

Teddy bears for a lifetime



© Dr Ursula Fellberg with Klimt Teddy bear 2024

“Once you start collecting Steiff animals and develop a love for them, you can’t stop ... and you don’t want to”

With this simple self-reflection, Dr Ursula Christina Fellberg refers to over 70 years of collecting stuffed animals, especially Teddy bears.

Parallel to her demanding management job, Berlin-born Dr Ursula Christina Fellberg has built up a collection of Teddy bears that is as extensive as it is varied. Today, based in Upper Bavaria, she dedicates herself to spreading the joy of life with bears in words, pictures and deeds under the heading “Bärenzeit” (Bear Time); this includes as a speaker and as the author of lively books, specialist articles and blogs www.baerenzeit.com.

The Teddy bears themselves are always the focal point and sparring partner. Ursula Fellberg stages her protagonists thematically in a lively world of experience. The Teddy bears and their friends thus become “tour guides” who open up times and spaces for their viewers. They talk about historical events and current affairs in books, are active on the internet and in social media and present themselves in the collection’s documentaries. Born in “Bärln”, the capital of bears, Ursula Fellberg spent her childhood, school days and student years there. Her first Teddy bear was Sonnyboy (ca. May 1951) from Steiff and remains a favourite to this day. What else should parents do with a child who was born in Berlin, the city where “the bear is almost always loose”, and whose surname is “Fellberg” and whose first name is Ursula?

The 50s and 60s were characterised by the constant increase in Steiff companions of all animal species and these were “played with” extensively. The Zotty and Mecki families, Snoopy and originals of the respective Steiff year were added to the collection, sometimes replicas of earlier editions. Then the annual Teddy bears from the Steiff Club delighted her; Ursula Fellberg could never say “no” to the special Teddy bears, the button eyes always looked at her faithfully and begged: “take me with you”!

Later (1974) I moved to Munich with my collection, but I always kept a suitcase with a few plush friends in Berlin and to this day have an “old love” for the city with the bear in its coat of arms. Home is where you feel at ease with your loved ones. That’s why the Teddy bears and friends today inspire with their bearish “joie de vivre” from beautiful Upper Bavaria. We have already reported on this time in the Club magazine Feb. 2015. When Ursula Fellberg visited the Steiff Museum in Giengen for the first time in 2006, the thought and idea for her own Teddy bear museum was born.

While writing her autobiography, Ursula Fellberg realised that she could recreate almost every period of her life with Steiff Teddies. A Teddy bear has become a representative of her life goals. The Gustav Klimt Teddy bear is part of the Designer’s Choice series and is a stylishly dressed individualist. He wears precious Dupon silk and his Teddy bear body is adorned with ornaments inspired by the motif of Klimt’s “Tree of Life”. The various elements of the tree of life symbolise aspects of life and also symbolise the variety of experiences one has in life. Klimt’s painting “Tree of Life” is a visual reminder of the importance of life and an invitation to live and appreciate life. The tree of life is also a symbol of love and friendship. So it’s all like the enduring passion for collecting and love of Teddy bears and the like and Steiff.

While the Fellberg Collection has so far mainly addressed collectors, Teddy bear lovers and those interested in history in word, image and deed, the “Teddys tun gut” campaign now addresses one of the most important target groups for Teddy bears - children!

From April 2024, the Fellberg Collection launched the “Teddys tun gut” (Teddies are good for you) campaign, together with the Berlin-based Björn Schulz Foundation and the Irmengard-Hof on Lake Chiemsee, an ideal place for aftercare, relaxation and encounters for families with seriously and chronically ill children and children with disabilities. Orphaned parents and siblings are also very welcome at Irmengard-Hof. A team of socio-educational specialists is on hand to support the families and has also been successfully accompanying group stays with planning and educational expertise for many years.

With an exhibition of parts of the extraordinary and incomparable Fellberg Collection, the Irmengard-Hof has gained a new, magnificent highlight, a unique selling point that will shine far beyond the facility.

Various scenes depict interesting and amusing events from the bear's life. And once again it is Steiff Teddy bears that set the tone in the exhibition. The brown bear, polar bear, panda and farmyard animals are presented on an old farm from the 1950s, as are Minkey Zotty and Cosy Petsy in a Bear Berlin setting; the Bavarian Teddy bears show attractions from the “Wiesn”, the Munich Oktoberfest, and Disney Donald Duck can visit his cousins Franz and Gustav Gans.

Above all, the Passport Bear and the “Wanderbursche” welcome visitors to the disabled-friendly Irmengard farm, which is certified by “Reisen für Alle” (Travel for All), and the two Teddy bears point out that children from all over the world are welcome, regardless of their means of transportation.

For years, the idea was to set up her own foundation, but Dr Fellberg has now found a suitable partner in the Björn Schulz Foundation, with whom she can combine two goals: As an ambassador, help and support for sick children and their relatives, and Teddy bears from the Fellberg collection as comforters and companions during bearish experiences.

The exhibition is for the children and their families at Irmengard-Hof, but visitors who support the purpose of the Björn Schulz Foundation are also welcome to come and get a picture of the bearish goings-on after registering, and then they can be admired by young and old - our Teddies.

www.sammlungfellberg.com



Irmengard-Hof

Mitterndorf 1
83257 Gstadt am Chiemsee
www.irmengard-hof.de



“Teddys tun gut”

Permanent exhibition of the Fellberg Collection at Irmengard-Hof Chiemsee

As the Irmengard-Hof is a protected area for parents and children, to visit, please send an e-mail to: infobayern@bjoern-schulz-stiftung.de

Quote Dr Ursula Fellberg:

“My Teddy bears stand for love, understanding and tolerance. By actively supporting the goals of the Björn Schulz Foundation’s Irmengard-Hof, I can make a positive contribution to the well-being and quality of life of sick children and at the same time enrich my own life.”