

PRAGUE AND VIENNA



Having the fortune of escaping the bombs of war for the last century, Prague remains an architectural treasure filled with history and charm. The city is laid out in four quarters making it easy to find the best attractions. Old Town is full of medieval spirits and fairy-tale sites. When you walk the renowned Charles Bridge, you get the feeling that you are in a story book. Larger than life size sculptures of religious saints line the bridge. Artist's display there art, musicians play classic melodies and the tourists fill the bridge, looking in every direction at glorious views. Catholicism dominates the culture and the Gothic cathedrals reach high into the sky. Deep spirituality still shapes much of the national character today while centuries of pride and inspiration are evident everywhere. The city feels romantic to me. Old town Prague is a must-see destination. Cobble stone streets and tiny alleys are filled with outside cafes. The buildings all have personalities adorned with sculptures and colorful exteriors. Mozart was born here and gave the city the gift of music. Concerts can be heard on the streets or in the churches....anywhere almost anytime of the day. Castles and river cruises cast a spell of romance. Roman, Gothic and rococo architecture makes Prague a picture perfect destination. This historical jewel is simply.....magical.

From Prague we took the train down to Vienna. The countryside had a melancholy feeling of gentle living. The houses were simple and the small clustered towns suggested a humble living. Vineyards and fruit trees covered rolling hills of lush green color. Vienna is the capital of classical music and where Mozart made his fame and lived most of his life. This is a big city complete with the grandeur of palaces, markets, museums, tourist shops, and cafes filling every walkway in the city "ring". The Schonbrunn Palace sits high above the city and reminds us of a time long past when royalty ruled the land. The history of the past still reflects much of what happens in the city today. Classical music fills the air and is an integral part of shops, restaurants and outside cafés. One can always find an opera or concert taking place. Even the churches have classical music and heavenly per-



formances. Trams circle the main attractions inside the "ring" of Vienna's center. Cafés line the old stone streets. Gelato and pastry shops are everywhere. The Viennese are generally cultured people and seem to put a focus on finding pleasure in the sights and sounds around them. Gothic churches reach high into the sky and smaller churches are overwhelmingly beautiful. Baroque St. Peters literally brought tears to my eyes. Vienna is still a big city....complete with too many people and a lot of traffic. But it's a lovely vision of a world of waltzes and mankind's desire to reach for the best in human kind and the care-free good life it offers.

