This multimedia brochure is created within the framework of the project “Multimedia Catalogue of the Tourist Sites and Electronic Marketing of Destination Bulgaria”, Contract No BG161PO001/3.3-01/2008/001-5, which is performed with the financial support of Operative Program “Regional Development” 2007 – 2013, co-financed by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund. The entire responsibility for the contents of this multimedia brochure is brought by the beneficiary – The Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism, and under no circumstances it can be considered that this multimedia brochure presents the official position of the European Union and the Managing Body.
GENERAL INFORMATION

The Bulgarian cultural heritage has many faces and manifestations - archaeological reserves and monuments, museums, galleries, rich cultural calendar, preserved folklore and magnificent architectural monuments.

The house, where Bulgarian people live, is the embodiment of their worldview, social status and practicality. During the Ottoman Dominion, the construction of houses was subject to two important requirements - safety and practicality. Many old buildings that demonstrate this type of architecture - in the villages of Arbanasi, Leshten Kovachevitsa, Dolen, Melnik, etc. have been preserved to the present day.
During the Bulgarian Revival - 18th - 19th century, when the Bulgarian craftsmen and merchants broadened their horizons and opened to Europe and the world, many European cultural influences entered our lands. They occurred in various aspects of the Bulgarian people’s lives, but for us, their heirs, they are most visible in the architecture and interiors of buildings, which were built during that era. The amazing Renaissance architectural models can be seen in many Bulgarian towns - such as Koprivshtitsa, the Old Plovdiv, the villages Zheravna, Borovets, Shiroka Laka, and many others.

In order to preserve this rich heritage a number of architectural reserves have been created - whole villages or districts, which now enjoy great interest from the tourists - Koprivshtitsa, the Old Plovdiv, Kovachevitsa, Arbanasi, the villages of Bozhentsi, Brashlyan Delchevo, Dolen, Architectural and Ethnographic Reserve Etara, the villages of Zheravna, Stefanovo and Shiroka Laka.
The village of Kovachevitsa is located in the Western Rhodope mountain, 23 km from Gotse Delchev and 120 km from Blagoevgrad. Due to its distinctive architecture, the village was declared a historical and architectural reserve. The two and three storey houses in Kovachevitsa were built in the 18th century. On the ground floor used to be the rooms where animals were kept and food was stockpiled. The upper storeys were used for accommodation. Kovachevitsa is a popular destination for tourists seeking outdoor recreation.
The village of Dolen is located in the western part of the Rhodope Mountain, about 26 km from Gotse Delchev. Due to its preserved houses from the Bulgarian Revival period, the village was declared a historical and architectural reserve. The reserve covers 70 buildings, monuments of culture. Typical of the houses in Dolen are the wide upper storeys and the decorated ceilings in some of the houses. Like the nearby villages such as Leshten and Kovachevitsa, Dolen is also a popular destination for country tourism.
The village of Shiroka Laka is located in the Rhodope mountain, 23 kilometers northwest of Smolyan and 16 kilometers of Pamporovo. Shiroka Laka is famous for its beautiful, authentic Rhodope houses, situated in tiers on both sides of river. The local master builders were famous throughout the country. The old houses are built in typical Rhodope architectural style - two storey buildings with bay windows and internal wooden staircases. Most of the rooms are wide, with wooden couches near the walls, the windows are small. The most famous houses are Sgurovska, Uchikovska, Grigorovska houses.
Besides its architecture, the village attracts attention with its preserved traditions. The national school for folklore arts is located in the village, and on the first Sunday of March every year, in the village is conducted an annual mummers festival, called Pespondelnik.
TOWN OF MELNIK

Melnik is the smallest town in Bulgaria. It is situated on the southern slopes of the Pirin Mountains, 175 km south of Sofia and 30 km from the border with Greece. During the Revival period, the local merchants sold their goods throughout Europe. The most striking architectural monuments, such as the Kordopulova and Pashova houses, date back to this era. The Kordopulova house is the largest Revival building in Bulgaria. It was built in 1754.
and it belonged to the wealthy family of Kordopulovi, who produced wine. The cellars, carved into the rock beneath and behind the house, with their constant temperature and ventilation were used in the preparation and seasoning of the famous Melnik wine.

The Pashova house was built in 1815. The ground floor, like the ground floors of the other Melnik houses, was built of stone.

One of the oldest houses on the Balkan Peninsula is the Bolyarska House, which was the residence of Despot Alexius Slav (13th century).
The village of Zheravna is located in the Balkan Mountain, 12 km from the town of Kotel and 50 km from Sliven. Zheravna is an architectural reserve with well-preserved and restored Revival houses, decorated with exquisite carvings, narrow cobblestone streets and numerous fountains. 172 houses in the village have been declared monuments of culture. Among the most interesting buildings, accessible for tourists, are Chorbadzhi Rusi’s house, the native house of the famous Bulgarian writer Yordan Yovkov and the native house of the publicist Sava Filaretov.
Every year in the second half of August in Jeravna is held the National Festival of Folklore Costumes. The village is also popular among tourists. The accommodation follows the spirit and style of architecture in the village. The hotels are restored houses from the times of the Bulgarian Revival.
VILLAGE OF ARBANASI

Arbanasi is situated on a high plateau, 4 km from Veliko Turnovo. In the 17th century the local traders were famous and they traded throughout the Ottoman Empire. The houses of rich traders of this period resemble small fortresses. They have a strict and austere appearance, without balconies and verandas, with barred windows and tightly overlaid doors. Inside, however, the houses are rich and sumptuous. The decoration of all doors, windows, closets, ceilings is extremely rich,
with wood carvings and plaster elements. Typical of the Arbanasi houses is that they are constructed in a way, which allows their inhabitants to live in them for a long time and only go out to bring some water from the well in the yard. The Konstantsalieva house is one of the largest preserved and richly decorated houses in Arbanasi, and it dates back to the 17th century.
TOWN OF KOPRIVSHTITSA

The town of Koprivshtitsa is situated in the Sredna Gora mountain. Due to its numerous monuments of culture, it has been declared a museum town and an architectural reserve. Among the museums and local attractions are the Oslekova house, the Lyutova house, the museum Todor Kableskov, the museum Dimcho Debelyanov, the museum Georgi Benkovski and the museum Lyuben Karavelov. The Oslekova house was built in 1856 for a rich merchant from Koprivshtitsa, called Nencho Oslekov. The rich wall paintings are quite interesting,
as well as the murals and the interior, which give an insight about the life of the rich family in Koprivshtitsa during the 19th century. Another interesting building is the Kableshkova house, built in 1845 in Plovdiv style. The museum exposition shows the lifestyle of the rich landlords of Koprivshtitsa.
The houses in Koprivshtitsa demonstrate the development of architecture during the Bulgarian Revival. The vibrant colors, in which they are painted, are a sign of originality and individuality.
VILLAGE OF BOZHENTSI

The pretty village in Gabrovo area, called Bozhentsi, is one of the most beautiful architectural reserves in Bulgaria. It is located 15 km east of Gabrovo and impresses with its well-preserved Revival houses and public buildings.
The magnificent two- and three storey houses attract the admiration of the visitors with their unique architecture. More than 100 of the houses in Bozhentsi are preserved in their authentic style. Nowadays the village is among the preferred destinations for country and eco tourism.
CITY OF PLOVDIV

The most impressive reserve, which keeps the architectural monuments from the times of the Revival, is the Old Town of Plovdiv. The architectural reserve Ancient Plovdiv provides a unique opportunity for walking through various eras in a small area, seeing ancient buildings adapted to modern life, and feeling the atmosphere of the city during the Revival. The Amphitheatre, the Roman stadium, the ancient Forum and the residential house Eyrene date back to the Roman age.
The eastern gate of the fortress walls - also known as Hissar Kapiya has remained from the Middle Ages. During the Revival, Plovdiv was an important economic center. The city was home to many wealthy and educated people who travelled across Europe and brought new cultural currents. The rich merchants from Plovdiv showed their wealth by building beautiful, richly ornamented houses, which became emblematic of the Old Town. In contrast to the adobe houses in the early Revival, which are small in size,
asymmetric and practical, at a later period the architects focused on the splendor and detail. The Revival Plovdiv houses are symmetrical, with bay windows on the second floor. Particular emphasis has been set on the colors, decorating the facade of the house with beautiful ornaments; the interior is complemented by rich carvings and paintings on the furniture, ceilings and stair railings. Some of the most interesting landmarks from the Revival period are the Mavridi house, the Nedkovich house, the house of Stepan Hindliyan, the Balabanova house, the Kuyumdzhiева house, etc.
This multimedia brochure is created within the framework of the project “Multimedia Catalogue of the Tourist Sites and Electronic Marketing of Destination Bulgaria”, Contract No BG161PO001/3.3-01/2008 /001-5, which is performed with the financial support of Operative Program “Regional Development” 2007 – 2013, co-financed by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund. The entire responsibility for the contents of this multimedia brochure is brought by the beneficiary – The Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism, and under no circumstances it can be considered that this multimedia brochure presents the official position of the European Union and the Managing Body.