Darmstadt, October 19th, 2017 *** The Vauban district in Freiburg is considered to be an exemplary model. In its present-day appearance it emerged from a citizens’ initiative and is reckoned to be one of the greenest districts in Germany. Car-free zones, passive houses, solar roofs and rooftop gardens brought eco-glamour with them, also internationally.
**Garden gnomes go home!**

*Innovation Academy* is a non-profit association that not only organizes seminars and initiates projects, but also takes visitors as well as delegates from all over the world on a tour through the district to show them how it sets new standards with regard to architecture and living environment; how old buildings were preserved and equipped with more stories, thus being reinterpreted, and changed their functionality through self-initiative or skillful upcycling. The design of the front gardens is wild, there is no sign of smugness and it evokes thoughts of freedom and rest. A trip to their own gardening project shows those who are interested how to build a worm farm and how to grow soy, eggplants, courgettes and much more in the city. Of course, it even comes with its own colony of wild bees.
Unorthodox and sustainable – Green City Hotel Vauban

The Green City Hotel Vauban with its 48 rooms lives up to its name. It was established in 2013 and is located in the heart of the urban district Vauban. Only ten minutes from the city centre, it demonstrates that being ecological doesn’t have to mean being antiquated and impresses with contemporary design made from massive ash wood that goes perfectly with the bare concrete. Natural materials merge to form stylish furniture that is always markedly unobtrusive but never too cool. Here, Heike Makatsch shot her first Tatort “Fünf Minuten Himmel” (“Five minutes of Heaven”) among other films in
2015. At the low-tech-facade of the small city hotel twiners, rich green and as high as a house, cut their way towards the sky. They cool the building down in summer and keep it warm in winter. Besides, they cast interesting light and shadow into the rooms. Guests of the hotel can either use bikes from the adjoining bicycle hire RADieschen or get a free ticket for the local public transport and all regional trains of Deutsche Bahn (2nd class).

Active social responsibility

In this hotel 20 employees dedicatedly work together – with or without handicap and absolutely equally. Handicapped people with slender chances on the “regular” employment market get a normal position here. And the concept is proving successful: the atmosphere is relaxed and cheerful, guests appreciate that and become regulars. The breakfast offer is focused on regional and ecological products and completely dispenses with outer packaging. Guests can appease their hunger and their thirst enjoying delicacies and beverages by local suppliers. For example the Green City Hotel Vauban uses high-quality coffee from the coffee factory Zollernalb, which is an integration company as well, for the preparation of their coffee specialties.
Visitors of Freiburg can experience a sustainable tour of the market (exclusively in small groups) with DiscoverFreiburg for only 28 euros. Here, local producers share their recipes and their products can be tasted. For example, the spreads by the start-up Hakunamatata are delicious as well as the fine vinegar essence and the mustard by Ireneus Frost and the aromatic honey by Honiggalerie Heldt. The program also includes a tour through the Münster. The picturesque church windows in some cases depict horrible stories – the people didn’t understand Latin, so they needed entertainment. Another peculiarity are the colorful motives of the various guilds, in a way the first marketing tools of the 14th century!
The German Green Pearls GmbH with place of business in Darmstadt, Germany unifies international tourism companies that support environmental protection and demonstrate social commitment. Thereby, Green Pearls is the first holding company worldwide that consolidates sustainable hotels, destinations and restaurants in a global data source.

Among the criteria of admission to Green Pearls® Unique Places, are a sustainability plan on management level, sustainable architecture, comprehensive water, energy saving and waste recovery measures, the use of seasonal and regional ingredients in the kitchen, as well as a large commitment for the social balance in each of the vacation regions.

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