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DEAR SUBSCRIBER

February 26, 1995

The Best Travel Guide

To me, the travel year is officially underway when the new *Michelin Red Guides* hit the bookstores. My copies of the 1995 Germany and Switzerland guides, though they arrived just two weeks ago, have already lost their tight newness. I've been at them. Each year I look up every hotel I've ever stayed in to see how Michelin rates it. I never throw out a Red Guide and have them from 1973, including all 17 German guides, 1979 through 1995. I like the heft and feel of any Red Guide but particularly the Germany book. Switzerland, only in its second year and a much smaller country, is a little skinny. I also like the prayerbook-style red page marker ribbon. A "bible" should look like a Bible. A few years ago Michelin changed the color of the cover to a brighter red — which at first I didn't like but now prefer — and went to lighter weight paper. At 1,015 pages, the 1995 guide has

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Swissair Price Reductions

Swissair, voted **Best Airline of 1994** by the readers of *Condé Nast Traveler* magazine, has extended through the end of 1995 its reduced fare program for *Gemütlichkeit* subscribers. Complete details have not yet been finalized but it is expected the reductions will be as before:

- \$50 off any roundtrip sale fare.
- \$100 off any roundtrip economy class fare.
- \$400 off any roundtrip business class fare.
- \$600 off any roundtrip first class fare.

To obtain fares and the current price reductions, call the main Swissair reservation number, 800-221-4750, and ask the reservationist to access "G-star, reference QL2JLQ."

Please be aware that you must book and purchase your ticket directly with Swissair to obtain the price reduction. For more info call *Gemütlichkeit* at 800-521-6722.

GEMÜTLICHKEIT

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

APARTMENT/CHALET RENTAL IN AUSTRIA

John Herbert, our Canadian expert on European vacation rentals, reports this month on Austria, a country he says offers some of the best accommodations values on the Continent.

In September, 1994, *Gemütlichkeit* reported on apartment rentals in Switzerland. While there are similarities between Austrian and Swiss rentals, there are two major differences. In Austria prices are lower and availability greater. Austrian self-catering units constitute one of the best accommodations values in Europe.

Like Switzerland, Austria has three types of rentals: those located in private homes; small four to eight unit apartment buildings; and the large, multi-storied condo buildings usually found in ski resorts. The most, by far, are in the first category.

Wherever there are tourists in Austria there will be a selection of "in-house" apartments. Towns, villages and rural areas have the most. Major cities such as Vienna and Innsbruck have only a limited and comparatively pricey selection.

"In-home" apartments are usually on the upper floor of the family home. Don't expect the glitz of a Florida or Hawaii high-rise condo. They will be clean, fairly modern and fully-equipped (sheets, towels, toilet paper, etc.). Always

verify that any unit you are considering has a separate living room. Only about one-third to one-half do. The remainder usually have a sitting area in the corner of the dining room or bedroom. Both one and two-bedroom units are widely available.

Although we have made reservations in advance, we prefer to see an apartment before renting it. No two are alike. If you stay away from July and August, and from ski

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ZÜRICH'S MID-PRICED HOTELS & RESTAURANTS

Associate editor, Bruce Woelfel, surveys Zürich's moderate to inexpensively priced hotels and restaurants.

Zürich has plenty of good hotels and a few that are "modestly-priced." The trick is find one that is both. Accommodations in first-class hotels are to be had for \$100 to \$150 single and \$175 to \$250 double. Even in these, rooms are relatively small and lack the grand appointments available in luxury class hotels which start around \$250 and run to \$500 or more. Most lower priced hotels are across the Limmat — on the "right bank" — a five to 10-minute walk from the rail station.

Here is a look at some of these hotels, arranged from most expensive to least expensive. Unless otherwise noted, rates listed here include buffet breakfast.

Hotel Florhof

Only a few blocks from the heart of Zürich, the Florhof looks like one of those classic village inns one sees in the Alps. Indeed, the Florhof

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EDITOR'S CHOICE

DEAR SUBSCRIBER

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nearly 100 more pages than the 1990 guide but is a half-inch thinner.

There are also Red Guides for France, Great Britain, the Benelux countries, Ireland, Italy, Spain/Portugal, Portugal (separate Portugal guide for the first time in 1995), Paris, London and the Europe Main Cities guide. For the uninitiated, Red Guides cover hotels and restaurants. Michelin Green Guides provide information on sight-seeing.

As anyone who has been a *Gemütlichkeit* subscriber for longer than 24 hours is well aware, we consider these books the European traveler's single most useful reference. They are essential for the auto traveler but they are also a "must-carry" for train travelers.

Red Guides are highly publicized for awarding stars — one, two or three — to a tiny percentage of expensive, mostly French, restaurants. No doubt many guides are sold to persons interested only in starred restaurants, but elite eateries are only a tiny part of the value and scope of these books. Let's use the German guide as an example. It rates and provides a mass of information on more than 10,000 hotels and restaurants. A typical Frommer's or Fodor's guide for Germany lists about 1,000 establishments.

The Red Guides' greatest strength is in the country side. A Frommer's guide contains listings for only about 100 principal German cities. Michelin, on the other hand, makes hotel and restaurant recommendations in over 3,000 German cities, towns and villages.

There are several unique Red Guide features that are invaluable to the auto traveler. Particularly useful are the maps that accompany the listing for nearly 150 German cities. Let's say you are driving into Kempten in the Allgäu, a town of about 61,000. Before you check out of your hotel this morning you use Michelin to phone Kempten's **Hotel Fürstenhof** for a reservation for tonight. Now as

you approach the city you are faced with the problem of finding your hotel in an unfamiliar town. The Fürstenhof's listing provides the map coordinates and tells you that the letter "v" indicates the hotel's location on the in-book map. You immediately locate it on the Rathausplatz about 100 meters — according to the map scale — from the Iller river. The map even shows the direction of the town's one-way streets and you have no trouble driving directly to the hotel.

Had you discovered that all the hotels in Kempten were booked you could have referred to your *Die Generalkarte #25* map to find a nearby town. You might have seen that Wiggensbach is about 10 kilometers (6 miles) east of Kempten. By looking up Wiggensbach in Michelin you would have discovered that it is a town of 3,800 and has a listing for the 24-room **Hotel Goldenes Kreuz**. Since Michelin rates this hotel as "comfortable" (it lists no hotels it does not recommend) you can be confident of decent accommodations very close to Kempten, your original destination.

Another Michelin feature which I find particularly useful, since I am always looking for special hotels and restaurants, are the 10 pages of locator maps in the front of the book. Throughout its guides, Michelin indicates special hotels and restaurants by printing their symbols in red. The cities in which these special places are located are shown on these locator maps. Let's say you have just crossed the border into Germany from Basel, Switzerland, and are driving north on the Autobahn. It is mid-afternoon and you feel like splurging; maybe a very good meal or an especially nice hotel. You turn to locator map #8 and immediately see more than a dozen choices within a 45-minute drive from your current location in the southwestern tip of Germany. The town of Auggen, for example, is, according to the guide, only 31 kilometers (19 miles) from Basel and is underlined in blue on the locator map. This is the symbol for a restaurant with, as Michelin puts it, "less elaborate, moderately priced menus that offer good value for money and serve carefully prepared meals, often of regional cooking." (These establishments are just

one step below Michelin star status and I have never been disappointed.) Under Auggen in the main listing you find the **Zur Krone** where a complete meal ranges from 39 to 66 DM (\$26 to \$44).

The town of Münstertal, 65 km (40 miles) from Basel, also looks promising. On the locator map it is highlighted in yellow with a Michelin star and also has a red marker. These indicate a starred restaurant and a "particularly pleasant or restful hotel." Turning to the listings you find the **Romantik-Hotel Spielweg**, which has 42 rooms, a one-star restaurant and has been awarded three red roof peaks. This is likely to be very special hotel with an outstanding restaurant. For its starred restaurants, Michelin lists the kitchen's specialties (in German). You see one of them is *Münstertaler Rehbäckle mit Waldpilzen*, venison with forest mushrooms. Complete meals range from about \$39 to \$70. Rooms at the hotel go from 150 DM (\$100) for the cheapest single to 380 DM (\$253) for the best double.

You can see how the guide allows one to travel according to whim, with no set itinerary or advance hotel reservations. This works in each country for which there is a Red Guide. Unfortunately, there is no Red Guide for Austria, though the German guide has a listing for Salzburg and the Main Cities list Vienna and Salzburg.

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CORRECTION

Last month our Prague story contained an inaccurate and misleading statement. In the story *Prague Travel Advisory*, under the heading *Information Sources in Prague*, is an underlined sentence which reads "...don't go to Prague with a hotel reservation."

That sentence should have read "...don't go to Prague without a hotel reservation." We regret this error. Be sure to have a confirmed hotel reservation prior to visiting Prague.

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GEMÜTLICHKEIT

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Editor & Publisher: Robert H. Bestor, Jr.
Associate Editors: Elizabeth Schiller, Bruce Woelfel
Contributing Editors: C. Fischer, R. Holliday
Design & Composition: Paul T. Merschorf
Consulting Editor: Thomas P. Bestor
Subscription Dept.: Andy Bestor, K. Steffans

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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%

AUSTRIA RENTALS

Continued from page 1

resorts in winter, there should be no trouble with availability. The tourist office in every town or village (the *Verkehrsamt* or *Verkehrsverein*) will have a list of local apartments (*ferienwohnungen*) often with a map showing the location of each. This list will usually describe in some detail what you will find in each apartment. Some are in English, many are not. This list is important because many homes with rental units do not display a *ferienwohnungen* sign.

When checking in it's helpful to know a few German words to make your wishes known to the proprietor. If you do not, however, the owner's teenage son or daughter will invariably be able to help. English is widely taught in the Austrian schools.

A major advantage to off-season travel (May, June and September, October are best) is the willingness of owners to rent for periods less than a week.

This is especially true when one is prepared to rent immediately and the apartment is vacant. Because of the cleaning charge that is usually made in addition to the regular rental charge, you will always pay slightly more per day when renting for less than a week. There are fewer days over which to apportion this fee which usually amounts to about 300 or 400 AS (\$29-\$38). Most owners include other charges (state tax, heating, etc.) in the quoted rental price, but always ask.

While a one-bedroom apartment in the off-season, including all extras, can range from 350 to 900 AS (\$34-\$87) per day, depending on size, quality and location, most such apartments cost between 500 and 700 AS (\$48-\$67). All prices listed in this article are for one-bedroom off-season apartments. Unless one is renting a lakeside apartment, high-season rates will rise about 100 to 150 AS (\$10-\$15) per day. A two-bedroom, one-bathroom apartment will be 20% to 40% higher.

When travelling in Austria we look for an apartment in a town or village that can act as a base for day

trips. And, instead of staying in the major cities, we prefer to be 10 or 20 miles away, where prices are much lower and driving easier. With this in mind, here are some regional recommendations, starting in western Austria and moving eastward.

Vorarlberg - There are two places in this popular mountain area. The first is St. Anton in Montafon (don't confuse with the famous ski resort of St. Anton am Arlberg 25 miles to the east). This small village of less than 100 houses is just three miles south of the east-west Autobahn that runs through the state. In addition to the

Zimmer Frei in Austria

One step down in price and comfort are the *zimmer frei* (room free or available), equivalent to English bed and breakfasts. They are more common than apartments and are often listed in the same guide. Because there are so many, you usually don't need a list - just drive around until you spot a sign. Off-season prices are usually in the 150 to 250 AS per person per night range. In July and August prices rise slightly, usually no more than 10%. Always ask if your room has a private bathroom. About half do.

One drawback to *zimmer*s is the reluctance of owners to take guests for one night. They prefer stays of at least two or three nights. If you offer to skip breakfast (with appropriate price reductions) you may overcome their reluctance.

marvelous scenery of the Montafon Valley, Switzerland is only 25 minutes away and Germany 45 minutes away. The 12 rentals in the village's 1994 apartment guide (*Verkehrsamt*, A-6771 St. Anton im Montafon, phone 05552-67191) are moderately priced starting at 350 AS (\$34). Typical is the apartment in the home of Klaudia Flatz. There are fine views from the balcony across the valley, but no separate living room — 380 AS (\$37).

A second choice, in the northwest corner of Vorarlberg, is Alberschwende, a village of 2,800 people. The setting isn't as dramatic as St. Anton, but this typical Austrian village in the hills above Bregenz, has a fine location if you wish to visit Germany and Switzerland, both just a few miles away. It has 21 rental apartments with some of the lowest prices in western Austria, starting around 300

AS (\$29).

Innsbruck Area - The best choice here is the village of Zirl, nine miles west of Innsbruck. Zirl itself is not particularly interesting or picturesque, but Innsbruck's *altstadt* is only a 15-minute drive. The ski center of Seefeld is just to the north and Garmisch-Partenkirchen is 30 miles away. The highly-regarded Otztal and Stubaital valleys are within a day's trip. Zirl has only five apartments listed in its 1994 brochure, with prices in the 450 to 530 AS (\$43-\$51) range. Tourismusverband Zirl Dorfplatz 33, A-6170 Zirl, phone 0-52-38-22-35.

Another choice in the Innsbruck region is Neustift, located in the beautiful Stubaital valley, a 20 to 25-minute drive south of Innsbruck. Neustift is not as well situated as Zirl, but is much more a tourist center, as is obvious from the 174 apartments for rent in the town. Most have separate living rooms and average about 500 to 700 AS (\$48-\$67). Verkehrsburro, A-6167 Neustift im Stubaital, phone 05-226-22-28.

The Zillertal Alps - The Austrians have been able to keep this skiing and hiking area mostly to themselves. It's in central Tyrol, about forty miles east of Innsbruck. While the Zillertal has some pleasant towns and villages, it is the four lovely valleys that spread southward from Mayrhofen that are the chief attraction. The principle towns of Mayrhofen and Zell am Ziller have a good selection of accommodations, but one may do better in any of the five villages between them: Laubichl, Hollenzen, Eckartau, Burgstall and Muhlbach. Every second house seems to have a *Zimmer Frei* or a *Ferienwohnungen* sign. In its list of 119 apartments, the Mayrhofen hotel guide includes many in these nearby villages. Tourismusverband Mayrhofen, Postfach 21, A-6290 Mayrhofen, phone 0-52-85-23-05. Prices are high in the Zillertal, around 500 to 750 AS (\$48-\$72) per unit.

Salzburg area - The village of choice near Salzburg is Strobl located on the Wolfgangsee 25 miles to the

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AUSTRIA RENTALS

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southeast of Salzburg. While Strobl is a pleasant enough lakeside resort, it's surrounded by some of Austria's most beautiful areas: the Salzkammergut lake district to the north, Salzburg to the west, the resort of Bad Ischl to the east and Hallstatt and the Dachstein Mountains to the south. Strobl and a couple of next door villages have a total of 67 apartments, most in the 500 to 600 AS (\$48-\$58) range. Fremdenverkehrsverband, Strobl am Wolfgangsee, A-5350 Strobl, phone 06-137-255.

Klagenfurt - The southeast portion of Austria, around Klagenfurt, is popular with European tourists because of its lakes, mountains and mild climate. The best known resorts of Veldon and Portschach are on the Wöthersee. Easy day trips are south to Slovenia or north to St. Viet with its marvelous town square and Hochosterwitz, a superb old fortress.

The best accommodation values are in Klopeiner See region, 15 miles east of Klagenfurt. This small area has a huge selection of apartments that are heavily booked in July and August. A June or September visit will yield lower prices and a wider selection. Many apartments are available only from June to September.

The center of the Klopeiner See area is St. Kanzian. You can pick up the 94-page accommodations guide at the tourist office, Tourismusverband Klopeiner See, Klopeinerstrasse 5, A-9122 St. Kanzian, phone 0-42-39-22-22. It lists over 300 apartments and bungalows, with a large selection around 500 AS (\$48). One home that accepts visitors the year round and has some of the lowest rates in the area is that of Hans and Sigrid Riepl in the small farm village of Brenndorf about two miles north of St. Kanzian. (Brenndorf 13, A-9122, St. Kanzian). They have two apartments (no living room). The Riepl's went out of their way to make us feel welcome during our stay a couple of years ago, including an afternoon snack of cake and schnapps with the family.

Vienna area - Vienna is expensive and doesn't have a wide selection of

apartments. We would recommend the Kamptal region, a wine-growing area northwest of Vienna. An inexpensive choice is the village of Schonberg am Kamp. Only seven apartments are listed in the regional tourist guide available from Tourismusverband Kamptal, 3571 Gars am Kamp, phone 02-985-26-80. Vienna is 40 miles to the east, the most scenic portion of the Danube between Krems and Melk is just to the south, and the whole region is dotted with old churches and castles. Prices are about as low as you will find in Austria.

We would particularly recommend the house of Johann and Mari-
anne Hager, Mollands 13, A-3562 Schonberg am Kamp, phone 0-27-33-283. The apartment itself is nothing special but the house is surrounded by vineyards, and the Hager's have their own wine producing facilities. We were given a tour and also had a chance to sample the local product — a very friendly stop. Perhaps the reason we found so many friendly Austrian families, was the fact that we were almost always the first North Americans to stay with them. It seemed to bring out the best in an already friendly country.

Austrian National Tourist Offices can be found in New York, 500 5th Ave. #2009, New York NY 10110, phone 212-944-6880; Chicago, 500 N. Michigan Ave. #1950, Chicago IL 60611, phone 312-644-8029; Los Angeles, 11601 Wilshire Blvd. #2480, Los Angeles CA 90025, phone 310-477-3332. These offices have apartment lists for a limited number of towns and can provide addresses of local tourist offices in Austria.

If you are willing to pay the extra cost of using a rental agency specializing in apartments, villas and homes, by far the best choice is Pego, Sageweg 1, A-6700 Blundez, phone 55-52-65-6-66, fax 55-52-63-8-01. They will mail you, free, a 140-page catalogue in English that lists in some detail, over 300 apartments and chalets. There is a color photo of each unit. Prices are generally reasonable but there is a 270 AS booking fee. Our only rental with them went smoothly.

For more upscale accommodations contact Interhome Inc., 124 Little Falls Rd., Fairfield NJ 07004, phone 201-882-6864, fax 201-808-1742. ☒

ZÜRICH HOTELS

Continued from page 1

feels distinctively, authentically Swiss as compared to sterile high-rise hotels where one might as well be in Miami.

Another considerable virtue is the hotel's proximity to the Kunsthaus, with its premier collection of 20th Century painting and sculpture.

Inside the Florhof, we discovered public rooms full of beautiful Swiss antiques and we enjoyed playing our favorite card game by the 18th Century fireplace, where the staff brought us coffee and cookies on a silver tray.

In contrast to the old-world ambience of the public rooms, guest rooms were remodeled in 1994 with all the bells and whistles. Our room also had big dormer windows, a classic Swiss bed, and a gleaming new bathroom.

This intimate, quiet hotel is owned by Brigitte and Beat Schiesser, who have a cordial, hands-on management style. No detail of our comfort was overlooked.

The little Florhof is most appealing.

(For information on the Florhof's cuisine see page 6)

Address: Hotel Florhof, Florhofgasse 4, CH-8001 Zürich

Phone: 10/2614470

Fax: 01/2614611

Location: 10-minute walk or five-minute tram ride from the main railroad station. Near University and Museum of Fine Art

Rooms: 10 singles, 23 doubles

Proprietors: Brigitte & Beat Schiesser

Prices: Singles 195-240 Sfr. (\$156-\$172), doubles 290-320 Sfr. (\$232-\$256)

Facilities: Outdoor terrace

Credit Cards: All

Disabled: Two steps up to lobby

Closed: Never

Parking: Five spaces in courtyard, 10 Sfr., 10 free street spaces, 6 p.m.-9 a.m.

Rating: EXCELLENT 16/20 G

Hotel Glockenhof

A well-maintained hotel in an 80-year old art-deco building centrally located two blocks from Bahnhofstrasse. Its public facilities include a

large and formally decorated restaurant with outdoor terrace for multi-course meals and a small but pleasant tavern with lower prices and simpler fare.

We found our average-size room a bit cramped after a stay in more spacious accommodations at Lucerne's Hotel Montana. But it was well ventilated with three windows, tastefully decorated and well equipped, including a spacious bathroom with large tub. The buffet breakfast, laid out in the large room which serves as a restaurant during the day, was plentiful.

New management has been in place since June, 1994. The staff is friendly, service was prompt and efficient and the concierge knowledgeable and helpful.

Address: Hotel Glockenhof, Sihlstrasse 31, CH-8023 Zürich

Phone: 01/2115650

Fax: 01/2115660

Location: Central Zürich, just off Bahnhofstrasse, 10 minutes walk from the railway station

Rooms: 57 singles, 51 doubles

Proprietor: Josef P. Schmidpeter, Director

Prices: Singles 178-196 Sfr. (\$142-\$156), doubles 260-290 Sfr. (\$208-\$232)

Facilities: Sauna, two restaurants, outdoor food service on terrace in summer

Credit Cards: All

Disabled Access: Four specially equipped rooms

Closed: Never

Parking: Five minutes walk to public garage

Rating: ABOVE AVERAGE 12/20

Hotel Arlette

The Arlette is small, comfortable and modern. Renovated in 1987, its average-sized rooms, simply decorated in yellow and green, are enhanced by colorful oil paintings. Conveniences include VCRs as well as color TV. The small restaurant and cozy bar are available from 11 a.m. until 10 p.m.

Address: Hotel Arlette, Stampfenbachstrasse 26, CH-8001 Zürich

Phone: 01/2520032

Location: On the right bank of the Limmat River, three blocks from main rail station

Rooms: Five singles, 25 doubles

Proprietor: E. Schlotter family

Prices: Single 125-185 Sfr. (\$100-148), double 165-250 Sfr. (\$132-\$200)

Facilities: Restaurant and bar

Credit Cards: All

Disabled: Good access, no special rooms

Parking: Public garage 5 minutes walk

Rating: ABOVE AVERAGE 13/20

Hotel Rütli

This small, alcohol-free hotel with no restaurant is modestly priced by Zürich standards, and its post-World War II building was renovated seven years ago. Guest rooms, some of which are generous in size, have simple decor but are pleasant and comfortable. Number 461 is a large single in beige and blue with a couch, and bathroom with tub. Number 315 is a spacious, quiet double with sofa and chairs, shower and lots of floor space. Upper floor rooms look out on the rooftops of this densely packed section of the city.

Address: Hotel Rütli, Zähringerstrasse 43, CH-8001 Zürich

Phone: 01/24515426

Fax: 01/2612153

Location: On the right bank in Zürich's older section eight minutes walk from the rail station

Rooms: 44 singles, 18 doubles

Proprietor: Ann Rafferty, Director

Prices: Singles 130-180 Sfr. (\$104-\$144), doubles 185-260 Sfr. (\$148-\$208)

Meals: Breakfast only

Facilities: Breakfast room

Credit Cards: All

Disabled Access: Some rooms with extra wide doors

Closed: Never

Parking: Public garage, five minutes walk, 25 Sfr. per night

Rating: AVERAGE 11/20

Hotel Arc Royal

Another modern, well-appointed hotel. Rooms are light and airy, with light oak furniture and white walls. Number 403 is a quiet, average-sized single with tub and shower and Number 406, facing a pedestrian street, has a double bed and shower and is available either as a single or double with a special weekend rate of 115 Sfr.

single (\$92) and 170 Sfr. double (\$136). Lower priced rooms face the noisier side of hotel.

Address: Hotel Arc Royal, Leonhardstrasse 6, CH-8001 Zürich

Phone: 01/2616710

Fax: 01/2514780

Location: On a pedestrian street, north side of Limmat, 1 block from the river

Rooms: 22 single, 36 double

Proprietor: Sylvia Steiger

Prices: Single 120-170 Sfr. (\$96-\$136), double 160-250 Sfr. (\$128-\$200)

Meals: Breakfast only

Facilities: Breakfast room

Credit Cards: All

Disabled Access: Ground floor rooms available

Closed: 23 December to 2 January

Parking: Own garage, 17 Sfr. per night

Rating: ABOVE AVERAGE 12/20

Hotel Bristol

The Bristol's 1900 art-deco building, also on the Limmat's right bank, was renovated six years ago. Its average-sized rooms are light and cheery with white walls and blond wood furniture. Most have showers though a few singles have tubs. Rooms which face the street are moderately noisy when the heavy, double-paned windows are open.

Though classified as an alcohol-free building (breakfast room but no restaurant), there is no limitation on smoking and guests are permitted to consume alcoholic beverages in their rooms.

Address: Hotel Bristol, Stampfenbachstrasse 34, CH-8035 Zürich

Phone: 01/2618400

Fax: 01/2511951

Location: In Zürich's old section, five minutes walk from the station

Rooms: 11 singles, 44 doubles

Proprietor: Martin Hammerli

Prices: Singles 110-130 Sfr. (\$88-\$104), doubles 130-185 Sfr. (\$104-\$148)

Meals: Breakfast only

Facilities: Breakfast room

Credit Cards: All

Disabled Access: No special facilities

Closed: Never

Parking: Garage five minutes walk,

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ZÜRICH

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20 Sfr. per night

Rating: ABOVE AVERAGE: 13/20

Hotel Scheuble

Though the Scheuble's guestrooms are rather ordinary, it is a good choice for couples who dislike the traditional European double bed arrangement of two singles placed together under one headboard. About half the double rooms contain queen-sized beds. This is another alcohol free hotel with no restaurant, though smoking and alcohol are allowed in guestrooms.

Address: Hotel Scheuble, Mühlegasse 17, CH-8001 Zürich

Phone: 01/2518795

Fax: 01/2617678

Location: Near the river, 5-10 minutes from the rail station

Rooms: Five singles, 64 doubles

Proprietor: Herr Meier

Prices: Singles 100-140 Sfr. (\$80-\$112), doubles 140-180 Sfr. (\$112-\$144)

Meals: Breakfast only

Facilities: Breakfast room

Credit Cards: All

Disabled Access: No special rooms

Parking: Public garage five minutes away, 30-40 Sfr. per night, free street spaces available free 7 p.m.-9 a.m.

Rating: AVERAGE 12/20

Hotel Uto-Kulm

This remote, mountain-top hotel is hard to classify. It is accessible only by rail, a half-hour's ride from Zürich's main station (6.4 Sfr./\$5). Upon arrival one must trek 10 minutes up a steep pathway to reach the hotel's rustic three-story building. Persons with heavy luggage and those not desiring a good workout prior to check-in may prefer to call from the station and be met by the hotel's four wheel drive vehicle.

The somewhat drab guestrooms, decorated in shades of brown, are otherwise comfortable and well appointed; some with large outside porches and many have fine views of the city.

Address: Hotel-Restaurant Uto-Kulm, Berggasthaus, CH-8138 Uetliberg

Phone: 01/4636676

Fax: 01/4631400

Location: Top of Uto Kulm mountain, 30 minutes train ride from Zürich

Rooms: 21 doubles

Proprietor: Mr. Fry

Prices: Singles 100-150 Sfr. (\$80), doubles 160-250 Sfr. (\$128-\$200)

Meals: All available

Facilities: Outdoor park and terrace with fanciful animal sculpture

Credit Cards: All

Disabled Access: Poor

Closed: Never

Parking: Utikon rail station garage.

Rating: AVERAGE 10/20

Hotel Krone

The modest Krone is small and conveniently located on the Limmat. Rooms, many without private bath or shower, are rather dull and sparsely furnished, in some cases only a chair and a place to hang clothes, but are clean and some have nice views of the river.

Number 38, a single without private facilities, faces the river and rents for 68 Sfr. (\$54). Number 24, also without private bath or shower and also with river view, is a triple for 138 Sfr. (\$110). Number 50, an average-sized, corner double room with private bath, also has a river view and rents for 134 Sfr. (\$107). The hotel has a small, reasonably-priced restaurant.

Address: Hotel-Restaurant Krone, Limmatquai 88, CH-8001 Zürich

Phone: 01/2514217

Fax: 01/2514763

Location: Old town, right bank, eight minutes from the station

Rooms: 14 singles, 12 doubles

Proprietor: Yves Schoch

Prices: Single without shower or bath 68 Sfr. (\$54), doubles without shower or bath 114 Sfr. (\$91), doubles with bath 134 Sfr. (\$107), triples without bath or shower 138 Sfr. (\$110)

Facilities: Restaurant

Credit Cards: All

Closed: Never

Parking: Free street parking until 7 a.m., public garage 25 Sfr.

Rating: AVERAGE: 10/20

Hotel Biber

The new, low-priced "City Backpacker," centrally located 10 minutes walk from the station on Limmatquai, has been designed for younger travelers. Accommodations include dormitories and some private rooms. Unlike a hostel, there is no curfew and residents may remain during the day.

City Backpacker/Hotel Biber, Schweizerhofgasse 5, CH-8001 Zürich, phone 01/251/9015, fax: 01/251/9024. Dormitory rooms 28 Sfr. (\$23), rooms with shared baths 55 Sfr. (\$44) to 88 Sfr. (\$68).

Restaurants

Restaurant Florhof

Another good reason to choose the Florhof as a Zürich headquarters is its excellent restaurant. In contrast to its daytime informality, at dinner time the restaurant takes on a more gracious and romantic air. Service at all times is friendly and prompt and the food first-rate.

One recent dinner began with a fresh assortment of lettuce bathed in an exquisite herb and lemon dressing. Pumpkin soup had a delicate cream base and came garnished with spinach, gnocci and fresh herbs. An unusual combination plate of salmon, white lake fish and sweetbreads was served with a sauce of fresh morels on a heart-shaped pastry shell. With local wine, the bill for two came to 60 SF (\$48).

Highlights of a second dinner included an herbed soup with gnocci, venison filet with a dark, very rich onion and mushroom sauce and delicately cooked dover sole meunière with rice.

Florhof Restaurant, Florhof Hotel, Florhofgasse 4, CH-8001 Zürich, phone 01/2614470. Moderate-Expensive.

St. Gotthard Café

This colorful and elegant restaurant, just a block from the train station, is a longtime favorite. When severely jet-lagged at the beginning of a trip or jaded with travel at the end, it has always raised our spirits: bright chandeliers grace

EDITOR'S CHOICE

EDITOR'S CHOICE

the ceiling; marble walls are hung with huge, brightly-colored prints and the crowd at the bar and tables is always animated and exuberant. Often there is live piano and violin music. On a recent wintertime visit to this wonderful lounge and bistro, a large Christmas tree added its seasonal presence and color to the festive scene. The ambience contributed greatly to our pleasure.

A standout among several reasonably-priced menu items is paprika chicken breast with *spätzle*, priced at 21.50 Sfr. (\$17).

Hotel-Restaurant St. Gotthard, Bahnhofstrasse 87, phone 01/2115500. Moderate-Expensive.

Zeughauskeller

The interior of this Zürich institution, in a 500-year-old building on swanky Bahnhofstrasse, is reminiscent of a Munich beer hall, especially when it comes to the quick service, shared tables, ample steins of Hürlimann beer *vom fass* and reasonable prices. The cuisine is Swiss farm-style and excellent. The *rösti* is as good as we've found anywhere. A cold sausage salad plate was 14.80 Sfr. (\$12), veal sausage with German-style hot potato salad was 12.80 Sfr. (\$10).

Here you will rub shoulders with rich Zürich bankers and raggedy young travelers living out of backpacks. Not to be missed.

Restaurant Zeughauskeller, Bahnhofstrasse 28 by Paradeplatz, Zürich, phone: 01/2112690. No credit cards. Moderate.

Brasserie Lipp

The frantic Lipp, with its polished black walls, large mirrors, white tile floors, well-dressed patrons, quality food and expert waiters going at breakneck pace is an extension of the famous Paris bistro of the same name. Portions are large and can be divided. Typical of the fare is the *cassoulet* with white beans, chicken, duck, pork, sausage and topped with crisp bread crumbs. It, a huge mixed salad and a glass of Fendant each, came to 50 SF (\$40) for two.

This is another "action" spot, great for people watching.

Brasserie Lipp, Urania Strasse, near Bahnhofstrasse, phone 01/2111155. Moderate to expensive.

Glogge Egg,

A very small and friendly bar/restaurant with plain Swiss food. Quick service, generous portions in an informal wood interior, with wood benches and plain wooden tables. A meal for two consisting of stewed chicken in a mushroom cream sauce with *spätzle* and a second entree of white sausage with dark onion gravy and *rösti* came to 34 SF (\$27), including two glasses of wine.

Glogge Egg, Snack Bar and Pub, Glockenhof Hotel, Sihlstrasse 31, phone 01/2115650. Inexpensive.

Concertino

For those weary of fondue and rich sauces, the Concertino is a convenient place for a light lunch of American-style food. One can order a hamburger, a club sandwich or a rump steak, each for 15.5 Sfr (\$13).

Concertino Cafe-Restaurant-Piano Bar, The Central Plaza Hotel, Central 1, phone 01/2515555. Moderate. ☒



LTU Offers Low Fare

LTU, the "other" German Airline, has announced a round trip fare from San Francisco to Düsseldorf of \$488 for departures between May 3 and June 28. The roundtrip from Tampa for May 4-June 22 departures is \$439. The San Francisco flight operates on Wednesdays, the Tampa flight operates Thursdays. West Coast travelers will not find a lower fare this summer. Book through a travel agent or phone 800-521-6722.

Germany Packages

DER Tours, a German travel company, also operates in the U.S. *Gemütlichkeit* has regularly reported on the company's product line because so much of it is of interest to the traveler to Germany and Europe. For example, DER has just announced, via a brochure entitled *Germany for All Seasons* and subtitled *Programs for the Indepen-*

dent Traveler, a joint offering with Lufthansa of competitively priced air-inclusive German vacation packages.

The Munich package, for instance, is priced at \$798 per person, double occupancy, from the East Coast and includes roundtrip air on Lufthansa, six nights hotel in Munich, a city sight-seeing tour, a Munich welcome card good for free public transportation and local discounts, a convertible flight bag/backpack and an inflatable neck pillow. For departure from Lufthansa's other gateways the add-on airfare is \$90 from Atlanta; \$117 from Chicago; \$169 from Dallas/Ft. Worth, Houston and Miami and \$240 from Los Angeles and San Francisco. The \$798 price is for low-season travel and accommodations at the **Brunnenhof**, a "tourist class" hotel just outside the Ring near Sendlinger Tor. There are four hotels from which to choose and other price variations dependent upon when one travels. The package price can increase to as much as \$1,218 per person from the East Coast for those who wish to travel in the high season and stay at the "deluxe" **Hotel Sheraton**. In addition, the single rate will be higher.

The Berlin package ranges from \$838 to \$1,528 and there is a three-night Frankfurt offer for from \$688 to \$1,088.

DER also offers an Oktoberfest package that includes airfare, six nights in the "first-class" **Eden Hotel Wolff**, two dinners, city tour, excursions to the Royal Castles and Oberammergau, excursions to Salzburg for a guided city tour and to Berchtesgaden, the flight bag/backpack and the inflatable neck pillow for \$1678 per person double occupancy. The add-on airfares from other gateways are the same as previously mentioned.

The DER Christmas Market program headquarters in Munich. The elements of this package are similar to the Oktoberfest deal expect that there are also excursions to the Christmas Markets of Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Nürnberg and Salzburg. Prices range from \$658 to \$1,298 per person double occupancy.

The brochure contains dozens of other offerings from river cruises to
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DEAR SUB

Continued from page 2

In addition to the unique features for use while traveling, Michelin is an essential bookshelf reference. For example, extensive information is supplied for each of the 3,000-plus cities and towns including: postal code, telephone area code, coordinates on various Michelin maps, population, altitude, distance to nearby and important towns, and the address, phone and fax of the local tourist office. The guide also lists principal sight-seeing attractions with their Michelin star ratings; sight-seeing attractions in the outskirts with their distance and direction from the town center; number of ski lifts; number of cable cars; number of cross-country ski runs; whether or not the town has a golf course and a lot more.

Another nice feature, especially given the dollar's recent slippage, is the use of a symbol to indicate restaurants which serve complete meals for less than 25 DM (\$17). In considering these inexpensive restaurants it is important to remember that Michelin lists no establishments it does not recommend.

Here are a few observations based on my first look at the 1995 Swiss and German Red Guides:

German Red Guide

- Though we didn't count them all, it appears that there are at least 4,000 hotels whose highest price for a double room is \$100 or less. A substantial number of those are under \$80.

- Eastern Germany has its first starred restaurant outside of Berlin. It is the **Erholung**, at Rissweg 39, in the Weisser Hirsch section of Dresden.

- Another Michelin first is its recognition of restaurants in eastern Germany which "serve carefully prepared meals, often of regional cooking." In Schwerin, 89 km (55 miles) southwest of Rostock, it's the **Zum Goldenen Reiter** serving complete meals from 34 to 55 DM (\$23-\$36). In Binz, on the far northern island of Rügen, is the **Hotel Poseiden**. The **Laubenhöhe** is in Weinböhla near Meissen. In Görlitz, near the Polish border, is the **Gutshof Hedicke**. In Halberstadt, 57 km (38

miles) southwest of Magdeburg, is the **Parkhotel Unter den Linden** and Weimar has the **Gasthaus zum weissen Schwan**. All have similar prices to the Goldenen Reiter.

- The nightmare that has caused celebrated Parisian chefs to fall on their boning knives has been visited upon **Aubergine** of Munich. It has lost one of its stars and now has but two.

Switzerland Red Guide

- Even when one takes into account that Switzerland is a much smaller country than Germany, making for a thinner Red Guide, hotels charging less than \$100 for their best double room, are far more scarce. Our estimate is that Michelin lists a little over 150 such hotels, most of which are restaurants with a few rooms to rent, *mit zim* as the guide says.

- In this, the second year of the Swiss Red Guide (last year's book sold over 100,000 copies), Michelin has added several new features:

- ✓ A listing of ski resorts with tourist information phone number, minimum and maximum altitude, number of lifts, lift connections with neighboring resorts and the availability of ice rinks and indoor swimming pools.

- ✓ A list of holidays in each Swiss canton.

- ✓ A calendar of the main regional events.

- ✓ The symbol of a crossed-out automobile for towns and sights that do not allow automobiles.

- The country's only three-star restaurant remains **Girardet** in Crissier near Lausanne. There are a handful of two stars, mostly in the French-speaking part.

- Here's what looks like a hot tip. In Thyon-Les Collons (canton of Valais) near Sion, is **La Cambuse**, a hotel to which Michelin gives one red roof peak and a red rocking chair designating a "very quiet or quiet, secluded hotel." The listing also notes a particularly pleasant view of the Val d'Hérens. The highest price double room is 140 Sfr. (\$112), amazing for a "red" hotel.

I have heard people object to the price of Red Guides — Germany is \$25.95, Switzerland \$23.95 — but, in fact, they are a terrific value. At twice the price I would consider them well worth the money. — RHB ☒

EUROPE BRIEFING

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tours of eastern Germany. Call 800-521-6722 for a free copy.

Balair/CTA Charters

Called the "leisure line of Swissair" Balair/CTA will again operate charter flights to Zürich from several U.S. and Canada gateways in 1995.

From May 3 to October 27, Wednesday and Friday there will be flights between Miami and Zürich; Friday only flights between Orlando and Zürich are scheduled for May 5 through October 27; San Francisco-Zürich flights will operate Mondays and Wednesdays from May 1 to October 27; Anchorage-Zürich flights are on Wednesdays only from May 31 to September 6; Calgary-Zürich flights will be Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays from May 1 to October 30 and a Saturday only flight between Vancouver B.C. and Zürich will operate May 20 to October 21.

One of the best airfare bargains to Europe is Balair/CTA's Relax Class (Business Class amenities). This year roundtrip Relax Class prices are \$1,346 from Florida, \$1526 from San Francisco and \$1,630 from Anchorage.

Nonchangeable, nonrefundable, high-season (June/July/August) L-Class roundtrip fares are \$538 from Florida, \$618 from San Francisco and \$764 from Anchorage. May/September/October fares are slightly lower. Book by calling 800-322-5247.

Vienna Card a Good Deal

Beginning in February 1995, for 180 AS (\$18), visi-

tors to Vienna can purchase a new product called the Vienna Card. It is sold at hotels and Vienna tourist information offices. With it you get:

- Unlimited travel for 72 hours on all forms of public transit in the city — subways, streetcars, buses and commuter trains.

- Discounts or reduced price admissions for a period of four days to leading museums, city tours and sights such as the Schönbrunn Palace and the Hofburg.

- Discounted tickets to events at the Konzerthaus and, during the summer, to concerts at the City Hall and Schönbrunn.

- Discounts at certain stores, a free glass of wine at participating Heurigen and restaurants, and a complimentary slice of cake at participating pastry shops and coffeehouses.

Worth the money if only for the unlimited travel.

Austria Changes VAT Refund

Because Austria is now a member of the European Union (EU), the procedure for obtaining VAT refunds has changed. The required export certification must be done only at the last point of departure within the EU. For example, if one returns to the U. S. via Germany and England, British customs would have to certify export. Austrian customs will stamp refund forms only when non-EU residents leave Austria for non-EU destinations.

The refund is 13% for most goods and about 6.5% for art objects, collector's items and books. The minimum purchase requirement is 1,000 AS (\$100) per store, including tax. ☒