

MainStrasse Village— Old-World Charm In 1989

By Phyllis Bundman

As the sun rises over the Ohio River, it shines on the face of the Goose Girl. She stands embrowned in the center of MainStrasse Village, watching all the comings and goings in this historic German village

turned shopping district. Established in 1978, MainStrasse Village brings a bit of the the Old World to Covington, Kentucky, which sits across the river from Cincinnati, Ohio-- an area itself rich in German heritage. This ethnic

background is the basis for the shops and attractions that make up the Village.

There are more than thirty shops and restaurants in the eight-block area that makes up the center shopping

ette sales. The mind boggles at the number of treasures waiting to be discovered in the Village. Some of the shopkeepers are the craftsmen of the merchandise. The time and care taken to stock the store is shown in their willingness to give information about the product, and to help you find exactly what you are looking for.

In addition to some of the best shopping in Northern Kentucky, MainStrasse also features some very interesting attractions. The Goose Girl Fountain is the centerpiece of the Village, as mentioned. History says that at one time farmers raised geese in Covington, and the idea for the fountain came from the German fairy tale by the Brothers Grimme entitled *The Goose Girl*. The Northern Kentucky Convention and Visitors Bureau commissioned Greek sculptor Eleftherios Karkadoulas to do the piece. He worked over a year and a half using the "lost wax" method, and the Fountain was erected and unveiled in October, 1980.

A block down the promenade is another jewel in the MainStrasse treasure chest-- the Carroll Chimes Bell Tower. Completed in 1979, the Bell Tower was named in honor of then Kentucky Governor Julian Carroll. What makes it so special is the fascinating hourly show it puts on each day. A 43-bell carillon plays a mini-concert while mechanized figures reenact the story of the Pied Piper of Hamelin. The German gothic architecture of the Bell Tower is another great representation of the cultural influence on the area.

Every day at MainStrasse Village is something special, and the MainStrasse Village Association also presents several shop events and festivals each year. The first event of the year is the Spring Stroll-- a shop event that celebrates the season by decorating the entire area with fresh flowers, generally held the first weekend of Spring. The festival season is kicked

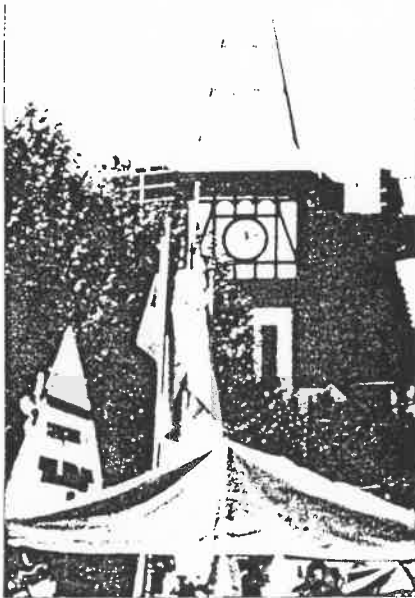
off in May with Maifest, the German tradition of celebrating the first spring wines. Maifest includes international food and entertainment, arts and crafts booths, and extended shop hours for browsing. Following in June is Taste Northern Kentucky, a food aficionado's dream come true. This festival is one of the best up-and-coming regional attractions, with growing participation each year by local restaurants. The annual Specialty Cook-Off is the highlight of Taste Northern Kentucky, and you can bet the crowds come from near and far to sample and vote for their favorite dishes.

August brings Vintage Days to MainStrasse. This shop event is a nostalgic look back at the Roaring Twenties, the Depression, and World War II. The main attractions at Vintage Days include the antique car displays and the authentic period costumes-- a history buff's paradise.

The biggest festival of the year comes next: the German tradition of the celebration of the "storybook wedding reception". Of course it's Oktoberfest!! MainStrasse Village shines in all its German heritage during this festival of festivals. Come and experience all the fun and excitement with this city-wide party! Fall winds up with Folklore Days-- a shop event that rediscovers the history and charm of Northern Kentucky. Folklore Days feature storytellers, craft demonstrations, and much more.

The Yuletide season is a favorite time at MainStrasse. The annual Christmas Open House welcomes the holidays with two weekends of gifts, trimmings, trees, and complimentary refreshments. The MainStrasse Village Candlelight Walk and Advent Wreath ceremony takes place the 4th Saturday before Christmas, and St. Nicholas arrives on horseback with apples and nuts for the children on December 6. What a nice way to celebrate the holidays!

Come and discover a different side of Kentucky in MainStrasse Village. Spend the day or the weekend-- the service, style, and shopping can't be beat. Tour groups are welcome! To reach MainStrasse Village, take I-75 to the Covington 5th Street exit (#192). The Village carpark is on 5th Street between Philadelphia and Main Streets. If you would like more information, a calendar of events, or a brochure of shops and attractions contact the MainStrasse Village office at (606) 491-0458 or send a SASE to 616 Main Street, Covington, Kentucky, 41011. ☐



The Carroll Chimes Bell Tower.

district; however, the entire MainStrasse neighborhood is approximately thirty square blocks. The original buildings have been renovated and equipped to house some of the region's finest and most unique shops. Each of the Village shops prides itself in maintaining its identity from the rest of the group.

The first thing you notice when you arrive at MainStrasse is the sudden feeling of being swept back in time. The streets are cobblestone, and sidewalks are decorated with potted flowers. Each storefront intrigues and beckons you to enter a different world inside. The statement, "Something for everyone" certainly applies to MainStrasse Village. There are shops that specialize in handcrafted items, antique shops, shops offering miniatures, vintage clothing shops, and German import shops. There is also a puppet theater that features live shows as well as puppet and marion-

Rolling beer barrel Contest at MainStrasse Village.

