

# 100 YEARS OF Hospitality

Stories To Tell, Stories To Share





Michael Specking



Christian Schwenke

Dear Team Members of Hilton Hotels in Prague,

# Let Us Tell You Our Story...

A century of filling the earth with the light and warmth of hospitality.

As Hilton celebrates its 100th anniversary, it is the perfect time to think about the warmth and hospitality Hilton Hotels in Prague have brought to the city of 100 spires. Now is the occasion to reflect on the people who have created the atmosphere and spirit that isn't only felt by our guests, but by our partners and the city itself. The work you do every day is work you should be proud of, not only within the property itself but throughout the community. Many team members have passed through our doors, and all have contributed to the award-winning hotel brand we are honored to be a part of. Our sincere thanks to all of you. Here are some of our stories we would like to share.

**Michael Specking**  
General Manager, Hilton Prague

**Christian Schwenke**  
General Manager, Hilton Prague Old Town

# Dip Into The Past

## WHO WE ARE

### HILTON PRAGUE

Hilton Prague is an award-winning downtown business hotel located in the heart of the Czech capital with four floors of meeting spaces, a large capacity of guestrooms, three restaurants, two bars, health club & spa, and multiple convention and banquet spaces, catering for groups of various sizes from 10 up to 2000 delegates, all in one welcoming, contemporary-design space.

### HILTON PRAGUE OLD TOWN

Nestled in the heart of the "City of a Hundred Spires", Hilton Prague Old Town creates a sophisticated retreat with its authentic art deco interiors, cosy ambience, more than 1,200 square meters of function space, health club & spa, and stylish restaurant and lounge & bar. The welcoming team captures Prague's charm and generosity with personal service to create a truly seamless experience for guests.

## BUILDING OF HOTEL ATRIUM IN 1989

State-owned tourism agency Čedok partnered with the French company CBC Paris to build the hotel as one of the first international joint ventures in Czechoslovakian history. The building, inspired by the architecture of La Défense in Paris, was designed by both French and Czech architects, and its design later influenced the entire appearance of the newly developed Karlín area. The ceremonial opening took place in June 1991. At that time, the hotel was called the Atrium Hotel. The Hilton Prague name came into use in June 1998, however the hotel has been a part of the international Hilton hotel chain since July 1995.



Hilton Prague, lobby, 2013



Hilton Prague Old Town, lobby, 2014



Hotel Atrium



Hilton Prague, pool, 2009



Hilton Prague, floods, 2002



Cloud 9 Sky Bar & Lounge, 2015

## MOVE YOUR BODY

The original design of the Atrium Hotel included two indoor tennis courts situated on the Mezzanine level. It was frequently used by businessmen and top Czech politicians. In order to accommodate meeting segments and new trends in spa and leisure, in 2000, one of the courts was converted into a modern health club & spa, while the second one became the large and elegant Hilton Grand Ballroom.

## QUICK THINKING TECHNICIANS SAVE HOTEL FROM DISASTROUS FLOODING

Situated on the bank of the Vltava River, Hilton Prague, along with the entire Karlín area, was one of the worst-affected properties during the devastating floods that hit the Czech Republic in 2002. To secure the property, the hotel took the unusual initiative to flood the lower lobby and parking to ensure the stability of the entire building. As a result, Hilton Prague was able to reopen just six weeks later, the first of Prague's hotels affected by the floods to do so. The hotel was forced to completely refurbish its technical and utility systems, as well as to reconstruct the lower lobby and surrounding areas. Consequently, since 2013 Hilton Prague has the latest flood protection system in place.

## DRINKS IN THE SKY

Much thought was put into designing the Hilton Prague's flagship bar, built in 2008. Situated 40 meters above the Vltava River, Cloud 9 Sky Bar & Lounge is located on the hotel's roof. The venue overlooks the city and features top to bottom glass walls and two terraces. Cloud 9 soon became a staple of Prague night life thanks to its custom-made sound and light systems and unique cocktail and food concept. The bar's construction required rearranging several technical structures on the hotel's roof, as well as modifications to the lifts and access hallway. In February 2015, the design of Cloud 9 completely changed for the first time since its opening. It now embodies a more modern and dynamic look that truly brings the bar to life at night.

## THE FAMILY GROWS

Hilton Worldwide took over the operation of a second hotel in Prague in 2007. Hilton Prague Old Town opened its doors after a six-month renovation. The building, which was formerly the Renaissance Hotel, featured an interior that was completely redone by acclaimed interior designer Alexandra Champalimaud, and public spaces by David Collins. The modern architecture recalls Czech Cubism.

## CALL ME ZINC

Hilton Prague Old Town's striking Zinc Lounge & Bar catches attention thanks to its distinct metal gates. Past the bar, there is the chic Zinc Restaurant, formerly Maze, which was led by renowned chef, Gordon Ramsay and modeled after his London venue. In 2009, Hilton took over the food & beverage operation at the hotel and Maze was reinvented as Zinc with a number of talented executive chefs taking the helm over the years. In 2009, the famed traditional Sunday Roast (now Sunday Brunch) was launched and remains a popular tradition.

## REMODELLING OF HILTON PRAGUE OLD TOWN

The Hilton Prague Old Town health club & spa was remodelled in 2011 with a contemporary, fresh look providing more comfort for clients and members. In 2014, two Executive floors underwent complete refurbishment, including 40 rooms offering guests sophisticated design and upgraded facilities.



Hilton Prague Old Town, opening, 2007



Hilton Prague Old Town, Zinc Restaurant, 2014



Hilton Prague Old Town, pool, 2011



Hilton Prague, new offices, 2018



Hilton Prague, King guest room, 2018



Hilton Prague, Executive Lounge, 2016

# New Hilton Century Brings Fresh Hotel Experiences

## HILTON PRAGUE

Numerous upgrades and improvements throughout the hotel will not only increase Guest and Team Member satisfaction with the property but will make Hilton Prague one of the freshest, eco-friendly hotels in Prague. Renovations and enhancements for Hilton Prague can be found in the following areas, some of them still to come in 2019:

- Guest rooms, Executive Lounge and all suites
- Redesign of 14 M-Level meeting rooms, increasing the meeting space by 180 m<sup>2</sup>
- LivingWell Health Club & Spa with a new swimming pool
- Lobby glass pyramid roof
- Lobby bar (Zest Bar) transformation into a trendy beer bar
- Atrium Restaurant extension to 450 seats
- CzechHouse Grill & Rotisserie transformation
- Refresh of the kitchen and buffet design in the team restaurant La Cantina
- Kitchen refurbishment
- Business Development and Finance Department offices

## HILTON PRAGUE OLD TOWN

In 2018 we celebrated the completion of a renovation project which included 303 refurbished guest rooms and a 1,200 square meter conference and meeting floor. The newly renovated spaces include modern amenities while the interiors work seamlessly with the hotel's elegant art deco design, befitting its location in Prague's beautiful Old Town.

The newly renovated guest rooms have a fresh and elegant design with a mix of modern and classic elements and thoughtful amenities.

- Custom designed headboards
- Mattresses exclusively manufactured for Hilton
- Spacious working desk with a built-in USB socket
- 49-inch flat TV
- Large elegant wardrobe and a cocktail cabinet-style mini bar with an innovative draw fridge
- New carpet and a cosy relaxation corner with a lounge armchair and standing lamp
- Bathrooms with Italian marble tiling, a large walk-in shower and wall-sized anti-fog heated mirror

The 1,200 square meter conference and meeting floor with 14 function rooms, including the Dvorak Ballroom for up to 340 delegates has seen a redesign as well.

- The pre-function space enjoys ample natural light and is visually connected with the meeting rooms through a new wool blend carpet from acclaimed British manufacturer, Brintons
- New sandstone colored wallpaper with a Hanami silk pattern, supplied by Baresuqe, Australia's premier distributor of wallcoverings

The design concept is from Chada, recognized as one of the world's leading interior design studios, specializing in the hotel and leisure industries in Australia and the Pacific Rim.



Hilton Prague Old Town, guest room, 2018



Hilton Prague Old Town, guest room detail, 2018



Hilton Prague Old Town, cooling drawer, 2018



# Take A Journey Through Time With Us



Before



After



Before



After



Before



After



Before



After



Before



After



Before



After



Before



After



# Take A Journey Through Time With Us



Before



After



Before



After



Before



After



Before



After



Before



After



Before



After



Before



After



Michael Specking,  
Charity Christmas Concert, 2017



Christian Schwenke, client event, 2018

# Did You Know?

## JOURNEY OF OUR GMS: MICHAEL SPECKING

Michael Specking has dedicated his professional life to the hospitality industry. His career path with Hilton includes various positions at Hilton properties in Germany, Nigeria and Turkey. As a result of his significant contribution to positioning Prague as one of the top European MICE destinations, Michael was introduced into the TTG Hall of Fame 2018. Michael has a degree in Economics and Hotel & Restaurant management from the University of Munich. He has been General Manager at Hilton Prague since 2007.

## JOURNEY OF OUR GMS: CHRISTIAN SCHWENKE

Christian Schwenke has been with Hilton Worldwide for 18 years and contributing his skill to a number of properties in Germany, Belgium, and Hungary. Since joining the Prague team in 2011, Christian has built an extensive network of contacts both in the corporate world and in organizations such as Out & Equal and Human Rights Watch. In September 2018, Christian took on the position of Chairman of the Pride Business Forum.

## AND THE WINNER IS...

Hilton Prague has won numerous awards throughout its history including being named the best from the top 50 hotels for meetings and events in Europe by industry-leading event management technology company, Cvent; Czech Republic's Leading Hotel for 4 consecutive years - World Travel Awards 2017; TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence for 8 consecutive years and Best Business Hotel in Eastern Europe for 7 consecutive years - Business Traveller Magazine.

Hilton Prague Old Town has been awarded the TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence for 8 consecutive years and one of the Top Hotels in Central Europe by Conde Nast Readers' Choice Awards 2018.

## VERY IMPORTANT GUESTS

Hilton Prague is no stranger to celebrities. Since opening in 1991, guests have included a number of famous people and dignitaries including Bill Clinton, Shimon Peres, Willem de Clerk, Mario Soares, George Bush, Princess Ann, Prince Albert of Monaco, Ban Ki-moon, Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, Barack Obama, Vaclav Havel and Vaclav Klaus, just to name a few.

Hilton Prague Old Town is also popular amongst local celebrities, who enjoy dining at Zinc Restaurant. For example, Mrs. Zlata Adamovska, a famous Czech actress, celebrated her birthday at the hotel. The hotel has accommodated some international VIPs including Gordon Ramsay and the Crown Prince of Malaysia.

## GLASS AND PORCELAIN MAGIC IN CLOUD 9 SKY BAR & LOUNGE

The magic of Cloud 9 extends to its special dishes and cups designed especially for us. There are more than 40 crystal glasses reminiscence of classical bar culture supplied by Zwiesel. Our dishes are porcelain, from Pordamsa, and keep the attention directly on the bar's culinary creations.



State visit, Ban Ki-moon, 2011



State visit, Barack Obama, 2009



Zlata Adamovská, Petr Štěpánek, actors, 2018



Pordamsa plates, Cloud 9 Sky Bar & Lounge, 2017



Charisma, Cloud 9 Sky Bar & Lounge, 2017

### FEEL THE CHARISMA

The Charisma was created in 2008 by Master Bartender, Roman Uhlir as the iconic drink of Cloud 9 Sky Bar & Lounge. The cocktail consists of Absolut Peppar, Bols Melon, Angostura Bitter's and cranberry juice. Served with fresh chili, strawberry and basil, it remains one of the bar's most popular cocktails. 2 698 glasses of Charisma were served in total through 2018.



Pyramid glass roof, 2018

### GLASS ABOVE YOUR HEAD

One of Hilton Prague's most environmentally friendly features is the rooftop glass pyramid. The renovation consisted of switching out 2000 square meters of glass and installing 800 segments featuring sun and heat protection. The pyramid has led to a significant reduction in the hotel's carbon footprint.

### COOK AND CHILL WITH HILTON PRAGUE'S CHEFS

The new kitchen refurbishment incorporates the capability to adopt a Cook & Chill concept for all F&B outlets and conference areas in the hotel. Cook & Chill is a method of food preparation, where cooked dishes are chilled rapidly with a blast chiller, and reheated as required with special ovens designed for food regeneration.

### NEW YEAR'S PEAK PERFORMANCE

Hilton Hotels in Prague like to celebrate and entertain guests, always in creative ways. The most exciting event of the year is the annual New Year's Eve celebration. Hilton Prague's New Year's Eve event is a dazzling paradise of parties headlined by an evening-long spectacle, featuring musical entertainment and world-class performances. A choice of dreamy dinners expertly prepared by the Hilton Prague award-winning team of chefs provides memories for a shiny year to come.

Hilton Prague Old Town tempts guests with glamorous New Year's events, offering a perfect destination, choice of tempting cuisine and sparkling entertainment. Just the right combination of style, sophistication and fun.



Hilton Prague, New Year's Eve, 2017



Hilton Prague, New Year's Eve, 2016

### CELEBRATING MILESTONES

In June 2018, Hilton Prague Old Town hosted a gala Great Gatsby - themed reception to celebrate two important milestones - the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the hotel's opening, as well as the rebirth of the property after a six-month guest room renovation. The theme was the ideal match to the sophisticated art deco ambiance of the hotel lobby and newly refurbished rooms. The creativity of the event included a Gatsby story by professional actors immersed within the guests and fantastic decorations.

### WITH STYLE AT HILTON PRAGUE OLD TOWN

To match the upgraded décor in the Hilton Prague Old Town, new uniforms were recently designed especially for our team. Made by Swiss brand Modastyle, the company specializes in quality, comfortable uniforms for employees in many industries. These stylish outfits reflect the Art Deco motifs found throughout the hotel, including decorative circles, stripes and colors.

### OUR CITY BEES

On the rooftop at Hilton Prague Old Town, things are really buzzing. Literally, thanks to the beehives we placed on our roof to support threatened bee populations in the Czech Republic. Our first harvest garnered 30 kilograms of honey. In addition to having little honey gifts to share, we also serve it at breakfast every morning.



Hilton Prague Old Town, Great Gatsby party, 2018



Hilton Prague Old Town, Great Gatsby party, 2018



Hilton Prague Old Town, new uniforms, 2018



Hilton Prague Old Town, rooftop beehives, 2017



Hilton Rock Star Grammy Contest, LA, 2011



Blue Energy team, Prague Castle, 2015



Yoga class, 2017

## SHOW OFF YOUR TALENT

No matter which department or hotel you work for, your hobbies and interests matter. Hilton Worldwide offers all team members infinite possibilities and opportunities to share their talents. Hilton Hotels in Prague boast winners in the worldwide Hilton Rock Star Grammy Contest, International Soccer Cup, in pastry and bartending competitions and many more.

## INFUSED WITH BLUE ENERGY

There is a special culture within Hilton Worldwide called Blue Energy. It is a unique programme designed for Team Members to spread their passion not only for hospitality, but also for their colleagues and local communities. Be it volunteering in our communities or simply serving our colleagues morning coffee, the aim of Blue Energy is to assist team members in delivering service with a positive spirit, strength and passion. Both Hilton Hotels in Prague have been doing a superior job in their Blue Energy activities.

## FIND YOUR BALANCE

Thrive@Hilton is our journey to sustainable peak performance. Here we help our team members across all facets of their lives in mind, body and spirit. We have been coming up with innovations in all these areas, giving team members opportunities to enjoy life at work and after work, and to take advantage of life-long learning. The body, mind and spirit activities include sport classes and events, celebrations of and with team members, flexible hours and part-time contracts, travelling with the Go Hilton program, coaching, leadership and educational opportunities, community and family activities, and many more.

## COMMITTED TO OUR COMMUNITY

Hilton Hotels in Prague have a robust corporate social responsibility program, allowing all team members the opportunity to get involved in causes they believe in. A few of our programs over the years include:

- Tour for Charity: Prague city tour for hotel guests in which all funds are donated to Chance4Children. This non-profit organization assists hospitalized, orphaned and socially marginalized children.
- Rubikon Center: This non-profit works to reintegrate convicts back into society. Hilton Prague holds an annual 'Practice Interview Day' in which candidates/ ex-convicts can practice their interview techniques and disclosures.
- Support of Svetla nad Sazavou's female prison: We have organized garage sales whose proceeds benefit the prison's program which helps departing inmates reintegrate into society.
- Cesta Domu: Charity art auctions have raised money for Cesta Domu, a hospice organization which supports families caring for a terminally ill family member.
- Senior Dinners: Hilton Prague and Hilton Prague Old Town have annually organized culture and dinner evenings in conjunction with Worldwide Day of Seniors.
- Tereza Maxova Foundation: Our long-running cooperation has raised more than 1.3 million CZK to support children leaving institutional care.
- ZOO Prague: Giraffes, hippos, anteaters, lions... no, we are not talking about new team members or new menu items, but animals Hilton Hotels in Prague have supported at the Prague Zoo since 2008.
- Wild Geese Foundation: Benefit auctions supported by famous Czech actors, singers and entertainers have taken place in Hilton Prague Old Town in order to support this organization which helps youngsters and teenagers integrate after leaving institutional care.
- UNICEF: Hilton Prague Old Town has participated in a variety of activities for UNICEF, including creating a Hilton Doll by renowned fashion designer Helena Mertlova for a special charity auction, providing space for UNICEF press conferences, selling cakes in the team restaurant to support a project in Africa, and many more.



Hilton Prague Old Town, Thrive, 2017



Tereza Maxová, Tereza Maxová Foundation, 2015



Prague Zoo, 2018

# We Have Told You Our Story... ...Now We Want To Hear Yours

*"The world's a better place because Hilton was born 100 years ago, and if we do our job, the world will be a better place because Hilton's in it for the next 100 years."*

**Chris Nassetta, President and CEO at Hilton Worldwide**

*"The biggest adventure you can take is to live the life of your dreams. At no time in my four years at the Hilton Prague was there a single boring day; every day was full of surprises and "unplanned" tasks. There are not many hotels out there where you have the opportunity to learn from the best and I am very thankful for every single moment I could spend in this vibrant hotel."*

**Daniel Habersatter, General Manager, Hilton Vienna Danube**

*"Hilton Prague is an unforgettable and important chapter in my career and life. One of my most vibrant memories from my time here was the big flood in Prague in 2002, when the two lower levels of the Hilton were flooded and the hotel miraculously re-opened within 6 weeks. An unforgettable team effort."*

**Gerd Fischer, Vice President Operations Finance, Middle East, Africa & Turkey**

*"I joined Hotel Atrium Prague back in 1993, so I can say that Hilton joined me in July 1995 rather than me joining Hilton. There are so many stories... one that stands out is seeing one of the pre-Hilton General Managers arguing with US Secret Service about access to an area blocked for Bill Clinton's visit. You could imagine how that went..."*

**Martin Stolfa, Vice President, Data Strategy & Governance, McLean**

*Quote: Work hard – Play hard, but then come back and work harder. The reward will come later. And it did... There is no better place to experience and provide experience in hospitality than the Hilton Prague. Because "It Happens At The Hilton."*

*"Happy moments? There are too many to mention but the ones that spring to mind are the big events: 2000 International Monetary Fund & World Bank Group, 2002 NATO Summit, International Olympic Committee 2004, to name just a few. And of course, the floods in the summer of 2002 – just 3 months before the NATO Summit – when the hotel was at 100% occupancy and we had to evacuate 1400 guests to 31 hotels in Prague and the surrounding areas. We closed the hotel for 6 weeks, cleaned and restored it to reopen in September."*

**Petr Pisecky, Cluster General Manager at DoubleTree by Hilton Riyadh - Al Muroj Business Gate & Hilton Garden Inn Riyadh Olaya**

*"Hilton Atrium Prague will always stay in my heart as the place which gave me the opportunity to explore various departments under the Management Trainee program, gaining fantastic on the job experience from great leaders."*

**Tomas Brandeis, Director Area Controller, Operations - Finance, Asia Pacific**

*"The ability of this majestic property to be able to operate in the highest quality like a Swiss clock is thanks to the devoted team that daily commits to its success. This was a unique experience for me which has left great memories but most importantly, the professional experience I use to operate today."*

**Vieri Biticchi, General Manager, Hilton Brussels Grand Place**

*"My fondest memories are linked to the great people I worked with in this unique environment – all the senior leaders I learnt from, as well as all my peers. The fact that I still keep in touch with a number of my old colleagues is the ultimate tribute to Hilton Prague's greatest social function in my opinion – a creator of friendships for life!"*

**Boris Guerov, General Manager, Millennium Hilton New York Downtown**

*"Memorable moments at Hilton Prague would be when the jack hammers finally fell silent after the various refurbishments – guest rooms, CzechHouse, Executive Lounge, meeting rooms, the Group Check-in and Cloud 9. There was a lot of hard work with too many noise complaints but more importantly loads of learning, fun and laughter ending in some lifelong friendships."*

**Ilio Rodoni, General Manager, Hilton Molino Stucky Venice**

*"In December 2010 I moved to Prague to join the Cluster Sales team as an Assistant Director of Sales coming from Hilton Sao Paulo Morumbi in Brazil. It was my first international assignment and I still remember my first day in the office like it was yesterday. I learned so much over my four years within the team and I was also given outstanding training and development opportunities, which I will always be grateful for."*

**Eduardo Galvao, Director of Sales – International Specialist, Hilton Worldwide Sales**

*"Hilton Prague is a talent factory and I feel lucky that I had the chance to work there for seven years. During this time I was able to learn from one of the best managers in our company. For sure there were difficult periods, but to be honest, when I think about Hilton Prague I remember only the good moments and the fact that no matter how difficult the situation was, I had everyone behind my back supporting me."*

**Boyka Kamenova, Director of Operations, Hilton Sofia**

*"I came to Prague in December 2009, it was supposed to be a short stint however it lasted for over five years. I have very fond memories of the Hilton Prague Old Town, and all the achievements made during these years. Had a great and dedicated team around me which made sure we collected award after award and made the hotel one of the best hotels in Europe, culminating with the 2014 Europe Blue Energy Award, and the Hilton Award of Excellence. Prague was an amazing city to live in, a city breathing with history, therefore I enjoy coming back."*

**Luca Crocco, General Manager, AlRayyan Hotel, Doha, Curio Collection**

*"I will never forget my time in the beautiful Prague. My first GM's position, the re-branding and opening of the fabulous Hilton Prague Old Town with a 6-week notice. Blackstone owners, Gordon Ramsay and then there were the full night evacuations... what a whirlwind, what an experience. So many fond memories with the teams from both HPOT and HP."*

**Remco Norden, General Manager, Hilton London Metropole**

*"This year, it will be 30 years since we have started to plan constructing the hotel building, currently Hilton Prague Old Town. It has been more than 10 years since Hilton Worldwide took over the hotel management. In my role of the acting manager of owners, I have never met better general managers than those recommended by owners while operating the hotel under Hilton Hotels & Resorts."*

**Václav Dvořák, former Chairman of the Board of Directors of Gestin Holding a.s.**

# Thank You!



Ryan Gauci, Hotel Manager, Hilton Prague / Christian Schwenke, General Manager, Hilton Prague Old Town  
Michael Specking, General Manager, Hilton Prague



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