

INTRODUCTION

The Time When Everything Was Possible

For some, the 1990s are lost in the fog of time; for others, every detail is still crystal clear. Those who didn't live through them will probably never fully comprehend what an exceptional time it was.



Nylon tracksuit and neon colors – icons of the Nineties

After the fall of the socialist regime, life turned completely upside-down. Suddenly anyone could travel, do business, spend money on things that were previously unavailable, but also to lose your job... Czechs acquired coupon books, nylon tracksuits, and colorful –

who ended up in barrels at the bottom of Orlik Lake.

In politics, heads spun from the "War of the Hyphen", a battle over whether the united republic would be called Czechoslovakia or Czecho-Slovakia. In the end, the conflict had one single vic-

first time. They had already celebrated the World Championship title in Vienna in 1996, and the same year rejoiced over the silver brought home by our footballers from the Euro in England.

And on top of all this, Czechs lived their personal lives to the fullest. They acquired their first desktop computers, sent faxes, played solitaire, found new positions on the labor market... At the end of the Nineties, mobilemania was rampant – previously the realm of the chosen few because the first phones cost CZK 60,000 and 150 minutes of calling cost CZK 3,000. And there certainly wasn't much signal coverage.

In short, it was a time when Czechs filled in the blank areas on the maps of their lives. And before they could fully orient themselves in this new world, they had to prepare themselves for another revolution, one that again upset the order of their lives. This time it wasn't a Velvet Revolution, but a digital one – thanks to the internet.

Join us as we swim against the tide of time and take a look back at how we lived in the Nineties.

⟨BIG CHANGES⟩

Significant changes took place in politics and technology

usually purple – suit jackets. Those in particular became the unofficial uniform of the wild, golden Nineties.

We were overwhelmed by the American TV series flooding the airwaves, some good, some not so good... And let's not mention the endless soap operas, the quantity of episodes of which began looking like a number in the phone book. Jaws dropped over the irreverent humor of the TV show Česká soda. And the news about the first tunneled companies. We were shocked by reports of entrepreneurs

tim – spelling. The petty conflict was just part of a series of other conflicts which culminated less than three years later in the definite dissolution of the country.

It was roughly around this time that the BB Centrum project began to take shape. PASSERINVEST Group was founded in 1991, and in 1998, the first of today's 17 buildings was erected. That was the year that Czechs got up before the crack of dawn to watch the unforgettable triumph at Nagano with their own eyes, when the glittering stars of the NHL shone at the Olympics for the

How Time Has Passed at BB Centrum

The plans for BB Centrum, a complex straddling the area between the former Brumlovka sports hall and Baar Street, started coming together over 20 years ago. Do you know which building was constructed first? And when? And can you guess who the first big tenant was? [More on Page 2](#)



⟨TRAVEL EUPHORIA, OR WE'VE GOT SCHNITZELS, LET'S GO!⟩

[How and Where We Travelled in the Nineties](#)

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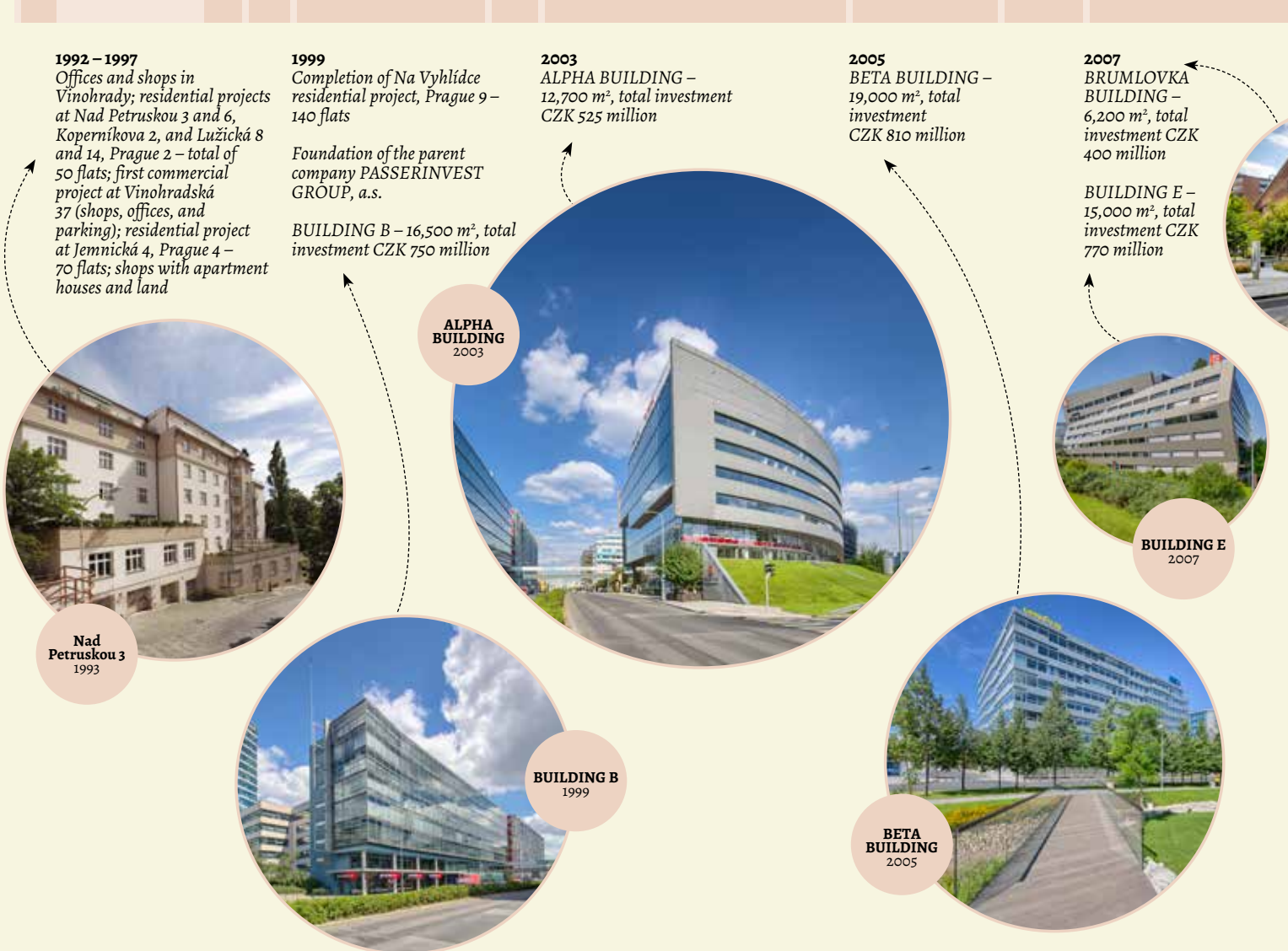


From Felicia to Mercedes

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Important Milestones





**BETHANY
COMMUNITY
CENTER**
2009



**BUILDING A
FACELIFT**
2017

BB CENTRUM – PREVIEW 2017–25

- Aparthotel and rental flats with retail space
- 3 office buildings with retail space
- 3 new residential projects, including expansion of Baar Residential Park II
- Bible Museum
- Revitalization of bought-back Buildings A, B, and D
- Buy-back of the remaining 4 office buildings including their subsequent revitalization



**BAAR
RESIDENTIAL
PARK**
2012



**NEW
BRUMLOVKA
SQUARE**
2017

Beautification of public areas

- New Brumlovka Square and pedestrian crossing over Vyskočilova St.
- Reworking Želetavská St. and the public areas between Buildings A, B, and C
- New water feature at the ALPHA Building
- New pavilion for the Elijáš Christian Primary School
- Expansion of Brumlovka Park



**BAAR
PARK**
2012



**NOVÁ
KAROLINA
PARK**
2012

2014
Change in the company strategy – buy-back of buildings into company ownership

Buy-back of the ALPHA Building and its renovation

Purchase of the Česká spořitelna building in Ostrava – 5,200 m²; subsequent renovation and rental; in 2015 sale of MO Moravská Ostrava and Přívoz; total investment CZK 65 million

2012
BAAR RESIDENTIAL PARK – 13,000 m², total investment CZK 850 million

BAAR PARK – 10,000 m²

OSTRAVA – NOVÁ KAROLINA PARK – 29,800 m², total investment CZK 1.21 bln

2009
BETHANY COMMUNITY CENTER – 2,200 m², total investment CZK 120 million

2016
BUILDING A and BUILDING B – buy-back



2010
ELIJÁŠ CHRISTIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL – 3,500 m², total investment CZK 150 million

FILADELFIE BUILDING – 34,000 m², total investment CZK 2.6 bln

2013
BUILDING G – 6,700 m², total investment CZK 360 million

Definition of the building buy-back strategy

2015
DELTA BUILDING – 41,500 m², total investment CZK 2.2 bln

PARK BRUMLOVKA – Phase I – 6,500 m²

BETA BUILDING – buy-back and renovation

2017
BUILDING D – buy-back

**BRUMLOVKA
BUILDING**
2007

**DELTA
BUILDING**
2015

BUILDING G
2013

**FILADELFIE
BUILDING**
2010

**ELIJÁŠ
CHRISTIAN
PRIMARY
SCHOOL**
2010

Total Investment as of End of 2016

In 2016, the total investment in BB Centrum reached CZK 15 bln; total investment in all projects (including those outside BB Centrum) approx. CZK 17 bln. The projected planned investment in BB Centrum is about CZK 13 bln.



A hulking, often noisy computer, an ashtray, and a fixed-line telephone were essential office equipment

The Nineties: Revolution In Our Offices

By
Martin Kavka

The Nineties brought huge transformations to our offices. Pocket calculators and typewriters slowly disappeared from desks, replaced by the first computers. Although heavy telephones with round dials or rows of buttons remained, their end (and the advent of mobile phones) was slowly drawing closer.

In some offices, you'd still find a mimeograph machine, but in others they already had the luxury of modern photocopiers. Younger people have probably never seen mimeographs – they were somewhat archaic pieces of equipment used to duplicate documents that worked on the principle of forcing ink through a special membrane.

Offices at the time were furnished with cheap, unsightly, and mostly impractical furniture. Employees could only dream of ergonomics – nobody really cared whether the wooden chair hurt your back... An absolutely essential part of every office in the Nineties was an ashtray – smoking was common in the workplace. Computers, which took up



The Nineties were embodied by binders in the cabinet, a stapler always in hand...and often high work demands



On our breaks, we read the newspaper over a cup of "turek"; now we get our information primarily from the internet



The fax: email's predecessor

quite a bit of desk real estate, were often decorated with souvenirs from holidays – such as seashells from one's first beach trip. Wooden desks were often covered with a sheet of glass, under which bits of paper were placed, from calendars to photos of children and grandchildren.

It was at this time that the first open-plan offices appeared. It was a rev-

olution – until then, most people worked in closed offices. However, they came in a form that was already becoming obsolete in the West – while here in the Czech Republic, open-plan offices were big rooms stuffed with desks, abroad they'd already moved on to the next generation of open space, furnished with coffee nooks, relaxation zones, bars, etc.

«HAVE A MEETING IN OUR RETRO OFFICE»

Our fully-equipped Nineties-style office is ready for your inspection on the ground floor of the ALPHA office building. You can even compare it with an office of today – both offices are freely accessible every workday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. until the end of June 2017. You can even have a meeting here.



Back when everything was on paper, the piles languished for the school paper recycling collections

AND OFFICES TODAY?



Today's Office Plays Many Roles

Offices today are completely different – employee comfort and ease of communication are big priorities. The approach to work is changing because of it – while before people only worked at their offices, today people often meet with colleagues and customers there as well. And the office environment should to reflect that.

Companies need to respond to the fact that technology has enabled us to work remotely, from cafés, co-working spaces, and even from home. They're therefore working to entice employees back with better facilities.

In keeping with modern trends, offices today offer big rooms with separate cubicles, isolated spaces for uninterrupted work, or even busy café settings for team gatherings and various meetings. Another essential is a spacious kitchen with a dining area. Also new are soundproof phone booths where people can make calls in private without disturbing others.

1992: The Year We Hooked Up to the Internet

The Nineties will always remain indelibly linked with the start of the digital revolution. When then-Czechoslovakia officially connected to the World Wide Web on February 13, 1992, few mortals realized how much influence it would have on our lives in the coming years. For a long time, it appeared that the internet would remain just an academic eccentricity. Only universities and a few enthusiasts were online.

By
Martin Kavka

It wasn't until the mid-1990s that the academic rules for internet use, which originally forbade any commercial use, began to loosen up, and gradually the first business services appeared.

One of the first was Seznam, which started up in 1996. Its founder, Ivo Lukačovič, was a typical internet pioneer. Young, inexperienced, but extremely passionate, he first created an unofficial website for Jára Cimrman, but when he ran into opposition from Cimrmanologists Zdeňek Svěrák and Ladislav Smoljak, he decided to try something else instead. He admired the American website Yahoo, and decided to create a catalogue of Czech websites using their model. The legend of the Czech internet was born.

Changed Beyond All Recognition

Later, at home and abroad, more and more websites emerged, and with them, the internet underwent a "gold rush". Primarily abroad, talk was of an internet bubble as investors sank unbelievable amounts of money into internet companies without any foreseeable financial return. The prevailing opinion was that the internet was so revolutionary that sooner or later it would become a perpetual money machine. The bubble burst in the early years of the new millennium; fortunately, the Czech internet avoided it because the crash of the American internet market completely cooled the local rising fever.

Since the 1990s, the internet has changed beyond recognition. At first, the word "internet" was capitalized and

people behaved politely and respectfully when using it. If users back then would read discussions under articles today,

they'd be shocked. But that's the price for internet liberalization – now anyone can get away with anything. But the lib-



So simple – just connect and have the world at your fingertips

CONNECTION

The Cost of Getting Online, Then and Now

What would you say if you had to pay CZK 45,000 a month for internet? That's exactly how much a DSL internet connection with a speed of 14.4 kbit/sec cost in 1994. A year later, thanks to increasing competition, prices dropped to CZK 10,000 a month. And even that was still way too much. Instead of a fixed connection, users chose dial-up connections.

But even this wasn't very accessible – in 1994, you paid a monthly fee of CZK 1,000 plus CZK 12 for every connection minute. You had to keep a strict eye on your time spent online, otherwise you'd be in for a shock when the bill came. A year later, it was possible to get dial-up for CZK 1 per minute (on top of the monthly fee of several hundred crowns).

Three people contributed to helping significantly reduce internet connection rates: Patrick Zandl, Ivo Lukačovič, and Ondřej Neff. At the end of the 1990s, they worked together to create a platform against the internet monopoly of what was then called Telecom and finally hammered out a special tariff. Thanks to them, for every 6 minutes of browsing between 5 and 9 p.m., and every 12 minutes after 9 p.m., we paid CZK 2.60.

◀CONNECTION VIA BBS▶

Czechoslovakia was already unofficially on the net back in 1990, when the FIDO network was operational here. You connected to this via a BBS, a system of electronic bulletin boards divided by topic. Users could chat, send email, and download or share programs and games. The hitch was that no more than 32 users could connect to the BBS at a time. And that was during the time when there were only a few thousand people on the internet.



eralization also brought certain risks – in the 1990s, no one had ever heard of trolls, phishing, hoaxes, hacker attacks, or other inconveniences that we encounter regularly online today. If you'd like to see what the internet looked like back in its "Stone Age", check out the Czech Internet Museum (www.muzeuminternetu.cz).

OUT OF INTEREST

Prices in the Nineties

By
Martin Kavka

Škoda Favorit 136 LS. In 1991, this car cost CZK 139,000. Other cars weren't any cheaper – an Opel Corsa with a 1.2 liter engine cost CZK 480,000 and the more powerful Kadett started at CZK 550,000. The smallest Peugeot 106, which could be bought in places like Kotva, cost CZK 350,000.

Week-long holiday in Egypt. In 1990, it cost CZK 25,000 per person; in 1997, thanks to the advent of charter flights,

the price dropped to around CZK 17,000. These days, prices for the trip start at around CZK 11,000.

Plane ticket to Paris. In 1990, a ticket cost about CZK 11,000 including taxes. Today you can fly a low-cost airline for around CZK 2,000.

Big Mac. In 1993, we paid CZK 48, but the average wage was just under CZK 6,000. Today it costs CZK 75, but the average wage is now CZK 27,000.

Note: To give you a better idea of prices then, keep in mind that in the early 1990s, the average wage was just under CZK 4,000 per month.



How We Got Our Start – Radim Passer, BB Centrum Founder and Chairman of the Board of PASSERINVEST GROUP, a.s.

At the end of 1991, I struck out on my own. At that time, I entered into a purchase agreement for three apartment buildings in Vinohrady and set up my first office in my home, a studio flat in Strašnice. I taught myself to write a valid purchase agreement with all necessary provisions, then how to take possession of a building. I bought a building on Prokopka Street in Prague 9, and a few weeks later, once I got the building permit, I began to renovate it with the help of the small construction company owned by my father. We sold this upgraded building to a computer company – our first sale ever. After deducting all expenses, we made 2.5 million crowns. I haven't sold the other buildings near Grébovka Park in Vinohrady yet.

New opportunities presented themselves in early 1992. We bought a number of buildings in Vinohrady, managed to acquire a building on Senovážné náměstí and sell it to a bank, as well as a building on Ve Smečkách in Prague 1. The company started to grow. We hired our first employees and set up our first proper office – first in Vršovice and, in mid-1991, in Vinohrady.

At the end of 1992, my father finally successfully concluded the deal for the purchase of the properties on which we later began building BB Centrum. He bought a construction company called Pražská stavební obnova (Prague Building Restoration) during the privatization period, which owned a construction complex here with very lucrative property. My father's only competition during the privatization was the management of PSO itself, but they obviously underestimated the situation. My father dug his heels right in, and without even the slightest hint of a bribe, his project won. During our first year of business, everything significant took place that dictated the future direction of the company. At that time, the Prague 4 Town Hall announced an urban design competition for architects that also affected my father's property, where the BB Centrum complex was later built.

In mid-1993, we purchased properties from my father and began working with the architecture firm of Jan Aulík,



which had won the urban design competition for the area of what is now BB Centrum. From 1992 to 1995, we sold practically all our other real estate so that we could focus intensively on preparing the project for BB Centrum, which got its name from its location – on one side of the property stood the Brumlovka sports hall and on the other side was Baarova Street.

In 1995, we moved our offices to a three-storey panel office building located on the BB Centrum property. Our development plans were already in full swing, and in 1998, we celebrated the gala opening of the first office building at BB Centrum – Building C (the one next to the entrance ramp to the expressway heading towards the city center). Its first major tenant was Hewlett-Packard,

which chose this modern building as its headquarters (and incidentally, HP is still with us today).

BB Centrum began to take shape, and it's been exactly 20 years since we started. We're already planning our anniversary celebrations for 2018, full of gratitude to God for the work which has already significantly exceeded our original expectations.



Beginnings in a studio apartment in Strašnice

⟨RADIM PASSER
IN THE YEAR 1992⟩

Favorite...

... **brand of automobile:** BMW

... **band:** anything melodic

... **clothing:** Hugo Boss and Nike

... **fun / hobby:** disco, football

... **active sport:** football, gym

... **athlete:** Diego Maradona

The Nineties Are Back!

History Repeats Itself! Following the era of the “pin-up girl” from the Fifties, the “hippie Sixties”, and the cheap and cheerful Eighties, the Nineties are back in style. What was popular then and what’s back today?

By
Dita Černá with Dagmar Gabulová,
certified style coach for the
Czech and Slovak Republics

After the grey days of totalitarianism, the Nineties brought the opening of the West and beyond. The things that Czech women could only dream of from the pages of Burda or during exceptional trips to Hungary or Austria, from where they hauled back piles of new western clothes, were finally a reality here. Shops began to fill with never-before-seen things, from interesting fabrics to a diverse selection of cosmetics. But Czechs also had something to export – the first Czech beauties entered the world of modeling.

The entire decade was spent eagerly awaiting the new millennium. In fashion, everyone knew of course that you can't repeat what came before, when the world invented jeans and miniskirts, one of the most cultish fashion items over the centuries. The boom of “sampling” migrated from the music realm to that of clothing – the more patterns adorned your skirt, blouse, or leggings, the better. And distinctive style wasn't the only characteristic of the Nineties. What was and will definitely again be in style this year?

Ring the Bell (Bottoms)

If it was denim, it was in – dresses, long-sleeved shirts, and super-modern cut-off, distressed denim vests, which had been popular a decade earlier... Jeans, slightly flared, ruled women's fashion in 1996. This trend, known in English as “boot cut” jeans, were called “zvonáče” here (“bell bottoms”) and dominated world fashion for ten years, and were popular both in denim and in businesswear. Boot cut trousers are back this year, as are jeans with braces.

ENTREPRENEURS

Retro Better Left Forgotten

On the very fringes of good taste where the “entrepreneurs” roamed were white socks with fake leather loafers and shapeless men's jackets in teal green or poison purple, accessorized with wildly patterned shirts in “tropical” style as worn by action hero Lorenzo Lamas. This wild fashion sense went hand in hand with the crazy early entrepreneurial days. Hopefully it will never return.



Photo: ČTK/AP/Remy De La Mauiniere

Spice Girls. Popular singers in the Nineties, trendsetters even in fashion

The 90s – Living the High Life

We don't just mean living a flamboyant lifestyle that mingled with fashion in the Nineties (just recall the somewhat redundant “decorativeness” of fashion icon and designer Gianni Versace...). Jeans, baggy pants, miniskirts, and padded jackets were worn with heavy shoes with thick soles, known as “traktorky” (treads). The bigger and heavier, the more fashionable their wearer was.

Platform shoes were also very popular, often colorfully decorated. These were popularized by the Spice Girls, who took this trend to extravagant heights.

Big, over-the-top hoop earrings enjoyed great popularity. From simple thin ones to elaborate designs graced the ears of most women. Just as with other trends of the time – the bigger, the better.



Photo: ČTK/AP

The heroes of girls in the 1990s were top models, who “wouldn't get out of bed for less than 10,000 dollars”

Neon, Diamonds, and Big Hair

Colors, as well as patterns, definitely dominated the Nineties. Classic black was complemented by garish shades of yellow, orange, green, and pink, not only on clothing, but also on accessories and makeup. After the gray socialist years, people wanted to be seen. Also trendy was grunge-style plaid. It was widely used in various color combinations on shirts, skirts, and dresses. And let's not forget hair trends. The fairer sex, in particular, will certainly remember "sugar water" – a mixture of granulated sugar and water that was used as the most effective gel to transform their bangs into the (then) ultra-modern wave above their foreheads.

Makeup of the 90s – Inspired by Youth

Makeup inspired by the Nineties means the comeback of pastel colors. Cosmetic trends didn't differ much from fashion trends: neon pink or blue shades, like in the 80s, rich brown lipstick, prominent blusher. Leading Czech makeup artist Zdeněk Fencel thinks that the main advantage of the Nineties was and is that so many things were worn – there was something for everyone.



Photo: ČTK/Mary Evans/Ronald Grant Archive / Mary Evans / Pantheon

Flowing curls and sleek, sharp bobs...pop queen Madonna was a proud wearer of curls ("vamp" style)

"Just like back then, burgundy, or even somewhat brown, lipstick is seen quite a bit today. Blue eyeshadow in a variety of shades is coming back, as are pastel shades of pink and salmon.

The last of the trends is bronzer – for a natural look, the face was contoured with bronzer and highlighter in such a way that the face appeared to be naturally lit," said Fencel. The spring fashion

shows have gone for a big comeback of the Nineties and really, it's quite logical – the young designers were inspired by their childhoods, and the older by their younger days.



ICONS

Photo: ČTK/PICTURE ALLIANCE/SVEN SIMON



Lady Diana

Photo: ČTK/AP/P Castaldi



Fashion designer Gianni Versace, Claudia Schiffer, Naomi Campbell

Icons of the time included Lady Di, top model Claudia Schiffer and real female bodies, a far cry from the emaciated figures whose time came decades later.

Lifestyles in the Nineties: Diets, Aerobics, Burgers, and Cookbooks

By
Alice Škochová

The Wild Fitness West: Muscles, Muscles, and More Muscles

The wild Nineties brought the cult of the body. New fitness centres cropped up wherever they could, seemingly like mushrooms. And they were packed. The first big complex opened in Průhonice, and actors, celebrities, and politicians flocked there. The equipment in these temples of bodybuilding was generally very simple and cheap. Weight training still wasn't considered part of a total healthy lifestyle like today, but instead focused primarily on bodybuilding. Men looked up to Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger. No one knew much yet about food supplements to help build muscles.

Kombucha and Fat-Burning Soups

Not everyone had the financial resources for expensive supplements, so they looked for cheaper solutions. Lenka Kořínková's cookbook S.P.L.K. (Strava podle Lenky Kořínkové - How to Eat by Lenka Kořínková) was hugely successful. It divided food into "flora", "fauna", and "neutral". Her method, which



Photo: ČTK/Nosák JH

Those who didn't use slimming products did aerobics instead. The world champion in sports aerobics in 1997, Olga Šípková

promised big results, strictly prescribed that meat and plants could not be eaten together during one day or even one meal. Another cheap solution were so-called fat-burning soups. Kombucha, an unappealing mushroom, promised overall improvements in health, and Czechs grew it at home in big jars.

Beautiful and Slim. Effortless Miracles

The weight-loss craze made its way to the Czech Republic. We wanted to cast off the socialist grey and be beautiful and slim. International companies penetrated our market, offering various teas, pills, and weight-loss shakes.

Who wouldn't be enticed by "miracles without effort", offered 25 years ago by Studio Twiggy? Natural latex wraps were supposed to get rid of kilograms and all pain as if by magic.

Lining Up For The First Hamburger

Until now, we'd eaten mainly at home or had lunch at a buffet. In 1992, however, a new kind of "eating out" made its way to the Czech Republic. The first branch of the fast food chain McDonald's opened on Prague's Vodičková Street. A massive line formed for the first hamburgers. Along with the curious crowds, supporters of the Animal

◀AEROBICS: LET'S GO, GIRLS! ▶

The biggest aerobics boom came after the revolution, when videos by foreign instructors made it here. Finally we could see what aerobics was actually supposed to look like. Classes migrated en masse from sokolovnas to newly established fitness centers. The luckiest danced in heavily cut-out outfits, very uncomfortable, as well as scarce. In the Nineties, aerobics was especially popular thanks to the successes of our Czech competitors. The pioneer and enthusiastic promoter of aerobics here was Olga Šípková, who became the first Czech world aerobics champion in 1997.

S.O.S. movement also stood out front to protest the non-environmentally friendly and unethical practices of the company. However, people quickly learned to enjoy fast food and "Me-káč" became a place where families even went for holiday meals. Two years after McDonald's opened, their

◀LINES FOR BURGERS▶

On opening day, 11,000 people stood in line for a burger at the first McDonald's in the Czech Republic.

CHART



TOP 10 SWEETS OF THE 1990s

1. Bubble Tape bubble gum rolls
2. Everything from Kinder: Eggs, Bueno, Maxi King, Milky Bars
3. Algida ice cream, and especially pricey Magnum bars
4. Frugo fruit juices
5. Vitacit Tang
6. PushPop lollipops
7. Juicy Fruit, Doublemint, Spearmint chewing gum
8. Family Frost ice cream
9. Danone Kid flavored yogurts
10. Milky Way candy bars



McDonald's on Vodičková Street



Photo: ČTK/Thomová Judita

Helena Růžičková and her cookbook

competitor KFC opened their first restaurant. Burger King made its way here 16 long years later.

Cooking with Švejk and Eva Pilarová

The publishing boom of the Nineties reached cookbooks as well. New cookbooks often stretched the boundaries of the genre – for example, there were erotic and travelogue cookbooks. Also popular were the “cooking on the cheap”

based on popular films and literary figures – such as Kája Mařík’s Grandkids, Cooking with Švejk, and Counsellor Vacátko’s Cooking Tips.

The Dawn of Coffee Culture: Piccolo or Small Espresso?

Big changes came to the world of coffee as well. The longing to follow world trends pushed muddy *turek* in glass cups out of the cafes. In its place, filter and instant coffee came first, followed

⟨TECHNOLOGY IN THE KITCHEN⟩

In the Nineties, new appliances flooded our kitchens. The first drip coffee makers, microwaves, juicers, and fryers found their places on our countertops.

cookbooks with titles such as The Beggar’s Cookbook or Cooking on a Dime. Growing interest in new directions in nutrition were reflected in the trend towards meat-free cookbooks. The biggest hits, however, were cookbooks by famous personalities, such as Jiřina Bohdalová, Helena Růžičková, and Eva Pilarová. Other cookbooks appeared

quickly by espresso. Taking a page from Italian tourists who demanded small, strong coffee in our cafes, we started calling espresso *piccolo*, *pikolino*, or *pikčo*. The name stuck. Even today, baristas take orders for “piccolo”, and for espresso, they ask if we want large or small. We had to wait a few more years for the big coffee chains to show up here.

HOW WE SHOPPED



The first supermarket opened 25 years ago

After the revolution, the floodgates opened with goods of all kinds. We snapped up previously unavailable things like mad, but we also needed everyday items. Rapidly spreading networks of smaller convenience stores cropped up, pri-

marily in residential neighborhoods and on the outskirts of major cities. The turning point in the way we shopped came 25 years ago, when the first supermarket, Mana, opened in Jihlava. A second branch opened a week later in Prague. For shop-

pers, the quantities of such a variety of goods in one place was utterly shocking. Some saw exotic fruits for the first time in their lives.

Travel Fever, or We've Got Schnitzels, Let's Go!

For many Czechoslovaks, the Nineties brought not only political freedom, but most importantly the freedom to travel. The borders opened and Europe was flooded with Škodas and Karosa buses. Homemade schnitzels perfumed the air in Yugoslavia, in Italy, and under the Eiffel Tower. "Czechs, don't steal" – these signs were a reality in western Europe back then. Everyone over 30 has memories like these. Welcome to the sweet trips of our dreams to the West.

By
Vlasta Holéciová

A Few Shillings in Our Pockets

Frankly, when borders were closed for decades, it's no wonder that once they opened up again, our travelling skills lacked...shall we say...class... That was the case for all of us who set out on in the Nineties in search of long overdue western "joys".

It all started innocently. With the abolition of travel permits in February 1990, the doors were thrown wide open with one-day trips, called "na čumendu" – "for a look-see". Such euphoria! We were captivated by the western European refinement, the wide variety of high quality branded goods, and the absence of socialist grey. The supply of organized trips came nowhere near filling demand. Completely packed and very uncomfortable Karosa buses headed out, sometimes twice a day, at first to Austria or Germany, and later to Italy, France, Great Britain, and Denmark. But no one minded the discomfort. These trips were journeys to a fairy tale land for those who took part.

At Home at The Gas Station

However, for foreign observers, we were a bunch of ill-mannered, dully-clothed, loud people who sometimes...ahem...left shops without paying. Those who had money (and there weren't many of those) bought electronics, groceries, and clothes.

Day trips to faraway cities had their own specifics. When the bus stopped at gas stations, no one was too embarrassed to bite into a boiled hot dog and drink a cup of "turek" that the driver made on the propped-open door of the luggage compartment.

If it was a multi-day trip, gas stations even functioned as bathrooms. No one was too shy to take over a sink and brush their teeth. In short, we were seen and heard "out there". When touring the beautiful sights of European metropolises such as Paris, London, or Rome, we slept in cheap hostels and some even in parks. Our pockets weren't very deep.

Viva Pâte!

Because we took our own food with us, Europeans threw us into another category of excursions that experienced a boom in the Nineties. These were multi-day trips to the Mediterranean, either in our own cars or in groups



Bibione

by bus. That was primarily because of difficult-to-acquire and expensive foreign currency. And so weekday excursions over the border to a camp by the sea were always self-catered. If you didn't pack schnitzels in your bag, you might as well have not even been there. Some even brought their own beer in plastic bottles. Pork cutlets fried in breadcrumbs were eaten not only on the way there, but also once we got there. And once they were gone, cans

of lunchmeat were brought out. Other Europeans began calling us "paštikáři" – the "pâté-eaters".

Bibione – The Czechs' Paradise

And what destinations were hot? We already knew the Black Sea from union tours during socialism, so it wasn't particularly enticing. Bibione became a hot spot, a relatively small seaside town in northern Italy. There probably isn't

a single Czech who hasn't been there. Sea, sun, and evening strolls along the promenade in gaudy clothes while eating a gelato were mandatory.

In addition to the Mediterranean, the Atlantic was also enticing, but since no one could afford a plane ticket to Spain, buses made the journey instead. Along the way, we spent the night in hostels, tents, or caravans, or we even drove through. After the conflict in Yugoslavia ended, Croatia reopened, and



<TOP DESTINATIONS IN THE 90S AND IN 2017>

Coach Tours:

Vienna, Paris, Rome, Venice, London



Holidays with Accommodation:

Bibione, Adriatic Coast, Costa Brava



Holidays Today:

Croatia
Italy
Greece
Slovakia

AU PAIR

And the au pair was born

The Nineties were also the time when Czech girls (and even some boys) travelled abroad to care for children in family settings. With only a few English lessons, girls took off to get experience, mostly in England. The pioneer of the au-pair program here was Student Agency, headed by Radim Jančura. During that time, 9 out of 10 girls aged 18 and up wanted to go to England to work. The reality was often not quite as rosy as their expectations. Once there, it was a lot of work dealing with British children and the vagaries of their parents. But the redemption was the opportunity to learn English well, get to know more about the “west”, and make some money.



THEN AND NOW

1990s

- Primarily coach trips or driving. We started flying in the late 90s.
- We took our own food with us, hence the nickname “paštikáři”, or “pâté-eaters”.
- We were not choosy about our accommodation; we didn’t mind sleeping in tents.
- We didn’t spend much – maximally on ice cream for the kids.
- We often went on day trips, without accommodation.

Today

- We became self-confident – we want high quality services and comfort
- We prefer flying.
- We want all-inclusive trips.
- We buy our holidays online.
- We often head out on our own, not on organized tours.
- Holidays are not just lying on the beach – trendy now are gastrotourism, agrotourism, golf trips, and adrenaline experiences.



the Adriatic coast became the number one destination for Czechs, and remains so even today.

Flying For The First Time

The turning point came in 1997, when the first charter flights began operating. Thanks to pre-contracted capacity, travel agencies could obtain quantity discounts from airlines and offer significantly reduced air excursions, which until then were only affordable

for a selected few. Many of us flew for the first time ever – yet another experience for which we’re in debt to the Nineties.

Next came trips to Arabic countries. In addition to the amazing Sphinx, the Pyramids, the azure blue sea, and snorkeling, travel agencies promised golden tanned skin in just a week, and people began flying to Egypt and Tunisia. But it was in no way inexpensive – a week’s holiday in Egypt

in 1997 cost around CZK 18,000. The more affluent could head for Cyprus, the Canary Islands, or to Mallorca. But that was a luxurious – and expensive – holiday indeed.

The very first flights to a truly exotic destination – to Thailand – departed from Prague in 2000. We thus entered a new era of travelling Czechs. Thailand today still heads the list of most popular exotic destinations. But that’s another story.



The Adriatic is still popular today



Flights to Egypt began in 1997

What Was Happening At Home? The Disintegration of the Federation, The Start of Coupon Privatization

By
Petr Halaburda

What was happening in the Czech Republic three years after the revolution? Events that were rather significant for the future. Slovakia had been talking for a long time about going out on their own, but the key events leading up to the split of federated Czechoslovakia took place in the summer of 1992. Photographs taken in the garden of the Tugendhat Villa in Brno showing Václav Klaus and Vladimír Mečiar sitting together remain a symbol of the peaceful dissolution of the 74-year-old union of Czechs and Slovaks. Two separate countries emerged on New Year's Day of the following year.

Coupon Privatization: A Unique Project Still Attracts Speculation Today

1992 was important for the start of coupon privatization, which had been discussed since just after the Velvet Revolution. Even today, experts still can't agree on whether or not it was successful. At the time, however, it was a unique way to start dividing the assets in state hands. Over 1800 companies were privatized using this method.

The first wave took place in 1992 and had five rounds, starting on May 18.

While coupon privatization in the Czech Republic continued even after the federation dissolved, Slovakia withdrew from the program. The second wave took place in 1994 and over 367 billion crowns worth of assets were distributed. Nearly 6 million people and 260 privatization funds took part in the first round; in the second, a similar number of residents and 353 funds.

Sport Split Up The National Team and Got Ready For the First Czech Successes

We rejoiced in our shared sports successes with the Slovaks for the last time. When Jaromír Jágr donned his Stanley Cup championship rings in 1991 and 1992, he was entered into the list of champions as being from Czechoslovakia. We can still watch goal after goal by the unstoppable number 68 today, but who else did we cheer for on TV?

Football Took Its Time; Two Years Later Came the First Big Czech Success

1992 was technically the last year "on the boat together" with the Slovaks, but in sports, it was far from reality. It was necessary, for example, to finish playing long-term domestic competitions and already-initiated international compe-



Photo: ČTK/Svancara Petr
Coupon privatization – a way to distribute state assets

titions with Czechoslovak selections. While in 1993 most athletes competed on behalf of the new republic, footballers didn't rush the split.

Just as with other team sports, they finished the league competition – in 1993, Sparta celebrated victory in both hockey and football – but the national team played together for the last time

in November of that year. Under the name "Czech and Slovak Federative Republic", they failed to qualify in Belgium (0:0) and for the 1994 World Cup. In the final duel, many Slovaks on the team didn't even play – only Peter Dubovský, Lubomír Moravčík, and Jaroslav Timko. "We didn't even realize that we were playing for the last time together, we

DĚLENÍ

Key Dates in the Division of Czechoslovakia

1992

July 8 – meeting between Václav Klaus and Vladimír Mečiar regarding the division (Brno)

July 17 – declaration by the Slovak National Council on the independence of the Slovak Republic

July 20 – resignation of President Václav Havel

November 13 – the Federal Assembly adopts the Act on Division of Assets and on the Transition to the Czech Republic and Slovakia

November 25 – the Federal Assembly adopts the constitutional law on the division of Czechoslovakia

December 16 – the Czech National Council approves the Constitution of the Czech Republic

1993

January 1 – creation of the independent Czech Republic

January 26 – Václav Havel is elected President of the Czech Republic



Photo: ČTK/Hejzlar Jaroslav
A done deal – Prime Ministers Vladimír Mečiar (left) and Václav Klaus confirm the split of Czechoslovakia

«AFTER 74 YEARS, IT'S OVER»

In 1992, the Czech prime minister and his Slovak counterpart agreed to dissolve the federation. On January 1, 1993, the countries went their separate ways.

were used to always having the Slovaks around, but this time there were too few of them,” recalled Miroslav Kadlec, later captain of the Czech vice-champions of Europe in 1996, rather unsentimental on the division of the football clubs.



Jágr, Hrdina, Železný, Doktor...
During the era of the federation, many Czech athletes had their first big successes. Jiří Hrdina, like Jágr, became an NHL champion in the Pittsburgh uniform. Javelin thrower Jan Železný kicked off his gold medal hattrick at the Barcelona Olympics, and decathlete Robert Zmélík, canoeist Lukáš Pollert, and shooter Petr Hrdlička brought home gold medals from the Catalan metropolis as well.

The first exclusively Czech Olympic successes came in 1996 in Atlanta, where, in addition to Železný, water slalomist Štěpánka Hilgertová and canoeist Martin Dvořák were victorious.

The Golden Era of Hockey Had Arrived

For hockey fans, the Winter Games in Nagano (1998) will remain absolutely unforgettable – for the first time, our boys were number one in the biggest hockey tournament in history. The golden era of Czech hockey had already taken place two years earlier, however, when our first genuinely “independent” team won the world championships in Vienna.

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OPEN HOUSE PRAGUE 2017

13.-14. 5. 2017

Over the course of one weekend in May, you'll have the opportunity to take a look into normally inaccessible spaces at BB Centrum – we're opening up the terrace of the FILADELFIE Building and the BETHANY Community Centre to the public.

CONCERT IN BAAR PARK

22/6

Czech and Slovak musical stars will perform under the stars – No Name, Děda Mládek Illegal Band, and Hana Zagorová and her group

OPEN HOUSE PRAGUE 2017

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THE KINOBUS IN BAAR PARK

14.-17. 8. 2017

For three years now, we've been making film fans happy – and the Kinobus is making its way back to BB Centrum once again.

1. 6. 2017

CHILDREN'S DAY IN BAAR PARK AND BRUMLOVKA PARK

An afternoon filled with fun activities and competitions for prizes.

Information about all events can be found on the BB Centrum Facebook page and website.

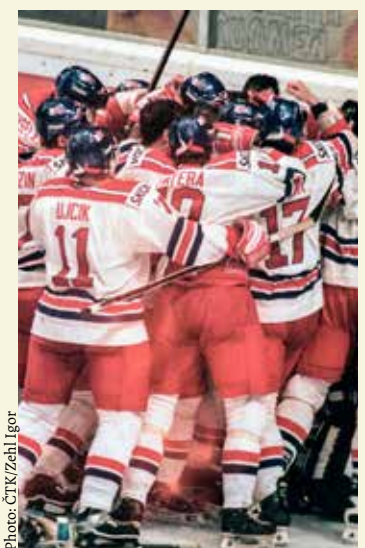


Photo: CTK/ZehI Igor

Photo: CTK/ZehI Igor

Vienna, 1996: the first purely-Czech gold at the world championships in hockey

Czechs later earned another five world championships

At the Cinema

Small cinemas died off and were turned into casinos, discos, or secondhand shops. Viewers were shuffled off to the multiplexes. They got used to going “to the cinema” instead of “to a movie” and learned to eat popcorn while watching. And what Czech films were made during this time?

By
Alice Škochová

**Obecná Škola (Primary School):
If any of the parents wants to see (an)
Idiot, please stop by the office...**

The announcement by the uncontrollable school director of one of Prague's suburban schools at which new teacher Igor Hnízdo, played by Jan Tříska, starts working. Shot in 1991 by director Jan Svěrák, it's largely an autobiography of screenwriter Zdeňek Svěrák. It was nominated for an Oscar for Best Foreign Film and became popular particularly among teachers who fondly recall the uncompromising teacher's introduction to his class: “My name – is Igor Hnízdo!”

**Cosy Dens (Pelíšky): I'd just like
to know where our East German
comrades went wrong...**

said Jiří Kodet in the role of Kraus over a melted plastic spoon in Jan Hřebejk's comedy from 1999. The former soldier with an aversion to Communists wormed his way into the memories of viewers with his memorable quarrel with his film daughter on the difference



Cosy Dens (Pelíšky)

ENDLESS SERIES BEGIN

A bunch of rich, good-looking teenagers in Beverly Hills 90210 dealt with slightly different problems than the post-revolutionary youth watching the screens. Maybe even more attractive were the stories of Brandon and Brenda, Kelly and Steve, Dylan, Donna, and other beautiful young people. The opening theme song is recognizable from the first few notes even a quarter of a century later.

Blind Mexican beauty Esmeralda also spent a lot of time in our living rooms, with her piercing emerald eyes, along with the impulsive Milagros and mischievous Manuela. Even the South American telenovelas were endless. The lifeguards from Baywatch, led by David Hasselhoff and Pamela Anderson bravely rescued residents of the California coast from shark attacks, drowning, and earthquakes.

The fate of the wealthy Ewing family from the Southfork Ranch in the series Dallas was close to our hearts. J.R. as the embodiment of evil; naive, handsome Bobby; desperate Sue Ellen; and good-natured Miss Ellie. Do you remember the episode when Bobby came back from the dead? They're yellow and still with us today. The Simpsons. The Czech version is considered one of the best adaptations, primarily because of the performances by Jiří Labus as Marge and Martin Dejdar as Bart. Ay caramba!

And even kids got their fair share—they couldn't tear themselves away from Chip and Dale Rescue Rangers or DuckTales. Even adults sometimes came to watch and see if Launchpad McQuack's plane would crash yet again.



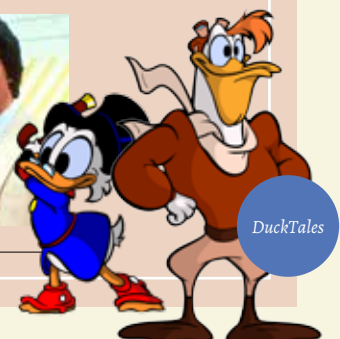
Beverly Hills 90210



Baywatch



Dallas



TELEVISION

What We Watched On TV

The first Czech commercial TV station was TV Premiéra, which began broadcasting in 1992 in Prague and Central Bohemia. Two years later it was renamed Prima. During this time, the first Czech private nationwide TV station entered the airwaves, with Vladimír Železný at its helm. Their first broadcast was Svěrák's film Primary School (Obecná škola). Viewers were especially fond of TV series.

between dumplings and gnochchi. This affectionate film about inter-generational and ideological conflicts won three Czech Lion awards for Best Male Actor (Jiří Kodet), Best Film Poster, and the Audience Award for most successful Czech film.

Thanks For Every New Morning (Díky za každé nové ráno): Uncle Vasil was obviously a bourgeois nationalist...

The protagonists of this bittersweet comedy dealt with the political orientation of their Ukrainian Uncle Vasil in this film written by Halina Pawłowska and directed by Milan Šteindler, in which humorous and tragic episodes from the August 1968 occupation until the 1980s are recounted. Scenes of Prague under Communism alternate

with images of the idyllic Ukrainian countryside from which emerge the distinctive characters of their Ukrainian relatives. The pride of the film is excellent Polish actor Franciszek Pieczka in the role of the father of main character Olga, played by Ivana Chýlková. Do you remember? I'll be awkward, I'll be awkward, I'll be awkward... 1994.

Kolya: Bills, you greedy, green cows...

Zdeněk Svěrák laments his unpaid bills in this Czech film that garnered six Czech Lion awards as well as the American Oscar for Best Foreign Film in 1996. The main character, an older bachelor named Louka, played by Zdeněk Svěrák, fakes a marriage with a Russian woman for money without realizing that he'll remain in charge of her young son Kolya when she emigrates to West Germany.



Kolya

The boy doesn't speak Czech and at first he doesn't trust his surrogate father, but gradually they manage to form a fragile bond. Who could forget the scene when Kolya "calls" his babushka in Russia using the shower head as a phone?

The Ride (Jízda): Girls never forget...

Jakub Špalek, Radek Pastrňák, and hitchhiker Aňa Geislerová criss-cross southern Bohemia in a convertible. This carefree summer road movie with a soundtrack by Buty featuring songs from their album Pppoommaalluu was an instant hit. Jan Svěrák's film won the grand prize at the Karlovy Vary Film Festival in 1995, where it received the Crystal Globe, as well as two Czech Lion awards for Best Cinematography (F. A. Brabec) and Best Music (Radek Pastrňák and Buty).

TOP 10 NINETIES FOREIGN FILMS



1. Jurassic Park
2. Forrest Gump
3. The Bodyguard
4. Se7en
5. Independence Day
6. Men in Black
7. Titanic
8. Pulp Fiction
9. Schindler's List
10. Mask

1992 BOOK HIT OF THE YEAR: MICHAL VIEWEGH: THE BLISSFUL YEARS OF LOUSY LIVING

In 1992, then little-known writer Michal Viewegh published his novel *The Blissful Years of Lousy Living* (Báječná léta pod psa), which was exceptionally successful with both readers and critics. The funny, nostalgic memoir of childhood and adolescence during Communism rang true with much of society. Five years later it was turned into a film.

WHERE WE WENT FOR MUSIC

Before 1989, the Žižkov club Na Chmelnici was the only place with regular performances where Praguers could go for a rock concert. In the 1990s, music clubs sprouted up like mushrooms after the rain. They often operated in dire conditions in old abandoned halls, with plaster falling on the audience's heads.

Legendary clubs such as Újezd, Bunkr, Belmondo Revival Club, U Zoufalců, and Rock Café all opened during the Nineties. On stage you could find groups such as Šum Svistu, Žlutý pes, Psí vojáci, Garáž, Hudba Praha, as well as a number of revival and cover bands.

MUSIC

What We Listened To



Photo: ČTK

ČTK 18. 8. 1990 – Rolling Stones concert in Prague

By Alice Škočková

On The Radio

In early 1992, Czechoslovak Radio ceased to exist – it was replaced by Czech Radio, but the expansion of private radio stations drew listeners away from it. The first private radio station, Evropa 2, started up in 1990. A year later, the popular station Radio 1 began broadcasting. Frekvence 1 and Rádio Alfa were the first two stations to get nationwide licenses. And what songs could we hear most often on our radios? More in the chart...

The First Musical Stars Live

Frank Zappa was one of the first stars to play here after the Iron Curtain fell. He played in 1991 in the sold-out Sportovní Hala in Prague at a concert celebrating the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia. The Rolling Stones followed at Strahov Stadium, along with Pink Floyd and Guns 'N' Roses, Paul Simon at Sparta, the Velvet Underground at the Palace of Culture, Metallica in Brno, Iron Maiden in Ostrava, and Nick Cave at Lucerna.

What Groups Did We Listen To?

Backstreet Boys, Kelly Family, Duran Duran, Oasis, Nirvana, Ace of Base, U2, Take That.

TOP 10 HITS OF 1992



1. Sběrka zvadlejších růží
Wanastovi Vjety
2. Na ptáky jsme krátký
Janek Ledecký
3. Láska je láska
Lucie Bílá
4. Když muž se ženou snídá
Karel Gott
5. Myslel jsem si, že je to láska
Mňága a Žďorp
6. Václavák
Iveta Bartoňová
7. Černí andělé
Lucie
8. Až jednou
Shalom
9. Nebude to lahké
Richard Müller
10. Marioneta
Tichá dohoda

From Felicia to Mercedes

The first half of the 1990s brought often unchecked growth in all possible areas. And just as the post-revolution generation of “fashionable men” were enamored of short trousers, purple jackets, white socks, and moccasins with tassels, even the Czech roads had their stars too.

By
Petr Horák and
Martin Kavka

To give you an idea of which cars ruled the road outside our borders, between 1989 and 1995, the European Car of the Year Award was won by the Fiat Tipo, the Citroën XM, the Renault Clio, the VW Golf III, the Nissan Micra, the Ford Mondeo, and the Fiat Punto. Many western cars were available here even before the Velvet Revolution. For

example, the Ford Sierra, the Fiat Uno, and the Peugeot 309 were all brought to Czechoslovakia by PZO Tuzex.

After the fall of the totalitarian regime and the borders were opened to free travel, the doors were thrown

thing that vaguely resembled a car. Czech highways were soon flooded with old models of various brands, of various ages and technical conditions. *Veksláci* (slang for moneychangers) moved up from Ford Sierras to more

sprung for the 405 with a diesel engine under the hood.

Germany's Opel was especially popular. Many of its models were on the road here: Manta, Ascona, Kadett, and Senator, as well as its derivation, the Monza, during the late 70s and 80s. Later, the newer models Vectra, Calibra, and Omega appeared. Their large, pseudo-luxurious SUV, the Opel Frontera, was a synonym for success shortly after the revolution. And we can't forget about Volkswagens – primarily the first and second generation Golfs, the Jetta, and the Passat. In addition to the aforementioned Ford Sierra and Probe, Czech drivers also loved Escorts and Scorpios, even the relatively ugly second generation models. Even older Tauruses and Granadas were imported. Connoisseurs looked for somewhat

◀A “LITTLE” LOOK BACK AT THE 90S▶

Little cars were hugely popular in the 1990s. Czechs stepped out of their Trabants and Škoda 120s and into Peugeot 105s, Renault R5s, Ford Fiestas, and Citroen AXs.

wide to individual imports of anything that had four wheels and could move. Czechs, frustrated by the limited selection of Škodas, Žigulíks, Moskvičes, Wartburgs, and Trabants, went over the border and bought any-

worldly-looking Probes, young hustlers drove BMW 3-series or Mercedes 190Es bought with daddy's money, and those who had access to cheap diesel handed over the family's savings for a Peugeot 309 – and those with bigger piggybanks

HYBRID

The first production model hybrid emerged in the Nineties

Did you know that the first production model hybrid in the world emerged in the Nineties? It was the Toyota Prius, which made its debut in 1997. It's still manufactured today – it's already on its 4th generation – and is synonymous with the term “hybrid vehicle”.

The development of the Prius was extremely interesting – as late as the end of 1996, Toyota still didn't have a working prototype. The main problem was the battery – the car either didn't run at all or was only able to drive a couple hundred meters. In late 1996/early 1997, thousands of Toyota's best engineers were working on the Prius.

Thanks to their unbelievable commitment to remove one obstacle after another, they were able meet their goal and in October 1997, the first Prius cars rolled off the line. It was a massive success – demand was huge and Toyota couldn't keep up with production. The car was available only in Japan for the first two years, after which it drove out into the world.

When the Prius became a favorite of Hollywood stars, such as Leonard Dicaprio, shortly after the start of the new millennium, it was clear that a legend was born.



Mercedes Benz 190 E



BMW E30



Opel Corsa

ŠKODA FELICIA (1994–2001)

1 The Felicia was manufactured from **1994 to 2001** in 5 versions – hatchback, station wagon, smaller and larger pick-ups, as well as a car with an open body, intended for recreation.

2 The modern **Felicia** was named after one of the most beautiful Škodas of all time – the convertible from the late 1950s/early 1960s.

3 Over the course of seven years, a total of **1,420,441 Felicias** were built. Ten years after production ended, the Felicia still was the most common car on Czech roads.



The Felicia was Škoda's first post-revolution model. Under the heavily redesigned body hid a reworked version of the Favorit. Once Škoda came under the wing of VW, a wider selection of motors became available, including the at-

mospheric 1.9 liter diesel and the 1.6 gas engine taken from the VW Golf. Just as with the Favorit, the hatchback and station wagon versions had the same back end (rear gate, taillights, etc.) in order to cut costs. Some versions had

options such as air-conditioning, ABS, airbags, and seatbelt tensioners. Until the Felicia was replaced with the Fabia, nearly 1.5 million were manufactured.

different cars. Fess up – who didn't love the Alfa Romeo 75 or the older Giulietta? And who didn't long for a VW Scirocco? The Fiat Tempra also had its particular charms.

A whole separate chapter on post-revolution Czech highways could be written about small cars. They were cheaper and more readily available, and if the whole family managed to squeeze into a Trabant or a Škoda 120 on holiday, then these little cars were more than sufficient. Do you remember the Peugeot 205, Renault R5, Citroen AX, Ford Fiesta, and Opel Corsa? Or the four-door liftback version of the Mazda 323 with the pop-up headlights? Or how about the symbol of the entrepreneur, the Mazda 626? Those born a little earlier will still remember the slogan "Mazda – How Do You Like Us?" or the ad exalting the refinement and quietness of the motor. Who wouldn't be amused by "I can't hear the motor, cancel the action"? And what about that tiny 6-cylinder in the Mazda MX-3?

Reading these names evokes lots of memories and experiences, doesn't it? Take a trip down memory lane with our photos.



Volkswagen Golf III

Hi-Tech: Computers Still Weren't Portable and Calls Were Still Made From A Booth

Perhaps in no other field of human activity are the memories of the Nineties so retro as those of the hi-tech world of computers and electronics. It's not that we didn't have color TVs yet – but at that time they still resembled a washing machine or fridge in size and weight. Despite this, in those early years we were able to catch a glimpse of what a personal computer could be good for, and news was spreading about the advent of mobile phones and the internet. A short comparison today will give everyone – especially today's teenagers – a laugh.

By
Petr Halaburda

A Computer in Every Household? Not Quite Yet...

Computers were already part of the post-Velvet Revolution world, but in general they were large machines that almost no one could use. Then the 90s came along and computers began to spread out to the everyday users. Performance and dimensions were, however, still a far cry from what we know today. And prices as well – computer setups usually cost several tens of thousands of crowns depending on how willing the customer was to pay for a better quality monitor, faster processor, or more memory. Despite this, everyone gawked at the first freely available desktop computers.

Development of operating systems, processors, and memory played a big role in the further progress of the computer world. In 1992, Microsoft released Windows 3.1 and completely dominated the market. Windows 95 brought another significant step forward. The Pentium processor was yet another huge leap, meaning faster computers. Sound cards were added, and dot-matrix printers were gradually phased out in favor of inkjet and laser, and one could finally connect to the internet with the help of a telephone modem. RAM was calculated using MB, but 3.5" diskettes were still used as data storage until they were replaced by CD-ROMs.

Access to the internet wouldn't be possible without a computer, and so it was important that as many people as possible had them. Over time, desktop models evolved into something like a universal building set – various components could be assembled freely into a working machine. For a long time, this was the easiest way to get a computer. And fortunately their prices dropped.

And Then Came The Internet

The internet is what led to the great progress in computer development. Launched in the Czech Republic on February 13, 1992, the open world of information, knowledge, and communication lured in all users, and for some, the only reason to have a computer was to access the internet. These days, we carry the internet around with us in our pockets or handbags thanks to smartphones, tablets, and notebooks. Mobile devices are the most popular in today's busy world.

Notebooks, formerly called laptops, began appearing in the first half of the 90s and quickly found their fans. Despite this, classic desktop computers haven't been completely pushed aside. Their performance and the appearance of the monitors have changed, and they're used primarily in offices. But fewer are made – in 2008, production of notebooks exceeded that of desktops for the first time.

Price? Sometimes More Than The Average Yearly Salary

At first, though, computers really weren't for everyone, especially those who wanted to play graphically intensive games. It wasn't unusual for a high-quality gaming computer to cost up to CZK 100,000 – this in the time when the average monthly salary was somewhere between six and seven thousand crowns. It was games that were the primary attraction for many

computer users during the early computing days. The game hit of the year in 1992 was Super Mario – a game (or one of its more recent versions) that pretty much every computer user has played at some point.

Mobile Phones – Unattainable Luxuries

In the early 1990s, no one could have possibly foreseen how important mobile phones would become for the current generation. It's not that they weren't known here, it's just that at first, they spread very slowly, just like elsewhere in the world. For at least several

years after its introduction, it was considered a superfluous luxury – a phone the size of a large handbag cost a good CZK 100,000 at first. Not to mention the usage fees. By the way – do you remember how we used to have to pay for incoming calls as well?

Mobiles in 1991, But Phone Booths Hung Around A Bit Longer

While abroad the first attempts at mobile connections took place in the late 80s – for example Soviet leader Michail Gorbachev was first seen with a mobile phone during the final days

«THE FIRST NOTEBOOKS, THEN CALLED LAPTOPS»

They began to appear in the early 1990s, yet still haven't managed to dislodge the classic desktop computer. And the internet? Czechoslovakia hooked up to it for the first time on February 13, 1992.



STILL WITH US



Video In Every Household

It sounds like a marketing campaign slogan, but it captures very well how much every family wanted the next big technical innovation – the VHS video camera. VCRs were pretty common even in those days, but video cameras were still far from being an everyday thing. But what parent wouldn't jump at the chance to be able to record the key moments of their children's childhoods?

And then the boom came! Anyone who attended a children's school performance, or really any event associated with children, would be surrounded by a horde of dedicated cameramen searching for the best camera angle. They gleefully played the videos for relatives who weren't able to be there. Then the cassette went into the cabinet, and frankly if we didn't buy new furniture every once in a while, it would still be there today. Maybe it'd be a good idea pull it out and shake off the dust – but what to play it on when VCRs have long since gone by the wayside and it didn't occur to anyone to have it transferred to DVD?

It's not that there are fewer amateur photographers and videographers today – rather the opposite, but most of them are content to use their phones. And let's face it – in the end they serve exactly the same purpose, and you don't need to drag around a huge bag with a heavy camera and worry about if it's sufficiently charged.



**STAY CLEAR OF A BROKEN
POWER LINE EVEN IF IT IS
TOUCHING THE GROUND!**

of the Soviet empire (October 2; 1989), in Czechoslovakia, the first phone call on a mobile network took place on September 12, 1991, when the chairs of the national councils of the Czech Republic and Slovakia Dagmar Burešová and František Mikloško spoke together on television.

Because of this, the public was under the impression that the expansion would happen very quickly, even if most people couldn't possibly imagine how the mobile invasion would change their lives. In fact, for many years, it was the only way for many Czechs to make calls – in the early 90s, it was still very difficult to get a land line. The most reliable place to make a phone call for most people remained the classic phone booth or other place with publicly accessible phones.

You might find it surprising, but there are still several thousand functional public phone booths in the Czech Republic. Think about it – can you recall the last time you saw a pay phone in your area? And the last time you leafed through a truly thick phone book, later renamed the Yellow Pages?

GSM Brought Mobiles to the Masses

The first mobile network in the Czech Republic worked on the NMW analogue system (1G). Three years after its launch, Eurotel delivered this service to 27,500 customers and despite this number of users, suitcase-sized devices still cost CZK 60,000 and weighed 4.5 kg. In the early days, the Eurotel monopoly had three stations from which it broadcast – the Žižkov Tower covered central



The first mobile phones wouldn't fit in your pocket

MUSIC



Walkmans and Discmans Ruled

Lucie Bílá celebrated the month of love and Petřín in her hit *Láska je láska* (Love is Love), Karel Gott told a romantic story of a man and his love having breakfast (*Muž se ženou snídá*), Janek Ledecký decided that we can't measure up to birds (*Na ptáky jsme krátký*), Fanánek was convinced that Průša is a pervert (*Průša je úchyl*), and Elton John's hit *The One* was heard around the world. 1992 was an unusually fertile year for musical hits, but do you remember how we recorded music and what we listened to it on? The mp3 format and other similar types were still in the distant future, and vinyl LPs experienced a sharp decline.



CDs Replaced Vinyl, Audiocassettes Survived

Cassettes served music lovers alongside vinyl records, but for connoisseurs, the quality of the sound lagged far behind that of LPs. Portable Walkmans and the possibility to listen to your favorite music anywhere at any time helped them retain their long-term popularity (remember how the tape would get tangled and how we'd rewind them with a pencil?) Many car radios still had built-in cassette players; the last automobile with a built-in player came off the line in 2010.

The new hit of the 90s was the CD, which began production back in the 80s. CDs suffered for some time because users couldn't record their own content onto them, like with cassette tapes. This was soon resolved by the availability of CD burners, and CDs definitely pushed their competitors off the market, especially with the advent of portable players.

Bohemia, the second transmitter was Prague 6, and the third served in Brno.

Two domestic companies, Eurotel and Paegas, launched in 1996 the more modern GSM network, which operates on a different band (900 MHz). The original NMT network was gradually phased out and later used to provide CSMA data services.

Thanks to GSM, the use of mobile phones became a real mass phenomenon, even when you consider that what we consider to be an average phone today was a far cry from the devices back then. In the second half of the first post-revolution decade, a whole range of mobile phones appeared – smaller, lighter, and cheaper. The market was dominated by Nokia (with the legendary 5110), but other manufacturers gradually began offering competing models and the mobile market began to boom. The legendary Apple was still to come – the first iPhone was introduced to the world in 2008 and ushered in the era of the smartphone.

No More Photos from the Bathroom – Digital Rules The World

Photography also underwent a dramatic transformation. The classical method for capturing images on 35mm film, as well

as their subsequent transformation into photographs was so important for many enthusiasts that they still use the alternative chemical method to develop photos even today. Improvised darkrooms, which people set up in their bathrooms, would be hard to find today. Indeed, the greatest number of photographs now

◁DIGITAL AT LAST▷

One of many areas in which we experienced a real revolution during the 90s was in photography. Classical equipment, 35mm film, and darkrooms were replaced by digital cameras – the first came along in 1994.

are taken on our mobiles, the most commonly used type of digital camera.

The Era of the 35mm, Disposable Cameras, Polaroid...

In the early 1990s, classical cameras with interchangeable film were still the most popular, but even then there was an effort to make them smaller. Disposable cameras appeared, and another big hit was instant photography, which Polaroid brought to the world. Snap a photo, wait two or three minutes, and

a paper photo appears in your hand – for most users, it was an unbelievable luxury. It's no wonder that it remained popular for so long: Polaroid ceased production in 2008 – exactly 45 years after it was founded.

...and Digital Had To Wait

Research and production of the first digital camera took place as far back as the 1970s – and the first camera that could record an image using electronic elements was manufactured by Sony in 1981. But it wasn't until 1988 that the Fuji DS-1P was introduced, which could record images as computer files. Three years later, Kodak introduced its first digital SLR, the DCS-100, priced at USD 13,000.

In 1994, the first commercially widely available digital camera was introduced. Here they began to be seen around 1996, but the biggest digital wave came after 2000, once memory cards on which the photos are stored were developed. And when mobile phone manufacturers began building high-quality cameras into their phones, the path to digitalization was clear. Compared with the early 90s, when you had to wait days to get photos of your vacation back from the photo lab, it was a huge step forward.



With Polaroid, you had a finished photo in your hand within 3 minutes of taking it

What Time Has Taken From Us

The Nineties were different in practically every way. And office and corporate life was no exception. For example, many English terms began creeping into day to day business life. Today Czechs don't do things "urychleně", but rather "ASAP", primarily when they're trying to meet an "uzávěrka" – deadline – that the "CEO", not the "generální ředitel", set. We don't go for "sváča", but rather for brunch, and for fast food instead of to a bistro. What else has changed in the everyday office routine?

By
Martin Kavka

Fax. We haven't used this in ages, but you might still find one stuck in a corner of your office somewhere. E-mail has taken over its role.

Typewriter. Also ancient history. At first they were mechanical, then they were replaced by electric and electronic models, and finally computers trumped them all.

Timecards. The principle is still the same, but instead of paper cards, we use chips.

Telegram. Do you even remember the last time you sent a telegram? Their function has been completely replaced by text messages.

Scrapbook. We collected our memories of good times in these. And today? Now we've got Facebook and Instagram.

Company Announcements. When management needs to communicate something to the whole company, they no longer need to use the public address system. Newsletters are reliably distributed to each employee.

Yellow Pages. They used to sit on everyone's desks, or at least in everyone's drawer. A printed phonebook is no longer necessary - Google and Seznam are much more efficient.

Walkman. This portable cassette player looks huge next to today's iPods and various mp3 players.

Memos. No company in the 90s was without memos – documents intended for multiple recipients that were distributed physically from one person to the next. Today we use our company intranets.

Company Events. The old expression has practically disappeared and has been replaced by a new one – teambuilding. Today, company trips are much more dynamic and spiced up with various activities.

Diskette. Programs such as Windows or Adobe Photoshop were so big in the 90s that they filled a dozen or more diskettes. Today we use flash disks instead.

Atlas. When we needed to go somewhere, no car was ever without a book of road maps. Now we carry them around in our pockets – mobile phones with GPS to help us navigate.



STILL WITH US

Oldies But Goodies from the 90s

By
Martin Kavka

Not everything disappeared along with the end of the Nineties. There is still quite a few contact points about which we could speak with people from the past if we could hop into a time machine and head backwards a couple of decades.

The Golden Nightingale Award. This popularity contest, first for Czechoslovak and later Czech singers and groups, was established back in 1962. Until 1991, the ceremony was organized by the magazine Mladý svět (Young World); after a short break it started up again in 1996 under the new name Czech Nightingale.

Kalendárium. A Sunday Czech Television program that started in 1992. Since its inception, it's been hosted by former TV presenter Saskia Burešová and offers interesting anniversaries and personalities who would be celebrating life milestones. One of the oldest Czech Television programs, with almost 900 episodes.



Karel Gott. The ageless singer is still with us, even though he technically ended his career in 1990. He organized a farewell tour that was so successful that he decided to remain on stage. His popularity hasn't declined since the Velvet Revolution, and his albums topped the charts in the 90s (in 1992, 1995, and 1997).

AZ Kvíz. Another Czech Television program. A knowledge and strategy game show, the goal of which is to connect three sides of a triangle by answering questions correctly. It broadcast for the first time on January 2, 1997. Even the hosts haven't changed – for the show's entire run, it's been hosted by Aleš Zbořil

and Eva Machourková (neé Brettschneiderová).

Receptář (Recipe Book) The brainchild of Přemek Podlaha, Receptář was first broadcast on Czechoslovak Television (starting in 1987) and later on Czech Television, and then from 2001 on Prima. He hosted the program until June 2014, and he passed away at the end of that year. The original Receptář show was replaced by the program Gondíci, s.r.o.

Miloš Zeman. During the 1990s, he led the Czech Social Democrats and was chairman of the Chamber of Deputies and the government. In 2003 he disappeared off the political scene for several years, but in 2013 he became the first directly elected Czech president (and third overall).

Miss. The first selection of the most beautiful Czechoslovak girl took place in 1989, and the beauty pageant was held all throughout the 90s. It still takes place today, but in 2010 it merged with the competing Czech Miss pageant. During the 1990s, winners included Michaela Maláčová (1991, now Michaela Bakala) and Iva Kubelková (1996).

◁ WORDS NO ONE
KNEW BACK THEN ▷

Social Network. In the 1990s, they'd think you were talking about providing a safety net for citizens with lower incomes. Today it's a clear allusion to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and others.

To "Google" Something. At first Google was only available in English, but the Czech version came along pretty quickly. During the Nineties, however, people would think you were crazy if you talked about "googling" something. That's because Google appeared at the end of Nineties – in 1998.

Tablet. Not a pad of paper or a pill or an ancient writing material. In the 90s, people would be confused – tablets didn't become widely available until 2010 when Apple released its first iPad.

Selfie. First seen in 2002, but has become massively popular only in the past few years.

Communicate something ("vykomunikovat"). A neologism that replaced the good old "arrange something", i.e. "domluvit".

WHAT WE HAD THEN BUT NO LONGER

**SLOVAKIA**

Former Czechoslovakia split at the end of 1992.

TV PRESENTERS

TV programs used to be introduced by presenters – both women and men. They also filled the space between programs. Today this role is filled by trailers for other programs and ads.

SMALL BANKNOTES

At present, the smallest banknote is the CZK 100 note; but originally there were even CZK 10, 20, and 50 notes in circulation.

BAGGED MILK

Something completely normal throughout the 80s and 90s. Bags with blue writing indicated low-fat milk; bags with red writing indicated full-fat milk. Kids took the small quarter-liter bags to school, where they were drunk with a straw. Boxed milk gradually replaced bagged milk.

CARBON PAPER

An office essential – a special paper covered on one side with a blue or black ink layer – it was used to make copies when writing or typing all types of text. You placed it between sheets

of normal paper and created up to 10 copies at once. With the development of printers and carbonless copy paper, carbon paper fell by the wayside. Today only a few companies in the world still make it.

HELLERS

10- and 20-heller coins disappeared in 2003, 50-heller coins a year later.

BLOTTER PAPER

Pink pieces of blotter paper – absorbent paper used to absorb excess ink and fountain pen blots or to dry freshly written text – were found in every notebook.

VIDEOTAPES

A huge hit in the Nineties – however, there were many different systems for recording video, often completely incompatible. Up to 12 hours of video fit on one tape. Now most videotapes just gather dust.

COFFEE GRINDERS

There used to be one in every grocery store. You could grind your bag of coffee beans right there in the store.

CZECHTEK

During the Nineties, it was a regular flash on the summer holiday news programs. Techno fans would gather in an empty field, set up their equipment, and start partying. This was the golden age of techno, and CzechTek was a massive event for thousands of people. Since 2007, significantly smaller events have been held for insiders in place of the huge parties.

FOOTBALL UNDERDOGS

In those days, there was no logic to football – small clubs such as Blšany and Drnovice elbowed their way into the traditional football bastions. During their heydays, their owners pumped millions of crowns into them and village clubs amazed fans all over the country. With the end of the 90s, these football “midgets” began disappearing from the big-time scene. In 2000, Drnovice still played in the 2000 UEFA Cup, but then fell back to the district level. Blšany advanced to the league in 1998 and managed to hang on for eight years – now they play at division level.

〈COLOPHON〉

BB Centrum Review, Retro Edition, No. 1/2017 | Publication Date: 12.5.2017 | Frequency: 3x annually | Publisher: Corporate Publishing, s r.o., U Golfu, 565, 109 00 Prague 10, www.copu.cz | Issue Number: 1/2017 | Editor-in-Chief: Kristýna Samková | Contributors: Nela Kadlecová, Martin Kavka, Alice Škochová, Vlasta Holéciová, Petr Halaburda, Petr Horák, Dita Černá | English Translation: C10 Group a.s. | Proofreading: www.proofreading.cz | Client Service Manager: Martina Krtoušová | Advertising: Ditta Dvořáčková, ditta.dvorackova@copu.cz, tel.: +420 603 196 614 | Photos: Archives, Shutterstock, ČTK | Printer: TNM Print s.r.o. | Registration: MK ČR E 15246 | Although every effort is made to ensure correctness, we cannot be held liable for any errors.