



## **Vienna Trip Notes** **December 23 – January 5, 2013**

### ***Arrival of Marie Day – minus one – countdown!***

Obviously we miss daughter and grandson and feel like real great-grandparents to Marie. Gosh Almighty or Godparents or whatever. Here she is in one of the outfits Tom got her. He purchased her traveling wardrobe before she got to NJ and amazingly it all worked. Here's one outfit.

### ***Friends ask "Who is Marie?" A goshaughter for goshgrandfolks!***

Here is a recent explanation from Tom: Here's Marie. She arrives tomorrow morning around 9:30am then we have a big annual Christmas Eve party at my friend's house, then we leave on Christmas Day evening for Vienna where I've rented a really nice modern 2 bedroom 2 bath apartment on an oldy-worldy quiet cobblestone street in the heart of the city where we can walk to most anything we want to see. A car will pick us up at the airport and transport us to the apartment where we'll be met by a management rep who'll give us a walk through and orientation. Since Marie is a musician (she plays the flute and piccolo in the school marching band) and is a Mozart fan, we'll be seeing his house and the museum plus the Klimt exhibition going on now plus a concert and the big deal New Year's fireworks when the whole city is out in the street dancing and enjoying the crisp winter's night. It's a spectacular city and we've been there and really feel the old Europe that we admire and appreciate. It will no doubt be a trip to be remembered for a lifetime and a first to Europe for Marie.



**Summary** – from Marie, the one who counts, and music to our ears: *For a first trip to Europe I would have to say this is just amazing. I don't think another trip will match up to this. I know for a fact four and a half years ago I wouldn't even have thought about being on an airplane much less being in business class and going to Europe. This was the best Christmas present I have ever had. Some of my favorite things were the Sisi museum, the Mozart apartment, and the Schonbrunn palace. The best restaurant we ate at was the one Kathrine Switzer suggested to us after the third man tour. Overall if I had to grade my trip it would be A+.*

**A pictorial tour** using some of Tom's photos; we'll save most of the pictures for Tom's photo show at [www.Tomskoi.com](http://www.Tomskoi.com).



Like in Paris where we frequent the historical brasseries, we enjoy Vienna's classic cafes.



St Stephen's Square and the cathedral is the center of town and near to our apartment so we'd be there multiple times to include for New Year's Eve when it's very much like Times Square in NYC. This was on the Third Man Sewer Tour. We all know the Third Man Theme music and probably the classic Orson Wells movie.



The streets were fully and extravagantly decorated with each street having its own theme. These chandeliers were our favorite. We would tour more than just Belvedere Castle (with its Klimt exhibit) but also Schonbrunn outside of town. Tom will add those pictures to his photo show. The woman in white is Sisi and her museum is always a favorite and we listened to every audio explanation available. For me it was a second time.

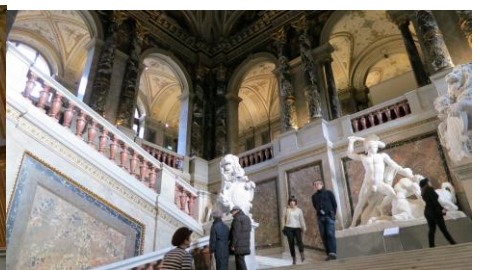




Inside St Stephen's was lit like the outside was for New Year's Eve. Here's inside the Vienna Opera House where we also had a backstage tour, then inside one of our two concert halls.



Maybe this picture was even AFTER the stop by the Eau de Vie/Grappa tasting cellar in Krems on our way to Melk Abbey.



Inside Melk Abbey in their treasures room, then inside the amazingly gold gilded chapel. The last picture is inside the Kunsthistorical Museum which is said to be every bit as spectacular as the Louvre or Orsay or NY Metropolitan Museum.



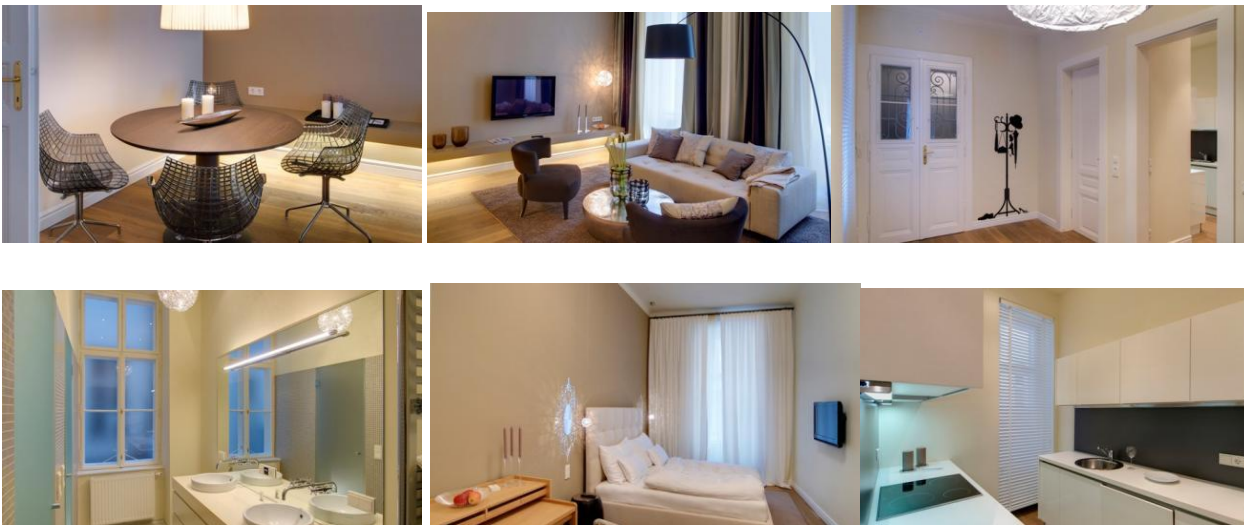


Just for the record, daughter and grandson have both been invited on trips but they are obviously happy with Kansas City life. Daughter Alayna just turned down a trip to Hawaii; I kid you not! We'll see how long Marie likes to travel . . . .

**The apartment** - The location was excellent right in the heart of the city and on a historical street too. It was hard to find just the right apartment because it's a holiday week and we didn't get to it as early as usually needed but despite that Tom did well.

It was good for location, modernization, size and top quality with even heated bathroom floors. Marie had her own side of the apartment with her own bath. It wasn't perfect: a bit sterile in decoration and the kitchen had been striped clean. (This entails purchasing staples like salt, sugar, oils, dish soap, etc.) I miss having a concierge.

<http://www.viennaresidence.com/de/appartements/wien/designer-apartment-wien-zentrum-einmalige-luxuswohnung-im-historischen-altbau>



**[www.jpi.at/en/Service%20Apartments/Apartments/serviced-apartment-1010-wien-schonlaterngasse-13c](http://www.jpi.at/en/Service%20Apartments/Apartments/serviced-apartment-1010-wien-schonlaterngasse-13c)** - Schönlaterngasse: *The Michelin guide review: The winding Lovely Lantern Street gets its name from the wrought iron lantern on the façade of the house at no 6. At no 5, you can visit the Heiligenkreuzerhof. If marriage tempts you in this charming Baroque chapel, don't hesitate, it's the upmarket place for weddings. At no 7 next door is the very old «Zum Basilisken» (basilisk) house. Robert Schumann lived next door at no 7a for a few months. The Alte Schmiede is the forge where the Lovely Lantern was made and is now a museum.*

*About our street: For a generally fairly old city, Vienna has preserved very little of its Medieval heritage. This is mostly due to the Turkish Siege of 1683: Everything outside of the city walls (which ran approximately along today's Ringstraße, the circular boulevard around the first district) was completely flattened by the Ottoman*

armies. As a result, only the first district still contains significant neighbourhoods that pre-date the late 17th century. The most remarkable area for Medieval and early Baroque buildings can be found around Bäckerstraße and its many side-alleys. I took the picture above in Schönlaterngasse, one of my favourite spots in Vienna: A narrow lane with cobbled streets, old burgher houses and cosy cafes nearby - all typical features for any historic city in Austria, except for Vienna. In the Medieval corner around Schönlaterngasse, you will also find the Heiligenkreuzerhof and the Bernardiskapelle, supposedly Vienna's oldest apartment block. The chapel is a hidden gem of the city and usually closed. This is unfortunate, since it is among the most impressive sacral Baroque buildings I know in Vienna. Another Baroque "island" in this otherwise Medieval hood is the Alte Aula and the Jesuite church.

**Diary** – I sent messages out each day to those who asked for updates.

**Christmas Day - Day 1 of travel** - She takes readily to the comforts of travel settling right into the chauffeured town car and then negotiating her way through the first class lounge. (Make no mistake - only Tom travels first class.)

Yet TSA was an unexpected challenge by no fault of her own. The new sweater had metal threads through it necessitating a full pat down but even the female agent felt it was inappropriate to do so on a 14 year old. That despite my saying I was mother and both of us saying it was fair and ok. The end result was a partial pat down which I'm sure caused no grief and only words of understanding by Marie.

A stop by the duty free shop supplied us with booze and then another plug adapter. A new-fangled one that accepts three inputs including a USB plus works in all countries and will keep me from going through my entire bag full of different models.

Last night's Christmas Eve party at Chris and Ouida's was a delight but resulted in a very late night. Marie won a \$25 Starbucks gift card for her drawing contest then a \$10 iTunes for being the youngest there. Someone asked Marie if Santa was going to come but surely multiple shoes and boots, a few designer outfits, an Andean flute, a camera, the Vienna trip and who remembers what else, will suffice. Smile.

We are clear that it is us, Tom and Diana, who benefit from having youth and especially such a smart and special one, around to share the love of travel. We can only hope she takes to it since we have Paris in March and some more hopeful ideas. Marie seems to take it all in and assimilate so we have reason to hope for the best.



**Picture of Marie and Tom in first class lounge**

**Arrival into Vienna - Day 2 – December 26** - Getting to Vienna is pretty special all on its own but made all the better by having First Class upgrade for all. Tom was already in first but imagine our surprise to be moved UP. This pretty much never happens even to a 1K Platinum flyer like me so we imagined it was faerie land.

Again Marie assumed the look of someone quite accustomed to first class even in the Dusseldorf lounge where I had to stop the coffee consumption. She was flying high as it was.

**Picture** taken at the famous Café Central, home of the 1800s noted writers. Our first full meal in Vienna. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caf%C3%A9\\_Central](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caf%C3%A9_Central)



**First full day - Day 3 - Thursday December 27** - We were surprisingly early up and early out by 9am for a walk over to Ms. Edith's who lives near to the Borse Platz or stock exchange. She introduced us to the American family from Philadelphia now living in Barcelona for a couple years and staying at Ms. Edith's B&B. They had their three teens near to Marie's age (12, 15 and 17) plus a friend. They were all characters. Nice characters but colorful in most cases especially the 6' 6" 12 year old with Einstein hair who was so cute as a very comfortable and outspoken gay.

Ms. Edith would be our guide for a full day until 5pm. It was good and it was just okay with her having been in Vienna forever, but also has a home in San Antonio and one in Budapest. She seemed ancient but we learned that she was younger than Tom. Nothing old about her except her looks.

After coffee and some chit chat we walk to train. We caught a bus. We saw embassies and lovely small estates on our way up the hills to Vienna Woods. It was there we had two stops with major overlooks which gave us views of UN or International City, the river and bridges, all of the town, plus maybe the Alps in the distance.

Special included a walk thru town of Gristling where artists congregated during the Beethoven and Mozart time frame. Ms. Edith gave us the opportunity to "interview" multiple restaurants with all being worth the look over and most historical. We voted and ended at a sweet complex of a restaurant that was from 1100s where we ate traditional dishes. Marie had her first weiner schnitzel and as usual it was a full plate size. She did pretty well at finishing it.



Isn't there something else? Its midnight and I can't think of it.

After the tour drop off at Ms. Edith's B&B we walked the entire ring road under the night lights with plenty of Christmas spectacular lights. Through parks and palaces, huge government buildings, a lit town hall called the Rat House (isn't that a great name for a house of politicians?) and the majestic huge library, until we came to the spectacular and well lit opera house. (We will tour there on another day.) It is not however as special as the Hof theatre across from the palace and museum grounds.



At the opera we bought tickets for a Mozart and Strauss concert to be held in the Imperial Hall of a 300 year old building on Beethovenplatz. This neo-Gothic building was constructed by Schmidt who was a famous cathedral architect and also designer of the Rat House and is noted for its unsurpassed acoustical sounds. Two enjoyable hours even for a non-educated music person; assisted with champagne for intermission where we were regaled with the psychological perspective of each player on stage by "psychiatrist in training" Marie.

Such great night time pictures even later to include the bright gold of Johann Strauss in Stadt Park. All that walking made us hungry for another dinner as the first one had been on our feet at a Viennese fast food place under the Opera House. Near to our hotel was a local noted but simple restaurant where we had Viennese soups and wine until midnight.

Am I tired? Do I have jet lag? We all own up to it.

**Day 4 – Friday - December 28** - Yesterday, well last night, we were up until about 2am which is closer to our body clock and worked for having had an 11pm dinner. When we went to bed and declared that no one need set an alarm we had no ideas we would not wake until 11am.

Tom cooked a big breakfast of eggs, meat and potatoes as well as tried out our frustratingly expensive nespresso coffee machine. The machine came with the apartment but the pods we bought and some worked and some didn't. Shopping later brought us some realistic instant coffee.

The rain had cleared but to make sure I carried my umbrella before our walk through Stadt Park where there is loads of statuary with the most famous being the bright gold Johann Strauss where we took pictures last night in the glow of the gold and moonlight then took more today in the sunlight. The park also contains lakes and is separated by a long canal which we'd later learn was used for the classic movie The Third Man. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Third\\_Man](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Third_Man)

We managed a warm up in The Intercontinental Hotel before meeting up for our walking tour. I'd thought a sewer tour would be inside sewers so not so cold but it was on wet streets and we shivered despite a lot of clothing and hats. Most know of The Third Man classic movie and the famous theme song which was sold more times than most any other piece of music. Our tour went through town and with stories of Vienna in the war and rebuild. We'd been told and encouraged to go by Kathrine Switzer who had enjoyed it this last summer, in the company of husband Roger. The tour ends at a lovely restaurant where a zither demonstration played the theme song and we're invited to see the movie that night and even a full museum. Many of the participants were aficionados who follow this and know every detail of the movie. Part of the tour's theme was the errors of the film most of which were comical as was the fact that our tour guide, mother and family have made a living off guiding this film's followers.

I didn't know of the movie at all but fortunately KV had insisted we rent and watch it which helped but even without that the tour of the city was good. While at her home in June she and Roger told us about staying in this delightful place for dinner, so of course we did.

Tomorrow we'll try to get up early and head to Schonbrunn Palace -

<http://www.schoenbrunn.at/en/things-to-know/palace.html>



**Note from Tom:** We're in a very nice apartment here in Vienna (right in the center of town) and doing well with sight-seeing and walking miles. Did the Third Man walking tour - wonderful guide from a long line of family guides (do you remember the Orson Wells movie, The Third Man?). Joseph Cotton played the lead and Wells was paid a hundred thousand for a three minute part right at the end of the movie. It was said to still be the highest salary ever for minutes performed. The tour ended at this lovely restaurant where a zither player played the Third Man theme for us then we had been advised by a famous running friend of Diana's to eat there. Wonderful meal and Marie has discovered Weiner Schnitzel and loves it (me too). Diana had venison stew that was super.

**Day 5 – Saturday - December 29th** - Using up our underground pass today and tomorrow before it expires, we hunted for the site the farthest away and came up with Schonbrunn Palace. (Most of Vienna is within an easy walk as we are in the city center.) It was rather optimistic that we expected to see Schonbrunn in the morning and Belvedere Palace in the afternoon; Schonbrunn ended up taking us most of the day despite getting up early. I suppose the good is that we really saw it as well as having a nice meal on the palace grounds. When we did a bus tour a few years ago it was a quick in and out and thus I'd never had the time to walk up the highest hill where there's a view of the city.

We did have time thereafter to have a nice walk and end up at the Mozart House and museum for an audio tour of three floors where Mozart lived. He apparently lived in many places but this was his most elegant and the only one left. It has a collection of memorabilia as well as films and an interesting setting.

My legs and feet were very tired by 7:30pm so I declared that I'd go home and they could stay out but turned out I had a couple takers to spend the evening in too. We could eat any number of things but it's like pate and cheese or leftovers and the evening ended with some TV now that the technos have made it work and an early to bed so we can have an early rise.

So much to do, so little time! Not counting travel days we'd have 9 full days and have used up 4 of them and still have much to see: Klimt special exhibit at the Habsburg, other Habsburg museums especially the one devoted to Sisi, a full day out to Melk Abbey, another concert, New Year's Day celebrations which are huge in city center, tour of the opera, Belvedere Palace, a river tour, maybe the national library and maybe Bratislava in Slovakia. I can readily see that we can't get it all done.

Here's the restaurant of last night: Mediterranean Schubert at 2 eingang uber schottengasse 3, [www.restaurant-schubert.at](http://www.restaurant-schubert.at) It is at the site of the end of The Third Man tour.

**Day 6 – Sunday - December 30<sup>th</sup>** - Oh my goodness. I don't even know what day it is. Yesterday I reported as Friday. Now it's Sunday.





I'd say that we don't believe in jet lag, but for some reason we have trouble sleeping until its almost morning. Guess since I don't know what day it is you can tell I'm not sleeping well. I have been up from 1:30am to 5am the last two nights. Fortunately Marie seems to be sleeping just fine – and of course it's in her own private wing of the apartment.

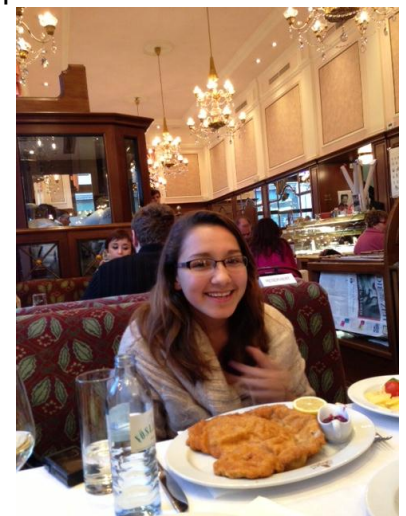
Briefly since I'm tired, we got up early again today and headed out to Belvedere Palace where they are celebrating 150 years of Klimt. We'd been there but without all the special Klimt, though we saw a special on Klimt at the Albertina before. <http://www.belvedere.at/en/schloss-und-museum/anreise>

Where to dine is often the question but rarely does it not pay off to eat in a museum café so we stayed in the Belvedere and it paid off with a pleasant meal in good surroundings. We liked our meal and Marie liked the gnocchi of her dish but left everything else. She's mostly doing well at eating and trying but still has some weird ideas or phobias that I have NO doubt she'll get over with soon.

For dinner we found what the Parisians would call a Brasserie but the Viennese call a café which was also a delightful experience. If in Paris it might have been in the book of historical brasseries. It was down the street from the Opera, across from the Imperial Hotel (where Hitler took up residence once) and with the perfect old waiter and traditional food. Marie even tasted my caviar on the egg dish and surprisingly declared it to be good.

Loudean rightly said "that's all you did?" about only seeing the Belvedere and then the Hapsburg Palace imperial apartments with the Sisi museum – but we do these things well and complete. At the Belvedere we took the audio tour and didn't miss a thing: rooms and art and specials to include the view of Vienna. (It's a bit outside of town.) Meals are leisurely. After a very long walk which Marie does quite well, we found the royal apartments and stood in a ridiculously long line for tickets to the museums. This is after all a big tourist weekend. We'd watched a multi-disc DVD about Sisi, the late 1800s beloved wife of royalty. Oddly she wasn't appreciated until long after she was assassinated but they've made up for it now with myths, stories and a full museum that has been much expanded since I was there in 2007.

**Picture:** Near to Albertina Museum in the Café Mozart and after our late rise, welcome lie-in, then a back door tour of the opera. The picture is Marie's third Wiener schnitzel of the trip.



**What we could have done** – a suggestion from traveler par excellence Ellen but we couldn't get ourselves up in the morning: I have a suggestion. If you're so inclined, go to mass on Sunday morning at St. Stephens. At the main mass they have a full choir, small orchestra, and a superb soloist. While there is ritual involved (centuries old) it's like a free concert and as I remember, the music was fabulous. And it connects you to life as it's lived in Vienna. If you get bored you're free to leave at any time. At Catholic masses, there is a certain amount of walking around and nobody thinks anything of it. Here's the link to the schedule:

[www.stephanskirche.at/index.jsp?langid=2&menuekeyvalue=13](http://www.stephanskirche.at/index.jsp?langid=2&menuekeyvalue=13). If Marie is into music, she might enjoy a bit of this.

**New Year's Eve in Vienna:** Another Times Square type of event. We could hear them at least until 5am. The fireworks exploded at my feet. The fireworks exploded and went up from our street corner also. This is one BIG party!



**Day 7 – Monday - December 31** - Ok, let me try to get this right. Day 6 was Sunday. Today is Day 7 – New Year's Eve Day and Monday. Yes, some of us have had a lot of alcohol on this trip and maybe enough that we had trouble counting.

I sent a picture to some of you earlier of Marie's third weiner schnitzel and here's Tom's note about that: "Not her third of the day. Her third of the trip. This is no doubt the biggest one I've ever seen.

"This was a lovely late lunch in a ritzy cafe (Cafe Mozart of course) just behind the opera house and around the corner from the famous Sacher Hotel (home of the sacher torte). We had to wait in line about 30-40 minutes but it was worth it. We had only intended to have a coffee and a dessert but the food looked great and Diana was hungry. She had a great piece of salmon with veggies and I had venison stew that was excellent. Then tonight we did another concert and came back to the



apartment through rather large crowds and a barrage of firecrackers, some of which sound like bombs! Fortunately, we live in a quiet street but have a bar nearby and a restaurant/bar next door and have had a few "bombs" go off but relatively speaking....

“Diana's going back out to join the hordes of revilers because that's what she does. Remember, she went to New Orleans Mardi Gras too. (And always wanted to go to Times Square for New Year's Eve.) Marie and I are staying in, playing with our iPads. She's got us hooked up to something called "Face Time" which allows for conversations and video face to face. (Diana's note: No Face Time for me – we look ugly looking down at our screens. Forget about it.)

“Anyway, life is good and we've had some lovely sunny days - cool but beautiful. Vienna was recently voted the best city in the world to live in. Maybe....” end of Tom's note.

Back to my report on today: one of us is not sleeping well at night but all of us slept well this morning and in fact shockingly late. But surely this was needed and healthy for us and it was the first morning without the use of an alarm.

We first walked a new route to the Opera House and had a back door tour which included the seating, back stage, presidential box, and reception halls. Tom and I did this tour in 2005 when we biked into Vienna from Prague but of course we enjoyed it all over again and it's really Marie's kind of thing. She took a picture of the orchestra pit and backstage, as well as others, but we know where her heart lies. Tom and I have toured all the major cities opera houses where we visited if they were open for tours and at one point I listed my 'collection' of famous opera houses. Maybe the top three famous and old established opera houses would be Milan, Paris and Vienna with those in no particular order. (Oh darn, where would I put Venice? So many, so little time.) Then we went to the Café Mozart Tom talked about above for a long and leisurely meal followed by a tour of the Opera Museum.

After another lengthy but nice walk we ended at the Kurasalon, one of the very touristy but gloriously lovely and striking concert halls where we paid up for concert tickets under their New Year's Eve pricing. Ugh, but what are you gonna do? Our first concert was better yet we enjoyed this one a lot and the music was fortunately different with the arias sung by a dramatically powerful opera singer. Just as good - all the New Year's Eve formal wear though fortunately we weren't the only ones in regular dress.

I did go out late night to experience the St Stephen's Square and various festivities. I might have stayed out longer but I wanted to be with my "family" for the first pop of champagne in 2013. I just made it but when I was literally stuck in the crowd of the square at 11:30pm I wondered if I'd make it out. It was tight packed like the New York Times scenario and as I hurried home for midnight I could see the masses still coming in for the shows and fireworks of the square. There were fireworks everywhere, at my feet, in the sky, out on the ring road, and all.

It was always clear that Tom did not want to go, and Marie had a choice, but since she jumped at every firecracker (which echoed through the canyons of the buildings) it was good that she chose not to go with me. It's now 1:30am, the fireworks continue as does her jumping at every one! This is surely a New Year's Eve she won't forget.

With that, I'm off.

### ***Day 8 – Tuesday - New Year's Day!***

We worked on beating our lie-in record this morning but we were up until 2:15am the night before and probably didn't get through the fireworks noise until well after 4am.

Our adventure today was what I generally think should be done the first day – a general tour. But circumstances caused us to see Ms. Edith instead and then we had this underground pass, etc. So off we were to the opera area to catch a general overall city tour.

A nice stube thereafter and a walk to and from gave us plenty of excitement as we went miles through city center, around St Stephens Square and by many open kiosks. The town is mostly cleaned up from last night but the front steps of our building show the results of many drunks outside – too gross to describe.

We are booked for an early morning full day trip called "Romantic Danube Valley" where we'll walk to a local hotel for pick up. From the brochure: "Through this romantic scenery full of history and legends the Danube winds its way past charming old villages and steep vineyards. The old castles tell us about the former importance of this trade- and traffic way, one of them - Dürnstein - especially famous, because here King Richard Lionheart was imprisoned, while waiting for his ransom to arrive from England, raised by his faithful Minstrel Blondel. During a romantic boat-trip the history comes alive. The heart of the Wachau is the old wine-merchants' town Krems. The highlight of this excursion will be the visit of the Benedictine abbey of Melk, one of Austria's most famous Baroque buildings, which together with the Wachau area, won the award for "Best Historic Destination of the World" in 2008. Lunch at the Abbey Restaurant at Melk." Tom and I were in this area during our bicycle trip from Prague to Vienna and not only want Marie to see it but don't mind seeing it again.

### ***Day 9 – Wednesday – January 2***

Down the river . . . . [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melk\\_Abbey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melk_Abbey) or is it up the river?

Light rain and 30 degrees met us this morning instead of the expected snow. That helped wake us up. A clearing and hint of sun would surface by noon.

It was only a short but brisk walk to a shuttle bus pick up at 9am then a change of buses before tour start at 9:45. We had been told the tour was sold out causing me to email an appeal which oddly gave positive results.

We then have just one more day open after today, then home to NJ, then next day goes Marie home to KC. She wants to go first class. Not business class but first class. We remind her that takes a lot of studying and choosing a proper career that will be lucrative. It doesn't happen on our pocketbook though it has happened with airline miles.



Compared to their snow and 20s temperatures before we arrived, we have been



most fortunate weather wise. Well, fortunate all the way around to even be here. Health wise, financially and mentally able. Even to see Vienna through a teen's eyes was a treat.

Our drive across the bridge via the river boat cruise docking area and into the UN Quarter also known as International City caused me to again be rather surprised if not amazed that in 2007 I walked through the International Quarter, into and through the Prater and home of the amusement park and huge Ferris wheel, and then on into town for touring plus the entire ring road.

Facts: 51 percent of Vienna is parks. Miles of beaches along Danube which is famously clean and contains some 50 species of fish. Vienna Woods older than the Alps. 1,000 old wine houses remain in this area. We saw many vineyards as our bus wove along the riverbanks.

The best way to see this Wachau valley is by boat but it doesn't run in the winter. With our fog and mist we even missed most of the adjoining castles that would have been viewed by river and even a bit by the bus. By the time we went home and weather cleared it was dark.

Good and humorous old guide with 5 languages; thank heavens our group only needed 3. (It turns out the old looking guide is younger than me.)

A 30,000 year old small fat woman (tiny figurine of Venus) made of stone was found in this valley and said to be the oldest ever found though something recently found here might be older. This is very near to where Richard the Lionheart was imprisoned high up on a hill.

We had a walk around Krems for hour but it's really turned touristy and requires getting onto the back streets. Ellen had told us about a special chocolate shop but we looked and are quite convinced it doesn't exist any longer.

We were in Durnstein for a walking tour to include sample tastes of apricot liquor and apricot schnapps. I bought a small bottle, saved our little glasses, and enjoyed some during the bus ride. It's also called Eau d'vie

or grappa. I don't know the difference.

About ten minutes farther down the road we stopped for lunch in small charming village called Emmersdorf: soup, a turkey cutlet with sauce and a vegetable mixture followed by an apple strudel that was as much like cheesecake. Marie wasn't so sure that Tom could manage to dine in a mere 1- 1/2 hours and she was right.

The chapel of Melk Abbey sure got Marie's attention. It was recently restored so even more brilliant than what we saw in 2005 and 2007. When we stepped into the chapel her mouth dropped and she stayed silent a long time.



Via a different route home on the bus we had a good drive-by of Schonbrunn Palace all lit up.

It was a full day so after a walk through the square and shopping areas, down our little alleyways, we ended our day early to have our first dinner in the apartment. Tom is cooking some pasta dishes.

### **Day 10 – Thursday – January 3**

Now I see why I can't figure out what day it is: My worksheet for what to do each day shows days on the ground, not days of travel. Days on ground equal 9 but count days like a tour company does and its 11. My daily reports 'home' were looking like "If it's Tuesday it must be Belgium." Our travels couldn't be more the extreme opposite.

**Picture:** At the kunsthistorisches Museum - The focus of our day with more Klimt and Reuben's and van dyke and Rembrandt and Vermeer and all the biggies in a fabulous building. Kathrine Switzer had sent us there. Good thing it was indoors as it rained sideways and blew at 27mph or more creating a miserable walk but it was worth it.



### **Day 10 cont'd - Last full day in Vienna - Thursday January 3**

The day before snow had been predicted but it turned out to be a delightful day. Today said 20 percent chance of rain but as we left it was misting so we returned for a couple of umbrellas. Little did we know how much we'd need them or even how possible they'd become. With driving rain coming down sideways in winds said to be 27 mph and some gusts enough to pick you off your feet an umbrella only went inside out.

We were going all the way across town, a walk we'd done before, and hindsight says we should have had a taxi. It turned into a miserable walk with no taxi in sight. We popped into various stores and shopping arcades.

The big museum complex inside the ring road is next door to the Museum Quarter which is just outside the ring. Our destination was the magnificent building of their main museum the Kunsthistorics with not only another Klimt exhibit but all the old masters.

In their center is an unbelievably gorgeous old cafe with the high dome above. We waited in line only to get near the front and be told they were closing. Then the direction to return at 4pm turned out to be misdirection too so we later ended up down the street.

The museum was open late fortunately but even with all our time there we didn't see it all. We did however use the audios again so surely learned a lot. We also learned that not all Austrians are nice and especially or notably the cafe manager.

Our dinner goal for our Last Supper was Kathrine Switzer's recommendation. It was even farther to our opposite side of town so we took a taxi. My feet had only finally dried out having been cold and wet then numb. Imagine our surprise to find it closed despite their website information. A few false



starts, one being where the taxi driver then took us as an alternate, turned to no good. We eventually took the underground home and ate okay in a local and colorful pub.

It was pack up time as our apartment check out was 6:45am with a car at 7am.

***Day 11 – Travel Day – Friday, January 5***

All went so well that we even got Marie into first class again. After I declared my worry that we might be creating a monster she even brought me her water bottle and chocolates back to my coach seat. Of course we know where Tom sat!

All is well that ends well and it's only about 8 - 9 weeks until our Parisian adventure. We had a day at home to unpack, do laundry, become reacquainted with Pandora and the house, before Marie would depart home to Kansas City. Her bags were full, hopefully so was her heart as ours was, and we felt like it had been an adventure of a lifetime for all three of us.

***Day 12 – Last Day – Friend Pat to Tom:***

Glad you are home safe and sound. So happy for Marie to have experienced such a slice of the high life. It is good for her to see how hard work rewards one. She will have additional motivation to study hard and seek valuable work.

***Tom to friend Pat:***

We're just home from delivering Marie to the airport (and thankfully able to wait in the United lounge in Terminal A). She's been a perfect traveling companion and fun and helpful (she's so bright) so we're looking forward to another adventure in March to Paris. Can you imagine being 14 and traveling in first class, eating in wonderful restaurants, staying in beautiful apartments, to and from the airport in a private car and seemingly being able to assimilate and appreciate all this? What a kid! And that fabulous coat I bought her when she was here in the summer not only kept her very comfy but looked wonderful. She really understands the phrase "life is good." And so do I.



Pictures Panoramic of Vienna

[http://www.foto-julius.at/images\\_wien\\_panorama.html](http://www.foto-julius.at/images_wien_panorama.html)

***From our amazingly well traveled friend Ellen who always helps with our travel plans:*** What a wonderful trip! Vienna is one of my favorite cities. I was there on the two days before New Year's Day, including New Year's Eve. I see you'll also be there on New Year's Eve. On that night in Vienna, everybody goes to a concert. Tickets to the concert at the opera are sold out months in advance. I got the great idea for this trip on Dec. 15th and wanted to fly out Christmas day. I got on the phone to U.S. Air and a wonderful agent put the trip together for me. I had read that Thessaloniki, Greece, was hosting a huge exhibition of treasures from Mt. Athos - one of the three promontories that stick out into the Aegean Sea from the north and it's covered with monasteries - 46 of them (if I remember correctly). All are off-limits to women. I owned a book that featured pictures of treasures from these monasteries (medieval illuminated manuscripts and icons) and I realized this was probably the only opportunity I would ever have of seeing some of these.

In the conversation, my U.S. Airways agent was trying to figure out the shortest route to Thessaloniki, and he mentioned Vienna. He decided to route me going through Stuttgart. I asked him if he could bring me home through Vienna. Answer, "Yes". I got out all my info on Vienna, got on the phone the next day and found that EVERY HOTEL in Vienna was booked solid. In a panic, I faxed the Viennese consul general in NY, told him that I had unknowingly booked myself through Vienna at New Year's Eve and couldn't find a hotel. He faxed me back and told me that New Year's Eve is the biggest night of the year in Vienna, and most hotels are booked months ahead. He, however, told me of a bed and breakfast owned by a friend of his that was off the beaten path and suggested that he might have an available room. I faxed the friend, and he had a room. And he took care of me like a concierge. I wanted to go to a concert on New Year's Eve. He found me a ticket to a concert in the orangerie of the Belvedere Palace - a string quartet playing Mozart - changed the way I hear and critique music. Never heard Mozart played like that. It was riveting.

I wanted to go on a tour of Vienna and the Danube River. He booked me on just such a trip. Bus picked me up, took me to a square where all the tour buses congregate. I found a bus with an English speaking guide and we drive up the Danube River valley as far as Melk Monastery - a mind-



blowing treat for the eyes (so long as you don't worry about where the money came from). We stopped at a picture postcard little Austrian town that had the best chocolate shop on the planet and a splendiferous baroque church. Then we stopped at the town where Richard the Lion-Heart was imprisoned on his way home from one of the Crusades.

I got back to the hotel with no time for dinner. My hotel host called me a cab instructed the cabbie to stop at a Weinersnitzel stand and get me a Weinersnitzel for dinner, then take me to the Belvedere for the concert. After the concert, I was instructed to take the subway to the Sacher Hotel, where he assured me they would accommodate me for dinner. Actually they offered me a ticket for \$350. When I explained that I was not interested in the dinner/dance that was the headliner for the evening at the hotel, but rather a simple dinner off the menu, they set me up in the bar with my own waiter, and served me a perfectly fine New Year's dinner. Then (per instructions) I took the subway to the Square at St. Stephens. It was so crowded; I couldn't always touch the ground with my feet (far too scary.) So I got back on the subway and went to the plaza in front of the gothic Town Hall. It was not too crowded. It featured 4 huge TV screens that were showing the concert at the Opera. At midnight, the orchestra broke into the Blue Danube Waltz, and everybody in the square danced. I, a total stranger in Vienna, was asked to dance repeatedly, and I found myself going back to my B & B in a delighted glow. One of the happiest New Years' Eves I can remember.

I spent the next the day having lunch in the tea room at the Belvedere Palace, seeing the art collection (ode to Klimt), and flew out that night. It was a great experience.

I'll look forward to your pictures and hope you have a WONDERFUL TIME!

## ***Itinerary***

### **Sun Dec 23 - Marie**

6:00am Depart KC via United #4342

9:37am Arrive Newark

### **Tue Dec 25 - All**

1:00pm Car Service

4:45pm Depart Newark EWR via LH#409

### **Wed Dec 25**

6:10am Arrive Dusseldorf DUS for plane change

7:10am Depart Dusseldorf DUS via LH#3088

### **Thu Dec 26**

8:45am Arrive Vienna VIE

Transport arranged by Tom with SunTransfers.com Conf#SUNTR\_AU6589

Driver to call Moe of apartment rental to meet us; tele 43 650 430 2020

[mm@viennaresidence.com](mailto:mm@viennaresidence.com)

Apartment c/o Vienna Residences fax number 43 1 307 2222 - 9

Schönlaterngasse 13/1, 1010 Vienna, Austria <http://g.co/maps/eczht>

### **[www.jpi.at/en/Service%20Apartments/Apartments/serviced-apartment-1010-wien-schonlaterngasse-13c](http://www.jpi.at/en/Service%20Apartments/Apartments/serviced-apartment-1010-wien-schonlaterngasse-13c)**

**13c** - Schönlaterngasse: The Michelin guide review: The winding Lovely Lantern Street gets its name from the wrought iron lantern on the façade of the house at no 6. At no 5, you can visit the Heiligenkreuzerhof. If marriage tempts you in this charming Baroque chapel, don't hesitate, it's the upmarket place for weddings. At no 7 next door is the very old «Zum Basilisken» (basilisk) house. Robert Schumann lived next door at no 7a for a few months. The Alte Schmiede is the forge where the Lovely Lantern was made and is now a museum.

About our street: For a generally fairly old city, Vienna has preserved very little of its Medieval heritage. This is mostly due to the Turkish Siege of 1683: Everything outside of the city walls (which ran approximately along today's Ringstraße, the circular boulevard around the first district) was completely flattened by the Ottoman armies. As a result, only the first district still contains significant neighbourhoods that pre-date the late 17th century. The most remarkable area for Medieval and early Baroque buildings can be found around Bäckerstraße and its many side-alleys. I took the picture above in Schönlaterngasse, one of my favourite spots in Vienna: A narrow lane with cobbled streets, old burgher houses and cosy cafes nearby - all typical features for any historic city in Austria, except for Vienna. In the Medieval corner around Schönlaterngasse, you will also find the Heiligenkreuzerhof and the Bernardiskapelle, supposedly Vienna's oldest apartment block. The chapel is a hidden gem of the city and usually closed. This is unfortunate, since it is among the most impressive sacral Baroque buildings I know in Vienna. Another Baroque "island" in this otherwise Medieval hood is the Alte Aula and the Jesuite church.

### **Fri Jan 4 – all**

7:00am Transport arranged by Tom – see above

9:25am Depart Vienna VIE via LH#3089

11:00am Arrive Dusseldorf DUS for plane change



12:10pm Depart Dusseldorf DUS via LH#408  
2:55pm Arrive Newark EWR

**Sat Jan 5 - Marie**

3:30pm Depart home  
5:58pm Depart Newark EWR via United #4397  
8:14pm Arrive Kansas City MCI

Taking Marie to Vienna at Christmas is a great idea. Christmas in Vienna is gorgeous. There's the Christmas market in front of the City Hall. There's the crystal chandeliers in the long walking square that runs from St. Stephens to Coal Market, and then to one of the palaces. There are concerts in several palaces.

Be sure and take Marie to see Mozart's house. It's just a couple of blocks behind St. Stephens cathedral. I spend the better part of a day there, reading all the info on the walls, and came away in awe of Mozart AND HIS WIFE!. They moved there 3 days after she gave birth! It's a large flat above shops, and it was an upscale residence with designer wall-paper on the bedroom walls. His schedule was super-human, and how his wife kept her sanity in the crush of people who visited, took lessons, and became residents is hard to imagine. It's well worth a visit. And do go to high mass at St. Stephens. The ritual - with music (full orchestra and choir) is marvelous. Doesn't matter that you're not Catholic. It's a spectacle.

About Sissi: <http://www.wien-vienna.com/sisi.php>

Dr Brigitte Timmerman's tour, "The Third Man – in the footsteps of a film classic" (00 43 1 7748901; vienna walks.com), runs Mondays and Fridays 4pm-6.30pm and costs €17 (£14.80). Private tours are available.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/travel/europe/on-the-trail-of-the-third-man-1779125.html>

Café Central, Vienna's most famous coffee house restaurant.

The coffee house has been a Viennese institution for three centuries. According to legend, the first coffee house opened with Turkish coffee beans, part of the spoils from the Siege of Vienna in 1683.

Café Central opened in 1860, and in the late 19th century it became a popular meeting place of Vienna intellectuals. Among its regulars were Theodor Herzl, Sigmund Freud, Josip Broz Tito, Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky

<http://www.viator.com/Vienna-tours/d454-ttd?pref=02&aid=g2416>