PRESS RELEASE

14th Berlin Burlesque Festival: Three Nights of International Stage Art, Glamour, Freedom and Attitude

Germany’s first internationally renowned burlesque festival returns to Berlin from 15 to 17 October 2026 — featuring artists from all over the world, live music, Surprise Awards, and a curated programme between variety theatre, empowerment and grand show culture.

Berlin, 2026 — The Berlin Burlesque Festival celebrates its 14th international edition from 15 to 17 October 2026, once again bringing international stage art, glamour, humour, sensuality, elegance and contemporary burlesque to Berlin.

Over three festival nights, newcomers meet acclaimed international stars, classic burlesque tradition meets modern performance art, and Berlin nightlife culture meets the international variety and cabaret scene. The shows will take place on 15 and 16 October at Heimathafen Neukölln and on 17 October at Wintergarten Varieté.

As Germany’s first internationally known burlesque festival, the Berlin Burlesque Festival has established itself as a fixture in the European cultural landscape since its founding. Each year, a cast is curated from more than 500 video applications from around the world, bringing together diversity, talent, skill, elegance, courage and the extraordinary.

The result is three nights that present burlesque not only as entertainment, but as highly professional stage art: luxurious, political, humorous, physical, precise, sensual and international.

From Seoul to Berlin, from Toronto to Rome, from São Paulo to the spotlight: The Berlin Burlesque Festival 2026 brings together artists from Europe, North America, South America, Australia and Asia — showing how relevant, diverse and artistically sophisticated modern burlesque is today.

A Stage for Values, Long Before They Became a Trend

Since its very first edition, the Berlin Burlesque Festival has stood for values that are now widely discussed under terms such as body positivity, diversity, inclusion, age diversity, queer visibility and bodily self-determination. On this stage, these values were never marketing language, but lived reality.

Here, bodies are not judged, but celebrated. Here, artists of different origins, age groups, gender identities, bodies and lived experiences stand in the spotlight. People with and without physical disabilities, international performers, queer artists, newcomers and legends share one stage — not as an exception, but as a matter of course.

This is not about lecturing. It is about presence.

The Berlin Burlesque Festival shows what happens when freedom, craft, desire, humour, elegance and attitude come together. When glamour is not surface, but an expression of self-empowerment. When beauty is not standardised. When an evening at the theatre can be entertainment, art and social commentary all at once.

Marlene von Steenvag — Empress of Burlesque

At the heart of the festival is Marlene von Steenvag, internationally known as the “Empress of Burlesque”. As a producer, artist and ambassador for freedom, diversity and self-determination, she has played a key role in shaping the perception of burlesque in Germany.

Marlene von Steenvag brought burlesque in Germany to a level where the art form was newly perceived by the media, cultural institutions and audiences: not as a niche, not as a nostalgic show element, but as an independent, high-quality and socially relevant stage art form.

She has performed publicly on international stages and privately for some of Europe’s most renowned houses. Her glamour stands for far more than elegance and beauty. It stands for emancipation, equality, appreciation, artistic freedom and the right to make oneself visible.

With the Berlin Burlesque Festival, Marlene von Steenvag has created a platform that combines international excellence, artistic diversity and professional visibility — proving year after year that burlesque can be luxurious, bold, political and deeply entertaining all at once.

International Cast 2026

The 2026 line-up brings together international highlights, established audience favourites and exciting new voices from the scene.

The artists include:

Joona Bae from South Korea, Ruby Moon from Canada, Fifi Fantôme from Canada, Halena Lou from Canada, Valerie Solstix from the USA, Bob’beyonce from the USA, Lola Itsy from Italy, Fanny Damour from Italy, Vesper Lynn from Italy, Donna Poderosa from Brazil/Italy, Jade Felina from Brazil, Lila Koi from Australia, Apolo D’Vino from Switzerland, Rebelle Bettie from Switzerland, Liu Bohème from Switzerland, Shades of Jade from Switzerland, Nathalie Sonnenschine from Poland, Martwa from Poland, ArtArtur from Poland, Ombre Ludique from Iran, Deeva D from the United Kingdom, Pandora Carnage from the United Kingdom, as well as numerous artists from Germany, including La Rubinia, Melissa Lee, Foxic Poison, The Dia Show, Kittie Mooncat & Mr. Purry Mooncat, Raketenmieze & The Breast Mates, Cowboy Pillows and Queen Rei from Germany/Brazil.

The evenings will be hosted by international hosts including Jack Woodhead from the United Kingdom, Eve Champagne and Lilly Mortis. Behind the scenes, Lady White Rabbit from France and Eleonora Silva, among others, will ensure the smooth running of the festival.

BBF Awards: Honouring Attitude, Culture and Extraordinary Personalities

A special part of the Berlin Burlesque Festival are the Surprise Awards. They honour personalities who have left a special mark through artistic, political, personal or cultural attitude.

Applications are not possible for these awards. They are decided each year by a secret committee and presented during the festival. The awards honour people who make a difference in the cultural landscape — not always loudly, but sustainably; not always at the centre of attention, but with great impact.

The Surprise Awards give the festival an additional cultural dimension: they make visible that stage art does not emerge in a vacuum, but is part of social developments, personal stories and courageous decisions.

Live Music as a Festival Signature

With The Sazerac Swingers from Germany, a multi-award-winning band will be on stage, shaping the sound, energy and rhythm of the festival as they have done for many years. Their music combines jazz, entertainment and stage presence — making the Berlin Burlesque Festival an experience that goes far beyond classic show formats.

Live music, international performance, costume art, comedy, choreography, storytelling and grand stage moments merge into a festival format that is equally glamorous, intelligent and emotional.

Three Nights. Two Iconic Berlin Stages. One Festival.

15 October 2026 — The Grand Opening

Heimathafen Neukölln, Berlin

16 October 2026 — The Friday Night

Heimathafen Neukölln, Berlin

17 October 2026 — The Saturday Night

Wintergarten Varieté, Berlin

With Heimathafen Neukölln and Wintergarten Varieté, the festival brings together two distinctive Berlin stage worlds: the urban energy of Neukölln and the capital's grand variety theatre tradition. Between red velvet, stage lights, live music, couture, comedy and international performance, a festival feeling emerges that is luxurious, wild, precisely curated and unmistakably Berlin.

Press Accreditation

Media representatives, photographers, cultural editors, city magazines, radio, TV, online media and trade press are invited to apply for accreditation for the Berlin Burlesque Festival 2026.

The festival offers numerous editorial angles: international artists, contemporary burlesque as stage art, body politics, age diversity, queer visibility, inclusion, Berlin nightlife culture, variety theatre tradition, live entertainment, fashion and costume art, international cultural work, Surprise Awards, and the question of why burlesque is experiencing a new artistic and social relevance worldwide.

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