

## The Moorish Hall - Spirit of the 19th Century

The Moorish Hall is a magnificent piece of 19th century architectural history on Lake Constance. This example of architectural spirit was completed in 1887. For many decades, the wealthy citizens of Constance celebrated their grand balls and festivities in the oriental ambience of the hall. The Stuttgart architect Prof. Otto Tafel is credited with the planning of the ballroom with its characteristic mirrored wall. In particular, the three large mirrors - each measuring a stately 2 meters wide and 4.5 meters high - are emphasized as characteristic of the hall. In their day, these were the largest mirrors in Europe and were imported by rail from Russia.

Many elements of classical Moorish architecture were brought into this hall by Prof. Otto Tafel. The three large mirrors - directly opposite the main entrance - are located in large round arches supported by columns. They make the hall, which is about 6 meters high, appear really powerful. On the sides and between the mirrors are niches with gold-clad, horseshoe-shaped arches. A multitude of small fan arches form the transition of the walls to the ceiling, along the edge of which runs a wide floral band with floral patterns. The central star motifs on the ceiling are formed by red ornamental bands, and the stylized rang ornaments (arabesques) are bordered by them. From the ceiling hang two 18 -flame candlesticks, once certainly equipped with wax candles.

The predominant colors are beige for the background, red and blue for the ornaments. And, of course, plenty of real gold leaf for the visual highlights of the ceiling. True to the Moorish model, architect Tafel kept in mind that in the interior of oriental buildings even the smallest surfaces are decorated with the recurring ornaments. This delight in the patterns filling surfaces has its origins in the Islamic faith, which - unlike Christianity - does not allow figurative representations of its deity. The multitude of ornaments is intended to distract the viewer from his own figurative ideas. Only in one essential point Tafel deviates from the Moorish originals.

Since the Moorish Hall was not a religious site, the architect dispensed with the typical calligraphic elements, which reproduce verses from the Koran in the form of scrolls. Only above the entrance door is such a stylistic element to be found. It consists of four words that make up the meaning "to the worship of Lord Abii Abdullah".