



HERALD PHOTOS BY MAUREEN NEVIN DUFFY

After 56 years, Munich is still attempting to shake its dark past



JOY with a purpose

By MAUREEN NEVIN DUFFY
SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

MUNICH, Germany — A melancholy haunts Munich despite the boisterousness of its cavernous beer halls and gardens pulsating to brassy *ompah* bands bedecked in embroidered lederhosen.

It persists not despite, but be-

cause of, the very gaiety of these fun-loving Bavarians. The more they impress you with their easy, genuine affection, the harder it is for the visitor to stop that question from bouncing around his or her head.

How could they not have known?

Just an hour's ride from this

charming, storybook city is perhaps the best known concentration camp in the world, Dachau. Munich lives in the psychological shadow of that infamous place even today, some 56 years after our 20th Armored Division liberated that death camp. The 20-something hotel clerks, whose parents were born after the Holo-

caust, tell how the tourists still prod them with questions of how it could have happened. It remains a raw wound for these natives, because this former prison also was the site of many a German's tortuous death. Bavarians who resisted the Nazis met similar

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Munich offers beer, history and plenty of sights

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ends to the Jews they tried to protect.

It is this very thing, which so deeply affected its residents and visitors alike, that gives this cosmopolitan

center the grit and depth of a must-see destination. This ain't no Disney World.

Politics and foreign policy, their importance finally understood at a dear price, are openly discussed everywhere, from cafes and museums

to the print shops of the Maximilianstrasse and Ludwigstrasse. And when it is time to blow off steam, there are myriad ways to do it.

As in the cinematic '20s and '30s, the people of Munich still seek relief in the numerous cabarets and jazz halls. Trams from Marienplatz, Karlsplatz and Max-Weber-Platz go to some of the hottest clubs — Atomic Cafe, Amerika Haus, Backstage and Einstein Kulturzentrum — for jazz, rock and funk.

Although most locals speak English, brochures and captions for the smaller museums and many of the club and theatrical productions are in German only. A welcome find is Angela Wilson's 11-year-old, very hip Munich Found, a monthly variety magazine for English speaking ex-pats. It covers both German- and English-speaking events and theatrics. To make plans before leaving home, visit www.munichfound.com. Judging by Wilson's endeavors, there is a talented enclave of ex-pats who've found the perfect audience for everything from Edward Albee plays — "The American Dream" and "Zoo Story" were playing last spring — to a thriving community

of Irish pubs.

The Karl Valentin Museum, not far from the famous Hofbrau House, is an intriguing shrine to Germany's answer to Charlie Chaplin. For those lucky enough to remember some high school German, it's certain to be a highlight.

Art deco is still big in Munich, and fans of the style will find plenty of eye candy at Art Deco on Neuturmstrasse and other shops nearby. For a sample of the region's current musical tastes, visit Muller's, a department store on a pedestrian street called the Im Tal, which offers customers headphones and an endless supply of tapes and CDs.

A few doors down from Muller's, on Radsteg and Tal, Accenti Designhaus has a vast assortment of statues, mobiles and odd bits you won't see anywhere else: glass bowties stuffed with U.S. dollars or a piano and sax, from Martin Mascherl Manufacturing in Austria. Bargain hunters will love Munich's second-hand clothes shops for expensive labels at low prices.

For dining, don't miss The Glockenspeil Restaurant, opposite the famous landmark of the Marienplatz

— the Glockenspeil clock tower — with mechanized figures that clang a large bell at appropriate times. The dining room is several floors up, providing an eye-level view of the clock's movements. The reasonably priced entrees are exotic but not so unusual, and the servers are on the surly side, but the view is worth the abuse. For a beer hall with great food and more refinement than the bawdy Hofbrau House, try the Paulaner.

Spend an hour or so in the Spielzeug (clock tower) Museum at the Marienplatz, with its antique toy collection. "The Pink Men From Mars" is a treasure whose Elastolin figures date back to 1926. Another treat is the large collection of mini-mechanical toys, circa 1875. Spielzeug also houses Marklin wind-up trains that first were displayed at the Leipzig Fair of 1891. Visitors can climb five floors of narrow spiral stairs to follow Barbie through 40 years of puberty — all the way through the Live Action Barbie of the '70s.

For less than \$5 — free on Sundays — explore the Stadt (state) Museum, St. Jakobs-Platz 1, with permanent exhibits that include musical instruments from around the world and Munich's history from the 15th century through post World War II reconstruction. Part of the Stadt is the Filmmuseum, which features series by such greats as Fritz Lang and Vittorio De Sica.

For current offerings, go to www.stadtmuseum-online.de/abo. Inquire about subtitles. For more information, call 212-661-7200 or go to www.muenchen-tourist.de.

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