

# VIENNA'S HAUNTING 'THIRD MAN' THEME

From the Riesenrad to the Casanova Club, film buffs can trace the story of Graham Greene's powerful postwar thriller



A tour group enters a tunnel in the sewer system underneath the city, where the climax of "The Third Man" was filmed. INSET The film is generally shown twice a week at this theater.

By MICHAEL MEWSHAW

IN 1948, when Carol Reed and Graham Greene started work on "The Third Man," they had in mind a thriller infused with Greene's famous moral ambiguity and haunting sense of place. They wound up producing not just a cinematic landmark but also what many regard as a valuable documentary, a kind of time capsule, of post-World War II Vienna.

Although at first the Viennese objected to the depiction of their town as a rat-infested rubble heap divided into Russian, British, French and American zones and populated with murderous black marketeers, they have come to consider Vienna and the movie as synonymous. "The Third Man" is shown in schools as a historical text and a language lesson on the differences between American and British English. It continues to be screened here twice a week, and thousands of people a year, some on guided tours, some on their own, use Greene's scenario as a map for exploring prosperous contemporary Vienna and catching occasional glimpses of the war-torn city under the reconstructed veneer.

For those who have never seen the film or whose memories have faded, there is no better place to begin a visit than the Friday night or Sunday afternoon showing of "The Third Man" at Burg Kino (Operring 19). Kurt Schramek, who has owned the theater since 1980, claims, "Young Viennese want to see this film" and, indeed, on a recent weekend a random glance at the audience revealed that most viewers were born decades after Holly Martins arrived in Vienna to discover that his old school chum, Harry Lime, was dead. What's more, though the film is in English, without subtitles, German speakers predominated.

Because a pair of funerals bookend the plot, a trip to the Zentralfriedhof, or Central Cemetery (Simmeringer Hauptstrasse 234; Gate 2), is the next logical step. In a necropolis of such immensity — two and a half million tombs — Harry Lime's fictional resting place has no special prominence, not with Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, Johann Strauss (father and son) and various presidents and national leaders buried nearby. But film buffs zoom in on the spot beside a tomb marked "Elchinger, 1913" behind the vast domed cemetery church. As for the final frame of Harry Lime's girlfriend Anna passing Holly Martins without a backward glance, that was filmed opposite the garden center nearby. A colonnade of trees still lines the road, but the ground isn't littered with imported leaves as it was on celluloid.

Quite apart from its cinematic significance, the cemetery merits attention. Like Vienna after World War II, it's divided into sectors — for Catholics, other Christians and Jews. While most graves are meticulously tended, the old Jewish tombs, most of which predate the Nazi era, are overgrown with grass and, in a disconcerting number of cases, they have been desecrated. At points throughout the Zentralfriedhof, piles of splintered columns and ruined cenotaphs are identified as funerary monuments fragmented during air raids.

The Riesenrad, an enormous late 19th-century Ferris wheel in the Prater park, is another celebrated Viennese site closely associated with "The Third Man." In the movie, it looms out of a desolate wasteland, an ironic symbol of an innocent world that has been destroyed. Holly Martins arranges to meet Harry Lime, who made a fortune on black market penicillin, then faked his death, on the Riesenrad.

Afterward, he delivers his devastating summary of history. "In Italy for 30 years under the Borgias, they had warfare, terror, murder, bloodshed — and they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and the Renaissance. In Switzerland they had brotherly love, 500 years of democracy and peace.

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ABOVE Ferris wheel, where Holly Martins and Harry Lime (Joseph Cotten and Orson Welles) meet. BELOW Theater where Lime's girlfriend, Anna, works. RIGHT Anna, leaving cemetery, passes Martins.



And what did that produce? The cuckoo clock." Playing Harry as a wise-cracking nihilist, Orson Welles wrote this dialogue for himself, but he couldn't sound more like a cynical citizen of Greeneland. These days, although the Prater is

canopied by trees and frequented by bikers, joggers and in-line skaters, kids still don't ride the Riesenrad. They prefer the excitement of the roller coaster or the water chute. But middle-age folk, and many far older, climb aboard an enclosed cabin for a

10-minute whirl that offers striking views of the city. As I got off, the man who steered us toward the exit was watching a portable TV. For poetic justice, he should have been watching "The Third Man." In prosaic truth, "The Three Stooges" dubbed in German held his unwavering interest.

At first glance, nothing appears to remain of "The Third Man" in the Innere Stadt, or inner city. Like a studio sound stage that has been struck, the bullet-pocked facades, the burned-out shells of cars, the mountain-sized tips of brick dust and broken mortar, the buildings that bear on their sides the room by room blueprint of bombed-out adjoining buildings — all this has disappeared.

The landslide of rubble that Holly skis down in front of Maria am Gestade (St. Mary's on the Riverbank) has been replaced by a staircase. Many cobblestone streets have been paved. And the original Reichs Bridge, which survived the war, collapsed in 1976 and has been rebuilt.

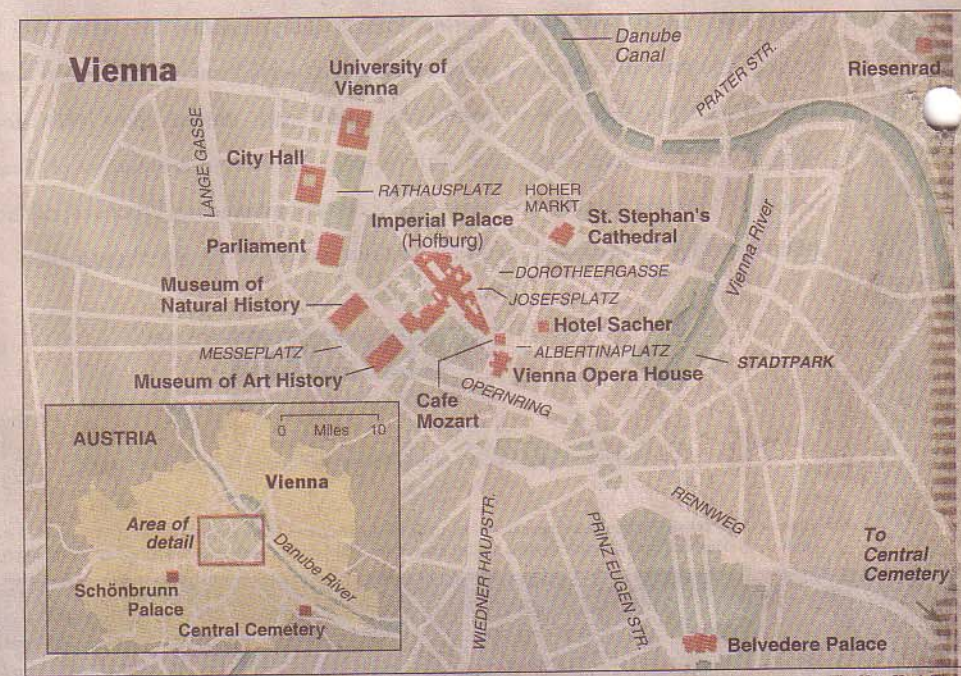
But on closer examination, some settings haven't changed — or at least not much. The Casanova Club, a den of shady characters in the film, is on Dorotheergasse (6-8), and judging by the photos of bosomy, undraped ecstasists out front, the show may be the same as in Greene's day. I'll say no more about it. The club filed suit against the film and may still be in a litigious mood.

The Theater in der Josefstadt (Josefstadt

Continued on Page 18



David O. Selznick



The New York Times

# 'The Third Man'

Continued From Page 12

Strasse 8), where Harry Lime's girl acted, continues to present German-language plays, just as it has since 1788. For those whose German isn't adequate, the theater and its ornate neo-Classical décor can be visited between performances. But off-hours sightseers will miss the moment when the chandeliers rise while the lights go down.

The Hotel Sacher, behind the opera house, is readily accessible. Even those who can't afford a room can, for the price of a slab of Sacher torte, soak up the opulence. Greene stayed here for two weeks researching "The Third Man." Reserved then for military personnel, the headquarters of British Intelligence, the hotel was a perfect listening post for Greene who, as a former MI-6 agent, possessed both the sources and resources to absorb information in a short time. In the film, it was Holly Martin's residence.

Had he arrived sooner, when the Russians requisitioned the hotel right after the war, he would have noticed that the Soviets turned the restaurant into horse stables.

Dr. Brigitte Timmermann, a historian and a bottomless trove of knowledge about "The Third Man," gives tours of Vienna that trace the footsteps of Holly Martins and Harry Lime. Unnervingly as a tracking shot. Carrying a binder of photos from the film, she moves from location to location, showing how the city looked in 1948 and discussing how it came to be as it is now.

For movie fanatics she's prepared to spend five hours on a frame by frame analysis of settings, but most people choose the two-hour circuit.

Surprisingly, as Dr. Timmermann led me around, she sailed past Café Mozart, where Holly meets Baron Kurtz and gets his first inkling that something is amiss about Harry Lime's life and death. Albertinaplatz 2, across the street from the Monument against War and Fascism, may be the actual site of the café, but the scene was shot several hundred yards away, in front of the Kapuzinerkirche on Tegethoffstrasse.

Similarly, although the film has Harry Lime residing at Stiftsgasse 15, Carol Reed plastered that address onto Josefsplatz 5, the Baroque Pallavicini Palace with imposing caryatids at its entrance. The cobblestones where Harry was supposedly run over and killed have been paved, but the equestrian statue of Josef II presides over the spot where Harry arranged for one of his murder victims to be deposited in his place. In a recent development, a permanent



Photographs by Reiner Riedler/Anzenberger, for The New York Times

ABOVE Caryatids at Josefsplatz 5, where Harry Lime lived. BELOW A grave at Central Cemetery, where Lime is buried.

exhibition of Salvador Dali's work has opened at the Pallavicini, and thus one legendary illusionist seems to live on not far from where another faked his death.

Around the corner, Dr. Timmermann pointed to the Spanish Riding School stable, explaining that it was on this wall that Harry Lime's menacing shadow moves through the wet Vienna night. This explanation prompted a second, then a third. The atmospheric gleam of the film's night scenes came out of a fire hose. And the film's famous use of shadows was necessary because Orson Welles didn't show up for the early shooting. His hulking silhouette was played by a double.

As she catalogs examples of artistic license that "The Third Man" took with reality, Dr. Timmermann proceeds from the assumption that small untruths serve the larger Truth. Standing in the doorway of Schreyvogelgasse 8, where Harry Lime makes his delayed entrance with a meowing cat at his feet, she concedes that this isn't across the street from Anna's house as the film suggests. Harry then flees to Am Hof square and disappears into a kiosk, down into the sewers, but there is, in fact, no kiosk, no sewer there.

Leading the way to Hoher Markt, Dr. Timmermann confesses that the Marc Aurel bar, where Holly plans to turn Harry over to the police, is actually the Oswald Steiner stationery store. What's more, when Anna warns him of the trap and Harry dashes for the sewers again, he would have had to be a long-distance runner to reach one, for those spooky vaulted caverns are far away.

Not only that, but when Harry climbs a spiral staircase and desperately tries to push open a metal grate, his frantic fingers flexing between the bars... well, Dr. Timmermann acknowledges the impossibility of that scene on two scores. First, a square grate covers what would have been a round exit from the spiral staircase. Second, the grates in Vienna are so thick, Orson Welles would need fingers as long as ET's for them to be visible at street level. They weren't Welles's fingers any-



way. They were Carol Reed's.

Finally we headed for the sewers, the pièce de résistance. Guided by Dr. Timmermann's flashlight, I descended a spiral staircase, as claustrophobic and frightening as any in the film. Flashing the beam ahead of us, Dr. Timmermann thoughtfully identified a dead rat curled in the mud. A plastic bag of garbage went unmentioned. As we reached the tunnel and its trickle of cloacal water, there was the distant reverberation of what sounded like... like gunfire. As surely as Anton Karas's zither music, this seemed to me the theme song of "The Third Man" — a pounding heart and small arms fire. But Dr. Timmermann, a straight shooter till the very end, admitted that the noise came from sewer workers who put on their own "Third Man" show with convincing sound effects. "It scares people stiff," she said.

It did me. I let her lead the way in fresh air and sunlight. Having seen so many obscure bends and elbows of the city, having gleaned so much arcane information about it from the film, I was persuaded that cinematic artifice is an excellent vehicle for exploring Vienna both past and present.



Rick Friedman/Black Star, for The New York Times

The trolley pickup outside the visitor center.

## Quincy, Mass.

Continued From Page 9

on the strangely appropriate date of July 4, 1826, the 50th anniversary of his signing the Declaration of Independence. His last words were said to have been "Jefferson survives." But he was wrong. In an amazing accident of history — one that is well known today — Adams's dear friend and the remaining surviving signer had died four hours earlier at Monticello.

Before leaving the Old House, we visited the stone library built by Charles Francis Adams in 1870. This passionately intellectual family needed a separate building to house some 14,000 books. Here we also found the old slant-top law desk upon which John Adams drafted the Massachusetts Constitution in 1779.

a forerunner of the federal version.

The trolley returned us to the downtown visitors center, just a block or two from the Hancock Cemetery where early Adams ancestors, including Deacon John, are buried. After wandering among the old headstones, we crossed the street to the United First Parish Church.

In a narrow crypt beneath the elegant domed sanctuary, John Adams is entombed alongside Abigail, John Quincy and Louisa Catherine. The simplicity of the whitewashed crypt and the four granite sarcophagi is offset only by the splash of color provided by the American flags draping the presidents' remains. Alone in this small quiet space with two presidents and two remarkable first ladies, I felt tremendously moved by the modesty of their rest-

ing place given the greatness of their legacy.

History remembers the Adamses as Presidents and first ladies, public servants and recorders of history, but Quincy reminds us they were farmers and patriots, parents and children.

And so G. J. and I preferred to end our visit to Quincy at yet another, less somber, Adams monument. We drove up Penn's Hill, and not far from the saltbox farmhouses where the two presidents were born, we found the stone cairn marking the summit from which Abigail Adams and her 7-year-old son, John Quincy, observed the battle of Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775. We couldn't help thinking that their vision that day extended far past the smoke of battle, straight into the American future.

## Four generations and where they lived

### Getting There

**By car:** From Boston, take I-93 south to Exit 7 onto Route 3 south (direction Braintree-Cape Cod). Take Exit 18 (Washington Street/Quincy Center). Bear left to Burgin Parkway and follow signs to Quincy Center and the National Park Service Visitor Center.

**By subway:** The M.B.T.A. (called the T) Red Line services Quincy. From Boston board the Braintree train to Quincy Center Station. Leave by the Hancock Street exit. The visitor center is across the street.

**By water shuttle:** The Harbor Express, (617) 376-8417, leaves from Boston's Marriott Long Wharf to Quincy's Fore River Shipyard Terminal. From the terminal, take the Quincy City Shuttle (9 a.m. to 4 p.m., on the hour) to the visitor center.

### Visiting the Park

The season at Adams National Historical Park runs from April 19 (Patriots Day) to Nov. 10. During the season, the park is open daily, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tickets must be bought at the visitor center, 1250 Hancock Street, (617) 770-1175; www.nps.gov/adam. Out of season, the center remains open Tuesday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., but the houses are not open to visitors. Admission: \$2 age 17 and up. A separate \$2 admission fee to visit the Adams burial crypts is collected at the United First Parish Church. Trolley service between

the visitor center and park sites is free.

Among the programs to bring the Adams family legacy to life is a schoolchildren's re-enactment of a debate among delegates to the Continental Congress over whether to remain loyal to the crown or vote for independence.

Within the park, the Adams birthplaces are at 133 and 141 Franklin Street, and the Old House is at 135 Adams Street. The United First Parish Church (not technically part of the park) is one block south of the visitor center on Hancock Street; (617) 773-1290. The church is open daily from June to November, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday 1 to 5 p.m.

### Where to Stay

A broad range of accommodations is available in Boston.

The best option in Quincy is the 100-room Best Western Adams Inn, 29 Hancock Street; (617) 328-1500, fax (617) 328-3067. Doubles start at \$119 and include Continental breakfast.

The 376-room Sheraton Braintree Hotel, at 37 Forbes Road, Braintree, (781) 848-0600, fax (781) 843-9492, is only a 10-minute drive from Adams Park sites. Off season rates are \$99 to \$169 for a double room.

### Where to Eat

While downtown Quincy has numerous small lunchrooms suitable

for breakfast or light lunches, visitors with cars will enjoy the trip to Marina Bay, just off the Quincy Shore Drive, a pleasant waterside complex of shops and restaurants offering a magnificent view of the Boston skyline. Siro's, 307 Victory Road, (617) 472-4500, serves updated contemporary cuisine with an Italian twist. Lunch or dinner for two, with wine, from \$40.

### Sightseeing

The Quincy Historical Society Museum is in the old Adams Academy, 8 Adams Street, (617) 773-1144. Open all year, Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Weekend hours vary, so it is advisable to call ahead. Suggested donation \$1.

The Dorothy Quincy Homestead, 1010 Hancock Street, at Butler Road, an 18th-century Colonial mansion, was home to several generations of the prominent Quincy family, including Dorothy Quincy, wife of John Hancock. It was open to tours, but closed earlier this year because the Metropolitan District Commission, which owns it, had difficulty arranging for live-in caretakers and interpreters; it may reopen next spring.

### Information

Call the Adams National Historical Park Visitor Center at (617) 770-1175. The park administrative offices are in the Old House, at 135 Adams Street; (617) 773-1177.

## If you go

Tours in English and German are offered by Dr. Brigitte Timmermann, (43-1) 774 8901, fax (43-1) 774 8933; e-mail to brigitte@viennawalks.tix.at; Web: www.viennawalks.tix.at. They take place at 4 p.m. Mondays and Fridays; private tours given by special arrangement. Group two-hour tours are \$12 a person, at 15.6 Austrian schillings to the dollar; \$11 with a Vienna card. (The card costs \$11.50 and is good for 72 hours of unlimited travel on public transportation, with discounts for museums, restaurants and many guided tours.)

If you want to take the tour given by the sewer department of the Vienna Council, call (43-1) 585 6455.

A ride on the Riesenrad in Prater park costs \$3.50. The Ferris wheel runs from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily year round except January and February, when it depends on the weather.

"The Third Man" is shown at the Burg Kino, at Opernring 19, (43-1) 587-8406, at 10:45 p.m. on Fridays and 3 p.m. Sundays. Admission about \$6.40, depending on the seat.

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