

DEAR
SUBSCRIBER

September 27, 1998

A Sense of Style

Our house is very near the Hayward campus of the California State University system. Every Sunday morning, back in the 70s and 80s, there was a pickup soccer game at the school. The players were an interesting blend of Europeans, Hispanics, Iranians, Afghans, Indians, and even a few local Anglo-Saxons.

Every week, when they were kids, our two sons would head for that soccer field. Amazingly, the adult players, many of whom spoke little or no English, would let everybody play, even 7-year-old Andy and 14-year-old Bob. The kids were also always involved in organized soccer; youth leagues, high school, and ultimately college soccer. But over the years they continued to play in the pickup games.

One of the Sunday players was a bandy-legged little Spaniard named Mira, a soccer nut who seldom missed *any* soccer game in Hayward. You'd see him at 8 o'clock on a Saturday morning at an under-12 game and then again in the afternoon at the college match — men's team or women's team, it didn't matter, Mira was there.

As they got older, the boys became interested in international soccer which was the big topic of conversation at the Sunday gatherings. The skills and abilities of the best players in the world would be discussed; names like Glenn Hoddle of England, Germany's Karl Heinz Rummenigge, Holland's Johan Cruyff and Argentina's Ossie Ardiles.

To define what separates the very best from mere excellence is not easy. What makes Pavarotti better than Carreras? Montana better than U2? Often what it finally comes down to is a sense of greatness that is hard to put into

Continued on page 2...

GEMÜTLICHKEIT

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

TRIER ON THE MOSEL

This summer, we traced the winding Mosel River to its western origins to find an ancient Roman city in the midst of yet another transformation.

There are some destinations where a guided tour genuinely enhances even the most frequent traveler's understanding of a city. Usually, a less structured wandering of a place provides a richer and more individually tailored experience. In the 2000 year-old German city of Trier, however, the two-hour guided walking tour of its Roman ruins and imperial vestiges is absolutely a must. An appreciation of history is, after all, what this city is really all about.

Trier is situated along the Mosel River in a 20 kilometer-long valley that lies between the Eifel Massif to the west and the foothills of the Hunsrück mountains to the east. Historically, the valley has served as

the meeting point of major trade routes, turning the city into an early cultural, religious, political, and commercial center. Trier was first established in 16 BC under Emperor Augustus as *Augusta Treverorum*, and later flourished in the 3rd and 4th centuries, when it became the seat of the Western Roman Empire, a domain that at one time reached from Britain all the way to southern Spain.

Although the city has never since attained the glory it experienced during Roman times, it has continued to thrive on a more modest scale as the political center of Germany's Rheinland-Pfalz. The canalization of the Mosel in 1957 helped revitalize the city after years

Continued on page 3...

Beau Rivage Palace

In nearly 13 years of reviewing European hotels, we have been careful to reserve the highest praise for those establishments which truly warrant it. In that time we have inspected literally thousands of individual guestrooms and hundreds of hotels all over Germany, Austria and Switzerland, including many of the best in each country such as: Hamburg's **Vier Jahreszeiten**, Zürich's **Dolder Grand**, Brenner's **Park** in Baden-Baden, the **Sacher** and **Imperial** hotels in Vienna, Geneva's **Le Richmond** and Interlaken's **Victoria Jungfrau**.

But now, after three separate stays over a nine-year period, we are prepared to term Lausanne's **Beau Rivage Palace Hotel** the "fairest in

the land;" the best hotel we have ever seen.

It is an absolutely top-of-the-line European luxury hotel of the rich, famous and talented, of international diplomats, of dowagers draped in poodle dogs and furs, and of royalty. Its guests have included Noel Coward, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, Gary Cooper, Mary Pickford, Somerset Maugham, Coco Chanel, Camille Saint-Saëns, and the Emperor Hiro-Hito. (The hotel protects the privacy of its current clientele, speaking only the names of guests who are now dead.) They came no doubt because the Beau Rivage is the quintessence of timeless European elegance, and surely is one of the world's finest.

Continued on page 7...

DEAR SUBSCRIBER

Continued from page 1

words, and especially difficult for someone whose English isn't so good.

So Mira relied on a succinct observation that has become part of our household lexicon. "E gotta style" (translation: "He has a style") was reserved for only the very best players. To really drive home the point it was "E gotta style, body," or, "He has a style, buddy." So now, when we can't quite express how really good a musician, an athlete, a restaurant, or a person is, we simply resort to "E gotta style."

This month, in our attempt to tell you why **Beau Rivage Palace Hotel** in Lausanne stands above all the other great hotels we have seen in 13 years of publishing *Gemütlichkeit*, perhaps we should have just left it at "E gotta style, body."

Epilogue: About 10 years ago, Mira, who by then must have been in his 70s, decided to go back to Spain. There was an impromptu little ceremony at the Sunday pickup game and the players chipped in to present him with a special soccer ball. But maybe it's true that you can't "go home again," because just the other day I saw Mira, still barely able to see over the steering wheel of his beat up little car, heading up the hill to the college. No doubt to a soccer game.

Things That Go Bump

I've flown as a passenger on all kinds of aircraft: tiny commuter airplanes; Navy jet fighters; rickety old Navy transports between

Kodiak, Alaska, and Adak in the Aleutian Islands; landed and took off from aircraft carriers; rode helicopters that whap-whapped away among Switzerland's highest peaks and along craggy Alaskan coastlines. I also have flown with my brother Bill in his Beechcraft Bonanza and, of course, many times across the Atlantic, including about a dozen trips recently on Swissair's comfortable MD-11s.

With apologies to Bill, the times I've felt the safest are with Swissair on those MD-11s. The only form of transportation that gives me a more secure feeling is a European train.

The events of the summer — the Swissair crash and the German ICE train tragedy — are jolts of reality that remind us of two important rules; don't get too cocky and have fun now. I live by the latter but tend to forget the former. Also, this just in: Swiss airplanes and German trains are as safe as ever but they are built and operated by humans. Don't worry, be happy.

Cheap Winter Travel

The season of cheap and cheaper flights to Europe is upon us. **Best Fares** website on the Internet sent us the following email on September 25:

"WE HAVE BRAND NEW SALE FARES TO EUROPE. These bargains cover travel through March of 1999. How about New York or Boston to Paris for as little as \$264 roundtrip (\$198 for kids)? Fly roundtrip from Detroit or Chicago to London for as little as \$309 roundtrip (\$229 for


kids). How about Dallas/Fort Worth or Houston to Rome for as little as \$364 roundtrip (\$273 for kids)? Book a \$419 roundtrip from San Francisco or Los Angeles to destinations including London, Paris, Frankfurt, Rome, Milan or Barcelona." Access Best Fares at www.bestfares.com.

Be sure, too, to check **Swissair**. Remember, even on their lowest winter sale fares, *Gemütlichkeit* subscribers get \$50 off per ticket. You must book directly with Swissair, then phone 800-238-0399 for ticketing. That office will verify your subscriber status and issue the tickets at the lower price.

Vevey Festival

In a recent issue we incorrectly had the **Vevey Wine Growers' Festival** taking place in 1998. Subscriber Marge Coughlin reminds us this rare event is scheduled for 1999. The festival takes place once each generation — only five times this century, the last in 1977. La Fete Des Vignerons is scheduled for July 29-August 15, 1999. For ticket info and a festival brochure write Vevey Tourisme, Fete Des Vignerons, CP 27, CH-1800 Vevey or see their website: www.fetedesvignerons.ch.

This is Not a Joke

A press spokesperson at the **Austrian Tourist Office** in New York says newspaper reports in both Austria and the U.S. that have one M. Lewinsky, a.k.a. "that woman," leading the Vienna Opera Ball's grand entrance parade next February are not true. 

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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.

TRIER

Continued from page 1

of occupation and wartime destruction. The University of Trier, which was founded in 1970 and now has 12,000 students, has also added new life.

The Place

Early on a sunny July morning, our guide Brigitte — a bubbly, retired Lufthansa flight attendant — led us on a walk through time that began with the story of how the towering Roman gate, **Porta Nigra**, was preserved by chance. In medieval times, unused public buildings — except for churches — were often torn down for their stones and timbers. The old gate was just such a target until, in the 11th century, in memory of Trier's Archbishop Poppo, the upper levels of its east tower were converted into a church, thus saving it from destruction.

Brigitte's fascinating narrative culminated in the story of the grand double **Cathedral** and **Liebfrauenkirche**. Inside and out, the two connected buildings combine elements from every major architectural period from Romanesque times to the 19th century.

This wonder alone convinced us that every Trier visitor will be captivated by stories of the city's rise and fall over the centuries.

Our first stop in Trier was to take in a spectacular panoramic view of the city from our room at the charming **Hotel Petrisberg** (page 5). From there, curiosity led us to the birthplace of Karl Marx; to the lavish rococo **Electoral Palace** and gardens; and to the incredibly well-engineered **Imperial Baths** built under Constantine the Great.

As we crossed the **Römerbrücke** (Roman bridge), which has served as a crossing since the second century, and sat in the austere **Basilika**, built by Constantine the Great in 300, we felt grateful for the fateful turn of events that preserved these relics. We felt we somehow understood the stories behind the sense of history that oozes out of every building,

Trier Info

Tourist Information:

An der Porta Nigra, D-54290 Trier, Tel +49/0561-978080, fax 44759, website: www.trier-online.de, email: tourist@trier-online.de

Population: 100,000

Distances from:

Düsseldorf	191 km/119 miles
Frankfurt	191 km/119 miles
Koblenz	124 km/78 miles
Luxembourg	40 km/25 miles
Munich	499 km/312 miles

Rail Connections:

Direct service available from many cities, including Cochem, Bonn, Bremen, Düsseldorf, Hamburg, Koblenz, Köln, Luxembourg, Mannheim, Stuttgart.

English Guided City Walking Tour:

May 1-Oct. 31, daily at 10:30am and 2:30pm. Cost 10 DM.

Upcoming Events:

Christmas Market, Nov 25-Dec 22
European Folk Festival, May 13-24
Trier Old Town Festival, June 25-27
Antiquity Festival, July 1999 - Performances will include Antigone, Oedipus Rex, and the national ballet of Spain (Medea-flamenco).
Trier Mosel Festival, Jul. 10-13
Trier Wine Festival, Aug. 6-9

Side Trips:

Saar Valley, Ruwer Valley, Luxembourg, Eifel hills, Hochwald Mountains, Burg Eltz, Maria Laach Monastery, boat ride on the Mosel.

Wine Shops:

Bischöfliche Weingüter, Gervasiusstr./Rahnenstr. Open Mon.-Fri., 9am-5pm. (Wine tip from *Die Besten Weine in Deutschland*: 1995 Eitelsbacher Marienholz Riesling trocken, DM 8/\$4.73.)

Stiftung Friedrich-Wilhelm-Gymnasium: Weberbach 75, Mon-Fri 9am-12:30, 1pm-5:45pm. (Wine tip from *Die Besten Weine in Deutschland*: 1995 Ockfener Scharzberg Riesling QbA trocken, DM 7.50.)

Weininformation: Konstantinplatz 11, Mon.-Fri. 11-1pm, 1:30-6:30, Sat. 10-1pm, 1:30-4pm, Sun. (Apr.-Oct.) 1pm-5pm.

garden, monument, and museum in this ancient town.

Museums

Visitors eager to learn more about Trier's long history shouldn't miss the 100-year-old **Rheinisches Landesmuseum**, one of Germany's most important archeological museums. Its collection follows human civilization all the way back to the Late Stone Age (4300-1800 BC). On display are artifacts from viticulture in Roman times, the largest collection of Roman mosaics in Germany, a gold coin collection that provides portraits of the late Roman emperors, and tombstone monuments arranged to look like a Roman roadside cemetery. The museum continues to research the history of Trier and the surrounding area. (Ostalle 44, Tues.-Fri. 9:30-5pm, Sat.-Sun. 10:30-5pm.)

Time permitting, several additional museums are worth a peek: the **Municipal Museum Simeonstift** (at the Porta Nigra) documents the city's history and art dating from the middle ages through the 19th century; the **Bischöfliche Museum**, in the old city jail (Windstrasse 6), contains a collection of religious art treasures and most prominently, a painted ceiling from the Roman Palace under the **Trier Cathedral**, dating from the time of Constantine; the **Karl Marx House** (Brückenstrasse 10) displays documents concerning the life and work of the founder of communism; and the **Spielzeug Museum**, featuring three floors and two centuries of toys, is sure to trigger a trip down memory lane for kids of all ages. (Magelstrasse 4-5, tel. +49-0651-75850)

This year marked Trier's first **Antiquity Festival**, established to celebrate the city's long tradition of theater. Throughout the event, classical pieces were performed in the Basilika, Amphitheater, and other historical venues. We attended the first Trier performance of Richard Strauss' opera *Elektra*, held outdoors under the stars in the amphitheater, the city's oldest Roman construct (100 AD).

Continued on page 4...

TRIER

Continued from page 3

Wine

Trier's economy today is driven primarily by the wine and tourism industries, although a smattering of small businesses and larger industrial corporations are also fueling economic growth. Incredibly, the city's wine tradition is even older than its historical buildings. The Romans are said to have planted vines on the slopes of the town by the middle of the first century AD, which predates even the amphitheater.

If you haven't had your fill of Riesling wines from elsewhere in the Mosel-Saar-Ruwer region, Trier offers a few gems of its own. For one, we visited the young and gregarious Georg-Fritz von Nell, who now runs the business that has been in his family since 1803. The winery consists of 16 hectares; grapes are pressed on the premises and aged in oak barrels.

In the family's *Weingut*, Edith von Nell prepares a specialty dish of pork marinated for two days in a semi-dry Riesling Qualitätswein, then roasted over a vine-wood fire, served with rich, creamy *au gratin* potatoes and fresh green salad. Although it's not a public restaurant, if you call ahead, they will often accommodate guests for dinner. Cellar visits and wine tastings are offered in English by appointment. (D-5500 Trier, im Tiergarten 12, near the amphitheater, tel. +49/0651/323 97, fax 300-797)

Another stop was **Saar-Mosel Winzersekt**, where we learned about the traditional method of making high-quality sparkling wine. At this facility, vintners from the Mosel-Saar-Ruwer region bring their Riesling and Elbling grapes to make four varieties of *Sekt*: Mosel (extra brut), Saar (brut), Ruwer (dry), and Obermosel (extra dry). A jovial wine expert, Herr Hechler, led us through the dark, vast cellars, showing us how to riddle (slightly rotating the bottles by hand during the in-bottle fermentation) and offering an end-

less stream of facts and figures about his craft. He told us the quality of the *Sekt* derives from a careful selection of grapes, a six-month barrel maturing time, 12-months bottle maturation, and the hand riddling. The tourist office can arrange tours by appointment. (Gilbertstrasse 34, D-5500 Trier, tel +49-0651-42627, fax +49-0651-42644.)

Over the last 10 years, Trier has served mainly as a stopover for tourists en route between northern and southern Europe. Few foreigners spend significant vacation time here, but in our opinion the city is worth a few extra days. The tourist office has begun to work aggressively to change its image from a city that intercepts tourists bound for other places, to a genuine destination itself. Look for a variety of special package deals meant to lure American vacationers from the larger and better-known destinations. September and October during the harvest and April through June are the high seasons. Advent in December is said to be an especially enchanted time to visit.

Hotels

Trier offers a wide range of accommodations — though few, if any, are true bargains — from small guest houses loaded with character, to standard chain hotels that boast convenient locations and an abundance of business services.

Klosterschenke

Our favorite establishment is not in Trier proper, but about seven kilometers to the south in Trier-Pfalzel (30 minutes by boat). On the west bank of the Mosel sits Klosterschenke, an 800-year-old monastery that was turned into a guest house in 1824.

Here, the friendly Betz family has impressively melded the old with the new in the monastery's eleven individually decorated rooms. Twelve foot high ceilings, well-preserved hardwood floors, and tasteful floral wallpaper give the rooms an airy, garden feel. Despite recent renovations, the owners have managed to preserve the original style of the building by highlighting exposed

beams and ornate moldings.

The bathrooms are small, but bright, clean, and modern. Room Number 16 has a larger bathroom and also a large window with a beautiful view of the river below. Number 27 is the only one with a bathtub, all others have showers.


Guests (and non-guests) can enjoy breakfast or lunch on the outdoor terrace shaded by linden trees, gaze at the river and the vine-covered hills beyond, and watch cyclists peddle leisurely along the *Moselfahrradweg*.

Dinner guests are treated to a menu of regional specialties, including lamb cutlets from the Ruwer Valley roasted and served with pine nuts, fresh tomatoes, garlic, and basil. For special occasions, small groups can reserve the table in the Petri Capelle, which was built in 1511.

A drawback is that none of the rooms is designated nonsmoking.

Daily Rates: Singles 100 DM (\$59), doubles 165 DM (\$98). Closed January.

Contact: Klosterschenke, Klosterstr. 10, D-54293 Trier-Pfalzel, tel. +49/0651/6089, fax 64313

Rating: QUALITY 17/20, VALUE 15/20 

Hotel Villa Hügel

For a romantic and more central locale (10 minutes walk to downtown), we would choose the Hügel, an art nouveau villa built in 1914. The owners recently renovated and expanded the hotel to a capacity of 70 beds (14 rooms in the original part; 16 in the new building), many of which feature views of the Cathedral, Imperial Baths, and the Electoral Palace and Gardens.

The Hügel takes pride in its stylish ambiance. A modern atrium fills the lobby with natural light and welcomes guests to this idyllic getaway. Each room is individually decorated and named after a European city. The hotel's favorite room is the Köln, which features the original plaster ceiling and double French doors opening to a balcony and a sweeping view of Trier. The Hamburg is the only other room to have a

EDITOR'S CHOICE

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balcony. Rooms that face the street are less expensive, and yet not likely to be loud, as the hotel sits on a lightly trafficked private way. All rooms come with minibar, cable-TV, telephone, and shower or bath.

Amenities include an outdoor patio, an indoor pool, and a sauna. A restaurant, available for house guests only, serves a gourmet breakfast and light afternoon or evening fare such as salads and crepes.

In order to foster a more intimate atmosphere, the hotel discourages large groups. Nonsmoking rooms are available and English is spoken.

Daily Rates: Singles 110 to 150 DM (\$65-\$89), doubles 170-235 DM (\$101-\$139).

Contact: Villa Hügel, Bernhardstrasse 14, D-54295 Trier, tel. +49/0651/33066, fax 37958

Rating: QUALITY 17/20, VALUE 14/20


Hotel Petrisberg

Our return to this long-time *Gemütlichkeit* favorite found the Pantenburg brothers, Helmut and Wolfgang, continuing to keep up with the times without sacrificing the personalized hospitality that makes the Petrisberg a gem. With other guests, we were treated to an afternoon snack on the lawn, which overlooks the amphitheater and city below.

Wolfgang, the decorator, has remodeled nearly all 34 rooms, with modern bathrooms, ornate French styled wallpaper, and handmade wooden beds. He continues to add to his collection of ceramics, which are placed throughout the rooms and corridors of the hotel. Helmut says that hairdryers and safes will be the next additions, followed by an elevator. TV's are still not in every room, although guests can request one for six DM per day. Thankfully for us, the Pantenburg's still do not permit smoking in their breakfast room.

Daily Rates: Singles 100 to 110 DM (\$59-\$65), doubles 150-180 DM (\$89-\$107). No credit cards.

Contact: Hotel Petrisberg, Sickingenstrasse 11-13, D-54296 Trier, tel. +49/0651/4640, fax 46450

Rating: QUALITY 15/20, VALUE 14/20 

Weinhaus Becker

Responsibility for running the Weinhaus Becker has just been passed to the next generation. With that change, has come a burst of energy and a flurry of improvements. A year ago, daughter Christine Becker and her husband expanded the house's cellar and kitchen. The next project will be a new reception area so guests don't have to enter the hotel through the restaurant.

The house is located in Olewig, not far from the amphitheater. It offers 42 beds; all rooms have telephones, TV, WC, and shower; some have balconies. The Becker's serve a buffet breakfast and they recently added a new dinner menu emphasizing regional specialties served to match the house wines.

Guests can join the family in the fall harvest to experience the wine-making process firsthand. Tastings are available by appointment. No designated nonsmoking rooms.

Daily Rates: Singles 75 to 85 DM (\$44-\$50), doubles 130 to 160 DM (\$77-\$95). No credit cards.

Contact: Weinhaus Becker, Olewiger Strasse 206, D-54295 Trier-Olewig, tel. +49/0651/938 080

Rating: QUALITY 12/20, VALUE 13/20

Dorint Hotel

Because of its situation directly across from the Porta Nigra in Trier, the Dorint Hotel offers the view of choice and utter convenience in location. However, its corporate owners were heavily criticized for tearing down the old Porta Nigra Hotel in 1968 and putting an ugly modern building in its place.

The Dorint offers 106 fairly standard rooms, room service, garage parking for 14 DM (\$8) per day, and most other business amenities. It plans to add air-conditioning within two years. Ask for a room in the older building (which has newer rooms with halogen lighting and more modern colors) on the side that faces the Porta Nigra. The windows are double-paned to keep the bustle of the city below to a murmur. Nonsmoking rooms are available.

On the street level, the Salon, decorated in a turn of the century motif, is open for lunch and dinner. The adjacent casino grants free entry to house guests.

Daily Rates: Singles 180 DM (\$107), doubles 318 DM (\$188).

Contact: Dorint Hotel, Porta Nigra Platz 1, D-54292 Trier, tel +49/0651/27010, fax 2701-176

Rating: QUALITY 11/20, VALUE 9/20

Hotel Deutscher Hof

Ten minutes from the city center is another business-oriented hotel, the Deutscher Hof, run by Andrea Weber. It features 98 rooms on three floors, all with shower or bath, WC, telephone, and color TV. Ten percent of them are designated nonsmoking. Rates include a breakfast buffet and parking.

There is presently no fitness facility, but Ms. Weber plans to add a small health center soon. Ask for a room that faces the garden, rather than the busy street below. Bikes are available for free use, because, as Ms. Weber says "You can't have culture all day long!"

Like the Dorint, this hotel caters especially to groups and business conventions. However, as we toured the facility, Ms. Weber chatted with people she encountered along the way, suggesting to us that despite the hotel's size, she is able to pay personal attention to most of her guests. The staff speaks excellent English.

Daily Rates: Singles 110 to 145 DM (\$65-\$86), doubles 155-185 DM (\$92-\$109).

Contact: Hotel Deutscher Hof, Südallee 25, D-54292 Trier, tel +49/0651/977 80, fax 977 8400

Rating: QUALITY 12/20, VALUE 13/20

Hotel zur Römerbrücke

In checking out another part of town, just across the Roman Bridge, we inspected the Hotel zur Römerbrücke, which offers 45 rooms, all with shower/bath, WC, radio, telephone, minibar, and television.

The location sounds deceptively far from town. In fact, the pleasant and scenic walk across the river takes

Continued on page 6...

TRIER

Continued from page 5

only about 10 minutes. Like so many other hotels in Trier, this one was under renovation. Bathrooms are large and bright white; first floor rooms are larger and have bathtubs, the rest have showers. Room Number 101 has a balcony and double sink; Number 102 is also large with a great view of the river.

The east-facing breakfast room was drenched with morning sunlight when we arrived. A new, hip bistro next door, owned and operated by the hotel, has been open for just over six months and a local artist has adorned the walls with brightly colored murals of the Basilika, Römerbrücke, and the Porta Nigra.

Daily Rates: Singles 110 DM (\$65), doubles 160 DM (\$95)

Contact: Hotel zur Römerbrücke, Aachener Strasse 5, D-54294 Trier, tel. +49/0651/82660, fax 8266 500

Rating: QUALITY 11/20, VALUE 11/20

Restaurants

Several of Trier's fine restaurants are historical landmarks, as well as culinary attractions. French and Mediterranean dishes influence many of the menus.

Palais Kesselstatt

A few months ago, this famous venue had a change of heart. Rather than continuing to cater to an upscale crowd, it decided to target a more mainstream clientele. New managers Burkhard and Katja Weiler, who rent the palace from the Kesselstatt family, offer cuisine based on regional specialties. The result is that prices have come down, but the quality of the food and the extraordinary ambiance has not.

The restaurant is centrally located across from the southern annex of the Liebfrauenkirche. It was built by the bailiff Karl Melchior Freiherr von Kesselstatt in 1740-1745 and designed by Johann Valentin Thomann of Mainz, who is admired for having created a grand palace within a very limited space.

The original rococo interior was destroyed in 1944; today, however, the Weiler's have redecorated the restaurant's two main rooms in keeping with the Baroque style of the building. Their plan is to change the menu seasonally, with lighter fare in summer and more hearty entrees in the winter.

If you can find room for it all, the full, fixed-price menu is a recommended indulgence. We sat at a corner table next to a tall, narrow window and examined a wine list which includes a wide selection of local vintages, plus many from France and Italy.

We began with an assorted appetizer plate of seasonal Pfifferlinge mushrooms, goat cheese drizzled with a sweet oil, and minced fresh tomatoes.

A huge salad of fresh, crisp lettuce, red cabbage, tiny croutons, bacon bits, and chunks of cheese, was enough for an entire meal.

After the delicate cream soup with fresh herbs arrived, we should have called it quits. But yet to come was the entree of pork medallions in a Cognac-pepper sauce, broccoli and cauliflower laced with a cheese sauce, bacon-wrapped green beans, and homemade noodles. While we ate and ate, a background tape of classical music played through twice.

Dessert was a fantastic combination of sorbet, ice cream, and fresh fruit. The meal was, to be sure, a culinary extravaganza for us. Prices fall in the mid-to-upper range for Trier. The fixed-price menus range from about 80 to 95 DM (\$47-\$56) per person.

(Next door is the Reichsgraf von Kesselstatt, one of the largest private wine cafes in Germany, which offers more casual dining. A wine tip from the magazine *Wein Sonderheft*: the 1996 Scharzhofberger Riesling Spätlese trocken.)

Palais Kesselstatt, Liebfrauenstr. 9, Tel +49/0651/75101, fax 73316. Closed Sun.-Mon. Open 11am-2pm and 6pm-10pm. Closed in February.

Rating: QUALITY 17/20, VALUE 14/20

Schloss Monaise Bistro & Restaurant

Another stately dining experience is to be found at the Schloss Monaise, about seven kilometers north of Trier proper. Here, Birgit and Hubert Scheid, two famous local chefs, have been recruited to run a new gourmet restaurant.

Schloss Monaise (roughly translated as "the palace of my leisure") was built beginning in 1779 to serve as the summer residence of Philipp Franz Graf von Walderdorff. In 1969, the palace became a property of the city of Trier. At one time, there were plans to turn it into a museum, but the city determined it was probably too far from the city center to attract enough visitors. So in 1994 through 1996, the city spent 12 million DM to restore the palace to be used as a restaurant. And in this capacity, it is drawing quite a crowd.

Dinner (or lunch) is served in a stylish atmosphere that tastefully mixes traditional fixtures like high ceilings and hardwood floors, with more modern accents like sleek black chairs, modern art on the walls, and silver candlesticks.

The Scheid's have designed a menu with a Mediterranean flair, which, incidentally, was handwritten on an antique gold framed mirror that stood in one corner of the main dining room. They prepare appetizers like melon soup with lox, gazpacho, fettucine with Pfifferlinge mushrooms, carpaccio with green asparagus, and spring rolls served in herb sauce. And main entrees (29.50 DM/\$17.45) include salmon with Hollandaise sauce, rabbit with an olive sauce, venison and fresh mushrooms, filet mignon with béarnaise sauce, and lobster served over fettucine with cheese sauce and green asparagus.

We began with a refreshing Bellini cocktail (puree of peach mixed with *rosee Sekt* and white wine), a paté of calves tongue and wild mushrooms, and *foie gras* with pears marinated in *Eiswein* (super rich and super sweet), all served with a special homemade bread.

Next came a Mosel River specialty: sautéed monkfish in a lobster sauce. With it we chose a 1996 semi-dry Kesselstatt wine. For dessert, we kept it simple: fresh strawberries and cream. Dinner for two was 128 DM (\$76) without drinks.

The service was friendly and attentive, without being intrusive. We especially enjoyed the quick tour of the upper floor, which is reserved for special occasions. All the original ornate plaster work has been preserved, as have the original wooden floors.

The restaurant also has a more casual outdoor cafe. Excellent English is spoken. Schloss Monaise, Monaiser Strasse D-54294 Trier, tel +49/0651/828-670, fax 828-671

Rating: QUALITY 17/20, VALUE 15/20

Zum Domstein

We stopped here for lunch, seeking an outdoor terrace where we could enjoy the mid-afternoon sunshine without straying far from the center of town. The Domstein has a more formal indoor restaurant and wine cellar that serves dishes cooked according to the Roman imperial chef Apicius. Some 200 regional wines are available.

Lunch specials range from about 13 to 18 DM (\$8-\$11). We ordered a trio of potato, ham, and corn salads, served with the delicious dark bread that is so popular in Germany; and a rather standard pasta dish of spinach and egg noodles served with Bolognese sauce. Service was friendly and adequate; some English spoken.

Zum Domstein, Am Hauptmarkt 6, tel +49/0651/74490, fax 74499

Rating: QUALITY 12/20, VALUE 12/20

BEAU RIVAGE PALACE

Continued from page 1

The hotel's impressive resume includes: lush, manicured grounds spacious enough to accommodate a small, American university; a magnificent view across Lac Léman (Lake Geneva) to the Savoy Alps on the French side; three excellent, completely different restaurants; gasp-

provoking public rooms like the recently refurbished grand ballroom whose circular, flying saucer-size, stained-glass cupola was, at a cost of several hundred thousand dollars, carefully dismantled, sent to Italy for cleaning and repair, then returned to the hotel and put back in place some 50-feet above the floor; an unflappable, warm, immensely competent staff who discharge their duties without even a flicker of haughtiness; and guestrooms that remind one of home — provided, of course, home is Buckingham Palace.

But several hotels in our three countries have similar attributes. So what is it that raises the Beau Rivage above the rest? Here's one example, at the outstanding Brenner's Park in Baden-Baden we found the same menu in both the hotel's restaurants; the only difference between the two was decor and the levels of formality. The BRP, on the other hand, has three restaurants, all priced differently and all offering completely different menus.

In the end, however, what sets the Beau Rivage apart is not a longer list of amenities but a feeling that can't be quantified. It is a place that oozes the very best of Switzerland, a country which trains future hoteliers. Throughout is a sense of serenity, of authentic elegance and the feeling that all is organized, under control and in perfect working order; and, if by some fluke it stops being that way, someone will fix it...quickly.

For most of us, the Beau Rivage is a once or twice in a lifetime experience. After all, this winter you will be able to fly roundtrip from New York to Europe for less than the cost for one night in one of the Palace's better double rooms. (At the hotel at

least you'll be going first-class, even if you choose one of their lowest priced rooms.)

Expensive? A regular room is 395 Sfr. (\$284), a lake view room 495 Sfr. (\$356), but the memories could be worth it: breakfast on your private terrace overlooking the lake; lunch in La Rotonde with a view of the garden, or in good weather, lunch in the garden at Piscine Beau Rivage; tastes of the world's greatest wines in the hotel's classy little Wine Bar; dinner in the lively, French-style bistro, Beau Rivage Cafe; a nightcap in the clubby, leather-chaired, dark wood-paneled English Bar, then to a sound sleep while lake breezes slip into your room through tall French doors. Between times you might try to squeeze in a few walks by the lake or a visit to the Olympic Museum,

which can be reached on foot via a special path from the hotel.

Of course, the Beau Rivage offers all the five-star amenities: indoor-outdoor pool, tennis courts, hair stylists, fitness facilities, exclusive little shops, the three restaurants and the Bar Anglaise.

The hotel offers a three-night package that includes lake view accommodations, one dinner at Café Beau Rivage and one at La Rotonde, flowers and fruit basket in the room, half-bottle of champagne, buffet breakfast, and entrance to the Olympic Museum for 1725 Sfr. (\$1241) for two persons and 1290 (\$928) for one person.

Maybe this writer saw too many 50s and 60s movies with European "Grand Hotel" settings starring Fred Astaire, Cary Grant and Audrey Hepburn, but every couple of years there needs to be a European luxury hotel fix. The Beau Rivage fills the

Continued on page 8...

Special Gemütlichkeit Rates

The Beau Rivage Palace has agreed to offer *Gemütlichkeit* readers a 20% discount on regular rooms and a 10% discount for lake-view rooms. Reservations must be made through the hotel directly (not their toll-free U.S. 800 number and not through a travel agent). Please state that you are a *Gemütlichkeit* subscriber. This program is on a request basis (meaning if the hotel is at or near capacity the discount may not be available) and valid from November through March, excluding Christmas/New Year.

The German Railway System

The Deutsche Bahn AG (DB) operates a route network of approximately 40,000 km (24,800 miles), of which some 17,000 (10,500 miles) are electrified. More than 33,000 trains (including 1,200 long-distance trains) transport more than 4 million passengers per day.

Trains

Long-distance and local systems are coordinated, providing close connections. The major intercontinental airports in Germany (Berlin-Schönefeld, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Munich and Stuttgart) are also integrated in this system.

With a top speed of 280 km/h (174 mph) the InterCityExpress (ICE) trains set new standards in high-speed-transportation within Germany. Each train has a restaurant car where travelers can choose between a traditional restaurant or a self-service bistro section.

Domestic InterCity (IC) trains complete the long-distance network on 8 lines mostly at hourly intervals. International EuroCity (EC) trains

Train Talk

are integrated in this system and link Germany to neighboring countries on more than 60 connections.

InterRegio (IR) trains link regional centers of Germany at two-hour intervals and provide excellent connections from and to the IC/ICE/EC network. IR trains serve famous tourist destinations such as the Black Forest, the Bodensee, the Bavarian Alps and places on the North and Baltic Sea. IR trains have special seats for small children and space for at least eight bikes (bike compartment reservations mandatory). The IR Bistro Café car serves light fare and beverages, including beer on tap.

Train Info In Germany

Call 19 4 19 (preceded by local area code) for train information, reservations and to order tickets.

Porters/Luggage Cars

In major German train stations


porters are available and are recognized by their red caps and sweat shirts. The first 2 pieces of luggage cost about \$3 and additional pieces are about \$1.50. Luggage carts are available with 1 or 2 DM coins.

Luggage Delivery/KurierGepäck

Next working day, door-to-door luggage delivery is available via a special carrier. KurierGepäck tickets are available at DB ticket windows and DB travel agencies. Phone 0180133 20 5 20 in Germany to arrange for pickup of luggage. Delivery within Germany is usually the next working day.

PostGepäck

This service uses the postal system to deliver luggage within Germany.

PostGepäck tickets are only available at DB stations or DB travel agencies. The luggage is to be checked at one of 18,000 German post offices. Depending on the distance, luggage is delivered to the desired address on the next working day or at least on the second working day. 

BEAU RIVAGE PALACE

Continued from page 7

bill better than anyplace else.

Daily Rates: Singles 340 to 550 Sfr. (\$245-\$396), doubles 395 to 650 Sfr. (\$284-\$467), junior suites from 810 (\$583), suites from 1650 Sfr. (\$1187). Breakfast is 32 Sfr. (\$23). See special subscriber prices on page 7.

Contact: Beau Rivage Palace, CH-1000 Lausanne-Ouchy 6, tel. +41/021/613 3333, fax 613 3334. Book from the U.S. at 800-223-6800.

Rating: QUALITY 19.5/20

Europe Travel Digest

■ The 15th annual **Schubertiade** is scheduled for Vienna's Musikverein from November 19-24, and the 13th **Mozart Festival** is at the Vienna

Konzerthaus from December 1-21.

Highlights of the **Vienna State Opera** in November include: Nov. 1, *La Boheme*; Nov. 10, *Tosca*; Nov. 13, *Madama Butterfly*; Nov. 28, *Fidelio* and Nov. 29, *Das Rheingold*. The Staatsoper performs virtually every night throughout the fall, winter and spring. For complete list of performances see the website: austria-tourism.at/events.html.

■ Cologne continues the 750th anniversary of its **Gothic Cathedral** with an exhibition entitled "Celestial Light - Gothic Glass Painting 1248 to 1350" by the Schnütgen Museum, November 19 through March 7, 1999.

■ The **Golden Pass Route**, one of Switzerland's famous scenic train journeys, has been packaged with three recommended itineraries ranging from 4 to 7 days.

One of them is from Zürich to Lucerne (overnight), to Interlaken

(overnight), to the Jungfrauoch, to Montreux (overnight) and Geneva, aboard the Crystal Panoramic Express. Costs range from 688 to 1,263 Sfr. (\$495-\$909) depending on the season and grade of hotel selected.

Price includes first-class rail travel, accommodations, breakfast, excursion to Jungfrauoch and Golden Pass documentation. The reduction for Swiss Pass or Swiss Card holders is 120 Sfr. (\$86).

For a brochure including a list of partner hotels and a timetable, phone +41/33/828 32 32; fax 828 32 39; email: jungfrautours@tcnet.ch.

■ **Swissair's Eurohopper** fare offers travel among 90 European cities for \$130 per flight. To qualify one must: fly from the U.S. on Swissair; purchase a minimum of three and a maximum of eight flight segments; and complete the travel within a two-month period. Contact Swissair at 800-221-4750. 