

FRM

The magazine on the
FrankfurtRhineMain metropolitan region

INNOVATION Why the Startup Factory puts FRM in pole position____ **THE FUTURE** How the region is becoming a hotbed of visionary science____ **FESTIVALS** What drives the Artistic Director of the Rheingau Music Festival_ **OVERSIGHT** Why AMLA is coming to Frankfurt_ **CAPITAL** What the title of World Design Capital means for democracy____ **FOOTBALL** Why EURO 2024 was unforgettable for all the fans

Issue 2024

>
English
Edition

Winegrowing in the metropolitan region

A journey of discovery through FrankfurtRhineMain



Frankfurt
RheinMain

Become a part of it



Business, next level

Whether quality of life, culture, economic performance or sustainability: In many international rankings, the Frankfurt RheinMain region is right at the top – and rightfully so. Opportunities across the cities and towns in our region are endless. Discover these top locations with us. If your company is planning to expand into our region we will assist you through every phase of the set-up process. With outstanding commitment from our team of experts.

FrankfurtRheinMain GmbH International Marketing of the Region is the official point of contact for companies looking to set up an operation in the Frankfurt RheinMain region.

→ frm-united.com

Editorial



WHAT MAKES OUR REGION UNIQUE?

Frankfurt RhineMain is a truly international metropolitan region where people from over 180 countries live together in a harmonious blend of diverse voices and cultures. Diversity is a key feature of our winegrowing region, too, and in a very special way. The metropolitan region is famous for its businesses and scientific and academic institutions, but it is also home to winemakers in unique terroirs. Vineyards stretch along the River Main, from the world-famous Rheinhessen area in the west of the region to Lohrberg in Frankfurt itself, down the Bergstraße to the south and into Franconia in the east.

The Romans first brought winemaking to the region, and we are still proud of that tradition today. The City of Frankfurt blends seamlessly into this heritage, with its own winery and even a vineyard within the city limits (you'll have seen it on the front cover). And if you're not a wine-drinker, I urge you to explore the other areas covered in this edition of FRM Magazine - there's plenty to discover!

Actions speak louder than words, so we're delighted by the EU's decision which underscores the importance of FRM as a financial centre – the EU's new AMLA agency is coming to Frankfurt. Its role is to fight money laundering, and it becomes the third EU institution to call the city home, along with the ECB and EIOPA pensions authority.

This edition is rounded off with a look back on the past and forward into the future, as the stadium in Frankfurt's Stadtwald turns 100 in 2025. The historic Waldstadion is the largest in the region, and along with hosting sporting events, it's also the venue for legendary concerts.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of FRM!

Mike Josef
Mayor of the city of Frankfurt am Main




INNOVATIVE AND IN THE MOOD TO PARTY

Economic power, innovation and cutting-edge science have always been USPs of our region. That is as true today as it was 570 years ago when Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press in Mainz. A big ideas factory is designed to develop Frankfurt RhineMain into an international innovation hotspot. The Rhein-Main-Universities of Mainz, Darmstadt and Frankfurt are joining forces with the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management and the Polytechnic Foundation of Frankfurt am Main. Their aim is for their Startup Factory to take a huge step into the future. It's a fantastic idea, characteristic of the spirit of our region, which is already known for its thriving startups and spin-off enterprises. Turn to page 6 to find out how FRM is growing even stronger.

At the beginning of the 20th century the region was known as the "pharmacy of the world", and not much has changed. The cutting-edge biotech industry reveals the close links between academia and business here. The example of Frankfurt RhineMain shows how regional funding works here, developing a project which is networked across the whole region. Join us as we take a look at a premier location in the heart of Europe, boasting major universities and global pharmaceuticals and chemicals firms such as Sanofi, Merck, Boehringer and BioNTech. Find out more on page 12.

The EURO 2024 European Football Championship was a magnificent festival for Frankfurt RhineMain and our guests from across the continent. Thousands of fans watched matches in the stadium, celebrated in the Fan Zone by the Main, and populated bars and beer gardens in the region for weeks on end. Share our unforgettable memories on page 38.

Have fun finding out about FRM!

Eric Menges
CEO of FrankfurtRheinMain GmbH
International Marketing of the Region



PARTNERS FOR THIS
EDITION OF FRM

GOLD

FrankfurtRheinMain
Die Wirtschaftsinitiative

BRONZE

KULTURFONDS
Frankfurt RheinMain

SILVER

**Frankfurt
RheinMain**
Become a part of it

HESSEN
TRADE & INVEST
Hessen Economic Development

**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
FRANKFURT**

SUPPORTERS

FrankfurtRheinMain
www.frm-united.com

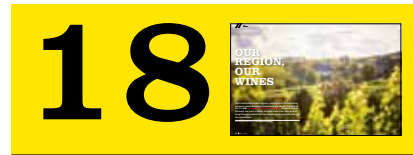
Regionalverband
FrankfurtRheinMain





06 STARTUP FACTORY

Universities in Mainz, Darmstadt and Frankfurt join forces to boost startups



18 WINE

What makes FrankfurtRhineMain one of Germany's leading wine producing regions

- 03 Editorial**
- 04 Contents/Publication details**
- 06 Startups**
 - > Universities combining strengths and talents
- 14 The Future**
 - > The new technologies shaping the region
- 18 Unique**
 - > What winemaking means to the metropolitan region
- 28 Culture**
 - > The Rheingau Music Festival: truly one of a kind
- 30 Banking**
 - > What AMLA is bringing to the financial metropolis
- 34 Global capital**
 - > What does it mean for the region to be World Design Capital?
- 38 Sport**
 - > Fans from Germany and Europe celebrating the European Championship
- 40 Locals**
 - >The faces and stories you need to know
- 48 Anniversary celebrations**
 - > The Waldstadion turns 100



14 TECHNOLOGY HUB

Cutting edge technologies that are shaping the FrankfurtRhineMain region



40 LOCALS

Which faces and stories you have to know



Vineyards in Frankfurt
The cover image shows the Lohrberg vineyard in Frankfurt. Turn to pages 18–29 to find out more.

PUBLICATION DETAILS

Publisher FRM – the magazine about the FrankfurtRhineMain Metropolitan Region is created by FrankfurtRheinMain GmbH International Marketing of the Region in cooperation with Fazit Communication GmbH, Frankfurt am Main.
For FrankfurtRheinMain GmbH: Eric Menges, Managing Director
Published by Fazit Communication GmbH, Tel: (069) 75 91-3101, Managing Directors: Jonas Grashey, Hannes Ludwig
Address of publisher and editorial office Pariser Straße 1, 60486 Frankfurt am Main, also the address for all persons responsible and authorised representatives named in the publication details

Editorial team Arnd Festerling (senior editor), Kim Berg, Luca Rehse-Knauf
Art direction Viktoria Vieweg, Kerim Demir
Production Viktoria Vieweg, Kerim Demir
Distribution Jadwiga Jaenicke, Tel. (069) 75 91-3011, Fax (069) 75 91-2673
Note Contributions identified by name do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editors. Reprint only with permission of the publisher. Printed in Germany. Copyright © by Fazit Communication GmbH 2024. The paper used to make this magazine is environment-friendly. It was produced using chlorine-free bleached pulp.
Cover image Jonas Rathermann



in @ f X
#wifoeffm
#frankfurtforward

FRANKFURT FORWARD MATCHING AM MAIN

Frankfurt Forward, a project by Frankfurt Economic Development, is the independent matchmaker and driving force for the FrankfurtRheinMain startup ecosystem. Frankfurt Forward was initiated in 2015 as part of the Industry Master Plan. It promotes the further development of innovation and digitalization at the Frankfurt location through networking and knowledge transfer.

With "Startup of The Year" – the cross-industry competition featured by a top-class jury and accompanying events – Frankfurt Forward established an important networking platform for startups, companies, investors and politicians in FrankfurtRheinMain.



frankfurtforward.com
frankfurt-business.net



A FACTORY FOR BIG IDEAS AND INNOVATIVE BUSINESS MODELS



The founders of the RheinMain Startup Factory are committed to empowering the startup culture in Frankfurt, Mainz and Darmstadt.

The RheinMain Startup Factory aims to support the creation of technology and science-based startups and develop the region into an **international innovation hotspot**. At the heart of the project are the Rhine-Main Universities of Frankfurt, Darmstadt and Mainz.

BY CARSTEN HAUPTMEIER (TEXT) AND JONAS RATERMANN (PHOTOS)

> **Thousands of students** are making their way across the extensive Westend Campus of Goethe University Frankfurt on one of the last days of the summer semester. Anyone with a bike frequently has to get off and push, and the bike racks outside the lecture theatres and seminar buildings are almost all full. The team at RheinMain Startup Factory believe that, among these students, there are some who plan to set up their own start-ups. They are ready to offer support to potential founders at universities in Frankfurt, Darmstadt and Mainz to build their own enterprises.

The project involves the strategic partnership between the Rhine-Main Universities of Goethe University Frankfurt, Jo-

hannes Gutenberg University Mainz and the Technical University of Darmstadt. They are joined by the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management, the Polytechnic Foundation of Frankfurt am Main and Futury GmbH. Together, they aim to “develop the Rhine-Main region into a sustainable, unique startup and innovation hotspot in the heart of Europe for technology- and knowledge-based entrepreneurship.”

FrankfurtRhineMain offers the ideal conditions, they say, stressing that the region has “excellent research allied with a diverse range of businesses and great economic power,” says Charlie Müller, Managing Director of Futury GmbH, a platform for startups. As students stroll past the windows of the University



Harald Holzer is Managing Director of the Highest centre for innovation and entrepreneurialism at TU Darmstadt.



Through his Futury firm, Charlie Müller develops solutions, business models and market access for early-stage startups.

There's an incredible amount of power in this region. //

Board building at Frankfurt University, the entrepreneur describes the new factory's approach. "The key element of building a startup hotspot right now is creating tailored structures and services to consolidate the power of all the various players in Frankfurt, Darmstadt and Mainz," he says.

The project recorded an early success in summer 2024 when the partners advanced to the second round of the "Startup Factories" competition run by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action. Candidates from further north also enjoyed success, such as a partnership of universities from central Hesse comprising Justus Liebig University Giessen, Philipps University Marburg and Technische Hochschule Mittelhessen, for their project StartMiUp Factory Sustainable Life. The competition aims to help develop centres for entrepreneurs that maintain strong links to academia but are run as private enterprises. A total of 15 candidates were selected in the first round, and have until February 2025 to submit their detailed plans. Yet the future of the RheinMain Startup Factory does not depend on progressing further in the competition, as Müller stresses it will "go ahead, regardless of whether we get further funding."

No matter what happens, the project partners expect the close and structured collaboration to deliver a huge boost to the startup scene in the region. According to the Startup Monitor, TU Darmstadt and Goethe University Frankfurt are already among the top ten universities in Germany, says Kirstin Schilling, Managing Director of Innovectis, a spin-off from Frankfurt University for knowledge and technology transfer. "If we can join forces and Mainz joins us as well, we can significantly increase our visibility and impact." From then on, Schilling believes, there is a route to the top in Germany, and perhaps further afield too. "Under the umbrella of Rhine-Main Universities which already collaborate closely on research, we have the chance to overtake startup the strongholds of Munich and Berlin," she says.

Decision makers at the other universities involved share very similar views. Michael Fuchs, who leads on knowledge and technology transfer at the University of Mainz, acknowledges that the city may not be famous for producing legions of startups, even after the success of BioNTech brought it to global prominence. "To continue attracting international recognition, we need to collaborate within the region," he says. Harald Holzer, Managing Direc-



Martina Pfeifer wants to attract international startups to the region.



Michael Fuchs is Head of Knowledge and Technology Transfer at the University of Mainz.

tor of the Highest centre for innovation and entrepreneurialism at TU Darmstadt sums up the situation as, “There’s an incredible amount of power in this region, but now we need to put that power onto the road.” For him, the region’s strong points include its strengths in science and innovation. He also stresses the importance of its international makeup and outlook and the region’s infrastructure, including Frankfurt Airport.

Making the most of the region’s strengths first requires groundbreaking ideas. But the makers behind the Factory aren’t just waiting for a flash of inspiration. They’re also offering strategic support to help develop ideas and businesses. “We can’t just wait for someone to knock on our door,” says Holzer. “That means we need to be active about scouting, getting the word out and raising awareness,” he says, drawing a comparison between funding startups and how talented young sportspeople are identified and promoted.

There’s certainly a huge pool of talent in the FrankfurtRhine-Main region. There are a quarter of a million students in the metropolitan region, so universities are a key element of the project. Universities were at the heart of the project concept from the outset, says Guenter Kraft, who developed the idea for the RheinMain Startup Factory. “That’s where the talent is, that’s where innovation happens,” says Kraft, who also works as a mentor at Highest. He has direct experience of the startup scene in the US and Israel, but he notes that when the project started in his home region, “There were a lot of individual initiatives, but there was no overarching strategy.”

The RheinMain Startup Factory is organised into three clusters, each focusing on a different business area. The “Innovate” cluster is where universities and research institutions work together, while support structures and startup “accelerators” are the focus of the “Create” cluster. The “Scale” cluster centres on investors in startups.

“Funding is vital across all phases of a project,” says Futury’s Managing Director Müller. He explains that the region is doing “pretty well” in terms of the early phases, but that things will get more challenging in later stages, when it can get “very expensive” for a tech startup, for instance. “Achieving that has been chal-



Kirstin Schilling is Managing Director of Innovectis where she works at the interface between innovation and enterprise.

Being successful as a startup is 80% down to your team. //

lenging for us in the Rhine-Main region so far. But if we can't manage to do that, the best startups will ultimately move to other regions in Germany or abroad altogether for IPOs in the US or Israel, for example," he says.

Martina Pfeifer, head of the Scale division also stresses the critical importance of funding. "Outstanding startups always find funds somewhere in the world. The only question is where. We want to keep them in this region," she says, but she stresses it isn't just about stopping businesses from moving away. She aims to attract startups from other regions. "The bigger the ecosystem, the more it attracts additional businesses and investors," she explains.

Pfeifer believes it is vital that the Startup Factory has its own funds as a first step. Her colleague Guenther Kraft estimates it will take around €100m. "That's a lot, but we need to aim high," he says. Innovectis Managing Director Kirstin Schilling describes the €56m Carma Fund for life science projects at Goethe University as a "first step," but she knows more investors are needed. "Ultimately, we need to ensure that international investors don't fly on from Frankfurt to Berlin or Munich. We want them to stay here."

What kinds of business models attract investors? How can you tell if a startup has the potential for success? For Martina Pfeifer, people are the most important aspect. "I always start by looking at the team," she says. "The team needs to be diverse and the people need to complement one another. It also needs to be incredibly resilient and driven by their own idea." Like her, brilliant ideas are not at the top of the agenda for startup expert Kraft. For him, the priority is the attitudes held by founders and the team behind a business. "Setting up a startup takes courage. Being successful is 80% down to your team," he says. But he adds that it's not enough for the team to consist solely of technical experts, as you also need someone with skills in business management, for example.

The RheinMain Startup Factory aims to help assemble teams like this. Innovectis MD Schilling offers the example of an engi-

neer from Darmstadt getting support from a business management specialist from Frankfurt. "We're already making that happen because we work together so well on a personal level," she says, but she stresses, that alone is not enough to compete at the very highest level. "We need to create the structures which facilitate that," she says.

These structures and the whole service are, in principle, open to all students and researchers and any idea. That said, Futury MD Müller sees a benefit in a certain level of concentration. "There needs to be quality along with quantity," he observes, adding that there is a need to teach problem-oriented thinking, otherwise you quickly end up in a situation where you have "Solutions looking for problems." He also emphasises that services should focus on individual areas such as deep tech, green tech, biotech and fintech. "The goal is to strengthen strengths. If we take too broad an approach, we end up taking a watering can approach to funding."

However, funding and structures cannot replace a vital factor of sport, academia or the world of business: role models. This is where the team behind Wingcopter comes in, for example. The drone manufacturer started as a spin-off from TU Darmstadt and now enjoys international recognition. Tom Plümmer, Jonathan Hesselbarth and Ansgar Kadura set up Wingcopter in September 2017 to use drones to deliver items such as medical products to remote areas. Harald Holzer says Wingcopter's founder Tom Plümmer regularly comes to give talks at the university in Darmstadt. In recent years, Holzer has observed a fundamental change in attitudes towards setting up startups, which he attributes to "tangible role models" such as Plümmer.

The stories of the man behind Wingcopter and BioNTech founders Uğur Şahin and Özlem Türeci are probably familiar to many of the students out and about in Frankfurt University's Westend campus in July. Some of them will even have equally promising ideas for ways to transform business and society. The RheinMain Startup Factory aims to create a better environment so that these ideas can become innovative business models in future. //

THE FUTURE GOES BACK A LONG WAY HERE

With cutting-edge research, thriving startups and strong growth, the Rhine-Main region is a **hotspot for visionary science and innovative industry.**

BY LUCA REHSE-KNAUF (TEXT)

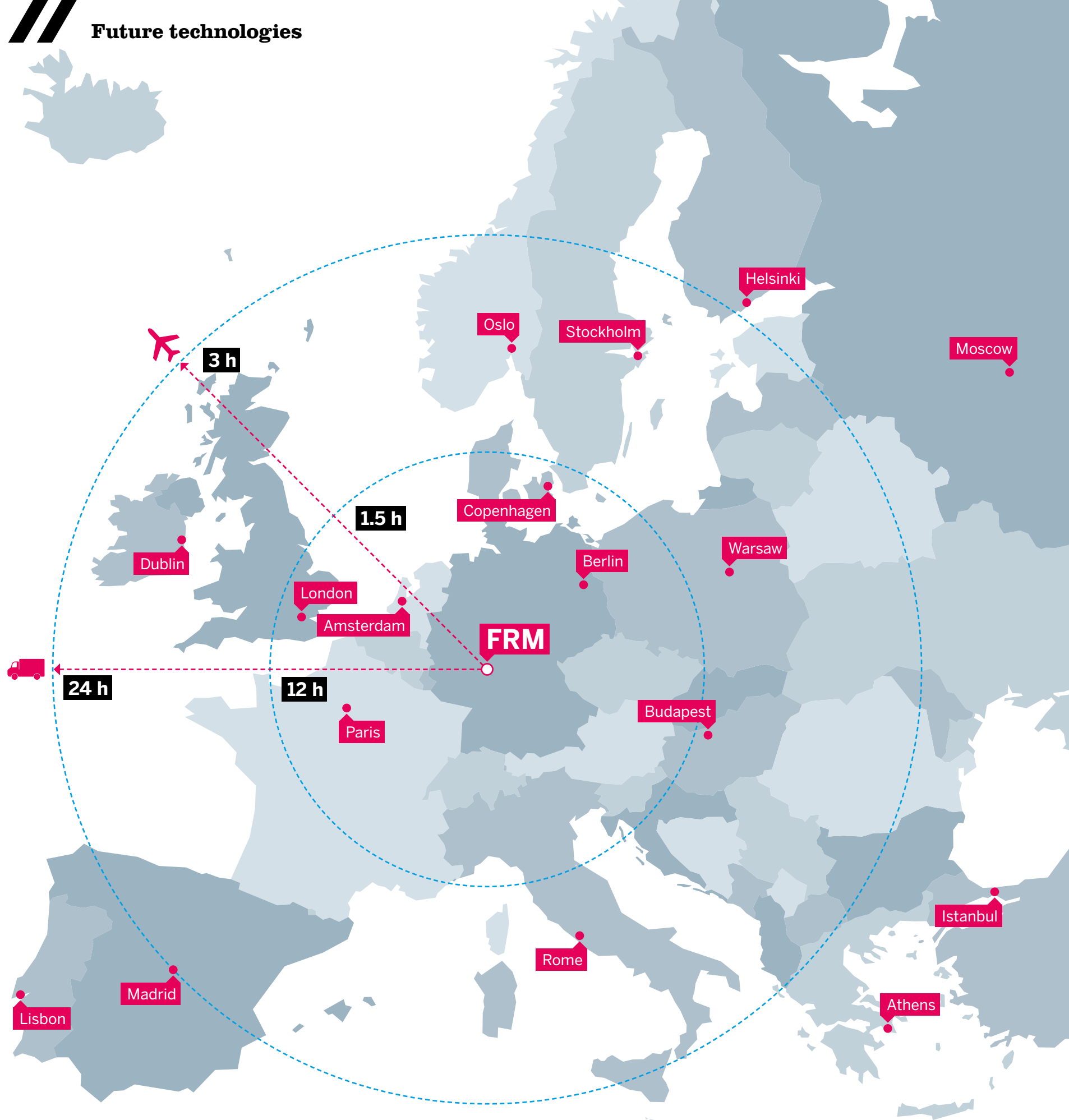
> In Mainz, the future began in 1450. At the latest. In that year, Johannes Gutenberg's invention of a new printing press technology sparked what was probably the greatest media revolution in human history: printed books. Frankfurt-RhineMain has a long tradition of innovation in other areas, too. The Merck company was founded in Darmstadt in 1668 and is considered the oldest chemicals company in the world. Boehringer Ingelheim was set up in 1885 and grew to become Germany's largest pharmaceuticals firm. In the early 20th century, companies such as Hoechst AG from Frankfurt helped the region earn the nickname of the "World's Pharmacy".

This visionary heritage continues today in the Rhine-Main region, and is clearly evident in biotechnology. "It's the application of biological principles to deliver a benefit to society," explains

Professor Eckhart Thines, Dean of the Biology Faculty at the University of Mainz and State Coordinator for Biotechnology in Rhineland-Palatinate. The practical applications range from cleaning products to medicine. "Fruit juice is an everyday example," he says. "It contains citric acid, which is actually a product of fungal metabolism." In simple terms, biotechnology researchers are inspired by natural processes, which they then implement with technology.

The Mainz biotech startup Ligni Labs is working on a revolution in how we protect plants, a nanotechnology shield against the vine disease Esca which until now has been considered untreatable. Novo Nordisk from Denmark has its German HQ in Mainz; it develops drugs to treat diabetes and is regarded as Europe's most valuable company. Another example with global recognition is





BioNTech, which became famous around the world by producing the mRNA vaccine for COVID-19. It is continuing its visionary research and development by creating individualised cancer therapies.

The presence of so many businesses in the Rhine-Main region is no accident. The FrankfurtRhine-Main region is home to 5.9 million people, while 2.5 million workers generate €273 billion: the equivalent of Finland’s GDP. The region is connected with the rest of the world by 18 railway stations for intercity services, 7 inland ports and Frankfurt Airport, which serves 283 destinations world-wide. The region owes its reputation as an outstanding location for science and research to the Max Planck, Helmholtz and Leibniz research institutes, the Rhein-Main universities of Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, the Technical University of Darmstadt, and Goethe University Frankfurt. Over 100,000 students study here and countless firms train apprentices and young professionals. For businesses, that means they enjoy the best possible access to the next generation of highly qualified workers.

Having great infrastructure is important, but it isn’t everything. “What businesses and startups need to continue growing are things like international education and childcare services,” says Mike Peter Schweitzer, Marketing Manager at biomindz, a municipal company which receives support from the state capital Mainz to build up the city as a biotech hub. “Attracting skilled workers from around the world takes good housing and educational services,” he goes on. He also stresses that the importance of diverse cultural programmes should not be underestimated in the attractiveness of a location. Schweitzer adds that Mainz’ cosmopolitan outlook ensures that firms and workers from abroad feel at home here. BioNTech founder Uğur Şahin has made Mainz his home, saying, “We came for the science and stayed for the people.”

The biomindz regional development company is helping ensure that Mainz remains a leading location for science and industry, holding networking events and promoting the region around the world. It helps the city develop sites and continually improves the conditions for research, startups and growth. Right now, a 12-hectare Life Science Campus is taking shape for research teams, startups and businesses. Biomindz also collaborates with the German 1st division club FSV Mainz 05, whose stadium is next door to the campus and provides conference spaces. Schweitzer says this makes quite an impression on scientists and businesspeople from all over the world.

Biotech is a key technology for the 21st century. And not just in medical fields, but also for industrial and environmental applications. These areas are expected to see rapid growth in the Rhine-Main region and inspire each other. Unlike US locations, institutions in the FrankfurtRhineMain region are close to one another and are easy to reach. Schweitzer hopes this will facilitate lively sharing of ideas and thinking. “We want to leave space to chance, too,” he says. “We want scientists to meet in the cue at the coffee shop, for example, or playing sport, and share their ideas there.” Eckhardt Thines is already raving about a kind of “Berkely spirit” like the Californian example.

In a pit in the centre of Mainz on the campus of the University Medical Faculty where a new 10,000m² laboratory and research building is taking shape. But while the builders are digging the foundations, archaeologists are also hard at work. Mainz is an ancient Roman city, where sites such as the theatre and the Drususstein Monument bear witness to the 2,000-year history of the city on the Rhine. Construction work often brings historic objects to light which need to be preserved, from silver coins to altars. With appropriate respect, the future is literally being built on the foundations of the past here.

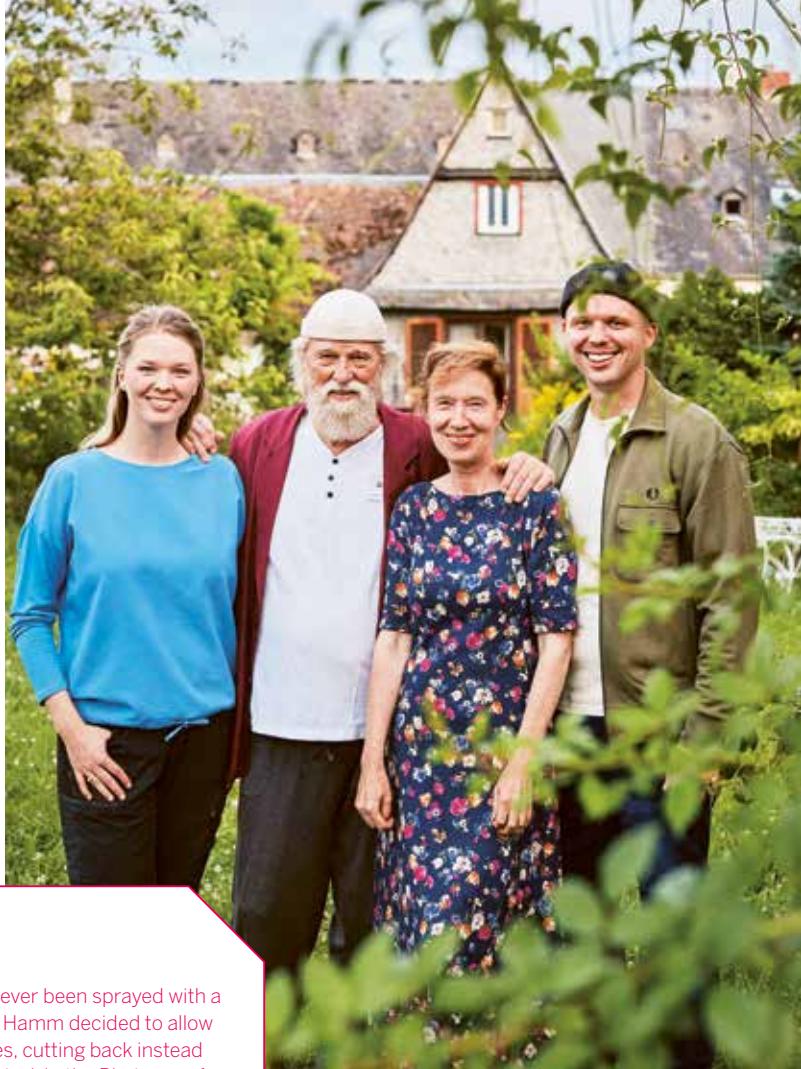
OUR REGION, OUR WINES

The FrankfurtRhineMain region is renowned for its flourishing economy, groundbreaking innovations and excellent quality of life. It's also a **unique wine-producing region**. Nowhere else in Germany has such a variety of areas under vine. Join us on a foray through a world that has something for everyone, not just the connoisseur.

BY GISELA KIRSCHSTEIN (TEXT), JONAS RATERMANN (IMAGES)



Aurelia, Karl-Heinz, Christine and Julius Hamm.



Steep slopes along the Rhine are the beating heart of winemaking. The Romans were the first to cultivate grapes here, over 2,000 years ago. Charlemagne savoured the wines which grew in his lands around Ingelheim, and a few hundred years later the monks of Kloster Eberbach first planted Pinot Noir grapes. Discussing wine here means talking about a whole culture of wine, and nowhere else is so multifaceted.

The landscape ranges from the gently rolling hills of Rheinhessen to the vertiginous slopes of the Rheingau, stretching down along the charming enclaves of the Hessische Bergstraße and out into the country of distinctive Franconian “bocksbeutel” bottles. Skyscrapers and a thriving economy are not the only things that the FrankfurtRhineMain metropolitan region has to offer: it is also home to the amazing diversity of German wines.

The regions of Rheinhessen and Rheingau, Hessische Bergstraße and Franconia stretch the length of FrankfurtRheinMain, framing the metropolitan region with unmatched variety. The broad expanse of Rheinhessen is Germany’s largest wine-growing region, with over 27,300 hectares under vine spread across 414 vineyards. It’s known as the “Land of a Thousand Hills”. The first documented reference to a German vineyard comes from 742 in a deed of gift of the Niersteiner Glock vineyard to the Bishop of Würzburg. The vineyard still exists today. Riesling grows naturally here and the

name “Glock” refers to the bell (“Glocke” in German) of the neighbouring church. “Kirchenstück” (“church land” in German) is still a common name for vineyards today.

The connection between wine and the church has left its mark in many ways. For example, in 1136 Abbot Ruthard and twelve Cistercian monks from Clairvaux in Burgundy moved into a valley with the River Eberbach flowing through it. It was not long before they had set up a thriving business in the wine trade. Alongside riesling grapes, the Cistercians planted grapes from their homeland, marking the moment Pinot Noir first took root in Germany.

Even today, some say you can still hear the monks singing in the cellars and cloisters of the former monastery. The monastic complex is so well preserved that the hit movie “The Name of the Rose” was filmed here in 1985 and 1986, including a murder in a wine barrel. Every year the historic basilica also hosts the opening concert of the Rheingau Music Festival. The late 12th-century Romanesque church, with its long, pillared nave, has a unique acoustic.

The ancient cellars of the former monastery are themselves a unique treasure chest, housing tens of thousands of bottles in the “holy of holies”, but the exact number is a closely-guarded secret. The oldest bottle dates from 1706, the history of wine in liquid form.

Organic pioneers

In Oestrich-Winkel there are vineyards which have never been sprayed with a single chemical. Over half a century ago, Karl-Heinz Hamm decided to allow plants to continue growing between the rows of vines, cutting back instead of ploughing in. He also banned the use of any chemical. In the Rheingau of the early 1970s – a region where convention held sway – this was extremely unusual. Hamm was a polarising figure, but he also became an organic pioneer. “Yields went down, but quality went up,” Hamm, now 71, explains. All at once he was able to harvest spätlese quality Riesling from the quartzite schist soils of the Daxbert vineyard. It was a revolution.

“Dad always taught us what ‘HAMMonious’ wines are,” says Aurelia Wehrheim-Hamm. “A good balance between residual sugar and acidity, the acidity providing the fundamental structure, but not too pronounced.” The 32-year-old studied wine business management and joined the family firm in 2015, taking the reins in 2016 and vinifying the wines held in the cellars. Her brother Julius has looked after the outdoor activity in the vineyards since 2020. The oldest vines in the Hasensprung vineyard are 65 years old, a jewel in the culture of winemaking. “The old vines are so multifaceted. You can taste where the roots have travelled, how they stretch down deep into the earth,” she says.

The Riesling ferment in the old cross-vaulted cellars of the winery. In the enchanting courtyard under kiwis and magnolias and in the rooms of the old patrician house, mother of the family Christine Hamm serves up culinary delights. There are few wine taverns in the Rheingau as charming as this. “We love our traditions and we want to keep them going,” says her daughter Aurelia. “Over 35 years of organic certification is a fantastic heritage.”

When it comes to modern trends, they are restrained, but they also ask themselves questions such as, “How can we respond to a changing climate?” Julius is flirting with biodynamic cultivation. Aurelia loves to take her guests out of their comfort zone by offering unconventional Rieslings. “We want to continue our father’s style, but with our own fingerprint on them,” she says. She stresses that Riesling is still the favourite varietal of the House of Hamm. “Rheingau just has a unique typicality, a fantastic interplay between sweetness and acidity, the cool influence of the climate on the wine.”

We love our traditions and we want to keep them going.

Aurelia Wehrheim-Hamm

Oestrich-Winkel

Where music lives in wine

Visitors to the Freiberger winery in the idyllic town of Heppenheim on the Hessische Bergstraße are greeted with the music of Gustav Mahler. Tradition with a tractor, coronet and violin is one way of describing the life of junior manager Charlotte Freiberger-Rabold. Her family's vineyard is nearly a century old, founded by her great-grandfather in 1926. The fourth generation is led by women. At 33, Charlotte is one of Bergstraße's first female winemakers to take the reins in an area where many wineries are still conventional in outlook. With 16 acres under vine, the Freiberger winery is the largest business still in private hands on the Bergstraße.

Charlotte is passionate about her career. "It's such a varied job," she says. "You're out and about in nature, then there's the vinification in the cellars, and marketing wines to customers. Wine is the one and only product where you grow the raw materials, manage production and sell the products yourself. You don't get that in any other industry."

Freiberger-Rabold studied oenology and winemaking in Geisenheim before taking a master's degree in cooperation with the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences in Vienna. On an internship in New Zealand she worked in a red wine cellar. Her philosophy combines modernity and tradition, at once valuing the old while also cautiously advancing it. That was on display in 2017 and 2018, when Charlotte travelled the world in her role as German's Princess of Wines to represent German wine, an expert on oenology wearing a coronet and a business suit. "Tradition is not about worshipping ashes, but the transmission of fire," is the vineyard's motto on its homepage. Charlotte chose the words herself. The aphorism comes from the composer Gustav Mahler. The junior manager has played the violin since she was six, with five years as a member of the Hesse state youth orchestra.

Maybe it's no coincidence that the white grape variety with its earthy aromas of pears and quince which has been under experimental cultivation here since 2008 was christened "Fidelio". Every year, a "wine duet" takes place in the cellars, where music mingles with wine, dancing a tango to pinot blanc and serving Riesling Sekt to accompany a scherzo by Bach. "Every piece of music has its own distinct character, and every wine does, too," says Charlotte Freiberger.



Every piece of music has its own distinct character, and every wine does, too.

Charlotte Freiberger
Heppenheim



en in another domain belonging to Eberbach. The fabled Abbess Hildegard once lived in Bingen on the left bank of the Rhine. Even today, Benedictine nuns at the convent of St. Hildegard still cultivate 7.5 hectares of vines above the world-famous winemaking town of Rudesheim.

Down in the valley tourists throng through the narrow streets of Rudesheim, lined with picturesque half-timbered houses. In the Middle Ages, world-renowned wines were shipped from here down the Rhine to Cologne and on to England. Nowadays, a cable car takes visitors over a sea of vines up to the statue of Germania on the Niederwalddenkmal memorial which commemorates the unification of Germany in the 19th century. Everything here breathes German history and wine culture, and the rustic wine taverns from Oestrich-Winkel to Eltville pay homage to a fine tradition of the culinary arts.

It isn't just the big names such as Schloss Vollrad, Weingut Weil, Schloss Johannisberg or Breuer in Rudesheim which are making their mark on producing racy Rieslings in Rheingau. Above Geisenheim, the brothers Marcel and Marius Dillmann have been conjuring magical "moments of delight" in their new vineyard, while Peter Jakob Kühn's commitment to biodynamic methods has been taking the over 230-year-old family vineyard in Oestrich-Winkel to new levels since 2004. He uses cow horn manure and follows the phases of the moon to create great wines with incredible perfume on the nose and expressions of terroir in the glass.

The true of home of the wine revolutionaries is actually in the distant hills of Rheinhessen. This area was long ruled by the French, and a stubborn contrariness persists in the little villages. In 1992, around 20 winemakers from villages such as Dittelsheim, Osthofen and Gau-Odernheim set up the "Message in a Bottle" association for young winemakers. It was a revolution. Instead of casting envious glances at the neighbour's vines, the group focused on sharing ideas and experiences and holding events such as the Mainz Wine Salon, where thousands of people meet on Saturdays for an outdoor party outside the cathedral, or the Techno Party Winefest in Nierstein.

The founders of Message in a Bottle now make up a who's who of winemakers in Rheinhessen. They number Gerhard Gutzler and Klaus Keller, long the leading winemakers in Rheinhessen, along with Pfannebecker, Wagner-Stempel, Wittmann and Winter. These winemakers restored German white wine to its former glory. For years, Rheinhessen was considered a place of mass-produced, simple wine in litre bottles derided as "barrel dishwasher". Many grapes still go into mass-produced wines here, but thanks to Message in a Bottle's commitment to the highest quality, the group swiftly became leading figures across Germany, exemplifying their pursuit of quality and the pleasure of great wine.

The modern Kloster Eberbach winery stands down the hill from the monastic complex. Here, above the village of Hattenheim, an ultra-modern cellar facility was created in 2008. It is right next door to the legendary Steinberg vineyard, once the most prized of all the Cistercians' vineyards. The monks built a wall around the vineyard to protect it from thieves and wild animals. At 3.8km in length and up to 4m in height, it creates a unique microclimate which makes Steinberg Riesling unmistakable to this day.

Kloster Eberbach isn't just the oldest vineyard in Germany. With around 200 hectares under vine, it's also the largest. The vineyards passed into public ownership of the state of Hesse in 1945, comprising four domains. As the delicate bubbles rise in your glass of Riesling, you feel sure that Bacchus must have made this place his home. The queen of all grape varieties, Riesling is the predominant varietal in Rheingau.

Further to the north, where the Rhine squeezes through the narrow gap into the head of the Middle Rhine Valley, pinot noir grows in the shaley soil of the vertiginous slopes around Assmannshaus-



You have to give the new vines the chance to grow on great sites that are right for their varietal.

Eva Vollmer
Ebersheim

“**Terroir**” is the magic word, and the artistry lies in conveying that sense of place in a glass. Anyone who has ever sampled the minerality of a Riesling from Battenfeld-Spanier knows how a wine can dance on your tongue. Carolin Kühling-Gillot is one half of the couple behind Battenfeld-Spanier, and in Bodenheim she conjures with contrasts, luscious Rieslings grown on the clay and sandstone of the famous “Roter Hang” (“Red Hillside”). From here, you can even see the slopes of the Hessische Bergstraße.

With only 462 hectares under vine, the Hessische Bergstraße is one of Germany’s smallest wine-growing areas. Magical villages such as Zwingenberg and Heppenheim are strung out along the ancient “strata montana” Roman road, with vines growing on the slopes of the Odenwald forest. Here, at the head of the Neckar basin, light sandy soils give way to layers of heavy clay, creating a huge variety of terroirs, sometimes changing within the space of a few metres. A great way to experience this is to walk along the “Erlebnispfad Wein und Stein” (Wine and stone experience path) above Heppenheim, which was inaugurated in 2007.

The Burgunder and Müller-Thurgau grapes thrive here, game and trout are found in the Odenwald, and asparagus grows on the level ground. On his way to his coronation in Frankfurt, it is said that Kaiser Joseph II once remarked, “Here, Germany starts to become Italy.” That was in April 1764, and it is possible that the almond trees were already in bloom here, earlier than anywhere else in his empire.

Traditions matter to the people who live along the Bergstraße. Down on the Rhine valley floor stands Kloster Lorsch, a Benedictine abbey which was a centre of power, humanism and trade into the high Middle Ages. Compiled in the late 12th century, the Lorsch Codex remains the most important record of vineyard locations and ownership: quite simply, it is the memory of wine-making history. Lorsch Abbey’s holdings stretch far into Rheinhessen and also into dreamy Oppenheim. In the Middle Ages, Op-

penheim was a centre of the wine trade, and its underground labyrinth of cellars bears unique witness to the age.

In the next village of Nierstein, winemaker Kai Schätzel is redefining the Silvaner grape, making great Rheinhessen in barriques. Here, so they say, the first German red wines were stored in French barriques, smuggled across the nearby border at night. What is certain is that sekt was invented in Rheinhessen as a German version of Champagne, but made with only one variety of grape. By contrast, Germany’s 2023 Young Winemaker of the Year Peter Hinkel is reinventing alcohol-free wine. His “Dri.Ver” combines de-alcoholised wine with verjus, the juice of unripe grape. The result is a unique interplay of sweetness and acidity, and Dri.Ver sparkling wine is even served in German embassies around the world.

Germany is still the home of sparkling wine Mainz is now the Great Wine Capital of Germany, but once it was the capital of Sekt, with global brands such as Goldhand and Kupferberg. Spread over seven levels dug into the hillside, Kupferberg’s 60 cellars are still the deepest in the world, while the estate above the historic centre



Miss Scheurebe takes on the future of wine

Her fellow winemakers know her as Dr Vollmer, but instead of pretty pictures on the labels of her bottles, Eva Vollmer dares to give her customers poems. Such as “Wine Weather”, which goes along the lines of: “Double-digit peach, fluffy citrus clouds, and friendly sheepy acidity. The forecast: high Riesling.” Or (in a playful tribute to Goethe’s poem “Erlkönig”), “Who’s that cheeky chap galloping around your glass and mouth? It’s the Scheurebe with a nose as fresh as a daisy.” The Eva Vollmer winery was the first winery in Rheinhessen to have a woman’s name on the bottle. After completing her PhD in oenology, Eva Vollmer restructured her father’s agricultural business in Ebersheim in 2007 and caused a real stir in the local wine community at the same time. Her business is as committed to creativity as she is to organic practices. Her first masterstroke was her rediscovery of the Scheurebe, which had long been considered a dull grape from a bygone era.

Vollmer turned it into a modern cult wine, hosting wine picnics and after-work events in her extensive gardens. “Lounging around with a glass of wine,” she calls it. Her white wines have been winning awards for years. Her husband Robert Wagner first trained as a central heating installer, but he retrained in winemaking and built the new wine cellar and tasting bar (playfully named “Kostbar”, a pun on the German word for “precious” and “to taste”). Alongside Scheurebe, they grow Sauvignon gris, Calardis blanc and Satin Noir, all resilient new varieties which are resilient to climate change. “Future wines,” says Eva Vollmer, energetically. “That’s the positive way we are describing the arrival of these new types of grape.”

In 2021 Vollmer and fellow winemaker Hanneke Schönhals set up the “Zukunftsweine” (“Future Wines”) initiative, which now counts 65 vineyards across the whole of Germany as members. Vollmer first planted Sauvignon gris in 2016 and it began a thrilling journey of discovery. One upshot of using fewer pesticides in the vineyard is spending less time working on the vines, she realised, along with less soil compression and increased biodiversity. For Vollmer, this is the future. Now, new varieties make up 40% of her vines. Her motto is “learn by tasting”. “It just lowers the barrier to entry if you ask, ‘Would you like a delicious taste of the future?’”



Wines from primeval rocks

On a clear day, Johannes Höfler can see the Frankfurt skyline from the Apostelgarten vineyard. "You're there in 20 minutes," he says, even though Michelbach is actually in Bavaria, not far from the town of Alzenau in the Franconian wine-growing region. "In terms of the style of our wines, we're closer to the Rheingau than to Franconia," says Höfler. Here, winemakers are somewhat caught between two worlds. The Alzenau region used to belong to the Electors of Mainz, but they still make classic Franconian wines out of Silvaner, matured in wooden barrels.

Höfler, 37, officially took over running his parents' VDP winery in July 2024. He studied oenology and is the fourth generation of his family to run the winery, which celebrated its centenary in 2024. He met his partner Ida in Geisenheim. She comes from the Middle Rhine region, and together they cultivate 11 hectares of vines on the slopes of the Spessart hills. Organically, as you might expect. His grandfather also set up a schnapps distillery.

Höfler brought back a love of Chardonnay from South Africa, along with an understanding that "Here, we can draw upon an incredible tradition of winemaking." The majority of Höfler wines are made with the classic Rheingau grape, Riesling. "That's down to the soil," says Johannes. Unlike the sandy soils commonly found elsewhere in Franconia and traditionally used to grow Silvaner, here the soil is a mixture of schist and quartzite. "The Rieslings from here get a really amazing flinty aroma," he enthuses. It fits perfectly with the philosophy of his vineyard: making origins something you can taste.



The Rieslings from here get a really incredible flinty aroma.

Johannes Höfler
Michelbach

of Mainz offers a fabulous view of the "Golden City on the Rhine" and its cathedral.

The red sandstone of the mighty cathedral was brought from Bürgstadt and Miltenberg in Franconia, within the territory stretching from Aschaffenburg down to the Neckar which was firmly in the grip of the Electors of Mainz. Even today, the city's coat of arms bears the Elector's symbol of the "Wheel of Mainz".

The "bocksbeutel" comes from the other end of the region. The unique ellipsoid bottle is famous around the world, containing wine of the highest quality, often a Silvaner, the most widely planted grape in Franconia. It has been grown in Franconia since 1659, but wine has been made here for much longer than that. It was in the 13th century that Gottfried von Franken wrote Germany's oldest book

about wine, filled to the brim with guidance on how to grow and make wine. But the bocksbeutel is far older yet. The oldest "flat ball bottle" in the world was unearthed in Franconia in the form of a Celtic clay vessel fired around 1400 years ago.

In the Franconian dialect, a "Häcke" or "hedge tavern" is the name for an inn that is only allowed to open for a few weeks a year. They serve earthy Franconian Silvaners and sparkling dry rosés. In legal terms, this is part of Bavaria, but at heart, the people of "Churfranken" belong to the Rhine-Main metropolis. In good weather, you can even see Frankfurt from the vineyards in Alzenau and Michelstadt.

Most of Franconia's winegrowing areas stretch along the Main, the river which connects the region with Rheinhessen and flows into the Rhine at Mainz. Along both banks either side of Frankfurt there are more wine-growing areas, progressively smaller, yet still very fine. While not on the Main itself, Frankfurt has its own vineyard on the Lohrberg hill, a stone's throw from the city centre. It symbolises a unique region, at once metropolitan and yet rich in an extraordinary variety of wine-growing areas.

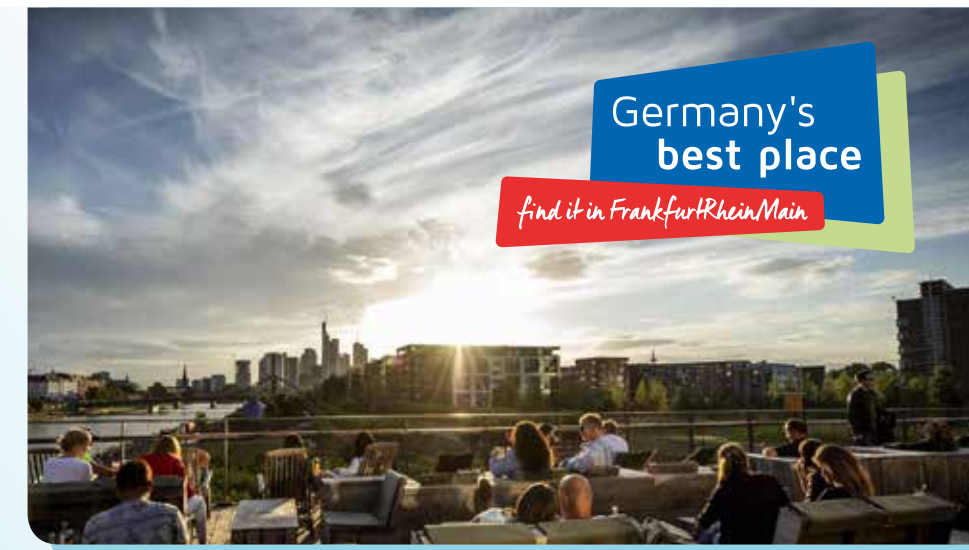


Find Your Future in FrankfurtRheinMain!

People from almost **200 nations** call Frankfurt-RheinMain their home, and everyone who would like to be part of our **community** is welcome. With its strong economy, great quality of life and cultural diversity, **FrankfurtRheinMain** is one of the best places to live and work in Germany. If you would like to discover the region, we are more than happy to help!

Contact us!

- +49 (0)69 2577 2577
- contact@find-it-in-frm.de
- www.facebook.com/finditinform
- www.instagram.com/finditinform
- www.linkedin.com/company/find-it-in-frankfurtrheinmain/



Germany's best place
find it in FrankfurtRheinMain

- Find everything you need to know about living and working in FrankfurtRheinMain
- The FrankfurtRheinMain International Office gives you advice by email, phone or in person
- For news, events and tips, have a look at our social media channels

www.find-it-in-frm.de



Stefien Mathias

RHEINGAU MUSIC FESTIVAL

One of Germany's largest music festivals has brought new fame to the Rheingau region, which is otherwise best known for its wine. Each year over 150 concerts take place at 40 venues from castles and palaces to wineries, the former Cistercian monastery of Kloster Eberbach and even museums in Frankfurt. **Culture Manager Michael Herrmann** first set up the festival 36 years ago. He celebrated his 80th birthday in February 2024.

INTERVIEW BY GISELA KIRSCHSTEIN



Mr Herrmann, many happy returns on your 80th birthday, and for 36 years of the Rheingau Music Festival. How did you make that happen?

By being passionate about it, having outstanding colleagues and being a music lover myself. We see the artists as our friends and we welcome them as friends: that's one of the keys.

What inspired you to set up a music festival?

From my early youth I loved listening to music and I sang in various choirs, including at Kloster Eberbach. I actually trained to become a bookseller, but a singing teacher once said to me, you could become an opera singer! I took singing lessons with him and drove a taxi at night to pay for them. But after two or three years, I realised that I've got a nice voice, but I'm not going to be a Caruso or Pavarotti.

So what happened next?

From 1964 to 1966 I went to Pablo Casals' festival in Prades in the French Pyrenees. The world-famous cellist and conductor Casals was living there in exile while Franco remained in power in Spain. The chamber music there made such an impression on me that I decided to set up my own festival like it. It took 24 years for me to bring that about, but that was the spark.

How did you actually set the festival up?

The idea of creating a festival was always there. I returned to Germany in 1982 because I wanted to get back into the music world and I worked for a concerts agency. We brought over artists from East Germany like Peter Schreier and the Dresden Baroque Soloists. That's how I grew into the industry, and I ultimately set up the Rheingau Music Festival Association in 1987.

How do you manage to keep presenting new and undiscovered artists?

My colleagues in the planning office are always on the lookout for young artists. We have just discovered a Brazilian cellist, for example, Guido Sant'Anna. The business has grown into a medium-sized company with 20 employees, and during the season we also employ hostesses and parking attendants, for example, bringing us a staff of around 100.

The classical music festival has changed a lot over the years.

Yes, we've brought in more jazz, world music and even pop. But it still only makes up a small part - a third, maybe. Classical music remains our priority, even if we now include chansons and cabaret concerts in the programme. There is also now the "Steinberg Round Table", a musical open air feast in the midst of the vineyards. You can only do things like that in the Rheingau. And there are the "Wandering Musicians" who pop up in various vineyards.

Wine has a big part to play: we don't thank our artists with flowers, for example, we give them Riesling wine. In addition to the €11,111 we award for the Rheingau Literature Prize, we also present 111 bottles of Riesling, donated by VDP, the association of leading winemakers.

What still makes the festival exciting today?

It's summertime, it gets dark late, there are no fixed locations. There's also the variety of the programme. There are so many opportunities, so many lovely local spots, from the churches in the Rheingau to listening to classical music on the Rhine on the "River Boat Shuffle". We even make music in the vineyards. We put on concerts in local areas right across the region, even in museums in Frankfurt and the stunning Schloss Westerhaus in Rheinhessen. It just has a unique appeal, with the music, the landscape, the architecture - and in Rheingau, there's the wine as well.

Mr Herrmann, you have turned 80 but you are still artistic director and managing director of the Rheingau Music Festival. How long do you plan to go on for?

[Laughs] Until I've had enough! The Rheingau Music Festival is my child and you can't just leave your children behind. We have 155 concerts this year but I can only attend 60 or 70 of them. That really annoys me, as I would love to see and experience all of them, every single one.



After working in the book trade for a while, Michael Herrmann turned to the hotel industry. He lived on the Canary Islands for ten years where he got to know greats of classical music, such as the German pianist and conductor Justus Frantz and the legendary American composer and conductor Leonard Bernstein.

AMLA

WHAT THE CITY AND THE REGION HAVE TO OFFER

The EU's new AMLA agency is coming to Frankfurt. The decision to base the agency here affirms confidence in the international financial centre. It also reflects the many advantages of the **FrankfurtRhineMain region** and the excellent experiences of the international community.

BY GÜNTER HEISMANN (TEXT)

> It was a close-fought contest. Nine countries submitted bids for the HQ of the new EU agency. In January 2024, the EU decided in favour of Germany, which had put Frankfurt in the running. The institution which sparked such interest is the rather clumsily named “Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Authority”, or AMLA, for short. Its role is to improve coordination in fighting money laundering and terrorism financing, which remains patchy even today. Organised crime channels billions of euros into convoluted, usually carefully concealed transactions in order to hide where the money came from. Terrorists also exploit the international financial system to carry out their transactions.

The AMLA financial security agency is the third EU institution to be located in Frankfurt. The European Central Bank (ECB) has had its headquarters here for a quarter of a century, EIOPA, the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority, has been based in Frankfurt since 2011. Its role is to oversee pension provisions and occupational pensions in the European Union.

Alongside these three core EU institutions, all the major banks from the US, UK, France and other countries have offices in Frankfurt, and the city is regarded as the leading financial hub in continental Europe. Germany's Federal Finance Minister Christian Lindner expressed his confidence that Frankfurt was the ideal location “to ensure the operational success of AMLA right from day one.”

A key factor in Frankfurt's strong position is the outstanding environment for working and living on offer in the FrankfurtRhineMain region. Expats who work at EU institutions and merchant banks from around the world value the region's thriving international atmosphere.

“Frankfurt is extremely varied and diverse. There are many people from all kinds of educational backgrounds and different national-

Located at the heart of Europe, the cosmopolitan city of Frankfurt enjoys excellent infrastructure. At the same time, it offers outstanding leisure opportunities and a quality of life unique among other financial centres. //



Tobias Vogel, Managing Director, UBS Europe SE

Frankfurt is a fantastic city for expats and makes it easy for us to settle down here. //

ities,” says Hampus Lööw, a monetary expert at the German subsidiary of the Swedish central bank in Frankfurt. “Most speak excellent English and there’s so much to discover. I love all the cafes, bars and museums, and the walks around Frankfurt, too.” The public transport options have also won the Swede over. “I don’t feel I need a car as the trains and metro run very regularly to the destinations I want to get to. It’s also great value.”

Expats with school-age children really value the region’s international schools, for example. “As the mother of a four-year-old son, working in Frankfurt allowed me to find a healthy work-life balance. There are good international schools, short commutes and beautiful surroundings close to the city,” says Caroline Haslop, an executive director at Goldman Sachs Deutschland. The Federal Finance Ministry’s AMLA page also includes warm praise from Dabin Wang (J.P. Morgan) and Tobias Vogel (UBS).

Given the rich and varied benefits of the FrankfurtRhineMain region, AMLA is unlikely to find it difficult to find experienced and highly qualified experts in fighting money laundering. The new agency plans to recruit 430 staff in the coming years. When the creation of AMLA came into legal force in the summer of 2024, an EU taskforce started work on setting up the new agency, which is likely to take several years to complete. The first step for the new team is to find the right person to chair the EU agency, with a decision expected by early 2025.

However, AMLA will not start work until the beginning of 2028 One reason why it will take so long to set up the new agency is that AMLA will need to be closely integrated into existing supervisory structures. EU member states already have national bodies responsible for preventing money laundering. In Germany, that role is held by Bafin, the Federal Financial Supervisory Authority. Oversight of banks also falls within the purview of the ECB. It is responsible for around two dozen major banks which are considered of particular significance to the stability of the European financial system.

The close proximity of the ECB and Bafin was one of the reasons behind the EU’s choice of Frankfurt for the headquarters of AMLA. Nevertheless, it seems likely that existing regulatory authorities will have to hand over some of their powers to AMLA.



Frankfurt, Amla/Bundesfinanzministerium

Dabin Wang, Executive Director, Electronic Trading, Analytics & Model Risk, J.P. Morgan S.E.



The city of the euro is becoming home to a new agency. In future, AMLA will bolster the supervisory work of Germany’s Federal Financial Supervisory Authority and the ECB.

The new EU authority is intended to ensure that terrorist and criminal abuse of the financial system is prevented everywhere in Europe with the same intensity and in the most effective way possible. To this end, AMLA will maintain ongoing oversight of national supervisory bodies. This will include identifying which countries are fighting money laundering most effectively. AMLA will then share the strategies and methods employed by these countries with other national financial regulators.

AMLA will work with national regulatory bodies to ensure information is shared as effectively as possible. As part of this, EU member states’ money laundering authorities will send representatives to the board which oversees AMLA’s work. While AMLA will not replace national financial oversight, it will take over some of the work which was previously carried out by member states’ authorities.

Banks and other financial institutions are considered to be at particular risk of money laundering and terror financing, so AMLA will oversee these areas itself. This will largely involve major banks which are active in at least six member states. Nevertheless, national bodies will still have a role to play in this area. Financial institutions which are subject to direct oversight from AMLA will be controlled by mixed teams comprising representatives of AMLA and experts on money laundering in the countries where the banks are based.

AMLA plans to complete its list of “critical” financial institutions by the end of 2027, not least to give due consideration to national sensibilities. In other words, it will be several years before the often inadequate efforts to fight money laundering and terror financing become better and more effective. This work will then be coordinated from the new office in Frankfurt.

DESIGN FOR DEMOCRACY



World Design Capital
Frankfurt RheinMain 2026

Every two years the World Design Organisation celebrates places that promote social, cultural and environmental development by putting design to work in clever ways. In 2026, FrankfurtRheinMain will bear the title of **World Design Capital**. The man behind the successful bid for the title, Matthias Wagner K, tells us about the social potential of great design.

INTERVIEW BY LUCA REHSE-KNAUF

> Mr Wagner K, you are Director of the Museum of Applied Art and professor of Design Curating and Criticism at Hochschule für Gestaltung Offenbach. What things can you design?

The simplest answer would be that you can design anything. From a beautiful vase to opportunities for democratic participation. Or from your next autumn fashion collection to our public spaces and even sustainable routes through consumer industry supply chains. What really matters to me, though, is the goals and values which underpin good-quality, responsible design, and also the leverage they can achieve. I care about design as civil society divestment, a statement in favour of free democracy.

What can good design achieve?

Good design starts right in the midst of our lives, in our everyday life. That's why we specified areas of action: work, construction and homes, education, industry, consumerism, culture and media, mobility, public spaces, and sport. Designers are ideally placed to identify problems and develop solutions and prototypes which they visualise, test and refine in the form of models, sketches and experimental projects. What makes good design special is that it conveys complex connections to users in a comprehensible way, which makes it an outstanding mediator between science, business and politics.

You can design anything. From a vase to opportunities for democratic participation. //



The 2026 motto is, “Design for Democracy. Atmospheres for a better life.” How can design contribute to a democratic society and living well?

There are countless examples. A new neighbourhood initiative can reinforce your community, while an urban planning project can come up with shorter and more sustainable journeys through your city. The submissions for 2026 display an incredible diversity of ideas and powerful visionary strength. For instance, there are proposals for projects to transform city centres from commercial areas into cultural and social spaces, and to repurpose business properties into homes. Other submissions present prototypes for modular construction and ways of building that promote recycling and re-using materials. Other projects aim to reduce the space given over to car use and transform garages into tiny houses.

What makes the FrankfurtRhineMain region the perfect design capital?

FrankfurtRhineMain has always been a region on the move. It’s a place where diverse cultures, political movements and academic discourse meet. Our region has a rich heritage, which has brought about huge social and design changes at turning-points in history, from the development of the printing press over 550 years ago to the reforms of the Art Nouveau movement. Or take “Das Neue Frankfurt”, for instance, the modern design of the 1920s which aspired to influence fashion, interior, product and communications design; or more recently the Auschwitz Trials, which took place from 1963 to 1968, the largest Nazi criminal trials in postwar Germany and which symbolise how the legal system of the Federal Republic responded to the holocaust. Saint Paul’s Church stands here, in which Germany’s first national assembly took place and which aimed to endow human and civil rights with the force of law in Germany: this is where the House of Democracy is to take shape.



Mayor of Hanau Claus Kaminsky signs the agreement for World Design Capital FrankfurtRhineMain 2026.

Ben Kuchlin

What specific projects are planned?

The open call is underway at the moment, where everyone is invited to contribute ideas for how to promote design democracy, cohesion and sustainability. FrankfurtRhineMain plans to use the title [of World Design Capital] to present a wide-ranging programme that includes exhibitions, experiences in public spaces and much more. Two year-long exhibitions are also forming part of the programme, with “A Step Ahead” in the Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt UNESCO World Heritage Site and “Design for Democracy” in the Museum of Applied Art in Frankfurt am Main. Among the activities already scheduled are the “Month of Design” across the whole of Hesse, and the eagerly awaited Young Talent Design Campus, where thousands of young people will engage with designing the world. As World Design Capital 2026, FrankfurtRhineMain will become a unique laboratory for the future, an ideas workshop filled with plans for new ways to preserve the shared basis of our existence.

Thanks to his proposal on the theme of “Design for Democracy”, Matthias Wagner K has made Frankfurt/RhineMain the 2026 World Design Capital.



Let us design how we want to live.

Design for Democracy. Atmospheres for a better life

Participate! Find all the latest information at wdc2026.org/en

The Frankfurt RheinMain Cultural Fund supports World Design Capital Frankfurt RheinMain 2026.

The non-profit fund is supported by the State of Hessen, the City of Frankfurt, the Hochtaunus and Main-Taunus local authorities, the cities of Darmstadt, Wiesbaden, Hanau, Bad Vilbel, Offenbach/Main, Oestrich-Winkel, as well as by the Rheingau-Taunus and Offenbach local authorities. To find out about other outstanding Kunstfonds cultural projects simply click www.kulturfonds-frm.de Facebook / Instagram / Newsletter



PARTYING IN THE HEART OF EUROPE

Hundreds of thousands of fans from the region and around Europe came together in a peaceful and friendly celebration of **EURO 2024**, cheering on matches in the stadium, or partying in the Fanzone, beer gardens, bars and streets.

BY ARND FESTERLING (TEXT)

FrankfurtRhineMain is a truly international region. No matter which team had won a match in the EURO 2024 European Football Championship, there were always enough fans for a victory motorcade after every game. That's no surprise, as people from at least 180 of the 194 countries in the world live in this region, and every country in Europe is represented here. "Fans and visitors from near and far loved celebrating in a peaceful and friendly way here in the city in the heart of Europe," said the Mayor of Frankfurt Mike Josef, who is also Head of Sport.

A large number of fans really did come a long way to be here, though many German and international fans live in the region. First and foremost, the Scots deserve a mention, who spread joy wherever they went, and were the clear audience favourites among locals. Always happy and in a party mood, many Scots had chosen to use the FrankfurtRhineMain region as a basis for their European Championship tour for transport reasons, even though their team didn't play a single match in the Waldstadion. In the Fanzone, in squares and on the streets, in the region's beer gardens and bars, day after day they lived out their motto and unofficial anthem: "No Scotland, no party!"

The Waldstadion hosted five EURO 2024 matches, but the fans outside the station enjoyed the next-best seats for every single game: the Fanzone. At 1.4km in length, stretching along the northern bank of the Main river against the backdrop of the "Mainhattan" skyscrapers, the Fanzone welcomed over 33,000 football-crazy fans every day. In total more than a million fans celebrated the football there during EURO 2024, watching matches on the huge floating screen in the river or on many smaller



The spectacular opening ceremony was broadcast live.

screens, or enjoying concerts on days when no matches were scheduled.

Everyone was talking about the weather during the Championship, regardless of where they were in Germany and the region. There were some days when the rain was so heavy the whole Fanzone had to be closed. Lightning even struck the stadium during the game between Slovakia and Bulgaria, but excellent safety measures ensured no harm was done. Nevertheless, the rain wasn't going to dampen the party atmosphere. Light showers totally failed to impress the revellers (or "Feierbiester", in the term former Bayern Munich manager Louis van Gaal donated to the German language), and if it came down more heavily, they just carried on the party in the nearest pub.



picture alliance/dpa (5)

Fans weren't just cheering on the German team: it was party time everywhere.

Fans celebrated in a happy and peaceful atmosphere in the city at the heart of Europe.

Mike Josef
Mayor of Frankfurt

Over a million people visited the Fanzone on the northern bank of the River Main.





The Fanzone by the Main was a complete success. We are delighted with it.

Thomas Feda
Head of Tourismus+Congress GmbH

Striker Niclas Füllkrug (right) fired up German fans in the Waldstadion.



picture alliance/dpa(6)



Cristiano Ronaldo was there, too, to the rapture of Portuguese fans outside the hotel, on the streets and, of course, in the stadium.

Condolences to the Scots The game on 20 June between Denmark and England was a real high point – and the fans of the two teams. They were led by a king and an heir to another throne, namely King Frederik X of Denmark and William Prince of Wales, and were welcomed at the stadium by Mayor Mike Josef. There was no missing the fans, either, as 11,000 Danes spontaneously marched from Opernplatz to the stadium while 10,000 English fans had assembled on Römer square where they partied in a happy, relaxed atmosphere. The statue of Justice outside Frankfurt City Hall held onto her sword in 2024, which England fans had pinched during the 2006 World Cup. Then there was Cristiano Ronaldo and, naturally, the other members of the Portugal team, too. Before the competition, they had no idea how much hype the Portuguese superstar could spark. Outside the team hotel, on the bus to the stadium, outside the stadium and inside the ground, the excitement was palpable to everyone.

United by Football – United in the Heart of Europe was the official motto of EURO 2024. And it was spot on, not just for the tournament itself, but for Germany as host nation and for the Frankfurt-RhineMain region. You could see it every day in the Fanzone. Thomas Feda is the head of Tourismus+Congress in Frankfurt, which planned and organised the Fanzone. “The Fanzone by the Main was a complete success. We are delighted with it,” he said. “The images of happy people celebrating in a peaceful atmosphere in a fantastic city have travelled around the world. The boost to our image and the emotional value generated are huge for the city and for the region.”



The party never stopped, and Mayor Mike Josef praised the peaceful and happy atmosphere. He was right, as this scene outside the stadium shows.



PEOPLE OF TODAY

Five out of 5.8 million: Anyone familiar with these faces and stories will know what makes the FrankfurtRhineMain metropolitan region so fascinating.

BY KIM BERG AND LUCA REHSE-KNAUF (TEXT)

John Provan

Historian & collector

John Provan speaks the Hesse dialect with an American accent. His father was in the US Army stationed in the Rhine-Main region, where he met John's German mother. The historian and collector lives in Kelkheim in the Main-Taunus area, and he explores the many connections between the US and FrankfurtRhineMain. When the many US barracks in the region were abandoned after the end of the Cold War, Provan rescued photographs, documents and objects. "As an historian, it was important to me that someone should gather up what was left behind and preserve it for future generations," says Provan. The items are on display in exhibitions in the US and Germany. Some, though, are in his apartment, such as a desk which belonged to GEN. Dwight D. Eisenhower from his time as Allied Military Governor in Frankfurt. Provan has archived over 400,000 photographs, and the images included pictures of the soldier Nick Clooney. When Clooney found out, he went to visit Provan, breaking his journey on his way to Venice for the wedding of his famous son George.





The Zur Andau bar in Mainz first opened its doors in 1844 when it was a homely wine tavern. In 1977 it became the flagship bar for the Bitburger brewery.

Lea Riederer and Maximilian Krauß

Landlady and landlord of the Zur Andau bar

A cold beer and a beer mat with a cross marked in biro on it is all Lea and Max need to ring in the perfect evening. They have run the cult Zur Andau bar in Mainz since 2023. After 42 years behind the bar, the previous landlord Burkhard Geibel-Emden handed over the keys to the beer cellar to the young couple. Thankfully, not much has changed since then. "It's an honour for us to leave our mark on the Andau's cult status and make a younger crowd passionate about it," explains Lea. They were particularly committed to keeping the bar's cosy atmosphere. While they updated the food menu and included some surprises on the drinks menu, Lea and Max have made sure to keep the unique charm of the 180-year-old bar. Thanks to this, the new tenants haven't only been welcomed by younger customers. "Our older regulars are pleased to see young people coming in, the team working well and us keeping the rhythm going," says Lea.



Out and about with Julia

Influencer

Taking us to Christmas markets, gorgeous summer terraces and delicious meals throughout FrankfurtRhineMain, Julia's @unterwegsmitJulia (Out and about with Julia) channels have attracted over 100,000 followers on Instagram and 70,000 fans on TikTok. She uses social media to highlight what the region has to offer in the world of food and drink. Alongside visits to new openings, Julia's Reels present Rhine-Main highlights on topics such as ideas for solo trips, date locations in Frankfurt, and food spots around Frankfurt's central station. "What obsesses me most is the transformation going on and the diversity of amazing places to eat. I've been trying out restaurants and cafes for years, but I never get to the bottom of my list. There's always something new on there," explains the influencer. She now ranks among the leading foodie influencers in the region. "I was fortunate that three years ago, people on TikTok were interested in where I like to eat, and the rest grew organically. I'm so grateful for that today."



Nikola Petrek

Guitar maker and luthier

Nikola Petrek used to work at the legendary Cream Music store near Frankfurt's central railway station, but when it had to relocate after over 100 years, he helped clear out the old store. While he was unscrewing a shelf from above the till, a thought occurred to him: "Every single great musician who came into this store over the years has seen this piece of wood." The list included Elvis Presley, Carlos Santana, Alice Cooper, John Lennon and the Rolling Stones. Petrek used the wood to build his "Frankfurt Historic Guitar" which he baptised in water from the river Main and subsequently put on display. Petrek has over 100,000 followers on social media. The majority of his work involves repairing guitars for customers from around the world. He adds, "When I build a guitar, it should be a work of art."



picture alliance/dpa

Jennifer Schrauth

Stonemason

At work, Jennifer Schrauth is part of a story that dates back over a thousand years: she is a stonemason at Mainz Cathedral. The cathedral is steeped in history, and it's Jennifer's job to keep it in good shape. "Through our restoration work, every day we help preserve this unique, historic building for future generations," she says. For her most recent project, the equestrian statue of St. Martin on the Cathedral roof temporarily lost its head. The sculpture from 1928 needed a new face, so the Mainz stonemasons decided to copy the heavily weathered original, as it could no longer be saved. Schrauth started work on the copy in October 2022, and St. Martin received his new head in June 2024. Recreating the head involved a thousand hours of modelling, hammering, tapping and scraping.

Andreas Thümmeler

Founder of the St. Kilian whisky distillery

Whisky from the Rhine-Main region? Some fans of Scotch whisky might shudder at the thought, but they would be mistaken. After all, the distillery's founder Andreas Thümmeler is passionate about making whisky using traditional processes. While many German whisky distillers make whisky in stills traditionally used for schnapps, Thümmeler uses only copper pot stills and fine wood washbacks. "There's a real gap in the market for whisky made in Germany - not just here, but in other countries as well. It was high time to go about doing it with complete focus and in high quality," explains the former investment banker. The complexity of the single malt from Rüdenu in Lower Franconia can certainly rival its Irish and Scottish relatives. In 2019, Thümmeler and his team presented their first three-year-old single malt from the St. Kilian Distillery. St. Kilian is now the largest whisky distillery in Germany. "Above all, the secret of our success is to make our customers and fans happy with great products and experiences here," explains the entrepreneur. It probably also has a little to do with flavour, too.



St. Kilian Distillery



picture alliance / dpa (2)



The Waldstadion in a bygone age. Nowadays the stadium (upper left) is dedicated to football. The velodrome (centre) has gone. The pool complex still remains, and The Boss still plays for at least 2.5 hours when he visits the stadium.

THE WALDSTADION TURNS 100

In **2025** the region's largest sport and cultural arena celebrated its 100th anniversary.

> **The Waldstadion was inaugurated in 1925.** It isn't the oldest stadium in the region, but it is the largest. Situated in the south of Frankfurt not far from the airport and the autobahn, it has hosted major sporting events and unforgettable cultural performances for a century. The stadium in Frankfurt's Stadtwald district has been fully renovated four times in its history, most recently for the 2006 Football World Cup, when it was transformed into a stadium dedicated solely to football. The athletics track was removed and a gigantic retractable roof was installed. The name has also changed twice to reflect new sponsors.

"The Greatest", Muhammad Ali, once fought Karl Mildenerger here, while a handball fixture attracted almost 45,000 fans. The stadium has hosted American football matches played by Frankfurt Galaxy and NFL teams, and matches for the German national football team. First and foremost, though, the stadium is the home ground for Eintracht Frankfurt, the top-flight club which won the

UEFA cup here in 1980. As well as Eintracht Frankfurt, other local teams such as Mainz 05, Wehen Wiesbaden, the Offenbach Kickers, FSV Frankfurt and the FFC Frankfurt women's team have all used the stadium for home fixtures.

"The Boss", Bruce Springsteen is just one of the world-famous musicians whose concerts break new ground, playing until the power gets turned off (or that's what the legends say, at least). As befits The Boss, his concerts put those of his national and international competitors in the shade – at least in terms of length – be it Supertramp, Depeche Mode, U2, the Rolling Stones, or Madonna, Rihanna and Beyoncé.

Well over one-and-a-half million people attend events at the venerable yet ultra-modern stadium in the heart of FrankfurtRheinMain every year, making the Waldstadion one of the most popular stadiums in Germany today – just as it was a hundred years ago. **∞**

Empowering smart ideas

Hessen is a dynamic high-tech location with a unique environment for R&D. This central German state is home to a managed knowledge network that combines forward-looking industries with leading universities, research institutes and highly skilled talent. Become part of this vibrant ecosystem and turn your innovative ideas into tomorrow's business success!



invest-in-hessen.com





The business network for FrankfurtRheinMain.



Around 140 companies have teamed up to form the FrankfurtRheinMain business initiative – everything from large international corporations to start-ups. The metropolitan region's leading business network is committed to ensuring the attractiveness of FrankfurtRheinMain for investment, innovation and professionals both today and in the future.

Serving as pacesetter, bridge builder and a platform for dialogue.

www.die-wirtschaftsinitiative.de