

CITY PINK

On the 20th anniversary of the fall of Berlin Wall, the city is experiencing a renaissance. **Christopher Kanal** explores the once-divided area of Mitte and stays at one of the city's hippest hotels, Lux 11.



'BERLIN REMAINS EUROPE'S MOST EXCITING,
RADICAL AND PROVOCATIVE CITY.'

Berlin

There has never been a better time to visit a re-energised Berlin than on the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Wall. From the art galleries of Mitte, the major league shopping on Kurfürstendamm and the boutiques of Charlottenburg to the legendary nightlife, Berlin remains Europe's most exciting, radical and provocative city.

Major new attractions include the recently opened Neues Museum, a stunning renovation on Berlin's Museum Island designed by David Chipperfield, holding an extraordinary collection of Egyptian artefacts. When in town, try and catch a performance by the Berlin Philharmoniker, the best orchestra in Europe. If you visit before Christmas, head to the buzzing Gendarmenmarkt Christmas market, with its Alpine stalls, copious quantities of glühwein and of course, currywurst. For a trip out of town visit Woerlitzer Park – a Unesco World Heritage Site, a stunning example of landscape gardening designed by Prince Leopold III.

Stay at: LUX 11

Housed in a beautiful 19th-century apartment block near Alexanderplatz in Mitte, Lux 11 is a minimalist, relaxed and cosy haven. Created by design team Claudio Silvestrin and his wife Giuliana Salmaso, the hotel creates a soothing atmosphere across its 72 apartments, including 16 suites.

On arrival you enter a spotless white lobby to be greeted by the warm smiles of their friendly, attractive staff.

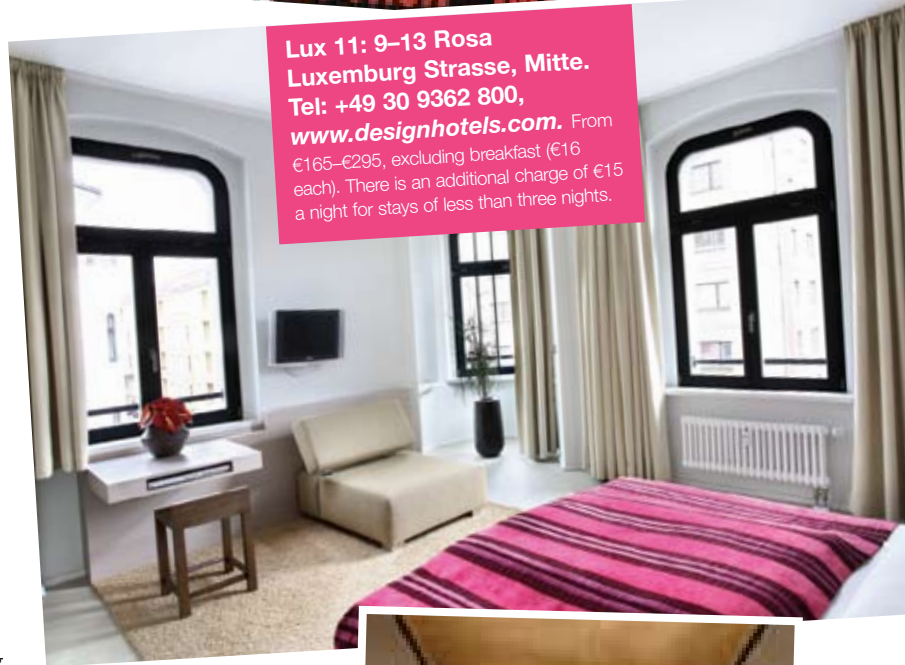
A glass-sided lift brings you up through the heart of the building to dark corridors backlit in pink. It's very cool, very Berlin. The executive suite was like a studio flat with its well-equipped kitchenette, comfortable sofa, honey-coloured wood and concrete bathroom. There was a huge comfortable bed and an indulgently large walk-in shower.

Lux 11 is a great base to explore the city. If you don't feel like venturing far for some designer shopping, Lux 11 occupies the same building that contains the Ulf Haines store, home to some of Berlin's most stylish fashion collections. Lux 11 has an Aveda hair salon and spa in the basement, a garage and laundry. Every room comes with a kitchenette, flatscreen TV, DVD player, fax machine and WiFi. Try and book executive suites 317 or 417, which have dramatic views through large windows of the Soviet-era architecture of Alexanderplatz and the Cold War sky-piercing spire of the Fernsehturm TV Tower. Both suites come with their own living area and sizeable kitchen.

In October 2009, new restaurant Luchs opened at Lux 11 serving gourmet Italian cuisine with a hint of South Tyrol. Head chef Christian Khalaf, who trained at Schwarze Rabe, uses fresh ingredients to create tasty



Mural of Erich Honecker and Leonid Brezhnev. Photo: Yoav, Flickr, CC license.



Lux 11: 9-13 Rosa Luxemburg Strasse, Mitte.
Tel: +49 30 9362 800,
www.designhotels.com. From €165-€295, excluding breakfast (€16 each). There is an additional charge of €15 a night for stays of less than three nights.

Lux 11 is a luxury retreat in the heart of Mitte.

dishes. Try the home-made ravioli filled with venison. Afterwards, unwind in the Luchs Bar before heading out into the Berlin night. The creators of Lux 11 are opening a sister property, the Weinmeister, in 2010. ■



MITTE: FIVE PLACES FOR YOUR ADDRESS BOOK

1. Neues Museum – Recently reopened after a stunning restoration by star architect David Chipperfield, the museum holds an exceptional collection of Egyptian artefacts including 3,400-year-old Egyptian beauty Queen Nefertiti.
Museumsinsel, +49 (0) 30 26 64 24 242
www.neues-museum.de

2. Taschen – A new addition to Mitte is the Philippe Starck designed outlet of the chic publishers.
Friedrichstrasse 180 - 184, +49 (0) 30 25 32 5991
www.taschen.com



3. Bar Tausend – A bare iron door beneath the Paris-Moskau railway leads you into one of Berlin's most happening high-end bars, perfect for hedonistic luxury lovers.
Schiffbauerdamm 11, +49 (0) 30 41 71 5396
www.tausendberlin.com

4. 14 oz. berlin – Top designer shopping with an individual service available in the atmosphere of a beautifully decorated apartment.
Neue Schönhauser Straße 13, +49 (0) 30 28 04 0514
www.14oz-berlin.com

5. Sammlung Boros – A monumental collection of contemporary art including those by Damian Hirst and Wolfgang Tillmans has a permanent base in this extraordinary space, an old WWII bunker (right).

20 Reinhardtstrasse,
www.sammlung-boros.de

