

TOM CLARK

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The charming born and bred Berliner Tom Clark has been a fixture of the local and international DJ circuit since the nineties. In 2000, he also started his own label, Highgrade Records, and although he could quite easily see himself living in another place - South America, for example - he admits that while working so actively in the electronic music scene, there's simply no better city than Berlin.

GROWING UP IN BERLIN

I grew up in Berlin Lichtenrade, the former West. From there, I moved to Tempelhof, Lankwitz, Schöneberg and Kreuzberg. For the last eight years, I have been living in Friedrichshain, which is not everyone's thing, but I like not living in some very thought-out, redesigned period building with a bunch of uptight and narrow-minded suits. Friedrichshain has the advantage of being in the middle of the city, there's a massive choice of bars and clubs, but also plenty of quiet corners that still convey a real feeling of a Berlin neighbourhood.

CITY WITH A DIFFERENCE

Through my work I've experienced many large cities on practically every continent, and still I would say that in terms of personal freedom, the affordable high standard of living and an unbelievable nightlife, other major cosmopolitan cities just don't come close. Berlin is also a completely different place to the rest of Germany. It is becoming more and more a genuine cultural melting pot, and this internationality and diversity is not something you come across in quite the same way in other German cities. The Berlin bear remains the ultimate symbol of Berlin for me. Back in the day when there was still the border control between East and West and you drove to the city past Dreilinden or Reinickendorf, it was always a joy to see the bear at the city limit - you just got that feeling of coming home.

A BERLIN EXPERIENCE

Berlin is a city with a very individual spirit, which is hard to pinpoint in words, but is easily recognisable when you see or experience it. One of my everyday favourite scenes is walking across the ⁰¹ *Oberbaumbrücke* as the sun is setting. You have a view to the *TV Tower*, the *East Side Gallery* and the *Spree*, which now instead of dividing the city runs as a life-giving artery around which more and more restaurants, bars and other alternative projects are springing up. I also really enjoy these moments in summer between about 4 and 5am; the city is for a short time like a ghost town, with hardly any cars on the streets. In summer having a good time is no effort - a drink in a beer garden, ⁰² *Golgatha* in Kreuzberg for example, followed by a short



walk in the beautiful *Viktoriapark* is all you need. Or barbecuing with friends in the park! This perfectly illustrates Berlin's exceptionality - in what other European capital would you be allowed to do this?

EATING OUT

The selection of quality restaurants is always improving. I have a couple of favourites that have a cosy atmosphere, interesting clientele and of course great dishes. For Italian, there's ⁰³ *Trattoria Libau* in Friedrichshain and *Il Contadina Sotto le Stelle* in Mitte. *Sasaya* in Prenzlauerberg is excellent Japanese, and *Café im Grenzbereich*, right next to the *Oberbaumbrücke*, serves delicious pan-Asian food. For something special, the restaurant at ⁰⁴ *Bar 25* offers dishes that are really a cut above, all in an unusual atmosphere offering comfort, as well as a certain coolness-factor. Aside from this I have a number of great little places across town where you can get good-value and tasty food.

CLASSIC BARS

In terms of bars, I tend to find over-styled places quite boring and so I'd rather hang out somewhere like the ⁰⁵ *Ankerklause* in Kreuzberg, which - although it has the vibe of an old Hamburg sailor inn - is a true Berlin institution. I do have a few places if I want to impress guests, like ⁰⁶ *Sanatorium 23*, *Goldfisch* or ⁰⁷ *ČSA Bar*, all in Friedrichshain. *Bar 25* and *Club der Visionäre* are also classic Berlin summer venues.

THE CAPITAL OF HANGING OUT

Taking it easy in Berlin is...well, easy! There are so many open spaces and parks to escape to. I prefer the ⁰⁸ *Volkspark Friedrichshain* and *Volkspark Treptow*, where the impressive Soviet memorial, is situated.