



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Potsdam – world heritage meets innovation**

**Once the residence of Prussian kings and famed for its historic palaces, parks and gardens, today's Potsdam thrills also with its reimagined historic centre.**

Potsdam is an exciting fusion of culture, art and history. The capital of Brandenburg welcomes its visitors with a trendy mix of historical sites, arts and crafts, distinctive architectural quarters, memorials, museums and open-air concerts, all in front of the panoramic back-drop of the historic city itself. Whenever you visit, the city has something to offer in each season.

Whatever your interest, you are certain to find something to suit your taste. Historic, classic or modern and innovative – the choice is great, the diversity unique.

#### **UNESCO world heritage – the Prussian Arcadia**

The cityscape is dominated by 17 palaces and great houses, nestled in the woody landscape of the Havel river. Potsdam's historic centre and its famous palaces and gardens merited its designation as a World Heritage site in 1990. The palace of Sanssouci, famous across the world and often referred to as the German Versailles, sits within vineyard terraces amid an enchanted garden and park scattered with countless follies. Visitors inspired to continue their journey through 300 years of history are spoilt for choice, as they can visit the adjacent Picture Gallery and the New Chambers, or venture slightly further afield to the New Palais, the Orangerie palace, the Marble Palais in the Neuer Garten, or to Babelsberg Park and Palace. Art, architecture and garden enthusiasts from all over the world will be inspired by the cultural landscape of this "Prussian Arcadia".

Potsdam also gives its visitors the opportunity to remember more recent German history. There are many memorials that invite the visitor to linger and commemorate, while its museums run themed events and exhibitions and offer a forum to reflect on past international conflict.

For a bird's eye perspective at a viewing height of 103 metres, visitors should climb the top of the Belvedere on the Pfingstberg. Potsdam's most beautiful view not only takes in the cultural landscape but stretches as far as the pulsing metropolis of Berlin. The charming two-towered Belvedere and the nearby Temple of Pomona nestle into the wooded slopes of Lenné's English-style landscape garden.

#### **Many ways to discover Potsdam**

The varied cityscape is easily explored on a leisurely stroll or a guided walk. The guided "Historic Centre" tour takes in the heart of the city, the "Alter Markt" and culminates in a visit of the parliament building. Bus tours around the city give a wonderful overview over Potsdam's highlights and must-see attractions. The "City Tour" departs every 20-30 minutes on city and palace excursions. With 12 stops and a hop-on-hop-off ticket, visitors are in charge of their own itinerary. The instantly recognisable vehicles of the Kaiser-Tour run 365 days a year from



Potsdam Central Station and offer views of 26 historic highlights and 3 guided tours with live commentary.

The best way to explore lakeside palaces and attractions is from the water - by watertaxi, on one of the passenger boats of Potsdam's white fleet (Weisse Flotte) or under your own steam by boat or raft. Thanks to its extensive network of well signposted cycle paths, Potsdam is also a great place to discover by bicycle. A great address for bike hire is "Potsdam per pedales", located centrally at Potsdam's main station and the Griebnitzsee train station. While out and about, cycle explorers can safely store their luggage at the main station's 24-hour bike park.

### **Potsdam – cosmopolitan before its time**

When walking through Potsdam, the visitor cannot fail to notice the cultural influence of other European countries on buildings, parks and whole districts of the city. They find themselves transported to a little piece of Holland, Russia or Italy right in the middle of Brandenburg. The city centre's Dutch quarter with its steep-gabled red facades, the Russian colony Alexandrowka, memorial to Prussian-Russian friendship, or the Peter and Paul Church modelled after its Italian twin in Verona, all bear witness to Potsdam's cosmopolitan past, as do the French Church and Bohemian weavers' cottages.

### **Breathing new life into Potsdam's heart at the Alter Markt and Alte Fahrt**

At Potsdam's heart is the picturesque Old Market Square (*Alter Markt*). The charming baroque square boasts not only St. Nicholas' church with its colonnaded roof and panoramic views, but also Potsdam's reconstructed city palace, completed in 2014 as the home of Brandenburg's regional parliament (*Landtag*). On weekdays, visitors can freely access the Knobelsdorff-staircase, the foyer and the cafeteria, as well as the Landtag's restaurant and roof terrace. For those who want to find out more about the history of the city palace, the House of Brandenburg-Prussian History in the Kutschstall at Neuer Markt 9 offers detailed information. The revival of the historic centre continues at the Steubenplatz, where the reconstruction of the Ringer colonnades has recently been completed. Right next to the city palace is the Altes Rathaus, the old town hall, now home of the Potsdam Museum - Forum for Art and History. Altes Rathaus, St. Nicholas' church and the Landtag building form the core of Potsdam's historic centre. The nearby riverside is benefitting from a whole host of innovative regeneration projects, all breathing new life into the historic centre.

### **Potsdam's new gem: Museum Barberini - modern art behind a historic face**

Destroyed in 1945, the Palais Barberini has now returned to its home in Potsdam's historic centre by the river Havel. Its faithfully reconstructed facade hides a brand-new interior. Since the opening of the Museum Barberini in January 2017, modern art has a new home in Potsdam. In 2200 square metres of exhibition space, in 17 halls spread over three levels, it showcases Hasso Plattner's collection of artwork from the former German Democratic Republic and from after 1989. In addition, its programme of special exhibitions will feature both old masters and modern art on loan from international collections starting with its two inaugural exhibitions "Impressionism. The Art of Landscape" showing works from Claude Monet to Gustave Caillebotte, and "Modern Art Classics: Liebermann, Munch, Nolde, Kandinsky".



The Palais Barberini is located close to the Stadtschloss (city palace) and in its original form dates to 1771/72. It has recently been reconstructed as part of the regeneration of Potsdam's historic centre.

### **Schiffbauergasse, hub of art and culture**

The city's cultural heart beats at the Schiffbauergasse. This cultural district by the shores of the Tiefer See buzzes with creativity and is the centre of Potsdam's liberal arts and theatre scene. Here, where steamships were once built, is the location of the Hans Otto Theatre with its bowl-shaped red roof. The busy cultural hub is also seat of many other performance and exhibition venues, such as the "Waschhaus", the "T-Werk", the museum "Fluxus+" and "fabrik" - Potsdam's International Centre for Dance and Movement Art. They offer a year-round menu of festivals featuring dance, music, film and contemporary, visual and performing arts. Many high-tech companies, such as the Volkswagen Design Centre or the software company Oracle, have also made their home here, making for a fruitful and unusual clash of cultures. Historic site meets future vision!

Food lovers are also well served, for example at the restaurant ship of "John Barnett" and the restaurant "Il Teatro" in the Zichorienmühle (a restored old windmill). The Nikolaisaal Potsdam, Potsdam's concert hall since 2005, is an exciting cultural meeting place in the city centre. National and international stars perform here, often accompanied by the Kammerakademie (Potsdam's chamber orchestra), or the renowned Film Orchestra Babelsberg. For details of this year's programme, please see [www.nikolaisaal.de](http://www.nikolaisaal.de).

### **Green culture: "Pückler. Babelsberg. The Park-Enthusiast Prince and the Empress"**

For a truly regal view, visitors can enjoy one of the most beautiful garden creations of the 19th century German nobleman and landscape gardener Prince Pückler-Muskau: Babelsberg Park. Architecture, horticulture and landscaping interweave artfully here. As is typical for Pückler and his contemporary Lenné, each twist and turn of the park's winding paths reveals a new vista of the surrounding river landscape and the Glienecke Bridge. Follow these paths through the flower garden to the gothic fountain, the rose garden and the moss garden. The eccentric prince's bag of garden design tricks, as well as his relationship with his Empress, who referred to him as the „magician“, are the focus of the new exhibition "Pückler. Babelsberg. The Park-Enthusiast Prince and the Empress". For the duration of this special exhibition, from April 29 to October 15 2017, and for the first time in many years, Babelsberg Palace will open its doors to reveal its still unrenovated interiors, offering visitors privileged views of the lovingly restored park just as Prince Pückler intended.

### **500th anniversary of the Reformation - "City meets Church"**

2017 sees the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. An extensive programme of themed events across the year promotes a lively exchange between city and church addressing Potsdamers and visitors, Christians and Non-Christians alike. Churches make an important contribution to the cultural and social life of the city. Special events such as readings, concerts and talks invite participants into Potsdam's famous and more obscure churches, bringing topics to places where you would least expect them. In return, religion becomes the focus of events hosted by other organisations, in different locations and formats. The theme-week "City meets Church" taking place in the Bildungsforum Potsdam from October 9 to 14 2017 offers guided tours, talks, readings and more.



## Further cultural highlights of 2017

Potsdam has culture in its soul. Its cultural calendar boasts world-class festivals and events all year round: from the Potsdamer Dreiklang of Jazz, art and architecture, the Tanztage, an International Festival for Contemporary Dance, to palace concerts and Potsdam's winter opera.

Potsdam's famous "**Night of the Palaces**", one of the country's largest cultural events, wows this year with a completely reimagined format under the heading "A New Kind of Wonder!". For one night only on August 19, Sanssouci Park comes to life in baroque splendour, as a multitude of spectacles including ringing bells, human mobiles and dancing creatures of air, light and silk enchant its visitors. The event kicks off with a **pre-evening concert** in Sanssouci Park on August 18 headlined by world-class, multiple ECHO-award winning violinist Daniel Hope and the l'arte del mondo orchestra. Against the backdrop of the UNESCO world heritage site they perform Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" culminating in a spectacular firework display. Afterwards, visitors can stroll through the illuminated park and take in exclusive views of the majestic backdrop.

Each year, the Konrad Wolf Film University, Babelsberg plays host to the largest **International Student Film Festival "Sehnsüchte"**, this year from April 26 to May 1. Under the theme "Surfaces", the best new talent in the industry will present their latest works to the public, as well as to a jury of experts, which will give out 10 different awards. The festival attracts around 7,000 visitors each year. Selected cinemas and the entire Sehnsüchte-Campus offer exciting events, workshops, panel discussions and guided tours through the film university and film studios. A highlight not only for film experts of all generations, but also for amateur enthusiasts.

From June 9 to 25 2017, the **Musikfestspiele Potsdam Sanssouci** explores the connections between "Earth, Fire, Water, Air" and music. In Potsdam's palaces and gardens, the elements are musically conjured in the form of floods and thunderstorms, singing stones, whirling winds, creation or chaos by artists from 23 countries in 80 concerts, operas and guided tours. May it be a fiery baroque opera from Spain, an airy jazz night in Sanssouci, the bicycle concert, Babelsberg's water music or exclusive house concerts by the water – music is in its element!

Culture enthusiasts pedal to their concert during the annual "**Bicycle concert**" of the Musikfestspiele Potsdam Sanssouci. "Seven Lakes, seven churches, plenty of music and along the water all the way!" is the theme of this year's event. On June 11 2017, this award-winning festival tradition will take participants on two family friendly cycle tours that feature concerts, guided tours, readings, installations and site visits around the city. Tours start at 10 am at the Brandenburger Tor/Luisenplatz.



Beautiful words and locations are the focus of **LIT:potsdam**, the city's successful summer **literature festival**, now in its 5th incarnation. Between July 6 and July 9 2017, many well-known regional and national authors hold readings in some of the city's beautiful and unusual locations.

The annual artists' open studio day, held this year on May 7, attracts friends of contemporary and visual arts to Potsdam. Galleries, studios and artists' associations offer a wealth of exhibitions and projects in the contemporary arts, and invite visitors to admire what's on display and have a go at producing their own creations.

In late summer, Potsdam invites visitors to savour three full days of Jazz. The triple event "**Potsdamer Dreiklang**" combines the Jazz Days, the Art-Pleasures tour and the Day of the Open Monument. From September 8 to 10, participants can delve into the three complementary themes of jazz, art and architecture. Unusual historical locations, including an old riding hall, a print workshop and residential dwellings from different eras, are transformed into unique stages for the Potsdam Jazz Days. Museums, studios and galleries accompany their exhibitions with acoustic pleasures from swing to cool-jazz. Passionate saxophone pieces, fascinating sculptures and the wonder of Potsdam's unique architecture will inspire and enthuse.

Over the last few years, **Potsdam's winter opera** has become a 'beacon project' for Potsdam and the region. In 2017 (November 23 to 25 and November 30 to December 2), the winter opera will be produced once again by the successful pairing of the Kammerakademie (Potsdam's chamber orchestra) and the Hans Otto Theatre.

During the month of December there are **Christmas markets** in five historic sites. This year they come in five different flavours: romantic in the crown estate of Bornstedt, Polish in the historic royal coach house (Kutschstall) at the Neuer Markt, Bohemian on Babelsberg's Weberplatz, traditional German in the Dutch quarter and "blue" in the historic city centre with its blue illuminations.

For further details on concerts, festivals, exhibitions, performances and open air events, please see the extensive calendar of events on: [www.potsdam-tourism.com](http://www.potsdam-tourism.com). Here you also find contact details for all organisers, operators and tourist advisors.

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