


WALLED CITIES



LIVING CITIES

VINCENT ZAMMIT

HELLEVOETSLUIS – 2016
EUROPEAN WALLED TOWNS

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- ▶ Walled cities cannot be appreciated if they are to be turned into Museums
 - ▶ Walled cities cannot be appreciated if they are not lived in
 - ▶ Walled cities need activities, events, movement
 - ▶ Walled cities need to preserve their history, but look towards the future in order to remain attractive and relevant


A Walled City

- ▶ Presence of walls
- ▶ This is Monteriggioni (Tuscany)
- ▶ A small walled area





- ▶ There are also the massive large cities
- ▶ Although they were walled cities, with the passage of time, they lost the majority of their walls, and nowadays the walls are just a memory
- ▶ There is much more to see and visit than the few remaining walls

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- ▶ Yet the historical background of these cities need to be retained
 - ▶ It is part of the history of the locality and it would be a shame if this part of their history is put aside
 - ▶ It is also up to the inhabitants and the authorities that the same heritage is well respected

RESPECT

- ▶ One cannot have respect for one's history if the same heritage is not respected by the authorities
- ▶ There must be evidence that the authorities in charge are also knowledgeable and ready to preserve what has survived

VALLETTA

EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE 2018



V.i8 VALLETTA
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OF CULTURE 2018



Valletta 18 proposed four themes:

1: Generations

- ▶ To empower Valletta's generations is to give the city, and all of Malta, a future

Valletta 18 proposed four themes:

2: Routes

- ▶ Valletta's societies share a common Mediterranean heritage through a strong community spirit and close family ties

Valletta 18 proposed four themes:

3: Cities

- ▶ **A beautiful city filled with artists
where creativity can only flourish**

Valletta 18 proposed four themes:


4: Islands

- ▶ The sea has shaped our country and our culture, formed our city, and influence almost every part of our lives

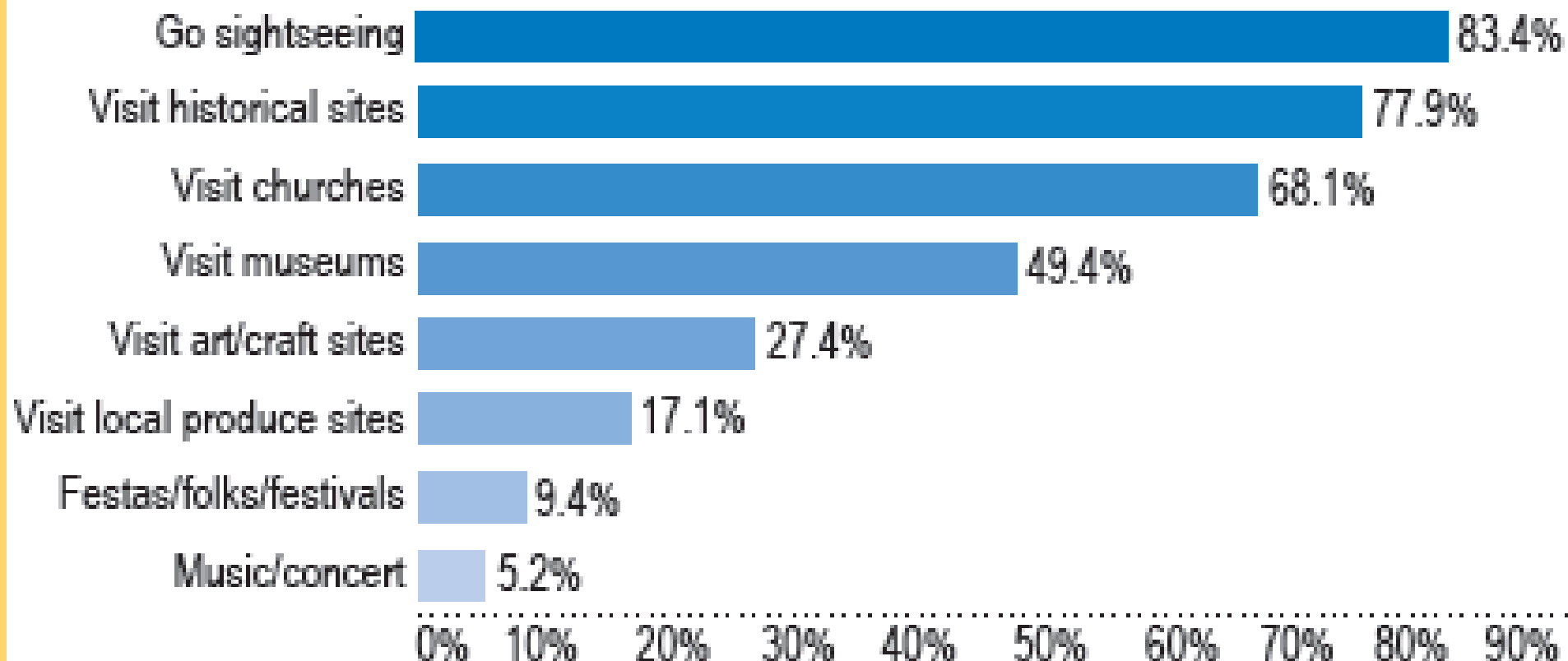
Valletta is ready for the challenge





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- ▶ Valletta 2018 has provided the authorities with a challenge
 - ▶ Restoration of historical buildings
 - ▶ Creation of events
 - ▶ Appreciation of less known venues

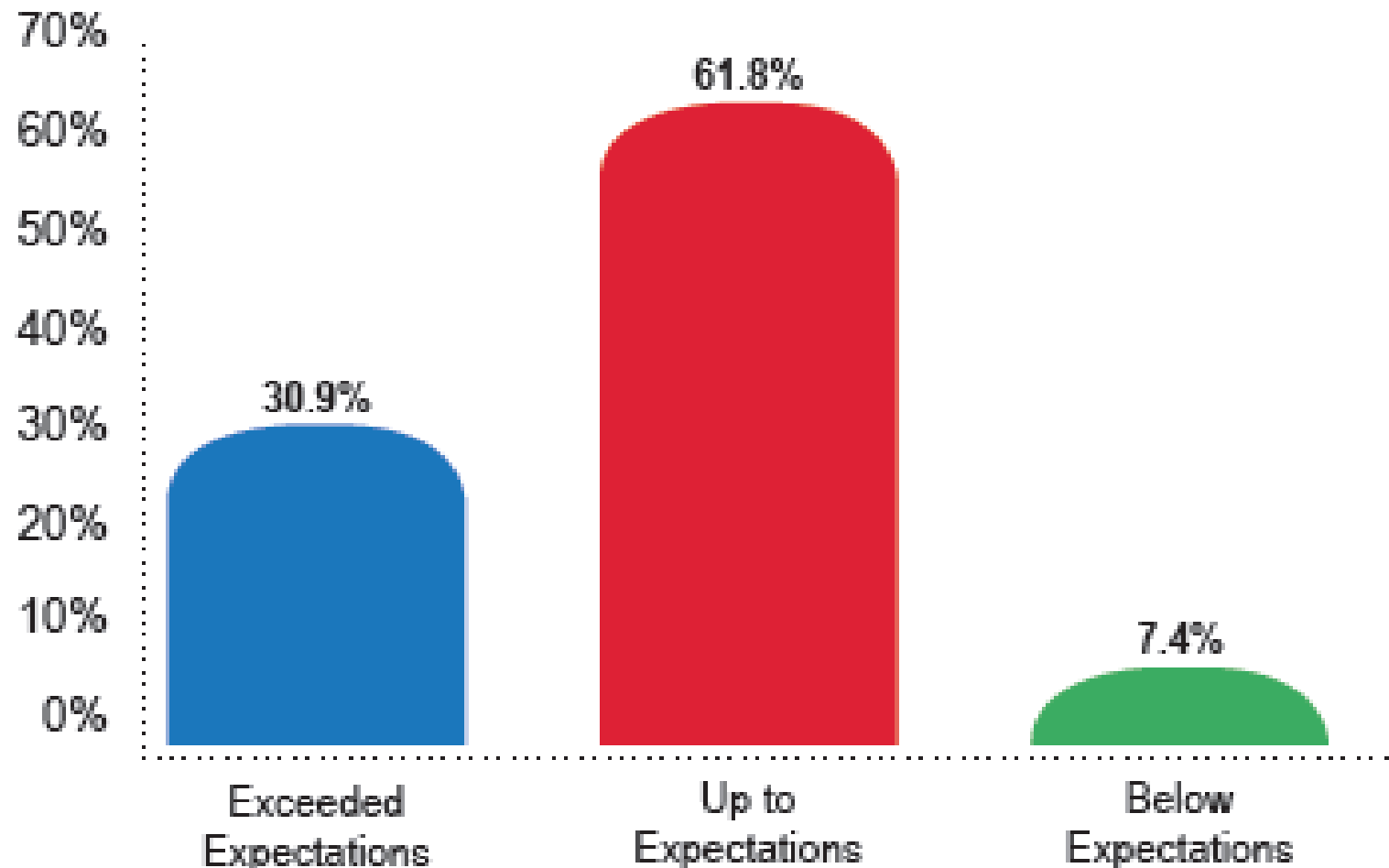
Tourist Participation in Cultural Activities, 2015



Source: MTA Market Profile Survey, 2015

Overall Experience

Tourists' Overall Experience in Malta, 2015



Source: MTA Market Profile Survey, 2015

What about the local population?

- ▶ **Announcing the findings, the Minister for Justice, Culture and Local Government, Owen Bonnici, said: “81% of respondents believe that Valletta is changing for the better moreover, 82% of those interviewed believe that Valletta 2018 is having a positive impact on Valletta’s image”. –**

- ▶ See more at: <http://valletta2018.org/news/culture-matters-research-highlights-valletta-2018s-positive-impact/#sthash.sGWV78jo.dpuf>

Project leader and director of the Culture
Directorate Caldon Mercieca



- “The objective behind this project is to co-design the experience of common and shared spaces in Valletta by building meaningful bridges with the community residents and regular users of these spaces. There is a reason why we wanted to use the *biccerija* as our focal point. We want the regeneration process to come from within the community that lives there and not impose it ourselves.”

- ▶ A Walled city is a living city, as there are more than just tourists, souvenir shops and other tourism related facilities
- ▶ There are people and families who live there



- ▶ A Walled city is a living city, as there are more than just tourists, souvenir shops and other tourism related facilities:
- ▶ There are the shops where the locals go and buy their everyday needs



► A Walled city is a living city, as there are more than just tourists, souvenir shops and other tourism related facilities

► There are the coffee and wine bars, where the locals go to entertain themselves





► There is a big contrast between Valletta and Mdina





The Three Cities are very similar to Valletta – they are walled cities with a busy and vibrant local community in each city.

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- ▶ A lot of work is done by all authorities, but unfortunately, these are very much tourism related events
 - ▶ There are also cases when only the main parts of the city are actually restored, and the local inhabitants are not even consulted, or informed of the changes
 - ▶ Those localities that involve their own citizens, are bound to have a better response and co-operation


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- ▶ Culture and Heritage abound in any Walled City
 - ▶ Their historical background is usually second to none
 - ▶ Yet, it all depends on how the same heritage is presented to the public

EVENTS

- ▶ Cultural events in the widest sense have become the norm in all cities, towns and villages in Malta
- ▶ A good number of them are also re-enacting historical events
- ▶ These tend to be educational as well, besides the spectacle that is offered

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- ▶ Revival and urban regeneration
 - ▶ “Major events are staged for many reasons. They are opportunities for socialising, celebrations of achievements, markers of time and vehicles for political posturing”
 - ▶ “...events have become platforms to sell a variety of products, including the host city as well”
 - ▶ “Major events are also increasingly associated with urban regeneration”

▶ Andrew Smith “Events and Urban Regeneration” Routledge 2012.



▶ Regeneration is not restricted to buildings, but there is the social aspect as well. The best way to achieve success is involvement of the local community:

▶ Performing


▶ Volunteering

▶ Spectating

▶ Watching on television

▶ Reading about the events in the media

▶ Knowing about the events within the locality

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- ▶ Another important issue is to include as much as possible a larger part of the cities
 - ▶ The first “Notte Bianca” event held in Valletta in 2005, had all the events in the main part of Valletta. A good part of the city was left untouched, unaffected, and therefore out of the same organisation and event





- ▶ Historical re-enactments are another way of how to liven up the activities and at the same time provide spectacle



- Besides demonstrating their skills, these historical re-enactors would also give information about the costume that they would be wearing, the arms used, and the way of life of soldiers



- ▶ The original groups were more interested in dressing up. Now all groups tend to be informative, besides trying to research their own particular period which they are representing



Medieval Mdina

23 - 24 April 2016

Find us at the Vilhena Palace courtyard
home to the Natural History Museum.

Saturday 23 April

- 1000 - 1700h 15th century living history.
- 1130 - 1150h Talk on medieval surgery.
- 1400 - 1415h L' Assoldo: Payment of the troops
- 1500 - 1600h Public lecture: Malta and Medieval Falconry

Sunday 24 April

- 1000 - 1700h 15th century living history.
- 1130 - 1150h Talk on medieval surgery.
- 1400 - 1415h L' Assoldo: Payment of the troops
- 1500 - 1600h Public lecture: Insights on medieval Malta from GF Abela's "Della Descrittione di Malta" (1647)



Anthony Xuereb Photography

VO/1080



jenngrillophotography

- ▶ Authenticity needs to be respected as well
- ▶ The local people need to remain loyal to their own particular culture and customs, as otherwise one would be pushing them away from the activities
- ▶ Authenticity is also offered by inviting visitors to the lesser known of the city



► A city needs to
continue to live its
own life





- ▶ Festivals are necessary to make the city Alive
- ▶ The walls of the city will give the festival/event/activity a sense of location, and the same time the same walls can become part of the event






- ▶ Museums form an integral part of the City – but how many local people actually visit the same Museums?
- ▶ MUZA The word is an acronym which stands for MUŻew Nazzjonali tal-Arti which is the Maltese name of the current National Museum of Fine Arts.
- ▶ Museums have to be up to date with technology, in order to be relevant



- Let us never forget that tourists come in all shapes, sizes and difficulties. Therefore access to all visitors is a necessity, for any city to become successful in attracting more visitors



- ▶ A lift has been installed for easier access into the city of Valletta

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- ▶ One needs to make interpretation of sites, buildings, monuments, museums, etc available to as many different visitor as possible, in order to have everyone appreciate what is on offer
 - ▶ But first these must be communicated to the local inhabitants, as these are going to make the city welcoming



- ▶ The local population have to be involved, and they will respond positively
- ▶ The local population needs to be made aware of all the issues, problems and plans for the better appreciation of their own cities



- There is no need for cities to remain historically minded – the bastions of a city can be used for other cultural activities




- ▶ **Malta's first Bollywood production shot extensively in the old cities of Mdina, Valletta and Birgu**



▶ Rick Carter, the Oscar-winning production designer for Munich (2005) said: "Malta has this kind of Mediterranean hodgepodge of culture where we could find areas that look like southern European locations in one spot and areas that look like Israel or Beirut in another". Indeed, in Munich, Malta was used to stand in for no fewer than seven cities, including Tel Aviv, Beirut, Athens and Rome.



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- ▶ Whenever the city authorities organise large conferences, events, and other activities, they have to involve the local population – otherwise no help will be forthcoming
 - ▶ The locals have to feel that they own the activity, they are part of the activity
 - ▶ They should be made to understand the importance of their city, and making them proud of their common heritage

**Walled Cities are living cities,
otherwise they would be just
dead museums**

Grazzi hafna

