

NEWS RELEASE  
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## **PARKHOTEL PRAHA – PAST AND PRESENT**

### **Parkhotel Praha of 1967 – The symbol of beautiful 60's**

The Park Hotel project dates between 1959 – 1964, its location was most likely chosen thanks to its proximity to Veletržní Palace, where foreign trade enterprises were based at that time.

The architects were Zdeněk Edel and Jiří Lavička, with additional contributions from Jaroslav Tomáš. The interior designs were conducted in cooperation with professor Alena Šrámková.

Parkhotel Praha was opened in June 1967, an era of a relative freedom after politically and economically strained 1950's. The hotel was part of the "Interhotels" chain owned by the largest tour operator in then Czechoslovakia, "Čedok". The hotel's architect Zdeněk Edel, reflects: "Parkhotel was my "baby". It was first building I was proud of. Parkhotel is intended be a quality hotel, which will be a gem of Prague."

The name of the hotel began as the project name during the construction "Hotel by the park" (referring to "Stromovka", the large park adjacent to the hotel). According to Mr. Edel, all the workers went to Stromovka Park to relax during their breaks and to eat their lunches. When the doors opened 3 years after the construction had begun there was no doubt that the property should be named Parkhotel.

Ing. arch. Zdeněk Lukeš, historian of architecture comments: "The Elegant Parkhotel fascinated me since I was a boy. The project is from 1959 and it was totally "wow" at that time. For me Parkhotel is the symbol of beautiful 60's era."

Preeminent among the big hotels in Prague, Parkhotel was also a popular address for companies. One of them was the Japanese company, Mitsubishi Corporation (MC). They hired a suite in the Parkhotel, which served as their Prague office. It was a unique address for Japanese and foreign companies in general and also served as good advertising for the hotel. The hotel even had a telex machine, which was quite a unique feature back then.

During its era of glory in 70's and 80s, the hotel was featured in a variety of movies, for example in "Což takhle dát si špenát", (1977), "Co je doma, to se počítá, pánové" (1980), or famous series "Arabela" (1980) just to name a few.

The hotel was popular not only among business circles, but was also used by Czechoslovak and international sport elite.

One of long time employees Jiří Bejček, who worked for the hotel from 1967 till 2011, reflects: "I don't remember any hotel being better. It was successful, made a lot of money and as a team we were sticking together big time."



## Years of change

From 1990 until 2013 the hotel changed owner 3 times and, unfortunately, the course of the hotel moved further and further away from its former 1960's glory..

The hotel was completely renovated in **1993/1994**. Ceilings were lowered; lights were removed, creating a darker environment.

- The glass wall between the meeting rooms and the bar was removed and replaced by dark green thick walls and a corridor with limited light.
- The front desk was built out of proportion and created a large space between guests and employees.
- A plastic green wall divided the café area from the main dining room, and a corridor was created from lobby to the restaurant
- Oversized sofa groups further separated the lobby from the bar area.
- The bar itself was made smaller, with lower ceiling and round shape.

During the rich tourist era of **2004-2005** the bedrooms were renovated, however the public areas remained untouched.

## 2012 – Rise of the Parkhotel

In summer of 2012 the Daramis Group took an active interest in the building, primarily because of the potential to develop the land surrounding the hotel. Being a real estate company, the main interest of Daramis was not in operating hotels, however when the owners entered the hotel, they felt something special. As described by Omri Sivor, founder of Daramis “I had a feeling in my stomach that this place has potential we can work with”.

Parkhotel's General Manager, Monika Hilm, adds: „Parkhotel Praha had deteriorated to a very sad hotel whose soul was slowly being sucked out of the building and it was clear to me that no one really cared. I felt huge opportunity staring at me...”

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of July, 2013 Daramis Group officially bought the hotel. The initial plan was to invest 40m czk (€1.5m), however the amount quickly grew too over 100m czk (€3.7m).

Initially the investment plan was to focus on technical building works: elevators, building system, leaking roof (both lower and upper), kitchen ceiling leakage, air-condition etc. The list was long and all the injected money was allocated to the technical improvement of the hotel. This was decided by the owning company's technical engineers, the list was long and there were many challenges to face.

## Reconstruction 2014-2015

After a full year of studies and research on how the hotel actually looked and functioned in 1967, the 3 phase reconstruction project finally started on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2014.



The reconstruction breakdown looked like this:

Phase I: 30/05/14-12/09/14

- Meeting rooms
- Breakfast Buffet
- Public toilets

Phase II: 30/05/14- 28/11/14

- Corridor (closed for offices)
- Shop (old cloak room)
- Balance7 wellness (previous GM and Sales offices area)

Phase III: 12/01/15-30/03/15

- Lobby
- Café
- Bar

Daramis Group became the sole owners of Parkhotel Praha in July with the clear intent to return the hotel to its former glory. To make the hotel the “1960’s icon of Prague” – honoring the original architecture and design which was extremely modern and progressive for its time.



The key was to emphasize the original unique elements:

- Open, wide common spaces with minimal impact and disturbance from walls and furniture
- Bring out the keel ceiling in the lobby and the pillars holding up the boat on land
- The large open windows in restaurant/café area
- The light coming through the meeting rooms into the main lobby area through glass walls
- Restoring unique details such as the lamps on the pillars, telephone booths, art works and statues

And adding more...

- 1960's inspired uniforms; designed by Česlav Jaroš, Czech designer & stylist
- Art that the original architect only dreamt of; Robert Piesen
- Quality chairs - from the period; Czech and foreign
  - o TON; "Stockholm" (Bufet7 restaurant)
  - o Ray & Charles Eames: "VITRA" (Cafe7)
  - o Gaetano Pesce: "UP 6 Ottoman" (Lobby)
  - o MOROSO; "Take a line for a walk" (Bar7)
  - o Arper; "Norma" (Bar7)
  - o Arper; "Dlizzie" (Bar7)
- High tech equipment expected now and in the future
  - o Phone chargers in the furniture's in Cafe7
  - o Tablet bar table for guest use
  - o Extensive amounts of sockets for computer charging
  - o High Tech touch screen in one of the telephone boots.
  - o Free WiFi of 250 mbps and yearly increasing capacity

From July, 2013 to date the full investment into the reconstruction is close to 100 000 000 CZK (€3.7m). The exact number is constantly increasing as new elements are being added, like outside terrace marble renewal (which was not included in original reconstruction budget).

"We strongly believe that travelers today are looking for originality and uniqueness and find it intriguing to see something local, in our case Czech at the same time as being provided with the basic human rights when staying in a hotel; fresh air (smoke free environment), a bed (good night sleep) and WiFi (High speed)", says Monika Hilm.

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