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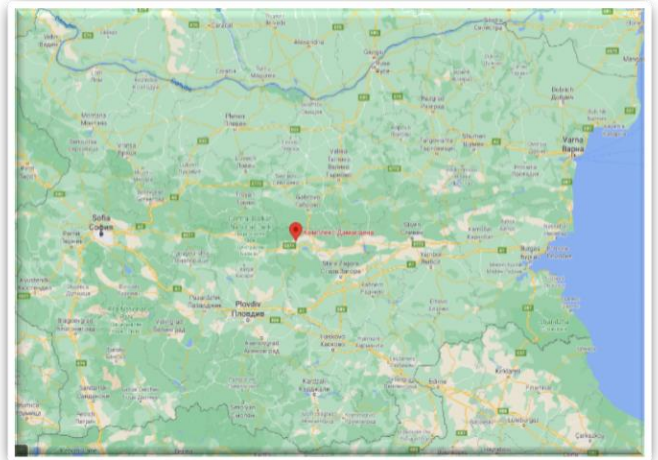


ETHNOGRAPHIC COMPLEX DAMASCENA

Location: Skobelevo Village, Pavel Banya Municipality, Southeast

Planning Region

Key words: Ethnographic museum, Rose oil distillery



“Damascena” is the first private rose oil distillery, found in 1991. It is situated in the heart of the Rose valley, in Southeast Bulgaria, in Pavel Banya municipality, and welcomes visitors for guided tours around the chateaux-like property offering a range of activities and services. The distillery was named after the famous rose “Damascene” which is one of the Bulgarian national symbols. Traditionally, the country is one of the leading rose oil exporters and rose water and perfume are among the key ingredients of the majority of branded cosmetics products, foods and beverages produced in Bulgaria. “Damascena” company hosts an ethnographic museum related to rose oil production. The visitors can observe the process of extraction of oil out of rose petals and learn interesting facts about the history of the rose oil, its features and ways of application. An ancient rose extractor called “gulpana” and many other rose-extracting tools are exhibited in the museum. The visitors are also encouraged to visit the modern distillery with frescoes (wall painting) retelling the story of the rose from its picking to the production of the rose oil (which is also known as the “liquid gold of Bulgaria”). A Thracian culture centre with fragments of Thracian sanctuaries and mounds is another “must see” attraction. Recently, a bio park for wild animals was built to enrich the tourism offering. During the “Pink Campaign’ (May/June) visitors can participate in the process of picking of the roses. Special folklore program is offered which includes additional activities, such as degustation of rose liqueur, rose jam and rose pie.

Marketing approach

The Distillery is advertising its activities on-line (in special events and bookings sites) or on its own web site (<https://www.damascena.net/>) (which won a prestigious award “site of the year” for 2020).

In 2020, “Damascena” Ethnographic Complex was recognized as a major

contributor towards the establishment of the brand *Destination Bulgaria* and was awarded a Certificate for successful cultural tourism and leadership in the production of rose oil.

Financial situation

Entrance fee for Complex “Damascena” is 12 BGN (or 6 Euro) with various discounts for students, children and

senior citizens. Additional cost is charged for special services, activities and folklore programs.

Key success factors and challenges

Among the key success factors are:

- The unique ethnographic museum featuring the Bulgarian

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symbol - the rose “Damascene”;

- The possibility for the visitors to observe the process of extraction and distillation of rose oil out of rose petals;
- Tourists can participate in various activities,

including rose-picking (seasonal in May/June), folklore program, rose products degustation etc.;

- Thracian cultural centre adds educational value to the overall experience.

The COVID-19 pandemic has a negative effect on the work of the complex, since most of the activities for visitors have been cancelled. The complex had to close for several month during 2020 and 2021.

GALLERY:



Source of the images: <https://www.damascena.net/>



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