

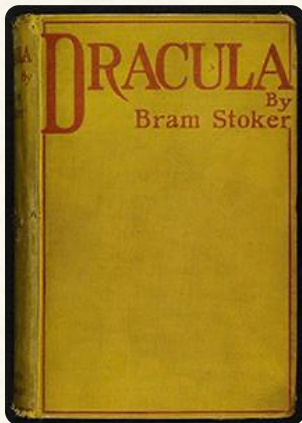


Count Kálnoky Estates

## DRACULA IS NOT WHO YOU THOUGHT!

Discover the real Transylvania behind Bram Stoker's myth  
— and the medieval Székely countly dynasty that still lives there today.

Transylvania, Romania — Autumn 2026



For generations, Transylvania has been synonymous with Dracula. Yet the real story behind the legend is considerably more fascinating.

In Dracula, published in 1897, the Count himself tells Jonathan Harker:

**“We Szekelys have a right to be proud, for in our veins flows the blood of many brave races who fought as the lion fights, for lordship.”**

Dracula goes on to describe the Székelys as the guardians of the eastern frontier and declares:

**“Ah, young sir, the Szekelys—and the Dracula as their heart's blood, their brains, and their swords—can boast a record...”**

These are Dracula's own words in Bram Stoker's fiction.

## THE REAL SZÉKELYS OF TRANSYLVANIA



The Székelys are an ancient Hungarian-speaking population of Transylvania, historically associated with defending the eastern borders of the Kingdom of Hungary and the Carpathians.

And there is a remarkable living link to this medieval world.

**The Kálnoky family is a historic Székely countly dynasty whose genealogy traces its lineage through the medieval history of Transylvania and includes a connection to Vlad III, known to history as Vlad the Impaler.**

Unlike Stoker's vampire, however, the Kálnokys are very real — and their heritage that is very different from the Dracula clichés can still be experienced today.

## THE KÁLNOKY ESTATE THE REAL TRANSYLVANIA BEYOND DRACULA



Approximately **55 kilometres** from Bran, the **Count Kálnoky Estate** brings together two historic castles, traditional vernacular guesthouses, museums and the restored stables of a former Hussar regiment.

Visitors can stay in historic surroundings, explore the castles and museums,  
discover traditional Transylvanian villages and landscapes,  
or ride through the countryside on horseback between the Kálnoky properties.





Count Kálnoky Estates



The Estate also offers a number of wonderfully original experiences: **from riding treks between the castles and cultural events to the possibility of celebrating a wedding in an authentic Transylvanian historic setting.**

Here, there are no artificial Dracula attractions.

Instead, visitors encounter authenticity rather than fantasy: **living Transylvanian heritage with castles, horses, forests, villages, traditional architecture and the descendants of a centuries old Székely family.**

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## A ROYAL CONNECTION TO TRANSYLVANIA

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The Estate also has an extraordinary modern chapter.

**His Majesty King Charles III** has maintained a longstanding personal connection with Transylvania and has been a regular visitor to the region for decades.

The King's private retreat is situated in a **historic Transylvanian hamlet founded in the 16th century by Bálint Kálnoky**, an ancestor of the present-day family. The retreat forms part of the wider heritage landscape and, at designated times, is accessible to visitors.

The connection between the British Royal Family and Transylvania has helped bring international attention to the region's remarkable architectural, natural and cultural heritage.



Photo: Walter Aigner



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## A CASTLE COMES BACK TO LIFE

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This winter, another major chapter in the Kálnoky story will unfold.

The family's principal castle at **Valea Crișului — Sepsikőrőspatak** is scheduled to open to visitors and cultural events following an extensive programme of restoration.



For the Kálnokys, this is more than the restoration of a historic building. It represents the revival of a family heritage that suffered decades of destruction and neglect under Romania's communist regime and the dictatorship of Nicolae Ceaușescu.

The castle's reopening will mark a major milestone in that process.

**Never mind Hollywood's Dracula.**

**The real Transylvania is stranger, older and more fascinating than the myth.**

Here, visitors can follow the traces of medieval Székely history, stay in centuries-old villages, explore restored aristocratic residences, ride through the Carpathian landscape and discover the living heritage of a family whose story reaches back into medieval Transylvania.

**Dracula is fiction. The Kálnokys are real.**

And the landscape in which Bram Stoker placed his legendary Count is still there to be discovered.

**Experience authentic Transylvania beyond the myth.**

Book your 2027 stay or riding adventure between the Kálnoky castles.

Visit the museums.

Join a concert or cultural event.

Discover the castles — or perhaps even celebrate a wedding in one.

**Count Kálnoky's Estate**  
**Transylvania, Romania**  
[www.Kalnoky.ro](http://www.Kalnoky.ro)

**DRACULA MAY BE A LEGEND.**  
**THE SZÉKELYS ARE REAL.**  
**THE KÁLNOKY HERITAGE IS ALIVE.**

