

# Hotel Avala in Budva

## Pioneer of Tourism and Tourist Architecture on the Montenegrin Coast

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PREMOVIĆ



THE OLD HOTEL AVALA

### Introduction

**T**HE DEVELOPMENT of tourism in Montenegro was influenced by the expansion of tourism in its vicinity, particularly within the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, of which Montenegro was a part. The general periodization of tourism development on a global level also applies to the development of tourism in Montenegro, albeit with a noticeable lag compared to other Mediterranean countries. Compared to most European countries, organized tourism in Montenegro developed with a delay of about four decades.<sup>1</sup> The Montenegrin coast has undergone fundamental sociological, economic, social, and tourism changes in the last two centuries. The development of organized tourism intensified after the Berlin Congress of 1878, when Montenegro expanded its territory and gained international recognition. Natural and social assets gained tourist value as people started using them for leisure, visiting clean and

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healthy natural environments for health reasons, relaxation, and recreation.<sup>2</sup> Initially, tourists visited the coast for medical reasons, due to the healing properties of seawater and the presence of sulphur springs. During that time, forms of tourism such as thermalism, seaside and lake tourism, and spa tourism developed.<sup>3</sup> Almost all hotel facilities that appeared in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century serviced the health and therapeutic tourism.

The development of tourism and tourist construction during this period was significantly influenced by the general development of transportation, the emergence of new means of transport and communication methods. In the early phases of tourism development, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the impact of tourism on an area or a region was linked to the public transportation means of that time and the expansion of the transport network. At that time, transport mainly involved trains and ships. Tourist zones developed near or around railway stations, following a nodal concentration principle. However, later on, with the advent of mass tourism, the location of tourist spots changed. Automobiles became the primary means of transport, thus increasing the traffic between tourist centers. Thus, larger areas became spaces for building tourist facilities. Contrary to the previously dominant polycentric development, a longitudinal development of tourist zones emerged.<sup>4</sup> Mass tourism steadily occupied the coastal areas, completely taking over entire areas and transforming the natural coastal landscape into a new type of landscape—a *tourist landscape* that strives to appear natural, though it essentially is not.<sup>5</sup> The construction of the Adriatic Highway on the southern Yugoslav coast in the 1960s led to a new way of developing tourist zones along the coast, prompting the development of numerous spatial plans. Some municipalities began the planned use of the coast for tourism purposes earlier, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as was the case with Budva.

General tourism recorded a steady growth only from 1939, with a more intensive development after World War II. In Montenegro, tourism first developed in Cetinje, the capital of Montenegro at the time, in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and then on the Montenegrin coast in the Bay of Boka Kotorska. More intensive tourist movements towards the southern part of the Montenegrin coast, which includes Budva, were not recorded in this initial period of tourism development. The Budva area played a very significant role in tourism development due to its favorable geographical position and tourist attractions. This was influenced by favorable geomorphological, hydrographic, and climatic conditions, as well as by the numerous cultural-historical monuments of this part of the Adriatic.

Several researchers have extensively studied the topic of tourism development in Montenegro and the former SFR Yugoslavia. Two characteristic periods

of tourism development and construction are recognized globally: the development of tourism until 1945, that is, until the end of World War II, and the development of tourism from 1945 to 1991, after the end of World War II. The first period lasted until World War I and is divided into two parts: the period of tourism analogues, which lasted until 1845, and the period of organized tourism.<sup>6</sup> During the period of tourism analogues, a limited number of people travelled, so such movements did not have a significant social impact. These social movements continued until the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when rapid economic development brought with it the beginning of organized tourism. The period of mass tourism is actually the period of working people's tourism, characterized by mass tourist movements. In this second case, participation in tourism is based on paid annual leaves and free time, which was common throughout the former SFR Yugoslavia. The period of mass tourism is associated with modern tourism, characterized by two periods: the initial period between the two World Wars and the second period after World War II, with a major expansion of tourism.

## **Conditions for the Emergence and Development of Tourism on the Budva Riviera**

### **Natural Conditions for Tourism Development**

**T**HE FACTORS that conditioned the emergence and development of tourism in Montenegro were primarily natural: geographical—the Adriatic coast, climatic—a favorable climate for tourism development, and morphological—suitable locations for building tourist facilities. The southern and central parts of the Montenegrin coast, which include the Budva, Bar, and Ulcinj Rivas, differ geographically and morphologically from the northern part, which comprises the Bay of Boka Kotorska, including the towns of Tivat, Kotor, and Herceg Novi. The southern and central parts of the Montenegrin coast are characterized by greater openness to the Adriatic Sea compared to the northern part, which is more enclosed, in the form of the Bay of Boka Kotorska. Compared to the Bay, which has a longer overall coastline, the southern and central parts have a longer coastline suitable for swimming (table 1). The coastal region of Montenegro encompasses an asymmetrical narrow strip which starts at the Bojana River, which forms the border with Albania. In the northwest, the coastal area is wide and continuous up to Budva, unlike the Bay of Boka Kotorska, where the coastline is more indented. In the southeast, in the Bar

hinterland, the coastal area narrows significantly, in some places reaching widths of less than two kilometers. From Bar, the low coastal plain expands into the spacious Ulcinj Field. The total Montenegrin coastline is 277,925 meters long, with 52,250 meters of coastline suitable for swimming.<sup>7</sup> Percentage-wise, 24.6% of the coastline suitable for swimming belongs to Budva, i.e., 12,850 meters of the Budva Riviera's coastline are suitable for swimming.

TABLE 1. THE TOTAL BALANCE OF THE MONTENEGRIN COAST  
AND THE PERCENTAGE OF INDIVIDUAL PARTS

|               | TOTAL length<br>(m) | (%)   | Suitable for<br>swimming (m) | (%)   | Not suitable for<br>swimming (m) | (%)   |
|---------------|---------------------|-------|------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------|-------|
| Boka Kotorska | 161,000             | 57.9  | 15,850                       | 30.3  | 145,150                          | 64.3  |
| Budva         | 38,075              | 13.7  | 12,850                       | 24.6  | 25,225                           | 11.2  |
| Bar           | 46,150              | 16.6  | 8,450                        | 16.2  | 37,700                           | 16.7  |
| Ulcinj        | 32,700              | 11.8  | 15,100                       | 28.9  | 17,600                           | 7.8   |
| TOTAL         | 277,925             | 100.0 | 52,250                       | 100.0 | 225,675                          | 100.0 |

SOURCE: Dokić, 10.

Budva occupies the central part of the Montenegrin coast, which is 21 km long, 3–5 km wide, and has a total area of 122 km<sup>2</sup> (fig. 1).<sup>8</sup> The altitude of the coastal area reaches up to 100 meters, making this part most suitable for tourism development. The Municipality of Budva comprises three entities: Budva with Jaz, the coastline from Kamenovo to Petrovac, and Petrovac with Buljarica.<sup>9</sup> Budva has large fields: Budva, Bečići, Buljarica, and Mrčevo. The most attractive geomorphological part of the Budva Riviera is the island of Sveti Stefan, connected to the mainland by a sandy isthmus.<sup>10</sup> The Budva Riviera includes several smaller islands.<sup>11</sup>

The Budva Riviera has 38 km of indented coastline with islands, of which one-third is suitable for swimming—12.7 km. Budva has 35 Mediterranean beaches, 23 accessible from the land and 12 only from the sea. The length of sandy beaches in Budva is 9.4 km, and pebble beaches are 3.3 km. The total area of beaches on the Budva Riviera is 358,000 m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>12</sup> The Budva Riviera extends from Jaz beach in the north to Buljarica beach in the south, near the border with the Municipality of Bar. The total length of beaches in Budva is approximately 5,300 meters, with an area of approximately 160,000 m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>13</sup> The Budva Riviera boasts an attractive coastline and a large number of beaches suitable for swimming (table 2).<sup>14</sup>

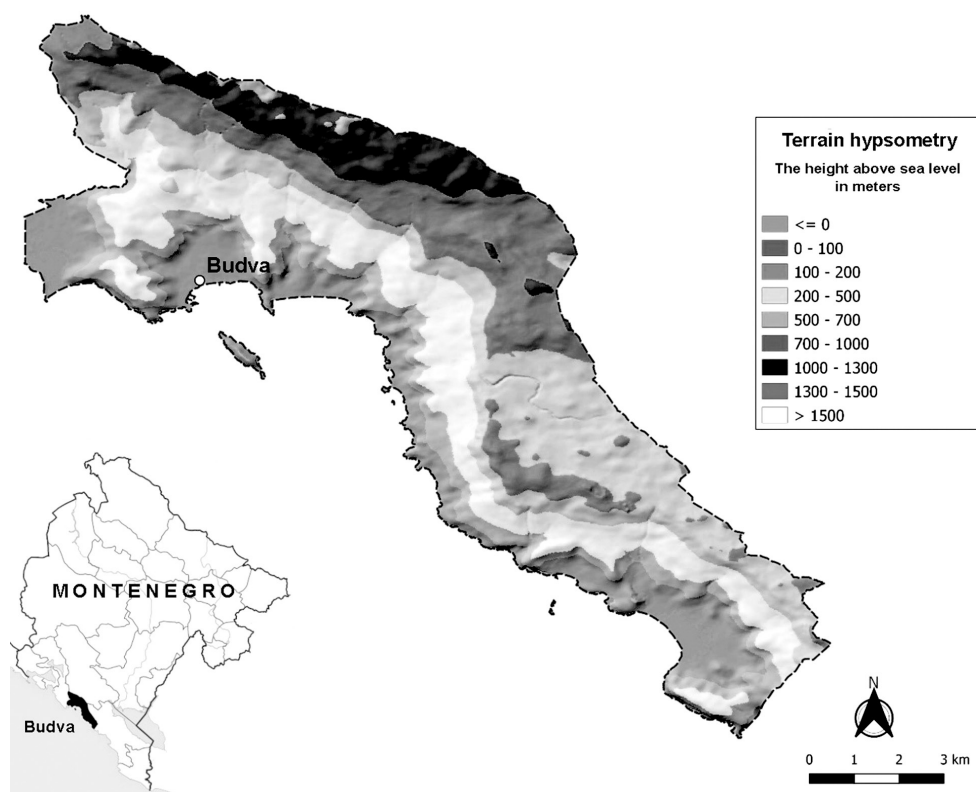


FIG. 1. GEOGRAPHICAL MAP OF BUDVA

SOURCE: Excerpt from the Geographic Information System.

TABLE 2. BEACHES ON THE BUDVA RIVIERA

| Location     | Beaches                               | Beach length (m) |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Budva town   | Jaz—big beach                         | 900              |
|              | Jaz—small beach                       | 300              |
|              | Trsteno                               | 100              |
|              | Mogren first and second beach         | 370              |
|              | Slovenska beach                       | 1,500            |
|              | Zavala                                | 110              |
|              | beaches on the island of Sveti Nikola |                  |
| Bečići       | Bečići beach                          | 1,950            |
| Sveti Stefan | Sveti Stefan—two beaches              | 750              |
|              | Miločer—big beach                     | 260              |

*Continued on next page*

Table 2—Continued

| Location    | Beaches             | Beach length (m) |
|-------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Pržno       | Miločer—small beach | 130              |
|             | Drobni pijesak      | 270              |
|             | Pržno               | 260              |
|             | Kamenovo            | 350              |
| Petrovac    | Petrovačka beach    | 650              |
|             | Lučice              | 250              |
|             | Buljarica           | 2,150            |
| Perazića do | Perazića do         | 300              |

SOURCE: Data on the length of beaches from the *Revizija Generalnog urbanističkog plana Budve—Osnove plana Budva*, 15.

## Valuable Architectural Heritage of Budva

**B**UDVA IS one of the oldest settlements on the Adriatic coast, dating back to the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. It is two and a half thousand years old. The Old Town of Budva was built on a small island connected to the mainland by a sandy isthmus. Over the centuries, Budva was ruled by Illyrians (4<sup>th</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC), Romans (2<sup>nd</sup> century BC–4<sup>th</sup> century AD), Byzantines, Stefan Nemanja (12<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> centuries), the Venetian Republic (15<sup>th</sup>–end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century), and briefly by the Austro-Hungarians at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and in the early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, as well as the French in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and again by the Austro-Hungarians before becoming part of Montenegro in 1918.<sup>15</sup> These different periods of rule greatly influenced the development of the town, creating a unique urban core with a multi-layered system of fortifications. The Old Town of Budva was located on a peninsula connected to the mainland on its western side. The Citadel, also known as the Castle of St. Mary, is situated on an elevation towards the open sea to the south, while the harbor was located in a sheltered position to the north of the town.<sup>16</sup> The Old Town of Budva is surrounded by thick walls built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, which have undergone several modifications in later periods. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Budva was enclosed by walls with six towers, and the town fortress had two towers.

Today's Old Town of Budva forms a unique architectural and urban entity of the Mediterranean type, consisting of densely built structures within a network of narrow, cobblestone streets and squares surrounded by walls dating from the late medieval period. The Budva Riviera extends over the Budva Field, occupying the coastal strip from Jaz to Buljarica. The historical heritage of Budva

includes the well-preserved old town, encircled by well-preserved city walls and buildings from the medieval era. The following churches are situated in the Old Town: St. Ivan (7<sup>th</sup> century), St. Mary (9<sup>th</sup> century), St. Sava (15<sup>th</sup> century), and the Holy Trinity (15<sup>th</sup> century). Above Budva is the Austrian fortress on Spas Hill. Archaeological excavations in 1936 uncovered material culture from the Greek, Illyrian, and Roman periods.<sup>17</sup>

Budva has suffered multiple times from Turkish attacks, fires, and particularly from earthquakes, the most notable being in 1667, which completely destroyed Budva, leading to the reconstruction of new walls on the foundations of the old ones. The current appearance of Budva closely resembles its state after the reconstruction from that earthquake. The second major earthquake struck Budva in 1979, causing extensive damage to historical and cultural monuments, especially the walls and buildings in the Old Town. Immediate restoration and rehabilitation efforts followed, fully restoring and reconstructing Budva. During the rehabilitation and restoration of the heavily damaged old town, new archaeological discoveries were made, enriching the scientific knowledge about Budva's historical development.

## **Tourist Facilities Development on the Budva Riviera**

**T**HE ACCELERATED development of transportation significantly influenced the growth of mass tourism on the Montenegrin coast and the Budva Riviera. The development of road and then rail transport in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was crucial. Some roads existed earlier, such as the Kotor–Budva road, built during the French rule, from 1807 to 1813. The construction of the Cetinje–Budva road in 1931, which connected the Budva Riviera with Montenegro's interior regions, and the opening of air traffic between Belgrade and Podgorica in 1930, were of major importance. During the interwar period, Budva became an exceptionally attractive tourist destination. Budva was the first tourist destination to prioritize tourism as a long-term societal and economic development strategy.<sup>18</sup> Air traffic in Montenegro developed only after World War II, with the construction of the Adriatic Highway through the Budva Field in 1965, further stimulating the development, planning, and utilization of Montenegro's coastal area. The Adriatic Highway connected Budva, Bar, and Ulcinj with Kotor, Dubrovnik, and further to the central and northern Adriatic.<sup>19</sup>

The origins of tourism on the Budva Riviera date back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, tourism was not yet an economic activity; rather, it was the



beginning of visits by a small number of people to attractive coastal areas. Organized tourism developed between the two world wars. After World War I, foreign tourists, and later domestic ones, visited the Budva area. In 1934, Budva had the following accommodation facilities: Hotel Balkan (9 rooms, 17 bed places), Hotel Beograd (16 rooms, 25 bed places), Hotel Budva (7 rooms, 12 bed places), and Hotel Mogren (7 rooms, 13 bed places).<sup>20</sup> The first exclusive tourist facilities on the Budva Riviera were the Karađorđević royal family's summer residence Miločer in Miločer, Grand Hotel Avala in Budva, and Hotel Palas in Petrovac (built in 1938).<sup>21</sup> Tourism development also led to the expansion of Budva beyond its historical boundaries. The emergence of the new settlement outside the Old Town's fortified walls dates back to 1938, when Hotel Avala was built near the Old Town.<sup>22</sup> This hotel's construction outside the Old Town's boundaries opened up new perspectives and indicated future directions for Budva's tourism development.

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, hospitality services in Budva were taken to a higher level. There was an increase in the number of bed places in the tourism sector, necessitating the introduction of a new categorization system under which the hotels in Budva were categorized as follows: *first class*—only Hotel Avala, as it had hot and cold running water and electric lighting in the rooms; *second class*—no hotels, as they lacked electric lighting; *third class*—hotels and villas with over ten rooms and running hot and cold water in the rooms, including Hotels Balkan and Mogren, Villa Rajković and Villa Medin; *fourth class*—hotels with fewer than ten rooms and private accommodations without running water in the rooms.<sup>23</sup>

The construction of houses near the old town core began only in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with few structures existing earlier. Tourism development between the two world wars spurred the construction of new residential and tourist buildings outside the Old Town and the reconstruction of some buildings within the historic core.<sup>24</sup> The first urban plan for Budva, the Regulatory Plan of Budva, created in 1939 by architect Bogdanović and engineer Gusina, was one of the first urban plans on the entire Montenegrin coast. Tourism development also led to the construction of private vacation homes in Budva. Shortly after the first urban plan was adopted, World War II interrupted and halted the construction of both tourist facilities and private homes.

After World War II, a new socio-political system emerged with the formation of the new state, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.<sup>25</sup> Tourism development in the postwar period was so intense that it became the leading and almost the only economic activity in the area. In this period, Budva began to expand territorially beyond the Old Town walls into the Budva Field, with the construction of public, residential, and tourist complexes. Two urban entities



were formed in Budva, with different structures and physiognomies: the Old Town of Budva and the new part of the town in the Budva Field. Construction went unplanned until the urban plan for Budva was devised in 1955. Architects Aleksandar Đorđević and Uroš Martinović created the spatial plan for Budva, laying the foundation for the urbanization of the Budva Field and the Budva Riviera. The planned construction of Budva followed.<sup>26</sup> Structures were built in three zones: at the base of Spas and Topliš hills in the northwest Budva Field, on the Budva Field between the Adriatic Road and Slovenska Beach, and on the eastern edge of the Budva Field.<sup>27</sup> Old Budva expanded towards Mogren, the Budva Field, and Slovenska Beach, while the Budva Field between Slovenska Beach and the Adriatic Highway was designated for hotels and tourist facilities.

In the first postwar decade, tourism development was modest, with minimal use of the Budva Riviera's tourist potential until 1958. Tourism development in this period mainly involved activating existing tourist accommodations built before the war. For the most part, this was constrained by limited transportation links and undeveloped supporting activities. The first hotels that opened immediately after World War II were: Hotel Avala in 1946 (96 rooms, 186 bed places)<sup>28</sup> and then Hotel Miločer in 1947. In the following years, vacation facilities for organized worker, youth, and children's holidays were built. Hotels Avala, Balkan, Mogren, Budva, and Villa Medin were nationalized during this period.<sup>29</sup> New commercial hospitality capacities, including the new Hotel Mogren (78 bed places), were built and opened in 1959. The town-hotel Sveti Stefan (226 bed places), which emerged from adapting and repurposing traditional fisherman's houses into luxurious tourist apartments, was opened in 1960.<sup>30</sup>

During the 1960s and 1970s, tourism became the primary economic activity in Budva, experiencing a dynamic and intensive growth. This growth was facilitated by the development of transportation, particularly the construction of the Adriatic Highway. All hotels built and opened during this period on the Budva Riviera were categorized as B-category hotels, with the exception of Hotel Maestral in Pržno, which was an A-category hotel. In this period, the first major hotel complexes were built on Slovenska Beach and Bečići Beach, and Hotel Avala villas were built as well.<sup>31</sup> Tourist complexes and hotels were also constructed near the Budva Old Town. Such a direct contact between the Old Town and the new tourist facilities, along with the impact of tourism on the Old Town's functioning, is best exemplified by the construction of Hotel Avala in Budva (fig. 2).

The dynamic growth of tourism typical of Budva in the 1960s and 1970s was abruptly halted by the devastating earthquake of 1979.<sup>32</sup> Many buildings of various purposes were destroyed or damaged. Some hotels completely disappeared in the earthquake, while others were heavily damaged, resulting in the



FIG. 2. POSITION OF HOTEL AVALA CLOSE TO THE OLD TOWN OF BUDVA

SOURCE: Đurđe Crnojević, National Library of Montenegro, Budva (Photo Archive), photo no. 37.

loss of 80% of tourist facilities on the Montenegrin coast. The entire tourist resort on Slovenska Beach, consisting of five hotels with a total capacity of 1,654 bed places, 815 rooms, and a total area of 44,044 m<sup>2</sup>, was destroyed. The hotels in question were the old Plaža, Slavija, Adriatik, Internacional, and the new Plaža.<sup>33</sup> In a very short period after the earthquake, the Municipality of Budva was restored with the help of domestic and international experts. Most of Budva area's planned reconstruction and construction programs were implemented in the first decade following the earthquake. Damaged tourist facilities, the Old Town of Budva, cultural-historical, and public buildings were restored. In the Old Town of Budva, structural repairs and the restoration of buildings returned them to their pre-earthquake functions, while also introducing new functions and content, particularly on the ground floors. The buildings in the Old Town acquired new commercial functions such as tourism, hospitality, trade, craftsmanship, culture, and others.<sup>34</sup> One of the most significant post-earthquake endeavors was the construction of the Slovenska Plaža tourist resort. On the site of the previously destroyed hotel complex on Slovenska Beach, the first phase of the new tourist resort with a capacity of 2,400 bed places in aparthotels was built in 1984, followed by a second phase with a capacity of 1,200 bed places completed by 1988. This was the largest investment project in the period of reconstruction in Montenegrin tourism following the major earthquake.<sup>35</sup> It can be concluded that tourism in Budva recorded a marked progressive growth until 1990, peaking in 1987 (table 3).

TABLE 3. TOURIST ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES IN BUDVA FROM 1939 TO 1990

| Types of tourist facilities  | 1939 | %     | 1973   | %     | 1978   | %     | 1984   | %     | 1987   | %     | 1990   | %     |
|------------------------------|------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|
| Hotels and tourist complexes | 598  | 64.5  | 6,218  | 24.2  | 6,230  | 17.2  | 7,709  | 20.8  | 7,717  | 18.4  | 8,373  | 22.1  |
| Camps                        | –    | –     | 5,000  | 19.4  | 11,000 | 30.4  | 8,500  | 23.0  | 9,249  | 22.0  | 6,850  | 18.1  |
| Resorts                      | –    | –     | 4,704  | 18.3  | 5,123  | 14.2  | 9,502  | 25.7  | 10,500 | 25.0  | 9,200  | 24.2  |
| Private accommodation        | 329  | 35.5  | 9,791  | 38.1  | 13,799 | 38.2  | 11,289 | 30.5  | 14,504 | 34.6  | 13,531 | 35.6  |
| TOTAL                        | 927  | 100.0 | 25,713 | 100.0 | 36,152 | 100.0 | 37,000 | 100.0 | 41,970 | 100.0 | 37,954 | 100.0 |

SOURCE: Duletić, 309, 314.

From the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a period of crisis and stagnation in tourism began as regards the construction of tourist facilities. This situation was caused by the breakup of the former SFR Yugoslavia and the wartime atmosphere in the region, which affected the development of tourism in Montenegro. No new tourist accommodation facilities were built, and the existing ones were inadequately maintained, leading to the rapid deterioration of a number of tourist facilities. Due to the ensuing crisis, Montenegro lost foreign tourists, and domestic tourist traffic was very low. However, although there was no significant construction of basic tourist facilities, from the 1990s onward, a new type of building emerged—apartments for the market intended for temporary stays and vacations. In recent decades, new functions in accommodation facilities have emerged, not solely of a tourist nature. This includes the emergence of mixed-use functions in tourist areas, driven by transitional development.

## Hotel Avala in Budva

**H**OTEL AVALA is considered the pioneer of major and intensive tourism development on the Budva Riviera, as a high-end tourism zone. It was one of the most important hotels on the Montenegrin coast at the time it was built, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The opening of the modern hotel attracted high-end guests from the country and abroad, turning Budva into a modern and attractive tourist destination, a reputation it still holds today. Based on archival research—original design documentation published for the first time in this paper—Hotel Avala has been thoroughly analyzed and described.

## Location and Position of the Hotel

**H**OTEL AVALA and its villas are located near the Old Town of Budva, 30 meters from the fortified walls of the historical core, at the end of a wide city promenade (fig. 3). The old hotel is situated next to a small city beach, with Mogren 1 and Mogren 2 beaches nearby. The new hotel building is positioned near a hill west of the old building. The hotel villas are on the hill, cascading toward the beach. Vehicular access to the hotel is provided by the local Mediteranska road from the north, connected to the city's road network and thus to the Adriatic Highway that passes over the hill west of the hotel.

## Construction, Historical, and Tourist Development of the Hotel

**T**HE IDEA of building a hotel to stimulate tourism development on the Budva Riviera emerged in the 1930s. The initiator and main financier of Hotel Avala's construction was businessman Radomir Stojić from Belgrade. Construction of Hotel Avala began in 1937. The hotel's designer was engineer Ivo Valand, who began the construction. Due to financial problems, the construction was later continued by engineer Dragomir Tadić from Bel-



FIG. 3. WIDER SITUATION PLAN OF THE POSITION OF HOTEL AVALA CLOSE TO THE OLD TOWN OF BUDVA (LEFT).  
SITUATION PLAN OF THE HOTEL (RIGHT)

SOURCE: Digitized cadastral map of Budva Municipality; Archival Documentation of the State Archives of Montenegro, Technical Documentation, folder 111.3.



grade.<sup>36</sup> During the construction of Hotel Avala, the Budva necropolis from the Illyrian, Greek, and Roman periods, dating from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC onwards, was discovered, significantly contributing to the city's tourist development. This ancient site is evidence of the specific blending of various cultures and influences that have alternated throughout history in this area. During the construction process, it was decided to add a fourth floor to the hotel. Hotel Avala was built and outfitted in one year and eight months and was officially opened on 16 July 1939, as the first exclusive facility on the Budva Riviera (fig. 4).<sup>37</sup> Its appearance, good personnel organization, and service level marked the beginning of high-end tourism in the area. Hotel Avala became a symbol of Budva and of the still modest tourism on the Montenegrin coast at the time.

As a hospitality facility, the hotel operated until 1941 despite the outbreak of World War II. During World War II, the hotel was closed and inactive. It was among the first hotels that reopened immediately after the war, in 1946. The hotel villas were built later, in 1963. The 1979 earthquake damaged the hotel, followed by a rehabilitation and renovation project. A new hotel was built in 1983, designed by Montenegrin architect Vladislav Plamenac.<sup>38</sup> The new hotel's design was fully urbanistically and functionally integrated with the existing hotel and the spatial context of the Old Town of Budva.

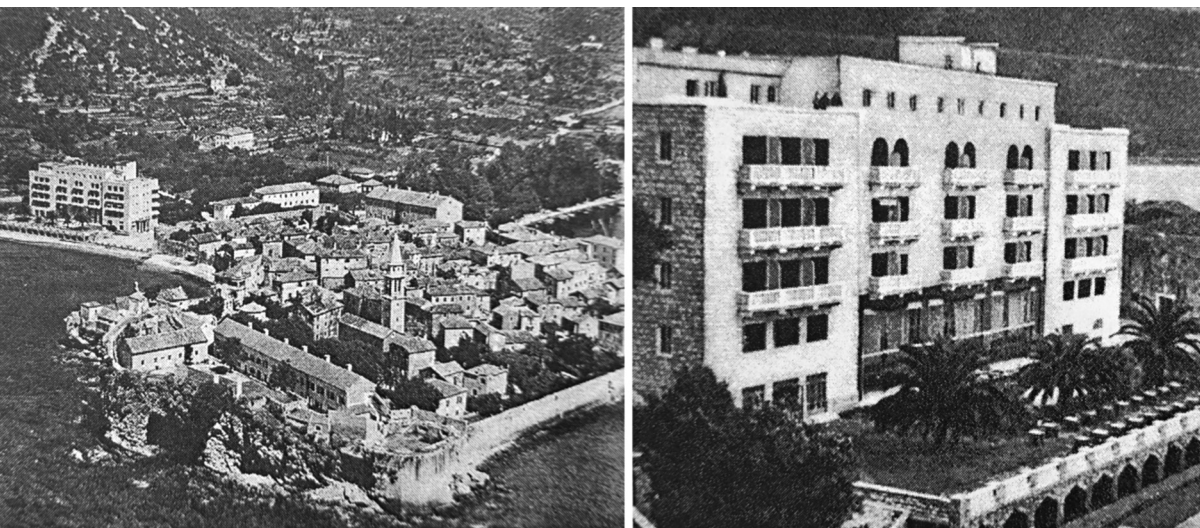


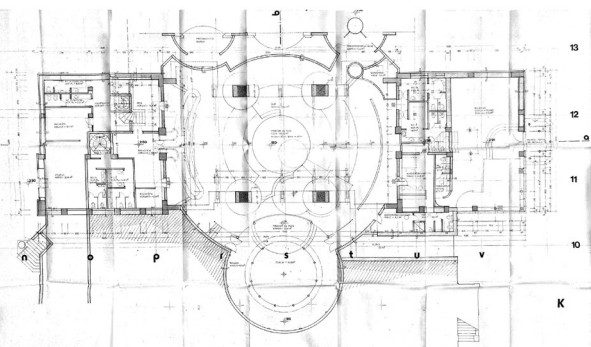
FIG. 4. HOTEL AVALA AND THE OLD TOWN OF BUDVA AFTER OPENING IN 1939  
SOURCE: Luketić, 126, 74.



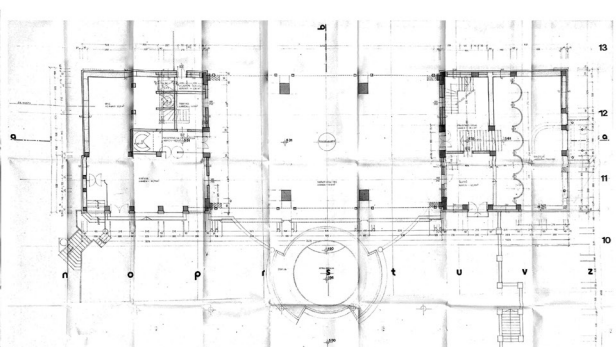
The old Hotel Avala



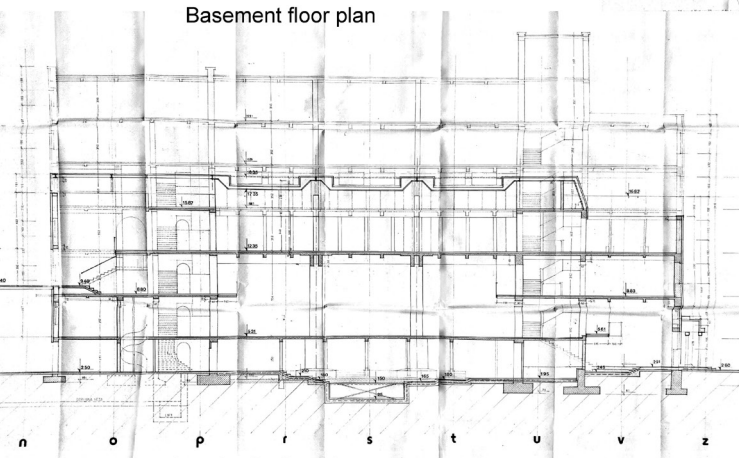
The position of the old hotel



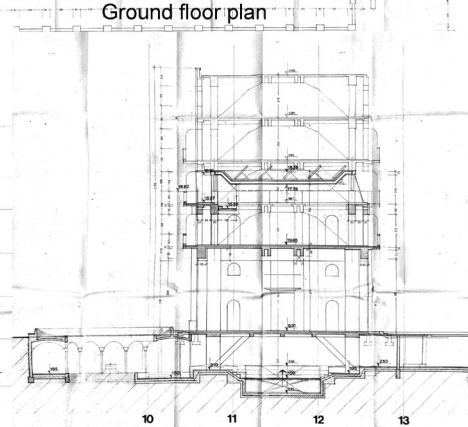
Basement floor plan



Ground floor plan



Longitudinal section



Cross section

FIG. 5. PHOTO OF THE OLD HOTEL AVALA; PROJECT DOCUMENTATION—ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS

SOURCE: Photo from Đurđe Crnojević, National Library of Montenegro, Budva (Photo Archive); situation plan—digitized cadastral map of Budva Municipality; architectural drawings from the Archival Documentation of the State Archives of Montenegro, Technical Documentation, folder 111.3.

## Architectural Design of the Hotel

**T**HE CONCEPT of the Hotel Avala complex comprises three distinct architectural, spatial and design entities developed in different periods of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These are: the old hotel built before World War II, the new hotel constructed in the 1980s, and 55 individual villas. The old hotel is parallel to the small city beach, offering good views of the sea and the old town. Built in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the old hotel features a monumental design using local stone as an autochthonous material of the local area. Its form is a simple cubic volume with characteristic openings and terraces on the facades (fig. 5).

The villas, built in the mid-1960s, are simple cascading houses with dominant terraces and staircases. They are positioned on a hill and cascading down with stairs, paths, and plateaus following the terrain's slope to the beach. This villa concept represents a good example of integration with the natural terrain (fig. 6).

The new hotel was built four decades after the old one on partially steep terrain between the villas and the old hotel. It is connected to the old hotel by a closed passageway (bridge). During the construction of the new hotel, a total of five underground and aboveground floors from the old hotel were retained, while the annexes and other parts damaged in the earthquake were removed. The large bulk of the old Hotel Avala building did not adequately correlate with the urban fabric of the Old Town of Budva. Understanding the existing urban fabric's characteristics, Montenegrin architect Vladislav Plamenac enhanced the hotel's relationship with the Old Town through the new hotel's design. This was achieved by visually reducing the mass of the existing building and freeing up the ground floor to connect pedestrian paths between the city promenade and the terrace in front of the sea.<sup>39</sup> At the time of the opening, the hotel had the following capacities: the old hotel had 186 bed places, the new hotel had 440 bed places, and 55 villas had 284 bed places. The new hotel has a modern architecture with white facades and horizontal elements (fig. 7). It has large openings and rhythmically arranged terraces on the facades. The new part of the hotel complex fully embraced public programs and functions, partly city-public and partly hotel-specific. All functions are organized across five floors of the older part and a new sixth floor, which serves as a service zone and connection with the new hotel below the old part's basement level. Functional connections between the old and new hotels were planned on the ground floor and first floor. The basement floor houses a wine cellar, shops, a bar, and terraces facing the sea. The ground floor features a restaurant with a large terrace and a covered plateau directly connected to the city square next to the Old Town on the hotel's eastern side. The old hotel is connected to the new hotel's ground floor on the western side at the mezzanine level.



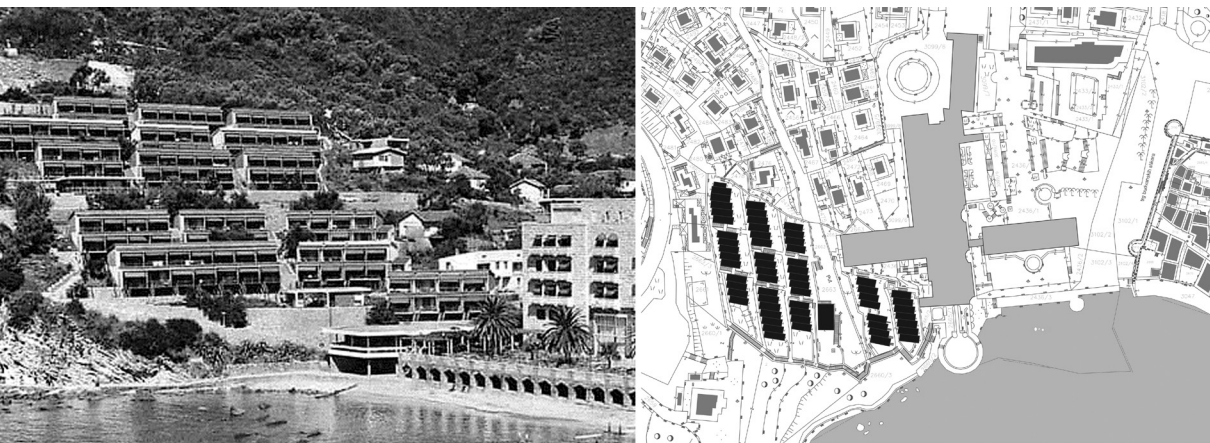


FIG. 6. VILLAS OF HOTEL AVALA (LEFT); THE POSITION OF THE VILLAS (RIGHT)  
 SOURCE: Postcard (Private Archive); situation plan—digitized cadastral map  
 of Budva Municipality.

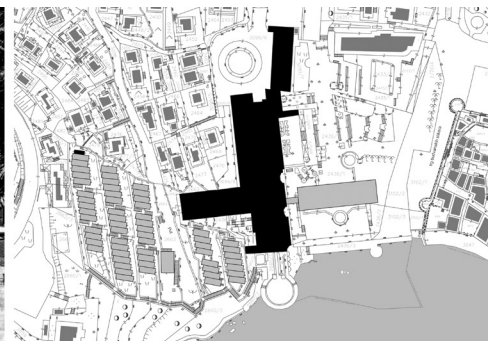
The first and second floors of the old hotel initially housed multifunctional rooms, with an open salon on the first floor overlooking the Old Town. Later, the rooms were adapted into exclusive suites and rooms. In the new hotel, standard rooms and suites are located on the floors.<sup>40</sup> Individual suites can be found in the villas on the hill. The hotel has two outdoor and one indoor swimming pools and a spa center, along with additional commercial amenities.

Hotel Avala has received numerous prestigious awards and distinctions (fig. 8). These are: The First Prize at the 1978 Invitational Yugoslav Competition for the urban-architectural design of the Avala-Mogren hotel complex and part of the town square, the “13. jul” Republic Award in Montenegro in 1985 (the highest state award in Montenegro), and the Republic Award for Architecture in Montenegro by the *Borba* newspaper in 1984.<sup>41</sup>

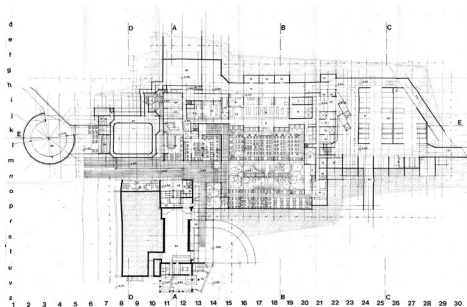
Privatized in 2004, the hotel underwent a comprehensive reconstruction and adaptation of both the old and new hotel sections in 2009. The most recent reconstruction significantly altered its original state. This renovation introduced new materials to the facades and interiors, changing the facade design and color scheme. Currently, Hotel Avala is operating and in excellent condition, with a 4-star category. Following the latest reconstruction, it offers 303 rooms (117 standard and 77 superior rooms), 54 suites, and 55 villas, with a total capacity of 809 bed places.<sup>42</sup> As a valuable and rich architectural heritage from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, influenced by various architectural styles of early and late modernism, Hotel Avala should be maintained and utilized with great care. Guidelines for its protection as a valuable 20<sup>th</sup> century heritage site should primarily focus on



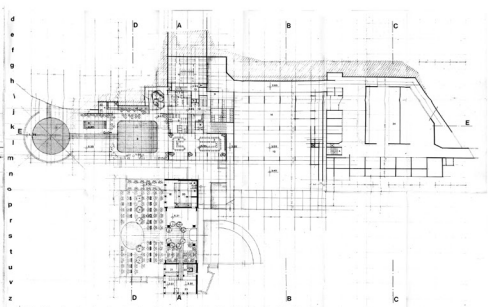
The new Hotel Avala



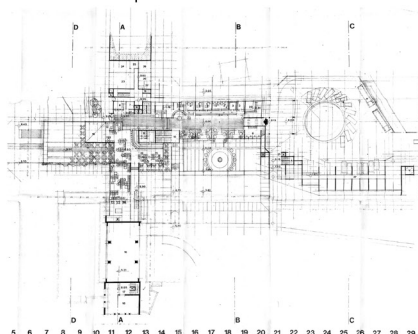
The position of the new hotel



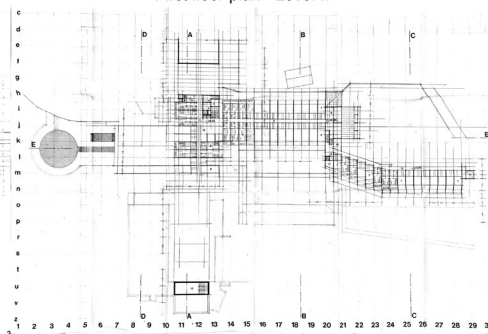
Ground floor plan of the new hotel - Level I



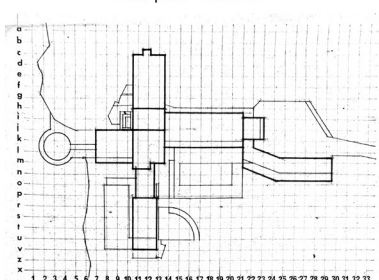
First floor plan - Level II



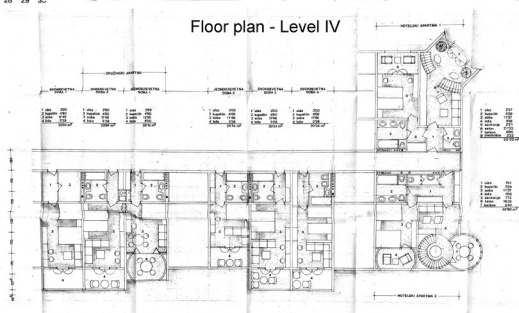
Floor plan - Level III



Floor plan - Level IV



Scheme of the hotel



Hotel rooms

FIG. 7. PHOTO OF THE NEW HOTEL AVALA; PROJECT DOCUMENTATION—ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS  
SOURCE: Postcard; situation plan—digitized cadastral map of Budva Municipality;  
architectural drawings from the Archival Documentation of the State Archives of Montenegro,  
Technical Documentation, folder 111.7.

restoring the original condition disrupted by the post-privatization reconstruction and expansion. Future interventions could include landscaping and activating an archaeological park in the hotel's immediate surroundings. Sustainable development should be based on preserving the original architectural state as much as possible while integrating contemporary tourism functions and amenities in line with future tourism development.

## Current Tourism Construction Types in Budva

**I**N RECENT decades, Budva has undergone a transition period marked by increasingly uncontrolled construction, leading to major problems in Budva's urban planning and spatial development. There has been a shift in the approach and methods of tourism construction as well as a change in the perception of tourism and hotels as a public service industry. The proliferation of new buildings of varying sizes and heights and new capitalist tendencies among investors have blurred the lines between tourist and private functions. New models of tourist facilities have emerged, which are not exclusively for tourism

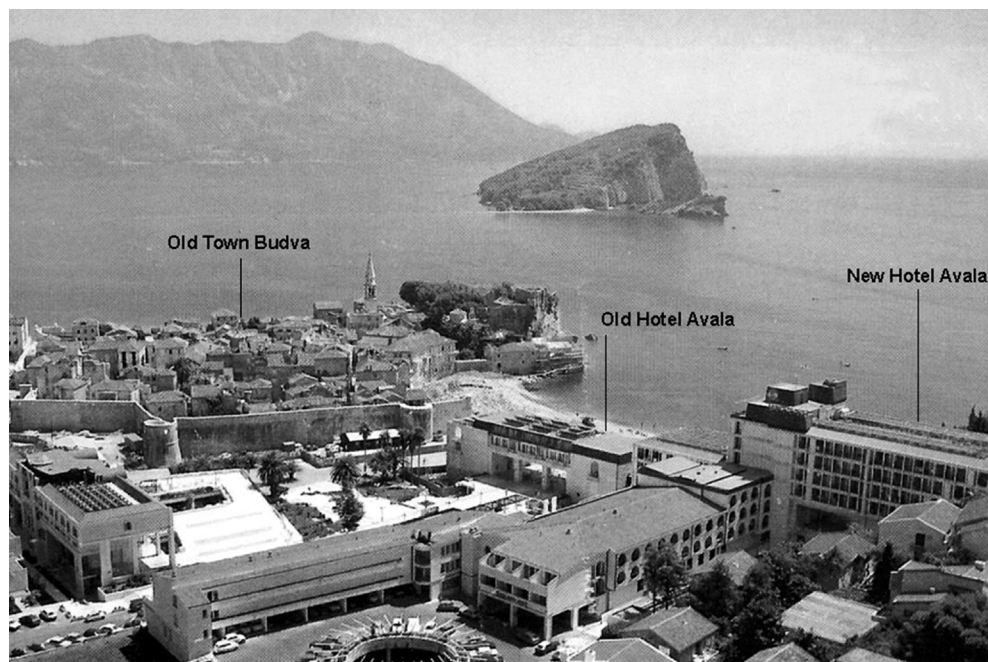


FIG. 8. THE HOTEL AVALA COMPLEX  
SOURCE: Postcard (private archive).



but have semi-tourist functions. The once clear boundary between tourism and residential areas has been blurred, with these functions becoming mixed. There is uncontrolled construction of luxury residential buildings in the primary tourist zones of coastal cities. The newly built accommodations are not intended for permanent residency but for temporary use by the owners or for rental purposes. This phenomenon has led to the emergence of temporary residences or housing without residents. The following types of mixed tourist-residential accommodations are prominent on the Budva Riviera: *semi-tourist capacities*, *housing without residents*, and *temporary housing*.

Semi-tourist capacities are private apartments primarily rented out for tourism. These accommodations are often found in large buildings in attractive locations and have become prevalent along the Montenegrin coast over the past two decades. *Housing without residents* refers to private units and apartments used seasonally without year-round occupancy. These units remain empty and unused for most of the year and fall under the temporary housing category. In addition to changing functions and primary uses, there have been alterations in the structures and volumes of mixed-use buildings. Instead of the former smaller and more dispersed physical structures that once fit well into Budva's inherited spatial context, there is now a growing trend towards constructing taller buildings and larger volumes along the coast, often blocking the view of the sea. These high-rise structures, often unnecessarily large, occupy prime locations in narrow coastal zones and frequently degrade the natural coastal landscape, hotels, tourist complexes, and other elements of the architectural heritage.

From an architectural and urban planning perspective, and in terms of maintaining the basic tourism function, the value of Budva's prominent tourist destination lies in its inherited active hotels along the Budva Riviera. These certainly include hotels that are still operational today—the Avala and the Morgen near the Old Town of Budva, the tourist resort of Slovenska Plaža, the hotel complex on Bečići Beach, Maestral Hotel in Pržno, and the town-hotel of Sveti Stefan. These hotel complexes have been the recognizable brand of the Budva Riviera for decades worldwide.

## Conclusion

**T**HE TRANSITION period of recent decades has significantly impacted the construction and transformation of the Adriatic coast. The current state of excessive construction of mixed accommodations, which are not exclusively for tourism, has completely changed the perception of tourist facilities, altering the coastal image and spatial identity of the Montenegrin coast and of

the Budva Riviera. This issue raises questions about the future development of tourism on the Montenegrin coast.

Solutions to the problems of tourism development can be found by applying proven contemporary scientific achievements and experiences from countries with long tourism traditions. Significant attention is now given to modern methodologies of tourism valorization, contemporary tourism trends, and their impact on sustainable development. This primarily involves the protection and sustainable development of the valuable tourist architectural heritage, including many hotels and hotel complexes built on the Montenegrin coast in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Hotel Avala exemplifies the rich architectural heritage from this period, deserving protection and sustainable development. The three distinct architectural units of the Hotel Avala complex are characterized by different architectural designs in line with the periods they were built in—the first half and second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, namely, early and late modernism. This valuable architectural and tourism heritage should be protected primarily by restoring the original state disrupted during the last reconstruction and expansion post-privatization, in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Preserving the original condition as much as possible while integrating contemporary tourist functions and equipment should be imperative for the sustainable development of inherited hotel facilities. Due to its proximity to the Old Town of Budva, Hotel Avala holds significant spatial importance and a close connection with the heritage that requires careful treatment. Alongside its rich historical development and tourism significance for Budva's growth throughout the past century, Hotel Avala holds substantial social importance. Given its spatial, tourism, and social impact on Budva, Hotel Avala symbolizes tourism and tourist architecture on the Budva Riviera and is a worldwide tourism brand of the entire Montenegrin coast.



## Notes

1. Miljan Radović, "Jedan pogled na inicijalnu fazu inostranog turizma u Crnoj Gori," in *Razvoj turizma u Crnoj Gori u XIX i prvoj polovini XX vijeka: Radovi sa naučnog skupa, Cetinje, 18–19. novembra 1996. god.*, edited by Dušan Martinović (Podgorica: Ekonomski fakultet, Institut za društveno ekonomska istraživanja; Kotor: Fakultet za pomorstvo, Skupština prijestonice, 1997), 109.
2. Miloš Perović, "Razvoj turizma na području Bara i Ulcinja u XIX i prvoj polovini XX vijeka," in *Razvoj turizma u Crnoj Gori u XIX i prvoj polovini XX vijeka*, 73–74.
3. Milorad Vasović and Živadin Jovičić, *Važnije turističko-geografske regije Evrope* (Belgrade: Rad, 1974), 35.



4. Ante Marinović-Uzelac, *Naselja, gradovi, prostori (studije i razmišljanja)* (Zagreb: Tehnička knjiga, 1986), 270.
5. Marinović-Uzelac, 277.
6. The period of organized tourism is associated with the year 1841, when Thomas Cook founded the world's first travel agency. Radović, 106.
7. Risto Vukčević, "Razvoj materijalne osnove turizma u Crnoj Gori," *Turizam: časopis za turistička pitanja* 22, 11 (1974): 5–8.
8. Vlado Duletić, "Razvoj turizma na Budvanskoj rivijeri u drugoj polovini XX vijeka," in *Turizam Crne Gore u drugoj polovini XX vijeka: Radovi sa naučnog skupa, Cetinje, 23–24. maj 2002. godine*, edited by Dušan Martinović (Cetinje: Prijestonica Cetinje; Podgorica: Ekonomski fakultet; Kotor: Fakultet za turizam i hotelijerstvo, 2004), 297–298.
9. Željka Hadžović, "Mogućnosti razvoja zdravstvenog turizma u klasteru Budva–Bar–Ulcinj," Master's thesis, Univerzitet Crne Gore, Fakultet za turizam i hotelijerstvo, 2019, 43.
10. Dušan Martinović, *Budvanska rivijera: Uslovi za razvoj turizma: Geografsko-turistička monografija* (Cetinje: Obod, 1973), 25.
11. The Budva Riviera also includes the following smaller islands: Vatulja and Mravinjak (along Dubovica), Sveti Nikola (near Budva), Kršić and Golubinj (near Sveti Nikola), Smokvica (near Reževići) and Katič and Sveta Neđelja (near Petrovac). Hadžović, 43.
12. Duletić, 299–300.
13. Miroslav Luketić, *Turizam u Budvi 1918–1941* (Budva: n.p., 1997), 55.
14. Data on the length of the beaches from *Revizija Generalnog urbanističkog plana Budve—Osnove plana Budva* (Budva: Opština Budva, 1983), 15.
15. Pavle Mijović and Mirko Kovačević, *Gradovi i utvrđenja u Crnoj Gori* (Belgrade–Ulcinj: Arheološki institut, Muzej Ulcinj, 1975), 100–101.
16. Mijović and Kovačević, 101.
17. In addition to individual cultural monuments, valuable monastic complexes are located in the vicinity of Budva. Mirko Dokić, *Turistička valorizacija užeg gravitacionog područja pruge Beograd–Bar* (Belgrade: Institut ekonomskih nauka, 1978), 13.
18. Radović, 116.
19. The development of tourism in the southern part of the Montenegrin coast was particularly driven by the construction of the Belgrade–Bar railway, which opened in 1976. The Belgrade–Bar railway was functionally connected to the Port of Bar, which is the largest port on the Montenegrin coast, and through it, all major overseas traffic connections of Montenegro with other countries take place.
20. Luketić, 66.
21. Luketić, 86.
22. Martinović, 123–124.
23. Luketić, 67–68.
24. Luketić, 220.
25. After World War II, a new state was formed after the Kingdom of Yugoslavia under the name of Democratic Federal Yugoslavia, in 1945. On 29 November 1945, the

state changed its name to the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, while in 1963 it finally took the name of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which it kept until 1991, when it disintegrated into several republics: the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia (comprising Serbia and Montenegro), Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia.

26. Gordana Rovčanin Premović and Zlatko Karač, "Arhitektura i kontekst u konceptu turističkog naselja 'Slovenska plaza' u Budvi," *Annales: Series Historia et Sociologia* 31, 4 (2021): 636.
27. Martinović, 123–124.
28. Luketić, 61.
29. Luketić, 87.
30. Duletić, 305–307.
31. Since the 1960s and especially the 1970s, the following tourist facilities have emerged on the Budva Riviera: a large hotel complex on Slovenska Beach, a hotel complex on Bečići Beach (with a total capacity of 2,380 beds, including the following hotels: Splendid, Bellevue with annexes, Montenegro, Montenegro A, and Mediteran), Hotel Maestral in Pržno, several hotels in Petrovac (Oliva, Oliva Villas, Riviera, and Castellastva), and Hotel As in Perazića Do. Duletić, 304–320.
32. The Montenegrin coast was hit by a major earthquake on 15 April 1979. The intensity of the earthquake in the epicentral zone was IX degrees on the MCS scale (7.0 degrees on the Richter scale) with the hypocenter depth at 17 kilometers. The epicentral area was in the Adriatic Sea, in the area between Ulcinj and Bar, at a distance of about 15 kilometers from the coastline and at a depth of about 30 kilometers. In this earthquake, 101 people lost their lives in Montenegro and 35 in Albania, while around 1,700 people were injured to varying degrees. A total of 250 settlements were affected. Gordana Rovčanin Premović and Miroslav Doderović, "Obnova i revitalizacija spomenika kulture na crnogorskom primorju oštećenih u potresu 1979. godine," *Prostor: znanstveni časopis za arhitekturu i urbanizam* 28, 2 (60) (2020): 414.
33. Rovčanin Premović and Karač, 637–638.
34. Duletić, 314.
35. Rovčanin Premović and Karač, 637–645.
36. Luketić, 73–87.
37. Luketić, 82–83.
38. The design studio that created the detailed design for the new hotel and the adaptation of the old hotel was SPO. Ambient from Ljubljana, and the architects engaged in the design were R. Popović and E. Ravnikar.
39. Rifat Alihodžić, *Arhitektura u Crnoj Gori 1965–1990. (Kroz prizmu "Borbine" nagrade)* (Podgorica: Crnogorska akademija nauka i umjetnosti, 2015), 136.
40. Based on design documentation from the Archival Documentation of the State Archives of Montenegro, Cetinje—Republic Fund for the Renewal and Construction of the Area Affected by the Catastrophic Earthquake, Technical Documentation, designs 1979, folders 111.1.–111.3. and 111.7.
41. Alihodžić, 134.

42. *Informacija o statusu privatizacije hotelsko-turističkih preduzeća* (Podgorica: Ministarstvo održivog razvoja i turizma Crne Gore, Sekretarijat za razvojne projekte, 2014), 11–12.

## Abstract

### Hotel Avala in Budva: Pioneer of Tourism and Tourist Architecture on the Montenegrin Coast

Hotel Avala is the first exclusive building in Budva and is considered the driver of a more intensive tourist development on the Budva Riviera and the entire Montenegrin coast, dating back to the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The construction of Hotel Avala marks the first spatial intervention and the impetus for the spread of tourist infrastructure and of a new town beyond the historical confines of the Old Town of Budva. Based on archival research—documentation of architectural design—this article presents Hotel Avala, opened in 1939, followed by the construction of villas in the 1960s and a new hotel in 1983. The Hotel Avala complex includes three distinct architectural entities built in accordance with the periods they originated in, characterized by rich and diverse architectural designs. Hotel Avala is an example of valuable architectural heritage from the past century, which should be protected with sustainable development and careful use, without unnecessary interventions that could compromise its originality and uniqueness. The hotel's sustainable development should be based on preserving its original state while applying contemporary tourist functions and using modern equipment in line with ongoing innovations and changes in the tourism sector.

## Keywords

Hotel Avala, Budva, Montenegrin coast, tourist architecture, architectural heritage