

ARCHAEOLINK

TURNING ARCHAEOLOGY INTO HERITAGE

A STRATEGY FOR OUTREACH Vela Spila Archaeological Project, Vela Luka

Addendum to the report produced in April 2016

Introduction

The Strategy for Outreach was written following a visit to Vela Luka in the Low Season (March 2016). This addendum is written following a visit during the High Season (August / September 2016) and should be read in conjunction with it.

High-Season

Vela Luka is completely transformed during the high Tourist Season, July and August. Overflowing bars and restaurants, accommodation at a premium and frequent performances of traditional *Klapa* songs and *Kumpanija* sword and chain dances, characterise this period. There are numerous events and exhibitions to entertain the summer visitors, mainly families, who are primarily interested in relaxing in the sun.

As to be expected, there are more flights to and from Split and Dubrovnik, more ferries to Vela Luka as well as a sea-plane service.

Many small cruise boats stop in Vela Luka but few include a visit to Vela Spila in their itineraries.¹

The 10,000 promotional/informative brochures on Vela Spila, printed at the beginning of the season, were consumed before the end of August.

The cave enjoyed a continuous stream of numerous visitors, some in groups as large as 60 persons, throughout the summer²; at times too numerous for the single guide to attend to.

Figures from the tourist board and also from the cave³ show that visitors in September are still numerous. The gift shop at the cave closed in mid August. *Klapa*, *Kumpanija* and other events currently cease at the end of August.

1 See Appendix below.

2 Totals for the summer were not available at time of writing.

3 Averaging 250 visitors per week in September.

Strategy for Tourism and Visitors

Marketing Plan

Current policy is directed from the Dubrovnik Nevertva County. The local Tourist Board has 8 members who sit with 2 representatives from the County together with the mayor.

With the aim of lengthening the tourist season, there is a need for a long term and broader marketing strategy for Vela Luka. The low or off-season visitor is of a more mature age, is not usually accompanied by children and is looking for areas of cultural and / or historic interest, preferably accompanied by good food and beverages. If other tourist markets are to be reached and supplied, they must be identified and contacted. There must also be adequate air, ferry and other services.

A two layer plan needs to be simultaneously developed as to how Vela Luka will:

- a) ensure these services: transportation; accommodation; food and beverage establishments; traditional entertainments; cultural and heritage sites - Vela Spila and the Museum; are made available; and
- b) communicate with and attract those new markets.

Information Dispersal

Ideally information, brochures, flyers, websites, tours etc. should be updated at least annually. In this, our more visual world, photographs are important and also need to be up-dated.

The excellent website giving much information on Vela Spila⁴ is currently 'down' and thus a loss for promotional purposes. For the future, a more diverse online presence⁵ is recommended, in different languages, with downloadable guides.

A second, perhaps part-time, guide is needed at the cave during July and August.

Concluding Remarks

ArchaeoLink's 'bottom-up' approach includes facilitating knowledge exchange, updating information, making information more widely and more easily available and understood, and encouraging the community to own their archaeology and cultural heritage.

The *ArchaeoLink* team is available to discuss any aspects of this or the original report further and would be pleased to assist the *Mend the Gap* team and/or the *Općina* of Vela Luka to advance any of the proposals or recommendations herein; now or at a future date.

Patricia Duff
Project Director

October, 2016

⁴ www.VelaSpila.hr

⁵ In Googling 'Total Hvar' the range of on-line possibilities can be viewed. Vela Luka needs the same strategy.

Appendix

The following is a partial list of small cruise ship operators whose ships visit Vela Luka, but who do not include Vela Spila in their itinerary.

<http://www.atlas-croatia.com/contact/>

<https://www.completelycroatia.co.uk/holidays/adriatic-princess-luxury-cruise-split-split/>

<http://www.sail-croatia.com>

<http://www.adventure-life.com/mediterranean/cruises/3334/dalmatia-cruise-adventure-2013>

http://www.balkanolidays.co.uk/croatia/dubrovnik_riviera/dubrovnik_cruise/dalmatian_highlights_cruise_from_dubrovnik_IDC100.html

<http://www.beyondtravel.com.au/2017-croatia-coastal-cruise-deals/>

