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French right

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Ben Thompson  
and Asifa Lahore

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entrepreneur  
£80m couldn't buy

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Queer British Art

## THE PREMIER LEAGUE MANAGER READY FOR A GAY FOOTBALLER

BOURNEMOUTH'S **EDDIE HOWE**, EXCLUSIVE AND ON THE RECORD

*"I would like to think a gay player would confide in me.  
I am 100% supportive: a happy player is a better player"*

Text : Markus Bidaux

**{HOT HOTEL}** SUN GARDENS, DUBROVNIK

Dubrovnik's streets can be frustratingly full of tourists, so *Winq* avoids the crowds and stays outside at the Sun Gardens resort – the perfect spot to enjoy the calm of the Adriatic Coast

I look out of the window from my aeroplane seat and gaze out over the terracotta roofs of Dubrovnik's Old City. As I do so, it's easy to see why HBO chose the location to create the fiction medieval city of King's Landing in *Game of Thrones*.

Dubrovnik enjoys the status of UNESCO World Heritage Site but with this comes one massive issue for such a tiny destination – tourists. There can be up to three cruises at a time docked around the Old City and the passengers from these congest the city's streets, so while Dubrovnik is a must-see it might

be best to stay just outside, as I did at the Sun Gardens.

Arriving at the five-star Sun Gardens resort, nestled on the coast just six miles north-west of Dubrovnik, I feel like I'm walking into a little, self-contained village. Although there is a nine-storey hotel, most of the property is made up of a series of apartment blocks that cascade down a slope to the hotel's promenade. My apartment is spacious, modern and comfortable, with spectacular views of the Adriatic Sea and Elafiti Islands from my sun deck. Inside, a large, fully-equipped kitchen and dining room lead

into a spacious, comfortable lounge, and in the luxurious bathroom the OCCO Bergamot & Red Thyme body wash is so good I can't resist slipping it into my soap bag to take home. But I didn't come to Croatia to sit inside...

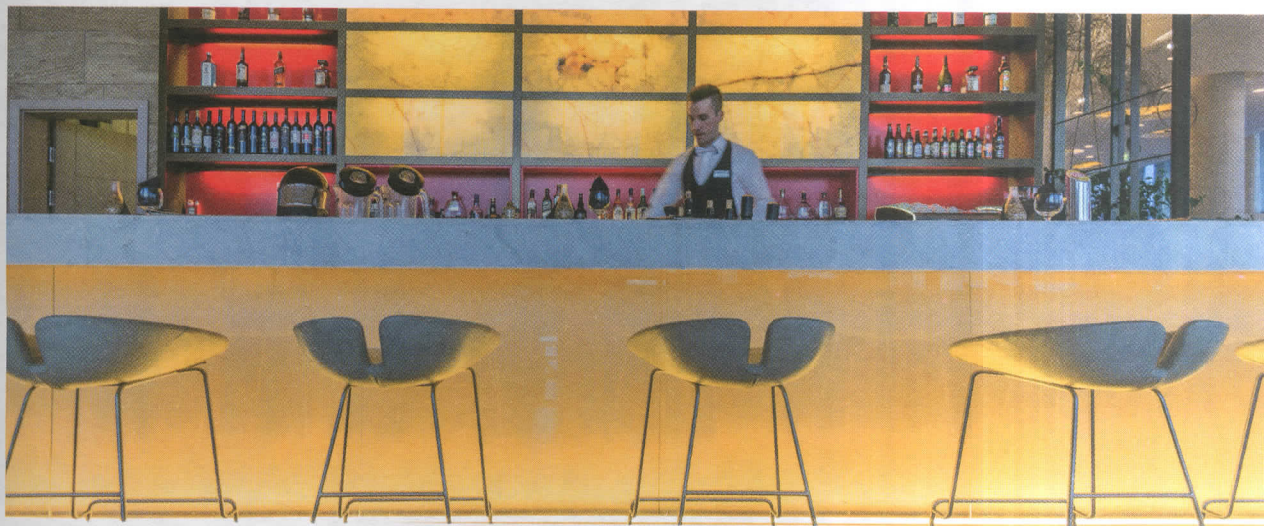
I rush down the steps past the other blocks to the resort's promenade. Along one side there are restaurants and bars (of which there are no less than 16) and on the other there are three large pools surrounded by sun loungers. But I want to dip into something a bit cooler.

Down another set of steps is a pebble beach and swimming area.



### Oggles with goggles

“After slipping into the waters I am glad I brought my goggles, as there are schools of small fish beneath my feet that are mesmerising to watch”



After slipping into the waters I'm glad I brought my goggles, as there are schools of fish beneath my feet that are mesmerising to watch.

During my stay I also take advantage of the impressive fully-equipped weights and cardio area and although I don't have a team to play with on the 5-a-side football pitch, beach volleyball or tennis courts, I do have a go at the indoor climbing wall and manage not to embarrass myself... at least not too much.

Between dips in the sea I relax inside

the award-winning Spa by OCCO. Like the toiletries provided in my bathroom, the spa uses OCCO products that are inspired by the Croatian coast. I hop from the steam room to the coal and salt saunas and finally dip into the hydrotherapy pool before treating myself to a massage.

Nights are spent eating al fresco while sampling as much Croatian wine as I reasonably can. When I do venture into Dubrovnik to explore the Old City, I pick a quiet day to avoid the crowds. I search out the filming locations of *Game of Thrones*

and find a hole in the city walls that leads to Buza Bar, which sits on a series of rocks between the wall and the sea. As I wander around the city, what I discover is just as breathtaking as I was expecting but at the end of the day I'm glad to head back to the Sun Gardens.

Because while Dubrovnik may be stunning this is the real highlight of my trip ■

From €100 in low season, and €300 in high season

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