

Wim Wenders
On the Sweet Life in the Hotel Restaurant Orphée in Ratisbon

There are a few famous classical coffeehouses in the world.
If you have ever been to one
you will know the singular feeling
of sitting there, reading a newspaper
just looking out the window
watching the passers-by
and sipping your breakfast coffee
or one last glass of wine for the night ...
Nowhere else is it more pleasurable to pause for a bit and sweetly do nothing.
A certain attitude to life is inextricably linked to these places:
A Lightness of Being,
yet one containing a certain measure of reflection and contemplation;
right in the midst of the world and yet far from it.

Such coffeehouses can be found in all the big cities,
inviting one to dally:
the *Deux Magots* in Paris.
the *Einstein* in Berlin.
the *Hawelka* in Vienna.
the *Balthazar* in Soho.
the *Caffé Roma* in San Francisco etc.

Who would have expected
chancing upon exactly such a Café
thoroughly fit to match the ones mentioned above
while strolling through the old city center
of a relatively small town in Southern Germany?
Yes, there it is: the *Orphée* in Ratisbon/Regensburg.
You simply have to walk up the Untere Bachgasse
then you cannot miss it!
The Orphée is simply unmistakable.
You think I am exaggerating? Oh no!
When I walked in and sat down the first time
I incredulously looked around.
A Déjà Vu?
Where was I?
Hadn't I been here before?
From the very first moment I felt at home
as if I were a habitué.
(And immediately knowing I was inescapably bound to become one ...)
Because of the Thonet Viennese Coffeehouse chairs and tables,
because of the mirrors,
the wood-panelled walls,
the ancient French placards,
the newspapers in their old-fashioned racks ...
But equally familiar
the way the waiter approached the table wrapped in his white apron
and in the next moment handed me the menu
and even more familiar the coffee I then ordered
just like at night (after I had, of course, returned) the evening menu listing the food and the wines.
(Yes, they did have my favourite Burgundy,
it seemed quite natural!)
Still the sense of familiarity was not bound to any one thing;
rather it was everything at once,
the light, the smells,
the sounds.
It was how time itself passed in this place.

How often I returned to the *Orphée* since then I cannot say.
(Do you know this feeling of becoming homesick just talking about something?)
And at some point the café plus restaurant was complemented by a marvellous little hotel, in no way
not befitting the fame of the rest of it all.

And, of course, such a place doesn't flourish all on its own;
you need a town to go with it
Which sets such an attitude to life into motion.
If you have been to Ratisbon I need to say no more.
Then you know ... Roman settlement, bishopric ...
but, if you have not been to Ratisbon
you had better get ready for a minor miracle,
for a fabulously Italianesque town
(the ancient city center is a UNESCO World Heritage Site)
but not in Tuscany, oh no,
rather right by the River Danube.

So if one fine day you'll be strolling through Ratisbon for the first time
And will finally be wearily dragging your feet after having meandered about for hours
without once having quitted to wonder and marvel
you know now where you may find some rest and repose.

Note by the *Orphée*:

Introducing filmmaker and movie director Wim Wenders would be like carrying owls to Athens or coals
to Newcastle. Shall we list and recommend his movies before or after a visit to the *Orphée*? Why not
treat yourself to both pleasures frequently ...

Note by the publishers of *AVISO Repose* (where this piece was published in an issue about the World
Heritage Sites in Bavaria):

The most charming of our heritage trust protected inns and restaurants of Bavaria are not (yet) as well
known as many of our castles, palaces and churches. There must be an end to this! In *AVISO Repose*
we therefore portray the most charming temples of culinary delights and worship of the muses in
Bavaria: each and every one a most venerable and authentic testimony to our rich architectural
heritage – PLUS: in all of them you can feast splendidly; in some you can also stay overnight.

=> HIER NOCH EURE ADRESSE USW.