

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD



PHOTOS BY NECEE REGIS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

By Niecee Regis
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

ZAGREB, Croatia — A dented, turquoise child’s pedal-car. Red high-heel pumps. A box of gourmet microwave popcorn. These are not things one typically expects to see enshrined on museum pedestals, but they are exactly the kind of everyday objects — laden with emotion and personal significance — on display in the Museum of Broken Relationships.

The name alone stopped me in my tracks. On a recent windy evening, almost dusk, I was meandering the warren of streets in Zagreb’s Upper Town. This medieval core of the old city has galleries, museums, small shops and bars, and the late-Gothic Church of St. Mark, easily identified by its colorful tile roof decorated with Croatia’s coat of arms. When I came upon the Museum of Broken Relationships, I wondered: Was this a joke? An ironic name for a hipster bar?

I stepped inside and found the admission desk within a brightly lit gift store. (“You’re My Everything. Not!” T-shirt or mugs, anyone?) An adjacent coffee shop was cozy and dimly illuminated. The place had the trappings of a museum — but what was it, exactly?

Through an archway I spied an introductory wall text, and objects on pedestals, and so I ponied up 25 Kuna (about \$3.50) and entered, thinking it would be a hoot.

Well, not exactly. The museum’s concept was born when the founders — a Croatian couple in the middle of a break-

up — wondered what people did with objects that had been meaningful in their relationships. They asked friends to contribute any items from love-gone-bad, along with musings about their meanings, and used these to create exhibitions that subsequently toured 25 cities — collecting donations along the way. The now permanent space, open since 2010, exhibits objects and texts from the broken-hearted around the world.

Though there’s a certain implied tongue-in-cheekiness to the premise of a museum founded on “failed relationships and their ruins,” the objects — all donated and cataloged by length of relationship, country of origin, and explanatory text — represent an attempt to overcome grief and loss through the creative act of sharing.

One of the first objects I encountered was a weather-beaten copy of “Tarantula” by Bob Dylan. The accompanying text, identifying the owner as from Sleaford, Lincolnshire, United Kingdom, in a relationship that lasted two years, reads: “Given to me by an American ‘boyfriend’ when I was 17 and inscribed ‘for . . . who charmed the savage wolf: I didn’t know that he would hound my parents for years, and would eventually have a sex change and steal their name for his new persona.”

On display nearby, a 45 of “If You Go Away” by Terry Jacks, (five years, off and on. Lincoln, United Kingdom), reads: “It was during yet another traumatic teenage break-up between me and the boyfriend that I bought this record which was actually quite a hit at the time. I played it full volume for days, really frustrating my parents, until we

made up again. The teenage romance fizzled out, as they do, but I kept my vinyl records, as each song has a certain memory. Perhaps now, 40 years on, it’s time to let go.”

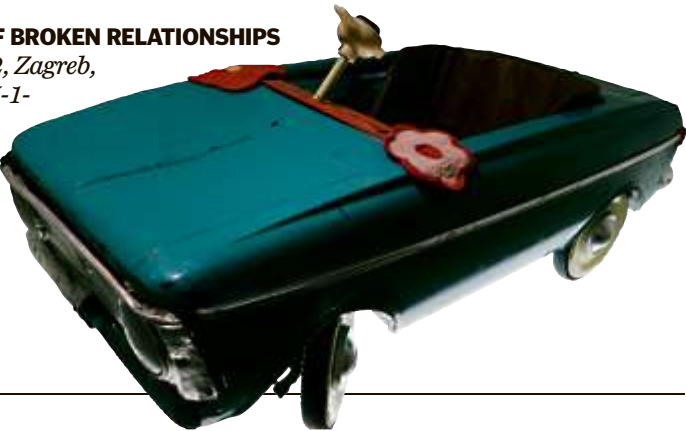
Indeed, the theme of letting go permeates the museum. Some relationships lasted decades, others less than one year, and accompanying texts run the gamut from several paragraphs to a simple sentence. (Next to a plastic hamburger: “His dog left more traces behind then he did.”) Each entry has humor, albeit in dark form, such as the couple in a long-distance relationship that tore one leg off a plush stuffed caterpillar each time they saw each other. The plan was to live together when there were no legs left. “But, naturally, as with all great loves, the relationship broke, and so the caterpillar did not become a complete invalid after all.”

The cumulative effect is poignant and unifying. Who doesn’t have an item to donate?

The entrance to the Museum of Broken Relationships in Zagreb and (below) one of the other momentos donated by a survivor of a broken relationship.

THE MUSEUM OF BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS
Cirilometodska 2, Zagreb, Croatia, 011-385-1-4851021, <https://brokenships.com>

Niecee Regis can be reached at niecee.regis@gmail.com.



HERE

LUXURY MOTOR COACH OFFERS FESTIVE TREATS
Hop a ride on the LimoLiner between Boston and Midtown Manhattan in December and enjoy seasonal movies and special travel discounts. Passengers who book a ticket on this luxury motor coach for travel between Dec. 1 and Jan. 3 can watch holiday films on-board, get a free dessert at the new Ocean Prime New York (123 West 52d St.) or Ocean Prime Boston (140 Seaport Blvd., opening Dec. 3), and get 10 percent off Hilton Hotel rates in Midtown and Boston’s Back Bay. LimoLiner recently became a pet-friendly service, meaning your under-25-pound furry friend can join you as you enjoy the leather reclining seats, satellite TV, free meals, Wi-Fi, and onboard service attendant. Rates: \$89 per person; \$39 per pet; some restrictions apply to hol-

iday deals. *844-405-4637, www.limoliner.com*

TRAVEL BETWEEN BOSTON AND FREEPORT, MAINE, FOR \$5
Pull together friends and family for a trip on the Amtrak Downeaster (pictured above) between Boston and Brunswick, Maine (stopping at Portland and Freeport en route), and take advantage of the Take 5—Pay \$5 deal. Buy one adult full-price ticket for travel on Tuesdays or Thursdays through Dec. 31, or on the special bonus days Dec. 11 and 26, and you can bring up to five companions for \$5 per person each way. The train runs five Portland-Boston round trips daily and two round trips extended to Freeport and Brunswick. An adult full-price ticket for travel between Boston and Brunswick, for instance, runs \$29 one way, \$58 round trip; book at least three days in advance and use code V558.

800-872-7245, www.amtrakdowneaster.com.

THERE

LACE UP FOR A NEW WALKING TOUR IN SLOVENIA
Wander around a castle perched on a dramatic white-stone cliff, through Venetian-Gothic alleyways in a seaside town, and alongside a glacial lake in a national park on a new tour to Slovenia. Country Walker’s 7-day guided trip, called Slovenia: Julian Alps to the Adriatic, takes visitors through this lesser-visited Central European country, located between the Adriatic coast, the Hungarian steppe, and the snow-capped peaks of the Alps. Meet local residents, indulge in regional wine and cuisine, and explore everything from museums and wildflower meadows to high mountain villages. Trips run August 24–30, 2016 (for past participants only), Sept. 7–13, and Sept. 21–27. Rates start at \$4,198 per person, double occupancy (add \$748 for single supplement). *800-234-6900, www.countrywalkers.com*

PLAN A SUPER BOWL ESCAPE IN NAPA VALLEY
Heading to the Bay Area for Super Bowl 50 on Feb. 7 in Santa Clara? Take a timeout to visit Auberge du Soleil, a luxury hotel set in the hills of Napa Valley that puts a focus on relaxation (read: amazing spa) and top wines and cuisine. The hotel will offer a sweet game-time package from Jan. 16 through Feb. 12 that includes a one-

night stay in a Maison king room, party snacks paired with a bottle of Dick Vermeil’s Proprietary Red (coach Vermeil’s St. Louis Rams won Super Bowl XXXIV in 2000), wine tasting for two at Vermeil Wines in Calistoga or Napa, a game-time sampler in the Bistro & Bar, a \$100 resort credit, and a 10 percent discount on any 60-minute service at Auberge Spa, such as the sports massage. The package starts at \$898 per person, double occupancy. *707-963-1211, www.aubergedusoleil.com*

EVERYWHERE

AN EASY REUSABLE DRAWING BOARD FOR KIDS ON THE GO
Keep kids entertained while traveling with Boogie Board’s new Play n’ Trace eWriter. This easy-to-hold, durable plastic board has a translucent LCD writing surface on which kids can write or draw using the twin-tip stylus. Kids can also place the board over one of the included letter or number cards — or their own hand, a picture, a toy, and so on — and trace the objects or designs. A quick press of a button clears the screen. This fun device helps eliminate the drama of dropped, lost, or messy crayons during travel, or of running out of paper. Boogie Board offers five accessory packs, such as Sea Life, Farm Friends, and Space Adventures, that come with a brush and six reusable cling scenes for tracing. \$29.99 for eWriter; \$12.99 per accessory pack. *855-224-0888, www.my-boogieboard.com*

LIGHT UP YOUR KAYAK ADVENTURES
Don’t let shorter days keep you off the water. Boston-based Kayalu makes one of the paddle industry’s top portable lights for navigation (pictured below), enabling others to see you on your kayak, paddleboard, or night fishing adventures. The easy-to-install Kayalite has a clever patented mounting system that lets you secure it to the deck using a clip on the bottom of the light that’s attached to an internal bungee cord. Attach the clip to an eyelet, deck rigging, or carry handle on deck; then pull the bungee cord tight and secure it on the light’s shaft. The LED light stands 18 inches above deck, offering excellent visibility to others without detracting from your night vision. Kayalu also makes a camera mount, the Kayacam, that uses the same mounting technology and lets you attach any compact digital camera to your kayak. \$49.95 each for light and camera mount. *617-338-2222, www.kayalu.com*

KARI BODNARCHUK

