Magiczny Kraków

Krakow nightlife: sentimental journey

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Krakow nightlife has already been through several stages since the political both of these Kazimierz establishments have a similar wooden-furnished cafe vibe and both have been on partygoers' must-see list for well over a decade. In Alchemia, which is the larger of the two, you can have a bite to eat during the day, in the evening go to a gig or a party in the basement room, and then go back upstairs and stay well into the wee hours. Sitting down is out of the question in Singer – here everyone dances literally everywhere as if there was no tomorrow. They boogie to bizarre rock and Balkan rhytms. Both Alchemia and Singer attract a glut of tourists, but they have a loyal group of local regulars too.

Those who prefer the local and (only!) slightly calmer vibe and prefer a good cocktail over a shot of *wiśniówka* should check out Kraina Szeptów around the corner (Izaaka 1) – a place with a long and well-earned reputation that is still only known to just a few.

A living legend of a slightly different Krakow is Piękny Pies (Bożego Ciała 9). This cult bar is already in its third location and serves as the headquarters and symbol of Krakow's bohemian milieu – here you can see what poets do when they do not write. Which is most of the time.

To appreciate the changes to the city's nightlife, it is worth returning from this journey back in time and collecting some comparative data. Nowadays the most valued places combine a welcoming atmosphere with perfection in the art of hosting. Such perfection in cocktail making can be experienced in speak-easy bars such as Mercy Brown (Straszewskiego 28) with its enchanting atmosphere from the bygone 20s and 30s. Mind you, to feel comfortable here, dress up a little! Z Ust do Ust (Estery 18) goes for a more laid-back vibe from the 90s. If you do not feel like looking for speak-easy bars, but are in the mood for a cocktail, then why not visit Kraina Szeptów or TramBar (Stolarska 5) which maybe looks unassuming, but has skilled bartenders.

Craft beer brewing, like cocktail culture, is a relatively new phenomenon in Poland. However, due to our inherent disposition to beer, it is increasingly gaining traction. Krakow has quite a few multi-tap bars where you can try a plethora of beers on tap. Beer lovers say that the most interesting selection is in Craftownia in Kazimierz (Świętego Wawrzyńca 22) and Nowy Kraftowy (Plac Nowy 8) which tempts guests with food and original decor. Closer to the Old Town, check out Kufle i widelce (Czysta 2) for a fine beer selection and an interesting food menu (deer burgers!). For a more party atmosphere, try the bustling Weźże Krafta at the nightlife hub of Tytano (Dolnych Młynów 10).

Last but not least – wine. Unfortunately there are still not enough places where wine is in the spotlight. A reliable wine spot with a good selection of bottles from Central Europe is Krako Slow Wine (Lipowa 6F) or the very Krakow style BARaWINO (Mostowa 1) with a range of wines for every budget.

Finally a word of warning. As you ramble through Krakow's streets in the evening, you may be tempted to follow the siren's call of the numerous "pijalnia" bars which serve cheap vodka, beer and simple snacks around the clock. This somehow charming concept has unfortunately gone downhill because these establishments attract mainly crowds of foreign tourists looking for alcohol-driven blurry adventures. These spots are not strictly speaking unsafe, but you will have a hard time unwinding in such conditions to say the least. Luckily there are many alternatives: some of them are mentioned above, and, with a little bit of patience, you can discover even more and take in Krakow's legendary nightlife in true style.