

Dagstuhl A Historic Castle Tour

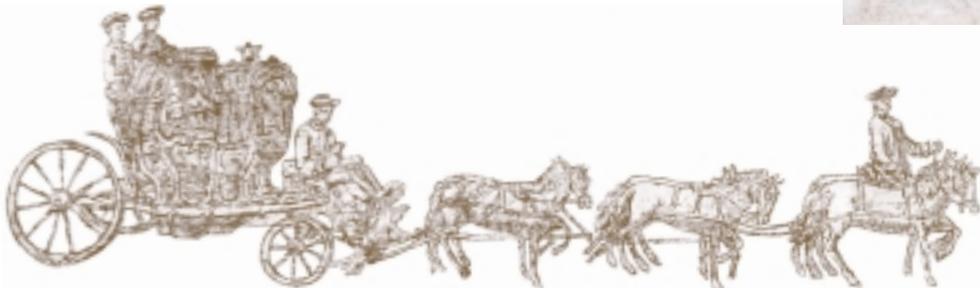


Schloss Dagstuhl
International Conference and Research Center for Computer Science

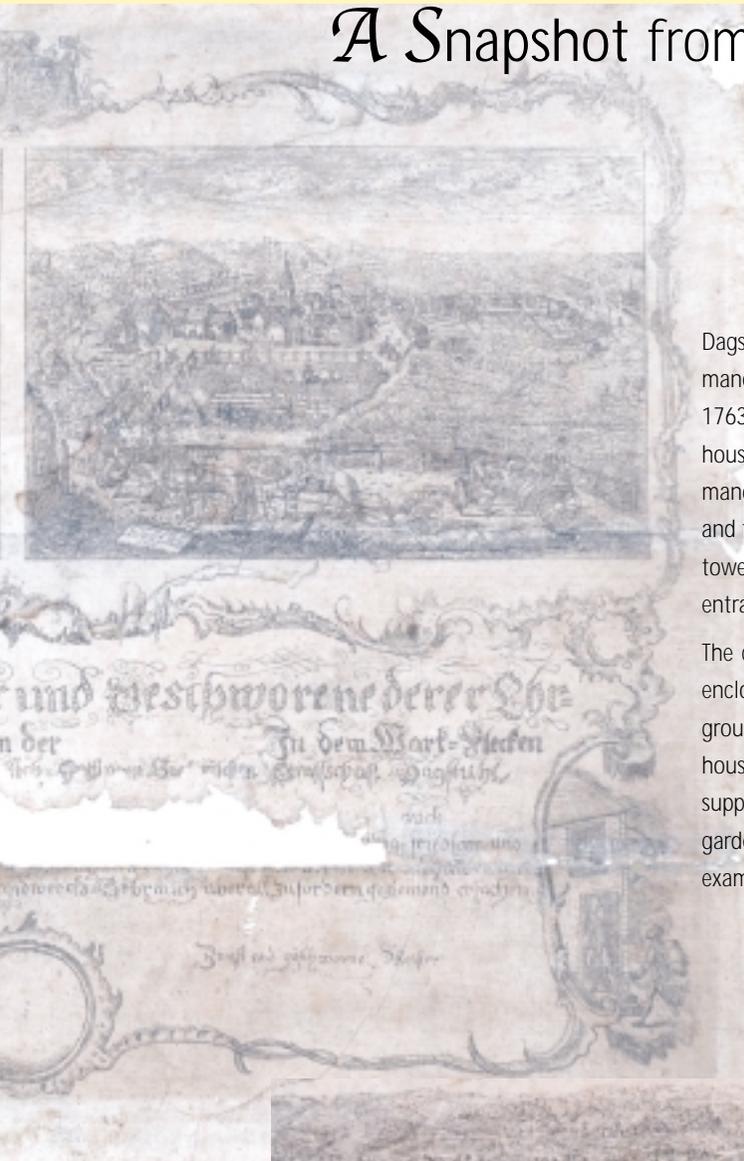
The museum of local history in Wadern is the home to an apprenticeship diploma from 1774 containing one of the oldest and best preserved drawings of Dagstuhl Castle which was built around 1760. One of the drawings shows a carriage drawn by six horses driving around the fenced, French style garden so that it can enter the inner courtyard of the magnificent castle. Another image from these drawings has also been vividly preserved: the market town Wadern being approached by a four-horse carriage belonging to a count. The scene conveys bustling activity: turning mills, the washing of fabrics, cattle roundups, farming activity. Two family crests decorated with the count's coronet are located above both drawings: Öttingen-Söttern und Schwarzburg-Sondershausen.

This snapshot from an older Dagstuhl Castle historical period and the Wadern residence shows the pulsating life of an emerging community which already possessed market rights and superior courts. Farming and trade guilds develop based on the Bavarian model; Wadern is on the rise to become the centre and administrative headquarters of the Hochwald region.

Dagstuhl Castle is the cultural and aristocratic centre of the region of its time. The numerous festivities staged by the nobility are the talk of the town. A magnificent avenue near Lockweiler ushers opulently decorated carriages which are accompanied by footmen and outriders to the count's castle. Infantry soldiers dressed in marching uniforms stand guard in front of their sentry boxes positioned at the impressive entrance passed the infantry soldiers in full ceremonial dress. An octagon-shaped fountain from which fresh spring water sputters from the middle spout also invites the visitor for a stroll as does the large, symmetrically arranged garden with two additional fountains and an arbour of roses. A fence as tall a grown man obstructs the excessive gazes of the count's subjects. In addition to hardy meals, beer fresh from the keg and from the castle's own brewery, the festive program provides diverse entertainment with colourful balls, literary, musical, and theatrical events as well as military parades put on by the count's soldiers.



A Snapshot from the older *Dagstuhl Castle*



Dagstuhl Castle was built in the style of the late Renaissance. First the seven axis manor house was built at around 1760, and then the baroque chapel followed in 1763. Three additional window axes and additional doors were added to the manor house between 1774 and 1775 and the gap between the chapel and the renovated manor house was closed with a multifunctional building which was used as a music and theatre hall. Today it is used as a music chamber. At that time there was a large, towering one-story house next to the chapel which boasted five arch-shaped cellar entranceways on its ground floor.

The castle grounds are arranged at an angle around the castle courtyard which is enclosed by a high iron fence and a guarded gateway in the front. The left side of the grounds is rounded off by a two-story house for the servants. Located behind the house in the court yard are several buildings that are used to provide services and supplies for the castle. On the other side of the street next to the today's baroque garden is the brewery. Modifications to the courtyard were gradually made. For example, two small housing units were built next to the manor house.

Painting from Karl Zdiarsky
Wadern Museum of Local History



Early History: Dagstuhl Fortress

The mountain trails along the banks of the Wadrill, Löster, and Prims at the foot of the Hochwald Black Forest region offered ideal roads to numerous merchants who transported their wares through this region. In 1290 noblemen from Saarbrücken built Dagstuhl Fortress on top of the narrow volcanic ridge between the Wadrill and Löster. The volcanic ridge itself gave its name to the fortress, because it actually looks like a roof top. Bad times began to fall upon the robber barons. For it was mainly the Archbishop of Trier, Boemund von Warsberg and his relative Boemund of Saarbrücken, Bailiff of the neighboring Grim Fortress, and later the first lord of Dagstuhl Fortress, who especially saw to it that the trade route was safe. However, in 1330 the male lineage of the knights at Dagstuhl died out. The four daughters of the knights married into famous royal houses (Fleckenstein / Alsace, Kriechingen and Rollingen/Lorraine as well as Brücken / Trier) making Dagstuhl a „Ganerbenburg“¹. The Bishop of Speyer and later Archbishop of Trier and Elector, Philipp Christoph von Sötern (1567-1652), acquired full property and other rights concerning the fortress after 1610. In 1634 Dagstuhl became a „Fideikommiss“². Philipp Franz von Sötern took possession of the Fortress und became Lord Justice of the realm („Hochgerichtbarkeit“). His daughter, Maria Sidonia married the Count Notger Wilhelm of Öttingen, a county in Swabia. His son, Kraft Anton, became the Dagstuhl burgrave in 1698. Costly legal disputes over confusing and complicated property ownership laws gobbled up large sums of money. Outstanding financial obligations added to the debt mountain which Josef Anton, Kraft Anton's son, ultimately inherited.



1. The concept of beneficiary inheritance (Ganerbe) is an old inheritance law according to which family property ownership is jointly administered and shared by family members to keep, similar to the concept of Fideikommiss (refer to footnote 2), important family property such as a castle from being divided up.
2. Fideikommiss restricts the inheritance of a family estate to just one person be it a man or a woman in order to prevent dividing up the estate. The benefactor has the right of use and enjoyment of the family property which remains in family ownership.



Top: The castle ruins before 1800 with Octavie's later artist's cottage
Bottom: The ruins today
Left: The ruins on a postcard around 1900

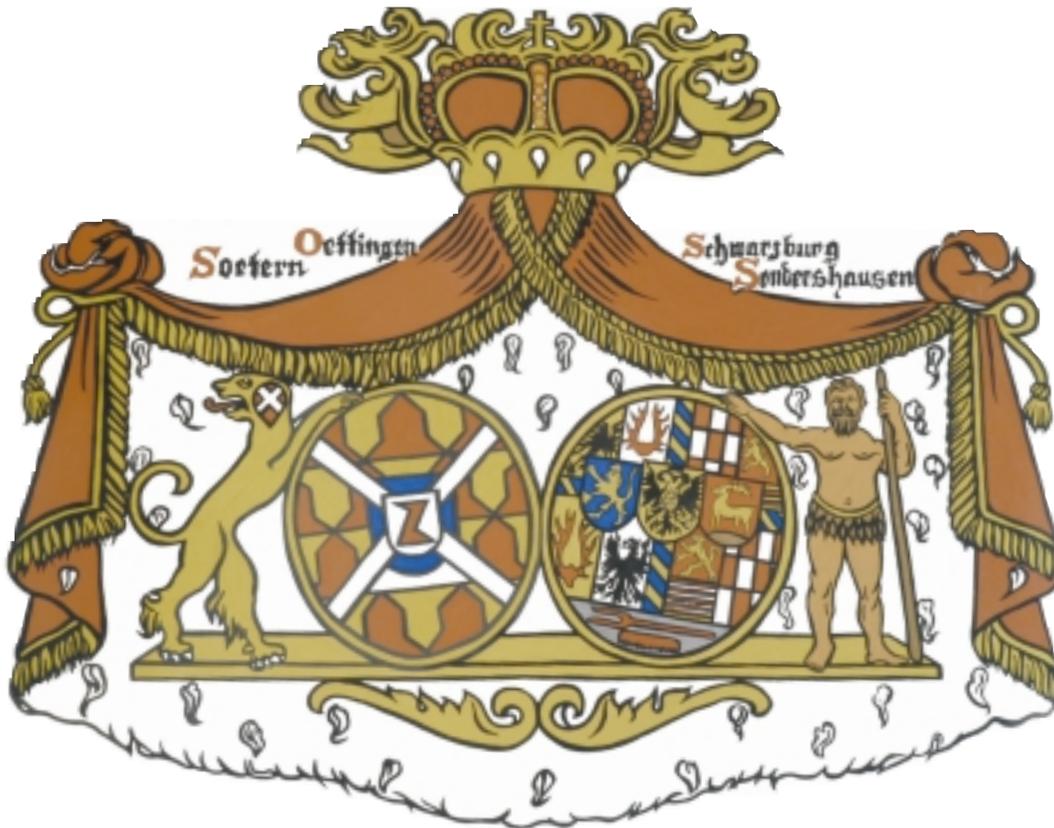
Castle Residents



Dagstuhl before 1905

The Count's Family

Josef Anton came into the Dagstuhl inheritance in 1751. He relinquished his reign over Hohen-Baldern in Swabia and ultimately moved his court to Dagstuhl for good in 1763. Within a short time Josef Anton began with the extension of the old administration building in Wadern in 1758, which is a part of the city hall today, and then he had two castles built: a summer retreat for his wife, Princess Christiane von Schwarzburg-Sondershausen, built in 1759 called the smaller Öttinger Castle, which now serves as a museum of local history and a city council conference room, and finally, Dagstuhl Castle after a statement of costs argued against the reconstruction of the fortress, which was starting to dilapidate around 1717.





Count Josef Anton von Öttingen-Söttern, 1720-78, played the leading role in shaping of history in Wadern and at Dagstuhl. It is under his reign that the once small timber forest hamlet rose to become a commercial centre. Josef Anton already had a market square built in 1764 which also served as a parade ground for his soldiers. He introduced market rights and Wadern became the seat of a superior court. Also, thanks to the improved infrastructure, craftsmen and trade guilds began to establish themselves as well as a fabric industry which was famous not only in the region but also beyond. This is because Count Josef Anton had the roads and bridges improved and reinforced. He pushed to have houses, barns, and stables built. The straw for the roofs which could easily catch fire was replaced by tile. The goal of new ordinances such as annual chimney and fireplace controls was to guarantee public safety. Order and cleanliness found their way into daily life by the establishment of a garbage disposal system. The count introduced crop rotation and the concept of freehold farmers³ which boosted the farming sector. His reforms in the education sector took hold. There was strict adherence to compulsory education laws. The distinguishing mark of his regency was the fight against social abuse. In keeping with his fiduciary duty as a count, Josef Anton tried to battle the abuse through a targeted alms distribution system. On the one hand his subjects were obligated to obey the absolutistic ruling sovereign, on the other hand they profited from his visionary capacity and enlightened style of leadership. Even concerning religious matters the count acted with tolerance. Dagstuhl Castle became the centre of the nobility in the Hochwald region.



In 1767, Christiane (1731 - 71), the count's wife, had a Capuchin convent built on a hill in Wadern, which now is named after her. However, only four years after the convent had been completed, the 40 year old countess, a former member of the Prague court of Maria Theresa, the Austrian empress, died. Because the couple remained childless during the marriage, the count married Countess Antonia von Zeil-Wurzach one year later. However, the joy that the birth of their daughter brought to the count and his wife only lasted a short while. Graf Josef Anton died in 1778. In 1779 the 26 year old countess married Count Hermann Friedrich Otto von Hohenzollern-Hechingen. The count decreased the size of the court as well as the size of the military contingent at Dagstuhl Castle. In return, he devoted his time to hunting and he knew how to fête - often in a large park along the Prims with a dam for a gondola flotilla. One of these fête scenes at „Bardenbacher Rock“ (Bardenbacher Fels) was captured in a subsequent painting by the „Painter Countess“, Octavie de Lasalle von Louisenthal.



Small Öttinger Castle (1759)
Now the Wadern Museum of Local History

3. Freehold farmers (Stockbauer) or yeomen are farmers who own land.

The End of the Feudal Period

Still the French Revolution was approaching fast. Already in 1789 the count's subjects began to complain about servitude, high taxes, arbitrary assaults by castle staff and other grievances. Count Antonia tried to mediate in the matter. However, despite her intervention she herself had to flee from the advancing revolutionary troops in 1792. For a while she was able to control the fate of the former Reichsherrschaft of Dagstuhl from Mainz, but then she finally retreated to Hechingen where Count Hermann had also returned in the meantime. It was from there that he released his subjects from servitude. Dagstuhl Castle and Wadern were occupied by the new French rulers. The fabric of the building suffered considerable damage under the new masters. After the Treaty of Lunéville (1801) which ended the French Revolutionary War, the Dagstuhl estate was nationalized and was finally acquired by the iron foundry in Remilly. Wood was used as fuel to melt iron at this foundry, which gobbled up huge amounts of timber. The timber from the Dagstuhl estate was also chopped down for the foundry. The deforestation of the Dagstuhl Castle grounds greatly depreciated the value of the property, which helped facilitate the sale of the estate to a former officer in the French and English and later in the Bavarian Army: Baron Wilhelm de Lasalle von Louisenthal.



*Landscape around Dagstuhl
on an old postcard*





Dagstuhl before 1890

De Lasalle von Loisenenthal

The de Lasalle von Loisenenthal family descended from a French lineage that originated in Spain and it is said that the family had already proven to be a valuable asset in combat against the English since the twelfth century. Three of the most famous ancestors were General Antoine La Salle, Napoleon's victorious commander at the Battle of Wagram (1809), Jean Baptiste La Salle, capitular of the cathedral in Reims and the founder of the international La Salle Schools (Frères d'École), and René Robert Cavalier La Salle, who explored the Mississippi all the way to its estuary mouth in 1682 and by doing so extended French claim to the territory that is now Louisiana. Many counties and cities and many street signs or hotel signs in states along the Mississippi bear the history-charged name „La Salle“. Even an American automobile from General Motors bore the LaSalle emblem from 1927 to 1940.

The La Salle family arrived in Saarlouis very early. George Theodor Lasalle, a local stock clerk, signed a lease in 1743 to rent the Dillinger Hütte („Dillinger Ironworks“) for ten years. The title of baron was conferred to him and his son, Albert, in 1763. George's brother, Johann Baptist, finally purchased the Loisenenthal Manor near the city of Püttlingen in 1764.

Johann Baptist's son, Wilhelm Albert found himself on the Lesser Antilles during his military service. It was there on the Caribbean island of Martinique that he married the Creole Marie Lucie Augier, who was the daughter of a wealthy plantation owner and governor of the island of St. Vincent / Union. Marie Lucie is presumably Josephine de Bauharnais' cousin, who was the first wife of Napoleon Bonaparte. Wilhelm Albert de Lasalle served as a cavalry captain in an Irish battalion that was stationed in Kilkenny, where his first son, Maximilian, was born. His son's godfather, Maximilian Josef I, later became the Bavarian



*The Lasalle family around 1890
In the background left the count's brewery from 1775*

de Lasalle von Loisenenthal



king. Wilhelm Albert returned to Germany in 1801. In 1807 his family relocated to Dagstuhl Castle which was decorated with exotic accessories and restored little by little for everyday use. Two of the servants who followed the family to Europe from the Antilles assisted in the restoration process. The image of one of these servants, Rachel Bero, has even been captured in a painting.

Eleven children were born into the family, five of which were born at Dagstuhl Castle, which became a manor from 1815 on. Wilhelm's son, Rudolf, later became the head of the district authority for Merzig County. His daughter Octavie became particularly famous and was known as the „Painter Countess“. Wilhelm, the youngest son, was a priest and died in Rome in 1842. According to family tradition, all members of the family were to be buried in the same place. So Wilhelm transferred his son's body to Dagstuhl with a horse-drawn vehicle. While crossing the Alps he collected young trees which he later planted on the castle hill.

In 1905/06 the Lasalle family extended the castle. Part of the building was remodeled in the Neo-gothic style and a tower was added to that part of the building. The adjoining chapel was also remodeled also adding a gallery to it. Even the burial vault was remodeled and was reconstructed so that it could later accommodate the „Stations of the Cross“ painted by Octavie, the „Painter Countess“. A stone lion now watches over the newly landscaped castle courtyard.



Dagstuhl Castle was extended again in 1906. Rizza von Louisenthal had work done to the castle tower and the burial vault. The construction company which was located in Wadern and owned by Matthias Barbian was contracted to do the renovation work. The beautiful castle courtyard served as a construction rubble site and a depot for stones by then. Wood was brought in to build a huge scaffold made out of tree trunks and wooden boards upon which dare-devil laborers performed juggling acts. The bravest workers even posed for a photo showing them on the scaffold without using ropes on the highest places.



*Left: The tower in neo-gothic style
Right: US deluxe limousine: a La Salle 1939*



Left: In her paintings Octavie often included portraits of people from Dagstuhl; bottom left: Octavie with her son, right: Elisabeth Theobald

Top right: Living and departed members of the Lasalle family at Wilhelm 's day of death 1845.

Bottom right: Fresco in the chapel



Clearly the most famous member of the de Lasalle family at Dagstuhl Castle was Octavie, who generally was known as the „Painter Countess“. She was born in Metz in 1811 and dedicated her life to literature, music, and painting at an early age. The family's ties to the Bavarian court made it possible for Octavie to study art in Munich, because she could rely on the support of King Ludwig I. The young artist's paintings were a success at exhibits in Munich and Nuremberg. Her main works show the bond with the Nazarene movement⁵, which is particularly reflected in her „Stations of the Cross“ paintings. In 1842, Octavie was appointed honorary canoness to the Order of St. Anne in Munich. Three years before her appointment to the order, she decided to take on the job of painting the Dagstuhl Castle chapel, which was completed in 1880. The artist's cottage that was set up in the fortress ruins was her hideaway. It is in this hideaway that Octavie painted most of her paintings. Naturally she also used the fortress's cistern that still functioned at the time and - according to legend - often took relaxing and soothing baths in the adjoining bathing room that was specially built for that purpose. Octavie often signed her paintings with a little red robin, but also signed them with her initials O.v.L.L. (Octavie de Lasalle von Louisenthal).



She often included portraits of castle servants in her paintings – simple people from Dagstuhl, Wadern, Altland, Noswendel, and also people who were important to her: King Ludwig I, Queen Elizabeth of Prussia, and King Wilhelm I. Octavie also painted portraits of herself. She donated her paintings to the lottery fundraiser, which took place every year and was for the benefit of the hospital in Wadern, which she founded in 1856. This means that to this day all of her paintings can still be displayed at the museum of local history. Her diaries reveal another passion which Octavie pursued when her artist's cottage became too cramped: fishing on the Prims or hunting foxes and rabbits. She came into contact with the Franciscan nuns from Waldbreitbach through the Lasalle family's charity foundation dedicated to caring for the sick. The founder of the Franciscan order in Waldbreitbach, Mother Rosa, frequently visited Octavie at the castle and at the hospital. A plain and simple life style is the common thread that bonded the two women – even though Octavie had to play her role as a baroness and dress up for gala events that were part of court life. Her long life ended peacefully in her sleep in February 1890. She suffered her whole life long from the loss of her illegitimate son who was born in 1840 and whom she had to give away. He was passed off as the offspring of a cook at Dagstuhl Castle.

Octavie with the last shot wolf she shot in the Hochwald region



5. Group of early 19th century German Romantic painters who aimed to revive honesty and spirituality in Christian art.

Octavie de Lasalle von Louisenthal



Dagstuhl today

From Nuns' Residence to „Informatics Monastery“



Nuns and senior residents at the Franciscan Order anniversary celebration.

The de Lasalle family owned Dagstuhl Castle until 1957. However, Theodore de Lasalle von Louisenthal died without ever marrying – and without any heirs to the estate. The estate was purchased by a third Order of Franciscan nuns, who chose Dagstuhl as the main residence. They had the old rooms converted into residence living quarters. New bathroom facilities and a central heating system were installed. Electricity cables and water pipes were laid. In 1957 construction work to convert the castle into a residential home for the elderly began and was not completed until 1961. Most of the renovation work was done to the interior of the castle as well as to the castle chapel which was extensive. The new residential home was dedicated in June 1961 at an opening ceremony in the White Room. Modern technological equipment such as elevators was introduced to Dagstuhl Castle. And in 1976 work began to expand the castle adding three stories to the building connecting it to the former manor house.

Ownership of the castle and the estate was transferred to the Franciscan nuns from Waldbreitbach in

1981. Other renovation work followed. The living quarters were built to accommodate the Bishop of Trier, who discovered Dagstuhl as a vacation spot for himself. The old wooden staircase was replaced by a marble one. The Stations of the Cross Chapel above the burial vault was renovated so that the paintings of Octavie, the Painter Countess, which were previously displayed in the Lockweiler church, could be hung in the castle chapel. The nuns from Waldbreitbach vacated the Dagstuhl Castle estate in April 1990 and now run a newly built residential home for the elderly located next door to the Elisabeth Hospital in Wadern.

The state government of the Saarland had already purchased the castle in 1989 and together with the Rhineland-Palatinate government founded the International Conference and Research Center for Computer Science. The center – an institution of the Leibniz association – owns a first class scientific infrastructure including a well equipped scientific library. This situation and the setting in the idyllic river valley, helps the research guests to work in cloistral seclusion. The first workshop took place in

August 1990 and it set the stage for the rapid growth of its national and international significance as the venue. Construction on a new complex began in 1993 which included a library, lecture rooms and additional guest rooms. The old street which goes past the castle was named after Konrad Zuse in honor of this ingenious engineer and inventor of the computer.



Top right: A bedroom after 1930

Middle left: The White Room after 1930

Middle right: The White Room today

Bottom left: Staircase before the renovation (1980)



A closer Look: a Walk around Dagstuhl Castle



*Top: The shape of a miter in the marble floor
Middle: Dual coat of arms with the Louisenthal and Liebig family emblems
Bottom: Hand-carved arched door in the White Room*

The castle's main entrance can be accessed from the courtyard. The entrance door is from 1759. Marble steps lead the visitor to the coat of arms hall. It is here that a pattern in the marble that reoccurs three times in marble floor becomes visible to the viewer: the shape of a miter that randomly appeared while the marble was being split is noticeable. The Franciscan nuns interpret this is a special sign because the Bishop of Trier has as a fact chosen Dagstuhl Castle as a summer retreat. An old door which is from Dagstuhl Fortress and located at the stairs landing leading to the coat of arms hall is eye-catching. It is made of fir wood and is decorated with iron fittings. The individual panels show the Dagstuhl Fortress coats of arms. In the coat of arms hall, the family crests show the histories of the Dagstuhl Castle royal families: Saarbrücken, Sötern, Ottingen-Sondershausen, and de Lasalle von Louisenthal. Other coats of arms commemorate families that were associated with Dagstuhl Castle, for example, Burg Eltz and Nesselroth. The furniture dates back to the time around the 1800s and includes among other things wardrobes and a grandfather clock that still works. The chairs convey a French flair. They are covered with pressed leather. The tiled stove was made on the Mosel and is decorated with scenes from a vineyard. It has only been part of the hall décor since 1957. The heavy iron chandelier shows the history of illumination: it serves with candles, petroleum and electricity.

On the first floor of the building on the left side is the old castle library which is a room with a fireplace. Every decorative piece from the Caribbean lined the hall in the past. The fireplace is adorned with the von Louisenthal crest and also with the Liebig crest. The next station of our visit takes us through an oversized baroque door and into the long White Room. Two putti are posted at the door. A niche for the throne of the royal couple can be seen towards the back of the room on the right. Both of the small, round, and hand-carved arched doors at the end of the White Room are from Graf Anton's native Swabia and bear the date 1743. The doors are decorated with scenes from the bible: St. Peter with the cock and Mary's family – her mother, Anne, her father Joachim, and Mary which stood as a figure on a little pedestal at one time. From the very beginning the White Room was used as multifunctional room. The walls were lined with panels used to counter dampness and the cold, which was a novelty back then.

Top: Old door from the Dagstuhl Fortress made of fir wood and decorated with family emblems

Middle: Room with fireplace

Mottom: Coat of arms hall with iron chandelier





Going back to the castle courtyard – a cross made of sandstone embedded into the outer wall next to the castle entrance catches the visitor's attention. Its stylistic features designate the transitional phase from the Romanesque to the Gothic period. The stone relief from 1350 is part of the original Dagstuhl Fortress. The main tower from 1906 displays two plates that flank the main doors to the entrance. These are retable⁶ from the Dagstuhl Fortress chapel with images of St. Peter holding the key and St. Christopher with the Christ Child. The lower window to the right of the tower is protected by a forged halberd⁷ which serves as a screen.

As in the old library the dual coat of arms above the door show the von Louisenthal and Liebig family emblems. The weather vane on the roof of the tower is adorned with a lion and the year 1905. From the building opposite the tower a mighty elm tree rises into the sky. In front of that tree is the octagon-shaped fountain of justice of the Superior Court Schwarzenberg to which Dagstuhl belonged. A snake shown biting its own tail – a Christian symbol for immortality – is wrapped around the crowns of the stone columns which were raised in memory of the death of Maximilian von Louisenthal in 1843. The stone lion in the castle courtyard belonged until 1898 to a quartet ensemble from the old cattle market fountain in Trier which was divided up after the fountain was torn down. One of these lion sculptures found its way to Dagstuhl.

6. Lower parts of the altar
7. Medieval weapon



Top to bottom:

Joined Öttingen-Sötern and Schwarzburg-Sondershausen coats of arms over chapel entrance

Tower and chapel of Dagstuhl castle

Reltable from the fortress chapel (1450)

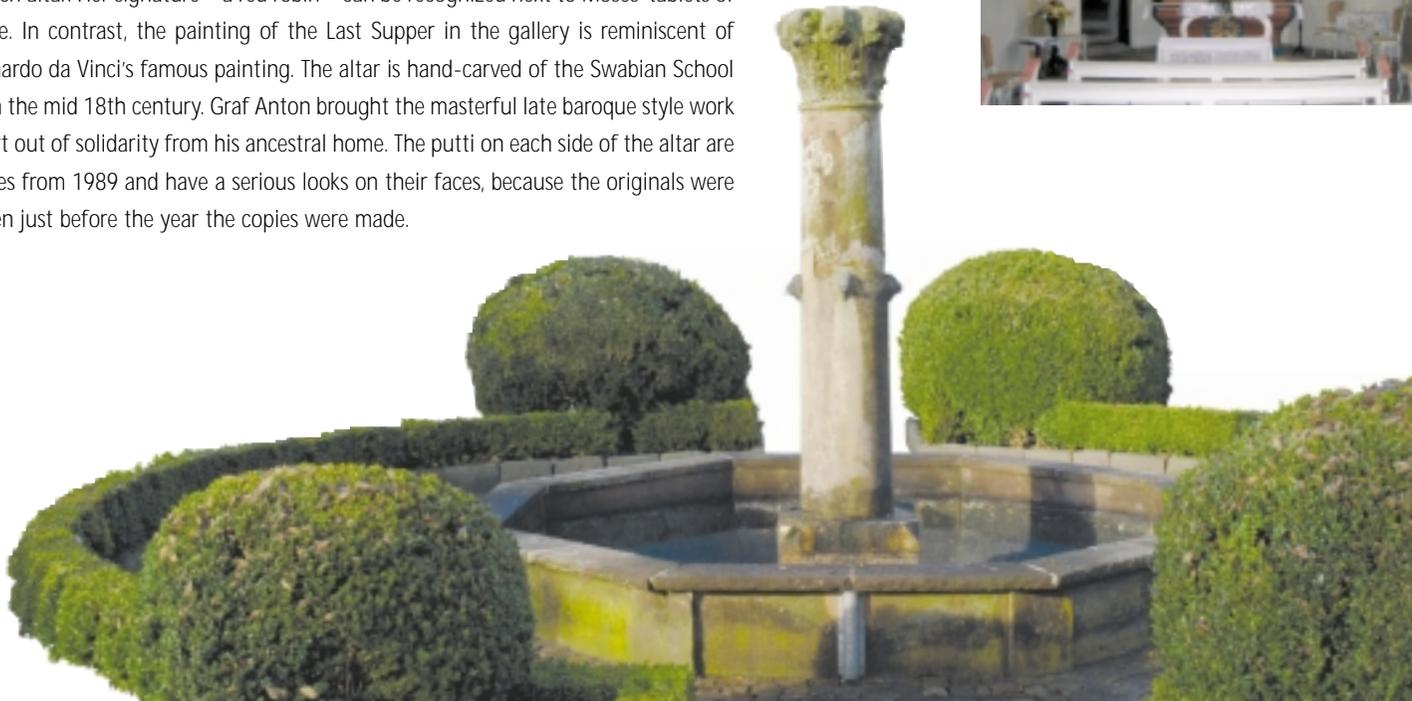
Sandstone cross (1350)

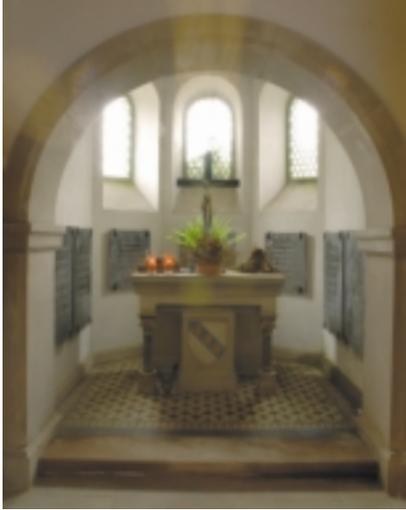
*Top to bottom:
Immaculate Mary in the chapel
Chapel altar
The octagon-shaped fountain of justice*



Something that is particularly worth mentioning is the Dagstuhl Castle Chapel. Built in 1763 this baroque style chapel's wide cantilevered outside staircase comprises 12 steps and is most impressive. The steep roof has protruding dormer windows and is embellished with a small onion-domed tower clock. The joined Ottingen-Sötern and Schwarzburg-Sondershausen coats of arms are emblazoned across the top of the two large windows which flank the portal entrance.

The castle chapel is dedicated to the Immaculate Mary. It was the „Painter Countess“, Octavie de Lasalle who assumed the task of painting it, and the work was completed between 1839 and 1880. The interior of the chapel has been kept to preserve the Marian spirit of the Nazarene style and conveys deep emotions for the mother of God. The over-sized wall painting of the Immaculate Mary is modeled after Esteban Murillo's original at the Prado in Madrid. Scenes from the old and new testaments complement the Immaculate Mary leitmotiv. The artist eternalized herself above the church altar. Her signature – a red robin – can be recognized next to Moses' tablets of stone. In contrast, the painting of the Last Supper in the gallery is reminiscent of Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting. The altar is hand-carved of the Swabian School from the mid 18th century. Graf Anton brought the masterful late baroque style work of art out of solidarity from his ancestral home. The putti on each side of the altar are copies from 1989 and have a serious looks on their faces, because the originals were stolen just before the year the copies were made.





Tant d'esprit de beauté, de force et d'excellentes qualités

Lasalle family motto

Top: The burial vaults

Right: Grave stones of the last Lasalle and of Octavie

Left: Stone column near the street

Bottom: ruins of the count's brewery (1775)

That last station in the tour on the castle ground leads to the burial vaults. In 1906 the burial vaults were first built for all the members of the Lasalle family, who lived at Dagstuhl Castle. The only people who were buried there who were not members of the nobility, were Elisabeth Theobald, the matron of the house, and the Irish major Cotter from Kilkenny (+1817). Tombs located in the walls of the burial vault facing the courtyard are still there to this day whereas the grave stones in the vault are just decorative grave stones brought in earlier from the chapel. Later, the Franciscan nuns of the Third Order were buried in simple wall graves opposite the elegant tombs of the noble family.



Outside the castle courtyard on the street next to the parking lot is a stone column. It supported a relief of a Madonna, which Rizza von Louisenthal brought back with her from Italy and was placed on the capital, which was previously empty. The relief was exchanged for a modern crucifixion scene in 1992. The ruins of the count's brewery from 1775 which was the first in the Hochwald region are located on the other side of the street next to the new flower garden.





Sidonie - the *White Lady* of *Dagstuhl*

On a moon-lit autumn evening the veil of fog and haze from the nearby Löster drifts over Dagstuhl Castle and creates bizarre shapes which float out of the burial vault and along the chapel and muffle a shrill cry from the adjoining castle hill.

During the crusades Sidonie, the daughter of one of the four Dagstuhl royal families, was betrothed to a count who was a crusader in Palestine. The fiancée waited in vain for the return of her bold knight, but he never returned from the Land of Promise. In the meantime, Sidonie's father ran into considerable financial difficulties. The dark knight von Schwarzenberg from Lockweiler took advantage of the situation and offered Sidonie's father money for the marriage to his daughter. However, Sidonie rejected the offer and waited another year in vain for her fiancé's return. Sidonie finally accepted her destiny and married Knight von Schwarzenberg. Dagstuhl Castle was in the middle of a lavish celebration when all of a sudden the mighty door to the palace burst open and the crusader who was thought to be dead stepped into the circle of wedding guests which stared at him in silence. Sidonie's fiancé rushed just a few steps towards the dumbfounded knight von Schwarzenberg only to be beheaded by the blow of his mighty sword and then fall dead onto the stone floor of the palace (Palas)⁸. Crying with horror Sidonie rushed to one of the towers and threw herself to her death. Since then she wanders around Dagstuhl and in the burial vault under the Stations of the Cross dressed in a white gown whining and sobbing.

8. The palace (Palas) is the main living residence on the grounds of a castle in the Middle Ages.

A Summary of Dagstuhl Castle History

1290 Dagstuhl Fortress is built, Boemund von Saarbrücken becomes the first lord of the fortress.

1330 The male lineage of the fortress lords dies out. Dagstuhl becomes a „Ganerbenburg“ and is administered by the four royal families into which the female heirs marry.

1616 onward Philipp Christoph von Sötern (1567-1652), Bishop of Speyer and later Archbishop of Trier and Elector of Trier, acquires all property rights concerning Dagstuhl Fortress.

1634 Dagstuhl Fortress becomes a Fideikommiss.

1635 Philipp Franz von Sötern (1634-96) is vested with the Fideikommiss.

1698 Kraft Anton von Ottingen (1684-1751), son from the marriage between Philipp Franz von Sötern's daughter, Maria Sidonia (1656-91), and Graf Notger Wilhelm von Ottingen (1653-93).

1751 Josef Anton von Ottingen-Sötern (1720-78) comes into the Dagstuhl Castle inheritance. This marks the actual history of Dagstuhl Castle, which takes the place of the fortress, which starts to dilapidate in 1717. It is under his reign that Wadern County and Dagstuhl Castle experience economic and cultural growth.

1779 Rule over Dagstuhl Castle passes on to Hermann Friedrich Otto von Hohenzollern-Hechingen (1751-1810), the second husband of Antonia von Zeil-Wurzbach (1753-1814), who was first married to Josef Anton von Ottingen-Sötern in his second marriage.

1792 Countess Antonia flees Dagstuhl Castle ahead of the advancing French revolutionary troops. Ownership of Dagstuhl Castle is transferred into the hands of the French.

1806 Wilhelm Albert de Lasalle von Louisenthal (1768-1845) moves into Dagstuhl Castle with his family.

1815 Dagstuhl Castle has permission to call itself a manor.



Above: Dagstuhl manor around 1930

Bottom: Dagstuhl before 1961



1839-80 Octavie de Lasalle von Louisenthal (1811-90), ninth child from the marriage between Wilhelm Albert and Marie Lucie d'Augier (1775-1854), paints the Dagstuhl Castle Chapel.

1845 Son Rudolf (1815-92) inherits Dagstuhl Castle and is (1866-75) the head of the district authority for Merzig County.

1905-06 Dagstuhl Castle undergoes extensive renovation work under Rizza de Lasalle von Louisenthal (1873-1948), the wife of Heinrich (1866-98).

1959 Theodor de Lasalle (1897-1959) dies as the last heir to Dagstuhl Castle without any children. Ownership of the castle passes on to the Franciscan nuns.

1961 Dagstuhl Castle is dedicated as a residential home for the elderly.

1981 The Franciscan nuns from Waldbreitbach assume ownership of the home.

1989 The government of the Saarland purchase the castle and together with the government of the Rhineland-Palatinate establish the International Conference and Research Center for Computer Science in Dagstuhl Castle.

1990 The International Conference and Research Center for Computer Science starts its work with its first workshop. Every year 3.500 scientists from all over the world visit the center to do research stays.





Schloss Dagstuhl

International Conference and Research Center for Computer Science
www.dagstuhl.de



IBFI gem GmbH
Octaviallee
D-66687 Wadern, Germany
E-Mail: service@dagstuhl.de
Phone: +49 6871 / 90 50

Author: Alexander Weinen
Translation: Yvette Cases-Brohmer
Layout: Uwe Loebens
Photos: Mechthild Schneider,
Willy Weinen (Wadern Museum of Local History), IBFI and Dagstuhl guests
Postcards: Christoph Kaub
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