Established more than 20 years ago, the Pardubice Wine Half Marathon is evolving into a full sporting festival. Since 2009 the race has incorporated the national championship of the Czech Republic and it is set to continue hosting it for the next few years. Some of the best Czech runners participate, but so too do people who just love the sport.

The main priority has been to get as many people as possible, of all ages and abilities, to become part of this race. For those not trained up for the half marathon there is a 7km race which takes a scenic route through the beautiful historic town. Being so flat, this course is favourable for personal best times. It is equally appealing to tourist runners as they pass by historical monuments such as the Green Gate, the East Bohemian Theatre, St. Bartholomew’s Church and the final straight along the city’s main thoroughfare, the Avenue of Peace.

In recent years the ‘Commons Run’, established for young runners, has grown to include more than 1000 children. The happiness they get from the event is a wonderful sight with which to start the sporting day, and it leaves a big impression on the kids thanks to a treasured race souvenir in the form of quality stamped medals. Other races within the festival include in-line skating, kick scooters, and handbike races where single riders propel themselves up to a speed of 60km/h and tandems to as much as 80km/h.

The races have gained such great popularity because of the family appeal and the consideration shown for every runner. Apart from the attractive course and competitive entry fees after the race runners are able to enjoy a rich gastronomic experience. Refreshments prepared for each runner include Czech-style beef goulash with local beer, Czech pie, coffee and fruit.

Runners are appreciative and consistently rank the race highly among Czech races. The Region of Pardubice also appreciate the race. Along with the Velká Pardubická steeplechase – which was first run in 1874 and has since become one of the most prestigious horse races in Europe – and the ‘Golden Helmet’ speedway motorcycling race, the half marathon brings foreigners back to the town year after year to spend time here.

Pardubice is a regional centre in the southern part of East Bohemia, built on both banks of Elbe river about 100km east of Prague, the Czech capital. It has about 90,000 inhabitants, and is the second-largest city in East Bohemia.

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Pardubice was first mentioned in historical chronicles in connection with a new monastery built by the crusaders in 1295. Arnost of Pardubice, the first Archbishop of Prague and advisor to the Czech King and Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV, turned the village around the castle into a prosperous town. In 1491 it was purchased by William of Pernštejn, who was keen to expand the city as much as possible. Under his rule the Gothic style castle was rebuilt into a magnificent Renaissance chateau, still well defendable with the castle walls and the wide moat remaining unchanged. This unique combination is there to be observed up to this day.

Succeeding Lords of Pernštejn continued his work and built the Renaissance square and the Green Gate as the dominant features of the city.

The town Pardubice grew to become a city in the 19th century when Jan Perner designed the railway from Olomouc to Prague. It was finished in 1845 and the station became a junction of Pan-European importance. Pardubice developed into a major industrial city in the first half of the 20th century.

Nowadays it is known for its petroleum refineries Paramo and the factory Explosia – where the plastic explosive Semtex was created. It is also the home town of one of the collapsed factories of Tesla (now Foxcon), which produced sensors used to detect stealth aircraft.

But runners in search of replenishment may prefer to discover that Pardubice is well known for the gingerbread and pastry it produces.

The race will be run again on 18 April 2015.

For event information visit www.pardubickyvinarskyprulmaraton.cz

Pardubice Wine Half Marathon

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