


The Classical Garden Route Tuinen en Tuinkunst between Rhine and Maas tussen Rijn en Maas

Tour Tip 4 Steeds and Knights, Emperors and Herbs Wickrath, Rheydt, Mönchengladbach and Neersen

On this historically exciting tour you experience 500 years of construction and garden design history.


On this historically exciting tour you experience 500 years of construction and garden design history. You start in the Wickrath Castle grounds. From a bird's eye view you recognise its unusual shape of a count's coronet surrounded by a moat and a linden tree avenue. The buildings  and park areas are situated on the islands within. The Imperial Count Wilhelm Otto Friedrich von Quadt commissioned the Maastricht master builders Matthieu and Francois Soiron with the construction of this ensemble in 1752. The brothers dammed the river Niers (shortly behind its source) to feed ponds and canals. They built a magnificent baroque castle, the wings of its front castle and the stables still exist. A noble address for equestrians and noble horses: the Rhenish Equestrian Register is at home in this traditional breeding location, tournaments and shows take place on a regular basis.



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The strict forms of the baroque building are reflected in the garden. Fountains, meadows and plant beds are in symmetrical order. Lemons and oleander grow orderly in tubs, the linden tree crowns are cultivated in a box-shape. Landscaped areas with softer contours follow, surrounded by flower beds and plant belts. A small part of the park is a nature reserve. In front of the gallery forest you will find the museum of ornithology. Admission fees apply. Entrance to the park is free.

Info: Tel. +49 (0)2161 252525, www.moenchengladbach.de


Long before Wickrath Castle was built, Rheydt Castle up the river Niers already existed. Here you visit the only wholly conserved renaissance building on the Lower Rhine  Otto von Bylandt commissioned its construction on top of the ground walls of a medieval robber-knight castle in the 16th century. The master builder Maximilian Pasqualini adorned it with cornices, gables, pillars and arcades. Until today, they give the building its bright airiness. It houses the Museum Schloss Rheydt (admission fees apply).



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The freely accessible park was updated in 2002 according to 19th century designs. Peacocks proudly stroll across the restored tournament meadow. Circular paths lead around the buildings and ponds and along the casemates. You can descend to the 16th century underground wall and trench system. Exhibited weapons, pictures and models in their cool original setting let history come alive. Afterwards magnificent avenues and forests invite you for a walk.

Info: +49 (0)2166 928900, www.schlossrheydt.de

You leave the river Niers and visit a harmonious trio of parks in Mönchengladbach: Bunter Garten with Kaiserpark and Botanical Garden. Together they constitute the 30-hectare green heart of the city. Restored to their original condition, they reflect the zeitgeist of the turn of the century, of art nouveau and garden design reform. The Kaiserpark was designed in 1890 (with the Kaiser-Friedrich-Halle built in 1903 in an elevated location)  and is the oldest park area. Some of its proud trees date from the time of its creation. In 1927, the Botanical Gardens to the north were added. Isolated gravestones remind us that this area used to be a graveyard and nursery. Plants from all parts of the world are exhibited in 25 departments, sculptures adorn the wide meadows.



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A year later, the Bunte Garten was added, a protracted link to the Nordwald. Seasonally planted flowers are points of attraction. Other attractions are the stone, herb and apothecary gardens as well as the fragrant and tactile gardens for the blind.

Info: +49 (0)2161 252525, www.moenchengladbach.de

Art lovers now visit the Abteiberg Museum (currently being renovated, scheduled to reopen in the autumn of 2007). Info: www.museumabteiberg.de, www.crossart-route-moderne-kunst.com

You are now driving northwards back to the river Niers, your destination is the palace garden Neersen. In the river plain, Adrian von Virmond commissioned the construction of a three-wing castle between 1661 and 1669 on top of older buildings. It now houses the local government offices.



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The 25-hectare freely accessible landscape park is home to native and exotic trees of particular magnificence and size. Presumably it was at first laid out as a baroque garden around 1800 and later changed to the English style. The landscape architect Maximilian Friedrich Weyhe presumably had something to do with it, although there is no proof. Over crunchy gravel paths you reach the castle moat and discover blooming plant beds which escort you to the Italian garden with lime trees and tub plants. The pond and trench system leads you to a central water axis which divides the park.

The Orangerie and the Tea House, sculptures and play areas are constructional elements of the park. A hedge maze invites you to play hide and seek, meadows and wedding forest are more recent elements. The castle yard, backdrop for the Neersen open air theatrics in the summer, is adorned by a flower bed hinting at the form of a coach.

Info: +49 (0)2156 949121, Festspiele: 949264, www.festspiele-neersen.de



Renatured Niers bei Wickrath

The slow river flows into the Maas near Gennepe

© Birgit Wilms



Zoo Mönchengladbach

Family fun between Wickrath and Rheydt

© Birgit Wilms



Castle and Park Myllendonk

The moated castle on the Niers (above Rheydt) is a golf course

© Stadt Korschenbroich



Sculpture Park Abteiberg

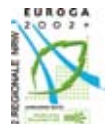
In front of the famous Museum Abteiberg

© Birgit Wilms

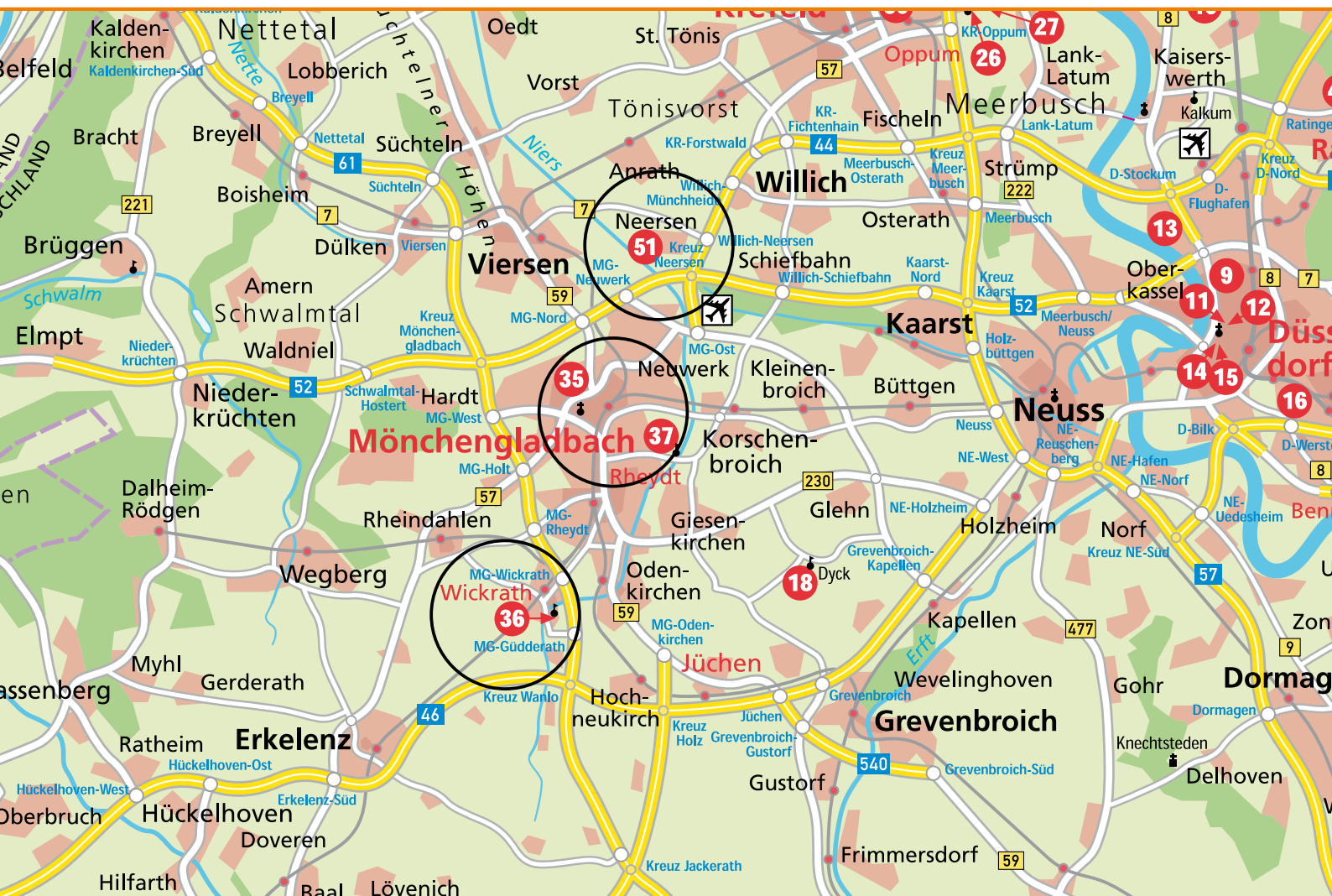
- 36 Schlosspark Wickrath, Schloss Wickrath, 41189 Mönchengladbach
- 37 Schlosspark Rheydt, Schlossstraße 508, 41238 Mönchengladbach
- 35 Bunter Garten mit Kaiserpark und Botanischem Garten, Bettrather Straße 82, 41063 Mönchengladbach
- 51 Schlosspark Neersen, Hauptstraße 6, 47877 Willich

This map is an excerpt from the general map
„The Classical Garden Route“

promoted by:



Ministerium für Bauen und Verkehr
des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen



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zwischen Rhein und Maas e.V.
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Tip

The 32 km long route is suitable for cycling trips. If you take the train, the starting point is Wickrath station, the return journey starts at Viersen station.

Info: www.radroutenplaner.nrw.de Still fit? From Neersen you can continue along the Niers cycling route to Kloster Mariendonk on the border to the Kleve district. The cycling route also has a number of return alternatives as well as links to other cycling routes, for example the "Fietsallee" on the Nordkanal, www.nordkanal.net.

Recommended travel season:

The castles and parks are worth visiting in all seasons. The exterior park area in Rheydt is freely accessible, the museum and the wall system are open Tuesdays to Sundays between 10 and 18 hrs. Admission fees apply for the museum. Please take note of special events before you travel (for example horse shows Wickrath, medieval market and knight tournaments Rheydt, castle festival Neersen).