



PALAIS  
**LIECHTENSTEIN**

THE PRINCELY PALACES

## THE GARDEN & THE PARK of the Liechtenstein GARDEN PALACE

### BAROQUE HORTICULTURAL DESIGN

The gardens of the Liechtenstein GARDEN PALACE in the Rossau quarter constituted another focus of artistic interest on the part of Prince Johann Adam Andreas I von Liechtenstein. Together with the gardens of the Belvedere Palace, they were the most important example of Baroque horticultural art in Vienna. The two *vedute* by Bernardo Bellotto executed in 1759/60 and a series of engravings by Salomon Kleiner (1731–1738) convey a detailed impression of their original appearance.

Laid out at the turn of the 17th to the 18th century by the Parisian horticultural designer Jean Trehet (1654–1740) in typical contemporary style, the park contained large *parterres de broderie* with a variety of formal plantings, flanked on both sides by avenues of alternating horse chestnuts and firs, as well as a central pool with a fountain situated on the central axis.

All the garden statuary was executed by the sculptor Giovanni Giuliani (1664–1744). Bellotto's *vedute* together with Giuliani's *bozzetti*, great numbers of which are preserved at Heiligenkreuz Monastery, convey a vivid picture of the former glories of the park's sculptural treasures, most of which had already been sold off by 1773 under the regime of Prince Franz Josef I (1726–1781).

At the end of the central axis was the Liechtenstein Belvedere, designed by Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach (1656–1723). Having climbed one of the two curving flights of steps to the terrace, the onlooker beheld a magnificent view of the gardens, the palace and the city behind them, as Bellotto's two *vedute* attest. In the other direction the panorama opens up onto the suburb of Lichtenthal with the church and the princely brewery, built in the fanciful shape of a hexagon. In the background the three hills to the north of Vienna, the Kahlenberg, the Leopoldsberg and the Bisamberg, could be seen as well as the last reaches of the forests and oxbow lakes beyond the farther shore of the Danube. Between 1873 and 1875 the Belvedere was replaced by a new sweeping Historicist edifice designed by Heinrich von Ferstel (1828–1883).

### THE LANDSCAPE GARDEN

From the late 18th century formal gardens became unfashionable and the taste for symmetrical French gardens based on strict axial designs waned. Like many other Baroque gardens the park of the Liechtenstein GARDEN PALACE was redesigned on contemporary principles.

From 1802 a spacious English-style landscape garden was laid out in several stages to designs by the prince's head gardener, Philipp Prohaska executed under the direction of Kramer, the prince's Supervisor of Gardens, which included large expanses of water, serpentine paths and huge trees (plane, sycamore, oak), some of which are still standing today between the two palaces.

The geometrical fountain from the Baroque era was refashioned as a rectangular pool and given a grotto-type arrangement of rocks together with a waterfall and a small island. Since this time the middle of the pool has been graced by a figural group representing a *Nereid with Child*, a cast of a bronze sculpture with dark lead zinc patination by Franz Anton Zauner. The original dating from 1795 is held



in the Princely Collections. The part of the park extending from the north of this pool up to the palace adjoining Alserbachstraße built by Ferstel has survived as a landscape garden in the English style more or less intact, despite the vicissitudes of the post-war period.

However, the situation in the section of the gardens immediately adjoining the GARDEN PALACE was quite different. This area had suffered severely from the erection of show homes by the *Austrian Building Centre* during the 1970s. In the final decades of the 20th century the damage was compounded by further separate uses of the park: plots in the east of the park were rented out and on the west side a public children's playground was constructed.

### **THE REVITALISATION OF THE PARK**

In the context of the total refurbishment of the GARDEN PALACE, which took place between 2001 and 2004, the wish arose to halt the progressive deterioration in the park's appearance. By the opening of the *Liechtenstein Museum* in March 2004 these historic gardens were to be revitalised and given a form appropriate to the complex as a whole. Conceived and executed by renowned horticultural designer Cordula Loidl-Reisch, the new designs remember the Baroque garden while paying tribute to the idea of the English landscape park.

Thus in the area immediately adjacent to the palace a section has been created that influenced by the aesthetic principles and proportions of the Baroque era. However, unlike its Baroque model, this reinterpreted parterre is dominated by various flowering herbaceous plants, as well by summer flowers.

In the absence of the original Baroque ornamental features new decorative elements had to be created. Today, instead of ornate stone Baroque vases on plinths metal baskets planted with roses echo the Baroque vase avenues on strips of lawn that once graced the central axis of the parterre.

One of the main aims of the revitalisation was to open up the central Baroque axis. The formal parterre merges gently into the informal English landscape garden, with the central axis extending from the backdrop of trees dominated by huge planes via the graceful sculpture of the nereid in the pool and the large expanses of grass to the impressive palace on Alserbachstraße which forms the boundary of the park.

### **LEISURE AND RECREATION**

The historic gardens offer people living nearby a place of recreation on their doorsteps and provide them with space to relax. Open daily and accessible via Fürstengasse, Alserbachstraße and the children's playground, this horticultural jewel in Vienna's ninth municipal district is maintained by the municipal gardens authority of Vienna.