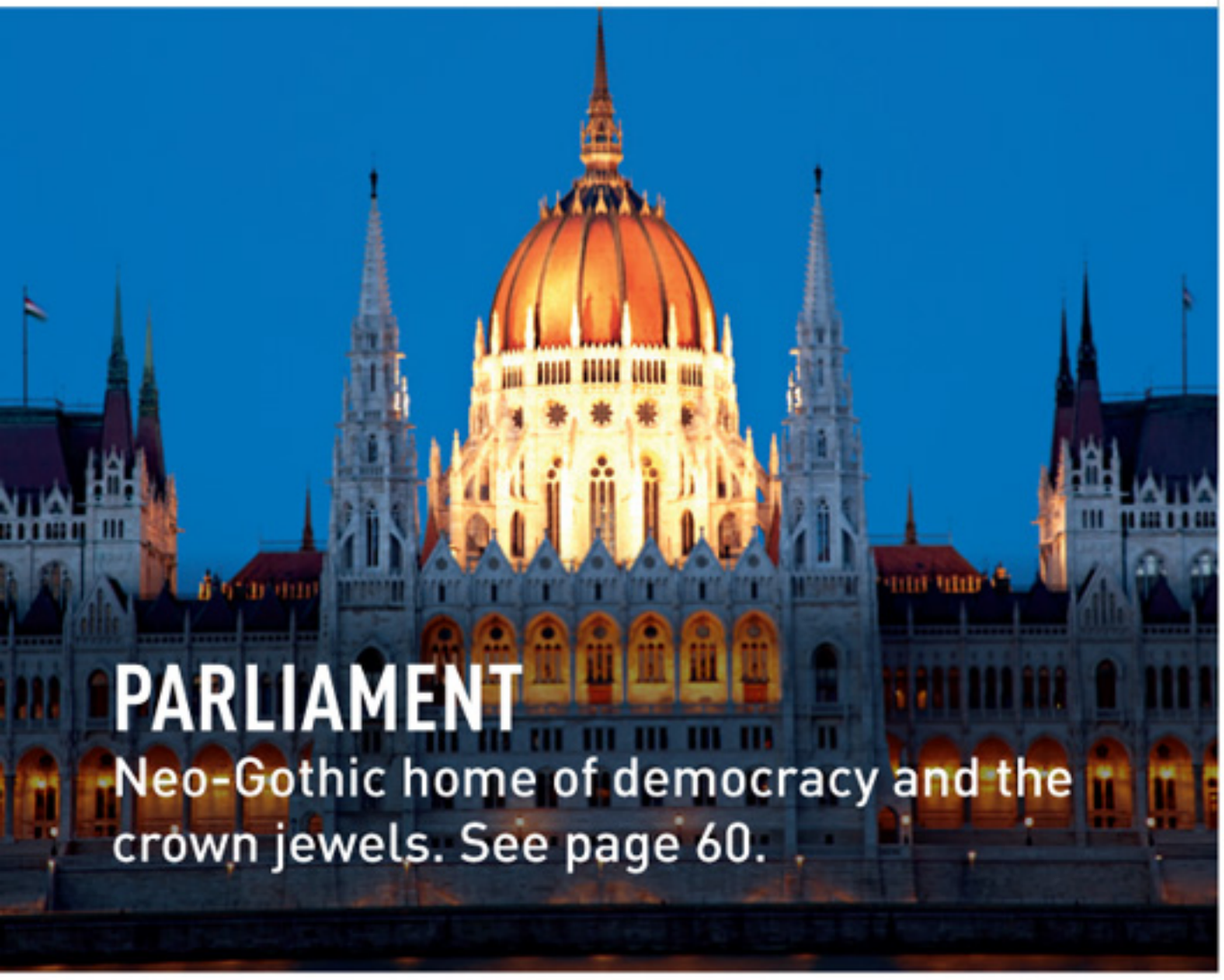
Berlitz

BUDAPEST

POCKET GUIDE

TOP 10 ATTRACTIONS



PARLIAMENT

Neo-Gothic home of democracy and the crown jewels. See page 60.



LISZT MUSEUM

Visit the home of Hungary's greatest composer. See page 64.



NEW YORK CAFÉ

Take high tea in grand style. See page 75.



OPERA HOUSE

Book seats for a night to remember. See page 63.



ROYAL PALACE

Visit the palace's fine museums. See page 28.



GREAT SYNAGOGUE

Explore the city's Jewish Quarter. See page 57.



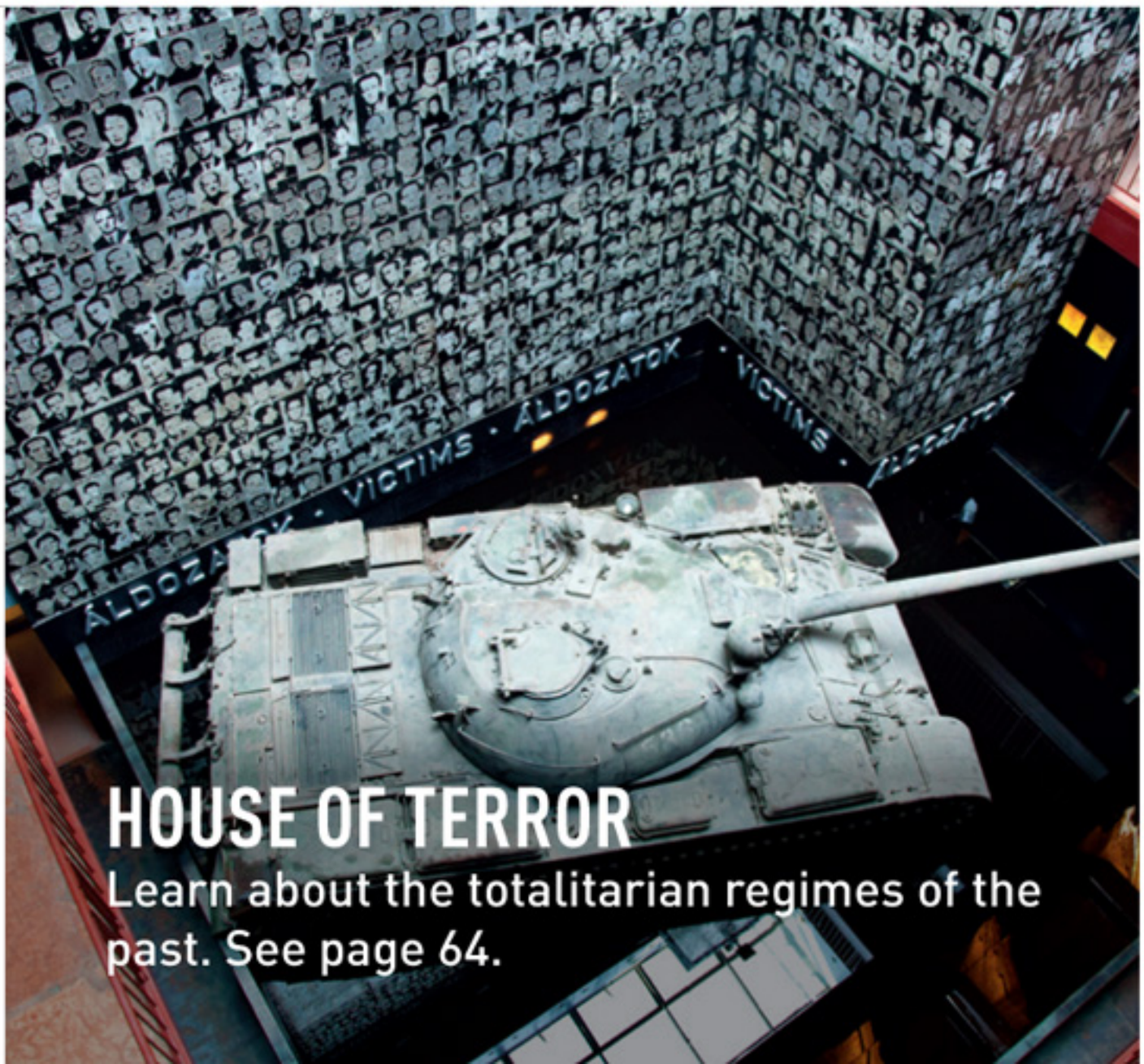
THE CASTLE DISTRICT

Cobbled streets and quaint houses lend a fairy-tale feel. See page 34.



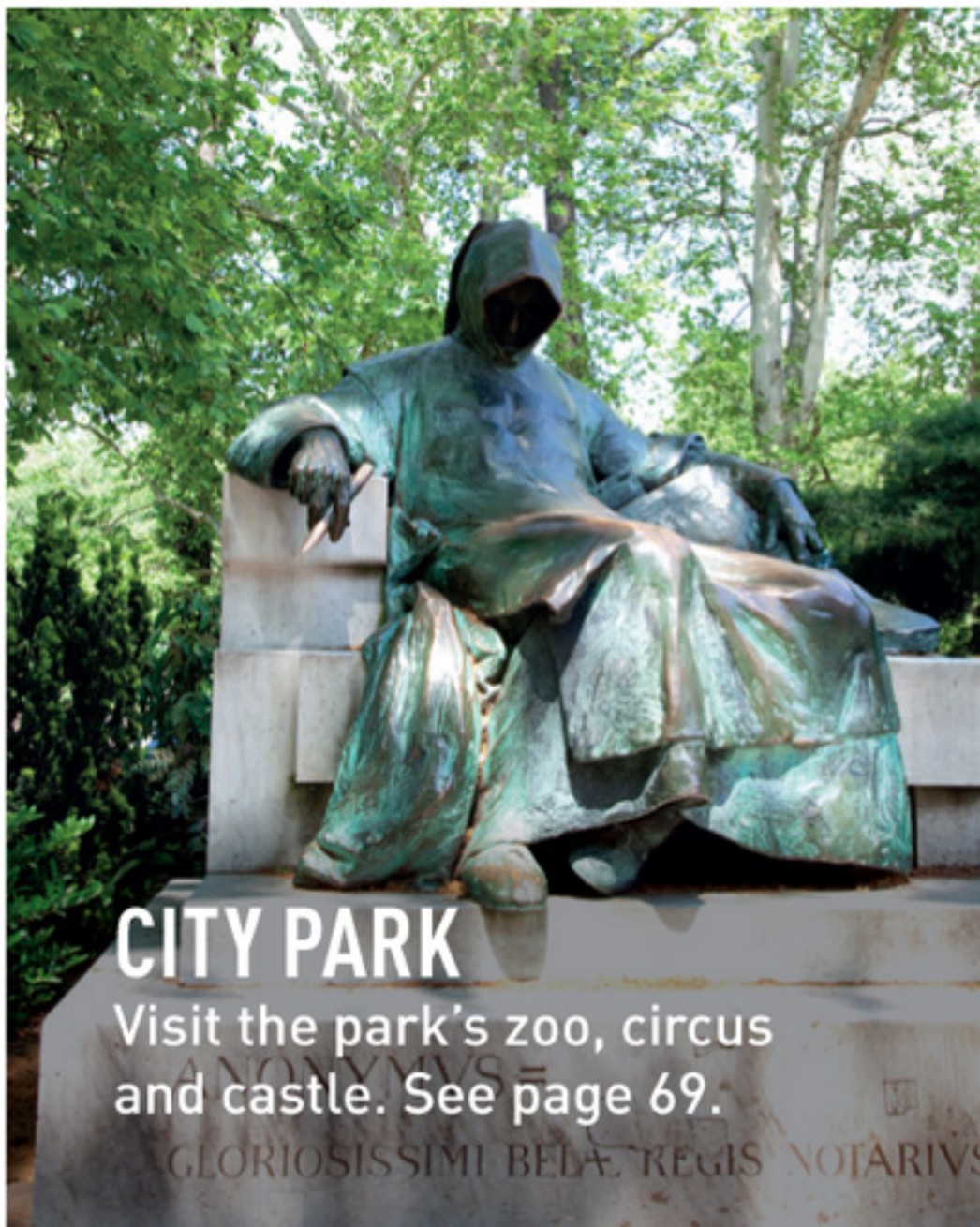
SZÉCHENYI BATHS

Relax in the palatial surroundings. See page 71.



HOUSE OF TERROR

Learn about the totalitarian regimes of the past. See page 64.



CITY PARK

Visit the park's zoo, circus and castle. See page 69.

A PERFECT DAY





9.00am

Breakfast

Have breakfast in the old-fashioned ambience of the Centrál Kávéház at Károlyi Mihály utca 9 in Pest's Belváros or 'Inner City'.

10.00am

Hungarian National Museum

Walk a couple of blocks east to Múzeum körút to find the Hungarian National Museum. Take a quick tour of the nation's history, viewing exhibits of the Avars' gold jewellery, St Stephen's coronation mantle and communist propaganda posters.

11.00am

Food Market

Follow the Belváros ringroad south to the vast Central Market Hall, built by Eiffel. Only the best produce is on sale here.

11.30am

Shopping on Váci utca

Cross the road and stroll up the city's premier shopping street. On the way, look out for handicrafts emporium, Folkart Centrum, and the magical window displays of florist Philanthia. Emerging in Vörösmarty tér at the end, you will find a stylish shopping mall on your left.

1.00pm

Gerbeaud

Take a light lunch at this café institution on the far side of Vörösmarty tér. Sit in the grand interior with its chandeliers and fine plasterwork, or lounge on the terrace watching people go about their business. Be sure to save room for Gerbeaud's cakes, as these are the café's speciality.

IN BUDAPEST





2.30pm

A zoo, a circus or a funfair

Entering City Park, you have a wide choice of amusements. Visit the zoo, extravagantly designed in Art-Nouveau style, and see the huge Palm House or enjoy a show with clowns, acrobats and jugglers at the Grand Circus at 3pm on Wed–Sun (also at 11am and 7pm on Sat and 11am on Sun).

2.15pm

Great square

Take the metro direct from Vörösmarty tér to Heroes' Square, at the head of Andrássy út and at the gates of City Park. In the centre of the square is the Millennium Monument, with the Archangel Gabriel at the top. Flanking the square are the Museum of Fine Arts and the Palace of Art.

7.00pm

Gundel

When you've rested at the Baths, take an easy stroll to Gundel, Hungary's most famous restaurant on the eastern edge of the park, where you can dine in style. Alternatively, take the metro a few stops back to the Opera House and take in a performance.

5.00pm

Széchenyi Baths

Also within City Park is the palatial neo-baroque complex of the Széchenyi Baths. Relax in the pools, indoor and outdoor, play a game of chess or have a massage. Afterwards, drink a glass of the health-giving waters at the little pavilion just outside.

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INTRODUCTION

'Budapest seems a wonderful place...the impression I had was that we were leaving the West and entering the East. The most western of splendid bridges over the Danube, which is here of noble width and depth, took us among the traditions of Turkish rule.'

The opening lines of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) convey author Jonathan Harker's sense of entering truly unknown territory when he reached Budapest on his journey to Transylvania. In his day, Budapest was considered the limits of the civilised world – exotic, but rather frightening. Many things have changed since then, and Hungary is now very much part of Europe. Its capital, Budapest, is a busy, increasingly cosmopolitan city



The view of the Parliament from Fishermen's Bastion

with a growing tourist trade. New routes opened up by budget airlines ensure that Budapest is more accessible than ever before, yet, for the moment at least, it still retains much of its old-world charm.

Founding principle

In AD 1036, the wise King Stephen wrote to his son, Emeric: 'Make the strangers welcome in this land, let them keep their languages and customs, for weak and fragile is the realm which is based on a single language and culture.'

GEOGRAPHY

Budapest is a city of two distinct parts, divided by the Danube, which, despite the waltz written in its honour, is murky and definitely not blue. The river separates the medieval streets and Roman remains of Buda and Óbuda (meaning Old Buda) from the late-19th-century boulevards of Pest. On the west bank, in Buda, the hills rise above the river. Over a period of 800 years, Castle Hill has suffered 31 sieges and been reduced to rubble on numerous occasions, yet enough has survived for it to remain one of Europe's most appealing medieval enclaves. On the flat ground of the opposite bank lies Pest, a busy city with broad, leafy boulevards and handsome baroque, neoclassical and Art-Nouveau buildings. Only in 1873 were these distinct areas united to form one city.

CONTEMPORARY BUDAPEST AND ITS PEOPLE

There's a lot more to the city than the historic sites and thermal baths for which it is famous. Since the end of the Soviet period, Budapest has embraced consumer culture and Western brands. The city is also renowned for its friendliness. If hungarians speak English and they see you looking at a map, they will often volunteer help; if they don't speak English, they'll try their best to help.

EMINENT HUNGARIANS

Hungary has produced many great musicians, the most famous of whom is perhaps Franz Liszt (1811–86), who became president of the Budapest Academy of Music. Writers include poet Sándor Petõfi (1823–49), who became a hero of the European revolutions of 1848. George Soros, businessman and philanthropist, was born in Budapest, as was conductor Sir Georg Solti, who is also buried here. Seventeen Hungarians have won Nobel Prizes: holography was developed by prize-winning physicist Dennis Gabor, and the Zsigmondy crater on the moon is named after Nobel laureate Richard Zsigmondy, who won the prize for chemistry in 1925.

Hollywood in its heyday was full of Hungarian talent, including a number of the great producers and directors – Korda, Fox, Zukor – and the revered Michael Curtiz who directed *Casablanca*. Actors include Béla Lugosi (best known for his role in the 1931 film *Dracula*). More recently, director István Szabó has won an Oscar for *Mephisto* (1981), György Pálfi has achieved

A LASTING IMPRESSION

'Good men must die, but death cannot kill their names,' says an old proverb. In Budapest, many of the streets are named after Hungarian heroes. Some are historical figures, others belong to the more recent past. The writer George Mikes (who wrote *How to be an Alien*, a celebrated satirical book about England) returned to Budapest and found that his former friends had become 'streets, statues and boulevards...with a largish square, you once had a drunken fight at 3am in City Park. And that statue there – so majestic on his pedestal – used to go to bed with one of your girlfriends. It hurt very much at the time – it was certainly not the behaviour you expect from a statue.'