

Wüstenrot -- Idyllic Town Grown To Save Money

The love of the [German automobile](#) ends right here in the town of Wüstenrot. No, it's not as if the town has anything against a Porsche or Audi — it's just that it lies along the [Idyllic Route](#).

In the most simplest way of explaining it, the route is best enjoyed walking or cycling. This would explain Wüstenrot's guided hikes.

A wonderful way to see the countryside is atop the *Aussichtsturm Steinknickle*, a 30 meter high observation tower. It doesn't end here, climb the 66 steps of the *Himmelsleiter*, or Stairway to Heaven, and look up to see the 45 meter high Sequoias at the Wellingtonien.

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You can go from atop the world to below it when you go see the *Silberstollen*, which were the old silver mines.

Have a walk over to the Finsterroter See, a lake that's great for both boating and swimming. Right nearby is a barefoot path, so go ahead and kick those shoes off.

After walking to see Wüstenrot's Baroque St. Kilian Church (b. 1732), visiting its *Glas- und Heimatmuseum* (Glass and Local History Museum), and its 18th century *Rathaus* you'll be ready to get out of your shoes.

And no one said you had to have your shoes on while over at one of Wüstenrot's BBQ areas, either. Keep 'em on while you're at the 15th/16th century Burg Maienfels though.

What can we see after that? The *Greifvogelanlage*, which is all about birds of prey. You're

welcome there anytime from March to November. And the *Haus Haller Straße 3* (a.k.a. *Georg-Kropp-Haus*), a half-timbered building from 1750 that houses the *Bauspasmus*.

What? Oh, right, I haven't told you yet that Wüstenrot is actually famous for its *Bausparkasse* (home loan bank) that has the name of this town, hence it makes sense to have a museum about it. ;-)

As idyllic as Wüstenrot is, it's even better during one of its festivals. Hopefully I don't miss any — so here goes: there's the *Ochsenfest* in July, the *Waldkuchenfest* (Forest Cake Festival), the *Dorfplatzfest Oberheimbach*, the *Kirchplatzfest* in June, the Summer Festival (also in June), and the obligatory Christmas Market.

Yeah, I did miss some — there's another Village Festival in early August (*Dorffest Finsterrot*) and the *Erntedankfest* (Harvest Festival) in September. Guess I got sidetracked by the [Swabian-Franconian Forest](#) and the Mainhardt Forest in the background.

Forget the car, this really is a place best explored on foot — or at least on a bike.