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DEAR SUBSCRIBER

August 26, 1996

Where's the Beer?

One of the nation's finest microbrewers is **Gordon-Biersch**. Most of the company's beer is produced and sold at its brewery/restaurants in Palo Alto, San Francisco, San Jose and Honolulu, but recently it began distributing its products to other restaurants.

Thus it came to pass that last night our local Hayward brewery, **Buffalo Bill's**, put a keg of G-B's Märzen on line. I ordered a pint, took a long pull, and immediately realized that, while the beer was very good, it tastes much better less than 20 miles away in Palo Alto.

A stranger standing next to me at the bar (he turned out to be a radiologist at a local hospital) agreed and said he conducts brewery tours in the Northwest and is always startled by how different — and better — the beers taste at their places of origin.

That beer doesn't travel well is no surprise, we've discussed it before here. But that one pint of Märzen made me realize that *good* beer is a lot more delicate than the mass produced stuff and even a journey of a few miles can alter its taste. It also gave me one more thing to worry about — the frightening number of breweries that are closing in Germany.

Neely Tucker, in an article for the Knight-Ridder newspaper chain, writes that at least 130 of Germany's roughly 1,200 breweries have closed or merged in the last five years and that young Germans are drinking less beer and more wine.

The author quotes German beer industry sources who say drinking patterns are changing the industry

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GEMÜTLICHKEIT

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

AUTUMN IN MUNICH

As a tourist destination, Munich is Germany's most popular city, particularly in the fall when Oktoberfest brings millions of visitors to the Bavarian capital.

In late September and through October there may be no better place to be in Europe than Southern Bavaria. The weather is the best of all the year, the leaves are turning, special beers are brewed and, of course, it is Oktoberfest, Munich's state-fair-to-the-10th-power beer festival.

By
Bob
Bestor

Some travelers, reasoning that summer vacations in the U.S. are over, expect September and October to also be off-season in Ger-

many, Austria and Switzerland. It doesn't work that way. Last year, says the **Munich Tourist Office**, a staggering 6.7 million people visited the Oktoberfest (o.k., o.k., they didn't *all* stagger). Most of those folks didn't just spend two or three days in Munich and then go back home. No, they also took in Salzburg, Innsbruck, Vienna, Lyon, Paris, Milan, Rome, Zürich, and points in between; in short, the Oktoberfest creates a tourism ripple that washes over the whole of southern Europe.

It's a great time to be there, but don't expect to be alone — especially during Oktoberfest; this year Sunday, September 21 to Sunday, October 6 (it always ends on the first Sunday in October).

Those who plan to be in Munich for this year's festival should already have hotel reservations. If you don't have them yet try the Munich Tourist Office's accommodations service listed on page 4.

Munich is, according to a survey we took a couple of years ago, the city most visited by *Gemütlichkeit* readers. And for good reason: the capital of Bavaria offers clean streets; a wealth of culture that, with an influx of eastern Europeans since the fall of communism, is becoming increasingly diverse; a unique cuisine and renowned beer.

Earlier this year we spent a few days rediscovering Munich. In our report which follows, you'll see, in addition to a couple of new spots, that we returned to some favorite restaurants and hotels. Those headed for Munich this fall might also want to refer to the January, 1992 issue of *Gemütlichkeit*.

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Ambling the Alps

The health benefits of walking are now well documented. These days doctors seem to recommend it almost as often as they do aspirin. A brisk daily saunter of 45 minutes to an hour keeps one updated on neighborhood doings — hmm, the Thompson's grass needs cutting...looks like the Smith's are putting in a pool, wonder where they got the dough? — *and* keeps the legs and the cardiovascular apparatus in good "running" order.

By
Bob
Bestor

Unfortunately, many North Americans live in places where walking is boring or dangerous — sometimes both. For them, and for that matter anyone who enjoys a good walk, a trip to Germany, Austria or Switzerland presents a glorious opportunity for long, interesting (and safe!) walks of infinite variety in both city and country.

It's hard to beat a day in Europe that includes a four to five-hour exploration on foot of a city like Munich, Berlin, Vienna or Zürich. We always include a little window shopping, some church investigating, maybe a cemetery browse and a couple of beverage stops at

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DEAR SUBSCRIBER

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and hundreds of breweries — some say between 25% and 50% of the current total — will be closed or bought out in the coming years.

Young Germans are drinking less beer than their parents. The average consumption per capita has recently dropped from 146 liters (about 38.5 gallons) per year to 138 (about 36.5 gallons).

Other factors include competition from other beverages, a tough drinking-and-driving law and a national move toward fitness and health. In addition, Germany's low birth rate means that the number of 20-year-old to 40-year-old men, the biggest consumers of beer, will decrease from 25 million to 20 million within 15 years.

Finally, German breweries make far more beer than they sell. The overproduction came about after reunification when West German breweries, seeking to dominate East German markets, expanded overnight. But East German drinkers, after an initial fad, went back to their old labels—leaving beer makers with far too much product. The inevitable price drop will favor big brewers who can make money on a small markup.

One casualty already, according to Ms. Tucker, is the Marz Group whose **Jever** brand was among the top 10 in the country. Today, following a disastrous attempt to sell beer in Eastern Germany, the company is broke and out of business.

A disturbing trend, but apparently inevitable. Of course, Germany has a very long way to go before it's beer industry resembles that of the U.S. where three breweries produce something like 90% of the beer sold. Germany's approximately 1,200 breweries in 1988 represented nearly 40% of the world's total.

Our advice to those who care about beer is to

drink the local stuff. If you are in Bavaria, forget Beck's, Warsteiner, Bitburger or any of the other brands that are sold nationally. Likewise you don't want to drink Spaten in Hamburg. Find out from the local tourist office or from your hotel which are the local breweries and stick to them.

I go against my own advice, however, when it comes to the Czech beers, **Budvar** and **Pilsner Urquell**. When I am in a city not too far from Prague, Vienna for example, I am always on the lookout for either. They are tremendous, my favorite beers in all the world. And I am told they are even better at the source. Of course.

Vienna, \$562 Zürich and \$544 to Munich.

There was only a six-day ticket purchase window plus blackout dates and other restrictions but such deep discounts augur well for the near future. It looks like we'll see very low airfares again this fall and winter. There's more to come so keep an eye out for newspaper ads and/or stay in touch with your travel agent. (Top agents, like Tom Smith of **Explorer Travel** [541-488-0333] in Ashland, Oregon, maintain a "hot-list" of customers who are alerted by phone whenever there is an airfare sale.)

Sandwich Machine Casualty

The other day we noticed a letter in the *Los Angeles Times* complaining about high prices in Switzerland. The letter's author cited \$45 for an 8-minute taxi ride from the Zürich Airport to downtown, \$16 for a self-service sandwich, \$4.50 for a soft drink, \$140 for a hotel in Zermatt.

I suppose all that is do-able but I'm of the opinion one would have to really work at it to find a machine that charged 20 Sfr. (about \$16) for a sandwich, even in Zürich. Then — presumably of sound mind and in full possession of all faculties — one would have to insert the necessary 20 Sfr. in order to be victimized by the sandwich machine. Prices in Switzerland are admittedly high but this seems to be the sort of person who, if given a gun, would very soon create a hole in his foot. One also wonders if this guy is aware that there are \$4.50 soft drinks and \$140 hotel rooms in Los Angeles.

Buried in all this poking fun at an unnamed person — who probably will never see this less than hilarious little item — is a small tip. This just in: there is a train station right at the Zürich Airport. From it trains run frequently to downtown Zürich. The cost is 5.81 Sfr. (\$4.85). However, with the \$41 saved our man would no doubt buy two more sandwiches from the machine.

P.S. Only the Blue Angels can get from the Zürich Airport to downtown Zürich in 8 minutes. —RHB ☒

Leading German Breweries

Hamburg Bavaria St. Pauli Elbschloss Holsten Beck's Haake-Beck St. Pauli Girl	Rhineland Pilsners Bitburger Herforder Irlle König Königsbacher Krombacher Stauder Veltins Warsteiner Wicküler	Forschungs Hacker-Pschorr Hofbräuhaus Kaltenberg Löwenbräu Paulaner Schneider Spaten
Dortmund DAB - Dortmunder Actien Brauerei Dortmunder Hansa Dortmunder Kronen Dortmunder Ritter DUB - Dortmunder Union Brauerei Stifts	Frankfurt and Hesse Binding Busch Euler Henninger	Franconia/N. Bavaria Altstadthof EKU Hofmark Kaiserdom Kulmbacher Mönchshof Kulmbacher Reichelbräu Kulmbacher Schweizerhof Maisel
Düsseldorf Im Füschen Zum Schlüssel Ferdinand Schumacher Zum Uerige	Stuttgart/Baden-Württemberg Eichbaum Fürstenberg Dinkelacker Schwabens Bräu Stuttgarter Hofbräu	Rauchentfels Steinbiere Schäffbräu Schlenkerla Rauchbier Spezial Tucher Würzburger Hofbräu
Cologne P.J. Früh's Kölner Hofbräu Küppers Malzmühle Päffgen Sion	Munich and the South Altenmünster Augustiner Ayinger	Berlin Berliner Kindl Weisse Schultheiss Berliner Weisse

Fare Wars

For me, the first harbinger of winter came on a hot night in mid-August. Reading that morning's *San Francisco Chronicle*, I came across an ad for fall and winter fares on **KLM** or **Northwest Airlines**. For travel between October 16 and February 28, the ad offered *roundtrip* fares from San Francisco that included \$406 to London, \$488 Frankfurt, \$562

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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. Mersdorf
Consulting Editor: Thomas P. Bestor
Subscription Dept: Andy Bestor, K. Steffans

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HOTEL RESTAURANT RATING KEY

Rating Scale	Scale	Hotel Rating Criteria	
Excellent	16 - 20	People/Service	30%
Above Average	12 - 15	Location/Setting	15%
Average	8 - 11	Guestrooms	30%
Adequate	4 - 7	Public rooms	5%
Unacceptable	0 - 3	Facilities/Restaurant	20%
Value Rating	Scale	Restaurant Criteria	
Outstanding Value	17 - 20	Food	65%
Very Good Value	12 - 16	Service	20%
Average Value	9 - 11	Atmosphere	15%
Below Average Value	5 - 8		
A Rip-Off	0 - 4		

Special ☉ Designation

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

MUNICH

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Munich Hotel Update

Hotel Exquisit

We enthusiastically recommended this hotel when it first opened in 1989. In three return visits — including one this year — we have found no reason to amend that endorsement. Public and guestrooms are maintained in excellent condition.

The Exquisit's two-level maisonettes are an excellent value in a luxury room and, for an additional 10 to 30 DM (\$7-\$20) per night, the hotel offers substantially more than the two dozen or so Munich three-star properties we have reviewed over the years.

The Exquisit's location, just outside the Ring, near the Sendlinger Tor, is about halfway between the Marienplatz and the Oktoberfest grounds.

Daily Rates: Singles 195 DM (\$133), double rooms 280 DM (\$190), maisonettes and suites 340 DM (\$231). 50 rooms, some designated nonsmoking. Disabled accessible. Parking garage (14 DM/\$9.50 per day). No restaurant.

Contact: Hotel Exquisit, Pettenkofer Str. 3, D-80336 Munich, tel. 089/551 9900, fax 089/551 99499.

Rating: QUALITY 15/20, VALUE 16/20

Hotel Adria

This hotel has long been recommended by *Gemütlichkeit* for its excellent location, moderate prices and pleasant, airy rooms. We are sorry to

say, however, that it has slipped.

We still like the location, near the Englischer Garten and only a 15-minute walk from the city center, and rates are slightly below most Munich hotels in its category, but the time has

seem especially interested in their guests.

On the positive side, our room — Number 306 — had a bathroom that had recently been redone (though the workmanship was less than perfection) and the large walk-in closet was handy.

This is still a decent mid-priced Munich headquarters, it's just not as spiffy as before and not the value it once was.

Daily Rates: Singles 120 to 180 DM (\$82-\$122), doubles 180-210 DM (\$122-\$143). 46 rooms. Not suitable for disabled. Street parking with permit. No restaurant.
Contact: Hotel Adria, Liebigstrasse 8a, D-80538 Munich, tel. 089/293081, 089/227015.

Rating: QUALITY 9/20, VALUE 10/20

Hotel Domus

When we first reviewed the Domus, in 1992, we liked its facilities but thought it overpriced. Since then, however, the hotel has held its prices and is now a better value than the nearby Adria.

Guestrooms are attractively decorated with polished cherrywood Thonet-style furniture and better equipped than most hotels in this category. The lovely breakfast room features large windows and a private outdoor terrace which is used on good weather mornings.

The Domus is in an excellent, quiet neighborhood — a couple of blocks closer to the Marienplatz than the Adria — and the stairway down to the Lehel U-Bahn stop is just outside its front door.

Daily Rates: Singles 188 to 220 DM

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Zürich to Munich on the Albert Einstein EuroCity

We had flown the *Swissair* nonstop from Los Angeles to Zürich but needed to go on to Munich. Of course, we could have flown immediately from Zürich but decided, because we wanted a night in the city and to recover a bit from the jet lag, to take the train the following day.

It would be fun, relaxing, scenic and we would save money by renting a car in Germany instead of Switzerland (a midsize car in Germany is \$19 per day plus 15% tax vs the same car in Switzerland for \$41 per day plus 6.5% value added tax, plus an additional 11% tax if picked up at the Zürich airport — a difference over 14 days of about \$368.)

The fare is about \$115 first class and \$74 second class if you don't have a rail pass — as we didn't. Buy rail passes or point-to-point tickets in the U.S. through **DER Rail** (800-782-2424).

We rode the **EC 167 EuroCity Albert Einstein** which leaves Zürich at 9:41 a.m. This train originates in Interlaken and finishes in Prague. Of course, we were only on the Zürich-Munich portion which takes about four hours. Short stops were made at Winterthur, St. Gallen, St. Margarethen, Bregenz in Austria, Lindau and Kempten.

The route clips the east end of the Bodensee (Lake Constance) and then, once in Bavaria, the scenery really begins to strut its stuff.

We had an entire first class compartment (six seats) to ourselves the whole trip. After a big, rather late breakfast in Zürich, we weren't hungry enough for the dining car so we read, dozed, watched the scenery slide by, bought a soft drink from the vending cart and soon were in Munich. Very pleasant.

As we rolled along, a great old tune from childhood invaded my brain and played itself over and over. It was, of course, Johnny Mercer's *Chattanooga Choo Choo* but somewhat altered:


*Pardon me boy, is that the EuroCity Albert Einstein?
On Track 29. Say, can you give me a shine?*

*You leave the Zürich railway station 'bout a quarter to ten
Read a magazine and you're in St. Margarethen*

*Würstel in the diner, nothin' could be finer,
than to sip a frothy glass of Veltliner.*

*When you see those painted houses outside your car
then you know that Lindau is not very far.*

*Do a little snoozin', north of Biessenhofen
Woo, woo Bavaria, here we are!!*

I would like to go on and tinker with the 'gonna-be-a-certain-party-at-the-station-satin-and-lace-funny-face' part but I must stop now. You see they've come for me... 

come for refurbishment. Carpets are threadbare, furniture and built-ins are beginning to show signs of wear and the general look of the hotel, both inside and out, is one of deterioration.

Worst of all, desk personnel don't

MUNICH

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(\$128-\$150), doubles 220 to 250 DM (\$150-\$170), apartments 290 DM (\$197). 45 rooms, some nonsmoking. No restaurant. Hotel garage.

Contact: Hotel Domus, St.-Anna-Strasse 31, D-80538 Munich 22, phone 089/221704, fax 089/2285359.

Rating: QUALITY 15/20, VALUE 14/20

Hotel Platzl

In the old quarter across from the Hofbräuhaus the sprawling Hotel Platzl offers 167 rooms in a reconstructed medieval building.

A standard double, like Number 150, has a separate sitting area that includes an overstuffed chair and a sofa and most other big-hotel amenities. Decor and furnishings are alike in all rooms.

This is one of Germany's 150 **Ring Hotels** and can be booked in the U.S. for the guaranteed dollar rate of \$85 per person single and \$65 per person double. The Platzl adds a local surcharge of 40 DM (\$27) which makes the total double room price approximately \$157, excellent for a centrally located four-star hotel. (Please note that the Platzl's value rating is based on the rack rates listed below.)

Daily Rates: Singles 220 to 285 DM (\$150-\$294), doubles 290 to 410 DM (\$197-279). 167 rooms, some nonsmoking. Fitness center. Garage.

Contact: Hotel Platzl, Sparkassenstrasse 10, D-80331 Munich, tel. 089/23703-3, fax 089/23703 800. U.S. bookings: 800-558-6850.

Rating: QUALITY 13/20, VALUE 8/20

Hotel an der Oper

Gemütlichkeit first recommended this small inn, just off Maximilianstrasse, in 1987. We still like it, especially the central location.

An der Oper's small, but elegant lobby beckons passersby and its 55 contemporarily decorated rooms are functional.

Daily Rates: Singles 140 to 165 DM (\$95-\$112), doubles 195 to 270 DM (\$133-186). 55 rooms. Parking available in nearby public garage.

1996 Oktoberfest Program

Saturday, September 21st

Grand Entry of the Oktoberfest Landlords and Brewers

Starts at 11 a.m. and lasts about 45 minutes. Features decorated carriages, ornate horse drawn wagons of the Munich breweries, waitresses on decorated floats and all the beer tent bands - about 1,000 participants. Route of entry: Sonnenstrasse-Schwanthalerstrasse to the Oktoberfest grounds. Grandstand seats on Sonnenstrasse: DM 38 (\$26).

Folklore International

Music, dancing and customs are performed in brightly colored festival costumes under the decorated dome of the Circus Krone building. Some 600 performers. Venue: Circus Krone, Marsstrasse 43, (nearest S-Bahn stop Hackerbrücke), starts at 8 p.m. and lasts about two hours. Admission: 29 DM (\$20), 28 DM (\$19), 26 DM (\$18), 17 DM (\$12), 12 DM (\$8).

Sunday, September 22nd, 1996

Costume and Riflemen's Parade

This seven-kilometer-long procession through the streets of the city center to the Oktoberfest grounds includes costume groups, riflemen, marching bands, trumpeters on horseback, civic guards, miners in historical uniforms, 100 thoroughbred horses, oxen, cows, goats and decorated floats. Participants are from Bavaria and the other German 'Lander' (federal states) as well as from neighboring European countries. Begins at 10 a.m. and lasts about two hours. Route of the parade: Maximilianstrasse through city center to the Oktoberfest grounds. Grandstand seats: Maximilianstrasse, Max-Joseph-Platz, Odeonsplatz, Pacellistrasse, Sonnenstrasse, Kaiser-Ludwig-Platz. 59 DM (\$40).

Sunday, September 29th, 1996

Concert of all the Oktoberfest Band

At 11 a.m. on the steps of the Bavaria statue. (In the event of bad weather the concert will be postponed until Sunday, October 6th, 1996).

Bavarian Central Agricultural Festival Munich "Bavarian Agriculture- A Big Show" From September 21st to 29th, 1996, on the southern part of the Oktoberfest grounds. Organizer: Bavarian Farmers' Association, Max-Joseph-Str. 9, 80333 Munich.

Tickets: Grand Entry, Folklore Evening, Costume & Riflemen's Parade

Münchner Festring e.V., Pestalozzistrasse 3A, 80469 Munich, tel. 089/260 81 34, fax 089/26 30 65 from : Hieber-Kartenverkauf, Liebfrauenstr. 1, 80331 Munich, tel. 29 00 80 14
Veranstaltungsdienst Mayr, Poccistr. 8, 80336 Munich, tel. 7 25 80 95 Kiosk at Marienplatz, underground level, 80331 Munich, tel. 26 46 20 Circus Krone, Marsstr. 43, 80335 Munich, tel. 55 81 66 (tickets for Folklore International only). Add 10% booking charge to all ticket prices listed above.

Reservations for Oktoberfest festival tents:

<u>Beer Tent</u>	<u>Phone/Fax</u>
Augustinerbräu	23183266/2605379
Hackerbräu	08170/7303/7385
Löwenbräu	477677/4705848
Paulanerbrauerei	464657/4603768
Pschorrbräu	8572029/8597056
Spatenbräu	348418/394782
Hofbräuhaus	4489670/4483587

Parking

Parking near the Oktoberfest grounds is impossible.

Public transportation: U-Bahn (underground): Lines U3 and U6 to Goetheplatz or Poccistrasse, U4 and U5 to Messegelände or Theresienwiese. S-Bahn: Lines S1-S8 to Hackerbrücke. Tram: Lines 18 and 19 to Hermann-Lingg-Strasse or Holzapfelstrasse. Bus: Routes 31 and 32 to Messegelände Süd, Routes 32 and 62 to Messeplatz, Route 58 to Georg-Hirth-Platz or Goetheplatz. There are taxi stands all around the Oktoberfest grounds.

Information, Brochures, Accommodation

Information offices in the Main Railway Station, at the Bayerstrasse exit (opposite Platform 11), open Mondays to Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sundays 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., tel. 089/23330-256 or 257; at the Airport, open Monday through Saturdays 8:30 a.m. to 10 p.m., Sundays and holidays 1 p.m. to 9 p.m., tel. 089/975-92815.

The 1996 Munich Oktoberfest Program booklet with information on the festival and its events is available from the Munich Tourist Office and at Munich news stands. Price: 4.80 DM (\$3.25).

Munich Tourist Office
Fremdenverkehrsamt München
Sendlinger Str. 1, D-80331 München
tel. 089/233 30 211, fax: 089/233 30 269

Contact: Hotel an der Opera, Falkenturmstr. 10, D-80311 Munich 2, tel. 089/290 0270 fax 089/2900 2729.

Rating: QUALITY 12/20, VALUE 12/20

(Editor's Note: When booking rooms at the above hotels, always inquire about special rates or programs such as weekend packages.)

Restaurants

Gasthof Liebighof

In the early 80s, this cozy neighborhood Gäststätte served plain but well-prepared Bavarian meals and we often ate here. A few years ago the restaurant changed hands and became a trendy bar with loud music. The good food and the warm family feeling departed.

However, about a year ago, we were told the *gemütlich* atmosphere had returned and Liebighof was again a place that served good food.

Not so. We could live with the restaurant being made up to look like an English pub, with ersatz memorabilia decorating the walls, but we draw the line at microwave heated meals.

Two small salads and main dishes of pork fillet and roast lamb, both covered with a gelatinous, heavily salted gravy, cost 60 DM (\$41).

Ghastly food; an emphatic thumbs down.

Gasthof Liebighof, Liebigstrasse 14, D-80538, tel. 089/295405.

Rating: QUALITY 3/20 VALUE 5/20

Cafe Lehel

The Liebighof dinner was so hideous we sought dessert elsewhere. About three blocks away is the Cafe Lehel, an Italian style bistro. There we each had an after-dinner drink (Calvados 4.5 DM/\$3; Glühwein 5.5 DM/\$3.75) and a dessert; nothing breathtaking or out of the ordinary but very good. Tiramisu (6.5DM/\$4.50), which in the last few years has become nearly as ubiquitous as Coca Cola, was better than average and the vanilla ice cream with hot, fresh raspberries was all one could ask for in the standard, but delicious *Eis mit Himbeeren* (7.5DM/\$5.10).

Next time we'll have dinner here.

Cafe Lehel, Seitzstrasse 12, D-80538, tel. 089/229139.

Zum Bürgerhaus

The restaurant's charming interior features light-colored, rough-hewn beams and tables, chairs and benches in the same light wood. There are white table cloths and napkins, but fake flowers.

Each member of our party of three ordered the five-course, fixed-price menu priced at 73 DM (\$50).

With memories of past Zum Bürgerhaus meals dancing in our heads as we sipped Paulaner beer and a suggested champagne cocktail, we were primed for some first-class cooking. Sadly, our expectations were dashed by a succession of boring, tasteless dishes.

The first of them, a "gift of the house," was diced, cooked vegetables in aspic served dry and bland. A snappy sauce, perhaps one with a creamy, horseradish base, might have helped.

Only the menu disclosed that the next dish, an avocado mousse with shrimp, actually contained avocado. The dish was heavy, more like a quenelle, and dry.

Buttery, tricolored, bow-tie pasta had a mysterious but punchless sauce and was draped with shredded red cabbage.

The main course, consisting of five tough slices of duck, was too dry and too bland to be presented as it was, without sauce.

Accompanying it were over-steamed zucchini, celery, carrots and asparagus. Spinach, a vegetable that is hard to overcook, was better.

Maybe the too-peppery scalloped potatoes was an attempt to spice things up a bit.

We politely declined when asked if we would like to take a 15-minute break between the pasta and the main course but got it anyway. It couldn't have been because they were busy in the kitchen, only a handful of tables were occupied (*always* a bad sign). Maybe the cook had to run next door to borrow a cup of bland.

For dessert, a rubbery chocolate-mint mousse — from a package? — served with canned pineapple, frozen strawberries and a watery raspberry syrup completed a thoroughly dreary, disappointing meal.

There's more: plates had wipe marks around the edges where drops from serving had been cleaned off; thumb prints were in the wipe marks and the silver forks needed cleaning between the tines.

On the positive side were the background music, a mix of classical "hits," a good waitress and the wine, Chianti Classico Brieite '94, DOCG Castelli di Grevepesa (35 DM/\$24).

Total cost of the dinner for three persons was 295 DM (\$201). We wouldn't go back for a third the price.

Zum Bürgerhaus, Pettenkoflerstrasse 1, D-80336 Munich, tel. 089/597909, fax 089/9304313.

Rating: QUALITY 3/20 VALUE 2/20

Munich Notes

- Despite its guidebook reputation as overrated, touristy and raucous, we always have one beer at the famed **Hofbräuhaus**. The band is very good, though it takes too many breaks. On a Sunday afternoon the main ground-floor room was sedate, clean and remarkably smoke-free; perhaps the ventilation has been improved. The Hofbräuhaus is now state-owned.

- Walkers will enjoy **Nymphenburg Palace** with its miles of paths through forests and gardens. Don't miss the **Botanical Gardens** — especially the remarkable cactus displays and intensely humid tropical greenhouses — or the **Carriage Museum** which displays the incredibly ornate horse-drawn carriages and sleighs of the Wittelsbach family, including some that belonged to Ludwig II, Bavaria's so-called "mad" king.

- Munich's **Englischer Garten** is another great place for walkers but be advised that on fine weather days there is a good deal of nude sunbathing. The park's **Chinesischen Turm** (Chinese Tower) beer garden is recommended.

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READERS' FORUM

Continued from page 3

sidewalk cafes — or indoors if the weather is cold or wet.

The first thing we do upon arrival in any city, big or small, day or night, is take a walk.

One 93°-F. Berlin day in 1982 we must have covered a dozen miles in a zig-zaggy, sometimes retracing our steps, route that included Checkpoint Charlie, the Philharmonia, the Victory Column, the Reichstag, the Tiergarten, the Memorial Church, the entire length of the Ku'damm and as much of the wall as was possible at the time.

Another "forced march" was in Hamburg, in 1988, on an even hotter afternoon. That day, thinking we would stroll the lakeshore for awhile and then catch a boat at one of the ferry docks along the way, we ended up walking all the way around both lakes, the Binnenalster and the Außenalster. The non-air-conditioned ferries were full of sweaty passengers and we decided it was cooler on the shore. The walk is no more than six miles but the heat made it seem twice the distance. Need I tell you how good the beer at the end of that sojourn tasted?

But Europe's greatest walks are in its gorgeous countryside, particularly the magnificent Alps. Even non-hill climbers can meander the flatter trails found at altitude by using chair lifts and cable cars that are everywhere in the Alpine countries.

Routes are well-marked and local tourist offices are stocked with brochures and maps which describe and delineate thousands of miles of country lanes, forest paths and mountain trails.

For those who enjoy walking with a small group and/or the guidance of experienced hikers familiar with the most rewarding trails, there are a number of U.S.-based companies who specialize in walking vacations.

One such, **Mountain Tours** of Southport, Connecticut, is operated

by former Gillette marketing executive, Bill Russell, who has been leading walking and hiking tours in Switzerland for 20 years. Mr. Russell refers to the routes he and his six other American guides select for their clientele of mostly middle-aged Americans as "modest hiking over intermediate trails with no technical climbing."

"We walk in a beautiful environment, anyone in good health can do it," he says. "Our hikes are for those who want to see a beautiful place but don't need to prove they're athletes."

The company's most popular tour is its "Three Culture Hike" which starts in the French-speaking Valais, then moves to the German Bernese Oberland and ends up in the Engadine, in southeastern Switzerland, where Romansch is still spoken.

"We spend three days hiking in each of these areas learning how each of the three different cultures has learned to cope in its own special way to the difficult demands of Alpine living," says Mr. Russell.

A typical day begins with breakfast at 8 a.m. and the hike at 9 a.m. There is a 10-minute break every hour and a one-hour lunch stop. Walkers are responsible for their own lunch which Russell suggests they purchase after breakfast at a deli or grocery store.

"If the hotel puts up the lunch it's expensive and always the same: a sandwich, some fruit and a piece of cake," he says. "There is infinitely more variety at a local deli."

The group arrives back at the hotel between 3 and 4 p.m.

But it's not all huffing and puffing. Russell's groups — typically from half a dozen to 15 hikers — take time to smell the roses.

"Many of our walks are village to village and when we come to an interesting one, we allow time for exploration," he says.

"For example, on one of our hikes we always stop at the famous hospice founded by the monks at the summit

of the Great St. Bernard Pass on the Swiss-Italian border. That day we'll also have lunch at a wonderfully charming small Italian restaurant and then resume our hike after lunch."

Russell and his guides also plan "outs" in every route; places where the tired hiker — or one with a sore knee or ankle — can board a bus or train back to the hotel.

Mountain Tours' vacations average about \$1,000 per week per person and include first-class (four-star) hotels, daily breakfast and dinner, a railpass and a guide every step of the way. If the group is larger than 12 there are two guides. Some of the hotels used include the **Rossach** in Pontresina, the **Silberhorn** in Wengen, the **Mirabeau** in Zermatt and, now that Russell has expanded his tours to Austria, the **Strass** in Mayrhofen.

Mountain Tours' formula seems to work; this year nearly 50% of Russell's trekkers were repeat customers.

Another firm which offers guided walking vacations in Switzerland and Austria, and which has acquired a reputation for value and dependability, is **Wanderweg Holidays** of Cherry Hill, NJ. The owner is Phil Scheidt.

Contact: Mountain Tours 800-669-4453; Wanderweg Holidays 800-270-7257.

READERS' FORUM

Comments on Austria

Air access to the smaller Austrian cities is now greatly improved, and it is no longer essential to fly into Munich (unless of course you want to rent a car, which costs appreciably less in Germany than in Austria).

A year ago, **Austrian Airlines** purchased a significant interest in **Tyrolean Airlines** which means that good, and relatively inexpensive, connecting services are now available

to Salzburg and Innsbruck due to code-sharing with the major transatlantic carriers, such as Austrian itself, **Swissair**, **Lufthansa**, and **KLM**. Further, the trusty Dash Turboprops are being replaced by quite luxurious Dehaviland and Fokker small jets.

The service is also a wonder. How can two, sometimes just one, attendant serve a full meal and drinks, on a half-hour flight? In America, I cannot even get a drink!

At a conference on a business trip last April we rented bikes from the train station. What a deal! Quite excellent equipment for only 50 AS (\$5) per 24-hour period ending at midnight, if you convince them you have a rail ticket, 100 AS (\$10) without.

I had forgotten that Salzburg, my maternal family's home, is interlaced with marked reserved bike lanes on all streets, and "equal opportunity" in the pedestrian areas. The best, of course, are the car-free paths and lanes along the river and past "Sound of Music" mansions to Schloss Hellbrunn. (Unexpectedly, my biking companion and I got there sooner than some others who went by car!) Several other conference participants caught the bike bug, and were equally enthused by their explorations.

Despite the 20C+ degree weather in town, we did manage to get three good days of skiing on Austria's glaciers: Kitzsteinhorn, Hintertux, and Stubai. Up-top temperatures hovered at freezing, but the sun made it feel hot! Except for long haul traffic on Sundays from Vienna to Prague, nearby Europeans have lost their ski fervor by April, leaving wide-open slopes with excellent conditions, even an overnight skiff of fresh powder. A ski month to be recommended.

I must say a positive word about our hotel in Salzburg, the **Mercure**. You wouldn't like it, and my preconceptions were equally unfavorable. It's a modern structure in a mediocre neighborhood some 20 minutes walk from the Stadtbrück.

The director, Edith Granögger, has the management and staff tuned to a fine pitch. Friendliness and service pervade. Can you imagine a receptionist quickly clearing away

empty glasses from the lobby instead of waiting for a tardy bartender? Nice little touches, such as big bowls of fresh fruit on every floor. Sumptuous breakfast and lunch buffets.

Best of all, on the evening of arrival, there was a wine tasting, heavily populated by the local cognoscenti. About ten Austrian vintners each provided samples of several different varieties. All this, monthly event, again with the buffet, for 190 AS 190 (\$19).

Coming from a wine-making family, I am embarrassed to admit that I did not realize the enormous variation in the Austrian staple Grüner Vetliner, to say nothing of the new Zweigelt. I also learned that Mercure annually selects and features a few local wines of excellent quality and value.

The faculty of our conference had arrived a day earlier. We had sent them off for a day in the Wachau (Stift Melk, Melk-Krems on the Donau, a wine seminar at Kloster Und). In the end, my friend and I had a better wine experience right at the hotel in Salzburg.

An occupational hazard is too little time for enjoying travel and/or skiing. My last trip proves that you can derive real pleasure from stolen minutes. With more free time, they likely couldn't get me back to work at all. Richard Davidson, Houston TX

Wine Road Hotel

I would like to report on a very pleasant experience in the German Rheinpfalz Weinstrasse at the end of this past June.

I stayed in Kallstadt at the **Hotel-Restaurant Weincastell zum Weissen Ross**. Kallstadt is a small village near Bad Dürkheim, in the rolling hills of Rheinpfalz wine region, but in sight of the Pfalzer Wald. While there is nothing of particular historic note, the town is not without charm, especially to wine-lovers, since it is home to at least eight wineries! It makes an excellent starting point for touring the area.

Jutta and Norbert Kohnke are the proprietors of the Weissen Ross. Jutta speaks excellent English and runs this small hotel; her husband is the master

chef of the restaurant. The other members of the hotel and restaurant staff were very friendly and helpful. The rooms are spacious and comfortably appointed; there are three floors above ground but no elevator. Parking is available directly across the street. The breakfast room offers homemade jams to go with the local breads, cheeses, and wursts. The restaurant is rated 14/20 with one black toque by Gault-Millau; my meal there was very good although the sauces were a bit on the heavy side.

My room cost 150 DM (\$102) per night. Neither the hotel nor the town were crowded despite the season. I look forward to going back. Contact: Jutta and Norbert Kohnke, Weincastell zum Weissen Ross, Weinstrasse 80, D-67169 Kallstadt, tel. 06322/5033, fax 06322/8640. The restaurant serves lunch and dinner and is closed Monday and Tuesday.

Roger F. Jones, Broomall PA

Swissair Savings

Where are the reduced fares on **Swissair** that you offered when we ordered your newsletter? We used Swissair when we flew in February of this year, but the only discount (better than nothing) we got was senior citizen 10%. I am always looking out for the best deal.

And can you help with low priced rooms in Munich, for a single senior, who depends on a social security check every month? I'd be ever so grateful.

Mrs. Annaliese Yiengst, Merrimack, NH

(Ed. Note: Gemütlichkeit subscribers who wish to obtain the special Swissair price reductions must book their travel directly with Swissair — 800-221-4750 — then call Swissair's Los Angeles office — 800-238-0399 or 310-335-5900 — and ask for Shirley who will confirm your Gemütlichkeit subscription and issue the tickets at the reduced price. All persons traveling together at least one leg of the transatlantic journey with the subscriber are eligible for the lower fare. Savings are based on the cost of the ticket and range from \$50 to \$600 per ticket.

As to the inquiry about rooms in Munich, the term "low priced" is relative. In this issue you will find several Munich hotels at various price points. However, for a

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DEAR SUBSCRIBER

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- Another beer garden popular with locals is **Walwirtschaft** on the river. There is free jazz every day from 4 p.m. Take the S-7 to Solln.

- Munich's **underground rail system** (U-Bahn) is very good and not expensive. 12 DM (\$8) buys a Tages Partner Karte (partner day ticket) that allows two persons to travel together from 9 a.m. one day until 6 a.m. the next. The surface rail (S-Bahn) system is free with a Eurail Pass, though if you have a Flexipass you probably won't want to waste one of your days of travel on a streetcar ride.

- Get money from an **ATM** that takes both Cirrus and Plus cards next to the McDonald's at Karlsplatz at the Karlstor.

- Bikes can be rented at **Mike's Bike Tours** (25 DM/\$17 per day includes bike, lock and map) at 11:30 a.m. at the east end of the Marienplatz. Call the day before to reserve at 651-4275.

- **Munich Found**, an English-language magazine about the city, is available at newsstands for 4 DM (\$2.75).

- Purchase **Birkenstock** sandals at **Bergermaier**, Sendlinger Str. #41, just south of the Marienplatz.

- For great clothes in the Trachten/Loden style try **Frankonia Jagd** at Maximiliansplatz 10. Expensive.

Press Clippings

From a recent *New York Times* we clipped an article by Munich resident, John Dornberg, for many years a

Times European correspondent.

In it he mentions two budget hotels: **Blauer Bock**, 9 Sebastiansplatz, in the center, with 76 rooms, some with shared baths. Doubles are \$71 to \$114; and **The Astoria**, 9 Nikolaistrasse, in Schwabing, Munich's students' and artists' quarter. The 26 rooms are decorated with contemporary art and double are \$110 to \$125.

In summing up the Munich restaurant scene, Mr. Dornberg notes the closing last October of **Aubergine** once a Michelin three-star restaurant. In its place he recommends **Tantris**, 7 Johann-Fichte-Strasse, two Michelin stars, where dinner for two costs \$250 to \$300 without wine. A small step below that is **Le Gourmet**, on the second floor of the **Restaurant Schwarzwaldler**, 8 Hartmann Strasse.

A recommended newcomer is **Gasthaus Glockenbach** (\$140 to \$200 for two plus wine), 29 Kapuziner Strasse, in a seedy neighborhood where the French German-Bavarian fare is "imaginative."

Dornberg calls **Le Cezanne**, 1 Konradstrasse, specializing in Provencal fare, "one of the best of Munich's 100 or so French bistros." Dinner for two is \$75 to \$100 plus wine.

Restaurant Glockenspiel, 28 Marienplatz, is on the top floor of a building on Marienplatz with views of the Rathaus tower. A three-course dinner for two, including a carafe of wine, costs around \$100.

Weinstadt, 5 Burgstrasse, in a 15th century house, serves "refined Bavarian-German interna-

tional" cuisine. Dinner for two is \$80 to \$100 plus wine or beer.

In the cafe/pastry shop category Mr. Dornberg recommends **Cafe Rischart**, 18 Marienplatz, and **Cafe Annast**, 18 Odeonsplatz where soup and a sandwich for two cost \$15 to \$20 and cake and coffee for two is \$10 to \$15. ☒

READERS' FORUM

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complete listing of Munich hotels and pensions please contact the German National Tourist Office, 122 E. 42nd St., 52nd Floor, New York NY 10168, tel. 212-661-7200.)

Searching the Past?

Do you have information on going to see where Hermann Goering's "Karinhall" mansion used to be, about 50 miles north of Berlin?

Is Goering's daughter, Edda, still a nurse in Munich? She would be 58-years-old.

R. C. Baker, Cincinnati OH

(Ed. Note: We don't have the information you seek but perhaps one of our readers does.)

Partenkirchner Hof Dissenter

As a recent subscriber to *Gemütlichkeit* I have to say how much I enjoy your publication. I have spent a good deal of time in Bavaria and love it. Most recently I took a four-day coaching trip with **Coaching in Bavaria** from Starnberger See to Neuschwanstein and back, what a wonderful experience!

I especially enjoyed your June issue featuring Garmisch-Partenkirchen where I have also spent a good amount of time. I look forward to returning and found the information very helpful.

What really disturbed me was your report on **Reindl's Partenkirchner Hof**. I have stayed here on two occasions for several days and had quite the opposite experience. The accommodations were very luxe and I especially enjoyed my dining experiences. The food was wonderful and I was very well taken care of by the staff.

It may have been that I was alone that they felt the need to take such good care of me but from my vantage point (a cozy booth along the side) it seemed to me that everyone was having a good time.

I found the lady in charge particularly helpful and attentive. I got the sense that she was perhaps a member of the Reindl family because she seemed to genuinely care that everyone had a nice experience.

This was in '89 and '90 and I hope yours was an isolated, however unfortunate, experience for I want to go back. In any event when do return I will let you know.

Clinton Creasy, Cambridge MA

(Ed. note: We did not review the Partenkirchner Hof as a hotel, only its restaurant.)

Coaching Bavaria offers horsedrawn carriage tours through the Bavarian countryside between April and October. Prices, which include hotel accommodations and meals, range from \$425 per person for a two-day tour to nearly \$5,000 for a 14-day tour from Kerschlach, a small village 25 miles south of Munich, to Verona, Italy.

Contact: Coaching in Bavaria, Kerschlach 6, D-82396, Pähl, Germany, tel. 08808/386, fax 08808/1349. ☒