

Only in Vienna: All reviews

Adrian Bridge, The Telegraph:

An invaluable guide to the city's hidden corners.

www.talkingcities.co.uk:

From the outset it's easy to gauge just how much care and attention to detail Duncan J. D. Smith has put into crafting this excellent Vienna offering. Indeed, we'd go so far as to say that it's one of the best travel guides we've read in recent years. The city's sights are described here in detail, along with an excellent collection of accompanying photographs. All told, Smith's writing brings to life a city brimming with culture and tradition, with emphasis placed upon little known details about Vienna's major and more difficult-to-find sights.

Mhaira Mc Neill, BBC Radio 4:

Your book has been fascinating.

Dardis McNamee, The Vienna Review (July/August 2010):

"Only in Vienna" is a very special book, a Rosetta stone for tourists, and for the Viennese an explorer's guide to old familiar places, that with charm and erudition, gives us back an enormously richer part of a world we thought we already knew.

www.dreambookandtravel.com:

"Only in Vienna" will forever hold a special place in my heart, as it was my first encounter with the city off the beaten path. I purchased it from the bookshop at the Belvedere Palace a couple of months into my time here and diligently uncovered every delightful hidden gem outlined. Mysterious courtyards, forgotten cemeteries, the world's first croissant, the Holy Grail, everything you need to fall in love with Vienna if you are not the touristy type.

Margaret Leroy (bestselling author of "Trust" and "The Soldier's Wife"):

I absolutely love "Only in Vienna"!

www.idlewildbooks.com:

"Only in Vienna" is part of a great series pioneered by 'Urban Explorer', Duncan JD Smith. These books have such good secret corners and hidden treasures that they make great gifts even for residents of the cities they profile. The Vienna version's highlights include Klimt's last studio, a traditional urban vineyard, and wonderful explanations of secret messages carved into a cathedral.

Hidden Europe Magazine (Issue 26, May-June 2009):

In a world where places seem to become ever more similar, it was an absolute joy to stumble on the "Only in..." series of guidebooks written by Duncan J. D. Smith. Each guide identifies 84 distinctive sights within a particular city. Duncan Smith brings to the "Only in..." series the gaze of the enquiring outsider. His approach to places and history appeals to us a lot. The "Only in..." series is a refreshing antidote to the prevailing tide of uniformity favoured by too many travel guides.

Carla Ramsay:

Superb guide to give you a lot of extra, insider knowledge to the city. Fantastic book! We had five days in Vienna and really benefitted from having this book alongside a city guide. We used this book to take us to little-known places or understand more of the detail of what we could see as we explored this gorgeous city. As we got to a new part of the city, we used the “Only In Vienna” guide to see what else was nearby and really enriched our experience of the city, as we learned about different squares, statues, plaques and the history of the city. I would really recommend this if you have only a little bit of time in Vienna or a lot. The book is really well researched and takes you to all parts of the city centre. The sections are very carefully chosen and a great mix of architecture, monuments, public art, interesting artefacts. I will definitely be buying the other ‘Only In’ guides for other places I go to in the future.

www.amazon.com:

...this absolutely stellar book...an excellent companion because it highlights the fun, easy and quirky little things that make up the spirit of Vienna. It combines historic sites such as monuments from the dynastic era or prize exhibits in the big museums, with anecdotes about the history of peculiar street names or street signs, and places you might have seen in movies set in Vienna. It spans much more of the city than the usual tourist-attractions-in-the-city-centre.

Nicky Gardner and Susanne Kries, www.eurocheapo.com:

A guide to hidden corners, little-known places and unusual objects, says the blurb, nicely summarizing the emphasis of a series of guidebooks which we have recently discovered. “Only in Budapest” was published in 2006, with author Duncan J. D. Smith adeptly reviewing 84 offbeat and eclectic curiosities around the Hungarian capital. Now Smith has followed his Budapest debut with a trio of new titles. “Only in Berlin”, “Only in Vienna” and “Only in Prague” bring a bit of Duncan Smith’s distinctive style to three more central European cities, with in each case 84 hidden gems being unveiled.

We learned that a mosque not far from our Berlin home is the oldest in Germany, discovered monster water lilies in Prague and found out about old Turkish cannonballs embedded in the stonework of Vienna buildings.

The Internet may have revolutionized our travel planning, but decent maps and first rate guidebooks are still a must. Yet the latter are often not written with an eye for detail, and that’s where the “Only In” series really appeals to us. The author reveals the entire history of a city and its hinterland through 84 detailed snapshots of the urban landscape, every one of them well worth a visit.

In a way, Duncan Smith’s approach is similar to our efforts with “Hidden Europe” magazine gently trying to get beneath the skin of a place and identifying spots that are genuinely offbeat and not on the regular tourist circuit. And all the better as almost all the sights mapped out by Duncan Smith in his guidebooks come with no admission charges.

Mark Ebery:

Your super book has just arrived here via Amazon. Packed full of interesting information and illustrated with some great photos. I’ll have very great pleasure in reading this thoroughly - and for using it as the basis for several more visits to my favourite city!

www.wieninternational.at:

The book "Only in Vienna" dedicates itself to unusual spots, hidden squares and secret places worth investigating. It is the ideal handbook for all those who want to discover new sides to Vienna and find out about the city away from the usual tourist hotspots - from hidden courtyards and secretive bars to curious museums and long forgotten cemeteries.

Austrian Times (21.06.10):

New English guide reveals Vienna's hidden treasures

There are thousands of tourist guides about Vienna, but "Only in Vienna" by Duncan J. D. Smith is an outstanding work surmounting its rival publications, the Austrian Times can reveal.

Smith's guide might not be the ideal choice for those visiting the Austrian capital for the first time with little time on their hands. But everyone keen on discovering the city's many hidden secrets lying off the well-trodden paths should equip themselves with "Only in Vienna".

The English-language publication – which does not ignore any of Vienna's 23 districts when it describes secret gardens, little-known museums and forgotten cemeteries – features lots of information most residents are not even aware of. Sheffield-born Smith, who calls himself an 'Urban Explorer', has also published guides about Budapest, Prague, Berlin, Munich and Hamburg. "Vienna is surely one of the grandest and also one of the most fascinating capital cities in Europe," he said.

www.amazon.co.uk:

This is a wonderfully refreshing way of discovering Vienna! Reading this guide does make the difference between just looking at Vienna and seeing it with all its history and eccentricities. I don't think I shall ever be tired of reading this book. As well as being thoroughly educational, each self-contained chapter is a delightful story for light reading pleasures.

Gavin Plumley, www.eintartetemusik.blogspot.com:

The nooks and crannies of Mitteleuropa

What is Urban Exploration? According to Duncan J. D. Smith it is a process whereby the explorer reveals the history of civilisation through journeys off the beaten track. Having started in Vienna with "Only in Vienna", Smith has now produced guides to the hidden corners of Prague, Munich, Budapest, Berlin and Hamburg. The Vienna guide, published in 2008, expands significantly on the less-celebrated parts of the Austrian capital. Where the Funeral Museum is given only glancing notice in the Rough Guide, say, here it is explained by an entirely separate entry. The doorway in which Harry Lime first appears, the Russian Orthodox Church or the last vineyard in central Vienna are all given due care and attention. His knowledge of the city's Innere Stadt, Vorstädte and Vororte is deeply impressive and makes for a charming additional guide.

Pastor Roy Ledbetter, USA:

I have just finished reading your book, "Only in Vienna", which I bought last year while in Augsburg. It was a delight in German, and I am sure it is even more charming in English. I have been to Vienna many times, most notably on my honeymoon in 1977. Thank you for your guidebook that brought so many happy

memories back. I will be in Vienna again soon, and am even more inspired by your work to go exploring.

Sharon Griffiths, UK:

Just to say that I bought “Only in Vienna” on my last day there - but just in time to spot the '05' on the Stephansdom and to visit the Frankfurt Kitchen in the MAK, which entranced me. Great stuff! Before I visit any of the other cities, I shall make a point of buying the “Only in...” guides on my FIRST day.

Adrienn Bartek-Rhomberg, Vienna tour guide:

Congratulations on your guidebook to Vienna. I am a licensed Viennese tour guide and regularly use your book in the course of preparations for my English tours. It is a great source of material. Keep up the good work!

Rod Dalmaine:

Book very, very helpful...it became my constant companion...I now have to decide where to go next, wherever “Only in...” takes me.

Ashley Mancini, www.amazon.co.uk:

A Fantastic Guide.

Wow! What can I say. If you want a standard, average, run of the mill guidebook, which only takes you to the same, overcrowded, touristy sites that any other guidebook can take you to, then please DO NOT buy this book. If, though, like me, you crave adventure, enjoy visiting all the famous sites that the place your visiting holds but yearn to discover more about the wonderful area your in and like to get under the surface of the place, and find its heartbeat and hidden gems, which are pretty much unknown (but are sometimes more interesting than many of its more famous sites), then DO GET this guidebook.

Duncan has done such a great job with his series of guidebooks. The books themselves are beautifully made, with detailed maps on the inside covers, and just the right size to read whilst your planning your new journey, and also to have with you in your rucksack whilst out actually exploring all the sites. Duncan's style of writing is very easy to read, fun, informative and also very authoritative. Duncan has also done an excellent job taking all of the beautiful photographs that adorn the guide's pages; he is truly an ‘urban explorer’.

I can simply say I absolutely adore Vienna; it is truly beautiful and has so many contrasts and characters. Duncan's book made me fall even more in love with it and when I was doing some research on my very first trip, the hidden corners, little-known places and unusual stories, places, sites and objects that Duncan explained in great detail made me see and experience things whilst I was there which I wouldn't have discovered otherwise. I have to thank Duncan sincerely for that; he made a trip I was so looking forward to into such a memorable one. My subsequent trips have been just as fantastic, and this book has helped me unlock more of Vienna's past. I have been led on many other adventures throughout Europe with Duncan as my guide and I would urge you also to discover his other guides.

If you are planning to go to Vienna, my sincere advice is do not hesitate – order this book straightaway. Book your travel arrangements and accommodation, and then when Duncan's book arrives, find a quiet corner with the comfiest chair you can find and just lose yourself in Duncan's stories about this beautiful place. Be prepared to

fall in love with Vienna's charms and I can't think of anyone better than Duncan to take you by the hand and guide on a journey you will not forget.

Martin Dawes, The Sheffield Star (August 3, 2005):

Duncan's latest book is a real Viennese whirl! Some 60 years after the fictional Harry Lime stalked the streets of Vienna in "The Third Man", Sheffield's self-styled 'Urban Explorer' Duncan J. D. Smith has been doing it for real - and creating almost as much interest. For he has been telling the good burghers of Vienna things they didn't know about their own city in a new guidebook ("Only In Vienna") homing in on its oddities. Enthralled by details of the world's oldest underground toilet and the first fitted kitchen, let alone the area where Hitler and Stalin lived next to each other for six weeks, one Austrian newspaper enthused: "It's the English approach to detail and eccentricities," painting an image for its readers of Duncan as a rather unusual English explorer in an urban jungle.

Peter Pils, Vienna:

Thank you for your wonderful "Only in Vienna". I follow step by step the places you describe, and savour the anecdotal delicacies.

"A poet, who visited Wien
fell in love with the Stygian scene
of vanishing charm and abysses,
thence just like a reborn Ulysses
he chanted so heartfelt and keen."

Jordi Bulto, Barcelona:

I bought your guidebook "Only in Vienna" a few months ago during a visit to the city and I really like it.

Steph Brunner, Austria:

...reading your book brings the visitor nearer to the real character of the city, reflecting its role during different times and showing its various faces. It lights the way to visiting another Vienna that is only seen at a second glance. The reader is motivated to become an explorer and to have the chance of building a more individual and personal relationship to the city.

Petra Öhlbock, FHWien-Studiengänge der WKW:

Last week I started to read "Only in Vienna" and I'm really impressed. I was neither born in nor brought up in Vienna, yet I have spent the last ten years in this city, and reading your book has made it clear to me that I know so little about it. Your book highlights many new aspects, and interesting details, which help me to better understand Vienna, which I now love more than ever.

Dafni Mavromatti, Vienna:

I have bought your book for myself and for friends who visit Vienna and I find it really great!

Brigitte Hilzensauer, translator of the German edition:

I can only tell you once again what a very great pleasure it was to translate your book. Today I was pondering if there were some secret places in Vienna you don't know - I haven't found any. It is still a pleasure reading the text! A time-tested proof: if you

have read it twice and feel already bored the book is no good; if you have read it four or five times and still like it, it has been written by Duncan J. D. Smith!

Sophie Menapace, Vienna:

I love the little details I knew nothing about. I am now walking even more open-eyed through the streets of Vienna. Thank you for opening our eyes to beauty and curious details.

Vanessa Otto, Vienna:

A few day ago an american friend gave me a book called "Only in Vienna", written by an english author, Duncan J. D. Smith, who lives most of the time in our city. It is not just another city guide. It 's one of those little treasures you start to love and won't give away - not that I have ever thrown a book into the dustbin! The book tells little stories about hidden places and small neighbourhoods. It gives a special view on parts of several districts most Viennese wouldn't have knowledge of because they are too busy taking holidays in foreign cities. And here comes the important point: there is so much more around you in a big city than just famous monuments. Breathe the air and let yourself go with the flow of inspiration.

Silvia McDonald, www.virtualvienna.net:

What a lovely book. I am sure it will be a big seller.

Brigitte Timmermann, Vienna Walks & Talks:

Looks terrific!

Michael Wolf, Hamburg:

I have just read your report about the filming of "The Living Daylights" in Vienna on Timothy Dalton's website and was really fascinated to learn some more details about one of my favourite Bond films. Well done - and the pictures were really nice too. I (also) really enjoyed your report on "The Third Man's" Vienna...I will have to go there again soon to check out all the places.

Manisha Shah, USA:

The book is a fun read. We read a little bit every day and are getting more knowledgeable daily. The anecdotes are great. I can only give it a rave review. Your book really is different and is perfect for someone who has been living in Vienna for years but has stopped paying attention to just how beautiful and historic it is.

James Dickinson, USA:

...your very excellent and beautifully produced book ...you are very lucky to have such a great publisher.

Hans Kohlenberg, Munich:

Short texts, well-chosen pictures, easily digestible and very, very interesting.

www.austriatoday.at:

A new guide to Vienna, "Only in Vienna", written by Duncan J. D. Smith and published by Christian Brandstatter Verlag, has been on sale for 19.90 euros since March at local bookstores. Subtitled "A Guide to Hidden Corners, Little-Known Places and Unusual Objects", the 223-page volume is a comprehensive, illustrated

guide to more than 80 fascinating and unusual historical sights in the Austrian capital. The volume is recommended for visitors who want to discover something a little different and for residents of the city who may have thought that they already knew everything there was to know about it.

Laura Murray, Australia:

I stumbled upon your webpage when I typed "Before Sunrise filming locations" into my Google search and I'm thoroughly impressed. Congratulations on your books ("Only in Vienna", etc.). I am sure that traveling through Europe with them will make my trip even more special.

Christian Mikosch, Vienna:

This book is truly amazing and I am writing this as someone who has lived in Vienna for fifteen years. Although I have always endeavoured to seek out interesting and unusual places Duncan J. D. Smith has shown me some gems, which I had never even heard of. Anyone who is truly interested in getting to know a city like Vienna, off the beaten track, can make some amazing discoveries with this book.

Univ.-Prof. Wolfgang Zankl, Vienna:

It really is an excellent piece of literature. I learned more about my city than in the last fifteen years living here!

Cosmas Tembo, Zambia:

I'm happy to receive the book you sent to me. It is interesting to me and my family.

Nancy Schulte, www.amazon.com:

As Americans living in Vienna we use a lot of travel guides. Of the nine we have for Vienna and Austria, we like "Best Drives Austria", for its clearly-depicted circuit drives, a book published here in Vienna called "Only in Vienna", for its descriptions of unique sights in Vienna (like the Turkish cannonballs embedded in the Stephansdom), and the "Eyewitness Travel Guides", for their maps.

Kristin Teuchtmann, Vienna:

"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I
took the one less travelled by,
and that has made all the difference."

"The Road Not Taken", Robert Frost (1920)

Like Robert Frost, Duncan James Dufton Smith views himself as a traveller, an urban explorer who - in contrast to the rapidity and rush of our time - prefers to indulge in the peace and calmness of his surroundings, wherever he might be. He, like Frost, would rather choose the road less known and trodden by tourists. In contrast to Frost, he did not write a poem about this endeavour, but rather converted his experience into a wonderfully and (with his own photos) comprehensively illustrated guidebook to more than 80 fascinating and unusual historic sights in Vienna.

Naturally, one can find chapters on St. Stephen's Cathedral, Schloss Schonbrunn, and the Prater with its Ferris wheel in his "Only In Vienna - A Guide to Hidden Corners, Little-Known Places and Unusual Objects", which was published in the spring of 2005 in both English and German by the publishing house Christian Brandstätter. He also does not shy away from well-known personalities such as Sigmund Freud, Emperor Franz Josef I and his wife Sisi, Otto Wagner, Gustav Klimt, and Strauss.

However, Duncan Smith manages to describe them as more than just characteristics and components of Vienna. Through his meticulous research - which reveals his academic background in Ancient History and Archaeology - combined with his natural talent for storytelling, he also succeeds in putting his subjects into a new - and for the most part unknown framework. He not only points the reader towards the popular Sigmund Freud Museum in the Berggasse, he also informs him/her about the almost unknown Freud monument on the Bellevuehohe and why it was erected in 1977.

The reader learns how the Habsburg's summer palace obtained its name and what the symbol "05" next to the entrance of St. Stephen's means. Chapter titles like "Where the Wurst is Best!", "The Architect who Feared his Wife" or "From Julius Meinl to Billy Wilder" demonstrate the somewhat different approach that Duncan Smith takes to a city, which allows that city to become even more fascinating through his perceptive recounting of his experiences.

In this way, Robert Frost's realization is vividly illustrated for the reader of "Only in Vienna", namely that it is the less-travelled road to the unusual, secret or hidden places, to which Smith absconds with us, that makes all the difference. This guide makes for wonderful reading.