

January 22, 2007

Dear Reader,

With this newsletter you will certainly **gain knowledge** to **impress your clients, colleagues and friends**. Here are interesting facts and news you may, or may not know:

In its January issue, the **National Geographic magazine** published an article on archaeological sites in the **Ljubljanica River**. This is the first feature in the magazine to focus solely on an issue related to Slovenia. National Geographic has been published since 1888 and is read by more than 40 million readers.

"The Ljubljanica is full of exciting remnants of the past," says Carol Kaufmann in the article published in both the US and Slovenian editions. In a 20-kilometre stretch of the river, **thousands of archeological artifacts lie hidden, including Celtic coins, Roman luxuries and medieval swords**. However, it may never be precisely explained why the Ljubljanica holds so many treasures, making it one of the "richest" rivers in Europe, as too many pieces of the intricate puzzle have already disappeared. According to the **archaeologist Andrej Gaspari**, who has dedicated his life to researching the Ljubljanica treasures, divers constitute one of the main problems. Even though the National Assembly made removing artifacts from the Ljubljanica illegal in 2003, most of the **10,000 objects found so far** have already been removed. Some divers sell their loot to museums; others to the highest bidder. Some have kept their treasures private. Many artifacts have left the country, and are now untraceable. Although National Geographic published photos of Slovenia in 1908, the article is also a **great success for photographer Arne Hodalič**, who contributed the photographs portraying Ljubljana, enshrouded in mist and secrets, and also some key finds, thus becoming the first Slovene to take all the photographs for an article in the magazine. The editorial board of the Slovenian edition said that this was an excellent promotion of Slovenia and its archaeology.

> **Slovenia:
National
Geographic
on the
Mysterious
Ljubljanica
River**



> **Rubik's Cube
– a Hungarian
Invention**

Every invention has an official birth date. For the Cube this date is **1974** when the first working prototype came into being and a patent application was drafted. The place was **Budapest, the capital of Hungary**. The inventor's name is now a household word. At the time, Erno Rubik was a **lecturer in the Department of Interior Design at the Academy of Applied Arts and Crafts** in Budapest. In the course of his teaching, Erno Rubik preferred to communicate his ideas by the use of actual models, made from paper, cardboard, wood or plastic, challenging his students to experiment by manipulating clearly constructed and easily interpreted forms. Erno had applied for a Hungarian patent for the Magic Cube in 1975, the first test batches were not produced until late 1977. The compulsive interest of friends and students in the Cube caught its creator completely by surprise and it was months before any thought was given to the possibility of producing it on an industrial scale.

The first Rubik's Cubes were exported from Hungary in May 1980.

Erno Rubik has not changed much over the years. Working closely with the toy producing company Seven Towns, he is still deeply engaged in creating new games and puzzles, and remains one of the principal beneficiaries of what proved to be a spectacularly successful invention.



> **Germany:
Eastern
Promise**

Early January saw the laying of the foundation stone of the **first mosque in east Berlin**. The mosque, in the district of Pankow-Heinersdorf, will cater to the city's 200-strong Ahmadiyya Muslim community, which already boasts 17 mosques and 30,000 members in Germany. Planning permission for the building, which will include a 12-metre-high minaret, was granted just before Christmas. It is expected to be finished by 2008.

The mosque has been controversial. When it was first proposed in early 2006, some locals formed an organization to campaign against it, claiming the development would cause traffic problems, erode property values and threaten democracy. Still, Berlin's authorities have defended the mosque, arguing that **freedom of religion** is guaranteed under Germany's constitution. Germany's intelligence services classify the Ahmadiyya Muslims as **peaceful**.



> Vienna flying high for the US Market

There will be significantly **more air travel options from the USA to Vienna** from 2007. Passengers can take advantage of some 500 new flights, including **non-stop services from Atlanta and Chicago**, and a greater number of connections from **New York**.

There were 756 flights from the USA to Vienna in 2005. This figure will have virtually doubled 2007, with almost **1,500 aircraft set to take off from US airports destined for the Austrian capital**. Delta Air Lines will be operating flights **between Atlanta and Vienna five times a week** from 2007, and in 2008 the carrier plans to step this up to a return trip every day. **Austrian Airlines** is also to offer more services from the States to Vienna. In May 2007 it will be launching a non-stop Vienna-Chicago-Vienna connection four times a week, increasing to a daily service from June. Traveling from New York will also be even easier in future. From April the New York-Vienna route is to be flown ten times a week, rising to 13 times in the peak season.

Vienna is one of the major players on the international conference circuit. And the improved flight connections will boost the appeal of the destination for US American corporations and organizations. In 2005 the two leading organizations that compile international statistics for conference events - the **ICCA** (International Congress and Convention Association) and the **UIA** (Union of International Associations) - both **ranked Vienna among the frontrunners**. The **ICCA figures put Vienna in first place**, ahead of Singapore, Barcelona, Berlin and Hong Kong. According to the UIA it was second only to Paris, and was followed by Brussels, Singapore and Barcelona.

In 2005 **Vienna posted 8.8 million overnight stays**, of which 604,000 were attributable to guests from the USA. The latest statistics indicate that the overall overnight figure will top the nine million mark in 2006, with a significant contribution also being made by increasing incoming tourism from the American market.



> Czech Republic: new tourist information centre

A new tourist information centre opens on the Old Town Square

December 4, 2006, saw the opening of a tourist information centre on the Old Town Square which will now be operated by Czech Tourism. Tourists will be able to pick up information on the Czech Republic and individual provinces of the country will be promoted from time to time.



> Austrian Airlines has appointed World Aviation Systems as General Sales Agent for passenger sales in Australia, effective 1 April 2007.

Dedicated sales and reservations team will be guided by Austrian's own country manager, Morten Skaar, who has been employed by the company for the last two years.

Austrian Airlines flies directly to Vienna, the gateway of Continental Europe, and to over 90 destinations beyond. Its hub, Vienna International Airport, offers smooth, efficient handling of incoming and outgoing aircraft and the fast, comfortable transfer of passengers. In fact, the average transfer time is just 25 minutes – unique in Europe.

At present, Austrian Airlines flies daily from Sydney to Vienna, via Kuala Lumpur except Tuesday, and from Melbourne to Vienna, via Singapore, every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Renowned for **outstanding, multi award winning service**, Austrian offers the very **best in comfort, cuisine and entertainment**.

From 25 March 2007, **Austrian Airlines** will discontinue direct flights to and from Australia and **will start code sharing on Thai's daily non-stop services between Australia and Bangkok**. Austrian flights **between Bangkok and Vienna will be operated by the Boeing 777**, the largest and most advanced twin-engine aircraft. The spacious interior of the Boeing 777 makes it an ideal choice for long-haul travel. 49 Business Class lie-flat sleeper seats as well as 260 Economy Class seats will be available on this service.

As a **member of Star Alliance**, the airline network for earth, the Austrian Airlines Group offers you the most convenient connections throughout the world to make your journey both rewarding and relaxing.



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

Kind regards,

Birgit Kraus

