

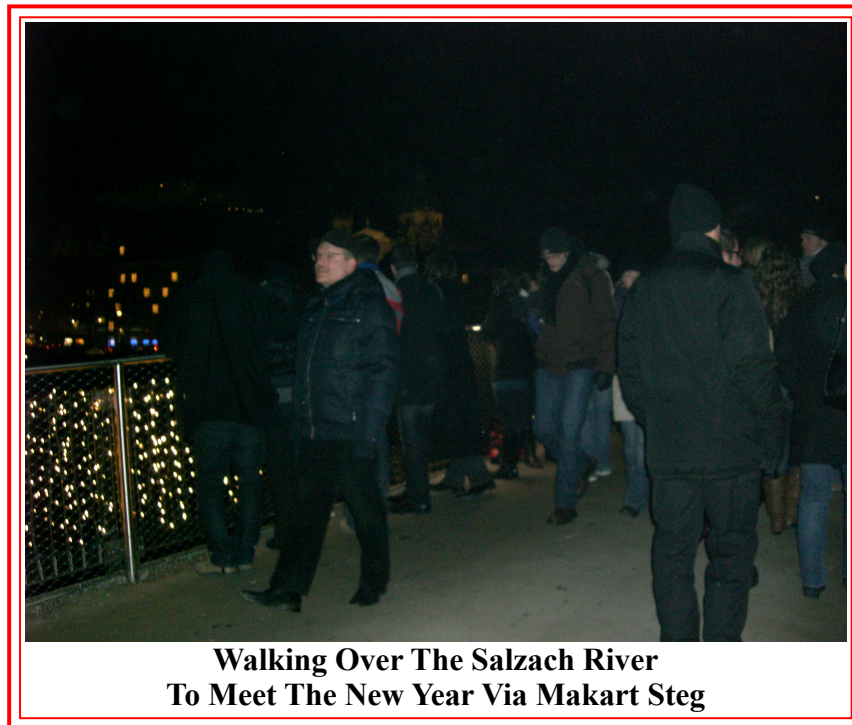
NEW YEAR'S EVE DINNER

Perhaps in excess of 2,000 people, residents of Salzburg, Austria, as well as tourists to this old city, braved the bitter cold of night on December 31, 2008, in order to enjoy the ringing in of 2009 under a pitch-black, cloudless sky.

For the residents of Salzburg, most of them carried fireworks and at least one bottle of wine per adult, while the tourists lined Makart Steg, the footbridge, linking the old town to the new city of Salzburg, spanning the Salzach River.

Then, at exactly midnight, the sky was lit up with rockets, exploding about 100 feet above the Salzach River, as residents and tourists alike kissed and/or toasted the arrival of the New Year.

Makart Steg abuts Hotel Sacher and many of the elderly tourists, staying at this hotel, had no need to suffer the cold winter's weather, but merely watch the festivities from the warmth of the restaurant which overlooks Makart Steg.



There was no pushing or shoving and no inkling of a bad temper from anybody on this somewhat magical night since all who came wanted only one thing: To put aside the problems of 2008 and to welcome in the new year – and the promise of better times ahead.

The explosions of the rockets reverberated throughout the ancient structures of the old city, across the Salzach River.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Went the rockets as they exploded above the swirling waters of the river.

Ah! Ah! Ah! Went the admiring sounds of the appreciative audience of tourists and residents alike.

Nobody was intoxicated with alcohol, but they, all, seemed to be intoxicated with the spirit of the moment.

Nobody wanted the scene to be inhibited with anything else other than the enjoyment of viewing and hearing the sounds of the igniting rockets as they flew high over the river to the delight of all with the many and varied colourful explosions in the crisp night air.

At Hotel Sacher, Management had laid on a Silvester Gala Menu for the occasion at a cost of €350 per person, all in.



This was the menu (**TARGET** [泰達財經] has omitted the German language part of the menu):

*The Sturgeon served smoked, home marinated and
as tatar with its caviar, lime yogurt and red carrots*

Essence of oven tomato with curd cheese-basil quenelle and leaf of gold

Breast of pigeon on beluga lentils with goose liver sauce

Atlantic turbot with asparagus and morels crayfish sauce and lobster raviolini

*Tenderloin of Angus Beef,
medium roasted Perigord truffles and stuffed zucchini blossom*

Sweet sledging into the “New Year 2009”

The following wines were paired with the food:

*Champagne
Laurent Perrier*

*2007 Grüner Veltliner
“Ried Krutles”, Federspiel*

*Weingut Knoll
Unterloiben, Wachau*

*2006 Riesling
“Gebling”
Weingut Sepp Moser
Rohrendorf, Kremstal*

*2005 Cuvée
“Rosso e Nero”
Weingut Josef Pöckl
Mönchhof, Neusiedlersee*

The food was exceptional: No criticism, at all.

The wines: Well, Austria has never, really, been able to compete with France.

The service: Impeccable.

The ambiance: Unmatched.

And, to cap off the night, came the snow that enveloped the city in a blanket of white.

The snow cover was about 2 inches thick by breakfast time – that is, for those people who made it to breakfast.

And, so, the city slept in the early morning as revellers of the night before recovered from the over-indulgence of foods and wines.

It was the atmosphere of the entire city at the approach of midnight, December 31, 2008, that could not help but cause one to sit back and to recall and to appreciate the love of humanity that pervaded the entire collage of this Alpine city.

Missing, perhaps, were the raucous outbursts from the inebriants that one notes at New Year’s Eve festivities at many a capital city of the world, especially in London, England, and New York City.

One could not help but feel absolutely safe when trying to walk, during the crush at the height of New Year’s Eve 2008.

While peace and love were exuded in the hearts of most people in Salzburg on this memorable evening, it was a pity that, in other parts of the world, this example could not be duplicated.

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