

Escape the Hustle and Bustle of a Metropolis

In these challenging times it is only human that we dream of peace and freedom, to break free of the stresses and strains of our bussssy lives and seek true relaxation. Five centuries ago the wealthy population of the Republic of Dubrovnik felt exactly that way.



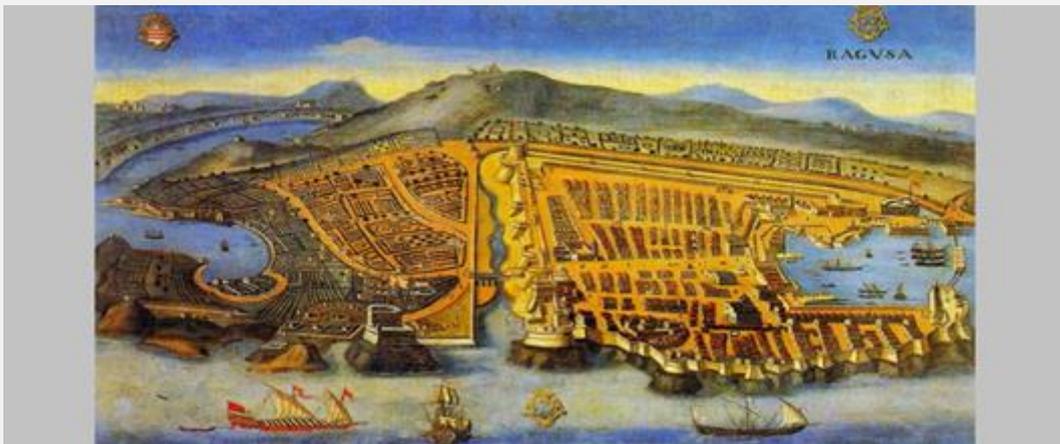
Roofs of the Old Town of Dubrovnik

Taking a break from demanding professional activities

Doing business with overseas countries, intermediating between Venice, Rome and the Ottoman Empire, trading salt and precious metals, managing an armada, living and working in a crowded city of stone under a blazing sun, respecting rigid rules and strict social distancing, sometimes it was suffocating. No wonder that the intellectuals and nobles of the City longed for escape.

Expansion outside the City

Whereas first only the enormous city walls offered the necessary security, once peace and order became more organised, the Republic expanded from the Old City to the neighbouring villages and all the way to the Pelješac Peninsula. At that time the inhabitants of Dubrovnik began to leave the Old City more often and for longer periods of time.



Map of the Old City, the Historical gardens, the harbour of Gruž and the Ombla river

First to cultivate fruit and vegetables on the hills just outside the City Walls. Still today this part of town is called „the Historical gardens of Dubrovnik “. The more these suburbs became safe, the more the gardens developed... with a little chapel (to bless the crops) ... a garden cottage (for storing tools and staying occasionally) ... a small country house ... an elegant villa.

In line with Tuscany

It was the time that the renaissance entered Italy and the aristocracy of Dubrovnik frequented the prospering and influential family circles of Tuscany. The time when young and ambitious noblemen travelled to study in Europe and came back with scientific and philosophical heritage from famous universities. At that time on a par

with Italy, it didn't take long for the Republic of Dubrovnik to unfold into an intellectual epicentre and to create an environment in which art and humanism flourished.



Sorkočević villa on the river of Ombla from 16th century (today ACI Marina Dubrovnik)

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Soon enlightened noblemen with the help of proficient architects and/or skilled stonemasons started building elegant houses with renaissance parks and refined gardens on the outskirts of the City. In the bay of Gruž (today the port of Dubrovnik) and along the Ombla river (from where in the 15th century the aqueduct supplied the Old City with drinking water) lush properties with gracious gardens rose amid the greenery.

Some of the noble families like the House of Gučetić and the House of Getaldić had even more audacity. They choose further distant villages like Trsteno – today well known for its unique Arboretum, or even islands like Šipan and the other Elaphite Island to build their small walled paradises. More about these personalities and their residences in one of our next newsflashes.



Trsteno Arboretum – Fountain at the Gučetić Villa (16th century)