



SWEDEN

Göteborg

Göteborg, Sweden's second-largest city, is an artistic hot spot with a community of painters, musicians, and fashion designers whose creations exhibit a working-class scrappiness. Røda Sten, a graffiti-covered former power station that now houses a thriving arts center (lower left photo), exemplifies the rough-edged cultural renaissance of this former industrial hub. In addition to rotating exhibits of contemporary art from Sweden and beyond, **the Røda Sten hosts the Biennial for Contemporary Art** (Sept. 5–Nov. 15, 2009). The diverse local music scene includes introspective singer-songwriters such as José González and the city's own subgenre of melodic death metal. Rave culture thrives at underground parties in 19th-century beer factories. 📖 In late May, the modern bohemians of the edgy Linné district take to the streets for the one-day "block party" Andra Långdagen (lower right photo). Check Göteborg's English-language news site (monthly.se) for details. In central Göteborg, visit the tiny Bar Centro, where the city's working creatives, art students, and business types exchange ideas while sipping what some call the best coffee in Sweden. —Nicole Solis

Cow Fighting Competition

OCT. 4
Martigny, Switzerland

In the Swiss canton of Valais, the local Hérens cows are known to fight one another for dominant positions in the herd. Since the 1920s, these bouts have been organized into a cow-fighting season that concludes in a championship match, the *Combat des Reines*, in Martigny's ancient Roman amphitheater. The winners of the valley's 12 preliminary competitions butt heads, push and shove, and wrestle until one backs down. At the end of the bloodless spectacle, one cow stands proud as *la reine des reines* ("the queen of queens"). An added attraction is the 90-minute narrow-gauge train ride that snakes through vineyards and orchards from Chamonix in France to Martigny. valais.ch



first nine days of the ninth lunar month. Stick to the sidelines during the processions as fireworks explode and devotees—their body parts pierced by long rods, hooks, and poles—walk on fiery coals and bathe in hot oil. Join the ceremonies at the six local Chinese temples, and feast on the bounty of veggie street food. All of the activities, from self-mutilation to tamer purification practices (such as abstaining from meat, alcohol, and sex), are aimed at bringing good fortune to the community during the coming year. tourismthailand.org, phuketvegetarian.com

The Italian Job

OCT. 19–31
Turin, Italy, to
London, England

Inspired by the famous chase scene in the 1969 film of the same name, this auto rally invites drivers from around the globe to meet in Turin on October 19. Mini Coopers predominate, but any auto featured in the Michael Caine heist



Phuket Vegetarian Festival

OCT. 18–26
Phuket, Thailand

The Chinese population on southern Thailand's largest island puts on fantastic and, to some, horrific displays of spiritual commitment during the

GÖTEBORG (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT): GREGG BUCKEN-KNAPP, ANDERS BERGSTEDT/MASKOT/SIPA PRESS, AMANDA HERMAN, HANNA ELIASSON; COW FIGHTING: MARC BAERTSCH; PHUKET: JEFF HENIG