



Budapest Hungary Trip Notes **December 9-18, 2011**

Tom and I usually play this game when it comes to choosing a holiday location. One of us will suggest something new and the other will find some excuse why it isn't a good idea and we end up in our favorite Paris again. This time I reminded Tom of having been in Budapest twice in 2007 and that I thought it was somewhat like a smaller, older-yet-dirtier Paris and maybe it had been cleaned up by now. He searched the internet, liked what he found, and loved an apartment he found even more. So it was "Budapest Here We Come!"

With hills and a fairy tale-like castle overlooking the Danube that flows majestically through the middle of the city, iconic bridges, grand avenues, monumental squares and palaces mixed with romantic little streets and plazas, exotic baths, cafes terraces and bustling social life, it is hardly a coincidence Budapest has been dubbed "Paris of Eastern Europe." Almost all of the inner city has been declared a World Heritage site. And to all this a strange, incomprehensible yet somewhat melodious language, and it makes an almost exotic, a bit even mysterious experience in the middle of Europe.

Here are Tom and our Parisian guests Isidora and Christine.



Did you know . . . ?

- *That English language is more closely related to Spanish, Russian or even Hindi, than Hungarian to any of the above. Hungarian is said to be one of the most difficult languages to learn.*
- *That Buda's castle was one of Europe's great centers during the 15th century: cultured, powerful and home to the Holy Roman emperor.*
- *That the original plan for what today is the grand boulevard running around inner Budapest was to build a Venice like canal.*
- *That Hungary has its own legend surrounding order of mystic monks, the Paulines, guarding their secrets since the 13th century.*

In 2007 it was the end of my employment and I'd always told a group of my running girlfriends that if my company sold I'd take them to Prague. (A Prague-to-Vienna bicycle trip had been a hit and I wanted to go again.) It had been a tradition that I took a group of up to 10 for an adventure in honor of my birthday and one year there were only four of us left from a trip to Longwood Gardens and I'd asked "Where would you like to go next year?" when one of them jokingly suggested Prague. (No wonder as I'd waxed on about how great was Prague.) Prague Virginia or Prague Kentucky was the joke for the year but no joke when the company sold and I said, "We're on!"

That eight day trip started in Budapest and ended in Prague. Someone called Budapest a Prague-on-Steroids and we had acknowledged that it needed some clean up but that fortunately all the old gloriously elegant buildings remained since the Communists didn't spend money on tear downs or clean ups. I had so much enjoyed Budapest that later the same month I had an opportunity to return for a few days as the start of a 15-day Viking River Cruise from Budapest to Amsterdam. I'd stayed at the famous Grand Corinthia Royal Hotel on the Pest side the first trip so I stayed at the delightfully

historical Hilton Hotel on the Buda Hill side the next time. (Buda is the old side on the hill, connected to the new Pest side by the Chain Bridge and now considered all one town.)

Now five years later I would be blessed with a week's apartment rental near to Heroes' Square. Remember how we enjoy living like a resident by living and grocery shopping and learning the local area? This time we would be in still another and different location which is known by the number of Embassy residences. Why we needed a four bedroom, three baths, penthouse type apartment I'm not sure but I don't argue with Tom who enjoys finding and staying in these pieces of history.

The apartment

You could see more at www.vrbo.com listing #283708 but here are the basics. We mostly lived in the master bedroom with bay window and huge marble and slate bathroom with twin summer rain showers and heated slate floors. Sometime after arranging for the rental we met Isidora from Paris (while on our Veneto and Venice tour) and she and her friend Christine came to stay with us for a couple days; they used the other end of the apartment with a large bedroom, two smaller bedrooms, two full baths and one half bath.



Large Home Office Space overlooking a garden, Kitchen with Island adjoining a planting room, and the Grand Living Room facing a terrace

Grand Parisian Style Flat/Roof Terrace! Elle Decor Featured: This 4 bedroom apartment is a stunning and spacious property surrounded by parks and tree tops in the central 6th district of downtown Budapest. Just two blocks from Andr ssy Avenue, City Park and Heroes' Square this apartment is a quiet oasis in the middle of the city. With its grandiose main alley, furnished with an eclectic mix of casual antiques and comfortable modern furniture this apartment, which has been featured in several interior decorating magazines including ELLE Dekor, is a unique and spectacular property. Ideal for families and entertaining the apartment features two large bedrooms with en suite bathrooms and two smaller single rooms with a large shared bathroom. The apartment features a grand dining room and living room, a large home office and a huge central, fully equipped kitchen with an island and a working fireplace. For full comfort there is a toilet for guests and a laundry room as well. Additionally there is a wonderful terrace with a built in watering system and space for dining or relaxing in the summer months.

While living in an apartment is good for us and we thoroughly enjoying feeling like a native and living in another world, this type of accommodation isn't perfect for everyone. It has some challenges and some things I'll admit aren't perfect such as: 1) no concierge, 2) some frustration making washers and machines work, 3) adaptation takes a bit longer than a hotel and 4) Tom likes to 'luxuriate' in the apartment more time than I do! Having said all that, we have just committed to an apartment near to the Arch d' Triomphe in Paris for April, are looking at Sydney for July and have found but not finalized a place in Buenos Aires for October.

Here's Tom's write up for www.vrbo.com: *We've rented many times through VRBO and this is one of the best. It is quiet, spacious, with high ceilings, beautifully appointed and equipped, with all the amenities. Large double sink master tiled bath with dual rainfall showers, heated slate floor, wonderful lighting and tons of hot water. There are two more large baths plus a half. The dynamic young woman managing the property, named*

Dorka, is fluent in English and seems up to any task. S arranged for a taxi to pick us up at the airport, hired a six-individual seat Mercedes mini-bus with driver for a day of touring (at a mere \$80 for five hours), and even had homemade goulash prepared and stored in the refrigerator on our arrival. A grocery store is only two or so blocks away as is the historic Heroes' Square and the famous Hungarian baths and spa as well as two subway stops. Also nearby is the famous Gundel restaurant, not to be missed, especially for Sunday brunch. Also, don't miss a walk across the Chain Bridge then take the funicular up to visit Maria Theresa's Palace. At night and well lit up, it's truly magical (see www.tomskoi.com then click on photo shows to see Budapest). A one hour night cruise on the Danube is spectacular. Visit the Cafe at the New York Palace Hotel for Belle Epoch/Baroque trappings at their best.

Weather and Health

I know – the two have little to do with each other but both being boring subjects

The report was always 'rain and cold' but there were many sunny and glorious days instead. I had pulled out what few winter clothes I had remaining (remember I'd commuted to Florida for 7 years until 2007 and since had only worn running or hiking clothing) and dressed like I expected the Arctic. My long cashmere coat was a big investment but so long ago that it's been relegated to the closet and the moths had at least a couple meals on it. It kept me warm, if not too warm, no matter. How absolutely opposite one of my 2007 trips when it was record high temperatures, folks were dying from the heat, and they were watering the asphalt roadways to keep them from buckling.

I'd lived with a sinus infection since my September French health fall-down and been hacking away all this time. Thus it was my firm intention to sleep in and rest and fully enjoy the huge and lovely apartment. I did pretty well at the resting but got nowhere with the recovery. Having a bit of food poisoning probably didn't help the issue much either. More on that follows.

Adventure Eating

Not always advised: Don't eat sausage from the Christmas market unless you want to die on the streets and spend the night up. I was up on the Castle Hill and ordered a drink at the Hilton where I'd strayed on one of my trips in '07. Then suddenly I couldn't drink anything. I thought I needed a room to stay in and wouldn't be able to make it home. By the time we did get home, walking over the Chain Bridge with the cold air in my face, I was somewhat better. By the time we got home, Tom had it and kept the effects for about 24 hours and a wee bit of the effects plagued us for a few days. For Tom it would plague him off and on for much longer.

Updates - From Tom

On Tuesday in Budapest

Well, I'm happy to report that with VRBO we've hit another home run and the place is huge and fabulous, sitting along a beautiful street lined with embassies and beautiful big homes from a great era for Budapest. Our two gal guests from Paris are blown away and we're happy to have plenty of bedrooms and private baths for everyone. And as usual, wait 'til you see the photo show! The gals are on their way back to the apartment now to pick up their bags and head to the airport. We've done a quick tour outside a palace and its garden nearby while they went to the huge market in the center of town. Lovely day – best weather yet and once they're on their way we'll venture out as tourists again. Wonderful city and such architecture. Great food and wine. Cruise on the Danube for an hour last night was spectacular. Wish you were here. See ya, Tom

After being home a week

*Budapest exceeded expectations even though I had the pictures and reports from Diana of her three trips. The apartment was fantastic, as you'll see in the photo show soon. I don't see how it could have been better - very large, beautifully equipped, and had the look of being lived in. The local young gal manager was super, before and during. She arranged a taxi to pick us up at the airport, hired a six individual seat Mercedes mini-bus for us, our two guests from Paris and the guide that you and Diana had on your visit. Wonderful day all around and only cost about \$80 for the van **and** driver for five hours. Our Sunday brunch at the famous Gundel that you'd put us on to was wonderful too and we spent about four hours there. We of course walked miles, toured*

the opera house, walked over the Chain Bridge and took the funicular up to the palace, which for me, turned out to be the highlight of the trip. The night pictures from there are just amazing.

The only downside was getting some bug - we thought it was food poisoning but the nausea and diarrhea came and went on four different occasions lasting a few hours then subsiding and things would return to normal only to come back a couple of days later. It started for me the day we arrived and my last bout ending late yesterday. It didn't curtail my activity much in Budapest though because it generally occurred during the night and I'd go through the cycle ending in bed and up the next day but was no fun.

Largest photograph on earth of Budapest?

See <http://70gigapixel.cloudapp.net/>

Tom's Photo Show

They are all on www.TomsKoi.com under Photo Shows but here's a direct link to this one: http://www.photoshow.com/watch/XN2kQ3sJ?source=em_ps_show_recipient

Buda's side – The Castle Hill



This picture (obviously from the web) would have been taken from the Pest side looking over at the Buda side – now two towns merged into two by the famous Chain Bridge. We walked across the bridge, up to the Palace (cheating a bit by taking the 100 year old wooden funicular) and very much enjoying the night lights on the Palace before walking over to where you see the Steeple of Matthias Church and around the Old Buda town. In 2007 for my second trip I stayed in the hotel attached to the church which is one of the Hilton's prides of their fleet since it's in an old Roman ruins that they have meticulously maintained as part of the hotel. This is at the Fisherman's Bastion and while we'd enjoyed the views and sights the day before during daylight it was notably more striking in the glow of the lights as was the view across the Danube to the town of Pest and the Parliament.

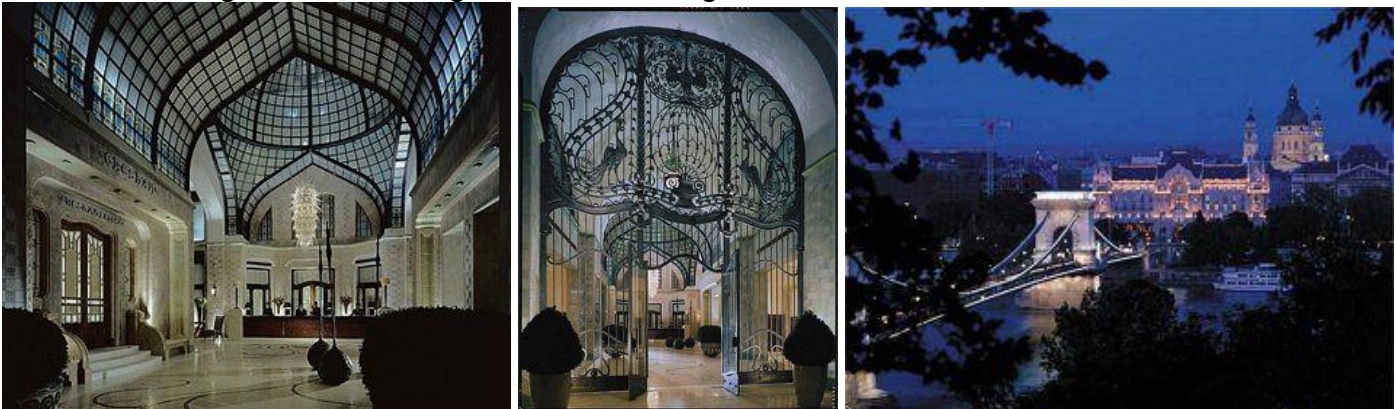
Hotels

Like so many old and historical cities, Budapest really has their share of great hotels. We found ourselves visiting a number of them including the Grand Corinthia Royal where I stayed in 2007, the Four Seasons Gresham Palace at the end of the Chain Bridge where celebrities and royalty stay, Le Meridian with its famous domed glass Tiffany-style ceiling, and the New York Palace. I think a city's hotels tell much of their story and like renting apartments, I never miss visiting whatever top rated hotels I can. (Remember the stories of my efforts to stay or see inside every National Park hotel possible?)

Grand Corinthia Royal at <http://www.corinthia.com/en/Budapest/home/> I stayed here with the girls on my first trip and at a sister hotel in Malta the year prior. It's quite a trip just to visit the location even without Budapest! There are concierge led tours every few days.



Four Seasons Gresham Palace at <http://www.fourseasons.com/budapest/> is on the Danube River, Pest side, facing the Chain Bridge and overlooking the Palace of the Old Buda side.



The lobby where we had a drink and then the view from the upper floors over the Chain ridge to the Palace.

Le Meridien at www.starwoodhotels.com/lemeridien/property/overview. They have a perfect location in the city center and near to the Danube River and features this huge domed ceiling Tiffany style. But now that I've seen their site, searched the web for pictures, I can easily say that while I'm impressed with their lobby, I'd sell any Starwood stock right away. The website is dismal. And by the way, while selling, get rid of any HP stock too – I hate my new computer.



New York Palace Hotel is known as Boscolo now and is part of Wyndham who does not have a good reputation. But the place is marvelous and worthy of a visit. Or two. I accidentally found it in 2007 on the way to the Synagogue. (The picture to the left is by Tom.) It's now called the Boscolo Budapest Hotel – see <http://budapest.boscolohotels.com>, formerly the New York Palace is even in Wikipedia. It's just down the street from the Grand Corinthia Royal. It was built by the NY Life Insurance Company as a local head office

and its Café is named New York Café and was a longtime center for Hungarian literature and poetry since its opening in 1894. It closed in 2001 to reconstruct into a luxury hotel. The café reopened just the year before I saw it. Big time original pomp, as was the whole building. The café and the hotel do not seem to belong to each other, one being wildly Italian “whore house” special (or Belle Epoch) and the other being far too modern to be attached. All the more interesting!

We had a reasonable good meal here with Tom enjoying his favorite Foies Gras on top of a ragout.



Historical hotels The Astoria and The Beke Radisson weren't worth the effort to find them, though we attempted and toured them.

The Parliament - See <http://budapest-parliament.com>. The joke is that they tried to copy the British Parliament and build something notable. One of the more notable aspects is that there is always reconstruction and always will be since was built of soft sandstone and as soon as one section is fixed, another section needs reconstruction. Yet it is dramatic and totally lit at night making it stand out above all else on the Pest side.



History - "The nation lacks a home." stated Mihály Vörösmarty, an outstanding Hungarian poet, somewhat bitterly in 1846. True, the sons of Árpád governed the country and enacted laws, from wherever they happened to be at the time. For centuries, a narrow steam of society: high priests, baronets, noblemen and aristocratic citizens claimed to constitute "the nation", meeting in council and passing judgment as they went. In the Era of Enlightenment, however, historical changes lifted millions from submission to disposition, giving mandate to a great number of people. And this nation needed a home, a place to build up a government they can call their own. In contrast with the royal palace, built in lofty heights above the rest of the city, the new parliament was to be built on the flat side of the Danube, on the same level with the city itself, as an expression and symbol of the newly born democracy. Following some years of struggle and turbulence, Imre Steindl's building design won the tender of 1882. Relying on the technical innovations of that time, he combined assorted stylistic elements to create an eclectic building, which mirrors history. The exterior leans toward the English school of Gothic Revival, somewhat resembling the Palace of Westminster in London; interior design, however, includes a great number of Renaissance and Baroque elements. The groundbreaking took place in 1885, and an average of thousand people worked consecutively for thirteen years to complete the building. It was a huge project, which greatly boosted the local industrial enterprises of the time, as the principle of working primarily with Hungarian material and Hungarian craftsmen was followed all the way through. Total cost was projected to be around 18,5 million of the era's currency, korona, but it ended up at 38 million. Around 176 000 cord ground was moved, 40 million bricks were laid, more than half a million ornamental stones were carved.



This is Tom's picture taken from the River Cruise – see more at his photo show.

The Royal Palace - high up on the hill overpowering everything!

This area on Buda Castle Hill was one of our favorite scenes and it absolutely dominates the southern skyline of the Castle District. From the looks of it, it rivals Versailles so I'm disappointed to learn that it's a mock historic structure. There are several original features from the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th Centuries . . . The first building came about in the 1200s and then in the 15th Century a large Gothic palace was established by the Luxembourg king. Many sources consider this one of the most beautiful palaces in Europe. The most important era of this building came under the rule of King Matthias in the 1400s when it was the heart of cultural life in Budapest, attracting nobleman, scholars and artists who came to the city from all over Europe. Why it's said to have been build (re-built?) by Maria Theresa I don't understand but it is truly a highlight of Budapest.

Inside the various buildings there are now elegant ballrooms, a chapel, and a crypt. Other buildings include the Historical Museum, the Hungarian National Gallery, a Contemporary art museum, and the National Library with an amazing collection of everything printed Hungarian and some choice illuminated manuscripts.



The Fisherman's Bastion and Church



The view from the top of Castle Hill and Fisherman's Bastion

You have a full view of the Chain Bridge, St Stephen's Cathedral where Sofia Loren's son got married (and she upstaged the bride), the Four Seasons Gresham Palace at the end of the bridge, and Parliament just beyond on the edge of the Danube.



Heroes' Square aka the Millennium Monument

This is our neighborhood of the moment and just a wee bit beyond was the famous Gundel Restaurant and to the other side the amusing 'castle' created for the millennium celebrations out of wood and paper and becoming so popular that it was rebuilt as a permanent fixture. It stands as a fairyland building comprised of a complex of buildings styles representing the evolution of architecture of Hungary. Built in chronological order of style: Renaissance, Baroque, etc. some call it the Dracula Castle for the Transylvania copy. Inside are museums and a restaurant and surrounded by a large wooded park. To the side are two giant museums that could be the size of Washington D.C.'s Museum of History or NYC's Museum of Art. We spent a day inside the Fine Arts Museum. Within the park would be the thermal baths.





Here are Wikipedia shots of Heroes' Square both at day and at night with one of the museums, an aerial shot of the castle surrounded by a moat and park lands, and an outside view of the Baths which are part of these huge parks. The last is an inside view of the Thermal Baths taken by Tom. There is also a noted Zoo right next door to the Gundel Restaurant.

Szechenyi Baths – see <http://www.szechenyibath.com/>

These are the largest complex of spa thermal baths in Europe. They have been around since the mid-1800s and are allegedly therapeutic and the certainly are entertaining. The outdoor 180 degree pools are open all year and cold water is needed to make them useable. When we went in 2007 we were surprised to find couples rather demonstrative along with old men playing chess on floating boards. Up one of the Buda hills called Gellert Hill is another famous bath that we visited in 2007.



The Opera House

Certainly this opera house compares well to the richest of the world. It was built in the late 1800s and renovated for its 100th year anniversary. In 2007 we took the guided tour and this time we only wandered around it and into the lobby and gift shop while the gals were with us, but then reverted and took the tour after all. The Mini-Concert that followed the tour was new and made the second time through the tour well worth it. You might recall that at one time I was 'collecting' opera houses around the world and have quite a few under my belt.



The Great Synagogue

I saw it in the daylight in 2007 and during a nighttime walk for this trip. It is said to be the largest in Europe being built in the mid-1800s. The Holocaust Memorial is often reproduced in brochures – it is a sculpture of a weeping willow and funded in part by Tony Curtis. The hours to visit are limited and

only available with a tour guide. We saw the museum and treasury rooms as well as the interior galleries. I liked the memorial on the Danube better as it is “Shoes on the Danube” with bronze shoes appearing to have been left randomly to represent those Budapest Jews and the citizens who aided them who were mercilessly shot into the river in 1944. Before they were shot the executioners required them to remove their shoes as they were a valuable item at the time.

Ráth György Museum

This was a lovely house just down the block from our apartment made into a museum of Edo Period Japanese art. We were amused to find it here but were never able to get into it despite supposedly opening hours, it was not.

Eating and Restaurants

This should be Tom’s subject but in case he doesn’t write I will say that we had a few memorable meals and much because our friends Isidora and Christine encouraged them. We’d arranged for a catered goulash dinner complete with whatever pasta they eat that looks like spatzel and pickles and red beets. It turned out to be enough food for ten and we ate about 1/3 of it and froze half for the apartment owner’s young rep. We had Hungarian wine and champagne too.



Gundel is famous in Europe and its right here in our neighborhood. When I was here the second time with Ellen she hurried off to eat at Gundel while I walked the town. Other friends kept saying to be sure to eat at Gundel. So the first thing we did when our friends arrive was walk the 10 minutes over to the other side of Heroes’ Square at the edge of the zoo for a delightful meal at Gundel

The list of awards is long. The reputation throughout Europe sometimes gives it a BEST rating. It is not pretentious nor is it extremely pricey but it is Budapest at its finest. A champagne brunch with our friends was an excellent way to start the adventure.

Check out the website for their history and even a list of famous guests. Don’t expect glorious pictures as there are not. It is quiet and understated luxury with fine service.

<http://www.gundel.hu/site/index.php?page=hu> - *Károly Gundel opened his restaurant in this spot in 1910. The restaurant soon became a meeting place for politicians, prominent members of the business community and the bourgeois middle class. It was fashionable to dine in the Gundel, which boasted many artists, athletes, writers and various celebrities among its regular patrons. Gundel Restaurant owed its popularity to two things: its inimitable hospitality and its unsurpassable cuisine. The ingenious Károly Gundel, who managed the restaurant in the early part of the 20th century, had an intuitive knack for bringing the best out of Hungarian cuisine by combining its original, unbridled flavours with the refined approach of French cuisine and applying modern gastronomic technology. His pioneering work placed Hungary on the world map of gastronomy. According to the New York Times, Gundel Restaurant’s set-up at the 1939 World Fair in New York did more to enhance Hungary’s reputation than a shipload of tourist brochures could have done. Gundel Restaurant proudly upholds its traditions and continues to provide the same standard of gastronomic*

excellence that has made it Hungary's most famous restaurant. It is our conviction that Gundel is not a synonym for luxury, but for quality.

Duna Corso Etterem is right on the Danube and a recommendation by Maria, our tour guide. See www.dunacorso.hu. We ate dishes like wild boar, stuffed cabbage rolls, spatzel, and drank Hungarian wines. From there we walked out to the river and caught a river cruise

When I took the 15-day Viking River Cruise from Budapest to Amsterdam, at the end it was agreed by many of us that the highlight was leaving Budapest at night and experiencing the wonderland. We would have been unable to do so today since water levels were too low for the cruise ships to arrive into Budapest. I met a fellow who was taking a Viking from Budapest to Nuremberg prior to becoming their tour director and learned that he'd be getting on a bus in Budapest in lieu of the boat and travelling a couple hours out of Budapest to catch the tour.



After this dinner we would indulge in a couple glasses of champagne while being guided up and down the river. To add to the experience, a large screen monitor would show us the interiors of buildings we were seeing.

The marketplace

Multiple floors of permanent market next to the River and near to the Customs House lies the major market. The top floor is comprised of a lot of restaurants. On my past trips I ate here and purchased various types of paprika. The girls bought crystal and lunch. Next to it is the Vaci, a pedestrian street that covers a big part of town running parallel to the river. It is full of shops, vendors and stalls with many of them classy but some touristy, and of course there are the plethora of restaurants.

Maria the tour guide

In 2007 while on the ABC tour we met Maria the tour guide. She was like a Julia Childs and we all loved her so I hired her for another day. Then when Ellen and I returned for the River Cruise I hired her again and we kept her for a very long day versus the 4-5 hours I'd arranged and it turned out to be so long that we split the cost. She took us out to Old Obuda and the Roman Ruins which put Rome to shame. (Remember the Romans were here with their headquarters.) We went all sorts of places that very few tourists ever see. So when we were coming this time, I was thrilled to find that she was still available. We arranged for a very nice Mercedes six individual seat passenger van with an excellent young driver and had a most enjoyable day once again and anything that was duplicate for me, wasn't for them, and I totally enjoyed all over again.



When we were with Marie in 2007 she explained how life was under the communists and how families with any wealth at all were given one hour to pack up only a few pounds of personal possessions and get out. Then the communists took over their apartments. Glorious old buildings were shown to us and we learned they'd been broken into many smaller apartments inside. Maybe this life is one of the reasons so many buildings are not cleaned up outside as its dangerous to be ostentatious.

After returning home we read in the New York Times the concern that socialism or a less democratic government is feared as the new regime might be changing the constitution more towards control by the bureaucrats.

If you come to Budapest – contact Maria at cell 36 30 9336530 or email hochman.m@freemail.hu. I suspect another trip to Budapest and maybe this apartment too are in the cards for Isidora and Christine.

Here's Christine, Isidora, Maria, Diana and Tom enjoying pastries at a famous cafe up on Castle Hills.

Christmas in Budapest!

Christmas markets, Christmas trees, Christmas decorations all abound. Yet oddly everything was rather austere compared to America's lush trees and heavily decorated windows and streets. A decorated Christmas tree, even in the best and ritziest of areas, seemed only half decorated.

Here's one of the Christmas markets with St Stephens Cathedral in the background.

Now how are we going to top this?

Well, we won't, as Budapest will always be in a world of its own despite comparisons to Paris. We can only hope they keep their hard earned democracy and eventually make it into the Euro zone. Now, it's a bargain compared to the rest of Europe.



There are more trips planned with the next one including Tom being to Las Vegas after I do the Red Rock Canyon marathon and he joins me a few days later to stay four nights at the Bellagio – in a suite of course. He wants to see two of the Cirque du Soleil shows again – “O” and Mystere. Then we are going to Paris for ten days where I'll try to finish the Paris Marathon before they close down shop. We are toying with Sydney in July and Buenos Aires in October and naturally there are marathons associated with each.

Life is good! We might live forever. . . .

Compliments of Esther Hicks, through friend Ellen, who quotes from Abraham: *You cannot judge the value of a life by its quantity. It is by the joy that you are feeling. The more joyful you are, the longer you live. Let yourself relax and breathe and be free and be joyous, and romp. The optimum physical life experience is to have plenty of things that stimulate you to desire, and an awareness of the way you feel, so you're reaching for thoughts that feel good—so you're wide open, so you're tuned in, tapped in, and turned on. We promise you, the timing of your death is always chosen by you.*

Itinerary

Fri Dec 9

2:30pm Car service to Newark
5:30pm Depart Newark EWR via CO#106

Sat Dec 10

7:40am Arrive Munich for plane change
11:00am Depart Munich MUC via LH#1676
12:15pm Arrive Budapest BUD

Car service arranged through Dorka Klim

Apartment VLF www.vrbo.com listing #283708
Varosligeti fasor 40. 2nd floor 4, 1068 Budapest - Doorbell: 124
Tele at apartment: 36 1 321 6526

Thru Hip Homes Hungary c/o Dorka Klim Tel +36 209 676736 or dorka.klim@gmail.com

Sun Dec 11 - Isidora and Christine Shepard

12:15pm Arriving Budapest via Malev #531

Mon Dec 12

11:00am Tour with Maria Hochman Tele 36-30-9336530 – to meet at apartment

Tue Dec 13 - Isidora and Christine

5:25pm Departing Budapest via Malev #534

Sat Dec 17

Hotel Airport Hotel Budapest
Lorinci u. 130/a Vecses, 2220 Tele: 800 663 3928 or 001 949 930 9595

Sun Dec 18

6:45am Depart Budapest BUD via LH#1685
8:00am Arrive Munich MUC for plane change
9:20am Depart Munich MUC via CO#107
12:40pm Arrive Newark

Touring

From Ellen: You might like to know that there is a subway that parallels Andrassey Street. The first time I visited Budapest, I stayed at a hotel behind the Opera house. I was given instructions to ride the subway out to Heroes' square and the art museum. There's an entrance across the street and maybe a block or so up the street from the Opera house. There were no attendants or ticket sellers (Sunday) so I and a couple of others who wandered in just hopped on and rode for free. I spent the entire afternoon at the Art Museum which has the largest and best collection of Spanish art outside Spain. The entire collection is huge and important. I could easily spend another afternoon there. Across the park there's another museum which I ran into about 15 minutes before it closed. I'm not sure exactly what its focus was, but I watched a film of Soviet tanks in Heroes' Square, and people running across the square under the tanks' guns. Seems the gunners couldn't see low around the tanks. I've not been in the palace on the Buda side or actually done a spa. I've spent time photographing the decor of St. Stephens and went to mass there. Found both very interesting. But I've read a list of museums in Budapest and realize I've just scratched the surface.

Walking Tour #1- Castle of Buda, Taban, Gellert Hill
Chain Bridge
Funicular and the Tunnel
Alexander Palace (Sandr Palota)
Castle Theatre (Varszinhaz)
Carmelite Order's Monastery (Karmelita rendhaz)
Castle Promenade (Varsetany)
Vizikapu (Water Gate) ex Saint John Gate
Disz ter (Parade Square)
Monument for War of Independence (Magyar honvedhisok emlékszoobra)
4-5 Disz Square
Kremsmunster Monastey
Passady House at 11 Disz Square
13 Disz Square, the Salgary House
15 Disz Squae
Uri utca (Gentlemanty Street)
#9 Uri Street
Castle Caves (budai varbarlangok)
Wax Museum
#31 and #37 only Gothic buildings and lived – in tower
Balz koz (Hatchet-close)
#14, 16 and 18 Tarnok Street – ancient trade houses
Museum of Pharmacy (Patikamuzeum)
Parliamen of Vuda
Oszaghaz utca (Parliament Street)
Church of Mary Magdalene
Nandor barracks
Museum of Military History