

Dresden World Heritage Site:

A Baroque City, Risen From The Ashes

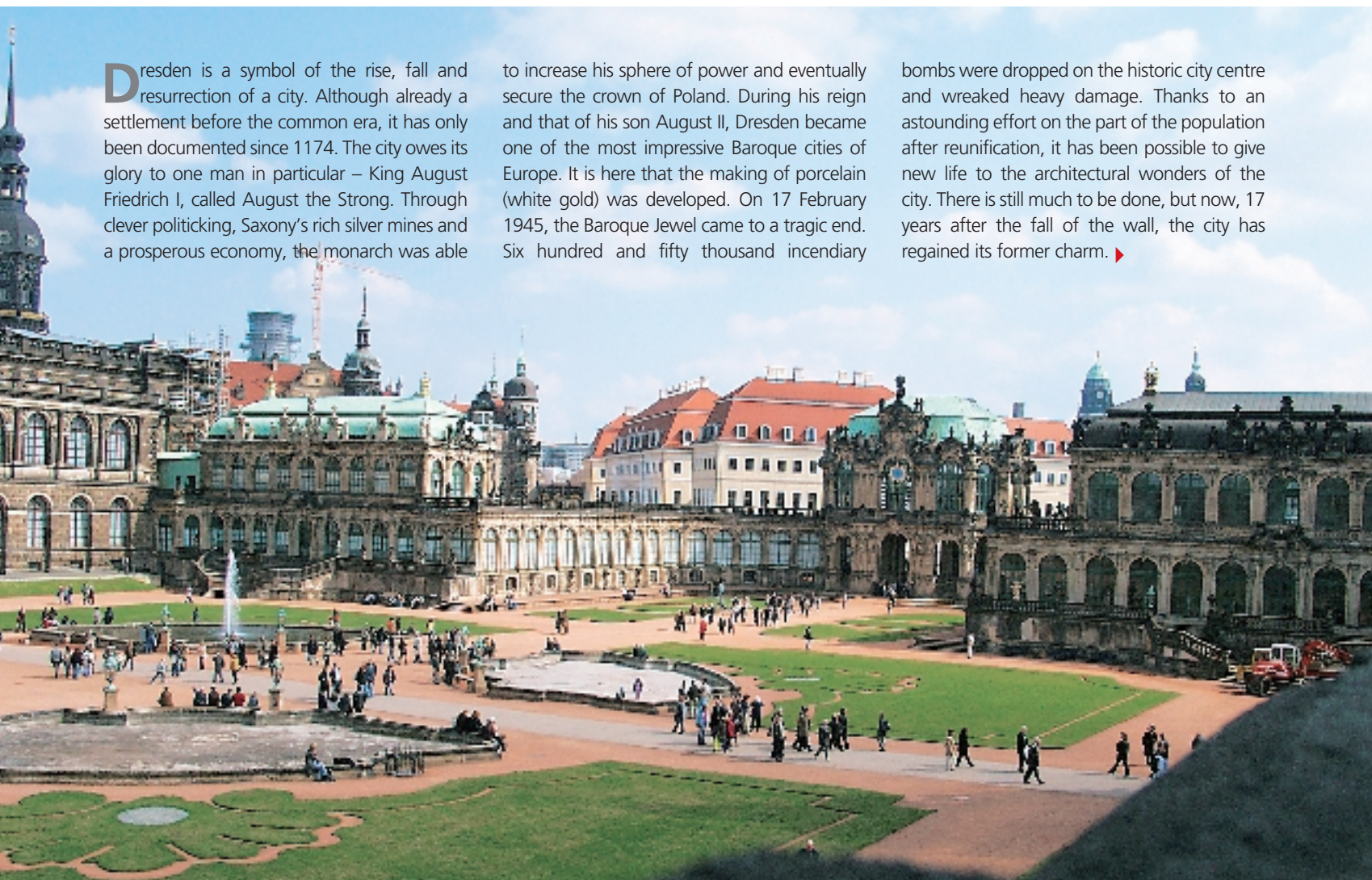
> Dresden-Armin Gemmer
Cover photo by: Christoph Muench

Dresden is considered one of the most beautiful cities of Europe. The silhouette of the Promenade of Dresden was declared a World Heritage Site in 2004. The Green Vault in the Castle where the Saxon Crown Jewels are displayed, the so-called Zwinger and the Semper Opera Building are renowned throughout the world. Much was destroyed in the Second World War. Now, however, almost 20 years after the reunification of the two Germanys, the historic buildings have attained their former glory and can be visited once again.

Dresden is a symbol of the rise, fall and resurrection of a city. Although already a settlement before the common era, it has only been documented since 1174. The city owes its glory to one man in particular – King August Friedrich I, called August the Strong. Through clever politicking, Saxony's rich silver mines and a prosperous economy, the monarch was able

to increase his sphere of power and eventually secure the crown of Poland. During his reign and that of his son August II, Dresden became one of the most impressive Baroque cities of Europe. It is here that the making of porcelain (white gold) was developed. On 17 February 1945, the Baroque Jewel came to a tragic end. Six hundred and fifty thousand incendiary

bombs were dropped on the historic city centre and wreaked heavy damage. Thanks to an astounding effort on the part of the population after reunification, it has been possible to give new life to the architectural wonders of the city. There is still much to be done, but now, 17 years after the fall of the wall, the city has regained its former charm. ▶



Inside the «Zwinger»

من داخل زوينغر



Semper Opera House

دار الأوبرا

The Brühl Terrace – The Balcony of Europe

Like the clasp of a necklace, the Brühl Terrace links the baroque ensemble of buildings on the banks of the Elbe. Here Brühl whose name still adorns the terrace rearranged a palace in 1739 with a "Lustgarten" which has been open to the public since 1814. Since then, numerous architectural works of art and fountains have been erected. The "Belvedere" and "Reale" were the first prominent coffee houses - hence the nickname "Balcony of Europe".

Frauenkirche

The Frauenkirche is not only a milestone in the history of baroque architecture, but through its destruction and reconstruction in cooperation with the one-time enemy, it has become a symbol of freedom throughout the world. Even the pilots who were instrumental in the destruction helped to rebuild it. Originally inspired by domes in Rome and Florence, the building was designed in 1726 by Gottfried Bär. Since the site on which the building was to stand was limited in size, the proportions of the Italian buildings could not be copied. A tower-like dome and a rectangular layout was the solution. The world's largest sandstone church was at the same time the most important construction of the baroque period as it combines elements of Classicism with Baroque.

Semper Opera House

Many come to Dresden just to see the Semper Opera House. The building with two-storey arcades in the form of arches is considered a masterpiece of neo-renaissance architecture. Statues of famous poets and writers decorate the outer façade. Particularly imposing is the bronze sculpture of Dionysos and a quadriga pulled by panthers located high above the portal. Opera lovers claim that the acoustics in the four steep tiers are better than in the Scala of Milan. If you want to experience this in person, make sure you order your tickets early. Performances in the Semper opera are sold out very early – sometimes a year in advance.

The Green Vault

The unimposing term Green Vault refers to the treasure room of fairytale-like riches. In 1723, August the Strong presented his wealth to the public. Since 1 September of 2006 it is again possible to view the largest ▶



The «Yednidze Tabakfabrik» Building

مبنى يدنيدز تاباكفابريك

collection of treasures in Europe. It features a unique and rich variety of exhibits from the period of baroque and classicism which were collected by August the Strong. The most famous of the exhibitions is from the court of Delhi, an ensemble of 137 gold plated figurines decorated with diamonds and rubies.

The Zwinger

The location of the Zwinger was once part of the Dresden fortress of which the outer wall is conserved. The name comes from the German word Zwinger (kennel) and was not meant for animals but for the cannons that were placed between the outer wall and the major wall. The onion-shaped dome at the entrance, borne by four eagles, is representative of the office of the king of Poland and the power and wealth of the builder. The complex with several buildings enclosing a picturesque garden courtyard including the "Old Masters' Picture Gallery" is viewed as a masterpiece of court baroque.

Old And New Masters' Picture Galleries

At the height of their powers, the Electors August II and III put together a collection of the most famous paintings of Europe. The crowning piece of the collection in the Gallery of the Old Masters is undoubtedly the Sistine Madonna by Raffael. Until the beginning of the 20th century the collection was regularly extended, culminating in the Gallery of the New Masters.



Inside the «Zwinger»

من داخل زوينغر

The Cigar Factory – A Homage to Turkey

The most unusual building of the city is no doubt the former cigar factory. Today in use as an administration building, its similarity to a mosque is not a coincidence. When it was built at the end of the 18th century it was the fashion to integrate exotic styles. It is also a tribute to Turkey the country where the builder made his money.

The Surroundings

The bizarre formations of Saxon Switzerland in sandstone cover an enormous area. Here it is possible to undertake long hikes in a

strikingly beautiful region. For those who are short on time, at the very least a visit to the Bastei and the Fortress Königsstein is a must. The 300-year old porcelain factory, in the city of Meissen offers a once-in-a-lifetime view into the story of the manufacture of white gold. ■

TRAVEL INFO AT:

Dresden-Werbung und Tourismus GmbH

Tel: 0351-49192100

Fax: 0351-49192116

info@dresden-tourist.de

www.dresden.de



Some of the destruction from the WWII still remaining

بقايا الدمار من الحرب العالمية الثانية ما زالت ماثلة