

DEAR
SUBSCRIBER

July 28, 1999

www.gemut.com

Gemütlichkeit's site on the World Wide Web is now in operation. We plan for www.gemut.com to become a must-stop on the Internet for any traveler to Germany, Austria, and/or Switzerland, especially for subscribers.

Here are the site's main features:

- **Archives/Members' Library.**

So far we have uploaded 84 issues, from 1993 through June 1999. The remaining six years of *Gemütlichkeit* — 1987 through 1992 — will be added over the next couple of months. Subscribers can access this searchable database for \$4 per month (minimum six months). Those who enroll will ultimately have unlimited access to every *Gemütlichkeit* ever printed — currently 151 issues — and also be able to download the latest issue well before it gets in the mail. Nonsubscribers will pay substantially more for this service. To enroll, email a user name, a password and a credit card with expiration date to gemut@mind.net.

- **Hot Deals.** We often hear of hotel, air and car rental deals that have a short window of opportunity. By the time we print them in the newsletter, the deal is gone. Now you will be able to find them at gemut.com.

- **Readers' Comments.** Log on and give us your trip feedback: favorite hotels, best restaurants, bad experiences, good deals, etc. When fully operational, this part of the site will be searchable, so if you're looking for a hotel, say, in Berlin, you'll be able to quickly locate all the entries about Berlin hotels. This will be a free area, open to anyone.

- **Links.** Here you'll find a list of some of the best websites for travelers to Germany, Austria and Switzerland: tourist office sites, rail

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GEMÜTLICHKEIT

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

THE LÖTSCHENTAL

A spectacularly beautiful Swiss valley that is quickly and easily accessed by automobile or rail yet remains remote and undiscovered.

The spine is the Rhône river and its valley. Sticking out on both sides of it are wiggly ribs of intersecting valleys accessed by dead-end roads that snake high into the Alps. In these upper valleys are found some of Switzerland's best-known resorts: Zermatt, Saas Fee, Crans Montana, Verbier. Some, like Evolène, Leukerbad and Zinal are not so well-known — at least by Americans. One of the most obscure is the Lötschental, a valley that holds hard to some ancient and mysterious traditions and whose residents speak a special Swiss-German dialect.

The University of Basel has evidence of a 1,000-year-old settlement in the Lötschental, but prior to 1913 and the building of the Goppen-

stein tunnel which connects Kandersteg in the Bernese Oberland with the Rhône Valley, the valley's tiny villages were accessible only via high — 8,200 feet — mountain passes. Its inhabitants were virtually cut off from the outside world.

Among the almost tribal traditions still observed in the valley is the Tschäggätä, a mostly fur costume with a large bell hung around the waist and a wooden face mask covering the head. It is the mask that interests most. Hand-carved by one of only two or three local artisans, each is a uniquely wild and spooky work of art. The fiercest are made in the village of Wiler by Anges Rieder-Jerien. You can see her studio — and hundreds of

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European Factory Delivery

We're whizzing along the Autobahn, Beethoven blaring from the CD player, enveloped by that special new car smell. Our car. We're among the many Americans who have traveled to Europe to pick up new cars from European auto makers, combining the charm of Europe with the fun of driving our own dream vehicle on vacation.

Back in the states, we had ordered our Porsche Boxster from a local dealer, then signed up with the Porsche Cars North America Grand Tour, held twice a year. Buyers don't have to take the tour and may pick up an auto on their own. But we found the tour interesting, informa-

tive, and well worth the time.

Rides around Porsche's Weissach test track are included, as is a fascinating factory tour of the Porsche plant in Zuffenhausen, a Stuttgart suburb. Weissach, about 20 miles from Zuffenhausen, houses the automaker's research and development facilities. The test track is a road course that winds through the countryside. Engineers who developed our model drove us along the test track. R & D uses the track constantly so innovations can be tested by designers as soon as new models clear the assembly line.

Before touring the factory, we stopped at the Porsche Museum

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DEAR SUBSCRIBER

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schedules, airline sites, and dozens more.

- **Car rental and rail passes.** Use these pages to check rail prices, order passes or get a quote on a rental car. Free area.

We hope you will consider the site an added benefit to your subscription. Use it to find the latest Swissair deals, get recommendations from fellow travelers, or check-out the best Germany, Austria and Switzerland travel websites. This is just a beginning. Soon we'll be adding pictures of reviewed hotels and restaurants to our Member's Library. Perhaps even sound and video. Take a look and let us know what you like and don't like.

More Trip Notes

Here are notes from a brief late-May visit to Freiburg im Breisgau, at the southern end of the Black Forest.

- **The Markgräfler Hof**, one of Germany's great unsung restaurants, is under new management and totally different: menu, decor, people, everything. The man who made it go, Hans Leo Kempchen, has 'up stakes' and gone. Anybody know where?

- We arrived in Freiburg by train which made the **Park Hotel Post**, (Eisenbahnstr. 35, D-79098, tel. +49/0761/31011, fax 31680, rooms from 159 to 289 DM/\$84-\$152) about three blocks from the station, a logical choice. *Gemütlichkeit* last reviewed the Post in 1991 and called it the best

value in the city.

This time we phoned ahead for a same-day reservation which was fortunate because the hotel was full that night. We paid 210 DM (\$111) for a very small but nicely furnished double, Number 358. Amenities above the norm, such as a radio in the bathroom, and quality furnishings, demonstrate owner Christa Meier's determination to keep the Post competitive. The breakfast buffet included scrambled eggs and bacon.

In a city which lacks charming, family run accommodations, the Post is a busy hotel used mostly by business travelers. Nonetheless, it is well-maintained and convenient to both the rail station and the *Altstadt*.

The famed **Zum Roten Bären**, which claims to be Germany's oldest hotel, costs \$20 to \$40 per night more than the Post and, since it is written up in virtually every *Fodor, Frommer, Fielding, etc.*, guidebook, is full of tourists. On our last stay there we found both the service and the accommodations wanting.

Still a good and inexpensive choice in the country a few minutes east of Freiburg is the **Gasthaus zum Kreuz** (Grosstalstr. 28, D-79117 Kappel, tel. +49/0761/620550, fax 806820). The restaurant is especially recommended.

- For an inexpensive meal, good beer and convivial surroundings in Freiburg, try **Feierling Biergarten** (Gerberau Str.). The daily special on Sunday, May 30, 1999, was *Kalbsrah-*

mgulasch mit Pilzen, Nudeln und Salat (braised veal in a cream-based sauce with mushrooms, noodles and salad) for 17.5 DM (\$9). A small glass (3/10th liter) of made-on-the-premises beer was 3.9 DM (\$2) and a half-liter was 5.9 DM (\$3). A brass band played starting at 11:30am. The brewery regularly hosts local bands. If you're in the vicinity, the Freiburg fire department's band will be there Sunday, August 29.

- That evening we saw a Freiburg phenomenon. Near the beer garden, hundreds of students gathered in the **Augustinerplatz**. They came to talk and to eat and drink what they had brought with them. There were no sidewalk cafes, no tables, no one selling anything, they just congregated at this spot to enjoy the night, sitting in groups of varying sizes on walls, steps and on cobblestones.

- Freiburg, with its network of narrow streets and alleys and many small shops and restaurants, is a great town for strolling and window

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Notes for Readers

- Foreign currency prices are converted to U.S. dollars at the exchange rate in effect at the time of publication.
- Hotel prices listed are for one night. Discounts are often available for longer stays.
- All hotel prices include breakfast unless otherwise noted.
- Local European telephone area codes carry the "0" required for in-country dialing. To phone establishments from outside the country, such as from the USA, do not dial the first "0".

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POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO:
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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.

THE LÖTSCHENTAL

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masks — by making an appointment through the tourist office.

The masks and costumes are worn only a couple of times each year, most spectacularly in a parade on the Saturday before Ash Wednesday. Only bachelors participate in the Tschäggätä and, according to Ms. Rieder-Jerien, their identities are never revealed.

Another tradition is that of the “red soldiers.” Wearing white and scarlet uniforms adorned with gold buttons, swords, rifles and a tall, white feather, they are descendants of men who fought in foreign wars. They march with a brass band on the Feast of Corpus Christi. The custom dates from 1625 when returning warriors began to save their parade uniforms for wearing on Sundays and holidays to honor God.

Though tourism began in 1972 with the building of the Lauchernalp ski area, the valley retains the quaintness and charm that many larger, more popular Valasian resorts have sacrificed for financial success.

Most buildings are of the customary rough wood, blackened by age and weather, and the accommodations are for the most part simple.

At the same time, the tunnel has brought 21st century civilization to the valley’s residents. Using the country’s nonpareil system of rail, busses and tunnels, a tourist office employee in Wiler told *Gemütlichkeit* he and his wife go to the movies in Bern and are home a little over an hour after the credits have rolled. Goppenstein is on the international Lötschberg-Simplon railway line (Bern-Brig-Milan) and a fast train stops about twice each hour.

Civilization in the Lötschental is mainly four small villages: Ferden, Kippel, Wiler and Blatten. The one with the best buildings is Kippel, the ski area is accessed at Wiler, Blatten is the most rustic and Ferden is perhaps the least interesting.

One can reach the valley easily by rail — train to Goppenstein and bus

Lötschental Info

Population: sparse

Altitude: 1217 meters/3,993 feet

Tourist Information: Lötschental Tourismus, CH-3918 Wiler, tel. +41/027/938 8888, fax 938 8880, tourist info +41/027/939 1515, Internet: www.loetschental.ch, email: info@loetschental.ch

Rail travel time from Goppenstein to:

Bern	1:13 hr/min
Brig	0:25 hr/min
Geneva	3:01 hr/min
Interlaken	1:02 hr/min
Lucerne	2:40 hr/min
Milan	2:17 hr/min
Montreux	1:03 hr/min
Sion	0:51 hr/min
Spiez	0:40 hr/min
Thun	0:50 hr/min
Zermatt	2:02 hr/min
Zürich	2:34 hr/min

Arriving by train:

Fast trains on the Basel-Bern-Brig-Milan line stop at Goppenstein at least hourly in both directions; from there it is only a few minutes by postal bus to the main villages: Ferden, Kippel, Wiler, Ried, Blatten.

The Lötschentaler Wanderpass:

The Lötschental is a network of roads, trails, lifts, and mountain huts. With the Wanderpass, walkers get a week’s unlimited access to the valley’s Postal Bus system and to the cable car and lifts, as well as fee entrance to the Lötschentaler Museum. Price is 59 Sfr./\$39 per person or 119 Sfr./\$78 for a family.

Ski Weeks:

The tourist office (see above) offers one-week Alpine and Nordic ski packages that include hotel accommodations with breakfast, lift pass, ski bus pass, and welcome drink. For Alpine skiers, the per person price for the package in category B hotels is 592 Sfr. (\$395) and 648 Sfr. (\$426) in category A hotels. The cross country package is 409 Sfr. (\$269) in category B hotels and 466 (\$306) in category A hotels.

Lötschentaler Museum:

Displays fine art as well as artifacts from the valley’s 4,000-year history, including early traditional dwellings and a bow from the Bronze Age. Located in Kippel and open mid-June through mid-October, Tuesday through Sunday, 10am-6pm, closed 12pm-2pm. Entrance: 4 Sfr. (\$2.60), 3.5 Sfr. (\$2.30) with guest card, 2.5 Sfr. (\$1.65) for student, and 1 Sfr. (\$0.66) for kids 6-16.

Vacation Rentals:

The valley has several dozen chalets, apartments and even Alpine huts available for short-term rental. Most are in the 400 to 700 Sfr. (\$263-\$460) per week range. Contact the tourist office for the brochure *Verzeichnis der vermietbaren Ferienwohnungen Chalets, Alplütten*.

into the valley — or by car. From Spiez take the road into the mountain to Kandersteg and board the car train (25 Sfr./\$16) for the 15-minute run to Goppenstein. From there, turn left and it’s only a few minutes into the valley. From the main highway that runs along the Rhône from Lake Geneva to Brig, look for signs to the turn north to Goppenstein. From the river it’s only a few minutes up a very good but twisty road.

For those seeking a self-catering vacation rentals, the Lötschental should be considered. And, like almost any place in Switzerland, it makes a good headquarters for the traveler with a rail pass. Many interesting destinations are within a two-hour train ride.

If you choose the Lötschental be prepared for the quiet, country life. Skiers and summer visitors who enjoy the outdoors will find plenty to do for a week or so, but less active travelers who want more than the glorious scenery and a good book, will have to rely on a car or rail pass for day-trips out of the valley.

Hotels

Hotel Edelweiss

The best hotel we saw in the Lötschental and one of the most remote. Its village, Blatten, is as far up the valley as you can go in winter.

EDITOR'S CHOICE

A member of the Relais du Silence association since 1994, the Edelweiss started as a small grocery store in 1923, became a hotel-restaurant in 1964 and was fully renovated in 1993.

Its guestrooms are the largest and most comfortable of the hotels discussed here. Our recommendation is Number 202 with slanting pine ceiling and a balcony with sweeping views of the valley. Number 203 is a large single with comfortable sitting area. All rooms are equipped with direct-dial phones, TV, radio and minibar.

Those who pick the Edelweiss would be well advised to also choose the half-board option (30

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LÖTSCHENTAL

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Sfr./\$20). The hotel's kitchen produces good, simple meals and the cellar is stocked entirely with Valasian wines.

The Edelweiss also has a small vacation house suitable for two to four persons which it rents for 400 to 570 Sfr. (\$266-\$380) per week, depending on the time of year and number of persons. Breakfast and dinner is available at the hotel for 217 Sfr. (\$145) per person (150 Sfr./\$100 for kids).

Daily Rates: Singles 85 to 125 Sfr. (\$56-\$82), doubles 140 to 210 DM (\$92-\$138). Half-pension 30 Sfr. (\$20)

Contact: Hotel Edelweiss, CH-3919 Blattentel, tel. +41/027 939 13 63, fax 939 10 53, email:

hoteledelweiss@rhone.ch, proprietor: Charlotte und Lukas Kalbermatten

Rating: QUALITY 13/20, VALUE 14/20

Hotel Nest-und Bietschhorn

The Lötschental's oldest hotel. Guestrooms and bathrooms are a bit smaller than at the Edelweiss. Room amenities are similar to the Edelweiss except that there are no TVs, though they can be rented.

Has the reputation as the best food in the valley. Classic dishes such as veal steak with morel mushroom sauce and noodles (38 Sfr. \$25), sauteed chopped veal "Zürich style" with *Rösti* (32 Sfr./\$21), and game dishes, take a back seat to such local specialities as a ragout of Valasian lamb with house-made noodles (20 Sfr./\$13) and Valasian rack of lamb with polenta (32 Sfr./\$21).

Daily Rates: Singles 65 to 85 Sfr. (\$43-\$56), doubles 125 to 160 Sfr. (\$82-\$105). Half-pension 31 Sfr. (\$20)

Contact: Hotel Nest- und Bietschhorn, CH-3919 Ried b. Blatten (Lötschental), tel. +41/027/939 11 06, fax 939 18 22, Web:

www.loetschental.ch/nest-bietsch, proprietor: Fam. Erwin Bellwald-Grob

Rating: QUALITY 10/20, VALUE 12/20

Hotel zur Widi

Serious skiers and walkers will want to consider these rustic family

accommodations perched on the mountain side several hundred feet above Wiler on the ski slope. Guestrooms are plain but spacious and several can accommodate three to four persons. In winter the hotel is accessible only by cable car.

Daily Rates: Singles 84 Sfr. (\$55), doubles 138 Sfr (\$91). Half-pension 20 Sfr. (\$13)

Contact: Hotel zur Widi, Postfach 248, CH-3918 Wiler/Lauchernalp, tel. +41/27 939 19 89, fax +41/027/939 20 19, email: zur-wildi@rhone.ch, proprietor: Familie Bellwald-Brenner

Rating: QUALITY 9/20, VALUE 12/20

Hotel-Restaurant Sporting

A simple, very rustic hotel and restaurant directly on the main valley road and across the street from the Lauchernalp cable car.

Daily Rates: Singles 65 to 75 Sfr. (\$43-\$49), doubles 130 to 150 Sfr. (\$86-\$99).

Contact: Hotel-Restaurant Sporting, CH-3918 Wiler/Lötschental/Wallis, tel. +41/027/939 13 77, fax 939 10 87, proprietor: Familie A. Rieder

Rating: QUALITY 9/20, VALUE 10/20

Hotel Fafleralp

This rough little gem at the remote northeast end of the valley is open only from May to October. A favorite of hikers, it is fully booked most weekends so reserve in advance. Excellent kitchen.

Daily Rates: Singles 53 to 76 Sfr. (\$35-\$50), doubles 106 to 152 Sfr. (\$70-\$100).

Contact: Hotel Fafleralp, CH-3919 Fafleralp, tel. +41/027/939 14 15, fax 939 14 53, proprietor: Christian Henzen

Rating: QUALITY 12/20, VALUE 14/20

FACTORY AUTO PURCHASE

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(Mercedes also has a museum in the Stuttgart area), featuring an assortment of exhibits celebrating the 50th year of the company.

The first surprise on the factory tour was how much work is cleverly handled by robots. The robotics are programmed for whichever model comes down the line for welding. Since Porsche often mixes models in

an assembly, this means the robots handle first a 996 coupe, then a 986 Boxster, perhaps a Cabriolet next.

Workers rotate jobs weekly, which not only relieves boredom with repetitive tasks but gives the factory a work-crew that knows the assembly process for all the cars. In the body shop, automatic carts bring parts to workers at nine stations, each cart "programmed" for the particular model passing through. Two shifts keep the factory humming. A sense of pride is evident throughout.

Courtesy of Uncle Sam and the 3rd Armored Division, we had lived as newlyweds for about a year in Frankfurt in the late 1950s. This time, as we began our driving tour, we skipped the big cities for the country inns and small hotels of scenic Germany.

With two weeks of free insurance, we planned our own itinerary using one of the excellent guides available for just such a purpose. We chose one major circle of Bavaria and another route in the Black Forest before returning to Zuffenhausen where we'd leave the car for stateside delivery.

Our first stop took us almost into Austria as we stayed at the **Zur Post** in Inzell, about 25 kilometers (16 miles) almost straight west of Salzburg. Situated in the center of the village, it was nicely painted and balconied on the outside, and inside featured warmly paneled dining rooms.

Bedrooms are comfortable, and the breakfast buffet is ample, serving both hot and cold items. Reproductions dot the premises which also feature a large indoor swimming pool.

Fast food outlets haven't yet touched the town which we'll remember for beer, bakeries, and exquisite embroidery.

However, rain encouraged us to move on toward the Black Forest area. We stopped first at a small inn, another **Zur Post**, in Ettal, still in Bavaria, on the road between

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Garmisch-Partenkirchen and Oberammergau. We had time to tour the local monastery and enjoy its gardens. Then it was on to the sunshine of Lake Constance.

Although we loved traveling the back-roads, we used the Autobahn to speed us along when we changed areas. Contrary to popular belief, Germany's 6,000-mile network of superhighways of four to six lanes, do have occasional speed limits, posted in kilometers. We saw 120 km (75 mph) signs quite frequently; a top end of about 130 km (81 mph) is recommended. Drivers universally blink their lights to pass, give turn signals when exiting, and are courteous in the extreme — even while they fly down their highways.

Meersburg is a medieval town on Lake Constance (Germans call it the Bodensee). We stayed at the **Weinstube Löwen**, a wisteria-covered tavern-hotel located in the heart of the cobblestoned old city. During most of the day, Meersburg allows no cars but relents long enough to let visitors load and unload. Good parking is nearby. Ferries ply the scenic lake and the sun we'd missed was shining every day. Numerous cafes and *Bierstuben* served delicious meals and often featured the fresh fish of the area. One day we took the boat to Lindau at the opposite end of the lake where we enjoyed a marvelous meal overlooking the harbor.

After departing Meersburg we stopped a few miles away at the **Basilika Birnau**, a jewel of a Baroque church which was consecrated in 1750. With detailed guidebooks available in English, the magnificent sanctuary came alive with its altars, statuary, and gold leaf.

Bypassing the Autobahn for the winding roads of the Black Forest area, we stopped first at Hinterzarten, where Frau Pfeiffer offers an exquisite small hotel, the **Sassenhof**. Although it housed no restaurant, many were within walking distance. However, her breakfasts and daily 4pm tea were delightfully served to the accompaniment of classical music in dining rooms with crisp white linens. The brochure had said that this rare hotel would feel

Buying a Car in Europe

Sellers: Contact any authorized dealer for BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Saab, Volvo, or Porsche. For the Grand Tour, contact a local dealer or Porsche Cars North America Inc. at 980 Hammond Drive, Ste. 1000, Atlanta, Ga. 30328 or call 770-290-3500.

Fast Lane Travel, Inc. also offers Porsche trips. Tel. 800/823-1188, Fax 303/876-4170 or e-mail: psontag@aol.com & psheffel@thor24.com. Other manufacturers with delivery programs: Mercedes-Benz, 800-367-6372; Saab USA, 800-955-9007; Volvo North American Corp., 212-754-3300; BMW (Customer Service), 800-831-1117.

A couple of subscribers have recommended **Fred Opert Cars**, which claims to arrange more European deliveries than any dealer in the U.S. Contact: Fred Opert Cars, 111 Spring St, Ramsey NJ 07446, tel. 201-327-1111, fax 201-327-8222.

Insurance: Porsche offers two weeks comprehensive insurance with zero-deductible. Mercedes gives 15 days of similar coverage. BMW offers 30 days of insurance with a 10 percent deductible for theft only. All will extend coverage for a fee, but be forewarned that insurance is quite expensive for non-residents who want extended stays. Volvo and Saab charge for their 15-day coverage from a few hundred dollars up, depending on whether you extend your stay.

Pickup: For Porsche, it's Zuffenhausen, a Stuttgart suburb where Grand Tour members are taken by bus. Mercedes uses the Sindelfingen Delivery Center near Stuttgart with fully equipped guest facilities and two restaurants where a complimentary lunch

or breakfast is served. A 90-minute factory tour is also available. BMW is in Munich and offers 24 free drop-off points where the owner may leave the car for shipment home. Some companies charge extra for drop-off if at a different site. Check with your dealer. Volvo delivers at Gothenburg, Sweden, a port city with ferries to Europe. Saab's delivery is at the factory in Trollhattan, Sweden, but you can take delivery in 11 other European cities.

Savings: Some manufacturers discount cars delivered in Europe and/or include extras such as complimentary hotel stays, meals and transportation to the pickup site. Volvo has complimentary airfare from 22 U.S. cities. Since these extras can change, check with your dealer or manufacturer. Porsche provided a discounted hotel stay at the **Graf Zeppelin Hotel** in Stuttgart as well as two dinners and a lunch at the factory, all accompanied by German wines and beer. The VAT (Value Added Tax) is paid but refunded with interest when the car is delivered in the U.S.

Internet: An entire book offering tips about renting, leasing or buying cars in Europe is available at www.ideamerge.com/motoeuropa; click on "guidebook." The site also offers links to manufacturers, dealers and insurance agents, as well as providing information about taxes in various countries and depreciation you might be able to claim by adding vacation mileage to your car.

Helpful books: *Charming Small Hotel Guides*, published by Duncan Petersen, and *Germany's Best-Loved Driving Tours* by Frommer. — Vickie Ferguson

like home and it did.

Next stop was with the Scherer family at the **Hotel Dorer** in Schönwald, in the heart of the Black Forest, 49 kilometers (31 miles) northeast of Freiburg. Each evening a fixed-price meal is served in the small, paneled dining room with a choice of several entrees. We decided to try one meal and were so overwhelmed by the quality of the food as well as its

preparation that we ate all our dinners there.

In nearby Furtwangen we spent most of one day at the **Deutsches Uhrenmuseum** (clock museum). Located appropriately in the center of the German clock industry, this museum holds the largest collection of clocks in Germany. Displays illustrate the history, art and technology of clocks. Clock making around

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Where to Eat in Vienna

Otto Wiesenthal, owner of Vienna's charming Hotel-Pension Altstadt, is a connoisseur of the good life and an expert witness on Vienna's restaurants, from the simplest Beisl to the fanciest Michelin-starred establishment. For his guests, he has published a booklet that lists his favorites in several categories. He has given us permission to pass on some of his capsule reviews.

Mediterranean

A Tavola

The little sister of **Cantinetta Antinori** offers the homey comforts of a simple Italian *Osteria*. High standards with homemade pasta and great lamb dishes. Large selection of quality wines which are also offered by the glass.

Weihburggasse 3-5, tel. 512 79 55, fax 512 79 551

Il Mare

A firmly headed family endeavor with possibly the best wood oven pizzas of Vienna. Always booked solid and well attended by staff of the publishing houses in the surroundings. Plain ambiance with simple wooden tables. Grappa for real grown ups.

Zieglergasse 15, tel. 523 74 94

Kornat

The forte of this small restaurant is the freshly prepared seafood in all variations. It is strongly advised to follow the recommendations of the waiters since some of the freshest fish is not even mentioned on the menu.

Marc Aurel-Strasse 8, tel. 535 6518

Martinelli

This Italian place in the beautifully renovated Palais Harrach has been offering consistently fine quality since its opening. In the summer, the outdoor seating area on the patio is one of the most gorgeous in the city. Beware of the charming escort.

Freyung 3/Palais Harrach, tel. 535 30 87

Danieli

A mixture between Italian *Osteria*

and restaurant with a stylish ambience and a strict distinction between the types of cuisine, depending on the time of day. Pizzas and simple meals especially for lunch, sophisticated cuisine in the evening. Lots of candles.

Himmelfortgasse 3, tel. 513 79130

Crêperie Brasserie Spittelberg

Located on the Spittelberg with a wonderful outdoor seating area, this place offers French specialties and especially a large selection of creative crepes. Try the excellent *moules marinieres* in mussel season. Young clients.

Spittelberggasse 12, tel. 526 15 70.

Heuriger

Zimmerman

Located on the Grinzing border in Armbrustergasse, this Heuriger offers space from 6 up to 20 guests. Lovingly decorated, a place with style and a gorgeous garden. The cuisine is distinctly different from the area's tourist Heurigen places. Beautiful people.

Armbrustergasse 5, tel. 37 22 11-0

Am Reisenbergweg

Once upon a time a dentist wanted to convert an old Heuriger into a villa, but he did not count on the strict rules. Now his son runs this Heurigen with the greatest view over Vienna. A place to hang out and dream - especially in the afternoon.

Oberer Reisenbergweg 15, tel. 320 93 93

Schreiberhaus

Located in the center of Neustift am Walde, this large country house is a popular Heuriger for family parties and corporate events. Decorated in comfort and style. Large terraced garden. Excellent food.

Rathstrasse 54, tel. 440-3844.

Wieninger

This place offers the best bottled wine within Vienna's city limits. Fritz Wieninger is one of Austria's top young vintners. His mother and

brother take care of this distinctive Heuriger in Stammersdorf. Try the soufflés.

Stammersdorfer Strasse 78, tel. 292 4106.

Off the Beaten Path

Cafe Drechsler

After a night that did not want to end this coffee house opens its doors at 4am. A Wiener Schnitzel for breakfast and the newspaper fresh off the press may not be everybody's liking, but some just don't want to go home.

Linke Wienzeile 22, tel. 587 85 80.

Alt Wien

A heavy spot in the Bäckerstrasse close to the Bermuda Triangle. Meeting point of artists and the left half of Austrian politics. The proper place for the famous last glass after a long night in Vienna bars.

Bäckerstrasse 6, tel. 512 52 22

Gmoa Keller

Nothing has changed in this place since the 50s when it had its heydays. The same floor, the same tables, and the same hostesses; two unique characters who already kicked out a federal chancellor or two. Self-service.

Heumarkt 25, tel. 712 53 10

Ernas Abendland

A place without a menu, where actually most people are acquainted somehow, everybody talks to each other, most of the time someone sits at the piano and plays. A genuine spot for communication. The food is unspectacular but well prepared.

Gardegasse 2, tel. 526 96 78.

Dubrovnik

One of the oldest Yugoslav restaurants of Vienna, adjacent to Stadtpark. You really feel as if you were in another country, the authenticity is amazing. A favorite among American guests of the hotels close by.

Am Heumarkt 5, tel. 713 71 02.

Music

Beograd

You should not enter this place which is close to Naschmarkt before 8pm, by which time the musicians

start their sobbing melodies. Typical cuisine with barbecue and caviar. The enchanted audience loves it.

Mühlgasse 1/Schikanedergasse 7, tel. 587 74 44

Wiener Rathauskeller

Those who really believe they have to hear typical Viennese music and practice their waltzing, have found the perfect spot here in the cellar halls of the Rathauskeller. Cuisine is good standard. Parking is difficult because of the tour buses.

Rathausplatz 1, tel. 40512 19-0.

Figlmüller - Grinzing

For several years the famous Vienna Schnitzel place has had a subsidiary in Grinzing. The first Grinzinger Heurigen show performs here, with musicians and singers presenting a charming mix of typical Viennese songs and dances.

Grinzinger Strasse 55, tel. 320 42 57 ☒

READERS' FORUM

Vienna, Prague Comments

When we got back from Austria, I found your May issue in the stack of mail. We did indeed visit **Restaurant Beograd** on May 30, when the NATO bombing was going on. I had read about the restaurant in *Gemütlichkeit*, plus the **Hotel Carlton Opera** recommended it. The night we went was our first night there, so we ate earlier than normal. The garden was very pleasant and, even in our jet-lagged state, enjoyed a nice dinner — huge portions, delicious food. The service was neither overly solicitous nor indifferent or rude. The waiter obviously knew we were American (mom, dad and kid), and I felt we received no different service than the German speakers near us. I would recommend this restaurant to anyone, and it's especially handy to the very pleasant Hotel Carlton Opera (Georg was particularly nice to us at the hotel).

On this trip we visited Prague, which I know you report on from time to time. We stayed at the very wonderful **Domus Henrici** (Loretan-

ska 11; tel. 042-2-2051 1369, fax 042-2-2051 1502; e-mail hotel@domus-henrici.cz). They have a great web site at www.domus-henrici.cz. We made all our arrangements by e-mail and fax.

The hotel is in a building dated 1372 and has about eight rooms opening onto a lovely terrace overlooking a peaceful valley. It is a short walk to the castle and a little longer (about 15 minutes) to the old square. We stayed in room Number seven, a suite consisting of a living area with fold-out couch, bedroom, and the biggest bathroom I've seen in a hotel (19,950 Ck for 3 nights, which is about \$195 per night, including extra charge for our teenager's bed).

Everything is very modern. I unfortunately arrived in Prague sick, so I stayed for two days in the comfortable duvet-covered bed with lots of fluffy pillows and their cozy terry robe. The mini-bar provided reasonably-priced soft drinks and downright cheap beer and wine. Additionally, Martina and Roberta, the hostesses, were very helpful and kind (especially while I didn't feel well).

Martina's husband, Milan, owns his own air-conditioned taxi, and we hired him for two days to be our driver and guide. As a native of Prague, he was full of information and very kind and patient in getting us around (mainly outside of Prague proper). His English is excellent. We paid him about \$20 per hour, plus a very generous tip (which he deserved).

We have nothing but the highest praise for this wonderful small hotel. I recommend it to anyone going to Prague.

LISBETH ASH
DOTHAN, AL

Vienna Hotel

Recently returned from two weeks in Vienna and a short train excursion to Ljubljana and a day-trip to the very southern tip of Slovenia.

In Vienna we stayed at **Hotel am Schottenpoint** (Währinger Str. 22, tel. +43/01/310/8787, fax 8787-4) and we were treated royally — we will stay there again. In Ljubljana, we

weren't all that brave and stayed at **Hotel Slon** (Slovenska 34, 1000 Ljubljana, tel. 061/1701100, fax 271164), but it was wonderful, and we were again treated royally. If you are interested in some feedback re eating in Vienna and Slovenia, car rental in Ljubljana, or hotels in either place, let me know.

KAY NYBERG
BATON ROUGE LA

(Ed. Note: We love feedback. By all means, tell us your favorites and your un-favorites. When mentioning hotels and restaurants, please include, if possible, street addresses, email addresses, and phone and fax numbers.)

Fraundorfer Smitten

I'm a very recent subscriber to your newsletter. In my first issue you wrote about favorite places to have a beer in Europe. What amazed me was that your first and third choices are also my favorite places. One was on a mountain top near Garmisch that we had to take a tram to get to and the other was my very favorite in Partenkirchen, the **Gasthof Fraundorfer** (Ludwigstr. 24, tel. +49/08821/9279, fax 92799). I wanted to take the couple with us to a real German *Gasthaus* and just happened on that one. Our wives wouldn't let us return a second time because of our condition from the night before. Oh, but what a wonderful experience.

I returned to Garmisch last year and was in the center of the shopping district just off the main street facing a barn on a Friday night. Of all the times not to have my camera, that was the worst. It was a scene of Germany of the past. In front of the barn was a long table with farmers getting together for some beers. The area was mud-laden, cows wandered about and the men wore various work clothes as they brought the week to an end with many *prosits*. It was Germany in a nutshell.

I was stationed in Idar-Oberstein from 1960 to 1963 and returned for the first time about five years ago. I drove through the old *Kaserne* where I was stationed as an MP and felt like 18 years-old again. Not a brick or stone had changed. It was as though

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FACTORY DELIVERY

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the world is presented from sundials, hourglasses, and candle clocks as well as complicated astronomical clocks and high-precision marine chronometers. A well-known watch-making school is housed nearby.

Roads in the Black Forest curve and meander, exposing glorious scenery at nearly every turn. Every village has a shop or two with the ubiquitous cuckoo clocks but many styles of carving are available. Merchants generally take credit cards and ship back to the states. Shipping costs can be high so check the price before deciding. We found we could manage our small wall clock in our luggage and brought it home safely.

Leaving the Black Forest behind, we drove in sunshine on the Autobahn to Stuttgart and then Zuffenhausen where we left our yellow Boxster. We'd miss Tweety (of course we had to name her) but we'd see her again in four or five weeks.

(Vickie Ferguson is a free-lance travel writer living in Highland Ranch, Colorado.)

Tour Hotels

- **Sport-und Kurhotel Zur Post**, Reichenhaller Str. 2, Inzell D-83334, tel. +49/08865/9850, fax 985100, rooms 90 to 190 DM (\$47-\$100),
- **Zur Post**, Kaiser-Ludwig Platz 10, Ettal D-82488, tel. +49/08822/9150, fax 6971, rooms 90-150 DM (\$47-\$79)
- **Weinstube Löwen**, Marktplatz 2, Meersberg D-88709, tel. +49/07532/43040, fax 430410, rooms 85 to 220 DM (\$45-\$116)
- **Sassenhof** (garni), Alderweg 17, Hinterzarten D-79856, tel. +49/07652/1515, fax 484, rooms 98 to 208 DM (\$52-\$109), no credit cards
- **Dorer**, Franz-Schubert-Str. 20, Schönwald D-78141, tel. +49/07722/95050, fax 9505530, rooms 85 to 220 DM (\$45-\$116)
- **Steigenberger Graf Zeppelin**, Arnulf-Klett-Platz 7, Stuttgart D-70173, tel. +49/0711/20480, fax 2048542, rooms 375-505 DM (\$197-\$266), U.S. dollar discount price for Porsche buyers: single \$139, double \$179. ☒

READERS' FORUM

Continued from page 7

I'd left the day before. Anyway, just letting you know how I'm enjoying your articles. Thanks and keep it up, wish I were there with you on your journeys.

BOB LONG
SATELLITE BEACH FL

Can't Find Maxi-Atlas

I tried to find the *ADAC Maxi-Atlas for Germany* at Amazon.com in vain. Where did you buy yours? I haven't checked at a regular bookstore yet, but if Amazon could not even come up with the title for Germany, the book might be difficult to find anywhere.

MAURICE VEENSTRA
WILLIAMSTON MI

(Ed. Note: To the best of our knowledge, the only importer of the *ADAC Maxi-Atlas for Germany is Travel Essentials*, 264 East Main Street, Ashland OR 97520, tel. 541-482-7383, fax 541-482-7472. You can also order the atlas through *Gemütlichkeit* at 800-521-6722. Subscribers get a 10% discount.) ☒

DEAR SUBSCRIBER

Continued from page 2

shopping. The most interesting shops — and one of town's best Italian restaurants, **Wolfshöhle** — are on Konviktstrasse.

• The weather in Freiburg was very warm and we dined outdoors (the elaborate wood-carved interior will be cozy on cooler evenings) at **Karchers Weinstube**, half a block from the Park Hotel Post. Main dishes range from about 11 to 28 DM (\$6-\$15) and the plain food is typical of the region. *Spargel* (half a dozen thick, white asparagus spears at 25 DM/\$13) with new potatoes and a buttery hollandaise sauce, more than fulfilled expectations but *Kalbsschnitzel "Wiener Art"* (24.5 DM/\$13) would never be confused with the stuff served at **Figlmüller** in Vienna. A quarter-liter of *Gewürtztraminer* cost 6.8 DM (\$3.60) and small *Pilsner* was 4.2 DM (\$2.20).

• On a hot Sunday night at the **Hotel Post**, we witnessed what one

can only hope was a near fatal case of jet lag: an American man cashed traveler's checks at the hotel desk, while explaining to his wife that the banks won't be open Monday because it's Memorial Day. Memorial Day? Let's just hope a very long flight had him a bit befuddled. Otherwise we must assume the gentlemen thinks the U.S. sets the holiday calendar for the world.

As to the money exchange, if he needed cash he could have walked half a block to the ATM at the Post Office. There he could have used his credit card or ATM card to obtain deutschemarks at a better exchange rate than at any bank, and a substantially better rate than at a hotel. ☒

Europe Travel Briefs

■ **Swissotel** offers summer discounts at 19 locations. For example, the **Swissotel Düsseldorf/Neuss** has a package available through August 29 priced at \$111 per night/per couple that includes room and breakfast. Contact: 800-63-SWISS.

■ **The German Wine Information Bureau** has a new Web site: www.germanwineusa.org. It offers reviews of German wines, advice on food and wine pairings, and info on touring the country's wine regions.

■ **Elaine Ridge**, a *Gemütlichkeit* subscriber and owner of **European Journeys**, a tour company, offers a **Christmas Shopping & Spa Tour to Germany**.

The first, November 27-December 5, is for ladies only and the second, December 4-12, is for couples. Cost is \$2,500 per person and includes airfare, hotels, transportation, breakfasts and dinners, three entrance fees, a two-hour spa package, a concert and guide services.

The basic itinerary is Heidelberg, Rothenburg ob der Tauber for three nights, Nürnberg, and winding up for three days in Baden-Baden, Switzerland. Tours are designed for six to 10 persons. Contact: Elaine Ridge, 4356 Moore Street, Wheat Ridge CO 80033, tel. 800-337-3057 ☒