

SALZBURG effortlessly enters anyone's Top Ten European destinations. Nourished by the tiny Salzach River and dominated by the old Castle: small wonder Salzburg inspired Mozart (250th Birth Anniversary, 2006) and formed an epic backdrop to The Sound of Music (40th anniversary, 2005), one of the most successful films of all time. Wander through the World Heritage status Old Town: see where Mozart was born on shop-filled **Getreidegasse** or for a few of your favourite things, browse the market that has crowded **Domplatz** since 1679; or climb every mountain on an inner city Sound of Music tour ([www.salzburginfo.at/soundofaustria](http://www.salzburginfo.at/soundofaustria)). Check out a hi-brow concert at one of the many top music venues like the **Festival Halls**, **Mozarteum** or **Mirabell Palace** - not least during the world-famous Salzburg Festival every July - August. Or get up to speed at the newly-opened **Museum of Modern Art** ([www.museumdermoderne.at](http://www.museumdermoderne.at)) perched up on Mönchsberg hill and served by its very own lift from the city centre below. You'll soon be humming "Sixteen Going On Seventeen" as you saunter the small yet perfectly formed gay scene, most of which is just over on the East bank; but start off at **HOSI** (Müllner Hauptstrasse 11; Tel: 0043 (0) 662 435927; [www.hosi.or.at](http://www.hosi.or.at)) on the West bank to build up queer spirit at this cosy and welcoming café-bar cum LGB community hub, mainly open evenings at weekends. Since 2002, the age of consent in Austria has been 14 for all persuasions, although the country has historically not had the greatest queer rights record, being one of the last in Europe to repeal a total ban on homosexuality in 1971. There is currently no legal recognition of same-sex partnerships and Austria joins Slovakia in trying to resist recognising any such unions made in fellow EU states. For yet more local gay flavour, hop across river to **Kupferpfandl** (Paracelsusstraße 14; Tel: 0043 (0) 662 875760), a pub that attracts a loyal, older crowd. For the young style set, however, start out at **Daimlers** (Giselakai 17; Tel: 0043 (0)

662 873967), overlooking the river, with its cosy bar-bistro below and trendy sofa lounge upper - albeit slightly pricy, not to say gay-straight mixed. Then whiz along a few doors to **Zwei Stein** (Giselakai 9; Tel: 0043 (0) 662 877179; [www.zweistein.at](http://www.zweistein.at)), probably the most busy gay bar in Salzburg, full of guys and dolls of all ages, especially young'ns. But the cutest crowd probably musters in my favourite: **Diva** (Priesterhausgasse 22; Tel: 0043 (0) 664 4315317; [www.divabar.at](http://www.divabar.at)), mere twists and turns away. This smallish L-shaped joint attracts friendly groups of welcoming young queers, but all intermingling, nothing of the clique - flirty without being overly cruisy! Those feeling frisky might overflow (if not too late) into the WC under the bridge over the road; or drop by the basement loos near the University Church in Philharmonikergasse over the river. If late, they might stroll up and around the **Rosenhugel Hill**, just north of the Mirabell Gardens, a short walk from Diva. Those keen to gig might head onto straight but gay-friendly **Republic** at the foot of the Mönchsberg hill back on the West bank.

Apart from the shops along Getreidegasse and the town markets, check out two cruisy lairs near the main station: **SEZ** (Elisabethstraße 8a; Tel: 0043 (0) 662 881169), Salzburg's largest erotic shop, with a whopping gay section of toys, mags and vids; and **Cruisingline** (Mertensstraße 13; no phone; [www.cruisingline.at](http://www.cruisingline.at)), the video booth complex nearby.

One of the best eateries in town is undoubtedly **Auerhahn** (Bahnhofstrasse 15; Tel: 0043 (0) 662 451052), a five minute walk north of the main station. Owned and staffed by three generations of the hospitable Pongratz family, it has the ambience of a traditional Austrian country house, complete with roaring fire and garden views. Or for something unusual, further out of town, try **Ikarus** (Hangar7, Wilhelm-Spazier Strasse 7a; Tel: 0043 (0) 662 219777; [www.hangar-7.com](http://www.hangar-7.com)) - an amazing restaurant in one of Europe's great modern buildings, overlooking the Red Bull drink chief's private collection of fighter jets, and - beyond - out onto Salzburg Airport's runway. Roaring!

**Blaue Gans (Blue Goose) Hotel** (Getreidegasse 41-43; Tel: 0043 (0) 662 842491; [www.blauegans.at](http://www.blauegans.at)) is only a few yards from the Festival Theatres and mere doors down from Mozart's Birthplace. Built in the 14th century, it was recently converted - splendidly blending the old and the new - into an "art hotel" bulging with modern sculptures and paintings, all for sale. Ella Fitzgerald has sung in the hotel's ancient basement bar. Fab restaurant too!

## THE THRILLS ARE ALIVE: **GAY SALZBURG**

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