



PRESS-INFORMATION

Tracing the Footsteps of an Emperor

This year, Saxony-Anhalt is hot on the heels of an emperor. On the 1050th anniversary of the death of Otto the Great, four places are inviting visitors to retrace his last steps. All of them have packaged up special offers for the occasion. And all of them are located on the "Romanesque Road," which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year. Rich culture and a long history that can be experienced in a "truly active" way, for example on pilgrimages and a press trip in April.

Otto the Great lived up to his epithet. To this day, he is one of the most famous figures in German history. This year marks the 1050th anniversary of his death on May 7. In Saxony-Anhalt, this is a good reason to retrace his footsteps. Fittingly, the "Romanesque Road" is also celebrating its birthday. The route, which winds its way through Saxony-Anhalt's unique cultural landscape in the shape of a figure eight, connecting 88 objects in 73 locations, was opened 30 years ago. The start and finish line are the state capital of Magdeburg — one of four Ottonian cities that will have special experience status in 2023.

Four stops have a double connection

In 2023, in a joint project with numerous partners, the Centre for Medieval Exhibitions will focus on places central to the life and work of Emperor Otto, tracing "The Emperor's Last Journey". In the truest sense of the word, visitors can experience what moved Otto I at four different stops. The intriguing part of it all: The cities of **Magdeburg**, **Quedlinburg**, **Merseburg** and **Memleben** are not only connected by the emperor's travel route. All four are also part of the "Romanesque Road" — and here the following applies: It's not the destination but the journey. And what was it like back then? Where did the emperor travel? A look back at the history: In 972, Otto and his family returned from Italy to the region that is now Saxony-Anhalt. On Palm Sunday, he enters Magdeburg Cathedral, and a little later celebrates a glittering royal court day and Easter in Quedlinburg. On Ascension Day he stays in Merseburg and receives guests. At his next stop, in Memleben, he wants to celebrate the feast of Pentecost. But it doesn't happen. The emperor dies — in the same place as his father Henry I, the first German king, almost 37 years earlier.

Searching high and low in Memleben

That is why Memleben near Naumburg will always be remembered as the place where two important German rulers died. To commemorate the deaths of his ancestors, Otto II founded a Benedictine monastery with his Byzantine wife Theophanu over 1,000 years ago. A monumental church was built, comparable in size to the Magdeburg Cathedral of Ottonian times, the ruins of which can still be visited today. The Monastery and Imperial Palace Museum of Memleben features modern exhibitions that show the daily life of the medieval monks and the close connection between the monastery and the powerful people of the empire. A beautifully designed monastery garden,

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the imposing architecture, exciting exhibitions and a monastery café invite visitors to linger. Several times a year, active monks visit the former monastery and report on the challenges of modern monasticism.

Searching for traces in Merseburg's imperial cathedral

In the twin anniversary year for tourists, Merseburg in the southern part of the state is also dedicated to the former ruler's journey. Signs with red and white symbols pointing to the "Romanesque Road" lead all the way to the imperial cathedral, which as part of the castle ensemble, is one of the jewels of the route. The altar retable, sculptures, epitaphs, paintings and manuscripts presented in the cathedral and cathedral treasury, including the famous "Merseburg Incantations", are of cultural and historical significance. The romantic Ladegast organ offers a special kind of listening experience. With selected documents and manuscripts from the cathedral archives and the cathedral library, Otto I's special relationship with the cathedral city will be highlighted from May 18 to November 5, 2023 with the motto "Otto the Great, Saint Laurentius and the Foundation of the Diocese of Merseburg - Searching for Traces in Merseburg's Imperial Cathedral". The exhibition is accompanied by many thematic special tours, projects and lectures.

The last journey in Quedlinburg and Magdeburg

Traces of the last journey of Emperor Otto I will also be uncovered for everyone in Quedlinburg and Magdeburg over the next few months. In Saxony-Anhalt's only World Heritage City, interested visitors will dive deep this year into the history that Otto I shaped. On the Stiftsberg mountain, the castle museum and the abbey church will also be participating, offering many activities on March 24, 2023 — the anniversary of what was probably the most glorious royal court day of the Middle Ages in 973. Despite the construction site in the castle museum, the Ottonian vaults will be made accessible on this day and the church of St. Wiperti, the former royal court at the foot of the Stiftsberg, can be explored in guided tours.

In the state capital, the Historical Culture Museum is presenting an exhibition from April 28 to October 8 on the occasion of the 1050th anniversary of the emperor's death. The special exhibition is called "Which Deeds Become Pictures? Otto the Great in the Memory of Later Times". In the Cathedral Museum "Ottonianum", the topic of memory will be the focus of parallel theme evenings and discussions. In particular, the staging of Otto's grave and Magdeburg Cathedral as his final resting place, as well as the ongoing celebrations to commemorate his death, will be examined in greater detail.

Special tours and exhibitions, conferences, events and festivities: Otto I is always present in Saxony-Anhalt. This year, however, his history is staged in such a way that his footprints seem almost fresh. This information is summarized at www.deskaisersletztereise.de

Author: Manuela Bock



From Memleben to Magdeburg — go on a pilgrimage and travel with us!

The **pilgrimage tour "The Emperor's Last Journey** — A Pilgrimage from Memleben to Magdeburg" allows you to explore the places on the Way of St. James where Otto I spent the last days of his life. The tour covers 240 kilometres along the "Romanesque Road" from Memleben via Quedlinburg to Magdeburg. Details about the individual legs of the route are available at www.romanik-pilgern.de.

On the occasion of the anniversary year, St. Jakobus Gesellschaft Sachsen-Anhalt e.V. is offering a **shortened pilgrimage route specifically for media professionals**. From May 7 to 13, 2023, those interested can join a small group each day to walk in the emperor's footsteps along the Way of St. James. The schedule of legs and routes begins each morning with a motivational address at 8:30 a.m. and ends in the evening at 6 p.m. with a pilgrimage blessing. After the jubilee event in the Imperial Palace on May 7, the pilgrimage continues May 8 from the monastery church Memleben to Helfta, on May 9 from the monastery church to Alterode, on May 10 from St. Vitus to Quedlinburg, on May 11 from the abbey church St. Servatii to Huysburg, on May 12 from the monastery church to Schönebeck and finally on May 13 from St. Jakobi to the cathedral in Magdeburg. More information can be requested from St. Jakobus Gesellschaft Sachsen-Anhalt e.V., Kirchplatz 3, 06333 Hettstedt, email: jw-lsa@web.de, www.jakobsweg-sachsen-anhalt.de

The **Investment and Marketing Corporation Saxony-Anhalt mbH (IMG)** also invites media professionals to a **cultural and historical press trip** along the emperor's last travel route. The trip starts on April 24 in Halle (Saale) and ends on April 27 in Magdeburg. Participants will travel by bus. The focus will be on cultural-historical activities for travel journalists, but options for an active vacation will also be presented, where you can discover the pearls of the Romanesque period. You can find the detailed programme here. Registration via email is requested by March 31st: pressereisen@img-sachsen-anhalt.de



PRESS-INFORMATION

Cycling Through Bismarck's Countryside

Some people's mouths water at the name, others think of the founder of the German Reich and controversial politician of the 19th century to this day. But Bismarck is more than herring fish or the "Iron Chancellor". For centuries, the Altmark was shaped by the old aristocratic family and vice versa. Visitors can trace Bismarck's footsteps across the countryside while experiencing adventures in nature, interesting discoveries, and surprising encounters.

The wide, untouched landscape of the Altmark simply begs for a discovery tour by bike. The Elbe Cycle Route, which runs through the region for almost 100 kilometres, is not the only place where cycling enthusiasts feel at home. Along the 500-kilometre Altmark circuit and many other idyllic routes, active tourists can enjoy the beauty of the vast landscape, learn much about the old noble Bismarck family, and meet its present-day representatives.

The starting point of a small round trip could be the Colbitz-Letzlinger Heide. At the edge of this once densely wooded area, this is where the Bismarcks stepped into the light of history. It was a great honour for the patrician family from Stendal to acquire Burgstall Castle. The elevation of their status, which was connected with the margravial privilege of July 15, 1345, made them knights of the Altmark nobility. Until the 16th century, the Bismarcks were part of the Altmark landed gentry. They lived removed from the big politics until the Prince-Elector of Brandenburg cast an eye on the rich hunting grounds. The family had to leave Burgstall. They received the estates of Krevese and Schönhausen in exchange. Today, one can only imagine the former splendour. What remains of the medieval castle is a hill surrounded by linden trees. The castle fell into disrepair. However, remains of the walls, which can be found in some places, and a tower foundation still bear witness to the glorious times. Later, a forestry commission office was erected there.

Festivals and concerts in the Renaissance manor house

It's a short bike ride from Burgstall to Birkholz. Even the name of the village promises a rural paradise. But the village near Tangerhütte offers more than quiet and seclusion. Famous artists come and go from the magnificent manor house. The events in the picturesque garden are of premier calibre. In keeping with the motto "culture in the open air", Carlotta and Martin von Gehren like to open their house in the summer for concerts as part of the "Altmark Festival" and also invite culture enthusiasts on other occasions. The building was erected in the 18th century on the site of a former moated castle. Later the estate came into the possession of Levin-Friedrich von Bismarck from Briest. A branch of the family has lived there for more than 600 years.

The neighbouring village is quickly reached by bike through the forest. Time seems to stand still here. But a lot has happened recently. The chapel built in 1588 has just been renovated. The half-timbered church, like the newly renovated brewery, is part of the estate, which still shapes the village today. Maren von Bismarck, the owner, enjoys welcoming visitors to concerts and other events. The magnificent manor house from the 17th century is one of

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the most beautiful examples of North German Renaissance architecture. Situated on a pond, it is surrounded by a spacious English-style nature park. The ensemble is one stop in the state project "Garden Dreams – Historical Parks in Saxony-Anhalt".

From the residence of Emperor Charles IV to the birthplace of Otto von Bismarck

The tour continues on the Altmark circuit. Along the way, the "Delicacies of Charneux" lines one of the most beautiful pear tree avenues in Altmark. In the village of Welle, estate owner Britta Götz-Mohr has dedicated herself to the preservation of old, regional fruit varieties. As a descendent of the von Bismarck family, she returned to the homeland of her ancestors at the end of the 1990s and, together with her husband Christoph Mohr, turned the Bismarck estate into a refuge for her family and guests seeking tranquillity. With a series of events, she too turned the old family estate into a place for art and culture. On the way to the next Bismarck town, the towers visible from afar entice visitors to take a detour to picturesque Tangermünde. Anyone who appreciates the romantic flair of a historic old town surrounded by a completely preserved city wall should take a break in the little town on the Elbe. Even Emperor Charles IV loved to lay his lordly head to rest there. The fact that he made the town a secondary residence to his headquarters in Prague from 1373 to 1378 is still appreciated by the people of Tangermünde today. They proudly call their town an imperial and Hanseatic city.

The view from the castle stretches far and wide over the Elbe meadows. North of the city, an imposing bridge leads to what is probably the best-known Bismarck site. In 1815, Otto von Bismarck was born in Schönhausen. The son of a country squire from Altmark and a Saxon diplomat's daughter, Otto von Bismarck later became one of the most important politicians of his time. As the "Iron Chancellor," Bismarck created the German Empire. In the town of his birth, visitors can go in search of traces of the figure who was revered by many, but who is still controversial today.

A “village living room” has become a creative place in the countryside

The Romanesque village church, where Otto von Bismarck was baptised, is a stop on the touristy Romanesque Road that runs through northern Saxony-Anhalt. The manor house where the "Iron Chancellor" was born was blown up in GDR times. The park and an outbuilding, which today houses the Bismarck Museum, have been preserved. In addition to Bismarck as a historical figure in politics, visitors can learn about his life as a pupil, student and husband. Back across the river, the ferry ride near Arneburg is a special experience. It takes a lot of pedalling to reach the next Bismarck village. But recreational cyclists who exercise regularly need not fear sore muscles. There are no mountains to climb and no obstacles to overcome. The path leads — far from busy roads — through the flat, wide countryside. Picturesque villages and contact with nature quickly make you forget the effort. This is probably the best leg of the route for experiencing the Altmark first hand.

It is a long way to Krevese, no matter which direction you come from. A visit to the village, which is now a district of the Hanseatic city of Osterburg, is



worth your time. Rainer Kranz and Ralf Engelkamp, the imposing manor house's two owners who come from North Rhine-Westphalia, not only found a new home for themselves in the vastness of the Altmark. With their "village living room" in an outbuilding, they have also created a "creative place in the countryside" for locals and (other) visitors.

The estate was once home to an ancestor of the "Iron Chancellor" and all Bismarcks living today. His name was Friedrich. When Kranz and Engelkamp discovered the baroque manor house, it had been left to decay for years. In 2003, the two art designers bought the historic ensemble of castle, monastery storehouse and park, which they have since revitalized for residential purposes as well as for exhibitions and events. The Christmas market on the estate is legendary.

Since 1345: family traditions that are 19 generations old

And speaking of Christmas. Another descendant of the famous family can be found in Döbbelin. Ever since Alexander von Bismarck took possession of the estate again in 1991, he has been carrying on the family tradition there, now in its 19th generation. He and his family use the 18th century castle as their home. In the cellar, they run a small café and a very special store. In "Bismarck's Christmas World" there are many little things that celebrate the holiday season but are available throughout the year. Visitors can also explore the park. Every spring, the LebensArt exhibition shows trends in gardening, living and lifestyle.

The heart of the Altmark beats in the 1,000-year-old Hanseatic city of Stendal, which is considered the cradle of Brandenburg-Prussia. A well-preserved old town with two mighty city gates, the Uenglingen Gate and the Tangermünde Gate in the style of North German brick Gothic, as well as the market square with St. Mary's Church, bear witness to its rich history. In front of the imposing town hall, the statue of Roland proclaims the proud Hanseatic tradition. Trade has had a decisive influence on the town and one family has played a special part in it. In early documents of the Hanseatic City of Stendal, "de Bismarcks" appear as members of the powerful merchants' and garment tailors' guild. They belonged to the patricians, the constitutive citizens of the city. The first descendant of the family to make a name for himself was Claus von Bismarck around 1345. He clashed with the city authorities and the church and sided with the Margrave of Brandenburg. The fact that he was enfeoffed with Burgstall Castle in return, and thus elevated from a commoner to a nobleman, triggered a revolt that resulted in the expulsion of the family from the city. Stendal, the last stop, can be easily reached by ICE train from large cities, and brings the visit to the Altmark full circle.

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Further information:

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PRESS-INFORMATION

The Hanseatic Altmark – picturesque towns that transport you back to the Middle Ages

Impressive gates, magnificent town halls, beautiful churches and imposing houses are all evidence of a time when the Altmark region was prosperous and prestigious. The powerful Hanseatic League was largely responsible for the growth of trade in the area between the 13th and 16th centuries. The north of Saxony-Anhalt has a greater concentration of Hanseatic towns than can be found anywhere else.

Seven proud towns not only formed a powerful group within the medieval Hanseatic League, but also stood together against the despotism and violence of the rulers of the independent German states. They are: Stendal, Gardelegen, Werben, Seehausen, Osterburg, Tangermünde and Salzwedel. Together with the town of Havelberg, they form the **new Altmark Hanseatic league** and have once again added the title "Hansestadt" (Hanseatic town) to their names.

In front of the historic town hall of **Hansestadt Stendal**, the statue of Roland is a symbol of the town's medieval trading rights and town charter. In around 1160, the town was granted the right to hold markets and in the Middle Ages it was one of the 25 largest cities in Germany. The Brick Gothic architecture of northern Germany and a number of artistic masterpieces bear testament to this time. The town's attractions for visitors include the two city gates, the Tangermünde gate and the Uenglinger gate, the High Gothic cathedral of St. Nicholas and, in the town hall, the oldest secular carved wooden paneling in Germany.

As its name suggests, **Hansestadt Salzwedel** in the north-western corner of the Altmark region owes its importance to the trade in salt (in German "Salz"). The town still retains its defensive walls from the Hanseatic era. They stretch for a distance of 1850 meters and have towers and two gates. The churches of St. Mary and St. Catherine also bear witness to the town's architectural and artistic heyday. Instead of salt, the town now supplies sweet delicacies throughout Germany. Salzwedel has made a name for itself as a Hanseatic town and as the home of the Baumkuchen or tree cake.

In **picturesque Tangermünde** with its towers that can be seen from far away and its famous town hall with a Gothic facade, visitors feel as if they have stepped back in time to the Hanseatic era. This little town on the River Elbe is the perfect spot for anyone who loves the historic atmosphere of an old town surrounded by a perfectly preserved town wall. The Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV enjoyed staying here and the residents of Tangermünde are still grateful to him for making the town into his second official residence from 1373 to 1378, alongside his main court in Prague. They are proud to describe Tangermünde as an imperial and Hanseatic town.

In **Hansestadt Havelberg**, the cathedral of St. Mary towers over its surroundings. This impressive building, which was constructed from 1147 onward after the Wendish Crusades of Albert the Bear, the first margrave of Brandenburg, still inspires awe today. From the castle hill there is a

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wonderful view of the River Havel and the Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve. At the foot of the hill, the old part of the town, which is located on an island in the river, is the perfect place for a peaceful stroll.

The Germans' favorite drink once provided jobs, good cheer and full purses in the south-west of the Altmark region. In the Middle Ages, **Hansestadt Gardelegen** became rich by exporting beer and hops. The statue of Roland outside the Gothic town hall and the churches of St. Mary and St. Nicholas all date back to this era. The ramparts, which form a green belt around the center of the town, were built for defensive purposes but are now one of the loveliest parks of the kind in Germany. They are part of the "Gartenträume – Historic Parks in Saxony-Anhalt" network.

Albert the Bear, from the House of Ascania, is responsible for founding **Hansestadt Seehausen**. After his Wendish Crusade, he brought Flemish colonists to the region in the 12th century to turn the marshy region into arable land. At its center, a flourishing town grew up with a church dedicated to St. Peter which has towers that are visible from a long way off. The entrance to the church is one of the most beautiful Romanesque brick portals in northern Germany.

The rustic charm of **Hansestadt Osterburg** appeals to visitors. Dating back over 850 years, it has a long history, an active present and a promising future. The buildings from the Hanseatic era include the churches of St. Nicholas and St. Martin. The English-style landscaped park of the former feudal estate of Krumke is home to one of the oldest box hedges in the world. The park is also part of the Gartenträume network.

Only a few hundred people live in **Werben** today. The residents therefore like to call it the **smallest Hanseatic town in the world**. But this picturesque town on the River Elbe has a long and rich history. In 1160, Margrave Albert the Bear founded the oldest hospice of the Knights Hospitaller in northern Germany here. The Elbe Gate and the Salt Church date back to the Hanseatic era. The little town's two main attractions for visitors are the Biedermeier Christmas market and the Biedermeier summer festival, which are held every year.

Anyone traveling on one of the eight Hanseatic routes in the Altmark will spot the traces of the area's historic past from a long way off. The region also has an active cultural scene, which includes organ and choir concerts in many of the beautiful churches. The Middle Elbe UNESCO biosphere reserve, the Drömling biosphere reserve and the Arendsee Lake, also known as the "Altmark lake," offer unforgettable experiences of the natural world. The wide-open spaces provide peace and relaxation for residents and visitors alike. Visitors can find out more about the Altmark from the Altmark Aktiv app or at www.altmark.de.

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PRESS-INFORMATION

Industrial culture: The Coal I Steam I Light I Lakes adventure cycle route

“From the dirtiest town in Europe to Helmut Kohl’s flourishing landscapes” – this is how the Coal I Steam I Light I Lakes adventure cycle route is sometimes described. It is a central feature of the marketing program of the tourism association of the World Heritage Region of Anhalt-Dessau-Wittenberg. The region lies between Wittenberg, Gräfenhainichen and Bitterfeld and has a long history of industrial production and brown coal mining, which the route aims to bring to life for visitors.

One of the main themes of the route is the major structural, environmental and landscape transformation that has taken place since German reunification in 1990. Former opencast coal mines, which had devastated the countryside, have become recreation areas and water parks, while what were once heavily polluted manufacturing plants have been transformed into modern, green industrial sites or have been renovated and restored to create fascinating industrial museums that attract large numbers of visitors.

It is this transformation that has enabled the region to become a tourist destination. This is why the Coal I Steam I Light brand was first launched in the 1990s and, because of the large number of lakes created from former opencast mines, it was extended to become Coal I Steam I Light I Lakes in 2013. This cycle and activity route links together the historic industrial culture of the region with the many lakes and water parks. In conjunction with this, the “World Heritage and Water” campaign was started in 2021 to bring together the significant potential for water tourism offered by the mine pit lakes and the cultural offerings of the World Heritage Region.

The Coal I Steam I Light I Lakes route itself is divided up into several stages. It begins in Lutherstadt Wittenberg at the Piesteritz workers’ estate, which was built to house employees of the Piesteritz ammonia plant. It then runs past the mine pit lakes on Düben Heath, such as Lake Bergwitz and Lake Gremmin. Lake Gremmin is the location of the impressive city of iron: Ferropolis. The open air museum there is home to five huge coal extractors that can be visited all year round and, in some cases, are accessible to visitors. This striking backdrop makes Ferropolis the ideal venue for music, sport and cultural events. It is also a popular campsite in the summer months.

The second stage of the route leads past Muldestau Lake to the Goitzsche lake district and Great Goitzsche Lake. Here the structural change that has taken place in the region is particularly obvious. Bitterfeld, which lies directly on Goitzsche Lake, was known at the end of the 1980s as the “dirtiest town in Europe” because of the coal mines and the large chemical manufacturing site there. Following the Peaceful Revolution in 1989 and German reunification in 1990, the region around Bitterfeld has gradually been transformed into the “flourishing landscapes” predicted by former German

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Chancellor Helmut Kohl in 1990. Today, Great Goitzsche Lake is one of the most popular lakes in Germany, with a range of activities, facilities and attractions for visitors on the shores and on the water, which makes it the ideal place to relax.

The third stage of the Coal I Steam I Light I Lakes route runs from Neuseenland north of Leipzig, which is also home to mine pit lakes, through the city of Leipzig itself to Lake Cospuden, south of the city. The fourth and final stage begins at Lake Cospuden in Markkleeberg, passes through the forests and alongside the lakes of the former Neue Harth mining area until it reaches Lake Großstolpen. Along the entire Coal I Steam I Light I Lakes route, there are a number of information boards that explain the history of the individual locations. This enables visitors to find out about the region's past while cycling from place to place in beautiful scenery.

In the future, other measures are planned to raise awareness of the route and to increase its popularity. The aim is to make greater use of digital offerings, such as augmented and virtual reality and apps which will bring the history of the region to life. Storytelling will also be included to allow visitors to experience the region's past at first hand and to understand the ideas and the lives of the people who lived there. There are also plans to develop several different experience centers or one large one where groups such as school classes can learn and discover more about the history of one location or the entire region, in part through play. A further goal is to expand the route into areas that also have an important industrial history involving brown coal mining in particular. It is hoped that in the future it will extend as far as the Burgenland district where brown coal is still being mined.

Apart from the industrial history of the region, visitors have a whole range of activities to choose from. They can follow the path of the Reformation in Luther's Wittenberg, experience a perfect Bauhaus day in Dessau, enjoy a ride in an Italian gondola on Wörlitz Lake in the Garden Kingdom of Dessau-Wörlitz or catch sight of the shy Elbe beavers living peacefully in their beaver lodge in the Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve. The World Heritage Region offers a fascinating variety of experiences to enjoy.

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PRESS-INFORMATION

“Picasso can be an inspiration for us”

An interview with art historian Thomas Bauer-Friedrich, director of art museums at the Kulturstiftung Sachsen-Anhalt (cultural foundation of Saxony-Anhalt) and head of the Art Museum Moritzburg in Halle (Saale), about a new exhibition.

In France and Spain, events are being held to mark the 50th anniversary of the death of Pablo Picasso and Halle an der Saale is also taking part in the commemorations. How did the Art Museum Moritzburg succeed in being the only museum in Germany to host the exhibition “The other Picasso: Back to the origins”?

I am still amazed that 2023 as the 50th anniversary of Picasso's death is going almost unmarked by German museums. Alongside smaller presentations from museums' own collections, for example in Cologne and Münster, the only major curated exhibitions are in Halle (Saale), Wuppertal and Regensburg. In Picasso's home countries of Spain and France, the most famous and important artist of the 20th century is being celebrated everywhere at the highest level. Our exhibition, which I have deliberately called “The other Picasso,” was offered to me over a year ago by Expona, the Italian exhibition agency. We have been having discussions about it for some time. When I found out about the possibility of staging this exhibition here in Halle (Saale), I immediately felt very excited. We are the only German museum to host it and afterwards it will move on to the Cobra Museum of Modern Art in the Dutch town of Amstelveen. The last major Picasso exhibition here in central Germany took place around 20 years ago. That was “Picasso and the women,” which was held in Chemnitz in 2002 at the start of my professional career. As a result, this project is very important to me personally.

What are the special features of the pieces in the exhibition, which focuses on ceramics and works on paper?

The concept developed by the two Spanish art historians Helena Alonso und Oscar Carrascosa concentrates on the references made by Picasso in his work throughout his life to the culture of his home country of Spain, to the art of the ancient world and to his family relationships – in other words, his constant habit of looking “Back to the origins.” As far as the pieces are concerned, the exhibition spans a period from just after the First World War through to the end of the artist's life. Around 100 graphics, drawings and, most importantly, ceramics will offer visitors the unique opportunity to discover another Picasso – not the familiar paintings, but, with the help of the graphics and ceramics, Picasso's work as a designer of ballet stage sets and as a poet and illustrator of books, plus his fascinating transformation of traditional ceramic art. In these areas, as in all the others that he became involved in, he was highly experimental and revolutionary. This makes it exactly the right project for us as the art museum of the region of Saxony-Anhalt with our focus on visual and applied art. In 1963, we acquired a wonderful bowl from Picasso's workshop in Vallauris in southern France with

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the motif of a picador. It is, of course, included in the exhibition. We have made every effort to put the works on display in an appealing and aesthetically pleasing way. We hope that visitors to the exhibition will be intrigued to find out about the “other” Picasso. A visit will be well worthwhile!

What influence does Picasso as an artist have on us today? And how do you intend to convey it to children and young people in particular?

Picasso is absolutely fascinating as an artist. He can inspire us to call into question existing established concepts, to develop them further and to transform them into something new. “A fearless spirit of innovation” is how I would describe it and this is extremely important and relevant to us against the backdrop of the massive changes in all areas of society and in the world as a whole. Our perspective on Picasso as a private individual and his relationships with women is very different today. We investigate this in our program to accompany the Leipzig Book Fair with a reading from a new book on the subject. This is certain to interest and inspire young people. I have also encouraged the students in the ceramics class at Burg Giebichenstein University of Art and Design in Halle to investigate Picasso’s works. Despite the relatively short time they had to prepare, the students produced some excellent pieces during the winter semester which we will be putting on display in the museum in the context of the exhibition. This demonstrates how relevant the subject remains today. And finally we have also included a creative area in the exhibition where visitors can create “their own Picasso” in digital form and post it on social media: #createyourownpic. This is obviously aimed at everyone, but our younger visitors will be more likely to try it out.

What exhibitions can we look forward to in the Art Museum Moritzburg?

Alongside the Picasso exhibition, we are putting on a small show of the paintings of Doris Ziegler, one of the most important painters of the Leipzig School. Our exhibition is the first in her home region and therefore long overdue. In the summer, we are staging “Halle by the Sea” and bringing the Baltic Sea into the museum in the form of pieces by artists from Halle (Saale) which demonstrate how they have focused on the Baltic in their work over the last hundred years and, in particular, on the town of Ahrenshoop on the Darß peninsula. At the same time, we will be holding a small exhibition of the works of Gertraud and Otto Möhwald. In the winter, we will be focusing on the animal kingdom with a show based entirely on pieces in our collection which demonstrate how animals have been the subjects and the motifs of visual and applied art over the centuries involving a variety of artistic techniques. Halle (Saale) is always worth a visit.

The other Picasso: Back to the origins. Ceramics and works on paper, from February 26 to May 21, 2023

Art Museum Moritzburg Halle (Saale), Friedemann-Bach-Platz 5, 06108 Halle (Saale). www.kunstmuseum-moritzburg.de

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PRESS-INFORMATION

“Truly special:” Dessau-Roßlau celebrates music and the people who make it

Dessau-Roßlau is well-known in musical circles for the international Kurt Weill Festival, which is held in February in memory of the composer who was born in Dessau. It consists of more than 50 events at 21 venues. Less well-known but no less inspiring are two other “truly special” musical events: the Days of Choral and Orchestral Music (TCOM) in March and the Ska Festival in June at Roßlau moated castle.

One of the most important German festivals of amateur music will take place in Dessau-Roßlau from March 17 to 19, 2023. It showcases the variety and the quality of the music produced by 14.3 million Germans in their spare time. At the Days of Choral and Orchestral Music, regional music associations, children's and youth choirs and a broad range of instrumental and vocal ensembles both from Dessau-Roßlau and from all over Germany will come together. Alongside the opening concert staged by the city of Dessau-Roßlau and the open-air event in the marketplace, the Long Night of Music, which consists of many different concerts at venues across the city, is a unique attraction. The highpoint of the three-day festival is the presentation of the Zelter and PRO MUSICA-Plakette. These awards are endowed by the President of Germany and presented every year by the Minister of State for Culture and the Media to musical ensembles with a long history. Find out more at www.tcom2023.de

This is Ska Festival

Ska is a musical genre that developed in the late 1950s in Jamaica and includes elements of reggae, rhythm and blues, jazz and rap. One of three largest Ska festivals in Europe will be held once again this year in Roßlau from June 22 to 25. As many as 2,500 fans will enjoy performances by their favorite bands against the magical backdrop of the moated castle in Roßlau. This open-air festival has quickly grown from a small-scale gathering of Ska lovers to one of Europe's most popular Ska events. A characteristic feature of the festival is the variety of performers and genres, which range from traditional Ska and two-tone to third-wave. As a result, it has something to offer everyone. Anyone with time to spare before or after the festival is certain to enjoy a visit to the nearby Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve, the Bauhaus UNESCO World Heritage sites or the Garden Kingdom of Dessau-Wörlitz, Find out more at <https://this-is-ska.weebly.com>

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PRESS-INFORMATION

From energy to knowledge: The opening of a state-of-the-art planetarium in Saxony-Anhalt

At the start of astronomical spring and the beginning of the Easter vacation, the Halle (Saale) Planetarium on Holzplatz is opening its doors for the first time. The grand opening will take place over four days from March 30 to April 2, 2023. This will give visitors the opportunity to explore the building, which has been converted from a gasometer, a repository for energy, to a planetarium, a repository for knowledge.

The monumental façade of the gasometer, which was built in the historicist style between 1889 and 1891, rises to a height of 16 meters and is 30 meters in diameter, creating a fascinating impression. Over the main entrance, the sign reading "Raumflug-Planetarium" (space-flight planetarium) commemorates the former planetarium on Peißenitz Island, which was irreparably damaged by flooding in 2013. The new planetarium was built with funding of around 21 million euros from the federal and state flood damage fund. At its heart is the hall of stars, which can accommodate up to 110 people. Following the groundbreaking ceremony on January 21, 2019, the planetarium has been constructed on three floors inside the restored circular walls of the gasometer with their arched windows.

On the roof, the telescope in the observatory offers the opportunity to observe the night sky live. The roof terrace is protected from ambient light by the outside walls that tower over it and therefore it gives a clear view of the starry sky. The audience in the hall of stars can also observe the cosmos through the lenses of the observatory telescope via a live transmission. In the future, the roof terrace will also be available as a venue for weddings, celebrations and all kinds of open air events.

In the new hall of stars, state-of-the-art technology is used to create amazing projections of the skies. Other possibilities include 360-degree panoramas and 3D flights offering unique and varied perspectives of the earth. Families, school classes and other interested visitors will in the future be able to enjoy 20 different shows involving astronomical phenomena in the 360-degree cupola. The presentations will include the astronomy of the South Pole 2000 years ago, a journey through the galaxies and a trip to Mars and the exoplanets. The astronomical knowledge on offer ranges from teaching for school classes and training for astronomy lecturers through to multimedia presentations of the blue planet, our solar system and distant galaxies, plus spectacular visual and audio experiences under the cupola of the hall of stars.

www.planetarium-halle.de

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Other tips for a city break in Halle:

May 26 to June 11, 2023: The Handel Festival: “The Opera: Dispute over Dideldorf and Dideldi” at authentic Handel venues in Halle, the birthplace of the great baroque composer, www.haendelfestspiele-halle.de, over three weekends and a total of 16 days

May 3 to May 15, 2023: Women in Jazz – 17th International Jazz Festival “New Jazz Now,” Halle Opera House, various venues, www.womeninjazz.de

Until June 25, 2023: State Museum of Prehistory Halle: Special exhibition “Horse nomads in Europe – Huns, Avars and Magyars”

August 25 to 27, 2023: Lantern Festival, one of the loveliest festivals in central Germany, along the Saale, Peißnitz, Ziegelwiese, Würfelwiese, www.laternenfest.halle.de

November 28 to December 23, 2023: Halle Christmas and winter markets with gallery evening (first Saturday in Advent) and Advent markets, Halle city center, www.weihnachtsmarkt.halle.de, www.finniundrudi.de

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PRESS-INFORMATION

Harz

The Brocken gang conquers the Harz mountains: New marketing strategy aimed at children

Over a period of several years, tourism in the Harz region has experienced dynamic growth. There has been a noticeable increase in interest in the region among families in particular, partly as a result of significant innovative investments in the infrastructure. The Harz Tourism Association believes that there is further potential for development in this area.

For some time, the themed marketing campaigns of the Harz Tourism Association have been aimed at its target group with the slogan "Nothing but fun - a magic formula to take you away from the daily grind." The associated advertising focuses primarily on parents as the decision-makers within the family. But in recent years there have been major changes in family life and in the communication within families. Children are increasingly being raised to be independent and self-reliant and to play an active role in family decision-making processes. This includes decisions about the destination for the next family vacation or excursion.

For this reason, the tourism association is now focusing on addressing and inspiring children as influencers directly, which is a new and innovative approach in German tourism. Unlike other marketing activities where children have a secondary role as users of the experiences and infrastructure, here they are seen as primary consumers of the informative marketing material.

At the heart of this new communication strategy is the Brocken gang and its four members Luke, Hanna, Henry and Emma. They have their own individual characters, appearance and clothes which allows the members of the young target group to identify with them. The four friends act as a team of reporters for Paul, who runs a radio station in the Harz region, researching and reporting on their experiences and their findings on their own website www.brockenbande.de in a way that will appeal to children. Primarily with the help of podcasts, audio recordings and videos, children are transported into five different worlds which represent the natural, historical, mystical, action-packed and technical aspects of the Harz region.

In cooperation with Heinz Hönig, the well-known actor, a number of radio plays on the subject of the Harz legends have been produced, which add an imaginative touch to the website. As a complement to the virtual offering, there is also a print magazine about the Brocken gang that highlights the special features of the Harz region using interactive campaigns.

The Brocken gang is also increasingly becoming an authentic Harz experience in the region itself. Children and adults who enjoy hiking can set off through the Harz with the special Brocken gang booklet and collect stamps from the Harzer Wandernadel checkpoints with the aim of earning the exclusive Brocken gang badge. In Wernigerode, Braunlage, Goslar, Hahnenklee and Osterode, families can enjoy a tour of discovery with the



Brocken gang. The Brocken gang town map of Wernigerode, which is designed for children, guides younger visitors through the town. In Braunlage, there is a treasure hunt with interesting information and questions that invites children to take a tour of the area. In Goslar, families have the chance to solve the mystery of the Kaiser's crown with the help of the Brocken gang. Young visitors can also discover Hahnenklee and Osterode accompanied by the Brocken gang. Other towns and partners are making use of the Brocken gang and including the members in their existing products. For example, the four friends can also be found on the walking route up to the castle and fortress of Regenstein in Blankenburg and in the citizens' park and miniature park in Wernigerode.

The Brocken gang is now a permanent feature of the communications and offerings in the Harz region and will hopefully inspire many more adults and children to enjoy spending time in the area.

Further information:

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PRESS-INFORMATION

Truly special: Urban camping in Magdeburg

Urban camping offers you the unique combination of sleeping in your motor home and strolling through bustling city streets. There are many reasons why people choose to park their motor home or camper van close to bars, movie theaters and shopping streets. Some people are just passing through, while some want to discover the city, but return to their own mobile home in the evening. Others prefer to be not too far from the bustle of the city or from their own home but would still like to experience the feeling of freedom on four wheels. The tourist information center in Magdeburg can provide details of a variety of motor home parking locations in the city and the surrounding area.

Honestly, who can remember the last time they woke up to the sound of birdsong and the rustling of the leaves in the trees? For some people, it's a long time ago. For others, it's just yesterday. But whether you are someone who is passionate about camping and often enjoys it or someone who just takes a trip every now and then, these special moments are always part of the experience: the first steps you take across the grass and past the open window of your own camper van just a few minutes after you've woken up. The rain pattering on the windscreen of the motor home, which sounds so much more magical than it does on the windows at home. Waking up and discovering that the first thing you see is a lake. Getting up and feeling the morning sun and fresh air on your face before you've even poured your first cup of coffee.

Urban camping in and around Magdeburg

All of that is just a stone's throw away from the hustle and bustle of the nearest shopping street or perhaps only an hour from your own home. Although many people may think that a motor home vacation involves setting off with just a few essentials and conquering the nearest wilderness or spending a few weeks far away from civilization with only a camping stove for company, it is also possible to go camping right around the corner. Maybe for a week or just a few days. And, of course, also in the city. Once you start investigating urban camping, you will discover countless opportunities and many benefits. Around Magdeburg, there are several wooded areas and lakes, all of which are idyllic spots for relaxing, finding some peace and quiet and making new discoveries. You can leave home, set off on vacation on four wheels and enjoy the freedom of the road, all without missing out on the advantages of city life and the center of Magdeburg. Imagine eating an ice cream in the shade of the trees in Rotehorn park. Strolling down Breiter Weg or walking along Hegelstraße toward the cathedral and spending time on Fürstenwall. Discovering museums or the Green Citadel designed by architect Friedensreich Hundertwasser and returning there in the evening, where you are only three steps away from your idyllic camping spot.

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Camping, caravans and more

There are many opportunities for camping or spending the night in your caravan not far from the city. The tourist information center in Magdeburg is the ideal starting point and can provide you with details of a variety of sites in the city center, on the outskirts and a few kilometers away. The Petriförder camp site is the ideal location for anyone who prefers to be at the heart of the action. Here you have a wonderful view of the River Elbe and are also very close to the busy life of the city. The Otto von Guericke Museum is just around the corner and the cathedral, opera house and main shopping streets are not far away. If idyllic locations are more important to you than infrastructure, the parking area for camper vans in the marina is a wonderful option. Here you are greeted with the sounds of the river flowing by and a breathtaking view of the city skyline when you step out of your motor home every morning. Here you can spend your nights in a peaceful natural setting and have your breakfast in the city, because the center is only a short walk away.

Well-managed parking sites for motor homes and camper vans

You can find an overview of the sites for motor homes in and around Magdeburg here: <https://www.magdeburg-tourist.de/camping>. The page lists sites for camper vans and camping and provides information about charges and special features, together with directions. We hope your next camping vacation is an enjoyable one!

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PRESS-INFORMATION

How churches can come back to life in just a few minutes

The Romanesque era has never felt as close as it does this year in Memleben, where 1050 years ago Emperor Otto the Great died in the imperial palace. His body was buried in Magdeburg, but his heart allegedly still rests in Memleben. At Memleben Abbey, visitors can take part in the exciting search for the Kaiser's heart and for the soul of this historic location.

Anyone who travels on the Romanesque Road cannot miss Memleben Abbey. Its stone ruins are a memorial to an eventful history. But a lot of imagination is needed to envisage what happened in the past.

Anyone who visits the abbey today will see the impressive ruins of a 13th century church which has been missing its roof for a long time. Only fragments remain of the 10th century church, but a reconstruction of the ground plan shows the unusually large size of the building. The abbey garden has been lovingly replanted according to the principles of medieval garden design. The exhibition area presents the varied history of Memleben with the help of interactive audiovisual displays. The well-maintained late Romanesque crypt from the period around 1200 is breathtaking. Here no modern technology is needed to convey the spirit of the Middle Ages.

Augmented reality: The ruins come to life

From March onward, visitors will be offered a completely new type of time travel, using the very latest augmented reality technology. At first everything seems quite normal. All the stones are in their usual places. Only one thing has changed: you are given a tablet to accompany you on your tour. A number of different orientation points with QR codes guide you through the abbey. The tour starts at the central viewing point, which gives an overview of the entire site. When you scan the QR code, the ruins and remains of the two churches will come to life in front of your eyes and, wherever you look, you will find yourself in the heart of the Middle Ages.

Your journey through time begins as you leave the viewing point. Church walls and a long-lost cloister appear. You are moving through a magnificent group of buildings that no longer exist. If you look up, the sky will suddenly disappear and you will find yourself inside Memleben Abbey church. Ahead of you, the choir screens and the view of the chancel give the impression that the medieval liturgy of the hours could start at any moment.

Evidence of historical connections discovered in the depths

The 1050th anniversary of the death of Emperor Otto the Great is on May 7. On this day, the special exhibition "The Emperor's Heart" begins in the exhibition area of the abbey. It includes finds from the archaeological excavations on the site. Hidden objects from the church and from other digs are displayed in their original form.

They highlight the challenges faced by archaeologists when they attempt to solve the riddles of the past. After the discovery of the objects deep in the ground comes the investigation of the historical connections. The researchers put together the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle in their search for

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the heart of Otto the Great in Memleben. In this exhibition, visitors have the chance to follow the archaeological investigation of the history of Memleben.

Archaeological digs for school classes

Anyone who is keen to discover more after all of these experiences can seek the help of a variety of experts. As part of the program relating to the investigation of Memleben, special guided tours and visits to the excavation sites, including talks by experts, are on offer. Classes of school children can even take part in the excavations themselves. Church services, presentations, guided walks and a pilgrimage are also available at the Abbey.

Further information:

- March 11 to October 31, 2023: "The Emperor's Heart – an archaeological investigation of the place of the death of Otto the Great," including a special exhibition (May 7 to October 31, 2023), www.des-kaisers-herz.de
- From the accompanying program: March 25/April 8/April 22/May 13/May 27/ June 10/June 24/July 8/July 22/August 19/September 9/October 7/October 21: Public guided tours on archaeology in Memleben
- April 23: World Heritage walking day
- May 8: The Emperor's last journey – a pilgrimage from Memleben to Magdeburg
- March 25/October 21: Walk to the burial mounds on the Eichberg near Memleben
- April 4/May 16/July 11/July 25/October 17: Vacation activities: "Hidden finds," a guided tour for children with experiences of the excavations
- Additional presentations, church services and experiences for groups and school classes (booking required)

High resolution press images of Saale-Unstrut

<http://www.press-area.com/saale-unstrut/start.html>

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PRESS-INFORMATION

Saale-Unstrut – where the splendor of the castles and cathedrals will last for all eternity

The Saale-Unstrut region was popular with kings and emperors in the High Middle Ages. The heart of Otto the Great was buried in Memleben, the favorite palace of Henry II was in Merseburg and Emperor Frederick Barbarossa lived for a time in Neuenburg Castle in Freyburg. Cathedrals and castles were built, the abbeys contributed to the development of culture in the region and the towns acted as trading hubs. The 13th century was a period of considerable prosperity for the region. Saint Elisabeth of Thuringia is one of the most famous figures of the time and she bears witness to an era when impressive buildings were constructed, apparently for all eternity.

During the first half of the 13th century, Landgrave Ludwig IV of Thuringia lived for a while in magnificent Neuenburg Castle in Freyburg with his wife Elisabeth, the daughter of the King of Hungary, who was canonized in 1235. The landgrave extended the castle in splendid style. Neuenburg is one of the largest castles in Germany and, at the time, it was already three times as big as the Wartburg. The mighty building towers over the valley of the Unstrut and can be seen from far away. There is historic evidence that the then 17-year-old Elisabeth spent time in Neuenburg Castle in 1224 and 1225.

Visitors will find that the castle, with its modern exhibition area, Romanesque double chapel and children's bower, is just as impressive today as it was then. It is still possible to walk through the rooms where Elisabeth spent her time or to take a peek into the medieval double-seated latrine where people did their business.

The Romanesque double chapel, a fascinating structure consisting of two religious rooms one on top of the other, had not been completed in Elisabeth's time. However, it is easy to step back into the 13th century and imagine the royal family attending church services on the top floor of the chapel. The impressive building, with its outstanding ornamentation and unusual decoration, is one of the highlights on the Romanesque Road.

Only a short ride from Freyburg to Naumburg

When Elisabeth looked out of the castle windows, she could see that the town of Naumburg was not far away. Naumburg was always busy. People came from far and wide to sell their goods there and to attend the many markets and fairs. But they also came to admire the new cathedral which had been started in 1210 and was growing higher every day. It is likely that one day Elisabeth rode over on horseback to visit Naumburg, to see the bishop and to check on the progress of the building work. In the Middle Ages, the construction of a cathedral was an unrivalled spectacle.

Nowadays people are climbing onto a different kind of saddle in Saale-Unstrut: a bike saddle. The last stage of the Unstrut cycle route runs from Freyburg to the Blütengrund in Naumburg where the River Unstrut flows into the River Saale. Freyburg itself is set amongst idyllic vineyards, each of which has its own vineyard house. Vines have been grown along the Saale and the Unstrut for more than 1000 years. In the wine museum in Neuenburg Castle, visitors can find out how much influence this has had on the region.

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Some winemakers in Freyburg invite visitors to taste the wine from the northernmost quality wine-growing area in their vineyards. A few tranquil wineries have opened on the Unstrut cycle route and the cathedral towers can be seen all along this stage of the route, as a clear indication that you are traveling in the right direction.

Life-size sculptures in the breathtaking UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site

Nowadays, visitors to the cathedral head straight for the works of the Naumburg Master: the founder figures, the west rood screen and the west choir. The unique nature of the building is what attracts and impresses people from all over the world and what resulted in the cathedral becoming a World Cultural Heritage site. Was Elisabeth equally impressed? Sadly, she did not live to see Naumburg Cathedral completed. Around half of the magnificent building was erected in her lifetime. Elisabeth could not have guessed that a sculptor and architect would complete the Romanesque cathedral so spectacularly in the Early Gothic style. She would probably have been moved by the natural appearance of the life-size sculptures of Jesus on the cross and of the founder figure Uta.

The wooden sculpture of Elisabeth (from around 1360) in Neuenburg Castle and the stone sculpture of her in Naumburg Cathedral (from around 1240) bear witness to the reverence she was held in. However, the two figures each express a very different kind of beauty. While the Gothic sculpture in Neuenburg Castle is delicate, graceful and gentle and reflects Elisabeth's meek and kind-hearted nature, the figure in Naumburg cathedral is much more in the Romanesque tradition. She is slightly hidden in a small chapel near the west choir and is standing upright and looking ahead, unyielding and steadfast in her faith. The sculpture is surrounded by modern windows entirely in red designed by the artist Neo Rauch and showing scenes from Elisabeth's life.

The Romanesque Road has been promoting Romanesque architecture for 30 years. In Saale-Unstrut, alongside Naumburg Cathedral and Neuenburg Castle, there are another 20 buildings from this era, including the abbey and imperial palace in Memleben, where augmented reality will bring two medieval churches to life for visitors from March 2023 onward. Also, for 30 years, the Saale-Unstrut Wine Road has been pointing the way to the vineyards of Germany's newest wine growing region.

High resolution press images of Saale-Unstrut

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