

ARTSY LEIPZIG

IT MUST BE SOMETHING IN THE AIR. IN LEIPZIG, WHERE NO MOMENT IS DULL, THE ATMOSPHERE IS ALWAYS CHARGED WITH CREATIVITY. AND WHILE IN THE PAST, IT WAS THE NOTES OF COMPOSERS LIKE BACH, WAGNER OR MENDELSSOHN LINGERING IN THE AIR, TODAY IT IS THE SMELL OF FRESH PAINT – FROM THE CANVASES OF KNOWN ARTISTS SUCH AS NEO RAUCH OR FROM NEW-GENERATION TALENTS – SCENTING THE ETHER. NOWHERE IS THAT TRUER THAN AROUND THE RED BRICK COMPLEX OF THE SPINNEREI, A REVAMPED COTTON MILL IN THE (FORMER) INDUSTRIAL AREA OF PLAGWITZ. IN RECENT YEARS IT HAS MORPHED INTO A HUB OF CREATIVITY, WITH INDUSTRIAL SPACES BEING CONVERTED INTO SHOWROOMS, DESIGN, MUSIC AND DANCE STUDIOS, ARTISTS' STUDIOS AND ART GALLERIES. IT'S LIKE AN ART OITADEL COMPLETE WITH AN ART STORE, A CAFÉ, AND A CAFETERIA/LOUNGE/BAR DESIGNED BY BRAZILIAN ARCHITECT OSCAR NIEMEYER THAT WILL OPEN ITS DOORS IN THE KIROW FACTORY.

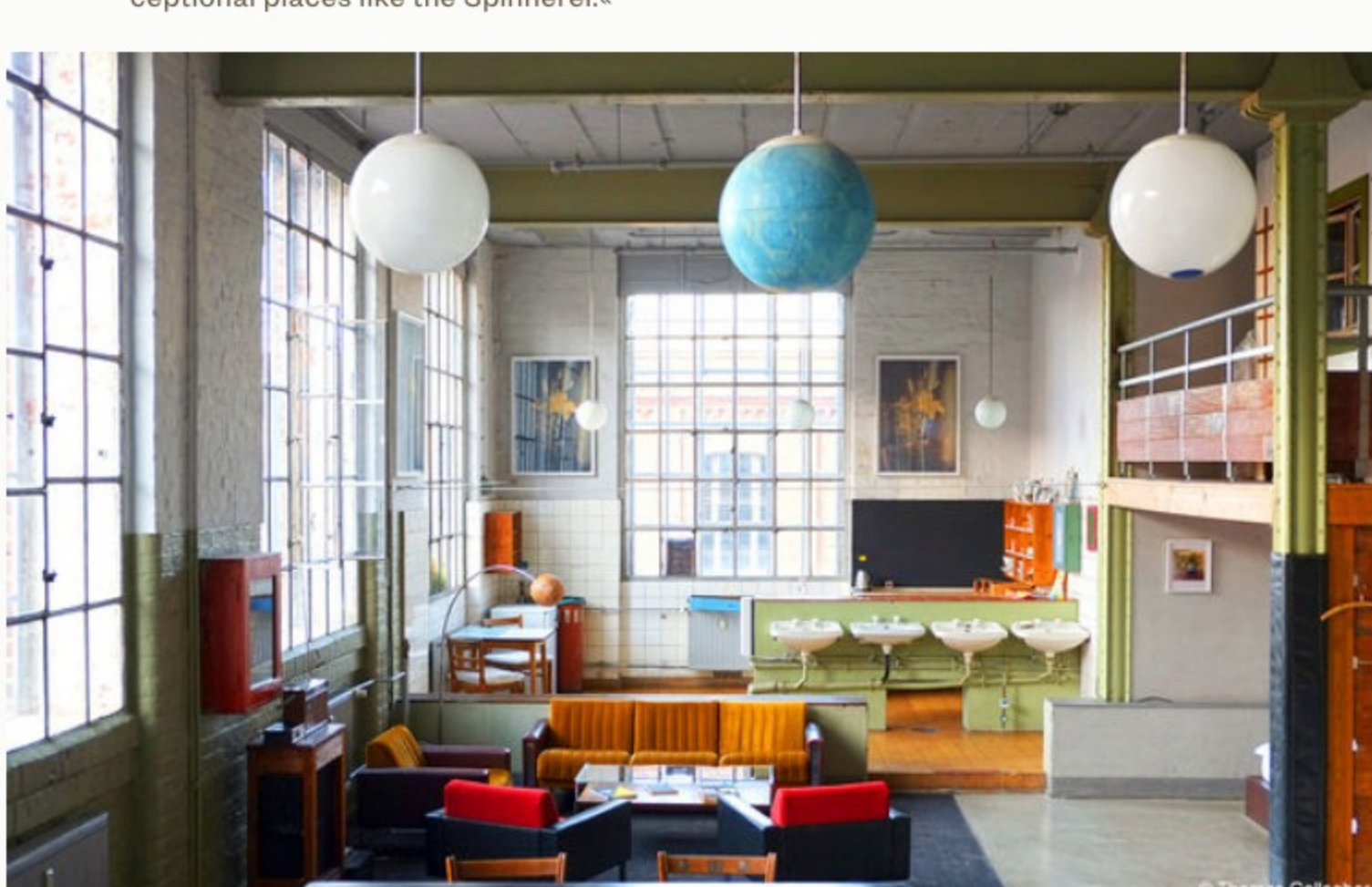


The iconic gallery Eigen + Art.



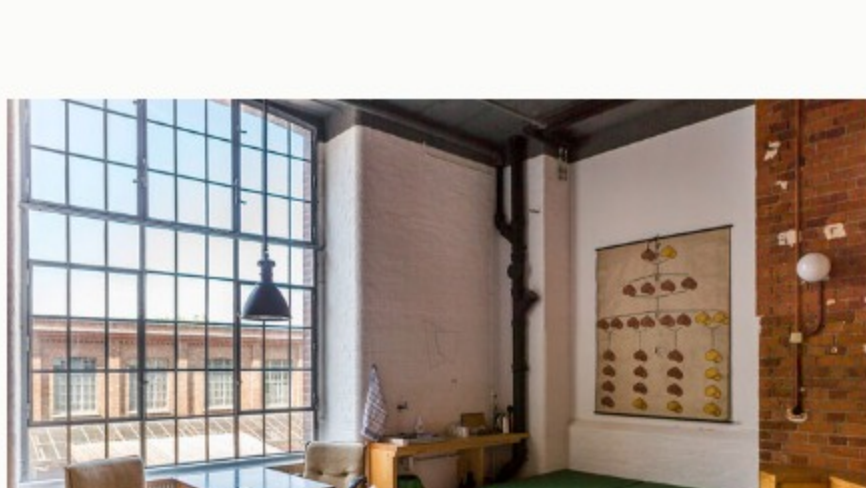
The Spinnerei in Leipzig.

»What makes today's art scene in Leipzig particularly exciting«, explains Gerd Harry Lybke, founder of Eigen + Art, an iconic gallery with spaces both in Leipzig and Berlin, »is the straight forward and inspiring relationship between the artists. Successful artists and artists just starting their careers meet each other on equal terms. The mutual exchange enhances the great location, one that brings much creativity. In Leipzig, people are very interested in art. It's not just the professionals. The entire city is active, claiming its very own space and being proud of it. This has given rise to exceptional places like the Spinnerei.«



The apartments at Meisterzimmer were once ateliers.

And it is at the Spinnerei that our Leipzig adventure starts. We settle in Loft #2 of the **Meisterzimmer**, an uber-cool hotel whose airy spaces used to be artist's studios. Our features lamps made from recycled drums and a work table that makes us want to draw. Our first stop is **Eigen + Art**, where a chat with director Elke Hannemann confirms what we suspected all along: figurative painting is alive and well in Leipzig. And some of the most exciting artists represented by the gallery are former students of Neo Rauch: we admire the bold strokes of Kristina Schultdt and the detailed canvases by Titus Schade. Local (and international) works are also on display in neighboring spaces such as **ASPN Galerie**, which exhibits art by interesting newcomers like Benedikt Leonhardt or **Galerie Jochen Hempel** introducing names such as Katja Tönissen. **Halle 14**, an inspiring cultural center, offers workshops, educational programs, and drawing classes taught by local painters.



In Loft #2 of Meisterzimmer, a worktable immediately arouses the desire to draw.

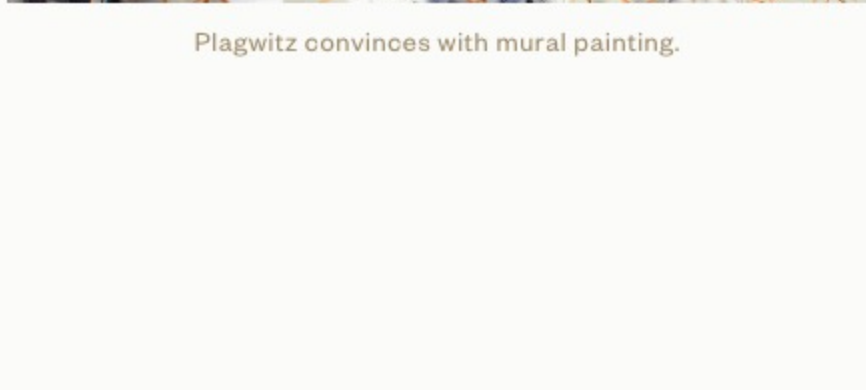
Around the Spinnerei, the **Plagwitz** area, brimming with cool venues, is worth exploring. Discover the **Kunstkraftwerk**, a former power plant whose spaces host multi-media exhibitions and multisensory installations. And admire post-industrial structures such as the **Westwerk**: it will house a food market, artist studios and a café. It already features ateliers such as **WKR**, where the restored industrial furniture is enthralling, or **Enzo Forciniti**, where an Italian artist creates hand-made wood glass frames. Objects by local artists can be found also at **Hafen**, a cute store on Karl-Heine-Straße – the main artery of the area –, where the shelves are stocked with ceramics, prints, and even liqueurs made in Leipzig.



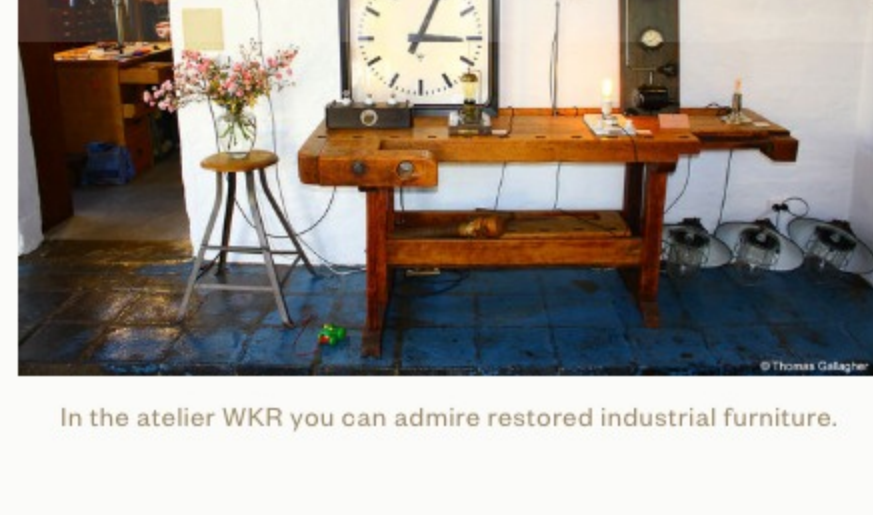
The Westwerk has post-industrial structures.



In the atelier WKR you can admire restored industrial furniture.



Plagwitz convinces with mural painting.



In the atelier WKR you can admire restored industrial furniture.



The Kunstkraftwerk hosts multi-media exhibitions.



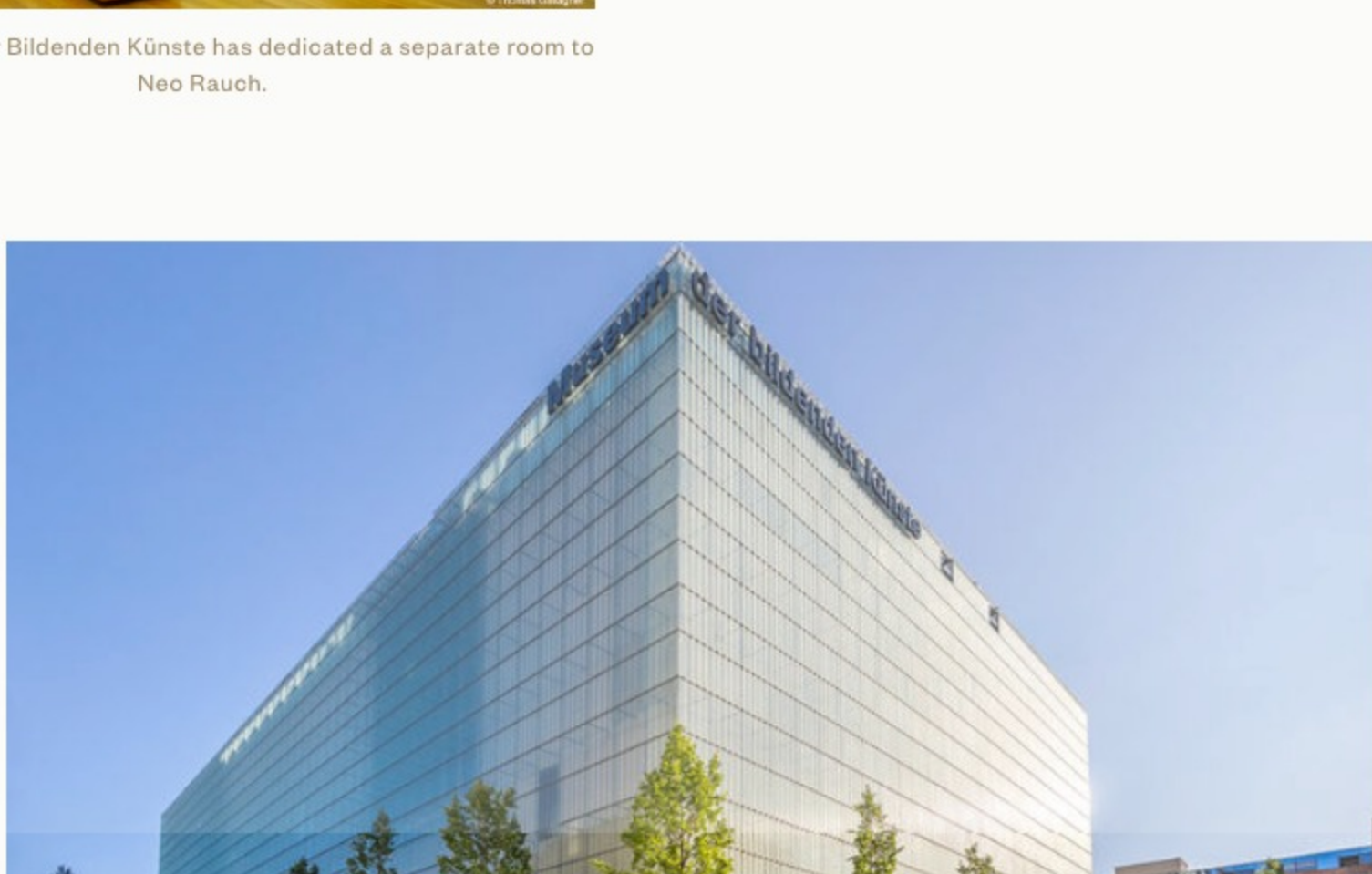
There are spicy fish and meat dishes at the Chinabrenner.

Even artists need to eat, and a variety of eateries caters to their needs. Their favorite haunts? **süß + salzig**, a charming café where homemade soups and crisp tarte flam-bée make for a quick meal at any time of the day. Or **Akko Hummus Bar**, where the hummus is as fresh and authentic as in Tel Aviv. At **Chinabrenner**, an unexpected slice of China in a former metal foundry, the art brigade scoffs spicy fish and meat stews like there is no tomorrow. Nights see the artsy crowd congregate at **Rudi Bar**, where the atmosphere is casual and the cocktails imaginative; or at **Noch Besser Leben**, an alternative hangout where students and artists gather for cheap beers, concerts and happenings. And if you have one drink too many, you can simply collapse in one of the upstairs rooms (for rent).



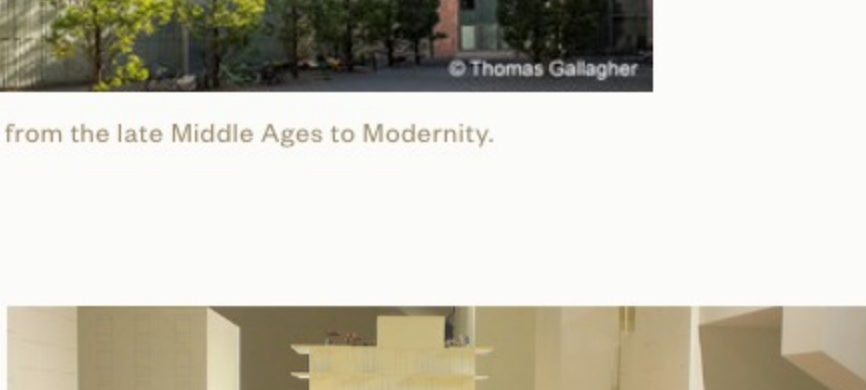
The Museum der Bildenden Künste has dedicated a separate room to Neo Rauch.

Contemporary art, but more institutionalized, can also be found in the picturesque old town, where Gothic, Renaissance and late 17th century styles adorn palaces, churches and courtyards. Located in the heart of the shopping area, the **Museum der Bildenden Künste** displays art from the late Middle Ages to Modernity. A room is dedicated to Neo Rauch, while works by contemporary artists, such as a gigantic dinosaur by Edith Karlson, embellish the passages.



In the Museum der Bildenden Künste you can admire art from the late Middle Ages to Modernity.

The **Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst** is like a contemporary art campus in a park: there is a central building, a café serving home-made food, **Tschau Tschüssi**, a boutique jam-packed with objects by international artists, and two residential suites, **Paris Syndrom** and **Volksboutique**, designed by artists Jun Yang and Christine Hill, that can be rented to spend a night surrounded by creativity. Inspiration galore is to be found also at the **Grassi Museum**, whose collections include musical instruments, furniture, textiles and porcelain. The current exhibition »Together!«, which presents new collective housing projects from Tokyo to Los Angeles, is fascinating.

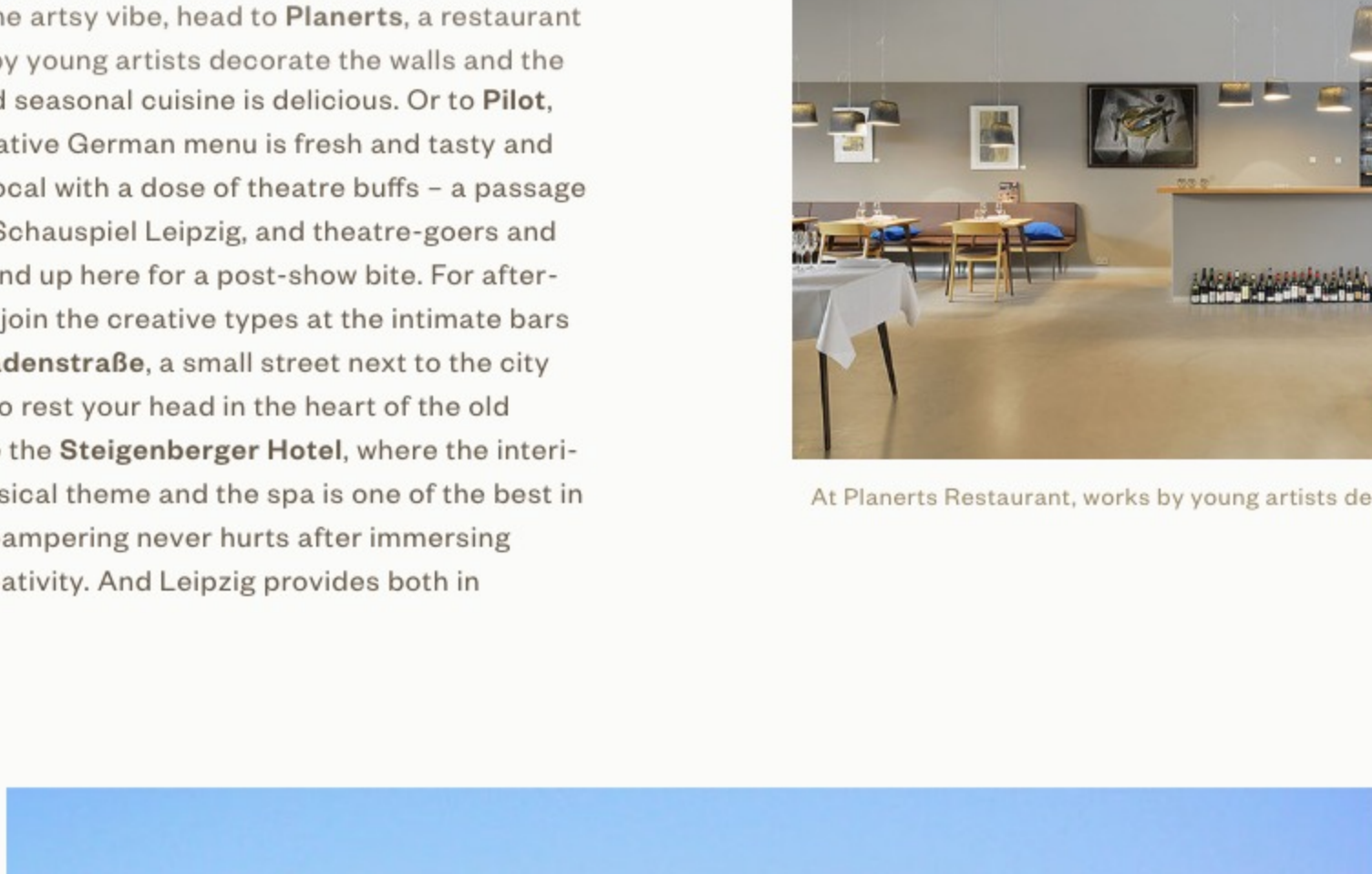


The current exhibition »TOGETHER!« in the Grassi Museum.

If museum-hopping whets your appetite but you don't want to lose the artsy vibe, head to **Planerts**, a restaurant where works by young artists decorate the walls and the Asian-inspired seasonal cuisine is delicious. Or to **Pilot**, where the creative German menu is fresh and tasty and the clientele local with a dose of theatre buff – a passage links it to the Schauspiel Leipzig, and theatre-goers and actors often end up here for a post-show bite. For after-dinner drinks, join the creative types at the intimate bars lining **Kolonadenstraße**, a small street next to the city center. Want to rest your head in the heart of the old town? Choose the **Steigenberger Hotel**, where the interiors have a musical theme and the spa is one of the best in town. A little pampering never hurts after immersing yourself in creativity. And Leipzig provides both in spades.



At Planerts Restaurant, works by young artists decorate the walls.



The Leipzig Opera House.

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