

Press Service

The Danube—A River's Lure

February 2004

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Press Service **February 2004**; responsible for the contents: Ursula Deutsch, editor: Eva Nikolaou.

The **Danube Tourist Commission**, founded in 1972, is a marketing association for tourism to the Danube region and the Main-Danube Canal. Members of the Danube Tourist Commission are Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, Bulgaria, Romania, and Casinos Austria AG.

www.danube-river.org
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Twelfth Danube Travel Mart, Vienna

This year's combined staging of atb (austrian travel business) and Danube Travel Mart at the invitation of the Vienna Tourist Board and Austrian National Tourist Office proved a resounding success. Fifty exhibitors from Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia and Romania enhanced the attractiveness of the atb. The Danube Travel Mart in turn profited from the presence of 750 buyers and about 180 media representatives from all over the world. The combined event also provided a lively forum for exhibitors to exchange news and views.

Buyers showed special interest in offers on the Danube's middle and lower reaches reflecting an information deficit about these areas. Exhibitors from the upper Danube also expressed themselves very satisfied with demand.

Serbian participants, benefiting from an upswing in interest in their country as a tourist destination, were able to establish many new contacts. With the new pontoon dock in Vukovar, Croatia too was a focus of interest. Exhibitors from Romania reported particular demand for combination ship-and-plane and ship-and-guided tour packages.

The Café Gerbeaud, which served sweet delights from Budapest, was a special attraction at the Danube Travel Mart.

A new publication, "**Danube Counter Info**", which is currently available only in German, was very well received; an English version is planned. The **Danube Sales Manual** was also presented at the Travel Mart. The sales manual is an international source of information, which contains details of all tourism services, cultural events and points of interest along the Danube from the Black Forest to the Black Sea. The sales manual will be available online starting in mid-March at www.danubesalesmanual.com.

The Danube Tourist Commission has selected the "**Musical Danube**" as its annual theme for the current year, "Nature & Culture" for 2005, and "The Danube Adventure" for 2006. The Commission's marketing activities will focus on the themes during these years.

The Danube in Facts and Figures

The Danube has long ranked number-one among cruise destinations. Today, the most European of rivers has a 30.6 percent share of the river cruise market—a lead of almost ten percentage points ahead of the Nile. Despite the challenge posed by low water levels, shipping firms, cities and regions achieved impressive results in the 2003 season.

Passau, the leading port of departure for **Danube cruises** recorded 132,383 cruise passengers, or 13,383 more than in 2002.

Vienna harbour registered 2,859 dockings by Danube cruise liners, which brought 132,383 visitors to the Austrian capital, representing an increase of 11.85% over 2002.

Blue Danube Travel welcomed 50,000 cruise passengers in the Slovak capital *Bratislava*, including 37,750 from Germany, Austria and Switzerland, and over 7,700 from English-speaking countries.

Although the pontoon bridge at Novi Sad was forced to remain closed because of low water levels, the ports of Belgrade and Novi Sad in *Serbia* reported 260 arrivals and 45,000 passengers, including 7,000 from the U.S..

Romania welcomed 33,000 cruise ship guests in 2003 even though it was particularly hard hit by low water levels. These numbers are expected to almost double in 2004.

The **excursion cruise** business also reported good results for the 2003 season: DDSG Blue Danube counted 144,000 guests in the Wachau, 55,000 in Vienna, as well as 6,500 on its services to Bratislava and Budapest, and 13,000 to Passau. Pyringer & Zopper welcomed 20,150 guests aboard MS *Schlögen* for Vienna sightseeing cruises while Brandner Shipping carried 95,000 passengers on its scheduled services through the Wachau.

For the 2004 cruise season that begins this coming March no fewer than eighty-four cruise liners are expected to ply the Danube. Nine of these vessels are brand-new or will be sailing the Danube for the first time.

New bridges in Linz and Szentendre

The new suspension bridge across the Danube at Linz will be 325 meters (just over two miles) long. The bridge is planned as a link in the projected west ring road around the Upper Austrian provincial capital. Construction on the bridge is due to begin in 2006. Also on the drawing board is a bridge in the Hungarian Danube bend area near Szentendre.

New faces

With the take-over of Seetours River Cruises by A'Rosa Flussschiff GmbH. *Jens Huse*, the former director of Seetours and IG River Cruises will leave the firm. The new manager is *Alfred Strauch*.

Bulgaria's National Tourism Promotion and Information Agency recently resumed active membership of the Danube Tourist Commission. *Ms. Assia Jossifova* is responsible for Danube tourism at the agency.

Mihailo Tomić has left Serbian tour operator Putnik to open his own firm, Oscar Tours, in Belgrade.

The new director of the National Tourism Organization of Serbia is *Milica Cubrilo*, who presented a new advertising campaign in Vienna, which is planned to run over several years.

Zoran Novaković left the Tourist Organization of Belgrade as of February 2 in order to devote himself to new activities; he remains a consultant to the tourism ministry. His successor is *Olivera Lazović* who can look back on many years' experience in tourism, including time at Putnik Travel and as commissioner for tourism at the Serbian chamber of commerce.

Klaus Zimmer and Guido Laukamp are new directors of the Cologne office of Viking River Cruises. Jeffrey S. Dash goes to Los Angeles as Viking president. KD Deutsche Flusskreuzfahrten GmbH has been renamed Viking Flusskreuzfahrten.

Franz Pasler has exchanged the manager's chair at DDSG Blue Danube for a seat in the company's supervisory board. *Helmut Richter* takes over from Mr. Pasler as manager.

International tourism trade fairs in 2004

Utazás, Hungary's biggest tourism trade fair will take place in Budapest, March 18-21. The fair will spotlight Slovakia as guest country and also feature the new "Gastro-Event Hungary".

Information: Hungexpo Budapest, utazas@hungexpo.hu or www.utazas.hungexpo.hu

IFT 2004 is scheduled for April 16-18 in Belgrade. The outgoing and incoming event will present new tourist attractions in Serbia and Montenegro.

Information: www.skypass.co.yu/ift2004.htm

On the Danube...

Excursion cruises

The Regensburg excursion cruise company Gebrüder Klinger will put a third ship into service at the beginning of the 2004 season. The new vessel is 40.5 meters (133 feet) long and will be able to accommodate up to 350 passengers.

Pyringer-Zopper lines has published its excursion program for 2004, which includes Vienna sightseeing tours and interesting cruises to the locks at Nussdorf-Freudenau aboard the MS *Schlögen*, as well as special theme cruises and trips for children.

Information: Donau Schifffahrt Pyringer-Zopper, dspz@donauschiffahrtwien.at and www.donauschiffahrtwien.at

Recreating Sisi's wedding cruise

On April 20, 1854 the sixteen year-old Duchess Elisabeth of Bavaria, who was nicknamed Sisi, embarked on a Danube ship to sail to Vienna for her marriage to Austria's Emperor Franz Joseph. On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of this journey Oberösterreich Touristik offers a Danube cruise from April 22-25 that retraces the historic voyage of the beloved monarch. The convoy of historic vessels in the "presence" of the imperial will call at Linz, where the "Kaiser" himself will board the ship, the Wachau valley and finally Vienna. The cruise ends with a tour to historic sites in Vienna associated with the life and times of the imperial couple, as well as a performance of the musical *Elisabeth*.

Information: Oberösterreich Touristik GmbH., Tel. ++43/732/663024-600, martina.achleitner@touristik.at

Danube cruises in 2004

DCS will operate the new Bulgarian ship MS *Rousse Prestige* exclusively this coming summer. The ship will primarily sail the Danube and Main. The Maden voyages starts on March 19 in Cologne, ending with a big party on March 29 in Passau

Information: DCS Touristik, service@dcs-touristik.de and www.dcstouristik.de

Austrian River Cruises-ARC Touristik/Club 50 also offers cruises leaving from and returning to Vienna aboard the brand-new MS *Johann Strauss*, which the firm has chartered for the entire season. The cruises sail upstream as far as the Main and downstream to the delta. Information: ARC Touristik arc@arc.co.at, www.club50.at

Peter Deilmann has announced a total of four routes from Passau to the Romanian port of Constanța on the Black Sea aboard the MS *Mozart* and *Donauprinzessin* with a number of departures scheduled. The company will also offer Danube golf cruises in August. Information: Peter Deilmann Reederei, info@deilmann.de and www.deilmann-kreuzfahrten.de

Nicko Tours offers several cruise routes between Passau, Budapest, Kalocsa and the Danube delta. Information: Nicko Tours, d.nitsch@nicko-tours.de

Viking River Cruises this year will again make relaxing vacations possible for dialysis patients on board the *Viking Primadonna*. The eight-day cruise sails from Passau to Budapest. There is also an eighteen-day trip from Passau to the Black Sea. Viking River Cruises was ranked sixth among the world's top one hundred cruise lines by the American "Condé Nast Traveller" magazine. Information: www.vikingrivercruises.com

DerTour's 2004 summer program includes classic Danube cruises with the MS *Mozart*, MS *Sofia* and MS *River Cloud*, as well as a number of interesting new features such as short "get acquainted" and theme trips, as well as a cruise aboard the *Viking Danube* that departs and returns to Vienna.

Information: Dertour, service@dertour.de and www.dertour.de

Fischer Reisen will operate the four-star MS *Gracioso* (formerly MS *Bolero*) for three sailings from Vienna to the Black Sea and back.

Information: Fischer Reisen. Tel. ++43/8158687, office@fischer-reisen.at

Transocean Tours marks its fiftieth anniversary this year. To celebrate the occasion the firm has put together a number of particularly attractive offers, including a cruise with the *Swiss Crown* from Passau to Budapest (April 29-May 6) Information: Transocean Tours Touristik, mail@transocean.de and www.transocean.de

Hapag-Lloyd has an interesting new feature in its program: an eight-day cruise from Regensburg to Budapest with three departures. Land excursions to the most beautiful sites along the Danube's shores are included in the cruise price.

Information: Hapag-Lloyd, info@hlkf.de and www.hlkf.de

An up-to-date preview of Danube cruises in 2004 is available from the Danube Tourist Commission in Vienna. Information: donau@austria.info

Cycle and sail the Danube

Not only is the Danube the number-one cruise destination it can also boast the most popular bicycle trail. Experiencing the Danube by ship and bike is truly unique, and as a consequence the segment has boomed for years. Oberösterreich Touristik will offer five ship and bike trips between May and September aboard the MS *Dunaj*. Dubbed “Danube Waltz” the cruise sails from Passau to Budapest and back, with passengers having the possibility of cycling individual stretches of the route as the fancy takes them. Bikes are carried free of charge and can also be borrowed on board ship.

Information: Oberösterreich Touristik, Info@touristik.at and www.touristik.at

Eurohike and Eurobike have published two new cycling catalogues for 2004 for the Danube bike trail.

Information: Eurofun Touristik GmbH, eurobike@eurobike.at and www.eurobike.at

... and on the River's Shores

Germany

Eastern Bavaria 2004 – Magic of the Romantic Age

The motto for the Eastern Bavaria Tourism Association's new catalogue is “Time for Feelings, Enjoyment and Contentment”. The logo for the year is the blue flower that the German poet Novalis made a symbol of the Age of Romanticism. The catalogue details vacation options on both water and land with a special flair, for example a trip by traditional barge on the Altmühl. The brochure provides a wealth of information, maps and list of accommodations. This year's joint Bavarian-Upper Austrian Provincial Exhibition “Without Borders” also deals with the Romantic Age.

Information: Tourismusverband Ostbayern, info@ostbayern-tourismus.de

Regensburg

Regensburg's first “Kunstkaufhaus” is a possibility both to experience and acquire works of art. Visitors can purchase paintings, sculptures, graphics, photographs, comics, graffiti and videos at affordable prices. Artists' workshops and a variety of programs make the event a meeting-place for artists and art lovers alike.

Information: Regensburger Kunstkaufhaus, www.kunstkaufhaus-regensburg.de

Ulm/Neu-Ulm 2004 Sales Guide

The twin cities on the Danube will mark the 125th anniversary of the birth of their great native son, Albert Einstein. The 2004 sales guide contains information about special anniversary events, many other of the year's highlights, as well as tips for accommodations, dining, points of interest and sightseeing in Ulm and the surroundings.

Information: Tourismuszentrale Ulm/Neu-Ulm, homburg@tourismus.ulm.de and www.tourismus.ulm.de

Passau booms

In the 2003 season Passau, the biggest port of departure for Danube cruises, recorded 132,383 cruise passengers, or 13,383 more than in 2002. Seventy-five ships are presently scheduled to dock no less than 1,283 times in 2004, bringing about 140,000

passengers to the “three-river city”. To meet growing demand, construction of six new mooring facilities for cruise liners in the Lindau area will commence in the autumn of 2004. In addition to expanding capacity, the new docks will make it possible for ships to put in at Passau even during periods of high water levels. The facilities will be easily accessible for cars, buses and trucks. The docks, which are located just 1.5 kilometers or less than a mile from the historic old town, are scheduled to enter operation in the spring of 2006. *Information: Passau Tourismus, info@passau.de*

Austria

Vienna

This year has been declared the “Year of Art and Delights” in Vienna. The March reopening of the Liechtenstein Museum will be yet another milestone in the renaissance of the capital’s museum scene. The princely collections will again be on display in the Baroque garden palace in Vienna, where they were exhibited up until the second world war. The collection comprises over 200 priceless works of art, including the world’s most extensive holdings of Rubens, as well as paintings by Van Dyck, Cranach, Raphael, and Rembrandt. The restored palace with its magnificent library and frescoes by Johann Michael Rottmayr is itself well worth visiting. A special culinary note can be given to a museum visit with a stop at “Ruben’s Brasserie”, which serves historic dishes.

The new Sisi Museum is due to open in the Vienna Hofburg, or Imperial Palace, in April to mark the 150th anniversary of the wedding of Empress Elisabeth and Emperor Franz Joseph. The museum will display numerous objects that once belonged to the legendary empress.

In August, the world-famous Lipizzaner horses will put on a gala display in the courtyard of Schönbrunn palace. Last year, about 6,000 watched these open-air performances every evening.

Schönbrunn’s courtyard is to be the stage for performances of quite a different kind this coming summer: rock stars Sting and David Bowie will both give concerts against a historic backdrop.

The Albertina, which in the first year after reopening following extensive renovations has become a magnet for visitors, will stage a major Rembrandt exhibition in April.

Information: Vienna Tourist Board, wvt@info.wien.at and www.wien.info

Lower Austria

Carnuntum Archaeological Park centenary

The centenary celebrations of the important Roman excavations on the Danube will revolve around the Emperor Marcus Aurelius and his stay in the city, as well as Roman gladiators. An interesting exhibition at the museum and a variety of special events are planned for the anniversary year.

Information: Carnuntum Archaeological Park, www.carnuntum.co.at

Slovakia

The Slovak Danube is a region of romantic scenery crisscrossed by cycling trails and hiking routes, as well as blind arms of the river, most of which are protected nature reserves. A new guidebook *Donaugebiet-Bezirk Komárno* (“Danube Region—Komárno District”) is a useful reference book for visitors to this part of the Danube.

Information: Slovak Tourism Agency, e-mail: sacr-wien@aon.at

Hungary

Cycling and canoeing

Erlebniscamp Nordland, the specialist tour operator for nature and adventure trips, offers a seven-day canoe tour through the unique Szigetköz nature preserve along the Danube in northwestern Hungary. The area is characterised by intertwining blind branches of the river and extensive stands of primeval wetland forest. Erlebniscamp Nordland also offers a variety of cycling tours along the Hungarian Danube bike trail and the lovely Danube bend.

Information: Erlebniscamp Nordland. Tel. ++43/3682/24804, www.erlebniscamp.at

Budapest Spring Festival, March 19-April 4

Hungary’s biggest cultural event takes place this year from March 19 through April 4. Two hundred concerts of classical and light music, theatre performances, art exhibitions and readings will be held at over sixty venues.

Information: Budapest Festival Center, info@festivalcity.hu and www.festivalcity.hu

Croatia

A new and enlarged pontoon dock near Vukovar will make docking at this Croatian Danube port easier in future. Plans are on the drawing board for constructing five additional docks over the coming years including at Kopački Rit, near Osijek, and at Ilok. These projects will return the infrastructure along the Croatian Danube to the level existing prior to the Balkan wars.

Information: office@kroatien.at, www.kroatien.at/kroatien

Serbia

With the start of the 2004 cruise season, liners will be able to tie up at an additional pontoon dock upstream from the pontoon bridge at Novi Sad. This will permit passengers to disembark for land tours before ships navigate the bridge.

Serbia is experiencing a boom in tourism, recording again in 2003 over 300,000 arrivals and more than 700,000 overnights. These results are double those of in 2000, the first year after the end of hostilities in the Balkans. Serbia’s Danube region in particular will be a focus of tourism in the years ahead. The two Danube cities, Belgrade and Novi Sad, can already boast a high standard of accommodations and vibrant cultural life. Some of the high points of 2004 are a summer jazz festival and

international theater festival in the autumn in Belgrade, and the “EXIT” music festival in Novi Sad in the summer. Another event of special interest is the fall festival in Smederevo, a unique Medieval fortress town, which presented its attractions at the Danube Travel Mart in January.

Information: TOS—National Tourism Organization of Serbia, Belgrade, mcubriilo@yubc.net and www.serbia-tourism.org

Romania

The figure of 33,000 Danube cruise passengers recorded last year is, according to present sailing notices, set to double in 2004. This faced-paced expansion is the result of major investments in port facilities and tourism infrastructure. Romanian incoming firms reported increased demand for combined ship and sightseeing arrangements. The Danube delta continues to head the list of attractions. Last year three new pontoons were constructed at Giurgiu, Oltenița and Fetești thus bringing the number of Romanian ports with docking facilities for cruise liners to eight.

Information: Romanian National Tourist Office, Währingerstrasse 6-8, A-1090 Vienna, Tel. +43/1/3173157, rumanien@aon.at

Bulgaria

Having recently resumed membership of the Danube Tourist Commission, Bulgaria’s newly established National Tourism Promotion and Information Agency aims to make the country’s attractions better known to potential guests. Bulgaria is rich in places of interest such as the historic cities of Vidin, Veliko Turnovo, Ruse, the birthplace of author Elias Canetti, and Silistra. There are natural wonders like the bizarre rock formations near Belogradchik, Rusenski Lom National Park, and the paradise for water fowl at Srebarna, which is located near Silistra and has been included by UNESCO on its list of world heritage sites.

Information: National Tourism Promotion and Information Agency, info@bulgariatravel.org and www.bulgariatravel.org

The Danube in Print

Danube Sales Manual

The Danube Sales Manual is the first international Danube sales guide which details all cultural events and places of interest and provides from mid March an on-line overview of tourism services along the Danube from the Black Forest to the Black Sea. www.danubesalesmanual.com

Danube Counter Info

This twenty-four page brochure (in German) with useful information about the Danube lands was presented for the first time at the Danube Travel Mart.

Information: Danube Tourist Commission, donau@austria.info, www.danube-river.org

Danube map

The map of the entire course of the Danube is a very popular feature on the Danube Tourist Commission's website www.danube-river.org. The copyright for the map belongs to the Studio für Landkartentechnik Detlef Maiwald, which has kindly granted the Commission permission for its use.

Information: Studio für Landkartentechnik Detlef Maiwald, Schulweg 77, D-228844 Norderstedt, Tel. ++49/40/5234046, StudioLKT@t-online.de

Japanese love letter to Vienna

Toshi Miyama has given expression to his love for Vienna in eighty-two short essays and stories in Japanese. The intention of the author, who is director of Japan Consult Hiromedia Wien, was to tell his countrymen about "his" Vienna and depict the city on the Danube from his own personal point of view. Miyama's work was published by Sairyusha in Tokyo and was nominated as "Book of the Month" in Japan last September. The book makes a perfect gift for Japanese friends and business partners.

Information: hiromedia.wien@telecom.at

This Danube Press Service is also available online at our website:

www.danube-river.org

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- **Danube Press Service**

German 0 English 0 French 0 Italian 0

- List of Danube **cycling tour operators** 0
- List of Danube **cruise operators** 0

- Brochures for the Danube and the Main-Danube-Canal (available by March 2004)

1. **Excursion Ships 2004** Englisch/German 0
2. **Cabin Cruises 2004** Englisch/German 0
3. **Yacht Tourism 2004** Englisch/German 0
4. **Music 2004** German 0

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