

DEAR
SUBSCRIBER

March 28, 1998

Subscriber Perks

This is gonna be one of those desk clearers. A month in which we fill this space with a little administrative business as well some odds and ends floating around my desk and in that trackless void between my ears.

First, it is my sworn and sacred duty to remind you what a good deal it is being a *Gemütlichkeit* subscriber. One begins, of course, with the newsletter itself, though modesty prohibits me from exalting it here. What I do want to discuss is the growing list of perks that add value to your subscription over and above these eight monthly pages of pure gold.

We are announcing this month that *Gemütlichkeit* subscribers now get a 10% discount on all **Travel Essentials** merchandise (see ad in insert or catalog sent last month with your newsletter). For example, the *Michelin Red Guide for Germany* which sells in stores for \$25.95. As a subscriber, you pay \$23.36. Or the popular Travelpro Crew Series, 22" rollaboard suitcase at \$199, already well below the MSRP of \$290. With your subscriber discount it's only \$179. Of course, they add a shipping charge, but that's offset by the fact that you pay no sales tax because the merchandise is sent from Oregon.

Another recently added goodie is that you can now order any of the dizzying array of **European rail passes** from our toll-free 800-521-6722 hotline. **Rail Europe** tells us there is no such thing as a discount on these passes, but for *Gemütlichkeit* subscribers they have agreed to waive the customary \$10 shipping and handling charge. For more information, see page three of this month's advertising insert.

You already know about the Swissair reduced fares. They range
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GEMÜTLICHKEIT

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

MAYRHOFEN

This little-known (by Americans) resort town in the Austrian Alps' Ziller Valley offers R&R, adventure, and even night life.

A friend and frequent traveler to Austria recently offered two points of advice for traveling in the Austrian Alps: explore on a whim some of the hidden Alpine valleys and villages, but don't plan to stay in Mayrhofen.

By Nikki Goth Itoi Years ago, he had wandered into the Ziller Valley and arrived at this bustling town, only to find it overrun with thousands of sales representatives from Amway Corporation. It seems Amway likes Mayrhofen so much, it brings its employees to the town for two months every spring and another two months in the fall.

It's an arrangement that can make

finding a bed in Mayrhofen a challenge, even in off-seasons. But Amway aside, Mayrhofen is a treasure in winter and summer alike, and worth a visit by anyone seeking Alpine serenity, outdoor adventure, or some combination of the two.

An easy two and a half-hour drive from Munich or Salzburg, the Ziller Valley begins at the town of Jenbach (population 6,000), and runs south following the Ziller River between the Tux Alps and the Kitzbühel Alps. At the end of the valley sits Mayrhofen, a town of 3,000 residents that grew from its origins as a summer haven for

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Airport Hotel: Convenience at a Price

The name of the game at Munich's **Kempinski Airport Hotel** is convenience. It is the only hotel right at the airport and is actually connected to it by a series of underground moving sidewalks.

We were able to drive our rental car to the hotel entrance, park, and quickly check into our room. Then we drove five minutes around the corner to return the car and walked back to the hotel. Better yet, the next morning, we rolled out of bed two and a half hours before our flight home, and were still able to check in with time to spare. The hotel's staff were quick to help us with our luggage and saved us the 10-minute walk to the terminal by calling a free shuttle.

Though the Kempinski has been open for a couple of years, it retains

a dazzling newness. It just may be, as advertised, "Europe's most ultramodern airport hotel." A soaring all-glass atrium serves as the hotel's lobby and is almost blinding as one emerges from the stale, fluorescent light of the terminal. Airport monitors in the lobby provide updated flight arrival and departure information.

There are 389 rooms and suites, some of which are designated nonsmoking. All have air-conditioning and the usual five-star amenities. Some face the tarmac and others, less desirable, face the atrium. Like the rest of the hotel, guestrooms still look very new. Ours, on the fourth floor facing the tarmac, had a large desk, a leather recliner, very good lighting, a decent television, and a fully-

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from \$50 to \$600 per ticket, depending on various factors. See the February, 1998, *Gemütlichkeit* for details or, if you don't have that issue, call us at 800-521-6722 and we'll tell you how to obtain the fares at the lower rate.

We are exploring a discount possibility with a couple of hotel groups but for now there is nothing to report.

A few months ago we reported the availability of low weekend hotel rates to be found on the **Internet** at www.travelweb.com/ (at the site choose "Clickit Weekends"). The best deals recently — and these seem to be continuing week after week — are room rates of 135 Sfr. (\$91) at the **Inter-Continental Hotel Zürich**, \$113 per night at the **Forum Hotel Praha** in Prague, 120 DM (\$67) at the **Forum Hotel Hamburg**, 162 DM (\$90) at the **Forum Hotel Leipzig**, 1550 AS (\$121) at the **Hotel Inter-Continental Vienna** and 125 DM (\$69) at the **Forum Hotel Berlin**.

However, when I attempted to make a reservation at the Berlin hotel, the on-line booking system offered a rate of 150 DM (\$83) — still an almost unbelievable price.

Frequent business traveler to Germany, Bob Gillespie, of Lake Bluff, Illinois, says the best coach seats on United Airlines' Boeing 777 transatlantic flights are bulkhead seats A, B, J and K of Row #16. Next

best are the same seats in the Exit Row, #30. He says the bulkhead seats offer a shred of isolation and enough room for a 5'-10" human being to fully extend his or her legs. According to Mr. Gillespie, there is enough room in front of the exit row seats that he has seen passengers sleeping on the floor there. These eight seats are usually reserved for members of United's Premiere frequent flyer program, but even if you're not one of those it can't hurt to ask.

You may have noticed we've recently kicked up our coverage of Austria a notch. No special reason, other than we felt we hadn't been giving the country its fair share of space over the past couple of years. And now comes a New York Times story that says Austria's share of the world tourism market last year declined to 7.6% from 12% in 1976. In addition, the Austrian National Statistics Office reports a 12% drop for July in the number of vacationers. Occupancy rates in Vienna hotels, though up slightly in 1997 to 61.7%, are still last among 10 top European cities.

We at *Gemütlichkeit* view this as an opportunity; like buying stocks when the market takes a big drop. What's bad news for Austria is good news for those of who like to get away from those vast schools of tourists who swim from London to Paris to Rome to Venice to Florence to Provence. If you like near empty museums and palaces, uncrowded restaurants, and hotels that greet you

with open arms, this may be your year to see Austria. With fewer tourists and more vacant rooms, hotels around the country could be in a mood to bargain.

Our lead story in May will be on Berlin, a city which, in my opinion, should be everyone's number one European destination in 1998. I'll tell why in May, but in the meantime read R.W. Apple Jr.'s piece on Berlin in the January issue of *Gourmet Magazine*. Mr. Apple is chief Washington correspondent for the *New York Times* and — I don't mind telling you and hope he doesn't either — a longtime *Gemütlichkeit* subscriber.

Another subscriber-scribe is Bill Stall of the *Los Angeles Times*. He recently dropped us a long letter after a Swiss vacation during which he and his wife, Anne, spent eight nights in a Wengen apartment rented from the Von Allman family. They paid a modest \$65 per night for Jungfrau-view digs with fireplace, kitchen, dining and living areas and bedroom, above the Chas. Gruebi dairy and cheese store. The Wengen tourist office can provide all the details on such accommodations.

Other Stall trip recommendations include the **Romantik-Hotel Julen** in Zermatt (great Matterhorn view, 212 Sfr./\$143 half board), the Swiss Handwerke store at the Zürich Bahnhof, and the **Mövenpick Hotel** (better than the Hilton) near the Zürich Airport.



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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.

MAYRHOFEN

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Viennese city folk to an 8,900-bed skiing and hiking resort.

The town handles its flood of year-round visitors remarkably well, thanks to an 11-employee tourist office which sends out some 300 brochures a day to prospective guests. They manage to do so while catering to the needs of thousands of current visitors, and also insuring that the town preserves its traditional flavor by sponsoring frequent Tyrolean evenings at the *Europahaus* convention center and other venues around town.

During the winter months, Mayrhofen caters to a fairly young and boisterous crowd of Dutch, British, and German skiers. Until a couple of years ago, the resort had a poor reputation because of terribly long lift lines, but since the installation of a new 15-person per car gondola, the *Penken-Seilbahn*, Mayrhofen has become one of Austria's most popular ski resorts.

A number of wintertime activities, however, don't require traipsing around in stiff boots attached to long, skinny planks. The tourist office can arrange a hot air balloon ride or a panoramic alpine flight, horseback riding, sleigh rides, ice skating, or tobogganing. In the rare case of inclement weather, indoor activities include swimming at the "adventure" pool (*Waldbadstrasse*); soaking in a hot tub, sauna, or Jacuzzi; playing squash, billiards, bowling, or chess; and of course, browsing the shops along *Hauptstrasse*.

When the Snow Melts

In summer, this ski town transforms into a mountain paradise that appeals to a slightly older, and less raucous crowd. The tourist office likes to point out that the town's location at the end of the Ziller Valley can be deceiving. For hikers, this is only the beginning. Four side valleys branching out from Mayrhofen provide miles of trails for grand views of the valley, low-level walks or hikes, and hut to hut tours and glacier crossings for serious backpackers.

Mayrhofen Info

Population: 3000 residents; 8900 guest beds

Altitude: 650 meters, 2,133 feet

Distances from:

Munich airport	2.5 hours by car
Salzburg	2.5 hours by car
	2 hours by train
Innsbruck	1 hour by car
	50 minutes by train

Rail Connections: Jenbach, at the entrance to the Ziller Valley, is on the main line from Innsbruck, Salzburg, and Munich. Change there for the Zillertalbahn which terminates at Mayrhofen.

Mayrhofen Tourist Office, P.O. Box 21, A-6290 Mayrhofen, Info-Hotline: +43 52 85/67 60, fax: +43 52 85/64 116-33, Email: mayrhofen@zillertal.tirol.at, Web address: <http://tiscover.com/mayrhofen>

Upcoming Events:

- June 11-14, 1998: Yaho! Mountain Festival (Paragliding)
- July 6-12, 1998: European Week of Culture. Dancers, musicians, singers, chefs, philosophers from all over the continent provide an opportunity for visitors to get acquainted with the diversity of European culture, cuisine, folklore, and people.
- August 14-16 10th annual Country, Blues & Folk Festival. Brings ardent fans of the wild, wild west together in Mayrhofen for a week of celebration.

To get the full effect of the Ziller Valley, take a ride up the *Penken* gondola. Conveniently, it departs from the middle of town (between #470 and #476 *Hauptstrasse*) within walking distance of nearly every hotel. Even nonskiers will appreciate the spectacular views and the abundance of beer huts, outdoor bars, and restaurants serving staples like local brews on tap, hot mulled *Glühwein*, *Würstel*, *Wiener Schnitzel*, *Gulasch* soup, and apple strudel. The *Penken* gondola is open year-round, from 9am till 5pm daily, weather permitting.

For the truly adventurous, Mayrhofen's most unusual pastime in winter and summer is paragliding. On a clear day, one can look up from the valley floor and spy a dozen or more brightly colored parachutes drifting down from the mountain tops to the valley floor. For 1,000 AS (\$79), adventure-seekers can ride tandem with a guide for a 20 minute-long sail that ends at the

Edenlehen Hotel (see below.)

This June, Mayrhofen will host Europe's biggest paragliding competition, the Yaho! Mountain Festival. It's an event that's designed for observers as much as for the participants. The tourist office claims that during last year's competition there were 211 paragliders in the air at once.

In addition to paragliding, there is a national kayaking competition, a farmer's festival and handcraft presentation, and of course plenty of Tyrolean food and live music.

Night Life

Apparently, a day of fresh mountain air isn't enough to tire the majority of visitors. Contrary to what one would expect of a secluded mountain town, Mayrhofen has a night life that should please most anyone. Many of the upscale hotels offer live music: the **Elisabeth Hotel** has a Tyrolean Day on Saturday afternoons, piano music on Tuesday evenings, and a live band on Fridays; the **Neuhaus** provides music it describes as "evergreens" — songs not Tyrolean, but also not too modern; and the **Hotel Strass** invites local bands to play in its lounge. In addition, **Mo's Esscafe & Music Room** (*Hauptstrasse* 417, tel +43 5285/63435) is an American pub that features karaoke.

Exploring the Region

A recommended excursion from Mayrhofen is to leave the valley and drive east on Route 165 over the 1,507 meter (4,944 feet) high Gerlos Pass and across the northern edge of the **Hohe Tauern National Park** toward Zell am See. This 1,786 square meter park is Europe's largest, and contains both Austria's highest peak, the **Grossglockner** at 3,797 meters (12,458 feet) and Austria's tallest waterfall, the **Krimml**.

In the summertime, there are spectacular views of the triple level falls from the road. Visitors can walk up a four km (2.5 miles) path to get a closer view. (Entry costs 10 AS/\$8 between May and October. The trail does get steep in some parts.) Unfortunately, in winter the Krimml is just a large slab of ice and visitors then

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may wonder what all the fuss is about.

After the falls, Route 165 continues east toward the town of Mittersill and the start of the Felber Tauern road, which runs south toward Lienz. (More information on Lienz and the Hohe Tauern National Park will appear in a future issue.)

Hotels

Whether Amway is in town or not, the Mayrhofen tourist office will arrange for overnight accommodations in any season.

During our visit in early February, we learned most hotels were booked on the weekends through mid-March, but it was not a problem to find a room midweek on short notice.

Traffic gets congested in the village center, but most hotels have parking and there are several public lots throughout the town.

Gästehaus Martha

Our favorite Mayrhofen accommodations are to be found at the tiny three-star Gästehaus Martha, where Karl and Martha Felbermayr offer seven double and two single rooms — all immaculately maintained and newly decorated in pastel colors and simple Tyrolean farm furniture.

The house dates to 1920, when Martha's grandfather built a one-story building for the family and for hosting summertime guests from Vienna. In 1950, her parents renovated the building and added a second story. And in 1991, Martha took over, putting bathrooms with showers (no tubs) in every room and again redecorating. The result is a house that feels new but still has a sense of history, and rooms that are bright and clean, if simple.


In the summertime, she has mostly regular guests, but there are usually a few rooms available. The largest and best is the so-called "pink room," a two-room double on the second floor with large windows that open to a sweeping view of the

valley. The two singles are rather small, but one has a disproportionately large bathroom to compensate. Doubles on the top floor are slightly older with smaller windows, but still have good views.

Breakfast is served in a cozy room on the first floor. There is also a business room equipped with a fax machine. The hotel is centrally located near the tourist office.

Daily Rates: Singles 260 to 310 AS (\$21-\$24), doubles 520 to 620 AS (\$41-\$48)

Contact: Karl and Martha Felbermayr, Gästehaus Martha, Durst 267, A-6290 Mayrhofen, tel./fax +43 5285/62324

Rating: QUALITY 13/20, VALUE 17/20 

Hotel-Pension Edenlehen

In a slightly less central location lies another good value: the three-star Hotel-Pension Edenlehen, overseen by the energetic 23-year old Andreas Hundsbichler and his wife, Irmgard. Together, they tend to 34 double rooms and four singles, plus a restaurant, wine cellar, sauna, and solarium.

The front lobby welcomes guests with a breakfast room flooded with morning sunshine, a fireplace and a small bar. Guestrooms are quite simple in decor, but all feature balconies, TV, and phone. South-facing rooms have larger windows that offer a view of the neighboring town of Finkenberg and the end of the Ziller Valley. Rooms to the north have a view of Mayrhofen and the Penken gondola, but the windows are smaller, which makes the rooms a bit darker. All bathrooms are modern with bathtubs, but the lighting won't be sufficient for tough critics.

Parking is plentiful, as the Edenlehen is just a 10-minute walk from the town center at the edge of a field that is the site of the Yahoï Mountain Festival. Paragliders float down into the valley to land right in front of the hotel and then come in to share a cup of coffee or a shot of sour apple *Schnapps* with the Hundsbichler family.

The Edenlehen's only foreseeable drawback is for those traveling *sans* children. The place is very family-

friendly and Andreas and Irmgard's four young children are very much in evidence. Still, a member of the tourist office staff told us her own parents like the Edenlehen best of any place they've stayed in Mayrhofen.

Daily Rates: Singles 460 to 660 AS (\$36-\$52), doubles 920 to 1320 AS (\$72-\$102)

Contact: Andreas & Irmgard Hundsbichler, Hotel-Pension Edenlehen, Rauchenwald 676, A-6290 Mayrhofen, tel +43 5285/2300, fax 2300 15

Rating: QUALITY 11/20, VALUE 14/20

Hotel-Garni Almhof

Also in the category of plain but adequate is Ferdinand and Elisabeth Moigg's three-star Hotel-Garni Almhof.

Despite its central location (about 1/4 mile from the town center), the Almhof is peaceful and quiet. Every room has a balcony, a small bathroom with a shower (no tubs, but plenty of hot water) and toilet, plus a TV, radio, phone, and safe. Parking isn't a problem.

In our small corner room, which featured windows across the length of two sides, we awoke the first morning to a fantastic view of snow-capped peaks glistening in the sun and the Penken gondola starting its morning climb up the valley wall. At night, however, the lighting in both the main room and the bath was rather dim.

Still, if chatting with a cheery hostess in the morning while enjoying a traditional Austrian breakfast — orange juice, coffee or tea, cold cuts, cheese, rolls, and jam — gets your day off to a good start, then the Almhof is worth a visit.

Daily Rates: Singles 320 to 380 AS (\$25-\$30), doubles 640 to 760 AS (\$50-\$60)

Contact: Ferdinand and Elisabeth Moigg, Hotel-Garni Almhof, Laubichl 141, A-6290 Mayrhofen, tel +43 5285/29 32, fax 29 32 20

Rating: QUALITY 11/20, VALUE 15/20

Elisabeth Hotel

The Elisabeth is the finest Mayrhofen has to offer and, though a stay here will put a serious dent in your wallet, the hotel and its staff will

EDITOR'S
CHOICE

probably make it worth the expense. Mike Thaler, a son of the owners, has worked for the **Ritz Carlton** and other fine establishments all over the world and recently returned to share his experience with the town's only five-star hotel.

Every guestroom is decorated differently, but all feature wood paneled walls and ceilings, a balcony, mini-bar, satellite TV, and separate rooms for toilet and bath. Some doubles are bright and airy, others tend more toward dark and cozy. Most of the bathrooms are a bit small for a grand hotel, and even here, the lighting was disappointing.

Amenities abound at the Elisabeth. In particular, the fitness center is a destination in itself, with a large indoor pool, sauna, solarium, steam room, body styling, massage, beauty salon, and Jacuzzi. And its restaurants, **Die Gute Stube**, serving Austrian and international cuisine, and **Mamma Mia**, with pasta and pizza, are popular with locals and regular Mayrhofen visitors.

Daily Rates: Singles 1090 to 2250 AS (\$85-\$176), doubles 1980 to 4700 AS (\$155-\$367)

Contact: Thaler family, Elisabeth Hotel, Einfahrt Mitte 432, A-6290 Mayrhofen, tel. +43 5285/6767, fax 6767-67, Email: elisabethhotel@netway.at, Web: <http://tiscovers.com/elisabethhotel.mayrhofen>

Rating: QUALITY 17/20, VALUE 13/20

Hotel Neuhaus

Just across from Mayrhofen's train station (which isn't visible from the hotel in the summer time), a busy receptionist and manager, Elisabeth Gredler, runs the four-star Hotel Neuhaus, making sure guests in its 150 rooms are well tended to.

The hotel actually consists of three connected buildings. The newest rooms were built in 1995 and they are considerably larger than the original ones. About 90 percent have balconies. Those facing south have the best view. Most also have a separate toilet and bath, and a bathtub rather than just a shower. Heated towel racks are standard, as are double sinks. And the lighting in

both rooms and baths is excellent.

Between the high seasons and the Amway invasions, the Moigg family is trying frantically to renovate its older rooms. At Christmas last year, new carpet and curtains were put in the older rooms; the lobby and guest restaurant were also recently refurbished.

In the oldest part of the house are three small restaurants open to the public, each of which serves a different menu. Other guest amenities include an indoor and outdoor Jacuzzi, a three-lane bowling alley, billiards and table tennis. Under construction in the basement is a new sauna. And the hotel is actually connected to the town cinema and another pub. Parking is available on the street or in the hotel's garage.

Daily rates: Singles 720 to 1200 AS (\$56-\$94), doubles 1440 to 2400 AS (\$113-\$188)

Contact: Josef Moigg, Hotel Neuhaus, Marktplatz 202, A-6290 Mayrhofen, tel. +43/5285/67 03, fax 63 8 08

Rating: QUALITY 15/20, VALUE 11/20

Hotel Strass

Mayrhofen's Strass family reportedly owns half the block of Hauptstrasse next to the Penken gondola. Its Hotel Strass and Sport Hotel Strass are especially well-known among British tourists for a lively *après ski* scene. In addition, the family owns the Garni Strass and the romantic Villa Strass.

The decor in these establishments ranges from modest and unremarkable at the Sport Hotel to luxury rooms with hand painted authentic farm furniture and canopy beds in the Villa.

All rooms include a bath or shower, toilet, balcony, TV, safe, radio, and telephone.

Nonsmokers and vegetarians get special attention here: the hotel reserves a section of its dining room for nonsmokers and offers a vegetarian menu as one of three daily dinner choices.

For sports enthusiasts, the Strass offers two squash courts, an indoor swimming pool, table tennis, billi-

ards, an arcade, solarium, and a hot tub with its own bar. Underground parking is available for an additional fee.

Daily Rates: Strass Hotel & Sport Hotel - singles 520 to 970 AS (\$41-\$76), doubles 1040 to 1940 AS (\$81-\$152); Villa Strass & Garni Strass - singles 410 to 860 AS (\$32-\$67), doubles 820 to 1720 AS (\$64-\$134)

Contact: Familie Roscher, Hotel Strass, Hauptstrasse 470, A-6290 Mayrhofen, tel +43 5285/6705-0, fax 63477

Rating: QUALITY 13/20, VALUE 12/20

Restaurants

Wirtshaus zum Griena

For Ziller Valley cuisine, Wirtshaus zum Griena is *the* place to dine. Here, Anneliese Steinlechner serves local specialties in a 400 year-old farm house located near Mayrhofen's second gondola, the *Ahorn-Seilbahn*.

The restaurant consists of four rustic dining rooms of varying size. We ate in one that years ago served as the children's bedroom. Behind us, bunk beds were built into the wall and our server pointed out a small hole in the ceiling which allowed heat to rise from the children's room to the parents' room on the floor above. In all rooms, exposed wood-beamed ceilings are low, walls are dark, and the light dim and cozy.

We sat at a well-worn, thick wooden table in a corner, and ordered green salads to start, followed by entrees of *Blutwuchtreaschtl* — blood sausage and diced potatoes pan fried and then baked in a heavy iron skillet until the top is crusty (105 AS / \$8.27) — and *Kaasschpazlang*, sinfully rich noodles baked with cheese and topped with bread crumbs (120 AS / \$9.50). For dessert, we shared an order of *Apfelreuschl*, sliced apples baked and sprinkled with cinnamon and sugar and topped with whipped cream for 95 AS (\$7.50).

The menu is written in the local dialect, so even if you know the German words for certain dishes, you might not recognize them here.

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MAYERHOFEN

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Thankfully, the servers are happy to help guests make their selections.

The overall effect of the Griena is to create something of a time warp. By the time we finished eating, it was a shock to walk back outside and see a parking lot full of cars. In fact, for the full effect, many guests opt to arrive at the restaurant in a horse-drawn sleigh.

Wirtshaus zum Griena, Dorf Haus 768, tel +43 5285/62 778 (reservations advised).

Rating: QUALITY: 16/20, VALUE: 16/20

Kaiserbründl

Kaiserbründl, run by the Gredler family, is a good standby for a broad range of local and international dishes and a lively crowd. The restaurant sits centrally at street level in the Marktplatz. Around 6pm, skiers start to trickle in for a bite to eat after an hour or two of *après ski* cocktails. During our visit, a group of locals and a few Americans hovered around the bar getting refills of Kaiser beer while "Pretty Woman" and other oldies played in the background. In the summertime, guests can dine on a patio outdoors.

Two beers appeared on the table almost immediately after we took our seats and began to browse a menu that started with salads, soups, and appetizers which range in price from 40 to 105 AS (\$3.15-\$8.26). Grilled entrees, including venison, range from 110-190 AS (\$8.66-\$15). Some Italian and even Indian dishes are also featured.

We ordered hearty meat dishes. First, a gratineed fillet of pork with a heavy sauce, served with broccoli and potato croquettes (deep fried potatoes loaded with butter) and artistically garnished with slices of peach and pear. Then, a skillet of pan-fried beef tips with mushrooms and sweet peppers served in a creamy, stroganoff-like sauce. The portions were extra large and the food was rich in butter and cream, so needless to say we filled up well before our plates were clean.

Kaiserbründl, Marktplatz 206, tel. 5285/62552

Rating: QUALITY: 12/20, VALUE: 14/20

KEMPINSKI AIRPORT HOTEL

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stocked minibar. With modern, Scandinavian-style furniture and a sparkling bathroom with chrome fixtures and a shower with both overhead nozzle and a second sliding, detachable shower head.

Another subtle, but important aspect of this hotel; soundproofing. During the entire evening, night, and morning, we never once heard a plane take off.

Oddly, the Kempinski skimmed on bath towels, providing only two thin ones for two people. Another small inconvenience was that the only phone sat on the desk, rather than at the bedside, meaning you have to get out of bed to answer it.

The hotel also has underground parking (Lot P26), a business center and a variety of restaurants and bars.

For recreation, there are two saunas, a solarium (tanning salon), an indoor pool with its own bar, and a complete fitness center. Other services include wheelchair access, elevators, child care, washers/dryers, and room service.

The trade off for all this, of course, is price. Singles and doubles are in the \$150 to \$250 range.

To reach the Kempinski on foot from the airport, simply follow the car rental and parking garage signs.

By car, the hotel is about 30 minutes from central Munich; follow signs to the Flughafen exit off highway A92. The hotel is also connected to the German railway through the airport line (S8).

Daily Rates: Singles and doubles 270 to 450 DM (\$150-\$250), children age 12 and under stay free. Rates don't include the Continental breakfast which is 22 DM (\$12) per person.

Contact: Kempinski Airport Hotel, Terminalstrasse / Mitte 20, D- 85356 Munich, tel. +49/89/9782-0, tel. +49/89/9782-2610. Reserve from the U.S.

921 800-426-3135 (To obtain the lowest possible rate, *Gemütlichkeit* always recommends contacting both the toll-free reservations service and the hotel directly). Email:

sales.muc2@kempinski.com Web: www.kempinski-airport.de

Rating: QUALITY 16/20, VALUE 11/20

A Kempinski Dinner

Dining at the hotel's **Restaurant Charles Lindbergh** was a surprisingly pleasant experience. After a week of breathing smoky air in restaurants all over Austria, we almost fell over when the maitre d' asked if we preferred smoking or nonsmoking.

The restaurant is large enough to accommodate a crowd, but still manages to avoid the institutional atmosphere of a cafeteria; and it beats any other options in the airport itself — we checked.

We treated ourselves to two carafes of an Italian Merlot, roast duck (43 DM/\$24) smothered in a thick, brown gravy; a baked vegetable ragout (29 DM/\$16) with cheese that turned out to be much lighter than it sounded; two slightly wilted salads, and a bottle of Evian to quench our never-ending thirst. The menu is in English, so there's no need to translate, and servers are efficient and attentive.

Including the beverages we paid 105 DM (\$58).

Restaurant Charles Lindbergh, Kempinski Hotel Airport Munich, Terminalstrasse/Mitte 20 85356 Munich, tel +49/89/97820, fax: 9782 2610

Rating: QUALITY 12/20, VALUE 11/20

Gemütlichkeit Coming Attractions:

Berlin

Lienz, Austria

Göttingen, Germany

Locarno, Switzerland

A Strasbourg Excursion

Vienna

Eating Well in Zürich

READERS' FORUM

Favorite Hotels

My wife and I have averaged one 30-day trip per year since 1980. We travel during the winter months to avoid the tourists and several times have been the only guests in a hotel. It is a great way to meet local people and not be bothered with crowds, though some hotels and attractions are not open in the off-season. We always travel independently by car so that we can set out own itinerary.

On our last trip, we ran into more snow than usual. All the major passes in Switzerland were closed so we did not get to all the places we had planned to visit, but, being independent, we just changed our itinerary.

We stayed at the following hotels. Each has its individual charm and we enjoyed them all. The price quoted is for a double room with private bath and breakfast

Switzerland

Worb (near Bern): **Gasthof Zum Löwen**, Enggisteinstrasse 3, CH-3076 Worb, tel. +41/031 839 23 03, fax 839 58 77, price 160 Sfr. (\$108). One of our favorites. Beautiful, chalet-style building. Owned and operated by the same family for about 600 years. Current owners are Hans-Peter and Ursula Bernhard. Excellent restaurant, but closed on weekends. On those days you are referred to the **Brauerei A. Egger** which is close by and also excellent. Dinner for two with wine: 72 Sfr. (\$49). Dinner at the Brauerei was about the same price.

Zermatt: **Romantic Hotel Julen**, CH-3920 Zermatt, tel. +41/027/966 76 00, fax 966 76 76. Family-owned and operated by Daniela and Paul Julen. Outstanding view of Matterhorn from the south side. Good food. Price 210 Sfr. (\$142) including half board. A bargain!

Amsteg am Gotthard (South of Luzern): **Hotel Stern und Post**, CH-6474, Amsteg am Gotthard, tel. +/041/883 14 40, fax 883 02 61. Another of our very favorites. Our fourth visit. An old Post House. Owned and operated by Elisabeth A. Tresch. A charming hotel with excellent food, and no TV or telephone to distract you. Our room was 160 Sfr (\$108). Dinner for two with wine 80 Sfr. (\$54)

Liechtenstein

Vaduz: **Hotel-Restaurant Engel**, FL-9490 Vaduz, tel. +41/075/232 03 13., fax. 233 11 59. In the heart of the city. Modern and comfortable. Our room in the back was very quiet. Cost: 160 Sfr. (\$108). They have a very fancy Chinese Restaurant but we chose the traditional one. Dinner for two with wine, 58 Sfr. (\$39).

Austria

Hof bei Salzburg: **Jagdhof am Fuschensee**, A-5322 Hof bei Salzburg, tel. +43/06229 23 72-0, fax 23 72-413. Beautiful, isolated location in a lovely part of Austria. Originally an old hunting lodge. Rebuilt after a fire about three years ago. Original decor and charm retained. Our room, Number 105 (1300 AS/\$102), had a large sitting area and a balcony overlooking the golf course and lake. Highly recommend the restaurant. Dinner for two with wine about 700 AS (\$55).

Germany

Schwäbisch Hall-Hessental: **Die Krone**, Wirtsgasse 1, D-74523 Schwäbisch Hall-Hessental, tel. +49/0791/9403-0, fax 9403 84. A Ringhotel. Hessental is a village close to Schwäbisch Hall. Very pleasant and comfortable. Staff friendly and helpful. Very good dinner. Our room cost 178 DM (\$98) and dinner for two with wine was 72 DM (\$40).

Helmstedt: **Holiday Inn Garden Court**, Chardstrasse 2, D-38350 Helmstedt, tel. +49/053 51/1 28-0, fax 128 128. Not your typical American Holiday Inn. Relatively new and very attractive. We had a large, quiet room away from the Autobahn. No restaurant but a nice breakfast is served and also a dinner of cold cuts for those who wish. There is an Autobahn restaurant very close by. Our room was 150 DM (\$82), without breakfast. Breakfast was 20 DM (\$11) each.

Berlin: **Best Western Hotel Stuttgarter Hof**, Anhalter Strasse 9, D-10963 Berlin, tel. +49/030/264 83-0, fax 264 83 900. An older West Berlin hotel but well maintained. Our room in the back was small but comfortable and quiet. Near "Checkpoint Charlie." Convenient bus stop nearby. Pleasant restaurant but a limited menu. In November, they gave a special rate to Best Western Gold Crown Club members of 185 DM (\$102) (normally 320 DM/\$176). Dinner for two with wine was 65 DM (\$36).

Eisenach: **Schlosshotel Eisenach**, am Markt 10, 99817 Eisenach, tel. +49/03691/21 42 60. Fax. 21 42 59. A new, small hotel with a 400 year-old wine cellar. In the center of Eisenach next to the church. Owned and operated by the Fam. Reinel. Our room was large, quiet, and very comfortable. Food and service were excellent. We got a weekend rate of 175 DM (\$96) for a deluxe room (normally 210

DM/\$115). Dinner for two with wine was 60 DM (\$33). Highly recommended.

Frankfurt/Dreieich: **Bauer Hotel Europa**, Hauptstasse 47-51, 63303 FFM-Dreieich-Sprendlingen. Tel. 0 61 03/60 40, fax 0 61 03/6 52 65. Best Western Hotel in center of Dreieich about 9 km (6 miles) from Frankfurt airport. Our room on the street was a bit noisy but comfortable. A room in back would have been more satisfactory. Good restaurant close by for a final meal in Germany. Good spot for the last night before flying home. We paid 169 DM (\$93).

BOB & PAT FARGO
PENSACOLA FL

Berlin Memories

Please extend my subscription for two more years. We really enjoy *Gemütlichkeit*.

Your comments about Berlin in the December '97 issue brought back memories of our very first trip to Berlin in 1964. We were young and looking for adventure so we drove our new signal red Mercedes 230 SL on the Autobahn from Unter-türkheim to Berlin. Before reaching the city limits we were stopped at a checkpoint manned by Russian soldiers. We were ordered to get out of our car while they made a thorough search. It was the "happening" we had hoped to experience.

After a long few minutes they gave us a smile and a positive nod and we continued until we reached the **Berlin Hilton**. For \$17.90 plus 15% service charge we had a large double room with private bath and TV. That was 1964.

In 1993, after two weeks in Paris, we picked up our leased Peugeot 405 and headed for Berlin. This time we stayed in Potsdam. Our hotel, the **Mercure** — \$158 for a double with CNN on the TV — was located within walking distance of the rail station and the boat dock. The rail service was excellent, but the boat trip with German school children was memorable. The children took turns sitting with us so they could pet our miniature wirehaired dachshund.

We walked many miles in Berlin; on the Ku'damm we had a delicious dinner of *Spargel*, ham and red ber-

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DEAR SUBSCRIBER

Continued from page 2

ries at **Kranzler**. In East Berlin, a lunch in the garden at **Borchardt's** was delightful. From the restaurant we walked to Alexander Platz and then took Bus #100 to the Brandenburg Gate. There, I bought a Russian military pin from a vendor. He assured me it was authentic. I was so pleased with my purchase I got up enough nerve to walk the short distance to the Reichstag but we were turned away when we tried to enter. Perhaps the guard saw the pin clutched in my left hand. We took the S-Bahn back to Potsdam.

Looking forward to more great issues of *Gemütlichkeit*.

PATRICIA GEHMAN
PALM BEACH FL

EUROPE TRAVEL DIGEST

■ The **Europa Hotel Mainz** offers *Gemütlichkeit* subscribers a special three-day, two-night package this summer between July 1 and August 16. For 262 DM (\$144) per person, the hotel offers a large air-conditioned room, a candlelight dinner, a welcome bottle of Rhine wine, roundtrip Mainz to Rudesheim on a KD River-cruise ship, a Mainz info packet and entrance to an exhibition honoring the life and work of Hildegard of Bingen, one of the most remarkable women of the middle ages. The exhibition runs from April 17 to August 16 at Mainz's Diözesanmuseum.

To reserve the special *Gemütlichkeit* subscribers' package contact Marianne Ziegner, Director, Best Western Europa Hotel Mainz, Kaiserstr. 7, D-55116, tel. +49/6131 9750, fax +49/6131 975555

■ Golfers planning a trip to Switzerland should obtain a **free golf guide** available from **Switzerland Tourism**. While we haven't yet seen the '98 guide, the 1997 edition contains information on 52 public and private courses. Some are open to the general public, others require a valid club card with handicap. For each of the

52 there are directions on locating the course, green fees, course length, altitude, dates of operation, recommended nearby hotels, and phone and fax numbers.

Green fees range from about 50 to 120 Sfr. (\$34-\$81). Contact Switzerland Tourism, 222 N. Sepulveda Blvd., #1570, El Segundo CA 90245, tel. 310-640-8900.

■ **International Home Stays** places travelers in English-speaking private homes in 24 countries including Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary and Poland. Host families offer home-cooked meals and personal guide service. Bed and breakfast deals begin at \$59 per night. Homestays with more services and pre-planned itineraries are available at higher prices. Contact: American-International Homestays, Inc., P. O. Box 1754, Nederland CO 80466, tel. 800-876-2048, fax 303-642-3365, email ash@igc.apc.org, web: www.commerce.com/homestays/.

■ A **new train** now connects Chur, the capital of Graubünden, with the mountain resort of Arosa. State-of-the-art panoramic cars aboard the **Arosa Express** offer unobstructed views of the alpine scenery and the interior design of the bar car is that of a traditional Swiss restaurant.

From May 24 through October 16, there are three departures per day from Chur at 10am, 12:50pm and 3:50pm. Passes valid on the route include Eurail, Europass, Swiss Pass and Swiss Flexipass; otherwise the roundtrip adult first-class fare is 38 Sfr. (\$26) and 22.8 Sfr. (\$16) second-class. Kids under 16 pay half price. Reservations of 5 Sfr. (\$3.50) each way are mandatory and can be made at any train station in Switzerland.

■ This year the **Rhaetian Railway** system offers rides on steam trains built in 1906.

The "Engadina" (St. Moritz - Samedan - Scuol-Tarasp - St. Moritz) departs St. Moritz at 9:45am and returns at 5:20pm on the following Sundays: July 19; August 16; December 27, 1998.

The "Surselva" (Landquart - Chur - Ilanz - Disentis - Landquart)

operates on Saturday, May 23 and Sunday, September 13. Departure is at 9.20am and the return is at 5.40pm.

The "Davos Roundtrip" (Landquart - Klosters - Davos - Filisur - Chur - Landquart) operates on the following Sundays: June 7; July 26; and October 11. Departure from Landquart is at 9.35am and return is 6.30pm.

The steam-ticket is 60 Sfr. (\$ 41) for adults, 20 Sfr. (\$ 14.00) for children under 16 years of age and holders of Swiss Passes, Swiss Flexipasses, Eurail passes.

Reservations can be made free of charge at any Rhaetian Railway station or with Graubünden Tours, tel. +41 81/254 9110, fax: +41/81 254 9111, e-mail: GRT@graubuendentours.ch.

■ Again this year, the **University of New Orleans** and the **University of Innsbruck** jointly offer a travel-study program for adults. Participants can choose from such courses as *19th Century Romantic Opera: The Tragic Muse, Where the Arts Meet, The Origins of Celtic Culture in Austria and German Language: Roots, Culture and Use* and join a variety of optional weekend excursions to Venice, Vienna, Verona and Munich. Cost is \$3295 per person and includes 21 nights accommodations and a variety of meals, field trips, German lessons, and entertainment. Contact: The European Centre, University of New Orleans, PO Box 1097, New Orleans LA 70148-1097, tel. 504-280-7484 or 504-280-7318.

Very briefly...

■ In Switzerland, one can rent a Porsche Boxter from **Europcar** for from one to three days for 399 Sfr. (\$270) per day. A 911 Targa or Carrera is 599 Sfr. (\$405). ■ **Lufthansa** is the only airline offering nonstop flights this summer between Houston and Frankfurt. The airline also operates four weekly nonstops between Dallas/St. Worth and Frankfurt. ■ The **Entertainment Hotel & Travel Directory** for 1998, priced at \$64.90, offers discounts — usually 50% — at some 5,500 hotels worldwide, quite a few in Germany, Austria & Switzerland. Order at 800-445-4137. 