

- Baden-Baden Hotels
- Updating Graz
- Graz's Famed Zeughaus
- Readers' Forum

# GEMÜTLICHKEIT

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

## BADEN-BADEN HOTEL REVIEW

Bob and Liz Bestor report on 11 hotels in and around Baden-Baden, from the ultra-luxurious Brenner's Park-Hotel & Spa to much simpler accommodations. Among them are some excellent values.

**T**ravelers to Germany who require unremitting culture are advised to give Baden-Baden a pass. But if for a few days you can forgo Baroque churches big enough for the Super Bowl, walled towns with half-timbered buildings older than Plymouth Rock and opera houses where Beethoven's initials are carved on a stall in the men's room, in favor of the genteel ambience of Europe's most fabled spa, you are likely to find a few days there restful and renewing.

And, to be honest, there are other things to do besides — as Europe's richest and most noble tourists have since the mid-19th century — stroll the Lichtentaler Allee, the extraordinarily beautiful promenade and park along the Oosbach River; partake of the town's healing waters; or gambol and gamble in the famous *spielbank* (casino) where many a Russian prince has dropped many a bundle.

Baden-Baden is, after all, located at the northern end of the Black Forest and the many delights of that region are easily and

quickly accessible. France, too, is just a few minutes away by car or train.

You will especially enjoy a Baden-Baden stay if your budget can stand one of the town's posh hotels, particularly the renowned Brenner's Park overlooking the river. That is not to diminish less expensive hotels reviewed here. For example, the Hotel Rebenhof, in the vineyards about a 10-minute drive from the center of Baden-Baden, is one of the best

values we've encountered in the last several years.

When planning a stay in Baden-Baden one should be aware of the special rates available through the local tourist office. During the low season — July 1 to August 15, November 1 to December 14 and January 7 to March 31 — the special "Baden-Baden Adventure" package price in one of the town's luxury hotels, including

*Continued on page 3...*

## GRAZ REVISITED

*Our last report on Graz was September 1990. Four years later, not much has changed other than the prices.*

**A**ustria's second city is somewhat of a forgotten destination.

*Birnbaum's Europe* treats it as though it doesn't exist. *Fodor's Affordable Europe*, omits it, as does its *Fodor's Budget Europe*.

But Graz is not to be missed. It is a worthy destination, replete with good hotels, restaurants and shops; all contained in a beautifully preserved Medieval core that brims with fascinating things to explore.

That core, the Old

Town, is by far the city's most interesting section; dense, alluring and ideal for walking. The *altstadt's* bustling, youthful aura is no illusion. One of every six residents is a student. Four hundred year-old Karl-Franzens University, with 30,000 students and one of Austria's three major universities, is located at one entrance to Old Town. Two smaller schools are also in Graz.

Though crowded, Graz is both clean and colorful: stone paving immaculately

*Continued on page 2...*

## Implements of War — Circa 1642

*Bruce Woelfel reports on Graz's fabulous collection of medieval weaponry.*

**G**raz's number one tourist attraction is probably its Zeughaus (Arsenal), a warehouse filled with medieval weaponry. It is a collection that will catch the imagination of every kid and ex-kid who ever read "Prince Valiant" on Sunday or was fascinated by armored knights and their weapons.

On a late June afternoon, After paying the modest entry fee, I found myself alone in the rather gloomy three hundred year-old building. Not a museum, this is a super-market of the medieval art of war: four floors of every conceivable specimen of 17th century technology, on floors, walls and ceilings, all looking brand new. The ground floor contains six 16th century field guns, a bronze mortar from 1652, implements and materials for making rockets, armor for light cavalry and footmen, black armor, (breast and back plates), hundreds of matchlock arquebuses, countless 17th century matchlock wheellock and flintlock muskets, pistols and rifles.

Other floors have equally large quantities of

*Continued on page 7...*

## GRAZ

Continued from page 1

swept; flowers and greenery everywhere. In the *altstadt*, however, one is never far from the peaceful surroundings of the Mur River: a placid, park-like setting, with benches and trees, always available for tranquil water-side strolls. Nearby, on the busy Hauptstrasse, narrow streetcars rumble along, sharing the confined space with taxis, pedestrians and delivery vans.

On the other side of this busy thoroughfare, beyond the noise of the trams, are the agreeable sounds of jazz. In summer, the extensive network of alleys and courtyards that radiate off the main street are places where small ensembles, usually students, practice their craft before audiences of tourists and locals.

Exploring the *altstadt's* labyrinthine network of streets is a surprisingly intimate and suspenseful experience. Narrow rocky passageways open suddenly to reveal unexpected vistas: a palace, a church steeple or a gilded clock tower rising to the sky. Hovering over all this is the Schlossberg, a towering ruined fortification perched above the *altstadt* and reached by steeply terraced steps. Like all medieval cities watched over by castles, it gives Graz a special drama.

### Graz Hotels

#### Erzherzog Johann

A charming, almost palatial hotel, situated in the central part of the Old Town on Hauptstrasse, close to shop-

ping, museums and important historical sites. It was once a residence of the Archduke Johann, a Hapsburg who married badly and could not succeed to be king.

The building is grand in scale. One enters to an elegant high-ceilinged lobby with a graceful staircase. Adjoining is a stunning 5-story high "winter garden" dining room, one of the most beautiful in Graz. This exquisite inner courtyard, enclosed by skylights, was originally built for horses and its glass roof was added in 1920.

Some rooms are gigantic, even the singles are large. My double was 35 feet by 18 feet, with a 17-foot ceiling. Its towering double-glazed windows are sealed against outside trolley noise. This imposing space is furnished with minibar, sofa, soft chairs, coffee table, a larger conference table, lovely veneered French Provincial chests, desks, wardrobes and Oriental carpets. The generously-sized bathroom has a huge tub, large lavatory and separate toilet room.

**Address:** Erzherzog Johann, Sackstrasse 3-5, A-8010 Graz

**Phone:** 0316/81 16 16

**Fax:** 0316/81 15 15

**Location:** Central

**Rooms:** 67 total, 32 singles

**Proprietor:** Bernhard Reif-Breitweiser

**Prices:** Singles 950-1300 AS (\$86-\$118), doubles 1750-3000 AS (\$160-270). Fall and Winter rates approximately 33% less than summer rates.

**Facilities:** Outdoor sundeck, lounging area and sauna.

**Credit Cards:** All

**Disabled:** Good access

**Closed:** Never

**Parking:** Garage at 120 AS (\$10) per day and limited free street parking

**Rating:** ABOVE AVERAGE 15/20 G

#### Hotel Kirchenwirt

This pleasant country inn is about three miles northeast of the center, in the Mariatrost section. The tram to the Old Town is a 5-10 minute walk from the hotel. Built as a restaurant for pilgrims in 1833, the Kirchenwirt was converted to its present use in 1920 and has been continuously modernized since. The average-sized guestrooms are furnished in a green and cream color scheme. Most have panoramic views of the surrounding countryside, and come with phone, hair-dryer, minibar, cable TV and robes. Number 231 is a two-room apartment for four, for 1600-1840 AS (\$145-\$170).

**Address:** Pfeiffer Hotel Kirchenwirt, Kirchplatz 9, A-8044 Graz

**Phone:** 0316/39 1112-0

**Fax:** 0316/39 111249

**Location:** In a residential area, 3 miles from town, 5 minutes walk from the tram

**Rooms:** 20 singles, 25 doubles

**Proprietor:** Joseph Pfeiffer

**Prices:** Singles 800-980 AS (\$72-\$90), doubles 1200-1400 AS (\$110-\$128)

**Meals:** All available

**Facilities:** Outdoor food service

**Credit Cards:** All

**Disabled:** Limited access

**Closed:** Never

Continued on page 7...

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## GEMÜTLICHKEIT

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### HOTEL RESTAURANT RATING KEY

Rating Category	Scale	Hotel Rating Criteria	
Unacceptable	0 - 3	People/Service	30%
Adequate	4 - 7	Location/Setting	15%
Average	8 - 11	Guestrooms	30%
Above Average	12 - 15	Public rooms	5%
Excellent	16 - 20	Facilities/Restaurant	20%

#### Special Designations

**G** By virtue of location, decor, special charm, warmth of management, or combination thereof, an especially pleasant establishment.

**\$** Offers significant value.

#### Restaurant Criteria

Food 65%  
Service 20%  
Atmosphere 15%

## BADEN-BADEN

Continued from page 1

the Brenner's Park, is 165 DM (\$107) per night, per person, double occupancy, minimum two nights; a good deal considering the Brenner's double room rack rates range from \$292 to over \$600 per night, not including breakfast or any of the extras offered in the package. If you're willing to commit to a week, the *per person* price per night is 141 DM (\$92). The weekend package also includes breakfasts, dinner one night at a local in-spot, the **Palais Gagarin**, and other extras. The seven-night package includes breakfasts, a four-course "gourmet" dinner at **Der Kleine Prinz**, a wine tasting, free public transport, a visit to the Roman-Irish Bath and a concert of the Baden-Baden Orchestra.

Package prices in the lower category hotels are less, of course. A weekend arrangement with the same extras, in the lowest category, a "standard" hotel, is 91 DM (\$59) per person, per night, double occupancy. The seven-night program costs 67 DM (\$44). Figure about 7% to 22% additional for single occupancy. High season rates are only slightly higher.

### Brenner's Park-Hotel & Spa

The Brenner's certainly ranks with the grandest of the "grand" hotels *Gemütlichkeit* has reviewed over the eight years of its existence. It must be added to a list that includes the **Beau Rivage Palace** in Lausanne, the **Victoria Jungfrau** in Interlaken, the **Vier Jahreszeiten** in Hamburg, Vienna's **Imperial** and, in a slightly different category, the **Grüner Baum** in Badgastein, Austria.

In a hotel of this caliber and price, one has every right to expect lavish guest rooms, elegant public rooms, excellent food and near-smothering service. The Brenner's fills the bill on all counts. In addition, it has an almost country setting, opening onto the Lichtentaler Allee, the park that follows the Oos river through Baden-Baden; and yet the hotel is no more than a five-minute walk to the town center.

We were upgraded to a new, beautifully redecorated junior suite.

Our soaring windows overlooked the park. In the morning we wakened to the birds and at night drifted off to sleep to the sound of the wind in the trees. There was a separate dressing room and a large bathroom with perhaps the best shower we've ever had in a hotel room. It, like the rest of the bathroom, was all marble tile with a thick, clear glass door and roomy enough inside for a family of four.

## BADEN-BADEN

Population: 50,000

Altitude: 594 feet

Approximate distances from:

Berlin	717 km	445 miles
Frankfurt	180 km	112 miles
Munich	332 km	206 miles
Strasbourg, France	61 km	38 miles
Stuttgart	112 km	69 miles

### Tourist Information

Haus des Kurgastes  
Augustaplatz 8  
Baden-Baden D-76530  
Phone: 07221/275241  
Fax: 07221/275260

### Taking the Waters

#### • Caracalla Thermal Baths

Römerplatz 11  
Telephone: 07221/275940  
Completed in 1985. 1,000 square meters of outdoor and indoor pools with hot and cold grottoes, a canal with flowing water, bubbling pools, hot whirlpools and underwater air jets. Extensive sauna and solarium facilities.

#### • Friedrichsbad


Römerplatz 1  
Telephone 07221/275920  
Built in Renaissance style between 1869 and 1877 and restored in 1981. These are the famous Roman-Irish baths which include a hot-air steam bath, thermal pool, bubbling bath, exercise bath and plunge bath.

#### • The Pump Room

Kaiserallee 3  
Telephone: 07221/275277  
For those who want to drink the water. Choose from two kinds of spa water: Friedrichsquelle and Nürtinger water from Heinrichsquelle. Yuk.

### For Gamblers

#### • Baden-Baden Casino

Kaiserallee 1  
Telephone: 07221/21060  
The oldest, largest casino in Germany and, some say, the most beautiful in the world. Guests can play French roulette, American roulette, baccara, black jack, poker and a game called klondyke. Minimum wager is 5 DM (\$3.25), maximum is 20,000 DM (\$12,987). 

Existence at the Brenner's is a pampered one. To this unpracticed eye, the hotel's spa and Lancaster Beauty Farm seems to offer every conceivable health and beauty procedure known to man. Let's say you had surgery in Switzerland and want to recuperate at the Brenner's.

The hotel can send a helicopter and put you up in a private apartment in its Black Forest Clinic in the adjacent Villa Stephanie. If you're someone who must be concerned with security it might be the penthouse with bulletproof windows at 3,000 DM (\$1948) per night (substantial discounts available, of course, for long-term stays). Guests with simpler needs can amuse themselves with facials, massages, manicures, medical pedicures, lymphdrainages, cellulite treatments or the ever-popular sea algae body treatment. And of course there are saunas, solariums and an indoor pool with a panoramic view of the Lichtentaler Allee.

Want to have pearls restrung or your jewelry cleaned? The hotel will arrange to have it done at no cost.

High tea is served daily at 4 p.m. in the salon off the main lobby. Beginning at 5 p.m. in this same room, a pianist in white dinner jacket plays light classics. A few steps away, in the Oleander Bar, more live piano can be heard into the wee hours.

Service, for the most part, met our high expectation. The affable men who manned the hotel's concierge desk were particularly helpful and unfailingly pleasant. There were, however, a couple of glitches. Liz's difficulty with opening the door to our room was met with impatience by personnel on duty at the front desk. When trying to unlock the room about 10 p.m. one night, the entire lock cylinder fell out in her hand. At the front desk the night porter's deep sigh and rolling eyes sent a clear message: "another helpless woman." We waited 45 minutes in the Oleander Bar for the lock to be repaired. Vindication came the next morning when a single turn of the housekeeper's key caused the lock to again fall apart. We don't quarrel with the malfunction — the door and lock were new and these things happen — but with the attitude of the hotel personnel. For the record, there was also a botched appointment with the Lancaster Beauty Farm and a 30 DM charge for a car wash that was never requested.

Another criticism is one voiced in an earlier issue (April, '94). It

Continued on page 4...

## BADEN-BADEN

Continued from page 3

concerns the hotel's policy of a 10 DM (\$6.50) surcharge for each call to the U.S. via AT&T's USA Direct. Guests not only pay the fee, but must give the hotel operator the number and wait for a callback. This makes a series of calls to the U.S. not only expensive but time consuming. In most European hotels, such calls can be dialed directly from the room and are deemed local and never appear on the bill.

We also confess to being disappointed that the menus in the hotel's main restaurant (coat required at lunch, coat and tie required after 6 p.m. in restaurant and salon) and the less formal Schwarzwaldstube are identical.

Everything we chose from the Brenner's conservative, traditional menu was very good, though, not surprisingly, quite expensive. Tender, juicy and perfectly cooked breast of chicken in a lively rosemary sauce, was 48 DM (\$31). Sautéed liver in a vinegary sauce with fried potatoes and a small salad was 38 DM (\$25). A shared first-course of Norwegian smoked salmon with toast points and a creamed horseradish sauce was 36 DM (\$23). This was the Schwarzwaldstube where, including dessert, a bottle of wine, two pre-dinner drinks (one each) and mineral water, the bill was 209 DM (\$136).

The next night, in the more formal and elegant Brenner's Park Restaurant, where we upgraded the wine, dessert and added a glass of after-dinner port, the tab was 260 DM (\$169). The star of that meal was truly outstanding calves sweetbreads. Service in both rooms was faultless.

This is without any doubt a great hotel, but incidents recounted earlier took some of the luster off our stay.

**Address:** Brenner's Park-Hotel & Spa, Schillerstr. 6 D-76530 Baden-Baden

**Phone:** 07221/9000

**Fax:** 07221/38772

**Location:** Park setting, 5 minutes walk from center of town

**Rooms:** 100 rooms, 68 singles and doubles, and 32 suites.

**Proprietor:** Richard Schmitz, Director

**Prices:** Singles 310 to 650 DM (\$201 to \$422),

doubles 450 to 980 DM (\$292 to \$636)

**Facilities:** Extensive spa services, hairdresser, two restaurants, Indoor pool.

**Credit Cards:** All

**Disabled:** Limited access

**Closed:** Never

**Parking:** Underground garage, 28 DM (\$18) per day

**Other Comments:** Breakfast is an additional 35 DM (\$23) per day.

**Rating:** EXCELLENT 18.5/20

### Romantik-Hotel Der Kleine Prinz

Though it seemed to us a bit contrived, Der Kleine Prinz offers its patrons loads of charm and 33 beautifully decorated guestrooms in a 100-year old, five-story Baroque building. This is a hotel built around a theme — a French children's tale, *The Little Prince* by Antoine De Saint Exupéry. Carrying the motif are what we assume to be reproductions of colorful illustrations from the Saint Exupéry book. The redheaded, black-booted Little Prince in his blue and red cloak is everywhere. To steal a Jacques Brel lyric, "Cute, cute, cute, in a stupid a \_\_ way."

Even to those of us who think the whole thing is somewhat overdone, guestrooms are extraordinary. Pick any one: the penthouse suite (750 DM/\$487) with its fireplace, slanting ceilings, heavy beams, large living and dining area, hand-painted porcelain bathrooms fixtures and a giant, retractable skylight; or perhaps the Turmzimmer (Tower Room) (425 DM/\$276) with wicker furniture, exposed beams and dormer windows. Double rooms are priced at 375 DM (\$244) — 275 DM (\$179) single — during the high season. At that price, you might try one of the Laura Ashley rooms or Number 34, Mille Fleurs (a thousand flowers).

The hotel has a lovely but pricey little restaurant offering meals from about \$45 to \$65. Each afternoon, guests are served tea and cakes compliments of the house.

The Little Prince is the creation of Edeltraud Rademacher and her husband, Norbert, who worked in catering for 22 years at New York's Waldorf Astoria. Its uniformed staff is very professional and guests are well cared for.

For those who cotton to super-chic little hotels — and whose travel budget can stand it — this is a fine choice but for only a few dollars more one can be at a true heavyweight of a hotel, the Brenner's Park.

**Address:** Romantik-Hotel Der Kleine Prinz, Lichtentaler Strasse 36, D-76530 Baden-Baden

**Phone:** 07221/3464

**Fax:** 07221/38264

**Location:** In the center, near the Kurhaus, about 200 meters from the river.

**Rooms:** 33 total rooms, 9 suites

**Proprietor:** Edeltraud & Norbert Rademacher

**Prices:** Singles 195 to 275 DM (\$127 to \$179), doubles 295 to 375 DM (\$192 to \$244), junior suites 395 to 650 DM (\$256 to \$422)

**Facilities:** Lift only in the new building

**Credit Cards:** All

**Disabled:** Not suitable

**Closed:** Never

**Parking:** 15 DM (\$10) per night

**Rating:** EXCELLENT 16.5/20

### Privathotel Quisisana

This is sort of a scaled down version of the Brenner's Park. There are sumptuous but smaller spa facilities and one gets the same sense of a monied clientele.

The 19th century villa has been recently upgraded to '90s elegance in a clean, contemporary *art nouveau* style. Particularly impressive are the hotel's wintergarden restaurant (where, incidentally, low-calorie meals are served), a salon with a shiny grand piano and crystal and gold chandeliers, and the gleaming spa where a waterfall spills into the indoor swimming pool and guests can watch a video from the Jacuzzi.

Guestrooms aren't quite the equal of those at the Brenner's or the Kleine Prinz, but you'll be very comfortable in any of the high-ceilinged rooms, many with views over the city.

The luxury and peace of the Quisisana don't come cheap. The top "bargain" is Number 78, a large double whose bed is tucked into an alcove and rents for 360 DM (\$234), without balcony. Most other doubles

Continued on page 5...

are 420 DM (\$273). The best single room value is Number 9, renting for 220 DM (\$143).

**Address:** Privathotel Quisisana, Bismarckstrasse 21, D-76530 Baden-Baden

**Phone:** 07221/3440

**Fax:** 07221/38195

**Location:** In a hilly, forested residential area approximately a 10-minute drive from the center

**Rooms:** 60 total

**Proprietor:** Jürgen & Elke Krämer

**Prices:** Singles 180 to 260 DM (\$117 to \$169), doubles 300 to 420 DM (\$195 to \$273)

**Facilities:** Beautiful indoor pool and spa

**Credit Cards:** Visa, Mastercard

**Disabled:** Not suitable

**Closed:** Never

**Parking:** Free

**Other Comments:** Restaurant only for hotel guests

**Rating:** EXCELLENT 16/20

#### Allee-Hotel Bären

A peaceful, almost stately atmosphere, comfortable guestrooms and a location on the Lichtentaler Allee are the Hotel Bären's principal virtues.

While some may consider its quiet, residential location — a 15 to 20 minute walk to the city center — an advantage, we think the Bären's prices are a bit out of line for a hotel this far out. Room Number 9, for example, a small no-smoking double without balcony is 305 DM (\$198). The least expensive doubles rent for 206 DM (\$134) and are on the side away from the park. The cheapest single on that side is 119 DM (\$77).

But the location *is* lovely and the Bären takes advantage of it by putting on twice-weekly barbecues in the hotel garden adjoining the park.

We would be more enthusiastic about the Bären if its rates were lower.

**Address:** Allee-Hotel Bären, Hauptstrasse 36 D-76530 Baden-Baden

**Phone:** 07221/7020

**Fax:** 07221/702113

**Location:** On the promenade, about 1.5 km from the center

**Rooms:** 80 total

**Proprietor:** Family Kimmig

**Prices:** Singles 119 to 206 DM (\$77-\$134), doubles 206 to 360 DM (\$134-\$234)

**Credit Cards:** All

**Disabled:** Not suitable

**Closed:** Never

**Parking:** 3 DM per stay

**Other Comments:** Member of the German Ringhotel group

**Rating:** ABOVE AVERAGE 15.5/20

#### Waldhotel Forellenhof

In a wooded setting about three miles from the city center, the Forellenhof offers excellent value and rustic charm.

The appealing interior of this green-shuttered, typical Black Forest farm house overflows with such country touches as carved wooden chandeliers, massive tile stoves and dark wood wainscoting.

Guest rooms in the newer section (preferred) have attractive cherry-wood furniture, good sized bathrooms and new TV sets with remote control. Number 28 is a comfortable double renting for 180 DM (\$117). Number 26 is an apartment with a very large sitting room and rents for 200 DM (\$130).

The restaurant, no surprise, specializes in trout. One from the River Oos, for example, sauteed with slivered almonds costs 26 DM (\$17) and comes with salad and rice, potatoes or noodles.

The Huber family's welcome is exceptionally warm. We like this hotel very much.

**Address:** Waldhotel Forellenhof, Gaisbach 91, D-76534 Baden-Baden

**Phone:** 07221/9740

**Fax:** 07221/974299

**Location:** 5 km outside Baden-Baden via Beuerner Strasse

**Rooms:** 27 total

**Proprietor:** Family Huber

**Prices:** Singles 85 to 109 DM (\$55-\$71), doubles 140 to 180 DM (\$91-\$117)

**Credit Cards:** All

**Facilities:** Garden terrace, wooded setting

**Disabled:** Not suitable

**Closed:** Never

**Parking:** Outdoors free

**Other Comments:** A bus leaves for the center every 10 minutes from in front of the hotel.

**Rating:** ABOVE AVERAGE 15.5/20 G \$

**EDITOR'S CHOICE**

#### Holland Hotel Sophienpark

This downtown hotel, recently modernized within an old building, caters to business travelers. Guest rooms are clean and bright and many open on to the adjacent Sophienpark.

Very good accommodations, if somewhat lacking in romance.

**Address:** Holland Hotel Sophienpark, Sophienstrasse 14, D-76530 Baden-Baden

**Phone:** 07221/3560

**Fax:** 07221/356121

**Location:** In the center

**Rooms:** 75 total

**Proprietor:** Jürgen D. Krämer

**Prices:** Singles 170 DM (\$110), doubles 245 DM (\$159), apartments 370 DM (\$240)

**Credit Cards:** All

**Disabled:** Yes

**Closed:** Never

**Parking:** 12 DM (\$8) per day

**Rating:** ABOVE AVERAGE 14.5/20

#### Hotel Atlantic

Though it in no way matches the Brenner's in other respects, the Atlantic Hotel's location, directly on the Lichtentaler Allee, is nearly as auspicious. From a table in the wintergarden, or outside on the terrace, one can enjoy a view of the park and the parade of passing swells.

Built at the turn-of-the-century, the Atlantic retains some of the advantages of hotels from that era; notably large guestrooms with high ceilings and windows. Room Number 1, which rents for 306 DM (\$199) is a good example. This huge double's tall windows open onto a balcony that overlooks the park. A smaller double, Number 2, also is on the park and goes for 219 DM (\$142). Rooms on the street side rent for about 25 DM (\$16) less.

On the no-smoking second floor, we like Number 216, a double on the park side with a beautiful balcony.

Furnishings and decor are of course much simpler than at the Brenner's. This is a good choice for those enamored of the location.

**Address:** Hotel Atlantic, Sofienstrasse 2a, D-76530 Baden-Baden

**Phone:** 07221/24111

*Continued on page 6...*

## BADEN-BADEN

Continued from page 5

**Fax:** 07221/26260

**Location:** In the center, on the park

**Rooms:** 53 total

**Proprietor:** Martina Kötter

**Prices:** Singles 107 to 184 DM (\$69 to \$119), doubles 196 to 306 DM (\$127 to \$199)

**Facilities:** Wintergarden, outdoor terrace with river view

**Credit Cards:** All

**Disabled:** Not suitable

**Closed:** Never

**Parking:** 16-21 DM (\$10-\$14)/night

**Rating:** ABOVE AVERAGE 13.5/20

### Hotel Deutscher Kaiser

A significant step down in quality, but not in price unfortunately, is the centrally located Deutscher Kaiser.

The hotel's salmon-colored facade, nicely set off by white shutters, is quite stylish, but inside, guestrooms border on drab. Bathrooms are small and poorly lit. The best room, Number 146, rents for 220 DM (\$142) in high season. A smaller room, Number 141, goes for 190 DM (\$123).

The accommodations here are decent but one can do as well in Baden-Baden for less money and, for a few additional dollars, much better.

**Address:** Hotel Deutscher Kaiser, Merkurstrasse 9, D-76530 Baden-Baden

**Phone:** 07221/2700

**Fax:** 07221/270270

**Location:** In the center

**Rooms:** About 25 total

**Proprietor:** Family Huber

**Prices:** Singles 120 to 145 DM (\$78-\$94), doubles 140 to 180 DM (\$91-\$117)

**Disabled:** Not suitable

**Closed:** Never

**Parking:** Public garage

**Rating:** AVERAGE 10.5/20

### Hotel-Restaurant Laterne

The elaborate front — flower boxes, red shutters and awnings and gold scrollwork against a green background — of the Hotel-Restaurant Laterne is perhaps the most distinctive along Baden-Baden's pedestrian-only Gernsbacher Strasse. In addition, its restaurant and street café are one of the area's most popular stops.

But behind that facade are 15 simple, reasonably-priced guestrooms, most with toilet and shower. If you want to stay away from the street, ask for room Number 4 whose windows open to an enclosed courtyard and rents for 140 DM (\$91). Number 37 is bigger and cheaper (120 DM/\$78) but on the street.

**Address:** Hotel-Restaurant Laterne, Gernsbacher Strasse 10 D-76530 Baden-Baden

**Phone:** 07221/29999

**Fax:** 07221/38308

**Location:** In the center

**Rooms:** About 15

**Proprietor:** Mike Brandau

**Prices:** Singles 60 to 90 DM (\$39-\$58), doubles 90 to 150 DM (\$58-\$97)

**Facilities:** Popular restaurant

**Disabled:** Not suitable

**Closed:** Never

**Parking:** Casino garage, 7 DM (\$4.50)

**Other Comments:** No lift, member of the Minotel group

**Rating:** AVERAGE 10.5/20

### Hotel Am Friedrichsbad

The Am Friedrichsbad is a bit of the Czech Republic in the center of Baden-Baden. Its main advantage is that the great Czech beer, Pilsner Urquell, is served in the hotel's Prager Stuben.

Guestrooms are borderline with worn carpets and furniture and an occasional spot of mildew in the bathrooms. Best of the lot is Number 123, a corner double with tall windows, a large bathroom with its own window and a small balcony. Or you might try the penthouse suite, which, in a kind of slap-dash way, is almost opulent.

No English spoken. The Laterne is better.

**Address:** Hotel Am Friedrichsbad, Gernsbacher Strasse 31, D-76530 Baden-Baden

**Phone:** 07221/271046

**Fax:** 07221/38310

**Location:** In the center

**Rooms:** 14 total, 6 singles, 7 doubles, 1 suite

**Proprietor:** Prokop Pustina

**Prices:** Singles 85 DM (\$55), doubles 130 DM (\$85), penthouse suite for 1-4 persons 190 DM (\$123)

**Facilities:** Prager Stuben serving

Czech food and beer

**Disabled:** Not suitable

**Closed:** Never

**Parking:** Public garage

**Rating:** ADEQUATE 7/20

## Value in the Vineyards

### Hotel Rebenhof

Not only is this the best hotel bargain we found in and around Baden-Baden but one of best we've come across in several years.

The Rebenhof sits on a gentle slope in the vineyards on the edge of the town of Neuweier, about a 10-minute drive from Baden-Baden. The inviting reception area is done in light wood paneling and the dark tile floor is partially covered by a large, rich Oriental rug.

The *gemütlich* restaurant offers a panoramic view of the vineyards.

Clean-as-a-whistle guest rooms are attractively decorated, have fully-tiled bathrooms and large, sliding floor-to-ceiling windows that give a sense of being right in the vineyards. The best we saw was an apartment, Number 11, which features a large separate sitting area next to the huge sliding door/window that opens to a balcony and the vines. It rents for 160 DM (\$104). A room with two twin beds, such as Number two, is just a smaller version of the apartment and goes for 132 DM (\$86).

With the recent slip of the dollar, we are simply not seeing hotels of this caliber at these prices.

**Address:** Hotel Rebenhof, Weinstrasse 58, D-76534 Neuweier

**Phone:** 07223/5406

**Fax:** 07223/52321

**Location:** In the vineyards in the wine town of Neuweier, 10 km SW of Baden-Baden via Fremersbergstrasse

**Rooms:** 17 total

**Proprietor:** Friedel Ziegler

**Prices:** Singles 80 DM (\$52), doubles 132 DM (\$86), apartment 160 DM (\$104)

**Disabled:** Not suitable

**Closed:** Middle Jan. to end March

**Parking:** Outdoors free

**Rating:** ABOVE AVERAGE 15.5/20 G \$ 

EDITOR'S  
CHOICE

## GRAZ HOTELS

Continued from page 2

**Parking:** Free

**Rating:** ABOVE AVERAGE 14/20

### Hotel Mariatrosterhof

Near the Kirchenwirt is another countryside hotel under the same management. The Mariatrosterhof's guest rooms are also furnished with phone, cable TV, minibars, and robes. Most have a view of the tree-covered landscape.

**Address:** Pfeiffer Hotel Mariatrosterhof, Kirchbergstrasse 1, A-8044 Graz

**Phone:** 0316/391070-0

**Fax:** 0316/391070-69

**Location:** In residential area 3 miles from town, 5 minutes walk from tram

**Rooms:** 20 singles, 30 doubles

**Proprietor:** Joseph Pfeiffer

**Prices:** Singles 800-980 AS (\$72-\$90), doubles 1200-1400 AS (\$110-\$128)

**Meals:** All available

**Facilities:** Outdoor food service

**Credit Cards:** All

**Disabled:** Limited access

**Closed:** Never

**Parking:** Free

**Rating:** ABOVE AVERAGE 14/20

### Ohnime

This agreeable, reasonably-priced inn and restaurant, is also in the Mariatrust section, and easily reached via tram from downtown. Most rooms have panoramic views of countryside and mountains, a few look over a nearby cemetery. They are decorated in tones of blue with harmonizing printed drapes and furnished with phones, cable TV and minibars. Room 203, an average-sized single has wide windows and a sweeping mountain and pasture vista for 660 AS (\$60). Number 205, a junior suite, decorated in rose and gray has two rooms and a french-style double bed. At 1100 AS (\$100) it is a bargain.

Ohnime's restaurant serves simple fare and its prices are moderate: I had fried chicken, green salad and white wine for 140 AS (\$12.50),

**Address:** Hotel-Restaurant Ohnime, Purbergstrasse 56, A-8044 Graz

**Phone:** 0316/39 11 43

**Fax:** 0316/39 11 43 19

**Location:** In residential area 3 miles from town, 5 minutes walk from tram

**Rooms:** 14 singles, 28 doubles

**Proprietor:** M. Digallo

**Prices:** Singles 660 AS (\$60), doubles 820-1100 (\$75-\$100)

**Meals:** All available

**Facilities:** Bar and outdoor terrace with food service

**Credit Cards:** All

**Disabled:** Limited access

**Closed:** Never

**Parking:** Free

**Rating:** ABOVE AVERAGE 14/20 \$

## GRAZ

Population: 240,000

Altitude: 1,194 feet

### Rail Distances and Times

Vienna	200 km	124 miles	2.5 hours
Salzburg	250 km	155 miles	4.0 hours
Innsbruck	440 km	275 miles	6.0 hours
Munich	390 km	242 miles	5.75 hours
Frankfurt	800 km	500 miles	10.0 hours
Zürich	740 km	460 miles	9.75 hours

Graz Tourist Office  
Hans-Sachs-Gasse 10  
A-8010 Graz.

Telephone: 0316/83 52 41-0

Fax: 0316/83 79 87

### Important Buildings

**Landeszeughaus** (Arsenal). Herrengasse 16, telephone 0316/877 2778. Admission: Adults 25 AS (\$2.30), children under 14 free. Closed November 1-March 31.

**Domkirche** (Cathedral). In 1485 a picture of the "Scourges of God" was mounted on the exterior wall - a reminder of the Black Death, the invasion of the Turks and the plague of locusts.

**Clock Tower.** Acquired present appearance in 1556, when the Schlossberg Castle was reconstructed. Still keeps time.

**Glockenturm** (Bell Tower). Built in 1588 under Archduke Karl. Houses largest bell in Styria and a medieval prison.

**Landhaus.** Considered to be a masterpiece of Italian Renaissance architecture.

**Eggenberg Palace.** Built in 1625, the square building has 365 windows - a different window for each day.

**Opera House.** Built in 1898/9. Inspired by famous Graz architect Fischer von Erlach, who built Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna.

**Mausoleum.** Erected in 1614/1638. Tomb of Emperor Ferdinand II.

## Restaurants

### Landhaus-Keller

Close to the Erzherzog Johann Hotel. The entrance of this atmospheric and extremely attractive hideout is past a guard booth and through the courtyard of the 16th century Styrian Parliament building in Old Town. Its rather dressy business clientele belies the relatively

simple food and reasonable prices. A romantic, intimate atmosphere is created by candle-lit tables in a series of narrow rooms under towering stone-vaulted ceilings. Some tables are also available outside in the ancient cobblestone courtyard.

On an evening last June, the food was excellent and the service quick and unobtrusive. The meal began with hors d'oeuvres of vegetables in aspic and garlic and herb-flavored cream cheese, accompanied by tasty pumpkin seed rolls. The main course was tender and flavorful boiled beef, served in a soup terrine with side dishes of white dill and caper sauce, sauerkraut, creamed spinach with garlic, and black bread. Without wine, the bill for one person came to 230 AS (\$21).

Landhaus-Keller, Schmiedgasse 9, A-8010 Graz. Phone 0316/83 02 76. Fax 0316/83 02 76 6.

### Krebsenkeller

This beer garden-restaurant is tucked inside a courtyard up a long pedestrian alley, on the ground floor of an ancient building. Here one finds plain wooden tables, unpretentious but prompt service and large portions of meat and cheese dishes, reasonably priced.

A large slab of rather bland cordon bleu was greatly improved by a squeeze of lemon juice. The "mixed salad" consisted of marinated cabbage and vegetables. For dessert, a local cheese called Schlierbacher, served with whole wheat bread, strong and pleasant, somewhat salty, with a Camembert-like taste. With two glasses of local red wine, the bill for one came to 199 AS (\$18).

Krebsenkeller, Sackstrasse 12, A-8010 Graz. Phone: 0316/82 93 77. ☎

## GRAZ ARSENAL

Continued from page 1

all descriptions of officers, commoners, tournament and horse armor, helmets, pistols, rifles, crossbows, halberds, lances, boar and peasant spears, sabres, broadswords, two-hand swords, shields, and many other weapons of the 16th and 17th centuries.

Continued on page 8...

## GRAZ ARSENAL

Continued from page 7

The weapons displayed here were gathered to equip an army of mercenaries late in the 17th century, when the warlike intentions of the Turks were at their most frightening. In 1683, Vienna came under siege, its population barely escaping starvation through the intervention of Polish and German relief armies under the Polish king John III (John Sobieski) and Charles V of Lorraine. But the weapons gathered here were never used for war. The 1699 Treaty of Karlowitz began the deterioration of the Ottoman Empire. The Arsenal's contents remained relatively untouched for 300 years to become the most complete collection of its kind in the world, an extraordinary window into the craft and complexities of medieval warfare.

Walking back to my hotel was like returning from a journey into the past. I knew that even today a thousand or more mercenaries could be outfitted and march back in time to the middle ages, completely equipped for battle. — BW



## READERS' FORUM

### Great Hamburg Hotel

My wife and I were recently in Hamburg and stayed at the **Hotel Abtei**, thanks to your recommendation in the July 1990 issue of *Gemütlichkeit*. We found this small deluxe hotel in a quiet residential area as interesting and delightful as it was when you reviewed it.

We were given room 10, a small suite at the top of the house with the hand-painted porcelain bathroom fixtures mentioned in your article. We enjoyed Herr Fritz Lay's excellent room stereo and had a very enjoyable evening meal in the hotel's intimate restaurant.

The Abtei's facilities alone make it a worthwhile stopping place in this busy city. But it is the personalities of the owners, Herr Lay and his charming wife, that make their establishment so outstanding. We have traveled throughout the German speaking world for over 20 years and met many fine hotel owners and innkeepers, but Fritz Lay's genuine hospitality and friendliness top them all. We paid about 395 DM per night (about \$250.00) for our suite and the light evening meal without wine was 121 DM (about \$76.00) for two. Reasonable for what we received.

Although the Abtei is in a residential area and removed from the center of Hamburg, transportation is convenient and inexpensive. The most pleasant way to go downtown is on the Aussenalster (Hamburg's large lake) ferries, the nearest stop being less than a 10-minute walk. There is also fast bus and U-Bahn service not far from the hotel. It should be mentioned that the hotel has no elevator and there are 64 steps from the ground floor to the top level where we stayed.

Since the Abtei restaurant is closed on Sundays, we also had an evening meal at **Schmitz**, a restaurant within walking distance on Maria-Louisen Strasse. This is definitely a neighborhood place with preference as to tables and

service given to regular customers. This is perhaps understandable since my spoken German with the unmistakable American accent fooled no one and I am sure they never expected to see us again. The food was good, the portions generous. I don't recall the exact amount we paid but I would describe the prices as moderate to expensive.

As your 1990 article pointed out, Hamburg is not the German tourist destination that Bavaria or the Black Forest might be, but it is a prosperous place with a fascinating waterfront and two attractive lakes in the heart of the city. If one combines a visit to Hamburg with a cruise down the Elbe river from Czechoslovakia, as we did, there should not be a disappointment with the final disembarkation in Germany's largest port city. Matthias Sheeleigh, Summit, NJ

### Austria Hotel Report

Your publication was most helpful to us during a mid-September tour through central Europe, mainly Austria.

The **Grüner Baum** in Badgastein was a delight. We had a lovely room looking out to the mountains. Dinner was very nice and made especially comfortable because we were seated in a designated nonsmoking area!

The **Hotel Fuschl**, however, was the worst hotel experience of our four week trip. The room (at \$250+ per night) was reasonably large, but while getting ready for bed, we discovered the bathtub had not been cleaned, there were hairs on the bathroom floor and the hallway to the

bathroom had spiders and many spider webs. I complained to the desk in the morning as we checked out, shortening our stay to only one night.

The other problem with this place was the dining room. The food was very well prepared and the service formal. We noticed that they had one of our favorite french cheeses on the cart and so asked for a very small taste. The waiter willingly obliged. As we were settling our bill, another waiter snatched the check out of our hands because he "forgot to charge us for the cheese". We were shocked to discover that we paid \$8 for a piece of cheese no larger than a silver dollar.

On to Salzburg and the **Hotel Goldfassan**. The location was great. We were able to park our car and use the tram. However, the rooms you raved about seemed not to exist. When shown a double, we asked if there were larger or different rooms available. We were told a room is a room, they are all the same. We found no TV, modernized bath or other features you highlighted. We had a clean but very spare room. The saving grace was the dining room where we had a simple but tasty meal in a room totally dedicated to nonsmokers

We felt compelled to share our experiences with you and hope you will consider them as you make future recommendations.

Florence & Cliff Johnson, Elmhurst, IL

(Ed. Note: Obviously you were given a room in the older part of the hotel. Readers are advised to book in advance and request rooms in the newer section.)

