

# Vienna Waltz



With Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy's *Before Sunrise* visit, a new generation is discovering the sexiness of one of Europe's oldest cities. GERARD RAYMOND tours the cafés and palaces.

**P**EOPLE OFTEN SAY the Viennese waltz perfectly captures the contradictory spirit of Vienna: The upper torso is held stiff and decorous, but the lower body makes sensuous sweeps about the floor. When you visit Vienna you can't miss the formal grandeur of the Austrian capital, but

*Gerard Raymond, who wrote about New York City in Issue No. 13, is the author of New York Scene (GMP Publishers), a travel guide.*

look below the waist—you'll discover its sensuality.

Once a melting pot of diverse cultures, turn-of-the-century Vienna was an intellectually and culturally vibrant city very much like New York. It's no surprise that this is where Sigmund Freud explored sexual neurosis and Arthur Schnitzler wrote *Reigen (La Ronde)*, his controversial play about casual sex. (You can visit Freud's former home and office at 19 Berggasse, now a small museum.) Ironically, the period of intellectual and revolutionary

ferment in the first decade of the 20th century—Trotsky lived here at that time too—also shaped the destiny of an unsuccessful art student, Adolf Hitler.

Vienna's fin de siècle glories make the city one of the world's greatest open-air museums. The bustling hub of the former Austro-Hungarian empire has experienced a decrease in population since World War I. But while an influx of people might add to Vienna's vitality—witness the post-perestroika renaissance of neighboring Prague and Budapest—the down-

sized metropolis is one of the most prosperously safe and clean cities in Europe. And there are indications that the city's population, currently 1.5 million, is on the increase; Vienna is poised to take full advantage of its strategic location as the gateway between Western and Eastern Europe.



SHAUN EGAN/TISI

**M**OST OF THE popular tourist sights of the city are located in the central First District, or Inner City. Vienna is easily explored on foot and has an excellent public transportation system. The center of the old city is Stephansdom, St. Stephen's Cathedral, sections of which date back to the 13th century. The Ringstrasse, the famous boulevard that replaced the city walls in the 19th century, is lined by an imposing collection of civic buildings. Two hallmarks of Viennese excellence, the angelic voices of the Vienna Boys' Choir and the exquisite grace of the Lipizzaner stallions are associated with the Hofburg, the former Hapsburg imperial palace. On most Sundays and holidays the choir sings mass at the palace chapel and the horses go through their paces at the Spanish Riding School. (You can get their schedules from the tourist office.)

Among the many museums and palaces the city has to offer, check out the 17th-century Schönbrunn Palace, a magnificent Baroque Hapsburg summer palace and gardens. You must also visit the Belvedere Palace, an architectural gem built for Prince Eugène of Savoy, a French-born Austrian general who defeated the Turks in the late 17th century, and who is said to have been gay. The Austrian Gallery in the Upper Belvedere contains some of the best paintings by Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele, and Oskar Kokoschka. Klimt's famous Beethoven Frieze is on

**DAY FOR NIGHT:** Schönbrunn Palace (top); Thierry Mugler and Joey Arias at the Life Ball (right); Braunerstrasse.

MARIO SOLDI ENTERPRISES



## Finessing Freud's City

### ACCOMMODATIONS

#### Luxury (\$300 and up per night):

*Hotel Imperial.* 16 Kärntner Ring; tel. 501-100.

*Hotel Bristol.* 1 Kärntner Ring, tel. 51-51-60.

#### Moderate range (below \$200):

*Hotel Am Stephansplatz.* 9 Stephansplatz; tel. 53-40-50.

*Hotel Kaiserin Elizabeth.* 3 Weihburggasse; tel. 515-26.

*Hotel Marc Aurel.* 8 Marc Aurel Strasse; tel. 533-52-260.

*Gay and lesbian-friendly:*  
*Pension Wild.* 10 Langegasse; tel. 406-51-74 (below \$75).

*Hotel Urania.* 7 Obere Weissgerberstrasse; tel. 713-17-11.

### NIGHTLIFE

*U4.* Disco; gay on Thursday nights. 222 Schönbrunner Strasse.

*Why Not.* Exclusively gay disco. 22 Tiefer Graben.

*Sophiensäle.* Nightclub in an old converted theater.

17 Marxergasse.

*Life Ball.* An annual AIDS fund-raiser at the Rathaus (City Hall), scheduled for May 6

this year (Call Ticket Express in Vienna, 505-23-24, for tickets; 718-77-00 for info).

### CAFES

*Museum.* 6 Friedrichstrasse.

*Hawelka.* 6 Dorotheergasse.

*Central.* Strauchgasse and Herrengasse.

*Griensteidl.* 2 Michaelerplatz.

*Landtmann.* 4 Dr. Karl

Lueger Ring.

*Willendorf.* At Rosa Lila Villa, Vienna's lesbian and gay center. 102 Linke Wienzeile.

*Savoy.* Attracts a large gay clientele. 36 Linke Wienzeile.

*Berg.* A modern-style gay café near Freud's house. 8 Berggasse.

*Frauencafe.* Viennese lesbians congregate here.

11 Lange Gasse.

**MISCELLANEOUS**  
*Löwenherz.* Excellent queer bookstore adjoining Berg.

*Flea Market.* A popular haunt on Saturdays between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Opposite the Savoy (see above), near the Kettenbrücken subway stop.

**INFORMATION**  
*Rosa Lila Villa.* Vienna's gay and lesbian center. 102 Linke Wienzeile; tel. 587-17-78.

*HOSI-Zentrum.* Austrian gay and lesbian association.

40 Novaragasse; tel. 26-66-04.

*XTRA!* A free monthly gay listings guide (in German).

Write to: Safe Way, Postfach 77, 1043 Wien, Austria.

*Tourist info.* In New York call 212-944-6880; in Los Angeles, 310-477-3332; in Vienna visit 38 Kärntner Strasse (for hotel reservations as well).—G.R.





TWO FOR COFFEE:  
Café partners  
Chernus (left)  
and Caha.

TOM MCKITTERICK

## A Kaffeehaus in Chelsea

**K**AFFEEHAUS BRINGS A FLAVOR OF VIENNA right to the heart of New York's Chelsea. The restaurant, located at 131 Eighth Avenue on the site of the defunct gay bar Chelsea Transfer, serves new regional Austrian and American cuisine. A handsome 18th-century mahogany bar, embossed burgundy velvet banquettes, stamped-tin ceilings, and gilt-frame mirrors evoke the Old World European elegance of the famous Viennese cafés Hawelka and Landtmann. In keeping with Viennese tradition, Kaffeehaus also provides customers with newspapers and magazines, an invitation to settle in and relax.

On the menu is an eclectic range of dishes with the accent on ingredients grown in the Austrian Alpine regions, as well as typical Viennese fare like Wiener schnitzel, a thin, crispy breaded veal cutlet, or the braised beef known as *Tafelspitz* (most entrées are priced under \$15). Try the green salad dressed with a vinaigrette made from roasted pumpkin seed oil, produced exclusively in the Austrian province of Styria. Suffice it to say, Kaffeehaus also offers desserts galore and strong Viennese double espressos—*Brauner* (with cream), *Einspänner* (with fresh whipped cream, or *schlag*), and *Melange* (with steamed milk), served with a glass of water, Viennese-style.

Kaffeehaus, opened a little over an year ago by Viennese-born Monika Caha and her New York business partner Margot Chernus, is a place where you can take both your lover and your mother. "It's wonderful to see a straight couple sitting next to a gay couple, and both holding hands. We wanted to create a perfect world," says Caha. Adds Chernus: "It should embrace everyone that comes through these doors—that's the highest ideal of the so-called café society."—G.R.

permanent exhibit at the Secession Pavilion, a striking cube-like edifice with an elaborate gilded dome. At Karlsplatz and along the Linke Wienzeile (the left bank of the subterranean Wien river), discover the delights of Jugendstil (German for Art Nouveau), a product of the Secession movement, which broke away from Vienna's conservative art academy in 1897.

Imperial Vienna was the European center for music. The greatest composers of the classical and romantic periods—Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms—lived and worked in this city. And the younger Johann Strauss reigned here as the "waltz king." The Vienna School composers—Schönberg, Webern, and Berg—were the vanguard of modern 20th-century music. Even today Vienna is the home of great music; the Vienna Philharmonic and the Vienna State Opera are rated among the best in the world.

If you are interested in architecture visit Karl-Marx-Hof, a half

mile-long municipal housing complex in Heiligenstadt, built during the so-called "Red Vienna" socialist period between the wars—proof that elegance and proletarian urban design can go hand in hand. Film buffs should visit the Riesenrad, the giant Ferris wheel in the Prater, where Joseph Cotten confronts Orson Welles in Carol Reed's 1949 thriller *The Third Man*, and where Ethan Hawke first kisses Julie Delpy in *Before Sunrise*.

Your Viennese experience will not be complete without a visit to a café, or *kaffeehaus*, the traditional local meeting spot (see Cafés in "Finessing Freud's City," page 108). Ever since a 17th-century Armenian immigrant brewed the first cup of Viennese coffee out of Turkish beans, the city's social life has centered around its cafés. Vienna is also the pastry capital of the world, so if you aren't too worried about your waistline, try to determine whether a Sachertorte at Demel's is better than the "original" at Sacher's.

Vienna's gay scene too exhibits the dual characteristics of restraint and

licentiousness (see Nightlife in "Finessing Freud's City," page 108). You may find more overtly queer communities in Berlin, Paris, or London, but don't underestimate the passions behind Viennese reserve. Furthermore, you're more likely to make friends here than in one of the famous gay capitals—at least you'll get less attitude.

"Here the people think only of sensual gratifications," writer and historian Washington Irving complained in a letter written from Vienna in 1822. Already sated after feasting my eyes on the rococo fancies of the Belvedere Palaces, my taste buds reeling from sampling a Sachertorte, I found myself at the neo-Gothic Rathaus along the Ringstrasse, where the annual summer open-air opera film festival was in progress. With the strains of Mozart's *Così fan Tutte* filling the air, I walked along the shrub-lined paths of the Rathaus park to discover Vienna's safest and most popular gay cruising grounds. The heady mix of Mozart and sex was totally irresistible. Irving was right, but I'm not complaining.♥