

Travel



Thursday, March 19, 1987 O&E

(Wb-8A, S-15A, F-6D, #7D, P-C-7C)***70

Lippizaners, opera and the Danube

It was a beautiful summer afternoon in Vienna. We had started the day with the Lippizaner horses at the Spanish Riding School and we would end it with "Carmen" at the State Opera House. In between those two memorable experiences, we rode a bus out of the city to lunch at a castle overlooking the Danube.

We missed the Vienna Boys Choir, but you can't do everything in a day.

The Lippizaners, opera house and castle are all survivors of the Austro-Hungarian empire, which included parts of modern-day Spain, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Italy. The empire of the Hapsburg family ended abruptly with World War I, reducing it overnight to the small alpine republic of Austria.

To appreciate such a colorful Sunday visit to one of the world's most beautiful cities, you must picture the Inner Stadt or Inner City, where stylish 19th century Viennese stroll past the historic buildings enclosed by the Ringstrasse, a circular road built on the site of the old city walls.

The heartbeat of the old city is the complex of palace buildings called the Hofburg at the back of it, facing one another across a courtyard, are the royal stables and the Imperial riding hall, home of the Spanish Riding School, and the Burgkapelle or castle chapel, home of the Vienna Boys Choir.

If you are farsighted enough to order tickets in advance for these events, you may someday join the eager Sunday crowds pressing through the doors.

THE SPANISH RIDING SCHOOL, home of Vienna's famous Lippizaner horses, has been tradition since the 16th century when Spanish horses were first trained at Lippizan, in what is now Yugoslavia. Only horses of Spanish origin were used because of their strength, intelligence and nobility.

There is no fanfare when the Lippizaner horses, with their uniformed riders, come silently into the riding hall, no recognition of the hundreds of spectators leaning over the two red-timbered balconies that run around the 180-foot-long hall with its white pillars and carved ceiling.

They ride in between two flags, hats raised towards the emperor's



one-of-a-kind traveler

Iris Jones

contributing travel editor

box as they move in slow motion under three great crystal chandeliers. The spectators do not sit in fixed seats, as they would do in a theater; a few sit on loose wooden chairs but most stand at the balcony rails as noblemen stood for this equestrian presentation for centuries.

Only the noble families could enter the hall in the days of the empire, but now the Sunday morning spectators are families and tourists, some in Sunday shirts and ties, others in summer skirts and slacks.

There are seven scenes played out on the great raked rectangle of earth, in a setting that looks more like an opera house than a stable. The young grey stallions come first and the four white mature Lippizaners follow with the steps and movements of the classical school.

Chief Rider Kottas and Rider Riegler lead Favory Alex I and Plu to Capriola in a Pas de Deux, a dance for two, and then the short and long rein demonstrations begin. If you are familiar with equestrian shows, you will understand the quadrilles and the "short hand rein between the pillars." The rest of us are simply mesmerized by horses that stand on their hind legs, or make controlled leaps, but most of all by the simple beauty of the event.

The scene before us is exactly like that on the front of the program, a painting which reads "Morning training at the Winter Riding Hall 1890."

While we enjoy the horses, the Weiner Sangerknaben, or Vienna Boys Choir, sing Sunday mass across the courtyard in the chapel of the winter palace. To put that in perspective, remember that the young Joseph Hayden once sang in the Vienna Boys Choir.

Tourists are not the only ones who enjoy these Sunday pleasures. According to the Viennese people I spoke to, Sunday has traditionally included the choir, the riding school,

lunch or coffee at the famous Konditorei Demel, an afternoon snooze and then the opera.

It is very difficult to get tickets to these events, although there are always some available through your hotel concierge or at the ticket stalls along the streets. Locals take a chance on a cancellation and sometimes buy tickets near the door at black market prices, but most of them write to their overseas friends and ask them to write to Vienna for tickets!

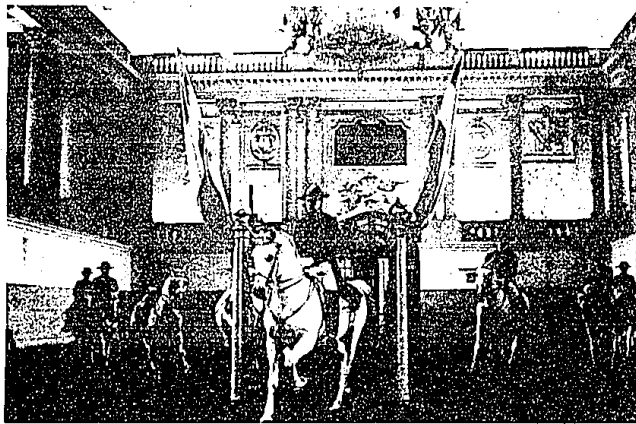
Don't miss these wonderful of tried-and-true attractions. Even if you must pay more on the spot, but try to write ahead for tickets if you can. Vienna Boys Choir, Verwaltung der Hofmusikpelle, Hofburg, Schweizerhof, 1010 Vienna. Spanish Riding School, Spanische Reitschule, Hofburg, Michaelerplatz 1, 1010, Vienna.

WHAT ELSE DO YOU DO on a Sunday? Drive out of town, like General George Patton did when he saved the Lippizaner horses by piloting them in trucks and driving them across the border to Czechoslovakia.

You can drive across the Danube (in Austria, Vienna is called Wien and the Danube is called the Donau) and look back at the Wienerwald, or Vienna Woods. You can go uphill to the wonderful vineyards and wine caves of Grazing on the lower slopes of the Wienerwald.

On weekends the Wieners (or Viennese) hike and picnic in these woods and play in the island of the Danube. There is a like 40 kilometers away in the province of Burgenland, near the Hungarian border. There are also sightseeing tours to the Wachau, the nicest part of the Danube in Austria.

The Viennese say that Prague, in nearby Czechoslovakia, is the most beautiful city in Europe. They are also very fond of Budapest, in nearby Hungary, where they may go to get their teeth fixed or to buy goose livers! You can take tour boats up the Danube from Budapest to Vienna.



photos by MICKY JONES

Horsemen at Vienna's Spanish Riding School put the famed Lippizaner horses through their paces.

We spent our Sunday afternoon driving along the Danube to the castle hotel at Durnstein. Durnstein is a busy little town in summer, steep streets leading up through vineyards that rise above Danube, crowds of summer shoppers in the narrow winding streets.

Signs point uphill to Schloss Durnstein where King Richard the Lion Hearted was imprisoned 600 years ago; legend says a minstrel found him by going from castle to castle singing the king's favorite song.

Half-way up the hill, we stopped at the Hotel Schloss Durnstein for a wonderful lunch eaten in the garden on a cliff high above the river.



Next week: "Vienna and the opera."

Tourists meander through the steep, narrow streets of Durnstein, a busy little town above the Danube.

A SURE BET



THE Business Exposition
May 5,6,7, 1987

presented by the

Livonia Chamber of Commerce

at

Schoolcraft College

for exhibit space

information call

CAROLYN SKINNER

(313) 478-3187

SANDERS TRAVEL TICKET CENTER EUROPE

| AIR ONLY | |
|-------------|-------------|
| • AMSTERDAM | from 598.00 |
| • BRUSSELS | from 546.00 |
| • FRANKFORT | from 568.00 |
| • GREECE | from 669.00 |
| • ISRAEL | from 899.00 |
| • LONDON | from 548.00 |
| • MADRID | from 549.00 |
| • MUNICH | from 584.00 |
| • PARIS | from 528.00 |
| • ROME | from 599.00 |
| • ZURICH | from 568.00 |
| • HAWAII | from 380.00 |

*EURAIL & BRITRAIL PASSES AVAILABLE

PASSPORT PICTURES FREE (WITH PAID BOOKINGS)

WE DELIVER AIR/RAIL TICKETS FREE TO YOUR HOME OR OFFICE

MON-FRI. 9-5:30 SAT. 10-2

855-2620
28230 Orchard Lk.
Farmington Hills 48018

TRANS GLOBAL TRAVEL, INC.

PRESENTS SENSATIONAL CRUISE SAVINGS!!!

Call us now for savings of 15% to 50% on your next cruise!

| SITMAR-ALASKA | NCL-CARIBBEAN | SITMAR-CARIBBEAN | DOLPHIN |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| SAVE \$650* | SAVE \$1000* | SAVE \$1,000* | SAVE \$500* |
| per cabin 10 days | per cabin 7 days | per cabin 7 days | per cabin 3 or 4 days |

Based on double occupancy - specific departure date. Subject to availability.
TRANS GLOBAL TRAVEL, INC.
30600 Northwestern Hwy., Ste. 303
Farmington Hills 48018
851-2232



Street scene in Durnstein, where King Richard the Lion Hearted was imprisoned 600 years ago.