Women run the city

With a record 33,139 women from 90 nations participating the Austrian Women’s Run is among the top three women’s runs in the world.

They come year on year from all places and are of all ages and levels of ability. Running together every woman offers her personal best efforts and all contribute to making the event into an incomparable experience.

Activity spreads over the entire weekend, with an extensive programme in the festival grounds. It starts on the Saturday morning with the opening of the expo and the race package pick-up accompanied by continuous entertainment all day on the Women’s Run stage, including informative talks and live music along with interesting exhibitors which attract tens of thousands to the festival site.

More than 90% of runners pick up on the Saturday – that’s 30,000 of them. Apart from the race number the goodie-bag package includes many little gifts including product samples and information.

The specifically in-house designed Women’s Run T-shirt is a highlight every year. Every shirt received by participants serves as an indication that the wearer is part of the Women’s Run community. With a new design and in a new colour each year the T-shirt has become a collector’s item. It generates a lot of attention and anticipation, as the secret of the new shirt is not revealed until a month before the event. This year it bore the race motto: ‘Run the City’.

The slogan carries a relevance that extends beyond the race weekend. It is a self-confident statement about the presence of female runners in urban areas the whole year round. Never before have so many women been seen running, walking and training in public areas. For all those who don’t run in cities, it is a beautiful souvenir of their run in Vienna.

Throughout the Austrian Women’s Run tens of thousands of runners leave an imprint on the whole city, particularly on the “Wiener Prater” where the race is held. Well before arriving there on the Sunday morning thousands of women and girls – all bearing the new Women’s Run shirt – start to make their way through the city by subway, tram and bicycle or on foot. The closer you get to the festival grounds, the more women join the throng. It is a thrilling and uplifting feeling for all participants when the unbelievably large Women’s Run community becomes visible and tangible and each runner discovers that she is a part of it.

All those arriving at the festival grounds are greeted by groups of drummers beating out a contagious rhythm. Well before the start a further highlight awaits runners – the warm-up with the star-choreographer Almande Belfor. Thousands of women and girls don’t want to miss this special event and join in enthusiastically.

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VALENCIA CIUDAD DEL RUNNING

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At exactly 09.00 the start gong chimes for the 33,000-plus runners. At the front there are top international and national runners who contest the 5km elite race. To offer optimum running conditions the rest of the field is divided into blocks that start in ‘waves’ every 2–3 minutes.

The course for both the 5km as well as the 10km is a flat loop through the beautiful green “Wiener Prater”. Thousands of spectators line the route and along with the drummers and bands create a sensational ambiance. A powerful wave of excitement carries the participants through the Prater.

The 10km distance is made up by an extra loop just after the 5km point running through the Viennese theme park and passing by one of the iconic Viennese landmarks: the giant ferris wheel.

Entering the finish straight a DJ offers an upbeat tempo for the final 100 metres and two moderators motivate the participants to extraordinary final sprints. The finish is always thrilling for visitors and full of atmosphere as the crowd rousingly welcomes runners over the line.

A medal and a rose are awarded to every participant for her own personal best performance. Celebrations start directly after the run in the festival grounds, which rock with the wonderful atmosphere and live music as the crowd anticipate the start of the largest award ceremony in Austria. The top three finishers of each age group are honoured – which adds up to 185 awards. Many companions, spectators (friends, partners, families) share this wonderfully uplifting experience with the runners.

Every year the Austrian Women’s Run attracts more and more women from foreign countries. Over 1000 participants in 2015 travelled from abroad to take part. With participants from 90 nations the Austrian Women’s Run embraces incredible diversity within those who start the run.

Women’s winner Jessica O’Connell from Canada enthused: “I had such a great time in Vienna, meeting the other runners and enjoying the warm hospitality. This event was unlike any other and I was honoured to be a part of it.” Kathrine Switzer, who has run the event three times, added: “Every woman is treated like an Olympic athlete. It’s exciting and perfectly organized – the best in the world.”

Become a part of the Women’s Run community. Join the run in Vienna and celebrate your success with thousands of participants, family and friends. The 29th Austrian Women’s Run takes place in May 2016 (date tbd). Online registration opens on 5 March 2016. Places are usually sold out within a month.
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