

Dear Reader,

March 28, 2007

With this e-mail you will certainly **gain knowledge** to **impress your clients, colleagues and friends.**

Here are interesting facts and news you may, or may not know:

The **world's oldest vine** was pruned as part of a traditional event in **Maribor** on Friday, as the city vinedresser Tone Zafosnik dealt the expert cut which will ensure this **400-year-old Guinness World Record-holding lady** gives a plentiful crop.

The Old Vine is a **protected item of natural heritage** and a symbol of Maribor, as well as all the wine-growing regions of Slovenia. Pruning controls its growth, fruitfulness, quality and stability.

Mayor of Maribor Franc Kangler, symbolically handed over grafts to representatives of various municipalities. A few grafts of the Slovenian vine will also find their homes in Germany, Switzerland, France and Montenegro.

The venerable age of the vine was scientifically proven in 1972. **Its grapes usually produce about 25 litres of wine every year. It is put in custom-made bottles and used by the Maribor City Council for special occasions.**

This year's 28th pruning session was attended by numerous locals and tourists, and accompanied by a **rich cultural programme.**



> **Maribor City Vinedresser Prunes World's Oldest Vine**

Ryanair is introducing **new service to Croatia**, in addition to recently established **London-Pula** flights, scheduled 3 times a week. Starting on February 8, low-budget flights from **Dublin to Pula** will be introduced. It is expected that **Zadar** will become soon afterwards one of the airline's destinations as well, with flights from London and Dublin.



> **Ryanair Flights to Pula and Zadar, Croatia**

The **European Union is turning 50** - a reason for real celebration. For the signing of the Treaties of Rome in 1957 was the start of an unprecedented success story. As President of the European Council, Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel has invited all the **Heads of State and Government of the other 26 EU Member States**, the President of the European Parliament Hans-Gert Pöttering and the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso to **Berlin** for the occasion.

Last Saturday, they arrived in Berlin, a city that symbolizes like no other the healing of the division of the European continent. As the Chancellor emphasized in her weekly video message, "we have succeeded in overcoming the division of the Cold War and we have **succeeded in bringing together almost the whole of Europe** in the European Union."



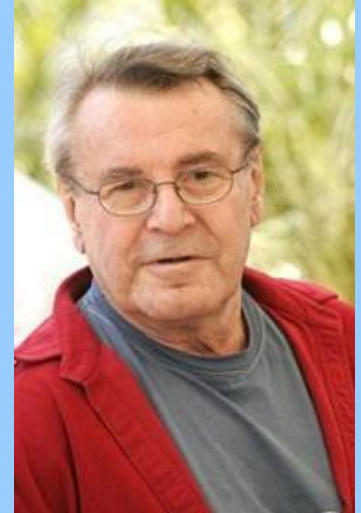
> **50 Years Treaties of Rome - celebrations in Germany**

> **Director Forman receives award for spreading CzechRep's fame**

Czech-born director **Milos̆ Forman received Gratias Agit** award for promoting the good name of the Czech Republic abroad from Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg on Tuesday. Schwarzenberg also congratulated Forman on his recent **75th birthday**.

The Czech Foreign Minister has annually awarded the prize in the form of a crystal globe since 1997. Its winners include former U.S. secretary of state Czech-born **Madeleine Albright**, cross-skiing Olympic winner Kateřina Neumannová, businessman Tomáš Baťa Jr, People in Need foundation and the Confederation of Political Prisoners.

Forman has lived in the United States since 1967. In 1975 he became a U.S. citizen. The second film he shot in the USA, **One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest** (1975), won five Oscars, including for direction. Another of his films, **Amadeus won eight Oscars**, including for direction, in 1984. Another film that Forman made in the USA, **Ragtime** (1981), highlighting the topic of racial hatred and desire for human dignity, received eight Oscar nominations. **The People versus Larry Flynt** (1996) was also nominated for Oscar. It won the Golden Globe award and the Golden Bear at the Berlinale international film festival. A couple of years later, Forman was awarded in Berlin again, this time for **Man on the Moon** (1999), a film biography of American comedian Andy Kaufman. Forman has also received **several awards for his life achievement**, both in the Czech Republic and in the USA.



> **Austria Welcomes a Record Number of Tourists**

Although Austria has always been hugely popular amongst tourists, 2006 turned out to be a record year for numbers of visitors. Up 5.9% on 2005, 802,000 British people went to the central-European country last year. Similarly, visits from Ireland were up 30% at 330,000. In total, Austria welcomed **30 million tourists from all over the globe** during the last year.

Austria is globally renowned for its **ski resorts and magnificent Alpine landscape**. Conditions for skiing last year were much better than in neighbouring Switzerland or Germany. Therefore, ski enthusiasts chose Austria as their **number one Alpine destination**.

Austria also became more accessible last year as **airline companies opened new routes**, not only to Vienna, but also to **Klagenfurt and Salzburg**. These companies have helped increase the number of visits to areas previously accessible for British people only through Vienna.



> **Budapest: the
Paris of Central
Europe**

People who are fond of **architecture, cultural heritage, or occasional visits to impressive museums** will fall in love with the Hungarian capital, Budapest. It is one of the **treasures of Central Europe**.

The former towns of Buda, Óbuda and Pest were united into one city in 1873 to create Budapest. The history of all three towns was already very extensive, **going back as far as the 3rd century B.C.** when the Celts settled here. Nowadays, Buda and Óbuda (generally referred to as Buda) are perceived as the historical parts of the city with many sites of interest. In opposition to the cultural heritage of Buda stands the commercially expanding Pest.

The **Castle Hill** is a majestic aspect of the city and the view over Budapest from here is simply marvellous. Apart from the castle itself, there are several other historical monuments to see. The **Matthias Church** is well worth visiting and an art enthusiast should not miss the opportunity to explore the Hungarian National Gallery and the Historical Museum of Budapest, both located in the Castle District. Anyone visiting Budapest should place at the top of their list of must-see spots the **local spas**, one of the charming attractions of the city. The **Danube River** which flows through the city is another great aspect that complements a visit there. The **Chain Bridge**, the first permanent bridge over the river has become the symbol of Budapest.

Budapest is also famous for its **Symphonic Orchestra** and, more generally, the **high quality of its theatre and opera facilities**. Simply walking through Budapest's old charming streets, enjoying the **cuisine and exciting nightlife**, or strolling through vast boulevards is an unforgettable experience.



I am looking forward to hearing from you with feedback or group requests in the near future.

Kind regards,

Birgit Kraus

