



No portion of this article may be reproduced without
express written permission of Style Publishing Group, LLC.
©2007 • All rights reserved.



Style Publishing Group
P.O. Box 1676
Frisco, Texas 75034
Phone: 972.335.1181
Toll Free: 877.781.7067
Fax: 214.722.2313
E-mail: info@friscostyle.com
Web: www.friscostyle.com

Ad Sales: (972) 335-1306



Gourd buffalo & Entrants in the Annual International Pumpkin Contest

photos by Garry Beckham



Pumpkinfest

By Garry Beckham

WHILE ON A TRIP to visit our youngest daughter, Jill, and her son, Lucas, in Stuttgart, Germany, we were very lucky to experience the annual “Pumpkin Festival” at the Ludwigsburg Palace. We were also very surprised to discover the theme of the 2006 Pumpkin Festival-- “The American Southwest.” Can you imagine longhorn steers, cows, cowboys, chickens, horses, totem poles and even cactuses created from colorful pumpkins and gourds?

Jill is a teacher with the U.S. Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DODDS), which are schools for military children in Stuttgart. She suggested the outing and drove us to Ludwigsburg, a town of about 85,000 people. Ludwigsburg is approximately 10 miles north of Stuttgart and is nestled along the Neckar River, a tributary of the famous Rhine River. While the Stuttgart public transportation system is very good and the subway/train system is easily

accessible from most of the city to the Ludwigsburg City Hauptbahnhof (main train station) we chose to experience the countryside. We parked in an area on the south side of the Palace which also housed a garden and play area for children. Our grandson, Lucas, loved running in the park and climbing on the wooden playground equipment on the Palace grounds.

The Ludwigsburg Palace is also known as the Residential Palace of Duke Eberhard Ludwig of the state of Württemberg and was built between 1704 and 1733. The “Residenz,” as it is known in German, has 452 rooms that fill the 28 buildings surrounded by many acres of ponds, flowers, trees and hedges. This palace is one of the greatest, if not the greatest, German baroque palaces and has earned the name of “Swabian Versailles.”

Swabian (Schwäbisch) is one of the dialects of High German, spoken in the region of Swabia which covers much of Germany’s southwestern state of Baden-

Württemberg (including the capital Stuttgart and the rural area known as the Swabian Alb) and the southwest of Bavaria. Swabian is also spoken by part of the German minorities in Hungary, former Yugoslavia, Romania and the former Soviet Union.

Many diplomatic meetings are still conducted in the Palace, in addition to many cultural events held in the Palace theatre and assembly rooms. Ludwigsburg Palace is surrounded by a scenic park, which includes a portrait gallery of the rulers of Württemberg along with their burial vaults, a state art gallery, regional museums and a theater. The gardens are also built in the baroque style and date back to the early 1700s. The massive gardens are known as “blossoming baroque” and attract thousands of visitors annually, especially in the spring.

As we approached the fabulous Palace, the huge south royal garden with a small lake and fountain jumped out at us. It



was spectacular! As we walked through the lush gardens, filled with seasonal fall flowers, hedges, gourds and pumpkins, we saw small remote controlled boats in the rippling fountain pond. Lucas was thrilled and awestruck as the boats zoomed past him and kicked up a small tidal wave that splashed us all.

At the beginning of each season, new flowers are planted to provide a spectacular sight and a romantic fragrance throughout the huge Palace park. The fall colors from the trees and bushes surrounding the Palace are a beautiful backdrop for the Palace's garden. Depending upon the season at Ludwigsburg, the assortment of flowers and shrubs that flourish on the grounds may include pink and white cranesbills, roses of several colors, sweat peas, geraniums of all sorts, white bacopa, petunias, monardas, annual salvi, white verbenas and many more.

The fall colors from the trees and bushes surrounding the Palace are a beautiful backdrop for the Palace's garden.

After admiring magnificent flower arrangements and enjoying the sunny fall day in the south garden, we headed to the north garden to take in the festival and food displays. The closer we came to the huge Palace, more and more pumpkins became visible. On the walkway were vendors of traditional German items, an ice cream kiosk and places to pose for pictures. Most of the walkways were lined with small pumpkins. The American



Preserving Your Pumpkin

If you have ever carved a pumpkin, you know the life of a jack-o-lantern isn't that long. However, some techniques that will help preserve your master artwork after carving is to soak the gourd in a bathtub with a half pint of Clorox bleach. Put the pumpkin in the bathtub face down for a couple of hours. The pumpkin will absorb water and the Clorox will help keep fungus from growing. After a couple of hours, take the pumpkin out of the tub and let it drain. Next put a thin layer of petroleum jelly on the cut edges and then very gently put a light coat of paste wax on the rest of the orange globe. Hopefully you will extend the life of your fall art object for at least two or three weeks and not have it turn into orange mush within a few days.



Gourd totem pole (left); American Indian on a gourd horse (center); Ludwigsburg Palace and gardens (right)



photos by Garry Beckham

Southwest pumpkin art appeared as we walked down a small asphalt path that was outlined with trees and beds of flowers.

On the very north side of the Palace, the huge pumpkins that were entered in the Annual International Pumpkin Contest could be seen. They looked very large even from a distance. These enormous balls of pumpkin pie filling were over 800 pounds and a small tractor was needed to move them. The sight of the many colors and the sizes of these huge garden vegetables left us amazed. Lucas wanted to take one home.

The event was really great for children. Not only did Lucas get to see the fabulous displays of pumpkin art, but he played in a haystack, rode a small gage train, floated on a boat ride in a rolling man-made flume and played with German children.

We spent about five hours in the gardens and exhibit areas. For lunch we enjoyed traditional German food, homemade apple cider, beer and wine, and a special treat of, you guessed it, pumpkin soup! Most of us liked the slightly warmed orange concoction, except for Lucas who liked the brotwürst (German hotdog), brotchens (hard roll) and pretzels better.

Approximately 450 different kinds of

pumpkins and gourds were on display, all colorful and intriguing. The Ludwigsburg Pumpkin Fest is an annual international event that attracts thousands of pumpkin viewers and contestants from all over the world with a total of more than 500,000 objects to admire. The fest runs from the end of August to the first of November. The 2007 event is scheduled from late August to November 3rd.

These enormous balls of pumpkin pie filling were over 800 pounds and a small tractor was needed to move them.

Ludwigsburg is very close to Stuttgart which is located in the southwest portion of Germany. We flew into Stuttgart's small international airport from Atlanta. Other interesting sites we were able to see while in the Stuttgart area included: the brand new Mercedes-Benz Museum, the Porche Museum, the Wilhelma Zoo and Botanical

Garden, Ritter Sport candy factory, the Hohenzollern Castle (about 20 miles southwest of Stuttgart), Weil der Stadt (a tiny walled village and home to Kepler's small museum) and the two plazas near the main cathedral in the center of town: Karl Wagner Platz (plaza) and Charlotte Platz (an area filled with restaurants, pubs, and shopping). We found the public transportation very easy to use and visited most of the aforementioned places, except for the Hollenzollern Castle, by public transportation.

We found the German people to be friendly and very helpful, especially when we were lost. The Ludwigsburg Palace Pumpkin Festival was a great event for all of us, and I highly recommend it for all fall visitors to Stuttgart and Germany.

Garry Beckham is a Plano resident and special contributor.

Mr. Beckham is our first special contributor to share his vacation with Frisco STYLE Magazine readers. Submit your most interesting vacation to editor@stylepublishing.com in a 150-word synopsis and if selected we will publish it in a future issue. In December read about an exciting sailing trip in the Bahamas.