

AUTUMN 2015

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Style and fun

MARVELOUS JEWELS

Hand-made originals

ttgluxury

FOR PREMIUM TRAVEL
PROFESSIONALS

CZECH

ARTISTS
& ARTISANS

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FOR PREMIUM TRAVEL
PROFESSIONALS

CZECH

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THE BUSINESS OF SELLING TRAVEL



Luxury is anything that feels special. I mean, it can be a moment, it can be a walk on the beach, it could be a kiss from your child, or it could be a beautiful picture frame, a special fragrance. I think luxury doesn't necessarily have to mean expensive.

Aerin Lauder

For some of us, what is not expensive simply cannot be luxurious. For some of us, luxury may be a nice little thing we come across unexpectedly that makes us happy and comes at almost no cost. After all, each of us has our own definition of luxury. So within the pages of this autumn edition of ttg czech luxury, we offer you a couple of things you may encounter when visiting the Czech Republic and you may not deem them luxurious at the first sight. Ben Hrubeš is not (yet) Manolo Blahnik, but his custom-made shoes, coming at affordable price, are beautiful and comfy and you can watch them being made or even make them for yourselves. Isn't that a luxury? What about eating out at a fine restaurant or staying in an excellent hotel knowing that the money you spend help people who have not been as fortunate as you are? Isn't that a luxury? Or what about getting a nice little jewel and be sure that it is not only beautiful and elegant but is also made only from fair trade silver, gold and gems? That is a luxury! And those are just a few examples. Come and see for yourselves, you will meet luxury here at every step of your journey.

Nada Rybárová

3
editor's letter

muž šperk,

moje vášně



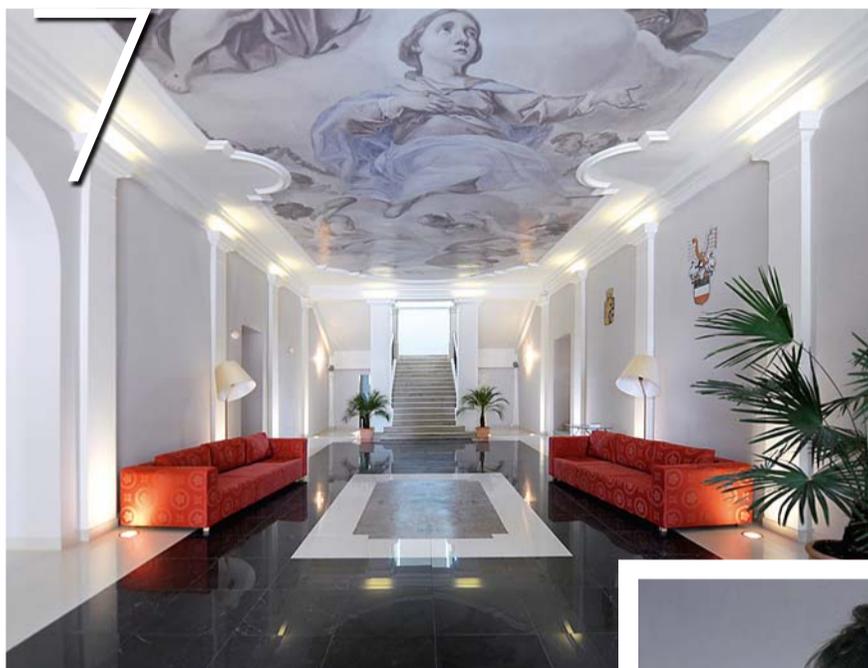
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editor's selection

Are you a responsible traveler? If so, we have chosen for you a couple of places in the Czech Republic that will give you that good feeling that by spending your money there, you do no harm to the environment and at the same time you help those who have not been as fortunate as you are.

Sheraton moments are better when shared



FEEL LIKE AT HOME during your stay in Prague! Sheraton Prague Charles Square Hotel is an inspiring boutique style property where history meets mod-

ern. Warm welcome and personalized service of hotel staff will create a memorable experience for you. At Sheraton Prague it is the little touches that matter.

Great location conveniently set on the edge of Prague's Old Town and New Town lets you enjoy main historical attractions within few minutes of walk. The elegant guest rooms and suites offer relaxing and inviting atmosphere after a busy day packed with leisure trips or business gatherings. For your meetings and events Sheraton Prague Charles Square Hotel offers a spacious conference room with day light and 5 meeting rooms conveniently located in close proximity of the hotel lobby. The enthusiastic hotel team will efficiently attend to all details of your event, so you can focus on what truly matters – your people. With the Make a Green Choice program in the guest rooms and with sustainable meeting packages you can always take the choice to think green. And at the end of the day - explore a romantic sunset and breathtaking views of the Prague Castle from hotel High 8 terrace bar!

A wonderfully preserved piece of history

HIDDEN IN THE QUIET cobblestone streets of picturesque Malá Strana close to the Prague Castle, Mandarin Oriental, Prague offers extraordinary blend of historic character and contemporary design. With its ninety-

nine rooms and suites, acclaimed dining and a wonderful spa, the hotels offers a peaceful retreat on the site of a former 14th century monastery. The Spices Restaurant and Bar promises an unforgettable dining experience

beneath a beautiful vaulted Renaissance ceiling and the hotel's spa is the only spa in the world located in a former Renaissance chapel. Coupled with the impeccable services provided by the staff, this hotel is the right place for all discerning visitors of Prague to stay in, especially for those who are also environmentally minded. In line with the group's environmental efforts, Mandarin Oriental, Prague too adopted policies to operate in an environmentally responsible way. It has recently replaced its open cooling system with a closed one to save up to 4,000 cubic meters of drinking water annually, all of the electric power the hotel needs comes from renewable sources, all cleaning agents used in the hotel are environmentally friendly and biodegradable and next year the hotel plans to build containers for rainwater that will be used for watering the hotel's huge garden. The guests also have a choice whether they want to change their sheets and towels every day and they can let the staff know in a very nice way by putting elegant tassels on the door knob.





Inspiring Happiness

EATING OUT has to be an experience and it definitely is if you choose a restaurant run by the Zátíší Group. Be it the Bellevue Restaurant where delicious dishes paired with great wines are accompanied by a magnificent view of the Prague Castle, be it the Mlýnec Restau-

rant by the Charles bridge that will let you taste Czech cuisine at its best with the Vltava river running just under your feet, the Žofín Garden in the green oasis of the Slovanský island in the heart of Prague, or the V Zátíší Restaurant in the Prague's Old Town where peeking through the win-

dow to the kitchen, you can admire the way culinary works of art are created by the chef and his team. No wonder all the restaurants are very popular among local gourmets.

The secret of their success lies within the company's philosophy: "Inspiring Happiness." That means not only passion for excellent gastronomy and above-standard care. That also means the desire to help. The Zátíší Group which also runs a very successful catering service and is the exclusive caterer of Žofín Palace and Prague Congress Center is committed to invest at least 50 percent of its profits into charitable and philanthropic projects, both in the Czech Republic and abroad. The company has joined for example the Ikerezi Project in Rwanda where farmers grow petunia and three other kinds of flowers for the perfume industry - a project that will support over 1,000 families by 2017, it helped to establish two new schools in Congo with its contribution the People in Need foundation or sent money to Cambodia to help 42 health care centers to save children's lives. At home, Zátíší Group takes part in the Projekt Šance - a program for commercially sexually exploited children, or in the Good Angel project that helps families with children where either a child or a parent suffers from cancer.

"Even the smallest effort counts," says Sanjiv Suri, the company's owner, president and CEO. His efforts and the efforts of his co-workers, however, are in no way small. So if you want to combine really fine dining with the great feeling that by tasting all the delicacies they serve you are helping people who have not been as fortunate as you are, these restaurants are where you should go.

Chateau Herálec Boutique Hotel & Spa by L'OCCITANE



SURROUNDED BY BEAUTIFUL COUNTRYSIDE, Chateau Herálec has stood for centuries in the heart of the Vysočina Region. As one of the most beautiful Czech castles in the region, Chateau Herálec

underwent an extensive renovation from 2009 to 2011 that transformed it into a luxury five-star Boutique Hotel & Spa by L'OCCITANE.

Through the picturesque landscape of Vysočina and less than an hour's drive from Prague or Brno, you will find yourself in a completely different world; an oasis of silence, peace and tranquillity. Quiet, intimate and spacious rooms with a beautiful English-style park, wonderful home cooking and a unique collection of wines from the Bordeaux region are what make the Chateau Herálec absolutely exceptional. Chateau Herálec is also the first hotel in the Czech Republic that obtained the exclusive French "Wellness and Spa by L'OCCITANE" license. Thanks to the excellent reviews given by satisfied guests, Chateau Herálec has been evaluated by TripAdvisor, the largest

global travel portal, as being one of the top-rated hotels in the Czech Republic and the best hotel outside Prague in 3 categories: Top Small Hotels, Top Luxury Hotels and Top Hotels for Service.

Chateau Herálec has a unique approach: they grow their own herbs, potatoes and vegetables; they bake their own rolls and cakes and even make homemade biscuits for dogs. They are the true masters of detail.

An informative printed guide shows you points of interest to see throughout the castle park and lists many of the old trees and their feathered inhabitants. It is common to hear or even catch a glimpse of the Forest Nuthatch, Chiffchaff, Hawfinch, Song Thrush, Great Spotted Woodpecker and the rare Tawny Owl in the park.

The 5* Superior Hotel Carlsbad Plaza

ALL-IN LUXURY



WHY DO PEOPLE continue to come to the Hotel Carlsbad Plaza? Naturally, they come for the great spa treatments; to feel better, to relax and to do something good for themselves and their bodies. Although these are all very important reasons, these are not the main reasons for their stay. In today's world, people are concerned with recharging their positive energy. They are looking for comfort and relaxation, an escape from the constant pressure of daily life. And this is what the hotel offers!

There is a variety of saunas and swimming pools, as well as effective spa treatments, both conventional based on

the unique properties of thermo-mineral water, and the services of physician of 14 different specialisations who provide a thorough examination with the help of the best modern medical technology. You may have the unique opportunity to use a medical Spa Suite and receive your treatment in complete privacy with total individual attention.

The Mediterranean-style Sorrento Restaurant offers a wide selection of dishes at their breakfast buffet. In the evening, you can dine at the world-class French restaurant La Bohème and finish the day with good friends and good music by a popular soloist.

Indeed, a wide selection it the greatest luxury. However, an unforgettable atmosphere is the most important and such atmosphere is omnipresent here. Beautiful floral arrangements. Fine Italian furniture and sound-absorbing English wool carpets. The hotel's membership in the "The Leading Hotels of the World", an alliance of the world's best hotels, and the highest international certification of 5* Superior go without saying. What is more is that all this luxury is located in the beautiful city of Karlovy Vary.

Together with the Czech Association of Hotels and Restaurants, the Hotel Carlsbad Plaza supports the Start to Life Foundation, whose purpose is to assist young people from orphanages through

training and job placement in the field of tourism. The hotel also promotes environmental awareness and is careful with its use of electricity, starting with energy-saving light bulbs to energy-saving small appliances in each room. They have their own laundry facilities with strict requirements on using environmentally-friendly practices and they inform hotel guests about environmental responsibility.

Karlovy Vary – Czech Republic

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Hilton Hotels in Prague - dedicated service and excellent facilities

HILTON HOTELS IN PRAGUE – Hilton Prague and Hilton Prague Old Town provide two unique getaways in the Golden Capital of the Czech Republic. One is located between the business district and the picturesque Old Town, the other at the gates to the city center, but both are within walking distance of the city's main tourist attractions. Regardless of which one you choose, both will offer a wide range of dedicated services and excellent facilities for you to enjoy. You can relax in the amazing spa of Hilton Prague or sip a cocktail at its rooftop Cloud 9 Sky Bar & Lounge while enjoying the stunning views of Prague. Or perhaps you would care to savor the excellent cuisine at Zinc Restaurant of Hilton Prague Old Town and know that you are actually helping the very city in which you are visiting. Why?

This is because in line with the Hilton Worldwide's commitment to corporate social responsibility, the two Prague hotels also engage in activities aimed at supporting the local communities which surround them.

Hilton Hotels in Prague give back to the community in many different ways. Whether annual dinners for seniors, garage sales to support various foundations for disadvantaged people regardless of age, long-term cooperation with Project Šance - a program for sexually exploited children and adoles-

cents that aims at returning its them to a stable life, or close ties with the foundation of Tereza Maxová dětem which helps abandoned children, these are only part of the ways that the two properties help those less fortunate. By staying at Hilton Hotels in Prague, you are helping too.



Lovely and Comfy, What Else Could You Wish for?



Sometimes they are lovely, but wearing them means suffering, at other times they are comfortable, but not quite in style, and sometimes they are both beautiful and comfortable, but lack wear resistance.

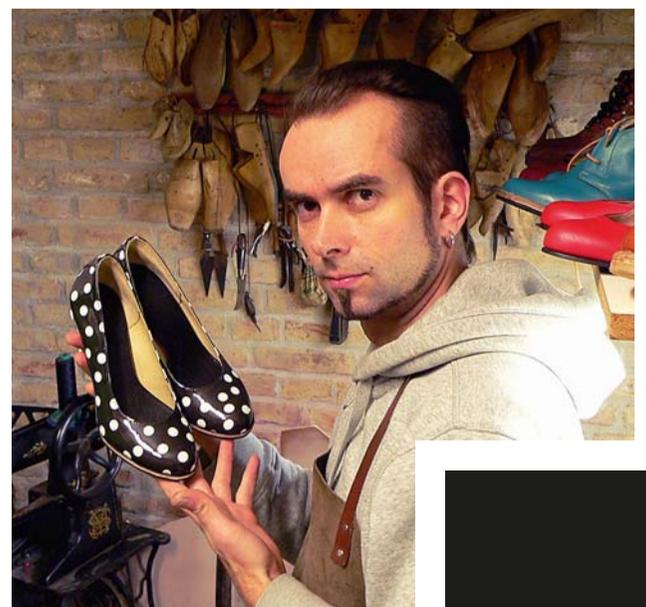
If you visit a small workshop on the ground floor of a house in the Prague neighbourhood of Hanspaulka, the shoes you get there are stylish, comfortable and at the same time long-lasting. Ben Hrubeš will tailor them for you and you may rest assured that each and every piece of his work corresponds with the Louboutin definition of a good shoe: "A good shoe is exactly like a good wine. These shoes are going to wear well and last for a long time."

Ben, however, is not a typical shoemaker. He studied biomechanics at the faculty of machinery, and it was his interest in historical fencing that brought him to shoemaking. He started making shoes for a group of historical fencing enthusiasts in which he has been active, and as he says he has learned a lot there. His customer base soon exploded and he also began making shoes for theatre groups and movie makers. Yet, after some time, he was tired of making historical shoes; he had simply made too many of them. Thus, he passed their manufacture to his two journeymen, and today he exclusively focuses on making tailor-made shoes using a traditional and time-proven method. By the way, his fencing hobby has also become sporadic because he wants to avoid injuring his fingers... Experts in dress protocol say that shoes

are the most important part of an outfit, as ill-chosen shoes may completely destroy an otherwise perfect appearance. Many men have their suits tailor-made, but fail to get tailor-made shoes to match. And that is a gross mistake, says Ben, because there are not many top-style shoes like Wholecut Oxford available in stores. The reason is that they are quite difficult to make in terms of the handi-craft – the upper is made of one piece of leather sewn (not glued) to the sole – and above all that, their typical feature is a closed lacing with the upper parts fitting tightly together so that the tongue is hidden. What matters most then is the height of the instep. Ben Hrubeš will take your measurements carefully and make these unique shoes for you. It will not be done while you wait, it will take a few days. Ben is happy if your feet are narrow, however he can also accommodate wide feet. He simply picks a wider last. It only requires more work from him to make the result look stylish.

Ben Hrubeš does not, however, make only men's dress shoes. He can make stylish court shoes for ladies, plain shoes for both men and women, or extravagant shoes if you like. He can also make belts that match your shoes. All the shoes he makes are entirely of genuine leather, so do not ever attempt to ask for imitation leather. But there is a border that he refuses to cross: he never uses crocodile or snake skin. He simply does not like to make shoes of skins of animals bred purely for their skin. He loves making shoes from cowhide or calfskin since the

skin is virtually a waste material because beef cattle are primarily bred for meat. So why not use the skin, too? Would you also like to learn to make shoes? Ben Hrubeš holds courses and workshops where he can teach you how to make shoes. Well, you may not become a professional shoemaker; if you lack the basics, he will do most of the work during the workshop and just let you do some cobbling. But you will spend two amazing days in a charming and leather-scented workshop and you will take home your first tailor-made shoes even if they are not Oxford or stylish court shoes. And when they ask you at home where you got such nice shoes you can proudly reply, "I made them myself."

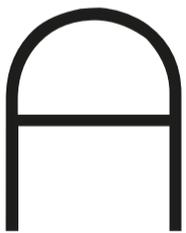


WHEN YOU WANT TO COMBINE BUSINESS WITH PLEASURE



Clarion Grandhotel Zlatý Lev

What **Francis Scott Fitzgerald** once said may not be true today: “No grand idea was ever born in a conference, but a lot of foolish ideas have died there.” International science conferences and congresses are gaining ever greater importance and are forming a solid foundation for closer international cooperation. They promote the exchange of information and most importantly, allow for direct personal contact among scientists. And perhaps from time to time, even great ideas are born there.



Although one should not confuse a conference with a holiday, it is necessary for the chosen destination to have something other than just convenient conference rooms to offer. Prague certainly meets this requirement. It is no coincidence that most congresses and conferences in the Czech Republic are held there. As a result, several of Prague's hotels have invested in the

construction or renovation of existing convention halls, as well as in the renovation of other rooms and hotel facilities.

Back to the Sixties

Parkhotel Praha was built in 1967 and devalued by structural modifications that took place in the nineties. This year, 48 years after opening and thanks to a delicate renovation, it has re-opened in its original appearance. The hotel has several conference rooms, the largest of which can accommodate up to 200 people. Parkhotel has been popular with business clientele ever since it was first built. For example, the Japanese company Mitsubishi Corporation rented a suite at the hotel that served as their Prague office. It was something totally unique at that time and was great advertising for the hotel.

Prague Hiltons and others

Hilton Prague has several conference rooms, the largest of which can accommodate up to 1500 people, and is also home to



The Mark Luxury Hotel Prague



Grandhotel Ambassador Národní Dům

The Czech Republic is much more than just Prague

There are other places in Bohemia that offer great convention possibilities. There is an Art Nouveau building designed by the Viennese architects Ferdinand Fellner and Hermann Helmer located in the heart of the famous spa town Karlovy Vary that opened in May 2015 as a new hotel: The Grandhotel Ambassador National House.

The Orpheum banquet hall, with a capacity of up to 700, is suitable for conferences, concerts and balls. Three other multifunctional meeting rooms can be combined into one unit that can hold 1,000 people. The hotel offers 83 luxury rooms, and because it is in Karlovy Vary, it also offers a high-end spa and fitness centre.

The Golf & Spa Resort Cihelna in Karlovy Vary also has a newly-renovated conference room. It was created by modify-

ing the existing amphitheatre and can accommodate 80 people. It is especially suitable for smaller events, such as presentations or golf-related activities and social events.

Finally, there is The Clarion Grandhotel Golden Lion in the North Bohemian city of Liberec. It has been serving guests since 1906, when it was opened by Austro-Hungarian Emperor Franz Joseph I for a Czech-German exhibition. The hotel was recently completely renovated and its main conference hall, Anton Worf, now accommodates up to 400 people. For smaller events, two smaller rooms are available – Roald Amundsen and Franz Josef. The hotel's library can be used for smaller business meetings. For private meetings, it is possible to rent either the presidential suite or the "Ještěd" suite. Karlovy Vary, Liberec and their surroundings offer plenty of opportunities to relax or play after spending a gruelling day at a convention or business meeting. So why not take advantage of it?

the recently-renovated Cloud 9 Sky Bar & Lounge. This glassed-walled rooftop bar offers breath-taking views of Prague. It was designed by the French architect Hélène Novák of Ian Bryan Architects. The younger and smaller sister of the Hilton Prague, Hilton Prague Old Town, just completed a 550,000-euro remodelling. The result, according to Hotel Manager Mr. Luca Crocco, exceeded all expectations. The remodelling took place in all forty rooms: twenty King Executive Premium rooms, fourteen Executive Twin Premium rooms and six Executive Queen Premium rooms. Another luxury hotel in the centre of Prague, The Mark Luxury Hotel Prague, opened several conference rooms in February. The largest of them can accommodate up to 200 people. The smaller ones can be easily converted into a hotel room and used for accommodation if necessary. The hotel's main meeting room will start full operations later this year.

The multifunctional Yard Resort complex is only ten kilometres north of Prague. In addition to offering a great gastronomic experience and golf, it also has several meeting rooms, the largest of which has a capacity of 150 people. After its recently-completed renovation, the Yard Resort can now offer accommodation in 22 stylish rooms.



Yard Resort



Prague has recently started a fresh new life. It is no longer just a historic beauty, it has now opened up to new trends. There are new bistros and small shops that sell food items from all corners of the globe and there are several more stores offering local products. And that's only in the field of gastronomy. Prague has also recently come alive with a young generation of new designers. Anyone who is courageous and has a vivid imagination can become a part of the city's new exciting landscape.



ROLLING ROUGH EDGE DESIGNERS' MAGAZINE





Young Czech fashion designers have tested the public's interest in fashion shows and exhibitions and have ventured to open their own boutiques and showrooms. In many instances, they've decided to merge with other designers from related industries and create a shared space. These are typically combinations of a workshop, studio and a showroom. Visiting such places is an interesting experience for many reasons. Let's look into the contemporary creative trends, particularly in fashion: accessories, jewellery and small decorative articles made of glass or porcelain. These items are complementary and work well together in each shop. It is also interesting to see the contrast of this contemporary artistic approach with the city's historical centre and its buildings. Finally, the newly established showrooms are captivating because of their sincerity and genuineness. Most of them also include studios where one can meet and speak with the designers and gain insight into the secrets of their ways of thinking and creative processes. Let's go to the city centre and wander through the world of design.

SHOWROOM

The latest addition to designer shops is a shared space; a studio and shop with

a simple but descriptive name – **Showroom.** (Klimenstká 3, Praha 1). Products are made with a simple and clean design, from quality materials and with great attention to detail.

Showroom. opened only in June of this year and is a joint project by six designers who all take a similar creative approach and perfectly complement each other. In addition, Showroom. introduces a special guest every three months. They are currently featuring the brand Plove. The store's founder, Zuzana Hartlová, is a designer herself with her own brand, Soolista. It has been on the market since 2012. It transforms the uninspiring uniformity of women's and men's shirts into apparel that relies on elaborate detail, minimalism and asymmetry.

The clothes sold in Showroom. are complemented by elegant PBG handbags, unconventional waterproof MONADA bags and DYAN women's footwear. There is also jewellery by Klára Šípková and JARA design.

Showroom. is not only a shop and a showcase for young designers; it is also a meeting place. You can make an appointment with the designers, get advice or arrange for a meeting.

BACKYARD

A few months before the opening of Showroom., another creative space opened in Prague 1 (V Jirchářích 8) – the **BackYard**. This too is no ordinary store. Ongoing lectures and discussions with various authors are held here. A new collection by a different designer is

presented every day. The BackYard is a peaceful oasis where one can have a glass of wine or a cup of coffee with the added flavour of creativity.

The creative mind behind this concept, fashion designer Kristýna Kubištová, says, "Last autumn, I was looking for a space where I could meet with clients. I also thought it would be nice if other events could happen here: lectures, screenings, presentations of new collections, exhibits, parties, etc. This is why I didn't want a classic store with a shop window. Most of my clients are coming to see me, not because of a shop window from the street. And so I found this little building tucked away in a cosy charming backyard. I was so excited about it that I rented it right away and hoped other designers would feel the same and join me. Fortunately, I was right."

Fashion
should
be stylish
and fun.

Twiggy

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feature
SHOWROOMS



Today, the BackYard presents different works by approximately ten artists. The award-winning jewellery Blueberries, with a typical combination of geometric shapes and natural motifs, and jewellery by Nastassia Aleinikova, whose unique approach has found its way into the collections of many foreign collectors and celebrities, can be found here. The fashion design industry is represented by Kristýna Kubištová's collection of top quality designer shirts, the street-art brand Pattern and the difficult-to-classify designer, Michaela Čapková. There are also hats by Sofya Samareva. Each piece from her collection is inspired by a different hairstyle.

The BackYard goes beyond fashion and accessories. Its Alter Deco project strives to motivate and employ people over 50 for whom it is hard to find a job. They make fashion accessories and other custom items. Each original piece is interwoven with the story of its artist.

AND MUCH MORE...

There is another designer shop that is just a ten minute walk from the BackYard called **Czech Labels and Friends** (Železná 12). Fans of Czech and Slovak fashion design can easily dress themselves here from head to toe. One can then proceed into Senovážné náměstí, to a store called **Hard Decore**, or go to the other side of the Vltava River to Malá Strana. There, among the winding streets and old buildings is another hidden treasure called **Showroom 26** (Karmelistská 26), which features a space shared by a few young designers. Lenka Štěpánková's fashion brand *Jsem*, combines elegance and femininity with the slightly avant-garde brand Katarze and leather accessories by Milimu. And as always; the designers themselves are directly involved.

There are countless places in Prague where one can discover and admire young Czech designers. Each place is unique in its space and creative approach, but are similar in the designers' belief of their originality and bold presentation to the public.



Gorjan Lazarov, general manager of the Boscolo Prague hotel, shares his views on what does it take to run one of the top luxury hotels in the city.

Boscolo Prague is one of the finest hotels in Prague, what makes this hotel so special?

I am convinced that it is the team at Boscolo Prague and the passion they have for providing great guest experience. I am proud to work with a true Dream Team, which together with the historical building of the hotel and unique design make Boscolo Prague an exceptional hotel. Our building was originally built as a bank and we still have the original vault of the bank, which today is our Cigar Bar. In addition, the hotel has the biggest five star swimming pool, which makes the ambiance of our Spa truly amazing and guests rank it as number 1 Spa in Prague. Our historic lobby is probably the most beautiful lobby in Prague and besides that can be combined in a unique event place for gala dinners, cocktail receptions, weddings etc. The hotel has 152 rooms and large congress center, which makes it an ideal place for conferences. We want to deliver a highly personalized service to our guests and create an environment where guests feel good. We are part of Marriott's Autograph Collection of independent hotels and we truly believe in the motto – Exactly like nothing else. As mentioned, the core is our people and that was probably the toughest part of the job, creating a culture where people feel good at work, where they have fun and smile, so they can pass the smiles to our guests. Since the beginning of the year I am taking care of Boscolo Milano as well and spend only a few days per week in Prague. The passion for providing great guest experience and what the team in Prague is doing every day makes me proud of each single individual of the Dream team.

Yours is not the only luxury hotel in Prague, how are you doing in terms of occupancy rate?

The yearly average is over 80 percent, which I think is very good. Because although the days of backpackers in Prague are long gone, the luxury market here is relatively small, while competition is quite big. We are trying to be creative and innovative and come up with service differentiators that other hotels do not have. We are also financially successful: we have doubled revenues and tripled the profits since 2011.

Boscolo Prague is part of the Italian Boscolo Hotels group. How big the group is and how strong is the Italian influence in your hotel?

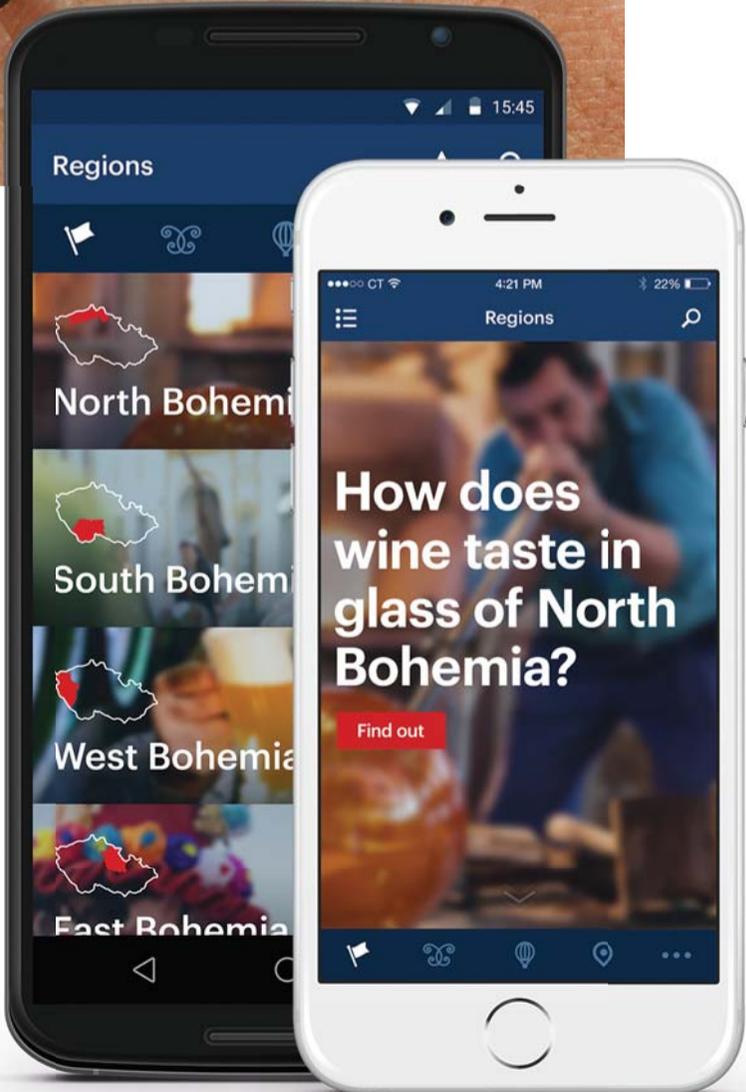
Boscolo Hotels is an Italian family company owned by the Boscolo brothers and originally comprised a couple of four-star hotels too, but then the company decided to focus on the luxury segment only. We have amazing properties in Milan, Rome, Nice, Venice, Budapest and Prague. Each of them is absolutely unique, when you enter, you just do wow! And all of the hotels are members of the Autograph Collection. We are building an Italian brand, which is spreading the Italian hospitality and lifestyle in the world. Together with the local flavor in the international destination where the Boscolo group has hotels, we are building a unique concept that is highly valued by our guests.

HOW DOES JEWELLERY FROM BOHEMIAN PARADISE SHINE AND GLASS FROM NORTH BOHEMIA SOUND?



A gemstone that shines like blood pulsing through Czech veins. Rays of light suffuse its refraction, dazzling you with its sheer beauty. No other gemstone is as closely linked to the Czech lands as garnet. It is the essence of our nation – small, steady, beautiful and world-renowned. The romantic landscape that is home to Czech garnet, combining a diversity of natural beauty with a wealth of history, has since the 19th century been known as **Bohemian Paradise**. The region's greatest fame came with a medieval "gold rush" linked to the occurrence of precious stones and the influx of hunt-

ers, cutters and engravers. Their skills honed over the centuries gave rise to a vibrant **jewellery making tradition**. The renown of Czech garnet extends far beyond our borders. Among the proud owners of jewellery containing Czech garnet have been historical figures such as Empress Catherine the Great and the actress Sarah Bernhardt. Among the master jewellery makers upholding the local tradition is **Jiří Urban** from Turnov. His most valuable pieces include a copy of the Czech crown jewels. A replica of the crown of the Holy Roman Emperor, for instance, involved an incredible 14 months of painstaking work. Jewellery made by the skilled hands of Mr. Urban has also adorned such foreign dignitaries as the United Kingdom's Queen Elizabeth II and in the past Pope John Paul II.



Where to find the lustre of Czech garnet?

The **Stone Path** is a fun interactive educational trail at the **Museum of the Bohemian Paradise in Turnov**, leading visitors through the complex journey involved in processing precious metals. But you certainly won't turn to stone with boredom. A special worksheet will help you to get to know a glittering world full of human dexterity, patience and the matchless magic of master jewellery makers. Bohemian Paradise is inexorably associated with fairy tales. And what sort of princess wouldn't own a jewellery box filled with such highly valuable jewellery? Perhaps this is the reason the region is a paradise for all goldsmiths and jewellers.

The **Stone Mason's House in Turnov** will provide you with an insight into these wonderful historical crafts. It is well worth ascending the legend-entwined **Mount Kozákov**, inside which there is reputed to be a kingdom of elves working in caves. They gather, grind and polish agate, jasper, amethyst and other gemstones, overseen by Garnet, the king of the elves. Try your luck – perhaps you too will find some of the precious stones that are here. But if you don't find any, don't despair. A gorgeous view of perhaps a quarter of Bohemia awaits at you at the peak of Kozákov.



Where is the glass-making tradition alive and where can one get to know it?

Since time immemorial, North Bohemia has been associated with the delicate art of master glassmakers. However, not many people are aware that glass brought the region not only renown but its name. At least in the Jablonec district, where in the 17th century glass production began to be reflected in the names of local municipalities, such as Sklenařice and Sklenné, from 'sklo', the Czech word for glass. Have you ever heard the tinkling sound of **forest glass**? The secret of its unique tones, quite distinct from those of normal glass, is hidden deep in the forests of

Jablonec, Nový Bor and Česká Kamenice. Thanks to the presence of iron, the glass was coloured green and frequently contained characteristic bubbles, unevenness and other faults. As soon as one poured wine into glasses made from green glass and clinked them a unique vivid ringing tone resounded. Indeed, carafes were made in such a way as to produce special gurgling sounds during pouring. Thanks to the revived tradition of North Bohemian glassmakers you can experience this unforgettable sound while enjoying a drink with your loved ones even today.



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and enjoy the radiant beauty of jewellery from Bohemian Paradise and the Pojizeří region and wonderful glass art from North Bohemia. Discover the Czech Republic, a land of stories, a land of living traditions, and revel in it with all your senses.

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Photos: Marek Musil and David Marvan

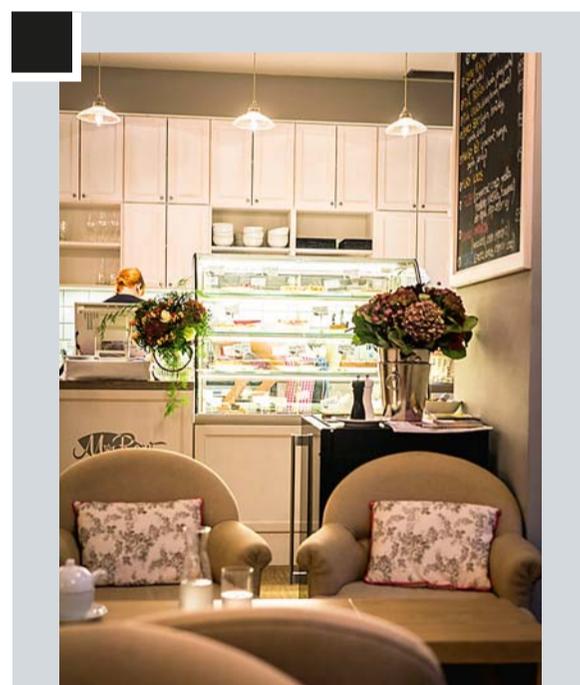




Prague again among the top twenty most visited cities of the world

ACCORDING to the recently released MasterCard Global Destination Cities Index, the Czech capital of Prague will remain on the Top 20 list of the most visited cities in the world this year, occupying the 19th position, as it did in 2014. The index also indicates that Prague will retain its position as the ninth-most visited city in Europe. London, Bangkok and Paris will be the world's most visited cities in terms of ex-

pected international visitor arrivals, with 18.815 million, 18.243 million and 16.059 million arrivals respectively. According to the MasterCard index, number of international overnight visitors in Prague will increase to about 5.5 million from 5.2 million in 2014. The annual MasterCard Global Destination Cities Index ranks 132 important world cities based on international visitor count and amount of visitor spending.



IF YOU ARE A FAN of raw vegan food, that is food prepared at temperatures no more than 42°C, thus maintaining its "live" enzymes and vitamins, try eating in the MyRaw Café coffee house in Prague's Old Town. MyRaw Café offers breakfast, lunch and dinner accompanied by savoury snacks, such as cheeses with nuts, dips and pretzel sticks. Raw vegan desserts are the house specialty, along with great fresh roasted coffee. It is "the place" for smoothie and fresh juice lovers. Even those who prefer wine are not left out: excellent organic wines from selected Czech winemakers are served here.

COZY BLEND OF WOOD AND LEATHER

ONE can easily spend hours in the award-winning Café Lounge, a warm and lovely café restaurant in Prague's Lesser Town, sipping gorgeous wines and tasting delicious starters, hot savory soups, fresh crisp salads or some of the mains. The excellent food, cheerful staff and comfortable yet classy atmosphere are sure to delight whether you are stopping for breakfast, lunch or dinner, or just to savor an afternoon coffee or an evening glass of wine with friends. The welcoming interior is a cozy blend of wood and leather with elegant framed art and a neutral color scheme backed by soft lighting. All that coupled with a piece of history in the Café Lounge's backyard – a renovated fragment of the Hunger Wall commissioned by King Charles IV and built by serfs for loaves of bread in the 14th century in order to protect the precious Prague Castle and its grounds.



The Buddha-Bar Hotel Prague has been inducted into the Travel Hall of Fame

THE FIVE-STAR Buddha-Bar Hotel Prague won its sixth Certificate of Excellence by the travel portal Tripadvisor.com and has been inducted into its Hall of Fame. Only businesses that have been awarded the certificate at least 5 years in a row can be entered into the Certificate of Excellence Hall of Fame.

"We are very happy to receive this award and are especially pleased that the guests appreciate the location, the amenities and the attitude and professionalism of our staff at this boutique hotel. Hospitality is all about people and our team has been hard at it for more

than six years, steadily raising the bar for service that we set when we opened in January 2009," says Director Veronika Fajčíková of The Buddha-Bar Hotel Prague.

The luxurious Buddha-Bar Hotel Prague is located in the center of Prague. In addition to last year's third place in the Travelers' Choice Awards poll (which recognizes only the best Czech hotels), it has also placed in the Canadian Reader's Digest TOP 10 most romantic hotels in the world and was declared one of the "hottest new European hotels" by The Sunday Times.



SPICES RESTAURANT AND BAR

Lovers of Asian cuisine should include a new place in their Prague restaurant plans: the recently-opened Spices Restaurant and Bar at the Mandarin Oriental, Prague in Malá Strana. Chef Jiří Štíft has introduced an entirely new concept of Asian cuisine, one that is focused on original regional specialties and drinks served in a new interior that effortlessly blends the magical atmosphere of a 17th-century convent with modern design elements. And what makes Spices Restaurant and Bar different from the competition? The main difference lies in the authenticity of the Asian dishes, which are under the strict supervision of Jiří Štíft and his Asian colleagues, who together add a contemporary touch. Food is served family-style, so the guests literally feel like they are in Asia. The authentic flavor of these dishes is prepared from carefully-selected fresh ingredients and is enhanced by the fact that the chefs complete the dishes right in front of the guests at their tables. Chef Jiří Štíft guarantees excellent food, drinks and service. He gained his experience on the Queen Elizabeth II cruise ship, and later during his six-year engagement at the Prague Radisson SAS Alcron. It was at this location where Chef Jiří Štíft, (the only Czech chef to do so) was awarded the prestigious Diamond Award from the American Academy of Hospitality.

The interior of the restaurant and bar at Mandarin Oriental, Prague, was designed by the British design studio Black Sheep.



Suite Getaway at Four Seasons Hotel Prague

THIS year, guests can experience the „suite life“ at Four Seasons Hotel Prague. The Suite Getaway package includes luxurious accommodation in newly renovated suites, American breakfast either at the hotel's CottoCrudo restaurant or in the room, one-way limousine transfers from the airport to the Hotel and 25 percent savings on any of the Hotel's Spa treatments during the stay. The offer can be booked with rates starting at EUR 885 per night. Four Seasons Hotel Prague offers twenty suites among its 161 rooms, and they vary in design from more contemporary to classic with a historical ambiance. "I would recommend staying in one of our River Suites offering one-of-a-kind views of the Prague Castle, Lesser Town and Vltava River. You feel you have Prague on the palm of your hand," says Petr Zezula, Chef Concierge.



ELEGANT AND BEAUTIFUL



An age-old truth says that hardly anything pleases a woman as much as a jewel; and in fact, even men often like to grace themselves with some jewellery. Prehistoric men, too, liked to decorate themselves with jewels made of natural materials – flowers, bones, shells or teeth. We are simply quite vain and surround ourselves with beautiful things.

Elizabith Taylor said that “Big girls need big diamonds”, but it does not have to be diamonds to make a jewel splendid and valuable. A truly beautiful jewel is often beautiful namely by its brilliance and workmanship, which often exceed the value of its material from which it is made. And so when you during your visit to the Czech Republic want to please yourself or someone close to you, do not insist only on diamonds or jewels made by renowned international jewellery companies. There are many other marvelous jewels made by exceptional Czech artists, and each and every one of them will be a hand-made original.

One of the best-known Czech jewellery companies, which incidentally is celebrating its one hundredth anniversary, is the Belda Factory. It was founded by Ladislav Belda, who upon graduating the school of business left for Germany, where he worked as a bank officer. Yet he longed for life in America and so he got himself hired as a sailor on a ship to New York. And there he began to make waxed pearls – glass beads soaked in a special lacquer that imitated real pearls. Many families in the Jablonec region where he came from made their living by making such waxed pearls. He started to make simple bijouterie from them and eventually achieved success with it. In 1915, he founded a jewellery company in Manhattan called Belda Beads&Co. In 1922, he returned home and established a jewellery workshop in Turnov, where he soon became one of the most important Czech jewellers and bijouterie manufacturers. After the Communist coup in 1948,

Will the people
in the cheaper
seats clap
your hands?
And the rest
of you, if you'll
just rattle your
jewelry.

John Lennon



he lost his company and all equipment – the machines were scrapped and the workshop was turned to a shoemaking cooperative. However, after the fall of the Iron Curtain, his son Jiří and grandson Jiří Belda junior revived the factory. Jiří Belda junior now manages the entire company under its current business name, Belda Factory. As first, they began to produce jewels in small quantities, but now, Jiří Belda junior produces not only own jewels, but also works with other well-known jewel designers. The company has produced jewels designed by Eva Jiříčková, the Olgoj Chorchoj studio and by Maxim Velčovský. It also successfully works with Alfons Mucha's granddaughter, architect Jarmila Plocková. The result of their collaboration is a collection of original jewels based on Mucha's designs, which is actually the very first time they have been produced.

Mooyyy is much younger; the company has just started operations. But this brand with its motto "My Jewel, My Passion" has a lot to offer, above all their yoga-inspired hand-made jewels. They are made of silver, either gilded or patinated. They also use lava stones, pearls and rose quartzes, but work mainly with the seeds from the evergreen elaeocarpus ganitrus tree called rudraksha, which is said to have wholesome effects on the human mind and body. Regardless the effects of this seed, the jewels in which it is incorporated are truly marvellous. The company is currently working on four collections, one basic that works with yoga symbols, and three original designer collections created by three significant Czech designers, Lucie Koldová, Anna Steinerová and Mirka Talavašková. Lucie Koldová is a well-known furniture and lights designer. For the MOOYYY brand,

she created the SENSO jewel collection that combines her unique and grace with spiritual yoga symbols. Mirka Talavašková, on the other hand, is among the leading Czech fashion designers, and for the creation of her CHIA jewel collection, she worked mainly with pearls, lava stones and rose quartzes, all supplemented with the rudraksha seeds. Anna Steinerová, creator of the RUDRA collection, is a jewellery-maker who focuses most often on the minimalistic form of a jewel, and places emphasis on witticism and irony. Jeweller Tereza Houdková might not come up with gold rings with diamonds, but you may be assured her jewels will conjure up a smile on your face. For instance, some of her jewels are made of scraps from the snowboard-making process. Her collection entitled "Let it Snow" represents a series of dream-like chains, brooches and rings made of process waste. When the snowboard base is last polished in a factory, there are tiny plastic shavings that resemble snow that fall off the snowboard. They are firm and yet ultralight, and in combination with, for instance pearls, they give rise to a truly unique jewel. Tereza Houdková of course does not rely only on waste; she is currently working with fair trade silver, gold and gems. This is precisely her idea of luxury: a unique product with a specific creator and a story, and the applied material is at the same time an investment – responsibly extracted gold and gems from a safe origin. Even these jewels do not lack their esprit: for instance, there is an engagement ring made of white and yellow gold with a diamond she customized for a certain wine maker.



premium picks



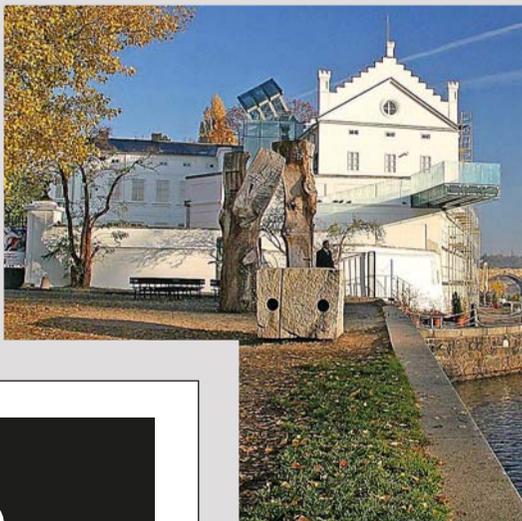
Sanjiv Suri,

founder, president & CEO of Zátíší Group, a company operating four notable restaurants in Prague, has been living in the Czech Republic since early 1990s. These are the places he loves to visit in the country he calls his second home.



1 CHATEAU MCELY – Absolutely perfect when one needs some relaxation. Less than one-hour drive from Prague, but you will feel infinitely far from everyday stress and worries in this luxury chateau hotel. It has everything you may wish for: natural swimming pool, outdoor whirlpool, tennis, volleyball and basketball courts, and you can also rent a bike or scooter for a little ride in the area. And the service is exceptional, I rate it amongst the best in the world.

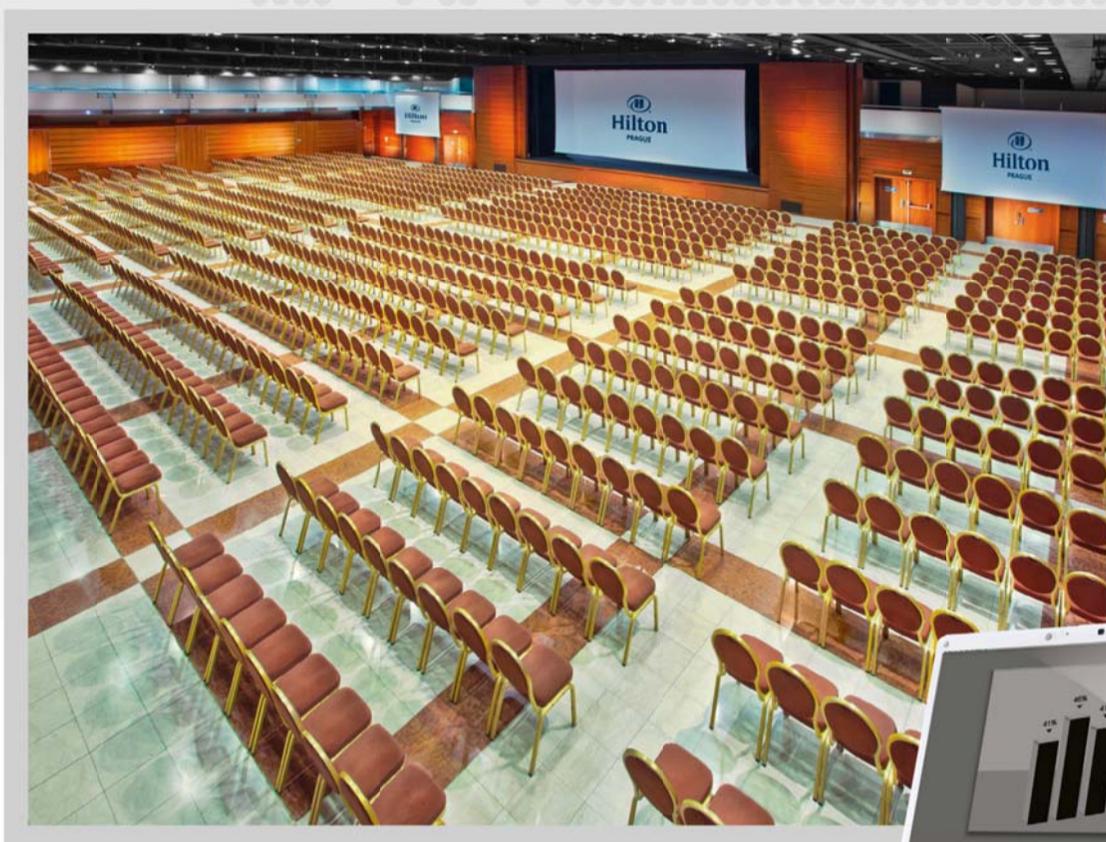
2 MUSEUM KAMPA – Known to locals as the Sova Mills, named after one of its 15th century owners Vaclav Sova, the picturesque building at the left bank of the Vltava river next to the famous Charles bridge was abandoned and left to its own fate for years until prominent art collector Meda Mladek decided to turn it into a museum. Museum Kampa opened in 2003 and soon has become one of the most visited gallery in Prague for its remarkable collections of modern art.



3 THE BELLEVUE RESTAURANT IN PRAGUE – I can't resist the temptation to commend the Bellevue restaurant. Not because of the food (which is absolutely delicious, of course), but because of the view. After all, the name of the restaurant seems to be self explanatory. Just imagine, sitting on the terrace, sipping wine and gazing at the Prague Castle on a hill just across the softly murmuring Vltava river...

4 KRKONOŠE MOUNTAINS – Not exactly the highest in the world, but definitely the top mountains in the Czech Republic. Their nature is unique, with steep glacial corries, mountain meadows, rocky ridges and picturesque valleys. Also, the Krkonoše mountains have the largest number of waterfalls in the country, many of them very tall or large, but all of them very beautiful. Perfect for winter and also for summer vacation. Špindlerův Mlýn, the country's most famous ski resort that lies on the Elbe river, just a few kilometers from it's source, is the best place to stay in when visiting the mountains.





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