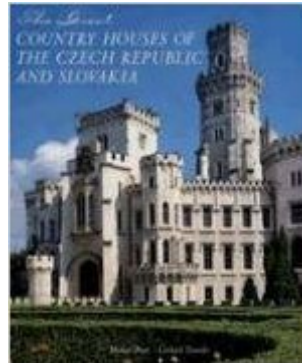




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# **The Great Country Houses Of The Czech Republic And Slovakia**



## Synopsis

Crowning the rolling hills of the Czech Republic and Slovakia are magnificent country houses in stone. Based on Lord Michael Pratt's seminal volume *The Great Country Houses of Central Europe*, *The Great Country Houses of the Czech Republic and Slovakia* takes an exclusive look at these regions' rarely seen treasures. Lord Pratt chronicles the dramatic histories of these regions' noble families as they constructed and remodeled castles, fortresses, and baroque manors to suit their tastes and herald their wealth and power.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Impeccably designed and lavishly illustrated, this volume allows us to wander into a part of the European heartland hitherto closed off to all but the most adventurous....Trumler's photographs of these national treasures unfailingly surprise and satisfy. Highly recommended as a visual delight and an unusual introduction to a newly opened region."

Lord Michael Pratt is a scholar based in London who specializes in modern European history. His works include *Britain's Greek Empire*, a study of Corfu and the Ionian Islands under Venetian and British rule. Gerhard Trumler is a professor of photography in Vienna and a professional photographer whose work has appeared in more than fifty books.

Not only is the history of the Czech Republic thoroughly explained, but the impact by the aristocratic

families and the evolving architecture in Western Europe is detailed. Having traveled extensively in the country, toured many of these places, heard the histories and read the brochures, I still found the commentary to be better at explaining the larger story. Many of these rich families owned more than one castle/palace. After decades or centuries some family lines died out and the estates went to supporters of the crown. The book also covers the ongoing legal battles by the Schwarzenbergers and Lietchensteins to recover their properties. The strength of the book is its story-telling. There are some exterior photos of the places discussed and a limited number showing interior rooms and leave a lot to be desired. I had hoped for a lot of interior photos because most of these places still do not allow photography without special permission. So I will have to be satisfied with the souvenir photos I was able to acquire and those I was allowed to take. Because the Renaissance, Baroque, and Rococo architectural styles came late to this area, there are some unique looks to these buildings. Sometimes it is on the exterior but primarily the interiors with their marquetry, elaborate ceilings, and mixture of styles for different eras that really take your breath away. If you are impressed with the interior photos from Cesky Krumlov, Hluboka, Lednice, or Dobruška you have barely started- there are even better rooms. If you have not traveled outside of Prague, this book will definitely make you want to go. One thing this book will do is to help you understand this region's fascinating history that is virtually unknown to Americans. At the time of this review, the book sold for 10-\$15 and you can't buy the full page color photos for that. Update 10/2015: This book is a reprint of the first 140 pages of The Great Country Houses of Central Europe. I give its text 5 stars without hesitation. My interest was not on Hungary and Poland and that is why I opted to purchase this version. My personal photos are much better but the text and large photos were a bargain at \$0.63.

Good window into Eastern Europe. Well illustrated and decent history. Didn't know if it would be worth the money, but I am glad I bought it.

TABLE OF CONTENTS: Introduction 1. Královský hrad Horka 2. Betliar 3. Cesky Sternberk 4. Opocno 5. Dobruška - Árpád 6. Buchlov 7. Buchlovice 8. Veltrusy 9. Lednice 10.

Valtice Afterword Bibliography FROM PUBLISHER: A comprehensive analysis of where politics, culture, and art merge, The Great Country Houses of the Czech Republic and Slovakia is a captivating read for anyone curious about the history and architecture of these two countries.

Gerhard Trumler's striking photographs allow readers entrance, for example, to the Liechtensteins' twin chateaux of Valtice and Lednice in the Czech Republic. The

lords of these castles established one of the greatest art collections in the world and played a major role in the diplomatic and military lives of the nation; they still remain as the ruling house of the Principality of Liechtenstein. Pratt's new chapter speaks of the difficulties of restoration and problems concerning modern-day ownership. Though many estates were lost or damaged during the World Wars, the houses as they stand today – some restored, some languishing in disrepair – present a rich cultural heritage of two fascinating countries.

Pictures are old. The pictures must have been taken during or right after the fall of communism in Czechoslovakia. The castles and chateaus are in the horrible shape, like they were 20 years ago. I guarantee you that none of them are in the bad shape as shown in this book which claims it is from 2008. Stay away from this book, although the writing is interesting the pictures need to be updated.

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