



## THE PGA OF CZECH REPUBLIC

The 31st instalment of a series that takes a random look at each member PGA.

# Czechs Keep Their Promise with 10 More Years of Growth

When, back in 1999, The PGA of Czech Republic celebrated its first ten years of existence, the then president, Tomas Teissing, declared: "We will continue to improve the promotion of the game and give full support to the creation of more new facilities."

In the 12 months recently completed, the PGA of the Eastern European country that was previously part of Czechoslovakia, reached its 20-year milestone... and a glance at the facts and figures of growth elsewhere on this page illustrate powerfully that the pledge has been kept, and then some.

During the last decade the ever-smiling Tomas (who had succeeded the founding President, Miroslav Némec), handed the role over to Petr Nitra in 2002. And just as his predecessor expressed pride at what had been achieved before, so the current figurehead can, on behalf of his colleagues, point to progress on a satisfying scale.

"During the year we have focused on finding ways to improve the quality of the performance of our tasks and co-operation in the development of golf in European countries,"

### Czech PGA The Facts

President: **Petr Nitra**  
Secretary: **Karel Skopovy sen.**  
Head of Training: **Petr Némec**

	2000	2010
Facilities	19	80
Number of golfers	7,124	44,012
PGA Professionals	38	197

he told *Working Together*. "We are proud that Prague was selected to host this year's PGAs of Europe, Central Zone Meeting.

"We are constantly striving to refine our education process so that we can utilise the most modern instructional techniques to achieve the highest possible quality of play. While Education is our No.1 priority, in 2009 the quality of our professional tournament series rose again," he added.

"Not only did the number of events increase

## Lengthy Golfing Heritage

**Where the Czechs had a sound base upon which to build was in, dating back more than a century, the former Czechoslovakia, had a golf course, and a golfing heritage that had not previously been nurtured during many years of political upheaval.**

So, pre-1990, when there was no PGA, there was nevertheless a Golf Federation and one that kept the sport alive and ready for the impetus supplied by the more recent and enthusiastically robust professional input.

The leadership of Tomas Teissing and the training programme introduced and developed by iconic figures such as Petr Némec, a 1998 winner of a PGAs of Europe 5-Star Professional award, and Jiri Zavazal, have combined to ensure that the plan for growth has blossomed and born fruit.

Tomas was a regular and enthusiastic visitor to Annual Congresses and International Team Championships along with Petr Némec and Petr Nitra. By working closely with The PGAs of Europe's Education Committee, full recognition was achieved for the training programme

from ten to twelve but also sponsorship income was significantly higher.

"Thanks to our new general partner Pilsner Urquell, we started working with Nova TV Sport which now broadcasts significant proportions of all Czech PGA Tour events. Finally, we have dramatically improved all of our PR and marketing activities while continuing to nurture our great relationship with the Czech Golf Federation in developing junior golf," he added.

and presented at the 1998 Annual Congress in Marbella. Since then the number of PGA professionals operating there has multiplied by more than five times to a total of nearly 200 from a mere 38 in 2000.

Likewise the promise to support the creation of new facilities has been honoured most successfully also, as the figures illustrate so graphically: from 19 to 80 in ten years and another large multiplication, this time by four.

The facility at Ciheiny, near to Karlovy Vary, was about to open at the turn of the century when other projects were in the pipeline. Also, a new driving range was opened in Prague thereby providing an opportunity for more newcomers to try their hand.

As the new courses arrived, so the demand grew with newly-qualified PGA professionals staffing the courses and driving ranges to the extent that the growth factor has been raised again, by the increase in the number of amateurs playing being multiplied by six... from some 7,000 to more than 44,000.

## Did You Know..?

- Golf began in Czechoslovakia in 1898 at Cisarska (Emperor's Meadow) in Prague.
  - The first course was created in 1904 in Carlsbad in the valley of the River Teplá. After many requests from local spa guests, the first 9-hole course was opened in 1904 and still exists to this day.
  - There are said to be "plans for another dozen courses underway" to cater for an anticipated new influx of golf tourists.
  - A year later on August 21 1905, another 9-hole course in Marienbad was opened in the presence of King Edward VII of England.
  - The 'founding fathers' of the PGA of the Czech Republic were Miloslav Bouska, Petr Mruzek, Miroslav Némec, Petr Némec, Jaroslav Peterka, Karel Skopovy senior, Jiri Zavazal and honorary member, Hanus Goldscheider.
  - In 1990 the Czech Republic was among the founder members of The PGAs of Europe.
  - The first successful event organised by The PGAC was the inaugural Czechoslovak Open at Mariánské Lázně in 1990.
  - Golf courses have sprung up across the Czech Republic and this boom in new facilities is set to continue. Investors are now focusing in particular on top-notch courses and facilities, including accommodation and various wellness programmes.
  - Currently there are 131 golf clubs using 80 golf courses.
- The best can be found around the capital, in the West Bohemian spa triangle and North Moravia. Some of the most scenic courses can be found at Karlstejn, Konopiste, Marienbad, Carlsbad, Ciheiny, Pilsen, Šilherovice and Celadna. Many were designed by leading architects including Gary Player (Ciheiny), and Miguel A. Jiménez (Celadna).



Board members of the PGA Czech

From left, standing: Alan Babicky, Oldrich Nechanicky, Petr Mruzek, Ondrej Trupl. Seated from left: Karel Skopovy sen. (Chief Executive), Petr Nitra (President), Petr Némec (Vice President)