

# Open Day at Prague Castle

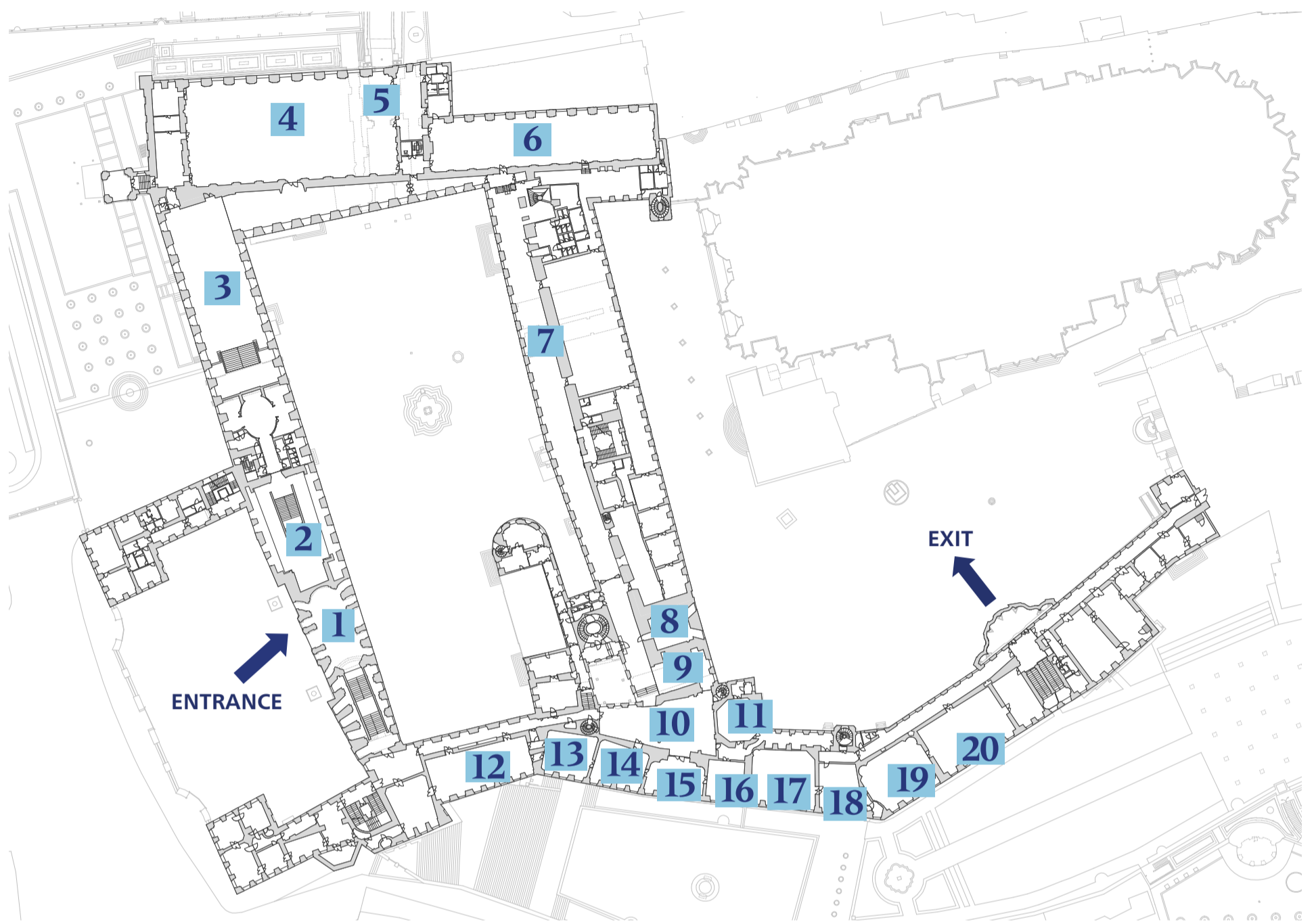
Prague Castle will be opening its gates once again. You can peek into the otherwise inaccessible ceremonial state rooms, where the most important state, diplomatic and social events take place.



KANCELÁŘ  
PREZIDENTA  
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- |                                |                                |
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# I MATTHIAS' GATE

This gate has served as the ceremonial entrance to Prague Castle for more than 400 years. It bears the name of Emperor Matthias, brother of Rudolf II. Every day at noon, a ceremonial changing of the Castle Guard takes place in the first courtyard – the Courtyard of Honour in front of Matthias' Gate. Here the President of the Republic greets state visitors with military honours, and newly appointed ambassadors arrive to have their inaugural audience with the Head of State.



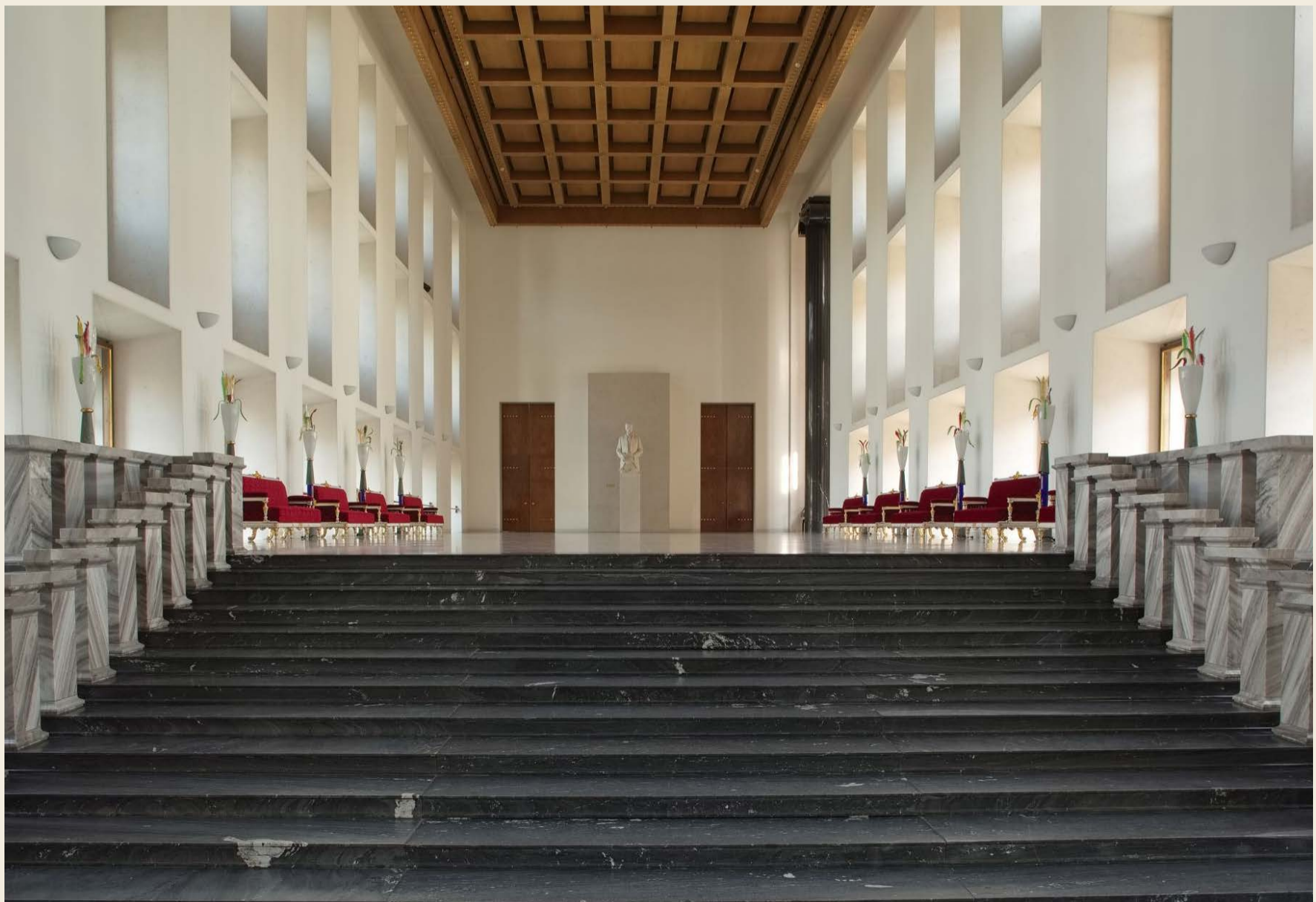
# PLEČNIK HALL

The Plečnik Hall (also known as the Hall of Columns) is the entrance to the representative premises of Prague Castle. It is used by the President of the Republic in the exercise of his constitutional powers and for the state representation of our country. Inspired by ancient architecture, the hall is the work of the Slovenian architect Josip Plečnik, whose distinctive style gave Prague Castle a new face as the seat of the President of the Czechoslovak Republic after 1918.



# 3 ROTHMAYER HALL

This hall was designed between 1948 and 1957 by Plečnik's pupil and close collaborator, the Czech architect Otto Rothmayer. The statue of the first Czechoslovak president Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk was created by Jan Štursa (1921) and is made of Carrara marble. The President of the Republic meets the diplomatic corps here every year on the occasion of the national holiday on 28 October.



# 4

## SPANISH HALL

The hall, measuring 48 × 24 × 12 metres in size, was built in 1602–1606 for ceremonial purposes and also to house the art collections of Rudolf II. Its present appearance dates from the second half of the 19th century. Stucco reliefs above the windows have been preserved from the original rich decoration. The chairs in the Spanish Hall were designed by Bořek Šípek in 1995 specifically for this space. This style of chair is called Olga, after the first wife of President Václav Havel. Nowadays, ceremonial meetings are held here on the occasion of national holidays and official visits, as well as concerts and balls.



# 5 THE PRESIDENT'S DRAWING ROOM

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The drawing room is used exclusively by the President of the Czech Republic as a backdrop for ceremonies held in the Spanish Hall and the Rudolf Gallery. It is furnished with sumptuous pieces of imperial furniture from the second half of the 19th century, in the style of the Second Rococo.



# 6 RUDOLF GALLERY

Rudolf II had this space built in 1590–1598 for his collection of paintings, which was among the largest and most valuable in Europe. The Neo-Renaissance decoration of the walls and ceiling dates from the second half of the 19th century. The President of the Republic uses the Rudolf Gallery for his annual meetings with Czech ambassadors working abroad, and also holds state lunches and dinners in honour of foreign heads of state.



# 7

## BROAD CORRIDOR

The connecting wing, in which the Broad Corridor is located, was built in the time of Rudolf II as a link between the imperial residence on the south side of Prague Castle and the art collections in the north wing. The current appearance is the result of reconstruction led by Jaroslav Fragner in 1960–1964, with partial modifications carried out by Bořek Šípek.



# 8 THE WHITE TOWER

This building is one of three towers that were part of the Romanesque fortifications of Prague Castle from around 1135. In the Middle Ages it also served as a prison (King Wenceslas IV was imprisoned here). In the Rudolphine period, an armoury was located here. The first floor of the tower is part of the representative premises, while the second floor was modified in the 1920s by Josip Plečnik in connection with the creation of the representative apartment of President T. G. Masaryk.



The hall is located above the original entrance to Prague Castle from the 12th century. Architect Pavel Janák built it here in the 1930s, sensitively combining modern elements with Romanesque masonry, a historic wooden ceiling, and a fragment of the palace wall from the Jagiellonian period. The decoration consists of tapestries from the rich collection of Prague Castle and a vase in the shape of a Greek krater from the Tsarist porcelain factory in St. Petersburg.



The space was created in 1937, when architects Pavel Janák and Otto Rothmayer, at the request of President Edvard Beneš, connected several smaller rooms that originally formed the background of the imperial bedroom, into a hall leading to the Glass Salon. A large painting by Václav Brožík depicts one of the most famous events in the history of the Castle – the Prague defenestration of 1618.



The Octagon was built in the space of the original St. Wenceslas Chapel, which was demolished during the Theresian reconstruction of the New Palace in the 18th century. It was then given its present form by the architect Pavel Janák, who made the alterations after the Second World War. The walls of the Octagon are decorated with three rare tapestries from the *Antony and Cleopatra* cycle, dating from the 17th century. The space is used for press conferences held by the President of the Republic and foreign heads of state during official visits.



The largest room in the south wing is the Throne Room, where the President of the Republic exercises his most important constitutional powers, such as appointing governments, generals, judges, and university presidents or receiving the credentials of ambassadors. Leopold Bucher's painting depicts the coronation of Ferdinand V. Habsburg in St. Vitus Cathedral in 1836. The wooden cartouche with the Bohemian lion is a rare work from the early 17th century, with preserved original colouring and silvering. The chairs date from the first half of the 18th century.



# 13 BROŽÍK DRAWING ROOM

The room bears the name of the important 19th century Czech painter Václav Brožík, who created the local pictorial decorations. The largest canvas depicts a historical event from 1457, the wedding of Czech King Ladislav Pohrobek to the French court. Another painting depicts Brožík's wife. In Brožík's salon, reciprocal gifts are presented during state visits. Newly appointed ambassadors and ambassadors are invited here for an interview with the President of the Republic after receiving their credentials.



# HABSBURG DRAWING ROOM

This salon served as the emperor's study and is the only room to retain essentially the original 18th-century decorations. On the walls is a portrait gallery of members of Maria Theresa's family. In the middle of one of the large paintings, the monarch herself is depicted wearing the coronation robes of the Bohemian monarchs and holding the Bohemian Crown Jewels. On the left is her husband, Emperor Franz Stephan of Lorraine, on the right her son, Emperor Joseph II. Today, the salon is used by the President of the Republic to receive the most important foreign visitors.



# 15 GLASS DRAWING ROOM

This room originally served as the imperial bedroom, and after 1918, as the first study of President T. G. Masaryk. In 1937, it was connected to the adjacent Janák Hall by glass doors. The rare pair of vases were created in Paris sometimes between 1826 and 1850. The marble bust of Apollo dates from the 19th century.



# 16 SMALL DRAWING ROOM

After the establishment of the independent Czechoslovak Republic in 1918, the room briefly served as the study of the first prime minister, Karel Kramář. Today it is used, for example, as a room for accompanying people who are not attending meetings in the adjacent Mirror Drawing Room. The painting to the left of the door is by Petr Brandl and depicts the Adoration of the Magi. The couple in the second painting appears to represent Philemon and Baucis from ancient legend. The richly gilded vase was created in the 1820s in a porcelain factory in Sèvres. The seating furniture dates from around 1720.



# 17 MIRROR DRAWING ROOM

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This salon served occasionally as a dining room but mainly as a ceremonial space for the Empress. It was thus a kind of counterpart to the Emperor's splendid Throne Room. Today, the Mirror Salon is used for meetings with delegations during official visits of the President of the Republic. The chairs were designed by architect Josip Plečnik for President T. G. Masaryk in the 1920s. The trays of hard-fired ceramics decorated with enamel painting were made around 1900 in Kyoto, Japan.



# DRAWING ROOM WITH FIREPLACE

This room gets its name from the white Carrara marble fireplace dating from the end of the 19th century. The President of the Republic and his wife use it for social gatherings. The decoration is complemented by a rare gilded wooden clock and an 18th-century French tapestry with an ancient theme. A marble bust depicts the daughter of Empress Maria Theresa, Queen Marie Antoinette of France. The vases and candlesticks with gilt bronze appliqués were made in Paris after 1860.



Originally, this space served as an audience hall for empresses, and it also hosted private concerts. A copy of the allegorical sculpture *Night* comes from the workshop of Matthias Bernard Braun (the original is located in the Royal Garden of Prague Castle).



This salon served as a dining room until 1918. Today, the President of the Republic uses the space for larger, more socially oriented meetings with guests. The Czech crystal chandeliers were made in Kamenický Šenov, the neo-classical furniture in the 1880s in Prague or Vienna.



# You can visit other areas of Prague Castle currently open to the public and free of charge

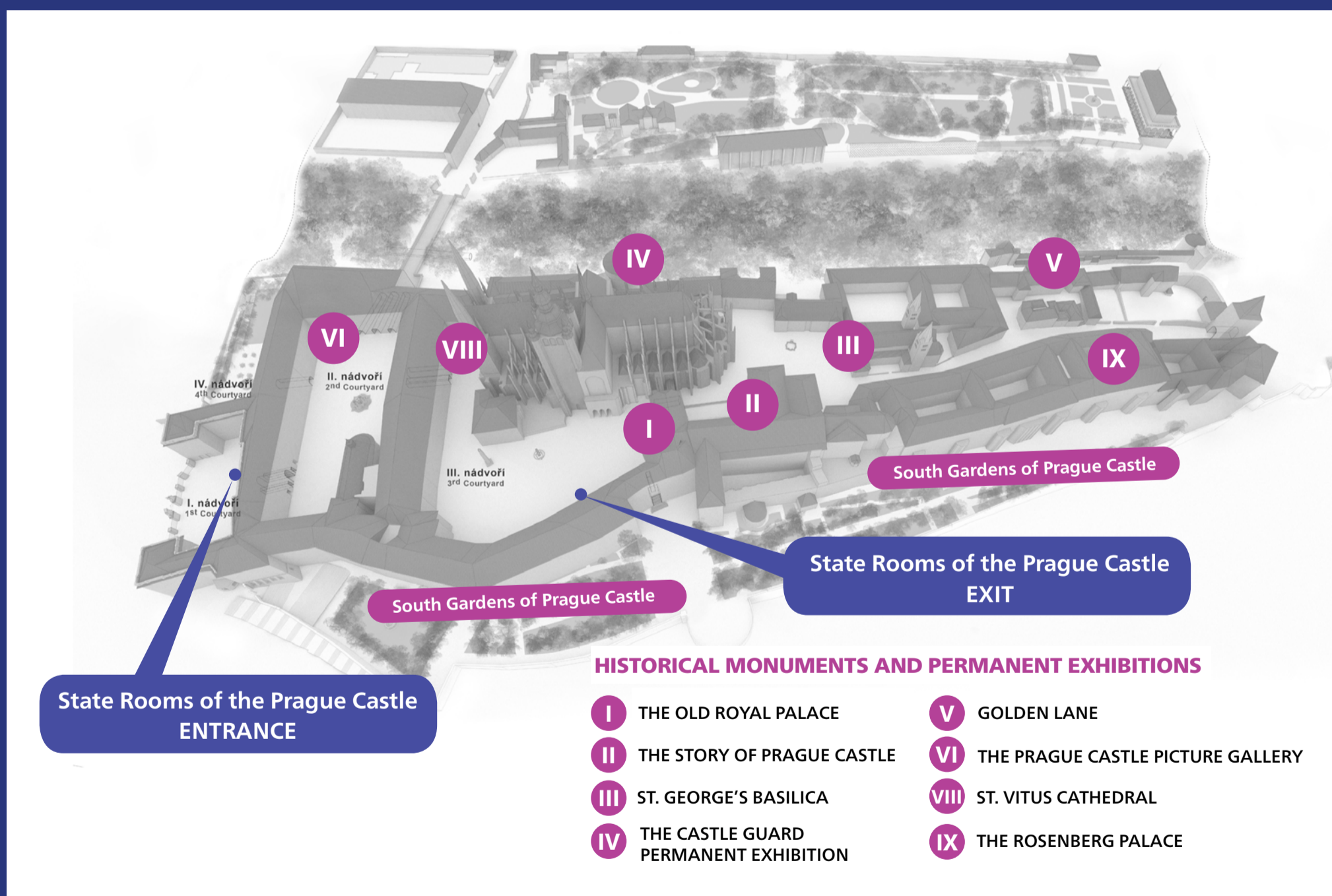
You can also visit, for free, **THE PRAGUE CASTLE – MAIN CIRCUIT**, including St. Vitus Cathedral, the Old Royal Palace, St. George's Basilica, and Golden Lane or **THE PERMANENT EXHIBITIONS OF PRAGUE CASTLE**: the Prague Castle Picture Gallery, The Story of Prague Castle, the Rosenberg Palace, and the Castle Guard Permanent Exhibition in Mihulka Tower. Today, **THE SOUTH GARDENS OF PRAGUE CASTLE** are open to visitors, which is not usually the case.

## OPENING HOURS

Historical Buildings / Permanent Exhibitions: **9 am–5 pm**

St. Vitus Cathedral / the South Gardens of Prague Castle: **9 am–4 pm**

PLEASE NOTE: Free admission does not apply to the Great Sout Tower of the Cathedral or the exhibition *The Heart is a Temple*.



And because we believe that **coming once is not enough**, we have prepared for you a rich Advent program: **Christmas Stroll at Prague Castle**. You can look forward to Christmas workshops, an exhibition, and concerts.

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