

VIENNA



Vienna is forever associated with the *Kaffeehaus*, where the seductive link between architecture, the arts, music and ideas has given rise to some of the world's great creative achievements. Distilled into these often grand but congenial places are so many of the city's cultural and existential riches that they have imbued Vienna's very way of life for centuries. The coffee houses continue to be vital social gauges, places where tradition and the avant-garde percolate vigorously, a state described by the 19th-century Austrian writer Alfred Polgar as *Weltanschauung*. Vienna is a harmonious mix of the historic and the hip, the imposing and the modern, with Gothic, Renaissance, Neo-classical and Eclectic sandwiched between Biedermeier and Secessionism.

The musical, literary and design-centric culture of Vienna's past, which flourished over six centuries of the Habsburg empire, has seeped across terrible decades of destruction into new, free-thinking generations. The imperial tradition and its trappings were so strong that it wasn't until the 20th century that fresh creative energies would emerge. More recently, the Millennium marked the beginning of Vienna's global self-awareness, symbolized by the opening of the MuseumsQuartier, one of the world's largest arts complexes. But even a century and a half before, Vienna had begun to shake off the conservative grip of the Habsburgs and entered a phase of liberalization under the Austro-Hungarian Empire's last ruler, Franz Josef. It was he, together with the 18th-century empress Maria Theresa and her son Joseph II, who really fostered Vienna's cultural high notes. From the mid-1800s, its modern look took dramatic shape; the Ringstraße, much like Haussmann's grand boulevards in Paris, imposed an iconic architectural style on the city. The medieval walls of the old city were demolished, and the 4-kilometre 'ring' was given a flamboyant facelift with its ornate, historicist buildings: showy touches of Flemish neo-Gothic (Rathaus), Greek Revival (Parliament Building) and neo-Renaissance (Kunsthistorisches Museum). Today they delineate the border between Vienna's largely pedestrianized *Innere Stadt* and its twenty-two other *bezirke* (neighbourhoods).

In 1897 a group of artists, including Gustav Klimt (see p. 309), Josef Hoffmann (see p. 305) and Otto Wagner (see p. 309), rebelled against the pomp and constraints of older architectural styles. The resulting Viennese Secession, along with the Jugendstil and the Wiener Werkstätte, the cooperative workshop of craftsmen who sought to turn everyday objects into *Gesamtkunstwerken*, was profoundly influential. Vienna's creative past is reflected in the name of its annual design exhibition, Blickfang, an eye-catching event that features furniture, fashion and jewelry. At street level, the continuing spirit of reinvention is captured in the ironic name of a budding atelier in the Spittelberg area, Werkprunk (p. 305), which can mean 'art-work splendour' or 'pomposity', depending on your taste. Either way, it sums up the rich and lively blend of Vienna's creative spirit.



CELESTIAL CEILINGS

17 **Café Central** Herrengasse 14

Featuring on the tourist circuit has done little to diminish the appeal of this café. Housed in the Palais Ferstel, its soaring ceilings and baroque columns make Café Central a stirring spot in which to imbibe the *Kaffeehaus* tradition. The menu has expanded beyond the usual coffeehouse choices of *Bratwurst* and *Strudel* to sautéed vegetables with smoked tofu. A particularly delicious treat from the in-house *Konditorei* is *Esterházytorte* (made with layers of sponge and almonds). Start practicing your pronunciation now.

BOOKISH VELOUR

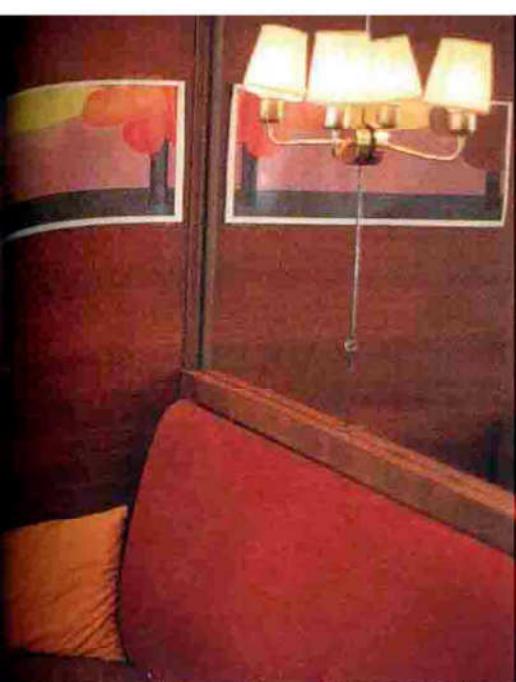
18 **Café Sperl** Gumpendorferstraße 11

In a garden square dotted with green chairs, this neighbourly café wears its history with a relaxed elegance. Pewter pots of daisies and a black-and-gold sign precede a charming interior of banquettes and billiard tables. Built in 1880 in the Ringstraße style, members of the Viennese Secession frequented this arty café. 'Franz Lehár always sat in that corner', says owner Manfred Staub, pointing to a photo of the Austrian operetta composer. The food, including *Pflaumentorte* (plum cake) and *Tafelspitz* (boiled beef), is excellent.

SOCIAL PALETTE

19 **Café Korb** Brandstätte 9

Philosophical airs were fanned here by Freud when he met with the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, and theatrical ones by owner Susanne Widl, a former actress-model who turned Café Korb into a stage for all. 'The art of taste and discussion should dominate in the coffee house,' she says. The mood among the 1950s fixtures is one of bohemian *laissez-faire*, with writers meeting in the Art Lounge basement and psychologists for the PsychArt series. Not to be missed on the menu are the yeast dumplings.



SITZ ON IT
20 Das Möbel Café
 Burggasse 10

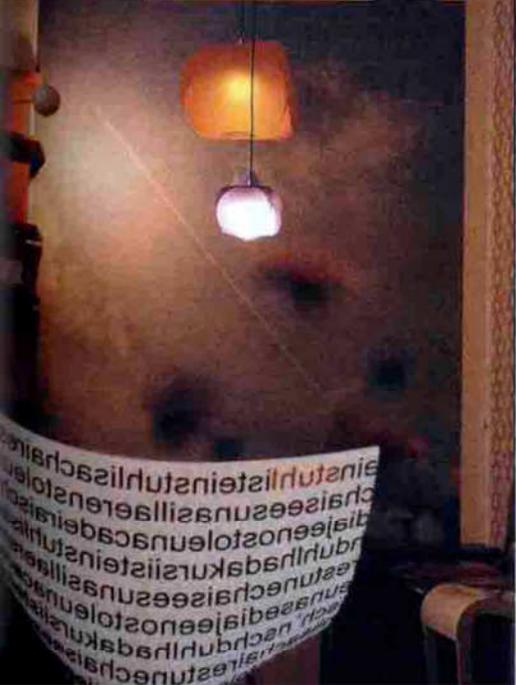
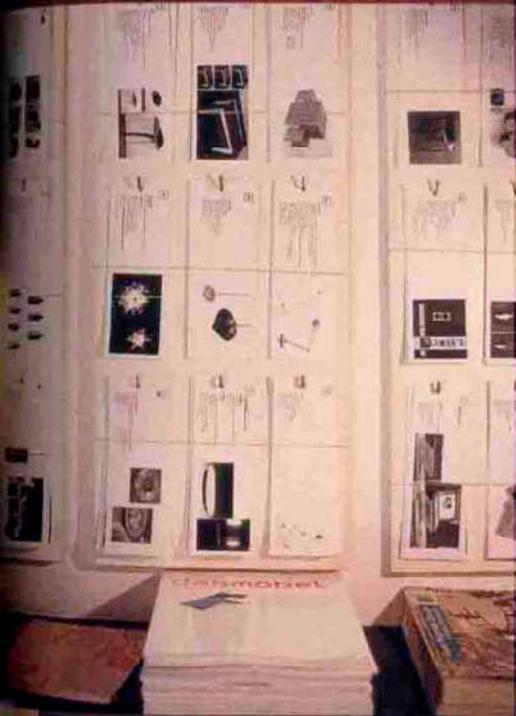
Viennese *Design Kultur* meets coffee culture in this changing furniture universe, where you can test-drive fabulous *Sitzmöbel* (sofas, seats, stools, hammocks) by young designers. The day-night venue has a supernatural capacity for sensational facelifts and mood changes with its quarterly furniture exhibitions, while the wall catalogue is an artwork in itself. Avant-garde design does not exclude hallowed traditions: newspaper racks, endless cups of coffee, lingering all day, and, insists owner Markus Luger, a true *Kaffeehaus* chill-out vibe that allows no noisy music.

PERSONAL EFFECTS
21 Lutz Die Bar
 Mariahilfer Straße 3

In a stretch dominated by interior design stores, it seems appropriate to find a bar where you can try out the latest furniture designs while sipping a cocktail. Seriously lounge-worthy, if you took away the seating there would be little left apart from the large aquarium behind the bar. Rows of chocolate-coloured ottomans (in the dark, caramel and white varieties), club chairs and bench seats ring the walls of this smooth, minimalist lounge with its discreet entry of wrought-iron railing. The window seats make cushy nooks for nibbling bar snacks while people-watching.

CLUB LIBERTY
22 Europa
 Zollergasse 8

'Ein Wohnzimmer called Europa' is how daily newspaper *Der Standard* described this retro-cool bar, a 'living room' with electro-funk music at times, jazz and blues at others, and a rainbow range of staff, flavours and behaviours. Owner Andreas Friesz backs a common European feeling of liberty for all, hence the name. Diversity has right of way: there's a coveted street terrace, two red rooms with a 1950s-style bar and several seating niches and a backroom nightclub (the *Hinterzimmer*). The Santora coffee is among Vienna's best, as are the Sunday breakfasts (served 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.).



OUT OF SPACE
23 Loos American Bar
 Kärntner Durchgang 10

A dissonant mosaic façade, glowing octagonal tables and onyx wall tiles, Jugendstil booths and a wood-and-brass bar: Adolf Loos packed all of that in 1908 into this dense atmosphere of marble, mahogany and mirrored trickery. 'In 6 by 4.5 metres, we connect art and pleasure with classic cocktails and over 200 drinks,' says Marianne Kohn, manager of Loos American Bar since the early 1980s. The bar is renowned for its Martinis, which regulars sip on while warming the bar stools in this historic protected building.

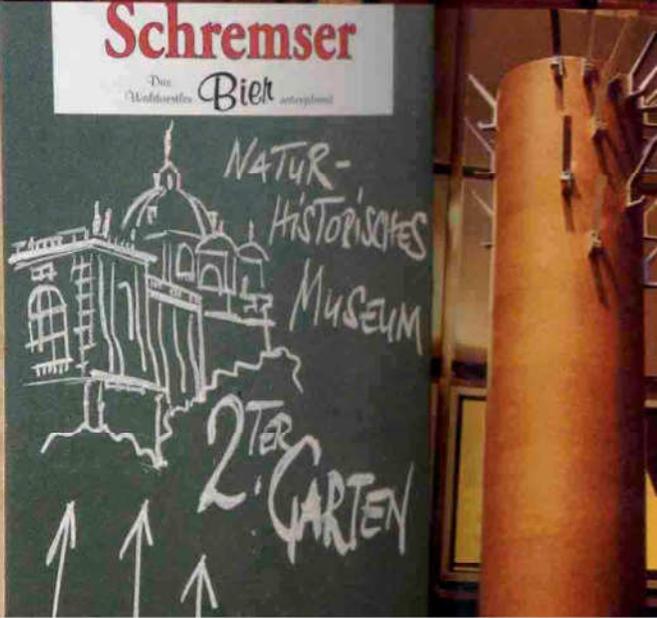
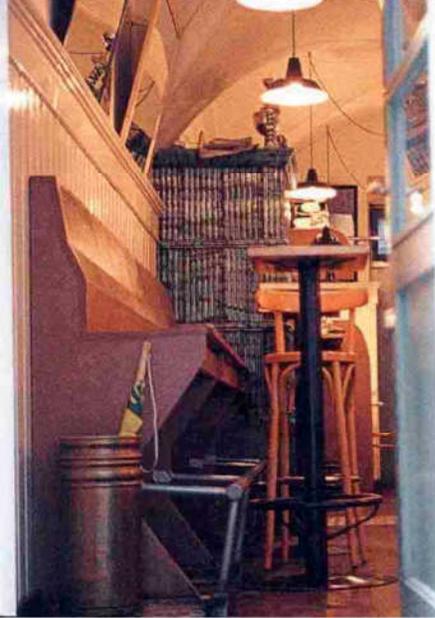
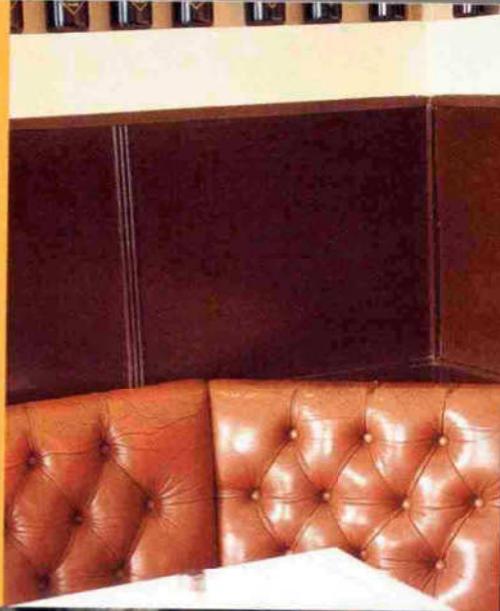
ROYAL SWEETS SUPPLIER
24 Café Konditorei Gerstner
 Kärntner Straße 13-15

The terrace of this former *Hofzuckerbäckerei* (confectioner to the Imperial Palace) makes for a sweet pit stop on the hectic main shopping stretch of Kärntner Straße. Bits of the past that are worth holding on to fortunately have been here, such as the 154-year-old recipe for *Haustorte*, a heavenly concoction of nougat, chocolate and almond. 'Many people come to Vienna just for this,' notes director Oliver Braun. A slice of one of the four dozen cakes that are baked daily with a glass of Veuve Cliquot on the terrace is the best antidote to an overdose of retail therapy.

TINY BUBBLES
25 Sektcomptoir Szigeti
 Schleifmühlgasse 19

Regulars help themselves behind the bar of this button-sized *Sekt*-swilling cellar with its chandelier strung with wine glasses and Champagne flutes, also the work of an habitué. 'This place is Vienna,' says one. There's a chunk of bread on the counter, about a dozen stools moved around at will, and wooden alcoves containing displays of the 'Classic', 'Prestige' and 'Frizzante' varieties of *Sekt* made by brothers Peter and Norbert Szigeti. Set up in 1990 to promote a 'new sparkling wine culture', all the popped corks in this bubbly comptoir come from the Szigetis' vineyard in Gols, southeast of Vienna.

eat





ALWAYS PERFECT

5 **Immervoll** Weihburggasse 17

When Immervoll ('always full') is just that, or when the weather is *immer schön*, devotees take to the terrace on Franziskanerplatz, 50 metres away, mingling with those of the Kleines Kaffée. Both are owned by actor-gastro-nome Hanno Pöschl, who has a predilection for small places and 'personal over perfect' service. The pretty vaulted bistro uses mirrors to create space and a cantilevered ceiling rack for wine bottles and glasses to save it. The menu includes at least three vegetarian dishes, which also account for one of two daily specials.

EXTRA ARCHITECTURE

6 **Österreicher im MAK** Stubenring 5

The menu and design of this spaceship-lit chunk of history are impressively in two camps: classical and modern Viennese. Located in a former exhibition space of the MAK (p. 309), restaurant and bar flow into one other around minimal wine shelving. Architects Eichinger oder Knechtl wanted to reinvent the traditional *Gasthaus*, which includes a bar, dining room and *Extra-zimmer* in which guests relax or party. The coffered ceiling is offset by mod elements, including a 22-metre-long light sail, a wine-bottle chandelier and black benches with green, pink and blue underlighting. Chef Helmut Österreicher steadily produces local favourites, including pork with *Knödel* (dumplings) and sauerkraut.

JUST DESSERTS

7 **Zum Schwarzen Kameel** Bognergasse 5

At this Jugendstil jewel, an elegant crowd sip cocktails and dine around diminutive wood-panelled bars, in lamp-lit booths and on the terrace. Opened as a spice shop in 1618 by Johan Baptist Cameel, this former haunt of Beethoven is a bar, delicatessen and *Weinhandlung* (wine store) with the best leg ham in Vienna and delightful displays. Under the whimsical black camel insignia, there is also an Alfred Loos-designed formal eating den with glass-beaded copper chandeliers and plaster friezes.

PITA FUNK

8 **Kantine** Museumsplatz 1

The main courtyard of the MQ is one of the most exciting public spaces in the world, around which people gather to read, relax, rave, write and Wi-Fi en masse. Looking over it to the Kunsthalle contemporary arts space, Kantine serves up quality organic food (pita breads with Asian flavours and Mauritian fish soup) with a restaurant-sized drinks list. From the hologram tables and green plastic chairs outside, the mood within is of a different sort. With funky couches, a ceiling disco *Kugeln* and 'music buffet', it's both physically and psychologically between the Electric Avenue experimentation space and Prachner architecture bookshop.

CHESTERFIELD UNDERGROUND

9 **Café Amacord** Rechte Wienzeile 15

'Dark, cozy, very good food and wine – typically Viennese,' is how one regular describes this den of wooden tables and Chesterfield sofas. The cooking is Viennese with a touch of the Mediterranean: risotto with pumpkin-seed oil from the Styria region (*Kürbisrisotto mit Steirisches Kürbiskernöl*), and pumpkin and lamb ragoûts (*Kurbisragout, Lammragout*). The Styrian spirit belongs to owner Dieta Eder. In 1988 she opened the first restaurant along the right-hand border of the Naschmarkt (p. 309); it's now an institution loved by students, socialists and politicians.

POTTED TREASURES

10 **Hansen** Wipplinger Straße 34

The closest thing to Viennese on the weekly Mediterranean-inspired menu is the Hokkaido-pumpkin *Strudel* or breakfast *Birchermuesli* and Wieser's jam from the Wachau region. But the location in the basement of the *Börsegebäude* (Stock Exchange building), is legendary. Named after Danish architect Theophil Hansen, who headed the monumental Ringstraße project (1874–77), the eatery shares a luxuriantly planted space with garden design store Lederleitner. Outside eating is all sandstone and terracotta, inside the skylit domed ceiling and milky-white arches are 'reminiscent of a Roman covered market'.



DESIGN SCHNITZEL
11 Huth Gastwirtschaft
 Schellinggasse 5

Gabriele and Robert Huth's *Gastwirtschaft* (inn) is a devoted supporter of *Wiener Küche*, despite its modern bistro look. Loved by young and old in search of Viennese classics in a chic setting, the glass-fronted eatery with its terrace and overhanging loft is light, leafy and *lärche* (wooded); it is the larch tree, in fact, which provides the traditional dark, woody touch. The past makes an appearance on the menu in the form of *Schnitzel*, boiled beef and meatballs. Weekly specials include vegetarian pasta and seasonal dishes.

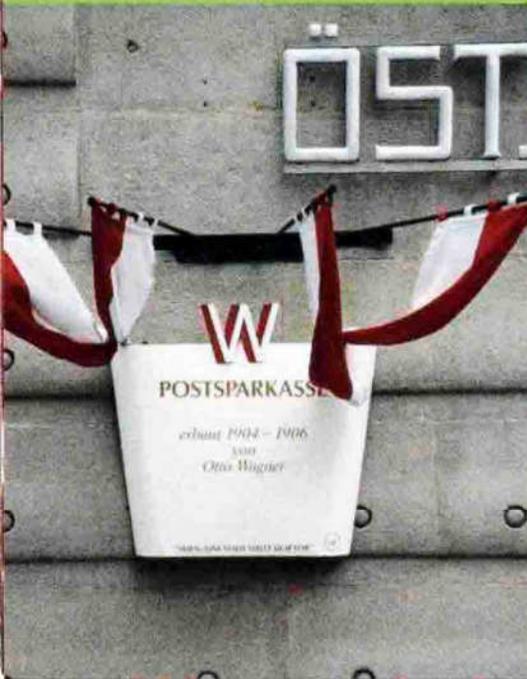
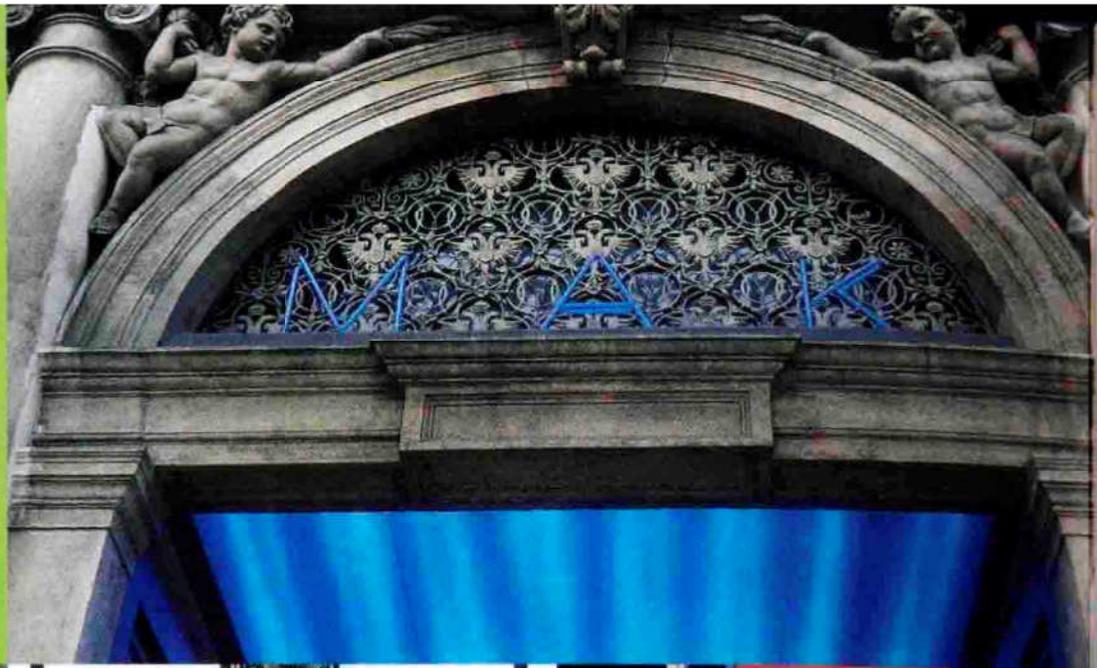
WHOLLY PUMPKIN
12 Naturkost St Josef
 Zollergasse 26

Pumpkins, plants, wooden tables and ingredients from long-established organic grocers all find their place at Naturkost St Josef health food store and its adjoining canteen. Lawyers, artists and wine merchants alike will recommend this hidden treasure, which says something about the ecological underbelly of the Viennese. Its reputation exceeds its vegetatively overwhelmed and unsigned entrance. Both eco-warriors and ladies-who-lunch come here for the seasonal range of organic salads and hot vegetable dishes.

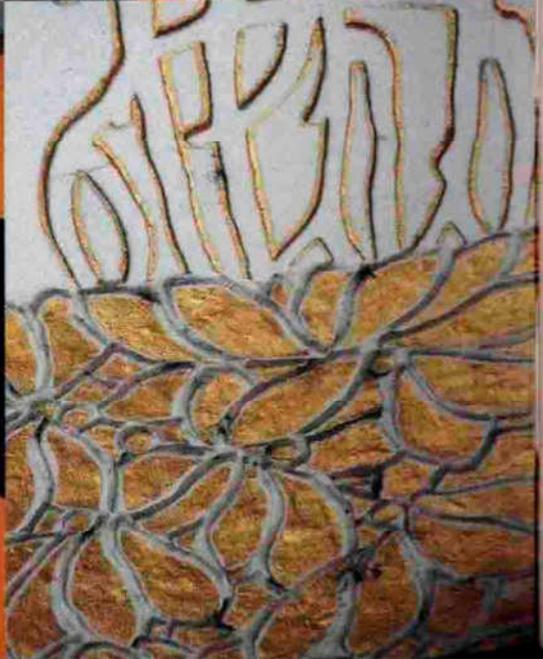
SULTANATE OF SWING
13 Julius Meindl am Graben
 Am Graben 19

The saffron window seats of this first-floor restaurant offer views onto one of the most beautiful pedestrian streets in the world. While the menu is creatively international (with the carrot *mille-feuille* an improvement on both the vegetable and the pastry), the milieu is totally Viennese. The 700-strong wine list is half that of the cellar wine bar, which serves cheese platters and wines by the glass. Finish off a meal with the house espresso (Meindl started out as a coffee roaster in 1924), served in exquisite red porcelain cups.

see



Archit



**38 Wagner-Werk
Museum Postsparkasse**
Georg Coch-Platz 2

Along with the Karlsplatz and other Art Nouveau railway pavilions, Otto Wagner's 1903 Post Office Savings Bank is a milestone of *Moderne Architektur*. Branded a 'box of nails', its functional aesthetic – as seen in the marble and granite façade fixed with 17,000 rivets and the steel-and-glass roof of the banking hall – illustrate the Hungarian-born Wagner's philosophy that 'What is impractical can never be beautiful.' This über-architect also designed the handsomely durable fittings, from floor coverings to clocks and counters and the Thonet-inspired chairs.

DOWN THE SEWERS

39 3mpc (Third Man Private Collection)
Pressgasse 25

Gerhard Strassgschwandtner spent a decade amassing records, posters and other memorabilia associated with cult movie *The Third Man*, which was filmed in Vienna in 1948, before going public in 2005. His biggest triumph was the discovery of the original zither played by Anton Karas (an instrument which led to a zither boom) in the actor's garden shed. Other highlights include a recorded interview with the film's only surviving star, Herbert Halbick, who played Hansel, and a short screening on a 1936 projector. Like the film, the visit ends in part of the 2,300 kilometres of Viennese sewers. Only open on Saturday afternoons.

SNUB TO PSEUDO-ECLECTICS

40 Secession
Friedrichstraße 12

In 1898, the Association of Visual Artists Vienna Secession commissioned Joseph Maria Olbrich to create a 'modern, functional' exhibition space. Its gold-leaf cupola and Art Nouveau façade is a landmark on a par with the spires of St Stefan's. The once controversial structure is now the oldest independent gallery in the world devoted entirely to contemporary art. In its basement lies a treasure: *The Beethoven Frieze*, a 34-metre-long fresco by the Secession's most famous son, Gustav Klimt, dedicated to the composer and inspired by his IX Symphony.

41 Museum of Applied Arts (MAK)
Stubenring 5

Silver and ivory coffee and tea services in organic shapes, candy jars, cutlery and chandeliers, table lamps, wine glasses, writing cases, brooches and astonishingly decorated secretaries are just a few of the everyday yet fantastic objects designed by Wiener Werkstätte craftsmen Josef Hoffmann and Koloman Moser for private clients. Both the WW and Jugendstil occupy permanent spaces on the first floor of the forward-thinking MAK. Inspired by London's Victoria & Albert Museum (p. 220), this 1852 neo-Renaissance building melds applied and contemporary arts in a cool and dynamic exhibition space.

DEMYSTIFYING

42 Architekturzentrum Wien
Museumsplatz 1

The Loos House as 'a house without eyebrows', the MuseumsQuartier as 'a tumour', the Haas Haus as 'a glass monster in the historic ensemble of buildings': guided tours of such controversial buildings are among the many facets of the Architecture Centre's role as a feisty public platform for design discussion. Set up in 1993, its mission is to democratize the knowledge of architecture, 'to mediate it as a cultural discipline, an everyday phenomenon and complex process'. The centre is a 'living venue' for exhibitions about current and future trends in architecture, as well as the ongoing project, 'Architecture in the 20th Century – Austria'.

CHILD'S PLAY

**43 Österreichisches
Theatermuseum**
Lobkowitzplatz 2

The baroque Palais Lobkowitz makes a splendid stage for the Theatre Collection of the Austrian National Library, which consists of costumes, stage models, marionettes, drawings and prints, all displayed with a refreshing emphasis on the illustrative over the interactive. Magic for children young and old are provided by the Javanese rod puppets and *Figurenspiegel* by Richard Teschner, and a stage of alternately spotlit costumes. Beethoven's 'Eroica' was performed here for the first time in 1805, during a private performance for Prince Lobkowitz.