

### SOME IMAGES OF HAMBURG

Hamburg, without question, is well worth a visit.

There is much to see and much to do in this wonderful old city.

Shopping is a pleasure, although somewhat limited in scope, and a visit to the Mont Blanc Boutique must be on every lady's and every gentleman's top shopping list.

Hamburg is the *'home'* of Mont Blanc and the variety of products, manufactured and crafted by this company, is, for the most part, not found in Asia.

However, there are some negatives about Hamburg, too.

At certain luxury hotels and restaurants, one is categorised by management as being a regular guest, an unimportant guest, or a complete stranger.

In other words, one is either in; or, one is completely out.

This is something akin to a *'private and very exclusive club'* where there is no entrance fee, but unless one is *'in'* the club, due to inheriting one's family jewels, which, of course, includes one's regular table at a certain restaurant in a certain, up-market hotel or where-ever, it is impossible to be treated with the respect that one might otherwise expect.

One may view this phenomenon at certain special times of the year, such as Christmas day luncheon or Christmas Eve dinner, where all of the tables at certain restaurants are reserved and prepared in a certain fashion for those in the in.

If one is not a charter member of this special clique, one is not able to break through the clique walls – because one is deemed not to have the necessary pedigree, such as a history of 30-plus years of eating and/or dining at a certain establishment at a certain table at a certain time of the year.

There is no way to break into this clique because, among other things, everybody in the clique knows everybody else, from generation to generation.

*'Others'* are just not welcomed.

**TARGET** (泰達財經) witnessed a scene at one food outlet of a 5-star hotel whereby the maitre d'hôtel purposely put 2 Australian ladies, one being in her late 20's and one in her early 40's, at a table, far from the windows so as not to disturb members of the clique, members who were expected by the maitre d'hôtel to take their seats, regardless of whether or not they had confirmed their reservations.

The maitre d'hôtel was spot on because, within the first 30 minutes of these 2 ladies, having been seated at the far end of the room, not too distant from the entrance, one of the ladies was talking loudly over her mobile telephone.

Clique members, already present, just looked in horror at the scene, but said nothing, while the maitre d'hôtel just shrugged his shoulders at clique members as though to say: *'What can you expect from philistines!'*

The use of a mobile telephone in such a restaurant is a real no-no.

The maitre d'hôtel knew his job, of that there was no question.

In top-class restaurants of Hamburg, the serving staff does not walk, but marches from point to point at a certain speed which **TARGET** estimated was between 2 miles per hour and 3 miles per hour, depending on the number of guests, present in the restaurant.

Shopping in Das Neue Wall, a preferred shopping area for discriminating ladies and gentlemen of Hamburg, will blow away many, if not most, of the staff of shops at Pacific Place or any other shopping mall in the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (RPC) because, among other things, the Hamburg staff at shops, such as Mont Blanc, know their products, from top to bottom.

Further, the products of brand-named shops are aimed at the very discriminating German customer, most of whom are very particular, demanding top quality merchandise and expecting personal attention.

If the staff of shops, such as big, brand names of the calibre of Bulgari, Dior, Chanel, etc, do not know their products, it is certainty that they would not be able to last very long in their jobs.

In one boutique, for instance, snake-skin, handbags were on sale when **TARGET** toured the city with the sales' ladies, not only knowing the name of the snake from which the bags had been made – python – but, also, the country of the design and country of manufacture of the bags, which were not the same – without reference to any written material.

Bargaining, up to point, is possible and expected, but one must not go too far in the bargaining process.

Lastly, when shopping in such brand-named shops and boutiques, it is common to be offered a glass of champagne – first-class quality, of course – and/or a cup of espresso with biscuits and chocolates.

The manners and courtesy of the ladies and gentlemen of Hamburg are, for the most part, exceptional, and consideration for the other person is, usually, paramount.

Strangers, on passing in the foyer of any good hotel, more often than not, would smile with a pleasant, '*Guten Morgen!*' or '*Guten Tag!*'

On a facetious note, the McDonald's hamburger came from Hamburg due to the arrival, many centuries ago, of the Hamburger Steak, which is, in fact, a hamburger patty, now put in between a bread bun and renamed as a hamburger.

A Hamburger, on the other hand, is a native, or resident, of Hamburg, and the term has nothing to do with meat or McDonald's although most Hamburgers do eat copious quantities of dead animal flesh and potatoes, cooked in many different ways.

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