



Winter wander land  
Griechengasse, in Vienna's inner city, is the Greek quarter

冬夜蹣跚  
維也納內城區 Griechengasse 是  
小希臘區

# VIENNA: SECRETS OF THE WINTER CITY

## 維也納：冬日城市的奧秘

Christmas looks a little different this year. WILL HIDE explores the contemporary side of a Viennese winter

今年的聖誕節看來與別不同，就讓Will Hide帶領大家探索維也納冬日的現代風貌

PHOTOGRAPHY ULRICH SPERL

There are certain cities where a blanket of fog actually enhances the character of the place. So it is with Vienna in winter. In the Austrian capital, walk down a damp, cobbled street as the darkness of night starts to envelop, and you are the star of your own film noir, a modern-day *Third Man*.

I thought this as I passed the neat shopfront of Scheer's at number 4 Bräunerstrasse, where both German kaisers and Austro-Hungarian emperors had their boots made more than a century ago.

You can still get a pair of shoes made today by the seventh generation of the family: prices start at €5,000 (HK\$43,000). Onwards, I ambled behind the tall spire of St Stephen's Cathedral, adjusting my umbrella to stop the rain running down my trousers, then turned left down Brandstätte, towards Café Korb.

The Austrian capital is one imbued with tradition: how could the capital of a former empire not be? But at this time of year, delve a little deeper and there's an alternative side: more to see than picture-postcard Christmas markets, mugs of steaming mulled wine, formal white-jacketed waiters, women in *dirndls* (traditional dresses), baroque churches and grand boulevards.

That's true in Café Korb, owned by actress, performance artist and 'cosmopolitan' – both noun and adjective – Susanne Widl. Every second Saturday she hosts a gathering of local philosophers and

#### Street life

Vienna isn't all grand squares – it's home to boutique cafés that have hosted Freud, local philosophers and performance artists

#### 街頭巷尾

維也納並非只有宏偉的廣場，城裡有不少精緻的咖啡室，從佛洛伊德到本地哲學家以至表演藝人都曾在此作客

every second Wednesday psychoanalysts discuss current issues. Sigmund Freud used to frequent the café back in his day. The last time I was here, I brought my mother. I know, I know...

There are some very grand, imposing cafés in Vienna, but truthfully Café Korb isn't one of them, although that's certainly not to say it doesn't have bags of character: if *Mad Men* were ever to shoot an episode in Vienna, it would be here. I thaw out with an order of *melange*, the local take on strong but milky coffee, and a generous slice of *apfelstrudel*, which comes swimming in hot, deliciously yellow vanilla sauce. Perfect for a cold afternoon. And good to eat while I sit and think why you should visit Vienna over say, Berlin or Prague at this time of year. Because of Vienna's seamless blend of the traditional and the contemporary, bundled up in a relatively compact area. There is a lot to do but you don't have to go far.

Vienna is made up of districts and after my dessert I make my way to the trendy restaurants and boutiques of the 7th. 'Is this the Brooklyn of Austria?' I wonder to New York expat and fashion stylist Lucie Lamster-Thury, who moved for love 12 years ago and on the way became smitten with her adopted home, too. She now offers bespoke shopping tours, concentrating on local designers who fly under the radar.

'You could say that,' she replies, laughing. 'There's a concentration of designers here, some great quality and what I really like is they're super eco-conscious.'

'For example, there are two sisters who have a shop called Werkprunk. One makes leather products; the other, silver. And the shop is their atelier – you can see them at work there as well as buy.'

'And there's a cool store called Local. The designer works there but she also hosts others from central Europe. The stuff is avant garde but wearable. You could wear it in the office then go straight out in the evening.' She reels off other favourites but you'll have to join her tour to learn more. ☺

有些城市在迷霧瀰漫下會顯得特別有個性，冬季的維也納正是如此。置身於這個奧地利首都，當夜幕開始籠罩大地之時，走在濕滑的鵝卵石街道上，你儼然成為黑色電影中的主角，正上演一齣現代版的《黑獄亡魂》。

當我經過Bräunerstrasse街4號、門面整潔的Scheer's鞋店時，腦海裡確曾浮現這個畫面。超過一個世紀以前，德國及奧匈帝國的皇帝均曾在此店訂造長靴。

時至今日，你依然可以購買由鞋店第七代傳人精工製造的皮鞋，價錢由5,000歐元(43,000港元)起。經過鞋店後，我踱步到尖塔筆挺的聖斯德望主教座堂後面，把雨傘扶正，讓雨水不再沾濕褲子，然後左轉到Brandstätte街，朝著Café Korb咖啡室走去。

維也納到處洋溢傳統氣息；它曾貴為帝國首府，又怎可能不滿載傳統呢？然而，在冬冬季節到訪這個奧地利首都，只要深入探索的話，就會發現維也納在傳統以外的另一面。這裡除了有風景明信片中慣見的聖誕市集、熱騰騰的香料熱酒、身穿白色外套的侍應、穿著傳統dirndls連身裙的女人、巴洛克風格教堂及華麗大道之外，其實還有很多有趣的事物。

Café Korb咖啡室就是其一。這家咖啡室由身兼女演員及表演藝術家的「大都會時尚達人」Susanne Widl經營。每個月的第二個星期六，她都會舉辦本地哲學家聚會，而在每月第二個星期三，精神分析學家會在此聚首，討論時事議題。心理學家佛洛伊德當年也是這家咖啡室的常客。上次我到這裡的時候，還帶上媽媽同行，我知道這有點兒那個……

維也納有不少氣派非凡的華麗咖啡室，但說真的，Café Korb並不在其列，但這並不是說它沒有獨特的個性。如果美國電視劇集《Mad Men》要在維也納取景的話，那一定會選這家咖啡室。為了讓身體暖和一些，我點了一杯充滿本土風味、香濃多奶的melange鮮奶咖啡，還有一大塊apfelstrudel蘋果卷，附上熱燙美味的黃色雲呢拿醬。這個配搭實在是寒冬的完美下午茶點，而且很適合讓我好好坐下來，一邊吃一邊思索，為何要在這個時節來到維也納遊覽，☺