



Ratskeller München

MARKTPLATZ

1681



THE MUNICH RATSKELLER AND ITS STORY

THE STORY

In the 19th century, the population of Munich increased dramatically, due to incorporation of neighbouring areas 130.000 people were living in the town.

The Market Square (today's Marienplatz) - with the Wine Street in the north-west side- was the central exchange point for salt and wine, for which Munich held the exclusive right.

Wine was the „folk's drink“, the region was a viticultural area since the 13th century(*); wine was also imported from South Tyrol, Austria and Palatinate and it was served in the wine taverns of the city; last but not least, wine was traded, sold and exported till to today's Switzerland.

The „Wein-Wirte“ or wine hosts owned renown inns, were merchants and respected council members; the City made huge profits, particularly through the „Ungeld“, the added beverage tax.

On the Eastern edge of Marienplatz is still the old Town Hall, which separated the Market Square from the „Tal“, the former "Salt Road", which led till to Salzburg.

The existing Town Hall became too small. The Council envisaged the construction of a new one, the existing buildings were bought (1865) and a competition began for the best architect design.

Georg von Hauberisser designed the building in Neo-Gothic style; on August 25, 1867, the foundation stone was laid and in 1874 the first of three sections was completed.

The City Administration moved into the above-ground rooms, while the first host couple, Ernst and Franziska Steidl opened the Ratskeller.

The expansion to the North became essential: Munich as a „Wine City“ needed wineries, -some of them were rented, in order to meet the needs in consumption and trade.

About 70 wine taverns were already existent!

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* In Bavaria, viticulture was practiced on the Isar, Inn, Danube, Wörnitz and Salzach, as well as nearby the lakes Tegernsee-, Staffelsee, and Chiemsee. Today, however, only the slopes on the Main in Franconia are of international relevance

„The grape harvest on the Isar“ tapestry of the Beast manufactory designed by P. Candid ; Nymphenburg Castle , Residence Museum



„Marktplatz“ (Market Place) in the 14th century



The corner house on Dienerstrasse with the Ratstrinkstube
Copper engraving by G.G.Winkler around 1730;
Historical Museum

The total costs of the construction amounted to 15.7 million marks, 6.2 million for the land acquisition, 23 houses were bought in the eastern and northern area.

The six cross vaults of the beer cellar depicted in 48 scenes the story of beer drinking, the "Ancient and Modern History of Munich" and the „Bockrausch“, they were painted with a lot of humor by Ferdinand Wagner.

Unfortunately time, smoke and two world wars destroyed the paintings completely.

1905, with the third building segment set, the Ratskeller doubled its surface to the actual 2000 square meters.



*the „Münchener Kindl“ is greeting the people with a cup of wine in the hand.
Relief by Edwin Weißenfels*

The existing vaults were joined by the rooms "Noah's Ark" and „Swamp“. Several artists were involved in decorating them: the "Noah's Ark" was designed by the Munich painter Heinrich Schlitt, the "Swamp" by Josef Rösl and the sculptures were by Simon Korn.

Above the portal to the „Prunkhof“ is the Relief with „The Münchener Kindl“ by E.Weißenfels as well as a fresco by Karl Schultheiß.

In all the paintings and figures there is humor and a kind of exhortation about the risks and effects of drinking: in the ceiling frescoes as well as in the grotesk gothic inspired sculptures, or in the „Battle between Beer and Champagne“(figure above) and „the Noahs' landing on the Ararat“ (by H. Schlitt, fig. Below).

The Flora and Fauna ceiling painting in the Swamp has been severely damaged through the heavy rains of the last years.

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Drunkhof Relief (by Weissenfels)
"The Marterl - The Memorial Plaque:
It shows a Reveler falling asleep in
drunkenness....
And the Admonition that too much wine
drinking weakens Fortitude....



Left: The battle between Beer and Champgne.

P.S.
 Heinrich Schlitt, was born 1849 in Wiesbaden, he also decorated the local Ratskeller and was commissioned by Villeroy & Boch to design beer mugs and decorative plates. He died in Munich in 1923.

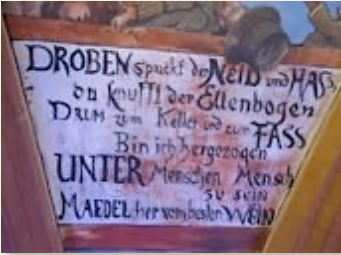


Noah is seen with a punch bowl set up.
The writing:
"from long sea voyage sick and tired
Noah comes to Ararat.
So that he recovers, he brews himself a
punch".

Noah's Ark ceiling frescoes



....*"Municipal council meetings can last a long time"....*



....*"Life outside is hard, here I can forget everything!...."*



....*"the fireplace warms me from the outside, the wine from the inside"*



.....And if you are weak, you should rather drink soda



.....beautiful women, good wine and large portions are the best reasons!



.....A guest alone? It's ok, if he consumes as much as two....



.....consume all before the End, that is the best testament!



*Sculptures by Simon Korn:
They have a kind of admonishing
effect?...*



The people of Munich were enthusiastic about the facilities, the wines, beer and food of Ratskeller. This was for the upmarket wine drinkers and beer was only to be sold in bottles.

1909 The magistrate obliged the host, -„the Wirt“- to pour 6 varieties of the Government's Wines", these were purchased and stored in the municipal winery.

For the purchase of the wines there was a separate commission: the wines had to be exclusively "from the fermented juice of the grapes" and "contain no additives and no sugar added. The wine list included 231 wines from all over the recognized wine world!

1928: In the city chronicle is mentioned: „the Ratskeller has risen to a place of solid drinking strength“,
.....„in its cellar 195,000 bottles of wine and sparkling wine are stocked and sold“. And it is worth the mention that the city -on the top-, benefited from „Ungeld“, the added tax!

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Detail of the wall fresco from the "Elysium" niche.
This showed gods, Socrates and his wife Xantippe.

Illustration from the City Archive.



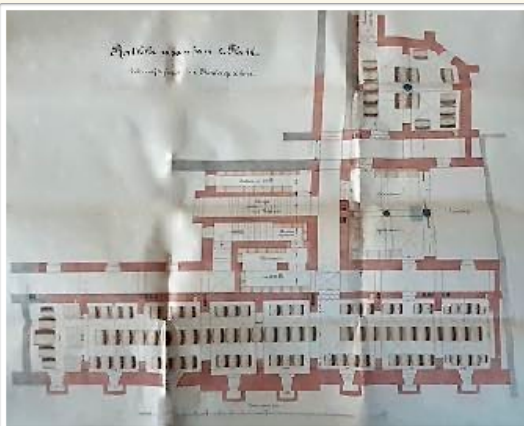
1905, the Municipal Winery was given the premises on the north side. The team was self-sufficient and led by a cellar master. They were supported by the coopers and their master Michael Kraher here in the picture.

The winery had capacity for 180 wine barrels and 50,000 bottles.

The wine supplier Heinrich Koch donated a magnificent barrel, carved by E. Grütznher.



The commission consisting of the magistrate Dr. Ernst Pachmayr, the master cooper and the winegrower Koch decided on the composition of the wines in the Ratskeller.



Map of the Municipal Winery 1905

And the actual rooms (below)



The Ratskeller, the place of bourgeois hospitality, ...“was bathed in soft light... illuminated by 250 tantalum bulbs from Siemens-Schuckert”.

In 1919 Ratskeller had to cut the opening hours, the crisis was palpable and government wines were very scarce.

1933 - 1945: the New Town Hall served as a meeting place for the National Socialist Movement and as a result, it was severely damaged in the 2nd World War.

The North wing was partially destroyed and its reconstruction lasted until 1953.

1945: Ratskeller closed its doors again for a makeshift repair of one year. 1949, Alfons and Betty Schmutzer became the next Ratskeller manager and were successful owners for 23 years. In 1956 a „Schoppenstube“=Wine Tavern was built in the previous Wine Cellar.

September 1972 the restaurant closed again, a general refurbishment was necessary. The City Council and the new delegated manager shared the huge costs of the extensive renovation and essential technical upgrade.

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Joseph Rösl painted the room „Sumpf (the Swamp) with the depictions from the first Nibelungen Ring (1874) by Richard Wagner.

Unfortunately, the paintings could not be restored.

Max Lacher painted his idea of Flora and Fauna in the swamp in 1950

Details of the ceiling frescoes in Room Sumpf



Max Lacher, the Munich painter was familiar with portraits, glass and porcelain painting. Works by him are in the Ludwig Beck department stores', in the Frauenkirche and in Ludwigshafen. Called the Carl Orff of painting, he was born in 1905, was a member of the resistance group FAB and the "Munich Secession".

Mr Christian and Maria Wieser reopened then the restaurant in 1975.

1984: The section of municipal wine cellar was turned into the "Alte Küferei" (Old barrel makers room) and the „Bacchuskeller", while the Schoppenstube became (1994) the "Franconian Wine Tasting Room" and in 2002 „the Weinwirtschaft".

In 1986, his son Peter Wieser and the son-in-law Anton Winklhofer joined the company management.

After the death of Christian Wieser (1996) his son Peter and Mr Anton Winklhofer together with their consorts Mrs Margot and Mrs Christine have been successful and tenacious.

Now it's the turn of the third generation: Mr Thomas Winklhofer has taken over the responsibility and has replaced his parents, after their retirement.

Since 2009 our guests enjoy the new atmosphere created in the rooms "Ludwig der I" (formerly „Alt-München"), „Noahs' Arch", "Sumpf" and „Bistro", which now combine a successful mix of contemporary and tradition, as well as the Royal Dolores Bar,-built in 2015.:- the new meeting point of the young generation!

In 10 rooms, the team of Ratskeller,-consisting of up to 75 waiters and 48 cooks, takes care of all guest and is honored to serve the life-long-loyal residents of Munich , as well as you, coming from all over the world, sharing the same passion for the traditional bavarian cuisine, the naturally brewed beer, the high quality of the local german and international wines as well as the hospitality in the unique atmosphere of the ancient basement of theNew Town Hall.

At this last moment we hope you had pleasant stay, we are already looking forward to welcoming you next time and merely want to express our gratitude for your visit, saying...

...Vergelt's Gott!"



1803, despite rising beer consumption wine bars were present in Munich. In 1870 existed 70 , and the number rose up to 141 in 1930.

The Ratskeller, with its Bürgerstube, Weintrinkstube and Ratstrinkstube (here in the picture the original connecting staircase -still in existing today) was the largest wine location in town.

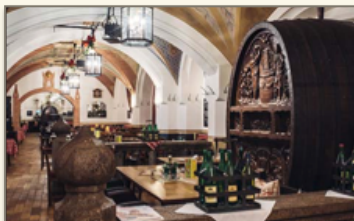
Most of the wine taverns had to close their doors during the recession in the 1930s.



Georg Hauberrisser began his work for Munich City Hall at the age of 25; it was completed 42 years later.

He became a specialist for town halls. Those in Kaufbeuren, Wiesbaden, St-Johann-Saarbrücken, Graz, Landsberg, Landshut and Ulm are also his work. The Brussels Town Hall was his "source of inspiration" for the New Town Hall in Munich.

yesterday & today



From above: Main room, Noah's Arch, Sumpf, Ludwig I, Weinwirtschaft

Ratskeller	the Leaseholders
1874-1877	Ernst Steidl
1877	Schlich
1904-1905	Kümmerling A & M
1905-1910	
1910	August Kämmerling
1920-1925	Ludwig Lindner
1928-1931	Hans Fürst
1934-1942	Josef Wilpert
1946	K&M Kraus
1949	A&B Schmutzer
1972	Refurbishment
1975	Christian und Maria Wieser, Anton und Christine Winklhofer
2023	Peter and Margot Wieser, Thomas Winklhofer Jr.

Author: Rosario Pellicchia, 2023

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