

RESTAURANTS



# TERASA U ZLATE STUDNE RESTAURANT AND CHEF LUKÁŠ HLAVÁČEK

| BY TRACY ELLEN BEARD

The Terasa U Zlate studne restaurant, located on the top floor and the terrace of the Golden Well Hotel, is one of Prague's best fine dining destinations. The restaurant features breathtaking views of "the city of one hundred spires." Italian architects Lorenzo Carmelini and Katrin Herden showcase their merged style of modern design and elements of the Renaissance era in the restaurant's new interior.

Golden Well Hotel boasts one of only 40 restaurants that have earned the "Rémy Martin Louis XIII. Fortress" label. Each hotel's staff must be specially trained to handle this precious Cognac, and at the Golden Well Hotel, it is served in the bar and at the restaurant.

## CHEF LUKÁŠ HLAVÁČEK

Forbes Magazine chose Chef Lukáš Hlaváček as one of the 30 under 30 most talented professional chefs in the recent past. Before returning to his home in the Czech Republic, Chef Lukáš worked at the 3-star Michelin Restaurant Meadowood in Napa Valley in the United States. He came to the restaurant in December of 2022 and operated under the current chef; then, in February 2023, he took over and began serving his menu.

## AN INTERVIEW WITH CHEF LUKÁŠ HLAVÁČEK

### How often do you change the menu?

I originally planned to change the menu every three months, but we have changed it more often because spring and summer products are often only available for one month, and I like to change the menu and use fresh products.

### Why did you choose cooking?

My mom did not like to cook; it was boring for her. No one from my family enjoys cooking, but we all love to eat. I love tasty food, so I began preparing it, and I never really wanted to do anything else.

### What is your style of cooking?

I cook what I like to eat. It is always about getting the best ingredients, and here at Terasa U Zlate studne, I have the budget to buy them. I don't care how far I must go to get them. I will buy things from France if they are better than what I can get locally.

When you are talking about the price level of my food, it must be the best. My customers care more about the taste of the food than where it came from.

Regarding my style, I try to cook a little lighter and bring in some Asian elements. I don't use fish sauce, but I like more modern ingredients like dashi. I buy some ingredients locally, but they are the very best I can get. My cooking is a little bit regional, a little bit French, and a lot Lukáš.

### Who are your customers?

I'd say that 40% are local and 60% are international. Some locals come every two or three weeks, so I change the menu frequently.

### What wines do you pair with your food?

Most of our wines are from Austria, Germany, and France, with a few from the United States.

What is one of your favorite parts of the job?

I love working with my pastry chef. I give him an idea, maybe what I want a dish to look like and the texture I am thinking about, and he creates it.

Dinner at Terasa U Zlate studne Restaurant My husband, Steve, and I enjoyed the tasting menu on the terrace. We began with a couple of amuse-bouches, a delicious fresh Pea Tart, and a White Asparagus tart with Smoked Duck Breast, Chicory, Grapes, and Walnuts. Then we moved on to two of the chef's favorite dishes,

a Foie Gras Terrine and the Fjord Trout from Germany.

Chef Lukáš said, "The terrine is very French and old school. It is a foie gras mousse mixed with cream and made into a ganache. It is like butter. I serve it with poached rhubarb, almonds, and brioche. I like only putting two or three amazing things on a plate and keeping it simple."

Next, we had the third course, the Fjord trout covered with buckwheat skin, which is very Czech. The chef said, "I serve it with asparagus and beurre blanc with cucumber cubes and caviar. This dish is crazy moist and delicious." My old chef told me, "It is very easy to make a complicated dish, but it is so hard to make a simple one."

The trout was followed by a gorgeous Halibut Wrapped in a Zucchini Flower with olives and a beurre blanc sauce. It was moist and tasty.

The final savory dish was Angus Royal Steak and Rib with smoked bone marrow, black truffle, white radish, and truffle sauce. The flavors were rich and decadent.

As is typical with a tasting menu, there was more than one sweet to finish the meal. The first was Chocolate Valrhona Semifreddo with Hazelnut Cream and salted caramel. This course exploded with texture and was delightfully sweet without going overboard.

To finish, we received a selection of Home-made Petit Fours. This delightful selection was the perfect way to end a glorious meal. Dinner at Terasa U Zlate studne restaurant is a must when visiting Prague. ❖

