

## **Rudnik on the San – Polish Wickerwork Capital**

The pearl on the map of Poland and Subcarpathian Region – Rudnik on the San, a town with seven thousand inhabitants – enchants with new wickerwork marvels each year.

The Polish Wickerwork Capital has rich 140-year long wicker-weaving traditions attributed to Count Ferdinand Hompesch. The unique handicraft of Rudnik is characterised with the local eco-friendly raw material, highest workmanship quality and multitude of designs. The dynamic development of the wickerwork industry and the well-mastered handicraft make the wicker-woven products from Rudnik on the San known worldwide. The town enchants with new picturesque wickerwork sculptures distributed within its area which are a perfect supplement to the natural environment. The Wickerwork Centre, operating since 2007, is an educational and exhibition unit awarded in the 1<sup>st</sup> issue of prestigious Polish competition called “Poland is Beautiful - seven Wonders of European Funds” in the category of “Tourism Industry Development in Rural Areas”. The Centre was also awarded in the competition organised by the Subcarpathian Regional Tourist Organisation for the “Best Tourist Product of 2010”. The Centre is a real pearl both in Poland and the whole Europe, promoting Subcarpathia even in Brussels. The unprecedented development pace of this exhibition, educational and marketing entity is recorded by various media and by tourists from Poland and abroad. Numerous entries in the Visitors' Book reveal that the tourists are captivated by the diversity and modernity of the exhibits and by the friendly and outgoing staff. Rich, miscellaneous and constantly changing tourist offer of the Wickerwork Centre comprises the presentations of wicker-weaving skills, wickerwork workshops, annual artistic open-air events and artistic shows of wickerwork fashion and jewellery. The Centre offers also some permanent exhibitions, such as historical, archaeological and ethnographic, as well as wickerwork components of the Polish pavilion made by Delta, a company from Rudnik, for EXPO 2005 in Japan. Out of all exhibits in the Centre, special attention should be paid to the set of ultramodern furniture made from wickerwork immersed in synthetic resin. The painting gallery in the Wickerwork Centre offers changing exhibitions of reliefs and sculptures, artistic wickerwork, drawings, graphics, artistic blacksmith works, painting of Polish and foreign artists, as well as temporary exhibitions of works borrowed from other museums and galleries.

The Centre is also adjusted to the needs of the disabled for whom the exhibition of monumental sculptures, the result of artistic open-air events, was arranged on the Centre yard.

The Wickerwork Centre is one of the most modern units of such a type in Poland, breaking "museum stereotypes". Both the utilitarian and artistic wickerwork products encourage to get acquainted with this eco-friendly material. Here, the original wickerwork exhibits may not only be admired, but also touched.

The visitors to this one of the seven Wonders of European Funds are still delighted with the constantly modified collections of wickerwork fashion. This admirable idea of promoting the traditional handicraft, implemented since 2000 in cooperation with Polish artists, is gaining popularity. The wonderful wickerwork outfits were presented during the conferences held in the Castle in Lublin, in the Royal Castle in Warsaw, EU Parliament and the Committee of the Regions in Brussels. Monumental wickerwork sculptures and dresses adorned by wickerwork jewellery are the distinguishing mark of the Polish Wickerwork Capital. The world of utilitarian (multiple wholesalers') and artistic wickerwork products (Wickerwork Centre) is visited by both townsmen and villagers, bringing their guests here and taking pride in the renovated historical building from 1890, operating in the new form since 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2007.

Everyone leaves the Wickerwork Centre and Rudnik on the San with a smile on their faces, as if disbelieving that, according to the introductory note, wicker may be used for making almost everything. And everything is wonderful, aesthetic and eco-friendly.

The Polish Wickerwork Capital has sufficient accommodation and catering facilities, and the hospitality of those offering various attractions (fishing, mushroom picking, hiking, cycling, barbecues, learning the secrets of wicker basket weaving, tasting regional cuisine and learning local traditions) make every stay here nice and safe.