

Altrip -- From Neanderthal Man To The Romans

Often when you read about a place there's a whole bunch of facts and figures thrown at you, never really delving into the soul of the place. Not so when it comes to the town of Altrip, just to the south of [Ludwigshafen](#) on the river [Rhine](#).

Sure, I can tell you all about the history of the place — how it was founded by Roman Emperor Valentinian I in 369 A.D., when he built a fort on the Alta Ripa. Funny, this [German town](#) wasn't even founded by Germans (or [Germanic Tribes](#), in this case), but by Italians.

Now over sixteen centuries later, no one could call this place anything but German.

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What's really funny is that the Romans weren't the first to come to Altrip (though it wasn't called Altrip back then). Neanderthal Man (around 100,000 years ago) could boast that title — his femur was found in a nearby gravel pit — but, either way, nothing remains of Neanderthal or Valentinian's time.

What does remain is the town's oldest house, a half-timbered one dating to around 1660. Yeah, doesn't seem that old compared to the Romans (or the Neanderthal Man for that matter), does it?

Altrip's town church is older, but only its tower. After a fire destroyed it in 1891, the 13th century medieval 20-meter high tower was the only part that stood standing.

That's all right, a little bit of the old, right next to the new. Now, that's character.

Did you know that you can easily get to Altrip via ferry from [Mannheim](#)? No? Everyday starting at

5:30am, there's ferry service to/from Mannheim — with the last one leaving at 22:30 (that would be 10:30pm for non-military time-telling folks). Sorry, Sunday mornings is a late start — the first one leaves at 8am. ;-)

What? Who doesn't like to sleep in or lounge around reading the newspaper in bed on Sunday mornings — or is it just me?

Even though I haven't gotten the pleasure of doing it, I'd imagine that watching the fireworks from the annual Fisherman's festival (in early July) from the ferry has got to be pretty. This festival, in addition to the fireworks, is a real fun affair with lots of seafood dishes (it is a fisherman's festival) and plenty of ale to go around.

I hope I managed to tell you about Altrip's soul, as well as some of its facts & figures. Thanks, Valentinian (does anyone know how to say thanks in Latin?) for a pretty awesome town.