

Universalmuseum Joanneum Press office

Universalmuseum Joanneum
Mariahilferstraße 4, 8020 Graz, Austria
www.museum-joanneum.at

presse@museum-joanneum.at
Telephone +43-316/8017-9211

Stainz Museum of Hunting Hunting culture through the ages

Hunting Museum, Schloss Stainz, Schlossplatz 1, 8510 Stainz

Opening hours: 1st March to 31st October, Tue-Sun: 10am-5pm

On advance notice it is possible for groups to visit the Hunting and the Agriculture Museum also outside normal opening hours between March and October from Monday to Friday.

Closed from November to February

Information: +43-3463/2772-0

For millennia, hunting has been an integral part of human life. Starting in September 2006, the new museum of hunting at Stainz Castle will be showcasing hunting culture in all its facets, not only presenting an extensive synopsis in terms of cultural history but also focusing on the interaction of man and nature.

Stainz Museum of Hunting: Innovative presentation in historical walls

In several stages of construction an exhibition area of 1200m² was created, new depots built, the box-office and shop areas redesigned, and the administration area revitalised at Stainz Castle, that was built in 1695 and acquired by Archduke John in 1840. The innovative presentation not only fits in consummately with the historical setting of Stainz Castle, it also spotlights the long standing tradition of hunting in Styria, particularly the founder of the Joanneum, Archduke John, who was known as a passionate hunter and whose heirs now run Stainz Castle as a modern enterprise.

In addition to the permanent new display collection, Stainz Museum of Hunting would like to be a centre of competence for matters of hunting: along with future temporary presentations on this subject, specialists and interested visitors will also be able to take advantage of a study collection, educational and seminar offers, a specialised library and contemporary information media.

Dieter Bogner from bogner.cc, Gunther Greßmann (GWL), Armin Deutz (GWL; member of the board of the Styrian Provincial Hunting Association), and Karlheinz Wirnsberger, director of the hunting collection at Universalmuseum Joanneum, are responsible for the museum concept. Architect Georg Driendl from Vienna designed the new layout of the hunting collection at Stainz Castle.

Wild hounds, belling stags, or: The cultural history of hunting

Eight rooms on the first floor of Stainz Castle are dedicated to the cultural history of hunting. Valuable exhibits from many different origins – Baroque animal paintings and magnificent courtly objects, ornate powder horns, but also everyday objects and wonder cures from folk medicine – illustrate the far-reaching effects that the cultural phenomenon of hunting has always had and continues to have on art, literature, music and film.

The exhibits at Stainz Museum of Hunting range from a Stone-Age spear thrower to ornate Imperial firearms, to a wide variety of hunting weapons. But not only weapons – customs and ways of life also tell us about the history of hunting: While finding food was top priority in the Stone Age, in courtly hunting it was above all the list of kills that counted. This era was marked by festiveness, extravagance and hedonism.

Much later we come across the “lone hunter” and his counterpart, the poacher, who became a symbol of idyll, love of nature and rebellion against the authorities in literature, art and film. People’s view of nature, and thus their attitude towards hunting, changed profoundly in the Romantic period: issues of wildlife ecology were advanced for the first time, with (natural) experience, silence and naturalness gaining ground. The romantic hunter, perhaps most prominently represented by Archduke John – and later the middle-class hunter – was guided in his hunting habits by John’s respect of animals and nature, and often saw hunting as a way of experiencing nature in an intense way.

Not only people’s approach to hunting changed over the centuries, so did the various forms and techniques of hunting, and they are the subject of in-depth analysis at Stainz Museum of Hunting. Technical developments and innovations in hunting entered the realm of everyday life and also shaped people’s artistic views: To illustrate this, the Museum not only presents historical hunting tools but also paintings and original equipment such as magnificently adorned dog collars, a collection of weapons and an excellent falconry collection.

Then, as now, hunting is part of everyday culture and entwined with a wide range of customs. Ornate items of practical use and wonder cures from folk medicine testify to its mystical importance in superstition. Bear’s gall tincture, items of practical use decorated with stags, or – in recent history – films on this topic illustrate the general cultural and historical importance of hunting in the development and customs of humankind.

Deerstalking, or: Wildlife ecology

Our visitors are in for some close encounters with animals on the second floor of Stainz Castle: The new Museum of Hunting aims to introduce visitors to the world of wildlife, providing information about habitats, and demonstrating the tasks of the modern hunter. Nine rooms focus on the biological and economic aspects of the interaction of man and nature; an exciting, vivid presentation with interactive exhibits offers the interested public numerous possible solutions to this subject.

From ants to capercaillies: Diversity on 10 km²

No two habitats are the same. Every animal has special requirements with regard to its ideal habitat – and you can see all these habitats at Stainz Museum of Hunting: What areas do animals live in and why? Is nature always natural? What habitat is “good” and what habitat is “bad”? How do our indigenous animals cope with the different seasons? For example, is there life under the snow? What does a capercaillie sound like? When are hunters allowed to, when are they supposed to shoot?

Look and learn, or: Guess who I am?

Not only you can see nature through different eyes, our little visitors can also learn a lot of new, exciting facts about their habitat at Stainz Museum of Hunting. A number of interesting public programme concepts invite our little guests to guess and join in the games, honing their perception of what’s going on in their immediate natural environment and carefully showing them what they – what we all – are: guardians of nature!