

MONOCLE

A BRIEFING ON GLOBAL AFFAIRS, BUSINESS, CULTURE & DESIGN

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Are you resident in the world's top liveable city?

MONOCLE ranks the **25** most alluring places to live and **5** more that require a bit of imagination

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- 01** Design Directory to engineer an exquisite household



**THE MONOCLE
GLOBAL QUALITY
OF LIFE SURVEY**

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THE WORLD'S TOP 25 MOST LIVEABLE CITIES —2008

Preface

Months of good-natured, frequently late-night and occasionally jetlagged debate have resulted in this: our definitive (and a little subjective) guide to the world's most liveable cities. Here's how we came to our conclusions.

It's perhaps fitting that we embarked on the ranking and elimination process for our second annual quality of life survey sipping rosé wine from the Bekaa Valley under lattice work and grape vines in one of the most ancient settlements in the world. Perched on the Mediterranean coast 45 minutes north of Beirut, Batroun is a town where local fishmongers and vegetable sellers drop off your early morning purchases in the late afternoon, where front doors are left wide open late into the evening and where alleyways curve and intersect, revealing glimpses of fragrant gardens and a dancing sea. Above a pebble beach (which could do with a clean-up once Lebanon sorts out some of its more urgent domestic matters) little bars will let you run an open tab for the summer. Portofino

and St Tropez it is not. On Batroun's main shopping street there's scarcely a familiar international brand name hanging above shop doorways and, unlike St Tropez, no one's going to get gassed in their sleep by a Russian gang and awake to find their villa emptied. In short Batroun is an ancient, enduring example of both quality of life and quality of place (see Richard Florida's "How Cities Renew" on p57) in its simplest, most alluring form – intimate, easy to navigate, safe, sunkissed, dotted with essential shops and services and just mildly chaotic.

As the planet becomes an increasingly urban place, delivering these life-improving essentials to cities big and small is proving more than a challenge. Radical environmental initiatives that pull cars off the streets can do wonders to curb toxic emissions, but can also kill whole neighbourhoods by depriving shop-owners of passing trade and leaving districts feeling lifeless and menacing. Inward investment programmes that promise diverse urban lifestyles to attract employees from foreign companies can boost local fortunes overnight but can ultimately drive out all those people that made the city interesting in the first place by pricing them out of the market. Governments around the world are realising that it's no longer enough to be just a financial centre, you also need to be a design capital, an ecological champion,

The selection process

If your idea of the perfect city is one where you can have a driveway full of cars that can whisk you to a number of over air-conditioned malls, where the best schools are private and good citizens are best tucked up in bed by 22.30, then our quality of life survey is not for you. To clear up any potential confusion, Monocle's survey has not been developed as a guide for ex-pats looking for their next plummy posting. Rather, it has been created to identify the cities that put its residents happiness and well-being first.

Both scientific (a few of our key metrics are listed in our ranking that follows) and subjective (it's difficult to measure whether a city is cosy or inclusive so you have to get out on the streets and experience it) our survey includes many of the obvious urban candidates but reshuffles the deck by also questioning how fun these places might be on a Tuesday evening, how many cinema screens are on offer and how little effort needs to be expended to jump on a bike, find a place to lay a towel, strip off, dive into a refreshing body of water and soak up the late summer sun.

a hub for knowledge and a magnet for creatives. Indeed, Seoul's metropolitan government is working on a fast track programme to be a global leader in all of these areas within a decade.

In the meantime, we've spent the past 12 months monitoring the progress of the 20 cities that made our cut in the 2007 quality of life survey (see last year's ranking, opposite) – while also keeping a close watch on 30 other contenders. To help refine our rankings for 2008 we added some new metrics to gauge the cultural footprint of cities as well as the ease of opening a small business. At the same time, global transport connections, excellent communications, innovative environmental initiatives, a low crime rate, attractive architecture and strong public services all helped cities advance up the list. Poor urban planning, packs of feral youth with too much time on their hands, disconnected transport links and a lack of urban village life all counted against contenders.

Over the next 216 pages we've slightly retweaked our regular editorial rhythm and devoted the entire issue to focusing on the issues, forces, people and policies that make cities work. As the best urban environments should also offer up fun and titillation at every turn, we've also made plenty of space for a splash of travel, collectibles, fashion, bare skin and essential summer media. — TB

Where they came last year

01. Munich
02. Copenhagen
03. Zürich
04. Tokyo
05. Vienna
06. Helsinki
07. Sydney
08. Stockholm
09. Honolulu
10. Madrid
11. Melbourne
12. Montréal
13. Barcelona
14. Kyoto
15. Vancouver
16. Auckland
17. Singapore
18. Hamburg
19. Paris
20. Geneva

Anyone for Gulf?

Wondering where that small, wealthy cluster of Arab states are in our list? We think none of them quite has what it takes. Here, Ali Wazani – a leading architect – gives them a ranking all of their own.

Abu Dhabi, UAE This is one the Gulf city that took its time to grow. There is an urban life in Abu Dhabi and that's why people like it so much.

Manama, Bahrain There is just one tiny area of Bahrain, called Aadliyah, that got it right. This area reminds us of some of the liveliest parts of Beirut.

Dubai, UAE If you think of new Dubai and all the towers on Sheikh Zayed Road, that's not a city at all. It has no urban planning, it's just one tower after the other. The Creek area though, which is also the oldest area, has the appearance of a real city.

Doha, Qatar There might be urban planning, but no life. It's not only about building places to live in, but also more meaningful places. The problem is, people often confuse "meaningful" with iconic.

01 <sup>Design city
—Page 119</sup>
COPENHAGEN



02
MUNICH



Copenhageners rejoice: your city (and its design) has our gold medal

Good looks, brains, perfect proportions, a sunny disposition and a sense of humour are always a winning combination – no matter what the competition. In the urban quality of life stakes a mix of all these, plus a firm grasp of environmental issues, regional transport and a variety of subjective elements (food culture, housing design, retail mix and quality of cocktails) all helped pull the city up from second place last year to global leader for 2008.

Copenhagen treats residents to a lifestyle that's hard to match: manageable scale, a clean harbour for brisk dips and abundant green space. The development of the Metro system and a commitment to cycling makes urban navigation swift and seamless. Some recent residential developments have created neighbourhoods lacking the street life that makes the rest of the city tick but it appears that developers have learnt from these mistakes. We'd happily move house if the right offer came along. — TB

Population: 509,861.

International flights: 105 weekly destinations, including 16 intercontinental.

Crime: murders, 6; domestic break-ins, 3,427.

State education: roughly 22 per cent of educational institutions are private.

Medical care: medical care at state hospitals is free for Danish citizens. Just 1.73 per cent of patients in greater Copenhagen region use private medical care.

Sunshine: annual average, 1,600 hours.

Tolerance: gay marriage was legalised in 1989. The city has had an active gender equality policy since the 1980s and is implementing better leave conditions for fathers, straight and gay.

Culture: 32 cinemas, 167 screens.

Green space: it takes less than five minutes by bike to reach a green area in the city.

Environment: 54.9 per cent of rubbish recycled in 2006 (latest available figures).

Business: 5,000 businesses start up in Copenhagen every year. In February the European Commission ranked Denmark as the fifth most innovative country in the world with regards to entrepreneurship.

Monocle fix: affordable housing and making sure this remains a cycle city – the mayor would like to introduce a congestion charge for cars.

Pipped to the post this year, 2007's champ still charms us every time

Ever since the Berlin Wall fell, Munich has been caught between the thriving of new capital, which is attracting a young crowd, and Dresden, the capital of German baroque in the east. Throw in the fact that Siemens, one of the city's largest employers, is embroiled in scandal and that for the first time since 1945 the dominance of Bavaria's arch-conservative Christian Socialist Union party looks seriously threatened, and it's easy to understand why Munich has been going through some soul-searching.

But through it all, Munich stands up to the competition (although it's a shame they dropped the plan for the Transrapid airport link). While the club scene is making creative types think twice about fleeing to Berlin, Munich's pull is still its unrivalled quality of life. It combines a strong economy with rich cultural offerings. The city's workforce is highly qualified; its universities world class. And if the walls start closing in you've got the Alps on your doorstep. — WB

Population: central city, 1.3 million.

International flights: 225 international destinations, including 76 intercontinental.

Crime: murders, 8 (down from 13); domestic break-ins, 1,129, down 15.7 per cent.

State education: Munich's two largest universities, Ludwig Maximilian University and the Technical University, are among the best in the world.

Sunshine: annual average, 1,679 hours.

Public transport: excellent, with stops close to most visitor sites. The one thing lacking is a fast rail-connection to the airport and express service in the city's vast tram and urban rail network.

Culture: 41 cinemas with 84 screens.

Shopping: shops close at 20.00 and are not open Sundays, with almost no exceptions. Munich's club scene is growing, however. Many bars and clubs are open until 03.00 or later.

Architecture: several major urban construction projects are under way aimed at reducing traffic in the centre and to create new environmentally friendly housing.

Access to nature: some of the world's best skiing, rock climbing and hiking is just an hour away, and there's a vast network of paths through the city's "green belt".

Monocle fix: they're working on it, but more affordable housing in the city.



03 TOKYO

Behind the fast-fwd stereotype lies a big city getting the basics right

Tokyo is a vast city, which means it can be maddeningly difficult to know. Astonishingly, a third of Tokyo's buildings have been erected since 1985, which means the city is always brimming with new ideas and architecture. It's also a city of unsurpassed service – stores and hotels outdo each other to attract Tokyo's fickle, demanding citizenry. Yet, despite lacking an obvious centre, this is a city that gets the basics right. Public transport runs with digital precision, people are mindful of others, and the crime rate is low. Japan's deep-seated conservatism is slowly giving way to a new generation of well-travelled, job-hopping twenty and thirtysomethings who are changing Tokyo, challenging stereotypes and creating an even more dynamic city. — HG

Population: 8.78 million; 12.88 million in Tokyo metropolis.

International flights: 96 destinations, including 67 long-haul.

Crime: murders, 135; domestic break-ins, 17,325 (Tokyo metropolis, 2006).

State education: you don't pay any fees for tuition or textbooks in state schools for the period of compulsory education. Tokyo has six prominent universities.

Medical care: there is a system of universal health coverage. How it applies to individuals depends on factors such as your age and work status.

Sunshine: annual average, 1,996 hours.

Tolerance: Tokyo employers are prohibited from discriminating against gays and lesbians, but few people come out at work.

Drinking and shopping: many of Tokyo's bars and izakaya stay open till dawn and there are numerous convenience stores.

Environment: Tokyo relies on nuclear power, although it also has hydro and thermal power plants.

Business: the Tokyo Metropolitan Government offers advice to firms looking to set up in Tokyo. But banks rarely give loans to new arrivals or non-residents.

Monocle fix: some cycle lanes might encourage a few more residents to get on their bikes.



04 ZÜRICH

Our continental European seat still impresses but occasionally irritates

It's not just liberal fiscal policies that have enticed international corporations such as Hewlett Packard, GM, Google and many others to set up in Zürich. The city's world-class education facilities and cultural offerings, great local public transport and well-connected airport mean it can satisfy even the most demanding employees.

All this may seem perfect, but the city should not rest on its laurels. Its lack of buzz and slightly unwelcoming atmosphere have led us to shift it down a notch this year. Zürich needs to be more flexible – its old-fashioned regulations for business and shopping hours should be challenged and revised. It's still up there with the best. But it needs to relax if it wants to stay there. — PE

Population: 376,815 (115,379 of whom do not hold Swiss citizenship); metropolitan area: 3 million.

International flights: 108 destinations, including 51 intercontinental.

Crime: murders, 19; domestic break-ins, 2,773.

State education: 58,000 people study at the 20 universities, colleges and higher education institutes in the Zürich region.

At higher educational level, the most important is the ETH Zürich, where 12,000 people study and which is one of the leading educational institutes in the world.

Sunshine: annual average, 1,742 hours.

Tolerance: snobbery abounds in Zürich. (see last year). There is a good gay scene, centred around Niederdorf. The canton of Zürich offers better benefits to same-sex couples than the rest of Switzerland.

Public transport: Zürich's Züri rollt scheme – a free bike service – runs all year round, with more bikes available between May and October.

Culture: 19 cinemas with 56 screens. There is a wealth of internationally acclaimed museums and a thriving contemporary art scene, with many dealers housing their collection in the city.

Monocle fix: become more of a 24-hour city – shops should open on a Sunday.



05 HELSINKI

Waterside revival, civic pride and a view to Asia bode well for the city

Six months of ice, snow and rain a year haven't stopped Helsinki, which has gone through a marked change over the past 10 years. New schemes are turning the city's harbours into urban spaces, making better use of Helsinki's position on the waterfront. Fresh names in fashion, such as Jasmin Santanen and Paola Suhonen give Finnishness a new meaning abroad, while at home in music and cinema an admiration for all things American has given way to domestic talent. The city could be more diverse ethnically – but even there, the situation is improving.

If only the shops could keep their doors open on Sundays even in the winter – we all love a day of non-commercial relaxation, but allowing some shopping doesn't take that away. — ENA

Population: central city 568,531; greater metropolitan area, 1.3 million.

International flights: 100 destinations, including 13 intercontinental.

Crime: murders, 10; domestic break-ins, 261 (down from 399).

State education: the majority of children go to state schools, which have repeatedly been rated the best in the world; 23 per cent of residents have a university degree.

Sunshine: annual average, 1,742 hours.
Temperatures: June's average temperature is 18.9C, February's is -7.9C.

Wired: Helsinki City Transport is installing a broadband network in the city's buses.

Tolerance: Helsinki has one of the lowest levels of immigration in Europe. Only 6 per cent of the city's inhabitants are not Finns, but the city is getting more diverse.

Media: Finns are avid newspaper readers; 87 per cent of the population aged over 12 years reads a newspaper every day.

Architecture: there are several interesting buildings in the pipeline, including a controversial hotel by the Swiss firm Herzog & de Meuron.

Monocle fix: reasonable prices at cafés – does a morning latte and croissant really have to cost €7? And better restaurants for lunch too (also see Briefing, page 44 and Roope Mokka essay, page 64).



Smiles better

Take your happiness into account when picking a base

When choosing somewhere to live, where might you be happiest? The first step would be to choose your country. If you live in Portugal, for example, the chances are you may be unsatisfied with your life (45 per cent). But if you have found your way to Copenhagen, there's a 66 per cent chance you will be very content with your lot.

This of course doesn't mean you will automatically be happier if you live there. The life choices you make will also have a huge impact – people who marry are happier than those who never marry, and maintaining a large circle of friends will do more for your happiness than simply earning ever-increasing amounts of money (after €38,000 a year it has less impact than other factors).

But in general choosing somewhere that has low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour, good green space and great public realm will tend to leave you happier. Stockholm scores more highly on all of these than Dublin or London. Also think about your immediate neighbours. Although most of us enjoy cultural diversity – eight out of 10 Londoners say that the mixture of people is one of the best things about it – they don't necessarily like it up close and personal. In Britain and the US, the evidence is that the more different groups you have in your neighbourhood, the lower the level of social trust and satisfaction. Choose carefully – what may be an exciting place to visit will not necessarily be where you're happiest. — BP

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06 VIENNA

Rooted in a rich but dark history, today's Vienna is looking forward

Don't be deceived by Vienna's apparent bourgeois rectitude. The capital of Austria has always been a frontier town, where cultures meet, clash and spawn new syntheses. The Viennese love to party and not just because the city hosts 123,000 students. Proud of its intellectual heritage, Vienna's art scene thrives each summer when it puts on a four-month street party at the MuseumsQuartier. The complex boasts more than 50 cultural institutions including the world-renowned Museum of Modern Art.

Vienna's local government is eco-friendly, and public transport is cheap, clean and reliable. The city has more than 1,000km of bicycle lanes. It's also one of Europe's greenest cities, with around 90 parks and gardens. — AL

Population: 1.67 million; metropolitan area: 2.3 million.

International flights: 105 destinations, including 30 intercontinental.

Crime: murders, 50; domestic break-ins 10,562.

Medical care: Austrian medical care is the best in Europe, according to Health Consumer Powerhouse.

Sunshine: annual average, 2,350 hours.

Wired: there are 124 free wi-fi hotspots, and the whole city should be covered by a super-high-speed optical-fibre network within the next 10 to 15 years.

Green space: almost 50 per cent of Greater Vienna is green space.

Culture: 61 cinemas with 171 screens.

Business: business culture is evolving, and the Vienna Business Agency is aggressively promoting the city as a business hub. Over 300 international companies have their regional headquarters in Vienna, including McDonald's and IBM, but the country's legendary bureaucracy and paperwork still acts as a drag.

Key developments: Neu-Aspern, €5bn new district north of the Danube, on the site of the Aspern aerodrome, halfway between Vienna and the Slovak capital Bratislava.

Monocle fix: free museums would help spread the cultural message.



07 STOCKHOLM

Stockholm has stopped resting on its laurels and is booming once more Stockholm, with its archipelago, pristine parks and old architecture, is pretty as a princess cake – the Swedes’ favourite birthday treat. But it’s also a bit like a powdered corpse, in the words of architect Anders Wilhelmson. Now a change is taking place, as the city experiences its biggest building boom since the 1970s.

The challenge is to keep the things all Stockholmers cherish – the open spaces, water views and small neighbourhoods – while at the same time providing enough housing for future generations. Almost 50,000 new flats are being built or planned and 33 skyscrapers are in the pipeline. Stockholm’s art scene is booming, too. New galleries are opening up and the Moderna Museet is having some of the best years in its history. — ENA

Population: 782,885. Metropolitan area: 1.9 million.

International flights: 134 destinations, including 15 intercontinental.

Crime: 25 (murders, homicides and assaults leading to death); domestic break-ins, 2,003.

State education: free state schools and universities.

Medical care: tax covers the main cost of medical care for everyone, but patients also pay an additional top-up fee. Quality is generally perceived as high, but queues have become a serious problem.

Sunshine: annual average, 1,821 hours.

Tolerance: Stockholm is generally very tolerant and diverse, although immigrants can experience problems getting a job or into the clubs on Stureplan.

Drinking: many bars are open until 02.00.

Culture: 16 cinemas, 51 screens, almost exclusively owned by one company, SF. Two big theatres, which host both Scandinavian and foreign plays.

Architecture: attitudes towards new, innovative architecture have been quite conservative and even protectionist, but are slowly changing.

Monocle fix: more and better cycle lanes and less discrimination against immigrants in the job market.



08 VANCOUVER

Culturally diverse Vancouver is gearing up for a greener Games

By accepting increased building density as official city policy, Vancouver believes it is leading the continent in addressing climate change. Last year, 7 per cent fewer cars made the daily commute to the city core.

Host of the 2010 Winter Olympics, the city is ahead of schedule in construction of infrastructure and preparation. A specialised drug unit is aimed at the city’s estimated 4,000 hydroponic marijuana-growing operations. Police are also charged with reducing homelessness, begging and the open drug market in time for the opening ceremonies.

Vancouverians are ethnically diverse, tolerant and slow to divulge that they have access to the freshest and most affordable sushi on the west coast. — JT

Population: 2,249,725 live in Vancouver’s metropolitan area.

International flights: YVR serves 64 international destinations, 46 intercontinental.

Crime: 19 murders; 4,373 break-ins.

Vancouver has the highest rate of gun-related violent crime of any major metropolitan region in Canada.

Sunshine: annual average, 1,928 hours.

Media: Vancouver is the second largest television production centre in North America, and home to some of the most concentrated media ownership in Canada.

Culture: 18 cinemas with 51 screens.

Several Cantopop stars have risen from the large Chinese community in Vancouver, and many Indo-Canadian Bollywood actors are based here.

Architecture: open to innovative builds.

Key developments: planning rules have been altered to allow taller structures. Slated for completion in 2011, Arthur Erickson’s Ritz-Carlton design is being described as a “hyperbolic paraboloid” form at 183m but will be surpassed by the Living Shangri-La tower, open early 2009.

Access to nature: Vancouver is surrounded by 18km of beaches and nearby the North Shore Mountains are home to three ski areas.

Monocle fix: tackle the crime rate.



09 MELBOURNE

Vibrant, art-loving Melbourne is booming – and sprawling

Melbourne’s economy is humming, its arts scene is thriving, and more than 1,000 new people a week are calling the city home. However, this influx has forced the state government to release more housing land on Melbourne’s fringe and the city’s 30-year development plan is being largely ignored as urban sprawl continues.

Public transport is already stretched, with no major investments planned and the city’s relaxed drinking laws are causing a moral panic about alcohol-fuelled violence. To top it all off, house prices are starting to look positively Sydney-like (they jumped 25 per cent last year). The question for Melbourne is whether the city can cope with the growing pains brought on by its own success. — JS

Population: 3,806,092 in metropolitan area.

International flights: the airport serves 45 international destinations.

Crime: murders, 33; domestic break-ins 6,285.

Sunshine: annual average, 2,190 hours.

Wired: private operators offer free hotspots around the city in cafés, bars and hotels. One free system is CafeScreen, which has 37 hotspots.

Tolerance: Melbourne offers a Relationship Declaration Register for same-sex couples and has a reputation for successful multiculturalism.

Drinking: Melbourne prides itself on its laid-back drinking scene. However, a trial programme is being run where patrons cannot enter premises after 02.00, in an effort to curb binge drinking.

Public transport: buses, trains and trams use the Metcard system, with one ticket working on all three services. Spending is concentrated on road construction.

Culture: 52 cinemas with 370 screens. Over 20 public galleries.

Architecture: planning consent is handled by individual councils, making the process patchy. The city council is promoting the development of sustainable buildings.

Monocle fix: a train line from the Central Business District to the airport.



10 PARIS Global city —Page 33

Paris has picked itself up, ready to reclaim its place as a global city

The French capital has headed up our chart this year in recognition that it is setting benchmarks in urbanism that have officials from around the world heading to meet mayor Bertrand Delanoë.

The city’s revitalised confidence (bruised after it lost out to London in the battle to host the 2012 Olympic Games and was hit by race riots in 2005) has prompted a shift in attitude: the city feels less uptight. Seeing Parisians of all varieties whizzing around on the city’s 20,000 Vélib’ bikes (the world’s biggest bike hire scheme), you sense a more playful, inventive city in the making. Add to that the celebrated café culture, independent retail and that classic architecture and you have a gâteau-sized slice of quality of life. — AT

Population: 2.2 million; 11.6 million in the metropolitan area.

International flights: 621 destinations, 360 intercontinental.

Crime: murders, 32; domestic break-ins: 8,227.

Medical care: France has a system of free universal health care. It’s ranked best in the world by the WHO.

Sunshine: annual average, 1,714 hours.

Media: four major dailies and one Paris daily as well as two tabloids and a daily sports newspaper. English-language daily the *IHT* is based in Paris.

Architecture: due to the number of protected buildings, planning consent is hard to get. The mayor plans to increase government housing by 20 per cent by 2014.

Green space: to many locals Paris does not feel like a green city and many crave greening schemes. In some Parisian parks, benches are de rigueur as walking on the grass is forbidden.

Culture: 83 cinemas, 376 screens. 119 museums. Culture is heavily subsidised. The city organises various annual events where access to museums, monuments and government buildings is free.

Monocle fix: more wi-fi spots would help as would better access to the Seine for pedestrians (also see Briefing, page 43).



11 SYDNEY

It has its problems, but changes are promised for the harbour city

What’s not to love about Sydney? Amazing views, an outdoor lifestyle, beaches on your doorstep and restaurants in abundance. In short, life is good. Unless, say many Sydneysiders, you happen to live here. Residents suffer public transport that barely works, clogged roads and outrageous property prices.

But change is in sight. The council (this is not a city usually associated with dynamic leadership) has introduced the first comprehensive review of Sydney’s development in years. The state government has chipped in with the promise of a metro rail line to the city’s northwest and the redevelopment of an old port into housing, entertainment venues and parks. Sydney seems to have realised that good looks aren’t always enough. — JS

Population: 4,336,374.

International flights: 56 destinations.

Crime: murders, 49; domestic break-ins, 29,329.

Sunshine: annual average, 2,701 hours.

Temperatures: average high in summer is 22.7C; in winter average low is 15.1C.

Tolerance: large gay community. Following the Cronulla race riots in 2005 the suburb has worked hard to overcome tensions.

Drinking: recent easing of drinks laws should help encourage more venues catering to a discerning crowd.

Public transport: Sydney’s rail services have been rated as some of the most unreliable in the world. Now, there are plans to construct a \$A12bn (€6bn) metro-style railway between the Central Business District and the city’s north-western suburbs.

Culture: 101 cinemas with 330 screens.

Green space: some 49 per cent of the Sydney region is made up of either national parks, forests or reserves.

Key developments: Barangaroo, a major redevelopment of a former port on the western edge of the CBD. (Also see Briefing page 52).

Monocle fix: a planning body with teeth that covers all of Sydney. Later weekday opening hours.



12 HONOLULU

Sun and surf make up for the 50th state’s occasional problems

Near-perfect weather and breathtaking natural scenery keep this city in our rankings in spite of overdevelopment and occasional under-funding.

Ask a Honolulu government employee about affirmative action, and you’ll get an immediate slap on the wrist: “The minorities are a majority here, so we are not aware of any such policies.” Indeed, the city’s various ethnic skeins are so interwoven it’s often impossible to untangle them. Only the native Hawaiian heritage is prized above all others with various incentives and programmes geared toward preserving it.

Locals are passionate about sports – particularly surfing. Teachers say that they know when the waves are good, because half the students call in sick. — LK

Population: 377,357; 905,601 live in the greater metropolitan area.

International flights: 18 destination (16 off-season).

Crime: murders, 19; domestic break-ins 5,777.

State education: 83.5 per cent use public education for schools and 66 per cent of those go on to university.

Sunshine: annual average, 3,110 hours.

Temperature: Honolulu’s average annual temperature is a perfect 25C,

with seasonal fluctuations of only a few degrees.

Tolerance: any race, religion or sexual proclivity goes (although Hawaiian is best).

Local Media: in addition to two daily papers, the *Advertiser* and the *Star-Bulletin*, foreign-language papers serve Japanese, Chinese and Filipino populations. *Honolulu Magazine* and *Hawaii Magazine* are the two glossies.

Culture: seven cinemas in the city centre.

Access to nature: coastline, rainforest or reserve is literally a few minutes’ drive from any area.

Environment: Honolulu received funding in 2007 to experiment with alternative fuels made from kukui nuts and coconuts.

Monocle fix: controlling the impact of tourism and second-home owners.



13

Business city
—Page 069

MADRID

State regeneration on a huge scale is making Madrid more appealing

Having lost out to Barcelona in other league tables in the past, Madrid set its sights on international elevation with the Madrid Global campaign.

Mayor Alberto Ruiz-Gallardón is also fulfilling his promise to Madrileños to change the face of their city. After burying the unpopular M-30 ring-road and promoting liberal thinking (he even officiated the gay wedding of an employee), Ruiz-Gallardón has shifted his focus to a huge regeneration scheme. Dubbed Madrid Río, the 820-hectare park will traverse six central districts and reclaim the Manzanares river banks, with surrounding streets adapted as pedestrian tributaries. All this regeneration is putting pressure on coffers, but residents seem to be enjoying the results. — ST



Population: 3,132,463.

International flights: 134 destinations, including 39 long haul.

Crime: 59 murders in Madrid's metropolitan area; 73,648 robberies, including break-ins.

State education: just 2.7 per cent of regional GDP goes on state education – the average for Spain is 4.4 per cent.

Sunshine: annual average, 2,769 hours.

Wired: plenty of cafés and bars in the centre offer wireless internet.

Drinking: at the weekend, most bars open until around 03.00. During the week, most establishments will shut around 01.00, but there will still be plenty of places in the centre to move on to.

Eating: most restaurants observe very inflexible hours: lunch is usually from 13.30 until 16.00, while dinner is from around 20.00 to 23.30. Trying to get a meal outside those hours is usually futile.

Green space: the city's lungs are the Retiro, a 350 acre park.

Public transport: Madrid has an excellent public transport system, which has benefited from a major expansion project over recent years. It is also cheap: €1 for a single, and €6.70 for a 10-journey ticket.

Monocle fix: plan the regeneration projects better to avoid the whiff of street chaos.

City branding ticksheet

For metropolises on the make, here's your to-do list

- Stop running ads.** They're too expensive and unless they're pitch-perfect, they make you look second-rate.
- Call Frank Gehry – and hang up on him.** Great architecture is splendid, but the “we hired a famous architect” gambit isn't the infallible branding play it once was.
- Put your anomalies to work.** Just because you're unhappy with an aspect of your city's history or landscape doesn't mean tourists feel the same way.
- Create a sense of place on the ground.** Rio's black and white pavements or Norman Foster's metro entrances in Bilbao (above) are constant reminders you couldn't be anywhere else.
- Become the centre of something.** Build on something true to you that locals can get behind, even if it's bizarre. Rakvere, Estonia will hold the 2008 world sumo championships. But then Kaido Höövelson, one of the world's top wrestlers, is a local.
- Synchronise tourism and investment promotion.** This stops tourism officials from getting folksy and reminds the investment bureau there's more to foreign business than hard numbers.
- Get a movie filmed in your 'hood.** It doesn't even have to be that flattering: *Strawberry and Chocolate* showed Habaneros raising pigs in their homes and still made Havana look sexy and interesting. And interesting, after all, is what you want to be. — JH
Jeremy Hildreth is head of place branding at Saffron

NEW ENTRY

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BERLIN

A thirst for radical ideas makes Berlin our culture leader

To paraphrase the writer and Berlin lover Karl Scheffler, “Berlin is a city damned to be forever changing, but never become.” More than 80 years on the sentiment still holds true – if maybe not for much longer. Berlin's centre has been reinvigorated by ad agency executives, gallerists and the diplomats and government bureaucrats who moved here when Berlin once again became the capital of Germany in 1999. Until the financiers come, Berlin remains a laboratory for artists, a playground for international nomads and an increasingly attractive business location for Germany's creative and media classes. But who knows? In a few years Berlin might be more than a city that, in the words of its inimitable mayor, is “poor, but sexy”. — ATZ

Population: 3.4 million.

International flights: 144 destinations, including 20 intercontinental.

Crime: murders and manslaughter, 70; domestic break-ins, 6,933.

State education: with more than 130,000 students spread out over three major universities, four arts schools, seven colleges of science and 14 private colleges, Berlin could be described as a university town.

Sunshine: annual average, 1,625 hours.

Wired: more than 95 per cent of Berliners are able to access broadband internet.

Public transport: Berlin's public transportation system is one of the most safe and reliable in Europe. The city's sizeable population of nightcrawlers is well served.

Architecture: Berlin has space to build, but a planning straightjacket on size and look imposed by the city's powerful planning authority has sadly kept architectural creativity in check.

Environment: since 2006 the public transport system has added 14 hydrogen-fuel-cell buses to its fleet.

Business: Berlin has made great strides in this respect in recent years, and the city's full-service agency for start-ups and relocation has earned a good reputation.

Monocle fix: a proper international airport would be good.



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BARCELONA

Instead of pandering to tourists, the city is putting residents first

Barcelona's Ajuntament has reacted well to claims that the city is losing its edge to the capital. Little can be done to slough the resentment felt by Catalans toward the vast numbers of tourists, but the city is shifting its focus away from tourism. A new law to regulate the use of apartments in the centre has seen almost 600 properties revert from short-term holiday rentals to permanent *apartamentos*. Transport and infrastructure is also receiving more funding. Use of bicycles has risen a staggering 81 per cent since last year, thanks largely to the citywide rental business, and an additional 28km of cycle lanes are under construction. Jean Nouvel's Parc Central in the developing district of Poble Nou is the latest in a series of green space initiatives. — ST

Population: 1,603,178.

International flights: 105 destinations (2007), including 15 intercontinental.

Crime: murders, 82; domestic break-ins 7,091 (Catalonia region).

Medical care: free providing you are registered with the *Servei Català de la Salut* public health system, which will provide you with a *targeta sanitària individual* (TSI card) that is valid throughout Spain.

Wired: A TSI will also entitle you to a 60 per cent discount on prescribed drugs.

Sunshine: annual average, 2,524 hours.

Wired: there are no plans for free public access but many cafés offer wi-fi.

Tolerance: immigration is a sore point among those who blame crime on the rising illegal immigrant population. But otherwise seen as a tolerant city.

Public transport: heavily funded and affordable bus, metro and tram system with Biofuel projects beginning to take off, and a new AVE and Metro link to the airport is well under way.

Business: Barcelona Activa is a new business incubator created in support of entrepreneurs, innovation, professional improvement and the creation of jobs.

Monocle fix: keep looking after the locals while making sure that levels of tourism are kept in check.



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MONTRÉAL

Canada's French capital steals our hearts, but leaves us less than green

Like Montréal's traditional greeting – a two-cheek kiss – life in *la belle ville* retains a Gallic flair. Montréalers are famed for their love of wine, cigarettes and poutine, though they've begun to embrace healthier living – two years ago, smoking was banned in bars and restaurants.

As Canada's cultural capital, fashion designers, musicians and writers are a major export. There are also booming video game, special effects and aerospace industries. The gap between rich and poor, however, is growing – one-quarter of families live on low incomes. Montréal lags behind when it comes to recycling, but eco-consciousness is rising: the Lachine Canal is being cleaned up for boating and biking, while sustainable housing is popping up. — AKW

Population: 1.9 million. 3.7 million in the greater metropolitan area (2006).

International flights: airport serves 67 destinations including 47 intercontinental.

Crime: murders, 43; domestic break-ins, 14,051 (2006).

Medical care: free and universal, but overburdened – one-third of Montréalers don't have a regular GP.

Sunshine: annual average, 2,029 hours.

Wired: the non-profit *Île Sans Fil* offers free access to hundreds of downtown wi-fi spots.

Tolerance: gay marriage has been legal since 2004. More than one in four residents is an immigrant, encouraging a diverse mix of cultures.

Public transport: the modernist metro, with a network of buses and commuter trains, serves 361 million riders a year.

Media: the city has four major daily newspapers, three French, one English.

Architecture: cutting-edge, sustainable housing developments using geothermal energy are underway.

Green space: over 1,000 green spaces.

Business: government agencies and venture capitalists are keen on start-ups in the hot high-tech sector.

Monocle fix: safer roads: Vespa-sized pot-holes can make driving hazardous.



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Retail city
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FUKUOKA

Japan's quality-of-life and shopping capital lives up to its sizeable hype

Every so often the Japanese media hone in on a city and proclaim it to be the new place to live; and these days it's all about Fukuoka. Some 889 km from Tokyo, Fukuoka sits on the northern tip of Kyushu, one of Japan's further-flung islands. It has all the advantages of a big city – excellent shopping, outstanding food, good transport links – with all the cosiness of a smaller, provincial town. Friendly, safe and clean, its proximity to East Asia – Shanghai is closer than Tokyo – means that Fukuoka is one of the most cosmopolitan cities in Japan. Fukuoka has good museums, a symphony hall and a multi-storey 24-hour book shop. Best of all, Fukuoka has a feeling of openness in its sea air and green spaces – a rarity in Japanese cities. — FW

Population: 1,426,724.

International flights: seven destinations, all to Asia except one to Guam, US.

Crime: murders, 12; domestic break-ins 1,688, including 209 where nothing was stolen.

State education: Fukuoka has 11 universities; 72,439 students in 2007. In terms of the proportion of students, Fukuoka ranks third in Japan.

Medical care: Japanese company employees and public workers get medical insurance from their employer. Those who are independent or have no jobs have to join the national health insurance scheme. People pay roughly 30 per cent of their medical costs.

Sunshine: annual average, 1,937 hours.

Tolerance: Fukuoka is a merchant town and it has a long history of hospitality. The city encourages co-existence regardless of sex or nationality.

Public transport: excellent public transport: cheap, clean, safe and punctual.

Architecture: Fukuoka is a popular stop for architecture pilgrims, with everything from Rem Koolhaas' Nexus development to the spectacular half-submerged greenhouses designed by Toyo Ito.

Monocle fix: a route to the West Coast of America.

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AMSTERDAM

Tolerance and innovation are key to the Dutch city's appeal

Amsterdam's combination of canals, bicycles, green spaces and stunning old and new architecture is hard to beat. And, despite some locals' concerns over immigration, it remains a tolerant haven amid Europe's urban discontents.

Because of its dynamic, can-do atmosphere, Amsterdam has successfully transformed itself from a traditional transport and trade hub into a centre for science and technology.

With its cycling tradition – there's almost one bike per person – Amsterdam had a head start in environmental terms. It is one of the first cities in the world to switch on to energy-saving street lighting. The city will continue to be a magnet for business and a good place to lead a relatively stress-free life. — BW

Population: 743,104.

International flights: Schiphol Airport serves 110 intercontinental destinations.

Crime: murders, 27 (January to end of November 2007); domestic break-ins 5,447.

Sunshine: annual average, 1,524 hours.

Wired: cheap wi-fi available across the city.

Tolerance: Amsterdam is one of Europe's most multicultural cities; 34.5 per cent of its citizens are non-western immigrants.

Culture: 11 cinemas with 60 screens. There are over 50 museums.

Architecture: the number of houses increased by only 795 in 2006, even though 4,043 new houses were built, as the city is bulldozing some of its most run down post-war housing estates. Space is a problem – residents of the historic houses that line the central hub canals have to wait up to seven years for parking permits.

Public transport: public transport carries a million people a day for a basic fare of €1.60. Construction of the new North-South metro Line 52 is four years late.

Environment: a world-leading plant turns household waste into electricity that serves 161,000 households, all trams and underground trains and street lighting.

Monocle fix: as in many cities, there's a need for more affordable housing.

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MINNEAPOLIS

A rustbelt revival is attracting young art, new money – and old problems

For the first time in a generation, population, housing and jobs all climbed last year. Corporate giants have bankrolled multimillion-dollar redesigns of cultural buildings and near-weekly festivals. The Twin Cities' culinary reputation is on the rise, artists are staking out rehabbed warehouses, and young professionals are moving in, attracted by the low cost-of-living-to-culture ratio.

Minneapolitans pride themselves on their community ethos, with two-thirds of neighbourhoods organising block clubs to prevent crime and connect citizens. Yet they're often segregated by race and class, especially in schools. There is also an infrastructure problem. Public transport is weak, and leaders spar over who can do the most to remedy it. — RDB

Population: 372,833; metro area: 3 million.

International flights: Seven destinations from Minneapolis International Airport, five of them intercontinental.

Crime: murders, 47 (2007); burglaries (domestic and business), 6,179.

State education: the well-regarded, 50,000-student university is one of the largest public schools in the country.

Medical care: United Health Foundation has ranked Minnesota as the healthiest state for four of the past five years.

Sunshine: annual average, 2,504 hours.

Temperatures: in January: low -16C, high -6C. In July: low 17C, high 28C.

Wired: a broadband provider is working on a project to blanket all 153 sq km of the city with wi-fi.

Tolerance: despite an "everybody's white" myth, racial minorities make up one-third of the population.

Culture: Minneapolis's 30 performance venues have more seats-per-capita than any US city, save New York.

Environment: more than 90 per cent of households recycle, and there are 80 green rooftops. Leftover food at the Mall of America is picked up by a pig farmer.

Monocle fix: repeal of the Prohibition-era ban of selling alcohol on Sundays, and selling beer and wine at grocers.



Action plan

Wondering why your town is absent?

Is there a fail-safe recipe for creating a city that offers superior quality of life? We think so. For cities that have a few basic assets working in their favour (decent geography, reasonable security and occasional sunshine) but are lacking in other areas the following formula will go some distance in helping less loved capitals find their way into our top 20 ranking.

The Monocle Urban Recovery Recipe

- 01 Gather one mayor, a couple of planners, a handful of influential developers, two to three financiers and a clutch of journalists.
- 02 Put them on a bus, make them get out and walk and have them ride bikes to sample their city from every possible level and angle.
- 03 Record their findings and frustrations.
- 04 Have them list the top 10 opportunities.
- 05 Book them on a world tour and have them sample a cocktail of cities that excel in a variety of areas.
- 06 Get them to document their findings and create an exhibition that demonstrates what's missing in their city and what can be achieved.
- 07 Develop a checklist of quick fixes while working on a longer term recovery strategy.
- 08 Build a working group that invites the brightest minds from around the world to constantly improve the recipe.
- 09 Ensure you keep residents updated and active in the process.
- 10 If all else fails, you can simply use the mix of ingredients below – be sure to mix vigorously!

- 7.5% **Kyoto** for the scale of its sidestreets and cosiness
- 12.5% **Copenhagen** for its transport, green space and handsome locals
- 2.5% **Beirut** for chaos meets intimacy and Boubouffe schwarma deliveries
- 5% **London** for its parks, diversity and remaining urban villages
- 4% **Berlin** for its lake and low cost of living
- 7.5% **Paris** for staying power and global access
- 2.5% **Rome** for climate, food and apartment potential
- 1.5% **São Paulo** for its urban country clubs – such as the Paulista
- 5% **Munich** for its position at the heart of Europe and coffee at Bar Centrale
- 5.5% **Zürich** for its excellent airport, public transport and bathing clubs
- 3.5% **Melbourne** for its food and eclectic neighbourhoods
- 12.5% **Tokyo** for its 24-hour-a-day metabolism, safety and endless possibilities
- 2.5% **Barcelona** for its enduring attractiveness and modernist apartments
- 3.5% **Sydney** for the climate, home-grown café culture and that harbour
- 4% **Fukuoka** for its street style, entrepreneurial spirit and toasted "katsandos" at the With the Style hotel
- 3.5% **Helsinki** for its outstanding public services and fast flight times to Asia
- 4.5% **Stockholm** for its funkis apartment buildings and well styled residents
- 2.5% **Buenos Aires** for its grandeur and well priced quality of life
- 3.5% **Montréal** for retaining its identity on a continent that gravitates toward mediocre solutions
- 1.5% **Hamburg** for its current rethink of its harbour
- 2.5% **Minneapolis** for seizing a cultural agenda
- 2.5% **Genoa** for its sense of potential



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KYOTO

Green and arty Kyoto has been setting the agenda for centuries

Despite its image abroad as a buttoned-up temple town, this city of almost 1.5 million is home to some of the world's most forward-thinking firms, including Nintendo, Kyocera and Wacoal, a thriving art scene and bars and nightclubs that stay open till sun-up and offer something for everyone, from jazz to hip-hop.

As one would expect, the home of the Kyoto Protocol on climate change is taking the lead on environmental issues too. Since introducing buses to Japan about 100 years ago, Kyoto's public transport system has grown into one of the best in the nation, with a reach that sees every one of its 25,000 local government workers use subway, trains, buses and trams to travel to and from work. — HG

Population: 1.46 million.

International flights: Kansai airport 57 destinations, 27 long-haul.

Crime: murders, 21; break-ins, 2,946.

Sunshine: annual average, 1,829 hours.

Temperatures: in January the average temperature is 5.8C, in August 29.1C.

Architecture: take your pick from buildings by Sachio Otani and Tadao Ando, as well as temples and shrines that include an impressive 17 World Heritage-listed buildings. Kyoto has strict regulations pertaining to its cityscape, including the protection of its *machiya* (old style townhouses).

Green space: 24.4 per cent of Kyoto is green, thanks to the hills to its northwest and a large park in Uji City.

Environment: the Kyoto Protocol was agreed here in 1997. Green schemes include the national "Cool Biz" effort to keep air conditioner use to a minimum and regulations to improve the city's river.

Key developments: A redevelopment on the southern side of Kyoto train station is already attracting clued-up home buyers, and new planning laws outlaw ugly buildings and billboards.

Monocle fixes: simpler address system – Kyoto has few street names and the way of writing addresses even confuses locals.



COULD DO BETTER —Global

Preface

This year we expanded our quality of life survey to list 25 cities (up from 20 last year). It's let us put the spotlight on a group of cities – some new, some on the slide – that with simple fixes could become winners.



21 HAMBURG

Germany's liberal publishing hub has to work harder to keep the talent
With its coalition of CDU and Greens, Hamburg is emblematic of Germany's new Bürgerlichkeit, or middle class. It demonstrates a will to solve problems rather than be bound by ideological rifts.

A seaport city with centuries-old international links, Hamburg's openness and liberal world view can be felt from the gritty bars on the Reeperbahn to the editorial offices of Germany's leading newspapers and magazines that have their headquarters here. A number of advertising companies, musicians and artists have left for the capital, but the Hanseatic port is fighting back, reasserting itself with aggressive urban renewal, and a new research centre focusing on the threat posed by the rising sea. — WB



22 SINGAPORE

High futurism is being met by more civic freedom in Singapore – at last
Since gaining independence from Britain in 1965, Singapore has leapfrogged to First World status in barely two generations. Today, it is shifting its social and cultural mores at a rate that bewilders even its citizens. There is a growing political outspokenness that, 10 years ago, would have been unthinkable under the famously censorial government. But there is still much more to be done here.

The careful stockpiling of reserves and a prudent fiscal policy that has shielded the economy from the worst of the global financial crisis, and a canny immigration policy have lured in many bold-faced investments; among them an F1 leg, the 2010 Youth Olympics and two massive casino resorts. — DW



23 GENEVA

Geneva is lovely but a little staid: the canton could afford a few changes

While the likes of Procter & Gamble and Nissan enjoy the attractive incentives offered by the canton, employees love the quick journey-times to the slopes, the lake and the generally high standards that underline daily life.

Geneva didn't do anything wrong over the past year but it didn't do much that's new either. In many ways this is the city's blessing – and curse. For a town as affluent as Geneva, it could tear down its airport and start again, it could loosen up its retail hours and shake things up architecturally. On a dazzling sunny day it's near unbeatable, but on a rainy Sunday in July its lack of diversions can be suffocating. All that said, it's still a global leader for global leaders. — TB



24 LISBON

Don't tell the mallrats, but Lisbon is becoming an Iberian cultural hub

Despite the recent surge in supersize retail, Lisbon has maintained its appeal. The tessellated sidewalks remain, as does the rich café culture and the modest inhabitants. Then there's the exhilarating approach over the old bridge and beige apartment blocks. Most cite the climate with cool breezes and lots of sun; the long beaches and the vibrant nightlife where DJs don't get going until 03.00.

Today, the city famous as a port for storied navigators is looking to its waterfront. Officials plan to convert dock areas into parks, the Santos area has become a design hub and museums dedicated to Asian art have opened. Problems: lacklustre education and healthcare systems and the limited metro system. — IC



25 PORTLAND

Portland skis into our good books, but needs better connections

It's not just Oregon's numerous Douglas fir that make Portland a green city. It's also its 20-plus LEED-certified buildings, the 70km of light rail, 37 farmers markets, and its exemplary cycle culture. Situated on the shores of two rivers, Portland sits back-dropped by the fir-flecked West Hills, in the shadow of Mount Hood, one the highest peaks in the US.

Most of the year the trees and peaks remain shrouded by grey but in summer residents head 30 minutes east to windsurfer's haven, the Columbia River Gorge, or 90 minutes west to the Pacific's swells for surfing. Within Portland are 267 parks and leisure facilities and 500km of biking paths. Issues: dealing with the terrible traffic out of town – and that rain. — KC