

DEAR
SUBSCRIBER

December 23, 1997

Happy Birthday to Us

This month completes 11 years of *Gemütlichkeit*. For a surprising number of you it is issue number 132. Thank you. For some it is your first. Thank you. And to everyone in between, thank you.

Trip Notes

In late November, we flew **Swissair** and **Crossair** to Berlin via Zürich. Then, after a few days, trained and autoed our way back to Zürich over a route that included stops in the German city of Göttingen; the Austrian towns of Seefeld and Innsbruck; Austria's Stubai Valley; Bern, the Swiss capital; Langnau in the Emmental and finally half a day and a night in Zürich.

You'll get all the details over the next few months, but here are a few random impressions:

- In Berlin they are putting Humpty-Dumpty back together again. When complete, the reincarnation will place Berlin once again alongside London, Rome and Paris as a preeminent European city. This metamorphosis from two wounded, divided towns to titanic city of Europe is surely one of the great stories of the 1990s. Over the next three to five years, I recommend Berlin to the Europe-bound traveler as a "must visit" destination. The scars left by communism and the death throes of 1945 can still be seen in and around the *Mitte* (formerly East Berlin), but are rapidly disappearing.

- The former west (Ku'damm area), however, remains the place to headquarter: more vibrant, more shopping, more restaurants. The starchy **Hotel Adlon** made a big media splash with its 1997 opening; and its location near the Brandenburg Gate will be good...someday. Right now there's not much around it except construction cranes and

Continued on page 2...

GEMÜTLICHKEIT

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

THE BEST OF '97

We wind up Gemütlichkeit's 11th year with the annual selection of the best of the past year. Also included is a list of readers' recommendations in 1997.

At the end of each of the previous 10 years, we have identified the cream of the crop of hotels, restaurants and various other establishments encountered in our travels for recognition as winners of our *Gemütlichkeit* "G" awards. These have typically been places where we felt something a little extra: particularly caring management, genuine hospitality and a special warmth or coziness. The word for it is *gemütlichkeit*.

This year we've decided to expand this concept and include whatever stands out from the crowd — be it a hotel, restaurant, person, or place. The emphasis, of course, is on *gemütlichkeit*, good value and places off the beaten track. *Those chosen are our strongest recommendations.*

Europe Travel Digest

A potpourri of package deals, a new Eastern Europe railpass plus other odds & ends.

■ One of the better **winter deals** we've seen comes from sunny **Lugano**. Some 30 hotels there are participants in a winter discount package. Through April 3, 1998, a double room for *three nights* with bath/shower and breakfast included starts at 145 Sfr. (\$101) per person at 10 category A hotels, 235 Sfr. (\$163) at 14 category B hotels, 325 Sfr. (\$226) at five category C hotels and 460 Sfr. (\$319) at four category D hotels, including one of Switzerland's finest, the **Villa Principe Leopoldo**.

Also included is a pass for unlim-

The jury this year was composed of contributors to *Gemütlichkeit* in 1997: in addition to myself that includes Liz Bestor, Roger Holliday, Claudia Fischer, Andy Bestor and Margaret Landeros. We strongly recommend each of the following "G" winners.

CITIES, TOWNS & VILLAGES

- Atop this category is **Weimar**, an historic German town shaking off the dust and cobwebs of 45 years of Communism and about to emerge as a prime tourist attraction. See it soon.

- **Cesky Krumlov**, in the southwestern Czech Republic, is a medieval treasure. The town rests in a great curve of the Vltava river and a beautiful castle hovers above it on a bluff. Old-world to the max. Roth-

Continued on page 3...

ited travel on Lugano public transport, entrance to the **Chocolate Museum Alprose** (with unlimited tasting!), entrance to the **Oldtimer Museum** in Lugano-Pregassona, plus a 50% discount on the funicular to Monte Bre, the cogwheel train to Monte Generoso, a trip on the Lugano-Ponte Tresa train, a lake-steamer ride to Morcote and entrance to the **Cantonal Museum of Art** in Lugano. Other discounts also come with the package. Contact Lugano Tourism & Conventions, PO Box 2533, CH-Lugano, tel. +41/91/921 4664, fax 922 7653, email: ltinfo@lit.ch.

■ A tour in obervance of the **50th Anniversary of the Berlin Airlift**

Continued on page 7...

DEAR SUBSCRIBER

Continued from page 1

turned up streets. In any case, high rollers looking for the best hotel in town are advised that it isn't the Adlon, but the glorious **Schlosshotel Vier Jahreszeiten** in Grunewald. When all is said and done, the Adlon will be just another high-ticket business hotel. The classy Schlosshotel, on the other hand, has all the right stuff: great charm and authentic pedigree.

- Germany's system of higher education is taking its lumps in the media. Meantime, Helmut Kohl sends his kids to Harvard and MIT.

- The host of a David Letterman-like German TV show imitates Letterman's mannerisms right down to pencil throwing and card flipping. There are "top 10" gags and the set is a clone of the real Letterman show. It ain't satire and it ain't funny. Dumb and dumber.

- Here's a vote for German cab drivers. They take you straight to your destination, usually in a tight Mercedes, help with the luggage and are unfailingly polite.

- Confession time. This trip marked a first for us: American fast food overseas. Famished at 2 a.m. on the Ku'damm, on a long walk back to our hotel (the **Domus**, still good and a bargain), we ducked in to **Burger King** for a large fries to go.

Sensational (2.4 DM/\$1.37).

- Where were we at 2 a.m.? A jazz joint, **Ewige Lampe**, Niebuhrstr. 11a, near Savignyplatz. Lively, friendly, inexpensive, great music.

- Cell phones are breeding like

years, I am accused of being against train travel. I have also sometimes argued that traveling by auto in Europe is cheaper than by train.

Well, all you rail travel devotees who see *Gemütlichkeit* as anti-train are advised that each of the three trips we have taken in the last 12 months has had rail travel as an important element. And I love it. It's virtually everything you say it is: relaxing, reliable and romantic. Everything that is except cheap. Our 5-day, four country Europass for two persons was over \$600. We can rent an Opel Astra (fine for two adults with lots of luggage) in Germany for less than \$250, including tax and airport fees, for two weeks. That's *14 days unlimited travel*.

I also must say that, contrary to our auto travel custom, we found ourselves reserving hotels in advance. With a car one can drive around a bit and eyeball hotels from the outside and, for those that look promising, ask to see a room or two.

I think trains are wonderful and I eagerly look forward to my next rail trip, but let's not let romance get in the way of reality. — RHB

10 Years Ago in Gemütlichkeit

1987 Hotel & Restaurant "G" Winners

Restaurant Smutny, Vienna, Austria

Restaurant Bratwurst-Häusle, Nürnberg, Germany

Restaurant Käpt'n Hahn, Sylt, Germany

Le Gitan, Zermatt, Switzerland

Hotel Benen Diken Hof, Sylt, Germany

Hotel Hecht, Appenzell, Switzerland

Pension Wolf, Salzburg, Austria

Hotel Rheinfels, Stein am Rhein, Switzerland

Romantik Hotel Bierhütte, Hohenau, Germany

Hotel de la Poste, Verbier, Switzerland

Hotel Andrea, Bodenmais, Germany

Gasthof Fraundorfer, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany

5 Years Ago in Gemütlichkeit

1992 Hotel of the Year

rabbits in Europe. You now see them everywhere: on the street, in stores, on trains and in restaurants. You think you're way off the beaten track in a rustic little *Gasthaus* in a tiny farm village and there's a guy at the next table with one stuck in his ear. Jarring.

A Rail Convert?

Because of our many backroads auto travel stories over the past 11

Incomplete November Issue

Due to an error by our mailing house last month, some subscribers received a November issue missing four pages.

If you were mailed an incomplete November issue, please phone 800-521-6722 and we will immediately send a fresh copy.

Vol. 11, No. 12
December, 1997

GEMÜTLICHKEIT

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

Editor & Publisher: Robert H. Bestor, Jr.
Associate Editors: Elizabeth Schiller
Contributing Editors: C. Fischer, R. Holliday
Design & Composition: Paul T. Merschdorf
Consulting Editor: Thomas P. Bestor
Subscription Dept: Andy Bestor, K. Steffans

Gemütlichkeit (ISSN 10431756) is published monthly by UpCountry Publishing, 2892 Chronicle Avenue, Hayward, CA 94542. TOLL FREE: 1-800/521-6722 or 510/538-0628. Fax: 510/582-8296. e-mail gemut@pacbell.net. Subscriptions are \$67 per year for 12 issues. While every effort is made to provide correct information in this publication, the publishers can make no guarantees regarding accuracy. Periodicals postage paid in Hayward, CA.

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO:

Gemütlichkeit, 2892 Chronicle Ave., Hayward, CA 94542

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.

"G" AWARD WINNERS

Continued from page 1

enburg-level charm. Getting popular fast. See it now.

- **Ljubljana.** We reserve the right to report on excursions from our three countries; this is one. Contributing editors Holliday-Fischer were delighted by Slovenia and its capital. Reports we've had from subscribers agree with them.

- **Sion and Evolène.** The oldest town in Switzerland, Sion, has a striking skyline, an interesting old town and lots of history. Evolène is an authentic mountain village unspoiled by tourism and probably much the same as it was 50 years ago.

- **Tübingen.** Stands out for its magnificent, original old town and for its lack of tourists.

SPECIAL HOTELS

Hotel Am Schloss Tübingen

Holliday-Fischer praised this hotel's hospitality and location, but reserved the highest accolade for their assigned guestroom (Number 20), which they say is among the best they have ever had.

Hotel Am Schloss, Burgsteige 18, D-72070 Tübingen, tel. +49/07071/9294-0, fax 9294-10, singles 99 to 130 DM (\$57-\$74), doubles 124-148 DM (\$71-\$85). Room #20 -185 DM (\$106)

Wolff's Art Hotel Weimar

Stunning interior design — a 90s version of Bauhaus/Art Nouveau — that features a unique collection of Polish and Czech poster art, plus a congenial welcome combine to make this hotel Weimar's best. Try guestrooms number 13 and 14 at 260 DM (\$148). Good value and our "Hotel of the Year."

Wolff's Art Hotel & Restaurant, Freiherr-vom-Stein-Allee 3a/b, D-99425 Weimar, tel. 5 40 60, fax 54 06 99, singles 150 DM (\$86), doubles 190 DM (\$109), suites 240 to 260 DM (\$137-\$149)

Hostellerie Bon Accueil Château-d' Oex

Outstanding 18th century country chalet, full of antiques, fine rugs and cozy rooms. Rustic elegance. Dramatic views across the valley from a prime hillside site. Tremendous charm. Best hotel in the region (excluding Gstaad).

Hostellerie Bon Accueil, Château-d' Oex, CH-1837, tel. 026 924 63 20, fax 026 924 51 26, singles 90 - 130 Sfr. (\$63-\$90), doubles 140- 200 Sfr. (\$95-\$136)

1997 Gemütlichkeit Hotel of the Year Wolff's Art Hotel Weimar, Germany

Hotel Des Vignes Sion

Classic Romanesque architecture in a vineyard setting. Open, inviting lobby has fine views toward Sion's unique skyline. Pierre and Christiane Menegale-Duc are caring, hospitable owner-managers. Offers *Gemütlichkeit* subscribers 15% off and the mineral water from your room's minibar is free.

Hotel Des Vignes, Rue du Pont 9, CH-1958, tel. +41/027/203 1671, fax 203 3727, singles 125 to 225 Sfr. (\$87-\$156), doubles 175 to 215 Sfr. (\$122-\$149), duplexes 255 to 285 Sfr. (\$177-\$198). 15% off these rates for *Gemütlichkeit* subscribers.

Schloss Haunsperg Oberalm bei Hallein

Simply one of the most *gemütlich* hotels we've ever experienced. An almost fairy-tale castle near Salzburg, full of priceless family heirlooms, old-world charm and operated by an energetic, gracious husband-wife team. Tops in hospitality. Eike and Georg von Gernerth invite *every single guest* to join them for a glass of wine.

The castle has eight rooms/suites

for rent, every one a charmer with its own special character. They feature high ceilings, ancient three-foot thick walls, squeaky wood floors, antique furnishings and glorious *objet d'art* which have been in the family hundreds of years.

Schloss Haunsperg, Hammerstrasse 32, A-5411 Oberalm bei Hallein, tel. 06245/80662, fax 06245/85680, per person, per day high season rates from 850 AS (\$69) to 1250 AS (\$101). Low season rates 10% off.

Hotel Dvorak Ceske Krumlov

An elegant little gem by the river in the shadow of the town's impressive castle. Refurbished inside and out in the Palladian style of an Italian country villa with much polished brass, rich wood paneling and well-lit, marble-tiled bathrooms.

Hotel Dvorak, Radnici 101, CZ-381 01 Ceske Krumlov, tel. 0337/711020, fax 0337/711024, singles 2800 to 3400 (\$82-\$100), doubles 3500 to 4300 Kc (\$103-\$126). Suites 4000 to 6000 Kc (\$118 to \$176).

Hotel Savoy Prague

Though we enjoyed a large and very comfortable room in this chain hotel, the Savoy earns its "G" for the way its staff pitched in to help locate our late-arriving luggage from the Prague rail station as well as deal with the complications that arose from that circumstance.

Hotel Savoy, Keplerova Ul. 6, CZ-11800, tel. 02/2430 2430, fax 02/2430 2128. Rooms 7670 to 9100 Kc (\$225 to \$268)

GOOD VALUE HOTELS

Dufour Zermatt

This two-star property is the best value we saw in Zermatt. Guestroom quality in the hotel's recently refurbished section beats many three-star properties. Room amenities include

Continued on page 4...

"G" AWARD WINNERS

Continued from page 3

heated towel rack in bathrooms, hair dryer, satellite TV, direct dial phone and minibar.

Hotel Dufour, CH-3920 Zermatt, tel. +41/027/966 2400 48, fax 966 2401, singles 55 to 95 Sfr. (\$38-\$65), doubles 110 to 180 Sfr. (\$75-\$123)

Pension Altenburg Weimar

Frau Marikka Hüttmann offers 12 simple but well-scrubbed, recently renovated rooms all with private bath, TV and telephone. Ask for a room on the first floor (our second floor) under the eaves with dormer windows. Doubles for about \$75. Free parking.

Pension Altenburg, Tiefurter Allee 2a, D-99425 Weimar, tel. 03643/64980, fax 03643/400303, singles 90 DM (\$51), doubles 130 DM (\$74)

Gasthof-Pension Waldrast Reutte

Gets its "G" for top value and hospitable owners. For less than \$60 per night, *Gemütlichkeit* staffers Andy Bestor and Margaret Landeros had a small corner suite (Number 15) with windows on two sides, a separate sitting room, separate shower and toilet rooms, comfortable furniture, satellite TV, a balcony and views of the ruined Ehrenberg castle. The bargain of the year.

Gasthof-Pension Waldrast, on Ehrenbergstrasse, Reutte-Ehenbichel A-6600, tel. +43/05672/62443, fax 62443, doubles 640 to 740 AS (\$52-\$60)

Trumer Stube Salzburg

Another "G" winner that qualifies on two counts: value and caring management; Marianne and Hermann Hirschbichler. Among the usual three-star amenities, the centrally located Trumer Stube's 22 rooms offer Satellite TV with CNN, radio, and separate sitting areas.

Double rooms for less than \$100. The hotel even has a few permits for street parking.

Hotel Trumer Stube, Bergstrasse 6, A-5020 Salzburg, tel. +43/0662/87 47 76 or 87 51 68, fax: 87 43 26, singles 520-720 AS (\$42-\$58), doubles 880-1250 AS (\$70-\$100)

1997 *Gemütlichkeit* Best Hotel Value Gasthof-Pension Waldrast Reutte, Austria

Hotel Austria Bad Hofgastein

This tiny hotel in the very center of Bad Hofgastein has a good restaurant and a few small but clean rooms for under \$50. The best room, Number 1, has side-by-side twin beds, two comfortable chairs, a small balcony, cable TV, telephone, radio, toilet and shower. The welcome is warm.

Hotel-Café Austria, Bad Hofgastein, Austria, A-5630, tel. 06432/6223, room rate 280 AS (\$23) per person.

PLACES TO EAT & DRINK

Budejovicky Budvar Ceske Budejovice

Famous brewery restaurant serving good food and the world's best beer in an attractive setting at bargain prices. A liter of Budvar is about 50 cents and a huge, delicious dinner for two about \$10.

Budejovicky Budvar, Karoliny Svetle 4, CZ-370 21 Ceske Budejovice, tel. 0387/7705111. Tours available.

U Maxima Prague

Authentic "old world" atmosphere plus the best food we found in Prague was at this below-street-

level, club-like bistro near the Intercontinental Hotel in the Jewish quarter. Lunch for \$15 included three beers. Don't miss *Kulcejda*, a potato cream soup topped with whipped sour cream and dill and floating a softboiled egg. About \$1.

U Maxima, Bilkova 4/132

Au Cheval Blanc Sion

This spirited storefront bistro in Sion's old town offers interestingly prepared dishes from a menu that depends heavily on fresh and seasonal ingredients. Six very fresh oysters were about \$4 and included a glass of white wine. A rich Spanish seafood stew, *Zarzuela*, with lobster, shrimp, mussels, chunks of white fish and potatoes was one of the best dishes of the year. Unfiltered Valaisian beer on draught.

Van Gogh prints, granite floors, antique clocks and bright print table cloths. Good service. Local clientele. Dinner for two about \$60.

Au Cheval Blanc, Grand-Pont 23, CH-1930, Sion, tel. +41/027/322 1867.

Landgasthaus Hammerwirt Oberalm bei Hallein

This bustling village *Gasthaus* is the logical place to dine for guests of the Schloss Haunsperg (see "G" hotels). Friendly service and above average food. Local clientele.

Landgasthaus Hammerwirt, A-5411 Oberalm bei Hallein, tel 06245/83664.

Zum Fidelity Affen Salzburg

The Funny Monkey is just around the corner from fellow "G" winner, Hotel Trumer Stube. Spinach *Spätzle* in cream sauce topped with crusted cheese and risotto with chopped, fresh vegetables are examples of the simple main dishes. Dinner for two is under \$30. Young crowd, friendly service.

Zum Fidelity Affen, Priesterhausgasse 8, A-5020 Salzburg

Lé Gitan Zermatt

In 1987, this restaurant wowed us with its marinated loin of lamb cooked over an open, wood fired grill. Amazingly, on our return 10 years later we found the same owner, were served by the same waiter and the food was just as good.

Prices are about double what they were in 1987, but still somewhat of a bargain for Zermatt, perhaps the most expensive of all Swiss resorts. Hospitable ownership and staff, good service.

Lé Gitan, CH-Zermatt, tel. +41/027/968 1940. Reservations recommended.

Rest.-Weinstube Forelle Tübingen

Etched windows, wood paneling, sepia drawings, a ceramic stove and fresh flowers are the atmospheric touches — along with generous servings of better than average food — which prompted Claudia and Roger to raise this restaurant to “G” status. As the title suggests, the emphasis is on fish, mostly trout. Also on the menu, however, are many traditional meat dishes. Most main courses are in the \$11 to \$18 range. Popular with locals, reservations recommended.

Restaurant-Weinstube Forelle, Kronenstrasse 8, Tübingen, tel. 2 40 94, fax 2 44 39. No credit cards.

1997 Reader Recommendations

Here are some of the hotels and restaurants you recommended in 1997. Most of the prices listed are those you said you paid. If no prices were included we have either supplied them or categorized the establishment on a scale from inexpensive to very expensive.

In cases where your letters did not include addresses or phone numbers we have attempted to supply one or both.

We are very grateful for your letters and regret we cannot print them all. We do have a few left from '97 that are scheduled for publication in early 1998.

Hotel International au Lac, Via Nassa 68 - Piazza Luini, CH-6901 Lugano, tel. 091 922 75 41, fax 091 922 75 44, single with breakfast & dinner 195 Sfr. (\$135)

Hotel Mozart, Hafenzentrum, CH-9400 Rorschach, tel. 071 841 70 34, fax 071 841 99 38, 110 Sfr. (\$76) single

Parkhotel Sonnenhof, CH-9490 Vaduz, Liechtenstein, tel. 075 232 11 92, fax 075 232 00 53, rooms 230 to 380 Sfr. (\$160-\$264)

SUSIE E. KANUCH
VAN NUYS CA

Hotel-Cafe Off, Uferpromenade 51, D-88709 Meersburg, tel. 07532 3 33, fax 07532 58 05, double room about \$100

CLIFF LINDSEY
FREELAND WA

Bayerische Staatsbrauerei Weihestephan, Freising, Germany, inexpensive-moderate.

MIKE ELDER
TOPEKA KS

Parkhotel Wehrle (Gästehaus), Gartenstrasse 24, D-79098 Triberg, tel. 07722 8 60 20, fax 07722 860 290, double 150 DM (\$86)

Hotel Wolf, Dorfstrasse 1, D-82487 Oberammergau, tel. 08822 30 71, fax 08822 10 96, double 120 DM (\$69)

Alpenhotel Denninglehen, Am Priesterstein 7, D-83471 Berchtesgaden, tel. 08652 50 85, fax 08652 647 10, double 204 DM (\$117)

Hotel Passauer Wolf, Rindermarkt 6, D-94032 Passau, tel. 0851 9 31 51 10, fax 931 51 50, double 160 DM (\$91)

Romantik Hotel Bierhütte, D-94545 Hohenau, tel. 08558 9 61 20, fax 08558 961 270, double 150 DM (\$86)

Posthotel Bayerwald, Dorfplatz 2, D-94371 Rattenberg, tel. 09963 95 00, fax 09963 950 222, double 120 DM (\$69)

Dom Hotel, Frauentorstrasse 8, D-86152 Augsburg, tel. 0821 15 30 31, fax 0821 510 126, double 176 DM (\$101)

Weinhaus Steichele, Knorrstrasse 2, D-90443 Nürnberg, tel. 0911 20 43 78, fax 0911 221 914, double 170 DM (\$97)

Schloss Steinburg, D-97080 Würzburg, tel. 0931 9 70 20, fax 0931 781 731, double 510 DM (\$291) for two nights and one four-course meal

Hotel Klingerhof, Am Hügel 7, D-63768

Aschaffenburg, tel. 06021 64 60, fax 06021 594 100 double room 170 DM (\$102)

Hotel Waldesruh, Am Bessunger Forst 20, D-64367 Mühlthal-Trautheim, tel. 06151 9 11 50, fax 06151 911 563, double 125 DM (\$71)

SHARON & NELSON HELM
PLANO, TX

Romantik Hotel Weinhaus Messerschmitt, Lange Strasse 41, D-96049 Bamberg, tel. 0951 2 78 66, fax 0951 26141, 225 DM (\$129) dinner for three, wine included

Gastätte Hofbräu, Bamberg, Germany, dinner for two, including wine 104 DM (\$59)

Hotel-Restaurant Nepomuk, Obere Mühlbrücke 9, D-96049 Bamberg, tel. 0951 9 84 20, fax 0951 984 2100, lunch for two, including wine 93 DM (\$53)

Hotel Bischofshof, Bischofshof am Dom, Krauterermarkt 3, D-93047 Regensburg, tel. 0941 5 90 86, fax 53508, 290 DM (\$166) for a suite

Restaurant Don Juan, Fischgasse 4, Regensburg, lunch for two, including wine 70 DM (\$40)

CHANEY ADERHOLT
BIRMINGHAM AL

Europäischer Hof, Bayerstrasse 31, 80335 München, tel. 089/551510, fax 089/5515122, about \$110 double

RONALD E. NULL
SANDPOINT ID

Hotel F.B. Schonleber, D-65375 Oestrich-Winkel, Stadtteil Mittelheim, Obere Roppelsgasse 1, tel. 06723/3475, fax 06723/4759, double room 150 DM (\$86)

Gasthof Distelfink, D-65375 Oestrich-Winkel, Stadtteil Mittelheim, An Der Basilika 6

DON & BETTY SCHAAF
LARGO FL

Hotel Bauer, Kulmbacher Str. 7, D-96317, tel. 09261/94058, fax 09261/52298, double 126 DM (\$72)

KEN & SHELBY LOVE
REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN

Hotel Garni Hornburg, Hornburgweg 28, D-91541 Rothenburg ob der Tauber, tel. 09861 8480, fax 09861 5570, doubles 125-155 DM (\$71-\$89)

VIRGINIA & ERIC KIEHN
STODDARD NH

Continued on page 6...

READER RECOMMENDS

Continued from page 5

Restaurant Zum Alte Gott, Weinstrasse 10, D-76354, Neuweier (near Baden-Baden), expensive

HERBERT ST. GOAR
CHATTANOOGA TN

Hotel Verenhof, Kurplatz 1, CH-5400 Baden, tel. 056/203 9393, fax 056/2-3 9394, rooms 140 to 260 Sfr. (\$97-\$181)

JOAN HAWKINS
GLEN COVE NY

Hotel Hoyacker Hof, Freisinger Landstrasse 9a., D-8046 Garching near Munich Airport, tel. 089/3206965-68, fax 089/3207243, single 130 DM (\$74)

GARY P. FORD
DAYTON OH

Gasthaus Huber, Bundesstr. 304, D-85560 Oberndorf bei Ebersberg, tel. 08092/31026, fax 08092/21442, singles 105 DM (\$60), doubles 140 DM (\$80)

ERSKINE HAVENS
HENDERSONVILLE TN

Pastorius-House, An der Heuwaag 1, D-91438 Bad Windsheim, tel. 09841/7078, 40 DM (\$23) single, 70 DM (\$40) double

MARION SNYDER
SCHNECKSVILLE PA

Ostermann Hotel, an der B49, Lützbach on the Mosel, tel. +49/02672/1238, fax 7789, doubles 140 DM (\$80)

Zum Jagerheim, Meerdofer Str. 40, Rüper, tel. +49/05303/2026, fax 2056, double 150 DM (\$86)

Posthotel Lauenstein, Orlmünder Str. 2, D-96337 Ludwigstadt-Lauenstein, tel. +49/09263/991 30, fax 991 399, doubles 140 DM (\$80) double

Burghotel Lauenstein, Burgstr. 4, D-96337 Ludwigstadt-Lauenstein, tel. +49/09263/9430, fax 94336, doubles 150 DM (\$86)

Parkhotel Seeblick, Strandweg 12a, D-18119 Warnemünde-Rostock, tel. +49/0381/519550, fax 519 55113, doubles 160-180 DM (\$91-\$103)

Rheinsberg am See, Finsterwalder Str. 64, D-13435 Berlin-Reinickendorf, tel. +49/030/402 1002, fax 403 5057, doubles 199 DM (\$114)

Posthotel Rattenberg, Dorfplatz 2, D-94371 Rattenberg, tel. +49/09963/9500, fax 950222, rooms 65 to 160 DM (\$37-\$91)

SHARON & NELSON HELM
PLANO TX

Hotel Petrisberg, D-54296 Trier, tel. +49/0651/4640, doubles from 160 DM (\$91)

Landhaus Sommer, Weidachstr. 74, D-87629 Füssen, tel. +49/08362/91470, fax +49/08362/914714, rooms 72 to 186 DM (\$41-\$106)

Trattoria Luigi, Augsburg Str. 20, D-87629 Füssen, average meal price 23 DM (\$13)

COLIN F. MCGOWAN
MARRIOTTSVILLE MD

Pension Altenburg, Weimar (see Best of 1997, page 1), double room 130 DM (\$75)

Schloss Röhrsdorf, Dresden, double room 150 DM (\$86)

J. LLOYD SUTTERBY
HOUSTON TX

Trattoria Toscana, Fraumünsterstrasse 14, Zürich, moderately priced

Block House Restaurant, near Bahnhof on Kirchenallee, inexpensive to moderate

ROBERT F. BIEHLER
CHICO CA

Restaurant Orangerie Nassauer Hof Hotel, Kaiser-Friederich-Platz 3, D-65183 Wiesbaden, tel. 0611 13 30, fax 0611 133 632, lunch for two approximately 100 DM (\$57)

Palais Cafe, Berlin, by the Opera on Unter den Linden

ANATOLE CHARI
LAGUNA BEACH CA

Restaurant Rustico, Munich

RANDY BAKER
CINCINNATI OH

Hotel Pod vezi, Mostecka 2, 110 00 Prague 1, tel. 420/2 533 710, fax 420/2 537 361, approx. \$200 per night

JAN QUINN FREYBERG
BROOKFIELD

Mövenpick Hotel, Hallbergmoos near Munich airport, 195 DM (\$111) double not including breakfast

CHARLOTTE OLSTEAD
REDWOOD CITY CA

Hotel Anker, Obertorstrasse 6, D-97828 Marktheidenfeld, tel. +49/09391/600 40, fax 600 477, double 220 DM (\$126)

Hotel Turmwirt, Ettaler Strasse 2, D-82487 Oberammergau, tel. 08822 9 26 00, fax 08822 14 37, rooms 100 to 180 DM (\$57-\$103)

Hotel St. Nepomuk, Obere Mühlbrücke 9, D-96049 Bamberg, +49/0951/98420, fax 9842100, rooms 130 to 240 DM (\$74-\$137)

Hotel St. Josef, Semmlstr. 28, D-97070 Würzburg, tel. +49/0931/308680, fax 308 6860, rooms 95 to 180 DM (\$64-\$103)

ELLIS & ZITA BICK
WEBSTER GROVES MO

Hotel Maloja Kulm, CH-7516, Maloja south of St. Moritz, tel. +41/082/43105, fax 434 66, double room 200 Sfr. (\$139) including breakfast and dinner for two

RONALD BLAKE
ALTAMONTE SPRINGS, FL

Alte Post Restaurant, Seepromenade, Meersburg, main courses 20/25 DM (\$11-\$15)

GENE LOPOTEN
LOWER GWYNEDD PA

Struber Hotel, Salzburg, Moderate

BARRY BROWN
MURRAY KY

Hotel St. Nepomuk, Obere Mühlbrücke 9, D-96049 Bamberg, tel. 0951 9 84 20, fax 0951 984 2100

Restaurant-Hotel Messerschmitt, Lange Strasse 41, D-96049 Bamberg, tel. 0951 2 78 66, fax 0951 26141, rooms 118 to 225 DM (\$67-\$129)

Hotel Bamberger-Hof, Schönleinsplatz 4, D-96047 Bamberg, tel. 0951 9 85 50, fax 0951 985 562, rooms 160 to 245 DM (\$91-\$140)

Tiefenau Hotel, Steinweissstrasse 8, CH-8032 Zürich, tel. 01 251 24 09, fax 01 251 24 76, rooms 169 to 360 Sfr. (\$117-\$250)

PATRICK J. PERKINS, M.D.
ORINDA CA



EUROPE TRAVEL DIGEST

Continued from page 1

includes stops in Berlin, Frankfurt and Wiesbaden and will be led by retired U.S. Army Colonel Steve Bowman, former Deputy Brigade Commander, U.S. Army, Berlin. Tour dates are June 22 - July 5, 1998.

Participants will visit the site of the 1945 Potsdam Conference, Tempelhof, Tegel and Gatow airfields, and attend commemorative events including the opening of the new **Allied Museum** and observe the fly-in of historical aircraft to Tempelhof. Among the planes will be the "Spirit of Freedom," a former U.S. Air Force C-54 transport which actually flew in the airlift.

Prices for the full 13-day tour are \$3250 per person air/land and \$2320 land-only. For the 10-day Berlin-only tour, prices are \$2900 air/land and \$1970 land-only. Airlift veterans get a 10% discount. Contact: Specialty Tours, 6535 Copa Court, Falls Church VA 22044, tel. 888-868-7706.

■ A new railpass valid for travel in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic, and Austria, the **Eastern Europe Flexipass**, is available from **DER Tours** through travel agents. The pass provides five selected days of unlimited first-class travel within a one-month period and costs \$195. Up to five additional days can be purchased for \$21 per day. Children ages 4-12 pay half the adult fare.

The pass also provides 50% discounts on Danube boats between Passau and Linz as well as on other boats, cog railways, and bicycle rentals within Eastern European countries. Contact: DER Tours 800-

782-2424, press 2.

■ Through February 28, the five-star **Kempinski Hotel Atlantic** on the banks of the Alster in Hamburg is offering a special winter rate of 275 DM (\$157) per night for a single or double room. Sadly, the deal does not include breakfast. Book by phone at 800-426-3135.

■ Calling it "**The Ultimate Grand Cruise**," the river vessel **Amadeus II** will cover more than 2,200 miles across Europe from the North Sea to

ship along the remainder of its transcontinental voyage.

Among the cities and villages to be visited are Amsterdam, Koblenz, Rudesheim, Heidelberg, Miltenberg, Würzburg, Rothenburg, Bamberg, Nürnberg, Kelheim, Regensburg, Passau, Melk, Dürnstein, Vienna, Budapest, Kalosca, Belgrade, Rousse, Vidin, Constanta, and Bucharest.

The Ultimate Grand Cruise will have two departures in 1998; June 27 and July 17. The cruise-only fare is

\$4,498 per person, based on double occupancy. All accommodations are outside cabins. Air-inclusive fares are available from New York (\$5,438), Chicago (\$5,538), Miami (\$5,538), Los Angeles (\$5,688), and San Francisco (\$5,688). Contact a travel agent or Uniworld: 800-556-5086.

■ The convivial **Hotel Bären** in Wilderswil, on the edge of Interlaken, offers several packages for 1998: Two nights with breakfast and one dinner is 180 Sfr. (\$125) per person double. The single supplement is 30 Sfr. (\$21). Prices for a three-night winter special begin at 180

Sfr. (\$125) per person with breakfast, or 270 Sfr. (\$188) if dinner is included. Seven nights start at 420 Sfr. (\$291) with breakfast, or 602 Sfr. (\$418) halfboard. Those who book a seven-night halfboard package three months in advance get a 10% discount, choice of room and one hour horsedrawn carriage ride. Contact: Hotel Bären, CH-3812, Wilderswil, tel. +41/33/828 3151, fax 828 3152.

■ For those thinking ahead to late spring and early summer, the country spa, **Grüner Baum**, in Bad-

Continued on page 8...

Do-It-Yourself Winter Tour of Europe

Swissair Programs Make It Affordable

Using various **Swissair** packages, travelers can structure their own independent multi-city winter tours of Europe. For less than \$1500 per person, one can visit as many as three major European cities in one week.

The logical first step is one of **Swissair's Long Winter Weekend** packages, which start at \$563 and include round-trip air from 33 U.S. cities plus three nights hotel with breakfast. You pick a destination from among 11 cities: Athens, Berlin, Brussels, Budapest, Geneva, Istanbul, Nice, Paris, Prague, Rome, Salzburg and Vienna.

Then, using **Swissair's Eurohopper** option, fly to any of 90 European cities for \$130 per "hop." (Three flight minimum.) Since, for this extension of the trip beyond the first three days, you'll need places to stay, the program offers special rates at **MinOtel** and **Best Western** hotels beginning at \$47 per person double including breakfast.

If one of your "hops" includes Switzerland, you can use the **Swiss Travel Invention's** "Go As You Please" option to choose from more than 100 Swiss hotels in seven price categories ranging from \$35 to \$135 per person double including breakfast. Contact **Swisspak**: 800-688-7947.

the Black Sea in just over three weeks this summer.

The U.S. promoter of the tour, Uniworld of Encino, California, claims it is "the most comprehensive cruise through Europe ever offered" and points out that passengers will traverse much of Europe over the three-week trip and only have to unpack once.

The ship will sail Dutch waterways to the Rhine River, then along the Main-Danube Canal to the Danube River, which will carry the

EUROPE TRAVEL DIGEST

Continued from page 1

gastein, offers four-night weekend packages which include an apartment or junior suite, food and drink (except for bottles of wine and spirits), welcome cocktail, facial and body treatments, 25-minute massage, solarium, Rolls Royce or picnic wagon tour and breakfast in the mountains.


Per person cost is 6780 AS (\$547). Available dates are April 30-May 3, May 20-24 and June 10-14. Contact: Grüner Baum, tel. +43/06434/25160, fax 25160.

■ Through March, **five of Gstaad's leading hotels** offer travelers 60 years and older six-nights accommodations with breakfast, lunch in a mountain restaurant, an all-region ski pass and a dinner at any of the participating hotels. The cost is 915 to 1,695 Sfr. (\$635-\$1177) per person depending on hotel category. Contact: Gstaad Saanenland Tourismus +41/33/748 81 81, fax 748 81 83, e-mail: tvsl@Gstaad.ch

■ For travelers heading to resorts in the **Upper Engadine Valley** via Zurich Airport there is new transfer service. Aristotours air-conditioned vans leave the airport at 10:30 a.m. and drop passengers at their hotel in about four hours. Contact: +41/1/810 12 15, fax 810 15 12, e-mail: aristosoft@logon.ch

■ In October, we published a letter from subscriber Jan Quinn Freyberg in which she highly recommended the **services in Prague of George Prager**. Since then, another subscriber, European trip planner Karen Pasold, has supplied us with a price list for Mr. Prager's services.

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Transfer to-from airport | \$50 |
| Day Guide 8 hours | \$20 |
| Grand City Tour per person | \$20 |
| Karlstejn Castle per person | \$20 |
| Opera, ballet, symphony tickets | \$20-\$50 |

Mr. Prager accepts only cash. Contact: George Praszky-Prager, Zelena 28/1747 180 00 Praha 8, fax 00420/02/3111979. 

AUSTRIA REMEMBERS


ITS BELOVED "SISI"

Next year, Austria pays homage to one of history's most fascinating women. On September 10, 1898, Austria's Empress Elisabeth died at the hand of an assassin.

Exhibitions throughout the country will commemorate the beloved "Sisi." They will document the intriguing life story of a woman who was at once fairy-tale princess, expert equestrian, poet, liberated woman, dieting-exercise fanatic and inveterate traveler.

Born to Bavarian royalty on Christmas Day 1837 in Munich, Elisabeth married Austria's Emperor Franz Joseph in 1854. The couple had four children: daughters Sophie, Gisela, Marie Valerie and, of course, the crown prince, Rudolph, who would later be the central figure in one of history's most famous murder-suicides.

Sisi's life was a series of tragedies: daughter Sophie died as a toddler; her favorite cousin, Ludwig II of Bavaria, the famous "mad king," drowned under mysterious circumstances; her brother-in-law, Emperor Maximilian of Mexico, was shot by revolutionaries; and, finally, beloved son Rudolph, 30, and his 17-year-old lover Maria Vetsera, were found dead of gunshot wounds at the family hunting lodge in the Vienna suburb of Mayerling.

Said to be one of the world's great equestrians, the Empress was obsessed with exercise and fitness. Decade-long diets coupled with a need for movement compelled her to take strenuous hikes, caused malnutrition and depression which led to suicidal fantasies. At age 60, on the promenade of Lac Léman in Geneva while boarding a ship for Montreux, she was stabbed with a file by 24-year-old anarchist, Luigi Lucheni. 

Special Events

Elisabeth - Beauty for Eternity, April 2, 1998 - February 16, 1999, Schönbrunn Palace, Hofburg, Hermes Villa. At Schönbrunn, the exhibition "Living quarters for an Empress" will focus on the personal life of the youthful empress and her daily life at court. The Hofburg portion is dedicated to the "official Elisabeth." The exhibit in the Hermes Villa is entitled "And no one will shed a tear...", and will explore Elisabeth's intellectual and emotional world. Contact: Schönbrunn Palace, Tel.: +43/1/811 13-0.

The Last Greek, May-June in the Marmorschlossl Photography Museum, Bad Ischl, Upper Austria. Elisabeth's tours through Greece will be documented in text and pictures. Exhibit will also be seen in Meran. Contact: Fotomuseum, Bad Ischl, tel.: +43/6132/277 57-0.

The Wedding Casket, April-October 1998, Bad Ischl. The famed "Wedding Casket" contains 23 watercolors by Albert Decker given to the young emperor and empress as a wedding gift by their subjects. Information: Stadtgemeinde Bad Ischl, tel.: +43/6132/233 41-0.

Elisabeth, the Musical. This popular Vienna musical which has been seen by more than a million people will run daily except Wednesdays at Theater an der Wien. Contact: Theater an der Wien, tel. +43/1/588 30-313.

Sissy, July, 10 - August 15, 1998, Schönbrunn palace theater. A *Singspiel*, or play with music, produced by the Austrian actor, Alfons Haidler, will be staged at the theater of Schönbrunn Palace. Contact: +43/1/512 01 00 39

Sisi Open Air, September 1998, Bad Ischl. Gerhard Tötschinger will stage a mammoth outdoor production in Bad Ischl. Information: Stadtgemeinde Bad Ischl, Tel.: +43/6132/27757-0. 