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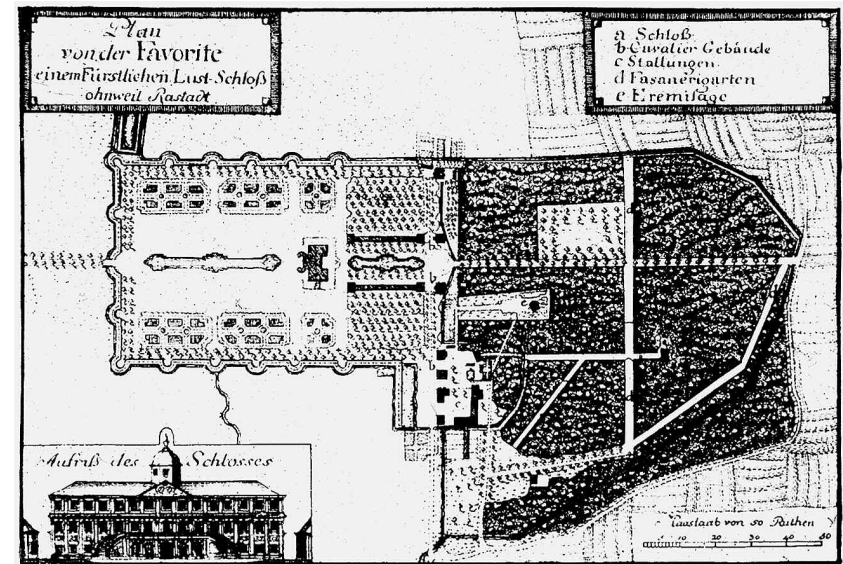
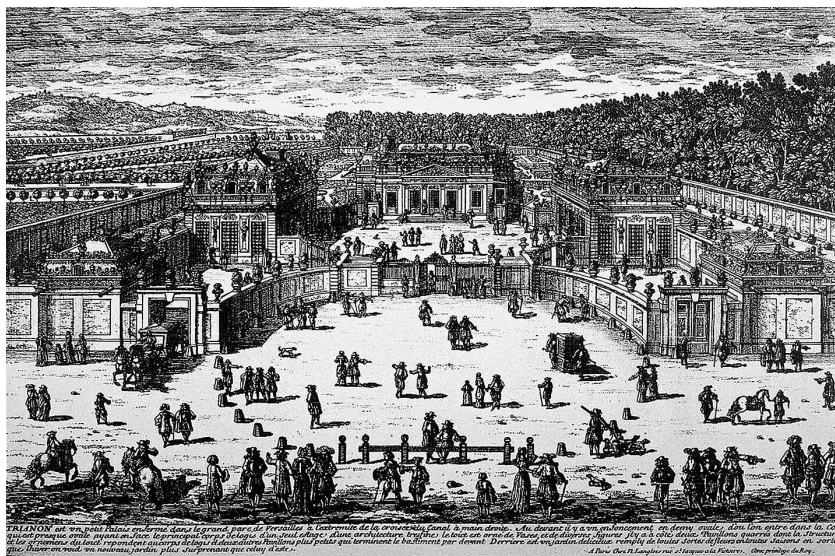
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of the 17th century in France, fantastically furnished *maisons de plaisance*, or pleasure palaces, for temporary visits to the countryside, were often built with one to two stories and a central garden hall. It was here that the nobility dedicated themselves to entertainment, conviviality, games, hunting, masquerades, studies, and raising children.

For the European high nobility, the pleasure palaces of the French king, such as the *Trianon de Porcelaine* at the palace of Versailles, were the gold standard. With its border of blue and white tiles and earthenware vases, it was a veritable Chinese fantasy castle and a famous inspiration. This type of building quickly became popular in Germany. Even the names of these pleasure palaces—Sanssouci, Monrepos, Sanspareil, Falkenlust, Clemensruhe—spoke of serenity, leisure, and luxury.

The name “Favorite” was given to several pleasure palaces, such as the palaces that once stood in Mainz and Ludwigsburg, but were destroyed in the Coalition Wars. Their owners were paying homage to the two imperial pleasure palaces of the same name in Vienna. The margravine, but particularly her husband Ludwig Wilhelm, were familiar with the “Favorites” as relatively relaxed locations for conferences with the Emperor.

Avelin: Trianon de Porcelaine, view from the east. Copper engraving, before 1687, built in 1670 by Louis Le Vau as a retreat for Louis XIV and the Marquise de Maintenon



The architectural history

Many questions about the construction and furnishing of the pleasure palace remain unanswered. In 1698, Margrave Ludwig Wilhelm had his royal architect, Domenico Egidio Rossi (1659–1715), begin construction of a hunting lodge in Rastatt, and simultaneously had a zoo with a pheasantry built near Kuppenheim. In February and March of 1707, though it was only a few weeks after the margrave’s death, and despite the risk of war and lack of funds, his widow began to buy the surrounding land for the construction of a pleasure garden.

After an interruption, mostly likely caused by war, construction continued in 1710. In 1711, wagoners first brought building materials to what was then called the “Favoritta”—likely a smaller structure that then formed the core of the present building. Most likely, in order to have enough room for longer stays, a decision seems to have been made during the shell construction phase to expand with both side wings and the entryway on the forecourt side. Work began again in 1717 with the construction of the two cavalier houses at the edge of the pheasantry and the west colonnade, which began to be used as an orangery in 1718. The small hermitage

“Plan von der Favorite einem Fürstlichen Lust-Schloß ohnweit Rastatt” (Plan of Favorite Palace, a royal pleasure palace near Rastatt), copper engraving, 1770



State bedroom

The shape and design of the bed in the crown prince's bedroom is identical to that of the margravine—here, too, the state bed is placed in a raised alcove with an arch decorated with a coat of arms, and the side doors lead to the antechamber and side room. The ceiling fresco has an appropriate theme for a young prince, namely the hero led by the goddess Minerva, with Jupiter holding a laurel wreath ready for his head. The wall textiles were clearly intended to be both entertaining and educational. Five broad bands, each with two richly framed embroidered images, depict scenes from Aesop's fables and the tales of his Baroque successor, La Fontaine, in the upper section, while the lower section primarily features mythological themes.

Antechamber in the crown prince's apartment

It is thought that these textile images are older than the bed, which was first installed in 1723. Astoundingly,



this means that, despite the crown prince's marriage to Maria Anna von Schwarzenberg in 1721, none of the furnishings in the state bedroom were changed. His wife's bed likely stood in one of the private rooms of the apartment.

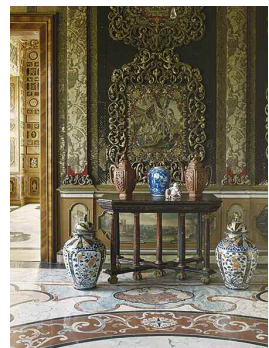
State bedroom of the crown prince

The fabric covering of the bed is a somewhat old-fashioned combination of very different textiles. Except for the scene of "Joseph standing before Pharaoh," they depict secular, at times mythological, scenes, particularly on the topic of love. These brightly colored, slightly childish images contrast with what was then a very modern, costly blue sateen bedspread with gold thread embroidery in the style of the 1720s.

Wall decoration of the state bedroom with textile images (scenes from Aesop's fables and the tales of La Fontaine)

Florentine cabinet

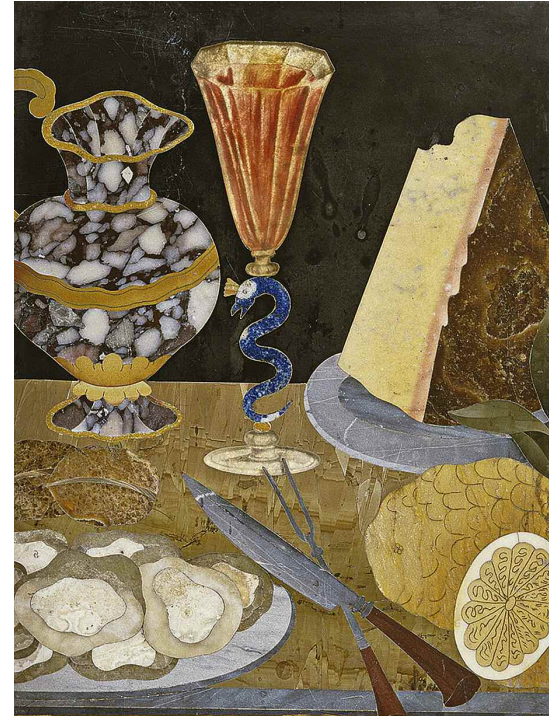
This corner cabinet, which is completely original, is the only one of its kind in Europe. The name refers to the 758 plates integrated in the wall decor made of commesso (an expensive technique of piecing together cut stone to form works of art practiced in the court workshops of Florence) and imitation commesso in



Scagliola. The cabinet also features reverse glass paintings and panels made of different materials. The room, which was begun no earlier than 1719, presumably as a lacquer cabinet, was not yet completed in 1729. The margravine deepened her knowledge of the commesso technique during a visit to her brother-in-law in Florence, where she likely saw the sepulchral chapel of the Medici covered with commesso panels at the Basilica di San Lorenzo.

Above the painted lacquer panels in the dados, there are eight mirrored sections, composed of many small rhombuses, each of which covers a miniature image—including colored engravings, and gouache on parchment and ivory. Two of these images are attributed to the Ismael Mengs, the miniature painter from Dresden (1688–

Florentine cabinet

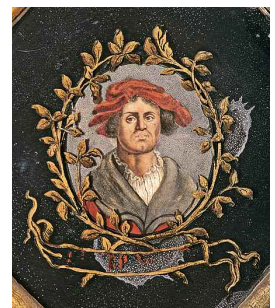


Pietra dura: still life with carafe, cheese, and oysters in the Florentine cabinet, circa 1720

1764), in the inventory from 1772. They are bordered by flower relief panels made of glass and soapstone and an additional frame of round commesso images alternating with small panels. In the center of these two mirrored areas are the coat of arms of Baden and the alliance coat of arms. Reverse glass painting and mirrored inlays in the ceiling, as well as a Scagliola floor with deceptively real “dropped” playing cards, a chess board, and a little mouse complete the tremendous richness of the materials used here.

The miniature images primarily depict European painters, sculptors, engravers, and architects from antiquity to the modern period, typically based on Joachim von Sandrart’s book of artists, “Teutsche Academie der Bau-, Bild- und Mahlerey-Künste” (German Academy of Architecture, Graphic Arts, and Painting), Nuremberg 1675–1680. Looking at the smaller mirrored surfaces, you can see rulers from antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the early modern period, all of them from the Hapsburg dynasty.

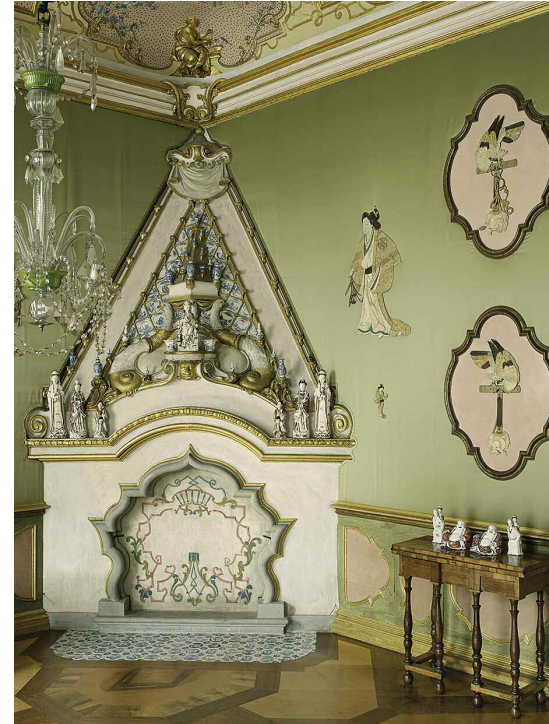
Miniature painting by Matthias Grünewald in the Florentine cabinet



The margravine raised her son herself, although contemporary ideas expected a young royal to be “taken away from the women” and raised by a court official when he was six or seven years old. With the images in the cabinet, she introduced the young prince to various virtuous ideals. Chiron, educator of princes from antiquity, watched over him, and the miniature images of artists allowed him to develop his taste and cosmopolitan spirit. His mother may have told him of the great paradigm of such a gallery of images, the row of self-portraits in the Uffizi in Florence. In preparation for his future role as a sovereign, he learned to see himself as a successor to the rulers of antiquity and particularly of the imperial dynasty of the Hapsburgs, with whom he was related through his relationship to the House of Zähringen and connected by their shared Catholic faith.

Thus, this exciting room is a unique combination of a lacquer cabinet and a hall of mirrors, a cabinet of curiosities, a gallery of miniatures, and a gallery of artists and dynasties. As in other rooms in the bel étage, the margravine used both older paragons and contemporary works from various areas of influence to create her own unique concept for the room.

Antechamber to the Florentine cabinet



Green Bedroom with mantelpiece and Japanese figurines on framed hard stucco cartouches

Antechamber to the Florentine cabinet

This room marks the start of the private part of the prince's apartment. Its original function is not known, but given the passage to the state bedroom, as in the margravine's apartment, we can assume that it was the bedroom actually used for sleeping. The ceiling fresco continues the theme of the antechamber with its depictions of Minerva, Juno, and Jupiter, forming a strange contrast with the Chinese wallpaper, which was most likely added later.

Green Bedroom

The second room in the private apartment has an even stronger East Asian character. Extremely subtly relieved Japanese figurines are affixed to the green renovated silk wall coverings and the pink, framed cartouches of hard stucco. They are made of pressed papier mâché covered with leather and, in some cases, with brocade. Writing on the backs testifies to their origin in Kyoto, where they were likely intended as decoration for screens

Japanese figurines, papier mâché, covered with brocade and leather, end of the 17th century

