

## **The Ambassador's Residence in Vienna**

U.S. Embassy Vienna

Eacho: Well, good afternoon! I'm Bill Eacho, the American ambassador in Vienna and I'd like to welcome you to our how. We're going to give you a little tour today of the embassy residence here in Vienna and I hope you enjoy it. Please, join me.

Well we're standing here in the reception area where we typically greet guests at embassy events. Here we have our book for our guests to sign in, we have many famous signatures in our book. We have the American flag and on the wall we have some maps showing the Austro-Hungarian empire in much of its gloried history.

This is the living room, the first room that guests enter when they attend a reception here at the residence. The residence itself was built in a Bauhaus style in 1931. Early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Bauhaus was becoming a very popular, contemporary style of architecture. The house itself has very large spaces for entertaining, it's very nice. This living room has as you can see tall ceiling, nice area for guests to mingle and enjoy one another's company. We have a piano which gets some use from time to time for parties, and in this direction is our dining room. I did take piano lessons when my sons were taking piano lessons, but they were far more successful than I. But it's a beautiful place also for me to display some of my photos. Senator Obama was about to become President Obama, he held a black tie dinner that evening for his opponent, Senator McCain, and was nice enough to invite us to come spend a few minutes with him. And then of course upon arriving in Austria, I presented my credentials to President Fischer and here's a picture of that, so from one president to the other.

And here we are in the dining room. Now as you can see, the table is set up simply for my family now, my wife and I are here in Vienna with our son, David. But we can make this table considerably longer and seat up to 16 or so for a formal dinner and we do quite a few of those. One of the terrific things we have is this Arts in Embassies program and we get to select the art that we would like for our residence. And Milton Avery is one of my favorite American artists, he was painting in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and so we have 3 pieces by Milton Avery.

Well now we're in the library, a very nice room, one of my favorites in the house. And we have in here my favorite painting in the house. It's called Yacht Race in the Fog, it's by Milton Avery, he painted it in 1959 and as you can see it's it really is evocative of sailing in the fog. This is what it feels like to sail in the fog, having done it quite a few times in my summers in Maine.

Now I'd like to take you into the next room and show you one of the more historic spots in the house. So now we get to see a little bit of the history up close. President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev standing on the steps right out front where we were standing earlier, that's where they first met in 1961. They then held a summit meeting in this room. Then several years later, President Carter met with Premier Brezhnev here as part of the SALT II summit, the nuclear reduction disarmament talks in 1979, also in this room. So President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev met in this room. We believe from the photographs that they sat here, not on this very couch but in this location and you can just imagine

sitting here how the two of them must have felt, discussing a wide range of subjects during the period of the Cold War.

Now we've been chatting a little bit about history and one of the neat things about this house is that we get to show a little bit of American history as well. We have three generations of the Avery family who were all artists. These paintings are both by March Avery, Milton Avery's daughter, and in the next room we have a couple of paintings by her son, Sean Cavanaugh, Milton Avery's grandson. This is called East End Eaton, painted in just 2007, by Sean Cavanaugh.

This house has also hosted many important guests over the years and it became evident in the 70s that we needed to add a guest wing. Now let's take a walk down the hall. Now while we've maintained the house in its original form for the most part, when the guest house was added in the 70s we took a little bit of a break from the Bauhaus style. And now we're in the guest wing in the living room area of the guest wing. It's nice to have this for our guests, so that they don't always have to be in the main part of the house and they can have a little bit of privacy. As you can see, it's not decorated in an early 20<sup>th</sup> century style but in an early American style. The décor of this room was all done by Ambassador Lauder.

So not only do we have a wonderful house to entertain in, we also have a wonderful outdoor space. Well I hope you enjoyed the house tour, but we'd also like to give you a chance to take a look at our lovely garden. Now my time in the garden is pretty much taken up by playing with Nicky, however we also enjoy a stroll around the flowers and frankly it's just a beautiful setting. Speaking of flowers, I'd like to introduce you to my wife, Donna.

Donna: Hi, I'd be happy to show you some of our favorite plants in this garden. One of the really special things about this garden in addition to the large displays of roses and peonies and rhododendron is that as you stroll through the gardens you see small clumps of columbine and delphinium and forget-me-nots and just some small charming flowers that really add such a special touch to this garden and the pathway through it.

These gardens cover more than 4 acres and were originally designed in 1930 when the house was constructed. The gravel paths were laid out in the original 1930's design of the house. It's just a beautiful walk, it's a about a quarter of a mile to wander through and obviously a charming way to walk the dog, but also to see the beautiful trees and flowers.

We have a very large rose garden which is not only lovely to stroll through but also provides us with all the flowers we need for our summer entertaining, which is a real luxury. We have a small vegetable garden on the property and it provides quite a lot of the food for us during the season and for our guests. We grow most of our culinary herbs, a large patch of raspberries, strawberries, grapes, rhubarb, lots of cucumbers, way too many carrots, not my favorite but I'm learning to love them, and many others so that's been a pleasant addition.

Eacho: Nicky is a year and a half old, we bought her from the Hungarian police dog training academy. She's fluent in Hungarian and English. Well thank you for joining us, we hope you've enjoyed our little

tour today. Nicky, now you be good, okay, here you go! (laughs) And we know Nicky enjoyed it as well.  
Thanks for joining us.

Donna: Thank you, goodbye.

(credits)