

## A VISIBLE REMINDER TO ALL WHO WE ARE

For 200 years the plain town hall had served its purpose well. Then, however, the city council decided to build a new façade. It was meant to be imposing and underline: The council is powerful and confident. This is how in the year 1612 one of the most beautiful Renaissance façades of Europe was created. The middle part of the old façade was levered up and in its place a massive alcove was built from glass. A five-storey high Flemish gable crowns its top. The front of the town hall, the representative side facing the market square, was designed by the sculptor Lüder von Bentheim in a lush and imaginative style: An intricate wall tapestry made from stone with vivid images on political and religious themes.

The human eye will not easily discern the façade's ornamental richness: Fantastic scenes from an unfamiliar world, symbolic figurines in reliefs, angels and fabulous beasts, flowers, vases and fruits: It is a masterpiece of masonry. There's a scene especially dear to the Bremen people above the second arch: The hen and her chicks refer to a legend associated with the founding of Bremen. The Eastern and Western sides of the town hall with their lancet windows and pointed arch portals remained in their original state.



Detailed view of the South façade of the town hall



Synthesis of the arts: Heinrich Vogeler's golden chamber

### Guarded like a treasure

A frequently visited and admired jewel of the town hall is a small chamber. The **Güldenammer**, built into the Upper Hall, is guarded like a treasure. On the outside, it is decorated richly with marvellous carvings and paintings. On the inside, it is a synthesis of art entirely in the style of Art Nouveau.

In 1905, the artist Heinrich Vogeler, based in Worspwede, was commissioned by the council to decorate the rather unostentatious chamber: For the walls, he chose crimson-golden wallpaper made from fine leather. Not even the tiniest detail of the room was overlooked, everything was decorated with an abundance of ornamentation. Door panels, lamp shades, fire place screens and door knobs thus became works of art in their own right, while representations of birds and flowers prevail.

A gorgeous wooden staircase leads to the upper floor of the chamber. Several wood cutters and master woodcarvers practised their art on it. It is considered a showpiece of the High Baroque period.

### Old and new: As if from one cast

The council needed space. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century an annex was necessary. Obviously, it constitutes quite a challenge for an architect to extend an existing building of such historic renown "in a restrained and tactful manner". Gabriel von Seidl from Munich proved equal to the task. He understood how to combine the old and the new in a skilful way. The medieval hall kept its predominance, the new building attaches itself to the old in an unobtrusive and highly harmonic fashion.

This is the genesis of the so-called **Festsaal**, which has its own unique charm. High panels made from dark oak lend the room its elegance. A large painting by Carl Vinnen depicting a harbour scene from the 17<sup>th</sup> century lends a maritime touch to the room. The spacious Art Nouveau chandelier suspended from the ceiling is very impressive.



View of the Festsaal in the New Town Hall



The Gobel chamber

Next to the Festsaal is the slightly smaller **Kaminsaal**. Ebony-brown parquet with a warm sheen, wallpaper made of dark crimson silk and a white stucco ceiling: The hall has an aura and is a favourite for small festivities and receptions. The large oil paintings make a lively contrast to the red against the plain of the wall. The fireplace, which is made of French marble and decorated with tiles from Delft, was donated by Bremen citizens, like so many elements of the new town hall.

Namesake of the adjoining **Gobelinzimmer** is a huge wall tapestry dating from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is ideal for minor meetings and conferences and is now also used for civil weddings.

The most important room regarding current political affairs is the **Senatssaal**. At its large oval table, the Senate holds its regular meetings on Tuesdays. The wall is covered with patterned silk. On the floor, there's a gigantic carpet into which the Bremen Key is woven – a space that conveys well-being. A bust commemorates Wilhelm Kaisen, who after the war was major and President of the Senate for two decades.

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### Town Hall – Guided Tours

Bremen's "drawing room" is the market square with its greatest ornament, the town hall. Guided tours inside the historical building (in German and English) give an insight into its fascinating 600 year-long history. You will see among other things the impressive Upper Hall and will get a glimpse of its luxuriant **Güldenammer**.

Mondays to Saturdays at 4 pm and Sundays at 12 noon in english language. Mondays to Fridays at 11 am, 12 noon, 3 pm, additionally Saturdays at 4 pm and Sundays at 11 am and 12 noon in german language. (No entrance while senate receptions, meetings, or events are being held).

### Town Hall Wine Cellars

The Bremen Ratskeller belongs to the oldest and most famous ones in Germany. German wines have been served here as far back as 1404. It goes without saying, a freshly tapped Bremen beer, too. The treasure chamber as well as the Rose Cellar and the Cellar of the Apostles hide in their caves noble wines dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century.

### Bookings and More Information

You will receive further details at Tourist Information Böttcherstraße, via the service hotline +49 421-30 800 10, or on [www.bremen-tourism.de](http://www.bremen-tourism.de)

For guided tours of groups, it is also possible to visit the town hall and its wine cellars on additional dates upon request.



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UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE

  
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Andreas Bovenschulte,  
President of the Senate  
and Major of the Free  
Hanseatic City of Bremen

## BREMEN TOWN HALL AND ROLAND STATUE UNESCO WOLRD HERITAGE SINCE 2004

Our Bremen town hall casts a spell on all of our visitors. This comes as no surprise, because here history comes alive. Built more than 600 years ago, it is preserved nearly entirely in its original state. Here is where the city council met, issued their rulings, made the policy of the day and administered justice for the citizens of Bremen.

This makes the town hall a unique symbol of continuity – as the seat of government and administration of a city whose citizens were always united in one purpose: to keep and defend its independence and self-governance.

**On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July 2004, UNESCO listed our town hall and the Roland statue as a world heritage site. This is one of the world's most prestigious and at the same time most desirable honours that can be awarded to a building, neighbourhood or landscape. The Cultural Organisation of the United Nations underscores the outstanding significance of our town hall and Roland statue in their historical, political and artistic significance.**



The Town Hall and Roland Statue  
on the market square are listed as  
a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

In the explanation for its decision, the committee emphasised the singular architectural form of the late Renaissance of Northern Germany, the so-called "Weser Renaissance".

The Roland statue in turn is declared by the UNESCO experts to be one of the oldest and most representative of the existing Roland statues, which were erected as symbols of independence and market rights. As Bremen citizens, we are especially proud of these unique witnesses of our history. Similarly, all those who come to visit our city will understand immediately, once they have come face to face with either of them on a stroll over the market square and a tour of the town hall.

**On that note: A warm welcome to all our visitors!**

Yours sincerely



One of oldest indoor markets in Germany: the Lower Hall

## BOOKED-UP THE LOWER HALL

The Lower Hall impresses with its simplicity. Massive supporting pillars made from oak lend it an austere structure. Its only ornament are the picturesque portals which were added at a later period. With a roof that gave shelter from rain and the cold, this room used to be market hall and meeting place for farmers, tradesmen and travelling troubadours. Here taxes were collected and duties were paid, and the local authorities administered justice over minor trespassers. To put it in a nutshell: a much frequented multipurpose hall beaming with life – which it remains to this very day. The hall is wonderfully suitable for all kinds of events and exhibitions and is booked up all year through.



The famous "Schaffer Banquet" in the Upper Hall



A must-see: the Upper Hall

## PURE HISTORY THE UPPER HALL

A contrast that surprises: The lower building is plain, whereas the town hall's Upper Hall charms with its solemn dignity. The hall is considered Bremen's most beautiful banquet hall. Works of art and curiosities decorate the room, which is about 40 metres long and 8 metres high. Four magnificent battleship models are suspended from the ceiling. They give testimony of a time when the Bremen merchants dispatched their valuable freight over the oceans – not without protection. Richly ornamented portals lead to further chambers of the new town hall.

For many centuries, the Upper Hall served as a place of political life. Here the city council sat, here its representatives negotiated political decisions for the welfare of the city, here justice was administered. Large wall paintings, proverbs and allegorical pictures bear witness to this past.

Nowadays, the Bremen Senate and the City Major use the marvellous room for prestigious purposes. Their most splendid manifestation is the annual **Schaffermahlzeit**, the oldest fraternity supper in the world, when the tables are laid festively.

## THE TOWN HALL WINE CELLARS GOURMET FOOD IN THE BASEMENT

From the treasures on the upper floor it is not far to the gastronomic delights in the depths of the town hall. These days, the **Ratskeller**, which was originally built as the foundation of the Gothic town hall, hosts a vast selection of wines. Approximately 600 varieties of German wine are stored in the cellars. The Bremen Ratskeller is associated with a trading tradition that made an important contribution to the wine culture in Germany. Up to this day, the restaurant and wine bar feel a great obligation to this tradition, which stands for a high sensitivity in dealing with the oldest cultural drink in the world. Whoever stops by for a bite to eat or a glass of wine will be seated at long wooden tables in front of imposing old wine barrels.

Those lucky enough to be treated to the tour of the **Rose Cellar**, will get a whiff of the aroma of century-old wines. The oldest one is the Rüdeshheimer from 1653.



The Rose Cellar in the Ratskeller



The Roland statue on the market square

## THE BREMEN ROLAND STATUE "VRYHEIT DO IK JU OPENBAR"

Statues of the Knight Roland can be found in many North-German cities. They are symbols for market and trading rights. In the eyes of the experts, the Roland statue in Bremen counts as the most famous and, from an artistic point of view, the most impressive and beautiful of those statues. This is why it is on the World Cultural Heritage List.

Bremen's Roland is also a Roland of Liberty. "Freedom I do reveal to you" is written on the shield of the Bremen Roland, which was built in stone in 1404. Shortly afterwards, building work on the Bremen town hall began. Before this statue, which is made from stone, a wooden predecessor symbolized the Freedom of the City. However, the Archbishop ordered its destruction in 1366.

Roland with the pointed knees is and remains the landmark of Bremen. The citizens of Bremen are certain: As long as he stands, Bremen will remain free.