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Please note: Restaurant listings represent a selection of previously reviewed restaurants that were rated two or more spires. Selections vary weekly. Restaurant listings have no relation to advertising. Reviewer visits are anonymous and expenses are paid by The Prague Post, for additional listings of restaurants, pubs and cafés, please see the special insert section, Summer in the City.

## Recently Reviewed

**Ambiente III** From the *gnocchi di patate* to the *ravioli con ricotta*, from the *fettucine* to the *fissilata cassarecia*, this is an Italian restaurant through and through. The kitchen also prepares steaks on a lava grill and offers imaginative dishes of lamb, veal and chicken. *Celestná 11, Prague 1 (Old Town)*. Tel. 2423 0244. Open daily, 11–midnight (Café open 9–midnight). No credit cards. 300–500 Kč.

**Bazaar Méditerranée** This lively complex just below Prague Castle includes a restaurant, café, bar, garden and terrace and offers a wide sampling of Mediterranean cuisine including gazpacho, Moroccan meatballs in vegetable ragout,

chicken souvlaki with rice pilaf, and moussaka with lamb and eggplant. *Nerudova 40, Prague 1*. Tel. 9005 4510. Open daily 11 a.m.–midnight. AmEx, Euro/Mastercard, Visa. 500–1200 Kč.

**Bumerang** A stylish gastropub with vibrant colors and fixtures, loudish music and equal emphases on drinking and dining. A goodly portion of items are prepared on a lava grill, including the lava-grilled vegetable salad, mushrooms, sirloin steak, chicken thighs and kangaroo fillet. These can be complemented by wonderfully crude mashed potatoes or an exquisite potato gallette.

Dessert offerings include lemon curd crêpes, orange marmalade cheesecake and a large selection of milkshakes. *Londýnská 52, Prague 2*. Tel. 2251 7047. Open Mon.–Sun. 11 a.m.–1 a.m. (kitchen closes at 11 p.m.) Visa, Euro/Mastercard, AmEx. 300–500 Kč.

**Delfy** The kitschy pillars and paintings may remind you of an Athenian tourist trap, but the menu is abundant and diverse, and the dishes — such as the octopus salad in vinegar marinade, mussel cakes in piquant mustard sauce, grilled shrimp on a skewer, veal with caramelized shallots, *souvlaki*, gyros, filet steak in pepper cream sauce, and saddle of lamb in estragon sauce — are well-prepared. The fresh figs with vanilla ice cream and cassis — sumptuous, creamy, fig-sweet and with a hint of cinnamon is to die for and the ice-cream cocktail with champagne and cassis is divine. Delfy imports many of its ingredients from Germany, which places its food — as well as its prices — several notches above the average Prague Greek restaurant. *Podolské náměstí 1, Prague 4 (trams 3, 16, 17 to Dvorce stop)*. Tel. 4446 3772. Open 11:30 a.m.–1 a.m. Visa, MasterCard. 700–1,000 Kč.

**Huang He** The chefs here use meat and strong, bold flavorings freely. Every portion is generous and expertly prepared; vegetables are gently cooked tender-crisp. The rice is steamed and/or fried with chopsticks in mind. *Vršovická 1, Prague 10*. Tel. 7174 6651 (Trams 6, 7, or 24 to Nádraží Vršovice). Open daily 11:30 a.m.–3 p.m., 5:30 p.m.–11 p.m. No credit cards. 100–300 Kč.

**Il Ritrovo** If Il Ritrovo is a low-profile spot, it's only because good pasta, when well done, needs no fanfare. Choose from 30 varieties in over a dozen fine sauces, all done to al dente perfection. The *linguine della notte*, with its sly dressing

## Treasure Island

By Will Tizard

Recent, real-life page from Prague's fine-dining annals: A visiting VIP in your life wants to take you to "the best restaurant in Prague." Knowing something about the subject, you name a spot with an impeccable reputation. Ushered in for the last lunch seating, you take a few minutes to pore over the menu and pass up your first chance to order. When the waiter asks again, you still need a minute to debate the wine. Then it happens, as unmistakable as egg salad on a tie. The waiter looks at his watch, makes a hint of shaking his head and sighs. When your bottle arrives, it's the same *Veltfínské zelené* they sell at the corner grocer's. Suddenly all your boasts about Prague's rising standards hang in the air like chemical clouds from Most. Where, you wonder, can you count on all-around quality when you want to splurge?

Well, true enough, it's still early days at the restaurant Ostroff, Prague 1 (on the island accessible from Legionnaire's bridge) but it does appear no one has ever been more serious about delivering the goods. Ostroff was launched by a Czech-German partnership — but its flavor is distinctly Italian. Chef Davide Canella presides over a menu that's as rich as the 12-page wine list that features top Sicilian and Tuscan vintages. And the location, on the Vltava's most picturesque island, does as much for the senses as the aromas emanating from the kitchen.

Actually three establishments in one, Ostroff's most visible face is the open-air terrace up top. Below decks is the sleek and jazzy long bar, equipped with massive waterfront picture windows that open fully in mild weather. Behind a simple frosted glass door at the bar's far end, the real treasure chamber lies: a brick-walled labyrinth of arched, candlelit dining rooms wherein the tastes and sensations of the Italian countryside reside.

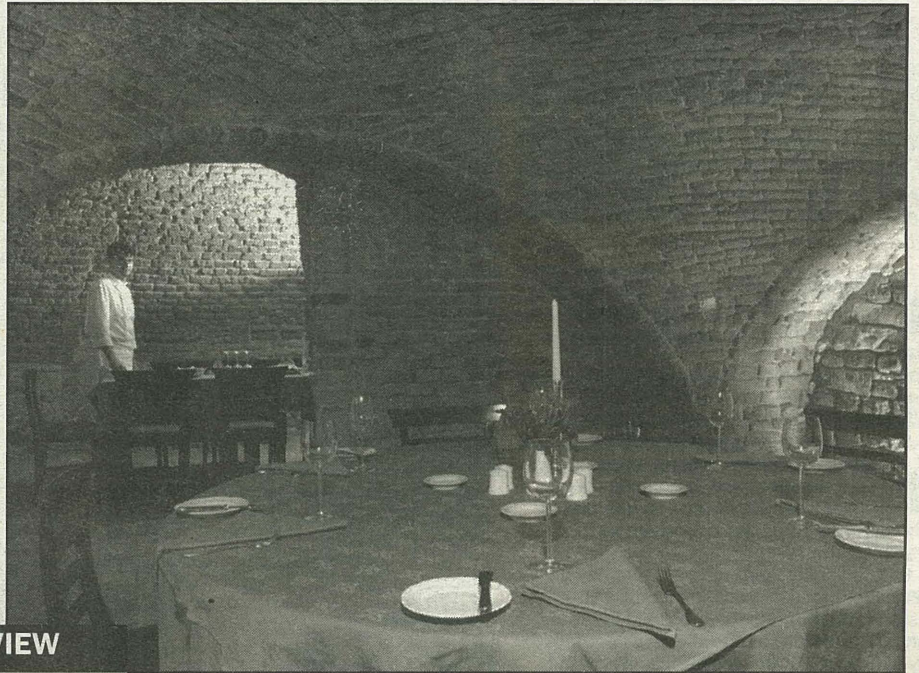
A good strategy is to hit the terrace first, which for now limits its cuisine to salads and desserts, then move inside as the evening comes on. Hoist a Staropramen 11- or 12-degree in the open air, or try the intriguing *Franziskaner* beer or *Weissbier*, a well-chosen, cloudy, aromatic wheat beer (all 35 Kč per .33 liter) and watch the façades on the Vltava's

of butter, sage, cream, thyme and cognac is as seductive as moonlight over the Mediterranean. What Italian dining was meant to be. *Il Ritrovo Spaghetteria Lublaňská 2, Prague 2*. Tel. 29 65 29. Open Mon.–Sat. noon–3 p.m., 6 p.m.–11:30 p.m. AmEx, Euro/Mastercard, Visa. 400 Kč.

**La Golosina** Aztec bird gods and broken-tile floor mosaics recall Baja patios; the menu carries you off further into a land of hard sunlight and flame-hot peppers with guacamole and red pepper salads, fish or duck burritos, steak asada, corn on the cob, wild rice, and a formidable desert burrito. *Na Výtoni 12, Prague 2 (Tram 16 or 17 to Výtoň)*. Tel. 29 26 53. Open daily 11–11. AmEx, Mastercard, Visa. 350–400 Kč.

**Persia Palace** Lovingly furnished with plush Oriental carpets, waiters in gold brocade, sitar music and a menu filled with exotic delights. Luscious lamb, various kebabs, spicy, filled pastries, aromatic rice and hints of pistachio, allspice and cumin just about burst off the menu pages. *Vinohradská 63, Prague 2*. Tel. 2225 2590. Open daily noon–4 and 6–midnight. AmEx Euro/Mastercard. 600 Kč.

**Pivovarský dům** True to its traditional pub roots, this refreshing and creative micro-brewery offers sausage, beans, fried and pickled pork, dumplings and potato croquets, along with classics such as *svíčková* (beef in cream sauce) and goulash. Clean-cut, aproned waiters bustle about, gliding over the light wood floor, steering around tables and swerving around the black-and-white tiled central bar and gleaming copper vats where the house brew is



VLADIMÍR WEISS/The Prague Post

Within Ostroff's brick-walled labyrinth of arched, candlelit rooms reside the tastes and sensations of the Italian countryside.

## REVIEW

### Ostroff

Střelecký ostrov 336, Prague 1 (on the island accessible from Legionnaire's bridge)

Open daily noon–2 p.m., 7 p.m.–midnight (terrace 11 a.m.–midnight)

Tel. 2491 9235  
1,200 Kč

AmEx, Visa,  
Euro/MasterCard



postcard-perfect right bank pick up the sunset glow. The star here, however, is the salad bar, which serves up as fine a mix of greens as you'll find anywhere: crisp arugula leaves, wine-marinated olives, zesty sautéed zucchini and aubergine, crisp cucumber and tomato slices full of natural flavor only the sun can bestow, all topped to your taste with balsamic vinegar and extra-virgin olive oil (130 Kč).

Now glide through the bar and slip into the rarefied chambers below. The maître d', with that impossible combination of grace, omniscience and seeming effortlessness, shows you to your table, then proffers the impressive wine list. Your host nods in approval even when you ask for two glasses of the cheapest wines listed. Indeed, as it turns out, the red — a hearty *Rosso degli Spezieri* — and the white — a crisp *Bianco degli Spezieri* from Tuscany — are nothing to be sheepish about.

Scanning the starters, the guinea fowl salad and asparagus mousse get your attention (240 Kč and 260 Kč respectively) but you settle on the cold vegetable soup (90 Kč). The rich, spicy blend of carrot, tomato, zucchini, potato and Mediterranean spices is divine, yet wholly distinct from gazpacho and several notches milder. Now, with a taste for pasta, you debate the linguini with scorpion fish sauce (530 Kč), the

handmade gnocchi stuffed with artichokes in clam sauce and — bearing in mind that all the pastas here are handmade — finally settle on a classic green lasagne (260 Kč). Decked out with knife-cut chunks of lamb, layers of béchamel sauce, spinach pasta and a dusting of fresh parmesan, it cuts like butter and is infused with the delicate taste of rosemary. Gazing across the summery green tablecloth and shimmering crystal to the grilled lamb, zucchini and aubergine on your companion's plate (530 Kč), you realize how completely distinct these same elements can be when handled by a master chef. Here the meat has been braised to a fine crispy finish, leaving it textbook pink and juicy inside.

A shot at the dessert trolley, decked out in chocolate mousse, a fruit tart taken from the cover of *Gourmet*, and strawberry-marbled cheesecake (your choice, 200 Kč), is mandatory. The last of these is a rich, moist, full-fruit assault on the senses — just the order for awaking your by-now-purring system so you can manage the walk home.

Though the place is now nearly empty, you linger, converse and glow. When you summon the bill it arrives instantly. Before you can pull yourself completely away, though, the manager invites you for a parting complementary limoncello in a sweet, refreshing touch of Sicilian tradition.

So don't despair of Prague's culinary reputation. A summer stroll may just turn up a jewel, smack-dab in the middle of the river.

made are on display. The more novel brews include *kávové pivo* (coffee beer); *pšeničné pivo* (wheat beer) and *Šampaňské pivo* (champagne beer). Desserts include a classic apple-raisin strudel and ice-cream sundae. *Lipová 15, Prague 2*. Tel. 9621 6666. Open daily 11 a.m.–11:30 p.m. No credit cards. 300 Kč.

**Pizzeria La Romantica** A pleasant ambience is served up with main courses that include a variety of tempting pastas, as well as gnocchi, pork, beef and chicken dishes and an extensive list of pizzas with every imaginable kind of topping. *Bruschetta* is especially good when ordered with a basket of deliciously warm, homemade bread accompanied by a cruet of garlic-herb butter. *Pizzeria La Romantica Londýnská 22, Prague 2*. Tel. 2425 7812. Open daily 10 a.m.–11 p.m. No credit cards. 150–350 Kč.

**Sher-E-Punjab Indian Restaurant** It could be any humble Prague neighborhood restaurant — until you scan the menu: featuring food in the culinary style of Punjab (a region of India near Pakistan), the limited menu includes a short list of main courses, among them several preparations of chicken, mutton, curry and a handful of vegetarian dishes, two types of rice and several kinds of Indian bread. The Indian tea with milk is fabulous — smoothly brewed and combined with cream, ground cardamom and a sprinkling of sugar. Every neighborhood should have the equivalent of a Sher-E-Punjab. *Konecchlumského 7, Prague 6*. Tel. 0603 52 23 58. Tue.–Sun. 11–11 (Closed Mon.). No credit cards. 150–250 Kč.

**Tequila Sunrise** The order of the day here is simple, straightforward Mexican cooking.

With the notable exception of the *Pescado al Carbon* (grilled swordfish) and the *Churrasco* (Mexican-style filet mignon), the menu is comprised of standards — nachos, tacos, burritos and fajitas — that are toothsome if somewhat mild. *Stupartská 6, Prague 1 (Old Town)*. Tel. 2481 9383. Open Sun.–Thurs. 11 a.m.–2 a.m., Fri.–Sat. 11 a.m.–4 a.m. No credit cards. 150–300 Kč.

**Zlatý kohout** A terrific restaurant — superb food at reasonable prices served with care in an ambience that recalls an elegant dining car on the Paris-Orient Express. And they play jazz. Main courses include duck breast stewed in red wine sauce, trout in lobster sauce served with vegetable risotto and lamb chop in puff pastry with spinach, aubergine and creamed potatoes. *Karlovo náměstí 24, Prague 1*. Tel. 2491 4286. Open Mon.–Fri. 11:30 a.m.–3 p.m. and 6 p.m.–11 p.m., Sat. 6 p.m.–11 p.m. Closed Sunday. 500–700 Kč.

## Off the beaten path

A selection of recommended restaurants outside the center.

### Expensive

(500 Kč and up)

**Brasserie Le Molière** A constantly rotating, fixed-price menu concentrates on fresh, basic, southern-French cooking. *Americká 20, Prague 2*. Tel. 9000 3346. Open weekdays and Saturday: break-

Cont. on next page