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TRAVELER

Dinkelsbühl, Germany

Some inhabitants of walled towns remain devoted to the past even when it complicates their present. Take **Jürgen Fricker**, purveyor of antique weaponry (www.fricker-historische-waffen.de), who lives and works in the city wall of Dinkelsbühl in western Bavaria. "Sure, the windows are a little small and the walls are a meter thick, but the security is fantastic!" he says with a laugh, pointing to his swords, muskets, shields, and a huge mastiff-like dog named Leto. Then he turns serious. "This is my castle, the place I've always dreamed of living. I don't take vacations, because I'm happiest here."

One soon sees Fricker's point. This village on the **Romantische Strasse** (Romantic Road), ringed by tenth-century walls, has all the cobbled alleys, stork nests, and painted half-timbered houses of the more famous Rothenburg, just up the pike, yet is not overrun with visitors. In the center of town is the single-nave cathedral of **Sankt Georg**, with breathtakingly vertical late-Gothic lines and a vaulted ceiling as intricate as fine lace. Across the street is the town's other standout monument, which happens to be your hotel: the **Deutsches Haus** (www.deutsches-haus-dkb.de/welcome.htm), a half-timbered mansion built in 1440 whose gabled facade is a triumph of the German Renaissance. Its restaurant is likewise superlative. And be sure to visit Herr Fricker in his shop in the **Segringer Gate**, where he has been known to uncork a bottle of wine for favored guests. (www.dinkelsbuehl.de/ISY/index.php?call=englisch)