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The W's of Bayreuth!

*Wilhelmine - World Heritage - Wagner -
& Wheat Beer*

W...as in **Wilhelmine**

Friederike Sophie Wilhelmine from Prussia, daughter of the 'Soldiers King' Friedrich Wilhelm I and Sophie Dorothea of Hannover was born in 1709. She came to Bayreuth after her marriage with Friedrich III from Brandenburg – Bayreuth, the crown prince of the Principality of Bayreuth in 1731. After becoming Margravine of Bayreuth, she created a splendid cultural center of Baroque in the heart of Franconia. In the following years many important European representatives of the arts, music and culture came to Bayreuth to work or to visit. Characterizing this is a quote by Voltaire, the famous French philosopher: "Formerly when poets and artists had to pilgrim to Naples, Florence and Ferrara - today they come to Bayreuth!" According to the vision of Wilhelmine: Built or expanded, the Markgräfliches Opernhaus, the Neue Schloss with its courtyard garden and the Eremitage, the rock garden Sanspareil and the Schloss Fantaisie are masterpieces of the Rococo. In 2012 it was added as a unique example of Baroque theater archi-

ecture in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

The pronounced garden art and park landscape in and around Bayreuth is largely due to the dedication of Wilhelmine. The Hofgarten by the Neues Schloss once belonging to the royal household is now the 'green lung' of the city and a city park for everyone in the meantime. Just a few kilometers east to the city center is the Eremitage – an art garden, together with a semi-circular Orangery of European status. The central sun temple is the symbol of absolute power. The first German Art Garden Museum in Schloss Fantaisie presents rare exhibits and the history of Central European garden design. The park Fantaisie unites as an art garden different stylistic phases of the Rococo and Sentimentalism up to the landscaped park of the 19th century. The rock garden Sanspareil enchants with its oriental construction and a natural rock theater: It was said that when a maid of honor (from Frederick the Great) laid eyes on it for the first time she exclaimed, "Ah, c'est sans pareil" "It is unique!" leading to Markgraf Friedrich ordering the name change of the village from 'Zwernitz' to 'Sanspareil'. The Ecological-Botanical Garden is home for over 11,000 plant species a in 6,000-m² conservatory and approximately 40 hectares of open space. It is not only suitable for research and teaching but on the other hand a nationally important attraction to the public, a center for education and recreation and it provides an interesting variety of programs throughout the year.

W...as in **World Heritage**

In 2012 the Margravian Opera House in Bayreuth, considered as the most beautiful preserved Baroque theater in Europe, was incorporated by the UNESCO as a unique example of theater architecture of the Baroque in the World Heritage List. And in 2023 a visitor centre and Opera House Museum was added. Almost daily and all year round the Opera House and Museum are open for visitors.

The most famous architects of their time Giuseppe Bibiena and his son Carlo were hired to design the interior rooms in 1744. For reasons of the acoustics, the interior was not built of stone and marble but wood. Even the pillars were wrapped in paper and painted with marble decor. Today, the Margrave opera house is considered an un-rivaled masterpiece of late baroque theater design.

W...as in **W**agner

Richard Wagner, born in Leipzig in 1813, resided in Bayreuth from 1872 till 1883. The evidence for his life is all around in the city up to today. For example, on the "Walk of Wagner", from the Haus Wahnfried, Richard Wagners former residence, to the Festspielhaus visitors can learn a lot about the life of Richard Wagner. The Bayreuth Marketing & Tourismus GmbH offers various tours. There are tours on the trails of Richard Wagner or programs with music: A small piano concert can be held with pieces of Richard Wagner and Franz Liszt, after a group tour of the piano house from the piano manufacture Steingraeber & Söhne.

Attracted by the magnificent Opera House from Margravine Wilhelmine, Wagner came to Bayreuth for the first time in 1871. He liked the city so much that he stayed and built his Festspielhaus, the Festival Theater. In the following years Bayreuth became the place of fulfillment for his work. 1876, the premiere of *Ring of the Nibelungen* took place in the Festspielhaus on the Green Hill after two years of construction, in 1876. Till today, the Bayreuth Festival is the most significant opera festival in Germany. The Festspielhaus with its architecture and special acoustics counts to the best and largest opera stages in the world.

During the tour: "In the footsteps of Richard Wagner" visitors can experience more about him at original locations. In the surroundings of the former home of Wagner and his tomb at the edge of the Hofgarten, the Court Gardens, you can get an insight into the life of the composer. He lived and worked in, from him named 'Haus Wahnfried' from 1874 till his death. Here he composed his great works such as the *Twilight of the Gods* from the *Ring of the Nibelungen* or *Parsifal*. Since 1976, the renowned Wagner Museum and the National Archive of the Richard Wagner Foundation is in house Wahnfried. Today the Richard Wagner Museum presents its visitors a modern museum on the life and works of Richard Wagner and the history of the Bayreuth Festival.

W...as in Wheat Beer

Bayreuth can look back to a long brewing tradition. In 1884, no less than 74 breweries were in Bayreuth. Today one of the most popular wheat

beers of Germany: Maisel's Weisse is brewed in Bayreuth. Maisel's Beer Experience World is said to be the most extensive beer museum of the world. With 4,500 square meters and over 6,000 exhibition-pieces, beer culture comes to life. Visitors learn interesting facts about the history of brewing and the city during the "BierTour" through the Bayreuther Catacombs, a kilometer long Labyrinth of ca. 400 years old stone cellars. In two culinary stops you learn about regional specialties and delicacies. About 200 breweries in the region brew more than 1,000 different variety of beers - from Pils and Märzenbier, various wheat beers, the special smoked beer and hold the world record for the highest brewery density measured by the number of inhabitants. These traditional beers are served in the local pubs, bars and restaurants in and around Bayreuth.

Further information:

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