

**ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING EXCHANGE INITIATIVE FOR SUSTAINABLE
HOSPITALITY SMEs IN THE BALKAN-MEDITERRANEAN REGION**

Subsidy Contract No. BMP1/1.3/2616/2017

Company name: "STAROSEL" wine and spa complex

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Source: <http://www.starosel.com/hotel>

Country/region of operation: Starosel village, Bulgaria

Sustainability dimension: heritage-based tourist product and experiential tourism

Description of the enterprise/initiative:

The "STAROSEL" wine and spa complex is situated below the southern slopes of Sredna gora, in the immediate vicinity of the unique Thracian royal cult center. The complex offers its guests amazing views, award-winning cuisine and wine, and a unique feeling of peace, cosiness and tranquillity.

The interesting and impressive architecture of the complex can be compared to an ancient monastery. In the center of the complex there is a wine cellar «Starosel», which offers wine tours and tastings for the guests of the complex. The complex has a total of 42 hotel rooms and 51 accommodation apartments. The interior of the hotel is filled with natural materials and hand-crafted furniture and fabrics that present the magic of Bulgarian folklore. The combination of the warm colours with the natural curves of the wood offers the guests an unforgettable experience. The complex also uses mineral water offering amazing SPA opportunities, there are in- and out-door pools, sauna, steam rooms and massage center.

The complex also has mini-golf, a Zoo and a playground. Various hiking, jeep-safari, paintball, horse riding and diving courses are organized in the complex.

Social/ community impact sought:

The impact sought is related to the development of the region and turning it into famous touristic destination as at the same time creating jobs for the locals, promoting the Starosel wine and the wine tourism in general as well as utilizing the available resources in the region – mineral water.

Stakeholders: Local and international visitors

Approach applied:

After the Thracian cult complex in Chetinyova mound -the largest ever found Thracian royal mausoleum complex dating back to the V - IV century BC was found in 2000 near Starosel village, the interest in the area started to grow. Given that, the entrepreneur wine makers have established a wine cellar called Starosel in the region. Soon, the wine became famous and started winning awards, therefore making the owners think of an adding value initiative. Being situated in a vast rural area with abundance of hot water springs they quickly decided to use these resources and bought large areas where they have built the complex. The approach used was creating a place in harmony with the nature. Using all the resources available they have recreated old-style Bulgarian buildings as at the same time providing all the modern features demanded by the tourists.

Innovation applied:

Not only it is the only place in the country featuring wine cellar, hot- mineral water SPA, horse-riding, fishing, zoo, traditional cuisine and atmosphere but it is also a place where peacocks, hens, rabbits, and deer are walking freely in the yard past visitors.

Social impact and business results achieved:

The creation of the complex made the region and the village famous, not only because of the wine but because of the various opportunities it provides. The Starosel complex is rated as superb /booking.com/and it is definitely among the favourite tourist destinations for young and adult.

Financial situation / sustainability of the business model:

The business is self-sustaining as its sustainability is ensured by the use of the available natural resources in the region in combination with the utilization of self-grown/manufactured products used in the restaurant.

Key success factors: Uniqueness of the place, constant development, comparatively low prices, high-quality of services, local products and Starosel branded wine

Challenges and problems: A challenge faced by the owners has been the high tourist flow. The problem was solved by an additional building and another SPA center next to the old one.

Year when the enterprise was created: 2005

References (web-site, intent links, video, etc.):

<http://www.starosel.com/hotel>