

KUBICEK

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Balloonist Aleš Kubíček from Czech joined the Montgolfier brothers at Hall of Fame

The Czech Republic honors one of its own with the induction of Ales Kubicek into the World Ballooning Hall of Fame. It is the most prestigious accolade that can be awarded in the industry.

Ales Kubicek is an award-winning aviator that has been an integral part of the development of the hot air balloon industry worldwide. As the founder of Kubicek Balloons in Brno over 30 years ago, he is responsible for the technical development and manufacture of over two thousand hot air balloons worldwide. His understanding of the critical elements needed to build a high-quality balloon led him to develop his own envelope fabrics making Kubicek Balloons the only manufacturer in the world to produce, coat and color their own fabric. Starting with very little other than a drive to succeed, Ales overcame the oppressive government of pre 1992 Czechoslovakia and built a worldwide aviation company that thrives today.

Ten years ago, Ales Kubicek suffered a serious head injury falling down the stairs on vacation and has been found it difficult to communicate ever since. Even before that, he revealed in a TV interview what ballooning means to him. *"For me personally, the form of ballooning is exceptional in the way a balloon flight affects the behavior of the person who completes it. It amazed me why so many people are happy to see a balloon in the sky and why so many people are happy on board. And I noticed that the balloon is built on deep symbols that are somewhere deep inside us, that condition our behavior without us realizing it,"* said the award-winning Kubicek in 2012 on the Czech TV talk show.

According to Kubicek, the first and basic symbol is the symbol of the earth, which weighs us down and characterizes our worries. Another symbol is air - something that permeates us, transcends us. *"And then we release fire into that air, which symbolizes transformation. The fire transforms the air, the balloon rises. But then there comes a moment when we have to climb into the balloon. We have to overcome fear, make a decisive moment and stop being afraid. And if we flood even more, we rise. We rise away from our worries that weigh us down. We fly through the air, but we don't know where. The air carries us somewhere and we surrender to it. This is an important moment. We are no longer the main ones, the ones who rule and decide here, we surrender and sail through the air. And then we have to go back to the ground, to our worries, going to work... But, and that's the important thing, somewhere deep inside us, something has changed,"* said Kubicek, who now shares the world hall of fame with ballooning legends like Joseph and Jacques Montgolfier, Umberto Nobile, Count von Zeppelin, and Stephen Fossett.

The award ceremony will take place during the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, New Mexico, which takes place 5-13. October 2024.

On Monday, March 25, 2024, Mr. Kubicek received another recognition, namely the award for extraordinary contribution from the subcommittee for aviation and the space program of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic.

From the first Czech balloon to an aerial superpower

Ales Kubicek fell in love with hot air balloons in the eighties at the Aviatik club in Brno. Here, with a group of enthusiastic friends, he designed and built the first Czech hot air balloon - the famous OVO. Balloons were joined by airships, and in the late eighties, Kubicek's vision turned into the first large passenger balloon in Czechoslovakia. Kubicek was already engaged in the production of balloons professionally.

Immediately after the revolution, the company, Kubicek spol. s r. o., gradually grew and expanded its repertoire to also include helium banners. In 2005, the company had its own custom-made factory built in Jarní Street on the outskirts of Brno. Part of the area is a meadow ideal for tests and balloon take-offs. It is from this location that Kubicek supplies a significant part of the world market with hot air balloons and is also the only manufacturer that produces complete balloons from weaving baskets to sewing textiles.

"What I appreciate most about Ales is his ability to give people space for growth and realization. Ever since his time in the Aviatik club, he has always promoted individual freedom and believed in the strength of each individual. His trust in people has always been boundless. I admire his determination to go his own way," says Radim Poláček, who became friends with Mr. Kubicek at the beginning of the eighties and subsequently worked with him in Kubicek's factory since 1992. *"Ales, I really congratulate you that your journey has reached these beautiful awards,"* adds Mr. Poláček.

It didn't stop at the balloons

Balloons are not the only success story of the Kubicek company. The entire brand combines three brands - Kubicek Balloons, Kubicek Visionair and Kubicek Aircraft. Other products include, for example, inflatable planets, which are intimately familiar to visitors to Kraví hora in Brno and can also be admired by people at the Expo in Dubai. 130 people found employment in the purely Czech company owned by the Kubicek family. *"They are people from seamstresses and basket makers to designers with expertise that few have. The number of employees continues to grow, and everyone deserves a big thank you. Without them, the company could not exist,"* says Ales Kubicek's wife, Naďa Kubicek.

"When we started with balloons 40 years ago, none of us even in our wildest dreams thought that we would build a company that could rise to such a level," says Mrs. Kubicek with a smile.

Ales has certainly made an impact on the world aviation industry that will endure. From his humble beginnings he has proven that he has a unique and special gift. Those of us in the Balloon Industry are blessed and fortunate that he chose this path and provided us with the best balloons in the world.

About Kubicek Factory s. r. o.

The company specializes in the production of hot air balloons under the Kubiček Balloons brand, imaginative Kubiček Visionair inflatables, and Kubiček Aircraft in the UL and LSA categories. Since its foundation in 1992, the company has grown to approximately 130 employees and has become a recognized specialist in the field. Traditional craftsmanship, attention to detail, and handwork are in symbiosis with new technologies and developments. Each product or its part is carefully designed, manufactured, and tested to the last detail under the supervision of experienced craftsmen. The competitive advantage of the Kubiček brand is its own production of special balloon polyester fabric, protected by a unique proprietary process. At the same time, they are pioneers in its use in the production of hot air balloons. During more than three decades of its existence, the company has produced over 2,300 hot air balloons, 1,300 baskets, 2,750 burners, 20,000 inflatables, and 8 airplanes that travel from the Brno factory to the whole world. Thanks to these achievements, it is now among the three largest hot air balloon manufacturers in the world and is recognized as a prestigious producer of technically advanced quality custom-made inflatables and, last but not least, special "off-road" aircraft.

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