

Our Annual Travel Issue!

GERMANY ■ AUSTRIA ■ SWITZERLAND

German Life

Detmold Open-Air Museum

Wernher von Braun
Visit Frankfurt
Regensburg
The Third Man

APRIL/MAY 2018 \$5.95

CANADA \$7.95



0 74470 91442 6

THE THIRD MAN— WALKING IN THE STEPS OF A FILM CLASSIC

BY BILL STEPHENS

What is it about this nearly forgotten film that has fans and tourists roaming the streets and sewers of Vienna?



A POSTER, PLUS MUSICAL CLOCKS IN VIENNA'S THIRD MAN MUSEUM. THE MUSICAL CLOCKS PLAY THE THEME TO THE THIRD MAN. COURTESY BILL STEPHENS.

I glanced at the middle-aged British woman next to me as our tour group edged closer to the Vienna sewers entrance. “Is this a good idea?” I asked her. She shrugged. “We’ll find out.” I took a deep breath, tugged at my safety helmet strap and shook my head. While thousands of tourists were happily exploring Vienna’s elegant museums, shops and coffeehouses, I was exploring Vienna’s dank sewers, questioning my common sense, feeling as foolish as a freshman.

Why Vienna’s sewers? Well, a few days earlier, I’d attended *The Third Man* movie at Vienna’s independent Burg Kino Theater, which regularly screens the 1949 British film noir classic. As I watched, I remembered how much I’d liked the movie as a small boy—especially the zither music. I enjoyed it even more this time. Set in bombed out, occupied, post-World War II Vienna, the movie traces the attempt of American pulp novelist Holly Martins (Joseph Cotten) to clear the name of his deceased friend Harry Lime (Orson Welles). Only Lime turns up as a very-much-alive, lethal, black market crook. Dramatic chase scenes were filmed in Vienna’s sewers. After watching the movie, I walked out of the theater alongside a senior British couple. “We’re Orson Welles fans,” they told me. “So we really liked the movie!” I later read that *The Third Man* has been voted among the greatest films of all time. Vienna, I learned, is very much linked with *The Third Man* movie, which has even sparked a local boutique tourist industry.

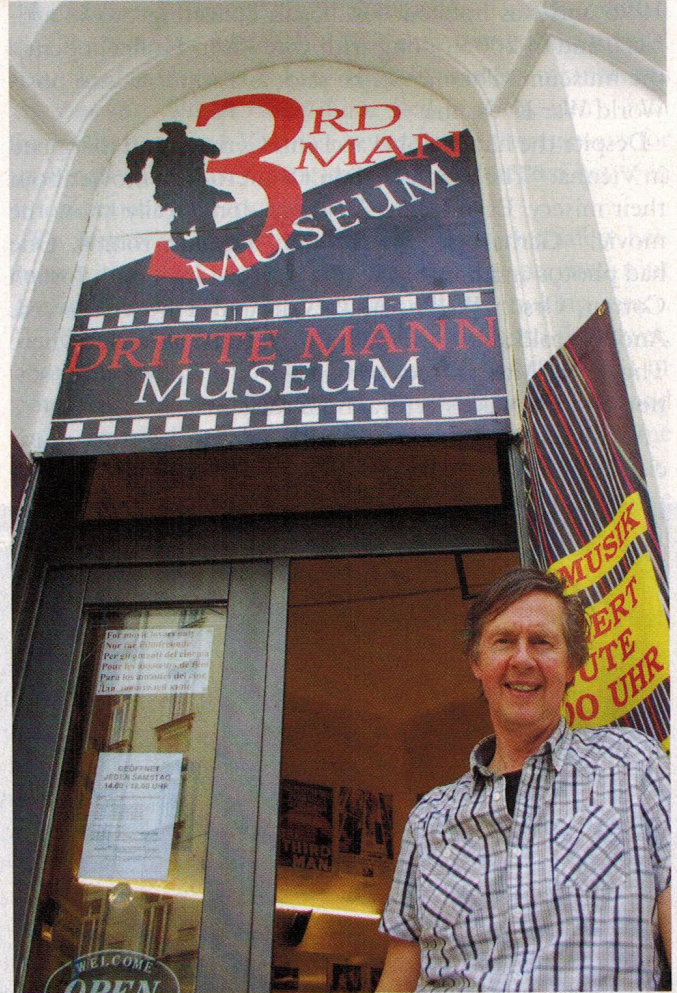
I decided to join, signing up for a “Vienna in the Footsteps of *The Third Man* Tour” (above ground). Christo-



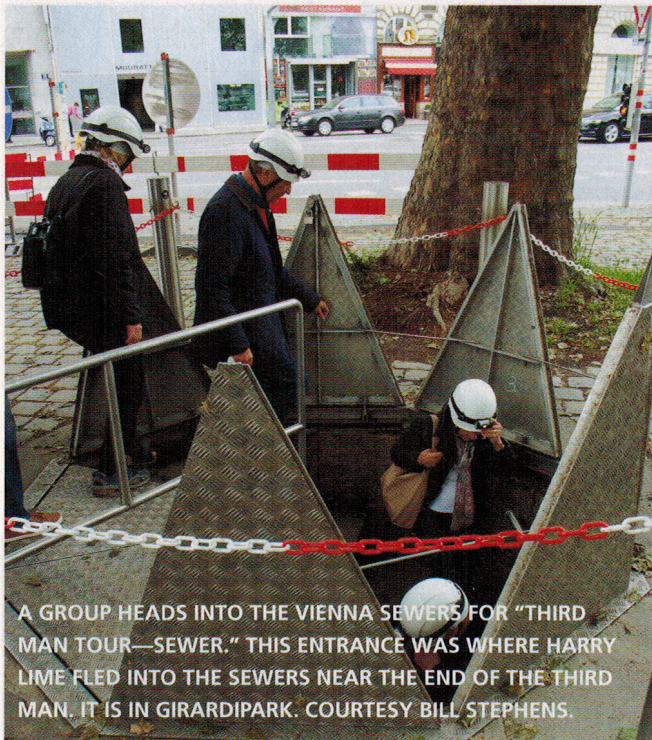
pher Timmermann, from a family of Vienna tour guide/historians, greeted me at the Stadtpark subway station by whistling *The Third Man* theme. Fellow tour members included a German, an ex-military man who's a big fan of the movie, a Scot who likes old movies and Orson Welles and a Munich man who likes the music.

Christopher led us past the Imperial Hotel, Russian headquarters in 1949 Vienna, which was occupied jointly by Russian, American, British and French forces. Christopher said 25% of Vienna was destroyed by World War II bombing. We strolled past the Hotel Sacher where Graham Greene stayed while researching the screenplay, and where the movie's Holly Martins (Joseph Cotton) stayed. Soon we entered Josefsplatz, site of Harry Lime's apartment, the entrance still guarded by four sculptured ladies from antiquity. We visited Michaelerplatz, the site of a dramatic scene where police waited in the shadows for Harry; the Schulhof, the square where Martins chased Harry's shadow; and Am Hof Square, where Harry first escaped into the sewers, evading Martins. Our tour finale was the doorway at #8 Schreyvogelgasse, where Harry Lime (and a cat) dramatically first appeared. Christopher said the filmmakers used catnip and fish oil to still the cat. As we pondered the doorway, a zither musician began playing *The Third Man* theme. Her presence, Christopher quipped, was a mere coincidence.

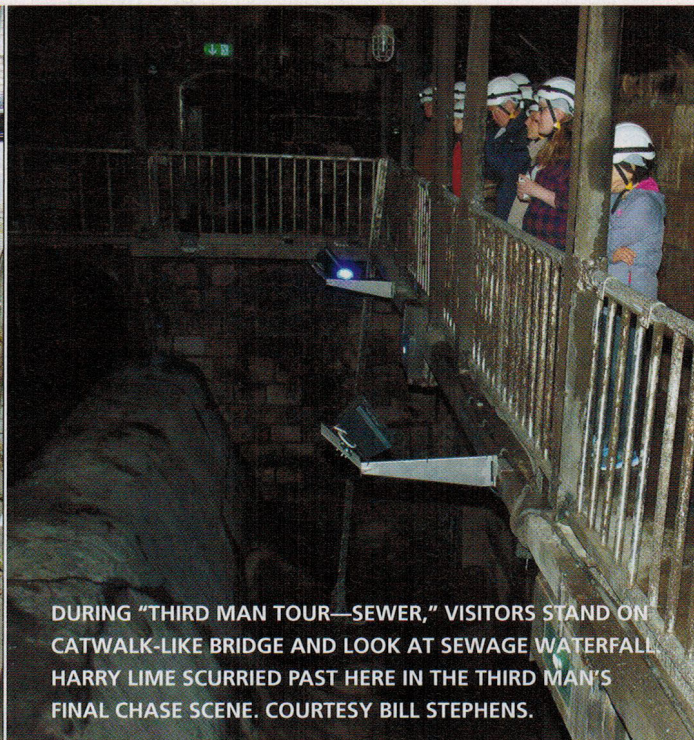
Curiosity in overdrive, I next visited Vienna's Third Man Museum, which sits on a residential street near Vienna's bustling Naschmarkt. Lanky museum director Gerhard Strassgchwandtner told our tour group that while working as a Viennese tour guide in the 1990s, he was often asked by British and American tourists about *The Third Man* movie. "I'd never seen it. And they asked how I could be a Vienna tour guide, and not know the



TOP OF PAGE: A ROOM IN VIENNA'S THIRD MAN MUSEUM FEATURING MOVIE POSTERS. COURTESY BILL STEPHENS.
ABOVE: THE THIRD MAN MUSEUM'S GERHARD STRASSGSCHWANDTNER. COURTESY BILL STEPHENS.



A GROUP HEADS INTO THE VIENNA SEWERS FOR "THIRD MAN TOUR—SEWER." THIS ENTRANCE WAS WHERE HARRY LIME FLED INTO THE SEWERS NEAR THE END OF THE THIRD MAN. IT IS IN GIRARDIPARK. COURTESY BILL STEPHENS.



DURING "THIRD MAN TOUR—SEWER," VISITORS STAND ON CATWALK-LIKE BRIDGE AND LOOK AT SEWAGE WATERFALL. HARRY LIME SCURRIED PAST HERE IN THE THIRD MAN'S FINAL CHASE SCENE. COURTESY BILL STEPHENS.

movie." So historian/artist Gerhard saw the movie in 1996 and was hooked. He began collecting movie artifacts, and in 2005 (along with wife Karin Hofler) opened the museum. The movie, he said, is a window into post-World War II Vienna.

Despite the film's global acclaim, Gerhard said it flopped in Vienna. "The Viennese didn't want to see a movie about their misery. Even today, Austrians don't really know the movie." Gerhard led us through museum rooms. One had photos and bios of the film's actors, including Joseph Cotten, Orson Welles, Alida Valli and Trevor Howard. Another told about *The Third Man* craze in Japan, where The Third Man theme today plays in a Tokyo metro station and in Osaka's central train station.

Another museum room told about winery zither musician Anton Karas. Director Carol Reed reportedly heard

Karas play on his first night in Vienna and eventually hired him for the movie. The music became a global hit and the winery musician became a millionaire. The museum has the zither Karas used to compose and record the film music as well as many recordings of music.

Other museum rooms celebrated the filmmakers—screenwriter Graham Greene, director Carol Reed and producers Alexander Korda and David O. Selznick. During our visit, we saw movie posters, film scripts, movie DVDs, magazine covers, film reviews, a movie camera used to shoot the film and movie stills. One room housed music clocks playing the movie's memorable theme. Finally, we watched a clip from *The Third Man* on a vintage cinema projector. Afterwards, a Russian couple told me they really enjoyed the museum tour—especially the old projector and the World War II history.

If you are a fan of *The Third Man* and find yourself in Vienna, here are some of the activities and tours that will bring the classic film and Viennese locales together:

Vienna in the Footsteps of *The Third Man* Tour

Tour is offered every Monday and Friday at 4:00 p.m. by a guide of the Timmermann family. Tour meets at U-4 Station Stadtpark. The tour covers the making of the movie and shows (above ground) film locations. Tour in English and German.

Tel +43-1-774-8901.

Email: info@viennawalks.com

Third Man Museum

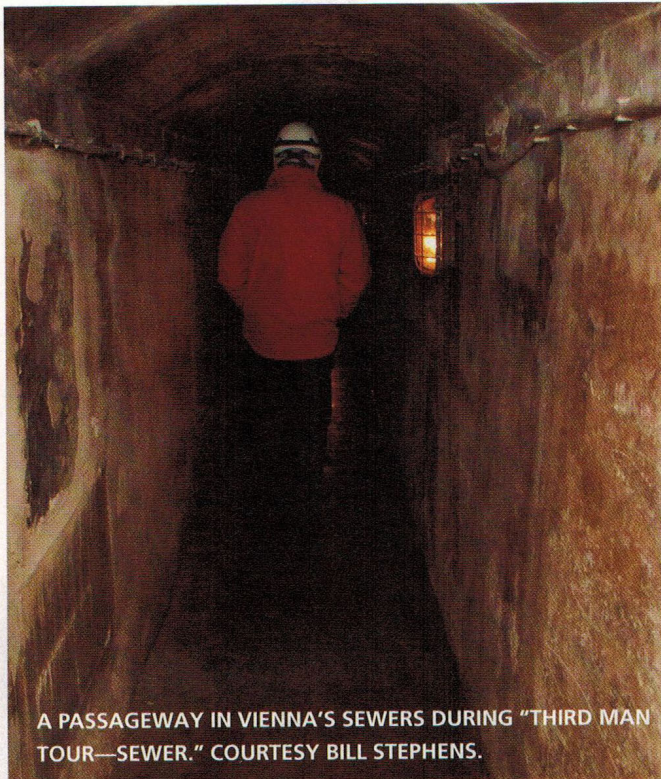
The Third Man Museum is open every Saturday from 2:00 p.m.—6:00 p.m. No guided tours available then. There are often guided tours (in English only) on Wednesdays at 2:00 p.m., lasting 75 minutes. The museum always announces English guided tours for individual visitors two months in advance on the museum's webpage <http://www.3mpc.net/engsamml.htm>

For groups, the museum is open every day of the week by appointment. The tours are only led by Gerhard Strassgschwandtner and his wife Karin Hofler, who run the museum. The museum features many rooms filled with memorabilia (including photos, posters, original scripts, artifacts, documents and recordings) about *The*

Third Man and of its historical context—Vienna after WWII. The museum is at Pressgasse 25, 1040 Vienna—just south of the Naschmarkt. Tel +43-1-586-4872.

Third Man Tour—Sewer

This tour visits sites filmed in Vienna's sewers for *The Third Man* movie. Tour is offered May–October, Thursday–Sunday, 10:00 a.m.—7:00 p.m. Tours depart every hour, meeting at Karlsplatz-Girardipark, 1010 Vienna (opposite Café Museum). Minimum age for the tour is 12 years. Tour in English at 3:00 p.m. Reserve tickets online at <https://www.drittemanntour.at/en/index.html>, or by phone +43-1-400-3033. Telephone support only Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.



A PASSAGEWAY IN VIENNA'S SEWERS DURING "THIRD MAN TOUR—SEWER." COURTESY BILL STEPHENS.

For some solo movie sleuthing, I hopped a northbound subway to Praterstrasse. As I walked towards Prater amusement park, I spotted the giant Ferris wheel (Riesenschiff)—the site of a scene in *The Third Man*. Built in 1897, the 200-foot tall ride miraculously survived World War II bombing. As I approached the great wheel, I looked up at its red, cottage-sized passenger cars. Soon, I joined a dozen people inside a car and we began our slow climb. At the top my fellow travelers began photographing Vienna's panorama. Me, I looked down, as Harry Lime did when he told fellow passenger Holly Martins he didn't care how many dot-sized humans on the ground died from his tainted penicillin sales, as long as he profited. Martins begins to realize the depths of his old friend's immortality. When we reached the ground after a 20-minute round trip, I stepped out onto the spot where Lime delivered his famous line about Switzerland, which had "500 years of democracy and peace, and what did that produce...the cuckoo clock."

The next day I rode a tram to Vienna's sprawling Central Cemetery (Zentralfriedhof), permanent home of more than 2 million Viennese. The cemetery was nearly devoid of visitors, as most people were elsewhere enjoying lively Vienna. After a 10-minute walk (with the help of Charles Drazin's book, *In Search of The Third Man*), I found the location where Martins attended Harry's funeral. The site has a black tombstone marked "Elchinger 1913." Harry's grave was borrowed from one "Johann Grun—1948." The spot was peaceful and I was alone, feeling like I was present at the 1948 filming. Behind the gravesite were swaying trees and, in the distance, a domed church.

Nearby, I found the cemetery road, site of the film's iconic last scene. The road looked as it did in 1948—lined with tombstones and trees. Except, the scene was shot on a cold December morning and the trees were bare. Today,

the trees were leafy green. According to author Drazin, director Reed had Cotten stand at the roadside. Then Reed signaled for Alida Valli (playing Harry's former girlfriend Anna) to start walking from far down the road towards Cotton and the camera. Reed had Anna walk right past Holly, snubbing him for betraying his friend. It was touching to stand in the spot where Reed stood, and to imagine the scene unfolding. As cemetery visitors walked by, visiting real, not cinematic graves, a gentle breeze kicked up. I lingered.

I could have left it at that. But, of course, I hadn't yet visited Vienna's sewers. I didn't want to visit Vienna's sewers. But, of course, I had to visit Vienna's sewers. *The Third Man's* dramatic sewer scenes were shot in Vienna's sewers and in a London studio. In Girardipark I gathered with a dozen others around a round metal sewer entrance leading into subterranean Vienna. Our "Third Man Tour—Sewer" leader, Herbert Stojaspal, had a robust physique, a bushy beard and a sense of humor. He assured us that nobody has yet died from Vienna sewer's smell and provided us with some fun Vienna sewer facts including: Vienna has almost 1,500 miles of sewers, there are 53,500 manhole grates and Vienna has an estimated 1.5 rats per person with Herbert adding, "Do not feed or pet the rats."

I had heard that the filmmakers wanted to use trained rats in the sewer scenes, but that they proved too unruly. Tour leader Herbert told us that this sewer entrance was the one into which Harry Lime fled near the film's end. In 1948, occupied Vienna's sewers were passageways for criminals (like Harry Lime) to move undetected between international military zones.

I wasn't reassured when Herbert passed out safety helmets with lights on them. But just then, the previous tour group emerged from the sewer entrance, looking intact. We followed Herbert down circular stairs into the sewer, soon passing a glass cage housing rats. I didn't feed or pet them. After walking narrow passageways, we stood on a catwalk-like bridge above a sewage waterfall. Some tour members covered their mouths and noses. We'd arrived at a site in the film's final chase scene. With police in pursuit, Harry Lime scurried past this waterfall. Ever the comic, our sewer tour leader Herbert pointed to a gas alarm, and announced that if that light turns red, he exits first. We then watched a movie clip, projected onto the sewer wall. From there we moved through more narrow passageways until we eventually emerged into a cavernous, vaulted area through which the Vienna River flows. Herbert reminded us that near the movie's end, police splashed through this space after Lime. Then we moved upwards through dark passageways, eventually ascending the same circular metal stairs we'd descended. When we emerged above ground, I breathed fresh air and gave a sigh of relief. Interesting tour...but I was grateful when Herbert passed out hand wipes.

The next morning during a B&B breakfast, a well-dressed American couple asked me what I'd seen in Vienna. They seemed poised to top me with tales of posh Baroque palaces visited. "Yesterday I toured Vienna's sewers," I said. The woman almost gagged on her cereal. **GL**