

DEAR  
SUBSCRIBER

### Clearing the Desk

This month you have the honor to join me as we paw through various piles of tattered phone notes, press releases, emails and unanswered letters that inhabit the vast, untamed reaches of my desk. (When we moved to Oregon in 1998, I thought a larger desk would reduce the clutter; alas, it has had the opposite effect.) Separately, these items aren't stand-alone stories but perhaps together they will edify and instruct, if not charm and delight.

• Let's begin with a luxury item. Subscriber Bill Bohnhoff of Santa Fe has kept me abreast of developments at the **Hotel Rote Rose**, in the hills not far from the Zürich Airport. Located in exclusive, very quiet neighborhood, I first heard of the hotel in the late 80's and early 90's via the raves of several readers. None other than guidebook author and former *Gemütlichkeit* subscriber, Karen Brown, called it "the perfect inn." So we finally booked one of its five apartments the night before a flight home in 1997. We paid CH 250. For my taste, it was a bit too cute, too precious and just a little too expensive. Perhaps the fact that upon arrival we had a devil of a time raising anybody to give us a room key — plus a skimpy breakfast and an overall lack of professionalism — dampened my enthusiasm. As a result I never wrote about it. Now enter Mr. Bohnhoff, a savvy sojourner, who tells of recent refurbishments on a grand and amazing scale. Expecting no more than a top grade double room, the Bohnhoffs

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# GEMÜTLICHKEIT

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

## NÜRNBERG

*Famed as a center of Nazism and the site of WWII war crimes trials, Nürnberg acknowledges its dark days but also wants us to know of its better times — almost 1,000 years of them.*

**N**ürnberg carries both the burden and pride of history.

For certain generations of Americans, the mention of Nürnberg conjures immediate thoughts of its role in World War II. It was here that the Nazis paraded and celebrated during their six party rallies and passed the Nürnberg Laws, setting the stage for genocide. And it was here that the Allies convened the Nürnberg Trials for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

This period occupies barely two decades of the city's nearly 1000-year history. But, more so than most German cities, Nürnberg has chosen to remember this short but shameful period in its recent past. In 2001, in a

part of the former **Nazi Party Rally Grounds**, the city opened a **Documentation Center** with its permanent exhibit, "Fascination and Terror," that addresses the causes and consequences of Nazi oppression. That same year, Nürnberg became the first city in the world to receive UNESCO's Prize for Human Rights Education.

But the city doesn't let its 20<sup>th</sup>-century past eclipse its medieval history. Visitors can still walk along most of the 5-kilometer (3.5-mile) medieval wall, much of which remains intact. Within the *Altstadt*, visitors encounter churches, patrician homes and other medieval structures born of Nürnberg's centu-

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## An Insider's Oktoberfest

**M**y wife Sharrell and I visited our first Oktoberfest in Munich in 1977 and had so much fun we've returned every year since. Last September, we celebrated our 26<sup>th</sup> consecutive year there.

During our first visits, we looked in the various beer tents to get a feeling of what they were like and at one time I vowed to have a beer (a one liter stein) in each tent. Well, there are fourteen tents, and I can't drink all that much in one day, so we had to spread it around over several days.

Ultimately, we settled on the **Winzerer Fähndel** tent, run by Willi and Helga Kreitmair, and have gone back there year after year for the past 20 years or so. I started reserving a table back in 1988 when we decided to take our three kids and their

spouses along with us on a "Grand Tour" of Europe. The eight of us had an absolutely fabulous time together.

That year, we shared our 10-person table with locals, tried speaking German, failed miserably at first, but we all were able to understand each other. We invited several of our seat mates to join us the following year, and this has since grown into an annual tradition. One couple flies in from London, two other couples live in Munich and are members of a music society. Another retired couple has been with us since 1988, live near Ammersee, and take the train to Munich. I have reserved the same corner table in *Boxe 31* every year since.

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**Exchange rates as of 3/30/04**  
**1 euro = \$1.22**  
**1 Swiss franc = \$.80**

## DEAR SUBSCRIBER

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were shown to a just-finished, ultra-stylish suite he estimated to be in excess of 1,800 square feet. The huge bathroom has a walk-in shower, a freestanding tub in the middle of the room and its own TV with four English-speaking channels, including Turner Movie Classics. Mr. Bohnhoff also describes a plethora of antiques, centuries-old door locks and hinges, and a common room that features ancient beams, a grand piano and a painstakingly-restored hunting fresco that occupies an entire wall. The Bohnhoffs paid CH 400 but junior suites are CH 250 (about \$195). They say that in 30 years of European travel this is the best value they've encountered in spacious, upscale accommodations. No, it's not cheap but consider the neighborhood; the chic **Hotel Widder** in the heart of Zürich offers double rooms from CH 635 to 780. I bow to Mr. Bohnhoff's more up-to-date experience. Check out the RR at [www.rote-rose.ch](http://www.rote-rose.ch).

- The Bocceri's of Sacramento called to tell us of indifferent service, loud banging on their door at 6am, and no access to AT&T Direct phone service at the **Kempinski Airport Hotel** in the Munich Airport. But when rooms at four-star hotels — the Marriott, for example — near the airport can be booked for about \$65 at [www.priceline.com](http://www.priceline.com), the Kempinski becomes irrelevant.

- The food store in the basement of Zürich's **Globus** department store

([www.globus.ch](http://www.globus.ch)) is the best in town and a "must see" according to one longtime subscriber (whose name I failed to record).

- Veteran *Gemütlichkeit* reader, Nancy Lee Merz, of Holmdel, NJ, said she and her husband, Norman, had the most romantic meal of their trip in the **Weinkeller** at the **Hotel Theophano** in Quedlinburg, Germany. But Ms. Merz gives the award for most gracious hostess to Marianne Koschak-Krebs at the **Hotel Krebs** in Interlaken, a place long recommended by this publication.

- The **Garmischer Hof Hotel** in Garmisch-Partenkirchen gets the enthusiastic endorsement of Dick Hickman, a subscriber since 1990 and a frequent GAP visitor. He points out that the privately-operated (Seiwald family) hotel is centrally-located in Garmisch (as opposed to neighboring Partenkirchen), only a 10-minute walk from the rail station. Meals there, he says, "leave no doubt that there is a master chef in the kitchen." Double rooms range from €84 to €124.

- *Gemütlichkeit* is about independent, do-it-yourself travel. But every now and then there is the urge to turn it all over to someone else. In the late 70s and early 80s, when I was employed by the Golden State Warriors (director of player personnel) of the National Basketball Association, I recall how pleasant it was on team road trips to have someone else attend to the details of travel. Arriving at the airport to start a trip, I turned over my luggage to our trainer/road

secretary and was handed a boarding pass. When flights landed our group of 18 to 20 simply ambled from the gate to a waiting bus; someone else worried about luggage and getting us from airport to hotel. Arriving in the hotel lobby we were immediately handed keys and were able to go directly to our rooms where luggage was delivered a few minutes later. My sole travel responsibility was simply being on board the buses when they left for airports, games or hotels (there was a printed itinerary). As a result I was able to work, read or just enjoy the scenery and forego such tedious travel chores as checking in to hotels, standing in line for boarding passes, waiting for luggage, hauling luggage, standing in line for rental cars, driving rental cars in an unfamiliar cities, and so on.

If, in considering your next European trip, being part of a group of *Gemütlichkeit* readers and avoiding some of the more tiresome aspects of

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### Using Gemütlichkeit

- 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".

### Logging on to our Website

Back issues in text format from January 1993, except for the most recent 12, are available free to subscribers only at <http://www.gemut.com> (click on "Members"). To access the issues enter the user name and password published in this space each month. The new codes are:

User Name: **zburg** Password: **9753**

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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.

## NÜRNBERG

Continued from page 1

ries of wealth as a mercantile center and Free Imperial City.

In Nürnberg, few tourists walk around with guidebooks and harried, confused looks on their faces. Most seem drawn into a different world. Nürnberg is as much about taking in the atmosphere — the countless fountains, the lively cafes and shaded beer gardens, the throngs of shoppers — as it is about sightseeing. It's not a static museum, but rather quite alive.

Rivers bring life and romance to cities, and the Pegnitz is no exception. On its westward flow to the Regnitz and Rhine, it bisects the *Altstadt* and creates a charming landscape. Willows wave on the banks, as the waters lap at knolls of islands. There are about a dozen footbridges crossing it with names that strongly suggest past uses, like the Hangman's Bridge and the Meat Bridge (modeled after the Rialto).

Nürnberg has been a place of trade, merchants and craftspeople for centuries, and Germany's Industrial Revolution had its roots here. Today, it continues as a major service and commercial center.

While industry has continued to bring prosperity to the city in recent decades, thankfully the trappings of industry — factories and modern office buildings — remain outside the city center. This wealth, coupled with pride and foresight, has allowed Nürnberg to rebuild a town center that was almost completely destroyed in the last year of World War II. Most buildings were reconstructed following the same style and measurements of the originals. Even where modern structures have risen, old and new seem complementary rather than conflicting. Architects took themes, if not the same architectural styles, and integrated old with new. For example, rather than just another boxy skyscraper, a glass tower gives the impression of medieval turrets. Cartier next to a gingerbread shop doesn't look out of place.

The city's prosperity has also allowed it to invest in a vibrant cultural calendar and to build or expand some

## Nürnberg Basics

**Population:** 489,000

**Elevation:** 284-307 meters (932-1007 feet)

**Tourist Office:** Frauentorgraben 3, D-90443, Nürnberg, tel./fax: +49/911 23 360, email: [tourismus@nuernberg.de](mailto:tourismus@nuernberg.de), web: [www.tourismus.nuernberg.de](http://www.tourismus.nuernberg.de).

### Driving Distances:

Berlin	436km/270 miles
Frankfurt	225 km/140 miles
Munich	166 km/103 miles
Regensburg	108 km/67 miles
Würzburg	112 km/70 miles

### Major 2004 Events:

May 7-8, September 10-11, **Old City Trempelmarkt** (largest flea market in Germany)

May 14-23, **Nürnberg Asparagus Market**

July 2-11, **Franconian Wine Festival**

July 30-August 1, **Gathering of the Bards**

November 26-December 24, **Christkindlesmarkt** (Christmas Market)

of Germany's most stunning museums. Indeed, the city's museums ([www.museumsgalore.nuernberg.de](http://www.museumsgalore.nuernberg.de)) have teamed to make it a compelling destination for travelers of varied interests. Art-lovers could spend days at the **German National Museum**, the largest art museum in the German-speaking world. The "New Museum," officially known as the **State Museum for Art and Design**, offers extensive and changing collections of contemporary art. Train buffs can explore the **German Railway Museum** or the **Historic Streetcar Depot**, and the **Toy Museum** appeals to adults as well as children. There's even a **Pigeon Museum**. Many stay open until 8 or 9pm — perfect for travelers who want to make the most of their days.

Nürnberg is delightfully easy to navigate. Logical signage in German and English direct visitors along the **Historic Mile**; far longer than a mile, it winds past the important historic and cultural sights of the Old Town. Each major "station" along the route has a number, and descriptive markers and arrows point visitors to key attractions. The markers also suggest "detours" to secondary attractions.

Excellent brochures, with background information keyed to numbers and sights, are available free in the tourist office and many stores and also in printable form online at [www.historische-meile.nuernberg.de](http://www.historische-meile.nuernberg.de).

Travel beyond the medieval walls is just as easy thanks to an extensive and friendly public transit and regional rail systems — complete with subways.

The best place to start a walking tour is atop the **Kaiserburg**, the imperial castle that stands like a crown over the city. The craggy outcropping that holds the fortress was known as the "Nourenberc" — or rocky mountain — and it was here the German emperors held court from as early as the 12<sup>th</sup> century through 1543, making Nürnberg as close as medieval Germany had to an imperial capital. This helped set the stage for centuries of prosperity and drew the attention of symbol-centric Nazi leaders.

While the castle itself could (and should) take 2-3 hours' exploration, put off that temptation and first get a sense of the city's layout. From Nürnberg's "balcony," as many call it, at the northernmost point in the city, look to the steeples and towers that fill the panorama. Turrets rise from gates atop the city wall, itself ringed by dry moats converted to gardens and walking paths. Look at a map to get your bearings. It's easy to spot the steeples of **St. Lorenz** and **St. Sebaldus**, the city's two original parish churches, which gave the *Altstadt's* two districts their names as early as the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The 14<sup>th</sup>-century **Church of Our Lady** rises from the **Market Square** and faces the imposing baroque towers of the **City Hall**.

Continue your orientation in the **Fembo House City Museum**, located in a 16<sup>th</sup>-century patrician home, with a multimedia "time-travel" orientation of the city (earphones offer the English version). The short stop here provides a context for the walk ahead.

For a good sense of life in 16<sup>th</sup>-century Nürnberg, stop at the **Albrecht Dürer House**, where the artist worked from 1509 to 1528. Tours of the well-restored house are offered in character by Agnes Dürer, his "wife," looking extremely well after nearly 500 years. The tour is in German but English headsets are available.

The city's Market Square is an ongoing celebration from dawn, when the farmers set up, until late evening, when crowds spill from the bistros

and cafés. Street musicians draw appreciative and enthusiastic audiences. Life is not the same after you're heard Bach played on bagpipes.

Nearby, the winding **Weissengerbergasse** (Tanner's Lane) is a narrow alley with one half-timber house after another. The buildings — former artisans' homes — are original and this area is one of the few to survive the bombing. It's also home to some of the city's best bars and bistros, like **Zum Hallertor**, the **Esscobar** and **The Druid**.

The **Hospital Quarter** (*Spitalviertel*) provides some of the city's most worthy postcard views. The **Hospital of the Holy Spirit** was extended over the Pegnitz in the 1500s—an architectural feat for the time and a scenic backdrop for the medieval district.

Although the **Craftsmen's Courtyard** (*Handwerkerhof*) is a re-creation, not a restoration, the shops and narrow streets feel more historic than commercial. It's a celebration of the crafts and trades that make up so much of the city's heritage: tin toy shop, gingerbread bakery, stained glass store, candle maker, pottery, leather goods, goldsmith, doll and puppet shop and wooden toys. Absorb the setting while enjoying 8 sausages for €7 at the "historic" sausage restaurant, **Das Bratwurstglöcklein**.

### Key Websites for the Traveler

- [www.gemut.com](http://www.gemut.com) Gateway site for travelers to Germanic Europe, including car rental, rail passes, hotel bookings, traveler feedback, travel tips and past issues (free access to back issues for subscribers; see log-on info on page 2).
- [www.viamichelin.com](http://www.viamichelin.com) The Michelin database of hotels and restaurants plus great interactive trip planning tools.
- [www.travelgearnow.com](http://www.travelgearnow.com) Guidebooks, maps, travel accessories, luggage, all at 10% off for subscribers.
- [www.webflyer.com](http://www.webflyer.com) Informative frequent flyer forums make this a must for air travelers.
- [bahn.hafas.de/bin/query.exe/en](http://bahn.hafas.de/bin/query.exe/en) German rail. Train schedules throughout Europe, not just Germany.
- [www.sbb.ch/index\\_e.htm](http://www.sbb.ch/index_e.htm) Swiss and European rail schedules.
- [www.ski-europe.com](http://www.ski-europe.com) Top web resource for skiers with much data on Alpine resorts.
- [www.myswitzerland.com](http://www.myswitzerland.com) Website of Switzerland's national tourist authority.
- [www.germany-tourism.de](http://www.germany-tourism.de) Germany's national tourist authority.
- [www.austria.info/us](http://www.austria.info/us) Austria's national tourist authority.
- <http://www.hhog.de> Website for an alliance of historic German cities.

During a visit to Nürnberg, make time to visit the **Nazi Party Rally Grounds**, about 20 easy minutes away by public transit (parking limited). More than five times the size of the *Altstadt* and intended to hold more than a half-million people, it's a monument to megalomania.

The **Congress Hall**, designed to hold 50,000 spectators but never completed, is the largest remaining monument built by the Nazis. The **Zeppelin Field** and **Tribune** could hold 160,000. This is where, in the famous newsreel scene, American GIs blew up a huge granite swastika. Sites are connected by the Great Road — two kilometers (1 mile) long and 60 meters (200 feet) wide and paved with granite blocks quarried by 100,000 slave laborers.

It's in the Congress Hall that the **Documentation Center** — one of the most compelling museums this writer has experienced — describes the rise and fall of the Nazi party and the consequences on Germany, Europe and the world. Visitors enter through a glass and steel gangway that pierces the north wing "like an arrow through the heart of Nazism," guides explain, "a pointed architectural statement of the present against the past." The bilingual exhibit, "Fascination and Terror," supported by English-language literature, forces visitors to confront the past. The path through the museum is designed to disturb, impress and intimidate with abrupt turns and jarring images.

Affiliated with the Documentation Center is **Courtroom 600** in Nürnberg's Palace of Justice, just a subway stop from the *Altstadt*. It's here that the International Military Tribunal took place in the years after the war. Since the courtroom is still in use today, guided tours take place weekends only from 1-4pm, on the hour. Tours are in German, although a detailed pamphlet and subtitles to an explanatory film are in English.

Nürnberg's tourism web site offers extensive English content on history, attractions, bus and walking tours, lodging, packages, public transit and even the city's gingerbread heritage. A best-buy is the two-day **Nürnberg Card** (€18), available to those who book at least one night's

accommodations. The card, available at most hotels, offers unlimited use of public transportation, free admission to all museums and most attractions, and additional discounts.

### Lodging

Despite its strong appeal to travelers, businesspeople are the primary clients of the city's hotels. This translates into generally better rates on weekends and from June through August. For the same reason, rates are often higher and rooms more difficult to find during the "Messe," the massive trade shows and conferences the city often hosts. Avoid those dates by checking the Messe web site at [www.nuernbergmesse.de](http://www.nuernbergmesse.de). Nürnberg's popular Christmas Market often means top rates and sold-out hotels as well.

### Burghotel Stammhaus

At the Burghotel Stammhaus, co-owner Walter Junker greets even a first-time guest warmly: "Ah yes, we've been expecting you. Welcome!" This *Altstadt* hostelry is part of a select group of German hotels called "Hotels with Heart." It shows.

Rooms are admittedly small, but have comfortable beds and all the standard conveniences (showers, but no bathtubs). Even rooms facing the street are quiet, since there's little traffic, and the neighboring buildings are residential. Some rooms on the off-street side, like 202, have balconies and a view to a lush park.

Breakfast is an unexpected delight with waffle cones filled with fresh berries, red peppers wrapped around herb cheese, and far more choices than one would expect at a hotel this size. In good weather, seating extends to a terrace enveloped by grape vines. Located near the base of the Kaiserburg, the Stammhaus is less than a minute from the center of activity.

**Contact:** Burghotel Stammhaus, Schildgasse 14, D-90403 Nürnberg, tel +49/911/203040, fax 226503, email [nuernberg@burghotel-stamm.de](mailto:nuernberg@burghotel-stamm.de), web [www.burghotel-stamm.de](http://www.burghotel-stamm.de). Proprietors: Walter Junker and Josefina Rück.  
**Daily Rates:** Singles €62-72, doubles €89, suites €139

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

### Hotel Elch

First mentioned as a hostelry in 1342, the Elch retains much of its medieval character even today. It's easy to imagine centuries of guests walking down from the nearby fortress and entering the half-timber facade through the arched doorway. Upstairs, they found guestrooms with a somewhat rustic character that perhaps reminded them of home.

Today's rooms maintain much of that feeling and blend with the history of the setting. Most have wood-plank floors and ceilings, and those at both ends feature visible half-timber construction. For the most authentic chambers, ask for the top floor, where many of the original beams still support the gabled roof. These simple, comfortable rooms have modern conveniences, however, from updated bathrooms with showers to Internet access. Furniture is either antique or "antiqued."

**Contact:** Hotel Elch, D-90403 Nürnberg, Irnerstrasse 9, tel. +49/911/249/298 0, fax 298 44, email [info@hotel-elch.com](mailto:info@hotel-elch.com), web [www.hotel-elch.com](http://www.hotel-elch.com).

**Daily Rates:** Singles €65, doubles €85

**Rating:** QUALITY 12/20, VALUE 13/20

### Hotel Agneshof

From the outside, the Hotel Agneshof is unremarkable, just another old building in Nürnberg's oldest district. But inside, is a chic, modern hotel with a fresh Mediterranean flair. Rooms are modern with designer themes — sleek lines, geometrical furniture and broad checkerboard tiles in the baths.

Most rooms face the peaceful inner courtyard and garden. The best choices, however, face the Agnesgasse with balconies that look to the castle (you'll pay for the view — except on weekends).

**Contact:** Hotel Agneshof, Agnesgasse 10, D-90403 Nürnberg, tel: 49/911/214440, fax: 21444144, email [agneshof-nuernberg@sorat-hotels.com](mailto:agneshof-nuernberg@sorat-hotels.com), web [www.sorat-hotels.com/agneshof-nuernberg/index.htm](http://www.sorat-hotels.com/agneshof-nuernberg/index.htm).

**Daily Rates:** Singles €90-155, doubles €105-190 (weekends: single €80, double €95)

**Rating:** QUALITY 13/20, VALUE 13/20

### Hotel am Jacobsmarkt

This charmer consists of four nearly adjacent buildings along the narrow Schottengasse near the historic town's south wall. Entry to the main building leads to a cheerful reception area. Behind it, hotel guests linger at a small bar or relax on deep, welcoming sofas and loveseats. Upstairs, one has a choice of "modern" or "rustic" guestrooms. The latter — many with original beams — are fully updated (ask for Number 424) and the modern rooms are equally appealing.

**Editor's  
Choice**

The best bet, however, is a few doors down, where the hotel offers two-story, one- and two-bedroom apartments. While the convenience of a full kitchen and larger living areas is advantageous, the main attraction is the sense of living in your own half-timber home. Apartments are generally limited to guests staying four or more nights, but this requirement is often waived on weekends and during the summer months. "Residents" have full access to all hotel amenities.

The hotel is in the southwest corner of the Old Town in a quiet area away from much of the pedestrian action. Still, it's close to several major museums, the Opera House and the subway. From the train station, it's about a 10-minute walk.

**Contact:** Hotel am Jacobsmarkt, Schottengasse 5, D-90402, Nürnberg, tel. +49/911/20 07 0, fax: 20 07 200, email:[info@hotel-am-jakobsmarkt.de](mailto:info@hotel-am-jakobsmarkt.de), [www.hotel-am-jakobsmarkt.de](http://www.hotel-am-jakobsmarkt.de). Proprietor: Wilhelm Hofmann.

**Daily Rates:** Singles €81-105, doubles €103-127, apartments €117-137 (weekends: singles €65, doubles €91, apartments €97)

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

### Hotel Deutscher Hof

World War II buffs may find the Deutscher Hof to their liking — at least as a curiosity. It was here that Hitler stayed with his entourage during his many visits to Nürnberg. History books show familiar photos of the dictator saluting from the balcony of his second-floor suite, framed by swastikas, the street below filled with frenzied followers. The hotel does nothing to remind guests of the past (a question regarding "Hitler's room"

## TRAVEL SURF WATCH

■ **Gemütlichkeit "philosophy:"** At a time when *Gemütlichkeit* is adding new subscribers, some may want to know more about the publication. **The Travel Insider's** 2003 online interview with editor and publisher Robert Bestor offers insights to the newsletter's strengths and limitations as well as a philosophy and set of personal preferences that, to a large extent, determine what the newsletter chooses to cover — or declines to. See [www.thetravelinsider.info/2002/1220bobbestor.htm](http://www.thetravelinsider.info/2002/1220bobbestor.htm)

While visiting The Travel Insider, be sure to sign up for publisher David Rowell's weekly newsletter, an always-interesting, often "ripped from the headlines" mix of travel commentary plus reviews of the latest travel gadgets. Mr. Rowell isn't bashful about offering his opinions, a trait reflected not only in his weekly reports but in his lively and eclectic website, [www.thetravelinsider.info](http://www.thetravelinsider.info). Check out his review of *Gemütlichkeit*.

■ **Farm stays and more:** The true bargains of European travel are in vacation rentals. *Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof* is a marketing association of German farm and wine properties with rooms, apartments and cottages for rent. Rates range from about 13 euros per person to 80 euros per room. Our sampling of half a dozen or so Bavarian properties indicates many comfortable accommodations can be had in the \$300 to \$400 per week range. See [www.farmholidays.de](http://www.farmholidays.de).

■ **New Munich restaurants:** A trio of new Munich restaurants is reviewed at the website of the English language magazine, *Munich Found*. In addition, the site's archives contain much info of interest to a visitor to the city. Go to: [www.munichfound.de/new.cfm?News\\_ID=1742](http://www.munichfound.de/new.cfm?News_ID=1742)

■ **Great holidays on a small budget:** Go to [www.germany-tourism.de/e/nsalt\\_infocenter\\_kleinepreisemap.html](http://www.germany-tourism.de/e/nsalt_infocenter_kleinepreisemap.html). Click a city on the map to download brochure pages with color photos of hotels priced at 40 euros per person and less. Symbols indicate services available and there is full contact info including hotel web addresses.

returned a blank smile but no response). Rooms are bland but spacious with modern amenities. The hotel lies just outside the town walls one block from the Opera House and a five-minute walk from the train station. A subway stop is near the front door.

**Contact:** Hotel Deutscher Hof, Frauentorgraben 29, D-90443 Nürnberg, tel. +49/911/90443.

**Daily Rates:** Singles €59-97, doubles €74-124

**Rating:** QUALITY 11/20, VALUE 11/20

### Food

Nürnberg's cuisine is typical for Franconia. The Franconian butcher's platter (*Schlachtplatte*) offers a tempting collection of sliced sausages including *Blutwurst* and *Leberwurst*. *Schäufele* (roasted pork shoulder) is usually served with potato dumplings. *Krautwickala* is a mixture of ground meat and spices rolled in a cabbage leaf, then roasted. River fish are also popular, especially carp either fried or poached and served in horseradish-cream sauce.

Hungry travelers will need to order at least a half-dozen of Nürnberg's roasted sausages — whose size and weight are still governed by strict law. Restaurants celebrate the pinky-sized treat with a variety of styles including soured in onion stock, atop a salad of fresh asparagus. The most typical is "naked" (*nackert*) with onions, salt and pepper or perhaps a dab of horseradish.

### Heilig Geist Spital

This historic setting — an expansive medieval hospice built along and over the Pegnitz — features fine Franconian cuisine. Start with Franconian wedding soup with liver dumplings or Old Nürnberg onion soup with Franconian wine added to the broth. Continue with roasted pork shoulder, broiled pork hock, *Sauerbraten* in gingerbread sauce or bratwurst in your choice of styles. Fish and vegetarian dishes are also available. Entrées average €10-12.

**Contact:** Heilig Geist Spital, Spitalgasse 16, D-90403 Nuernberg, tel +49 0911 221761, fax +49 0911 208655, [info@heiliggest.spital.de](mailto:info@heiliggest.spital.de).

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

### Da Gaetano

Da Gaetano is a great option for reasonably priced, fast (but not rushed) dining — especially for travelers who want a break from *Rindfleisch* and *Schnitzel*. German cuisine is offered, but the focus is Italian specialties like risotto, papardelle with wild mushrooms, calamari, pizza frutti di mare, gnocchi sorrentino, and tagliatelle with mushrooms. Most entrées are in the €7-12 range.

The dining area is one flight up with a view over the Market Square. Ask for a table in the oriel window which offers nearly a 180-degree view. The two rooms are warmly decorated with plates, paintings and prints from Italy and plenty of plants and ivy. Fresh flowers and candles brighten booths and tables. The friendly setting and prompt service makes for relaxed dining.

**Contact:** Da Gaetano, Hauptmarkt 9, D-90403 Nürnberg, +49/911/2276 31

**Rating:** QUALITY 14/20, VALUE 15/20

### Kettensteg

The Kettensteg, located by the bridge of the same name, is a romantic bistro overlooking the Pegnitz. Choose the lower of the restaurant's two levels for the best views, or sit in the beer garden. From there, watch the ducks and listen to the muted rush of a waterfall. The menu features traditional Franconian fare such as sausages and pork shoulder, as well as a variety of pasta dishes.

Prices are reasonable with main dishes averaging about €11. After dinner, walk across the bridge and look back to the restaurant, where the candles look like a swarm of fireflies.

**Contact:** Kettensteg, Maxplatz 35, D-90403 Nürnberg, tel: +49/911/22 10 81.

**Rating:** QUALITY 12/20, VALUE 13/20

### Nassauer Keller

This 13<sup>th</sup>-century stone tower, built even before the town fortifications, is among Nürnberg's oldest houses, and the Nassauer Keller is one of Germany's oldest inns. Guests duck through the narrow entrance and descend the steep wooden stairway into a richly medieval basement setting. Candles flicker against brick walls and ceilings. History is palpable. In addition

EDITOR'S CHOICE

to the usual *Sauerbraten* and pork shoulder offerings, the restaurant serves tempting fish and game dishes including venison with calvados cream and cranberries, poached salmon, and roast duck with red cabbage and potato dumplings. Leave room on the credit card for a good bottle chosen from the excellent wine card.

Entrées range from €11 to €21, but It's best to call ahead for reservations.

**Contact:** Nassauer Keller, Karolinenstrasse 2, D-90402 Nürnberg, tel./fax: +49/911/225 967

**Rating:** QUALITY 15/20, VALUE 16/20

### Lederer Kulturbrauerei

It's worth the 5-minute subway ride (and the nearly 30-minute walk) to dine outside in the sprawling beer garden at the Lederer Kulturbrauerei, a former brewery with roots in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Entrées are in the €8-10 neighborhood and include pork shoulder sold by the 100-gram portion, "brewer's schnitzel" filled with cheese and ham, "beer wagon goulash," spare ribs and Nürnberger sausages. For €4-6, snacks include fresh breads, warm pretzels and meat, sausage and cheese platters. Although there's pleasant indoor seating, the best spots are outside, where it's self-service. Guests sit at trestle tables in a wooded park setting. Many play chess or backgammon and make it an afternoon.

**Contact:** Lederer Kulturbrauerei, Sielstrasse 12, D-90317 Nürnberg, tel. +49/911/26 86 65 (one block from Room 600)

**Rating:** QUALITY 12/20, VALUE 13/20

*Two longtime Gemütlichkeit favorites not visited this trip but which we continue to recommend are...*

### Weinhaus Steichele


Simple but pleasant and welcoming family-run hotel in the very heart of the old town. Good restaurant.

Weinhaus Steichele, Knorrstr 2, D-90402, tel. +49/0911/202280, fax 221914, web [www.steichele.de](http://www.steichele.de), email [hotelsteichele@steichele.de](mailto:hotelsteichele@steichele.de). Room prices from €62-95.

**Rating:** QUALITY 11/20, VALUE 15/20

### Bratwursthäusle

In this town bratwurst is a vener-

ated food and this is its temple. Sometimes as many as 10,000 tiny, spicy sausages are served in a day here. Though the Bratwursthäusle is touristy, the food is delicious, the service good and prices reasonable. Don't miss it. Bratwursthäusle, Rathausplatz 1, [www.bratwurst-haeusle.de](http://www.bratwurst-haeusle.de). 

## OKTOBERFEST

*Continued from page 1*

Heinz Müller's 17-piece brass band occupies the center bandstand in this tent, and since I've been a brass player for over 50 years, I appreciate the musicians' ability. Whether playing marches that make one want to get up and parade, popular tunes, sing-alongs, or dance music, this is one fine group.

The food was another draw that kept us coming back to this tent, plus I think Paulaner is the best beer at the Oktoberfest. There is rack after rack of chickens on huge rotisseries, turning themselves a golden brown. Before cooking, the birds are stuffed with special herbs and spices that make them simply delicious.

The mechanics of reserving a table are pretty simple. Contact the tent's operators in the early spring for fall reservations. For all tents, the requirements are basically the same: You must pay for 20 beers and 10 half chickens per table in order to make a reservation. Your reservation begins at 5:00 in the evening, so others may be sitting at your table if you wait until then to arrive. Some tents will require you to pay in advance and pick up your tokens and tickets when you arrive. They are sold without "service," so when you present a them to your server, you must pay the "tip" at that time (about 15% additional). Those who don't like chicken, can use the tickets for other food items. Of course, the tokens are for either regular or "unleaded" (alcohol-free) beer.

When you arrive on the day requested, there will be a list posted inside the tent with your name and the location of your reserved table.

The tents generally open around 10:30 to 11am, and the bands strike up around noon. Perhaps 10% to 20% of the tables are unreserved and on a

first-come, first-served basis. Of course, it's easier to get a seat before noon on a weekday versus showing up at 6:30pm on a weekend evening. We always reserve midweek because there are more "locals" at that time and the atmosphere is less chaotic. Since September 11, 2001, it doesn't seem as crowded as in prior years.

We've found that the evenings generally get pretty rowdy, with the younger crowd dancing on the tables, spilling beer on one another and sometimes altercations ensue, but everyone seems to have a good time anyway. One year, a couple of locals sitting behind us got into an argument, and one hit the other over the head with a beer stein. Security guards took both men outside for a visit to the first-aid booth and a lecture before bringing them back to sit again at the table as friends.

A list of the various tents is at [www.oktoberfest.de/en/home](http://www.oktoberfest.de/en/home).

Here is a general description of the tents and beer served. Listed by popularity with my comments:

- **Bräurosl** (Hacker-Pschorr), tel. 089/857 20 29, fax: 089/859 70 56. Nice and typical Munich.

- **Winzerer Fähndl** (Paulaner) tel. 089/46 20 22 95, fax 089/45 65 59 49. Where we always go. Great beer, great food, great band. *Gemütlich* atmosphere.

- **Fischer Vroni** (Augustiner) tel. 089/66 10 42, fax 089/65 25 34, web [www.fischer-vroni.de](http://www.fischer-vroni.de) Small but good atmosphere and the fantastic *Steckerlfisch*. (Steckerl in the Bavarian dialect means "little stick" and in this dish a stick is inserted lengthways through the fish, mostly mackerel, so it can be angled over a charcoal fire, a technique that allows the fat to run down the stick and not into the fire.)

- **Schützen Festhalle** (Löwenbräu), email [schuetzen-festhalle@t-online.de](mailto:schuetzen-festhalle@t-online.de). Another smaller tent, people are on the benches early here, but it never gets too chaotic.

- **Augustiner** (Augustiner), tel s089/ 231 83 266, Fax: 089/ 260 53 79, [www.augustiner-restaurant.com](http://www.augustiner-restaurant.com). An institution and the favorite tent of the real "Münchner."

## Travel Nitty Gritty You Can Use

■ **Walking in Switzerland:** Everywhere in the country are the yellow signs that mark walking and hiking paths (*Wanderweg, chemin pédestre*). Typically they display altitude, destination, and often the approximate time to the destination. Times are based on a moderate 4.2 kilometers (2.6 miles) per hour pace on flat land. Paths in the mountains (*Bergweg, sentier de montagne*) have a red and white tip. Sometimes signs are in canton colors and some areas have special hiking paths suitable for wheelchairs.

Just in case: the phone number of the Swiss REGA helicopter rescue service — the ambulance of the Alps — is 01/383 11 11. Be prepared to tell them exactly where you are — and to pay.

■ **Movies in Switzerland:** German language newspapers use a code to indicate movie soundtrack languages. The first uppercase letter indicates the original language followed by lower case letters which tell the language(s) of subtitles. Thus E/d/f denotes a film in English with German ("d" for Deutsch) and French subtitles. In French-speaking areas look for the letters 'v.o.' which signify *version originale* meaning the movie's soundtrack is in the language of the country of origin. So 'v.o.' with any Hollywood movie means it will be in English.

■ **Contacting local tourist offices:** Local and regional tourist offices in our three countries have literally tons of free information that will be useful in planning your trip: hotel brochures, restaurant lists, walking routes, lists of vacation rentals, maps, etc. The big question is where do you find their mailing address, phone number, fax number or email address? Answer? In the *Michelin Red Guides*. Virtually every town listing in every red guide contains tourist office contact information (unfortunately, there is no guide for Austria). If you don't want to spend the money for the latest guide try your local library.



• **Hacker-Festhalle** (Hacker-Pschorr). The nice decoration fits well with a friendly and professional landlord, Toni Roider.

• **Hippodrom** (Spaten-Franziskaner-Bräu), email: [hippodrom@t-online.de](mailto:hippodrom@t-online.de). A very bad image until some years ago. Sepp Krätz has made it a good place to eat, but not cheap.

• **Armbrustschützen-Zelt** (Paulaner). No listings. The tent is good, but the decoration is pretty dreary.

• **Ochsenbraterei** (Spaten), tel. 089/383 873 12, fax 089/383 873 40. [www.ochsenbraterei.de/](http://www.ochsenbraterei.de/) Roasting whole oxen is a good show, but ox meat is better elsewhere.


• **Käfer** (Paulaner), tel 089/416 83 56, fax: 089/416 82 07, email [wiesn@feinkost-kaefer.de](mailto:wiesn@feinkost-kaefer.de). Very special but not typically Oktoberfest. By invitation only.

• **Weinzelt** (Wine, Sekt), tel. 089/290 705 17, fax: 089/242 438 81, email [weinzelt@kuffler.de](mailto:weinzelt@kuffler.de). Pretty girls and Paulaner Weissbier.

• **Löwenbräu-Festhalle** (Löwenbräu). tel. 089/477 67 7, fax 089/470 58 48, email [festzelt@unionsbraeu.de](mailto:festzelt@unionsbraeu.de). Full of Aussies, Canadians, Kiwis, Americans...

• **Hofbräuhaus** (Hofbräu München), web: [www.hb-festzelt.de](http://www.hb-festzelt.de). Full of Aussies, Canadians, Kiwis, Americans...

• **Schottenhamel** (Spaten-Franziskaner-Bräu), tel. 089/544 69 310, fax 089/544 69 319, web [www.schottenhamel.de](http://www.schottenhamel.de). Used to be an institution, a place of city council and meetings of former fraternity members. These days the younger crowd is more interested in finding a date.

We'll be back again in 2004. Oktoberfest begins on September 18<sup>th</sup>, and ends on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. 

## DEAR SUBSCRIBER

*Continued from page 2*

travel sounds appealing, I can think of no more appropriate tour for our readers than **Insider Bavaria**, and no better tour leader than our own Jim Johnson. The author of this month's lead story on Nürnberg — and many others over the past several years — Jim is not only a vastly experienced traveler to our three countries and

fluent German speaker, but a scholar of German history and culture. In addition to his role as our senior writer, he is a near full-time consultant to Historic Highlights of Germany ([www.historicgermany.com](http://www.historicgermany.com)), a marketing association of 14 German cities. Jim's contacts with that group assure those who join him on his nine-night itinerary of a unique, "insiders" travel experience — one sure to take you behind doors closed to the average tourist. There will be memorable dinners in memorable rooms, private wine tastings, and overnights in some of our favorite hotels. Jim's ground-only tour starts in Würzburg, October 11. For further information, see page four of the advertising insert or email Jim at [jjohnson@hhog.de](mailto:jjohnson@hhog.de), or me at [bob@gemut.com](mailto:bob@gemut.com), for a detailed itinerary.

• The best winter tour we know of is Karen Pasold's **Christmas Markets of Imperial Europe**. This year, it starts in Prague November 30, then goes to Leipzig, Weimar, Meissen, Dresden, Kraków, and finishes in Budapest on December 10. The \$1975 per person price includes hotels, ground transport, nine breakfasts, seven dinners, five lunches, tips, and a welcome reception. The tour visits the more authentic markets of Eastern Europe, and includes a number of guided walking and bus tours. Intriguing stops along the way include a visit to Oscar Schindler's factory (*Schindler's List*) in Kraków, dinner with Gypsy music in Budapest at **Nostalgia Etterem** and, on the last night, a ballet (possibly the Nutcracker) at the Budapest Opera House.

We endorse this tour mainly because we know that it bears Ms. Pasold's personal stamp from start to finish. A longtime *Gemütlichkeit* subscriber and an expert on Eastern Europe travel, she has chosen every hotel and restaurant following in-person visits and careful inspection. As we said last year, this is the "mother" of all Christmas market tours.

Ms. Pasold will send you a brochure and/or a CD. Contact: Karen Pasold, Classic Europe, 1 Glenmoor, Frisco TX 75034, tel. 972-625-6050, fax 972-370-2700, email: [classic europe@yahoo.com](mailto:classic europe@yahoo.com). — RHB 

## We Recommend

This listing of good value, mid-priced hotels in popular destination cities is intended for fast reference. Additional hotels and links to hotel websites hotels is in the **Archives & Hotel Database** sections at [www.gemut.com](http://www.gemut.com). The required subscriber user name and password for access this month is on page 2 herein. Hotels are arranged in price order, higher to lower.

### Berlin

**Hotel Art Nouveau**, Leibnizstr. 59, tel. +49/030/327 7440, fax 327 744 40, email: [hotellartnouveau@snauf.de](mailto:hotellartnouveau@snauf.de)

**Hotel Domus**, Uhländstrasse 49, Germany D-10719, tel. +49/030/882041, fax 882 0410, email: [info@hotel-domus-berlin.de](mailto:info@hotel-domus-berlin.de)

### Bern

**Hotel Innere Enge**, Engestrasse 54, CH-3012, tel. +41/031/309 6111, fax 309 6112, email: [info@zghotels.ch](mailto:info@zghotels.ch)

**Hotel Kreuz**, Zeughausgasse 41, CH-3000, tel. +41/031/329 9595, fax 329 95 96, email: [hotelkrenz@swissonline.ch](mailto:hotelkrenz@swissonline.ch)

### Lausanne

**Hostellerie du Débarcadère** 7 chemin du Cret, Saint Sulpice, CH-102, tel. +41/021/691 5747, fax 691 5079, email: [debarcadere@swissonline.ch](mailto:debarcadere@swissonline.ch) (not in town)

**Hotel Agora**, Av. du Rond-Point 9, CH-1006, tel. +41/021/617 1211, fax 616 2605, email: [agora@fhotels.ch](mailto:agora@fhotels.ch)

### Lucerne

**Hotel Wilden Mann**, Bahnhofstrasse 30, CH-6000 Luzern, tel. +41/041/2101666, fax 2101629, email: [mail@wilden-mann.ch](mailto:mail@wilden-mann.ch)

**Hotel Cascada**, Bundesplatz 18, CH-6003 Lucerne, tel: +41/041/226 80 88, fax 226 80 00, email: [info@cascada.ch](mailto:info@cascada.ch)

### Munich

**Hotel Exquisit**, Pettenkofenstr. 3, tel. +49/089/ 551 99 0, fax 551 99 499, email: [info@hotel-exquisit.com](mailto:info@hotel-exquisit.com)

**Hotel Kraft**, Schillerstr. 49, tel. +49/089/594823-24, fax 550 3856, email: [office@kraft-hotel.com](mailto:office@kraft-hotel.com)

### Rothenburg ob der Tauber

**Reichs-Küchenmeister**, Kirchplatz 8, Rothenburg o.d. Tauber, Germany D-91541, tel. +49/09861/97 00, fax 97 04 09, email: [hotel@reichskuechenmeister.com](mailto:hotel@reichskuechenmeister.com)

### Salzburg & Environs

**Schloss Haunsperg**, A-5411 Oberalm bei Hallein, Hammerstrasse 32, tel. +43/06245/80662, fax 85680, email: [info@schlosshaunsperg.com](mailto:info@schlosshaunsperg.com)

**Hotel Struber**, Nonntaler Hauptstrasse 35, Austria A-5020 tel. +43/0662/843 728, fax 843 728 8, email: [struber@sbg.at](mailto:struber@sbg.at)

**Hotel Jedermann**, Rupertgasse 25, Austria A-5020, tel. +43/0662/873241-0, fax 873241-9, email: [jedermann@salzburginfo.or.at](mailto:jedermann@salzburginfo.or.at)

### Vienna

**Hotel Römischer Kaiser**, Annagasse 16, A-1010, tel +43/01/512 77 51 0, fax 512 77 51 13, email: [info@rhotel.bestwestern.com](mailto:info@rhotel.bestwestern.com)

**Allstadt Vienna**, Kirchengasse 41, tel. +43/01/526 3399-0, fax 523 4901, email: [hotel@alstadt.at](mailto:hotel@alstadt.at), web: [www.alstadt.at](http://www.alstadt.at)

**Pension Aviano**, Marco-D'Aviano-Gasse 1, tel. +43/01/512 8330, fax 512 8330 6, email: [aviano@pertschy.com](mailto:aviano@pertschy.com)

### Zürich

**Hotel Florhof**, Florhofgasse 4, Switzerland CH-8001, tel. 41/01/261 4470, fax 261 4611, email: [info@florhof.ch](mailto:info@florhof.ch)

**Hotel Arlette**, Stampfenbachstrasse 26, Switzerland CH-8001, tel. +41/01/25 20 032, fax 25 20 932, email: [hotel.arlette@bliuwin.ch](mailto:hotel.arlette@bliuwin.ch)

### Frankfurt Airport

**Steigenberger Esprix Hotel Frankfurt Airport** CargoCity Süd, D-60549, tel. +49/069/69 70 99, fax 69 70 94 44, email: [frankfurt@esprix-hotels.de](mailto:frankfurt@esprix-hotels.de)

**Hotel Birkenhof**, von-Eiff-Str 37, Hanau-Steinheim, D-63456, tel. +49/06181/648 80, fax 64 88 39, email: [info@HotelBirkenhof.de](mailto:info@HotelBirkenhof.de) (25-minute drive from airport)

**Hotel Dreieich**, Frankfurter Str. 49, Langen, D-63225, tel. +49/06103/91 50, fax 52 030 (15-minute drive from airport)

### Munich Airport

**Kempinski Hotel Airport**, Terminalstrasse/Mitte 20, D-85356 Munich, tel. +49/089/9782-0, fax 97822610, [info@kempinski-airport.de](mailto:info@kempinski-airport.de)

**Hotel Hoyacker Hof**, Freisinger Landstrasse 9a, D-85748 Garching b. München, tel. +49/089/326 9900, fax 320 7243, email: [info@hoyackerhof.de](mailto:info@hoyackerhof.de)

### Zürich Airport

**Mövenpick Zürich Airport** Walter-Mittelholzerstrasse 8, CH-8152 Glattbrugg, tel. +41/01/808 88 88, fax 808 88 77, email: [hotel@movenpick-zurich-airport.ch](mailto:hotel@movenpick-zurich-airport.ch)

**Hotel Fly Away**, Marktgasse 19, Zürich-Kloten, Switzerland CH-8302, tel. +41/01/804 4455, fax 804 44 50, email: [reservation@hotel-flyaway.ch](mailto:reservation@hotel-flyaway.ch)