

Garmisch-Partenkirchen

Bavarian Tradition at the Foot of Germany's Highest Mountain

> Johannes Bardong

This first-class ski and hiking area at the foot of the Zugspitze is one of Germany's most beloved tourist attractions. In the town in which Richard Strauß chose to reside, Bavarian traditions and customs are treasured. The colourful facades of the houses, a special kind of fresco painting only found in this area and called Lüftlmalerei, reveal faithfulness to traditions evident in 'Gamsbart', 'Lederhose', 'Dirndel', 'Hausmusik' and 'Schuhplattler', all detailed below.

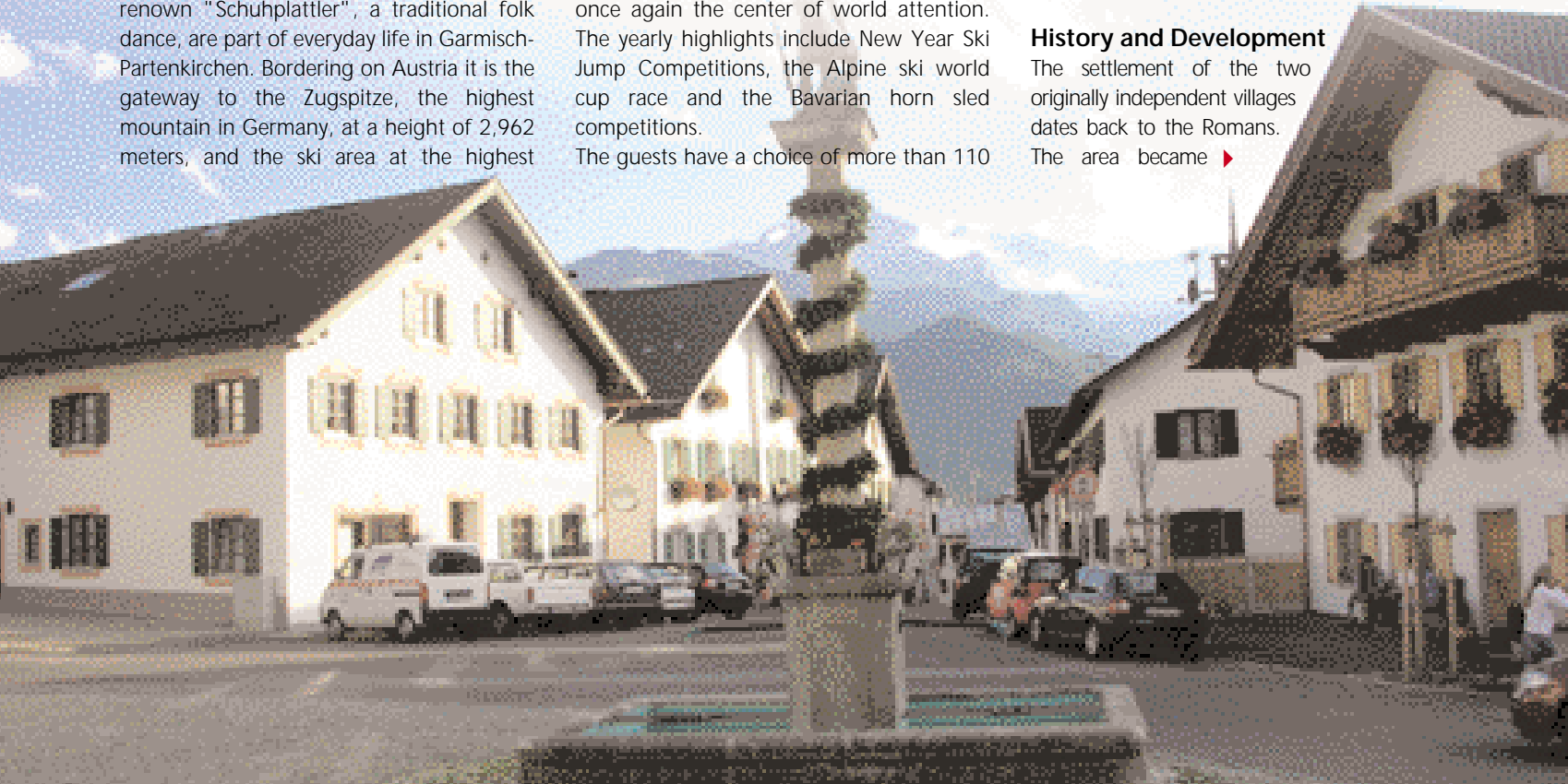
Gamsbart, literally a chamois beard worn as a decoration on men's hats in the Alps, Lederhosen (short pants made of leather) and Dirndel dresses are common attire of the residents, and Hausmusik (gatherings in private homes for amateur musicians), the alphorn, and the world-renown "Schuhplattler", a traditional folk dance, are part of everyday life in Garmisch-Partenkirchen. Bordering on Austria it is the gateway to the Zugspitze, the highest mountain in Germany, at a height of 2,962 meters, and the ski area at the highest

altitude. The Winter Olympic Games in the 30s made this town a hot spot for skiing. Skiing and sports events such as the Alpine Ski World Cup in 1978 resulted in a cutting edge infra structure. It has now been determined that Garmisch will be the site of the Alpine Ski World Cup in 2011 and thus once again the center of world attention. The yearly highlights include New Year Ski Jump Competitions, the Alpine ski world cup race and the Bavarian horn sled competitions. The guests have a choice of more than 110

kilometers of cross-country tracks, 65 kilometers of ski slopes for down-hill skiing, 34 arial cable cars and lifts, 8.5 kilometers of toboggan runs, a huge snowboarding area and ski schools galore. From November through May you can count on snow and the summer is also worth experiencing.

History and Development

The settlement of the two originally independent villages dates back to the Romans. The area became ►



A fountain

نافورة



The priest of the local church on his way to a wedding قس المنطقة في طريقه إلى زفاف



Traditions are well preserved - "Schuhplattler" is a famous folk dance in Bavaria التراث الشعبي محافظ عليه جيدا كما يبدو من هذه الرقصة البافارية المشهورة

prosperous in the Middle Ages due to the commercial route between Augsburg and Venice. The train tracks laid in 1889 were the starting gun for tourists. At that time, guest rooms, hotels, and spas were erected.

Is this Garmisch or Partenkirchen? The slight differences are often pointed out to tourists, even though the villages formally became one 72 years ago. The locals still find the difference important – they add to the charm.

Traditional Garb and Festivities

In addition to the sports events in the winter, there are numerous events and festivities throughout the year. The cultural highlights are the Richard Strauß Festival in June and the Hometown Celebrations in July and August. Richard Strauß (1864 – 1949) was a famous Romanticism composer who chose to live in Garmisch-Partenkirchen.

Not only during the weeks of festivals do the locals take part in folk dancing and playing of the Alphorn. These are identifying characteristics of the residents all year

round. The correct traditional costume is important. Women wear a dirndl dress with a red apron; men wear lederhosen, a hat sporting a feather, and often a Gamsbart. The traditional clothing distinguishes the majority of the residents from the tourists. At festivals, all residents without exception wear traditional clothes and for the insiders, the accessories reveal details about which family one belongs to.

One of the newest trends is for couples from all over Germany to come here to get married. Not only do the newly-married couples enjoy rides in horse-drawn coaches in the summer and horse-drawn sleighs in the winter – the tourists adore these activities as well.

Lüftlmalerei

A very special attraction is the murals and frescos to be found here. The colourful folkloristic portrayals on the walls of the houses tell tales of the lives of farmers reveal the trade of the owner of the house and portray patron saints and other religious

motifs. The Biblical portrayals generally date back to the 18th century.

The common three-dimensional drawings are painted directly onto the freshly applied stucco and cannot be altered after application. In the Schmiedstrasse you will find extraordinary scenes from the Old Testament. On the outer walls of the restaurant Gasthaus Frauendorfer in the Ludwigstrasse a traditional peasant wedding can be seen.

Neuschwanstein Castle

Neuschwanstein is THE destination for tourists from abroad. By car it is 60 kilometers to the castle built by Ludwig II (1845 – 1886), known as the Fairytale Prince. The castle is Romanticism personified and towers over Lake Förggen. It is visited yearly by 1.3 million tourists, many from Japan.

Experiencing the Alps

The spectacular beauty and the unique panorama of the landscape can best be appreciated on foot. Hikers and climbers ▶



Panoramic view

منظر بانورامي



The Zugspitze with almost 3,000 meters is the highest mountain in Germany

زوغسبيتز أعلى جبل في ألمانيا

can expect to come upon gorgeous valleys, clean lakes and nature reserves. Ariel cable cars make the ascent easier.

Concerning the lack of snow in many German ski regions, Garmisch-Partenkirchen is one area where snow is relatively certain. In addition to snow sports, more and more health and hiking specials are being offered. In addition to the many hiking trips, climbing at the Eibsee-Zugspitze at a breathtaking height is the epitome for climbers. Fans of flying, will find paragliding and tandem gliding above the mountain peaks. The adventure of rafting or kajaking on the Loisach River is also on offer.

Prices and Accommodation

The tourist in Garmisch-Partenkirchen or the holiday-maker with his own private weekend home is certainly not the budget traveller. Prices are relatively high – especially if you are staying in the Hotel Drei Mohren or Atlas Post Hotel where King Ludwig II spent some time and which are considered the best Garmisch-Partenkirchen has to offer. A more rustic but not necessarily cheaper atmosphere is to be found in the Gasthof Frauenhofer, complete with Bavarian evenings with folk dances, yodelling, and singing.

Those who are looking for reasonably-priced



The main road in the picturesque village

الشارع الرئيسي

accommodation will find what they want in privately rented rooms, also offering contact with the locals. Most reasonable and centrally located with all the amenities is the Naturfreundehaus, in particular for families. It offers rooms with many beds, particularly for ski and hiking groups. At the same time they have single rooms, but these must be booked in advance.

Getting There

It is best to fly to either Munich or Innsbruck. Innsbruck is only 60 kilometers away and Munich 120. Trains travel from both cities to Garmisch-Partenkirchen hourly; travel by car is also convenient. A visit to the Bavarian capital or across the border to the Gothic town of Innsbruck is very rewarding. ■