

Bartosz Bończak

### **Historical hotels in “Golden Prague”**

#### **Summary**

Prague, with its monuments of great historical and artistic value, has been gaining popularity in recent years. It has become one of the most important tourist destinations in Central Europe. This is the reason why hotel industry in this city is developing so quickly – there are 654 collective tourist accommodation establishments with 547 hotels, motels, pensions and residences, which is more than 83%. Establishments, located in the old, historical buildings, are among the most interesting hotel groups in the city. For the purpose of this project, hotels located in buildings erected before the beginning of World War II, operating during the research that took place from the beginning of July to the end September 2008 and which have 10 or more rooms (according to Czech definition of the hotel) were taken into consideration.

Historical hotels in Prague are mostly collective tourist accommodation establishments in the historical city center, in Prague 1 district, where 135 establishments of this type operate (September 2008), which is almost 80% in this administrative district and a quarter in the whole city. This shows a great potential of this kind of facilities, covering a great range of hotel market in Prague.

The main advantage of these establishments is their location directly in the city centre which is also the main tourism, business and political core. The vicinity of the main tourist attractions, as well as public institutions, shopping venues and business centers, is the main reason why the historical hotels are so popular among the people visiting Prague. It is important to mention, that such a great location is strictly connected with the higher price in comparison to hotels situated further away from the center.

The majority of historical hotels are rather small in size. 88 of them (65% of the total) offer less than 50 rooms, and on the other hand, only 14 (about 10%) have more than 100 rooms.

Historical hotels in Prague 1 district are mostly upper class hotels, ranging from 3 stars above. Almost half of all hotels in this district (about 49%) are 4-star hotels and 27 of them are luxurious 5-star hotels with an outstandingly exclusive service.

Most of the mentioned hotels are privately owned by individuals, families or different companies. In addition to this, many of them are associated within different organizational structures, such as hotels chains, systems or groups, often of international or even global range.

The main and the most interesting attribute of these hotels is their location in

interesting, unique buildings, often of great historical and artistic value. They are mostly located in tenement houses, but also in such places as former stables, hospitals, convents or banks. It significantly influences their attractiveness and creates unique atmosphere of the hotel, which is perfect for guests looking for new sensations. This is the main feature giving the hotel its own “spirit of the place” which is important in creating its outstanding brand and often a long lasting tradition.

Despite the favorable location and the atmosphere, historical hotels also have problems of their own. Among the most important ones is the constant protection of the building by the building conservation officer, as the centre of Prague is on UNESCO World Heritage List, which often makes it difficult to renovate the hotel or add new facilities, for example to adopt the building for people with reduced mobility. This is the reason, why small, historical hotels often cannot compete with big, modern and well equipped hotels, located just a few steps away from the city centre.

To conclude, it is easy to assume that historical hotels of “Golden Prague” are creating a unique web of original establishments, offering a wide range of various services – from economical to luxury class – to their guests. All of them have a great potential for future development, but some problems may also occur and are more likely to happen to them than in the case of “traditional” hotels.

Translated by Bartosz Bończak

**BOŃCZAK Bartosz, student I r. studiów II stopnia  
(turystyka i rekreacja)**

Uniwersytet Łódzki

94-039 Łódź, ul. Władysława Króla 27 m. 1

e-mail: b.bonczak@gmail.com