

## Christmas all year round

**Not only in the historic market squares of Saxony-Anhalt, but also in vineyards and courtyards, museums and workshops, a very special atmosphere prevails during Advent. Christmas is in the air. But there is one place where you can find sounds, sparkles, and glitters all year round: the Harzkristall Glasmanufaktur in Derenburg.**

Even though the cold has long since claimed the blossoms in the garden, the glass sculptures still bring vibrant colors to the small park along the Holtemme River: like bright blue, orange, or yellow fountains, they spring from the flowerbeds; as oversized drops or mushrooms, they adorn the meadows and are even part of the climbing course in the playground. But those who come to the Harzkristall Glasmanufaktur in Derenburg, a district of Blankenburg, are probably looking for more than just an unusual stroll across the expansive company grounds. They are looking for glass experiences. As close to the source as possible.

### Impressions of the Creation of a Work of Art

With a hiss, the white-blue gas flame strikes the raw piece, transforming into a yellowish fire that licks the glass bulb from all sides. The glassblower takes a deep breath and, through a metal tube called a glassblower's pipe, lets it flow powerfully yet gently into the viscous lump at the bottom of the tool. It expands into a thin-walled sphere. The expert dips this into colored glass shards and brings it back into the flame. There, the colors fuse. And again and again, the glass is turned, blown, and color applied.

Next to the glassblower, who is creating decorative spheres at the lamp—the burner that heats the glass to incandescence—are the workbenches of other employees and apprentices of the manufactory. Here, small figurines or pieces of jewelry are created from the viscous mass of blanks melted from different colored rods. Melanie Jacobs sits on the far left. She is responsible for painting the cooled, crystal-clear glass spheres. Sometimes she captures entire winter landscapes on the glass, other times she envelops the pieces in delicate glitter ornaments.

Visitors watching the experts at work and observing the creation of these small works of art will certainly not be bored while they wait for the guided tour of the factory to begin. A tour starts every hour on the hour; today's tour is led by Heinz Rose. He first takes his audience to the cinema, where a film recounts the company's history: founded in 1946 as a so-called resettlement cooperative for displaced Sudeten Germans, continued as the VEB Glaswerk Derenburg (a state-owned glassworks) in 1949, affiliated with the Burg Giebichenstein University of Art and Design Halle in the 1960s, and finally, after the turmoil of German reunification, became part of the Gerhard Bürger Foundation in 2013 as Harzkristall GmbH. This organization is committed to promoting science and research, art and culture, and the preservation of historical monuments, which still includes cooperation with Giebichenstein. Further new buildings and renovations followed, along with the expansion of the interactive tour. The organization currently employs around 40 people.

### Using the Techniques of Our Forefathers

After a look at history, the tour moves to the present, to production: to the warehouse with its various wooden molds, to the exhibition of the latest designs, or to the engraver's workshop. In the furnace hall, the highlight of the tour, the molten material is shaped right there on site. Freehand or in wet wooden molds. The guests gather on the gallery and watch the activity in front of the furnaces, the men handling the glowing hot mass, the scooping, blowing, swirling, beating, cutting, smoothing... The processes of manual glassmaking observed here have remained virtually unchanged for millennia and were declared an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2023. Therefore, it is not difficult for the Derenburg glassmakers to produce goods like their ancestors and thus contribute to the restoration of historical monuments. For example, the glass blocks in the windows of the Goettingen locomotive shed come from Derenburg, as do the crystal glass globes of the streetlights in Worms Cathedral Square and the historic glass lamps in Hamburg's City Hall.

### Feasting, Shopping, and DIY

At the end of the tour, the visitors disperse; some head to the café or shop, others to the creative workshops. Those who want to try their hand at working with hot glass (preferably after prior registration) under the guidance of experts will find what they're looking for there. Even children can blow a glass ball or shape a tealight holder. The 90-minute workshop, in which participants create their own drinking glass, is geared more towards adults.

But of course, shopping is also an option. The shop offers everything from tiny glass balls to unique custom-made pieces. In addition to the creations of the Derenburg glassmakers, you'll also find pieces from other German manufacturers. This sophisticated selection is complemented by a colorful array of small items from around the world. Anyone looking to get ready for Advent will find what they're looking for in the Christmas World and Nordic Winter departments. It's definitely worth checking out

the factory's event calendar. For example, on **November 28th**, there will be a late-night shopping event with various offers and promotions. On **December 14th**, 2025, Santa Claus will be visiting, and visitors can make their own crafts.

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**More Information:**

[www.harzkristall.de](http://www.harzkristall.de)

[www.gerhard-buerger-stiftung.de](http://www.gerhard-buerger-stiftung.de)

[www.sachsen-anhalt-tourismus.de/kultur/noch-mehr-kultur/tradition-und-brauchtum](http://www.sachsen-anhalt-tourismus.de/kultur/noch-mehr-kultur/tradition-und-brauchtum)

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