

# A SHORT OVERVIEW OF THE TOURIST OFFERS OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF GORNJI MILANOVAC, SERBIA

Miodrag M. ŽIŽOVIĆ  
Vučelja LEKIĆ  
Nada DAMLJANOVIĆ  
Mališa R. ŽIŽOVIĆ

*Abstract:* In this paper, a brief history of the origin of the town of Gornji Milanovac is given and evaluation of current presentation of Gornji Milanovac municipality touristic offer is presented.

*Keywords:* Touristic offer, internet presentation, multi-criteria evaluation.

## INTRODUCTION

The total area of the Gornji Milanovac municipality is 836 km<sup>2</sup>. It has 63 localities that are inhabited. Of all these locations, City of Gornji Milanovac is the newest and largest. If we go back in history, following the period of Serbian uprising, the administrative center of the Rudnik region was located to Brusnica, a village close to Gornji Milanovac. Since there was no chance of developing an administrative center there, Aleksandar Karadjordjević, the Serbian prince in charge at the time, issued an order in 1853 to form a new settlement, which would serve as the administrative center close to Brusnice in an empty area beside the Despotovica river. Divlje polje was the name given to this new settlement. The location was originally known as Despotovica. In honor of his half-brother Milan Obrenović (Brusnica, about 1770–Bucharest, 1810), duke of the first Serbian rebellion, the new town's name was changed to Gornji Milanovac in 1859 by proclamation of the newly elected Serbian prince Miloš Obrenović. It was the first city in Serbia to be constructed in accordance with the previous urban plan, which is essentially still in effect today. This was made possible by the fact that there were only two wooden structures in the Divlje polje area: an inn (a structure for overnight guests) and a watermill on Despotovica. The center of the Rudnik nahia in Turkish times was the settlement of Rudnik on the mountain Rudnik. In the first and second Serb rebellions, this settlement

was destroyed, so after the second rebellion and gaining autonomy, the center was moved to Brusnica.

About thirty homes and a few primarily stores formed city of Brusnica in the nineteenth century. In addition, a school with twenty to thirty pupils was located in the home of Jovan Obrenovic, the mayor (Milos Obrenovic's brother). In Brusnica, a church was constructed in 1837 and is still standing today. A post office with four horses was established in 1839. There were 205 people living in 63 households in the town in 1844. Since there were no favorable conditions for development here, other options for a new town at the county center of Rudnik-Takovo were explored for a number of years before the concept of establishing a new community in Divlje polje was finally approved and carried out.

New town: An urban plan was made after Viennan planners were contacted. The sidewalks on either side extended as far as the roadways. There are planned locations for both public and private structures. 750 hectares were included in the initial proposal. Belgrade land surveyors took measurements, and following the public sale, work on constructing the county administration and court building, the post office building, and other buildings commenced.



**Picture 1.** *Court building- theoldest building in Gornji Milanovac.*

All government establishments were relocated from Brusnica at the start of 1856, and the new town already had 44 stores and 19 taverns. The boys' school was relocated in 1857. A school for women was established in 1858. The telegraph was established in 1859. Construction of the church in Gornji Milanovac was started in 1859 and was finished in 1862. The first

physician, Josef Simon, arrived in 1858. There were 775 people living there in 1862, according to the census (460 men and 315 women). During the years 1862–1878, when Serbia gained full independence, Gornji Milanovac emerged as the region’s administrative and commercial hub, complete with artisan stores, cobblestone streets, four municipal wells as well as private wells with drinking water.

After the Berlin congress in 1878, the people of the nearby villages grew more engaged in agriculture, horticulture, and animal husbandry, but the city did not grow. There were 1,333 residents in 1887. A two-grade high school was established in 1879. A savings bank was established in 1888.

A portion of the Tenth infantry regiment was based in Gornji Milanovac during those years; the garrison consisted of 27 officers, 41 non-commissioned officers, 5 gendarmes and 402 troops. A district hospital was founded in 1892, and a new high school building was constructed in 1902, marking the school’s elevation to the level of an eight-grade school for the first time since its founding in 1922/23.

The narrow-gauge railway route from Lajkovac to Cacak was planned, and work on it started in 1911–1912. Following their October 1915 capture of Serbia, the Austro-Hungarians expeditiously finished the building by employing a significant number of prisoners of war, primarily Russians and Italians. From 1917 until 1918, the railway served their military requirements. Prior to 1918’s liberation, the railway was destroyed, tunnels were buried, and bridges were removed.

The military-age population (aged 21 to 45) was mobilized in 1940/1941, and Serbian soldiers were taken as prisoners following the April 1941 war and Yugoslavia’s surrender. After the occupying power was established, many of the city’s craft stores were forced to close since their employees were being held captive.

After the second world war, in the 1950s, Gornji Milanovac saw an influx of new businesses and factories that brought young people from the surrounding countryside to the city. The percentage of people living in rural areas is steadily declining as the metropolis grows.

The huge military garrison and robust economy allowed the tourist catering company Šumadija, of which the hotel “Šumadija” was the leading player, to operate effectively. The hotel was initially constructed in the town center, close to the court, the mayor’s office, the church, and the municipality building from the original set of structures in Despotovica. Later additions included two more stories with rooms for administration and housing in addition to the ground floor and basement. During Gornji Milanovac’s

greatest period of growth, a reconstruction was completed; a new, stand-alone hotel, the tallest structure in Gornji Milanovac with fifteen stories and two restaurants, was constructed almost next to the previous hotel. There was also an observation deck on the top floor.

It is important to note that a catering firm and a hotel with over 200 bedrooms in a tiny town ran profitably in the 1980s. Private catering businesses were also prosperous. The nation of Yugoslavia and its economic structure are disintegrating. There was no severe collapse of any economic enterprises in Gornji Milanovac. The businesses “Šumadija” tourist catering, “Graditelj” construction, “Dečje novine” publishing, and “Gornji Milanovac road transport” all ended operations.

The “Šumadija” tourist catering company’s facilities have been fully privatized. The solitaire was transformed into a residential structure (the apartments were sold out), and a tiny portion of the hotel (the old part) was still used as a hotel. Numerous little structures, referred as hotels, have sprung up throughout the city to provide lodging for would-be tourists. The majority of these structures are one or two rooms or apartments, and the owners virtually never use them exclusively; rather, they are almost always involved in additional activities.

The tourist industry will also be significantly impacted by the closing of the “Autoprevoz” passenger transport firm. Established during the post-war era, this enterprise became significant in providing connections between Milanovac and neighboring larger towns and settlements following the railway’s closure on December 31, 1969. These days, transportation inside the municipality is handled on a complicated scale by taxi drivers and transporters from neighboring cities. It is comparable to the link with the neighboring cities.



**Picture 2.** *Museum of Rudnik and Takovo Region.*

The detailed history of this region through the centuries can be found in Museum of Rudnik and Takovo Region, as well as in Glišić, M., et. al. (1995) and Ilić, D. (1999).

### EVALUATION OF CURRENT PRESENTATION OF GORNJI MILANOVAC MUNICIPALITY TOURISTIC OFFER

A multi-criteria technique for assessing a place’s (region’s) tourism offer was provided in the paper Žižović M.M. (2014), and it was used to assess how the municipality of Gornji Milanovac presented its tourism offer. Here, we employ the same evaluation process. The earlier portion of this effort may serve as an inspiration for the city’s eventual tourism offerings. Other than that, the municipality’s tourism offer is comparable to what it was ten years prior, as detailed in the paper Žižović M.M. (2014), which consists of the municipality’s own rural (or ethno) tourism offering, which has increased dramatically due to the approximately 130 households that provide tourist services.

The only accommodations available to tourists in the city itself are little hotels for one night stays. Although the document Žižović M.M. (2023) describes the potential that the historical site Takovo holds for tourism, it is currently not an offer that travelers can take advantage of. In certain locations, the potential still remains, but tourists cannot reach it. The evaluation is given in Žižović M.M. (2014) by the formula

$$V = \sum_{i=1}^{12} k_i f_i$$

where  $f_i$  are parameters (criteria) given in Table 1.

**Table 1.** *Set of parameters/criteria for evaluation.*

$f_1$	Informativity of presentation-general offer.
$f_2$	Informativity of presentation-transportation. How to come to the place of destination?
$f_3$	Informativity of presentation-accommodation. Where to stay?
$f_4$	Informativity of presentation-What to see?
$f_5$	Informativity of presentation-What to eat?
$f_6$	Informativity of presentation-What and where to buy?
$f_7$	Informativity of presentation-Local transport.

$f_8$	Informativity of presentation-Payment methods. How to pay?
$f_9$	Informativity of presentation-Reservations. How to make a reservation?
$f_{10}$	Crispness of presentation about historical events.
$f_{11}$	Crispness of presentation about geographical concepts.
$f_{12}$	Multilingualism of presentation.
$f_{13}$	Attractivity of presentation.

This time, the evaluation is detailed in Table 2 and the weighting coefficients of the criteria are retained as they were in paper Žižović M.M. (2014), Table 3.

**Table 2.** *Degrees of criteria satisfaction.*

$f_1$	0.5
$f_2$	0.1
$f_3$	0.6
$f_4$	0.7
$f_5$	0.1
$f_6$	0.2
$f_7$	0.1
$f_8$	0.1
$f_9$	0.4
$f_{10}$	0.7
$f_{11}$	0.3
$f_{12}$	0.1
$f_{13}$	0.6

**Table 3.** *Weights of criteria.*

$f_1$	0.10
$f_2$	0.08
$f_3$	0.08
$f_4$	0.08
$f_5$	0.05
$f_6$	0.05
$f_7$	0.05
$f_8$	0.05
$f_9$	0.06
$f_{10}$	0.10
$f_{11}$	0.10
$f_{12}$	0.10
$f_{13}$	0.10

Using the evaluation given in Žižović M.M. (2014), we obtain the result, which nevertheless shows that the presentation is inadequate even

though it has improved over the previous ten years.

## CONCLUSION

The aforementioned information leads to the conclusion that Gornji Milanovac municipality has a tourism potential, but it is not sufficiently advertised to potential customers. We won't analyze the factors that led to this presentation evaluation outcome at this time. The only plausible explanation for this circumstance is that most service providers do not work primarily in the tourism industry and instead depend on repeat business and referrals from current clients in order to find potential new clients.

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### *Notes on the authors*

**Miodrag ŽIŽOVIĆ**, Ph. D. Assistant Research Professor, Institute of economy, Belgrade, Serbia. Email: miodragz@gmail.com

**Vučelja LEKIĆ**, Teaching Assistant Department of Mathematics. Faculty of Technical Sciences Čačak, University of Kragujevac, Serbia. Email: vucelja.lekic@ftn.kg.ac.rs

**Nada Damljanović**, Professor PhD. University of Kragujevac, Serbia, Faculty of Technical Sciences in Čačak, Serbia. Email: nada.damljnovic@gmail.com

**Mališa ŽIŽOVIĆ**, Professor PhD. University of Kragujevac, Serbia. Faculty of Technical Sciences in Čačak, Serbia. Email: zizovic@gmail.com