



AUTUMN 2014

EQUUS KINSKY

The noble breed of horse

**BREATHTAKING
VIEWS**

When the view is important

**GOLF IS
AN ADDICTION**

110th anniversary of Czech golf

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AT ITS BEST

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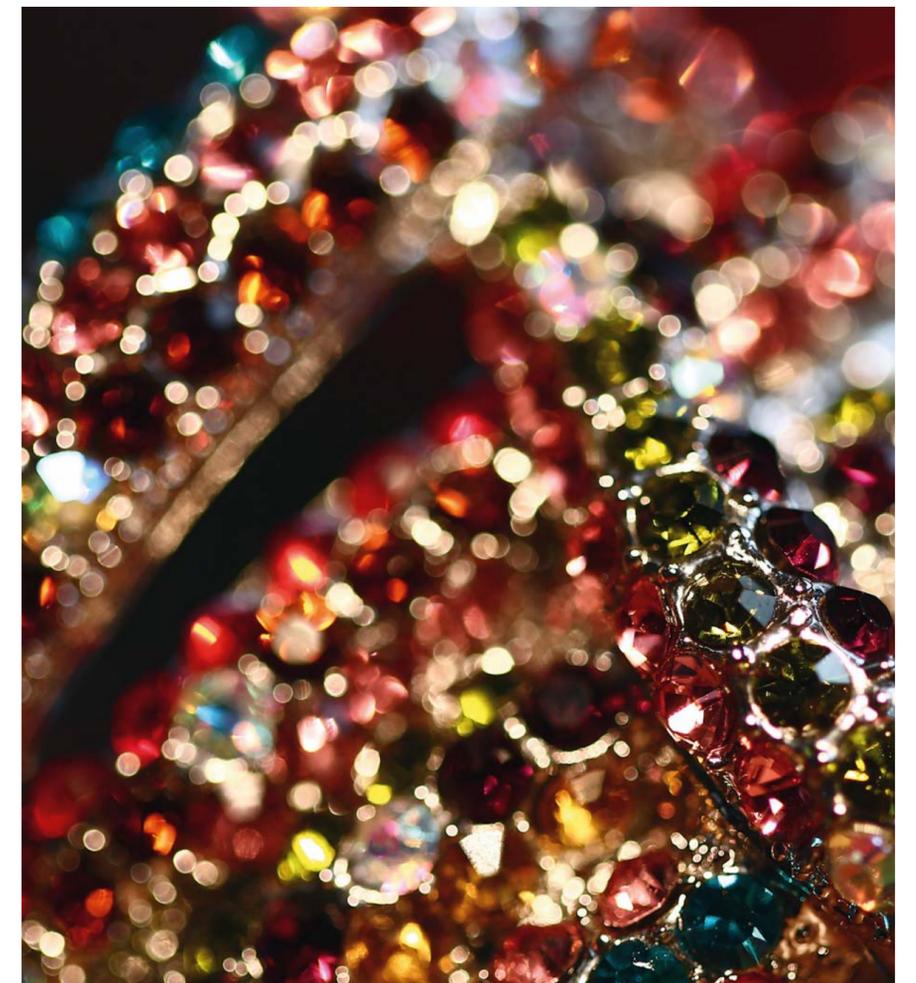
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There is nothing
new in the
world except the
history you do
not know.

Harry S. Truman

This edition of ttg czech luxury is full of history: the history of Czech golf, history of the noble Kinsky horse breed or the history of Bohemian garnet. We will invite you to the historical Estates Theatre and we will suggest some great historical places that offer magnificent view of other historical places. We also will invite you to a romantic rendezvous in the historical setting of old Prague and give you some ideas where else to go in the Czech Republic to see some more of - yes, history. After all, there is no harm in studying a little history over your vacation, is it? As Marcus Garvey said: „People without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.“

But do not worry, we will not bore you. Each of the places you will find as you leaf through this issue is full of life and should you decide to visit them, you will be overwhelmed by the atmosphere. Actually, we are sure you will still remember them long after your visit becomes history...

Nada Rybářová

3
editor's letter



ENJOYABLE JOURNEYS START WITH THE RIGHT CHOICE

How to get to the airport, where to park, how to avoid queuing for the check-in or what must not go in your hand luggage: all these questions tend to add to your stress levels before a journey. But there is an alternative – to really enjoy your departure, be it for pleasure or for business, from Václav Havel Airport Prague and receive a pampering service worthy of a celebrity. Let us show you how it is done.

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CONTENTS

ttg czech luxury

summer 2014



06 **Editor's selection** Great views

10 **Feature** Equus Kinsky

16 **Feature** The beginnings of Czech golf

12 **Feature** Bohemian garnet

14 **Profile** Prague Congress Centre

19 **Profile** The Mark Luxury Hotel Prague

24 **Profile** Aria and Golden Well hotels

26 **Premium Picks** What should not be missed in the Czech Republic

editor's selection

The visible landscape is believed to affect human beings in many ways. That is why we have selected a couple of hotels and restaurants you may want to visit when in the Czech Republic, all of them great when it comes to view.



A ringside seat to the town

Lying in the midst of a splendid forest park, the **HOTEL ESPLANADE SPA & GOLF RESORT** is located just five minutes' drive from the oldest golf course in the Czech Republic. The view of its luxurious rooms and suites is a balm for your soul: the town of Mariánské Lázně, which is blessed with healing mineral thermal springs and a unique atmosphere that thousands upon thousands of visitors come to enjoy each year will spread out before you.



If you wish to combine your golf stay with wellness activities, then the Hotel Esplanade Spa & Golf Resort is the right place for you. You can choose from a total of eight golf courses located nearby, including the above-mentioned Royal Golf Club Mariánské Lázně. In addition, the hotel's spa & wellness centre offers an unparalleled combination of relaxation and professional care.

Turn on the music and look out the window

THE PRAGUE ARIA HOTEL is dedicated to music. There is not a single square meter that does not remind you of it. From Antonín Dvořák to Elvis Presley, each of its 51 rooms deals with a different great musician. Even the plates in the CODA Restaurant bear images of famous composers and musicians. Beginning with your check-in when you get a welcome

drink, you may discover that the restaurant's terrace offers a breath-taking view of Prague. But you do not need to go to the terrace to enjoy the view. Have a seat at the window in your room, choose your favourite music on the Apple TV and enjoy the view of Vrtba Garden, one of the most beautiful Baroque gardens in Prague. You will not even want to leave your room.

Have a drink 40 meters above the ground

CLOUD 9 SKY BAR & LOUNGE on the rooftop of the Hilton Prague hotel, which was designed by the famous British designer Philip Rodgers, has more to offer than just innovative cocktails and delicious food. An impressive design, timeless music, glass interior, personable bartenders and two terraces - it all leaves an indelible impression on the guests. The long list of cocktails is supplemented by delicious meals served in portions that you can easily share with your friend; you will not be able to polish them off by yourself. During the summer months, feel free to relax on the terrace that features a grill and sip one of the signature cocktails, complement it with a gourmet burger or home-made sausages and let your eyes feast on the panoramic view of Prague and the Vltava River. Not even winter can deprive you of the beautiful view; you can still enjoy it behind the warm protection of the bar's glass walls.



THE BELLEVUE CHARM

Hardly no one would expect a restaurant with the name **BELLEVUE** not to have a nice view. But only a few expect the view to be so gorgeous. Whether you sit inside the restaurant or on the outside terrace, the view of Prague Castle will take your breath away. Your time spent relaxing on the terrace during the summer months will be enhanced by the soft murmur of the Vltava River.

Of course, there is also a lot to see inside: the stylish interior features a play of light and shadows through original decorative glass elements created by the outstanding Czech designer, glass-maker and sculptor Rony Plesl. While, the restaurant's interiors and view are important, if the food were nothing special, then not even the view of Prague Castle rising above the Vltava River could save the day. But honestly, this is not a concern at the Bellevue. The local chef performs true gastronomic magic with passion to prepare succulent meals made from the best local ingredients and serves them with grace and creativity. All gourmets know that each meal deserves a unique wine and that the right pairing is essential. Therefore, the Bellevue serves a multi-course degustation menu with matching wines that changes regularly to respond to the season and that introduces various famous gastronomic personalities. On top of it all, you can enjoy the magnificent view... Bellevue simply broadens its guests' sensory horizons.



A PASSION FOR PERFECTION WITH THE RIVER RUNNING UNDER YOUR FEET



Prior to entering the **MLÝNEC RESTAURANT**'s reception area, you could not possibly anticipate the gem you are just about to discover. But when you sit down at the restaurant's seemingly endless windows or on the terrace overlooking the Vltava River, you will be left speechless. You may have already seen Charles Bridge, but only at the Mlýnec can you savour its beauty and the splendour of various picturesque recesses along the river from such a unique perspective.

The Mlýnec Restaurant will let you taste Czech cuisine at its best. Marek Šáda, an outstanding young chef, searches for and improves upon long-forgotten Czech specialty recipes. With respect and sensitivity, he approaches traditional cooking techniques, yet at the same time he is not afraid to apply the most modern gastronomic methods in order to achieve the perfect result. His unmistakable style allows these rediscovered traditional Czech ingredients to stand out. The result is an elegant modern Czech menu made from seasonal and local ingredients. An electrifying atmosphere, perfect Czech cuisine, the pulsating centre of Prague and the Vltava River running just under your feet... It would be a pity to miss this place.



A balm for your soul



None of the views from the widows of the 205 rooms in the **HOTEL IMPERIAL**, the best spa hotel in Karlovy Vary, will disappoint you. The views of the spa's greenery and hotel park with a backdrop silhouette of the town are a true balm for the soul, and it undoubtedly enhances the euphoric feelings you will have after receiving unparalleled body care from the hotel. There is a good reason that

the Hotel Imperial is a four-time holder of the Czech Republic's Leading Spa Resort award.

The hotel has earned its reputation not only with the quality of its spa care, but also with the level of detail and perfection found in every single feature that is offered to its guests. Just recently, the interiors of this neo-Renaissance dominant building in Karlovy Vary dating back to the beginning of the 20th century have been completely renovated. The renovations, however, did not spoil the unique style or atmosphere of this hotel where many current and former Czech and foreign celebrities have spent some time. In fact, they helped increase the hotel's allure.

Unfortunately, we no longer know whether actress Mary Pickford, world-famous piano maker William Steinway or actor Douglas Fairbanks had rooms with a view of the forests or the spa town, but we do know they enjoyed it.



From where Tycho Brahe used to gaze out over Prague



Climb the narrow lane leading to Prague Castle and discover a true gem. The **GOLDEN WELL HOTEL**, former residence of the famous Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe, is situated on the slope just below Prague Castle. You will never forget the view of Prague that it offers. You will also see the Baroque terraced gardens – the Royal Garden and the Ledeburg Garden. What a fascinating sight! If you stay at the hotel during the summer, you may also use the private gate of Emperor Rudolph II that leads directly to the Castle Gardens. Hotel U Zlaté studně is small. There are only 17 rooms and 2 suites. But more importantly, it is picturesque. In addition to its luxurious rooms and impeccable service, it prides itself for its restaurant Terasa U Zlaté studně, which is located on the fourth floor and from where you can convince yourself of the saying that Prague is the City of a Hundred Spires.

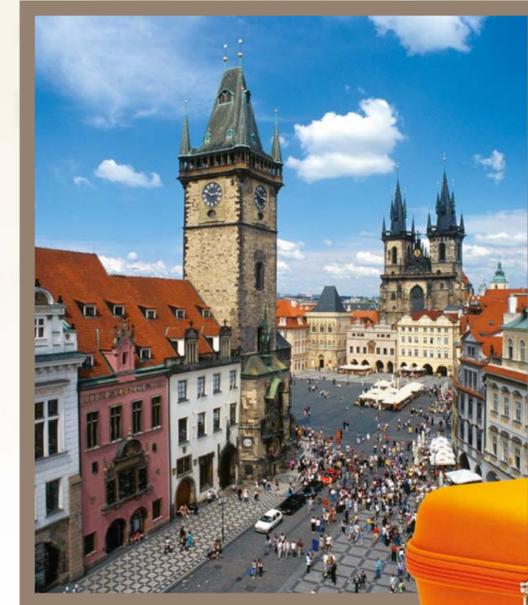
Sit down on the terrace and contemplate



As its name suggests, the **LINDNER HOTEL PRAGUE CASTLE** is located only a short distance from Prague Castle and is even closer to the Strahov Monastery. Walk out of your room onto the narrow terrace, sit down at a table, maybe enjoy a refreshing beverage and take a good look in front of you. Behind the not-so-big wall and surrounded by full-grown trees stands the oldest Premonstratensian abbey in Bohemia, founded in 1143. Do not let yourself be confused by its obviously Baroque appearance; the monastery has been rebuilt several times. By the way, its library is one of the most valued and best preserved historical libraries in the world. The German family-owned Lindner Hotels & Resorts runs 34 hotels in Europe, and Hotel Prague Castle is, as of now, their only hotel in the Czech Republic. It offers a congress centre, a restaurant and a summer terrace, and, above all, its lovely serene courtyard in which it is a pleasure to sit and relax. It is located in a 16th-century building that used to be a part of the monastery. The walls in its luxurious rooms have their own peculiar historical charm. The history and distinctive style of the hotel line up with the company's motto: Not just better. Different.



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GOLD IN THE STABLE

Equus Kinsky, or the Kinsky horse, is an exceptional animal not only for its nobility, but also for its typical golden colour. Being very versatile, it excels in dressage, show jumping, hunt riding and it is also suitable for recreational riding and can be harnessed in exceptional cases. It has managed to live through 180 years of peace and wars, technical progress as well as major economic and political changes. The founding of the breed can be attributed to the Czech noble family Kinsky, after whom it was named.



10

feature
KINSKY HORSE



The Kinsky family bred horses from time immemorial and golden horses often occurred in their herds. They were warmbloods whose colour was either gold with a white mane (palominos) or gold with black hair and black on the lower parts of their limbs (buckskins). Originally, they were just horses that had somewhat unusual colour markings and were named only later.

IN THE PAST, it was not the normal practice to write pedigrees of horses and register their breeding in the countryside. This changed in 1832, when Earl Oktavian Kinsky – at the age of just nineteen years – built a stud farm called Ostrov near Chlumec nad Cidlinou and started to write pedigrees for his horses. This is how the Kinsky horse studbook came into being.

Oktavian was a true horse expert and he was also a significant organizer of horseracing events in Eastern Bohemia. He bought a large pack of foxhounds in England and in 1836, he organized the first

English-style parfors hunt in Bohemia. The local nobles quickly took to this form of amusement and went on hunts several times a week. Oktavian had a racecourse built on the meadows near Chlumec and ten years later, the first horseracing event was held here according to English rules. The winner was – as you might guess – Oktavian Kinsky on a yellow stallion named Caesar. Oktavian also initiated the most famous Czech horserace – The Great Pardubice Steeplechase, which was first held in 1874.

MANY SUBSEQUENT WINNERS of The Great Pardubice Steeplechase have ridden Kinsky horses. The mare Norma became very famous after Lata Brandisova, the first and the last woman who ever managed to win The Great Pardubice Steeplechase, won the race while riding her in 1937. Lata entered several more races, but when she finished in fifth place after a falling off Norma in 1935, the owner of the mare, Lata's cousin Zdenko Radslav Kinsky, started to consider whether he should lend the mare to another rider or put her into breeding. As fate would have it, he let Lata ride Norma again and Lata famously won by seven horse lengths in 1937.

DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR, German receivership was imposed on the Kinsky manor, but through various tricks

and with the help of loyal employees, the Kinsky family managed to save a considerable part of the herd from conscription into the German army. The next period of hard times started for the horses in 1948, when the communists seized power in the country. Not only did the nobility become class enemy Number One, but horses also did not fit into the new lifestyle in the new social order. Studs were expropriated and the horses were – thanks to an agreement negotiated by the Kinsky family representative, Radslav Kinsky, with a horse lover who worked in the Ministry of Agriculture – moved to The

No hour of life
is wasted that
is spent in the
saddle.

Winston Churchill

Slatiňany National Stud Farm. However, in the early 1950's, the national stud farm lost interest in the horses from Chlumec and their breeding was divided into several national state farms.

Only through the efforts of numerous dedicated people was the stud preserved and the breed restored to its full power.

TODAY, the Equus Kinsky Association has approximately 280 broodmares and 10 stallions, young horses and horses-in-training registered in the studbook. Twelve broodmares and two stallions are located in Hradistko, near Sadska east of Prague, in a facility that belongs to Petr and Libuse Pulpan, who have made tremendous strides in continuing the breeding of these horses.

WHEN THE KINSKY FAMILY returned from emigration after the fall of communism in 1989 and the state returned their property to them through restitution, their main priority was restoring the manors devastated by decades of mismanagement by the communist state. There was no money and time left to breed horses. Petr Pulpan bought the herd of Kinsky horses from the family and stabled them in Ostrov in Chlumec nad Cidlinou, which

he rented from the Kinsky family under favourable terms. Radslav Kinsky, himself horse lover and breeder, was happy that the horses' breeding would be continued by a man who was a true horse lover and expert. But when the manor was transferred to Radslav's nephew, the relationship between the two families deteriorated and Petr Pulpan decided to build his own facility and move the horses.

TODAY, not only stallions and broodmares, but also young horses-in-training and colts live at the riding school in the village of Hradistko on the left bank of the Elbe River. The surrounding landscape of meadows, fields and

forests is ideal for horse riding. The facility has two riding halls and two outdoor arenas. You can also have your own horse stabled or trained here.

ALTHOUGH THE KINSKY HORSE has not always had a bed of roses, and there were times when it seemed that it might not survive, it is today bred in England, Germany, the U.S. and other countries. There are currently approximately 1,000 of these horses worldwide and the horses are also owned by the English royal family. On her one hundredth birthday, the Queen Mother received the mare Johanka Kinsky from Petr Pulpan and the mare has already given birth to three foals.





When there is something nice to see at a congress



three years. The future of the Congress Centre Praha is also supported by the fact that The International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), the most significant international association in the field of congress business, chose it as its venue for its annual meeting in the autumn of 2017. "With only about 1,500 participants, it will not be the largest congress held there, but the participants will all be experts

and professionals in the business of congress organization," says Václav Novotný. "They would not simply go to a place that would not be of the highest standards. And I believe they will be interested to know how a congress centre from the 1980s, with many similar buildings around the world, can be freshened up to meet today's requirements." The magnificent view will then be the proverbial icing on the cake.

Architects criticize its utilitarian design, technical and economic experts its enormous energy usage and others are annoyed by its connection to the country's communist past. This somewhat megalomaniac building from the 1980s was ceremonially opened on 2 April 1981, and four years later, the 16th Congress of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, at that time the only party in power, congregated there. After all, this was exactly the purpose for which what was the then Palace of Culture, today the Congress Centre Praha, was built.

The neo-functional monoblock building with an irregular heptagon floor plan has its own fire-fighting unit. There are 70 halls and lounges (the largest of them can hold nearly 2,800 persons) hidden within its depths. The floor tiling on all floors covers an area of 2.5 ha, and its boiler room resembles a small power plant. The air conditioning pipes stacked end-to-end would reach a length of one hundred kilometres. Three million Euros are spent annually only to supply power to the building. In addition, the Centre ran into huge debt due to a costly renovation that

took place before a meeting of the IMF and the World Bank in 2000 and before the NATO summit that was held there two years later. In the recent past, it was still possible to hear voices calling for its demolition. "Demolition? What total nonsense!" says Václav Novotný, Deputy Mayor of Prague. "Not only just Prague, but the whole Czech Republic would suddenly lose the ability to host a congress for two and half thousand people. There are many congress centres in the world from the same era and nobody is pulling them down. Moreover, show me a congress centre that has a view that is comparable to the one in Prague." He is right. Thanks to its suitable location situated on the edge of the Nusle Valley, the Congress Centre offers a unique view of Prague and the Prague Castle. Rumour has it that in 1990, a year after the fall of the communist regime, the then USA First Lady Barbara

Bush spent more than fifteen minutes enjoying the very same view from the northern side of the building during her visit to Prague. The view, however, is not the only strong point of the Congress Centre. Not only it is easily accessible – the main traffic artery runs by the Centre (basically, it is a long approach road to the D1 highway, so if you are arriving from Vienna or Budapest, you cannot miss the Centre), and there is also a metro station in very close proximity, so you can reach downtown Prague within a few minutes. The real jewel of the Centre is its reconstructed great congress hall. Because of its excellent acoustic properties, it is ranked among the thirteen best concert halls in the world. The Congress Centre is now about to undergo another renovation. Thanks to the efforts of Václav Novotný, it got rid of its huge debt and even has the financial means to catch up with modern architectural features and cover the losses it suffered during the long years when all its profit went to make interest payments. The renovation will not affect the Centre's full operations and should be completed within

A PRIVATE NIGHT AT THE OPERA WITH FOUR SEASONS HOTEL PRAGUE



PRAGUE OFFERS a new lifetime experience for opera lovers: private performance of Mozart's Don Giovanni at the famed Estates Theatre, followed by a gourmet meal accompanied by a live orchestra on the rooftop terrace of the Four Seasons Hotel. Through an exclusive arrangement with Four

Seasons Hotel Prague, up to six guests can experience the renowned opera in total privacy amid the Neo-Classical splendour of the theatre, considered one of the most beautiful theatres in all of Europe. After the performance, a chauffeur will bring the guests back to the hotel in a vintage Rolls Royce.

The couple or a group will toast Mozart from the hotel's rooftop terrace and enjoy live music from members of the Estates Theatre Orchestra and a gourmet meal served under the stars. "It is definitely a lifetime experience. You gain a deeper understanding of Mozart's genius during a private performance of Don Giovanni in the Estates Theatre, the majestic site of the opera's premiere in 1787," said Petr Zezula, Chef Concierge at Four Seasons Hotel Prague. The experience is available from May 15 until September 15 in 2015 and is priced for up to six persons at EUR 60,000. It includes the luxurious accommodation in the Presidential Suite for two nights, private performance of Don Giovanni at the Estates Theatre, transfer from the theatre to the Hotel in vintage Rolls Royce and private dinner on the hotel's rooftop terrace. Six months' advance reservation is required; some blackout dates apply.

GOLF CLUB KARLOVY VARY



Although it sounds unlikely, fencers and dog breeders were most instrumental in introducing golf in the Czech Republic. The first group brought it over and the latter group revived it after the Second World War.



In 1904, when all of Europe was enjoying the renaissance of fencing, a Men's Fencing Club, which took over the previously-established tennis club, was founded in Karlovy Vary; it later also founded a golf club there. The municipal council supported the decision to establish a golf club with the objective of expanding the selection of sports activities for spa guests in Karlovy Vary. Shortly after, a nine-hole course covering an area of 2.3 ha with a length of 2,093 m was built in the valley of the Tepla River. It was the very first golf course in the territory of today's Czech Republic. It was typical not only for

its criss-crossing holes, but also for its frequent play across water with players having to traverse the Tepla River at five different points. A year after the Golf Club Karlovy Vary was founded in 1905, a Swiss-style clubhouse was erected. On 16 July 1906, it hosted its first international golf tournament, the Count Furstenberg Silver Cup. It was won by Diaz Albertini from Paris. This tournament was played continuously – with a few exceptions – until 1939. Before the First World War, the club's members mostly included various spa guests from England, the United States of America and Western European countries. The course was frequently played, and its size was soon found to be insufficient. Therefore, in 1908, the club's managers began to consider construction of a new eighteen-hole course. Unfortunately, the development of the sport of golf and actually of the entire spa town was interrupted by the outbreak of the First World War

I think golf is literally an addiction. I'm surprised there's not Golf Anonymous.

Larry David

in the summer of 1914. The town was transformed into a field hospital, and the course was abandoned. The area was not fully reclaimed, renovated and re-opened until 1919. In the 1920s, the manager re-introduced the idea constructing a new course. Nothing could hinder his vision, not even an economic crisis. In fact, the construction of the new eighteen-hole golf course near the village of Olsova Vrata was also partially meant to be a social project. Unemployed people coming from vacant hotels and restaurants in Karlovy Vary could take part in its construction. A renowned expert of his time, Parisian architect Constantin Noskowski, was put in charge of its design and actual construction. The construction of the golf course was finished under his supervision in 1932, and the first tournament was played there that same year. However, it took three more

MY FIRST STEPS ON THE GOLF COURSE



THE PUBLISHER of this magazine, Amara Zemplerová, really likes golf and she also just happens to be a great golfer, too. A multiple Czech national champion, she also successfully represented the country at international tournaments up to 1988. After the fall of communism in 1989, she began to organize the GOLF SHOW fair, which significantly accelerated the arrival and growth of golf business in the Czech environment. In addition, she organised a golf tour for children, many of whom rank among today's best golfers. She currently also serves as the Vice President of the Senior Golf Association and has been inducted in the Czech golf Hall of Fame three years ago. Who knows if she would have devoted her entire life to golf if she had not been influenced by the sport since

her very first steps – steps that she took at the Karlovy Vary Golf Club, which this year is celebrating its 110th anniversary.

It is not usual for a publisher to write about themselves for the magazine they publish, and this time would be no different if the Karlovy Vary Golf Club were not celebrating its 110th anniversary. However, on this occasion, I could not resist. Over the 110 years of the club's existence, I have spent as much as one-half of that time at the Karlovy Vary Golf Club. I even took my first steps on the course. My father was a greenkeeper and – at a time when each hole had its own patron who was responsible for taking care of it – his was hole 18. He spent a lot of time there and so did I.

On the golf course, I first learned to walk and then also to play golf. While I lived in Karlovy Vary, I used to play every day, always on this course. Each season, i.e. from April to October, I played at least 100 rounds.

I am very fortunate since both golf and my work have allowed me to travel a lot. And, throughout the many years that I spent travelling the world and playing golf on all the continents, even if only as a tourist, I realised one important thing. None of those golf courses could match Karlovy Vary.

Many of them were more beautiful, with breath-taking views of the sea, cliffs ... and there were many I would love to play again.

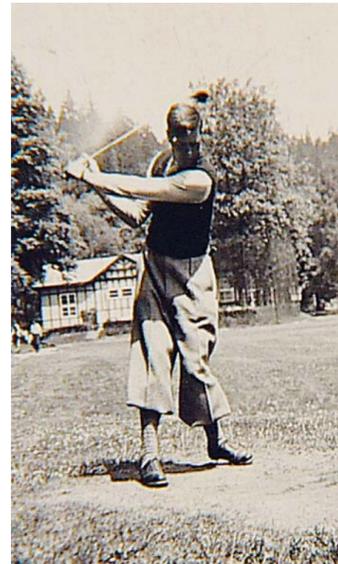
So, why is it that the golf course in Karlovy Vary is the best? Because even if you play there every day, year after year, it never gets old and you never have enough. Each hole is a unique chapter in a story and no two are alike. They resemble a necklace of wild pearls. Each is different, yet together they create a beautiful piece of jewellery. If I ever opened a travel agency, I would travel the world selling golf trips to Karlovy Vary. By the way, once you are in Karlovy Vary, another gem of a golf course is a mere stone's throw away: the Royal Golf Club in Mariánské Lázně, whose members have included – among others – the English King Edward VII. Royal Golf Club Mariánské Lázně will be celebrating its 110th birthday next year.





years before it was fully completed and opened in 1935. In the following years, the Second World War left its destructive mark throughout the entire area, and the master's course in Olsova Vrata became gradually overgrown with bushes and high grass. Surprisingly, it was the members of the Karlovy Vary Dog-Breeding Club who helped to bring golf back to the nation. The former nine-hole golf course in the Tepla River valley was recommended to them as the ideal place to conduct their dog training. They found several golf clubs in the abandoned clubhouse, and it was not long before they started to play the golf on a slightly-groomed golf

course. However, they could only play on one bank of the river since the bridges over the river were torn down. In March 1949, the golf club was reopened and its managers immediately decided that golf would be played exclusively on the Olsova Vrata golf course. It was by far more neglected, but seemed to be more suitable for the future. The material used for the construction of the new clubhouse at the Olsova Vrata golf course was obtained from the demolition of the old clubhouse in the Tepla valley. This marked the end of the nine-hole golf course. Members of the golf club threw themselves into the restoration of Olsova Vrata, and each hole had its own patron. Unfortunately,



ly, the club did not have enough members to restore all eighteen holes. The first tournament there was held in 1955, but the course was not fully re-opened until September 1960. Today, at the age of 110, the Golf Club Karlovy Vary, the oldest golf club in the Czech Republic, boasts nearly 900 members, of which almost one hundred are children. In addition to its regular club activities, including its development of the youth with top players, it also hosts various important European tournaments, such as the Ladies European Tour, the European Mid-Amateur Tour and the European Seniors Tour.

Hilton Prague voted the Czech Republic's Leading Business Hotel

HILTON PRAGUE has been recognised as the Czech Republic's Leading Business Hotel for the second consecutive time at the European final of the renowned World Travel Awards 2014, voted for by travel agents worldwide. At the Europe Gala Ceremony, which took place in Athens, Greece, in August, Hilton Prague was one of the twenty-four Hilton Worldwide properties in Europe to receive an accolade. Hilton Prague features spacious and flexible meeting areas that are available for larger exhibitions and galas including the Congress Hall, which can accommodate up to 1,500 delegates and the Hilton Grand Ballroom, seating up to 650 guests. An additional thirty-seven versatile meeting and banqueting rooms provide venues for smaller functions. The fully equipped Business Centre offers high speed

and wireless Internet with expert technical support, secretarial assistance and state-of-the-art presentation equipment. "I am delighted to see Hilton Prague recognized at these well-respected awards, especially for the second consecutive year," said Michael Specking, general manager of Hilton Prague and Hilton Prague Old Town. "This demonstrates the team's outstanding commitment to providing Hilton Hotels and Resorts' world-renowned hospitality to our guests and the quality of the hotel's facilities," he added. Hilton Worldwide's flagship brand, Hilton Hotels & Resorts, was awarded Europe's Leading Hotel Brand at the ceremony, reflecting its presence in thirty-four countries across the region. The prestigious World Travel Awards have been recognising organisations delivering outstanding customer experience in travel and tourism for more than twenty years. They have become a key global



institution of the industry, stimulating competition and innovation among operators, as well as providing a helpful testimonial for quality to travellers worldwide.



Q&A

At the end of 2013, a group of private investors purchased a palace in Prague's centre where The Kempinski Hotel Hybernaska was located. In mid-2014, a new company took charge of the hotel and is currently running it as an independent hotel under the name The Mark Luxury Hotel Prague. According to one of its co-owners, **Mr Jaroslav Svoboda**, the hotel has many qualities that are virtually unknown to the public.

The Mark Luxury Hotel Prague is a palace with a more than 600-year history. It was successfully renovated in 2008 and has been run as a luxurious hotel ever since. Is there actually anything more that could be improved?

The hotel indeed has many qualities that are virtually unknown, and we have to change this. Hardly anyone knows, for instance, that the hotel has the largest rooms in Prague. 60 of its 75 rooms are suites, and the average area of the rooms is more than 50m². In addition, hardly anyone knows that there is a splendid 1,800m² Baroque garden in the inner courtyard that could certainly be better utilized than it has in the past. We definitely need to build a new conference centre. One is presently being built in the hotel's former offices, which have now been relocated to an adjacent building. The existing conference facility is small and inconvenient. The new one will offer capacity for up to 150 persons. We also need to improve the reception area as the existing one is not fit for such a luxurious hotel.

This sounds like a pretty big investment...

We intend to invest 50-70 million Czech crowns into the hotel. Of course, all modifications will be consulted with preservationists, which will probably make the whole process more complicated. But this is a must since a hotel as luxurious as ours simply cannot exist without a wellness centre. And before now, it has not had one.

How would you like to improve the utilization of the garden?

Up until now, the garden has only been used in summer and spring, and offered basically just a bar. We intend to expand it and remodel it into a fully-fledged restaurant with capacity for at least 150 places. In summer, the entire area shall remain open, however, in winter we plan to stylishly cover it. It would be a pity not to use the garden in winter.

And why did you call your hotel The Mark?

We wavered over several names, but in the end we decided on The Mark because of what it means in translation – a label, or figuratively, a symbol. We want to be different, and as an independent hotel we are perfectly cut out for it. In addition, we want our hotel to become a popular and recognized brand. It currently ranks among the five best hotels in Prague, but we want to be even better.



TO MARK THE OCCASION of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Jiří Kolář, a world-renowned Czech creative artist and poet, the Prague Museum Kampa will host an exhibition of one hundred of his most important works beginning in September 2014. A catalogue will be published to accompany the exhibition with texts that include current research surrounding his work. The works will be divided according to the primary technique the artist used, including collage, prollage, chiasmage, crumplage, anti-collage, etc. The collection will be exhibited following the same principles.

Jiří Kolář is one of the most important figures represented in the collection of Jan

THE JIŘÍ KOLÁŘ EXHIBITION AT THE MUSEUM KAMPA

and Meda Mládek, whose foundation manages the Museum Kampa. The collection of Kolář's works is extensive and high quality. It primarily contains his works that were created between the end of the 1940s and the mid-1970s, i.e. the period representing the artist's most significant achievements. The Mládeks amassed their collection mostly from Jiří Kolář's exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum in New York. The collection, which Jiří Kolář himself chose for the New York exhibition, includes sets of the most important techniques he discovered over the years and which are mainly from the end of the 1950s to the end of the 1960s.

PRAGUE

THE BUSINESS OF ROMANCE



Photo: Kurt Vinion, www.pragueweddingphotography.com

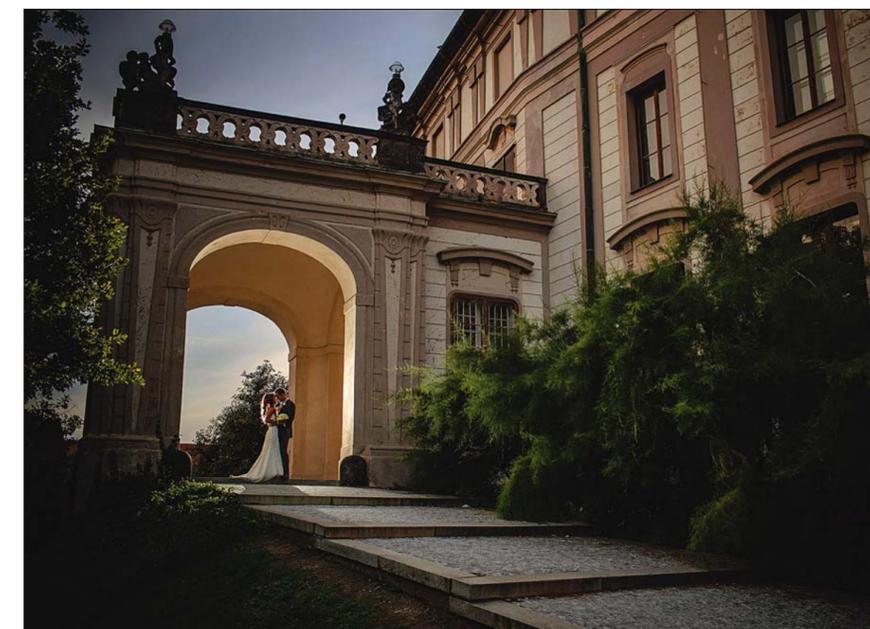


Photo: Kurt Vinion, www.pragueweddingphotography.com

Visitors have always fallen in love with Prague. It's up for debate whether this is mostly due to its location on both sides of a sinuous river, its hilly terrain offering countless vistas, or its inimitable blend of architectural styles. The truth is that together, all of these factors create a visually stunning whole that has been photographed, filmed and painted, depicted in song and poetry, and voted the fifth best place on Earth to visit* – and that a growing number of people are choosing as a backdrop for the special moment in their lives, be it a marriage proposal, wedding, honeymoon, or anniversary celebration.

There is, of course, a business side to all this, and Prague City Tourism, the city's tourism marketing agency, is well aware that romance tourism holds great economic potential. Consequently, it has made romance in

what is to become an international campaign is the publication of a new brochure, the Prague Wedding Guide, available in English with Russian, Chinese, and Korean versions to come soon. Says Kateřina Pavlitová, Prague City Tourism's marketing director, of the project: "The guide is meant not as an exhaustive catalog of options but more as an inspiration. It's heavily visual, with gorgeous photos showing the variety of settings and experiences romantic couples have at their disposal in Prague. Just as importantly, we wanted to convey that the options are flexible and Prague can accommodate couples and wedding parties of different sizes, budgets, personal styles, and cultural backgrounds."

NO SIZE FITS ALL

Indeed, with the ever-diversifying tourism market in Prague, it has become obvious that the one-size-fits-all (pre-) wedding package is now definitively a thing of the past. For some couples, the bulk of their time leading up to a wedding in Prague is spent with a professional photographer creating a portfolio of beautiful photos to be displayed in the couple's home as treasured mementos; the city, with its myriad settings – gardens; the river; historic interiors and exteriors – lends itself particularly well to photography, as the Prague Wedding Guide demon-

strates. For others, Prague might be just the setting for a carefully orchestrated proposal in high dramatic style, complete with a surprise ring hidden in a secret location or a band of musicians suddenly appearing to perform the couple's favourite song.

MORE THAN JUST WEDDINGS

The weddings themselves range widely from romantic summer affairs held in one of



Photo: Kurt Vinion, www.pragueweddingphotography.com

The Prague Wedding Guide is available for download from the Media section of www.praguecitytourism.cz.

Prague's scenic gardens overlooking the city to sumptuous, glittering celebrations in the historic ambience of a Baroque or Art Nouveau palace. There are as many kinds of weddings as there are couples. While some couples seek to organize events for hundreds of guests, most weddings held in Prague are far smaller, reflecting the city's compact size and intimate atmosphere. The wedding might not even necessarily be the first for the bride or groom, or it might not - strictly speaking - be a wedding at all: vow renewals or anniversary celebrations with some degree of ceremony are an increasingly popular way to celebrate the longevity of a couple's union in the company of their family and friends. As of 2014, gay couples can legally enter into a civil union in the Czech Republic, and there are no limits on the celebration. Some of the most beautiful and moving ceremonies, say the professionals who arrange them, are those booked by more mature couples who prefer a relatively small but deeply meaningful and meticulously planned event that perfectly reflects who they are and what they have achieved. Speaking of professionals, Prague is well prepared to meet the demands of a variety of clients in this respect. Experienced local wedding agencies

and coaches will not only help clients navigate the bureaucratic requirements for a legally binding ceremony, book venues and photographers, assist with translations and certifications, and of course, take care of all logistics, but they can also suggest fun and exciting ways for the wedding guests to make the most of their stay, such as the below.

AN ACCENT ON CULTURE

Says Kateřina Pavlitová of Prague City Tourism: "Prague is justly known for its architecture, music and art, and they are very much a part of any experience visiting the city, as you are literally walking among visual masterpieces. Music, like beauty, is a universal language and it's easy to incorporate it into a wedding or honeymoon experience. Booking a private box at the opera is a lovely experience I'd recommend even to those who aren't necessarily big classical music fans; or, if you are a hardcore romantic, you can book a string quartet to serenade your beloved from below your hotel window."

There are, of course, other ways to incorporate local art and culture into a wedding ceremony – from having your wedding stationery designed in Prague by a local artist using Prague motifs, to purchasing local crafts as gifts for wedding party guests; engraved or cut crystal glass is an especially inspired choice.

CULINARY DELIGHTS

However, man does not live by culture alone, and there is now a quality of culinary experiences available in Prague that was simply non-existent ten or even five years ago, both in the luxury segment and outside it. Many new bar and restaurant owners are professionals who have spent years honing their skills in places like London, Rome or Berlin and are now back, opening their own businesses; this phenomenon has

made a positive difference. With Czech white wines garnering medals at international wine shows, new sophisticated wine bars and restaurants (some in beautiful natural settings) have been popping up. With knowledgeable sommeliers at hand, a customized wine tasting event is a superb way to get your guests to meet each other informally before the big day.

Meanwhile, legendary Czech beer, while perhaps not (yet) a mainstream candidate for a wedding event, will certainly shine at any boys' night out. An ongoing Czech beer renaissance has resulted in superb local brews of all known styles being widely available in Prague. A guided beer tasting, a beer-tapping lesson, or a dinner where courses are matched to specific beers are just a few possibilities.

GETTING TRANSPORTED

One of the significant advantages of Prague as a wedding destination is its relatively compact size, meaning brides and grooms will not be spending long hours in traffic getting from one location to another. Additionally, even the very act of traveling within Prague can be done in style. Classic horse-drawn carriages are a staple of traditional weddings, while festive vintage cars (open-top or not) are an equally frequent sight. But there's more: Boats of all sizes including a genuine Italian gondola can be rented for a ceremony, reception, or photo-op; and while hot-air balloon flights are not allowed over the very centre of Prague, several companies operate them from the surrounding area, which is dotted with forests, castles and picturesque villages.

* The TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice Awards 2014

PETRIFIED DROPS OF DOVE BLOOD



A merchant's book from the 16th century states that a garnet "...cheers up the heart, chases away indecent thoughts, bestows wisdom and honour, protects a person against thunder and enemies, protects against contagious plague winds and helps pregnant women to deliver their child sooner." It is also deemed to be a stone of righteousness. An Italian legend tells the story of a thief who robbed a jeweller's shop. After being caught, the garnet necklace in his hands turned grey and matted. It regained its original appearance only when returned to its true owner.

Regardless of whether there is a grain of truth in the Italian legend or whether it is only a myth and superstition, humanity has been enamoured with the garnet since antiquity. The very first written records about this gem date back to the 4th century BC. Theophrastus of Eresos mentions it in his work, *Perilithon*, a part of which was dedicated to mineralogy. It is, however, true that at those times people were not yet able to distinguish all the features of individual stones, and thus the common name of *carbunculus*, i.e., live coal, was applied to all red stones, regardless of whether they were a type of garnet or spinel, tourmaline or ruby.

A German philosopher, a count of Bollstadt, named the stone garnet (in Czech, *granát*) at the beginning of the 13th century. He derived the name from the Latin word *granum*, which means a grain, because garnets are usually found as disseminated grains growing in rock or as sepa-

rate grains in alluvial deposits. There are many kinds of garnets and they occur in a wide variety of colours with the exception of blue. The stone we know as Bohemian garnet has a deep red colour and belongs to the group of pyropes, whose name is derived from the Greek words for fire (*pyr*) and eye (*ops*).

The Bohemian garnet is first mentioned in a writing by German physician Georg Bauer, better known under his Latin name *Georgius Agricola*, in his work entitled *De natura fossilium libri X* from 1546. He, however, calls it *carbunculus carchedonis* and quite precisely specifies its deposits in the Central Bohemian Uplands (*České středohoří*). In 1679, Czech writer, historian and priest Bohuslav Balbín named this pyrope a Bohemian garnet (*Český granát*). However, the greatest credit for creating this respected trademark must be given to Professor Franz Xaver Maximilian Zippe more than 100 years later, when he praised Bohemian garnets in a report he presented to the Royal Czech Society of Sciences. This awakened a keen and unusual interest among its members (mostly noblemen) in those stones.

The Bohemian garnet is a small gem, mostly from 0.2 to 0.8 cm. "You can

sometimes find stones that are nearly one centimetre, but this happens only very seldom. A one centimetre stone is almost a miracle," says gemstone collector and trader Marian Gajda. Yet, Bohemian pyropes are in high demand. The personal physician of Emperor Rudolph II, who was deeply interested in deposits of the garnets, noticed that despite the fact that Bohemian garnets cannot – in terms of size – compete with foreign specimens, they outshine all other garnets in the world with their splendid "dove blood" colour.

And yet, perhaps, Bohemian garnets may not have always been so small. Anselmus Boëtius de Boodt first called attention to the alleged existence of a gemstone with a splendid colour and the size of a dove egg showing no defects. De Boodt purportedly spent a lot of time searching for the gemstone, and enjoyed the privilege of having access to the private collections of Emperor Rudolph II. However, he was not successful in his search. Despite this, you can see garnet jewels in the Czech Republic that will impress you with their beauty and size. For instance, they can be found in the small town of Trebívlice, where Ulrika Sophie von Levetzow, who at seventeen was the love interest of the great Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, lived. The castle exhibition dedicated to Ulrika and Goethe includes – among other things – Ulrika's famous collection of seven Empire jewels containing the largest and most beautiful Bohemian garnets mounted in gold.

22
feature BOHEMIAN
GARNET



*Luxury spa resort
Top quality
Delicious catering*



According to the most extensive travel portal TripAdvisor, hotel Esplanade Spa & Golf Resort in Marienbad was rated amongst the TOP 10 best hotels in Czech Republic for year 2014.

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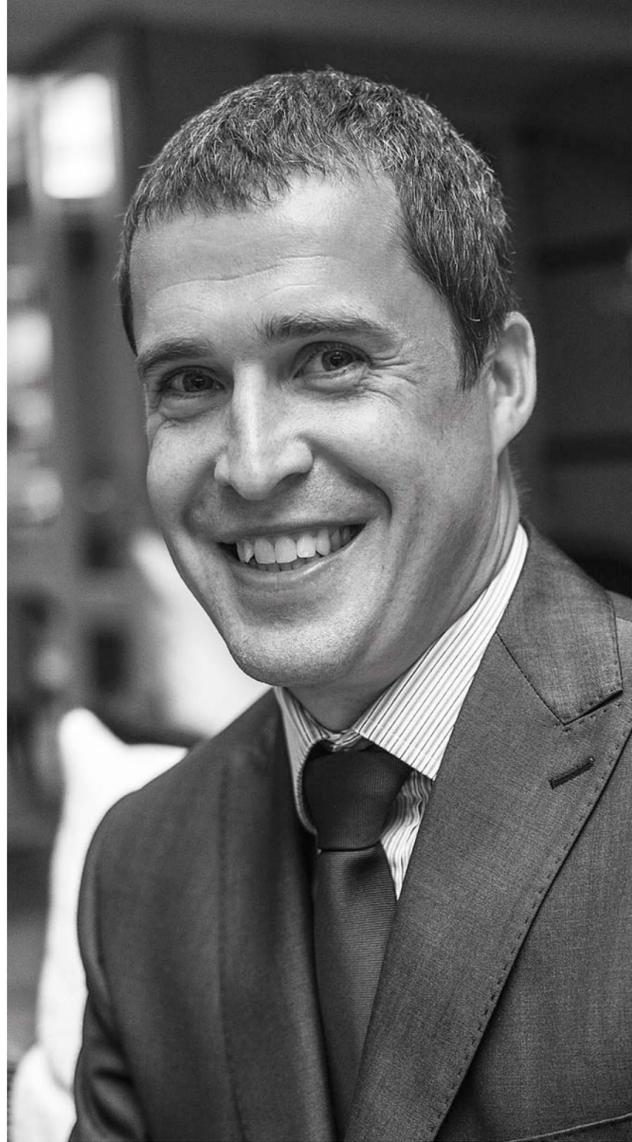
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Q&A

"The right atmosphere and perfect service make a good hotel" says **Jiří Hlavatý**, General Manager of the Aria and Golden Well hotels.

The hotels you manage have repeatedly been recognized with international awards as being the best hotels in the Czech Republic, and despite the fact that they are rather small and independent, they outperform industry giants the Four Seasons and the Mandarin Oriental. Where does their success come from?

Both of the large hotel chains you mentioned are among the best international hotel chains and they typically provide top-notch service. However, they are hampered by having to maintain certain unified standards. They are basically the same everywhere in the world, and their guests thus know what they can expect. Our hotels are owned by a private owner, thus they are not bound by any unified standards. This does not mean they are not top quality. In fact, the opposite is true. Each guest is treated as the unique individual that they are. There is more or less a family atmosphere in our hotels, which is quite often one of the reasons of their success in various ratings; at least based on the feedback we

get from our guests. Another factor is the rather low turnover of our employees. Guests who return to us even after a couple of years and see the same faces conclude that our employees are happy in their jobs. This is then reflected in the quality of their work. And last but not least, I would like to mention one of the most important quality features of our hotels, their powerful first impression. A guest's arrival and check-in is a very important process, and we pay great attention to it. Upon welcoming our guests, we show them round, provide them with all necessary information regarding their stay in Prague, reply to any queries, and at the end we offer them a welcome drink to make the beginning of their long dreamed-of holiday more pleasant.

The fact that the Aria Hotel is dedicated to music is clear not only from its name, but also from the hotel's very entrance in which the guests cannot miss the mosaic tiles that resemble a musical score. How is the musical theme reflected in the interiors of the hotel?

The musical theme of the Aria Hotel is worked out in every detail. The hotel has four floors, each of them with a different musical genre: there is a jazz floor, an opera floor, a classical floor and a modern music floor. Each room, in total 51, is then dedicated to a different famous musician. There is a Mozart room, Dvořák room, Elvis Presley room and even a Bob Marley room. There are books about the given musician in each room, and of course samples of his or her works that you may listen to on a player or on the new Apple TVs in our facility. A musical library containing a vast collection of CDs and DVDs from all possible musical genres, recordings of operas and musicals as well as various well-known movies is an integral part of the hotel. Guests may borrow any medium they want and play it in their rooms, in the library or in the hotel cinema, which can seat up to twelve persons and is equipped with a superb sound system. If one cannot make a choice, they can ask our real musical expert, music director Ivana Stehlíková who studied musicology at university and is always ready to help guests with their choices.

And what is so astonishing about the Golden Well Hotel?

The Golden Well Hotel, or in Czech, U Zlaté studně, immediately amazes its guests with its location. It is situated just under Prague Castle, and it is rife with history and romanticism. There are only 19 rooms in the hotel, but that makes its charm all the greater. The hotel's genius loci is enhanced by the amazing view of Prague and surrounding gardens both from the rooms and from the terrace of our restaurant, which ranks among the top gastronomic facilities in our country. The restaurant also provides our guests direct access to the Prague Castle Gardens and to Prague Castle, which is very much appreciated. Every day, our hotel guests gather between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. to enjoy their five o'clock tea in the hotel lounge where they can get together and share their experience from their stay in Prague. As a matter of interest, in 2008, the hotel was voted the world's most beautiful hidden jewel.

PRAGUE ZOO AMONG THE WORLD'S TOP TEN

Prague Zoo has been named among the top ten zoos around the globe by TripAdvisor, the world's largest travel site. TripAdvisor announced the winners of its Travelers' Choice awards for Zoos and Aquariums in early August.

Prague Zoo finished seventh best in the world and second in Europe in the poll. The world's best was the Henry Doorly Zoo in Omaha, Nebraska, and Europe's best the Chester Zoo in United Kingdom.

"For those wanting to see the world's most wondrous creatures, TripAdvisor has named the Travelers' Choice Zoos and Aquariums, as chosen by the community of millions," said **Barbara Messing**, chief marketing officer for TripAdvisor. "Travelers can enjoy a fun and educational experience at any of these popular award-winning attractions around the globe."

Travelers' Choice awards honor top travel spots worldwide based on the millions of reviews and opinions from TripAdvisor travelers.

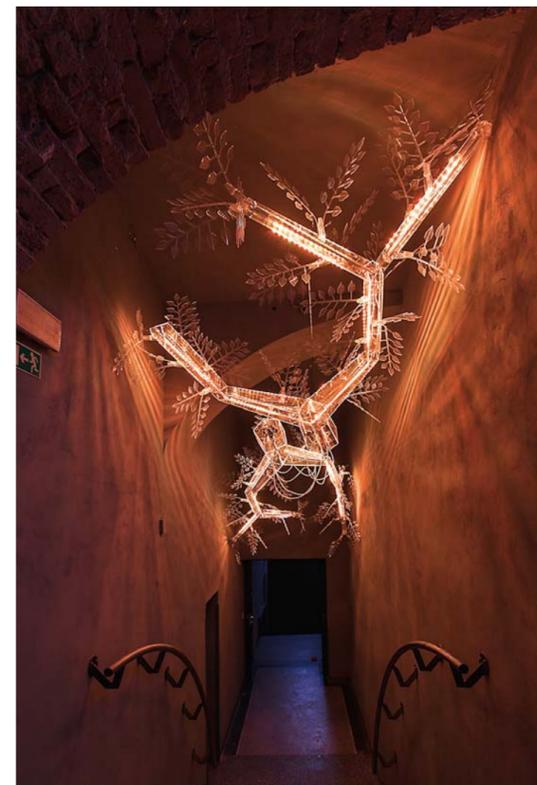
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The SIGNAL Festival Returns

**October 16–19, 2014
Prague**



FOLLOWING the success of SIGNAL Festival, Prague's first lights festival held last October, second edition will brighten up the streets, squares and parks of the city with light installations and sculptures for four nights again in the autumn.



Větvení – permanent installation in the Roxy music club
author: Michal Cimala, photo: Alžběta Jungrová



Cloud – interactive installation utilizing household light bulbs and pull strings
authors: Caitlind Brown & Wayne Garrett, photo: Luděk Neužil

With over thirty projects, the 2013 edition attracted some 250,000 visitors over four evenings.
www.prague.eu

premium picks



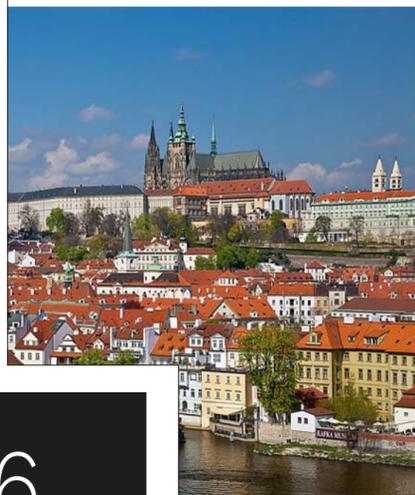
Photo www.adr.cz

Over the last two decades, Petr Kolář, Czech architect with an outstanding career both at home and abroad, has been busy building luxury houses and hotels all over the world, including the Velaa Private Island in the Maldives. These are the places he loves to visit back at home in the Czech Republic.



1 TELČ – Wonderful town, with its famous square and with its castle. You don't even have to admire the town's great historical architecture, the atmosphere is unequalled. I don't recall many such places elsewhere in the world.

2 PRAGUE – I have been traveling a lot over the last twenty years and I really love to travel, but I'm happiest when I get back to Prague. I love to drive through the old Prague and sometimes I even choose a longer way when going to my office in the morning. The view from Prague's Old Town across the Vltava river is something I will never get tired of.



3 KUTNÁ HORA – A town not far from Prague which I would recommend to everybody. And it's not just for the famous St. Barbara's Cathedral and other historical buildings, the GASK gallery in the former Jesuit College is one of the best in the country. Kutná Hora has become a place worth to see, every time I visit, there is something new in the town.



4 ZELENÁ HORA – I noticed that Czech children are well traveled these days, they have been almost everywhere from America to Asia. But when it comes to their own country, they simply do not know it. So I took my children on a road trip through the Czech Republic and it was amazing how many beautiful places we have discovered. The pilgrimage church of St. John of Nepomuk at Zelena hora is something nobody should miss.

26
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