



WELCOME

**International Jeunes
Sommeliers
Competition**

Ljubljana, 2023



Association
Mondiale de la
Gastronomie

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INTRODUCTION

Slovenia has joined Chaîne des Rôtisseurs with its own association – Bailliage National de Slovénie in year 2005. Since then we establish ourselves as a vibrant and reliable part of our global family. Membership of selected restaurants, professional chefs and enthusiasts is not only a great honour but also an important contribution to the promotion of Slovene culinary art and viticulture.

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1. ABOUT SLOVENIA

A short history of Slovenia

The territory of present-day Slovenia has been inhabited since prehistoric times. One of the most important finds, dating back to the Old Stone Age, is what is probably the oldest musical instrument in the world – a whistle from the Divje babe Cave near Cerklje. Experts estimate that the whistle is about 55,000 years old.



There are many caves in Slovenia that served as a refuge for prehistoric man in which archaeologists have discovered interesting finds of stone and bone weapons and tools. During the Late Stone Age, pile-dwellers lived in the Ljubljana Marshes; their wooden dwellings were built on piles driven into the water or swampy ground. Their main activities were hunting, fishing, animal husbandry and farming. In 2002, archaeologists excavated a wooden wheel with an axle, which is one of the oldest wheels ever discovered in the world. It is more than 5,000 years old.

In the Early Iron Age or Hallstatt period from the 8th to 4th centuries BC, present-day Slovenia was inhabited by various tribes that used iron to make weapons, tools and other objects. The tribal society was stratified into rule by the military aristocracy. Many beautiful specimens from this period were found in the Dolenjska region in particular (situlas, helmets, weapons, necklaces, etc.).



Starting at the end of the 2nd century BC, the Roman Empire expanded into present-day Slovenian territory, which was part of the Roman Empire in the early years of the first millennium. The territory was divided into three provinces: Venice and Istria, Noricum, and Pannonia. In many towns or *civitas* the inhabitants traded extensively, engaged in handicraft, and those living by the sea were seafarers, olive growers and salt producers. The most important Roman towns in present-day Slovenia were: Emona (Ljubljana), Petovio (Ptuj), Celeia (Celje) and others. These towns were also important centres of early Christianity (e.g. Bishop Victorinus in Ptuj).

The end of the 4th century marked the beginning of the migration and invasion of peoples into the territory of the crumbling Roman Empire. In 394, one of the most important battles deciding the fate of Christianity took place in the Vipava Valley. The Christian Emperor Theodosius of Constantinople (present-day Istanbul) defeated his pagan adversary Eugenius of Rome. The

Battle of the Frigidus (also called the Battle of the Frigid River) is a symbol of the victory of Christianity in the western part of the Roman Empire.

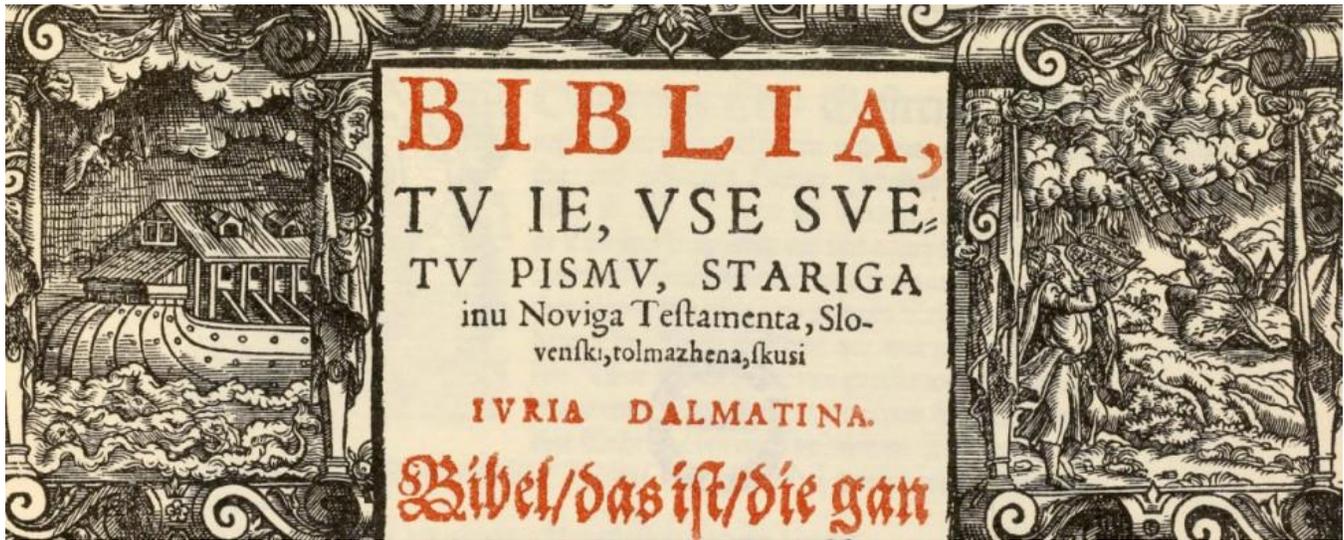
Inhabitants on the Slovenian side took refuge from the invaders from the east in mountain shelters, where they made a living mostly by raising livestock (Ajdna in Gorenjska, Rifnik in Štajerska, etc.) and continued the Christian tradition. Knowledge of mining and metal processing was also preserved.

In the 7th century, Carantania was established in the area between the Drava, Danube and Mura Rivers. The Carantanians fought the neighbouring Avars, Bavarians and Lombards. The centre of Carantania was Krn Castle on the border of Gosposvetsko polje in present-day Austrian Carinthia. The Carantanian prince, who was ceremoniously installed on the Prince's Stone in Gosposvetsko polje, was elected by members of the military nobility and free peasants (kosezi). The oath, by which the prince promised to respect the rights and will of the people, carried on in Slovenian long after Carantania lost its political independence in the 8th century. In terms of democratic practices, the enthronement ceremony was a unique event in the European space at the time. It was later described by the French jurist Jean Bodin, and Thomas Jefferson reportedly used it in drafting the U.S. Constitution.

The Carantanians asked the Bavarians for help against the neighbouring Avars, and in return lost their political independence. Christian missionaries were sent to Carantania. Later, the present-day Slovenian territory was included in the Holy Roman Empire of German nationality and divided into the following provinces: Styria, Carniola, Carinthia and Istria. The most powerful feudal family were the Counts of Celje, who ruled almost the entire Slovenian territory in the 14th century.

The Middle Ages was marked by the colonisation of large parts of Slovenian territory by newcomers from the Germanic world. The ethnic boundary between the hitherto majority Slovenian population and German immigrants changed dramatically. South Germanic influences from the north were intertwined with Venetian influences from the west, which is also reflected in the many Romanesque and Gothic buildings.

The period from the end of the 15th century to the end of the 16th century was marked by Turkish invasions, urban development, peasant uprisings, the influence of the Renaissance and humanism, and the Protestant Reformation. During this time, the first books in Slovenian (Primož Trubar, 1550) and the translation of the Bible (Jurij Dalmatin, 1584; the 14th translation globally) were the beginning of the development of Slovenian literature, which is one of the pillars of the Slovenian national identity. Many townspeople and nobles supported the Slovenian Protestants, but the movement was almost completely suppressed by the Counter-Reformation. Slovenian national awareness was able to develop more freely only with the onset of the Age of Enlightenment.



During the reign of the Austrian Empress Maria Theresa in the 18th century, present-day Slovenia progressed in many activities: agriculture, fruit growing and animal husbandry. Primary education in Slovenian began to develop (1774). Her successor, Joseph II, liberated the peasants, which was the basis for the economic progress of Slovenian lands. At the end of the 18th century, enlightened intellectuals made every effort to bring the Slovenian language to the level of German and Italian. Many books were published, including a new translation of the Bible, the first scientific history of the Slovenian nation, the first theatre plays and newspaper in Slovenian.

Slovenia's territory in the first half of the 19th century was marked, inter alia, by the French occupation (1809–1813), the construction of the Vienna–Trieste railway (completed in 1857) and the strengthening of the national identity (the Spring of Nations, the first Slovenian political programme, entitled United Slovenia 1848, which demanded national autonomy within the Habsburg Monarchy, mass rallies). The poet Dr France Prešeren put the Slovenian language on the map of culturally highly developed nations.

The period before the First World War was a time of intense economic development and enhanced political activity in Slovenia (mass political open-air rallies – camps, newspapers, etc.). The first political parties were formed. The First World War greatly affected Slovenia and its inhabitants. The Isonzo Front (1915–1917) in the western part of Slovenia was one of the bloodiest battlefields of the First World War. Numerous Slovenians fought on all fronts, especially in the ranks of the Austro-Hungarian army; many lost their lives.

Slovenia became part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia after the First World War, and then part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia after the Second World War. After more than 70 years of living in Yugoslavia, the Slovenians had built a consensus for an independent path. In the 1990 plebiscite, almost 90% of the population voted for independence. In 2004, Slovenia joined the EU and became a member of NATO.



Wine-growing regions of Slovenia

White or red, lush aromatic, strong, full or light, dry or sweet – whatever wine suits you, in the three wine-growing regions of Slovenia you will discover your favourites!

- **Primorska wine-growing region**

All four wine-growing districts in Primorska – Brda, Vipavska dolina (the Vipava Valley), Kras (the Karst), and Slovenska Istra (Slovenian Istria) can feel the greater or lesser influence of the Mediterranean.

The most characteristic wines, representing the individual districts of the Primorska region are Teran, Rebula, Malvazija, Refošk, Pinela.

- **Podravje wine-growing region**

The Podravje wine-growing region, which was named after the Drava River, has many answers for you. It is divided into two wine-growing districts: Štajerska Slovenija, which is the largest wine-growing district in Slovenia, and Prekmurje.

Wines that will immediately make you think of Podravje – Furmint, Italian Riesling, Ranina, Traminer, Blue Franconian.

- **Posavje wine-growing region**

The smallest Slovenian wine-growing region, Posavje, named after the Sava River, is divided into three wine-growing districts: Dolenjska, Bizeljsko–Sremič, and Bela krajina.

The region with the largest number of wines with a recognised traditional denomination label – Cviček, Metliška Črnina, Belokranjec, Bizeljčan.

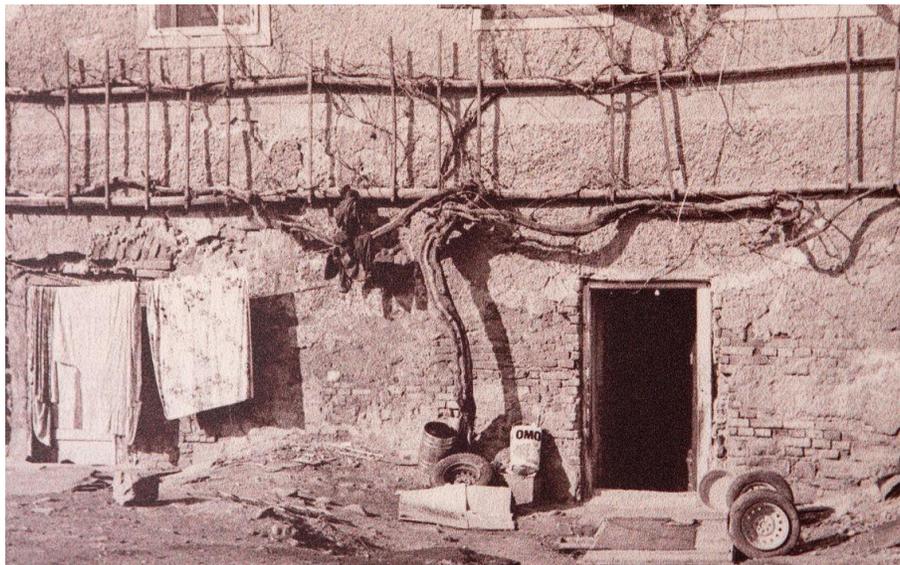
SLOVENIA'S WINE REGIONS



World's Oldest Vine

The heart of Maribor, Lent, is home to the oldest vine in the world. At more than 450 years old it's the only plant boasting its own museum – the Old Vine House. Maribor hosts a number of events celebrating the Old Vine, such as the Pruning of the Old Vine, St. Martin's Day, and the Old Vine Festival. Believe it or not, the Old Vine even has its own anthem, and the locals are only too keen to let you hear it.

Is it just a legend or a fairy tale? The story of the Old Vine is absolutely true! It spins a tale showing how it is possible that the grape variety of "Žametovka" has been growing in Lent, Maribor, for more than 400 years, throughout all its ups and downs.



This Žametovka grape variety was planted in front of the house at 8 Vojašniška street (Vojašniška ulica) towards the end of the Middle Ages; this was when Maribor was facing the threat of Ottoman invasion. The Old Vine survived despite furious fights between invaders and defenders of the city going on in its immediate vicinity. In the late Middle Ages, fires occurred frequently due to the wooden roof structures and straw coverings. And even though the house just behind where the Old Vine grows was partially burned several times, the vine lived on, the medieval fires notwithstanding.



The Danger is Not Over Yet

Around 1870, phylloxera ravaged our country and this spelled catastrophe for wine growers throughout Europe. This parasite, which attacks at the roots, killed most vines. The Old Vine has survived because it has roots deep within the river Drava gravel, where the vine louse could not survive. Even during the bombardment by the Allied forces in World War II that partly destroyed the house on the facade of which the vine is growing, the vine survived.

However, the vine has had some more difficult times recently as well. Since 1963, when the dam was built on the Drava river, serious problems arose for the Old Vine. As the level of the river began to rise to more than three meters, the long-standing balance of the root system became upset and the vine started to die slowly. Neglected areas along the banks of the Drava river in the 70's and unprofessional care had only exacerbated its condition.

Will it survive?

Fortunately, the old resilient plant was noticed by a group of experts from the Institute of Agriculture, which prevented the removal of the vine and the demolition of the house, which was in very poor condition. These experts, led by Mag. Tone Zafošnik, concentrated all their powers in the revitalizing the vine. Thus, by removing the dead parts and making a short cut, they restored its life. The Old Vine had survived again, though this time its end had come perilously close.

Since the restoration of the house and the paving of the surrounding area in 1982, the Old Vine has flourished in all its glory. Today, the vine has its own vintner who takes care of it. The Old Vine has also become one of the main Slovenian landmarks when it won a place in the Guinness World Records and became, officially, the oldest vine in the world.



Wine treasury

The story of the oldest Slovenian wine cellar speaks of the long tradition of winemaking in Ptuj. Its beginnings go back as far as 1239, where Minorite friars built a wine cellar under their monastery. Its extensive collection of vintage wines includes a special treasure – Zlata trta (Golden Vine) from 1917, which is considered the oldest Slovenian wine.

In addition to keeping exceptional vintage wines, the Ptuj Wine Cellar is also known as a cellar that creates pleasant, contemporary, and popular wines behind its thick historical walls.

Wine regions close up

Slovenia, due to its size, offers numerous possibilities for visiting any of our wine regions.

- **Goriška Brda:** This secluded almost hidden corner of Western Slovenia is often referred to as the "Tuscany of Slovenia" due to its hilltop villages, orchards, cypress trees and of course, its rolling hillsides lined with vines. It is almost a mystical place because it is hidden behind mountain ranges to the east and north and there is only one road into the region from Nova Gorica. In fact, it is indeed like entering another world because you actually travel through a few kilometres of Italy before emerging on the other side in Slovenia once again. Because of this it has a very different feel. The views are amazing. Welcome to your own secret paradise!



- **Istra:** Slovenian Istra or Istria is another holiday paradise for those who love the seaside and their vino as well! The Adriatic Coast is lined with beautiful seaside towns like Piran, Koper and Izola while Portoroz tries to exude a more ritzy feel on the Slovene "Riviera". But it's inland where all the vino magic happens. The hinterland away from the beach crowds feels like another world. Lazy hillside villages bask in the sun and life moves at a very gentle pace. Whether you stay on the coast itself, or in a charming B&B inland, this is a great spot to relax and unwind!

- **Karst:** If you slip over the Italian border heading east through Friuli to Slovenia, and hug the Mediterranean, you end up in the region known locally as Kras. The region straddles northeastern Italy and southwestern Slovenia, one of the few wine regions to share countries, and indeed share parts of towns (like Trieste, as an example). It's readily identifiable for its karst limestone cliffs – in fact, the region Kras gave birth to the designation of the karst topography. One third of Slovenia's surface area is composed of limestone where dolines, sinkholes, blind valleys dry valleys and various other karst phenomena can be found. Underground, there are innumerable karst caves and abysses including the famous Postojna and Škocjan caves. Lipica Stud Farm is another big tourist attraction. The main towns are Štanjel to the north, stretching down to Škocjan Caves/Kozina in the south, Lipica/Trieste/Kostanjevica out west. Sežana is at its centre and is the largest town.



Vipava valley: The VIPAVA VALLEY is a lush green expanse, with rich soils and moderate rainfall, that straddles the Vipava River on its way to the Adriatic. Stretching from Nova Gorica out west to Vipava to the east, the Vipava Valley snakes through an area bounded by the Trnovo Plateau to the north and the Karst to the south. The busy freeway linking Italy with Ljubljana runs right through the heart of the valley and you can see a myriad of villages on either side like that line small hills and the level plains. Ajdovščina and Vipava are the main towns here and the area is perfect for a relaxing getaway as it is relatively free of mass tourism with only a sprinkling of tourists venturing out to the tourist farms and wineries. Not to say the area is bereft of things to do, there is plenty to keep you busy if you wish. From Nova Gorica visit villages like Crnice, Vrtovin and Brje. Vipavski Križ is a striking town atop a hill with a church at each end and stunning vistas of the valley. The circle of Vrtovce-Smarje-Gaberje-Planina is a nice drive. Towards the eastern end of the valley are the renowned wine villages of Slap, Goče, Mance and Lože.

- **Bizeljsko/Dolenjska:** The Posavje wine region lies in the southern-eastern part of Slovenia along the Croatian border and is made up of 4 sub-regions: BIZELJSKO-SREMIC, SMARJE-VIRSTAJN, DOLENSKA and BELA KRAJINA. BIZELJSKO-SREMIC is made up of a narrow strip of land along the northern bank of the Sava River, protected by the mountains from the harsh north winds therefore making for some of the best wine growing conditions in the region. SMARJE-VIRSTAJN rests in the shadow of the Alps with a cool climate and sandstone soils necessitating careful placement of the vineyards among the rolling wooded hills. Across the Sava and further south is DOLENSKA, which makes up most of the Posavje region, an area with both alpine and Pannonian climatic influences, gentle hills, and south-facing vineyards. Where the foothills of the Alps give way to the more open plains is the area called BELA KRAJINA, known for hot summers, cold, snowy winters, and the rocky limestone soil known as Karst.

- **Jeruzalem:** Almost on the border with Croatia, the hills of Ljutomer-Ormož rise lavishly above the Mura and Drava rivers. Jeruzalem is contained in this area which is particularly famous for its amazing landscapes, which many people consider to be some of the most beautiful in the world. Jeruzalem, with its holy name, has it all: an energetic vibe, wine roads with top wines and exquisite viewpoints. Some say it has every right to be named a "heavenly place". During all seasons, the landscape on the Jeruzalem Wine Route shines with a special intensity of colors and shapes. The hospitality of the people along the way makes it even more colorful. Tourist farms, bars, wine growers, artisans and locals invite you to visit the route throughout the year. Like Goriška Brda, this area is scarcely populated and feels like another world so come and lose yourself in the stunning countryside that makes up this corner of Slovenia.



- **Maribor:** Maribor is the second largest city in Slovenia and the capital of the Štajerska region. Pleasantly lodged between the wonderful nature of the Pohorje on the one side and wine growing hills on the other, Maribor is an ideal base for wine tourism. With its diversity and quality wines on offer, surrender yourself to one of the key tourist destinations in Slovenia! The Old Vine House along the river Drava in central Maribor is the obvious choice. Out front of the house grows the famous Old Vine which is the oldest vine recorded in the world at over 400 years and registered in the Guinness Book of Records. Once it was a component part of the town's defence wall, and today it attracts tourists as a central wine temple. Then visit Vinag also in central Maribor. Maribor's greatest monument is not visible

from the surface – making Vinag even more amazing. It's not a tomb, but a birthplace – of some best wines in the world. Enjoy the vast underground cellars and an amazing collection of wine.

- **Slovenske Konjice:** Just before the mighty Pohorje forests wrap you into their hug, the doors to the town Slovenske Konjice, with the thousand-year-old square design, open in front of you. The town of Slovenske Konjice is found just off the main freeway between Ljubljana and Maribor and lies under the northern slopes of the Konjiška Gora mountain and winegrowing hills of Škalce. A medieval country town with six thousand inhabitants, it is laid before the mysterious Slovenske Konjice Mountains on one side and the sunny golden hills of Škalce on the other side. The town which was first mentioned in 1146 by the name Conouwiz is typical of the valley around the river Dravinja. Slovenske Konjice is the centre of the Dravinja valley which opens through beautiful fields towards Boč, the Ptuj Mountains, Haloze and Drava fields. The town is becoming a good model of kindness and tidiness. It was awarded with seven awards for the most beautiful excursion town and won the golden medal in the European competition Entente Florale. Wines from Slovenske Konjice area are something special. The flavours inside these wines will satisfy all your expectations as they intertwine in perfect harmony. The poetry of local vintage wines is offered to be tasted in the town wine shop and other local wineries. The excellent quality of wines from the Konjice area is becoming a tradition, and a walk between sunny vineyard hills is a dessert for nature lovers!

2. COMPETITION PROGRAMME



We created an interesting and ambitious programme, which fully incorporates the values of The Jeune Sommelier Competition and those of the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs. Over five days competitors and members of the jury will experience the best of Slovene hospitality and the richness of our tradition, gastronomy and enology.

3. DAY ONE: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

Arrival of competitors and judges

Ljubljana is located at the intersection of major European transportation routes, half way between Vienna and Venice. It is easily accessible by train, from the highway, and by air.

Ljubljana Jože Pučnik Airport is located 26 kilometres to Ljubljana (20 minutes by road).

A regular bus route connects the Ljubljana Jože Pučnik Airport and the Ljubljana Central Bus Station (bus stop no. 28).

Other airports within reasonable distance to Ljubljana. The distances to the other airports:

Airport Graz, Austria: 187 km

Airport Klagenfurt, Austria: 85 km

Airport Zagreb, Croatia: 140 km

Airport Trieste, Italy: 130 km

Airport Venice, Italy: 230 km

Accommodation

Judges and committee members will be accommodated in a five-star hotel InterContinental.

Competitors will be accommodated in a three-star Superior City Hotel

18:30 Informal Early Arrivals Dinner: Pen Klub



Located at the crossroads of culture, art and urban life, surrounded by Ljubljana's monumental neo-Renaissance palaces, a stone's throw away from Tivoli Park and encompassed by a beautiful garden, the new P.E.N. KLUB restaurant creates a unique and unforgettable dining experience.

Chef Mojmir Marko Šiftar is the former captain of the national youth culinary team and a semi-finalist at the prestigious S. Pellegrino Young Chef Academy 2018. He was named the best young talent of 2019 by the Gault et Millau Restaurant Guide, and is the recipient of the Michelin Guide's Bib Gourmand Award.

4. DAY TWO: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

Arrival of the remaining competitors and other participants



10:30 Press conference: Castle Wine Shop

11:30 Getting to know Slovenian wine: Castle Wine Shop

A guided presentation of Slovene wine regions and wines.

14:00 Lunch: Slovenska Hiša – Figovec

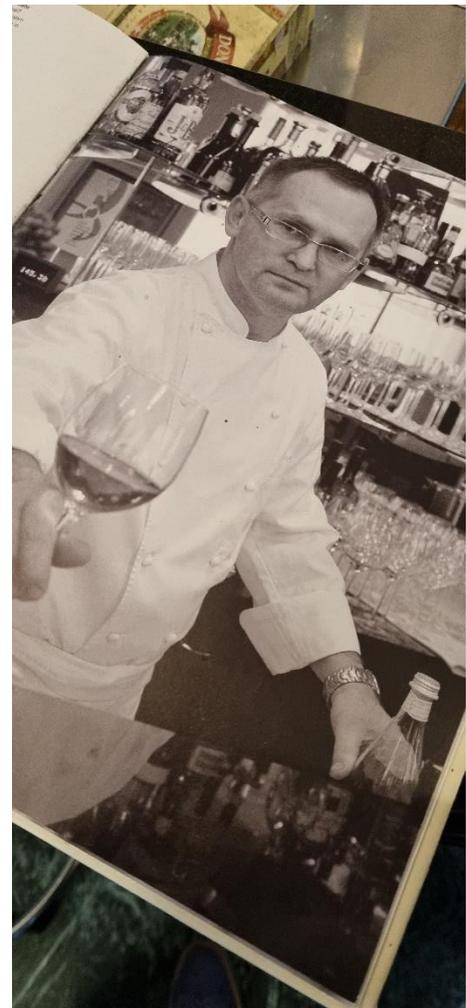
“Restaurant where Slovenian food and drinks are at home, home-made cold cuts and sausages, cocktails and a glass of wine.”

19:00 Opening Gala Dinner: JB Restaurant

JB Restaurant is the story of the Bratovž family and is built on family love and cooperation. The restaurant is a real gourmet's paradise. Its beginnings can be traced back to the year 1992 when Janez Bratovž, having gained invaluable experience abroad, returned home to Slovenia after 5 years. JB Restaurant with its chef Janez Bratovž was the first Slovenian restaurant to make the World's 50 Best Restaurants.

Janez knows that his creative ideas are not enough and that running a fine restaurant requires a team effort with the whole family chipping in. His son, Tomaž, is chef's right hand in the kitchen, daughter Nina is an Advanced Sommelier in charge of the wine list, customer service and communication between staff, guests and media, and wife Ema, rounding it all up, takes care of the management.

It is no coincidence that JB Restaurant sits at 19 Miklošič Street, designed by the greatest Slovenian architect, Jože Plečnik. Even though it is located right in the middle of the city bustle, it offers a calm and elegant escape where our guests can relax and peacefully experience exquisite cuisine. Clean lines and the perfection of the interior décor are a special experience for many tourists who cannot wait to visit us again.



5. DAY THREE: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

Discovering the Vipava valley

08:00 Departure from Ljubljana

09:00 Arrival at Guerila Winery



11:30 Lunch at Maierija

The aroma of the Bora wind and the sun

The idyllic upper Vipava house, hidden among vineyards and orchards of Vipava valley, offers simple traditional cuisine with a contemporary touch. The food is prepared from natural ingredients which ensure succulent treats. The offer follows the seasons. In spring and summer months, seasonal ingredients give the cuisine a Mediterranean orientation, while in autumn and winter you can smell Central Europe with traditional Austro-Hungarian cuisine.

13:30 **Visiting the Burja Estate**

The Burja Estate connects a traditional Vipava winegrowing farm with modern understanding of wine. But aren't the two actually the same? Don't we want to recognize our roots, bases and flavors in wine and at the same time feel the soil and climate of the vineyards?



foto: Marijan Močivnik, www.studio-ajd.si

15:30 **Departure for Ljubljana**

16:30 **Arrival in Ljubljana**

18:30 **Dinner for competitors at CUBO Restaurant**

Private dinner for judges and committee members at Castle Wine Shop

6. DAY FOUR: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

Semi-final 2023

Intercontinental Ljubljana



07:30 **Arrival of the competitors, briefing and photos**

08:00 - 08:30 **Part One – Theory**

09:00 – 12:55 **Part Two - Practical**

13:00 – 14:20 **Light Lunch**

14:20 – 16:20 **Part Three – Tasting**

16:20 **Conclusion of Semi-Final**

19:00 Joint dinner: Strelec



The award-winning restaurant is located in one of Ljubljana's most charming landmarks, the picturesque Archer's tower of the Ljubljana castle, and boasts the prestige Michelin's "The Plate" symbol as well as a commendable total of 17 points awarded by the restaurant guide Gault-Millau for the third year running.

At Ljubljana Castle, the most visited tourist spot in Slovenia, in the Archers' Tower, which stands right next to the entrance to the castle, a high culinary offer is created by an exceptional chef, Chef Igor Jagodic.



The round tower speaks the stories of the Slovene folk tradition

The round tower, the origins of which date back to the 15th century, took on its present appearance after the restoration in the 1950s when architect Boris Kobe and academic painter Marija Pregelj decorated the interior of the tower with its now recognizable features, sgraffito wall murals. In a wide ribbon, the paintings embrace the tower's interior and show fragments of the stories of the Slovene folk tradition in framed scenes: Lepa Vida, Desetnica, Mlada Zora ...

7. DAY FIVE: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

Final of the 2023 Competition to place the 1-2-3

Ljubljana Castle



- 08:30** Competitors assemble for briefing and photos
- 09:00** Announcement of the three finalists
- 09:30 – 11:19** Individual Testing
- 11:40 – 12:00** Testing – Together
- 12:00** Final Concludes - Announcement of the results

17:00 **Award Ceremony**

18:00 **Slovenia Chapter**

19:30 **Gala Dinner**



8. DAY SIX: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

Departures