

Business portrait, February 2009

wombat's Vienna, Munich and Berlin: The first Austria-based City Hostels

With the concept of wombat's CITY HOSTELS, the young businessmen Sascha Böck and Marcus Praschinger have brought a certain type of youth tourism to Austria and Germany, which is already common practice throughout the Anglo-American areas. Cleanliness and comfort instead of curfews and 10-bed-dorms – wombat's is not a youth hostel in the traditional sense.

wombat's is a backpacker hostel: a unique convergence of hotel and youth hostel, at which many facilities are shared among guests.

The comfy lounge, the womBar and the guest kitchen are shared, as are the very popular dormitories with enhanced shower and toilet – single, twin and double rooms are nonetheless on offer. An apparent advantage is that the costs for the individual are kept to a minimum due to this shared use of many facilities. But even more important is that it creates a friendly, mutual and communicative atmosphere among the guests. The feeling "hostel" is difficult to describe – one has to experience it to fully understand it. The term hostel does not describe a place; it rather describes an attitude, a philosophy. The encounter of diverse people who all share the wonders, the ups and downs and the experiences of the adventure called "travelling".

Back in 1999, Marcus Praschinger and Sascha Böck already focused on the booming niche of youth tourism and built the first wombat's CITY HOSTEL "The Base" **close to the main train station, Westbahnhof**. Success was inevitable: the first expansion came in 2001, when the number of beds was raised from 150 to 261. 2004, another wombat's was opened in Munich, Germany, **right at the main train station**, two years later "The Lounge" joined in on Vienna's main shopping street, the **Mariahilfer Straße**, in June 2006 and, in February 2008, the wombat's CITY HOSTEL Berlin in the vicinity of **Alexanderplatz** was opened. The next opening will soon take place: by 2010, the fifth wombat's CITY HOSTEL will open its gates at the **Viennese Naschmarkt** – by then, it will be the biggest house with its 440 beds.

Awards: The Hostel Oscar HOSCAR was awarded to the wombat's CITY HOSTELS in 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007 and 2008

Absolute cleanliness is top priority for the owners – that is why wombat's was **elected cleanest hostel world-wide** in 2003; the Bavarian affiliated company received this award in 2004. In 2006, the wombat's CITY HOSTEL's received 3 "Hoscars" (Hostel-Oscar) and was elected **most popular hostel chain in the world** – a title they regained in 2007 and again in 2008. The new wombat's CITY HOSTEL Berlin, which had been opened in February 2008, was awarded the "Best hostel 2008" in the category

"Large Hostels" (more than 300 beds), Vienna's wombat's CITY HOSTEL "The Lounge" were given the award "No.1 Hostel in Austria for 2008".

Unlike the traditional youth hostels with 8- and 6-bed dorms, you find only **2-, 4-, and 6-bed dorms** here (see table). **Each room is equipped with a private bathroom and individual lockers, the bed sheets are included in the price.** Style and design put the finishing touch to the overall picture of each wombat's –in "The Base" in Vienna the interior wall design was done in the style of the painter Wassily Kandinsky. The collaboration with a team of young interior designers who have designed the house in Berlin sets and embraces future trends.

"Get together" at womBar

The conventional youth hostels curfew at 11 p.m. does not exist here. The reception is open 24/7. Also, the womBar, the in-house pub, with happy hour is open into the early hours of the morning. Incorporator and directing manager Marcus Praschinger stresses, *"We want to create a social atmosphere for our guests: partying, making new friends and just generally having a good time – that is essential."*

Furthermore, extensive extra facilities are a main part of the company's philosophy: **internet hotspots, a pool table, coin operated laundry and a guest kitchen** can be found in each wombat's City Hostel. Last but not least, it is the reasonable price that is contributing to increasing overnight stays and recommendations among travellers. Hints in tour and hitchhiker guides are one thing, but word of mouth is still a top decision-making support when choosing accommodation – a good position for further expansion plans to Prague and Budapest.

By now, the major part of the bookings is done via internet on www.wombats-hostels.com. Another successful strategy is that the guests already meet like-minded people at the front desk as **only people who have travelled a lot themselves work at wombat's.**

What remains is the question about the name. The two founders of wombat's were backpackers themselves and travelled across the whole world: *"Marcus and I had a friend in Melbourne who tragically died in an accident. He loved the Australian marsupials and always had the dream of opening a hostel with the name 'wombat's backpackers'. So the name is dedicated to him,"* states Sascha Böck, founder and managing director.

Turn to the next page for womFacts!

Pictures in printable quality: www.wombats-hostels.com/styleguide
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womFacts	Vienna "The Base"	Munich	Vienna "The Lounge"	Berlin	Vienna "Naschmarkt"
Founding year	1999	2004	2006	2008	2010
Beds / Rooms	261 / 75	300 / 65	230 / 65	346 / 84	440 / 122
Overnight stays / Guests per year 2007	80.000 / 35.000	101.000 / 47.000	82.000 / 36.000		
Overnight stays / Guests per year 2008	88.000 / 37.700	102.500 / 42.900	82.000 / 36.250	97.000 / 39.500	
Price / Person 2008	€ 17.- – € 25.-	€ 12.- – € 35.-	€ 17., – € 25.-	€ 17. – € 40.-	
Turnover 2007	€ 1.72 Mio	€ 2.4 Mio	€ 1.75 Mio		
Turnover 2008	€ 1.86 Mio	€ 2.53 Mio	€ 1.81 Mio	€ 1.77 Mio	
Occupancy 2008	81,76%	80,68%	94,74%	87,03%	
Room size	2-, 4- and 6-bed dorms	2-, 4-, 6- and 8-bed dorms	2-, 4- and 6-bed dorms	2-, 4- and 6-bed dorms, apartments with patio or balcony	2-, 4-, 6- and 8-bed dorms
Sanitary facilities	Shower & toilet in every room	Shower & toilet in every room	Shower & toilet in every room	Shower & toilet in every room	Shower & toilet in every room
Youth Hostel Card	not required	not required	not required	not required	not required
Age limit	none	none	none	none	none
Gender-segregation	on demand: Pink wing for ladies	on demand: Pink wing for ladies	on demand: Pink wing for ladies	on demand: Pink wing for ladies	on demand: Pink wing for ladies
Miscellaneous	"no smoking", sun patio, packed lunch on demand, half board by request	packed lunch on demand, half board by request	"no smoking", packed lunch on demand, half-board by request	"no smoking", apartments with kitchenette, double room with patio or balcony, roof-top bar with a 150 m ² patio	"no smoking", glass roofed breakfast area
Opening times	24 h / day	24 h / day	24 h / day	24 h / day	24 h / day
Address	Grangasse 6 A-1150 Vienna	Senefelderstraße 1 D-80336 Munich	Mariahilfer Straße 137 A-1150 Wien	Alte Schönhauserstraße 2 D-10119 Berlin	Rechte Wienzeile 35 A1040 Wien
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