

**INSIDE:**

- Yellow Roads
- Michelin Red Guide Review
- Vienna Opera To Close
- Readers' Forum

**DEAR  
SUBSCRIBER**

There's a lot to cover this month, so we'll get right at it.

### **Lufthansa/Lauda Air**

Last month we erred about the terrific **Lauda-Air/Lufthansa** \$498 roundtrip fare from Los Angeles to Vienna by way of Munich. We correctly reported the fare but little else. Our thanks to Peter Katz, director of the **Austrian Tourist Office** in Los Angeles, who wrote to inform us that Lauda-Air planes and crews are used for the *entire* flight and there is *no change of planes* between Munich and Vienna. By the way, the fare is good until the end of May. On another matter, Mr. Katz was kind enough to send us a list of companies in the U. S. and in Austria which can arrange for vacation home rentals.

### **Europa-Let, Inc.**

P.O. Box 3537  
Ashland OR 97520  
Phone: 800-426-4486  
Fax: 503-482-0660

### **Interchange/Villas Int'l**

605 Market St.  
San Francisco CA 94105  
Phone: 800-221-2260  
Fax: 415-281-0919

### **Interhome Inc.**

124 Little Falls Rd.  
Fairfield NJ 07004  
Phone: 201-882-6864  
Fax: 201-808-1742

### **Rent-A-Home International**

3429 Fremont Pl. N. #318  
Seattle WA 98103

*Continued on page 2*

# GEMÜTLICHKEIT

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

## BADGASTEIN

*In Badgastein, the spa town that has attracted royal hot-tubbers for nearly 150 years, we found a country hotel to write a long letter home about and three others worth at least a postcard.*

**Y**ou won't be in town two minutes before you understand perfectly what it was that attracted kings and queens to Badgastein. It's remote setting, a few hundred feet above the Gasteiner Valley floor, laid out along the curve of the valley's end, is tremendously appealing. Badgastein's main street is thus in the shape of a horseshoe and right in center of town, slashing through the middle of that horseshoe is a rip-roaring waterfall that blasts its way wildly down the steep hillside. Continue on around the horseshoe and the road becomes the Kaiser-Wilhelm Promenade, a wide, flat walking path that meanders past hotels, shops and crumbling *Belle époque* buildings.

Many — perhaps even most — people come to Badgastein to “take the waters.” In 1845, the Emperor Franz Joseph showed up in BG for a cure and the place was made. A number of large, elegant hotels were built and for several decades Badgastein was one of Europe's most popular

spas. These days the best hotels are smaller and less in the “grand” style, but the prospect of better health is still a major attraction. Many hotels have direct connections to the hot springs. Another cure attraction is the “healing tunnels” of Bockstein, a former gold mine, where deep in rocky caves, at temperatures of sometimes more than 100-degrees, people come by the tens of thousands from all over the world to lie on cots and inhale and absorb radon gas.

In winter, many of BG's visitors are fit skiers (56 lifts, 250 kilometers of downhill runs), but in

warm weather the tourist population is, in large part, elderly and ill. Thus in summer, the town is quiet and goes to bed early, although there is a casino. If you're looking for action Badgastein is not the place. But if relaxing in a peaceful, beautiful setting — perhaps filling your days with long walks and good books — appeals to you there are a number good hotels, four of which we recommend without equivocation.

### **Grüner Baum**

Over the years readers have told us of a country hotel near

*Continued on page 4*

**EDITOR'S  
CHOICE**

## **SWISSAIR SWEETENS DEAL FOR GEMÜTLICHKEIT SUBSCRIBERS**

*Currently, mere mortals can fly roundtrip from Chicago to Zürich on Swissair for \$818. Gemütlichkeit subscribers can fly there for \$100 less.*

LAST MONTH'S ISSUE WAS SUPPOSED TO CONTAIN A FLYER describing the special *Gemütlichkeit* subscriber price reductions on **Swissair**. Our mailing house failed to insert them into the newsletter envelope. That's the bad news. The good news is that they are included (we hope) with this month's issue. However, disregard the listed price reductions because the *further* good news is that Swissair, bless them, have sweetened the deal considerably.

Here's the new arrangement.

*Continued on page 6*

## DEAR SUBSCRIBER

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Phone: 206-545-6963

Fax: 206-774-3074

### Alda Travel Agency

Universitätsstrasse 11

A-1010 Vienna

Phone: 1-42 16 26

### Domino Apartments

Sonnenfelsgasse 3/2d

A-1010 Vienna

Phone: 222-513 45 97

### Interhome

Alpenstrasse 54

A-5020 Salzburg

Phone: 662-845586

### Pego

Holiday Home Rentals in Austria

Saegeweg 1

A-6700 Bludenz

Phone: 5552-65666

Fax: 552-63801

### Michelin Red Makes Changes

The 1993 *Michelin Red Guide for Germany*, a book we consider essential for travel in Germany, particularly for the auto traveler, has made its annual late winter appearance.

We bought our first red guide 20 years ago and since then have never set foot on European soil without one or more of these invaluable books in our suitcase. They are also superb for trip planning and, for the frequent traveler to Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Great Britain and the Benelux countries, a great reference to have around the house.

The price for the 1993 *Deutschland* guide is up another dollar to \$25.95. Two years ago it cost \$19.95. But rising prices have not been accompanied by added features. Last year for example, Michelin dropped its listing of "Holiday Villages," vacation apartments with cooking facilities that rent by the week, typically at far lower prices than comparable hotel accommodations. Now Michelin has changed the format for listing hotel room rates. For the past several editions, the book has given prices for the highest and lowest priced single room and for the highest and lowest double. Now, for reasons we can't even guess, rate information is limited to the price for the least expensive single and the highest priced double. Figuring what you might pay for a room is now much more a matter of guesswork. Granted, a lot of hotels price their rooms evenly, with only a 10 or 20 DM price spread from the lowest to the highest priced rooms. For those hotels, Michelin's new format is still useful.

On the other hand, many small, family-run hotels have two or three special rooms priced from 25% to 75% higher than their standard doubles. If your budget calls for a double at 160 DM or less, what are you to do when the Michelin listing shows 128/220? That means the cheapest single is 128 DM and the top double goes for 220 DM. A hotel might have several comfortable doubles at 160 DM but you can't determine that from the current edition. A case in point is one of our favorite hotels, the **Anker** in Marktheidenfeld, less than an hour's drive east of the Frankfurt Airport. The 1992 *Red Guide* listed the Anker's

range for double rooms as 150/280. That's quite a spread, \$90 to \$169. A lot of folks who wouldn't pay \$169 for a room might still stop at the Anker if they knew they could get a double for under \$100. But this year one might conclude from the information in Michelin that the Anker — with a 1993 top double room price of 300 DM (\$181) — is too expensive.

The traveler looking for a single room is no better served. It seems as though every hotel has one or two broom-closet singles priced substantially below the normal single room. A traveler with a reservation for one of these rooms might end up paying 50% to 100% more in order to get suitable accommodations. Or, worse, they could find themselves stuck in a cramped, airless room.

On the plus side, Michelin continues to expand its listings for hotels and restaurants in the Eastern part of Germany. While ordinary guidebooks may review a few dozen hotels and restaurants in the East, nearly all of which are in big cities, Michelin lists over 1,000 in more than 200 cities. And now, three years into unification, the *Red Guide* has finally tabbed two Eastern Germany restaurants for special recognition. The **Zum goldenen Reiter** in Schwerin, 207 kilometers northwest of Berlin, and the **Gasthaus zum weissen Schwan** in Weimar have been included in the category of restaurants Michelin considers as offering "good value for money and serving carefully prepared meals, often of regional cooking." About 25 hotels, most of them in smaller towns,

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

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### Rating Key - Hotel

- I Basic accommodations or a hotel that underachieves. Suitable only for stays of one or two nights.
- II Good hotel, typical of its class. Suitable for a longer stay.
- III A cut above other hotels in its price category.
- IV Excellent accommodations.
- V A great hotel, world-class, could be a memorable experience.

### Restaurants

- ❖ Acceptable meals, but *only* if the price is right.
- ❖❖ Good food but not good value, overpriced.
- ◆ Serves good, plain food, typical of the region.
- ☆ A cut above other restaurants in its price category.
- ☆☆ Outstanding food and service.
- ☆☆☆ A great restaurant in every respect

### Special Designations

- G By virtue of location, decor, special charm, warmth of management, or combination thereof, an especially pleasant establishment.
- \$ Offers significant value.
- ⊖ Stay away.

have been awarded the Michelin "red rocking chair" as being "very quiet or quiet, secluded hotels."

Here are a few quick impressions of the 1993 edition.

- **Strange Omissions**

Omitting hotels **Trumer Stube**, **Pension Wolf & Goldfassan** in Salzburg (one of a handful of non-German towns included in the guide). Omitting restaurants **Fofi** and **Florian** in Berlin, while including tired and touristy **Kopenhagen**. Not listing Munich's **Hotel Opera**, an exquisite little place in the Lehel district.

- **Notable bargains**

The **Hotel Kraft** with a top double price of 195 DM/\$117, by far the least expensive of 22 Munich hotels to which Michelin gives its "comfortable" (two "roof peaks") rating. Other Munich hotels in that category range from a double room price of 225 DM/\$136 (**An der Oper**) to 410 DM/\$247 (**Hungar-Hotel** and **Hotel Budapest**).

In Berlin the **Hotel Domus** has a top of 245 DM/\$148 while its competitors in the two roof peak category range from 298 DM/\$180 (the boxy, charmless **Hamburg** with 240 mostly tiny guestrooms) to 525 DM/\$316 (**Berlin Excelsior**). The "single peak" **Atrium-Hotel** has a top of 150 DM/\$90. We don't know the hotel, but that's an incredible price for 1993 Berlin.

In the countryside, the splendid **Romantik Hotel Bierhütte** in Hohenau, about 25 miles north of Passau, has a top of 204 DM/\$123.

- **Falls from grace**

In Garmisch-Partenkirchen the **Forsthaus Graseck**, a favorite of ours since 1979 but which we have recently criticized for lumpy mattresses and worn furnishings, is no longer listed. The *Red Guide* is much used by Europeans and to be left out of the book could be a death blow to the hotel's obviously undercapitalized owners. Even new beds and furniture didn't help.

A hotel which for many years led Michelin's Garmisch-Partenkirchen list, the **Posthotel Partenkirchen**, has now slipped below **Grand-Hotel Sonnenbichl** and **Reindl's Partenkirchner Hof**.

- **Out of line**

Hotels in smaller cities are supposed to be less expensive. Room rates in Heidelberg, however, take one's breath away. Top price for a double room at the charming little Hirschgasse is 694 DM/\$418. It's good, folks, but not *that* good. **Der Europäische Hof** is 620 DM/\$373 and even the dingy **Alt Heidelberg** is 280 DM/\$168. We wouldn't stay there at half the price.

- **Good cooking**

For the best food in Germany head for the Black Forest town of Baiersbronn, about 30 kilometers south of Baden-Baden. Nearby, in Tonbach, is the **Schwarzwaldstube**, which is celebrating its canonization to Michelin sainthood. This year it was awarded a third Michelin star, joining only two other German restaurants, **Aubergine** in Munich and **Im Schiffchen** near Düsseldorf. There are about a dozen German restaurants which have been give two stars and one of them, the **Restaurant Bareiss**, is also outside Baiersbronn, only a couple of miles from Schwarzwaldstube.

### **Imperial Austria**

Richard Davidson has been a *Gemütlichkeit* subscriber for several years and, through his company, **austria ski**, an organizer of travel to Austria for much longer than that. In 1993 he is offering a new program of "stay put" vacations to single Austrian destinations. Called "Imperial Austria" the vacations are to Innsbruck, Baden by Vienna and to the town of Steyr.

The concept was designed with the "mature" traveler in mind and is based on a seven-day residence in one strategically located Austrian town from which full and half-day excursions depart.

Mr. Davidson's company makes two extraordinary promises to customers: first, they guarantee travelers will be "not just satisfied but pleased" with the trips or their money will be refunded; and, second, there is no penalty for cancellation.

I was particularly intrigued by the program to Steyr, about halfway between Vienna and Salzburg and close enough for daytrips to Bohemia. The per person price for the May trip is \$1,075 per person and \$1,375 in October. Prices include airfare,

ground transport, seven nights in a first class hotel, breakfasts and dinners. Prices are based on New York departure and a "moderate supplement will be applied for departure from your nearest airport." In Steyr you will stay either in the **Hotel Mader** or the **Romantik Hotel Minichmayr**, whose restaurant is rated by *Gault Millau*. The full-day trip to Bohemia is an additional \$52.

Call 800-333-5533 for brochures and information.

### **Odds & Ends**

The **Titlis Cableway** in Engleberg (central Switzerland) now has revolving cable-cars. You'll see a 360-degree panorama during your ride up the mountain....Innsbruck has a new casino, Austria's 12th...Last month in our note on travel consultant Karen Pasold, we forgot to pass on a recommendation of hers. As a guide to the city of Vienna, Mrs. Ulrike Danniger-Kren, according to Ms. Pasold, is an "absolute delight." Her fee for one day is 2,500 OS (\$216). Write her at Hennersdorfstrasse 17, A-2333 Leopoldsdorf, phone (2) 235-2296...Hamburg has opened a **Museum of Erotic Art**, the latest attraction of the city's red-light district, the Reeperbahn... There is a museum devoted to cats in Basel, Switzerland. The **Katzen Museum**, only open Sundays and by appointment, is at 101 Baselstrasse in the Basel suburb of Riehen. Phone: 061-67 26 84.

A couple of years ago we took a short cruise down the Danube on the **M. S. Mozart**, a luxurious ship that served disappointing food. A first look at the Mozart's 1993 prices causes rapid eye blinking. The seven-day Passau to Budapest tour for two persons costs \$5,676. That's on the Dorabella Deck (at the waterline). Up on the Tamino Deck, the same room for two is \$7,200. Other vessels which ply the river are less pricey. A couple can ride the **M. S. Swiss Pearl** from Vienna to Nürnberg, or vice versa, for \$3,014. Contact DDSG-Danube Cruises Austria, 800-999-0226, fax 310-641-8049...DDSG also operates the Vienna-Budapest hydrofoil. Service begins April 9 and the one-way fare is \$79, roundtrip \$114. 



## BADGASTEIN HOTELS

Continued from page 1

Badgastein, the Grüner Baum. We finally decided to find out what all the excitement was about. Did we like it? Let's just say its the best country hotel we've reviewed in the six-plus years of publishing *Gemütlichkeit*.

What the Grüner Baum doesn't have, you won't need. This luscious hideaway is an enclave of half a dozen or so buildings set in a private Alpine valley (Kötschachtal), surrounded by craggy, forested mountains. Winding through the 175-acre property, past the tennis courts and the outdoor swimming pool, is an energetic, crystal clear mountain stream. Just over a foot-bridge is the Kösslerhaus which contains the hotel's spa, the beauty treatment center, the indoor swimming pool and several guest rooms and apartments.

There are three restaurants, Ganghoferstüberl, Rösslstube and Hochzeitsstube. Three nights a week there is live music in the Rösslstube, from dance orchestras to zither music. A pianist plays every day at 4 p.m. — tea time. The centerpiece of the bar is a sculptured grizzly bear fountain that sometimes spouts Kir Royale. In its large fireplace, the hotel will sometimes spit-roast a whole pig. When the sun shines, meals can be taken in the garden restaurant which on marginal days has a heated terrace.

The Grüner Baum schedules a full program of guest activities including picnics, hikes, bike tours, sleigh rides, tobogganing and barbecues. When we there, the Blumschein family took a horse-drawn wagon load of guests into the nearby mountains and served them a huge buffet breakfast. There are the usual cure therapies such as thermal baths, herbal baths, massages, mud packs, inhalation and sauna. For the various beauty treatments the hotel

employs full-time cosmetologists. There is even a staff doctor and a fully staffed nursery for children of guests.

Only five minutes from the hotel is a nine-hole golf course. Weekday green fees are 280 AS (\$24) and a five-day pass is 1250 AS (\$109).

Of course, the hotel's public and guest rooms are decorated in the traditional but sumptuous Tirolean style with liberal doses of rich, hand-carved and inlaid wood, marble tiled floors, fine rugs and antiques. But not everything is traditional; the main dining room has a no smoking area.

Guest rooms are comfortable, quiet and come with five-star furnishings and amenities. We particularly liked Number 90 in the Kösslerhaus. It overlooks the creek and from its balcony is that stunning view up the valley toward the mountains. The bed is canopied and the bath roomy and gleaming. With breakfast and dinner, the per night cost for two persons is about 2400 AS (\$209).

You'll note we have rated the Grüner Baum as "offering significant value." That it does in any season, but in the off-season — May 14 through July 4 and September 19 through October 18, the rates are especially attractive: an apartment with bedroom, living room and balcony for two persons, depending on length of stay, ranges from 1960 to 2600 AS (\$170-\$226) including both breakfast and dinner.

By any standard, this is a great hotel. The setting is perfect. Grounds and interiors are beautifully maintained. Staff is friendly and efficient. All the services are offered.

Grüner Baum, Kötschachtal, A-5640 Badgastein, telephone 06434 25 160, fax 06434 25 16 25. Per person, per day rates including breakfast and lunch or dinner range from 730 to 1800 AS (\$64-\$157). Major cards.  
**Grüner Baum: V G \$**

## Haus Hirt

Walk around the Kaiser Wilhelm Promenade, near the end of the horseshoe, and you'll find Haus Hirt, a wonderfully comfortable, quiet little hotel spread across the hillside with great views over the Gasteiner Valley.

Though it is no more than a 10-minute walk from the center of town, Haus Hirt feels like being deep in the countryside. Room Number 68 is a two-level apartment — sleeping area and bath are up a short flights of stairs — with a balcony and view of the valley. There is a small kitchen. For two persons with half-board the price is 1980 AS (\$172).

A comfortable corner double with balcony and valley view is Number 590 which rents for 690 AS per person (\$60) including breakfast and dinner.

The hotel has cure facilities and in the morning guests can participate in yoga and group exercise.

This is the kind of place to hide out in for a week or two. Take your walking shoes and some good books.

Haus Hirt, An der Kaiserpromenade, A-5640 Badgastein, telephone 06434 27 97, fax 06434 27 97 48. Singles 640 to 990 AS (\$56-\$86), doubles 1280 to 1980 AS (\$112 to \$172).

**Haus Hirt: III G \$**

## Villa Solitude

One of Austria's newest castle hotels is the Villa Solitude on Kaiser Franz Joseph Strasse, the horseshoe shaped main street. The house was originally a gift from an Austrian count to his mistress and is registered as an historic monument. It was the site of the signing of the Gasteiner treaty between Bismarck and Count Andrassy. The owners of the Grüner Baum, the Blumschein family, purchased

Continued on page 8

**A** trip from Salzburg south to Badgastein can become much more interesting by taking a less traveled route, part of which involves a delightful "yellow road" from Maria Alm (southeast of Saalfelden) to Route 311, or another — though much less direct — east to Bischofshofen. You'll need a detailed map such as Mair's *Die Generalkarte #7* for Austria.

Out of Salzburg, take any road to Bad Reichenhall. From there, follow the little yellow road past Thumsee and pick up Route 21 to the Austrian border. Then take Route 312 past Unken in the direction of Lofer. (If you are coming from Munich, take the Traunstein exit, head south through Inzell on Route 305, and then turn toward Lofer where the road intersects Route 21.)

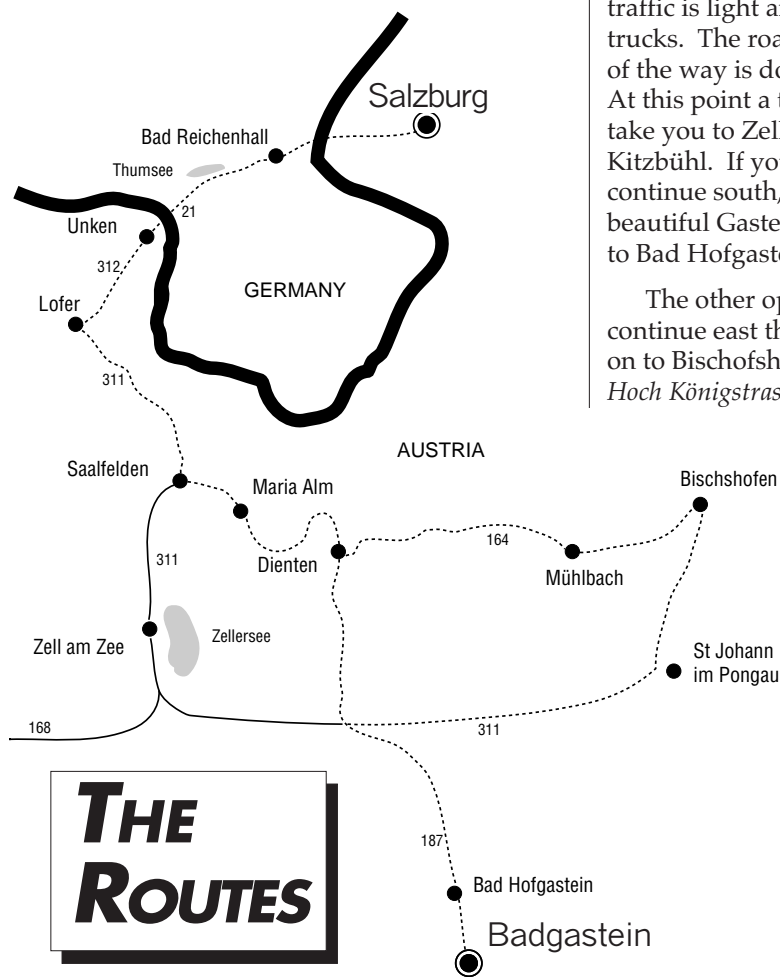
From Lofer there are views of several mountain peaks and the drive on to Saalfelden is through the Saalach Valley beside the Saalach River. Along the way are caves open for tours and places to stop for a wander through wooded gorges.

At Saalfelden, turn toward Maria Alm then on to Dienten. Maria Alm is a very picturesque little village with many hotels and restaurants, and an abundance of flowers decorating the buildings. The road from there to Dienten is

## Yellow Roads

# SALZBURG TO BADGASTEIN

quite interesting, particularly that portion past Hintertal. But from there on it is narrow, seldom more than a car and a half wide and



## THE ROUTES

climbs to a summit shortly before arriving at Dienten. The trip from Maria Alm to Dienten is, as the Mair's map indicates, quite scenic and there is an abundance of flower-covered houses. It is an interesting driving experience.

Dienten, a ski resort, is an exceptionally beautiful town.

Buildings are decked completely with flowers. One house was covered with fuchsias.

Here you have a decision to make. Your first option is to go straight south. This road, to the main highway between Zell am See and St. Johann, is very narrow and mostly only wide enough for one car. (Too narrow for a yellow line in the middle). There are turnouts, of course, but traffic is light and there are few trucks. The road is curvy and most of the way is downhill to Route 311. At this point a turn to the west will take you to Zell am See or on to Kitzbühl. If you cross 311 and continue south, you enter the beautiful Gasteiner Valley leading to Bad Hofgastein and Badgastein.

The other option at Dienten is to continue east through Mühlbach and on to Bischofshofen by way of the *Hoch Königstrasse*. Though this a lesser road even than a "yellow road" (the map shows it in white with gray borders) it is paved and well marked. It, too, is a lovely drive.

At Bischofshofen be sure to follow the Zell am See signs or you'll end up on the freeway to Salzburg or Graz. Once back on red

road 311 heading west toward Zell am See, you'll soon see signs for the road south to Badgastein.

*This drive was first suggested to us by our "Yellow Roads" guru, John K. Bestor, who also wrote this piece. You'll be rewarded whichever route you choose.*

## SWISSAIR DEAL

Continued from page 1

For travel from the U. S. to Europe, between April 1 and October 31, for Gemütlichkeit subscribers who book and purchase tickets directly with Swissair, the airline will reduce fares as follows:

**Economy Class or "sale" fares \$100**  
**Business Class fares \$400**  
**First Class fares \$600**

At press time, these were three examples of Swissair's roundtrip fares from the U. S. to Switzerland.

Gateway	Sale Fare	Subs. Fare
L.A.	\$918	\$818
Chicago	\$818	\$718
New York	\$718	\$618

In some instances, connections to other European cities are included in these prices.

**Here is the procedure for obtaining the price reductions: Call Swissair's main reservations number, 800-221-4750. Book the best fare available at the time you wish to travel. Then, to purchase tickets, call 800-238-0399 and ask for Shirley. She will issue your tickets at the reduced fares after verifying with our office that you are an active subscriber. You must follow this procedure to obtain the lower fares.**

You may purchase as many tickets as you wish as long as the traveling party is accompanied in a least one direction by a Gemütlichkeit subscriber.

### More Airfare News

#### LTU Summer Prices

German airline, LTU, is offering these roundtrip prices to Germany for travel from June 1 through August 31:

New York	\$598
Miami	\$698
Los Angeles	\$798


Children's discounts range from 10% to 75% of the above fares, depending on their age.

Phone 800-888-0200.

#### DER Tours Summer Prices

**DER Tours**, the large, Germany-based travel wholesaler, purchases in bulk — mostly from **United Airlines** — and resells at discount prices. Here is a sampling of their current, mid-week high-season fares for roundtrip travel between the U.S. and Frankfurt during the period June 1 and September 30:

Atlanta	\$779
Chicago	\$779
Dallas	\$819
Denver	\$819
Kansas City	\$819
Los Angeles	\$869
Miami	\$729
New York	\$689
Phoenix	\$919
San Francisco	\$869
Seattle	\$919

Go through a travel agent to book these fares. Frequent flyer mileage is credited. 

## READERS' FORUM

### No Vacancy

Recently you wrote about the advantages of *Ferienwohnung*. The main disadvantage we have found is that there is rarely a vacancy during the summer months. We spent the summer of '92 in Prien, Germany, and never saw a *frei* sign on a *Ferienwohnung*. The signs always indicated no vacancy. However, during the winter months, the vacancy signs appeared.

Our favorite place in Germany, Austria, Switzerland is Wengen, Switzerland. We can't say enough about the quiet beauty of this mountain village. The **Hotel Belvedere** served an outstanding evening meal on the Swiss National

Day in August.

Mindy Sharp, Camarillo CA

(Ed. Note: Ms Sharp makes a good point. Our story should have pointed out that the Becker's off-season travel method of not making reservations for *Ferienwohnung* [vacation apartments] might be difficult to duplicate during the summer. Advance reservations would no doubt be required at that time of year.)

### Lost Issue

I would like to order another copy of the issue you wrote about Kandern's **Zur Weserei**. Mine blew out of the window on the autobahn as I was reading it to my husband and was smashed against the grill of the car behind us for many kilometers. We managed to find the hotel anyway, with many questions, and it was wonderful — as was the restaurant. We were there in early December and although the hotel was not crowded at all, the restaurant was packed, so we were very glad we had reservations — per your suggestion.

Out third time at **La Residence** in Lausanne and still love it.

Food at **Gasthaus zum Löwen** in Stauffen (about 20 kilometers outside Freiburg) was superb; stayed at **Markgräflerhof** in Freiburg and agree with you on all counts.

Suggest you review **De Zaehringen Auberge** in Fribourg (Switz.). What a masterpiece; ancient beauty, food was better than excellent and we were given a tour of the entire old home. Will come back to stay for sure. The big suite was filled with carvings and paintings from the 13th century and packaged with dinner, wine, etc., it was about \$200 — a gem!

For a hotel near the Zürich Airport we surely would choose **Mövenpick** over **Novotel** next time.

Janis Struckman  
Western Springs IL



(Ed Note: *Gemütlichkeit* gives two-stars, "outstanding food and service," to the restaurant of the Hotel Markgräflerhof. The hotel offers simple but decent accommodations.)

The **Hotel Gasthof Dragoner** is conveniently located on Highway 17 and 23 just north of Oberammergau in Peiting. It is an easy drive to Füssen, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, etc., even a day's shopping trip to Innsbruck and Swarovski Crystal Factory Store in Waten.

Jim Draper & David Oplet  
Belleville, IL

(Ed. Note: Mr. Oplet & Mr. Draper enclosed a brochure from this attractive hotel showing the highest priced double room is 130 DM (\$78).

### **No On Budapest's Nemzeti**

Bob Gillespie, of Lake Bluff, Illinois, takes issue with us regarding the moderately-priced **Hotel Nemzeti** in Budapest. Mr. Gillespie recently stayed there on business and says he will not go back. He termed the hotel "worn, tired and devoid of charm." For a less expensive Budapest alternative to the five-star hotels clustered along the river, Mr. Gillespie recommends the **Hotel Gellert** which he says is at least interesting and has some charm.

He highly recommends a hotel in Achern near Baden-Baden, the **Götz Sonne-Eintracht**, which he puts in the same category of the **Hotel Anker** (a favorite of many *Gemütlichkeit* subscribers in Marktheidenfeld, about 45 minutes east of Frankfurt.)

### **A Hotel in Bavaria**

Victor Obninsky of Tiburon, California, — the first person, incidentally, to tout us on the **Hotel Geiger** in Bertchesgaden (1992 *Gemütlichkeit* "Hotel of the Year") — likes the **Hotel Alpenhof** in Murnau. "Only a half-hour from Munich, Oberammergau and Wieskirche and 15 minutes from Garmisch-Partenkirchen. A very good hotel off the road with a fine

breakfast and Alpine view."

### **Rustic Swiss Gem**

M. L. Cox of Scottsdale, Arizona, recommends the **Bietschhorn**, a pension in the village of Kippel, in a mountain valley near the Lötschberg tunnel which connects Kandersteg with the Rhône Valley (*Gemütlichkeit*, April, 1992). He has particular praise for the food. According to Mr. Cox, the Bietschhorn is rustic, far off the beaten track and offers such atmospheric touches as a St Bernard guarding the second floor and straw mattresses. He swears they are comfortable.

### **Frankfurt Restaurant**

Dr. John Feist of Pittsburgh likes Frankfurt's **Ristorante Bel' Mondo**. "An excellent and *gemütlich* northern Italian restaurant in a sedate residential section. Reasonably priced." The Bel' Mondo is at Kettenhofweg 64, telephone (069) 725881.

### **Grüner Baum Supporter**

Our travel agent, a Swiss woman, said "Mr. and Mrs. Miller if you are going to that area, you must stay at my most favorite place in all of Europe...the hotel **dorf Grüner Baum** in Badgastein." When the Swiss lady says "you must" we've learned to heed her instructions.

If we ever hit the lottery or get \$4 million from a rich uncle you will quickly receive our address change showing us at the **Grüner Baum**. It's a former hunting lodge that the Kaiser stayed at — old money to say the least. It's out in the boondocks about six or seven miles from town; the cab is a horse and wagon or a four-horse sleigh. It's a spa, a retreat, a lover's nest, a hiker's dream, etc., etc. We've referred four other couples there over the past year. We all want to live there.

Go there and check it out. I'll bet it qualifies for a "G" Award.

Hamp & Sue Miller, New Brunswick NJ

## **EUROPE TRAVEL BRIEFING**

### **Vienna Opera Dark For 18 Months**

The **Vienna Statsoper** will use the summer break — normally July and August — plus the period from September through mid-December 1994 to do some reconstruction of its stage and install a state-of-the-art hydraulics system. While the opera house is closed the company will tour Japan and then set up a temporary home at **Theater an der Wien**. More details are expected in June.

### **The Hofberg Reopens**

Major portions of Vienna's Imperial Palace which were closed for repair following the November fire have been re-opened. These include the **Imperial Treasury** (in our view one of Vienna's most fascinating exhibits), the Grand Hall of the **Austrian National Library** and the famous **Spanish Riding School**.

### **Eastern Germany Castle Hotels**

The Castle Hotel Association, **Gast im Schloss**, has added two hotels in eastern Germany, the first properties in the new states to be accepted by the association.

Newcomer **Schloss Eckberg** is a 19th century neo-gothic structure built on a hill at the edge of the Elbe river and surrounded by a 37-acre park with pond and rock garden.

The town of Eisenach is best known for Wartburg Castle, a German national monument built 925 years ago. It is where Martin Luther completed his translation of the New Testament. Richard Wagner used the castle as the setting for his opera *Tannhauser*. A portion of the castle has been converted and is now the **Wartburghotel**.

The *Gast im Schloss* 1992/93

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## HOTELS

Continued from page 3

the building at auction in March of 1990 and in short order returned it to its former glory. Today it is an exquisite six-room inn with an excellent restaurant, the Brasserie.

The five apartments and one two-bedroom suite have been meticulously restored using the highest quality materials and adding all the modern comforts. Several have a view of the falls. Most of the wood paneling is the original cedar and in one cabinet are pieces of the Blumschein family's Meissen porcelain. The carpets are original and were repaired at a cost of nearly \$50,000. The design on the guest bathrobes matches that found on bathroom tiles and towels.

Dinner in the bright Cascade Room of the Brasserie was satisfying. *Brassrieteller*, 180 AS (\$16), was filets of lamb, veal and pork, served with a reduction sauce and sliced mushrooms. A side of spaghetti had no visible sauce, but a nice flavor of herbs, cheese and garlic. *Hirschruckenfilet* was three very tender pieces of venison, also served in a reduced sauce, with Chinese pea pods and potato croquettes.

Villa Solitude, Kaiser Franz Joseph Strasse 16, A-5640 Badgastein, telephone 06434 5101 / 5102, fax 06434 5101-3. Apartment prices range from 2,000 AS (\$174) to

3,000 AS (\$261). The Kaiserin "Sissy" Suite has a low season/high season price range of 2,400 AS (\$209) to 3,800 AS (\$330). If three or four persons occupy this two-bedroom suite the range is 3,000 AS (\$261) to 4,800 AS (\$348). Major cards.

**Villa Solitude: IV**  
**Brasserie: ☆**

### Landhaus Gletschermühle

Located in a wooded area about a five-minute walk above the center of town is the best bargain we found in Badgastein.

Officially a *Frühstückspension* (bed and breakfast), the Landhaus Gletschermühle has 16 nicely-furnished, spotless, spacious guest rooms. Most have balconies with views, cable TV and private bathrooms. Room Number 3 is a corner double with a separate sitting area. For two persons the price with breakfast is 640 AS (\$56).

Little English is spoken but that shouldn't deter you because ownership is very friendly.

Landhaus Gletschermühle, Gletschermühlestr. 7, A-5640 Badgastein, telephone 06434 20 970, fax 06434 23 80 30. Singles 270 to 350 AS (\$24-\$30), doubles 540 to 700 AS (\$48 to \$60).

**Gletschermühle: III \$**

### Evianquelle

The village of Böckstein is 10 minutes by car into the hills behind Badgastein. The Alpenhaus-Café Evianquelle is located by itself outside

the village in a narrow river valley. Water from a locally famous spring on the hotel's property is free and delicious. Next to the hotel is a trout pond and, no surprise, one of the hotel's specialties is fresh trout. *Lachsforellenfilet* in *Zitronenbutter* with potatoes and salad is 175 AS (\$15.22).

Guest rooms are simple but spacious, some with separate sitting area. Kids and dogs are welcome and there is plenty of room for both to roam.

Evianquelle, Nassfelder Weg, A-5645 Böckstein, telephone 06434 27 68, fax 06434 27 67. Singles 260 to 320 AS (\$23-\$28), doubles 510 to 610 AS (\$44 to \$53). No cards.

**Evianquelle: II**

### Meranhaus

Those who would like to go back 80 to 100 years and see what a hotel was like in the time of the Habsburgs might try the Meranhaus. Some of its guests date back at least that far.

While this relic is full of antiques and nostalgia, such charms are outweighed by a worn, almost shabby, atmosphere and lack of vitality. Guestrooms are comfortable enough, bathrooms have even been redone with modular, plastic shower stalls, but we'll take a pass.

Meranhaus, A-5640 Badgastein, telephone 06434 23 28, fax 06434 23 863. Singles 350 to 550 AS (\$30-\$48), doubles 700 to 1300 AS (\$61 to \$113).

**Meranhaus: I**

## EUROPE BRIEFS

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*Directory* contains full color photos and a description in English of each of its member hotels. Also included in the book are 10 castle-to-castle tours, including one tracing castles and wine along the Rhine and another following the Fairy Tale Road.

For a free copy of the directory contact the German Tourist Office, 122 42nd St., 52nd floor, New York NY 10168, tel. 212-223-2323, or 11766 Wilshire Blvd. #750, Los Angeles CA 90025, tel. 310-575-9799.

### Europe Hotel Discounts

Swissair's **European Travel Invention** brochure details numerous money-saving plans available April 1 through October 31. For example:

- The **Swiss Travel Invention** part of the program offers accommodations in 200 Swiss hotels and guest houses in six price categories starting at \$37 per person.

- Hotel rates in nine major European cities — Zürich, Geneva, Berlin, Brussels, Frankfurt, London, Paris, Rome and Salzburg at prices ranging from \$24 to \$72. The brochure contains a photo of each hotel.

- **Interhome** rentals of apartments, chalets and villas throughout Europe.

- A coupon worth \$50 toward your next holiday. Contact: Swisspak 800-688-SWISS.