



Press Release

February 2005
22/Gs/Gra

Munich, the Porcelain City - Porcelain Treasures

In addition to the world-famous Nymphenburg Porcelain Factory, which celebrated its 250-years jubilee in 1997, Munich also houses other high-class collections of the "white gold". The porcelain collections in the Residence Museum, in the Marstallmuseum of Nymphenburg Palace, in the Lustheim Palace and in the Bavarian National Museum include fascinating products of the European and Asiatic porcelain art.

Porcelain Collections

The Residence Museum

Both European porcelain from the 18th and 19th centuries and oriental porcelain is on exhibition in the state rooms of the Wittelsbachs' principal palace. The provenance of the products of the 18th century, such as figures, dinner services and vases, is Meissen (near Dresden), Frankenthal, Vienna, Sèvres and Paris. The porcelain of the 19th century – dinner services and porcelain pictures – were made in the magnificent factories of Nymphenburg, Berlin and Paris. The exhibitions of the important East Asiatic porcelain collections, such as, for example, bowls, vases, bottles etc – go back to the 16th century.

Opening hours of the Residence Museum

Entrance Max-Josef-Platz 3

Tel: 089 / 29 06 71

April 1st – October 15th daily 9am – 6 pm

October 16^h – March 31st daily 10am – 4 pm

Mornings: East Asiatic porcelain, European porcelain from the 19th century

Afternoons: European porcelain from the 18th century

A brief account of the history of porcelain

The manufacture of porcelain in China was developed in the 10th century. In the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) it had already reached a stage of technical perfection when its export to Europe began. In Europe the secret of manufacturing porcelain was not known until the 18th century. The secret of its production was discovered by Ehrenfried Walther von Tschirnhaus at the beginning of October 1708 a second time and developed further after its death by Johann Friedrich Böttger. On 28 March 1709 Boettger reported the invention of the European porcelain. From then on, the secret of manufacturing porcelain, the so-called "arcanum", was divulged and spread, resulting in factories being set up throughout Europe.

A short history of the Nymphenburg Porcelain Factory

Maximilian III Joseph, the last prince-elector of the old Bavarian line of the House of Wittelsbach, established the first Bavarian Porcelain Factory in 1747. It was then housed in Neudeck Castle in the Munich suburb of Au and in 1761 was moved to a building specially built for the purpose in the northern section of the crescent in front of Nymphenburg Palace. Ever since that time porcelain of a high quality has been continuously produced there entirely by hand. The manufacture of porcelain reached its peak under Count von Haimhausen. In 1753 he managed to obtain the services of Joseph Jakob Ringler and in 1754 of the brilliant Franz Anton Bustelli to assist him in his work. Ringler knew the secret of manufacturing porcelain and, above all, understood how to use the kilns. Bustelli, who is today regarded as the major rococo porcelain artist, created some 150 different models in less than nine years, for example the love groups, market figures, portrayals of foreign peoples, putti as Ovidian gods and the world-famous figures of the *Commedia dell'arte*.

Nymphenburg porcelain is still today formed, turned and painted by hand as it was in the 18th century. The special colours are produced in the factory itself according to old recipes. The technique of manufacturing porcelain at Nymphenburg calls for a very great measure of craftsmanship and artistic skills, which is entirely rooted in tradition. As in former times, the potter's wheels are still driven by water power. The energy-generating and transmission plants are today regarded as engineering monuments, which nevertheless are up-to-date and function extremely well. The historical three-storey round kiln is still in working order.

The factory is owned by the Bavarian State and is today run by the family foundation, the Wittelsbach Equalisation Fund (*Wittelsbacher Ausgleichsfond*). It is housed in the northern section of the crescent in front of the palace and is usually not available to the public. All the same the manufacture offers every Wednesday at 10 a.m. a guided tour through the studio at a price of € 25. Call 179197-0, an early reservation is recommended as the number of participants is strictly limited.