

# LASVIT

## **LASVIT opens new OV-A-designed headquarters in Nový Bor, shining a new light on the traditional home of glassmaking**

NOVÝ BOR June 24, 2019 – LASVIT’s new headquarters on Palackého Square in the Czech town of Nový Bor regenerates the region’s glassblowing tradition and restores precious historic buildings, with a cleverly designed master plan that accommodates old and new, traditional and innovation with the addition of two spectacular buildings, one entirely clad in glass tiles.

Inspired by the traditional slate roof shingles of the region, these glass tiles integrate



transparency and technology, combining the intrinsic beauty of glass and light in the local vernacular.

The headquarters were officially opened by the President of LASVIT, Leon Jakimič on June 24, 2019, at a ceremony attended by the Regional President, Martin Půta, and Nový Bor’s mayor, Jaromír Dvořák.

*“Our new headquarters are a world away from the typical office; they are a monument to our vision to inspire mankind and a symbol of our love of light. We chose a house used by glassmakers as long as two hundred years ago, and breathed new life into it – a life intertwined with glass and with the roots of this traditional craft in this area, showing how traditional materials can be united with modern design and cutting-edge technology,”* Leon Jakimič said.

### **Glassmaking returns to its historical home**

The houses on Palackého Square in Nový Bor have been occupied by glassmakers since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, house no. 171 was a glassworks belonging to the Carl Schappel Company from Leipzig. After the Second World War, glassmakers returned to the ancient wooden house on cast iron pillars, and set up a glassmaking school and filing shop.

The second house, now part of LASVIT's headquarters, was built in 1790 as a residence. LASVIT has carefully restored both these protected historic sites, and is dedicated to restoring the authentic glassmaking traditions of Nový Bor.

*"It makes me happy that LASVIT, known throughout the world, has decided to renovate the original glassmakers' house in Nový Bor, right in the heart of the 'Crystal Valley'. The structure was originally the property of the Liberec Region, and I am overjoyed that the new owners have been so conscientious in their renovations. The buildings combine modern technologies while at the same time respecting the history of glassmaking, which is traditional to the area,"* said Martin Půta, the President of the Liberec Region.



Bringing the art of glassmaking back to Nový Bor is not just business, but mindful of local traditions. The Liberec Region has provided 300 000 CZK towards the new LASVIT headquarters.



### **A glass house reveals a strong identity**

The new headquarters doesn't just present an attractive exterior, but also a modern interior of the highest standard, so that employees work in a beautiful environment equivalent to the finest contemporary office spaces.

*"Ultimately, the compound will look exactly the way that we and our employees envisioned it. Now all our product research and development can be done in one place. All the firm's departments are in close contact, while retaining their own space where they can work in peace and quiet. The interior thus allows for easy communication, but includes calm spaces*

*where people can unwind in a beautifully designed environment,”* LASVIT’s Director of HR and Project Manager, Jiří Fiala, said.

LASVIT invited a number of architectural firms to submit proposals for a design that would dazzle and inspire yet respect the history of the buildings, while providing employees and visitors with a pleasant, functional environment. A primary concern was to create a complex with a strong identity, which would remain connected to its surroundings as part of the town’s fabric. The winning design, selected in collaboration with the acclaimed Czech architect and critic, Adam Gebrian, was proposed by Czech architects OV-A, founded by Štěpán Valouch and Jiří Opočenský.



*“The competition was a bit of a holiday for us, as we were meeting people from other teams and getting a taste of our client’s fascinating world. We were designing for the context of a historical town, a traditional region of glassmakers, with long-dead volcanoes looking down upon us from the surrounding countryside,”* Valouch recalled.

The buildings also had to fulfill demanding technical requirements. LASVIT is known around the world for their intricate kinetic glass installations that react or move to music. These often cover dozens of metres and weigh several tons and one of the key goals of the project was to include a hall where they can be displayed under various different lighting conditions.

### **The unusual glass house architecture dazzles**

Alongside its restored traditional houses, the complex has a new sleek black cement house and a glass house.

*“The relationship between the two houses, originally baroque-era cottages, and their modern incarnation is most interesting. These houses have a unique shape, both on the inside and the outside – the black house is closed in upon itself, while the glass house is like a shining lamp*

*lighting up the city. May this be a sign of the rejuvenation and new burst of confidence in glassmaking in the region,”* said Valouch.

The glass house appears as a lighthouse, shining not only on to the surrounding town but also performs a symbolic function, shining a light far beyond the borders of the Czech Republic. The entire building is clad in glass tiles, which LASVIT developed especially for it.

*“The overlay drew inspiration from the slate shingles which have traditionally been used for buildings throughout the Česká Lípa district since time immemorial,”* Valouch explained.

The square glass tile is reminiscent of the shape and application of traditional slate shingles, (square templates are placed diagonally, one on top of the other). LASVIT devised a technical solution that gives the glass a similar texture to slate. The facade of the black house, which stands just across from the glass house, is similar in form but, instead of glass, the house is overlaid with a special, black cement wall tile.



LASVIT is internationally renowned for its extraordinary custom-made light installations, however it also devotes much time and energy to developing glass as architecture, creating glass walls that appear like flowing water, and glass overlays that can be assembled like bricks. Signature LASVIT architectural projects include the Bellagio Shanghai, where one whole wall in the main foyer is glass. At the KANAL - Centre Pompidou in Brussels, LASVIT built a complete pavilion from organic glass panels designed by Welsh artist and industrial designer Ross Lovegrove.

### **A renovation full of surprises**

During construction, the architects discovered a well that was not listed in the town records. Inspired by this historic “found” feature, they decided to celebrate it as an interesting

architectural feature inside the building. Visitors now look through a glass floor to see all the way to the bottom of the well, which may have been part of the original settlement.

*“Every day that I checked on the building’s progress, there was something unexpected – the well which we discovered, or the rotten beams, or even the human approach to doing things and resolving certain problems... Not to mention the craftsmanship and courage of many of those involved in the project,”* Valouch said.

## **NOTE FOR EDITORS**

### **ABOUT LASVIT**

LASVIT is a creative hub of glassmaking talents, fresh ideas, and daring designs. This young, progressive Czech glassmaking and design company inspires the world with its breathtaking custom-made installations exhibited all over the world, as well as with its unique lighting and glassware collections made from hand-blown glass. The founder of LASVIT, Leon Jakimič, steers the company with the utmost respect for the Czech glassmaking tradition, but also with a boundless optimism for modern technologies and cutting-edge design.

In past years, LASVIT has attracted many renowned designers and artists who wanted to collaborate with an unconventional Czech company. In cooperation with LASVIT, many stars such as the Campana Brothers, Kengo Kuma, Yabu Pushelberg, Nendo or Ross Lovegrove, have created some of their most unforgettable glass collections. Ever since 2007, LASVIT has been on a mission: to bring beauty, happiness, and a piece of the Bohemian soul to clients worldwide, and thus change the world for the better. Let LASVIT in, let the changes begin.

[www.lasvit.com](http://www.lasvit.com)

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