

Harry – gefangen in der Zeit

Culture and society

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The demise of the Ruhr region's massive mines and steel mills was unavoidable, but some of them were given the opportunity to restart. Curious visitors look where miners once toiled and coal dust mixed with sweat covered their faces. One example is a coal mine near Essen that was founded in 1847. It has been converted into an area with museums, dance halls, theaters, cafés and a large park dedicated to industrial history that visitors can see and feel. The Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex is now a World Heritage Site.

A steel mill near Duisburg was also closed in the mid-1980s. Eight years later, an unusual park was created there. Now visitors can see fascinating industrial buildings put to new uses. One of the former blast furnaces is now home to Europe's largest artificial diving pool, while another has a dizzying observation platform. High-rope courses, alpine climbing gardens, and, of course, places to eat and drink draw over 500,000 visitors each year. Perhaps the most beautiful thing, however, is a nighttime stroll across the grounds – the park is open all day and admission is free – when buildings and blast furnaces are colorfully illuminated. Who knows what the miners of yesteryear would say to that!