

Friedrichsruhe Wald: A Hubele Whole Family Favorite

Fully arriving in Germany cannot occur until we take our first walk through the Friedrichsruhe Wald. It is truly a grounding source for all of us. For me, this connection began with my first trips to Oehringen 17 years ago, when Joachim and I's Sunday visits were completed with a walk in the forest. Independent of the season, this was as important as the meal we shared.



Before long our visits included Sebastian and his kinderg wagon (stroller) and, eventually, it became the place for Oma and Opa to take 5 and 6 year old Sebastian for some freedom to run and explore. As our lives progressed getting there took a bit more effort, but the fresh air and towering trees always made it worthwhile.



While each of us has our own relationship with the Freidrichsrue Wald, mine has certainly evolved over the past years due to my work with a therapy made directly from the buds. What I have learned of Gemmotherapy has certainly paved the path for a deeper respect and connection to the trees and the forest. Always the history teacher, and an eternal student, I still have so many questions as to the origins of the area around the forest and Joachim's own family connection. While I don't have all the answers, yet I will fill you in on the bit I have learned.

My mother-in-law's childhood home sits on the edge of the Friedrichsrue Wald. She and her siblings grew up with the forest as an extension of their home. It held opportunities for foraging and further adventures as a child. Joachim also has fond memories of playing in the forest with his brother and cousins while his mother spent the afternoon helping the family with farm chores.

The area around the forest drew attention in the early 1600's when the Count of Hohenlohe developed a hunting park in the forest and the surrounding area now occupied by the Wald and Schloss Hotel. Sadly though, what he created was destroyed during the 30 year war.

In an attempt to recreate the Count's concept, the Prince of Hohenlohe, Friedrich II, built a small castle to be used as his hunting lodge and an expansive garden to enjoy. With that development, much of the forest was cleared to make way for the growing of crops. When Friedrich II passed away the area was named Friedrichsruhe in his honor.

The area continued to be maintained by members of the royal family until post WWII when what was once the schloss became a hotel. Today this hotel sits directly across from my mother-in-law's family residence, which is now home to her brother and his family.

Returning to subject of the forest, it is a protected space and nature preserve that continues to be enjoyed by families from the village of Friedrichsruhe as well as guests of the hotel. Rich in history and beauty, it continues to thrive and offer those who enter it a connection to nature and what is real and true. This is exactly why it has become such a ritual for us to pay a visit as soon as we arrive, very much like honoring an elder member of the family, and ending each day with a sunset walk through its calming presence.

