

König Ludwig II

Interests in ancient Germanic legends

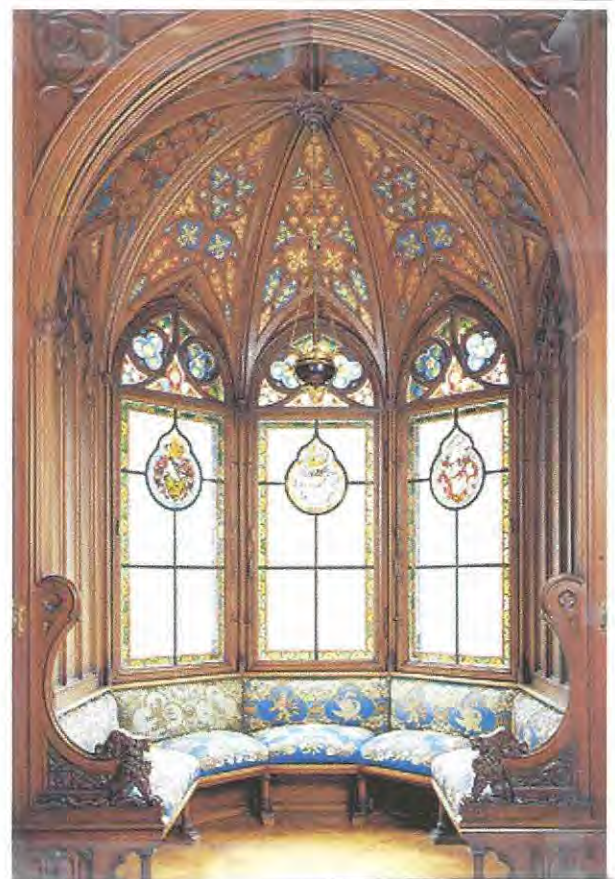
“Schwanenritter” / “Swan Knight”

In Neuschwanstein the late romantic concept of restoration, which makes a further appearance in 1883 in Ludwig's plans for Falkenstein Castle, is combined with the idea of a new castle of the swan knight Lohengrin. The knight's heraldic animal, the swan, had already featured as a leitmotif in the castle built by Ludwig's father, a building which had had a substantial influence on the development of Ludwig's artistic tastes. The swan was also the historic heraldic animal of the knights of Schwangau. Maximilian saw himself as their successor and adopted their coat of arms. His son followed suit, and the swan thus also features as a heraldic animal in Neuschwanstein; it is sometimes used in combination with the medieval coat of arms of the Pfalzgraf bei Rhein, a title still held by Ludwig, and the lozengy of the royal coat-of-arms of Bavaria.

Ludwig II had been familiar with the [Lohengrin legend](#) since he was a child from the murals of his father's castle. He was introduced to Wagner's "Lohengrin" on 2 February 1861 in the Munich Court Opera House and was captivated. Thus, in the course of time, Ludwig II came to see himself in typically romantic fashion as both a real knight of Schwangau and the fictitious swan knight Lohengrin, while always remaining fully conscious of himself as the ruling king of Bavaria.

THE LIVING - ROOM

Passing an artificial Grotto (by A. Dirrigl, Munich) you enter the King's living-room. Divided by two columns, it consists of the big saloon and a smaller corner, the so-called swan corner. The paintings again represent a saga, this time scenes of Richard Wagner's opera "Lohengrin" (painters: Professors Hauschild and Heckel, Munich). Above the stove: Lohengrin's arrival in Antwerp. On the opposite side: The miracle of the Holy Grail, Lohengrin's vocation as fighter for Elsa of Brabant. More of the Lohengrin saga is to be seen in the swan corner. On the stove stands a big flower vase of Nymphenburg china in the shape of a swan, the favorite animal of Ludwig II. Almost in every room of the castle the swan motive appears in varying forms. Paintings on the doors of the big bookcase, in a romanesque style, show legends of "Tristan and Isolde", "Parzifal" and the "Nibelungen saga" (by F. Piloty). The chandelier, of gilded brass, has 48 candles. The ornaments on the chandeliers and on the columns are made of coloured Bohemian glass. In the arch of the ceiling we see arms of all families connected with the Lohengrin saga. Blue silk coverings and curtains are embroidered with the motive of the swan.



Oriel in the bedroom: stained glass windows with the Wittelsbach, Bavarian and Schwangau coats of arms, upholstery embroidered with crowns, lions, swans and lilies