

Best practice – rural touristic object Jaunpils Castle in Latvia

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Tools for Trainers

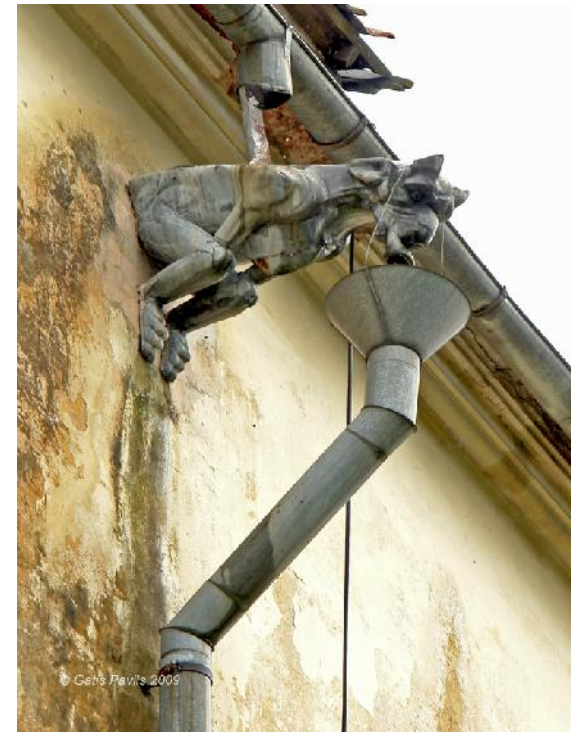


Before:

- **1301** - the starting point of the medieval castle of Master of Livonian order from 14-th century in Jaunpils, mentioned in historical sources; the master of Livonian order at that time was Gotfried von Roga (1298-1306). The castle was a helping hand to the comturey of Dobeles. The castle had stone walls which were rendered and in some places are up to 2.1 m thick. Jaunpils castle served as fortress and residence for a small military unit, order's monks, and aged knights belonging to the Livonian order. It was a long journey full of adventurous stories lasting 6 centuries till the first revolution in Latvia in 1905.
- **20th Century** - In the dead of the night on December 24, **1905**, revolutionists set fire to Jaunpils castle. In one night's time the castle which had proudly stood more than five centuries was completely destroyed.
 - 1907**- The reconstruction project of the castle developed by German architect George August was commenced.
 - 1919** - The family of Reke departed to Germany.During the period of the first independency in Latvia the castle building was used for livestock breeding.
 - In the **60s-70s** the last reconstruction was carried out in the castle - the premises for the needs of livestock breeding experiment station were built. There was a piece of art called "Madonna with the Child" found in the castle hall under lime plaster.
 - 1997** - The castle becomes a property of the local government.

Now:

- **21st Century** – In the year **2003** a new era for the medieval castle in Jaunpils started. By that time it was just stone walls, soviet style furniture, old mill, church and a few inhabitants of neighboring houses. The renewal has come to being thanks to the enthusiasm, vitality and abilities of the young entrepreneur Arita who lived in a settlement not far from the place.
- In order to run management of the castle the local authority (p/a) “Jaunpils” was established in **2003**. Within the structure of this local government there are such units as museum, culture centre, library and SIA(Ltd) “Jaunpils pils”, which deals with hotels, organizes excursions, banquets, and other activities. Jaunpils castle takes active part in activities organized by Association of Latvian Castles, Palaces and Manors. Having participated in the action “Visit Castles and Palaces in Latvia!” (“Apceļosim Latvijas pilis un muižas”) Jaunpils castle was nominated “The Most Hospitable Castle” and “The Best Guides”.



More about recent developments:

- **Touristic program - deeping into the medieval times**
- It started with ordinary excursions, but attractive ones, with fantasy and zest. Highly satisfied consumers – tourists have shared quickly positive information about the object. By that time a demand for that kind of products was quite high. Soon part of the castle rooms were rebuilt to a medieval style hotel. It offers not only overnight stops but also participation in original shows – meeting ghosts, a night in the Princess room.
- Enthusiasts have rebuilt the former room of the eating-house to the present Tavern of medieval style with medieval menu. An attractive special offer was created: Medieval Meal that can be eaten using only fingers.
- The Medieval Castle Museum was opened, part of the exhibited items were found on the territory of the Castle, others were collected by enthusiasts.



More:

- In the very beginning of the business there was a web page created with all information about the Castle and services on its territory. Content of the web page: information about the place, excursions, services for individual leisure and corporative events, news. The fact, that it was undertaken as a first step of business start, is to be pointed out. A great attention was given to the promotion of the product via touristic centers, mass media, publicity agencies, regional centers.
- The most challenging part was keeping up the touristic interest to the Castle. With this purpose, new services, new ideas of excursions, entertainment events, attractions were developed.

The T4T project team visiting Jaunpils castle, 2017



Thematic medieval excursions

To experience Jaunpils castle's medieval atmosphere, the little guests as well as grown-ups are offered various excursion programs with theatrical elements, medieval characters and interactive activities.

- **Little monks (For children in pre-school to grade 6)**
- Each child will become a pupil of a real medieval school, and will be dressed up as a little monk. The teachers and parents will come to be other medieval characters. A monk and his servant will teach the little students the secrets of building a castle, the symbolism of architectural details, court manners, lady virtues and wielding knightly armament. Investigative excursions will take place in the courtyard, tower and the wine cellar. The event will conclude with an old cannon salvo in honour of the guests.
- **An invitation from the Keeper of the Keys (For adults, and children grades 6-12)**
- While the Baron is away, all the keys of the castle are trusted to the Keeper of the Keys, so she can introduce the visitors to the history of the knights castle, the inner court regalement, the deeds and misdeeds of the barons and other courtiers, as well as medieval methods of upbringing. The visitors will have a unique opportunity to take up medieval arms against an evil spirit in the wine cellar. The event is concluded with an old Swedish cannon salvo.

More excursions

- [A Medieval Monk's Stories](#) (A jolly trip into the Middle Ages for those over 16)
- It is a great and mischievous adventure together with Theodor the Monk, his Servant girl and a Troubadour and his love songs. During the journey visitors will learn medieval traditions, give a knight's oath and practice the male and female art of wielding weapons. Minezinger's romantic Dante sonnets will accompany the journey; in the wine cellar guests will be able to empty their wine goblets in honour of their new knighthood and their sweethearts. The journey will conclude with a cannon salvo in honour of the guests! The monk and his entourage are a great addition to your banquets, seminars and other events.
- [Night excursion to the castle cellars](#). The excursion will take the visitors to the ancient and mysterious cellars, possibly encountering the friendly castle ghost on the way; guests and the castle household sometimes see him fooling around.
- [Wedding excursion](#). The Rose Lady and her squire will welcome the Newlyweds and their guests. They will not only give advice to newlyweds about how to build a love castle, keep warmth in the home hearth and maintain a romantic relationship, but also about the virtues of the knights and their sweethearts. Words of love, a toast at the baron's wine cellar and an old cannon salvo – all in honour of the lovers!

Medieval wedding

- “Medieval wedding” / a journey into the Middle Ages. The Lady of the Castle, Chamberlain and the Troubadour welcome the newlyweds and their guests; they accompany them on a journey into the Middle Ages and introduce them to the traditions and virtues of the time. The bride will learn the vows of an ideal wife, and the groom will practise his mind and his hand at the fine art of handling the knights’ armoury and caring for his wife. After saying “I do” the Newlyweds will say the ancient oaths to each other and taste a Love Drink from the royal castle goblet. The journey will be filled with court toasts; guests will be able to enjoy wine from the castle cellars accompanied by love songs. The journey will conclude with a cannon salvo in honour of the Newlyweds! The “Medieval wedding” is also suitable for wedding anniversaries.
- Besides the excursions the range of other services for tourists has extended: it is possible to have a wedding ceremony and wedding parties in special wedding apartments, banquets, festivities, such as Latvian traditional Ligo, Christmas parties, medieval tourneys, markets, presenting handcrafted works and traditional products. There are rooms for seminars and conferences.

Current service proposal includes:

- Weddings, seminars, banquets, event management, entertainment, excursions, accommodation, lodgings for the night, museum, extra offers.
- **event management offers**
- Medieval ages in Jaunpils Castle; Medieval feasts in Jaunpils Castle; The Lively Ball of the Devil's Servants; Munchausen's Ball of True Lies; The forging of lucky coins, Medieval entertainment
- **Extra offers**
- Yard decoration with candles or torches
- Room decoration - florist
- Fireworks Medieval meal
- Room rent
- Serving pork at the midnight ceremony
- Shoot with a cannon
- Car guarding
- Babysitter at night
- Musical setting
- Quest room "The Night of Legends"
- Workshop for children

