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DEAR SUBSCRIBER

September 26, 1996

Hello Internet

Today, class, we're going to talk about the Internet. You may have heard of it.

One year ago this month we wrote that the idea of travel planning via computer, using an online service such as Compuserve, Prodigy or America Online, or the Internet, was one whose time has not yet come. A telephone, a saavy travel agent and some good print resources, we decided, was still the best and fastest way to do the job.

One year later, things have changed. As a resource for travelers, the Internet's World Wide Web is exploding and those who don't have access to it are liable to be left behind — at least for now.

I say "for now" because it looks like the technology and hardware required to access the Internet is going to very soon get a lot more user-friendly. Most of us who go online now must use a computer, a modem and a regular phone line. Data transmission on the Web — text, pictures and, in some cases, sound and video — can be a slow process. Text moves quickly, but graphics are much slower. Depending on equipment, and the complexity of the graphics to be viewed, it can take from a few seconds to several minutes for a Web page to reveal itself on a computer screen. Data transmission over cable wires, however, is infinitely faster and speedier modems are also on the way. Even as this is written, TCI, the country's biggest cable-TV operator, is offering Internet access via cable in some markets. The time is nearer than we imagine when we'll be able to click up Zürich's WWW site on our TV screens as easily as we can CNN.

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GEMÜTLICHKEIT

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

BUDAPEST

Budapest is known as the most "Western" of Eastern European cities. This month our Hungarian travel expert, Karen Pasold, finds a good selection of hotels and an armload of good, inexpensive restaurants.

Karen Pasold is a travel planner. She is paid to plan trips, develop itineraries and recommend out-of-the-way hotels and restaurants. Her expertise is born of dozens of European trips in which she scouts out likely hide-aways for her clients. She is extremely knowledgeable about traveling in our part of the world, especially Hungary.

This year we asked Karen to give us a report on Budapest. Her story ran to slightly more than 15,000 words. The word count for the entire newsletter is a bit less than half that and something had to give. Thus, her story has been mercilessly pruned. Karen approaches the subject of travel with enthusiasm, humor, a keen eye to detail and a unique, effervescent sort of off-the-wall way of looking at things. Unfortunately, a lot of that was left on the cutting room floor. But the bare bones that

remain constitute an insightful, up-to-date report.

(By the way, if you need trip planning help call Karen at 214-625-6050.)

Hungary is a charming, provincial alternative to the high-priced countries of the West. On a recent visit we felt like millionaires; we could afford anything, including the best, and not even beside affordability, it offers tremendous "Old-World" charm and a rich history. And now in the '90s, before our very eyes, it is casting out the grey ghosts of decades of communism.

On my first trip to Hungary, in 1976, the country was under Russian control. Things were bleak: soldiers occupied the streets, hotels were not good, meals only adequate and

there was absolutely no shopping. Most of the country was in a dilapidated state. An uneasy, unsafe feeling pervaded. Border crossings were never quick. Western visitors were routinely hassled and felt out of control. But in five return trips since the collapse of communism in 1990, I have noticed steady and constant improvement.

This spring, with my oldest girlfriend, I spent three weeks seeing the country by automobile. She was born in Budapest and fled with her parents near the end of WWII. Her ability to speak Hungarian made it easy to ask information and understand the reply. English is not widely spoken outside hotels, German is the next best alternative.

Credit for the result of our research also goes to her Canadian cousin who was born in Budapest and now works there. Relentlessly, he pushed us to see more and do more. Each night we had dinner with Nick (referred to as Nick at night) who showed us what Budapest has to offer and gave us constant history lessons. Hardly a restaurant has escaped him, as you will see by the list reviewed here.

Rooms At Good Prices

Tradesco Tours is a U.S. source for Budapest hotels.

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**See page 4 for
Karen's Budapest
Travel Tips**

READERS' FORUM

Salzburg Deal

Last month we published a letter from subscriber Richard Davidson who had high praise for Salzburg's *Hotel Mercure*. Mr. Davidson is president of *austria ski*, a tour operator specializing in Austrian ski vacations. This winter, his company offers a week in Salzburg at the *Mercure* for \$699 per person, double occupancy, including air fare from New York (modest supplement for departures from other cities). The program is designed for, but is not limited to, skiers. Contact: *austria ski*, 800-333-5533. — Editor

Goering Report

R.C. Baker asked about finding Karin hall, Hermann Goering's mansion in the countryside north of Berlin and if Goering's daughter, Edda, is still a nurse in Munich.

Longtime subscriber and expert on postwar Germany, Bob Gillespie, tells us Karin hall was leveled by the Russians in

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DEAR SUBSCRIBER

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But even with the current limitations, it is now worth your while to do trip planning and research online — especially on the Internet.

Online Services

With respect to the online services mentioned above, however, not much has changed. America Online, the service I use, is still mostly "big hat and no cattle." The travel information available simply doesn't live up to the promo and the promise.

For example, under 'Destination Europe' in AOL, one can choose 'Austria,' find a section on 'Lodgings in Austria' and then click 'Vienna.' There you'll find a listing of about a dozen of the best-known hotels in the city: **Sacher, Hilton, Marriott, Imperial, Bristol, König von Ungarn**, etc. Big deal; the hotels everybody knows about.

Somewhat better is a listing of about 150 Austrian Bed and Breakfasts in some 100 cities. Many, however, turned out not to be B & Bs but expensive hotels such as **Schloss Dürnstein** in Dürnstein and **Schloss Mönchstein** in Salzburg, one of Austria's most exclusive hotels. And the list contains only address, phone and fax number, no prices.

An 'Online Bed & Breakfast Guide' carries the same listing for Austrian B&Bs as found under 'Destination Europe,' but again, no rates. (You get a lot more information by calling the Austrian Tourist Office and asking for their guide to Austrian hotels.) One German hotel on the B & B listing is **Schloss Kronberg**, a magnificent edifice and hotel (Eisenhower's post-war headquarters) but hardly a B&B.

To be fair, there is a lot of travel info on AOL and I haven't checked out every site, but what I've seen seems pretty standard guidebook stuff that doesn't stray far from the beaten path.

Surfin' the Net

It's a much different story on the Internet. The World Wide Web is like a limitless maze of rooms (web sites) — some shabby, some grand, some gray, some colorful, some small, some huge. In each room/site are several doors; each of which leads to another room, that leads to other rooms, that leads to other rooms and on and on and on. If you get lost, as you certainly will, you simply push a button and you're back where you started.

The 'doors' are hyperlinks, which are underlined words or phrases describing the room/web site behind the 'door.' Simply click on the word or phrase and you're taken to another web site. Each

of these sites I had several choices and at 'Public Transportation (address <http://www.biztravel.com/germany/travel/pubtrans.html>) my choices were 'German Rail,' 'German Railway Timetables and Information' and 'Subway Navigator.'

In 'Subway Navigator' one can determine the route between any two underground stations in more than 50 of the world's largest cities. I chose Vienna. A map is provided and if you don't know the names of the stations you simply click on starting and ending points on the map. The route, including the name of every stop and the approximate time of travel, then appears on the screen. Utterly fantastic.

While at 'Subway Navigator,' I noticed the following hyperlink (door); "Consult CityNet to get more information on Vienna." I decided to head in that direction. At CityNet's Vienna page (<http://www.city.net/countries/austria/vienna/>) I found numerous hyperlinks (doors) promising much information about Vienna, including 'Maps,' 'Sights,' 'Food & Drink,' 'City Info,' 'Arts & Entertainment' and 'Concierge.' I chose 'Concierge,' then 'Food & Drink' and found a long list of more choices, including one titled 'Beer Traveler's Guide.' I decided to check it out (as you see, at this point I started to veer off course) and suddenly was in an entirely new world from where I could access a list of some 700 U.S. brewpubs, get details on beer festivals throughout the world plus barrels of other beer info. This, I believe, is called "surfing" the Net.

I elected to go back to the "Food & Drink" page where these choices were available: Beer Travelers Guide; Beer World by "J"; BeNeLux Beer Guide; Calendar of Beer Events in Europe; Eric's Beer and Homebrewing Page; Real Beer Guide; World-Wide Web Virtual Library; Beer; A la Carte Guide to North American Restaurants and Lodging; EaTneT: A Localized Restaurant Directory; Epicurious Food; Cooking and Recipes; Fodor's Restaurant Index; Restaurant Guide Worldwide; World Guide to Vegetarianism; World Wide

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Try These Web Travel Sites

- **Welcome to Switzerland** - <http://heiwww.unige.ch:80/switzerland/>
- **The Zürich Guide** (Including hotel and restaurant lists) <http://www.zurich.ch/>
- **Munich Online** - <http://www.munich-online.de/welcome.html>
- **Hotels in Munich** - http://www.munich-online.de/hotels/h_adrlist.html
- **Restaurants in Munich** - <http://www.munich-online.de/lokale/restaurants.html>
- **A Munich Guide** - <http://homepages.munich.netsurf.de/Nikolaus.Duttler/munich.htm>
- **Tourist Information Austria** - <http://www.atnet.co.at:80/Tourism/>
- **Austrian National Tourist Office U.S.** - <http://www.anto.com/>
- **Vienna Hotels** - <http://www.nethotels.com/>
- **Vienna Tickets Online** - <http://www.atnet.co.at:80/jirsa/>
- **Biztravel** - <http://www.biztravel.com/>
- **Hotel Anywhere** - <http://www.hotelanywhere.com/>
- **Yahoo Travel Directory** - <http://www.yahoo.com/Recreation/Travel/>
- **Vacation Home Rentals of the WWW** - <http://cyberrentals.com/homepage.html>

site has an address.

Over the next few paragraphs your eyes may tend to glaze over, but try to stay awake and maybe, if you're not already a Web surfer, you'll get a glimpse of the potential of this ocean of information.

I recently began at a site called Biztravel, whose address is <http://www.biztravel.com/>. From there I clicked on 'Destinations,' then 'Germany,' then 'Travel,' then 'Public Transportation.' At each

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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.

BUDAPEST

Continued from page 1

The company offers some good prices, but requires full payment in advance. There are stiff penalties for cancellation, so be sure of your plans. Prices listed are high season, effective through October 31st. Tradesco Tours, 6033 West Century Blvd. Los Angeles, Ca. 90045, tel. 310 649-5808, fax 310 649-5852. (Hotel value ratings in this issue are based on rack rates, not on the often cheaper rates offered by Tradesco.)

Budapest Hotels

Kempinski Hotel Corvinus

Our favorite Budapest hotel, the city's newest (1992) and one of its most expensive, is named for King Matthias Corvinus, the Hungarian monarch whose likeness appears on the electronic room keys. Its location, off Vörösmarty Square, is excellent. Contemporary in style, its sleek granite and glass facade faces a park. The soaring lobby never feels crowded.

After a day tramping crowded, noisy streets in hot, polluted air, this is a sophisticated, serene haven to return to.

Concierge staff is attired in tuxedos and there are always three to five in attendance. Elevators arrive in seconds whisking one to curving, horseshoe shaped corridors.

Even with the hotel full, we never felt the presence of other guests. Soundproofing is perfect; we heard no hall noises, talking, doors closing or TVs. All rooms are similar in decoration and furniture style is Art Nouveau with Empire overtones.

The only substantial difference between standard and deluxe rooms is the latter have a love seat or coffee table, and possibly a larger bathroom. Room shapes do vary and so does furniture arrangement. Our room was approximately 11 by 20 feet with an entry area of built-in, lighted closets and luggage racks. Black accents, inlay and geometric painting enhance the light tan wood entertainment cabinet, desk and chair, upholstered occasional chair and ottoman, headboards, night stands and ante room cabinetry and closets.

At the top of Corvinus' list of amenities are its "real" beds; bona fide mattresses and box springs (not all hotels are so equipped; see Pasold's Budapest tip, page 4). And the hotel's quality cotton sheets and duvet covers, over down comforters and feather/down pillows, constitute the most luxurious bedding we came across in the country.

Bathrooms are strikingly elegant and spacious. Ours had a huge oval basin set in

a large black marble counter. There was a separate glassed-in shower and bath tub. Of course, there was a basket of toiletries and wash cloths but only one terry robe and slippers. Thus when we went to the steam baths and spa (660 Ft./\$4.25) we had to improvise on cover-up attire.

Unfortunately, breakfast is not included in the rack rate and, at \$20 per person, it is more sensible and another experience to go to a café or pastry shop. At nearby **Gerbeaud**, pastry and coffee is about \$3.

There is just not a posher place to stay in Budapest, we were very happy campers.

Daily Rates: Singles \$265 to \$325, doubles \$326 to \$386. Rates do not include breakfast. (Ed Note: Double rooms booked through Tradesco in 1996 ranged from \$178 to \$198 including breakfast.) 345 rooms, some nonsmoking. Disabled accessible. Underground parking.

Contact: Kempinski Hotel Corvinus Budapest, Erzsébet tér 7-8, H-1051 Budapest, tel. 1/266-1000, fax 1/266-2000, U.S. res. 800-426-3135.

Rating: QUALITY 19/20, VALUE 16/20

K + K Hotel Opera

The Opera House fronts on Pest's most elegant avenue, Andrásy, (AN-drah-she) the Champs-Élysées of Budapest and a lovely district for strolling. Just a few steps west of it is the Opera Hotel

The Opera's most distinctive feature is the screaming canary yellow walls of the public rooms. Apparently this is the signature of all K + K hotels.

Though meticulously well-kept, this hotel lacks something. Rooms are too stark and contemporary with severe, pale wood built-in beds. There are no comforters just brown blankets, some occasional rattan chairs and, what else, bright yellow drapes.

On the redeeming side, housekeeping is immaculate and baths are white tiles with small marble counter tops.

The Opera is air-conditioned, its windows are new and it is on a side street; thus, there is no noise.

Our favorite room is a two-story apartment, Number 601, at 350-500 DM (\$236-\$338), depending on season. It looks out on a side street and has wicker furniture in the sitting area, TV seating, half-bath downstairs, full bath upstairs, double beds with down comforters, sloping ceilings and a round window that actually opens. In low season this is a good value at \$250, but otherwise we felt the rooms were a little small for the price.

Daily Rates: Singles \$120 to \$172, doubles

\$159 to \$209. 113 rooms, some nonsmoking, none suitable for disabled. Air-conditioned. Garage \$9.

Contact: K + K Hotel Opera, Révay utca 24, H-1065 Budapest, tel. 1/269 0222, fax 1/269 0230.

Rating: QUALITY 16/20, VALUE 15/20

Astoria Hotel

This hotel has about as much Old-World ambiance as you're likely to find in Budapest. Built at the turn-of-the-century, it retains much of its former glory. Public areas, lobby, restaurant and some of the rooms have been renovated.

Based on two visits, in 1991 and again this year, we like the hotel; but only if the weather is cool. Rooms are not air-conditioned.

On our former visit we had Number 423 under the eaves, on the side street. It consists of two separate older bedrooms, but the bath is old and small with only a shower. This time we requested a newer room and were given Number 210 on Kossouth Lajos-Rakóczi, a major six-lane artery.

Double French doors with roll-up blinds open to a balcony above the roaring street. The incredible traffic noise never subsided at any time during the night. Since, it was bloody hot, we had to have the doors open....Wow!

After making a fuss for a newer room, and then not liking it, the desk personnel, who really try to please, weren't happy when we asked to move. But we wound up in #517 on the quietest side of the hotel — if there is such a thing. Large French doors opened onto balconies on each end of the room, but it was still 90 degrees inside (we had a thermometer).

The dining room and café area, which also serves as the breakfast room, is very elegant with dark marble columns, crystal chandeliers, shaded sconces, Empire chairs, red drapes and red and white cloth napery. This is wonderfully air-conditioned and stayed delightful and refreshing.

The breakfast buffet is quite elaborate: large self-serve samovars of hot water for tea and coffee, old-fashioned circulating juice machine, water pitchers, various breads and rolls, cakes and sweets, real French toast with fruit syrups, scrambled eggs, bacon, cold salads, homemade stewed fruits, and chafing dishes of goulash.

If you can close the windows and doors to block out the street noise, and it is not sweltering hot, the Astoria is recommended for its charm and reasonable prices. It's only a five-minute walk to Váci

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EDITOR'S CHOICE

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— pedestrian-only shopping street — and surrounded by enticing back streets to explore.

Daily Rates: Singles \$95 to \$124, doubles \$124 to \$164. 124 rooms. Tradesco prices are \$110 single and \$139 double. Not suitable for disabled.

Contact: Astoria Hotel, Kossouth Lajos u. 19, H-1053 Budapest, tel: 1/117-3411, fax 1/118-6798.

Rating: QUALITY 15/20, VALUE 16/20

Pannonia Hotel Nemzeti

In a city of dark, dirty, sooty buildings left over from the coal burning era, the gorgeous baby blue and white painted facade of the Nemzeti (National) is a beautiful surprise. Built in 1902, it is just off Rakóczi (ROCK-coat-zee), up the street from the Astoria.

Restoration in '87 did much for the beautiful stairway and Art Nouveau public room areas, but most of the bed chambers are done in 50s communist-style beige-brown with dreary furniture and saggy, hard beds.

Many rooms face a spacious inner courtyard, all Baroque and blue painted. Number 104, a new, fairly spacious, inner room with air-conditioning, has pale cream striped wallpaper, brass sconces above the beds and the ubiquitous tan wood furniture from the same furniture factory as several other Budapest hotels. Ceilings are high, 12 feet at least, with tall, newly-done windows draped with an attractive red-patterned linen-like fabric. There are real beds with mattresses and box springs in these new rooms, but no comforters, just brown fuzzy blankets. Bathrooms, too, are new with good light, new tiles, and bathtubs with showers.

With such opulent hallways and stairs (there is an elevator) it is really a shame about the rest of the rooms.

The buffet breakfast seemed scant in comparison with most of the other hotels.

For under \$150 in high season, this is a good value if you have a new room. However, the hotel has no garage and parking is not safe on the street.

Daily Rates: Singles \$81 to \$101, doubles \$115 to \$128. 76 rooms, 18 of which have been recently renovated and are air-conditioned. None suitable for disabled.

Contact: Pannonia Hotel Nemzeti, Józef krt. 4, H-1088 Budapest, tel. 1/114-0019, fax 1/269-9162.

Rating: QUALITY 14/20, VALUE 16/20

Karen Pasold's Budapest Travel Tips

About the Food

Hungary has always been noted for its cuisine. Even during hard times Hungarians always paid more attention to their food and placed greater importance on it than many of their Eastern European neighbors. The cooking is distinctive, with Austrian, Bohemian and Transylvanian overtones. Certain specialties should not be missed. No other paprika in the world comes close to the Hungarian version, which is mild or sweet. Normally labeled "Csemege" (CHEH-mah-guh), this paprika is a brilliant orangy-red. Buy it in grocery stores. Small 100 gram bags of cost 115 Ft (\$.74).

Some typical dishes to try are: "Gulyás," a broth stew which comes from the herdsman tribes cooking the dried meat in a cauldron on an open fire with fresh vegetables added; "Palóc soup" (PAH-lowtz), a delicious combination of lamb, potatoes, and green beans; "Jókai" (YO-kai), thick kidney beans in a smoky pork soup; "Fruit Soups," chilled summer soups made of any variety of fruit (we tried seven types) in a cream base with additional fruit added, whipped cream on top, absolutely delicious; "Hortobágy Palacsinta" (HORE-toe-bahdj), minced veal stuffed crepe with paprika sour cream sauce; "Hungarian Foie Gras," goose liver pate; "Lecsó" (LECH-oh), yellow pepper, tomato, onion sauté; "Fogash" (FOE-gosh) or Süllő (SHOE-lure), pike-perch fish indigenous only to Lake Balaton, as much as four times cost of other fish but worth it; "Dobos Torte" (DOUGH-boush), six-layer chocolate creme filled cake with hard caramel topping.

Restaurant Advice

Eastern Europeans eat on the late side, we dined most evenings around 8 or 9 p.m. Have your hotel make a reservation. We often reserved a day ahead but the same day normally is fine. Many restaurants recommended in this issue are not suitable for walking to at night. Take City Taxi (2-111-111), it's only a few dollars each way. Today nearly all menus are in several languages. Our local advice was to tip 10%, and 15% in the better restaurants.

Opera Tickets

Opera tickets can be had for a little as 100-200 Ft. (\$.66-\$1.33) on the main floor or very upper balcony. The most expensive tickets, \$12, are for boxes, including the Emperor's box, with six delicate French chairs. A 45-minute tour of the Opera House costs 500 Ft. (\$3.33).

An Evening of Music

Near the Opera House is **Belcanto Restaurant** (Dalszenház u. 8). During dinner, members of the Budapest Opera and students of the Academy of Music perform. Even the waiters sing. The interior is elegantly simple with plain, painted walls, wood floors and signed pictures of theater and opera performers. The menu is quite extensive, prices are high for Budapest and a 15% gratuity is included, but you come for the entertainment, not the food.

Taxis

Hotel procured taxis are usually Mercedes Benz autos and the drivers will be wearing suits. They charge at least two to three times more than normal city taxis. Therefore, always request City Taxi. Your hotel will call if you ask. The number is 211-1111.

Hotel Beds

Be careful when checking out hotels to look at the beds. Hungary is notoriously full of what I call the "glorified sofa." Low, cot-like, and narrow (32" wide), these so-called beds, upholstered in atrocious fabrics, are found in many hotels. You can sleep almost as comfortably on the floor.

Money

Local currency is the forint (Ft.). At press time, 156 forints equaled \$1. There are many ATMs throughout Budapest and even in the smaller Hungarian towns.

Travelers checks are easily cashed in any Western European bank, but not so in Hungary; only certain ones cash them. American Express has an office near the Kempinski but exchange rates aren't as good as at banks. But persevere, there are banks that cash traveler's checks.

We met six Brit's, four of which had lost all their money, passports, tickets, and credit cards at Keleti (KELL-ah-tee) train station. They were pickpocketed. Beware of these poorer parts of town like Keleti, where train loads of destitute Poles and Czechs shop the cheap stores around the station, work the crowds, and go back home. Two hotels are near Keleti, the huge **Hungaria** and the **Park**, a dump we stayed in 20 years ago.

Getting There

Subscribers who take advantage of the special *Gemütlichkeit* price reduction program with **Swissair** should be aware that there are two Zürich-Budapest flights daily.

Malev, the privatized Hungarian airline which has daily non-stops (5 times a week in winter) from New York's JFK Airport to Budapest, offers a **City for All Seasons** package priced at \$1,100 per person, double occupancy, which includes roundtrip air between New York and Budapest (add-ons available from other U.S. cities), six nights at the **Gellert, Hilton, Marriott, Atrium Hyatt**, or **Corvinus Kempinski**, airport transfers, a dinner at **Gundel**, entrance to the casino, half-day sight-seeing tour, and an opera performance. The rate is through October 31, after which prices should be a bit lower. This is a \$3,000 value if priced separately.

Hotel Mercure Korona

This modern hotel, just two busy corners up Múzeum krt. from the Astoria, caters heavily to tour groups.

Rooms are all similar; small, but attractive enough. Mine, Number 323 in the front corner, had two windows that looked down from a turret-like alcove to the busy Kalvin ter, but let in absolutely no street noise. Bathrooms are smallish and have tubs with showers. Beds have real mattresses but pillows are so thin and flat as to be almost nonexistent.

Breakfast is one of the hotel's nicest features; a huge buffet including the best scrambled eggs I've ever eaten.

Daily Rates: Singles \$128 to \$149, doubles \$149 to \$176. Tradesco double room prices: \$156 to \$170. 422 air-conditioned rooms, some nonsmoking and wheelchair accessible. Attached garage.

Contact: Hotel Mercure Korona, Kecskemeti u. 14, H-1053 Budapest, tel. 1/117-4111 or 117-9117, fax 1/118-3867.

Rating: QUALITY 16/20, VALUE 15/20

Taverna

The most recommendable aspect of this modern, maroon-colored glass and brick 12-story hotel is its unbeatable location in the middle of Váci, Pest's pedestrian shopping street.

All guestrooms have the same decor, but different layouts and most are pretty small. Lobby and public areas are air-conditioned but that's all. When the outside temperature was 95, our room was hot.

Number 124, has a huge square window opening to an inner atrium, but traffic noise from the back street was a negative. There was minimal furniture, only a desk and one chair, and very little room to walk around.

The bed was hard as a rock, the pillow consisted of lumpy foam bits and sheets were brown-orange stripes. The bath was modern, but tight in a five-foot space. If not for the long entry hall we would have had no room for our luggage.

The large breakfast room was packed and hot, with no discernible air-conditioning. There was a good selection, but the buffet was not regularly attended to. The Taverna is okay for a night or so, but overpriced.

Daily Rates: Singles \$129, doubles \$167. Tradesco double room prices: \$157. 224 rooms, not wheelchair accessible. Attached garage.

Contact: Taverna, Váci utca 20, H-1052 Budapest, tel. 1/138-4999 or 118-7500, fax

EDITOR'S CHOICE

1/118-7188.

Rating: QUALITY 10/20, VALUE 10/20

Hotel Délibáb

Majestically situated on a corner of the street of the same name, this former Esterházy mansion is now a state-run hotel. The crusty, chipped exterior is still being restored and painted a two-tone mocha and white. This is a hotel for Old-World ambiance.

The Hungarian dictionary defines Délibáb as "mirage" and mirage it is — until you enter. Colonnade balconies, window friezes, ornate pediments, cornice brackets, arched doorways, wrought iron window grills and fencing, and stone balustrades are framed by old locust trees in full bloom. Large, classical windows are decorated with carved stone and plaster faces amidst cascading garlands. Too bad the rooms don't measure up.

For \$49 you get a clean but uninspired room. Decor is best described as "Moscow tacky."

Beige-brown 50's style low-slung chairs lined one wall of the bedroom. I've seen or sat in this exact chair in so many Hungarian hotels, they must have come from some great Soviet Furniture Warehouse. They sit about as good as they look. Sleeping is on a miserable, backbreaking sofa bed with a sheet draped over it. The lone redeeming feature is two down/feather pillows, but the comforter is a mysterious batting material. Floors are wood with small, murky oriental rugs.

The newer rooms with plain paneled headboards on beds and some of the beds are together, but baths are still not quite dreamy. Each double gets two towels, the kind K-Mart sells. On the other hand there is TV with three English and three German channels.

The skimpy breakfast is served in a basement room which becomes a bar at night.

The staff was very kind at this no frills hotel and, being at the end of Andrásy, the neighborhood is quite grand, full of faded, crumbling old mansions and villas.

The Metro is nearby and Pest is reached in 10 minutes for about 50 cents. An added bonus is that the world famous restaurant, **Gundel**, and its sister restaurant **Bagolyvar**, the City Park and Zoo and the Széchenyi Baths are within walking distance.

Daily Rates: Singles \$40, doubles \$49. 34 rooms, all with shower. No lift. Street parking only.

Contact: Hotel Délibáb, Délibáb u. 35, H-

1062 Budapest, tel. 1/122-8763 or 342-9301, fax 1/342-8153.

Rating: QUALITY 7/20, VALUE 12/20

Hotel Central

Once the exclusive province of high-ranking Russian officials and party members, the Central can best be described as "Moscow Colonial." Quite the opposite of the elaborate Délibáb, the exterior is an unattractive, uninspired, motel-style with boxy balconies and the hotel name in orange plastic block letters.

Rooms are actually decent. Beds are hard, some are sofa style, but at least there are headboards and dust ruffles. There is a satin comforter covered in white sheeting with a big center cutout opening, typical of this old-style hotel.

Baths are spacious enough, tiled, and have tubs with wall mounted showers.

It is the apartments, once the epitome of Soviet luxury, that are the most fun. Number 102, two large rooms, has papered walls in a dark blue pattern with large mirrors and pictures. There are groupings of brocade-covered chairs and couches, crystal chandeliers, long drapes and sheers over many windows. This same fussy, Old-World look carries into the bedroom with one large floral brocade padded headboard and footboarded bed, with the sheet just draped over the top. Pillows are large and fluffy. The bathroom is gigantic, tiled ceiling to floor in blue with a single pedestal basin, WC, bidet, and long bathtub. For about \$140 the apartments offer a lot of space and a glimpse of the old regime.

The location is a bit out of central Pest, but the hotel could be fun for a family or group.

Daily Rates: Singles \$51 to \$90, doubles \$64 to \$103, apartments \$141. 36 room, six apartments. Street parking.

Contact: Hotel Central, Munkacsy Mihály u. 5-7, H-1063 Budapest, tel. 1/321-2000, fax 1/322-9445.

Rating: QUALITY 11/20 VALUE 12/20

Hilton Hotel

Architecturally, the Hilton attracted a great deal of attention in the mid-70s by incorporating into its construction the 700-year-old walls of a 13th century Dominican Church and the facade of a 17th century Jesuit university.

It is on the Buda side overlooking Pest and the Danube and adjacent to Matthias Church and near Fisherman's Bastion. For surrounding scenery and old cobbled streets, the Hilton is well-located. It was once Budapest's leading hotel, but with

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newer entries like the posh Kempinski, it's time they stop resting on their laurels and get to refurbishing.

We never heard hall noise or sounds between the rooms. Beds had the most comfortable mattresses of our trip, but there were no down comforters like the Kempinski, just a gray blanket. Carpeting was an atrocious geometric pattern that didn't match anything and bedspreads were a limp, out of style, dull, gray print. Furniture is utilitarian and simple, straight lines, dark finished. Over the beds hung a dumb picture of a huge pale blue butterfly. The sitting area was two smallish chairs and a patio table. All of this is standard for an old Holiday Inn. The best feature of the room is the bath, with unusual caramel-colored marble, ample towels, soaps, washcloths, telephone, hairdryer, and lighted magnifying mirror.

Hotel staff was kind enough and helpful, room service speedy, but the Hilton lacks pizzazz, especially at these prices. There is no swimming pool, but most other amenities are available.

Daily Rates: Singles \$218 to \$257, doubles \$275 to \$327, breakfast not included (about \$20). 295 rooms, some nonsmoking and wheelchair accessible. Air. Underground parking.

Contact: Hilton Hotel, Hess András ter 1-3, H-1014 Budapest, tel. 1/214-3000, fax 1/156-0285.

Rating: QUALITY 16/20, VALUE 12/20

Hotel Kulturinnov

This and the Hilton are the only two hotels in the celebrated Castle District — the sublime to the ridiculous. How it came to be classified three-star is a mystery because in amenities it ranks with the Délibáb.

For less than \$60 come amenities so typical of the Soviet, communist idea of comfort: smallish rooms, beds hugging opposite walls, no two together (we once had a maid roll her cart into our room between the beds at 6 a.m. without knocking), snazzy brown-orange color scheme, orange, gold, & brown oriental rugs, orange upholstered sofa beds, tiny bath, so-so shower.

All rooms are virtually alike. Some face an inner courtyard, others the side street.

The hotel has little charm and is a no-frills alternative to the \$350 Hilton.

Daily Rates: Singles \$45, doubles \$58.

Contact: Hotel Kulturinnov, Szentharom-

sag' 7, H-1014 Budapest, tel. 1/155-0122, fax 1/175-1886.

Rating: QUALITY 6/20, VALUE 10/20

Budapest Restaurants

(Unless otherwise noted, these restaurants have menus translated to English. — Editor.)


Gundel

Resurrected, rejuvenated, redone by Hungarian-born New York restaurateur and food writer George Lang and former U.S. Ambassador to Austria, Ronald Lauder (Estée's son), Gundel is considered by the cognoscenti as the best restaurant in Eastern Europe. It is superior in all aspects: its venerable history, astonishing good looks, charm, service and cuisine. Anybody who is anybody has dined here during its 102 year reign; even in the communist years.

The main dining room is subtly elegant, done in rich Beaux Arts style. A collection of original Hungarian paintings lines the walls. The state buy-out and rejuvenation cost \$18 million. A staff of 52 cooks prepares only the freshest ingredients and there is a matchless selection of Hungarian wines.

The value is tremendous; a \$50 meal here would cost \$150 in New York. A dinner that began with "Poor Man's Pockets;" a sort of Piroski with chicken-paprika cream sauce (460 Ft./\$2.95), followed by steak with assorted steamed vegetables and tiny potato croquettes (2250 Ft./\$14.50), and ended with apple cake and vanilla ice cream (420 Ft./\$2.69), may not have shown the kitchen at its best. But it was beautifully served on cobalt blue and gold-rimmed Zsolnay china and accompanied by the music of György Lakatos, a popular Hungarian band. Not the best dinner I had over three weeks, but certainly the most atmospheric and a terrific bargain. Those who dabble in caviar or goose liver specialties, will spend much more. Call well ahead to reserve a table in the main dining room. Definitely a dress-up place!

Gundel, Allakerti út 2, 1146 Budapest, tel. 1/321-3550, fax 1/342-2917. Closed Christmas Eve night.

Rating: QUALITY 14/20 VALUE 18/20 

Baglolyvár

Just around the corner is Gundel's much lower-priced sister restaurant. From chef to waitresses, it is run entirely by women. Meaning "Owl's Nest," this home-cooking operation is quite popular, especially in nice weather with its garden seating.

The menu is small and there is a daily fixed-price offering of exceptional value. Our "Spring" menu included cold cherry soup, breaded pork cutlets, green salad with a rémoulade dressing and cottage cheese crepes with chocolate sauce and fresh, sweet strawberries, 1220 Ft. (\$7.80). The fruit soup tasted like flour water with sour cherries floating around, and someone apparently dropped the salt shaker in the cutlet breading, but the rest was good. Dinners average about \$12 per person.

Bagolyvár (BOGG-oy-var), Állakerti út 2, H-1146 Budapest; tel. 351-6395 Fax. 342-2917. Until 11 p.m.

Rating: QUALITY 10/20 VALUE 15/20

Százéves


This petite mansion, located at the end of Váci near the Danube, dates from 1756 and a marble tablet at the entrance announces it is an historical monument.

Százéves claims to be the oldest restaurant in town and is what a typical Hungarian restaurant should look like; whitewashed vaulting supported by stone columns, leaded glass windows in the arches, age-darkened wood banquettes, shaded brass chandeliers, wall sconces, marble floors, starched white table cloths with deep pink coverlets and, for shame, paper napkins. Across the back is a delightful terrace garden, lined with flower boxes, serenely cool on a sweltering evening.

Dinner here was as the best we had on the trip (sorry, Gundel). We began with cold pear Tokaji soup 390 Ft. (\$2.50) and Hortobágy pancakes 690 Ft. (\$4.42). Main courses were wonderfully tender "wild boar in juniper sauce" 1790 Ft. (\$11.47); "chicken breast paprika" 1290 Ft. (\$8.26), tender dark meat and a superb sauce; and "veal stew with dumplings" 1390 Ft. (\$8.90). You get what you pay for and the quality of the ingredients here is superior. Our grand total for three persons was 7100 Ft. (\$45.50).

There is a Gypsy band and a 15% reduction for guests of the Taverna hotel group which owns the Százéves.

Százéves (SAAZ-aicsh), Pesti Barnabás u 2, H-1052 Budapest, tel. 118-3608, fax. 266-5240. Until midnight.

Rating: QUALITY 18/20 VALUE 18/20 

Kisbuda Gyöngye

The "Pearl of Little Buda" is a most unusually decorated restaurant. Walls are ingeniously paneled in old armoire doors and odd furniture parts. No two chairs match, there are turn-of-the-century chandeliers, a collection of old bibelots, pink table cloths and silver candelabras with pink taper candles.

EDITOR'S CHOICE

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Hidden in an obscure neighborhood of old Buda, it obviously was once someone's residence. An old upright piano provides low-key entertainment.

We had spring asparagus specials as appetizers followed by a most delectable roasted duck breast fillet. Most entrees are in the 900-1300 Ft. (\$5.76 to \$8.33) range. A full meal with wine averaged \$16.50 per person for quite sophisticated cooking.

The restaurant is near Arpad bridge. Take a cab.

Kisbuda Gyöngye (KISH-bu-da DJUN-dje), Kenyeres u. 34, 1034 Budapest, tel. 168-6402, 168-9246, fax 168-9227. Until midnight.

Rating: QUALITY 17/20 VALUE 18/20

Monarchia

In the tradition of the Hapsburg empire, the Monarchia reflects the taste of Emperor Franz József. This is another costly villa renovation creating a new restaurant among the great old houses of Buda; very expensive but stunning results. It is painted a daffodil yellow with white accents on the outside, quite grand.

Prices are high for Budapest, one pays a premium for the renovation, the international menu and the multilingual waiters. A sampling of offerings: Russian caviar and vodka 2800 Ft. (\$17.90); soups such as garlic creme and tortellini 400 Ft. (\$2.56); Siberian pelmeni (like a ravioli) 900 Ft. (\$5.77), lobster, shrimp, crab, and smoked salmon — all rare for Budapest — were about 2400 Ft. (\$15.38); Hungarian entrees 900-2100 Ft. (\$5.76 to \$13.46). Our total was \$37 for two (tip 500 Ft.).

Way off the beaten track, in the Buda hills. Take a taxi.

Monarchia, Verányos u. 4, 1125 Budapest, tel. 212-2414, fax 212-2413. Until midnight.

Rating: QUALITY 16/20 VALUE 17/20

Múzeum

Here, next to the National Museum, is Old-World ambience that won't break the bank and you may dine with some well-known folks. Next to us was a large gathering of Russians including Yeltsin's former finance minister. The ladies were gussied up in rather outrageous, very out-of-style, dinner dresses and wraps. They kissed each other, made frequent vodka toasts and ordered course after course; no doubt like the good old days of the Politburo. Courses came on huge platters, very dramatic and decorative — the most elaborate presentation we saw anywhere in Hungary.

The Múzeum is extremely popular so reserve well ahead. Starters are in the \$2 to \$3 range and main dishes from \$5 to \$9.

Try pike-perch Tisza river with garlic pasta for 1305 Ft. (\$8.69) or the wonderful calves liver for 850 Ft. (\$5.45). A couple of our entrees came with what the English menu called "squashed" potatoes. They are the smoothest, creamiest I've ever eaten. Do try! Dinner for two with soup, entree, salad, several beverages and 10% tip was \$26.

Múzeum, Múzeum krt. 12, 1088 Budapest, tel./fax 138-4221. Serves until 1 a.m., closed Sunday.

Rating: QUALITY 17/20 VALUE 18/20

Paksi Halvendéglo

The name translates: "A fisherman's tavern in the village of Paks." Its neighborhood is commercial buildings in Buda and not a place to walk to conveniently, so take a taxi. Never mind the surroundings, inside it's delightful.

The restaurant bustled with locals on our weeknight visit; we were the only tourists, but were with Hungarians. A violinist serenaded romantic couples and at the piano was a husky-throated Marlene Dietrich-style cabaret singer. She alone is worth the trip.

We started with an unusual fish soup with vegetables, wine, sour cream, lemon and bay leaf, 420 Ft. (\$2.69). In his bare hands, the waiter spectacularly carried a whole Fogash (a pike-perch fish from Lake Balaton and pronounced FOE-gosh) to the table for our inspection. Priced by the gram and enough for three persons, we asked to have it broiled. The fish turned out to be enough for all five of us. It was filleted at the table but there were still a few bones to watch out for. The thick-meated, flaky, snow-white fish was wonderful, served with gigantic portions of pan-fried potatoes. By the time dinner was over, we had all had several courses: Tokaji wine, Unicorn (a nasty, extremely bitter herbal liquor — a national drink), strudel, ice cream and coffee. This extravagant dinner was 7800 Ft. for three or \$16.66 each with tip.

Paksi Halvendéglo (PAK-shee HALL-VEN-day-glue), Margit krt. 14, Budapest; Tel. 212-5599. Serves to midnight.

Rating: QUALITY 16/20 VALUE 17/20

Üj Sipos Halászkert

Up in Obuda (old Buda), on the right bank of the Danube near Arpad, hides an idyllic, preserved old square, FŐ tér. Squeezed between ugly concrete neo-Russian high-rise apartment complexes, it's a bit difficult to find, but a couple of the square's restaurants are utterly charming. The building exterior is done in burgundy and white stucco framing long windows with birds-eye roof dormers. The various dining rooms have whitewashed walls and wainscoting accented with antiques and

Haban ceramic plates.

When opened in the 1930's, Üj Sipos Halászkert had the innovative idea of serving boneless fish. There is also a wide selection of veal, pork, beef, and chicken dishes. Most dinners average \$10-\$15 per person. A Gypsy band is the usual entertainment.

Üj Sipos (WE SHE-poesh Hall-losh-kahrt), FŐ tér 6, 1033 Budapest (Obuda), tel. 188-8745. Until midnight. Take a taxi.

Rating: QUALITY 17/20 VALUE 18/20

Postakocsi

A 100-year-old stagecoach occupies one corner of this restaurant, which was recommended to us for its Old-World atmosphere. Walls of the two dining room areas are hung with harnesses, equestrian bridles and coach lanterns. Hungarian specialties predominate with at least four offerings each of fish, veal, pork, beef, and chicken, along with the goose liver house favorite. There is a strolling violin player or Gypsy group. Dinner on this beautiful hidden square is truly a step back in time. The bill with drinks or wine will be in the \$15 per person range.

Postakocsi (POST-ah-ko-chee), FŐ tér 2, 1033 Budapest (Obuda), tel. 250-2286, 168-7801, fax 168-7801.

Rating: QUALITY 17/20 VALUE 18/20

Buda Muskátli

Muskátli translates as geranium and the awning-covered garden verandah is bordered by flower boxes of crimson red geraniums. One can dine inside or out on tables covered in hunter green cloths on French garden chairs. It was the only really affordable restaurant we scouted out in the Castle District for lunch and is located next to the 1848 Revolution monument in a tiny, leafy shaded park. We tried a fun mix including cold peach soup 300 Ft. (\$1.92), Margarita pizza 700 Ft. (\$4.49) and fabulous mashed potatoes 150 Ft. (\$0.96). With drinks we paid \$9 for two. Sit outside in good weather to catch the cool breezes and watch the horse carriages clomp by.

Buda Muskátli (MOSH-cot-lee), Disz tér 8, Buda

Rating: QUALITY 14/20 VALUE 16/20

Ristorante via Luna

Wandering the neighborhood near Bajcsy-Zsilinszky út, we discovered a small Italian restaurant whose exterior is simple but newly repainted in pink and white with dark wood mullion windows. Italian house salad was 390 Ft. (\$2.50); various pastas with cream, bacon, basil,

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garlic, ham & peas, mushrooms, were all 420 Ft. (\$2.69); lasagna, cannelloni, and penne with cheeses were 490 Ft. (\$3.14). Our lunch with salads, pasta, drinks and tip was \$14 for two.

Ristorante via Luna, Nagysándor József u. 1 Tel. 112-8058. Until 11:30 p.m.

Rating: QUALITY 16/20 VALUE 17/20

Anna Café

A really smart choice for a snack or light lunch, in the middle of Váci near Vörösmarty square, is the new Anna Café. It's particularly a pleasing stop if you can snag one of the outdoor tables. Very clean, high-tech new, you sit at small round green marble tables to order: cakes and pastries 150-250 Ft. (\$1-\$1.60), Caesar salad 400 Ft. (\$2.56), fruit salad 425 Ft. (\$2.72) and American-style sandwiches 500 Ft. (\$3.21) which are always served with shredded cabbage, some flat tasting sour cream potato salad and shredded carrots.

This is great people watching, ranging from cellular phone types sporting yellow pants and purple sports jackets to aging "hooker" types in tight orlon tops and tacky, moth-eaten fur coats. Everybody smokes. A couple of sandwiches and drinks were \$9.

Anna Café, Váci utca 5.

Rating: QUALITY 15/20 VALUE 17/20

Gerbeaud

Originally founded in 1858 by a Swiss confectioner, this venerable institution has survived Budapest's turbulent last 140 years and remains very much intact; a must-see destination. Strolling Váci, it faces you on Vörösmarty Square. There are tables outside for warm weather, but inside is the unique Belle Époque interior.

The building was recently purchased by the Swiss for \$900,000, so they will eventual-

ly be spiffing up the silk wall coverings, crystal chandeliers, and avocado green velvet seat covers. Service is dreadfully slow, if you can even find a waitress, but it is the place to see and be seen in cozy, faded splendor.

The pastries and confections are excellent and worthwhile. You can even have them packaged up with curly ribbon ties to take with you. I can remember when cake & coffee cost a dollar, now it's about \$3. A diminutive menu (as scarce as servers) contains 27 pages of selections written in four languages. On the cash register receipt, in English, distinctively notable is "Tip not included!"

Gerbeaud, Cukrárszda, Vörösmarty tér 7. Open 9-9 p.m. daily.

Rating: QUALITY 15/20 VALUE 18/20

DEAR SUBSCRIBER

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Restaurant Guide; Zagat Dine; The German Wine Page; The Wine Page; World-Wide Web Virtual Library; Wine; World Wide Wines; Wine Information and Wine Net News.

By now I think you can see that the WWW is motherlode of travel information.

Switzerland Online

On another exploration, I discovered a web page for Switzerland (<http://heiwwww.unige.ch/80/switzerland/>). Using its search capability I found a site containing an alpha listing of Zürich hotels (http://www.eurospider.ch/zt/hotel_guide/hotel_guide.html). Now *here* is a real hotel source; it lists nearly 200 hotels from the grandest to the simplest. Selecting at random the modest, two-star **Hotel Fischer**, here is a sample of the info provided:

Fischer Hotel, Schaffhauserstrasse 520, 8052 Zürich, Telefon: 01 301 27 55, Telefax: 01 302 58 42

Outside of the city center, 5 minutes from the airport. Family atmosphere. Room with bath/WC. For longer stays, there are one-bedroom-apartments available. Parking available, own bakery. Free parking in front of the hotel. 3 or 4 bedrooms on request. Pets on request. From

main station by tram 10 or 14 in direction to "Seebach" until the end station. From the airport by bus #768 till station 'Seebach'.

Single room, wash-basin 83.00 Fr.; Single room, bath/shower, WC, 104.00 Fr.; Double room, wash-basin, 64.00 Fr.; Double room, bath/shower, WC, 72.00 Fr.; Triple-room, bath/shower, WC, 62.00 Fr.; Four-bed room, bath/shower, WC, 56.00 Fr. Prices per night and person, service and tax included. These average prices are subjected to change.

We have passed from the realm of parlor tricks to something that has real application. I could have made a reservation online.

Munich's Super Site

Another terrific site is 'Munich Online' (<http://www.munich-online.de>). There's a load of good stuff here but my favorite page is a listing of hundreds of restaurants placed in 41 categories by cuisine: Bavarian, Bohemian, Chinese, French, Italian, Spanish, etc. In addition to address, phone number and hours of operation, the site allows visitors to leave comments and to rate each restaurant on a scale of 1-5 in four separate categories — food, drink, service and ambiance — with 1 being the highest. These are compiled and available online. Click on a hypertext and see the restaurant's composite rating as well as what other diners have said about it.

I decided to checkout **Tantris**, a Michelin two-star and widely considered Munich's best restaurant. The composite rating was 1.3, very high. The most recent rating was made the previous day, was in English and gave the restaurant a "1" in all four categories. The comment read, "The best restaurant in Germany." A fantastic feature!

There is also a list of some 300 hotels, a city map, schedules of events, information on museums and galleries, theaters, music and virtually every address and phone number a visitor or potential visitor could possibly want.

These are just a handful of the literally thousands of Web sites that will be of use. Let us know your favorite Web addresses and we'll pass them on.

If you don't yet have access to the Internet all I can say is time's a wastin'. — RHB

READERS' FORUM

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1945. There is nothing left to see. As to Goering's daughter Edda, she is married to a dentist and still lives in Bavaria. — Editor

Int'l Homestays o.k.

In reference to Marge Coughlin's letter (June, 1996) concerning home stay services, I have used this firm on numerous occasions, and have found the company to be extremely reliable and their services more than satisfactory. If one would look at their itinerary of services, and use common sense, the person would know that the firm specializes in Eastern Europe and underdeveloped countries.

This company will try to help the traveler in Western Europe, but that is not their area of greatest expertise. In its field, **American International Home Stay** is a very good company.

A.J. Dickerson, Dunedin FL

Beer Report

Re: Beer. The best local beer I have tasted in Germany is Ettal, in Kloster Ettal between Oberammergau and Linderhof. Buy it there, I have not seen it outside the immediate area. For international beer, hurrah for Budva. It's available in Oberstdorf (*Gemütlichkeit* tip) and Athens, Greece, among other places. Look for it, it's worth the effort.

In Munich, try second floor restaurant, **Dallmayr** (Dienerstr. 14) near the Opera. It is a delicatessen at the level of **KaDeWe** in Berlin. Some super wine bargains (French mainly). Not touristy at all and very moderately priced. Dr. Anatol Chiari, Laguna Beach CA

Correction

Last month we listed a wrong phone number for **Wanderweg Holidays**. The correct number is 800-270-ALPS.