Baroque
Czech Republic
Through All the Senses
edition 2017
Vision of Baroque

When the enormous round boulder set atop a rigid stone sea of Renaissance finally moved, it brought down an avalanche of restlessness, changes, questions and exploration. The history of mankind never witnessed an era that wished to alter the world and turn its face to God to such an extent as Baroque. Faith was reflected in the vast numbers of crosses, wayside crosses, forest shrines and pilgrimage churches scattered around the countryside. Having once flowed like the ocean, suddenly the landscape was full of islets, landmarks and places, where just stopping or looking around would move your heart and set you to thinking.

The ostentatious scream of Baroque to the heavens will not leave anyone feeling apathetic even today. Our contemporary understanding of beauty was and still is significantly influenced by Baroque. Graceful curves, arches, spires, sculptural and opulent paintings, splashes of colour, gold everywhere you look, sculptures with animated expressions giving the impression that people were turned to stone at the peak of a surge of emotion...

And then there is Baroque monumentality. Baroque style took control of the Czech landscape and endlessly toyed with dimensions, perspectives, vistas and optical illusions. There are temples, which upon entering, make you feel as if you have shrunk and become a tiny awed observer of a magnitude reaching far beyond human dimensions. On the other hand there are churches seemingly as big as the human soul, where one feels as if they have entered into themselves.

Baroque style changed the world, changed towns and the landscape alike. New structures were erected and the old ones rebuilt – anything straight and pointed had no place anymore and so was curved into decorative arches, conforming to the phenomenon of that time – the oval shape.

Towns witnessed the mushrooming of gold-plated churches, Marian and plague columns, gratefully towering into the sky like hands clasped in prayer praising the Lord for sparing them from the Black Death. The boom of secular buildings did not lag behind – ranging from lavish chateaux, palaces and urban houses to wonderful gardens and allegorical fountains. The landscape gradually started showing off stretches of fields with walls between them and tree lined alleys. Man began changing the countryside into vast unfenced gardens adapted to an ingenious concept and ambitious plans. Having been influenced by Baroque, farmers and ordinary folk alike imparted their farmsteads and houses with a plethora of arcs and curves. Baroque altered the Czech landscape beyond recognition and similar places can probably only be found in just a few areas around the world.

Get inspired through all the senses for your baroque journeys at www.czechbaroque.com

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In a country filled to the brim with Baroque gems, it is difficult to choose the ten shiniest jewels. There will always be someone saying - why didn't you include this or that... So let us view the selected sites as dignified representatives of everything significant that Baroque means for the Czech Republic, as phenomena, that if you haven't seen, you cannot say you know Czech Baroque. In addition, eight of them have made it onto the UNESCO World Heritage List.

1. Prague
Considered to be the most significant of the dozens of Baroque Houses of God in Prague, the Church of St. Nicholas in Lesser Town is a masterpiece of the famous father and son architects, the Dientzenhofer. Not far from here you will find the Czernin Dientzenhofer. Not far from Prague, the Baroque Houses of God in Prague, the most renowned of the dozens of Baroque of God, are considered to be the most significant of the dozens of Baroque. If you haven't seen it, you cannot say you know Czech Baroque.

2. Kutná Hora, Sedlec
The breathtaking Kutná Hora, having designed the Czernin Dientzenhofer. Not far from Prague, the Baroque Houses of God in Prague, the most renowned of the dozens of Baroque of God, are considered to be the most significant of the dozens of Baroque. If you haven't seen it, you cannot say you know Czech Baroque.

3. Valtice
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4. Olomouc
The Church of the Assumption of Our Lady and Saint John the Baptist in Sedlec, Kutná Hora, is a triumph of the “Baroque Gothic” style of the ingenious architect Jan Blažej Santini. He was also behind the restoration of the nearby Church of All Saints, having designed the ornamental compositions consisting of bones in the renowned ossuary. The world of the rare breed of Baroque horses can be explored if you take a short trip to the National Stud Farm in Kladruby nad Labem.

5. Kroměříž
The Church of the Assumption of Our Lady and Saint John the Baptist in Sedlec, Kutná Hora, is a triumph of the “Baroque Gothic” style of the ingenious architect Jan Blažej Santini. He was also behind the restoration of the nearby Church of All Saints, having designed the ornamental compositions consisting of bones in the renowned ossuary. The world of the rare breed of Baroque horses can be explored if you take a short trip to the National Stud Farm in Kladruby nad Labem.

6. Zelená hora
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7. Mikulov
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9. Železna hora
The Church of the Assumption of Our Lady and Saint John the Baptist in Sedlec, Kutná Hora, is a triumph of the “Baroque Gothic” style of the ingenious architect Jan Blažej Santini. He was also behind the restoration of the nearby Church of All Saints, having designed the ornamental compositions consisting of bones in the renowned ossuary. The world of the rare breed of Baroque horses can be explored if you take a short trip to the National Stud Farm in Kladruby nad Labem.

10. Holašovice
The Church of the Assumption of Our Lady and Saint John the Baptist in Sedlec, Kutná Hora, is a triumph of the “Baroque Gothic” style of the ingenious architect Jan Blažej Santini. He was also behind the restoration of the nearby Church of All Saints, having designed the ornamental compositions consisting of bones in the renowned ossuary. The world of the rare breed of Baroque horses can be explored if you take a short trip to the National Stud Farm in Kladruby nad Labem.
Despite its relatively small size, the Czech Republic boasts more than 250 Baroque chateaux that can be found in almost every other village. Aristocratic residences in the countryside display the beauty of their ornamentations and harmony with the surroundings. A perfect witness to the love of symmetry, which was then an unwritten law. Baroque chateaux are like pearls from a dazzling necklace, which snapped above the landscape.

1 Veltrusy
A dream of Count Václav Antonín Chotek that came true. The High Baroque chateaux with an X-shaped central building looks like a butterfly on a flower. The symmetrical horseshoe of the side wings surrounds the typical Court of Honour enclosed by allegorical sculptures by Matthias Bernard Braun. The beautiful English landscape garden resembles a “decorative farm” and ranks among the oldest in Europe. www.czechtourism.com/e/veltrusy-chateau

2 Vranov nad Dyjí
Vranov Chateau is the most striking landmark of the Podyji landscape. Being regarded as an excellent example of European Baroque architecture, it is situated on a high rock above the River Dyje and conjures up fantastic impressions of floating on clouds. The chateau features the breathtaking Hall of Ancestors with remarkable illusionist frescos and a unique chateau chapel. www.zamek-vranov.cz

3 Valtice
Valtice Chateau crowns the generous landscaping and urban vision of the noble House of Liechtenstein. Baroque is omnipresent here - the town is Baroque and so is the cultural landscape of the Lednice-Valtice Complex. The massive chateau consists of a four-winged building with ornate interiors, a Spanish horse stable as well as a tastefully refurbished Late Baroque theatre. Open all year round, the Wine Salon tasting exposition will bring a smile to the face of many of a fine wine connoisseur. www.czechtourism.com/e/valtice-chateau

4 Karlova Koruna
Face to face with this unusual structure, a lover of Baroque will immediately recognize the style of Santini. Thanks to him the noble family of Kinsky gained a truly original residence, surrounded by a park stretching harmoniously along the three axes of the chateau. In addition, Santini designed a separate chateau chapel located nearby. www.karlovakoruna-zamek.cz

5 Český Krumlov
Being second in size only to Prague Castle, this castle and chateau complex owes its magnificent appearance to Baroque. Creating a splendid landmark of the town, the extensive grounds boast a fully functional Baroque theatre, one of the world’s best preserved facilities of its kind. The chateau park, the Masquerade Hall, Cloak Bridge, Chapel and Dining Hall are all perfect examples of Baroque taste and thinking. www.zamek-ceskykrumlov.eu www.ckrumlov.info

6 Libochovice
Quite rightfully referred to as the Baroque Gem on the River Ohře, Libochovice Chateau stands in absolute harmony with the picturesque meandering river. Baroque tapestries, stoves, the huge Saturn’s Hall, as well as the French garden all bear the striking neat signature of Baroque. www.zamek-libochovice.cz

7 Troja
The summer residence of the Sternberg family inspired by an Italian Baroque suburban Villa, surrounded by an extensive garden with fountains, statues, an Orangery and natural labyrinth adorns the bank of the River Vltava on the edge of Prague. It is highlighted as another triumph of Baroque symmetry as the Grand Hall decorated with frescoes glorifying the Habsburg family is flanked by several lounges leading down one after another forming the left and the right wings topped off with tower-like belvederes. en.ghmp.cz/troja-chateau

Chateaux Scattered like Pearls in the Landscape

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Baroque Czech Republic through all the senses
A Baroque garden is actually a logical extension of a chateau in the landscape. Ruled by symmetry and geometry and featuring spectacular vistas, floral displays, opulent areas of colours and shapes, as well as statues, fountains, sala terrena and gloriettes, the concept of the Baroque garden is modelled on the ideals of Versailles Palace Gardens.

1 Buchlovice
A perfect example of an aristocratic Baroque residence designed from the very beginning as part of a beautiful terraced garden matching the natural terrain. The garden starts on the highest terrace on the same level as the chateau and its neat symmetry is highlighted by ponds with fountains and sculptures.

2 Dobříš
The terraced garden of Dobříš Chateau was inspired by French landscaping art, representing a perfect example of a Rococo garden concept with lots of statues and a noticeable axis finished off with a typical Orangery resting on the horizon when viewed from the chateau buildings.

3 Jaroměřice nad Rokytnou
The interiors of the fabulous Jaroměřice Chateau merge into an impressive Baroque garden with a double staircase, fountains, statues, amazing carved benches and plant features arranged in remarkable shapes. The garden regularly hosts the Peter Dvorský International Music Festival.

4 Duchcov
Stretching from the very buildings of the chateau, the Ducal Garden boasts a system of pools, jets and fountains, along with sculptures by Matthias Bernard Braun, meticulously shaped trees, a large terraced double staircase ruled by the polygonal axis of strict symmetry. The paths here remember the steps of Casanova, Mozart, Haydn, Chopin, Beethoven...

5 Český Krumlov
Over recent decades the Baroque nature of the chateau garden with three terraces has been significantly restored, displaying a beautiful cascaded fountain adorned with statues of water deities, nymphs, and animals. The unique late Baroque Summer-house Bellarie features a Baroque kitchen and an artificial cave. In addition the Festival of Baroque Art is held in parts of the chateau and garden every September.

6 Praha
The gardens of Prague’s aristocratic palaces used to serve the same purpose as those situated around chateaux. Regarded as probably the most spectacular of these, the terraced Vrtba Garden boasts a sala terrena and Braun’s statues. However, considered as the most valuable, the Early Baroque Wallenstein Garden encompasses a pond with an artificial islet, fountains, statues and a grotto. More Baroque elements can be found in Prague Castle’s Royal Garden.

7 Kroměříž
The world’s most renowned of all Czech Baroque Gardens, the Flower Garden in Kroměříž is a bit of an oddity since it does not adjoin a palace, but is conceived as a separate entity, representing the only preserved garden of this type in Europe. It is an example of an Early Baroque landscaping concept with astonishing symmetry and geometry. Fountains, labyrinths, bodies of water and separate structures constituted a turning-point in garden development. Adjoining the Archbishop’s Palace, the Chateau Garden is partially of a Baroque nature, even though it was later transformed into an English landscape garden.
Wayside crosses, chapel-shrines, tree alleys, stretches of fields with balks, pilgrimage churches, statues along paths and on bridges, meadows, ponds, ... Landscape touched by man and transformed, a land with a Baroque soul. However, the ambition of Baroque man to glorify God’s work went much further. Whole areas became targets of their landscaping projects. Nature was subjected to mathematics and cultural landscapes started to emerge. So set off for these cultural landscapes started to subjected to mathematics and projects. Nature was targets of their landscaping further. Whole areas became glorify God’s work went much ambition of Baroque man to a Baroque soul. However, the and transformed, a land with Landscape touched by man even more harmoniously with nature. Between the towns of Jičín and Kopidlno, he built churches, chapels, chateaux, forest shrines and a system of interconnected alleys. The whole complex was intended for paying homage to the Virgin Mary.

**1 Wallenstein Landscape**
When, after the Battle of White Mountain, the famous General Albrecht von Wallenstein decided to turn Jičín into his residential town, he invited prominent Italian architects and commissioned them to create an aristocratic residence amidst a designed landscape, unrivalled in Central Europe at that time. The geometric tendencies in the countryside between Velká Ostrava and the village of Valdice join seven major points, such as for example the Church of St. James the Greater, Valdice Gate, the impressive linden alley and a summer loggia with a terraced garden.

[www.albrechtvaldstejna.cz](http://www.albrechtvaldstejna.cz)

**2 Marian Garden**
In the near vicinity of the Wallenstein Estate, Count Šlik created a somewhat less spectacular but very sophisticatedly designed landscape, where the intentions of man are fused even more harmoniously with nature. Between the towns of Jičín and Kupidlino, he built churches, chapels, chateaux, forest shrines and a system of interconnected alleys. The whole complex was intended for paying homage to the Virgin Mary.

**3 Kuk**
Another enlightened proprietor, Count Spork commissioned landscaping of the countryside around his summer residence in Kuk. The chateau with a spa adjoined an exquisite garden on one side of the river. Later he had a monastery and a Hospital built opposite the chateau ... along with several chapel-shrines, fountains and statues scattered in the countryside, uniquely combining the chateau environment with the surrounding woods. Admittedly, the chateau does not exist today, and only some of the spa houses have survived, but an exposition in the newly renovated Hospital invokes a truly extraordinary experience. Kukuš Hospital is a stunning island of Baroque art in all senses of the word.

[www.hospital-kuku.cz](http://www.hospital-kuku.cz)

**4 Broumovsko**
This time not a secular but religious impulse enabled the creation of a unique project to build nine significant landmarks of the countryside around Broumov – nine churches. Otmar Daniel Zinke, the Abbot of the Benedictine Order from the Broumov Monastery, invited for this job none other than the most prominent architecte: Christopher Dientzenhofer and his son Kilian Ignatius. Churches became new landmarks in the landscape and have remained such to this day. Wandering from one to another is magically charming.

[www.broumovsko.cz](http://www.broumovsko.cz)

**5 Skalka**
Winning off the plaque was a frequent incentive for erecting structures in gratitude to the Lord. Servatius Ignatius Engel of Engelsfuss conceived this mission on a rock promontory above Mnisek pod Brdy very generously indeed. He had a place of pilgrimage featuring the Church of Mary Magdalene, monastery, hermitage and Stations of the Cross built, having significantly landscaped the countryside.

[www.mnisek.cz](http://www.mnisek.cz)

**6 Svatý Hostýn**
Regarding a striking landmark of Hostýn Hills, the Pilgrimage Basilica of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary is at the centre of the much sought-after pilgrimage site, which boasts quite a unique phenomenon in having two sets of Stations of the Cross. This magnificent Baroque church is visible from the entire Haná Region. Apart from its dominating effect, the long staircase starting at the Water Chapel overarching the spring of healing water is another landscape-forming element.

[www.czechtourism.com/c/holy-hostyn](http://www.czechtourism.com/c/holy-hostyn)

South Moravia and East Moravia
If you were looking for a large-scale Baroque landscape complex in the whole of Europe, you would definitely end up in Moravia. The Baroque style completely changed this region. In the vicinity of Jarošovice nad Rožňavou, Slavkov u Brna, Bucharovice, Velhrad, Kroměříž, and Hostyn as well as many other sites, outstanding landscaping projects were conceived. Famous throughout the world, the Lednice–Valtice Complex began its systematic construction just around the time of Baroque. The Moravian countryside is still not only charming, but also oozes Baroque hospitality. Why not take a bike and explore it following one of the attractive wine cycling trails.

[www.jizni-morava.cz](http://www.jizni-morava.cz)
[www.vychodni-morava.cz](http://www.vychodni-morava.cz)

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Art in the Baroque period literally spilled into the countryside. Notable artists began to appear even in the most remote regions, frequently leaving behind stunning pieces of work. Music became an important part of life, even among common folk. Sculpture experienced a huge boom, painting received completely new impulses and architecture strode on at the greatest pace of all.

Outstanding Personalities of Czech Baroque

Architects
Being the oldest of the famous Italian architects working long-term in the Czech lands, CARLO LURAGO constructed the spectacular building of Prague’s Klementinum, rebuilt the adjacent Church of the Holy Saviour and designed the Church of St. Ignatius on Charles Square. Throughout Bohemia there were many churches and chateaux created by this giant. If searching for the most prominent family of master builders, you would certainly come up with the DIENTZENHOFFERS. Father CHRISTOPHER and his son KILIÁN IGNATIUS designed several amazing buildings. They often worked together, as in the case of the Church of St. Nicholas in Lesser Town, Prague. Prague’s Loreto, Brevnov Monastery, Porheinekka Palace, Monastery in Teplá, Kladuby-Convent, Broumov Monastery and its estate along with hundreds of other ecclesiastical and secular buildings throughout the country make up the fascinating legacy of the Dientzenhofer family. Perhaps the most remarkable architect of his time was JAN BLAŽEJ SANTINI-AICHEL. His vision stood apart. He is regarded as the creator of the mystical and deeply symbolic style referred to as Baroque Gothic. His most famous masterpiece is the pilgrimage site on Zelená hora near Žďár nad Sázavou, while more of his unique structures can be found in Kladuby, Křtiny, Kutná Hora, Písečný and Chříč. Santini’s work and life is explored in Mariánský Týnec Museum and the New Generation Museum in Žďár nad Sázavou.

www.santini.cz

Sculptors
Probably the most important sculptors of Czech Baroque were MATTHIAS BERNARD BRAUN and MAXIMILAN BROKOFF. It is incredible that Braun joined the sculptors’ guild with quite possibly his most ingenuous masterpiece, the statue of Lutgardis situated on Charles Bridge. His legendary statues of Virtues and Vices can be found at Kus. Brokoff owes his fame mainly to sculptural groups of Jesuit Saints on Charles Bridge. Several statues of saints standing on this famous bridge (including a wooden mould for the statue of St. John of Nepomuk) brought recognition also to his father John.

www.maxmilanbrokoff.cz

Painters
Numerous Czech Baroque masters are represented in our selection by PERK JAN BRANDL. He painted mainly religious motifs, but also created several outstanding portraits and noble houses were vying for his services. Many of his works can be seen in the collections of the National Gallery in Prague. The spirit of the grace of Italian Baroque was brought to Czech lands by KAREL SKRÉTA, who lived in Venice for years, after his family had gone into exile following the Battle of White Mountain. In Prague, he painted altarpieces in the Church of Our Lady before Tyn and the Church of St. Procopius. Another of his masterpieces is the Passion Cycle adorning the Church of St. Nicholas.

www.ngprague.cz

Composers
From a long list of cantors, band leaders and choirmasters let us choose the two most prominent names. Early Baroque is represented by the Knight ADAM MICHINA OF OTRADOVICE. It was he who gave Czech Baroque music an impulse for rapid development. His hymns such as Louňovské četi (Czech Latte), Svatonořská muzika (Holy Year Music), Česká mariánská muzika (Czech Marian Music) as well as his mass music can be heard on concert stages even today. High Baroque is exemplified by JAN DESMAS ZELENKA, a master whose creativity reached far beyond Czech borders. Admired by Bach and Telemann, Zelenka was original and unique, often considered to be a Catholic counterpart to Johann Sebastian himself. Dozens of mass and religious songs, the excellent Requiem, Magnificat, Te Deum along with the brilliant secular piece Sub idea pacis et Palmæ virtutis rightfully belong in the treasure chest of world Baroque.

Albrecht von Wallenstein
One of the most important Generals of the Thirty Years’ War, military genius, as well as successful entrepreneur, politician, horse expert and the man behind significant construction projects. Wallenstein Palace is just the top of the impressive pyramid of the incredible number of buildings he financed. His high demands on architects were legendary, mercilessly firing them if he was even a little dissatisfied with their work.

www.albrechtzvadlstejna.cz

Polyxena of Lobkowitz
The list of personalities must include at least one significant woman of the Baroque period. A faithful Catholic, patron and supporter of religious orders, Polyxena born to the House of Perstein, donated a rare wax-coated statue of the infant Jesus, which she had received as a wedding gift from her Spanish mother, to Discesoled Carmelites Friars with the Church of Our Lady Victorious in Prague. Today, the statue is famous around the world as the Infant Jesus of Prague.

www.pragesjesu.cz
Baroque Gems

There are people, who in Egypt, are content with just pyramids, in Paris with the Eiffel Tower and in the Czech Republic with Charles Bridge, while having no idea how much more they are really missing. Then of course there are people who like to discover hidden treasures. This country is full of them among Baroque pearls and gems. They are scattered around the countryside, and are definitely worth looking for and finding.

**Brno**
Young Count Franz-Josef Cernin had the family residence in Krásný Dvůr rebuilt in the spirit of the time into a magnificent Baroque chateau, logically incorporating the surrounding landscape and becoming its centrepiece. The three-winged building embraces the Court of Honour, where a trio of tree alleys used to fan out further into the countryside. The existence of the alleys is still quite visible today. The beginnings of the famous and unique surrounding park date back to the Baroque period, but it was imparted with the landscape park character some time later.

[www.krasny-dvur.cz](http://www.krasny-dvur.cz)

**Casanova's Duchcov**
The list of world Baroque personalities should undoubtedly include Giacomo Casanova. This philanderer and man of many talents spent the last thirteen years of his life at Duchcov Chateau. Looking after Count Wallenstein’s library, he was reminiscing and writing. For example he was the author of the first science fiction novel in the world. Searching for his tracks in the chateau and the gardens is exciting. The chateau itself shelters several of them and in the Baroque garden you will quite possibly be able to hear the silent echo of his footsteps.

[www.czechtourism.com/c/duchcov-chateau](http://www.czechtourism.com/c/duchcov-chateau)

**Ploskovice**
Ploskovice Chateau, a delicate two-storey structure built on the edge of a terrain fracture, adapted as a terrace with open arcade galleries in the shape of lobster claws, with artificial grottos on the level of an extensive Baroque park, was a dream-come true for the Grand Duchess Anna Marie of Tuscany. The dream of a place of refuge, home, paradise. Here every woman feels like a Princess and every man like a courteous knight.

[www.czechtourism.com/c/ploskovice-chateau](http://www.czechtourism.com/c/ploskovice-chateau)

**Krásky Dvůr**
Youth Count Franz Josef Cernin had the family residence in Krásný Dvůr reconstructed in the spirit of the time into a magnificent Baroque chateau, logically incorporating the surrounding landscape and becoming its centrepiece. Two opposite buildings, forming a Court of Honour. In the Czech Republic an absolutely unique structure perfectly representing Viennese Baroque style. The chateau is gradually regaining its former appearance and shelters various gems, such as the oldest Central European Baroque still life paintings - large canvases by German painter Gottfried Libalt. The Ballroom features the fascinating, newly restored mural by Antonín Tuvora. Thanks to his mastery, you get the impression that the painted plants grow directly from the floor and stoop over you from the ceiling.

[www.czechtourism.com/c/nehlovy-chateau](http://www.czechtourism.com/c/nehlovy-chateau)

**Nebílovy**
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[www.czechtourism.com/c/nehlovy-chateau](http://www.czechtourism.com/c/nehlovy-chateau)

**Unknown Santini**
Santini’s genius is fascinating, wherever it may be.

[www.santini.cz](http://www.santini.cz)

**Dientzenhofer’s Churches**
The significance of father and son Dientzenhofer for the Czech landscape and urban appearance is indisputably extraordinary, as they designed dozens of churches among other things. In the Broumov area you will find eight of them situated quite close to each other and representing an important element of the Baroque landscape concept. If you venture out a little further, make sure not to miss the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Přeštice, Pilgrimage Church of Mary Magdalene in Skalka near Mníšek pod Brdy, Pilgrimage Church in Čumil Svaté Márií near Sokolov, Church of the Virgin Mary in Dobrá Voda near České Budíčovice and the Church of the Birth of the Virgin Mary in Nové Město na Moravě. A must is the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Zvole. And that is just the beginning.

[www.czechbaroque.com](http://www.czechbaroque.com)
Baroque Mysticism

The love of God was awakening in Baroque man and he continued to nurture it. He built symbols of his faith everywhere around himself. The mystery of the divine intention was an essential topic of man’s life and death, which he tried to learn to accept. Modern man can understand precious little of his thoughts and desires. Nonetheless, traces of the passion, humility and love are still more than evident. And what’s more, they are breathtaking and fascinating.

Nonetheless, traces of the mysticism of death to accommodate but yet had the right to be respectfully laid to rest.

One of the world’s most renowned ossuaries is in the Church of All Saints in Kutná Hora and it clearly bears Santini’s signature. The second largest ossuary in Europe (after the Paris catacombs) beneath the Church of St. James in Brno was discovered as late as 2001 and was not opened to the public until a few years ago. It astounds and makes one contemplate the relativity of human desires. A different, far more intimate feeling is aroused by the ossuary in Santini’s Church of the Name of the Virgin Mary in Křtiny. The 12 skulls painted with laurel wreaths and the letter ‘T’ have still not fully revealed their secrets.

The attempt of Baroque man to come to terms with his own mortality is well illustrated also in the cemetery in Střílky, as the whole place is more a work of art than anything else. Its placement in the landscape displays High Baroque features, as do the statues along with magnificent stone vases and a cemetery chapel.

Let us follow the path of the mysticism of death to Mikulov, South Moravia. There used to be a beautiful Baroque Church of St. Anne with a Loreto Holy Hut. Unfortunately it was destroyed by fire, but the splendid frontage with two towers and the mystique of the place have remained to this day. After the departure of Baroque, the monumental Unreinistein Tomb was erected on the site of the former church in the mid-19th century, holding the remains of the family members even from the Baroque period. www.ossuary.cz www.tchbrno.cz www.baroknihrbitov-strilky.cz

Sign of the Cross

Motifs of the life of Christ became omnipresent in the Baroque period. Various villages felt the need to build at least a wayside cross, not to mention the aristocracy and the Church itself. The whole country witnessed the mushrooming of Stations of the Cross, which poured out of Houses of God, surrounded churches, and then ran up and down the hills. Referred to as the Czech Netherlands at that time, Šluknovsko, a Roman Catholic island in the middle of a Protestant sea, had fourteen of them built – matching the number of the stations. The Way of the Cross in Jiřetín pod Jedlovou ranks among the most beautiful in the country.

It was not only the martyrdom of Christ that fascinated Baroque man but also his birth and childhood. Since Baroque times crowds of worshippers from all over the world have flocked to the Chapel of the Holy Cross of Prague’s Church of Our Lady Victorious to bow before a modest wax statue of the Infant Jesus of Prague. Having been cast in Nuremberg using Jan Brokoff’s wooden mould, a bronze statue of the future Czech Patron Saint, John of Nepomuk, was mounted on Charles Bridge in 1683. At that point nobody could have anticipated that its installation on Prague’s stone bridge would incite such massive spreading of St. John’s statues onto bridges across Europe. Most of them, obviously, can be found in the Czech Republic as they stand on almost every other bridge.

Dozens of churches consecrated to Saint John demonstrate the respect the Czech nation has always had for this saint. Admittedly, the most famous of these structures is Santini’s creation on Zelená hora with the impressive representation of St. John’s tongue on the inner side of the dome, but most emotions will undoubtedly be aroused on a visit to Nepomuk, where a majestic church designed by Kilian Ignatius Dienzenhofer and consecrated, obviously, to Saint John of Nepomuk, was erected on the spot of this Saint’s birthplace.
Baroque changed not only the face of Czech towns, villages and the landscape, but also changed the way of thinking, habits and daily life of people. It was the Baroque period, when many of the traditions that are still very much alive today began to sprout.

Baroque in Inscribed in Tradition

considered one of the oldest and largest in Central Europe). In Veselý kopec, Zubnice, Kamenická Stráň, Přerov nad Labem, Kouřim, Příkazy and Rymice.
www.holasovice.eu
www.vmp.cz
www.czechtourism.com/c/vesely-kopec-open-air-museum
www.skanzen-zubnice.cz
www.polabskemuseum.cz/pervov-nad-labem
www.skanzenkourim.cz

Food not Only for the Spirit
The spiritual dimension of everyday life did not mean that Baroque man did not know how to have a good time. As today, food and drink played an integral part. Anyway, these are Baroque traditions that we are probably most keen to continue.

Traditions associated with beer and wine production are very much alive. In the Baroque period there was not one monastery that would not brew the amber nectar. The current boom of local breweries brings monastic breweries back to life again – beer is produced in Brněnov, Želiv, Osek, Vyšší Brod, Bromov and Stražov.

Likewise, winemakers draw on traditions rooted in Baroque. Many wine regions of “Moravia” and “Bohemia” feature beautiful and still functioning Baroque wine cellars – some of the most renowned can be found in Pavlov, as well as in Velké Pavlovice, Brno, Uherské Hradiště, Petrov, Kroměříž, Perná and Dolní Kounice...

It was Baroque gastronomy that formed the foundations on which typical Czech cuisine was built. Up to this day many chateaux put on special food days and festivals of Baroque cuisine, in particular Přerov is quite noted for them. A good guide on how to try meals, which used to be cooked in our country three hundred years ago, is also provided by the Czech Specials brands. Restaurants priding themselves on holding this title offer Czech dishes, drawing on tradition but at the same time reflecting current gastro trends.
www.czechspecials.cz

Traditional Public Holidays
Easter and Christmas in the Baroque period were far more important holidays than they are today. For people in the time of Baroque they had a deep mystical meaning. At Christmas people had not started giving each other gifts yet, but they met up on the occasion of magnificent religious celebrations, as well as folk theatrical performances and puppet shows. The theatre still plays an essential part in traditional Christmas markets, which you will encounter more or less in every major town. Enjoying Christmas in the Baroque atmosphere of Český Krumlov, Prague and Olomouc is truly a very emotional experience.

In folk tradition Easter used to also be connected mainly with the “holy” theatre; however, traditional Easter carol-singing has really not changed much over the centuries. Today the typical Easter habits and customs can be witnessed mostly in villages of South and East Moravia. Easter carol-singing, whipping girls with Easter sticks, wooden rattles, water soakings, enhanced by everyone dressed in folk costumes, carol songs, dancing, and, of course, some good wine or plum brandy.
www.czechtraditions.com

#VisitCZ

www.czechbaroque.com
Needless to say the idea of spas dates back to ancient times, but in the Baroque era spas became a tremendously interesting cultural phenomenon. Established in many places around the country, they were constructed and run by townsfolk and aristocracy as well as religious orders. In the Baroque period there were close to seventy spas in Czech lands, with two-thirds of them having been newly built.

Spa Boom

1 Karlovy Vary
It is believed that people used to be aware of the existence of hot, healing springs in the spot where Karlovy Vary stands today as far back as the Bronze Age. However, the real boom of spa treatments did not come until the Baroque period. The explosion of Baroque architecture was felt even by the spa industry. The first bathhouse, the Mill Spa, was built in 1711, when Russian Tsar Peter the Great stayed in the town. Promenades were constructed, options for providing entertainment were explored, a theatre was built, the Saxon and Bohemian Halls were erected on the very spot where the Hotel Pupp now stands and production of thermal spring salts was commenced.

This period, also saw the arrival of prominent spa experts, such as Dr. David Becher, regarded as the most important of them. He introduced a variety of new treatment methods, such as drinking water at springs, walking as part of the therapy and balancing drinking and bath treatments. He was very active in planning spa building development. Karlovy Vary enjoyed its first wave of popularity and Europeans started coming here to explore the place. The glory of the most famous Czech spa, triggered by the Baroque era, continues today. www.karlovyvary.cz/en

2 Teplice
The second oldest Czech spa is Teplice. At the time, when Baroque began to control spiritual and social life, Teplice had just one stone house where spa care used to be provided. Baroque completely transformed the town and the spa alike. The 17th century saw the onset of Teplice’s popularity as one of the spa places to visit, culminating in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, when the town was quite deservedly referred to as the Salon of Europe or Little Paris. Artists, rulers, military leaders, politicians, nobility – anyone who was anyone just had to be seen here. Goethe used to come here for six months at a time, from spring to autumn. He met Beethoven here and went to salons with Emperors and Kings.

Going back to the Baroque era, we can notice another fundamental turning point in the fate of the town – the spa became the property of the Clary-Aldringen family, who started to invest generously, building and promoting the spa throughout Europe. They began to construct new spa houses, erected a theatre and joined the spa with the chateau and chateau gardens. Matthias Bernard Braun created for them one of the most beautiful plague columns in the country. Boosting an extremely glorious past, Teplice also has great potential today. www.czctourism.com/t/teplice

3 Mariánské Lázně
It is actually thanks to Baroque that the youngest of the West Bohemian spas ever saw the light of the day. In the second half of the 18th century the place was still covered in dense forests, marshes and impassable paths. The fact that healing springs were hidden there was then known only to a few monks from the nearby monastery in Teplá. They tried to make the area accessible, but were not very successful. It was not until 1779, when the monastery physician managed to persuade the abbot that the springs were really very beneficial and that he should personally try their effects. The abbot was very excited about the results of the water-based treatment. Seven years later, the monastery finally received permission to construct a spa building, the first house of the future town.

Being one of the first noted guests to come here and sing the praises of Mariánské Lázně, Goethe remarked in 1820 that here he felt like he was in America, where a town would spring up from the wilderness in just three years. Although established quite late compared to other spas, its popularity rocketed, at one point surpassing even that of Karlovy Vary. Mariánské Lázně truly deserves its fame even today. www.marianskelazne.cz
In Pursuit of Baroque Gems by Train

Take a train ride and discover the most beautiful Baroque sites in the Czech Republic.

Practical Information

The Czech Republic is a landlocked country in Central Europe, bordering with Germany to the West, Poland to the North, Slovakia to the East and with Austria to the South. The outermost points of the country between West and East are 493 km apart, between North and South 278 km.

The Czech Republic is a member of the European Union. Since Jan. 1, 1993 it has been an independent state, previously it was part of Czechoslovakia. The territory of the Czech Republic consists of three historical lands – Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia.

Area: 78,864 km²
Capital City: Prague
Administrative Structure: 14 regions
System of Government: Parliamentary Republic
Population: 10.4 million
Religion: roughly two-thirds of the population are non-believers, Catholicism is the most widely followed religion
Official Language: Czech
Time: the time zone is UTC + 1, both summer time and winter time are used
Currency: Czech koruna (CZK)
Dialling Code: + 420
Internet Domain: .cz

Important Telephone Numbers:
112 SOS Emergency Call
155 Emergency Medical Service
158 Police of the Czech Republic
156 Municipal Police
150 Fire Brigade

Transportation

The largest and major Czech airport is the Vaclav Havel Airport in Prague-Ruzyně, which meets all European standards and has three terminals.

In the Czech Republic, traffic drives on the right, speed limits: motorway/outside of municipalities/in municipalities – 130/90/50 km/h.

The dense road network is dominated by 19 motorway sections totalling 1,247 km. Motorway use in the Czech Republic is subject to a fee via motorway toll stickers, which can be purchased at petrol stations or post offices; the drive-through toll is not paid by passenger cars.

Railway and bus services are widely used, including a network of cycle buses. Tourists can also opposing trademark for cableways and passenger boat traffic. Larger towns have very good public transport networks.

A good service is provided by the IDOS transport information system, which is a software interface searching for connections of different types of public transport, including combinations (www.idos.cz).

In the Czech Republic it is not permitted to drive after consuming any amount of alcohol whatsoever.

www.czechtourism.com

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www.czechbaroque.com
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