

### SHOPPING, EATING AND EXPLORING AUSTRIA

If one were to ask 100,000 people as to the person who wrote the words and the person who composed the music of the most famous Christmas carol, ever, '*Silent Night*', it is highly unlikely that one would obtain any answer, at all.

Yet, it is the most widely sung Christmas carol in the world and it has been the favourite of most carolers for the past 191 years

The answer is that Silent Night was composed by Mr Franz Xaver Gruber, the son of a linen weaver, who was born in 1787 in Hochburg, Austria.

**Inside The Stille Nacht  
Kapelle:  
To The Right Is A Painting Of  
Mr Franz Xaver Gruber,  
The Composer Of Silent Night**

His musical composition of Silent Night was finished in 1818.

The words of Silent Night were written by Father Joseph Mohr, a Catholic priest, having been born in Salzburg, Austria.

According to historical records, shortly before Christmas 1818, the organ at Oberndorf Church of St Nicholas was found to be out of order and so Father Joseph Mohr and Mr Franz Xaver Gruber collaborated in creating a new Christmas carol – to the accompaniment of the guitar of Mr Franz Xaver Gruber.

**The Stille Nacht  
Kapelle Of  
Oberndorf, Austria**

This was the first recorded time that a guitar had been officially used in any Church in Europe.

It was played and sung for the people of Oberndorf at the Christmas Eve Mass.

Silent Night became so popular that it was said to have been the beloved carol of Frederick William IV (1795-1861), King of Prussia (1840-1861), who attempted to unite German states under Prussian rule.

The first performance of this carol in the United States of America was on Christmas Day of 1839 at Trinity Church on Wall Street, New York.

In a period of just 21 years from that date, Silent Night became the Number One on the pop charts, worldwide.

And the composer of the music and the librettist never received anything for their joint creation.

Oberndorf is just a 25-minute journey from Salzburg by a little red train, known as the Lokalbahn.

The cost of the journey is €7.60 per person, return trip included.

**TARGET** () ventured out of Salzburg to Oberndorf on Tuesday, December 30, 2008, and visited The Stille Nacht Kapelle, the little chapel in Oberndorf where Silent Night was first performed to the plaintive strains of the guitar of Mr Franz Xaver Gruber.

It was a very pleasant outing and this medium was happy to see the real Austria, the little chalets in small towns and hamlets that one remembers in motion pictures, such as '*Good-bye, Mr Chips*', starring the late, inimitable actor, Mr Robert Donat.

On the Lokalbahn, one can view the deer farms and note the way that the locals live in their little chalets.

After visiting the little chapel at Oberndorf, which can only accommodate only about 20 people, **TARGET** went to a local restaurant, called Gasthof Bauerbräu-Gewölbe, about 2 minutes' walk from the chapel.

There, for the princely sum of €47, this medium ate a 3-course meal which lasted for the best part of 2 hours.

One of the dishes was an Austrian goulash (kalbsrahmgulasch), priced at €14.80.

At the cost of €5.20, one was able to taste milchrahmstrudel, a desert that only, it seems, Austrian chefs can do justice.

An aspect of this lovely little Austrian restaurant was the friendliness of the single serving girl who rushed around, doing a bang-up job in keeping everybody happy as well as serving the food, piping hot from the kitchen.

Although there was no English menu, this little German lass (not Austrian, by the way) did her best to explain all of the dishes on offer.

**TARGET**, also, made a friend of a German family that had taken the trouble to drive 80 kilometres from Bavaria in order to view The Stille Nacht Kapelle.

It was interesting to learn from this family that German schools did not, as early as 25 years ago, teach their students of the association of Austria with Germany, during World War II when Adolf Hitler was in power.

History records that Austria welcomed German troops into the country while Adolf Hitler declared that Austria and Germany were, in fact, one nation.

Adolf Hitler was born in Braunau am Inn, Austria, in 1889.

Braunau Am Inn, a town, Bundesland Oberösterreich (Federal Province of Upper Austria), northern Austria, on the Inn River, opposite the Bavarian town of Simbach and north of Salzburg.

The Rome-Berlin Axis of 1936 was an agreement between Adolf Hitler, acting in his official capacity as the head of state for Germany, and the then Austrian Government that acknowledged Austria as a German state.

The Anschluss (annexation) of Austria was accomplished when German troops entered Austria on March 12, 1938, and a Nazi Government was formed, headed by Arthur Seyss-Inquart.

Austria was, then, known as Ostmark (Eastern March) and it was divided into 7 administrative districts under the central authority of the German Third Reich.

All of the above was unknown to this German family, or so this medium was informed, but all of this information is readily available in history books – which are not, or were not, available for German students until fairly recently.

### **Shopping: Watch Out!**

There is a great deal of junk for sale in Salzburg, as one may imagine in a city that is a draw for tourists from all parts of the world, but there are, also, a number of unique items that are well worth buying, too.

One such item is the '*trachten jacke*', a hunters' jacket, made of a very heavy grey, tightly knitted wool with green piping around the collar and pockets, completed with deer-horn buttons.



This is the type of formal and informal jacket that has been worn by Austrians for centuries.

There is, also, an overcoat to match the trachten jacke, but it belies its elegance, being ostensibly simple in its outward appearance.

The cost of the trachten jacke with overcoat to match is about €1,240 (about \$HK12,400).

Austrian hats, made of thick wool or of rabbit fur, are, also, readily available at between €65 and €200, each.

But, aside from such unique items, one would be better off doing one's purchases in Germany, Italy, France or most other European countries because, in Salzburg, one can easily be '*milke*d' by a number of shops, as **TARGET** discovered on its first day, there.

Aside from shopping, however, Salzburg is a wondrous place for both the glutton and the gourmet.

**TARGET** would strongly recommend a visit to Arthotel Blaue Gans (The Blue Goose), located at Getreidegasse 41-43, Herbert von Karajan Platz 3.



On the day that this medium ate at this 650, year-old establishment, this was the menu for a luncheon:

Cured Beef's Tongue with Pheasant Mousse  
€11.80

Soup of Beetroots with Goose Ravioli  
€5.20

Tafelspitz 'Klassisch'  
(Prime boiled beef with roasted potatoes, spinach and a chive sauce)  
€17.50

Wiener Schnitzel  
(Veal escalopes, fried in butter, parsley potatoes and cranberry jam)  
€16.90

Salzburg Nockerl on Raspberries  
€13.90

Caution: The size of many dishes, ordered in Austrian restaurants, is larger than one normally gets in Asia; and, if one is determined to visit The Blue Goose – it would be a pity not to visit it, actually – one has to reserve a table, well in advance.

It is only too easy to over-order at this fine, stand-alone restaurant, and, then, discover that one has to leave most of one's food on the dish – which could well be mistaken for gluttony.

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