Tour Tip 9

Transience meets Eternity

From Düsseldorf northwards to Ratingen

This route will be inspiring to anyone with a special interest in romantic locations! The starting point is the “Malkastenpark/Jacobigarten” in the heart of Düsseldorf which exudes a private atmosphere.

The councillor of commerce Johann Conrad Jacobi purchased a small property in Pempelfort in 1742 and built a garden with a baroque arrangement, a parterre and an avenue. His descendants turned the family residence into a meeting point for artists and philosophers: Goethe, Wieland, Heine, and Herder. The brothers Humboldt were also among the guests. Thoughts were exchanged in the shade of magnificent trees, in the gardens between sculptures and seductively fragrant blossoms. The baroque elements with a Venus pond have remained the core element of this three-hectare garden. Landscaped areas along the course of the Düsseldorf follow, which in 1790 were already designed in the style which was then becoming fashionable. In the middle of the 19th century, the residence became the property of the oldest German artist club the “Malkasten” and, as the restaurant and terrace were newly constructed, it was redesigned in the 20th century by the landscape architect Roland Weber. When events and celebrations take place, the park is freely accessible, otherwise via the restaurant only or by previous arrangement. Admission is free.

Info: Tel. +49 (0)211 356471, www.malkasten.org

Now a visit to the neighbouring Goethe Museum in Schloss Jägerhof is possible

Info: Tel. +49 (0)211 8996262, www.goethe-museum.com

The journey continues to the Golzheimer cemetery which was built in 1804. A melancholic air lies above the former cemetery. Between rows of linden trees on geometrically designed grass areas you will discover picturesque solitary trees and scattered tombs. Prominent Düsseldorfer personalities such as Weyhe, Schadow, Immermann or Bethel found their final resting place here. From a cultural historic viewpoint this cemetery belongs to one of the country’s most important cemeteries, with classicistic, neo-gothic and neo-Romanic tombs. The inner-city park was designed by the famous garden architect Maximilian Friedrich Weyhe, admission is free.

Info: +49 (0)211 8929058, www.duesseldorf.de/stadt-gruen/parks

In our next destination, the Nordpark, you will find secluded garden and park areas. Basically this rambling and freely accessible area has a representative character. Visitors are impressed by the striking views, ample bed plantings, water basins, fountains and sculptures. In 1937, after only one and a half years’ preparations the park was opened on the occasion of the exhibition “Große Reichsausstellung schaffendes Volk” (a Reichs-exhibition about the working population). The director of the office for gardens Will Trapp had designed the 28-hectare park on a vacant field and had giant trees brought from all over the city area to create striking focal points. Among rigid architectural forms you will discover cozy places in the summer flower garden or the Japanese garden which has belonged to the Nordpark since 1975 when it was donated by the Japanese community.

Info: Tel. +49 (0)211 8994800, www.duesseldorf.de/stadtgruen/parks

Now you can travel into the under-water world. The Löbbecke Museum/Aquazoo is located next to the Nordpark.

Info: +49 (0)211 8996150, www.duesseldorf.de/aquazoo

The journey continues northwards parallel to the river rhine. You cross an extraordinary overnight accommodation the “Mutterhaus” in Kaiserswerth. The ensemble like a monastery is situated in a spacious garden and was in former times a location of silence and recreation for the nursing sisters.

Info: www.culture-castles.de

Your next destination is the Schlosspark Heltorf which was built in 1808. It is one of the most beautiful forest parks in the English landscape style in the Lower Rhine area. For the second time, you will meet the garden architect Weyhe who also designed this park. Approximately 700 different tree species from all over the world can be found on the 54-hectare property. The second oldest rhododendron plantation in Germany is noteworthy, some plants are nine metres high. The pond is fed by the Angerbach, the moated castle is a private property, and viewing is not possible. Admission fees apply to the park which was designed by the French architect Abbé Biarelle. As early as 1796 it was his idea to create an English-style park.

Info: Tel. +49 (0)211 8996262, www.goethe-museum.com

Ratingen is your next destination. You visit the Poensgenpark, a late English landscape garden with around 80 wood species from all over the world. In 1907, the Düsseldorfer manufacturer Carl Poensgen commissioned it to neatly compliment his mansion which was destroyed in the Second World War. The Düsseldorfer garden architect Hoemann converted meadows and fields into a landscape park with exciting views and bridges which cross the streams. The freely accessible park is divided into three areas. From the rose and shrub garden you get to the meadows with their magnificent solitary trees followed by darker wooded terrain. The five-hectare park is a link between the moated castle “Haus zum Haus” and the factory Cromford which is a museum today.

Info: Tel. +49 (0)2102 5504111, www.ratingen.de
Tip
This tour is an attractive cycling route. When you leave the city centre it leads mainly along the Rhine as well as through forests and fields. Start: Düsseldorf Wehrhahn station. Length (round trip) approximately 45 km. Shortcut alternative from Ratingen-Ost station.
Info: www.radroutenplaner.nrw.de

Recommended travel season
The parks are attractive in all seasons. The Schlosspark Heltorf is opened on weekends and public holidays (1st May until 31st October) from 10.00 – 18.00 hrs.