

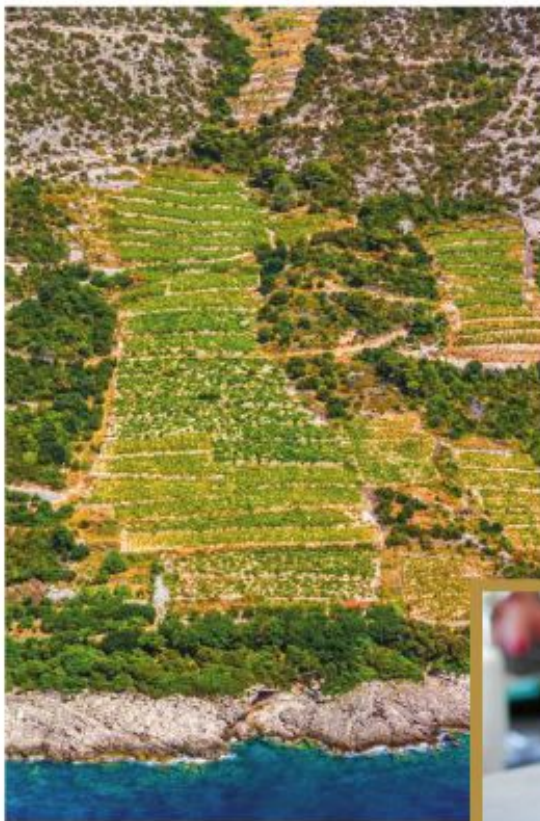
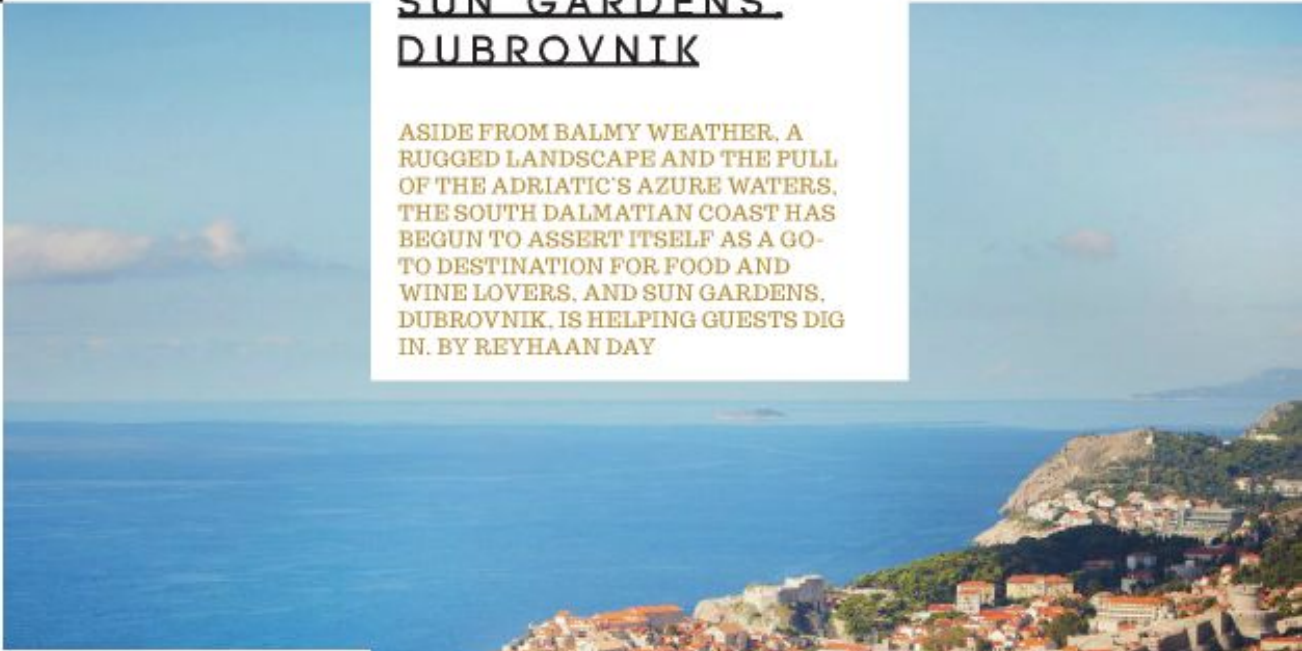
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# mayfair times

*David Gandy: From model to entrepreneur  
PLUS: Fashion focus, Soho special and the revitalisation of St James's*

## SUN GARDENS, DUBROVNIK

ASIDE FROM BALMY WEATHER, A RUGGED LANDSCAPE AND THE PULL OF THE ADRIATIC'S AZURE WATERS, THE SOUTH DALMATIAN COAST HAS BEGUN TO ASSERT ITSELF AS A GO-TO DESTINATION FOR FOOD AND WINE LOVERS. AND SUN GARDENS, DUBROVNIK, IS HELPING GUESTS DIG IN. BY REYHAAN DAY



Vineyards at Pelješac



The inviting Adriatic waters of Dubrovnik



A mouthwatering salad at Hotel Sipan

PROCLAIMED “the jewel of the Adriatic” by Lord Byron and considered “heaven on earth” by George Bernard Shaw, Dubrovnik in Croatia has long made an impression on the great and the good. A UNESCO world heritage site since the late 1970s, the city continues to delight with its stunning architecture, riveting history and, increasingly, its gastronomic culture – all just a two and a half hour flight from London.

With 22 hectares of picturesque gardens, a private beach and three swimming pools, the 201-room luxury five-star Sun Gardens, Dubrovnik makes the ideal base for discovering the region’s culinary delights. Sitting just 6km outside the city’s Old Town in Orašac, it’s the perfect choice for those wanting to balance their sightseeing with some sunbathing.

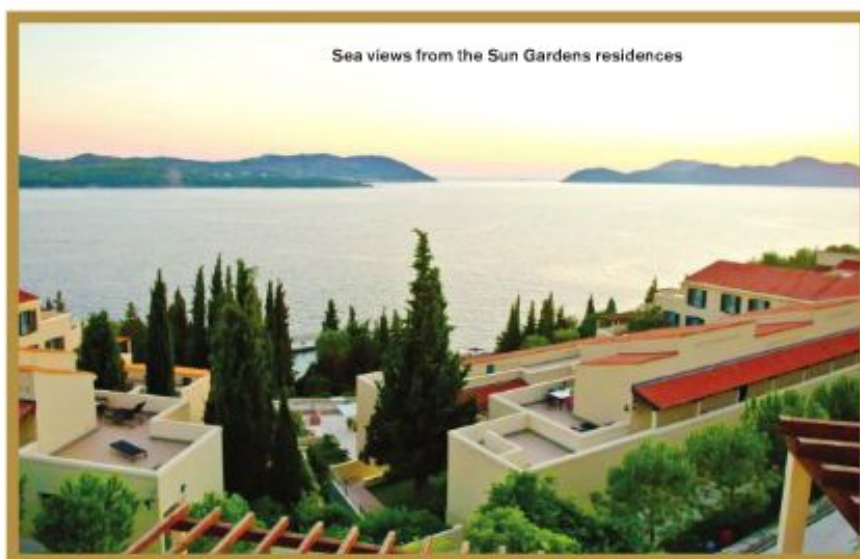
Catch a 10-minute cab – or a 30-minute speedboat – from Sun Gardens to the romantic Old Town, which has an abundance of quality bars and restaurants. Take a breather from wandering the steep cobbled streets and sip on wines at the charming Matusko Wine Bar, run by the Matusko winery – currently making some of Croatia’s best wine, including the sweet Dingac Reserva.

Restoran Dubrovnik, a rooftop restaurant hidden on a narrow, atmospheric street, is one of the city’s most celebrated. Dishes here are a mix of traditional and modern influences made using the freshest local produce – served in a romantic, candlelit space surrounded by shuttered windows and the terracotta domes and spires of the town.

Next on visitors’ itineraries should be a day trip to the medieval town of Ston and nearby harbour area of Mali Ston – renowned for its oysters farmed on local beds. Take a leisurely lunch on the shady terrace at Bota Sare Restaurant, which serves up simple fish, shellfish dishes and sharing plates. For a taste of traditional Croatia, try the unusual dessert Stonska torta, or “Ston cake” – made with a pasta, cinnamon and almond filling.

An hour’s journey in the car (organised by Sun Gardens) takes you to Pelješac. This peninsula is a must-see for wine connoisseurs, with its stunning vistas and some of the country’s most acclaimed vineyards and winemakers. Drop into the old stone Saints Hills Vinaria, in the sleepy village of Oskorusno, which produces delicious varieties made from grapes grown in Pelješac and the nearby area. Taste a few glasses while looking over the verdant valley stretching all the way to the sea.

Sea-faring types will enjoy boat trips from the hotel marina to the Elafiti islands – one of which, Lopud, boasts the only sandy beach in the area – ideal for a dip before lunch at the largest of the islands, Sipan. Pick a spot at Hotel Sipan’s terrace,



overlooking the stunning bay, framed by imposing green hills and surrounded by palm trees.

Those who fancy eating closer to home will be spoilt for choice back at Sun Gardens. Dotted on either side of the resort’s main boulevard are a range of dining spots. Two of the quality options include Cilantro, a sleek, open kitchen restaurant serving modern seafood dishes; and Il Giardino, offering Adriatic-inspired plates.

Work up an appetite with a full body holistic massage at The Spa by OCCO (2015 World Luxury Spa Awards’ Best Luxury Hotel Spa), then try the new “Tastes for all Senses” menu. This tasting menu showcases the region’s finest produce, with each course paired with white, rosé and red (Croatians say “black”) wines from Croatia’s emerging wine regions. Dishes include Mediterranean shrimps with decadent Istrian black truffle; the riviera’s famous oysters; and succulent, slow-roasted veal fillets.

Laidback options include the meat lover’s paradise The Butcher, with Croatian, Argentinian and USDA steaks served; the internationally focused The Market; and La Pasta, preparing fresh and simple Italian cuisine. A number of buffet options ensure that there is always something for those who prefer more choice. Diners don’t have to miss the jaw-dropping sunset over the nearby Elafiti islands either, as most restaurants have outdoor seating. If thoughts of leaving the azure skies and golden sunsets give you the blues, there’s always the option of making one of the 207 fully appointed residences your home away from home.

***One-bedroom residences start from around £164,000; two-bedroom residences from around £218,000; and rooms start from £205 per night.***

[www.dubrovniksungardens.com](http://www.dubrovniksungardens.com)