***PRESS RELEASE***

**New York had a taste of Slovenia**

**Ljubljana, 21 October – *Yesterday evening in New York City, the Slovenian Tourist Board, in cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia in the USA, organised a presentation of Slovenia as a tourist destination. At the “Taste Slovenia” business event, representatives of selected American tourist agencies and tour operators, key tourism and lifestyle media and opinion leaders in the field of tourism got to know Slovenia through the ultimate culinary experience with Ana Roš and through tasting of Slovenian wines.***

In cooperation with the Slovenian tourism industry, the Slovenian Tourist Board (STB) recognised the USA as one of the overseas markets of key importance for Slovenian tourism. This year, it included it in the global digital campaign, which is one of the most important of the STB’s projects since it re-gained its independence in August 2015. By the conclusion of the campaign in November, it will have raised the profile and reputation of Slovenia as **green, active, healthy** tourist destination and promoted its attractive tourist products through innovative digital advertising. Yesterday evening’s event in New York was an upgrade of the digital campaign and one of the largest events this year at which the STB promoted Slovenia through top-notch cuisine and wines.

Representatives of selected American tourist agencies and tour operators, key tourism and lifestyle media and opinion leaders in the field of tourism gathered at the evening “**Taste Slovenia”** business event in New York City. Thanks to the culinary masterpieces of **Ana Roš** and wines from various wine-growing regions, they discovered Slovenia as a culinary destination able to satisfy even the most demanding guests. Although the culinary story of Slovenia, which has inevitably been influenced by the location of the country, positioned as it is in the Alps, the Mediterranean, the Pannonian Plain and the Karst, has been written by many top-quality master chefs renowned throughout the world, Ana Roš stands out due to her innovations that include local ingredients as well as the traditions of her ancestors. Since she appeared in the Netflix series “The Chef´s Table” and was declared the most talented chef of 2015 by the prestigious association of young chefs Jeunes Restaurateurs d’Europe, guests have to wait several months for culinary pampering at her restaurant Hiša Franko near Kobarid. Also, the popularity and importance of Ana Roš is proven by the fact that the state of Slovenia appointed her as an ambassador of the “I Feel S**love**nia” national brand.

The “**Taste Slovenia”** business event took place at the Intercontinental Barclay, considered one of the most sustainable hotels in New York City and among the leading in responsible and sustainability-oriented hospitality. Its director Hervé Houdré, who has been called “the greenest hotelier in New York”, is also one of the most esteemed hoteliers in the world. The location of the event is a perfect match for the story of Slovenia as **green, active, healthy** tourist destination and a country that was declared the **world’s first Green Country** at the recent Global Green Destinations Day conference held in Ljubljana, the Slovenian capital and European Green Capital 2016. In the comprehensive assessment in accordance with the Global Destinations criteria, it scored as many as 96 points from a possible total of 100.

Next year, in Ljubljana, the Intercontinental chain will open its first hotel in Slovenia. Thus, the representatives of the Slovenian tourism industry who participated at the presentation about their country in New York (Ljubljana Tourism, Fabula tours, Lifeclass Hotels & Spa, Slovenian Convention Bureau, Palma TO & DMC, Union Hotels, d. d., Kompas, d. d., Pisanec Tour Design Company, Hotel Cubo, Happy Tours, Roundabout Travel, ABC Rent a car, Luxury Slovenia, LTO Sotočje), wine makers and Steklarna Rogaška had an opportunity, too, to learn about the standards provided by the Intercontinental chain.

“In cooperation with the Slovenian tourism industry, the STB is putting efforts into bringing more U.S. guests to Slovenia as they are considered to be tourists who seek products with higher added value. As Slovenia does not encourage mass tourism, it is a perfect tourist destination for such guests. The advantage of Slovenia as a tourist destination is the ability to provide various experiences within a relatively small territory and a short period of time. Our culinary and wine products are well developed, Slovenia is gaining recognisability and popularity as gastronomy destination even among the most demanding lovers of top delicacies. Slovenia can offer a great variety of health and wellness programmes in natural spa resorts, rich culture, various adventures in nature, innovative niche products, etc. Slovenia is safe and green country, ready to host even the most demanding visitors. It is a fact that American tourists are looking for new destinations, which is a great opportunity for Slovenia” said **Maja Pak, M.Sc., Director of STB,** at the presentation of Slovenia as a tourist destination on the American market.

In 2015, U.S. tourists were ranked 14th according to the number of overnights in Slovenia; their average length of stay was 2.2 days. The number of arrivals and overnights has been increasing since 2006. Thus, 47,169 arrivals of U.S. tourists were recorded in 2006, while the number was 74,334 in 2015. Accordingly, the number of overnights increased from 106,992 in 2006 to 165,198 in 2015. Last year, the highest number of overnights by U.S. tourists was recorded between May and September, predominantly in Ljubljana (43.7%) and in mountain municipalities (36.3%). They stayed mostly in hotels (71.8%).

**Additional information**

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