

Für einen bunten Tag!  
**Obarvaj svoj dan!**  
Colour your day!



I: [www.maribor-pohorje.si](http://www.maribor-pohorje.si), [www.pohorje.si](http://www.pohorje.si)  
E: [tic@maribor.si](mailto:tic@maribor.si)

## **ARCHDUKE JOHANN, APOSTLE OF THE LOWER STYRIAN WINE HILLS**

In 1828 Archduke Johann founded the insurance company Grazer Wechselseitige, which today operates under the name of Grawe. This was one of the Archduke's many activities that were aimed at improving the economy of the then country of Styria. The renowned Hapsburg nobleman included the insurance company in his concept of universal development, in which agriculture held a special place. Hence his idea to establish the Styrian Agricultural Association was also realized in Graz in March 1819. In October of the same year branches were established in both Maribor and Celje.

With that economic progress, to which Archduke Johann was dedicated, spread to south Styria where also the surroundings of the central town of Maribor benefited. Among many of his inclinations for novelty Archduke Johann, born on the 20th January 1782 in the palace Palazzo Pitti in Florence, also carefully cultivated his love of wine growing. Styrian viticulture was lagging in Johann's time. In the vineyards there were a large variety of vines but the crops were poor and the care provided was unprofessional. Because the Archduke was well acquainted with the viticultural conditions along the river Rhine and the quality wines produced from vines there, he decided to introduce the vines to places in Styria.

As the centre for his trial introduction of vines from the Rhineland region he chose slopes in the surroundings of Pekre and Limbuš, where in 1822 he purchased an estate that today is known as Meranovo. In the year 1823 new vines were planted in Pekre and the great success of that trial was shown already at the first grape harvest in 1826, which Archduke Johannes personally attended; after that he also frequently resided at there. The vineyards became so reputable and well known that in 1832 a viticultural school was established at Meranovo, to which a fund for awarding vinedressers was later incorporated.

Beside Johann's economic credits he is also worthy of esteem for his work in the field of culture. Still today a firm reminder is the Styrian provincial museum in Graz, for which the Archduke laid the foundations in 1811. It is named after him and known as the Joanneum museum. Archduke Johann died in Graz on the 11th May 1859 and was buried there. Ten years later his remains were transferred and buried at the castle in Schenna in South Tyrol, today in Italy. South Styria paid homage to Johann's memory in 1883, when a memorial was erected in Maribor. The memorial was removed from Maribor's town park in 1918 and it is now housed in the Regional Museum. However, a copy of his memorial today adorns Meranovo.