

The 2018 Prague Advent Knife Exhibition had several surprise features of which a much larger exhibition space and more exhibitors were most notable.



The New Town Hall tower seen from the Vodičkova street. The New Town Hall is the traditional venue for the Prague knife shows.

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The main floor in the morning was very heavily occupied.

Text and pictures: **Martin Helebrant**

Advent is a Christian tradition covering four Sundays before Christmas Eve. It is a time which traditionally should be devoted to evaluation and reconciliation of the passing year, to calm down, remember friends and prepare yourself for the nativity of the Salvator – Jesus. The four principal words (and also names of the candles on the Advent wreath) are Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. For the Czech knife making and loving community the second Advent Sunday is connected with the Knife exhibition at Prague, at the New

Town Hall. And so it was on the 9th of December of 2018. The weather was surprisingly mild when I walked down to the venue. A gentle wind blew the first smells of roasted sausages and mulled wine from the distant Christmas market. I was eager to see friends and the results of their work, and of course to enjoy a good show. In front of the New Town Hall gate there was nothing unexpected – a small queue of early visitors mixed in with the late exhibitors.



Hervé Maunoury from Challiers (France) in the Massif Central joined the exhibition and visit of Prague, taking with him the family.

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Nine year-old Noemi Heřtová from Turtle knives was by far the youngest participant in the Prague knife show. She presented these two knives, one with a 144 mm blade from RWL 34 and plum wood handle, the other with a 91 mm blade from RWL 34 and olive wood handle.



The surprises began when I entered to the building. This year's exhibition saw significantly more exhibitors – approximately 100 knife makers. It appears that the show is beginning to, rightfully, challenge the national knife exhibition in Příbram. The Large Hall, the traditional main floor of the show, was fully booked as was the smaller Dining room in the commons. In addition to these there were two new corridors and two new smaller halls full of exhibitors tables.



Czechs like to do many things themselves and the knives follow suite. A good couple of booths offered steel, materials for handles or pre-processed blades.

Bottom: A different look at knives. Students of the High School of Applied Arts Crafts at Turnov, CZ, made this Garbage Man's knife (top) and Twisted monolith.





Students of the Czech High School of Artistic Crafts at Jablonec nad Nisou sculpted these standard line 100 mass production folders by Mikov Mikulášovice.



Jiří Pražák from Pražounova dílna, CZ, made this remarkable cleaver. The 200 mm blade is made from spring steel, the handle is stabilized alder wood. Overall length is 335 mm.

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Three knives by Dohnal & Dohnal, CZ. The top and bottom knife have an ELMAX blade, 105 and 75 mm long respectively, the one in the centre has a 127 mm blade from carbon Damascus. The handle materials are (from top to bottom) antler & walnut, ebony and carbon marble. The folder has an Axis lock.



A student of the High School of Applied Arts at Turnov made this 'Crystal blade of Dragon'. The 140 mm blade is carbon steel with etched crystal glass. The handle is made from brass and walnut.

The increased number of exhibitors was, to a certain degree attributable to the exhibitions from abroad – a special mention here goes out to French knife maker Hervé Maunoury who came from the Massif Central. He told us that his participation was bundled with a family trip, he both enjoyed the town and made some sales. Altogether, it was a satisfactory experience and he plans to come again. The strong Polish and Ukrainian presence is almost a rule, and some craftsmen from the Russian

Federation were present as well. But there were a good handful of Czech freshmen and even one fresh-girl. Only nine years old Noemi Heřtová presented her fixed blade knives on the table of her stepfather Jiří "Turtle" Hrála (they were both participants of the exhibition for the first time). Their knives are simple, but well-made and no one could say that these were the result of some child at play. The young lady obviously put a lot of effort into them and we should all praise her tutor. A new knifemaker was born,

a child with promise for the future. As it should in advent time. They were not alone. Other freshmen on the exhibition who deserve mentioning are Marek Procházka with his folding knife, Josef Pilch with his farmer knife which utilizes a modern material for the handle, Sergei Chomenko (UA) with his obsidian knives, an unusual chopper by Jiří Pražák from Pražounova dílna and others. The 'old guard' (regardless of age) also had a lot to offer. I would like to point out

the 'Republic' knife by Unčovský knives, folders by Filip Kurota of Filda's knives or kitchen and the small utility knives by Tomáš Čížek. Special mention goes out to Jan Novák from Hanes Knives with his series of commemorative knives, innovative utensils disguised as dog tags and ball pens with creative and well-rounded crafted mechanisms. For a well-made, simple but classic design you should take a look at the work of Dohnal & Dohnal to name but one. Last but not least, there was a showcase



Top:
Czech Unčovský knives made this knife on the occasion of 100th anniversary of the Czech Republic in 2018. The knife has the national coat of arms and the engraving uses motive of lindy tree leaves – the Czech national tree. The 93 mm blade is from RWL 34, the scales are titanium. The overall length is 203 mm.

from the students of the high schools of applied arts from Turnov and Jablonec. Both schools had their tables at the Prague Advent knives and were well worth a visit. These schools will become a topic of separate articles later on. In terms of visitors, the exhibition saw regular numbers. One would expect that the increased number of exhibitors would result in a bit of a 'diluted' layout on the show floor, but this was not the case. Most of the time the floor was quite busy. Perhaps, some of the

visitors extended their tour to visit all of the tables. I noticed some visitors from abroad, most of them were tourists who came by chance, but I met a small party of Austrians from Vienna who had come on purpose. When, in the afternoon, I asked them how satisfied they were, one of them said: "We visit Brno quite often and this time we decided to stay in the train for two more hours. It has been worthwhile." Another party came in from Germany to visit the show. The chief organizer of the exhibition,

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Top:
Michal Jarý from Jakuza knives, CZ, made this knife from 19 312 and nickel carbon steel sandwich. The blade is 85 mm, and the overall length is 197 mm. The sheath is from Morta (bog wood).



A kitchen knife by Sławek Jedrzejczyk from Polish Custom knives. The 205 mm blade is made from RWL 34. The handle is maple. Overall length is 340 mm.

Bottom:
Two folders by Czech maker Michal Petrovič. The upper knife has a saw mill blade and roller bearing, and a handle from Finland birch. The lower knife was made from steel rope and has a roller bearing, and a handle made from ostrich bone and tree bark.





Top:
Two knives by Russian maker Denis Uldanov. The top knife has a 100 mm blade from 3D Damascus with walnut handle. The lower knife has a 120 mm blade from mosaic Damascus with Ironwood

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Petr Weigärtner, CZ, made this hunting knife with a 140 mm blade from Vanadis 4 Extra steel, and a handle with leather washers. The overall length is 250 mm.



A friction folder (farmer's knife) by Czech maker Josef Pilch. The 85 mm blade is 19 191 steel and the handle and right side pocket clip are from G10.

Bottom:
Arkady Dabakyan, an Armenian knife maker who lives and works in the Czech Republic, made this fixed blade from 2258 steel, with stabilized maple handles. The blade measures 125 mm, the overall length is 245 mm.

Zdeněk Janča, has done an excellent job in upgrading the Prague Advent knives to a new level; while retaining the pleasant atmosphere of the previous years. Maintaining this level will be a challenge for the future. Although, I am really eager to see the Prague spring and Advent knives 2019. Prague is a good place in the heart of Europe, easy to reach by either train or bus and is easy to reach from most of the Central European cities. The visitors are mostly Czechs but there is a definite increase of visitors from abroad

as well as foreign exhibitors, I expect these numbers to steadily rise. Prague is the perfect place to purchase a Christmas present, maybe not only knives. And do not forget that Czech legislation is still very knife friendly.

