



## Travel Stories by Amaru & Suzanne



### Korčula, Marco Polo's Birthplace

by Amaru & Suzanne, Sept 11th 2007

After a few days in Dubrovnik the time had come for us to move on, unfortunately that meant that we had to split up our group as well. Carl and Karine stayed in Dubrovnik and Sylvain just caught the catamaran with us to the island of Mjet for a day trip. So, it was just me..... and 4 girls, could be worse =)

The 5 of us arrived on the island of Korčula, Marco Polo's birthplace, and once more we were approached by several people that were offering rooms. We told them that we were looking for a place where we all could be together.

An elderly man approached us and told us that he had three rooms for us, 2 doubles and a single, and that he was located just 5min away.... They all say that they are only 5min away but he seemed nice so we tagged along after him.

Well, 5min later we had reached his house, basically in the middle of the old town and just 10 metres away from the ruins of Marco Polo's house. Location was awesome, we inspected the rooms and could not wish for anything better.



Aboard the catamaran  
leaving Dubrovnik



We have arrived  
in Korčula

Our landlord, Peter, then wanted us to follow him upstairs and to take our passports with us to register. We walked a few flights of stairs and eventually made it to the very top of the house, and what a view we were offered there. We could even see the tower that belongs to the Marco Polo house, and we were higher up and had a better view over the ocean than the people in it had.

While writing down our information he offered us some local sweet dessert wine, Proceek, which turned out to be a real hit with all of us, it was great! He just told us that he gets it from a friend that makes it himself....

Hmmmm, we will have to see if we can get ahold of his friend for a few bottles later on =)

After all of this the time had come to explore the town of Korčula.....

It may be a small town but from the very first moment we liked it better than we had liked Dubrovnik. This felt a bit more authentic, a bit more like the real Croatia we had come to see!

It's touristic, no doubt about that, since it's said to be the birth place of Marco Polo everything, and we mean everything on the island is Marco Polo this and Marco Polo that. You have the Marco Polo Travel Agency, The Marco Polo House, Marco Polo Ice cream and much more.

But, it still feels small and homely and very very cute, the old town is located within the city walls and the water surrounding the city is very clear and very blue, it's beautiful!



That's Marco Polo's house  
the tower that can be seen



We all strolled aimlessly and at one point also split up to be able to wander by ourselves. While walking past one of the two small docks that the town has, we noticed that a big ferry was leaving the island. On a closer look we noticed that the ferry was the same that we had been on from Bari to Dubrovnik...and can you remember the name of the ferry? Marco Polo of course.....figures!

That evening we all decided to out and try one of the restaurants that we had been recommended. This place supposedly specializes in seafood and after all the pasta and pizza we needed a change in diet! We sat studying the menu and started wondering about some of the prices.... they are all per kilo. We just weren't sure how big the servings were going to be. So we decided to ask the waiter how it all works.

He told us: "Well, it works like this, you order, I walk into the kitchen, the cook prepares the dinner, I serve it and then ask you if you enjoyed it" with a glimpse in his eye..... we love people with a sense of humor and this guy is right up our alley!

He then walked into the kitchen and came out with a big tray which contained a few different fishes that varied in size. He then starts to describe them and first points to the tomato and lettuce on the tray and tells us that they have a bit of veggie taste to them.... this guy was hilarious!!

We all eventually settled on a few different dishes and when he brought them out he served the girls first and then when he handed me my plate he said: "And here is for you God, 4 girls!!".



Well, let's just say that we left him a nice tip at the end of the meal (and we don't normally tip)!

The next morning we decided to have a sleep in and then we would catch a bus to another small village on the island called Lumbarda which was supposed to have a nice beach where we could lay and do as little as possible.

We caught the bus around noon and it was packed with kids, we had accidently jumped on the local school bus.... well, I definately know that I do not want to work with children now....hehe, they were so loud and messy that the bus driver actually pulled over and shouted to them in Croatian....

We eventually made it to Lumbarda and our beach.... it was a beach which contained a few pebbles here and there but was mostly sandy....not as nice as the once in Lopud but still ok. And as you can see from the photos, the water was of a lightblue colour, very clear.... absolutely gorgeous (Yes, we do mention the water quite a lot but come on....look at those photos and tell me you wouldn't)!!

After spending a bit of time in the water (yup, still cold) we decided to have our picnic.... and what a pain that turned out to be. For some reason we attracted dozens upon dozens of wasps. We couldn't sit still and eat our food but had to keep walking along the beach while we were eating, and even step out into the ocean to avoid the wasps. It must have looked ridiculous to anyone else watching.





Looking up at Korčula  
from the harbour

Heading back from the beach we noticed a few signs for a few local vineyards and decided to try the local wine out. It turns out that this region is famous for a wine called "Grk", a white wine.

We walked the village, trying out a few different Grk's and some reds as well until we eventually stumbled upon a man who had the Proceek wine we were looking for. He was more than happy to tap up a few bottles for us and also gave us a handful of grapes each to snack on. We just keep meeting more and more lovely, friendly people in this country.

Since we had around 90min before the bus was to arrive we decided to walk back to Korčula, at this point it was not more than 5km anyway. An hour later and Suz was regretting her decision.... her thongs (flip-flops) were starting to wear through and didn't offer any support at all - like

walking with paper on her feet.

We managed to make it back to Korčula in one piece and got an awesome view of the town from the hill as a reward for our efforts.

That evening we went to a cocktail bar called "Massimo" which is housed in one of the city wall towers. The only way to get there is to climb on a ladder and your drinks have to be hoisted up on a rope, very different!

A few Mojitos and Long Island Ice Teas later and we were ready to have some food and start preparing for the next day when we would leave.

We couldn't be bothered to sit down and eat so we actually just ended up having pizza (again). But at least it was one of the better ones that we've had in Croatia.



We thought we would get rain  
But the weather cleared up

We took the pizzas with us back to our rooms and had them with some of our Proceek wine and started talking about what to do the next day...

Korčula turned out to be a very nice surprise, Suz and I hadn't thought of visiting it first when we started planning our Croatia trip so a big thank you to all of you that recommended it to us, it would have been such a shame to miss seeing it.

The small town is very cute, everybody is very friendly and even though they have a lot of tourists, the prices have yet to reach the level Dubrovnik is at. You might say that Korčula is a mini-Dubrovnik, which is both good and bad. It's beautiful, old and very friendly but unfortunately it also means that more people will find it and prices will eventually rise.

We are glad that we managed to see what we did and we would recommend anyone in the area to spend a few days here. For us, the time had come to move on to the next island, Hvar, which is one of the big islands that almost everyone visits, we wanted to discover why!



Suz and Alex  
Sitting down having lunch



It's beautiful with the  
mountains in the background



The ferry Marco Polo  
leaving Korčula



**The main gate**  
of the town



**The small church**  
in Korčula



**Suz**  
looking out over the ocean



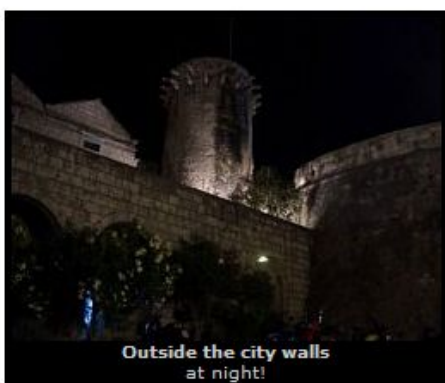
**The water is so blue**  
and so clear



**Going out for dinner**  
and being called God by the waiter



**Seafood risotto**  
It was great!



**Outside the city walls**  
at night!



**These guys are preparing for the**  
traditional Moreska Sword Dance



**Suz and Trina**  
Trying to locate the bus station



**Looking back**  
at Korčula town



**Which country were we in again?**  
You could easily forget..



**Suz on the bus**  
...after most of the kids have gotten off



**It's easy to see**  
that we are in a wine region



**A stone wall**  
leading towards the ocean



**The clear waters**  
at Lumbarda



**Another shot of these**  
amazing waters!



**Suz and Trina**  
on the beach



**How clear is this water?**  
I would love to dive in it



**Alex**  
The Great!



**On our search**  
for Grk



**There are many vineyards**  
along the way



**Free samples....**  
We love that!



**We bought some wine**  
From a local vineyard



**Great views**  
can be found everywhere



**More wine sampling**  
and Alex seems to be enjoying it



**"Oh no, I lost my penis"**  
I would be in dispair as well....



**Grapes and more grapes**  
We were given lots of them



**The Procek wine maker**  
and the girls!



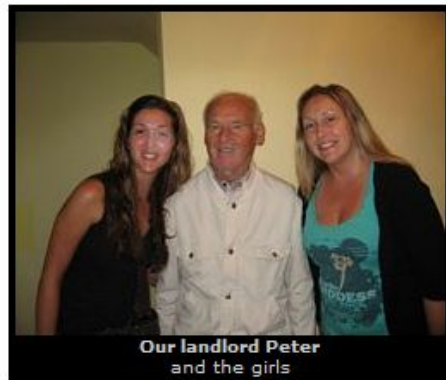
**On our hike**  
back to Korčula



**Found a tiny Butterfly**  
along the road



**Korčula**  
during sunset



**Our landlord Peter**  
and the girls



Walking to the top of  
Massimo cocktail bar



Suz and Laura  
waiting for their drinks



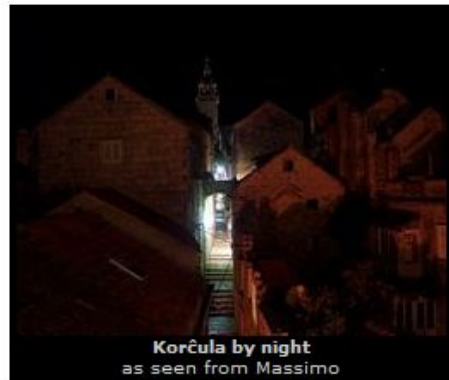
Suz and I  
at Massimo



Laura and Alex  
like we said, they are crazy



So sad...  
We've finished our drinks!



Korčula by night  
as seen from Massimo

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