

If you're still looking for a summer holiday, **Tricia Wormald** has discovered a way to sample old-fashioned class without breaking the bank – majestic Lake Worth, in Austria's southernmost region of Carinthia...

GENTLY cruising along the still waters of Lake Worth, gazing at the magnificent villas along its 10-mile length, you can't help but become nostalgic.

It was easy to imagine the privileged lifestyle enjoyed by 19th-century inhabitants, originally the

rich from Vienna.

Composers Gustav Mahler and Johannes Brahms were just two of the great names drawn to the peace and tranquillity of the lake during those times; today the villas are owned by industrialists, business tycoons, stars of stage and screen and the richest

woman in Austria, billionaire Heidi Horten.

Sadly, many of the old villas have been demolished to make way for new buildings, not all in keeping with their surroundings, and there's a movement, led by architect Heimo Kramer, to make locals more aware of their herit-

age and protect it.

The best way to see these impressive villas is from the water. A map detailing both historic and modern Lake Worth architecture, produced by Kramer, provides information about all the buildings that are worth seeing.

Even better for no-

sey parkers, you can stay in some of these villas as a paying guest. Many have been converted into hotels and apartments and you can stay in one from as little as 25 euros a night, including breakfast.

During my visit I stayed at the Villa Miralago, in Portschach – one of the best-preserved in Carinthia. Built in 1893, it has nine bedrooms, which vary in style and size.

Just don't expect a

television, internet facilities or a telephone in any of them; you can, however, rely on friendly and personal service at this family-run establishment.

Because it's a listed building, renovations three years ago were kept to a minimum.

My room was decorated in the art-nouveau style, with large, elegantly-draped shuttered windows offering a view over the lake right across to the Maria Worth penin-

sula; the only sounds were birdsong and the gentle lapping of water against the boat-house deck.

Breakfast was excellent, with fresh, hot crusty breads and locally-sourced meats and cheeses plus other fine produce.

Located within easy walking distance of the boat stop, and just a 10-minute drive to Carinthia's capital city of Klagenfurt, it's a perfect base for a holiday to enjoy the city,



the stunning countryside and the lake.

Bathing in the crystal-clear and ultra-clean lake is one of the most popular summertime activities and – for a real treat – take a motorboat ride to the five-star Schloss Velden hotel and savour lunch.

TRAVEL FACTS

GETTING THERE:

Ryanair operates flights from London Stansted to Klagenfurt:

www.ryanair.com.

WHERE TO STAY:

Villa Miralago, Portschach – from 65 euros per night: www.miralago.at.

INFORMATION:

For information on Lake Worth villas, visit www.woerthersee-architektur.at. For general tourist information, visit www.austria.info or www.kaernten.at.