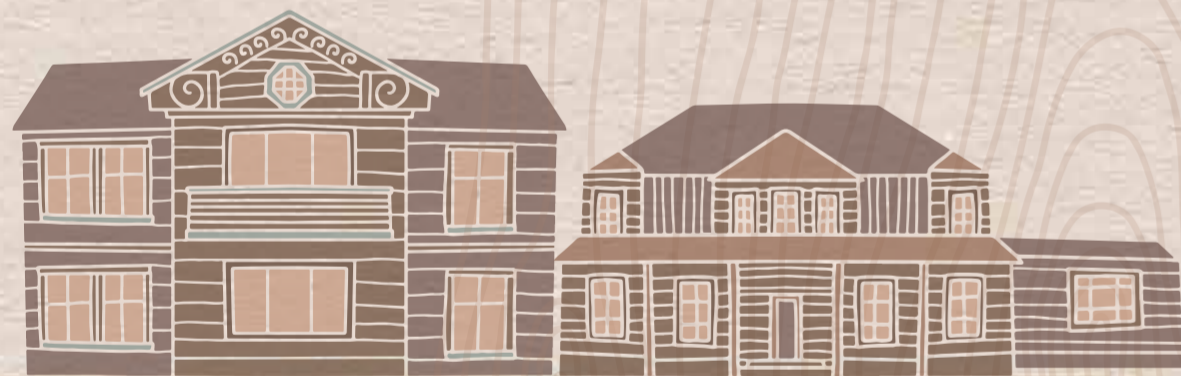


WOODEN STORIES

MODERNISM FOR THE FUTURE

Discover the fascinating stories of wooden villas built at the beginning of the 20th century on the website of Modernism for the Future, the architectural heritage-dedicated program of Kaunas - European Capital of Culture 2022. Head to modernizmasateiciai.lt for pictures, drawings and personal interviews.



MORE KAUNASTIC ROUTES

Wondering what to do next? Here are some of the themed routes available in English:

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Welcome to Kaunas | The City of Champions |
| Modernist's Guide | Culture Shock |
| Wallographer's Notes | Double Weekend |
| The Litvak Landscape | A Hanseatic Merchant's story |
| The Litvaks of Slobodka | Kaunas in Film |
| The Sugihara Route | 100 Years of Theatre |
| Gastro Guide | Kaunas Fortress |
| The Ethnic Trail | Around Kaunas With a Diplomat |
| Kid-Sized Kaunas | |

For free publications, visit the Kaunas IN tourist information center (Laisvės al. 36, Kaunas), or locations labeled with the "Tourism Information Friendly" or visit.kaunas.lt. More of the "Wooden Stories" and other kaunastic routes you can find in the digital version on kaunastika.lt.

USEFUL HASHTAGS

#kaunastic #visitkaunas #kaunas2022

TOURISM INFORMATION



"KAUNAS IN"

Laisvės al. 36, Kaunas | +37061650991
info@kaunasin.lt | visit.kaunas.lt

ŽALIAKALNIS

1 HOUSE OF A. JOKIMAS

Minties rato g. 2

When Kaunas became the temporary capital of Lithuania, a new city plan was very much needed. It was prepared by a local architect and engineer, Antanas Jokimas, and his Danish colleague Peter Marius Frandsen. The whole project was never implemented, but the concept of a city-garden is beautifully revealed in the so-called Žaliakalnis trapezium by the Oak Grove. Jokimas himself moved there to a house designed by Jonas Andriūnas in 1925. According to the historian Žilvinas Rinkšielis, the house reflects the time and the place: "The house ignores the street line and stands on a spacious, green plot. (...) The design incorporates elements typical of Baroque architecture: the broken roof, the voiles often found in church architecture, and the finely divided double-glazed windows."

2 HOUSE OF J. DERESKEVIČIUS

Minties Rato g. 24

Jonas Dereskevičius, who once worked as the head of Žaliakalnis Primary School, built the house in 1928 according to the design of Ignas Gastila. The house next to the oak grove was intended for his own family and renting out. The building of modest but expressive architecture and a pediment with large windows was not nationalised during the occupation. The building has thus retained its authenticity, including the staircase and the exterior elements.

3 HOUSE OF A. GEDMANTAS

Aukštaičių g. 44

Phantasmagorical creatures greet you from the courtyard of this house as you walk down Aukštaičių street. Their creator, artist Aistė Ramūnaitė has lived here since birth. She is the granddaughter of Antanas Gedmantas. Gedmantas, a captain of the Lithuanian army and adjutant of the staff of the Riflemen's Union, who had a tragic fate. Once upon a time, the ground floor was a shop. The roof windows of the villa are decorated with charming sunlight motifs, and many authentic elements have been preserved.

4 HOUSE OF V. AND D. MILIAUSKAS

Dzūkų g. 5

A common rule is that if at least one relative cares, a historic building will survive. A beautiful house of exceptional appearance born in 1931 is lucky. Architect Dovylos Konkulevičius is the great-grandson of the family that owned it between the wars. For him, wooden architecture became a way of life. He has amassed a collection of window hinges and other elements from many other houses in Žaliakalnis. What do you know, maybe a museum will be born? In addition, Dovylos is happy to advise other owners of wooden houses. After all, why demolish? It is more inspiring and more respectful to resurrect.

5 THE RESIDENCE OF THE GERMAN ENVOY

Perkūno al. 4

This wooden villa on the edge of the current Vytautas Park hides an exceptional history. The building was transported from Germany and assembled in Kaunas on the instructions of the German Head of Mission, Franz Olshausen. In fact, the diplomat had to fight for the opportunity to settle in this picturesque area out of the city centre. The villa, atypical of Kaunas, was somehow left abandoned for many years, but thankfully it has now been renovated. Its previous residents, a bar called "O kodėl ne?", have moved to Šančiai (see object #17), and, as of summer 2022, new ones are yet to move in.

6 MANSION

A. Mackevičiaus g. 96

Such mansions are rare in Kaunas. The characteristic building dating back to 1885, preserving many authentic elements, is a reminder of ethnic provincial architecture. Many renovations have damaged the overall appearance of the house - it is almost 150 years old! The stove-heated manor house now has seven apartments, as the internal structure has also been changed.

7 B. AND V. SRUOGA HOUSE-MUSEUM

B. Sruogos g. 21

Just before the war, the writer's family brought parts of the house by rail from Žemaitija, the homeland of Vanda Sruogienė, and assembled it in Žaliakalnis. Today you can still see the dining room set by the famous furniture designer Jonas Prapuolenis and look at the writer's study. A decade after Sruoga's death, the street was named after him, and some more years later, the house was turned into a museum where you can learn all about his famous book "Forest of the Gods" and more.

8 J. GRUŠAS HOUSE-MUSEUM

Kalnietičių g. 93

The pioneer of tragedy and tragicomedy in Lithuanian literature did not shy away from other forms of literature. You can find out more about this writer at his house-museum, a branch of the Maironis Lithuanian Literature Museum, which exhibits authentic objects and documents and hosts literature and theatre-related events. When inside, it is easy to forget that Savanorių Avenue is buzzing nearby - actually, when the writer and his family moved to Kaunas, there were not as many neighbours around as there are today.

9 J. ZIKARAS HOUSE-MUSEUM

J. Zikaro g. 3

"The house built by Zikaras on Zikaro Street" sounds like an ironic quick-word, but it's true. The family villa built by the author of the Kaunas Statue of Liberty, a pioneer of professional sculpture, right next to his workplace, the Kaunas School of Art, today functions as a museum. It is as cosy as it was 100 years ago because it has just been carefully renovated! Note the authentic floor covering called meloleum, among other peculiarities.

10 J. GRUODIS DEPARTMENT OF KAUNAS CITY MUSEUM

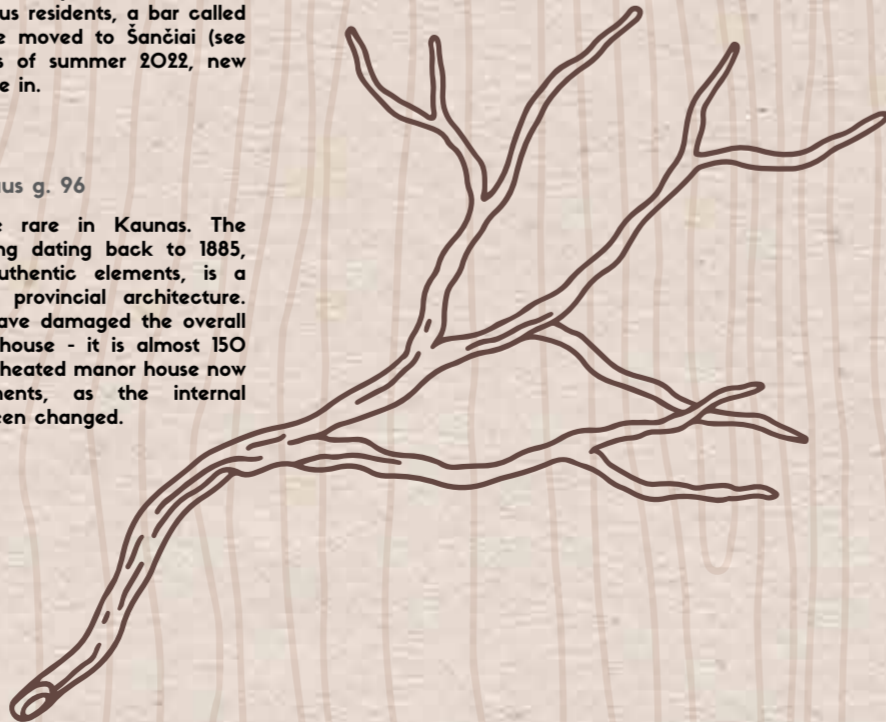
Salako g. 18

"I am healthy and full of strength for my noble work," wrote composer Juozas Gruodis on a card of his own self-motivation system. To find out what else motivated him, visit (by appointment or by joining an event at the museum) his and his wife Stasė's villa, which is home to a branch of Kaunas City Museum. The house on the picturesque hillside by the Neris was designed by a famous interwar architect Feliksas Vizbaras. And the composer planted apple trees in the garden, which still bear fruit today. Delicious!

11 HERITAGE BOUTIQUE "GREEN HILL"

Žemaičių g. 20

This elegant green residential house was designed by Vaclovas Michnevičius, an interwar architect who loved interpreting historical forms and is famous for his turrets. One of those, visible from various places in Žaliakalnis, also adorns this building. You can stay in one of the stylish apartments of this wooden house with a terrace offering spectacular views. Book a night or a few on the Booking platform.



DOWNTOWN

12 HOUSE

A. Mickevičiaus g. 35

This blue-painted house is home to three institutions with different profiles, all complementing each other. On the ground floor, which dates back to the late 19th century, is the craft beer pub Vingiu Dubingiu. It opened its doors in 2016 and quickly became a meeting spot for the cultural and academic communities. On the second floor is the social centre Emma, named after Emma Goldman, the "most dangerous woman in America", born in Kaunas, where everything from readings to dancing takes place. The newest neighbour is Kolibris, an independent bookstore.

13 RESTAURANT "BERNELIŲ SMUKLĖ"

K. Donelaičio g. 11

K. Donelaičio street starts with a row of historic wooden houses, reminding us of what the centre of Kaunas looked like at the end of the 19th century, during the tsarist governorate. It is where the officials and other wealthier residents lived. This particular house, a good place to try out Lithuanian cuisine, was built around 1896 by craftsmen of Soboras church, who did not hesitate to apply the decorative principles and elements of Russian wooden architecture. You'll find them both on the façade and in the interior. The adjacent house, number 7, is slightly older and distinguished from other wooden houses of the same period in Naujamiestis by its décor.

14 HOUSE

Kėstučio g. 43

There are many examples of modernist architecture on Kėstučio street, but many smaller wooden buildings date back to an earlier time. Number 43, a wooden "lace" house built around 1900, has a music shop. You can still come in and chat if you don't plan to buy a guitar.

ŠANČIAI

17 BAR "O KODĖL NE?"

A. Juozapavičiaus pr. 122

Although this house by the railway is only half-wooden, we decided it deserved to be included in this route. The story is simple - the cultural bar called "O kodėl ne?" (Why Not?) had operated for several years in the former residence of a German diplomat in Vytautas Park (see object #5) and only recently moved to Šančiai. So the unique aura of this venue, which has travelled from Žaliakalnis, is definitely not made from bricks!

PANEMUNĖ

19 VILLA "GRABYTĖ"

Gailutės g. 19

There are all sorts of hotels in Kaunas, and you can even stay in a baroque monastery, but, let's face it, staying in an authentic interwar villa in a romantic area like Panemunė, once a fashionable resort with the best beach in the city, is a next-level luxury. Panemunė was once home to a military school, so officers built villas in the block between Vičiūnų, Gailutės and Vaidilos Streets. In 1933, Colonel Domininkas Grabys, an engineer, and his wife Bronislava Grabienė bought this beauty. Their daughters, the Grabytės, grew up here, hence the name of the recently renovated, luxuriously furnished guest house.

20 VILLA OF L. KAIRIŪNAITIS

Gailutės g. 28

This villa pops up in the headlines from time to time, as the locals worry it might be demolished. It caught fire numerous times, but the promise is - it will be rebuilt, and the authentic architectural elements will be preserved. The two-storey building with an attic was built in 1926 and was considered to be one of the most beautiful villas in Panemunė. The owner, Liutauras Kairiūnaitis, was an interwar public figure and educator. During the occupation, the villa was nationalised, and 13 apartments were squeezed inside. After the renovation, there will be 10 of them.

15 HOUSE

Kėstučio g. 64

Although you can only get to the National Kaunas Drama Theatre's prop warehouse if you are part of the staff, this house is worth a stop. The artist Valda Verikaitė has created a glass and mirror installation, "Reflections of the Theatre", for the institution's 100th anniversary. The matt surface of the photographs of theatre legends offers a way to focus the gaze and regenerate the life-giving

16 KAUNAS CITY CHAMBER THEATRE

Kėstučio g. 74A

Did you know that the contemporary Kaunas City Chamber Theatre also "grew" on top of an old wooden building? Although it has changed its shape considerably, the object fits into our itinerary, as the main stage is where the wooden part was. "We have learned that the site used to belong to the Dažaislis Monastery. In 1865, the monks asked for permission to build a single-storey wooden building, probably a hostel," Jurga Knvyrienė, head of the theatre, is quoted in an article on lyrtas.lt. During the Soviet occupation, the building housed a sports club. In 1992, it was given to the theatre people, who did a lot of renovation work on their own.



18 "BALTIJOŠ CIRKAS" AND CLOWN MUSEUM

Drobės g. 31

Among other things, the Šančiai neighbourhood is famous for its unique wooden heritage, the amount of which was influenced by the Tsar army officers and soldiers who lived here, as well as by the factory workers. The present urban network here is colourful in every sense. Local circus performers present shows and other activities in the complex of houses on Drobės street. There is also a clown museum with several thousand exhibits. Get in touch before you visit!

21 "K.I.N.A.S. PANEMUNĖ" CREATIVE HOUSE

Vaidoto g. 26

This house is almost a hundred years old. It has been a parsonage, a school, a kindergarten, a charity place, even a cinema... Recently, Giedrius Bučas, the initiator of many sustainable design projects in Kaunas and beyond, has moved in and is using his efforts and sustainable methods to awaken the building to a new, fully cultured life. During its first year, the venue has hosted theatre performances, film screenings, exhibitions and workshops.

ALEKSOTAS

22 OLD CHURCH OF ST. CASIMIR

Antakalnio g. 35

There are two churches at this address. The old wooden one was built in 1921. As Silvija Slaminskienė writes on aut.lt, "The wooden church of St. Casimir in Aleksotas is one of the earliest wooden sacral buildings constructed in this diocese in the first decade of independence." The new church was designed by Algimantas Kančas (1954-2016), one of Kaunas' most famous contemporary architects. It is used for services, while the old one is used by Caritas to organise various activities for children and young people and to provide charity.

23 HOUSE OF M. GIMBUTIENĖ AND J. GIMBUTAS

K. Grybauskos g. 22

The pioneer of archaeomythology, professor Marija Gimbutienė lived in this wooden house with her family from 1940 to 1942. At that time, she had already graduated from high school and started her studies at the Faculty of Humanities at Vytautas Magnus University. She is the world's most famous Lithuanian scientist who studied the prehistoric development of Europe. After the outbreak of the war, she moved to Germany, and in 1949 reached the USA.

VILIJAMPOLĖ

25 HOUSE OF R. KALANTA

Panerių g. 34

One of the flats in this seemingly unremarkable house was the home of the Kalanta family, who had moved here from Alytus. Everyone in Lithuania knows the name of Romas Kalanta - he burnt himself to death in the city garden in May 1972 to protest against the Soviet regime. The work of Robert Antinis commemorates Kalanta's memory at the place of his sacrifice; his grave is in Romainiai Cemetery. Kaunas has a street named after the hero, an exposition in the IX Fort Museum, and this wooden house has been marked by a plaque and a nearby memorial stone since 1990.

26 HALF HOUSES

A significant part of Vilijampolė, especially the territory of the former Kaunas ghetto, could be marked with the symbols of a 'half house', a single-sided building that seems to lack another side. Graphic designer, photographer and illustrator Inga Navickaitė-Drasutė, mesmerised by this phenomenon, carried out artistic-social research in this neighbourhood a few years ago, which turned into a series of photographs and an album supplemented by archival material. "After the land reform between the wars, small plots of land were distributed here. In the 1930s, the construction of single, two-storey wooden houses with pitched roofs began in large numbers. Such roofs were likely chosen to create more space, as the houses were built side by side and their area was tiny", the artist said in an interview with the local press.

Hi,

Welcome to wooden Kaunas. It's warm, cosy and genuine. These houses hide stories of their builders and inhabitants and the action that took or is still taking place. The wooden architecture is unique in its smells, colours, textures and even sounds. Built during the interwar period and earlier, the 19th century, it is both an essential part of the urban face of Kaunas and the history of the everyday life of ordinary people. Today, houses in particularly attractive places in the city are disappearing one by one. Although one might want to hurry, we suggest you take your time on this cosy route. Many of the houses marked on the map can be actually visited, spent time in, and even stayed in. Hopefully, we won't need to delete any places along the route soon. You can do your bit by paying attention.

PUBLISHED IN 2022

24 HOUSE OF J. VARNECKIS

Sietyno g. 17

Civil engineer Jonas Varneckis bought some land in Linksmadvaris in 1929. His project for a wooden villa with a mansard was completed in 1933. The villa is attractive for its Art Nouveau motifs and folk style features. During the occupation, a kindergarten was established in the nationalised building. The villa is now privately owned and managed by the architect's family.



27 HOUSE

Jurbarko g. 73

This wooden house, which shines green from behind the trees, is distinguished by a covered outdoor gallery used as a corridor. Such architectural solutions are not very common in Kaunas, influenced by our climate. Mykolas Želvys designed the house with flats for rent for the client Preidelis Ipas in 1931, and it alone is worth walking to the traffic circle at the end of Jurbarko Street or on the way to see the 'half houses' of Vilijampolė.

28 MANOR

Radvilų Dvaro g. 1

Rafailas Volfas established the oldest brewery in the current territory of Kaunas in 1853 in Slabada, today known as Vilijampolė, which was not part of the city then. Two red brick brewery buildings and two wooden houses from the 19th century have survived until today. The manor house was the factory's office and two flats, with a stable behind it. The second house with a veranda was built between the wars. New developers have recently acquired the former brewery complex - we wonder what will happen here.



TINY ARCHITECTURE

When in Žaliakalnis or the centre of Kaunas, lift your head - can you spot the modernist nesting boxes hiding among the tree branches? Street artist Morfai interpreted the architectural forms of Kaunas' Golden Age and adapted them to birds.

Other tiny wooden houses in Kaunas are home to books. Such little free libraries can be found near actual libraries, museums and residential houses - you can take the read you want or bring your own for others to discover.

