

The New York Times

36 HOURS

36 Hours: Vienna



Josef Polleross for The New York Times

Motto am Fluss: a new bar and restaurant on the Danube Canal.

By SARAH WILDMAN

Published: January 5, 2012

FOR years, [Vienna](#) has lingered in the fading glory of the fin-de-siècle era, understandably satisfied with the grandeur of its Hapsburg-era architecture and parks. Now a new wind is blowing through this imperial city, with the opening of dazzling hotels, new and renovated museums and a reinvention of the gasthaus, that ubiquitous pub where Viennese artists and philosophers, workers and shopkeepers linger over schnitzel and beer well into the night. This year, the city celebrates the 150th birthday of its most famous artistic export, Gustav Klimt, whose gold-toned paintings will be on display at 10 of the city's museums.

Friday

4 p.m.

1. EXPLORING THE QUARTIER

Last year marked the 10th anniversary of the MuseumsQuartier, the former Hapsburg stables turned culture plaza. Mumok (Museumsplatz 1; 43-1-52500-0; mumok.at), the museum of contemporary art housed in a basalt lava cube on the plaza, has a new director, Karola Kraus, who has already made her mark with a show called “Museum of Desires,” which reorganized the five-floor permanent collection of modern art. Wander the galleries, then stop at Café Halle (Museumsplatz 1; 43-1-523-70-01; www.diehalle.at.) for a mini-obstkuchen (fresh fruit tart, 2 euros, or \$2.56 at \$1.28 to the euro). The romantic yet modern restaurant, its walls hung with billowing sheer curtains, is tucked into the former private quarters of the emperor. Downstairs, photography exhibitions in the [Kunsthalle Wien](#) (Museumsplatz 1; 43-1-521-89-33; kunsthallewien.at) draw crowds.

5 p.m.

2. CAFÉ-KULTUR

Café Sperl (Gumpendorferstrasse 11; 43-1-586-41-58; cafesperl.at) is among the most iconic of the city's legendary turn-of-the-century coffeehouses, with velvet banquettes where you can have a small brauner (espresso) for 2.60 euros. Then cross the street to Phil (Gumpendorferstrasse 10-12; 43-1-581-04-89; phil.info), a Berlin-style bookstore/music shop/coffeehouse with mismatched furniture, D.J.'s and a late-night bar ripe for experiencing the newer side of Vienna's cafe culture.

8 p.m.

3. TRADITIONAL, OR NOT

For classic Viennese cuisine at an old-is-new-again gasthaus, head for Schilling (Burggasse 103; 43-1-524-17-75; schilling-wirt.at), distinct for its 1950s fixtures and traditional dishes like Kalbbutterschnitzel (veal butter schnitzel, 14.50 euro) and böhmische palatschinken (a dessert pancake with plum sauce, 6 euros). Some Viennese swear the future is places like Skopik & Lohn (Leopoldgasse 17; 43-1-219-89-77; skopikundlohn.at), which kicks Austrian food (and prices) up a notch with dishes like Arctic char over creamed yellow beets (19 euros) in a wildly artistic space, with walls covered in black scribbles. Grab a drink nearby at A Bar Shabu (Rotensterngasse 8; 43-650-544-59-39), with small bites, wine, beer and absinthe menu (glass, from 4.90 euros).

10 p.m.

4. DECISIONS, DECISIONS

Fluc (Praterstern 5; fluc.at) is a club built in a former pedestrian passageway at the Prater metro stop with a stage for live [music](#), D.J.'s and large beer steins (about 3 euros). Or, to experience the new underground scene, go to Brut (Lothringerstrasse 20; 43-1-587-87-74; brut-wien.at), a center for "international, experimental and innovative performance art" (i.e., general mayhem) held in the cellar of the Wiener Konzerthaus (entrance 6 to 30 euros). Looking for calm? Have a drink at [Motto](#) am Fluss (Schwedenplatz 2; 43-1-252-55-11; motto.at/mottoamfluss), a new bar on the Danube Canal.

Saturday

9 a.m.

5. TO MARKET

Order an espresso (3.50 euros) and breakfast at one of the dozens of restaurants that line the edge of the century-old Naschmarkt before the crowds arrive. The open-air market is a mile long, stretching between Karlsplatz and Kettenbrückengasse U-bahn stations. Filled with stalls stocked

with produce, baked goods, flowers and spices, it is easily one of the best in [Europe](#). On Saturdays, hawkers selling antiques and bric-a-brac branch out for another mile.

11 a.m.

6. ROYAL AFFAIR

If you've seen one royal boudoir, you've seen them all, so skip the [Imperial Apartments](#) and head to the magnificent State Hall of the Austrian National Library (Josefsplatz 1; 43-1-534-102-52; [onb.ac.at](#); 7 euros) tucked inside the Hapsburg palace complex in the First District. It was built by Emperor Charles VI in the late 17th century, with a soaring frescoed ceiling, 200,000 books dating from 1500, and antique globes scattered about; you'll feel like you've stepped inside a storybook. Then stop at Café Braünerhof, (Stallburggasse 2; 43-1-512-38-93), the late novelist Thomas Bernhard's favorite café to while away an afternoon. On Saturday afternoons, classical musicians play, and the waiters are appropriately rude.

3 p.m.

7. SHOP AROUND

In the Seventh District many shops carry maps showing all the locally made and European sourced clothing shops. Try Camille Boyer (Lindengasse 25/2; [camilleboyer.at](#)) for buttery soft, dove-gray hobo bags from Lumi (175 euros). Or Buntwaesche (Lindengasse 31-33; 43-664-780-44-61; [buntwaesche.at](#)) for super-soft cotton children's clothing in adorable prints (T-shirts from 20 euros). Wabisabi (Lindengasse 20; 43-664-54-51-280; [alle-tragen-wabi-sabi.at/](#)) sells Japanese-style geometric-cut women's clothing, entirely in black and white. Across the street at Werkprunk (Kirchengasse 7/11, enter at Lindengasse 23; 43-1-990-64-32; [werkprunk.com](#)) sisters Jasmin and Silvia König make jewelry out of sterling silver and semiprecious stones (35 to 700 euros).

7:30 p.m.

8. RETURN TO THE CLASSICS

Classical music is everywhere in this city, from the [Musikverein](#) to the [Wiener Konzerthaus](#) to the [Volksoper](#) and beyond. Not to be overlooked is the Wiener Staatsballett (the Vienna State Ballet) at the Staatsoper. A former star of the Paris Opera Ballet, Manuel Legris, became director in 2010; a seat in his house is a treat (tickets online at [wiener-staatsoper.at](#) from 8 to 130 euros).

9:30 p.m.

9. KITCHEN CONFIDENTIAL

Down a winding First District street is Gasthaus Pöschl (Weihburggasse 17; 43-1-513-52-88), with simple wood tables, whitewashed walls and a menu that is consistently excellent. Try favorites like roasted calf's liver (15.10 euros) or gnocchi with a sauce of spinach and sheep cheese (8.90). Too heavy? Duck into the smoky Kleines Café (Franziskanerplatz 3) and try an open-faced tartine for under 5 euros.

11 p.m.

10. RED DAWN

Die Rote Bar, at the magnificent [Volkstheater](#) (Neustiftgasse 1; 43-699-150-150-14; [rotebar.at](#)), opened in 1889. It is a marvel of belle-époque architecture, with a chandelier and frescoes of revelers from the 1880s, dressed (and lighted) entirely in red. Saturday is “club night,” which means everything from D.J.'s to burlesque.

Sunday

10 a.m.

11. AMUSE YOURSELF

In the mid-18th century, the Prater, once a royal hunting ground, morphed into what it is today: a European Coney Island. The iconic red Riesenrad — the Ferris wheel of “Third Man” fame — still dominates. Newest is the stomach-dropping PraterTurm, a swing that takes you nearly 400 feet in the air and whips you around at 38 m.p.h. (5 euros). The 360-degree view of the city, if you can open your eyes, is spectacular. As winter sets in, ice skating rinks open across the city. Try the enormous Wiener Eislaufverein, by the InterContinental Hotel (Lothringerstrasse 22; 43-1-713-63-53; [wev.or.at/](#); 6.50 euros for adults, 5.50 skate rentals).

11:30 a.m.

12. WALK ON BY

The white palace in the center of Augarten park has produced handmade Viennese porcelain since 1923. Last summer the palace opened the sleek restaurant Décor, decorated entirely in gray and green, with a 7-euro lunch menu (Obere Augartenstrasse 1; 43-1-212-38-88; [decor-augarten.at](#)). Or try nearby Am Nordpol, a kitschy-art-filled gasthaus with a hearty Bohemian kitchen (Nordwestbahnstrasse 17; 43-1-333-58-54; [amnordpol3.at/](#)).

1 p.m.

13. OLD TOWN, NEW ART

Check out the display of Judaica in the recently overhauled Jewish Museum (Dorotheergasse 11; 43-1-535-04-31; jmw.at; 10 euros), then take tram D and ride up to 21er Haus (Arsenalstrasse 1; 43-1-795-57-70; 21erhaus.at; 5 euros). Designed for the 1958 Brussels World's Fair by Karl Schwanzer, this glass-and-steel temple of modernism is now a monument to postwar art, with exhibitions, a rehabilitated 1960s-era cinema, and a cafe. Then wander next door into the [Schloss Belvedere](#) and the Gustav Klimt/Josef Hoffmann exhibition (on display through April), which opened the Klimt anniversary year.

IF YOU GO

25 Hours (Lerchenfelder Strasse 1-3; 43-1-521-510; 25hours-hotels.com/wien), the first outpost of a small design chain from [Germany](#), opened last spring. The rooftop bar offers fantastic views of downtown. Rooms from 120 euros (\$155).

The luxury **Fleming's Hotel** behind the [Rathaus](#) (Josefstädter Strasse 10-12; 43-1-205-990, flemings-hotels.com) opened in February 2011 with gorgeous wood-paneled rooms; "city view" rooms offer great vistas; 130 to 200 euros.

This article has been revised to reflect the following correction:

Correction: January 6, 2012

An earlier version of this article misspelled the name of the Ferris wheel in the Prater and also misspelled, at one point, the German for "Vienna" in a reference to a concert hall. The Ferris wheel is the Riesenrad, not Reisenrad, and the concert hall is Wiener Konzerthaus, not Weiner. An accompanying map repeated the errors; additionally the map located the Donau Kanal incorrectly. The canal is the long ribbon of water at the center of the map; it is not the broader body of water at the upper right corner. (That is the Danube).

A version of this article appeared in print on January 8, 2012, on page TR11 of the New York edition with the headline: Vienna.

<http://travel.nytimes.com/2012/01/08/travel/36-hours-vienna.html?ref=travel>