

ZÁMEK LEDNICE - LEDNICE CHATEAU

Dear ladies and gentlemen, dear children,

the chateau administration welcomes you to the chateau Lednice. The owner of the chateau is the Institute for Monument Preservation in Kroměříž.

Thank you in advance for following these rules throughout the tour:

- we kindly ask you not to touch displayed objects and walls, not to sit on the furniture and not to leave your group
- in the rooms with carpets please walk only on them
- taking photos is included in the price of the ticket, but it is forbidden to use flash, tripods or selfie sticks

Now a short look at the history of Lednice:

The first preserved record about Lednice is from the year 1222. At that time it was just a Gothic water stronghold with a farmyard which a Moravian aristocrat Sigfried Sirotek obtained from king Wenceslas I.

The Liechtenstein family, who came from Styria (Austria), bought a part of the manor and the castle Mikulov and from 1371 to 1945 they were the owners of Lednice and nearby chateau Valtice.

Lednice with its beautiful gardens and surrounding park served as the summer residence for the ruling princes who were continually improving the property. For instance, the famous Austrian architect Bernard Fischer von Erlach (1656–1723) rebuilt the Renaissance chateau from the 16th century and added a monumental riding hall and stables in the Baroque style, which is connected to the chateau on the west side.

Karl Eusebius of Liechtenstein (1611–1684), an artist, builder, gardener and horse breeder known throughout the whole of Europe, was largely responsible for the rapid growth of Lednice and its surroundings.

The next rebuilding phase was in the mid-18th century when the western wing was designated for the building of a church to replace the former monastery situated most probably near the eastern side of the present greenhouse.

At the beginning of the 19th century the Viennese architect Josef Kornhäusel finished garden area of the chateau, according to the wishes of prince Johann I., and changed the whole facade of the building to the Empire style. During the years 1846–1858 the chateau was rebuilt in English Neogothic style by the architect George Wingelmüller as requested by the then-ruling prince Alois II. (1796–1858). The chateau served as a summer residence. After Wingelmüller's death his assistant Johann Heidrich finished the project. The inside furnishings, which you can see during the visit, was created in the furniture workshop of Carl Leistler in Vienna.

However, part of the furnishings suffered damage during the World War II and the most valuable pictures were transported to Vaduz (the capital of the Principality of Liechtenstein) in 1943 by the family. The Lednice chateau was taken over by the Czechoslovak State in 1945 and made it accessible to the public. Lednice-Valtice complex was placed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1996.

Now we are standing in **the Entrance hall** with its impressive self-supporting staircase which does not have any supports. The three portraits above the staircase are of noble Liechtenstein princes and are the only paintings remaining from the original gallery collection of 11 paintings of the ancestors. Emanuel is on the left, Gundakar in the middle and Philip Erasmus on the right.

The master blacksmith Hollenstein made the three-tiered chandelier – the largest in the chateau. It has 116 branches, weighs 690 kg (about 1500 pounds) and is 15 meters in length (about 50 feet).

The Liechtensteins were heated hunters which numerous antlers prove and in this **Hunting room** they originally placed their trophies. Nowadays, only two stuffed eagles left. On the left side you can admire a head of a mythical unicorn. The head is from plaster but the horn comes from special sea animal - narwhal which lives in the North Sea.

Now we are going through **a connecting hallway** within the apartment of princess Francisca of Liechtenstein (1813–1881), born Kinsky, wife of Alois II. Take a look into **an African room** where some exhibits from Africa and Asia are displayed, and also into **a bathroom** which demonstrates the major change in hygienic customs in the mid-19th century. It is equipped with a marble bath, a toilet, a table with a washing set and some additional wicker accessories – a

shelf, a paravan (a screen) and a taboret (a stool). The towels and perfume flasks are original.

We have come to **an entry room** where two flags are displayed. These are from the regiment of soldiers led by Johann Josef I of Liechtenstein. The flags are dated from 1801 and were used in Napoleonic battles. They are rare mainly because they have been preserved as a complete set along with the authentic flagstaff and carrying belts below. Because the flags are identical, we can observe them both front and back. The motto *Pro Rege et Patria* is in Latin and means *For King and Country*.

Johann Josef I of Liechtenstein (1760–1836), a field marshal, earned his reputation as a young man in battles against the Turks. Later, during the Napoleonic wars, he took part in the battles of Austerlitz (Slavkov u Brna, 1805), Aspern and Wagram (1809). The little door in the corner was instrumental to firing in the stove in the next room.

This room is much more intimate than the preceding Neogothic chambers. **The Blue room** is a lady's sitting room from the late 19th century. In a corner cabinet there is a collection of porcelain made in Vienna and Meissen. On the wall there is a portrait of princess Caroline (1836–1885), the daughter of Alois II. The two smaller pictures above the commode on the right side are portraits of the Emperor Josef II. and his wife Isabelle Parmsk.

The ladies' bedroom is furnished mainly in the late Empire style. The writing table in a corner is a replica of a famous piece made by architect John Danhauser for Sophia of Habsburg. Its plant pots were part of the original design, as well as the lids which replace them in winter. On a night stand there is a mother-of-pearl cross imported from Mexico in the 19th century. The pictures in the room are watercolours painted by Alois II. himself. In the 19th century, painting was part of the education and good upbringing of a member of an aristocratic family. The princess Francisca herself was also a very enthusiastic painter. Once again have a look into the bathroom where you can better see the flush toilet in the shape of fish.

The Chinese room contains a collection of Oriental furniture. There is for example a sewing table inlaid with mother-of-pearl for the kind of hand-work which was among the favourite ladies' activities.

The original wallpaper in the **second Chinese room** is unique for its interesting themes. The paintings are done on original Chinese paper and are

extraordinary in Europe for the scale of their humans, birds and flowers. You can see that people are much smaller than animals and plants. An old Chinese philosophy says that nature is more than human. The big red jewelry case and the vase of Chinese porcelain are of artistic value as well. And now we return to the representative area of the chateau.

We have entered **the Knight's hall**, a romantic rendition of the greathalls of the Middle Ages. The atmosphere is created by wooden paneling on the walls, by the imitation of Gothic vaulting and especially by a collection of Flemish brass chandeliers. The chateau was electrified in 1903 and this is the only room with candles. In the middle chandelier there is a small wooden person – Saint Hubert, the patron of hunters.

The armor on the brackets are imitations of a knight's armor from the 19th century – the only exception is one historical piece made in Venice in the Middle Ages (that one with pointed shape of shoes). All the pieces of armor are about 135 cm high (5 feet) and weigh about 36 kg (80 pounds). The chest with golden ornament is a romantic imitation from the 19th century, while the similar piece on the opposite side is a rare work from the 16th century.

A large English park is situated on the north side of the chateau. This park was added to the original garden and was filled with Romantic buildings by prince Alois I. (1759–1805). The minaret, the Turkish tower, which you can see, is said to have been designed during just one night by the prince's architect Josef Hardmuth. The minaret is a unique 60-metre (195 feet) high observation tower.

In 1805 prince Johann I. commissioned the agricultural buildings master Petri and the horticulturist Fanti to rebuild a muddy stretch of land and convert it to a natural park in the English style. Around 1811 they constructed a pond with 16 little islands. The river Dyje had a new riverbed behind the minaret and security dikes were built. The prince also sent the gardener Richard van der Schott to North America to obtain some plants suitable for the local climate. Some of them, like the plane tree or the lily tree, grown from American seeds, can be seen in the park until today. The park is 1560 square meters large (16 800 square feet) and the lake 290 square meters (3120 square feet).

The architect Hardmuth was commissioned to add an aqueduct, Janohrad (John's castle), Nový dvůr (New court), Rendez-vous (Arc de Triomphe) and a new colonnade above Valtice City.

Now we will continue to rooms which have rare inlaid parquet flooring, so please, walk only on the gray carpets.

This **summer dining room** was used only in case of the celebrations or visitations. On a richly-carved Neogothic table and in the corners you can see original pewter dishes.

The pictures on the walls remind us of this room's function. On the right side, a painting shows the wedding banquet of Sigismund of Dietrichstein and Barbara of Rothal. Among the guests you can also see the Czech and Hungarian king Vladislaus II Jagiello (he is sitting on a chair in front of the table on the left) and his children prince Louis II., the next Czech king, and princess Anne, who became queen after 1526. A picture of a knightly tournament, usually organized during such occasions hangs on the left.

The Venetian mirror with a rich Baroque frame hangs on the opposite wall between windows. Its carving was inspired by the leaves of the acanthus plant, a traditional motif used in classical architecture.

We will now go through a **small connection room** to the chateau library. On the way you will notice a statue of Venus, Greek goddess of love and beauty, made from Carrara marble in the 19th century. The white ceramic vases were used as decorative covers for flowerpots. The Chinese vases with plaster ornaments were favourite accessories at that time and form part of the large collection of oriental pottery to be found inside the chateau.

A unique self-supporting wooden staircase dominates **the library**. This masterpiece was also made in the workshop of Carl Leistler and was completed in 1851. According to the legend, it was made from one trunk of oak. However, it was not done at once. The trunk was cut into smaller parts and after the carvings had been done, the trunk was joined again. There is no iron nail in this staircase. The staircase leads to the gallery on the first floor. Among the carvings of the staircase you can also find three hidden animals (frog, bird, lizard). Leistler's company made all the decorative woodwork seen throughout the chateau, including the cassetted ceilings. This particular ceiling is made from oak and lime (linden) tree.

Above the staircase there is a small wing altar dates from the turn of the 15th century. It symbolizes the family tree of Jesus Christ and is decorated with ebony. The technique of chiaroscuro was used to paint the picture of Saint Hubert. Its inspiration was possibly a graphic by Albrecht Dürrer. The statue of

a nymph is from tin and lead and was made in the 19th century. The vessels for aromatic ointments comes from China.

In the library you can mostly find encyclopedias, dictionaries, plans of land, books about art and architecture, museum and auction catalogues. The books are written in German, English, French and Latin. Before leaving the library notice also the portal, one of the most delicate architectural details in the interiors.

A casseted ceiling made from Canadian walnut decorates **the Turquoise room**. This hall is the only room where you can see the original suede leather wallpapers – in the small sections above the doors. The rest of wallcoverings were produced (according to the original examples) with the help of modern technology by the Belgian company Francar.

The painting above the fireplace from French striped marble portrays the Holy Family by the Renaissance master Raffael Santi. It is only a replica, because the original is displayed in Louvre (Paris). The portrait on the right side of the entrance to the library is of Elisabeth, archduchess of Austria, the wife of French king Charles IX. She founded a cloister and a hospital in nearby Valtice City. The portrait on a left side is of princess Sidonie, born Salm-Reifferscheidt (1623–1688). She was wife of Hartmann of Liechtenstein. She gave birth to 24 children, but only 9 grew to adulthood.

In the corners of the floor you can notice a very modern heating system which heated the ground floor of the chateau. It was designed by Josef Scheps during the last reconstruction. The amount of hot air was mechanically regulated. Logs were used as fuel and the stoves and ovens were located in the cellar.

The tie-beam ceiling of the **Red smoking hall** is made from larch with richly-carved ornaments in walnut. Twelve coats-of-arms which decorate the ceiling beams belong to the families which were related to the family of Liechtenstein.

A glass door connects the Red hall with the greenhouse. It was built during years 1843–1845 by an architect Peter Hubert Desvignes. It is 92 meters long (300 feet), 13 meters wide (45 feet) and 10 meters high (33 feet). About 250 types and kinds of tropical and subtropical plants grow there. At that time it was really technical unique.

Above the windows there are two eagles, this motif is repeated through the chateau, for instance on wallpapers and on chandeliers, because it is part of

the coat-of-arms of the Liechtensteins. The eagle with the bird's head belongs to the principality of Selesia and the second one with the girl's head to the county of Rietberg in East Friesland (Germany). A small statue on a fireplace depicts Ulrich of Liechtenstein as a Roman warrior.

The Blue music hall is the largest hall in the chateau, so it was used for dancing and musicians stood at corner niches. Now there are two serpentine vases which were presented to prince Johann I. by the Russian tsar Alexander I. in 1805. The pictures on the side walls with hunting themes are the work of Franz Werner Tamm. The crystal lampstands in the corners are from Venetian glass, as well as a large mirror of which frame was designed by George Wingelmüller. The fireplace is made from German marble. The intricately carved sideboard is a copy of one from Middle Ages. The set of upholstered chairs is the work of a Lednice master craftsman Rudolf Appel.

The picture hanging on a facing wall is by the German painter Hermann Schlösser. It was painted in Rome in 1851–52 and portrays two characters from the Greek mythology – Perseus and Andromeda. The cassetted ceiling from linden tree wood is said to be among the best Neogothic ceilings in Europe.

In the Blue hall the tour through this fairy-tale summer house ends. Enjoy your stay in the Romantic chateau park. We recommend you to visit the greenhouse, Janohrad with its hunting collections or to walk through the park to the minaret. Since this „natural“ park landscape is really unique in Europe!

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Thanks a lot for your visit!