



Schönbrunn Group

KAISERLICHES ÖSTERREICH ENTDECKEN

MEDIA INFORMATION

Schloss Hof Estate

Idyllic summer palace and hunting domicile of Prince Eugene and the Viennese Court in Marchfeld.

Only about an hour's drive from Vienna and stretching across more than 70 hectares of the eastern Marchfeld we find the Baroque synthesis of the arts that is Schloss Hof Estate. The former imperial rural seat was one of the most magnificent palaces in the Habsburg Empire. Built in 1725 for the legendary military commander Prince Eugene of Savoy, it was extended and remodelled under Maria Theresa into the largest rural palace and estate in Austria. A stately, aristocratic residence, an artistically conceived terraced garden and a tranquil estate farm comprise an ensemble today that uniquely combines imperial splendour and pastoral idyll.

The Palace

In 1725, Prince Eugene of Savoy purchased a four-wing castle dating from the seventeenth century and had it extended by two more wings. Maria Theresa acquired the rural seat thirty years later, in 1755. Between 1773 and 1775 she had the palace raised by one storey and the rooms on the first floor remodelled.

These rooms on the bel étage with their historical accoutrements were designed to display the owners' exquisite taste, wealth and status and are open to visitors for viewing. The tour starts in the north wing with Prince Eugene's former residential apartment, which was remodelled for Emperor Joseph II. The rooms in the east wing look over the resplendent gardens and are devoted to a detailed view of life and career of Prince Eugene of Savoy, famed both as a military commander and also as an art lover and connoisseur. Finally, the tour takes visitors via the Baroque chapel and the neoclassical banqueting hall into Maria Theresa's quarters in the south wing. Each room has its own unique fascination, vividly conjuring up the joie de vivre of the eighteenth century. The rooms of the bel étage also provide the illustrious background for temporary special exhibitions.

The Gardens

In the eighteenth century, the Baroque Garden – even more than the palace – excited the wonderment of contemporaries. Seven terraces descending towards the River March are divided by a central, vertical, visual axis in laterally reversed arrangement. The flower beds are symmetrically laid out, the avenues of artfully cut trees, the many sculptures and great stone vases, also the richly ornamental fountains transform the gardens today, just as in the past, into an idyllic refuge for hours of recreation and relaxation. Likewise, Prince Eugene's orangeries, two technically and architecturally imposing glasshouses, are also an irresistible invitation to linger and look.

The heart of the Baroque garden is the Great Cascade, which in size and craftsmanship has few peers in Europe among Baroque fountains, those in Versailles, for example. It has been painstakingly reconstructed and can at last be admired once more in all its glory.

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The Estate Farm

Everyday life in the Baroque era is also re-enacted at Schloss Hof Estate as a sensory and sensuous experience. The palace has an intact Estate Farm, which in the eighteenth century provided food, drink and luxuries for the princely household and organised the husbandry of the riding and work animals and technical maintenance tasks. Today traditional herbs, fruits and vegetables of all kinds thrive once more in the herb garden, the Weinviertel farmer's garden, and the kitchen garden – the *Allerleigarten* – that has everything. There is also the *Naschgarten* – the “Snacking Garden” – where visitors can help themselves to the berries growing there. A hammock garden offers visitors the chance to chill out in the shade of ancient walnut trees. Historically authentic craft workshops display the artistic skills of turners, potters and basket-weavers.

Two adventure paths offer younger visitors the opportunity to take a time trip into the eighteenth century and to have fun learning about everyday life in the Baroque age in all its facets. And more fun is to be had in an adventure and water playground, also in the Children's and Family World, in the handicraft workshops, Punch and puppet theatre, conjuror's shows, readings, concerts and lots more.

The main attraction of the estate farm is the animal population: around 200 animals including many – now rare – domestic breeds from old Austrian tradition, such as Noriker horses, Wallachian and Racka sheep, Jacob – four-horned – sheep and white Baroque donkeys are waiting to greet their visitors. The petting zoo is an opportunity to get to know several animal species at delightfully close quarters.

Imperial setting for feasts and festivities

The Schloss Hof Estate was famed far and near as the scene of brilliant feasts already in the time of Prince Eugene and Maria Theresa. Today this tradition is continuing with a wide-ranging event programme for the whole family.

But the Schloss Hof Estate can offer more: its resplendent halls, its historical riding manège, the rustic barn, the artistically planned garden terraces, the intimate Baroque palace chapel and many other unique settings, backgrounds providing just the right atmosphere for conferences and celebrations. Whether company event, seminars and workshops, Christmas parties, weddings – here you can find the fitting location for every occasion.

Schloss Niederweiden

A jewel of Baroque architecture and scene of brilliant festivities and receptions in illustrious historical surroundings.

The special charm of Schloss Niederweiden lies in the lightness of its architecture, in part French chateau de plaisir and in part modelled on the stately villas of Upper Italy. It is a harmonious combination of the Baroque vogue for prestige and display, and rustic cosiness and intimacy.

Schloss Niederweiden was built in 1693 by Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach for Ernst Rüdiger Count von Starhemberg with the name “Jagdschloss Engelharstetten” – thus a hunting lodge. Prince

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Eugene of Savoy purchased the building in 1726, a year after he had acquired the nearby domain of Hof as rural seat and hunting domicile.

Like the palace in Hof, Schloss Niederweiden was also given its present appearance in its essentials under Maria Theresa. Her court architect Nikolaus von Pacassi remodelled it in 1765 according to her wishes. Many rooms were appointed in the Chinese style, which was the very latest fashion at the time; today, only the banqueting hall bears witness to this. However, the paintings by Jean-Baptiste Pillement have been changed through manifold restorations. Exotically blooming trees decorated with musical instruments grow out of the panelling and up to the ceiling; oriental-looking musicians sit between the wall sections.

Gourmet events and temporary exhibitions

Fischer von Erlach planned a game kitchen in an ancillary building for the entertainment appropriate to illustrious guests. Two open stove fires were installed – large enough to accommodate an entire stag on a spit or to roast large cuts of game on the grill. Three hundred years after being built the room has been recreated again, faithful to the original in all details and alive with the genuine Baroque feeling for comfort, welcoming visitors to view it. The game kitchen is also the scene of culinary events. The palace itself is the location for temporary exhibitions. Finally, not the least of the charms of Schloss Niederweiden is its small, idyllic garden.

Interactive web portal “World of the Habsburgs”

An optimal supplement to the attractions of Schloss Hof Estate and Schloss Niederweiden was created with the interactive web portal “The World of the Habsburgs” with a virtual exhibition on the history of the Habsburg Monarchy including a wide-ranging spectrum of topics and breathing life into the living habits and worlds of the Habsburgs. Detailed text and pictorial material casts a critical light on the leading ruler personalities and describes the historical backgrounds. The website has meanwhile become a reference project and has received many awards. It is continually augmented. Since 2014, the virtual exhibition on the 1914-1918 war, “The First World War and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy“, has been available for viewing online.

The **Schönbrunn Group**, in administering Schönbrunn Palace, the Vienna Furniture Museum, the Sisi Museum in the Vienna Hofburg, also the Schloss Hof Estate, has in its charge the leading attractions of Austria’s Imperial heritage. The Schönbrunn Group is responsible for the preservation and revitalisation of the cultural assets entrusted to it. The necessary funds are provided in toto by the revenue earned by the Schönbrunn Group itself.

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