

A couple is seen from behind, sitting on a rooftop with a green roof. They are looking out over the Budapest skyline, which includes the St. Stephen's Basilica and the Chain Bridge. The sky is a mix of blue and white clouds.

 *Catch Budapest*

99
CITY SECRETS
AND
URBAN TALES

**A DIFFERENT GUIDE TO
BUDAPEST**

INTRODUCTION

Budapest. Its name evokes a majestic castle over the hill, a giant Parliament and the wide Danube river, but also cheap alcohol, heavy food and partying among ruins until the sun comes up. And while all of this is true, Budapest is so much more than the obvious. It's a dynamic city in a constant state of flux that invites you to peel back its multiple layers and to never stop exploring. You can literally spend years in Budapest and still discover something new all day, every day. This is the city we call home and although we spent half of our lives moving and traveling, Budapest lured us back every single time.

Throughout the 99 chapters of this book, we want to invite you on a journey through the streets of this city full of contradictions. We want to show you the majestic, but also the crumbling; the nostalgic but also the hypermodern. We want you to see more than gaudy downtown and all those flawless bars, cafés and restaurants. We want you to peek behind the facades and doorways, to leave your comfort zone and to walk with your eyes

wide open for the little things. Since keep in mind that it's often the story behind that makes a seemingly ordinary place so special.

Discover secret inner courtyards and the most beautiful buildings off the beaten tourist trails. Visit those little cafés, bars, shops and markets that refused to give in to the expectations of the masses.

Embark on a time travel through the many eras of Budapest's history: See the most romantic Ottoman remains, the proud traces of the Monarchy but also the ever-present legacy of roughly 50 communist years. Hop on unique and scenic means of transportation and view the city from different angles. Or take a little downtime and enjoy the peaceful beauty of the many secluded parks and the Buda Hills.

Budapest's distinctiveness shows on every corner once you leave your doorstep. Don't be afraid to give into it and let this gorgeous capital capture you - with all of its beauty, edginess, rough sides, flaws and virtues.

3. HUNGARIAN ART NOUVEAU

Upper-Class Eye-Candies from the Turn of the Century

Perfect for: architecture-lovers, photographing

Why you need to see them: Because these are simply the most beautiful buildings in whole entire Budapest.

You don't have to be a die-hard fan of architecture (or an architect) to fall in love with the Art Nouveau building style. Bright colors, little ornaments, lots of decorative elements and a general splendor with attention to the tiniest details are what characterize this building style meant for the rich and famous of the turn of the century. Art Nouveau (and the related Secessionist) buildings are what experts call "total works of art": Each one of them is a real "Gesamtkunstwerk", where beauty is meant to be at literally every corner. Buildings where everything comes together in harmony to give you an eye-candy you won't ever forget: the inside, the outside, the furniture and even the surroundings. And although some of these elements



5. BAKANCSOS STREET FLEA MARKET

Budapest, where are You?

Perfect for: getting hold of stuff, thrifting your way through Budapest's most peculiar flea market

Why you need to do it: Because it's Budapest's most peculiar flea market and there's literally nothing you won't find here if only you look properly.

This flea-market is nothing for the faint-hearted. While usually it's the Ecseri Market that makes it into all guides it's really tiring how tourist buses arrive there every day and how much the vendors got adapted to this. Perfect English, high prices, carefully sourced goods - meh. The adventure-factor went sort of missing. This is not the case with the Bakancsos Street Flea Market, where you'll seriously ask yourself what planet you're on. First of all, prepare for a hell of a long ride deep into the suburbs and probably some shady faces along the way. But this is part of the

25. THE ÉTKEZDÉK

The Canteens of Goulash Communism

Perfect for: time travel, traditional Hungarian lunch, experiencing everyday-life during communist times, Budapest on a budget, lunching with locals and aboriginal Budapestians

Why you need to see them: Because they'll give you the weirdest kind of time travel, straight into the era of Goulash-Communism.

Although probably no sane person would actually love to travel back to communist times, there are certain things that - in retrospect - make Hungarians chuckle and even bring a weird feeling of nostalgia. Even to those that never actually lived in communist Budapest. One of these things is definitely Budapest's canteens. They are very simple places with basic but fresh lunch menus and a setting that will take you straight back into the 20th century. Just a few decades ago "étkezdék" were the go-to places for socializing and chatting around midday, while they were filling the stomachs with cheap (i.e. around 900HUF-cheap for



36. THE INNER COURTYARDS

Little Wonderlands behind the Facades

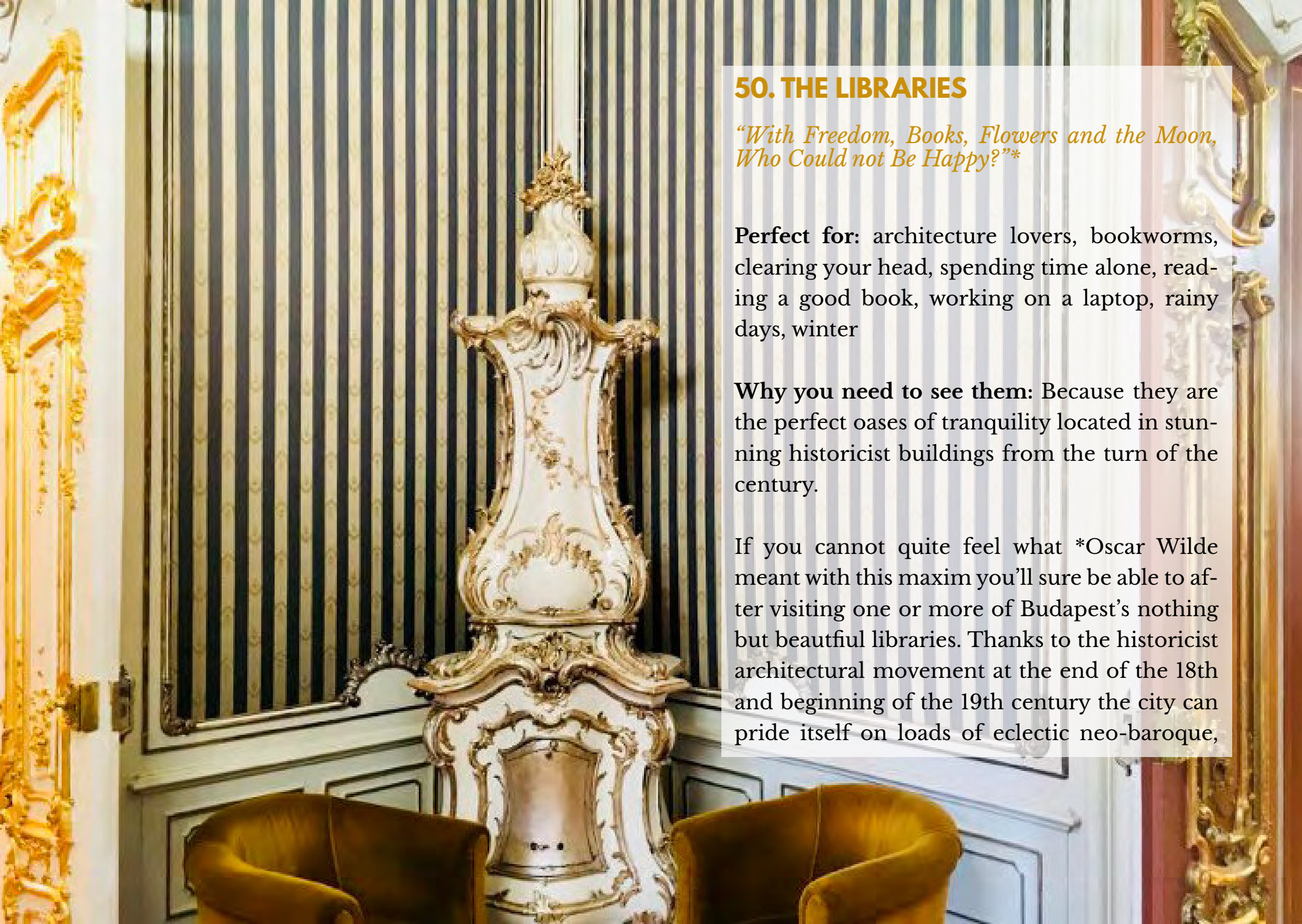
Perfect for: looking behind what defines Budapest's streetscape, finding out how Budapestians live behind the closed gateways, surprising yourself

Why you need to see them: Because the beauty behind the often crumbly facades will truly surprise you.

Hidden from most eyes, concealed by often crumbly facades, withheld and often completely unseen. Yes, most of Budapest's inner courtyards and stairwells only allow for a sneak-peek between the opening and closing of a gateway. Unless you are of the courageous type...

... and it's worth to be courageous since what lies behind many of the closed doors will take your breath away. Architectural masterpieces, beautiful frescos, a whole ecosystem of colorful plants and flowers and the general care and effort many residents put into what they call their homes. The





50. THE LIBRARIES

*“With Freedom, Books, Flowers and the Moon,
Who Could not Be Happy?”**

Perfect for: architecture lovers, bookworms, clearing your head, spending time alone, reading a good book, working on a laptop, rainy days, winter

Why you need to see them: Because they are the perfect oases of tranquility located in stunning historicist buildings from the turn of the century.

If you cannot quite feel what *Oscar Wilde meant with this maxim you’ll sure be able to after visiting one or more of Budapest’s nothing but beautiful libraries. Thanks to the historicist architectural movement at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century the city can pride itself on loads of eclectic neo-baroque,

68. PÁNTLIKA PAVILLON

A Sunny Terrace and the Spike of a once Sinister Star

Perfect for: outdoor eating and drinking, a sunny day, spring & summer, a romantic date, meeting friends, hanging out, enjoying the sun, learning a fun story about Budapest's communist times

Why you need to do it: Because eating retro burgers, drinking and chatting freely under the sun at this particular place is how to make the best of history.

Colorful chairs, lush green trees, people chatting, delicious burgers and outdoor chilling right in the big City Park. At first glance, Pántlika looks like lots of other heavenly terraces of Budapest - a cozy oasis for the warmer season. Except that it's not, especially if you take a good look at the story of this peculiar place and see that it's a lot more than what meets the eye:

During communist times, the HUNGEXPO (Hungarian Expo; Hungarian "international" fair – was



82. SZÉCHENYI HILL

Beverly Hills with a View

Perfect for: a day trip, an undisturbed & unique panorama, experiencing the “rich” & fancy Budapest, discovering a traditional Hungarian restaurant without the fuzz, riding a peculiar vehicle

Why you need to see it: Because you’ll have a view of Budapest only a few people have had. And you’ll never forget it.

Budapest’s twelfth district is nothing for the working-class. If you want to build your next villa and settle down here for good, however, this is the neighborhood to do it. It’s a peaceful, quiet and green area far above ordinary downtown in class, taste and mentality. Which is understandable as the view is breathtaking. Come here to see Budapest from a completely unique perspective you won’t get from anywhere in the city center. It’s a sight reserved for the privileged who can afford to ride up here with their shiny cars because depending on public transportation here sucks.



88. TRAPÉZ BAR

If Only it Could Talk...

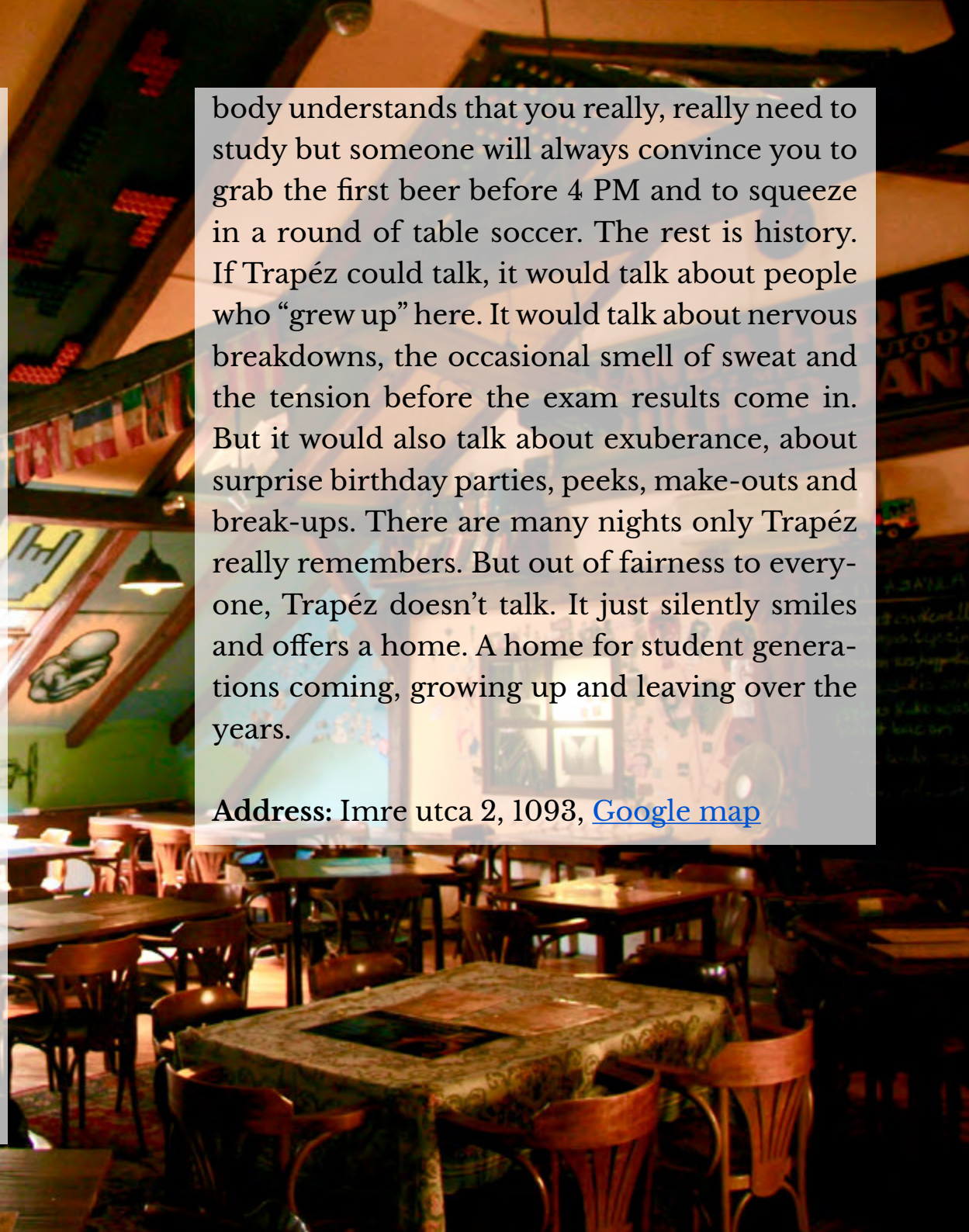
Perfect for: meeting friends, studying, working on a laptop, drinking, cheap alcohol, being surrounded by students

Why you need to see it: Because it's the second home to a large part of Budapest's student population. And it has a soul.

This is more than a simple student hangout. Trapéz literally acts as the second living room to a large part of Budapest's student population. It's a place for everything the average student is incapable of in his own home: Studying, eating and hanging out. Trapéz always provides a full fridge, cheap alcohol, fast wifi and like-minded people. It's furnished like a cozy living room and it cleans up magically overnight. It offers a lot of space and large tables for group sessions of drinking or studying. It has the terrace you always wished for but couldn't afford. Somebody else empties the ash-trays for you. Every-

body understands that you really, really need to study but someone will always convince you to grab the first beer before 4 PM and to squeeze in a round of table soccer. The rest is history. If Trapéz could talk, it would talk about people who "grew up" here. It would talk about nervous breakdowns, the occasional smell of sweat and the tension before the exam results come in. But it would also talk about exuberance, about surprise birthday parties, peeks, make-outs and break-ups. There are many nights only Trapéz really remembers. But out of fairness to everyone, Trapéz doesn't talk. It just silently smiles and offers a home. A home for student generations coming, growing up and leaving over the years.

Address: Imre utca 2, 1093, [Google map](#)



95. WEKERLE ESTATE

A Bucolic Hidden Community within the City Borders

Perfect for: architecture lovers, a day trip within Budapest, exploring a hidden society of Budapest

Why you need to see it: Because it's one of Budapest's most exciting "hidden societies".

The Wekerle Estate is a real rough diamond in the middle of an otherwise very industrial part of Budapest. Come here for a truly special village-in-the-city experience and feel like entering the setting of a fairy-tale. This little community is a garden city located in the XIX. district (Kispest) and was built at the beginning of the 20th century. At the end of the 19th century, Budapest's population grew explosively because people from the countryside were seeking work in the capital. Wekerle was built for them originally. Since these were countryside-people, the estate was specifically designed to resemble a bucolic little village. And this is exactly what it is today: a colorful, quiet and peaceful little entity in the middle of a city of

