

# Paul's Düsseldorf Guide

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## Overview

Düsseldorf is a city of contrasts. Auf Wiedersehen Pet perpetuated an image of a dour urban centre populated by wise-cracking Geordie builders, and whilst there is still a sizable ex-pat population (albeit more white collar these days), the city is viewed very differently through German eyes. "The longest bar in Europe" is the nickname afforded to the Altstadt, or Old Town, whilst the trendy Medienhafen (Media Harbour) and chic Kö (Königsallee, the designer shopping street) earn the city its other moniker of "Yuppie Town".

The city was controversially named state capital of the newly created North Rhine Westphalia in the 1940s, much to the disgust of local rival Cologne, and although the city and its surrounds clock in at almost 1 million people, the city centre (where most of the action is) is relatively compact. The main station is to the southeast of the centre, 4 U-Bahn stops from Heinrich Heine Allee – this will land you smack bang in the Altstadt. If walking, allow 25 minutes and head diagonally away from the station. Oststrasse is a little more down to earth for shopping than the trendy and expensive Schadowstrasse and Königsallee, and is also home to a clutch of affordable but comfortable hotels and the excellent Schumacher Stammhaus, a traditional Alt brewpub.

The drinking areas of the Altstadt lie pretty much between three streets running west to east at right angles from the Rhine. Flingerstrasse to the southern edge boasts the most famous of the brewpubs – Zum Uerige – and the tiny schnapps bar Et Kabuffke, famous for the Killepitsche liqueur. Bolkerstrasse is crammed with bars, the best being the Zum Schlüssel Alt brewpub and the small and cosy (and often incredibly loud) Auberge. Kurze Strasse is the more northerly of these three and boasts the lively Bierhaus Zille. Another 500 yards or so north, past the post-modern art gallery, lies Ratinger Strasse, the northern extremity of the Altstadt and home to another concentration of pubs, including Im Füchschen brewpub.

The LTU Arena (52,000 capacity, all-seater, retractable roof) lies at the end of the U78 U-Bahn line (that starts from the station), although the U79

to Duisburg stops within walking distance. Both these lines run through the main station, Oststrasse and Heinrich Heine Allee. On the rare occasions that games are played away from the Arena, the Paul Janes Stadion (on Flinger Broich) is used. Bus 738 or 725 to Fortunaplatz will get you closest; alternatives include an S Bahn to D-Flingern or an U75 in the "wrong direction" (i.e. away from the Altstadt) to Ronsdorfer Strasse – both of these involve a 10-minute walk.

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## A note about the beer

The ONLY beer you should be seen drinking in Düsseldorf is altbier. This is traditionally served in 0.2 or 0.25 litre measures, and is a dark, sweet-ish beer that tastes slightly like ale crossed with lager (the reality is far better than the description). There are a number of mass-produced (but still very palatable) "factory" alts, notably Frankenheim and Diebels, however the best beer by far comes from the four traditional "brauereiauschenken". These are, in my own order of preference (which does change frequently!):

- **Schumacher Alt** – available in the Schumacher Stammhaus in Oststrasse (my own favourite pub – in the stand-up bar to the left of the main door), in the more stuffy and restaurant oriented Im Goldener Kessel in Bolkerstrasse, in the stand-up style Zum St Sebastian bar opposite the Schlossturm and, a wee bit bizarrely, in a wee glass pub in Carlsplatz Market (the key to the underground toilet is behind the bar).
- **Zum Uerige** – possibly Düsseldorf's most celebrated beer, but currently lagging in fourth place for me! The place itself (on Flingerstrasse) is a cavernous warren of different rooms, with prowling gherkin sellers (out of a big bucket) and very good service, and the beer can also be tasted in more sedate surroundings at Zum Goldener Hirsch on Aderstrasse, near Graf Adolf Platz. Like Fuchschen, there's a wheat beer on offer as well, but expect derision from the Kobes\* if you order one!
- **Im Füchschen** – the "youngest" of the four big hitters, and the most northerly; you can find it up on Ratinger Strasse. Zur Uel, a few doors down the street, also serves Füchschen, as

does Das Gasthaus on Hammer Strasse (south-east of the Rhineturm, near the Stadttor tram stop) and Himmel und Aäd on Nordstrasse. The brewery also does a nice wheat beer called “Silber Füchschen” by the bottle.

- **Schlüssel Alt** – Served in Zum Schlüssel on Bolkerstrasse and assorted outlets including one on the Rheinuferpromenade by the river (be warned – they prefer to serve it by the half-litre there, and it does spoil the taste as it warms).

The only way to see if you agree with my ranking is to try them yourself!

\* The blue aproned grumpy men carrying trays of beer around, sullenly slamming them down on the table (or studiously ignoring you if you are actually *trying* to catch his attention) are known as “Köbes”. There’s a long story behind this, and I can tell you if you ask! The grumpiness is all part of the show (“Zum Uerige” can be translated as “At Grumpy’s”). The trick to remember is that you are considered to be a guest in the Köbes’ house, so taking it easy and waiting to get served when he’s good and ready are the key to getting through the experience unscathed!

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## Flying from the UK

### Airports:

- **DUS - Düsseldorf International** is only 10km or so north of the city centre and a stones throw from the LTU Arena. A taxi into the centre will be €15-20, however by far the easiest and cheapest option (particularly if you are staying near the station) is to walk down to the basement of the terminal and catch the S7 into the Hauptbahnhof (it’s not the terminal station – the S Bahn will go on to Solingen – so make sure you get off!). If you’re feeling more adventurous, the Sky Train monorail will take you to the Flughafen Hauptbahnhof and you can catch a variety of trains (S Bahns, double-decker Regional Expresses, or the more expensive Inter City and ICE trains). The fare into Düsseldorf, including a simple connection, is €2.10 (select A on the left hand side of the buttons under the screen on the ticket machines – the right hand side is for children’s tickets). If there is a group of you who will be sticking together, the Gruppenticket - €10.60 for the whole day for up to 5 adults – may prove more cost-effective.

- **CGN – Cologne/Bonn Airport** is very handy for Düsseldorf by virtue of some direct express trains or dozens of connections via Cologne Hauptbahnhof on a regular basis. If travelling on the “ICE” service that generally runs either to Dortmund or Berlin, the downside is that this is considerably more expensive than local transport, but much faster and more comfortable. If you are slumming it on a cheap ticket, or arrive at a time not conducive to catching the ICE, you should catch an S Bahn from the airport station to Cologne Hbf, then change onto a Düsseldorf service (usually an RE, RB or S Bahn; the ICE and IC trains carry a supplement). The Arrivals Hall in Terminal B (used by Easyjet) has a Deutsche Bahn (German Railways) ticket office that stays open until at least 9pm – come out of the Arrivals door and turn left, look for the red “DB” sign (if coming from Terminal A, it’s at the far end of Terminal B). There’s an excellent, relaxed café bar on the basement level of Terminal B near the station called Diners – they will sell you bottled beer for the train (and either open it for you or leave it closed).
- **NRN – Düsseldorf Weeze** is way out in the back of beyond to the north-west of Düsseldorf (it’s actually nearer the Netherlands than Düsseldorf!). Ryanair run a bus to/from Worringer Strasse, next to Düsseldorf Hauptbahnhof (main station) – the bus stop is out the station’s main door and to the right, about 300 yards up the road (past Burger King and the cinema and opposite the bar marked F on Map 2).
- **DTM – Dortmund Airport** is in Dortmund, to the north of Düsseldorf, and is served primarily by Easyjet . I’ve never used it, however presumably you will need to head into Dortmund centre before picking up one of the numerous trains south to Düsseldorf. Much like Cologne, there is a choice of cheap local or fast express services.

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## Getting around

**Note:** if you are in possession of a Fortuna Düsseldorf home ticket, the ticket includes FREE travel on local services in the VRR (Rhein-Ruhr) area on the day of the game; this stretches up to Dortmund, but not as far south as Cologne.

There are a number of ticket options for getting around Düsseldorf. An adult single ticket in Zone A costs €2.20 (unless it's for a very short journey, in which case it's €1.30), or a day ticket comes in at €5.20 for one. Up to 5 people can travel together all day on a Gruppenticket for just €11.40. If you're wandering further afield in the VRR area, you'll need a Zone B or more likely a Zone C ticket (the group tickets offer real value for two or more travellers in these fare bands).

If you're travelling up from Cologne, you can buy a "SchönerTagTicket NRW" – this covers the entire North Rhine Westphalia state and clocks in at €23.50 for one, or €33.00 for up to 5 (plus an extra €2 if bought over the counter rather than at a machine). This is valid after 9am Mon-Fri, or all day on weekends and holidays. As with all of these ticket deals, IC and ICE travel is excluded.

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## Paul's Favourite Pubs

(see Maps below for the location of most of these)

**Braureiausschanken** – these are the closest things to beerhalls that Düsseldorf has to offer. They generally have a small stand-up taproom, or "Schwemme", near the door for casual drinking, or a more food-oriented seated hall for chowing down on traditional food. Both areas will be served by circulating blue-shirted Köbes (see above), but be warned – you will only generally be served by the right one for your table (and trying to call him over is most definitely not the done thing!)

- **Schumacher Stammhaus** – most people only discover the restaurant-ish "Im Goldener Kessel" in the Altstadt (diagonally opposite Schlüssel on Bolkerstrasse), but I prefer the earthier brewery outlet on Oststrasse, between the centre and the station. Turn left for stand-up drinking (my favourite!) and great service, or right for the full restaurant beer hall.
- **Im Fücshscen** – brew pub on northern edge of Altstadt (Ratinger Strasse) – great beer, and loads of other places around. Also do a weizenbier called "Silber Fücshscen", which is worth a try. The stand-up section is right inside door and to the right (which also has free – as opposed to attended – toilets for those in the know)
- **Schlüssel** – another brew pub, this time on Bolkerstrasse. Plenty of proletarian (i.e. non-restaurant) seating and standing just inside

the door to the right, and very good beer. Unfortunately, service often ranges from painfully slow to non-existent (it took us 25 minutes just to pay the bill once!).

- **Zum Uerige** – Massive brew pub in middle of Altstadt (Flinger Strasse). Superb waiters who replace your empty 2cl glass with a full one within seconds. In the summer they also float around the street outside, making the pub a very difficult place to walk past.
- **Zum Goldener Kessel** – the "golden kettle" is Schumacher's main Altstadt outlet and sits in Bolkerstrasse diagonally opposite Schlüssel. The very small stand-up tap room is to the left inside the door, and the rest of the place is quite restauranty.
- **Ratinger Brau** – way off the beaten track in the town of Ratingen (effectively a suburb out near the airport), this brewpub makes and sells its own excellent (and very cheap) Altbier as well as excellent food. Get off at Ratingen Ost S-Bahn station and walk towards the town centre – you'll find it on your right after around 700 yards. Can apparently be combined with other Ratingen pubs for a crawl, but we've never made it past this place!

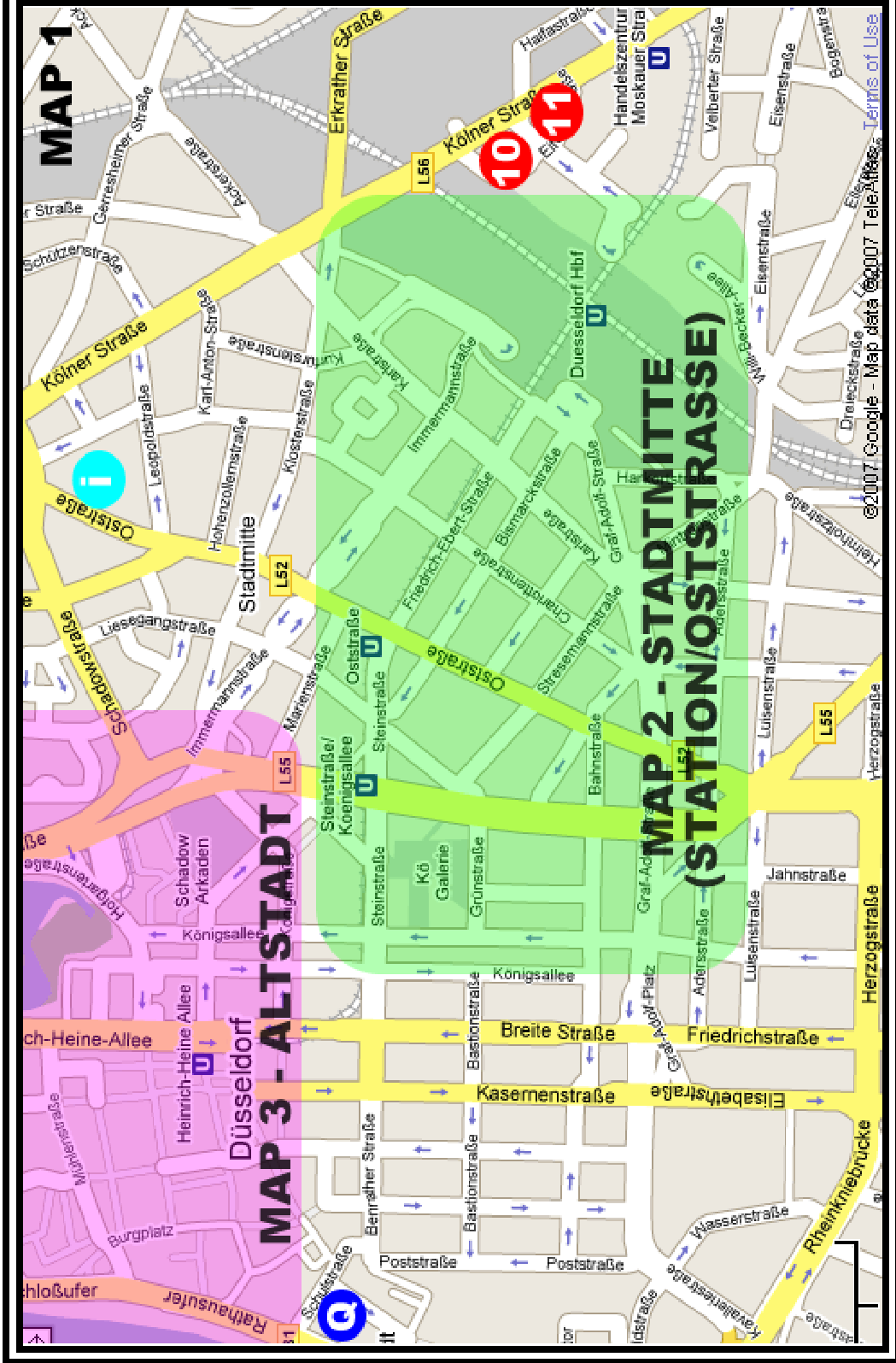
**Kneipen etc** – these are a mix of (mostly smaller) pubs, ranging from tiny local places to larger town centre haunts. These may have connections with the traditional four (Schumacher, Uerige, Fücshscen and Schlüssel), but can't be considered true Braureiausschanken as they don't major on the food element.

- **Et Kabuffke** – tiny wee place that sells the heavenly Killepitsch liqueur, right over the precinct from Uerige. No beer, but wine and soft drinks are available.
- **Peter's Diebels Treff** – narrow wee lokal on Mertensgasse. Lots of alt, wood beams and fig schnapps (Kleine Fiegling). May seem quiet at first, but can fill up in an instant. A real oasis of calm in the often mad environs of the Altstadt.
- **Bei Bill** – tucked way down in the south of the Altstadt on Hafenstrasse (opposite the expensive, food oriented Zum Schiffchen) is this great poky wee locals pub. Well worth a stay, but don't sit under the fruit machine! The landlady has fond memories of the Tartan Army from 2003.

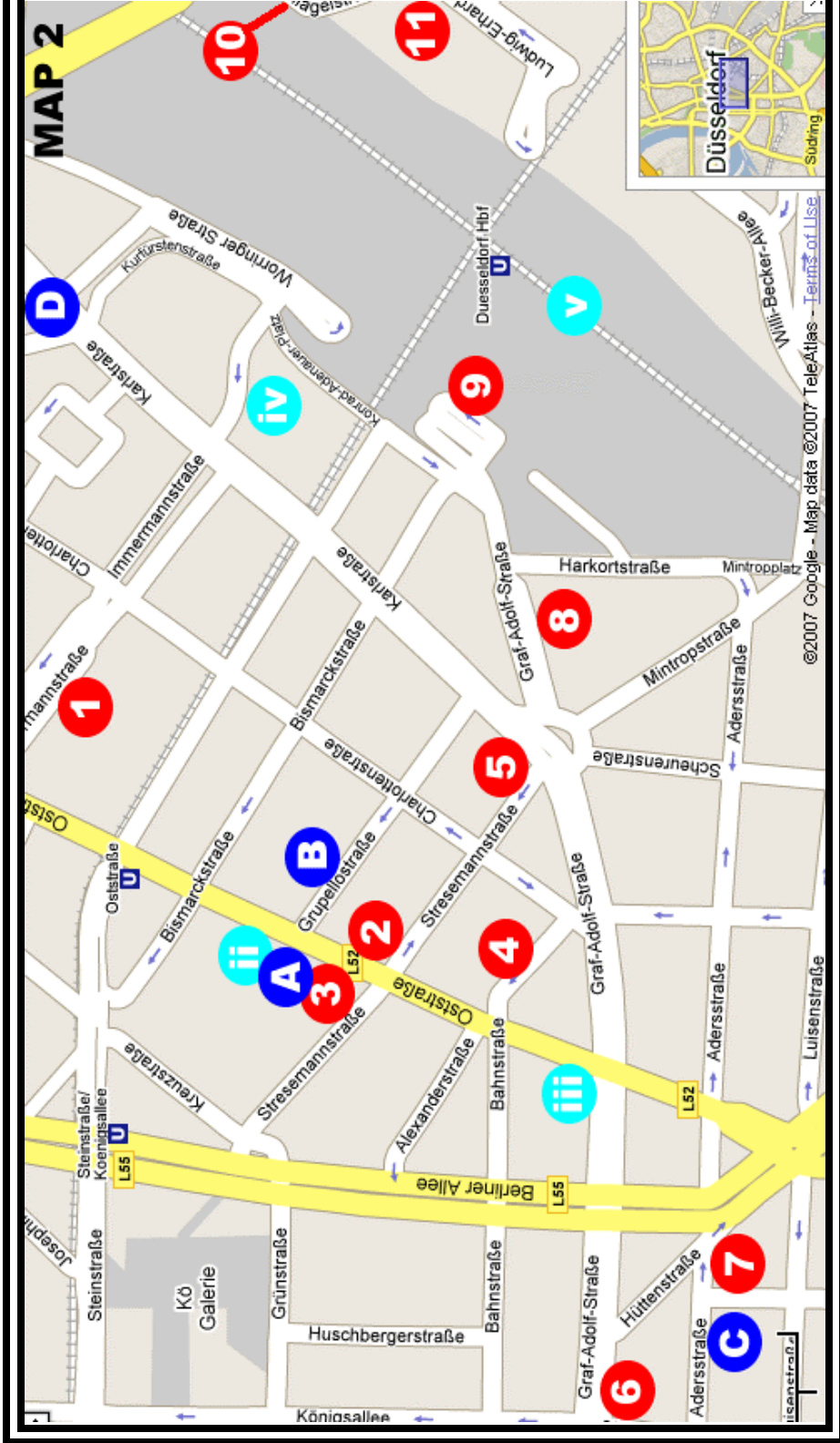
- **Donau Bierstube** – a strange bird of a pub on Worringer Platz, handy for the station. Seems to be popular with homesick elderly Balkan customers. We tend to sit at the bar when we're there.
- **Das Gasthaus** – right behind the silver Frank Gehry building on Hammer Str, this is a great place for a Füchschen alt near the harbour.
- **Bierhaus Zille** – Amazing place on Kurze Strasse. Really narrow but stretches way back. Best left for after 9pm on a Friday or Saturday. If you sit at the front bar it has a scoreboard that shows what song is playing!
- **Spinnstube** – tucked away on the southern edge of the Altstadt on Wallstrasse, this tiny local is a real find. The weaving theme extends from sewing to comedy illuminated arachnids hanging off the ceiling, and the carnival music can lead to the formation of an impromptu dance floor amongst the tightly packed furniture. Don't expect particularly quick service (the old guy running the show does his best), but it is a real alternative to the crowded altstadt.
- **Himmel und Ääd** – superb semi-trendy beer hall on Nordstrasse (just north-east of the Altstadt and just up from Nordstrasse U-Bahn station). Fuchschen Alt on tap, a good menu, and strangely, a stand-up section in the middle of the pub. A perfect post-match pit stop.
- **Zum St Sebastien** – Schumacher's new-ish stand-up bar opposite the Schlossturm at the end of Kurze Strasse. Pub snacks only, and very few seats, but a great Altstadt pub made even more entertaining by the Arsenal supporting Köbes.
- **Schumacher Op'm Carlsplatz** – another beer bar (as opposed to Brauereiaussschank) from Schumacher, this one takes up half of a small building actually on Carlsplatz itself alongside the fruit and vegetable market stalls. Despite initial appearances, there is an underground toilet accessed around the corner courtesy of the key on a large block of wood kept behind the bar.
- **Zum Goldener Hirsch** – a trendy-ish pre-club type bar on Aderstrasse (near the bottom of the Kö. A quiet place to try an early-evening glass of Uerige, but no idea how busy it gets later on.
- **Fortuna Eck** – one of a cluster of football pubs (and the only one I can remember the name of) in the Flingern area, traditionally the bedrock of Fortuna's support. Handy for Flingern S-Bahn station and the Paul Janes Stadion, but not necessarily worth a special trip otherwise.
- **Zwieblen** – a party pub in the northern outskirts of the Altstadt and handy as a journey break between Ratinger Strasse and the main action. "Onions" was one of the first pubs Helen and I visited in 2002 and is opposite an excellent value and supremely quick pizzeria.
- **Engelen** – late opening, exceptionally narrow bar in Kurze Strasse popular with Fortuna fans and night owls.
- **Zur Uel** – a few doors down from Fuchschen on Ratinger Strasse, and serving its neighbours excellent Altbier, the one main advantage Uel has is its much later closing times.
- **Georg's Bistro** – a real odd bird of pub (used to be in more ways than one, with an aviary of its own sitting on the bar), this small Grupellostrasse "lokal" is very close to Schumacher (meaning we tend to overlook it for the main attraction).
- **Auberge** – Left the best laugh til last! This a German rock pub par excellence! Mullets and denim jackets a plenty, this tiny bar can be a squash, but has waiter service so you don't need to worry about squeezing to the bar. Guaranteed to hear Bon Jovi, and quite possibly, the Final Countdown. When "Wind of Change" came on in here, I thought everyone was going to break down in tears. I actually have a t-shirt from this place (seriously), and best of all, it says "Let's Rock!" on the back.

### A note about smoking

In common with almost all of Germany, NRW instituted a smoking ban in July 2008. At the time of writing, this was being trialled with all pubs that serve food (and restaurants etc) being non-smoking (although a blind eye was being turned to most people hanging out of windows), and "Raucherclubs" that had to sign "members" up for free before serving them any drink in a very smoky environment. The state parliament is due to debate this system on 31 July 2008, so things may change.



- Hotels**  
 10 – Holiday Inn Düsseldorf, Ludwig Erhard Allee  
 11 – Hotel Ibis Centrum, Ludwig Erhard Allee
- Pubs**  
 Q – Bei Bill, Hafenstrasse. Part-time bar, part-time changing room for transvestites. Quirky and reliable.
- Shops**  
 I – Fan & More (best football shop in town), 11 Oststrasse



**Hotels**

- 1 – Hotel Nikko, Immerman Strasse
- 2 – Best Western Savoy, Oststrasse
- 3 – Hotel Monopol, Ostrasse
- 4 – Hotel Batavia, Bahnstrasse
- 5 – Hotel Mercure, Am Stresemanplatz
- 6 – Holiday Inn Konigsallee, Graf Adolf Platz
- 7 – NH Düsseldorf City Center, Aderstrasse
- 8 – Inter City Hotel, Graf Adolf Strasse
- 9 – Ibis Hotel Hauptbahnhof, Konrad Adenauer Platz (built into frontage of railway station, adjacent to main entrance)
- 10 – Holiday Inn Düsseldorf, Ludwig Erhard Allee
- 11 – Hotel Ibis Centrum, Ludwig Erhard Allee

**Pubs**

- A – Schumacher Stammhaus, Oststrasse. Simply the best.
- B – Georg's Bistro, Grupellostrasse. Small and pokey "lokal", complete with its own aviary on the bar.
- C – Zum Goldener Hirsch, Aderstrasse. A quiet place to try an evening glass of Ueige.
- D – Donautube, Karlsruasse. A Balkan bar on the edge of Worringer Strasse. Quaint.

**Shops**

- ii – Enterprise CD Markt (very cheap CDs), Oststrasse
- iii – Kaufhof department store (including football shirts, Düsseldorf souvenirs, CDs and food/drinks)
- iv – comic book shop selling mini plastic Margaret Thatcher figures, opposite station and behind Tourist Info

**Pubs**

- E – **Zur Uel**, Ratinger Strasse. A later-opening, trendier version of...
- F – **Im Fuchschen**, Ratinger Strasse. A very good brewpub (actually the other side of the road).
- G – **Zum St Sebastian**, Kurze Strasse. A stand-up Schumacher pub near the Schlossturm.
- H – **Zweielen**, Mühlenstrasse. Quirky party bar.
- I – **Bierhaus Zille**, Kurze Strasse. Loud and lively, with an evening disco. No football colours.
- J – **Peter's Diebels Treff**, Mertensgasse. Superb, friendly wee local and often an oasis of calm when the rest of the Altstadt is mental. Does a nice line in plum schnapps.
- K – **Zum Goldener Kessel**, Bolkerstrasse. Schumacher's Altstadt beer hall and restaurant.
- L – **Auberge Rock Bar**, Bolkerstrasse. Classic rock bar, with classic rock bar toilets.
- M – **Zum Schlüssel**, Bolkerstrasse. Excellent beer in a cavernous beer hall. Service can be slow.
- N – **Zum Uerige**, Flinger Strasse. The most quintessential of Düsseldorf's brew pubs.
- O – **Et Kabuffke**, Flinger Strasse. Absolutely tiny schnapps bar (wine but no beer). Essential, but not in a large group. Has a serving window onto the street for busy times.
- P – **Spinnstube**, Wallstrasse. Another tiny backstreet lokal with an eccentric owner. Not for crowds! Carlsplatz is one block to the south.

**Shops**

- [Blue shaded streets are main shopping areas]
- vi – **Tourist Info** shop on Burgplatz
- vii – punk shop selling various cool things, Kapuzinergasse
- ix – **Killepitsch shop**, selling the herbal liqueur and associated clothing line

**MAP 3**

