

Baltic



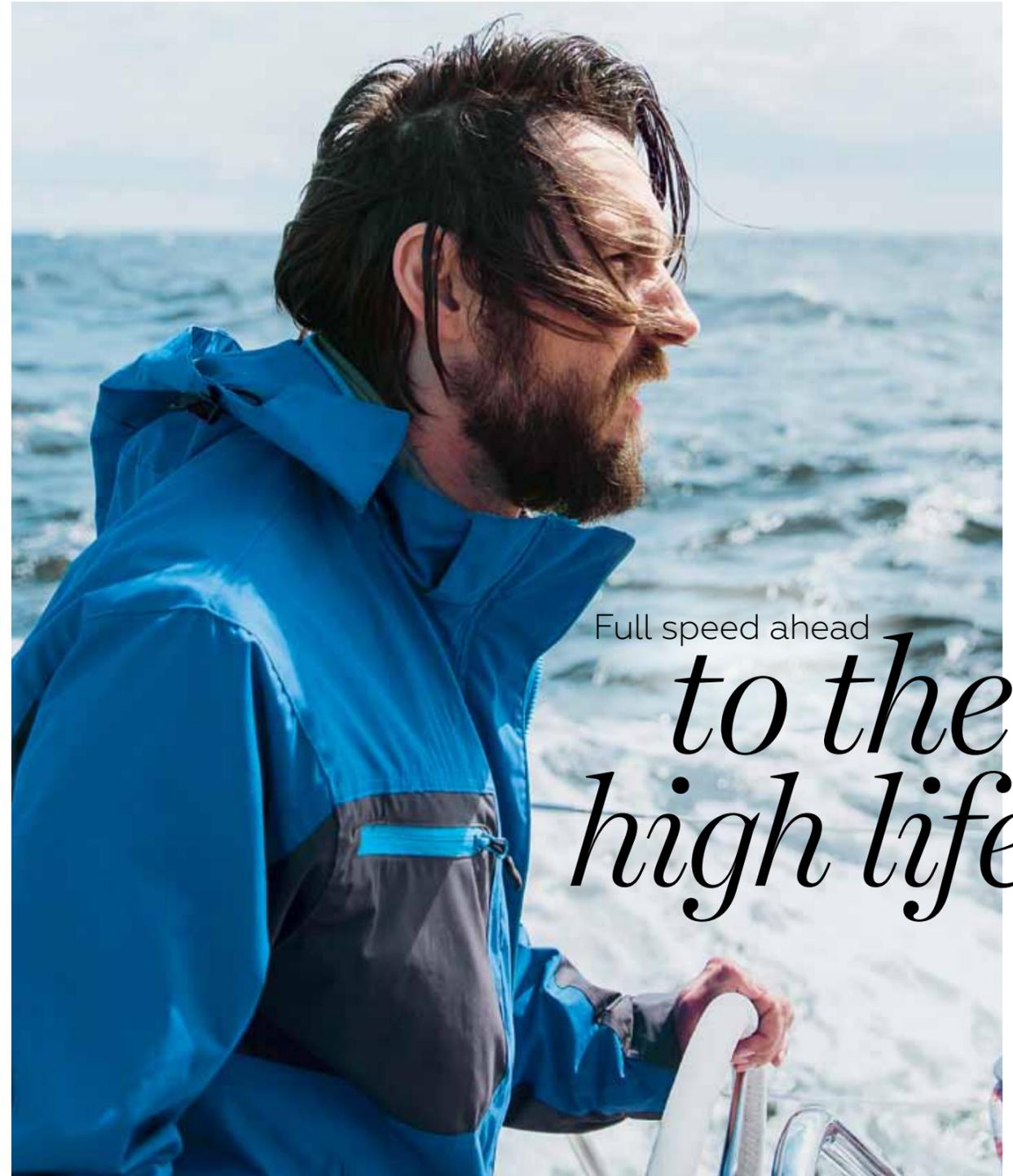
SOUTH COAST BALTIC



South Coast
Baltic



Where boating adventure begins



Full speed ahead
*to the
high life*

Discover beaches, people, fine food and culture
on the southern Baltic coast

Oh Brave New World

Every departure in life leads to something promising; what lies ahead? Such thoughts can play vividly in the imagination when they are not about metaphorical “new shores” but about the very real coastal and island region that is so very close, but which is still a terra incognita for many boat owners. That region is the South Coast Baltic stretching from Vorpommern to Bornholm and all the way along Poland up to Gdańsk and Kaliningrad, and then further on to the Curonian Spit and Klaipėda in Lithuania.

So, what awaits you there? Beaches so long and so fine and with a quality that is unique to the Baltic area. Harbour villages and towns with an optimistic outlook attracting lots of young people from all over the world wanting to release their creative spirit. The landscape is varied with bays and lagoons, spits and rocky coasts, and so too is the cultural landscape with a number of artists and events in the five nations. You can also see here how something new develops from its historic foundations as well as in the urban wastelands – and how modern museums show visitors the past in a contemporary and accessible style. Elsewhere, inside the numerous renovated stately homes and castles of the region, you have the feeling that time stopped a century ago – although many new developments are taking place within these old walls too.

There is so much more besides. This magazine can only highlight a few of this region's huge range of places, which you can best explore by sailing there yourself. Sometimes, however, a single image and a few words and impressions are just enough to turn curiosity into a kind of longing. Sailors and boat owners who are keen explorers certainly should turn the page and read on.

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Four boats, enthusiastic sailors, the best weather conditions and a new discovery every day: our report on a flotilla sailing from Gdańsk to Kaliningrad up to Klaipėda



14

Megi Malinowska from Studio Tabanda creates designer chairs that sell like hot cakes all over the world. She belongs to a new generation of creatives spreading a spirit of optimism in the old Gdańsk district of Dolne Miasto and turning it into a touristic attraction



06

No other Baltic coastal region has as many fine sandy beaches. And this is only one of the many stories about the southern Baltic coast which is best told in pictures



22

There are over 1,000 manor houses in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. Many of those have already been transformed into attractive hotels and museums while others still offer a lot of space – like the Quilow moated castle

New shores

04 South Coast Baltic

Where is it and why should you definitely sail there? It can all be explained with a few facts and figures.

06 Shore to impress

A designer pool in the harbour bay, beaches in walking distance of the jetty, parties with the sound of the sea – and much more. Told in a few words and some stunning images.

12 More than just a grain of truth

Yes, sand researchers really do exist. On the beach, they find as many valuable insights as there are grains of sand on the shore, particularly on the southern Baltic coast. We talked to one of them.

There's a lot going on

14 From grey to colourful

Dolne Miasto was for a long time Gdańsk's forgotten district. Then some young artists, designers and creatives from all over the world became aware of the old factory buildings' open spaces. Now it feels as if New York and Berlin have met here at the Baltic Sea.

20 Cool area

There are lots of buzzing places along the southern Baltic coast.

22 Castles in the air come true

Such a density of stately manor houses is unique. Many are already popular with guests as hotels, museums and cafes – others still need renovation. A visit to two creatives in Vorpommern who are finding plenty of space for new ideas within those time-honoured walls.

26 Traditional boats and future motors

Bright minds, lots of entrepreneurial spirit and a concentrated maritime tradition – there is everything that is needed for innovative boatbuilding projects from Bornholm and Vorpommern to Lithuania. We introduce some of them.

Content

Innumerable colours and shapes

30 Spit, lagoon and bay

This is how a multifaceted coastal landscape is formed when land and sea have shaped it geologically over thousands of years. This means a great deal of variety for sailors and boat owners.

32 A diverse cultural landscape too

The wealth of culture, culinary joys and entertainment is too big here to cover it all with a travel guide. Probably the best approach is to drift and discover.

Simply sailing there

34 “Totally doable”

We accompanied a flotilla sailing from Gdańsk over Kaliningrad to Klaipėda and put some questions to the participants afterwards. The result: much easier than they thought and a totally worthwhile pursuit which they will be happy to do again.

42 A few small preparations

and then you can sail off yourself. Here is an overview of the most important tips, infos and documents.

20

The Polish culture festival polenMARKT in Greifswald offers a dazzling programme:

there are jazz and classical music concerts as well as theatre, film and buzzing club nights



B REGION

Five countries, one region

Varied regions in Vorpommern, the unique landscape of the Danish island of Bornholm, miles of sandy beaches on the Polish coast, a Russian enclave and Lithuania's only sea harbour – the southern Baltic coast is exciting, diverse, full of surprises, wildly romantic in many places... and comparatively untouched.



You could regard this as symbolic of the region's history. A region that basically was a closed economic area from the Vikings until the discovery of America. Later, it became less and less important as the explorers' journeys meant that the trading centre shifted to the West. In the end, the countries antagonised each other during the rise of National Socialism following the First World War.

There was no iron curtain in the water after the Second World War. The Baltic Sea wasn't closed, maritime traffic continued to move between the neighbouring states – but it wasn't heavy and was rather limited. New opportunities for the region only occurred after the wall came down and the Soviet Union collapsed. Initiatives such as "South Coast Baltic" today contribute to the region harmoniously growing together again.



Shared history

Onetime allies during the Hanseatic League era, but later enemies in war – today, a new region is growing together on the southern Baltic coast that has a long shared history

The "Ulrich Finsterwalder" wreck has been lying in the Lake Dąbie, a few kilometres northeast of Szczecin for over 70 years. The German concrete ship was attacked in the Second World War but didn't sink. To this day, it endures the weather on Jezioro Dąbie, the Polish name for the lake – and now a tree is growing on its deck.

Own character

Vorpommern
While Germany might be known as a country of car manufacturers, for Vorpommern it's boats. These are built in dozens of shipyards between the Darß and the Szczecin lagoon (see page 28).

Poland
In the northern voivodeships of Poland – with its large wharfs in Gdańsk and Szczecin – the typical Polish love for freedom was demonstrated at the previous parliamentary elections: the nationalist right-wing party PiS had significantly worse results in the area where the "Solidarność" movement originated.

Bornholm
Bornholm is renowned around the world for its centuries-old craft. Now the island has also made a name for itself as a gourmet paradise.

Kaliningrad
The Russian region Kaliningrad is an exclave between Poland and Lithuania and therefore feels more "European" – more and more companies are locating there.

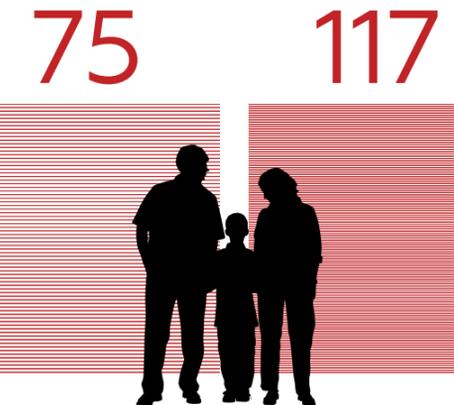
Lithuania
Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, Klaipėda has developed into an important hub as the only sea harbour in Lithuania.

Country and people

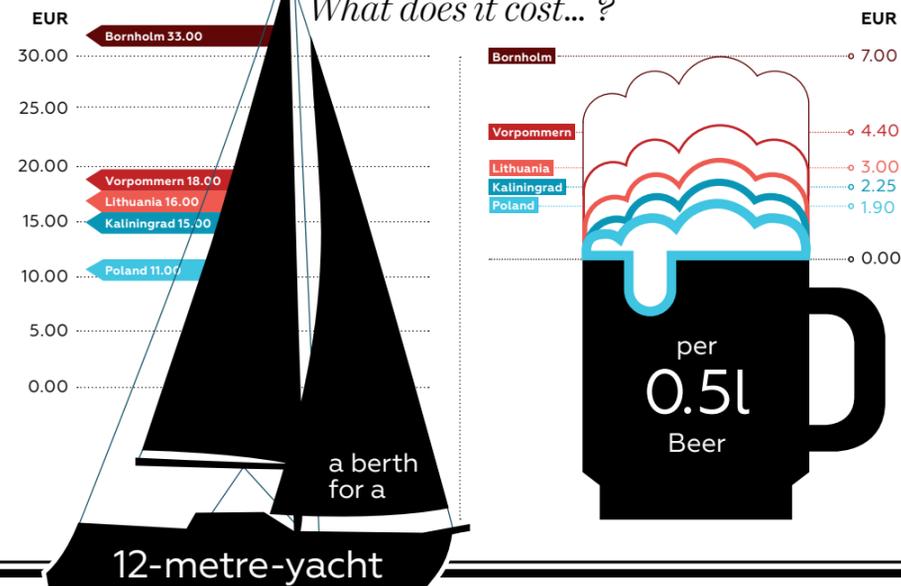
8.9 million
people live in this region.

50%
Around 50 percent of those are in the Polish part of the South Coast Baltic.

The region's average population density is 75 inhabitants per square kilometre. This is significantly less than the European average of 117 inhabitants.



What does it cost... ?



Good to eat

Regional favourites

Vorpommern
"Fish"

Fish is probably the most prominent dish on Vorpommern's restaurant menus, preferably served with potatoes. In autumn, there is a choice of venison. And in many places the popular Soljanka has survived from GDR times, a slightly sour meat soup with cucumber and tomato.

Poland
"Pasztecik to go"

People around Szczecin love this hearty yeast-pastry – filled either with minced meat, sauerkraut and mushrooms, or cheese and champignons. The first snack bars opened up at the end of the 1960s using equipment from Russian military field kitchens.

Bornholm
"Sun over Gudhjem"

Smoked herring with radishes, chives and onions, and raw egg yolk on top of it – "Sol over Gudhjem" is a typical dish on Bornholm. Every year, renowned chefs get together to compete over who can make the best "Sun".

Kaliningrad
"Ravioli the Russian way"

Minced meat-filled pasta cases cooked in broth are a popular dish all over Russia. You can have them in soup or as a main dish.

Klaipėda
"A dream in pink"

Cold beetroot soup is a must in Klaipėda during the summer. And so is a cold beer to go with it – along with some roasted bread too, if you like.



Shore to impress

You can see what the region has to offer as soon as you set foot on shore: there's a designer pool inside the harbour bay, a paradise sand landscape and then there's the lively atmosphere on the city's beach complete with a view of its cultural monuments. A few people are so taken by it they just want to dance — right at the water's edge.

Splash around the harbour basin

The harbour pool in Hasle is well worth a visit – if only because of its cool viewing platform

Hasle, on the island of Bornholm, has been known for its harbour and herring smokehouses for centuries. For a few years now, the fishing village on the west coast has had a new at-

traction which makes it worth mooring for. At Hasle Havnebad, you can go for a swim if the weather's fine, or if not, you can pay a visit to the sauna. But you can always look far out to the sea, across the pier. And it's especially cool to spend the day's

end on the steps of the six-metre-high viewing platform which faces west. A picturesque sunset is guaranteed. Harbour Bath is part of a comprehensive development project. The former industrial harbour has been transformed to meet tourism and recreation needs.



bit.do/sailorguide



Drowned by the sound of the sea on Usedom

A summer weekend with raves, not rockets

Until recently, most visitors to Peenemünde came to see the notorious testing sites where the Nazis built the first rockets. The exhibition at the Peenemünde Historical Technical Museum is

impressive. But now, thousands of visitors have started flocking to Meeresrausch, an annual open-air festival held on the north of the island, which is still quite low-key. Some visitors who come here by boat set anchor in the Peene river and swim to the rave. The music festival is at its most beautiful at dawn, when you can watch the sun rise over the dancefloor to the sound of electro music.



meeresrausch-festival.de



City beach in Szczecin

A fine, sandy beach in the city centre – with the marina right next door

Now, you can go for a swim and play beach volleyball at the new marina, right in the middle of Zachodniopomorskie's economic metropolis. The city beach is located on the island of Grodzka, next to the North East Marina. Directly across from the island, on the banks of the Oder river, is the popular Waly Chrobrego viewing terrace. The terrace itself is only a few minutes' walk from the Szczecin Philharmonic, winner of the Mies van der Rohe European Architecture Award.



northeast-marina.pl

Russia's first Blue Flag beach

The Kaliningrad region attracts wealthy Russian pensioners

More and more Russians from the cold east are escaping to this resort on the Baltic. The little coastal settlement of Yantarny, famous for its amber, has now received permission to fly the Blue Flag – the international certification for beaches with good water quality and safe swimming areas. The sand of Yantarny's beach is fine and white, and there are playgrounds, changing



rooms, and a wheelchair ramp. All for free. You can also hire deckchairs and towels for a small fee. Taking a dip, however, is not for the faint of heart: the water temperature in Yantarny seldom exceeds 17 degrees Celsius in July.

visit.kaliningrad.ru



Poland starts here

Some say that Jurata on the Hel Peninsula has the region's most beautiful beach

There are many good reasons to sail around Hel. For one thing, the Bay of Gdańsk is magnificent: the sea is calmer here than at Poland's outer coast, and there's a dense network of harbours. You can even sail into the

canals and rivers of the Vistula delta as well as its lagoon.

The peninsula is also blessed with a heavenly landscape of sand – which has been under protection as a biosphere reserve for 40 years. Many of the beaches have sandbars, so the water here can be a bit warmer than is usual for the Bal-

tic coast. And the wind makes the land-facing side of the peninsula ideal for kite-flying or windsurfing.

The Jurata beach resort, just a few kilometres from the town of Hel, is known as the Pearl of the Polish coast. No wonder the Polish president has his summer home here.



bit.do/d3n7T

The sands of time

Holidaymakers like reading books on the beach. But geoscientist and sand researcher Gösta Hoffmann reads the beach like a book. The Baltic Sea's south coast in particular provides him with infinite opportunities for a good read.

INTERVIEWEE *Gösta Hoffmann*
AUTHOR *Oliver Geyer*

3 Fun facts about sand

1

The sands of time from Bornholm

Lots of hourglasses are filled with the Danish island's fine white sand

2

Scarce resource

Cement consists of two thirds of sand – in some countries entire beaches are being removed to meet the construction industry's needs

3

Magic sand

Scientists have developed water-repellent sand that could make agriculture possible in the desert

Why is sand so interesting for geoscientists?

Gösta Hoffmann:

For us, sand is one of the most exciting research objects because a grain of sand stores information over thousands of years and provides knowledge about its history, if you can read it correctly. Sand consists of rocks worn by weather which are then transported, for example, via rivers to the sea. The origin can be deduced from each single grain, which means for us that we can get a good understanding of geological processes from sand, and on a larger scale too.

So, when you look at sand, you are really taking a deep look into the past. What do you see when you put sand from the Baltic Sea's south coast under the microscope?

Essentially, the sand tells the entire history of the formation of the Baltic Sea, which isn't an ocean in the classic sense, but is actually the mainland covered by water. During the Ice Age, large glaciers picked up material in Scandinavia and moved it southward. As part of this process, the Baltic Sea basin was created and then all the material frozen inside the glacier gathered at its southern border. What remained were masses of sediment debris in every possible grain size and a hollow that was swamped with water – the Baltic Sea.

Sediment debris in every possible grain size – that doesn't quite sound like the beautiful beaches of the region with their fine sand.

These beaches have been created over thousands of years, exposed to processes of movement and weathering. The rough material stayed where it was and the fine grains drifted away, particularly towards the east since the Baltic Sea is located in a westerly wind zone. This is why there is a strong formation of spits in the Polish and Baltic area.

Now we know why there are so many beaches on the Baltic's south coast, but why are many of them so much whiter than other beaches in the world?

Sand, of course, isn't just sand. The sand on the Baltic coast consists almost exclusively of quartz which is one of the most robust minerals on Earth. When everything else has weathered down, the light-coloured quartz remains. That is why the Baltic coast has those particularly white beaches, in contrast to the Canary Islands where a lot of volcanic rocks give the sand a darker colour.

For most people one grain of sand looks much like another. How do you know of all this?

A lot of information is already given by the grain's shape.

A grain of sand from the Leba dune in Poland, for example, looks different from a grain of sand from Germany's Usedom beach. The grain from Leba was transported by wind and is therefore rounder, the one from Usedom was carried by water and so has a more angular shape. This is how I can reconstruct the transportation process. We also have relatively complicated measuring methods. Quartz has a grid structure when it is in its crystalline form. We can tell from imperfections in the grid's composition when this quartz grain has last seen the sun. We get this sand from of a depth of up to 20 metres and then examine it by means of optically stimulated luminescence (OSL) in a dark laboratory.

Is all this only of geological interest or does it also have significance for us today?

When we understand the sand's past, we can also produce helpful prognoses, even for the very near future. An example: there are discussions among the sailing community as to whether it is possible to build a marina at Bodstedter Bodden. It would be technically easy to build a channel to the Baltic Sea, but the problem is that the natural coastal processes would have an effect on it. The technical engineering installation might be possible, but it would soon be reversed with sand quickly covering

it up. To put it simply, the southern Baltic Sea region is a very dynamic area where change is constant.

And the more distant future?

It will all be about climate change. We can also learn from the sand how many times catastrophic storm events have taken place in a region and whether they have become more frequent. We can produce computer models using this data about how storm surges have risen in the past and what consequences this could have in the future. However, the expected sea level rise is even more interesting for the southern Baltic coast. The effects would be particularly grave there since the coast is already constantly subsiding because of its ice-age formation – and long-term movement of the sea is towards the land. We can also see this in early traces of settlements which are covered with sand and are under water today.

So sand research can also offer archaeological findings?

Yes. There are settlement discoveries at spits that reveal how people adapted to the changes in their natural environment and how, for example, fishing has changed in the Bodden waters. Since sand covers up human remains, things like this can also be understood by sand research.

As a sand researcher, can you relax when you are on a beach holiday?

It's quite the opposite. For me, it's a great privilege. I couldn't think of a better work environment than the beach. I think it's pretty good that you can travel all over the world, looking at beaches. ☺



Gösta Hoffmann is a geologist at the Steinmann Institute of the University Bonn. He did his doctorate on the formation of the islands of Rügen and Usedom and the post-ice age changes of their coasts. He also travels to other coastal regions of the world including trips for research on the creation of the Rhine delta and the history of the northern Indian ocean tsunamis on the Arabian Peninsula. He is currently engaged once more with the post-ice age development of the southern Baltic coast, this time in collaboration with colleagues from the Baltic states.



From *shabby* to *chic*

Until a few years ago, **Dolne Miasto** was a grey zone with abandoned industrial buildings wherever you looked. Then the young creatives discovered the Gdańsk district and now it feels like New York and Berlin have collided on the Baltic Sea.

AUTHOR Johannes Ehrmann
PHOTOGRAPHERS Yana Wernicke, Michal Szymonczyk

The first thing you see is social housing, right by the exit from the urban motorway. Five-storey blocks with grey-brown facades and an uninterrupted view over six lanes of tarmac. Here, only the washing in front of the windows hanging out to dry in the wind from the Baltic Sea provides any bright colour. A car flashes its indicator and turns at the next corner, driving into the district where for years nobody even thought of going unless they had to.

Welcome to Dolne Miasto, Gdańsk's lower town. Just the mention of Dolne Miasto fills some locals with horror. It's not a place they want to go to. And why should they, they ask. They say there's nothing there. Only old houses and scruffy people.



“Everyone in Gdańsk thought it was dangerous here”

*Megi Malinowska
The designer has her studio in Dolne Miasto and lives there, too*



Polish Brick Lane
Dolne Miasto reminded London art couple Gilbert & George of home



But they are wrong. There is something there. Just 500 metres from the motorway exit, Megi Malinowska unlocks a heavy iron door leading straight into the heart of her success story. It is a story made in Dolne Miasto, and it does justice to this old working-class district. The place has white bare stone walls, dark ceilings and stark fluorescent lights. On the desks, however, there are large iMac screens and silver keyboards side by side with wireless headphones – the new generation's work tools.

We are in ulica Łąkowa, the broad main road cutting through the district. The design studio is called Tabanda and Megi Malinowska founded it with two co-students on her architectural course in 2009. Constructing houses, project planning, that was all too complicated and too protracted, they thought. So they began to design objects for the office, something that was used every day.

The breakthrough was the “Diago” chair. You see it in offices everywhere here. In its basic version it sells for €299 and the company shifts around a thousand units per year worldwide with Berlin being one of the hotspots for it. “Our bestseller,” says a beaming Megi Malinowska. 📍

Diago
Tabanda's bestseller chair is available in various versions – even with a felt cover

In the city centre's shadow
In the past, guns were produced here – today, the old factory is a magnet for young people





Paper lanterns and red brick
Dolne Miasto's night market takes place every weekend in summer – as long as the weather is good



“The bad reputation only exists in people’s heads”

*Jacek Feliga
He opened his bar-cafe in the old factory in October 2016*

A huge CNC mill is in the workshop next door, complete with grindstones. Big hoses suck up the wood dust everywhere; the floor is covered with large chipboard panels. The Tabanda founders now employ six staff. Around half of the chair’s production is now somewhere else in Gdańsk, but the assembly is still done completely here in the rooms of a former carbine factory. Yes, things are being produced again in Dolne Miasto.

Malinowska says it was pure coincidence when she came here for the first time. She visited a street festival and noticed that Dolne Miasto, officially a part of Gdańsk’s city centre Śródmieście, wasn’t

the terrible place everyone thought it was. The old buildings weren’t threatening. Quite the opposite. They offer an opportunity for young people short on cash but full of ideas. Half-derelict industrial buildings, cheap rents, barely 6,000 inhabitants – it all meant lots of room for design. It is the classic story of regeneration like in the post-industrial districts of London, New York and Berlin.

In 2013, the city of Gdańsk also began to revitalise the public facilities in Dolne Miasto – roads, pavements, lighting and green spaces were all renewed. This amounted to an investment of €8m, a large part of which came from European Union

funds. The Łąkowa outside the factory site now has a green walkway with brand-new park benches between its two lanes which don’t quite match the bleak facades surrounding it. “A lot has changed very quickly,” says Malinowska. Perhaps too quickly? “We’ll have to see what’s going to happen in 10 or 15 years,” she says, rather evading the question.

In the backyard, motors are booming and excavators are digging up the neighbouring property’s soil. The next investment in the area is already lined up by a big player of the Polish economy: LLP, the Gdańsk textile group, which has an annual turnover of €1.3bn, is expanding its head-



Drink local

Host Feliga offers several craft beers as well as “Bytow”, the Gdańsk beer

Circle of waggons

You see more and more new faces in the run-down social housing tower block district

quarters. The company has already renovated and moved into the old Monopol tobacco factory close to the building site and a new “Fashion Lab” is being created. The scruffy lower town is suddenly rather popular, and not just with the creatives. Even a few yachting enthusiasts have settled here, on the tributary of the Motława river which has served as the inner city’s border for centuries. They have founded a club called Zejman, Gdańsk dialect for the German word “Seemann”. They have already moved into one of the old city gates on the neighbouring warehouse island where parties with shanty music and Gdańsk beer are a regular occurrence. ➤



Run for your lives
For a long time Dolne Miasto, which borders the city's Renaissance moat, had a reputation for being unsafe and poor.

And now big business is discovering the area. Is it a good thing? The young pioneers who came here when no one was interested are in two minds about it, like Megi of Tabanda and Jacek Feliga of the hip café Rzecz Jasna. It is also located inside the old carbine factory – like a place you would find in Williamsburg or Berlin-Neukölln and where you can get a Paraguay tea and a flat white underneath carefully exposed red brick patches in the plaster. On the other hand, people say that investment is providing stimulation for the area. But big money can also destroy things quickly. Over there in the backyard, masked by the noise of diggers, mobile food stalls have already put up their marquees for the night market which is on every Friday and Saturday when the weather is nice. Later, people will be sitting here on pallets chatting, youngsters and hipsters listening to electro beats, eating sweet potato fries and wild boar burgers.



“It isn't a problem that we are a bit off the beaten track. People know us”

*Zenon Jozsef Szulczewski
His sailing club Zejman takes its name from the German-Polish heritage of the city*

Will they still be here in ten or fifteen years? It's hard to know. But there are also those who have always been here. In the evening, the light is still on in the pub at the other end of the Magistrale where the Łąkowa is already called the Wróbla. There is a tram in front of the door, silent and seemingly lost on tracks leading nowhere. It is lacquered in Poland's red and white national colours, a museum piece in the middle of the district, a relic from the old days when not everything was better, but at least the people from Dolne Miasto could get to the centre without changing the lines.

Beyond the crossing in the darkness are the old warehouse's halls which give the Zajezdnia bar its name. And behind that, all that's left now are the 400-year-old banks used as fortifications which reach out into the river with their jagged profile. You can almost smell the water on this mild evening.

Inside the bar, the walls are covered with black and white photographs. This place radiates with something that feels very familiar. People are sitting in front of their beers and soft drinks in the taproom – parents and their kids and everyone else are all talking at the same time, while a granddad holds fast to his green beer bottle. The room next door has a children's corner with colouring books, building blocks and soft toys.

“I provided that,” says a short guy at the bar. Krzysztof introduces himself with a smile. He lives next door with his parents. He chats away about the pub, the district where he has spent his whole life, the illnesses and strokes of fate, all with an openness that goes with places like this. Then, in Polish, he orders a round of walnut vodkas for a toast and shows his passport without explaining why. He waits a while until someone clocks his date of birth. Everyone cheers. Na zdrowie, then, new friend, to your 31st birthday!

And while the warming sweet drink spreads through your body, you can't help but think about what the young designer Megi Malinowska said of this district where she also lives, in one of the old social housing blocks. “There are no connections in the buildings, but we all know each other. It is like a town inside the town,” she says.



The organisers of the “Cult movie festival” (FKK), chose the industrial scenery of the Gdańsk wharf as a stage for its 20th anniversary – “because an unusual setting is the best place to watch cult movies.”

Out on the street, your gaze returns to the motionless tram, line 8, Dolne Miasto. Last stop: lower town. It is all quiet. A couple are walking their dog, a solitary bike crawls past. Abandoned cars are parked in the old warehouse's courtyard where the numbers 1 to 13 can still be seen in old German lettering above the flap doors for the trams – regardless of the quarter's proneness to superstition.

The soft street light falls on the house at the corner. On the second floor an old man quietly enjoys a cigarette leaning on a cushion. It seems as if there is a whole world

lying between this corner and the historic centre with its gold-embellished facades and the trampling tourist streams in the basilica – just over there on the other side of the main arterial road. Even the design studio and the hipster café and the noisy night market are now far, far away. Grey, still and solitary, Gdańsk almost looks like it is a film set from a 40-year-old movie by that famous Polish director Kieślowski, this Friday here on the borders of Dolne Miasto, down by the water. ©

“Local Guides” in Gdańsk

The Gdańsk City Cultural Institute gives free tours of Dolne Miasto in the summer

ikm.gda.pl/en/projekt/local-guides

Diary

This is the best way to find events in and around Gdańsk:

trojmiasto.pl/kalendarz-impres

Cool coast

Heading out to sea to the South Coast Baltic is well worthwhile – because it's a region full of places and people who have the spirit of adventure.

Here are five pointers to an area where so much is going on.



Szczecin's pulsating island

The island of Lastadie on the Odra River in the city of Szczecin had vanished from the minds of many for decades.

It seemed as if only a few historians were interested in the dilapidated harbour and brick buildings that housed an abattoir and municipal storage after the war. In the past few years with gradual revitalisation of the Odra Promenade which lies on the opposite side locals have started to rediscover Lastadie's potential for a new era: an island replete with empty industrial monuments right in the centre of town, surrounded

by water and with a pretty view. Basically, the best thing that can happen to a city. Now, a few places in Lastadie have started to wake up: there are restaurants, shops, and event spaces – all next door to a newly built marina. The island is well on its way to becoming the throbbing heart of Szczecin, as well as becoming a hotspot for sailors and other boaters looking for an escape from the city.

Greifswald is a bustling university town – that much is clear. But the example of the Polish culture festival 'polenmARkT' is worth a closer look:

What began as an evening of Polish culture in the cellar of the university's Slavic institute in 1997 had morphed into a Polish cultural week within a year. That marked the beginning of a 20-year success story. For ten days every November, the polenmARkT in Greifswald's city centre offers a full programme of jazz and classical music concerts, art exhibitions, film screenings and theatre performances, literary readings, and club nights – as well as some wild mash-ups of all of these things. There's something for

everyone here, according to the event's manager, who has received high praise and won awards for his efforts to open Poland's borders to culture. The polenmARkT has become so popular because it hasn't lost any of its casual character – which has also made it a cultural crossing point for different art forms as well as building a bridge between Germany and Poland.

polenmarkt-festival.de



Relaxed border-crossing in Greifswald



Bornholm: a golden oasis of cool

In just a few years, the island of Bornholm has rapidly transformed itself into a mecca for Copenhagen's trendsetters.



And the word is slowly spreading elsewhere in Europe that you can find a rare and unique mixture on this Baltic island: contemporary design, cool bars and innovative cuisine – all wrapped up on a Scandinavian island idyll. Bornholm, often described as a remix of the Baltic coast's most gorgeous

scenery, has lost nothing of its raw charm. A few cool new locations scattered here and there like glistening sprinkles suit Bornholm's Baltic beauty very well. Sometimes, the glittering nuggets really are gold – such as in Listed harbour, where goldsmith Sebastian Frost has established himself to create his internationally sought-after jewellery. His wife has, fittingly, opened her gem of a coffee bar right next door: Bay Frost offers a rich assortment of home-baked goods, as well as a sundowner that many feel is the island's best.

sebastianfrost.dk

4



Standup paddleboarding through Kaliningrad's former restricted area

Some people get creative in their downtime.

Now, there's a completely new way to discover the city of Kaliningrad – and surf instructor Vadim Chudyakov is behind it all. He asked himself, 'what can I do if there's no wind at all?' Then, he found out about the new sporting trend of standup paddle-

boarding (SUP), in which you stand on a surfboard and use a paddle to move through the water. Of course, you need to be able to stay on the board and keep your balance! Chudyakov initially borrowed a surfboard and spent weeks training. Then he invested a couple of thousand

euros in his own equipment and opened up a school for SUP. If you book a course with him and pass the first balancing exercises, you can tour the city from the water for free. The city on the Pregel river is especially well-suited for this type of excursion. Once you've paddled past the prefabricated buildings of the postwar period, it's off to Königsberg's old town, then onward to the former restricted military area, past the old warships, through dismantled lift bridges and old Prussian harbours.

5



Klaipėda: Lithuanian tradition reanimated



Modern dance crossed with traditional Lithuanian storytelling results in a new art form that greets you on practically every street corner in Klaipėda.

That's because the PADI DAPI Fish Dance Company likes to get out of its dance theatre once in a while and use the city itself as a stage. And where else would their performances be better suited to breathe new life into Lithuania's cultural inheritance than Klaipėda's historic cityscape? The piece "White Lullaby", for example, illustrates Lithuanian fairytale mythology with a minimalist aesthetic to contribute to a current social debate: how do we explain to our children that in spite of our time-robbing jobs, they're always in our thoughts? It is a question on the minds of many in an economically prosperous region. The Fish Eye artists' collective is behind PADI DAPI Fish, and has enriched Lithuania's cultural scene for years with its award-winning projects.

padidapifish.lt/en



The Quilow moated castle is one of the oldest Renaissance castles in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. There are more than 1,000 castles and stately homes in the region, many of which are still awaiting renovation. There is still a lot of space for ideas

Good manors

South Coast Baltic offers a concentration of stately homes like hardly anywhere else.

While many have already been transformed into popular hotels and event locations, others are still awaiting renovation – and they are attracting the creative community.

AUTHOR *Oliver Geyer*
PHOTOGRAPHER *Silke Weinsheimer*

First, here is a slightly different definition of “haunted castle”: a derelict castle that has been haunting your mind for weeks – while you try hard to carry on living in the city. It seems to be increasingly boring, though, because this once grand building keeps on captivating your thoughts.

That is exactly what happened to Uwe Eichler after he visited the empty moated castle in Quilow above the river Peene in summer 2011, close to the Usedom bridge to the west. A lot of this is to do with the location which in itself is impressive, but Uwe Eichler’s imagination is also a bit to blame. Previously, Eichler used to be one of the artistic directors of the Ballhaus Ost theatre in Berlin. It was a prime example



Uwe Eichler

Used to be manager of the Ballhaus Ost theatre in Berlin. Initially, he had much smaller plans and just wanted to move to the countryside. Then he discovered the Quilow moated castle and was captivated by it. Now he is transforming it into an event space

THERE'S A LOT GOING ON

of these empty premises in former industrial lofts, bunkers and dance halls which the pioneers of the free Berlin art scene brought back to life in the post-Wall years with their typical mix of party and performance. In this respect, it is almost inevitable that such an empty building creatively inspires someone like Eichler – all the things you could do there, what could be brought to life there.

It is primarily thanks to Eichler’s and his life partner Dirk’s will to get involved with a truly big unknown that the Quilow castle in the air has developed into a fully scaffolded real moated castle providing space for meetings and exchanges, education, culture and cultivated festivities, and which should be mostly renovated by late summer 2019. It is the oldest Western Pomeranian Renaissance castle, probably built in the years 1570 to 1575, and it was owned for centuries by the von Owstin family. It sits right on the edge of the Quilow woods like a sleeping beauty, surrounded by old oak trees, desperately in need of renovation, but still blessed with a large amount of structural substance. Right opposite is the caretaker’s building – which is probably more easily habitable. Even so, you still want to shout out: what a great undertaking!

The two actually had much smaller plans to start with when they looked up information about the thousand-plus listed stately homes and manor houses in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern on the website www.gutshaeuser.de. “We were only playing with the idea to move to the country. I never thought that this would turn into such a major project,” says Eichler.

A few weeks later, he stood at the back door of this huge building and poured a bucket of water over his head in the morning sun. There wasn’t a shower. The Förderverein Kulturerbe, an association to preserve cultural heritage, had given Uwe and Dirk a set of keys so that they could try living there for a few weeks and get a feeling for the place. The two put mattresses, a fridge, washbags and the most basic living requirements into a small lorry, and headed out there. 📍

Today, Uwe Eichler himself is chairman of the Förderverein Stiftung Kulturerbe and as an unsalaried developer of the project, he can dispose of €4.2 million of grant funds. In the meantime, his life partner earns a living for them both as a teacher in Anklam.

The story of how Quilow and Eichler found each other is one of those brilliant chains of events, happy endings and bravely taken opportunities which, with hindsight, seem completely logical. From the first phone call with the Kulturstiftung to the less-than-bureaucratic decision of the Ministry of Economy of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern to support the project as the main investor, right up to the rescue measure that Eichler had a federal state development agency project management office established to support him in administrative tasks. "I can deal with questions of substance but these legal procedures nearly drove me insane," he says, sighing at the thought of it all.

However, it was much more than just coincidence. The state developing agents clearly saw that Eichler would be successful here. Now the 43-year-old was free to develop his ideas: he wants to create a space that is always slightly unfinished even when it is "finished". A place that can breathe and pulsate, and where the dark shadows of the past aren't just painted over. The idea of having different floors – meeting space, beers and communication on the ground-floor; seminars and information about the history with a connection to the present in the middle; rehearsal stage at the top and overnight stays in the estate manager's house – is planned in a fluid way. However, before the castle starts its transition into something new and dynamic, the building's statics have to be right. There is still a lot to do.

It was mainly encounters with people from the region that made Dirk and him feel at home there very quickly, says Eichler. He says he wanted to do something with this place straight away but the town and its inhabitants quickly did something to him because he was open to them. That is why the former theatre director is already thinking about what role the people of Quilow could play here while the developer

builds the stage, so to speak. "The house is supposed to be a place where you can meet up in the evening," he says. "You have many small businesses here with great touristic offers and we would like to be available to them as a central point of contact," he adds. So what is the main theme of the Quilow castle "play"? What could the experience-based educational programme be about? Here, the backdrop itself provides good stimulation. "Architecturally this manor house is a transitional phenomenon from a medieval castle to a more representative self-portrayal of the lord of the manor. This departure into a new era is a great template

Paris, Texas, Buggenhagen

Art curator Till Richter already had held some notable posts before he opened the first museum of Vorpommern for international contemporary art in this municipality of 211 inhabitants on the river Peene



Art personally brought to you

Richter doesn't hesitate to guide visitors through his exhibition rooms at Buggenhagen castle. But be careful, his enthusiasm for art is infectious



for us," says Eichler. What can life in the countryside, which is also in a transitional phase today, look like in the future? And what has this got to do with our consumer behaviour? These are the relevant questions.

A change of scene. Those who want to see a magnificently renovated Western Pomeranian manor house whose owner completely lives for the arts should visit Till Richter at the Buggenhagen castle a few kilometres away. Visual art is at the centre here and there are strict requirements in place – not only for the visitors but also for young artists who will be awarded with the sought-after stipends by the established art historian. Once a year, Richter offers the opportunity for promising candidates to create new works of art at his castle over eight weeks in the former living rooms of the baroness Buggenhagen and to exhibit them there later. The art collector studied at the Paris Sorbonne and later held a junior professorship in Austin, Texas until in 2013 this empty castle came his way and haunted his thoughts.

Paris, Texas, Buggenhagen. The one thing that Richter definitely did not want to leave behind with this step was the world of modern art. Quite the contrary, he wanted to transport it to this community of 211 inhabitants on the river Peene – with stipends and changing exhibitions by international artists.

That this first museum for international contemporary art in Vorpommern has started out so well is clearly rather pleasing for Richter and it fills him with pride. The old image of a lord of the manor comes briefly to life – in a modern friendly version – when you see the extrovert northern German accompanied by his dalmatian dog guiding visitor groups over creaking floorboards through the first exhibition room. First, there are the works of the current stipendiary Minor Alexander from Ukraine. He took wood from the forest behind the castle inside and flocked it with psychedelic colours – with a polyamide that is also used to coat a ship's hull to protect it.

It's clearly evident: the building, the nature, the maritime region – all of it seems to do something to people. And it does something to the arts too. ©



Round churches

Bornholm's architecturally unique landmarks

Bornholm's four round churches – dazzling white, and repainted every year – are hard to miss. They were all built from granite in the 11th to 12th century and are still in perfect condition. They once served as defensive structures to protect the people of Bornholm from pirates.



Curonian weather vanes

The Curonian Spit's fishermen's former business cards

In the past, the weather vanes on the Curonian fishing boats' topmasts indicated straight away which village they came from. Those identification marks helped to control fishing.

Today, Curonian weather vanes are a popular embellishment for a Lithuanian front garden or rooftop.



Boating tradition as a driving force for the future

The South Coast Baltic countries – which have always been known for promoting a lively exchange beyond their borders – are now growing together economically.

While focusing on old traditions, the people there are developing new perspectives and embarking on a journey into the future. Boatbuilding is a good example. We take a look at some of the projects.

THERE'S A LOT GOING ON

AUTHOR *Oliver Geyer*

LITHUANIA
Back to the Vikings and forward to the future

Over 1,000 years ago the most innovative boatbuilders were from Klaipėda in Lithuania. Traces of settlements show that the Vikings had advanced to this region and used ships to do it that could navigate the shallow coastal waters and rivers – and that must have aroused the interest of those who inhabited the Curonian Spit. It can be assumed that the region's traditional flat-hull boats, for example the Kurenkahn ("Kurenas" in Lithuanian), also have some of the Nordic conquerors' maritime innovative strengths – although of course they have been developed over the years in response to the requirements of the Spit.

Historian and shipbuilding expert Romas Adomavicius from Klaipėda and his colleague Simas Knapkis are working for the association of historic boatbuilders in Lithuania to revive this craft and tradition. The two of them also want to give it a new momentum that will make these boats sail a good distance further into the future. The prototype which they are currently building will also have an electric motor as well as the traditional sail. In this way, these boats, which are still perfectly adapted to the lagoon waters in terms of their shape and manoeuvrability, could become tourist boats that are easy to steer in harbours – without compromising the historic appearance with the humming and vibration of a combustion engine.

It is no surprise that the traditional wood-construction isn't so easily compatible with motors. They were never meant to have them and the heavy combustion engines have proven to be particularly problematic. In contrast, the much lighter, innovative electric motors open up completely new opportunities.

Adomavicius and Knapkis are also hoping for support from the EU-funded ELMAR project, which is led by trade promoters in Vorpommern and whose goal it is to promote and support boatbuilding projects with innovative electric propulsion in the Southern Baltic area.



“Traditional Curonian barges with modern electric motors are sailing into the future”

*Romas Adomavicius
 Expert from the association of historic boatbuilders in Lithuania*

At the project launch at the beginning of November 2017, boatbuilders from Poland, Lithuania and Germany came together to present their projects and exchange their experience. There was a specific location for the meeting: the participants should be able to familiarise themselves with electric drive solutions which some Vorpommern shipyards are using and which are leading the technical development. In addition, Adomavicius and Knapkis used the opportunity to exchange ideas with their German colleague Kirsten Dubs in the Freest boatyard about the “clinker construction”, which was typical for historic boats but knowledge about which had not survived in Lithuania. Dubs specialises in the preservation of old boatbuilding techniques and traditions (see next page).

Both Adomavicius and Knapkis were accompanied by two fellow countrymen who are also have the future clearly in their sights. Tomas Žapnickas and his former university friend Evaldas Narusis founded “Green Boats”. They are currently experimenting with a boat model that features optimum characteristics in terms of proportion, motorisation and battery capacity to facilitate day trips for small tourist groups in the lagoon waters. It is their vision to meet the Curonian Spit's strict environmental requirements and provide another tourist attraction for the region: “In Lithuania, we have areas with restrictions for combustion engines in the shallow inland waters. ▶



1 CURONIAN SPIT
 A boatbuilding tradition that stretches back to the Vikings now embraces the electric motor era – with eco-friendly day trip barges

Therefore, we want to produce boats that can take everyone to the places of natural beauty this country has to offer," says Żapnickas. The enjoyment of the unique landscapes of the lagoon and the spit will be much greater because the Green Boats' fleet offers a calm environment without any motor noise and vibration. There are other possible applications for these silent boats too. For example, burials at sea which are becoming increasingly popular.

It is no secret that Żapnickas and Narusis also have a commercial interest besides their noble goals: "We both love boating and particularly eBoating. We'd like to demonstrate the advantages of electric motors to people who still have boats with the old types of engines. People also have a natural fear about technical things and of embracing new ideas," he says.

WESTERN POMERANIA

Cold- and damp-weather boats and open shipyards

Boatbuilders are reconnecting with historic boat design in Vorpommern too. In some places they are even embracing the more recent GDR past. Many people do not know that it isn't just the Scandinavians who make boats that are both durable and which keep their value. The "Vilm Yacht" was manufactured in former East Germany. It was an absolutely solid sea-going vessel and regarded as something of an insider's tip among the comfort-oriented and price-conscious owners in West Germany – even during the years when Germany was a divided country. The Vilm is such a reliable motorised sail boat, that it has been able to get through extreme weather safely, as well as surviving the socialist GDR years intact. The order books of the Vilm shipyard which is in the Lauterbach harbour on the Greifswald lagoon – close to the wooded island of Vilm near Rügen – are still completely full 40 years after it was first established. This is due to the fact that the 20 or so staff, managed by shipyard boss Michael Lenz, are not distracted by current fashions but instead work with a certain kind of Western Pomeranian stubbornness and a proper understanding of what really counts in cold and damp weather conditions: they go for using a generous amount of materials instead of optimising them for large-scale production. Here experience, a sense of proportion and templates on the wall take precedence over computer-controlled milling



2 GREEN BOATS

currently experiment with a boat model that has the perfect features for day trips to the lagoon waters in terms of proportion and motor power

3 VILM YACHTS

already were an insider tip among comfort-oriented and price-conscious owners in the West

4 OPEN SHIPYARD

Boatbuilder Kirsten Dubs preserves old boatbuilding techniques in the Western Pomeranian fishing village of Freest while pioneering a very modern approach



machines. This is so worth seeing that Vilm now generates extra income through their "transparent shipyard" concept where tourists can rent a holiday flat there and watch the construction process while enjoying food at the self-built Vilm's prow counter.

www.vilm-yacht.de

Boatbuilder Kirsten Dubs has applied a similar concept to the 120-year-old Jarling shipyard in Freest on the river Peene. Hers is called an "open shipyard," which means visitors can get involved and repair their boats under supervision. Dubs, who is one of just a few independent boatbuilding masters in Germany, took over the premises in 2007 and made her dream of a shipyard that still uses conventional boatbuilding crafts a reality. A place where knowledge about traditional techniques, such as the caulking and the clinker construction, is being kept alive – and it is also in demand at Adomavicius's and his partner Knapkis project in Lithuania. All of the five to six boats regularly raised up in the old wooden hall are over 50 years old – apart from the ones that Dubs constructs herself with her 13 staff who all use the traditional construction methods. The "open shipyard" is also open to artists who want to exhibit their works there – which is another great reason to visit this place.

www.bootswerft-freest.com

GREIFSWALD

Where the things that belong together came together

The Greifswald based HanseYachts which was founded shortly after the wall came down is one of East Germany's spectacular economic success stories since the reunification. Michael Schmidt, winner of the Admiral's Cup in 1985, founded the company in 1990 on the premises of the old ship- and repair yard and started to develop the first model which entered the market as "Hanse 291" in 1992. Today, HanseYachts is Germany's largest yacht builder and the second largest in the world, as measured by the number of boats sold.

So how did this happen? In only eight years, Schmidt expanded the range of models to eight and started collaborating with designers Judel/Vrolijk & Co by the end of the 90s. The expansion course was pushed further with this enhancement of design: Hanse now also produces motorboats under its roof having acquired the Norwegian motorboat man-

The Dehler brand is set to have a great future again under HanseYachts' flag

ufacturer Fjords Boats AS in 2007. The British traditional sailing brand "Moody" joined them as well in the same year. The innovative power of the Greifswald company is also proven by numerous awards for their ship and interior design.

However, it was another acquisition a year later that really caused a sensation in 2009. Hanse brought the West German Dehler brand on board – bringing together what belongs together in the German boat industry. The company founded by Willi Dehler in the 1960s in the West German city of Dortmund gained a good reputation for its racing and cruising yachts, but also had to repeatedly endure heavy setbacks. Karl Dehler, the son of the company's founder, saw a big chance in Hanse's acquisition offer. Under Hanse's flag, the future was once again looking bright for Dehler – as the brand that can give that extra bit of performance with its lighter, slimmer boat design and construction. In the meantime, Hanse has also developed into an international company, relying particularly on the rich experience of Polish experts for building boat hulls: besides Hanse's main factory in Greifswald there is also another plant in Goleniów, southeast of the Szczecin lagoon where they produce the hull and covering shell and where the first steps of assembly are done. Cooperation in the boatbuilding trade is clearly healthy here – and it even reaches out across country borders.

All this makes it possible to move forward with a collaborative, innovative force. The preconditions couldn't be better: Hanse now employs over 1,300 staff and is the only large-scale production shipyard with direct access to the sea. This makes it possible to be the only yard that can build a ship with a length of 21 metres: the Hanse 675 is the largest series production sailing yacht.

www.yachts.group



5 DEHLER YACHTS

have been a byword for a lighter and slimmer construction for decades – thereby delivering an extra performance

6 GREEN DREAM BOATS

has set the precedent for state-of-the-art solar catamarans with its stylish "Solliner" model

7 PRESERVING BOATING CULTURE

is Bornholm's Træbådelaug association's declared aim. The association's members support boat owners with their expert knowledge as well as their practical help



POLAND

An eco dream that is a catamaran

Nothing in life is perfect. But Solliner, the solar-driven catamaran, developed by the young and fast-growing company Green Dream Boats from Gdańsk which went on to the market in 2014, comes very close. Particularly when the aim is to produce a day-trip boat to carry up to ten people, to be as environmentally friendly as possible and with a stylish design. The "Solliner" model is what happens when you build a boat using the latest knowledge about materials, hydrodynamics and eco-motors combined with modern design. Six metres long and two metres wide, it is the lightest construction of its kind on the market and can be run by a 5-PS-electric motor using 100 per cent solar energy. It can reach up to 12 km/h – quietly, emission-free and without producing any water pollutants either. A gel battery can be used in addition in case it isn't a sunny day which will keep the motor running for 18 hours. The hardtop, with its photovoltaic panels, protects the boat while being transported or when moored and it shields the passengers from both sun and rain. They can make themselves comfortable on a U-shaped sofa and enjoy the panoramic view. Boat hires from all over the world have already ordered more than 80 models of the Solliner which is particularly suitable for renting out because it is cheap to maintain and simple to operate.

www.greendreamboats.com

BORNHOLM

Preserving boating culture together

Bornholm is a treasure island. We are not talking about a chest full of gold coins here, but about something that is inherent in the island's people themselves: their knowledge and craftsmanship about anything to do with boat motors. The Træbådelaug association has made it its task to make the most this treasure and preserve this knowledge – and by doing so preserving as many boats and motors as possible. The association members support boat owners with expert knowledge as well as practical advice about everything to do with repairs, boat renovations and constructing them from scratch. Lectures, joint excursions and classes are all part of Træbådelaug's boat-lovers programme.

www.traebaade.dk ©

BY THE BODDEN



Landside scenic beauties

One peculiarity of the South Coast Baltic is its so-called bodden: the Curonian Lagoon is just one of many briny inland waters just waiting to be discovered.

One example is the Nemunas Delta (called Memeldelta in German) across from the Curonian Spit on the landside of the Curonian Lagoon. The delta is suitable for motorboats because the water is relatively flat.

In Ventė Cape (Ventės ragas in Lithuanian), formerly known as Windenburger Eck, you can visit Europe's oldest ornithological station: many migratory birds take a break here at the "horn" of the Nemunas Delta on their way down through Europe to Africa. Because the Baltic is a tideless sea and consequently low in salt as it is, with freshwater continuously flowing in at the mouths of the rivers, many lagoons with their reed-covered shores resemble freshwater lakes and offer migrating birds a safe haven for breeding.

The whole region from the Lithuanian Port of Klaipėda to Stralsund in Vorpommern can be explored on the old European inland waterway E70. On the way you'll pass through some magnificent spots, one of which is the Żuławy Loop (Polish: Pętla Żuławska). What's special about it, besides its dense network of modern piers and marinas, is its enchanting canals, locks and drawbridges. Not for nothing is Pętla Żuławska also known as the "Polish Netherlands".



B CULTURE



Discovery – the easy way

There is no doubt that the cultural, culinary and entertainment choice along the South Coast Baltic towards the East is too great to cover it station by station with a travel guide in your hand. Nobody has the time to do that. However, the most beautiful thing is that you can simply drift and discover treasures like these all by yourself.

open-air stage is now a landmark for many sailors and boat owners. Back then, people came along in their hundreds when some prominent Polish musicians got together on board the Finsterwalder for the first time to give a concert. Now the wreck hosts regular music events. **1**

bit.do/finsterwalde

Party supreme on Bornholm

An international festival that provides you with a view of Northern Europe's largest medieval castle ruin and a lake, and is directly linked to one of Denmark's most beautiful camping sites, can confidently call itself the "Wonderfestival".



2



GOOD MUSIC AND WILD PARTIES – in unexpected places

Off to the wrecking ball

If there was a top ten of the world's most unusual concert locations, the half-sunken cargo ship "Ulrich Finsterwalder" in Lake Dąbie near Szczecin would definitely be amongst the top-ranking locations.

Since 2010's "Chopin on a concrete ship" event, the wreck which was converted to an

It takes place every year in August at Bornholm's northernmost tip with the the old Hammershus castle ruin as an impressive backdrop. The really spectacular thing isn't just the castle and nature, but the cultural life there. The Wonderfestival presents bands, artists and DJs from all over Europe on two stages – plus plenty of other activities around it:

wonderfestival.dk



A DIGNIFIED MEMORIAL – for the dark chapters of history

The Second World War Museum in Gdańsk

The organisers of this new museum in Gdańsk caused controversy.

They wanted to create a place to remember the war from a Polish perspective as well as a universal one. Some parts of society were worried that the great sacrifices made by the Polish people weren't being adequately honoured there. The museum is now open and without doubt it does demonstrate the war's horror for its visitors in a vivid way. Exhibits include a farewell letter

written on a handkerchief of a man sentenced to death in Warsaw, and the blanket of an Auschwitz survivor which is made from human hair. The spectacular museum building opened in 2017 and is located near the Gdańsk wharf. It can be seen from far off: the tower with cafes and event rooms is dedicated to the present, while the war's traumas are displayed in large settings below ground. **3**

muzeum1939.pl

From Usedom to space

There aren't that many places where there is such an ambivalent feeling for technical progress as in the Historical Technical Museum in Peenemünde.

In 1942, a rocket that reached space for the first time was launched here in the "Versuchsanstalten Peenemünde". The same technology was used to develop the first military carrier rocket. Thousands of forced labourers, concentration camp inmates and prisoners of war suffered and lost their lives during its production. The museum guides the visitor in a focused way from the development of this high-tech invention under the aegis of Wernher von Braun to the fate of the forced workers – by showing biographies and wit-

ness accounts. Today, Europe's once largest military research centre is a museum as well as a cultural meeting place. Now, concerts with international artists take place inside the power station's turbine hall – the only preserved building – in this example of monumental industrial architecture.

museum-peenemuende.de



4



NICE TASTE – from down-to-earth to sophisticated

Torvehal on Bornholm

Sea buckthorn cookies or smoked sausage?

Craft beer or organic wine? Coffee or cake? Or better still, everything together? The newly opened market hall inside the old abattoir from the 1920s offers the best of

everything that grows or is produced on Bornholm – and there is plenty of it. The sunny Baltic island is located on a meteorological divide and has an almost Mediterranean climate. It has developed into a foodie hotspot over the past few years with famous restaurants such as the Kadeau, the Stammershalle and the Nordlandet. The Torvehal in the island's capital Rønne is the perfect starting point to discover Bornholm in a culinary way. There is also a foodtruck, a cafe and a wine bar. **5**

torvehalbornholm.dk

Delicious made easy

The heavy, roughly carved benches in front of the fish snack bar in Wolin harbour already send out a clear design message:

It is very down-to-earth here, but it's also very good. The smoked fish that entices visitors from afar completely meets all expectations. It is served by Alexandra who used to be an acrobat before she turned to gastronomy. Simple, well-prepared food with a slightly rough, smoky charme. The Wolin fish snack bar is the perfect warm-up for all the gastronomic highlights of this region. It is harbour food in the best sense. **6**



PURE ROMANCE – and history of art

A bike trip embracing Caspar David Friedrich and Runge

It is only a five-minute walk from the City Marina Wiek in Greifswald to get to one of Germany's most famous dilapidated buildings: the Eldena monastery ruin. This red brick building owes its fame to the artist Caspar David Friedrich who used it as a central motif of his work because the monastery's ruins evoked for him a great but lost past. There is even an Eldena room in the Caspar David Friedrich Centre in Greifswald.

The ruin is also the starting point for the 47-kilometre route of German Romanticism which leads from Greifswald to Wolgast and is best discovered by bike. A row of display boards along the route document the life and work of the Romantics. Once you have arrived in Wolgast, a visit to the birth house of Philipp Otto Runge is highly recommended. It was reopened for its 240th anniversary with a completely new museum concept. **7**

vorpommern.de

Food for the soul

The Curonian Spit, the narrow stretch of land between Kaliningrad and Klaipėda, has sent generations of German writers, artists and thinkers into rapture.

Wilhelm von Humboldt noted that an image would be missing from his soul if he hadn't seen the Curonian Spit. Thomas Mann enthused about the charm of this landscape with its shifting sand dunes, the pines and the dark blue sea. Germany's great literary figure had a house built in Nidden, today Nida, where he spent three summers and where a small museum and cultural centre is housed today. It has been a wonderful tradition that since 1997 Nida has lived to the rhythm of the Thomas Mann Festival which takes place each year in July. The landscape of the soul of modern man is reflected there in music, words and art. But the view onto the Spit, which you can enjoy from the museum, is equally impressive.

thomas-mann-haus.de



8



A few days after midsummer and they gather in Gdańsk to sail off together. Two dozen people with one goal: to sail to the Curonian Lagoon via Kaliningrad. We went there to catch the mood and hear what they had to say. And here's the thing: everyone said that it was a great experience.

AUTHOR Kerstin Löffler
PHOTOGRAPHER Fabian Weiss

Sailing into the sun



We leave the harbour of Gdańsk in a Jeanneau

Sun Odyssey 49 DS at four in the morning

A few days after the summer solstice, it hardly gets dark at all at night.

From our berth we have an unobstructed view of the medieval wooden Crane Gate, the symbol of Gdańsk



ents enrolled me in a sailing school. And I have been surfing since then on anything that floats! I have tried it all. Once I windsurfed to a friend's birthday party, that was around 100 kilometres.

Sometimes I'm really torn between sailing and windsurfing. Sailing is slow and it makes you fat. If there's no wind, you sit there for hours and hardly move. I'm faster on my board. Windsurfing is more sportive. One thing is certain though. Once our children can swim we'll get our own boat. 🗣️



Jaano Martin Ots was awarded his sailing license over 30 years ago in the Soviet Union. The Estonian never leaves his house without his sea charts and his tablet in a waterproof case



A landlubber's logbook

For a long time, Kerstin Löffler wanted to go sailing – and that became a reality at the 2017 South Baltic Coast Rally.

A gut decision

Sailing is great, they said. Sailing is fantastic, you're outside all day in the fresh air, you move around and can see the sea. My first day on board is coming to an end, I'm on my knees on deck cleaning off bits of gooseberry from the boat. They were from the fruit cake Joanna brought on board for breakfast; it didn't stay with me for very long.

The only thing I saw today were our skipper's shoes while I was hanging over the railing for hours. At least that quickly establishes a certain closeness: if you throw up in front of someone all day long, there's no need for big conversations in the evening – the others know you quite well by then.

Sports sailors don't mind the long distance between Gdańsk and Klaipėda, they sail day and night if required. It is a different thing for hobby sailors. They set sail unhurriedly at nine in the morning and aim to berth somewhere at midday or in the afternoon, eat something and have a look around. I don't want to say anything wrong but I think that's why the Russian authorities should change their mind: yachts aren't dangerous! There are such good waterways here, such good winds, you could build a marina anywhere here. The conditions are perfect!

That's why I am also astonished that no one is out and about on the water – no boats, no windsurfers, no kitesurfers, nothing. It seems as if people here don't know all the things they could get up to on the water. I started sailing in 1982 in Tallinn where I grew up. An uncle of mine had a surfboard. He took me to a small bay and straight away I knew that's it! Since you were only allowed to windsurf if you had a sailing license in the Soviet Union, my par-



The first stage of our voyage takes a solid 12 hours:

we weigh anchor at daybreak and reach Kaliningrad in the early evening



“Sailing isn’t like taking the ferry: you never know how long you’ll need to get from A to B.”

*Adam Walczukiewicz
Skipper*

from Kaliningrad to Klaipėda. First we had no wind at all, then headwind. It took us nearly 30 hours just for this leg of the rally. It can take a long time. Very long. That’s why we yachtsmen talk about distances in terms of miles and not hours. Sailing isn’t like taking the ferry: you never know how long you’ll need to get from A to B.

Sailing is like a bridge between people. Wherever the people are from, they’ll find a language – sailing is pretty much the same all over the world. Life at sea is pretty rough. Even simple things like cooking can be arduous tasks there. But I like boats. I like the sea. I just enjoy sailing. 📍



The Amber Coast

90 per cent of the world’s amber comes from the Kaliningrad region.

Along the southern Baltic coast you often see men in oilskins standing in the water, casting their nets into the sea – not for fish, but for amber. Their “catch” is infinitesimal, however, compared with the vast amber deposits in the region.

The real business in “yellow amber” (which, despite the name, can come in various colours) is in Russian Yantarny, which was called Palmnicken back in the days of East Prussia till Soviet annexation after World War II. Yantarny (from yantar, meaning “amber” in Russian) has the only amber mine in the world. Roughly 450 tonnes of amber are extracted here annually, that’s a good 90 per cent of global production. Most of it is sold to China.

To extract this precious fossilized tree resin from the earth, the workers now have to dig fifty metres deep in an open-cast mine to reach the huge amber fields. One cubic metre of excavated rock here yields approximately one kilogram of amber. But the state-owned amber combine needn’t worry for the time being: the deposits here are estimated to last for another two hundred years.

A mosaic portrait of Lenin made up of hundreds of pieces of amber adorns a showroom at the combine’s headquarters in Yantarny. Amber jewellery and cosmetics are sold at the amber museums, of which there are quite a number in the Kaliningrad Oblast.

There’s one in Svetlogorsk, for example, the former

German spa town of Rauschen, where an employee secretly pours a cupful of amber pebbles into the fountain in front of the museum: children who’ve taken a tour of the museum are then handed little fishing nets with which to fish out the pebbles.

But be careful, holidaymakers, when combing the beach for resinous treasures: not only amber, but also vestiges of phosphorus bombs from World War II can get washed ashore around here. Even experts can hardly tell amber and phosphorus apart with the naked eye. Phosphorus is of course extremely dangerous because it ignites at body temperature. So just in case bring along a closable and incombustible receptacle to carry your catch in.



Adam Walczukiewicz was a graphic designer before he turned to sailing for a living. He skippered boats in the Mediterranean for a long time



From Kaliningrad with love

I can’t help thinking of James Bond when we arrive in the naval port of Baltijsk. One boat after another, slowly, in single file, right up to the quay, where nearly a dozen stern-faced Russian border officials are standing with big peaked caps on.

We have to step up to the rail one at a time and hand our passports to a female Russian soldier.

Three soldiers and a German shepherd come aboard and search our boat. Two others disappear with the passports. After one whole hour of waiting, green light: we’re cleared for entry.

Oh yes, and another thing you’ve got to watch out for: ships. I believe the Baltic has the densest traffic of any sea in the world, and sometimes big ships don’t see you. It’s like cycling: even if you keep to your side and do everything right, you still have to watch out for what the others do. Being in the right won’t get you anywhere when you get rammed by a ship. Still, I like the Baltic a lot. It has nice ports, gorgeous little spots along the coast, great beaches, some of which look like on the Mediterranean – just not so overcrowded. Not yet.

We were fast in this year’s South Coast Baltic Rally. On the way back from Klaipėda to Danzig we went a hundred miles in under 24 hours, you can hardly do it much faster than that in a yacht like this one. In a speedboat, yes, but not in a tourist boat. I remember the first time, two years ago: we took a pretty long time getting



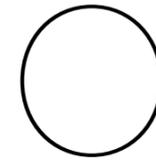
“Improvising is what’s charming about our berth.”

Robert Bzdęga
from Poland has skippered his way halfway round the world

Ours are the only boats moored in Kaliningrad. The marina is mostly a jumble of boat parts, through which we weave our way to a portable shower



Malte Wiedemeyer has been living on Usedom since he retired. The former lecturer of philosophy and his friends set sail on a three-week trip together every summer



Of course you start small here on the Achterwasser, then head up to Rügen, and at some point you’ve sailed your whole area. Then you’re familiar with the boat, the wind conditions, water depths and sea marks – you practice all that first in your own area. And then you take it to the next level: it’s about 65 sea miles to Bornholm from here. You have to watch the weather beforehand and get information. There were some force 8 gales here during the South Coast Baltic Rally, it was ferocious for a while.

The switch to the Baltic, the open sea, isn’t normally a problem, especially for shorter distances. Sailing, say, from Rügen to Denmark, you’ve got land either in front of you or at your back most of the time. But



The journey to Klaipeda turns out well – even the sun is coming out

We’re sailing off from Kaliningrad in the morning and arrive in the evening in Klaipėda, Lithuania’s only sea port. Two office towers that form the shape of a giant K welcome us as we sail into the modern marina.

On our last night, we all meet for a barbecue in the marina

I know what Malte meant when he talked about the community that he enjoys so much when he is sailing. Two dozen people from five countries are sitting together here at the harbour, chatting, laughing and toasting the joint adventure – and the thing I would like to do most now is to carry on sailing with them for weeks.

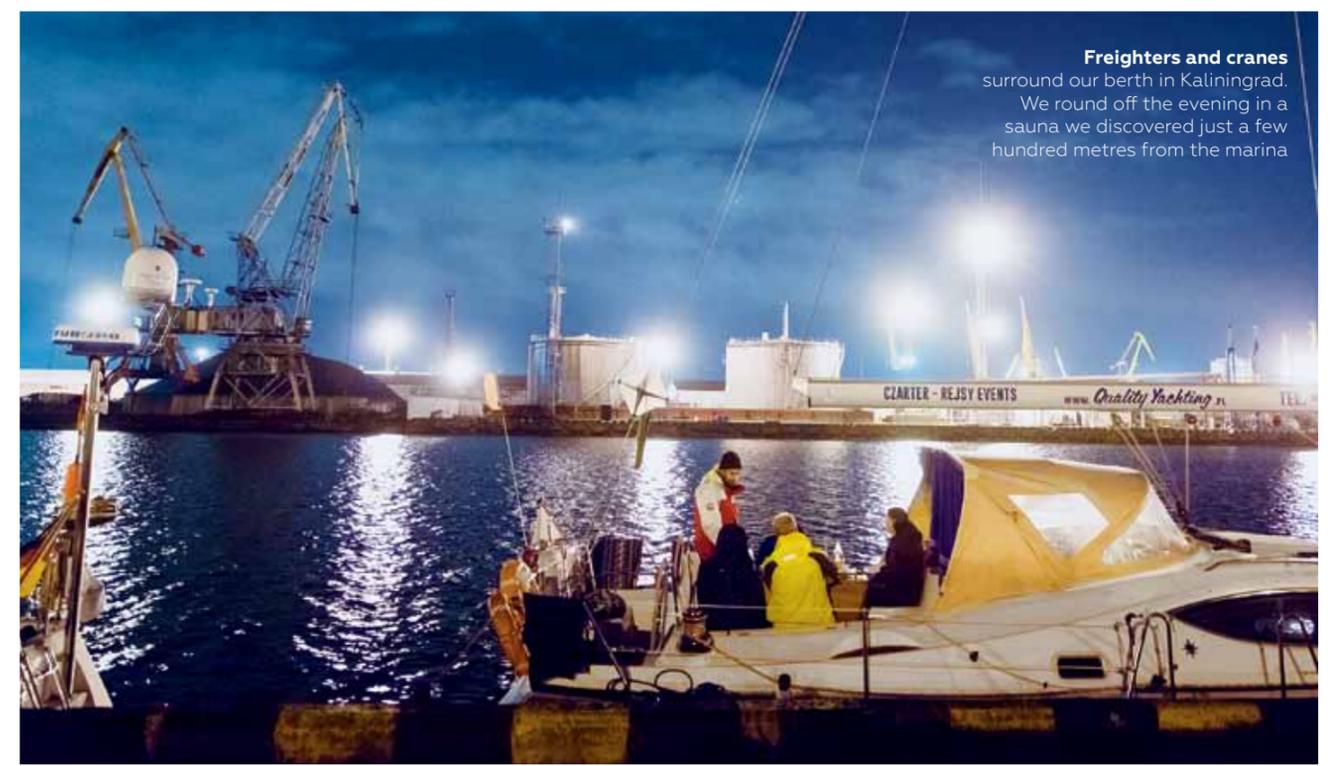
Kerstin Löffler

after Bornholm there’s no land in sight for a while, and that’s pretty eerie the first time round, I have to admit. You’re at the mercy of the sea. But you don’t sail alone, you sail in a flotilla. Which of course gives you a feeling of security, that nothing can really go wrong because you know the others are by your side.

That’s actually what’s so nice about sailing together. Of course sometimes when you’re in port you go to a bar by yourself afterwards, in the evening. But it’s much nicer to sit around on the wharf together and barbecue. Those are some of the best times I’ve ever had.

Arriving in port is an incredibly great feeling anyway: when you moor the boat, first you have a “dock”, a drink together, and arrange to meet up later for dinner. There’s no substitute for this sort of community experience, I wouldn’t miss it for the world.

We’ve really covered the whole southern Baltic by now. We know lots and lots of ports and we’ve had lots and lots of good times – and hopefully there’s more to come for a while. ☺



Freighters and cranes surround our berth in Kaliningrad. We round off the evening in a sauna we discovered just a few hundred metres from the marina

B SERVICE PREPPING FOR YOUR VOYAGE



Compact info in the marinas guide

More than thirty new marinas between Stralsund and Klaipėda

30 nautical miles: that's the maximum distance between most of the marinas on the South Coast Baltic nowadays. The new marinas on the Western Pomeranian sailing route, in particular, have filled in the former service gaps. So a new boating area has emerged over the past few years, extending more than 300 nautical miles from west to east.

southcoastbaltic.eu



Visa for Kaliningrad

Allow ten days to obtain a visa

This is basically the only drawback about the route: you can't just weigh anchor and set sail when the weather's right. Because Russia still requires a visa for entry into the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad Oblast. And you should apply for a visa at least ten days ahead of time. The simplest solution is to use one of the travel agencies specialised in handling visas, which can be found online.

It makes sense to get a tourist visa, which is valid for four weeks and on which you can enter the country several times – in case you need to make another stop at Kaliningrad because of the weather. A visa is likely to cost €80 and up, depending on the travel agent.

toureast.de



Where the money is

You get złoty from Polish cash dispensers with your EC card

In Lithuania you pay in euros anyway. And many hotels and restaurants in Russia have their own cash dispensers, at which you can withdraw roubles – though you can make cashless payments almost everywhere in Kaliningrad. In our experience, even the little kiosks in the middle of the woods on the Curonian Spit will take credit cards – even for tiny amounts.



And then patience

Various stages of the rally can sometimes take a long time

Seldom have they had such smooth sailing, says Adam. In the previous rally in 2015, it took their flotilla nearly 30 hours to sail from Kaliningrad to Klaipėda. The Baltic is simply unpredictable – and that's the great thing about it.

B INDEX WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

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South Coast
Baltic



Where boating adventure begins



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