



Museums Off the Beaten Track

Berlin is known for its many museums and tourists here have over 170 to choose from. The usual destinations for most visitors include the Pergamon or Bode Museum, the National Gallery, the Naturkundemuseum (or Natural History Museum), and the German Historical Museum. But what about all those small, special-themed museums which rely on word-of-mouth referrals and are rarely considered worthwhile by mainstream travel guides? On the following.

It all began with the salmon colour worn by Hildegard Knef. The now deceased Berlin actress wasn't just one of the many stars with regular appointments with her beautician. She and Koch had developed a close and lasting friendship. After she had discarded her almost used-up lipstick, René Koch rescued it from the wastepaper basket and saved it for posterity. Today it graces this exceptional private collection of lipsticks from the past 100 years.

Over the course of his professional life, this 64-year-old beauty expert, who began his career as head make-up artist at Yves Saint Laurent Beauté in New York, has been entrusted to make over countless prominent stars including Joan Collins and Shirley Bassey. Lip care is no small matter to someone like Koch. And so began the collection of lipsticks over the years which also spawned his dream to create a small museum. Two years ago his dream became a reality. Finds from all over the world are displayed here and are lovingly presented in a display of René Koch's passion. Pieces of jewellery round out the collection, including some pieces that are hand painted or set with mother of pearl or precious stones, and others with built-in music boxes. Lipsticks of famous UFA stars and Hollywood divas from

the 1920s and '30s are presented along with half a dozen exhibits from the personal effects of the Argentinian icon Evita Perón. Lip care can reflect the times, as shown in designs out of wood produced during the lean years following WWII and in the "Volkslippenstift" or "people's lipstick" ad campaign (whose tagline was "Highest quality for the lowest price") which featured Hildegard Knef in the years after the war. The museum's exhibits are rounded out with collections of items from the flower power hippie days and a collection of things produced in former East Germany. One of the museum's highlights is the exhibit featuring over 125 original kiss-impressions next to the autographs of popular stars such as Milva, Mireille Mathieu, Bonnie Tyler, Ute Lemper, Brigitte Nielsen, and Vicky Leandros, and, of course, Hildegard Knef, along with anecdotes and insider stories collected over the years which René Koch loves to share with visitors.

A visit to the lipstick museum is an exclusive, once-in-a-lifetime event which isn't available anywhere else. At the end you won't know which is more impressive, the exhibits or "The Lord of the Sticks" himself, René Koch.

➤ **The Lipstick Museum** in the Cosmetic and Camouflage Centre, Helmstedter Straße 16, Berlin-Wilmersdorf, Call for a tour, also available with a "Flying Buffet" and champagne receptions, phone +49 30 854 28 29 email@rene-koch-berlin.de, www.rene-koch-berlin.de.

➤ **Tip:** The topical book "Lucky Lips" by René Koch is available and includes amusing stories about the cultural history of this accessory as well as tips and tricks of the trade for perfect lip care. 144 pages, 16.90 Euros

TASTE of BERLIN

