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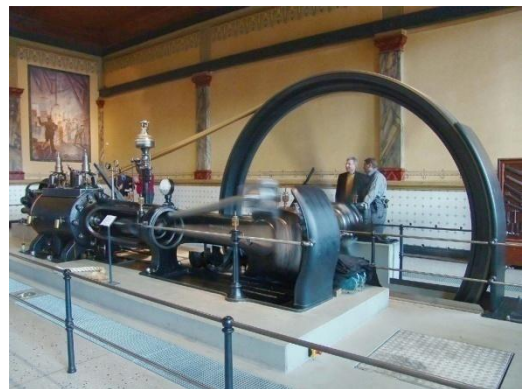
The nationalization and the centrally planned economy at East German times and the de-industrialization after German reunification have obscured the fact that Saxony was the most developed and wealthiest part of Germany until World War II. Chemnitz was the city with the highest industrial output in Germany, followed by Dresden, both of them at time the richest city in Germany as well, while Leipzig was the most important trade fair place in Europe. Other companies, some of them even world market leaders, also operated from the smaller towns and even villages in Saxony. They have left many traces, and they have shaped the face of many places and, sometimes, even the landscape. The roots of the industrial revolution lay in the technology and the skills developed for mining in the Ore Mountains, which can be traced on the Silberstraße, the “Silver Route”, running all the way from Dresden to Zwickau.



Saxon Museum of Industry

Your tour starts in Chemnitz, once known as the “Saxon Manchester” and named Karl-Marx-Stadt during East German times when the Communist government tried to turn Chemnitz into a model Socialist city. Chemnitz was the cradle of what is commonly known as “German engineering”. Machines developed in Chemnitz were so good that the British government demanded that they, and others from Germany, were

marked with “Made in Germany”. What was intended as a sign of inferiority turned into a hallmark of excellence. Many of the chimneys that once dominated the city have disappeared but the old factory buildings still remain. It is a challenge to preserve at least some of them as witnesses of a bygone era. The Saxon Museum of Industry is located in a former foundry which made tank engines during the war and later machine tools. A fully operational steam engine remains on its original location as part of the exhibition which tells the story of Saxon industrial history, divided up into several themes. Since Chemnitz was also the headquarters of the second-largest German car



Steam engine at the Saxon Museum of Industry



The Villa Esche

manufacturer, the Auto Union, whose brands all wore the four interwoven rings, cars are also featured in the exhibition. The museum also deals with outstanding entrepreneurs.

One of them was Herbert Eugen Esche (1874-1962), who co-owned Germany’s largest manufacturer of stockings. In 1902, he commissioned the Belgian Art Nouveau artist Henry van de Velde to build a new villa in the outskirts of Chemnitz. It was very different from the many other villas of industrial captains in the city and it is now deemed to be a historical

monument of Van de Velde designed the exterior and the interior of the building in his own unmistakable German reunification, Villa Esche now serves as a museum and an event location.

Your next stop is the August Horch Museum in Zwickau, the original Audi factory, with 100 years of Saxon car history displayed. The engineer August Horch had relocated his business to Zwickau in 1904, and his products quickly became the epitome of German car engineering. Horch was the leading luxury car brand in Germany until World War II,



Inside the Villa Esche



August Horch Museum in Zwickau

largely outselling Mercedes-Benz and other competitors. In 1909, August Horch was forced to leave his own company. Solely based on his reputation, he was able to raise enough money instantly to establish another company and built a new factory right next to the Horch factory. When the older Horch company initiated a lawsuit against August Horch, he had to find a new name for his products. The problem was solved by translating Horch, which means "listen!" in German, into Latin: "Audi" was born. Later, Horch, Audi and two

other Saxon car makers, Wanderer and DKW were merged into a new company called Auto Union, mentioned before. The four interwoven rings on the Auto Union cars symbolized the four brands that had combined forces. Cars from the four Auto Union brands make up the pre-war part of the exhibition. The cars have been placed into lovely period settings. After the war, the Zwickau factory produced another icon: the plastic-bodied, two-stroke Trabant compact car. The Zwickau engineers tried at various times to replace it with a more modern vehicle, but the government would not allow them to do so. Interesting prototypes illustrate that Saxon car engineers remained competitive throughout the Communist period and could have competed successfully on the world market, even under the difficult conditions of the Centrally Planned Economy.

Features and inclusions:

Transfers from Dresden or Leipzig to Chemnitz and Zwickau and back by coach

English-speaking guide for the Saxon Museum of Industry and the Villa Esche

Audio guide for the August Horch Museum

Entrance fees for the Saxon Museum of Industry, the Villa Esche and the August Horch Museum

Prices:

50 € per person (valid for groups of 20 people or more)

Options:

Guided tour of the Saxon Railway Museum in Chemnitz-Hilbersdorf, with trains from different periods, including locomotives built by the famous Hartmann Company of Chemnitz

Availability:

January to December, Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays

Departure:

From Dresden or Leipzig

Suggested Departure Time:

9 a.m. from Dresden, 8:30 a.m. from Leipzig

Duration:

Approx. 7 hrs from Dresden and 8 hrs from Leipzig (including transfer times, excluding meals and breaks)

Restaurant Recommendations:

The young team of the Villa Esche Restaurant, located in the former orangery of Villa Esche, serves contemporary, fresh cuisine and fine wines.