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Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

## A Night Where Styrian Tradition Met Viennese Elegance

Vienna Hofburg Palace, 11.01.2026 [ENA]

On the evening of 10 January 2026, the majestic halls of Vienna's Hofburg once again became the stage for one of Austria's most cherished cultural events: the 126th Steirerball. Sold out weeks in advance, the ball drew around 3,500 guests and reaffirmed its status as a highlight of the Viennese ball season where Styrian tradition, hospitality, and joie de vivre blended seamlessly with the Viennese elegance.

From the moment guests arrived, the Hofburg radiated an atmosphere of celebration. The historic palace was adorned in green and white, the colors of Styria, and filled with visitors dressed in traditional Tracht, elegant dirndls, and refined evening wear. Dancing continued until the early hours of the morning, accompanied by music, laughter, and the unmistakable sense of a community celebrating its cultural roots.

According to Andreas Zakostelsky, Chairman of the Association of Styrians in Vienna and chief organizer of the ball, the 2026 Steirerball was exceptional in many ways. For the first time in its long history, the event was completely sold out several weeks before the date, a testament to its enduring popularity and growing appeal.

"The atmosphere was outstanding," Zakostelsky remarked. "It is a joy to see how warmly the Steirerball is embraced by its audience. Our guests bring with them the typical Styrian zest for life and enjoy a truly special ball night."

This year's Steirerball placed a particular focus on the Thermen & Vulkanland, a region renowned for its thermal spas, volcanic landscapes, and culinary excellence. Throughout the Hofburg, guests were invited to experience the essence of this region: aromatic pumpkin seed oils, refined wines, Vulkanland ham, hearty Brettljausen, and exquisite chocolate creations.

Behind each of these delicacies stood dedicated producers who craft their goods with passion and pride—embodying a form of hospitality that is both genuine and generous. The Steirerball thus became not only a social event, but also a culinary journey through southeastern Styria.

The evening began with a solemn ceremonial entrance, traditionally accompanied by the Klangvereinigung Wien. Members of the association's board, distinguished guests, dance groups, and flag bearers from Austria's federal states entered the ballroom, followed by representatives of the guest region Thermen & Vulkanland. The opening continued with a graceful Polonaise, performed by the debutantes and young gentlemen under the guidance of dance instructor Claudia Eichler. This was followed by a fashion

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presentation by the master class of the Graz Model School, showcasing stunning Styrian Tracht designs.

A musical highlight then set a classical tone: soprano Corina Koller and tenor Ivan Oreščanin from the Graz Opera performed a duet from Mozart's Don Giovanni, captivating the audience. Following the traditional Dachsteinlied, performed by the Stadtkapelle Fehring and sung enthusiastically by many guests, the Steirerball 2026 was officially opened. The Klangvereinigung Wien, under the direction of Gerald Mair, performed Johann Strauss II's famous waltz Wiener Blut, setting the tone for an evening devoted to dance. The event was hosted by moderators Oliver Zeisberger and Alexandra Gorsche.

In his welcoming remarks, Zakostelsky greeted a distinguished circle of guests, including National Council President Walter Rosenkranz, Foreign Minister Beate Meinel-Reisinger, State Secretaries Barbara Eibinger-Miedl and Jörg Leichtfried, Josef Taucher representing the City of Vienna, City Councillor Bettina Emmerling, Styrian Bishop Wilhelm Krautwaschl, and Styrian Governor Mario Kunasek. Governor Kunasek emphasized that the Steirerball once again demonstrated a "successful fusion of Styrian tradition and hospitality with Viennese elegance." He highlighted the region's appeal as Austria's most popular holiday destination and praised the organizers for presenting Styria's culinary, musical, and artisanal treasures in the heart of Vienna.

Music played a central role throughout the night, with 19 ensembles and bands performing across the Hofburg. One of the emotional highlights at midnight was the appearance of the cover band "Grenzenlos", whose STS program created unforgettable moments.

Shortly after midnight, the Hofburg transformed into a 1970s disco paradise. The cover group "Tribute to ABBA – Thank You for the Music" electrified the audience with iconic hits such as Dancing Queen, Mamma Mia, and Waterloo, turning the ball into a joyous sing-along celebration.

Beloved regulars also returned to the stage: Die Edlseer with frontman Fritz Kristoferitsch, as well as Beppo's Band, featuring trade unionist and Member of Parliament Beppo Muchitsch on keyboards.

Dancing fueled appetites, and the Steirerball delivered generously. Guests enjoyed everything from traditional Buschenschank fare and Vulkanland ham to Zotter chocolate and classic Soletti snacks. Along the recreated Styrian Wine Road, fine regional wines were poured, while the Styrian Buschenschank and a traditional sausage stand in the foyer catered to late-night cravings.

A special highlight was the Murauer beer tapping, introduced for the first time at the Steirerball. And at half past one in the morning, the much-loved Styrian pumpkin seed oil scrambled eggs provided welcome sustenance for night owls.

As always, the Steirerball served as a vibrant networking platform. Prominent figures from politics, diplomacy, and business mingled with representatives of culture, sports, and media. Among the guests were

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UK Ambassador Lindsay Skoll, numerous members of the National Council, provincial leaders, and key figures from Austria's industrial, financial, insurance, energy, construction, and transport sectors. The Thermen & Vulkanland delegation was strongly represented, as were leaders from tourism, banking, and agriculture. The presence of figures from football, fashion, and journalism further underlined the ball's broad appeal.

The evening also had a charitable dimension: the tombola, organized by the Thermen & Vulkanland, will support regional projects in southeastern Styria through Rotary Clubs in Feldbach, Fürstenfeld, and Bad Radkersburg. The Steirerball 2026 demonstrated how these values can be brought to life in a contemporary context—honoring tradition while fostering dialogue, connection, and joy.

As dawn approached and the last notes faded, one thing was clear: the Steirerball 2026 was not merely a ball, but a celebration of Styrian identity, gracefully staged in the heart of Vienna, and a shining example of how cultural heritage continues to thrive through shared experience.

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