

INSIDE:

- The Flüela Pass
- Readers' Forum
- Travel/Study in Austria
- Swissair Ski Packages

GEMÜTLICHKEIT

The Travel Letter for Germany, Austria, Switzerland & the New Europe

DEAR SUBSCRIBER

October 28, 1993

The family has pushed back from the Thanksgiving table. The once golden, gleaming bird is much the worse for wear. The conversation turns to travel. Remember that little town just south of Heidelberg on the Neckar?, somebody says. It was the Rhine, not the Neckar and it was north, not south, of Heidelberg, says another. And it was Mainz, not Heidelberg.

What are you talking about? The Gasthof Hirs is on the hill above the city, not in the old town.

The railway station can't be where you say it is because the tracks are on the other side of town.

And so it goes when the clan gathers. We inevitably talk travel but our recollections never seem to quite match. Memory, after all, play tricks. Not mine, of course; mine is photographic and infallible, but for the enlightenment of the table we wind up hauling out the books, maps and atlases. Soon everyone is involved; tracing a route, looking up a date or finding the price of a hotel room. New trips are planned and old ones are re-lived. For a few moments we are transported: mentally swaying to the music at the Gasthaus Fraundorfer in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, downshifting to negotiate a narrow road in the Swiss Alps or lazing over lunch at an outdoor café in Vienna. Our memories have been awakened by those old, familiar books and maps, many of them dogeared travel veterans.

Continued on page 2

ZUOZ & SCUOL

This month we stay in Switzerland's Engadine, looking for romance and Romansch. We find both in two out-of-the-way high-country towns along the Inn river valley — Scuol and Zuoz.

Switzerland is known as a country of four national languages. Most of us have an idea where we'll hear the first three — German, French and Italian — and what they sound like. It's the fourth, the mysterious Latin-derived Romansch, that's the "final Jeopardy" stumper. Though it is spoken by a tiny percentage of the Swiss population, a map in the Michelin *Green Guide for Switzerland*, entitled *Linguistic Switzerland*, marks a wide area of the eastern part of the country as Romansch-speaking.

The place to find Romansch is the canton called Graubünden, known as the Engadine. Though Graubünden tourist office literature says 167,000 speak three languages, one of them being Romansch, you'll seldom hear it in the bigger towns like Chur or St. Mortiz. In only a few villages is it actually the day-to-day tongue.

At the *stammtisch* in the *stuva* of the **Hotel Crusch Alva** in Zuoz, the mailman drops by for a mid-afternoon cup of coffee. Ten minutes later the village cop joins the

group. He bears the relaxed air of one who knows serious crime in Zuoz happens about as often as the Super Bowl comes to Zürich. Soon the mailman leaves only to be replaced by a couple of road workers. And so it is all day, the everyday folk of Zuoz come and go. Their words sound strange to an American used to hearing German, French or Italian. They are speaking one of the five dialects of real, live, authentic Romansch.

Located in a high, wide valley just up the road from St. Moritz, Zuoz is a town which attracts tourists — in fairly modest numbers by Swiss standards — but one which tourism has not changed. It calls itself the best preserved village in the Upper Engadine. Streets are cobbled and buildings look much as they must have nearly five hundred years ago when the town was rebuilt after being burned to the ground by its own residents in order to check the advance of the invading Austrian Imperial Army.

Continued on page 3

EUROPE TRAVEL BRIEFING

Anglo-Phone

Dial 156-6531 from anywhere in Switzerland to contact English-speaking operators with access to a large database of travel information.

Anglo-Phone advises visitors on ski conditions, English-speaking doctors, lawyers, dentists or other professionals, cultural activities, night-life, movies, bookstores, social and fitness clubs.

Ski Swiss 1993 in Zermatt

During the weeks of December 4-11 and December 11-18, the Swiss ski schools welcome guests to their annual ski course, a tradition that goes back 58 years. Ski Swiss takes place this winter in Zermatt at the foot of the Matterhorn.

Cost of the package is \$1,150 per person and

DEAR SUBSCRIBER

Continued from page 1

The travel library, you see, has multiple uses. It's for trip planning and trip taking, of course, but also for reminiscing, for dreaming and for settling arguments. Thus I have found it essential (even before we started writing this newsletter, by the way) to keep certain maps and travel books around the house.

For the frequent traveler to Western Europe a small library helps pass the long winter nights, serves as an invaluable resource for settling arguments, is there to plan your next trip and, of course, stands at the ready when it's time to head for the airport again.

Here are a few items I would never be without.

Planning maps. Germany, Austria, Switzerland. I use Michelin maps #426 *Austria* (scale of 1:400,000), #427 *Switzerland* (1:400,000), and #920 *Europe* (1:3,000,000). These are not suitable for guiding you over Europe's maze of backroads but are for planning and perspective.

You'll notice I omitted Germany. That's because the **German Auto Club's** (ADAC) *Maxi-Atlas* is all anyone needs for that country, both for planning and backroads driving. It also contains an index of some 10,000 towns and villages cross-referenced to the proper map page. I know of no other atlas that is suitable for backroads driving. A spiral binding makes the *Maxi-Atlas* very easy to use but remember, it covers only Germany.

I should also mention that the tourist offices of each of the three countries will provide free maps which are also suitable

for general reference, not including driving.

Detailed Maps. Scaled from 1:100,000 to 1:200,000, maps of this large scale are not only essential when you are "in-country" but also nice to have back home for planning or settling an after-dinner argument. For Germany, the best are the *ADAC Karte* at 1:150,000. To cover the entire country one needs 24 separate maps (with *ADAC Karte* priced at \$7.95 each, the value of the *ADAC Maxi-Atlas*, which covers all of Germany for \$22.95, is obvious).

Allianz Freizeitkarte — at 1:100,000 — have even more detail and are suitable even for bicyclists. But the problem for the auto traveler using these maps is that they cover so little territory one is constantly changing to a new map.

Die Generalkarte (1:200,000), my personal preference, are published in Germany by Mairs and are by far Germany's best selling road maps. You'll need 35 to cover the entire country. They are also available for Switzerland (4 maps) and Austria (9 maps, including Italy's Südtirol).

The legends for the above maps — ADAC, Mairs, Allianz — are in several languages, including English. One of the features I find especially useful in all of them is that scenic roads are edged in green.

Atlases. While the previously mentioned *Maxi-Atlas* is a must for Germany, the hardbound *Germany/Europe Atlas* by ADAC is the Mercedes Benz of European atlases. About one-third of its pages are devoted to Europe. This is a very good book to have, but not essential. Michelin's softbound *Motoring Atlas Europe*, at half the price, is low-tech but a good reference and planning tool.

Hallwag's hard-to-find, softbound *Euro Guide Atlas* has much to offer, including a

directory of 20,000 hotels. Neither the Hallwag nor the *ADAC Germany/Europe Atlas* fit easily in a suitcase.

The must-have guide for skiers is the marvelous, hardbound *ADAC Ski Atlas*. Two minor drawbacks are the text is in German and it's a load for the suitcase.

Guidebooks. The most important travel book I own is the current *Michelin Red Guide for Germany*. It not only goes with us on every trip, it is a reference I use on a daily basis. Need hotel fax or phone numbers? Need hotel addresses? Want to know where a certain hotel is in relation to the center of town or the main railway station? Which hotels are in a quiet location? The phone number of the local tourist office? How far it is from one town to another? Where to get a good, three-course meal for less than 25 DM (\$15)? The red guides (published for France, Italy, Spain & Portugal, England & Great Britain, the Benelux countries, Paris, London and the *Michelin's Main Cities Guide* which includes more than 60 of Europe's major cities) will answer those questions and a thousand more.

Not to be overlooked are the hotel guides available free from the German, Austrian and Swiss tourist offices in this country. The hotels listed are members of their country's hotel association and as such are required to meet certain standards. These booklets are especially valuable for Switzerland and Austria, countries for which there is no Red Guide (Salzburg, however, is covered in Michelin's Red Guide for Germany, and some of the important cities of Austria and Switzerland — Vienna, Salzburg, Zürich, Geneva and Basel — are covered in *Michelin Main Cities*).

For sight-seeing and cultural attrac-

Continued on page 8

Vol. 7, No. 10 **GEMÜTLICHKEIT**
October, 1993
The Travel Letter for Germany, Austria, Switzerland & the New Europe

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Gemütlichkeit (ISSN 10431756) is published monthly by UpCountry Publishing, 2892 Chronicle Avenue, Hayward, CA 94542. TOLL FREE: 1-800/521-6722 or 510/538-0628. FAX: 510/582-8296. Subscriptions are \$67 per year for 12 issues. While every effort is made to provide correct information in this publication, the publishers can make no guarantees regarding accuracy. Second-class postage paid in Hayward, CA.

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO:

Gemütlichkeit, 2892 Chronicle Ave., Hayward, CA 94542

Rating Key - Hotel

- I Basic accommodations or a hotel that underachieves. Suitable only for stays of one or two nights.
- II Good hotel, typical of its class. Suitable for a longer stay.
- III A cut above other hotels in its price category.
- IV Excellent accommodations.
- V A great hotel, world-class, could be a memorable experience.

Restaurants

- ❖ Acceptable meals, but *only* if the price is right.
- ❖❖ Good food but not good value, overpriced.
- ◆ Serves good, plain food, typical of the region.
- ☆ A cut above other restaurants in its price category.
- ☆☆ Outstanding food and service.
- ☆☆☆ A great restaurant in every respect

Special Designations

- G By virtue of location, decor, special charm, warmth of management, or combination thereof, an especially pleasant establishment.
- Ⓢ Offers significant value.
- Ⓢ Stay away.

SCUOL/ZUOZ

Continued from page 1

Further up the road past Zern-
ez, about where the Upper Enga-
dine becomes the Lower Engadine
and supposedly where the Italian
influence is no longer felt, is Scuol
(Shuls). It is much more a town of
the 20th century and not as pictur-
esque as Zuoz, though it does have
its advantages. Here the valley is
considerably narrower affording
excellent views of the peaks of the
Lower Engadine Dolomites which
loom above the town. It also
boasts a new \$35 million spa in
which the town takes great pride.
Scuol is considerably larger than
Zuoz, with a "regular" downtown
and the usual collection of shops.

Take your choice: Zuoz is the
more charming and authentic of
the two but Scuol has more
services and creature comforts.

The area is blessed with a
number of good hotels, most of
them small, family-run operations
emphasizing traditional decor and
service.

Scuol

Schloss-Hotel Chastè

**EDITOR'S
CHOICE**

The decor of every hotel in the
region relies heavily upon the
ubiquitous, light — almost
bleached — knotty pine. Nowhere
have we seen it more strikingly
used than at the Schloss-Hotel
Chastè, whose guestrooms are
some of the most richly attractive
we have ever seen.

From the instant one approach-
es the intricately carved entry
doors, steps into the rustic, an-
tique-strewn public rooms under
vaulted arches, and inhales that
lovely wood smell, it is clear the
Chastè is something special.

Several guestrooms have
recently been refurbished and they
are exquisite. Number 133, on a
corner, has hardwood floors, a
fireplace, a curving bank of
window, a huge, luxurious bath-

SCUOL

Population: 1,744

Elevation: 4,081 feet

Approximate distances from:

Geneva 471 km 291 miles

Zürich 196 km 121 miles

Innsbruck 164 km 102 miles

Munich 244 km 151 miles

Tourist Information

Tourist Office
Scuol Tourist Office
CH-7550 Scuol
phone 084/909 44
fax 084/909 45

Scuol offers 80 km/50 miles of
prepared downhill ski runs in-
cluding one 10 km/6 mile run.
They are served by 16 cableways
and lifts.

The town's new spa is open daily
10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Entrance fee is
17 Sfr. (\$12) for adults and 13.5
Sfr. (\$9) for children.

Green fees at Vulpera's nine-hole
course are 40 Sfr. (\$27) Monday
through Friday and 50 Sfr. (\$34)
on Saturday and Sunday. A
week's pass is 230 Sfr. (\$156).

ZUOZ

Population: 1,186

Elevation: 5,561 feet

Approximate distances from:

Geneva 475 km 295 miles

Zürich 199 km 123 miles

Innsbruck 148 km 92 miles

Munich 228 km 141 miles

Tourist Information

Tourist Office
Zuoz Tourist Office
CH-7524 Zuoz
phone 082/715 10
fax 082/733 34

There are marked bike trails
in the Upper Engadine and
bicycles can be rented for 12 Sfr.
(\$8.50) per day at the Zuoz
Tourist Office.

There are four ski lifts in Zuoz
with about 20 km/14 miles of
slopes of all levels of difficulty.
Cross-country skiers will find
some 40 km/25 miles of trails. ❧

room with both tub and shower
and a private terrace with view
down the valley. Number 131 is a
bit smaller but has a marble-tiled
bathroom and a small adjoining
bedroom. It too has a private
terrace. Number 135 is in the
same style but with a canopied
bed. Finally, Number 136, the
two-bedroom "Panorama Suite,"
is absolutely stunning with its
cathedral, beamed ceiling, fire-
place, and spacious marble
bathroom with large corner
bathtub under exposed wood
joists and wide skylight.

In this hotel you will see no
plastic, the wood is never painted
nor is it, except for the floors,
waxed.

This wonderful hideaway is
located about 15 minutes by car
up the mountain above Scuol and
just beneath the Tarasp Castle.
For 500 years it has been run by
the Pazeller family (currently
Rudolf and Daniela) and its
restaurant is rated among the
country's top 100 by *Weltwoche*.

Schloss-Hotel Chastè, CH-7553
Tarasp-Sparsels, phone 081 864 17
75, fax 081 864 99 70, singles 125-
180 Sfr. (\$85-\$122), doubles 250-
320 Sfr. (\$170-\$218), half board
included. Major cards.

Schloss-Hotel Chastè: IV

Romantik Hotel Guardaval

The Guardaval is a
splendid example of
traditional Engadine con-
struction: arched doorways,
deeply recessed windows and an
exterior liberally splashed with the
unique plaster designs known as
sgraffito. Actually, the hotel is the
result of joining two 17th century
farmhouses. Inside are cozy
public rooms with vaulted
ceilings, antique furnishings and
huge windows overlooking the
valley and the peaks of Lischana.

Guestrooms, though a mixture
of different styles, materials and
sizes, are consistently comfortable

Continued on page 4

ZUOZ/SCUOL

Continued from page 3

and attractive.

Perhaps the most appealing we saw was southwest-facing Number 41 with three large windows, wood paneled ceiling, balcony, separate sitting room with a low, slanted ceiling and a large bathroom with skylight.

Another interesting room is Number 18 in the older of the two houses (they are joined). It is special because of its rustic wood paneled walls and ceilings and a spacious, new, gleaming bathroom.

The Regi family's welcome to their excellent hotel is warm and enthusiastic.

Romantik Hotel Guardaval, CH-7550 Bad Scuol-Tarasp-Vulpera, phone 084/91 3 21 22, fax 99 7 67, singles 115-165 Sfr. (\$78-\$112), doubles 230-330 Sfr. (\$156-\$224), half board included. Major cards.

Romantik Hotel Guardaval: III G

Hotel Chasa Belvair

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Only four years old and in the very center of Bad Scuol, the Chasa Belvair is the only hotel physically connected to the new \$35 million spa and cure facility. Modern, airy guest rooms are all alike but are nicely decorated and come

equipped with TV, radio, minibar, direct-dial phone; in other words all the necessary amenities

Though lacking in country charm this sparkling new hotel is the best value we found in the region.

Hotel Chasa Belvair, CH-7550 Bad Scuol, phone 081/864 93 94, fax

and restaurant. The first evening of our visit the Belvedere put on a massive — and rather pricey — buffet dinner (52 Sfr./\$36) featuring Engadine specialities and a country music singer. As to the latter, perhaps such entertainment is welcomed by the hotel's heavily Swiss clientele but for a couple visiting Americans it missed the mark.

But that's minor stuff; the Belvedere is a good hotel for families. It offers better than average facilities for children and its 60 guestrooms are clean and comfortable, though only eight of them are equipped with television sets.

You'll have to walk up one flight but the hotel's best rooms are in the tower. Octagonally shaped Number 518 has angled walls, exposed wood beams and several windows.

Hotel Belvedere, Bad Scuol, CH-7550 Scuol, phone 084/9 10 41, fax 084/9 90 72, singles 106-141 Sfr. (\$72-\$96), doubles 212-282 Sfr. (\$144-\$192), half board included. Mastercard and Visa okay.

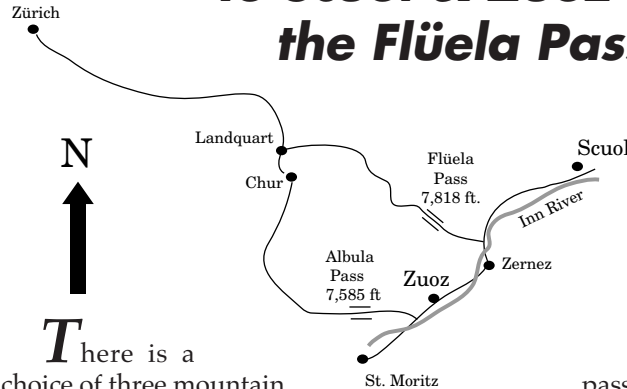
Hotel Belvedere: II

Robinson Club Hotel Scuol Palace

It is the sheer size of the Robinson Club that surprises travelers approaching Scuol from the southwest along the winding Inn river road. Looking more like a school or hospital, the Palace's huge yellow building seems a little out of place in this woodsy setting. Actually it's a 113-room "Club Med" style hotel — one of 24 worldwide

Continued on page 5

To Scuol & Zuoz Via the Flüela Pass



There is a choice of three mountain passes to eastern Switzerland from Zürich: the Flüela, the Albula and Julier. The Albula drops you close to Zuoz, the Flüela is more convenient if Scuol is the destination and the southern-most, the Julier, is close to St. Moritz. From the standpoint of scenery we prefer the Flüela.

Using *Die Generalkarte* #1 and #3 for Switzerland, take the autobahn N3 southeast toward Chur. In winter or early spring stop at Heidiland autobahn rest stop where the Graubünden tourist information counter can tell you which passes are open.

Exit the autobahn at Landquart and follow Red Road #28 toward Davos. Before you have gone very far you'll see a sign indicating whether the pass is open or closed. You'll go through Schiers, Klosters and the outskirts of Davos, then over the pass. After that you will come to the intersection of Red Road #27. You can go left to Scuols or right to Zuoz. Via the Flüela the trip from Zürich is about 195 km / 120 miles.

081/864 99 82, singles 105-125 Sfr. (\$71-\$85), doubles 200-220 Sfr. (\$136-\$150), half board included. Major cards.

Hotel Chasa Belvair: III \$

Hotel Belvedere

This modern, four-star hotel on Scuol's main street expends much effort providing "big hotel" services like nightly live music in both bar

— that features a long list of guest activities and services. With the price of the room guests get three buffet-style meals, including wine. Some of the Palace's public spaces are quite impressive with soaring ceilings, huge paintings and elegant chandeliers.

Of course, there are tennis courts, an indoor swimming pool, a nearby golf course, sauna and Turkish baths, a nursery and other facilities for families.

Guestrooms are decorated and furnished in at least a dozen styles. Number 101, a corner room, is a spacious single, and Number 116, a nice double, has a private balcony and an excellent view.

The Club Robinson is for those who enjoy this style of hotel living.

Robinson Club Hotel Scuol Palace, CH-7550 Bad Scuol, phone 084/912 21, fax 084/9 02 21, singles 127-178 Sfr. (\$86-\$121), doubles 234-316 Sfr. (\$159-\$215), half board included. Major cards.

Hotel Scuol Palace: II

Zuoz

Schlosshotel Castell

Youth, energy and charm are a can't miss combination. That, and a solid hotel background, are qualities Ernst and Sylvia Wyrsh bring to their resurrection of the Schlosshotel Castell, located on a hill overlooking the valley just outside of Zuoz.

Built to look like a castle in 1913, the hotel did not do well following its reconstruction after a 1961 fire. The Wyrshes took over in 1989 and since then have created an ambience that fits the Castell's numerous physical attributes. Among those attributes are spacious, well-furnished guestrooms and vast, grand public rooms with handsome wood paneling, grand pianos, oriental rugs and elaborate ceilings. In the main salon the fireplace is always lit and there is a pianist during the cocktail hour.

The Wyrsh's cater to families and there are special arrangements such as a children's dining room, game room and child care facilities.

The hotel is open from mid-December to mid-April and from mid-June to the end of October.

Castell Zuoz Alpen Schlosshotel, CH-7524, Zuoz, phone 082/7 01 01, fax 082/7 31 20, singles 80-142 Sfr. (\$54-\$97), doubles 152-340 Sfr. (\$103-\$231), half board included. Major cards.

Castell Zuoz: III G

Hotel Klarer

Above the massive stone arch that frames the blond, wood front door of the Hotel-Café-Restaurant-Confiserie Klarer on Zuoz's main square, are two dates. The first, 1565, is the year in which the building was re-constructed after the village was burned in 1499. The second inscribed date, 1926, is when the Klarer family began renting out a few rooms to travelers who began to arrive in greater numbers when the railroad was built after the war. The Klarer's had come on the scene shortly after WWI and for several years operated only a bakery on the premises.

Though the current patriarch started out in that bakery, Herr Klarer is now a full-time hotelier. And you'll be hard pressed to find a more pleasant and welcoming one. Thanks to a few years spent in Canada, he speaks excellent English.

There is still a tempting pastry and candy shop on the premises and the Café's vaulted ceiling, carved wood paneling and indirect lighting make it a snug place to dawdle over coffee and cake

Guestrooms are simply but comfortably furnished. The larger doubles, like Number 12, have a separate sitting area with comfortable chairs.

Hotel Klarer, CH-7524, Zuoz, phone 082/7 13 21, fax 082/7 12 14, singles 70-110 Sfr. (\$48-\$75), dou-

bles 140-220 Sfr. (\$95-\$150), half board included. Major cards.

Hotel Klarer: II G

Hotel Crusch Alva

Kitty corner from the Klarer is another typical Engadine building housing the Crusch Alva. Its interior is all stone arches, bleached wood ceilings with big beams and paneled walls.

Young Silvia and Peter Jöri-mann are especially proud of the hotel's restaurant which has been recognized by *Gault Millau*. The couple offer "refined" regional cuisine in their 300 year-old, paneled dining room. Though we missed the formal restaurant, a light lunch of risotto in the *stuba* was excellent.

Number 18 is typical of the dozen or so guestrooms. On a corner, it has a carved wood bed and a large bathroom with its own window.

The hotel has no elevator but is the best value in town.

Hotel Crusch Alva, CH-7524, Zuoz, phone 082/7 13 19, fax 082/7 24 59, singles 70-80 Sfr. (\$48-\$54), doubles 140-160 Sfr. (\$95-\$109), half board included. Major cards.

Crusch Alva: II \$

Hotel Bellaval

More private home than hotel, the Bellaval features 13 clean, airy guestrooms and a pleasant wood-paneled restaurant.

Room Number 12, with its oversized bathroom and private balcony, is the hotel's most requested. Number six has a balcony with a terrific view and Number 14 has a big skylight, a wooden ceiling and a marble tiled bathroom.

An outdoor pool is heated in summer.

Hotel Bellaval, CH-7524, Zuoz, phone 082/7 14 81, fax 082/7 31 41, singles 65-90 Sfr. (\$44-\$61), doubles 130-180 Sfr. (\$88-\$122), half board included. Major cards.

Hotel Bellaval: II



EUROPE TRAVEL BRIEFS

Continued from page 1

includes accommodations for seven nights, daily breakfast and dinner, weekly ski pass for the entire region, six days of ski instruction, a welcome cocktail, organized ski races and a candle-light dinner.

For more information contact the Swiss National Tourist Office, 222 N Sepulveda Blvd., El Segundo, CA 90245, phone 310-335-5980, fax 310-335-5982.

Swissair Ski Vacations

Swissair's 1993/94 ski packages start at \$261 per person, per week double occupancy. Weekly apartment rentals begin at \$150 per person, double. Swissair's **Swiss Travel Invention** hotels are priced from \$39 per person, per night in a double. **Europe Your Way** hotels start at \$33 per person double.

In addition, Swissair's winter brochure contains a \$50 per person coupon good towards your next trip, plus reductions for seniors, special deals that allow kids a complimentary ride on some trains and a free stay at certain hotels. It also contains discounts for group travel. Contact Swissair 800-688-7947.

Travel/Study in Austria

The **European Centre**, a joint program of the University of New Orleans and the University of Innsbruck, operates travel-study programs for adults. The price for their 22-day summer program is \$2,495 and includes a private room with bath at the University of Innsbruck, breakfasts and lunches, one three-unit class, lessons in conversational German, excursions to historic sites, a weekly forum, field trips and social events. Participants choose from four courses of study — *Empires and Nations*; *Opera in Europe*; *Where the Arts Meet: Comparative Themes in Literature, Music and Visual Arts*

and *Society and Culture in the U. S. and Europe* — for up to three credits or simply for personal enrichment. Lectures — in English — are from 9 to 11:30 a.m. weekdays and limited to 10 students. Airfare is not included in the price. Contact program coordinator Alea Morelock, International Study Programs, Metropolitan College, University of New Orleans, New Orleans LA 70148, phone 504-286-7484/7116, fax 504-286-7317.

Freiamt in Autumn

A week in Freiamt (Black Forest) starting at 177 DM (\$107) per person offers bed, breakfast, a group hike, tour, use of indoor pool, sauna and extras. Contact: Verkehrsburo, Bad Strasse 1, D-7348 Freiamt, phone 07645/644, fax 07645/628.

Tauber Valley Excursion

Tauberbischofsheim has a three-day weekend bicycle program beginning at 155 DM (\$93) per person. The program includes a bicycle tour in the Tauber valley, a wine tasting in a castle cellar, a Franconian supper and another meal. Contact: Verkehrsam, Postfach 1480, D-97934 Tauberbischofsheim, phone 09341/80313, fax 09341/80389.

Mosel Wine Program

Trier invites visitors on an autumn trip to the Mosel-Saar-Ruwer wine region. The arrangement called *Wine and Sekt-Making in Germany's Oldest City* costs 148 to 325 DM (\$89-\$166) per person for two nights, depending on accommodations. Also included is a city tour, a group lunch and a wine and sekt tasting. Arrival can be any day except Saturday. Contact: Tourist Information, Postfach 3830, D-54228 Trier, phone 0651/978080.

Rhine Journey

Bacharach in the Loreley Valley offers six days of Rhine romance for 224 DM to 289 DM (\$141-\$174). A tour of the medieval town, an ex-

cursion to the Loreley, a drive along the Rheingold Road and a guided hike are on the program. Contact: Verkehrsamt, Oberstrasse 1, D-55422 Bacharach, phone 06743/2968, fax 06743/3155.

Golf Package

Überlingen, Germany, on Lake Constance offers a two-day golf special including hotel with breakfast and dinner plus an excursion to the island of Mainau from 485 DM (\$292) per person. Contact: Kurverwaltung, D-88662 Überlingen, phone, 07551/4041, fax 07551/66874.

Adenauer at Rhöndorf

On the Trail of a Great Man in History: Konrad Adenauer is a weekend program available to groups. Two nights, including hotel, a visit to the Adenauer home in Rhöndorf, a walking tour of Bad Honnef and extras starts at 286 DM (\$172) per person. The program is also available in a shortened version as a day trip or excursion. Contact: Tourist Information, Hauptstrasse 28a, D-53604 Bad Honnef, phone 02224/184170, fax 02224/79687.

New Hitler Attraction

The **Wolf's Lair**, where Adolph Hitler narrowly escaped assassination in July of 1944, may be turned into a tourist attraction. Already, there are more than 250,000 visitors to the site, which is in the countryside north of Warsaw, near the town of Ketrzyn, known in German as Rastenberg. An Austrian company has contracted to operate the site as a commemoration to Claus von Stauffenberg, the German officer who planted a bomb in a room where Hitler was being briefed regarding the progress of the war. The bomb, which was placed in a briefcase under a table, went off but Hitler survived the blast. Von Stauffenberg, along with many other German officers involved in the plot, was hanged with piano wire. 

READERS' FORUM

Trip Report

We were glad to see your recommendation of **Weinhaus Messerschmitt** in Bamberg since we had made reservations there. We very much endorse that recommendation. We also appreciate your advice not to miss the *rauchbier* at the **Brauerei Schlenkerla**. Bamberg proved a beautiful and interesting smaller city, and a great beginning for our trip.

In Tegernsee we found an available room at the **Fischerstüberl am See**, which was very adequate and had a beautiful view of the lake from our balcony. A particular highlight was beer by the lake at the **Herzogliches Brauhaus Tegernsee**. The lake is also, of course, an ideal location for walking or hiking.

From Tegernsee we went to Seeg and were fortunate enough to find a room at **Pension Heim**. It was at least as good as you said, and once again we appreciate good information. A particular treat came in the general conviviality after dinner, where we made a new friend (another guest) whom we will visit on some future trip.

From Seeg we drove to Zürich for a stimulating two days. We had made reservations at the **Schweizerhof** and were very pleased with both accommodations and the French restaurant. We had a great deal of difficulty parking our car, however, and this detracted somewhat from an otherwise enjoyable stay. Without getting into all the unpleasant details, we were essentially left on our own to park at a time when nearly all the Parkhauses near the hotel were full. We wasted a significant amount of time before we were able to get the car situated. The irony is that I decided against your

recommendation of the **Hotel Florhof** because of parking difficulties you mentioned there.

Our final night was spent at the **Post Hotel** in Aschaffenburg where we were served an excellent dinner. When the waiter told us the trout was "still swimming" we both agreed that that was the correct choice. The **Schloss Johannesburg** in Aschaffenburg also was an interesting tour.

It was very slow-go the next morning on the autobahn from Würzburg to Frankfurt, reinforcing a policy of stay close, start early, and perhaps look for a different route to the airport.

John Dansby, Ashland KY

(Ed. note: Sorry if we misled readers. Parking is difficult near the Florhof, but not for hotel guests. Leave your keys with the front desk and your car will be taken care of for about \$5 per day plus however much you choose to tip the porter.)

Munich Hotel Praised

I was certainly pleased to read the August *Gemütlichkeit* on Munich hotels. I noted the **Hotel Kraft** in the moderate range and am glad that you placed the Kraft on the list. We were fortunate to be able to stay there for a week in the spring as it was near the medical school. It was just a short, very pleasant walk, to the Marienplatz, the City Gate and other interesting aspects of Munich. We also found that it was not a bad long walk to the Oktoberfest area. The Kraft has an elevator and I think about 30 rooms. Prices were reasonable and it included an extremely nice American-type breakfast. The staff was kind, helpful and very, very friendly to us during our period there. We felt quite at home.

Reuel May DDS, Jackson MS

Budapest Update

I travel regularly to Eastern Europe on business. A recent trip was to Budapest, thus this letter.

Arriving at the small Budapest Airport, one should head for the hotel/bus desk just inside the entrance. There, for a fee of 240 forints, or about \$2.50, one can take a comfortable van into the city and any designated hotel. Changing dollars can be done right at the airport, next to the baggage area, before entering the main terminal. Currently the exchange rate is about 95 forints to the dollar and this has remained stable within a few cents for the past six months. You should also plan on booking a reservation for the return van trip from the hotel to the airport since they will arrange for pick-up at any time from any location. Taxis to the city run near \$20 and the van system is superior.

Compared to other eastern European cities, staying in Budapest is a joy for the spoiled western traveler. Accommodations are near the standard of large western European cities. I stayed at the top-of-the-line **Grand Corvinus, Kempinski**, owned by **Lufthansa**. Priced at about \$190, it offers good value considering the service and the outstanding daily breakfast. The hotel has an indoor pool and spa, a masseuse and a business room with computers, faxes etc. Its elegant three-story entrance foyer is fast becoming the meeting place for business in Budapest, and the two restaurants serve a variety of menu styles, but alas are hotel fare.

Less expensive and less modern is the old **Gellert Hotel** and baths, also on the Buda side of the river. This one falls into the \$50-\$95 range and at one time was *the* grand hotel of Budapest, now slightly worn at the heels but still enjoyable.

Food is a pleasure in this city and not expensive. And don't forget to order Hungarian wines, they are very pleasant. Watch out for the unicom, a favorite after

Continued on page 8

DEAR SUBSCRIBER

Continued from page 2

tions I keep the *Michelin Green Guides*, one each for Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Unlike the Red Guides, these books are not revised annually. The guide for Germany, however, was recently updated to include the eastern part of the country.

Beyond the Michelin Green and Red Guides, nothing is essential. Among the all-purpose guides — covering hotels, restaurants, sights, etc. — I prefer the Frommer's guides for individual countries.

You might also consider the *Access Guides* by Richard Saul Wurman. I have never used them in Europe but on a recent vacation in New England, I found the Access Guide for Boston quite valuable. Designed for the walker, these books are organized by neighborhood and feature color-coded type for fast look-up. Restaurants are in red, sights & culture in black, hotels in blue and shops/parks in green, etc. A numbering system in the body of the text refers reader to excellent 3-D style maps. The

graphics are excellent, the information reliable.

Two other books I find helpful both at home and when traveling are the *Marling Menu Master*, a little \$7.95 menu translators published for French, German, Italian and Spanish; and *Langenscheidt's Taschenwörterbuch*, an English to German and German to English dictionary. ☒

READERS' FORUM

Continued from page 7

dinner liqueur produced by a former parliament member who retired to tend the family business. This one can leave you guessing where you are and why you are there.

An excellent meal is on tap at the *Kakas*; this means duck, and is the special of the house. Wandering gypsy music accompanies your meal and, for the proper tip, will stay right at your table. A meal of duck, stuffed with plums and served in a plum sauce was excellent and the cost

for two was around \$50, including wine.

Two other nice spots are the *Amadeus* off the Vorosmarty Sq., where grilled chicken or steak, with salad and wine runs about \$12, and one of my favorite spots, the *Margaret*. Just across the Margaret bridge and up the hill one block. This is a small restaurant, owned by a prominent local architect. It is frequently visited by foreign political figures and is well known as a local gathering spot for politicians. A wonderful courtyard covered with vines and flowers is a favorite place for locals to dine and I found it a warm, friendly place to eat and enjoy the local color. Prices are \$15-\$20 per person including local wine. Be sure to ask for Cjac Mattai, the owner; a very entertaining and educated man who can and will give you a fascinating verbal tour of Hungary and it's history.

Budapest is high on my list for a repeat visit.

Colin F. McGowan,
Marriottsville MD

Swissair Flier

I wish to simply extend my thanks for your excellent inducement to subscribe, namely the \$400 per business class ticket reduction on my *Swissair* flight to Geneva. Considering my associate and I are flying roundtrip, the \$800 savings is very much appreciated!

Once I decided to proceed, the transaction was easily handled through the extreme efficiency of Liane at *Swissair* in San Francisco and my tickets immediately arrived via Federal Express. All in all, it was actually much easier than having to bicycle down to the *Swissair* offices on West 49th Street here in Manhattan to pick up my tickets.

Lee Snider, New York NY ☒

Major Swiss Ski Resort Information - Winter 1993/94

Resort	Phone	Fax	1-Day Pass	6-Day Pass	Kids Discount	Difficulty Rating**		
						B	I	A
Arosa	081/31 16 21	081/31 31 35	\$32	\$138	50%	31%	57%	12%
Crans-Montana	027/41 30 41	027/41 74 60	\$30	\$138	40%	45%	50%	5%
Davos	081/45 21 21	081/45 21 00	\$35	\$170	40%	30%	40%	30%
Engelberg	041/94 11 61	041/94 41 56	\$30	\$122	45%	25%	40%	35%
Films/Laax	081/39 10 22	081/39 43 08	\$35	\$170	50%	50%	70%	20%
Grindelwald	036/53 12 12	036/53 30 88	\$34	\$146	50%	33%	50%	17%
Gstaad-Region	030/4 71 71	030/4 56 20	\$28	\$142	50%	40%	40%	20%
Interlaken*	036/22 21 21	036/22 52 21	\$44	\$202	40%	33%	47%	20%
Klosterheide	081/69 18 77	081/69 49 06	\$33	\$163	40%	30%	40%	30%
Lenzerheide	081/34 34 34	081/34 53 83	\$29	\$136	40%	15%	50%	35%
Les Diablerets	025/53 13 58	025 /53 23 48	\$26	\$127	40%	36%	52%	12%
Leysin	025/34 22 44	025/34 16 16	\$24	\$113	30%	10%	50%	40%
Mürren	036/55 16 16	036/55 37 69	\$32	\$146	50%	30%	50%	20%
Pontresina	082/6 64 88	082/6 79 96	\$32	\$162	30%	20%	70%	10%
Saas-Fee	028/59 11 11	028/57 18 60	\$34	\$160	40%	30%	45%	25%
Scuol/Taraspe	081/22 13 60	081/22 72 73	\$27	\$131	40%	20%	70%	10%
St. Moritz	082/3 31 47	082/3 29 52	\$32	\$162	30%	20%	70%	10%
Verbier	026/31 62 22	026/31 32 72	\$33	\$155	30%	30%	40%	30%
Villars	025/35 32 32	025/35 27 94	\$25	\$127	40%	35%	50%	15%
Wengen	036/55 14 14	036/55 30 60	\$34	\$146	50%	35%	50%	15%
Wilderswil	036/22 84 55	036/23 33 35	\$34	\$146	50%	35%	45%	20%
Zermatt	028/66 11 81	028/66 11 85	\$39	\$183	50%	30%	40%	30%

* Jungfrau ski region including Grindelwald, Wengen, Mürren. ** % of runs for beginning, intermediate, advanced skiers.