

May 29th – July 2nd, 2014

PMC Postcard Album

European Trip 2014

From:
Wendy Priestly
8/107 Miles Platting Rd.
Eight Mile Plains,
QLD 4113
Australia

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stamp here

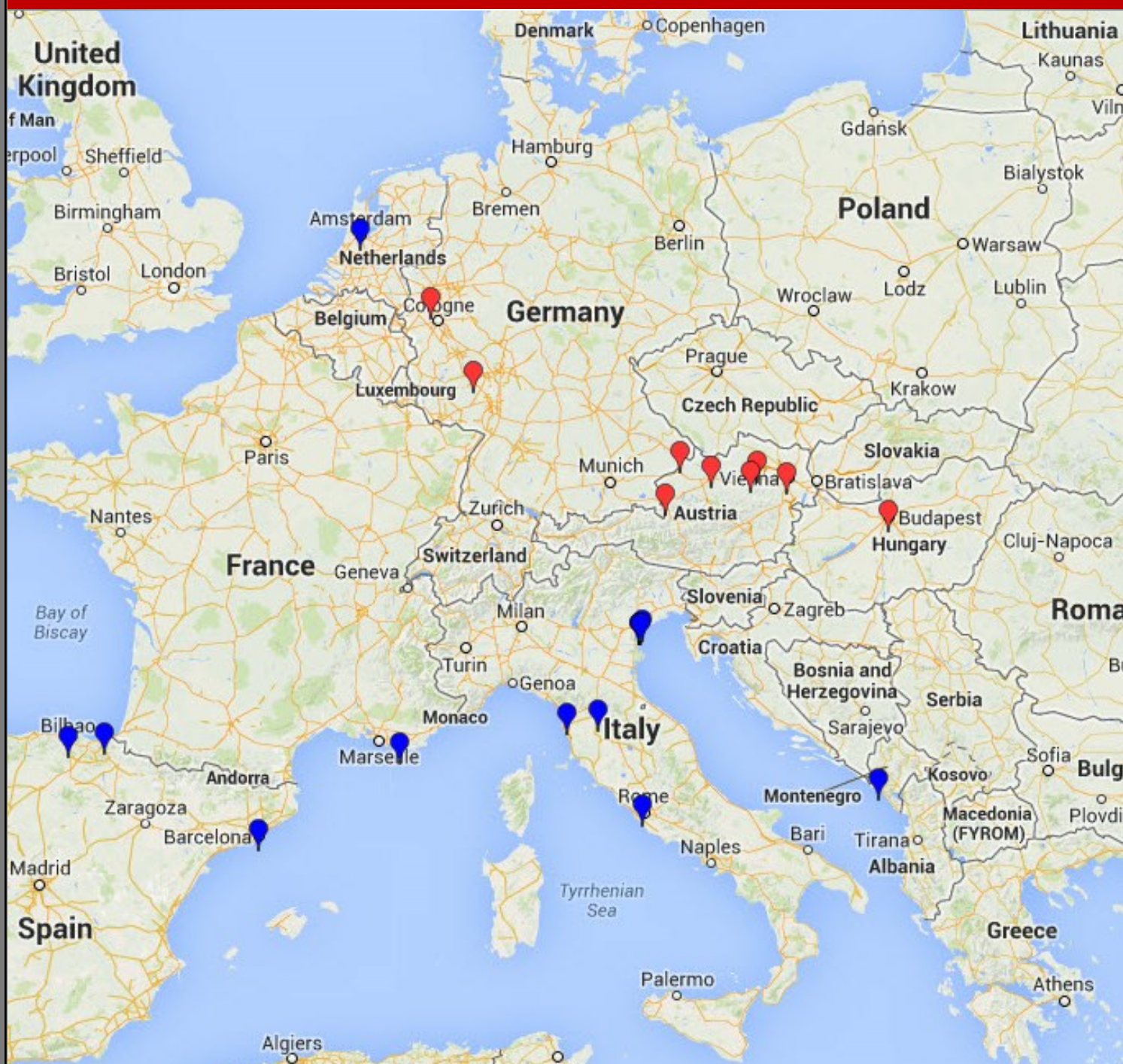
Hello PMC Members and Friends,

I hope you enjoy this Postcard Album recounting our adventures around Europe, aboard the Regal Princess and Scenic Spaceship.

Wendy Priestly

To:

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All States and Territories
Australia



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*From Gondolier...
to Cruise!*

PMC European Trip Tour in Venice - Part 1 -

May 29th, 2014

Hello PMC Members,

The PMC travelling group of 22 members arrived in Venice last Thursday. There was rain the first afternoon, but yesterday, the weather was sunny and great. Venice is the same as it was 1000 years ago. Looking up a street now looks like it was in Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice.

Yesterday we went to see St Mark's Church which is really the centre of Venice, where the bones of gospel writer St Mark are buried. The façade is decorated with large bows in gold leaf mosaics. From the roof viewing area, we had a great outlook across the main river/ ocean areas where the trading ships and now ocean liners come down the cruising channel.

I enjoyed looking at the many balcony gardens with flowers showing from their places, making the canals very colourful.

We also did some shopping and visited the Venetian glassware shops as well as the Italian clothes and shoes, just a dream.

Food has been a bit ordinary and a few of us think we get better Italian food in Australia :)

Monday afternoon when we board the Regal Princess we will be cruising down the coast around the bottom of Italy up to Rome.

Cheers,
Wendy

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PMC European Trip Tour in Venice - Part 2 -

June 3rd, 2014

Hello PMC Members,

Just concluding our travels in Venice as we get ready to pack our bags and head to the shipping port. The last few days have been spent looking at the wider scenes and activities around Venice and out from the main island of San Marco where we have been staying right in the centre of town, at Hotel Casanova (named after the famous artist that had many lady friends).

We headed out along the numerous river and canal systems enjoying the views of the islands with the painted houses that need permission to change the colour of their homes as this is a popular tourist attraction.

Cruising along the river system we come to the island of Burano that is famous for its handmade lace. After lunch we went on to the island Lido and the famous Lido Beach of Love where we walked along the sand and stepped into the Adriatic Sea.

Yesterday was spent around St Marco again to view demonstrations of the famous Murano glassware that is known worldwide for its fine features and amazing colours. The famous glass blowers from Murano, usually work for 15 years before they would be able to produce pieces of high quality. Making the glass takes good quality sand which is in abundance around Venice.

The bells of St Marco's Bell Tower are now chiming for 7:30 am and breakfast is calling. All rung by hand and deafening if you take the lift to the top (about 20 floors up) with the tour at that time.

Cheers,
Wendy

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All roads lead to...

Rome!

PMC European Trip Montenegro and Rome

June 9th, 2014

Hello PMC Members,

Weather could not be better - warm and sunny in the coastal town of Kotor, Montenegro, which is down the coast from Venice. A picture perfect town that gained independence after the break-up of Yugoslavia. From the top of the mountains we can see for miles. We stopped for morning tea and enjoyed home made bread, cheese and smoked ham, for those that like meat:) and cool drinks.

The beaches give the most inviting offer to those looking down on the beginning of the summer vacationers. We also notice the Casino Royale where Daniel Craig made the 007 movie. Returning to the ship for dinner we settled in for a formal dinner in suits and finery for all. A Lovely 4 course meal if you can make it.

Saturday, we headed off to Roma (Rome) the city of love and the Pope and Vatican. We stopped at the Vatican Museum and saw many paintings by Michelangelo almost 500 years ago. We then headed off to see the outside of St Peters Square which we had been informed that morning would not be available, as there was a special service honouring 200 years celebration of the military police which the Pope was to bless. I did not think we would be able to see much, however when we got there the Pope was doing a drive around the square and drove strait past us!

Finishing off Rome with a trip to the Colosseum and then to Florence for some fine leather shopping and then Pisa, to see the leaning Tower.

Now off to Spain, then Amsterdam and down the Rhine over the next few weeks.

Cheers,
Wendy

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PMC European Trip France and Spain

June 11th, 2014

Hi all PMC members,

Our journey continues across the beautiful Western Europe. The weather is warm like a Spanish summer with beautiful blue skies as far as the eye can see. We arrived in the southern city of France Toulon for a short stay and headed into town to experience the local Saturday fresh produce markets.

Our next stop was the city of Barcelona, Spain. While on a walking tour of the city we were able to take in the impressive building designs of Gaudi their most famous son. The Cathedral was started in 1850 and they are still working on finishing it by 2026. Gaudi had a very strong faith and wanted to show his beliefs in his buildings.

In the afternoon we went down to the fountains and waterfront to see the other sights. While down at the waterfront we noticed an advertisement for the round the world 2 man racing in December 2014 and Renault was the sponsor. They had some electric cars on show and asked if we wanted a test drive - What around the street of Barcelona? Of course that would be ok especially as we would only be going slow in the local traffic and had a guide car. So we gave it a go and it wasn't that bad once you understand that the traffic goes across in front of you if they want to take the next exit.

Our final Spain stop was the San Sebastian northern coast with its wonderful beaches and the most expensive property in all of Europe per square meter. We couldn't resist sampling more local food and enjoyed their version of tapas.

Next stop is Amsterdam to cruise down the Rhine. Wish you were here!!

Love to all
Wendy

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Tapas Crawl !

PMC European Trip San Sabastian - Txomin - Biboa

June 13th, 2014

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Hello PMC Members,

Travelling now to north coast of Spain, to San Sabastian, just like the Gold Coast except with an older population due to the expanse of Europe. We saw great beaches (like Bondi beach) and had great shopping opportunities.

We very much like the old palace that the Spanish Royal family used in the summer that was designed by the British when Spain had Britain as an ally, instead of France in 18th century.

Also enjoyed the meals in San Sebastian and the tapas testing were excellent. Kathy lead the group as we moved from one location to another, our very own "tapas crawl"!

Next day, up and off to wine tasting in Txomin, one of the most well known wineries in the area and imported into Melbourne as well. Their vines are grown both on trellis and elevated with gardens of red and blue hydrangeas.

Then on to Bilbao to visit the Guggenheim Museum (focusing in contemporary art). This was just magnificent; Sharyn and I very much liked the sculptures, inside and out. They also had a "flower dog" similar to our Festival of Sydney at MCA in January.

Now off to Amsterdam!
Wendy

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Bike Power !



PMC European Trip Amsterdam

June 16th, 2014

Hello PMC Members,

We arrived in Amsterdam and began with a tour of Anne Frank's house and museum. It was just stunning to see the life of a girl through her diary writing depicting life under the Nazi's regime in 1942 - 1945. Sadly, she died about 3 months before the end of the war. From her family of; father, mother and sister, only her father survivor who later set up the museum, in her memory in the mid 1960's.

We were also told that the local buildings are sinking and moving on their wooden pylons. We noticed how some buildings are leaning, back, forward, to the left or right and leaving spaces in between.

We finished our days in Amsterdam with a walk around, while avoiding the many bikes on the road. There are over 1 million bikes in Amsterdam and 10,000 boats in the canals – more bikes than people as some people have 3 bikes in different locations. The use of cars and trucks are limited and we were impressed how the bikes have been modified to take deliveries to smaller shops.

We are now waiting for boarding the Scenic "Space-Ship" for cruise down the Rhine!

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PMC European Trip Dusseldorf

June 23rd, 2014

Hello PMC Members,

We boarded our Spaceship for the cruise down the Rhine river and made sure we were all well aware of the sea drill. We learned how to fit the life jackets, and chuckled when they said there is only one life boat (for the crew) to pick passengers up in the water. We got excited to see the first lock and how it worked. We have 56 locks to pass - where the river Rhine flows back into the North Sea (at Amsterdam) and then another 50+ locks where the river is falling to the Black Sea.

The next morning we arrived at the town of Dusseldorf and did some walking around town with a local guide and learnt about the attractions. The streets are paved with cobble stones, for which we called them "bone shaker". Dusseldorf is a very old and pretty city with many trees and parks. Sale prices were hard to work out in German, but we thought we were on to a good shopping location with 0% sales??? King Street (upmarket shopping) is a must stop.

The local bells/chimes let us know when it was 10am and the shops were open for business. The chimes hang on the outside of the house and chime a most pleasant tune. We tasted the local mustard, which our guide said was better than Dijon. We got to taste a number of them and I even tried an apricot mustard.

A little more looking round the town and we come across the oldest building (1288) in the area and of course it is also the oldest pub in town. Back to the Spaceship to get ready for dinner at the 12th Century Castle that housed the Knights who protected the local town.

The weather is getting warmer now and feeling more like an European summer.

Kind Regards

Wendy

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PMC European Trip Along the Rhine

June 25th, 2014

Hello PMC Members,

Our travels continue along the Rhine and its many joining rivers. We started on the Rhine and steered on the "Main River", and now are back on the Rhine, heading to Bamberg. The Spaceship we are travelling on has many opportunities for enjoying the local produce and more European foods. As a PMC group, we had booked the Italian restaurant - Portobello - for an evening together. We all enjoyed our 7 course meals with many options - including vegetarian as well. We had a lovely night that went late, which included dancing and letting off our "space energies". Of course, the following days we did suffer with dark eyes and tired muscles.

The next day, we enjoyed walking through a local town - Rudesheim - with its original homes and decorations at the front door. Many of the decorations are what we would use for Christmas.

Many of the shops and stores in the original town have signs hanging above their entrances to show what they sold. We were told that the local people had little to no reading skills and this is why they had the pictured signs. It was also the reason why the Cathedrals had such beautiful windows and wall murals, depicting bible stories. Some of the signs we saw showed; a wine bar (as water was so contaminated, no one would drink it), baker and accommodation for weary travellers.

One of the oldest remaining homes was built in 1480, and served as a bath house for Jewish women. They came down once a month to wash themselves and their hair. They had to allow it to dry (without a hair drier) and if they did not have it dry by end of the day, then they most likely caught "lung disease" which was a cold, that many usually died from. Life expectancy was around 40 years for men and much lower for women as many died during child birth.

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Loving the journey,
Wendy
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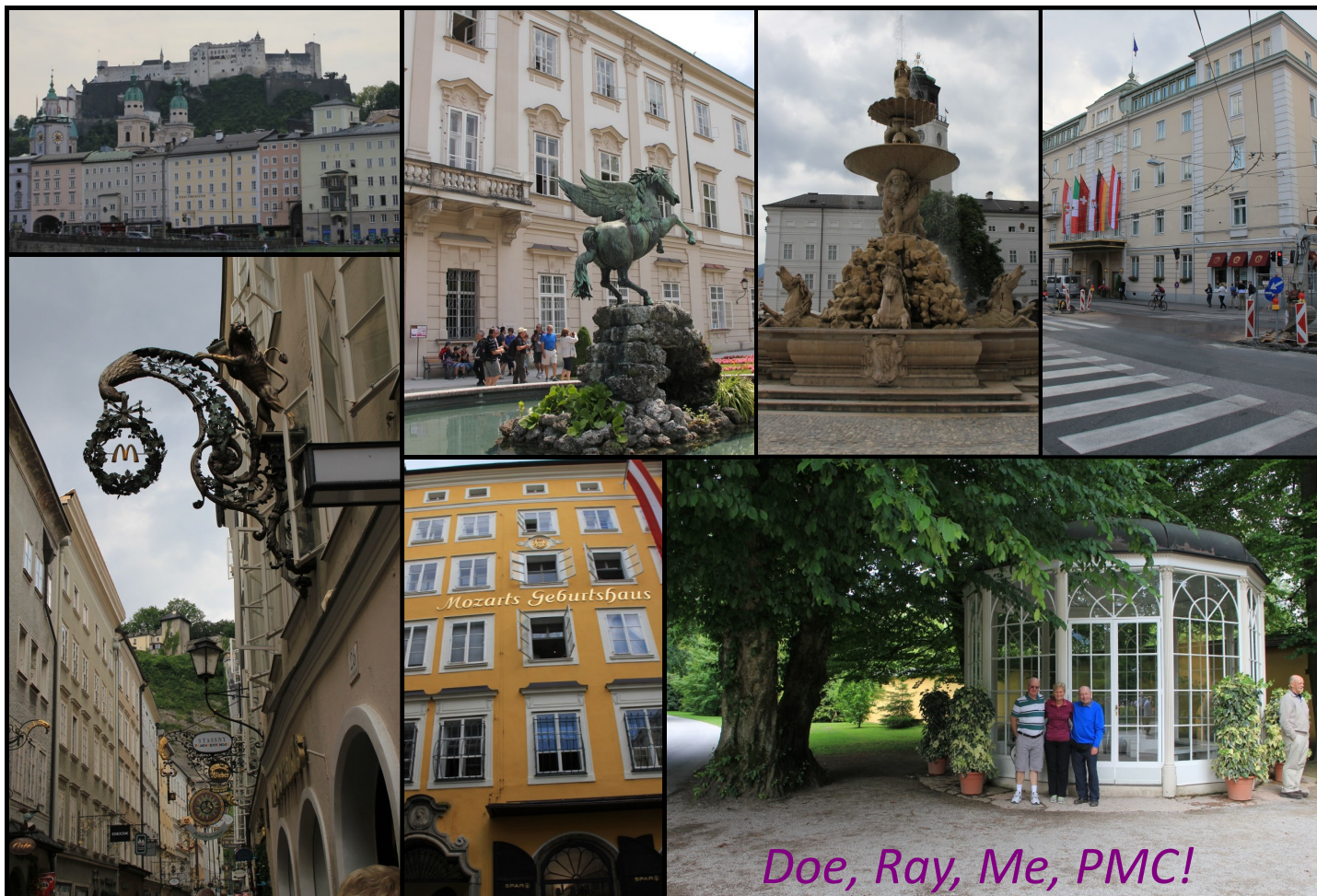
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PMC European Trip Passau Germany

June 27th, 2014

Afternoon to all of you back home,

Moving along the Rhine, we have past Linz and now the Danube through Austria and into Hungary. We are now leaving Passau and see the solar powered farms along the way. As we drive along we are told about the various highway speed limits that apply to the many types of vehicles in the EU. Cars are unlimited, (up to 250 Kms/h) but buses and trucks are limited to 100 to 80 kms/h.

Our travels this day take us out of Germany and into Austria and to Salzburg or the Sound of Music location, a most stunning place with its many original 11th - 17th century homes. We see the location for "The Hills are Alive with the Sounds of Music". We are taken past the home used as the main house, then to the gardens for "Doe, Ray, Me" then to "Sixteen going on Seventeen". It is unfortunate that we now know that the location was the house of the mistress of the local Prince Bishop who had 15 children with him! The Pope did ask about his activities. We also noted the location of "I have Confidence in Me". (in the movie, Before Maria takes up her employment with Captain Von Trapp.)

Arriving in Salzburg, we must visit the famous hotel and location of the Sacher Torte. This has of course been copied many times over. However the original recipe is still made in the Sacher Hotel. We take in the local shopping sites (high street for shopping) and make a last tourist stop to see the house where Mozart was born. His mother had 15 children and only he and his sister survived past childhood. We had lunch at a local restaurant who prepared an Austrian inspired meal, although we could have stopped at the local McDonald's which had a sign to fit the medieval times.

It's time to hit the shops and take in the sights and sounds of the summer Mozart festival, then back to the ship for a sail into Linz (over-night). Love seeing the new sights and wonder at the magnificent creations and scenery all around.

Love to all,
Wendy

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Look at us now!

Hi all PMC members,

PMC European Trip Down the Rhine to Budapest

July 2nd, 2014

Last days of our PMC cruise down the river systems of the Rhine, Linz and Danube to Budapest. We are nearing the end of our time together. Starting with 22 members we finished our cruise with all still on board. (Although some had weakened to the dreaded cold and cough). Our last few days were spent in places that took our breaths away. Stopping at the town of Melk, we learnt about the difference between an Abbey and Monastery. We learnt that an Abbey could be a Monastery, but that a Monastery need not be an Abbey. The Abbey had to have the Abbot in residence. The lovely Abbey of Melk has some priceless treasures and was high on a hill with only one path from town shown by the yellow brick road.

Cruising to our next location, the town of Durnstein, was something we had been waiting for since boarding the cruise on the first day. We had been looking out for the castle that Richard the Lionheart had been held in by Leopold V for a ransom. This caused his brother Prince John to raise taxes to pay for his ransom and famously, "take from the poor and give to the rich". But you will remember that Robin Hood and his band of merry men tried to change this arrangement.

Our next town was Vienna, and all the glory of the renaissance was shown in the magnificent buildings all across the town. We walked around for a few hours but decided that using a horse and carriage was more our style. Later, we dressed in all our finery for the Mozart piano concert at the Palace. A most serious occasion, and the girls did a great job.

The next day, we made a trip into another country, Salzburg, in Austria (birthplace of Mozart) or to Cesky Krumlov in the Czech Republic. Passports were required and the boarder was closed at night for security reasons.

Nearing the end of our cruise we arrived in Budapest to the most magnificent sight that morning. We had docked in Priority No.1 - directly opposite the Parliament building. Impressive during the day and extraordinary at night! That night we gathered for our farewell dinner with the Captain. All looking good and going to plan for the next time away with the PMC.

Regards
Wendy

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Benefits of Club Travel for PMC Members

Hello PMC Members and Friends,

Through Club Travel, PMC members can share travel with like-minded friends as there are no strangers, with everyone travelling as one family.

Travellers have the confidence, security, safety of travelling in a group and with an experienced tour director to look after everyone's needs throughout the tour.

Club travel is able to pass on great discounted rates, protect bookings and tailor make every tour to the group's requirement.

PMC members can have the confidence that their tour is being organised by an extremely well-travelled and experienced tour director.

PMC members are all invited to experience first hand, the relaxed and friendly groups tours.

Dare to Dream.

Sharyn Bojczenko
Travel Specialist and Tour Director
Club Travel

