

## Castle of Bezanec

*The castle and the park Bezanec are in Valentinovo near Pregrada on a small hill in the vicinity of the creek Plemenscina, from where a picturesque Kostelska valley can be seen.*

*The castle was built at the end of the 17th century as a one-storey four-winged building with the court. In the 30-ies of the 19th century it was renovated in the spirit of classicism thus becoming one of the most representative courts in our country. Triangular gables rise in the middle of all fronts in the roof area. A tower clock is above the main front, the memory of old castle towers. Fronts are broken down by pilasters, decorated by altana on the main south-eastern side and loggias on the first floor and open arcades on the ground floor on the south-western side. Court fronts are open by arcades. The castle is the worldwide cultural heritage monument. It is approached through the ash-tree-like maples way 90 m long, developed after 1911. It is not known when the park was established. In 1861 there was a park north-east from the castle. There are two stages in the development of the park. The oldest one corresponds to the time of the castle renewal - the 30-ies of the 19th century. Then, a small park of 1220 m<sup>2</sup> developed behind the castle. Today, there are still some trees from that period in it - ginkgo, basswood and buttonballs. The second stage belongs to the period between 1900 and 1911 when the entrance portal was made, hedge was trimmed around the park, spruces were planted along the way and on the area south of the castle a park of 3100 m<sup>2</sup> was developed. The retaining stone wall next to the road, south of the castle, existed before 1900.*

*Once, a park was carefully taken care of. Nada and Cecille Ottenfels remember the park from the 30-ies of the 20th century when there were annual flowers, rhododendrons, azaleas, jasmines, syringas, ground boxes, roses, bay laurels and palms. The south-eastern front was covered with clematis and Japanese roses and pelargoniums were on the balcony. Apart from a three-hundred-year old basswood, the following trees were in the park: Caucasian fir, ginkgo, Catawba tree, buttonballs, poplars and other kinds of trees. Six village girls took care of palms in the castle in the second half of the 19th century. Three of them watered palms daily in the summer and the other three took care about them and heated the orangery in winter. The property Bezanec was owned by counts Keglevic, then a baron Kollenbach, a baron Schlaum-Linden and finally a baron Ottenfels-Gschwind. The castle belonged to the family Ottenfels, originating from Carinthia, for the longest period of time.*

*Ottenfels got a title of the German empire knight in 1653 and in 1696 they were accepted in Kranj and in 1698 Styrian orders. In 1710 Wolf Jakob Ottenfels got an Austrian barony. His son Franz Otto inherited in 1751 from his uncle Johann Martin Baron Gschwind, an imperial field-marshal and the last of his stock, properties, as well as his surname Ottenfels-Gschwind.*

*There were two persons in the family whose names were particularly connected to the castle - Franjo Ksaver (1778 - 1851) and his wife Josipa, née baroness Schlaum-Linden.*

*Franjo Ksaver was an Austrian ambassador in Constantinople (1822-1833) and a Metternich's advisor in Vienna (1833-1846). He had an excellent knowledge of oriental antiquities. He had a big oriental collection of documents that his namesake grandson deposited with the State archives in Zagreb in 1942. Various stories are connected with the name of Josipa Ottenfels. She lived in Bezanec from 1842 until her death in 1885 when she was buried in a family in a parish church in Pregrada. She was stubborn and all members of the family had to obey her. During her stay in Bezanec, the castle was constantly repaired and renovated and scaffolds were there for decades. The story said that on her way from Constantinople a gypsy foretold her that she would live as long as she built. In 1842 trunks with furniture and carpets arrived from Constantinople that she had not time to open during her life. After Josipa's death, Persian carpets, pictures and furniture were taken from trunks. Among them was particularly significant a sofa covered with the blue velvet with golden embroidery given to Franjo Ksaver by a Turkish vizier.*

*The castle Bezanec frequently adapted according to the ideas of retroactive owners. As a neglected cultural monument since 1964, it experienced a high-quality improvement in 1990.*

*Thanks to the present owner, Sinisa Krizanec, who took a self-initiated liberty to give purpose to the property, to plan, finance everything thus creating a priority commercial function that enables maintenance of one of the most beautiful classicist representatives of the architectural monumental heritage. Following the rules of the restoration, once a family castle was adapted to the most purposeful way of high-quality presentation through a tourist receptive revalorization of the present time.*