

Stendal Connects A Bear With Art History :-)

Stendal hardly looks its age when you walk through *Tangermünder Tor*, one of the brick gate towers that form the remnants of its city wall.

Born almost 1,000 years ago, the old brick structures blend with the gothic churches and half-timber houses to look fresh and polished. Walking around, the architectural transitions are just one of the many design features that will make you want to give this town a closer look.

Stendal started a bit roughly. Founded by the warrior Albrecht the Bear, it was a heavily fortified member of the powerful [Hanseatic League](#). The thick fortifications were necessary to protect the wealthy merchants of the town.

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The *Tangermünder Tor* is one of two brick gate towers remaining from the old city walls. The town hall, churches and homes also reflect the Germanic architecture that flourished under Albrecht and prevailed through out the Middle Ages.

However, Stendal also has a major presence felt in Greece, France, Italy and all other art and archeology centers. This is thanks to Johann Joachim Winkelmann, who was born a cobbler's son and grew up to redefine the study of fine art and history. His life story is really interesting.

You can explore it along with his work at the *Winkelmann Museum*. It's stuffed full of drawings, letters, sculptures and paintings from all over Europe as well as special exhibits about local history with relics from local digs.

So what do a bear and art history have in common? Both did great things for Stendal. Albrecht the

Bear founded and protected it. Johann Joachim Winkelmann gave it a softer cultural soul. The rugged old bones and the softer cultural additions combine to give the town a rich cultural scene to explore.

You can explore everything on foot or by biking — the bike trail here is part of the popular [Altmark](#) trail that runs throughout [Saxony-Anhalt](#).