

...the Castle



A magnificent castle, a diva, poised above the water

The castle in Schwerin is omnipresent. It attracts attention to itself from all directions. The monolithic, **polyaxial circular structure composed of eleven storeys and six wings** rises up majestically. The tremendous richness of detail makes the edifice with its 635 rooms appear graceful and light at the same time. Embellished with a myriad of towers and turrets stretching towards the sky, **crowned by golden cupolas and sparkling merlons**. The facades are gracefully and trenchantly broken up by numerous windows, alcoves, columns, bay windows, balustrades, ornaments and figures.

Text modules on Schwerin Castle			
	Content	Text	Number of characters
Mini summary	Exterior and surroundings	Its myriad of towers and turrets crowned by golden cupolas and sparkling merlons, lends the former princely residence the appearance of a veritable fairytale castle.	165
	Architecture, style	When developing the old castle, Friedrich Franz II. deliberately chose the historicising style of neo-Renaissance, thus demonstrating the continual reign of his noble family since the Middle Ages.	196
	Architecture, style	With its essentially unmodified architecture until the present day, Schwerin Castle, both inside and out, epitomises the culture of royal seats and is Europe's last quintessential courtly structure of distinction.	214
Short summary	Exterior and surroundings	Its myriad of towers and turrets crowned by golden cupolas and sparkling merlons, lends the former princely residence the appearance of a veritable fairytale castle, which is reflected in Lake Schwerin, sometimes in daylight, other times in crimson hues, always a sight of majestic beauty.	289
	Architecture, builder, style	When developing the old castle, Friedrich Franz II. deliberately chose the historicising style of neo-Renaissance with an abundance of gold and embellishments, and incorporated fortified relicts, such as the old bastions. In doing so, he demonstrated the continual reign of his noble family since the Middle Ages.	313

	History of the castle up to the present day	<p>Erected on the remains of a Slavic island castle, the former royal seat bears witness to a history stretching back almost one thousand years. Once home to the princely family from the Wends and the noble House of Welf, the structure has now been the seat of the state parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern since 1990.</p> <p>Optional follow-on text</p> <p>Like a history book for the development of Mecklenburg, Germany and Europe, the castle is a witness of the past for all political and cultural eras stretching from the Middle Ages right up to the modern age.</p>	317
	<p>Interior rooms and museum</p> <p>Uniquely designed Throne Apartments</p>	<p>The interior boasts perfectly designed state rooms and lounges, the opulently appointed Throne Room, the gallery of palatial castles and ancestors, a unique collection of porcelain objects, the silver chamber as well as the collection of ducal hunting and ceremonial weapons.</p> <p>Optional follow-on text:</p> <p>A tour through the rooms is like an expedition through the history of the region, through the history of the Mecklenburg Dynasty and through the culture of the monarchies of Europe.</p> <p>The Schwerin Throne Apartments belong to the State Museum and are open to visitors.</p>	208
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Longer summary	Appearance, surroundings, general	Schwerin Castle leaves a lasting impression on the viewer as the most significant architectural creation of romantic historicism – on the one hand due to its innumerable turrets, cupolas, bay windows, balustrades and ornaments, and, on the other, on account of its unique location and the exquisitely designed surroundings. It is resplendent among the museum, theatre, the prestigious buildings “Kollegiengebäude”, “Altes Palais” and “Neustädtisches Palais” and manicured parks, nestled in Lake Schwerin.	504
	Architecture, builder, style	In the middle of the 19 th century, Grand Duke Paul Friedrich sought to replace the outdated complex with a new building within sight. However, the foundations had only just been completed when the Duke died. His son, Grand Duke Friedrich Franz II., halted the construction work and instead expanded the old castle. While his contemporaries were going down new paths in terms of architecture, he deliberately chose the historicising style of neo-Renaissance and, by doing so, demonstrated the continual reign of his noble family since the Middle Ages.	550
	Master builders	Optional follow-on text: Several star architects of that time were involved in the construction project, including Georg Adolph Demmler and Gottfried Semper. The royal court moved into the complex in 1857. The building, which today houses the State Museum, was erected on the foundations of the planned new castle.	289
More text modules	Appearance, surroundings	The castle in Schwerin is omnipresent. It attracts attention to itself from all directions. The massive, polyaxial circular structure composed of eleven storeys and six wings rises up majestically. The tremendous richness of detail makes the edifice with its 635 rooms appear graceful and light at the same time. Embellished with a myriad of towers and turrets stretching towards the sky, crowned by golden cupolas and sparkling merlons. The facades are gracefully and trenchantly broken up by numerous windows, alcoves, columns, bay windows, balustrades, ornaments and figures.	578

	Architectural style, history	The palatial castle had its heyday in the middle of the 19th century. And this was the era of the Romantic period, revolution and historicism.	142
	Appearance, builder, history, style	It is not without coincidence that the circular shape and the towers of the castle are evocative of a fortified castle. In doing so, the last great master builder – Grand Duke Friedrich Franz II. – expresses his power and his will to defend it. After all, his roots, like the foundations of the building, date back to the Slavic period. For 1,000 years, the complex has served as a political centre of the coastal region – from paganism to the period of the Grand Dukes through to today's seat of the regional government.	522
	Interiors	Inside too, Schwerin Castle is deemed a prime example of the lordly display of splendour. With its perfectly designed state rooms and lounges, the palatial castle was geared towards etiquette from the cellars to its cupolas.	225
	Interiors, castle museum, effect on the visitor	Guests are awestruck by the richly appointed rooms. They had already marvelled at the castle poised above the lake, its golden roofs and the colourful gardens on their arrival. Then they walked past a row of monarchs. Entering the Throne Room, they were then dazzled. The hall-like room is expansive and makes people appear small. The only person to sit here was the ruler, namely on the opposite side. The way there was long and was followed by many pairs of eyes. Even if the sovereign did not appear by the grace of God, he was still always present with his consort in the form of two official portraits.	607
	Interiors, the last heyday of courtly life a lost era/ culture	The staging of state policy culminated in the opulently appointed Throne Room as the centre of the region. Artistically laid panel parquet and extravagant décor on the walls and ceilings, velvet and stucco – everything exudes grand ducal dignity. Allegorical sculptures and paintings celebrate the sovereign virtues and the region with its towns and lines of businesses. The sovereign palatial castles and the portraits of all of the dukes of Mecklenburg are displayed in the galleries in the anteroom.	911

		The interconnected décor is well matched in a suggestive manner and geared entirely towards ceremonial aspects. In the 19th century, such throne apartments were part of any royal seat of distinction. However, it is only in Schwerin that they have been preserved in their entirety and in their original state. The palatial castle is thus home to a unique witness of the last heyday of courtly life in Europe.	
	Surroundings, town, parade ground	An important architectural space of the prestigious Schwerin ensemble is defined by the Old Garden. The central square of the town and the state remains fully preserved until today and is dominated by the buildings of the royal court and public administration. In contrast to similar squares in other towns, it has been perfectly preserved.	341
	Description, poetic, exterior, location	This prima donna stands on a small island in the enormous Lake Schwerin, amid a sea of flowers. As the ducal palace takes up virtually the whole of the island, one would like to imagine it is only supported by the waves. And so the diva is poised above the town, the lake and the rest of the region wearing a flowing cloak and a golden crown.	343
	Description, poetic, exterior, location	This beauty likes to see itself from all sides in the reflection of the sparkling water, with an exaggerated sense of self-importance and admiration. In the sunshine and equally in the moonlight. At times it is shrouded in thick wafts of mist up to its hips, making its towers appear to flow into the sky in ethereal fashion. Then it is bathed in the sunset glow of the lake. This reflection is, of course, a deliberately planned part of the eminently magnificent staging of the castle.	486
	Builder, architectural history	The complex, which had been continually added to, was no longer in keeping with the times and was to be replaced by a new, nearby building. However, just as the foundations had been completed, the duke died. His son, Grand Duke Friedrich Franz II., halted the construction work and instead expanded the old castle.	314

	Builder, architectural history, master builders	The master builders Georg Adolph Demmler and Hermann Willebrand from Schwerin submitted several blueprints for the ambitious project. Ideas were also contributed by Friedrich August Stüler, the senior government building officer of the Kingdom of Prussia, the academy professor Gottfried Semper from Dresden and the master builder of cathedrals Ernst Friedrich Zwirner from Cologne. In doing so, the Grand Duke enlisted the services of the architectural elite of his time. The construction work took 14 years to complete. Even the 1848/49 Revolution could not put a stop to the work. The royal court took up residence there in 1857.	632
	History, contemporary witness	The castle is thus not just an ancient building of historic importance, full of animation and spirit. It also symbolises the pomp and circumstance of one of the oldest European dynasties. The breath of royal history drifts through its walls. It illustrates the political and cultural development of an entire continent in authentic fashion.	340
	Architectural style, stately homes	The majority of the stately homes erected in the historicising style of architecture in the 19th century were hunting and pleasure lodges or private retreats. They did not play any leading part in the field of politics. The affairs of state took place in the royal palaces. One of the few royal palaces of that time was erected in Schwerin. Probably even its most magnificent and its most consistent.	400
	Art gallery "Alter Garten", State Museum	The gallery building is reminiscent of a Greek temple. On one hand, an Ionic portico is indicative of the classical educational establishment for the acquisition and development of knowledge and, on the other, it distinguishes the house as a sovereign structure which is part of the castle ensemble. In 1882, the new museum building was opened, which was ground-breaking in terms of its engineering. In Germany it is among the best preserved museums from the 19th century. An almost unique feature is that the original purpose of the building remains virtually unchanged until this day. The international, top-class collections in an architectural monument are a synthesis of the arts and one of Germany's most notable museums. The plans and design were provided by Hermann Willebrand. (see Museum in the chapter "Culture")	785

	Entertainment of the Dukes, State Theatre	The neighbouring State Theatre was inaugurated in 1886. The exterior of the prestigious building gives the appearance of a villa from the Italian High Renaissance period. The interior reveals numerous baroque shapes and décor. When it came to the stage and technology, the building boasted state-of-the-art equipment – for instance electric light from its own power system. The columns along the front of the building relate to the castle and the lake on the opposite side. After extensive restoration work, the interior furnishings are now once more fit for grand dukes. (see Theatre in the chapter “Culture”)	572
	History of the castle until far into the Middle Ages	In the year 965, the Arab merchant Ibrāhīm ibn Ya‘qūb travelled the region to the east of the Lower Elbe. In his notes he described a Slavic island castle being constructed in an enormous lake. In the following centuries reference was always made to this transmission and to this origin of the castle and the lord of the manor. It was not until the 1970s that conclusive evidence manifested itself. In the inner courtyard archaeologists actually came across a ring-shaped castle mound. Tests carried out provide incredibly accurate confirmation: the trees used had been cut down between 962 and 974. What a sensation. It is possible to trace back from further written documents and archaeological finds that the respective lords appreciated the outstanding strategic location and always operated a fortress here. In doing so, they continually expanded the complex and added more and more prestigious elements.	908



Classicism and modernism meet each other in many different ways, abounding in charm. Schwerin can justifiably be described as the cultural capital of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. And this position has been held for many hundreds of years now. Art and culture, in particular, were furthered at the ducal seat.

Schwerin State Museum is among the most significant museums in Germany. In particular, with the internationally renowned top-class collection of Dutch paintings as well as the works of Jean-Baptiste Oudry and Marcel Duchamp. Much of it originates from the legacy of the dukes, while other pieces are of a contemporary nature. In 2013, for instance, the gallery acquired a collection of art pieces by Günther Uecker, which provides a comprehensive reflection of his work and is one of a kind in Germany.

Mecklenburg State Theatre is among those with the most visitors in Germany. And one that is steeped in history. Following restoration work carried out in compliance with regulations for listed buildings, the magnificent building once more stands out with its grand-ducal aura, lavishly decorated with gold and velvet. The programme includes opera, musicals, theatrical performances, ballet and concerts. The latter is predominantly provided by the music ensemble **Mecklenburgische Staatskapelle Schwerin**. First formed over 450 years ago, it is one of the oldest orchestras in the world.

In the summer months the ensemble performs major operas right on the doorstep, so to speak. Each year it delights tens of thousands of visitors with the festival productions **Schlossfestspiele Schwerin** on the enchantingly beautiful site between the theatre, castle, gallery and lake. The opulent performances with spectacular stage effects, with top-class soloists and large choirs have long since earned themselves a permanent position among the top-ranking, prestigious opera festivals on an international level.

Concerts of the festival productions **Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern** as well as those on the Ladegast organ in the cathedral are also among the highlights of the Schwerin classical season.

The **Schweriner Kultur- und Gartensommer** lures guests with exquisite cultural offers and wonderful entertainment. Visitors to the three-day castle festival **Schlossfest** are taken on a journey through time to experience the history of this location. Culinary delights are served by **GourmetGarten** in the romantic castle garden.

In May the **Filmkunstfest MV** presents new films and a large number of celebrities. The autumn is enriched by the literature event **Schweriner Literaturtage** and the **Christmas market** provides a touch of solace from the winter blues. In addition, multifaceted cultural events offer a wide range of entertainment from jazz to rock, from smaller-scale performing arts through to arts and crafts, from markets to galleries.

Stately homes, gardens and art collections of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Schwerin State Museum (Staatliches Museum Schwerin)

Schwerin State Museum accommodates one of the **highest rated collections** of Dutch and Flemish paintings of the 17th to 18th centuries, set up by the dukes of Mecklenburg. They acquired works of **world-famous masters** such as Rubens, Rembrandt, Jan Brueghel the Elder and Frans Hals. One **particular treasure** is the Sentry by Carel Fabritius.

This perhaps most notable Rembrandt student founded Delft Light-painting and left behind just 13 paintings.

Since 2013, a further 155 paintings **donated by Christoph Müller** have aided visitors in experiencing for themselves in more vivid fashion the variety of the masters, styles and eras. Schwerin's reference collection of Dutch paintings is thus regarded as one of the most significant **on an international level**.

The basis of the collection was acquired by Duke Christian Ludwig II. (1683-1756). Over 400 small- and medium-format works of exquisite quality provide differentiated insights into the multifacetedness and wide range of subject matter of the "Golden Age" of Dutch painting. The painters Willem van Aelst, Gerard Dou, Paulus Potter, Adriaen van Ostade, Ludolf Backhuysen, Jan Davidsz de Heem and Jan van Huysum are also represented in the collection with several of their works. Schwerin also boasts some outstanding individual pieces such as the Ice Scene by Hendrick Avercamp, Woman at a Harpsichord by Frans van Mieris the Elder, the Lovesick Maiden by Jan Steen and the two brilliant Boys' Heads by Frans Hals. The Old Man's Head by Jan Lievens is also remarkable. Over 80 still-life paintings ranging from the Haarlem Breakfast Still Life to magnificent flower arrangements of the early 18th century are a highlight of the collection. Names including Simon de Vlieger and Ludolf Backhuysen are representative of Dutch marine painting.

Schwerin owns the **largest collection worldwide** of the French animal painter Jean-Baptiste Oudry with 34 paintings and 43 freehand drawings. *The series of exotic animals originally painted for the Royal Botanical Gardens in Paris is now on display once more following restoration work at the Getty Museum Los Angeles, including the famous Clara the Rhinoceros.*

English portrait art of the 18th century is represented by the splendid full portrait of the Mecklenburg Princess and the English Queen Charlotte from the studio of Thomas Gainsborough. A **Winter Landscape by the Romanticist Caspar David Friedrich from Western Pomerania** is one example of works from the 19th century. The 19th and 20th centuries are represented in Schwerin by artists such as Pablo Picasso, Max Liebermann, Lovis Corinth, Franz von Stuck, Lyonel Feininger, Alexej von Jawlensky and Max Beckmann.

The Schwerin Marcel Duchamp collection comprises a total of 90 pieces, including ready-mades, sculptures, graphic art, poster and book designs as well as two versions of his **famous Box in a Suitcase**. Schwerin prides itself in being one of the few places in Europe where works of Marcel Duchamp are on display.

The Duchamp set is complemented by works of related artists such as Sigmar Polke, John Cage, Marcel Broodthaers, Nam June Paik, Ben Vautier, François Morellet, Rachel Whiteread, Daniel Spoerri and Icke Winzer.

Among the most recent works are examples of Mecklenburg landscape painting, fifteen bronze sculptures by Ernst Barlach and paintings from the German Democratic Republic. Pieces of contemporary art have also been added to the collection.

In 2013, the gallery acquired a **collection of art pieces by Günther Uecker**, which reflects his work in comprehensive fashion. As of 2016, all of the works have been displayed in the new annexe.

Günther Uecker is among the outstanding German artists who enjoy an international reputation. The collection fits in here so well as the relief-like nail paintings have their roots in the Mecklenburg landscape.

The most extensive inventory of the museum is the special collection of copperplate engravings. Selected freehand drawings and prints from the 16th to 20th centuries are regularly presented in special exhibitions. The collections of arts and crafts comprise approximately ten thousand objects, including porcelain artwork, predominantly from the Meissen factory, ceramics, glass, gold and silversmith work, furniture, weapons as well as coins and medals. A selection of art and craft pieces is on display in the stately homes in Schwerin, Ludwigslust and Güstrow.

The range of offers of the museum is regularly enhanced by means of a **multifaceted concept of temporary exhibitions**, whereby special attention is given to contemporary art and references to the history of the region.

In addition to refreshments, the museum café offers a large selection of catalogues, books, prints, art cards, ceramics, porcelain, jewellery, glass, design, textiles and toys in impressive museum architecture of the late 19th century. Since 2014, the museum has been the first art museum in Germany to offer an **adventure room for children** providing various offerings in line with each exhibition.

Children can get creative and experience art for themselves, with opportunities for drawing, building, stamping and sticking. They feel unknown objects, make pencil lines produce sounds or venture a glimpse of infinity. All of the offerings are prepared to match the respective temporary exhibition and to suit the ages of the children. The workshop character of the adventure room provides a great deal of distinct ideas and stimulation for any child aged between 5 and 10 years. Parents can watch, join in or continue their tour.

The museum also offers an audio guide for children and a special book designed for inclusion for the blind and visually impaired featuring tactile 3D representations of the most important elements of the composition and an audio CD. On Thursdays the museum stays open longer than usual. The RENDEZVOUS series offers readings, concerts, film premieres, discussions with artists and guided tours from 6 o'clock in the evening.

Mecklenburg State Theatre

The building, which provides the backdrop for five kinds of stage entertainment, has several locations offering an **extensive programme** with operas, operettas, musicals, theatrical performances, ballet, concerts, drama in Low German dialect and puppet theatre. With around 20,000 visitors per season, it is among the **most popular** theatres in Germany as a whole.

The large building located opposite the castle opened in 1886. After restoration work carried out in line with the regulations for listed buildings, this opulent structure once again captivates the observer with its grand-ducal aura, with an abundance of gold and velvet, exquisite parquet flooring and magnificent chandeliers, with a box for private viewing by the dukes and opulent foyers. However, the 540 comfortable theatre seats mean there is no need for the guests to forgo modern-day conveniences. **Dramatic arts** have had a long tradition in Schwerin. In 1753, it was here that Conrad Ekhof, a colleague of Lessing in Hamburg and who went down in history as the “father of German thespianism”, founded the first German acting school, which was revived by Lucie Höflich after World War II. This great tradition was carried on in GDR times in the extraordinarily successful theatre period from 1974 to 1989 with Christoph Schroth as theatrical director: With the almost 6-hour-long “Faust I and II” and the “Discoveries of the Ancient World” Schwerin becomes a place of pilgrimage for theatre enthusiasts from all over Germany and also beyond its borders.

The theatrical ensemble mastered German reunification in splendid fashion, as most recently demonstrated by the invitation extended to Herbert Fritsch’s staging of “The Beaver Coat” to appear at the “Theatertreffen” festival in Berlin in 2011.

The other major line of tradition is the music theatre **Musiktheater** and the Mecklenburg State Music Ensemble **Mecklenburgische Staatskapelle Schwerin**. It celebrated its 450th anniversary in 2013, thus making it one of the oldest orchestras in the world. It was headed by the composer Friedrich von Flotow for many years. Richard Wagner paid a visit to Schwerin in 1873 and engaged the services of artists here for his first Bayreuth Festivals. The cultural life of the royal seat of Schwerin was characterised by lavish opera performances and they were a flagship for the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg. Among the guest conductors and virtuosos are illustrious names such as Johann Fischer, Johann Wilhelm Hertel, Antonio Rosetti, Felix Mendelssohn, Johannes Brahms, Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy and Camille Saint-Saëns. After 1945, the general music directors included Kurt Masur, Klaus Tennstedt and Hartmut Haenchen.

The second location is the **E-Werk**, beautifully situated on the northern banks of the Pfaffenteich lake. The puppet theatre with its own stage is also accommodated in the former power generation plant. The successful theatre programme pub **werk3** in the heart of the old part of the town was initiated by the Mecklenburg State Theatre in 2008 and has been privately owned since the summer of 2014. The programme includes premiere celebrations, matinées and exhibitions as well as guided tours with a look behind the scenes. During the **TheaterThekenNacht** event held twice a year, and which is always sold out, 50 actors and actresses tour over 20 pubs of the town, serving up the guests great plays in small bites between tables and chairs.

The theatre festival **Theaterfest** is a cultural and social highlight. Guests delight in a gala programme with artists from all areas of the performing arts, an exquisite buffet and music and dancing in all of the rooms until the early hours.

In the summer the state music ensemble **Staatskapelle** invites guests to a picnic in some of the most beautiful gardens of the state in the series of open-air concerts "MeckProms".

Schwerin Castle Festival of the Mecklenburg State Theatre

Hate and love, jealousy and gallantry – there can be no stage large enough for such great feelings and emotion. Be that as it may, the art-loving centre of Schwerin provides just the right backdrop for opulent operas. Each year, **tens of thousands of visitors** are captivated by the castle festival "Schlossfestspiele Schwerin" between the castle, the gallery, the theatre and the lake. What started out in 1993 as an insiders' tip among opera enthusiasts has now not only become firmly established in the summer of culture in the north of Germany but also ranks among the top internationally renowned opera festivals. An enchantingly beautiful location, an ensemble of soloists from around the world, great choirs, spectacular stage effects, and set under the vast **spangled sky of Mecklenburg** ensure guests spend an unforgettable evening of theatre. Moreover, Schwerin's **grand-ducal past** resonates in poignant fashion in the romantic stage performances.

Many guests, however, like to see what is going on beyond the stage. They reserve a table for dinner in a nearby restaurant before the performance, book a boat trip on Lake Schwerin or a guided tour through the old part of the town. Some also stay for a few days, roam the superb palatial castle and discover the 1000-year history of the state, stroll through the magnificent gardens and the art collection of the grand dukes, visit the cathedral and the small galleries dotted all around the market.

...the gardens



A three-dimensional production comprising plants and sculptures.

The graceful park landscape surrounding the castle brings together elements from several centuries. Famous landscape gardeners created a well-conceived work of art featuring geometrical herbaceous borders and untouched reed belts, a baroque intersecting canal (Kreuzkanal) and water features, tree-lined paths and pergolas, terraces and steps, sculptures and grottos. Between ancient trees and fresh tulips magnificent vistas draw the visitors' eyes again and again to the castle, the lake and the town.

Schwerin Gardens

A three-dimensional staging of plants and sculptures .

The impressive garden monument was redesigned and supplemented **according to historical plans** for the 2009 Federal Horticultural Show – including the addition of a floating meadow.

The core – the grand-ducal palace garden – is regarded as **one of Germany's most beautiful and notable baroque complexes**.

Events with top-class casts make use of the perfectly designed backdrop and, in turn, enhance the diva-like image of Schwerin. The Schweriner Gartensommer, in particular, enthralls its guests with concerts and processions, with the castle festival and fireworks. Culinary highlights are also proffered by exquisite restaurants. The graceful **parkland** surrounding the castle brings together several gardens from different centuries. Famous landscape gardeners created an artistic synthesis comprising geometric herbaceous borders and untouched reed belts, a **baroque intersecting canal (Kreuzkanal) and water features, tree-lined paths and pergolas**, terraces and sculptures. Between ancient trees and fresh tulips **magnificent vistas** draw the visitors' eyes again and again to the castle, the lake and the town.

Castle garden (Burggarten)

Measuring just 1.8 hectares, the castle garden on the palatial castle island is the artistic highlight of Schwerin's sprawling park and lakescape. It surrounds the ducal palace like a colourful, voluminous skirt. It wraps itself gently and picturesquely around the bastions and foundations of the building. Plants and water features on the steps and terraces create smooth transitions from the building to the water. They gracefully overcome a difference in height of 12 metres and make the tall structure appear to well and truly flow into the lake. And this body of water thus becomes the sky-blue train of a wedding gown for the castle in the most elegant manner. The visitor is surprised to note how the architecture and nature amalgamate to become a three-dimensional painting.

The castle garden stretches over two levels. The ground level protrudes just a few centimetres out of the water. In close proximity to the banks are some exotic giant trees planted on sprawling areas of lawn. Curved paths make their way through the area in the style of an English country garden. They lead to a mysterious grotto. Further arches and paths as well as the thorny rose garden nurture the mystically romantic aura of the location.



The vegetation becomes denser towards the castle. Hedges and borders create colourful ornaments in harmony with the building. Roman terraced and villa gardens were the inspiration for this area.

Paradise is symbolised by the ensemble composed of the works of art and the plants. Each design element – from the fountain to the sculptures through to the flower beds – plays its own role in this enactment. In particular, this can be seen in impressive fashion in the courtyard of the orangery. Directly beneath the main tower the semi-circular structure is surrounded by a symmetrical carpet of pruned bushes and colourful flowers. The kaleidoscope-like garden hall is supplemented in perfect harmony by numerous potted plants, figures and tiles as well as the central shell-shaped fountain.

The orangery itself is a real feast for the eyes. Its cast-iron design was all the rage in the middle of the 19th century. In the summer the glass palace accommodates a wonderful café. In the winter its elegant rooms still house the potted Mediterranean plants. The second level of the castle garden extends over several terraces and plateaus, thereby incorporating the roofs of the orangery and grotto. Visitors stroll through porticoes and ornamental plants. They are afforded a breath-taking panoramic view of the surrounding lakes and banks. But their eyes do not only roam far into the distance. They also take in the finely enchased façade of the palatial castle – right up to the golden roofs. The hovering goddesses of victory and the battling Hercules also create a stir among the strollers.

The castle garden was designed together with the castle. The main ideas originate from Peter Joseph Lenné. The Director General of the Royal Prussian gardens was the star of his guild at that time. From 1850, his plans were implemented by the Schwerin-born court gardener Theodor Klett. Owing to the fact that the reconstruction in our days was carried out according to these very plans with meticulous precision, the castle garden is one of the few authentic horticultural works of art of historicism in Europe.

The Palace Garden (Schlossgarten)

An iron swivel bridge leads from the palace island to the mainland and directly into the palace garden. It was here that Peter Joseph Lenné came upon a baroque garden, which he then simplified a little while still retaining the basic structures in his design. In as early as the 17th century, French architects had laid out a pleasure garden with geometric quadrants. However, it was not until their famous fellow countryman Jean Legeay – who simultaneously executed the baroque garden in Ludwigslust in unsurpassed quality from 1748 – came to Schwerin that the main axis was directed towards the castle, while opening up the view as far as the horizon. His system of paths, vegetation and areas of water still dominates this part of the green spaces today. The central element is the baroque intersecting canal (Kreuzkanal). Many different aspects of the fairytale castle are reflected in it. This is a place where ducks and swans also feel at home. They are joined by twelve ancient gods and the four seasons. The sculptures created by the famous Saxony-born court sculptor Balthasar Permoser make reference to the God-given order in whose midst the builder, Grand Duke Friedrich Franz II. saw himself. After all, his bronze statue also leads from the front on horseback. However, it was his son who later commissioned this monumental equestrian statue at the top of the intersecting canal.

The wide pond is framed by areas of trees planted at regular intervals, by tree-lined paths and pergolas. In addition to newly planted specimens, ancient giant trees are to be found all around – including several swamp cypresses whose aerial roots look as if they have been sculpted. Following Lenné's plan, the Schwerin-born court gardener Theodor Klett doubled the size of the park and added the **Greenhouse Garden** with curved paths, large areas of lawn and individual groups of trees. Of course, he emphasised the views to the castle, the lake, the town, the surrounding countryside and the various fixed points in the garden. He modelled the transitional areas between the individual areas and to the surroundings in his customary manner, creating soft and flowing lines. This was the place of residence of the Grand Duchess Alexandrine, mother of Friedrich Franz II.

Hugo Berwald created the larger-than-life, white marble statue in 1907.

In addition to a hedge and kitchen garden as well as other parts, the sprawling park also comprises the **Garten am Marstall**. It is situated on the other bank and affords a wonderful view of the imposing silhouette of the castle.

The complex, which spans a total of 25 hectares, was redesigned according to historical plans for the 2009 Federal Horticultural Show, and is in excellent condition today. This is why the palace garden is regarded as an impressive historical and landmark garden of a high national rank.

...the lakes



The regional capital is blessed with calming nature provided by twelve lakes.

The centres of few inland cities – particularly ones with ducal or royal influences – are situated so close, so perceptibly and so idyllically to water like Schwerin.

Germany's third largest inland waterway – Lake Schwerin – lies at the foot of the castle. The water quality is excellent and the banks are a lush green. Eleven more lakes stretch far into the town and account for one-third of its area.

Schwerin lakes

The regional capital boasts twelve lakes, providing the area with an abundance of calming nature and fresh air. Guests on **pleasure boats** can enjoy impressive views of the castle and the town at all times of the day. There are few large inland towns – especially ones of a grand-ducal or royal character – whose **centres are situated in such close proximity to water** and in such a picturesque manner like Schwerin. It is said that no person in Schwerin lives further than two hundred metres away from water. Lake Schwerin – Germany's **third largest inland waterway** – almost completely surrounds the castle. Eleven more lakes reach far into the town and account for one-third of its area.

City trippers are however, quickly far away next to and on the lakes and can treat themselves and their feet to a break in **idyllic nature** from traipsing the pavements. There are many opportunities for **strolling, swimming and watching boats**, rowing and fishing, sailing and paddling, hiking and cycling. The **quality of the water is excellent** and the banks of the lakes are lush green.

There are numerous moorings for rowing, pedal, motor and house boats. The Werderwiesen boat garages are even regarded as the largest garage complex on European waterways.

The Elde and Elbe and eventually the North Sea can be reached via the Stör and Störkanal.

Since the introduction of passenger shipping in 1852, boat trips across Lake Schwerin have gained a place in the town's visitors' programme. No ship does the tour of the castle in such style as the MS Elfriede. The iron lady has already been operating for over 90 years. The younger members of the fleet serve several routes into the neighbouring lakes. The schedule includes events such as coffee and cake trips and dusk tours as well as Father's Day trips and a prosecco party. The vessels can also be booked for private functions of any kind and guests can also delight in live music and a buffet with a wide range of delicious food. The view of the stunning lake scenery can be enjoyed for free. The Petermännchen ferry promises the most inexpensive cruise in the world. For two Euros it takes guests from one side of the Pfaffenteich to the other.

The **cycling and hiking trails** along the lakes are not only impressive due to the idyllic nature. They also link up numerous **architectural gems**, including beautiful churches, old gardens and other stately homes (e.g. Schloss Wiligrad).

The Schwerin lakes are of great significance for the protection of species and biotopes. Among the breeding birds are the sea eagle, osprey, whooper and dwarf swan, tufted duck and kingfisher. Five nature reserves provide an important place to rest and spend the winter for numerous wading birds and waterfowl. River-perch, pike, pike-perch, bass and eel as well as the dominating white species of fish bream, rudd, roach and bleak splash about in the water. Otters feel at home on the banks of the lakes.



...the old part of the town



Saunter along the historical streets, visit the shops and dine in style.

Just a few minutes away from the grand-ducal palatial castle, mediaeval alleyways invite you to take a stroll. Several hundred historical buildings and cultural monuments, including many half-timbered houses as well as the market and the town hall, allow visitors to experience the town's history from its foundation in 1160 until today.

Schwerin's Historical Town

Take a stroll, do some shopping and dine like a royal with a view of the castle.

Right in the middle the mighty **Schwerin Cathedral** stretches up 117.5 metres into the sky, making it taller than all of the other churches between the Baltic Sea and the Mecklenburg Lake District. Two other large **brick churches tower** above the town.

The old part of the town is characterised by massive **official residence and government buildings** from the baroque and historicism periods. Elegant mansions bear testimony to an illustrious era. After all, large sections of the town centre were geared wholly to the representation and prestige of the grand dukes.

However, the old part of the town also acquires its particular flair from the **pedestrian areas** and squares as well as the **Pfaffenteich** – Schwerin's tranquil lake "Binnenalster". It is bordered by resplendent town houses, the promenade lined by limetrees and steps leading down the banks to the water. Behind many historical walls, exclusive boutiques, small galleries and many **independent stores** offer art and antiques in addition to fashion. Moreover, Schwerin is home to one of the largest shopping complexes in northern Germany with its large centres around the Marienplatz.

Coffee house culture and traditional, home-style dishes in many **restaurants** are typical of Schwerin. Almost every week, markets, festivals, processions and other **events** draw the visitors' attention to the different facets of the old part of the town.

Just a few minutes from the grand-ducal palatial castle, mediaeval alleyways invite you to take a stroll. Several hundred **historic buildings and cultural monuments**, including half-timbered houses as well as the market and the Town Hall, make the town's history come alive – from its foundation in 1160 until today.

The Lion Monument situated in the market square of the old part of the town was erected in memory of the town's founder Henry the Lion. Behind it stands the radiantly white pillared building. Here, a pastry shop serves delicious cakes and gateaux made according to traditional recipes. An additional eye-catcher in the market square is the Town Hall dating back to the 14th century. In 1835, it was given its current Tudor-style facade by senior government building officer Georg Adolph Demmler.

In the cathedral 220 steps lead to the visitors' platform, affording a stunning view of the town, the castle and the lakes. On their way up visitors pass five bells, the oldest of which originates from 1363. The interior boasts impressive objects of religious veneration such as the gothic altar of the Holy Cross, the bronze baptismal font dating from 1325 as well as the triumphal cross from 1420. Each year, organists from all over the world play on the magnificent Ladegast organ with its 5100 tin pipes.

The original Romanesque cathedral was donated by Henry the Lion. It was later converted into a Gothic cathedral. At 105 metres long and with an arch height of 26.5 metres, it is among the largest works of red brick Gothic. However, no tower was added in the Middle Ages. It was not erected until 700 years later and was completed in 1893.

The tombs of several dukes are also noteworthy, including the place of rest of Grand Duke Friedrich Franz II. as well as the epitaph for Duke Christoph von Mecklenburg and his consort Elisabeth von Schweden.

Two additional large **red brick churches rise up** above the town.

Like the cathedral, they are also closely linked to the ruling dynasty in Mecklenburg. The castle is not only within sight of both but also at eye level. The Grand Duke Friedrich Franz II. commissioned renovation work to be carried out on the Schelfkirche and the Neo-gothic Paulskirche was completely rebuilt.

The E-Werk, situated on the northern bank is particularly striking. This historical building with its Renaissance-style turrets and embellishments was once a state-of-the-art power generation plant. Today, it provides seats for some 100 theatre enthusiasts.

The Schlosspark-Center, the Marienplatz-Galerie and Schweriner Höfe bring together three department stores, some 164 shops and 39 gastronomic establishments.

Almost every week, markets, festivals, processions and other **events** draw the visitors' attention to the different facets of the old part of the town.

And the **castle** is always **within sight**.