



From garden palais to elegant hotel: A place with a fascinating history

The origins of the hotel date back to the 18th century, to the Palais Harrach built in the baroque style by Johann Lukas von Hildebrandt – the same architect who also designed the magnificent Belvedere Palace. The palais was used as a residence but also served as a centre of cultural life in the Austrian capital.

The Militär-Reitlehrer-Institut was a school for riding instructors of the army of the Austrian Empire and, from 1867, for the joint ground forces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, consisting of the Common Army as well as the separate armies of the two halves of the Dual Monarchy. The impressive riding hall soon became a symbol of Austria's military tradition. During the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, it served as a field hospital for wounded soldiers, among other things.

The school was dissolved following the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy in 1918 and the riding hall was converted into a cinema. The EOS Lichtspieltheater became one of the largest movie theatres in all of Vienna, screening silent films accompanied by a 60-piece orchestra for a unique cinematographic experience. After the Second World War, which caused severe damage to the building, the property was taken over by the Austrian postal administration and used as a depot for its buses. The historic remains were partially knocked down in the late 1980s, but the magnificent portico and historic staircase were preserved. The building was carefully restored with an eye for its rich history and has been welcoming guests from all over the world as a hotel since 1988. The property remained shut following the Covid lockdowns before new owners took over the hotel. After four years of vacancy and one-and-a-half years of construction, the Imperial Riding School, Autograph Collection opened its doors in 2024.

An oasis of calm in the heart of the city: the Kaisergarten and the Old Lady

Hidden behind the impressive façade of the Imperial Riding School Hotel lies one of the largest private gardens in Vienna – a tribute to the apple trees of Franz Joseph I that once stood here. The emperor himself had the trees planted in the garden of Palais Harrach, which would later become part of the hotel grounds. The former orchard, intended to supply the imperial court with fresh fruit, remains an essential part of the hotel to this day. At the heart of the 2,000 m² garden is a 150-year-old plane tree affectionately known as the Old Lady. As one of the oldest trees in Vienna, it lends the garden a very special atmosphere.

A bridge between the past and the present

“The newly reopened Imperial Riding School Hotel represents a fusion of historical elegance and modern lifestyle. Our aim at the hotel is to offer our guests a unique and creative experience characterised by the rich history of the building and its surroundings,” says General Manager Jürgen Fleischhacker.

Further information:

www.imperialridingschool.com

Imperial Riding School, Autograph Collection

In the new Imperial Riding School Hotel, the historical elegance of the former imperial and royal Military Riding School is just as obvious as the courage to be creative. Steeped in history, the hotel allows the past to live on with great charm in a modern design concept and uses inspiring flair to create a new lightness. Private and business guests are offered premium comfort, top facilities and first-class service in the heart of Vienna's third district. 342 rooms and a varied gastronomic offering with regional and international specialties, as well as a pool, wellness area and hotel garden, make your stay a unique experience. The Imperial Riding School is the first [Autograph Collection](#) hotel in Austria and is therefore part of the [Marriott International](#) brand. The main owners are [Northwood Investors](#) and the hotel is operated by co-owner [Event Hotels](#). [Imperial Riding School](#)

About Autograph Collection® Hotels

Autograph Collection Hotels advocates for the original, championing the individuality of each of its over 290 independent hotels located in the most desirable destinations across 50 countries and territories. Each hotel is a product of passion, inspired by a clear vision, soul, and story that makes it individual and special: *Exactly Like Nothing Else*. Hand-selected for their inherent craft and distinct perspectives on design and hospitality, Autograph Collection properties offer rich immersive moments that leave a lasting imprint. For more information, please visit www.autographhotels.com, and explore on social via [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#) to be inspired by immersive moments that are #ExactlyLikeNothingElse. Autograph Collection is proud to participate in Marriott Bonvoy®, the global travel program from Marriott International. The program offers members an extraordinary portfolio of global brands, exclusive experiences on [Marriott Bonvoy Moments](#) and unparalleled benefits including free nights and Elite status recognition. To enroll for free or for more information about the program, visit marriottbonvoy.com.

About Event Hotels

Event Hotels, headquartered in Cologne, operates 60 business and city hotels at over 40 locations in Europe under the names of well-known international hotel brands. The motto: Hospitality at heart. Event hotels are the leading white label hotel operator in Europe, and as such not only manage the operational business of its hotels, but also take an investment stake in real estate and operation together with partners, work out potential for sustainable growth and thus shape the landscape of hotels and hospitality. www.eventhotels.com

About Northwood

Northwood Investors LLC (“Northwood”) is a vertically integrated real estate investment advisor that was founded in 2006 by John Z. Kukral, former President and CEO of Blackstone Real Estate. Northwood is headquartered in Denver, Colorado and has 14 offices across the U.S. and Europe. Northwood seeks to acquire well-located real estate through tactical sourcing and subsequently maximize its value through hands-on value creation at the asset level. Northwood’s team of more than 260 dedicated real estate professionals possess expertise in acquisitions and asset management, providing the firm a competitive advantage to source investments and create high-quality real estate projects. Northwood’s experience is evidenced by the team’s \$20 billion of real estate acquisitions since inception. Link to website: [Northwood Investors](#)

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