Picasso in Bulgaria

Oh man, how are we missing this?! Selected works of Pablo Picasso, the greatest artistic mind of the twentieth century (I’d say arguably but there is no argument about it, sorry), or any century for that matter, will be on display in Sofia’s National Art Gallery until January 2016. Picasso’s fever dreams created some of the most iconic artistic work of the Western canon. His cubist expressionism bent the rails of the Art Express and sent it in a completely different direction. How can we be ginning cotton and slaughtering pigs and chickens, stamping out tires and Snickers bars, making soap and filling toothpaste tubes, and the people of Sofia are enriching their lives by merely being in the presence of great art? How in the world is this happening?!

http://www.novinite.com/articles/171572/Bulgarian+President+Unveils+Picasso+Exhibition+at+National+Art+Gallery+in+Sofia

The Plovdiv Jazz Festival

Ok, so it’s not our lucky month. Art, music, theater. Here’s the music part. The Plovdiv Jazz Festival is happening this week in Bulgaria’s second city Plovdiv, which is noted for its cultural bonafides. The city itself is a gem of both preservation and modernity. Built on
seven hills as Rome was, Plovdiv is replete with Roman ruins including a remarkably complete amphitheater still used by Plovdivians for theatrical productions; cultural artifacts of the Thracians who pre-date the Romans, and people who revel in the vivacity of city life that is demonstrated every evening when thousands take to the streets to enjoy a post-prandial promenade, an expresso, or perhaps a gelato on those nights when a fist full of ice cream is just what’s needed to quiet the baying dogs of sugar deprivation. Music; we’re missing the jazz festival. But there will be music in June.

http://www.novinite.com/articles/171625/Bulgaria%27s+Plovdiv+Hosts+Jazz+Festival+on+November+2-6

**National Enlightener’s Day**

Pretty safe to say that we in the U.S. do not have an equivalent; a day honoring all the people who helped develop and preserve Bulgarian culture and pass it on to other generations. Will future American generations ponder or even care what went on here and now? Will there be radio stations devoting their playtime to 2015’s hip hop as there are now those that play oldies ad nauseam so that Boomers can feel the razor blades of misspent time and youth deflating their own balloon of happiness.


**And now Varna**

Have you heard of the Black Sea city of Varna? If you’re not Russian or Eastern European probably not. But Varna is Bulgaria’s third city and sun and fun playground and a hub to the considerable Black Sea tourist trade during the warm weather months. Package tour groups
from western Europe are everywhere during the peak tourist months with very good reason; great hotels for less than half the cost of similar offerings along the Mediterranean Sea and a friendliness toward the traveler that has been lost along the Cote d’Azur, in Malaga, Nice, Marseille, Cannes, never mind Tangiers, and Crete. And now Varna is demonstrating its own cultural flash by hosting a cinema and literature festival. Never too much of a good thing.

http://www.novinite.com/articles/171558/Bulgaria+to+Host+Cinema%26Literature+Festival+in+November

**Bulgaria’s got wine**

And the wineries that produce them are gloriously represented at Megavino, the annual wine fair held in Brussels. The fair comes to Plovdiv in April 2016 just in time for the latest vintage to emerge from the oak casks and steel vats used in Bulgarian wine production. How do we know so much about Bulgarian wine? Well, Blagoevgrad, which is where the American University in Bulgaria is located, the home to the GSW Bulgaria program, is just a short hop from Melnik, one of the centers of Bulgarian wine making, and a place that we visit to take in the local flavor and taste a bit of Melnik’s finest traditional wine right out of the cask. We also visit more modern examples of wine making to do comparative analysis strictly in the name of science you understand. You ought to come along.

http://www.novinite.com/articles/171517/Record+Number+of+Wineries+Represent+Bulgaria+at+Megavino+Wine+Fair+in+Brussels

**And yes, Bulgaria is ancient**
To wit, subterranean mosaics discovered during excavations in downtown Sofia. Probably 1600 years old and part of the ancient Thracian city of Serdica which underlies modern Sofia. Bulgaria is rotten with the leavings of the ancients. The country is a place of wonder and monumental history, a crossroads of civilizations, a place waiting to be discovered and re-discovered by us and YOU!  
http://www.novinite.com/articles/170559/Bulgarian+Archaeologists+Discover+1600-Year-Old+Mosaic+in+Downtown+Sofia

That’s it for this time. We hope you decide to do summer study abroad with us in Bulgaria in June 2016. Compare our $2950 program fee with any other four week program to Europe and you’ll be astonished. How do we do it you wonder? Bulgaria hasn’t adopted the Euro as yet although it became a member of the European Union in 2007. And we have strong connections in Bulgaria. **For more information see the Bulgaria program flyer:**  
https://gsw.edu/Assets/International/Study%20Abroad/2016%20Bulgaria%20Flyer.pdf

and program application:


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Until next time.  
Dovizhdane,  
Philip Szmedra