Neuschwanstein Castle

**Neuschwanstein Castle** ([German](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_language): *Schloss Neuschwanstein*, pronounced [[ˈʃlɔs nɔɪˈʃvaːnʃtaɪn]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help%3AIPA/Standard_German), [Southern Bavarian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern_Bavarian): *Schloss Neischwanstoa*) is a 19th-century [historicist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historicism_%28art%29) [palace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace) on a rugged hill above the village of [Hohenschwangau](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hohenschwangau%22%20%5Co%20%22Hohenschwangau) near [Füssen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F%C3%BCssen%22%20%5Co%20%22F%C3%BCssen) in southwest [Bavaria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bavaria), [Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany). The palace was commissioned by [King Ludwig II of Bavaria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_Ludwig_II_of_Bavaria) as a retreat and in honour of [Richard Wagner](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Wagner). Ludwig chose to pay for the palace out of his personal fortune and by means of extensive borrowing, rather than Bavarian public funds. Construction began in 1869, but was never fully completed.

The castle was intended as a private residence for the King, until he died in 1886. It was open to the public shortly after his death.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-50million-1) Since then more than 61 million people have visited Neuschwanstein Castle.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-premiummarke-2) More than 1.3 million people visit annually, with as many as 6,000 per day in the summer.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-internet-3)

## **History[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Neuschwanstein_Castle&action=edit&section=2" \o "Edit section: History)]**

### Inspiration and design**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Neuschwanstein_Castle&action=edit&section=3" \o "Edit section: Inspiration and design)]**

Neuschwanstein embodies both the contemporaneous architectural fashion known as castle romanticism ([German](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_language): *Burgenromantik*), and King Ludwig II's enthusiasm for the operas of Richard Wagner.

In the 19th century, many castles were constructed or reconstructed, often with significant changes to make them more picturesque. Palace-building projects similar to Neuschwanstein had been undertaken earlier in several of the German states and included [Hohenschwangau Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hohenschwangau_Castle%22%20%5Co%20%22Hohenschwangau%20Castle), [Lichtenstein Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lichtenstein_Castle_%28W%C3%BCrttemberg%29), [Hohenzollern Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hohenzollern_Castle), and numerous buildings on the [River Rhine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhine) such as [Stolzenfels Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stolzenfels_Castle%22%20%5Co%20%22Stolzenfels%20Castle).[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-12) The inspiration for the construction of Neuschwanstein came from two journeys that Ludwig took in 1867 — one in May to the reconstructed [Wartburg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wartburg) near [Eisenach](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eisenach),[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-MPB50-13) another in July to the [Château de Pierrefonds](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ch%C3%A2teau_de_Pierrefonds), which [Eugène Viollet-le-Duc](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eug%C3%A8ne_Viollet-le-Duc%22%20%5Co%20%22Eug%C3%A8ne%20Viollet-le-Duc) was transforming from a ruined castle into a [historistic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historism%22%20%5Co%20%22Historism) palace.[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-MPB51-14)[[nb 3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-15)



Neuschwanstein project drawing (Christian Jank 1869)

The King saw both buildings as representatives of a romantic interpretation of the Middle Ages, as well as the musical mythology of his friend Wagner, whose operas [Tannhäuser](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tannh%C3%A4user_%28opera%29%22%20%5Co%20%22Tannh%C3%A4user%20%28opera%29) and [Lohengrin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lohengrin_%28opera%29%22%20%5Co%20%22Lohengrin%20%28opera%29) had made a lasting impression on him.[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AFSN197-16)

In February 1868, Ludwig's grandfather [King Ludwig I](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwig_I_of_Bavaria) died, freeing the considerable sums that were previously spent on the abdicated King's [appanage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Appanage).[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AFSN110-10)[[nb 4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-17) This allowed Ludwig II to start the architectural project of building a private refuge in the familiar landscape far from the capital [Munich](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Munich), so that he could live out his idea of the Middle Ages.

It is my intention to rebuild the old castle ruin of Hohenschwangau near the Pöllat Gorge in the authentic style of the old German knights' castles, and I must confess to you that I am looking forward very much to living there one day [...]; you know the revered guest I would like to accommodate there; the location is one of the most beautiful to be found, holy and unapproachable, a worthy temple for the divine friend who has brought salvation and true blessing to the world. It will also remind you of "Tannhäuser" (Singers' Hall with a view of the castle in the background), "Lohengrin'" (castle courtyard, open corridor, path to the chapel) ...

— Ludwig II, Letter to Richard Wagner, May 1868[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-18)

The building design was drafted by the [stage designer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scenic_design) [Christian Jank](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Jank) and realised by the architect [Eduard Riedel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eduard_Riedel).[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-MPB53-19) For technical reasons, the ruined castles could not be integrated into the plan. Initial ideas for the palace drew stylistically on [Nuremberg Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuremberg_Castle) and envisaged a simple building in place of the old Vorderhohenschwangau Castle, but they were rejected and replaced by increasingly extensive drafts, culminating in a bigger palace modelled on the Wartburg.[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AFSN10-20) The king insisted on a detailed plan and on personal approval of each and every draft.[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AFSN12-21) Ludwig's control went so far that the palace has been regarded as his own creation, rather than that of the architects involved.[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AR12-22)

Whereas contemporary architecture critics derided Neuschwanstein, one of the last big palace building projects of the nineteenth century, as [kitsch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kitsch), Neuschwanstein and Ludwig II's other buildings are now counted among the major works of European [historicism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historicism).[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AFSN16-23)[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-MPB7-24) For financial reasons, a project similar to Neuschwanstein – [Falkenstein Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Falkenstein_Castle_%28Pfronten%29%22%20%5Co%20%22Falkenstein%20Castle%20%28Pfronten%29) – never left the planning stages.[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-MPB82-25)

The palace can be regarded as typical for nineteenth-century architecture. The shapes of Romanesque (simple geometric figures such as cuboids and semicircular arches), Gothic (upward-pointing lines, slim towers, delicate embellishments) and Byzantine architecture and art (the Throne Hall décor) were mingled in an eclectic fashion and supplemented with 19th-century technical achievements. The [Patrona Bavariae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_%28mother_of_Jesus%29%22%20%5Co%20%22Mary%20%28mother%20of%20Jesus%29) and [Saint George](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_George) on the court face of the Palas (main building) are depicted in the local *[Lüftlmalerei](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L%C3%BCftlmalerei%22%20%5Co%20%22L%C3%BCftlmalerei)* style, a [fresco](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fresco) technique typical for [Allgäu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allg%C3%A4u%22%20%5Co%20%22Allg%C3%A4u) farmers' houses, while the unimplemented drafts for the Knights' House gallery foreshadow elements of [Art Nouveau](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art_Nouveau).[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AFSN212-26) Characteristic of Neuschwanstein's design are theatre themes: Christian Jank drew on coulisse drafts from his time as a scenic painter.[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AFSN9-27)

The basic style was originally planned to be [neo-Gothic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gothic_Revival_architecture) but the palace was primarily built in Romanesque style in the end. The operatic themes moved gradually from Tannhäuser and Lohengrin to [Parsifal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parsifal).[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-Ammon107-28)

### Construction**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Neuschwanstein_Castle&action=edit&section=4" \o "Edit section: Construction)]**



Neuschwanstein under construction: Bower still missing, Rectangular Tower under construction (photograph c. 1882–85)



Neuschwanstein under construction: upper courtyard (photograph c. 1886)

In 1868, the ruins of the medieval twin castles were completely demolished; the remains of the old keep were blown up.[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AFSN114-29) The foundation stone for the palace was laid on 5 September 1869; in 1872 its cellar was completed and in 1876, everything up to the first floor, the gatehouse being finished first. At the end of 1882 it was completed and fully furnished, allowing Ludwig to take provisional lodgings there and observe the ongoing construction work.[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-Ammon107-28) In 1874, management of the civil works passed from Eduard Riedel to [Georg von Dollmann](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_von_Dollmann).[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AFSN11-30) The [topping out](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Topping_out) ceremony for the Palas was in 1880, and in 1884, the King was able to move in to the new building. In the same year, the direction of the project passed to [Julius Hofmann](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Julius_Hofmann&action=edit&redlink=1), after Dollmann had fallen from the King's favour.

The palace was erected as a conventional brick construction and later encased in various types of rock. The white limestone used for the fronts came from a nearby quarry.[[27]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AFSN21-31)

The sandstone bricks for the [portals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal_%28architecture%29) and [bay windows](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bay_window) came from [Schlaitdorf](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schlaitdorf) in [Württemberg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/W%C3%BCrttemberg). [Marble](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marble) from [Untersberg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Untersberg) near [Salzburg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salzburg) was used for the windows, the arch ribs, the [columns](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Column) and the [capitals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capital_%28architecture%29). The Throne Hall was a later addition to the plans and required a steel framework.

The transport of building materials was facilitated by scaffolding and a steam crane that lifted the material to the construction site. Another crane was used at the construction site. The recently founded [Dampfkessel-Revisionsverein](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technischer_%C3%9Cberwachungsverein%22%20%5Co%20%22Technischer%20%C3%9Cberwachungsverein) (Steam Boiler Inspection Association) regularly inspected both boilers.

For about two decades the construction site was the principal employer in the region.[[28]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-MPB64-32) In 1880, about 200 craftsmen were occupied at the site,[[29]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-AR14-33) not counting suppliers and other persons indirectly involved in the construction. At times when the King insisted on particularly close deadlines and urgent changes, reportedly up to 300 workers per day were active, sometimes working at night by the light of oil lamps. Statistics from the years 1879/1880 support an immense amount of building materials: 465 [tonnes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tonne%22%20%5Co%20%22Tonne) (513 [short tons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Short_ton)) of Salzburg marble, 1,550 t (1,710 short tons) of sandstone, 400,000 bricks and 2,050 cubic metres (2,680 cu yd) of wood for the scaffolding.

In 1870, a society was founded for insuring the workers, for a low monthly fee, augmented by the King. The heirs of construction casualties (30 cases are mentioned in the statistics) received a small pension.

In 1884, the King was able to move into the (still unfinished) Palas,[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-AFSN19-34) and in 1885, he invited his mother [Marie](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marie_of_Prussia) to Neuschwanstein on the occasion of her 60th birthday.[[nb 5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-35) By 1886, the external structure of the *Palas* (hall) was mostly finished.[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AFSN19-34) In the same year, Ludwig had the first, wooden *Marienbrücke* over the Pöllat Gorge replaced by a steel construction.

Despite its size, Neuschwanstein did not have space for the [royal court](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Court_%28royal%29), but contained only the King's private lodging and servants' rooms. The court buildings served decorative, rather than residential purposes:[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-MPB46-11) The palace was intended to serve King Ludwig II as a kind of inhabitable theatrical setting.[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AFSN19-34) As a *temple of friendship* it was also dedicated to the life and work of Richard Wagner, who died in 1883 before he had set foot in the building.[[31]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-MPB67-36) In the end, Ludwig II lived in the palace for a total of only 172 days.[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-Merkle68-37)

### Funding**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Neuschwanstein_Castle&action=edit&section=5" \o "Edit section: Funding)]**



Neuschwanstein in 1886

The King's wishes and demands expanded during the construction of Neuschwanstein, and so did the expenses. Drafts and estimated costs were revised repeatedly.[[33]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AR13-38) Initially a modest study was planned instead of the great throne hall, and projected guest rooms were struck from the drafts to make place for a *Moorish Hall*, which could not be realised due to lack of resources. Completion was originally projected for 1872, but deferred repeatedly.[[33]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AR13-38)

Neuschwanstein, the symbolic [medieval](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medieval) knight's castle, was not [King Ludwig II's](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwig_II_of_Bavaria) only huge construction project. It was followed by the [rococo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rococo) style [Lustschloss](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lustschloss%22%20%5Co%20%22Lustschloss) of [Linderhof Palace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linderhof_Palace%22%20%5Co%20%22Linderhof%20Palace) and the [baroque](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baroque) palace of [Herrenchiemsee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herrenchiemsee%22%20%5Co%20%22Herrenchiemsee), a monument to the era of [absolutism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Absolute_monarchy).[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AFSN110-10) Linderhof, the smallest of the projects, was finished in 1886, and the other two remain incomplete. All three projects together drained his resources. The King paid for his construction projects by private means and from his [civil list](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_list) income. Contrary to frequent claims, the Bavarian treasury was not directly burdened by his buildings.[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AFSN19-34)[[34]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-RL171-39) From 1871, Ludwig had an additional secret income in return for a political favour given to [Otto von Bismarck](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otto_von_Bismarck).[[nb 6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-40)

The construction costs of Neuschwanstein in the King's lifetime amounted to 6.2 million [marks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_gold_mark) (equivalent to 43 million 2017 €),[[35]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-MPB65-41) almost twice the initial cost estimate of 3.2 million marks.[[34]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-RL171-39) As his private means were insufficient for his increasingly escalating construction projects, the King continuously opened new lines of credit.[[36]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-ADB-42) In 1876, a [court counselor](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Court_counselor&action=edit&redlink=1) was replaced after pointing out the danger of insolvency.[[37]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-whoswho-43) By 1883 he already owed 7 million marks,[[38]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-AFSN111-44) and in spring 1884 and August 1885 debt conversions of 7.5 million marks and 6.5 million marks, respectively, became necessary.[[36]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-ADB-42)

Even after his debts had reached 14 million marks, King Ludwig II insisted on continuation of his architectural projects; he threatened suicide if his creditors seized his palaces.[[37]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-whoswho-43) In early 1886, Ludwig asked his cabinet for a credit of 6 million marks, which was denied. In April, he followed Bismarck's advice to apply for the money to his parliament. In June the Bavarian government decided to depose the King, who was living at Neuschwanstein at the time. On 9 June he was incapacitated, and on 10 June he had the deposition commission arrested in the gatehouse.[[39]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AFSN23-45) In expectation of the commission, he alerted the gendarmerie and fire brigades of surrounding places for his protection.[[36]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-ADB-42) A second commission headed by [Bernhard von Gudden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernhard_von_Gudden) arrived on the next day, and the King was forced to leave the palace that night. Ludwig was put under the supervision of von Gudden. On 13 June, both died under mysterious circumstances in the shallow shore water of [Lake Starnberg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lake_Starnberg) near [Berg Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berg_Castle_%28Bavaria%29).

### Simplified completion**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Neuschwanstein_Castle&action=edit&section=6" \o "Edit section: Simplified completion)]**



Neuschwanstein front façade and surroundings ([photochrom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Photochrom%22%20%5Co%20%22Photochrom) print, c. 1900)



A 1901 postcard of Berg Castle

At the time of King Ludwig's death the palace was far from complete. The external structures of the Gatehouse and the Palas were mostly finished but the Rectangular Tower was still scaffolded. Work on the Bower had not started, but was completed in a simplified form by 1892 without the planned figures of the female saints. The Knights' House was also simplified. In King Ludwig's plans the columns in the Knights' House gallery were held as tree trunks and the capitals as the corresponding crowns. Only the foundations existed for the core piece of the palace complex: a [keep](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keep) of 90 metres (300 ft) height planned in the upper courtyard, resting on a three-[nave](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nave) chapel. This was not realised,[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-AFSN12-21) and a connection wing between the Gatehouse and the Bower saw the same fate.[[40]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AFSN22-46) Plans for a castle garden with terraces and a fountain west of the Palas were also abandoned after the King's death.

The interior of the royal living space in the palace was mostly completed in 1886; the lobbies and corridors were painted in a simpler style by 1888.[[41]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AFSN26-47) The *Moorish Hall* desired by the King (and planned below the Throne Hall) was not realised any more than the so-called *Knights' Bath*, which, modelled after the Knights' Bath in the Wartburg, was intended to render homage to the knights' cult as a medieval baptism bath. A *Bride Chamber* in the Bower (after a location in *Lohengrin*),[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-AFSN9-27) guest rooms in the first and second floor of the Palas and a great banquet hall were further abandoned projects.[[33]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AR13-38) In fact, a complete development of Neuschwanstein had never even been planned, and at the time of the King's death there was not a utilisation concept for numerous rooms.[[29]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AR14-33)

Neuschwanstein was still incomplete when Ludwig II died in 1886. The King never intended to make the palace accessible to the public.[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AFSN19-34) No more than six weeks after the King's death, however, the Prince-Regent [Luitpold](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luitpold%2C_Prince_Regent_of_Bavaria%22%20%5Co%20%22Luitpold%2C%20Prince%20Regent%20of%20Bavaria) ordered the palace opened to paying visitors. The administrators of King Ludwig's estate managed to balance the construction debts by 1899.[[42]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AR16-48) From then until [World War I](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I), Neuschwanstein was a stable and lucrative source of revenue for the [House of Wittelsbach](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House_of_Wittelsbach), indeed King Ludwig's castles were probably the single largest income source earned by the Bavarian royal family in the last years prior to 1914. To guarantee a smooth course of visits, some rooms and the court buildings were finished first. Initially the visitors were allowed to move freely in the palace, causing the furniture to wear quickly.

When Bavaria became a republic in 1918, the government socialised the [civil list](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_list). The resulting dispute with the House of Wittelsbach led to a split in 1923: King Ludwig's palaces including Neuschwanstein fell to the state and are now managed by the [Bavarian Palace Department](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bavarian_Administration_of_State-Owned_Palaces%2C_Gardens_and_Lakes), a division of the Bavarian finance ministry. Nearby Hohenschwangau Castle fell to the [Wittelsbacher Ausgleichsfonds](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wittelsbacher_Ausgleichsfonds&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Wittelsbacher Ausgleichsfonds (page does not exist)), whose revenues go to the House of Wittelsbach.[[43]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-Sykora32f-49) The visitor numbers continued to rise, reaching 200,000 in 1939.[[43]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-Sykora32f-49)

### World War II**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Neuschwanstein_Castle&action=edit&section=7" \o "Edit section: World War II)]**

Due to its secluded and strategically unimportant location, the palace survived the destruction of two World Wars. Until 1944, it served as a depot for [Nazi plunder](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazi_plunder) that was taken from France by the [Reichsleiter Rosenberg Institute](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reichsleiter_Rosenberg_Taskforce%22%20%5Co%20%22Reichsleiter%20Rosenberg%20Taskforce) for the Occupied Territories (*Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg für die besetzten Gebiete*), a suborganisation of the [Nazi Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazi_Party).[[44]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-50) The castle was used to catalogue the works of arts. (After [World War II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II) 39 photo albums were found in the palace documenting the scale of the art seizures. The albums are now stored in the [United States National Archives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Archives_and_Records_Administration).[[45]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-51))

In April 1945, the [SS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schutzstaffel) considered blowing up the palace to prevent the building itself and the artwork it contained from falling to the enemy.[[46]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-RL184185-52) The plan was not realised by the [SS-*Gruppenführer*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gruppenf%C3%BChrer) who had been assigned the task, however, and at the end of the war the palace was surrendered undamaged to representatives of the [Allied](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allies_of_World_War_II) forces.[[46]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-RL184185-52) The Allied occupation authorities eventually returned the palace to the reconstituted Bavarian state government. Thereafter the Bavarian archives used some of the rooms as a provisional store for salvaged archival material, as the premises in [Munich](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Munich) had been bombed.

**FACTS:**

**Exterior**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Neuschwanstein_Castle&action=edit&section=9" \o "Edit section: Exterior)]



Palace roof



Overview of palace complex; position of the planned chapel marked in yellow



View from location of unrealised chapel along upper courtyard level: Bower (left, with balcony of [Elsa von Brabant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elsa_von_Brabant)), palace front, and Knights' House (right), according to Wagner's stage directions for [Antwerp Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Het_Steen) in the second act of *[Lohengrin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lohengrin_%28opera%29%22%20%5Co%20%22Lohengrin%20%28opera%29)*

The palace complex is entered through the symmetrical Gatehouse flanked by two stair towers. The eastward-pointing gate building is the only structure of the palace whose wall area is fashioned in high-contrast colours; the exterior walls are cased with red bricks, the court fronts with yellow [limestone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limestone). The roof [cornice](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornice) is surrounded by pinnacles. The upper floor of the Gatehouse is surmounted by a [crow-stepped gable](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crow-stepped_gable) and held King Ludwig II's first lodging at Neuschwanstein, from which he occasionally observed the building work before the hall was completed. The ground floors of the Gatehouse were intended to accommodate the stables.

The passage through the Gatehouse, crowned with the [royal Bavarian coat of arms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coat_of_arms_of_Bavaria), leads directly into the courtyard. The courtyard has two levels, the lower one being defined to the east by the Gatehouse and to the north by the foundations of the so-called Rectangular Tower and by the gallery building. The southern end of the courtyard is open, imparting a view of the surrounding mountain scenery. At its western end, the courtyard is delimited by a bricked embankment, whose polygonally protracting bulge marks the [choir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Choir_%28architecture%29) of the originally projected chapel; this three-nave church, never built, was intended to form the base of a 90-metre (295-ft) [keep](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keep), the planned centrepiece of the architectural ensemble. A flight of steps at the side gives access to the upper level.



Saint George



Gatehouse

Today, the foundation plan of the chapel-keep is marked out in the upper-courtyard pavement. The most striking structure of the upper court level is the so-called Rectangular Tower (45 metres or 148 feet). Like most of the court buildings, it mostly serves a decorative purpose as part of the ensemble. Its viewing platform provides a vast view over the Alpine foothills to the north. The northern end of the upper courtyard is defined by the so-called Knights' House. The three-storey building is connected to the Rectangular Tower and the Gatehouse by means of a continuous gallery fashioned with a [blind arcade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blind_arcade). From the point of view of castle romanticism the Knights' House was the abode of a stronghold's menfolk; at Neuschwanstein, estate and service rooms were envisioned here. The Bower, which complements the Knights' House as the "ladies' house" but was never used as such, defines the south side of the courtyard. Both structures together form the motif of the *Antwerp Castle* featuring in the first act of *Lohengrin*. Embedded in the pavement is the floor plan of the planned palace chapel.

The western end of the courtyard is delimited by the *Palas* (hall). It constitutes the real main and residential building of the castle and contains the King's stateroom and the servants' rooms. The Palas is a colossal five-story structure in the shape of two huge cuboids that are connected in a flat angle and covered by two adjacent high gable roofs. The building's shape follows the course of the ridge. In its angles there are two stair towers, the northern one surmounting the palace roof by several storeys with its height of 65 metres (213 ft). With their polymorphic roofs, both towers are reminiscent of the [Château de Pierrefonds](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ch%C3%A2teau_de_Pierrefonds). The western Palas front supports a two-storey balcony with view on the [Alpsee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alpsee%22%20%5Co%20%22Alpsee), while northwards a low chair tower and the conservatory protract from the main structure. The entire Palas is spangled with numerous decorative chimneys and ornamental turrets, the court front with colourful [frescos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fresco). The court-side gable is crowned with a copper lion, the western (outward) gable with the likeness of a knight.

**Interior**[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Neuschwanstein_Castle&action=edit&section=10" \o "Edit section: Interior)]



Floor plan of third floor, position of fourth-floor Hall of the Singers marked in red



Corridor



Throne Hall detail

Had it been completed, the palace would have had more than 200 interior rooms, including premises for guests and servants, as well as for service and logistics. Ultimately, no more than about 15 rooms and halls were finished.[[50]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-NP117-56) In its lower stories the Palas accommodates administrative and servants' rooms and the rooms of today's palace administration. The King's staterooms are situated in the upper stories: The anterior structure accommodates the lodgings in the third floor, above them the *Hall of the Singers*. The upper floors of the west-facing posterior structure are filled almost completely by the Throne Hall. The total floor space of all floors amounts to nearly 6,000 square metres (65,000 sq ft).[[50]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-NP117-56)

Neuschwanstein houses numerous significant interior rooms of German [historicism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historicism). The palace was fitted with several of the latest technical innovations of the late 19th century.[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AFSN212-26)[[51]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-57) Among other things it had a battery-powered bell system for the servants and telephone lines. The kitchen equipment included a [Rumford oven](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rumford_fireplace) that turned the skewer with its heat and so automatically adjusted the turning speed. The hot air was used for a [calorifère central heating](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masonry_heater%22%20%5Co%20%22Masonry%20heater) system.[[52]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-RL6484-58) Further novelties for the era were running warm water and toilets with automatic flushing.

The largest room of the palace by area is the Hall of the Singers, followed by the Throne Hall. The 27-by-10-metre (89 by 33 ft)[[53]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-59) Hall of the Singers is located in the eastern, court-side wing of the Palas, in the fourth floor above the King's lodgings. It is designed as an amalgamation of two rooms of the Wartburg: The Hall of the Singers and the Ballroom. It was one of the King's favourite projects for his palace.[[54]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AFSN48-60) The rectangular room was decorated with themes from Lohengrin and [Parzival](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parzival%22%20%5Co%20%22Parzival). Its longer side is terminated by a gallery that is crowned by a tribune, modelled after the Wartburg. The eastern narrow side is terminated by a stage that is structured by arcades and known as the *Sängerlaube*. The Hall of the Singers was never designed for court festivities of the reclusive King.[*[citation needed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed%22%20%5Co%20%22Wikipedia%3ACitation%20needed)*] Rather, like the Throne Hall it served as a walkable monument in which the culture of knights and [courtly love](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Courtly_love) of the Middle Ages was represented. The first performance in this hall took place in 1933: A concert commemorating the 50th anniversary of Richard Wagner's death.[[34]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-RL171-39)

The Throne Hall, 20 by 12 metres (66 by 39 ft),[[55]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle%22%20%5Cl%20%22cite_note-berneck45-61) is situated in the west wing of the Palas. With its height of 13 metres (43 ft)[[55]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-berneck45-61) it occupies the third and fourth floors. [Julius Hofmann](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Julius_Hofmann&action=edit&redlink=1) modelled it after the [Allerheiligen-Hofkirche](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allerheiligen-Hofkirche%22%20%5Co%20%22Allerheiligen-Hofkirche) in the [Munich Residenz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Munich_Residenz). On three sides it is surrounded by colorful arcades, ending in an [apse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apse) that was intended to hold King Ludwig's throne – which was never completed. The throne [dais](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dais) is surrounded by paintings of Jesus, the [Twelve Apostles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twelve_Apostles) and six [canonised](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canonised%22%20%5Co%20%22Canonised) kings. The [mural paintings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mural_painting) were created by [Wilhelm Hauschild](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilhelm_Hauschild_%28painter%29). The floor mosaic was completed after the king's death. The chandelier is fashioned after a Byzantine crown. The Throne Hall makes a sacral impression. Following the king's wish, it amalgamated the Grail Hall from Parzival with a symbol of the [divine right of kings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divine_right_of_kings),[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle#cite_note-AFSN16-23) an incorporation of unrestricted sovereign power, which King Ludwig as the head of a [constitutional monarchy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitutional_monarchy) no longer held. The union of the sacral and regal is emphasised by the portraits in the apse of six canonised Kings: [Saint Louis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_IX_of_France) of France, [Saint Stephen of Hungary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Stephen_of_Hungary), Saint [Edward the Confessor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_the_Confessor) of England, [Saint Wenceslaus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Wenceslaus) of Bohemia, [Saint Olaf](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Olaf) of Norway and [Saint Henry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emperor_Henry_II), Holy Roman Emperor.

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| --- |
| **Neuschwanstein Castle** |
| Castle Neuschwanstein.jpgNeuschwanstein Castle in 2013, looking northeast |
| Neuschwanstein Castle is located in BavariaNeuschwanstein CastleNeuschwanstein CastleLocation within GermanyShow map of BavariaShow map of GermanyShow all |
| [https://maps.wikimedia.org/img/osm-intl,13,47.5575,10.749444444444,250x200.png?lang=en&domain=en.wikipedia.org&title=Neuschwanstein+Castle&groups=_69144d7c0ea3a9a81058ef38a73a0a9418ff4e6a](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle%22%20%5Cl%20%22/map/0)[Wikimedia](https://foundation.wikimedia.org/wiki/Maps_Terms_of_Use) | © [OpenStreetMap](https://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright) |
| **General information** |
| **Architectural style** | [Romanesque Revival](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanesque_Revival) |
| **Location** | [Hohenschwangau](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hohenschwangau), Germany |
| [**Coordinates**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geographic_coordinate_system) | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/55/WMA_button2b.png/17px-WMA_button2b.png[47°33′27″N 10°44′58″E](https://geohack.toolforge.org/geohack.php?pagename=Neuschwanstein_Castle&params=47_33_27_N_10_44_58_E_type:landmark)[Coordinates](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geographic_coordinate_system): https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/55/WMA_button2b.png/17px-WMA_button2b.png[47°33′27″N 10°44′58″E](https://geohack.toolforge.org/geohack.php?pagename=Neuschwanstein_Castle&params=47_33_27_N_10_44_58_E_type:landmark) |
| **Construction started** | 5 September 1869 |
| **Completed** | c. 1886 (opened) |
| **Owner** | [Bavarian Palace Department](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bavarian_Administration_of_State-Owned_Palaces%2C_Gardens_and_Lakes) |
| **Design and construction** |
| **Architect** | [Eduard Riedel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eduard_Riedel) |
| **Civil engineer** | Eduard Riedel, [Georg von Dollmann](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_von_Dollmann), Julius Hofmann |
| **Other designers** | [Ludwig II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwig_II_of_Bavaria), [Christian Jank](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Jank) |