

KING-OTTO Dripstone Cave



First I want to say hello on behalf of the tourist association of Velburg. Please don't touch the stones, because on our fingers there's fat. The fat stays on the stones and so the stones won't grow for years.

A stone in an alluvial cave needs 3 to 5 years to grow for one millimeter. Now I'd like to explain the genesis of the cave:

The rocks and stones around Velburg belong geologically to the so called "Fränkische Jura". The rocks consist of calcareous stone, also called lime stone and were formed about 175 millions of years ago from the deposits of the "Jurassic See". Caused by the receding water of the Jurassic see, funnel shaped open caves were formed, which appear all over this area. Not as often are alluvial caves, as the King-Otto-Cave.

This stones arise this way:

Outside the cave rain water and carbonic dioxide go together. Carbonic acid is built. The acid water gets through the ground and the stone. In the stone it dissolves the lime stone and extremely small lime crystals are deposited at the ceiling and on the bottom of the cave.

Stones growing from the ceiling to the bottom are called stalactites'. Stones growing from the bottom upwards are called stalagmites.

When stalactite's and stalagmites grow together might pillars are formed.



The King-Otto-Cave was discovered by a shepherd called Peter Federl, who lived in St. Coloman, the small village down the hill. He was on the hill above with his sheep, when his dog ran into a fox's den. He followed the dog and discovered this beautiful cave.

It happened on 30th September 1895 on the names day of the Bavarian king Otto, a brother of King Ludwig II., who built all the famous castles as Neuschwanstein and Linderhof. Therefore the cave was called King-Otto-Cave.

In 1954 electricity was installed. Before that torches and magnesium light were used and covered the stones with a fine layer of soot, so that the stone now seem to be black.

In the cave you need some phantasy. On our tour we are able to see nice and interesting things in some of the stones:

- Castle Neuschwanstein
- an Owl
- mother Marie with the child
- Buddha
- Frog driven by the fan from the Flintstones
- lounges and a heart
- Bavarian sausages – bloodwurst and liverwurst

After this we come to the so called treasure room, with a small lake.

In the showcase we can see bones of a cave bear. They were found in the cave, when the paths were made. Some of the bones also were found in caves in the Hohenfels training area of the US-Army. The bears really got very tall - such as 3-4 meters.

You see also:

- Parts of a jaw
- Bones of hands and feet
- Bones of fingers
- Teeth
- Head of a bear
- Pelvis of a deer

Now we come to the Kuhngrotte, and you see:

- two stones growing together – it will last about 20 years until they really get together.
- Camel with a rider
- Snow-white and the seven dwarfs – one of the dwarfs ran away, he hides himself in the new part of the cave.
- Hippopotamus
- Frog

A further part of the cave was discovered on 2nd December 1972. It's called Adventhall and it's opened to tourists since 1977. It was rendered accessible through a long passage. Here you can see the original colours of the rocks which are sometimes coloured brownish by embedded metals like iron ore.

All this new part of the cave was filled with water during hundreds of years; there were formed pearl-like formations under water. The water line is still perceptible underneath the ceiling. In early historical times some parts of the ceiling fell down, probably caused by an earthquake. The big stalagmites on these tumbled parts and the mighty pillars show that this occurred very long ago.

The air moisture in the cave is very high; the temperature is always round 8 degrees centigrade. Therefore bats like to use the cave as winter quarters. We created special holes to let them in.

Ceiling: in the new Adventhall you see:

- Young stalactites up to 200 years – hollow
- Corkscrew
- Hamster
- Leaning tower of Pisa
- The Bavarian Lion King
- Ivory Tower of the never-ending story
- Tower of a cathedral
- Garden of cactuses
- Two hands of a witches
- Toilet brushes of the Flintstones

