

Edition Patrick Frey

Press Release

Clemens Marschall, Klaus Pichler
Golden days before they end



They still exist, these little cafés, inns, Branntweiner [small drinking places that open early in the morning], bars or – as the customers refer to these places – dens, where time seems to have stopped. If you pass by, you hear loud laughter through the half open door – and only very few walk in. Too often, these places appear in the media with reports of a fight or a stabbing between friends over a misunderstanding during one of their drinking sessions.

Klaus Pichler (photos) and Clemens Marschall (text) chose not to walk by, but to walk in those places, in order to document these parallel universes. Pichler took photos of the guests, the daily grind, craziness and high drama of it all; Marschall interviewed the owners to get their perspective. For many customers, these are the only places they find somebody to talk to. Most of the time, the whole bar takes part in one conversation. These are substitute families with their own daily rituals.

Barter trades flourish and people take care of each other; small circles you can only join after a certain probation time. But once you've joined the family, you stick together and you drink together – all day, every day... Branntweiner open at five in the morning, other cafés at 9am, some open in the afternoon or the evening to provide a 24-hour service for the older drinking generation. The furnishings often date from the 1960s, and some customers have been coming for as long. The only sign betraying the ravages of time, is people dying. And with them, these drinking dens.

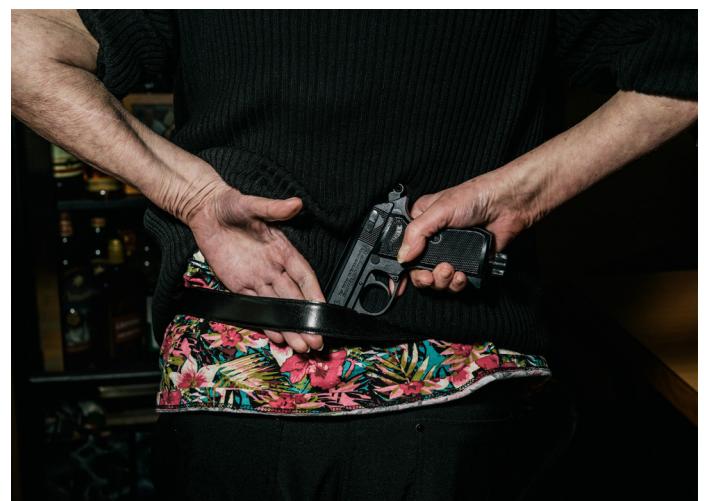
Pichler and Marschall went on a mission to find, document and explore the last of these refuges for a dying drinking generation. On countless wanderings through Vienna they found some of these places in their final throes. The book is a swan song for these bars that have shaped their customers' existences for decades, places that are soon to disappear forever.

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