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*Stories from a 'jewel box'*

# SZENTENDRE AND ME

MAGAZINE



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## Introduction

Dorottya Hidegkuti



*I tend to think that one of the strongest links that ties us to the town is that we continually learn something new about Szentendre. Sometimes meet someone at the market or read a book or learn someone's personal story. The aim of the initiative "Szentendre and me..." is to share as many of these stories as possible with those who really want to know why it is so great to live here or to visit the town.*



music teacher, conductor - Vujicsics Tihamér Music School

# ÁGNES BOKORNÉ FORRÓ

*«Szentendre is a huge melting pot and this is why it's so incredibly exciting and inspiring. (People kept and still keep coming here from all over the place and it's truly magical how things sometimes connect.)»*

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To me Szentendre is the place I long to be and I can't get enough of it. It was love, faith and my profession that brought me here and I had a warm welcome from the family, the congregation and my colleagues. Here, it's never a problem if I can't go on holiday because I can admire the landscape of Tófenék and the neighbouring hills from our terrace in Püspökmajor. I can also see Megyeri Bridge on the Danube as well as horses, deer, pheasants, all sorts of birds or even fireworks in the evening. It reminds me of Káli Basin north of Lake Balaton, where we spent our honeymoon and I feel that I belong here and even if I never left the town again, I would still feel very lucky to spend my days here.

confectioner, owner - Sweet Dreams Confectionery

# GYÖNGYI EÖTVÖS

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*«I like LIVING in Szentendre not just coming home to sleep.»*

If you ask me what Szentendre means to me it's like having to answer the question 'What makes human life really beautiful'. I wasn't born here but I chose to live here. I'm sure that the town and the fact that I can live here is one of the greatest gifts of my life. My daughters were born here and they take for granted what is an everyday WONDER to me who spent her childhood in a housing estate. We take a stroll by the Danube after school, skip stones and feed the ducks. We walk down by Bükkös Stream, climb up all the trees on the way and stuff fresh prickly horse-chestnuts into our pocket.

I walk wherever I can in town and I make new discoveries even after so many years. I come across small streets, alleys, façades and backyards that I have never seen before. I always meet people I know and the question 'How you doin'?' is not just a meaningless phrase of politeness but the beginning of a nice conversation. For me, the world's most delicious dishes are those I and my daughters eat by hand smearing ourselves on the steps of the Danube bank as we watch the water and the ever-changing sky. In these moments, I feel that I'm the happiest person in the world (which may be true).







gallery manager and owner - Erdész Gallery & Design

# LÁSZLÓ ERDÉSZ

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I was running an art gallery in the town of Dunaújváros, when one day Mr Ádám Farkas called me saying that the Painting Gallery managed by the Hungarian Art Fund wanted to open a gallery in Szentendre to sell graphic works by local painters and they needed someone to manage it. When I thought that I would be able to work with Dezső Korniss, Endre Bálint and Jenő Barcsay, all of whom I admired greatly, I immediately pounced on the opportunity.

During the years I realised that others felt the same way. Wherever people come from, something happens to them in Szentendre and they get stuck here or return again and again even after twenty years. Both Hungarians and foreigners are enthralled by some kind of magic. They soon have their favourite places in town and tell about it to others so new people keep coming to discover the magic.

This is how you grow into this town – through your children and the school and though your work and the people you come to know.





*«I didn't  
choose  
Szentendre,  
Szentendre  
chose me.»*



owner - Patakpart Beauty House

# ILDIKÓ KERÉKGYÁRTÓ BAGYINSZKI

*«I am grateful that Szentendre is home to my family and my work.»*

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When we first visited our friends in Szentendre, we fell in love with the town instantly. We got on our bikes and enjoyed the view, Bükkös Stream, the forests, the Danube and the centre. We were thrilled by the area's natural beauty.

Even so, when we moved here, I was somewhat sad and it took me years to feel that the town was my real home. I think it started when I began to see friends and familiar faces in the streets. Then, we started to go to local programmes, shops and restaurants. We became regulars at local festivals and bought theatre season tickets. I came to like this small-scale but full life so much that when I'm coming home on the motorway, I instinctively veer towards Szentendre, rather than Nyíregyháza.



cooking school leader and owner - Gourmet Cooking School

# KRISZTINA KOVÁCS

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*«We have grown fond of this city and we like to feel that we're at home here.»*



We moved to Szentendre in 2010, when our daughter, Eszter was born. Afterwards, we would still go back to Budapest for a while to the doctor's, the hairdresser's or cosmetician's but after a while we stopped and started to go to local shops. This is when our real integration began. Somehow this prompted the idea of the cooking courses as well because we often went to such courses in Budapest but there were none in Szentendre.

Apart from my husband, nobody believed in the success of our enterprise. I was told that Szentendre was a dormitory town and people only came here to sleep. However, I did believe in it because I had the impression that there was a demand and I would have to create an opportunity to satisfy it. It is true that our first courses had very few participants but today I see that the cookery school not only reached out to locals, but also started to build a community.

Therefore, my idea of Szentendre as a wonderland finally came true. As someone from Budapest, it's fantastic to bump into people I know at every turn and when they ask 'How you doin'?', they really want to know. We have our favourite shops and restaurants where the owner calls us by our first name. In the children's bookshop, the assistant already knows which books to recommend to our daughter and in the chocolate shop I usually have my cayenne-pepper espresso with orange peel dipped in chocolate.

retired museum educator

# ÉVA KRIZBAINÉ SZABÓ

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*«I would group Szentendre's assets into three equally important categories: local history, ethnic past with a fabulously rich Serbian cultural heritage and visual arts. Why is it important to know these assets? Because you can only love a place and be attached to it if you know its history. This is what makes a place your home because without the roots, it's just a place of residence.»*



During my college year in the town of Szombathely, I detested small-town life. I thought that once I returned to Budapest, I would never move again. Then in Szentendre I experienced the pleasures of small-town life: I know my neighbours and the shopkeepers and whenever I go to the centre, I come across someone I know at every turn. Even today, I stop at the Tanners' Cross on Donkey Hill and look around in amazement. I keep taking photos of the town and there are still plenty of things I don't know and I feel elated when I discover something new. I like Szentendre most on snowy winter evenings when I take a stroll in the empty streets of the centre. Everything's white and I feel like I'm in wonderland. Although I like travelling in the world, I also know that you don't need to go far to find miracles because they're right there under your nose.



architect, graphic designer,  
author of «Szentendre, Mendemonda» travel book

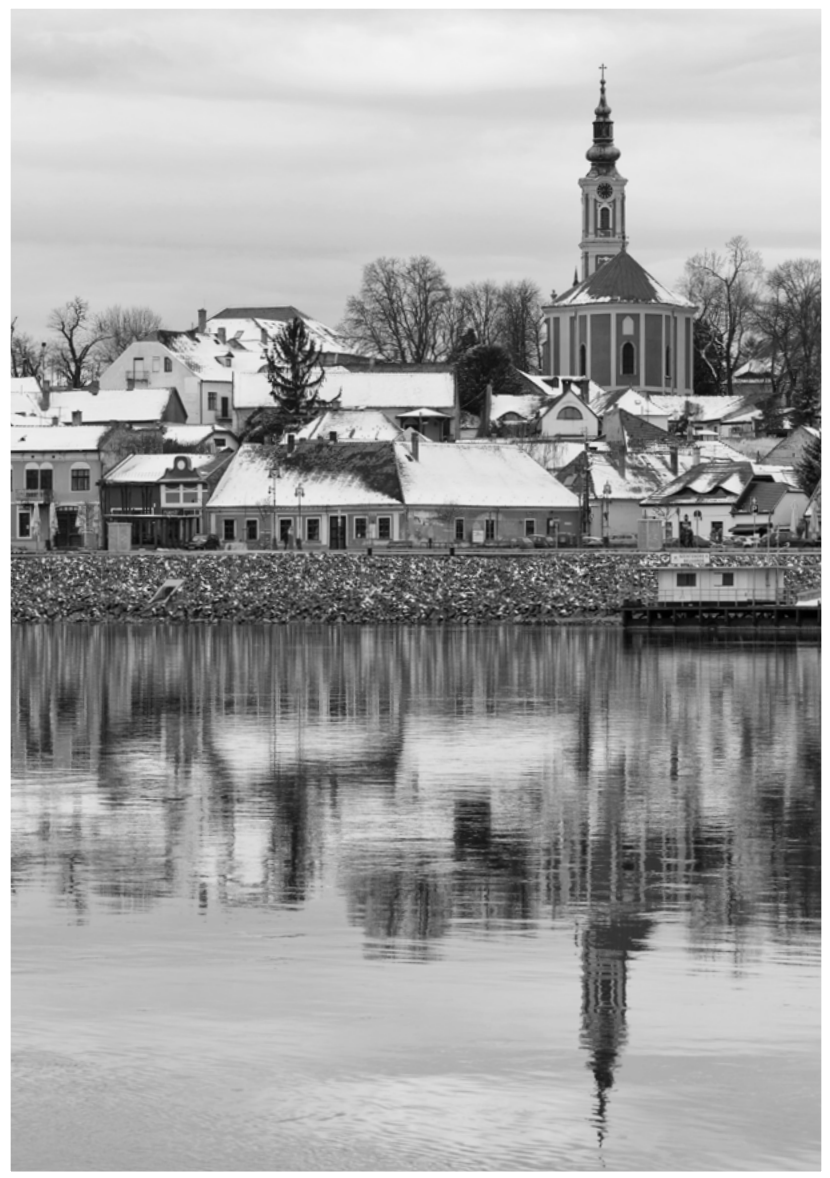
# ZSÓFI MÁSIK

*«To me Szentendre has always been the 'zero mile marker'.  
I love its different faces in summer and in winter. Wherever I sit  
by the Danube, I know the water connects us. I love the town  
because it inspires me and sometimes I feel like I'm in a fairy tale.»*

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My first memory of Szentendre has to do with my Grandma. Every year in early spring she moved from her flat in Buda to her holiday house on Pismány Hill in Szentendre. Our walks in the centre were always a special experience. First, we used to go to the ice-cream shop in Görög Street, then to the dyke on the riverside where we would search for flat pebbles to skip stones. I always gaped in awe in the historic centre and I can still remember sauntering down from Pismány, crossing Bükkös Stream and walking on the cobblestones of Bogdányi Street to arrive in Main Square.

Years later, as locals we also got to know winter in Szentendre. This was another exciting experience because the dim yellowish evening lights and the virtually deserted town were in stark contrast to the summer bustle and yet it made the town complete.





owner - Édeni Édességek Chocolate Store

# CSILLA PELLE

*« One of my closest ties with the town is the chocolate shop. I am happy that we created a place that the lovely residents love, too.»*

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Szentendre is a small town which is just as loveable as my own home-town. I lived in Eger until I was 18 and went to university in Debrecen. I moved to Szentendre from Budapest in 1994 with my husband and son, who was 18 months at the time.

I had no problem getting used to the town because Szentendre is a lot like me. There are loads of new ideas here that I can relate to because variety is my lifeblood. Szentendre has a stream, a river, hills and plains with verdure, different colours and views and you feel like you're in a film.

We live in a beautiful town and it's great that I can still appreciate it. Whenever I can, before going to the shop in the morning, I always walk down to the river to catch a glance of the view. It is amazing to see it flowing here every day no matter what.



owner - Görög Kancsó Restaurant

# PÉTER SZALAI

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My dad was always a perspicacious person and spotted the opportunities. In the late 80s, he opened a fashion shop in Bogdányi Street because at the time there was only one such shop in town. It nicely took off and in the meantime my parents fell in love with the city and we moved to Ady Endre Street.

I loved the town even back then. I can still remember the day when the demolition of the dam started. We came here after school, bought an ice-cream from Mr Surányi and sat on the parapet under the trees. It never occurred to me to live or work anywhere else.

We opened Riverside floating bar last year with my friend Zoltán Pásztor, the owner of ferry. We wanted a place that brings people closer to the Danube.



*«I have roamed the town  
since I was a child. I know every  
street and every cobblestone.  
Although I travel a lot,  
I like it best here. »*



ÁMOS IMRE  
(1907–1944)



ANNA MARGIT  
(1913–1991)



VAJDA LAJOS  
(1908–1941)



ZELEN KÉPTÁR





confectioner, owner - Szamos Confectionery

# LÁSZLÓ SZAMOS

*«Szentendre is my life, my everything. Hungarian composer Emil Petrovics once said: 'I'm Hungarian but I don't want to forget my Serb roots'. I couldn't agree more. »*

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I never brag about living in Szentendre, I'm simply proud that my family has lived here for 200 years and my grandchildren are the eighth generation in the town. I take special pride in having Serbian ancestry on my father's side.

I'm proud of my Serbian ancestors because I can be here today thanks to them. As a token of my appreciation and respect for them, I still go to the Orthodox mass. Serbians gave so much to Szentendre in terms of culture, religion and gastronomy, which made it the northern-most Mediterranean town of Europe. Its charm, atmosphere and dynamism leaves no-one indifferent.

In my view, you need to know your own roots as well as those of the place where you live in order to appreciate its present and to hand the values down to posterity.

mayor of Szentendre

# MIKLÓS VERSEGHI-NAGY

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*«Home. Family. Community. Work. Life. Everything.»*

Szentendre is my home. It's a typical small town that consists of fine threads that form an unusually strong fibre of close-knit communities. Our family has had ties with the town for generations. My father went to the Franciscan Secondary School in Szentendre and I have lived here with my wife and four children for 20 years. One of my children and my grandchild were born here. In addition to my family, which gives me a solid foundation, we are also members of several communities from the church congregation through sports clubs to groups of friends, which are all strong ties to the town. Just like my work. I cannot imagine a better situation than working for your own town. I can see the results of my work in everyday life and I meet the people I work with and work for day in day out.

I always walk, the town is not merely a 'map' for me. To cite Hungarian poet Miklós Radnóti: 'I am at home. And if a shrub happens to kneel down, beside my foot, I know both its name and its flower; I know who walks on the road and where they are going,'

And I often go running along the Danube then up the hills where the whole world opens up before my eyes. I was also attracted and captured by this wonderful Mediterranean-style small town with the river, the churches, the roofs, the alleys and its mysterious and charming atmosphere.



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