

萨格勒布： 静美的首都

相比于游人如织的杜布罗夫尼克，克罗地亚的首都萨格勒布显得格外安静平和。在这座古老的中欧之城里，既有巴洛克与新古典主义建筑，也有各式手工艺店铺，还有一座独特的失恋博物馆。在上城区和下城区漫步，在新与旧之间徜徉，仿佛可以触摸到默默流淌的时间。

文 莱比特 ● 图 视觉中国（除标注外）

城市起源

一个雾气氤氲的早晨，我从萨格勒布机场乘大巴前往市中心的杜布罗夫尼克酒店 (Hotel Dubrovnik in Zagreb)，车开到下城区的公园附近，浓雾将大巴车笼罩，雾气在车窗上凝结成小水珠，滑滚出左一道右一道的轨迹，这算是萨格勒布给我的见面礼吧。

杜布罗夫尼克酒店始建于1929年，经历了多次翻新和装修，既有复古的装饰、大理石地砖和老电梯，又有新派的简约室内装潢和意式以及克罗地亚本土美食。在酒店大堂，我见到了



此行的向导——Zlata Merlin。她满头银色卷发，戴着金丝眼镜，身着卡其色的长款风衣，眼神特别亮，“手眼身法步”都有着超越年纪的精神和矫健。“你好，我叫Merlin，会说中文”，还没等我打招呼，就听到了熟悉的语言，我愣住了，没想到对面这位古稀老人中文那么棒，“我以前在北京做外交的，待过几十年呢。”她补充道。

我捧着手里的克罗地亚指南书，好奇地问：“我看书里说克罗地亚咖啡很有特色，能带我去咖啡馆看看吗？”“这我倒是不清楚，我平时很少喝咖啡，不如咱们先去广场走走吧，然后我带你逛逛萨格勒布。”Merlin笑着说。

于是我们步行出发，不一会儿就到了耶拉契奇总督广场 (Trg Bana Jelačića)，广场以总督耶拉契奇命名，广场中间还矗立着他的青铜雕像，只见他身骑战马，手扬长剑，背后的奶油黄色巴洛克建筑给这位国家英雄的飒爽身姿增添了几分柔和的色调。

广场上的喷泉名叫曼达莎瓦茨 (Manduševac)，传闻一位长官率领他的军队路过此地时，又累又渴，便让一个叫曼达的女人从 Manduševac 井舀水，舀水时她说了一句祈祷语“Zegreb, Mandušo”，于是 Zegreb 也被认为是萨格勒布名字的起源。不过另一个说法更为可信，这座城市的名字或许源于原始斯拉夫单词 grěbъ，意思是丘陵。只不过这个说法鲜有人提及，毕竟没有故事，也没有美丽的少女。

我们走过广场的石板路，惊起一群灰蓝色的鸽子，它们环绕在广场市集的小提琴手和手工艺人的身旁，又好像在聆听相约在广场见面的情侣的耳语。





建筑迷宫

Merlin 在一处铜质微缩城市模型前停下脚步，她说：“横穿总督广场的伊利卡大街 (Ilica Street) 把萨格勒布分成两个区——上城区和下城区，南部还有一个新城区，你可以看到建筑从北向南也越来越新。” 我们一起从广场前往圣马可教堂 (St. Mark's Church)，这条只有约 600 米远的街沿途却有 20 余处餐吧、酒馆，比利时菜、墨西哥菜、西班牙菜、意大利菜应有尽有。

走了七八分钟，在路的拐角，穿过摆放神龛的石门，这栋颜色鲜明的小教堂跳进了我的眼帘。教堂不大，但历史可以追溯到 13 世纪，斯拉夫风格的钟楼和罗马风格的圣殿组合，与国旗同款配色的红白蓝釉面马赛克房顶独树一帜，屋顶上铺设的瓦片代表了萨格勒布的盾徽 (红色背景的白色城

堡)，以及克罗地亚 - 斯拉沃尼亚王国的盾徽。白色大理石的墙体上镶嵌了并不花哨的拱形瘦长窗户，让这座看起来更像童话小屋的教堂有了古朴庄重之感，也与活泼灵动的房顶相承接。教堂旁的建筑举足轻重，总督府、宪法法院、议会拥坐两旁，同样历经数百年风雨。四周建筑色彩众多，有白的、黄的、橘的、粉的，一如这座城市，毫不热烈，温柔至极。

由于教堂只在弥撒时间开放，我们没能入内。Merlin 介绍说，在教堂里有著名的本土雕塑家伊万·梅什特罗维奇 (Ivan Meštrović) 创作的雕像以及著名本土画家约佐·克亚科维奇 (Jozo Kljaković) 创作的壁画。“其实你已经见过伊万的作品了，我们路过的街上，公园里，只要是



手指特别细长的人物雕塑，都是他做的。” Merlin 说道。

圣马可教堂娇俏可人，而不远处的圣母升天大教堂 (Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary) 则异常高大——高约 105 米的双子塔直插云霄，无论在这座城市的任何角度，都是让人无法忽视、抬头仰望的天际线最顶端。这座教堂的历史比圣马克教堂还要早，在 1092 年定型，虽经过多次重建，但是教堂典型的哥特式风格让人过目不忘。

与欧洲其他古老哥特风大教堂的空灵相比，有着干奶酪色外墙的圣母升天大教堂显得更为亲切，教堂周边时常很热闹，烟火气十足。教堂内的彩绘玻璃窗气势恢宏，上帝、天使、圣徒的雕塑栩栩如生。



爱与缆车

“走，我们去个更适合年轻人的地方。”Merlin 带我穿过停留有多辆老爷车的小路，来到了失恋博物馆（Museum of Broken Relationships）。

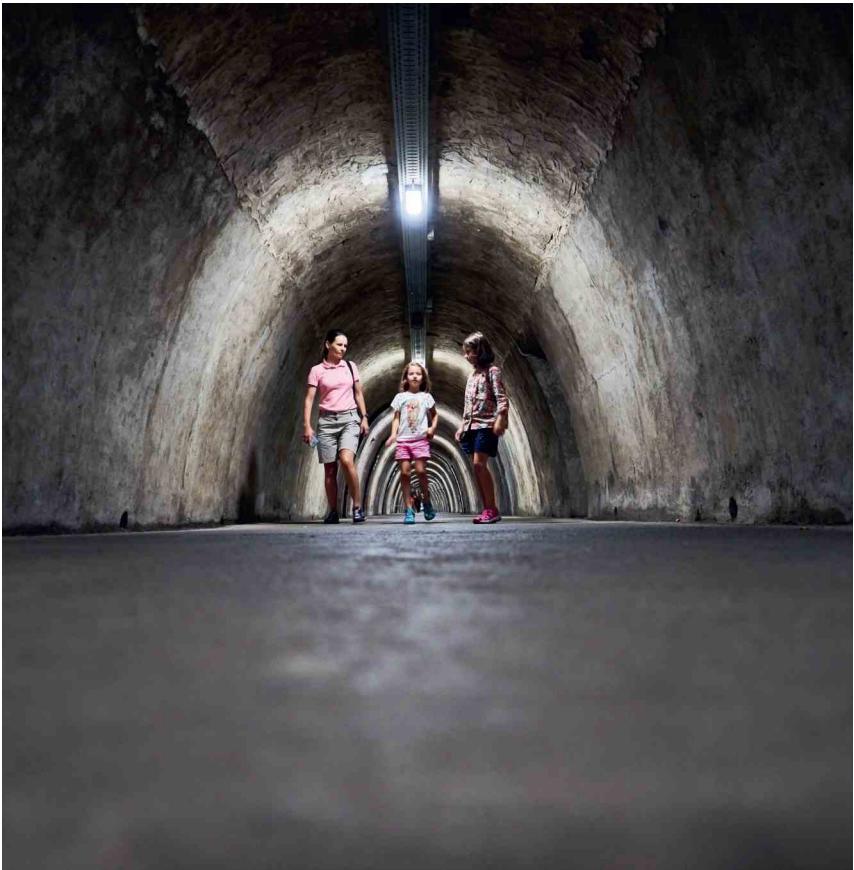
失恋博物馆虽然开馆时间不长（2006 年），却名声在外，曾在 2011 年被肯尼斯·哈德森奖（Kenneth Hudson Award）评为“欧洲最具创意博物馆奖”。经过纯白的走廊，左侧墙壁上用英文写着一段段爱情箴言，右侧则是一件件跟失恋相关的物品：一双华伦天奴的铆钉高跟鞋、一串家门钥匙、一个瓷器花瓶、一口煎蛋锅……这些物品的背后都是一段以分手为结果的恋情回忆，物品的主人把他们长长的故事和遗憾留在了介绍牌上。

正当我为这些失恋爱人感慨时，Merlin 提议我们离开这块伤心地，乘坐世界上最短的索道缆车，毕竟，没有什么事比坐缆车更能消解心头的忧愁。

缆车的起点是洛特什察塔（Lotrščak Tower），白色塔身，柱形塔



本页左下图：WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



顶，和广东江门开平的碉楼极为相似，塔外墙上交叉成“X”状的墙钉。正午时分，塔附近礼炮轰鸣，炮声最早在 16 世纪末响起，曾吓退奥斯曼帝国的士兵，从 1877 年开始，炮声则变成正午的信号。这项传统给当地人带来了生活的仪式感，炮声一响，说明午餐的时间到了，只有双眼迷茫的游人和广场上的鸽子才会被惊吓得“虎躯一震”。

在乘坐缆车前，我们现在塔下的空地上闲坐了一会儿，只见一位脸上挂着微笑的老年街头艺人，头戴蒂芙尼蓝的画家帽，帽子上绣着萨格勒布的标志性“心”形的徽章，穿着牛仔夹克。他怀抱着一把木质吉他，轻轻撩动着尼龙琴弦，曲调悠扬而舒缓。琴箱头部贴着欧盟旗帜，插着克罗地亚国旗，连装赏金的容器都是国旗配色的帽子。琴箱肚子上是手写的几个彩色大字“ALL YOU

NEED IS LOVE（有爱就够了）”，让人不禁联想到那首由约翰·列侬（John Lennon）创作、披头士乐队（The Beatles）演唱的同名歌曲。

休憩后，我和 Merlin 一起登上克莱因蓝色的缆车，据 Merlin 介绍，缆车建于 1888 年，用于连接上城区和下城区。说话间，有着缓坡拱顶的车子从高到低慢慢滑行，一路穿梭在碧绿的葡萄藤间，目之所及全是橘色的房顶。

高处的风光没有一丝秘密，上城的地下别有洞天。从缆车上下来后，在塔西边我们发现一处被葡萄藤盘踞的洞口，这就是格力奇地下隧道（Grič Tunnel）的入口。隧道最早是“二战”期间连接防空洞的人行道，20 世纪 90 年代重新开放，如今则是当地人穿梭各大街道的捷径。在这里我和 Merlin 道别，相约第二天再继续探索。

集市长街

第二天，我俩决定从圣母升天大教堂向西探索，教堂的西南角是热闹的多拉茨市场(Dolac Market)。这片市场共有两部分，一部分是露天市场，还有一部分在地下，因为售卖的食材丰富、质量较好被当地人唤作“萨格勒布的肚子”。穿行在市场里，摆摊的手作人亲切地跟我们这些东方面孔打招呼，他们售卖的是藤编的提篮和花瓶，还有一个被弹簧丝吊起的小木偶在空中上下翻腾。这些小木偶被制成小女孩、小丑、小狗等形象，有着五颜六色的爆炸毛线头和一双圆圆的木质小手。“我们的木偶戏很有名。”Merlin告诉我，木偶戏和木偶动画片等是克罗地亚文化艺术中的佼佼者，《木偶奇遇记》(The Adventures of Pinocchio)和《牛仔吉米》(Cowboy Jimmy)等经典动画深入人心。直到现在，萨格勒布每年都会举办国际木偶艺术节。

市场里，有点泛黄的大个头青椒、通红滚圆的西红柿、带点紫色的白皮大蒜、胖胖的茄子、蕉绿的白菜……整整齐齐地被摆放在清一色的红色太阳伞下，干净得看不到一丝泥土。大瓶小罐的土蜂蜜被垒成金字塔的形状。市场上鲜有年轻人出没，这里是中老年的“露天舞厅”，脚步麻利的大爷大妈不慌不忙，提着菜篮子，拎着大布袋在市场间穿梭，好像在奔赴一场集体舞会。年轻人则聚集在市场外围的咖啡馆小食店里，在午后盛放的鲜花边抿一口咖啡。

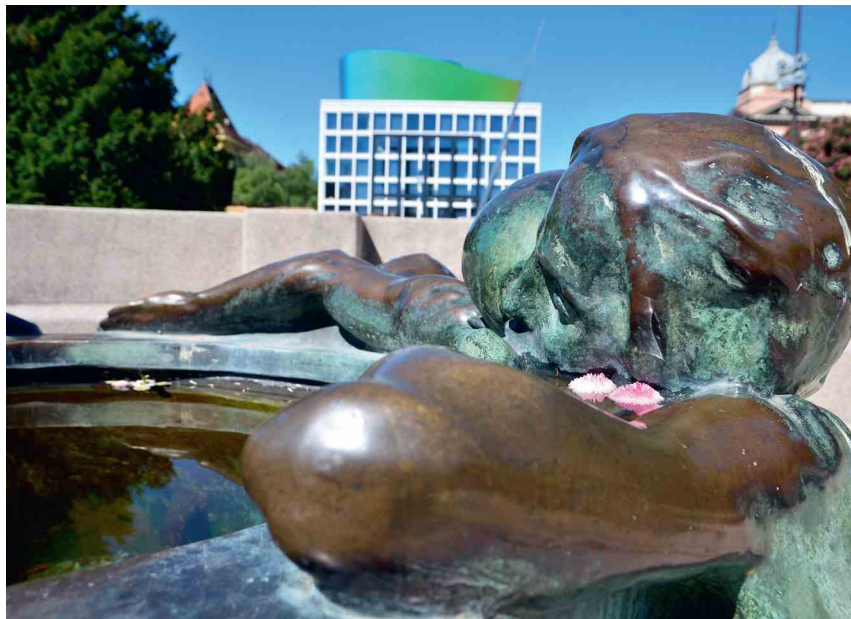
从市场向北走，便是特卡尔契奇街

(Tkalčićeva Street)，街边林立着马卡龙颜色的联排房子和露天咖啡馆，我们在一座名为玛丽亚·玉利奇·扎格爾卡(Marija Jurić Zagorka)的雕像旁停下脚步。雕像手握雨伞，身穿垫肩长裙，眼神坚定地望向前方，雨伞上还插了一丛粉白的月季花。Merlin介绍道，她是克罗地亚著名的作家和记者，也是在20世纪初期为妇女权利奔走呼号的先驱。

在靠近洛特什察塔的特罗斯马耶大道(Strossmayer Promenade)，我见到了克罗地亚另一位作家安东·古斯塔夫·马托什(Antun Gustav Matoš)的雕像，与扎格爾卡雕塑的写实风格不同，马托什的雕塑风格更为抽象。他坐在长椅正中，双臂舒展靠在椅背上，鼻子硕大，眼神深邃，跷着二郎腿——不羁的粗线条让整座雕塑有很强的现代感。在这条林荫大道上走累了，还可以靠坐在这位作家旁边，和他一起远眺下城区。

逛完我们又回到多拉茨市场，从市场向南走，踏上陡峭的鹅卵石路，这里便是拉迪切瓦大街(Radićeva Street)，又叫“长街”，是萨格勒布最古老的街道之一。巴洛克风格的豪宅、装饰有铁艺招牌的老房子以及各种纪念品商店散落其间，墙体的涂鸦给老街带来年轻的活力。我仔细地逛了逛其中几家小店，不仅被Q版爱因斯坦木偶吸引，还买了很多《权力的游戏》的纪念品。





下城漫步

耶拉契奇总督广场以南，下城区以“马蹄铁”形状的公园群为中心，向四周扩散开来，这里有着多座博物馆、美术馆、大学。Merlin 和我走在下城区的街头，只见两边绿树荫浓，蓝色有轨电车沿着铁轨缓缓向前。

沿途我们时不时就遇到一座雕塑，有伊万创作的发明家《尼古拉斯·特斯拉》(Nikola Tesla)，以及他在国家剧院旁创作的人与人跪地相互依偎的环形雕塑《生命之井》(The Well of Life)。另一位雕塑家玛丽亚·吴耶维奇·盖雷托维奇(Marija Ujević Galetović) 创作的作品则倚靠在维拉式卡街(Vlaška Street)的柱子上——雕塑的人物是克罗地亚作家奥古斯特·莎诺阿(August Šenoa)。

走到有着玻璃穹顶和精致外墙雕塑的克罗地亚艺术展览馆，我忽然发现展览馆正在举办象征主义本土画家弗拉霍·布克瓦(Vlaho Bukovac)的油画展，便顺势进入参观，弗拉霍曾是多

个王朝的宫廷画家，展览馆中的展出了他的多幅作品，孩童天真可人，自画像也是栩栩如生。

看完画展，我们继续在街上聊着天闲逛，一家名叫 Jasmina i lutkice 的设计师手工艺店的橱窗让我们停下了脚步，这家店售卖的是布艺娃娃。透过橱窗，我们好像看到了一个童话世界。布艺娃娃身体各个部分由不同材质和图案的面料缝合而成，组成了奇妙的肌理感。他们或是长着翅膀的天使，或是穿着毛衣的小熊，或是长耳兔子，或是有着星星点点肚皮的恐龙。看店的老板是这些娃娃设计者的丈夫，他说我们可以在他妻子的作品中发现一些标志性的特征，比如女孩儿都有樱桃小嘴，以及三根线缝成的下睫毛。

我买了一只有着黄色底胡萝卜图案的灰色兔子留作纪念，和 Merlin 道别。这只兔子如今也一直在在我的办公桌上，承载着萨格勒布的旅行回忆。



Zagreb: A Serene Capital City

Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, is more peaceful than touristy Dubrovnik. This ancient city in central Europe has Baroque and neoclassical buildings, all kinds of craft shops, and a unique Museum of Broken Relationships. Wandering around upper-town and lower-town seems like a travel through time.

WORDS LAIBITE • PHOTOGRAPHS VCG



Origin of the City

A foggy morning, I took an airport shuttle from Zagreb Airport to Hotel Dubrovnik. I got off near the lower-town park. The shuttle was enveloped by heavy fog, with droplets streaming down the windows. This was my introduction to Zagreb.

Hotel Dubrovnik, originally built in 1929 and renovated several times later, was an edifice of retro ornaments, marble floors and vintage elevators, as well as modern interior designs. The hotel offers Italian and Croatian cuisines. In the lobby, I saw my travel guide Zlata Merlin in a long khaki windbreaker. She had

silver curly hair, bright eyes, and a pair of wire-rimmed glasses. She looked younger than her age. "Hello, my name is Merlin. I speak Chinese." she said, before I had time to greet her. I was taken aback that this old lady was speaking Chinese so well. She added, "I have been working for foreign affairs in Beijing. I lived there for several decades."

With a Croatia guide book in my hand, I asked curiously: "It says in the book that Croatian coffee is really something special. Could you take me to a café?" "I don't know which ones are the best because I'm not a big coffee

drinker myself." Merlin told me, smiling, "How about we go see the square first? Then I'll show you around Zagreb."

So, we walked to Trg Bana Jelačića, a square named after the governor-general Jelačića. In the center of square stood his bronze statue upon a horse, a sword in his hand. The creamy baroque architecture behind him complemented the valiant posture of Croatia's national hero.

The fountain on the square is called Manduševac. Legend has it that an officer and his troop were exhausted and thirsty when they came through. He ordered a girl named Manda to fetch water from Manduševac and she prayed "Zegreb, Mandušo" while bailing water. This is often considered to be the origin of the city's name. A more credible theory traces Zagreb to the proto-Slavic word *-grębъ* which means hill, but this account can't compete with a story about beautiful girls.

A flock of bluish-grey pigeons took flight as we walked along the stone-paved road. They flew around violinists and craftsmen in the market, eavesdropping on the whisper of lovers out on a date.





An Architectural Labyrinth

Pausing in front of a city miniature in copper, Merlin said: "Zagreb is divided into upper-town and lower-town by Ilica Street, which passes Trg Bana Jelačića. There is a new district to the south. The buildings are newer as you go south." We left the square and headed towards the St. Mark's

Church. The 600-meter road was packed with over 20 restaurants and bars, with a broad range of Belgian, Mexican, Spanish and Italian food.

After a couple of minutes, we got to the corner and passed a stone gate with niches in it. A bright-colored church came into view. Going back to the 13th century, the small church combines a Slavic bell tower with a Romanesque nave. Its roof was glazed mosaic painted in red, white and blue, the same color scheme as the Croatian flag. The tiles recalled the coat of arms (white castle against red background) of Zagreb and Kraljevina Hrvatska i Slavonija. The white marble wall was interspersed with simple and slim vaulted windows, giving this fairytale cabin of a church a quaint and solemn feel under its luminous roof. A number of prominent buildings, steeped in history, were close by, such as the governor's palace, the constitutional court and the parliament. They were painted with gentle pastel of white, yellow, orange, pink, etc., reflecting the city's calm spirit.

The church is only open to the

public during mass, so we didn't get to enter. According to Merlin, it housed the statues and murals, created by renowned local sculptor Ivan Meštrović and painter Jozo Kljaković respectively. "Actually, you have seen Ivan's works," she explained, "The figure sculptures that have long slender fingers on the street and in the park are carved by Ivan Meštrović,"

Not far from the dainty Basilica di San Marco, is the towering Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary – the 105m twin towers rise toward heaven. Wherever you are in Zagreb, it forms the peak of the skyline. First taking shape in 1092, this cathedral has an even longer history than Basilica di San Marco. In spite of multiple reconstructions, the neo-Gothic style was impressive to behold.

The Cathedral of the Assumption, painted with the color of fromage, looks more hospitable than other ethereal gothic cathedrals in Europe. The surroundings are often buzzing with urban life. There are magnificent stained glass windows and vivid depictions of God, angels and disciples.

Love and the Cable Car

"Let's go! There is an exclusive hangout for young people." Merlin led me down a road strewn with vintage cars to the Museum of Broken Relations.

The Museum of Broken Relations is a huge hit though it was founded as recently as 2006. It was hailed as the "most creative museum in Europe" by the Kenneth Hudson Award in 2011. Walking through the lily-white corridor, you'll find love maxims in English on the left, and objects concerning breakups on the right: a pair of Valentino high-heels with rivets, a bunch of house keys, a porcelain vase, an egg pan...Each of these is a love story ending up with breakup. The owners shared their stories and regrets on the display boards.

As I was lost in the fate of these unhappy lovers, Merlin suggested we leave this space of heartbreak by the shortest cable route in the world—nothing like a cable ride to clear up a spell of sorrow.

The cable car started from Lotrščak Tower. The white trunk and column-shaped tip reminded me of the Kaiping watchtower



in Jiangmen, Guangdong. Nails were arranged in the shape of X on the external wall. At 12AM, guns thundered out a salute. First installed at the end of the 16th century, the artilleries were intended for Ottoman troops. It wasn't until 1877 that the gunshot turned into noonday signal. It has since become a daily ritual for locals, calling them to lunch. Only vagabond tourists and pigeons on the square would be startled.

Before boarding the cable, we sat for a while under the tower. A smiling old street artist in a denim jacket and a Tiffany blue beret was strumming a soft and haunting tune on his wooden guitar. His beret was embroidered

with a heart-shaped emblem, the symbol of Zagreb. At the top of the guitar case were the flags of the EU and Croatia. The hat laid out to collect money was in the colors of the national flag as well. The colorful words of "ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE" were written on the case, in homage to the Beatles song written by John Lennon.

Merlin and I climbed on the Klein-blue cable car after some rest. She told me that the cable car was put into service in 1888 to connect upper-town with lower-town. The vaulted cable car started to slide down as we spoke, passing through lush grape vines. There were orange roofs wherever we saw.

Descending from the panoramic view of the higher area, we dived into nooks and crannies below the upper-town. We got off the cable car, and discovered to the west of the tower a hole covered with grape vines – the entrance of Grič Tunnel. Originally a track connecting air-raided shelters during World War II, it was reopened to the public in the 1990s. Nowadays, it has become the shortcut for locals between streets and alleys. I said goodbye to Merlin and agreed on a further exploration for the next day.

Long Streets in the Market

The following day, we decided to walk west from the Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the southwest was Dolac Market which consisted of outdoor and underground areas. It is also known as the "belly of Zagreb" because of abundant and high-quality foodstuff. In the market, peddlers waved to us, touting rattan baskets and vases, and puppets that danced on wire. These puppets were in the form of little girls, clowns and dogs, with colorful yarn as hair and round wooden hands. Merlin told me proudly that their puppetry is world renowned. Puppetry and puppet cartoon is a marvelous expression of Croatian culture. Cartoons like The Adventures of Pinocchio and Cowboy Jimmy are some of the most popular classics. Each year, the international puppetry art festival takes place in Zagreb.

In the market, vegetables ranging from yellow-tinged peppers, ruddy round tomatoes, to white garlics with a hint of purple, plump eggplants, and dark green cabbages were neatly placed under rows of red parasols. Bottles of local honey were piled in the shape of pyramid. You hardly saw young



people here because it's like an exclusive club for middle-aged and elderly folks, who dashed among the stalls with their baskets and bags like attendees to a dance party. Young people hang out in cafés and snack shops on the perimeter, sipping coffee next to flowers in full bloom.

Going north from the market, you will find Tkalciceva Street lined with macaron-colored town houses and outdoor cafés. We stopped in front of the sculpture named Marija Jurić Zagorka. Wearing a long dress with padded shoulders, she looked stolidly ahead, an umbrella decorated with

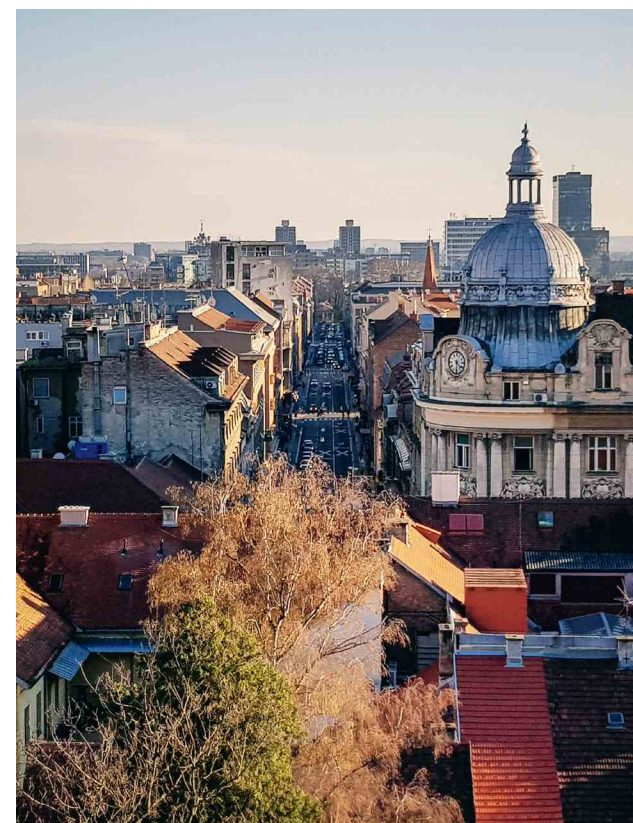


a bouquet of pale pink rose in her hand. Merlin told me that Zagorka in addition to being a great Croatian writer and journalist, was a pioneer campaigning for women's right at the beginning of the 20th century.

On the Strossmayer Promenade near Lotrščak Tower stood the sculpture of Antun Gustav Matoš, another Croatian writer. It was more abstract than the realistic style of Zagorka's. With a large nose and deep-set eyes, he sat in the middle of a bench, legs crossed, arms resting on the backrest. The bold lines made the sculpture strikingly

modern. It is nice to sit with the writer and take in the view over the lower-town if you need a break.

We went back to Dolac Market, turned south, and continued down a steep road paved with oval stones. This was Radićeva Street, alias "Long Street", one of the oldest streets in Zagreb. Baroque villas, old houses with iron signboards and souvenir shops were dotted along the street, while graffiti lit up the faded walls. Rummaging through a few shops, I was delighted by some comic puppets of Einstein, and grabbed a load of Game of Thrones-related souvenirs.



Strolling about lower-town

To the south of Trg Bana Jelačića, the lower-town sprawls out from a U-shaped cluster of parks. Many museums, galleries and universities are located here. Walking down the streets shaded by lush trees, Merlin and I watched a blue tramcar slowly making its way along the track.

Now and again we came upon more statues, such as the inventor Nikola Tesla created by Ivan, and another of his works near the national theatre – The Well of Life, a circular sculpture of men huddling on their knees. Another piece by Marija Ujević Galetović, leaning against a column on Vlaška Street, depicted

the Croatian writer August Šenoa.

Croatia Art Gallery had a glass dome on top and fine sculptures on external walls. As I approached, I noticed there's a painting show of Vlaho Bukovac, a local symbolist painter. Vlaho turned out to have been a royal painter for several courts. Among the works on display were images of innocent childhood and some captivating self-portraits.

Back from the gallery, we kept strolling around in the street and chatting. Jasmina i Iutkice, a shop selling handmade cloth dolls by the namesake designer, caught our eyes. The shop windows seemed to be a peek in a fairytale world. All

body parts of the dolls were stitched together with various patterns and fabrics, creating a fantastical texture. There were angels with wings, bears in sweaters, long-eared rabbits, or dinosaurs with spotted bellies. The guy in charge was the designer's husband. He told us that his wife's works had certain distinctive features. For instance, girls had cherry lips and lower eyelashes composed of three threads.

I picked up a grey rabbit with a picture of carrot on yellow background and bid farewell to Merlin. Now this rabbit sits on my office table, a lovely token of my time in Zagreb.



一座融合了中世纪、巴洛克及文艺复兴风格与中东风情的老城就展现在面前。瓦莱塔整座城市建在一个半岛之上,从城门口就可以一眼就望到主路尽头的圣埃尔莫堡(Fort Saint Elmo)和背后蓝色的地中海。

我沿着主路走到古城中心的圣乔治广场(St. George's Square),紧挨着它的就是著名的大团长宫(Grandmaster's Palace)。这座建于16世纪的建筑在之后的数百年里一直是马耳他乃至整个地中海的权力中心,就连法国皇帝拿破仑也曾在这里居住过。大团长宫的布局是马耳他传统风格,四周为两层房屋,呈长方形,建筑中央为花园,园中密植柑橘,池塘内饲养着从西西里运来的各种鱼类,整体氛围庄严肃静。

宫殿的内部装饰和欧洲大陆那些以恢宏奢华著称的宫殿相比要显得朴素一些,但宫殿内收藏有历代骑士团首领的画像,由大师雷蒙·佩雷洛斯(Grand Master Ramon Perellos)赠给骑士团的法国戈培林挂毯(French Gobelins tapestries)以及5000多套16~18世纪骑士穿戴的全身胄甲等珍贵文物。这些文物也是马耳他历史的缩影。

在众多欧洲国家中,马耳他这个面积仅有316平方公里、人口刚过50万的小国看似名不见经传,却在欧洲历史上扮演着至关重要的角色。身处地中海中心的马耳他与西西里岛隔海相望,南接北非,扼守西西里海峡(Strait of Sicily)入口,因其得天独厚的地理位置而被称为“地中海的心脏”。地中海对于整个欧洲文明的重要意义无须多言,于是也留下了“谁掌握了马耳他,谁就掌握了地中海;谁掌握了地中海,谁就掌握世界的中心”的说法。

初遇瓦莱塔

随着飞机高度的下降,在蓝得令人着迷的地中海上出现的这个黄褐色的小岛,显得如此突兀。而随着一阵引擎的轰鸣和机身的晃动,我们稳稳地降落在马耳他国际机场(Malta International Airport)的跑道上,虽然这是我第一次来马耳他,但机场周围低矮的黄色石制建筑和远处蔚蓝的地中海是如此熟悉。我曾在无数好莱坞电影里看到过相同的场景,以至于刚才我都脑补出了飞机降落时轮胎冒烟的戏剧化画面。

首都瓦莱塔(Valletta)距离马耳他国际机场仅十几分钟车程,路过城门前巨大的三叉海神喷泉,穿过入城桥后,沿丘陵斜坡修建的街道从脚下起伏延伸到远方,沿着这条街道一直走,只见狭窄的石格道路两边已经被私家车停得满满当当,车子上方是色彩艳丽、装饰精美的木制阳台。

瓦莱塔： 地中海之心

文 KEVIN ● 图 视觉中国、KEVIN

马耳他骑士团的传奇色彩

说起马耳他的历史，就不得不提到充满传奇色彩的马耳他骑士团(Rhodes and of Malta)，这个“国土”面积仅为罗马市内两栋楼、“公民”仅三人的骑士团，却是联合国官方认证的大会观察员实体，具有“准国家”性质。不过，虽然公民只有三人，骑士团的成员(骑士和牧师)和志愿者却多达几万人。马耳他骑士团最初称医院骑士团(Knights Hospitaller)或耶路撒冷圣约翰骑士团(The Order of St. John of Jerusalem)，11世纪成立于耶路撒冷，是欧洲历史上著名的“三大骑士团”之一。骑士团最初的职能是照顾病人或受伤的朝圣者，并于1113年获得教廷承认。

到了1291年随着基督教世界在中东的节节败退，骑士团不得不放弃了巴勒斯坦前往塞浦路斯，在那儿没多久，于1309年又撤到罗德岛(Rhodes)。之后作为整个东地中海地区唯一的基督教武装力量，骑士团在罗德岛一直坚持到1522年才被迫撤回欧洲。在欧洲大陆经历了流离失所的7年之后，1530年，骑士团奉教皇克雷芒七世(Pope Clement VII)和神圣罗马帝国皇帝查理五世(Emperor Charles V)的命令，来到了马耳他岛，并更名为马耳他骑士团，成了扎在奥斯曼帝国胳膊窝里的一根坚刺。

1565年，不可一世的奥斯曼皇帝苏莱曼一世决定彻底拔除这根肉中刺，于是派出大军围攻马耳他。然而面对数倍于己的敌人，经过4个多月的激战，马耳他骑士团在大部分城市被摧毁、成员一半战死的情况下，最终赢得了这场战争的胜利——这就是在欧洲历史上赫赫有名的“马耳他围困战”(Great Siege of Malta)。

经此一役，马耳他骑士团享誉欧洲，帆上标有马耳他骑士团八角十字的战船在地中海横行无阻。原本资金紧张的骑士团也获得了众多欧洲国家的支持，在岛上建立了一座新的都城。为了纪念“马耳他围困战”的胜利，新都城就以时任骑士团团长让·德拉·瓦莱塔(Jean Parisot de la Valette)的名字命名。





华丽的教堂

离大团长官不远处就是圣约翰副主教堂(Saint John's Co-Cathedral)。在马耳他这个小小的岛国,共有 360 多座教堂,但圣约翰副主教堂无疑是其中最重要的一座。教堂于 1573 年开始修建,虽名为副主教座堂,却是天主教在马耳他的主教堂之一。教堂外部黄色的墙体和装饰原始简朴,仿佛一座堡垒。我在参观教堂时却发现,内部装饰却极尽华丽,墙壁的每一寸都由黄金、大理石或壁画装饰。教堂内部还大量运用了华丽的巴洛克风格的装饰,包括交错雕刻的石墙,以及描绘了圣约翰生活场景的拱顶和侧面祭坛。这座教堂也被称为欧洲最漂亮的教堂之一。

但这座教堂里最吸引人的并不是这些金碧辉煌的装饰,而是教堂中所藏的“巴洛克艺术之父”——卡拉瓦乔(Caravaggio)最大也是唯一一幅签名画作——《圣约翰被斩首》(The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist)。

1606 年,卡拉瓦乔因被控谋杀罪从那不勒斯逃亡到了马耳他,寻求当时马耳他骑士团团长阿罗夫·德·维格纳科特(De Wignacourt)的庇护,德·维格纳科特非常欣赏这个浪荡天才的才华,提出了以留下当骑士团的官方画家作为条件换取赦免。于是卡拉瓦乔在马耳他创作了这幅《圣约翰被斩首》,并在画作下方用圣约翰的鲜血构成了自己的签名。卡拉瓦乔希望通过创作这幅画来控诉人类的残暴,尤其是政治上的迫害,并希望由此唤醒人们



停止杀戮。可惜卡拉瓦乔和马耳他骑士团的蜜月期并没有维持多久,1608 年 8 月末一贯放荡不羁醉酒惹事的他还是马耳他被捕入狱,当年年底他就被驱逐出了马耳他,并在两年之后离世。

瓦莱塔老城所在的半岛山势由西南向东北方向的海湾倾斜,城里的街道顺着山势起伏,有很多走起来都有些费劲的陡坡。在众多狭长而起伏的道路中,旧薄荷街(old mint street)是其中最耀眼的明星。站在陡坡上放眼望去,我甚至看不到它伸向海边的尽头。而街道两边淡黄色的建筑上伸出来的那些鳞次栉比的彩色木窗,给这条街道增添了很多灵动的气息。热门电影《慕尼黑》《达·芬奇密码》和最近上映的《侏罗纪世界 3》都曾在此取景。

漫步在瓦莱塔那一条条狭长的街道上,我发现彩色的木窗、精美的木门、传神的石雕、坚实的外墙才是瓦莱塔的灵魂。街角随意一家香气四溢的咖啡馆或是精心修饰的花店就值得我们停留一整天。这个不大的城市融合了塞维利亚的优雅、罗马的古典、耶路撒冷的古朴和贝鲁特的自由散漫,在欧式的外表下却又露出一丝中东风情。瓦莱塔这份融合东西的独特气质有如一个让人永远摸不透的美人,也难怪长久以来好莱坞导演们都对这个地方青睐有加。



夜之精彩

从旧薄荷街一路向南，便可依次到达上巴拉卡花园(Upper Barrakka Gardens)和下巴拉卡花园，这是瓦莱塔城市里的两座大花园。海拔偏低的下巴拉卡花园中有罗马风格的大理石建筑——亚历山大·鲍尔爵士的纪念碑(Monument to Sir Alexander Ball)。较为著名的上巴拉卡花园则位于大港口之上，原为意大利骑士的私人花园，也是瓦莱塔防御工事的一部分，视野极佳，不仅可俯瞰瓦莱塔的港湾城区，更可以眺望整个大港，以及大港对面的三姐妹城(Three Cities)。

三姐妹城由Senglea、Vittoriosa和Cospicua三座堡垒组成。在马耳他围困战中，海湾对面的这三座堡垒是马耳他骑士团主要坚守的阵地。在1565年大围攻时，上巴拉卡花园所在的St.Peter及St.Pauls堡垒区曾是奥斯曼军队架设大炮的地方。站在上巴拉卡花园的平台上，可以看到下方的St.Peter及St.Pauls堡垒区。时至今日这里仍然架设了8门炮，不过这些早已不是攻城的大炮，而是用于报时和庆典的礼炮，这些礼炮现在每天12点和16点时都会鸣响。

我正巧赶上了下午礼炮鸣响的仪式，礼炮声中，对岸的三姐妹城高耸的城墙依旧，只是昔日战火纷飞的海湾，如今只有邮轮的汽笛响彻。在希腊式的花园里找个长椅坐下，慢慢等着瓦莱塔日落，斜阳如同一块幕布，一寸寸地为瓦莱塔合上白天的喧嚣，同时开启迷人的夜晚。

开启灯光的瓦莱塔从中世纪的堡垒摇身一变，成了充满浪漫气息的南欧小镇。拥有地中海湿润气候的马耳他兼具西班牙、意大利、希腊美食之长。我在距离旧薄荷街不远的



地方找到了一家在旅行APP上评价颇高的餐厅，餐厅不大，就五六张桌子。此时距离餐厅营业还有半个多小时，店里只有老板一个人做着营业前的准备，而我只能在餐厅门口的街边干等着，他丝毫没有邀请我进去坐着等的意思——至少从服务上就可以看出这是一家地道的意大利餐厅。

吃完一顿美味的海鲜大餐，抚慰了疲劳的身体，我慢慢踱回古城门口，白天被地中海的大太阳逼得躲起来的街头艺人们，此刻开始在城门附近支起音响弹起吉他，或是奉上精彩的街头魔术表演。如果说白天的瓦莱塔属于历史的过往，那么此刻的瓦莱塔则属于生活的当下。

Valletta: The Heart of the Mediterranean

WORDS KEVIN • PHOTOGRAPHS VCG

First Encounter

As the plane descended, a tawny-brown island appeared out of nowhere in the mesmerizing blue of the Mediterranean. The engines rumbling and the fuselage shaking, we landed firmly on the runway of Malta International Airport. The low yellow stone buildings around the airport and the azure Mediterranean in the distance were familiar images, even though it's my first visit to Malta. I'd seen such scenes in so many Hollywood movies that I couldn't help picturing dramatic smokes of landing gears upon impact.

It is only a dozen minutes' drive from Malta International Airport to

Valletta, the capital of Republic of Malta. Passing the huge Trident fountain in front of the city gate and crossing the bridge, I saw the street rise and dip with the rolling hills into the distance. Walking along the narrow cobbled street lined with a multitude of cars, I saw colorful, stylish wooden balconies above. An old city mixing medieval, baroque and Renaissance styles with the Middle East touch unfolded to my eyes. The city of Valletta is built on a peninsula, and from the city gate you can see Fort Saint Elmo at the end of the main road and the blue Mediterranean behind it.

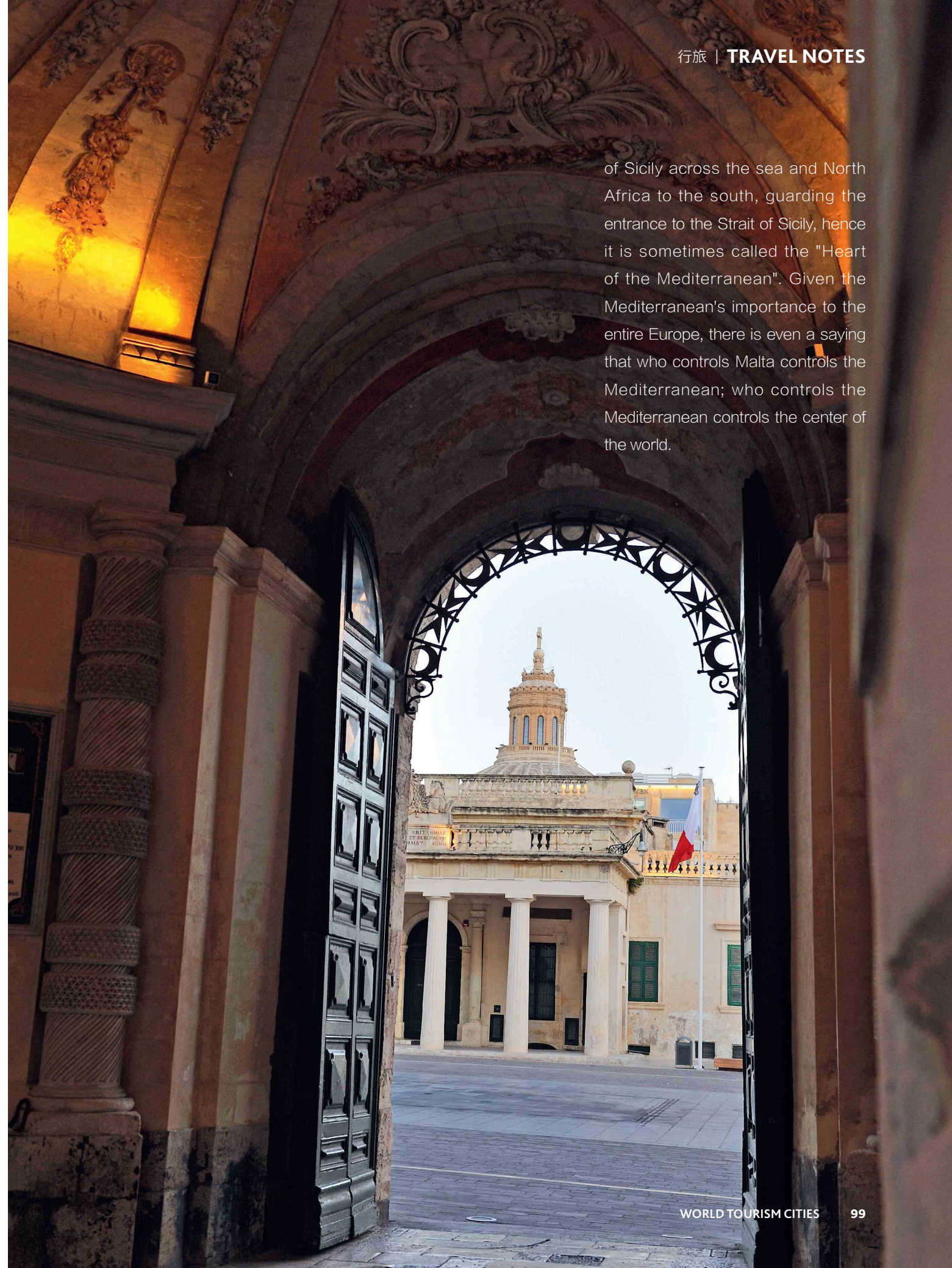
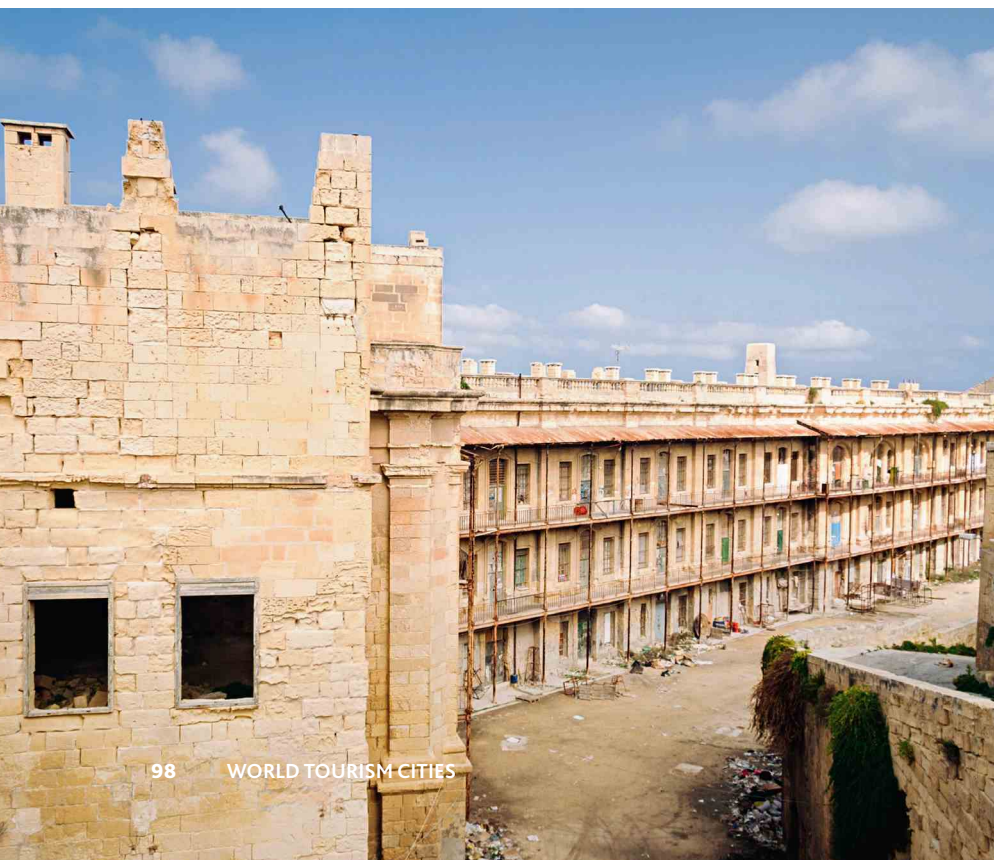
I walked down the main road to

St. George's Square in the center of the old city, and next to it was the famous Grandmaster's Palace. Built in the 16th century, it used to be the center of power in Malta and across the Mediterranean. Even Napoleon once stayed here. With a traditional Maltese layout, the Grandmaster's Palace is surrounded by two-story houses, rectangular in shape. The center of the building is a garden thickly planted with citrus trees and a pond of various kinds of fish from Sicily. It felt solemn and quiet.

Though relatively simple inside compared to the grand palaces in continental Europe, the palace contains a collection of portraits of the leaders of Order of Malta and French Gobelines tapestries bestowed by Grand Master Ramon Perellos, as well as more than 5,000 sets of full body armor worn by knights from the 16th to 18th centuries. These artifacts are a microcosm of Maltese history.

Beside many European countries, Malta, covering an area of only 316 square kilometers with just over half a million people, may seem obscure, but it has played a crucial role in European history anchored. In the center of the Mediterranean, it faces the island

of Sicily across the sea and North Africa to the south, guarding the entrance to the Strait of Sicily, hence it is sometimes called the "Heart of the Mediterranean". Given the Mediterranean's importance to the entire Europe, there is even a saying that who controls Malta controls the Mediterranean; who controls the Mediterranean controls the center of the world.





Legendary Order of Malta

Speaking of the history of Malta, the central figure is the legendary Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta. Its "territory" is only two buildings in Rome with three "citizens". However, it has permanent observer status at the United Nations General Assembly as quasi-sovereign. Standing behind the three citizens are tens of thousands of members (knights and priests) and volunteers. The Order of Malta, originally known as the Knights Hospitaller or the



Order of St. John of Jerusalem, was founded in Jerusalem in the 11th century and is one of the most prominent military orders in European history. Originally set up to care for the sick or wounded pilgrims, the Order was recognized by the Holy See in 1113.

By 1291, with Christianity retreating in the Middle East, the Order had to abandon Palestine for Cyprus, where it stayed for a short time, and withdrew to Rhodes in 1309. As the only Christian armed force in the entire eastern Mediterranean, the Order in Rhodes stood their ground until 1522, when they were forced back to Europe. After seven years of displacement on the continent, the Order arrived on the island of Malta in 1530 on the orders of Pope Clement VII and Emperor Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, and was renamed the Order of Malta, becoming a thorn in the side of the Ottoman Empire.

In 1565, the high and mighty Ottoman Emperor Suleiman I decided to remove this thorn once and for all, sending an army upon Malta. Faced with an enemy many times their size, the Order pulled off a victory after more than four months of fierce fighting, with the city largely destroyed and half of its members killed in battle. It became famous in European history as the Great Siege of Malta.

The battle earned the Order of Malta notoriety across Europe, and ships bearing the Order's Octagonal Cross had the run of the Mediterranean. The previously cash-strapped Order received support from many European countries to build a new capital on the island. In honor of the victory, the new capital was named after Jean Parisot de la Valette, then commander of the Order of Malta.



Gorgeous Cathedrals

Not far from the Grandmaster's Palace is Saint John's Co-Cathedral. There are more than 360 churches in Malta, a tiny island country, but Saint John's Co-Cathedral is hands-down the most important among them. Constructed in 1573, it is associated with one of the bishops in Malta despite its name. The yellow walls and decorations on the outside are simple and rudimentary, like those of a fortress. When I got in, however, we found the interior to be lavishly decorated, with every inch of the walls adorned with gold, marble or frescoes. The heavy use of Baroque elements include interleaved carved stone walls, vaults and side altars depicting scenes from the life of St. John. The cathedral is considered one of the most beautiful churches in Europe.

However, the main attraction of the cathedral is not the ornate decorations, but the largest and only signed painting *The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist*. by Caravaggio, the "Father of Baroque Art".

In 1606, Caravaggio fled a murder charge in Naples to Malta, and sought asylum from



De Wignacourt, the head of the Order at that time. De Wignacourt appreciated his genius and offered a pardon in exchange for him to remain as the Order's official painter. Caravaggio painted *The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist in Malta*, forming his signature with St John's blood on the bottom of the canvas. He created this painting as an indictment of human brutality, especially political persecution, and as a call to stop senseless killing. Unfortunately, Caravaggio's honeymoon phase with the Order did not last long. At the end of August 1608, he was arrested and imprisoned in Malta due to his drunk and disruptive habits. He was expelled from the islands by the end of the year and died two years later.

The peninsula where Valletta's old city is perched slopes from the southwest to the northeast bay, so that streets rise up the hills, many of them steep and arduous to walk. Among the many long, winding roads, Old Mint Street is the most spectacular. Standing on the steep slope, I couldn't see the end as it reached for the sea. Rows upon rows of colored wooden windows of the mustard yellow buildings on both sides added a vibrant edge to the street. The blockbusters Munich, *The Da Vinci Code* and the recently released *Jurassic World 3* were filmed here.

Wandering down the narrow streets, I discovered the soul of Valletta



in the multicolored wooden windows, elaborate wooden doors, sculptures, and sturdy facades. You could easily linger for a day just at cafes smelling of freshly roasted beans or neat flower shops around the corner. This small town has something of Seville's elegance, Rome's classical glory, Jerusalem's starkness and Beirut's capricious pulse, with a hint of Middle East beneath the European exterior. Valletta, in its fusion of influences, is like an ever elusive beauty. No wonder it holds an enduring appeal for Hollywood directors.

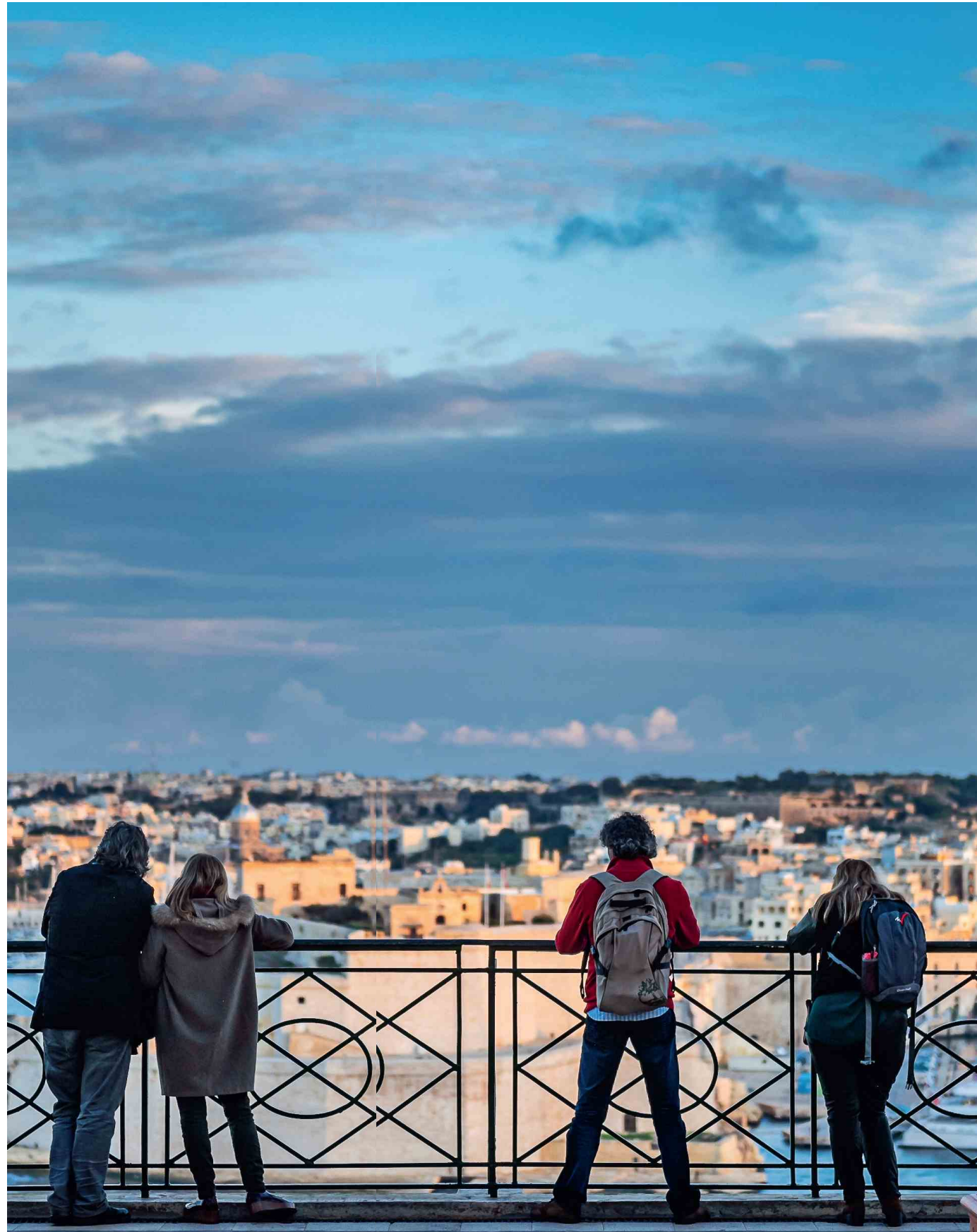


Beguiling Night

Heading south from Old Mint Street, I reached the Upper Barrakka Gardens and then the Lower Barrakka Gardens. These are two major gardens in Valletta. The Lower Barrakka Gardens, on the lower side, are home to a Romanesque marble Monument to Sir Alexander Ball. The more famous Upper Barrakka Gardens, originally the private garden of the Italian knights and part of Valletta's fortifications, are located above the Grand Harbor and offer an excellent view of Valletta's harbor town, and out to the entire Grand

Harbor and the Three Cities opposite it.

The Three Cities consisted of three forts: Singles, Vittoriosa and Corsica. These three forts across the bay were the main positions held by the Order during the 1565 siege of Malta. At the time the forts of St. Peter and St. Pauls, where Upper Barrakka Gardens are located, were used by the Ottoman army to set up artillery. The platform of Upper Barrakka Gardens has a view of forts St. Peter and St. Pauls below. There are still eight cannons here today, no longer war machines, but signal cannons for telling the time and celebration,



The guns are fired every day at noon and 4PM.

I happened to be there just as the cannons were fired for the afternoon ceremony. The towering walls of the Three Cities stood immovable, while the once bloodstained bay now echoed with the foghorns of cruise ships. Sitting on a bench in a Greek-style garden, I waited for the sunset over Valletta. Like a curtain, the setting sun closed off the hustle and bustle of the day to usher in the enchanting night.

As the evening lights switched on, Valletta transformed from a medieval fortress into a romantic southern European town. Its warm Mediterranean climate allows Malta a mix of Spanish, Italian and Greek cuisines. Not far from Old Mint Street, I tracked down a restaurant highly rated on a travel App. It's a small place of five or six tables, not to open for another half an hour. The owner was the only person in the restaurant preparing for business, and I had to wait on the street outside. He showed no particular concern of inviting me in—a thoroughly Italian restaurant judging from the nonchalance alone.

Restored by a delicious meal of seafood, I slowly made it back to the gate of the old city, where buskers in hiding from the Mediterranean sun during the day, began to set up stereos, strum guitars and perform marvelous street magic near the gate. If Valletta belongs to the past during the day, at this moment it stirs with the present life.