

ARIA HOTEL PRAGUE

| BY TRACY BEARD

When I think of the Aria Hotel Prague, the words that come to mind are luxury, art, and beauty. Photos and statues are on display throughout the public spaces and rooms. Coda Restaurant serves delicious, Instagram-worthy dishes, and the UNESCO World Heritage Baroque Vrtba garden just outside the hotel is stunning.

The 5-star hotel, located near the historical city center and designed by the Italian architecture firm SPATIUM, opened in 2003. The hotel is within walking distance of numerous historic buildings, the Charles Bridge, and plenty of tasty restaurants. The original buildings, transformed by architects Rocco Magnoli and Lorenzo Carmellini, now showcase a luxurious musical-themed boutique hotel. The hotel interior was refreshed and renovated five years ago.

ROOMS AND SUITES

This luxury boutique hotel has a total of 51 guest rooms, 29 Deluxe Rooms, 16 Junior Suites, and 6 Signature Suites, all different, and each one offers contemporary, well-appointed furnishings, Saffron beds, and many opulent amenities. Suites are designed to feel like residences, are larger than the deluxe rooms, and look out onto the Winter Garden Atrium or Vrtba Garden. Each floor of the hotel has a distinct color scheme and is themed with décor and artwork depicting contemporary, classical, opera, or jazz music.

ARTWORK IN THE HOTEL

Steve and I loved our tour with Jan Korta, the hotel's Director of Sales and Marketing. He told us that all the artwork in the hotel is part of the hotel owner's private collection, a music-loving Czech film producer. Jan explained, "The idea behind the music-themed hotel was that an international language was music. We thought dedicating and naming each room after a different music artist would be a good idea. Rooms have a picture of the named artist. Artists include Mozart, Miles Davis, Jeff Baker, the Beatles, and so on. Each artist's room is on the appropriate floor of the genre they

represent jazz, classical, opera, and contemporary. We have huge events in Prague and are a preferred hotel for many artists."

Many of the art pieces are originals by Salvador Dalí, and several original sculptures, statues, and paintings by Chagall, Kodet, and Franz von Stuck are represented throughout the hotel.

MUSIC LIBRARY

As a guest of the hotel on a recent visit, I was thoroughly impressed with the Music Library. Hotel guests can watch or listen to over 5,000 CDs and over 900 DVDs or videos. The music literature covers every music genre and includes the artists represented throughout the hotel. Music lovers can sit back and relax in the cozy leather chairs or take items back to their rooms to listen or watch in private.

PRIVATE CINEMA

Another unique room is the Private Cinema. This room reminded me of the quintessential man cave. Up to 12 guests can choose from the more than 900 movies, sit and watch for hours in comfortable chairs, and snack on their favorite movie fare, which can be ordered from the restaurant. Use of the cinema is first come, first serve.

VRTBA GARDEN

The Vrtba Garden is Prague's oldest Baroque Garden and is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Guests at the hotel have access to a private entrance to the terraced garden, which boasts an incredible view of the city.

My husband Steve and I meandered through this stunning, professionally manicured garden

first thing in the morning before the general public entered and filled the pathways.

WINTER GARDEN ATRIUM

The Winter Garden Atrium sits at the center of the hotel. This palace-like garden space is perfect for reading a book, sipping a glass of wine, or listening to music in the evening. The Atrium is filled with light, has comfortable seating, and features concert-quality piano music.

ROOFTOP TERRACE

Guests can enjoy dinner and drinks on the Rooftop Terrace, which is open during nice weather in the summer. This area is available for parties upon request.

FIREPLACE LOUNGE

The Fireplace Lounge is another beautiful place to relax before dinner.

CODA RESTAURANT

CODA Restaurant is one of Prague's top fine-dining restaurants. Steve and I enjoyed a tasty dinner during our stay. Coda Restaurant hired a new chef this fall. Executive Chef Igor Chramec sits at the helm and turns out delicious courses for hotel guests, locals, and other visitors to Prague. Those dining on Tuesday through Saturday will enjoy the live music played on the piano in the lounge.

Breakfast is served each morning in the Coda Restaurant. It is both buffet style and a la carte.

When planning a trip to Prague, Czech Republic, be sure to spend a few nights at the Aria Prague Hotel and make a reservation to dine at Coda Restaurant. ❖

