

DEAR  
SUBSCRIBER

### What we like to do is...

Recently a subscriber of many years told me about his annual vacation at a seaside hotel on the Baltic where he and his wife have become regulars. Their room at the **Parkhotel Seeblick** in Warnemünde near Rostock overlooks the beach and costs about 90 euros per night. Days are spent on the beach reading, walking and swimming. When it rains the couple visits Rostock, a large city with many shopping, cultural and sight-seeing opportunities.

I have spoken with this man several times over the years and he has much experience traveling in Germany. It sounds to me like he's on to something. In fact his description was so appealing I found myself wishing I could do what he does — go to that hotel and spend a few days lazing on the beach and eating too much in the hotel's restaurant.

It then occurred to me that our few thousand readers all have their own special routines and hide-aways, and how great it would be to share those special secrets with fellow subscribers. I therefore hereby extend an invitation to you to tell us about a single destination or activity you especially enjoy when visiting our three countries; something you look forward to on almost every trip. Please email your "What we like to do is..." story to [bob@gemut.com](mailto:bob@gemut.com) or, if you don't have email, send it regular mail to 288 Ridge Road, Ashland OR 97520. Try to keep your letter under 300 words and be sure to include as much pertinent information as possible.

*Continued on page 2...*

#### in this issue

- p1 Medieval Lübeck**
- p1 Swiss Vineyard Drive**
- p2 Robbery on Rails**
- p4 Key Websites**
- p5 Recommended Hotels**
- p7 Readers' Forum**
- p8 Low Fares on Air India**

# GEMÜTLICHKEIT

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

## LÜBECK

*Still a major German port on the Baltic, this "Queen of the Hanseatic League" is a city of canals, narrow lanes, medieval buildings, great spires, and seafarers.*

**M**ention Lübeck to most Germans and their eyes light up. "It's a treasure," they say. "A city unto itself."

Many describe memorable sights like the 13<sup>th</sup>-century town hall and the **Holsten Gate**, the medieval fortification that has become the city's trademark. Some recall forays through the town's warren of medieval passageways that burst into hidden courtyards. Others may remember a patrician home, perhaps the **Buddenbrooks** house of Thomas Mann, who joins today's giant **Günter Grass** as two of the city's three Nobel Prize laureates (Willy Brandt is the third).

By Jim  
Johnson

Some recall the bells of **St. Mary's Church**. On Palm Sunday, April 1942, a single bombing run — the city's only attack during World War II — followed a fairly straight line from the Cathedral to St. Mary's. Although the churches and the city have been rebuilt, the bells remain in place, crumpled and shattered where they fell six decades ago, a shrine to remind of the horrors of war and its victims. A further reminder is the **Coventry Cross**, made from two nails recovered from England's destroyed cathedral and presented to St. Mary's as an act of reconciliation.

Others have fonder memories stated in a single word: "marzipan."

*Continued on page 3...*

## Lake Geneva Vineyard Drive

*A drive from Hotel Beau Rivage in Lausanne to the Vaudois Wine Museum in the Aigle Castle by way of the Route du Vignoble, and Castle Chillon.*

**I**n any Condé Nast poll of "favorite cash crops driven through," hillside vineyards would undoubtedly finish first. A charming element of vineyards is that they change their look with the seasons: lush green foliage in summer, the glorious colors of fall, and in winter, after pruning, each gnarled vine becomes a sculpture.

Along our suggested route are turnouts from which to savor the view and for picture-taking. And what a view: the endless vineyards, craggy alpine peaks on both the French and Swiss sides and, down on the water, lake steamers gliding from town to town.

The vines, which one can walk

among on marked footpaths, yield grapes that produce principally fruity, pale yellow wines and a few smooth, light red ones. Most of the whites come from the Chasselas varietal and the reds are often a combination of Pinot Noir and Gamay the Swiss call "Dole."

Start the odometer trip counter at the gates of the Beau Rivage Hotel, drive toward the lake to the frontage road, Quai de Belguque, and turn east toward Montreux. Leaving Lausanne you will pass a number of fine homes. Once past the town of Lutry go left at the sign marking the Route du Vignoble, through the tunnel under the railroad tracks and begin to climb into the vineyards. You

*Continued on page 6...*

**Exchange rates as of 6/27/04**  
**1 euro = \$1.22**  
**1 Swiss franc = \$.80**

**DEAR SUBSCRIBER**

*Continued from page 1*

sible on hotels, restaurants, directions, prices and other details. It can be as simple as "What I never miss is six Bratwurst with sauerkraut off the vendor's cart at the corner of Schillerstrasse and Beethovenstrasse in XYZ town." Or it can be a bit more detailed and include hotels and restaurants. But don't just give us a list of favorite hotels and restaurants (though they are always welcome); what we're looking for here should be activity-related, such as "We go to XYZ town for the wine festival and stay in ABC hotel and eat in DEF restaurant." If, in our judgement, your letter would be of interest to our general readership we'll publish it in *Gemütlichkeit* and/or post it on our website.

**Trip Planning Online**

We have replaced the complex bulletin board feature on our website ([www.gemut.com](http://www.gemut.com)) with a much more user-friendly trip planning page we're calling **Europe Travel Kiosk**. You can ask and answer questions or simply post your own comments. This Kiosk is a great place to get your specific travel questions answered by experts — the savvy, veteran travelers that make up our readership. In addition, those of us here at *Gemütlichkeit* headquarters will be keeping an eye on the Kiosk and jump in as needed. Our Europe Travel Kiosk is at [www.gemut.com](http://www.gemut.com).

**Find Hotels Easier at Gemut.com**

We've added a useful new feature

to our website's hotel database. Now you can sort hotels by quality rating, value rating, price, editor's choice, and, of course, name. A new timesaving feature is a drop-down menu of cities. Click on one of them to find all the hotels we've reviewed in that city.

This month's access codes to the Members' area of Gemut.com are: user name = beck; password = 9121. Remember, each month the new codes are on page 2.

**Cautionary Rail Tales**

We've had a couple of unsettling reports from two longtime subscribers. One, on an overnight train from Krakow to Budapest, had her daypack containing passport, credit cards and \$600 cash stolen from a private, locked sleeping compartment. She and her companion believe they were done in by a thief posing as a conductor. They were frequently awakened during the night to show tickets and passports and each time had to open the daypack to fish out the necessary documents. The final time, at 6am, when the "real" conductor opened their door with his key, the daypack was gone. The thief apparently had a key and was able to open the door and somehow quietly remove the daypack without awakening the compartment's two occupants. The bag was found a short time later in the restroom. All was in order, except the cash was gone.

Another disturbing story comes from a couple changing trains in Bochum near Düsseldorf. Traveling on a

first-class Eurail pass, they first loaded their four bags into the vestibule at the end of car. While his wife waited, the husband carried two of the bags to the nearest seats — a distance of 15 to 20 feet — where he left them momentarily to go back for the other bags. Returning with the remaining luggage, he discovered that one of the first bags — naturally, the one with the money, rail passes, and passports, etc. — was missing. Their gear had been out of their sight for only a few seconds.

In filing the police report, the couple remembered being observed by suspicious-looking young men on the platform prior to boarding. From mug shots they identified several notorious Algerian nationals who the police said had been previously deported but, because of relaxed or nonexistent border checks, were able to easily return to Germany. The missing bag was found later with all items intact except the cash. — 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**

Back issues in text format from January 1993, except for the most recent 12, are available free to subscribers only at <http://www.gemut.com> (click on "Members"). To access the issues enter the user name and password published in this space each month. The new codes are:

User Name: beck Password: 9121

Vol. 18, No. 6  
July 2004

**GEMÜTLICHKEIT**

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

**Publishers:** Robert H. & Elizabeth S. Bestor  
**Editor:** Robert H. Bestor  
**Senior Writer:** Jim Johnson  
**Contributors:** Mark Honan, Nikki Goth Itoi  
**Consulting Editor:** Thomas P. Bestor  
**Online Services:** Kurt Steffans  
**Subscriber Travel Services:** Andy Bestor, Laura Riedel

*Gemütlichkeit* (ISSN 10431756) is published 11 times each year by UpCountry Publishing, 288 Ridge Road, Ashland OR 97520. TOLL FREE: 1-800/521-6722 or 541/488-8462, fax: 541/488-8468, e-mail [travel@gemut.com](mailto:travel@gemut.com). Web site: [www.gemut.com](http://www.gemut.com). Subscriptions are \$67 per year for 11 issues. While every effort is made to provide correct information in this publication, the publishers can make no guarantees regarding accuracy.

**POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO:**  
*Gemütlichkeit*, 288 Ridge Road., Ashland OR 97520

**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	
People/Service	30%	Outstanding Value	17 - 20
Location/Setting	15%	Very Good Value	12 - 16
Guestrooms	30%	Average Value	9 - 11
Public rooms	5%	Below Average Value	5 - 8
Facilities/Restaurant	20%	A Rip-Off	0 - 4

**Special Designation**

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

## LÜBECK

Continued from page 1

It's in Lübeck that the Niederegger family launched the confectionery delight and continues to create the world's only "original Lübeck marzipan." (The giant shop off the Breite Strasse still challenges willpower.)

### Hanseatic Queen

Almost every visitor is imprinted with the stunning panorama of the former Queen of the Hanseatic League, whose seven steeples stretch with majesty to the heavens in a silhouette that has inspired sailors, merchants, residents and visitors for nearly 600 years. Many of these spires, as with much of the city, are built in brick Gothic style, a feature that helps give the city a distinctive look.

Prints and paintings from as far back as the 13<sup>th</sup> century show a similar skyline of the "City of Seven Spires." It was a town of merchants and sailors, each with its own neighborhood and church. **St. Mary's**, with its brick Gothic construction, is one of Germany's largest church buildings and the model for dozens of others throughout northern Germany. The Romanesque **Cathedral**, perhaps the city's oldest structure, has foundations dating to 1173.

**St. Peter's Church** features both Gothic and Romanesque construction — and allows visitors to gaze from its 150-foot-high viewing platform to the city below. What they'll see is a compact collection of nearly 1,400 buildings under protection as historic monuments and a complete *Altstadt* designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Most survive from medieval times, Lübeck's "Golden Age," when merchants and sea captains demonstrated their wealth and their devotion to their city and their God.

### Island Old Town

They'll also see that Lübeck's Old Town is actually an oblong island city set between arms of the Trave River amid a network of harbors, canals, old moats and artificial ponds. Although guards no longer cut off access to the city at night as they did throughout most of its history (several vehicle and pedestrian bridges

## Lübeck Basics

**Population:** 220,000

**Elevation:** Sea Level

**Tourist Info:** Beckergrube 95, D-23552 Lübeck, tel. +49/1805/88 22 33, fax: +49/451/122 12 02, email: [marketing-hl@luebeck-tourismus.de](mailto:marketing-hl@luebeck-tourismus.de), web: [www.luebeck-tourismus.de](http://www.luebeck-tourismus.de).

### Driving Distances:

Berlin	170 miles	273 km
Cologne	298 miles	481 km
Frankfurt	340 miles	549 km
Hamburg	42 miles	68 km
Munich	516 miles	833 km

### Major Events:

Early July, Sand World  
Late July, Travemünde Week  
Late August, Baltic Sail  
Christmas Fair, Nov. 22-Dec. 23, 2004

### Best Buy:

The HappyDay Card, from 24-72 hours, offers free transportation on area buses and trains, reduced admission and event tickets, reduced-price harbor cruises. Available in the tourist office and in many hotels starting at €5.

provide around-the-clock access to the island), nighttime brings a sense of isolation — in the positive sense of the word, even more so than the thickest walls of a medieval town. Silence falls deeper, and sounds — church bells, jazz saxophone from a fourth-floor flat, laughter from an alleyway — carry farther. Even in the height of summer, there's rarely a sense of congestion.

For visitors, the island setting also makes exploration manageable and secure. All wandering is finite, and all roads eventually lead to water and an inevitable familiar landmark — or at least to a sign in the superb system of "Navigation Lübeck" signs designed to help visitors arrive quickly, easily and intuitively at their destinations. Directional signs are placed at major street crossings and bus stops.

One might begin with a **boat tour** around the island. Signs of daily life merge the centuries. Small piers jut over the river; on a landing, a man washes a dog. As the boat passes, there's a splash as the dog fetches a stick and rinses the shampoo. In front of a row of old houses, a strip of lawn runs almost into the river. A woman makes her rounds with a watering can. Behind her, laundry flaps on clothes lines. On a small hill by the old moat, a group of fishermen seem

as interested in conversation as in the dips of their poles. They're framed by the steeples of the Cathedral. Water seeps through wooden barriers of an old millstream.

Although the tour is conducted in German, the views and orientation make it worthwhile, and a good tour book and map fill most of the gaps. For those with a bit of energy and two hours on their hands, follow up the cruise with a walking circumnavigation, the perfect way to get oriented to the Altstadt.

### Old World charm

Much of Lübeck's allure comes from its medieval houses, courtyards and passageways — and their accessibility to visitors. It was a prosperous city during medieval times, and most of the houses visitors see date from that period. They were built side to side with extensive rear courtyards (often visible through today's front windows). Later, rear additions were built that jutted into the courtyards. These allowed owners to conduct business and store merchandise in the front of the house and live in the rear.

Many patrician homes are breathtaking, both inside and out. One open for viewing is the 18<sup>th</sup>-century **Behnhaus** (Königstrasse 9-11) with its two residential wings and central reception area. The classical setting is palatial. His and hers garden rooms give the illusion of being outside in a lush garden. In one room, the ceiling is painted sky blue. Birds and butterflies float on painted walls. A mural fence with painted vines keeps visitors from climbing into the paintings. At Wahnstrasse 54-56, twin 16<sup>th</sup>-century skyscrapers stretch eight-stories high topped with double gables.

With the success of the Hanseatic League, Lübeck saw significant population spikes. Given the island's geographic constraints, the city could not expand. Instead, landowners started to convert their rear additions from living space for themselves into multiple houses. They cut passageways through the houses from the street to rear courtyards, while continuing to conduct business in the front of the house and themselves

moving into larger, more expensive homes.

### Hidden courtyards

In some cases, landowners — many of them merchants — rented houses to their employees or to craftspeople with whom they worked. With prosperity came a sense of obligation, as wealthy merchants tried to buy their way into heaven by providing lodging for poor. Within the courtyards of homes they owned, they built two rows of small homes, each row connected and facing the other over a small walkway. Many of these residences remain today and form an historic form of low-cost housing.

Pfaffenstrasse 25, the **Füchtingshof**, is typical “welfare housing,” established in 1639 by merchant Johann Füchtling. At the time, widows didn’t have to pay rent but were required to pray for Füchtling’s soul. In the 1970s, the houses were converted to apartments for women and female students. Today, residents are required to pay, but not pray.

Residents and visitors access them through a warren of small passageways—“**Gänge**”—that intersect town streets. Maps show about 50 of the small alleys; investigative sorts will find many more. They’re a highlight of any visit to Lübeck.

### Key Websites for the Traveler

- [www.gemut.com](http://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](http://www.viamichelin.com) The Michelin database of hotels and restaurants plus great interactive trip planning tools.
- [www.travelgearnow.com](http://www.travelgearnow.com) Guidebooks, maps, travel accessories, luggage, all at 10% off for subscribers.
- [www.webflyer.com](http://www.webflyer.com) Informative frequent flyer forums make this a must for air travelers.
- [bahn.hafas.de/bin/query.exe/en](http://bahn.hafas.de/bin/query.exe/en) German rail. Train schedules throughout Europe, not just Germany.
- [www.sbb.ch/index\\_e.htm](http://www.sbb.ch/index_e.htm) Swiss and European rail schedules.
- [www.ski-europe.com](http://www.ski-europe.com) Top web resource for skiers with much data on Alpine resorts.
- [www.myswitzerland.com](http://www.myswitzerland.com) Website of Switzerland’s national tourist authority.
- [www.germany-tourism.de](http://www.germany-tourism.de) Germany’s national tourist authority.
- [www.austria.info/us](http://www.austria.info/us) Austria’s national tourist authority.
- <http://www.hhog.de> Website for an alliance of historic German cities.

Most of the passageways yield surprises. If you look closely (Bäcker-gang 43 is one example), you can sometimes see footprints in the bricks left behind by cats, dogs, birds or other animals that walked over the forms while the bricks dried. At first glance, Durchgang 46 looks poorly kept and littered. After a turn, the path opens into an expansive courtyard with trees, and gabled houses with half-timber above brick. Opposite its entrance, Durchgang 49 welcomes residents with a decorative gate and brick archway. Three massive buttresses support the two buildings and help keep them from folding in on each other.

### Grass and Mann

Visits to the **Günter Grass-House** and the Mann Family’s **Buddenbrooks House** are worthwhile and offer insights that transcend literature. The Grass-House is compelling for anyone intrigued or troubled by the creative process. Opened in October 2002, it is dubbed “a crossroads forum” and examines the phenomenon of “double gifts”— people with deep talents in two or more fields. Through the displays, visitors can begin to grasp how Grass’s multiple means of creative expression attempt to resolve both personal and broader issues.

The Buddenbrooks House, where Thomas Mann grew up, offers a view into his life and the lives of the Mann family. A walk through six biographical “stations,” reveals the lifestyle of a patrician Lübeck family.

### Travemünde

No stay in Lübeck is complete without a visit to its “daughter town,” **Travemünde**. The longtime spa resort and port city is 10 miles (17 kilometers) downstream on the Baltic but officially and emotionally part of Lübeck. It’s a relaxing boat ride from Lübeck (return easily by train or bus to cut travel time) and passes the massive ferry terminal, fish warehouses, cruise ships and four-master **Tall Ship Passat**. The older sections of town still have old fishing cottages — just a short walk from the remodeled casino and the baroque **Church of St. Lorenz**. The Vorderreihe is both a shopping street and board-

walk. It’s also a great outdoor destination for cyclists, hikers, beachgoers and boaters who can explore miles of coastline. Seeing so much activity, it’s easy to forget the Cold War years when Travemünde lay just across the river from the Communist East.

On the way from the *Altstadt* to Lübeck’s train station, departing visitors cross the Trave River, where a row of statues tops the bridge wall. According to tradition, anyone who pats the bare rump of Mercury is sure to return. It’s perhaps easier just to turn around and take in the seven-spire silhouette. Even the briefest glance will likewise inspire the departing visitor and guarantee a timely return.

### Lodging

#### Klassik Altstadt Hotel

Guests feel immediately welcome and at home in this intimate, charming establishment whose various incarnations through the last nine centuries have included bath house, anchor-smithy, sailor’s hostel and now cozy inn. Today’s clientele is likely to be scholars lecturing at the Günter Grass-House or visiting musicians performing with the symphony, as well as families and couples on repeat visits. It’s obvious that the engaged staff knows — and likes — many of their guests, although everyone is treated with equal warmth and familiarity.

EDITOR’S CHOICE

Each of the 28 guestrooms is decorated individually, and most are spacious with high ceilings, an abundance of dark wood, and soft, pleasing colors. There’s hardly a bad choice, but those that best reflect old Lübeck are the Buxtehude Room, with its period prints and paintings, or the classic decor and Buddenbrooks feel of the Thomas Mann Room.

Don’t rush out in the evening. Enjoy a delightful dinner in the hotel dining room, which feels more like a parlor as the evening progresses, with shared conversations and perhaps new friends.

**Contact:** Klassik Altstadt Hotel, Fischergrubbe 52, D-23552 Lübeck, tel. +49/451/70 29 80, fax 73 77 8, email

[info@klassik-altstadt-hotel.de](mailto:info@klassik-altstadt-hotel.de), web [www.klassik-altstadt-hotel.de](http://www.klassik-altstadt-hotel.de).

**Daily Rates:** Singles from €44, doubles from €75, suites from €113.

**Rating:** QUALITY 15/20 VALUE 16/20

### Parkhotel im Lindenplatz

The Parkhotel im Lindenplatz is a small, privately-owned hotel located just outside the *Altstadt* near the train station. Built in 1900, the building was converted to a hotel in the 1950s. The Behnck family took over in 1989.

The 18 guest rooms are contemporary, while exterior and public spaces are distinctly *Jugendstil* in design with lead-glass windows, geometric light fixtures and Biedermeier furniture. Number 7 is a large double with a balcony, an ornamental wooden bed, and an oversized bathroom with tub. Number 17 looks to the front with a broad double-window view to a tree-lined plaza where Bismarck and the Kaiser stand watch on stone perches. Although there's traffic, noise is not a factor due to double-glazed windows.

Despite its intimate size, the hotel does have 24-hour desk service.

**Contact:** Parkhotel im Lindenplatz, Am Lindenplatz 2, D-23554 Lübeck, tel. +49/451/871 97-0, fax 97-29, email [info@parkhotel-luebeck.de](mailto:info@parkhotel-luebeck.de), web [www.parkhotel-luebeck.de](http://www.parkhotel-luebeck.de).

Proprietors: Behnck Family.

**Daily Rates:** Singles €59-80, doubles €79-120.

**Rating:** QUALITY 12/20 VALUE 13/20

### Hotel Lindenhof

Just a block from the Parkhotel, the Lindenhof has been in the Schröder family for four generations. During a recent guest visit, daughter Emily was apparently in training — crawling along the counter at the reception desk.

"That's the kind of hotel we are," said proud papa Thomas. "We're quite down-to-earth, and everyone pitches in. We're not a big hotel, and we're not a cheap hotel. Where we try to make a difference is in our service."

They book theater tickets, plan walks or day trips, arrange tours — acting in many ways as concierge. Before taking on the responsibility,

Thomas took seven years to travel the world and learn more about the hotel business and to decide whether it was a life for his family.

Though the hotel has no restaurants, light snacks are available for guests in the evening, which many take with them into the TV room. Someone's available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The Lindenhof's 62 rooms offer variety. Room 312 is an especially large double with an oversized bathroom with shower and views to the back. There's a large work area as well as a sitting area with three upholstered chairs. Two doors down, the Lindenhof's guesthouse (10 apartments lodging up to six guests each) has at least one room worth considering; G6 is a spacious double with a pleasant, sunny sitting nook looking out to *Jugendstil* homes. If the weather's good, sit on the balcony instead.

**Contact:** Hotel Lindenhof Lübeck, Lindenstrasse 1a, D-23558 Lübeck, tel. +49/451/872 10-0, fax 872 10-66, email [info@lindenhof-luebeck.de](mailto:info@lindenhof-luebeck.de), web [www.lindenhof-luebeck.de](http://www.lindenhof-luebeck.de).

Proprietors: Schröder Family

**Daily Rates:** Singles €64-85, doubles €80-108, apartments €100-135.

**Rating:** QUALITY 14/20 VALUE 15/20

### Hotel Strandschlösschen

For those who love the sea, the beach or spa life, Travemünde offers excellent lodging alternatives to Lübeck. Swap after-dinner exploration of the *Altstadt's* narrow alleys for a moonlit walk on the promenade (or maybe a swing through the Casino). The recently completed Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten (Four Seasons) Casino Travemünde caters capably to the five-star set with 74 rooms and suites that match the casino in elegance and style.

Perhaps the best beachfront value is the **Strandschlösschen** — Little Beach Castle — with many of its 33 rooms overlooking the beach, the Baltic and a sea of umbrellas and lounge chairs. The setting is refined and relaxed, with an abundance of antiques in the supremely *Jugendstil* structure, a hotel since its 1904 construction. In the afternoon, enjoy tea

Editor's  
CHOICE

time on the patio where potted palms brush the canvas covering. The tranquil view is to the lighthouse and the breakwater, which masks all but the tops of lofty ships.

Ask for Room 19 on the third floor (no elevators), a spacious corner room with a sitting area and a balcony with views up and down the beach. Or settle amicably for 12A, which features a chandelier, a 19<sup>th</sup>-century oil painting and an extra-large bathroom.

**Contact:** Hotel Strandschlösschen, Strandpromenade 7, D-23570 Lübeck-Travemünde, tel. +49/4502 / 7 50 35, fax 7 58 22, email [info@hotel-strandschloesschen.de](mailto:info@hotel-strandschloesschen.de), web [www.hotel-strandschloesschen.de](http://www.hotel-strandschloesschen.de).

**Daily Rates:** Singles €55-74, doubles €95-148 (about 20 percent less outside of high season).

**Rating:** QUALITY 15/20 VALUE 15/20

### Food

#### Ratskeller zu Lübeck

Lübeck's Ratskeller has been serving folks since 1666. Until the 1800s, the cellars stored wines in transit to far-off ports as well as for local consumption. Celebrations known for their huge quantities of food often took place in the aisles between the bottles, a tradition that benefits today's travelers. Many regulars prefer to dine in the "Diele," small, confessional-like booths that seat four. Wooden walls reach to the vaulted ceilings. At €9.30, the "Seven-Tower Plate" is an excellent buy with salmon and a variety of vegetables such as leeks and potatoes. For €15, enjoy sole with bacon, shrimp baked with spinach, or duck flambéed with Grand Manier at your table.

**Contact:** Ratskeller zu Lübeck, Markt 13, D-23552 Lübeck, tel. +49/451/7 20 44, fax 7 20 52, email [info@ratskeller-zu-luebeck.de](mailto:info@ratskeller-zu-luebeck.de), web [www.ratskeller-zu-luebeck.de](http://www.ratskeller-zu-luebeck.de)

**Rating:** QUALITY 13/20 VALUE 15/20

#### Schiffergesellschaft

It's a quick step into Lübeck's nautical past when guests enter the Schiffergesellschaft (Seamen's Guild), which has been a meeting house since 1525. Today, the foundation still owns the

Editor's  
CHOICE

restaurant and one table on a raised platform is reserved for captains. Proceeds support needy sailors and their widows.

The setting seems to have changed little. Model sailing vessels, some more than 300 years old, hang from thick-beamed ceilings and sit on platforms heavy with centuries of paint and lacquer.

The cuisine reflects the maritime heritage of the restaurant and the city. Fish dominates the menu, especially dishes that were easy to transport and would endure storage. Take Labskaus, for example; that Hanseatic combination of pickled beef, sweet beets, onions, peppercorns and other ingredients boiled, pureed and served with fried eggs and rolled herring. It tastes better than it sounds (or looks). Follow that with Lübeck apple-Marzipan strudel.

Tradition often gives way to modern preparation. Few sailors at sea enjoyed moist, tender salmon on a bed of chanterelles sautéed in herbed cream sauce, preceded by a creamy duck soup with apple-potato dumplings. Expect to pay €12-20 per person for a hearty meal.

The perfect drink is a traditional Rotspon, a red wine imported young from Bordeaux and allowed to mature in wooden casks in Lübeck. Nearly 500 years ago, merchants shipped wines through Lübeck and discovered that the same wines stored in the city's cellars tasted better than when aged for the same period in France. Soldiers during the early 19<sup>th</sup>-century Napoleonic period agreed.

Contact: Breitestrasse 2, D-23552 Lübeck, tel. +49/451-76770, fax 73279, web [www.schiffergesellschaft.de](http://www.schiffergesellschaft.de).

**Rating:** QUALITY 16/20 VALUE 16/20

### Remise Bistro-Café-Bar

This relaxed, upbeat and friendly bistro is hidden in a renovated courtyard. Because it's off the tourist path, you'll mostly encounter local residents and students. Some customers are from the offices of Greenpeace, Amnesty International and Theater Partou, located just across the courtyard.

Strings of white bulbs form geometric shapes along the ceiling and add a festive air. Candles add warmth to the light and lend a sense of intimacy. Along the inner walls, red and white tiles — perhaps from a 1920s renovation — integrate well with the red-brick of both the inner and outer walls to extend a sense of history and permanence. In good weather, seating is available in the courtyard.

Service is fast but not hurried and the prices relatively low, so it's a great place if you've decided not to make a major time or financial commitment to a meal. But it's also quite appropriate if you want to spend a quiet evening enjoying dinner or just a beverage and conversation.

Remise adds flair to simple dishes. Typical choices include skillet dishes such as broccoli and potatoes with raisins and walnuts; sliced potatoes topped with crab, vegetables and cheese; potato soup with strips of smoked salmon; pasta with turkey and mushrooms; and baked Camembert cheese with berries. Most entrées are less than €7.

**Contact:** Remise, Wahnstrasse, D-23552 Lübeck, tel. +49/451/77773

**Rating:** QUALITY 12/20 VALUE 13/20

### Yachtzimmer

The Yachtzimmer (Yacht Room) experience is one of being aboard an old-time ship. No, it's not cramped or dark, but the interior design — with wood-plank ceilings and sloping walls — strongly suggests a ship-board setting. Antique mirrors are painted with views of old Lübeck, and the decorations are distinctly maritime.

The restaurant stretches across two 15<sup>th</sup>-century patrician houses with added-on space in the rear. In good weather, guests can sit at 10 tables in front of the restaurant with a view to the Holstentor and the brick, gabled Salzspeicher, the medieval salt storehouses that now shelter boutique shops.

Not surprisingly, fresh fish makes up much of the menu, but there's plenty for others as well. Those with a flair for the dramatic can request that their Irish coffee, Chateaubriand

or crepes Suzette (among other dishes) be prepared tableside. The extensive wine list is reasonably priced by the glass or bottle.

The primary menu changes seasonally, and a special menu offers new choices each week. One fun feature is the weekly "Trainee Dish" created and prepared by one of the restaurant's three-year trainees. The employee's name is listed on the menu. A recent offering — salmon with sauerkraut — seemed somewhat dubious but turned out o.k. When shredded, mixed with crème fraiche and then browned atop the salmon, the sauerkraut provided a pleasant sweet-and-sour complement to the delicately flavored fish.

Entrées are served on floral, ceramic plates under silver tops. Tea candles add additional character and intimacy. Servers take a team approach to each table ensuring appropriate attention. Entrées range from €12-20 and are worth every eurocent.

**Contact:** Yachtzimmer, Obertrave 4-5, D-23552 Lübeck, tel. +49/451/7 72 82, fax 899285, email [service@yachtzimmer.de](mailto:service@yachtzimmer.de), web [www.yachtzimmer.de](http://www.yachtzimmer.de). Proprietor: Jürgen Bierwirth

**Rating:** QUALITY 14/20 VALUE 15/20

For more information on Lübeck see the August, 1999, issue in the Members' area at [www.gemut.com](http://www.gemut.com). The User ID is 'beck' and the password is '7766'.

### VINEYARD DRIVE

Continued from page 1

will immediately note little plots of vines bordered by stone retaining walls and how the entire hillside, except for a few buildings, is taken up by vines. Later you will see that some terraces nurture only a solitary row of plants.

Just past 8 kilometers into the drive you will see the **Grandvaux Restaurant**. At that point continue straight ahead, do not take either the road that goes up the hill or the one that goes down. Follow the Route du Vignoble markers.

Quickly you round a corner and come upon a spectacular panorama.

At 8.9 kilometers bear right again following the Route du Vignoble

sign. Do not go left up the hill.

In this area are tiny plots of hillside, perhaps as small as six or eight feet by 10 to 14 feet, being prepared for planting.

At about 9.5 km you will be able to see how the vines go right to the edge of the lake, yet another example of how virtually every square meter of this unique piece of earth is used.

Next comes the wine village of **Riex**, where you can stop for lunch or to taste wine. At about 10.5 kilometers is a small cemetery and another spot to park the car and enjoy the view or snap a picture.

Then comes **Epesses**. To visit the village leave your car in the parking area just before the town's entrance. Traffic here is controlled by a light that allows travel first in one direction on the one-lane street and then, after a few minutes, the light changes and the flow is reversed.

Just beyond Epesses is a good look at the cable car system used to transport the harvested grapes up and down the steep hill.

Another turnout is at 12.7 km; this one with a telescope and a map which orients users to such peaks as the Dents du Midi and the summits of the Haut-Chablais in the Savoy, across the lake.

At 13.2 is **Chexbres** and at 13.8 km the drive returns to more urban surroundings. The main road is rejoined and heads toward Vevey on the lake.

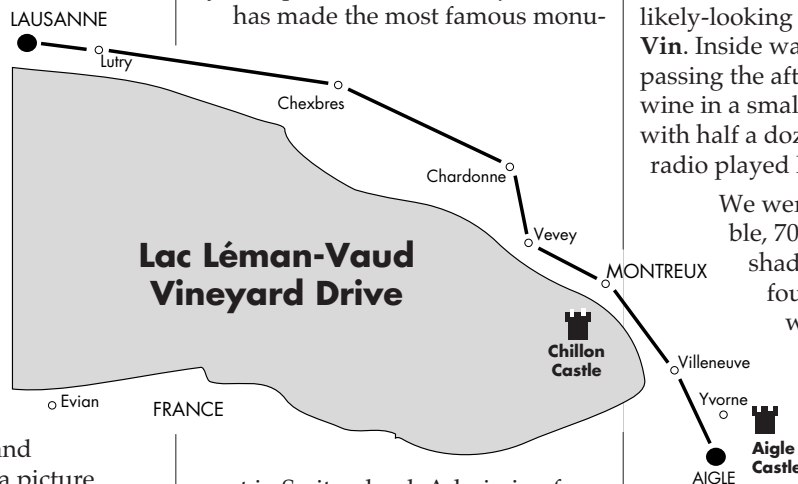
Then, at 14.1, take the left up the hill toward **Chardonne** and in a couple of kilometers you will pass under the Autobahn. At 16.8 is a good view of Vevey and Montreux.

Another kilometer and you come to Chardonne where we stopped for lunch (see story elsewhere on this page).

About a kilometer beyond Chardonne the road heads down the hill to Vevey where, if you do not wish to

explore the town, simply follow the signs to Montreux.

Once there, heed the Martigny, Evian signs. At about 34 kilometers into the drive is **Chillon Castle**, built on rocks just off the lakeshore, which Byron's poem, *The Prisoner of Chillon*, has made the most famous monu-



ment in Switzerland. Admission for adults is CHF 10 and CHF 5 for children.

Then comes **Villeneuve** at the end of the lake. Continue on, following the signs to **Aigle**.

At about 43 kilometers are the first signs to the Aigle Castle and its wine museum. To the left are the vineyards of Yvorne.

Then, at 47 kilometers, make a left at the sign to the chateau and follow the signs through the narrow streets.

The **Castle of Aigle** and the **Vaudois Museum of the Vine and Wine**, are open every day from April to early October. Adults pay CHF 9, children 6-16 CHF 5. The castle, which was built in the 13th century, now offers 14 rooms of the region's viticultural art and artifacts including old wine glasses, decanters, labels, bottles and wine-making paraphernalia.

To assist you in this wine exploration write to the **Vaud Tourist Office** and request its *Guide to the Vaudois Vineyards*, a handy booklet in English which traces both auto and walking routes through the vineyards along Lac Léman, lists points of interest and outlines the characteristics of the wines in each of the villages.

**Contact:** Office du Tourisme du Canton de Vaud, Avenue d'Ouchy 60,

Case postale 164, CH-1000 Lausanne 6, tel. +41/021/613 26 26 - Fax 613 26 00, web [www.vaudtourisme.ch](http://www.vaudtourisme.ch).

### **A Light Lunch in Chardonne**

We parked on the main road by Maison des Vignerons and walked back into town, stopping at the first likely-looking place, **Cafe au Bon Vin**. Inside was a handful of locals passing the afternoon over a glass of wine in a small, plain room furnished with half a dozen wooden tables. A radio played French pop music.

We were greeted by an amiable, 70ish grandmother type shadowed by a little girl of four or five; no doubt the woman's granddaughter.

The light meal for two consisted of 5 dl (about a pint) of house-made wine, fresh bread and a plate of sliced

meat — dried beef, prosciutto, bacon and sausage — served with a small ceramic pot of pickles and pickled onions. All was delicious and we enjoyed an idle half hour watching the patrons, the elderly woman and the little girl. The lack of tourists and the Bon Vin's authenticity recommend it.

**Au Bon Vin Pinte Vaudoise**, 6 rue du Village, CH-1803 Chardonne, tel. +41/021/921 27 04. ☎

## **Readers' Forum**

### **Strong Lufthansa Support**

I am a new subscriber and find the question about possible deteriorating service on **Lufthansa** an interesting one. I returned home five days ago from a trip to Munich from Portland, Oregon, via Frankfurt. This is a nonstop flight and a blessing for us Northwest travelers. No more three-hour layovers in Chicago or Atlanta.

The service was excellent; the crew very attentive — especially considering the babies and small children on the flight. As you can imagine the plane was full but everyone was considerate. Lots of fluids were offered with a smile and the food was good.

I have made many trips to Germany since I arrived in the U.S. 36 years ago. The polar route and Lufthansa are a great improvement over some of my earlier trips. Much praise to Lufthansa.

INGEBORG TONN  
THE DALLES OR

### Handy Munich Airport Hotel

A couple of comments about recent "mentionings" in *Gemütlichkeit*. In April you wrote that subscribers from Sacramento were displeased with Munich's **Kempinski Airport Hotel**. Our second stay there was just a few weeks ago. We find it very convenient as an overnight stop after the San Francisco-Munich flight on LH which doesn't arrive until about 5:30 pm., too late to pick up a rental car and drive anywhere. Next morning we just walk to car rental in the airport and pick up our vehicle. This trip we paid 163 euros, which included a terrific breakfast buffet -- normally a "big ticket" item. Staff on both visits was helpful and courteous (they even let us store some luggage there while we traveled to Poland for the weekend).

Item #2: The June issue asked for input regarding the service on **Lufthansa**. We were fortunate to be able to use **United** miles to get an upgrade for our recent trip, and the new business class sleeper seats are fabulous! They fully recline and even have a place to store your shoes and another spot for your eyeglasses. And just push a button and your tray table automatically pops up from its storage spot. All seats have individual remote controls to set the seat however you wish. The service was outstanding both directions, and Munich's new Terminal 2 is spacious, light and easy to negotiate. If you're flying business class, there is a special area for check-in with 14 counters. So as you can see, we are sold on LH at this point. Last year we could not obtain an upgrade, but felt that service in economy class was pleasant, friendly and attentive.

Thanks, as always, for thought-provoking items.

CHARLOTTE OLSTEAD  
REDWOOD CITY CA

### Good Things in Stuttgart

I'm an American born in Stuttgart...an often overlooked city as a tourist and travel destination. In looking through the hotel info on Stuttgart at your website I noticed two wonderful hotels that are missing from your lineups:

- **Hotel Ochsen** in Stuttgart-Wanzen (Ulmer Str. 323, tel. +49/0711/407 0500, email: [info@ochsen-online.de](mailto:info@ochsen-online.de), doubles from €107), which exudes *gemütlichkeit* and is a hotel where many stay before picking up a new Mercedes.

- **Hotel Traube** in Plieningen (Brabantgasse 2, tel. +49/0711/458920, email: [info@romantik-hotel-traube.com](mailto:info@romantik-hotel-traube.com), doubles from €105) next to the airport. Here, the Chef de Cuisine put together a meal for 15 of my family that was outstanding (including mailing dinner menus to all guests within 24 hours of planning the meal). Quite impressive, even by European standards! The Racknagel family (ask for Romy) runs this place and it is well worth the effort to experience this level of hospitality.

Two hours south of Stuttgart is Zwiefalten and its church, the jewel in the crown of the Schwabisch school of Baroque churches. What a fantastic place this is. It makes your heart stop, and send chills up and down your spine...that's how breathtakingly beautiful this place is. I would take another trip to Germany just to visit this place again. With regards to art in the city of Stuttgart, the **Stadt Gallery** contains masters such as Franz Hals, Rembrandt, Gauguin, Max Beckman, Picasso, Kandinsky, Renoir, Albers, Otto Dix, ...just to name a few, housed in a new wing designed by British Architect James Sterling...really an undiscovered jewel not generally well known.

Thanks for all the exacting and hard work done on your publication ...you do yourselves proud.

RALPH LOVELL  
ATLANTA GA

(Editor's Note: For a suggested auto tour that includes three great Baroque churches in southern Germany — including the Church at Zwiefalten — see the Feb. 1994 issue of *Gemütlichkeit* in the Members' area at [www.gemut.com](http://www.gemut.com). See access codes page #2.)

## Travel Quickies

■ **Christmas in Germany:** As independent travelers, *Gemütlichkeit* subscribers are not much interested in package tours — except during the holiday season and the time of the great outdoor Christmas festivals. Though every town has its own Christmas market, larger cities mount the most elaborate productions. Nürnberg is said to be the biggest and best and, for a small town, Rothenburg ob der Tauber's is extraordinary. Salzburg, Munich and Vienna are also high on any list.

A highly-reputable Los Angeles company, **Nonstop Travel**, has organized a December 2-10 junket that includes Munich, Salzburg, Rothenburg, Nürnberg and Würzburg. The deal includes three and four-star hotels, all breakfasts, some dinners, city tours, a visit to Neuschwanstein Castle, a Franconian wine tasting, English-speaking escort, local guides and all admission fees. Ground transport is via deluxe motorcoach equipped with toilet, refrigerator, kitchen, coffee maker, radio/cassette, CD, video, air-conditioning, folding tables, adjustable seats and foot rests. The tour begins in Munich and ends in Frankfurt. The double-occupancy price is \$1,055. Roundtrip air starts at \$439. Contact: 800-949-6362.

■ **Low Fares on Air India:** India's flagship carrier now offers a number of nonstop flights from U.S. cities to Europe at very attractive prices. High season (June 16-August 31) fares from Los Angeles to 30 European cities via Frankfurt are \$999 plus tax. September 1 through December 14 fares are \$555 plus tax. From Chicago the prices are \$599 and \$325. From Newark to Paris fares are \$555 and \$365. Flights, which are via Boeing 747 aircraft, earn frequent flyer miles on Delta or Air France and there is no minimum stay, no weekend surcharge and an open return is permitted for an additional \$100. Air India business class from the U.S. to Europe starts at \$2350 and first class fares begin at \$3099. Contact: 800-521-6722. 