King Ludwig II and his castles

King Ludwig II

Neuschwanstein was commenced by Ludwig II in 1868 high above his father’s Hohenschwangau Castle in the area he knew so well, and was never actually completed. It was his monument to the culture and kingship of the Middle Ages, which he venerated and wanted to recreate. Designed in a medieval style but equipped with the latest technology of the day, it is one of the most famous buildings in the world and a central symbol of German idealism.

The interior features picture cycles from old Norse and chivalric legends. The Singer’s Hall is based on two halls in the Wartburg, and the Throne Hall, which celebrates power and authority, was inspired by Byzantine and early Christian churches.

Neuschwanstein Castle

Augustine Monastery Herreninsel

The Herreninsel is the site of Bavaria’s oldest monastery (founded in around 640) and a bishop’s seat with a cathedral (1215–1808). It was bought by Ludwig II in 1873 to have rooms in the Baroque monastery buildings converted for his private use. In 1948 the Constitutional Convention was held here to draw up the future constitution of Germany. This important chapter of German history is documented in the museum. The long and eventful history of the monastery is illustrated in further rooms and there are also two galleries showing paintings by the Chiemsee artists. Some of the king’s rooms open to the public are furnished as they were in his time. The two fully preserved High Baroque halls with illusionistic frescoes and the Late Baroque Library Hall by Johann Baptist Zimmermann alone make this palace that played an important part in Bavarian history well worth a visit.

Baroque Emperor hall in Augustine Monastery

Neuschwanstein Castle

Herreninsel Palace (New Palace)

This monument to Absolutism which is far more magnificently furnished than the palace of Versailles on which it was modelled, was begun in 1878. The State Bedchamber in the Large Apartment is the most expensive room of the 19th century. The porcelain in the Small Apartment is the largest single order ever received by the Meissen manufactory and the richness of the embroidery on the textiles is beyond comparison. In this palace Ludwig II conjured up kingship with all the means at his disposal. The building remained incomplete, as did also the park around it, which was modelled on Versailles with its splendid fountains and intended to cover most of the island; today the gardens are surrounded by a natural area with important biotopes. In the palace, the comprehensive Ludwig II Museum documents the life and work of the man described by Paul Verlaine in 1886 as the ‘only true king of the 19th century’.

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Throne Hall in Neuschwanstein Castle

Children Fishing on the Chiemsee, F. W. Pfeffer (1822–1891)
The Baroque palace together with its pavilions, the Amalienburg, the Badenburg, the Pagodenburg and the Nymphenburg Palace in Munich, and in Linderhof created rooms of astounding splendour. His Royal Villa was the only one of his buildings that Ludwig II completed (1878). This palace with its Baroque façade was influenced by French architecture, and the interior is decorated with Rococo motifs from the time of Louis XV. Ludwig II incorporated many aspects of the south German Rococo style of his own ancestors, which he had already encountered as a child in Nymphenburg. The room where Ludwig II was born in Nymphenburg Palace is furnished with oriental splendour. The king used them largely for night-time trips in the mountains, and his name day in the lavishly decorated Turkish Hall furnished with drapes and a fountain. The King’s House can only be reached on foot, either from Elmau or Garmisch-Partenkirchen.

Main façade of Linderhof Palace

Linderhof Palace

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