

2024

CROATIA
Full of life

GOLDEN PEN media award



PHOTO: JULIEN DUVAL

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Dubrovnik

GOLDEN PEN 2024.

In the beautiful cultural monument Lazareti in Dubrovnik, on May 10, 2024., the 20th annual "Golden Pen" award ceremony was held, which was traditionally organized by the Croatian National Tourist Board, this time with the strong support of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County Tourist Board and the the city of Dubrovnik Tourist Board. It is a well-received award ceremony recognizing foreign editors, journalists, travel bloggers, and influencers who, with their positive and affirmative reporting, significantly contributed to the promotion of Croatian tourism worldwide last year.

Thus, 33 media representatives from 15 countries participated in tonight's ceremony, and 14 VIP media representatives, who have successfully promoted Croatia as a desirable tourist destination on a global level in the last twenty years, gave a special touch to this event.

The Golden Pen's most important recognition is the Grand Prix, which this year was awarded in six categories: for the best radio reportage, the best online media reportage, the best print media reportage, the best travel blog, the best publication on social networks, and the best television reportage.

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As part of this year's overall program of the Golden Pen, CNTB and its partners organized a three-day study trip, during which foreign journalists, bloggers, and influencers enjoyed visiting the sights and attractions of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County. Touring the Dubrovnik city walls, visiting the Neretva River, enjoying the view from Srđ, visiting Cavtat, driving the Karaka, and a photo safari in Opuzen are just some of the experiences that representatives of the foreign media will remember from this trip, and we should not forget the folklore ensemble either.

At the end Linđo entertained all the guests with their dance performances and the singing of the traditional klapa group during the festive part of the program.

GRAND PRIX FOR THE BEST PRINT ARTICLE

FINLAND

Pirjo Houni-Lundberg and Marica Rosengård

Pirjo Houni-Lundberg is a journalist and book author. She has been working for many magazines and newspapers in Finland, and is especially known for her travel articles and feature articles on interesting individuals. She was nominated for the Journalist of the Year award in Finland in 2016. Marica Rosengård is a Swedish photographer and visual artist. Her work has been featured in numerous publications, including Vogue, Elle and The New York Times. Rosengård received numerous awards for her work, including the Swedish Photographers Association Award for Best Photographer of the Year in 2019.



Photo: CNTB Author: Dean Tošić

GRAND PRIX FOR THE BEST ONLINE ARTICLE

HUNGARY

Gall Anna and Nagy Eszter

Anna i Eszter wrote about their experience of traveling in Istria. Eszter is a hiking tour guide in Hungary and a nature lover, so hiking on Učka and truffle hunting in Istria is what she enjoyed the most. Anne is a professional journalist mainly reporting on culture, social events and travelling, so it is not surprising that she recognized Grožnjan’s extraordinary cultural and artistic features and described it as “so much more than an average small Croatian town”.



Photo: CNTB Author: Dean Tošić

GRAND PRIX FOR THE BEST RADIO REPORTAGE

UNITED KINGDOM

Adrian Chiles

Adrian Chiles is a well-known British TV and radio reporter and a public personality, but what he is proud of the most is being well-known in Croatia. Thanks to his proud mom Ljerka (who is here in the audience with us tonight), Adrian is a Croatian British and thus visits and reports on Croatia often. One of his reports on the island of Murter was broadcasted on the popular BBC radio show 'Your Place or Mine with Shaun Keaveny'.



Photo: CNTB

Author: Dean Tošić

GRAND PRIX FOR THE BEST TELEVISION REPORTAGE

ITALY

Licia Colo' and Alessandro Antonino

Licia Colo' is a distinguished TV presenter and journalist who has won many awards during her career. Her show Eden - Pianeta da salvare, dedicated to travel reports focusing on ecology, currently runs on popular TV channel LA7. She is one of the favourite TV personalities in Italy whose documentaries are loved by all generations. Alessandro Antonino is an art lover whose works are dedicated to inland and coastal landscapes and are often displayed in art shows. His show 'Travelling with Alessandro' ran on TV 2000. Together with Licia, he made a beautiful report on Plitvice Lakes including Rastoke, Gospić and Kutarevo, with sequels about Zadar, Pag, Split, Šibenik and Krka National Park.



Photo: CNTB Author: Dean Tošić

GRAND PRIX FOR THE BEST TRAVEL BLOG POST

NETHERLANDS

Marjolein Linstra and Danny van der Meijden

Marjolein is a true ambassador for Croatia. She has visited the country multiple times and published many blog posts about the different regions of the country. She plans to travel to Croatia more in the future and offer similar content to her readers. Danny is a travel blogger and also a fan of Croatia and Croatian tourism. His numerous visits to Croatia have resulted in many blog and social media posts where he shares his experience of travelling to various regions of the country.



Photo: CNTB Author: Dean Tošić

GRAND PRIX FOR THE BEST POST ON SOCIAL MEDIA

GERMANY

Elisa Malih and Sohail Malih

Elisa Malih and Sohail Malih are German social media creators whose valuable coverage of Croatian tourist offer attracts the attention of their followers, as well as the media which has featured their posts on various occasions.



THE WINNERS WHO ATTENDED THE PRIZES CEREMONY

PRINT MATERIAL - ARTICLE CATEGORY

AZERBAIJAN

Emil Akhundov

Emil Akhundov wrote an amazing article with many stunning photos of Croatia that was published on 10 pages in a popular magazine M.O.S.T. in Azerbaijan. An interesting fact about the article is that it was one of the reasons the leading airline company in Azerbaijan, Azal, decided to connect Azerbaijan and Croatia with direct flights this summer for the first time in history.



BELGIUM

Farid El Mabrouk

In his article “To the Eye of the Earth”, Belgian journalist Farid El Mabrouk describes his trip to the Šibenik-Knin county, a destination that has managed to preserve its original character. He described Šibenik and its surroundings as a place that has it all — natural wonders, art, rich cultural heritage and gastronomic offer, peaceful and authentic character and a true Joie de Vivre, or the joy of living.



THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Karolína Demelová

Karolína Demelová is an editor of Marinanne magazine and Wave radio and she specializes in topics covering lifestyle, health, travelling and literature. In her article she writes about Zadar, Velebit and surroundings, paying special attention to Paklenica National Park, a favourite among the Czechs thanks to the popular movies about Winnetou.



SLOVENIA

Barbara Gavez Volčjak

Barbara Gavez Volčjak is a journalist and assistant editor of Tourism section in Slovenian daily newspaper Večer. She has been a journalist for more than 25 years and often writes interesting and engaging articles about Croatia, Croatian tourism, and all news from tourism industry.



ITALY

Massimiliano Rella

Massimiliano Rella is a journalist and photographer always looking for new stories, hidden destinations and interesting people. He collaborates with some of the biggest Italian and international travel magazines. Massimiliano wrote a 12 page long article on the island of Brač. The article was published in Bell' Europa, a monthly travel magazine with more than 100.000 readers.



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Kristin Vukovic

With proud family roots from Karlovac, Kristin Vuković has written about Croatia for more than a decade, for publications such as The New York Times, BBC Travel, Travel + Leisure, Virtuoso and she was named a “40 Under 40” honoree by the National Federation of Croatian Americans Cultural Foundation. Her feature article in Hemispheres, United Airlines’ in-flight magazine, is an exploration of and the city holds a special place in her heart, since she was engaged in Dubrovnik and married in Sponza Palace.



ONLINE MATERIAL - ARTICLE CATEGORY

POLAND

Natalia Gumińska

Natalia Gumińska published two articles impressively entitled “Croatia, the country I have avoided so far. Now I know it was a mistake” and “Croatia, favourite country of the Polish. You can fall in love with the place and its atmosphere” on wp.pl, one of the leading online portals in Poland, where she also vividly retold her impressions of Croatia on "Newsroom WP".



CHINA

Yang Yi

Yang Yi represents reporters of Planet Seeker, one of the digital media of Lonely Planet China. Throughout the last couple of years, they have continuously supported Croatian tourism and promoted Croatia as a destination to their readership. In 2023, Croatia was the only country on Lonely Planet's top list of destinations for that year to which PlanetSeeker dedicated a special extensive article on the occasion.



UNITED KINGDOM

Rick Jordan

Rick Jordan is an award-winning reporter and travel writer. During his 20 years of editorship in the esteemed Conde Nast Traveller, he has travelled all over the world. He wrote a detailed report on the islands of southern and central Dalmatia and the hidden beauties of Croatian coast. He is also a fan of Croatian sport and a proud owner of Luka Modrić's autograph.



RADIO REPORTS CATEGORY

FRANCE

Jean-Sébastien Petitdemange

Jean-Sébastien Petitdemange is a French radio and television presenter. He has been passionate about media since his teenage years and collaborated with major tourism media. As a presenter for one of France's leading radio channels RTL, Jean-Sébastien has showcased Croatia, a destination widely recognized by the French.



HUNGARY

Szűcs Péter and Kamasz Melinda

Jazzy Radio Business Class is a morning business and public life show, where experts analyse the world's most important news and events. Szűcs Péter and Kamasz Melinda made a very special interview and explained all the advantages of visiting Croatia off main season and covered many other interesting information about the country.



TELEVISION REPORT CATEGORY

THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Martin Vrbický

Martin Vrbický is a cinematographer specialized in documentaries about travelling and sports. His report on Dubrovnik offers the viewers many beautiful shots of the city, as well as the information on history, the most important monuments and many internationally acclaimed films and TV series shot in Dubrovnik. Martin is also a leader in filming extreme sports in the Czech Republic and free ride skier.



UNITED KINGDOM

Phoebe Nicolaou

Phoebe Nicolau is an executive producer of lifestyle TV shows in the UK. Her main inspiration are interesting locals she meets on her travels. One of her features shown on ITV's show 'This Morning' included Croatian tour guides, tourism workers, teachers, students and cooks that presented tourism potential of Croatia to British viewers.



GERMANY

Joshua Werner-Levy

Joshua Werner-Levy has been a journalist for 15 years and he loves telling relevant, polarizing and moving stories. He is the author of a beautiful 1,5-hour long TV report on the south of Croatia broadcasted as a part of a well-known and popular tourist show "Wunderschön".



TRAVEL BLOG CATEGORY

AUSTRIA

Carolyn & Sascha Heigl

Carolyn & Sascha's blog offers informative content to its readers, but is also visually attractive and has their own, personal touch. They share their travel experience with the readers in an informative, but also motivating and inspiring way. Their love for traveling also took them to Croatia, where 4 beautiful publications were created.



HUNGARY

Szombati Orsoly

Orsolya is one of the most active travel bloggers in Hungary. She has been to more than 80 countries and wrote about the experience on her blog. Alongside the blog, she has created a website that supports travellers with ideas, reports and free advice.



POLAND

Agnieszka Grudziąż

Blogger Agnieszka Grudziąż has been running her blog Cromaniam dedicated exclusively to Croatia for 10 years. Cromaniam has been included in Top 100 Polish blogs by See Bloggers, the biggest festival for web creators in Poland. Agnieszka is also the author of many e-travel guides for Croatia.



SOCIAL NETWORK/INFLUENCERS CATEGORY

BELGIUM

Emma Verhaeghe

As a travel influencer, blogger and PR consultant from Belgium Emma inspires countless people to explore new places. Among other destinations, this year she has offered an interesting coverage of Zagreb and Opatija Advent trip to her followers.



FRANCE

Ophélie Schaffar

Ophélie Schaffar is a French content creator, an traveler, photographer and food enthusiast. During her December trip to Croatia, she participated in the Advent Opening ceremony and visited Zagreb and Samobor. Her content highlighted Croatia as a winter destination with a variety of activities and landscapes and an easy access with all-year-flights between France and Zagreb.



FRANCE

Marina Balain

Marina Balain is a French creative traveling the world as a photographer, dancer and a writer, seeking the extraordinary in everyday. She visited Croatia during Winter time, travelled through Zagreb and the surrounding and presented a unique way to be immersed in local culture and experience Croatia to her followers.



UNITED KINGDOM

Elise Tanriverdi

Elise Tanriverdi is specialized in the adventures of solo travel. She is known for her inventive portrayal of Croatian landscape using drone and reporting on off-season tourist offer, especially focused on culture, beaches and gastronomy. Her dream is to fully understand the concepts of 'fjaka', 'galeb' and 'marenda' and savour local cuisine while exploring all regions of Croatia in a 'slow living' manner, or as Croatians would say – 'pomalo'.



CHINA

Amelia-Yang Baodi

Amelia is a Chinese influencer with loyal followers interested in lifestyle, gastronomy, culture, art and exploring isolated, less known locations on their travels. She presented engaging content to her followers covering locations such as Zagreb, Dubrovnik and Krka National Park.



Congratulations to all the winners and thank you for your contribution to the promotion of Croatia around the world. We wish you the best of luck in your future work!



Photo: CNTB Author: Dean Tošić

