

SCHREIBER:

INN - SIGNS

Photos Kostner, München

"The fairest arms the world doth yield
Is a gold beaker in a white field."

Names of wines naturally have association for me. I am a passionate student of the propaganda leaflets issued by famous wine-dealers. Of all the advertisements that snow into the house, they are the most enjoyable. I compare the beautiful descriptions of the various years—"1931 Zeller Schwarze Katz (Black Cat) elegant brand, very fiery." When for example, among the "Good full table wines" I discover "a fresh, juicy Gaubickelheimer Felsweg" then at once a vision rises before my mind's eye of the village inn in which one must drink the wine of the rocky path. Thus visions pursue me for years of the famous cellars in which I were fain to while. When such vision condense into reality, when one of these famous years really comes within reach of one's palate, it is of essential importance to select the fitting surroundings for the great occasion. In the crooked streets of little vineyard towns, inviting inn-signs lure one on at every step. It is terribly hard to decide between the "Blue Carp" and the "Boar". But we can cut out the "Golden Swan" at once, it is far too elegant and redolent of new paint. But the other two—so much depends upon the table, the chair, the niche in which the vision is to become reality. How simple it was in the good old days. The thirsty man simply followed the primitive signs that pointed out the way. The door of the inn was marked with pinecones or a bundle of straw, later by the hanging out of green wreath. Then as the cities began to grow, their coats of arms and those of their guilds came into use. There came a day when the landlord took to decorating his inn-sign with striking insignia. It became increasingly difficult for the landlords to protect themselves against their rivals. One theory has it that beauty comes into being only as a result of competition: certainly these beautiful old inn-signs in wrought iron or painted wood came about as a result of the attempt to attract attention among numerous competitors. Naturally we find the most beautiful of these signs in places where the vine is at home. South Germany and Tyrol, above all, offer inexhaustible material to the student and lover of old handicrafts. Our selection betrays in almost every example an overpowering love of ornament. Leaves, branches, curves and spirals almost overwhelm the actual symbol of the inn. It was not at all the purpose of the artists merely to direct the public's eye to the main feature of attraction. They were

Oben:
Gasthaus „Zum Doppeladler“ in Rattenberg, Tirol
Sign of the "Double-Eagle Inn" Rattenberg, Tirol

Frachtschiff als Wirtshausschild in Tittmoning a./Salzach
Trading-Boat as Inn-Sign in Tittmoning/Salzach, Oberbayern

