



MAGICAL, FLYING AND CONFIDENCE TABLES

INTIMATE DINING
OF THE 18TH-CENTURY NOBILITY

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

11–13 October 2026

Český Krumlov Castle, Bellaria Summer Palace

CONFERENCE ORGANISERS

The National Heritage Institute, Regional Historic Site Management in České Budějovice,
State Castle and Chateau Český Krumlov
The Foundation of The Baroque Theatre in Český Krumlov
The Silesian University, Faculty of Philosophy and Science in Opava
The National Museum of Agriculture
in cooperation with Ivan Day, Petra Burianová and Milan Svoboda



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MAGICAL, FLYING AND CONFIDENCE TABLES: INTIMATE DINING OF THE 18TH-CENTURY NOBILITY

This international conference explores the fascinating, hidden world of private life and elite sociability among the European nobility in the eighteenth century. It examines how the desire for absolute privacy, political discretion, and informal intimacy reshaped the culture of aristocratic dining and, at the same time, led to the introduction of remarkable architectural and technological innovations.

At the center of attention are the mechanical wonders of the era—ingenious "flying," "magical," and "confidence" tables. These tables are designed to travel vertically from lower-level kitchens, moving upwards to the dining and dancing halls, where the food is served to guests. This specific design minimised the necessity of servants' presence, allowing hosts and guests to converse privately and undisturbed.

Presentations by leading international curators, art and culinary historians, architects, producers and writers will guide attendees through European noble courts and royal Residences. Papers will uncover the principles of French mechanical tables, Denmark's flying chairs, the mathematical table of Sicily, the exotic atmosphere of Sweden's Chinese Pavilion, and the "wishing table" of Weimar. Beyond court etiquette and Baroque culinary symbolism, the conference highlights the rigorous processes behind restoring these mechanisms, including the authentic magical table at Bellaria Summer Palace in Český Krumlov dating from 1760.

Finally, the event will show how this Baroque illusion and the craving for technologically advanced dining continue to echo in modern design and architecture, using the example of the Swedish Villa Spies from 1969, which features a flying table at its very center.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

SUNDAY | 11 OCTOBER 2026

18.00	Opening of the conference
18.30	Dinner at Bellaria Baroque kitchen
20.00	Magical table performance

MONDAY | 12 OCTOBER 2026

CONFERENCE PLENARY PROGRAMME

Trends in Intimate Dining among the European Nobility in the Eighteenth Century

Ivan Day – Independent Culinary Historian, United Kingdom

The Magical Table in Bellaria: Restoration History

Pavel Slavko – Head of the Administration of the State Castle and Chateau Český Krumlov, Czech Republic

The Mechanism of Flying Tables in France: Principles and Originality

Stéphane Castelluccio – Research Director at the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), André-Chastel Centre, Paris, France

The Wishing Table at Weimar's Belvedere Castle

Friederike von Rosenberg – Director of the Directorate of Castles, Gardens and Buildings at Klassik Stiftung Weimar, Germany

The Invisible Service: The Mathematical Table of the Casina Cinese in Palermo

Carlo Vivirito – Architect, Regione Sicilia, Department of Cultural Heritage, Palermo, Italy

The Flying Chair in the Audience Chamber at Frederiksborg Castle and the History of Denmark's Now-Lost Flying Tables and Chairs

Thomas Lyngby – Independent Historian, External Lecturer at the Saxo Institute, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

The conference will be held in English.

Cost of three-day conference package: **EUR 600 (incl. VAT)**

Booking in advance is essential due to strictly limited numbers; only 20 conference packages are available.

CONTACT US

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The Confidence of the Chinese Pavilion at Drottningholm

Alexander Holm – Curator, The Royal Collections, Royal Court, Stockholm, Sweden

From Royal Secrecy to Public Dining: Reviving Sweden's First Flying Table at Confidencen

Maria Watolla – Producer, Confidencen Theatre, Ulriksdal, Sweden

When Modernism Rediscovers a Baroque Trick: High-tech Dining at the Villa Spies

Mikael Askergren – Independent Writer (Architecture/Urbanism), Stockholm, Sweden

TUESDAY | 13 OCTOBER 2026

Morning

Section A

10.00–12.00 **The Baroque mechanisms of Český Krumlov castle**

The magical table of Bellaria Summer Palace;
the Baroque Theatre

Section B

10.00–12.00 **The Baroque elements of aristocratic cuisine**

The Baroque kitchen of Bellaria Summer Palace

Section C

10.00–12.00 **The iconography of Baroque culinary arts and their symbolism in the collections of Český Krumlov castle**

The castle gallery and collections

Afternoon

14.30–16.00

Private curated tours of Český Krumlov castle complex for conference participants and guests:

Český Krumlov castle historical interiors

The Baroque Theatre

The historical kitchens of Český Krumlov castle

Schwarzenberg library and its culinary books

**Tours run simultaneously;
participants must pre-book only one of them.**
End of Conference Programme



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