

MONOCLE

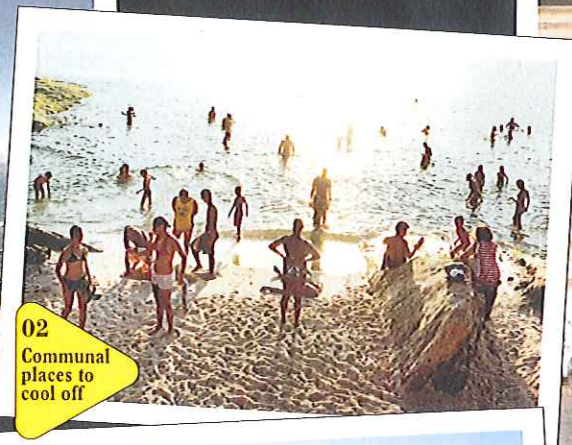
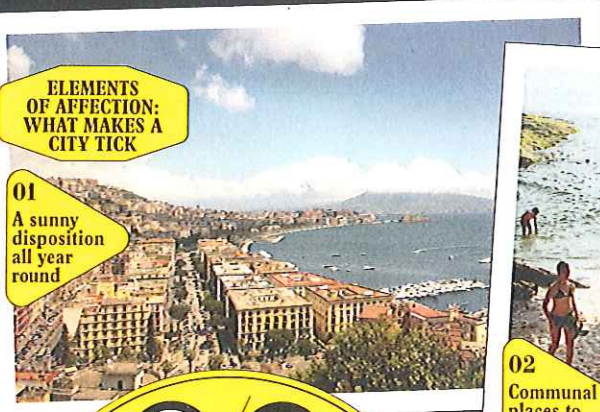
A BRIEFING ON GLOBAL AFFAIRS, BUSINESS, CULTURE & DESIGN

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JULY/AUGUST 2010

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 - B BUSINESS** Honolulu: why the city needs to look west not east
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 - D DESIGN** Helsinki: a European capital's Asiafication
 - E EDITS** Paris's policies to encourage small-scale retail
- EXPO** Rethinking better living in Naples, Rio, Taipei, Beirut and Istanbul

Where would you rather live: *A cosy capital or a chaotic cosmopolis?*

Our 2010 **QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEY** of the world's best cities to live punctually and peacefully — or on the edge

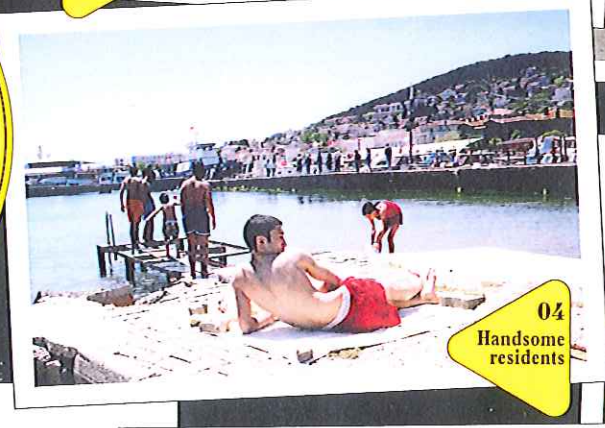


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OUR GLOBAL RANKING OF THE WORLD'S MOST LIVEABLE CITIES

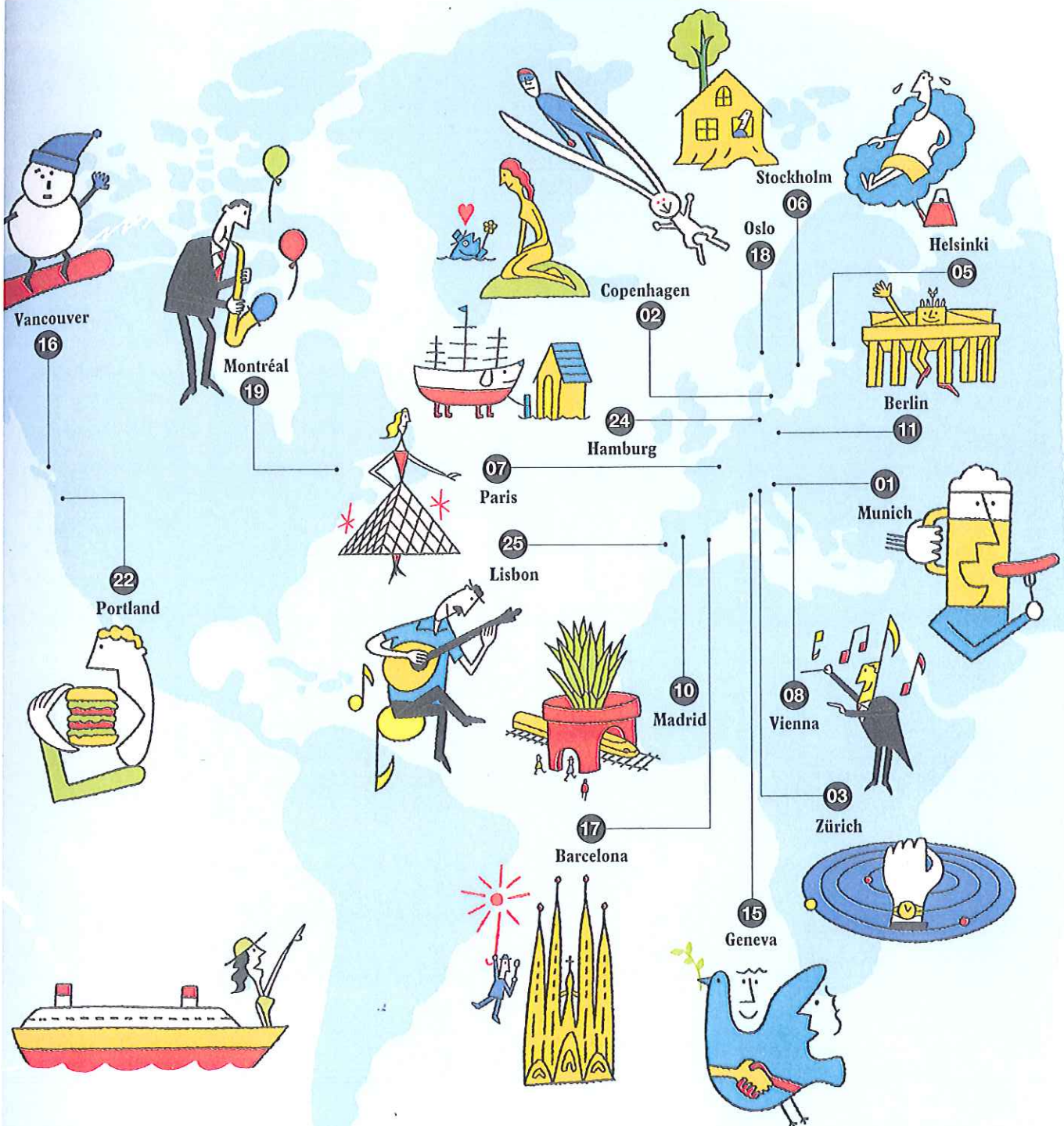
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five with a little more sun and sauce



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19 Montréal: Montréal Island may be only 3.3 per cent green space but the city is trying hard to catch up via new recycling targets and a successful bike scheme.

20 Auckland: Holding steady at number 20 for the second year in a row, Auckland is busy tidying itself up in time for next year's Rugby World Cup.

21 Singapore: Dropping from 18 last year, small-scale Singapore could do with devoting some money to culture and creativity instead of casinos and shopping malls.

22 Portland: A re-entry to our survey, the small city in America's Northwest earns its place for its tolerance – and its love of the bicycle and good coffee.

23 Kyoto: Keeping hold of its traditions, the city's rather stuffy vibe could be in for a shake-up in the midst of its continuing business boom.

24 Hamburg: Despite losing its edge – and some of its workforce – to young pretender Berlin, this is still one of our favourite German cities.

25 Lisbon: Low crime rates and its position as a gateway to South America make the Portuguese capital an ever more pleasant place to live, with a rejuvenated waterfront and new laws allowing same-sex marriage.





THE LIVEABLE CITIES INDEX —2010

Preface

We've been doing our homework and crunching the numbers for our survey of the top 25 liveable cities, but we know it's not just about statistics.

WRITERS

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Jörg Koopmann

It was some time in mid-March that we decided to go for a bit of a rethink on how we'd approach this 2010 Quality of Life issue. While correspondents had already been dispatched to ride the rails in Berlin, cycle around Fukuoka, walk the neighbourhoods of Vancouver and sample the bars of Madrid, there was something nagging us as we sat taking in the sunset and surf on the beach at Ipanema.

Sitting with my colleagues Andrew, Rob, Anders and Alex we discussed all that was right and wrong with Rio de Janeiro. The beach, as the city's great democratic meeting place, seemed very right. So too did the new government's improvement projects along the waterfront and its social and security programmes that were helping turn around many favelas, as well as the general rhythm of the place that makes it such an alluring metropolis.

The wrongs were the gunships flying overhead, the desperate kids snatching and grabbing from unwitting tourists and all the fine architecture locked behind iron bars, razor wire and CCTV cameras. According to our metrics, Rio de Janeiro would be a liveability failure because of its murder rate, its public transport system and its tired international airport. It took just one trip to the kiosk up the beach (accompanied by another tray of beers) to

decide that we should add a special section to this year's liveability survey that celebrates the cities that may not be the cleanest, safest or most perfectly planned but are still incredibly liveable – if you accept them on their own terms.

As most local governments work hard to retain talented residents and attract inward investment, too often they end up deleting the very elements that have made their cities attractive for decades and even centuries. Well proportioned neighbourhoods are replaced by ghastly mixed-use developments, one-way traffic schemes kill the metabolism of once buzzy shopping streets and anti-noise police take all the fun out of Saturday night.

Liveable cities are meant to be just that – urban settlements where human life can thrive because they are easy to navigate, diverse, pulsing and full of opportunities. Our deck of top 25 cities didn't see too much reshuffling for 2010, in part because the economy saw many large-scale improvement projects put on hold, but there were enough shifts (Geneva, Madrid, Portland) in our ranking to ensure that no mayor should be resting on last year's performance and enough innovative ideas being implemented to keep less inspired leaders on their toes. — (M)



01 MUNICH

2009 ranking: 04 | 2008 ranking: 02

When it comes to clichés about Germans, Dr Michael Kerkloh has heard the lot. "We don't laugh, we are not colourful, we are very strict, we are orderly and proper, we are all engineers..." He laughs. "Of course, that's all true! But there is also another side: that we are a multi-shaped society, a colourful melting pot of contradictions."

Kerkloh is something of a colourful melting pot of contradictions himself. Munich Airport's CEO might have just picked up yet another Skytrax award for running Europe's Best Airport (its fifth), but when MONOCLE meets him and media relations vice president Ingo Anspach in his office fronted by views of the Alps, he's keener to show off Albin – an enormous Russian stag's head that sits on its own chair. "I am not a hunter, but I was with a Russian group. At 10am they gave me a gun and said 'At 6pm we want to eat'." Three hours of stalking through Siberian forest later they all opened fire – with only Kerkloh hitting his target. Beginners' luck, suggests MONOCLE. "Not for Albin," notes Anspach.

Such knockabout behaviour might not be every CEO's modus operandi, but then, for an airport boss, Kerkloh runs a happy ship. Thirty thousand people are employed by 500 companies at Europe's fastest-growing airport; one that's doubled in size in a decade. In part that's down to a groundbreaking 60/40 per cent partnership deal with Lufthansa. But peerless customer service has certainly helped. Commuters are promised a maximum 30-minute transfer time ("not only you but your bag as well"), they can rest at the five-star Helmut Jahn-designed Kempinski Hotel (which admittedly could use an overhaul) or browse the gleaming Munich Airport Centre, a shopping, business and recreation area that connects the two terminals. Alongside outlets for the usual luxury-goods duty-free suspects, it includes everything from the world's only airport brewery (producing – what else? – Airbräu), a late-night supermarket, a dedicated FC Bayern Munich store selling 600



01



02



fan items from toasters to garden gnomes, and even a sex shop. When the Icelandic ash cloud crippled many European hubs in April, Munich worked with the Red Cross to provide beds for every one of its 2,000 stranded passengers. Factor in the anticipated green light for a third runway (although there is opposition to it), plus the proposed 2014 introduction of a €1.85bn Transrapid monorail to cut journey time for the 40km route into the Bavarian capital from 40 to 10 minutes, and you have a city taking its inhabitants' quality of life seriously.

"When I worked in Frankfurt in the 1970s," Kerkloh says of the less-progressive city, "people often said their favourite part was the airport." But that was for a different reason. "They couldn't wait to get away."

"The airport in Munich is so important," agrees Dominik Wichmann, editor of *Süddeutsche Zeitung Magazin*, the award-winning colour supplement with Germany's largest national daily newspaper. "Really it is a microcosm of the city. It's part of the reason that for the past four or five years people are coming back to Munich – and staying."

Once described as "about as cool as polka music on cassette", Germany's third-largest city no longer finds itself overshadowed by Berlin's "poor-but-sexy" hipness. In recent years the city could scarcely have taken its unofficial slogan, "Munich Loves You", any more to heart. Some €4m has just been invested to promote Deutsche Bahn's Call a Bike scheme to get the city cycling. When MONOCLE visited the city was preparing to allow 70,000 of its citizens into its Allianz Arena stadium to watch a European Cup match on the big screen – for free. And strict rules on working hours, combined with 15 "holy" days, mean that Munich's workforce must take seven weeks off each year, whether they want to or not.

"One of the things that is never talked about in quality of life surveys is that the best cities always close down on Sundays," says the hotelier and restaurateur Rudi Kull, when we meet over cappuccino at the Louis Hotel, one of seven ventures he oversees around the central Marienplatz. "We work hard here. But you have a day off to take care of social life, meet the grandparents, visit museums or spend it in the English Garden. If you want to stay important in industry, you have to stay healthy, have friends and have time to start a family. My advice to New York is: take Sundays off!"

And Munich is a city ideally suited to enjoying. It is spotlessly clean, a breeze to navigate and has one of the fastest-growing economies and lowest unemployment and violent crime rates in Germany. You can't fail to notice how polite and helpful everyone is and even at night it's a pleasure to walk around. The construction of skyscrapers is restricted; instead, commissions for world class architects such as Herzog & de Meuron, who built the interconnected shopping courtyards of the Fünf Höfe, or Wolf Prix of Coop Himmelb(l)au, who designed the BMW Welt flagship centre, are encouraged.

Thomas Mann, the writer who lived here for many years, wrote of the city, "Munich glows". Indeed, the sky is often a vivid blue dotted with puffy white clouds, while the relaxed, Baroque atmosphere gives the city a southern European flair. Not for nothing is Munich sometimes referred to as "Italy's northernmost city".

Though it's some 400 miles inland, in spring the 3.6 sq km English Garden becomes a surfing hangout. Look down from the Prinzregentenstrasse and you'll see an orderly queue of surfers ready to take the plunge where the Eisbach (ice brook) gushes into the park. Meanwhile Munich's compact size means an evening

out typically accommodates two or three stop-offs: perhaps a gallery opening followed by an aperitivo, then some classic Bavarian food – cuisine is celebrated here in a way it just isn't in Frankfurt, Hamburg or Berlin.

Combine Munich's sense of tradition with an economy driven by information technology, biotechnology and publishing sectors and you start to understand why the city's epithet "laptops and lederhosen" has stuck.

Munich is proud to mix past with future. A stable, conservative government, which has been in power for the past 40 years, has led to numerous global corporations being based here (seven of Germany's 10 biggest, according to DAX), rubbing shoulders with a thriving start-up community. Meanwhile, two large elite universities comprise some 90,000 students – the next generation of upwardly mobile citizens.

To young people in Munich today, Sergey Brin and Larry Page are the same as Mick Jagger and Paul McCartney were for my generation," says publishing baron Hubert Burda, when we meet in his penthouse office at Hubert Burda Media, surrounded by his staggering art collection.

In the 1990s Burda worked with the government to set up Munich's Digital Advisory Board, while other city authorities were still struggling to get to grips with wi-fi. Now his annual DLD (Digital, Life, Design) Conference brings together tech entrepreneurs with everyone from the American inventor Chuck Hoberman to the British environmentalist David de Rothschild. "Young people love to work with me, because we changed the way the company works. We made it much more open. With technology we have this new way of working together."

It's a sentiment echoed by Siemens' CEO Peter Löscher. "I am constantly in close contact with Munich's mayor to



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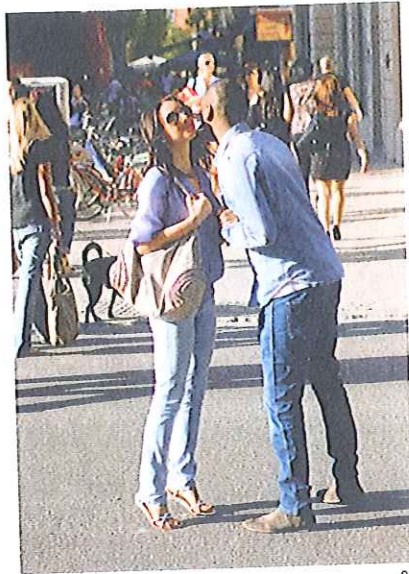
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Five things that would make life better here

- 01 Shops in Munich really should be allowed to have longer opening hours.
- 02 We can't wait for that high-speed airport rail link.
- 03 The city is lovely in terms of quality of life but compared to Berlin or Hamburg is still a little too conservative culturally. Greater diversity would attract more of the creative class.
- 04 Living in Munich is expensive. No wonder many artists, galleries and quite a few startups move to affordable Berlin. Munich could do more to foster the art scene and small businesses.
- 05 With locals loving their cars and lots of heavily motored vehicles clogging outbound highways every weekend, the city should work on an easy-to-use electric car-share system to allow people to drive to the beautiful nearby countryside.

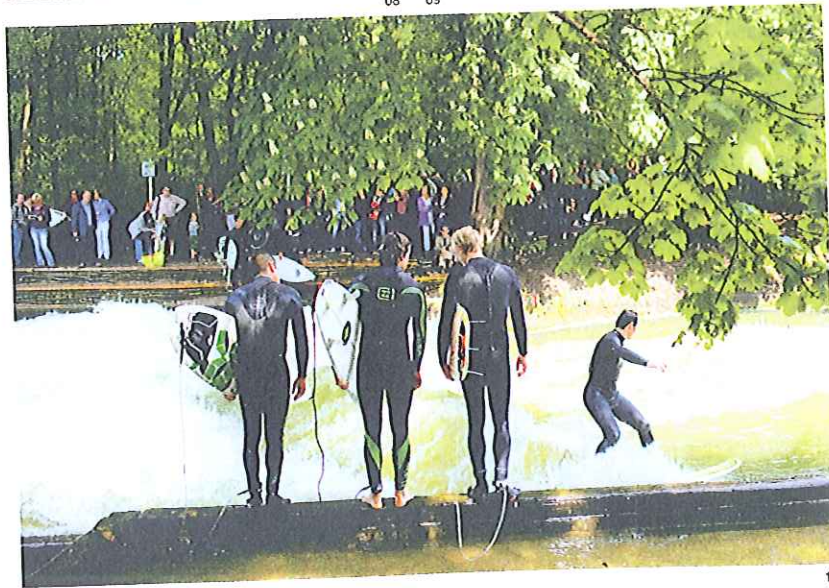
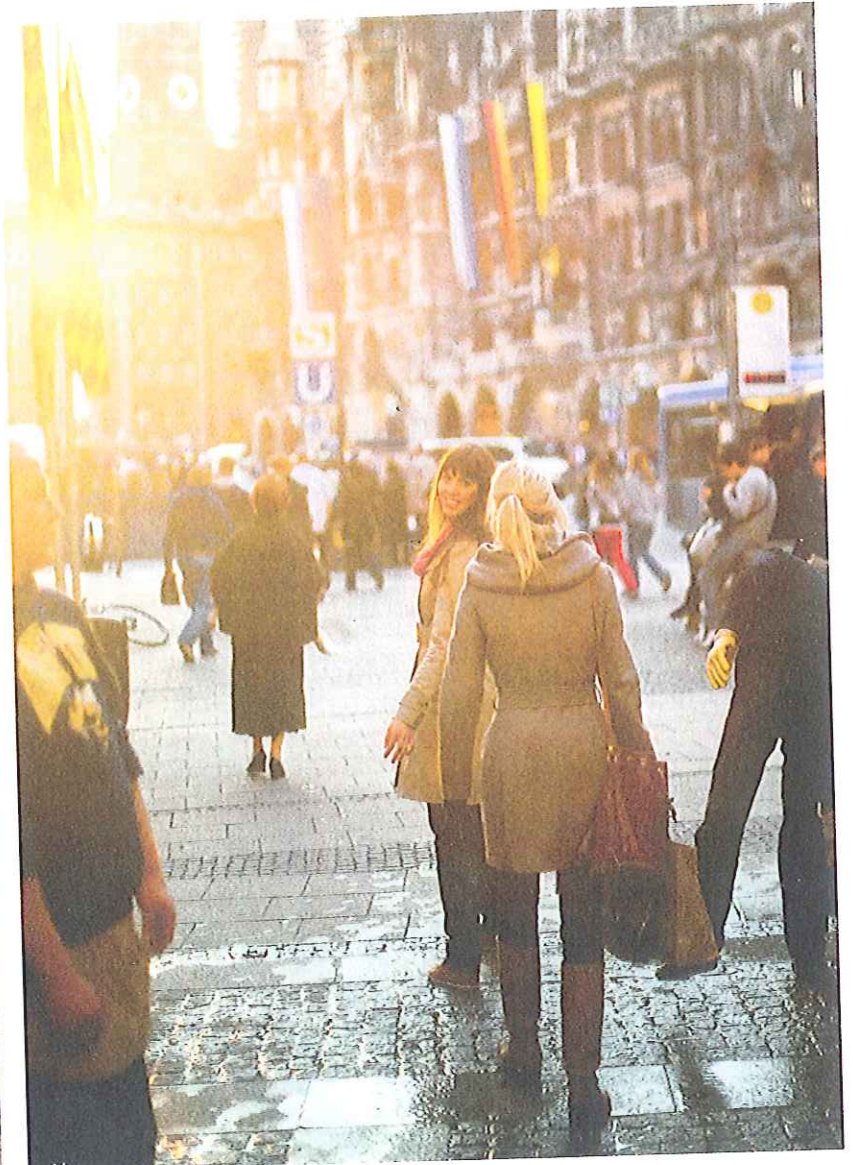


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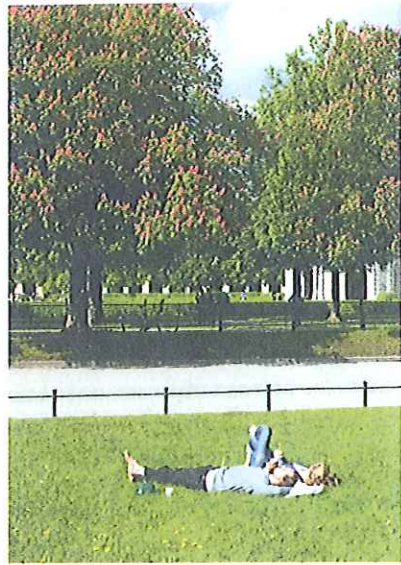
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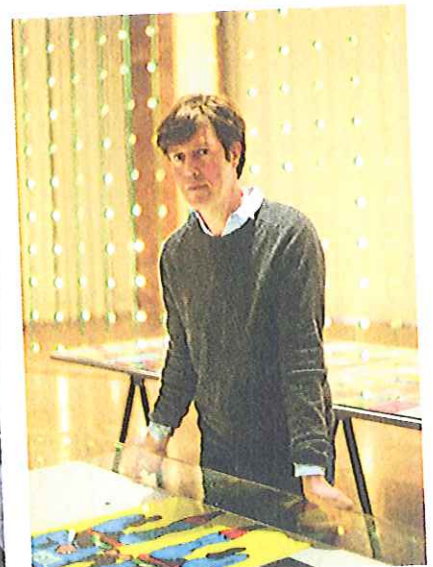
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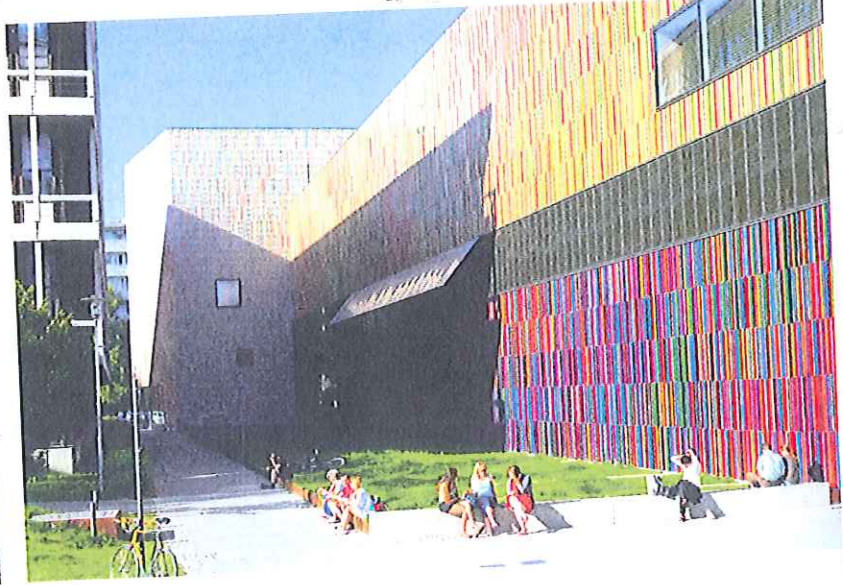
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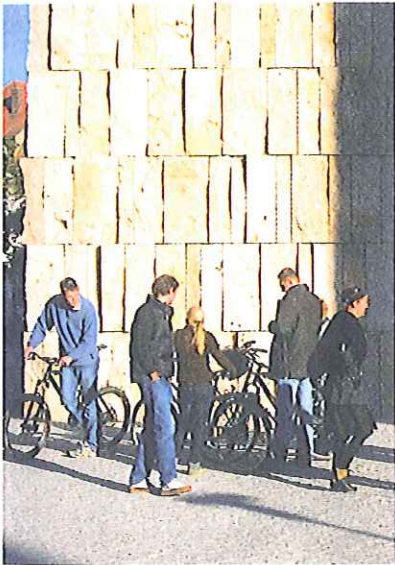
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- 07 Klaus Schrenk, director of the Pinakothek der Moderne museum
- 08 A quick hello on Leopoldstrasse
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- 17 Thumbs up for Munich, Maximilianstrasse
- 18 Outside the Mandarin Oriental
- 19 Bar Centrale café

talk about the right solutions for the city's needs," he says. "Munich aims at cutting its CO2 emissions in half by 2030 and our study indicates that even a reduction of 90 per cent would be possible by mid-century, without losing any quality of life. With growth of our own green portfolio we managed to increase our revenue 11 per cent year-on-year, to €23bn in 2009."

Yet technology and green thinking remain balanced by the arts and the scene in this dynamic metropolis is thriving. "Chris Dercon, director of art museum Haus der Kunst, and Frank Baumbauer, director of theatre Munich Kammerspiele, are the two people responsible for the turning point in the last three or four years," says Marc Gegenfurtner, of Munich's Department Of Arts & Culture. "They have taken arts to an international level, while simultaneously opening them up to the whole of society here."

As if to illustrate the democratisation of the scene, Museum Brandhorst, the stunning new modern art centre, was celebrating its first birthday when we visited. "We had 350,000 visitors in one year," says Professor Klaus Schrenk, its director. "A truly staggering figure." In a

- 20 BMW Welt, by Coop Himmelb(l)au architects, with the BMW museum and towers in the background
- 21 Graphic designer Thomas Mayfried at his exhibition at the Haus der Kunst museum
- 22 Shoppers outside the Four Seasons hotel in Maximilianstrasse
- 23 Sammlung Brandhorst, Munich's newest museum, by Sauerbruch Hutton
- 24 Celebrations in Marienplatz as FC Bayern Munich win the league title
- 25 Glyptothek Museum at Königsplatz
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- 27 Sunday brunch at Brenner restaurant
- 28 Cycling in the Glockenbach quarter
- 29 Michael Kerkloh, CEO of Munich Airport, and friend
- 30 Lemar Café at Pestalozzistrasse
- 31 A passenger on Maximilianstrasse

move typical of Munich's attitude towards its citizens, it celebrated not with a VIP cocktail party in the evening but by opening its doors all day for free.

The next night at the Haus der Kunst MONOCLE attended the launch of a new exhibition by Thomas Mayfried, the acclaimed German graphic designer. "I came to Munich to study photography," Mayfried tells us. "There is so much energy, and the climate is so easy, I fell in love with it."

But perhaps the single biggest factor that illustrates Munich's booming quality of life is this: while the rest of Germany is faced with a shrinking population, leading to media scare stories about "dead cities", it is the only centre to report an upswing in birth rate. "People are at it like rabbits," says Dominik Wichmann. "The city expects to grow its population by 7 per cent over the next five years. And you only get children when people feel safe; when you want to be embedded in a place."

To return to Dr Michael Kerkloh's earlier point, just like Frankfurt in the 1970s many Munich inhabitants also say the airport is their favourite place. But not because they can't wait to leave. "No," says Kerkloh. "Here they can't wait to come back." — (M)

Munich metrics

Population: 1,364,194.

Flights: intercontinental, 55; European, 160.

Crime: murders: 8; domestic break-ins, 954 (down from 1,152 last year).

State education: with 45,539 students, Munich's LMU is not just Germany's biggest university, it is also considered one of its best. When the federal excellence initiative was started, which aims to promote top-level research, LMU was among the few universities chosen.

Medical care: two of Germany's largest university hospitals are in Munich.

Sunshine: annual average, 1,907 hours.

Temperatures: average low in December: 1.1°C; average high in July, 18.8°C.

Tolerance: Munich has an intercultural integration programme to help migrants settle in the community.

Drinking and shopping: shops still have to close by 20.00. But at least bars can now stay open till 05.00.

Public transport: Munich decided to invest heavily in biking infrastructure. The overall share of traffic by bike is hoped to rise to at least 17 per cent by 2015.

Media: Munich is one of Germany's most important media cities, home to *Focus* magazine, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and several large TV production firms.

Culture: cinema screens, 84. In 2010, work on a museum about Munich in the Third Reich and the role the city played for the Nazi movement is finally scheduled to begin.

Architecture: in recent years Munich has seen some spectacular modern architecture go up, especially in the form of new museums such as the Pinakothek der Moderne and the Museum Brandhorst.

Access to nature: Munich is surrounded by spectacular, accessible nature. Going from the city centre to Starnberger See just takes 30 minutes by commuter train (S-Bahn) for example.

Emergency Services: average ambulance response time: 1.5 minutes (time from emergency call to the start of the ambulance) in 96 per cent of the cases.

Environmental issues: Munich plans to halve the CO2-emissions per person by 2030.

How easy is it to start a business?:

The number of businesses started rose 6.4 per cent in Munich last year to 18,644.

Chain test: Zara: 5, Starbucks: 10.

Key upcoming developments: Munich is hoping to host the 2018 Winter Olympics.



Visit monocle.com to see our film about Munich's winning ways and also our interactive map of the Top 25 cities.



02 COPENHAGEN

2009 ranking: 02 | 2008 ranking: 01

The city sets the standard for low-emission urban living

Copenhagen's community-focused architecture coupled with the Danes' civic commitment to looking after one another and their unyielding bicycle-obsession are all reasons why this city always ranks so high. It doesn't hurt that the city is also home to 13 Michelin-starred restaurants, including Noma.

After playing host to climate change conference COP15 this year, Copenhageners are still studiously at work transforming their city into the people's metropolis with the aim of becoming the eco-capital of the world. This ambitious project will make Copenhagen even greener. Several eco-friendly and human-scale redevelopments at Nordhavn and the former Carlsberg brewery site are also under way. — LL

Population: 528, 208.

International flights: 119 destinations, of which 19 are intercontinental.

Crime: murders, 13; domestic break-ins 4,496.

Sunshine: annual average, 1,872 hours.

Medical care: free. The state even covers private care if public system is overloaded.

Tolerance: tough immigration laws, though the city invests €200,000 annually in anti-discrimination efforts.

Public transport: Copenhagen has 350km of bike paths and 55 per cent of inhabitants cycle to work.

Architecture: only occasionally do daring projects such as Jean Nouvel's new Copenhagen Concert Hall get built.

Green space: 43.2 sq m per resident.

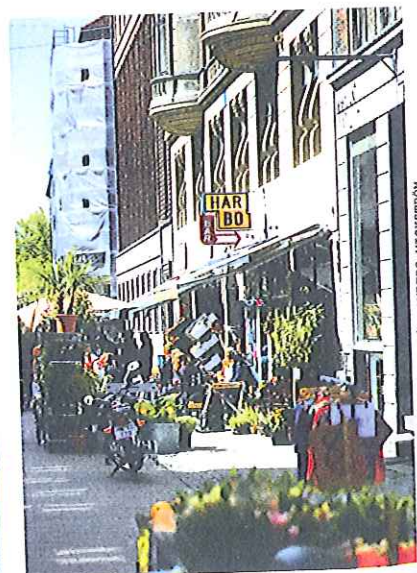
Emergency services: average police response time, 3 to 4 minutes; ambulance, 5 minutes 45 seconds.

How easy is it to start a business? It's free of charge, takes five minutes to register and then another 10 days to become active.

Chain test: Zara, 2; Starbucks, 2.

Key upcoming developments: new bridges, including one by Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson, should open in the central harbour area in 2012.

Monocle fix: clean up the Tivoli Gardens, they're becoming a bit seedy; the city also needs a couple of new, up-scale hotels.



PHOTOGRAPHERS: JAN SØNDERGAARD, ANDERS WICKSTRØM

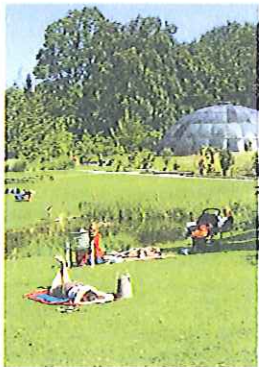
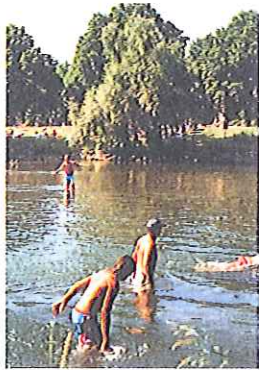


03 ZÜRICH

2009 ranking: 01 | 2008 ranking: 04

A new entrepreneurial spirit is attracting fresh ideas to the city

The financial turmoil of the past couple of years has done Zürich good. UBS and Credit Suisse may not agree, but more and more young people are setting up their own businesses in Switzerland's main city. This new entrepreneurial spirit, coupled with top-ranking educational facilities and the city's proximity to the Alps, is attracting professionals from all over the world. Last year, Germans, British and Chinese topped the list of foreigners moving to Zürich and their various new needs are beginning to influence Swiss urban life. Finally, for instance, you can go shopping (in some places) on a Sunday evening. Zürich also continues to rank so high because of its superlative transport system: from airport to tram you can feel the investment. — BS



- Population:** 382,906.
- International flights:** 57 intercontinental.
- Crime:** murders, 18; domestic break-ins, 4,323.
- Temperatures:** average high in July, 23C; average low in January, -2.8C.
- Medical care:** good, but according to the OECD it is the second most expensive system in the world. In 2009 costs for basic insurance was raised by 10 per cent.
- Tolerance:** in a 2009 survey, 80 per cent of citizens rated Zürich's cultural mix as a positive aspect of city life.
- Culture:** cinemas, 18; screens, 58.
- Architecture:** a network of new residential areas in development near the airport, targeting a young, more urban clientele.
- Green space:** 116 sq m per resident.
- How easy is it to start a business?** As a Swiss citizen it takes two days; for an EU citizen it takes up to 14 days; and for non-EU citizens it takes up to four weeks.
- Outdoor seating:** 4,278 benches in centre.
- Key upcoming developments:** Prime Tower, a 36-floor office block next to Hardbrücke train station; there's also a long-term plan to redevelop three marinas in the centre.
- Monocle fix:** work on softening up locals' stiff views towards outsiders; clear up the traffic around the main station; offer cheaper and cleaner taxis.



PHOTOGRAPHERS: FLURINA ROTHENBERGER, ROBERTO CECCARELLI, SALLY MONTANA, SARAH GRAY



04 TOKYO

2009 ranking: 03 | 2008 ranking: 03

Despite the vast number of residents, Tokyo is clean, punctual and polite. Japan's capital is like no other major metropolis. The city has long been famous for being a vast architectural melting pot with a skyline that changes with alarming frequency, yet steps are now being taken to dispel its reputation as a city of concrete. More than 400 additional hectares of greenery will be created by 2013, supplemented by 200,000 new roadside trees. The city is also planning to start burying the numerous overhead service cables.

Residents are braced for an electric travel boom, too: it's estimated that 15,000 electric or hybrid cars will hit the streets by 2013, with chargers as common as "konbini" stores. And soon you will no longer have to trek to Narita to leave the country – Haneda's long-awaited international expansion is set for October. — DM

Population: 8.8 million; greater metropolitan area, 13 million.

International flights: 89 destinations, of which 43 are intercontinental (the new terminal at Haneda will have connections to a predicted 12 countries).

Crime: murders, 131; domestic break-ins, 7,815 (in the greater metropolis, 2008).

Sunshine: 1,783.3 hours in 2009.

Tolerance: same-sex marriages are not legal anywhere in Japan.

Public transport: operates on schedule, and is trusted by Tokyo residents.

Media: almost 180 foreign media organisations have offices in Japan (the majority in Tokyo), down from 200 last year.

Culture: 85 cinemas, 270 screens.

Emergency services: average police response time, 5 minutes 32 seconds; ambulance, 6 minutes 5 seconds.

Outdoor seating: since 2003, more than 780 benches have been donated to municipal areas as part of a memory bench scheme.

Chain test: Zara, 17; Starbucks, 217.

Key upcoming developments: the new broadcasting tower, Tokyo Sky Tree, will be completed in spring 2012. Already it is Japan's tallest structure.

Monocle fixes: trees, trees, and more trees; more non-smoking areas in local restaurants and bars; Tokyo should make the most of its roof-tops.



05 HELSINKI

2009 ranking: 05 | 2008 ranking: 05

One sunny day in Helsinki almost makes up for all those dark months

The city is small enough to walk or cycle around easily and with Alvar Aalto-designed office buildings on the harbour and an Eliel Saarinen train station, the urban scenery is striking. It's connected too: Helsinki is just a seven-hour flight to Asia, eight hours to New York, and a 3.5 hour train ride to St Petersburg when the high-speed service begins this winter.

While the Nordic welfare system ensures high quality of life, free education for everyone and even free wi-fi, the average apartment is small. Mayor Jussi Pajunen is planning the development of eight new neighbourhoods along the shore which will be linked to the city by a new metro line. Challenges ahead are affordable housing, employment for immigrants and a bike scheme that works. — AMG

Population: 583,350.

International flights: 10 intercontinental.

Crime: murders, 6; domestic break-ins, 684.

Sunshine: 1,745 hours in 2009.

State education: the Finnish education system continues to top the international league tables. Education is free all the way through to university.

Public transport: although the city has 1,100km of cycle paths, only 7 per cent of people use bikes as a regular mode of transport – 30 per cent drive.

Tolerance: Helsinki demands a 40 per cent quota of women in all public offices. The city council is female-dominated with 49 women and 36 men.

Environmental issues: the city aims to generate 20 per cent of its energy from renewable sources by 2020.

Emergency services: average police response time, 8 minutes 4 seconds; ambulance, 6-7 minutes.

Culture: the new Helsinki Music Centre opens next year and a new library is planned for 2017.

Green space: 108 sq m per person.

Chain test: Zara, 3; Starbucks, 0.

Key upcoming developments: a new rail link to Vantaa airport is under way.

Monocle fixes: more daring architecture; better cycle paths and longer shop opening hours.

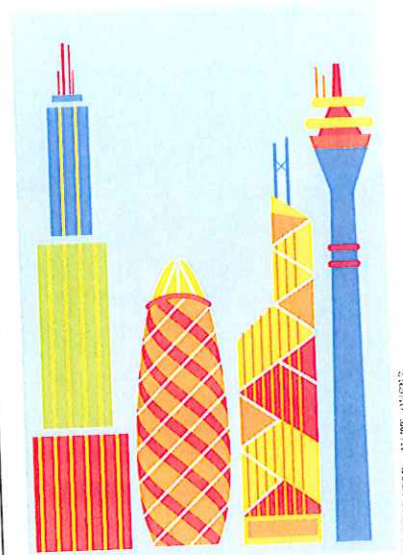


ILLUSTRATION: MATT OUSLEY

Where's my hometown?

As you run your fingers across the MONOCLE list of top 25 cities, have you wondered why your hometown didn't make the cut? Each year we send researchers to urban centres that we've heard good things about, or that have been included in previous surveys, but in the end, do they really merit being named as one of the top 25 places to live in the world?

Sometimes it's crime that lets a place down. This year we headed to Chicago, for example, but when you see its murder rate – in 2009, 453 people were killed out of a population of 2.85 million (Tokyo with 13 million people had 179 murders) – it's hard to make it a winner.

Other times cities may be safe but lack other key ingredients. Take Düsseldorf where there were just two murders but which is missing the softer aspects that make a city work. Even a few more places open on a Sunday just to buy groceries would help.

We also put Hong Kong to the test. Here's a city we like so much we are opening a bureau there, but on our metrics test it misses out. Traffic congestion, air quality, housing and conservation all need attention.

In the end the cities that make the cut are not just OK, but places that are benchmarks for urban renaissance and rigorous reinvention in everything from environmental policy to transport. — (M)



06

STOCKHOLM

2009 ranking: 06 | 2008 ranking: 07

Sweden's capital is a benchmark for eco-city living. But is that enough? Stockholmers breathe some of Europe's cleanest air, swim in the clear waters of the city centre in summer, cross-country ski in its vast forests in winter and go to work on green buses – 75 per cent of the public transport fleet runs on renewable energy. They can even show off their eco-friendly credentials returning home from a night on the town – 40 per cent of taxis run on electric or hybrid fuel.

While Stockholm's impeccable cleanliness is to be applauded, its focus on being so neat has turned the city into a bit of a drab place in need of a spruce-up. Thankfully, the first signs of one are on the horizon with the redevelopment of the Slussen docks and new residential projects at Norra Bantorget where some design innovation is finally shining. — LL

Population: 829,417.

International flights: 176 destinations, of which 23 are intercontinental.

Crime: "reported acts of deadly violence", 30; domestic break-ins, 2,499.

Sunshine: annual average, 1,881 hours.

Drinking and shopping: some clubs now stay open as late as 07.00, most close at 03.00. Bars stay open until 01.00 or 02.00.

Medical care: there are five hospitals and the world-leading Karolinska medical university is opening its third hospital in 2015.

Public transport: 93 per cent walk, cycle or take public transport to work.

Green space: 87.7 sq m per resident.

Emergency services: average police response time, 3 minutes 9 seconds; ambulance, 12 minutes.

Culture: a large new photography museum, Fotografiska, opened this spring.

Environmental issues: more than 60 per cent of the city's electricity consumption comes from renewable sources. The city plans to be fossil-fuel free by 2050.

Outdoor seating: 10,000 benches, one every 25m in busy areas.

Chain test: Zara, 3; Starbucks, 1.

Key upcoming developments: construction of the energy-efficient Stockholm Royal Seaport mixed-use development starts this year.

Monocle fix: more rental flats in the centre.



07

PARIS

2009 ranking: 08 | 2008 ranking: 10

Finally, Paris addresses its troubled suburbs and edges up our rankings Postcard-perfect streets, charming cafés, independent boutiques and iconic cultural attractions continue to make Paris hard to beat. These days, though, the city is dusting off its slightly stuffy image, starting with its softer elements. Take the restaurant scene where, after years of resting on its culinary laurels and letting London and New York lead the way, the return of young French chefs from overseas has hailed a new chapter in French cuisine.

Hot on the heels of President Nicolas Sarkozy's scheme for a "greater Paris" – a project to reconnect the city with its disenfranchised suburbs – are plans for the CDG Express, a 20-minute high-speed train linking the airport and Gare de l'Est. Paris is challenging its "museum-city" stereotype yet keeping its soul intact. — AQ

Population: 2.2 million; greater metropolitan area, 12 million.

International flights: 315 intercontinental destinations.

Education: École normale supérieure is the only Parisian institution to make the *Times Higher Education* top-100 rankings.

Medical care: France's healthcare system is free and ranked the best in the world by the WHO. Paris is home to some of its best hospitals but proposed restructuring of the city's public hospitals could cost 4,000 jobs by 2012.

Public transport: efficient and cheap metro system soon to be complemented by a peripheral tram system.

Architecture: 40,000 new housing units planned for 2014.

Culture: 376 cinema screens, including 150 at independent cinemas.

Access to nature: the Bois de Vincennes and Bois de Boulogne are easily accessible by metro.

Chain test: Zara, 20 (up from six last year); Starbucks, 34.

Key upcoming developments: A high-speed, 130km metro line linking Paris's centre with some of its more remote suburbs is due for completion by 2023.

Monocle fixes: longer and flexible opening hours; more Vélib' parking spaces; air conditioning on the metro.



08

VIENNA

2009 ranking: 07 | 2008 ranking: 06

It's cultured, clean, well manicured and well connected

Is it any surprise that we still love Vienna so much? This year sees an election in which the long-ruling Social Democrats, the SPÖ, are facing a bitter challenge by conservatives eager to chip away at their majority. In response, the SPÖ have ramped up quality-of-life initiatives, continuing their shoreline redevelopment of the Danube and sponsoring a number of public cultural events.

Top-ranking healthcare, a reliable public transport network and acres of green space continue to make the Austrian capital one of the world's most liveable cities (and it's our choice for Culture City, see page 93). Yet we can't help but think that the city would do well to become more inclusive of its growing immigrant populations. — ATZ

Population: 1.7 million.

International flights: 23 intercontinental and 118 short-haul destinations a week.

Crime: murders, 68 (up from 34 last year); domestic break-ins, 9,672.

Temperatures: average low in January, 0.1C; average high in July, 20.2C.

Drinking and shopping: strict labour laws mean the shops close early and always on a Sunday.

Tolerance: same-sex registered partnerships were introduced earlier this year: anti-discrimination laws provide a legal backbone for a tolerant society, yet far-right parties still find themselves platforms.

Architecture: the beloved haunt of night owls and Sunday brunchers, the Naschmarkt will get a €15m upgrade in the next five years.

Culture: today, there are more than 100 museums, 70 theatres and four opera houses, funded annually by the government to the tune of €311m.

Environmental issues: this summer, Vienna will become one of the first cities to have a hybrid bus which boasts fuel savings of between 25 and 30 per cent.

Key upcoming developments: due by 2015, the new train station in south-east Vienna has been beset by cost overruns.

Monocle fixes: a more inclusive attitude towards immigrants; better shopping hours.



09 MELBOURNE

2009 ranking: 09 | 2008 ranking: 09

It lacks the good looks of Sydney, but Melbourne means business

Avoiding an argument between rivals Melbourne and Sydney was how Australia got its capital city, Canberra, in 1901. The stand-off continues to this day – albeit on friendlier terms – yet Melbourne is emerging from the shadow of its New South Wales adversary. It's like the kid brother finally growing up: long renowned for its festivals, food and love of Aussie rules football, Melbourne can now back up its fun-loving cultural image with serious figures. The state's average economic growth is 3.3 per cent (it is 1.7 per cent in New South Wales) and job growth is 2.1 per cent per annum (1.4 per cent in NSW).

But there are growing pains: increased investment means more people, who have to be housed and transported around a city that suffers from sprawl. — DP

Population: 3.9 million.

International flights: 22 intercontinental destinations.

Crime: murders, 27; domestic break-ins, 4,867 (down for two consecutive years).

Temperatures: average low in July, 5.3C; average high in February, 26.5C.

Medical care: all Melbourne residents are eligible for free treatment in a public hospital as a public patient, and free or subsidised out-of-hospital treatment.

Tolerance: Indian students in Melbourne have been the victims of attacks and, in one case, murder, causing heightened tension in the city this year.

Culture: 12 cinemas, 56 screens.

Public transport: a year-long hybrid-electric bus trial recently ended, exploring cuts in costs and carbon emissions.

Emergency services: average ambulance response time, 10 minutes 25 seconds.

How easy is it to start a business? It can take as few as two days to register a new business.

Chain test: Zara, 0; Starbucks, 5.

Key upcoming developments: a AU\$7.2m (€5m) rescue package for drought-ravaged trees as part of a AU\$26.4m investment in parks and gardens (see page 70).

Monocle fix: cut the 40,000-strong waiting list for public housing by ramping up the number of homes being built.



10 MADRID

2009 ranking: 12 | 2008 ranking: 13

The country faces a tricky financial future, but the capital is looking good

Spain's parliament may be fumbling for the appropriate parachute as it stares into the stormy void of potential financial freefall but elsewhere in the capital things are oddly bright and breezy. There is a cheery optimism in many residents' demeanour – perhaps because of the continued progress they see the city making. Take the Madrid Río Project, 8 sq km of reclaimed river parkland and urban beach, or a project for 16,000 new homes and green space around the station Operación Chamartín that has broken ground.

A rise in visitor numbers is encouraging too. And while shoppers may be staying *en casa*, bar owners and restaurateurs are profiting from Madrileños' irrepresible spirit. But what will happen when stimulus money runs dry? — ST

Population: 3.3 million; greater metropolitan area, 6.4 million.

International flights: 52 intercontinental.

Crime: 36 murders in 2009.

Temperatures: average low in January, 5C; average high in July, 24C.

Drinking and shopping: bars are open around the clock but you'll be hard-pushed to find an off licence open after 22.00.

Tolerance: Madrid benefits from Spain having the most advanced laws for gender equality, requiring parity in official positions.

Public transport: a high-speed train connection is under construction from Atocha to the airport; a new urban bike system, MyBici, is planned for spring 2011.

Green space: 17.75 sq m per resident.

Architecture: a commitment to social housing; 2,191 houses were built in 2008, 3,344 more are under construction.

Emergency services: Madrid's 112 emergency number was named the best in Europe by the European Emergency Number Association.

Key upcoming developments: with the M-30 ringroad going underground, 820 hectares of land will be converted into parkland, with an urban beach and cafés.

Monocle fix: encourage an oriental invasion, Barajas needs more intercontinental flights, particularly to Asia.



11 BERLIN

2009 ranking: 10 | 2008 ranking: 14

Berlin is fun but does it have the resources to polish its rough edges?

Vacant plots in the east of the city are being covered with new housing and the urban infrastructure is being overhauled slowly (although it seems the city has no money to fill all of the potholes from the hard winter). The downside: just when you thought roadworks were decreasing, all of Mitte is sledgehammered again. Alexanderplatz is getting its much needed underground parking but this is turning the area into one giant construction site, as is the area around Hackescher Markt.

Yet the city is vibrant and deserves its reputation as a hothouse for new business. It's a great place to be young. Perhaps that's why the arrival of private members club Soho House has been a talking point. Although everyone might be happier to toast some new bike lanes. — MA

Population: 3.4 million.

International flights: 148 destinations, of which 21 are long-haul.

Crime: murders, 27; domestic break-ins, 9,028 (the second year on the up).

Sunshine: annual average, 1,717 hours.

State education: an educated workforce, 34.4 per cent of Berliners have a university degree or equivalent.

Media: Berlin is stealing Hamburg's thunder as the German media capital. Tabloid *Bild* relocated here and soon Germany's biggest news agency DPA will follow.

Culture: 284 cinema screens; more than 400 galleries.

Green space: 29.4 sq m per person.

How easy is it to start a business? Berlin is Germany's most entrepreneurial city: 117 new businesses were started per 10,000 inhabitants in 2009.

Chain test: Zara, 6; Starbucks, 20.

Key upcoming developments: Basic construction on Berlin's new airport is expected to finish this year and the airport is scheduled to start operating in 2011; the reconstruction of the old city palace is scheduled to begin this year.

Monocle fixes: services were overwhelmed this winter and most of Berlin's pavements were unusable for weeks. This has got to change. More bicycle lanes in east Berlin are also key.



12 SYDNEY

2009 ranking: 13 | 2008 ranking: 11

There's been fresh investment in the arts and a new cycle network

This is a city that ebbs and flows like the Tasman Sea: the understated elegance of Customs House is dwarfed by indistinguishable concrete hotels; the famous and reliable Manly Ferry delivers commuters onto a creaking, erratic rail system.

While the average Sydneysider will happily complain about the inadequacies of the city, that complaint will be delivered in between sips of coffee at a beachside café. This is a city that ushers people outdoors: the sun shines on surfers at Bondi, couples strolling through the Botanical Gardens and al fresco diners in the restaurants of Surry Hills and Paddington.

Yet, despite the sunny lifestyle, there are difficult challenges to be faced – transport infrastructure and urban redevelopment chief among them. — DP

Population: 4.4 million.

International flights: 46 destinations, of which 34 are intercontinental.

Crime: murders, 50 (up from last year's 41); domestic break-ins, 24,475.

Sunshine: annual average, 2,227 hours.

Temperatures: average low in July, 8c; average high in January, 25.9c.

Public transport: the City Council recently announced a AU\$76m (£52m) investment in a 200km inner-city cycle network.

Media: all five national TV networks – ABC, SBS, Seven, Nine and Ten – are based here.

Culture: Art Month Sydney ran for the first time this year, showcasing more than 70 of the city's leading commercial galleries and public art museums.

Green space: there are 378 hectares of open space within the City of Sydney, equating to roughly 21.4 sq m per resident.

Outdoor seating: there are more than 1,000 benches in Sydney.

Chain test: Zara, 0; Starbucks, 9.

Key upcoming developments: plans are in place for the largest urban renewal project in Australia: 278 hectares of disused industrial land between the city and the airport will become Sydney's Green Square and house 33,000 people by 2021.

Monocle fix: pedestrianise more of the CBD, consent to plans to make part of traffic-heavy George Street a no-car zone.



13 HONOLULU

2009 ranking: 11 | 2008 ranking: 12

A cosy city that's perfectly poised between Asia and the Americas

Obama's hometown is having a tropical renaissance. Tourism is on the rise and new flights to Japan starting this autumn will mean more travellers from the East who will further boost the already robust retail economy. Entrepreneurs from the US, South Korea and Europe are also here starting internet companies, opening restaurants and shooting films.

The influx of creative outsiders living and working here is bringing new life to the galleries and bars of Chinatown. And areas such as Palolo and Kaimuki, with their 1960s bungalows, are ripe for renovation. Once the urban rail network is up and running (construction starts soon), quality of life will improve further. It would be good to get more people out of their cars and on their bikes. — AMG

Population: 374,676 in the city centre.

International flights: 19 intercontinental.

Crime: murders, 14; domestic break-ins, 4,353.

Sunshine: annual average, 3,162 hours.

Drinking and shopping: most restaurants and bars close at 02.00; some bars hold special licences to stay open until 04.00.

Public transport: despite a perfect climate, only 1 per cent of people commute by bike.

Architecture: Honolulu encourages innovation through flexible zoning regulations.

Green space: 710.96 sq m per person.

Access to nature: from leaving the city centre, you can be in a rainforest in 20 minutes.

Environmental issues: 33 per cent of rubbish is recycled, expected to increase as a kerbside recycling programme is expanded to 40,000 homes on the island.

How easy is it to start a business? Varies based on work load, but average time: 7-10 working days; rush is two to three days.

Chain test: Zara, 0; Starbucks, 34.

Key upcoming developments: construction of rail line that will connect downtown Honolulu with the airport is scheduled to begin this year. Completion date: 2019.

Monocle fix: become more sustainable: more than three quarters of food supplies in Hawaii are shipped in.



14 FUKUOKA

2009 ranking: 16 | 2008 ranking: 17

Japan's eighth largest city punches above its weight in every way

On the northern tip of far-flung Kyushu, Fukuoka has a subtropical climate and room to breathe. This year, the city will funnel nearly €9m of funds into creating green spaces and revamping its parks, especially the area around Port of Hakata. Discussions are also under way as to whether an additional runway should be built at Fukuoka Airport, Japan's fourth busiest. Greener ways of getting around are in the pipeline too.

The city is considering introducing car-sharing and is set to experiment with renting out its official Mitsubishi i-MiEV electric cars for free to registered members of the public to raise awareness of the need to reduce CO2 emissions. The cost of living is attractive too: rents are at least a third cheaper than Tokyo. — SH

Population: 1.5 million; greater metropolitan area, 2.4 million.

International flights: 16 cities, only one intercontinental. Fukuoka city is the third largest gateway to Japan for Asia when adding the numbers going through Fukuoka Airport and the Port of Hakata.

Crime: murders, 16; domestic break-ins, 1,351 (both down on last year).

Sunshine: 1,807 hours in 2009.

Temperatures: average high in August, 31.6c; average low in January, 3.2c.

Public transport: besides redevelopment of the port, Fukuoka will also benefit from the new Shinkansen extension.

Environmental issues: the city subsidises citizens who install solar energy systems in their homes to the tune of about €900 – 750 citizens did this in 2009.

Emergency services: average police response time, 6 minutes 5 seconds; ambulance, 6 minutes 16 seconds.

Culture: 9 cinemas, 43 screens.

Green space: 8.81 sq m per person.

Chain test: Zara, 2; Starbucks, 20.

Key upcoming developments: Kyushu University continues to be relocated, moving to the 500,000 sq m Ito Campus.

Monocle fixes: beef up the art scene with some cutting-edge galleries, and better hotels are needed.



15 GENEVA

2009 ranking: 24 | 2008 ranking: 23

Small-town living in a city with a firm eye on the future

Geneva remains impervious to the gargantuan agencies based here (see page 53) and continues to reap the benefits of small-town living. With 35 tennis clubs, sport is a strong point, and the city punches above its weight for culture and the arts: there are 22 theatres, more than 60 bijoux galleries and a surprisingly radical art scene that prevents the city from turning into a Brussels-esque monoculture.

Geneva's Calvinist roots are apparent – Sunday trading hours are a bore – and the city needs to shake up its rigid planning laws and build some new homes for its burgeoning international community. With an eye on the future, the municipality has already started work on a hi-tech subway network and has several promising eco-developments in the works. — SGR

Population: 189,313 city; 457,628 Canton of Geneva.

International flights: 106 international, 27 intercontinental.

Crime: murders, 8; domestic break-ins, 4,435 (Canton of Geneva).

Sunshine: annual average, 2,037 hours.

Medical care: of a high standard, but expensive. Luckily for the expat community, EU nationals are entitled to free medical treatment under the bilateral Reciprocal Health Agreement.

Public transport: from May to October, city bicycles can be borrowed outside the main train station free of charge.

Culture: 26 cinemas; 52 screens. The city devotes the lion's share of its budget to culture – more than 20 per cent.

Green space: 18.5 sq m per person.

Environmental issues: 43 per cent of refuse is recycled.

How easy is it to start a business? It takes roughly two weeks.

Chain test: Zara, 3; Starbucks, 5.

Key upcoming developments: a plan to transform a 568 acre industrial zone in the city, creating at least 2,500 housing units.

Monocle fixes: most newsstands carry international press, yet there's no specialised local affairs magazine; incredibly low vacancy rates make apartment-shopping tricky; clean up the dodgy area around the station.



16 VANCOUVER

2009 ranking: 14 | 2008 ranking: 08

The city needs to make the most of its Olympic dividend

The Winter Olympics have come and gone, much to the relief of many Vancouverites who tended to view the whole affair as an imposition. Indeed, now Vancouver is free to resume its ordinary excellence.

In the centre, luxury flats and first-class restaurants are abundant, there are also plenty of more relaxed neighbourhoods to settle into. Commercial Drive is packed with easy-breezy cafés and shops surrounded by residential streets, while beach-fringed Kitsilano is a mecca for the young and switched-on. Vancouver's proximity to Asia (coupled with Canada's enlightened migration policies) have defined the city as an international hub: one in three residents speaks a language other than English, while the port is one of North America's busiest. — ZD

Population: 578,041; greater metropolitan area, 2.3 million.

International flights: 66 international destinations, including 34 intercontinental.

Crime: murders, 17; domestic break-ins, 2,869.

Temperatures: average low in January, 0.5C; average high in August, 21.9C.

Tolerance: British Columbia legalised gay marriage in 2003, well before the rest of Canada.

Culture: as North America's third-largest filmmaking centre, Vancouver offers tax incentives to production companies and other industry supports. Cinema screens, 59.

Emergency services: average police response time, 8 minutes 53 seconds; ambulance, 8 minutes 54 seconds.

Green space: 22.5 sq m per resident.

Environmental issues: all new-built family homes are required to provide dedicated charging stations for electric vehicles.

Chain test: Zara, 1; Starbucks, 146.

Key upcoming developments: the former Olympic athletes' village is being transformed into an instant neighbourhood; a spring showcase of new flats attracted thousands.

Monocle fixes: post-Olympic clean-up, learn to preserve some uniqueness, charm and grit. More rail services to suburbs.



17 BARCELONA

2009 ranking: 15 | 2008 ranking: 15

Intercontinental connectivity and near faultless urban planning

Many have considered spending a year or two in southern Europe's most liberal city: with its slower-than-capital pace and year-round al-fresco activity (almost). But two sticking points prevent the city from attaining top 10 status and claiming back the Spanish quality of life crown from rival Madrid.

Catalonia's capital is one of Europe's most beautiful cities but the Catalans' dour attitude is far from fetching. Cheer up, you're not French. Also, we're bored of the city being Europe's premier booze break destination. It might be profitable but it's time to knock it on the head.

Unbeatable architecture, ideal climate, excellent services and attractive residents. Fix up the city beaches and Barcelona could have it all. — ST

Population: 1.6 million; greater metropolitan area, 4.9 million.

International flights: 28 intercontinental and 98 international routes.

Crime: the city was unable to supply any recent or relevant crime rates.

Sunshine: 2,526 hours in 2009.

Temperatures: average low in January, 8.5C; average high in August, 24.5C.

State education: a well-developed higher education system, especially for business schools such as IESE and ESADE.

Public transport: the new international terminal at El Prat opened last year, including a direct train from town to get there.

Culture: 33 cinemas, 198 screens.

Green space: 18.1 sq m per resident.

Environmental issues: Biofuel buses are now standard.

How easy is it to start a business? Despite council initiatives for small businesses, it can still take between 15 days and one month to register a business.

Chain test: Zara, 9; Starbucks, 16.

Key upcoming developments: the La Sagrera station development that will serve as the new hub for the AVE capitals high-speed train service has broken ground.

Monocle fixes: Barcelona's city beaches, though undeniably convenient, could be better combed; and please sort out the perma-lowlife on the Ramblas.



18 OSLO

2009 ranking: 17 | 2008 not ranked

The city is making the most of its attributes and getting connected

Until now, Oslo has been the only Scandinavian capital not to make the most of its proximity to water. That's all changing, however, with the Fjord City redevelopment; the cargo ports are moving out of the city centre and new small-scale, eco-friendly neighbourhoods are moving in (as are the lobsters who have taken a liking to the cleaner waters here). In the coming years, Oslo's waterfront is set to change beyond recognition.

The city's urban redevelopment boom is matched by the city's recent cultural confidence; new museums and art spaces will open in the next few years. Oslo is finally showing off that it's just as much a world leader in good urban design and art patronage as it is in handing out those Nobel Peace Prizes. — LL

Population: 575,475; greater metropolitan area, 876,391.

International flights: 112 destinations, of which six are intercontinental (that is up from two last year).

Crime: murders, 7; domestic break-ins, 1,725.

Sunshine: annual average, 1,730 hours.

State education: Oslo is big on education with 27 private and state-run universities and colleges.

Medical care: there are 14 free state hospitals in the surrounding area, with a new A&E in the pipeline.

Public transport: nearly NKR2bn (€250m) was invested in public transport last year but punctuality remains sketchy.

Culture: 8 cinemas, 32 screens.

Green space: 30 sq m per person.

Environmental issues: fossil fuels are being replaced by renewable energy and greenhouse gas emissions from municipal buildings will be cut by 95 per cent by 2030.

How easy is it to start a business? Over 9,500 new businesses were set up in Oslo last year, a third run by women. It takes seven days to set up a new business.

Chain test: Zara, 2; Starbucks, 0.

Key upcoming developments: NKR2.2bn (€277m) has been set aside for residencies designed for the elderly.

Monocle fix: better integration of minorities.



19 MONTRÉAL

2009 ranking: 19 | 2008 ranking: 16

Trams could help get this car-loving city on track for the top

There's a lot Montréal gets right. Its designers and architects are at the forefront of new ideas about sustainable urban living. Some of the city's once dormant, rough edges have been converted into thriving hubs for hi-tech firms.

But Montréal has banked for too long on its existing assets and the low cost of living relative to other North American cities. Meanwhile, it's neglected an ageing, car-centric infrastructure and the need for more green space.

This is now starting to change with bold plans for a tramline, new parks, more pedestrian and bike routes, and sustainable housing projects. There's no shortage of creative thinking here – politicians just need to start listening and putting that intellectual capital to use. — CF

Population: 1.6 million; greater metropolitan area, 3.6 million.

International flights: 49 intercontinental and 72 international.

Crime: murders, 31; domestic break-ins, 10,838.

Sunshine: annual average, 2,029 hours.

Public transport: the city is debating plans to create a 12.5km tram/light-rail line servicing downtown. Bixi, Montréal's bike-share programme, the first of its kind in North America, has proved a huge success after only one year.

Green space: despite some generous urban parks, only 3.3 per cent of Montréal Island is green space.

Environmental issues: the city is rolling out a new recycling bin scheme that aims to raise waste diversion from 53 to 70 per cent within two years.

Culture: 45 cinemas, 251 screens.

How easy is it to start a business? The city needs to do more to promote entrepreneurship – it's falling behind Vancouver and Toronto in new business start-ups.

Chain test: Zara, 2; Starbucks, 38.

Key upcoming developments: a C\$167m (€129m) project to convert a downtown red-light district into a culture and entertainment hub, dubbed Quartier des Spectacles (QDS).

Monocle fix: greenlight the tramway.



ILLUSTRATION: ARTS CHICAGO

Last resort Russia

Should MONOCLE ever make a top 100 survey of the world's liveable cities, we would still be hard pushed to find a home for Russia. Even for those who have benefited from the economic boom in Moscow and St Petersburg, these are not easy places to be.

First off, accommodation: would you pay €300,000 for a one-bedroom flat in a monolithic tower block overlooking a power station? Eating and drinking: there are plenty of decent restaurants in Moscow but none is exceptional and most are expensive – €75 for a half-decent steak is common. Service: unanimously poor – smiles are unusual, competence even rarer. Corruption: rife, the police are untrustworthy and Byzantine bureaucracy thwarts small business owners.

Moscow is not only difficult to get around – the traffic is horrendous, cycling only for the insane – but also difficult to leave. Flights to Europe are overpriced. For internal flights, add old planes and questionable safety standards into the mix.

Yet despite this, nightlife is boisterous, and world-class galleries, opera and concerts are all available for pennies. A real crackdown on corruption and a citywide drive to raise service levels would go a long way to improve things. But don't expect to see a Russian city in the top 25 any time soon. That would take a total overhaul of urban planning, governance, and most importantly, mindset. — SW



20 AUCKLAND

2009 ranking: 20 | 2008 not ranked

A non-mover in the charts but a city on the cusp of healthy change

On the brink of becoming a "Super City", (see page 70), Auckland is at a fascinating crossroads. Traditionally, the city has been let down by a lack of investment and cohesion, and it remains to be seen if this is the correct fix. But the city with arguably the most beautiful harbour in the world is already beginning to find itself as it scrubs up for the Rugby World Cup next year.

New bars and restaurants have opened, often in the city's sprawling green suburbs, while local and central governments are pouring billions into upgrading cultural institutions and key infrastructure. Finally, this city's citizens are waking up to what they have – a creative, intimate city where you can live in the forest but be 15 minutes from a world-class art gallery. That's something to treasure. — SFG

Population: 444,100; greater metropolitan area, 1.3 million.

International flights: 32 destinations, of which 18 are intercontinental.

Crime: murders, 12; domestic break-ins, 17,345 (metropolitan area).

Temperatures: average high, 18.9C; average low, 11.3C.

Drinking and shopping: there are 1,700 licensed premises in Auckland City alone – 03.00 closing is common.

Public transport: one of the highest car-ownership rates in the world – an estimated one car for every 1.5 people. Use of rail and bus services is slowly improving.

Media: Auckland has the most radio stations (relative to population) in the world.

Culture: Auckland Art Gallery, located downtown, is currently being redeveloped at a cost of NZ\$121m (£66m) and will reopen next year.

Access to nature: away from the popular city beaches, there are vineyards, forests and wild beaches within a short drive.

How easy is it to start a business? Can be done online in 30 minutes.

Chain test: Zara, 0; Starbucks, 20.

Key upcoming developments: the Rugby World Cup next year.

Monocle fixes: a high-speed rail link to the airport.



21 SINGAPORE

2009 ranking: 18 | 2008 ranking: 22

The tiny island still packs a punch as the powerhouse of Southeast Asia

Singapore is an ultra-modern city built on conservative values. It is reassuringly free of social strife with low crime rates, which in turn helps attract a crowd of expats and foreign workers to the numerous institutions headquartered here.

Along with the construction of new metro lines and malls, two new multi-billion-dollar resorts (Marina Bay Sands and Resorts World Sentosa) have seen casinos added to the entertainment menu, a departure from the country's squeaky-clean image, perhaps not quite what we had in mind. Nevertheless with top medical facilities and a highly educated population it's clear to see how the living is easy. However, high stress levels, a relatively high cost of living, and a sense of self-censorship present room for improvement. — BSC

Population: 4.99 million.

International flights: 200 destinations, of which 96 are intercontinental.

Crime: 19 murders, down from 26 last year; house break-ins and related crimes, 1,026.

Sunshine: annual average, 2,154 hours.

Tolerance: homosexuality is illegal, though last year an event called Pink Dot was held, in support of LGBT rights.

Education: almost 100 per cent educated by the state. The system is criticised for being overly focused on rote learning methods, rather than creativity.

Public transport: there are plans to double the rail network by 2020, at an estimated cost of SGD\$20bn (£11.6bn).

Green space: roughly 71.2 sq m per person.

Emergency services: ambulances met the target of 11 minutes for 84 per cent of calls in 2009.

How easy is it to start a business? It can take as little as 15 minutes to start a business, registration can be filed online.

Chain test: Zara, 7; Starbucks, 65.

Key upcoming developments: as part of the plan to make Singapore an arts hub, a new art museum in the City Hall is slated for completion in 2013.

Monocle fix: better work-life balance and flexible work arrangements – Singaporeans tend to rank low in global indexes measuring happiness.



22 PORTLAND

2009: not ranked | 2008 ranking: 25

This Northwest mini-metropolis is still flying high

Reinvention is a theme in this leafy little city in the US Pacific Northwest. On a single street you can find a coffee roaster run by an ex-building contractor, a bespoke cycling bags company owned by a former singer-songwriter and a vibrant little bar housed in a retrofitted air-conditioning workshop.

Perhaps the diverse scenery fosters such flexible thinking: a snow-capped volcano looms to the east; there's a 5,000-acre forest within city limits; and ocean and desert can both be reached in a two-hour drive. In town, over 483km of cycle lanes link vibrant neighbourhoods packed with distinctive shops, restaurants, cafés and bars. Intimate scale, luxuriant setting and an enterprising, homegrown ethos set Portland apart among US cities. — ZD

Population: 582,000; greater metropolitan area, 2.2 million.

International flights: just two long-haul, to Amsterdam and Tokyo.

Crime: 19 murders; domestic break-ins 3,594.

Temperatures: average high in August, 27C; average low in January, 1C

Tolerance: Portland was the first major US city to elect an openly gay mayor. All couples may register as domestic partners.

Public transport: The city-centre streetcar network opens a new €120m branch this year. Cycle commuting has roughly quadrupled over the past decade.

Culture: Powell's Books claims to be the world's largest independent bookstore.

Green space: 70 sq m per resident.

Emergency services: average police response time, 5 minutes 13 seconds; ambulances, 7 minutes 12 seconds.

How easy is it to start a business?

The city offers grants for storefront refurbishments and other start-up costs.

Chain test: Zara, 0; Starbucks, 44.

Key upcoming developments: a controversial proposed expressway bridge into Washington State, a fifth line for the light-rail service, a €550m expansion of the cycling network over 20 years.

Monocle fix: get connected: revive Lufthansa's Frankfurt service for a start.



23 KYOTO

2009 ranking: 22 | 2008 ranking: 20

So far, changes have been cosmetic and the routine is getting tired

Kyoto was Japan's capital for more than 1,000 years and even today the city exudes an elegance and self-confidence that only a city with a millennial history can possess. Many Japanese regard them as stand-offish but Kyotoites are justly proud of the beauty, taste and refinement of their city.

The Kamo river cuts through the city centre, bringing cool breezes even at the height of the fierce Kyoto summer. The city is fringed with the most magnificent temples and shrines in Japan, has enviably verdant surroundings and is a centre of excellence in music, scholarship and religion. Kyoto has also embraced modernity and is a focus of Japanese innovation and technology – it is home to the headquarters of such stellar companies as Nintendo, Kyocera and OMRON. — DD



24 HAMBURG

2009 ranking: 23 | 2008 ranking: 21

Already clean and green, Hamburg is receiving a modern makeover

Quality of life for the average Hamburger has improved with two more areas of the city smartening up their acts. The major development of the harbour area – Hafencity – is finally producing its first habitable neighbourhoods and in its wake the shabby streets of nearby St Pauli have seen an upgrade. The Jungfernstieg promenade around the Alster has also received a major makeover, and the airport is finally accessible via S-Bahn.

Alongside being the only German city with two clubs in the national football league, Hamburg is green, clean, safe (although that break-in rate is high) and prosperous. Though it risks losing some of its media scene to Berlin, *Der Spiegel* is building a new HQ. If only the sun shone as much as in Munich. — MA



25 LISBON

2009 ranking: 25 | 2008 ranking: 24

Amid low crime rates, sunny Lisbon continues its cultural boom.

Concerts and theatre performances are up by double digits as venues such as Nimas, a converted cinema, attract indie acts. In the Baixa district, a year-old fashion and design museum anchors an urban renewal project around Praça do Comércio to shift traffic and refurbish historic buildings.

Residents, however, seem less enthusiastic about the need for a new coach museum, preferring instead that authorities invest in public transport, cycling schemes and overhauling housing policy – Lisbon's population has dropped by 20,000 in the past two years. Part of the blame is due to outdated rental laws that have kept prices at untenable levels, making it hard to cover the cost of upkeep – the city centre is dotted with deserted buildings in need of some TLC. — IC

Population: 1.5 million; greater metropolitan area, 3.7 million.

International flights: 29 intercontinental destinations, via neighbouring Osaka.

Crime: murders, 9; domestic break-ins, 1,453.

Sunshine: annual average, 1,775.

Public transport: the Kyoto Highway development will be completed in March 2011. The city offers loans to business owners to buy electric cars; there are 35 recharging points around Kyoto.

Culture: 8 cinemas, 32 screens.

Architecture: there are strict architectural standards to protect Kyoto's scenery and landscape.

Emergency services: average police response time, 6 minutes 33 seconds; average ambulance response time, 4 minutes 17 seconds.

Environmental issues: 18.2 per cent of rubbish is recycled, aims to increase this to 27 per cent by 2015.

Chain test: Zara, 1; Starbucks, 16.

Key upcoming developments: a controversial aquarium is due to open in 2012, and the zoo is being renovated.

Monocle fixes: put the preservation of the city's architectural gems higher up on the local government agenda; invest in finding a solution to on-going inner city traffic congestion problems.

Population: 1.8 million.

International flights: just six long-haul destinations, though 80 to Europe.

Crime: murders, 9; domestic break-ins, 7,006.

Sunshine: annual average 1,725 hours.

Education: Hamburg's school system is undergoing contentious changes this year. Elementary school will now last six instead of four years and there will only be two school types after that, instead of four.

Tolerance: with its gay village, Hamburg markets itself as a gay tourist destination.

Media: traditionally the centre for print media in Germany, Hamburg now feels the pressure from Berlin, with the *Bild* tabloid relocating to Berlin and the DPA news agency about to join them there.

Public transport: the new U4 underground line is under construction and is expected to carry 35,000 passengers daily.

How easy is it to start a business?

With 112 businesses started per 10,000 inhabitants, Hamburg ranks second only to Berlin in Germany.

Key upcoming developments:

Hamburg's new district, Hafencity, is taking shape with more than 1,500 people already living there.

Monocle fix: the city has to work on keeping its image as a creative capital. More affordable space for artists.

Population: 489,562; greater metropolitan area, 2.03 million.

International flights: 22 intercontinental; 51 European destinations.

Crime: murders, 4; domestic break-ins, 1,256.

Sunshine: 2,780 hours for 2009.

Tolerance: same-sex marriage signed into law late this spring.

State education: residents favour private educational facilities: 194 private pre-schools vs 94 public; 47 private secondary schools in Lisbon vs 33 public.

Drinking and shopping: bars in Bairro Alto and many riverside districts serve alcohol after 01.00. Supermarkets open on Sundays.

Public transport: subway extension to airport to be completed next year (15 minute ride to downtown).

Architecture: permits for innovative builds are allowed but it's a slow-going process.

Green space: 28 sq m per resident.

How easy is it to start a business? Registering a one-man firm or PLC takes a few hours and costs €360 with Empresa na Hora (On the Spot Firm) programme.

Chain test: Zara, 9; Starbucks, 1.

Key upcoming developments: urban regeneration of Baixa district on waterfront.

Monocle fix: stop giving out permits to build shopping malls.



CIVIC SLICKERS —Global

Preface

The right mayor can reinvent and rejuvenate a city, boosting infrastructure, speeding integration and fostering the arts. For our cities special, we profile 10 of the freshest movers and shakers in urban politics worldwide, pinpointing their greatest successes.

ILLUSTRATOR
Masao Yamazaki

It's the era of city power, a time when civic leaders are setting the pace in everything from climate change to social policy (who needs central government?). It's also a time when a new generation of urban ambassadors are taking over city halls: who would have expected to find a gay woman in charge in Houston or a Muslim woman taking power in Amsterdam? Although you need to be careful: sure it's entertaining having a charismatic figure in charge but are they also good city CEOs — people who can court business leaders in search of a new HQ? We think these candidates tick all the boxes.

01

Takashi Kawamura Nagoya

Takashi Kawamura has raised hell in Nagoya. In his first year in office, the mayor of Japan's fourth-largest city has slashed prices on medical tests and water and is locked in a battle with the assembly to push through tax cuts and trim the budget. Kawamura's "shomin kakumei", or people's revolution, has made the city a national symbol of reform. — KH

Success: Agitating for political change and against party fealty.

Challenge: Take on the city assembly to push through tax and budget reform.



02

Motti Sasson Holon, Israel

Mayor Motti Sasson of Holon, a city of 170,000 just southeast of Tel Aviv, has miraculously put a mid-size bedroom-community on the world's cultural map. The 63-year-old workaholic has brought five new museums to Holon, including Ron Arad's groundbreaking €24m Design Museum (see issue 33), generating an influx of youngsters while inventing a distinctive urban brand from scratch. — AS

Success: Cultural institutions such as the Design Museum and Cartoon Museum.

Challenge: Consolidate Holon's position as the Middle East's cultural centre.

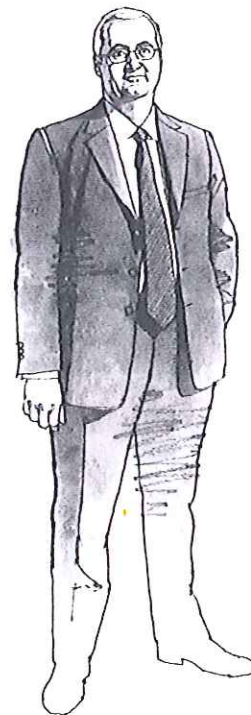
03

Annisie Parker Houston, Texas

After Annisie Parker was elected Houston's mayor last December, Barack Obama called to tell her, "We were watching and very proud." The choice of adjective mattered: Parker, 54 with three adopted children, is the first openly gay mayor of a large American city. She moved into the mayor's office without a media storm, just a loyal circle of aides. "It's not like a cult of Annisie — it's just the type of person she is," says campaign adviser Cynthia Miller. — SPT

Success: Getting elected as a progressive choice of gay candidate in Texas.

Challenge: To reconcile her recent tough budget with overhauling the Metro transit system.



04

Sten Nordin Stockholm

While world leaders were copping out at Copenhagen, eco-champ Nordin was arm-twisting hundreds of fellow mayors to vow to slash CO2 production. Nordin plans to turn the Swedish capital into an "eco-city" with some suburbs running entirely on clean fuels by 2030. "We're reducing the carbon footprint of Stockholm to three [it's currently four] tons per inhabitant by 2015," Nordin promises. — IW

Success: Leading 500 mayors in a pledge to cut carbon emissions by 20 per cent by 2020.

Challenge: Clean up the reputation of the Moderate Party after a voting scandal.

5
Fatima Elatik
 Amsterdam-Oost
 The Netherlands has a fair share of multicultural cities. Enter Fatima Elatik, the daughter of Moroccan immigrants who took a hands-on approach to integration. In a few years, parts of Amsterdam-Oost were seen as a no-go zone, but we're now one of the most vibrant areas in Amsterdam," says Elatik. Combining ambitious urban planning projects with cultural initiatives, Elatik is bringing a previously neglected community together. — JO



Success: Raising residents' satisfaction in some neighbourhoods by a third.
Challenge: Implement budget cuts without damaging the "concrete" of a creative community that she has fostered.



08
Alejandro Char
 Barranquilla,
 Colombia

Known as "El Bacán" (The Dude) by locals, this construction baron took over a practically bankrupt city in 2008. Two years later, the city's annual income has risen to \$800m (a rise of around \$500m) and debt has halved. "Organising the house," is how the Dude describes it. — SPT

Success: Building 35 new schools, 32 health centres and 52 sport facilities.
Challenge: Improve public space.



09
Lisa Scaffidi
 Perth

Former air hostess Lisa Scaffidi was accused of being all style and no substance when she became the first female lord mayor of Perth in 2007, but it turns out she's got bags of both. Her tenacious commitment to the arts and sustainable urban development has seen Australia's fourth city finally competing on a national level. Scaffidi has set her sights on "more public transport, a permanent home for our symphony orchestra and a new public lending library". Don't bet against her pulling off all three – and then some. — DPT

Success: Helping Perth become Australia's fastest growing local government authority.
Challenge: Convince her critics she is serious about her international ambitions.



06
Alberto Ruiz-Gallardón
 Madrid

Madrid's dapper mayor is keeping the city vibrant despite Spain's economic woes. He's spruced up areas, launched a trade fair and kept Olympic bid fever going. "We're opening Madrid up to the world, while preserving the advantages of a medium-sized metropolis," says Gallardón. — DPT

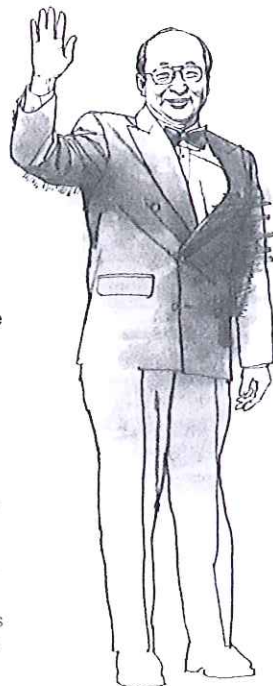
Success: A €3.9bn motorway to unplug the city centre.
Challenge: Work on a third Olympic bid after two failures; he needs a high-profile international success.



07
Phil Gordon
 Phoenix, Arizona

Since entering office in 2004, Gordon has been a steward of Phoenix's downtown transformation. This spring, he became a civil-rights hero too. When Governor Jan Brewer signed a law allowing police to detain individuals on suspicion that they were illegal immigrants, Gordon was the most prominent politician in the state to oppose it. He sent *The Washington Post* an essay calling the bill a "humiliating moment". — SPT

Success: Introducing an excellent light-rail system in a city where the car ruled.
Challenge: Take on conservative state politics in the face of wide-ranging immigration concerns.



10
Jason Hu
 Taichung, Taiwan

Jason Hu thinks big. Mayor of Taichung since 2001, his large-scale infrastructure and economic development have been applauded, but his key strength is in turning a city known for crime and prostitution into a place where, he says, "culture permeates all levels of society". He's brought Zaha Hadid, Zhang Yimou and Yo-Yo Ma to Taichung, and has set out plans for Toyo Ito's futuristic opera house this year. — TRA

Success: Crime is down 60 per cent since 2001.
Challenge: Focus on local politics as supporters push for a presidential bid.