

CHECK IN

On Croatia's Coast, Stunning Pools and a Mediterranean Mood

Hotel Lemongarden and Brown Beach House, two boutique hotels, offer some glamour by the sea.

By Anja Mutic

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Before a recent tourism surge elevated Croatia to the top rungs of European beach destinations, hotels along the Dalmatian coast had lingering whiffs of socialism in their dusty design and no-frills vibes. Now, two boutique waterfront properties showcase wow-worthy swimming pools: the chic [Brown Beach House Croatia](#) in a repurposed tobacco warehouse in the ancient town of Trogir and the stunning [Hotel Lemongarden](#) in a sleepy fishing village on Brac island.

Hotel Lemongarden



The pool at Hotel Lemongarden, in a sleepy fishing village on Brac island. Christian Husar

Rates

Rooms from 300 euros (high season), about \$370

Basics

When the hotel's Austrian owners visited Sutivan 15 years ago, they swooned over this tranquil fishing village on Brac island. Ilic Dvor, a Renaissance mansion from 1505, was the first building they bought and renovated. Over the years, they restored two nearby buildings that also had long histories, the seafront-facing Vesna and the tucked-away Definis with its stone terraces and passageways. What steals the show is the swimming pool lined with tall palm trees and fragrant gardens with roses, bougainvillea and hibiscus. The 23 suites and 12 rooms, many with private terraces overlooking the garden or the sea, showcase wood furniture by island craftsmen and floors made of renowned Brac marble. Designer finishes like Murano chandeliers and silk fabrics and carpets by Missoni and Paul Smith, together with bold flashes of color inspired by local herbs, give the décor a decidedly Mediterranean mood.

Location

The hotel is on the car-free waterfront of Sutivan on the northwest coast of Brac, a short ferry ride from Split.



A suite in the Vesna building at Hotel Lemongarden. Christian Husar

The Room

I booked a maisonette but got upgraded to a duplex suite, with a coral and sea theme reflected in the color of the carpets and furniture. The marble-floored living room had two windows facing the Adriatic Sea, draped in beige and blue curtains; two windows faced the back wall of the hotel. A seating area had striped blue-white armchairs and a sofa beneath a sea-themed painting. A flat-screen television sat on top of a beige cabinet; the mirror above the desk area created a sense of space. The seafront-facing bedroom had an armchair, a king-size bed with a blue and white headboard and a huge walk-in closet stocked with beach towels and bags. Upstairs was a cozy attic bedroom with its own walk-in closet and a bathroom.

The Bathroom

Both bathrooms were clad in solid wood and marble. The downstairs one had a roomy shower with a Naturals hair and body wash dispenser, a bidet and, surprisingly, a urinal. The beige marble countertops had generous space. The terry cloth towels and all-cotton robes were notably soft. Flooded with light, the upstairs bathroom had a tub, a shower and a two-sink counter.



The private beach at Hotel Lemongarden. *CHRISTIAN HUSAR*

Amenities

In the living room, a tall blue cabinet had a minibar stocked with snacks and drinks. Wi-Fi was free but spotty. The reception was staffed until 10 p.m.; when I called at 10:30 to alert them to the hallway lights erratically going on and off, the call got routed to someone in Austria. The hotel's private pine-shaded beach was a 10-minute bike or golf cart ride away (both complimentary); it had parasols, lounge chairs, showers and a small bar.

Dining

The rates included breakfast and dinner, served at the seafront restaurant with interiors featuring citrus-inspired fabrics, stones and Bisazza mosaics, and a few tables on the edge of the sea. Breakfast was all made to order; freshly baked croissants hold you over until food arrives. The four-course dinner showcased Mediterranean classics with a contemporary twist (I chose an almond-crusted John Dory). Vegetables come from the hotel's organic farm on a plateau above Sutivan, herbs are harvested from the garden, and the seafood picked from the fishermen's morning catch. The lounge bar had a colorful interior with sea-themed paintings, and served a great white wine spritzer with lemons and herbs from the hotel's garden.

The Bottom Line

An island standout etched into the fabric of a Dalmatian fishing village, this ancient compound blends heritage with luxury but with a slight bend toward kitsch.

Hotel Lemongarden, Perića Kala 1, Sutivan, Croatia. lemongardenhotel.com.