

*Wessex Fine Art Tours*

# ***THE CULT OF SPLENDOUR***

***GREAT HOUSES  
and GARDENS of  
BOHEMIA & MORAVIA  
(Czech Republic)***

***19~26 June, 2026***



**Organiser:**

Barbara Peacock MA, FRSA

**Reservations and Enquiries:** Tel: +44(0)1962 771579

Email: [wfasc-tours@wfasc.co.uk](mailto:wfasc-tours@wfasc.co.uk) [www.wfasc.co.uk](http://www.wfasc.co.uk)







## GREAT HOUSES AND GARDENS OF BOHEMIA & MORAVIA

The Czech Republic, comprising the historic provinces of Bohemia and Moravia, has one of the richest concentrations of great houses in Europe, exceptional gardens, splendid churches and innumerable picturesque little Renaissance and Baroque towns, set in a landscape of great beauty. On this tour we shall visit many wonderful buildings from the mediaeval period to the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century. Many are of European importance and are UNESCO World Heritage listed, yet still remain relatively undiscovered by foreign visitors to the country.

In the Middle Ages, Bohemia was a powerful and wealthy kingdom, ruled in the 14<sup>th</sup>-century by the country's greatest king, Charles IV. We shall visit his great castle at **Karlštejn**, with its unique painted 15<sup>th</sup>-century chapel, one of the most glorious painted interiors of mediaeval Europe.

The Renaissance was a period of rich cultural activity with many Italian craftsmen working in the country. Highlights include the manor house of **Doudleby nad Orlicí** with its important painted Renaissance interiors and the beautiful Renaissance châteaux of **Litomyšl** and **Telč**, both situated in delightfully unspoilt Renaissance towns, and both listed UNESCO World Heritage sites. Litomyšl was the birthplace of Smetana and our tour will include a concert arranged as part of the Smetana Music Festival.

From early in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century many members of the Austrian and German nobility chose to build their summer places and grand hunting seats in Bohemia and Moravia, which had become part of the mighty Austrian Habsburg Empire. At picturesque **Český Krumlov**, the wealthy Schwarzenbergs updated the medieval castle with spectacular 18<sup>th</sup>-century interiors and created a delightful rococo theatre, one of the few surviving in Europe, and still with its original stage sets and costumes. The Czech lands also became one of the great centres of the Baroque, and at **Žďár nad Sázavou** we visit the spatially exciting Baroque pilgrimage chapel of St John Nepomuk by the brilliant Czech architect, Santini-Aichel. In the early 19<sup>th</sup>-century, the Baroque gives way to a chaster, purer classical style, beautifully presented at the private château of **Kostelec nad Orlicí**. In contrast, the towered and turreted Schwarzenberg country seat of **Hluboká** is the finest example of Romantic Gothic Revival. Finally the wonderful Art Nouveau interiors of the **Municipal House, Prague**, bring us into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.







Telč



Doudleby



Telč Renaissance ceiling



Hluboká Castle



Hluboká Castle: The Grand Library



Karlštejn Chapel



Prague Gardens



## PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

**Fri Jun 19** Recommended flight **BA 0852** Depart 10.10 London Heathrow, arriving Prague 13.10. Afternoon private visit to the **Municipal House, Prague** (1905-12), a magnificent Art Nouveau building, decorated by major Czech artists, including Alfons Mucha and Max Švabinský. First of two nights in the Hotel Monastery Garden, quietly situated a few minutes walk from the Old Town Square.

**Sat Jun 20** We visit Emperor Charles IV's magnificently sited great castle of **Karlštejn**; its outstanding late Gothic chapel (private visit) is a monument of European importance. Afternoon visit to **Veltrusy**, a charming small C18 château with painted Rococo interiors, set in an important landscape park.

**Sun Jun 21** We travel south-east to **Žďár nad Sázavou** to see the remarkable pilgrimage chapel to St John Nepomuk (1719-27), one of the masterpieces of the Baroque. Afternoon arrival in the delightful Renaissance town of **Litomyšl**, East Bohemia (UNESCO World Heritage), birthplace of Smetana. Visit Litomyšl Renaissance château and 18<sup>th</sup>-century court theatre. First of 3 nights in the Hotel Zlatá Hvězda, centrally situated in the old town.

**Mon Jun 22** Today we visit three privately owned houses, confiscated by the Communists, but restituted to their former owners after the fall of Communism in 1989, and now restored: the elegant Empire house **Kostelec nad Orlicí**, with fine period furniture; the delightful Renaissance manor house of **Doudleby** and the richly decorated Rococo palace of **Nové Hrady**, set in beautiful gardens.

**Tue Jun 23** We visit **Pernštejn**, the most dramatic of Moravia's mediaeval castles. Thence to **Lysice**, an interesting house of many periods with a fine recently restored 19<sup>th</sup>-century garden. Return to Litomyšl for included evening concert.

**Wed Jun 24** We travel westwards to **Telč** in Moravia

(UNESCO World Heritage), one of the most beautiful and unspoilt small Renaissance towns of Central Europe and visit the château with its magnificent 16th-century interiors. Late afternoon we arrive at the enchanting South Bohemian town of **Český Krumlov** (UNESCO World Heritage) and check in at the Hotel Latrán, a few minutes from the Castle. First of two nights in Český Krumlov.

**Thu Jun 25** A day exploring **Český Krumlov**. The spectacular castle has wonderful Renaissance and 18th-century interiors and an unique painted Masked Ballroom. Private visit to the Rococo court theatre, one of the finest surviving in Europe, complete with its original props, costumes and music, followed by a special visit to the recently restored Rococo summer pavilion of **Bellarie** (provisional).

**Fri Jun 26** We depart Český Krumlov for **Hluboká**, the great turreted Romantic Gothic fantasy castle of the Schwarzenberg family. After lunch we drive to Prague Airport for the return flight **BA 0855**, departing Prague at 17:45 arriving London Heathrow at 18:55.

## TOUR LEADER

**Barbara Peacock MA FRSA** has travelled extensively through the Czech Republic since the early 1990s and has taken many Study Tours to Bohemia and Moravia. She is founder and director of Wessex Fine Art and Architecture Tours and lectures in Britain and abroad for organisations such as the National Trust, the Art Fund and the Arts Society, and is a Tour lecturer for Art Pursuits Abroad. She was formerly Assistant Keeper in the Department of Fine Art at Birmingham City Art Gallery and subsequently Adult Education Tutor in Fine Art at Southampton University. She is co-founder of The Friends of Czech Heritage and in 2015 was awarded the Czech Lifetime Achievement Award for her work in the Czech Republic.



### PRACTICALITIES

The 8-day tour will cost **£3695 per person** in a twin-bedded or double room, **£300 single supplement**. All Hotels are four star and are in historic buildings in UNESCO World Heritage locations.. The first two nights will be spent at the Hotel \*\*\*\* Monastery Garden in Prague Old Town; then three nights at Hotel Zlatá Hvězda \*\*\*\*, Litomyšl, and finally two nights at \*\*\*\* Hotel Latrán in Český Krumlov. The fees include accommodation (five dinners and five lunches including wine, soft drink and water), all coach transport, all entrance fees and gratuities, the services of the lecturer and tour manager and an informative illustrated tour booklet.

**Note:** The cost does **not** include the air flight.

The most convenient scheduled direct flights are:

June 19 BA 0862 Departs London/ Heathrow  
1010 arrives Prague 1310

June 26 BA 0861 Departs Prague 1745 arrives  
London /Heathrow 1855

The coach and our Czech Tour Manager will meet the 1310 flight, and will return participants to Prague airport on June 26. **Please check a place is available before booking your flight.** You can of course arrange to have extra time in Prague before or after the tour and choose alternative flights.

### CANCELLATIONS

**Cancellation charges are as follows:**

56 days or more before start of course - loss of deposit

55 - 43 days before start of course - 50% of the total

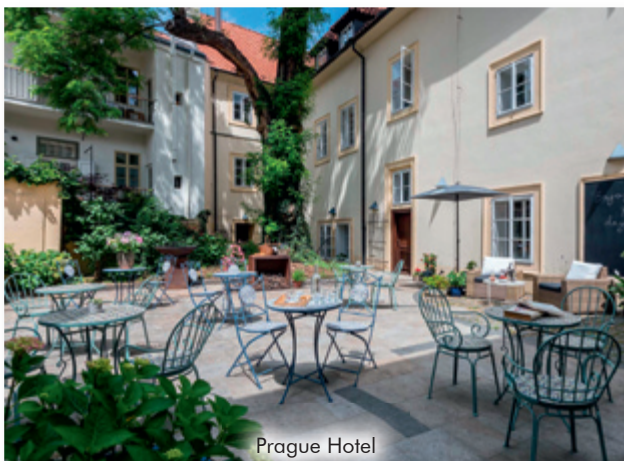
42 - 29 days before start of course - 60% of the total

28 - 22 days before start of course - 85% of the total

21 - 0 days before start of course - 100% of the total

*It is a condition of booking that you arrange travel insurance to protect yourself against loss. In the unlikely event of cancellation by WFASC we undertake to refund you in full within 14 days all monies paid to us in course fees.*

Please visit our website: [www.wfasc.co.uk](http://www.wfasc.co.uk)



Prague Hotel

### BOOKING FORM

(PLEASE USE **BLOCK LETTERS**)

I/We wish to attend the 2026 Tour of The Great Houses and Gardens of Bohemia and Moravia and would like to reserve accommodation in a **single/shared** room.

I/we enclose a cheque for **£400 per person** (a non-returnable deposit) made payable to: **WESSEX FINE ART STUDY COURSES**,

OR, I am or we are paying £ \_\_\_\_\_ into the following account:  
Wessex Fine Art Study Courses, Account no.76898668

Sort Code: 30-99-71

Reservations should be sent to: WFASC Enrolments,

Church Cottage, Beauworth, Alresford, Hants SO24 0PA  
or scanned and emailed to: [wfasc-tours@wfasc.co.uk](mailto:wfasc-tours@wfasc.co.uk)

**[1]** Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other (please include first name).....

Address: .....

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Postcode:..... Telephone: .....

Email:.....

**[2]** Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other (please include first name).....

Address: .....

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Postcode:..... Telephone: .....

Email:.....

I/We will obtain a ticket on the recommended flight ☐

I/We will make our own travel arrangements ☐

Signature: .....

Date: .....

How did you hear about this tour?: .....

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*In addition to this all-inclusive tour, a fully-illustrated Tour Guide will be provided describing the historical background for each of the visits, supported by plans of the buildings and describing transitions through the ages.*



If you would like to be added to the waiting list, or receive information about future tours please email Barbara Peacock on **wfasc-tours@wfasc.co.uk** or complete and return the form below.

Please make contact if you would like to hear more about talks and lectures for your local society or group.

Stay in touch also by viewing the website at **www.wfasc.co.uk**

Name (title & first name) .....

Address: .....

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Telephone:.....

Email:.....

Your area of interest: .....

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