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Chief Editor
Naďa Rybářová

Contributors
Naďa Rybářová
Petr Bílek

Head Designer
Luděk Neužil

Photos
Bill Ebbesen
Jan Malý Prague Proms
Petr Našic
Geolina163 Wikimedia Commons
Jan Špidlen Archives
innen Wikimedia Commons
Turistika.cz
Naďa Rybářová

Executive Director
Amara Zemplerová

Šafaříkova 5
120 00 Praha 2
Czech Republic

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To expect the
unexpected shows
a thoroughly
modern intellect.

Oscar Wilde

Within the pages of this spring edition of ttg czech luxury, you will find some of the highlights of the Czech Republic you may not expect.

Everybody knows that Prague is beautiful and has a couple of must sees, such as the Charles Bridge or the Prague Castle, and that the city's historic center has been added onto the UNESCO World Heritage List twenty-five years ago. But do you know that Prague has vineyards that produce surprisingly good wines? Everybody knows too at least two or three famous Czech composers, but do you know that also one of the world's best violin makers is Czech?

This issue of ttg czech luxury will also lead you outside Prague to the spa towns of Karlsbad and Marienbad, or to the Czech Republic's largest and best know ski resort Špindlerův Mlýn, where you can, unexpectedly, enjoy the country's largest and finest selection of Hennessy cognacs. It will also lead you across the border to Poland, Slovakia and Hungary to show you some favorite luxury spots outside big cities, such as the Hungarian Lake Balaton called "Hungarian See," or the Malbork Castle in Poland, once the seat of the Teutonic Knights.

We hope you will find some inspiration in this issue and will come to see for yourselves. Just expect the unexpected, you will not be disappointed.

Naďa Rybářová

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editor's selection



RIGHT IN THE CENTRE OF LIBEREC, capital of north-Bohemian region of the same name, top architects, designers and IT engineers have joined their forces to create a one-of-a-kind project – a unique collection of designer rooms under one roof. Long-awaited flagship of the well-established Pytloun Hotel Group, the Grand Hotel**** Imperial has instantly become a sought-after favourite of all those looking for value and inspiration alike. Each architect or designer studio has taken on a specific theme to create a world of its own. Some rooms are inviting for a romance, some include literary or art allusions in their design, others breathe with playfulness and joy of life. But let's talk first things first. Behind the hotel's period yet contemporary facade, which in itself is quite a magnificent look of its own, you will find yourself upon your entrance in a spacious lobby area decorated in a black-and-gold combination and dominated by a unique lighting structure designed by the world-known Lasvit studio. With the front desk and the Cafe Imperial

to your left and the Zlatý kohout Restaurant to your right, the original art-deco stairway right in front of you invites for a tour through the hotel's history – the walls being the gallery. Winston Churchill might have chosen to take the stairs, yet you are welcome to use an elevator and enjoy the hotel's history on your way down.

That being said, the hotel is fully refurbished and provides for all the comfort one can expect in the 21st century, not to speak of the design and technology. Apart from 67 rooms of Superior and Superior Deluxe categories designed by VRTIŠKA • ŽÁK studio (who are also the authors of the entire interior re-design), the hotel is offering 29 Design Deluxe rooms that have been specifically and uniquely designed by many other top architects, such as Chybik+Kristof (Expo 2015 Bronze Award laureates), Petr Stolín & Alena Mičková (2016 Czech Architecture Award laureates), or the late Bořek Šípek – art director of the Czech Deco Team, whose numerous members have taken part in the project as well.

LARGEST SELECTION OF HENNESSY COGNACS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The luxurious and cosy HENNESSY BAR in the equally luxurious Savoy Hotel, Member of Asten Hotels, in Špindlerův Mlýn, the largest and best known ski resort in the Czech Republic, features the largest and finest selection of Hennessy cognacs in the entire country. From Hennessy V.S. to Richard Hennessy or Hennessy Paradis Imperial, this outstanding place serves them all. But the bar offers much more. Cocktail lovers will enjoy its signature cocktails, wine lovers will enjoy its fine selection of wines and those who are fond of Champagne also will not be



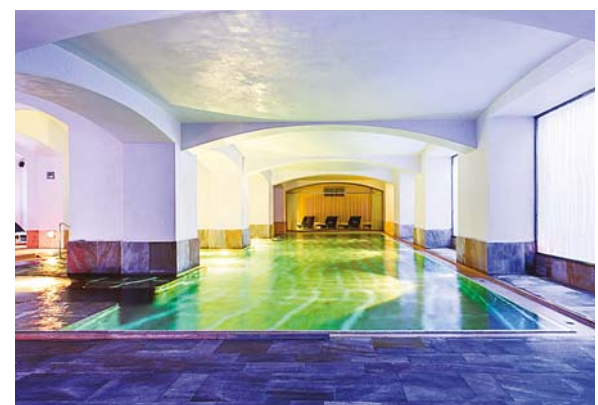
disappointed, whether they prefer Moët & Chandon, Dom Pérignon or Krug. The bar with photographs of famous Hollywood stars on the walls is open not only for hotel guests, but also to the public, it is non-smoking and seats 35. Definitely a must visit place.

www.astenhoteles.com

Boscolo Wellness & Spa

HOUSED IN A BEAUTIFUL NEO-RENAISSANCE PALACE from the end of 19th century, Boscolo Prague, an Autograph Collection Hotel, recaptures the architectural splendor of its past and welcomes guests with a number of enticing amenities.

One of them is the Boscolo Wellness & Spa offering the perfect combination of services for spiritual and physical regeneration and renewal. The dominant feature of the spa is the 20-meter heated indoor pool with an intricate mosaic floor, massage beds and whirlpools. Spa-goers are encouraged to take advantage of the relaxing steam bath and the purifying dry sauna. Professional therapists are at hand to help with the selection of the right therapeutic massage or a beauty treatment. A dedicated fitness studio features a full range of cardio and weight lifting equipment and consultations with a personal trainer are available. Boscolo Wellness & Spa has an extensive membership program for non hotel guests featuring a host of benefits including dining in the excellent hotel restaurants.



Bellevue - starring: Marek Šáda

Marek Šáda, Creative Chef of the Zátíší Group, has been performing his culinary magic in the Bellevue Restaurant for several months now. He earned his place on the Prague gourmet map by taking large strides during his three-year stint in Mlýnec Restaurant. The Zátíší Group knows that Marek is not only a great chef, but his creative approach to cooking entertains and piques the interest of all his customers. Therefore, the Group has now decided to entrust in his care their jewel – the Bellevue Restaurant. Soon after his arrival, the new chef began thinking about how to surprise regular guests and how to bring them something they had not had before. So, he devised several new menu items during the initial phase. Recent menu additions include calamari cannelloni with beef cheeks confit and grilled saddle of wild boar with foie gras.



ONCE DISCOVERED, NEVER FORGOTTEN



Prague is a city with an authentic and magic atmosphere. There is a story behind every corner, history on every street, unique flavor in every cafe. And in the heart of it all, carefully hidden, you find a secret treasure... still active Augustinian monastery, a part of the Augustine, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Prague, which for many years has kept the stories of Augustinian monks alive to preserve their history dated back to 14th century. Olga Polizzi, the accomplished designer of the Augustine, implemented Augustinian order elements to the interior and sensitively combined it with the modern Czech cubist style. One of the most unique highlights of the property is a former astrological Tower which currently serves as one of the Signature Suites at the hotel. Its 360 view of Prague is an unforgettable experience, especially when you reserve it for a private romantic dinner. If you are looking for unforgettable experiences, Augustine, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Prague is the place for you...

www.augustinehotel.com

Nové Lázně carefully combines history with elegance in modern accommodation

THE FIVE-STAR DANUBIUS HEALTH SPA RESORT NOVÉ LÁZNĚ is one of the inherent dominant features of Mariánské Lázně.

Here, rich history blends with the utmost care to provide the highest level of comfort to its guests.

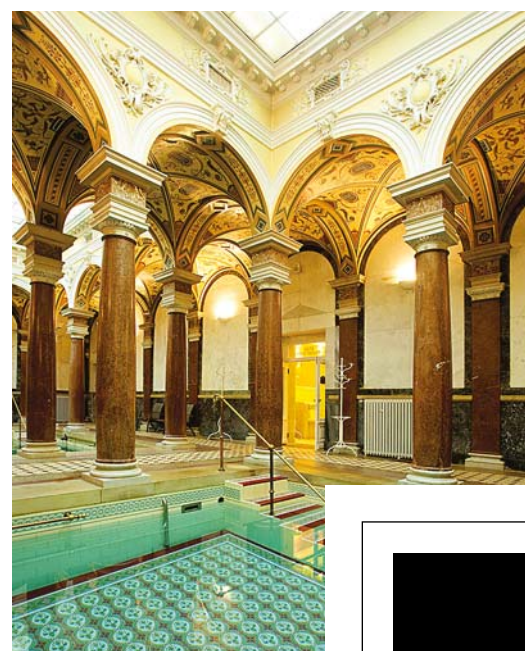
In 1896, Nové Lázně – with nothing more than just splendid mineral baths at that time – offered a great spa environment for wealthy visitors, politicians and prominent rulers. This includes both Emperor Franz Joseph I and British King Edward VII, who literally fell in love with Nové Lázně and met there in 1904. The Nové Lázně bathhouse has always been

renowned for its breathtaking architecture and above-standard care. Since 1999, the bathhouse has gradually begun to offer first class luxury accommodation. In addition to its perfect location in a spa town, it now offers 97 fully-equipped luxury rooms with free Wi-Fi. Over two dozen of the Junior Suites still have that “new” smell.

Clients of Nové Lázně can be assured that they will be well looked after in this outstanding hotel. They have everything they need in their rooms for their spa treatments and visits to the Roman baths. They can consult with a nutritional therapist and select an appropriate menu from among the excellent food prepared by the hotel's experienced tandem of chefs, Václav Černý and Jiří Pokorný.

A visit to the Roman baths is also a unique experience. Two original pools from 1896 await the guests in preserved historical areas. In addition, there is also a swimming pool with a countercurrent feature, a whirlpool, 2 saunas (90° C), a sanarium (60° C), and a steam bath (85° C). Nové Lázně also offers Kneipp therapy, a cooling pool, a fountain with crushed ice and a quiet relaxation room in which to rest. Soaking in the mineral bath and relaxing in the King Edward VII room or in the Imperial cabin

of Austrian Monarch Franz Joseph I of Habsburg are quite rare experiences. Nové Lázně, which is part of the Danubius Hotels Group (Mariánské Lázně Spa), is connected by covered walkways to all the major hotels in the area. Guests can enjoy an extensive range of spa treatments, a beauty salon, an emporium and the Danubius Premier fitness center.



TIPS FOR YOUR STAY

The Royal Wellness Program certainly stands out among the choices. During a three-day stay, guests will experience two types of massage, a bath with natural carbon dioxide, a whirlpool bath with peat extract and a dry CO₂ gas bath. In addition, guests may enjoy free entry into the Roman baths, the Danubius Premier fitness center and the Aqua wellness center.

www.marienbad.cz

Country Pleasures

Choose your favourite luxury spot outside the urban hustle and bustle. The V4 countries* have so much to offer!



Slovakia Wine, Art & History

Elisko winery in Modra at the foothills of the Small Carpathian Mountains is an ultra-modern facility boasting a “wine park” with a gourmet restaurant and the Zoya Museum, a gallery featuring Andy Warhol originals as well as other works of modern and contemporary art. In the same mountains, treat yourself to a stay in Zochova Chata, a freshly renovated hotel with a wellness centre.

Moving a bit further to the southeast, near Mužla in the Štúrovo region of south Slovakia, visit Chateau Belá. The chateau has been lovingly restored by countess Ilona and her banker husband Matthias, Graf von Krockow. Among the multifarious renovations and landscaping (five-star hotel and conference facilities), a winery has been included. It is the great Riesling grape that leads the way here.



BOTH THE TATRAS

To enjoy maximum luxury in the Low Tatra, stay at the Grand Hotel at the heart of the Jasná mountain resort. Plunge into magical silence and relax in the hotel wellness centre. Summer is ideal to enjoy the beautiful views and breathe in fresh air of the Liptov region.

When travelling to Jasná, you might also stop earlier in the Demänovská dolina (valley) and take a room in Tri studnický hotel. It is a cosy and romantic four-star establishment in its own right, but has one extra fabulous feature: a sauna house in the backyard, with a real mountain creek to cool down and a forest to look at beyond. If you opt for the other mountain range in the region, the High Tatra, staying at the fairy-tale Kempinski Hotel Štrbské pleso is a must.

In central Slovakia, in the spa town Sliač, you will find an extensive Spa & Wellness Hotel Kaskady, offering wellness treatments and professional care in the fields of physiotherapy and balneology. Tri Duby Golf Course is nearby.

THE SPA & GOLF PARADISE



You know the famous spas of Western Bohemia – Karlsbad, Marienbad, Franzensbad... However, healing waters and fabulous, largely forested countryside taken aside, the region is also a hotspot for all practitioners of the beautiful game, offering 6 golf courses, with

even more courses just across the border in Germany. Our tip: Kynzsvart for its pristine, bucolic countryside and the classicist castle.

Czech Republic The charm of seclusion

It's a strong tradition in this country to escape cities during holidays and weekends to seek the healing power of nature. But where should you go without compromising on your standards?

Located in the community of Příchovice in Jizerské hory, the hotel V Nebi (In Heaven) has only 12 rooms and everything is suited there for perfect relaxation, including a 600-sq-m spa and wellness, a garden, an outdoor pool and sauna.

For a taste of aristocratic grandeur, try Chateau Herálec with a 17th-century English park and Spa L'Occitane. Also in the beautiful Vysocina region, there is another oasis of peace and harmony – St. Kateřina Resort, a perfect

place for freeing oneself from the stress of everyday life. St. Kateřina provides healthy food, clean air and lots of opportunities for physical exercise. A new item on the list is a certified original Ayurveda program.



8

profile **Slovakia**
and **Czechia**

*V4 is an alliance of four Central European countries – Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary.

BÜKFÜRDO

The Birdland Hotel Golf & Spa luxury resort lies in a popular thermal spa region in Western Hungary, boasting all the amenities that will pamper your senses. Enjoy your game on the 18-hole international golf course just at the hotel. With 33 pools, a sauna world and curative spa facilities, the nearby Bükfürdo spa is a paradise for anyone who wants to relax, bathe and just live pleasantly.

BALATON

Of course, the "Hungarian See" cannot be missed by any traveller exploring the country beyond Budapest. The Echo Residence All Suite Hotel is situated on the Tihany peninsula in two separate buildings, right above the Yacht Club and the beach. The suites built on the hillside give a splendid view to the Lake Balaton in all seasons. The marina offers unforgettable memories to lovers of sailing, just as the beach to those who seek repose.

Near the western end of Lake Balaton, you'll find the Hévíz lake, the world's second largest thermal lake. The flow of water is very strong and the lake is believed by the locals to be completely replenished each day. To spend a couple of days at this mineral water wonder, it's best to stay in the five-star Lotus Therme Hotel & Spa.

Hungary Bükk & Eger



Voted as the best luxury forest hotel in the World Luxury Hotel Awards 2015, Oxigen Hotel & Zen Spa is located the outskirts of the charming Bükk National Park, in the community of Nosvaj, providing offers stylish accommodation, rich wellness facilities and traditional Hungarian cuisine. Mountainous and forested, the Bükk National Park abounds in karst formations, particularly caves, including the country's longest (4,000 metres) and deepest (245 metres) cave, Istvánlápa. The nearby city of Eger is the heart of the eponymous wine region, which has a climate similar to Burgundy or the Northern Rhône. In Szepasszonyvolgy, or the Valley of Beautiful Women, there are more than 200 wine cellars! The local wines include Debroi Harslevelu (a golden wine with the aroma of linden flowers and a rich sweetness) and Egri Bikaver (better known as the anti-vampiric „bull's blood"). For those who prefer to stay directly in Eger, try The Shiraz, a hotel with a flavour of Morocco. Imola Hotel Platán is a child-free hotel, which allows you to enjoy its luxury in peace. The Saliris Resort Hotel is built around a blindingly white limestone formation created by mineral waters, offering an ultimate spa experience.

Poland The Baltic Coast



The infinite dome of sky above the coast and the sea, the omnipresent breeze, the sandy beaches stretching as far as your eye can see, the stern beauty of the North. This is the Polish Baltic coast. Add some great resorts, cities and hotels, and it may be well your next summer holiday destination.

Start with the former Hanseatic city of Gdansk. Like a mini-state all to itself, the port city of Gdansk has a unique feel that sets it apart from the other cities in Poland. The city's finest hotel is the five-star Podewils, a beautiful Baroque mansion on the River Motława, right in the centre of the city.

Down the road from Gdansk, there is the charming, bright, clean and friendly resort of Sopot, offering a choice from three five-star hotels: Sheraton Sopot Hotel, Sofitel Grand Sopot and Hotel Rezydent. Alternatively, try the unusual

Bayjonnhotel near the Sopot pier with an original Thai cuisine.

At the tip of the 34-km long and at some points less than 200m wide Hel Peninsula, there is the eponymous city of Hel, tracing its origins back to the 12th century, when it was the center of the herring trade. Scenic, Caribbean-style beaches, where the sand is as soft as silk, run along the shores of the peninsula and are intermittently dotted with pretty resorts along the way, like the sea-side resort of Jurata, the old fishing village of Kuznica and Jastarnia, the heart of the municipality. In Hel you can sail, wind surf, become familiar with the old Kazubian culture, and under the bright sun acquire a tan as quickly as on any Mediterranean beach. And once you are in the region, do stop at Malbork Castle, once the seat of power for the Order of the Teutonic Knights.

HILLS AND MOUNTAINS IN THE SOUTH

The Polish resorts in the south teem with life all the year long. Hotel Bania Thermal & Ski will furnish you with a combo of modern comfort and a warm highland-style mood. Thermal pools, conveniences for families and live entertainment – it is all right there!

The four-star No Name Luxury Hotel & Spa is an oasis of peace, surrounded by wild nature. It consists of several buildings linked by glass catwalks. The exteriors made of spruce logs and interiors of raw wood, stone, glass and linen create an excellent blend of tradition and modernity.



Once down south, it would be a mistake not to visit the Polish no. 1 mountain resort of Zakopane, with its lively

Krupowki promenade. It is pleasing to see that modern developments respect local traditions and materials. To have a first-hand experience of this, book a room in Rezydencja Nosalowy Dwór Hotel that offers everything a five-star hotel should. And if you prefer a smaller place, try the Art & Spa Hotel.

ARTS, MUSIC AND BEYOND

Our tips for top-class cultural events across the country

Big Bang Data

April 7th – August 14th, 2017
DOX Centre for Contemporary Art, Prague

① Is information a potentially unlimited source of wealth? Is data ammunition for weapons of mass surveillance? Or does it, above all, bring a new opportunity for knowledge and transparency? This exhibition is exploring ways in which the current information explosion is changing our world. Curated by Olga Subirós and José Luis de Vicente, Big Bang Data is held in collaboration with Centre of Contemporary Culture of Barcelona (CCCB), Spain. www.dox.cz

①



of the artist's family and art itself. The theme of history links his well-known photo-realistic works with those focused on the history of art, seeking to express something that lies beyond the capacity of speech. Avoiding a single "signature style", Richter has absorbed many trends, ideas and contemporary events. One section of the exhibition is devoted to Richter's latest works – realistic paintings, still lifes, objects and abstraction. www.ngprague.cz

Explosive Operatic Experience

Krakatit. An opera by Václav Kašlík.
First performance: April 20th, 2017

② A unique chance to witness the performance of an original Czech 20th century opera work. Based on Karel Čapek's 1992 novel Krakatit, this is a remarkable experimental creation by Václav Kašlík (1917–1989), one of the greatest and most versatile 20th-century Czech opera composers. Kašlík's opera Krakatit draws upon a dynamic scenario blending the real world and the world of delusion, and is characterised by sharp cuts and contrasts, with the score combining contemporary classical music experiments with jazz and pop. The libretto was co-created by the Czech film director Otakar Vávra, who had previously adapted Čapek's novel into a movie. www.narodni-divadlo.cz

②



Enjoy Music in the South

International Music Festival Český Krumlov

July 14th – August 5th, 2017

④ Held in the picturesque medieval city of Český Krumlov in South Bohemia, this popular summer music festival offers a total of 19 concerts this year. Do not miss the opening opera gala concert, featuring two of the brightest opera stars of our time: soprano diva Angela Gheorghiu and tenor Ramón Vargas. Look forward to Mischa Maisky, brilliant cellist, who excels in the style of legendary virtuosos, always maintaining a romantic quality that cannot be found in many other players. Mr. Maisky will be accompanied by young Chinese pianist Shiran Wang. The other big names in the festival's list include Spanish guitarist Javier Perianes as well as violinist, violist and conductor Julian Rachlin. The festival programme also commemorates the 450th anniversary of composer Claudio Monteverdi. www.festivalkrumlov.cz

③



The German Great in Prague

Gerhard Richter

April 26th – September 3rd, 2017
National Gallery, Prague, Kinský Palace

③ Few artists illuminate a calendar of art sales quite like Gerhard Richter. In February 2015, his abstract painting Abstraktes Bild (599) fetched £30.4 million (\$46.3 million) at Sotheby's in London. A major retrospective exhibition of Gerhard Richter, who is by many considered the greatest living artist, will present selected works created over the past six decades. More than fifty pieces will take you through the German artist's multi-genre oeuvre – from realism to naturalism, pop art, conceptual art and abstraction. The exhibition highlights

Richter's painting styles centred around the theme of "history" – not only the history of Germany, but also

④



⑤



Prague Proms

June 21st – July 19th, 2017

⑤ Tune in and listen to Prague vibrating with great music. Organized by the Czech National Symphonic Orchestra, this festival delivers a month full of high-quality musical performances in the Czech capital. The programme encompasses classic music as well as jazz and musicals. This year, Prague Proms will kick off with a Danny Elfman concert, to be followed by stars such as Ute Lemper and Vince Mendoza. Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band will most definitely appeal to all those with a penchant for jazz in its purest form. This 18-member big band combines thirties and forties swing with contemporary musical styles such as funk and jazz-fusion – earning them several Grammy nominations. Obviously film music will also be on the cards with a jam-packed evening dedicated to "Not Just a Hollywood Night." And who better to take charge than the popular shaman of this genre, the wonderfully vivacious Carl Davis. www.pragueproms.cz



New AVA Spa in Four Seasons Hotel Prague

Dedicated to local traditions and luxurious pampering with breathtaking views of Prague Castle, the unique AVA Spa opened in Four Seasons Hotel Prague last summer. Historically, "ava" is the Celtic word for water and to this day, ava remains part of the names of many Czech rivers, including the Vltava River that runs right by the hotel. And water and historical Czech spa traditions are central to the theme of the AVA Spa concept.

The Spa has named its five treatment rooms after five Czech rivers including the Vltava, Morava, Otava, Litava and Svitava. The Vltava is a large couples' suite with rhassoul and a bath that offers stunning views of Prague's most beautiful sights, such as Prague Castle and the Charles Bridge. In addition to the spa suites, guests are invited to enjoy the

sauna, steam bath and vitality pool with a waterfall, massage jets and hydrotherapy surrounded by comfortable lounge chairs and a fireplace for a truly relax atmosphere.

Featuring Swiss Perfection and Sodashi cosmetics and treatments not found anywhere else in Czech Republic, the AVA Spa offers guests the opportunity to sample traditional Czech-inspired baths, exclusive facials and signature spa rituals. The Spa is open for both hotel and outside guests.

"What makes AVA Spa unique to Prague is our select line of cosmetics and signature treatments," says Claudia Santos, Spa Manager at Four Seasons Hotel Prague. "We are especially proud of our spa rituals, which include purifying baths, detoxifying massages and age-defying facials."

The world of Jitka Klett



FASHION DESIGNER JITKA KLETT

who offers beautiful feminine clothes for daily wear as well as social events, regularly presents her collections that include dresses, blouses, jackets, skirts, pants, and jeans with matching accessories at fashion shows and major fashion weeks all over the world, be it in New York, Dubai, Paris or Prague. Be sure to visit her showroom on the Haštalská street in the Old Town when in Prague if you are looking for femininity, elegance and comfort. Recently, her fresh Ready to Wear collection is also available at the Manoukian boutique in Dubai Mall, the world's most exclusive shopping center.

The Quisisana Palace Hotel

A KINGDOM OF INFORMAL ELEGANCE



Located on the banks of the Teplá River, the five-star Quisisana Palace Hotel in Carlsbad is immediately recognizable; the hotel's façade beckons its visitors. Its gorgeous interior and top services have earned it top rankings and a long-running first place among the area's hotels on the well-known travel portal TripAdvisor. Amongst the many advantages that this history-rich and wonderfully renovated hotel offers is the opportunity to enjoy a visit to the world-famous spa, being in close and easy

proximity to both the city center and the tranquil spa quarter. Other top features are the hotel's extraordinary interiors, its exquisite health spa facilities with a beauty salon, and the superb Café Restaurant with its distinguished cuisine.

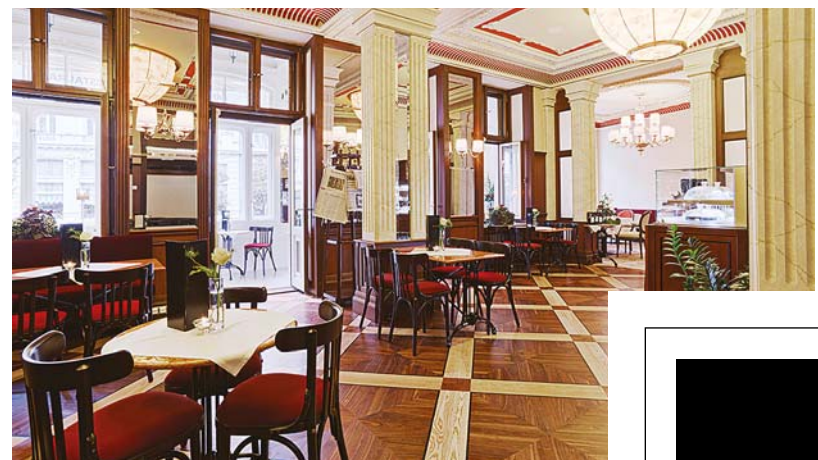
Within an environment that blends 19th-century décor with a modern take on comfortably designed accommodation, guests will find 19 high-end rooms and suites. Each of the rooms is a little different, but what they all have in common are elegance and luxury. Suites additionally provide access to grand balconies. The Safari Suite is completely atypical; it impresses with its exotic romantic atmosphere and is well-appointed with a private Jacuzzi in the bedroom.

Augmenting the positively charged atmosphere of the hotel, the health spa and beauty salon located on the second floor will help you to relax and recharge your mental and physical energies. In the first salon in the Czech Republic to use the brand, visitors may spoil themselves with a Swiss 'NIANCE®' cosmetics treatment, known for its unique anti-ageing effect on women's and men's skin.

The guests of this boutique hotel – one of only two hotels in the Czech Republic that are members of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World association – can recharge their energy and boost their spirits in the Quisisana Café Restaurant, where famous à la carte breakfast items and divine lunches and dinners await them.

However, it is predominantly the hotel's exquisite services which make it so great. In addition to its friendly and helpful staff, we would be remiss were we not to mention the exciting experiences that Quisisana Palace can arrange for its guests. They may, for instance, play golf on up to seven different nearby golf courses, and there is easy access to nearby ski resorts during winter.

www.quisisana-palace.com

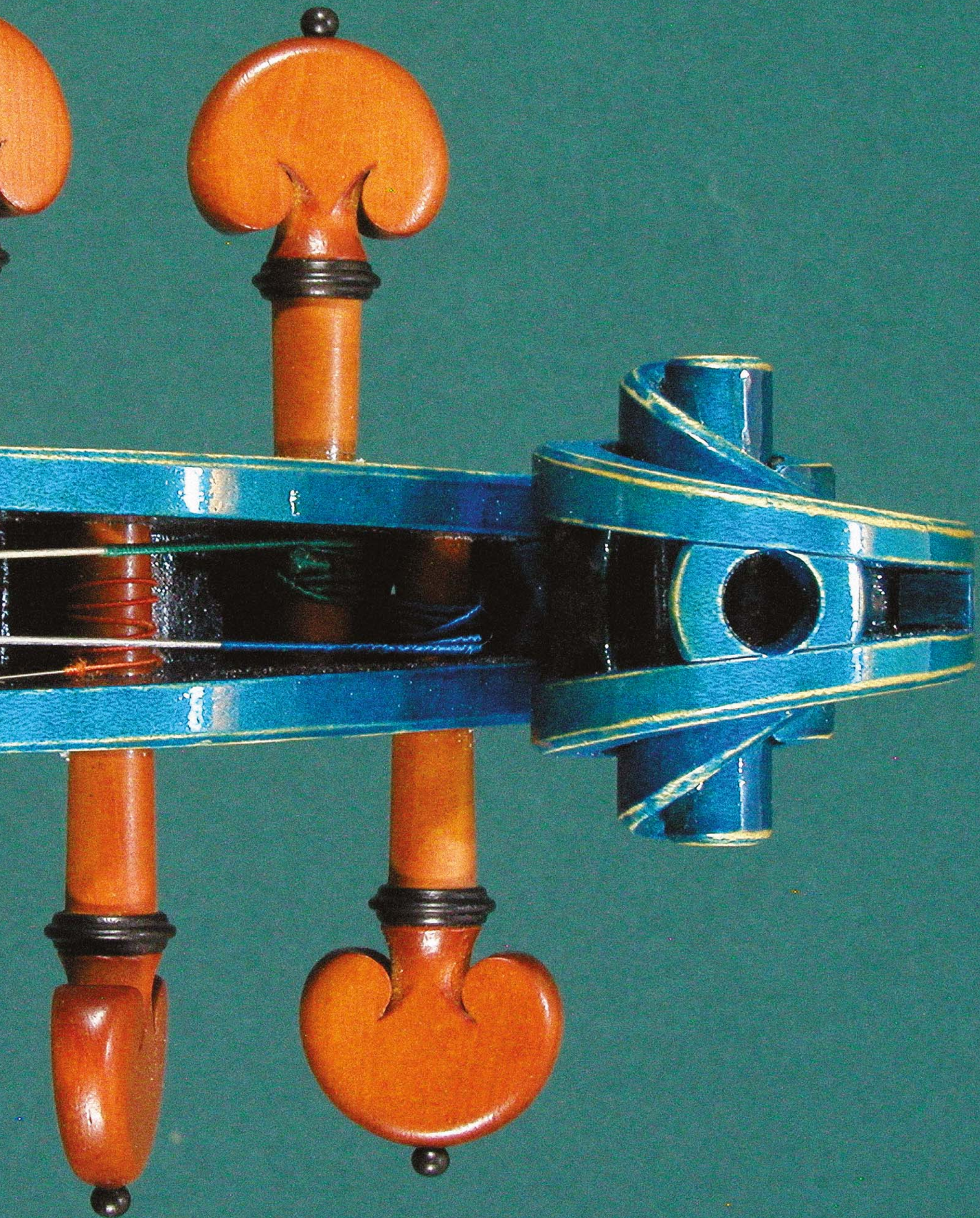


THE SAGA

Of the Špidlen Dynasty

If you would like to get your violin from Jan Špidlen's shop, be aware that you may have to be willing to wait for it. Jan Baptista Špidlen is the successor to the famous violin-making family with more than one hundred years of tradition. He builds his violins entirely by hand, and it takes time. At the most, he builds three instruments annually.







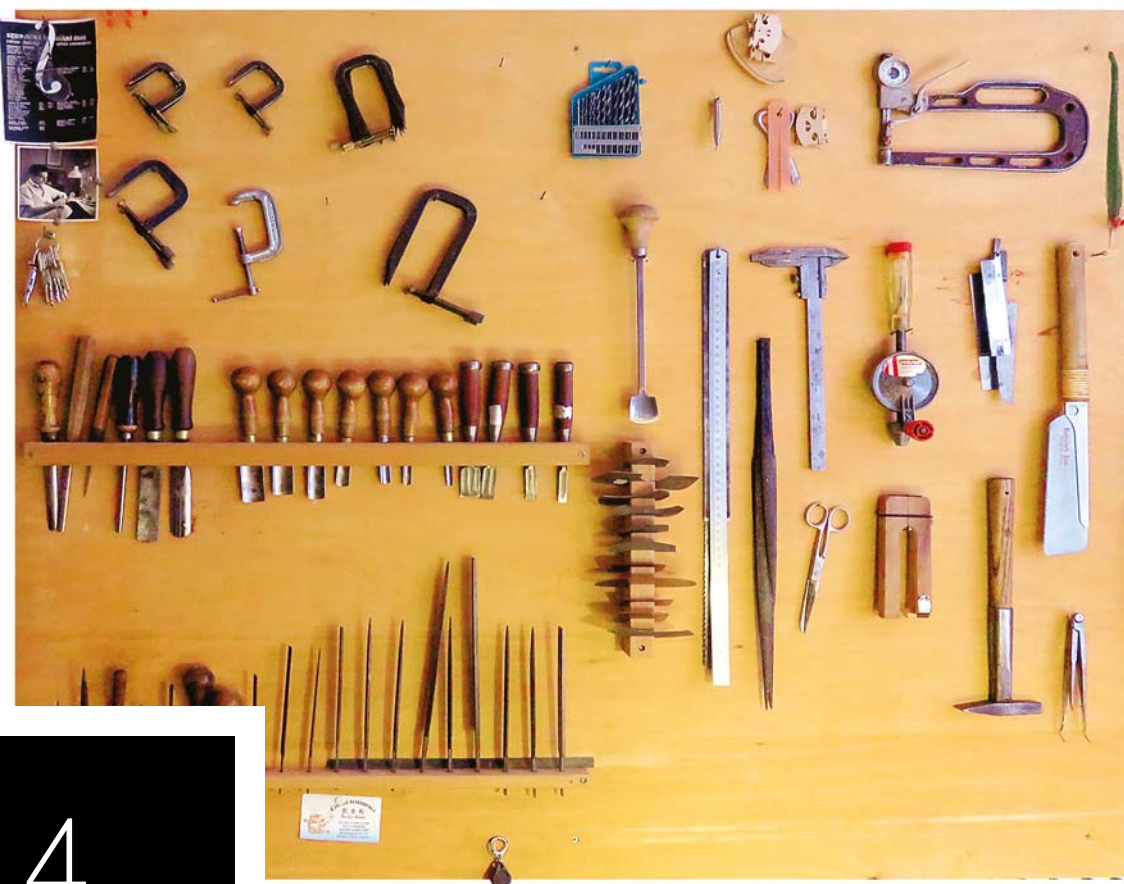
The family tradition was founded by František Špidlen, the great-grandfather of today's master violin maker. His most productive years were when he lived in Moscow, where he had had a position as a luthier at the Tsarist Conservatory. However, he moved back to Bohemia in 1907, on the advice of his doctors because Moscow's climate was very bad for his chronic bronchitis. He opened a shop in the center of Prague and was soon held in great regard. František Špidlen died in 1916 and the business was taken over by his son, Otakar František, who then had just turned twenty. Otakar was a very talented violin maker and despite his youth, he quickly won recognition. In addition to making instruments, he was also interested in old instruments, and soon became an excellent businessman and an instrument expert. Many rare instruments

passed through his hands and many famous customers like Jan Kubelík and other musicians came to see him. His son, Přemysl Otakar Špidlen, inherited his father's exceptional talent. He devoted himself almost exclusively to violin making and achieved great success in many major violin-making competitions, e.g. in The Hague, Liège and Poznan. He was also a renowned expert and his attestations are recognized worldwide.

Jan Baptista Špidlen is the latest in the Špidlen dynasty devoted to violin making, and he has been just as successful as his predecessors. Since the beginning of his career, his violins have been awarded at international competitions and in 2003, he achieved something unprecedented: at International Triennial Competition in Cremona, Italy, he entered two violins and he won both first and second prizes.

Jan Špidlen built his first violin while still in high school. The instrument turned out so well that the famous violinist Josef Suk bought it from him. And when he went to advance his studies and gain experience in the prestigious company J & A Beare in London in 1989 to 1990, instead of exploring the city during his free time, he built a copy of a rare violin that was being restored in the workshop. This exceptional violin became another prized possession of Josef Suk.

Today, Jan Špidlen mainly sells his violins abroad. He has supplied violins to Korea and has made violins for the London Academy. He has made violins for the Société Générale in Paris. He built a viola for the Philharmonic Orchestra in Ljubljana and his instruments are purchased by customers in Switzerland, Japan and Venezuela. He has also built two cellos, but does not enjoy doing it quite as much because it 'takes too long', he says. Even a vio-



A table, a chair, a bowl of fruit and a violin; what else does a man need to be happy?

Albert Einstein



lin, if built properly, takes a lot of time. Jan Špidlen does not make more than two or three annually. If someone were to order a violin now, they would not be able to expect him to start building it any earlier than 2020. Špidlen's violins are made exclusively by hand. First you have to make the sides (ribs). Then the sides have to be shaped and glued to a form – a thick plate in the shape of a violin. Then you trace the shape and cut out both sounding boards, one from spruce for the upper plate (belly), and one from maple for the back. Then the sounding boards have to be carved out. Two F holes are cut into the upper plate and the bass bar is glued to it. When the body is ready, the scroll, neck and the fingerboard are all carved. It is all eventually added to the body of the violin. And then the instrument is varnished and left to dry. It may sound straightforward, but it really is quite a complex process.

The dimensions of the violin and the specifications of its parts have stayed unchanged for centuries. There is nothing more one could do to improve the basic shape or the type of wood used. The use of spruce for the upper plate was evolutionarily. Over the span of hundreds of years, it was discovered that spruce created the best balance between strength and weight, and thus resonates the best. Violin makers may "make their mark" only in the details. They can make the edges thick, round or very slim. The elegance of the instrument is important too. Jan Špidlen is very interested in potential innovations in string instruments. In 2004, he was among the nine leading international luthiers who attended the two-week international conference Amiata Summit in Tuscany, where new ideas on how to further develop the violin were shared. Following this conference, Jan Špidlen built a violin with various improvements: a different outline for the body with short corners and narrow sides, enlarged F holes,

a titanium screw inside the neck, carbon reinforcement, and a stylish rendition of the scroll with embedded lead weights. Novices would probably never notice these attributes upon first glance. What one would notice, however, is the blue color. It was Pavel Šporcl who inspired Špidlen. He attended the summit with the violinists and since 2006, Pavel Šporcl has owned this exceptional instrument.

World-renowned violinist Isaac Stern called the Špidlen family the succes-

sors to the famous Stradivarius. We are happy to see that the Špidlen family history will very likely continue. Jan's son, František is going to study at the same school as his father did in Germany's Mittenwald. And daughter Josefina studies classical singing, and has great artistic talent; she could also become a violin maker if she ever wanted to.



Prague's Iconic Grand Hotel Evropa to Become W Prague



Hotels Worldwide, part of Marriott International, plans to open W Prague in early 2020. Owned by PPH Evropa and Prague Prime Home Management, part of the Austrian group Julius Meinl, W Prague marks the brand's de-

but in the Czech Republic. The hotel will be a renovation of the former Grand Hotel Evropa on the city's central Wenceslas Square, an art nouveau style property that pushed boundaries when it originally opened in 1905. The historic structure will be combined with a modern new building to create an amazing blend of old world glamour and a contemporary design. "As one of Europe's most exciting and diverse destinations, Prague is a perfect fit

for the iconic W brand and is certain to push new limits for Prague's vibrant hotel scene when it opens in 2020," said Sandeep Walia, Area Vice President – Luxury Brands, Western Europe, Marriott International. "We are pleased to be partnering with PPH Evropa and Prague Prime Homes Management, and we share their confidence that this hotel will bring a new social scene to an already pulsing global city."

Restored historical elements of the former Grand Hotel Evropa will set the stage for W's vibrant design, complemented by a stunning new oval-shaped extension. The two buildings will be fully connected to create 154 stylish guestrooms and suites, including the Extreme Wow Suite – the brand's take on the traditional Presidential Suite. W Prague will feature a glamorous rooftop bar and an outdoor terrace, the perfect location to enjoy sweeping cityscape views and a fabulous cocktail and culinary experience. The hotel will also feature the W Living Room, the brand's original version of the hotel lobby, along with several chic restaurants and 350 square meters of ultra-modern event space. In addition, guests will be invited to experience the indoor WET pool deck, FIT fitness center and AWAY® Spa.

"With W Hotels, we are confident we have selected a truly innovative hotel brand that best reflects our vision for this very special and unique development," said Nadine Gilles, Managing Director of Prague Prime Homes Management.

W Hotels now boasts a portfolio of 50 properties around the globe, and is on track to reach 75 hotels by 2020.

The Newly Renovated Cafe Rudolfinum has Recently Opened



Rudolfinum, a Neo-Renaissance building on the banks of the Vltava River, has always been associated with music and art since opening in 1885. Today, this cultural center is home to the Czech Philharmonic

Orchestra and the Rudolfinum Gallery. It also houses a stylish cafe.

The cafe has recently opened in the Column Hall. The renovation was carefully done in way that added aesthetic beauty, while artistically uniting the entire building. Cafe Rudolfinum strives to be a cosmopolitan Czech cafe that offers its own quality products. Cafe Rudolfinum does not want to draw attention to itself. Instead, it would like to augment the building's beauty and become a part of the Rudolfinum whole. For this reason, its architectural features are not too ostentatious; instead, they blend in. Rather than incorporating superficial pomp, it uses quality materials and a high level of craftsmanship in each of its individual elements.

"It is decisively Czech, yet at the same time it is a cosmopolitan cafe. It is stylish, classic,

elegant and contemporary. It fully respects the architecture, the functionality, the quality, and the whole concept of Rudolfinum. It is a place where music and art synthesize. The main objective is to be an extension of the complete cultural experience. But the doors will be open to everyone from noon till the evening," says Sanjiv Suri, owner of the Zátisí Group and the new operator of the cafe. As a sign that guarantees the great enjoyment you'll derive from visiting the café, here are five personalities from around the world who live in the Czech Republic and who share a love for music and cutting-edge cuisine: Sanjiv Suri, owner of Zátisí Group, David Mareček, CEO of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Italian chef Gianluca Giardi, French creative pastry chef Christophe Dubreuil and Charles Fleer, coffee expert from the US.

Manolo Blahnik in Prague: The Art of Shoes

This summer, Prague will be one of the prestigious locations where visitors will be able to enjoy insights into the extraordinary work of Manolo Blahnik, the famous Spanish fashion designer and founder of the luxury shoe brand.

Launched in January this year in Milan, Italy, The Art of Shoes is a retrospective spanning 45 years of work by Manolo



Blahnik, one of the most influential figures in his field. The exhibition Art of Shoes will land in prestigious locations that have meaning to Manolo Blahnik's work and life. Launched at the Palazzo Morando fashion museum in Milan - a fashion capital where Manolo Blahnik shoes are manufactured, it will then move to the State Museum Hermitage in St. Petersburg, Russia, a source of constant inspiration for him.

The third leg of the tour will be Prague. The exhibition will show at Museum Kampa, a modern art gallery in the capital of the Czech Republic, the paternal country of the Blahnik family, from August 11 to November 12, 2017.

Museum Kampa will be followed by the Museo Nacional de Artes Decorativas in Madrid, Spain – a country dear to Manolo Blahnik's heart, and next year, the tour will move to the BATA shoe museum in Toronto, Canada. Manolo Blahnik has selected 212 shoes and 80 original drawings as a personal reflection of his work capturing his passions and inspirations: architecture, art, botany, literature, cinema, the 18th Century, Italy, Russia, Spain and many others. Spanning from the early 1970's up to the present day, the selection will also include the collection of Marie Antoinette shoes that Manolo Blahnik created with Oscar winner Milena Canonero for Sofia Coppola's 2006 film Marie Antoinette.

BECOME A GLASSMAKER FOR A WHILE



The Center of Glass Art in Sázava near Prague offers more than just a tour through an exhibition in the renovated former smelter František. You can become a glassmaker in this authentic environment and under the supervision of a professional, you can make a decorative ball, a flower vase or a glass flower from hot glass. Or you can decorate a glass by engraving or sand blasting it.

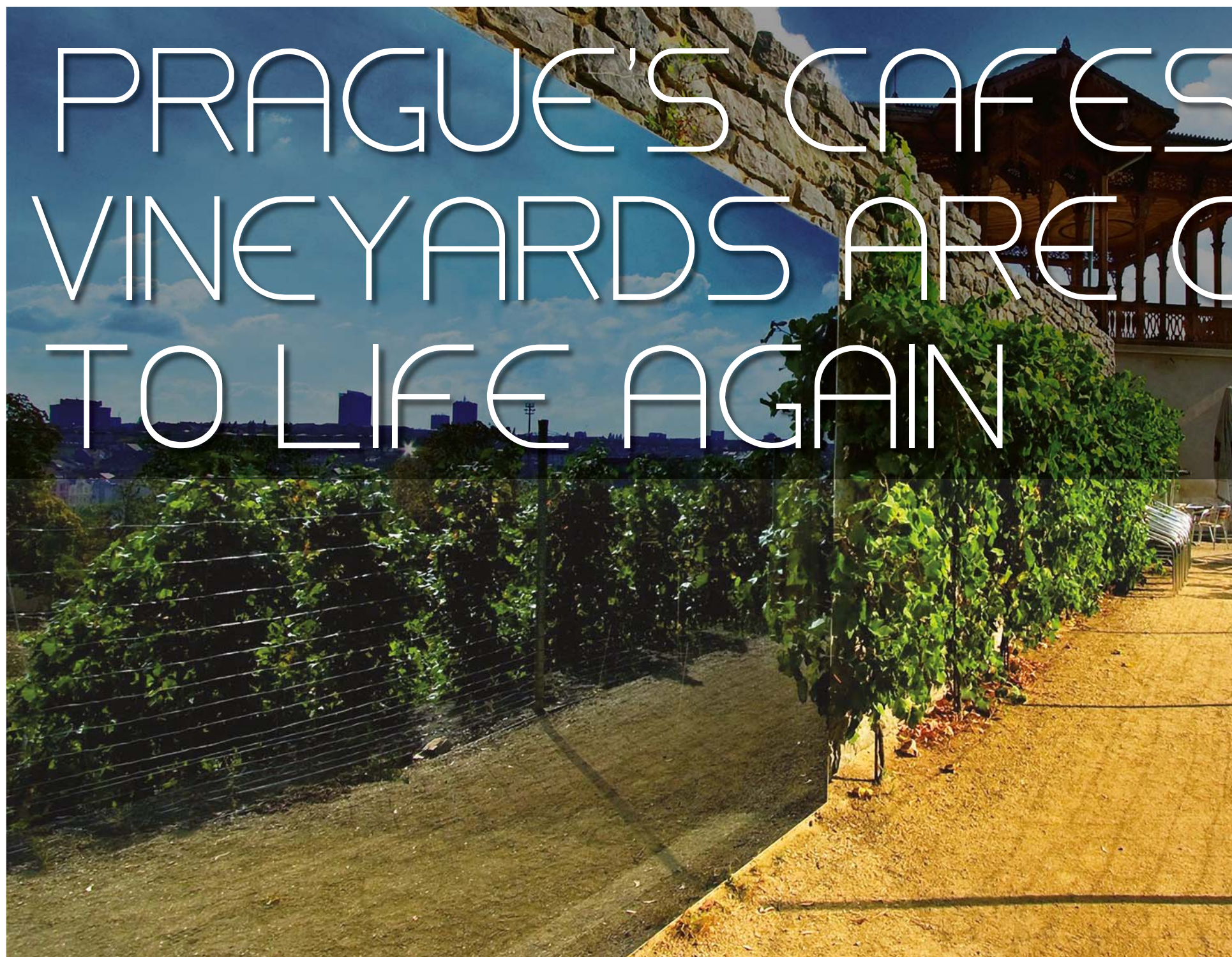
The Center of Glass Art presents a part of one of the world's largest collections of modern glass. This collection was created by glassmakers between 1982 and 2006 at IGS international symposia in the North Bohemian town of Nový Bor, famous for its long tradition of glass manufacturing. The center in Sázava is equipped with the most advanced glass-making technology, which students and aspiring artists can use during their apprenticeships. You can use it as well. Just ask at your hotel and they will advise you how to get here, or visit www.cestyskla.cz.

www.prg.aero



5 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD USE THE VIP SERVICE AT PRAGUE AIRPORT

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5. Once you try our services, you will not want to fly any other way



PRAQUE'S CAFES VINEYARDS ARE TO LIFE AGAIN

Every foreign visitor knows that Prague is beautiful, and its historic center has even been added onto the UNESCO World Heritage List. Every visitor also knows that one should definitely not miss the opportunity to visit a city tavern or pub, because the beer here in Prague is both famous and delicious.

Some may also know that Prague used to be full of great cafes, where personalities such as Franz Kafka, Max Brod, Emil Filla and Bohumil Kubišta used to meet. While some of these cafes have already disappeared, others still remain and you can get a great coffee there even today. Tourists may also know that Prague has many new charming cafes. But how many know

that Prague has vineyards that produce surprisingly interesting and good wines? The town owes its vineyards to King Charles IV – and it is no coincidence that he grew up in France. The Czech king and Roman emperor brought the best French varieties of grapes to the city on the Vltava River, and in 1358 even issued a mandate that all suitable southern slopes had to be planted with grapevines. In addition, winemakers were exempt from paying taxes and tithes for several years. During the reign of Rudolf II, the city was surrounded by vineyards and local wineries had reached their prime. Prague, which at the time was given the nickname “the wine town”, had excellent conditions for cultivating grapevines: sunny

Wine makes daily living easier, less hurried, with fewer tensions and more tolerance.

Benjamin Franklin

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feature **PRAQUE'S
VINEYARDS**



MAGNIFICENT COFFEE

Today, Prague is proud of many things, not just its vineyards. Only a few years ago, the number of places where one could find a really good cup of coffee could be counted on one hand. Yet Prague's cafés used to be famous. They were the meeting places for the avant-garde art community between the wars and were frequented by dissidents before the Velvet Revolution in 1989. The Prague cafe scene was alive then. Today, Prague is again just one step away from becoming a cafe superpower similar to London, Berlin and New York. The coffee scene has moved incredibly fast and forward in recent years. It has combined the impact of the third world's coffee wave with the young generation of professionals who are dedicated to coffee with great enthusiasm. Although some of the famous cafes disappeared during the Communist regime, for example, Café Union, a meeting place

for Prague's intellectuals and artists, some cafes are still around and can be visited today.

Café Slavia is one of the great coffee houses in Prague with a history dating back to the late 19th century. Under the Communist regime, it was known as the meeting place for dissidents, including future President Vaclav Havel. Stop by for a coffee or a glass of wine. Café Slavia offers one of the nicest views of the Vltava River and Prague Castle from its windows. The luxurious Café Imperial is also an exceptional place. You will definitely be impressed by its Art Deco style interior and their famous eggs Benedict for breakfast.

Prague is simply full of excellent cafes. Try a cafe located on the ground floor of the Municipal House, one of the most famous and the most beautiful Art Nouveau buildings in Prague, or the stylish Café Lounge in Malá Strana.



warm hillsides without a risk of flooding and a network of urban creeks and small rivers enjoyed the perfect combination of favorable temperatures and humidity. There were several hundred vineyards in mid-18th century Prague totaling a tremendous seven hundred hectares. However, most of the vineyards started to deteriorate in the following centuries and their total area decreased sharply. Today it is less than 13 hectares. However, some vineyards have survived and the wine from them is excellent, even though many are so small that they cannot produce wine commercially. Most of the vineyards have a unique location that provides extraordinary views of the city. They are worth visiting. One of them is St. Wenceslas vineyard on the southern slopes below Prague Castle. According to legend, Prince Wenceslas founded the vineyard and even farmed it by himself in the early 10th century. However, the first written mention of the vineyard did not appear until 1396. It was later transformed into a garden and a magnificent Neo-classical villa was built on the site of an old winery build-

ing in the 1830s. Today, it is a national monument. In 1990, the villa came under the control of the Prague Castle Administration and a complete renovation of the building, the park and the vineyards took place between 2006 and 2008. Since 2008, this beautiful place has been open to the public.

Another remnant of the ancient glory of Prague's vineyards is the St. Clair vineyard. This vineyard has been there since the 13th century and later belonged to Troja Castle, which was built between 1678 and 1685. It is above the castle next to the zoo and botanical gardens. The grapes were processed in the castle's vast cellars. Part of this vineyard is now a nature trail where you can see historic wine-processing items such as old presses, vats and barrels. Not far from St. Clair vineyard is another one called Salabka. This is Prague's largest vineyard. The local homestead is now a protected cultural site. Some parts of the buildings date back to the 16th century. It is the only wine estate in Prague which still fulfills its original function. Inside New Town, on the southern slope

of Havlíčkovy Sady, is another protected historical vineyard called Grébovka. The vineyard has been there since the times of Charles IV. It almost ceased to exist several times throughout the twentieth century. The entire park area was recently renovated, including the vineyards and the large wooden gazebo with a restaurant, where you can sample wines from this vineyard. Not all vineyards in Prague are open to the public. Prague has therefore decided to hold an annual two-day weekend event in which the private and municipal vineyards open their gates to visitors. So, if you are in Prague for the weekend of June 24 and 25 this year, this will be the first year you can stroll through the vineyards of the Czech capital. This will offer a rare opportunity to appreciate the uniqueness of Prague's wines and at the same time visit some of the protected historical sites that are normally inaccessible to the public.



Forty years of Laterna Magika's WONDERFUL CIRCUS

Laterna magika is celebrating a remarkable anniversary, 40 years since the premiere of **Wonderful Circus**. The production, depicting a journey of two clowns and created by artists of such renown as Evald Schorm, Jiří Srnec and Jan Švankmajer, has earned standing ovations all over the world and can still be seen in Prague, as performed at the New Stage of the National Theatre.

Wonderful Circus was premiered in 1977 at the Adria Palace in Prague, where Laterna magika resided at the time. Since 1983, the production has been regularly performed at the New Stage, where it has been shown up to the present day.

To date, Wonderful Circus has received more than 6,380 performances. On tours abroad, the production has been staged on over 550 occasions, in more than 50 cities in 17 countries (Germany, Slovakia, the Netherlands, the USA, Belgium, the USSR, Italy, France, Canada, Bulgaria, Georgia, Austria, Israel, Estonia, Turkey, Denmark and Greece.)

The production has met with great critical acclaim worldwide, as documented by selected reviews:

"... the fixed metaphor of clowns being born of an egg and striving to fulfil their destiny is here transformed into theatre magic stronger than ever before. (...) Applying the black-light theatre approach, the authors of

the piece have created a bewildering theatre piece. I was simply bewitched." (Clive Barnes, New York Post, 1979)

In the autumn of 2015, Laterna magika performed Wonderful Circus in Greece, and the production again met with positive responses:

"Such enthralling shows leave every critic holding his/her breath and puzzled, asking: WHAT should I focus on, and WHAT should I comment on? The only thing that the reviewer can do is either describe that which he/she has seen or try to demythicize (decipher) that which is happening on the stage. And so we can say about the first episode: the entire stage is covered with a huge white oblong cloth shaped into a semicircle. Throughout the performance, beautiful film images are projected onto it, while in the middle of the semicircle 12 actors-dancers carry out challenging figures, which are directly connected with that which can be seen on the panoramic screen. That which takes place on the stage as dance and theatre is thus semantically and dramaturgically linked with the parallel magnificent cinematic show!" (Stamatis Gargalianos, Teatro.gr, 2015)

The poetic story of the eternal quest and desire for beauty revolves around the pilgrimage of two clowns in search of an unattainable Venus, during which they have to overcome the wiles of the Seducer who brought them to life and who longs to control them. It enchants the audience by the changing of sets that had been shot in outside locations throughout

the former Czechoslovakia, humorous scenes and dance, devised by five choreographers, headed by Karel Vrtiška. The piece still conveys a strong artistic charge of the brilliant team that has conceived it. The stage director Evald Schorm, the set designer Josef Svoboda, the founder of the Black Light Theatre, Jiří Srnec, and Jan Švankmajer, who created the puppet scenes. The original music and music dramaturgy was the work of Oldřich F. Korte, while Zdeněk Seydl designed the decor and costumes.

In 2011, Jiří Srnec recalled the genesis of Wonderful Circus as follows: "A truly extraordinary team got together back in 1976. Evald Schorm in person was seeking out and inviting artists of various professions. During the first meeting a few words were uttered on the subject, the two clowns and their love for the Venus. Only the true believers and enthusiasts gathered for the next meeting. From the very beginning the miracle of mutual understanding was growing. It was great to be a part of it. A space had opened up for something unprecedented, novel."

Wonderful Circus fuses film, theatre, music and dance. Given the conditions at the time, creation of the piece was challenging, especially in terms of production and co-ordination. Each role was rehearsed with several casts and Josef Svoboda's set design required a specific film that had to be recorded simultaneously on three cameras – it required 53,000 metres of material. If the show had been performed once every day it would have filled the theatre's calendar for as long as 16 years. The production has also nurtured several generations of dancers, who have unceasingly assumed the roles after their colleagues. To date, some 25 Sad Clowns, 22 Cheerful Clowns, 25 Seducers and 30 Venuses have taken their turn on the stage.

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profile **WONDERFUL
CIRCUS**

The Cost of Czech luxury

What are the most interesting items you can buy in Czechia*? Here is our price overview of the finest hotels, glamorous cars, highly pleasing activities, ancient liquor and...yes, mushrooms.



For free!
Mushrooming – Wild mushroom foraging from May through October is a great local hobby that will not only get you out into fresh air but also reward you with your own natural ingredient to the dinner table. Head into any woodsy area and don't forget a sharp knife, a clean basket and a hunting spirit. But beware! Poisonous varieties do exist, and it's imperative that you consult a field guide and/or a knowledgeable local.



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www.hubertushuntingtours.com

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www.profirentcars.com



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www.augustinehotel.com

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* Please, feel free to call our country Czechia! The history of the name is more than 1,200 years old. Leave the Czech Republic, a cold and impersonal political name, to politicians and diplomats.

EDITOR'S TOP 3



① | ③
② |

① Experience a state-of-the-art active holiday on the shores of the "Bohemian Sea" – the **Lipno Lake**. The recently-built Lipno village offers yachting amenities, high-quality accommodation and services as well as ample opportunities for outdoor sports. Or just hanging around.
www.lipno.info

② Choose a different place for your event – choose **Šilheřovice Castle** near Ostrava, a manor once owned by the Rothschild family. A golf course is there for you in the adjacent English park. www.zameksilherovice.cz

③ ... and a third tip in the Czech borderland: the four-star **Větruše Hotel** in Ústí nad Labem provides a pleasing haven for trips in this dramatic region and to the fascinating sandstone world of the Czech-Saxon Switzerland. And cosy Saffron beds to boot.
www.hotelvetruse.cz

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profile 9 WAYS
TO SPEND MONEY

premium picks



Nora Dolanská,
Director of Prague City
Tourism, knows what
places in Prague
should not be missed.
Here are some of her
suggestions.

1 Vyšehrad Cemetery – Not only does the cemetery have an amazing atmosphere, it also has the genius loci of a place where our history was made. A walk through the park will take you to the gates of this cemetery where name after name mark pieces of our history: Antonín Dvořák, Bedřich Smetana, as well as Alfons Mucha, Josef Myslbek (the sculptor who created the St Wenceslas sculpture), the author Karel Čapek, and the symbolic grave of Milada Horáková, who was murdered by the communists. For all those lovers who are dazzled by the spring, there is also the grave of our romantic poet Karel Hynek Mácha, whose statue, located in a different location in Prague – Petřín – is traditionally visited when cherry trees below the Petřín Tower are in bloom.



in Londýnská Street in Vinohrady, the Fair Trade coffee-serving student café Pod Lipami at Letná, with its stylish front garden, as well as Monolok Café with its greenery-topped courtyard in Moravská Street in Vinohrady. Not far from here, in Anglická Street, you will find excellent Russian coffee and coffee cocktails in the Double B Café, Oliver's Coffee Cup Café in Wenceslas Square, and the café called 'Styl a Interier' located in the passageway of Langhans House in Vodičkova Street.

2 Prague Cafés
Today, the mushrooming number of cafés in the city are part of the gastro-culture phenomenon exploding in Prague. Some of them are non-traditional, including the lovely TriCafé in Anenská Street, Cathedral Café in Týnská Street hiding under the shadow of the cathedral, the popular Mamacoffee

3 Žižkov Tower – Ten babies crawling up the vertical concrete mast towards the sky take those who are interested right up to the top of the Žižkov Tower. From here, you can enjoy stunning views in all cardinal directions, and if you are in luck with the weather, you cannot only see the Giant Mountains (Krkonoše) to the north, but also, when looking down towards



Austria, the Bohemian Forest (Šumava) and Alpine peaks. Sitting down with a cup of coffee or a drink at a height of more than 60m is worth it: here, a panoramic view of Prague will unfold before your very eyes.

4 New Town Hall and New Town Tower – I

know that the Old Town Hall is the most famous town hall building in Prague's center. However, up to the mid-18th century, Prague comprised four self-contained towns, each of which with its own administration seat. The New Town was always the more revolutionary and radical town. Today, its town hall adorns the very city center at the end of Vodičkova Street at the head of Charles Square. The town hall's tower, which will help tourism this year by taking up tourists who are disappointed by the scaffolded Old Town Hall, offers beautiful views of the roofs in the historic city. Beware of the 221 steps though; you will need to manage them physically as there is no lift. As a reward, there is a well-known Prague café downstairs in courtyard of the town hall, Cafe Neustadt.



5 Karlín – Even though the 2002 floods in Prague damaged the city along the river to a great extent, they led to a regeneration and a modern urban style in several areas. This happened in Karlín, where old boiler rooms, machinery halls and factory buildings were transformed into a range of modern architecture developments. To meet your social needs, you will find plenty of cafés, restaurants and pubs here. Moreover, on Vítkov Hill, you will find the largest equestrian statue in the world towering majestically above you – the statue of Jan Žižka, the Hussite military leader of the 15th century.





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Pick up your free copy from any Prague City Tourism information centre:

- **Old Town Hall** – Old Town Square 1, Prague 1, open daily 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.
- **Na Můstku** – Rytířská 12, Prague 1, open daily 9 a.m. – 7 p.m.
- **Václav Havel Airport Prague Terminal 1** open daily 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.
- **Václav Havel Airport Prague Terminal 2** open daily 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.

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