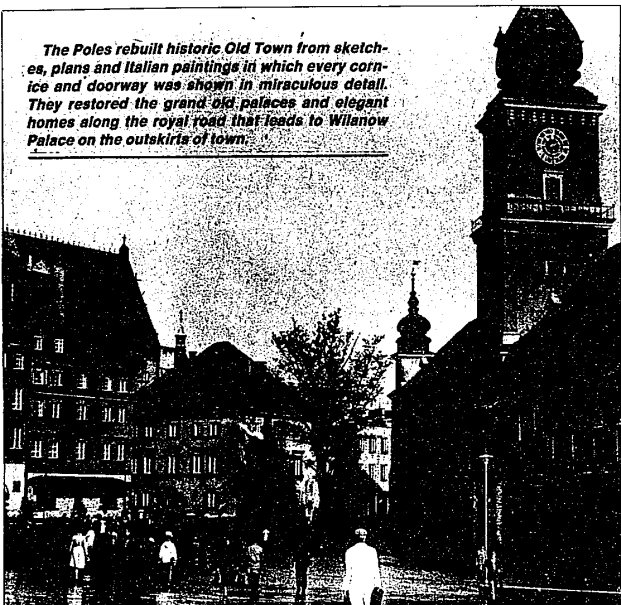


The resurrection of Warsaw, a city that almost died

The Poles rebuilt historic Old Town from sketches, plans and Italian paintings in which every cornice and doorway was shown in miraculous detail. They restored the grand old palaces and elegant homes along the royal road that leads to Wilanow Palace on the outskirts of town.



The German army nearly destroyed Warsaw at the end of World War II. For several months Nazis exploded every house, office building, cathedral and statue in the capital city of Poland. Old Town, shown above, is testament to the restoration process that has been going on ever since. (Photos by Micki Jones)

By IRIS SANDERSON JONES

WARSAW, Poland — Warsaw is a miracle. The German army tried to kill it at the end of World War II by destroying every building in the city. For several months they worked their way through the city streets with explosives, blowing up every house, office building, cathedral and statue in this capital city of Poland.

When the Russians crossed the Vistula River in 1945 there was literally nothing left of the city, except for a few outlying palaces where the Nazis had lived; they didn't have time to blow them up before they left.

A film in the city museum shows in black and white what the eyes find hard to believe: a flat sea of rubble to the horizon, with only an occasional wall left to mock the survivors who came back in the cold snows of January.

The miracle is that the survivors rebuilt the city you see today.

THEY REBUILT the historic Old Town from old sketches, plans and Italian paintings in which every cornice and doorway was miraculously shown in detail.

They restored the grand old palaces and elegant homes along the royal road that leads out of the Old Town to Wilanow Palace on the outskirts of town.

Over the years they built the new downtown city: department stores, railway stations, hotels and all the bus and street car lines needed to hold the growing city together.

And they built hundreds of apartment buildings to house the population of the city — reduced from 1,350,000 to 200,000 during the War — and now at 1.5 million.

They have done all that in 35 years, starting from that moment when the survivors came down from the hills and from the Nazi concentration camps in 1945 and said, "Warsaw is still the capital city of Poland."

ON A WALKING tour of the Old Town, you will see fresh flowers placed every day beneath the plaques memorializing the martyrs and heroes of World War II. You must force yourself to remember that this historical cathedral of all of these ancient buildings, sagging gracefully over the market square, are reproductions. The great palace, with its ceiling layered with gold leaf, is just now being opened again to the public.

Walking around the new town gives you an entirely different feeling. Here there are crowds of people, acres of small shiny cars and buses turning every corner near the Palace of Science and Culture, built by the Soviets as a gift to the Poles. It dominates the downtown area and is a regular source of jokes among local people.

Four huge state department stores dominate one side of the main street; a collection of small private stores dominates the other. Visitors see how difficult it is for local people to go about their daily living, standing in line at every food store and for almost every need in their lives. There is an eight-year wait for apartments.

On the other hand, the Polish people look well-fed and well-dressed. They move about rapidly in buses, street cars and private cars.

A bus tour of Warsaw goes inevitably to the site of the old Warsaw Ghetto, where the Jews who made up one-third of the city population were walled in, starved and shipped to concentration camps.

Apartment buildings and schools cover the area now, but Mila street is still there, where the last survivors dug their way into the sewer system at Mila 18.

And in a large open space, a final irony, two large black bas-reliefs stand in memory of the ghetto uprising. They are carved from stone intended by the Germans for a monument to Adolf Hitler.

You cannot escape World War II in Warsaw, but there are other more cheerful things to experience there, especially if you love music. This is the land of Chopin. The land where the standards of music are much higher than they are in most places in the world.

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travel log
Iris Sanderson Jones
contributing travel editor

Old world meets the new in modern-day Poland

WARSAW, Poland — Images of Poland. A high-rise city built on a sea of rubble. Costumed folk dancers around a barbecued pig in a mountain meadow. Great glossy mounds of good food. Lineups at the supermarket. Black market currency. Women and children kneeling in front of glorious altars. Hay carts. Buses and street cars and . . .

I really did not know what to expect of Poland, a country shrouded in history and the Iron Curtain, unknown to most Detroit-area travelers. Polish Americans go there sometimes, but Poland has only recently become a developing travel destination for Americans.

It is a good destination if you are the right kind of traveler, and if you go either in a

group or with someone who speaks Polish. The right traveler is the one who loves history, music, pageantry, folk arts and watching people live and work in ancient settings.

I would not recommend it for Americans who like to travel alone, unless they speak Polish. English is spoken extensively, but you need the language and an understanding of the rules to travel comfortably outside the big cities.

I visited Poland as part of the annual convention of the Society of American Travel Writers on a tour organized by the state travel organization ORBIS. Most people travel on such tours, which are well organized and help to avoid the bureaucratic irritations common to Eastern European countries.

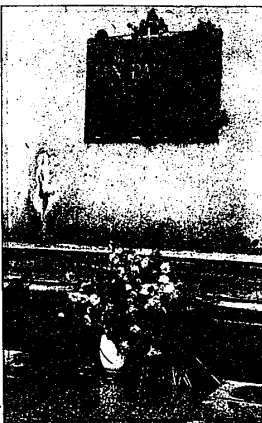
Such tours may go south to the wonderful little city of Cracow, up into the Tatras mountain resorts near Zakopane, north to the seaports around Gdansk (once called Danzig) or into many historic villages and towns. Wherever they go, they almost always start in Warsaw.

You need a visa for a stated number of days, and you must convert \$15 a day into Polish currency, spelled zloty, pronounced zwoty.

Currency, hard and soft, dominates a trip to Poland as it dominates Polish life. Hard currency includes the dollars, pounds, marks, francs etc. that come from Western Europe and North America. Poland needs such currency badly. Polish people routinely buy it on the black market because there are some things they can't buy without it.

The law says you must buy your zloties at the official exchange rate of 33 to a dollar. Tourists are offered 150 zloties to a dollar regularly on the street, but those who accept the challenge are usually cheated by money-dealers with magic fingers. Somehow, half the money disappears, but you can't complain to the police.

Smart travelers take dollars with them in small denominations: ones, fives, 10s. You can give them to taxi drivers, waiters and other service people who are happy to see you pay your bill in hard currency. Your bill will be less than it would be in zloties converted at the official rate.



A streetside memorial in Warsaw pays tribute to the Polish Pope, John Paul II.

Ice age returns in new exhibit

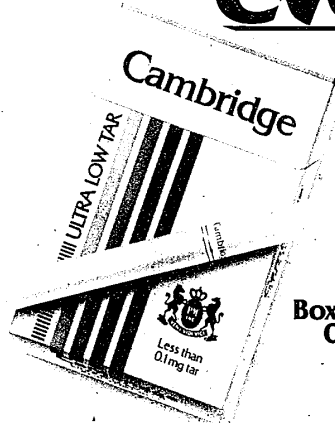
Michigan history "comes alive" in a display at the Michigan Historical Museum's new location at 208 N. Capitol Ave. in Lansing. A chronological arrangement of photographs, artifacts and drawings takes visitors from the present back through the state's history.

The display covers the development of the automobile, the logging, pharmaceutical, furniture and breakfast food industries, the Civil War, the Ameri-

can Revolution, fur trappers, French voyageurs, the British, Indians and early settlers in Michigan. These are all represented by photographs and artifacts.

The museum is operated by the History Division of the Department of State and is open from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and from noon to 4:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Admission is free.

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