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DEAR SUBSCRIBER

June 28, 1996

**An All-Time Favorite**

As usual, the **Gasthof Fraundorfer** was roaring. The long tables were filled with groups, mostly Germans. The smaller tables and banquets, too, were packed. Frau Fraundorfer and her staff of servers moved swiftly around the room, toting trays with half-liters of beer and plates heaped with steaming Bavarian food. From the tiny stage at the front of the room wafted the clear tenor voice of Friedl. He wore *Lederhosen* and accompanied himself on an accordion. Most of the approximately 100 diners squeezed into this cozy room were having the time of their lives, and judging by the rising noise level the majority were on their third beer — at least. Two teenaged boys in traditional dress had just entertained the crowd with a Bavarian dance that involved a lot of leg kicking and loud thigh slapping.

I took a sip of my Paulaner and, for the perhaps the 1,456th time, thought why can't we make beer this good in the U.S.? Feeling expansive and contented, I turned to Liz and launched into one of my pronouncements; yet another shattering insight from the wise old traveler:

"You know we've been coming over here for a long time, and we've seen a hell of a lot, but..." She was way ahead of me. "There's no place like the Fraundorfer," she said, finishing my obvious and not very insightful commentary.

Obvious or not, it's true and I'm not the only one who thinks so. Earlier this month, 25-year-old son Andy and Margaret, his significant other, were camping near Garmisch-Partenkirchen and had their first Fraundorfer evening. They had reserved ahead and were seated with a

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# GEMÜTLICHKEIT

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

## GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN

*Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany's most popular resort, offers excellent accommodations in all price categories, a scenic setting, lots to see and do and, at night, the fantastic Fraundorfer.*

**G**armisch-Partenkirchen is a natural headquarters when visiting

southern Bavarian. From it, most of the region's main attractions are accessible on daytrips: the **Royal Castles of Linderhof, Neuschwanstein and Hohenschwangau**; the **Wieskirche**; the wood carving village of Oberammergau, famous for its **Passion Play** performances every 10 years (next: 2000); the **Benedictine Abbey** at Ettal and the violin-making village of Mittenwald. Even Innsbruck, in Austria, is less than an hour's drive.

There is also plenty to see and do in and near the city itself: the Zugspitze, Germany's highest mountain, can be reached from the railway station via cogwheel train and then cable car; there are miles of walking and hiking trails; a casino; good shopping and two towns with different personalities — simple, country Partenkirchen and more fashionable Garmisch.

The setting, in a flat basin with mountains all round, is gorgeous. Among the most impressive peaks are the Zugspitze, the Alpspitze, the Wank and the Kramer.

For an easy hike, park at the Olympic ski stadium and walk the flat road about a mile to the Graseck cable car. Take the approximately three-minute ride (5 DM/\$3.33) up to the **Forsthaus Graseck**, where you may wish to stop for a lunch or a beverage on the terrace and enjoy a fine view of the Wetterstein range. Afterward, walk down the marked trail to the Partnachklamm, a gorge through which thunders a small river. The path is alongside the surging torrent and the gorge is very narrow. Wear shoes you don't mind

getting muddy and expect to get a little wet. The roundtrip will take a little less than two hours.

For those who would rather drive than walk, there are a number of notably scenic roads which can easily be explored from Garmisch-Partenkirchen. Try driving north around the Walchensee and the Kochelsee or take the toll road east off Red Road #11 just north of Wallgau. Or try this loop: Head west on Red Road #24 along the Loisach river, swing down into Austria, come back up into Reutte, then take the

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## EUROPE TRAVEL BRIEFING

### Amex CDW Requirements

A recent American Express statement contained updated rules on their Car Rental Loss and Damage Insurance Plan, commonly referred to a Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) and theft coverage. Here are some important features of the coverage:

- What is reimbursed: Damage to or theft of rental car.
- Length of coverage: Now a maximum of 30 consecutive days rather than 31 as in the past. In other words, Amex does not provide CDW coverage on car rental contracts longer than 30 days.
- Vehicles not covered: exotic cars, trucks, utility vehicles, and full-sized vans. Minivans are covered, but to be absolutely certain call Amex and ask if the specific model you plan to rent is covered.
- What is not reimbursed: Value added tax and/or

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## DEAR SUBSCRIBER

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German couple at a small table for four. Their relationship as table-mates began a little self-consciously but, as always happens at the Fraundorfer, by the end of the evening they were the best of friends; dancing, buying each other beer and Schnaps and solving the world's problems. Andy asked his new friends about another German restaurant he had heard was similar to the Fraundorfer. *Esgibt nur einen Gasthof Fraundorfer* was the response from the German couple.

I once asked a woman from the Garmisch-Partenkirchen tourist office if there were other restaurants in town like the Fraundorfer and got a similar response: "There is only one Fraundorfer; there every night is a party"

We first found the Fraundorfer in October of 1979. About nine o'clock in the evening, out for an after-dinner stroll and looking for a nightcap — maybe someplace with a little music — we chanced on this little Gasthof that would have a larger impact on our lives than we could possibly have dreamed.

We stood at the door and searched the crowded room for a place to sit. Reading our faces, a long table of older women squeezed together and motioned us over. After ordering a beer, we looked around and tried to take it all in: the packed room, the rough wood walls and ceiling darkened with age, the memorabilia and photos going back to the 1936 Winter Olympics, the music and the happy customers.

After a few minutes, the women put their heads together for a short conference, following which there was a shifting of places. They had rearranged themselves to place their lone English-speaker next to Liz.

For the next three hours we talked, drank beer and danced. Liz and I danced with each other, with the older women, and Liz even took a turn or two with a couple of red-faced Garmisch-Partenkirchener bent on making sure the Paulaner truck would soon be calling again at the

Fraundorfer.

The women turned out to be German war widows on holiday from the north of Germany. Mathilda, the English-speaker, translated for the group and for us. When the music stopped we drove Mathilda and her friend Angela back to their hotel. We left them after accepting an invitation to stay for a few days at Mathilda's home in a village near Hanover later in our trip.

It was not a phony 'let's do lunch' invitation, she meant it.

And so, 10 days later, there we were, sipping a glass of wine in the sitting room of Mathilda's well kept two-story home in Lügde, population 12,000, about 40 miles south of Hanover. Prominently displayed on the wall were pictures of four men, all in German military uniform. One or two wore swastika arm bands. They were Mathilda's husband and three brothers, all of whom died in World War II. That night she and Angela took us to a small country restaurant and later Liz and I slept in Matilda's spare bedroom. Next morning, she fed us a gigantic breakfast at a table in her garden. During our Fraundorfer discussions I had mentioned a fondness for Beethoven and, as we ate, through an open door floated the sounds of Beethoven's Pastorale, perfect breakfast music.

The next night, Mathilda's sister and brother-in-law hosted a garden party at their home that featured several varieties of deliciously grilled meats, a rather lethal wine punch and, very late in the evening around the fire pit, Schnaps. The party had been organized to welcome us to Lügde (those 'cold' northern Germans, you know) and we met the whole family.

That chance meeting at the Fraundorfer began a relationship between two families — one in Germany, one in California — that remains to this day. We've made other trips to Lügde and breakfasted often in Mathilda's garden. Other members of our family have also been welcomed in Lügde and, in the early 80s, the two, stout German sisters, Mathilda and Erna, stayed with us in Hayward for three weeks. It was their first and only trip to the USA. Later, Erna's 22-year-old daughter, Marianne,

lived with us for four months, earning spending money by helping Andy with his German studies and doing clerical work in our business.

Mathilda, who told us what it was like during the war to exist on potatoes and to learn, one-by-one, of the war deaths of a husband and three brothers, died three years ago.

Erna's husband Hans, the master outdoor griller and World War II paratrooper, died in 1988. The last time we saw him it was his birthday. All that day he sat at a table in his beautiful garden as one after another of his old World War II *Kameraden* stopped to reminisce and raise a glass.

For a kid whose earliest impressions of Germany were newsreels of the war (I was seven in 1945), to get to know this generation of Germans was fascinating.

Since that evening in 1979, we've returned to the Fraundorfer at least 20 times. Always there have been interesting table mates, most of them German. And we've been invited to other homes. One night we were seated in a booth with a German foursome on holiday. The discussion turned to soccer and we were invited to join the two couples that very evening to watch Bayern München, the New York Yankees of German soccer, in the televised European Cup final. One does not refuse such invitations and in short order we were sitting in front of the TV in one of Garmisch-Partenkirchen's finest homes.

Little has changed in the 17 years we have known the Fraundorfer. For 27 years the music was provided by Josef (12-string guitar) and Friedl (accordion). The near-inscrutable, almost gruff, Josef seldom smiled but made eye contact with every pretty woman in the room. Ruddy, round-faced Friedl is more outgoing. I used to note what they drank in an evening and, though it was a prodigious amount, from 7 p.m. to sometimes well after midnight, Friedl rarely left the stage for the men's room. And, while I was keeping score, Josef never did.

Often our waitress was Erika, a bouncy woman, full of humor, who speaks no English but under-

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# GEMÜTLICHKEIT

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

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## HOTEL RESTAURANT RATING KEY

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

| Value Rating        | Scale   | Restaurant Criteria |     |
|---------------------|---------|---------------------|-----|
| Outstanding Value   | 17 - 20 | Food                | 65% |
| Very Good Value     | 12 - 16 | Service             | 20% |
| Average Value       | 9 - 11  | Atmosphere          | 15% |
| Below Average Value | 5 - 8   |                     |     |
| A Rip-Off           | 0 - 4   |                     |     |

### Special Designation

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

## GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN

Continued from page 1

Yellow Road along the north shore of Plannsee, past Linderhof, through Ettal and back to Garmisch-Partenkirchen. For these you will need *Die Generalkarte* #25 and possibly #26.

For a somewhat tricky but immensely rewarding drive over some very remote back roads, we refer you to our September, 1992 issue, and the forest drive from Füssen to Mittenwald.

In winter, of course, Garmisch-Partenkirchen is Germany's most popular ski resort, with nearly 50 cable cars and lifts, dozens of downhill runs and several cross-country routes.

A major Garmisch-Partenkirchen selling point is its affordability. Hotels in all categories offer good value and apartments are even better. Two persons, for example, could spend a week in one of Garmisch-Partenkirchen's excellent *Ferienwohnungen* for under \$500. Combine that with another one-week apartment rental in, say, the Austrian lakeside resort of Attersee; add an inexpensive rental car, and you have a very relaxing two-week European vacation for less than \$1,300, not including airfare or food.

Here are a some options regarding accommodations and restaurants:

### Hotels

*This month we introduce a new value rating system on the 0-20 scale. A 10/20 value rating means the hotel or restaurant offers average value when compared with similarly priced establishments throughout Germany, Austria & Switzerland. Value ratings above 10/20 offer comparatively better value and those below 10/20 offer less. In other words, a hotel we rate at 15/20 is a very good value. One we score 5/20 is a poor value.*

*Unless otherwise noted, assume all hotels include breakfast in the price of the room and have direct dial telephone, cable TV, lift, en suite bathrooms and accept most major credit cards.*

#### Grand Hotel Sonnenbichl

The Sonnenbichl adds the flavor of Bavaria primarily to its friendly service. Otherwise it is, for the most part,

**EDITOR'S CHOICE**

## GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN

- Population: 28,000
- Elevation: 720 meters - 2,362 feet

Tourist Office  
Verkehrsamt  
Richard-Strauss-Platz  
D-82467 Garmisch-Partenkirchen  
Tel. 08821 / 1806 Fax 08821 / 18055

| Distances from: | KM  | Miles |
|-----------------|-----|-------|
| Berlin          | 700 | 437   |
| Frankfurt       | 480 | 300   |
| Hamburg         | 890 | 556   |
| Innsbruck       | 60  | 38    |
| Munich          | 86  | 54    |
| Nürnberg        | 250 | 156   |
| Salzburg        | 200 | 125   |
| Vienna          | 360 | 225   |

### Ski Prices

Holders of the HAPPYSKICARD are entitled to ski four separate ski areas: Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Seefeld (in Austria) Mittenwald and Schneearena Tiroler Zugspitze. Costs for the three day card range from 136 DM (\$91) for adults and 90 DM (\$60) for kids under 15 to 552 DM (\$368) for adults and 359 DM (\$239) for children. Single day lift passes for one of Garmisch-Partenkirchen's four ski areas range from 28 DM (\$19) and 20 DM (\$13) for Eckbauer to 58 DM (\$39) and 35 DM (\$23) for Zugspitzgebiet.

### Ascending the Zugspitze

There are two routes to the Zugspitze from the German side of the mountain. The first is by rack railway to Zugspitzplatt glacier station via Eibsee. The ride takes 75 minutes from the Garmisch rail station, 60 minutes from the village of Grainau and 35 minutes from Eibsee. Trains leave hourly beginning at 0735.

The second is from the lake at Eibsee via the Eibsee cable car, one of the biggest in Europe, which ascends directly to the Zugspitze summit in 10 minutes. Departures from Eibsee are every half hour beginning at 0830. Eibsee is 10 km from Garmisch and can be reached by rack railway, car or by special Eibsee busses.

Roundtrip fares are 58 DM (\$39) for adults, 41 DM (\$27) for kids 16 to 18 years, and 35 DM (\$23) for children 4-15.

### The Casino

The Garmisch-Partenkirchen Casino is open every day and offers roulette, baccara, blackjack and slot machines. Minimum wagers are: blackjack 10 DM (\$6.67), baccara 50 DM (\$33.33), American roulette 10 DM (\$6.67) and slot machines 1 DM (67 cents).

a traditional, rather formal, five-star hotel, located on a slight rise less than two kilometers north of the city center.

Here the live music is classical or jazz instead of oompah and you'll feel more comfortable in a tie when bellying up to the Peacock Bar. High rollers who travel in grand style will want to reserve the Richard Strauss suite at 950 DM (\$633) in low season. For medium rollers a standard double rents for about 280 DM (\$187).

Of course, the Sonnenbichl offers a wide array of services: beauty farm, the usual solarium-sauna-fitness facilities, an indoor pool, bikes to rent, nearby tennis and golf, organized tours and, for a small charge, a shuttle into town.

The formal Blue Room serves "German specialties" but the Zirbelstube, with local dishes, is Bavarian all the way.

The hotel offers a number of weekend and holiday packages beginning at 222 DM (\$148) per person.

**Daily Rates:** Singles 165 to 215 DM (\$110-\$143), doubles 230 DM to 330 DM (\$153-\$220). 93 rooms, usual services (see above) plus balconies, free parking, no smoking rooms, limited disabled access.

**Contact:** Grand Hotel Sonnenbichl, Christian & Petra Weiss, Burgstrasse 97, D-82467 Garmisch-Partenkirchen, tel. 08821 / 70 20, fax 08821 / 702131.

**Rating:** 17/20 **Value:** 14/20

### Ramada Sporthotel

In a pleasant country location, about two kilometers from the city center, the Ramada Sporthotel (not part of Ramada USA) is for those who crave large resort hotels with all the services. This one has a beauty farm, indoor pool, Jacuzzi, sauna, fitness center, even squash courts.

Public rooms are decorated in a 90s Bavarian style that emphasizes polished wood, recessed halogen lighting and lots of windows. The hotel's sprawling Cafe Terrace, a modern 'winter garden,' with bright, contemporary furniture, is virtually glass-enclosed.

The spacious guestrooms are

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## GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN

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similarly decorated with an emphasis on wood and modern furnishings.

**Daily Rates:** Singles 260 DM (\$173), doubles 360 DM (\$240). 155 rooms, all usual services (see above) plus balconies, free parking, no smoking rooms, one guest room equipped for disabled.

**Contact:** Ramada Sporthotel, Andreas Bisson, Am Riess 5, D-82467 Garmisch-Partenkirchen, tel. 08821/75 80, fax 08821/3811.

**Rating:** 16/20 **Value:** 11/20

### Clausing's Romantik Posthotel

Those who seek the epitome of kitschy Bavarian charm might just find it at the lively Clausing's Romantik Posthotel. The busy, complicated decor of its public rooms is as Bavarian as it gets: vaulted ceilings, baroque statues, religious icons, low hanging lamps, forests of dark wood paneling, intricately carved antique furniture, dried flowers, old pictures and other quaint paraphernalia. The effect is a kind of warm, country-cozy elegance that makes one feel like staying for a while.

Those who do will be in the very center of Garmisch, both physically and socially. In fair weather, Clausing's vast streetside outdoor cafe is jammed with an international crowd, and every night there is live music.

Some of the older guest rooms, though spacious and comfortable enough, are a jumble of colors and fabric patterns and there are also some strange furniture choices.

Rooms on the top floor, however, have been redone in a more restrained, though unmistakably Bavarian, style and are the ones to ask for. We especially like #41, #42, #49 and #51. All have slanting beam ceilings; spacious, well-lit, luxurious bathrooms and rent for from 256 to 286 DM (\$171-\$191).

**Daily Rates:** Singles 100 to 200 DM (\$67-\$134), doubles 160 to 300 DM (\$107-\$200). 45 rooms, beer garden, outdoor restaurant, no access for disabled, free public parking 100 meters from hotel.

**Contact:** Clausing's Romantik Posthotel, Fam. Weinfurtner/E. Löcher,

Marienplatz 12, D-82467 Garmisch-Partenkirchen, tel. 08821/70 90, fax 08821/709205.

**Rating:** 16/20 **Value:** 14/20

### Posthotel Partenkirchen

For many years, Michelin ranked the Posthotel Partenkirchen number one in Garmisch-Partenkirchen. Then bigger and grander hotels came along and the Post fell a notch or two. But those who supplanted it do not match the Post's elegant Bavarian interior — public and guest rooms. The richness of its carved-wood ceilings and walls and splendid old furnishings is extraordinary.

Guestrooms in the main building are in the same style, woody and Bavarian almost to a fault. Lighter, airier and of greater appeal to us are the more modern accommodations in a separate annex.

During the late 80s, the Post's once highly-regarded restaurant fell on hard times, but apparently things have improved. Gault Millau gives it one chef's toque and a rating of 14/20, tied for the highest rating of any Garmisch-Partenkirchen restaurant.

A recent, popular addition in the hotel is the Post-Taverne, a bistro-style restaurant and bar with a small open kitchen which offers lighter dishes, mainly pasta, and serves from late afternoon to 11:30 p.m.

The Posthotel offers a special rate to *Gemütlichkeit* subscribers of 95 DM (\$62.50) single and 190 DM (\$125) double — except during the periods September 15 to October 15 and December 20 to January 15, 1997. Our value rating, however, is based on the rack rates listed below.

**Daily Rates:** Singles 100 to 170 DM (\$67-\$113), doubles 200 DM to 280 DM (\$134-\$187). 60 rooms, some balconies, free parking, limited disabled access.

**Contact:** Posthotel Partenkirchen, Familie Stahl, Ludwigstrasse 49, D-82467 Garmisch-Partenkirchen, tel. 08821/5 10 67, fax 08821/78568.

**Rating:** 15/20 **Value:** 14/20

### Gasthof Fraundorfer

Atmosphere, atmosphere, atmosphere. The Fraundorfer has buckets of

it. The location, in the center of less touristy and more authentic Partenkirchen, is perfect. Much of its intricately painted facade on Ludwigstrasse, the town's main street, is a scene of happy Bavarians around a table, eating, drinking, singing and dancing — and an apt symbol of what goes on inside.

The Fraundorfer's principal fame is as a restaurant and six nights each week (Tuesday is *Ruhetag* — a rest day) the cast assembles — the Fraundorfer family, Friedl the singer/accordionist, the Bavarian dancers, the cooks and the servers — and the show goes on. There is live music, dancing, much beer and staggering helpings of hearty, regional dishes ordered from a huge menu.


Reserve ahead of time and expect to be seated with other diners. It is an experience not to be missed.

Its renown as a restaurant may obscure the fact that the Fraundorfer also has some very pleasant and reasonably priced sleeping accommodations. Though all guestrooms are decorated in a cozy Bavarian style with lots of blond wood and beds with canopies, the best are in Gästehaus Barbara, an annex behind the hotel. The room we occupied there, the first one to the left of the entry on the ground floor, was small but snug, comfortable and immaculate. This annex is in the midst of the family "compound," where several generations of Fraundorfers can be seen coming and going.

The prototype Bavarian inn.

**Daily Rates:** Singles 65 DM (\$43), doubles 120 DM to 160 DM (\$80-\$107), apartments 160 DM to 180 DM (\$107-\$120) two persons, 180 DM to 225 DM (\$120-\$150) three persons, 220 DM to 280 DM (147-187) four persons and 250 DM to 300 DM (\$167-\$200) for five persons. Apartment prices include breakfast. 33 rooms, some balconies, sauna, solarium, free parking, no lift, very limited disabled access.

**Contact:** Gasthof Fraundorfer, Josef & Barbara Fraundorfer, Ludwigstrasse 24, D-82467 Garmisch-Partenkirchen, tel. 08821/21 76, fax 08821/71073.

**Rating:**  14/20 **Value:** 18/20

**EDITOR'S CHOICE**

Hotel Berggasthof Panorama  
Excellent mountain, valley and city views; a good restaurant; country charm; pleasant guest rooms and reasonable rates make the Panorama an "Editor's Choice" and one of the Garmisch-Partenkirchen's best hotel values.

**EDITOR'S CHOICE**

It sits part way up the mountain on the Partenkirchen side of town very near the pretty little church of St. Anton.

Guestrooms are not fancy, a bit on the small side, but clean, bright and comfortable. We recommend rooms number one and nine. The former is sort of 'junior suite;' it has a small sitting room in addition to its bedroom and rents for only 150 DM (\$100). Number 9, two flights up, is a better than average-size corner double whose balcony offers the best view in the hotel and, at 130 DM (\$87), is an outstanding bargain.

For those who don't choose the Panorama as a hotel, we recommend its reasonably-priced homey restaurant. Lunch or dinner on the deck overlooking the valley is an extremely pleasant experience.

Friendly, family management.

**Daily Rates:** Singles 80 to 95 DM (\$53-63), doubles 120 DM to 150 DM (\$80-\$100), apartments 150 to 160 DM (\$100-\$107) for two persons, add 30 DM (\$20) for each additional adult, less for children. Apartment prices include breakfast. 17 rooms, balconies, free parking, no lift, no disabled access.

**Contact:** Berggasthof Panorama, Volker Neuroth, St. Anton 3, D-82467 Garmisch-Partenkirchen, tel. 08821/25 15, fax 08821/48 84.

**Rating:** **C** 14/20 **Value:** 17/20

#### Queens Hotel Residence

Though physically only a few blocks from the Fraundorfer, in style and character the Queens is on a different planet. Once a Holiday Inn, it offers decent guest and public rooms, plenty of parking and all the services anyone could need. For those planning a business conference this may be the place, but independent vacationers will be more content elsewhere.

A better bet is the hotel's Apartment Sonnenberg, also on the Partenkirchen side (see below under *Apartments*.)

**Daily Rates:** Singles 160 to 226 DM (\$107-\$151), doubles 180 to 360 DM (\$120-\$240). 117 rooms, free parking, indoor pool, tennis, no smoking rooms, no disabled access.

**Contact:** Queens Hotel Residence, Josef Simon, Mittenwalder Strasse 2, D-82467 Garmisch-Partenkirchen, tel. 08821/75 60, fax 08821/74268.

**Rating:** 12/20 **Value:** 11/20

#### Hotel Boddenberg

Tucked in a little stand of trees, the Hotel Boddenberg is adjacent to the 1936 Winter Olympics' ski stadium.

One imagines it as a very busy place at ski season, particularly when the world's finest ski racers are in town for Garmisch-Partenkirchen's World Cup slalom race, an event whose finish line is a stone's throw from the hotel.

For the rest of the year, however, it's quiet, friendly and off-the-beaten path; a good place to hole up for a few days.

Guest rooms are above average in size and most have views.

We hadn't been to the Boddenberg for several years and, while we found the welcome to be as warm as ever, it's not quite as sparkling as we recall. Nothing major, but let's hope some refurbishment is just around the corner.

**Daily Rates:** Singles 80 to 98 DM (\$67-\$113), doubles 150 DM to 190 DM (\$134-\$187). 24 rooms, balconies, free parking, no disabled access, no lift, outdoor pool, meals from limited menu served to guests only.

**Contact:** Hotel Boddenberg, Fam. H. Wettermann, Wildenauerstrasse 31, D-82467 Garmisch-Partenkirchen, tel. 08821/9 32 60, fax 08821/932645.

**Rating:** 11/20 **Value:** 12/20

#### Gasthof Werdenfelser Hof

To fully understand the value that Garmisch-Partenkirchen apartments represent, one needs only to inspect the rooms at this extremely simple little hotel just down the street from

the Fraundorfer in Partenkirchen.

The small, rather dark guestrooms do not have private toilet or bathing facilities, TV or phone. They appear to have had hard use and it has to have been several years since any refurbishment has taken place. For two persons the price is 80 DM (\$53). Spend another \$10 per night (minimum one week) for the "Wank" or "Kramer" apartments of the Ferienwohnungen Regina (see below), however, and the difference is similar to that between a Motel Six and the Waldorf.

**Daily Rates:** Double rooms 80 DM (\$53). Live Bavarian music nightly, no in-room toilet/bathing facilities, no access for disabled, no lift, no credit cards, no TV.

**Contact:** Gasthof Werdenfelser Hof, Herbert Lassnigg, Ludwigstrasse 58, D-82467, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, tel. 08821/3621, fax 08821/79614.

**Rating:** 6/20 **Value:** 12/20

#### **Apartments**

##### Ferienwohnungen Regina

The Matheisl family offer four rental units, each named after a local mountain peak or range.

We were most impressed by the two top floor apartments — the Wank and the Kramer — on opposite ends of this neat-as-a-pin chalet-style building. Both have marvelous views from their large balconies and each has a high, blond wood beamed ceiling that arches over the sitting room. These units' wood and tile kitchens and baths are snuggled under the sloping beamed ceiling and brightened by skylights. Since the Wank and Kramer have only a kitchen, a bath and a living room with beds that fold out of the wall, they are best suited to two persons. But at prices beginning at 95 DM (\$63) per day — one week minimum — what bargains!

The larger apartments on the ground floor start at 120 DM (\$80) for two; add 30 DM (\$20) for each additional person.

The decor of all four units emphasizes light wood, white walls and carpeting, drapes, couches and over-

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**EDITOR'S CHOICE**

stuffed chairs in various pastel shades. Each has cable TV with CNN, a radio and direct-dial phone.

The Regina is on the Garmisch side of town in a residential neighborhood, about a 10-minute walk from the Bahnhof.

These are easily the best of the apartments we saw in Garmisch-Partenkirchen.

**Daily Rates:** 95 DM (\$63) for two persons to 240 DM (\$160) for six persons, breakfast not included.

Four apartments, cable TV, phone, balcony, street parking, no credit cards.

**Contact:** Ferienwohnungen Regina, Bernhard Matheisl, Riffelstrasse 4, D-82467 Garmisch-Partenkirchen, tel. 08821/56159, fax 08821/56159.

**Rating:** 18/20 **Value:** 18/20

### Appartment Sonnenberg

These rental units in Partenkirchen are operated by the Queens Hotel Residence.

Apartment #1 is quite small but has a separate bedroom, toilet with shower, small kitchen/sitting room and a small balcony. At 80 DM (\$53) per night (only a three night minimum) it is a bargain and one has use of the hotel facilities, five to 10 minutes away on foot. Of course, you'll have to find your own breakfast but there is a bakery just across the street.

None of the units is done in a Bavarian style. Walls, ceilings, cabinets, tables and hard chairs are all white and drapes, carpets and overstuffed furniture are done in various shades of lavender.

**Daily Rates:** 80 DM (\$53) for two persons to 150 DM (\$100) for four persons. Three apartments, street parking, cable TV, phone, balcony, breakfast not included.

**Contact:** Queens Hotel Residence, Josef Simon, Mittenwalder Strasse 2, D-82467 Garmisch-Partenkirchen, tel. 08821/75 60, fax 08821/74268. Apartment Sonnenberg is at Sonnenbergstrasse 27.

**Rating:** 14/20 **Value:** 14/20

Ferienwohnungen Johannihof  
Frau Mauer's typically Bavarian house is located in a residential Partenkirchen neighborhood about a

20-minute walk to the village center. For couples on a budget there is a two-room apartment — kitchen and combo living/sleeping room — which rents for 90 DM (\$60). The larger, two-bedroom apartments, rent from 140 to 160 DM (\$93-\$107), depending on the season, and can accommodate up to six persons.

**Daily Rates:** 90 DM (\$60) for two persons to 200 DM (\$133) for six. Five apartments, balcony, street parking, no credit cards, breakfast not included.

**Contact:** Ferienwohnungen Johannihof, Rosmarie Maurer, Schützenstrasse 4, D-82467 Garmisch-Partenkirchen, tel. 08821/56159, fax 08821/56159.

**Rating:** 11/20 **Value:** 13/20

### A Restaurant

#### Reindl's Partenkirchner Hof

Thought to be Garmisch-Partenkirchen's finest restaurant, the Partenkirchner Hof once upon a time rated a Michelin star. A few years ago, however, it was reduced to "red menu" status which is defined as "less elaborate, moderately-priced menus that offer good value for money and serve carefully prepared meals, often of regional cooking."

We had been to this restaurant some years ago and returned based on the Michelin rating and the recommendation of friends.

A bad table, a less than enthusiastic waiter and a reservations mix-up can't affect the taste of food but they can certainly make one more ready to find fault. Thus we may go a little harder on the Partenkirchner Hof than it merits.

When we arrived, there was no record of the reservation we had called in that afternoon. The maitre d' suggested that we may mistakenly reserved a table at the Posthotel Partenkirchen which, he said, has happened before. I don't think we phoned the wrong restaurant but am willing to admit the possibility. As a result we were shown to a table hidden in a tiny alcove near a serving station. From there we couldn't see the room and, after about 30 minutes, were the only diners in this isolated corner of the restaurant.

As we were ushered the length of the main room (an attractive space with lots of indoor greenery and lamps hanging over each table) to be seated, we passed a number of vacant tables for two. Ninety minutes later, when we left, those same tables were still empty.

The relationship we struck up with our waiter is about the same as one has with a bus driver; we were barely aware of each other's presence. Though competent enough, he disappeared for long periods and at the end charged us 3 DM (\$2) for bread we never touched.

Oh yes, the food. Good but not great. Fairly priced, though. *Coq au Riesling* Alsatian style (26 DM/\$17) — chicken cooked in white instead of red wine as is *Coq au Vin* — was tasty enough but came covered with a white sauce on a white plate, a bland presentation. The evening's best dish was a frothy, buttery cream of lobster soup (10 DM/\$6.67) that came sprinkled with fresh dill, a few shrimp and had an intense lobster taste. Ragout of morel mushrooms and venison (25 DM/\$17) came up short, however, with only four little morels and two small pieces of venison filet.

The desserts we chose were ordinary: three small rounds of ice cream in raspberry sauce and, from a tray, four chunks of undistinguished cheese served with one small piece of French baguette.

The meal for two, including salad, one soup, main course and dessert was 94 DM (\$63). We paid 4 DM (\$2.67) for 0.4 liter glasses of beer and 9.8 DM (\$6.5) for a quarter liter of everyday Italian wine (Dolcetta d'Alba).

As bad as we've made it sound, this restaurant is worth another try. The room is very appealing and the prices are reasonable. Perhaps the food will taste better when we have a decent table and a waiter with whom we can do a little "bonding."

Reindl's Partenkirchner Hof, Bruni & Karl Reindl, Bahnhofstrasse 15, D-82467 Garmisch-Partenkirchen, tel. 08821/5 80 25, fax 08821/73401.  
**Rating:** 12/20 **Value:** 13/20

## EUROPE BRIEFING

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sales tax unless such reimbursement is required by law.

### Model Train Museum

In the *Dallas Morning News*, Jim Landers writes of the **Marklin Model Railroad Factory and Museum** in the town of Göppingen, 44 kilometers east and slightly south of Stuttgart.

Model railroaders all over the world are familiar with this company which, since 1859, has constructed the world's finest toy trains.

As early as 1891 Marklin showed a complete clockwork model railroad for 1-gauge track at the Leipzig Toy Fair. Others had produced trains that ran on track but Marklin was the first with a complete railroad, including turnout switches, signals and other accessories all built to a uniform scale.

In 1897, the company introduced the first fully electric toy railroad, and, in 1926, introduced railroads operated by 20-volt transformers.

These breakthroughs are explained at the museum and many of the company's early trains, including live steam trains powered by alcohol burners and clockwork trains wound with a key, are among the 900 locomotives and other toy models built on display.

The Marklin Museum is open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Admission is free. Contact: Stadt. Verkehrsammt, Marketstrasse 2, Göppingen.

### Figure Skating Package

The **1997 World Figure Skating Championships** will be held in Lausanne, Switzerland, on March 17-23. Bryan Sports Events offers a tour package that includes: eight nights hotel accommodations at the **Lausanne Palace** or the **Hotel de la Paix**, breakfast, roundtrip airfare from New York (air supplement for other U.S. points of origin) to Geneva (Swissair or Air France) with transfer to Lausanne, an all-events ticket in a "prime" seating location, full sight-seeing program, daily transfer from hotel to ice rink and on-site escorts throughout. Per person, double occupancy price at the Palace is \$3,895 (single supplement \$1,400) and \$3,595 (single supplement \$900) at the

Hotel de la Paix. Sight-seeing destinations include the Olympic Museum, Montreux, Chillon Castle, Gruyères and Zermatt.

Contact: Bryan Sports Events, 400 El Camino Real #1550, San Mateo CA 94402, tel. 415-579-0455 or 800-234-6432.

### 1996 Europe Red Guide Out


Michelin doesn't produce a red guide for Austria. The city of Salzburg, however, is covered in the *Red Guide to Germany* and Vienna is in its *Red Guide to Europe*. The 1996 edition of the latter has recently been released and is now available (\$24.95). The guide offers a selection of hotels and restaurants for 66 main cities within 19 countries in Europe, totaling 4,753 establishments (2,655 hotels and 2,098 restaurants). New this year is a section for Prague of the Czech Republic.

Following are the guide's starred restaurants for Vienna and Salzburg.

**Vienna:** ☆ ☆ Steirereck, ☆ Korso (Hotel Bristol), La Scala (Hotel Plaza Wien), Drei Husaren, Gottfried, Altwienerhof, Jahreszeiten. **Salzburg:** ☆ Landhaus Eschlböck-Plomberg and Brandstätter.

### Heidelberg is 800

In celebration of its 800th anniversary, **Heidelberg** has scheduled a year of festivals: Serenades in the Heidelberg Castle (starting June 6), Mozart Weeks (June 23-July 27), the Castle Theater Festival (July 27-Sept. 1) and the exhibition *Liselotte from the Palatinate* (Sept. 20-Jan. 26, 1997) are among more than 600 events planned.

Special deals include a "Stay 3 Nights, Pay for 2; Stay 4 Nights, Pay for 3" package at from 125 DM (\$83) per person per night in a double room during June, September and October. The "Heidelberg plus Heidelberg Card" costs from 212 DM (\$141) for two nights' bed and breakfast. The "Castle Festival Arrangement" (July 30-Aug. 31) costs from 369 DM (\$246) per person in a double room and includes two nights' hotel, plus breakfast, a tour of the Old Town, a meal at the "Alt Heidelberg," a theater festival meal and a ticket to a performance of your choice. Information: Verkehrsverein, Postfach 105860, D-69048 Heidelberg, tel. 06221 - 142211, fax 142222. 

## READERS' FORUM

### Baroque Church Tour

I would like to recommend the **Hotel Unger** (beim Hauptbahnhof, Kronenstrasse 17, tel. 0711/2099-0, fax 0711/2099-100) in Stuttgart. In the 13 years since we first stayed there they have added a lobby and refurbished and redecorated the rooms and it is now a very nice hotel, indeed. The staff were all helpful and friendly, they provide what must be the most sumptuous breakfast buffet in Germany, and start serving it at 6:00 a.m. (which made it possible for us to have breakfast before catching an early train.) The hotel is on a quiet street and deserves to be mentioned as an excellent choice for tourists who will arrive or depart Stuttgart by train.

List price for our room was 299 marks (\$199), but we qualified for a special weekend rate of 199 (\$133) for a double the first time we stayed, and got the same rate when we returned three weeks later in midweek.

I would like to also suggest that you offer a revised and expanded article outlining a tour of Baroque churches.

I ordered the back issue of *Gemütlichkeit* (February, 1994) that described your tour of churches since we had thought about making such a tour of our own after purchasing a copy of *Baroque Churches of Central Europe* by John Bourke several years ago. (It is a Faber paperback published in London and may not still be in print.)

By making a few detours from your route we were also able to visit several lesser known gems. We drove to Weingarten from Meersburg, for example, and then headed north, following your route, toward Saulgau and Riedlingen to Zwiefalten. From there we drove to Bad Schussenried and took a yellow road to Steinhausen and returned to Meersburg. (It is much easier to get to Weingarten

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## DEAR SUBSCRIBER

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stands everything. At the end of the evening she can recount from memory every dish ordered by everyone at the table. (Actually, the customer is supposed to tell the server.)

About three years ago we showed up one night for dinner and there was no Josef, no Friedl and no Erika. Friedl, we were told, was very ill and Josef had retired. Of Erika there was no news. We left early thinking our love affair with the Fraundorfer might be fading. We would go back, of course, but it would never be the same, a chapter was ending.

Thus it was with lowered expectations that we approached last April's return to the Fraundorfer. But when we arrived for dinner, there, sitting on the little stage, was Friedl; recovered from bypass surgery, a little thinner and sounding as good as ever. Later in the evening, when he began to yodel and croon those sad songs of unrequited Alpine love it was 1979 again. Liz went to bed about 11 p.m. but I stayed to the end. And, next morning in the breakfast room, another pleasant surprise: it was Erika who took our order. Josef is still retired. Frau Fraundorfer says he doesn't come around anymore but perhaps they can coax him back for next year's celebration of Friedl's 30th year at the Fraundorfer.

To us, the Gasthof Fraundorfer is the quintessence of what a German inn should be: good restaurant, good beds, cozy, convivial, affordable, and the kind of place you can return to year after year and each time recapture the magic. As Arnold said in the movie, I'll be back. — RHB 

## READERS' FORUM

Continued from page 7

these days, by the way, than it was when you went there because they have completed a route to Ulm that avoids the central part of Ravensburg. In addition, they have built a free underground garage directly in front of the Basilika, so parking is no longer a problem.)

The day we drove to Ottoberen from Seeg we headed west a few miles to **Maria Steinbach**, a jewel of a church out in the middle of nowhere. (We had the parking lot and church all to ourselves, a welcome change from getting engulfed by bus loads of tour groups constantly unloading at the better-known places.) Next we headed for Leutkirch and visited the church at Isny before returning to Seeg.

All these are well worth a visit, even though they may not be mentioned in guidebooks. If you suggest that *Gemütlichkeit* readers visit some or all of these churches, be sure to mention that the *Mairs Die Generalkarte* 1:200,000 maps #22, and #25 are essential. You have to find your way to Maria Steinbach, for example, more or less by dead reckoning since it does not appear on road signs until you are within 5 km of the place.

Robert F. Biehler, Chico CA

### Homestay Service Strikes Out

Don't count on an exciting adventure in foreign travel with **American International Homestays, Inc.**

After reading your March issue I quickly phoned their toll-free number and gave my travel dates in Switzerland and my four favorite locations. I also gave them free range to offer other places. This was on April 15 and I was told I'd probably hear from them by the end of April. They very obviously had no available list of homes to suggest to me. I called back later to add that I don't care if the families speak English — it should have been an easy selection for them.

When I hadn't heard anything by May 5, I phoned and was told "Yes, we planned to call you and others to say we haven't located any homestays in Switzerland."

I was stunned at their lack of interest and told them they obviously had no plans in place before they put out their advertising. The response was "thanks for calling" and a final click of the phone. Not very rewarding. Marge Coughlin, Los Altos CA

### Hamburg Restaurants

You asked for input on the Northern Germans. Generally, I haven't found them to be much different from other Germans. It has always seemed that the younger Germans, 40ish and younger, are a little more friendly than their elders. I would heartily echo the author's sentiments that Americans who miss Hamburg are missing something very special, beautiful and full of interesting sights. I especially enjoy visiting the Museum of Hamburg History, the Antik Markt downtown, the five beautiful old historic churches, the fascinating Rathaus, taking the S-Bahn to picturesque Blankenese, and strolling the Alster! I also want to share with you some travel thoughts and experiences:

• **Anna Restaurant** (Bleichenbrücke 2, phone 040/367014), Hamburg. What a WONDERFUL lunch, though quite pricey. It is located in an upscale shopping area on one of Hamburg's numerous canals in Hamburg. In the summer we enjoyed sitting outside with a lovely view of Hamburg's church spires and buildings. I would

describe the food as "New Europe" cuisine; the salads, pasta, soups, fish, desserts were all creatively and attractively presented and, on one visit, I had a terrific *Wiener Schnitzel*. The chef prepares meals in an open area and there is no heavy German food. There are few tourists; mostly Hamburg business people and other nicely-dressed Hamburgers who can afford to spend some extra deutschemarks for an excellent meal.

• **Restaurant La Mer (Hotel Prem, An der Alster 9, phone 040/245 454)**. One of the finest (and most expensive) meals I have ever eaten! The dining room is in a lovely and charming, romantic, old European setting, with plenty of candles and outstanding, knowledgeable service. Guests enjoyed "complimentary" vichyssoise with caviar as an appetizer. I enjoyed watercress soup, Hummer (lobster) salad with asparagus. The nightly specials and desserts were wonderful and the meal ends with a variety of delectable "complimentary" sweets.

(Note: Our family has stayed at the Prem twice in summer. Though the staff is helpful and gracious and the hotel charming, we would not stay there again at that time, when windows need to be kept open. Although the location and view of the beautiful Alster are wonderful, from the front rooms noise of the constant traffic makes it hard to sleep! Those of us in the rear also found it quite noisy and the heat with the windows closed made it uncomfortable.)

Linda Cornutt, Dallas TX 