

be found at many stadiums across Europe and around the world, FC St Pauli delivers more than just a thrilling bit of spectatorship. In a world where the beautiful game is often less than beautiful – marred by hatred and intolerance – it’s nice to be welcomed in by a club that cares about more than just the score after 90 minutes. A club that works hard to create a community spirit in the neighbourhood it calls home. — (M)

**Three more anarchist football clubs**

- 01 AC Omonia Nicosia**  
The Cypriot club formed in 1948 in opposition to Apol.
- 02 Besiktas**  
The Turkish club’s fans endorsed the 2013 protests in Istanbul.
- 03 FC Barcelona**  
A rallying point for Barcelona’s left-wing politics.

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**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Daniel Bach is a presenter and producer across Monocle 24’s daily news programmes and host of our business show *The Entrepreneurs*. He hails from the football-mad city that is Toronto.

ESSAY 07

## Can you dig it? *Urban allotment gardens*

Traditionally the provinces of senior citizens lording it over their land, Hamburg’s allotments are enjoying an influx of young professionals who are growing the community as well as their vegetables.

by *Nicholas Brautlecht,*  
*journalist*

Whenever I’ve spent an extended period abroad I’ve had most of the German nicknames bestowed upon me. The Brits called me Bosch, like the home appliance company; in the US, playing football, I was the Kaiser, after football legend Franz Beckenbauer; in Russia, things were less nuanced – there, children simply shouted “*Hitler kaputt!*” at me.

While there’s often a grain of truth to clichés, some are simply wrong – I am terrible at football, for example. Yet others need to be redefined, including one German stereotype in particular: the *Schrebergarten*.

A relatively unique form of urban gardening, in Hamburg these allotments cover an area equal to just under 2,700 football pitches and, according to some, are under threat of becoming increasingly un-Germanic. But what does that mean?

The *Schrebergarten* first came about in the mid-19th century. During industrialisation, many families lived in poor, overcrowded conditions. Light, air, sun and exercise were seen as the best recipe

for boosting health, so small, fenced urban gardens sprang up as a solution. (They’re named after the Leipzig-born physician Daniel Gottlob Moritz Schreber, who was also known for chinstraps to correct crooked teeth, not to mention similarly sadistic appliances to prevent masturbation.)

The gardens are typically seen as the bulwarks of German parochialism: grumpy pensioners trimming the lawn with nail scissors while their wives polish the obtrusively smiling garden gnomes. That’s why I used to keep a safe distance from these plots of land, even though the paths intersecting the large “colonies” are open to the public. The folks behind the neatly cut hedges – in their sandals, white socks and Adidas shorts – frightened me. Little did I expect to become a *Schrebergarten* fan someday.

It’s worth taking a stroll through one of these 300 green labyrinths scattered across Hamburg. On summer weekends you’ll see kids splashing in paddling pools or kicking footballs. Their mums will likely be combing through flowerbeds on all fours, harvesting tomatoes and courgettes, while dads tend to the barbecue, possibly wearing the same Adidas shorts as their 1980s predecessors.

The senior incumbents still represent most tenants but each summer hammocks, prayer flags and Buddha statues replace the

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plastic sunloungers, German flags and garden gnomes, as young families, eco-warriors and hipsters from Sternschanze or Ottensen infiltrate the city’s 34,500 allotments.

The gardens capture the zeitgeist of the young urban crowd. The onus of living in a big city has got many Hamburgers yearning for a

**Three Hamburg gardens**

- 01 Heimgartenbund Altona**  
A *Schrebergarten* in Othmarschen, near town.
- 02 Botanischer Sondergarten Wandsbek**  
You’ll find this in the Eichtalpark.
- 03 Dahliengarten Hamburg**  
Head to Altonaer Volkspark.

slower place of life, one closer to nature. They want to get their hands dirty and dig up some vegetables – to smell the rosemary and harvest the apples. The gardens are now so popular that there is a waiting list of several years to secure one.

As this trend is part of a wider urban-gardening boom, there have been a few initial signs that Hamburg’s *Schrebergarten* scene – for more than a century the stereotypical stronghold of working-class Germans – would be overrun by young creatives, media folk and Google middle-managers. But the seniors can complain all they want (and they do): young *Schrebergardeners* are redefining the social landscape here, disproving the view that small gardens come with small minds.

For these liberal cosmopolitans, however, it can be a challenge to accustom themselves to the rules of the gardens. Think regulations governing the height and width of hedges and trees, as well as sewage disposal. There’s even a Federal Small Gardens Act.

Lilli, a 44-year-old props-master at a Hamburg theatre, once turned on her electric saw and had some veteran neighbour shout at her across the hedges for making noise. It was a Sunday! Sundays, like midday, are *Ruhezeit*: rest time. Despite the initial hiccups and the months spent cleaning up after the previous occupant, Lilli now waxes lyrical about the pears, walnuts and beans she harvests from her petite plot. “I am always jumping for joy when I return home with a bouquet of flowers.”

While Lilli and the other novices learn to adhere to some regulations, they're also finding ways to sidestep others, and Germany's orderly allotment scene is developing an anarchic feel: trees are growing wilder as many seek to work with nature, not against it; shabby and industrial-chic are replacing linoleum and plastic; and colourful paper lanterns provide a backdrop as New Age types gather around fire bowls for evening beers.

The kaleidoscope of people inside these colonies is evolving. This can be challenging to deal with but it's a chance to expand a formerly homogenous bubble – and that's never a bad thing. Lilli, in her turn, has become an advocate of *Ruhezeit*. She's also learned to appreciate the proximity of her neighbours though initially it made her feel uneasy. One hopes they feel the same way about her. — (M)



**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Nicholas Brautlecht is a journalist and former *Bloomberg* correspondent. His family once shared a *Schrebergarten* with a couple in Berlin, where he shirked his garden duties to lie in a hammock.

ESSAY 08

## Grind control *Coffee culture*

From leading its trade in Europe to pioneering it as a motivator for its workers, Hamburg has always had a close relationship with coffee.

by Stephanie Sy-Quia,  
*Monocle*

Under a railway bridge in an almost desolate part of HafenCity, you may stumble upon a small, funny-looking little building that seems barely able to prop itself up, so hard is its slant. Being built close to the Oberhafen dock, it's thought that the tides and storm surges over the years since its construction in 1925 have contributed to its steady landward lean. This is the Oberhafen-Kantine – the last *Kaffeekluppe* in Hamburg.

Such establishments as this once catered to the city's dockers and warehouse workers by sliding coffee and other warm treats through a hatch in the wall, to be taken away or enjoyed in the building's cafeteria-like hall. The Oberhafen-Kantine is a tiny example, one that barely does justice to the social phenomenon.

*Kaffeeklappen* and their sister venues, *Volkskaffeehallen* (literally, “people’s coffee halls”), arose in the golden era of Hamburg’s Speicherstadt warehouse district – now a Unesco World Heritage site – to keep the men and women who worked in the area moving. In their heyday in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, some of the largest *Kaffeeklappen* could accommodate hundreds of people.

While England’s Charles II may have tried to ban coffeehouses a couple of centuries prior, amid fear that they were hotbeds for dissent, in Hamburg the drink was welcomed with open arms. With typical German pragmatism, coffee was heralded as a tippable that improved concentration and efficiency, so warehouse owners started giving it to their workers (the practice had the added benefit of reducing alcoholism – to put it simply, people had something else to drink).

Of course, the proliferation of coffee in the city didn’t come from nowhere. It was Hamburg’s star import and a big reason for its wealth. Along with London and Le Havre, Hamburg was one of the top European ports ferrying in green coffee from the “coffee belt” of the world (Guatemala, Ethiopia, Brazil, Costa Rica and, later, Vietnam). Hamburg was the biggest importer for supplying central and southeast Europe, as well as its neighbours further north. (The coffee culture of Scandinavian coastal cities such as Stockholm and Copenhagen testifies to the solidity of the trade). Some of the world’s most important coffee companies were founded here,

including Tchibo, Jacobs and Neumann Kaffee Gruppe (NKG), once one of the largest coffee importers in the world. JJ Darboven, the first company to offer packaged ground coffee (thereby democratising it still further), continues to roast in Hamburg-Billbrook to this day.

Hamburg also opened the first coffeehouse in Germany, in 1677 – Berlin had to wait another 45 years before King Friedrich William I of Prussia personally introduced his countrymen to the beverage, which set off a nationwide caffeine addiction so strong that it stirred Johann Sebastian Bach to pen a short opera called *Coffee Cantata*. By any measure one of the composer’s lesser-known works, it features a petulant daughter imploring her father to let her succumb to her addiction. “*Coffee, Coffee muss ich haben!*” she shouts. (“Coffee, I must have coffee!”)

There is a historical theory, pushed partly by the late 20th-century philosopher Jürgen Habermas, that the Enlightenment burst upon the scene because people put down their beer and started sipping the sweet – or rather bitter – stuff instead and spent more time in the sociable and often intellectual milieus of coffeehouses. As the writer Adam Gopnik put it in *The New Yorker*, “Democracy was made not in the streets but in the saucers”. Hamburg may not be noted for its contributions to the Enlightenment but its prime import can be credited with the wider city’s bounteous wealth in more ways than one.