

ART & CULTURE

High culture and a new groove for harbour city

HAMBURG

Trisha Andres is won over by the cutting-edge concert hall, fabulous art galleries and the cool regeneration of the docks

You're either an Elbe river or an Alster lake kind of person," said Lydia, a geborene Hamburgerin, or a local born on a bridge in Hafencity.

The maritime city is defined by the ebb and flow of water. The Elbe, the city's industrial shipping artery, is an immense tidal river that courses into the North Sea. On my visit, the second largest harbour in Europe seemed endless, with rows and rows of vessels from all corners of the globe, locks, canals and titanic cranes that from afar look like characters straight out of *Transformers*. Then, emerging from the banks of the river like a glacier, was the glass-panelled Elbphilharmonie, the city's new concert hall designed by the Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron. The building, which is now the city's defining landmark, dominates Hamburg's skyline and houses three concert halls, The Westin Hotel and 45 apartments. The halls' acoustics – the work of Yasuhisa Toyota, one of the world's most acclaimed acousticians – are exceptional. The grand hall is decked throughout with grooved plaster and paper panels, each individually designed to create balanced resonance.

A sweeping view of the River Elbe and the container port, fringed by cranes, came into view

The overall effect is dazzling, resembling sea shell imprints in the right light. On one end of the hall, 4,765 organ pipes gleam like silver iceberg icicles. Such beauty comes at a price: the original forecast for the "Elphi" was €272million (€243million); the final bill came to a controversial €789million. In addition to being the home of the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra, the venue also hosts a varied programme of musicians including Philip Glass, Yo-Yo Ma and Brian Eno. London's Barbican and the Royal Festival Hall simply do not compare, and seeing a concert in this fine venue is reason enough to visit the city. That night, I saw Wagner's *Das Rheingold* conducted by Marek Janowski with soloists Katarina Karnéus as Fricka, Michael Volle as Wotan and Johannes Martin Krauzle as Alberich. Under Janowski's guidance, the orchestral transitions were handled deftly and opera and symphony were in complete sync.

After the performance, I wandered through the viewing plaza's curved glass entrance. Built between the building's new prismatic facade and the old brick warehouse it sits on, the platform is open to the public seven days a week, even to those without a concert ticket (entry is free but you can also make an advance reservation of €2 online if you'd like to skip the queues). I sat on one of the benches and admired the views: boats moored on the side of the river, a train

chugging along a raised rail track and the city's spires soaring above flat-top buildings. Here was the city in full view, the river winding along docks and buildings old and new. Elbphilharmonie is the crown jewel in Europe's largest urban development project, Hafencity, which has transformed 2.2 sq km of tumble-down docks along the city's port into a buzzing shopping and residential area during the past decade (final completion is due between 2025 and 2030). But it's not the new developments I was enamoured with, it was the historic Speicherstadt that made an impression. A labyrinth of lofty 19th-century warehouses and narrow canals that was once the centre

of Hamburg's port, it's now a Unesco World Heritage Site lined with fashion showrooms, artists' studios and tea rooms. I popped into Wasserschloss (wasserschloss.de) and surveyed and sniffed the 250 teas on offer and finally sampled an "Elbuefer" tea and a traditional cinnamon bun. This, I thought, was a very pleasant way to spend a Saturday afternoon. Further afield, I ventured to the Alster lake, another one of Hamburg's defining bodies of water. Unlike the Elbe, it is placid and classically beautiful. I took in the views aboard a steamer cruising along the large lake, dotted with small sailing boats and ringed by leafy banks, green parks and white stucco villas.

LIGHT FANTASTIC
The dazzling Elbphilharmonie, above; and Alster lake, left

Later, I wandered along the Neuer Wall, an elegant street that runs along the lake, lined with Art Nouveau townhouses, jewellers and boutiques: affluent Europe in all its glory, with a self-assurance built on the city's chic pedigree (as the birthplace of Karl Lagerfeld and the home of Jil Sander). Hamburg's Kunstmeile or "art mile" comprises five major galleries, flanked by two very different museums on either side. A Kunstmeile pass costs €36 and is valid for 12 months, allowing you to visit each of the five institutions once. At the northern end, a short walk from the closest station, Hauptbahnhof Nord, is the superb Kunsthalle, holding one of Europe's largest art collections. The main



WORK AND PLAY

Hamburg is Germany's busiest seaport and is pictured from the popular Beach Club Strandpaoli

Kunsthalle is all wood-paneled walls and checkered black-and-white floors, exhibiting old masters such as Lucas Cranach the Younger as well as 20th-century artists. Next door is a glass contemporary gallery, the Kunsthalle, an exhibition called *Art and Alphabet* until the end of this month explores languages and writing systems through various art forms, from painting to installations.

A requisite Beatles tour was next on the agenda. The Fab Four played around 300 concerts and spent more than 12,000 hours on stage here and John Lennon said: "I grew up in Hamburg." Musician Stefanie Hempel, armed with a ukulele, led our group through the old red light district as she sang the songs the Beatles performed in the clubs and strip joints of the Reeperbahn and Grosse Freiheit. "The Beatles will be the Schuberts and Schumanns of the 20th century," Hempel quoted Leonard Bernstein.

Back at the Elbphilharmonie, I stepped onto the spaceship-like escalator and waited patiently for two and a half minutes to be beamed up through a white tunnel studded with thousands of glimmering discs. As I emerged onto an observation platform, a compelling vision of the River Elbe and the sweeping waterfront, fringed by cranes, came into view. The sun made its way down to the edge of the harbour, casting a white glow over the dark grey river. I couldn't really decide what kind of person I was, whether I was an Alster or an Elbe. Maybe, like the city, I was both.

The most wonderful thing for me is that the stage is in the middle of the audience, creating an almost campfire-like feeling. Book tickets to the Elbphilharmonie (00 49 40 357 666 66; elbphilharmonie.com). Tickets for the International Music Festival from April 27 – May 25 2018 are on sale from December; website above

THE HAMBURG BEAT A MUSICIAN'S GUIDE TO CITY NIGHTLIFE

STEFANIE HEMPEL
I am a singer-songwriter and founder of the musical Beatles tour (hempels-musictour.de). In my opinion, Hamburg is the most beautiful city in Germany.

It has been my home for 20 years. One reason I came here was to study classical piano; the other was to live somewhere intimately connected with the Beatles. I've been a Beatlemaniac since my early teens and there is no place in the world where the Fab Four – or Five, as they were

originally – played more than in the city's clubs. And it all happened in the old red light district, St Pauli, where you'll find the old "sin mile", the infamous Reeperbahn, surrounded by a bohemian, village-like neighbourhood full of creatives, cafés, shops, restaurants and bars. The atmosphere is relaxed and convivial, yet remains the beating heart of Hamburg's anti-establishment identity.

St Pauli is still where the music happens. The most iconic examples remain the old rock 'n' roll clubs where the Beatles played, such as the Indra and the Kaiserkeller, but dive into the caves of the legendary Molotow club and you might discover a fantastic indie band. Beneath the so-called



"dancing towers", at the very beginning of the Reeperbahn, you'll find the stunning Mojo Club. At night, the ground-level doors open up, leading you underground into a modern concert hall. The area is also full of quaint restaurants and street food joints. One of my favourite places

to go before a night out is the Reeperbahn is the Pizzabande – definitely the best pizza in town.

It's a bohemian place run by a real St Pauli character and musician. If you prefer fine dining, book a table at the Nil on Neuer Pferdemarkt. Then make your way to resonanzraum, the new home of the Ensemble Resonanz, which holds monthly "urban string" concerts, where chamber music meets electronic art.

The most exciting new

and Georg Baselitz, while exhibitions at the Haus der Photographie range from Richard Avedon, Martin Parr and Viviane Sassen. If time is limited, I'd recommend the Kunstverein Hamburg, where famed German photographer Wolfgang Tillmans has a solo show until Nov 12 displaying his art beyond the camera. At the Kunsthalle, an exhibition called *Art and Alphabet* until the end of this month explores languages and writing systems through various art forms, from painting to installations.

A requisite Beatles tour was next on the agenda. The Fab Four played around 300 concerts and spent more than 12,000 hours on stage here and John Lennon said: "I grew up in Hamburg." Musician Stefanie Hempel, armed with a ukulele, led our group through the old red light district as she sang the songs the Beatles performed in the clubs and strip joints of the Reeperbahn and Grosse Freiheit. "The Beatles will be the Schuberts and Schumanns of the 20th century," Hempel quoted Leonard Bernstein.

Back at the Elbphilharmonie, I stepped onto the spaceship-like escalator and waited patiently for two and a half minutes to be beamed up through a white tunnel studded with thousands of glimmering discs. As I emerged onto an observation platform, a compelling vision of the River Elbe and the sweeping waterfront, fringed by cranes, came into view. The sun made its way down to the edge of the harbour, casting a white glow over the dark grey river. I couldn't really decide what kind of person I was, whether I was an Alster or an Elbe. Maybe, like the city, I was both.

The most wonderful thing for me is that the stage is in the middle of the audience, creating an almost campfire-like feeling. Book tickets to the Elbphilharmonie (00 49 40 357 666 66; elbphilharmonie.com). Tickets for the International Music Festival from April 27 – May 25 2018 are on sale from December; website above



TRAVEL TRUTH

Do cruise ships cope with hurricanes?
Chris Leadbeater investigates

While the obvious fallout from Hurricanes Irma and Maria – the twin forces of nature that roared in the Atlantic last month – is the damage wrought to islands in the Caribbean, and to the south-east of the United States, this latest period of tumultuous weather has also provoked large gulps of concern in the Caribbean. Hurricane season traditionally runs until the end of November, so there may be worse to come.

This will not be a pleasing thought if you have booked a voyage heading for the likes of Barbados or St Lucia in the next few weeks. And yet the comforting reality is that encounters between cruise ships and extreme storms tend to be rare – and that even when one meets the other, the former can deal with the latter without too much worry.

Oasis of the Seas – an ocean-going behemoth owned by Royal Caribbean – is a case in point. The largest passenger ship on the planet when it was launched in 2009 (and still the third largest, able to hold up to 6,760 passengers), it was built with an extra-wide hull which gives it added stability in ferocious conditions. At 198ft (60.5m) across at maximum width (and 154ft/47m at the waterline), Oasis of the Seas is too big to fit into the Panama Canal but its broadness means it can withstand the most unfriendly waves.

This was proved in November 2009, on its delivery voyage from the Finnish shipyard where it was built to its new home in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. En route, it moved through what officers recorded as "almost up to hurricane force" winds,

and swells in excess of 39ft (12m) – but coped admirably. This same hardness is true of smaller vessels. You can find footage online (goo.gl/YV5VAZ) of another Royal Caribbean ship, Anthem of the Seas – which is around two-thirds the size of its giant sibling – slipping blithely through the Atlantic in September of last year, even as Hurricane Hermine strikes its 14th deck with a surge.

Even a freak wave would be unlikely to unhinge a modern cruise ship. Discussing the Atlantic's sour hello to Oasis of the Seas, Matthew Collette, a professor of naval architecture and marine engineering at the University of Michigan, told the journal *Live Science*: "If [a ship] was

The reason cruise ships don't capsize in hurricanes is that they are not placed in harm's way

struck by [a freak wave], I would expect local damage at the point of impact – maybe some broken portholes or bent railings. But little else."

However, the main reason cruise ships do not capsize in hurricanes is that they are not placed in harm's way. Weather prediction systems track in advance, and avoiding action taken. Royal Caribbean and Norwegian Cruise Line erred on the side of caution and cancelled two sailings as Irma raged. Carnival, MSC Cruises, Celebrity Cruises and Disney Cruise Line all re-routed ships out of its path.

The simplest strategy for surviving a hurricane is not to face it in the first place.

FIVE-STAR EUROPEAN RIVER CRUISES



Discover the 'Little Venice' of Colmar, France



On-board cuisine, MS Thomas Hardy



The River Danube, MS Jane Austen



Standard Suite, MS Emily Brontë

Telegraph TRAVEL

READER OFFER

Eight days from £949pp

From the Seine to the Iron Gate,
sail Europe's greatest waterways

Why choose a river cruise?

River cruising is a wonderful way to explore the heart of Europe and see a country's hidden gems. You can sit on the top deck of a ship under brilliant blue skies and gaze on famed landscapes dotted with castles, villages and vineyards. As the vessels are smaller than ocean cruise ships, land is always in sight, sea sickness is almost non-existent and picturesque scenery gives past uninterrupted.

Where can I go?

With fascinating on-shore tours and excursions included in the price, enjoy a choice of 13 stunningly beautiful and fascinating cruises, visiting destinations such as Budapest, Vienna, Cologne, Strasbourg, Lucerne, Avignon, Arles, Paris, Bucharest, Koblenz, Heidelberg, Trier, Basel, Amsterdam, Bruges and Rouen. Discover bulbfields, gorges, vineyards, monasteries, medieval towns, breathtaking Alsace and the Black Forest. Offering itineraries to match every interest and passion, Riviera Travel promises no compromise on choice. Few ships can match the sheer luxury of its elegant fleet.

How do I get there?

While some providers ask you to make your own way to the departure port, Riviera Travel provides return flights from 15 UK regional airports, or connections to Eurostar from local train stations and even transfers. This allows you to travel quickly and efficiently to your departure port, and then return home in the same comfort and style at the end of the cruise.

What is it like on board?

Enjoy a dip in the splash pool on a long summer evening, keep fit using the gym facilities, pamper yourself at the beauty salon or spa, or simply catch up on some reading in the on-board library. Every amenity has the highest possible specification so your experience is as blissful as you could wish for.

Relax in luxury. The elegant fleet of five-star vessels all boast complimentary WiFi, stylish furnishings, wrought iron, polished copper and imaginative lighting, plus the taste of a talented designer to create a superb ambience. Cabins are spacious and suites boast all the comforts of a five hotel, with beautifully appointed en-suite bathrooms and spectacular river views.

The dining experience

Savour exceptional dining from early bird breakfasts to light or full lunches, afternoon teas, four-course dinners and midnight snacks, all using freshly prepared local and seasonal produce, and all included in the price.

Exceptional value for money

With a choice of five, eight and 15-day cruises available, there is an option to suit all tastes and budgets. You can also be assured that your flight from one of 15 regional airports, or Eurostar travel with transfers is included in the price. You will also enjoy the cabin of your choice, on-board dining, history and culture brought to life by experienced guides and friendly Riviera Travel cruise director and tour manager.

Departures from Dec, 2017 to Nov, 2018.
Your price includes:

- Return flight from regional airports or Eurostar and connecting regional rail
- Accommodation aboard a five-star ship!
- Exceptional cuisine with full board throughout
- Fully supported by a friendly, knowledgeable and professional cruise manager
- A programme of tours and excursions



Book with our trusted partner



Terms and conditions: *Only available on selected dates and cruises. Supplements applicable for certain regional stations. †The Seine Paris and Normandy River Cruise operates on the four-star MS Swiss Ruby. Prices based on two people sharing a twin cabin. Single cabins and optional insurance available at a supplement. Calls from a landline or mobile are charged at a local rate and open Monday-Friday 9am-7pm, Saturday and Sunday 10am-4pm. Additional entrance costs may apply. Images used in conjunction with Riviera Travel. This holiday is operated by, and your resulting contract and booking condition will be with, Riviera Travel (registered in England no 1869295), ABTA 142744, ATOL 3430 protected, a company wholly independent of Telegraph Media Group Limited. Please refer to the Data Protection Notice in today's Personal Column.



A new ship and, dare we say it,
a new dawn in cruising has arrived.
Boutique cruising.

Welcome to boutique cruising featuring the design cues, cuisine and levels of service you would expect to find in the world's finest boutique hotels. Except here, you'll wake up in a new destination different to the one you went to sleep in.

Welcome to our brand new luxury cruise ship, Spirit of Discovery.

To find out more visit saga.co.uk/cruises or call 0800 015 6886.

SAGA
keep doing

For more information about financial protection and the ATOL Certificate, visit www.atol.org.uk/ATOLCertificate. Saga Holidays is a trading name of STGH Ltd (registration no 2176/052). STGH Ltd and Saga Cruises Ltd (registration no 3247858) are subsidiaries of STGH Group Ltd (registration no 0720588). All three companies are registered in England and Wales. Registered Office: Enbrook Park, Sandgate, Folkestone, Kent CT20 3SE. With respect to general insurance products sold in the UK, STGH Ltd is an appointed representative of Saga Services Limited, registered in England and Wales (company no 7326202), which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (NHA-SC7974).