DEAR SUBSCRIBER

The Dish Hall of Fame

Many years ago in this space I offered an opinion — vigorously disputed by some readers — to the effect that our three countries lack midpriced restaurants offering interesting food in unpretentious surroundings. At one end of the spectrum are the great shrines of culinary worship identified principally by their Michelin stars and lofty Gault Millau scores. Adoring, upscale "foodies" venerate them by feeling privileged to shell out \$80 to \$200 per person for a series of labor-intensive, artful dishes that look as though they just stepped off the cover of Gourmet Magazine. Though such restaurants have provided some of the best meals of my life, they are not, for a number of reasons, practical for everyday dining — even when cost is not a consideration. If, during a two-week trip, one schedules two top-level restaurants, that still leaves a dozen blank spaces on the dinner dance card.

Which brings us to the other end of the scale; the ubiquitous Gasthof, Gastätte, Weinstube, Bierstube, et al, that serve the time-honored dishes we've all come to know and love. But with these cherished meat and potato sanctuaries comes a reality we must face: though often amazingly good, the hearty, everyday cuisine of our three countries is somewhat heavy and repetitive. I always enjoy and look forward to well-prepared traditional dishes — Rösti in Switzerland, Schnitzel with Pommes Frites in Austria, and Kalbs Medallions in Germany, for example — but after a few days a change of pace is needed. At that

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GEMüTLICHKEIT

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

ROMAN TRIER

Founded by Augustus Ceasar in the century just before the birth of Christ, Trier became known as The Second Rome. It still bears the marks of that great empire.

s a recent walking tour ended in front of Trier's ancient Porta Nigra gate, an Italian visitor exclaimed to his guide, "This is even better than Rome!"

While such a statement might be blamed on too much Riesling, Trier,

By Jim Johnson Germany's oldest city, does contain the largest collection of ancient Ro-

collection of ancient Roman buildings outside of Rome — with nary a touch of that city's traffic and in a more concentrated, pedestrian-friendly area. In Trier, travelers walk past and through the **Porta Nigra**, the Roman Empire's largest intact city gate. They marvel at the size and majesty of the **Basilika**, used in the early 4th century by Emperor Constantine as an audience hall and

throne room, and which is the largest single-room structure surviving from Roman times. They explore the expansive ruins of the **Imperial Baths**, remodeled during the 4th century as barracks for more than 1,000 soldiers. Many of the walls still stand.

They see the foundation of Germany's oldest bridge, then as now a gateway to Mosel vineyards first planted by the Romans.

From the **Amphitheater's** terraced seats one can almost hear the roar of 20,000 spectators, the snarl of tigers and the groans and frightened cries of gladiators and prisoners of war. It was here Romans gathered to watch animal fights as a prelude to *Continued on page 3...*

Vienna's Cultural Whirl

ne might think Vienna, a city long renowned as a cultural stronghold, didn't need any more highbrow attractions; but that's exactly what it's gotten in the last few years.

The massive **Museumsquartier**

By Mark Honan

(www.mqw.at) was featured in *Gemütlichkeit* when it opened in 2001.

Most of its 40 diverse attractions were up and running by then. Last year, the final two pieces were slotted into place with the opening of the Children's Theater and Quartier 21 (www.quartier21.mqw.at). The latter describes itself as an 'innovative infrastructure for the production, dissemination, and presentation of contemporary cultural offerings.' Cutting through the verbiage, it means you can see works by emerging talents in the field of art, design, fashion, pho-

tography and other media.

The year 2000 heralded the opening of the **Haus der Musik** (Seilerstätte 30, A-1010, www.houseofmusic-vienna.at), an excellent exposition of all things musical. Admission is €10, senior citizens €8.50, and it's open 10am to 10pm daily. You can conduct the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, construct your own electronic sounds, even record your own CD. The lives and achievements of Vienna's great composers (Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, etc.) are imaginatively presented via visual displays and English commentary. Bypass the extra section on the Vienna Philharmonic (additional €9.80) -

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Exchange rates as of 10/25/03

1 euro = \$1.18 1 Swiss franc = \$.76

DEAR SUBSCRIBER Continued from page 1

point, the difficulty is finding something in the vast open space between €90 seven-course-feasts and Jägerschnitzel. Over the past dozen years, at least in major cities like Berlin, Munich, Vienna, and Zürich, that void has largely been filled. Berlin, especially, offers a wide choice of affordable restaurants that serve inventive, lighter dishes. At such places as Filou, Tavola Calda, and Florian you can wear blue jeans yet be assured of affordable, high-caliber meals made from the freshest ingredients. In some cases, such as at Florian, the dishes are often updated, less hefty versions of old standbys. I recall, for example, that restaurant's Tafelspitz: thin, tender slices of moist beef, gently infused with the flavors of winter vegetables and a suggestion of garlic, creating a taste I have not experienced before or since with that dish.

Food, I'll readily admit, is a high priority. Part of every travel day is given to choosing the evening's restaurant. We use the recommendations of guidebooks, friends, readers, locals and, of course, our hotelier — probably in reverse order. When we're out walking during the day, exploring a town or neighborhood, we constantly keep an eye out for possible candidates for that night's, or the next's, dinner. Usually we pick one and make an on-the-spot reservation. But sometimes, having three or four possibilities in mind, we simply leave our hotel early and give them all a second look before making a final decision — a decision that is occasionally dictated by which one will take us. In the selection process, a busy place is a very good sign and, of course, one must always read the menu posted outside. The dishes have to at least sound good. We try to avoid restaurants that offer menus in English. It's an indication of tourists, which too often means indifferent food and sometimes the English menu is incomplete.

In Europe, we seek tastes not usually found on this side of the Atlantic. Game is an obvious example. Venison, wild boar, and pheasant are seldom seen on U.S. restaurant menus. The tame mushrooms sold at most U.S. supermarkets are tasteless, distant cousins to the typically wild European varieties. Calves liver is a dish not served at any of our town's approximately 50 restaurants but is everywhere in Europe — and delicious. Various versions of fried potatoes are as common in the USA as hamburgers, but none compares with Switzerland's marvelous *Rösti*. Of course there are the great cheeses served in Switzerland's French-speaking restaurants, Schnitzel in Vienna and Germany's unsung fish and seafood. And the list goes on.

Recent musings on some of the best dishes we've had over *Gemütlichkeit*'s 17 years has yielded a sort of a "Dish Hall of Fame." Here are a few. You will note that many are of the everyday meat and potatoes variety:

Augustiner Grossgastätten, Munich: *Mixed Grill*

Cafe Hengstler, Donaueschingen, Germany: *Bienenstich* (pastry)

Historische Schlossmühle, Morbach, Germany: *Breast of corn-fed chicken*

Hotel Bahnhof Restaurant, Saanen, Switzerland: *Kalbsleber* (calves liver)

Hotel Beau Rivage Palace, Lausanne, Switzerland: *Tiramisu*

Hotel Erzherzog Johann, Graz, Austria: *Horseradish soup*

Hotel Les Sources des Alpes, Leukerbad, Switzerland: *Roasted Bresse chicken*

Hotel Neu-Meran, Bad Reichenhall, Germany: *Duck liver pâte*

Hotel Stadt Hamburg, Westerland (Sylt), Germany: *Schmalz* (bacon drippings to spread on bread)

Hotel Vieux Manoir au Lac, Murten, Switzerland: *Pan fried perch filets*

La Grappe d'Or, Lausanne, Switzerland: *Resinet* (wine tart - dessert)

Restaurant Alter Fuchs, Salzburg: *Liwanzen mit Powidl und Rumzwetschke* (dessert of prunes, crepes, rum and whipped cream)

Restaurant Au Cheval Blanc, Sion, Switzerland: Zarzuela (Spanish-style seafood stew)

Restaurant Haxen Bauer, Munich: *Haxe* (veal shank)

Restaurant Lorenzini, Bern, Switzerland: *Risotto with fresh white truffles*

Rogacki, Berlin: *Röstkartoffeln* (fried potatoes)

Stazione "Da Agnese," Intragna, Switzerland: *Risotto with cheese*

Tavola Calda, Berlin: *Kalbsleber* −RHB

Using Gemütlichkeit

- Hotel prices listed are for one night. Discounts are often available for longer stays.
- All hotel prices include breakfast unless otherwise noted.
- Local European telephone area codes carry the "0" required for in-country dialing. To phone establishments from outside the country, such as from the USA, do not dial the first "0".

Logging on to our Website

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User Name: leaf Password: 5802

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Editor:
Contributors:
Webmasters:
Consulting Editor:
Subscription Dept:
Subscriber Travel Services:
Robert H. & Elizabeth S. Bestor
Robert H. Bestor
Alim Johnson, Mark Honan
Criss Garcia, Ryan Stowasser
Thomas P. Bestor
Subscription Dept:
Rurt Steffans
Andy Bestor, Laura Riedel

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HOTEL RESTAURANT RATING KEY

Rating Scale	Scale	Restaurant Criteria	
Excellent	16 - 20	Food	65%
Above Average	12 - 15	Service	20%
Average	8 - 11	Atmosphere	15%
Adequate	4 - 7	·	
Unacceptable	0 - 3		
Hotel Rating Criteria		Value Rating	Scale
Hotel Rating Criteria People/Service	30%	Value Rating Outstanding Value	<u>Scale</u> 17 - 20
	30% 15%		
People/Service		Outstanding Value	17 - 20
People/Service Location/Setting	15%	Outstanding Value Very Good Value	17 - 20 12 - 16

Special © Designation

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

TRIER

Continued from page 1

those between man and beast and, ultimately, man against man to the death. In the dank dungeons, it's easy to imagine the last moments before the condemned were forced into the arena.

Founded in 16 B.C. under Emperor Augustus, Trier expanded as an imperial residence and capital of the Western Roman Empire. To serve its emperors and a growing population, the Romans built a city of such unprecedented proportions that it was known as Roma Secunda (Rome the Second) and had a population of 80,000.

After the Empire's fall and the city's decline during the Dark Ages, Trier rebounded strongly in the Middle Ages thanks to the power of the Catholic Church and the town's role as residence of archbishops and prince electors. It is a period that produced an extensive collection of medieval, renaissance and baroque buildings. In the early 20th-century the focus shifted to charming *Jugendstil* structures.

While stunning ancient architecture is the city's strongest draw, don't miss newer buildings such as the baroque St. Paulin's Church and the Church of our Lady, Germany's oldest Gothic church. Behind these medieval facades, visitors find architectural styles from the 4th through 18th centuries. Trier's expansive Electoral **Palace**, built as a "wing" to the Basilika, is considered one of the finest examples of rococo style in Germany, and its baroque Palace Gardens are a peaceful green oasis in mid-city. Another popular baroque attraction is the Karl Marx Haus, his birthplace but now a museum.

Perhaps one of Trier's most charming areas is its former **Cathedral City**, a mostly intact medieval district. Within the former city-within-a-city, a warren of narrow alleys runs between medieval houses. Much of the old wall still stands, though at somewhat precarious angles.

With most of the ancient city built over through the centuries, and many buildings destroyed by bombs, after

Trier Basics

Population: 100,000

Elevation: 518 feet (158 meters)

Tourist Office: Tourist-Information Trier, An der Porta Nigra, D-54290 Trier, tel 49/651/87808 0, fax 44759, email: info@tit.de, web: www.trier.de/tourismus

Driving Distances:

ii viii g Diotairees.				
Basel	408 km	253 miles		
Berlin	729 km	452 miles		
Bonn	146 km	91 miles		
Frankfurt	189 km	117 miles		
Heidelberg	196 km	122 miles		
Koblenz	122 km	76 miles		
Munich	522 km	324 miles		
Saarbrücken	94 km	58 miles		

Train:

Hourly rail service from Koblenz and Luxembourg and frequent service from Mannheim via Saarbrücken.

Typical Rail Times:

Basel	4 hours, 45 minutes
Berlin	6 hours, 50 minutes
Bonn	2 hours, 35 minutes
Frankfurt	3 hours, 20 minutes
Heidelberg	3 hours, 20 minutes
Koblenz	1 hour, 25 minutes
Munich	6 hours, 15 minutes
Saarbrücken	1 hour, 25 minutes

the war Trier faced a choice of excavating ancient buildings or constructing new ones. Although many tired, boxy department stores from the 1940s and 1950s stand in the shadows of old monuments, the city often chose to dig; mainly out of historic pride and a hope tourists would come. The gamble paid off, tourism and wine are now the city's top two industries. In 1987, UNESCO named Trier a World Heritage Site. In that same year, construction workers building an underground parking garage found the Forum Baths, today one of the city's popular attractions.

"Every time someone puts a shovel in the ground, they find a piece of ancient Trier," said one guide. The moment even a fragment of ancient wall is unearthed, historical preservation laws require that construction stop and archeologists be called in. Still, much of the old city, the extensive temple district and the 80,000-seat Roman Circus, for example, remains hidden and only partially charted.

Although some guidebooks suggest ways to "see Trier in one day" or even one hour, the city deserves at least two days. With interior visits, it takes nearly a full day just to explore

the attractions around the pedestrian district. Several key stops such as the **Barbara Baths**, **Roman Bridge** and Amphitheater require a short walk or drive outside the central district, though they are still within the walls. Add a boat ride or stroll along the Mosel and some quiet lunchtime moments at a wine bistro, and two days are quickly filled.

Try to fit in a visit to the **Rheinisches Landesmuseum**, an outstanding archaeological museum with Germany's most extensive Roman collection. Leading treasures include a giant mosaic of a chariot driver, a grouping of magnificent glass artifacts, one of the world's largest collections of Roman coins, and a courtyard with building stones, columns and sarcophagi.

Trier is considered the cradle of German wine culture, and the milelong **Wine Teaching Path** winds through vineyards to the village of Olewig. Rotating weekly, village vintners offer tours of their wineries and wine cellars, tastings and light food.

The city also is a staging point for excursions (by car, bus or bicycle) to the remote, volcanic mountains of the Eifel region north of the Mosel, the more rugged Hunsrück Region to the south, to the nearby Ruwer, Saar and Sauer Rivers and along the Mosel itself — either toward the Rhine or upstream to Luxembourg. It is also only minutes from France.

Guided walking tours in English are available Saturdays at 1:30pm from May through October. The two-hour sojourn covers most major attractions from the outside with interior visits to the Basilika and the Imperial Baths. The Amphitheater is not included. The City-Tour Trier, a 35-minute whirlwind in a covered, double-decker bus, runs from March through November with hourly trips each day from 10am to 5pm.

Another option is the **Trier-Card**, which includes free transportation on city buses. The "TrierTour" bus route includes stops at 16 attractions where travelers can get off and on with no time limits. The card, good for three days, also entitles visitors to reduced admission prices to museums and monuments and on tours and bike

rentals. The cost is €9 for adults and €15 for a family of up to two adults and three children.

If budget permits, it's worthwhile to hire a private guide through the Trier Tourist Office. The cost is €65 for two hours, €90 for three hours, and €150 for a full day. The guides many of them retired teachers or professors — use Trier's history to impart a deeper understanding of how Europe developed over the past 2,000 years. And, unlike guidebooks, they are aware of the very latest discoveries: Just this year, for example, during excavation on the grounds of the city's Mutterhaus Hospital, experts from the Roman Archaeological Museum unearthed a Roman "insula"—a residential city block—as well as a partially paved street and a structure about 130 feet (40 meters) long.

Trier's English-language tourism website at www.trier.de is an excellent source of information and includes current schedules and prices for all attractions. (Note that many attractions are closed or have limited hours from November-March.)

Lodging

Trier hotels generally offer good value with most double rooms falling well under €100 a night. Some of the best choices are in Olewig, a former

Key Websites for the Traveler

- www.gemut.com Gateway site for travelers to Germanic Europe, including car rental, rail passes, hotel bookings, traveler feedback, travel tips and past issues (free access to back issues for subscribers; see log-on info on page 2).
- www.viamichelin.com The Michelin database of hotels and restaurants plus great interactive trip planning tools.
- www.travelgearnow.com Guidebooks, maps, travel accessories, luggage, all at 10% off for subscribers.
- <u>www.webflyer.com</u> Informative frequent flyer forums make this a must for air travelers.
- <u>bahn.hafas.de/bin/query.exe/en</u> German rail. Train schedules throughout Europe, not just Germany.
- <u>www.sbb.ch/index_e.htm</u> Swiss and European rail schedules.
- <u>www.ski-europe.com</u> Top web resource for skiers with much data on Alpine resorts.
- www.myswitzerland.com Website of Switzerland's national tourist authority.
- <u>www.germany-tourism.de</u> Germany's national tourist authority.
- <u>www.austria.info/us</u> Austria's national tourist authority.
- http://www.hhog.de Website for an alliance of historic German cities.

wine village now within Trier's city limits. The setting is parklike with hilltop villas and vintners' homes overlooking the town. It's a 15- to 20-minute walk or 10-minute bus ride to the city center's pedestrian zone.

Hotel Blesius Garten

Built as a country estate in EDITOR'S CHOICE 1789 in Olewig, the Blesius Garten provides a charming retreat surrounded by vineyards, parks and woodlands. The Kraft family bought the inn in 1979, and their passion shows in every detail. With individually selected furniture and accessories, the hotel's 63 rooms feel like private bedrooms or parlors — only larger. Some even have plush recliners. The hotel has three restaurants and, since 1998, its own popular microbrewery.

Even-numbered rooms open to the beer garden, which can stay boisterous past some travelers' bedtimes. Room 103, a large double with a small parlor and closet, looks out to quiet vineyards.

Daily Rates: Singles €54-75, double €82-116. Parking garage €6
Contact: Hotel Blesius Garten, Olewiger Str. 135, D-54295 Trier, tel +49/651/3606/0, fax 3606/33, email: info@blesius-garden.de, web: www.blesius-garten.de
Rating: Quality 17/20 Value 17/20

Weinhaus Becker

Another Olewig option is this 42bed, family-run hotel, restaurant and winery. While the building is 20th century and lacks the character of some of its neighbor villa hotels, the rooms are spacious and the rates reasonable. When Wolfgang Becker isn't working wonders in the kitchen, he joins wife Christine making guests feel welcome. The neighborhood is quiet with a rural atmosphere, and guests can quickly escape any semblance of city life with a stroll through the family vineyards (the Beckers also give informative tours). Ask for one of the many rooms with balcony.

Daily Rates: Single €40-50, double €75-85

Contact: Weinhaus Becker, D-54295 Trier-Olewig, Olewiger Str. 206, tel. +49/651/938080, fax 930888, email: weinhausbecker@t-online.de, www.weinhaus-becker.de. Proprietors: Christine and Wolfgang Becker Rating: QUALITY 15/20 VALUE 16/20

Hotel Villa Hügel

This 1914 *Jugendstil* villa is pure charm — and a good value. The wooded, hilltop setting overlooks the Cathedral, the Palace Gardens and the Imperial Baths, with a backdrop of the Mosel hills. The high-ceilinged rooms are so spacious that some doubles could almost pass as junior suites. Furnishings are plush. A modern addition blends well with the original villa.

Views are to the town or the villa's pleasant gardens. Outdoors, guests lounge in the gardens, on split-level terraces or stroll the property. Inside, are a pool and sauna.

Rooms have city names instead of numbers. Wien, a "smaller" room in the new wing, has a balcony overlooking the garden. The larger Oslo, with a couch and sitting area, looks to the hills. Köln, on the top floor is a huge double, almost a penthouse. Hamburg is the prize room, located in the villa with a panoramic balcony. Although standard rooms are more than adequate, we advise spending an extra €15-20 per night for an oversized deluxe room with terrace or balcony.

Dinner, for hotel guests only, features light, regional cuisine.

Daily Rates: Singles €69-88, doubles €97-136

Contact: Hotel Villa Hügel, Bernhardstrasse 14, D-54295 Trier, tel. +49/651/33066, fax 37958, email: hotel-villa-huegel@t-online.de, web: www.hotel-villa-huegel.de

Rating: Quality 16/20, Value 16/20

Hille's Hostel

Not to be confused with a youth hostel, the privately owned Hille's Hostel is a superb choice for budget-conscious travelers of all ages. Rates are low — €32 for a double — and the communal kitchen and laundry facilities also help keep costs down. Admittedly, there are no frills, but the hostel is modern, clean and friendly with private rooms and bathroom facilities. The bunk beds may

even appeal to kids and bring back memories for adults. The hostel is just a few blocks from the main rail station.

Daily Rates: Singles €27, doubles €32, quad "family" €48. No breakfast. Key deposit €6

Contact: Hille's Hostel, Gartenfeldstrasse 7, D-54290 Trier, tel +49/651 710 2785, email: <u>info@hilles-hosteltrier.de</u>, web: <u>www.hilles-hosteltrier.de</u>. Proprietor: Hille Neu.

Rating: QUALITY 11/20 VALUE 16/20

Hotel Deutscher Hof

Despite its 102 rooms, the modern, family-run Deutscher Hof feels intimate and personal. Because of the hotel's group trade, all guests can benefit from the availability of handicapped-accessible rooms, rooms for families, special-diet meals (for example: vegetarian, high-fiber or low-fat), an extensive wellness area with massage and cosmetics, a huge buffet and even a bowling alley. One recent guest inquired about an ironing board and had perfectly pressed clothes the next morning—at no charge. The hotel is across the street from the start of the pedestrian zone.

Daily Rates: Singles €60-80, doubles €90-110. Free parking.

Contact: Hotel Deutscher Hof, Südallee 25, D-54290 Trier, tel. +49/651/9778/0, fax: 9778/400, email: info@hotel-deutscher-hof.de, web: www.hotel-deutscher-hof.de.

Rating: QUALITY 16/20 VALUE 16/20

Dorint Hotel Porta Nigra

This boxy, cookie-cutter, late 60s structure looks out of place across the street from the ancient Porta Nigra. Inside, however, is a perfectly fine four-star hotel in a central location. Request an upper-floor, even-numbered room (such as 414) facing the Porta Nigra. Double-glazed windows eliminate most street noise.

Daily Rates: Singles €109-122, doubles €124-137

Contact: Dorint Hotel Trier, Porta-Nigra-Platz 1, D-54292 Trier, tel. +49/ 651/27010, fax. 2701170, web: www.dorint.com/trier

Rating: QUALITY 16/20 VALUE 15/20

Hotel-Café Astoria

One of the better in-town values,

the Hotel-Café Astoria is typical of Trier's "urban villas" of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Its white facade is offset by stone trim and a steep slate roof. The 14 rooms are modern, spacious and bright with large windows and tasteful, if somewhat plain, decor. Bathrooms have small, Plexiglas "cell showers" but are otherwise ok. It's just a few minutes' walk from the Porta Nigra.

Daily Rates: Singles €50-60, doubles €70-82

Contact: Hotel-Café Astoria, Bruchhausenstrasse 4, D-54290 Trier, tel. +49/651/978350, fax 41121, email: info@astoria-hotel.de, web: www.astoria-hotel.de

Rating: QUALITY 14/20 VALUE 16/20

Hotel Zum Christophel

About 100 years old and operated by the fourth generation of the Keufen family, Zum Christophel is literally in the shadow of the Porta Nigra. It offers 11 rooms, most of them spacious and all spotless and modern, if a bit stark. Room 23 is a large double overlooking the Porta Nigra. Room 33, used often by families, has a fold-out couch but no view. Although the two rooms on the top floor have the most character — slanting ceilings, skylights, gabled windows — number 41 is the larger.

For center-city value, it's a toss-up between this hotel and the Astoria.

Daily Rates: Single €55, double €85, family quad €125

Contact: Hotel Zum Christophel, Simeonstrasse 1/Porta-Nigra-Platz, D-54290 Trier, tel. +49/651/979420/ 0, fax: 747 32,

email: <u>info@zumchristophel.de</u>, web: <u>www.zumchristophel.de</u> **Rating:** QUALITY 14/20 VALUE 16/20

Hotel Petrisberg

During World War II, the German army established an anti-aircraft battery on a hillside overlooking Trier. Near that gun emplacement was a small hotel operated by the Pantenberg family. In exchange for wine, the soldiers helped the family dig a cave shelter in the hillside above the hotel. From the mouth of their cave two young boys watched the terrifying, for-real fireworks show in which their city was

destroyed by Allied bombers.

The Pantenberg family survived and their Hotel Petrisberg survived undamaged. It is still there today, on that hill above the town hidden away among trees and vineyards. Its owners and managers are the brothers who watched the bombing of Trier from their hillside shelter 58 years ago, Helmut and Wolfgang Pantenberg.

A longtime "Editor's Choice" and always at or near the top of our list of value hotels, the Petrisberg offers always-spotless rooms, a quiet location with fine views, beautiful grounds, and among the warmest welcomes *Gemütlichkeit* has ever experienced. Highly recommended.

Daily Rates: Singles €55 to 65, doubles €85 to 95, suites €125 to 140. Breakfast rooms and all guestrooms are non-smoking.

Contact: Hotel Petrisberg, Sickingenstrasse 11, 5500 Trier; tel. +49/0651/4640, fax: 46450, email: info@hotel-petrisberg.de, web: www.hotel-petrisberg.de/en

Food

Weinhaus Becker

In the six years since Christine and Wolfgang Becker converted their small wine bar to a restaurant, Weinhaus Becker has built a superb reputation validated by a one-star rating in Michelin's Red Guide and 17 points with Gault Millau. "I prepare everything myself, from the first appetizer to the last praline," says Becker, who considers himself part chef and part "artistic director."

The menu changes every six to eight weeks depending on what's fresh and in season. Recent appetizers included a "mosaic" of smoked fish, vegetables, sheep's-milk yogurt and greens; sautéed rabbit with mushrooms; and caramelized goose liver served over a poached pear, with vanilla sauce. Main dishes were venison medallions with wild mushrooms and blueberry pancakes; Atlantic halibut with saffron; and shrimp encrusted with a puree of sole and potato served atop sweet chicory. For dessert try ginger soufflé with papaya ragout over white chocolate ice cream. The wine menu is extensive and of course includes many bottles from the Beckers' own vineyard.

The setting is comfortable and inviting, with 12 tables in a front room and 10 in back. The dominant theme is wine, from barrels on the walls to carvings of wine presses.

Entrées range from €28-32, appetizers from €17-19 and desserts from €8-12. The restaurant also offers a four-course menu for €49.

Contact: Weinhaus Becker, D-54295 Trier-Olewig, Olewiger Str. 206, tel. +49/651/938080, fax 938088, email: weinhausbecker@t-online.de, web: www.weinhaus-becker.de. Proprietors: Christine and Wolfgang Becker Rating: Quality 18/20, Value 14/20

Café Restaurant Brunnenhof

Although Café Restaurant Brunnenhof offers lighter fare like salmon marinated in Riesling, the city center restaurant is heavy on "comfort foods" like beef-and-beer goulash and pan-fried noodles with onions, bacon, potatoes, garlic and cheese. It's also relatively inexpensive with few entrées more than €11. Servings are large and well-prepared. Although located in the 11th-century Simeon College, the restaurant's interior is 20th century. If possible, choose outdoor dining in the old courtyard with a view to the Porta Nigra. Jazz fans will enjoy the "Jazz im Brunnenhof" outdoor series in July and August.

Contact: Brunnenhof Café, Simeonstrasse 60, D-54290 Trier, tel. +49/651/700295.

Rating: QUALITY 13/20 VALUE 15/20

Kraft-Bräu

One of three restaurants at Hotel Blesius Garten, Kraft-Bräu is Trier's largest beer garden. Many guests come to enjoy the fresh beer and to socialize. Many more are tempted by the culinary offerings. Fish dishes, such as rainbow trout fresh from the trout pool and fried in butter, range from €13-17. Meat dishes generally fall between €14-20, such as beef filet with pine-nut crust and rosemary-chili au jus, and lamb in a red-wine mint sauce. At the Brewery-Bistro, almost everything is under €10: ten Nürnberg sausages, beef stroganoff,

sliced pork with beer sauce and fried potatoes, and fresh pasta with pesto. They'll also bottle your choice of their beers to take with you.

Contact: Kraft-Bräu, Olewiger Str. 135, D-54295 Trier, tel. +49 0651 3606-0, fax +49 0651 3606-33, email: info@blesius-garden.de, web: www.blesius-garten.de

Rating: Quality 14/20, Value 15/20

Etage Restaurant

The specialty at Etage is *Eifeler* Fladen—a flat farmers' bread typical of the region north of the Mosel. Cooked in a stone oven in an open kitchen, it is served crisp with a choice of toppings like tomatoes, mozzarella cheese, broccoli and shrimp. The best of these is a delicious combination of beans with Mettwurst, a delightful smoked sausage. Although the menu features many regional dishes with various combinations of meat, fish, sausages and cheese, guests with lighter appetites can choose the salad bar, Apple Mountain (apples, nuts and raisins served in yogurt), and Klatschkes (cucumber salad with scallions and Quark — sort of a cross between cottage cheese and cream cheese). A light lunch might cost €8-10, a more complete dinner €9-15. The mezzanine seating offers a nice view of the Art Deco bar, but the rear terrace garden offers the best atmosphere and a quiet retreat from the pedestrian plaza just a few paces away.

Contact: Etage Restaurant, Neustrasse 56, D-54292 Trier, tel. +49/651/912/0858, fax: 994 6708

Rating: QUALITY 14/20 VALUE 16/20

it's pretty superfluous once you've spent two to three hours in the rest of the museum.

Last year, Vienna unveiled its musical take on Hollywood's famous Walk of Fame, by creating 70 plaques honoring its best-known musical proteges. The star-shaped plaques line the pavement along Kärntner Strasse and between the Theater an der Wien and the Haus der Musik.

Last March, the **Albertina**, Vienna's vast repository of graphic art, re-

opened its doors after several years of renovation hid its treasures from public view (www.albertina.at). In March 2004, when the **Liechtenstein Museum** opens in the Liechtenstein Palace at Fürstengasse 1, visitors will gaze upon works by such masters as Rubens, Raphael, and van Dyck, study bronzes and weaponry, and tour the palace library (€3.63).

Not everything about the city is erudite. The winter season brings Christmas markets to Vienna's streets. These are held at several locations around town, but the biggest and most atmospheric is in front of the **Rathaus**. Sip a mug or two of hot, spiced Glühwein, lob a snowball of artificial snow (or the real stuff, if the weather obliges), and wander round the stands selling kitsch Christmas gifts and paraphernalia. This year, the market runs from 15th November to 24th December. Other popular Christmas markets in the center include those at Freyung/Herrengasse (29th November to 23rd December) and Spittelberg (19th November to 23rd December).

Other traditional winter attractions include the opulent black tie balls and the New Year's Eve/Day concerts. This year, there's also the New Year's Eve Trail, an all-invited open-air party which promises fun and revelry across the whole central district. For details of this and much else, visit the tourist office web site www.wien.info.

If the above sounds enticing, bear in mind that we haven't even mentioned Vienna's truly great sights - Stephansdom, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Schloss Schönbrunn and the like. With all this, it's no wonder that the town's historic center was granted the status of UNESCO world cultural heritage site, in 2001. Our only question is this: what took them so long?

Lodging

Hotel Altstadt Vienna

Gemütlichkeit's 1994 "Hotel of the Year" still retains its Art Nouveau decor, clever guestrooms, and owner Otto Wiesenthal's efficient but guest-friendly management style.

In a building of wide corridors, squeaky old wooden floors, high ceilings and soaring windows, the hotel's spacious and inviting "Red Salon" is its *gemütlich* heart. Here, on late winter afternoons, guests warm themselves with hot drinks by an open fire while looking over the roofs of Vienna to the neighboring Church of St. Ulrich. The same room is also the place for a nightcap and, next morning, works as a light and airy breakfast room.

No two guestrooms are alike and all have been carefully decorated in a minimalist Art Nouveau style that includes halogen lighting and well-chosen modern art. Each comes with a telephone in both bed and bathroom, master light switches, cable TV with CNN, and a selection of complimentary toiletries.

A capable and accommodating staff will see that your early-morning taxi to the airport is on time, arrange for opera or concert tickets, and recommend off-the-beaten track restaurants in a variety of price categories.

The hotel's location, just outside the Ring, might be a drawback for some, but others will enjoy life in an urban neighborhood of interesting shops, good restaurants and few tourists. The *Zentrum* is only 15 minutes on foot or five minutes by underground. In an expensive city, this hotel is a good value.

Daily Rates: Singles €99 to 138, doubles €129 to 148, suites €149 to 249 Contact: Altstadt Vienna, Kirchengasse 41, tel. +43/01/526 3399-0, fax 523 4901, email: hotel@altstadt.at, web: www.altstadt.at

Rating: QUALITY 16/20, VALUE 15/20

Hotel Post

In most cities, overlooking the Post Office would not be a plus. However, this is Vienna, where architectural jewels shine in the most unexpected places. Sure enough, the Post Office boasts a graceful pediment depicting a brace of angels bearing Austria's two-headed-eagle crest—it's a fine sight to greet you as you draw back your bedroom curtains. The three-star Post has always been good value for its central location, though the rooms used to look some-

what tired and dreary. Then renovations a couple of years ago endowed them with cheerful pastel colors. Yet they still retain an old-fashioned feel, with parquet floors and solid, standard-issue furniture. They also come with television, radio and telephone. Many are a generous size, and those without private bathroom are especially good value if you don't mind using communal facilities.

Daily Rates: Singles €62-68, doubles €93-111. Rooms with shared bathroom facilities are about one-third less.

Contact: Hotel Post, Fleischmarkt 24 A-1010 Wien, Austria, tel.+43/1/ 515830, fax 51583 808, email: office@hotel-post-wien.at, web: www.hotel-post-wien.at Rating: Quality 12/20 Value 15/20

Hotel Austria

Tucked away down a quiet yet central cul-de-sac, this three star hotel lets you enjoy Vienna's sights and nightlife while allowing easy retreat to your room to shut out the noise when it suits. The calm setting is reflected in the demeanor of the reserved yet helpful staff, and the comfortable yet unostentatious furnishings. Many rooms have crystal chandeliers, gilt mirrors and oriental carpets, alongside the occasional Baroque or Biedermeier ornament. All have TV, radio, telephone and minibar, though some cheaper rooms are without private bathroom.

Contact: Hotel Austria, Am Fleischmarkt 20, A-1010 Wien, tel. +43/1/51523, fax: 51523 506, email: office@hotelaustria-wien.at, web: www.hotelaustria-wien.at

Daily Rates: Singles €49-95, doubles,

€78-120

Rating: QUALITY 13/20 VALUE 14/20

Das Triest

If you've had your fill of Viennese Baroque, and yearn instead for modern designer chic, check into this fashionable hotel. You'll be following in the footsteps of celebrities like Johnny Depp and Elton John. It's come a long way since its humble beginnings as a coach-stop on the trade route to Trieste port.

Designed by Terence Conran, the

spacious guestrooms are stylish yet understated. The simplicity of white walls is offset by the warmth of bright-colored fabrics and welcoming cherry-wood furnishings. Vienna's historical legacy is not ignored: the salon retains its original 17th-century vaulted ceiling, while black-and-white prints depict the city's spectacular statuary. An impressive perspective of central Vienna can be enjoyed from the rooftop terrace.

Evenings, the glitzy bar is a popular meeting-place for well-heeled, fashion-conscious locals. Reasonably priced for a five-star, there are 143 rooms, but only two singles. Das Triest has all the facilities and comforts expected of a top-class hotel.

Daily Rates: Singles €190, doubles €245, suites €299-375

Contact: Das Triest, Wiedner Hauptstrasse 12, A-1040 Wien, tel. +43/1/589180, fax: 5891818,

email: <u>back@dastriest.at</u>, web: <u>www.dastriest.at</u>

Rating: QUALITY 17/20 VALUE 15/20

Food

DO & CO

DO & CO introduced gourmet cooking to the skies with their catering contract with Lauda Air. Here, at its flagship restaurant in Haas Haus, the seating and ambience are more enjoyable than typically found within the narrow confines of a 737.

For a start, there are the fabulous picture windows overlooking Stephansdom's spire. Nevertheless, this modern, open-plan space suffers from its own popularity. It's usually busy, sometimes hectic, and the tables are set a little too close together. Service is not the swiftest, but the food, when it arrives, does not disappoint. There are Viennese standards, Thai dishes, and wok-fried meals where you can select your own fresh ingredients.

With prices coming in around €5-14 for starters/salads, or €18-24 for a main course, you get top quality for a relatively modest outlay.

Stephansplatz 12, A-1010 Vienna, tel. +43/1/535 39690, web: www.doco.com

Rating: QUALITY 13/20 VALUE 14/20

La Crêperie

Though you won't go wrong here with the excellent crêpes, there are plenty of other choices, including meat and fish (€11-19), and a multicourse gourmet menu. The crêpes (€3-13) are large enough that a savoury one each, followed by a shared sweet one, is usually enough for two. The Florentine (€7.60) is a palatable combination of ham, bacon, cheese, egg and spinach, with a side serving of sour cream.

There are sidewalk tables, but half the attraction of this place is the creatively-decorated rooms inside. One room is decked out like a circus bigtop, while other areas feature antiquarian books, atmospheric murals, snake-like spears — the diverse artifacts are effective conversation piec-

Grünangergasse 10, A-1010 Vienna tel: +43/1/512 5687 Open 3pm-11.30pm Monday-Friday,

11am-11.30pm Saturday & Sunday Rating: QUALITY 13/20 VALUE 14/20

Readers' Forum

Frankfurt Hotel

Looking for a hotel in Frankfurt we found, through the Michelin Red Guide for Germany the Main Plaza. It is located on the left bank almost across the river from the Dom in Sachsenhausen. We walked everywhere in the old part of town from this hotel.

Although the price was a little steep, €198 for Thursday night and €158 for Friday night, the room was wonderful, very spacious with a king size bed, a small kitchen, which we didn't use, a very nice bath with tub and shower and from our tenth floor room we had a wonderful view of the entire city. The hotel is a 20minute taxi ride from the airport, (€25). I recommend it and we will stay there if we should be in Frankfurt again. There are two restaurants associated with the hotel, a formal expensive one in the hotel and a more casual one with outdoor seating overlooking the river called the River Cafe where we ate twice and enjoyed both the meals and the ambiance.

The staff spoke excellent English and were very courteous and helpful. Tel. +49/069/664010, fax 604014408, email: info@main-plaza.com.

> Ted Vian Via email

Bischofshofen Suggestions

The Werfen story brought back many pleasant memories. We spent five nights in nearby Bischofshofen in 1995, thoroughly enjoying Eisriesenwelt, Burg Hohenwerfen, Hallein and the salt mine, Salzburg and other nearby accessible places such as Zell am See and St. Johann im Pongau. From the latter we took a pleasant hike of a couple of kilometers to the Liechtenstein Klamm, an interesting narrow chasm carved by a glacial melt stream and accessible by walkway through it. Worth a visit.

Bischofshofen is larger than Werfen, of course, and nothing outstanding as a town although very pleasant and our stay at the small Hotel/ Gasthof Schutzenhof was quite satisfactory and reasonable (address: Alte Bundesstrasse 3, A 5500 Bischofshofen, Austria; tel. 64 62 22 53). Bischofshofen is a rail junction of main lines serving Salzburg, Innsbruck and points in central Austria. I believe it was possible to go direct to Graz from there, for example, and connections to Bad Gastein, etc. were convenient. For rail travelers it is probably a better choice as most IC or through trains do not stop at Werfen, but local trains make the short run from Bischofshofen to Werfen very conve-

Some Werfen comments: In addition to the steep road, trail and lift to Eisriesenwelt, the steps and paths inside the caves are numerous and fairly steep and visitors should be prepared for a fairly strenuous climbing experience at moderately high altitudes. And it is chilly! Burg Ho**henwerfen** is a very fine example of castle design and siting and ranks high on our list, but below Burg Eltz, as an outstanding castle.

The falconry demonstration and explanation was excellent and just recalling the swooping birds made the hair on my neck a little nervous.

> Martin Vitz Via email

We Recommend

This listing of good value, mid-priced hotels in popular destination cities is intended for fast reference. Additional hotels and links to websites of these hotels can be found in the Archives & Hotel Database sections at www.gemut.com. The required subscriber user name and password for access this month is on page 2 herein. Hotels are arranged in price order, higher to lower.

Berlin

Hotel Art Nouveau, Leibnizstr. 59, tel. +49/030/327 7440, fax 327 744 40, email: hotelartnouveau@snafu.de

Hotel Domus, Uhlandstrasse 49, Germany D-10719, tel. +49/030/ 882041, fax 882 0410, email: info@hotel-domus-berlin.de

Bern

Hotel Innere Enge, Engestrasse 54, CH-3012, tel. +41/031/309 6111, fax 309 6112, email: info@zghotels.ch

Hotel Kreuz, Zeughausgasse 41, CH-3000, tel. +41/031/329 9595, fax 329 95 96, email: hotelkreuz@swissonline.ch

Lausanne

Hostellerie du Débarcardère, 7 chemin du Cret, Saint Sulpice, CH-102, tel. +41/021/691 5747, fax 691 5079, email: debarcadere@swissonline.ch (not in town)

Hotel Agora, Av. du Rond-Point 9, CH-1006, tel. +41/021/617 1211, fax 616 2605, email: agora@fhotels.ch

Lucerne

Hotel Wilden Mann, Bahnhofstrasse 30, CH-6000 Luzern, tel. +41/ 041/2101666, fax 2101629, email: mail@wilden-mann.ch

Hotel Cascada, Bundesplatz 18, CH-6003 Lucerne, tel: +41/041/226 80 88, fax 226 80 00, email: info@cascada.ch

Hotel Exquisit, Pettenkoferstr. 3, tel. +49/089/551 99 0, fax 551 99 499, email: info@hotel-exquisit.com.

Hotel Kraft, Schillerstr. 49, tel. +49/089/594823-24, fax 550 3856, email: kraft.hotel@t-online.de

Rothenburg ob der Tauber

Reichs-Küchenmeister, Kirchplatz 8, Rothenburg o.d. Tauber, Germany D-91541, tel. +49/09861/97 00, fax 97 04 09, email: hotel@reichskuechenmeister.com

Salzburg & Environs Schloss Haunsperg, A-5411 Oberalm bei Hallein, Hammerstrasse 32, tel. +43/06245/80662, fax 85680, email: info@schlosshaunsperg.com Hotel Struber, Nonntaler Hauptstrasse 35, Austria A-5020 tel. +43/ 0662/843 728, fax 843 728 8, email: struber@sbg.at

Hotel Jedermann, Rupertgasse 25, Austria A-5020, tel. +43/0662/ $873241\text{--}0, fax\ 873241\text{--}9, email: \underline{jedermann@salzburginfo.or.at}$

Vienna

Hotel Römischer Kaiser, Annagasse 16, A-1010, tel +43/01/51277

51 0, fax 512 77 51 13, email: <u>info@rkhotel.bestwestern.</u> **Altstadt Vienna**, Kirchengasse 41, tel. +43/01/526 3399-0, fax 523 4901, email: hotel@altstadt.at, web: www.altstadt.at

Pension Aviano, Marco-D'Aviano-Gasse 1, tel. +43/01/512 8330, fax 512 8330 6, email: aviano@pertschy.com

Zürich

Hotel Florhof, Florhofgasse 4, Switzerland CH-8001, tel. 41/01/261 4470, fax 261 4611, email: info@florhof.ch

Hotel Arlette, Stampfenbachstrasse 26, Switzerland CH-8001, tel. +41/01/25 20 032, fax 25 20 932, email: hotel.arlette@bluwin.ch

Frankfurt Airport

Steigenberger Esprix Hotel Frankfurt Airport CargoCity Süd, D-60549, tel. +49/069/69 70 99, fax 69 70 94 44, email: frankfurt@esprixhotels.de

Hotel Birkenhof, von-Eiff-Str 37, Hanau-Steinheim, D-63456, tel. +49/06181/648 80, fax 64 88 39, email:info@HotelBirkenhof.de (25minute drive from airport)

Hotel Dreieich, Frankfurter Str. 49, Langen, D-63225, tel. +49/ 06103/91 50, fax 52 030 (15-minute drive from airport)

Munich Airport

Kempinski Hotel Airport, Terminalstrasse/Mitte 20, D-85356 Munich, tel. +49/089/9782-0, fax 97822610, info@kempinski-airport.de Hotel Hoyacker Hof, Freisinger Landstrasse 9a, D-85748 Garching b. München, tel. +49/089/326 9900, fax 320 7243, email: info@hoyackerhof.de

Zürich Airport

Mövenpick Zürich Airport, Walter-Mittelholzerstrasse 8, CH-8152 Glattbrugg, tel. +41/01/808 88 88, fax 808 88 77, email: hotel@movenpick-zurich-airport.ch

Hotel Fly Away, Marktgasse 19, Zürich-Kloten, Switzerland CH-8302, tel. +41/01/804 4455, fax 804 44 50, email: reservation@hotelflyaway.ch