

DEAR
SUBSCRIBER

June 27, 1997

Breaking Away

Excuse me, but I have an aversion to hearing English in the breakfast room. It means we're not far enough off the tourist route. I, too, am a tourist but it still grates hearing those usually too-loud American voices.

Breakfast in a hotel in Germany, Austria and Switzerland is a decorous affair and having experienced several hundred I know the drill: *Gut Morgen* and a nod of the head to fellow breakfasters on arrival and a *Wiedersehen* on departure. In between, conversation at table is quiet, sometimes hushed. I have never heard a German, Swiss or Austrian address someone across the room as we Americans often do ("Honey, can I bring you some of these lovely cold cuts?").

Of course, American-style hotels, such as the **Steigenberger Avance** at the Frankfurt Airport, are just like being at the **San Francisco Airport Hilton**; a far cry from European hotels that maintain breakfast as a sedate, contemplative ritual.

And ritual is what I came for. I'm here because of the differences in culture. The idea is to experience their's; not bring them mine. The Golden Arches, Burger King, KFC and other American chain businesses in Europe are an abomination. I cringe when I see them — no matter how cunningly disguised they are to blend with the local architecture — because I know with each one that goes up a little of what makes Europe unique is eroded.

When traveling, I want to soak up as much of the other culture as I can and that's why one of the continuing themes of this newsletter is getting off the

Continued on page 2...

GEMÜTLICHKEIT

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

APPENZELL

Our report on the tiny Canton of Appenzell in Switzerland's north-east corner, where women's suffrage didn't happen until 1990

You're looking for a place to spend a week or so on your next trip. Maybe a small, quiet village, preferably one with loads of charm that has visible connections to past centuries. It would be nice if the townspeople still observed traditional customs and dress. There should be a selection of good restaurants and a wide choice of accommodations.

However, since you don't plan to spend all day every day in your chosen village it should be near a big city or two, have plenty of recreational opportunities and be a place from which to embark on easy daytrips to interesting sights and

towns — by rail and/or auto. If the village happened to be near the borders of two or three other countries that would a plus, too.

And, naturally, you don't want it to be too expensive.

The place you are looking for is Appenzell, the principal town of the tiny northeastern Swiss canton of the same name. It fills the bill perfectly.

Want tradition? Well, as late at 1990, women were still denied the vote and elections and other town business is still conducted each year at a gathering on the Landsgemeindeplatz in the city center. Citizens entitled to vote are required to attend. Ballots are cast by

acclamation or a show of hands. Most men proudly wear a sword or bayonet passed down from their forefathers. Traditional dress for them is a black hat decorated with flowers, a bright red vest, gold pants, white knee socks and an earring. In fact, they look a little like the San Francisco 49ers.

Women wear ankle-length pleated skirts, tied bodices, huge embroidered lace collars and, in their hair, the *Schlappe*, a black-winged bonnet trailing a wide red ribbon.

Appenzell's intricately painted houses, tradition-bound citizenry and peaceful setting can lull one into thinking it is not only spiritually but physically far removed from the rest of the world.

Not so. Zürich is a little over an hour away by car and just under two hours by trains which depart about once every hour. Bregenz, at the westernmost tip of Lake Constance is only 40 minutes by car or an hour and 40 minutes by frequent train. St. Gallen, an interesting city itself, is only 19 km (12 miles) away and from there train connections are possible to such places as Lindau in Germany (less than two hours); Konstanz (a little over an hour); Vaduz, capital of Liechtenstein (about an hour and a half) and Schaffhausen (less than two hours). Trains to St. Gallen from Appenzell run about every 30 minutes and the trip takes about half an hour.

Continued on page 3...

Avoiding the Summer Tourist Crush; One Dozen Less Touristy Destinations

Reports are already filtering back. One reader described the streets of Venice in May as so full of tourists it was like getting in and out of the stadium at a Super Bowl. Another tells of a line two blocks long all day to see Michelangelo's sculpture of David in Florence. In the heat and height of the summer, that line will be longer.

Gemütlichkeit staffer Andrew Bestor called from Salzburg in early June to tell us the town is already full to the battlements of Hohensalzburg with tourists. Beautiful Salzburg is where — we were told by a tourist official five years ago — over 700 tour buses each day in high season drop their loads of visitors.

It is said to be virtually impossible to use accumulated mileage for an airline ticket to Europe this summer. The airlines, you see, can sell every seat for cash.

Car rental companies report huge demand for cars throughout Europe.

Continued on page 6...

DEAR SUBSCRIBER

Continued from page 1

beaten track and away from tourist hordes. Masses of other people doing exactly what I'm doing, all speaking my language, doesn't cut it.

Some people tell me they enjoy meeting other Americans in Europe. They join up for drinks and for dinners and new friendships are made. Others tell me they like European hotels but every once in a while find it a relief to check in to a Hilton or Intercontinental with American-style showers and where they can order bacon and eggs and toast for breakfast. Not me.

European hand-held, shower-over-the-bathtub attachments are sometimes awkward but I find them a small price to pay for traditional ambience. As to bacon and eggs, in the city of Hayward, California, alone, there must be several dozen restaurants where I can order such a meal, but nowhere can I find the fresh rolls, butter, cheeses and meats one is served in most German, Austrian and Swiss hotels.

Too many Americans and things American diminish that feeling of being part of the culture and of independent discovery. A private audience with the Pope is a greater experience than getting just a glimpse of him from a jam-packed **St. Peter's Square**. Seeing the Chagall stained glass windows in Zürich's **Fraunkirchen** all alone on a cold winter morning is vastly more fulfilling than seeing them with a pushing, sweating crowd of 500 — most chattering in your own language — on a warm summer afternoon.

One of the great pleasures of auto travel in Germany, Austria and Switzerland is rolling into a little town and discovering a local festival is underway. Invariably that means live music, dancing, food booths, beer tents and sometimes parades. It seems we always

wind up getting into a conversation with a few locals. Though we try a little German, the ultimate success of such discussions seems always to depend on their knowledge of English.

Stumbling onto these affairs is sheer delight and has given us some of our very best travel experiences. If we had never gotten away from the main tourist haunts we would have missed them. Seeing a world renowned building or painting is stimulating but seldom as satisfying as an oompah band, a couple of beers and finding out how much you have in common with a table of local townspeople. Such experiences are hard to come by if you never break away from the crowd.

Those who share these feelings may find useful this month's story on avoiding the summer tourist crush in Europe.

Wagons, Ho!

This is the time of year we get a lot of new subscribers. Welcome. Following is some nitty gritty all *Gemütlichkeit* subscribers should know about:

- We have a new email address: gemut@pacbell.net. We seldom retrieve mail from our rbestor@ix.netcom.com or rbestor@aol.com addresses.


- *Gemütlichkeit* is mailed at the end of each month. We write between the 15th and 25th of each month, then it's 48 hours at the print shop and, if all goes well, the mailing house gets it to the post office two to three days after that. Ideally, you have the information from two to three weeks after it is written. Except for weekly news magazines such as *Time* and *Newsweek*, the writer-to-reader time line for monthly magazines is typically six weeks to two months.

Once our mailing house drops *Gemütlichkeit* at the post office we're out of the picture. Independent surveys of mail delivery of periodicals indicates service is deteriorat-

ing. It had been hoped that computers and increased automation would improve things and perhaps they eventually will, but for now we're getting a lot of calls asking "where's my *Gemütlichkeit*?"

One difficulty is that each address label must be barcoded. This is done with USPS-approved software that certifies each address and puts the proper nine-digit zip code on the label. In some cases the software adjusts addresses and corrects them. At other times, if there is something incorrect about the address, the post office software simply doesn't recognize it and the envelope in question is often delivered late or never. Please check your *Gemütlichkeit* envelope label and make sure the address is correct. You may wish to contact your local post office to determine your exact address. To advise us of your correct address, or to change your address, please send a postcard to 2892 Chronicle Ave., Hayward CA 94542.

- In the days the West was won, advance scouts traveled a few days ahead of the wagon train and reported back on which was the best route, where there was good water and a good place to camp without too many hostile native Americans. They weren't any smarter or more savvy than the people they advised, they'd just been over the trail a few more times. Sometimes the scouts suggested the safest route but the settlers chose an easier trail; or vice versa. I see our role the same as those old scouts; to bring back the latest info. We have our own biases and tastes and they may not always match yours. When that happens, or when you've just been over the trail yourself and have some suggestions for those coming behind you, we want to hear about it. Drop a note.

(Of course you know what usually happened when the wagon master didn't follow the scouts' advice, don't you? Well, it wasn't very pretty.) — RHB 

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GEMÜTLICHKEIT

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

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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.

APPENZELL

Continued from page 1

A pleasant day for railpass holders might be to take the 10:08 a.m. to Romanshorn via St. Gallen, then the ferry across Lake Constance to Friedrichshafen in Germany, arriving at 11:26 a.m. Have lunch there, perhaps take in the **Zeppelin Museum** (tel. 07541/3801-0, fax 07541/3801-80, Seestrasse 22) and then it's about half an hour east to Lindau. After an afternoon stroll around that delightful lakeside city, catch the 4:29 p.m. to Appenzell, arriving at 6:19 p.m. The ferry also carries automobiles, so you can do the same thing by car.

The village of Stein also makes for a pleasant half-day excursion. There you'll find the **Appenzeller Volkskunde Museum** where most mornings you can watch a farmer making Appenzeller cheese by hand over an open fire. After that go next door to the Appenzell *Schaukäserei* (Showcase Cheese-Dairy) and see the same basic process done in computer-controlled stainless steel tanks, vats, centrifuges and presses. Afterward, you can have lunch in the dairy's restaurant.

There are several other picturesque villages in the canton which can be quickly reached by car, bus or tram, or you may even want to walk to some of them.

Each Wednesday morning at 10 a.m. tours are conducted by the **Appenzell Alpenbitter**, a distiller of several liqueurs, the most popular being a black aperitif served over ice and called Alpenbitter. Though our guide spoke only German, the operating-room-clean plant was interesting, particularly the room containing huge open containers of dozens of spices. At the end, there is a tasting and an opportunity to purchase product.

On a clear day you might drive to Schwägalp and take the cable car to Mt. Säntis, the highest peak in the Alpstein range.

Each evening, at a hotel or restaurant somewhere in the area, there is live Swiss mountain music. Traditionally dressed men, each with a single earring (a tiny version of the scoop used in the cheesemaking), play the concertina, piano, bass violin and sometimes one or two other instruments. It is said the best Swiss yodelers

APPENZELL INFO

Altitude: 785 meters, 2,575 feet

Population: 5,373

Appenzellerland Tourist Office

Hauptgasse 4
CH-9050 Appenzell
Phone: 071 788 96 41
Fax 071 788 96 49

Appenzell Showcase Cheese-Dairy

Stein CH-90063
Phone: 071/59 17 33
Open 7 days, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Appenzeller Alpenbitter

Weissbadstrasse 17
Appenzell CH-9050
Phone: 071/87 17 17
Tours Wednesday 10 a.m.

Appenzell Museum

Hauptgasse 4
(Above Tourist Office)
Phone: 071/87 96 31
Fax: 071/87 96 49
Daily April-Oct.

Appenzeller Volkskunde Museum

CH-9063 Stein
Phone: 071/59 1959
Daily except Monday, April-Oct.

Alpine Music

Check tourist office for schedule

Other Activities

Tuesday

10.00 a.m.-11.30 a.m.
Guided tour of the town Appenzell.
Meeting point: Tourist Information Office.
Free. (Also on Thursdays)

2.00 p.m. - 5.00 p.m.
See traditional craftsmen at work in the Appenzell museum: whitewood cooper, wood carver, saddler, peasant artist and silversmith.

2.00 p.m. - 5.00 p.m. Individual excursion by railway to St-Gallen: Visit the Abbey Library and the Textile Museum (free brochure describing both Library and Museum). Prices includes train ticket and

entry fees: Adults . 23 Sfr. (\$16), children 15 Sfr. (\$11).

Wednesday

8.00 a.m.-11.30 a.m.
Visit an Alpine dairyman and cheesemaker in Grosshütten. Free.

10.00 a.m.-11.00 a.m.
Tour of the Appenzeller Alpenbitter distillery. Meeting point: main entrance, Weissbadstrasse 27. Free.

2.00 p.m.-5.00 p.m.
Guided hike with herbal specialist. Learn about herbs and how use them in daily life. Price: 8 Sfr. (\$6) (In German only) June-September 10.30 a.m.-7.00 p.m.
Guided visit to local dairy farm with cows and small animals. Lunch and tea included. Prices: adults 20 Sfr. (\$14), kids 15 Sfr. (\$11), children under 6 free.

Thursday

2.00 p.m.-3.30 p.m.
Wood carving course, make your own butter dish.
Price: 20 Sfr. (\$14)
Guided visit to an Alpine dairy herdsman's family. Includes simple Alpine lunch and tea. Prices: adults 20 Sfr. (\$14), kids 15 Sfr. (\$11), children under 6 free

Friday

2.00 p.m.-5.00 p.m.
Watch embroiderers at work in the Appenzell museum
2.00 p.m.-3.30 p.m.
Guided tour of Appenzell historical and embroidery museum. Free.

Saturday*

9:45 a.m.-11.00 a.m.
Guided excursion to the Wildkirchli caves. Free of charge. Meeting point: Ground station of the Ebenalp cableway. (*Only during July and August.)

Daily

See cheese and butter made in Altenalp and Bommen.

come from here. Your hotel or the tourist office, which publishes a daily listing of events, can provide details.

Not in most guidebooks but worth a peek is the Baroque **Pfarrkirche St. Mauritius** on Hauptgasse across from the Hotel Hecht. Note the extraordinary chandelier and the church organ.

Appenzell Accommodations

Romantik-Hotel Säntis

The hotel around which the village of Appenzell revolves is the Säntis. With its steep gabled roof, rows of lace-curtained

windows and intricately painted facade overlooking an outdoor terrace, it sits invitingly on the town square.

On our first visit, in 1987, it had just been refurbished. Choosing the finest materials and fixtures seems to have paid off because guestrooms are still in excellent condition. Perhaps the wood has darkened a bit and no doubt the carpets have been replaced but the well-lit marble tile bathrooms still shine.

The public rooms' wood paneling, marble floors and comfortable

Continued on page 4...

APPENZELL

Continued from page 3

leather-covered furniture seem a few shades darker and are just beginning to show age. Still commanding the dining room is the handsome carved-wood mural of life in Appenzell, done in 1956 by local artist Hans Neff.

The best news of all is the hotel's ownership remains in the capable hands of the Heeb family.

Higher priced doubles have small, separate sitting areas and most rooms have glassed-in bathrooms. Doors and walls between sleeping rooms and bathrooms are floor to ceiling glass. A shade can be drawn for privacy. Bathroom interiors are white marble. Room Number 242 has a traditional four-poster "Appenzeller bed" and a carved armoire. Number 114 is a smaller double but still comfortable.

One reason for the hotel's local popularity is its restaurant. The dining areas are agreeable spaces, with light wood-paneled walls and cozy low ceilings. Tables are covered with white cloths over larger blue and white print ones and set with candles, cloth napkins and real flowers. Tied-back frilly white curtains hang in the small, opaque windows.

One dinner began with garlicky mussels served over small squares of toast, followed by a fresh salad of both red and butter lettuce, sliced cucumber, shredded carrots, beets, corn in a curry sauce and celery root. The dressing might have been a tad sharp for some tastes.

Restaurants that successfully execute tried and true recipes are a surprisingly rare commodity. *Kalbsleber und Rösti* (calves liver and fried potatoes) is not what one would call cuisine on the cutting edge, but creative or not, at the Sântis its mouth-watering richness satisfies cravings the American Heart Association recommends we all ignore. Prior to cooking, the liver is brought to the table in a copper pot for approval. It is cut into bite sized pieces, quickly sautéed and then covered with reduced pan juice. A dish to die for — perhaps literally.

Another winner was Angler fish, a

salt water creature that when cooked is not flaky but spongy, somewhat like lobster. This, too, was offered for inspection before being carved into medallions and sautéed with provençal herbs and fennel root.

An Appenzeller cheese plate, which consisted of three thick slabs of the pungent local pride served with fruit, wheat bread and shelled walnuts, was good but for us a poor dessert choice. More refreshing and lighter was a plate of "exotic" fruits — banana, apple, blueberries, figs — with scoops of raspberry, orange and pineapple sorbet.

We are always disappointed when there is no draught beer available so we made do with bottles of the serviceable Sântis Kristal. Half a bottle of Blauburgunder, a local red called Appenzeller Weinachts WY, cost 22 Sfr. (\$15). Without beverages, the meal for two was about \$100.

This is a well-run small hotel (37 rooms) that hovers somewhere between comfortable and luxurious. Since our most recent visit in November, 1996, the Sântis has embarked on an addition that will add five new nonsmoking rooms.

Daily Rates: Singles 110 to 150 Sfr. (\$78-\$106), doubles: 180 to 260 Sfr. (\$127-\$183), half pension 35 Sfr. (\$25) per person. Number 116 is specially equipped for handicapped guests.

Contact: Romantik-Hotel Sântis, Landsgemeindeplatz 3, CH-9050 Appenzell, tel. 071 7878722, fax 071 7874842. Proprietors: Stefan and Catriona Heeb.

Rating: QUALITY 15/20, VALUE 13/20

Hotel Hecht

Its unpretentious exterior might cause you to pass by the Hotel Hecht without a second glance. The modest reception area might also lull you into thinking it is just another squeaky clean, by-the-numbers Swiss hotel. The Oriental rugs and antiques in the hallways might provide a flicker of a clue but, in truth, you need to be there about 24 hours before realizing that Maria and Regula Knechtle's little Hotel Hecht is a special place.

In 1987, we said it was a hotel we

would like to "fold up, put in our suitcase and take to the next town, though room would have to be found for the people who run it as well."

This writer's first impulse — one too often indulged, unfortunately — is to resort to a cliché and say that the extra "something" we feel about the Hecht is hard to put into words. But on second thought, it's easy to reduce it to words. Actually, one word: people. It has to be. There are no exquisitely-carved, wood-paneled walls or ceilings, no priceless antiques, the whole place is pretty basic: comfortable, clean, quiet, good food and friendly management.

Also part of the Hecht's warm-fuzzy package is the snug little dining room's home-cooked food, the homey atmosphere in the wood-paneled *Gaststube* — where locals play the Swiss card game *Jass* — and the view of the Alpstein range through the dormer windows of room Number 52.


In 1987, we ate wonderful country meals at the Hecht but this time were there on a night when the dining room was closed. The Knechtle's, however, fed us in the *Gaststube*: *Schnitzel* and a *Schwein Cordon Bleu* filled with Appenzeller cheese accompanied by Ottenberger Pinot Noir from nearby Thurgau-Ruishauser. We finished the evening with Appenzeller Krauter, an herbed *eau de vie* from the local distillery just down the street, and *Rasschas*, an Appenzeller cheese (Rass = strong, chas = cheese).

There is here an ability to make guests feel at home.

(Those planning to stay at the Hecht need to know that, while it is centrally located, there is now a series of one-way streets in the town and it is difficult to get directly to the hotel when approaching from the north or west via the main square. You can't drive through Appenzell's center from west to east.)

Daily Rates: Singles 90 to 120 Sfr. (\$64-\$85), doubles 150 to 200 Sfr. (\$106-\$141), half pension 30 Sfr. (\$21) per person.

Contact: Hotel Hecht, Hauptgasse 9, CH-9050 Appenzell, tel. 071 7874780, fax. 071 7871047

Rating: QUALITY 14/20, VALUE 14/20 

EDITOR'S
CHOICE

Hotel Hof Weissbad

The new (August, 1994), rather glitzy 80-room Hotel Hof Weissbad, in the tiny village of Weissbad about 4 kilometers east of Appenzell, bills itself as a health resort and offers the usual "cures" and therapies.

Though the hotel's location, nestled under the looming Alpstein range, is favorable, the modern building seems to take nothing of its identity from its surroundings. It is a hotel that could be in Atlanta or Pebble Beach and look more like it belonged. The plush public rooms feature a glassed-in elevator, a fountain in the lobby and a gleaming grand piano which is played most evenings.

Several of the slightly spare guestrooms have hardwood floors to keep allergy inducing dust at a minimum and some are designated nonsmoking. Most have balconies and the usual four-star amenities.

Naturally, there is a large indoor pool, fitness center and a 24-hour medical staff. Treatments range in price from 12 Sfr. (\$8.50) for 15 minutes in the Solarium (if one considers high doses of ultraviolet rays "treatment") to 140 Sfr. (\$99) for something called *Sauerstoff-Eigenblutbehandlung* HOT.

The hotel makes its own cheese, a process that can be observed four days each week, and there is free shuttle service to Appenzell. A golf course for the hotel is currently under construction and a portion of it may open in the fall.

Daily Rates: Singles 195 (\$137), doubles 330 Sfr. (\$232), suites 540 Sfr. (\$380), half board 30 Sfr. (\$21) per person. The hotel offers several packages that include room, half board and various treatment programs. There are two rooms for disabled guests.
Contact: Hotel Hof Weissbad, CH-9057 Weissbad, tel. 071 798 8080, fax 071 798 8090.

Rating: QUALITY 15/20, VALUE 10/20

Hotel Löwen

About a block toward the main square along Hauptgasse from the Hotel Hecht is the Löwen, under new ownership.

It offers nine special "Appenzeller" rooms which feature hand-painted furniture typical of the region. Though

the Löwen does not quite measure up to the Sântis or the Hecht, mainly due to a need for refurbishment, do not hesitate to book a room here. Management is friendly and helpful and no doubt has already made a number of improvements since last winter.

Daily Rates: Singles 90 to 120 Sfr. (\$64-\$85), doubles: 160 to 200 Sfr. (\$113-\$141), half pension 35 Sfr. (\$25) per person. Sauna and solarium. Proprietors Rita Bircher and Hans Ulrich Rothenberger.

Contact: Hotel Löwen, Hauptgasse 25, CH-9050 Appenzell, tel. 071 7872187, fax 071 7872579.

Rating: QUALITY 11/20, VALUE 9/20

Hotel-Restaurant Kaubad

Four kilometers southwest of Appenzell, in a lovely, quiet location at the end of a narrow road that traverses high pastures, is the Hotel-Restaurant Kaubad.

This is a much simpler hotel than those reviewed above but its access to skiing in winter and walking trails in summer will appeal to guests with those interests.

Daily Rates: Singles 95 Sfr. (\$67), doubles: 160 Sfr. (\$113), half pension 35 Sfr. (\$25) per person. Prices are reduced on a sliding scale for bookings of more than one night. No elevator or in-room TV. Indoor pool. Sauna. Proprietors: Freddie and Monika Raymond-Peier.

Contact: Hotel-Restaurant Kaubad, CH-9050 Appenzell, tel. 071 7874844, fax 071 7871553

Rating: QUALITY 9/20, VALUE 11/20

Gasthof Hof

The two best guestrooms for the money we saw in Appenzell were at the Gasthof Hof at the opposite end of the Landsgemeindeplatz from the Sântis. The Hof's busy restaurant is one of the town's most popular and also offers a few rooms to rent.

One floor has just been remodeled and Numbers 10 and 12, at 110 Sfr. (\$77) in low season and 130 Sfr. (\$92) in high season, offer fine value. Number 12 is on a corner with lots of windows overlooking the square and the Hauptgasse, while Number 10 is slightly larger and has a table and two chairs. Both are done in an aromatic white pine and have ultra modern TVs with

cable and snug little bathrooms with stall showers.

Daily Rates: Singles 80 Sfr. (\$56), doubles 110 to 150 Sfr. (\$77-\$106). No elevator. Proprietor: Johann Dörig family.

Contact: Gasthof Hof, beim Landsgemeindeplatz, CH-9050 Appenzell tel. 071 7872210, fax 071 7875883

Rating: QUALITY 9/20, VALUE 15/20

Haus Lydia

The Appenzell region also has many vacation apartments available for rent. We looked at one, Haus Lydia, in a residential section of the town, about a 15-minute walk from the main square.

The large chalet-style house offers two apartments in addition to quarters for the friendly owners, the Mock-Inauen family.

The upstairs apartment, which has a private entry, consists of sitting area, a bedroom, bathroom and kitchen. For larger families, a loft with two more bedrooms is available.

The ground floor unit is smaller and includes a combination living room/kitchen and a bedroom. The living room sofa can be converted to a bed.

The decorative emphasis in both apartments relies on wood, oriental rugs and heavy furniture. Unfortunately, it doesn't all work together. The furniture is a melange of various styles and bathrooms and kitchens often have different tile patterns adjoining each other.

Nonetheless, for those who plan to stay for a week or more, this, or similar accommodations, represents excellent value.

Rates: Two persons 55 to 88 Sfr. (\$39-\$62) per day, depending on the season. Four persons 68 to 120 Sfr. (\$48-\$85). Six persons 80 to 130 Sfr. (\$56-\$92). Prices based on minimum seven-day stay. Shorter stays are priced at 42 Sfr. (\$30) per night single and 72 Sfr. (\$51) double per night including breakfast and private bath. Personal checks o.k. but no credit cards accepted.

Contact: Haus Lydia, Eggerstandenstr. 53, CH-9050 Appenzell, tel. 071/787 4233

Rating: QUALITY 10/20, VALUE 14/20

12 DESTINATIONS

Continued from page 1

What this all adds up to is that 1997 may turn out to be a record year for the number of Americans visiting Europe. And what that means is the best-known cities and attractions will be overrun with visitors.

If this summer is your trip of a lifetime and you have no choice but to fight your way in and out of the great museums, castles and cathedrals of Europe, there are one or two things you can do to ease the pain a bit.

- Visit the really hot attractions, like Bavaria's **Royal Castles**, early in the morning or late in the afternoon. Be among the first in line when they open or among the last visitors of the day. Our man in Florence said the line to see David dwindled to only a handful between the hours of 5 and 6 p.m. Use the middle of the day to shop, sit at a sidewalk cafe or walk. Some attractions, like the palaces of **Nymphenburg** in Munich and **Schönbrunn** in Vienna have huge, beautiful grounds which are great for strolling at almost any time. You could, for example, tour Nymphenburg first thing in the morning, then walk the grounds at your leisure and, in the afternoon, visit the less popular but fantastic botanical gardens that are adjacent to the palace grounds.

- Drive the back roads. It takes longer but you'll be away from the crowds and feel as though you're on a private, personal expedition rather than part of an invading army.

- In the biggest cities, like Vienna, Munich and Berlin, visit attractions the guidebooks don't tout so highly or are a little away from the center of tourist activity. In Munich, walk the **Englischer Garten** and see the **Bavarian National Museum**. In Vienna, visit the **KunstHaus Wien/Hundertwasser** or spend an afternoon in the **Prater**, a giant amusement park where you'll be among Viennese instead of Americans.

Berlin is so spread out it's easier to get away from the hordes. Take a boat ride on the Havel and visit the strange but fascinating **Checkpoint Charlie Museum** whose eclectic collection of memorabilia tells the story of both successful and tragic escape attempts from behind the Berlin Wall.

In Germany, Austria and Switzerland, of course, are thousands of villages and towns tourists seldom see. Many have great charm, history, culture, recreational options and as such offer an attractive summer alternative to the most popular places. You will find tourists in all, sometimes quite a lot, but not so many as in the tourist meccas.

Austria

Attersee

This village on the Attersee, about 35 miles east of Salzburg, is the center of a relatively inexpensive resort area in Austria's Salzkammergut. Moderately-priced hotels and inexpensive vacation apartments abound.

Don't Miss: A lake tour on the Attersee-Shiffart with lunch on board. A day in nearby Bad Ischl, summer headquarters of Emperor Franz Josef and home of composer Franz Lehar.

Recommended Hotels: Hotel Seegasthof Oberndorfer, Hauptstrasse 18, A-4864 Attersee, tel 07666/7864-0, fax 07666/7864-91. Rooms from \$67.

Pension Alpenblick, Abtsdorf 56, Attersee, A-4864, tel. 07666 75 43, fax 07666 74 71. Rooms from about \$30.

Where to Eat: Café 1er Beisel, Landungsplatz 6, A-4864, tel 07666/7877. Three course meals from about \$30.

Steyr

Picturesque walled town south of Linz on a peninsula formed by the confluence of the Steyr and Enns rivers. The town square is lined with Gothic and Renaissance buildings.

Don't Miss: The *Altstadt* and the apricot *Schnapps* at Gasthof Pöchlacher.

Recommended Hotels: Hotel Mader, Stadtplatz 36, Steyr A-4400, tel. 07252/533580, fax 07252/533506. Rooms from about \$70.

Schwechater Hof, Leopold-Werndl-Strasse 1, Steyr A-4400. tel. 07252/53067, fax 07252/5477054. Rooms from about \$55

Where to Eat: Gasthof Pöchlacher, Sieringerstrasse 122, Steyr A-4400, tel. 07252/63173. Three course meals from about \$20.

Bad Hofgastein

Sparkling, modern village in the heart of a pretty Alpine valley. Limitless opportunities for recreation, including golf. About an hour and 20

minutes by train from Salzburg.

Don't Miss: A visit to the historic spa town of Badgastein, which during the Victorian era, attracted Europe's crowned heads.

Recommended Hotels: Appartmenthotel Aurora, Am Kirchenplatz 8, Bad Hofgastein, Austria, A-5630, tel. 06432/6210-0, fax 06432/6210-62.

Apartments from about \$60 per day (7-days)

Hotel Norica, Kaiser-Franz-Platz 3, Bad Hofgastein, Austria, A-5630, tel. 06432/8391-0, fax 06432/8391-500. Rooms from about \$75

Where to Eat: Hotel-Café Austria, Bad Hofgastein, Austria, A-5630, tel. 06432/6223. Three course meals from about \$20.

Burgenland

Get way off the track in this unique part of Austria south of Vienna on the Hungarian border. Interesting towns are Mörbisch and Rust, both on the rather strange Neusiedler See, a 124 square-mile body of water surrounded by reeds. Only seven feet at its deepest point, it sometimes mysteriously disappears; the last time being from 1868 to 1872. Walk the towns, note the rooftop storks' nests and stop in the garden of a *Heurige* (wine tavern) for a snack and a glass of fresh white wine made on the premises.

Don't Miss: The Neusiedler See

Where to Stay: Seehotel Rust, A-7071, Rust, phone 02685/381, fax 02685/381 419. Rooms from about \$90.

Where to Eat: Any of the wine taverns.

Germany

Trier

This historic old wine town is littered with irrefutable evidence that it was once the capital of Ancient Rome in Germany. Use it as a headquarters to explore the Mosel or Saar wine regions. Luxembourg and France are nearby.

Don't Miss: The **Imperial Roman Baths**, the **Roman Amphitheatre** and a boat ride on the Mosel.

Recommended Hotels: Hotel Petrisberg, Sickingenstr. 11-13, D-54296 Trier, tel: 0651/4 64-0, fax 0651/4 64 50

Where to Eat: Palais Kesselstatt, Liebfrauenstr. 10, D-54290 Trier, 0651/40204, fax 0651/42308.

Bamberg

One of Germany's most enchanting towns. Wonderful buildings, great riverside setting. Wander the *Altstadt* at dusk, just as the lights which illuminate the old buildings, bridges and statuary begin to take effect.

Don't Miss: *Rauchbier* ("smoky" beer) at **Brauerei Schlenkerla**, Dominikanerstrasse 6.

Recommended Hotels: Hotel St. Nepomuk, Obere Mühlbrücke 9, D-96049, Bamberg, phone 0951/25183, fax 0951/26651. Rooms from about \$78.

Wilde Rose, Kesslerstr. 7, Bamberg, D-96047, phone 0951/28317, fax 0951/22071. Rooms from \$53.

Where to Eat: Weinhaus Messerschmitt, Lange Str. 41, Bamberg, D-96049, phone 0951/27866, fax 0951/26141. Three course meals from \$26.

Weimar

Rich in history and physical beauty, this small town of 60,000 is readying to be Europe's "Cultural Capital" in 1999. Because it was four decades behind the Iron Curtain, tourists have yet to arrive in big numbers.

Don't Miss: The small chapel in the town's **Alter Friedhof** (old cemetery) containing the coffins of Schiller and Goethe, called by many the greatest German of them all. **St. Peter's Cathedral** in nearby Erfurt. Ilm Park.

Where to Stay: Wolff's Art Hotel & Restaurant, Freiherr-vom-Stein-Allee 3a/b, D-99425 Weimar, tel. 5 40 60, fax 54 06 99. Rooms from about \$87

Christliches Hotel Amalienhof, Amalienstrasse 2, D-99423 Weimar, tel. 54 90, fax 54 91 10. Rooms from about \$74.

Where to Eat: Residenz Café, Grüner Markt 4, D-99423 Weimar, tel/fax 03643/59408. Three course meals from about \$15.

Sylt

This narrow spit of land off the northwest coast of Germany has long been popular as a summer getaway for Germans but few Americans ever find their way there. What's to do? Explore the thatched roof Frisian village of Keitum. Gamble at the casino in Westerland. Dine out in some of Germany's best seafood restaurants. Our recommended hotel, the Benen Diken Hof, is one of Germany's finest small hotels, or, for cheaper accommo-

Tourist Hot Spots Summer, 1997

Austria

Innsbruck
Salzburg
Vienna
Grinzing
Hofburg Palace
Kärntnerstrasse/Graben
Schönbrunn Palace
Spanish Riding School
St. Stephan's Cathedral

Germany

Bavarian Castles
Neuschwanstein
Hohenschwangau
Linderhof
Berchtesgaden
Berlin
Charlottenburg Palace
Ka De Wa
Dahlem Museums
Pergamon Museum
Potsdam
Germany's Rhine Valley
Heidelberg
Munich
Deutsches Museum
Marienplatz
Nymphenburg Palace
Pinakothek Museums
Residenz Palace

Meissen
Romantik Road Cities
Rothenburg ob der Tauber

Switzerland

Chillon Castle near Montreux
Interlaken
Grindelwald
Gruyères
Lucerne

Congested Roadways

Basel-Frankfurt Autobahn
Border crossings to eastern countries
Brunig Pass: Interlaken-Lucerne
Austria: Main East-West Landeck-Feldkirch
German Alpine Road: Lindau-Berchtesgaden
Gotthard Tunnel
Grossglockner Road: Austria
Munich-Nürnberg Autobahn
Nürnberg-Frankfurt Autobahn
Salzburg-Munich Autobahn
St. Moritz south to Lake Como
Rhine Valley: Rudesheim to Koblenz
Romantik Road: Würzburg to Füssen
Vienna-Salzburg Autobahn

datations, you may wish to contact the tourist office (Am Tipkenhoog 5, D-25980 Keitum, tel 04651/3370, fax 04651/33737) about vacation rentals.

Don't Miss: The beach promenade in Westerland and miles of sand dune trails.

Where to Stay: Hotel Benen Diken Hof, Süderstrasse, D-25980 Keitum, tel.

04651/93830, fax 04651/938 383.

Rooms from about \$85.

Where to Eat: Alte Friesenstube, Gaadt 4, D-25980 Westerland, tel. 04651/1228, fax 04651/26319. Three course meals from about \$26.

Switzerland

The Emmental

Rolling pastures, huge farmhouse/barns and tiny farm villages that attract few tourists are the main features of this placid region east of Bern. Switzerland's most inexpensive vacation apartments and chalets are found here. Famous for the cheese. The pace is slow.

Don't Miss: Country drives and the village of Langnau.

Where to Stay: Hotel Hirschen, CH-3550 Langnau, tel. 034/402 1517, fax 034/402 5623. Rooms from about \$56.

Where to Eat: Hotel Hirschen, CH-3550 Langnau, tel. 034/402 1517, fax 034/402 5623. Three course meals from about \$34.

Lake Constance

The south shore of Lake Constance offers several interesting towns, a few vineyards and, of course, the lake. From Stein am Rhein east to Bregenz in Austria is perhaps 60 miles.

Don't Miss: Stein am Rhein, tiny Gottlieben near Kreuzlingen, a walk around the German city of Konstanz and the ferry from Romanshorn to Friedrichshafen in Germany.

Where to Stay: Schlössli Bottighofen, Seeterrace, Bottighofen CH-8598, tel. 071/688 1275, fax 688 1540. Rooms from about \$120.

Seehotel Schiff, Mannenbach am Untersee, CH-8268, tel 072/663 41 41, fax 072/663 41 50. Rooms from about \$70

Where to Eat: Hotel Krone, Gottlieben, CH-8274, tel. 071/666 8060, fax 071/666 8069. Three course meals from about \$40.

Morges

Pretty little town on Lac Léman (Lake Geneva) between Lausanne and Geneva in the La Côte wine region. Exploring such villages as Apples, Vufflens-le-Château, Biere and Ballens on the slopes above the lake, you will find few tourists. You can see Audrey Hepburn's grave in nearby Tolochenaz. Geneva and Lausanne are

Continued on page 8...

12 DESTINATIONS

Continued from page 1

easy daytrips. Nyon is an interesting nearby lake town.

Don't Miss: The meal of a lifetime at L'Ermitage in Vufflens-Le-Château, otherwise any little *Pinte* (simple wine restaurant) in one of the villages in the hills.

Where to Stay: L'Ermitage, Vufflens-Le-Château, CH-1134, tel. 021/802 2191, fax 021/802 2240. Rooms from about \$211.

Hotel de la Courrone, Grand-Rue 88, Morges, CH-1110, tel. 021/803 2016, fax 021/803 12 97. Rooms from about \$76.


Where to Eat: L'Ermitage, Vufflens-Le-Château, CH-1134, tel. 021/802 2191, fax 021/802 2240. Three course meals from about \$90.

Brienzi

Unpretentious small town on the Brienzersee and a quieter, cheaper alternative to touristy Interlaken. Known as the birthplace of Swiss woodcarving. Call in advance to tour **H. Huggler-Wyss** (CH-3855, Brienzi, phone 036/511679), manufacturer of wood sculptures. Nearby is Ballenberg, the **Swiss Open Air Museum**, a collection of about 60 farmhouses, barns and mills, all fully operational. Also nearby are the **Giessbach Falls** and the great peaks of the Jungfrau Region.

Don't Miss: Ballenberg. A ride on a lake steamer.

Where to Stay: Grandhotel Giessbach, CH-3855, Brienzi, tel. 036/513535, fax 036/513707. Rooms from about \$99. Brienzi-Löwen, CH-3855, Brienzi, phone 033/951 1241, fax 033/9513 841. Rooms from about \$85.

Where to Eat: At the hotels listed above. 

READERS' FORUM

Florhof Supporter

I have been to the **Hotel Florhof** since the early 1970's, at least three times each year since then. In the process, I have come to know and respect the Schilter family style of management and, equally, the Schiesser approach.

Both families, by the way, were more than just managers - they had a vested financial stake in the operation with the owners who live in Central Switzerland and have been absent owners for many years. The current management (the Schiessers), in fact, have a huge financial investment in the property and participated in the extensive renovation of the entire building and restaurant as well as association now with the Romantik Hotel organization.

There are certainly many differences in the operation of the property today than in 1974 when I first stayed there. (I was there most recently in April of this year, and in June and November of 1996. I will next go in July of this year as well as November.)

The Schilters were a very reserved and efficient couple who ran the hotel in that manner — as did their employees. Toward the "end" of their tenure, the restaurant had become only satisfactory (and not always that) and the look of the entire hotel was quite "tired." When the Schiessers took over, they had to bring in all new help (with the exception of one of the daytime porters who stayed and is there to this day). Now, all of the

renovations are complete; the rooms are all redone as is the restaurant. By the way, the restaurant is revitalized and has become well-known and extremely popular. In fact, I try to have at least a couple of dinners there because it is excellent. Yes, the prices are now higher for the rooms; but still a bargain, in my opinion, compared to other properties in Zürich with like features, etc.

The Schiessers, I find, to be very efficient and full of grand plans for the future. They are very proud of what they have accomplished there and have taken some time with me to not only show me through the entire operation, but to discuss their plans for the future. They have also been very helpful to me personally with things I have asked them to do on my behalf. I found them very helpful and very willing.

So, I regret to see the opinions expressed by two of your readers. No doubt they feel exactly as they have stated, but I do feel there is another side to the Florhof that I would urge them to give it another chance. I look forward to my return there, as I always do.

RICHARD J. MORSE
GLENDALE CA

5-Star Hotel Report

Enclosed is a check for another year of Gemütlichkeit - we have enjoyed the newsletter and send it on to our daughter and son in Zürich. We hope you will do more on the Alsace as it is so reasonable for Americans now and traveling in Switzerland and Austria still is a joke value-wise. Also hope to see more info on the famous Christmas stops other than the Christmas markets.

Our favorite hotel is **Bayerischer Hof** in Munich. We hosted our daughter's wedding there and our American friends who came are still talking about the service, beautiful rooms in the old section and every detail perfection. Last year, on a trip to Sweden we flew to Hamburg as I wanted to stay at the **Vier Jahreszeiten**. *Gourmet Magazine* had raved about it several years ago, but it cannot hold a candle to the Bayerischer Hof.

We refused the first horrible room they gave us — the second room was no better but we were jet-lagged — no air-conditioning as confirmed and right over the entrance, very noisy. All of the restaurants in the hotel were closed, save one, and room service took an hour. For this we were paying \$400 per night and then some. The hotel is under new ownership and I'm afraid has really changed since the *Gourmet* article was written.

KATIE MILLHISER
PIEDMONT CA

Suspect U.S. Currency

As a subscriber and occasional contributor to your newsletter, I can share a never-ending frustration when traveling in Germany.

Now that the U.S. has a new \$100 bill, very few banks in Germany will take the old \$100 bill. Their excuse is that it may be counterfeit — ironically for years they gladly accepted them without question. Please caution readers to take only new \$100 bills to Europe — it will save having your blood pressure go up when a bank employee tells you he won't change the old bill.

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