

The Grand European River Cruise

Prague and Budapest to Amsterdam



September 2023

Bob and Molly Hillery

Grand European River Cruise, September 2023

Monday September 4 (Labor Day) Tuesday September 5

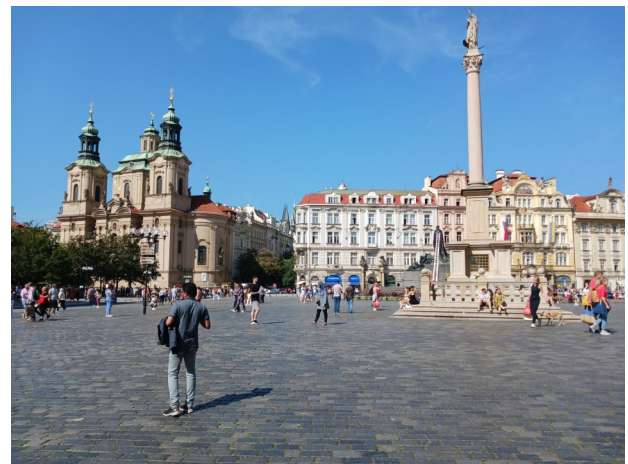
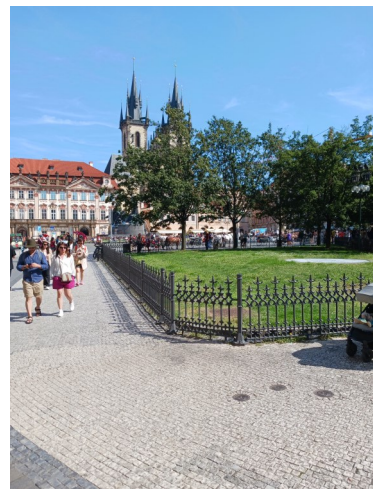
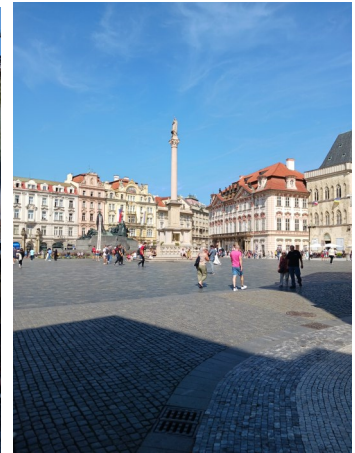
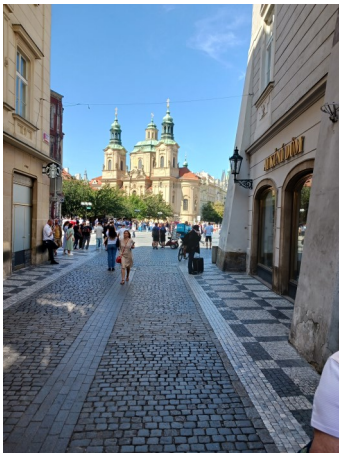
We had enjoyed dinner at Phoenician Taverna on Sunday evening before driving to the airport Marriott for an overnight stay. We finished the evening with a nightcap in the hotel lounge.

We were up at 8am and had breakfast in the hotel before checking out and taking the 10am shuttle to the airport. Within 20 minutes after leaving the hotel, we had checked in and passed Security and were on our way to the Delta lounge for an hour before our 12-noon flight to JFK. This flight left on time and arrived a little early in New York. After a long walk, we still had almost five hours in the lounge before our 7:30pm flight to Prague.

Despite a somewhat lengthy taxi ("Rush hour, Labor Day" per the captain) we had a smooth flight (again, some turbulence was expected but never materialized), a good meal and both of us got several hours sleep. We arrived in Prague at 10am local time to sunny skies and a temperature near 60F. The walk to Immigration was short, the procedure went quickly and, although a little slow, our bags arrived, and we were on our way to be greeted by the Viking representative. He was there in the Arrivals Hall, and he ushered us to a taxi to take us to our hotel. We had expected a shuttle bus, but this turned out to be a more pleasant method of getting into town – and, we were told, Viking would pick the tab!

We arrived at the Art Nouveau Palace Hotel near Old Town and were greeted by yet more Viking representatives who gave us a quick rundown on the events planned for the next three days before guiding us to check-in. Our room on the fifth floor was quite spacious by European standards, and we were soon settled in and unpacked.

We decided to take a walk to Old Town Square in the afternoon on a warm and sunny day. It was lovely to stroll the narrow streets, get a cup of coffee, and soak in the flavor of this beautiful city with its magnificent buildings. We were out about 2 hours before returning to the hotel for a cold drink and then to relax for a few hours before dinner.



We took the recommendation of the Viking representative and walked a block from the hotel to a very nice Czech restaurant. The surroundings were a little rustic, but the food and service were excellent, and we enjoyed a two-hour meal.

Wednesday September 6

We were up about 9am and went to the hotel restaurant for a good buffet breakfast. We then spent the next five hours strolling to Old Town Square and then to the Charles Bridge.



We made reservations for a concert tomorrow evening, had lunch in an Irish Pub and generally enjoyed watching the world go by and admired the absolutely amazing architecture. As yesterday, it was warm and sunny, but a slight breeze kept things generally pleasant. It was a great way to spend the day before returning to the hotel for a nap before dinner.

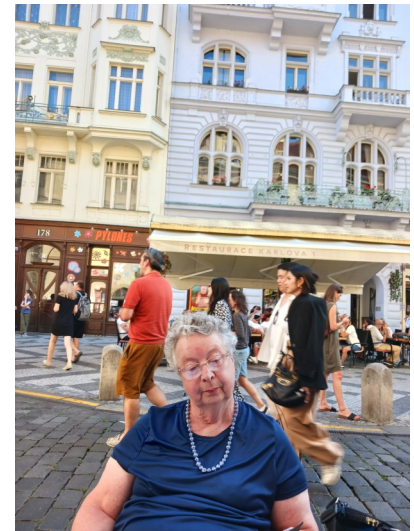
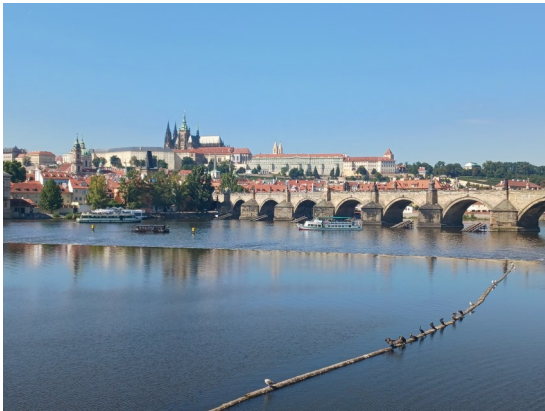
We decided on a re-visit to the same restaurant we had visited last night and had another excellent meal – with “family” treatment from some of the staff.

Thursday September 7




We were up late and missed the hotel breakfast, so we walked to Old Town Square and found an outdoor café where we lingered for over an hour with coffee. We then walked back to the hotel and Molly stayed there for the rest of the afternoon to rest while I went for an extended walk. I went via New Town to the Charles Bridge and then set off back towards the hotel. I had intended to locate the restaurant where we were booked for dinner but a combination of narrow streets that seemed to have no logic and a lack of signal on my phone, I never did find it. I decided, however, that Uber was probably a better bet for our plans for the evening – and Molly was quick to endorse that plan.

Below: Charles Bridge, Wenceslas Square, pre-concert drink



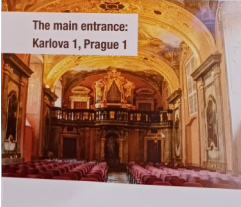
We had tickets for a concert at the Mirror Chapel where it was said that Mozart had played the organ! We were to hear an hour of various well-known classical pieces by a four-piece chamber orchestra as well as soprano and organ soloists. We left the hotel at 5pm, quickly got an Uber and were close to the concert hall in time to enjoy a pre-dinner drink outside.





Dvořák Symphony Orchestra


is a chamber orchestra with a long-standing musical tradition and worldwide reputation. The soloists and the other members of the ensemble are lead musicians of renowned Prague orchestras such as Czech Philharmonic, Prague Symphony Orchestra or National Theatre Orchestra. Dvořák Symphony Orchestra is regularly performing all around the world – in Europe, United States, South Korea or in China. For several years, this orchestra has been continuously performing at the two most prestigious concert locations in Prague: at the Mirror Chapel in Clementinum where W.A. Mozart played the organ, and at the Smetana Hall of the Municipal House, which is a beautiful Art Nouveau gem named after the great Czech composer Bedřich Smetana.



The main entrance:
Karlova 1, Prague 1

The Mirror Chapel

is one of the most beautiful concert halls in Prague. This chapel was built by Kilian Ignaz Dientzenhofer during 1724-25. The marbled walls and floors matched with stucco ornamentation, frescoes and mirror-decorated ceiling make it a truly unique sight which cannot be seen anywhere else. Another spectacular particularity of this beautiful concert hall are the two ancient organs which have been played till today. The Mirror Chapel is the only historic building in Clementinum which is open to the public during classical music concerts – a phenomenal experience you should not miss.



Vivaldi

Four Seasons

Duration: 65 min.

<p>M. A. Charpentier W. A. Mozart W. A. Mozart</p> <p>J. Pachelbel A. Dvořák Ch. Gounod T. Albinoni J. S. Bach A. Dvořák B. Smetana</p> <p>A. Vivaldi W. A. Mozart</p>	<p>Te Deum A Little Night Music, KV 315 (selection) Pamina's aria (Magic Flute) or Queen of the Night (Magic Flute) Canon in D Major Slavonic Dance No. 8 Ave Maria Adagio in 5 minor Toccata and fuga d minor Biblical song No. 4 Moldau</p> <p>Four Seasons (Spring and Winter) Alleluja (from Exultate jubilate)</p>
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Dvořák Symphony Orchestra Prague will perform along with renowned organ, violin and vocal soloists.
Organ: M. Šmejkalová or A. Melichar
Soprano: E. Hanlová or Anna Quadrátová

Upcoming concert information

The concert (just an hour) was very good, and the quality of the performances seemed to us to be excellent. The players were listed as “lead players” in one or more of the three classical orchestras resident in Prague. And, of course, the music

was selected to please a wide audience and show off the talents and, especially, the organ.

We were able to get another Uber to the restaurant, which was a “sister” to the one we had enjoyed the previous two nights. The menu was the same, the food was as good, but the service seemed a little more reserved in a more modern ambiance. It was, however, a nice way to end our stay in Prague and we were able to walk home on pedestrianized streets in about 15 minutes.

Friday September 8

We were up before 6:30 as we had to have our cases outside the room by 7am. We then had about 30 minutes for a quick breakfast before our bus left for Budapest about 7:45. It was a seven-hour drive to our ship, but we made two stops, one for restrooms and coffee and another for lunch. The drive was pleasant as we drove through the western portion of the Czech Republic, into Slovakia (for about an hour) and finally into Hungary. We crossed the River Danube at Bratislava (which reminded of our first time in this area when we took a high-speed boat from Vienna to Budapest via this city) and then were on the south and west of the river for the remainder of the drive. The Danube does a ninety-degree turn to switch from East-West to North-South as it meanders through western Hungary.

Leaving Prague, we went via some fairly significant hills (which surprised me) but then the majority of the remainder of the Republic and Slovenia was relatively flat farmland with some forested areas and a few small, rolling hills. Just before we crossed into Slovakia, we were in a large vineyard area (we had already sampled and approved Czech Sauvignon Blanc) together with some large sunflower and corn fields.

This terrain was repeated through the part of Slovakia that we crossed and into western Hungary until we were within about 100 of Budapest. Here, we could see the large hills to the west of the Danube, and which take in the land right to the river, including the beautiful Buda portion of the city. We crossed the river to the east side and were soon at the Viking Mimir which was to be our home for the next two weeks. We boarded, checked in and were soon settled in our stateroom and enjoyed some time on the balcony.



Tonight, we attended the safety briefing and a talk on the upcoming cruise by the Cruise Director, enjoyed a pre-dinner drink in the lounge and then a good dinner, where we were joined by two Australians. We finished the evening with espresso in the lounge.

Saturday September 9

We got up at 7:15, had breakfast on board and then took a five-hour bus and walking tour of Budapest. We saw the main boulevard in Pest, Heroes’ Square and many fine buildings before crossing the river to visit the Castle District. There is no longer a castle there but there are many fine buildings as well as St Matthias’ church, named for the first king of the Magyars when the 7 tribes formed a union in Hungary. We also had beautiful views over the Danube towards the amazing parliament

building, before being driven back to the ship for lunch.



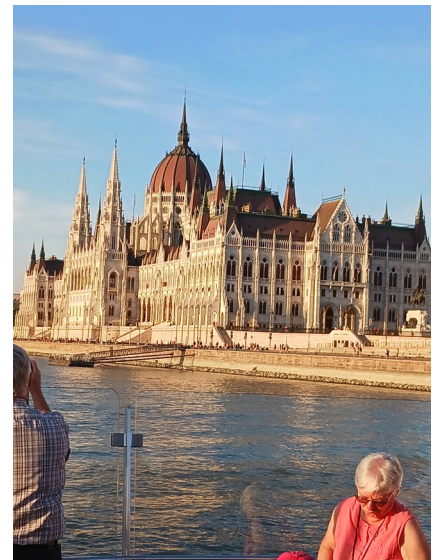
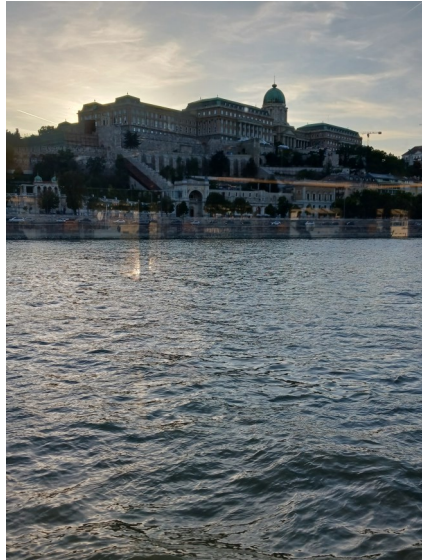
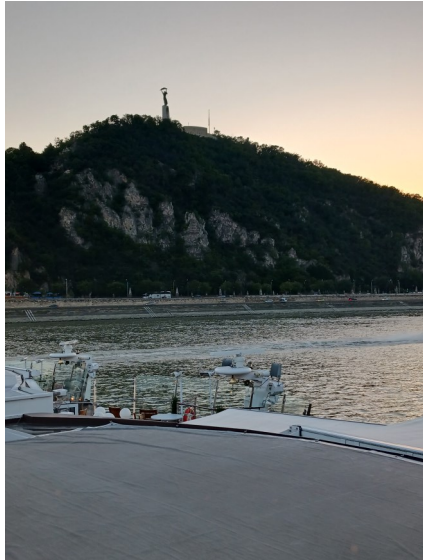
St Matthias Cathedral



I took a short (very hot) walk in the afternoon and then we relaxed until the evening talks and dinner. Dinner was once again very good, and we had more pleasant conversations. After dinner, we listened to the cruise director talk about his life as a child (he's in his late forties now) in the Communist regime in Budapest. It was interesting to hear his perspective on life before and after (not all bad or all good on either side) and he painted a somewhat bleak picture of today's Hungary – in terms of education, health and the economy. Obviously, he held out hope for a better future and he was clearly happy to be part of

Hungarian life today, but I am sure most listeners didn't expect to be hearing anything good about life under Communism. I also felt that his talk gave a warning about the Western trends towards Socialism and the dangers of too much State involvement in everyday life – but maybe that was just a reflection of my bias. Both of us could relate to many of the “hardships” of his childhood (food shortages, home life and schooling) and got the sense that his life reflected many aspects of ours – just 30-40 years later. It was very interesting.

Sunday September 10



We had sailed out of Budapest just before dinner time last night (above) and today we would be sailing throughout the day until our arrival in Vienna in the late afternoon. Consequently, there were no excursions (until the evening) and we were able to have a late breakfast and a relaxing day watching the world go by from our balcony. It was warm and sunny all day and we enjoyed the scenery on both sides of the Danube as we left Hungary, spent several hours in Slovakia and then entered Hungary. Apart from the city of Bratislava, there was not a lot of civilization as far as we could see, and the riverbanks were generally heavily wooded. The terrain was mostly very flat.



Bratislava and sailing the Danube in Slovakia

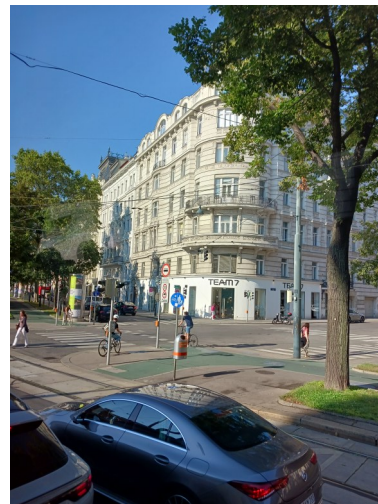
I went for two walks (each 30 laps of the small circuit on the sun deck), we had another good chat with a couple over lunch, and we each had naps before our arrival on the outskirts of Vienna around 4:30pm. After passing through the second of 68 locks in our jour-

ney, we entered the canal and soon were docked very close to the center of town.

We had an early dinner on board as many guests left for concerts in the city. We chose to stay on board, had an after-dinner espresso and an early night.

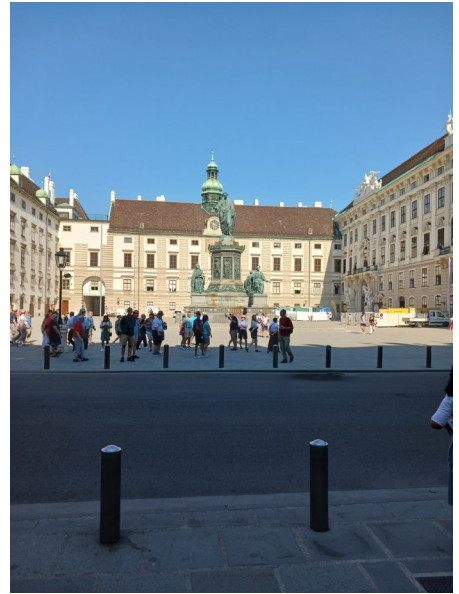
Monday September 11

We had breakfast on board and then went by bus (below) into the old part of town for a walking tour.

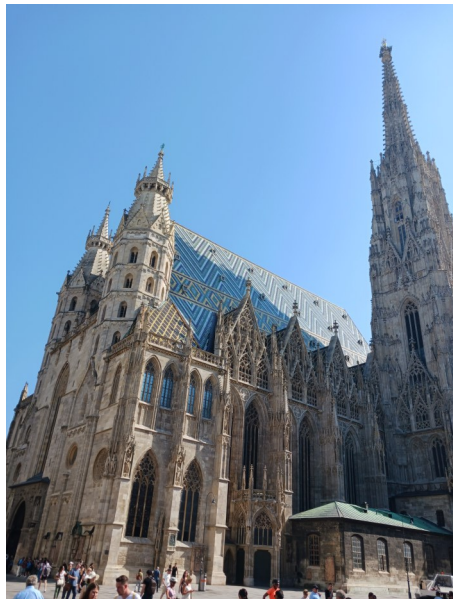


We saw the amazing palaces built by the Hapsburgs over a period of several centuries (a sight which I still recall amazed me on our first visit here) and then walked to St Stephen's Cathedral, the massive Roman





Catholic church that dominates the old town area. Molly and I had a drink on the square on another beautiful, sunny day before walking back to the bus via more old town streets and passing dozens of beautiful buildings.





After lunch, I took a walk on the bank of the Danube and then we relaxed until dinner time. It was another good meal capped with a nightcap in the lounge.

Tuesday September 12

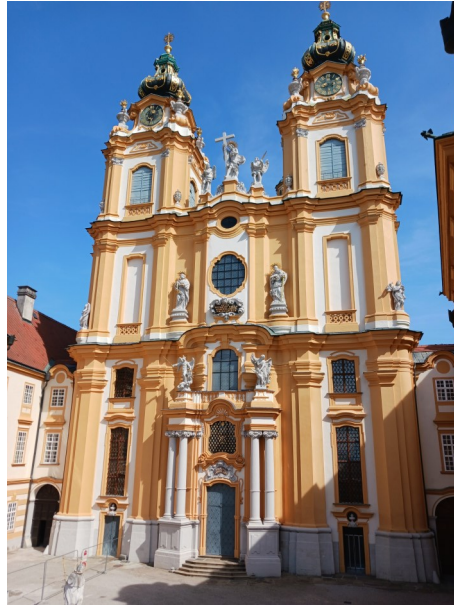
I was up and on the top deck by 8am and did 26 laps (2 miles) walking before breakfast. We were sailing in the Wachau Valley, a beautiful stretch of the Danube surrounded by forests and vineyards. There were a number of lovely churches and castles along the route, so Molly and I sat in the lounge for quite some time after eating. I did another short walk before getting a coffee.



We both skipped lunch (early due to the afternoon tour times) but I got a coffee before we started our shore excursion. Today, we were driven just a few miles (uphill) to visit Melk Abbey. This is a Benedictine monastery which is still active, 1000 years after it was founded. It is a huge facility with some very ornate and extensive rooms. These were built as "hotel" quarters for visiting royalty. We toured four or five of these that are maintained essentially as a museum. The rest house a school and offices. We did not see any of the relatively few monks who still live and work here, but we did see the massive library that only they may use.

The abbey sits on a hillside overlooking the Danube and the broad valley to the south and, although we didn't visit, there are some extensive gardens and even vineyards





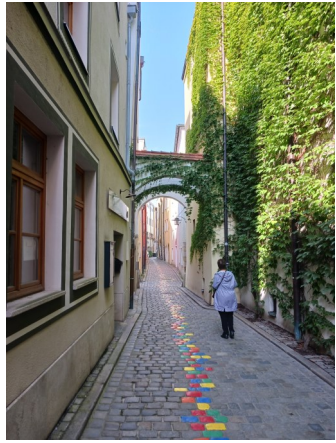
Melk Abbey, the river, and our ship

on the site. It was an extremely hot and humid afternoon (near 90F) and we were somewhat relieved to get on the air-conditioned bus for the return to the ship – which had sailed about 20 miles further upstream in our absence!

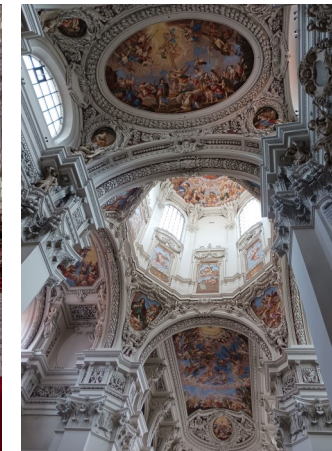
Wednesday September 13

We were docked in the small town of Passau (just in Germany) by the time we got up and had breakfast. We then left on a 1 ½ hour walking tour of this lovely town at the confluence of three rivers – the Danube, the Inn and one much smaller “creek”. The town has lots of narrow cobblestone streets climbing from the rivers and ending (at least as far as our tour was concerned) at the very large Baroque cathedral. Most of the buildings have maintained the same appearance for several hundred years, in large part because Passau has never been bombed – much like Prague. Consequently, strolling the streets (with our excellent guide) is a very pleasant experience and one in which the Baroque architecture and colors can be admired at close

quarters.



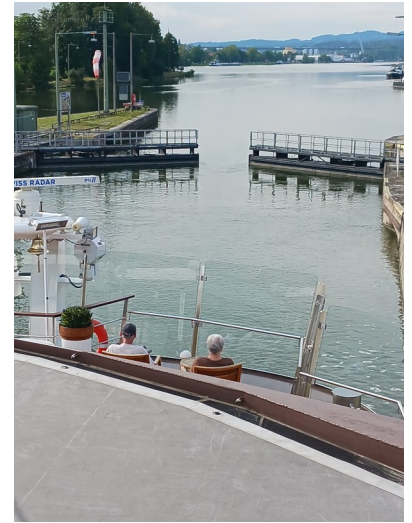
The cathedral is undergoing a five-year long repair and maintenance program (including its massive 18,000 pipe organ) so there is a lot of scaffolding inside and many areas are covered. However, what we could see along the main east-west aisle and towards the altar was stunning, with enormous frescoes on walls and ceiling.



From the cathedral we walked slowly back down to the ship and shortly afterwards we set sail. Some of the tours continued into the afternoon, so guests on them were to meet the ship a little further upstream. We, on the other hand, had nothing to do but relax! I was also able to take a short walk on the sundeck.

Passau floods a lot!!!

Messerschmid	
1584	15. Sept
2013	07. Sept
1595	11. Okt
1904	09. Okt
1712	20. Okt
1802	8. Okt
1709	05. Sept
1585	1. Sept
2002	13. Sept
1920	10. Sept



Leaving Passau, low bridge ahead, one of 68 locks

At the point upstream where we picked up other guests, we learned that the water level further along our journey was still not sufficiently high to make our passage a certainty. This possibility had been mentioned for several days (apparently, it is not an uncommon occurrence on this cruise) and we had been hoping for some rain (not on us but to feed the river!). At this point, we were told that it was still up in the air but that or ship would return to Passau, and we would be bussed to our various tours in Regensburg tomorrow (Thursday). At that point, we would either pickup the ship that would by then have traveled to Regensburg or we would return to Passau by bus – and do all Nuremburg tours from that point by bus! It all sounded quite complicated but all we could do was to enjoy our second evening in Passau on the ship and hope for good news.

Thursday September 14

We were up about 7am to get breakfast before our bus left for Regensburg (about 1 ½ hours drive) and the walking tour that we had selected. The ride was pleasant via rolling countryside with lots of green and many fields of crops – and a few vineyards.



The tour of Regensburg was at least as good as the one we had done in Passau, and we similarly had a very good guide. Regensburg is a much bigger town than Passau but the Old Town (where we spent our time) is still relatively compact. It, like Passau, has many narrow, multi-directional streets – many of which are cobblestoned – and



beautiful buildings. Like Passau, Regensburg was a major trading spot along the Silk Road and the architecture reflects its former glory.

We walked up to the cathedral square with the guide and then were left to our own devices. We had a coffee while a morning service was taking place and then spent some time in the huge cathedral. The outside façade is magnificent, with statuary and decoration reminiscent of Milan, although much darker in color. Inside, too, it was very dark with the only light coming from the many stained-glass windows. This is quite different to the sense we got in the Baroque-style cathedral in Passau, where the windows were a major source of light for the distinctive colors inside.



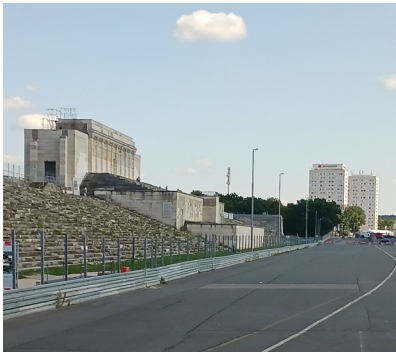
Regensburg, its magnificent cathedral and the old stone bridge

We then walked slowly back to the bus, crossing once again the Old Stone Bridge, which we were told is 1000 years old and used as a model for the Charles Bridge in Prague, with many arches over the river. We boarded our bus for the drive back to our ship in Passau, which we had been informed we would be leaving as the river level was confirmed as too low for safe passage. Tomorrow (Friday) we would take the bus again to Nuremburg where we would board a sister ship (exactly the same configuration) for the remainder of the journey to Amsterdam. The major downside was that we had to pack!



Friday September 15

We had slept on our first ship (Wimir) and in the morning we were bussed to the Vili, waiting for us in Nuremberg. After a three-hour drive, we had lunch on board the Vili and then started our afternoon tour. For this we were driving through the city and caught glimpses of the huge rally grounds built for Hitler's propaganda talks before World War II, as well as the courts where the post-war Nuremberg trials were held. Our main focus, however, was on the castle and the old town.



Above: Hitler's rally Grounds
Left: Just getting into the castle is a challenge

Nuremberg had been heavily bombed in the war and we were told that as much as 95% of the city saw extensive damage. The Old Town in particular was so damaged that it took years to clear the rubble and even longer to decide on whether or not to rebuild. Fortunately, reconstruction was the decision and now we were able to walk through the city gate, passed the massive castle and down the steep streets of the town as far as the market square. The views were magnificent and the buildings (some originally built 400 years ago and more) have been restored to their former glory.





Rebuilt Nuremberg Old Town

Once again, we had a beautiful day and a superb guide, so we were able to get a glimpse of the old city that was at one of the most powerful cities of the Holy Roman Empire, a major trading center, and is still the second-largest city in Bavaria. It is also the unofficial capital of Franconia, a former independent state, now incorporated into Bavaria. Nuremberg was the original railroad town in Germany and today it is still a major hub and a major industrial city, with Siemens and MAN both having large plants.

Tonight, on our new ship, we listened to a visiting trio in the lounge who played lots of Django Reinhardt and similar compositions and gave us an excellent one-hour show.

Saturday September 16

This morning we woke up in Bamberg and, rather than take a city tour, we opted for a bus ride into the Franconian countryside, where we made four very interesting stops. Our guide, originally from Scotland had something of a Scottish twang but here grammar was all German – and, again, she was very good.

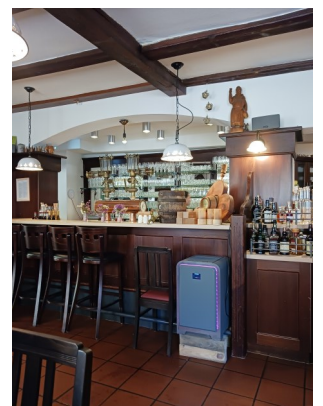
The first stop was at a former hunting lodge of the Prince Bishop of Bamberg. It has enormous, forested grounds (for the

hunt) but the focus for us was the “lodge” itself. It was built like a palace, and we toured several of the room that had been occupied by the bishop and guests on their infrequent visits away from the city.



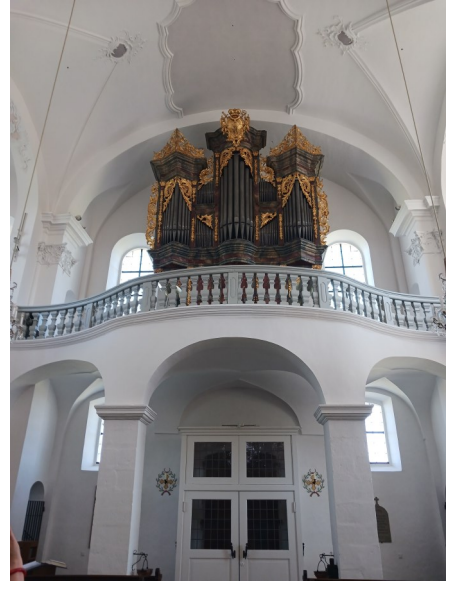
We then stopped at a tavern in a nearby village where we were given two small beer samples and a soft pretzel with sweet mustard. Apparently, the two are “staples” in this beer-drinking part of Bavaria.

Our third stop was in another village with a fine cathedral, many old farmers’ homes, and many narrow, quaint streets. The main attraction here, however, was that this was where many women (and men) were tried and convicted as witches in the 1600s – and burned at the stake! Apparent-



ly, witches were blamed for weather, famine, anything that went wrong, and no-one was immune from the witch-hunt that soon spread from women to the noblemen, including the mayor of this particular town.

Our final stop was at a very beautiful small church (nothing grand on the outside) with what was described as one of the best Rococo interiors anywhere. It certainly was beautiful and had been built as a shrine for pilgrims who came for the healing powers of a nearby spring.



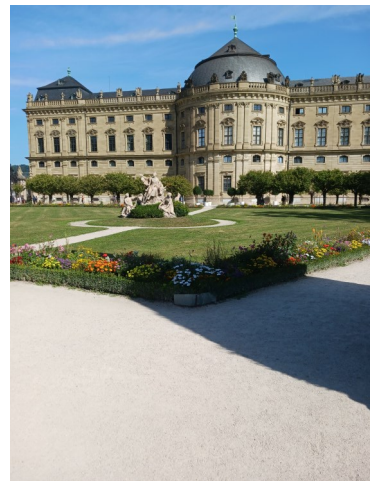
We returned to the ship at the same time as the vast majority of guests who had been on the city tour. They had been impressed with the town but saw a distinct similarity with those tours of the past three days, so we were pleased that we had chosen this alternative.

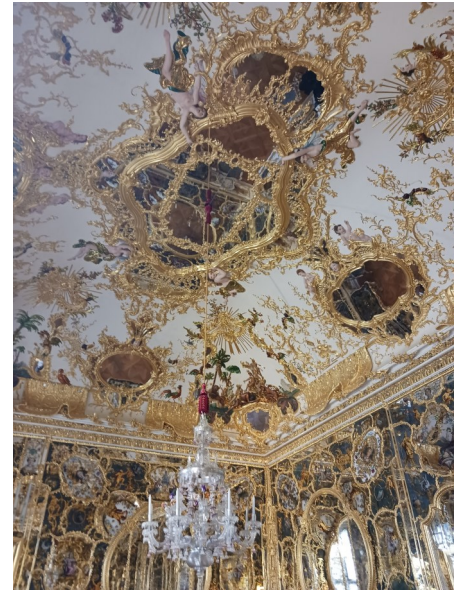
The ship sailed as soon as everyone was onboard to our next stop in Wurzburg, so we had a relaxing afternoon. This part of the river (now the Main) has many locks and low bridges, so the sun deck (and its walking track) is closed for several days – so no chance for any exercise!

After dinner tonight we went to the lounge as usual. At first it was relatively empty but soon the group of five Australian couples started to dance and shortly thereafter made it their mission to get other guests on the floor. Consequently, it was 11pm before Molly and I left for bed after a fun evening.

Sunday September 17

Today we were docked in Wurzburg where, after breakfast, we set off on our tour of the city. We were driven to the Bishops' Residenz where we were guided through a number of the very ornately decorated rooms. Once again, this building and the whole city had been very badly bombed but most of the more important buildings have now been restored. The Residenz in particular has had the magnificent room of the bishops' quarters and the reception halls totally returned to the (almost over the top) Rococo style.





We had a brief look at the gardens of the residence and then walked downhill to the market square and then the old bridge over the River Main. We saw the enormous cathedral (and heard its very loud bells as a service ended), which is 1000 years old, and many of the very nice civic buildings of the old town.





We were then driven back to the ship for lunch and a more relaxed afternoon, although I did take a 2-mile walk back to the old bridge on a hot and humid afternoon. Dinner tonight was followed by a glassblowing demonstration that put me to sleep early!

Monday September 18

After breakfast we did a relatively short walking tour of Wertheim, a charming small town at the confluence of the Main and much smaller Tauber rivers. The old town area is very compact and mainly pedestrianized so it made for a pleasant walk on a much cooler morning with a persistent threat of rain. This small town had been the site of Nazi rallies in the Thirties and some guests went on a short extension to hear about the Jewish population here, which most seemed to find very interesting.



Wertheim
- where they also
have floods!

Wertheim sits across the river from Bavaria and is in the state of Baden-Wurttemberg – the town losing its “independence” and its ties to the vineyards across the river in Napoleonic times.

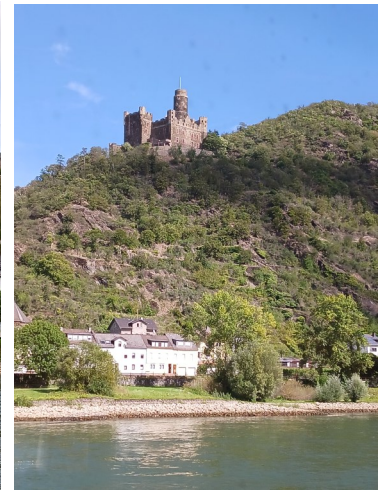
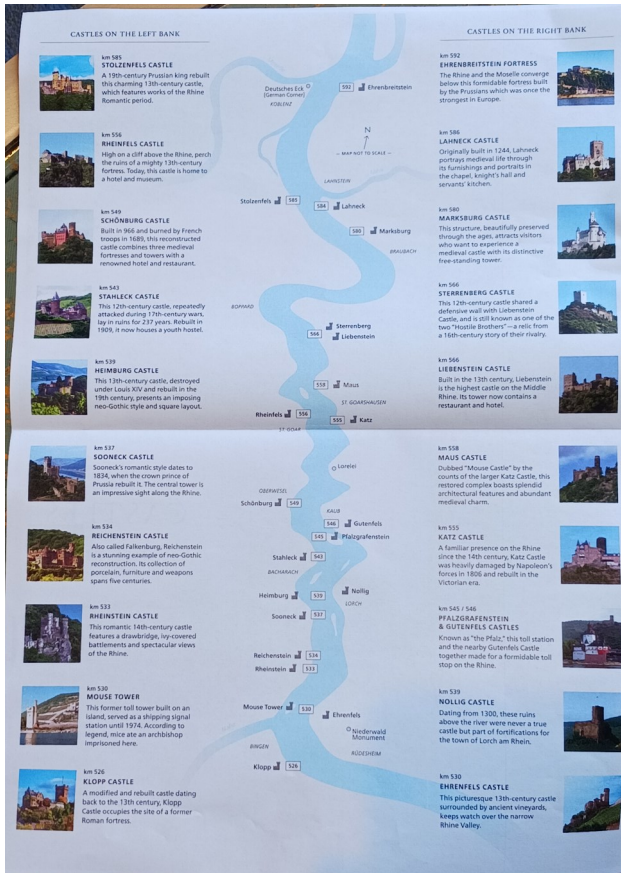


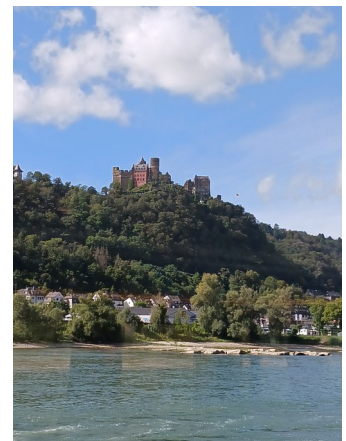
We set sail again at 1pm and had a relaxing afternoon on board as we continued on the Main towards Frankfurt. The sun deck was still closed so there was no walking available, but I spent time catching up with the diary, uploading photos, etc.

Tonight, after dinner there was a nautical quiz in the lounge, but I am afraid that Molly and I didn't do very well. We were OK with the history and general knowledge questions but fell way short on the "movies and soundtrack" sections. We made up for our loss with an extra nightcap and dancing again until 11pm.

Tuesday September 19

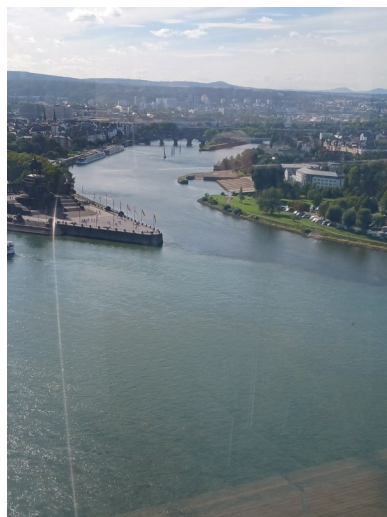
When we got up this morning about 8:30 we were close to the point where the Main River meets the Rhine and ready for a scenic cruise through the Middle Rhine with all its castles. As a result of low water levels, however, the ship had to proceed quite slowly so it was about noon before we started this particularly attractive section with its castles, churches and very steep vineyards. I spent time walking on the sun deck (now open) before we both sat in the lounge on a beautiful afternoon.





The Castles of the Rhine

Our arrival to Koblenz was delayed, which meant that we left the ship about 10 miles upstream to begin our afternoon tour. This was to a huge fortress high above the river which had been built by the Prussians to defend against the French in the 1800s. We reached it by a cable car that left very close to where our ship would dock and crossed the river well above the water. Our guide was a “retired” actor from London who donned the persona of a British army engineer who had been instrumental in the construction.



The fortress was immense and had massive walls and (apparently) an intricate series of underground passageways. The most interesting aspect of the fort was the series of defensive features that any would-be aggressor would have to overcome. Walls, moats, high rampart cannon and musket, as well as the potential for boiling oil on their heads! In fact, none of these were ever used in anger as Napoleon (the last to attempt a capture) had already been defeated elsewhere. In fact, the only damage that the fort ever experienced was at the end of World War 2 when Allied bombing caused one building to be partially destroyed. The guide made the whole visit worthwhile and very interesting.



Tonight, after dinner, we listened to a duo (piano and violin) who played popular classical pieces for an hour in the lounge – a great way to end the evening.

The Fortress at Koblenz



Wednesday September 20

We awoke already docked in Cologne (or, at least, the nearby commercial port area), from where we took a bus into the center of town for our walking tour. Frankly, Cologne (or, at least what we saw on this visit) has little to offer except the biggest Gothic cathedral in the world (which is amazing inside and out) but our guide was once again excellent and made the two-hour walk interesting. His main points were that what we were looking at (again, apart from the cathedral) was essentially built after the war but that the city itself was a northern outpost of the Roman Empire and much of what we were looking at was built on (or, in





some cases, incorporated into) the old Roman walls and buildings. Hence, as he said, despite “everything” being new, the function of what we were seeing was actually ancient and “Nothing ever changes in Cologne”. We really enjoyed his humor and – as with all our guides – he seems to contradict the thesis that Germans have no sense of humor.



We were back onboard for lunch and the rest of the day. We once again finished the day with drinks and dancing in the lounge and a nice chat with an English couple we had just met. As well as our Australian friends!

Thursday September 21

By the time we woke up we were in Holland and cruising towards Rotterdam. It was overcast and the forecast was for rain much of the day. In fact, by the time we had listened to the disembarkation briefing at 10am it was raining quite heavily – such that we considered not taking the afternoon tour, which would have taken us to see an area where a number of windmills were situated. The



Our only glimpse of windmills

rain continued so our decision was made. Molly was fighting a cold so that was enough of an excuse in this weather.

Tonight, we had our farewell drink with the captain, our farewell dinner on board and concluded a very good tour in the lounge.

Friday September 22

We were up at 7 and completed our packing as we had to leave the cabin by 8am. We then had breakfast before getting our taxi to the airport in Amsterdam. We had plenty of time to spend in the KLM lounge and then a pleasant flight to Boston. The walk to Customs was exceedingly long and Molly's cold (which had been developing for a few days) really began to drag her down. Fortunately, we had a long layover (which became even longer as our onward flight was delayed) but we finally made it to Cincinnati around 11pm. We got the shuttle to the Marriott where we picked up the car (which started!) and drove home after a super cruise.

