

FOOD *and* TRAVEL

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APRIL 2011

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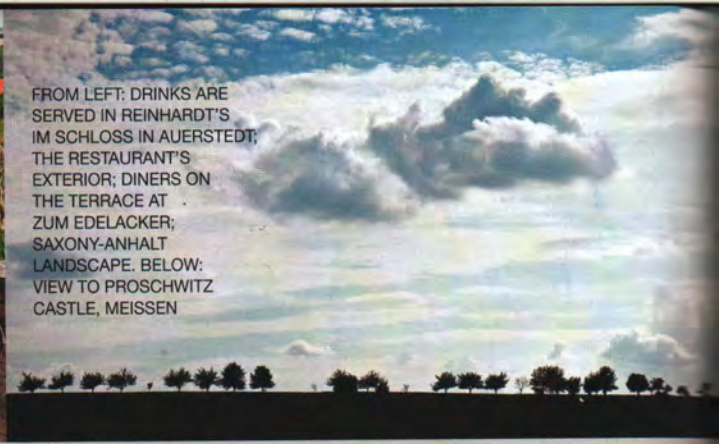
SPECIAL ISSUE

PACKED FULL OF FAMILY HOLIDAY INSPIRATION

San Sebastián Tapas Easter events Spanish wine Germany Veeraswamy



FROM LEFT: DRINKS ARE SERVED IN REINHARDT'S IM SCHLOSS IN AUERSTEDT; THE RESTAURANT'S EXTERIOR; DINERS ON THE TERRACE AT ZUM EDELACKER; SAXONY-ANHALT LANDSCAPE. BELOW: VIEW TO PROSCHWITZ CASTLE, MEISSEN



example of Romanesque and Gothic architecture, the cathedral was built between the 13th and 15th centuries and includes sculptures by the 'Naumburg Master', an anonymous 13th-century sculptor whose works grace houses of worship as far away as France.

Thuringia

With its rolling hills carpeted by vineyards and poplars, north-east Thuringia may remind one of Tuscany. This association is particularly evident around the bucolic village of Bad Sulza and its appropriately named Toskana Therme. Although hot springs have bubbled here for thousands of years, the health spa that now operates on this site is a trailblazer in the therapeutic use of music – specifically, underwater music, known here as 'liquid sound'. Described as a 'concert hall filled with water', Toskana's thermal baths attract everyone from music lovers to those seeking healing in the serene salt-water pools.

A city of ornate UNESCO World Heritage palaces and regal avenues, Weimar was a farming village until the mid-16th century when Duke Johann Friedrich decided to make it his home – and transformed it into a worldwide centre for the arts. Under the Duke's patronage and that of rulers that followed, the city beckoned artists, musicians and writers to come and practise their craft. Bach lived and worked here for several years, as did Goethe, Nietzsche, Liszt and Schiller. In the early 20th century Weimar was home to architect Walter Gropius and the Bauhaus School, one of history's most significant design movements. History buffs will be fascinated by Weimar's state theatre – the first one in Germany and the location at which the country's Weimar Republic was declared in 1918.

If gastronomy is your pursuit, you should stop for a meal at one of Thuringia's Michelin-starred restaurants, Anna Amalia. Chef Marcello Fabbrì's inventive menus are as colourful as the man himself, pairing anglerfish with herb gazpacho and lardo di Colonnata ham, and silky foie gras with local mirabelle plums and pink peppercorns in a style he describes as 'pan-European with an Italian heart'.

Erfurt, the capital of Thuringia, is also one of Europe's oldest human settlements; archeological finds show that the spot was

inhabited as long ago as the Paleolithic period. In the Middle Ages the city was an important trading hub and religious centre, home to more than 90 monasteries and friaries. The city's vibrant university – one of Germany's most prestigious – was founded here in 1392 and has seen many notable names pass through its halls, including an idealistic young theologian named Martin Luther.

Modern-day Erfurt is relaxed and welcoming, its winding cobbled lanes and colourful half-timbered facades far more like a friendly village than a city of a quarter-million. To get your bearings, climb the steps up to the twin cathedrals Mariendom and Severikirche, where you'll enjoy breathtaking views of the old town. Each summer this spot plays host to the popular Domstufen-Festspiele, a series of plays performed on an open-air stage. The focal point of Erfurt's medieval centre is one of Europe's most unique bridges, the Krämerbrücke. Straddling the river Gera, this bridge houses a row of half-timbered buildings on either side whose ground-floor spaces are occupied by local artisans, galleries and speciality shops. One of the bridge's most popular addresses is Goldhelm Schokoladenmanufaktur, a quirky café-cum-boutique that showcases the work of a young chocolatier, Alexander Kühn. Combining the highest quality chocolate with such innovative ingredients as cherry blossoms, pumpkin and baked apples, Goldhelm's sweets have become a local sensation and helped turn the Krämerbrücke into a lively community hub. Seamlessly wrapping tradition and innovation into one mouth-watering package, it's also the perfect microcosm of these three soon-to-be-discovered regions. □

Food glossary

- Eierschecke** A light, moist cheesecake from Dresden.
- Gose** A tangy, top-fermented beer usually mixed with fruit syrup.
- Klöße** Fist-sized Thuringian potato dumplings, served with gravy.
- Leipziger Allerlei** Leipzig's most famous specialty, a spring vegetable ragout with asparagus and crayfish.
- Leipziger Lerchen** Small tarts filled with marzipan and strawberry jam.
- Pilsner** Light yet bitter German lager.
- Quarkkäulchen** Saxon dumplings made from curd cheese and raisins, pan-fried and served with vanilla sauce or ice cream.
- Schwarzbier** A dark, strong and tasty beer Thuringia is famous for, perfect with a Rostbratwurst.
- Thüringer Rostbratwurst** Spiced pork sausage, served grilled with mustard. The oldest recipes dates back to 1404 and it has its own PDO status.



Don't miss

- Born Feinkost** Home of Thuringia's most famous mustard. *Wenigemarkt 11, Erfurt, 00 49 36 17 40 34 0, born-feinkost.de*
- Goldhelm Schokoladenmanufaktur** The place to taste Alex Kühn's wildly popular chocolate creations. *Krämerbrücke 12-14, Erfurt, 00 49 36 16 60 98 51, goldhelm-schokolade.de*
- Naumburg Cathedral** Its 2011 exhibition focuses on the Naumburg Master, running June-November. *Domplatz, Naumburg, 00 49 34 45 23 01 103, naumburgermeister.eu*
- Schloss Proschwitz** Owned by Dr Georg Prinz zur Lippe, this is the oldest and largest private wine estate in Saxony. *Dorfanger 19, 01665 Zadel über Meissen, 00 49 35 21 76 76 0, schloss-proschwitz.de*
- Toskana Therme** Health spa featuring 'liquid sound'. *Wunderwaldstrasse 2a, Bad Sulza, 00 49 36 46 19 20 00, toskanaworld.net*