

About

# POL SKA

an insider guide  
for outsiders



# Contents



## Life **16**

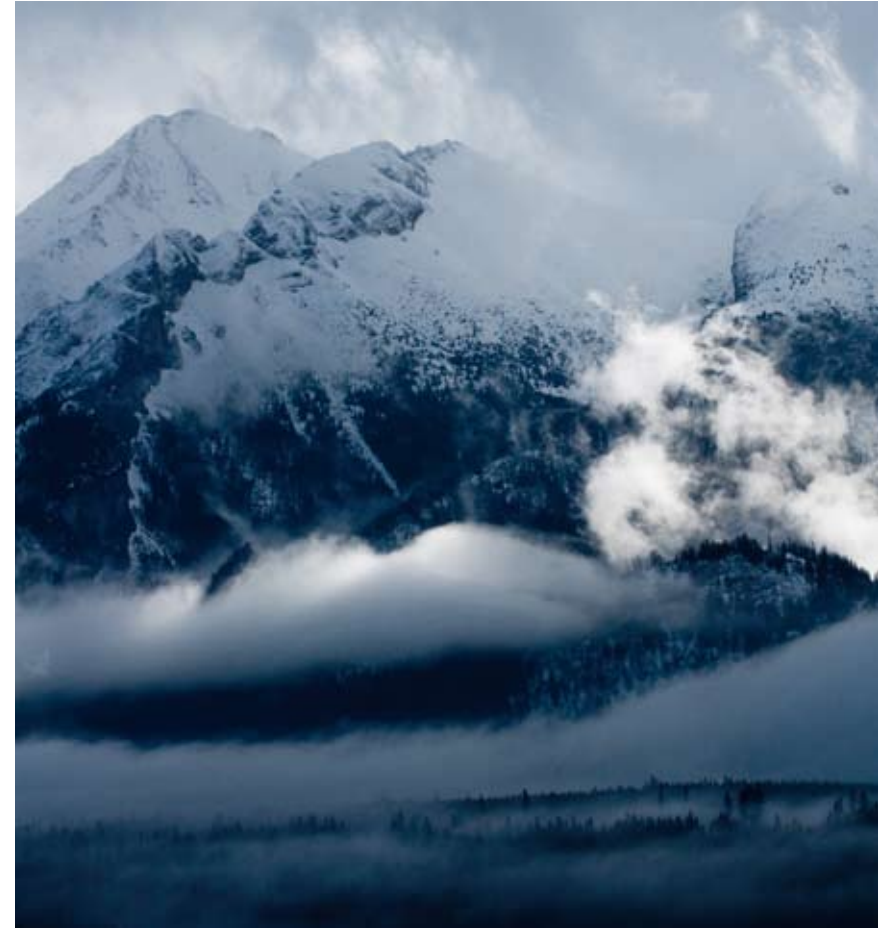
The Polish Year **18** Language **22** Ethnic Groups **24** Faith **26** Attire **30**  
Dos & Don'ts **32** Food **34** Getting Around **38** Sports **42** Euro 2012 **48**

# Contents



## Cities **52**

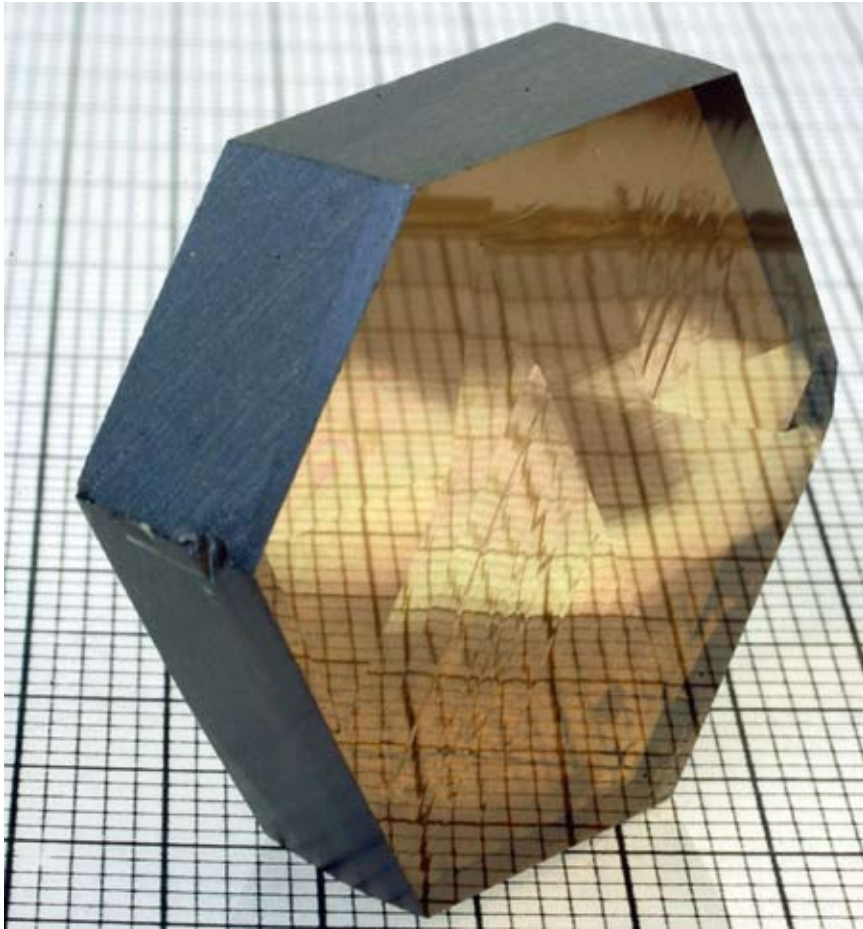
Warszawa **54** Katowice & Silesia **66** Tricity – Gdańsk / Gdynia / Sopot **74**  
 Kraków **82** Łódź **94** Wrocław **100** Poznań **110** Szczecin **120**  
 Bydgoszcz / Toruń **126** Lublin **134** Białystok **140** Rzeszów **146**



## Nature **150**

The Moving Dunes **152** Baltic Coast **154** Kaszuby **156**  
 Warmia, Mazury, Suwalszczyzna **158** Białowieża Forest **160**  
 Bieszczady **162** Tatra Mountains **164** Sudety **166**  
 Ojców National Park **168** Rural Retreats **170** Spas **172**

# Contents



## Ideas **172**

Film, Film Festivals **176** Performing Arts **178** Performing Arts Festivals **180**  
 Music Festivals **182** Books **184** Visual Arts **186** Education **190**  
 Science **192** Economy **196** The Stock Exchange **200** Design **202**



## Insights

Leszek Moździerz **12, 77** Anda Rottenberg **12**  
 Anne Applebaum-Sikorska **15, 35** Robert Trzópek **15**  
 Robert Makłowicz **34** Mikołaj Długosz **57** Agata Michalak **61**  
 Mariusz Szczygieł **63** Ania Kuczyńska **64** Przemysław Łukasik **69**  
 Roman Łój **72** Stach Ruksza **73** Wojciech Szczurek **78** Aneta Szyłak **81**  
 Tomasz Gutkowski **85** Cecylia Malik **89** Jarosław Suchan **97**  
 Pola Stępień **99** Katarzyna Roj **103** Katarzyna Wielga **107**  
 Piotr Korduba **112** Wojciech Fibak **115** Marek Krajewski **117**  
 Monika Pyrek **123** Łona & Webber **125** Krzysztof Bober **129**  
 Janusz Leon Wiśniewski **131** Dobrila Denegri **132** Marek Żydowicz **132**  
 Krzysztof Cugowski **137** Monika Szewczyk **144** Ignacy Karpowicz **145**  
 Katarzyna Kordoń & Beata Pisula **149** Krzysztof Brodziński **149**  
 Marcin Mostafa & Natalia Paszkowska **168** Philip Niedenthal **170**  
 Roman Polański **171** Marek Kamiński **171** Krystyna Kaszuba **172**  
 Maciej Zień **172** Kuba Mikurda **177** Maciej Nowak **181**  
 Jacek Skolimowski **183** Piotr Bazyłko, Krzysztof Masiewicz **186**  
 Robert Firmhofer **194** Krzysztof Olszewski **199**  
 Agnieszka Jacobson-Cielecka **202** Tomek Rygalik **205**



# Welcome to Endless Poland



**Grzegorz  
Piątek**

Architecture critic and  
curator by day, a travel  
writer by night

You have just joined, or you are about to join, the 13 million foreigners who visit Poland every year.

Polish hospitality, *polska gościnność* – you will hear this phrase a lot from Poles. We see ourselves as friendly, welcoming folk. Even if it is difficult to break the ice sometimes, even if at first a person may seem reserved and unapproachable, once you do break the ice, once you join the ranks of friends and friends of friends, there is no way out. Ask any expat who has decided to settle in Poland. Even if they have been greeted initially with distrust and scepticism by their workmates or future in-laws, now they are a part of the family, or *rodzina*.

Try to be the first to leave a Polish party. No way! A countryside wedding reception can last up to three days. Sneaking out or leaving quietly is called 'leaving the English way' here. Why English and not French or Dutch is not quite clear, but it is certainly not the Polish way. The host will grab you

by the hand, propose (or insist) that you have another slice of cake, another cup of tea, another shot of vodka, promise another round of desert, warn you against the weather outside, suggest you stay the night. If you do decide to leave, in spite of the host's efforts, you will guarantee him or her a sleepless night, tossing in bed, recounting the whole visit and trying to figure out what went wrong. The thought that you were jet lagged, tired, or had some more urgent business to attend to would be too simple. There must have been something that offended you.

Now that you have been warned, allow us to encourage you. 600,000+ hotel beds, not to mention over 13 million Polish homes, are waiting for you. We will do our best to make you stay longer, and longer, and longer, and make sure you want to come back.









## Leszek Mozdzer

Composer, pianist, jazz musician, music producer, recently artistic director of the legendary SFINKS 700 club in Sopot

Poland is full of emotion, a place where sincerity matters. Sincerity is the real currency governing interpersonal relations – this is what I like most about Poland.



## Anda Rottenberg

Art historian and critic, recently curated an exhibition on Polish-German cultural relations in Berlin

Poland is what it is. It is my country and my attitude towards it is an emotional one. But if I were to distinguish its particular advantage, it would be the creativity and resourcefulness in varying circumstances. I am also pleased by two more characteristics that have saved our society from uniformity. These are a tendency towards rebellion and a sense of humour. In brief: the love of freedom and bravado, which are hardly understood outside our country and yet so obvious to us – for better or worse.

Gdańsk's City Hall is a backdrop for many celebration, including the annual St. Dominic's Fair in the summer



Żuławy – located between Gdansk and Elblag in the north, in the delta of the river Wisła, is the only part of the country located below sea level.



### Anne Applebaum Sikorska

Journalist and Pulitzer Prize-winning author, married to Foreign Minister of Poland Radosław Sikorski. Published *Gulag* and a travelogue *Between East and West*, about to release a Polish cookbook

Poland is still a little bit more unpredictable, a little bit more impetuous and a little bit less well-groomed than its western neighbors and a lot more creative. The music, art and architecture can surprise you, the food will impress you, the speed of change will amaze you. Thanks to rapid economic growth, every five years Poland becomes a different country. It grows more sophisticated, more diverse and more interesting with every passing year.



### Robert Trzópek

Chef at some of the world's best restaurants. Based in Warsaw, where he runs Tamka 43 at the Chopin Centre

I could name many places in Poland that are my little corners of the world, such as my home city of Gdańsk, or Warsaw, a city I recently moved to. It welcomed me with open arms and at the same time confronted me with a number of challenges. However, I find that people are what I value most in Poland. In the time I spent working abroad, I had the opportunity to meet many people, some of whom I can now count among my

friends. Yet it is only after I had returned to Poland that I felt surrounded by those that are truly dearest to me. If I were to specify the reason I decided to return to Poland to settle down for good after six years working abroad, I would have to draw up a long list with names of people who make my life in this country – whether in Gdańsk or Warsaw – more complete and based on authentic bonds.

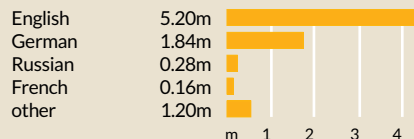


# Life

Perhaps this is your first visit to Poland. Perhaps you've had a vague idea of our country. Or maybe you've been here before, five or twenty years ago. Either way, you will find the reality surprising. The former are bound to get something they did not expect. The latter will be amazed how much has changed since the last time. Here is a lowdown on the basic aspects of everyday life that will help you better understand and navigate the country

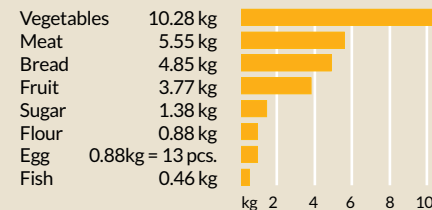
## Language

Pupils and students studying foreign languages



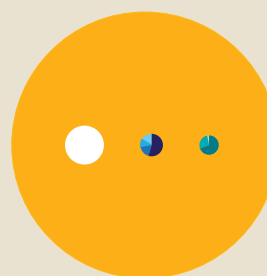
## Food

Consumption per month, per capita



## Ethnic groups

Nationality declarations in 2002



Polish	36 983 720
Undeclared / unspecified	774 885

### National minorities

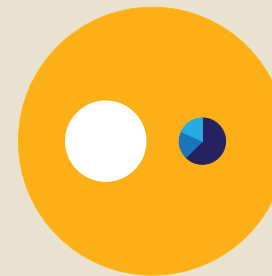
German	152 897
Belarusian	48 737
Ukrainian	30 957
Other	41 456

### Regional identities and ethnic minorities

Silesian	173 152
Kashubian	5 062
Roma	12 855

## Faith

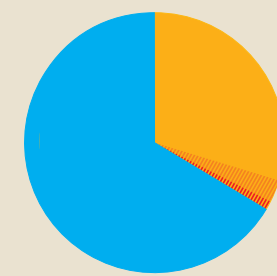
The faithful of selected religions



Roman Catholics	33 693 462
Undeclared / Atheists	3 529 100
Orthodox	504 660
Protestant	158 012
Others	148 800

## Polish Year

Work vs. rest



working days	252
days off	113
included	
religious holidays	10
national holidays	2

## Sports

Olympic medals



gold
silver
bronze

# Polish year

December

**4 Barbórka (The day of St. Barbara)**, the patron saint of miners – is celebrated in Silesia: a rare occasion to see thousands of miners in full galore.

The pre-Christmas shopping-cooking-baking frenzy starts: a great way to take your mind off the fact that you're in for another winter.

January

**1 New Year's Day (Nowy Rok)** Buying water may be a problem as most shops are closed.

**6** Religious Catholics celebrate the **Epiphany (Święto Trzech Króli)**. One week into the new year and a second day without shopping already! Russian Orthodox celebrate **Christmas**.

**21 Grandmother's Day (Dzień Babci)**

**22 Grandfather's Day (Dzień Dziadka)**

**24 Christmas Eve (Wigilia)** With a range of traditional dishes that vary from home to home and from region to region, the holiday is a culinary fest that Polish homemakers prepare for long in advance. Followed by two days of family visits and celebrations over **Christmas (Boże Narodzenie)** and Boxing Day.

On the **last Saturday of January** or the **first Saturday of February** you will see young ladies and gentlemen in evening dress. It is a sign of **studniówka**: a traditional school dance organized around a 100 days before final exams that gradually turns into an American prom-night style extravaganza.

February

**14 Valentine's Day (Walentynki)** – A recent import. Expect loved-up couples holding hands in shopping malls and multiplex cinemas, restaurateurs and hoteliers' imaginations running amok in inventing lovers packages. Your best bet is to boycott parties in clubs and bars to avoid the fluff.

**Fat Thursday (Tłusty Czwartek)** comes on the last day of Carnival Poles stuff themselves with doughnuts (*paczki*). Expect massive queues in front of every bakery.

40 days before **Easter, Lent (Wielki Post)** begins.

20°C

10°C

0°C

Average day temperature

Precipitation

Day Duration

March

**8 Women's Day (Dzień Kobiet)** The most cherished leftover from the official communist calendar. Flower stalls spring up around cities to cater to the needs to men who want to surprise their wives, girlfriends or that lonely soul from the human resources department.

**21 The first day of spring,** Observed as the unofficial **Truancy Day (Dzień Wagarówicza)** by pupils around the country. In most cases the celebration programme includes sneaking out of school, trying to get a beer, sharing a cigarette in the sun, then thinking of ways to get away with it. A truly formative experience.

April

**1 April's Fools' Day (Prima Aprilis)**

**Easter (Wielkanoc)** – Between March 22 and April 25, the first Sunday after the first full moon of Spring. Like Christmas, it is observed in ways that differ from home to home, depending on regional tradition and the level of engagement in religion. On **Easter Monday** be sure to wear wellingtons and a waterproof jacket. Not to protect yourself from the rain, but from the bucketfuls of water thrown at you. **Wet Monday (Lany Poniedziałek)** is a pagan tradition that has survived a thousand years of Christianity. Nobody remembers any more why, but you are supposed to get yourself and others wet.

60 mm

12 pm

40 mm

20 mm

first vegetables in spring season

white storks return from the south

asparagus season

6 am

6 pm

365 days and nights with a nation that loves to celebrate no matter the economic or historical circumstances

May

**1 Labour Day (Święto Pracy)** Definitely a labour-less day.

**3 Constitution Day (Święto Konstytucji 3 Maja)** – An overture to summer holidays. If May 1 is on Tuesday and May 3 is on Thursday, a Pole can get a nine-day holiday just by taking three days off work.

In May there is **the matura**, the final exam and a rite of passage into adulthood for every educated Pole.

**26 Mother's Day (Dzień Matki)** is a big thing in Poland and it overshadows **Father's Day (Dzień Ojca)**, June 23) completely. One can explain it by the fact that for centuries Polish fathers were distant figures – always at work or in the battlefield.

strawberry season

# Polish year

June

July

August

September

October

November

21 May – 24 June

20 °C

## Pentecost (*Zielone Świątki*)

49 days after Palm Sunday and

## Corpus Christi (*Boże Ciało*)

– 60 day after Easter, are days off for everybody – Catholic or not.

Day Duration

Usually May and June are the safest when it comes to weather. The **school holiday** (*wakacje*) starts late in June nevertheless. July and August are a time of crowded beaches (if weather permits) and ritual moaning about the state of infrastructure. Somehow people think that there is a way to transport the whole nation in the direction of the sea or the mountains and still manage to avoid congestion.

## 15 Polish Army Day (*Święto Wojska Polskiego*)

Commemorates the battle of Warsaw (1920) that stopped the march of the Bolshevik army to the west, coincides with the Catholic celebrations of the **Assumption of Mary** (*Wniebowzięcie NMP*). It's also the peak of the holiday season, one of the thirteen days in the year without shopping. The streets are empty, the beaches look like streets swarming with people.

strawberry season

cherry &amp; sweet cherry season

harvest

asparagus season

mushroom picking

apple season

6 am

1 Elementary, middle and high school students return to school on September 1, university students on October 1.

In the autumn, Poles are busy making up for the time spent on holiday. There are very few reasons to celebrate, days get shorter so you are better off in the safety of your office taking care of business.

60 mm

12 pm

Precipitation

40 mm

10 °C

Average day temperature

## 15 Teacher's Day (*Dzień Nauczyciela*)

Teacher's pets and their parents rush to schools with flowers.

6 pm

20 mm

0 °C

potato harvesting

## 1 All Saints Day (*Dzień Wszystkich Świętych*)

Another day without shopping! Millions flock to cemeteries across the whole country to pay respects to their (deceased) loved ones. Unofficial start of the fur coat season for Polish ladies.

## 11 Independence Day (*Święto Niepodległości*)

A day off for everybody (including shop assistants).

Theoretically, winter starts around Christmas, but one can expect the first snow in November. It comes late and is relatively mild in the south west, grips hard and usually doesn't let go till well into March in the north east.

# Language

Polish is spoken by some 50 million people around the globe, including virtually all Polish citizens and a diaspora in Europe and North America. London, Dublin and Chicago are the biggest Polish centres outside Poland's borders

It is definitely one of THOSE languages that sound opaque to the rest of the world. Luckily, words describing technological advances, like *radio*, *telewizja*, *komputer*, *telefon*, not to mention *internet*, look and in most cases, sound familiar. Names of institutions like *poczta*, *biblioteka*, *restauracja* or *hotel* are equally comprehensible. Add to it the vocabulary influenced by French or Latin, from the broad field of humanities, medicine and politics: *filozofia*, *migrena*, *parlament*. Thank people who reinvented Polish as a modern language in the 19th and 20th centuries and kindly decided not to construct Polish-sounding words for various imports and novelties, as was the case in Finland, where telephone is a *puhelin*. Luckily, there are Polish and international equivalents for some words. You can choose between seeing a *doktor* and a *lekarz*, seeing a theatre *spektakl* or a *przedstawienie*.

One can trace different cultural influences on Poland by the provenance of words. For instance, a lot of vocabulary that has to do with civic culture is of German origin, as it was imported in the Middle Ages together with the know-how on founding and running cities, for instance *ratusz* (city hall, stemming from *Rathaus*) or *burmistrz* (mayor, from *Bürgermeister*). Naturally, English is the biggest influence nowadays, with words like *blog*, *hipster*, *hamburger* and *modem* that go mainstream overnight, much to the horror of purists.

Things get worse (for you) once you try to decode words describing everyday, familiar things. Most of these have ancient names that sound familiar only to those Europeans who speak other Slavic languages, such as Czech, Slovak and Slovenian, and to the citizens of Baltic countries who still remember their mandatory Russian from school. How about a slice of *chleb*? Or a glass of *woda*? Confused? That was just bread and water. If you are too shy to try your Polish you can always order *sushi* and *wino*, but sometimes there is no choice. When travelling from Kraków to Warsaw you can take a *pociąg*, a *samochód* or a *samolot*, a train, a car or a plane. When strolling around a *miasto* (city or town), you take an *ulica* (street), pass by a *dom* (house) with a *sklep* (shop) downstairs, to reach a *plac* (square – that should look familiar to Northern Europeans) or a *rynek* (market square). There you will meet a *mężczyzna* (man) or a *kobieta* (woman) for a *kawa*

These are the diacritic signs used exclusively in the Polish alphabet. They change the pronunciation of Latin letters considerably. **Ą** sounds like something between 'oh' and 'awe' (a-some!); **Ć**, **Ś** and

**Ź** are softer, baby talk versions of C, S and Z; **Ż** sounds like an S in 'pleasure' or 'leisure'; **Ł** should be pronounced like W in 'white'.



(coffee – easy one) or a *herbata* (tea, not necessarily herbal) and escape *na wieś* (to the countryside) to admire a *krowa* (cow) and run away from a fierce *pies* (dog). After an adventurous *dzień* (day) there is the quiet *noc* (night) to get to the last page of this *książka* (book).

Some regions have seen a revival of local dialects, somewhat suppressed and petrified under the communist regime. Kaszubs in the north and Silesians (*Ślązaks*) in the south claim that their tongues are distinct enough to be treated as separate languages, not dialects. The official compromise is that they are 'regional languages' or 'ethnolects'. The difference between them and standard Polish will not be discernible to your ear (although Czechs and Germans will hear lots of common words in Silesian), but you will notice double signage in Polish and Kaszub, spoken by some 50 thousand people and taught to some 10 thousand pupils in the region to the west of Tricity and along the Baltic coast from Gdańsk all the way to Łeba. In the south, the Silesian regional language is spoken by at least 60 thousand people, widely taught in schools and spoken on regional radio and television.



# Ethnic Groups

98% of citizens declare their nationality as Polish, but you will find many other ethnic groups contributing to the cultural landscape of modern Poland and the cities are becoming increasingly multicultural. For Poland it is actually back to normal. Before the Second World War around 30% of citizens were of nationalities other than Polish: Jewish, Ukrainian, Belarusian, German

Looking at the official numbers, Germans are the largest minority in Poland, constituting around 150,000 Polish citizens. Most of them live in Silesia, in and around the city of Opole. This region used to be set on the fringe between Poland and Germany, changing hands over the centuries. Now, as the border was entirely redrawn in 1945, it sits right in the middle of southern Poland. Some villages are almost uniquely German, not just in language (notice the double signage), but also in their appearance – neat rows of squeaky clean houses with manicured front lawns. The German minority is large enough to win seats in the national parliament and to run local government in many parts of the region.

In the east of Poland there is a natural presence of nationalities from across the border: Belarusians, Ukrainians and Lithuanians. Interestingly, you may see onion domes of an Orthodox church in the west too, as several thousand Belarusians found a new home near the German border after the Second World War. The same goes for the Łemko minority that used to populate the mountains of Bieszczady in the south east. Many of them were forced to move west by the communist state. The Łemko culture and architecture has been enjoying a bit of a revival recently. In 2008 the village Bielanka was officially given a second, Łemko name – Білянка.

When travelling around Poland do not be surprised if you bump into a Greek. Many communists fled from Greece to Poland after the *coup d'état* some forty years ago and ended up staying and starting families. Szczecin is probably the most Greek city in this country.

Recent immigration makes things complicated for the statisticians but more interesting for everybody else. For instance, officially, there are 27,172 Polish citizens of Ukrainian descent. But

A Vietnamese restaurant in Warsaw – one of dozens that have sprung up around the city in the last decade.



nobody knows how many Ukrainians actually live in Poland and on and off – shuttling back home only to renew their visas. NGOs that deal with Polish-Ukrainian relations estimate this number at anywhere between 100,000 and 200,000.

In Warsaw you will notice a large presence of Vietnamese, who have quickly become the largest minority in the city. Officially there are about 1000 of them, in reality – 20,000 to 40,000, as evidenced by the proliferation of Vietnamese restaurants. Recently, pho soup was even voted one of the most typical Varsovian dishes. At the same time the capital is a natural destination for immigrants and expats from all parts of the globe – from Nigerians to Russians, Spaniards to Indians.

There are (officially) some 12,000 Roma in Poland. Many of them were forced to settle and take up jobs in factories in communist days, hence a large presence in industrial towns such as Nowa Huta (now a district of Kraków), Mielec or Puławy and in the largest cities. It is estimated that 30% of Roma children in Poland do not go to school, but on the other hand there are pioneering projects such as Roma textbooks and dedicated learning programmes. In many Polish cities wealthy members of the community are famous for the dazzling houses they build. The Roma neighbourhood on the eastern outskirts of Poznań, along the old road to Warsaw, is becoming something of an alternative tourist attraction.

According to official statistics, 34.6m out of 38m citizens of Poland are members of some religious group. Over 33m are Roman Catholics

The ties between the nation and its main religion strengthened first after the Second World War and then in the seventies when churches and catholic institutions became places of resistance or at least a break from the omnipresence of the communist state. John Paul's II presence in the Vatican and his visits to the home country became a source of strength for Poles – religious or not. As a result of this religious resurgence, some 2000 churches were built between 1976 and 1989. Statistics aside, the relationship between the church and the nation is more complex. There are different levels of engagement within the majority. To be baptised does not necessarily mean to be a devout Catholic. When asked about moral choices, Poles frequently disagree with the church's official stance. In big cities, such as Warsaw and Łódź, attendance on Sunday mass has been decreasing gradually. One thing is certain, Poles are very much attached to their rituals and are eager to show it at Christmas and Easter and on rites of passage such as weddings, christenings, first communions or funerals. In some bigger cities bishops are important figures of public life (for example Kraków's Stanisław Dziwisz - the former personal secretary of John Paul II) and it is hard to imagine the opening of a new school or new stretch of a motorway without them.

Small as other denominations may seem in proportion to the Catholic majority on the scale of the whole country, a Protestant or a Russian Orthodox can find a church in every major city. Sometimes it is a sign of a lively local community, sometimes a testimony to the city's multicultural past, as in Łódź, dubbed a 'city of four religions' before the Second World War. There are very few mosques and functioning synagogues, but their number has been growing over the last years. The plan to build a new mosque in Warsaw caused a local media storm. However, there are cities and regions in Poland where non-Roman Catholics constitute a sizeable group. One example is Białystok and its immediate surroundings, where school holidays double up because of a large Orthodox community. On the southern end of the country, close to the Czech border, around Cieszyn and in the valleys of the Beskid mountains, there is a lively Protestant community.

## Roman Catholic

The life of Poland's religious majority revolves around popular pilgrimage sites such as this one, built in Łagiewniki (a neighbourhood of Kraków),

where Saint M. Faustina Kowalska is worshipped. The Pauline monastery on Jasna Góra in Częstochowa with the celebrated icon of the Black

Madonna (a miniature of which Lech Wałęsa has famously worn in his lapel) remains the heart of Polish Roman Catholicism.





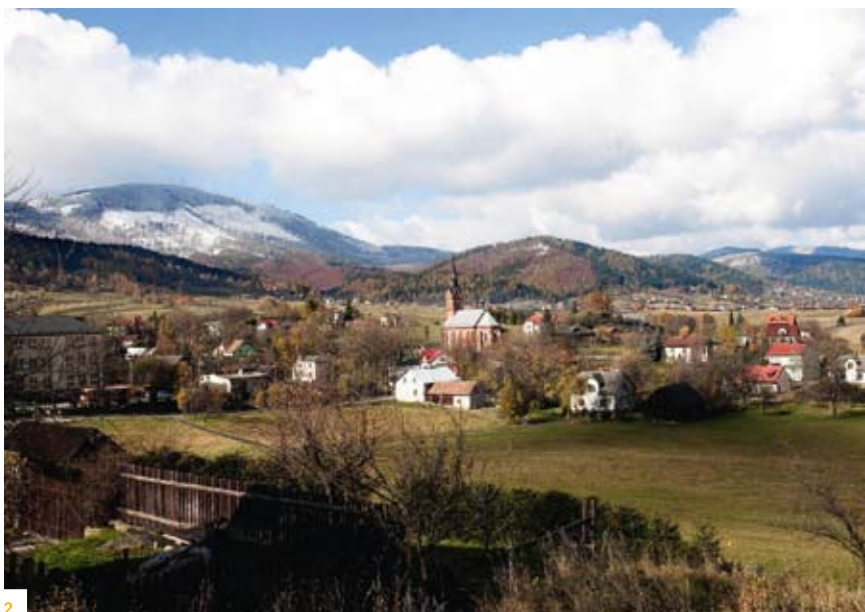
# Faith

## Orthodox →1

The Orthodox minority is particularly visible on the eastern fringe of the country, in and around Białystok.



1



2

## Protestantism →2

The biggest Protestant community lives in the region around Cieszyn, in the south of Poland.



3

## Islam →3

Historically, Islam was represented by the Tatar minority in the east.



4

## Judaism →4

Judaism has become nearly non-existent in Poland after the Holocaust, but recent years have seen a revival.

# Weather



Poland is situated between the mild climate zone of Western Europe and the continental climate of the East, responsible for harsh winters and hot summers. This means an exciting variety of natural phenomena: a sudden explosion of vegetation in spring or the so-called golden Polish autumn. This also means our lifestyles, wardrobes and architecture have to be suitable both for -20 and +35 degrees.

When contemplating what to bring to Poland for a winter holiday a few years ago a well-known Brit asked if there were really polar bears in this country. No, dear reader, there are no polar bears living in Poland, apart from perhaps some rather lonely ones at the zoo. However, it does get cold

So, what to bring by way of clothing? The summer, which often seems to start off very strong in May and then flatters to deceive in June and July, before returning with a glorious – but often all too brief – revival in August and September, can be glorious but given climate change and other factors is not as predictable as it once was. In winter, however, temperatures can drop to below zero (Celsius) and in the north-east of the country can even fall as low as -25 degrees – and the winds can bite, so a big warm coat and decent boots/shoes are a must. Gloves, hats, scarves might also play a role here, between late October and mid-March.

Sartorial elegance, a very Polish vice, can often just go out of the window in the depths of the winter, elegant women wandering around cocooned in what appear to be sleeping bags from their ankles to the tops of their heads. When they emerge, of course, Polish womenfolk turn into butterflies.

Most men of course couldn't really care less, but the winds are as cold for them as for our lovely butterflies, and a warm coat might work here too. The snow can also destroy even the best pair of training shoes, bitter personal advice from the experienced: bring warm boots, preferably lined, maybe even with polar bear fur, who knows?



# Dos & Don'ts

## ◆ Who's that speaking?

You shouldn't be surprised to hear Elizabeth Taylor or Kate Winslet sound like a wolf pretending to be a granny. Almost all the foreign shows are dubbed over by a speaker who reads out all the dialogue with one voice. The speakers, known as *lektorzy*, are audio celebrities here with some voices firmly attached to certain shows. Some channels were trying to challenge this custom by introducing subtitles but had to go back to the old ways sooner or later, forced by letters from disgruntled viewers and sharp drops in ratings.

## ◆ Feel the heat

We know what a real winter is and we have learnt to abuse central heating at every possible occasion. Do not be surprised to find our homes, offices and shops obscenely overheated, in spite of shrinking resources. Climate change? What climate change? It was -10 this morning.

## ◆ The secret language of kissing

The Polish kissing code is very vague and liberal. When you're greeting a friend you can exchange somewhere between one and three kisses, the exact number is a matter of personal judgement. Kisses are exchanged eagerly between women, more reluctantly between a woman and a man. Between men a handshake or a bear hug is just enough, except for close relatives or very very good or long-missed friends. A kiss on the woman's hand is treated by some as a sign of old fashioned chivalry, by others – as disgusting and uncivilised.

## ◆ Turkey-ish

Slowly ousted by the omnipresence of espresso machines, so-called Turkish coffee used to be the proper coffee for an average Pole. If you want to try the thick, strong brew, vaguely reminiscent of actual Turkish coffee, look out for *kawa po turecku* on the menu or startle a waiter at a posh restaurant by asking to give you one.

## ◆ Lemonheads

Taking tea with milk is considered English extravagance in Poland. The proper way is to put a slice of lemon in it.



## ◆ My Home is My Mosque

Make sure to wear nice socks! Officially, taking your shoes off when visiting somebody's place is considered a faux pas, but you may be asked to do so in many homes, especially in the countryside.

## ◆ Polish whispers

Beware, Italians, Spaniards, Greeks and other hot-blooded Mediterraneans! At family functions Poles can get very loud indeed, but raising your voice in a restaurant, on a train or in a street often comes across as rude or an act of desperate attention-seeking.

## ◆ 'No' does not always mean no

It is embedded deep within the nation's psyche that it would come across as rude to answer too enthusiastically to an offer of a drink or a snack. The first answer is usually *nie, dziękuję* (no, thanks), no matter how hungry or thirsty one is. This will be undoubtedly followed by repeating the offer (*może jednak?*), to which you are allowed to answer a hesitant *poproszę* (yes, please) accompanied by many maybes, thank-yous and excuses.

## ◆ Get stuffed

Once you think you are done eating what you first so politely refused to eat, you will undoubtedly be offered another one, and another one. The ritual will be repeated. Refusing at least one extra bite will probably be taken as an offence.

## ◆ Seat etiquette

On public transportation, in waiting rooms, airport lounges, in hotel lobbies – wherever you are and there are no seats left, keep your eyes open and make sure to offer yours to any woman (unless of course you are one yourself), an elderly or a disabled person, a pregnant woman or a woman with a baby. One out of ten of the persons you'll consider senior citizens make take offense because they still like to think of themselves as middle-aged, but the rest will appreciate your courtesy.





**Robert Makłowicz**

Food connoisseur,  
author of books on  
gastronomy and  
a TV chef

When I travel around Poland and feel like eating something when I happen to be, say, in Kaszuby, in the northern part of Poland, I don't look for a pizzeria or a restaurant with cuisine from Podhale in the south, but for a place that offers dishes from Kaszuby. Similarly, in the mountains I avoid venues with food from Wielkopolska (the region around Poznań), because I want to eat something from Podhale

Over the last dozen or so years – especially after Poland's accession to the European Union – Poland has seen a revival of regional cuisine. Before we joined the EU, there were lively debates about the concerns of losing national identity, but the outcome was quite the reverse. With the possibility of registering regional products granted by EU law, local delicacies have witnessed a renaissance – we return to traditional methods of cultivation and production. If someone feels like having a taste of regional dishes, they will have such a chance in almost every place in Poland.

Polish cuisine abounds in exquisite dishes and regional delicacies. Probably the most famous Polish titbit is *oscypek*. But we also have *kiszka ziemniaczana* – which looks like a sausage but is stuffed with potatoes grated with bacon; *piróg biłgorajski* a dumpling which in turns resembles pâté, prepared from potatoes and buckwheat groats with a bit of white sour cheese or *zurawinówka*, dense cranberry alcohol. In the region of Lublin, you can also have a taste of excellent plum jam. Apart from that, I would recommend all sorts of groats (*kasza*), very characteristic of our cuisine, and popular in a limited number of places in Europe. We are also one of the few countries of the world where mead – the oldest alcohol our civilisation remembers – is produced on a considerable scale. Climate change has provided for the possibility of growing wine again. More and more vineyards are emerging not only in Podkarpackie (Subcarpathia), but also in the area of Jasło and Dolny Śląsk (Lower Silesia). I've had an opportunity to have a sip of gourmet wine from the vicinity of Wrocław.

From the mountains in the south to the sea in the north – Polish cuisine varies from region to region. Recent years have seen a rise of interest in local recipes and ingredients. *Oscypek* →1

is a smoked cheese made of salted sheep milk exclusively in the Tatra Mountains and is a protected product under the EU regulation on geographical indications and designations of origin.





### Anne Applebaum – Sikorska

Journalist and Pulitzer Prize-winning author, married to Foreign Minister of Poland Radosław Sikorski. Published *Gulag* and a travelogue *Between East and West*, about to release a Polish cookbook

Living for a time in the Polish countryside, I learned how to cook with what was local, fresh and available: the uniquely Polish combinations of meat and dried fruit, of wild mushrooms and kasha, of sour soups and spicy sausage, of home-made jams and pickles, all of these made sense in a place with plentiful plums, abundant game, forests full of exotic mushrooms and eggs so fresh they still had feathers stuck to the shells



# Getting Around



1

The Polish network of roads and railways differs from region to region. Better check with a local before choosing the best mode of getting from point A to point B: plane, train or car

The main train station in Kraków is being transformed into a large transit hub, with a coach terminal and a direct railway link to the airport. →1 Long gone are the days when flying abroad

meant a mandatory commute to Warsaw's Chopin Airport. Regional airports are growing fast and offer more and more direct connections to European cities. →2



2

## By Plane

If you are flying in from abroad, you are most likely to arrive at Warsaw's Chopin Airport, since it is the largest air hub in Poland. It handled nearly 8.7 million passengers in 2010 or 42 % of traffic in Poland, 90% of which was international. Currently, it handles regular flights to circa 90 destinations worldwide, with London and Frankfurt ranking as the most popular. Recently new direct connections were opened to places like Beirut, Tbilisi, Hanoi and Yerevan. Eating up more and more of Warsaw's share in the market are regional airports that have experienced an unprecedented growth in recent years, serving more and more international destinations. Kraków and Gdańsk are competing for second place after Warsaw. Most domestic traffic goes through Warsaw anyway – with nearly a million passengers a year. Regular services operate to Bydgoszcz, Gdańsk, Katowice, Kraków, Poznań, Rzeszów, Szczecin and Wrocław. The most popular of them are Gdańsk and Wrocław, which makes sense since the 50 minute flight, even with the commute to and from the airport and a wait beats the train ride by half. For Szczecin and Rzeszów it makes even more sense. Although flying around the country has democratised recently, a domestic flight is still a great opportunity to meet Polish MPs and other important (but not wealthy enough to fly by private jet) figures.



# Getting Around



1

## By Train

Most of the fast connections operated by Intercity go via Warsaw, which makes its main station, Warsaw Centralna, the busiest hub in Poland, serving over 20 million passengers each year. It takes under 3 hours to get from Warsaw to Kraków, Katowice and Poznań, which makes taking a train to these destinations more sensible than flying. EuroCity trains from Warsaw to Berlin and from Katowice to Vienna make sense too, at 5 and a half hours, since they are comfortable and considerably cheaper than the plane. Intercity was wise enough not to dispose of dining cars when it came to savings. Their WARS restaurants on wheels are a real treasure, with comfortable seating and a menu that consists of meals freshly prepared on board. The schnitzel (*kotlet schabowy*) remains a firm favourite among the regulars.

The train system is one big construction site nowadays, which is logical if you consider how long the railways have suffered from lack of investment and basic maintenance. In this state of a perpetual revolution, the trains speed up and slow down, the rolling stock varies in quality, and the tariff is far from comprehensive, but this is about to improve soon. Some key projects will be finalised in 2011 and 2012, including the renovation of hitherto neglected grand stations in Warsaw, Gdynia, Katowice, Poznań and Wrocław and the modernisation of the Warsaw-Gdynia line.

→1 The train network is particularly dense in the western and southern parts of the country, but Warsaw has the fastest connections to other major cities.

→2 The road infrastructure is improving rapidly thanks to European funds and massive spending from the government. Soon it will be possible to cross the country from east to west on the

A4 or the A2, and from north to south on the A1



2

## By Car

Petrol in Poland is one of the cheapest in the EU: 5.09 zł or €1.25 per litre (as of March 2011). The network of motorways is better developed in the east-west direction – the A4 takes you from the German border (in Görlitz/Zgorzelec) to Wrocław, Katowice and Kraków and further east, in the direction of Ukraine. The A2 has almost reached the German border in Świecko / Frankfurt an der Oder at the western end, spans western Poland all the way to Łódź, and is set to reach Warsaw in 2012. The north-south A1 – linking the Tricity area (including the ferry terminal in Gdynia that connects Poland and Scandinavia) with the Czech border via Toruń, Łódź and Katowice is in various stages of construction or modernisation. Other than that the network of motorways and expressways – despite major ongoing investments – is, frankly speaking, underdeveloped and some of the large cities, like Poznań and Wrocław or Wrocław and Łódź are linked via perpetually congested two-lane roads, so on some of these routes it is advised to consult a local and choose a train or a plane instead. Coach services operate around the country, filling in for trains in the east and in the north where the network is sparse. Even though they are no longer operated by the state monopoly PKS, this acronym is almost a synonym for a coach station (*dworzec autobusowy*) around the country.

# Sports



1



2

9 percent of Poles cite sports as their favourite pastime, after home entertainment, cinema, dining and tourism. They are outnumbered by sports fans, who visit the stadiums and pay for satellite tv to keep up with the latest scores. Football and speedway remain the most popular disciplines, until a sudden surge in interest when a Polish team or a Polish athlete enjoys a spectacular success. This was recently the case with women's volleyball (the 'golden girls') and ski jumping (thanks to Adam Małysz's countless victories in world tournaments and his four Olympic medals). At the same time, health, fitness and wellness are becoming the nation's main focus. This is good news not just for pharmaceutical companies. A running craze is sweeping the country, an aquatic sports centre is every ambitious mayor's flagship project and in big cities the number of people who choose the bicycle as their daily means of transportation is rising fast.

→1 A modern take on a sleigh-ride in the Polish mountains.

→2 Polish lakes and seaside draw surfers from around the country. Hel Peninsula and Łeba are the most popular destinations for wind- and kite surfers.



Zalew Zegrzyński, an artificial lake north of Warsaw, is a centre of watersports in summer and an impromptu ice skating rink in winter.





Polish summer sometimes starts in May and Poles eagerly use the first opportunity to escape to the Baltic beaches.





## Sports

# Euro 2012



### Warsaw

The opening ceremony will take place at the National Stadium (Stadion Narodowy). The 55,000 seat arena was erected directly

on top of the old Centennial Stadium. It is meant to resemble a wicker basket, enveloped in light mesh panels in white and red – the colours of Polish flag. The 80-tonne, 70-metre steel

spire above the football pitch was made in Poznań, shipped to Warsaw in three pieces and assembled on site.

Regardless of the changing fortunes of the Polish team, football is the most popular sport in Poland. The Prime Minister, Donald Tusk is not just a fan, he is an avid football player himself. No wonder he made it a point to build ca. 3,500 quality football pitches, serving also as public sport and leisure facilities, in small towns and villages around the country. Football rookies compete for the Donald Tusk cup and they practice on pitches branded *orliki*, all meant to be a part of preparations for the 2012 UEFA football championship. They double as venues for local events and are meant to be a tool for fighting social exclusion. Hosted by Poland and Ukraine between 8 June and 1 July of 2012, the event is set to be a major draw for visitors from around Europe.

Poland is expecting up to a million extra visitors that year, including football fans, journalists, officials, not to mention football players and their entourages. All eyes will be set on the new stadiums constructed in four Polish cities for this event.

For Poland, EURO 2012 is more than just a football tournament. It is a giant infrastructural, organisational and social project, largely contributing to the country's rapid and significant development. All Poles will be hosts of this spectacle, showing a new face of the country celebrating together.

# Sports

## Gdańsk →1

The second largest of Poland's Euro 2012 stadia is Gdańsk's 44,000 capacity The PGE Arena. The shape and color of the stadium, bedecked with translucent panels, references amber. PGE Arena will light up Letnica, a hitherto neglected neighbourhood close to the harbor.



1

## Wrocław →2

The stadium, located west of the city centre, close to the airport, was designed by JSK Architekci, the architects of Warsaw's National Stadium. Wrocław's 42,000 seater, like PGE Arena, is designed to glow in the dark, changing colours depending on the character of the event.



2

## Poznań →3

Poznań was the first of Polish host cities to complete its Euro 2012 venue – an upgraded and expanded version of the Municipal Stadium (Stadion Miejski) dating back to 1980. It doubles as the homebase of the local team: Lech Poznań.



3








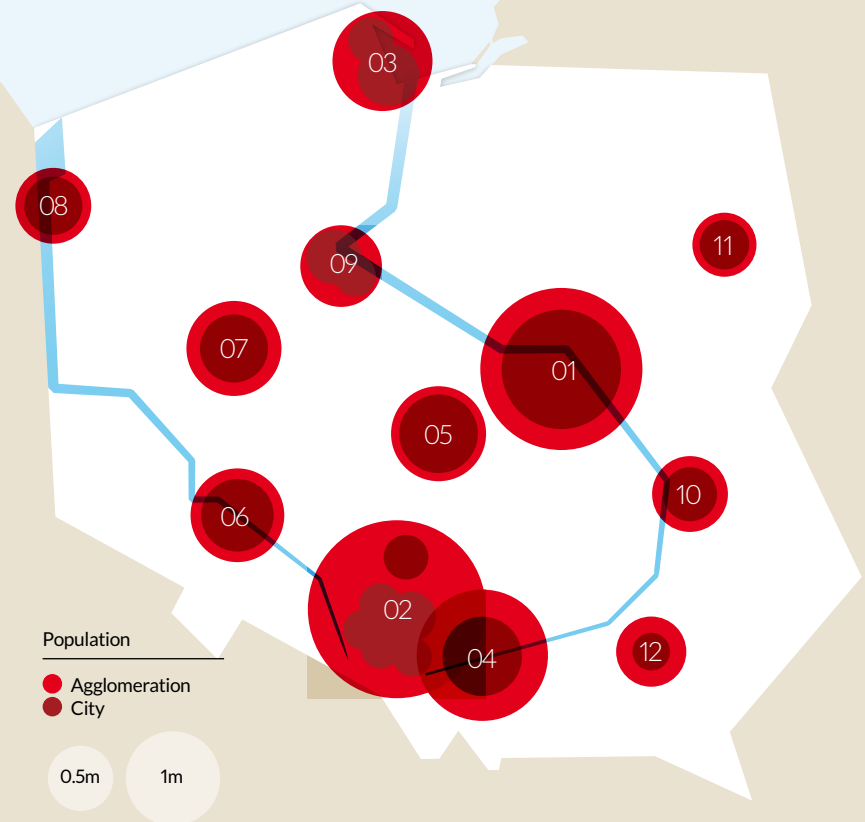
# Cities

The fastest way to immerse yourself in contemporary Polish culture and to get a crash course in its history, is to head for one of the urban centres. But, mind you, every city offers a different version. Poland was split between three empires throughout the nineteenth century and its borders shifted completely in 1945. Cities and regions developed on quicksand, seeing entire ethnic and social groups come and go, absorbing various influences. Thus, each one displays a unique architectural and social landscape and has its own flavour of modern Poland. What's your favourite flavour?

On the next pages you will find portraits of twelve biggest agglomerations accompanied by insider tips from locals. Pack your bags!

## Key to symbols used in Cities section

-  population of the whole agglomeration
-  number of students
-  average monthly gross salary in euros
-  number of sunlight hours a year
-  nearest airport / distance from city centre



**02** Warszawa  
Central Europe's most dynamic metropolis

**02** Silesia & Katowice  
A post-industrial conurbation on the rise

**03** Tricity Gdańsk/Gdynia/Sopot  
Three (at least three) cities in one

**04** Kraków  
A new face of the old capital

**05** Łódź  
Culture fills factories

**06** Wrocław  
On the crossroads of European history

**07** Poznań  
So much more than a business city

**08** Szczecin  
A sea port far from the actual sea

**09** Bydgoszcz / Toruń  
Two capitals of one region

**10** Lublin  
A gate to the East

**11** Białystok  
City of many cultures and religions

**12** Rzeszów  
A small giant

# Warszawa

 3.2m 
  291 000 
  1126 € 
  2258 h 
  Warsaw Chopin Airport / 8 km

key to icons on page 52



Warsaw's mermaid (*syrena*), a half woman, half fish holding a sword and a shield is a symbol of the city's heroic past and today's energetic attitude. You will find hundreds of versions: on the fountain in the Market Square and on a monument on the waterfront boulevard, on school buildings, trams and buses and on football fans' graffiti. This one adorns the Stolica cinema house (currently under renovation) and was sculpted in the forties.

Once considered a distant, slightly embarrassing relative, Warszawa (Warsaw) is now on the fast track to becoming first in line to inherit Berlin's mantle as Europe's coolest city. With glowing reviews from enthusiastic visitors, word-of-mouth is spreading fast. People flock to Poland's capital in search of culture, nightlife, and that elusive buzz that seems to be growing ever stronger

Legend has it a young fisherman named Wars was casting his nets one night when he came upon a mermaid. He was so taken by the sight and the voice of the creature, he proposed to her. His love for her caused her tail to turn into legs, and she took on the human name Sawa. Wars and Sawa lived happily ever after on the shores of the Wisła (Vistula), and the settlement they founded bore their joint names. At first sight, there is little romance to be found along the Wisła's banks now. Varsovians are fiercely proud of their city, but newcomers may not immediately appreciate the city's charms. Entering Warsaw from the East, each bridge – be it the century-old Poniatowski or the latest addition, the Świętokrzyski – ensures a picturesque view, a skyline dotted with church spires, tower blocks and skyscrapers. But once you get to the city, it takes a good guidebook or an informed local to reveal the best the city has to offer. It can be found inside hard-edged public buildings, such as the Palace of Culture and Science or the National Opera, in private apartments turned galleries, in secret gardens, hip bars and specialist shops. The city may seem a different place on every visit. It changes rapidly and it takes on a different appearance each season. In the summer it's

Warsaw's skyline is dotted with more and more skyscrapers, making it one of the tallest cities in this part of Europe. Eleven of the highest buildings in Poland are located here.





Warsaw University Library (BUW) offers a spectacular view of the skyline and the river from its one hectare rooftop garden, composed entirely of plants that are native to Central Europe.



a relaxed city of cyclists zooming through the parks, in September and May – a cultural capital buzzing with festivals, concerts and exhibition openings. In winter, it turns inward.

All but erased in the Second World War, Warsaw was gradually rebuilt from the rubble and reached the pre-war population of 1.2m around 1970. Tourists marvel at the quaint Old Town, but their awe turns to astonishment on learning that the medieval-looking buildings date back to the 1400s and '50s. Another popular attraction is the gift from the USSR and the tallest building in Poland – the Palace of Culture and Science. Completed in 1955, a bizarre hybrid of Manhattanism and Stalinism peppered with loose references

## Mikołaj Długosz

Artist, photography collector, lives and works north of the centre



1

There are many museums and galleries in Warsaw devoted to the most important aspects of contemporary art. **Muzeum Sztuki Nowoczesnej / Museum of Modern Art** (ul. Pańska 3, ☎ mon-sat: 12pm-8pm, 🎫 free) is temporarily housed in an ordinary block of flats, just around the corner from the InterContinental tower – until the completion of the new museum building designed by Christian Kerez. **Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej – Zamek Ujazdowski / Centre for Contemporary Art – Ujazdowski Castle** (ul. Jazdów 3, ☎ tue-sun: 12pm-7pm; fri: 12pm-9pm, 🎫 normal 12 PLN, reduced 6 PLN; thu: free entry). The latter is housed in a reconstructed Baroque castle situated near Warsaw's most beautiful historic park – **Łazienki Królewskie (Royal Baths)**. Another important contemporary art institution is **Zachęta Narodowa Galeria Sztuki / Zachęta National Gal-**

**lery of Art** (pl. Małachowskiego 3, ☎ tue-sun: 12pm-8pm, 🎫 normal 15 PLN, reduced 10 PLN, thu: free entry) established over 150 years ago. The gallery building was constructed at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. The exhibitions present the latest art by the most interesting Polish and international artists.

When in search of the local flavour, head to **Magazyn Praga** (ul. Ząbkowska 27/31, ☎ tue-fri 11am-7pm, sat-sun: 12pm-4pm), that sells innovative, modern pieces by Polish and foreign designers.

On the other side of the river, there are many cool shops on **Mokotowska street**: boutiques of the best Polish fashion designers, cafés and unique restaurants.

A Warsaw night club crawl can start from the bar **Warszawa Powiśle** → 1 ul. Kruczkowskiego 3B, ☎ daily from 10 am). This is quite an unusual place – the bar's modernist interior has been adapted

from the former, tiny, Warszawa Powiśle railway station. There is a lot going on there: cultural events, concerts, lectures and great musical events. Straight from the bar, hop on a train that will take you over the Wisła to the district of old Praga, on the east bank of the river. 11 Listopada Street is the hub of decadent alternative clubs

A walk along the Wisła riverfront is the perfect way to relax on the following morning. The banks of this partly untamed river running through the very heart of the city offer wonderful wild beaches, often frequented by Varsovians on sunny days. If you are up for a longer excursion visit the vast **Zalew Zegrzyński / Zegrzyński Reservoir, Puszcza Kampinoska / Kampinos Forest or Puszcza Kamieniecka / Kamieniecka Forest**. Wilderness still abounds here despite the proximity to the large urban agglomeration.



Warsaw is said to be a city without a centre. But if you need to catch a bus, a tram or a train in any direction, the best bet is

to head to Rondo Dmowskiego: a big roundabout next to the biggest underground station and the central railway station.





The Palace of Culture and Science, built in the fifties, as a 'gift' from the Soviet Union is the city's main orientation point, a loved and loathed element of the skyline.



to Polish historical architecture. Until recently, the city has tried to ignore its presence, many have campaigned to get rid of it altogether. But to the new generation, the Palace is as much a symbol of Warsaw as the Mermaid, and its communist connotations have ceased to be significant. The edifice – itself home to several cultural institutions – is finally being reintegrated into the fabric of the city. Behind it loom the towers of Warsaw's new business centre – a living monument to Poland's economic power and the confidence of its private sector. At their base is another communist-era landmark that is just now returning to favor: the Central Station, hastily completed for Leonid Brezhnev's visit, it was considered an irredeemable eyesore for decades, until a quick scrub proved that under the grime lay hidden a modernist masterpiece. This feeling of reinvigoration extends to Krakówskie Przedmieście, part of the Royal Route connecting the Old Town to former royal residences in the south. Come summer, the partly pedestrianised boulevard, which has undergone major renovation work in the past few years, teems with people; significantly, not all of them are tourists. Cafes, bars and restaurant gardens line the pavement, along with granite benches that each play a different Chopin tune – erected there in 2010 as part of the composer's bicentenary celebrations.

Fryderyk Chopin, widely considered to be the world's most famous Varsovian, also lends his name to Warsaw's airport. The

## Agata Michalak

Editor-in-chief of *Aktivist*, a free culture and lifestyle magazine

The part of Warsaw that should definitely be explored is **Praga**, my home district, which for various reasons I consider to be more authentic than the more elegant city centre on the opposite bank.

I like **ul. Żąbkowska** a lot – not only its recently renovated segment with a distinct pavement, but also the hidden, unrestored part of the street lined with tenement-houses and the intriguing architecture of the Koneser vodka distillery. This area is slowly filling up with cosy cafes.

The 19th-century building on the corner of Żąbkowska and Targowa, which is Praga's main street, houses a **milk bar** (**Żąbkowski Bar Mleczny**, ul. Żąbkowska 2, ☎ *mon-fri: 7am-7pm, sat: 7am-6pm, sun: 9am-6pm*), a place worth dropping by in to immerse oneself in the aura of the bygone (communist) times.

Żąbkowska, along with the nearby **Inżynierska** and **11 Listopada** streets make for a route I am happy to show my guests as a living testament to the history of Warsaw and the multifarious contrasts that currently characterise the city. A number of places



1

in the area serve delicious coffee and tasty snacks. I recommend **Łysy Pingwin** (ul. Żąbkowska 11, ☎ *sun-thu: 3pm-12am, fri&sat: 3pm-2am*) and **Sen Pszczoły** club (ul. Inżynierska 3, second courtyard behind the white gateway, ☎ *tue-sun: 6pm- until the last customer*) that hosts concerts of various indie artists. Another cool place is the club-cum-cafe **Winowajca** (Inżynierska 1, ☎ *daily: 6pm- until the last customer*).

For shopping opportunities one should head for the centre and **Powisłe** – a district near the Wisła river. I recommend a visit in **Love & Trade** boutique →1 (ul. Solec 18/20, ☎ *mon-fri: 6pm-7pm, sat: 11pm-7pm*), situated in **1500 m2 do wynajęcia / 1500 square meters for rent** club. The place was created by a group of young artists and fashion designers who aim at promoting various Polish fashion brands.

I also like to drop by **Blind Concept Store** →2 on Mokotowska street (ul. Mokotowska 63/100, ☎ *11pm-7pm*). They offer very original jewellery and various gadgets that make for great presents.

A new and very exciting annual event in the city's calendar is the **Warsaw Music Week** (in May). The festival promotes Warsaw's independent music scene, presenting everything that is interesting and important in different clubs, along with independent acts from all over Europe.



2

The Copernicus Science Centre (Centrum Nauki Kopernik) is an innovative science museum completed on the waterfront in 2011. It drew 200,000 visitors in its first three months.



proximity of the terminal to the city is its greatest asset, soon to be strengthened by the opening of a rail link that will cut the commute to the city (and the trip from your home country) to mere 15 minutes. Another reason to finally discover the Central European metropolis for yourself.

## Mariusz Szczygieł

Reporter for the *Gazeta Wyborcza* daily, expert on Czech culture, his book *Gottland* won the European Book Prize in Brussels as the best European book of 2009



1

### Restauracja Rozbrat 20

ul. Rozbrat 20, ☎ mon-thu: 7.30am-11pm, fri: 7.30am-until the last guest, sat: 9.30am-until the last guest, sun: 9am-10pm

This is a small restaurant by a park, reminiscent of French bistros, crammed with people sitting back to back. The simple, light-filled interior has black and white décor with starched white tablecloths and flowers. The menu offers just a few light dishes: Parisian broth, sardines with marakuja, St. James mussels with a black ink risotto. One of the most demanding restaurant critics in Poland, columnist for the influential Polish daily *Gazeta Wyborcza*, once came to this restaurant to write a review. He ate and was so impressed that he did something he had never done in all his years as a restaurant critic. Due to the excellence of the cuisine at Rozbrat he named the chef in his review (Łukasz Guziński). The talents of this chef are now well renowned.

### Galeria Jabłkowskich in the →1

inner courtyard ul. Chmielna 21, entry from the gate on the street, ☎ mon-thu: 6am-10pm

This is a free gallery in a courtyard, under open skies. Splendid photographs of Warsaw adorn the walls of a tenement house that belongs to the descend-

ants of the Jabłkowski brothers, former owners of Warsaw's largest department store. Our capital has a harsh appearance and you have to look carefully to discover its hidden beauty. These photographers have a great deal of affection for the city. The exhibition is part of a non-profit initiative, inviting anyone to photograph the city, with a professional jury deciding which photographs will be displayed in the courtyard. About thirty large-format photographs are on exhibit at any one time, and I go there every fortnight as the exhibits change on the 1st and the 15th of every month.

### Skład Modernista →2

Hoża 9c ☎ daily, best to make a prior appointment with the owners: + 48 500 565 448

This is a place for those in the know. You have to walk past the building at Hoża 9 and then immediately after it go to the end of the courtyard alongside the old dilapidated building with the 1zł coin mural, which will soon be lost forever as the paint is peeling off. Tucked away on the ground floor is an amazing collection of furniture and lamps. The owner is the eccentric Arkadiusz Choduń, who in 1991 went to a Rolling Stones concert in Prague and ended up staying in the Czech capital for ten years. He became enraptured with Czech design from the 1930s. Today, he brings modernist furniture from the 1930s to the 1960s to Warsaw (including Thonet pieces). Mr. Choduń doesn't sell furniture that has already been restored, as customers would then suspect that it may have only been recently produced. He'd rather restore it once you choose your favourite piece.



2



## Ania Kuczyńska

One of the most recognisable names in fashion – here and abroad. Graduate of the prestigious Accademia Koefia in Rome and ESMOD in Paris



1



2

### U Kucharzy →1

ul. Ossolińskich 7, ☎ mon-sat: 9am-8pm, sun: 12-5pm

This great restaurant, whose cuisine successfully reconciles tradition with modernity, is located in the former Europejski Hotel, which in itself is an interesting element of the history of Warsaw. Polish cuisine is served on starched tablecloths in the beautiful hotel interior, while open kitchen space allows guests to see how dishes are made (some of them are even prepared right at the customers' table). I recommend the steak tartar (*tatar*), which is the house speciality.

### Pod Gigantami

Al. Ujazdowskie 24, ☎ daily: 10am-11pm

Nearby is the Pod Gigantami (Under the Giants) restaurant, located at Al. Ujazdowskie – one of the most impressive streets in Warsaw – in a beautiful tenement-house, whose untypical entrance is framed by two giants holding up its balconies. The restaurant, offering very light and tasty cuisine, is housed in a huge old apartment. It boasts an elegant, refined décor filled with beautiful old furniture, in which tables are set with beautiful pre-war china and white-lace napkins, all contributing to the restaurant's unique atmosphere.

### Qchnia Artystyczna

ul. Jazdów 2, ☎ thu-sat: 2-11pm, sun-wed: 12-10pm

The restaurant is hidden away from view and not so easy to find. It is located in the building of the Centre for Contemporary Art (CSW), so one can easily have lunch, see an interesting exhibition and visit the well-stocked bookshop – all in the course of an afternoon. Dishes are served in an original way on stylishly decorated tables. The summer terrace offers a beautiful panoramic view of Warsaw.

### Belvedere Restaurant →2

in the Royal Baths / Łazienki Królewskie Park – ul. Agrykola 1, ☎ daily: 12-11pm

The restaurant's décor and furniture were designed by a young scenographer, Borys Kudliczka, who has often collaborated with Mariusz Treliński, art director of the Polish National Theatre and Opera in Warsaw. Belvedere is located in a historic building of interesting design. After lunch I recommend a stroll through the beautiful Royal Baths Park.

### Śłodki... Słony →3

ul. Mokotowska 45, ☎ daily: 10am-12pm

A nice and cosy pastry shop smelling of the delicious goodies

it offers with a superb restaurant in the back. The meringue cake, is an absolute must. The home-made doughnuts with rose-jam filling should definitely be tried as well.

### Mielżyński Wine Bar

ul. Burakowska 5/7, ☎ mon-thu: 9am-11pm, fri&sat: 11am-11pm, 12.45-6pm

Mielżyński's décor is an example of a very successful conversion of post-industrial space of a former factory into a wine bar. Mielżyński's immediate vicinity is that of an interesting commercial complex, presenting the visitors with an opportunity to do a little shopping in **Red Onion** (great olive oil!) or visit one of the most famous hair stylists. It is best to visit Mielżyński in summertime, when one can sit outside and enjoy a glass of good wine.



3

→1 Don't believe your eyes – Warsaw's Old Town is in fact very, very new. The houses along the Castle Square (Plac Zamkowy) were rebuilt in the early fifties, the cathedral (in the

middle) in 1956, and the Royal Castle itself was not finished until 1988.

→2 Warsaw's Museum of Modern Art (MSN) has emerged as one of the most interesting institutions in Europe focused on recent art.



1



2

# Katowice & Silesia

 2.8m
  141 000
  1026 €
  1789 h
  Katowice international Airport / 30 km

key to icons on page 52



At 111 metres, the historic broadcasting tower of the Gliwice radio station is the tallest structure in the world built entirely out of wood.

A decade ago the idea of spending a weekend in Silesia, a region with two hundred years of coal mining tradition under its belt, would seem outrageous, but now the whole area is re-inventing itself as a destination for the demanding tourist: from contemporary art and alternative music lovers to people who get their kicks from playing golf on derelict industrial sites

The train station in Katowice is one of the busiest in Poland. It sits right in the heart of the city. The neighbourhood south of it is a testimony to the inter-war period of prosperity when the city was the capital of an autonomous region rich in coal and steel: Upper Silesia (Górny Śląsk). The ambition and wealth of the 'most American of Polish cities' is reflected in the sheer size of the regional parliament building (Sejm Śląski) and Poland's then second-tallest apartment tower. These achievements were to be dwarfed by the development undertaken north of the train station in the 1960s and the 1970s. Along Aleja Korfanteo is the longest housing block in the city (*superjednostka*) and the masterfully engineered 11,500 seat arena, Spodek (the saucer). In a couple of years a new cultural district will be completed next to it, replacing the Katowice coal mine: with a concert hall of the Polish Radio National Symphony Orchestra (NOSPR), a convention centre and the partly underground premises of the Silesian Museum (Muzeum Śląskie) designed by the Austrian architects Riegler & Riewe.

If you feel like connecting with the region's working class tradition, take a bus to the suburb called Giszowiec, founded a century ago by the Giesche brothers industrialists who used to own around one third of the present city area. Giesche's miners were housed in a self-sustained community of red-brick houses, with a school, a church and

The corn-shaped tower blocks of Tysiąclecia housing estate in Katowice were designed in the seventies to provide compact apartments with maximum daylight.





The ornate gate from the Donnersmarck palace in Świerklaniec near Katowice was dismantled in 1960 and rebuilt as the entrance to the zoo in the Culture Park in Chorzów.



other local facilities. Get there before it's registered on the UNESCO heritage list and turns into a theme park.

On the other side of Katowice, in Chorzów, another version of a working class paradise was created fifty years later at the order of the much cherished local communist leader – General Ziętek. The 600–hectare Park of Culture and Leisure is nearly twice as large a New York's Central Park and was probably the earliest attempt at land reclamation in this part of Europe. With its charmingly retro attractions (a planetarium, a zoo, an open-air museum of vernacular architecture, a fun park, outdoor swimming pools and the valley of dinosaurs) it can be best admired from a cable car that hovers in the air.

Katowice may be the seat of local government, but the region is in fact polycentric. The second biggest – Gliwice, is equally successful to Katowice in its transition from industrial to a service-based economy. It is the seat of Silesia's technical university which is the reason why it boasts a vibrant architect community. Bytom has unique cultural institutions: the region's only opera house, a strong



## Przemio Łukasik

Architect, lives and works in Bytom, in a house converted from a concrete coal mine building, co-founder of the acclaimed architectural practice Medusa Group

**Bytom** and Silesia are a hybrid of culture and industry. In Bytom there is **Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej Kronika / the Centre for Contemporary Art Kronika, Śląski Teatr Tańca / Silesian Dance Theatre, opera, a ballet school and a music school**. Bytom also boasts one of the most important collections of Polish art after 1989 – the collection of **Muzeum Śląskie / the Silesian Museum**.

### Alternativ turistic

Alternativ turistic project maps are available at the Kronika Gallery. You can use them to explore individually or join a group and travel around Śląsk in a more organised, yet still very alternative way.

More than a dozen bicycles are available for trips during which tourists can venture out to the venues to date accessible only to miners, steelworkers and factory workers; venues unfamiliar even to most inhabitants of Silesia. With Alternativ Turistic you can also see the remnants of the Szobierki mine as well as **Huta Katowice / Katowice Steelworks** – once the boldest industrial achievement of socialist Poland. In Zabrze, the project **Kopalnia Guido / Guido Mine** offers the possibility of going down into the mine (with a ticket). Other attractions include **turbo golf tournaments** →1 on the slagheaps or in the halls of closed-down factories

**Kronika Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej / Centre for Contemporary Art Kronika**, Rynek 26, Bytom, ☎ tue–thu: 11 am–6 pm, fri: 2 pm–8 pm, sat: 11 am–3 pm,



1



2

### Rondo Sztuki / Art Roundabout

Rondo im. Gen. Jerzego Ziętka 1, Katowice, ☎ tue–fri: 11 am–7 pm, sat – sun: 10 am–6 pm

Gallery operating at the tram stop next to the Spodek Hall in Katowice. Right in the middle of an enormous roundabout, with a tunnel running underneath, one can – as it turns out – successfully present contemporary art and a varied, interesting cultural offer.

### Muzeum Górnośląskie / Upper Silesian Museum, Plac Jana III Sobieskiego, Bytom

#### Jazz Cafe →2

Rondo im. Gen. Jerzego Ziętka 1, Katowice, ☎ tue–fri: 11 am–7 pm, sat – sun: 10 am–6 pm

Coffeshop at the theatre. The interior is made entirely of aluminium profiles and steel plates, which mark the walls and the ceiling. The sort of idea where an interesting visual effect is achieved at low cost. Japanese cuisine.

Rondo Sztuki is a contemporary art gallery located in a glazed pavilion over Katowice's biggest roundabout – Rondo Ziętka, next to the memorial of the heroes of the Silesian Uprising.



contemporary art collection and the most influential art gallery in this part of the country.

Until 1914 the industrial region was split between three empires: the Russian, Austrian and German. When Poland re-gained independence in 1918, Upper Silesia was divided again between Poland and Germany (the Weimar republic). In 1945 the whole urban region was for the first time brought together under Polish rule. The old divisions are still relevant to locals nonetheless, but for the untrained eye it is often difficult to tell where one city ends and the next one begins and the historical and cultural divisions are diminishing. It is perfectly likely for a student of the Silesian University in Katowice

South of the train station is Katowice's modernist centre, planned and built in the thirties, when the city became the capital of the autonomous region of Silesia.



to get some culture and beer in Bytom in the evening, sleep over at a handsome stranger's place in Gliwice and still make it back to school by train the next morning. Hundreds of thousands commute between the 17 cities and it is technically possible to travel from Gliwice in the west to Dąbrowa Górnicza in the east on a tram. The length of this journey, compared to the 20-minute ride down the A4 motorway shows just how much the region could benefit from a bit of coordination. Common sense prevailed in 2007 when the 17 cities of the region formed the Metropolitan Association of Upper Silesia (Górnośląski Związek Metropolitalny) – the first step towards creating a super-city of 3 million inhabitants.



## Roman Łój

President of the board of the Katowice Coal Holding company responsible for 18% of Poland's coal production

In **Zabrze**, it's worth going down the historic mine **Guido (ZKWK Guido ul. 3 Maja 93, Zabrze, ☎ tue-sun. Hours of underground sightseeing tue: 9:00 - 18:00, wed-fri: 9am-2.30 pm, sat-sun: 12 am-4 pm, www.kopalniaguido.pl)**. In Tarnowskie Góry - **Historic Silver Mine (ul. Szczęść Boże 52, Tarnowskie Góry, ☎ mon-sun, 9 am-3 pm, www.kopalniasrebra.pl)** is much older and was exhausted long ago, available for tourist groups. An amazing show used to be held there - the lights were turned off, with only several point lamps left in the main pit, shining like miners' oil lamps. This was intended to teach respect for the people who used to work underground. Fans of architecture should definitely pay a visit to the **Nikiszowiec neighbourhood →1** (a district of Katowice, www.nikiszowiec.pl), almost a separate town built 100 years ago for the workers of the present-day Wieszorek mine. Apart from this, take a look at the architecture in the centre of Mikołów, the palace at Pszczyna - **Castle Museum in Pszczyna, (ul. Brama Wybrańców 1, Pszczyna, ☎ tue-sun: 10 am-3 pm, www.zamek-pszczyna.pl)**, the brewery museum in Tychy (**Tyskie Browarium, (ul. Mikołowska 5, entrance from ul. Katowicka), Tychy, ☎ mon-sat, 10 am-8 pm, www.tyskiebrowarium.pl)**.

### Restaurants

An exclusive restaurant at the **Hotel Monopol →2** at ul. Dworcowa 5, it is definitely worth a visit hotel and restaurant **Marysin Dwór (ul. Pukowca 17a, Katowice, www.restauracja-katowice.com.pl)**. And traditional gatherings at the restaurant **Pod Kasztanami** in Giszowiec (ul. Radosna 35, Katowice-Giszowiec), closer to the city centre at **Gwarek (ul.**



1

Przemysłowa 2, Katowice), or next to the Wieszorek mine at the centre of Mikołów, the palace at Pszczyna - **Castle Museum in Pszczyna, (ul. Brama Wybrańców 1, Pszczyna, ☎ tue-sun: 10 am-3 pm, www.zamek-pszczyna.pl)**, the brewery museum in Tychy (**Tyskie Browarium, (ul. Mikołowska 5, entrance from ul. Katowicka), Tychy, ☎ mon-sat, 10 am-8 pm, www.tyskiebrowarium.pl)**.



2

## Stach Ruksza

Curator, art historian, director of the celebrated Kronika Centre for Contemporary Art in Bytom



1








2

Both the fine arts and applied design have had a very positive impact on the character of Silesia. And this should be understood not only as product design, but also engaged design, or critical design. These trends are very interestingly articulated in initiatives carried out by the **Katowice Academy for Fine Arts** and in the **Castle of Art and Entrepreneurism in Cieszyn →1 (ul. Zamkowa 3)**, a unique institution in Poland.

Places to go out in Katowice's city centre include **Złoty Osioł →2 (ul. Mariacka 1)**, with its good and affordable vegetarian fare, and **Karma (ul. Św. Jacka 1)**. Bigger portions of (not necessarily) veggie dishes are too to be found in Bytom at **Hipnoza (Jazz Club Hipnoza, Plac Sejmu Śląskiego 2)** and **Fantom (ul. Żeromskiego 27)**. Fantom and Hipnoza are both places to hang out, as are the following: **Fanaberia (corner of ul. Wita Stwosza i Juliusza Słogonia, Bytom)**, **Przedświt (Księdza Konstantego Damrota 6, Katowice)**, **Archibar (ul. Dyrekcyjna 9, Katowice)**, **Galeria Inny Śląsk (ul. Karola Miarki 2, Tarnowskie Góry)**.

# Tricity

## Gdańsk / Gdynia / Sopot

 1.2m
  92 000
  962 €
  1702h
  Gdansk Lech Walesa Airport /  
 Gdańsk: 10 km, Sopot: 10km, Gdynia: 23 km

key to icons on page 52



Lech Wałęsa is the city's most famous citizen. Having retired from politics he has become a living icon, symbolised by Gdańsk artist's Grzegorz Klaman's sculpture above.

A series of beautiful coincidences created Tricity (*Trójmiasto*): an urban phenomenon made up of three cities. In fact it is a mosaic of smaller neighbourhoods, which becomes evident when one takes the SKM train connecting the metropolitan area along the Baltic coast

Hopping on and off the train one can witness so many lifestyles and different eras it seems almost impossible for them to exist shoulder to shoulder. First there is the Old Town in Gdańsk – a monument to the power of the local bourgeoisie who used to control all the trade between Poland and the rest of the world through the port. Meticulously restored after the Second World War, it is worth a long walk, although it feels a bit detached from the modern life of the city. Then there's the legendary Gdańsk Shipyard where unrest started in 1970 and 1980, consequently leading to the fall of communism in this part of Europe. Further along the coast there are the gigantic concrete housing estates in Przymorze and Zaspas built in the seventies on the site of a former airfield. With huge open spaces left between the blocks, the strict separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic and trams zooming in and out of tunnels, the neighbourhood even after four decades retains a slightly unreal, utopian feel. Worth seeing are the enormous murals created by local and international artists, churches from the Polish ecclesiastical construction boom of the seventies and eighties, and the longest building in Poland (860 m) – the Wave Block (*Falowiec*) taking its name from the building's footprint. In what seems like a parallel universe where time stopped a hundred years ago, there is the neighbourhood of Oliwa, which boasts a cathedral, a meticulously preserved historical park and streets lined with old trees and villas, with cozy cafes and antique shops.

The shore of Gdańsk Bay (*Zatoka Gdańska*) is punctuated by piers in all three cities: Gdańsk (on the Brzeźno beach), Sopot (*top*) and Gdynia (*bottom*).





Sopot's main pedestrian promenade – Bohaterów Monte Cassino, affectionately called *Monciak*, is teeming with people throughout the summer season.



Sopot is Oliwa's younger, wilder brother. The most famous resort on the Polish coast is the Tricity's playground, where people from the whole area come to dine and party. It can become quite unbearable in July and August when the usual traffic is quadrupled by holiday makers, but take a walk a few blocks away from the main promenade (Bohaterów Monte Cassino or *monciak*), or come on a warm spring or autumn weekend and you will get a perfect blend of hedonism and class. Sopot is a firm favourite with expats who decide to settle in the Tricity, so don't be surprised if you're greeted by a handsome stranger in your native tongue.

Further north, Sopot (the smallest of the three cities) seamlessly blends into Orłowo – a neighbourhood of Gdynia. Gdynia is a city 'created out of sea and dreams', a Dubai-style story that happened in the '20s and the '30s when Poland suffered from a trade war with Germany and decided it needed to grow independent from the German-controlled harbour in Gdansk. A new city and a port were built in a space of a dozen years on the site of a fishermen's village,

## Leszek Moździer

Composer, pianist, jazz musician, music producer, recently artistic director of the legendary SFINKS 700 club in Sopot, suggests a 7-day programme to give you insight into the city's scene



1

### Monday

Say hello to the sea. Listen to the only genuine music of Sopot – **the sound of the Bay of Gdansk**. With its uninterrupted rhythm, the sea will envelop you with its wonderfully soothing whisper, asking you a few important questions.

### Tuesday

After a good rest, we begin our tour at 8.00 pm. To start, allow yourselves to be carried away by Jazz Travel – a cycle of tue gigs in the club **Versalka** → 1 (ul. Bohaterów Monte Cassino 63). The cosy stage of that club has witnessed the best Polish jazz musicians of the young, mid and older generations. Versalka is the perfect place to gather momentum for the rest of the week.

### Wednesday

**Papryka** (ul. Grunwaldzka 11, Live wednesdays, 9 pm). A place for those in the know, the Mecca of Tricity's alternative scene. Access to those over 21 years old; ring the bell on the left-hand side.

Once inside, you will find yourself in the midst of loud, energetic guitar music. The joyous and spontaneous jamming sessions bring together the rock and punk scene of Tricity. Jazz musicians and DJs also pop in, sometimes the stage will feature dozens of musicians on a single evening; no one here is surprised by the roar of guitars at 3 o'clock in the morning. But midnight is usually the hottest hour.

### Thursday

After a heavy dose of decibels it's time for a change. thursday music evenings at 6 pm in **Dworek Sierakowski** (ul. Józefa Czyżewskiego 12) will restore the right sensitivity to your hearing. Here, every thu you can listen to the most talented and active musicians in Tricity. Once you have fed your soul with a portion of delicate and sophisticated classical music, I suggest that you try something harder and take a walk to **Stary Rower** (ul. Pułaskiego 15). Here, the premier jazz league of Tricity and its surrounding areas swings its way through the jungle of jazz modu-

lation, progressions and harmonic substitutes, pleasing the more demanding jazz enthusiasts during the weekly jam sessions.

### Friday and Saturday

You don't need a special plan to get to know the DJ scene – all you need to do is walk from club to club. **Mandarynka** (ul. Bema 6), **Stary Rower**, **Spatif**, **Soho** (ul. Bohaterów Monte Cassino 61), **Coco Bongo** (ul. Bohaterów Monte Cassino 55/57), **Ferber** (ul. Bohaterów Monte Cassino 48), **Ego** (Bohaterów Monte Cassino 53). Luckily, you can get everywhere on foot, as the clubs are only a few paces from one another and you won't need the car at all, unless you want to go to **Pestka** (ul. Sportowa 1).

### Sunday

Visit **Sauna World in Sopot's Aqua Park** (ul. Zamkowa Góra 3), for after such an intensive week, your body will need some rest and cleansing. In the evening, the ritual of saying farewell to the sea, the sound of which will soothe your senses, the obligatory borsch and pierogi in **Spatif** → 2 (Bohaterów Monte Cassino 52). On a Sunday evening you should be able to easily find a table. The Sopot sound treatment is over; now you can go back to your daily business, enriched by unforgettable musical sensations.



2

## Wojciech Szczurek

Probably the most popular of big city mayors in Poland. In 2010 he was elected for a fourth term by 87,4 % of Gdynia's electorate



1

According to a local saying, Gdańsk is for sightseeing, Sopot for relaxing and Gdynia for doing business. Recently, however, this view is becoming more and more anachronistic, as each of the three cities can well serve any of these purposes, albeit each in a different style. The close distance between Gdańsk, Sopot and Gdynia is shortened even more by the comfortable **Rapid Urban Railway / Szybka Kolej Miejska – SKM**, a network of roads and a ring road (*Obwodnica*).

### GDAŃSK

Gdańsk attracts visitors with its historic buildings and the charm of a Hanseatic port city. It is the Polish Amsterdam. **Długa** and **Długi Targ** streets, the **City Hall** (ul. Długa 46, ☎ tue: 10 am–3pm, no entry fee, entry every 30 minutes, wed–sat: 10 am–4pm, sun: 11 am–4pm), the **Artus Court** →1 (☎ tue: 10 am–3pm, no entry fee, entry every 30 minutes, wed–sat: 10 am–4pm, sun: 11 am–4pm), **fountain of Neptune**, and a medieval **crane** (ul. Szeroka 67/68, ☎ mon–sun: 10:30 am–6:30pm) by the Motława river – all these



2

en pier in Europe and the Forest Opera, which is a concert venue for summer music festivals.

### GDYNIA

Finally, Gdynia, a phenomenon of a city that developed at lightning speed in early 1920s as a result of the decision to construct a giant harbour on the site of a Kashubian fishermen's village. Nowadays, Gdynia is not only a port harbouring the world's largest container and cruiser ships, a site for shipyards and maritime business, but also a vibrant city of a quarter of a million inhabitants that entices visitors with a plethora of tourist attractions, including the **Gdynia Aquarium** (al. Jana Pawła II 1, ☎ daily: 8 am–3pm), two swimming museums: **Dar Pomorza frigate** and WWII-era destroyer **ORP Błyskawica** as well as a uniform modernist architectural complex that is unique on the European scale. The city has become famous for its major artistic events, among them the **Heineken Open'er Festival**, recognised as the best music festival in Europe, the annual **Polish Film Festival**, **Ladies' Jazz Festival** and **Globaltica World Culture Festival**. Additionally, Gdynia specialises in sailing events such as **regattas** and **boat shows** featuring the world's largest yachts →2, which explains its title as the Sailing Capital of Poland.

### SOPOT

Sopot is the most famous of Polish seaside resorts, with Art Nouveau architecture and a recently built hotel and convention complex. However, Sopot's main allure is still its beaches, the longest wood-

Gdynia is dotted with art déco and modernist houses dating back to the roaring twenties and thirties when the modern city was founded. The tenants of the magnificent building on the

corner in 10 Lutego Street have even started a private museum devoted to Gdynia's design heritage.



quickly drawing a 100,000 ambitious people from all over the country. Now Gdynia is still a vibrant port city, with quarters of modernist, art déco-flavoured architecture (the best examples can be found along ulica Świętojańska and 10 Lutego), surrounded by leafy residential quarters on green hills. Climb one of them – Kamienna Góra – to take in a view of the city, the harbor and the shipyard, recently shadowed by **Sea Towers** – a brand new 140 metre-tall residential building.



The Gdańsk Shipyard area, where anti-communist riots and strikes broke out in 1970 and 1980, is being redeveloped, but the traces of history are still there.



## Lech Wałęsa

Leader of the *Solidarność* movement in the 1980s, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, President of the Republic of Poland 1990-95

When I was a little boy, I saw Gdańsk as a big city with a seaport and shipyards. I knew that the Second World War had started there. I also heard that there were many historical sights in Gdańsk. This is how much I knew then.

In the late spring of 1967 I got on a train and went to the seaside. I got off the train at the Gdańsk Główny railway station. A minute later I bumped into a friend from my old neighbourhood who talked me into working in the shipyard. I met my wife Danuta in Gdańsk and this is where our children were born...So that is how

I became a Gdańsk man out of my own choice.

Today, many years later, having visited so many cities in Europe and the world, I can say that I would never swap Gdańsk for New York, Paris, Brussels, Tokyo or Moscow...

At the end of the 20th century, Poland gave Pope John Paul II to Europe and the world. Gdańsk, on the other hand, gave the *Solidarność* movement to its nation, as well as to Europe and the entire world (...).

excerpt from: *Gdańsk Lecha Wałęsy / Lech Wałęsa's Gdańsk*, Piotr Adamowicz, Andrzej Drzycimski, Adam Kinaszewski, Gdańsk 2008.

## Aneta Szyłak

Director of the Wyspa Institute of Art on the premises of the legendary Gdańsk Shipyard takes a break to give us an exclusive tour of the Tricity area

### Gdańsk Shipyard

This is the most interesting place in the Tricity for me. It was here that I decided to set up the **Art Institute Island / Instytut Sztuki Wyspa**. Above all I was struck by the complexity of the place. Because of this the Shipyard is now generally considered an industrial rather than a post-industrial place. It is not a monument, but a living place. It is still an operating workshop and only a certain part of its premises has been liquidated, destined for reconstruction into a new district, the City of Youth. Our projects often involve the fantastic locals working and living here. The shipyard is also a laboratory of the changes taking place in Poland. Here you can learn about the political struggle (including the myths about the founder of the *Solidarność* movement), the establishment of the institutions themselves, the cuts in the workforce, the division of the company, the privatisation processes, the culture of demonstration, free time and zoning.

### Subiektywna Linia Autobusowa / Subjective Bus Route →1

An initiative by Grzegorz Klamn, giving voice to the former shipyard workers who debate the history of the shipyard in an old bus.

### Buffet Klub →2 ul. Doki 1, ☎ mon-sun: 12pm-11pm

Frequented by artists, activists, musicians, journalists, students, curators and animators. This is a venue for all those who want to see the Gdańsk art scene in its full glory, especially at weekends. The café's interior is a great combination of industrial style, a few contemporary additions and artistic touches. The club serves



good drinks, offers music events, as well as book promotions. The Buffet staff are friendly, competent and charismatic.

### Tawerna Dominikańska ul. Targ Rybny 9, ☎ daily: 12 am-12pm

The bar is located in Długoje Pobrżeże opposite the Baltic Philharmonic Hall. It does not look too flashy, so it can be easily overlooked. It offers the best and freshest fish in town. A few varieties of cod, eel and salmon, as well as excellent herring in oil are served here. Make sure you book your table in advance for the weekend.

### Mazel Tov ul. Ogarna 119

This is the stronghold of the klezmer resistance against the anti tobacco law. Smoking is allowed here! It is a small and homely place with an intimate family atmosphere, so it is worth getting to know everyone around – without delay. It boasts a large group of regulars. Here you can improvise music with friends and unusual things can happen any time. If you have a musical instrument, bring it along and join in straight away.

# Kraków

 2.1m
  185 000
  815 €
  1523 h
  John Paul II International Airport Kraków-Balice / 11 km

key to icons on page 52



Kraków has enough historic sights to keep you busy for a few days, but it does not cease to surprise with more and more new galleries, museums, bars, restaurants

Kraków, the ancient capital and former seat of kings, is the grande dame of Polish cities, one of very few that have retained an old worldly atmosphere throughout the tumultuous 20th century. It is the only Polish city that boasts a work by Leonardo – and an Old Town filled with miraculously preserved gothic and baroque churches, it has a 650-year old university, aristocratic families taking tea at the same table their grandparents took tea at with their grandparents. It is filled with Polish memorabilia. It is a city so Polish that it can make a modern Pole feel like a foreign tourist.

The main market square (Rynek Główny) is the city's treasure trove, with the Virgin Mary Church (Kościół Mariacki, famous for Weit Stoss's spectacular gothic altar piece) and the Clothier's Hall (Sukiennice) that houses the National Museum's Polish painting collection. Further south, down ulica Grodzka there is Wawel hill with the former Royal Castle and the cathedral that is less a part of Kraków, and more Poland in a nut shell. Nearly a thousand years ago it became the seat of Polish kings with a castle and a cathedral.

There are at least 300 restaurants and bars of different sorts in the Old Town. But there is more waiting for you three tram stops away in Kazimierz, the former Jewish neighbourhood. In the 1990s Kazimierz underwent something of a renaissance. A plethora of new bars and cafes, and of course Jewish-themed restaurants, changed the grim streetscape. The apartments upstairs were snapped up by trendy Cracovians, then by wealthy expats and Varsovians who wanted a piece of the action for themselves. This drove away a lot of the working class population that had settled here after the war, replacing the Jewish population. By the end of the 1990s, Kazimierz officially became the new Old Town, a mandatory stop for every tourist.

The Virgin Mary church is a source of inspiration for the architecture of the *szopka* – elaborate folk nativity scenes crafted by artists from the region, exhibited yearly in Kraków before Christmas. A large collection of them can be seen at the Historical Museum of Kraków.



Kopiec Kościuszki (the Kościuszko Mound) is an artificial hill created to honour the nation's hero over a hundred years ago. It alludes to pagan tradition of burying great heroes

in tumuli. Two of them can be found in Kraków, one devoted to the legendary pagan prince Krak and the other to his daughter Wanda.





The Nowa Huta neighbourhood was built in the fifties east of the old city together with new gigantic steelworks. The factory's headquarters was built in a style

that is a hybrid of a Florentine renaissance palazzo and local Old Town architecture.



Life in the neighbourhood revolves around ulica Szeroka, with five old synagogues and an old market square – Plac Nowy, which is also one of the centres of nightlife in Kraków.

Kazimierz can no longer claim to be the coolest neighbourhood. Podgórze – an area across the river linked with the city proper via a spectacular new footbridge – is stealing the crown. It was immortalised by Steven Spielberg in *Schindler's List*, but it was Kazimierz that benefited most from the burst of interest in Jewish culture. Typically, Podgórze's renaissance started with an invasion of students looking for cheap accommodation, followed by bars and cafes that quickly became local institutions. Unlike in the largely gentrified Kazimierz they still rub shoulders with butcher's shops and funeral homes. Until recently, there was only one major cultural institution in the neighbourhood. The Manggha Centre for Japanese Art and Technology, designed by Arata Isozaki, is home for a unique collection of Japanese art, given a wider audience thanks to the director Andrzej Wajda's and his wife Krystyna Zachwatowicz's determination and



## Tomasz Gutkowski

Director of the Foundation for Visual Arts and the Photomonth festival in Kraków recommends a 24-hour itinerary

Kraków offers many fun-filled days for those in search of cultural and culinary attractions. But if you only have 24 hours I recommend the following itinerary (in no particular order). To keep things simple, we can start at **Bunkier Sztuki**, (Plac Szczepański 3a, ☎ tue-sun: 11 am–6pm). This contemporary urban gallery buzzes with alternative art life on two floors of space, including a wonderfully stocked bookstore and a vast cafe. Leaving Art Bunker, we head down ul. św. Tomasza to **Galeria Camelot** (ul. św. Tomasza 17) and its renowned cafe, an ideal spot for early lunch. Walk down the street a dozen or so metres and hang a left onto ul. Floriańska in the direction of **Pauza** – a conglomeration of a movie theatre, club, cafe, and gallery. Staying on ul. św. Tomasza, we come upon **Galeria ZPAF I S-ka** →1 (ul. św. Tomasza 24, ☎ wed, fri, sat: 12–6pm, thu: 3pm–9pm), a small but spunky gallery of contemporary photography and across the way is the **House of Albums** (ul. św. Tomasza 25, ☎ mon–fri: 10 am–7pm, sat: 11 am–7pm), a fantastic bookstore specialising in art books and illustrated albums.

We can walk, take a streetcar, or jump into a taxi to **Kazimierz**, the former Jewish quarter and currently the centre of Kraków nightlife. For coffee choose from one of the many cafes on Plac Nowy (**Alchemia**, **Miejsce**, **Barak**, **Kolory**, **Singer**, etc). If it's time for lunch, go Italian, for example the Sicilian cuisine at **Coca**. Moving right along through Plac Wolnica, pop into the **Ethnographic Museum** (Plac Wolnica 1, ☎ tues–sat: 11 am–7pm, sun: 11 am–3pm).

Later cross the Wisła river via the newly-built **Bernatka footbridge** and this puts us right in the heart of **Podgórze**, the free city of yore and now an increas-



ingly fashionable district. Explore the neighbourhood, including: **Galeria Starmach**, known for its exhibitions of leading contemporary artists (ul. Węgierska 5), **Goldex Poldex** (ul. Józefińska 21/12) – the fanciful centre of independent culture, and the new home of **Cricoteka**, Tadeusz Kantor's experimental theatre (museum to be opening in late 2011).

After a short walk along the Wisła we come to one of the most dynamically growing parts of town. Once an unattractive industrial district, now home to two flagship cultural projects: the **MOC AK (Museum of Modern Art Kraków)**, housed in a breathtaking new building and the

nearby **Oscar Schindler Factory Museum** (Lipowa 4, ☎ tue-sun: 10 am–6pm), whose permanent exhibition shows the life of Kraków's Jewish community during the Second World War.

The day can be wrapped up by visiting **Fabryka**, a colony of artists workshops, galleries, and bookstores, formed around a huge music club. More likely than not, a concert or some other show will be on. If you still have the fortitude for more nightlife, head back to the City Centre for a taste of Kraków's legendary clubs: **Bomba** →2, **Pauza**, **Piękny Pies**, **Rozrywki** 3 and many... too many... more.

The Wawel Hill, with the cathedral and a former royal castle, reads like a history book: coronations, assassinations, royal weddings and burials.





The seminary of the Resurrectionist Order was built in the nineties and remains one of the most fascinating examples of Post-Modern architecture in Poland.



financial support. In 2011 MOCAR (The Museum of Contemporary Art Kraków) opened next door to the former Schindler factory and a museum dedicated to the avant garde theatre director Tadeusz Kantor is under construction on the river front.

Those interested in the city's Jewish heritage should visit the memorial on Plac Bohaterów Getta – the square where Jews from Kazimierz were congregated before being sent to concentration camps. Kraków is a departure point for most of the tourists who want to visit the most (in)famous of them: Auschwitz-Birkenau, located in Oświęcim, about an hour's drive west of the city.

If you feel like venturing out of the comfort zone of the historical part of town, you can either head up the river to the Benedictine abbey in Tyniec, spectacularly perched on top of a rock, or hop on a tram to Nowa Huta. On the waiting list for UNESCO's world heritage list, Nowa Huta is a bizarre social engineering experiment conceived in the early years of communist Poland – a new working class town with a gigantic steel factory that was to overshadow old Kraków with its bourgeois ways, slender church spires and royal memorabilia. What was meant to be an independent city is now a troubled district of Kraków, that fascinates with its grandiose Stalinist architecture. Get there before it turns into the next Old Town.



## Cecylia Malik

Artist who became popular thanks to her project *365 Trees*. Inspired by Italo Calvino's *Baron in the Trees*, she climbed one tree every day for one year. Lives in Kraków

### Salvator

This walk starts at the Dębnicki Bridge near **Wawel Castle**. Across from the **Jubilat** → **1** department store is **Flisak Milk Bar** where you can eat a proper full Polish lunch, including herring, chased down with a shot of vodka. After about five minutes of walking along the Wista, we see the walls of the **Convent of the Norbertine Sisters**. Here we walk up onto ul. Tadeusza Kościuszki and continue in the direction of the final stop of the streetcar in **Salvator**. We pass a baroque abbey to our left and turn into ul. św. Bronisławy. This is a beautiful boulevard lined on both sides with maples, ash, linden and chestnut trees. This takes us past the Romanesque-baroque **Church of St. Salvador**, the oldest church in Kraków, dating back to the 10th century. Across the street is **St. Margaret's**, a round wooden structure.

We pass the 100 – year old mansions of old Kraków families, a cemetery on our left and then we're nearly at **Kościuszko's Mound**. This is one of four such sites in Kraków built to commemorate Poland's national heroes. Tadeusz Kościuszko, originally a Polish military engineer, served as a general in the Polish and American armies, including fighting in the American Revolution. The effort to build the mound was commenced in 1820, three years after Kosciuszko's death, and it took another three years to complete. We have a choice – the view from up top is spectacular, but we can also pass on from this and follow the path westward. Immediately on the other side of the mound is a sycamore-ash forest, and we are headed in the direction of the so-called **Sikornik**, a hill overgrown with birch trees. To our left we can see the Wista valley, the abbey in Tyniec,



and the gentile outline of the Beskid mountains. Even further, on a clear day, one can also see the rugged snow-capped panorama of the Tatras.

From Sikornik, we walk down through a pass, and we are in the middle of a real forest, beautiful beech woods that fill with thimbleweed in the spring. From here, we walk uphill for 15 minutes. Up top is the **city zoo**, and 134 bus that takes us back to the city centre.

Another interesting place is the **workshop of sculptor Andrzej Siek** (ul. Emaus 20). It's easy enough to find as the entrance way is marked by massive wood sculptures. Andrzej Siek treats his work space as a gallery and exhibition space. A visit is highly recommended.

Yet another fantastic place is the historical museum at **Zwierzyniecki House** (ul. Królowej Jadwigi 41). During communist

times this house served as the Lenin Museum in Kraków, as legend holds that before he led the revolution in the Soviet Union he spent a couple of days here.

### Zakrzówek → 2

Zakrzówek is a lake among the Twardowski cliffs, not far from the Wista, on the edge of the Kraków district of **Dębniki**. We are nearly in the city centre, only 20 minutes away from Wawel Castle. For quite some time this has been a great place for alpine climbing, nestled among the woods, meadows and natural rock formations. Twenty years ago this was the site of a quarry, which filled to become a lake and is now heaven for scuba divers. This site is currently being fought over by developers and environmentalists who are trying to preserve a habitat of the extremely rare Chequered Blue Butterfly.



Move over, Leonardo! Kraków is adding more attractions to its already wide range of museums. In 2010 and 2011 three new venues opened: an underground exhibition devoted to the city's

history underneath the Market Square →1, the Museum of Polish Aviation (*Muzeum Lotnictwa Polskiego*) in a spectacular building designed by the Berlin practice Pysall.Ruge and the Kraków archi-

tect Bartłomiej Kisielewski in an old airfield east of the city centre, and the sleek new Museum of Modern Art Kraków (MOCAK →2) designed by the Italian Claudio Nardi.



1








2



Driving by Kraków's history and its protagonists: from construction workers of Nowa Huta, to pope John Paul II, to the Nobel Prize winning poet Czesław Miłosz.



# Łódź

 1.1m
  123
  750 €
  1820 h
  Łódź Władysław Reymont Airport / 6 km

key to icons on page 52



Uszatek – a teddy bear beloved by Polish children was born at the Se-Ma-For studios in Łódź.

Uszatek is one of Polish Television's biggest exports ever, known in Finland as Nalle Luppakorva, in Slovenia as Medvedek Uhec, in Catalonia as Losset Faluc, in Holland as Teddy Hangoor, Slovenia as Macko Uško, in Hungary – as Füles Mackó.

Łódź, pronounced 'wooch', as in 'Would you', used to be the fastest growing city in Poland. There is no equivalent for the word 'boomtown' in Polish, but if there were, it would be spelled Łódź. Over the course of the nineteenth century a bucolic village of 767 inhabitants (in 1806) turned into a textile industry powerhouse of 340,000, dubbed the 'Manchester of Poland'

Cotton from plantations in Central Asia would arrive here and return east with affordable textiles for the hungry Russian market. Around the same time when Charles Darwin completed his *Origins of the Species*, his theory of survival of the fittest was already a reality in Łódź. The experiment resulted in thousands of cash-hungry Poles, Jews, Russians and Germans flocking here to play out their rags-to-riches scenario. Most of them ended up on the bottom of the food chain, but some were able to amass fortunes overnight. The layout of the new city, located south of the old village along the high street – Piotrkowska – resembled American cities with its seemingly endless grid-like plans. The frenetic atmosphere of fin-de-siècle Łódź also resembled gold rush America. Perhaps this is why Andrzej Wajda's film *The Promised Land*, depicting the rise of a Łódź industrialist, was so well received in America and garnered an Oscar nomination in 1976.

When Wajda, a graduate of Łódź's famous film school (along with the likes of Polanski and Kieslowski) set out to shoot *The Promised Land*, he did not have to spend much on sets. The locations – from factories to restaurants, from industrialists' mansions to slums – were still there, intact, perhaps a little worn. In the seventies the city centre was still sandwiched between two huge, redbrick textile

Piotrkowska Street – the main axis of the city is the longest high street in Poland, lined with shops, cafes, galleries and clubs.



factories, formerly owned by two rival families that virtually ran the city at the turn of the century. The Poznański of Jewish origin, had the one in the north, and the German Scheibler family owned the other one. Both of them are a different sight now.

The switch from socialism to capitalism hit Łódź hard. The industry that had first breathed life into Łódź, all but disappeared after 1989. As a result, the population shrank by some 100,000 over the course of one decade. The recovery has been long but the patient is getting better and better with each year. The unemployment rate dropped from 20 to around 6 percent from 2004 to 2008, and the city will soon officially become one of the most important transit hubs in



Karol Scheibler's White Factory is one of the landmarks of Łódź's industrial architecture.



this part of the continent – the A2, connecting Warsaw with western Europe, and the A1, linking the Baltic seaports with the south.

Piotrkowska Street is still the city's spine, dotted with cafes, restaurants, clubs, cinemas and galleries. On the northern end, the Poznański textile factory is now a fun factory, a telling sign of a transition from an industrial to a service based economy. Alongside a huge shopping centre, there is a luxury hotel with a swimming pool suspended above the city, a cinema, dozens of restaurants, and msz – the new space of Łódź's renowned Art Museum (Muzeum Sztuki). Somewhat dwarfed by all of this is Poznański's mansion, which is now a museum and is well worth a visit as a fascinating testament of the local industrialist's opulent, nouveau riche tastes. On the southern side of the centre, the Scheibler factory along with a cluster of other industrial buildings and working class settlements is a picturesque blend of the old, the new, the renovated and the forgotten. The main part of the Scheibler factory has been converted into loft apartments, while another factory further down Tymienieckiego street is home to Łódź Art Centre, an independent institution responsible for some interesting festivals, amongst them Łódź Design, which has quickly become the most respected design event in the country. Culture is one of the city's main driving forces, as evidenced by the recent success of Łódź's animation studios, the renaissance of Muzeum Sztuki or the burst of activity of local NGOs, thriving on the abundance of empty post-industrial spaces.



## Jarosław Suchan

Director of the Museum of Art in Łódź

Łódź is an unusual patchwork comprising completely disparate elements – and that's what makes it so unique. The city is atypical, turn almost any corner and there will be a surprise in store – whether for your eyes or senses. In my opinion, the greatest attraction of Łódź is the very fact that it shatters our expectations and imagination adopted on earlier trips to other, seemingly similar, cities.

Let us go on an imaginary walk. First, see **Księży Młyn** →1 (from the Łódź Fabryczna railway station towards Plac Zwycięstwa) and the remnants of one of the world's largest nineteenth century industrial complexes. In fact, it's a city within a city – with factories, palaces, workers' houses, parks, schools, hospitals and even a fire station. Most of the buildings were in ruins; the original architectural design was somehow distorted by the later, not so successful architectural execution. Nevertheless, the atmosphere is unusual – impressive factory halls (some of which were recently converted into fashionable lofts), Grohman's villa, with the interior possibly designed by Otto Wagner himself, a fantastic secessionist electric power station building etc. When you wander around the district you can't help feeling that you are discovering a kind of forgotten world and it doesn't matter if thousands of globetrotters have discovered it before us.

After Księży Młyn, I would recommend moving on to **Ruda Pabianicka**, the wooded hills in the southern part of the city stretching across to the Ner river, with its picturesque little lakes. Walking along the leafy alleys you can unexpectedly come across the dilapidated remnants of fantastic villas from the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a time when it was

the favourite spot for the Łódź bourgeoisie. **One wooden villa** that used to belong to a Jewish industrialist, Szyja Światłowski, is particularly impressive. The American film director Robby Henson chose it for the setting of his horror film *House*.

**The old cemetery** is the next must-see. Or in fact three cemeteries located next to one another: **Catholic, Protestant and Russian Orthodox**. Their

neighbourhood is testimony to the multicultural history of the city. Amongst trees, bushes and an unkempt lawn lie the tombstones of eminent Łódź industrialists. These structures, the size and splendour of which befit palaces and castles, tell us a lot about the prosperity of the Łódź of yesteryear: the Łódź that has disappeared forever.

Of course, there is also **Piotrkowska street** – the city's



main drag, the monumental **palaces of Izaak and Karol Poznański** →2, **Łagiewnicki Forest**, the biggest urban forest in Europe, the modernist **Montwiła-Mireckiego district**, the **Jewish cemetery** with the tombstones of the greatest figures in the history of Łódź. On top of all that, the courtyards, deserted little factories, forgotten villas and palaces, parks and squares; an unbelievable maze which is best explored without recourse to guidebooks so that you allow yourself to be surprised.

The old Poznański factory, immortalised by the director Andrzej Wajda in his film *The Promised Land*, has been converted into a luxury hotel.



## Pola Stępień

Interior architect and fashion designer, founder of the [wunderteam.pl](http://wunderteam.pl) group



1

### Jazzga Club →1

ul. Piotrkowska 17, ☎ mon-sat: 12pm-until last customer

In its ten-year history Jazzga has staged the most intriguing of musical projects: from extreme electro-acoustic experiments, through all kinds of jazz improvisations, a mix of electronic music, rock, rhythm'n'blues, cabaret, punk rock to disco and pop.

Naming just a few of such projects makes one realise that there is no sound that has not been heard in that club: jazz and post-rock improvisations by the Exploding Star Orchestra, electronic and instrumental

gigs by the Burnt Friedman and Jaki Liebezeit duo, ambient-dub sets by Deadbeat, crazy sound and vision experiments by Felix Kubin or impromptu variations by Macio Moretti (Maciej Moruś) in his numerous incarnations: Mltch&Mitch, Baaba or his chilled, drum&basse 60 Minut Projekt aka LXMP.

### Owoce i Warzywa

ul. Traugutta 9, ☎ mon-sun: 10 am-until last customer

This is a relatively new place that opened less than two years ago. I like its unpretentious décor, interesting and frequent artistic happenings and good cof-

fee. The place is always teeming with people.

### Muzeum Sztuki w Łodzi / Museum of Art in Łódź →2

ul. Więckowskiego 36, ☎ tue-sun: 12pm-7pm, 🎫 normal 8 PLN, reduced 3-5 PLN

This is the second-oldest modern art museum in the world. Its unique collection was brought together in 1931 by artists from the a.r. group. The Museum of Art in Łódź continues the avant-garde tradition: it presents art from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It is housed in a nineteenth century townsman's palace. I also have a special connection with this place, since I have had the pleasure of working, together with Magdalena Koza, on the modernisation project of the ground floor of the building and its conversion into other functional areas. Thanks to the changes the museum has been enhanced with a new, interesting place: the ms café - appreciated by design enthusiasts and guests.



2



# Wrocław

👤 1.07m 🏠 142 000 💰 854 € 🌞 1891 h ✈️ Copernicus Airport Wrocław / 10 km

key to icons on page 52



The tower blocks in Plac Grunwaldzki, with funky oval-shaped loggias, are an icon of seventies space age design.

Wrocław – a city located halfway between Brussels and Kiev – has come a long way from the ghost city it was in 1945 when the Soviet troops marched in. Today it is a vibrant economic and cultural hub that has learnt to celebrate its complex history

One does not have to look at the map to realise that Wrocław is better connected to Dresden and Prague than to Warsaw. It becomes clear once you find yourself at the Market Square (Rynek) – dominated by an elaborate Gothic city hall, filled with the buzz of terrace cafes and the hum of a fountain. For better or worse, yes, you could be in any city north of the Alps. Modern-day Wrocław combines metropolitan quality with the laid back atmosphere of smaller cities. It benefits both from the presence of multinational companies such as LG, Siemens, Volvo, Bosch, 3M, Toyota, and the 200,000 plus student community that fills the northern part of the Old Town. Currently, looking at the meticulously restored facades of the Old Town, the brightly-lit Market Square and green boulevards along the Oder, it is hard to believe that the city was ever disaster-stricken.

Yet, Wrocław, formerly Breslau, was taken over by Soviet and Polish armies in 1945, after a long and dramatic siege. Subsequently, the whole German population was replaced with Polish settlers. This was not the first such dramatic shift in the city's history. Over the centuries it changed hands often. Polish, Czech, Habsburg, Prussian, German then Polish again – each political power leaving a distinct mark on the city's landscape. All of this, combined with traces left behind by Wallon weavers, Jewish merchants and other minorities that chose to call Wrocław home, adds to what the British historian Norman Davies called the 'microcosm'. In his book of this title (co-written with Roger Moorhouse) he depicted Wrocław as a synecdoche of European history, a place swept by all the big cultural and political movements.

Park Szczytnicki, dominated by the Centennial Hall – a great place to relax and reflect on the city's changing fortunes.



Make sure to take a lift to the roof of the Renoma department store and take in a 270 degree panorama of Wrocław. On a clear day you will see the Sudety mountains in the south.



One can witness all of these layers during a single walk through the city. The Market Square is a testament to medieval civic culture and a product of modern-day leisure society. The churches with slender spires that still dominate the skyline after all these centuries are monuments of gothic architecture. The multicultural past can be traced in the South-Western part of the centre, called the Four Temples Quarter, where an Orthodox, a Catholic and an Evangelical-Augsburg church share the street with a recently-restored synagogue. These temples rub shoulders with hot party spots around the streets of Włodkowica, Ruska and Świętego Antoniego. If you look behind the facades you can see some unhealed war wounds, which may trick you into thinking that the Reich surrendered only yesterday.

Wrocław has a love-hate relationship with the four rivers that dissect the city – dozens of arms and canals. In 1997 the city suffered from the ‘flood of the century’, which may be hard to imagine now, when you see hundreds of people picnicking carefree on Wyspa Słodowa (an island across from the main university building) on a sunny summer day.

Taking a boat is one of the most memorable experiences one can get in the city and yet another way to pass through its many architectural layers. Cruising upstream one passes by the Gothic churches of the cathedral island (Ostrów Tumski), the modern university library,

## Katarzyna Roj

Curator at the BWA Design gallery in Wrocław, a place where design clashes with contemporary art and science

### Former Exhibition Site

I believe this is the most important place on the map. Here you can find, among other things, Max Berg's **Centennial Hall** (*ul. Wysławowa 1*), listed by UNESCO. The Hall is located across the street from the **ZOO** (☎ *depend on the season; summer and public holidays: 9 am–7pm, 🎫 – 25 PLN, reduced 15 PLN*), **Park Szczytnicki and the Japanese Garden** (☎ *1 Apr–31 Oct: 9 am–7pm, 🎫 – 3 PLN, reduced – 1.5 PLN*), the former Feature Films Studio. Other interesting sites are **Pawilon Czterech Kopuł / the Four Domes Pavilion** →1, a pergola and the horse-shoe shaped pond with a recently completed **multi-media fountain** (☎ *am–11pm. The first show begins at 10 am*)

### WuWa

A walk around the legendary construction exhibition WuWa from 1929 is a must. For the exhibition, over 30 purely modernist residential buildings were erected. You can see them from the outside – because they are still inhabited to this day. They



1

are situated in the vicinity of Kopernika Street, at the back of Szczytnicki Park.

the **Niskie Łąki** club (*ul. Ruska 46c*, ☎ *mon–sat: 6pm–until last customer*) and the **cafe-cum-bookshop Falanster** →2 (*ul. św. Antoniego 23*, ☎ *mon–sat: 10 am–8pm*).

### Murals

Murals from artists from all corners of the world are scattered around the entire district. The Wrocław urban art scene can be admired in the passage between Św. Antoniego and Ruska streets. Here you can also find galleries,



2



The Oder's dozens of arms and canals make water sports a natural pastime in Wrocław. This spot is right next to the National Museum.



the seventies tower blocks with extravagant oval windows and the Nazi edifice of the regional authorities. The trip terminates by the zoo, but if you don't care too much for animals (or you care for them way too much to watch them stuck behind bars) you can walk straight to one of the city's greatest marvels: the Centennial Hall (Hala Stulecia). Completed in 1911, it is the only 20th century building in Poland to be featured on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Its architect, Max Berg, responsible for designing the enormous concrete dome, called it 'the cathedral of democracy'. But it is more than a textbook piece of architecture; it is also yet another powerful element of the microcosm metaphor. Where else could you find a building that has hosted Hitler and John Paul II, Picasso and the Dalai Lama?

For several years now, the local elite has been working to eradicate any Polish-German resentments. This is symbolised by the roaring success of crime stories about the detective Eberhardt Mock, written recently by Marek Krajewski, set in pre-war and wartime Breslau. This peaceful reappropriation of previously rejected

The Market Square is one of the biggest in the country and still the actual centre of the growing city.



German heritage has found its architectural equivalent in Renoma – the downtown department store, converted into a high end shopping centre. Originally opened in 1930 by a Jewish businessman, Mr. Wertheim, as one of the biggest and most technically-advanced stores in Europe, it was soon nationalised by the Nazis, then bombed, then hastily rebuilt by the Polish authorities. After 1989 it suffered from many unlucky goes at modernisation. It finally reopened in 2009 with the facades restored to their former glory (using four kilograms of gold among other materials), a new, futuristic wing, and a contemporary art collection inside. Not to mention dozens of shops. Most of them – again, could be anywhere in Europe. This is probably a huge achievement in a city with such a dramatic history.

Wrocław is a paradise for 20th century architecture lovers, with buildings from some of the most innovative Polish and

German architects, such as Erich Mendelsohn's former Petersdorff department store from 1929.



## Katarzyna Wielga

Co-ordinator of the Cultural Programme of the Polish EU Presidency at the National Audiovisual Institute (NInA)



1



2

Above all, Wrocław is associated with its **market square**, filled with many nice cafes, pubs and restaurants. **Spiz** (Rynek-Ratusz 2) is one of such places, offering not only grub, but also beer from its own brewery.

A few hundred feet farther is the Solny square, home to **Soul Café** (Plac Solny 4) – an ideal breakfast cafe. An original restaurant-cum-club is **Mleczarnia** →1 (ul. Włodkowska 5),

located right next door to the newly renovated **Pod Białym Bocianem / Under the White Stork Synagogue** (ul. Włodkowska 7), which functions both as a temple and a culture centre. The whole area around Włodkowska street is brimming with cafes. Lovers of Polish cuisine should definitely visit **Jadka** restaurant (ul. Rzeźnicza 24), which offers such delicacies as pierogi filled with veal or crayfish.



3

**The Centennial Hall** (ul. Wystawowa 1) will host the European Culture Congress (September 8-11, 2011), an unprecedented meeting between culture theorists, practitioners and representatives of cultural NGOs. The road leading to the Hall from the center goes over two bridges, including the **Grunwaldzki Bridge**, which was designed 1919.

An absolute must is a visit to **Panorama Racławicka** →3 (ul. Jana Ewangelisty Purkyniego 11), which is a very peculiar work of art that says a lot about Poland, the Polish people and their perspective on history.

**PURO Hotel Wrocław**  
ul. Włodkowska 6

It is located in the heart of the city, a stone's throw from the Market Square and the train station. The hotel offers luxury standard in a self-service environment. It does not even have a traditional reception desk and bookings are taken on-line. Innovative technologies make everything run smoothly.



# Lower Silesian Castles

Every fourth castle or palace in Poland can be found in Lower Silesia (Dolny Śląsk), the region surrounding Wrocław. The diversity of buildings and their legends inspires



1

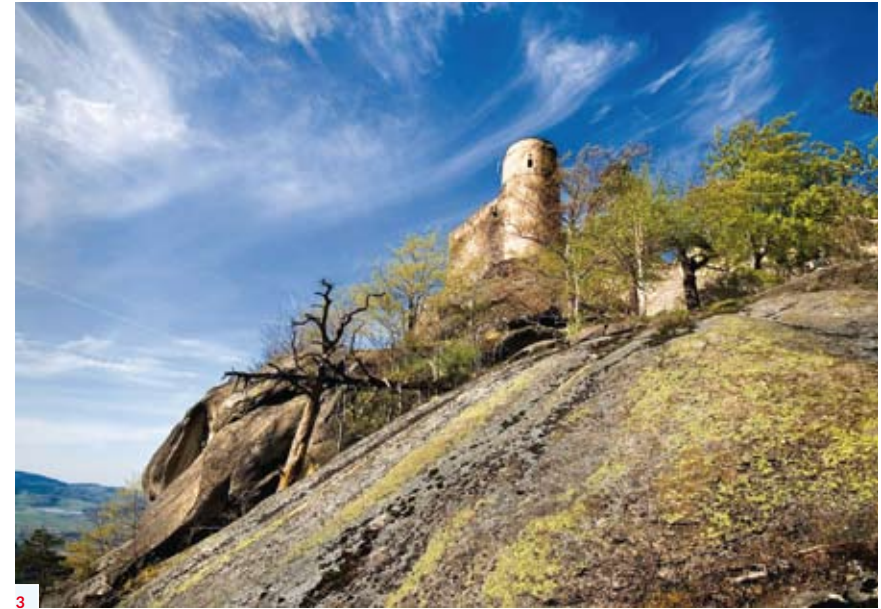


2

the imagination of every adventurer, or architecture lover. It is difficult to resist the magic of such castles as Czochoła →1, Grodziec →2, Chojnik →3, Bolków, Książ →4 (the third

largest in Poland) or Kamieniec Ząbkowicki (designed by Karl Friedrich Schinkel). Every building tells its own story that is a thread in the rich, colourful tapestry of the history of the

region, a story of medieval Piast princes and Silesian aristocrats, of Czech kings and Habsburg emperors, English gardeners, Italian architects and Soviet soldiers.



3



4



# Poznań

 1.07m 
  142 000 
  879 € 
  1853 h 
  Poznań - Ławica Airport / 5km

key to icons on page 52



The Poznań goats (*koziołki*) fight their mechanical fight daily at noon on the façade of the historic city hall.

You are very likely to find yourself in Poznań on a business trip. Its citizens, *Poznaniaks*, have become a Polish synonym of the hard-working, dilligent, frugal. Stereotypes aside, the city is underpinned with an entrepreneurial spirit, but there is much to discover outside the boardroom door

Poznań's GDP per capita is double the Polish average, making it the second wealthiest big city in the country. It is an international centre of conventions and fairs, home to multinational companies and many billionaires from the list of Poland's richest. It also boasts the highest per capita ratio of retail space in Poland. Even the city's landmark hotel (temporarily closed) is called Bazar. No wonder then that the everyday life of the city revolves around places related to trade.

First comes the Poznań international trade fair (Międzynarodowe Targi Poznańskie) area. Conveniently, the glazed gateway building is the first thing one sees walking out of the main train station. Over it looms one of the landmarks of the city – the fifties steel spire, flood lit in the evenings, showing just how important this place is economically and symbolically for the city. The fairgrounds however, are not for the average Poznańiak, they are mainly for the visiting people. Both locals and visitors mingle on the Market Square (Rynek). In the centre of it is another landmark, a renaissance jewelry box of a building – the graciously ornamented city hall designed by Gian Battista Quadro. In the warmer part of the year, the square turns into Poznań's playground, bustling with life, much like the mercatos south of the Alps, where the Quadro came from. The Rynek is only nominally a market nowadays. Poznań's famous neighbourhood grocery markets have taken over this function long ago. There you can buy flowers round the clock, stock up on fresh fruit from the famously fertile region of Wielkopolska that Poznań is the capital

The façade of the Stary Browar shopping, business and cultural centre gleams over Dąbrowski Park.





## Piotr Korduba

Author of books on an official and intimate history of Poznań, lecturer at the Institute for Art History at Adam Mickiewicz University



1

### Imperial Castle and Zamek Culture Centre →1

ul. Św. Marcin 80/82

The castle, which used to be the residence of German emperor Wilhelm II, is one of the most extraordinary edifices in this part of Europe. Although it was constructed at the beginning of the 20th century (between 1905 and 1910), its neo-Romanesque style is reminiscent of the Middle Ages. Despite its ancient looks the building is equipped with modern amenities, including elevators and central heating. During the wartime occupation Albert Speer ordered the castle rebuilt, the plan being to turn it into Hitler's residence. To this day, the castle's interiors serve as an interesting example of Third Reich aesthetics.

The organisation of the so-called '**imperial district**', that the castle remains the most important part of, is still intact and includes the opera house and some of the awe-inspiring edifices of the Adam Mickiewicz University.

For many years now the castle has housed the Zamek Culture Centre.

### The Palm House

ul. Matejki 18, ☎ 9am-4pm daily

The glass pavilions in the small, old-fashioned Wilson Park conceal a winter garden. The palm house dates back to the early 20th century. However, its most recent, modern form is a rather unfortunate design choice. The exotic aura of the interiors is enhanced by the fog that benefits the tropical flora.

### Fruit and vegetable markets →2

Plac Wielkopolski, Rynek Jeżycki, Rynek Łazarzski, Rynek Wildecki, ☎ opening hours vary. Florist stalls open 24/7

Poznań has its historic market square with a marvellous Renaissance-era city hall and painstakingly renovated tenement houses. It also has its colourful and bustling fruit and vegetables markets, located in the heart of

the city (Wielkopolski Square) as well as in the nearby residential districts (Jeżycki and Wildecki Market Squares). These markets are centres of local activity, where men and women of Poznań have been doing their daily shopping for decades at the vendors they are well acquainted with.

### Pracownia Cafe Restaurant

ul. Woźna 17, ☎ wed-sat: 12pm-12 am, sun-tue 12pm-11pm

In a side street off the Old Market Square is the small and swanky Pracownia. Located in an old tenement house, the ascetically designed cafe offers a taste of Polish, Italian and Eastern cuisine. In the summer, the cafe opens its garden in the inner courtyard. Pracownia is also worth a visit for a glimpse at its intriguing regular customers.



2

The tradition of the Poznań International Fair (Międzynarodowe Targi Poznańskie) dates all the way to 1911. Nowadays PIF is the largest trade fair organizer in

Poland with over 50% of the country's total exhibition area (110,000 m<sup>2</sup> indoor and 35,000 m<sup>2</sup> outdoor space) and over 60% more exhibitors each year as the second largest

in Central-Eastern Europe.



of, or look out for regional specialties. For the sweet tooth there is the *rogal marciński* – a super-sized croissant, filled with poppy seed, for others – *ser smażony*, fried cheese with cumin. Both have been recently added to the European register of foods of protected geographical origin.

The social importance of neighbourhood markets has been somewhat undermined by Stary Browar – a gigantic retail and cultural complex, erected nearly a decade ago and stone's throw from the Old Town. The daring project of Poland's wealthiest woman, Grażyna Kulczyk, quickly became a favourite meeting spot for *Poznaniaks* from all walks of life. But it is interesting to outsiders as well for its flamboyant architecture, and contemporary art shows and performances. Architecture lovers will also appreciate Stary Browar's older cousin – Okraglak (the round house). The modernist department store opened in 1955 and instantly became a contemporary icon for the city, thanks to its surprising round shape and a modular concrete facade. It is now closed for renovation and is set to reopen as an office building with a rooftop café.

When you get tired of shopping and striking business deals, Poznań offers a lot for the soul. It is home to renowned dance and theatre troupes, such as Polski Teatr Tańca, and the biggest performing arts festival in the country – Malta, organised every year in June, taking over streets, squares, factory lofts and theatres too. Its name is not a homage to the Mediterranean country, but a reference to the lake



Thanks to recent restoration works the ornamentation on the facade of the city hall can be seen in its full glory.



and the park on the eastern edge of the city where the festival started some two decades ago. Speaking of beginnings, Poznań is probably the place where the Polish state started around 966 AD. Historians and archaeologists have been waging an academic war over this for a century or so, split into two camps. One follows early chronicles that hint at Gniezno, a town east of Poznań, where prince Mieszko the First was officially baptised and pledged his allegiance with the German emperor. The other camp has been ceaselessly digging up the cathedral island (Ostrów Tumski) in Poznań looking for traces of the actual event. Looking at a well-maintained, affluent city like Poznań now, one can only say that it would not be such a bad place to start.

## Wojciech Fibak

Art collector, world-class tennis player in the 1970s. Raised in Poznań, lives in Warsaw



**Stary Browar / Old Brewery**  
*ul. Półwiejska 32*

I am not terribly keen on shopping centres, I'm proud that in my hometown we've got this amazing space and atmosphere that doesn't give you the impression that it's just about renting every possible square metre for the highest commercial rent.

This is thanks to the fantastic architecture that brings together a post-industrial interior of the 19th century Huger brewery and ultra-modern technology and construction techniques.

The Old Brewery is much more than a shopping mall or the new hotel. Grażyna Kulczyk, the owner, has turned it into a place for art lovers, who come en masse not only for the art exhibitions, but also the shows of modern dance, fashion and contemporary design. It's a place I go every time I come to Poznań to visit my mum.





The artificial Malta Lake in the eastern part of the city is the heart of a vast park. It hosts canoeing and rowing championships and gave name to a renowned performing arts festival.



## Marek Krajewski

Sociologist, author of many books on pop culture, consumerism, design and art. Lives in Poznań

### Okraglak Department Store →1 ul. Mielżyńskiego 17

Built at the turn of the 1940s and 1950s and designed by Marek Leykam. In the form of a rotunda, the interior features a unique stairway utilising a double spiral. The building has served a number of functions, first it was a department store, then a fast-food court, and later a nightclub. It is currently slated for refurbishing.

### Old Marych Statue Pedestrian zone on ul. Półwiejska

This statue portraying a man pushing a bicycle was built about 15 years ago following a competition held by a local newspaper. Readers voted for an important local figure who they believed deserved a statue. Rather peculiarly, the winner was the fictional hero of a radio programme, Old Marych. He was a raconteur, who spoke in our urban dialect. Poznańians selected a person who represents ordinary people, not some historical personage. The sculpture itself is very egalitarian, it has no pedestal, but stands directly on the ground.

### SPOT →2 Dolna Wilda 87, near the Old Brewery, ☎ tue -fri: 12-8pm, sat: 11am-8pm, sun: 11am-6pm; closed on mon.

SPOT is a multifunctional meeting place bringing together a design studio, exhibition space, restaurant, play area for children, and an educational facility. SPOT also has its own beach, an area for playing team sports, and a bicycle rental facility.





## Licheń



The most surprising (and the largest) of Poland's modern churches can be found less than an hour's drive from Poznań. The shimmering dome is visible on the horizon from the A2 motorway. The Marian shrine was completed in 2004 and, in the words of the architect, represents the 2000 years of Christian architecture. Donations that allowed for the building of the whole complex over a space of a decade were generously provided by Catholics from Poland and abroad. The site is visited by 1.5m pilgrims and tourists a year.



# Szczecin

👤 0.7m 🏠 62 000 💰 823 € ☀️ 1754 h ✈️ Szczecin-Goleniów Solidarność Airport / 45 km

key to icons on page 52



This house in the Old Town was reconstructed in the late nineties. The neighbourhood is still a construction site.

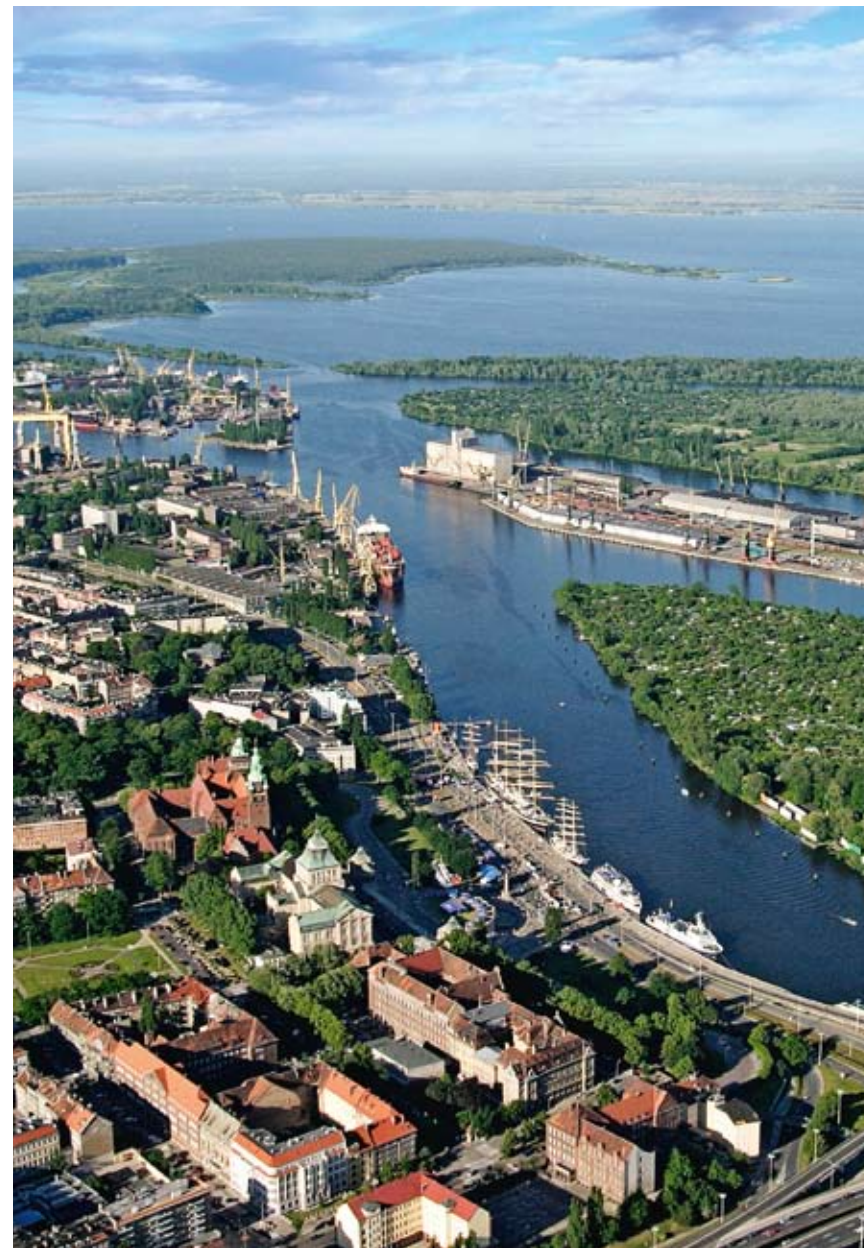
As a vibrant sea port Szczecin has always welcomed people, goods and ideas from all directions. Perhaps this is why it feels like a country within a country

Towards the end of the Second World War, when the allies were drafting a new Polish-German border along the river Oder, Szczecin (Stettin) nearly got split between the two countries. The story goes that it took five years, until a treaty was eventually signed between Poland and East Germany in 1950, to settle the border for good a few kilometres west of the city and thus keep it in one piece. Even though the river does not constitute a political border now it does divide Szczecin into two distinct parts – the city proper and Prawobrzeże (the Right Bank). Both of them have their old town centres of medieval provenance. Oder's many arms, innumerable canals and green islands make a commute between the two parts feel a bit like crossing the Mississippi. The adjacent lake Dąbie is the only in Poland that maritime yachts can sail on.

All of this, along with the presence of a port and a legendary shipyard, where riots against the communist regime started in 1970, reinforce the popular perception that Szczecin is a seaside town, even though it is located 65 kilometres from the Baltic. The sea is nonetheless an important element of the city's mythology and identity – every family has someone who is or has worked on the sea or in maritime business. Water and greenery (including one of Europe's largest and most beautiful cemeteries) take up two thirds of the city's area, but if you choose to rent a kayak and do the 13 kilometre tour around the Oder you may get the impression that the city is all greenery and water.

For a visitor who has already seen Kraków or Warsaw, Szczecin is bound to feel like a different country. In fact, it is located closer to Berlin (130 kilometres), Copenhagen (274 km), Stockholm (454 km) and Prague (507 km) than to Warsaw (516 km), not to mention

Szczecin promotes itself as a 'floating garden' which is justified by the fact that 42% of the area is covered by greenery, and 23.8% – by water.





Plac Grunwaldzki is the largest of Szczecin's famous star-shaped squares.



good old Kraków. It is the largest city and the historical capital of Pomerania (Pomorze), a region that is now split between Poland and Germany (Vorpommern) and has kept changing hands between Poland, Sweden, Prussia, Denmark and Germany throughout the last millennium. As a result, the modern city is an amalgam of different influences.

The houses of the old town (Podzamcze) and the city hall (one of the newest in Poland – reconstruction started in 1998) resemble those on the other side of the border, while the splendid gatehouses (Brama Portowa and Brama Północna) look like those built around the same time (1600) in Gdańsk. The castle, reconstructed after the Second

## Monika Pyrek

Track and field athlete, world champion in pole vaulting, resident of Szczecin

### Greenery

Szczecin's parks are the places I am most eager to return to. I begin my walk at **Jasne Błonia** that lead into **Park Kasprowicz**, which is in turn connected with the **Arkoński Forest Park**. The whole area encompasses over 40 acres of greenery located in the very centre of the city. Flanking Kasprowicz Park from one side is **Różanka**, a rose garden dating back to 1928 that is bursting with a range of colours and smells – pure magic! The garden fell into oblivion in the 1980s and is now in the process of recovering its charm and beauty – there are over 9,000 roses growing there.

### Water →2

*cruises on the river Oder, the price of boat and steersman varies, depending on the route chosen: 100 – 450 PLN*

Water is omnipresent in Szczecin, perfectly harmonising with the cityscape. The 'floating gardens' slogan used in Szczecin's promotional campaign is very dear to my heart. I recommend visitors to explore the **Oder river**

through a waterside walk, where impressive architecture clashes with wild nature. The river can be admired from **Waly Chrobrego** →1 – viewing terraces that are Szczecin's signature landmarks and places to find inner calm. My favourite water location **Jezioryo Szmaragdowe** (Emerald Lake), an artificial lake in the **Zdroje** district, created in 1925 on the site of a flooded chalk excavation pit. The lake's water is truly emerald

in colour and is definitely worth gazing into. **Plac Grunwaldzki** – The most beautiful of the city's star-shaped squares: Paris in Szczecin! However, to me it is not the urban design reminiscent of the French capital that makes this place so beautiful, but the men who frequent it to play chess, beginning in early spring until late autumn.



1



2



Trasa Zamkowa is a fast road that links two parts of the city over the river Oder.



World War is a loose variation on the Central European Renaissance. A stone's throw from it is a place where the future empress of Russia, Catherine the Great, née Sophia Anhalt zu Zerst, was born in 1729. A few blocks away you will find a copy of Verrocchio's Venetian monument of the condottiere Bartolomeo Colleoni. It was erected in the middle of a roundabout that is one of the hubs of the city's radial street structure, modelled after Haussman's plan for Paris (the beauty of Szczecin's radial plan can be best appreciated from the top floor of the city's tallest building – the Pazim Tower). If you realise that – as a sea port – Szczecin has always accepted people and goods from abroad and that – as the nearest large city – it is a natural destination for German shoppers, everything starts to make sense.

## Łona & Webber

Adam Zieliński, hip-hop artist  
and Andrzej Mikosz, music producer.  
Both are based in Szczecin

In order to get acquainted with Szczecin one should head in the opposite direction from what common sense would suggest and upon leaving the train station follow the road leading away from the city centre. The most picturesque part of the city is located on the far side. The **Venice of Szczecin** – as this is the area in question – is a riverside industrial estate. Some of its buildings were constructed in the interwar period. The area is easily reached (locals will gladly provide the necessary directions) from Kolumba Street lined with characteristic, beautiful post-industrial edifices.

### Brama Jazz Cafe →1

Plac Hołdu Pruskiego 1, ☎ daily  
10am–until the last customer

A place worth stopping by for a morning coffee, housed in a beautiful old gatehouse.

### Bar Pasztecik

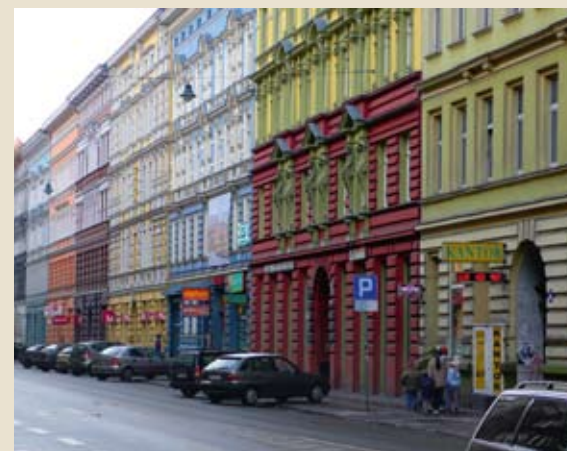
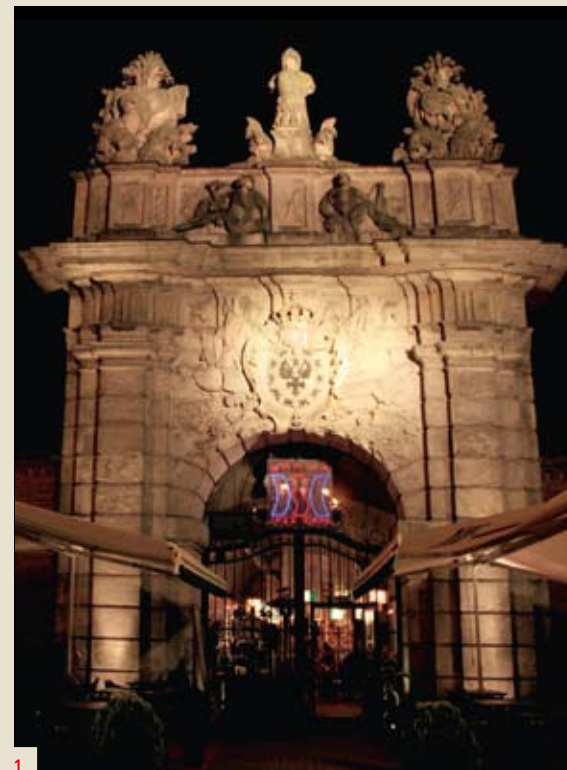
ul. Wojska Polskiego 46,  
☎ mon–fri: 10am–7pm,  
sat: 10am–4pm

Visitors to Szczecin absolutely must take a bite of *pasztecik*. This regional delicacy is available at a number of places, including this bar at Wojska Polskiego street. From here it's a short walk to Jasne Błonia park – a favourite spot of Szczecin residents, especially in the summer.






### Pionier 1909

ul. Wojska Polskiego 2

There is no doubt about it – this is the oldest operating cinema in the world. And truly terrific films are screened here.



# Bydgoszcz/Toruń

 0.8m 
  77 000 
  751 € 
  1787 h 
  Bydgoszcz Ignacy Jan Paderewski  
 Airport / Bydgoszcz: 3,5 km, Toruń: 53 km

key to icons on page 52



An opera evening in Bydgoszcz, breakfast in Toruń. But where to spend the night?

Toruń and Bydgoszcz have been rival cities for decades. An upgrade of Bydgoszcz Airport makes Toruń green with envy. The rumour of a big international company planning to set up shop in Toruń is likely to start riots Bydgoszcz. However, since 1999 the two cities have shared the duties of regional capital, which makes great sense since they are but a short commute from each other and are comparable in size and importance. Toruń has a renowned university and contemporary art centre, a splendid old town and a breathtaking riverfront view. Bydgoszcz has an opera, an airport, an important film festival and the best medical services in the country. Both deserve closer attention.

Toruń emerged in the Middle Ages as a cosmopolitan trade hub of the Hansa. The affluence and taste of the bourgeoisie have lasting evidence in the architecture of the gothic Town Hall, in St. John's cathedral and St. Jacob's church. All of them have been meticulously renovated, which is no wonder since the local university has been producing world class specialists in monument preservation for decades. Today Toruń is suspended between the splendour of the past and the challenges of the modern world. The tradition is symbolised by *pierniki* – gingerbread cakes in various shapes and sizes, manufactured in a local factory named after another pillar of Toruń's identity – Kopernik. Mikołaj Kopernik – or Nicolaus Copernicus – who challenged the belief that the universe revolves around earth – was born in the city in 1473. Needless to say there is a museum dedicated to the local son and a global hero in his family home. The modern side of Toruń is best represented by the brand new contemporary art centre – CSW Znaki Czasu. Completed in 2008, it is currently programmed by the Serbian-born, Rome-based curator Dobrila Denegri. CSW holds only a handful of exhibitions a year but each one draws the attention of art critics far beyond Toruń and you are guaranteed to see something fresh every time you visit. In the summer, the

You can make Toruń's famous gingerbread cookies (*pierniki*) yourself at the Gingerbread Museum (Żywe Muzeum Piernika) in the old town. (ul. Rabsiańska 9) ☺ April – December, daily: 9 am – 6 pm, January – March, daily: 10 am – 6 pm)

Toruń university is, naturally, named after Mikołaj Kopernik and features a ceramic tile composition commemorating the city's most famous son on the façade.





The so-called Bydgoszcz Venice is coming back to life after years of neglect.



institution steps outside the building to organise the CoCart music festival. The art centre will soon rub shoulders with a concert hall designed by the Spanish architect Fernando Menis.

Somewhat younger than Toruń, Bydgoszcz rose to prominence in the 19th century, thanks to the industrial revolution, a sizeable garrison and Kanał Bydgoski (the Bydgoszcz Canal) that opened in 1774, providing a missing link between the water routes of Eastern and Western Europe. Even now, if you set out to sail from Belarus to France, the only way would be via Bydgoszcz. For the less ambitious, that is most of us, there is the Bydgoszcz Water Tram that conveniently links a shopping centre in the east with a sports arena in the west, via the old town, from May to October. The old town itself cannot be compared in size or architectural quality with the one in Toruń, but it boasts two things that the other one cannot. There is a piece of excellent contemporary architecture, in the form of the riverfront BRE Bank headquarters, completed in 1998 and ageing gracefully, and a green island (Wyspa Młyńska) with a manicured



## Krzysztof Bober

Founder of Plateaux Foundation, which promotes contemporary music and audiovisual art in Poland, creator of the Plateaux festival. Lives in Warsaw

### TORUŃ

#### City Park on Bydgoskie Przedmieście →1 ul. Bydgoska

The oldest and largest city park in Toruń, landscaped in the English style, is one of the most interesting of its kind in Poland. Its unique character is additionally emphasised by the unique secessionist architecture of Bydgoskie Przedmieście surrounding the park.

#### Winiarnia Niebo ul. Rynek Staromiejski 1, ☎️ *thu-sun: 12pm-midnight;* *fri-sat: 12pm-2 am*

A small, cosy café in the grounds of the Town Hall. Unique atmosphere of a Toruń cellar and those sofas, they are simply made for sinking into. You can always drop in for a coffee or mulled wine and relax under the brick vaults.

#### Tantra ul. Ślusarska 5, ☎️ *mon-thu:* *3pm-midnight; fri-sat: 12pm-2 am;* *sun: 12pm-midnight*

The little streets off the New Market Square offer many hidden gems. One of them is Tantra, an Indian-themed cafe. It's an unpretentious place with a touch of fantasy. Excellent selection of teas, coffees and unusual cocktails.

#### Pierogarnia Stary Toruń →2 ul. Most Pauliński 2/10, ☎️ *mon-sun* *11 am-midnight*

The best pierogi in town. The restaurant is located near the Arsenal – on the site of a former bridge. Various types of dumpling dough and stuffing (particularly recommended are fluffy, baked *piecuchy* dumplings); multi-storey interior, typical for Toruń. Rustic, warm atmosphere.



1

### BYDGOSZCZ

#### Mózg ul. Gdańska 10, ☎️ *mon-sat: from* *4pm; sun: from 6pm*

The leading venue for independent music in the region. This is the birthplace of Yass, the best jazz bands, instrumentalists and leading artists of the experimental music scene perform here. Brain is also a venue for exhibitions and

various other cultural events. The club boasts an attractive bar where you can sit and chat, while listening to great music.

#### Wyspa Młyńska / The Mill Island

This is a complex of buildings traversed by two meandering rivers: Brda and Młynówka. It has become a true showpiece of the city, thanks to a revitalization project lasting several years. It brings the old and the new together. For a long time, Mill Island was the venue for various cultural initiatives – among others hosting the summer **BWA** exhibitions.

#### BWA Gallery ul. Gdańska 20, ☎️ *tue-thu: 10 am-6pm;* *fri: 12pm-8pm; sat-sun:* *11.30 am-4.30pm*

The most interesting venue on the cultural map of Bydgoszcz, presenting interesting exhibitions and projects exploring completely unknown aspects of contemporary art in the region.



2

It took over thirty years to build it, but now Bydgoszcz can boast the newest and most modern opera in the country that also doubles as a convention centre.



park that is a huge draw for the locals in the warmer part of the year. The neighbouring quarters overlooking a canal, dubbed, somewhat exaggeratedly, the Venice of the North, are now undergoing something of a revival after years of neglect. Waterside cafes and restaurants are becoming a Bydgoszcz specialty.

The city is also famous for its musical venues. Even though it was constructed some sixty years ago, Filharmonia Pomorska is still considered to have the best acoustic quality in the country. Recently, the city completed an opera house, finishing a laborious process started in 1974. A concrete carcass of the unfinished building loomed over the city for decades, as a testament to the inefficiency of the communist state and the delusions of grandeur of local apparatchiks. Opened in 2006, the 860-seat Opera Nova is a source of civic pride. It also serves as a convention centre and in December of 2010 it became home to the international festival of cinematography – Camerimage. A much deserved honour for one of the most underestimated cities in Poland.



## Janusz Leon Wiśniewski

Writer and scientist, currently based in Frankfurt

The Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship inspires awe in first-time visitors, but also in those who – like me – call this region home and have lived there for many years. To me its true heart (and I ask the residents of nearby cities of Bydgoszcz and Włocławek to forgive me) is **Toruń**, an old city with a long history but also young thanks to the thriving academic life of its renowned university. Toruń, which was spared the bombings of World War II, is a gem of Gothic architecture. In 1997, it was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

**The House of Mikolaj Kopernik**, ul. Kopernika 15/17; City Hall, ul. Rynek Staromiejski 1, ☎ depend on the season: 10am–4/6pm

The narrow streets around the market square are worth a stroll – visitors should head in the direction of the **Leaning Tower / Krzywa Wieża**, which indeed is leaning (very much so in fact) to one side, and marvel at the gothic houses along **Ciasna / Narrow** street, which is, indeed, very narrow. **St. John's / Św. Jana Church**, where Copernicus was baptised, as well as what is believed to be the astronomer's house are also worth a visit. It is best to finish the walk at the **Old Town Square** →1, where the **City Hall** and **Artus Court** are located.

**Kopernik gingerbread shop**, ul. Rynek Staromiejski 6, ☎ mon–fri: 10am–7pm, sat & sun: 10am–6pm

On the ground floor of the aforementioned Artus Court is a shop offering the world-famous Toruń gingerbread cookies made according to a recipe as old as the city itself and as well protected a secret as that of the Coca Cola



formula. I simply cannot imagine Toruń without its gingerbread.

**Manekin**  
Rynek Staromiejski 16,  
☎ sun–thu: 10am–11pm,  
sat & sun: 10am–12pm,

Also worth a visit is the pancake shop Manekin, which is considered to serve the best pancakes in Poland.

**Róże i Zen**  
ul. Podmurna 18, ☎ mon–thu:  
11am–10pm, fri–sun: 11am–11pm

For an evening meal I head to Róże i Zen restaurant, which offers its visitors wonderful cuisine

(not only Polish) and delicious wines in a refined décor in the space of a flat.

**Piwnice**  
ul. Gagarina 11,  
for bookings send an e-mail to: [przewodnicy@turystyka.torun.pl](mailto:przewodnicy@turystyka.torun.pl)

I sometimes like to leave Toruń for a few hours and head to Piwnice, a small town about 10 km away. Poland's largest radio telescope is located in Piwnice's astronomical observatory. The site offers its visitors not only the opportunity to look at the stars from 'up close', but also to listen to fascinating lectures about the universe.



## Dobriła Denegri

Historian and independent curator, artistic director of the Centre of Contemporary Art in Toruń. Born in Belgrade



What I like most about Toruń is not only **CoCA**, as one might suppose – I really like a couple of places that are not on the official, tourist & medieval map of the city, like the **Bydgoskie Przedmieście** district, with its fabulous architectural examples of modernism. It's got a lovely park, a bit neglected, but that's one of its charms, making it even more romantic. I really love the **Park Miejski in Toruń**, with its spectacular views of the river Wisła.

As for places to hang out in Toruń, I would recommend a pre-capitalist adventure at the **Pod**

**Atlantem Resaurant** (*ul. Duchy Świętego 3*) – it made me feel really nostalgic, not trendy at all; a perfect place for a drink if you're tired of all the obvious tourist destinations.

As for Toruń's clubs, there's **eNeRDe**, which could just as well be in Berlin; it's very underground. For lazy summertime evenings – there's a nice **Na Końcu Świata** (*ul. Podmurna 4 – 6*, ) club, neighbouring the ruins of the Teutonic castle.

I also like the **Ethnographic Museum** (*Wąły gen. Sikorskiego 19*, ☹ depending on the season; tue–fri:

9–16/17, sat–sun: 10–16/18) – it's like a piece of a rural fairy tale in the centre of the city, with a couple of cabins, a wind mill and some cottages, in an old park, very quiet and peaceful.

As for hotels in Toruń – those with deep pockets will certainly like **1231 Hotel** (*ul. Przedzamcze 6*, reservation: +48 56 619 09 10), situated in an old mill, literally over a real stream. I also recommend the **Petit Fleur** →1 (*ul. Piekary 25*, reservation: tel.+ 48 56 621 51 00), super cosy and in the very centre of the Old Town.

**Opera Nova**  
*ul. Marszałka Focha 5*

One of the most modern and versatile music theatres in Poland, Opera Nova, which houses the Plus Camerimage Festival, has proven that it aims at a synergy of the arts and that partnership in culture and arts always has its benefits.

**On the trail of culinary explorations**

I recommend three places in Bydgoszcz: the exceptional **Maestra** (*ul. Marszałka Focha 5*, ☹ daily: 12pm–9pm /until the last customer on performance days). At the opera house where the music culture combines with culinary craft; the **Oliwka** (*ul. Jagiellońska 96*, ☹ daily: 7am–11pm) in Słoneczny Młyn / sunny Mill hotel and **Bolero** (*ul. Grodzka 36*, ☹ daily: 6:30am–10pm) at the Holiday Inn.



## Marek Żydowicz

Chairman of the Tumult Foundation, director of the Plus Camerimage Festival, resident of Bydgoszcz

The Centre for Contemporary Art in Toruń was the first of the wave of new museum buildings constructed in Poland thanks to an influx of European funds.



# Lublin

👤 0.7m 🏠 86 000 📄 769 € ☀️ 1820 h ✈️ Warsaw Chopin Airport / 180 km

key to icons on page 52



In the nineteenth century, the Italian-Polish architect Antonio Corazzi converted the Jesuite church, the largest in the city, into a Catholic cathedral.

It is difficult to talk about Lublin without resorting to the tired East-meets-West cliché. The reality is that the city lives up to the slogan, so why not stick to it?

The Trinity Chapel at the Lublin Castle serves as a lasting symbol of the peaceful intertwining of two cultures. It was the first church that the recently christened prince of Lithuania, Władysław Jagiełło, saw on his visit to Poland. In 1418 he ordered painters to adorn the gothic chapel with Byzantine-style frescoes – hence the picturesque fusion of Western architecture and Eastern ornamentation. It is also in Lublin where the union between the Polish Kingdom and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was officially confirmed in 1569, creating a vast state spanning today's Eastern Poland, Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania.

Lublin grew rapidly in 19th century, when it was a part of the Russian Empire. No wonder that there are lots of traces of the Russian presence left. Along some Orthodox churches, you will find public buildings modelled after those in St. Petersburg, like the former Russian State Bank headquarters in the city's main promenade – Krakowskie Przedmieście. East meets west again in Lublin's charming Old Town. It has an air of a provincial small town somewhere in Eastern Europe, but at the same time dazzles with ornate facades of renaissance burgher houses designed by Italian architects. Later, in early 20th century, this Lublin brand of renaissance became one of the main inspirations for Polish national style, so do not be surprised to find copies in other regions.

For centuries, Lublin, also known as וְלִבְּוֹל, was one of the most important centres of Jewish culture in Europe. Even though Jews made up one third of the city's population before the Second World War, there are not many traces of their presence left. There is a vast cemetery in Kalinowszczyzna, north of the Old Town. Somewhere in Podzamcze, the area in a valley beneath the castle, there is a plaque on the site of the great Maharshala synagogue and an old street light

Brama Krakowska (the Kraków Gate) leads from the Old Town to Krakowskie Przedmieście – Lublin's main promenade.





The Lublin Science and Technology Park, gradually expanding since 2009, is set to boost innovation in the city and help it develop renewable energy sources.



in Podwale Street that never goes out. It commemorates the 26,000 Lublin Jews sent to the concentration camp in Bełżec over one month in the spring of 1942.

Other than that, the neighbourhood was razed during or immediately after the war. Foundations of Jewish houses are buried under an east-west (again!) expressway, Aleja Tysiąclecia, and a bus station. Ugly as it is, the coach terminal is a vital connection point between modern Poland, Ukraine and Belarus. There is a lot of traffic across the border and Lublin is a natural entry point to Poland and the Schengen zone in general. Ukrainians eagerly come to study in Lublin and the local university is one of the most important centres of research on Ukrainian language, literature and culture. Local authorities, cultural institutions and NGOs are tightening their partnerships with Lviv, the biggest city of Western Ukraine, just across the border.

The East-West narrative took a surprising twist a few years ago, during renovation of the castle hill. The courtyard was repaved with stone, almost identical to local limestone, shipped all the way from China.



## Krzysztof Cugowski

Frontman of the rock band Budka Suflera, now in the fifth decade of his career, sings praise of his hometown

### The Old Town

Lublin boasts one of the few old towns in Poland that survived the war and has remained untouched to this day. Some elements of the recently-restored houses of the Old Town date from the Renaissance and late Gothic periods. It's also worth seeing Kraków Gate, leading to the Old Town and the equally beautiful Trynitaraska Gate nearby.

### The Royal Castle →1

ul. Zamkowa 9, ☎ +48 81532 50 01 ext. 61, ☹ Jun-Aug: tue-sat: 10 am-5pm and sun 10 am-6pm; from September to May: tue-sat: 9 am-5pm, sun: 9 am-6pm

The early nineteenth century castle was damaged many times. On the premises of the castle there is a very interesting thirteenth century tower and church, where you can see restored fourteenth

century frescoes, presenting, among others, King Władysław Jagiełło. The castle chapel is phenomenal – unique in Poland.

### Krakowskie Przedmieście

The main pedestrian street of Lublin. The section near the Old Town and Town Hall offers many attractive bars and restaurants.

### Underground Lublin →2

Rynek 1, ☹ sat-sun: 12pm, 1pm, 2pm, 4pm, 🚶 normal – 9pln, reduced – 7pln

A few years ago a tourist trail was marked out in the atmospheric restored cellars of the Old Town. The intricate system of winding and sometimes very narrow corridors is worth seeing, particularly in the evenings under the light of burning torches.

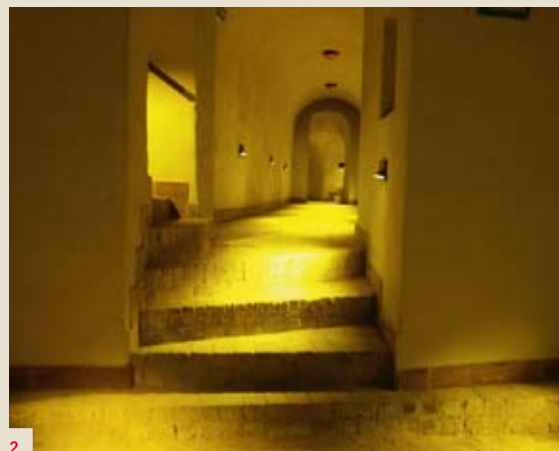
### Teatr w Budowie / Theatre under Construction

ul. Lubomelska 1 – 3

I find this place particularly exceptional. The theatre has been under construction for forty-odd years. It is situated in the very heart of Lublin, in a very beautiful location. If it is ever completed it will become a very important cultural centre for Lublin. It is currently partly finished: the Lublin Philharmonic Hall and Musical Theatre are found at the back of the building. Saski Park, established in the nineteenth century, is situated opposite the theatre.



1



2

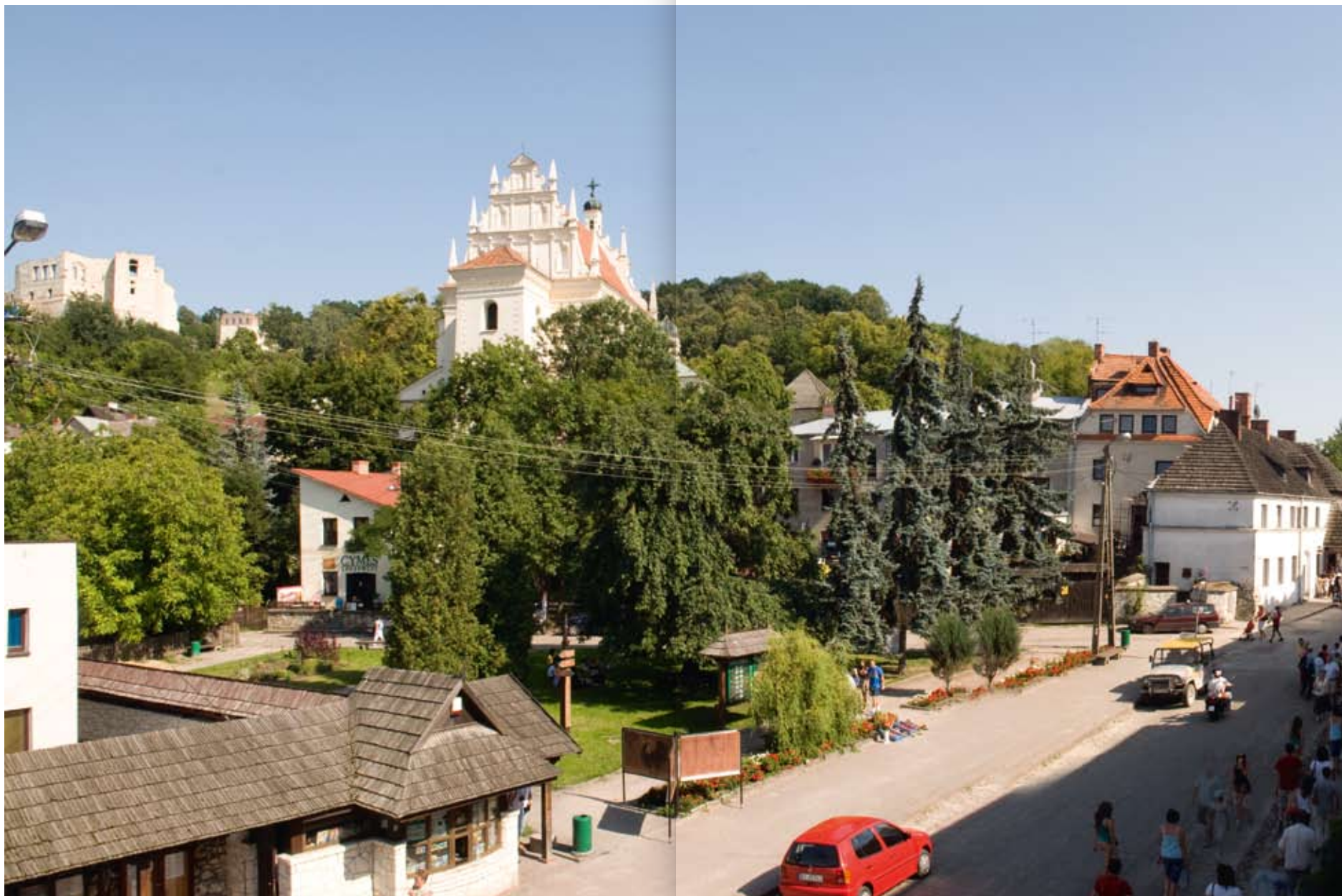
# Kazimierz Dolny

Kazimierz Dolny is a perfect Polish small town, set in a picturesque valley at the foot of a ruined medieval castle, with a cobble-stoned, sloping market square, three bijoux churches,

renaissance granaries lining the Wisla riverfront and many traces of a once vibrant Jewish culture. No wonder that it was discovered and eagerly explored by artists early in the 20th century. Now it

is a favourite weekend getaway for Lublin and Warsaw artists, intellectuals and professionals who snap up summer homes in the town itself and nearby villages. Kazimierz Dolny can be

seen at its most charming, quiet and slow on weekdays.





# Białystok

 0.5m
  50 000
  748 €
  1720 h
  Warsaw Chopin Airport / 208 km

key to icons on page 52



Locals recommend a stroll around Bojary – a neighbourhood composed of old wooden working class homes.

Białystok is now a fairly large city with all the infrastructure of a regional capital, but it still retains some of the charm of a much smaller place. The scale of Lipowa – the main street, lined with two and three storey houses, leading up to a pedestrian market square (Rynek Kościuszki) - strengthens this impression. Look out for the post-war buildings around the square and look up to see graffiti decorations of ancient warriors, zodiac signs and other themes that were supposed to give this rather new city an old town feel

In fact, the history of Białystok is relatively short. It grew rapidly into a multicultural city in the 19th century thanks to a railroad linking Vienna and St. Petersburg via Warsaw and Vilnius and an industrial boom. The residence of the aristocratic Branicki family, which owned Białystok before it became an industrial hub, marks the eastern end of Lipowa Street, a few steps away from the Market Square. Meticulously restored after the Second World War and now housing the Medical University, the palace is surrounded by a vast park and a baroque French-style garden.

Białystok's other landmarks are a far departure from the pre-industrial idyll of the residence. At the opposite end of Lipowa Street, on a small hill, there is the St. Rochus church with its 78-metre tall spire. The building, equally inspired by gothic cathedrals and Manhattan's skyscrapers, was designed in the 1920s and is said to be one of the finest churches built in Poland in the last century. Set to become

Lipowa, the city's high street, used to be named after Marshal Piłsudski, Hitler and Stalin, before going back to its historical name for good in the fifties. It

links the Market Square with the magnificent St. Rochus church (in the foreground).





The so-called city hall in fact never housed Białystok's municipal authorities. Local merchants used the space in the lower part for shops and firemen used the tall tower for observation.



a new icon of the city is the new opera house south of Lipowa Street. The monumental edifice, designed by Marek Budzyński, architect of the acclaimed university library in Warsaw, will be covered with lush vegetation. It seems very fitting for a city that recently stunned the rest of the country when a survey showed it had the highest standard of living among the 12 biggest Polish cities. This is largely due to the clean environment, the abundance of parks and the proximity to nature. As early as 1993 Białystok became the first Polish member of the Healthy Cities Network set up by the WHO. It is no surprise that a historically multicultural place, now located just off the eastern border of the country, has the highest percentage of non-Catholic and non-Polish population of all the big Polish cities. Long gone is the Jewish population that made up nearly a half of Białystok's population before the Second World War, but Belarusians and Tatars are large minorities, as evidenced by the onion domes of modern Orthodox churches, a construction site of the Islamic cultural centre and the soft local accent.

One of the last remains of the tsar's hunting lodge in Białowieża, near Białystok. The national park museum in Białowieża is a place to learn about these aspects of

the forest's rich wildlife that flourishes in the parts of the forests restricted for tourists.



The surrounding countryside is one of the most culturally diverse areas in Poland. Tykocin is a minuscule town with a grand Market Square and a well preserved ancient synagogue. In some villages, ethnic minorities are the majority. In the Tatar village of Kruszyniany you will find a beautiful wooden mosque. The villages south east of Białystok are almost uniquely Belarusian. And a mere 40-minute drive away from the city there is the Grabarka hill – the most important Orthodox sanctuary in Poland, surrounded by a forest of crosses. Travelling around Białystok is a journey in time, back to the days when Poland was one of the most diverse countries in Europe, where Poles made up no more than two thirds of the population.



## Monika Szewczyk

Director of Białystok's acclaimed Arsenal Gallery



1

### Branicki Palace →1

ul. Jana Kilińskiego 1,  
☎ tue - Fr, 3:30 - 5:30pm,  
sat - sun: 9am - 5pm.

A historical palace in Białystok, one of the best-preserved aristocratic mansions from the Saxon period on Polish territory. Built in the late-Baroque style and often referred to as the Versailles of the Podlasie region, the Versailles of the North or the 'Polish Versailles'.

### Jewish Heritage Trail in Białystok →2

Few traces remain of the Jewish presence in Białystok. Among those that survived to the present day are three synagogues, a few tenement houses, some architectural details, memorials and memorial plaques and a cemetery. All the more reason to preserve

the memory about the city's once vibrant and sizable Jewish population, present in Białystok between 1658 and 1939 (until the outbreak of World War II). The trail leads visitors to sites connected with the history of Białystok's Jews, presenting the Jewish population in the context of the multi-cultural society of pre-war Poland and promoting elements of Jewish culture and tradition.

The city's pedestrian zone encompasses **Kościuszko Square** as well as **Suraska** and **Kilińskiego** streets. The hungry and thirsty will find a few inexpensive eateries there serving Polish cuisine such as **Spotem Podlasiak** (ul. Rynek Kościuszki 15) and **Astoria** (ul. Sienkiewicza 4, opening hours: 1 - 10pm mon - sat, 12 - 10pm sun) - with a terrace overlooking the Market Square.

### Białystok Manufacturers' Trail

Presenting the history of the city's industrial prosperity and of local companies, run by Nowik, Hasbach, Becker, Trylling, Moes and Janowski, the trail leads to factory buildings, mansions and villas that have survived to the present day. The functions they had served may have changed repeatedly over time but the edifices themselves testify to the industrial heyday from the turn of the 20th century.

### Metro Club →3

ul. Białowyny 9a, ☎ thu - sat:  
7pm - 2am, tue - wed: 7pm - 6am

Since its opening in the mid - 1990s Metro's DJ deck and stage have seen performances by a host of artists from various parts of Poland and the world. The venue boasts a great sound system and interesting décor,



2



3

with two bars, a dance hall and lounge area.

### Rynek Antiquarian Bookseller

ul. Kościuszki 13,  
☎ mon - fri: 10am - 6pm

The bookshop offers a journey to the East through its extensive offer of Central and Eastern European literature from Belarus, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine, Russia and Serbia. Additionally, the shop boasts an impressive selection of vinyl records.

## Ignacy Karpowicz

Writer, winner of the 2010 Polityka Passport Award in the literature category



4



5

When visiting Białystok it is worth getting to know three tourist routes. The first is the wooden architecture trail. I recommend a walk to the district of **Bojary** →4, with beautiful old wooden houses. Here you can see and feel the pre-war climate of an Eastern Polish borderland town. It also becomes evident that brick or concrete is not necessarily better or more beautiful than wood. The next is the Esperanto and Zamenhoff trail. It is worth starting from the newly-opened **Ludwik Zamenhof Centre** →5 (ul. Warszawska 15), which, as a new institution, is vibrant and not yet fossilized. It's a good place to see and understand the place in which Esperanto was born.

Although an artificial language, Esperanto had noble intentions and a very interesting history. I would take my guests to the **Cechowa café** (ul. Warszawska 4/6). Firstly, because they serve *kiszka ziemniaczana* (potato pudding) (a regional delicacy based on potatoes), and secondly, because you can still sense the old communist era. Though unattractive, Cechowa is not pretentious. Such establishments are already a rarity with the world flooded with restaurant chains and smart restaurants with sophisticated cuisine. Eating excellent food in a flashy restaurant for a lot of money has become so easy that it's not worth recommending. But Cechowa is different.

# Rzeszów

 0.6m
  62 000
  777 €
  1763 h
  Rzeszów – Jasionka Airport / 10 km

key to icons on page 52



The tall, communist-era Revolution Monument is equally loved and loathed, but whether one likes it or not, it is a natural orientation point and an involuntary icon of Rzeszów.

Much like Białystok, Rzeszów had lived a quiet life for centuries until a combination of political and economic circumstances gave it a sudden boost. The castle and the old town that you can see now were one of dozens of a similar kind in southeastern Poland. In fact many cities within a short drive from Rzeszów, such as Sandomierz and Jarosław, used to be much more important than they are today and can boast impressive historical monuments that contrast with their present significance

Rzeszów used to be just a stop on an ancient trans-continental trading route leading from German cities via Wrocław and Kraków to Lviv and further into Ukraine and towards the Black Sea. This historical route was followed with a railroad in the nineteenth century and recently with the A4 motorway, soon to span Poland from east to west and facilitate the flow of people during the Euro 2012 football championships. The city got its first boost from the railroad and experienced a period of rapid modernisation at the turn of the last century, evidenced by elegant art nouveau villas and interesting public buildings from that period.

Next, in the 1930s it was incorporated into an ambitious plan to industrialise a hitherto underdeveloped part of Poland by building the Central Industrial District (COP) there. Rzeszów and nearby towns such as Mielec and Stalowa Wola became hubs for Polish aircraft and other technology-based industries. After the Second World War Rzeszów involuntarily profited from the fact that Lviv, a large

Rzeszów's economy relies on cutting edge technology, but the city retains an old-worldly, small city charm and benefits from the proximity of mountain resorts.



and cosmopolitan city equal in importance to Kraków, found itself on the Soviet Ukrainian side of the new eastern border. Rzeszów took on new functions, filling in for the absent metropolis and accepting increasing amounts of investment in modern industry. The controversial, clitoris-shaped monument to Soviet soldiers erected at one of main intersections in the 1970s has become an icon of the new Rzeszów, along with a Chinese Wall of tower blocks built across the river from the old town.

There are two sides to Rzeszów now. The city maintains the charm of a small, walkable, cyclable city, with a beautiful market square (make sure to take a tour of the underground corridors



The Lubomirski Castle sits on a bastion designed by the great Dutch baroque architect Tylman van Gameren.



and vaults), lots of greenery, clean tap water and a growing student population. On the other hand, Rzeszów is an ambitious little beast that survived the nosedive of heavy industries in post-1989 Poland. In 2001 it founded a university, it attracts lots of foreign investment and drives the ambitious project of Aircraft Valley (Dolina Lotnicza): a cluster of companies, education facilities and research centres of European importance, with Politechnika Rzeszowska at its young heart. Overall, the high technology cluster is estimated to provide one third of all jobs in the city. It is no coincidence that in 2009 the expanded Jasionka airport started to operate direct flights to New York. Rzeszów is living, working, studying proof that the historical division between the developed Poland A and the rural Poland B is already history.

## Katarzyna Kordoń & Beata Pisula

Owners of K&K Selekt, the only Polish company dealing in international consulting between Asia and Europe. Both are based in Rzeszów

### Dworek restaurant

ul. Dąbrowskiego 19,  
☎ daily: 10 am–10 pm

A terrific place for a business lunch – elegant vintage interiors, great service and a beautiful garden (especially in the summertime).

### Czarny Kot restaurant

ul. Mickiewicza 4,  
☎ daily: 1pm–11pm

Housed in a newly renovated cellar and boasting a stylish interior, the restaurant offers an impressive selection of delicious dishes (caution, size of the portions is also impressive!) A popular meeting venue for foreign businessmen. And if the dinner stretches past the afternoon tea, it is worth stopping by...

### Wiedeńska Pastry Shop

ul. Rynek 13-14,  
☎ mon–fri: 9am–9pm,  
sat&sun: 10am–9pm

Located in the 4-star **Ambassador Hotel** in the Market Square, the pastry shop offers tasty delicacies of the palate year-round.

### Hotel Grand Cafe

ul. Dymnickiego 1A

Unforgettable décor of both the hotel and the cafe, delicious coffee, wonderful service and a great location in the very centre of the city.

### Klubowa Restaurant

ul. Ks. Józefa 23a, ☎ daily,  
10pm–7pm

We recommend this venue especially to senior visitors that cherish tradition. *Klubowa* is one of Rzeszów's oldest restaurants and is famous for its dancing events and delicious, traditional Polish cuisine.

### Underground tourist route

☎ tue–fri: 10.15pm, 11pm, 12pm,  
1 pm, 2pm, 3 pm, 4 pm and 5pm  
sat&sun: 11.15 am, 12am, 1pm, 2pm,  
3pm, 4pm, 📞 6.5pln / 4.5pln

Foreign visitors, and especially Americans, will definitely enjoy the Underground tourist route under Rzeszów's market square, which offers a peek into Polish history.

## Krzysztof Brodziński

Engineer working at the European Centre for Nuclear Research in Geneva (CERN) on construction of the LHC particle accelerator

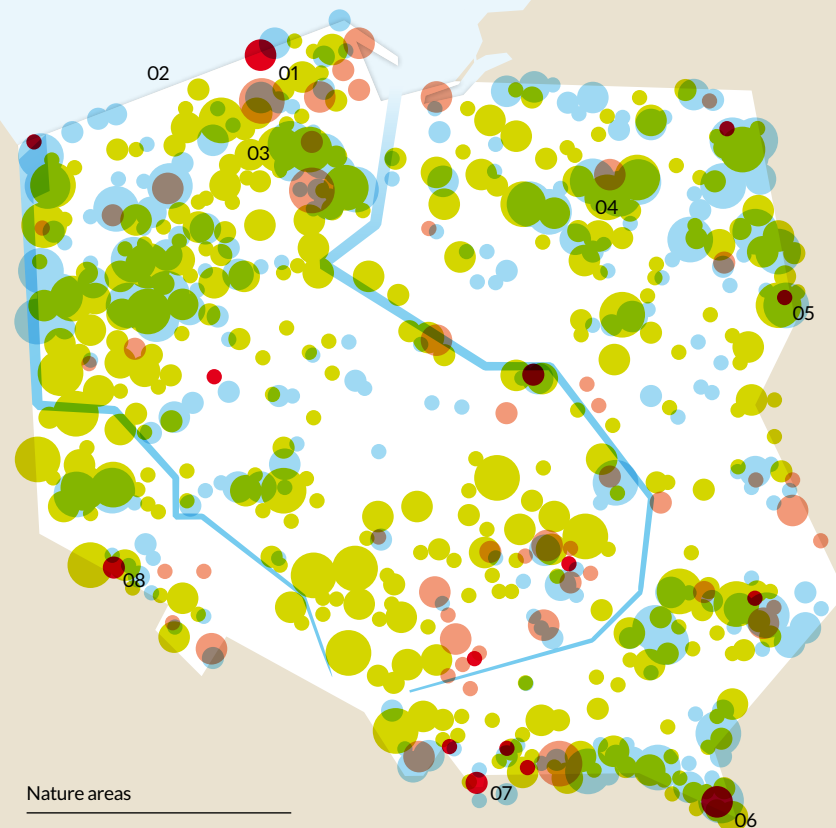
Those who wish to forget about daily realities and take a break among wild nature should go to the Polish foothills of **Bieszczady**. This is one of the wildest corners of Poland and can be reached by car, about 1.5 hours from Rzeszów. Bieszczady offers many recreational options. The Solińskie lake, with its many wild coves, is paradise for those who love watersports and fishing. Bike trails allow one to test one's limits and endurance. For the less active, I recommend walks in the Sine Wiry reserve. Choose an unmarked trail and you may spot a bear, lynx or even a bison. It's also worth visiting the non-extant village of Łopienka with its old stone temple – an

ancient worship site and pilgrimage destination for the region's inhabitants. Sunny autumn is the best time to visit the Bieszczady. Between September and October – when the noise of the high season has died down – the mountains reveal their most beautiful side. That's when you can enjoy the multi-coloured carpet of leaves, which is the most beautiful in the highest part of Bieszczady. My personal recommendation is the route from Wetliny through the Orłowicza mountain pass, towards Połonina Wetlińska, where you can relax in a modest PTTK (Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society) hostel and enjoy a hot Bieszczady-style tea with lemon.



# Nature

Poland was a late bloomer when it came to industrialisation or modern farming. What was considered a disadvantage for decades has turned out to be an asset. It means that there are parts of the country, especially in the northeast, where primeval forests and vast marshes never had to make way to agriculture, where lakes were never threatened with pollution. From the white, sandy Baltic beaches in the north, to the mountains in the south, there is plenty to be discovered



## Nature areas

- Forests
- Nature 2000 areas
- National Parks
- Landscape Parks

### 01 The Moving Dunes

Catch them if you can

### 02 Baltic coast

With white sandy beaches and dramatic cliffs

### 03 Kaszuby

A green paradise a stone's throw from Tricity

### 04 Warmia, Mazury Suwalszczyzna

The land of a three thousand lakes

### 05 Białowieża

An untouched primeval forest

### 06 Bieszczady

Poland's least-populated mountains

### 07 Tatra Mountains

Highest mountains in the country

### 08 Sudety

Hills, forests, castles, spas





## 01 The Moving Dunes

A few kilometres from the Baltic resort of Łeba there is a vast lake. It used to be a bay, but it is now cut off from the sea by a thin strip of land. This strip is covered with a miniature desert – 500 hectares

of dunes that constantly shift their position, by 3.5 to 10 metres a year. At this speed, you will not be able to witness the movement, but the windswept dunes are impressive nevertheless. Some

of them, called white mountains, reach up to 30 metres in height. On the edge of the national park from the 115 metre high Rowokół hill, you can admire a spectacular view of the lake and the dunes.



## 02 Baltic coast

From Świnoujście in the west to Piaski in the east, the Baltic coast spans 775 kilometres, from Germany to Russia. Yes, there are resorts swarmed with tourists, but for each one of them there

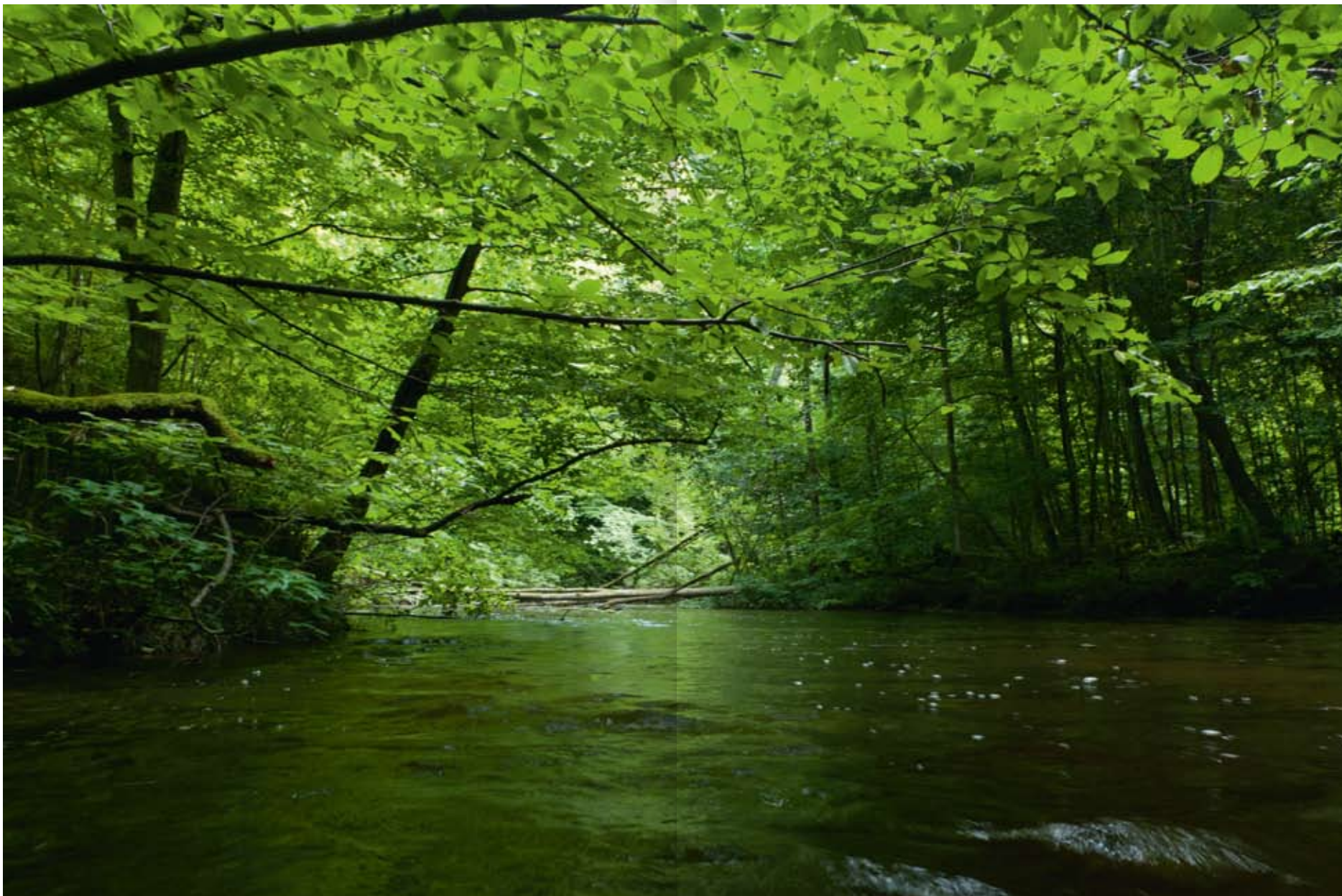
is a dozen quiet villages. Yes, the weather is uncertain and the average temperature of water in the summer is somewhere between 17 and 21°C, but these are fully rewarded by the sight of

white and wide sandy beaches and many other natural wonders: the dramatic cliff coastline in Wolin island (towering 93 metres above the sea) and in Rozewie (pictured above) – the

northernmost chunk of Poland, or the improbably narrow Hel peninsula. The quality of water along the Polish coastline is tested and certified every year. Luckily, Poles are very conformist

in their holiday habits, so the whole coast is empty between September and June. Pick your favourite kilometre of the 775.





### 03 Kaszuby

Driving west from the Tricity, once you make your way through the suburbs that sit along the S6 bypass road, you will find yourself in the heart of Kaszuby. The Kaszuby Lakeland

(Pojezierze Kaszubskie) covers around 300 square kilometres of rolling hills, green forests, clear lakes, small towns and villages. The most picturesque part, sprawling around the

town Kartuszy, is dubbed the Kaszuby Switzerland (Szwajcaria Kaszubska), for its hilly landscape. The highest of them, Wieżyca, is the best place to take in the beautiful view.





## 04 Warmia Mazury Suwalszczyzna

This is the least populated part of Poland, with only one large city, the regional capital Olsztyn. Otherwise, driving down route 16 that spans the whole region, you will mostly see forests and

lakes, including the biggest lake – Śniardwy, and the deepest – the cobalt blue Hańcza. There are at least a three thousand of them. The lakes are a refuge for wild birds, such as cormorants or black storks,

and the forests are home to bison, foxes, martens and muskrats. No wonder Mazury (Masurian Lake District) is in the final of the internet poll New7Wonders. Yachting aficionados flock to the Mazury

Lakeland (Pojezierze Mazurskie). Slow life enthusiasts should go for a 11-hour cruise down the ancient Elbląg – Ostróda canal. For history and architecture lovers there is lots to discover: from medieval Teutonic

knights' castles to the Wolf's Lair Nazi bunker that saw Hitler's unsuccessful assassination plot, from magnificent Prussian mansions to the baroque sanctuary in Święta Lipka.





## 05 Białowieża

Out of all the forests in Poland, this one is the least spoilt by civilization. Most of the Białowieża National Park is not accessible to tourists, but the part that you can visit

is spectacular enough. The village Białowieża is home to the National Park Museum, the palace park founded for the pleasure of Russian tsars, featuring exotic plants, and

first and foremost a departure point for visiting the forest and the Polish bison enclosure. The Polish bison (*żubr*) are a species that used to populate Central European forests for thousands

of years. The last wild *żubr* was killed in 1919, but a few years later the International Bison Protection Society started to rebuild the population from the ones living in a zoo. The bison

returned to Białowieża forest (Puszcza Białowieska) in 1929. Now there are around 700 hundred of them both on the Polish and the Belarussian side of the border.



## 06 Bieszczady

The southernmost part of Poland is wedged between Ukraine and Slovakia. It is also one of the least populated, partly because of the ethnic cleansing that the communists subjected the Łemko

minority to in the 40s and 50s. The Bieszczady mountains are one of the most peaceful parts of the country now, with the only concentration of tourism around the artificial Solina lake (Jezioro

Solińskie). Above it there are mountain ranges called *połonina*, with flat peaks that feel like elevated promenades. Behind them, tucked away in the valleys are quiet villages.





## 07 Tatra Mountains

The highest Polish mountains, part of the Carpathian range, towering above the town of Zakopane, can be seen in their entire splendour from the top of Gubałówka, a hill on the

other side of the town. Tatry offer something for everyone. A trek up the valleys Kościeliska or Chochołowska is almost like a walk in the park even for beginners, as is a trip to Morskie

Okno – a picturesque lake nestled between the mountains. Giewont – the most famous mountain in Poland is more of a challenge. Big as they are, Tatry seem almost too small for the amount of

people who want to visit them. It is best advised to go head there in autumn or spring, that is outside the skiing season and the summer holiday when visitors numbers peak.



## 08 Sudety

First of all, this is one of the warmest spots in Poland (save for the actual mountains) with a mild winter and an early spring. The Sudety are split between Poland, Czech Republic and Germany.

The region is so full of natural and architectural attractions that one might suspect it's a theme park created for sightseeing pleasure. From the snowy peak of Śnieżka to a concentration of castles

(most of them turned into superb hotels) in the valley around Jelenia Góra, from renowned resorts such as Cieplice and Karpacz to wonders of nature such as the peculiar rocks on

the volcano-shaped Szczeliniec mountain. Already hugely popular with German tourists, Sudety are set to become one of Poland's main draws.



# Ojców National Park

## Marcin Mostafa & Natalia Paszkowska

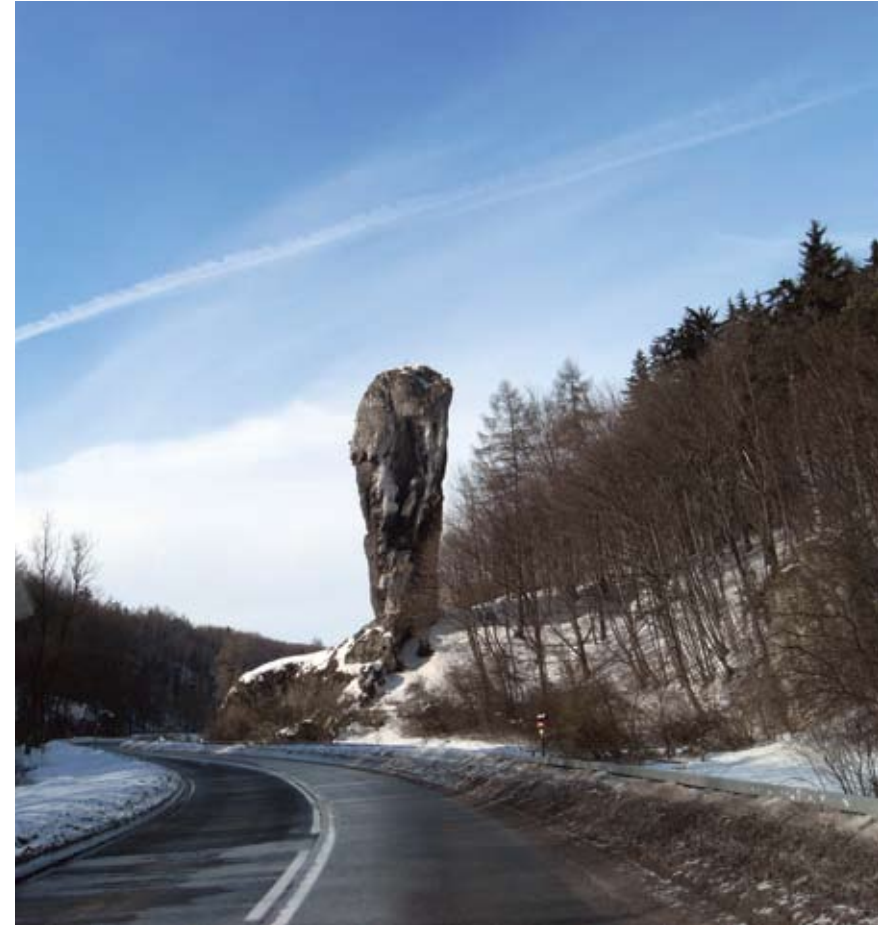
Founders of the studio WWAA, architects of the acclaimed Polish Pavilion for the 2010 Expo in Shanghai



We discovered this magical place in the middle of winter, on our way home to Warsaw from a snowboarding holiday. What may have contributed to the charm of our experience was the fact that we only found one lodge that was open, and in which we were the only guests... The secluded park valley offers astounding views and brings

to mind a sophisticated design reminiscent of a computer adventure game (like *Siberia*). There is everything there: ruins of a medieval castle, a strange rock formation in the shape of a bludgeon, a plethora of caves, houses overgrown with trees and a mysterious eclectic chapel on the water. All accompanied by architecture fairly coherent

in style. The park's size (it is the smallest of Polish national parks) makes it possible for visitors to explore Ojców within a day or two and leave with the pleasant conviction that they know the place like the back of their hand.



# Rural Retreats

## Philip Niedenthal

Editor-in-chief of *Podróże*, a monthly travel magazine

### Gallery 69 →1

Dorotowo 38, near Olsztyn, bookings: +48 89 5136480

This place is a breath of fresh air for design lovers. From the architecture and the interiors to the cuisine – the hotel is full of original ideas and it makes for a relaxing stay. It has a private, secluded beach picturesquely located on the 1000-hectare Wulpińskie lake.

### Oberża pod Psem →2

Kadzidłowo 1, Mazury, bookings: +48 87 425 74 74

Hidden in the forest, the lodge is a perfect destination for a weekend get-away, both in summer and winter, where one can get some warmth in the Russian *banya*. Plus, they serve the world's best caramel pancakes – which in themselves make Kadzidłów worth a visit.

### Kania Lodge →3

Sytna Góra 10, 40 minutes from Gdańsk, bookings: +48 58 681 06 77

"I come here to admire the beauty of 'Kashubian Switzerland', bathe in the semi-private lake, enjoy the wonderful cuisine and the impressive selection of wines, as well as the hospitality and sense of humour of the owner", says John Borrell,



1



2



3

a native of New Zealand. Nothing compares to a dinner on the terrace overlooking the lake and the lawn, on which the sheep fulfil the role of environmentally-friendly lawnmowers.

## Roman Polański

Film director, scriptwriter, actor, awarded numerous film prizes worldwide, including the Oscar for *The Pianist* (2002), lives in France

## Mazury

Mazury is my mysterious and magical land – hundreds of lakes and canals, which I sailed when I was young. The thought of them makes me nostalgic, because I made my first film there – *Knife in the Water*. Mazury is a wonder.



## Marek Kamiński

Traveller, conqueror of both the North and the South Poles, lives in Sopot

## Wisła

For me, the icon of Poland, or Poland in a nutshell, is the Wisła river – the last wild river of Europe of that size. A journey down the Wisła from Kraków to Gdańsk is an unusual journey in time and nature. Key events in the history of Poland, Europe and the world have taken place here. It is our national gem. The Wisła can be covered in many ways: on foot, horseback, by bike or by kajak. You can travel with your friends and family, or alone.



# Spa Resorts

## Krystyna Kaszuba

Founder of Twój STYL (Your Style), the most popular Polish magazine for women. Currently lectures on the Theory of Exclusive Magazines at the University of Warsaw, Consultant, advisory board Hubert Burda Media

## Dr Irena Eris Wzgórze Dylewskie →1

Wysoka Wieś 22,  
near Ostróda  
[www.drirenaerisspa.com](http://www.drirenaerisspa.com)

The resort is beautifully situated in the heart of Mazurian Landscape Park. The surrounding forest lends itself to relaxing and energising long walks as well as bicycle rides. This world-class SPA boasts a state-of-the-art hotel, which is a synonym for luxury and the wellness approach.

The resort offers face and body treatments using cosmetics by Dr Irena Eris, which are not available in regular stores but are for SPA use only. Before treatments begin a beautician tests the customer's skin and tailors the products to his or her individual needs.



1



2

## Maciej Zieliński

One of the most acclaimed Polish fashion designers

## Głębczek Vine Resort & Spa →2

Wielki Głębczek 1, 78 km north east of Torun, [www.glebczek.pl](http://www.glebczek.pl)

This is the only resort in Poland focused on vine therapy. Set in a picturesque lake land, surrounded with a vineyard, it offers such treats as wine baths, grape pit body scrubs and lots of treatments with wine- and grape-based cosmetics. Other than that, you can enjoy the aromatherapy sauna, floral steam baths, relaxing and detoxifying massages.

## Wieliczka

### Wieliczka Salt Mine Underground Rehabilitation and Treatment Centre →3

Park Kingi 1, Wieliczka near Kraków, [www.kopalnia.pl](http://www.kopalnia.pl)

This facility is located 135 metres below the ground level, in the UNESCO-listed salt mine in Wieliczka that dates back to 13th century. It is probably the only spa where you will be handed a hard hat before starting the treatment. The air in the underground chamber is naturally bacteria-free and it contains large quantities of sodium chloride and magnesium and calcium ions. This unique subterranean health facility is particularly beneficial in treating lower and upper tract respiratory system diseases, as well as allergies, skin diseases, and metabolic disorders.

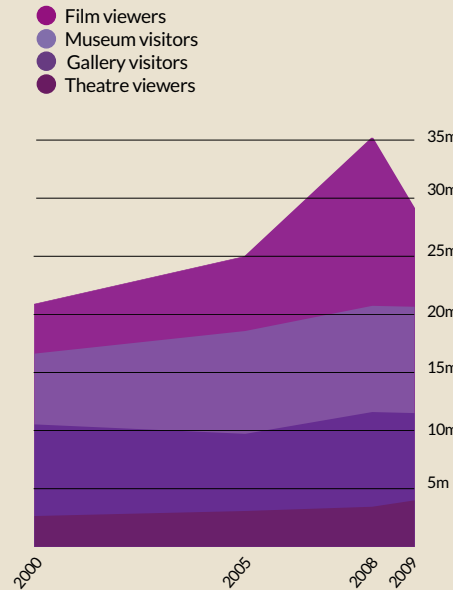


3

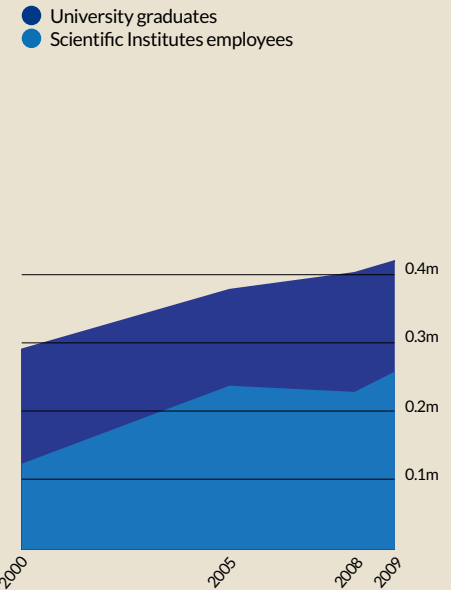
# Ideas

It is not an overstatement to say that for centuries Poland was a land of great ideas rather than a land of impressive things. In a country so frequently ravaged by wars and other disasters, it was rarely possible to amass and hold on to material wealth: from art collections, libraries and family jewels, to bridges and factories. At the same time, philosophy, mathematics, music, theatre and poetry thrived in the adversity of a challenging history, even when books and scripts were the first to burn. Poland has been enjoying an unprecedented period of stability and prosperity in the past twenty years, further strengthened from the moment we joined the European Union. Industry, technology, science, architecture, design and other fields that need a secure environment are developing again, making up for decades of negligence. But without the continued history of great ideas, they would be like a house with no foundations

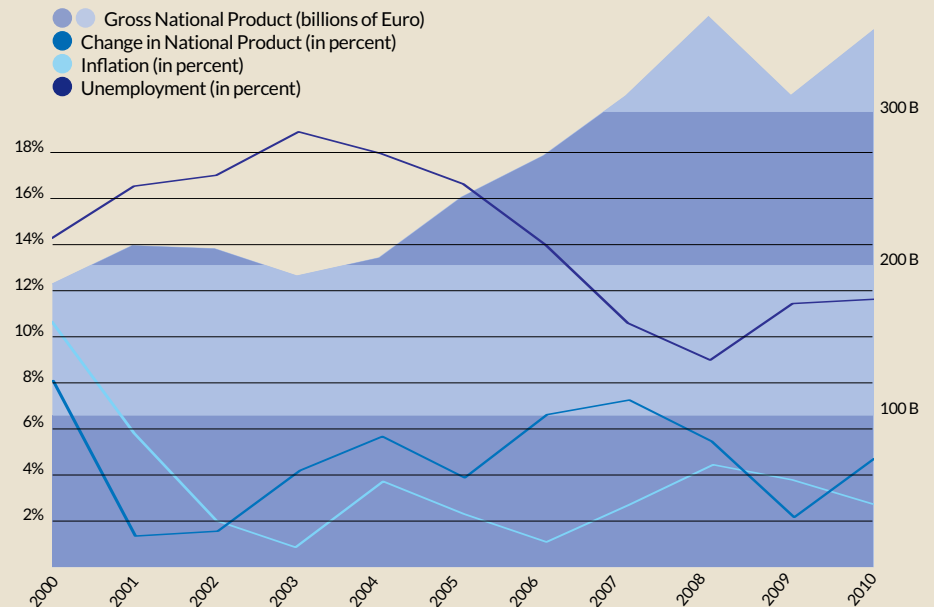
## Culture



## Science & Education



## Economy





# Film

The Polish Film School, or Polska Szkoła Filmowa, is a somewhat nostalgic term for the time when Polish cinema mattered most, both nationally and internationally

“One thing is certain, never before and never again was so much great talent revealed, so many great pictures made and cinema reached such an important position in culture, and was received by the public with so much passion engagement”, wrote the film critic Alicja Helman about the period between 1956 and 1961.

The phenomenon was created mostly by alumni of the Łódź film school who took advantage of a relatively relaxed political atmosphere in the country in 1956 and decided to talk about things that had been hitherto taboo in the communist country. The recent experience of Second World War and of stalinism, depicted frankly, beyond both communist and nationalist-conservative stereotypes, became subject for debut films by now classic directors such as Andrzej Wajda, Stanisław Różewicz and Andrzej Munk. Wajda's *Kanał*, awarded the Special Jury Prize in Cannes in 1957, is a benchmark of the Polish Film School with its bitter portrayal of young people who have lost everything in the Warsaw uprising and are making their way through the city's underground canals to escape from a besieged neighbourhood. Andrzej Munk chose a more ironic approach in his *Bad Luck* (*Zezowate szczęście*), a story of a Zelig-like figure who gets into all sorts of trouble throughout Poland's tumultuous history.

The Polish Film School often looked into literary classics for inspiration, adapting famous Polish novels and novellas, and commissioned leading Polish novelists and playwrights to write scripts. Cinematography, often black and white was another strength of The PFS, which was allowed for not just by talent of cinematographers but also by the slow pace of production. The class of '56 was just a beginning. More and more alumni of the Łódź school followed suit: Roman Polański, who shot only one film in Poland, *Knife in the Water*, before making *Repulsion* and *Cul-de-sac* in England, and Wojciech Jerzy Has, who still mesmerizes film lovers around the world with his cult classics: *The Saragossa Manuscript* and *The Hour Glass Sanatorium*.

If you feel like taking a trip back in time, visit the Cinematography Museum in Łódź, which collects posters, costumes, sets, film stills and other memorabilia, not just from the fifties and the sixties, but from the whole century-long history of Polish cinema. When in Warsaw, look out for The Best of Polish Movies – regular screenings of Polish classic with subtitles in English or Spanish, at the National Library.

An open-air screening at the Market Square in Wrocław during the Era New Horizons festival.



1

## Kuba Mikurda

Critic, translator, editor, works for the Department of Contemporary Culture at the Jagiellonian University

### Era New Horizons →1 Wrocław, July

The most interesting landmarks on the map of Polish film festivals. For more than 10 years, the ENH has consistently expanded the aesthetic horizons of Polish audiences – it presents the discoveries of major festivals worldwide, organises reviews for specific authors and the cinema of nations whose works do not receive much attention otherwise, going beyond the borders of the cinema and visual arts. The showcase of the festival is a competition associated with a specific and distinct type of aesthetics. The ENH competition values experimentation, contemplative cinema, no-plot scripts, cinema that forces the viewer to abandon his or her habits, provoking new ways of watching. The ENH is also the **ENH space** – collateral events, including

exhibitions, workshops, debates, numerous publications (the ENH has already published more than 20 books), and the cycle **New Horizons of Film Education**, targeted at young audiences and carried out in co-operation with cinemas and schools across Poland. During the ten days of the festival, Wrocław becomes a city of cinephiles – you can often see people deeply engaged in film debates, sometimes in the strangest of circumstances. Foreign viewers will be glad to find out that the vast majority of films are screened with English subtitles.

### Watch Docs. Human Rights in Film Warsaw, December

A festival organised by people who believe that even if the films themselves don't change the world, the viewers who watch them can change a lot, indeed.

### Animator Poznań, July

Those who are hungry for more cinema should add the festival to their list, as it is the biggest animated film festival in Poland, which takes place every year with outstanding guests from around the world.

### American Film Festival Wrocław, November

It bears testimony to the fact that the continent of American cinema – seemingly familiar and acknowledged – is for us still *terra incognita*.

### Summer Film Academy Zwierzyniec, August

Fans of holiday film tourism should venture to Zwierzyniec for a festival which merges ambitious repertoire with picturesque natural setting.

# Performing Arts

Poland has more than 140 publicly funded and private theatres. The Polish School of Theatre, deeply immersed in Poland's history and tradition, with a courageous critical approach to reality, has resulted in a truly rich theatrical scene

Jerzy Grotowski (1933–1999) is one of the foremost figures in the Polish School and is world renowned as one of the greatest reformers in the history of theatre. Grotowski transformed theatre into a research laboratory. He believed that the actor and spectator were the most important factors in a performance. In addition to his work in Poland, Grotowski conducted international workshops and towards the end of his life relocated to Pontedera, Italy, where in 1986 he established the Work centre of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards. In the peace and quiet of the Tuscan countryside, Grotowski carefully selected apprentices from around the world and conducted experimental research into his 'ritual arts'. To this day Grotowski's artistic heirs continue this research in artistic exploration.

Another internationally recognised artist is Tadeusz Kantor (1915–1990), the creator of Zero Theatre (otherwise known as 'performance without action'), Informal Theatre (chance events and movements) and the Theatre of Death. Kantor treated props and actors on equal terms and staged his works as happenings.

The next years have witnessed the emergence of new generations of theatrical artists who have also been very well received in theatres throughout Europe. This group includes Krzysztof Warlikowski, Grzegorz Jarzyna, Krystian Lupa and Jan Klata. Warlikowski is a theatre and opera director, who specialises in theatre of the antiquity, William Shakespeare (11 plays) and contemporary drama. Warlikowski's productions subtly address contemporary social issues. He is a student of Krystian Lupa's, known throughout Europe for his treatment of the human condition in our Eurocentric-Christian world. Jan Klata uses classics of Polish literature to confront contemporary social phenomena.

Tadeusz Kantor emerged as one of the most important figures of the 20th-century Polish theatre, successfully transcending national and cultural borders.





# Performing Arts



## Maciej Nowak

Director of the Raszewski Theatre Institute in Warsaw, recommends the most important Polish theatre and dance festivals

There are many theatre festivals in Poland and they are extremely popular among theatregoers throughout Europe. The festivals primarily serve to provide an overview of performances from all over Poland, but also to delineate general trends of development

**Warszawskie Spotkania Teatralne (Warsaw Theatre Meetings) → 2**  
Warsaw, April

The most significant festivals. These events, revived in 2008 after an eight-year hiatus, have been re-established as a grand celebration of Polish culture, to the great acclaim of theatre fans (some 8,000 spectators).

**Prapremiery (Pre-premieres)**  
Bydgoszcz, October

A competition of the previous season's premiere performances from throughout Poland. Kraków's Reminiscencje (October) dates back to 1975, though the format was refreshed in 2003 giving it more programmatic integrity and making it one of the most highly regarded theatre festivals in Poland and abroad.

**Warszawa Centralna → 1 (Warsaw Central Station)**  
Warsaw, October

Organised by Teatr Dramatyczny, it aims to reshape Poland as a phantasmagorical space and the site of exploratory undertakings by various cultures and nations.

**R@port Gdynia**  
Gdynia, May

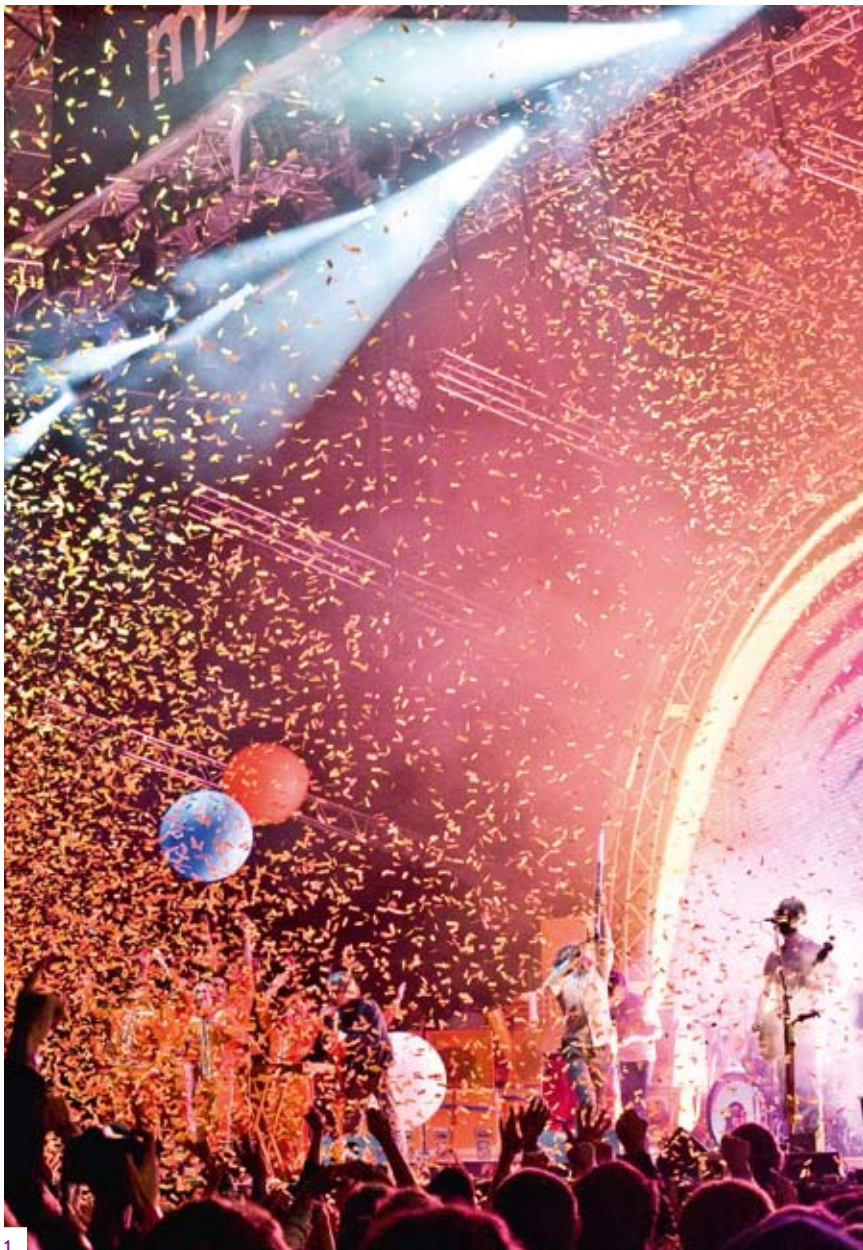
The repertoire of this festival is grounded in a cognitive effort to capture the elements of social discourse that can be addressed by theatre.

**Dialog**  
Wrocław, October

An international festival organised in Wrocław where artists from around the world perform their most important plays.

**Ciało/Umysł (Body/Mind Festival of Dance Theatre)**  
Warsaw, October – November

Champions courageous and inquisitive artists for whom the starting points for stage performances are the flesh and the spirit.



## Jacek Skolimowski

Music journalist, radio host and DJ recommends the best music festivals for every ear and every pair of feet

Recently, Poland has seen an explosion of music festivals – from big pop and rock events to ambitious alternative and contemporary music showcases

Summer and autumn bring on the biggest musical events.

### **Heineken Open'er Festival** *Gdynia, beginning of July*

For almost ten years it has been promoting the biggest and most important mainstream acts from all over the world – from the Chemical Brothers and Massive Attack, to Coldplay, Kings Of Leon and Arctic Monkeys.

### **Off Festival →1** *Katowice, beginning of August*

More focused on presenting alternative music and discovering promising artists from the independent scene. The person responsible for the line-up is Artur Rojek from the popular Polish rock band Myslovitz. If the Open'er Festival is like Poland's Glastonbury, then the Off Festival is more like Barcelona's Primavera Sound, a place to discover budding talent.

### **Unsound Festival** *Kraków, October*

Fans of electronic music will certainly appreciate the ambitious festival. It started seven years ago as a small event mostly for

German, Australian and Polish experimental artists. And now it's one of the best events in Europe for all the new genres like dubstep, radical like noise and demanding like neo-classical.

### **Audioriver** *Płock, Summer*

For the fans of more dance beats there's a really nice event called Audioriver – every summer on a beach by the Wisła in Płock. It's the best place for all night parties with the best DJs and live acts playing everything from techno, drum'n'bass, breakbeat, house, electro and minimal.

### **Burn Selector Festival** *Kraków, June*

Completely new thing on the festival map is, organized for the third time in 2011, with a more and more ambitious line-up.

### **Old vs. New**

Poland has also its own rich tradition of festivals like **Jazz Jambo-ree** or the contemporary music showcase **Warsaw Autumn**, both over 50 years old. They still enjoy much attention and certainly a great deal of respect, but

have to compete with younger events. For the jazz music it's **Warsaw Summer Jazz Days** and for contemporary music it's **Sacrum Profanum** in Kraków. Even the legendary **Jarocin festival**, which in the eighties was a place, where Polish punk-rock was born, has to compete. **Przystanek Woodstock**, a completely free event organised in Kostrzyn, right by the Polish-German border, draws up to even by 400,000 – 500,000 people each year.

### **Warsaw**

To get in touch with the most interesting independent Polish music, simply visit Warsaw anytime, the largest and most diverse centre of musical innovation. Of special note is the label **Lado ABC**, which has been growing for ten years now. The protagonist here is Macio Moretti, leader of the band **Mitch&Mitch**, which started as a spoof country combo, but now comes up with exquisitely arranged style-surfing pieces. Moretti also plays drums in the wacky jazz group **Baaba** and the project **ParisTetris**, where he is joined by the pianist Marcin Masecki and the Argentinian-born singer Candelaria Saenz.



# Books

The three most prolific Polish writers around the world are poets: Tadeusz Różewicz (50 languages) and two Nobel Prize winners, Czesław Miłosz (45 languages) and Wisława Szymborska (41 languages). An interesting phenomenon is the unrelenting fascination with the works of Stanisław Lem – 90 of his books have been published in 42 languages, notwithstanding 76 different anthology contributions

## Olga Tokarczuk

Novelist and essayist who chose to live in a small village in the Sudety mountains, where she perfects her own brand of magical realism. *Prawiek i inne czasy (Primeval and Other Times)* has been translated into Belarusian, Bulgarian, Catalan, Chinese, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Romanian, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish, Swedish and Ukrainian.

## Wojciech Kuczok

Novelist from Silesia Ioho, has won accolades for his frank account of a difficult father-son relationship. *Gnój (Muck)* has been translated into Croatian, Czech, Dutch, French, German, Hungarian, Lithuanian, Russian, Romanian, Serbian, Slovak and Ukrainian.

## Antoni Libera

Poland's foremost expert on Samuel Beckett, author of a Bildungsroman set in 1960s Warsaw. *Madame* has been translated into Catalan, Czech, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hungarian, Italian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Russian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish and Turkish.

## Paweł Huelle

A Tricity author who has written a tale about a mysterious child set in Stalinist-era Gdańsk. *Weiser Dawidek (Who Was David Weiser?)* has been translated into: Czech, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, Hebrew, German, Italian, Norwegian, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian, Spanish and Swedish

## Andrzej Stasiuk

Carefully examines the meanderings of Central European history and culture in his reportage novel *Jadąc do Babadag (On the Way to Babadag)*, translated into Albanian, Bulgarian, Czech, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Lithuanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovenian and Ukrainian.

## Dorota Masłowska

Novelist and playwright, has won the nation's heart with her debut 'chav novel', *Wojna polsko-ruska pod flagą biało-czerwoną (Snow White and Russian Red)*. Her inventive use of colloquial Polish has been more or less faithfully translated into Czech, Dutch, English, French, German, Hungarian, Portuguese, Russian, Slovak, Spanish and Ukrainian.

Warsaw's Czuły Barbarzyńca (the Gentle Barbarian) → 1 was not the first bookshop-cum-café in Poland but certainly the one that defined the moment and

started the craze that does not seem to end. You will find similar places in every respectable Polish city.



1

## Michał Witkowski

Best known for his witty gay novel *Lubiewo* translated into Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Hebrew, Hungarian, Russian, Swedish and Ukrainian.

## Stefan Chwin

*Hanemann*, an erudite novel set in post-war Gdańsk, has been translated into Czech, English, German, Hungarian, Romanian, Russian, Slovak, Spanish, Swedish and Ukrainian.

## Andrzej Sapkowski

The nation's favourite fantasy writer. His cult novel *Krew elfów (Blood of Elves)* has been translated into Czech, English, French, German, Lithuanian, Russian and Spanish.

## Marek Krajewski

Set a trend for crime novels full of periodic details. The first of Eberhardt Mock's investigations *Śmierć w Breslau (Death in Breslau)*, set in the pre-war German city of Wrocław has been translated into Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, German, Hungarian, Italian, Slovak, Spanish and Ukrainian.

## Jacek Dehnel

Poet and novelist known for his nostalgic eye for detail and a taste for elaborate vocabulary. His *Lala (Dolly)* has been translated into German, Hebrew, Hungarian, Italian, Lithuanian, Slovak and Turkish.

# Visual Arts



**Piotr Bazylko,  
Krzysztof  
Masiewicz**

Collectors and lovers of contemporary Polish art. They write a blog about the Polish art market called ArtBazaar

The past twenty years in Poland have been a period of great political and social transformation, as well as a time for the expansion of art spaces – new public and private collections have been created and new galleries opened. Furthermore, it has been a time of great international triumph for Polish artists. Nowadays, the art of Paweł Althamer, Mirosław Bałka, Michał Budny, Rafał Bujnowski, Tomasz Kowalski, Katarzyna Kozyra, Marcin Maciejowski, Wilhelm Sasnal, Monika Sosnowska, Jakub Julian Ziółkowski and Artur Żmijewski is recognised by curators, gallery owners and collectors worldwide. Private galleries, actively promoting Polish art around the world, have made the greatest contribution to the expansion of Polish art abroad.

Still, the most recent Polish art is more than just the big names. Polish galleries, both public and private, showcase works of many young artists. These venues deserve a closer inspection



## WARSAW

**The Foksal Gallery Foundation** →1  
ul. Górskiego 1A, [www.fgf.com.pl](http://www.fgf.com.pl)

They put Polish art onto the international stage. Aside from organising exhibitions, FGF often engages in projects in the public space. FGF is also the founder of Avant-Garde Institute in the former studio of the late artist Edward Krasiński.

**Czarna Gallery**  
ul. Marszałkowska 4 apt. 3,  
☎ tue–fri: 4pm–8pm, sat: 12–6pm  
or by appointment: [czarnagallery@gmail.com](mailto:czarnagallery@gmail.com), [www.czarnagaleria.net](http://www.czarnagaleria.net)

Located in a marvellously renovated second-floor flat of a mid-town tenement house. Exceptional art projects by top artists from the youngest and middle generation make for a worthwhile visit.

**Kolonie**  
ul. Bracka 23 apt. 52, ☎ tue–sat:  
3–8pm, [www.galeriakolonie.pl](http://www.galeriakolonie.pl)

The youngest of Warsaw's institutions comprises a gallery and a publishing house, Kolonie specialises in the latest trends in Polish contemporary art.

**Leto**  
ul. Hoża 9c, visits by appointment:  
501 696 440, [www.letopl](http://www.letopl)

One of Warsaw's most dynamically growing galleries. This is where many famous debuts by artists from the youngest generation took place.

**Lokal\_30**  
ul. Foksal 17b #30,  
☎ wed–fri: 4pm–7pm, [lokal30.pl](http://lokal30.pl)

Housed in a small apartment in an old tenement house by ul.Foksal in the very heart of Warsaw, the

gallery debuted on the international art market at the 2006 Viennafair, where its presentation won the main award.

**Raster** [www.raster.art.pl](http://www.raster.art.pl)

Founded in 2001, the gallery immediately became a symbol of the new generation of both artists and collectors. Today, it is one of the most prominent Polish galleries, present at such prestigious fairs as Art Basel and Art Basel Miami Beach. Raster is also a venue for various performances and meetings with authors.

## KRAKÓW

**Zderzak Gallery**  
ul. Floriańska 3, [www.zderzak.pl](http://www.zderzak.pl)

Founded in 1985, the gallery is one of the most important exhibition spaces on the Polish art market. Zderzak was the first to



# Visual Arts



1



2

re-discover Andrzej Wróblewski, one of the most interesting Polish painters of the 20th century. It was here that the 1999 and 2000 debuts of Ładnie Group artists took place.

## Galeria ZPAF I S-ka

ul. św. Tomasza 24, [www.zpafiska.pl](http://www.zpafiska.pl)

The gallery focuses on presenting and promoting photography as a medium of contemporary art

and organises an annual photography festival (Photomonth).

## Starmach Gallery →1

ul. Węgierska 5, ☎ mon–fri: 11am–6pm, [www.starmach.com.pl](http://www.starmach.com.pl)

Located in a redecorated interior of a Jewish prayer house in the Podgórze district of Kraków, the gallery is run by Andrzej Starmach, who specialises in contemporary Polish classics.

## GDAŃSK

### Wyspa Institute of Art

ul. Doki 1/145 B, ☎ 12–6 pm tue–sun, [www.wyspa.art.pl](http://www.wyspa.art.pl)

Founded in 2004 on the grounds of the legendary Gdańsk shipyard, the Institute became one of Poland's leading cultural institutions. Wyspa is the first Polish non-profit institution with international outreach to be run by a non-governmental organisation dealing in contemporary art culture.

## POZNAŃ

### Piekary Gallery

ul. Piekary 5, 1st floor, ☎ mon–fri: 10am–5pm [www.galeria-piekary.com.pl](http://www.galeria-piekary.com.pl)

Presents the art of the 20th and 21st centuries, paying particular attention to avant-garde trends.

### Stereo Gallery →2

ul. Słowackiego 36/1, [www.galeriastereo.pl](http://www.galeriastereo.pl)

The youngest and most dynamic of Poznań's galleries specialises in what is most recent in Polish art. The gallery serves as a space for individual and group exhibitions that convey the most captivating of the current trends in Polish art.

## ŁÓDŹ

### Galeria Atlas Sztuki

ul. Piotrkowska 114/116, ☎ tue–fri: 4–8pm, [www.atlasmusztuki.pl](http://www.atlasmusztuki.pl)

Atlas is a small private gallery whose exhibition program out-ri-vals that of many public institutions. It is here that many exhibits and debuts important on the national scale have been held.



1

## The Poster Museum →1

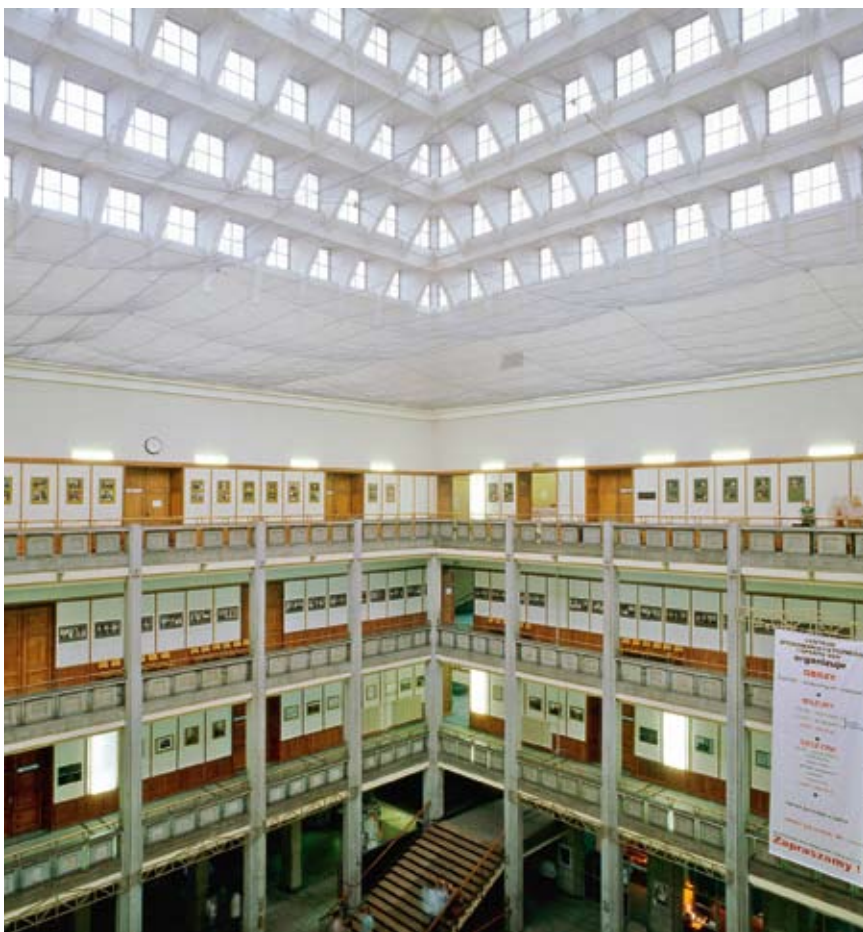
ul. Stanisława Kostki-Potockiego 10/16, Warsaw, ☎ mon: 12pm–4 pm, tue–fri: 10am–4pm, sat–sun: 10am–6pm

A small pavilion next to the Wilanów royal palace opened in 1968, when the Polish Poster School was already an internationally recognised phenomenon, as the first such institution in the world. The genre was born in the

mid-fifties when the film industry and state propaganda machine started to commission artists to design posters for countless events and occasions. They were free to experiment with the form so long as the content was politically tame. The resulting posters still stun with innovative typography and witty metaphors. Each of the leading artists, such as Roman Cieślęwicz, Henryk Tomaszewski, Jan Lenica, Jan

Młodożeniec, Waldemar Świerzy, Wojciech Zamecznik, developed their trademark styles, ranging from expressive free-hand drawing to extremely minimalist. The spirit and quality live on in the young generation of Polish graphic designers presented at the museum, along with the best of international poster art, at the **International Poster Biennale** organised by the museum every other year.

# Education



Warsaw School of Economics (SGH) is one of the country's most prestigious universities.

The most important centres for higher education are in Warsaw, Kraków, Wrocław, Poznań, Łódź and the Tricity area (Gdańsk / Gdynia / Sopot). Poland currently has nearly 2,000,000 students (including 15,800 foreigners) attending its 458 institutions of higher education (132 state-owned, 326 private)

The most popular courses of studies are economics, business and public administration (23% of students), social sciences (13.9%), education (12%), liberal arts (8.8%), engineering (6.8%), medicine (5.8%), computer sciences (4.9%), public services (3.7%), law (3.1%), environmental protection (1.4%) and other (16.4%).

Warsaw's 66 universities and colleges, attended by 300,000 students, give it by far the largest concentration of post-secondary education in Poland. The capital city is home to such renowned institutions as Warsaw University, the Warsaw School of Economics, the Warsaw School of Social Science and Humanities, the Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw University of Life Sciences, the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music and the Warsaw University of Technology

The 'Most' programme enables students to participate in parallel studies at several different universities at the same time and is extremely popular among Polish students. The Erasmus programme brings a growing number of foreign students to Poland. Many of them begin their stay in the country by learning Polish at the School of Polish for Foreigners at the University of Łódź ([www.sjpd.cuni.lodz.pl](http://www.sjpd.cuni.lodz.pl)).

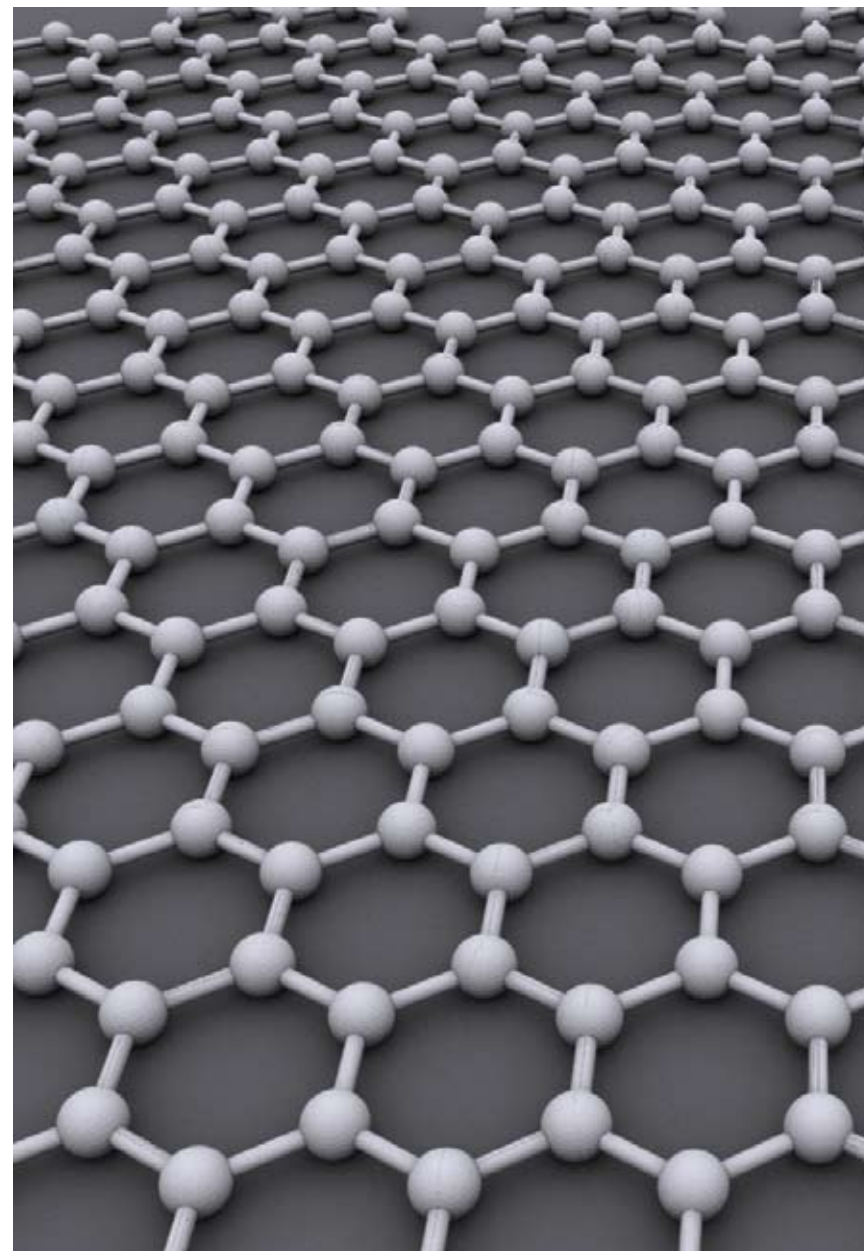


# Science

A century may have passed since Poland's last Nobel Prize in science (for Maria Skłodowska-Curie), but the spirit of innovation lives on

Polish scientists are patenting global industrial production of graphene, a miraculous material that is set revolutionise electronics over the next decade. Poland is the first country in the world to be capable of producing it on an industrial scale. Graphene means smaller, cheaper and much faster computers. Discovered in 2004, one gram of graphene can cover several football pitches. But that is not all. With better conductivity than copper it is one hundred times stronger than steel. Graphene was invented at the Institute of Materials Technology (ITME) in Warsaw. The ITME is now working on obtaining an international patent for mass production. Scientists from the ITME devised a way of transferring production of graphene from the laboratory to industrial scale using equipment that had been used for years in the manufacture of semiconductor structures. Scientists believe that in 10 years the full miniaturisation of silicon-based systems will end and graphene will replace it. It is likely that EU funds will be available to support the development of graphene, with the 10-year Flagship programme starting in 2012 and a budget of EUR 100 million.

Graphene is so thin that it would take three million sheets of it to form a one millimeter layer.





## Robert Firmhofer

Director of the Copernicus Science Centre in Warsaw, recommends three exciting new projects by Polish scientists

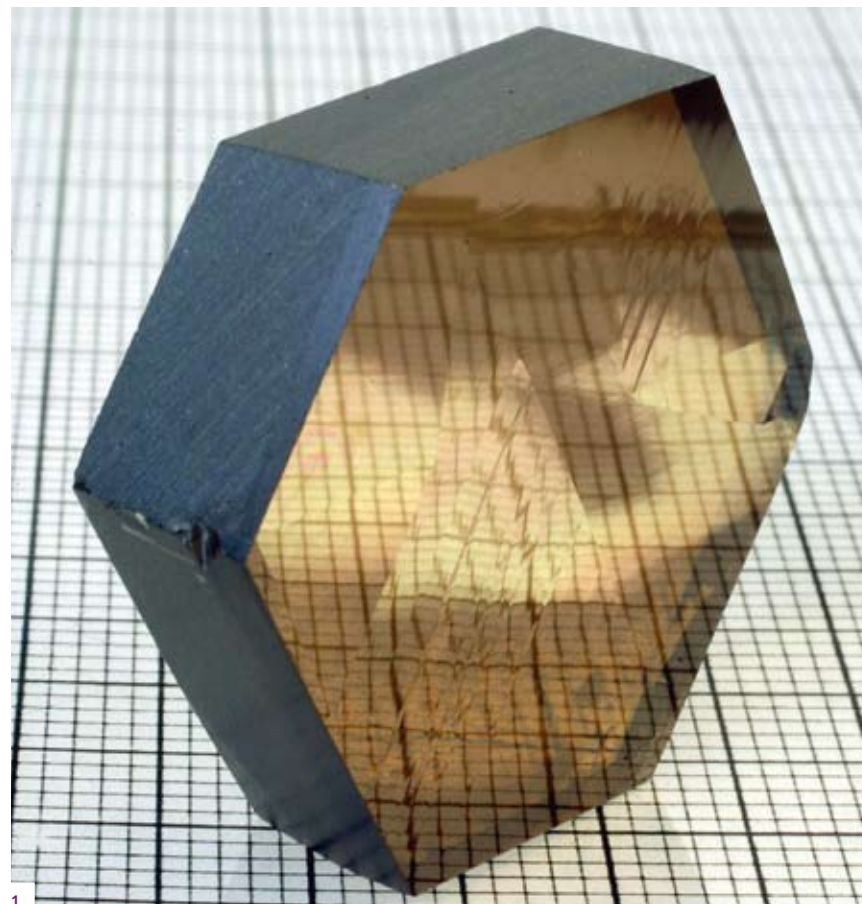
### Gallium nitride →1

The first noteworthy project is a new technology developed by the company Ammono. This small company, which has yet to make a name for itself, has developed a new method for synthesising the best, biggest and purest crystals of gallium nitride. This discovery has put Ammono on the cutting edge of innovation in the 21st century. PhD students at the Warsaw Polytechnic and Warsaw university founded the company 10 years ago. Much like silicon, gallium nitride is a semiconductor, although it has many additional physical properties, such as the capacity to emit light. Gallium nitride crystals are already used to produce Blu-ray lasers and in the future they will most likely revolutionise the market for laser projectors. The new technology makes it possible to miniaturize equipment while maintaining high resolution and colour quality. Thanks to the methods developed in Poland, computers should soon be shrunk down to unthinkable small dimensions and miniature devices will be able to project high-quality images on-demand wherever we want, for example on any wall. Gallium nitride is also used to produce light-emitting diodes and in electrical switching devices. New gallium-nitride based semiconductors will increase the capacity of electrical circuitry to handle higher voltages and frequencies, resulting in greater energy efficiency for many types of equipment, including electrical and hybrid automobiles. One of the biggest problems for electrical cars is their limited range. More efficient gallium nitride crystals will make it possible to extend considerably battery capacity without an increase in size. The team of young scientists at Am-

mono are continuing the best Polish traditions in semiconductor research, harking back to Jan Czochralski, the inventor of the method for synthesising single crystals. The Czochralski method of growing single crystals of silicon is used to this day in the mass production of microprocessors.

### Cardiac surgery robots

The second important project brings together high technology and the medical sciences. Scientists at the Foundation for the Development of Cardiosurgery (founded by the late Dr. Zbigniew Religa) have created a series of cardiac surgery robots known as the Robin Heart Family. The team is also working on an artificial heart. The Robin Heart robots are high-precision surgical devices for use in cardiac surgery. Currently, the only country that produces cardiac surgery robots is the United States. The Polish-designed robots currently being developed will represent an advance on American technology in this area and are the only such under development in Europe. The robots greatly reduce the invasive nature of cardiac surgery and decrease risks associated with surgery for the patient. They also make it possible to conduct operations at a distance (teleoperations). During such an operation, an advisor supports the robot operator with an intelligent database containing all clinical data on the patient. The new Polish robot is still being tested and has not yet been used to operate on a human being. The most advanced operations to date have been on pigs, including open-heart surgery conducted via tele-operation in February 2011 by two clinics miles apart from each other in Silesia, in southern Poland.



### Plant nervous system

The third project presents a discovery by the Polish biologist Stanislaw Karpinski. After many years of working in Sweden, and thanks to the Wellcome programme of the Foundation for Polish Science, Prof. Karpinski recently returned to Poland. His team discovered that plants have a primitive nervous system. They noted that plants have the capacity and a mechanism to share in-

formation about the type of light that shines on particular leaves of a plant. The team researched how plants record information about the intensity of sunlight and its colour. Intra-leaf communication is facilitated, as it turns out, by a flow of electrical impulses, similar to an animal's nervous system, but functioning at a much slower speed. This highly complex mechanism also involves processing of signals from quantum to analogue/electro-physiological in-

formation. Karpinski's discovery means that to fully understand plant life we need not only biology, but also to look to the realms of physics and mathematics. This not only expands our understanding of the plant world, but also shows us that plants are much more closely related to animals than we previously thought. The manner in which plants process information suggests analogies with quantum computers.



# Economy



1



2

The Polish economy, eh? Where to start? A big small country, a small big country? Poland's perennial question. A major European powerhouse or a backwater supplying cheap labour?

The country – and its economy – is marked by its history in a way few others are, even in Central Europe. A product in many ways still of the partitions of the 19th century, a prosperous, 'Germanic' west and south-west, with Poznań and Szczecin's major economic and financial centres, Katowice and Silesia's major producers of (nasty, nasty) coal-driven energy. Then the backward east, the forgotten east, with its stereotypical, almost 19th century feel, its over-populated dilapidated 'collective' farms, a source of cheap labour in Manchester, Sheffield, Chicago...Berlin?

An agricultural country with some industry or an industrial country with a large rural population? A post-industrial country, with booming services, high tech and progressive, big on design software, highly trained mathematicians and computer literature graduates? Yes, Poland is still a land of fascinating disjointedness.

All the above are true and all are in themselves also meaningless without qualification and context. Infuriating and fascinating in equal measure. A nation of rude shopkeepers, awful Byzantine bureaucracy, but one full of start-up firms, entrepreneurs schooled in perhaps a more ruthless, ambitious and smart form of capitalism than many outsiders might imagine. Many forged in doing their business in a centralised demand-driven economy have some entrepreneurial skills that many western business school graduates could take lessons from. Not the fancy theoretical stuff, perhaps (although there is also enough of that to go round), but in the practical, the pragmatic mechanics of getting things done, bypassing, negotiating the bureaucracy. Pricing, competition, 'getting to market,' are just some of the wonderful things about capitalism that 40 years of state socialism taught the Poles! Nothing is impossible in this country. That should be its motto. A place that thrives at the crossroads of many business cultures.

Poland now has Europe's sixth-biggest economy. It was the only country in the European Union to note economic growth in 2010. As such its borrowing needs are easily and relatively cheaply financed, with lenders' generosity allowing the government to run a budget deficit of about 7% of GDP. In some part Poland's relative immunity from the bitter winds of the global financial crisis is due to its relative backwardness, its banks, for example, arriving late to the foreign-currency lending party that hit, for example Latvia and Hungary. Pension

→1 Polish industry is more and more focused on quality products, for instance turning out custom made yachts.

→2 The DNA Research Centre in Poznań uses the latest technology for early diagnosis of cancer.

reform, modernisation of the roads and railways (2,000km of new fast roads will be built by 2012, when Poland and Ukraine co-host the European football championships) should underpin the slow shifting reform process. Rising public debt and a stubbornly high budget deficit are worth watching, but this is not Athens!

This country of 38.5 million people are it seems close to shedding the 'emerging market' label. Many Polish factories have become part of the German supply chain because of Poland's high productivity and low wages. The country will not meet the technical requirements for euro membership until 2015 at the earliest, but that may in fact help. Poland has a balanced economy, big on energy, agriculture, manufacturing, high tech research and development. It also has a large internal economy. Since 2004, when Poland joined the EU and had access to EU structural funds, unemployment has remained perniciously high, but inflation is lowish (at about 3-3.5% - close to the upper limit of the National Bank of Poland's target rate).

Clean energy and high tech manufacturing are areas that Poland can thrive as it moves away from the old models, a post-industrial economy based on diversified services and high tech solutions. Poland's shale gas potential, for example, has been estimated at between 1.5 trillion cubic meters (tcm) and 3 tcm. Shale gas potential of 1.5 tcm would mean that Poland has a near 200 year supply of gas beneath its soil. Insiders said the sector could become commercially viable in the next 5-10 years. Another interesting area, that highlights how potentially decaying industrial areas, and communities, can reinvent themselves is the luxury yacht market. Poland's yachting industry is experiencing phenomenal growth and is set to become a European yacht-building hub, whose products are marked by high quality and low prices. Poland's yacht production sector has grown more than fivefold over the last five years. In 2010, the value of its sales reached almost \$500 million, giving Poland about five percent of a global market that is currently valued at around \$11.5 billion. Overall about 95 percent of all luxury yachts made in Poland are sold abroad and about 90 percent of this figure is sold to clients in the EU and the USA. Italy, the world's largest luxury yacht maker, exports 65 percent of its total production.

Solaris coaches get commuters around in cities all over Europe - from Athens to Warsaw, from Poznań to Munich. 60 % of the production is exported abroad.



**Krzysztof  
Olszewski**

Founder and many-year president of the Supervisory Board of Solaris Bus & Coach S.A., manufacturer of city and intercity buses, coaches, trolleybuses, special buses and trams

Poland is my favourite country to work in because of all the enormous possibilities that it offers. You can thrive in many areas here: arts, sport or economy.



# Stock Exchange



Marx is rolling in his grave: the Warsaw Stock Exchange headquarters was built right next to the former communist party headquarters.

Contrary to many perceptions, Poland has a long history of equity and even early derivatives trading. The first stock exchange in Warsaw was opened in 1817. The modern Warsaw Stock Exchange (WSE) began operating in its present form in 1991 and is now the largest bourse in both Central Europe and Eastern Europe

The market value of domestic companies traded in Warsaw is about €120 billion, compared with €73 billion listed in Vienna, Warsaw's nearest rival in the region. Trading volumes were also higher than for competing markets, at nearly €25 billion, compared with €20.7 billion each in Vienna and Athens. However, looking west, there is still some way to go. The market value of domestic companies listed at the SIX exchange in Zurich was €802.6 billion and in Frankfurt at €903.2 billion. Trading volumes leapt 70% in 2010 after the government floated several large companies: PZU in May in a \$2.5 billion IPO and also sold its majority stake in electric energy utility Tauron in June in an IPO worth \$1.3 billion — bucking the trend across Europe. The two offers were among the five largest in Europe in the second quarter of last year. The Warsaw bourse was also the IPO market leader by total value, with seven companies raising a total of €3.1 billion in the second quarter on the regulated market.

The government has been seeking a buyer for the WSE for some time, but after several failed projects, including an attempt to sell to Frankfurt-based Deutsche Boerse, there is no buyer in sight. In 2009 the exchange invited four international exchanges to buy the bourse - London Stock Exchange, Deutsche Boerse, Nasdaq OMX and NYSE Euronext. The effort fell through in the final weeks of 2009 because of a lackluster response to the offering. In November 2010 the government offered 63% of shares to the public. The WSE sale is the pearl in Poland's privatisation drive which aims to raise PLN 25 billion (6.36 billion euros) to plug a public deficit due to balloon to 7% of GDP this year, more than double the 3% of GDP EU limit.

The WSE is a joint-stock company created by the State Treasury and has 38 different shareholders. These shareholders are a mixture of brokerage houses, banks, the State Treasury and a listed company. The main trade organisations operating in Warsaw are the EU, the TWO and the OECD. There are currently 274 companies listed on the WSE. Some examples of these companies are Netia, the TP Group, Grupa LOTOS, KGHM Polska Miedz SA and Bank Pekao SA.

# Design



## Agnieszka Jacobson-Cielecka

Design critic and curator, co-founder and long time editor-in-chief of the Polish edition of Elle Décor, curator of the October Łódź Design festival

What makes Polish young designers stand out? Thirtysomethings eagerly reach for simple, inexpensive, natural and readily available materials: wood, OSB, MDF, felt, semi-finished products or reclaimed materials. They often make their products themselves or with the help of local craftsmen, in very limited quantities. Many designs are characterised by a perverse sense of humour and irony, shying from convention

They are often informed by Polish tradition, material culture and craft. In these days of globalisation and easy access to standardised technologies, uniqueness and provenance have become priceless. Reaching back to the roots, Polish designers exploit local resources. They replicate traditional ornamentation, colour schemes and decoration motifs and re-work and re-interpret old patterns. Young Polish design is a perfect symbiosis of natural resources and advanced technology. The projects show an appetite for the new without forsaking the old. Designers like Azé hire local artisans, create jobs and unleash the need to return to primary sources. The most spectacular example of innovative use of folk inspiration combined with the high-tech is the Polish pavilion designed for the Expo 2010 in Shanghai by WWAA Architects (Natalia Paszkowska and Marcin Mostafa). The basic idea of the project was to distinguish the country visually. Hence the motif of folk cut-outs, applied onto a modern form. The basic finishing elements of the pavilion were made of plywood. From the outside, filler panels were made of glass, polycarbon and insulated laminate were mounted on to the modules, water and UV resistant materials.

Anyone interested in the visual side of everyday life in Poland should check out the Polish Advertisement Festival in Warsaw, every year in April or May, AD Days in Łódź (end of November) and the Photomonth in Kraków that opens in May.

→1 The souvenirs produced for the Polish EU Presidency in 2011 allude, inter alia to distinctly Polish folk costumes and dances.

These toys were designed by Anna Łoskiewicz and Zofia Strumiłło from Beza Projekt

→2 Puff Buff Design are making waves around the world with their inflatable PVC lamps



1



2



Chances are that you are sitting on a Polish sofa when reading this book. Poland is the fourth largest furniture manufacturer in the world, surpassed only by China, USA and Italy.



## What is the best thing in Poland? Forests and wood



### Tomek Rygalik

Industrial designer, lives and works in Warsaw. Academic at the London Royal College of Art. Studied architecture and design in Łódź, New York and London. Designs for Italian, Finnish and Polish companies. Contributed to the special line of furniture produced for the Polish EU Presidency in 2011 (opposite page, left)

Poland is a furniture manufacturer of European and worldwide renown. We produced mainly wooden furniture, which in my opinion, forms our material culture and is part of our identity. Talking to many people from across the world, I found out that wood is very much associated with Poland. Wood is an essential material for us Poles. Obviously, it comes from forests, and just as Poland is famous for being Europe's third and the world's fourth furniture manufacturer – Polish forests and landscapes are also its landmarks. Be it in Mazury (Masuria) among the lakes, or in Tatry (Tatra Mountains), there are beautiful forests everywhere in Poland, both coniferous and leafy. I often visit various places in Poland, among others Bieszczady (mountain range in southern Poland) or Kociewie – a region near Bory Tucholskie (Poland's largest pine tree forest complex). I have always been surrounded by forest, it's inspirational. The forest is something truly beautiful – something we can recommend to people from other countries.



## About Poland

Warsaw / Warszawa 2011  
ISBN 978-83-89546-83-8

## Published by

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
of the Republic of Poland in the  
framework of the Polish Presi-  
dency in the EU Council (2011)



## Contributors

Grzegorz Piątek, Jo Harper,  
Ewelina Bartosik, Arkadiusz  
Gruszczyński

## Editorial team

Grzegorz Piątek, Jo Harper,  
Ewelina Bartosik, Arkadiusz  
Gruszczyński, Katarzyna Maniak,  
Bogna Świątkowska  
Bęc Zmiana New Culture  
Foundation / www.funbec.eu

## Consultants

Krzysztof Świrek (Polish Film  
School), Izabella Kaluta, The  
Book Institute (Books)

## Translations

Emilia Bulman, Marek Jarosz,  
John Kubiniec, Agnieszka Le Nart  
(copy editor), Łukasz Mojsak,  
Małgorzata Nowicka

## Graphic design

Tomek Bersz / berszmisiak.com  
Cooperation: Bartek Stefaniak

## Book is set with fonts

*Timeline* by Marian Misiak  
*Lato* by Łukasz Dziedzic

## Sources of data for graphs

**Opening information for cities**  
(pages: 54, 66, 74, 82, 94, 100, 110,  
120, 126, 134, 140, 146):  
The Institute of Meteorology and  
Water Management, Union of  
Polish Metropolis, Central Statis-  
tical Office's publications

**Life** (page 17): Statistical Year-  
book of the Republic of Poland  
2010; Polish Census of 2002

**Population of agglomerations  
and cities** (page 53): Union of  
Polish Metropolis

**Nature** (page 151): Statistical  
Yearbook of the Republic of  
Poland 2010

**Ideas** (page 175): Statistical Year-  
book of the Republic of Poland  
2010, The Union of Polish Me-  
tropolis, Eurostat

## Photos

Marta Arkiersztejn - **180**  
Archive of the Ministry of  
Regional Development - **196**  
Archive of the Silesian Castle of  
Art and Enterprise - **73**  
Bartek Banaszak - **40**  
Maciej Bejm - **75**  
Bieg2012 - **50**  
John Borrell - **170**  
City of Poznań Archive - **112,**  
**113,116**  
City of Gdynia - **79**  
City of Szczecin - **41, 121, 122,**  
**123, 124**  
City of Rzeszów - **147, 148**  
City of Białystok - **141, 142, 144**  
City of Łódź - **94, 96, 97, 98**  
City of Katowice - **69**  
Marek Chelminiak - **130**  
Mikołaj Długosz - **25, 42, 44, 46,**  
**68, 72, 84, 88, 89, 92, 95, 117,**  
**125, 138-139, 156-157, 159-161,**  
**164-165, 166-167, 196**  
Press images of PL.2012 sp. z.o.o  
- **50, 51, 105**  
flickr.com/Dpgeb - **110**  
Paweł Fabiański - **61**  
Łukasz Gierałtowski - **75**  
Nicolas Grosspiere - right top **36,**  
left **36, 39, 54, 55, 56, 60, 64, 65,**  
**67, 71, 80, 91, 100, 118, 191, 192**  
Maciej Landsberg - **4, top28,**  
top**29, 35, 58-59, 74, 75, 76, 77,**  
**78, 80, 81, 83, 85, 101, 102, 103,**  
**104, 105, 106, 126, 127, 129, 131,**  
**133, 143, 152-153, 158, 189, 190**  
Wiesław Jurewicz and Romuald  
Sołdek - **108-109**  
Radosław Kazimierzczak - **70**  
Kuba Kraciuk - **57**  
Bogdan Krężel - **107**  
Maciej Kuszela - **115**  
Lubelska Trasa Podziemna,  
Ośrodek „Brama Grodzka  
- Teatr NN” - **137**  
Marcin Mostafa and Natalia  
Paszowska - **168, 169**  
Milosz1 - **111**  
Press images of the Ministry  
of Foreign Affairs - **203, 204**  
Press images of Centrum  
Nauki Kopernik - **62**

Press images of Brama  
Jazz Café - **125**  
Press images od Jazz Café - **69**  
Press images of the Warsaw  
Stock Exchange - **200**  
Press images of the Ammono  
company - **195**  
Press images of the Centre for  
the Documentation of the Art  
of Tadeusz Kantor CRICOTEKA  
- **179**  
Press images of Galeria Starmach  
in Kraków - **188**  
Press images of Galeria Stereo in  
Poznań - **188**  
Press images of Love&Trade - **61**  
Press images of Petit Fleur hotel  
- **132**  
Press images of Narodowe  
Centrum Sportu sp. z o.o. - **48**  
Press images of Lubelski Park  
Naukowo-Technologiczny S.A.  
- **136**  
Press images of Jazzga club - **99**  
Press images of Hotel SPA dr  
Irena Eris - **173**  
Press images of Era New  
Horizons festival - **177**  
Press images of Fundacja Galerii  
Foksal - **187**  
Press images of Głębocek Vine  
Resort & Spa - **173**  
Press images of Solaris - **199**  
Press images of Euro Poznań  
2012 - **51**  
Press images of Wrocław 2012  
- **51**  
Press images of Skład  
Modernista - **63**  
Press images of Belvedere - **64**  
Press images of Stodki Stony - **64**  
Press images of Monopol  
Hotel - **72**  
Press images of Bomba Café - **85**  
Press images of Muzeum  
Sztuki - **99**  
Press images of SPOT. - **117**  
Press images of Gallery **69 - 170**  
Press images Puff Buff - **203**  
Małgorzata Opala - **117**  
Witek Orski - **180**  
Marek Ostrowski - **10-11, 14, 171**  
Joanna Pawluś - **78**

Pixmac royalty-free images - **13,**  
**27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 36, 38, 42,**  
**60, 66, 82, 86-87, 90, 107, 114,**  
**120, 124, 128, 134, 135, 137, 140,**  
**145, 149, 154-155, 160, 162-163,**  
**171, 173,**  
Mariola Poddemska - **73**  
Jacek Poremba - **182**  
Krzysztof Romański - **77**  
Przemysław Sejwa - **145**  
Weronika Szmuc - **85**  
Bartosz Stawiarski - **65**  
Paweł Traczyk - right top **64**  
Łukasz Wojtasik - **62**  
Krzysztof Worobiec - **170**  
Paweł Wójcik - **63**  
Wikipedia - **193**: The method of  
producing graphene for industrial  
purposes, developed by Dr. Eng.  
Włodzimierz Strupiński.