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**DEAR
SUBSCRIBER**

Going in Style

Like the Pope and the Dalai Lama, my life is guided by a few simple precepts. One of them is never eat beef in an airplane. I don't care what they tell you on those microwave cooking shows, radar can't cook meat. But there I was at 37,000 feet tucking into a lovely, pink, thick, juicy filet served with wild rice and an amazingly tasty morel mushroom sauce. It was the best airline meal in recent memory. Who did it? **Swissair**, of course. Los Angeles to Geneva, Zürich to Los Angeles, our high opinion of this airline was bolstered every step of the way. From the fast, smooth check-in to speedy luggage retrieval — in both directions — we have nary a complaint. People who tell me the Swiss are cold and unfriendly have never met Swissair flight attendants. On the endless return flight we were shown three movies: *Scent of a Woman*, *Chaplin* and *Consenting Adults*. Naturally the transatlantic Legion of Decency had whacked out even the mildest swear words but it helped pass the time on an 11-hour plus flight.

Good food? Flight attendants that actually attend to passengers? I grant you

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GEMÜTLICHKEIT

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

WENGEN

Though it's a town that exists solely on tourism, Wengen's storybook setting, traffic-free streets and excellent accommodations make it one of Europe's great hideaways.

If ever there is a convention to pick the most scenic place on earth, we volunteer to make the nominating speech for Wengen. The village sits on a ledge, about 1,500 feet above a most spectacular gouge in the earth, the Lauterbrunnental, a steep-sided, gloriously green valley. Looming above the town is a 270-degree panorama of some of the world's most famous peaks: the Jungfrau, the Mönch, the and the Schilthorn, most of which glitter with ice and snow the year round. Arrange them nicely around Yosemite and you

have the Lauterbrunnen Valley. Impossibly beautiful is the best we can do to describe it.

There are only three ways to get to Wengen: by helicopter, via train or you can walk from the town of Lauterbrunnen (about an hour and a half). By far the most popular method of transport is the 15-minute train ride from Lauterbrunnen, leaving your car in the multi-story garage near the Lauterbrunnen railway station.

By now you have deduced that Wengen is free of automobiles — oh,

there are a few vehicles used for various maintenance chores around town, but essentially the village is blessedly free of auto traffic.

Take advantage of Wengen in the off-season (March to early June and late August to November), hotel prices are substantially lower.

In winter, of course, Wengen is ski country, mostly downhill. In spring, summer and fall, walking/hiking is the major activity.

Within their price categories the hotels we saw in Wengen were

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ZÜRICH: A MINI-REPORT

On a short visit to Zürich we return to the Hotel Florhof, long a Gemütlichkeit favorite, find interesting shopping on both sides of the Limmat and have a good meal at a Zürich institution.

Zürich, we have concluded, is an under-rated town. Its reputation is as a cold-hearted banker's town catering only to the rich who come to deposit or withdraw large sums from numbered bank accounts and parade down Bahnhofstrasse in full-length fur coats.

In *Gemütlichkeit's* three countries the major cities most visited by our readers seem to be Munich, Vienna and Berlin.

Perhaps those three would be our favorites, too (though not in that order), but a brief Zürich stopover earlier this month reinforced a notion that's been slowly gnaw-

ing its way into consciousness for the past couple of years: Zürich is a town worth a lot more attention than we've been giving it.

It offers some excellent city walking, window shopping and people watching on both sides of the river. If Zürich is your final stop

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DEAR SUBSCRIBER

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these are definitely airline innovations of the 1990s, but Swissair isn't stopping there. By the time this reaches you, passengers in their first class cabins will be able to choose movies prior to their flight and, once on board, swing their very own video screen out of the armrest slot and view their very own film(s) in the privacy of their very own seat. This is an innovation most of us will never experience, unless we rack up a ton of frequent flyer miles. But it *is* evidence of this airline's real commitment to being the best. Frankly, I think they are.

Inexpensive Business Class

One of the best travel deals around is the "Relax Class" on Swissair's charter subsidiary, **Balair**. I have spoken to subscribers who fly Balair year after year. They get same big, comfortable seats and pampering in-flight service as aboard scheduled carriers. Balair flies the new Airbus 310/325 from Newark, Orlando, Miami, Bangor, San Francisco and Anchorage. High-season economy roundtrip from Newark is \$660, Relax Class is \$1,040. From San Francisco prices are \$890 and \$1,450; from Florida, \$840 and \$1240; from Anchorage \$996 and \$1,440 and from Bangor there is no Relax Class service, only coach at \$720. There are discounts for children and in some cases shoulder season prices are slightly lower. Service is weekly. Phone 800/322-5247.

'Vickie Young' Scores Again

While we're on the subject of excellence, earlier this month we were fortunate enough to again find ourselves at the **Victoria Jungfrau** in Interlaken. We used it as a base to explore the Jungfrau region of the Bernese Oberland. Two nights in the hotel's **La Terrasse Restaurant** reaffirm its place among the best restaurants we've reviewed (*Gemütlichkeit*, Feb. '93) in the past 18 months. As you know, blue jeans are our preferred dinner attire, a predilection that winds us up in the bistros and gasthaus of Germany, Austria and Switzerland. But about once a week in the course of the trip, a little candlelight, a good bottle of wine and some *haute cuisine* are in order. For this we have to dress up. I put on a tie, Liz wears nylons. As we were leaning back in our chairs at La Terrasse, after a particularly satisfying engorgement, Liz gave the food the highest possible praise when she said it was worth the tie and the nylons.

What to Drive

Over-priced and over-rated as rental cars in our view are the Mercedes Benz 190 and the BMW 316i or 318i. They are typically more than double the price of an Opel Astra or VW Golf but don't come close to delivering twice the value. In fact, they are only marginally more satisfactory. Trunk space in both categories of cars is about the same (14 cubic feet), the MBZ and BMW do have more power, better road handling and are heavier cars but not enough, in our opinion, to justify the extra expense. Three or four persons traveling

together will have more trunk space and more passenger space for less money in an Opel Omega, Ford Scorpio or VW Passat.

Car Rental Nightmare

Here's a story to give one pause. It was told to me by a *Gemütlichkeit* subscriber who rented a car in Germany and drove it to Hungary. His first day in the country the car was stolen leaving him with the cars keys and nothing else. Our subscriber had taken the precaution of purchasing Collision Damage Waiver insurance so he owes the car rental company nothing. However, the trunk was full of luggage and his estimated loss of personal belongings is near \$7,000, which is not covered by any rental car insurance. Had he used a credit card to pay for his rental and cover the CDW he still would not have been covered for the theft of his belongings.

That set me to worrying about driving around Europe with cameras, camcorders and laptop computers in the trunk. I was relieved to learn that as part of my homeowners policy, my insurance company, United Services Automobile Association, does provide worldwide coverage for such losses. Whether that is a standard feature of most such policies, I do not know, but my advice is to find out if you are covered, well in advance of any European trips, particularly those that include countries where automobile theft is more common than it is in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. ☐

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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.

WENGEN

Continued from page 1

uniformly high quality. Virtually every guestroom in town has a view. Some are merely good, many are magnificent.

Hotel Regina

This is the best hotel we saw in Wengen. The Regina is a rambling, six-story, turn-of-century hotel that young Ariane and Guido Meyer have upgraded to near top-class luxury. Their refurbishments, however, have not broken the hotel's connection to its early days, at least in the public rooms which have a Victorian era feel. The spacious lobby is sprinkled with antiques and the large fireplace wouldn't look out of place in an English country manor. Great high windows and white wicker furniture give the main dining room a bright, winter garden atmosphere.

Guest rooms, nearly all of which have been recently redone, have more city elegance than country charm and all are different. The new sixth floor chambers are especially attractive, though there is no elevator between the fifth and sixth floors. The best in the house is Number 604, a junior suite on two levels with exposed beams, slanting ceilings, numerous skylights and a Jacuzzi bathtub. A slight drawback is that the bedroom is upstairs and the bathroom downstairs. A more traditional double room is Number 508, which is on a corner and has a canopied bed. The cozy "honeymoon room," Number 701, has a skylight in a slanting wall that affords a perfect view of the Jungfrau from the bed. Room Number 214 has a canopied bed and opens on to a very large terrace, perfect for sunbathing. It should be noted the terrace is shared by other second floor rooms.

The Regina is a four-star hotel and offers amenities and services appropriate to that classification.

EDITOR'S CHOICE

The hotel's policy of displaying the pictures of local artists in the hotel's corridors is a tip-off that the Meyer family is trying hard to create a special hotel.

So far, so good.

Hotel Regina, CH-3823 Wengen, telephone 036/55 15 12, fax 036/55 15 74. Singles 111 Sfr. to 173 Sfr. (\$77-\$119), doubles 222 Sfr. to 346 Sfr. (\$127-\$239). Prices include half-board, breakfast and dinner. Credit cards.

Hotel Regina: III G

Wengen

Population 1,600
Altitude 1,275 meters/4,183 feet

Approximate distances from:

Basel	138 km	- 86 miles
Bern	54 km	- 33 miles
Genva	147 km	- 91 miles
Interlaken	20 km	- 12 miles
Zürich	101 km	- 63 miles

Wengen Tourist Office
CH-3823 Wengen
Phone: 036/55 14 14
Fax: 036/55 30 60

Bernese Oberland Tourist Office
Jungfraustrasse 38
CH-3800 Interlaken
Phone: 036/22 26 21
Fax: 036/22 57 16

Roundtrip train fare from Interlaken to Wengen is \$8 second class, \$11 first class. Swiss Pass holders ride free between Wengen and Interlaken. The Eurailpass, however, will get you only as far as Interlaken. The parking garage at Lauterbrunnen costs 7 Sfr. (\$4.80) per day in summer and 10 Sfr. (\$7) in winter.

A one-day ski pass for the Kleine Scheidegg - Männlichen area is 48 Sfr. (\$33) for adults and 24 Sfr. (\$17) for children. A three-day pass good for the entire Jungfrau region is 126 Sfr. (\$87) for adults and 63 (\$43) for children

Hotel Silberhorn

In the very center of the village, steps from the railway station, is the four-star Silberhorn. In comfort, room space and quality it ranks just behind the Regina.

On the rather ho-hum ground floor entry is the hotel's public restaurant and bakery. Things improve considerably on the first floor, however, where you'll find the reception and a lobby whose centerpiece is a piece of furniture that ratchets up the elegance quotient of almost any room, a grand piano. The best place to be at the Silberhorn, however, is on its spacious terrace where every table has a ringside seat to one of the world's great views.

The hotel's comfortable guestrooms are all similarly decorated and furnished. Many of them have fold-down beds which makes for increased daytime living space.

Number 429 is a large double with superior views of the great peaks and a separate sitting area with sofa and two comfortable chairs. Number 328 is a two-room studio with kitchenette, a separate bedroom, fold-down double bed in the living area. It would be ideal for a family or two couples.

As with most hotels that have only refurbished a portion of its guestrooms, the Silberhorn's newer rooms are worth the extra money.

Hans-Jakob Beldi, the Silberhorn's affable manager, regularly leads guests on half-day walks. The hotel can pack you a lunch.

Hotel Silberhorn, CH-3823 Wengen, telephone 036/56 51 31, fax 036/55 22 44. Singles 122 Sfr. to 215 Sfr. (\$84-\$148), doubles 184 Sfr. to 370 Sfr. (\$127-\$255). Prices include half-board, breakfast and dinner. Credit cards.

Hotel Silberhorn: II

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WENGEN HOTELS

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Falken-Hotel

The best thing about the Falken, other than the Cova family who have owned the hotel since it was built 108 years ago, is its aura of another time. The wonderfully nostalgic lobby, dining room and other public rooms don't look like they've changed much since 1885. No rush to refurbish here; instead the Covas proudly maintain the hotel's creaky, herringbone wood floors and the handsome old washbasins which were installed in guest rooms long before the private bathrooms. But do not misunderstand, the Falken is well preserved, not a decaying relic.

Our recommended single is Number 19 and a roomy double is Number 10, on a corner with the herringbone floors, oriental rugs and, sorry about this, shocking orange furniture.

Music is an important part of life at the Falken. There is a separate music room where regular concerts and recitals are sponsored by the owners.

During the summer months the front of the hotel is a vine-covered arcade and on the lawn guests sit at tables under massive old chestnut trees. At the side of the building is a small stage for folkloric shows and a grill for outdoor barbecue parties.

When someone surreptitiously stooped to smell flowers on a table in the dining room, Andrea Cova conveyed his entire philosophy as a hotelier when he said sharply, "They are fresh, this is not a plastic hotel."

Like its owners, the Falken has character.

Herr Cova offers a 10% discount off the rates below if you book

directly with the hotel.

Falken-Hotel, CH-3823 Wengen, telephone 036/56 51 21, fax 036/55 33 39. Singles 115 Sfr. to 140 Sfr. (\$66-\$97), doubles 190 Sfr. to 280 Sfr. (\$131-\$193). Prices include half-board, breakfast and dinner. Credit cards.

Falken-Hotel: II G

Hotel Alpenruhe

Simple but beautifully maintained rooms. We were truly amazed to learn that the carpets, walls, ceilings and furniture are all circa 1978, a testimony to the sort of house kept by Ms. Marion Prevost. In a country of extraordinarily clean hotels, this one stands out.

Every hotel in Wengen is quiet but this one, at the far end of the village, is especially so.

Since the Alpenruhe is at the north end of the village, and slightly above it, most guest rooms look out over the town and on to the mountains. Unfortunately, many rooms are somewhat small and none we saw had sofas or easy chairs. Ask for room Number 25, one of the few with the original hardwood floors still not covered with carpeting. It has a re-done bathroom and is on a bright, pleasant corner. Our second choice would be the large double, Number 45, which has a splendid view. For a single, try Number 43.

The Alpenruhe, which does not accept groups, offers excellent value.

Hotel Alpenruhe, CH-3823 Wengen, telephone 036/55 27 44, fax 036/55 27 77. Singles 91 Sfr. to 118 Sfr. (\$63-\$81), doubles 176 Sfr. to 236 Sfr. (\$121-\$163). Prices include half-board, breakfast and dinner. Credit cards.

Hotel Alpenruhe: II \$

Hotel Bernerhof

This two-star hotel on the main street of the village offers low cost lodgings provided you are amenable to walking down the hall to the bathroom. Rooms with private bathroom facilities are so small that it is worth the small additional cost to move up substantially in space and quality to the Alpenruhe or the Falken. For the most part, the Bernerhof's rooms are small and plain with a tiny shower and toilet built into one corner of the room. Wash basins are in the bedroom. Rooms are clean but the furniture is a little beat up. Most, however, come with television, something you don't get at the Alpenruhe.

Our recommended doubles are Number 307 or Number 209, which is smaller but has better furniture.

A very pleasant single is Number 101, on a corner with many windows.

The hotel has no elevator.

Number 207, which would accommodate a family of four, has a real bathroom, opposed to the tiny boxes installed in most other rooms that have private facilities.

We had a light but satisfying lunch at one of the Bernerhof's sidewalk tables; good soup and outstanding salad (11.5 Sfr./\$8) of chopped *wurst* and fresh vegetables.

Hotel Bernerhof, CH-3823 Wengen, telephone 036/55 27 21, fax 036/55 33 58. Singles 90 Sfr. to 112 Sfr. (\$62-\$77), doubles 180 Sfr. to 224 Sfr. (\$124-\$154). Prices include half-board, breakfast and dinner. Credit cards.

Hotel Bernerhof: I



EUROPE TRAVEL BRIEFING

Salzburg Festival Notes

This year's Salzburg Festival, which runs from July 23 until August 31, features the Vienna Philharmonic, the London Philharmonic, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Oslo Philharmonic, the ORF Symphony Orchestra, the Budapest Festival Orchestra and the SWF Symphony Orchestra. Conductors include Lorin Maazel, Sir Georg Solti, Ricardo Muti, Seiji Ozawa, Claudio Abbado, Yehudi Menuhin, Mariss Jansons and James Levine. Among the soloists will be Jessye Norman, Christa Ludwig, Hermann Prey and Samuel Ramey. Some of the opera's to be performed are Mozart's *Così fan Tutte* and *The Magic Flute*, Verdi's *Falstaff*, *Salome* by Richard Strauss and *L'Orfeo* by René Jacobs.

Tickets are difficult to obtain at this late date but you can try. Call 662/844501 or fax 662/846682.

New Innsbruck City Map

The city of Innsbruck has published a new visitors map and an English version is available. In addition to the street map, the town's key sights, including color photos and a brief description of each, are presented with a cross reference to their location on the map. On the reverse side of the map is such practical information as the location of pharmacies, medical assistance, bike rental, money exchange, tourist information centers, post offices, airline offices and so on. The maps are available free of charge from the Austrian National Tourist Office, 11601 Wilshire Blvd., #2480, Los Angeles CA 90025, phone 310/477-3332, fax 310/477-5141.

Picasso in Munich

Fifty paintings, 60 drawings and nine sculptures of Pablo Picasso on loan from various museums and private collections

are on display until June 6 at Munich's Art Gallery of the Hypo Cultural Foundation. The exhibition is dedicated to the last half of Picasso's life. The Gallery is located at Theatinerstrasse 15, telephone 089/224412.

Inexpensive Mosel Stay

Piesport, a very old wine village on the Mosel, offers stays of one week that include seven nights accommodations, half-board, an excursion to Rudesheim and a good-bye gift of a bottle of Piesporter Goldtröpfchen for from 267 DM (\$161) per person. Information: Verkehrsbüro, St.-Martini-Strasse 27, D-5555, Piesport, phone 06507/2027.

Private Tour of Frankfurt

For those with plenty of time to kill at the Frankfurt Airport how about a two-and-a-half hour drive around the city with your own personal tour guide? For 140 DM (\$89) up to four persons can hire a taxi with an English-speaking driver from the city's Taxi Central. Contact Taxi-Union, Gutleutstrasse 98, D-6000, Frankfurt, telephone 069/252830, fax 069/231928.

More Vienna Air Service

Vienna is becoming more accessible by air from the U. S. For those who want to fly directly to the city here is a summary of the available service.

Austrian Airlines: Daily non-stops from New York beginning April 4. Five one-stop flights weekly from Chicago via Copenhagen.

Delta Airlines: Non-stops on Tuesday and Thursday from New York and a one-stop on Saturday.

TWA: One-stop flights from New York daily except Sunday.

Lauda Air: One-stop service from Miami on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. One-stop service via Munich from Los Angeles on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. (All in conjunction with Lufthansa.)

READERS' FORUM

Misunderstanding Or...?

While on business last October I passed through Füssen and decided to follow your recommendation and stay at the Pension Heim. I was greeted by a young lady, who told me a room with breakfast was 52 D-marks. I was given a nice room with double bed, but not requested to sign any registration. At breakfast the next morning, it turned out that the young lady had misunderstood my imperfect German and thought I was with my wife. On check-out, the owner told me there had been a mistake, that I had been put in the wrong room and the charge was 60 D-marks. I was at a disadvantage in the language and not about to argue over eight marks as the room and stay had been very pleasant. Actually, the hotel was only half full, so I don't think I was depriving a couple of a room. So I paid the 60 D-Marks and asked for a receipt. The owner told me if he had to give me a receipt, he would have to charge more due to taxes. I left without a receipt!

I felt I was being taken advantage of. If the young lady thought I was two people, and the charge was 52 D-marks, how come on becoming a single the charge increased to 60 D-marks? Secondly, in addition to taking advantage of me, he was also making cash money on the side.

I thought you might want to warn your readers about the potential for this kind of thing. The Pension Heim is a very nice place and good value, and I would certainly go again, but this did leave a bad taste following an otherwise pleasant visit.

Incidentally, I also followed your recommendation of the pub that is a short walk from the Heim

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ZÜRICH

Continued from page 1

before returning to the U. S. it's also a good place to make last minute gift purchases.

Here, beginning with the Florhof, is an accounting of our brief visit.

Hotel Florhof

EDITOR'S
CHOICE

This year we returned to the **Hotel Florhof**, on the left bank of the Limmat, which, based on a visit in 1988, we included in our "50 Best" hotels book.

The linchpin of this quiet and genteel house positioned just above Zürich's old town in the city's cultural heart, is Herr Hans Schilter, for more than 30 years its manager. He now welcomes the children and grandchildren of his early guests.

This kind and courtly man is the very essence of European hospitality. He is calm, friendly, capable and most of all, genuine. Quite obviously he immensely enjoys both his business and his customers.

Gemütlichkeit recently published a letter from a subscriber who had a disappointing stay at the Florhof. We are acquainted with the reader well enough to know she didn't imagine her bad experience. It was one of the reasons we decided to return.

But our visit turned up nothing but roses. Herr Schilter seemed to be constantly in the reception area bestowing his largesse on all who passed through. The bearish night manager was a lot more teddy than grizzly and the servers at breakfast were also most pleasant. No doubt our subscriber ran afoul of someone at the Florhof that we didn't encounter.

Physically, the Florhof falls short of luxury. Comfortable and quiet it is, but nothing more. The

breakfast buffet, though hardly sumptuous, was adequate.

Guest rooms are sufficient in size for a city hotel where guests are away from their rooms during the day. They are clean, have well-lit bathrooms, good reading lights, comfortable beds, good linen and are equipped with mini-bars and remotely controlled color TVs with the usual cable channels including CNN. Strangely, there were no washcloths in our bathroom. The room, however, (Number 22) is the only one in the house that retains the original plaster detailing on its ceiling. (The building has a history that can be traced back to 1576.)

Parking is difficult at the Florhof. At Herr Schilter's direction we parked our car in the hotel's driveway and left the keys with the porter who moved it as needed. The cost for this service was a modest 5 Sfr. (\$3.50) per day.

Ultimately — after it fulfills some basic requirements, which the Florhof certainly does — a hotel comes down to its employees and how they relate to their guests. In that respect the Florhof gets very high marks. For those who want a quiet, well-located Zürich headquarters at a fair price, we don't know of a better place than the Florhof. It is easy to see why many of you return year after year.

Hotel Florhof, Florhofgasse 4, 8001 Zürich, telephone 01/261 44 70, fax 01/261 46 11. Singles 150 Sfr. to 190 Sfr. (\$103-\$131), doubles 210 Sfr. to 280 Sfr. (\$145-\$193). Major cards.

Hotel Florhof: III G

Out for a Stroll

After settling in at the Florhof we set out to find lunch and perhaps do a bit of shopping. The hotel is close to Niederdorf-Strasse and its various offshoots, a network of winding, narrow streets of antique stores, small galleries and cafés.

A Cheap Lunch

In this district is a somewhat disreputable looking little bistro that serves good food and beer at low (for Zürich) prices. The tables at **Rheinfelder Bierhalle**, 19 Marktgasse (not the larger establishment of the same name on Niederdorf-Strasse), are occupied by local characters full of good cheer. On a recent Saturday afternoon the *stammtisch* was rollicking. A short-haired, ruddy-faced woman in a leather jacket opened fire with a water pistol at a man in his mid-70s wearing a rumpled wheat-colored suit and a bizarre necktie. Blearily looking on from an adjacent table was a well-oiled biker type sporting a black shirt with the phrase "Easy Riders Chopper Club" over a Hell's Angels style logo. In one corner, oblivious to these shenanigans, a young couple with a preschool child lunched on the special of the day, Calamari with tartar sauce (13.50 SFR./\$9.30). In another corner, also ignoring the *stammtisch* antics was a small group of smartly dressed women.

In summary: good food, authentic atmosphere, friendly people.

Rheinfelder Bierhalle, 19 Marktgasse, Inexpensive. ♦

Gift Shopping

As you might suspect, Zürich is a shopper's Valhalla. But while our cursory strolls uncovered a number of unusual stores and much attractive merchandise, we saw no bargains.

- At 61 Niederdorf-Strasse is **messer Dolmetsch**, a sort of Swiss-style Sharper Image. A set of five Henckels knives in a drawer that pulls out of a wooden cutting board is 389 Sfr. (\$268). Neat Swiss Railway watches start at 100 Sfr. (\$69).

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SWITZERLAND'S 100 BEST RESTAURANTS

This list is compiled each year by the Swiss publication Die Weltwoche. After the name of each restaurant is the city — and usually the region or canton — in which it is located and its telephone number. In parenthesis is the restaurant's 1992 standing.

- (1) Girardet, Crissier, Lake Geneva, 021-634-0505
- (2) Petermann's Kunststuben, Küsnacht, Zurich, 01-910-0715
- (4) Stucki, Basel, NW Switzerland, 061-35-8222
- (3) Le Pont-de-Brent, Brent, Lake Geneva, 021-964-5230
- (10) Pierroz (Rosalp), Verbier, Valais, 026-31-6323
- (5) Fischerzunft, Schaffhausen, Eastern Switzerland, 053-25-3281
- (6) L'Ermitage, Vufflens-le-Château, Lake Geneva, 021-802-2191
- (--) Jöhri's Talvo, Chamfèr, Graubünden, 082-3 44 55
- (9) Auberge du Raisin, Cully, Lake Geneva, 021-799-2131
- (11) Nik Gygax (Löwen), Thoringen, Bernese Mittelland, 063-61-2107
- (16) Witschi's, Unterengstringen, Zurich, 01-750-4460
- (18) Real, Vaduz, Liechtenstein, 075-2-2222
- (13) Fletschhorn, Saas Fee, Valais, 028-57-2131
- (23) Du Cerf, Cossonay, Lake Geneva, 021-861-2608/3657
- (10) Le Béarn, Geneva, 022-321-0028
- (12) Le Chat-Botté, Geneva, 022-731-6532
- (20) Centenario, Locarno, Ticino, 093-33-8222
- (19) Les Continents (Intercontinental), Geneva, 022-734-6091
- (22) Rathauskeller, Zug, Central Switzerland, 042-21-0058
- (--) Le Neptune (Du Rhône), Geneva, 022-731-98 31
- (17) Lion d'Or, Cologny, Geneva, 022-736-4432 or 022-736-5447
- (15) De la Tour, La Tour-de-Trême, Fribourg, 029-2-7470
- (35) Le Boccalino, St-Blaise, Neuchatel, 038-33-3680
- (14) Le Cygne (Noga Hilton), Geneva, 022-731-9811
- (8) Paradies, Ftan, Graubünden, 084-9-1325
- (31) De la Gare, Le Noirmont, Jura, 039-53-1110
- (32) Santabondio, Lugano, Ticino, 091-54-8535/2266
- (28) Schlüssel, Mels, Eastern Switzerland, 085-2-1238
- (25) Bellevue-Grill (Bellevue), Bern, Bernese Mittelland, 031-22-4581
- (30) Châteauvioux, Satigny, Geneva, 022-753-1511
- (26) Chesery, Gstaad, Bernese Oberland, 030-4-2451
- (38) La Rosaraie, Yverne, Lake Geneva, 025-26-5367
- (29) Teufelhof, Basel, NW Switzerland, 061-261-1010
- (33) Pöschli, Magden, NW Switzerland, 061-841-1125
- (36) Moospinte, Münchenbuchsee, Bernese Mittelland, 031-869-0113
- (39) Walserstube (Walsershof), Klosters, Graubünden, 081-69-4242
- (24) La Grappe d'Or, Lausanne, Lake Geneva, 021-23-0760
- (41) Tübli, Zürich, 01-251-2471
- (34) Le Gourmet (Forum), Martigny, Valais, 026-22-1841
- (63) Motto del Gallo, Laverne, Ticino, 091-93-2871
- (48) Krone, Batterkinder, Bernese Mittelland, 065-45-3434
- (40) Schäfli, Wigoltingen, Eastern Switzerland, 054f-63-1172
- (--) Rosa Tschundi, Gockhausen, Zürich, 01-821-03-95
- (37) Al Portone, Lugano, Ticino, 091-23-5995/5511
- (44) Sonne, Stein am Rhein, Eastern Switzerland, 054-41-2128
- (--) Adler, Nebikon, Lucerne, 062-86-21-22
- (42) Du Cerf, Crans-près-Celigny, Lake Geneva, 022-776-2323
- (46) Les Quatre Saisons (Europe), Basel, 061-691-8044
- (43) Königstuhl, Zürich, 01-261-7618
- (85) Zur Mühle, Fläsch, Graubünden, 085-9-1054
- (49) L'Ermitage, Clarens, Lake Geneva, 021-964-4411
- (50) Auberge du Grand Pin, Peseux, Neuchatel, 038-31-7707
- (52) Davoserhof, Davos, Graubünden, 081-43-6817
- (69) Martin, Flüh, NW Switzerland, 061-75-1002/08
- (54) Sonne, Schuenenberg, Eastern Switzerland, 032-89-1545
- (53) Auberge de Vouvry, Vouvry, Valais, 025-81-1107
- (51) Flühgasse, Zürich, 01-53-1110
- (21) La Rochette, Boncourt, Jura, 066-75-5614
- (55) Linde, Stans, Central Switzerland, 041-61-2826
- (57) Waldhof, Schaanwald, Liechtenstein, 075-3-1138
- (66) Auberge de Pinchat, Carouge, Geneva, 022-42-3077
- (--) Le Vieux Manoir, Murten, Fribourg, 037-71-12-83
- (71) Bürgis Burehof, Euthal, Central Switzerland, 055-53-2417
- (--) Conca Bella, Vacallo, Ticino, 091-43-74-74
- (62) Hubli's Landhaus, Davos, Graubünden, 081-46-2121
- (61) Chez Armin (Bad Maisprach), Maisprach, NW Switzerland, 061-841-1818
- (59) Ratskeller, Schwyz, Central Switzerland, 043-21-1087
- (83) Bumanns Kulinarium, Naters, Valais, 028-23-6364
- (87) Sihlhalde, Gattikon-Thalwil, Zurich, 01-720-0927
- (45) La Cassolette, Carouge, Geneva, 022-42-0318
- (65) Spycher, Kirchdorf, Bernese Mittelland, 031-781-1834
- (67) Pinte, Dättwil, NW Switzerland, 056-83-2030
- (84) Eichmühle, Wadonswil, Zurich, 01-780-3444
- (58) Ochsen, Gossau, Eastern Switzerland, 071-85-2531
- (74) Da Veraguth, Sagogn, Graubünden, 081-921-6464
- (73) Riesbächli, Zürich, 01-55-2324
- (--) Albana, Silvaplana, Graubünden, 082-4-92-92
- (88) Pöstli, Lachen, Central Switzerland, 055-63-1291
- (64) Thuri's Blumenau, Lommenschwil, Eastern Switzerland, 071-38-3570
- (--) Wirtschaft St Pelagius, St Palagiberg, Thurgau, 071-98-14-34
- (92) La Côte, Corin-sur-Sierre, Valais, 027-55-1351
- (89) La Bagatelle (Le Grand Chalet), Gstaad, Bernese Oberland, 030-8-3252
- (--) Schloss Falkenstein, Neidergösgen, Solothurn, 064-41-11-26
- (--) La Perle du Lac, Geneva, 022-731--79-35
- (99) Sonne, Dielsdorf, Zurich, 01-853-1245
- (96) Auberge de Zahringen, Fribourg, Fribourg, 037-22-4236
- (94) Zur Faktorei, Bach, Zurich, 01-784-0316
- (--) Schultheissenstube (Schweizerhof), Bern, 031-22-45-01
- (--) Lindergarten, Zell, Lucerne, 045-88-22-55
- (79) Alpenblick, Wilderswil, Bernese Oberland, 036-22-0707
- (--) Le Petit, St Legier, Vaud, 021-88-22-55
- (95) Le Fauteuil, St-Sulpice, Lake Geneva, 021-691-2021
- (91) Hostellerie de la Vendée, Petit-Lancy, Geneva, 022-792-0411
- (56) Nussbaumer, Aesch, NW Switzerland, 061-78-1685
- (82) Schäfli, Altnau, Eastern Switzerland, 072-65-1847
- (--) Chasté Tarasp, Graubünden, 081-864-17-75
- (--) Chez Jeannette, Aarau, 064-22-77-88
- (--) Hirschen Amriswil, Thurgau, 071-67-79-71
- (47) Anker, Lutzenberg, Eastern Switzerland, 071-44-1412
- (--) Ochsen, Neuendorf, Solothurn, 062-61-11-43

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messer Dolmetsch, 61 Niederdorfstr. 61, 8001 Zürich, telephone 01 811 23 00, fax 01 / 811 23 11.

- Just on the other side of the Limmat, at the end of the Rudolf Brun-Brücke, is one of several **Schweizer Heimatwerk** stores which sell Swiss handcrafts and souvenirs. There are thousands of high quality but pricey items. We saw beautiful scarves for about 250 Sfr. (\$172) and hand-painted ceramic tiles for 67 Sfr. (\$46).

Schweizer Heimatwerk, Rudolf Brun-Brücke, 8023 Zürich, telephone 01 / 211 57 80.

- A block off Bahnhof-Strasse, at Uraniastrasse 7 is the fascinating and chic **Caviar House**. The specialties here are Iranian Caviar and Balik Salmon. A little less than nine ounces of Beluga is 725 Sfr. (\$500). Tastings were not offered. An attractive Bodum chromium and glass hors d'oeuvres server is 129 Sfr. (\$89) and a silver caviar server with six vodka glasses goes for 715 Sfr. (\$493).

Caviar House, Uraniastrasse 7, 8001 Zürich, telephone 01 / 211 49 77, fax 01 / 212 13 83.

Restaurant Kronenhalle

With the Florhof's restaurant closed we opted for Kronenhalle, for decades a Zürich institution and place to

be seen. Over the years it has been a hangout for the likes of Yves St. Laurent, Igor Stravinsky and James Joyce. Kronenhalle is where the beautiful people go after a fund-raising gala, a sort of Zürich version of Elaine's in New York, Spago in Beverly Hills and Stars in San Francisco. But stuffy it is not.

In fact Kronenhalle turned out to be great fun. On the ground floor are two rooms, the high-ceilinged brasserie and the somewhat more formal Chagall room. The walls of both rooms — as well as the cozy, wood paneled bar which shouldn't be missed — are hung with some very major league art. It was exciting to sit amidst the work of masters. At one end of the Chagall room is his big blue painting entitled "Gladiolas." On the wall above our table in that room was a little Monet landscape. When we showed an interest in the art, our waitress urged us to walk around the restaurant and ogle to our heart's content. We had gone only a few feet before a waiter-turned-docent took us under his wing. He pointed out Mirós, a Picasso self-portrait, a sketch by Toulouse Latrec, and works by Matisse, Braque, Klee, Cézanne and other magical names.

We showed up at 8:45 on a Saturday evening without reservations and were met by a woman who said she couldn't seat us before 10 p.m. We later learned that this is the daughter of the

restaurant's original owner, Hulda Zumsteg. Credit her with a sense of humor. In the midst of giving us the bad news about a table, an ancient patron crept by us on her way from the ladies room. Our greeter rolled her eyes at the old woman's back and, in a stage whisper said, "SOME PEOPLE HAVE BEEN HERE SINCE SIX O'CLOCK AND WE COULD USE THE TABLES."

The food, which we might characterize as upscale/traditional, was very good, but plays second fiddle to the "scene" — the people, the rooms and the art.

When it's your last night in Europe you don't fool around. We started with smoked salmon and caviar over *blini* (45 Sfr./\$31). Superb. *Carpaccio* (36 Sfr./\$25) — paper thin raw beef — drizzled with olive oil and topped with shaved dry cheese fell a little short of expectations. Both main courses came with *rösti* as good as we've ever had. Veal "Kronenhalle" (46 Sfr./\$32) was thinly sliced and served in a light brown sauce. The better of the two entrees, calves liver (46 Sfr./\$32) also thinly sliced, was perfection. Portions were plentiful, Kronenhalle does two servings.

Dinner for two without beverages was 192 Sfr. (\$132).

We dressed casually and no one batted an eye but dresses, coats and ties are the uniform of the day.

Restaurant Kronenhalle, Rämistrasse 4, 8001 Zürich, telephone 01 / 251 02 56 or 01 / 251 66 69.

Expensive. Major cards.

Restaurant

Kronenhalle: ☆ G 

READERS' FORUM

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in the same village. That too was a good recommendation and exactly as you described it — even to the frenetic manager/waiter.

Austin Peppin
Chesterfield, MO

(Ed. Note: It seems obvious the Heim's owner keeps no written record of some guests in order to avoid taxes and possibly an assessment to the tourist office based on number of overnight stays. We have been told this is not an uncommon practice in Germany and numerous times have paid in cash for rooms and signed no register, which is what we recall doing at the Heim in 1992. The cost for our double room was 108 DM.

Why you were charged 60 DM when they discovered you were a single is quite mysterious except that it sounds like the extra eight marks was a "single supplement." Perhaps they thought you were traveling with a business associate and that person would pay separately for a total of 104 DM. The 1993 Michelin Red Guide for Deutschland shows the lowest single room price at the Heim is 70 DM and the highest double goes for 120 DM. It is really quite difficult to imagine those friendly people trying to cheat someone out of eight marks. 