

# Dresden 2004



Calendar by Ulrich van Stipriaan



## CHURCH OF OUR LADY

The challenge that the craftsmen had to face sounds paradox: would they be able to build it the way they would have done it in former times? They were – and they combined old and new techniques impressively: The old church, built between 1726 and 1743 after the plans of George Bähr, burned out after the bombing of Dresden 1945 and collapsed.

Since May 27, 1994 rebuilding is in progress – using the original (dark) stones that were found usable during the cleaning of the site.

In July 2003 the dome was completed, reaching two thirds of the original height, yet missing the more than 98 feet tall lantern with the holy cross on top.

In 2004 the exterior is scheduled to be finished. Being the most remarkable dome building north of the alps and the symbol of protestant churches the Frauenkirche – Church of Our Lady – will be one of the most important pieces of European cultural history again.

# February

## PROCESSION OF PRINCES

A family with a history: the Wettins – and at the end the modern age begins, with craftsmanship and science and even the artist Wilhelm Walther, who created the impressive mural painting.

The larger-than-life parade of riders shows all regents of the house of Wettin. The painting was done for the 800 year celebration of the family's regency and was painted 1872 to 1876 in sgraffito technique.

This wasn't that good of an idea because sgraffito is nice to look at, but very sensitive. Around the turning of the century the first damages appeared.

What should they do? Restore? Or trying a complete new technique? It was decided to do the second and the royal porcelain manufacture in Meißen offered to implement the procession of 35 counts, princes and kings and 58 additional scientists, artists, craftsmen and farmers on 24000 tiles.

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# March



**DINGLINGER'S VINEYARD**

Up to the end of the 19th century the slopes left and right of the river Elbe were filled with vines. Then the vine lice came and ate their way through the vineyards, making the wine growers mad and the real estate agents happy. The crash of the wine industry resulted in the building of villas where the vines used to be. Nowadays one can see multiple spots where vines are growing again – Dinglinger's vineyard for example with Dinglinger's House and pavilion.

From 1692 on the area belonged to Johann Melchior Dinglinger, who built a summer house here. Dinglinger and his two brothers Georg Friedrich and Georg Christoph ran one of the most important goldsmith businesses in Europe for the saxon King Friedrich August I. (August the Strong). They created such valuable pieces of art like the "golden coffee set", the "bath of the Diana" and the "Court of Dehli at the Birthday of the count Aureng-Zeb".



## BLUE WONDER

In a way the bridge “Blue Wonder” looks like the Eiffel Tower. But the Eiffel Tower isn’t blue and it is standing up-right.

The similarity is not a coincidence: The Blue Wonder (Blaues Wunder) is from the same age. On July 15th 1893 the originally green bridge was opened, although the people back then didn’t really trust the new technology of the suspension bridge that combined the two villages of Loschwitz and Blasewitz. Doubtful faces can be seen on the picture taken at the weight test with carriages and brave citizens.

The bridge passed the test – just the color changed with the time: it turned blue. The citizens fastly renamed the bridge – originally named after the Saxon King Albert – to its still-known nickname: blue wonder. By the way: until 1921 the crossing of the 920 feet long bridge demanded a fee: Pedestrians, bicyclers, trolley guests, chicken and geese had to pay 2 pence to cross the river...

## GREAT GARDEN

When the Great Garden (Großer Garten) was built in the second half of the 17th century, it was located out of city bounds. Today it is in the heart of it, a green paradise for skaters, joggers, walkers and plain pedestrians.

The only purpose of the Palais in the Great Garden was to house the festive entertainments of the Dresden Court. It was built after Italian ideas without glass windows or any kind of heating – which made the place only amusing during the summer in the not so mediterranean weather of Dresden.

That didn't stop the Saxonian court from having parties there: Known are the "farmers place" from 1709 where the Saxon Earl Friedrich August II. played a French farmer and the Danish king Friedrich IV. played a Norwegian farmer. Another event was the marriage of Friedrich August II. and Maria Josepha of Austria in 1719. The festivities lasted four weeks, including the Venus-Festival on September 23 in the Great Garden.



## PILLNITZ CASTLE

The Castle of Pillnitz is an example of how people imagined China in a time where hardly anyone was there: imaginative exotic.

For August the Strong it was the *Indian start* for his idea of 24 castles of amusement for the Saxonian court.

For August's former mistress Countess Cosel the (forced) moving from the inner-city Taschenberg Palace to Pillnitz Castle was in 1713 the beginning of the long end at Stolpen castle.

Reminding of August is the gondola which he used when approaching Pillnitz via the river Elbe. Nothing reminds of his mistress though.

The park of Pillnitz offers some surprises. Part of it follows the strict rules of the baroque era, part of it is created as an English garden – and then, of course, there is the camellia. It is said to be the oldest camellia in Europe and has been in bloom between February and April for 222 years now with 35000 carmine rose-like flowers that indicate the beginning of spring.





## TERRACE BANK

The terrace bank (Terrassenufer) with the steamships of the white fleet in front of Brühl's Terrace and the magnificent skyline of Semper Opera, August's Bridge, Cathedral, Residential Castle, house of the estates (Ständehaus) and Secundogeniture is another reason for Dresden's fame as Florence of the Elbe.

Brühl's Terrace (Brühlsche Terrasse) is also known as the Balcony of Europe. It is located on the former Elbe rampart of Dresden's old defense system.

Heinrich Count Brühl got the area as a present from his elector. The architect Johann Christoph Knöffel changed the place into a closed place for an exclusive noble society.

In 1814 the object was made accessible for the public – which uses it frequently since then: Brühl's Terrace with its views to the river Elbe or the prominent Academy of Arts is especially on sunny summer days the boulevard of Dresden.



# August

## ALBRECHTSBERG CASTLE

The people of Dresden obviously adopted the art of throwing parties from the baroque era. On Albrechtsberg Castle – the one of the three elbe castles closest to the city and also the most beautiful – they do it particularly well. The Roman bath is located below the castle but yet well above the river Elbe. With its semicircular walking area and the row of columns around the water basin it is destined for Italian moments on the Elbe. Actually the fame of the building didn't start that Mediterranean: a Scottish Lord, the 7th Earl Findlater bought the area in 1803 and built an extraordinary villa on it. 1850 the prince of Prussia, Prince Albrecht, bought part of Findlater's vinery – he had to leave Prussia because he had married a woman that didn't suit his stand... He asked the architect Adolf Lohse, a disciple of Schinkel, to build him a 3-story villa in the style of the late Berlin classicism. The cost of 3.5 million Marks was worth the investigation...

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# September

## ZWINGER

In German, the room between inner and outer defense wall of a city is called "Zwinger". The Zwinger in Dresden started this way too – until August the Strong decided that this would be the right place for an orangery that could protect the plants that couldn't survive the cold Dresden winter.

The Military had their doubts: "That's not what you use a Zwinger for!" But it came even worse for the officers: the Dresden Zwinger was turned into a yet another place for the court's amusements from 1711 on.

It was planned as a gigantic building that was to stretch up to the river Elbe. It wasn't realized that big, but with its four rectangle and 2 round pavilions the Zwinger is a masterpiece of the baroque era. Someone called the Zwinger "A caprice of carnival of architecture"!

There is so much art in the Zwinger, so much to see inside and outside that a walk through the garden can only be a start...



## CATHEDRAL

In the crypt still lays the heart of August the Strong – and next to it the 48 sarcophagus of the other Saxon kings and dukes and their relatives. The roof is framed by 78 larger-than-life stone figures by Lorenzo Mattielli. Between those two places, so to speak, is the biggest catholic church in Saxony. The Italian Gaëtano Chiaveri started the building in 1738. And because it looked better he placed the church not after religious criteria but after aesthetic ones – a little slanted to the bridge. The Saxon people didn't get along with Chiaveri and his Italian workers (who lived in the "Italian Village" nearby), and in 1749 the mobbing worked: Chiaveri left town, Saxon workers completed the church in 1754. On 52,000 square feet it houses an Organ by Silbermann, a pulpit by Permoser, an altar by Anton Raphael Mengs and other valuable pieces.



## SYNAGOGUE

On first sight it's hard to tell how delicate this building is: 3,000 heavy blocks form the 80 feet high cube (well... near-cube) of the building. The massive stone reminds of sand stone – and of the wailing wall in Jerusalem. The tower is warped – 2 inches per stone row. That way the inner room of the synagogue can be directed towards the east although the lot isn't aligned properly. A curtain of golden metal strings forms the walls of the inner room and is a reminiscence to the transportable tent of the ark of the covenant while the outer wall symbolizes the firm walls of the temple in Jerusalem.

The new Dresden synagogue is located near the original Synagogue which was built after plans of and under supervision of Gottfried Semper in 1838. It was destroyed by the Nazis on November 9, 1938. 63 years later, on November 9, 2003 the new synagogue was consecrated.



# December

## SEMPER OPERA

This opera house shines into the world, although not always as spectacular arranged as with the light installation of Gert Hof in December 2002. The opera house, which is so famous today, is the second one Semper built in this spot. The first one opened on April 21, 1841 and was a three-story sandstone building. It was referred to as "most beautiful theatre in the world". Theatre and opera was played in the house with space for a total of 1750 attendances.

On September 29, 1869 it burned down – because of carelessness. After a compromise made of wood (which the people of Dresden disrespectfully called "booth") the new opera opened on February 2, 1878.

In world war two a victim of the bombs and reopened on February 13, 1945 (exactly 40 years after it was destroyed) the Semperoper is a must for tourists visiting Dresden – and those who don't like operas can take a tour through the house...