and the **Tourism Champion of Croatia for 2019**.

After the pandemic year of 2020, in 2021, the north communal port with a capacity of 375 berths was opened.

In 2020, to comply with the Law on Tourist Boards and promote Croatian tourism, an Election Assembly of the Tourist Board was held, resulting in a name change to the 'Rovinj-Rovigno Tourist Board / Ente per il turismo della città di Rovinj-Rovigno'.

In 2020, in accordance with the Act on Tourist Boards and the Promotion of Croatian Tourism, the General Assembly of the Tourist Board was held, resulting in a change of its name to the Tourist Board of the City of Rovinj-Rovigno / Ente per il turismo della città di Rovinj-Rovigno.

We conclude our chronological overview of the significant events that have shaped the development of tourism in Rovinj with the remarkable year of 2022. In that year, the new Tourism Development Plan for the Rovinj-Rovigno destination for the period 2022-2030 was adopted and the Visitor Center of the enchanting Fantazija Quarry / Cava di Monfiorenzo Natural Monument was opened. Moreover, the prestigious accolades received at the Days of Croatian Tourism highlighted Rovinj-Rovigno as the ultimate destination for leisure tourism, cementing its position as the **Tourism Champion of Croatia for the year 2022**.

This awe-inspiring tale of Rovinj's tourism evolution and a remarkable journey that has transformed this coastal gem into Croatia's premier tourist destination would not have been possible without the brilliant minds who meticulously crafted its development, and the passionate residents who have cherished and continue to adore their extraordinary city.

The role of the Tourist Board has evolved since its establishment, and today it positions itself as a key player in the creation and promotion of a high-value-added tourism product in the destination. It acts as a tourism moderator in the public-private partnership involving tourism companies, the local government, private accommodation providers, restaurateurs, and other stakeholders directly involved in shaping the destination's tourism product.

It is important to note that the first part of the chronological sequence of events that marked the development of tourism in Rovinj was based on notes compiled by the late Professor Josip Folo, a doyen of Rovinj tourism, and his book 'Povijest rovinjskog turizma' (History of Rovinj Tourism) published in 2002. The remaining information was sourced from the archival documentation of the Tourist Board of Rovinj-Rovigno.

The commemorative exhibition for today's anniversary was created using archival materials from the State Archive in Pazin, the City Museum of Rovinj-Rovigno, the City of Rovinj-Rovigno, Maistra d.d., and the Tourist Board of Rovinj-Rovigno.