

Schloß **Schönbrunn**



Schönbrunn Palace

Press information

Schloss Schönbrunn Kultur- und
Betriebsges.m.b.H.

Vienna, September 2009

Imperial attractions as magnets for visitors

Schönbrunn Palace is one of the most important Baroque palatial complexes in Europe. Since it was hived off from state administration in 1992 the funds for the upkeep and revitalisation of the palace have derived exclusively from income generated by its operating company, the Schloss Schönbrunn Kultur- und Betriebsges.m.b.H. (SKB). Since its foundation, the SKB has increased turnover continuously and has made this World Cultural Heritage Site Austria's top tourist attraction.

The history of **Schönbrunn** and the buildings that preceded the present-day palace on this site go back to the Middle Ages. Known as Schönbrunn since 1642, the estate was originally a hunting preserve. Following the devastation of the Turkish siege of Vienna in 1683, Emperor Leopold I commissioned the architect Fischer von Erlach to design a new hunting lodge and gardens. Maria Theresa had this structure rebuilt as an imperial residence furnished with costly furnishings and decorations. Today the original 18th-century Baroque interiors still convey the atmosphere of this empress's stately home. Besides the palace itself the complex includes numerous architectural features in the park and gardens such as the Gloriette, the Neptune Fountain, the Obelisk Fountain or the Roman Ruin. The complex covers an area of 1.5 km² and is both an important place of recreation for Vienna's population and Austria's most frequented tourist attraction.

When the complex was hived off from federal administration in 1992, the SKB was charged with generating the income needed for the upkeep and revitalisation of the palace through economic exploitation which on the one hand provides top-quality service to its customer base and on the other makes the least possible impact on the historic fabric of the palace. Following the SKB's immediate success, the Republic of Austria consequently transferred the management of the Imperial Apartments in the Hofburg under a lease agreement in 1994, to be followed by the Imperial Silver Collection in the Hofburg in 1995 and the Imperial Furniture Collection on Mariahilferstrasse in Vienna's 7th municipal district.

In the **Imperial Apartments** 19 original state rooms – including the residential and official apartments of Emperor Franz Joseph and Empress Elisabeth – are open to the public. In 2004 the **Sisi Museum** was installed in the apartments immediately preceding those where the empress resided, and conveys an authentic portrait of this fascinating personality. The **Imperial Silver Collection** displays outstanding items from the luxurious world of imperial banquets. The Imperial Furniture Collection, with holdings of more than 160,000 objects of which around 4,000 are on display, is the largest collection of furniture in the world.

In total, 3.3 million admissions were counted in 2008 for Schönbrunn Palace, the Hofburg and the Imperial Furniture Collection. In Schönbrunn alone, admission numbers increased from 1.2 million in 1993 to 2.6 million in 2008. In 1991, the last year before it was hived off, a loss of €140,000 was registered against a turnover of €4.5 million. The management of the SKB – Wolfgang Kippes as Technical Managing Director and Franz Sattlecker as Commercial Managing Director – were able to increase turnover by a factor of more than six to €31,5 million in the financial year ending in 2008.

The major part of this is made up by admissions from Schönbrunn and the Hofburg (around 60% in 2008), income from rental and lease agreements (around 15% in 2008), takings from the museum shops (around 21% in 2008) as well as other proceeds. The palace operating company now represents a revenue factor in the federal budget, as these cultural assets are owned by the Republic of Austria and are operated by the SKB on the basis of a usufructuary right or lease agreement. Since its existence (1993 to 2008) the company has contributed €16.5 million in revenue to the state over and above all payable taxes and dues.

As a rule, the SKB generates an operative profit of around 47% of its turnover. 'Our profitability means that we do not need to rely on state subsidies and it secures the economic basis for the upkeep and restoration on historically authentic principles of these valuable cultural assets', explains managing director Franz Sattlecker. Since being hived off from state administration, the palace and park at Schönbrunn as well as the Hofburg are experiencing the most costly phase of reconstruction in their history, and are gradually being restored to their original imperial appearance. To this end and in order to implement state-of-the-art security measures the SKB has already invested €138 million. The restoration of the Gloriette and the Orangery, the complete revitalisation of the Neptune Fountain and the Obelisk Fountain or the construction of the Schönbrunn Palace Conference Centre in the Apothecaries' Wing, the Maze, the Children's Museum / The Schönbrunn Palace Experience and the Sisi Museum in the Hofburg are examples of just some of the SKB's numerous projects. 'The focus of our expenditure policy is the preservation and restoration of these valuable cultural attractions to the most authentic standard possible based on solid scientific and historical research. In addition, the expertise gained from this research is handed on in specialised training schemes or collaboration projects with university departments', says managing director Wolfgang Kippes.

The first principle of all our activities is to ensure the smallest possible impact on the historical fabric. In creating new cultural, touristic and leisure opportunities, the management is concerned to integrate modern touristic structures in the most sensitive way possible. In dealing with thousands of visitors every day, the SKB prides itself on providing the best possible service and security. This includes an electronic ticketing system and a specialised training programme, unique in Europe, for its staff, who number current 231.

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Facts & figures

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Proprietor

100% Republic of Austria
Represented by the Federal Ministry of Economics, Family and Youth

Management

Schloss Schönbrunn Kultur- und Betriebsges.m.b.H.
Dr Franz Sattlecker, Commercial Managing Director
Dr Wolfgang Kippes, Technical Managing Director

Supervisory board

Hans Müller, Chair of the supervisory board
KR Josef Fröhlich, Honorary Chair of the supervisory board
Eva Gaisbauer, Vice-Chair
Friedrich Resel
Mario Rehulka
Wolfgang Beer
Dr. Gerhard Popp
Karin Lirzer
Andrea Rotter
Michael Vogel

Staff

SKB (in total)	231
Schönbrunn	160
Hofburg	45
Imperial Furniture Collection	27