

LOOKING OUT



Linderhof gardens

TEXT: **RICHARD CARRIERO**
PHOTOS: **ALAMY / PUBLICITY IMAGES**

Ludwig's Castles

King Ludwig II of Bavaria has a double legacy. Something of a detached dreamer, he was regarded in his own time as extravagant and impractical. His building projects were incredibly expensive and eventually his government declared him insane. On the other hand, Ludwig left some of Germany's greatest architectural gems – tourism goldmines that have reimbursed the region many times over. A great patron of Richard Wagner, he actually made the latter portion of the composer's career possible through his encouragement and financial support. Today Ludwig II is Bavaria's most famous monarch, a father of the region's cultural tradition.

Ludwig was born in 1845 and grew up in seclusion – indulged by parents but raised by tutors. During his adolescence Ludwig became engaged to the youngest sister of his best friend, Austrian Empress Elisabeth, but he never married. He became King Ludwig II in 1864; his first act summoned Wagner to his court. Ludwig's reign occurred at the time when Otto Von Bismarck embarked upon the series of wars that would eventually lead to German Unification. After Prussian victory in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 Ludwig drafted the *Kaiserbrief*, which endorsed a unified Germany. While the Prussian king became Kaiser, Bavaria lost its independence and Ludwig withdrew from the public eye.

In 1868 the king began construction on his first two castles: Neuschwanstein and Herrenchiemsee. The two represent very different influences; Neuschwanstein was built on a high promontory and is known today for its soaring towers. Herrenchiemsee, however, is a more imposing horizontal structure created in the tradition of Versailles and Schonbrunn. Neuschwanstein's various themed rooms were inspired by scenes from Wagner. Herrenchiemsee and later Linderhof Palace, on the other hand, draw their influences from the palaces of Louis XIV.

Unfortunately, Ludwig's buildings contributed to his downfall. Although he

financed his projects from his personal fortune, the king's extravagance was still burdensome. He ordered ministers to scour Europe, borrowing funds from other monarchs and ignored calls for restraint. After nearly twenty years of ceaseless spending, the king's cabinet had enough. In early 1886 the ministers compiled evidence of Ludwig's insanity and with Bismarck's acquiescence, presented a document of deposition to the king in his ornate wood-carved bedroom at Neuschwanstein. One day later Ludwig's body was found floating in a nearby lake at a spot marked today by a memorial cross. Despite the appearance of foul play, the death was ruled a suicide.

Today people flock to Ludwig II's castles. They are not the practical bastions of the medieval era but instead fairytale universes conceived by a monarch who reveled in a dream world of opera and moonlight strolls. Travelers can take in some or all of Ludwig's castles from the plush seats of

Neuschwanstein

LOCATION: Schwangau, Germany
STYLE: neo-romanticism
BUILD: 1869 – 1892
ARCHITECT: Eduard Riedel
www.neuschwanstein.de

Linderhof

LOCATION: Graswang Valley, near Village of Ettal
BUILD: 1869 – 1885
STYLE: neo-Rococo
www.linderhof.de

Herrenchiemsee

LOCATION: on the Herreninsel island in the Chiemsee lake, 60 km from Munich
BUILD: 1878 – 1885
STYLE: neo-Baroque
ARCHITECTS/DESIGNERS: Christian Jank, Franz Seitz and Georg Dollman
www.herren-chiemsee.de



The New Palace at Herrenchiemsee



Neuschwanstein Castle



Linderhof Palace

double-decker coaches staffed by multilingual guides. The winding trip from Munich through the Bavarian hills is one of the principle attractions touted by tour companies.

sky has inspired fairy tale palaces for a century. Disney's Sleeping Beauty castles have drawn their inspiration directly from Neuschwanstein. From the height of its turrets, the view of a Bavarian countryside filled with mountains, farmland and lakes stretches in all directions. The

in Bavaria and swan fountains issuing icy spring water from their beaks. Neuschwanstein also sports a bejeweled Byzantine chapel, a music hall that seems suspended among Alpine peaks and the Venus grotto, an artificial cave fitted with electric lights.

Fairytale universes conceived by a monarch who reveled in a dream world of opera and moonlight strolls.

Neuschwanstein

Neuschwanstein is one of the most recognizable attractions in Germany. Its location on a rock ledge, surrounded by forests and snowy peaks and its turrets rising towards the

fourteen finished rooms of the interior are decorated with borders showing scenes from Wagner's operas. The King's suite features a four-post bed with a canopy depicting in carved wood the towers of every cathedral

Linderhof

Linderhof is a very different kind of castle from Neuschwanstein. Built in a valley at the foot of the Alps, Linderhof is actually a small white, two-storey structure and the only building Ludwig ever lived to see completed. The designs of its handful of rooms are taken from salons at Versailles. A bronze equestrian statue in the entrance foyer is a replica of the "Sun King" statue of Louis XIV. Linderhof is filled with colorful sitting rooms, a hall of mirrors and a table that rises through the floor, built so that the king's servants could

Hotel Vilnius



Travel Agency



Only ten minutes away from Vilnius Airport, this modern 2-star Hotel Vilnius Europolis is located close to the Old Town. We are loved by a great price and delicious breakfasts!

If You travel in Baltics States and need a travel assistance, guides, excursions, hotels - contact travel agency Europolis. We will handle Your travel issues easily!

Contacts: Švitrigailos Str. 11D
LT-03228 Vilnius, Lithuania
Hotel reception: +37052150410

Travel Agency: +37069998999
E-mail: info@europolis.lt
www.europolis.lt



Herrenchiemsee Fountain

and marble. Walking paths lead under trellises and into gazebos lined with flowers and statues.

Herrenchiemsee

Herrenchiemsee also owes much of its Neo-Baroque style to Louis XIV. Located on an island in the middle of Bavaria's largest lake, the New Palace at Herrenchiemsee is modeled after the central portion of Versailles. The palace exceeds the original in some ways – its Hall of Mirrors is larger than

that of Versailles and the immense staircase of marble in the state wing is similarly imposing. The gardens, lined with replica statues and waterworks along the main axis also resemble the French royal grounds. Like Neuschwanstein, however, the New Palace was never finished. With only twenty completed rooms, work on the rest was discontinued after the king's death. [do](#)

Fly to Munich with airBaltic

- ✘ Direct flights from Riga and Vilnius starting from EUR 43 - earn 750 BalticMiles in Economy class.
- ✘ From Scandinavia and Eastern Europe via Riga starting from EUR 76 - earn at least 1250 BalticMiles in Economy class.
- ✘ BalticMiles partners in Paris: Sixt car rental, LSG Sky Chefs.

serve dinner without disturbing him. The real beauty of Linderhof, however, has to be the grounds. The surrounding hillsides provide

a romantic backdrop in all directions. Reflecting pools showcase statues of gold

● Meet us at CATERPILLAR stand at BAUMA – world's number one exhibition for construction and mining industries (Munich, April 19-25, 2010), and visit us in LATVIA – any time!

SIA WITRAKTOR

Daugavas 38
Mārupe, LV-2167
LATVIA

Phone: +371 67 703 513
Fax: +371 67 703 567

www.cat.lv
www.balticused.com

WITRAKTOR

