



Hidden Treasures

Tales of crystal and stone in the Zillertal Valley

The "Hidden Treasures" exhibition is a new showpiece at Nature Park House in the mountaineering village of Ginzling. The multimedia world of the Nature Park, geological history of the Zillertal Alps and selection of precious minerals found therein extends over two floors, encompassing a surface area of some 500 m² and takes visitors on a unique journey through the geological history of these alpine highlands. Glittering crystal treasures that have emerged over millions of years inside the mountains are on display here, including a special area dedicated to the "Zillertal garnet". Other highlights include a large relief of the Zillertal Alps and a crystal chamber, an exciting light installation.

The use of crystals discovered in the Zillertal Alps can be traced back to the Stone Age. Long before "Ötzi" the Ice Man's era, travelling hunters and gatherers encountered mineral deposits as they migrated southwards over the Alps and incorporated their use into everyday life. This wealth of precious minerals can be attributed to the geological diversity of the Hohe Tauern Window. A deeper insight into the region's geological history can be gained on a guided tour with Zillertal mineral collector Walter Ungerank, under whose auspices this exhibition was created.

The stone seeker from Zillertal

Walter Ungerank, a former surveyor, is considered one of the most renowned mineral collectors of his generation. Even as a child, he discovered a passion for discovering treasures hidden in the mountains. A passion that has remained with him to this day. As both initiator and donor to this impressive mineral display, he has significantly contributed to the success of the new exhibition at Nature Park House in Ginzling. Even after retirement, he still loves to be out and about in the mountains, or inspire visitors while taking them on a special guided tour through his life's work.

The "Hidden Treasures"

The "Hidden Treasures" exhibition extends over two floors and an overall display area of some 500m². 15 exhibitors have compiled these local artefacts with great attention to detail and created an impressive display at the Nature Park House.

This exciting journey through time starts with a large relief of the Zillertal Alps and an overview of the special features of the Zillertal Alps Nature Park. Then, room by room, visitors are taken through millions of years of geological history, starting with the formation of the continents, our mountains and the changes caused by the ice ages, before going on to the individual crystalline stages of the many tributary valleys, especially in the Upper Zillertal.

A large section of the exhibition is dedicated to the "Zillertal garnet", whose history can be traced from its original discovery, extraction and processing to its transformation into historic pieces of jewellery. Other exhibits include an old gemstone cutting workshop with finished crystals "Even experts are amazed by the raw and cut garnets in colours ranging from red and orange to green. Such specimens are rare in Austria," reports Ungerank



proudly. "Even Johann Wolfgang von Goethe collected Zillertal crystals. Some pieces from his estate can also be seen here."

Willi Seifert, Managing Director of Zillertal Alps Nature Park, adds: "*We offer a modern exhibition experience for the whole family. Exciting stories are told, while interactive elements and games reveal some of the secrets of how our mountains were formed. There are, of course, some exhibits you can touch. Not to mention our Mountain Cinema, which entertains with interesting films. A special highlight is the crystal chamber, where visitors can immerse themselves inside a crystal using modern light and mirror technology,*" reveals the company director.

The treasure hunters' passion

The spotlight is always on the people who have travelled through the mountains over many years to find, mine and trade these treasures. The stories of their discoveries are just as spectacular as the marvellous objects themselves, which have found their way into the display cases in Ginzling via private collections. Whether deep underground in old tunnels, or just a few centimetres below the surface - the quest to find these treasures remains a recurring adventure.

Nature Park House in Ginzling

Nature Park House is located in the idyllic mountaineering village of Ginzling and is a place where adventure, architecture and nature merge, forming a multifunctional meeting place for mountain and nature enthusiasts. Nature Park House is easily accessible by public transport and is an ideal starting point for hiking and mountain tours. A magnificent natural garden with a play area and a bouldering facility invites you to stay awhile.

Opening hours:

Mid-June to mid-September
daily 08.30 – 12.00 hrs and 13.00 – 17.00 hrs

Mid-September to mid-June
MON-THUR 08.30 – 12.00 hrs and 13.00 – 17.00 hrs
FRI 08.30 -12.00 hrs, closed on public holidays

Admission tickets are available online at
<https://www.mayrhofen.at/de/stories/naturparkhaus-ginzlingbuchbar>.

About Walter Ungerank

Walter Ungerank, born in 1948, can look back on over 60 years of experience as a mineral collector and is recognised as one of the finest experts in Zillertal. He keeps records of natural and mining history and is an expert on Stone Age artefacts, having discovered his passion at the tender age of 10. After marrying a girl from Zillertal, Walter Ungerank moved to the valley and immediately set out to explore his new homeland. He worked as a surveyor, while overseeing the Tyrolean State Museum mineral collection on a voluntary basis. The "Hidden Treasures" exhibition in the Nature Park House in Ginzling represents the fulfilment of a lifelong dream.

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