

MUSEUM SCHLOSS FÜRSTENBERG

Porzellanmanufaktur FÜRSTENBERG / Kulturgut Fürstenberg gGmbH

Touching allowed! – The new SCHLOSS FÜRSTENBERG MUSEUM permits a hands-on experience of porcelain

Fürstenberg, February 2017: 5 March marks the date – that's when the new museum in Schloss Fürstenberg will open its portals for visitors. After a year and a half of extensive renovation and restoration work, the museum is barely recognisable. The new, thematic structure of the exhibition invites visitors to pursue their own interests as they embark on a journey of discovery through the world of porcelain. And in many places, the exhibition is decidedly 'hands-on'.

Although the exterior of Schloss Fürstenberg, built as a hunting lodge for Duke Carl I, has scarcely changed, visitors entering the facility will be immersed in a modern museum world. The renovations were completed at a cost of five million euros. The porcelain manufactory FÜRSTENBERG, NORD/LB and Kulturgut Fürstenberg gGmbH were assisted with the financing of the project by funding partners from the foundation sector, the German Savings Banks Association (DSGV) as the main sponsor, and additional sponsors. The funds were raised by Kulturgut Fürstenberg gGmbH, which has operated the museum since 1 January 2017. The new museum is a magnet for visitors to the entire region. 'Our new museum concept brings tradition together with the modern world. We would like for visitors to grasp, in the full sense of the term, the fascination that porcelain has always had, from the 18th century down to the present day,' Museum Manager Christian Lechelt explains. As a modern and innovative company museum, it also reflects the way the FÜRSTENBERG porcelain manufactory has developed into an international brand in the luxury and premium segment. Even the first impression comes as a surprise. The historic staircase is beaming in fresh white. The uniform colour scheme of white, black and gold continues throughout the entire exhibition. The exhibition rooms, which are named for people from the FÜRSTENBERG history, are all dedicated to a particular aspect and its transformation down through time. In the Desoches Hall, a variety of tea and coffee pots serve as historical documents that tell their stories. Because different vessel shapes, handles and spouts affect the way a piece is handled. Every pot is made with matching cups, too. Visitors can playfully combine cups and saucers here, too. Weitsch Hall is dedicated to dining culture. Here, visitors have access to more than 250 pieces of porcelain – a cross-section of the FÜRSTENBERG range – that they can even use to create entire table settings. Inspiration for this is provided by an impressively staged table set in Mix&Match style. In Rombrich Hall, the magic of the rich FÜRSTENBERG art of decorating unfolds. Digital projections make patterns come alive and dance on white vases. The history of the creation of FÜRSTENBERG is

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laid out for visitors in the old polishing room. From the Duke's idea to the establishment of a successful production operation, it was a long, difficult and yet highly exciting process. This part of the exhibition not only discusses the Duke's own motivations but also profiles the first director of the manufactory, Johann Georg von Langen. Where did the manufactory employees, the raw materials and the energy come from?

The Visitors' Workshop attaches great importance to visitor participation and experimentation. There are four workstations where manufactory staff show the secrets of their craftsmanship. Here, visitors can learn how a handle is attached to a cup, how a figurine is poured, or how a complicated open-work basket is created. Visitors are also welcome to enjoy a demonstration of pattern techniques: the application of print images and hand painting. In the Visitors' Workshop, those who wish can even take brush and paint in hand themselves. Under the guidance of a porcelain painter, the visitor can design a porcelain souvenir of his or her own creation.

The days when a visit to the museum meant dusty display cases, long text panels and, by all means, not touching anything, are in the past. With its innovative exhibition concept, digital portrayals and lots of hands-on exhibits, the new SCHLOSS FÜRSTENBERG MUSEUM shows how much fun a visit to the museum can be for the whole family.

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