FEATURES RECOMMENDED

The Bright Stillness of Salzburg Under Lockdown

By Gregory Manni December 9, 2021

The Salzach River runs through the northwest end of Salzburg. (c) Gregory Manni

A series of photographs explore Salzburg under lockdown—an unusual glimpse of a city known for its scenic views and cultural tradition.

Photographs and Text by Gregory Manni

Austria is living under its fourth national lockdown in less than two years. Restaurants, retail shops, hotels and Christmas markets are all closed, in scenes reminiscent of last year's late-Nov. lockdown. Salzburg—a city that would normally be chock-full of travelers sipping mugs of spiced Glühwein or hunting for gifts in the windows of its iconic shopping district—has been left to the locals. The city's sidewalks and trails are busy, as residents leave their homes for fresh air, while downtown, streets and plazas sit mostly quiet under the glow of Christmas lights.

Over the course of a typical year, tourists outnumber Salzburg locals 58 to 1. Businesses may

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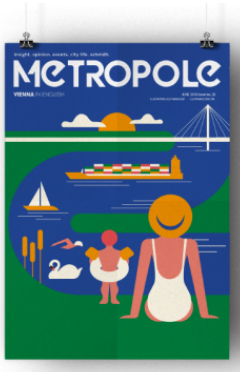

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€ 8.00 – € 13.00 incl. tax Buy Now be scrambling in their absence, but the emptiness leaves room to examine the city in a new light. Without the commercialization fostered by the tourism industry, Salzburg starts to look closer to the way many locals perceive their home: a place of warmth, natural beauty and a slower pace of life.

City dwellers cross the street at Mirabellplatz, in downtown Salzburg.

Salzburg's famous Mirabell Gardens are closed off due to snowy conditions.

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Holiday lights hang above Linzer Gasse Platzl, a small square in Salzburg's historic center. With shops closed, a few passersby walk through what is normally a bustling avenue.

The city's most popular Christmas market, the Salzburger Christkindlmarkt, is held in the old town outside Salzburg Cathedral every year. City-goers pass by closed stalls.

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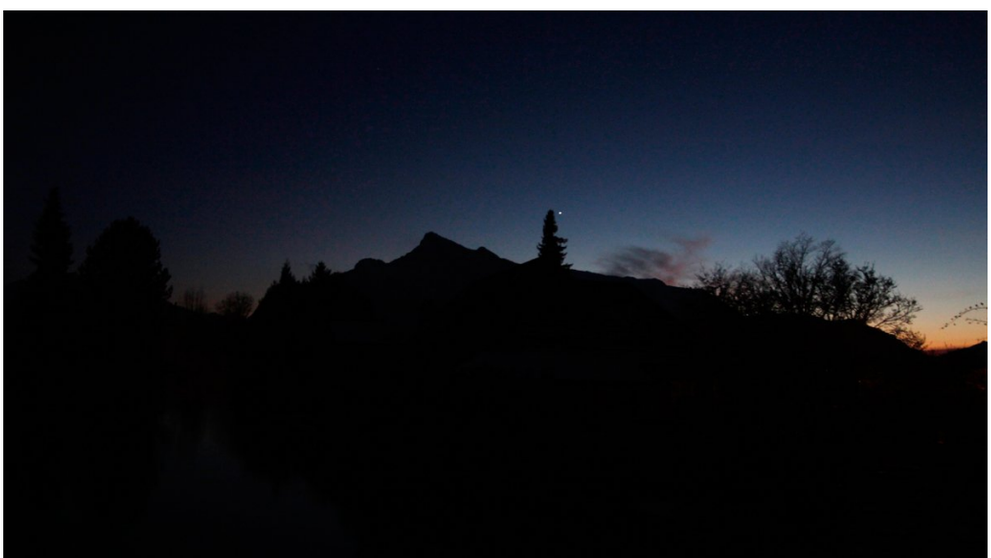
The lockdown has hurt Christmas market vendors, who in some cases had already paid for their stall spaces, Christmas goods and staff. According to reporting by *Der Standard*, sales figures this season are forecasted to be 70% less than in pre-pandemic years.

Afternoon sunlight falls over Salzburg's southeast end. On the hill to the right sits the Hohensalzburg Fortress.

The Hohensalzburg Fortress is reflected in a pool of snowmelt.

Lights snake along Salzburg's iconic shopping district on Getreidegasse.

City dwellers turn away from a jewelry shop window. Next door, a chocolate shop advertises Mozartkugel, a sweet dedicated to composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who was born in Salzburg.



The sun sets behind the Untersberg, a mountain just south of the city.

As someone who moved to Salzburg within the last year, I've only known the city a short while. But in that brief period, I've learned to see another side of it—the one that lies beneath the gaudy souvenirs, the *Sound of Music* tours or the grandiosity of the Salzburger Festspiele.

I'm not sure that would have been possible without these lockdowns. Despite their many downsides, they have slowed us down and given us a fresh perspective.

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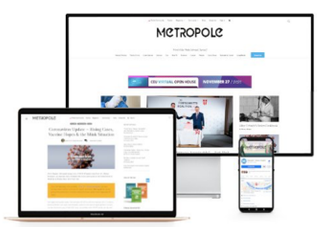

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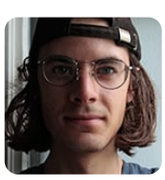

Gregory Manni

Gregory Manni grew up between Detroit's suburban sprawl and Lake Michigan's shoreline, and has since become a disciple of ecology, poetry, and story. He moved to Austria in 2021 to see about a girl, and his current aim is beating back climate change through the act of writing. He tweets at @gregory_manni.

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