

BEST OF BERLIN

By the Exberliner editorial team
Photos by Maria Runarsdottir

Exhibition

Best head in the west

Once, he towered over Friedrichshain's Leninplatz (now United Nations Square), a 19m testament to Soviet power. Today, he looks at you sideways from a dais in far-northwestern Spandau. The 3.5 tonne granite **head of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin**, buried after reunification in a secluded forest in Köpenick and unearthed just last year, is the centerpiece of Spandau Citadel's newest exhibition, Unveiled: Berlin And Its Monuments. The new €15 million attraction features seven rooms of banned and discarded sculptures and statues, some dating as far back as the 14th century, with video footage and interactive screens to inform you about additional ones lost to history. Besides Lenin, the other main

draw is an installation on the Prussian-era busts that once lined Tiergarten's Siegesallee, taken away by the Nazis before World War II, now set up in a semicircle as they were originally in the early 1900s, accompanied with tree wallpaper and the sounds of an oncoming thunderstorm approaching. If it seems odd to see Communist, Prussian and even Nazi-era relics treated with equal reverence, it only serves to illustrate the German capital's history of ideological hairpin turns – which of today's monuments will be the next to go? — **HS**

Unveiled: Berlin And Its Monuments, Spandau Citadel, Am Juliusturm 64, Spandau, daily 10-17

Bar

Best Italian wine alternative

“It’s all about family! You are family, we are family, everyone who comes here is part of our family,” gestures an excited bartender. If you were sceptical that craft beer could be an Italian thing, **Birra** is here to prove you wrong. The cosy Prenzlauer Berg pub is the brainchild of brewmasters Manuele Colonna and Giampaolo Sangiorgi, the latter of whom founded Milan microbrewery Birrificios Lambrate. With two successful pubs in Italy, he took a leap of faith and moved to Berlin, flying in to celebrate Birra’s April 30 opening. Sixteen ornate beer taps head the bar, their brass polished to perfection. Just as much pride has gone into the beers themselves, all Italian, most from the Lambrate brewery itself, from the Pilsner-style Montestella (€3.50/0.3L; €5.50/0.5L) to the citrusy, Belgian-style Brighella (€5/0.4L, but it’s 9 percent!). In true Italian style, you can get a plate of meat or cheese *antipasti* to soak up the alcohol (€10.50–€13.50). But more memorable is that everyone who enters the place, Italian or not, is greeted like a long-lost sibling; loyal customers even keep personal tankards behind the bar. The high prices mean you won’t want the family gathering to last that long, and the lack of an outdoor beer garden is a drawback now that summer’s hit – but if a business can rely on goodwill and enthusiasm alone, Birra should have no issues. — **RL**

Birra, Prenzlauer Allee 198, Prenzlauer Berg, Mon–Sun 17–1



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