

LEISURE / TRAVEL / INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL
 See also: International travel



Richard Basch
 DC Travel Examiner



World's first underground balloon flight completed in the Mamet Cave in Croatia

3 Likes

Next: MSC Cruises joins the wave of fares with benefits

Use your key for the next article

September 30, 2014
 10:55 AM MST



Bijan-Haron Markicevic

The 675 foot deep Mamet Cave in the Velebit Mountain in Croatia was the scene of an incredible adventure, a successful first ever underground balloon flight. Ivan Trifonov, a seventy-year-old Austrian, has become the first man alive to try and succeed at flying a hot-air balloon underground.

Trifonov's descent, for which he used a specially designed balloon, was 25 minutes long. The balloon for this successful attempt was specially designed with a smaller than usual size balloon without a basket but only two gas cylinders framed by iron pipes as improvised seating space for Trifonov.

"For once in my life, I have the chance to go down in Tartarus (hell), right?" said Trifonov jokingly, and then significantly more seriously added "Absolutely a tough thing". This has been a difficult project. You must have the right balloon, the right weather, and the right support. "It was very difficult and I don't believe this is going to be repeated by anyone ever again."

Over his lifetime, Trifonov, an experienced hot air balloon pilot, has been honored with four Guinness World Records for hot air ballooning over the South Pole, the North Pole and the Mediterranean Sea and is also the first man to stand, dive and fly over the North Pole all within 12 hours. Inspired by the book Journey to the Centre of the Earth by Jules Verne, Trifonov has received his fifth Guinness World Record for his recent journey to the bottom of Mamet Cave and back.

The unique video of this great feat showcases the amazing beauty of Croatia alongside the adventurous spirit of Trifonov further exemplifying the endless possibilities for active tourism in Croatia.

The Mamet Cave is about 676 feet deep and 196 feet in diameter at the entrance and is shaped like an inverted funnel. It is located above Obrovac, in the Velebit Nature Park. The first written data about the cave dates back to 1929, while the first descent to its bottom started on July 5, 1968 to collect data for topographic mapping and aerial photography. The map produced on that first descent is still being used today.