

A TRIP through the MIDDLE AGES

on the Rhine and the Mosel Rivers

Watercolor impressions painted on location by Michael Killelea © 2014

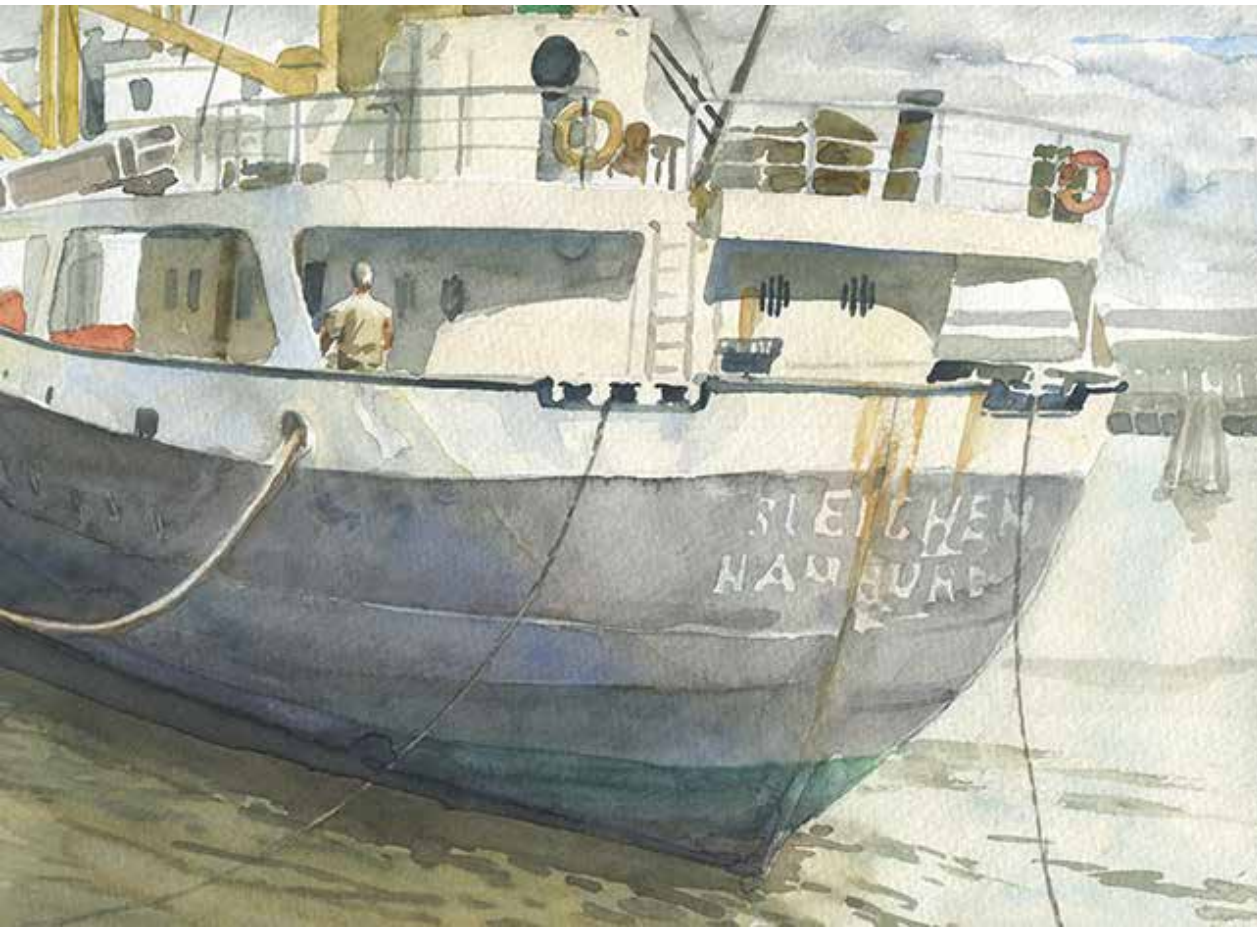


The lively French city of Strasbourg straddles the Ill River, one of many fingers flowing into the Rhine.

So much of Europe is built on stones which were themselves reused from earlier cultures that it's impossible to imagine its walls and towers, bridges, castles and churches without these early foundations.

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ater coursing to the sea has always been essential for commerce. Societies developed along these aquatic roads, and legacies of those earliest settlements remain today.



HAMBURG, Germany

(left) Proximity to the North Sea has made it a major port since Middle Age burghers ran the city. Today it is the second largest port in Europe and home to a maritime museum where the retired cargo ship SS Bleichen is now berthed.

SCHLESWIG HOLM, Germany

(below) A former fishing villiage near the North Sea, Schleswig Holm has gradually evolved into a colorful waterside vista for travelers. Today, its maritime heritage is largely a memory.



ANTWERP,

Belgium

(right)

The docks in Belgium's second largest city stretch for miles making the port one of the busiest in Europe.

Rain and mist rolling in from the North Sea colored the waterfront in shades of damp gray, lacking only the soulful call of a foghorn to make the scene complete.



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ith ready access to the sea, the low countries developed art and culture even in pre-Roman times.

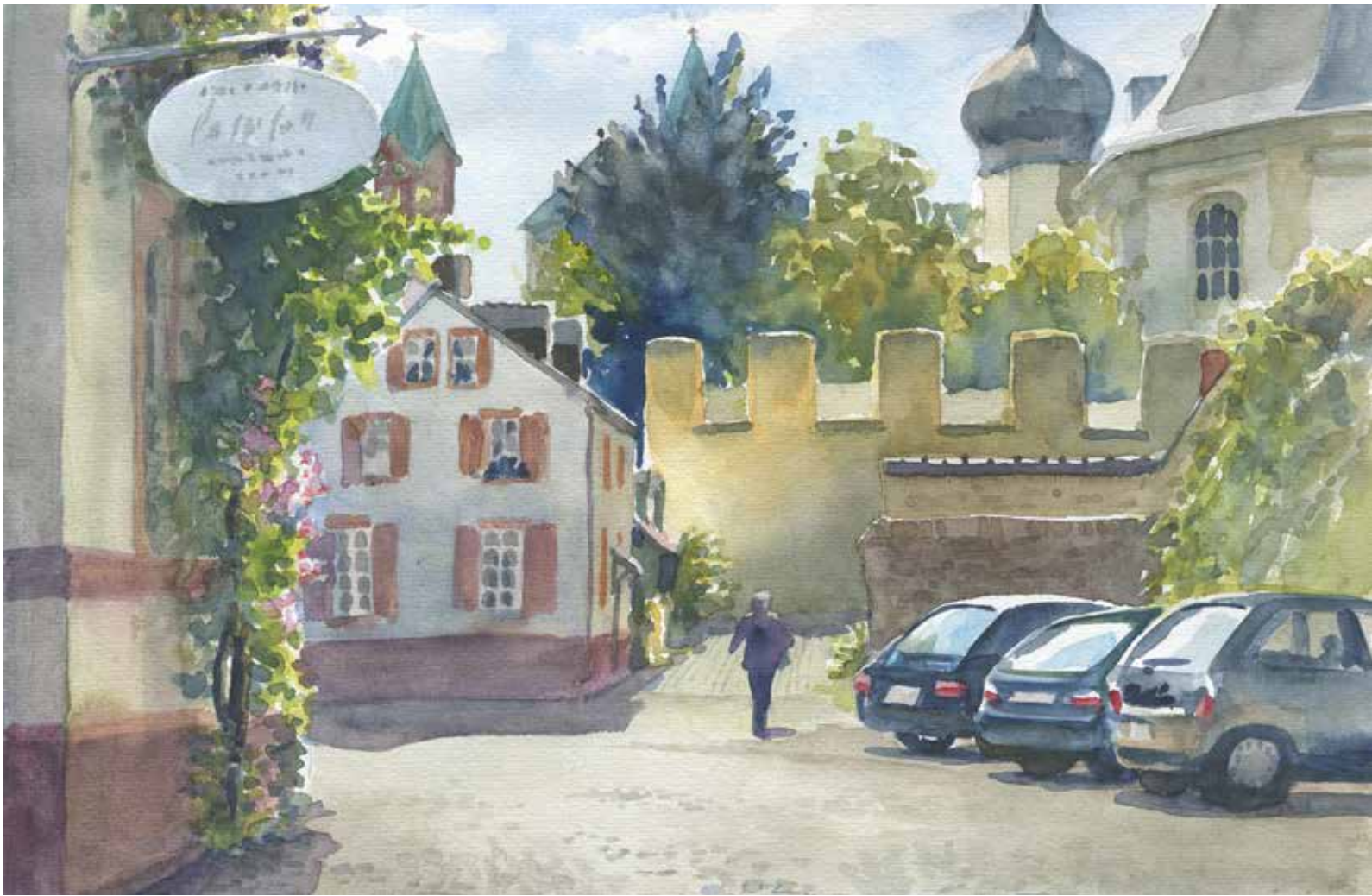
ANTWERP,

Belgium

(right)

If the salt air has tinted this water centric city, its burghers have been efficient traders since the middle ages. Opposite the City Hall covered by many national flags, a strange fountain celebrates Brabo, a Roman soldier about to throw the hand of a giant he has just slain into the water. The name Antwerp comes from the Dutch words "hand werpen" or to throw the hand.





SPEYER, Germany
(above)

The Romans set up camp here in 10 BC and the town became an important center for royalty and clergy. But Fischmarkt Square now has its own charm, long free of the smell of fish from the nearby Rhine.



BOPPARD, Germany
(left)

This UNESCO World Heritage site nestled in the Rhine Gorge, is surrounded by forests and vineyards. It first saw settlement 13,000 years ago, long before Julius Caesar's conquests, but the half timbered houses near the Market Square recall much later Middle Age residents.



fascination with castle walls and medieval construction can seduce a visitor into a time warp.

WILLEMSTAD,

Netherlands

(right)

A small village built adjacent to the main Dutch shipping channels, Willemstad is ringed by the walls of a star shaped fort and drained by canals. It lives quietly today slumbering almost within sight of the enormous Delta Works tidal control project.

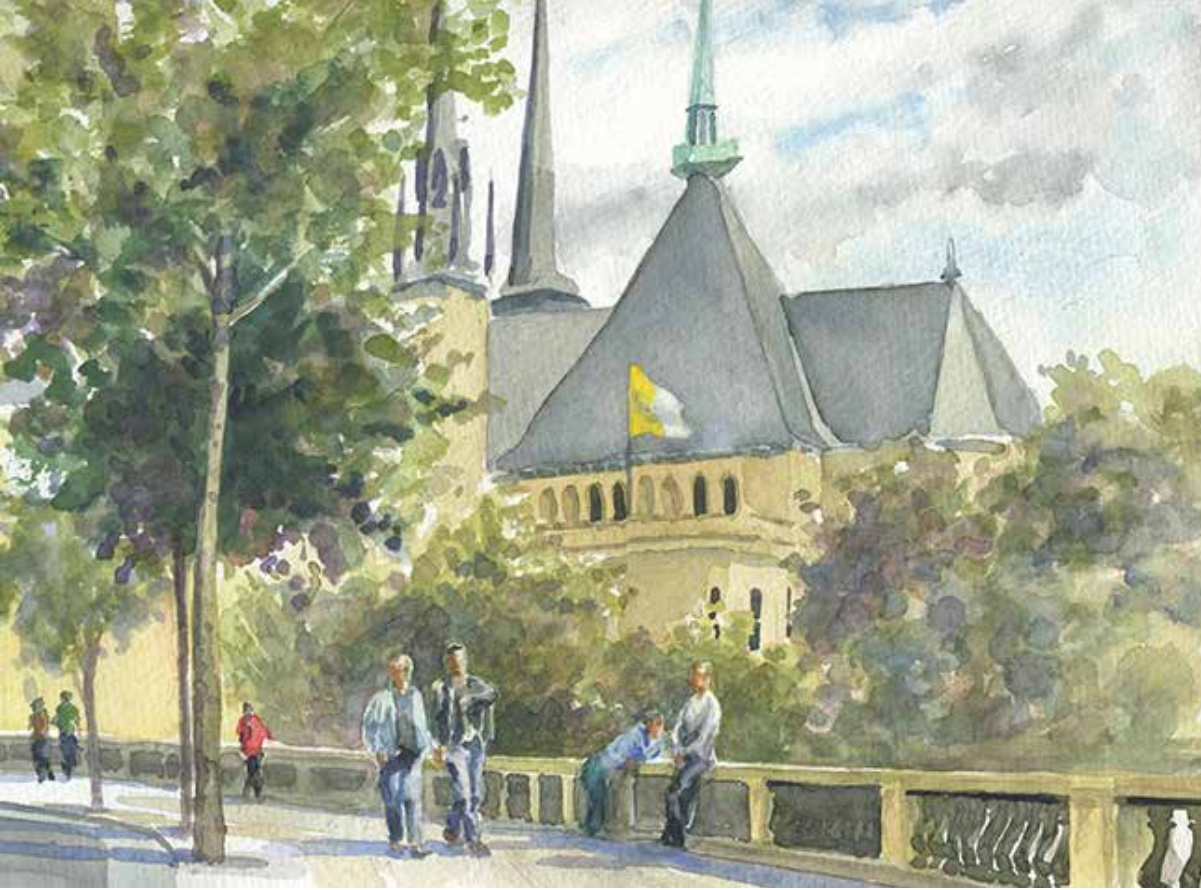


COLOGNE, Germany

(below)

It's hard to overstate the impression created by Cologne's massive medieval cathedral. Construction began in 1248 on the World Heritage site which today is Germany's most visited landmark.





Luxembourg

(left)

Officially known as the Grand Duché de Luxembourg, this small country is surrounded by Germany, France and Belgium.

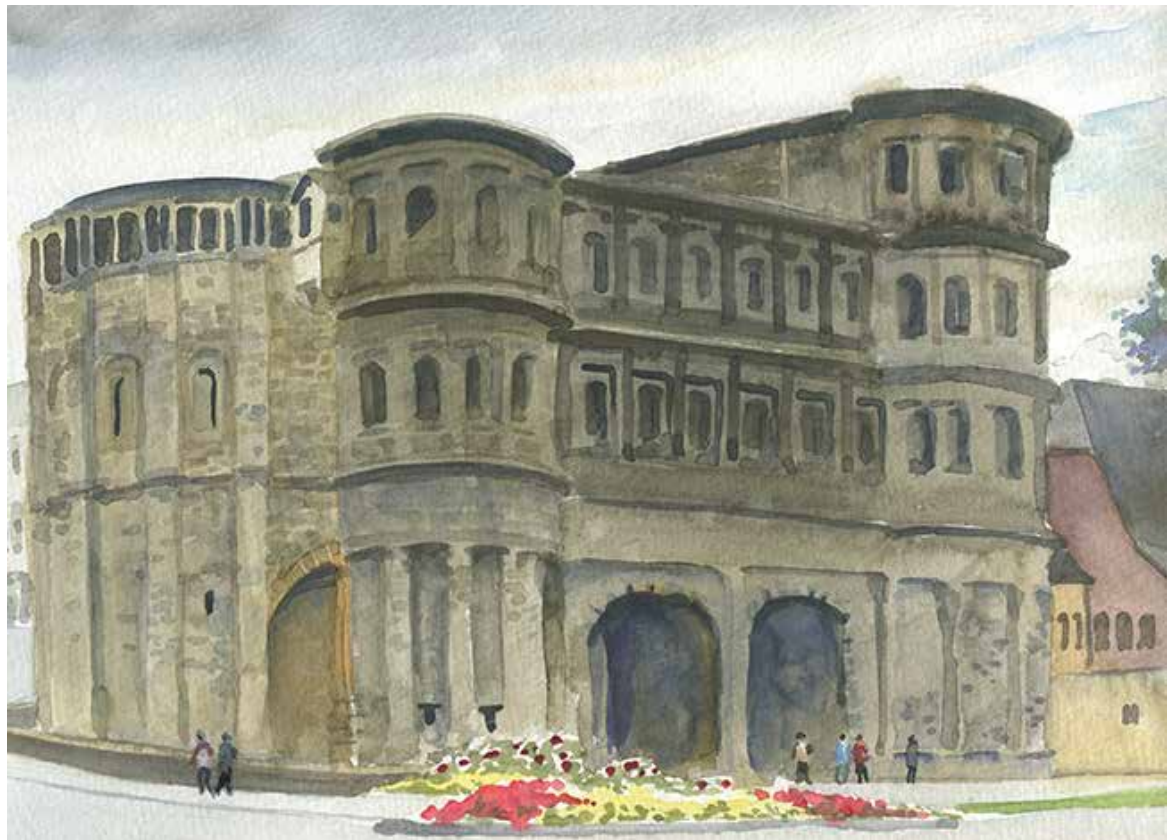
A walk around Luxembourg City's Place de la Constitution offers city views over its cathedral and the fortifications that reflect Roman and Germanic cultural influences. The city is also home to a great deal of international wealth.

TRIER, Germany

(right)

Roman rulers divided their empire into four regions centered in Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Trier. It's no surprise that this bustling city is still crowded with Roman ruins.

The northern gate to the city walls was named Porta Negra, or Black Gate, when a fire in the Middle Ages left the building darkened.



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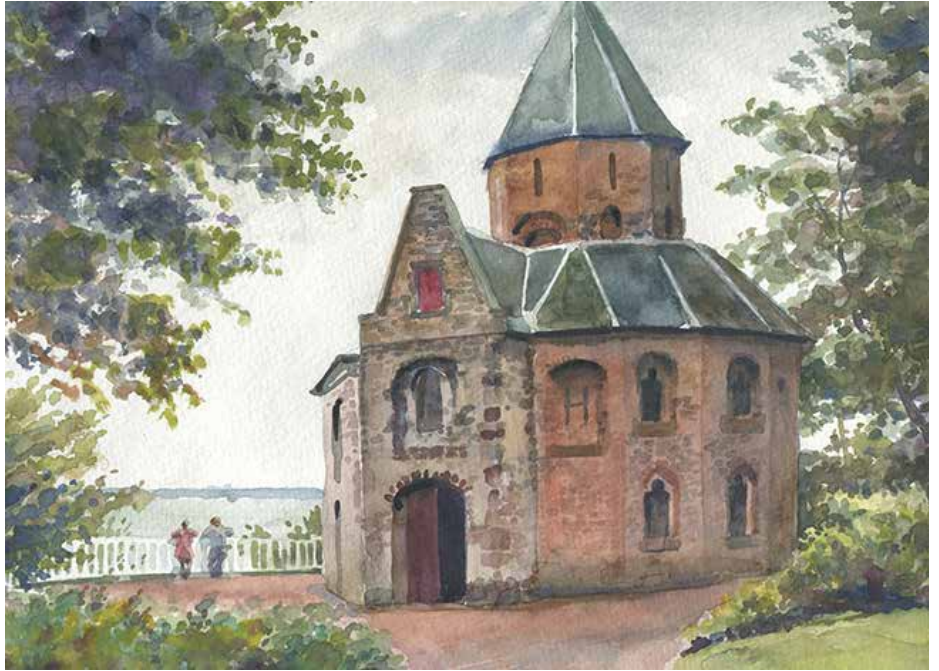
hroughout history, in the wake of wealth and power we find grandeur and imposing memorials.

Legends and stories from ancient gatherings have become the foundation for today's cultures.

NIJMEGEN, Netherlands

(right)

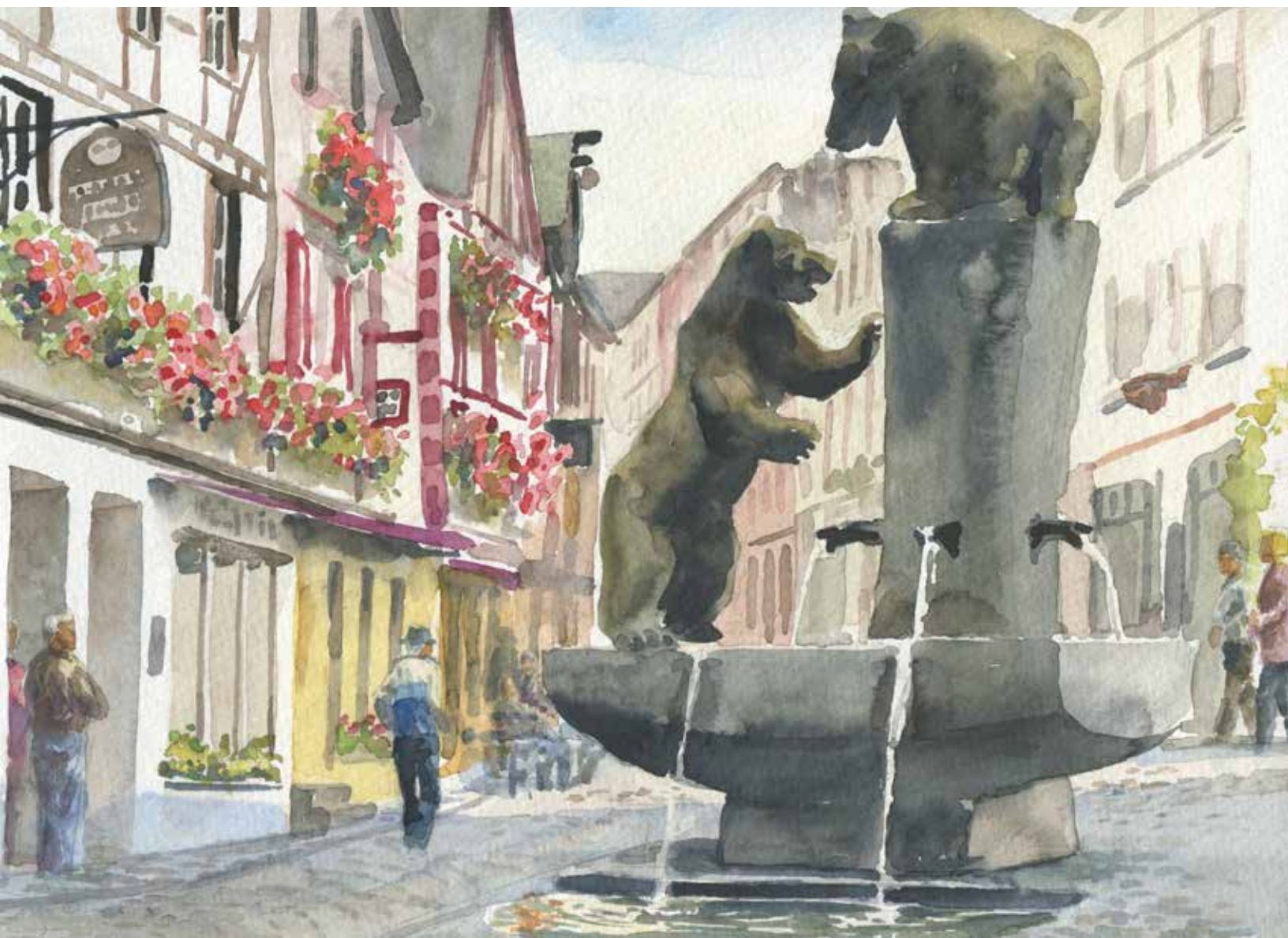
Building on St. Nicolas Chapel first started in 1030 with material from Charlemagne's palace (begun in 777 AD on the same hill). The site overlooks the Vaal River flowing into the Rhine.



BERNKASTLE, Germany

(below)

Two bears are said to have sheltered a woman and child on a cold snowy night outside this little Mosel River village. The legendary bears are celebrated in a bronze fountain amid blocks of beautiful half-timbered houses. A medieval castle sits above the streets, giving the name "bear castle" to the place.





BASEL,
Switzerland
(left)
Modern trolleys
rumble across the
Mittlere Bridge over
the Rhine and
continue around
Eisengasse toward
City Hall. This part of
downtown is Basel's
banking district and
scattered among the
financial offices are
many fine museums.
Swiss timekeeping is
evident in the
precision of their
efficient public
transportation as well
as in their watches.

BADEN BADEN, Germany

(below)

Luxury accommodations are nothing new around the thermal baths in Baden Baden, and many contemporary residents brought their wealth here to retire. Through the centuries the area has attracted citizens, Roman emperors and the likes of Napoleon, Queen Victoria and Dostoyevsky. Sopian Strassa is a comfortable place to shop or enjoy a leisurely cake and coffee.



Mike Killelea and Franz-Josef Bollig, mayor of Tritenheim, Germany, during a visit to that town's wine festival.

Travel is engaging and enlightening, with unlimited opportunities for serendipity to enter if you're open to it.

Mike and Kathy Killelea had a wonder-filled experience during a visit to Hamburg and along the Rhine and Mosel Rivers. Mike's paintings of large and small places on that trip danced from his brush and continue to brighten his spirit.