

THE OWNERS AND THE BUILDERS



The Count Jan Rottal was one of the most powerful and richest feudal lords in Moravia. In 1650, he was credited for his merits by several honorary posts. He was known to be a cruel master as he managed to suppress the rebellion in Walachia. He was believed to misuse his influence to his own enrichment. But he also kept in touch with the court in Vienna and with the distinguished artists of his time. He asked the Italian architect **Filiberto Luchese**, who was living in Vienna, to design the reconstruction of the castle. Rottal also employed the top painters from northern Italy as well as skilful plasterers.

Even though building of the

castle was delayed, Rottal had started to live there with his second wife, Anna Marie Lobkowic. He also proved to be a successful entrepreneur of his time. He gave up many of his demanding offices in order to consolidate his properties in 1655. He died in 1674.

Consequently, some of the works in the interior of the castle were completed by his heirs; his cousin Jan Kryštof Rottal (1699 – 1674) and then his son Jan Zikmund (1717 – 1762). His son, educated and art-loving **František Antonín Rottal** (1717 – 1762), followed the early Baroque design with the following late Baroque style. He had the interior redesigned and he also began to build the churches in Hostýn, Bystřice pod Hostýnem and Mysločovice. He set up the monastery for the Trinitarians adapting the Church of St Anna in Holešov for them.

He added the Black Chapel to the parish church in Holešov where he also had his family tomb built. He employed many artists, e.g. B. Tritsch, T. Šturm, O Zahner, J. J. Schaubberger, K. Palko. During his era, theatre and culture were allowed to flourish. The castle orchestra kept in touch with a distinguished composer **F. X. Richter**, the native of Holešov.

In 1814, the heiress's marriage brought in the family from Wrbno. **Rudolf Eugen Wrbna** (1846 – 1883) was a high-ranking chamberlain and the officer of the Viennese opera who revived the earlier tradition of theatre and music performances in the castle. He left the castle to his nephew Rudolf Kristian (1883 – 1925) who was married twice. His first wife was the Countess of Choryně and his second wife's name was Elvira, the princess of Bavaria from the family of Wittelsbach. They had two children Rudolf and Alfons and the daughter Isabela. The last owner of the castle was Rudolf Wrbna who died in 1936. His wife, Barbora Wiedemann, was the last heiress of the castle.

THE CASTLE GARDEN

The garden surrounds the castle mostly from the eastern side. It has grown up step by step since the mid-17th century.

Currently, it has been reconstructed and still takes up a vast area between the town of Holešov and the village of Dobrotice where people can stroll in the former game park.

The park still contains a few huge vases which have remained intact from the former outstanding decoration of the garden. Unfortunately, not much remained of the examples of the numerous garden architecture once present in the park; i.e. a **small pavilion** from the mid-18th century, later altered into an observatory, and the statue of a composer F. X. Richer (1709 – 1789) created by Jan Habart in 1959.

Filiberto Luchese's early-Baroque design of the garden was later adapted in accordance with the subsequent fashion of Dutch gardens and later, with the French design **inspired by André Le Notre**. At that time, the canal was built resembling the shape of **Neptune's trident**. It was 980 metres long and took the area of 16,500 square metres. Regrettably, the garden is lacking the opulence and magnificence of the waterfalls, pools and sculptures. The lay out and the early-Baroque symmetry of the garden has been partly disguised by features of **the English landscape garden**. The front of the garden was ravaged in the first half of 20th century and later revived with respect to the original plans of the garden. The canal in the shape of Neptune's trident gives an impressive example of its architectural value in the region of Moravia.

Visitors may notice that the middle arm of the canal, the spire of the castle and the spire of the church are symmetrical with the axis of the trident. However, it is still not known whether it was intentional or accidental.

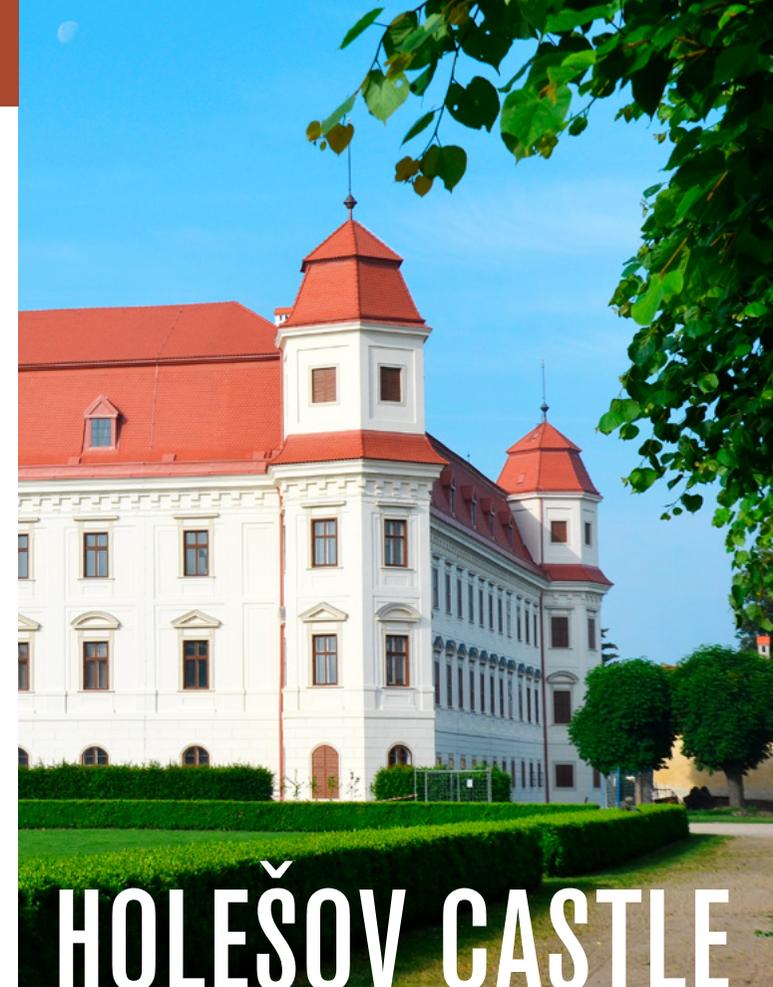
Nowadays, the gardens have been undergoing a substantial reconstruction and have been revived as an important leisure amenity.



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HOLEŠOV CASTLE



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The origins of the feudal site in Holešov date back to the Middle Ages. The written record comes from 1245 mentioning Hugo from Holešov, the bishop's fiefholder, who probably resided in the Holešov fortress at that time. Several presumably related feudal families kept it in succession until the time of Hussite Wars. The fortress was then destroyed.

The Sternberg dynasty built a new fortress after the Hussite Wars and, the basement and the ground floor have partly been preserved on the west side of the castle to the present day. The remains include a few details as well as two basement rooms preserved in the embankment leading to the main entrance of the castle as it is today.

The fortress is believed to have been surrounded by a moat. Its second floor dates from the 16th century and the initial ground plan was later respected by further reconstructions on the south side.

However, there is no architectural evidence of the later gothic rebuilding. Until 1574, the late gothic fortress was changed into the renaissance castle.

The Thirty Years' War caused a great turmoil in the architectural history and the castle was plundered and burnt down by the Swedish armies in 1643 and 1645.

In 1650, **Jan Rottal bought the castle and commissioned Filiberto Luchese, the architect from Vienna, to reconstruct it.** The Count of Rottal bought the property of Holešov as well as the bishop's estate of land of Kurovice and Trebetice.

The owner then chose Holešov to be his home residence. The ruins of the castle were supposed to turn into **a luxurious residence** in the early Baroque style demonstrating **the Rottal's social and material status in Moravia.**

The radical reconstruction started in 1655 on the site of the former castle. Although the Rottals had started living in the castle, the final works were finished in 1674. Luchese's project brought to life a four-wing building and polygon corner towers surrounding the inner courtyard.

The artists from northern Italy were employed to decorate the interior of *piana nobile* and *sala terrena*. Their works were, however, later repainted in the *sala terrena* and in other rooms on the first floor while the second floor stayed unfinished.

The majestic gardens belonging to the castle displayed alleys of full-grown plants, an orangery and an orchard.

Further architectural changes in the Baroque style were initiated by the next of kin, **Frantisek Antonin, the Count of Rottal** (1717 – 1762). He triggered further cultural and architectural development in the castle. He had the interiors on the second floor redesigned, the murals painted, and the outdated entrances were replaced by an *enfilade*. He also established the theatre in the ceremonial room in the west wing of the building. He set up the tradition of the theatre performances which was later renewed by **Rudolf Eugen Wrba** (1846 – 1883) in the 19th century. The castle became a bustling hub of culture and activities of that time. The theatre hall was later converted into a winter garden.

The exterior of the castle has been mostly preserved until the present time. There have been only slight changes to the colour of the *façade* in order to brighten the building.

Classicism and its design can be traced in the east wing of the castle with its impressive *enfilade* connecting the rooms there.

Between the 18th and 19th century, the interiors on the second floor were finally completed. Some rooms were decorated by the local artist, Jan Sviták, from Bystrice pod Hostýnem. The final changes to the exterior of the castle were made by the mid-19th century in the classicist period. The moat was reduced and the front *façade* with a new coat of arms was designed.

More recent changes to the design of the castle are seen as rather devaluing. On the second floor, however, some impressive Art Nouveau paintings can be found.

In 1910, the history of the castle was marked by a fire, which affected the roof and some of the rooms on the second floor. Later, the mansard roof was revived. In 1948, the castle became expropriated by the state.

The castle is a four-wing two-storey building with a mansard roof and a rectangular inner courtyard which is surrounded by a moat, however, without



water. The corners are marked by stately hexagonal towers.

The ground floor rooms show barrel-vaulted ceiling. **Sala terrena** in the north wing displays a valuable vault decorated by stucco mirror frames and paintings. It contains tableaux and painted scenes based on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The central figure is represented by the ancient Greek god Zeus. The characters of mythological figures contain individualized features, perhaps of the members of Rottal family.

The hallway in the west wing of the building guides the guests to the staircase and to the first floor. The staircase on the opposite side was meant for the servants. It leads **to the great hall** in the north-west of the building and also to the second floor. The walls in the great hall contain pilasters between the windows. These are partly covered by sculptured herms. The rooms on the first floor have a barrel vault. They are embellished by stucco frames defining the space for the paintings of the scenes from **Ovid's Metamorphoses, Trojan War and Greek mythology.** The vaults of the corner bastions are decorated by acanthus and fruit ornaments. The antique themes created in the 18th century can also be seen on the second floor but they have not been restored yet.

The decoration of the so called Blue Room in the garden wing was painted by the grisaille technique and was accomplished by John(ann) Switak Pinxt, 1797.

The Holešov Castle represents the classic feudal site rooted in the Middle Ages. It was built in the second half of the 17th century in the Early Baroque style. The castle is credited for its clarity of style and design and for its fine interior decoration. Therefore, it is valued as one of the most classic examples of early Baroque architecture in the Czech Republic. The harmonious layout of the castle and the garden maintains its elegance from the distance as well as from close-up. The park was also laid out in the early Baroque period and is ranked as a highly valuable example of French gardens in Moravia.

The castle has been owned by the town of Holešov since 16th March 2005. It is now undergoing reconstruction and therefore, visitors can only access the basement, the ground floor and the first floor at the moment. The garden and the former game park including the pheasantry are freely accessible to the public.

The gardens are spread over 130,000 square metres displaying about 2300 ornamental trees and 1000 fruit trees. The game enclosure was established on 260,000 square metres with about 2300 trees.