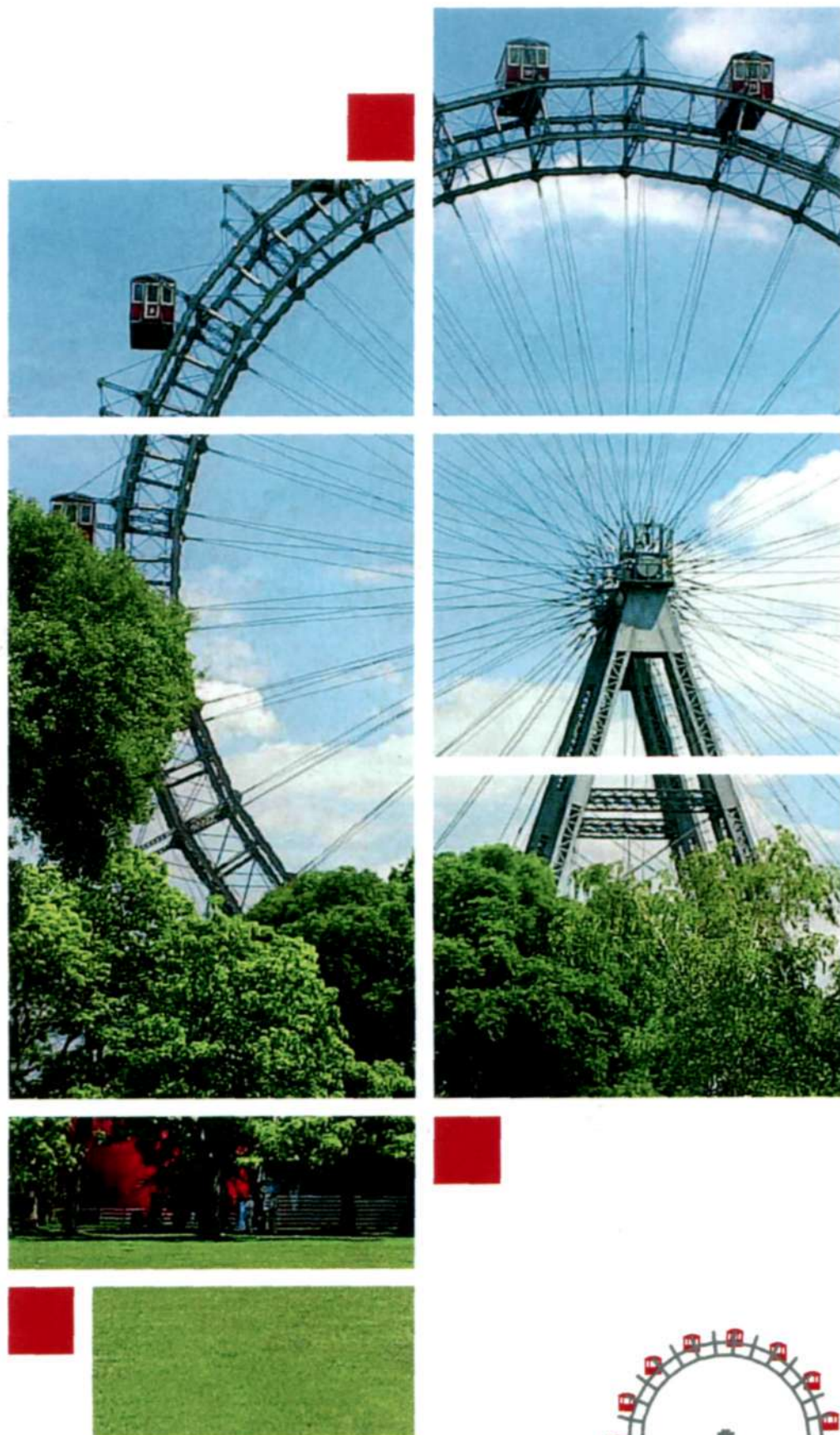


Be carried away by tradition.



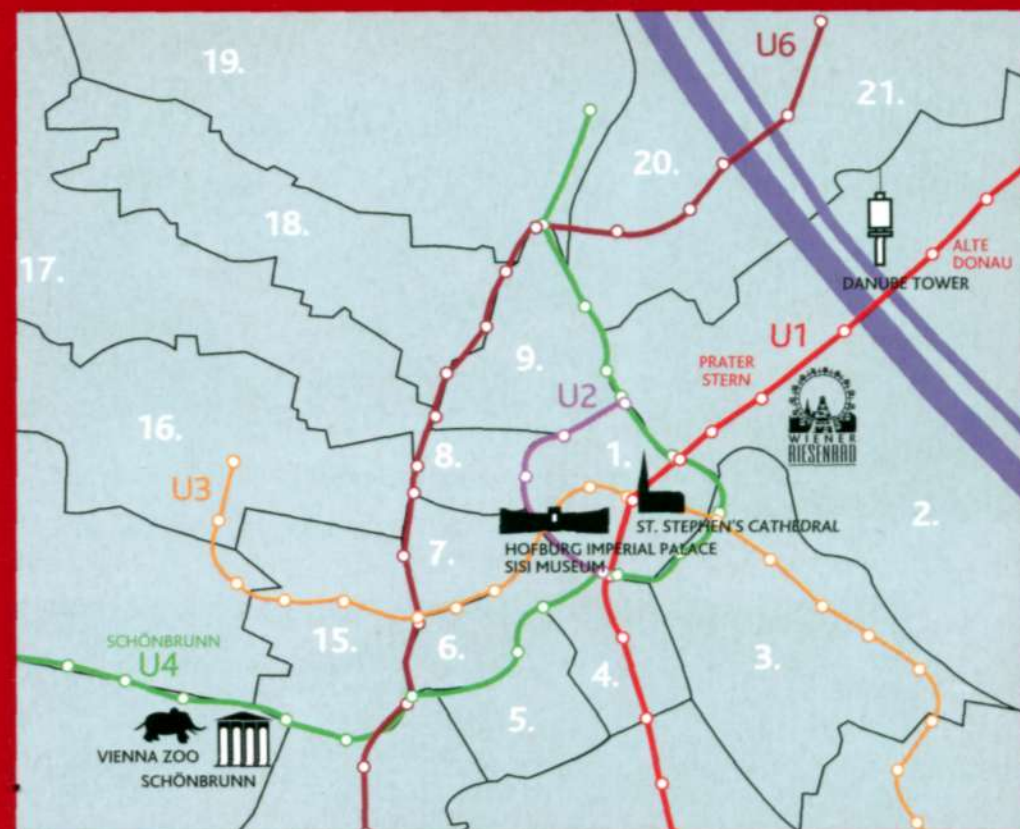
RIDING THE WHEEL OF TIME.

Entertainment and tradition
two times.

Visit the Giant Ferris Wheel and the
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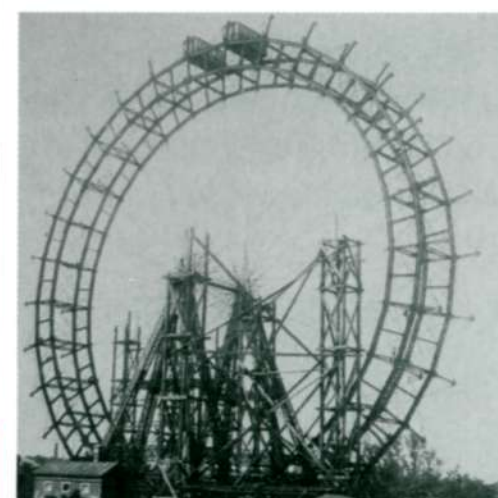
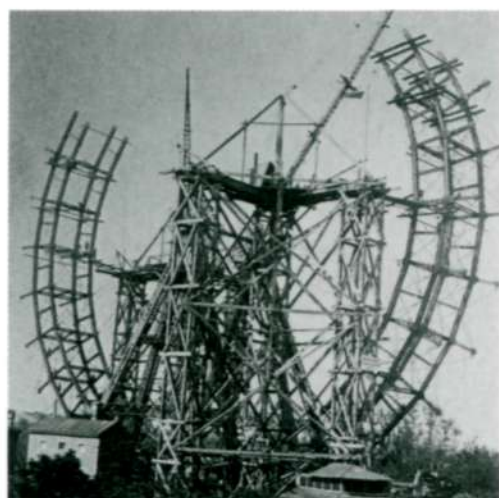
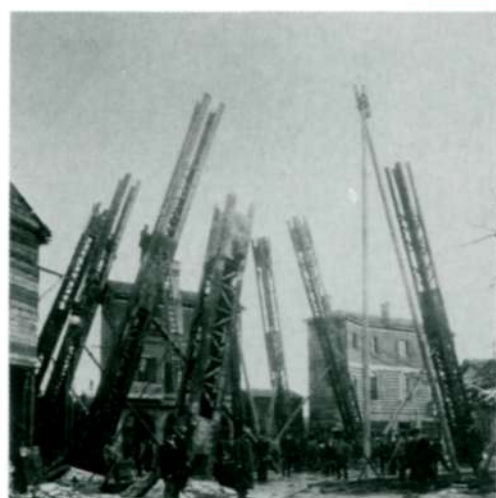
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Partners:



The Prater and the Giant Ferris Wheel – a Viennese story.

How an imperial hunting ground became a key landmark of Vienna.



Emperor Joseph II opened the Prater in Vienna, one of Vienna's most popular leisure areas with a world-famous amusement park, to the public in 1766. Before that, the Prater had been an imperial hunting ground for centuries, with first historical mention dating back to the years 1162 and 1403. As early as in the first year it opened, numerous innkeepers, coffee brewers, and pastry cooks set up their establishments in the Prater, and the first merry-go-rounds went into operation. Originally for the diversion for the working classes, over the decades the Prater developed into a place that also offered entertainment for a more discerning audience. The amusement area "Venice in Vienna", established in 1895 and featuring a lagoon city modeled after Venice, Italy and real gondolas attracted visitors from all social backgrounds. The public enjoyed fairs, dances, and spectacular fireworks as well as opera concerts conducted by Johann Strauss father and son, Lanner, Ziehrer, and Lehar.

In 1896, the English engineer Walter B. Basset bore the idea to construct a Giant Ferris Wheel in "Venice in Vienna", which in the meantime had become famous throughout the monarchy. The company of Walter

B. Basset had already built such "giant wheels", which enjoyed immense popularity, in London and Blackpool. After initial resistance by the respective authorities a building permit, subject to stringent regulations, was issued and construction began in November 1896. After just eight months, the final spike was driven into the structure of the wheel during a grand celebration commemorating the 60-year crown jubilee of Queen Victoria of England.

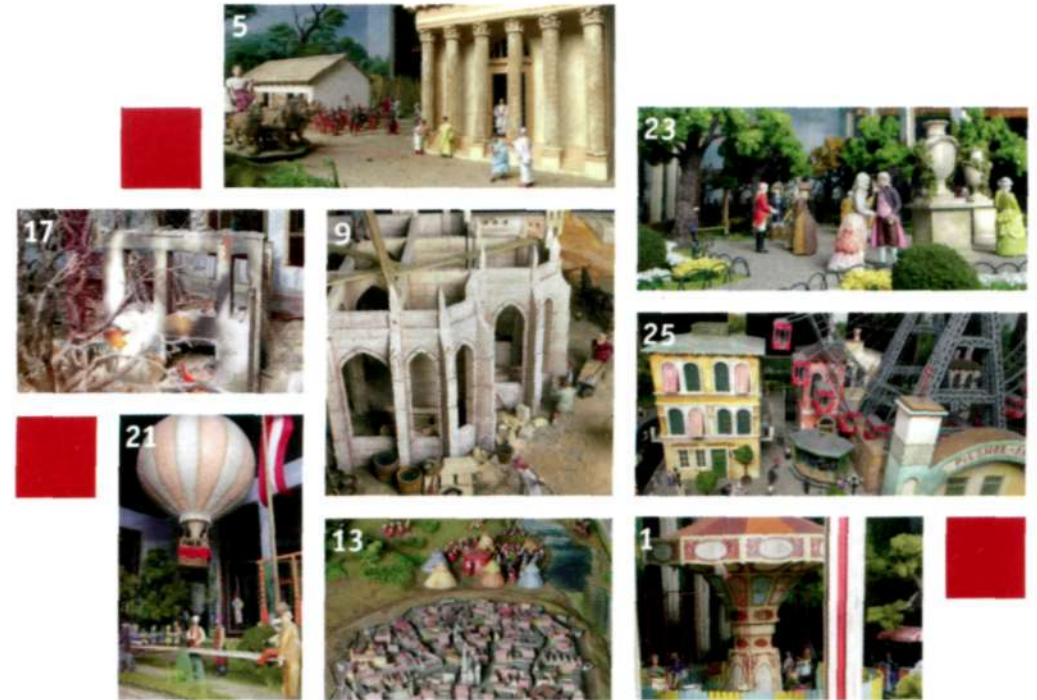
After the engineers in charge successfully completed a number of test rides, the Giant Ferris Wheel was finally opened to the public on July 3, 1897. 30 cabins with 20 seats each drew crowds of Viennese wanting to marvel at their city from 65 meters above ground. The strong economic upswing in the monarchy, the 50-year crown jubilee of Emperor Francis Joseph I, and the World's Fair in 1898 as well as the outrageous stunts of brave artists on the cabin roofs kept attracting masses of visitors. During World War I, the Giant Ferris Wheel was closed for operation from 1914 until 1916, as ordered by authorities. In 1915, a new land-owner even demanded the demolition of the Giant Ferris Wheel. Since the owners were not able to pay for the costs of razing, the Giant Ferris

Learn about the history of Vienna – Visit the cabins at the bottom of the Giant Ferris Wheel.



Wheel was impounded and auctioned off in 1918. During the final days of World War II, the Giant Ferris Wheel was badly damaged when a fire destroyed all 30 cabins and the operational facilities. Although Vienna at that time was reduced to rubble and ash and fraught with pain and suffering, the Giant Ferris Wheel was reconstructed in record time, and operations commenced again on May 25, 1947.

After 100 years of existence, the Giant Ferris Wheel in Vienna is still a magnet for visitors. A venue in numerous movies, such as "The Third Man" or the James Bond film "The Living Daylights", it is known all over the world as a key landmark of Vienna. To put it into the words of a Viennese song: „Du liebes Riesenrad wirst alles übersteh'n und dich noch hundert Jahr als Glücksrad dreh'n.“ (“Dear Giant Ferris Wheel, you will survive everything and turn another one-hundred years as wheel of fortune”).



Roman Times [5] The settlement of Vindobona is established. Marcus Aurelius travels through the countryside by horse-drawn carriage. He ruled the area when the Prater wetlands were still a wild riverine landscape. **The Middle Ages [9]** Medieval Vienna is marked by the construction of St. Stephen's Cathedral and the Prater is still far beyond the city gates. **Turkish Wars [13]** The Prater becomes the scene of military conflict in Vienna in the 17th century, the cavalry of Polish king Jan Sobieski comes to the rescue with Polish cavalry attacking from Kahlenberg mountain. **The Age of Enlightenment [23]** In 1766, Joseph II opens the Prater to the public; the imperial hunting ground becomes a huge entertainment park and remains a European attraction to the present day. **Biedermeier [21]** The Prater is the kingdom of the ordinary people as dance and music lead the way into the first half of the 19th century. **World's Fair and Venice in Vienna [25]** The illusion landscape "Venice in Vienna" is constructed at the entrance of the Prater as part of the World's Fair. Of the many attractions, only the Giant Ferris Wheel has survived the passage of time. **Fin de Siecle [1]** The Prater becomes a literary setting, the first car races take place in the main alley. Vienna at the turn of the century is a truly cosmopolitan city, in which the Prater is both a place of abundant enjoyment and discreet adventure. **The Roaring Twenties to the Throes of World War II [17]** The ideal world of the Prater suffers destruction. Nevertheless, nothing can permanently destroy the "Wurschtl", the symbol for the vibrancy of the Prater. And the Giant Ferris Wheel keeps on turning...