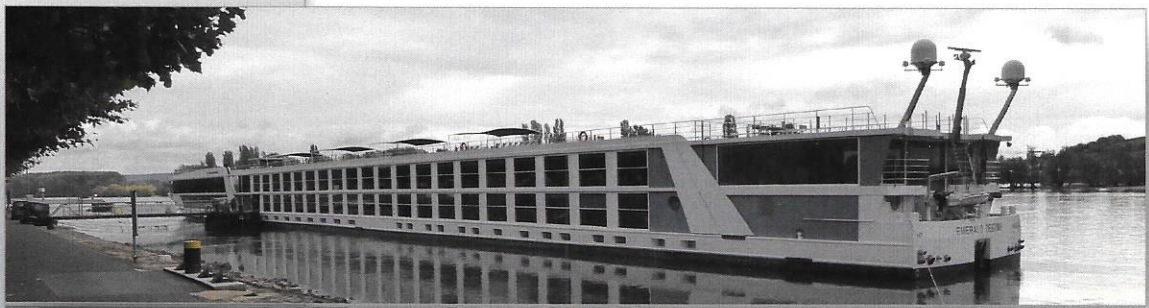


TODAY'S NEWS

By Anne Greeno

Emerald Waterways Rhine- Main Discovery River Cruise



On October 4, 2017, Wendy Dunham and Frank Cameron escorted a group of 54 Canadians to Amsterdam, Holland, to join Emerald Waterways' river cruise ship, the Destiny for a 7 night, 8 day adventure on the Rhine and Main rivers from Amsterdam to Nuremberg, Germany.

As with all Wendy Dunham Travel guided tours, itineraries are designed to give the group extra time in various cities to explore and enjoy local cultures and cuisine. The group spent extra nights in Amsterdam and Nuremberg, giving everyone time to visit local places of interest, including the red light district!

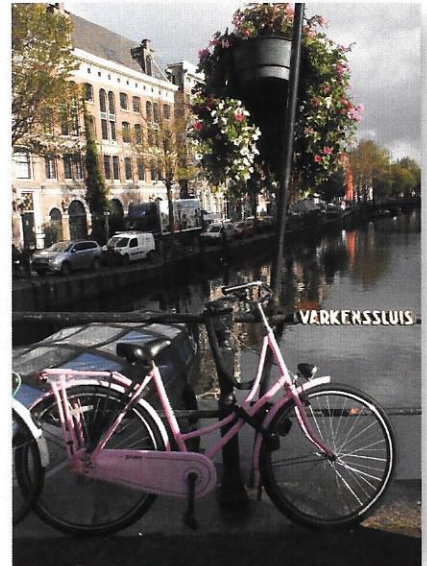


I hope you enjoy reading my account of our journey along the Rhine and Main rivers. Every city and town that we visited in Holland and Germany had something unique to offer, and I hope the pictures will show you just how special each place was. Enjoy!

Amsterdam

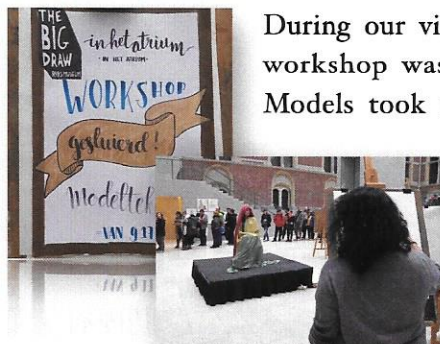
Our group stayed at the Radisson Blu Amsterdam for a night before the cruise to give us time to explore Amsterdam. Its central location allowed us to walk along the canals to experience the city's cultures and take in its historical significances.

Amsterdam is the capital of the Netherlands and is known as the "Venice of the North" due to it being constructed on 90 islands, surrounded by dozens of canals, and accessed by 1,200 bridges. Its name comes from *Amstelredamme* after a dam in the Amstel river. Because most of the land around the river is marshy, most buildings were constructed on wooden piles driven into the mud. A lot of the historic buildings are now slanting and sinking, only still standing because when the piles rot from being in the water so long, the buildings lean into one another as they sink.



Amsterdam is famous for its many **museums**, including the prestigious Rijksmuseum, the Hermitage Amsterdam, Van Gogh, Stedelijk, Amsterdam Historical and Anne Frank museums. Many members of our group visited several of these museums during our stay in the city.

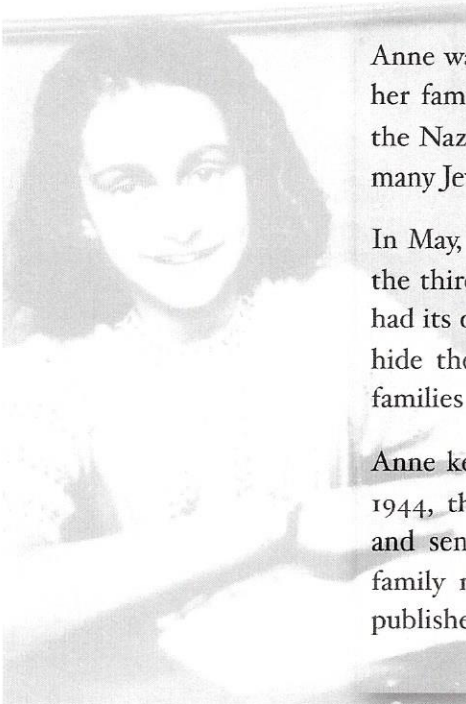
Our group had a private bus tour of the city, with a stop at the Rijksmuseum, and also a **canal boat tour**. It was interesting to see the many houseboats lined up on each canal. We were told that slip rental is cheap for the boats, however, the cost of buying a boat is prohibitive to most. An interesting way of living for sure.



During our visit to the **Rijksmuseum**, a painting workshop was underway in the centre courtyard. Models took turns sitting very still while aspiring artists painted portraits of the subject for critique by professionals. It was interesting to see each artist's unique rendition of the same subject.



Anne Frank

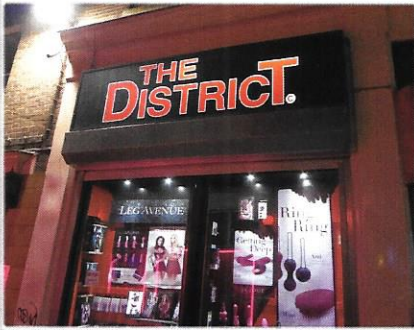


Anne was a Jewish German born in Frankfurt in 1929. She moved with her family to Amsterdam in 1933 when Germany became occupied by the Nazi's. In May, 1940, Germany occupied the Netherlands, trapping many Jews, including the Frank family.

In May, 1942, the Frank family hid in concealed rooms in an annex on the third floor of the building where Anne's father's company, Opekta, had its offices and stores. Several trusted employees helped the Franks hide there for over two years. In July and November of 1942, other families joined the Franks in the living areas above the shop.

Anne kept a diary of her time in hiding. Her last entry was August 1, 1944, three days before German uniformed police arrested everyone and sent them to concentration camps. Anne's father was the only family member to survive the Holocaust. In 1950, Anne's diary was published, entitled "The Diary of a Young Girl".

The Red Light District



Amsterdam is known for its red light district which has sex workers offering their services from behind glass doors or windows and usually under a red light. This service became legal in 2000, but cannot be offered on the street, thus the doors and windows.



Many of our group wandered through the main district. It really was amazing to see. I turned around once to see Jim smiling and waving. Apparently, he caught the eye of one of the girls!



Along with sex, there are sex related products and services you can purchase throughout the district. The shops had something for everyone. In one particular shop, the apron in the picture on the right caught the eye of one of our own (not mentioning names CC). I'm wondering if someone on her "naughty" list is getting this as a Christmas gift this year.



Coffee, Treats and a Smoke?

Soft drugs are legal for personal use in Amsterdam. This includes weed, magic truffles, salvia and peyote cactus. The limit per individual is 5 grams of cannabis or 5 cannabis plants. Establishments that have been permitted to sell soft drugs under certain circumstances are called “coffee shops”. But where do these coffee shops get their drugs? Individuals are not allowed to grow weed for sale, but coffee shops are allowed to sell it. Hmmmm - how does that happen? In early 2017, legislation was passed that would partly legalize the production of weed. There is now an experimental new system in specific cities in the Netherlands where coffee shops can legally acquire weed from state-appointed producers.



Throughout the city there were products for sale that you won't find for sale in Canada, at least until July 1, 2018. Convenience stores, tourist shops and the local delis all sold treats made from cannabis. One could buy a pair of wooden shoes, local cheese and cannabis laced cookies all in the same aisle. There are many Amsterdam companies that ship their products legally to customers in the US, however, it is more difficult for Canadian customers to get their purchases through Canadian customs.



The Destiny



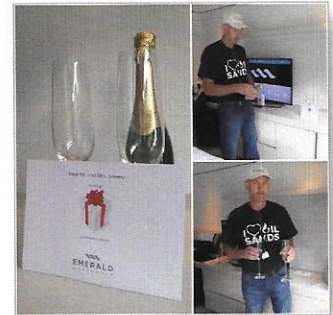
Boarding The Destiny

It was finally time to board the beautiful Emerald Destiny. Built in 2017, the Destiny is the newest ship in the fleet. The crew of 47 can accommodate 182 guests in its 92 suites.



The crew welcomed us onboard with a cool drink and tasty buffet lunch. A special treat for all of Wendy's guests was a

bottle of champagne in each of our suites. Jim and I enjoyed sipping the bubbly in front of our floor to ceiling window with the top half open, enjoying the hustle and bustle of Amsterdam. A great way to start the cruise.



Features of the Destiny



The ship is stunning! It has three levels of suites, some with balconies and some with floor to ceiling windows called panoramic balconies. The dining room and lounge are located at the bow of the ship on decks 2 and 3. The lounge has an open air section on the bow, giving a great view of what's ahead.

The pool area has a heated pool, a retractable roof, a 24 hour coffee area plus bar service that is available every 15 minutes throughout the day and evening. The area is surrounded on three sides by floor to ceiling windows, a good place to hang out on rainy days. The area also doubles as a movie theatre.

The ship's rooftop has a walking track, sun loungers, miniature golf and games. Once we left the Rhine river after Rudesheim and started on the Main river, the deck was cleared of all furniture, railings and even the wheelhouse in order to allow the ship to pass under low bridges, some within inches!

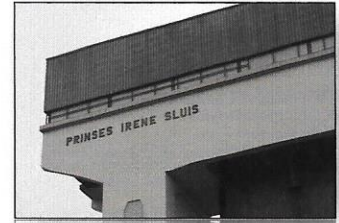


River Locks

It wasn't long after we left Amsterdam when we went through our first lock.

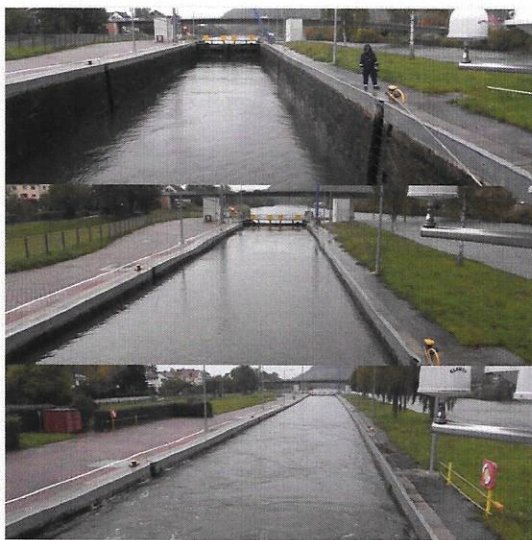
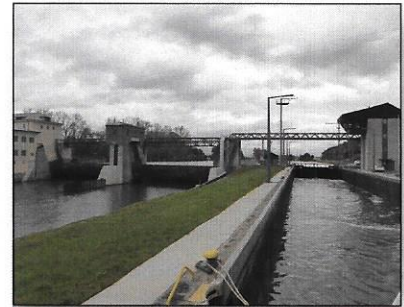


When the ship enters the lock, the gate at the far end is closed, holding back the higher river water on the other side. Each lock is long enough to accommodate both working ships and cruise ships. The Destiny was designed to fit width-wise in each lock on the Rhine and Main rivers, but with no room to spare.



Each lock is a different height, depending on the height of the river on the other side of the front gate. The markers were good to watch the progress of the rise, which was incredible fast.

It was common to see dams attached to the lock that controlled how much water was permitted downstream.

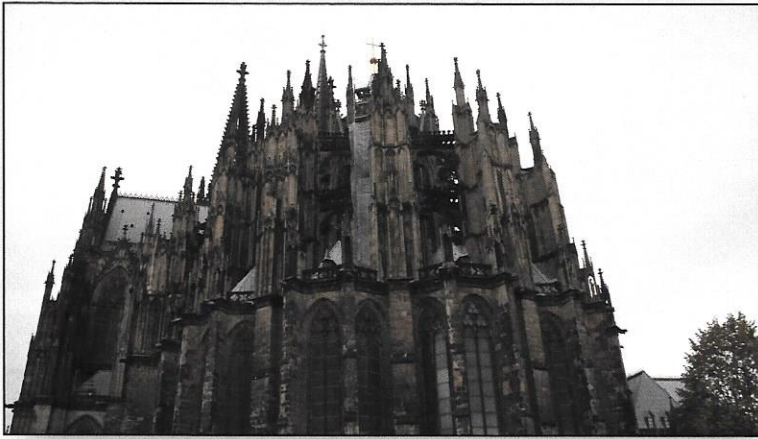


While the ship was getting situated within the dock, and all the while the water was raising, the ship's crew adjusted tethering lines to ensure the ship didn't drift from its intended position.

Once the back gate is closed, pumps under the front gate start pumping in the water. Over the next 15 to 20 minutes, the ship raises to the same water level as on the other side of the front gate. When the lock is filled, the front gate opens, the back gate remains closed, and the ship sails out.

34 more locks to go before arriving in Nuremberg.

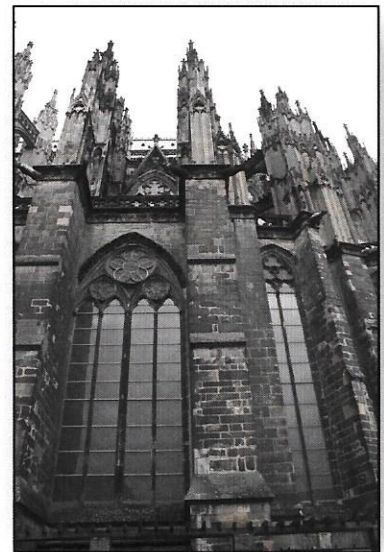
Cologne



The most visited landmark in Germany is Cologne's **Cathedral Church of Saint Peter**. It was built to house the remains of the Three Magi (the Three Kings), a gift to the Archbishop in 1164. Construction of this Gothic style church started in 1248 but halted in 1473, restarted in 1843, and was then finally finished in 1880 with the completion of two 510' spires.



Besides the **Shrine of the Three Kings**, the Cathedral also contains several other important Christian artifacts. One is the oldest surviving crucifix north of the Alps, the **Gero-Kreuz**, the first Western depiction of the crucified Christ on the Cross. Another is the **Milan Madonna**, a wooden sculpture from the 13th century that depicts the Blessed Virgin Mary with an infant Jesus. A more modern, but equally impressive artifact, is stained glass containing 11,000 identical glass pieces.



During WWII, Cologne was the Military Area Command Headquarters for the Military District VI of Münster. The city was targeted by Western Allies to be destroyed. During 262 air raids, 34,711 bombs were dropped. These raids resulted in catastrophic losses for the German people of Cologne with the death of over 20,000 civilians, including the eradication of Cologne's Jewish population.

The cathedral survived the bombings as pilots needed it to remain as a point of reference.



German Beer and Cuisine



Gaffel am Dom



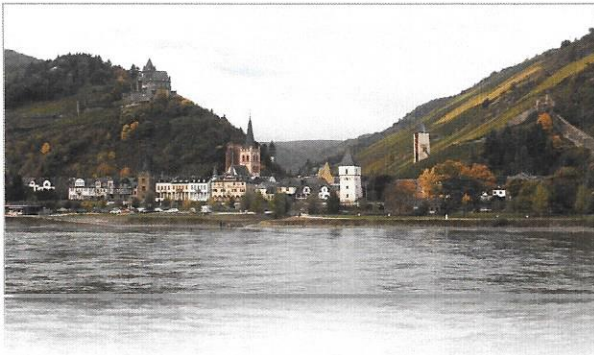
The cruise director onboard the Destiny recommended that we try local beer at the Gaffel am Dom and even provided coupons for free beer. It was a busy spot for locals and tourists alike, some dropping in for a meal, others for just a quick beer or two. John, Jim and Rollie enjoyed the beer and the atmosphere.

Cafe Reichard

Nothing speaks decadence like the treats and sweets at Reichard's. Located within the shadows of the Cathedral, the cafe has both indoor and outdoor seating. Take-out is also available for those wishing to stroll. Treats are packaged in beautiful gift boxes, complete with ribbons and bows. Old world charm.



Rhine Gorge



The Rhine Gorge is home to many castles, some now in ruins, others converted to personal homes or hotels. October was a great time to sail past these majestic buildings with the leaves starting to turn into their beautiful colours of yellows and reds.



Rheinfels Castle is located in the village of St. Goar. What was once the largest fortress of the Middle Rhine is now a hotel. Begun in 1245, it was active until becoming indefensible by the French Revolutionary Army in 1797.

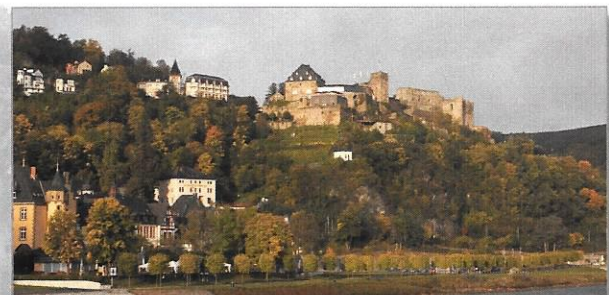
There's a myth on the river about a beautiful maiden called Lorelei who would sit combing her long hair and sing to lure mariners onto the rocks in this narrow and shallow point in the river. It is said she cast herself into the river after being confined to a nunnery.

Arlene and Rod enjoyed the back pool deck while sailing through the final parts of the Gorge. A great morning over all.

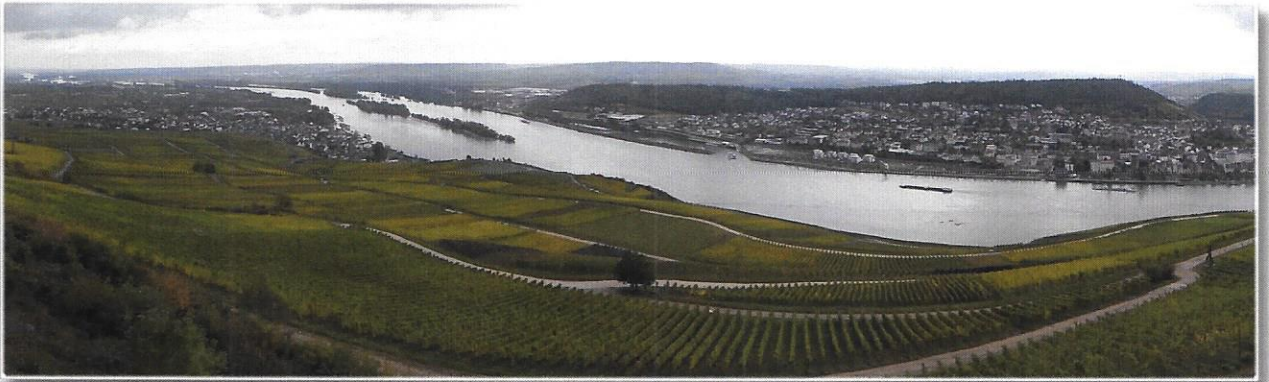
Located in the Middle Rhine region, the Rhine Gorge is called the Romantic Valley of the Lorelei. This area was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1992 because of its winding valley, rugged hillsides, ruined fortresses, steep vineyards and tiny villages.



Germany has many award winning wineries, many from the Rhine Gorge. Most of the vineyards in the valley belong to the wine regions Mittelrhein, Rheingau and Nahe. The majority of wine in Germany is white.



Rudesheim



Rudesheim is in the heart of the Rheingau wine growing region, evident by vast acreage of vineyards. The river between Rudesheim and its neighbouring town, Bingen, used to be so shallow that large boats needed 40 horses to pull them through the Binger Loch channel. Widening of the channel was completed in 1967 and the horses were no longer needed for this type of work.

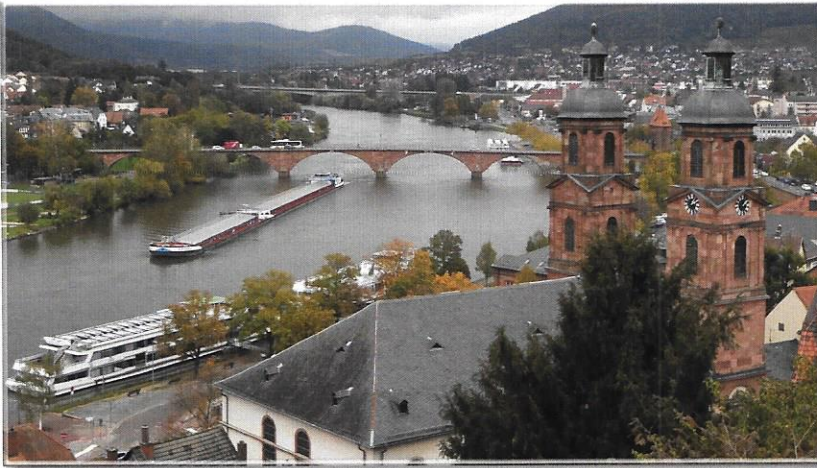
The town is host to many bars, restaurants and tourist shops, with Drosselgasse being one of the best known streets in all of Germany.

Niederwald Monument

We took a chairlift over the hillside vineyards to see this 35' tall statue of Germania. This statue commemorates Germany's unification in 1871. The Germania figure holds the recovered crown of the emperor in the right hand and the Imperial Sword in the left. The inscription on the monument states: In memory of the unanimous victorious uprising of the German People and of the reinstatement of the German Empire 1870-1871.

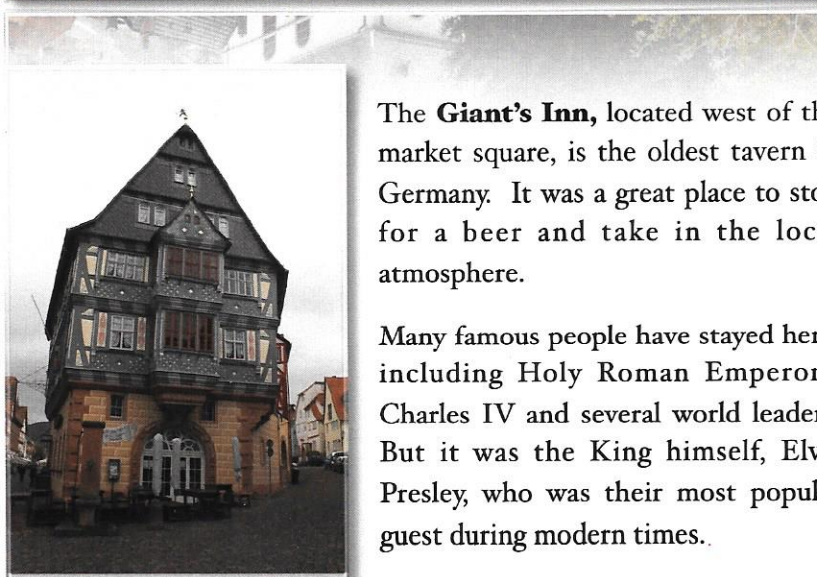


Miltenberg



Miltenberg is a beautiful medieval town with many restored half timbered houses still in use since 1237.

The town has a market square, which is the home of the Church of St. James, City Hall and the City Museum. The best bagels in Germany (so the story goes) can be found in the square at Backerei Hench Conditorei.



The **Giant's Inn**, located west of the market square, is the oldest tavern in Germany. It was a great place to stop for a beer and take in the local atmosphere.

Many famous people have stayed here, including Holy Roman Emperors, Charles IV and several world leaders. But it was the King himself, Elvis Presley, who was their most popular guest during modern times.

Perched above the town is Mildenburg Castle, built in 1200. The stunning views from the castle were arguably some of the best in Germany. The picture above was taken from the castle.

If I had to pick my most favourite town on this trip, Miltenberg would have to be it. It had all the attributes you would expect to find in a small, quaint German town.

Main Street in Miltenberg is a mile long, flanked by brightly painted buildings dating from 1237 to the 1700's. The streets are cobblestone in keeping with its heritage. The town has several bakeries and its own brewery. In addition to beer, Jägermeister, a German liqueur, is popular here. Jägermeister means "master hunter" and, contrary to popular believe, does not contain deer or elk blood.



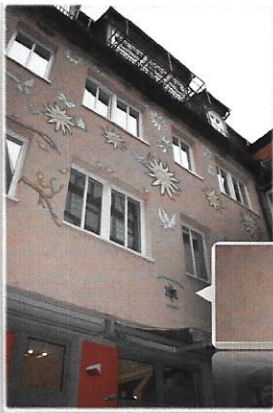
Wertheim

Our group took a half hour bus ride from Miltenberg to Wertheim. What a beautiful medieval town Wertheim turned out to be. It has the same architecture as Miltenberg, with half-timber buildings lining the town square and its side streets. This town floods every five years and a law was passed banning anyone from living on the bottom floor of their home.



Memorial Stones

Wertheim was home to many Jewish families. During WWII, most were either killed in their homes or taken to concentration camps. We stopped at a house that was used during the war to gather the Jews before they were sent to the camps. Lina Klaus was the last Jew to be taken from this



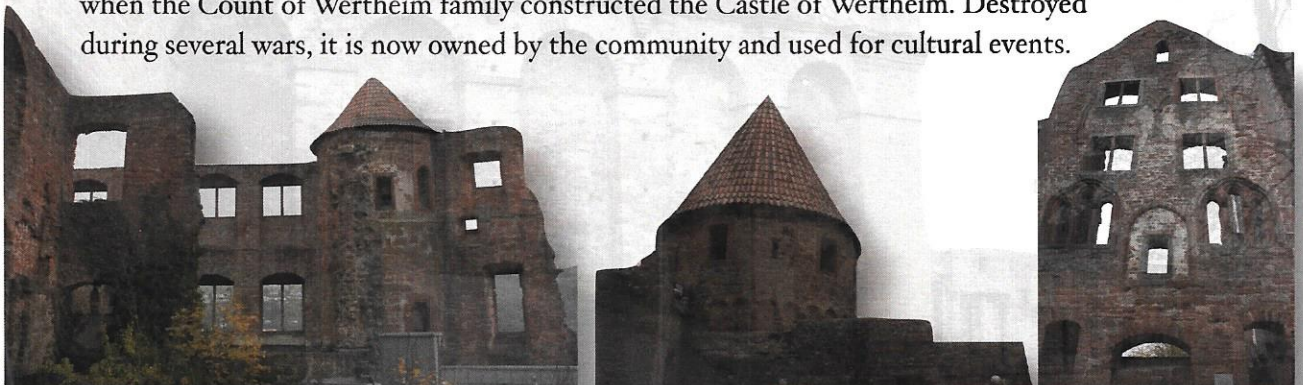
house on October 21, 1940. The people of Germany remember the many Jews killed during the war by placing memorial stones, called Stolpersteine, or stumbling blocks, in front of Jewish homes. We saw them in many of the



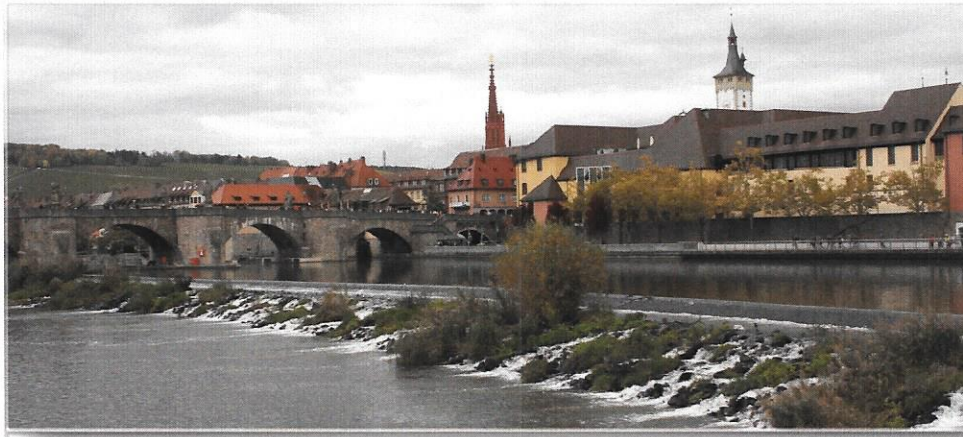
German towns we visited. These stones were outside the house where Lina and others from the Jewish Quarters were taken from.

Castle of Wertheim

Originally founded between the 7th and 8th century, the town of Wertheim was originally called Kreuzwertheim. The town's name changed to Wertheim around 779 when the Count of Wertheim family constructed the Castle of Wertheim. Destroyed during several wars, it is now owned by the community and used for cultural events.



Wurzburg



Wurzburg has deep religious roots, evident by its many churches, especially the Church of St. Mary, and symbolic saint and apostle statues, as seen on the Old Main Bridge. Various styles of architecture can be found throughout the city, including Baroque, Romanesque and Renaissance. The most prominent buildings are the Marienberg Fortress (1200) and the Residenz (1720), both official bishop residences.

Marienberg Fortress



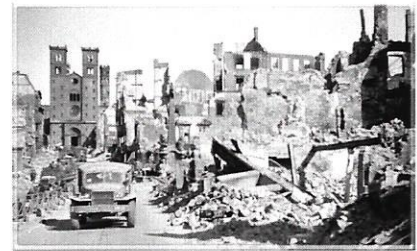
Residenz



Wartime



The city suffered great losses during WWII. During an air raid on March 16, 1945, the city was destroyed with only seven buildings remaining intact. 1000 tons of bombs from 236 bombers, 11



Mosquitoes and 225 Lancasters were dropped in just 20 minutes. Sadly, 5,000 people died. American forces occupied the city three weeks later, bringing an end of the war to the city and people of Wurzburg.

Life On Board The Destiny



It's all about the food! Breakfast and lunch were served buffet style in the main dining room, and a light lunch was also served in the lounge. Supper was served by friendly and efficient staff. There were several choices each night, and the chef provided his recommendation prior to each meal. The desserts were almost too pretty to eat.

One morning, the chef and his assistant gave us a demonstration on how to make traditional German apple strudel. We got to have some with ice-cream at lunchtime that day. Again, almost too pretty to eat.



When the weather wasn't the best, or when the upper outdoor deck was closed due to low bridges, the indoor pool area was a great place to hang out. Pictured here enjoying the day are Alice, Myrtle, Rose, Frances and Margaret.

An icon in Wendy Dunham's travel adventures is Nova Scotia's own Frank Cameron. We call him the patriot of our travel family. Frank enjoyed chatting with everyone in our group and having a beer now and then. Pictured from the left is Pearl (Frank's good friend), Anne, Frank and Jim. We look forward to more great trips with Wendy, Frank and Pearl.



Marion and Roland were on Wendy's trip to Italy with us in 2015. We had a lot of fun getting reacquainted with them on this cruise. And what's truly amazing is that Marion and Roland were very good friends with my parents many years ago. We only found this out in November when I was tagged in a picture of my father on Facebook. What a small world.



Life On Board The Destiny



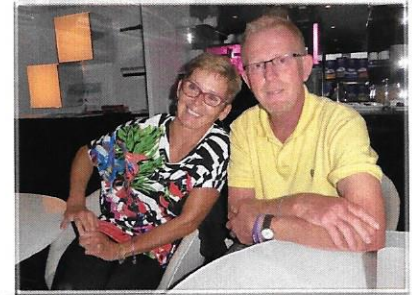
Emerald Waterways treated us to a **glass blowing demonstration** from a local artist, Dieter Schrade. He showed us the various techniques he uses to make jewelry, vases and ornaments. His specialty is crystal singing instruments, specifically triangular shaped prisms that when tapped will resonate beautiful tones for several minutes.

I was one of two lucky audience members to receive an ornament that Mr. Schrade made during his demonstration. A great keepsake to take home.

Another treat from Emerald Waterways was an **eclectic violin concert** by Vladimir Bodunov. His performance was high energy, serene and full of great sounds. This was the first time for many of us hearing such an instrument. We purchased two of his CDs so that we could enjoy his music back home. Photo courtesy of Arlene and Rod D'Eon.



On this trip we met up with old friends and met new ones. In the left picture are Ken, Bev and Cathy. On the right are Elaine and David.



The Captain of the Destiny hosted a welcome aboard gala dinner. Wendy and a few of her guests joined the Captain and his second in charge at the main table. It was a great experience for them to meet Captain Jasper, and equally nice for the Captain to meet a few Canadian Maritimers.



Bamberg

Located on the River Regnitz, Bamberg is a medieval city dating back to 1007. Because of its multi-architectural styles ranging from 12th century Romanesque to 18th century Rococo, the Old City was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The Cathedral of St. Peter and St. George is situated high up in the Old City. The present structure was built in 1237 to replace the original one destroyed by fire in 1185. Located in the Cathedral next to the main altar is an equestrian statue called the Bamberg Rider, erected in 1225 to depict St. Stephen of Hungary. Most notable in the cathedral is the tomb of the canonized Imperial couple, King Henry II and Empress Kunigunde.



What is Bamberg Famous For?

Bamberg is known as “**little Venice**” due to its many canals running between the Regnitz, Rhine, Main and Danube rivers. People also compare Bamberg to Rome because of its architecture and its strong religious beliefs.

Many of the houses along the canals belonged to former fishermen. They are still very scenic and picturesque.



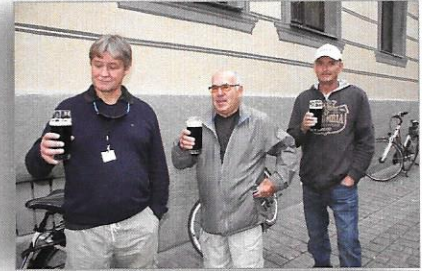
This beautiful building is the Old City Hall. It was built on a bridge because, as legend has it, the Bishop would not allow the citizens to have land for political purposes. The Baroque elements and wonderful frescoes were added in the 1700's.



Bob and Doreen Flemming enjoyed their walk around the Old City of Bamberg.

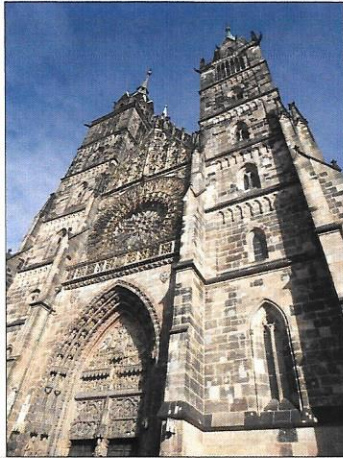
Lots of Beer!

Bamberg has 10 independent breweries that produce 30 types of ale. The specialty beer of Bamberg is Rauchbier, which means “smoke beer”. Our guide suggested we try it, so the guys did. The recipe for this very dark beer is 500 years old and is made using smoked malt. The most popular place to purchase smoke beer is through a little window inside Brauerei-Ausschank, a local pub established in 1405.

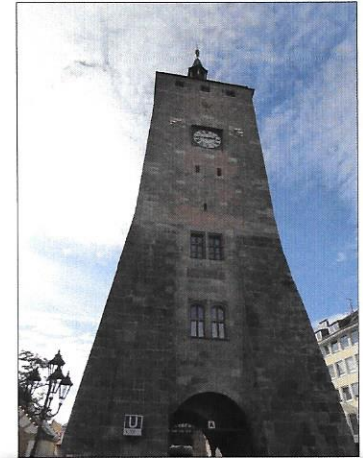


Nuremberg

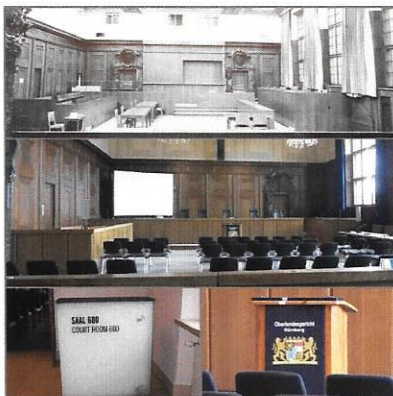
Our disembarkation stop was the beautiful city of Nuremberg. Our group was transferred to the Grand Hotel to enjoy one final day and night in Germany before flying back to Canada the following morning.



We spent several hours roaming through the old city centre admiring the churches, waterways and markets. It was busy with people shopping, eating and enjoying the fall outdoors. We found a nice Irish pub and ate lunch outdoors in the sunshine.



The Nuremberg War Trials



Germany's war history was not prominent in our travels throughout the country, other than what local guides spoke about on our tours. Jim and I visited Courtroom 600 in the Palace of Justice to learn about the trials of 21 major war criminals charged with crimes against peace and humanity. Emerging from the trials was the formation of modern international criminal law. The resulting Nuremberg Principles then became the basis of the International Criminal Court in Hague.

It's Time To Go Home

All too soon our journey was over. It was an amazing trip with great people. Emerald Waterways was a great company to cruise with and we highly recommend them. Many thanks to Wendy for putting together a great package that highlighted both Amsterdam and cities along the Rhine and Main rivers.

Below are a few more images of the fabulous time we had. We look forward to many more adventures.

Life is short and it's up to each and every one of us to make the best of it. Don't waste it.

Do what makes you happy. Until the next time, Auf Wiedersehen.



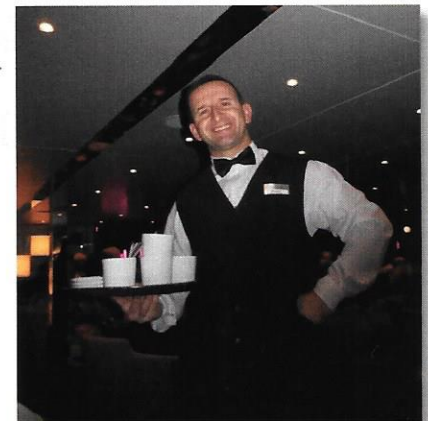
Bob, Jim, Ken, Bob and Frank enjoying tea while cruising through the beautiful River Gorge.



Jim and Anne Greeno



Kathy, Wendy and Elaine enjoying the top deck as we go through the Gorge.



Slobodan is the most popular waiter onboard the Destiny. Lots of fun, laughs and dancing when he was around.

It's Time To Go Home



Pearl and Frank in Rudesheim



Arlene and Jim enjoyed a special Rudesheimer kaffee



Marion and Alice enjoyed seeing the castles and estates along the Gorge.



Shirley and Bob having a round of mini putt.



Lovely ladies, Rose and Myrtle



Kim and Andrew enjoying the upper deck.