

By Claudia Capos
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

VADUZ, Liechtenstein — We're late. A massive traffic snarl and a detour over the St. Anton pass in the Tyrolean Alps have added hours to our drive from Salzburg, Austria, to Vaduz, Liechtenstein. Our three-day stay in this landlocked alpine principality, snuggled between Austria and Switzerland, will give us barely enough time to sample Liechtenstein's noble spirit, and spirits, so every minute counts.

It is 6 p.m. when we roar up a hillside to Triesen, high above Vaduz, and stop at a weathered wooden farmhouse. We ask an affable-looking farmer sipping wine at a rickety table whether this is Telser Distillery. He speaks no English, but nods.

Proprietor Marcel Telser suddenly appears, introduces his father, Sebastian, and then invites us into a cloistered stable with 500-year-old wood beams that once housed the family's goats and cows. It is now the distillery showroom for Telser, the oldest producer of fine spirits in Liechtenstein and a world-renown maker of single malt whisky.

"My great-great-uncle started the business in 1880 and handed it down to my grandfather and my father," explains Telser, the fourth-generation owner. "We've traditionally specialized in handmade fruit spirits made from apples, prunes, pears and cherries, because for years it was illegal in Liechtenstein to distill cereals."

Telser spirit production never ceased during the two World Wars but sputtered in the 1990s when fruit-spirit sales declined and protective trade barriers fell. To save the family's distillery, Telser traveled to Scotland to learn about making Scotch whisky.

"I wanted to produce a mellow, fruity, rich, mild whisky," he says. "I felt it should have a link to our region, so I have used the barrels from local Pinot Noir winemakers for aging rather than traditional bourbon or sherry casks." Whisky production began in earnest in 2006, and Telser developed a unique bottle-in-a-pine-wood-box container, often described as an "oversized giraffe in a coffin," to differentiate his award-winning, triple-distilled, single malt whisky.

Upstairs we see the two wood-fired copper-and-stainless-steel stills where Telser uses crystal spring water from the mountains to produce his barley and rye whisky, gin and various fruit spirits and digestives. In the showroom, we do a tasting of three spirits, which offer multidimensional flavors,



CLAUDIA CAPOS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Vaduz castle, a 700-year-old fortress, has been owned by the princes of Liechtenstein since 1712 and has served as the princely family's residence since 1938.

ol and Phil Wells, from Sydney, who say curiosity attracted them to tiny Liechtenstein, which covers only 62 square miles. "This is the sixth-smallest country in the world, and we wanted to add it to our list," they explain.

The following day, we explore Vaduz, which showcases the principality's major artistic and historical attractions. Strolling down broad Peter-Kaiser-Platz past ornate parliamentary buildings and imposing banks we arrive at the Postage Stamp Museum. There we buy gold tokens that admit us to the adjacent Treasure Chamber of the Principality of Liechtenstein, the only museum of its kind in the Alps. Passing through two James Bondesque sliding security doors, we emerge into a modern-day Aladdin's cave brimming with glittering jewels and priceless artifacts. We admire the prince's crown, ancient weapons and a collection of Faberge eggs.

We continue along the Städtle pedestrian walkway to the "black cube" and "white cube" — local monikers for the dark-stone Kunstmuseum and gleaming-white Hilti Art Foundation. Our self-guided tour of the museums reveals an impressive collection of modern and contemporary paintings, sculpture and art objects. Nearby, outdoor cafes tantalize us with lunchtime aromas. At the tourist center's gift shop, we buy cigar schnapps made at Weinbau Hoop in Eschen.

That afternoon, we meander through the Prince of Liechtenstein's 10-acre Herawingert vineyard and visit his Hofkellerei for a winetasting. Prince Johann Adam I established Liechtenstein's grape-growing tradition 300 years ago when he took possession of both the County of Vaduz and the vineyard in 1712. Heavy iron-clad doors lead to a vaulted cellar where a wine steward serves us two Vaduzer Pinot Noirs and an Austrian Riesling.

Our final toast to Liechtenstein is at Gasthoff Au. In the biergarten, we order Liechtensteiner Brauhaus dark malt beers with dinner. Glasses clink, church bells chime, and farm tractors rumble past as sunset casts a golden glow on this little piece of paradise.

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Savoring the noble spirit, and spirits, of Liechtenstein

ranging from fruity to caramel to malty.

Afterward, Telser and his wife, Hassia, suggest other points of interest that impart the spirit of Liechtenstein. "This is paradise," says Hassia, gesturing toward the lofty peaks and neighboring vineyards.

That evening, we dine by candlelight on the terrace at the Hotel-Restaurant Schatzmann, one of four Michelin-starred restaurants in Liechtenstein. Between bites of veal in lemon sauce and pasta, we hear the faint clanging of cow bells beyond the hedge.

Chirping birds and the scent of hay awaken us the next morning. Over a breakfast of farm-fresh eggs, cheese and meat, we hear canon shots signaling the observance of Fronleichnam, or Corpus Cristi. We plan to drive up to Malbun, a scenic mountain ski village, but our trip is halted mid-way by a religious procession streaming from a small church. Village women and girls in long skirts and men and boys in lederhosen gather under a tent for a

WHERE TO STAY:

Hotel-Restaurant Schatzmann
Landstrasse 80, 9495 Triesen;
011-423-399-12-12
www.hotel.schatzmann.li
Doubles from \$174, including breakfast; dinners from \$65

Park-Hotel Sonnenhof

Mareestrasse 29, 4990 Vaduz;
011-423-239-02-02
www.sonnenhof.li
Doubles from \$435, including breakfast; dinners from \$70

WHERE TO EAT:

Gasthof Au
Austrasse 2, 9490 Vaduz;
011-423-232-11-17
www.gasthof-au.li; dinners from \$25

L'Osteria Adler

Landstrasse 289, 9495 Triesen;
011-423-392-66-00
osteriaadler.com; dinners from \$45

More information: www.tourismus.li

feast of bratwurst, potato salad and draft beer while an oom-pah-pah band plays polka music.

Resuming our drive, we pause at a scenic overlook to admire the jewel-hued Rhine River and neighboring Switzerland far below. At Malbun, we buy round-trip tickets for the Malbun-Sareis ski chairlift, which whisks us above fragrant pines and lush valleys crisscrossed by ribbon-like roads to a 6,000-foot-high fairytale setting. On the Sareis Berg restaurant's outdoor deck we sip PrinzenBräu beer, a local microbrew made in nearby Balzers, while admiring majestic snow-custed peaks and Lilliputian chalets. After a short hike, we glide back down the mountain.

Our next stop is iconic Vaduz castle, which has been owned by the princes of Liechtenstein since 1712 and has served as the princely family's residence since 1938. We see no sign of Reigning Prince Hans-Adam II and Princess Marie as we circle the thick stone wall enclosing the medieval fortress. But we do meet Australians Car-



STEPHAN SILLER/TOURISMUS SALZBURG

The cemetery at St. Peter's Abbey in Salzburg.

the burial ground. The cemetery borders on the sheer cliff face of the Mönchsberg, with its series of catacombs built into the stone. As the bells began their noonday tolls, the sound bounced off the rock walls and the whole cemetery thrummed with a thrilling, clangorous din. Long after the bells ceased ringing, their echo seemed to vibrate the air as we walked back through the city to regretfully take our leave.

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The magical bells of Salzburg

By Karen Campbell
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

SALZBURG, Austria — Music-lovers routinely flock here for the city's acclaimed international festival, its multilayered connections to the Von Trapp family and "The Sound of Music," and its rich legacy of musical genius. Mozart was born here and spent his formative years in the city, and his birthplace houses a museum that is one of the most visited sites in Austria.

But during a first visit to the city, my most memorable musical experiences occurred outside the concert halls and museums, encountering the old city's extraordinary church bells. Quite serendipitously, on our first venture from the modern section of the city into Old Salzburg, we were crossing the footbridge across the Salzach river just as noon struck. Seemingly on cue, all the city's church bells (and there are a lot

of them!) began ringing, resonating through the sunlit air up and down the river. It was so entrancing, we stopped in our tracks for some minutes and simply reveled in the sounds, a magnificent, reverberant mix of pitches, timbres, and rhythms.

Salzburg is often referred to as the "Rome of the North" for its abundance of Catholic churches with grand domes and bell towers in the Austrian baroque style. In fact, many of the church bells toll every quarter hour, so hearing their peals as you walk around is really an integral part of being in Salzburg. The Salzburg Cathedral alone has seven bells, one of which is the second largest in Austria.

In addition, the tower of the Neue Residence, the governmental palace of Prince-Archbishop Wolf Dietrich von Raitenau, contains a carillon of 35 bells. Three times a day — at 7 a.m., 11 a.m., and 6 p.m. — the

carillon plays classical tunes. From around Easter to October, each mini-concert is followed by a rejoinder from atop the Mönchsberg, the towering mountain that frames Old Salzburg, as the Hohensalzburg Fortress's "Salzburg Bull" cuts loose. The 200-pipe organ dating to 1502 is said to be the world's largest mechanical musical instrument.

For our final day in the city, we ventured to St. Peter's Abbey. Founded in 696, it is the oldest monastery north of the Alps, and we arranged to be in the cemetery when noon struck so we could be right under the church's giant bells as they and the others in the town began to ring. The cemetery, with its beautifully tended gardens, gravestones, and monuments, is surrounded by three churches built in the early Middle Ages, and the soaring Romanesque apse of St. Peter thrusts into the landscape of

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