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ZunftHaus zur Zimmerleuten

A lovely lunch at [ZunftHaus zur Zimmerleuten](#) provided an interesting look into the history of the guild houses of Zurich.

The guild houses were unions of craftsmen, and from 1400 - 1800, twenty-six guilds ruled Zurich. The ZunftHaus zur Zimmerleuten was a guild house of carpenters from the middle of the 15th century, although in 1708, they demolished the original building to create the present two-story stone house. The red eagle on the coat of arms on the façade is the emblem of the carpenters' guild.

In October 2006, Edward F. Nesta and I had lunch at **ZunftHaus zur Zimmerleuten** with our friend, Oliver Guggisberg, who wanted to introduce us to the history of the guild houses.



We had lunch in a private dining room with hanging brass chandeliers, carved ornate stone columns and antique paintings in ornate Baroque frames lining the walls. Our round table featured pristine white linen tablecloths and white napkins folded into classic crowns, sparkling crystal, silver charger plates, and an autumnal arrangement of chestnuts, gourds, and orange Chinese lanterns on silver plates. White curtains framed large windows with white window boxes overflowing with bright red geraniums with views of old town Zurich.



The guild houses have their own wines, and our server Mike Fehr, brought us aperitifs of 2005 Räschling Burghalde Riesbach, Landolt Weine Zurich, 12% alcohol, with a light nose and pear notes on the palate, to accompany a bowl of almonds, as we looked at the menu written in Swiss-German, which is slightly different than German.

We began with an amuse bouche of a salmon roulade on celery. A few moments later steaming bowls of my favorite Jerusalem artichoke soup swirled with pumpkin oil, enhanced with a dollop of cream, and

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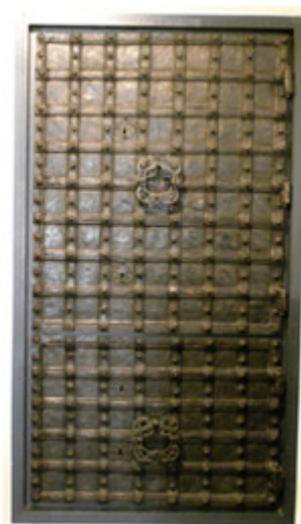
garnished with chives (Tobinambursuppe mit Kürbiskernölhaube) arrived. It was the first time that Oliver tried Jerusalem artichokes, and he loved the rich flavors of this delectable soup.



For their main course, Edward and Oliver selected the Veal Zurich Style (Züri Gischnätzlets), sliced tender pieces of veal, carefully browned in butter, simmered in local Zurich white wine, followed by an addition of chopped onions and fresh mushrooms, topped with a generous crown of whipped cream, and served with accompanying golden hash brown potatoes. Our server paired this dish with another guild wine, a 2004 Landolt Zunfthaus zur Zimmerleuten Zunftwein, Landolt Weine Zurich, 12% alcohol.



I continued with delightful Crêpes gratinated with Greyerzer cheese, filled with seasonal vegetables, and served on a bed of creamed spinach (Grüens Omlett mit Greyerzer gratinierte Schnittlauchcrêpe gefüllt mit Saisongemüse auf einem Beet von Rahmspinat).



After lunch, we took a tour of the guild house with Mrs. Karin Forunz, who is the only woman to run a guild restaurant. Guilds still exist today and are noblemen societies, although they no longer have political affiliations. The guild houses usually have a restaurant, and the members hold meetings on the upper levels. The guilds are traditional clubs for men, with no women members in the guilds.

Each guild has its own treasures, and Mrs. Forunz opened the ornate 17th century wrought iron safe for us to see the guild's silver and gold treasures of over 160 years, including drinking vessels, jugs, candlesticks, and silverware. Unfortunately, members divided the medieval treasures in 1789, at the end of the ruling

guilds.



While the silver inside the safe is interesting, the safe itself is even more impressive, and requires four very decorative keys to open the locks. Mrs. Forunz explained that no one has possession of all four keys, which are of varying lengths and would be extremely difficult to copy, to ensure the safety of the treasures. Members still use the silver treasures for special events.

On the top floor of the Zunfthaus zur Zimmerleuten, it is interesting to note the wooden ceiling from the 14th century, the stained glass windows, and the wooden floors. The Zunfthaus zur Zimmerleuten is the oldest and richest guild house in Zurich.

If you are planning a trip to Zurich during April, be sure to schedule your visit around the third Monday in April, for the Festival of the Guilds, where members march in a parade in historical costumes.



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