

DEAR
SUBSCRIBER

December 23, 1998

Reasons to Like Us

In my completely unbiased opinion, the two best things *Gemütlichkeit* has going for it are firsthand reporting and timeliness. All of our hotel and restaurant evaluations are based on personal visits, most of which have taken place only a couple of weeks to a few months before you read about them.

Last year, in compiling the information contained in this year's first 11 issues, *Gemütlichkeit* reporters made a total of six trips to Germany, Austria, Switzerland. In addition to our own two trips, the team of Roger Holliday and Claudia Fischer were also there twice, as was Nikki Goth Itoi.

This, I think, is what sets us apart from guidebooks which have copy deadlines many months ahead of their publication dates. Guidebooks are necessary. We use them all the time; but only Michelin, in its *Red Guides*, claims to visit every establishment it lists, every year. It is well-known in the travel publishing industry that several high-profile, U.S.-based guidebooks carry listings and descriptions of hotels and restaurants their writers have never visited.

If I say so myself, this makes our annual year-end issue especially useful. Contained within our eight pages this month, is a distillation of the best the five of us have seen and experienced in a year's time in two trips each.

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Gemütlichkeit Has Moved

Our new address is:
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GEMÜTLICHKEIT

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

THE BEST OF '98

Gemütlichkeit's 12th year ends with our usual review of the best of the past 11 months. Establishment names are numbered and located on the map on page three.

This issue marks the end of 12 years for *Gemütlichkeit*. In each of the previous 11 years we have devoted most of our December issue to a review of what impressed us most during the past year: the best, the worst, the best values, the friendliest, sometimes even the weirdest.

What we always look for are those hotels, restaurants, and other places where one finds just a little extra in the way of hospitality and warmth.

In 1998, our five reporters (see *Dear Subscriber*) saw Mayrhofen, Lienz, Vienna, and the Tirolean countryside in Austria; Berlin, Göttingen, Lindau, Würzburg, and the Mosel and Ahr valleys in Germany; and Bern, Locarno, Pontresina, and Lausanne in Switzerland. There was also a report on Strasbourg in France.

So again this month, we highlight the places we recommend most highly from those visited during the past year.

TOP HOTELS

"Hotel of the Year" Schlosshotel Vier Jahreszeiten (#9) Berlin, Germany

The photo at the wire for the *Gemütlichkeit's* "Hotel of the Year," involving the Schlosshotel and Lausanne's Beau Rivage Palace, showed a dead heat. But, since the Beau Rivage has been reviewed twice before, the nod goes to the German entry.

Many believe the Schlosshotel Vier Jahreszeiten to be Germany's best hotel. We won't argue. Built early this century in Berlin's Grunewald section for Kaiser Wilhelm's personal attorney, the house has since had a series of owners, was abused in two world wars, and finally wound up in the 70s and 80s as an unpretentious small hotel. But

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Vienna Plays Strauss in '99

If one of your life's dreams is to see Johann Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* (The Bat) performed in Vienna, this is the year.

You see, Strauss, who also composed Austria's unofficial national anthem, *The Blue Danube*, died in 1899, a hundred years ago. This, of course, means a series of concerts, balls, operettas, and exhibitions in 1999 devoted to the Waltz King's memory.

Die Fledermaus, a New Year's Eve-New Year's Day tradition in Vienna

for decades, will be performed repeatedly in 1999 by all of the city's opera companies. The **Vienna Kammeroper** alone is offering it almost nightly through February 13. It can also be seen at **Theater an der Wien** and, naturally, at both the **State Opera** and the **Volksoper**.

Strauss's other familiar operettas, such as *Der Zigeunerbaron* (Gypsy Baron), and *Wiener Blut* (Viennese Blood), will also be reprised.

Carnival season offers the oppor-

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DEAR SUBSCRIBER

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You may be interested in the qualifications of the five *Gemütlichkeit* writers you rely on for travel advice:

- Roger Holliday and Claudia Fischer are a husband and wife team who, for as long as we've known them — 13 years — have written a weekly travel column which is syndicated to daily newspapers in the Midwest. They also lead at least four international tours per year, mostly to Europe. When their clients have gone home, Roger and Claudia usually take a few extra days to roundup stories for *Gemütlichkeit*. In his youth, Roger worked in public relations for the Porsche factory in Stuttgart. He is fluent in German.

- Nikki Goth Itoi is senior editor of a San Francisco-based high-tech magazine whose duties frequently take her to Europe. She, too, sets aside a few days after business is over to free-lance for *Gemütlichkeit*.

- Prior to launching *Gemütlichkeit* in late 1986, Bob and Liz Bestor had vacationed in Europe about a dozen times. Since then, those vacations have become two to three times per year business trips.

The point being; there are some fairly experienced eyes, ears, noses, and palates out there seeing, feeling, hearing, sniffing, and tasting what's good and not so good about traveling in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

For '99? Liz and I head for Europe on January 3; Nikki will be in northern Germany at the end of February, and Roger and Claudia go in the spring. And that's just the first quarter.

Local Color

Along the way in 1998 we encountered a few places that don't seem to fit in any of our "best" categories but which you might like knowing about.

- For local color in Seefeld, Austria, try the **Milchhof** on Münchnerstrasse. The beer is Puntigamer and the clientele earthy; many grizzled characters in Tirolean dress, but *very* smoky.

- **Hall in Tirol**, near Innsbruck, is a very old town full of picturesque streets and buildings. Stop for refreshment at **Anisbrau**, Schlossergasse 15, a brewery from 1700 to 1900 and now a well-worn restaurant-bar with vaulted ceilings and wood wainscoting. Inexpensive.

- Music fans should not miss **Ewige Lampe**, a little hole-in-the-wall bar-jazz/blues club in Berlin's Savignyplatz neighborhood. Over two nights we saw tremendously entertaining blues and New Orleans-style jazz bands. Very friendly folks — employees *and* patrons — and inexpensive. Can't wait to go back.

Ewige Lampe, Niebuhrstr. 11a, tel./fax +49/030/324 3918.

- A few train routes stand out: Chur to Samedan in Switzerland;

Innsbruck to Zürich; Locarno, Switzerland, to Domodossola in Italy; and any ICE train in Germany.

- A few places didn't measure up: the restaurant at Innsbruck's **Schwarzer Adler Hotel**; **La Croix d'Ouchy** in Lausanne, a restaurant we liked in 1991, failed us in '98; and room Number 14 at the **Brauereigasthof Aying** in Aying near Munich (the restaurant, however, was very good, it's just some of the guestrooms that need sprucing up).

Favorite Things

For us, 1998 was a very good year of travel. Here are five things I will remember most.

1. Ewige Lampe.

2. Berlin's **Art Nouveau Hotel**, easily the year's best big city hotel discovery.

3. The food at the **Hotel Saratz** in Pontresina.

4. The extraordinary graciousness of Jacqueline Kaderli, director of Bern's **Innere Enge Hotel**.

5. Vienna's **Beograd** restaurant and the talented customer who got up and sang *Summertime*.

Wrapping Up

This is our 144th issue, the end of 12 years. I continue to be amazed at how many of you have been around since that first year, 1987.

But whether this is your 144th or very first *Gemütlichkeit*, you have our most sincere thanks for allowing us to be advisors to your travels.

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GEMÜTLICHKEIT

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

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HOTEL RESTAURANT RATING KEY

Rating Scale	Scale	Restaurant Criteria	
Excellent	16 - 20	Food	65%
Above Average	12 - 15	Service	20%
Average	8 - 11	Atmosphere	15%
Adequate	4 - 7		
Unacceptable	0 - 3		
Hotel Rating Criteria		Value Rating	Scale
People/Service	30%	Outstanding Value	17 - 20
Location/Setting	15%	Very Good Value	12 - 16
Guestrooms	30%	Average Value	9 - 11
Public rooms	5%	Below Average Value	5 - 8
Facilities/Restaurant	20%	A Rip-Off	0 - 4

Special Designation

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

enter German designer Karl Lagerfeld, backed by steamer trunks full of deutschemarks (nearly \$600,000 per guest room was spent), and you have another of what this city is all about these days; a miraculous transformation.

Schlosshotel (now marketed by Ritz Carlton) has it all: gated, walled grounds, precious works of art, eye-popping public rooms, sumptuous guest rooms. Disregard what you hear about the Adlon; in Berlin, Schlosshotel Vier Jahreszeiten is Numbah one, baby.

Daily Rates: Singles 545 to 675 DM (\$326-\$404), doubles 595 to 725 DM (\$356-\$434)

Contact: Schlosshotel Vier Jahreszeiten, Brahmsstrasse 10, D-14193 Berlin, tel. +49/030/895 840, fax 8958 4800

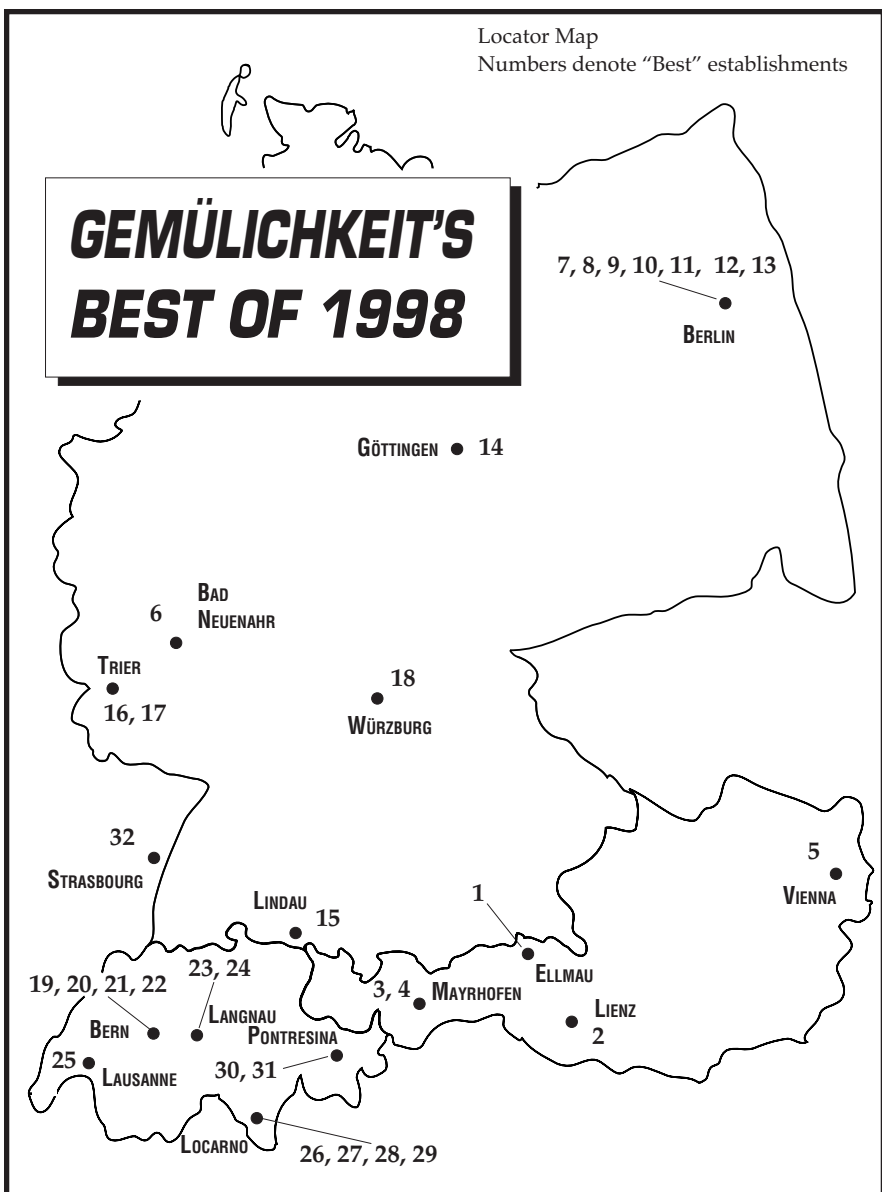
Rating: Quality 19.5/20, Value 13/20

**Beau Rivage Palace (#25)
Lausanne, Switzerland**

We sometimes foolishly use words like "elegant" and "luxurious" when describing very good — or even better than very good — hotels. But that gets us into a bind when it comes to the genuine article. So let's put it this way, as far as *Gemütlichkeit* is concerned, in Germany, Austria or Switzerland, they don't get any posher or more luxurious than the Beau Rivage Palace. Like the Schlosshotel Vier Jahreszeiten, the BRP has the whole package: lush grounds, great guest rooms, fabulous public areas. Except, with 174 rooms vs. the Schlosshotel's 52, its a bigger package; grander ballrooms, more acreage, multiple restaurants, etc.

While we're at it, we will repeat again the BRP's special rate for *Gemütlichkeit* readers. From now through March 31, you get a 20% discount on regular rooms and 10% off lake-view rooms. *Book directly with the hotel.* Do not reserve through a travel agent or via the hotel's toll-free U.S. reservation number. When calling or faxing, mention you are a *Gemütlichkeit* subscriber.

Daily Rates: Singles 340 to 550 Sfr.



(\$250-\$404), doubles 395 to 650 Sfr. (\$290-\$478), junior suites from 810 (\$601), suites from 1650 Sfr. (\$1213). Breakfast is 32 Sfr. (\$24).

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, Value 13/20

**Hotel Innere Enge (#21)
Bern, Switzerland**

A hotel dedicated to hospitable service and music. In addition to high quality furnishings and decor, all rooms display pieces from the hotel owners' collection of jazz memorabilia, be it a Dizzy Gillespie

hologram or a framed letter written by Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong (Room Number one). The hotel has a basement jazz club that books first-rate talent.

At Innere Enge, now just six years old, manager Jacqueline Kadlerli, ensures you'll get an extraordinarily warm welcome plus Bern's best combination of hospitality, charm, guestroom comfort, and value. Ten minutes from the city center by public transport or a 25-minute walk.

Daily Rates: Singles 140 to 210 Sfr. (\$103-\$154), doubles 200 to 270 Sfr. (\$147-\$199)

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GÖTTINGEN

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Contact: Innere Enge, Engestrasse 54, CH-3012, tel. +41/31/3096111, 3096112

Rating: Quality 17/20, Value 13/20

Belle Epoque (#22) Bern, Switzerland

The theme at this tiny, rather unique hotel in Bern's old town is *Jugendstil* (a.k.a. Art Nouveau or Secessionist), a style that became popular around the turn of the century — the "Belle Epoque." Public and guest rooms are liberally endowed with Marina and Dr. Philippe D. Ledermann-Puigventós's magnificent collection of *Jugendstil* art and antiques. The tiny bar displays an original Toulouse Lautrec poster.

Rooms are small but beautifully done.

Daily Rates: Singles 165 to 200 Sfr. (\$121-\$147), doubles 220 to 285 Sfr. (\$162-\$210)

Contact: Belle Epoque-Garni, Gerechtigkeitsgasse 18, CH-3011, tel. +41/31/311 43 36, fax 311 39 36

Rating: Quality 15/20, Value 11/20

Hotel Saratz (#30) Pontresina, Switzerland

The laid-back, rejuvenated Saratz impressed us with its caring, friendly staff, contrasting architectural styles (Victorian and 1990s Art Nouveau), excellent food in both restaurants, and a breezy, un-stuffy ambience. Most guestrooms have fine mountain views and one could sit all day in front of the fireplace in the wide-open, halogen-lit, wood, slate and stone salon-bar. We prefer the new wing.

The Saratz deserves also to be on our "value hotels" list.

Pontresina, as you may know, has loads more charm than its famous, very-near neighbor, St. Moritz.

Daily Rates: Singles 110 to 178 Sfr. (\$81-\$131), doubles 180 to 318 Sfr. (\$132-\$234). Breakfast included.

Contact: Hotel Saratz, Via Maistra, CH-7504 Pontresina, tel. +41/081/

839 4000, fax 839 4040. email: saratz@alpineclassics.ch. Proprietor: Adrian Stalder

Rating: Quality 16/20, Value 13/20

Hotel Orselina (#27) Locarno, Switzerland

The genteel, understated manner of its owner, Alberto Amstutz, sets the tone at Orselina. First impressions are very good but not overwhelming. But once in your room you catch your breath at the stunning view of lake and mountains. And, as the hours — and days, if you're lucky — wear on, the Orselina begins to grow on you. At the end of your stay, you realize you've experienced one of Switzerland's finest hotels.

Magnificent hillside location, beautiful gardens and grounds, fine restaurant, comfortable guestrooms, and, most of all, the warm hospitality, qualify the Orselina for our list of 1998 "best" hotels.

Daily Rates: Singles 180 Sfr. (\$132), doubles 310 to 362 Sfr. (\$228-\$266), suite 452 Sfr. (\$332). For half board add 24 Sfr. (\$18) per day. Parking in garage 10 Sfr. (\$7), covered lot, 7 Sfr. (\$5), outdoor 4.50 Sfr. (\$3).

Contact: Hotel Orselina, CH-6644 Orselina, tel. +41/091/735 44 44, fax 735 44 66, email: hotel@orselina.com

Rating: Quality 18/20 Value 12/20

Klosterschenke (#16) Trier, Germany

An 800 year-old former monastery whose 11 lovely rooms feature high ceilings, hardwood floors, exposed beams, and ornate moldings. Just south of Trier. A wonderful bargain.

Daily Rates: Singles 100 DM (\$60), doubles 165 DM (\$99). Closed January.

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

Rating: Quality 17/20, Value 15/20

VALUE HOTELS

Haidenhof Gasthof Hotel (#2) Lienz, Austria

In Lienz, south of Austria's famed Grossglockner, is this comfortable,

family-operated hotel with views of the Dolomites .

Daily Rates: Singles 470 to 625 AS (\$40-\$53), doubles 940 to 1250 AS (\$80-\$106).

Contact: Haidenhof Gasthof Hotel, Grafendorfstrasse 12, A-9900 Lienz, tel. +43/04852/62440 fax 62440-6. Proprietor: Kreissl family

Rating: Quality 14/20, Value 16/20

Gästehaus Martha (#4) Mayrhofen, Austria

Nine immaculately-maintained, newly-decorated rooms — some with great valley views — in the Tirolean resort of Mayrhofen in Austria's Ziller Valley. Extraordinary bargain.

Daily Rates: Singles 260 to 310 AS (\$22-\$26), doubles 520 to 620 AS (\$44-\$53)

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

Rating: Quality 13/20, Value 17/20

Art Nouveau Hotel-Pension Berlin, Germany (#10)

Great Berlin bargain in a very desirable neighborhood. Nicely decorated, large, high-ceilinged rooms.

Daily Rates: Singles 155 DM (\$93), doubles 180 DM (\$108), suite 210 DM (\$126). Prices are about 20% higher during trade fairs and conventions.

Contact: Art Nouveau, Leibnizstr. 59, D-10629 Berlin, tel. +49/030/327 7440, fax 327 744 40.

Rating: Quality 16/20, Value 16/20

Luisenhof (#11) Berlin, Germany

Elegant townhouse near Berlin's *Mitte* (east Berlin). Special weekend rates.

Daily Rates: Singles 175 to 290 DM (\$105-\$174), doubles 210 to 290 DM (\$126-\$174). Weekends 175 DM (\$105) single, 185 DM (\$111) double.

Contact: Hotel Luisenhof, Köpenicker Strasse 92, 10179 Berlin (Berlin-Mitte), tel. +49/030/2415906, fax 2792983

Rating: Quality 17/20, Value 15/20

**Domus (#12)
Berlin, Germany**

Excellent-located, business-oriented hotel only five minutes' walk from Ku'damm; one of western Berlin's better values.

Daily Rates: Singles 139 to 165 DM (\$83-\$99), doubles 198 to 265 DM (\$119-\$159).

Contact: Hotel Domus, Uhlandstrasse 49, 10719 Berlin, (Berlin-Wilmersdorf), tel. +49/030/8803440, fax 88034444

Rating: Quality 14/20, Value 15/20

**Gendarm (#13)
Berlin, Germany**

Best east Berlin location on Gendarmenmarkt. Let's hope prices stay low after planned exterior refurbishment. Try rooms 37 or 33.

Daily Rates: Singles 140 to 160 DM (\$84-\$96), doubles 150 to 180 DM (\$90-\$108), suites 200 DM (\$120)

Contact: Hotel Gendarm, Charlottenstrasse 60, 10117 Berlin, (Berlin-Mitte), tel. +49/030/2044626, fax 2082482

Rating: Quality 13/20, Value 16/20

**Stadt Hannover (#14)
Göttingen, Germany**

Hospitable, comfortable and only a 2-3 minute walk from main rail station in university town of Göttingen.

Daily Rates: Singles 98 to 128 DM (\$59-\$77), doubles 145 to 185 DM (\$87-\$111).

Contact: Goethe-Allee 21, D-37073 Göttingen, tel +49/0551/45957, fax 45470.

Rating: Quality 14/20, Value 15/20

**Hotel Petrisberg (#17)
Trier, Germany**

Longtime *Gemütlichkeit* favorite in an idyllic setting on a hill above Trier. Brothers Helmut and Wolfgang Pantenberg personify hospitality.

Daily Rates: Singles 100 to 110 DM (\$60-\$66), doubles 150-180 DM (\$90-\$108). 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

**Gasthaus Stadt Mainz (#18)
Würzburg, Germany**

Very special Würzburg hotel and restaurant warmly and efficiently run by the hospitable Schwarzmann family. Ask for room Number Six.

Daily Rates: 130 to 190 DM (\$78-\$114)

Contact: Gasthaus Stadt Mainz, Semmelstr. 39, D-97070 Würzburg, tel. +49/0931/53155, fax 58510.

Rating: Quality 14/20, Value 15/20

**Cittadella (#28)
Locarno, Switzerland**

Popular old-town restaurant with a few clean, comfortable rooms with private bath. No lift.

Daily Rates: Singles 60 to 100 Sfr. (\$44-\$74), doubles 100 to 150 Sfr. (\$74-\$110)

Contact: Hotel-Ristorante Cittadella, Via Cittadella 18, CH-6600 Locarno, tel. +41/091/751 58 85, fax 751 77 59

Rating: Quality 10/20, Value 13/20

**Villa Pauliska (#29)
Locarno, Switzerland**

Beautifully restored hillside villa with four open, airy guestrooms with high ceilings, tall windows, hardwood floors and pleasant bathrooms. Breakfast is not available, however.

Daily Rates: Singles 60 to 80 Sfr. (\$44-\$59), doubles 100 to 150 Sfr. (\$74-\$110).

Contact: Villa Pauliska, Via Orselina 6, CH-6600 Locarno-Muralto, tel. +41 091 743 05 41

Rating: Quality 14/20, Value 16/20

**Hirschen (#23)
Langnau, Switzerland**

Charming, authentic country hotel in Switzerland's Emmental region between Bern and Lucerne. Very good kitchen. Handy for train travelers.

Daily Rates: Singles 80 to 95 Sfr. (\$59-\$70), doubles 130 to 160 Sfr. (\$96-\$118)

Contact: Hotel Hirschen, Dorfstrasse

17, CH-3550 Langnau, +41/034/402 1517, fax 402 5623. Proprietors: Hedy and Urs Weyerermann, Urs Messerli.

Rating: Quality 13/20, Value 15/20

**Ostello Palagiovani (#26)
Locarno, Switzerland**

Spic and span hostel at the edge of Locarno's old town. Several rooms with private bath for two, three and four persons. Professional and friendly.

Daily Rates: Singles 52 to 77 Sfr. (\$38-\$57), doubles 74 to 84 Sfr. (\$54-\$62). Lunch and dinner 11 Sfr. (\$8) extra. Bicycle rentals per day 12 Sfr. (\$9), half-day 8 Sfr. (\$6).

Contact: Ostello Palagiovani, Via Varenna 18, CH-6600 Locarno, tel. +41/091/756 15 00, fax 756 15 01

Rating: Quality 10/20, Value 15/20

We saw two Swiss vacation rentals that belong on our list of "value" accommodations.

**Beck Haus (#24)
Signau, Switzerland**

First floor flat in 200-year-old house in the hamlet of Signau in the Swiss Emmental near Langnau. Kitchen, sitting room, two to three bedrooms, and balcony. Three-minute walk to rail station.

Weekly Rate: 315 Sfr. (\$232)

Contact: Beck Haus, Dorfstrasse 45, CH-3534 Signau, tel. +4/034/497 1344. Proprietor: Familie Beck

Rating: Quality 13/20, Value 16/20

**Chesa Nouva (#31)
Pontresina, Switzerland**

Centrally located, sunny, modern apartment in Swiss resort of Pontresina, perfect for two persons.

Weekly Rate: 840 Sfr. (\$617).

Contact: Chesa Nouva, Chesa Miramunt, CH-7504 Pontresina, tel. +41/081/842 7844. Proprietor: G. Gredig.

Rating: Quality 15/20, Value 13/20

Coming Attractions

Vaduz • Salzburg
Heidelberg

TOP RESTAURANTS

(Restaurant price key: INX = Inexpensive (\$10-\$20 per person without beverages); MOD = Moderately priced (\$20-\$35 per person); EXP = Expensive (\$35-\$50 per person); VEXP = Very Expensive (Over \$50 per person).

Hotel der Bär (#1) Ellmau, Austria

Creative Austrian cuisine in a rustically elegant dining room with splendid views. Perhaps the best half-board dinner we've ever had.

Hotel der Bär, A-6352 Ellmau, Tirol, Austria, telephone 53 58/23 95, fax 53 58/23 95-56. EXP

Rating: Quality 17/20, Value 14/20

Wirtshaus zum Griena (#3) Mayrhofen, Austria

A cozy, kitschy, 400 year-old farm house specializing in hearty Austrian comfort food. Located near Mayrhofen's second gondola, the Ahorn-Seilbahn. Try *Blutwuchtreaschtl*, blood sausage and pan-fried diced potatoes baked until crusty in an iron skillet.

Wirtshaus zum Griena, Dorf Haus 768, tel +43 5285/62 778. Reservations. INX-MOD.

Rating: Quality: 16/20, Value: 16/20

Restaurant Beograd (#5) Vienna, Austria

Most Vienna live music spots are touristy. Not this one. Authentic old-world music, food and atmosphere at hard-to-believe prices. Violin, piano, occasionally an accordionist, every night at 8pm. Don't miss the Balkan appetizer plate, plenty for two persons, at about \$6. Near Vienna's Naschmarkt.

Restaurant Beograd, Schikaneder-gasse 7, tel. +43/01/587 7444, INX

Rating: Quality 13/98, Value 17/98

Die Möwe (#7) Berlin, Germany

A dress-up place with affordable prices for very good food in Berlin's *Mitte* near the Memorial to the Victims of Fascism. Soft lighting, red banquettes, white tablecloths, tall windows, huge mirrors, and a pia-

nist. Lamb and game dishes recommended

Die Möwe, Am Festungsgraben 1, D-10117 Berlin, tel. +49/030/201 2039, fax 201 2081. Reservations. MOD

Rating: Quality 14/20, Value 14/20

Spree Athen (#8) Berlin, Germany

Old-Berlin atmosphere, cabaret-style entertainment (female vocalist and pianist performing prewar Berlin songs), and above average food combine to make the Spree Athen a must. Just off the Ku' damm in the Savignyplatz neighborhood.

Spree Athen, Leibnizstrasse 60, D-10629 Berlin, tel. +49/030/324-1733. Reserve ahead. MOD-EXP

Rating: Quality 12/20, Value 12/20

Rest.-Weinstube Frey (#15) Lindau, Germany

A first floor, 16th-century wine tavern overlooking the town's main pedestrian shopping street. Wood paneling, cushioned benches, ceramic stove, and leaded glass windows. Speciality: whitefish from the Bodensee.

Restaurant-Weinstube Frey, Maximilianstrasse 15, 88131 Lindau-Insel, tel 0 83 82-52 78, fax 0 83 82-47-18. No credit cards. MOD.

Rating: Quality 16/20, Value 17/20

Restaurant Idille (#6) Bad Neuenahr, Germany

Worn pine floors, crisp white walls, fresh flowers, an open kitchen, fine views and perhaps a dozen tables. Refined, French-influenced cuisine prepared with skill, care and the freshest ingredients. Big wine list. In a residential area above the town. Splendid desserts.

Restaurant Idille, Am Johannisberg 101, D-53474 Bad Neuenahr, Tel +49-2641-28429, Fax +49-2641-25009. No credit cards. MOD-EXP

Rating: Quality 17/20, Value 12/20

Lorenzini (#19) Bern, Switzerland

Excellent Northern Italian dishes in a lively, chic, but informal room. House-made pastas and, in November-December, risotto liberally sprinkled with white truffles.

Lorenzini, Theaterplatz 5, CH-3011, tel. +41/31/311 7850. MOD-EXP

Rating: Quality 16/20, Value 13/20

Zimmermania (#20) Bern, Switzerland

Welcoming French-style bistro deep in Bern's old town. Specialities include house-made sausages and Choucroute (Alsatian sauerkraut dish with various meats). Good cheese cart. Rich sauces, large portions.

Restaurant Zimmermania, Brunnngasse 19, CH-3011, tel. +41/31/311 1542, fax 312 2822. MOD-EXP

Rating: Quality 13/20, Value 10/20

Hotel Hirschen (#23) Langnau, Switzerland

Refined Swiss country cuisine at this out-of-the way Emmental inn. Bring a big appetite and be sure to order the *Rösti*. Marvelous wine selection.

Hotel Hirschen, Dorfstrasse 17, CH-3550, +41/034/402 1517, fax 402 5623. MOD-EXP

Rating: Quality 15/20, Value 12/20

Villa Pauliska (#26) Locarno, Switzerland

Dine relaxed by stylishly in one of two rooms in this graceful, turn-of-the-century Italianate villa. At 51 Sfr. (\$38), the fixed-price, five-course, dinner represents one of the best Switzerland restaurant values we've seen in some time.

Villa Pauliska, Via Orselina 6, CH-6600 Locarno-Muralto, tel. +41 091 743 05 41 MOD

Rating: Quality 16/20, Value 15/20

Hotel Saratz (#30) Pontresina, Switzerland

Not your standard Swiss country fare; instead, lighter more adventurous dishes. For example, instead of Scaloppine in the usual rich sauce, it was served only with pan juices in a mixture of fresh greens, red and yellow peppers, and a handful of tiny, flavorful, wild mushrooms. Or chunks of lamb filet folded into rucola greens, with intensely-flavored cherry tomato chunks and paper thin slices of Parmesan. Pilsner Urquell on draft.

Hotel Saratz, Via Maistra, CH-7504 Pontresina, tel. +41/081/839 4000, fax 839 4040. MOD

Rating: Quality 16/20, Value 15/20

La Petite Ecurie (#32) Strasbourg, France

Well-prepared bistro food in a charming, but unstudied atmosphere. The lively "scene" is almost as good as the food. Go after 9pm for the best people watching. At about \$13 each, leg of lamb and duck breast are worth every penny.

La Petite Ecurie, 8 rue de l'Ecurie, Strasbourg, tel. 88 23 06 22 INX-MOD

Rating: Quality 15/20, Value 16/20

STRAUSS

Continued from page 1

tunity to dance to Strauss waltzes at some 300 balls.

Hearing Strauss melodies is not restricted to the prestigious (and rather pricey) **Musikverein** and **Konzerthaus**, but also at other venues such as the **Kursalon** in the **Stadtpark** where the Strauss family performed in their heyday; at **Vienna Boys' Choir** concerts, and even on Danube cruises.

In addition, all of Strauss's 550 works (printed music and original scores), his organ, baton, paintings of the him, and photos not previously seen in public, will be on display at the "Johann Strauss" exhibition at the **Historical Museum of the City of Vienna** from 6 May to 26 September. The **Theater Museum** will also stage a Strauss exhibition from May to October, featuring all his stage works.

For schedules and info contact the Austrian Tourist Office, P.O. Box 1142, New York, N.Y. 10108-1142, tel. 212-944-6880, 212-730-4568, email: antony@ix.netcom.com.

Vienna Performance Tickets

TICKET OFFICES for Austrian Federal Theatres (Vienna State Opera, Volksoper, Burgtheater, Akademietheater): Österreichischer Bundestheaterverband / Bundestheaterkassen, Hanuschgasse 3, 1010 Vienna, telephone/information:

+43/1/51444/2960; Volksoper, Währingerstrasse 78, 1090 Vienna, telephone: +43/1/51444/3318; Burgtheater, Dr.-Karl-Lueger-Ring 2, 1010 Vienna, tel.: +43/1/51444/2218.

OPENING HOURS: Mon. to Fri.: 8am to 6pm; Sat., Sun. and holidays: 9am to 12 noon; the first Saturday of each month and on Saturdays during Advent: 9am to 5pm.

INFORMATION OFFICE IN THE ARCADES at the Vienna State Opera, Herbert von Karajan-Platz, 1010 Vienna: advance ticket sales and information on the Vienna State Opera and Volksoper. Hours: Monday to Friday: 10am until one hour before the performance starts; Saturday 10am to 12 noon; the first Saturday of each month and on Saturdays during Advent: 10am to 5pm. Closed on Sundays and holidays.

TICKET SALES for the Vienna State Opera and Volksoper normally start one month before the date of the performance (e.g. on September 1st for October 1st, on September 2nd for October 2nd, on September 30th for October 30th and October 31st. Tickets for performances from September 1st to 30th are sold on the corresponding day from June 1st to June 30th. Ticket sales for Burgtheater and Akademietheater normally start on the 20th of each month for the whole following month (e.g. on August 20th for all the performances in the month of September).

Tickets for standing room at the Vienna State Opera, Burgtheater and Akademietheater are sold only at the evening box office. Tickets for standing room at the Volksoper may be booked beforehand from the same day that advance ticket sales start. Evening box offices open one hour before the performance starts.

WRITTEN REQUESTS FOR TICKETS for the Vienna State Opera and Volksoper from other Austrian provinces and from abroad must reach the Österreichischer Bundestheaterverband / Bestellbüro (ticket office), Hanuschgasse 3, A-1010 Vienna, no later than three weeks, for Burgtheater and Akademietheater no later than two weeks, before the date of the performance.

TELEPHONE TICKET SALES are available worldwide for credit card holders (American Express, Diners Club, Visa, MasterCard, Eurocard and JCB Card). Phone Vienna +43/1/513 1 513 Monday to Friday: 10am to 6pm, Saturday, Sunday and holidays 10am to 12 noon; the first Saturday of each month and on Saturdays during Advent 10am to 5pm. Telephone ticket sales start the day after ticket offices open for reservations.

READERS' FORUM

Hotel Feedback

Having just returned from a *Gemütlichkeit*-induced trip to Europe, I thought you might like some feedback.

Lienz, Austria and the **Gasthof Haidenhof** (Ed. Note: see page 4) was everything you'd said. In addition to a charming location with a view of the valley, and a semi-functioning workout room on the top floor and a very good and comfortable restaurant, the staff, many of whom were related to each other, were friendly and helpful and that, too, could be a return destination.

Bad Hofgastein and the **Hotel Norica**: just OK, though my traveling companion disagrees and feels it was quite lovely and a pleasant place to stay. I found it not unpleasant, and a great central location, but it was an average hotel with average food and average personnel, though Mme. Czerny, wife of the proprietor, made the rounds at dinner. The good news: the town put on an oom-pah display replete with lederhosen and dirndls, in honor of the visiting dignitaries of a European health conference. That was a treat!

A new one for you: in Oberalm, Austria, the Count and Countess von Gernerth, Eike and Georg, whom you may have already met, welcomed us broadly to their **Schloss Haunspurg**. It's a "Castles of the World" accommodation, huge house with its own attached chapel, where

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READERS' FORUM

Continued from page 7

generations of Austrians, both locals and family, have been wed and buried. We were the only guests, so we got the large room with the view of the back lawn, king bed, bathroom with bidet and large, fluffy towels, toilet room with sink, and a huge attached sitting room with cable TV, many comfortable places to sit and read the many books in English, several musical instruments and a Bosendorfer baby grand piano. Yes, I played it but hardly gave it what it deserved. Several rooms resemble suites and the Count and Countess told us they often get families with children who stay in a separate room with the Nanny. During the Christmas holidays, it's not unusual to have a full house with breakfast served in all of the four possible locales. By the time we left, we felt as though we'd known the von Gernerths forever, and the stay felt like a visit with a wonderful aunt and uncle.

On our way out of town, we took the tour of the **Salzbergwerks**, the salt mine from which Salzburg gained much of its glory; it was well worth doing and great fun, despite the rain.

The von Gernerths then sent us to their friend, Max, proprietor of the **Landhaus zu Appesbach** in St. Wolfgang on the Wolfgangsee, a real find. Max could not have been more accommodating. When we arrived, he had a fire going and invited us to have coffee and cake.

We found the restaurant to be outstanding. He also gave us a history of the area and suggested hikes to take and sights to see. The town of St. Wolfgang is cutesy in a touristy way but not unpleasant and within walking distance of the Landhaus. Max and the town are both lakeside, and we're sorry we had only one night there.

We ended with the **Kempinski Hotel** at Munich Airport, the most disappointing stay of the trip. Lovely room, good accoutrements and, magically, no airplane noise, and they promised abundant shuttle

service to the airport. However, when we needed one, "it" was already in service and wouldn't be available "for a while." It cost us an extra cab ride to make our flights, but we'd gone there for the efficiency, as opposed to the charm, only to find it sorely lacking.

Thanks for your publication and it's honesty. Keep up the good work.

JUDY FERN
VIA EMAIL

(Thanks for your email and the very accurate description of the Schloss Haunsperg. The von Gernerths are legendary, the innkeepers against whom all others should be judged. We gave them top ratings in 1988 and again in April, 1997. — Editor)

Yes on Hirschen

Your October, 1998, Travel Letter brought back pleasant memories.

You are right on target with your comments about Langnau im Emmental and the **Hotel Hirschen** (*Ed. note: see page 5*). Langnau is a comfortable drive from the airport in Zürich. A walk around the village, superb meal at the Hirschen and a good night's rest and jet lag is gone.

We headquarter at the Hirschen and make day trips out in all directions. Lucerne, Interlaken, Bern, Jungfrau and Fribourg.

The train station is within walking distance, as you state in *Gemütlichkeit*, and handy for trips into Bern.

In the local area there is the bell factory, the covered bridges, and the show dairy.

Langnau and the Hirschen are worthy of an extended stay.

DAVE KREHBIEL
VIA EMAIL

Eastern Cities Recommended

Let me say how much I have enjoyed your publication for the past few years. You have great articles and good advice that my wife and I have benefited from on several trips to Germany. I am glad to see that you are giving east Germany some publicity - they need it.

We visited Dresden, Meissen, Weimar, Bautzen and Quedlinburg

as part of a Rotary Club visitation project in 1995. These are great cities with wonderful people. We stayed in private homes and were treated like family.

If you have not visited Quedlinburg or Bautzen yet, you should do so - they are true medieval gems with fascinating histories. Some other smaller but very interesting towns are Gorlitz and Herrenhut, near the Polish border.

CARL E. WILSEY
VIA EMAIL

Chiemsee Find

The **Gasthof-Pension Seiser Alm** (tel. +49/08051/7404 and 7044, fax 8620, D-83233 Bernau am Chiemsee) is a traveler's dream. Double rooms are beautiful suites ranging in price from 90 to 120 DM (\$54-\$72) with TV and telephone; sauna and solarium are available. The food is two-star, very tasty and plentiful. The view of the lake is breathtaking and dining on the terrace is a great experience. Dinner for four with drinks is around \$50.

It is a short drive to Salzburg, Berchtesgaden or Munich and 15 minutes to the boat to Herrenchiemsee Island with its magnificent castle. Many trails exist for hikes to the Kampenwand.

The inside dining area has "*viel Gemütlichkeit*," decorated with mounted deer horns and stuffed birds. The service is impeccable, the owner and his wife greet each table. All waitresses are dressed in Bavarian dirndls and English menus are available.

From Munich to Salzburg on Autobahn #8 take the Bernau turn-off. At the stoplight by the Post Hotel take #175 toward Nieder-Aschau for about three kilometers (open area). At the top of the hill look for the Seiser Alm sign on the right side of the road (across from a lumber yard). Take a left and go up a narrow road into the trees for one kilometer. The Seiser Alm will be on the right with lots of parking and a good view of the lake.

GREG & ERIKA COOPER
NIPOMO, CALIFORNIA 