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DEAR
SUBSCRIBER

January 28, 1994

Revised Rating System

This, being the start of our eighth year of publication, seems as good a time as any to simplify our system of rating hotels and restaurants. Under our old system we occasionally found places that didn't fit any of our rating categories. There were other shortcomings, too.

We will now rate both hotels and restaurants on a 0-20 scale and place them in one of five categories: Unacceptable, Adequate, Average, Above Average and Excellent. The ratings will be based on weighted criteria. For hotels the criteria are: Location, Guestrooms, Public Rooms, Restaurant(s), Facilities and People. For the restaurants the criteria are: Food, Service and Atmosphere.

(See the box on page two.)

Of course, it is impossible to reduce such a process to mathematics. A beautiful restaurant run by wonderful people could conceivably serve food so awful the restaurant could only be rated "unacceptable." This system, however, might yield enough points for service and atmosphere to place it in the "adequate" category. In cases like that we will simply resort to more subjective methods and give the restaurant its deserved "unacceptable" overall rating.

Though not perfect we still believe this is a step in the right direction. We welcome your suggestions.

Correction

World War II scholar Bob Gillespie of Lake Bluff, Illinois,

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GEMÜTLICHKEIT

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

VIENNA PENSIONS

Prices are high in old Vienna, particularly for hotel accommodations. We recently spent several days researching the city's pensionen. Not only did we find bargains but several stunning hotel rooms to boot.

In the past few years we have reported on several levels of Vienna hotels. We started with the high-priced luxury stops like the famed **Hotel Sacher**, the **Imperial** and the **Palais Schwartzberg**. Next we looked at small, atmospheric hotels such as the **Römischer-Kaiser**, the **Kaiserin Elisabeth** and the **König von Ungarn**. But when double room prices for those began to nudge the

\$200 level we turned our attention to a dozen or so three-star offerings like the **Kärntnerhof** and the **Wandl**. But, while we found two or three decent hotels at double room prices of from about \$100 to \$120, the drop in quality at this level was significant.

So last month we went to Vienna in search of alternatives and were delighted with what we found. Simply stated, the city's *pensionen* offer its

best hotel value. In pension after pension we found spacious, attractively decorated and furnished guest rooms just as handy to the town's most popular attractions as are the Sacher or the Kaiserin Elisabeth. And amazingly, the best rooms in the best *pensionen* can be favorably compared with guestrooms at the city's finest and most expensive hotels.

For example, several almost opulent corner rooms at the **Pension Aviano** are suite-size and overlook the town's principal walking and shopping street, the Kärntnerstrasse. And just outside the Ring, former Wang Computer executive, Otto Wiesenthal, has created the city's most stylish pension, the **Altstadt Vienna**, where each guest room is a near work of art and the view is across the city's rooftops to St. Ulrich's church. Naturally, the owners of both hotels are much involved with their guests. Herr Wiesenthal at the Altstadt rustles up event tickets, makes reserva-

A RED GUIDE FOR SWITZERLAND

Michelin's Red Guides are the world's best reference for the independent auto traveler. For the first time, there is one for Switzerland.

To quickly flip through a current list of travel books available from Ingram — the nation's largest book wholesaler — is to suddenly realize the immense number of travel titles on the market. Today's traveler can choose from thousands of guidebooks and travel references. New offerings, each with their own variation on an old theme or a new gimmick like color coding or three-dimensional maps, seem to be introduced on a

daily basis. But close examination usually reveals that most new releases are only a rehash of previously published information. When one asks the critical question, will this book be useful enough to warrant carrying it in my suitcase?, the answer is too often in the negative.

But with Michelin's newest title the response has to be an enthusiastic, "absolutely!" The good news for independent travelers to Switzerland is, for the first time in 1994, a

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corrects our October item concerning Hitler's "Wolf's Lair" in Poland being turned into a tourist attraction. We wrote that Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg, who tried to kill Hitler with a briefcase bomb at the "Wolf's Lair," was hung with piano wire. Mr. Gillespie points out that von Stauffenberg, who returned to Berlin thinking Hitler was dead, was actually shot. Hundreds of other conspirators were executed in a variety of ways, including being hung from meat hooks with piano wire.

Mr. Gillespie also sent us information on the **Bendlerblock**, a complex of buildings near Berlin's Tiergarten, where the failed plot to overthrow National Socialism was mostly hatched. It is now known as the **German Resistance Memorial Centre**. Several of the plotters against Hitler were executed here on July 20, 1944, the same day of the attempted assassination. A permanent exhibition "documents the motives, methods and aims of the struggle against the National Socialist dictatorship." The German Resistance Memorial Centre, is at Stauffenbergstrasse 11-13.

Vienna Notes

It was our first wintertime visit to Vienna, my favorite city. It's a great cold weather city; plenty of places to duck in for a lusty bowl of soup, a beer or, during the Christmas season, a hot *Weihnachtspunsch*. This potion of tea, orange juice, red wine and rum is seemingly sold everywhere by everyone. Kärntnerstrasse restaurants erect sidewalk stands that compete with the local Rotary Club's stands. No matter what the weather the booths stay open and gather crowds until late at night. One of my best 1993 Vienna memories is wandering through the snow one night after 11 p.m. sipping hot *Weihnachtspunsch* from a paper cup.

The stuff is also sold at the **Vienna Christmas Market**, which, by the way, is not to be missed if you're in town during the season. The city's Neues Rathaus, its lovely grounds dazzlingly lit and decorated, provide a spectacular backdrop for the hun-

dreds of Christmas stalls.

As long as you're in the neighborhood you should amble up Burggasse to the tiny Christmas Market that winds through narrow Spittelberggasse. The **Weihnachtsmarkt am Spittelberg** is a charming little collection of cubicles that hawk the wares of neighborhood artisans along with various libations that warm the inner traveler. Go in the evening and have dinner at **Boheme**, a nifty little restaurant that we'll review next month.

Alas, Gypsy music has apparently disappeared from the Vienna restaurant scene. Of course, our beloved **Café Budva** packed it in several years ago. Though neither was in Budva's league, we now mourn the passing of the **Csárdásfürstin** and **Mathias Keller**. The latter burned down and the former is now a Russian restaurant. So where does one find authentic *Zigeunermusik*? Try Budapest.

Actually we did get our Gypsy music fix — at the Volksoper where the Emmerich Kálmán's, *Csárdásfürstin*, was playing. Inside, the old building looked better than ever and the first-rate performance had just what we were looking for, dancing, rousing choruses and teary love duets...a very satisfying dose of Viennese operetta. I recommend it. But don't expect Volksoper personnel to welcome you with open arms. Our encounter with a coat checker made me think I was in Paris. But we would never have met this charmer had not our unsmiling usher forbidden us to take our coats to our seats. Past Volksoper visits have taught us not to expect a "Hi, I'm Klaus your usher" kind of welcome but this time things got a little out of hand. Ah, but don't let me deter you, we probably just hit a couple of about-to-retire not-so-civil servants having a bad day. Anyway you'll forget it all once the curtain rises. Don't wear jeans. Men will feel out of place without a tie and women wear dresses.— RHB

Revised Hotel/Restaurant Rating System

Rating Category	Scale
Unacceptable	0 - 3
Adequate	4 - 7
Average	8 - 11
Above Average	12 - 15
Excellent	16 - 20

Hotel Rating Criteria	Scale
People/Service	30%
Location/setting	15%
Guestrooms	30%
Public rooms	5%
Restaurant/Facilities	20%

Restaurant Rating Criteria	Scale
Food	65%
Service	20%
Atmosphere	15%

Sample Rating:

1993 Gemütlichkeit "Hotel of the Year"
Grand Hotel Victoria Jungfrau
Interlaken, Switzerland

Category	Rating	Weight	Score
Location:	14	x 15%	= 2.10
Guestrooms:	19	x 30%	= 5.70
Public Rooms:	20	x 05%	= 1.00
Restaurant(s):	18	x 15%	= 2.70
Facilities:	20	x 05%	= 1.00
People:	19	x 30%	= 5.70
Total			18.20

Overall Rating: Excellent 18/20

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GEMÜTLICHKEIT

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

Editor & Publisher: Robert H. Bestor, Jr.
Associate Editors: E. Schiller, L. Troop
Contributing Editors: C. Fischer, R. Holliday
Design & Composition: Paul T. Merschorf
Consulting Editor: Thomas P. Bestor
Subscription Dept: N. Badely, K. Steffans

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HOTEL RESTAURANT RATING KEY

Rating Category	Scale	Hotel Rating Criteria	Scale
Unacceptable	0 - 3	People/Service	30%
Adequate	4 - 7	Location/setting	15%
Average	8 - 11	Guestrooms	30%
Above Average	12 - 15	Public rooms	5%
Excellent	16 - 20	Facilities/Restaurant	20%

Special Designations

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

\$ Offers significant value.

Restaurant Criteria

Food	65%
Service	20%
Atmosphere	15%

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tions at neighborhood restaurants and recommends things to see and do.

The difference between a pension and a hotel is of little consequence to the average vacation traveler. The former rarely have room service or restaurants. While hotels generally occupy an entire building, city *pensionen* usually are located on two or three floors of a building that houses other businesses. When you and your suitcase are riding up the elevator to the reception desk of your pension you may be accompanied by people on their way to the dentist or to consult with their attorney. You won't find amenities like doormen and porters but many Vienna pension guestrooms have TVs with plenty of satellite channels, minibars and even hairdryers. Breakfast is typically from a buffet as bountiful as a three or four-star hotel.

Pension Altstadt

If your image of a Vienna pension is based on John Irving's fictional, seedy Pension Grillparzer, you're in for a surprise at the two year-old Altstadt. In terms of guestrooms, warmth of welcome, service and savoir faire, it's right there among the best small hotels in the city. Each of the 25 guestrooms has been carefully decorated in a rather spare Art Nouveau style that includes such '90s touches as low voltage halogen lighting and pieces of well-chosen modern art. Every room has a telephone in both bed and bathroom. And naturally there are minibars, master light switches, cable TV with CNN, a selection of complimentary toiletries in each bathroom, and other comforts one seldom associates with this class of accommodation. At night a little gift is left on each bed and not just the ritual piece of chocolate. When we were there last month it was a small Christmas decoration.

On a late winter afternoon

EDITOR'S CHOICE

guests can warm themselves with a hot drink by the open fire in a spacious but cozy main salon whose wide, soaring windows look out over the Church of St. Ulrich.

If you want the best room in the house ask for Number 14. This small apartment rents for 1650 AS (\$134), has a view of the church and a gigantic bathroom with a very

VIENNA

Population: 1,500,000

Elevation: 512 feet

Approximate distances from:

Budapest	208 km	129 miles
Munich	435 km	270 miles
Prague	292 km	181 miles
Salzburg	292 km	181 miles

Vienna Tourist Office
Kärntnerstrasse 38
Daily 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Phone: 1/513 88

Vienna Ticket Service
Phone: 1/587 98 43
Fax: 1/587 98 44

New Museum
KunstHaus Wien
Untere Weissgerberstrasse 13
A 1030 Vienna
Phone: 1/712 0491

English Radio
Danube Radio
92.9 & 103.8 MHz

large tub. We also particularly liked Number 31.

Owner/manager Otto Wiesenthal reminds us of other hoteliers we have met along the way — Fritz Lay at the **Hotel Abtei** in Hamburg and Claas Johannsen at the **Benen Diken Hof** in Sylt — who, possessed with intelligence, good taste and an obsession with details, have created outstanding small hotels.

The Altstadt's location, outside the Ring might be seen by some as a

drawback, others will enjoy life in a flourishing, upscale, urban neighborhood filled with interesting shops, good restaurants and not many tourists. Either way, the *zentrum* is only 15 minutes on foot or five minutes by underground.

Address: Kirchengasse 41, A-1070 Vienna

Phone: 1/526 33 99-0

Fax: 1/523 49 01

Location: Just outside the Ring. Take the U3 to Volkstheater. Exit the station through the Burggasse door and go left to Kirchengasse.

Rooms: 25 rooms, all with cable TV, two telephones and minibar. Some no-smoking rooms.

Proprietor: Otto Ernst Wiesenthal
Prices: Singles 1050 to 1450 AS (\$85-\$118), doubles 1250 to 1650 AS (\$102-\$134).

Meals: Buffet breakfast (included), snacks

Facilities: Large sitting room, lift.

Credit Cards: All

Disabled: Not suitable

Closed: Never

Parking: Public garage (150 AS) or street

Other: Theater and opera ticket service

RATING: EXCELLENT 17/20 G \$

Pension Aviano

For those who want to be in the very center of the action, the Aviano is our top choice. Thirtysomething-ish Frau Sabina Kafka, combines raising a family with running a veritable fleet of Vienna *pensionen* — the Aviano, Pertschy, Christina and one we did not see, the Pension Baronesse. The Aviano, with 17 spacious, newly remodeled, almost elegant rooms, is her flagship. Number 413, for 1500 AS (\$122) is a giant room whose main feature is a turret-like alcove on the corner of the building. This cozy retreat has windows on three sides, a small table, two chairs and a view up and down the Kärntnerstrasse. At the price it is possibly the best hotel room value we've seen inside the Ring. Number 304 is

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similar.

The Aviano's breakfast room is a bright, cheerful place with small halogen lamps suspended over each table.

Guestrooms at the Aviano can be favorably compared in size and comfort to rooms at the city's best small hotels and to standard rooms in the top hotels. The difference in price, of course, is substantial. For example, the best double at the **Kaiserin-Elisabeth** — a small hotel highly recommended by *Gemütlichkeit* — is about 2400 AS (\$195). Though you will find the K.E.'s decor and furnishing a bit more elegant, the best rooms at the Aviano will be larger, have better views and the central location of the two hotels is equal. The least expensive (rack rate) double room at the **Vienna Hilton** is about 2800 AS (\$227) and the hotel is not as well located.

Address: Marco d' Aviano-gasse 1, A-1010 Vienna

Phone: 1/512 83 30

Fax: 1/5312 81 65-65

Location: Inside the Ring, just off Kärntnerstrasse 17 rooms with telephone, TV, radio, minibar, toilet and shower or bath. Some have kitchen facilities.

Proprietor: Sabina Kafka

Prices: Singles 620 to 740 AS (\$50-\$60), doubles 980 to 1500 AS (\$80-\$122)

Facilities: Breakfast room, lift

Meals: Buffet breakfast (included)

Credit Cards: Visa, MC

Disabled: Not suitable

Closed: Never

Parking: Public Garage

Other: 15% price increase 12/25 through 1/7.

RATING: ABOVE AVERAGE 16.5/20 G \$

Pension Pertschy

Also run by the dynamic Frau Kafka. All rooms are acceptable but

those in the newer part are of a similar quality to rooms at the Aviano. Number 220, for example, is large, newly redecorated and furnished and has herringbone wood floors, oriental rugs and a big tile stove left over from the days when this 300 year-old building was a *palais*.

We mark down the Pertschy slightly because not all rooms are up to Aviano standards, a few are small and some hallways and stairwells — which, typical of pensionen, are owned by the landlord and not the hotel — are pretty dreary places.

Nonetheless, is it centrally located and we unhesitatingly

Vienna's Splendid New Underground

Vienna's now completed underground makes getting around the city an inexpensive delight. Fast, frequent (in three days of constant movement throughout the system we didn't wait for a train, tram or bus more than 20 minutes — *total*) trains will whisk you to virtually any destination in the city. We paid 115 AS (\$9) for a three-day pass good for unlimited travel on Vienna's vast network of trams, busses and underground and S-Bahn trains. A 24-hour rover ticket costs 45 AS (\$3.50) and an 8-day strip ticket is 235 AS (\$18). Buy them from machines at all underground stations. Children under seven and foreign students (with student I. D. and passport) under 16 travel free.

recommend it as a Vienna headquarters.

Address: Habsburgergasse 5, A-1010 Vienna

Phone: 1/534 49-0

Fax: 1/534 49-49

Location: Inside the Ring, just off the Graben

Rooms: 43 rooms with direct dial telephones TV, radio, minibar, toilet and shower or bath. Some have hair dryers and kitchen facilities.

Proprietor: Sabina Kafka

Prices: Singles 580 to 740 (\$47-\$60), doubles 980 to 1240 (\$80-\$101)

Facilities: Sitting room, lift

Meals: Buffet breakfast (included)

Credit Cards: Visa, MC

Disabled: Not suitable

Closed: Never

RATING: AVERAGE 11/20

Pension Nosseck

The Nosseck is owned by two affable sisters whose family once operated our favorite *beisl*, the Café Budva, which had the best Gypsy music in town. That place is long closed and its musicians scattered to other gigs, but it was good to run across a couple of hale and hearty Budva survivors. We found their hotel is like their restaurant, decidedly "old world." A comfortable chair in the Nosseck's small, cluttered sitting room feels like Vienna must have felt 100 years ago. And the place does have a history: this is one of the buildings where Mozart lived and where he is said to have written the Haffner symphony.

Guestrooms are, for the most part, spacious with high ceilings and windows, herringbone wood floors, oriental carpets and views of the Graben. You can rent rooms 11 and 12 as a suite for 1200 AS (\$98), or a small, quiet double at the back of the hotel is Number 9 for 900 AS (\$73).

The Nosseck's location is excellent and the Bernard sisters offer an especially warm welcome. At 370 AS (\$30) per day, Nosseck's arrangement with a nearby public garage is not as good as other hotels but the sisters recommend leaving the car at the Westbahnhof — about 15 minutes away via the underground — where the parking charge is about \$10 per day.

Address: Graben 17, A-1010 Vienna

Phone: 1/533 70 41

Fax: 1/535 36 46

Location: Inside the Ring at the

end of the Graben

Rooms: 26 rooms including seven singles, most with TV and bath.

Proprietor: Terika Bernard / Susanne Gundolf-Bernard

Prices: Singles 550 to 700 (\$45-\$57), doubles 900 to 950 (\$73-\$77)

Facilities: Sitting room, breakfast room, lift

Meals: Breakfast (included) ordered from menu card.

Credit Cards: No

Disabled: Limited

Closed: Never

Parking: Public Garage 370 AS per day

RATING: AVERAGE 10/20 \$ G

Pension Christina

Another Kafka property. The Christina's location, near the Danube canal about a 10 minute walk from Stephansplatz or three minutes via underground (U1 Schwedenplatz), is quiet but somewhat removed from the center.

Guestrooms and baths are on the whole notably smaller than in the *pensionen* we have previously discussed. You should ask for one of the larger rooms, such as Number 209 which has a separate sitting area with sofa and coffee table.

Address: Hafnersteig 7, A-1010 Vienna

Phone: 1/533 29 61

Fax: 1/533 29 61-11

Location: Inside the Ring, near the Danube canal.

Rooms: 33 rooms, most with telephone, TV, minibar, toilet and shower or bath. One apartment with kitchen.

Proprietor: Sabina Kafka

Prices: Singles 540 to 680 (\$44-\$55), doubles 940 to 1080 (\$76-\$88)

Facilities: Sitting room, lift

Meals: Buffet breakfast (included)

Credit Cards: Visa, MC

Disabled: Not suitable

Closed: Never

Parking: Street parking - 10 minute walk across Danube Canal

Other: 15% price increase 12/25 through 1/7.

RATING: AVERAGE 8.5/20

Pension Elite

A richly decorated pension with much "Vienna-at-turn-of-the-century" charm. Guestrooms and public areas are full of antique furniture and old rugs. The problem is only a handful of rooms have bathrooms and prices seem a little high. The location, too, on Wipplingerstrasse, a street of heavy vehicular traffic and big office buildings, is a bit removed from the center.

Parking in Vienna

Street parking within Vienna's Ring is virtually impossible. One might find a place for an hour or so, but parking for extended periods of time is not permitted. Most hotels and pensionen have arrangements for guest parking at nearby garages but it is expensive. At 160 AS (\$13) per day, the **Hotel Römischer-Kaiser** has by far the best deal we know of, but at other hotels the price ranges from 300 to 370 AS (\$24 to \$30) per day.

Some hoteliers recommend parking the car near the Westbahnhof, well outside the Ring, and taking the underground into the city center.

Room Number 10 is a double with toilet, shower and a good rooftop view. It rents for 1400 AS (\$114). The "served" continental breakfast includes muesli, cheese, sausage and juice.

Address: Wipplingerstrasse 32, A-1010 Vienna

Phone: 1/53325 18-0

Fax: 1/535 57 53

Location: Inside the Ring, seven minute walk from Stephansplatz
Rooms: 49 rooms, 10 of which come with toilet and shower. TV and radio upon request.

Proprietor: Fam. Dr. Wagner

Prices: Singles 720 - 900 (\$59-\$73), doubles 1180 -1500 (\$96-\$122)

Facilities: Sitting room, lift, bar

Meals: Served continental breakfast (included)

Credit Cards: No

Disabled: Not suitable

Closed: Never

Parking: Public garage

RATING: AVERAGE 8.5/20

Pension Riedl

Though the three year-old Pension Riedl is the plainest of the accommodations reviewed here, we nonetheless recommend it. Six of its eight bedrooms, have *en suite* toilet and shower and all are clean and bright. Number 6, which rents for 1100 AS (\$89), is a family room with a double and single bed and two showers.

Since there is no breakfast room, the meal is brought to each guestroom at a prearranged time.

The street outside the Riedl is currently under construction, and the entrance to the building is a little messy, but by summer these should all be cleared away and the Riedl will have parking spaces in a new underground garage.

The hotel is located in the northeast corner of the Ring, near the Danube Canal, about a 10 minute walk from Stephansplatz.

Address: Georg Coch-Pl 3, A-1010 Vienna

Phone: 1/512 79 19

Fax: 1/512 79 19-8

Location: Inside the Ring near Danube canal and Stuben Ring

Rooms: eight double rooms with radio and telephone, six with bath

Proprietor: Frau Felser

Prices: Singles 550 to 600 (\$45-\$49), doubles 920 to 980 (\$75-\$80)

Meals: Breakfast served in the room

Credit Cards: Visa, MC

Disabled: Not suitable

Closed: January 10 to mid-February

Parking: Public garage

RATING: ADEQUATE 7.5/20



SWISS RED GUIDE

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Michelin Red Guide for Switzerland. It categorizes and rates more than 2,000 Swiss hotels and restaurants from Zürich to the tiniest mountain village.

All the great red guide features are there: the front-of-the-book maps which locate the most pleasant or restful hotels and the restaurants with the best food; the little city maps that guide the auto traveler in and out of town and upon which are spotted the listed hotels and restaurants; the distance-between-towns charts; and the basic information about each city such as population, telephone area code, altitude, major sights, tourist office address and phone number and distances to other towns. Of course, there are dozens of other clever little features which when added together form what now must be regarded at the single most useful reference for the independent traveler to Switzerland.

Here are a few highlights culled from our copy of the '94 guide purchased in Zürich in early December (it is not yet available in the U. S.):

- The "roof peak" symbols of about 40 hotels are printed in red, meaning "particularly pleasant...owing to the character of the building, its decor, the setting, the welcome and services offered..." Among them are such *Gemütlichkeit* favorites as Interlaken's **Grand Hotel Victoria-Jungfrau**, the **Dolder Grand** in Zürich, **Les Sources des Alpes** in Leukerbad, **Waldhotel Doldenhorn** in Kandersteg, the **Hotel Victoria** in Glion near Montreux, the **Schlosshotel Chastè** near Scuol, **Hostellerie Bon Accueil** in Château d'Oex, **La Residence** and **Beau Rivage Palace** in Lausanne, the **Hotel Gardenia** in Caslano near Lugano, the **Giardino** in Ascona and the **Grand Hotel Giessbach** near Brienz.

- Some hotels with big reputa-

tions were not given red, among them: all the hotels of St. Moritz including **Badrutt's Palace**, all the hotels of Geneva including **Le Richmond**; all the hotels of Bern including **Schweizerhof** and **Bellevue Palace**; the **Grand Hotel National** and the **Palace** in Lucerne, the **Montreux Palace**, **Rosalp** in Verbier, all the hotels of Grindelwald, and, surprising to us, the **Palace** and **Le Grand Chalet** in Gstaad and the **Kronenhof** in Pontresina.

- French-based Michelin has been accused of a provincial bias when it comes to awarding its coveted restaurant stars. In this first guide, the only three-star awarded, **Girardet** near Lausanne, four of the six two-stars, and 12 of the 43 one-stars are in the southwestern, French-speaking, French-cuisine, part of the country. Draw your own conclusion. The two-star awards outside of the French region went to **Stucki** in Basel and Petermann's **Kunststube** in Küsnacht. (Be advised that the front-of-the-book map, referred to above, incorrectly shows a two-star restaurant in Küsnacht am Rigi, at the northern tip of Lake Lucerne, instead of in Küsnacht eight kilometers from Zürich.) A touted Zürich restaurant, **Agnes Amberg**, did not win a star, perhaps in part due to the death a year or so ago of Ms. Amberg.


- There is a section on Swiss wine with a table showing where the various grape varieties are grown and an explanation of their characteristics. Michelin says the years 1989, 1990 and 1992 are the best of recent vintages and that Swiss wine production barely meets the country's own needs — probably a major reason why Swiss wines are seldom exported.

- There is special section on Liechtenstein. The **Park-Hotel Sonnenhof** gets three red roof peaks and the **Restaurant Real**, both in Vaduz, is awarded one star.

- A lexicon of about 300 commonly used terms. For example, the

table indicates the French word *sec* or *trocken* in German or *secco* in Italian means "dry" in English. One looks up the foreign word in the alphabetical listings to find the English meaning.

- A listing of the country's principal winter sports centers provides information on altitude, an information phone number, number of ski lifts and the total kilometers of cross country trails.

The 366-page book is hardbound and weighs only nine ounces. 

READERS' FORUM

First & Last Night Hotels

Reports from a trip taken in October 1993.

Vienna: **Stop & Sleep Hotel**, Fischamend Bei Wien, A-2401 Fischamend / Vienna Marco Polo-Strasse 1, phone (43) 0222-32/77712, single 610 AS (\$50), double 710 AS (\$58). Approximately four km from Vienna airport. Good for a first and last night in Austria.

Budapest: **Hotel Astoria**, H-1053 Budapest, Kossuth Lajos U 19, P.O.B. 95, H-1366, phone (361) 117-3411, fax (361) 118-6798. Very nice but ask for rooms eight through 17 on the 4th, 5th, or 6th floors. Breakfast buffet excellent. Double \$120 with private bath, booked through IBUSZ (Hungarian Travel Co.). Parking beside hotel, west side, at no charge. Visa, MC. Restaurant: **Vegetarium**, V. Cukor Utea 3, phone 2-67-03-22. Short walk from the hotel Astoria. Vegetarian, all nonsmoking. Classical guitar musician starts about 7 p.m. Restaurant: **Orchidea**, Hungarian style "California" restaurant. Excellent salads. Has nonsmoking section. Budapest VIII, Rakoczi ut 29, phone 138-2429.

Laundromat: On Rakoczi utca

about halfway between Hotel Astoria and Orchidea restaurant on the opposite side of the street. Discovered too late to use. Had both washers and dryers, and it looked to be self-serve.

Germany, Weilheim: On Highway 2, southwest of Munich. Good first night stop if your on your way to Füssen or Garmisch. **Hotel Vollman**, 120 DM (\$98), double with private bath. On main square. Overnight parking in their compound, no charge. Nice breakfast buffet and dinner menu. Train station is three blocks away. Train to Munich 13 DM (\$7.50), one way, per person.

Germany, Bamberg: **Hotel Gasthof Wilde Rose**, Kesslerstr. 7 D-8600 Bamberg, phone 09-51-2-83-17, fax 09-51-22071. Double 140 DM (\$80), third floor, no elevator, private bath. Parking available for 6 DM (\$3.50) per night. Quiet spot, somewhat difficult to get to if you don't have a map. Excellent location for shopping and sight-seeing.

Germany, Erding: **Hotel Mayr-Wint**, Häger Strasse 4, D-8058 Erding, phone 081-22-7094, fax 081-22-7098. Double with private bath is 140 DM (\$80), parking on street or in small parking lot. Our room, #406, had balcony, lots of good lights, TV and very quiet. Erding is at the end of S-bahn 6 to Munich. Station short walk from hotel. Munich airport within 15 kilometers from hotel. Nice small town with shops and restaurants. Dinner and breakfast are excellent at the hotel. Good first and last night stop. A clerk at one of the shops in Erding recommended a visit to the crystal factories in Bodenmais or Zsiesel or on the way back to Vienna. We took time and visited the Joska plants in Bodenmais. Wonderful experience and still arrived in Vienna at 6:30 p.m..

Mr & Mrs Robert Daggett, Jr, Afton OK

Travel by Carriage

Your travel letter is so enjoyable that I thought I'd contribute this

information about a trip I plan to repeat this September.

If you're nostalgic for the past, romantic, and love beautiful scenery, you'll have a great time "Coaching in Bavaria" with a horse drawn mail coach or other antique carriage. The carriages are very comfortable, have English speaking coachmen, and travel primarily on roads that are not open to vehicular traffic. The tours are of different lengths but include overnight stays in quiet country inns, all meals, and your transfer to and from your hotel or the train station in Munich.

The five-day, four-night tour included arrival by carriage at the famous Wieskirche and the opportunity to tour King Ludwig's Neuschwanstein Castle. An eight-day tour completes a loop through this beautiful part of Germany. For those who really want a treat, horse drawn mail coach tours are available from Lindau, Germany (on Lake Constance) through Switzerland to Italy, or you can follow Mozart's Journey from Vienna to Prague with visits to castles and historic towns, and a cultural program ranging from operas and concerts to Bohemian folklore. This tour is from September 16th through the 26th and will be expensive but most memorable. Andreas Nemitz, the tour owner, speaks excellent English, the tours are very well organized, and the horses and carriages are safe and in good condition. The five-day tour, for example, costs about \$900.00 per person, depending upon single or double occupancy and the rate of exchange. You can contact Coaching in Bavaria, R. Nemitz, Kerschlach 6, D-82396 Pahl, Germany, phone: 8808 386 or telefax: 8808/1349.

Susan Newcomb, Walnut Creek CA

Hotels Recommended

We toured Germany and Switzerland for three weeks using many of your recommendations and we thank you for them.

Our hotel suggestion: **Hotel**

Restaurant Ratsschuo, 6442

Gersau, Switzerland with a lovely view on the shore of Lake Lucerne. Rooms are modern, about \$100; there are bikes to use and dinner was above average (about \$35 for two) with fresh vegetables and fruits and some vegetarian dishes.

We used your car hire at Frankfurt Airport and were off to a good start as we were upgraded to the Opel Astra at the Corsa price, which for 21 days was a bargain.

From *Gemütlichkeit* we used: the **Gasthof Rose** in Boxtal, a village west of Wertheim, the **Hotel Reich-Kuchenmeister** in Rothenburg, the **Pension Heim** in Seeg, and in Interlaken the **Hotel Post Hardermannli**. All were moderately priced and very satisfactory. O. D. Yoder, Newton NJ

Salzburg Hideaway

We Would like to share our favorite hotel with your readers, the **Berghotel Zistelalm**, located 10 minutes and 3000 feet above Salzburg on top of the Gaisberg mountain. It makes it easier if you are traveling by car, but there is a bus that goes up from Salzburg. This cozy hotel, rated three-star by the Austrian Government, has everything! The panoramic view from this half timbered lodge includes the Austrian Alps, rolling green hills and Salzburg below. The food is excellent (don't miss Hermann's *Wiener Schnitzel mit rösti*). A favorite lunch spot for guests and locals alike is on the outside terrace overlooking the swimming pool, and occasionally is accompanied by local "oompah" bands in summer.

The Zistelalm is ideal for day trips to the surrounding attractions. There is a beautiful and easy hiking trail around the Gaisberg that only takes about an hour. The hotel is so relaxing we have often taken a day off from sight-seeing and stayed up there to read or enjoy the sun.

What makes this hotel so special to us is its warm and friendly own-

Continued on page 8...

READERS' FORUM

Continued from page 7

ers, English-speaking Annaliese and Hermann Hauser. We recommend rooms four, nine, or 12. Prices range from approximately 650 AS (\$53) per night, double without bath, to 940-1095 AS (\$76-\$89) with bath, breakfast included. The apartments that are separate from the main building, and sleep four, are around 1600 AS (\$130) Singles are from 380 AS (\$31) without bath to 490 AS (\$40) with bath. Call ahead for reservations (0662/64167 or 641068 or fax 0662/642618). The address is A-5026 Salzburg, am Gaisberg.

Linda & Max Gray, Diablo CA

Lufthansa

Lufthansa Airlines says it no longer has a check-in counter in the Frankfurt **Gravenbruch Kempinski Hotel**.

Many Lufthansa passengers fly to Frankfurt because they can avoid the Frankfurt Airport Lufthansa "counter chaos" by staying at the Gravenbruch Hotel and enjoying this luxury.

I am sure many will now seek an alternate destination and/or airline. D.L. Bechtel, Fort Worth TX

Tax Saving

I'm writing with regard to your November 1993 issue which contained several pieces which either need additional comment or are not up to date.

First the essay, "Factory Delivery; Good Deal or Not" did not mention

an important "saving" element applicable to California residents: if one drives a factory-delivered car in Europe for more than 90 days, one avoids paying the excise tax normally applicable to a new car purchase. (It is 7.5% in my county, so it would materially increase the amount in the total saving column).

The "Swiss Trains" essay was excellent, but it would have been more useful to your readers had it mentioned the Swiss Rail Pass is probably Europe's greatest travel bargain: it entitles the owner to ride not only the Swiss Rail network, but also the Postal Bus network, the Lake Steamers of Switzerland, and the train networks of the big cities. In addition, it also frequently obtains discounts on private lines, including R.R.'s and aerial tramways and ski lifts.

Finally, the Stuttgart piece didn't mention two noteworthy art museums. The state (Baden-Württemberg) museum's collection is not world-class, but it does contain some excellent late 19th century and early 20th century art from France, Spain, Austria, and Germany. The city museum, in my experience, always offers dynamic exhibitions (In June 1993, for example, it had a fascinating "Ruins of Pompeii" together with a large exhibit of Edward Münch). It is an easy and pleasant walk between the two museums.

My credentials are that every year for the

past nine years I have spent three to four months in Europe, and have taken European delivery of a German auto (in 1993 it was a 6-cylinder VW Passat) in each of these years.

Kenneth Kloforn, Irvine CA

How Come?

I cannot understand why you tell us that the Swiss National Tourist Office in San Francisco is closed on 12/31/93 in your December issue, received today (1/13/94) when the info could have been published in November, for a little advance notice.

R. Dreyfus, San Diego CA

(Ed. reply: We published the information as soon as we had it. Swiss National Tourist Offices in Los Angeles, New York and Chicago remain fully operational and ready to serve you.)

SNTO
222 No. Sepulveda Blvd.
El Segundo CA 90245
Phone: 310-335-5980
Fax: 310-335-5982

SNTO
150 N. Michigan Ave.
Chicago IL 60601
Phone: 312-630-5840
Fax: 312-630-5848

SNTO
608 Fifth Avenue
New York NY 10020
Phone: 212-757-5944
Fax: 212-262-6116

By the way, each issue of *Gemütlichkeit* is written, printed and mailed during the last 10 days of the month it is dated.)

Problems at the Opera

Though we prefer that subscribers write us when they wish to make recommendations or warn of places

to avoid, occasionally we hear something over the phone that needs to be passed along. John and Barbara Swards of Allentown, PA, phoned to report a disastrous visit to a hotel *Gemütlichkeit* has highly recommended for the past three years, Munich's expensive little **Hotel Opera**. The Swards listed several complaints, among them: no help with luggage, no fan in bathroom, a large water stain on ceiling above the bed, no waste container in room or bath, no wash cloths and no breakfast menu. Mr. Swards told *Gemütlichkeit* the room they were assigned was far from the elegance and comfort we described in our January, 1992, issue. He is of the opinion that the Opera may be in financial difficulty.

It should also be noted that the Opera was omitted from the 1993 Michelin Red Guide for Germany. For the time being we will withdraw our recommendation of this hotel.

Florhof Changes

Finally, we appreciate all those who called or wrote to tell us of the retirement of Herr Schilter at the **Hotel Florhof** in Zürich. We will welcome your comments regarding the Florhof's new management. ☒

Coming Soon:

- Vienna restaurant report and more hotels
- St. Gallen in Switzerland
- Zell am See and Steyr in Austria
- Oberstdorf in Germany