

DEAR
SUBSCRIBER

Taking Care of Business

This space should properly be devoted to my mumblings and musings on European travel. While I intend to get to that, there's a "housekeeping" issue that needs to be dealt with first.

In the 23 years of *Gemütlichkeit's* existence we've not raised our renewal subscription price. The folks who came on board in 1987 still pay the same low price as when they started. Though I haven't done precise research (I'm scared to), the per reader cost—printing, postage, getting the stories—to produce a year's worth of issues has much more than doubled since then. Factor in an overall loss of readership due to 9/11 plus all the free (though very much unfiltered) information on the Internet, and, as the man once said, "Houston, we've got a problem." Our problem is the same one that faces every other print publication in this country—news-papers, magazines, newsletters—how to survive in the Internet age.

There is a way, however, for us to live happily ever after and for you to continue to receive *Gemütlichkeit* at 1990 price levels—and on a much more timely basis. By now you've no doubt figured out that we're going electronic. Starting this month, *Gemütlichkeit* will be delivered to some by email and to others by regular mail. The regular mail part is only temporary as we plan to transition to 100-percent email delivery within a year or two. In the meantime those who choose to receive the newsletter the old fashioned way will have to pay a higher price, \$69 per year to be exact. The new electronic price is \$49 for one-year and \$93 for two. Renewal notices will now offer the two price categories, one for

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GEMÜTLICHKEIT

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

SCHWERIN

Though the former East Germany came out of hibernation 20 years ago, many of its most interesting cities remain undiscovered by Americans. Schwerin is a prime example.

Northeastern Germany's grandest, gaudiest ancestral duke's castle looms large, a formidable presence situated inside this attractive Mecklenburg lakefront city. It is the signature image of Schwerin, Germany's smallest *Landeshauptstadt* state capital, conducting its governmental business in the republic's least densely-populated federal state.

The walkably compact urban layout is set amidst vast stretches of bucolic heath-and-farm countryside, dappled with more than 1,000 Mecklenburg-region lakes and ponds; seven of which are within municipal confines (including the oblong-

shaped, artificial **Pfaffenteich**, crisscrossed by commuter boats, with a fountain spouting near its southern perimeter, where four downtown streets intersect). **Schweriner See**, the biggest lake (21km/13mi. long, 60 sq. km. overall) shapes the city's east contours and is fringed with bays, boat docks, parks, marshes, footbridges, causeways, curving pathways and south-shore Zippendorf's sandy beach.

Reaching skyward in Zippendorf since 1964 is Schwerin's 136.5-meter/453-ft. *Fernsehturm* TV tower with observation perch. **Weisse Flotte** excursion boats take passengers from Marstall piers to **Kaninchenwerder** and

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Open Air Museums

Visiting an open-air museum in Germany is an interesting and entertaining way to learn more about the country's past. Germany has more than 130 of these museums, large and small, which are known as *Freilichtmuseums*, *Freilichtmuseums*, *Freilichtmuseums*, *Bauernhofmuseums*, and sometimes, if they deal with the very early history of this part of the world, *Archäologischesmuseums*. The majority consist of houses, barns, workshops, outbuildings, fields, gardens, and pastures depicting rural and village life during the 500 years from the late Middle Ages until the beginning of World War II.

Open-air museums typically focus on daily life in their own geographical region. Most of the buildings are authentic and date from the

15th to the 20th century. They have been dismantled, moved to the museum site and then reassembled. In many cases, these historical edifices have been saved from destruction after being dismantled to make room for new ones. Some *Freilichtmuseums* also have a few buildings that are modern-day reproductions of older structures.

Houses in open-air museums contain furniture, appliances, cookware, tableware, linens, and decorative items—the same as, or similar to, those used by their occupants a century or more ago. Workshops for blacksmithing, carpentry, and

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Exchange rates as of 8/8/09
1 euro = \$1.42
1 Swiss franc = \$0.92
1 gallon diesel, Germany = \$5.85

DEAR SUBSCRIBER

Continued from page 1

regular mail, one for email. If you want to start receiving *Gemütlichkeit* immediately via email, please send your name and email address to bob@gemut.com or phone 800-521-6722 x 3.

Book Your 2010 Cruise Now

The major cruise companies have announced 2010 schedules and itineraries, and there are substantial discounts for early bookings. **Uniworld**, for example, offers \$900 per couple price reductions on selected European river cruises, such as the popular Danube Discovery—9 days, Nürnberg to Vienna—provided you book and pay for a category one or two cabin before September 30. The discount drops to \$300 if you wait until the November 30 deadline. This is in addition to the five-percent *Gemütlichkeit* discount.

Please be aware that our travel department can book you on *all* the major cruise lines and destinations, not just Europe and not just river cruises. Contact Laura Riedel at 800-521-6722 x 2, or via email at laura@gemut.com. You can also browse hundreds of cruises using the Cruise Finder at www.gemut.com.

Fall Wine Festivals

For many, the next 90 days are the very best time for a European vacation. Current low air fares are

almost certain to drop even more for fall trips and Europe's crisp air and changing fall colors are a travel aphrodisiac. This is the season, too, for grape harvest festivals in thousands of wine villages. These wonderfully authentic mostly outdoor events feature good food, wine and music and are held in mostly off-the-beaten-track towns that offer the double-barreled advantages of low prices and welcoming local residents in a convivial setting. Small town Europe at its best. You can see a long list of festivals by date and location at www.deutscheweine.de. The site is in German until you click the English link.

Currency Exchange Revisited

We've been over this ground before but based on the number of questions received here, perhaps a review is in order. The question being, "what do I do about exchanging dollars for foreign currency?" Though the answer—ATM debit cards and credit cards—is straightforward, it's often not well-received. People are put off by credit card and debit card service charges and foreign exchange fees. But even with the fees, plastic is still the way to go.

Currency exchange issues continue to be a recurring theme at online travel forums and I am amazed at the number of people who, (a), convert large amounts of dollars to euros prior to U.S. de-

parture, then carry the resulting cash on their person to Europe, or, (b), purchase traveler's checks. In my view, both are bad ideas.

Until I talked him out of it, one man planned to exchange \$5000 for euros and carry them all over Europe. The danger in conveying a lot of cash is obvious. Surprisingly, however, many travelers think only of the security problem in transporting cash and don't consider the exchange rate when buying euros from their bank. As this is written, Wells Fargo is selling euros for \$1.51. If one were to purchase 3,000 euros from the bank at that rate it would cost \$4,530 plus a small fee. The inter-bank rate, however, is 1.438 and that's the rate you'll get if you use a debit card or credit card and let your bank convert the euros to dollars. Sure, most cards charge fees for these transactions, but you get a much better exchange rate

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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 PDF format from January 1993, except for the most recent 10, are available free to subscribers only at 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: **werin** Password: **6702**

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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	
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

SCHWERIN*Continued from page 1*

Ziegelwerder, mid-lake nature sanctuaries frequented by more than 100 species of birds. Urban smallness has inspired a much-used, rather fond nickname for Schwerin: *Hauptdorf* ("Capital Village"). Small though it is, this proud old city is on the verge of a major yearlong celebration marking its 850th anniversary in 2010.

If the locally wonderful water world doesn't satisfy outdoor enthusiasts, they can bike-hike through the heavily forested, environmentally protected **Warnowtal** valley, 70/km/43.5mi. northbound toward coastal Rostock via hidden-away riverbank villages.

First, though, one of Germany's most flamboyantly spectacular castles—inspired by Grand Duke Friedrich Franz II—fairly shouts for attention. Its pentagonal bulk, master-planned by court architect Georg Adolf Demmler, stands on a lake in conscious imitation of Château de Chambord in France's Loire Valley. Rising from medieval fortress foundations on a mini-island accessed by bridges festooned with decorative lamp posts, ongoing construction and centuries of impulsive add-ons produced the neo-Renaissance, gilded-domed **Schweriner Schloss** (www.schloss-schwerin.de, finally completed in 1857. The end result, amidst terracotta trimmings and fancy stone masonry, is a splurge of pinnacles, towers, belfries and 15 turrets. For dramatic dazzlement, floodlights illuminate the ensemble at night. All in all, an extravagant setup for the Mecklenburg-Western Pomeranian state's *Landtag* parliamentary offices.

For visitors touring the premises, however, governmental doings play second fiddle to the castle's cultural finery. Not to be missed: an upstairs portrait gallery devoted to images covering 600 years of ancestral dukedom and, in separate gallery space, important Mecklenburg landscape paintings.

Schwerin Basics**Population:** 96,329**Elevation:** 38 meters (125 feet)

Visitor Information: Tourist-Information Schwerin, Am Markt 14, 19055 Schwerin, tel. +49/0385/592/5212, fax: 0385/555/094, info@schwerin.com, www.schwerin.com.

German National Tourist Office, 122 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10168-0072, tel. 212-661-7200, fax: 212-661-7174, www.cometogermany.com

Driving distances:

Hamburg	91 km	57 miles
Lübeck	51 km	32 miles
Rostock	70 km	43 miles
Frankfurt	255 km	158 miles
Berlin	183 km	113 miles
Leipzig	267 km	166 miles
Magdeburg	164 km	102 miles
Wismar	30 km	19 miles
Stralsund	134 km	83 miles
Hannover	179 km	111 miles
Bremen	182 km	113 miles
Kiel	112 km	70 miles

Important dates: Founded (and Christianized) by Saxon Duke Henry the Lion, 1160

Holy Roman Empire statehood, 1161-1358

Mecklenburg Court Orchestra's inaugural concerts, 1563

Became capital of Mecklenburg duchy, 1621

Grand Duke Paul Friedrich of Mecklenburg-Schwerin made the city official "headquarters" of his court, 1837

Decreed state capital of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, 1918

Arrival of American troops, May 2nd, 1945; then the British, June 1st; final hand-over to Russian forces, July 1st

Absorbed into the socialist German Democratic Republic, 1949-1990

Visitor Information: The east-west A-24 *Autobahn* linking Berlin and Hamburg provides speedy access to Schwerin's lake district. Exit at either of three inter-

Also here: a grand wood-paneled banquet hall, neo-Gothic chapel and ducal throne room. Watch for the Schloss museum's displays of furniture, jewelry, medals and weaponry, but especially its sizeable European porcelain collection (Meissen, Fürstenberg, Sèvres). Relax in the glass-walled orange-rie/café; stroll amidst six allegorical statues in the Baroque Schlossgarten—gorgeously abloom with fresh plantings while Schwerin

changes: Hagenow, Ludwigslust or Schwerin-Süd. As it approaches the city, the A-24 morphs into a bucolic suburban roadway called the Ludwigsluster Chaussee. Four coastal Hanseatic cities—Lübeck, Wismar, Rostock and Stralsund—are connected by North Germany's A-20 *Autobahn*. Exiting at the Wismar interchange gets you onto a short, direct southbound drive toward in-town Schwerin.

Rail: Log onto www.raileurope.com for DB German Rail's InterCity service to Schwerin's Wilhelmian-style central station. Frequent daily departures from Rostock; 56-minute trip. Check DB schedules for comparably reliable 57-minute service from Hamburg. Figure on two-hour travel time from Berlin's riverside *Hauptbahnhof*, in addition to *Ostbahnhof* and midcity *Zoobahnhof* stations.

Air: Closest major international gateway airport: Hamburg-Fuhlsbüttel (HAM). Closest regional airports: Schwerin-Parchim (SZW), Lübeck-Blankenese (LBC), Rostock-Laage (RLG).

Bus Ride: The #10 line loops around the lower part of the Schweriner See (Germany's third largest lake). Check timetables and fares online at: www.sgs-busundreisen.de.

Events: *Festspiele MV*, June-Dec., annually, statewide. Classical music.

Schlossfestspiele (Castle Festival), annually July-August. Alter Garden, outside the Mecklenburgisches Staatstheater: opera, ballet, drama. A 2009 highlight: Mozart's *The Magic Flute*.

Drachenbootfest (Dragon Boat Festival), on the Schweriner See, Aug. 9-11.

Altstadtfest (Old Town Festival), inner-city streets and squares, Sept. 10-13.

19th annual International *Filmkunstfest*, May 5-10, '09, Capitol Kino movie theater.

Mäkelborg Christmas Market, city center, Nov. 27-Dec. 31 this year.

Best Buy: Purchasing the Schwerin-Ticket entitles the holder to 10-15% discounts on some two dozen tours and attractions in and around the city. Bargain-priced at €5 for one-day usage, €7 for two days.

hosts Germany's famed BUGA federal garden show this year through October 11.

Thanks to past acquisitions made by Mecklenburg Duke Christian Ludwig II and his son Friedrich, the state's **Staatliches Museum Kunstsammlung** ranks high as an outstanding fine-arts repository. Set amidst linden groves on Werderstrasse's northern edge of lakeside Alter Garten

greenery, this cultural gem (built 1877-82) resembles a Grecian temple. Gallery-goers ponder Dutch-Flemish "Golden Age" masterpieces (Rubens-Rembrandt-Hals-Breughel), but influential German works (Cranach the Elder-Caspar David Friedrich-Max Liebermann-Lovis Corinth) deserve equal admiration. Here, too: Thomas Gainsborough's full-length, 18th-century *Queen Charlotte* portrait and (surprise!) a comprehensive French array of dadaist-surrealist Marcel DuChamp canvases.

Schwerin's inner cityscape emerged in remarkably good shape from its economically tight-fisted GDR years. So meander; take in the architectural mix. Inside and out, **Dom St. Maria und St. Johannes** (on Bischofstrasse) exemplifies soaring early-Gothic north-German brick cathedral architecture. Climbing the 219 winding steps to the tower's observation deck rewards persevering sightseers with sensational panoramas from 98-meter/320-ft. altitude. Evocative tidbit: the 15th-

Key Websites for the Traveler

- **www.gemut.com** Gateway site for travelers to Germanic Europe, including car rental, rail passes, hotel bookings, 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.travelessentials.com** Guidebooks, maps, travel accessories, luggage, all at 10 percent off for subscribers. Use discount code gemut2009.
- **maps.google.com** Best maps on the web. Driving & walking. Zoom in-out. Great detail city & country. Satellite & terrain views.
- **bahn.hafas.de/bin/query.exe/en** German rail website, with train schedules throughout Europe, as well as Germany
- **www.sbb.ch/index_e.htm** Swiss and European rail schedules
- **www.ski-europe.com** Top Web resource for skiers with much data on Alpine resorts
- **www.myswitzerland.com** Website of Switzerland's national tourist authority
- **www.germany-tourism.de** Germany's national tourist authority
- **www.austria.info/us** Austria's national tourist authority
- **www.historicgermany.com** Website for an alliance of historic German cities
- **www.thetravelinsider.info** Info on electronics for travelers — cell phones, computers, etc.

century golden cross crowning the steeple was salvaged from Wismar's war-damaged (and, in 1990, GDR-dynamited) Marienkirche.

Angling over to the Marktplatz, you'll come upon an unusual kind of **Rathaus**—essentially Gothic but scrunched behind an English mock-Tudor façade. At this town hall's same market-square location, a dozen white Doric columns enclose the 18th-century **Säulengebäude**, a produce-and-flowers market hall which also contains the **Röntgen** coffeehouse café. At midpoint on the square, a symbolic lion monument crouches atop a marble shaft. Extending from the castle's horticultural and kitchen gardens through the southeastern corner edge of town, the Schlossgartenallee is lined with oak trees and imposing Gründerzeit and Wilhelminian villas of late-18th/early-19th-century vintage. Viewing them makes socialist GDR austerity a distant memory.

Beginning in 1705, a planned *Schwerin Neustadt* community named **Schelfstadt** came into existence. Its narrow streets, clustered half-timbered *Fachwerk* houses, Baroque Schelfkirche parish church and tidy gardens, still comprise a worthwhile visitor attraction. This lakeside area's **Freilichtmuseum Schwerin-Muess** recalls 18th-19th-century rural folkways with thatched-roof cottages, farm buildings and workshops.

Schwerin Hotels

Speicher am Ziegelsee

While doing any moderately extensive Schweriner looking-around, you're sure to reach a lake. In the case of this four-star hotel, it's on the city's north-side Ziegelsee. After German reunification, the Sorat organization acquired a 1936 wheat warehouse, converting the six-story brick structure into what was completed in 1998. Overall, a successful transformation—culminating in a spacious lounge warmed by a rough-stone fireplace, sunny atrium,

wood-and-wicker furnishings in public areas, sauna and fitness facilities, earth-tone materials throughout, and, of course, a lake-side terrace. The 55-seat restaurant has upscale white-tablecloth Mediterranean-dinner flair, and serves full gourmet breakfasts. For coziness, request a top-floor room in which overhead window dormers brighten a roof-slanted wall. Room-rate differentials depend upon your choice of water- or land-view accommodations.

Daily Rates: Singles €75-97, doubles €95-117

Contact: Speicher am Ziegelsee, Speicherstrasse 11, 19055 Schwerin, tel. +49/0385/50030, fax 03085/50031, m.info@speicher-hotel.de, www.speicher-hotel.de

Rating: QUALITY 14/20, VALUE 15/20

Seehotel Frankenhorst

Another, less-pricey Ziegelsee choice is four-star-rated and in its own park on the lake's northeast shore, 6km/4.75 miles from midtown Schwerin. The all-nonsmoking premises include 43 modest but colorfully pleasant guestrooms, the nautically themed *Bootshaus* restaurant, glass-enclosed *Wintergarten*, summer terrace, beauty salon, whirlpool and sauna, swimming pool, boat dock and lakefront beer garden—plus equipment for table tennis, volleyball and other family-friendly activities on the sprawling lawn.

Daily Rates: Singles from €49, doubles from €55.

Contact: Best Western Seehotel Frankenhorst, Frankenhorst 5, 19055 Schwerin, tel. +49/0385/592/220, fax 0385/592/22145, info@seehotel.bestwestern.de, www.seehotelbestwestern.de.

Rating: QUALITY 13/20, VALUE 15/20

Niederländischer Hof

Best in town for deluxe ambience, perched on the west edge of Pfaffenteich waters, mere minutes from the *Bahnhof*, this distinctive 1901 oldster keeps its 32 guestrooms in

Editor's
Choice

tip-top shape, with parquet floors, English-import country furniture and marble baths. The wood-paneled library is a restful gathering place. Expect culinary excellence in the mirrored restaurant (adjacent to the hotel's own garden) and low-key chitchat in the city's most sophisticated bar.

Daily Rates: Singles €84-124, doubles €139-170 (choice of lake or city view).

Contact: Niederländischer Hof, Alexandrinenstrasse 12-13, 19055 Schwerin, tel: +49/0385/59110, fax 0385/5911/0999, hotel@niederlaenderscherhof.de, www.niederlaendischerhof.de

Rating: QUALITY 17/20, VALUE 16/20

Crowne Plaza

Location: a bit south of the *Altstadt*, overlooking the Ostorfer See (yet another of Schwerin's delightful lakes), walkably close to the Schloss and gardens. Slick Americanized atmosphere and amenities attract business-meeting clientele as well as leisure travelers to this modern red-brick building, shaped like a ship's prow. As expected: a fitness and "wellness" center, plus conference and banquet facilities. All 100 guestroom accommodations come equipped with wireless Internet access. The Marco Polo restaurant offers an international dinner menu, and each evening in the Columbus Bar cocktails are sipped to a background of smooth piano melodies. Ask about package rates tied to seasonal events and entertainment. Golfers pay €138 per-person (weekdays), €146 (weekends) for a package that includes greens fees at 18-hole Loch Winston Golfplatz.

Daily Rates: Singles €99-137, doubles €129-177 (costs dependent upon city or lake view).

Contact: Crowne Plaza Hotel Schwerin, Bleicher Ufer 23, 19053 Schwerin, tel: +49/0385/57/550, fax 0385/575/5777, crowne-plaza-schwerin@online.de, crowne-plaza.m-vp.de

Rating: QUALITY 15/20, VALUE 14/20

Alt Schweriner Schankstuben

Overlooking a public square with the brick cathedral looming nearby, all 16 budget-simple rooms are pinewood-furnished and offer splendid views of prime Schweriner landmarks. The two-part restaurant, cheerfully staffed by Frymark-family ownership, focuses on regional specialties. Weather permitting, meals and drinks are served on an 80-seat terrace, shaded by linden trees. Free on-site parking for guests arriving by car.

Daily Rates: Singles €55-59, doubles €59-94; extra for Dom view, €88-94.

Contact: Alt Schweriner Schankstuben, Am Schlachtermarkt 9, 19055 Schwerin, tel. 49/0385/592/5313, fax 0385/557/4109, mail@schankstuben.de, www.schankstuben.de

Rating: QUALITY 12/20, VALUE 16/20

Zur Guten Quelle

Right in the middle of things, with favorable Marktplatz-and-cathedral proximity. Schusterstrasse connects the *Innenstadt* with Alter Garten greenery. Matthias Theiner runs this six-room *Gasthaus* with an attentive sense of hospitality. His timber-framed property, still stalwart after its two centuries of existence, was tastefully renovated three-four years after Germany's reunification. Still, however, fixtures and vinyl-covered furnishings wistfully retain their retro GDR dowdiness. Restaurant dinner entrées average €8-13. An intimate sidewalk beer garden stays busy during any stretch of pleasant mid-year weather.

Daily Rates: Singles €49-53, doubles €69-76, families €91-100

Contact: Zur Guten Quelle, Schusterstrasse 12, 19055 Schwerin, tel: +49/0385/565/985, fax 0385/500/7602, quelle190555Sn@aol.com, www.zur-guten-quelle-m-vp.de

Rating: QUALITY 13/20, VALUE 15/20

Schwerin Restaurants

Weinhaus Uhle

On a street corner near the cathedral, this classy but genteel establishment with 1902 pedigree has a dual identity: slickly modern wine bar downstairs; vaulted-ceilinged, red-carpeted heraldic *Rittersaal* Knight's Room upstairs for fine dining. Overall décor (somehow) merges florid rococo and *Jugendstil* Art Nouveau design. Flammkuchen crêpes (€7) are popular; full-course *Mecklenburger Klassiker* house specialties range €9-12.90—or splurge on the roast duck (€18.50) instead. A talented music-making combo entertains nightly.

Editor's
Choice

Contact: Weinhaus Uhle, Schusterstrasse 13-15, 19055 Schwerin, tel. +49/0385/477/3030, www.uhle1751.de

Rating: QUALITY 16/20, VALUE 14/20

Weinhaus Wöhler

A Schelfstadt wine retailer since 1819, turned long ago into a completely Germanic inner-city restaurant where leaded-glass windows romanticize a pair of intimate dining rooms (with non-smoking section and "hot spot" for travelers' WiFi computer messaging). Frymark-family management makes them feel right at home. Located two short blocks east of Pfaffenteich shoreline.

Contact: Weinhaus Wöhler, Puschkinstrasse 26, 19055 Schwerin, tel. +49/0385/555/830, www.weinhauswoehler.com

Rating: QUALITY 13/20, VALUE 13/20

Weinhaus Krömer

Mundanelly useful, beginning in 1895, as the *Grossherzogliche Damfwäscherei* (the grand duke's steam laundry); completely redesigned prior to reopening a year ago, courteously hosted by the Krömer family. Main courses: €5.50-9.50.

Contact: Weinhaus Krömer, Grosser Moor 56, 19055 Schwerin, tel. +49/0385/562/956, www.weinhaus-kroemer.de

Rating: QUALITY 12/20, VALUE 14/20

Zum Stadtkrug Altstadt Brauhaus

Shiny copper vats, yeasty aromatics, bottles galore, bare wooden tabletops and chummy close quarters leave no doubt that you've stepped into a good old *Hausbrauerei*, this one pouring its nine kinds of pilsner beers since 1936. Ceiling beams, blond stucco walls, leafy beer garden and a mishmash of antiques set the tone. Unfancy breakfasts, brunches and meat-fish-fowl-*Schnitzel* dinners (€8.95-14.95) are served. "Going regional" could mean ordering a helping of *Schweriner Grützwurst* sausages with dumplings (€9.95) or one of the Baltic fisherman's platters (€12.95-14.95).

Contact: Zum Stadtkrug, Wis-marsche Strasse 129, 19053 Schwerin, tel. +49/0385/593/6693, www.alstadtbrauhaus.de

Rating: QUALITY 12/20, VALUE 14/20

Wallenstein

Patrons dining beneath a swooping roof out on the long, low pavilion glance directly beyond Schweriner See embankments for knockout views of the almighty Schloss. You'd expect selections of lake fish in such a setting, so go ahead and order—for instance—a helping of reliably fresh *Zanderfilet* pike-perch (€9.50-13.40) or white *Matjes* herring (€7-8.65). Or instead decide upon steak, pork, breast of duck or per-haps a generously big, plump *Wienerschnitzel*. (Such full-course meals range €13.80-16.90). Vegetarians aren't ignored (€8.20-9.50), and dessert/drinks listings suit all tastes by day or night. Sip smooth, Mecklenburg-brewed Lübzer pilsner beer.

Contact: Restaurant-Café Wal-lenstein, Werderstrasse 140, 19055 Schwerin, tel. +49/557/7755, www.restaurant-wallenstein.de

Rating: QUALITY 14/20, VALUE 15/20

Friedrich's

Handsomely situated on the southern rim of midcity

Pfaffenteich waterfront, this restaurant's colonnaded edifice exudes circa-1810 neoclassical elegance. There's no letdown inside, where white door frames and potted palms accentuate walls and sideboards loaded with vintage photographs and antique bric-a-brac. Menu reliables include choice of two portions of Mecklenburg farmers's feast (€9.90-12.90), goulasch accompanied by red cabbage and home-made dumplings (€10.90), rump-steak and salad (€12.90). A big-windowed café is on the premises and, in summertime, a sizeable number of tables can be set on the terrace.

Contact: Restaurant-Café Friedrichs, Friedrichstrasse 2, 19055 Schwerin, tel. +49/0385/555/473, www.restaurant-friedrichs.com


Rating: QUALITY 16/20, VALUE 17/20

The Café Scene

Finding a *gemütlich* café in Schwerin is just about as easy as finding a body of water in this land of lakes and rivers. In addition to **Röntgen**, "recommendables" include **Ulrike** (Wittenberg Strasse 42), **Rothe** (Puschkinstrasse 14), **Karina** (Werderstrasse 2) and **Weststadt** (Carl-Moltmann-Strasse 30). For chic ambience and circa-1755 ancestry: **Café Prag** (Schlossstrasse 17), where light lunches range €4.90-10.90.

Shopping

Map-read your way to Friedrichstrasse, Schlossstrasse, Schmiedestrasse, Werderstrasse, extra-long Mecklenburgstrasse, pedestrian-only Puschkinstrasse or Schelfstadt's narrow Münzstrasse. Several urban *Einkauf-center* malls promptly popped up after the GDR's 1990 implosion. The biggest, with its 120 stories, is the triple-level **Schlosspark-Center** at west-side Marienplatz. Due to open here, in 2010: the massive curved-glass **Marienplatz-Galerie**. While turning a corner away from that construc-

tion site, browse the **Wurm-Passage**, a mini-mall. The **Burgsee-galerie** now dominates Mecklenburgstrasse; Grabenstrasse's **Sieben Seen (Seven Lakes) Center** opened recently. In a much more traditional vein, weekend flea markets occur during July, followed by November's medieval-themed **Martens Markt**. 

OPEN-AIR MUSEUMS

Continued from page 1

other trades are equipped with historically accurate tools from the period. Village stores are stocked with the manufactured goods available to people at that time. And barns often display agricultural machinery, horse trappings, and a variety of vehicles from humble wagons to fancy coaches.

These museums provide fascinating glimpses into the past and into the daily lives of people who raised their own animals, grew their own crops, ground their own grain, baked their own bread, churned their own butter, spun their own yarn, and wove their own cloth. Many *Freilichtmuseums* also offer hands-on workshops where children and adults can try some of the skills their ancestors by necessity possessed for putting food on their tables and clothes on their backs.

The first German *Freilichtmuseum* was constructed in 1901, but consisted only of new reproductions of old houses from East Prussia and the surrounding area. The museum established by the Thuringian city of Rudolstadt in 1914-1915, with several houses dating back to the 17th century, is Germany's first *Freilichtmuseum* of authentic historical buildings. And in 1934, the largest regional museum of this type was established in Cloppenburg, in Lower Saxony.

World War II slowed or halted the expansion of these projects, but during the 1960s and 1970s many new *Freilichtmuseums* opened throughout the country. Some are small museums situated on only a few acres of land in or near urban

centers. However, the majority are located in rural areas where the museum covers a much larger expanse, often in a bucolic setting such as the rolling moors of northern Germany or the foothills of the Bavarian Alps.

If you're planning a trip to the northwestern part of Germany, consider visiting the following *Freilichtmuseums* north of the Main River, between Frankfurt and Hamburg:

Freilichtmuseum Hessenpark is only a few kilometers north of Frankfurt am Main, in the Taunus Mountains. Since 1974 more than 100 old buildings that could not be maintained at their original sites have been moved here. Featuring *Fachwerk* (half-timbered) houses, barns, outbuildings, and a large windmill, each grouping of buildings presents a typical settlement within the region of Hesse. Just outside the entry gate, a large village square is surrounded by *Fachwerk* restaurants, beer gardens, shops, an exhibition hall, and even a historic *Rathaus* (Town Hall) where weddings can be held.

(Freilichtmuseum Hessenpark, Laubweg 5, 61267 Neu-Anspach/Taunus, tel. +49/6081-5880, fax 588127, service@hessenpark.de, www.hessenpark.de)

You'll want to plan at least half a day or more for visiting the **Westfälisches Freilichtmuseum** in Detmold. Now Germany's largest open-air museum, it opened to the public in 1971. The museum comprises a group of 70 buildings known as the Paderborn Village, plus numerous other farmhouses, granaries, barns, windmills, and textile workshops on 250 acres of land. To keep from getting sore feet, take a horse-drawn wagon from the entrance of the museum to the Paderborn Village, then wend your way back through the fields and farmsteads along the well-marked footpaths. Restaurants and beer gardens provide refreshments at various places within the grounds.

(Westfälisches Freilichtmuseum Detmold, 32756 Detmold, tel. +49/5231-7060, fax 706106, [\[detmold@lw1.org\]\(mailto:detmold@lw1.org\), \[www.lw1.org/freilichtmuseum-detmold\]\(http://www.lw1.org/freilichtmuseum-detmold\)\)](http://wfm-</p>
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If you're interested in life in even earlier times, head to the **Archäologisches Freilichtmuseum** in Oerlinghausen, not far from Detmold. Several exhibits along the walking paths depict daily life from the Stone Age to the Bronze Age to the 8th century A.D. Special demonstrations of felt-making, pottery-making, bronze casting, cooking over an open fire, and other skills are scheduled at various times during the year.

(Archäologisches Freilichtmuseum, Am Barkhauser Berg 2-6, 33813 Oerlinghausen, tel. +49/5202-2220, fax 2238, archaeoerl@t-online.de, www.AFM-Oerlinghausen.de)

On the outskirts of the city of Münster, the **Mühlendorf Freilichtmuseum** is a small but interesting collection of 25 rural buildings from the 17th to the 19th centuries. The *Fachwerk* farmhouses are constructed in the "half-house" style typical of northern Germany, with a large threshing floor in the barn, flanked by stables, in one half of the building, and an adjoining kitchen and living quarters in the rest of the structure. One of the prime attractions is a windmill built in 1748, which was in use until 1943.

(Mühlendorf Freilichtmuseum Münster, Teo-Breider-Weg 1, 48149 Münster, tel. +49/251-981200, fax 9812040, info@muehlendorf-muenster.de, www.muehlendorf-muenster.de)

You can easily spend three or four hours at **Museumsdorf Cloppenburg**, Germany's oldest *regional* open-air museum, near Bremen. Depicting the rural life and culture of the people of Lower Saxony, it consists of 52 well-restored old buildings, including several farmhouses and laborers' dwellings, barns, mills, workshops, a church, and a schoolhouse. Pumpernickel bread is still made in the traditional way at the museum, with the dough formed into brick-shaped loaves and baked for fourteen to sixteen hours

in a wood-fired oven. You can buy this old-fashioned, dense, heavy, very tasty black bread—and other kinds of breads baked in the same oven—at two locations in the museum complex. If you're lucky, you can even eat it slathered with freshly churned butter from a butter-making demonstration, washed down with a glass of the buttermilk from the wooden churn. You can also purchase attractive handmade pottery at the museum's *Töpferei* (potter's workshop). A pleasant restaurant on the grounds offers regional specialties throughout the day.

(Niedersächsischen Freilichtmuseum, Museumsdorf Cloppenburg, Betherstrasse 6, 49661 Cloppenburg, tel. +49/4471-94840, fax 948474, info@museumsdorf.de, www.museumsdorf.de)

If you're staying in Hamburg, the **Freilichtmuseum am Kiekeberg** is a nice day-trip away from the hustle and bustle of the big city. More than three dozen wood-and-red-brick buildings depict the cultural life of the region from the 17th through the 19th centuries. Special demonstrations are given on country cooking, bread-baking, beer-brewing, spinning, weaving, blacksmithing, and other skills.

(Freilichtmuseum am Kiekeberg 21224 Rosengarten-Ehestorf, tel. +49/40-7901760, fax 7926464, info@kiekeberg-museum.de, www.kiekeberg.de)

Most German open-air museums offer regularly scheduled guided tours, as well as theme-focused tours on certain days and private tours (including English-language) by prior reservation. At Christmas, Easter, and other holiday seasons, special programs are planned, such as Easter-egg decorating, harvest festivals, and Christmas markets selling traditional handmade crafts. Contact the individual museums for a list of forthcoming events.

For more information go to www.wikipedia.org and do a search for "open air museums." ☒

Oktoberfest Cometh

Dates for Oktoberfest 2009 are September 19-October 3. Below is a list of the major tents with contact information for those who want to try to reserve a table. For more info on Oktoberfest and table reservations visit <http://tr.im/vLHx> and www.oktoberfest.de.

Munich hotels raise their rates during Oktoberfest but rooms are still available. Go to <http://tr.im/vLHG>.

Hippodrom

Tel. 29 16 4646

www.hippodrom-oktoberfest.de

Hofbräu-Festzelt

www.hb-festzelt.de

Schottenhamel

Tel. 54 46 93 10

www.festzelt.schottenhamel.de

Schützen-Festzelt

Fax 23 18 12 44

Weinzelt

Fax 242 438 81

Bräurols

Fax 89 55 63 56

www.braeurols.de

Ochsenbraterei

Tel. 38 38 73 12

Fax 38 38 73 40

www.ochsenbraterei.de

Armbrustschützen-Festhalle

Tel. 23 70 3703

www.armbrustschuetzenzelt.de

Hacker-Festzelt

www.hacker-festzelt.de

Winzerer Fähdnl

Tel. 62 17 1910

www.winzerer-faehndl.com

Käfer's Wiesn-Schänke

Tel. 416 83 56

www.feinkost-kaefer.de

Löwenbräu-Festhalle

Fax 470 58 48

Augustiner-Festhalle

Tel. 23 18 32 66

Fax 260 53 79

Fischer-Vroni

Tel. 66 10 42

Fax 65 25 34

www.fischer-vroni.de

DEAR SUBSCRIBER

Continued from page 2

that will more than compensate for the fees. For example, if you charge the same 3,000 euros on your credit card while in Europe your cost is \$4,314 plus most major banks will add a foreign transactions fee of three-percent (\$129) bringing your out-of-pocket total to \$4,443. In this comparison, the saving for using a credit card instead of buying euros is \$87. The traveler whose credit card doesn't charge foreign transaction fees—Capitol One being an obvious choice—saves \$216 on our example transaction.

There is another disadvantage to buying euros. If you don't spend them all you bring them home and either put them in a drawer for the next trip or change them back to dollars and take another exchange bath because Wells Fargo's "buy" rate is much lower than its "sell" price.

For everyday "walking around" money, use your ATM card (not the credit card, you'll pay cash advance fees). If you have a Capitol One ATM there'll be no cost to access your money. Most banks, however, charge from a couple of dollars to three-percent to obtain the euro equivalent of \$300 at an ATM. It's worth it for the convenience and for the better exchange rate.

Traveler's checks are a terrible deal. They are hard to cash, the exchange rate is lousy, and you'll pay a fee—sometimes to buy them and always to cash them.

Moving dollars into foreign currency is all about the rate of exchange and ATMs and credit cards offer the best rate.

A final note: never, ever change money at airport or rail station currency exchange booths. If you need a small amount of local currency upon arrival in Europe, find an ATM in the airport. ☒

We Recommend

This listing of good value, mid-priced hotels in popular destination cities is intended for fast reference. Additional hotels and links to hotel websites is in the "Hotels" pages at www.gemut.com. Hotels are arranged in price order, higher to lower.

Berlin

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

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

Bern

Hotel Bristol, Schauplatzgasse 10, CH-3011, tel. +41/31/311 0101, fax 311 9479, email reception@bristolbern.ch

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

Lucerne

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

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

Munich

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

Hotel Acanthus, An Der Hauptfeuerwache 14, D- 80331 München, tel. +49/089 / 23 18 80, fax: 2 60 73 64, e-mail: acanthus@t-online.de

Hotel Kraft, Schillerstr. 49, tel. +49/089/594823-24, fax 550 3856, office@kraft-hotel.com

Rothenburg ob der Tauber

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

Hotel Hornburg, Hornburgweg 28, D-91541, tel. +049/09861/ 8480, fax 5570, hotelhornburg@t-online.de, www.hotelhornburg.de

Salzburg & Environs

Schloss Haunsperg, A-5411 Oberalm bei Hallein, Hammerstrasse 32, tel. +43/06245/80662, fax 85680, info@schlosshaunsperg.com

Hotel Struber, Nonntaler Hauptstrasse 35, Austria A-5020 tel. +43/0662/843 728, fax 843 728 8, struber@sbg.at

Hotel Jedermann, Rupertgasse 25, Austria A-5020, tel. +43/0662/873241-0, fax 873241-9, jedermann@salzburginfo.or.at

Vienna

Hotel Römischer Kaiser, Annagasse 16, A-1010, tel +43/01/ 512 77 51 0, fax 512 77 51 13, info@rkhotel.bestwestern.com.

Altstadt Vienna, Kirchengasse 41, tel. +43/01/526 3399-0, fax 523 4901, hotel@altstadt.at, web: www.altstadt.at

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

Zürich

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

Hotel Arlette, Stampfenbachstrasse 26, Switzerland CH-8001, tel. +41/01/25 20 032, fax 25 20 932, 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, frankfurt@esprix-hotels.de

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

Hotel Dreieich, Frankfurter Str. 49, Langen, D-63225, tel. +49/06103/91 50, fax 52 030. hotel-dreieich@gmx.de

Munich Airport

Daniel's Hotel, Hauptstrasse 11, Halberggmoos-Goldach, D- 85399, tel. +49/0811/55120, fax 551213, info@hotel-daniels.de, www.hotel-daniels.de

Hotel Hoyacker Hof, Freisinger Landstrasse 9a, D-85748 Garching b. München, tel. +49/089/326 9900, fax 320 7243, info@hoyackerhof.de

Zürich Airport

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

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