



# FLANDERS TODAY



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The changing Brussels skyline photographed by Georges De Kinder  
(see page 14)

## Reach for the sky

The Brussels skyline is changing fast as architects are finally taken seriously

Derek Blyth

Brussels has rarely had the towering ambitions of Paris or London. Most of the city's office staff work in anonymous low-rise office blocks built by faceless architects, but a new wave of office towers is transforming the city's skyline and changing the working environment.

After decades of indifferent planning, Brussels is slowly becoming more exciting architecturally. Wander through the streets and you are constantly surprised by new buildings rising out of the ground and old buildings that have been transformed into sleek glass skyscrapers.

Much of the new architecture is found in the European Quarter. As the EU expands, the Commission demands more office space

in the capital. In the past, Europe's bureaucrats took whatever was offered, but they are now more demanding about the spaces they occupy. They want impressive buildings close to public transport hubs in lively urban areas. But they also need buildings that meet carbon emission targets and incorporate the latest rainwater recycling technology, as well as having underground car parks and effective security screening.

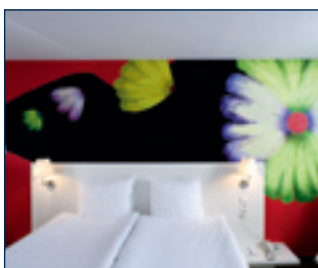
The sheer scale of the European presence makes it a major player in the Brussels property market. The Commission employs an estimated 25,000 staff in Brussels and occupies 865,000 square metres of office space. The offices are spread across 61 different buildings, mostly located along the Wetstraat-Schuman axis, though some are in satellite nodes at Beaulieu and Evere.

The Brussels authorities have

always done their best to satisfy the EU's list of needs. But now the Commission has added another request. It wants the European Quarter to provide a "human face" for the 27-member union and serve as a model of a high-quality sustainable urban environment.

Brussels Region has tried several times in the past to draw up a master plan for the European

*Continued on page 3*



### Business

The hotel sector in Brussels is booming again as the city goes global. But can the good times last for ever?

9



### Active

You can live well in Flanders without crunching your credit. We pick some places where you can do more on less.

12



### Interview

Tomas De Bruyne has been put in charge of floral arrangements at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. We find out what inspires his designs.

16

## Antwerp mayor apologises for crimes against Jews

City officials actively assisted Nazis

Lisa Bradshaw

Patrick Janssens, the mayor of Antwerp, officially apologised on Sunday, October 28, for the city's treatment of its Jewish residents during the Second World War. "We can today do nothing else but recognise that the city officials and police in those dramatic days of the summer of 1942 played an active role in the persecution and arrest of the Jews," said Janssens. "Therefore, on behalf of the city, I offer my apologies."

Janssens' videotaped statement was shown in the port city during a congress

on the Nazi extermination of the Jews. Antwerp is currently home to a sizeable neighbourhood of Orthodox Jews, which constitutes about 15,000 of Belgium's total Jewish population of 40,000. It is estimated that 65% of the city's Jewish community was deported during Nazi occupation.

The mayor's apology comes on the heels of a report published earlier this year by the Centre for the Historical Research and Documentation on War and Contemporary Society that revealed that Antwerp

*Continued on page 5*

Feature 1, 3

News 5-6

Business 7-9

Arts 10-11

Active 12

Agenda 14-15

Living 16

FREE WEEKLY



## EDITOR'S CHOICE

## Centraal Station, Antwerp

Centraal Station is one of Antwerp's greatest landmarks. It was built during Belgium's boom years at the end of the 19th century as a symbol of the confidence and power of Antwerp's port. More than a century on, it still impresses travellers with its sheer scale and daring.

The German novelist WG Sebald opened his 2001 novel *Austerlitz* in the main hall. The narrator observed: "When I entered the great hall of the Centraal Station with its dome arching nearly sixty metres high above it, my first thought, perhaps triggered by my visit to the zoo and the sight of the dromedary, was that this magnificent although then severely dilapidated foyer ought to have cages for lions and leopards let into its marble niches."

The entrance hall has been carefully restored since Sebald saw it. As such, it is one of the wonders of the railway age. It was designed by Louis Delacenserie, a Bruges architect whose earlier buildings were styled in the 15th-century gothic of his home town. The project took 10 years of planning and building, much of it supervised by King Leopold, whose preference for grand eclecticism led the architect to study buildings as different as the Pantheon in Rome and Lucerne's main railway station.

Delacenserie's interior is as lavish as a Baroque palace, employing a rich palette of more

than 20 different types of marble. The station bar has the grandeur of Versailles, and the ticket hall soars like a cathedral. The architecture cries out for steam trains, couples stealing a last kiss, soldiers setting off to a war. It was in fact once used by the BBC for filming an episode of *Poirot*. The director insisted on putting up a name board that read: *Gare de Bruxelles*. "How wonderful to be in Brussels again!" Poirot confusingly exclaimed.

It all seems a little too grand for catching a local train to Kontich. But it now has an important role to play in 21st-century transport. In 1998 the city launched a major project to ensure that the new generation of 300km/h trains stopped in Antwerp Centraal rather than skirt around the suburbs. A 1,200-metre tunnel was dug between Berchem and Dam stations and two new levels were built below the existing station. The final bill was €1.6 billion, which seems a bargain compared to the €8 billion spent to build a new Eurostar tunnel and terminal in London.

The high-speed station was ceremonially opened earlier this year by Flemish transport minister Kathleen Van Brempt and Antwerp's mayor Patrick Janssens. The great entrance hall is now filled with a mixture of fast-track business executives and locals heading home on clunky suburban trains. And the sign under the clock reads *Antwerpen*, not *Gare de Bruxelles*.



Centraal Station: superbly restored and improved

## Flanders Today

independent newsweekly

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## FACE OF FLANDERS



## Willem Elsschot

More than 70 years have passed since a retiring Flemish writer wrote a slender novel called *Kaas*. He had a successful job in an advertising company and dashed it off in a couple of weeks, yet the 1933 novel has become one of the classics of Dutch-language literature.

*Kaas* is one of the great satires on business life. It tells the story of Frans Laarmans, who takes sick leave from his job as a clerk in an Antwerp shipping company to start a cheese importing business. Laarmans is a hopeless entrepreneur and wastes precious time trying to work out a name for his company, finally settling on General Antwerp Food Products Agency.

He has no business sense and no idea what to do when a consignment of 10,000 Edam cheeses is delivered to his house. He spends several weeks sorting out his office furniture and fails to sell a single cheese, which he doesn't even like. His problem is that he is afraid of what people will think of him. "I can't go charging in while all those customers are there and bring the whole business to a halt while I hold forth about my full-fat cheese."

He is even less comfortable when he meets people involved in the cheese business. "All four of them respected names in cheese, people with a past, a cheese pedigree, people with authority, money. And into their midst had strayed Frans Laarmans who knew as much about cheese as about chemistry."

The author's real name was Alfons de Ridder, and he wrote several acclaimed novels in his free time without telling his family. He is honoured in Antwerp by a statue on the Mechelseplein and a plaque on the wall of 21 Lemmestraat, where he spent most of his life. The café where he used to drink, the Quinten Matsijs at 17 Mariaanstraat, organises a walking tour of his Antwerp haunts once a month.

*Kaas* has a dry understated humour reminiscent of *The Office*. Its hero could just as easily have been selling Enron shares or a dot-com idea. The novel is one of Flemish literature's few international classics and was recently translated into a spare English prose by Paul Vincent (Granta, 2002). The British screen actress Helen Baxendale, famous for her appearance in *Friends*, bought the film rights a few years ago, so a movie might be made one day.

online

[www.weg.be](http://www.weg.be)



Cheesed off: Elsschot's comic novel features a failed salesman

## TALKING DUTCH

notes on language



## Brugdag

After the gloom of the previous months, October has not delivered the promise of an Indian summer. With the long weekend coming up, you are probably keeping your fingers crossed that the weather will be *droog en zonnig*. Well, *droog weer* would do, but *een paar zonnige dagen* would not go amiss. Certainly, with winter pressing in, the need for a holiday increases. I am not talking about *een vakantie* of two weeks in the sun, but rather *een paar dagen verlof*, a couple of days off. One of the novelties for many people coming to work in Belgium is that public holidays fall naturally on a fixed date. The drearily named bank holidays in Britain, for example, always fall on Mondays; even 1 May is always on a Monday, and 11 November has been confined to Remembrance Sunday. It makes everything so predictable.

In Belgium you can strike lucky, as we have this week. Many of you will have decided to take Friday off *om de brug te maken*. Having made the bridge, you can take off for four days without cutting too deeply into your annual holidays. If you have a generous boss, you may even have been given Friday as an extra day off, unlike the unfortunate civil servants a couple of years ago whose ministers forgot to give them such a present; the ministers were even named and shamed in the press: *Drie ministers hebben hun ambtenaren geen brugdag cadeau gedaan*.

November 1 is *Allerheiligen*, All Saints' Day, when most people in Flanders will make their way to the local *kerkhof* to visit the *graven* of departed family members and friends. There will be stands where you can buy chrysanthemums at the cemetery entrance and queues of cars to get into the car park. The otherwise grim *kerkhoven* will be jammed with the living and brightened up with *bloemen*. *Allerheiligenavond*, All Saints' Eve, has in recent years been taken over by Hallowe'en, that originally pagan Celtic festival to chase away evil spirits on the holy eve which has been imported in its American form. The pumpkin, the symbol of Hallowe'en, is to be seen outside many a door. But don't be surprised if your giant *pompoen* disappears one night from your doorstep: the *pompoenbevrijdingsfront* may have been at work. The secretive pumpkin liberation front will leave a note assuring you that the pumpkin will be given to people *die het goed kunnen gebruiken*: it will be transformed from a decoration into soup for the homeless.

Friday is *Allerzielen*, All Souls' Day, the day that many Flemings will visit friends and family to have *pannenkoeken en koffie*. As for 11 November, *Wapenstilstand* – "weapon standstill", Armistice Day – which falls on a Sunday this year, you will get *een vervangingsdag*, which you can take off as a replacement day when it suits you. A quick look at the calendar reveals that next year *de brug maken* will not be an option in November. Perhaps May holds out more possibilities for *een lang weekend*.

Alistair MacLean

online

[www.vandale.be](http://www.vandale.be)



## FEATURE



Brussels Airport Pier A, designed by Groep 2000 (Jaspers-Eyers, Bontinck, Montois, Van Campenhout and Willox)

# Flights of fancy

Continued from page 1

Quarter, but the area remains a somewhat lawless territory, where local action groups have little power to stop large-scale developments. Residents have gradually fled the area as living conditions become intolerable. Yet the situation might finally improve as a result of a new joint plan unveiled last September by European Commission vice-president Siim Kallas and Brussels Region minister-president Charles Picqué.

The latest proposal drafted by the Commission and Brussels Region is focused on some 400,000 square metres of Commission property flanking the Wetstraat. The new plan envisages the construction of some 220,000 square metres of new office space along this axis.

The main thrust of the new plan is to put an end to decades of poor

planning in the Schuman district and develop a "truly mixed neighbourhood". Charles Picqué said that he wants to develop: "a centre of European and international activity" with a "cultural and recreation centre accessible to all".

The joint plan intends to tackle the soul-destroying monotony of this district by constructing new housing as well as office space. So there will be 180,000 square metres of additional housing in various locations in the European quarter – particularly on relatively quiet streets such as Lalaingstraat, Orbanstraat and Guimardstraat.

Both Kallas and Picqué acknowledge the failures of the past in developing the European Quarter. They admit that most existing buildings represent an outmoded style of architecture and believe that their new proposal marks a

"historical moment."

For Kallas the priority is to create a "more human face for the European quarter". He says that new buildings will be designed to give the area a more human scale. "The idea is to have less buildings but bigger buildings", he argues. "This will allow us to free space for living, for commercial space, for open space."

Kallas adds that the Commission's current buildings policy aims to save costs by consolidating its services "within fewer office buildings of at least 50,000 to 100,000 square metres". He also wants to introduce greater transparency in the buildings policy by publishing proposed real estate projects in the Official Journal and introducing a systematic tendering procedure for building or renting Commission build-

ings. He promised that the design of new buildings on Wetstraat would be subject to an "international architecture competition." The Commission would ensure that the winning design respected, "the guiding principles concerning the architectural value and integrity of the buildings, security, work environment and social welfare facilities".

The new plan will affect several other areas of the city since the Commission remains committed to the policy of decentralisation introduced three years ago. Picqué favours this approach to avoid what he calls "a ghetto effect." He explains that, "there is nothing worse than having a European quarter which is a kind of fortress, closed upon itself with a different status from the rest of the city".

## Building Brussels



Astro Tower

Michel Jaspers has been building in Belgium for almost half a century. He began his career in 1958 when architects were hard at work in Brussels designing daring new structures for the World Expo. "I had the good luck to begin working at a time when new urban ideas were being developed for the World Fair," he said in a recent interview. Jaspers opened his first office in Hasselt and now works in partnership with his son Jean-Michel Jaspers and Johnny Evers. The firm is now the biggest architectural firm in Belgium and 76th in the world, with annual turnover touching €15 million. The firm employs 120 architects in offices in Hasselt, Leuven and the Marolles district of Brussels.

Michel Jaspers began to make his mark in Brussels in the 1980s when he worked for the Flemish government. He transformed a neoclassical building on the Martelaarsplein for the Flemish government and designed the glass-faced Boudewijn administration building near Rogierplein.

Almost everyone in Belgium is familiar with at least one Jaspers-designed building, even if they can't name the architect. The company has worked with all the major Belgian banks, along with insurance companies, hotels, universities and retailers.

In a career spanning 50 years, Michel Jaspers has transformed Brussels with buildings like the North Gallery on Koning Albert II laan, the gently curved Lex Building in the European Quarter, the Espace Jacquemotte in the Marolles, the KBC Headquarters on Havenlaan and the Dexia Bank on Rogierplein.

online  
[www.jaspers-eyers.be](http://www.jaspers-eyers.be)

## Landmark office buildings

As the capital of Flanders, Belgium and Europe, Brussels is one of the world's administrative hubs. It's also a centre of banking, insurance, lobbying and law. Here are a few landmark office buildings that stand out from the crowd.

### Berlaymont

Evacuated in 1991 because of asbestos-related safety fears, the European Commission's Berlaymont headquarters finally emerged from white dust sheets in 2004 after a 13-year €1 billion renovation programme. Originally constructed in 1969 on the site of a 17th century convent, the building once had a helipad on the roof and an underground supermarket reserved for EU staff. The 13-floor building is now one of the most technologically advanced in Europe.

### Charlemagne

The American architect Helmut Jahn transformed a dull 1960s office building by wrapping it in a high glass screen. Several EU departments are based in this stunning glass block overlooking an intimate city park.

### Madou Plaza

A 1965 concrete tower on Place Madou was transformed in 2005 by the architects Assar and Archi 2000 into a sleek 33-floor glass building for 1,200 European officials.

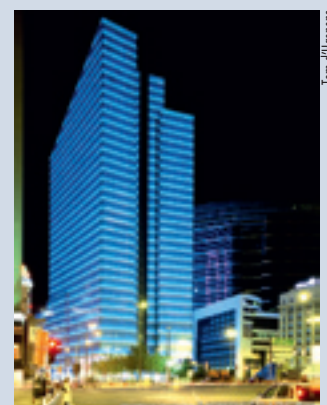
It takes its name from the 19th century Belgian artist Jean-Baptiste Madou. "Lovely views from the upper floors but it sways in high winds," notes one EU official.

### Central Plaza

A beautiful place to work next to Central Station. The pleasing curved tower was designed by the Brussels firm Art + Build in 1998. It replaces the 1962 Lotto Tower, which was torn down despite protests from architectural historians. The new tower had to be eight floors lower than its predecessor because of the city's tough new policy on building height. A consortium of three international law firms – Stibbe, Herbert Smith and Gleiss Lutz – occupies the top seven floors of the 15-floor complex.

### Dexia Tower

The Dexia bank has its new headquarters in a stylish glass tower with a jagged profile overlooking downtown Rogierplein. Designed by the firms Jaspers-Eyers and Partners, and Samyn and Partners, it replaces the 1958 Martini Tower, which had fallen into ruin.



Dexia Tower





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## Antwerp mayor apologises

"This should never happen again"

Continued from page 1

authorities did more than stand helplessly by – they actively assisted the Nazis in rounding up Jews and deporting them to concentration camps.

In 2002, Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt also apologised for Belgium's role in the Holocaust. But the issuing of official apologies for historical atrocities is a controversial activity – many scholars and historians have stated that it only helps victims and their descendants if the parties who are directly responsible for crimes against humanity apologise for them. Jewish lawyer and former head of the Flemish Socialist party Fred Erdman apparently does not agree. In response to the statement by Janssens, he said: "It is never too late for apologies. This should never happen again in a city that was and is a melting pot of cultures."



Patrick Janssens

## Belgian pilot arrested in Chad

A Belgian pilot has been arrested in Chad in connection with alleged child abduction. The man, who has not been named, was involved in transporting more than 103 children from the war-torn region of Dafur in southern Sudan. The children were due to be taken to

France and Belgium and placed with foster parents by the French NGO Arche de Zoé. The organisation argued that the missions "saved 1,000 orphans from certain death," but critics say that some of the children were taken from their parents.

## Make-up allergy wrecks career

VRT has announced that Sigrid Spruyt will no longer be anchoring its 19.00 news, due to a severe allergy to cosmetics. Spruyt is a mainstay of Flemish news, having been with VRT for more than 15 years. She has suffered from the allergy for the

past 16 years. In an interview with Studio Brussel, she said: "I literally don't feel good anymore in my skin. This is the final chapter in a long story." Spruyt will remain with VRT, working on projects off-screen.

## NEWS FLASH



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### Bomb defused

A British bomb from World War Two was successfully defused last Sunday by army experts. The 250kg bomb was unearthed by workers on land owned by the oil company Total Belgium in Evergem, East Flanders. The bomb was found in the Bombardementstraat, or Bombardment Street.

### Neo-Nazis meet near Aarschot

Several hundred Neo-Nazis met last Saturday in Wolfsdonk, near Aarschot, for a concert organised by the far-right organisation Blood and Honour. The members came from Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany to attend the rally.

### Tax bills in the post

The tax department expects to send out tax statements for the fiscal year 2006 to 1.2 million Belgians by the end of October. The tax returns have been processed much faster than in previous years, which means that most taxpayers will receive statements by the end of 2007, the tax office says.

### Train strike

The railway network suffered severe disruption last Friday after rail workers blocked Zuid Station in Brussels. The action, which lasted about an hour, was held in protest at a plan to force workers to maintain basic train services during strikes.



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### Club Brugge close the gap

Club Brugge improved its position in Belgian football's first division last Saturday after securing a 1-2 victory over Racing Genk at Fenix Stadium. The West Flanders team moved up to second place in the league table after leaders Standard de Liège drew two-all against KV Mechelen. Cercle Brugge are now in third place after a goalless draw against Sporting Anderlecht.

## Turkish protests in Brussels

Police clashed with Turkish demonstrators last Wednesday in the Brussels municipalities of Schaarbeek and Sint-Joost-ten-Node. Several police officers were injured, and cars and buses were damaged. Several bus passengers were taken to hospital suffering from minor injuries.

The violence flared up after Turkish youths decided to stage a protest march in spite of a ban issued by the local authorities. They were protesting against recent Kurdish attacks on Turkish soldiers near the Iraq border.

Several shops and cafés owned by Kurds and Armenians were attacked and damaged by the protestors. The outgoing prime minister, Guy Verhofstadt, said that the attacks were "unacceptable" and that "everyone in Belgium has the right to build a future in peace, whatever their ethnic origin might be".



Belga

## Umicore solar car grabs second place in outback challenge

A Belgian solar car finished in second place in the World Solar Challenge held in Australia last week. The Umicar Infinity was one of 61 vehicles that took part in the five-day race across 3,000km of empty Australian outback. The vehicle was designed by a 14-person team comprising students and graduates from Leuven's technical institute Groep T and reached speeds of 95km/h on the Darwin to Adelaide run. The design incorporated sophisticated solar panels based on germanium substrates developed by the Belgian materials technology group Umicore. The race was won by a Dutch team from Delft.



Belga

online  
www.umicore.com

## "Blood diamonds" seized

Police investigators confiscated diamonds worth €14 million last week in a raid on the Antwerp company Peri Diamond. A man was arrested on suspicion of dealing in "blood diamonds" from the Ivory Coast. Trade in blood diamonds – used to finance criminal organisations and armed conflicts – is banned worldwide. The Antwerp World Diamond Center – formerly the Diamond High Council – has promised to tackle the problem in Antwerp, which is the world centre for uncut diamonds. The singer Bob Geldof recently criticised Antwerp's diamond industry for failing to tackle the problem effectively, but dealers say that certificates of origin are often faked.



## Tower threat



IJzertoren: police respond as angry man makes empty threat

Police last week questioned a man, 60, from De Panne after he threatened to blow up the IJzertoren in Diksmuide, West Flanders. The man had called the town hall in Diksmuide to complain about various matters,

including the war in Iraq, the political situation in Belgium, the Flemish question and the church. The man then demanded to speak to the mayor or one of the aldermen of Diksmuide. When the request was refused, he said that he would ensure that the IJzertoren was destroyed. The police tracked the man down to the home of his ex-girlfriend, where he explained that he didn't mean to carry out the threat.

The IJzertoren was built in memory of Flemish soldiers who died in World War One. It was erected in 1925 as a political protest after 500 Flemish war gravestones were ground down to make road grit. The monument became a symbol for Flemish nationalists and was dynamited in 1946 by unknown extremists. A new tower was built on the site, now the scene of the annual IJzerbedevaart, or IJzer Pilgrimage.

## Clean sweep

The average person in Flanders cut down the amount of waste produced last year by 16 kilos. Flanders is now one of Europe's best-performing regions for waste reduction, according to Flemish environment minister Hilde Crevits. The region generates 530 kg of waste per person, but only 150 kg is collected by rubbish trucks and sent to the incinerator. Ten years ago, the average Flemish inhabitant produced 100 kg more waste.

Crevits said that the figures show that households in Flanders are becoming increasingly aware of techniques for cutting down on waste, such as recycling and composting. More than 70% of Flemish waste is now recycled. She added that the good results were partly achieved by an increase in the price of plastic rubbish bags in Flemish municipalities. The figures are particularly impressive given that domestic consumption in Flanders rose by 3% over the past year.



Waste not: rubbish volume goes down

## Buses blocked for a month

Buses in Ghent and Antwerp spend on average one month a year stuck in traffic because of illegally parked cars. The figures on bus delays were released last week by Flemish mobility minister Kathleen Van Brempt in response to a parliamentary question tabled by Marc Cordeel. Van Brempt said that trams and buses were held up for a total of 500 hours because of badly parked cars.

## Baby boom

Flanders is going through a mini baby boom, according to figures released last week by the Study Centre for Prenatal Epidemiology. A total of 65,941 babies were born in Flanders in 2006 – the highest number in 20 years. In addition, Flemish mothers are bearing more children than the European average, according to Flemish child welfare service *Kind en Gezin*. The average woman in Flanders now has 1.74 children, compared to the European average of 1.47. But women in France and Ireland are the most reproductive in Europe, producing an average of 1.98 children.



## Headscarf dismissal overturned

The Council of State has overturned a decision to dismiss a primary school teacher who refused to remove her headscarf outside the classroom. The woman, who taught Islam in a school in the Brussels municipality Sint-Pieters-Woluwe, was allowed to wear her headscarf in the classroom, but told that she had to take it off elsewhere in the building "because of school regulations." The Council of State, the country's supreme court, ruled that the school did not have the right to impose such a rule and she should be given back her job.

## Roads signs company denies corruption

The roads signs company Janssens has denied allegations of corruption in connection with the award of public contracts. The company is accused of securing contracts with Mechelen city council by bribing finance alderman Leo Stevens. The alderman resigned last week and told investigators that he received money from Janssens and a second local contractor to finance his election campaign.

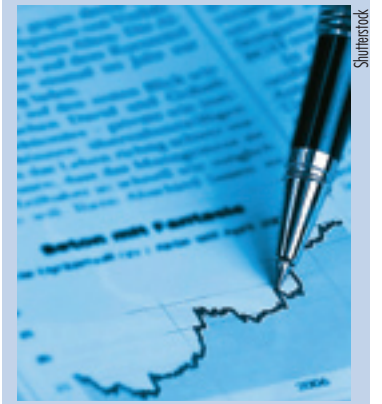
## Bumper to bumper

Belgian roads are getting more crowded than ever, according to figures released last week by the federal government. There are now six vehicles on the road for every 10 Belgians, which is double the number registered 30 years ago. The figures show that the number has risen steadily every year since 1977. The sharpest rise was registered in the decade 1987-1997, when the number of cars surged by 28%. The increase has been less steep over the past 10 years, when 19% more cars entered the traffic stream.



Road to nowhere: more cars registered

## THE WEEK IN FIGURES



50

Number of hybrid buses purchased for Bruges and Leuven under a €15.8 plan announced by Flemish mobility minister Kathleen Van Brempt. The high-tech buses use a combined diesel and electric power source to minimise carbon emissions, cut down fuel consumption and reduce noise.

1.2 million

Calls made to the Flemish government information line during the past eight years. The Infolijn (number 1700) was set up to deal with citizens' questions relating to the Flemish administration. The most frequently asked questions concern renovation and energy-saving subsidies. Calls are dealt with by 160 operators based in Diegem, outside Brussels.

1.64 million

Containers handled by the Port of Zeebrugge every year. The figure is expected to rise to five million within four years following the opening of a new dock that can handle the world's largest container ships.

325,000

Number of hotel beds in Flanders, according to the latest figures compiled by the provincial tourist authorities. Some 150,000 beds are in rented apartments and 65,000 in the region's 1,213 hotels, while others are in camp sites. "The hotel sector continued to expand in Flanders in the period 2002-2006," the report says.

1 million euro

Amount of internet fraud uncovered in Belgium in 2006, according to the Federal Computer Crime Unit FCCU. "This is just a fraction of the true scale of the fraud," said FCCU director Luc Beirens.

1.39 billion euro

Amount needed to bring Flemish schools up to standard, according to Agion, the agency charged with maintaining the educational infrastructure. Schools have to wait an average of eight years to secure renovation work or new buildings. Education minister Frank Vandenbroucke has promised to speed up cases.

16,000 euro

Prize money awarded to the winner of the prestigious Dutch-Flemish literary award, the Prijs der Nederlandse Letteren 2007, handed out every three years by the Nederlandse Taalunie. Jeroen Brouwers, this year's winner, refused to accept the award, saying that the amount was "a mockery". The winner of the 2007 Man Booker Prize, considered the highest award in English literature, went home recently with £50,000 (€75,000).



## Revamped Stadsfeestzaal opens

Stylish shopping centre will boost Antwerp's image, mayor says



Stadsfeestzaal

The Stadsfeestzaal, a landmark 19th-century building on Antwerp's Meir, was reopened on 25 October by Antwerp mayor Patrick Janssens. The building was gutted by fire in 2000 but has now been

restored to its original appearance following a major three-year revamp financed by property developer Multi Development Belgium and Bank of Ireland Private Banking.

The neoclassical monument was built one 100 years ago by the architect Alexis Van Mechelen. "It contained the largest hall in Belgium at the time," Janssens said. "The hall was the setting for events like the car show and the book fair."

The restoration project was based on the original building plans and set out to replicate the wooden floors, marble staircases, statues and mosaics. The building adds some 20,500 square metres of commercial space to the Meir shopping street and contains a Delhaize City supermarket along with 40 smaller shops. The complex also has 40 luxury apartments and 275 underground parking spaces.

The spectacular interior of the Stadsfeestzaal has convinced several international brands to open their first Belgian outlet here, including Salsa, Sabon, La Place, Saturn, Crocs, Lloyd Shoes, Laurent Perrier Champagne Bar, Onara and Leon Mode. The American chain Urban Outfitters has also decided to open its first European shop in the complex.

The building connects the Meir, the city's main shopping artery, with the Hopland, where several specialised fashion boutiques are located. "This project will boost Antwerp both as a shopping city and a fashion city," the mayor said.

## H Essers fact file

### CEO

Ivo Marechal

### Headquarters

Genk

### Turnover

€247.7 million

### Net profit

€7.6 million

### Employees

2,038

### Truck fleet

900

### Storage space

629,000 sq metres

### online

[www.essers.com](http://www.essers.com)

## Keep on truckin'

Limburg family firm wins award

H Essers, the Genk-based transport and logistics company, was voted 2007 Flemish company of the year. The Limburg family-owned company was begun in 1928 and now has 20,000 customers along with branches across 11 European countries. Its fleet has increased three-fold over the past five years, and the company hopes to double turnover by 2012. Essers provides a range of services, including transport, distribution, storage and advanced logistical support. The jury praised the company for achieving "sustainable expansion, and technological and operational innovation".

## Post office shake up

Johnny Thijs, CEO of De Post, has announced a series of measures to prepare the postal service for increased competition from the private sector. He said that the company would continue to close down smaller post offices and replace them with post outlets located in shops, supermarkets and railway stations. He also wants to close down 350 sorting offices and increase part-time employment but stresses that jobs are not under threat.

## Fast track

World Bank report praises Belgium

Belgium is the fastest place in Europe for starting up a new business, according to the World Bank report *Doing Business 2008*. An entrepreneur can get a business up and running in just four days, the report says. It also noted that the necessary paperwork can be completed in a mere three steps. The World Bank report is based on a survey of business regulations in 178 countries. Belgium improved its ranking significantly by speeding up registration of a company's memorandum of association, which can now be done online.

### online

[www.investinlanders.com](http://www.investinlanders.com)  
[www.doingbusiness.org](http://www.doingbusiness.org)

## BUSINESS FLASH



Shutterstock

### Nike

The US-based sport equipment and sportswear company has opened a flagship store in the Stadsfeestzaal, near the Meir in Antwerp. The company is also seeking a location in Brussels to open a similar store.

### Telenet

The Mechelen-based cable and telecommunications company Telenet is launching the first high-definition television service in Belgium on 1 December.

### Penguin

The Flemish frozen vegetables production company Penguin is closing one of its five British units. The North Thoresby plant, which employs some 65 workers, was owned by the Christian Salvesen company until its acquisition by Penguin last September.

### Port of Zeebrugge

Zeebrugge, Flanders second largest seaport, has seen its container traffic grow 25% for the period ending September this year compared to 2006. The port is also one of Europe's largest car shipping and handling centres and recently celebrated the arrival from Japan of its two millionth Toyota car.

### NH Hotels

The Spanish-owned hotel company NH Hotels has acquired two Sofitel hotels in Bruges and Ghent. The company already operates 11 hotels in Flanders – six in Brussels, two in Ghent and the other three in Genk, Mechelen and Bruges. The group now plans to invest €200 million on developing its network in the region.

### IKEA

The Swedish furniture and household equipment retailer IKEA has bought land on the edge of Ghent, close to Flanders Expo, to build a new superstore. The store is expected to open in late 2008. IKEA already has four outlets in Flanders – two outside Brussels, one in eastern Brussels and the other in Antwerp.

### Provion

The West Flanders company Provion began last week producing bio diesel fuel using rapeseed oil. The environmentally-friendly fuel is not yet widely available to motorists at petrol stations. Total is the only major company that buys bio diesel, which it mixes with conventional fuel.

### ICO

Japanese cargo handler International Car Operations (ICO) has expanded its handling capacity at Zeebrugge. The company has increased capacity at its Bastenake terminal from 10,000 to 25,000 cars a year. Zeebrugge is the world's biggest port for importing new cars.

### Wienerberger

The Austrian-based Wienerberger AG, a manufacturer of bricks and clay roof tiles, is expanding its Flanders base by investing further in hollow brick production. The company plans to invest €54 million at three sites in Flanders – Egem, Rumst and Zonnebeke. The aim is to reduce harmful emissions at all three plants and introduce brick recycling at Rumst.

### BASF

German chemicals group BASF is to increase production of ethylene oxide at its Antwerp plant. The expansion, scheduled for 2008-2009, will make Antwerp the largest facility of its kind in Europe. The plant will eventually have an annual capacity of half a million tonnes of ethylene oxide, which is widely used in the construction, packaging and automotive industries.



Antwerp: chemical industry expands



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## MINDING MY OWN BUSINESS

## Speaking Your Mind

Someone wants to talk to you



Mind your language: call centre staff are taught to be tactful

Steven Tate

Ever seen the results of a poll on television or in a newspaper and thought, "Nobody asked me"? As the jumble of products and services keeps growing, as well as the media that promotes them, business researchers and government ministers are ever more eager to get their finger on your pulse. Started 15 years ago, Dedicated Research is the largest Belgian call centre devoted exclusively to market research.

Although the company is not free to divulge exactly who its clients are, client service director Kevin Pomeranc says, "If you live in Belgium, and you've been telephoned for your opinion on cars, medicine, food and drink or politics, then you have probably spoken to us." The company's Brussels call centre reflects the hodgepodge of cultures that comprise Belgium: Flemish and francophone Belgians, Spaniards, Moroccans, Africans and others are among the 40 or so tele-opera-

tors reaching out for you to put in your two-cents worth.

The company completed more than 240,000 surveys in 2006. That number of completes is actually more impressive than it sounds, says Pomeranc. "Only one out of five private persons contacted will agree to answer a survey – and only one out of 10 businesses will complete the survey." Some respondents have to be called on their mobiles – as more than 15% of Belgians have no landline in their homes.

Incomplete surveys cannot be used – even if the respondent hung up on question 99 of a 100-question poll. To induce businesses to go the distance, the client (through Dedicated Research) often offers an incentive. "We might send the company questioned the survey results," Pomeranc says. "Or, in some cases, offer cash."

"The multicultural nature of the country makes us well-suited to deal on an international level," continues Pomeranc. Clients use Dedicated not only to gauge where Belgians and those residing here stand on topics linked to the clients' interests, but also to find out how people in The Netherlands and France feel about certain things. The Dutch, who have a reputation for speaking their mind, are more timid when it comes to talking on the phone. The French, on the other hand, have a lot to get off their chests. According to Pomeranc, people in Flanders and Wallonia echo their linguistic compatriots in the Netherlands and France – although they are less extreme. Still, "people are eager to let you know what they think about cars – less so about politics," says Pomeranc.

The language conundrum in Belgium can make calling a little dicey, as figuring out which language to speak at first is a shot in the dark. "We never cold call, so that gets rid of some of the guess work," says Pomeranc. Still, the

person's name isn't always telling: most people might guess that Yves Leterme would have French as his first language. "So we go on where the person lives: yes, there are francophones living in Flanders and Flemish people living in French-speaking areas," concedes Pomeranc. "But we minimise the risk as much as possible."

"Phone centre work is seen by some in Belgium as a temporary job," says Arnold Cobbaerts, founder of Conectys, a communications company based in Ghent with call centres in Eastern Europe. "Attrition can be as much as 30 %, which means one is constantly training a third of the workforce." For this reason, many call centres are looking at Eastern European countries where phone work is considered a career rather than a job.

But Dedicated Research has been able to knock employee turnover down to a scant 15 per year, thanks to the family feeling engendered there. Along with the typical "employee of the week" programmes and team motivation exercises, the location in the Brussels commune of Sint Gillis is easy for working mothers, students and other urban dwellers without cars for whom getting out to an industrial park would be difficult.

And the guarantee of a long-term position helps. Belgians are growing more comfortable about being asked to speak their mind, so Dedicated will be probing for years to come.

**"Most people might guess that Yves Leterme would have French as his first language."**

- Kevin Pomeranc, Dedicated Research



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## HOTELS

# From Bust to Bloom

New hotels are opening in Brussels, but the boom might not last



Bloom!

**Simon Barry**

Barely two years ago, many analysts were warning that the Brussels hotel market was suffering from overcapacity, under investment and room rates inconsistent with the status of the capital of Europe. But the sector is now reviving, reaching unprecedented occupancy rates and seeing its rates creep back up. "The conference business is booming, and the EU-related bookings are as strong as ever," says Jochem-Jan Sleiffer, who returned to Brussels as general manager of the Hilton after nearly 10 years working in other hotels owned by the group. The impact of the new EU member states, the negotiations for a new EU treaty and the fast-growing impact of

Europe on worldwide business have turned Brussels into a new hub for international meetings and conferences. The months July and August saw occupancy rates grow by more than 6 %, while September and October were exceptionally good. Everything is looking good at the moment – at least until the next crisis.

The local market is once again experiencing a peak. This is similar to other golden periods in the past when a dire shortage of hotel rooms in the city encouraged hotel developers to pour millions of euro into new capacity. There are already some in the industry asking for a moratorium on new projects to protect the present market conditions. Indeed, with some 15,000 rooms in the three-

to five-star categories – including over 3,000 rooms in the apartment hotel sector – the industry seems to have enough space capacity. But there are currently plans for up to 10 new hotel projects, and many existing hotels are capitalising on the present boom to draw up extensive renovation and development plans.

The landmark Astoria Hotel is to be closed for a year for a major renovation, while other key hotels such as the Sofitel in the upper town, Bloom! (formerly the Royal Crown and before that a Hyatt) on Koningsstraat and the Crowne Plaza on Rogierplein are at various renovation stages. Others have just opened. A Martin's group hotel has appeared in the shadow of the Berlaymont, the Sofitel Brussels

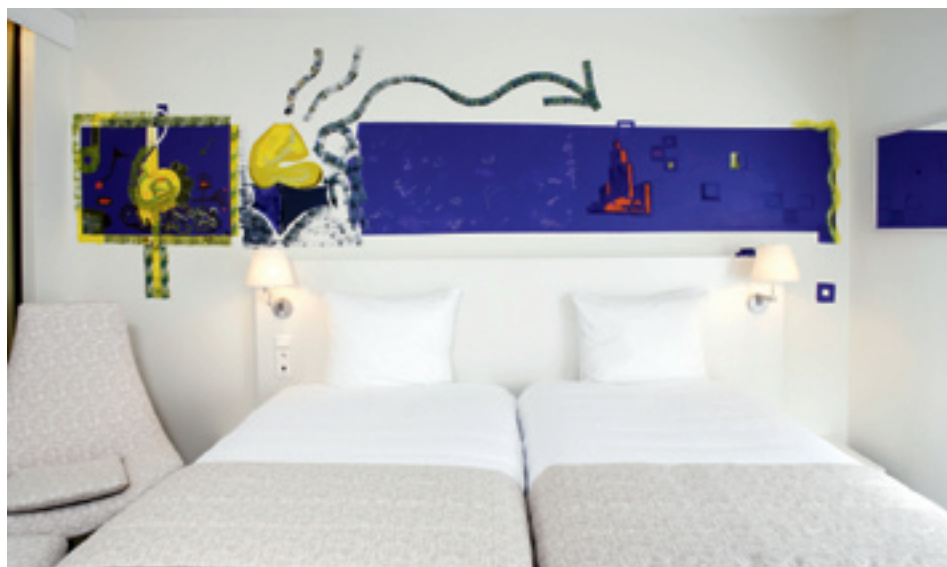
Europe has added a stylish note to Jourdanplein, and the SAS near the European Parliament has brought new potential to Elsene district. Next week, the Dominican, a new 150-room hotel, opens behind the Munt in downtown Brussels. But, warns Sleiffer, building additional properties in the 200-room bracket is not what Brussels needs. "We should be looking for big chain properties with some 600 to 800 rooms that would bring new business to the city. The smaller players are only taking business away from the big operators and pushing room rates down," he notes.

Many of the recent developments reflect the significant increase in property prices over the last five years. Few experts expect this trend to stop, since Brussels has tradi-

tionally suffered from a low valuation in hotel rooms. Some groups have been in a shopping frenzy on the local market in the last few years. The Spanish NH hotels has acquired three properties in less than four years and now manages 11 hotels in Flanders, including six in Brussels. The French Accor company has plans to open two-star Etap hotels in Brussels, Bruges, Ghent, Kortrijk, Diegem and Antwerp over the next four years.

Not everyone is so optimistic about the market. Vincent Steinmetz, vice-president of Horeca (the Belgian federation of hotels, restaurants and cafes) and representative of the hotel industry, is clearly worried that the sector is facing massive overcapacity in the near future with a downward pressure on room rates and balance sheets drowning in red ink. In a recent interview he noted that present room rates were closer to those in Lisbon than to those in Paris or Amsterdam. Even if average occupancy rates are creeping back towards the upper 70 %, it still means that the bulk of the Brussels hotel market is nearly empty over the weekend.

In Flanders, the situation is different. Hotels at the coast had a terrible summer, largely due to the uncertain weather, but also because of a growing trend for northern Europeans to spend their holidays in cheaper and sunnier destinations. The art cities – Bruges, Antwerp and Ghent – fared better as renovation efforts, and tourism-related events had a favourable impact. The opening of the final Eurostar rail link between Brussels and St Pancras in London, cutting travel time to less than two hours, is expected to boost the number of tourists from Britain. And the reopening of the Congress Palace in Brussels in late 2009, coupled with better coordination between the Brussels and Flanders tourism offices, offers hope of a brighter future for the hotel sector.



Dominican Hotel



The White Hotel



## New look for Africa Museum

Stéphane Beel unveils ambitious plan, but the money still has to be found



Derek Blyth

Ghent architect Stéphane Beel last week unveiled an ambitious new master plan for Leopold II's Africa Museum in Tervuren. The architect aims to transform the site by adding a new glass building alongside the old colonial palace and link the two buildings with an underground tunnel. "This almost amounts to a

new project on the scale of Leopold II's original building," said museum director Guido Gryseels.

The museum was commissioned by Leopold II as a showcase of the Belgian Congo and opened one year after his death. The grand neoclassical building contained a vast collection of art and artefacts from the Congo and grew into a distinguished scientific institute

with a vast collection of mineral samples and animal specimens.

Work on the new 3,000 square metre building is planned to begin in 2010 on the 100th anniversary of its opening. But the federal buildings department, which is responsible for the museum, has still to unlock the €66.5 million budget needed to construct the new glass pavilion, which will contain the ticket desk, café, bookshop and auditorium.

The pavilion is the first phase of a much more ambitious plan to revamp the entire site, including the research institutes and park. The final budget is not known, but is expected to run to over one million euro.

Some of the country's leading architects submitted proposals for the master plan, including Paul Robbrecht and Jo Crepain. But the federal agency voted unanimously for Beel's proposal, drawn up with advice from specialists such as French landscape architect Michel Desvigne and director-scenographer Niek Kortekaas. "I can't emphasise strongly enough that this was a collective undertaking," Beel said. "Tervuren is a very complex project. We have to modernise the Africa museum without obliterating the past."

Beel's plan includes a proposal to move the main entrance to the Koloniënpaleis, or Colonies Palace, built by Leopold at the end of the main avenue linking Brussels and

Tervuren. "The present entrance on the Leuvensesteenweg isn't very welcoming," Beel explains. "The grand entrance leading to the Koloniënpaleis is much more in tune with the original plan for the site."

Director Guido Gryssels, who has been calling for urgent work for the past six years, has to keep his fingers crossed that the money can be found. "It isn't any wonder that our institution is called the last colonial museum in the world," he says. "The last major renovation was done in 1959. Some people would like to keep it exactly as it is. But that isn't really an option. We have to consider contemporary themes like the environment, biodiversity and migration."

**"Tervuren is a very complex project. We have to modernise the Africa museum without obliterating the past."**

- Stéphane Beel, Architect

## FILM FREAK

### Spanish and Latin American Film Festival



Emilio Martínez Lázaro presents *13 Rosas* on November 7

This year marks the 15th anniversary of one of Brussels' most enjoyable film festivals, which focuses on new films from Spain and Latin America. It's a good programme all around, but I especially recommend the opening night where director Emilio Martínez Lázaro will present his new film *Las 13 Rosas*, together with the lead actress Pilar López de Ayala. This political drama from the award-winning director of *The Wrong Side of the Bed* tells the story of 13 young women accused of attempting to murder Francisco Franco towards the end of the Spanish Civil War. Some of them were only teenagers with very little leftist activity to their names at the time. In addition to shedding light on this particular devastating story, the film is a comment on how fascism can crush the hopes of an entire generation.

Also from Spain this year is Antonio Banderas' second film as director, *El Camino de los ingleses* (*Summer Rain*), which

is based on the coming-of-age novel by Antonio Soler (who also wrote the screenplay). This stylistic, dreamy film is about a young man (Alberto Amarilla) dealing with illness and falling in love in Banderas' native Malaga during the 1970s.

From the Latin American side of the world, the highlight is Mexican director Francisco Vargas' *El Violín*, which is sweeping up awards, including one at Cannes for first-time actor Ángel Távira. He portrays an elderly musician who quietly plays his violin for spare change during the day – while hording weapons for guerrilla warfare by night. Set during the peasant uprisings in the 1970s in the Guerrero region of Mexico, the movie mixes social realism with a lyrical black-and-white style, to marvellous effect.

Lisa Bradshaw

November 7-18 at Vendôme and Flagey, Brussels. Programme and tickets from [www.intercommunication.be](http://www.intercommunication.be)



# Missing

A new Flemish film fictionalises the work of Belgium's Missing Person's Unit



Young, attractive investigators search for a missing girl in *Vermist*

## Jan Verheyen

"I love genre movies," says Jan Verheyen, the Flemish director behind *Vermist*. So when writer and producer Philippe De Schepper called him up and asked him to direct a project he'd been working on for years, "I tried to hide my excitement." The director of many TV and film projects, including *Team Spirit* and *Buitenspel*, Verheyen had never done a police drama, and *Vermist* is firmly rooted in the genre. "It's amazing that while police series on TV are very popular, there have only been two police movies in Flemish cinema," he says.

Not interested in competing with American blockbusters, Verheyen and the screenwriters chose to focus their attention on emotions over large-scale action. And they also took a different approach from a storytelling point of view. "Most successful police dramas are whodunits," says Verheyen,

"but in this case you're looking for the victim. It's a completely different emotional investment. This was confirmed in the audience previews. People are genuinely moved by the story. That's based on our collective trauma; this is a traumatised country."

He's referring, of course, to the kidnapping and murder of several young girls that took place in Belgium in the 1990s and then again last year in Liège. *Vermist* is based on the work of Belgium's Missing Person's Unit, which was set up after the series of murders committed by Marc Dutroux about 10 years ago. Verheyen was able to choose the film's cast, and "everybody I wanted said yes," he notes. "I love ensemble casts; I like finding all these pieces of the puzzle and fitting them together."

LB



Jan Verheyen

## Who's who in 'the cel'

Director Jan Verheyen has put together a dream team of actors to portray the agents in Belgium's Missing Person's Unit



**Who he is:** Koen De Bouw One of the hardest-working actors in Flanders. He's been in TV series like *Flikken* and *Windkracht 10* and starred in the recent movies *Verlengd Weekend* and *Koning van de Wereld*. He won accolades in 2003 for his performance in the award-winning movie *De Zaak Alzheimer*.

**Who he plays:** Walter Sibelius The head of the Missing Person's Unit. Serious, driven and so married to his job that his wife gave up on him and left. He barely sees his daughter, searching for other people's children instead.



**Who she is:** Joke Devynck A Flemish stage star of the 1990s, she has also featured in several TV series, including *Wittekerke* and *Flikken*. This is her second film: her first was in Jan Verheyen's *Buitenspel*.

**Who she plays:** Tine Peeters Second in command of the Missing Person's Unit and its emotional core. Two young daughters at home lend a certain vulnerability to her work.



**Who he is:** Kevin Janssens Flemish heartthrob who was selected this year as one of the European Film Promotion's coveted 'Shooting Stars'. He was in last year's *Windkracht 10: Koksijde Rescue* but really turned heads as boxer Sylvain Vandewalle in *Koning van de Wereld*.

**Who he plays:** Nick Bulens The rebel of the unit. He doesn't like to play by the rules, and he sees everything in black and white – good guys vs bad guys and no room for blurring the lines.



**Who he is:** Steve Van Samang A singer as well as an actor, he won the first season of *Steracteur Stertiest*, a talent contest on channel één. He has played Kevin in the TV show *Witterkerke* since 2001 and was in the movies *Windkracht 10: Koksijde Rescue* and *Buitenspel*.

**Who he plays:** Steven Van Hamel The unit's computer nerd – and a charming one. He analyses a lot of data and views a lot of video footage.



**Who she is:** Cathérine Kools Best known as Lotta on *Wittekerke*, she has also been in the TV shows *Thuis* and *Aspe*. She starred in the 1999 film *Vergeten straat* and was most recently in Dominique Deruddere's *Firmin*.

**Who she plays:** Milly Lacroix The newcomer to the group, she's a scientist used to working solely in a lab. Now she's confronted by the ugliness that lies behind the forensics.



# Affordable Flanders

Do more on less: a guide to cheap living



Prices have been creeping up steadily in recent years in Flanders, but the cost of living is still much lower than London or Paris or Amsterdam. We take a look at some of the cheapest places to eat, sleep, enjoy and study.

## A night at the opera

Cost: €10

A night at the opera can be expensive in cities like London and New York, but the Munt opera house in Brussels has a policy of offering some cheap seats for every production. "We set the price to be the same as a ticket for the cinema," a Munt spokesman explains. The cheapest seats are on sale at €10. The seats are located on the left and right sides of the uppermost circle, so the view of the stage isn't going to be perfect. But you can still enjoy the music and the sheer glamour of the 19th-century opera house.

online

[www.demunt.be](http://www.demunt.be)

## Coffee on a terrace in Antwerp

Cost: €1,80

Drinking coffee in London has become boring in recent years as international chains snap up prime locations and offer a bland product that is the same from New York to Edinburgh. But here in Flanders the cafés are mostly still run by dedicated people who have their own unique selling point. It might be a picturesque canal-side location, or Barbie dolls suspended from the ceiling, but every place is going to be different. One of the newest cafés is Jam, located in an old house on the corner of Grote Goddard and Wijngaardbrug in the heart of Antwerp, where you can sit on the terrace on a Saturday after-

noon listening to a street musician playing a fiddle across the road. A café lungo served on a tray with a silver jug of milk and a little biscuit costs just €1,80.

## Business lunch near Louizalaan in Brussels

Cost: €8

The best restaurants in Brussels offer a business lunch for a fraction of the price of an evening dinner. You can eat a two-course lunch at noon in many of the top addresses for about €11. You have to take what the chef wants to prepare, so the choice is minimal, but you can usually find something that appeals scrawled on a blackboard. The Louizalaan district is especially thick with excellent restaurants that offer outstanding deals, with lunch menus for as little as €8.

## Live in a loft in the European Quarter

Cost: €870 a month

People grumble about rising apartment prices, but this corner

of Europe still has relatively affordable accommodation to rent. Even Brussels, which has some of the highest rents in the country, comes out as one of the world's cheapest capital cities, according to The Economist's annual survey of worldwide costs of living. The report says that you will pay €870 a month for a "mid-priced one-bed furnished apartment" in Brussels, compared to €1,500 in Berlin, €2,000 in Paris, £1,500 (€2,100) in London, and an eyeball-popping \$5,500 (€3,800) for a place to lay your head in New York.

## Book a theatre seat in Brussels

Cost: €6,50 off

The Flemish Community wants Brussels residents to enjoy the city's rich programme of dance, exhibitions, theatre and music. The answer is to offer everyone three culture tickets worth €6,50 each. These can be used to get discounts when you book tickets at many of the main venues in Brussels, including the Kaaithater, Bozar, the Museum of Musical Instruments and the Beursschouwburg. The tickets can be ordered online by filling in a simple form in Dutch. Click on *Hoe bestellen*. They can also be ordered by residents living in the Flemish suburbs around Brussels.

online

[www.vgc.be/cultuur](http://www.vgc.be/cultuur)

## Take the train to the beach

Cost: €8

Train tickets are never too expensive in Belgium, but the best deals are at the weekend when you can nip across the country for half the normal fare. You can take the train from Ghent to Knokke for a day at the beach for just €8 return. The Belgian railways website has information about other special deals for young people, groups and older travellers, along with an online ticket booking form.

online

[www.nmbs.be](http://www.nmbs.be)

## Look at Flemish art on a Sunday morning

Cost: free

Most museums in Flanders charge an entry fee, but some have a free day once a month or even once a week. The Museum of Fine Arts in Ghent is one of the most generous. You can visit the collection on a Sunday morning from 10.00 to 13.00 without paying a cent. Highlights of the collection include Hieronymus Bosch's painting of *Christ Carrying the Cross* and Theo van Rysselberghe's *Portrait of Marguerite van Mons*.

online

[www.mskgent.be](http://www.mskgent.be)



## Study at business school

Cost: €17,000 fees

The Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School is consistently ranked one of the best in Europe and reached 22nd position in a recent list of the world's best business schools compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit. Yet it remains one of the world's cheapest places to study. "For people on a tight budget, Vlerick is a relatively inexpensive option," says Vlerick spokesperson Vanessa Debruyne. "Courses are subsidised by the Flemish government, and living costs in Ghent are really low, making Vlerick among the cheapest of the world's top business schools." Students pay €17,000 in tuition fees for an MBA and about €350 a month in rent, compared to about €45,000-€50,000 at a major London business school, along with at least €1,000 in rent.

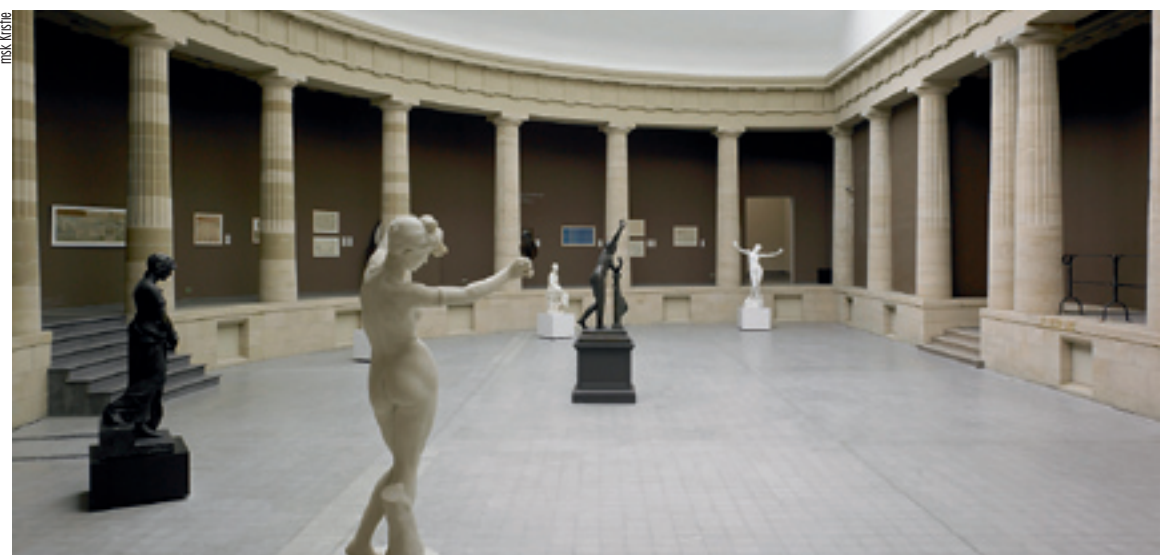
Derek Blyth

online

[www.vlerick.be](http://www.vlerick.be)



De Munt: going for a song



Ghent's Fine Art Museum for free



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## Classical &amp; new music

## Brussels

**Bozar (Paleis voor Schone Kunsten)**  
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00,  
www.bozar.be  
**NOV 1** 20.00 De Munt Symphony  
Orchestra, conducted by Mark  
Wigglesworth, and Munt Choir,  
conducted by Piers Maxim: Mozart's  
Requiem KV 626, Britten's Sinfonia da  
Requiem op 20  
**NOV 2** from 16.00; NOV 3 & 4 from  
11.00 Bach Academie Festival,  
conducted by Philippe Herreweghe:  
concerts, workshops,  
lectures, film (see also under Royal  
Music Conservatory)  
**NOV 4** 11.00 Graindelavoix and  
Ensemble Rafik El Maai,  
conducted by Björn Schmelzer and  
Rafik El Maai (Moussem Festival)  
**NOV 6** 10.00 The Symphony, it's chic:  
musical workshop with the Belgian  
National Orchestra (info & reservations:  
02.507.84.64; children aged 8-14)

## Hanlet Auditorium

Livornostraat; 02.720.66.85  
**NOV 2** 20.00 Philippe Liénart, piano,  
Erwin Liénart, violin: Bach, Wieniawski,  
Bloch, Grieg (tickets: 02.608.57.65)

## Kapel van de Miniemen

Miniemenstraat 62; www.minimes.net  
**NOV 2** 19.45 Sancte Deus & Una Cum:  
polyphony and Gregorian chants, works  
by Morales, Tallis, Tejada, Pastrana

## Royal Fine Arts Museum

Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.512.82.47  
**NOV 7** 12.40-13.30 Jalina Trio: Martin,  
Brahms

## Royal Music Conservatory

Regentschapsstraat 30; 02.213.41.37,  
www.kcb.be  
**NOV 2** 20.00 Ricercar Consort.  
conducted by Philippe Pierlot:  
Bruhns, Bach. 22.30 Benjamin Alard,  
harpsichord: Bach  
**NOV 3** 15.00 Bach Academie Choir and  
soloists, conducted by Christoph Siebert  
and Peter Kooyi: Schütz, Telemann,  
Bach. 19.00 Marathon concert Bach-  
Bruhns: Bach Concentus, conducted  
by Ewald Demeyere: Johann Bernhard  
Bach, Bach. Collegium Vocale Gent,  
conducted by Philippe Herreweghe:  
Bach cantata. Christine Busch, violin:  
Bach's violin Sonata No 3. Collegium  
Vocale Gent, conducted by Philippe  
Herreweghe: Bach's Missa brevis No 2

**NOV 4** 11.00 Pierre Hantaï,  
harpsichord, Amandine Beyer, violin:  
Bach sonatas. 14.00 Barthold Kuijken  
and Patrick Beuckels, Baroque flute:  
works by WF and CPE Bach. 17.00 Duel  
Bach - Marchand: Lorenzo Ghielmi,  
harpsichord and organ: works by  
Marchand and Bach  
**NOV 7** 20.00 Leonidas Kavakos, violin,  
Denes Varjon, piano: Beethoven,  
Brahms, Szymanowski, Stravinsky  
(tickets: 02.507.82.00)

## Vaudeville Theatre

Koninginnegalerij; 02.507.82.00,  
www.ticketclik.be  
**NOV 1-4** Mad about Mozart: five  
concerts of Mozart's music

## Antwerp

**Amuz**  
Kammenstraat 81; 03.248.28.28  
**NOV 3** 21.00 Aapo Häkkinen,  
harpsichord: Handel, D Scarlatti  
**NOV 4** 15.00 Capilla Flamenca & Het  
Collectief: Stockhausen's Tierkreis

## DeSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28  
**NOV 7** 20.00 Sol Gabetta, cello,  
Henri Sigfridsson, piano: Schumann,  
Shostakovitch, Franck

## Sportpaleis

Schiijnpootweg 119; 0900.45.045  
**Until NOV 11** 20.00 Night of the  
Proms with Il Novecento Orchestra &  
Fine Fleur Choir, conducted by Robert  
Groslot with Macy Gray, Soulsister and  
Roby Lakatos (tickets 070.34.53.45)

## Ghent

Handelbeurs  
Kouter 34 (09.265.92.01)  
**NOV 6** 18.15 Leonidas Kavakos, violin,  
Denes Varjon, piano: Beethoven,  
Brahms, Szymanowski, Stravinsky

## Opera

## Brussels

**De Munt**  
Muntplein; 070.23.39.39  
**Until NOV 11** Mitridate, Rè di  
Ponto by Mozart, conducted by Mark  
Wigglesworth

## Ghent

**Vlaamse Opera**  
Schouwburgstraat 3 (070.22.02.02)  
**NOV 4-DEC 1** Der Ring des  
Nibelungen: Siegfried by Wagner,  
conducted by Ivan Törzs

## Jazz, soul &amp; blues

**Ancienne Belgique**  
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24  
**OCT 31** 20.00 Robert Fonseca

## Archiduc

Dansaertstraat 6; 02.512.06.52  
**NOV 3** 17.00 Jazzisfaction.  
**NOV 4** 17.00 Lee Konitz 80th Birthday  
Celebration Concert

## Jazz Station

Leuvensesteenweg 193-195;  
02.733.13.78  
**NOV 3** 18.00 Delannoye/Estievenart  
Quartet

## Sounds Jazz Club

Tulpenstraat 28; 02.512.92.50  
**NOV 2** 22.00 Slang & Vj Luas Racas

## The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45  
Concerts at 20.30:  
**NOV 2** Thorsten Goods Quartet  
**NOV 3** Trio Ambre + Phil Abraham:  
the music of Chet Baker  
**NOV 6** Jill'Z Jazz Combo

## Theatre 140

Eugène Plaskyalaan 140; 02.733.97.08  
**NOV 2** 20.00 Larry Coryell

## Borgerhout

**De Roma**  
Turnhoutsebaan 286; 03.235.04.90  
**NOV 2** 20.30 Narcissus Quartet & Bobo  
Stenson Trio

## Bruges

**De Werf**  
Werfstraat 108; 050.33.05.29  
**NOV 5** 20.30 Matt Wilson's Arts and  
Crafts

## Ghent

**Mineral Jazz Club**  
Onderbergen 25; 09.265.92.01  
**NOV 6** 20.30 Mendoza and friends

## Pop, rock, hip-hop, techno

## Brussels

**Ancienne Belgique**  
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24  
Concerts at 20.00 unless otherwise  
noted:  
**NOV 1** from 16.30 Now\_Series: Transit  
+ Liars + Apse + 65 Days of Static  
**NOV 2** Reverend & The Makers  
**NOV 3** John Hiatt. Spot on Denmark:  
Amber + Band Ane + Murder +  
Figurines

## Beursschouwburg

Auguste Ortstraat 20-28; 02.550.03.50  
**NOV 3** 20.30 Dustin O'Hallaran +  
Corinna Repp

## Halles de Schaerbeek

Koninklijke Sinte-Mariastraat 22;  
02.218.21.07  
**NOV 6** 20.00 My Chemical Romance

## Koninklijk Circus

Onderrichtsstraat 8; 02.218.20.15  
**NOV 6** 20.00 Wilco

## Le Botanique

Koningstraat 236; 02.218.37.32  
Concerts at 20.00:  
**NOV 3** The Strange Death of Liberal  
England. Wax Tailor  
**NOV 4** Blood Red Shoes. Los  
Campesinos. Vampire Weekend + New  
Young Pony Club  
**NOV 6** The Wombats. James Deano and  
Band

## Recyclart

Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34  
**NOV 7** 20.00 Future of the Left

## VK Club

Schoolstraat 76; 02.414.29.07  
**NOV 3** 20.00 Envy + Amen Ra  
**NOV 6** 20.00 Hermano +The Sedan  
Vault

## Antwerp

**Lotto Arena**  
Schiijnpootweg 119; 0900.26.060  
**NOV 2** 20.00 Joss Stone

## Sportpaleis

Schiijnpootweg 119; 0900.26.060  
**NOV 5** 20.30 Michael Bublé

## Borgerhout

**Hof Ter Lo**  
Noordersingel 30; 03.543.90.30  
**NOV 2** 20.30 Iced Earth

## Eeklo

**CC De Herbakker**  
Pastoor De Nevestraat 10; 09.378.40.90  
**NOV 2** 20.00 An Pierlé + White Velvet

## Ghent

**Handelsbeurs**  
Kouter 29; 09.265.92.01  
**NOV 1** 20.00 Mark Ronson

## Halle

**CC 't Vondel**  
Possozplein 40; www.livenation.be  
**NOV 3** 20.00 An Pierlé + White Velvet

## Mechelen

**CC - Stadsschouwburg**  
Keizerstraat 3; www.livenation.be  
**NOV 1** 20.00 An Pierlé + White Velvet

## World, folk

## Brussels

**Ancienne Belgique**  
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24  
Concerts at 20.00 unless otherwise  
noted:  
**NOV 4** 19.30 Dubioza Kolektiv +  
Balkan Beat Box

## EXHIBITION

Georges  
De Kinder

Georges De Kinder has spent  
several years photographing  
the unexpected side of Brussels.  
He has an eye for strange isolated  
buildings, windblown wastelands,  
unexpected urban viewpoints. His  
first exhibition in the Sint Goriks-  
hallen cellars a few years ago had  
visitors asking, "Is this really Brus-  
sels?" His latest show, in the same  
venue, offers a new portfolio of  
views that barely resemble Brus-  
sels. De Kinder reveals a city of  
industrial landscapes, eerie forgot-  
ten spaces, gleaming glass towers.  
Most photographers choose cloud-  
less day, but De Kinder prefers  
heavy leaden skies with rain blow-  
ing in from the North Sea. You  
leave this exhibition aware of the  
city's hidden beauty.



Sint Gorikshallen, Brussels.  
7 November to 31 December.

## online

www.georgesdekinder.com

## Theatre

## Brussels

## Kaaithater

Square Sainctelette 20; 02.201.59.59  
**NOV 7 & 8** 20.30 Physical Interrogation  
Techniques by Carl Michael von  
Hauswolff + Death is Certain by Eva  
Meyer-Keller (in English)

## Kaaithaterstudio's

Onze-Lieve-Vrouw van Vaakstraat 81.;  
02.201.59.59  
**OCT 31** 20.30 Müller/Tractor, adapted  
from Heiner Müller's work by Jan  
Decorte (in Dutch)

## KVS Bol

Lakensstraat 146; 02.210.11.12  
**Until NOV 3** Koning Lear (King  
Lear) by Shakespeare, staged by Alize  
Zandwijk (In Dutch with French  
surtitles)

## KVS Box

Arduinkaai 9; 02.210.11.12, www.kvs.be  
**OCT 31-NOV 4** Liberté, égalité,  
sexualité by Bernard Breuse and Sam  
Touzani: Touzani plays a journalist who  
interviews God (In English with Dutch  
surtitles)

## The Warehouse Studio Theatre

Waelhemstraat 69a; 0487.38.06.82,  
marystuart@shaksoc.com  
**NOV 6-10** 20.00 Brussels Shakespeare  
Society in Mary Stuart, adapted from  
Schiller's work by Peter Oswald (in  
English)

## Antwerp

## Arenberg Theatre

Arenbergstraat 28; 070.22.21.92  
**NOV 5 & 6** 20.30 Whiety Edyp,  
performed by Wierszalin Theatre,  
Bialystok, staged by Piotr Tomaszuk (in  
English, Fr & Dutch surtitles. Europalia.  
europa)

## Bruges

## The English Theatre

Kuipersstraat 3; 050.61.31.20  
**Until NOV 11** 20.00 Icabod in Anton's  
Shorts, selection of Chekhov sketches  
(in English)

## Visual arts &amp; film

## Brussels

## Argos

Werfstraat 13; 02.229.00.02  
**Until NOV 11** Open Archive #1, videos,  
concerts and conferences based on  
Argos' permanent collection

## Atomium

Atomium Square; 02.475.47.72,  
www.atomium.be

## Get your tickets now for...



**Moussem Festival**, October  
31 to November 17 in venues  
across Antwerp and Brussels.  
Details from 03.286.88.52 or  
www.moussem.be

Artists from all over the  
Arabic world will join home-  
grown talent in this fascinat-  
ing juxtaposition of tradi-  
tional and contemporary arts  
with a programme centred on  
dance, theatre, music and film.  
Next year the Moussem Festi-  
val adopts a nomadic format, so  
take advantage now of this rare  
concoction of Oriental sounds  
and performances.



**Until MAR 30** Willy Van Der Meeren, furniture from the 1950s by the Belgian architect

**Box Gallery**  
Maliestraat 88; 02.537.95.55  
**Until DEC 1** Les Silences du promeneur, photographs by Bernard Descamps

**Bozar**  
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.84.44  
**Until FEB 2** Encompassing the globe: Portugal and the world in the 16th and 17th centuries, art works, maps, navigational instruments and early books from the time of Portugal's trading empire and voyages of discovery  
**Until NOV 30** The Void, architecture show with models, plans and photographs of projects by Portuguese architect Gonalo Byrne  
**Until JAN 6** Melting Ice, group show on the theme of global warming,  
**Until JAN 20** The Grand Atelier: Pathways of Art in Europe, 350 paintings, drawings, sculptures, manuscripts, books, prints, furniture and objects dating from the 5th to the 18th centuries

**Brussel in de Kijker**  
Koninginnegalerij 17; 02.502.09.73  
**Until NOV 19** Royal Greenhouses of Laeken, some 50 photographs of the greenhouses' flora and architecture by Olivier Polet

**Espace Culturel ING**  
Koningsplein 6; 02.547.22.92  
**Until FEB 17** Brilliant Europe, 800 years of jewellery in Europe, with paintings, miniatures and 200 pieces of jewellery

**Espace Photographique Contretype**  
Verbindingslaan 1; 02.538.42.20  
**Until NOV 4** Tuinen, photographs by Paul den Hollander, Daniel Desmedt and others

**Gemeentehuis van Schaarbeek**  
Colignonplein 2; 02.247.27.25  
**Until NOV 7** Op Papier, original Belle Epoque posters by Toulouse-Lautrec, Anna Boch and others

**ISELP**  
Waterloosesteenweg 31; 02.504.80.70  
**Until DEC 1** Eves' Phase I: le complot, video, drawings, photographs and installation by Didier Mahieu. Interactions, paintings by Claude Celli and sculptures by Cl  mence van Lunen

**Ixelles Museum**  
Jean Van Volsemstraat 71; 02.515.64.21  
**Until NOV 4** Photographier un territoire: le Foyer Saint-Gillois, social housing in the Brussels commune of Saint-Gilles  
**Until JAN 26** All Roads Lead to Rome: Artists travelling in Europe from the 16th to the 19th centuries  
**Until JAN 27** Ontmoetingen: 1997-2007, photographs by G  raldine Langlois

**Jewish Museum of Belgium**  
Minimenstraat 21; 02.512.19.63  
**Until DEC 31** Jewish Spaces and Itineraries: The Shoule of Molenbeek, Aspects of contemporary Judaism

**KVS**  
Arduinkaai 7; 02.210.11.12  
**Until NOV 17** Decors, photographs of Flanders by Peter De Bruyne

**De Loge Architecture Museum**  
Kluisstraat 86; 02.649.86.65  
**Until DEC 23** Vienna-Brussels: the Secession Years, the reciprocal artistic influence of the two capitals at the turn of the 19th century

**La Lettre vol  e**  
Barth  l  mylaan 28; 02.512.02.88  
**Until NOV 3** The Green(er) side of the Line, photographs by Alban Biaussat

**Pascal Polar Gallery**  
Charleroiesteenweg 108; 02.537.81.36  
**Until NOV 3** Une femme, photographs by Claude Fauville and texts by Claude Javeau

**Passa Porta**  
A. Dansaertstraat 46; 02.226.04.54  
**NOV 5-9** Staden, De Stad, photos and poems from Helsinki by Pentti Sammallahti and Bo Carpelan

**Royal Military Museum**  
Jubelpark 3; 02.737.78.33  
**Until NOV 2008** Penseel op het geweer (A Paintbrush in the Barrel), World War One paintings, drawings and etchings by soldiers

**Royal Library**  
Kunstberg; 02.519.58.73  
**Until NOV 30** Bollandistes, Saints and Legends: 400 Centuries of Research, exhibition commemorating the 400th anniversary of the publication of H  ribert Rosweyde's Fasti Sanctorum

**Royal Museum of Art and History**  
Jubelpark 10; 02.741.72.11  
**Until DEC 2** A Princely Hobby, some 150 works from the workshops created by Charles de Lorraine to furnish his palatial residences  
**Until DEC 31** Belgi   op kijkdoosprenten, some 400 views of Belgian cities dating from the 17th and 18th centuries

**Royal Museum of Fine Arts**  
Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.508.32.11  
**Until JAN 27** Rubens: A Genius at Work, major show of works by the Flemish master and his workshop

**Schaarbeek Cultural Centre**  
Lochtstraat 91-93; 02.245.27.25  
**Until DEC 7** Pekin Contemporain, contemporary art from China

**Saint Michael and St Gudula Cathedral**  
Parvis St-Gudule; 02.217.83.45  
**Until NOV 27** Paroles Ouvertes, paintings by Anne Piron

**Stadhuis**  
Grote Markt; 02.279.43.50  
**Until JAN 13** Van't stadt en schoone buytens, drawings and paintings of Brussels and its surroundings by 18th-century artists Ferdinand-Joseph Derons and Andreas Martin

**Stadsarchief**  
Huidevettersstraat 65; 02.279.53.33  
**Until DEC 31** Zicht op licht: Het licht in de stad, the history of the use of lighting in Brussels and its effect on society, past and present

**Tour et Taxis**  
Havenlaan 86C; 02.543.06.98  
**Until MAR 23** It's our History!, multi-media exhibition on the development of the EU and the lives of European citizens since 1945

**WIELS**  
Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.347.30.33  
**Until NOV 18** Dots Obsession, walk-in balloon installation by contemporary Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama

**Antwerp Contemporary Art Museum (MuHKA)**  
Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60  
**Until NOV 18** Panamarenko's studio, selected contents of the Flemish artist's house donated to the museum  
**Until JAN 6** If I can't dance, I Don't Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution, Edition II: Feminist Legacies And Potentials In Contemporary Art Practice  
Lonely at the top #6, Recyclable Refugee Camp TOURISM by Ives Maes

**deSingel**  
Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28  
**Until DEC 16** The Wrong House: Alfred Hitchcock & Pauhof, exploration of architecture in the films of Alfred Hitchcock with installation by Austrian architectural firm Pauhof  
**Extra City, Center for Contemporary Art**  
Klamperstraat 40; 0484.42.10.70  
**Until DEC 16** Numerous Incidents of Indefinite Outcome, works by Joachim Koester

The Nine Monads Of David Bell, works by Luke Fowler

**FotoMuseum**  
Waalse Kaai 47; 03.242.93.00  
**Until JAN 6** Belgium, Stephan Vanfleteren's photographs of Belgium, with humour and nostalgia  
Oorlogsmaterial by film director Robbe De Hert. Ost.Modern, images from Eastern Europe by Annemie Augustijns  
Stage fright, thematic exhibition on the effects of the ever-growing presence of cameras in society

**Hessenhuis**  
Falconrui 53; 03.206.03.50  
**Until NOV 25** Bivak Gloria, group show by Dwight Marica, Michele Matyun and friends

**Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten (Royal Museum of Fine Arts)**  
Leopold De Waelplaats; 03.238.78.09  
**Until NOV 18** MuHKA at the KMSKA, installations by contemporary artists Mark Manders, Nedko Solakov, Patrick Van Caekenbergh, Jimmy Durham and Michelangelo Pistoletto, among others, on the occasion of MuHKA's 20th anniversary  
**Until DEC 31** The Rijksmuseum comes to the Scheldt, 40 16th- and 17th-century masterpieces, including paintings by Spranger and Goltzius plus works by Chiaroscuro painters lent by the Amsterdam museum

**Mayer van den Bergh Museum**  
Lange Gasthuisstraat 19; 03.232.42.37  
**Until JAN 27** Facing death, drawings of the artist's dying wife by Eugene van Mieghem (1875-1930)

**Mode Museum (MoMu)**  
Nationalestraat 28; 03.470 .27.70  
**Until FEB 10** Exuberant fashion designs by Bernhard Willhelm

**Bruges De Bond**  
Buiten Smedenvest 1; 050.44.30.48  
**Until NOV 4** Indefinite Reflections, works by Anneke Eussen

**Gaasbeek Kasteel**  
Kasteelstraat 40; 02.531.01.30  
**Until NOV 4** Allemaal ridders: from tough warriors to romantic heroes, medieval knights

**Ghent Caermersklooster**  
Vrouwebroersstraat 6; 09.269.29.10  
**Until DEC 9** VIPS - Very Important Paintings, portraits by Karl Meersman

**Design Museum**  
Jan Breydelstraat 5; 09.267.99.99  
**Until DEC 31** Studio Glass, the Alonso glassware collection from Art Nouveau to the 1960s  
**Until JAN 13** Retrospective covering the 65-year career of architect and designer Ettore Sottsass, with furniture, ceramics, glass, jewellery, architecture and industrial design  
**Until JAN 13** Christopher Dresser, pioneer of modern design, display of Eastern-inspired minimalist objects by the Scottish designer (1834-1904)

**Museum Dr Guislain**  
Jozef Guislainstraat 43; 09.216.35.95, www.museumdrguislain.be  
**Until APR 27 2008** Sick: Between Body and Soul, the links between mental and physical pain

**Museum of Fine Arts**  
Citadelpark; 09.240.07.00  
**Until JAN 13** British Vision, Observation and Imagination in British Art 1750-1950, with works by William Hogarth, Thomas Gainsborough, Stanley Spencer and Francis Bacon, among others

**Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (SMAK)**  
Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03  
**Until DEC 2** Kunst Nu: Leaving These Landscapes Behind, monumental sculpture installation by Tim Volckaert

**Until JAN 13** Daria Martin, 2 films by the American artist.

**Grimbergen Strombeek-Bever Cultural Centre**  
Gemeenteplein; 02.263.03.43  
**Until OCT 31** Looking for the Border, show of recent Belgian and Italian art, with works by Marcel Broodthaers, Alighiero e Boetti, Guillaume Bijl and Cesare Pietroiusti

**Z33**  
Zuivelmarkt 33 (in begijnhof); 011.29.59.60  
**Until DEC 12** Toegepast 12, works by young designers from Limburg, Wim Buts, Hanne De Wyngaert and others

**Ieper In Flanders Fields Museum**  
Grote Markt 34; 057.23.92.75  
**Until NOV 15** Oorlogsgetuige, 1914-1918: drawings of war scenes by Henry De Groux

**Knokke-Heist Lagunahal**  
Krommedijk - Duinbergen; 050.63.04.30  
**Until NOV 30** Kunst & Wunderkammern, artists' rooms by Eric Angenot, Franck Bragigand, Loek Grootjans and others

**Leuven Park Abbey**  
016.20.30.20  
**Until DEC 21** In the name of God: 1000 years of monasticism, from the origins of the first monastic orders to today

**Stuk**  
Naamsestraat 96; 016.32.03.20  
**Until NOV 11** Sculptures by Erwin Wurm

**Machelen-Zulte Het Roger Raveelmuseum**  
Gildestraat 2-8; 09.381.60.00  
**NOV 4-FEB 3** Waterverf, watercolour paintings group show with works by Guy Mees, Marc Mulders, Elizabeth Peyton, Roger Raveel, Thomas Sch  tte and Raoul De Keyser, among others

**Meise Belgium's National Botanic Garden**  
Nieuwelaan 38; 02.260.09.70  
**Until DEC 31** Hard Rain, photographs by Mark Edwards based on Bob Dylan's eponymous song

**Tervuren Central Africa Museum**  
Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11  
**Until AUG 31 2008** Knock on Wood! Forest and Wood in Africa, thematic exhibition on African trees and forests and their need for sustainable management

**Ypres Municipal Museum**  
Ieperleestraat 31; 057.21.83.00  
**Until NOV 18** Paintings by Ypres artist Franois B  hm (1801-1873)

Festivals & special events

**Audi Jazz Festival:** blues, world, avant-garde and hip-hop  
**Until DEC 10** in venues across Belgium  
02.456.04.85, www.audijazz.be

**Europalia:** Festival of music, literature, dance, exhibitions and cinema celebrating the cultural diversity of the 27 EU countries  
**Until FEB 3** at venues across Brussels  
02.507.85.94, www.europalia.eu

**Brussels Bouglione Circus**  
**Until DEC 9** at Laeken Park, near the Atomium. 0476.49.12.03, www.bouglione.be

**Bronks Festival:** Children's theatre festival (In Dutch with some performances in French and without dialogue)  
**NOV 3-11** at venues across Brussels  
02.219.99.21, www.bronks.be

Don't miss this week



**Bach Academie,** November 2-4, Royal Conservatory of Brussels, Regentschapsstrat 30. Tickets from 02.507.82.00 or www.bozar.be

Superstar Belgian conductor Philippe Herreweghe returns with the second edition of his Bach Academie, a mini-festival devoted this year to the composer's use of rhetoric. Conductor Philippe Pierlot, harpsichordist Pierre Hanta  , organist Lorenzo Ghielmi and other Bach experts from Belgium and beyond will be there. You can attend conferences, join discussions and watch *Kronik der Anna Magdalena Bach*, a rarely screened film from 1967 starring the young Gustav Leonhardt as Bach.

**Festival des Libert  s:** Festival organised by the Brussels La  que organisation with concerts, theatre, film, performances, workshops and exhibitions.  
**Until NOV 11** at Path   Palace, Anspachlaan 85  
02.289.69.00, www.festivaldeslibertes.be

**Hors Pistes:** European contemporary circus festival. Guest of honour is Johan Le Guillerm with several performances of his show Secret/Cirque ici  
**NOV 1-28** at venues across Brussels  
02.218.21.07, www.halles.be

**Ed Byrne:** solo show by the Irish comedian  
**NOV 9** 20.30 at Theatre 140, Eug  ne Plaskylaan 140, 02.733.97.08, tickets: www.standupworld.com

**The Dream of Icarus:** fair for aviation enthusiasts  
**NOV 2-4** 10.00-18.00 at Cinquantenaire Park, Autoworld 02.736.41.65

**Antwerp De Avonden:** Four-day music and literary festival  
**OCT 31-NOV 3** at deSingel and Muziekclub Petrol  
www.deavonden.org

**Cirque du Soleil presents Varekai**  
**Until DEC 2** in the renowned circus group's big top in the Zuiderdokken  
070.22.32.30, www.cirquedusoleil.com

**Kuifje De Zonnetempel:** musical by Dirk Bross   and Frank Van Laecke (in Dutch)  
**Until NOV 1** at Stadsschouwburg, Theaterplein 1  
070.25.20.20, www.musicalkuifje.com.

**Suske en Wiske Theatershow:** musical theatre (in Dutch).  
**NOV 2-NOV 4** at at Stadsschouwburg, Theaterplein 1, 077.37.38.39

**Other towns Countryside:** Country lifestyle fair  
**NOV 1-4** 10.00-19.00 at Flanders Expo, Maalteko  ter 1, Ghent  
09.241.92.11, www.flandersexpo.be

**Biennale ClassicA:** period home and lifestyle fair  
**NOV 3-11** Mon-Fri 13.00-19.00, Sat & Sun 10.00-19.00 at KORTRIJK Xpo  
216 Doorniksesteenweg, www.classic.be



## MY FLANDERS

# Tomas De Bruyne

Flemish master florist Tomas De Bruyne is senior advisor on floral arrangements at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. He tells us about his passion for flowers and where he gets his inspiration.

## What are you working on at the moment?

I'm just about to leave for Auckland, New Zealand, where I'm giving a series of demonstrations and lessons. It's an exciting new experience for me to discover new materials, people and culture. I think it enriches me as a designer and as a person.

## What made you decide to become a master florist?

I have a passion for flowers, but I'm also someone with a deep urge to be creative. All my life I've been driven by a sort of need to shape things. Even when I was very young I got a big kick out of being creative and letting my imagination run wild. This creative urge comes from something deep inside me.

## Where do you find inspiration?

I'm inspired by the abundance of nature. This led me into the world of flowers and plants. I've never had a single moment of regret. I've brought a fresh dimension to floral arranging by using the techniques I've learned over the last few years. I've also found a lot of inspiration in the past – which is an endless source of knowledge and experience. Throughout my working life, I've always been driven by a passion that comes from inside me. There are thousands of different ways in which you can bring out the beauty of flowers and natural materials. You can use your own creativity to combine them in different ways. My work stems from my belief

that the most important thing is to be yourself and to treat other people with respect and love.

## How do you work?

My creations are based on feelings. They are almost never based on technical specifications. The inspiration can come from any number of sources: sculpture, paintings, a philosopher's writings or even comments from colleagues and friends. The design is always based on a split-second decision. The aim is to give shape to a feeling using flowers as a medium. Ideas occur at the most unexpected moments. These are the most beautiful and pure concepts.

## What advice do you give your students?

I always tell my students that there are three ingredients needed for a finished design. The first is the thought, which forms the basis for the overall arrangement. Secondly, you need reflection. You need to think about how to achieve the final result in terms of technique and organisation. And finally you need the act of creation. You need to turn the thought into form. I had to create a decoration recently for Swarovski involving more than 10,000 roses. This called for an enormous amount of preliminary work, just to show everyone what I wanted to do.

## Is there a "Flemish" dimension to your work?

I try to bring my own creativity to bear on the richness of the natural world. In this way I hope to achieve a harmonious combi-

nation of technique, knowledge and respect for my profession. But there is certainly a "Flemish" dimension to my work, in the sense of a passion that drives us far beyond our frontiers.

## Where can we see your work?

I'm sometimes told that I don't do enough work in my own country. I'm going to try and change that in future. At the moment I do most of my work abroad, in places like the United States and Asia. I've published eight different books so far: four art books and four practical guides. The

photographs in my exhibition *Beauty of Nature* reflect the harmony of women and flowers, while my work *Eternal Circles* sets out to show the ultimate perfection and simplicity of the circle using natural materials and flowers.

## How did you get the top job at the Beijing Olympics?

I took part in a demonstration in Beijing that was titled *Tao and Nature*. The Olympic Committee liked my work and asked me to work with them. They were pleased with the work and appointed me as senior advisor.

## Do you miss anything about Flanders when you travel abroad?

I miss my partner most of all but also my house and the good living that we are lucky enough to enjoy in Flanders.

## What are your plans for the future?

I'd like to take on fresh challenges and share my love of natural beauty with others.

online

[www.tomasdebruyne.com](http://www.tomasdebruyne.com)

Pim van der Meulen



## THE LAST WORD

what they're saying in Flanders

### The energy crunch

"We have to work hard on producing alternative fuels.... We don't have much time left."

**Professor Pierre Jacobs**  
University of Leuven

### The power of television

"Aspe has become a brand – a strong brand."

**Herbert Flack, star of the Flemish TV series**

### Skipping the first day

"That students miss the beginning of the school year is unacceptable. It's like missing the first letters of the alphabet."

**Frank Vandenbroucke,**  
Minister of Education

### Bicycling

"Good, but not good enough."

**Flemish pro cyclist and reality TV star Bart Wellens**  
(on coming in fourth in the Czech Republic last weekend)

**TyneCot HenryDeGroux Bouwgrond**  
**Fashionista GarageTV RomySmits**  
next week in Flanders Today