

Romantic Cities: The time before Christmas is the time for presents

Koblenz/Weinheim, 2017 – Let's be honest: all of us can get stressed while we are looking for the right gift for our loved ones. The Romantic Cities offer two solutions for this. Apart from the fact that the Christmas markets offer the perfect occasion to escape the turmoil and maybe even find a suitable gift – like a Jürgen Klopp Luther Bible – the cities themselves may just have one or two surprises for their guests. Since September, Idar-Oberstein is the starting point for the new Hildegard von Bingen pilgrimage trail on the Rhine river. What better way to rest and relax? Next year, Mainz honours Gutenberg on the 550th anniversary of his death with a new city app and costume tours – the perfect follow-up to this year's anniversary of the Reformation. Not to mention the large special exhibitions in Speyer and Trifels (Richard the Lionheart) and in Trier (Karl Marx) that run until the spring of 2018 when the Almond Blossom along the German Wine Route begins. Additionally, the new William Turner Route is also ready. With so much to choose from, the choice is difficult.

New in 2018

The new Hildegard von Bingen pilgrimage trail, which opened this autumn, begins in the gemstone capital **Idar-Oberstein**. The first stage of the trail is therefore dedicated to Hildegard's study of rocks. In her fourth work *Physica*, the religious teacher describes the effects of 26 (gem)stones. This first stage of the Hildegard trail follows the parallel Saar-Hunsrück hiking trail into the medieval town of Herrstein. Once the fabled rock-hewn church and the spectacular cliff formations at the beginning of the trail have been passed, the natural path offers beautiful, peaceful brook valleys, old forests and magnificent views whilst crossing the mountain ranges.

In **Mainz**, "augmented reality" is the buzzword in homage to Johannes Gutenberg's 550th death anniversary. Using your own mobile phones, you can stand and watch a 360° animated movie of St Christoph's Church – Gutenberg's baptistry – and see what it used to look like.

From 17 September 2017 to 15 April 2018, the Historical Museum of the Palatinate in **Speyer** will show a major art history and cultural history exhibition on the life and impact of King Richard the Lionheart of England. The exhibition is under the patronage of the Rhineland-Palatinate's Premier Malu Dreyer and bears the honorary title "Regional Exhibition Rhineland-Palatinate". A detour to nearby Trifels – Richard's former prison – is highly recommended.

The **5th May 2018** is **Karl Marx's 200th birthday**. This is the first time that a historic-cultural exhibition is dedicated to the life of the eminent 19th -century thinker, his important works and multifaceted activities in the context of his time. Sponsored by the Federal State of Rhineland-Palatinate and the City of Trier, the regional exhibition **KARL MARX 1818–1883. LIFE. WORK. TIME.** will be on display in the Rhenish state museum in Trier and in the St Simeon's Collegiate Church city museum in Trier from 5 May to 21 October 2018.

British painter William Turner is regarded as one of the fathers of Rhine romanticism. Two hundred years after his first journey to the mighty river, the Upper Middle Rhine Valley World Heritage association brings Turner's picturesque scenes back to life. A total of 26 sites between **Koblenz** and Bingen mark important stages in Turner's journey through the Upper Middle Rhine Valley. In addition to the website (www.turner-route.de), the anniversary of Turner's travels will be topped off in the coming weeks by the installation of information panels marking locations and viewing directions around St Goar and St Goarshausen. These panels will be successively installed in the course of the coming years.