

## Storytelling – stories from Lübeck and Travemünde

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# Lübeck

## A Dutchman in love with Lübeck

Lübeck without the status of a UNESCO World Heritage is like a Michelin-starred chef without stars, says Jan Kruijswijk. What does Lübeck have in common with the Pyramids of Giza, the Ruins of Olympia, Stonehenge and the Great Wall of China? They all belong to the group of over 1,000 historic sites around the world that have been given the protection of UNESCO World Heritage status. 39 of these sites are located in Germany, and Lübeck has been one of them since 1987.



City guide Jan Kruijswijk – A dutchman in love with Lübeck - St. Annen-Museum (c) LTM - Ingo Wandmacher

Lübeck was founded in 1143 as the first port on the Baltic Sea and quickly developed into the rich and mighty “Queen of the Hanseatic League”. The Old Town island is one of the most beautiful examples of the red-brick Gothic style of Northern Germany. The seven church spires have dominated the city’s silhouette since the Middle Ages. In addition to the famous Holsten Gate, it is worth seeing the historic Town Hall, the salt storage buildings, which were used to store the “white gold”, the Hospital of the Holy Spirit, the impressive merchants’ houses and the medieval alleys and courtyards. The archaeological subsoil of the Old Town with around three million finds is also part of the World Heritage Site.

Someone who knows everything there is to know about it, is the tour guide Jan Kruijswijk. The native of the Netherlands with his unmistakable Rudi Carrell accent and beloved

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Norwegian jumpers has been living in Lübeck since 1991. “I came to Lübeck because of love”, he says in reference to his wife Dorit, whom he met while drinking the popular spiced wine “Glühwein” with some colleagues at Lübeck’s Christmas Market. At that time he was still working for Dräger as an engineer in Zoetermeer in the Netherlands, but quickly relocated to Lübeck and has never regretted it. “Lübeck is far more than a beautiful backdrop”, he raves. “Here, you breathe history and it’s at the centre of life.” After retiring, he made a new profession out of his hobby of showing business customers “his” Lübeck once their working day was done.

Since 2007 he has been offering regular guided tours, explaining the “Queen” and what makes Lübeck a UNESCO World Heritage Site – in German, English and Dutch, of course. “There was a gap in the market when I started at the Association of Lübeck Tour Guides”, he says with a laugh and strokes his grey beard. He particularly enjoyed dressing up for the costume tours as Jan Janszoon van Wijck, a Dutch captain who spent the winter of 1668 in Lübeck with his galleon “Seelöwe”. He took a room in the Seafarers’ Guild and enjoyed the food and drink, especially the French red wine, which matured in Lübeck’s cellars into the now famous Lübeck red wine “Rotspön”. “I once got some very special praise from one visitor”, laughs Kruijswijk with a wink. “After the walk around the city he said, thanks for the great tour – and you did really well with the Dutch accent!” This Captain Jan Janszoon van Wijck may explain how Kruijswijk manages to make his guided tours so exciting and unforgettable for visitors. He tells stories. “My secret is a mix of entertainment and history. A guided tour only takes two hours, and I don’t want to bore my visitors with too many facts and figures. You can find many details on Wikipedia”, he says. “But I want to inspire with my stories, so that our guests want to come back to learn more about the city.”

And what does the UNESCO brand mean for Lübeck? “It is a promise”, reflects Kruijswijk. “Lübeck without the status of a UNESCO World Heritage is like a Michelin-starred chef without stars. Visitors from all over the world can rely on the fact that the UNESCO seal means they will find something very special here.” The most common question on his tours relates to the destruction during World War II. “Lübeck was fortunate in its misfortune”, is his response. “Around three quarters of the Old Town survived the War almost untouched despite the devastating air raid of 1942.” Then in 1944, Lübeck was declared supply port of the International Red Cross and this made it off-limits to further bombing raids.

Kruijswijk especially enjoys taking his visitors through the old Seafarers’ Quarter around St. Jacob’s church. The traces of medieval life can still be seen here and this provides great material for his stories. There is, for example, St. Jacob’s church for seafarers, St. Gertrude’s Hostel for weary pilgrims, the Seafarers’ Guild as a meeting place for captains, the Castle Gate that used to be the cause of genuine last-minute panic at times, and the Hospital of the Holy Spirit in which the poor and sick had to make a vow of obedience, chastity and poverty to be admitted. Still, you did get a free meal and three litres of beer every day adds Kruijswijk with a grin, knowing well that it was better to drink dark beer than water during the Middle Ages as protection against diseases. Beer was also part of the crew’s daily rations on board of trading ships, so it was no wonder that there were around 160 breweries in Lübeck in the Middle Ages.

“Many believe that the Middle Ages were romantic”, explains Kruijswijk. “But that’s not true. It was a daily battle for survival. Disease and death lurked everywhere.” That was also why rich Lübeck merchants were so generous with donations, as they were worried about their

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salvation and wanted to buy their place in paradise. This resulted in many charitable foundations, such as the Füchtingshof, which offered refuge to impoverished widows and orphans. The little alley houses in the rear courtyards of the Old Town are a special tourist attraction – spruced up like little doll’s houses, they make popular holiday apartments. The humble wooden huts used to be home to servants, simple seafarers, or were rented by small businesses, and could not even be heated because of the fire risk. 70 of these historic alleys and courtyards have been preserved to this day and are an integral part of many guided tours.

“The alleys are simply part of Lübeck and each one tells its own special story”, says Kruijswijk. He could talk passionately and enthusiastically about “his” Lübeck for hours, but even the best guided tour has to come to an end. Just one question is left: What is his favourite place in Lübeck? “The Christmas Market of course”, he replies with a smile. “I found my great love there in the protection of the historic Town Hall.” How romantic!

## Lübeck's new museum area

**The Hanseatic League – from trading association to global player. A tour through the European Hansemuseum. The Hanseatic League was a successful model. Originally. Eventually, it came to an end. The European Hansemuseum explains the rise, fall and legend of the erstwhile commercial power and invites you on an interactive journey through 600 years of Hanseatic history.**



European Hansemuseum Lübeck – outer facade (c) Europäisches Hansemuseum - Foto Thomas Radbruch

How did it all begin? Why did merchants band together in the Middle Ages? Haven't they been competitors? How did they live and what did they have that others did not? On an area of over 4,000 square metres, visitors can experience the boldness of longrange trading and learn about life in a foreign place, the fight for privileges, wealth, power, piracy, plague, belief and death. If there's something worth knowing about the Hanseatic League, you are sure to learn it here.

The journey begins underground at an excavation site. Archaeologists have uncovered a piece of history here, which takes visitors back to the beginnings of the City of Lübeck. The city was founded in 1143 as the first German port on the Baltic Sea and it quickly became clear: Lübeck had what it takes to be "Queen of the Hanseatic League": a protected island town, a gateway to the Baltic Sea, good transport connections and of course the merchants' instinct for profit and new trading connections. The tour continues through an imaginary portal to the banks of the Neva. There is no exact date for the founding of the Hanseatic League and no written contract, but the League may well have been born here in foreign lands in the high reeds against a backdrop of heavily laden cogs. In 1193, merchants from

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Low German cities meet on the banks of the river before travelling further to Novgorod, elect a leader and proceed in the protection of the group to conduct lucrative business in the Russian trading metropolis.

Lübeck in 1226. The city is growing and a sea of redbrick develops over time. More and more people move to the emerging trading city and living space behind the city's walls becomes scarce. Lübeck's merchants have become extremely wealthy thanks to long-range trade. They begin to build their houses from fired brick rather than wood and loam. The journey through time continues on to the year 1361, to the "Oude Halle", the Hanseatic trading office ("kontor") at Bruges, which was the centre of "global trade" north of the Alps at that time. Here, they traded in woollens from Flanders, spices, silk and brocade from Italy, furs and wax from Russia, tropical fruit from Spain, relic bags from Cologne and armour from Milan.

However, the international trading routes not only bring wealth and power, but also disease and death. The plague, for example, carried off around a third of Europe's population in the 14th century. In London in 1500, visitors see how the Hanseatic merchants also make enemies abroad due to their wealth and far-reaching privileges. They are not entirely blameless in this, though. Their privileges and upmarket lifestyle cause major resentment among the local population. It peaks with an angry mob attempting to storm the Hanseatic kontor known as the "Steelyard". Problems and disagreements are also increasingly apparent within the Hanseatic League itself, which becomes very clear at the "Hansetag" meeting (Hanseatic Day) in Lübeck in 1518. The Reformation begins in 1517. New values sweep across large swathes of Europe and new conflicts arise as a result. The fortunes of the League fade despite all efforts and successes, such as the Peace of Westphalia of 1648.

The last Hansetag is held in Lübeck in 1669. The final leap through time takes visitors to Bergen in Norway, where the local Hanseatic kontor is converted to a Norwegian kontor in the mid-18th century. That was the end of the Hanseatic League, but life went on. For the erstwhile "Queen of the Hanseatic League", too. The legend of the Hanseatic League persists and is still tangible today. In 1980 the New Hanse is founded in Zwolle in the Netherlands to keep the spirit of the Hanseatic League alive as a community of and cultural exchange between the cities. The "City League THE HANSE" now has 183 members in 16 countries and each year one of the member cities hosts the Hanseatic Days, the "family reunion" of the Hanse cities.

## **European Hansemuseum Lübeck**

An der Untertrave 1

[www.hansemuseum.eu](http://www.hansemuseum.eu)

Opening hours: daily open 10 a.m. – 6 p.m, except 24<sup>th</sup> of december

Entrance fee: adults: € 12.50 | reduced price: € 11.00 | children: € 7.50

## Food & Drinks in Lübeck

### MORE THAN COFFEE AND CHOCOLATE - ONE FAIRTRADE

What comes to your mind when you think of fairtrade? Eccentric shops tucked away in the most obscure parts of the city, that are exclusively packed by bearded do-gooders? Not so in Lübeck! With over 30 suppliers of fairtrade products Lübeck is the first city in Schleswig-Holstein to be declared a Fairtrade City, in 2011. If you would like to take a look at how colourful, modern and creative the world of fairtrade can be, then you should definitely pay a visit to ONE Fairtrade in Königstraße.



Aykut Kayabas - ONE Fairtrade (c) LTM - Ingo Wandmacher

A glance at the large display windows of the corner shop demonstrates the wide variety of goods on offer. From high-quality hammocks from El Salvador and hip bamboo bowls from Vietnam to imaginative bags from Thailand – around the world in 75 square metres! Owner Juliane Aigner is particularly proud of the cheerful bags. “My sister discovered those on one of her travels. For me fairtrade is more about the principle than it is about the seal. It is about sustainable production, good working conditions and fair wages. The seamstresses make the bags from scraps of material left over from their traditional costumes. They are fantastic for spring with their bright colours!”. Meanwhile, Juliane’s partner Aykut Kayabas gets to work on the large roaster, the iron heart of the store. The machine hisses and steams and finally the inimitably delicious aroma of freshly ground coffee wafts through the air. The perfect souvenir: “Liubice”, Lübeck’s old-Slavic name, means “the lovely

one” and is the only fairtrade coffee that is roasted here on site.

He has just had the name patented. “Two mild, light varieties of coffee are combined with a small shot of espresso – you have to try for yourself to discover how wonderful that tastes”, he says with a wink. [www.one-fairtrade.de](http://www.one-fairtrade.de) (Information in German)

## MARZIPAN WITH LOVE – LÜBECK’S SWEETEST EXPORT SUCCESS

### J.G. NIEDEREGGER

Behind the proud facade of the original Niederegger store on Breite Straße, hides what may well be one of the city’s best-kept secrets. Protected by bullet-proof glass and known only by the immediate family and the head confectioner, sweet-toothed fans still puzzle in vain over the special ingredient that makes Niederegger Marzipan what it has been since 1806: “marzipan of world renown”.



© Niederegger

The subtle mix of almonds, sugar and the magic ingredient has also retained its noble character for 200 years and remains as ever an exquisite delicacy. Of course, the marzipan tastes particularly good in the place where the spirit of the original confectioner and company founder Johann Georg Niederegger and the passion for this unique product can still be felt, in the original store opposite the historic Town Hall. Simply follow the “golden thread” that greets you on the ground floor and – embedded in the floor and ceiling of the building – ultimately leads you from one loving detail to the next. Old baking moulds on the walls, the “Classic”, the small marzipan bread, recreated in the lift button, the wallpaper and that of the company logo, and last but not least the entertaining Marzipan Salon, where you can learn about the eventful history of Niederegger Marzipan. Here, you will also come across a few of the most famous marzipan lovers: from the Tsar’s mother Luise to Thomas Mann and Wolfgang Joop, you can read their own Niederegger anecdotes. Hungry? Then why not relax and end your visit in the delightful café atmosphere, indulging in the store’s famous marzipan nut cake while you contemplate one of the most fascinating Lübeck success stories at leisure. [www.niederegger.de](http://www.niederegger.de)

## GERMANY'S OLDEST WINE BUSINESS - WEINHAUS CARL TESDORPF

When the golden letters on the old Tesdorpf house glitter in the afternoon sun, you cannot help but feeling: This name means something in Lübeck! Once an influential patrician family with political office, nowadays it is a love of wine that persists in the 12<sup>th</sup> generation of the family. Anyone who loves good wines really should not miss the opportunity to visit Weinhaus Tesdorpf in Lübeck.



Winehouse Carl Tesdorpf (c) LTM - Ingo Wandmacher

While the wine may no longer arrive by ship at the Untertrave, the head of the business and wine connoisseur Carl Johann Tesdorpf still places the highest value on the noble quality of his wines. The Lübecker Rotspon is particularly popular. Visitors may be able to find it elsewhere, but of course not all Rotspon is actually Rotspon! Two requirements have persisted through the centuries: It must be a French red wine that is bottled in Lübeck.

The choice of wine used for the Rotspon is at the discretion of the sommelier, however, and the Tesdorpf's are famous for their excellent relationships with French wine growers and châteaux. Peter Hinrich Tesdorpf founded his wine emporium in 1678, setting a milestone in the German wine trade. This connection to the tradition of the family business is apparent wherever you look in the Weinhauson Mengstraße today. The 800-year-old merchant's house is a treasure in itself and makes a visit to the oldest wine business in Germany a double pleasure.

[www.tesdorpf.de](http://www.tesdorpf.de) (Information in German)

## TIMELESS BEAUTY IN NEW GARB - SEAFARERS' GUILD

Sometimes it takes two princes to wake a sleeping beauty with a kiss. Frank Höhne and Michael Engel have accepted the challenge and fulfilled a long-held dream with the takeover of the management of the Seafarers' Guild.



Schiffergesellschaft © Ingo Wandmacher

The proud gabled house opposite the seafarer's St. Jacob's church has been a home for mariners since 1535 and, since 1866, has also been home to one of the city's most famous restaurants. It is this special atmosphere of real history that makes a visit to the Seafarers' Guild such a unique experience to this day. Yet, even timeless beauties need a live-cell therapy from time to time. "Combining the tradition of the building with modern everyday life requires a lot of sensitivity", stresses Frank Höhne. The two new bosses are focussing on "fresh, affordable cuisine of the highest quality". The menu, which is laid out like a newspaper, is changed every one to two months and can also be taken away as a souvenir. The 51-year-old is especially proud of his Southbend Grill, which he uses to "prepare the perfect steak". The house brand "The Captains" is also new. Beers, wines, sparkling wines and spirits are all available under the maritime name, which you will find all over the establishment. The garden in the inner courtyard, which is accessible directly from the Engelsgrube, is the place to sit in summer. While listening to Frank Höhne talking about the many innovations and crucial little things, you have a good feeling that the balancing act between preserving and modernising has been achieved with great success. Give it a try!

**[www.schiffergesellschaft.de](http://www.schiffergesellschaft.de)** (Information in German)

## Blossoms and award-winning chocolate

### SWEET DREAMS COME TRUE AT THE“ EVERS & TOCHTER” FACTORY

The small artisan production facility of Evers & Tochter is hidden behind the façade of a house in Lübeck's Old Town. Angela Evers conjures up candied blossom dreams here – lovingly crafted by hand blossom-by-blossom and coveted as decoration the world over. Her new passion lies in making chocolates with unusual flavours – handmade and internationally recognised.



Angela Evers - Evers & Tochter Manufaktur (c) LTM - Ingo Wandmacher

The garden behind the house is both a paradise and a working plot. Every morning, while things are flourishing and blooming, Angela Evers harvests asters, horned violets, daisies, hibiscus and rose petals here. She candies the fresh flowers on the same day using her secret recipe, preserving the aroma, taste and colour (almost) for eternity.

Evers & Tochter represents high quality, fine flavour, a special passion for detail, sustainability and fair trade. The ingenious woman in her late fifties began her new craft in 2006, “learning by doing”, as she says – with a lot of patience, creativity and

a desire to start a new business idea after 20 years as a freelance fashion designer. Her daughter Dana Li handles the marketing and web presence for the small family company. “We are a great team and complement one another perfectly”, says her mother Angela proudly. Edible flowers are now a very popular decoration all over the world, especially in delicatessens and patisseries, where they are used to embellish cakes, pastries and much more besides. Angela Evers has also candied herbs like parsley, thyme and woodruff. “But flowers are more popular and sell better”, she adds.

Fine chocolates with equally bold flavour compositions are her new passion and the second mainstay of the business during the flower-poor months of autumn and winter. The creative newcomer already scooped gold and silver at the last International Chocolate Awards for her white chocolate bar with gin spice and milk chocolate with truffle salt, and she came away with the silver medal from her first appearance at the world championships in London.

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Congratulations!

Her big clients include Dior, Swiss department store chain Globus and the KaDeWe store in Berlin; she is on the radar of well-known food scouts all over the world. It hardly gets better than that. This success also means roundthe- clock work for Angela Evers though. How does she do it all? “I played basketball for 32 years. That helps me to keep both feet firmly on the ground, to dribble, to endure and to blast off when I can score!”, she explains, describing her recipe for success with a smile. She doesn't know what her next winner will be, but it is bound to be something sweet!

[WWW.EVERSUNDTOCHTER.DE](http://WWW.EVERSUNDTOCHTER.DE)

## The perfect menu

**RESTAURATEUR MANFRED MIERA IS REINVENTING HIMSELF AND EVERYONE CAN TASTE IT.**



Miera Restaurant - Manfred Miera (c) LTM - Ingo Wandmacher

**His name is Miera. Manfred Miera. The man is a statement just as much as the five gold letters on a dark-red background hanging above the entrance to his gourmet restaurant on Huxstraße. Miera has been a constant major player of the Lübeck gastronomy scene for almost 30 years with a delicatessen, bistro, restaurant on the first floor and neighbouring wine bar, and despite that, he is happy to reinvent himself.**

Miera stands for quality and haute Mediterranean cuisine, sourcing his ingredients predominantly from the region. His culinary motto: “We cook with the sun of the South and the produce of the North”. His outstanding cuisine and his good wines are popular not just with the people of Lübeck, but have also long found him fame in Feinschmecker, on Tripadvisor and with other gastronomic tipsters. Does Miera the restaurateur have Italian roots? The name would certainly suggest so and he does look like it could be true. “No, the name comes from Upper Silesia”, explains Manfred Miera with an amused grin. “But I did learn to cook in an Italian restaurant in Scharbeutz and do seem to have got stuck with the Mediterranean angle.”

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He had the urge to try something different when he first finished his training and began to cook vegetarian food. “It was fun to develop dishes that no one had made at that time. That was the appeal.” Always reinventing yourself, “shedding your skin”, as Miera calls it and becoming at ease with a new skill, that has remained his passion to this day. Just recently, he developed a new gastro concept for his two restaurants in Lübeck and Neustadt. “We have reinvented ourselves once more, because we want to become more down-to-earth and accessible for our guests. The king is dead, long live the king!” reports Miera happily of his latest culinary coup, which should lure young people in particular “away from their burger haunts”. “Ultimately, we’re taking a risk in changing our cuisine to a clear southern European style, doing away with the filling German main course, in favour of a Mediterranean menu with starter, pasta, fish, meat, dessert – i. e. a proper menu, if people want it, and all at moderate prices.” In terms of quality, he likes to rely on his own nose and direct contact with the small producers and growers from whom he prefers to buy. “Eating naturally well, that is modern quality of life.”

Does Miera covet a Michelin star? No, he doesn’t need one, he says self-consciously and adds mischievously: “The people I like to serve couldn’t afford the food and the people who could afford it, I don’t want to serve.” Well, he speaks his mind and as king I suppose he’s allowed to do that. Bon appetit!

[WWW.MIERA-RESTAURANT.DE](http://WWW.MIERA-RESTAURANT.DE) (INFORMATION IN GERMAN)

## It's the right cut that matters

### ROTTER GLAS – MODERN GLASS DESIGN AND UNIQUE SPECIAL PIECES FROM LÜBECK



Birgit Rotter - Rotter Glas from Lübeck (c) LTM - Ingo Wandmacher

**“I’ve loved Rotter Glas since I was a little girl”, explains the personable company director Birgit Rotter in her unmistakable American accent.**

“As a child at home in California I used to press my nose up against the glass door, as my parents kept the special glasses in a cabinet and only put them on the table on Sundays.” The passion for collecting came from her grandparents, who wanted to send their children, who had emigrated to America after the War, a greeting from home with the beautifully cut glasses from the Lübeck factory. So it was no surprise that fifteen-year-old Birgit wanted to visit the factory when she came to the Hanseatic city for the first time as an exchange student at the Katharineum school. That’s also when she met her future husband Wolfgang Rotter for the first time. “But I only had eyes for the glasses back then”, she explains with a wink.

After studying business management in California, she returned to Lübeck in 1986 for an internship. And she made her way back to the Rotter Glas factory too and once again met Wolfgang Rotter, who invited the young lady there and then to take a romantic sailing trip to Grömitz. This was not just the start of a German-American love story, but also the foundation for the current success of the Rotter Glas brand. A few years passed before she took over management of the family company from her husband, however, during which the entrepreneurial business woman first brought up her own “baby” – alongside their two sons Carl and Christoph – the “Artemani” gallery for small manufacturers in Lübeck’s Old Town.

As the new head of Rotter Glas, Birgit Rotter has been responsible for marketing and sales since 2013, and is breaking new ground to increase the brand’s fame and attract new international customers. She proudly explains that her circle of clients now includes an exclusive superior hotel on Bora Bora in the South Pacific and a gourmet restaurant in Kyoto, Japan. And by the way, Kate Moss was so impressed by a Rotter glass at the recent opening of the new Dior shop in London that she wouldn’t drink out of anything else. “Our glasses are full of passion, quality and sensuality and I would like them to be loved – for a lifetime, like I love them”, says Birgit Rotter of the love of her life. “You don’t need to have everything, but what you have you love!”

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Rotter Glas is famous all over the world for modern glass design, superb cutting and brilliant colours. The family company was founded in Silesia in 1870. All glasses are still finished purely by hand to this day and are precious unique pieces. More than 150 cuts have been developed over the generations. The “Kugelbecher” has a special cult status and is painstakingly cut using the spherical drilling process patented by Carl Rotter back in 1929.

[WWW.ROTTER-GLAS.COM](http://WWW.ROTTER-GLAS.COM)

ACTIVE NORTHERNERS

## A crab on the Wakenitz

### CANOEING ON THE WAKENITZ – THE AMAZON OF THE NORTH

**A canoe tour on the Wakenitz is one of the most stunning leisure activities and one of the best ways of seeing Lübeck's natural surroundings. The river is affectionately known as the "Amazon of the North" in Lübeck.**



Canoe-Center Lothar Krebs - Wakenitz (c) LTM - Ingo Wandmacher

Because the eastern bank was a restricted area along the former GDR border for decades, the wild overgrown embankment here has remained almost undisturbed. The romantic river landscape was designated a conservation area in 1999. "The canoe tour from Lübeck to Rothenhusen takes around five hours and is also suitable for beginners. You paddle for three to four hours, interspersed with breaks", explains Lothar Krebs, and he should know, as he has been running his canoe centre for 33 years, hiring out canoes for tours on the Wakenitz and other waterways in the area. The experienced teacher discovered his passion for canoeing in 1983 in Sweden, enthusiastically bringing the idea home with him. What began as a small venture, has over time become the largest canoe tourism business in the region, and now also includes the Wakenitzhaus in Rothenhusen as a central port of call, with its modern guest house, canoe rental station, camping area and since 2017 a tent hotel too. "Thanks to the weak current, the Wakenitz is also ideal and safe for inexperienced paddlers", says Lothar Krebs, though he does advise his guests to wear life jackets at all times. "Ultimately, canoeing is not a computer game; everything is live!" adds the former teacher with a smile. He loves the real adventure in nature that he can offer his guests on the "Amazon of the North". Our tip: a tour in the large Canadian canoe around the island-shaped Old Town of Lübeck – with Lothar Krebs acting as both helmsman and city guide!

[WWW.KANU-CENTER.DE](http://WWW.KANU-CENTER.DE) (INFORMATION IN GERMAN)

# Travemünde

## The success story of the seaside resort Travemünde

told by Wolf-Rüdiger Ohlhoff

**International celebrities like Josephine Baker, Sophia Loren, Thomas Mann, Caterina Valente and Gunter Sachs have all beaten a path to Travemünde.**



Wolf-Rüdiger Ohlhoff - Travemünder hobby historian

Wolf-Rüdiger Ohlhoff knows them all, not personally, but no one knows more about Travemünde as a meeting place for the rich and famous than the amateur historian from Travemünde. He is a walking encyclopaedia. Everything began in 1802 when the seaside resort of Travemünde was founded and life in the traditional fishing village was truly turned on its head. Sea bathing became fashionable at that time in the better circles, albeit only from a wooden bathing machine or in one of the six warm water bathing pools on the beach. 3.000 visitors came to bathe in the first year alone, bringing money with them; the coastal architecture that is so typical for Travemünde today sprang up quickly. The queues at the bathing machines and in the warm water bathing pool became ever longer, until finally in 1873 a public swimming facility was constructed on piles in the water. This was an immense boost to bathing operations, as large numbers of visitors could now bathe at the same time in the sea, though separated into male and female areas as before. Technical progress brought the first steam shipping line to Travemünde in 1824.

Weekly the side-wheel paddle steamer Princessia Wilhelmine brought visitors across the Baltic Sea from refined Copenhagen to Travemünde. Shipping connections from and to Saint Petersburg, Riga and Reval quickly followed, which were used by rich Russians to reach the great cities of Europe. Famous Russians who lodged in Travemünde at that time were Ivan Turgenev, Nikolai Gogol and Fyodor Dostoyevsky. Travemünde really began to fill up from 1882 onwards, when the first railway came and a couple of years later, when cars started to become a common mode of transport. Famous names like Joseph von Eichendorff, Emanuel Geibel, Richard Wagner, Clara Schumann, Edvard Munch and of course, Thomas Mann, all feature the list of prominent visitors to the historic seaside resort. In July 1914, Franz Kafka wrote in his diary: "In the afternoon briefly put bare feet in the sand. Felt unpleasant". It was still unobscuring at that time to show bare skin in public.

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Gambling was a magical draw for high society and had a decisive impact on Travemünde's reputation as a fashionable seaside resort. In 1833, it was officially approved in the "Kurhaus" – now the A-ROSA Resort. For forty years gambling was banned under Chancellor Bismarck and the gaming tables in Travemünde were put away. Gambling was allowed to start a new in 1949, this time in the "Kursaal", dating from 1914, which is now the Columbia Hotel Casino Travemünde. This helped the resort to achieve an incredible comeback in the post-war era as the glamorous "Monte Carlo of the North". The casino-nightclub "La belle Epoque", was legendary, creating a furore in the 1950s and 60s with shows featuring international stars. A "nogo zone" of 15 km prevented citizens of Travemünde from gambling everything away themselves. This was instituted because the town elders were concerned that daily temptation in the nearby casino might drive the locals to speedy ruin.

Does Ohlhoff have a favourite place in Travemünde? Of course, two even! He loves listening to the Passat Choir live on-board the four-masted barque Passat, and sitting on the bench of the new pier to watch the majestic ships coming in going out – just like in olden times. Madness!

## Why is the plaice flat?

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM THE SEA – A VISIT TO THE OSTSEESTATION PRIWALL



Ostseestation Priwall Travemünde - Leiter Thorsten Walter (c) LTM - Ingo Wandmacher

**Who'd have thought. Pipefish, jellyfish, shrimp, gurnard and lumpfish – they all live in the Baltic Sea and almost seem to keep us company when we go swimming. The native sea dwellers might not be as famous as the clownfish Nemo, but they are just as fascinating in their own way, amazing around 15,000 visitors a year to the Ostseestation on the Priwall Peninsula.**

Marine biologist Thorsten Walter turned his dream into reality here in 2007, establishing aquariums and a small environmental station in an old submarine pen. Not only can you look, but you might actually get to touch a crab or a real starfish. Thorsten Walter calls his concept "oceanography for everyone", working patiently and passionately day after day and with a flair for education to make it a reality. Many visitors with children come to him during school holidays and at weekends, but otherwise it is usually large groups, including countless kindergarten and school classes. In addition to tours through the Ostseestation, he also offers the children landing net courses, beach walks or microscope instruction. Adults too enjoy listening to Thorsten Walter reveal the secrets of the local underwater world, which usually finishes with one delicious fish recipe or another.

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“That’s part of it”, grins the congenial marine expert. But does he like eating fish where he so lovingly protects his charges? Sure, and he prefers to buy it from the Travemünde fishermen who sometimes bring him exotic examples for his collection from their cutter trips.

Thorsten Walter is planning a move to the new waterfront project on the Priwall peninsula in autumn 2017, into a larger exhibition space. The concept is ready – from the visitor circuit and an exhibition on the history of the fishing industry to new display aquariums. He is working with Priwall investor Sven Hollesen, various charitable foundations and the Landschaftspflegeverein Dummersdorfer Ufer e. V. on the financing for the new Ostseestation. Fingers crossed! And why is the plaice actually flat? Thorsten Walter’s response: It isn’t really, it just swims on its side!

[WWW.OSTSEESTATION-PRIWALL.DE](http://WWW.OSTSEESTATION-PRIWALL.DE) (INFORMATION IN GERMAN)

## Just lay it on thick

### A PORTRAIT OF TWO TRAVEMÜNDE ARTISTS

**Instinctive painter meets artisan. Frauke Klatt meets Ninette Mathiessen. Two painters, as different as Luv and Lee, yet united by a talent for bringing their very personal view of the sea and the maritime world to life on canvas.**



Frauke Klatt und Ninette Mathiessen (c) LTM - Ingo Wandmacher

It is apparent immediately when you enter Frauke Klatt's studio: here is a passionate water sports enthusiast at work, expressing her love for the sea, the wind and sailing in matchless paintings. Billowing sails and vividly foaming waves pull the observer into the scene, making the power of the sea something tangible.

Frauke Klatt breathes life into the scenery with thickly applied, vibrant colours. "My large-format acrylic pictures express the full dynamic of sailing, but also the leaden silence of the calm on a muggy summer's day". Someone once told her that you feel "wet" when you look at her pictures, which happens to be one of the biggest compliments you can pay a marine painter. The long-term resident of Travemünde revolutionised international marine art in 1997 with watercolours on old canvases. Pictures like people, on whom time has left its mark and are

full of life precisely because of that.

The life and work of the "art craftswoman", as Ninette Mathiessen calls herself, are rather a different story. She only entered the public domain as an artist six years ago. Her fresh and free approach has been conquering the regional art scene ever since.

With good ideas, lots of initiative and modern, expressive pictures, which are intended to "have a simple decorative effect and bring joy". The fish is always at the heart of her work. This is her trademark and in some ways also a memento of her first commissioned work. Fish motifs for a fish restaurant: sometimes the answer's close at hand. Thus, the little girl who earned her first pennies with street painting, has become a gallerist and artist able to make a living from her passion.

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You won't find fine brushstrokes in her work. Her pictures are as wild as the sea: She goes to work with palette knives and artists' blades, creating clear motifs with unusual materials like mortar and packing paper, always different, always maritime and of course always featuring that now proverbial "Mathiessen fish".

Circumnavigator: Frauke Klatt has designed the official poster for the Travemünde Sailing Week 18 times since 1997. She prefers to explain the great variety of her works in person by appointment. [www.frauke-klatt.de](http://www.frauke-klatt.de) (Information in German)

Local patriot: Ninette Mathiessen organises an art exhibition with ten Lübeck artists every year. Her gallery and art workshop are on Bertlingstraße, opposite the Strandbahnhof in Travemünde. [www.diekunstwerkerin.de](http://www.diekunstwerkerin.de) (Information in German)

## Sculpted from stone

### UNIQUE MEMORIES FROM THE BALTIC BEACHES



Kristin Wolf (c) LTM - Ingo Wandmacher

**They are sometimes angular, or round, or rough, or completely smooth and sometimes even sparkle a little when you turn them this way and that in the sun. They tell stories that are as diverse as their composition, they give flight to our imagination and fascinate us with their uniqueness.**

Stones are ten a penny and yet here in particular they develop their very special charm. Who hasn't dropped one in their pocket during a walk on the beach – with the feeling that they've found a really special example? Stones are a little piece of eternity and perhaps that's why they have healing properties when it comes to the trials and tribulations of life. In any case, that's how it was for Kristin Wolf, a young woman who felt one day that her life simply couldn't go on as before. She was going to the beach on a daily basis at the time. "The stones gave me strength and to some extent saved my life". They certainly changed Kristin Wolf's life for ever. The number of her finds steadily grew, as did the idea of sending little messages with them. The first went to her boyfriend: two little bodies of Baltic rock leaning on one another – a moment of closeness sculpted in stone. The framed piece decorated their home from then on and attracted the attention of friends and family: "Can you make something like that for me too?". The business idea was born. Although: if you see Kristin Wolf working you probably wouldn't think "business idea" at all. Over and over, she turns and twists her treasures in her hand, putting them together, testing the harmony of colour and form.

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Her motifs represent moments of happiness. Births, marriages, declarations of love – unique and unforgettable for her clients, combined with the hope for a little bit of eternity. Kristin Wolf's works are clear and minimalist. The stones are the stars. They alone tell the story that you cannot put into words.

[WWW.STONE-EMOTIONS.DE](http://WWW.STONE-EMOTIONS.DE) (INFORMATION IN GERMAN)

ACTIVE NORTHERNERS

## Everything in flux

YOGA BLISS WITH VIEWS OF THE TRAVE



Yoga ship (c) Yoga center Travemünde

**We all know. Sometimes you carry an idea in your head for years, tossing it back and forth and yet not finding the courage to put it into practice.**

Stefanie Kinter dared to do it. Five years ago, she moved with her family from North Rhine-Westphalia to Travemünde, turning her very personal dream into reality. While still working as a senior manager for a large DAX concern, the passionate yogi rented a small room in a private house in Travemünde and began to offer yoga courses there. That was in August 2012. Breathe in, breathe out, let go. And then sometimes everything falls into place by itself. Today Stefanie Kinter is the owner of the Travemünde Yoga Centre, employs several people, offers the full spectrum of the various forms of yoga and is also training the next generation of yogi. Happily, in Travemünde that daily freshness boost is included and it's just a few metres from the sea to her yoga studio on Möwengasse. The family used to come to the seaside every year; now they live where other people come on holiday. She meets these holidaymakers in summer at her "Yoga on the Beach" classes. And even if the sun's not shining, she puts people in a good mood with bad weather packages and laughter yoga. Since 2014, she has been taking to the sea in the "Yoga Ship" for Travemünde Sailing Week. "There is a very special atmosphere. The movements of the ship are both a challenge and a source of strength", she says, starting to dream and then adding with a wink: "You can even manage a headstand when there's a dead calm". The participants are always enthralled in any case and the 25 places on deck are highly coveted. "When we come back from our sailing trip and enter the Trave estuary with all the people watching on land, I always feel a little bit like a queen", she laughs. There are moments in life when you truly feel that you have made the right decision. Listening to Stefanie Kinter talk like that may perhaps be one of them. With that in mind: "Namaste".

[WWW.YOGAZENTRUM-TRAVEMUENDE.DE](http://WWW.YOGAZENTRUM-TRAVEMUENDE.DE)

[WWW.YOGASCHIFF.DE](http://WWW.YOGASCHIFF.DE) (INFORMATION IN GERMAN)

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## 3rd rock from the sun

### NATURE ADVENTURE CLOSE TO THE CITY – THE DUMMERSDORFER UFER

**When Matthias Braun looks out of his office window, the first thing he sees: nothing. Well, nothing isn't quite the right word. Broad grasslands, farmland and yes, when he leaves the building, perhaps even a couple of playing children from the on-site nature kindergarten. On the horizon, hidden, the Trave, which continues its path to the Baltic Sea undisturbed here.**

Matthias Braun is the director of the "Dummersdorfer Ufer" conservation association. A quiet man, who has to smile when he sees the old pictures of how it all began in 1977. The then 17-year-old stood with a handful of people in the wild coastal landscape of the Dummersdorfer Ufer and decided: this natural oasis close to the city must be preserved exactly as it is. After long years of dedicated work, and following on from pockets of protected land, the coastal strips, the Dummersdorfer Feld, woods and small lakes have been a fully protected nature reserve since 1991. This not only benefits the many highly specialised species of animals and plants, but also the visitors searching for and finding a respite from their everyday lives. "One of the prettiest places has to be the Stülper Huk", reports Matthias Braun. There is an incredible view of undisturbed nature from the tip of a little promontory 15 metres up. Visitors can choose from five hiking trails in all to get a closer look. "Every season offers something special": from February, the mating season of the whooper swan triggers the start of spring fever, while hundreds of lambs cavort along the banks from March and, from May, the Dummersdorfer Feld is in full bloom. Then we have lots of special activities going on for young and old nature lovers. "Getting local people and visitors actively involved is very important to us. We want to show people and vividly explain to them why nature conservation is so particularly worthwhile here". Well, if that's not an invitation!

[WWW.DUMMERSDORFER-UFER.DE](http://WWW.DUMMERSDORFER-UFER.DE) (INFORMATION IN GERMAN)