



Karma Kabs

visitors to London in Ambassador cars from India decorated with plastic flowers, sari fabrics and disco balls. Tours might include galleries or hard-to-get-into clubs or just hanging out.

# Locals Who Will Open Doors and Minds

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Kirsten Foster. Tours, (34) 667-770-492, [www.saboroso.com](http://www.saboroso.com) are 95 euros (\$118 at \$1.24 to the euro) a person including food and drink.

Saboroso's tapas tour is an example of a "lifestyle tour" — a relatively new trend found primarily in Europe's major cities. While you might get a history lesson or two, for the most part the tours, which are designed for a specific group, couple or even a single tourist, are meant to connect travelers to a city's immediate buzz, whether through food, shops, artist's studios or a stroll through a developing neighborhood.

One of the early pioneers of this trend is a self-styled "lifestyle guru" named Tobias Moss of Karma Kabs, (44-208) 9640700, [www.karmakabs.com](http://www.karmakabs.com), in London. Six years ago he brought in some Ambassador cars from India and had friends decorate the interiors with sari fabrics, disco balls and plastic flowers. He and his drivers are now well-known London characters and on a first-name basis with some of the city's most famous artists, nightclub owners and restaurateurs. For £60 an hour (\$109 at \$1.81 to the pound), up to four visitors can cruise around the city with Mr. Moss or one of his crew.

"I don't have a set thing," Mr. Moss said.

"I'm very spontaneous. It depends on how long they've got. I might take them to the club Sketch — the owner is my partner — because by day it's a gallery. Or we might go down Brick Lane and see the ethnicity. I just hang out with them, and if the people are cool I can get them into anyplace that they normally couldn't get in."

Some of Karma Kab's recent cool customers have included Kate Moss, Emma Thompson, Oliver Stone and Scarlett Johansson. "She used us a few times while she was filming a Woody Allen movie here," said Sacha Vitorovich, a driver and one of Mr. Moss's three partners (the other two are Mourad Mazouz, the personality behind the clubs Momo and Sketch, and Tom Conran, son of Sir Terence Conran). A poet and artist from Serbia, Mr. Vitorovich said that in the seven years he's been driving Karma Kabs, he's never taken the same route. "It's always a different adventure," he described. "It's the journey that matters, not the destination."

Henrik Tidefjard, founder of Berlinagenten, (49-30) 437-20701, [www.berlinagenten.com](http://www.berlinagenten.com), in Berlin, said, "It's like fashion. People today want their trips to be more individualized. They are looking for new limits."

*'They took us into places where we would never have gone on our own.'*

He said Europe's low-cost airlines were helping to drive this trend. "People are now traveling an average of two or three days to a new destination," he said. "I think of myself: I'll take a low-cost flight, and it doesn't really matter where I sleep. I'd rather spend my money on food, shopping and experiences. That's why I'm doing this business. So I can reduce the amount of time people spend finding the best shopping area and the best restaurant so you don't need to stand there on the street saying, 'Oh no, where should we eat?'"

As with Saboroso, Mr. Tidefjard's signature tour is food-focused. He takes clients on what he calls a Gastro-Rallye of the trendy Mitte and Prenzlauer Berg neighborhoods of Berlin. Clients choose a four- or five-course meal (the five-course Gastro-Rallye is 109 euros a person), with each course tak-

en at a different international restaurant. "At the same time you are having a culinary experience, you are experiencing the neighborhood and its small secrets and how people are living," Mr. Tidefjard said. "It's interactive and social. You are always on the move and wondering, 'What's the next stop? What are we going to eat next?'"

Monica Summerville, an American film editor in her mid-30's who lives in London, hired Warsaw Trip, (48-509) 538-450, [www.warsawtrip.pl](http://www.warsawtrip.pl), for a recent weekend trip to Warsaw with her boyfriend (an average tour is 90 euros a person for a half day, including transportation). "It really felt like we were meeting with friends," she said.

"When you only have a weekend you really want to come away with a sense of place," she continued. "They spent a lot of time with me on e-mail before we arrived, asking what we were interested in. My mother is Polish, and I mentioned to them specific dishes I remember that she used to make. They made an effort to find restaurants that made those foods. They took us into places where we would never have gone on our own like a bookshop cafe and a Russian market.

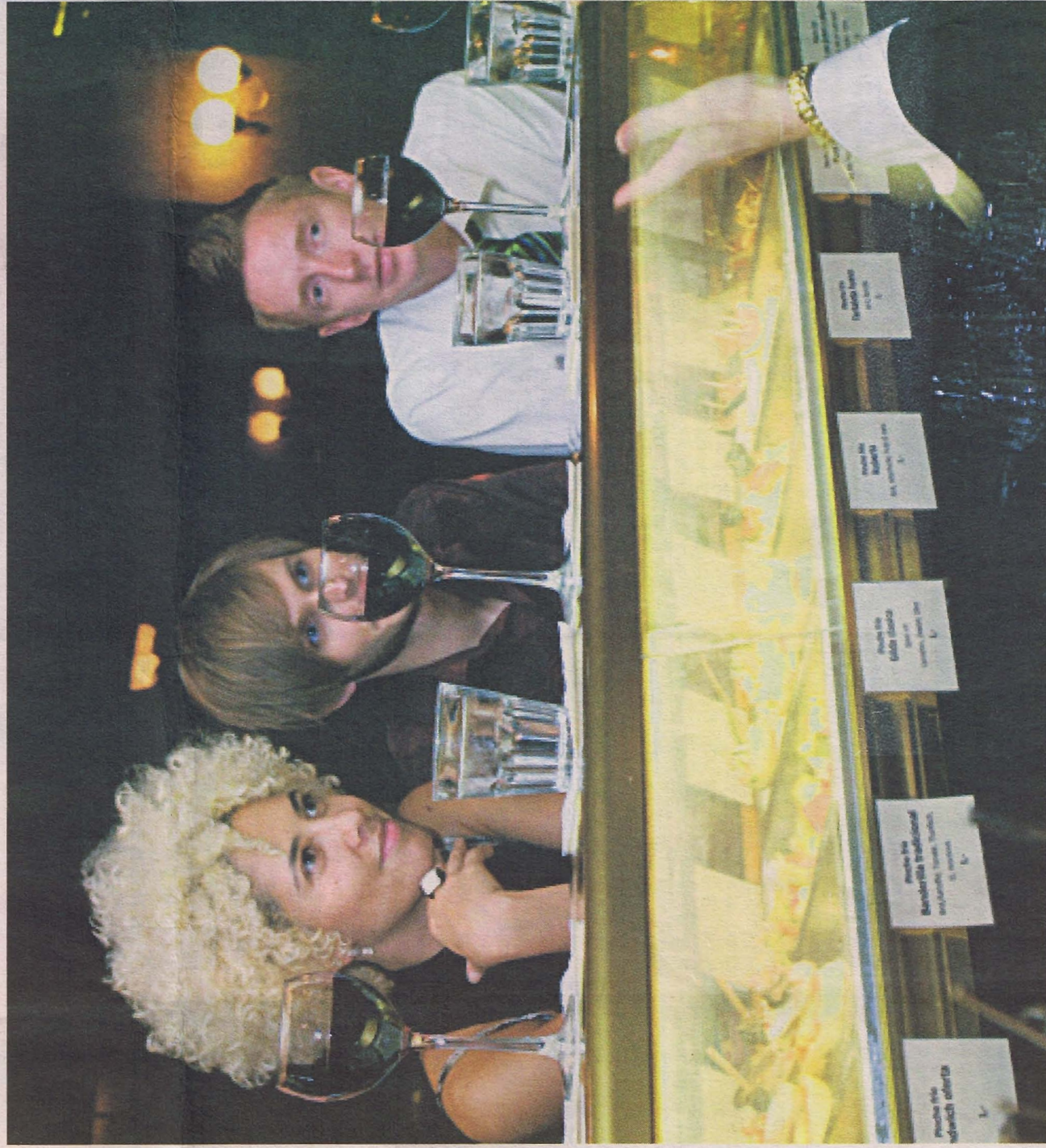
# Doors and Minds in Lifestyle Tours



Saboroso  
I sardines at La Plata in Barcelona on a Saboroso tour. Grant Gastro-Rallye run by Berlinagenten in Berlin. Rik under, is at right.

sterdam locals through a variety of specialized tours, like shopping with Sabine, a shopaholic flight attendant from Amsterdam, or drawing with two Dutch artists, or having home-cooked meals in Amsterdam. They have added tours in other Dutch cities as well as Barcelona, Madrid and Lisbon and plan to add more locations soon.

"Our first goal was to find out if the concept worked," Ms. Mooren said. "And we now know it does. When we started a year ago, we had on average one request per



Andreas Tauber/Berlinagenten

FOR THOSE WHO GO, THOSE WHO KNOW