

PRESS INFORMATION

Typically Franconian?



Nuremberg's City Life (Photo: Uwe Niklas)

From a merely administrative point of view, Franconia consists of several parts: three of Bavaria's seven administrative districts are Franconian: Unterfranken, Oberfranken, and Mittelfranken. Franconians have quite a lot in common: they aren't overly enthusiastic about their State capital, Munich, for example. The differences between the traditions of, say, former working-class town, Nuremberg, and those of the former Royal residence, Munich, simply are too big. The Upper Bavarian self-confidence of "Mir san mir" (We ARE somebody) is alien to Franconians. Actually they don't really like to admit that they belong to the Free State of Bavaria at all. Rumour has it, though, that it is mainly Franconians who hold the reins of power in Munich's state bureaucracy. The "Liberalitas Bavariae" was at home in Protestant Franconia, long before the region became yet part of Bavaria. "Live and let live" is a thoroughly Franconian attitude.

Franconians have many faces. "Franconians are a chequered lot" is the title of a collection of essays by Hans Max von Aufseß, a witty approach to the nature and peculiar characteristics of Franconians. Franconians are inventive and innovative. Nuremberg people have a reputation for their Nuremberg wit. Franconians are open-

mindful and liberal, not least because of the international trade exchanges that have been cultivated here over the centuries: "Nuremberg trinkets are sold all over the world" is another old local saying. But Franconians are modest. They do make a difference between outward appearance and reality – and much prefer reality. They're not very good at boasting about their successes, but rather hide their light under a bushel. Franconian nature is not euphoric, but tends to be rather pessimistic. The highest approval possible is expressed in a terse "basd scho" – which means "it's all right". And a typical conversation starter at a main market stall might be the sceptical question "You don't have carrots, I'm sure?" instead of the simple request "I'd like two pounds of carrots, please".

Usually Franconians are honest and faithful. One legendary example is the football fans' love for "their" 1. FC Nuremberg, normally simply called Club –, no matter whether times for the Club are good or bad. And times have often been bad, since the last time they were champions was 1968. Whoever wins the heart of a Franconian – a feat which really does take some time – will have conquered it forever. And part of the Franconians' mental make-up is their dry, often quite down-to-earth sense of humour.

Franconian dialect varies greatly from region to region. But there's one basic rule for all districts. In Franconian dialect, p is softened to b; and t sounds like a d – which makes Franconians easily recognizable when they try to speak standard German far from home. Then sometimes they over-compensate to sound "proper" and correct – hardening even the soft consonants. But maybe this could also just be a subtle attempt at winning sympathy?