

URBAN LIFE

CAFÉS, RESTAURANTS, BARS AND NIGHTCLUBS

The Czech Republic is the true home of *pivo* (lager). Staropramen is still made in the capital, or you could try pilsners from Plzeň, such as Pilsner Urquell and Gambrinus, or Budweiser Budvar, not to be confused with its watery US namesake. Local hostelries tend towards the Bavarian drinking vernacular – open halls with tables and benches – and more beers will arrive without you ordering them, as there is a tacit assumption you'll continue drinking. For beer served in dimpled glass tankards, try U Zlatého Tygra (Husova 228/17, T 222 221 111). In the main, however, Prague's bar and club scene is moving in a style-oriented, cocktail-focused direction, as reflected in Hemingway Bar (Karolíny Světlé 26, T 773 974 764) and Black Angel's Bar (Staroměstské náměstí 29, T 224 213 807).

The local culinary scene is also evolving beyond the traditional staples of pork, dumplings and cabbage. Enterprising foreign restaurateurs such as Sanjiv Suri and Nils Jebens, who run the Zátíší and Kampa groups respectively, are now joined by former Nobu London sous-chef Paul Day, who heads up Sansho (see p042); and the Ambiente Restaurant Group, whose La Degustation Bohême Bourgeoise (Haštalská 18, T 222 311 234) netted a Michelin star in 2012. Other notable additions to the city's restaurant scene include CottoCrudo (T 221 426 880) at the Four Seasons (see p016), which introduced Prague to its first (and only) crudo bar.

For full addresses, see Resources.



Katr

The sounds and the scents of sizzling meat set the rhythm and pace of this restaurant, which opened in 2012 to serve organic meat and fish, from Argentinean beef to regional Czech pork. The design is a showcase of functionality by local firm defakto, who divided the three rooms with white oak frames, and added blackboards that feature menus and candid reviews written by customers. In a hands-on twist,

diners are encouraged to cook the meat themselves using gas cookers fitted to each veneer table, pulling down chrome ventilation hoods from the ceiling. Those not suited to DIY can request their fare cooked-to-order, or choose dishes from the à la carte menu, such as roast chicken stuffed with chestnuts and truffle oil. *Věžeňská 9, T 222 315 148, www.katrrestaurant.cz*

**Sansho**

British chef Paul Day is making an impact in Prague with his South-East Asian fusion cuisine, served in an informal dining space. The €33 dinner menu includes pork belly and watermelon salad, made with rare-breed Prestik pig, whereas the lunchtime à la carte service spices things up, offering salmon sashimi with citrus soy. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Petrská 25, T 222 317 425, www.sansho.cz



Kavárna Pražirna

In a city where finding good coffee can be hit and miss, Pražirna is a mandatory stop. Owner Vanda Zumrová roasts beans twice weekly on site, sourcing speciality batches from small coffee farms in Cuba, Mexico, Panama and Kenya. Baristas brew with the kind of gravitas that will make a coffee aficionado sing, and snacks here include homemade cakes, paninis and hops-flavoured soft drinks from the Černá

Horna brewery in South Moravia. This basement café – its shelves stacked with second-hand books – has a cosy feel; the vaulted brick ceilings, varnished timber floors and spruce beam bar were designed by Edit! Architects. Photographs by Jitka Horázná adorn the walls whenever there's no exhibition on display. Closed Sundays. *Lublaiňská 50, T 720 385 622, www.kavarnaprazirna.cz*



Francouzská Restaurant

The French restaurant at Municipal House features stunning art nouveau interiors, including works by Alphonse Mucha. This is a traditional sort of place, where white-shirted waiting staff dash between the rows of tables in the grand dining hall (above). The kitchen produces European and Czech specialities and is presided over by chef Jacques Auffrays. Opt for an early supper and there will still be time

to take in a performance in one of the Municipal House's concert halls. The gluttonous brunch on the first Sunday of the month is more banquet than buffet: it attracts Prague's who's who and the foie gras, game and champagne flow freely. *Náměstí Republiky 5, T 222 002 770, www.francouzskarestaurace.cz*



Cloud 9 Sky Bar & Lounge

Encased in floor-to-ceiling glass and with unobstructed views over the Vltava River, this rooftop bar in the Hilton hotel was designed by Philip Rodgers and opened in 2008. Cloud 9 is reached by walking through a theatrical, LED-lit catwalk-like hallway, a glamorous entrance that pairs well with the crowd of snappily dressed Czechs and expats. Drinks are on the expensive side, but allow yourself at least

a taste of something crafted by Roman Uhlíř, one of Prague's finest master bartenders. The aged signature cocktails are a good bet – the glittering skyline view calls for a Manhattan made with Maker's Mark bourbon and matured in an oak cask. Closed Sundays.
Pobřežní 1, T 224 842 999, www.cloud9.cz



Cafe-Cafe

Unlike many of Prague's coffee houses, Cafe-Cafe is not the sort of place where you'll find people with their noses buried in Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. Its playful atmosphere instead draws the city's gay community, fashionistas and celebrity patrons. If you're near Wenceslas Square, the café is well placed for an afternoon coffee or pastry; its famed for a sugary rota of treats including cakes like the

Black Forest gâteau, and *koláč*, a classic Czech pastry imbued with fruit such as plums or cherries. The interior features art deco-style stools, a fuchsia-coloured bar, oversized mirrors and exposed brickwork and vents. During the summer, grab a table on the outside terrace facing Rytířská, which affords an excellent view of the passing throng.
Rytířská 10, T 224 210 597, www.cafecafe.cz

**Cukrkávalimonáda**

Owner Tomáš Kyselá designed the pared-down interior of this intimate dining venue, which serves a range of pastries, salads and cakes, as well as simple, tasty dishes like tagliatelle with fresh spinach. Daily specials usually involve some variation on trout, but are dependent on whatever happens to be available at the market on the day.
Lázeňská 7, T 257 225 396



Jazz Dock

Architect Pavel Suchý's punchy interiors in this 2009 jazz venue incorporate a candy colour-scheme offset by an acid-yellow 'futuristic-cubistic' bar front made of reflective laminate. Specialist acoustic interventions reflect the importance of music to the owner, Vladimír Lederer, who, with his partner, Karla Fišerová, was inspired to create an affordable club that would bring jazz back to the people

of Prague. The single-storey structure appears to float as if moored on a narrow side-channel of the Vltava but, in fact, Jazz Dock is grounded on the riverbank, allowing for a terrace overhanging the water. The late-night music programme, which changes every three months, tends towards younger, up-and-coming artists. *Janáčkovo nábřeží 2, T 774 058 838, www.jazzdock.cz*



Grand Café Orient

For a rare chance to experience cubist architecture up close, head to the House at the Black Madonna (see p071). Czech architect Josef Gočár was responsible for the building, including the 'living interiors'. Make your way up, past the fabulous geometric balustrade on the teardrop stairwell, to the Grand Café Orient. The furniture here, also designed by Gočár, is rather sparse but beautiful.

Ask for a table on the narrow terrace to get a closer look at the architect's facade. Wherever you sit, you can enjoy the simple menu of sandwiches and salads, and our particular favourites, the pancakes, which are offered either 'salty' or sweet. *First floor, Ovocný trh 19, T 224 224 240, www.grandcafeorient.cz*



M1 Lounge

Don't be put off by the wire-glass safety doors of M1's unassuming lobby. Once inside, pull up a bar stool and watch the incoming parade; a slightly older, eclectic crowd. Or reserve a booth with a table, designed for shisha tobacco smoking. The space is raw industrial, with a DJ station (spinning R&B, dubstep, hip hop), a zinc-topped bar and an intimate VIP room.

Masná 1, T 227 195 235, www.m1lounge.com



Lokál

They like their beer in Prague, and this venue brings the traditional Bohemian beer hall concept bang up to date. Local firm Ateliér PH5 reinterpreted the interior, which features long wooden benches and illuminated wall panels decorated by graffiti artists. The Pilsner Prazdroj is served from a glass bar housing stainless-steel barrels and calibrated cooling pipes, and the food is typically Czech, although

it's far from staple pub fare, with fresh ingredients sourced from regional suppliers and the Czech Farmer's Market. The spicy sausages, served with horseradish and mustard, are a house speciality. *Dlouhá 33, T 222 316 265, www.lokal.ambi.cz*



V Zátíši

The name of this popular restaurant translates as 'still life', but a makeover in 2011 proved that owner Sanjiv Suri is not one to rest on his laurels. Slovak interior decorator Barbara Hamplová's redesign retains elements of the flamboyant original interiors by Barbora Škorpilová: the space features glass vases from Rony Plesl, Zaha Hadid bubble-design wallpaper and a Swarovski crystal chandelier. The

exhaustive menu includes wine pairings selected by sommelier/manager Libor Pavlíček, and the classic Bohemian dishes will leave a positive impression of Czech cuisine. If you're partial to dessert wine, the Sonberk Pálava, a mix of Müller-Thurgau and Gewürztraminer varietals, is delicious with a salty cheese. *Betlémské náměstí/Liliová 1, T 222 221 155, www.vzatisi.cz*



Čestr

Since opening in February 2011 as part of the successful Ambiente Restaurant Group, Čestr has proved to be one of Prague's finest purveyors of modern Bohemian cuisine. The bright, airy interior spans a large renovated section of the former Federal Assembly building, in which Czech architect Václav Červenka of Ateliér PH5 has created a striking space punctuated by a patterned glass ceiling.

Čestr (pronounced Chester) refers to *Český strakatý skot*, a newly fashionable Czech breed of cow – a hint that the menu is heavily focused on local beef. Alongside tender steaks are many other carnivorous treats such as knuckle roasted in dark beer with butter and onion. The waiters, clad smartly in brown aprons, are quick to advise on Moravian wine. *Legerova 75/57, T 222 727 851, www.ambi.cz*



SaSaZu

Holešovice is now something of a clubbing hot zone, with Mecca (T 734 155 300) and Cross Club (www.crossclub.cz) also in the vicinity. In SaSaZu, the VIP mezzanine terraces that stretch the length of the 2,500-capacity venue are the best vantage point for watching the dancers surrounding the DJ stations and the 'UFO' – a globe-shaped framework that glides through the space. When you've

worked up an appetite, head to the club's decent Asian-inspired restaurant (above). Studio GAD designed its suitably dark interior with distinctive spiralling lights. *Bubenské nábřeží 306, T 284 097 455, www.sasazu.com*



Cantinetta Fiorentina

Boasting large, arched windows looking out on tree-lined Pařížská, this stylish complement to Josefov's ritzy boutiques is set in a historic 1906 art nouveau building on the site of the former Pravda restaurant. The interiors – which have ornate chandeliers, and Tuscan plates lining the walls – retain a grand old-Europe setting combined with a modern flair courtesy of architect Šimon Brnada

of Atelier PH6. One side of the venue is a café by day, transforming into a wine bar at night, while in the white-tableclothed restaurant area (above) diners enjoy Tuscan fare – think certified Chianina beef served with black pepper sauce and green salad, pasta or seafood, all paired with a mainly Italian wine list. *Pařížská 17, T 222 326 203, www.cantinetta.cz*

La Finestra

Seen through the window, the chefs at work in the kitchen of this brick-walled restaurant will invariably be occupied with the preparation of one of the cuts of meat in which it specialises. These are imported from Italy after being aged for six weeks, although daily specials reflect an equal emphasis on seasonal produce. La Finestra is not a place for fine dining in the grandest

sense, but it does offer one of the best restaurant experiences in town, utilising trestles to serve food and decanting all red wines. The eaterie's bias towards meat contrasts with co-owner Riccardo Lucque's Aromi (T 222 713 222), which primarily serves fish. Both restaurants employ super-efficient staff.

*Platněřská 90/13, T 222 325 325,
www.lafinestra.cz*



INSIDER'S GUIDE

ZBYNEK KRULICH, DESIGNER

After graduating from Prague's Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in 2011, Zbynek Krulich partnered with Kristýna Malovaná to launch Morphe (www.morphe.cz), a creative studio which specialises in product, furniture and interior design. If he's not in his studio on Bubenska, Krulich takes his laptop to a coffee house for meetings and inspiration. He frequents experimental art gallery/café NoD (Dlouhá 33, T 736 152 015), as well as Mistral Café (Valentinská 11/56, T 222 317 737): 'I like Mistral's interior. From a design perspective, it's one of my favourite places.'

When buying clothes, Krulich prefers the streetwear designs at The Room by Basmatee (see p080), or independent local labels like Sistersconspiracy (Vitkova 244/8, T 060 436 3989), which creates edgy menswear, and often collaborates with young artists. His womenswear tip is Chatty (see p087) No (www.nofashion.eu), for its minimalist cotton tees and silk dresses. 'It's where I'd buy something for my girlfriend,' he says. In the evening, Krulich dines on simple rustic pasta dishes at Peperoncino (Letohradská 648/34, T 233 312 438), followed by some art-house cinema and drinks at Bio Oko (Františka Křížka 460/15, T 233 382 606). If he's going clubbing, it will be at the quirky 2 Patro (Dlouhá 729/37). In his spare time, Krulich likes to run. 'Stromovka Park is great and sometimes I do bootcamps there too,' he says.

For full addresses, see Resources.

