

myADVENTURES with THE EXPERT TRAVELER

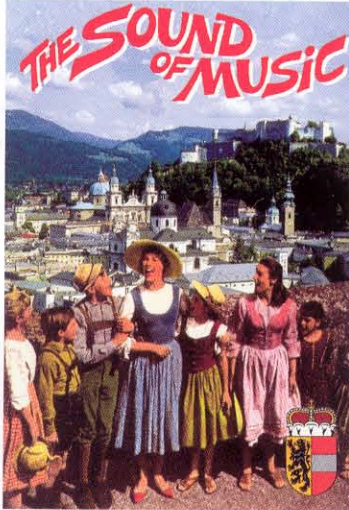
AUSTRIA

“The hills are alive with the sound of music!”

If you appreciated the movie *The Sound of Music*, why not go on location?

At the geographical heart of Europe lies the Republic of Austria. Tucked away, two hours south of Munich, is one of the country’s most beautiful cities. Austrians call it the “home of music.” When you consider Salzburg, Austria is both the birthplace of Mozart and setting for the Oscar-winning movie, *The Sound of Music*, it’s easy to see why. Spring, summer and fall, tourists and music-loving explorers make pilgrimage to Salzburg to be immersed in the culture of the city and enjoy the numerous festivals and music-related activities.

Salzburg is a town divided in half by the meandering Salzach River. The “Old City”— on the left bank of the river — is where ancient Roman settlements once stood. Now, visitors can marvel



Travel Specialist, Gig Gwin (founder and CEO of Gwin’s Travel in St. Louis, MO) the most traveled travel agent, having visited every country in the world.

at architecture from the Middle Ages, Romanesque, Baroque and Renaissance periods. Most of the hotels and restaurants are located on or near the Salzach River and the city provides a wonderful walking tour. Start at the banks of the Salzach, cross over one of the footbridges to Old City and take a cable car to the top of Hohensalzburg Fortress for a breathtakingly beautiful panoramic view of the city.

For many Americans, the highlight of a visit to Salzburg is the *Sound of Music* Tour. On the tour, you can visit the Benedictine Convent where Julie Andrews sings “Maria” and the Mirabell Gardens and Palace where Andrews and the children sing “Do-Re-Mi,” as well as several other sites recognizable from the movie. But while you’re touring, don’t be surprised if some native Salzburgers stare at you blankly when you mention the movie. Despite its tremendous popularity, the film has never been dubbed and shown on Austrian television.

My favorite part of the tour began as we drove out of the city in through the mountains to St. Gilgen. This picturesque mountain

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*Above, left:
The mountains of
St. Gilgen*



*Above, right:
The view to the Old
City from
Monchsberg,
Salzburg*

*Right: A view of
Salzburg from the
Salzach River*



All photos courtesy of Gig Gwin

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village, with its brightly painted homes and churches, sits on a mirror-clear lake crowded with small boats and lively pleasure-craft. The town's backdrop is one of dramatic mountain peaks, each one rivaling the next for beauty. Having traveled to every country in the world—more than once—I am not easily impressed...but I was.

A quite different tour includes the salt mines of Salzburg. Once known as “white gold,” the valuable mines in Salzburg coupled with the savvy marketing of the city's archbishops, provided the basis for the city's current affluence. The tour itself includes a train ride, a trip down into the mine shaft on a wooden slide miners have used for years and a short boat ride across a lake deep inside the mining cave complex. The tour ends when you cross into Birchesgarten, a charming German town full of wonderful wooden carvings, cuckoo clocks and other collectibles.

The one word I'd use to describe the Austrians of Salzburg is “elegant.” They are a handsome people,

blessed with a love of the arts. They enjoy a well-ordered but robust style of life. Nowhere is this more evident than in their cuisine. Dishes are made with lots of beef, sausage and wonderfully rich sauces. While visiting, don't miss the wienerschnitzel, pastries or strudels complimented with an Austrian wine or beer. And for a change of pace at breakfast, skip your regular tea or coffee and order a hot chocolate. You'll find it smooth and light, not at all overpowering.

In all, a trip to Salzburg is well worth almost any price. However, currently discounted flight and hotel rates will make this trip all the more inviting.

-Gig

Stately Salzburg residences

