

Bulgaria's Oldest City Honoured As Culture Capital

SOFIA, Bulgaria _ Plovdiv, the oldest city in Bulgaria, has been officially inaugurated as the European Capital of Culture for 2019.

Some 50,000 people gathered on a main square Saturday to watch the opening show dubbed "We are all colours" with 1,500 local and foreign artists on several stages.

The entertainment included traditional Bulgarian folk dancers, 200 choir singers, a brass orchestra and a musical and laser spectacle.

Squeezed between the Balkan and the Rodopi Mountains, Bulgaria's second-largest city has survived for thousands of years on the crossroads between Western Europe and the Middle East. Plovdiv is in central Bulgaria, 144 kilometres (90 miles) southeast of Sofia, the capital.

Plovdiv claims to be the oldest continually inhabited European city, with more than 6,000 years of history. Evidence of that can be seen in many architectural landmarks dating back to Thracian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman



times. The city on both sides of the Maritsa River is also known for its ethnic diversity. Many of its 340,000 inhabitants belong to the country's Turkish, Roma, Armenian, Greek and Jewish minorities, all of which have quite a strong influence

in Plovdiv this year, including one exhibition featuring fragments of the Berlin Wall to mark 30 years since its fall and another with 30 short films and debates on how art can foster liberty.

Plovdiv, the first Bulgarian city to become a European culture capital, was also named among The New York Times' list of 52 places to go in 2019. It shares the 2019 culture title with the Italian city of Matera.

"This year will be a turning point for Plovdiv. We have spent four years to prepare all events. I'm sure that Plovdiv will never be the same," Svetlana Kuyumdzhieva, the art director of Plovdiv 2019, told reporters.

Picture: People walk past works part exhibits of the Art Liberte exhibition in the town of Plovdiv, Bulgaria. Plovdiv is the first Bulgarian town named to celebrate the most prestigious cultural initiative of the European Union, along with the Italian city of Matera as the twin European Capital of Culture for 2019. (AP Photo/STR)

on the city's vibrant cultural life.

Examples of this influence were presented during the opening music, light and dance show under the motto "Together."

Some 350 cultural events are scheduled

Travellers Can Now Retrace Routes In 'Green Book'

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. _ The Oscar-nominated interracial road trip movie "Green Book" has spurred interest in the real guidebook that helped black travellers navigate segregated America. With a little research, travellers can find copies of "The Negro Motorist Green Book" online and retrace the route in the movie or develop their own tours of sites that once provided refuge to African-Americans.

The Peter Farrelly film follows an Italian-American bouncer, played by Viggo Mortensen, as he drives a prominent black classical pianist, played by Mahershala Ali, during a 1962 music tour through Jim Crow-era America. To avoid conflict and to protect the pianist, Mortensen's character uses the Green Book _ a guide published from 1936 to 1966 by Harlem postal worker Victor H. Green.

The Green Book offered black travellers tips on places to eat, visit and sleep while on the road. The taverns, hotels and gas stations were often black-owned and were identified via word-of-mouth or through advertisements.

"Carry your Green Book with you," the book warned readers on its cover. "You may need it!"

Today, curious travellers can find copies of every edition of the Green Book for free at the New York Public Library Digital Collections or purchase replicas from the Camarillo, California-based About Comics publisher. Inside, readers will find listings in almost every state with addresses of places that catered to African American travellers amid of world of "Whites Only" restaurants, hotels and other establishments across the United States.

Some of the places featured in the travel guide still exist, at least as shadows of their former selves.

In Birmingham, Alabama, the city of the final performance in the movie, the once black-owned A.G. Gaston Motel is now part of a national monument established by then-President Barack Obama. The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and aides stayed at the motel while planning demonstrations against legalized racial segregation in the city in 1963.

Now abandoned and owned by the city, the motel once was an upscale haven with a restaurant and live music for blacks seeking safety in a place known as the most segregated city in America. It eventually will be refurbished as part of plans that call for it to become a centerpiece of the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument.

About 90 miles to the south, in Montgomery, King often got his hair cut in a barber shop inside the Ben Moore Hotel, which was a Green Book fixture at the time King was pastoring a church in Alabama's capital in the 1950s. The hotel still stands on a corner, vacant and decaying.

Meanwhile, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the De Anza Motor Lodge, a business owned by Zuni trader and Indian art collector Charles G. Wallace, along the historic Route 66 is still standing, barely. It offered black motorists opportunities for a good night's rest and a chance to catch a nearby show of American Indian and Mexican-American doo-wop singers. The motel was listed in some editions of the Green Book and is undergoing renovation after years of being abandoned.

The Threatt Filling Station in Luther, Oklahoma, is on the National Register of Historic Places for its distinction as a black-owned filling station along the Route 66 "Mother Road." The Threatt family's recent partnership with historians to preserve the former station and the movie "Green Book" have brought about a renaissance of sorts for the structure, The Oklahoman reported in December.

Charles Becknell, Sr., 77, of Rio Rancho, New Mexico, said he bought a 1954 edition of the Green Book online after he saw the movie. The retired educator plans on visiting some of the sites mentioned in the book to see what's there now. "I also wanted my grandchild to see this book for themselves," Becknell said.

To be sure, some of the sites mentioned in the Green Book no longer exist and the buildings that once housed them have been replaced or torn down.

Frank's Restaurant in New York City's Harlem neighbourhood, advertised in the 1959 Green Book edition, is long gone and a new defunct discount store occupies the spot. The former Booker Washing Hotel and Courts in San Francisco, which once of-



The De Anza Motor Lodge sits along Route 66 in Albuquerque, N.M.

ferred black travellers "splendidly decorated suites" and a "cocktail lounge," is now a Safeway grocery store and apartments.

Still, visitors can use the guide to visit

the sites and see how a place that once provided safe haven has evolved and contemplate what it meant for black travellers more than 50 years ago.

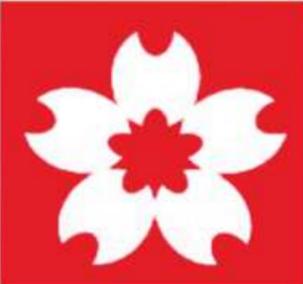
The movie "Green Book" is nomi-



Charles Becknell, Sr., 77, holds a copy of 1954 the edition of "The Negro Motorist Green Book" at his home in Rio Rancho, N.M.

nated for best picture at the 91st Academy Awards scheduled to air Sunday on ABC. Mortensen is nominated for the best actor award and Ali as best-supporting actor.

(Pictures: AP/Russell Contreras)



SAKURA TURBO HOOD

NO MORE SMOKE, GREASE & ODOURS
GREAT FOR ASIAN COOKING

B-53
The B-53 has the newest type of motor that has turbo speeds at ultra low sound levels and air purifier

- * 150 to 1100 CFM with 7" diameter duct
- * 1.5 - 5 sone
- * Baffle filter system; stain-less steel; dishwasher safe
- * Touch panel w/ 5 speed control
- * Turbo function over 1000 CFM
- * Air purifier function; recirculation of air
- * Dual LED lights
- * New design DC motor
- * 30" x 22 7/16" x 9" or 36" x 22 7/16" x 9"



M-2000
The M2000 has award winning minimalist design and uses the ancient and naturally occurring Golden Ratio to craft it's proportions

- * 250 - 780 CFM
- * 2 - 5 sone
- * Glass touch screen panel with 3-speed control
- * Stainless Steel beehive filter system, detachable and dishwasher safe
- * Time delay shut-off (5min)
- * Dual LED lights
- * 30" x 19 11/16" x 3 1/8"
- * 35 7/16" x 19 11/16" x 4 1/2"

U3-H HEAT



This model is designed 14-inches further from the wall to accommodate the front burners of your stove. 15 minute self-cleaning function - with a click of a button the U3-H uses heat to dissolve the oil build up inside the hood. There's no need for detrimental chemicals and cleaning solutions.

- * 350 - 680 CFM
- * 2 - 4 sone
- * Rocker switch with 2 speed control

R7471IW



Patented grease trapping & reusable filter
Extracts 85% of grease before enter to interior or range hood, ducts & vent cap
Front smoke baffle to keep steam inside
6" ducting become 680 C.F.M.
6" round duct or 3 1/8" x 10" duct either horizontal or vertical

WHITE SPECIAL \$369

R727 II



The R-727II has been re-designed with a new modern slick exterior

- * 580 CFM
- * 2.5 - 6 sone
- * Oil trapping cups
- * Round rocker switch with 2 speed control
- * 29 3/4" x 22" x 6"

NEW PRODUCT SUPER BIDET





Slow-Motion Closing



Anti-Bacterial Resin



Special Tender Spray Head



A Level Temp. Seat

SAKURA PRODUCTS CO.

Scarborough
4490 Sheppard Ave. E, Unit 2
Scarborough, ON., M1S 4J9
TF: 1-800-475-5473
Tel: 416-291-5218
Fax: 416-291-5231

Times Square
550 Hwy 7E, Bldg D.
Unit # 91, Richmond Hill
West Leslie/North Hwy 7
905-889-3339

Mississauga
Dixie Park Mall
1550-South Gateway Road
Unit 113, Mississauga
South Eglinton/East Side Dixie
905-238-3198 (Wed Off)

INFO@SAKURA-CANADA.COM | WWW.SAKURA-CANADA.COM