

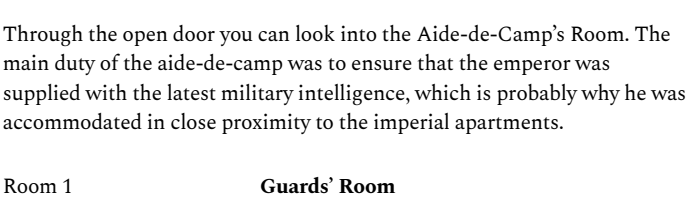
Schloss Schönbrunn

IMPERIAL LIVING

The State Rooms and Imperial Apartments on the piano nobile

Back in the 17th century, the Habsburgs had a small summer palace on this site. However, this was destroyed during the second Turkish siege of Vienna in 1683. After the defeat of the Turks, Emperor Leopold I commissioned the Austrian Baroque architect Fischer von Erlach with the construction of a hunting lodge. Fifty years later Maria Theresa had Schönbrunn remodelled in the Rococo style by her court architect Nicolaus Pacassi. Here she spent the summer months together with the court household, which numbered more than 1,500 individuals. The imperial family also contributed personally to the furnishings and decoration of some of the rooms in the palace. This is just one of the features that make the history of the palace come alive today, telling the story of the changing fashions for interior design and the everyday life of the Habsburgs. Maria Theresa’s successors also left their mark on the palace, above all her great-great grandson, Emperor Franz Joseph, who was born in the palace and died here in 1916, after a reign lasting 68 years.

When you get to the first floor, turn to the right, into the Herringbone Room. Through the window on the left you can look into a courtyard called the Grosser Kaiserhof, which is now part of the Children’s Museum. There you can find out about everyday life at the imperial court and try out some of these aspects for yourself.



Through the open door you can look into the Aide-de-Camp’s Room. The main duty of the aide-de-camp was to ensure that the emperor was supplied with the latest military intelligence, which is probably why he was accommodated in close proximity to the imperial apartments.

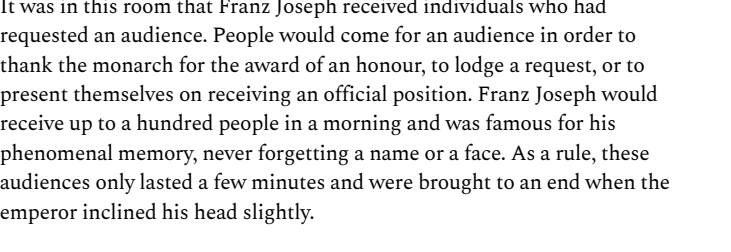
To your right is a ceramic stove, which like all the others in the palace was stoked (originally with wood) from a passage running behind the walls of the rooms, so that the imperial family was not disturbed and to reduce the amount of dirt. In the 19th century a steam heating system was installed which was in use until 1992.

Room 2 **Billiard Room**

This room served as a waiting room for people attending an audience with Emperor Franz Joseph. Imperial audiences were held twice a week. The billiard table, which belonged to Franz Joseph’s grandfather, Emperor Franz I of Austria, was used by army officers to pass the time. On the walls you can see three large paintings. The central painting depicts the first awarding of the Order of Maria Theresa in 1758. Founded by Maria Theresa, this was the monarchy’s first order of merit and one of the highest honours bestowed by the imperial dynasty. The paintings on the left and right commemorate the centennial anniversary of the order’s foundation. To mark the event, Franz Joseph gave a magnificent banquet in the Great Gallery of the palace and held a reception in the park.

Room 3 **Walnut Room**

This room gets its name from the precious walnut panelling, which together with its gilded ornamentation and the console tables belongs to the original Rococo décor from the time of Maria Theresa. The chandelier dates from the 19th century. It was in this room that Franz Joseph received individuals who had requested an audience. People would come for an audience in order to thank the monarch for the award of an honour, to lodge a request, or to present themselves on receiving an official position. Franz Joseph would receive up to a hundred people in a morning and was famous for his phenomenal memory, never forgetting a name or a face. As a rule, these audiences only lasted a few minutes and were brought to an end when the emperor inclined his head slightly.



Room 4 **Study of Emperor Franz Joseph**

Franz Joseph ascended the Austrian imperial throne when he was only eighteen. He dealt with a phenomenal amount of work each day: starting before five o’clock in the morning, he spent the day at his desk, which you can see here on the right, where he worked diligently through the files put in front of him. He even had his breakfast and lunch served to him at his desk. This was how the first public servant of his state, as he liked to describe himself, spent most of his time. The emperor was uninterested in having his rooms done up in sumptuous style. He was content to surround himself with private paintings, photographs of his family and keepsakes given to him by his children and grandchildren. One of the two large portraits shows Franz Joseph at the age of 33, while the other depicts his wife, Empress Elisabeth, who was called Sisi in the family, a name that has come to encapsulate the enduring myth of this tragic empress.

Room 5 **Bedroom of Emperor Franz Joseph**

Running to a strict schedule, the emperor’s daily routine began at four o’clock in the morning. After rising and performing his ablutions in cold water, the emperor, who was a strict Catholic, said his morning prayers kneeling on the praying stool which you can see to the left of the bed. The iron bedstead is further evidence of the emperor’s rather Spartan lifestyle. Franz Joseph died in this bed at the age of 86 in 1916, after a reign of 68 years, amidst the turmoil of the First World War. The painting on the easel shows the emperor on his deathbed. During the course of his long life, the emperor had suffered numerous blows of fate: his eldest daughter, Sophie, died at the age of two, and his brother Maximilian, emperor of Mexico, was executed by revolutionaries. This was followed by the tragic suicide of his only son, Rudolf, and the assassination of Empress Elisabeth by an Italian anarchist. At the exit to this room, on the left-hand side after the door, is the emperor’s lavatory. It was installed for Franz Joseph „on the English system“ in 1899.

The next three rooms belonged to the suite occupied by Empress Elisabeth.

The Stairs Cabinet was used by Empress Elisabeth as her study, where she kept up her extensive correspondence and wrote her diaries and her poetry. From here a spiral staircase, which was removed after the fall of the monarchy, led down to the empress’s private apartments on the ground floor.

The Dressing Room is devoted to the beauty regime of the empress. Elisabeth was considered to be one of the most beautiful women of her time, and was well aware of this. Her beauty regime and sporting activities to preserve her slender figure dominated the empress’s daily routine, with the care of her magnificent ankle-length hair occupying several hours a day.

Please go through this room and enter Room 9, the Bedroom of Franz Joseph and Elisabeth.

Room 9 **Bedroom of Emperor Franz Joseph and Empress Elisabeth**

In 1854 Franz Joseph married his cousin Elisabeth, who was just sixteen years old at the time. This room was furnished and decorated as their bedroom on the occasion of their wedding. Franz Joseph worshipped his wife all his life. Whether this affection was returned to the same degree remains a matter of speculation. Elisabeth rejected the rigid etiquette of court life from the very beginning and over the course of the years developed into a self-confident woman. She led an independent life, travelling extensively, and in later life was rarely to be seen in Vienna. In September 1898, at the age of 61, Elisabeth was stabbed to death with a file by the Italian anarchist Luigi Lucheni in Geneva.

Room 10 **Salon of Empress Elisabeth**

The atmosphere of this room, which served Elisabeth as a reception room, is determined by the white and gold panelling, pale silk wall hangings and the sumptuous Neo-Rococo furniture. The clock in front of the mirror has a second mirror-image face so that it can also be read in the reflection.

Room 11 **Marie Antoinette Room**

This room was used as the family dining room. Imperial family dinners followed strict court ceremonial, and the table was always festively set with gilded centrepieces decorated with flowers, fruit and sweetmeats. At official dinners French cuisine was served, but for family dinners Franz Joseph preferred traditional Viennese dishes such as schnitzel, beef goulash, boiled fillet of beef or the famous “Kaiserschmarren” (shredded sweet pancakes with raisins). In order to keep the food warm and fresh, it was transported from the wing containing the court kitchens to the imperial apartments in heated boxes and kept warm in an adjoining room in warming ovens fuelled by coal and, later on, gas. The emperor sat at the centre of the table, with the empress opposite him on the rare occasions she was present. As Elisabeth often fasted in order to preserve her slender figure she seldom attended family meals. Family dinners usually began at six o’clock in the evening and consisted of three to six courses. The dining service on the table has been loaned by the Imperial Silver Collection in the Vienna Hofburg, where a wealth of treasures in porcelain and silver is exhibited. The exhibits include the gold cutlery and condiment set of Maria Theresa as well as the personal service of Empress Elisabeth, among many other fascinating objects.

Room 12 **Children’s Room**

The Children’s Room is decorated with portraits of Maria Theresa’s daughters. Most of her eleven daughters were married off at a young age for political reasons. On the left just beside the door is the portrait of Marie Christine, Maria Theresa’s favourite daughter. The only one of her daughters allowed to marry for love, her husband was Albert of Saxony-Teschen, the founder of the Albertina. Here you can look into the bathroom which was installed for Zita, the last Habsburg empress, in 1917.

Before exiting this room you can look into the Breakfast Cabinet. The appliqué work in the medallions decorating the walls was executed by Elisabeth Christine, the mother of Maria Theresa.

Room 14 **Yellow Salon**

The Yellow Salon is the first room in the apartments on the side of the palace facing the gardens. It contains remarkable pastel paintings by the Genevan artist Liotard showing realistic depictions of children from middle class families. They contrast starkly with the typical courtly portraits of Maria Theresa’s children, examples of which you can see in the next room. There you can also see a portrait of Maria Theresa as Queen of Hungary by the court painter Martin van Meytens.

Room 16 **Hall of Mirrors**

The Mirrors Room was used for family celebrations during Maria Theresa’s reign, among other occasions for small concerts. In 1762 this room saw the first concert given by the six-year-old Mozart before the empress. After the performance, according to his proud father, “Wolferl jumped onto her majesty’s lap, threw his arms around her neck and smothered her with kisses”.

Rooms 17, 18, 19 **Rosa Rooms**

Like the two following rooms, this room is named after Joseph Rosa, the painter of the landscapes that hang here. The first painting to the left of the door you have just come through depicts the Habichtsburg in Aargau in Switzerland, which is the ancestral seat of the Habsburg dynasty. Here you can see a portrait of Emperor Franz I, Franz Stephan of Lorraine. Following skilful political manoeuvring by his wife Maria Theresa he was elected and crowned Holy Roman Emperor at Frankfurt in 1745. Maria Theresa ruled over the Habsburg Crown Lands while Franz Stephan, in addition to his imperial duties, devoted himself to the natural sciences and financial affairs. The painting shows him with objects from his collections which attest to his interests in art, history and the natural sciences.

Rooms 21, 22 **Great and Small Galleries**

You are now in the Great Gallery, which was used by the imperial family for balls, receptions and banquets. More than 40 metres long and almost ten metres wide, the Great Gallery formed the ideal setting for festive events at court. Decorated with crystal glass mirrors, gilt stuccowork and ceiling frescos, it represents a sumptuous example of Rococo art. The frescos are by the Italian painter Gregorio Guglielmi and represent a glorification of Maria Theresa’s rule. In the central fresco we see Franz Stephan and Maria Theresa enthroned and surrounded by the personifications of a ruler’s virtues together with allegories of the Crown Lands of the monarchy. The two large carved and gilded wooden chandeliers used to take 70 candles each before the palace was electrified in 1901. Since the end of the monarchy the Great Gallery has been used for concerts. In 1961 it was also the setting for the historic encounter between President Kennedy and the Soviet premier Khrushchev.

The adjoining Small Gallery lies on the side of the palace facing the gardens. It was used for name day and birthday celebrations and offers a wonderful view of the park and the Gloriette, which was built during Maria Theresa’s reign on the crest of the hill opposite the palace. During recent restoration work the Small Gallery had its original 19th-century glossy white finish restored.

Rooms 23, 24 **Chinese Round and Oval Cabinets**

Rooms known as the Chinese Cabinets flank the Small Gallery: on the left is the Oval Chinese Cabinet and on the right, the Round Chinese Cabinet. Maria Theresa was extremely fond of the contemporary fashion for Chinese and Japanese art. In both cabinets precious Chinese lacquer panels are set into the white wooden wainscoting. Their gilt frames develop into little consoles supporting examples of blue and white porcelain. The parquet flooring of both rooms with its ornate inlay work is also remarkable. The two cabinets served as rooms for playing cards and as conference rooms. Maria Theresa used the Round Chinese Cabinet for secret state conferences and meetings with her state chancellor Prince Kaunitz.

Room 25	Carousel Room
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The Carousel Room owes its name to the large oil painting hanging on the left. It depicts the Ladies' Carousel held by Maria Theresa in the Winter Riding School of the Hofburg in 1743 to mark the recapturing of Prague in the War of the Austrian Succession. This Winter Riding School, today known as the Spanish Riding School, is still the setting for performances by the famous Lipizzan stallions. Here Maria Theresa rides on a Lipizzaner at the centre of the picture, followed by her ladies-in-waiting. To the left is a portrait of Maria Theresa's father, Emperor Charles VI, wearing a sumptuous Spanish coat-dress.

Room 26	Hall of Ceremonies
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During the reign of Maria Theresa the Hall of Ceremonies was used for smaller ceremonial festivities and to celebrate occasions such as christenings or weddings. The cycle of paintings hanging in this room depicts the wedding celebrations held on the occasion of the marriage of Maria Theresa's eldest son and heir, Joseph, to the Bourbon princess Isabella of Parma. The cycle includes what is probably the most well-known portrait of the monarch depicting her as the "First Lady of Europe" in a sumptuous gown of Brabant bobbin lace.

To the left, the largest of these paintings shows the bridal procession with a train of 98 carriages. All the wedding guests, which included the entire high aristocracy of Europe, can be identified by the coats of arms on their carriages.

The paintings on the right-hand wall depict the court banquet and the dinner in the state rooms of the Hofburg, while those on the opposite side of the room show the wedding ceremony in the Augustinerkirche and an operatic serenade in the Grand Ballroom of the Hofburg. The paintings are chiefly remarkable for their detailed and faithful depiction of buildings, people, their clothing and even the tableware.

In the painting that hangs beside the door to the next room there is a special detail. The child you can see there is the young Mozart. He was however not invited to the wedding celebrations as these took place in 1760, when he was only four and still living in Salzburg. The paintings took several years to be completed, during which time Mozart had become famous all over Europe, the reason why he was later included in this painting.

Room 28	Blue Chinese Salon
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The Blue Chinese Salon was decorated with these 18th-century handpainted rice-paper wall hangings at the beginning of the 19th century. This room was the setting for the historic negotiations that culminated in the renunciation by Karl I, the last emperor of Austria, of participation in the affairs of government on November 11th 1918. The following day saw the proclamation of the Republic of Austria, marking the end of more than six centuries of Habsburg rule. However, since Karl refused to abdicate from the throne, he and his family were forced to go into exile. He died on the island of Madeira in 1922, aged only 35; his wife Zita lived until 1989 and was buried in the imperial crypt as the last empress of Austria.

Room 29	Vieux-Laque Room
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The Vieux-Laque Room was remodelled by Maria Theresa as a memorial room to her beloved husband, Franz Stephan, who died unexpectedly in 1765. Black lacquer panels from Peking were set into the walnut wainscoting and embellished with gold frames. After Franz Stephan's death, Maria Theresa wore mourning for the rest of her life. A note was found in the empress's prayer book after her death on which she had noted the length of her happy marriage, right down to the precise number of hours.

Maria Theresa also commissioned three paintings for this room: in the middle is a portrait of Franz Stephan by Pompeo Batoni, who also painted the double portrait of Joseph II and his brother Leopold which was done in Rome in 1769. On the table in front of Joseph, who is standing on the right, lies a copy of Montesquieu's *Esprit des lois*, one of the key works of the Enlightenment. The ideas of the Enlightenment underlay all the young emperor's endeavours and reforms.

Room 30	Napoleon Room
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The Napoleon Room recalls the French emperor, who resided in this room – once the bedroom of Maria Theresa – both times he occupied Vienna, in 1805 and 1809. The marriage of Napoleon to Marie Louise, daughter of Emperor Franz II in 1810 was intended to cement the peace between the two rulers. After the fall of Napoleon, Marie Louise returned with her son to the court at Vienna for the time being. As a result of the Congress of Vienna held from 1814 to 1815 she was eventually given the Duchy of Parma – but only on condition that she left her son, the Duke of Reichstadt, in Vienna. The European powers insisted that, as the only son of Napoleon, little "Prince Franzi", as he was called at court, was to remain politically insignificant and to grow up in isolation at the Viennese court under the guardianship of his grandfather. In keeping with family tradition, like all male Habsburgs he learnt a trade. The painting in front of you shows him as a little gardener. On the console table you can see his beloved pet, a crested lark. Napoleon's son died from tuberculosis in 1832, aged only 21. The bust shows him on his deathbed.

In the **Porcelain Room** (Room 31) that follows we again return to the time of Maria Theresa, who used this small room as a study and for playing games of cards. The carved wooden framing, painted blue and white to imitate porcelain, covers the walls entirely up to the ceiling. Set into this carving is a total of 213 pen-and-ink drawings which were executed by Franz Stephan and some of his children, including Marie Christine, who is portrayed in one of the portrait medallions. She was the empress's favourite daughter and was the only one of her children who was allowed to marry the man she loved, Duke Albert of Saxony-Teschen.

Room 32	Millions Room
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You are now in one of the most valuable rooms in the palace, known as the Millions Room. It owes its name to the wall panelling made of an extremely rare type of rosewood into which are set Indo-Persian miniatures. Depicting scenes from the private and court life of the Mogul rulers in 16th-century India, they were cut up by members of the imperial family and reassembled to form new images in a sort of collage. The Millions Room also features a typical example of the playful spirit of the Baroque age, when optical illusions were very popular: crystal mirrors are hung on both sides of the room, reflecting one another and creating the illusion of infinite space.

Room 33	Gobelin Salon
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Both the walls and the armchairs in this room are covered in Brussels tapestry dating from the 18th century. The tapestries on the walls depict market and harbour scenes while the chairs display tapestries representing the twelve months of the year.

The following room, which was the **study of Archduchess Sophie** (Room 34) was part of the apartments of Franz Joseph's parents, Archduke Franz Karl and Archduchess Sophie, who resided here in the 19th century. Sophie was an ambitious mother who energetically and successfully pursued her aim of putting her son on the Habsburg throne. She was also his most important political advisor – contemporaries described the archduchess as the "only man at the Viennese court". Her relations with her daughter-in-law, Empress Elisabeth, who was also her niece, were tense, and she was one of the main reasons why Sisi always felt ill at ease at the Viennese court. Elisabeth frequently complained about the way her mother-in-law constantly kept her in check, treating her as if she were child.

Room 35	Red Salon
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The portraits in this room show the emperors from the end of the 18th century, starting with Maria Theresa's son Leopold II, who followed Joseph II on the throne. Beside him is his son Franz, the last Holy Roman Emperor. In 1806, under pressure from the military victories won by Napoleon, he dissolved the Holy Roman Empire and proclaimed the Empire of Austria. Thus Franz II became the first emperor of Austria as Franz I. Following the Habsburg tradition of pursuing alliances by marriage to acquire influence and territory rather than by waging war, he married his eldest daughter Marie Louise to Napoleon, and his second daughter Leopoldine to the emperor of Brazil. Her portrait is displayed here on the easel. The other portraits show Emperor Ferdinand and his wife Maria Anna. Ferdinand was the eldest son of Emperor Franz and was popularly known by the affectionate nickname of "Ferdinand the Kind-hearted". He was epileptic and incapable of ruling. The real ruler of the Austrian monarchy during that period was State Chancellor Metternich, who was known as the "coachman of Europe" for the way he controlled European policy with his skilful diplomatic manoeuvrings.

Room 37	Rich Room
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The Rich Room is named in allusion to the only surviving bed of state from the Viennese court. It was made at the time of Maria Theresa's wedding and originally stood in her private apartments in the Vienna Hofburg. The wall hangings with embroidered architectural elements also belong to this bed of state with its draperies of red velvet embellished by gold and silver embroidery.

Room 38	Study of Archduke Franz Karl
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Together with the adjoining salon, this room was part of the suite occupied by Archduke Franz Karl, the father of Franz Joseph, in the 19th century. The paintings take us back once again to the reign of Maria Theresa. The famous family portrait by Martin van Meytens shows Emperor Franz Stephan and Maria Theresa surrounded by their offspring. The imperial couple had 16 children – eleven daughters and five sons – of whom eleven survived into adulthood. Missing from the painting are two children who were born later and three who had already died. One of the main duties of a ruling family was to produce as many heirs to the throne as possible in order to ensure the continuation of the dynasty. Opposite the family portrait are likenesses of the women who played an important role in the life of Maria Theresa. To the right of the mirror is her mother, Elisabeth Christine, and on the left is Countess Fuchs, once the governess and later the close confidante of the monarch. As an expression of her attachment Maria Theresa had her buried in the imperial tomb in the crypt of the Church of the Capuchin Friars, the only non-Habsburg to be accorded this honour.

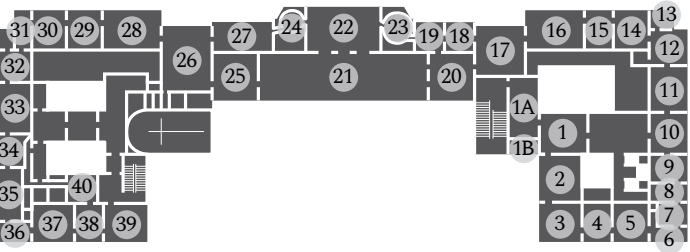
Room 40	Hunting Room
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The Habsburgs were passionately fond of hunting and shooting. On the left-hand side of the room you can see portraits of Maria Theresa's parents, Charles VI and his wife Elisabeth Christine, in hunting costume; between them is Franz Stephan, later husband of Maria Theresa, as a boy. Franz Joseph was also famous for his passion for shooting; even as a child he shot sparrows and pigeons in the park at Schönbrunn. One of the paintings shows Schönbrunn in its earlier form as the hunting lodge designed by Fischer von Erlach.

You have now arrived in the last room on your tour. Thank you for visiting Schönbrunn Palace. We would be pleased to welcome you to Schönbrunn Zoo, as well as to the collections at the Imperial Furniture Museum, the Sisi Museum with the Imperial Apartments and the Imperial Silver Collection in the Vienna Hofburg. Information on all these attractions is available from the information desk.

Good bye!

Ground plan of the first floor of the main palace building



- 1 Guards' Room
- 1A Herringbone Room
- 1B Aide-de-Camp's Room
- 2 Billiard Room
- 3 Walnut Room
- 4 Study of Emperor Franz Joseph
- 5 Bedroom of Emperor Franz Joseph
- 6 Western Terrace Cabinet
- 7 Stairs Cabinet
- 8 Dressing Room
- 9 Bedroom of Emperor Franz Joseph and Empress Elisabeth
- 10 Salon of Empress Elisabeth
- 11 Marie Antoinette Room
- 12 Children's Room
- 13 Breakfast Cabinet
- 14 Yellow Salon
- 15 Balcony Room
- 16 Hall of Mirrors
- 17 Large Rosa Room
- 18 Second Small Rosa Room
- 19 First Small Rosa Room
- 20 Lantern Room
- 21 Great Gallery
- 22 Small Gallery
- 23 Round Chinese Cabinet
- 24 Oval Chinese Cabinet
- 25 Carousel Room
- 26 Hall of Ceremonies
- 27 Horses' Room
- 28 Blue Chinese Salon
- 29 Vieux-Laque Room
- 30 Napoleon Room
- 31 Porcelain Room
- 32 Millions Room
- 33 Gobelin Salon
- 34 Study of Archduchess Sophie
- 35 Red Salon
- 36 Eastern Terrace Cabinet
- 37 Rich Room
- 38 Study of Archduke Franz Karl
- 39 Salon of Archduke Franz Karl
- 40 Hunting Room

