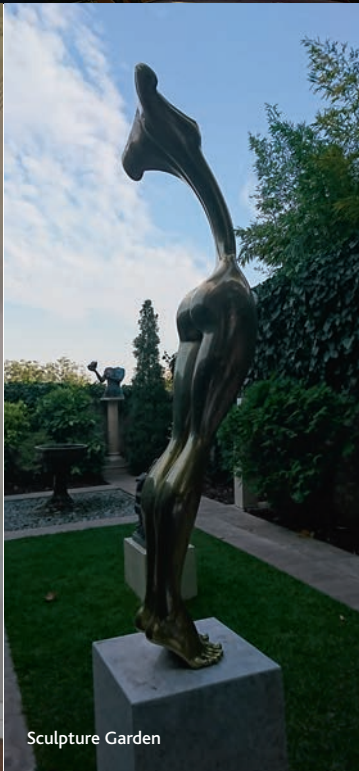




Castle District



St. George Residence Interior



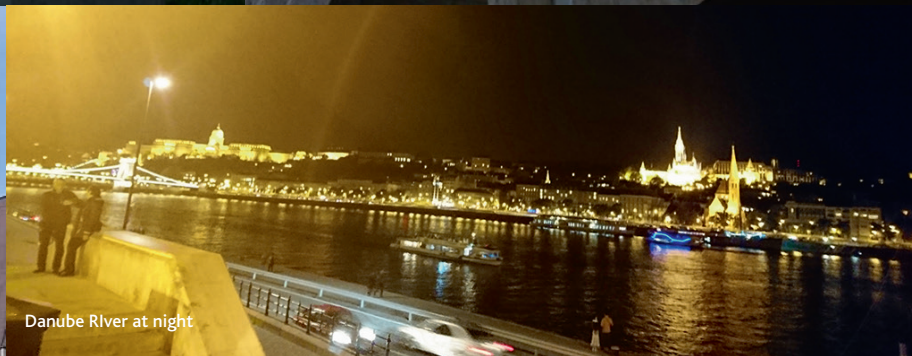
Sculpture Garden



Fishermans Bastion



Castle District, coloured tiles



Danube River at night



St. George Hotel



Street Statue



## BEAUTIFUL BUDAPEST

By Caroline Preston

The capital city of Hungary, a 'must see' on my infinite trip list. I'd often wondered about Budapest and what I might find, images of architectural grandiose were my first thoughts then my mind of course naturally wanders to food...visualising paprika laden stews and rich and sustaining soups to warm cold winters. For liquid refreshment perhaps, a limitless choice of beers and several varieties Hungarian wine. Hungary is by the way the 17th largest wine producing region in the world. Enough of the temptation I was booked and going. This was sure to be cultural, culinary and wine tasting adventure to remember...

But first a bit of history, Budapest was formed in 1873 when Buda, Obuda and Pest merged to become Budapest. The city is spread along the banks of the River Danube incorporating seven bridges and 2 railway bridges. These ornate and beautiful bridges were all destroyed bar one in the second world war and later restored to their former glory. Many fierce battles have influenced the city from Celtic and Roman occupation and 150 years of Ottoman rule the beauty of this city is thanks to its history.

Nowadays the blend of old and modern make Budapest an architectural paradise. Visitors are drawn to the many spectacular sites including Parliament Buildings, Heroes Square, Liberty Bridge and the Museum of Fine Art. In addition, a 'must visit' is the sumptuous outdoor spa facilities including the world-famous Gellért Baths located in the fine Hotel Gellért, natural hot springs feed mineral rich thermal pools, the waters are recommended for illnesses of the joints including arthritis. Whilst I can't endorse the health benefits it's a very relaxing experience that also offers additional spa and mud treatments. The Gellert baths are the most photographed in all of Hungary but are not the only facility. The city is a utopia for spa lovers. The busy Szechenyi Baths are equally

worth a visit or why not try a thermal beer spa that claims to release muscle tension.

After relaxing you'll might be gearing up for some activity, for the more active and adventurous why not try caving, a labyrinth of natural corridors and chambers to explore away from the bustle of the city or plan in advance to participate in the scenic Budapest Marathon, a 2-day running festival with something for everyone.

For the foodies amongst us try a Hungarian cookery class and a visit to Great Market Hall, built in 1897 it is considered the most beautiful of Budapest Market Halls. Market Hall offers fresh food, fine wines, cured meats, souvenirs and much more, foodies and shoppers will delight in a visit here. The diversity of the food offering in this city is staggering. Street food stalls across the city offer anything from small batch Goulash to Vietnamese pho, why not try a Lángos a delicious soft dough that's fried and crunchy on the outside. Try it with a cheese and sour cream topping. For something finer try one of Budapest's fine dining venues, try Caviar & Bull housed in the Corinthia Hotel offers a 7-course tasting, degustation and prix fix menus. Fine food in grand surroundings.

For the lover of culture Budapest delivers in abundance. With multiple theatres,

concert halls a fabulous Opera House and stunning National Theatre there's no end to the Cultural stimulation on offer and with 100 museums and galleries it's a cultural smorgasbord.

In this busy city somewhere to sleep will be necessary, the city offers a huge choice for every budget. From modern hostels for mixing with likeminded travellers to the finest luxury hotel brands including Ritz Carlton, Hilton, Sofitel, Corinthia and more it doesn't fail to satisfy. On my future hit list is the St. George Residence Hotel, an all suite aparthotel claiming to be the oldest in Budapest. It boasts grandiose interiors in the heart of the Castle District.

Budapest is huge but it's up to the visitor to decide whether to relax in the atmosphere, culture and great cuisine or head for an action-packed adventure. For the more confident traveller the cities tram and bus network are affordable and frequent. Like any big city taxis are readily available albeit at additional cost but walking is also very enjoyable just remember to wear comfortable shoes as you'll want to walk for miles. Whatever you decide Budapest was the ultimate city break and I still have many more reasons to return. Is it time you started planning your own adventure?

### Travel tips

Caroline travelled with British Airways from Newcastle International via London Heathrow and spent 3 nights at NH Budapest City, doubles from £109 prpn based on two sharing. Prices based on travel in October 2018. Easy Jet flies to Budapest from Manchester and London.

### Web references to use:

[www.gellertspa.com](http://www.gellertspa.com) [www.szechenyispabaths.com](http://www.szechenyispabaths.com) [www.thermalbeerspa.com/benefits](http://www.thermalbeerspa.com/benefits) [www.caving.hu](http://www.caving.hu) [www.caviarandbull.com/budapest](http://www.caviarandbull.com/budapest)  
[www.stgeorgehotelbudapest.co.uk](http://www.stgeorgehotelbudapest.co.uk)