

ORIGINAL NIGHTS OUT:

BERLIN

For the second installment of Smirnoff's Original Nights, *FHM* goes off the wall in Europe's party capital...



Berlin has a deserved reputation for hosting some of the cheapest, most creative and coolest nights out on the planet. But it's all down to two unlikely factors: inexpensive bar rental and high unemployment rates among artists (apparently they frequent bars because they're warm places to go in the evenings). With the Hollywood elite moving in - Brad and Angelina recently bought a flat there, while you can barely walk the streets without bumping into Tom Cruise or Robert De Niro - there's still time to enjoy the city's bohemian charms. Here's the Smirnoff Co.'s guide to ten original nights out in the city...

TACHELES

Not all squatters look like Chumbawumba and wear tatty duffel coats. In Berlin, they are arty types with geometric hairstyles who produce art for zero rent at 'culturehouses' such as Tacheles. An ex-department store, Tacheles is a five-storey, graffiti-splattered urban space where the public step through twisted metal to riffle through avant-garde workshops, and visit the commune's cinema, theatre and five bars. There's one bar with a fire-breathing dragon, another with ironing boards substituting as tables, and another where drinks are served from a burnt-out VW van. www.tacheles.de



INDOOR FESTIVALS AT KALKSCHEUNE

If Michael Eavis decided to host next year's Glasto in your local council offices, it would be something a bit like Kalkscheune. Turn up, and you could take in an Amy Winehouse gig, an indie disco, a German MP DJ-ing 1980s' tunes and cabaret shows featuring some bloke covering Christina Aguilera on the ukulele - all at the same time. Kalkscheune also has theme nights such as 'Big In Berlin' (playing music from artists such as Bowie and Depeche Mode who have drawn sonic inspiration from the city), and an evening where chefs dished up the last meals of deceased luminaries such as Elvis and John Belushi. www.kalkscheune.de

'OSTALGIA' AT KAFFEE BURGER

Berlin's current vogue for Ostalgia ("nostalgia for the East") has witnessed a revival in Trabants and Eastern European foodstuffs. To experience the trend in full swing, head to Kaffee Burger, a niterie which features GDR living room décor circa 1973, Vita Cola (ersatz East German Coca-Cola), and chaps milling around in grey cardigans. Best time to go? Saturday night's Russian Disco. www.kaffeeburger.de



FOR THOSE ABOUT TO ROCK...

With a resident tattooist and patronage from Motorhead and Marilyn Manson, White Trash Fast Food is a hub for a menagerie of Berliner 'outsiders' - bikers, punks, transvestites and heck, even pensioners. Recently they even turned Bruce Willis away for being "uncool". www.whitetrashfastfood.com



TECHNO, TECHNO, TECHNO...

A clubbing institution since 1991, Teutonic techno-dungeon Tresor now operates inside a disused East German power station. Like some booming, vibrating Kafkaesque bunker, clubbers can wander down 30-foot industrial tunnels while the likes of Jeff Mills play music at deafening frequencies. They even stamp the word 'TECHNO' on your hands upon entry. www.tresorberlin.de

GO BOHO IN PRENZLAUER BERG

Hipster haven Prenzlauer Berg is awash with über-trendy lounge bars such as Wohnzimmer (every room is designed like a different threadbare living room) and Club der Republik, which you enter via a garage door before clambering up an emergency fire exit. Be warned though: at weekends in Berlin, nights don't start until the small hours, so turn up around 9pm and these places could be empty...



"BUY YOURSELF HAPPY"

Kauf Dich Glücklich is a Prenzlauer Berg bistro, whose name translates as: "Buy Yourself Happy". And purchase yourself ecstatic you can, because *everything* inside this café, whether it's the kitschy furniture or the waitresses' earrings, is on sale. Choice items on offer when *FHM* visited included the café's chairs and tables, its stereo and a taxidermed fox carrying a tray.

FREEBIE BERLIN

Tips are tax-free in Germany, which means, companies can make profit without charging customers. Kick off a gratis Berlin evening, by taking in a charge-less New Berlin Tours sightseeing jaunt (www.newberlintours.com), followed by a visit to Weinerei (www.weinerei.com) in Prenzlauer Berg. Devoid of any signage at the front, you throw a Euro in a small fountain at the door before helping yourself to a drink at the table.



PING PONG THEME BAR

Expect crumbling walls, patrons huddled on crates around radiators and a DIY bar at this stark, table-tennis-themed joint. Despite the motif, there's only one ping-pong table, where up to 30 beatnik kids engage in round-robin communal games around the table. Decrepit? Yes. Boring? No. www.drpong.net

WIN



A TRIP TO BERLIN!

You've read about Berlin's quirky-but-cool impromptu nightlife scene. You want to go there, right? Well, now you've got a chance to experience the city's Weimar waywardness for yourself. The Smirnoff Co. is offering one reader and a friend a VIP two-night trip to Berlin. Head to fhm.com/smirnoff before December 31, and you'll be chowing down on Currywurst before you know it. Good luck.



AND AT HOME...

It's not only Berlin that has an influx of arty folk. Bohemian enclaves flourish all over the UK. Here's a small guide to Boho Britain... **CAMBERWELL, LONDON:** Sarf London district billed as the "New Hoxton" thanks to niteries such as The Castle and Funky Munky. **LIME STREET, NEWCASTLE:** Geordie Greenwich Village overflowing with art galleries (see 36 Lime Street), pubs and an anarchist cinema. **KING STREET, GLASGOW:** The scene which spawned Franz Ferdinand and Glasvegas. Check out parties at the Transmission gallery...



SMIRNOFF LONDON

If it's November, it must be London. The Smirnoff Experience hits the UK... The sophomore Smirnoff Experience party touched down in Camden's regal KOKO venue recently for a blisteringly original night featuring sets from French band Fancy (who sound like AC/DC fronted by Leo Sayer-on-helium), Belgian electro-rock outfit Goose and DJ sets from the likes of Kissy Sell Out. As a taster for this month's event in Shanghai, it couldn't have worked better. Until then...

NEXT MONTH: TOKYO
FHM heads to Japan for jacuzzi karaoke, Ninja-prepared sushi and cos-play restaurants...