

## Werl Beckons Pilgrims And Culture Buffs

Werl is home to a sacred image of the Virgin Mary with the Christ child seated on her lap. Pilgrims venture here from far and wide to pay their respects and meditate upon the 68-centimeter-high statue, which dates back to 1170 and is presumed to have been crafted in Sweden.

You will appreciate that after its installation at the Basilica Sanctuary in 1661. Only visitors of high authority, such as kings, bishops and abbesses, could view the heavily crowned Madonna.

In 1953, Pope Pius XII conferred upon the sanctuary the dignity of “basilica minor.” Since then, as many as 300,000 annual visitors have arrived to view the famous figurine.

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Today, you can see the exquisite relic and attend a session of worship at any of four masses held each Sunday. During the pilgrimage season (May through October), four prayer and rosary events are scheduled each Wednesday. The basilica is easily accessed by bus from any part of the town.

Lest you think that’s all there is to do in Werl, take a good look at the local cultural events calendar. You will find music performances, world-class dance presentations, stage plays, comedies, festivals and carnivals, handicraft workshops, sports events, and more. One intriguingly unique activity is Moonlight Shopping in August, when local shops stay open past midnight.

Be sure to stop by the central train station, a center for parties, concerts, seminars, and cultural exhibits as well as transportation. Other venues for education and entertainment are the Town Hall, the Hellweg Gallery, the Franciscan Ethnology Museum, the Town Museum at the Rykenberg, and the Peoples Forum Museum.

Then, after soaking up so much knowledge and culture, you will want to relax a bit. It is time to head to the *Freizeitbad Werl* (leisure time pools), with indoor and outdoor bathing and sunning gardens that have served local residents since 1937.