

**Hollywood loves Berlin – the Berlinale 2008:** The guest list of movie stars and rock stars was long this year in Berlin at the annual film festival "Berlinale" in the inspiring German capital: Scarlett Johansson, John Malkovich, Penelope Cruz, Ben Kingsley, Madonna, Diane Kruger, Natalie Portman, Willem Dafoe and so on. The Berlinale in February 2008 was opened by Martin Scorsese's documentary "Shine A Light" about Rock legend "Rolling Stones". Band leader Mick Jagger and his band showed up on the Red Carpet in front of the "Berlinale Palace" at the "Potsdamer Platz". One of the happy winners of the Silver Bear for the best director went to Paul Thomas Anderson for "There Will Be Blood". By the way the bear is the heraldic animal of Berlin! In many interviews especially Hollywood Stars emphasized that they love to come to Berlin. They fell for the natural charm and the dynamic modern spirit combined with an omnipresent flair of culture, art and history – not to mention the gorgeous restaurants, bars and clubs! But Berlin does not only attract the stars. This unique city offers fascinating sights and unforgettable experiences and memories for everyone! More information and pictures of the Berlinale 2008: <http://www.berlinale.de/en/HomePage.html>

**An insider's tip: Microbrewery Vielank in the very scenic courtyard of tree alley roads and the banks of the river Elbe:** Some people call the Vielanker Brewery an "oasis in the desert" – originally referring to the sandy soil and the slow economy in this North-East German region located directly at the former border between East and West Germany (lying on the East side of the river Elbe). But now it's the source of a fresh beer spring attracting both tourism and local jobs. For you it means that you can enjoy the tasty beer brewed according to the German purity law from 1516. The always fresh and unfiltered specialties are the "Vielanker Pils" and the "Vielanker Dunkel". During season they also brew a Hefeweizen and a Christmas Doppelbock. An interesting fact for homebrewers: Vielank has its own beer yeast culture which can be seen during a guided brewery tour. Drinking beer provokes

appetite. No problem, the microbrewery Vielank has its own pub and beer garden for every time of the year. Local rustic cuisine offers self-baked bread and delicious roasts barbecued over open fire among others for fair affordable prices. For a better digestion you can give the "beer schnaps" a shot – made in their own distillery using dark beer extract. The "Vielanker Brauhaus" is also famous for the impressive event calendar with concerts and festivities. If you travel by car it might be a good idea to stay overnight at the Hotel right next to the brewpub – a beautiful and completely remodeled old barn in the traditional half-timbered style. A good reason to stay a day or two longer to explore the scenic countryside at the river Elbe (How about a relaxing boat trip?) or a few of the many sights such as the castle "Doemitz". <http://www.vielanker-brauhaus.de/> (only in German available)

**European Transromanica Route in the romantic Thuringia:** In Thuringia, culture and tourism are closely connected. A very special facet in the broadly diverse cultural life here is certainly the Romanesque. About 100 historic buildings remain in Thuringia from an era that put its stamp on the common European identity. The state of Thuringia is part of the transnational project "Transromanica" – a cultural experience path through Europe. There are numerous Romanesque castles, chapels, monasteries, rural churches and many other beautiful architectural treasures waiting to be discovered by you. We can only pick a few highlights: Luther fortress and UNESCO World Heritage site "Wartburg" in Eisenach, Church of Our Lady "Liebfrauenkirche" in the "Johann Sebastian Bach town" Arnstadt, Monastery Church "St Peter and Paul" in the Thuringian capital Erfurt and the Monastery ruin Paulinzella in Southern Thuringia. Along the Transromanica you will find so many fascinating historic, cultural – and culinary treasures combined with a scenic landscape and hidden but active witnesses of traditional German handcraft such as mustard mills, glass-blowing & porcelain manufactures, flour mills, chocolate manufacture, microbreweries and so on, that you could easily spend a few weeks only in the beautiful Thuringia. <http://www.transromanica.com/>

**UNESCO World Heritage site Quedlinburg – old town and historic castle:** In 1994 UNESCO declared the over 1100 years old town Quedlinburg to be an outstanding example of a European city of medieval origin which has preserved through the centuries its precious architectural heritage of romanesque and half-timbered buildings. Quedlinburg`s medieval town exhibits more than eight centuries of authentic architecture in a way that is unique in both quality und quantity. King Henry I. – Founder of the Saxon Dynasty and crowned in 919 as the king of the East franconian Empire – chose Quedlinburg`s „castle-mound“ as one of his favorite seats of residence. Thus it was here that he was laid to rest after his death in 936. At the hight of Ottonian power between 936 and 1024 the Saxon rulers regularly celebrated Easter and held important imperial diets in Quedlinburg. Around the castle-mound a thriving market-town developed with connections to the major trading-routes of the time. The collegiate church of St. Servatius on a hill above the old town is a masterpiece which also houses a famous church treasure. The old town of Quedlinburg is surprisingly well preserved – the probably oldest half-timbered building in Germany can be found between over 1000 half-timbered houses from seven centuries. <http://www.quedlinburg.de/>

**Travel to Germany: electrical devices & communication:** Electrical appliances in Germany run on 220 – 240 volts. Sockets take round-pronged plugs. Running your american electrical toothbrush or hair-dryer could result in serious damage. Gadgets usually need both a voltage converter and a plug adaptor. Most rechargable electronics such as notebooks, cameras, iPods and mobile phones function for a voltage range of 100 – 240 volts – that means you only need a plug adaptor. Check the information on the power supply unit of your electrical devices: "Input: 100–240V" is what you need to see there! If you are uncertain ask the fabricator or your local dealer – best before you start your journey. Hi-Fi Internet Access "Hot Spots" became more common within the last 10 years in Germany, but don't rely on it – especially in small towns and rural areas. Most cities have "Internet cafes" – ask your hotel staff, tourist information centers or just (young) people. Tri-band or Quad-band mobile phones function in Germany. Make sure you

know about the costs for outgoing and incoming calls including your mailbox. If you have an unlocked SIM-card phone you could just switch to a German SIM card which are available in any mobile phone shop. Calling abroad in this case is expensive. German phone numbers (landline and mobile) always start with "0". To call a German number from anywhere abroad use the country code +49 and drop the first "0". To call abroad from inside Germany dial "00" followed by the country code (USA: "1") and the phone number. Public phones operate either with coins or calling cards which are available at post offices, kiosks and tourist information centers. Emergency calls are free. In Germany you can call the police at "110" or the emergency doctor / fire department at "112". In case of an emergency don't hesitate to ask a german speaking local or passerby to help you making the call – especially to provide the information where exactly you are located! For more information and if you have questions [contact us](#).

---

**More News & Tips: The German American Connection**

<http://www.tgac-us.com>