



TRAVELTIPS

From wire reports

Books on an iPod

Take the Apple iPod, add a best-selling novel and mix in the venerable Algonquin Hotel. The result: a marketing gimmick with high-tech overtones for a low-tech product.

The 174-room Algonquin in New York, renowned for its fat, gossipy literary history through the decades — a history that features Dorothy Parker, New Yorker editor William Shawn and many others — now offers a battery-operated take on reading, or, rather, listening: Guests will be able to take a loaner iPod to bed, preloaded by staff with the audio book of their choice.

The iPods — there are two on hand to start — will be loaned at no cost on a first-come, first-served basis, and guests can choose from a selection of classics and current best sellers.

Airline prices rise

WASHINGTON — With the summer travel season around the corner, several of the nation's largest airlines last week raised round-trip ticket prices by \$10 to \$20.

The latest round was launched by AMR Corp.'s American Airlines, which increased prices systemwide on Wednesday by \$2 to \$6 per round trip. Delta followed with fare hikes of \$10 to \$20, which many of the other airlines, including American, later matched.

The airlines said they raised their fares to offset soaring fuel prices. It's the seventh ticket price increase since February.

Hurricane outlook

WASHINGTON — Brace yourself. This year's hurricane season is expected to be worse than last year's, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's annual forecast Monday.

Forecasters predicted seven to nine hurricanes this year, compared with a forecast of six to eight in 2004 — and last year was far worse than the predictions. The hurricane season in 2004 was one of the most damaging, with 12 major storms. Four consecutive storms — Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne — hit Florida within six weeks.

Airlines such as American, Delta, US Airways and JetBlue that have many flights to the Caribbean and Florida took substantial financial hits during last year's third quarter, a period that is traditionally one of their most profitable periods. The major airlines lost more than \$1 billion during the period because they had to cancel a large percentage of their flights. Hurricane season stretches from June 1 to Nov. 30.

Italian cuisine exhibit

WASHINGTON — It might be hard for Americans to imagine today, but there were times when you couldn't find a good meal in Italy. That's illustrated in "Fifty Years of Italian Cuisine," an exhibit at the Italian Cultural Institute here.

During World War II, Italians not only had to cope with food scarcities and privation, they also faced accusations from the state-controlled press that if they ate too much, they were stealing from the fatherland.

Through photographs, ads, magazines and newspapers, the exhibit traces Italian eating from then until today, and what it calls a renaissance of Italian cuisine.

The Italian Cultural Institute is at 2025 M St. NW, Suite 610, in Washington. The free exhibit runs through May 27. For reservations, call (202) 223-9800, Ext. 1. www.italcultusa.org.



Burghausen Castle, the longest castle in Europe at 3,422 feet, overlooks the historic downtown area of Burghausen, Germany, from the bluff above the Salzach River.

Bavarian Beauty

Regal Bavaria's treasures are on display in Munich and neighboring towns while American pop culture references remind a traveler of home.

Story and photos by
David Panian
Daily Telegram Staff Writer

MUNICH, Germany — On a cool night last month while on a trip to southern Germany and Austria, I thought I was in a completely Bavarian environment, walking across a bridge that connects Burghausen, Germany, with Ach, Austria, after a Bavarian dinner in a centuries-old castle and then enjoying a glass of weissbier — you can't go to Germany and not have some beer, especially the fine wheat beer — at a pub in Burghausen's historic stadtplatz (city center). Some of my reporter colleagues and I who were in Germany at the invitation of Wacker Chemie GmbH were on our way back to the Hotel Burgblick, which required crossing the two-lane bridge over the Salzach River, when we heard the sounds of a rock tune echoing off the hills: "Whoa, we're halfway there ... Whoa, livin' on a prayer!"

Yes, the hills were alive with the sound of a German band playing Bon Jovi's hit from 1987. I was at once annoyed, since I don't care for Bon Jovi, and amazed that I was hearing American music in a town that dates to at least 600 A.D. — or to 100 B.C. if you count when Celts first settled in the area. Heck, I had just had dinner in Burghausen Castle — the longest castle in Europe at 3,422 feet and where Napoleon stayed for a few days in 1809. You'd think such a place would be well insulated against bad hair-band music.

Luckily, Bavaria is proud to put its history on display and — mostly — drown out such outside influences. The city of Munich was heavily damaged by Allied bombing during World War II, and the people there decided to rebuild the city as historically accurate as possible, meaning the tallest structures are church steeples.

And there are many churches — mostly Catholic, as about 95 percent of Bavarians are Catholic — and all are amazingly beautiful. The artwork inside the churches is painstakingly detailed, and I only went in a couple. For example, Ludwigskirche (St.

Ludwig's Church) is the university church for Ludwig Maximilian University and was built from 1829 to 1844. Inside is a gorgeous fresco, "The Last Judgment" by Peter Cornelius, that covers the wall behind the altar and runs up onto the ceiling. Churches in the States rarely have that kind of artwork.

Many of the steeples can be seen from the Monopteros, a Greek "love temple" on a hill in the English Garden to the northeast of central Munich. The English Garden is Munich's answer to New York's Central Park and was designed to be a "people's garden" in a style different from the finely manicured French gardens found in other parts of the city. It features wide expanses of grass, horse trails and a swift-moving stream popular with surfers.

Yes, I said surfers. At the park's southern entrance off Prinzregentenstrasse, rapids in a fast-moving stream draw surfers and their shortboards. Each surfer, dressed in a wetsuit, will ride for about 10 seconds — or less if they fall — before giving the next surfer a shot at the waves.

One thing that amazed me is the level of trust given the users of Munich's transportation systems. Anyone who's visited an American city with a subway is used to buying a ticket, then passing through a turnstile before descending to the trains. In Munich, you still have to buy a ticket, which seems reasonably priced, but they don't have turnstiles. Instead, riders are expected to stamp their tickets in these little, blue time-clock-like boxes set up at the top of the escalators down to the trains.

So what's to keep freeloaders from abusing this honor system? Pairs of plainclothes or uniformed ticket checkers that pass through the subway cars, waving their identification

cards and asking, "Die Fahrkarte, bitte" — ticket, please.

That, of course, reminded me of the airship scene in "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" and the derivative train scene in "Dogma."

One of my guidebooks said that freeloaders are slapped with a 40 fine, which would be \$52.

But for 6, one can ride from Munich to Dachau, a town 13 miles away that is infamous for the concentration camp the Nazis operated there from 1933 to 1945. It is the only camp that was used throughout the Third Reich's reign of terror.

It was not a death camp, but a work camp. Still, the SS executed many of the prisoners — Jews, gypsies, prisoners from countries the Nazis invaded, priests, homosexuals and others — brought there. In all, more than 30,000 died from executions, abuse, malnutrition and medical experiments. The SS had a "murder school" there.

The displays in the building that once housed the camp administration detail the rise of the Nazi Party, beginning with World War I, and the history of the concentration camps. Never before have I read the word "murder" as much as I did in the 45 minutes I was there, and I rushed through the camp because I got there at 4:15 p.m., and it closed at 5.

Walking up to the camp was truly chilling, and it wasn't just the now-overcast skies and sprinkles of rain that were beginning to fall. There is definitely an air of evil to the place, but also one of quiet determination exemplified by a display within the camp near the area where roll call would be called.

In front of a long wall is a small tomb, topped with flowers. The inscription on the cap says it contains the ashes of the unknown concentration camp victim. On the wall behind it, in Hebrew, German, French, Russian and English is the proclamation, "Never again."

All schoolchildren in Munich are required to take a field trip there.

On a more celebratory note, I was in Bavaria just after the new pope, Benedict XVI, was elected. Benedict XVI was born in the small town of Marktl am Inn, and christened Joseph Ratzinger. The town museum has the stone baptismal font in which

Petersburg packages for three, five or eight days; the weeklong trip starts at \$474 per person double for hotel, transfers, breakfast and guided tours (international air is extra). The company also custom designs trips. Simply select among its online offerings—Yusupov Palace (\$45-\$80), Draw Bridges Night City Tour (\$55-\$60), a tour of the city's suburbs (\$155-\$165.) Info: 800-755-3080, www.visitrussia.com.

— The Washington Post

TRAVEL answers

Q My mother wants to go to St. Petersburg, Russia, this summer. Any suggestion on tours that focus on St. Petersburg and last at least a week?

A Many package tours like to cram in as many Russian highlights as possible, or at least pair up the two imperial cities, Moscow and St. Petersburg. But various companies cover St. Pete only, and for more than a long weekend.

The Russian National Group

(877-221-7120, www.russia-travel.com), which is affiliated with the Russian National Tourist Office, offers an eight-day tour of St. Petersburg with various 2005 dates. Prices per person double range from \$2,164 (low season, tourist-class hotels) to \$4,040 (high season, deluxe hotels) and include air from New York, lodging, breakfast and sightseeing at the top spots, such as the Hermitage and Peter the Great's Summer Palace.

Visitrussia.com also has St.



A staircase leads to a second-story floor inside Burghausen Castle. Above the archway is the year 1523, but the oldest parts of the castle date to 1255.



A surfer rides the waves of a stream in Munich's English Garden, the city's version of Central Park in New York.

Ratzinger was baptized. As Marktl is only about seven miles from Burghausen, it was easy to go see the building in which the new pope was born and the museum. A docent at the museum told me through my translator/guide/ driver from Wacker that the town had been besieged by pilgrims and reporters.

Also nearby is the larger town of Altötting, which is home to several Catholic parishes and the Chapel of Mercy, a popular shrine with Germany's Catholics. It contains a Black Madonna, and my driver told me that people come there to pray to the Virgin Mary. They do so by carrying a wooden cross — the shrine has several light-weight crosses available that are 3 feet tall by 2 feet across — and walking around the shrine. If their prayers are answered, they return with artwork of the Black Madonna. Inside the shrine is a chapel, where mass is celebrated. The interior walls are also covered with artwork honoring the Black Madonna.

I'm not Catholic, so the whole scene was a bit strange to me, but the faith of the people there, carrying crosses and praying was — like most of Munich and Bavaria — beautiful and moving.



The town museum in Marktl am Inn saw its number of visitors rise dramatically in April to see the baptismal font in which the new pope, Benedict XVI, was christened. Joseph Ratzinger was born in Marktl in 1927.

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