

“Bei uns ist immer was los!”

## WEIHNACHTSMÄRKTE—CHRISTMAS MARKETS

market: der Markt, die Märkte

Christmas market: der Weihnachtsmarkt, die Weihnachtsmärkte

Nürnberg / Nuremberg

# A Nuremberg Christmas

As the first of Germany's traditional Christmas markets, Nuremberg sets a nostalgic standard by which all others are judged.

### A Nuremberg Christmas

Nuremberg's historical Christkindles Market delights tourists from all over the world during the Christmas season.

At 5.30 p.m. on the Friday before the first day of Advent—as soon as dusk began descending upon the city of Nuremberg—the lights went out around the Main Market square, and thousands of people turned to look towards the top of the *Frauenkirche*, Nuremberg's most visited church, all in anticipation of the Christ Child's appearance. Dressed in her white and golden garment and with her long blond curls and a golden crown, she has been a symbol of the Christkindles market for years. And so this time, the 2007 and 2008 Christmas Angel, Rebekka Voland, opened the world's best known Christmas market with a solemn prologue ending with the words “...and those who come are truly welcome,” and invited visitors to enjoy the delights and enchanting pre-Christmas atmosphere of the market.

The tradition of choosing a Christ Child for the opening of the Nuremberg's Christmas market goes back to 1933. In that year, an actress from the Nuremberg municipal Theatre, Renate Timm, played the role of the angelic messenger. Accompanied by two golden angels (*Rauschgoldengel*), a children's choir and church bells, she recited a prologue from the gallery of the *Frauenkirche*, inviting people to join the festive pre-Christmas atmosphere at the

historic Nuremberg's Christkindles market. In the following years, other famous actresses were given the role of the Christmas Angel. However, since 1969 this tradition has been different: a young Nuremberg woman between sixteen and nineteen is chosen for the role of the Christ Child for a two-year period.

During the Advent season in Germany, the Christmas Angel is, in fact, the most important representative of the Christmas Market, if not of the entire city. She usually appears in numerous television shows and interviews. Her other activities include paying visits to charitable institutions, hospitals, kindergartens, and homes of the elderly, distributing presents and bringing joy. The Christ Child is also often invited to other Christmas markets in Germany playing the role of an ambassador of the city of Nuremberg.

I was certainly impressed by the opening ceremony of the Nuremberg Christmas market performed by a Christmas Angel standing in the gallery in the bright lights and reciting her famous prologue. Yet, this spectacle is only one part of the Christmas tradition in Germany. Every year, during the four weeks leading up to Christmas, the thousands of twinkling lights as well as the aroma of gingerbread and mulled wine comprising the Christkindles market also become the heart of the town's pre-Christmas