



Erasmus, p.11

NOVEMBER 14 2007

| N°5

| INDEPENDENT NEWSWEEKLY

| WWW.FLANDERTODAY.EU

Erkennungsnummer P708816

Belga



Holding on: Yves Leterme

BHV vote plunges country into crisis

Is this the beginning of the end for Belgium?

The country plunged into one of its worst constitutional crises in 50 years last week after Flemish politicians voted in favour of splitting up the Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde (BHV) constituency. The vote was taken in the home affairs select committee of the Chamber of Representatives after French-speaking politicians had walked out of the meeting room. The proposal

was supported by all the Flemish members present except Tinne van der Straeten of the Flemish ecological party Groen!

Flemish politicians immediately hailed the vote as a triumph. "It's an historic day for Flanders," said Flemish nationalist Jean-Marie Dedecker. "We've finally imposed a Flemish majority by saying the secession of Halle Vilvoorde has to happen.

But the government could overturn today's vote, and there will be many appeals. It will probably take another year. But the Flemish lion has roared, and that's what is important."

The Flemish leaders were accused by French-speaking politicians of breaking a long-standing agreement among Belgian parties not to split a vote along linguistic lines. The radical francophone FDF leader Olivier

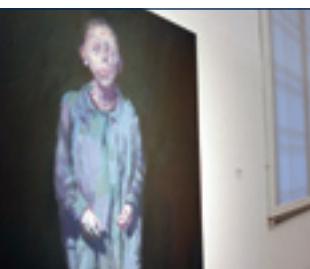
Maingain noted: "This marks the first time ever in Belgian politics that one linguistic community has voted against the other on a very sensitive issue."

Didier Reynders, the acting finance minister and head of the French-speaking liberals, said: "It's a very serious vote because it goes against the principle of respecting minorities and not setting one

community against the other."

The francophone walk-out is the latest crisis to hit the marathon coalition negotiations which have failed to form a government after five months of talks. It represents for some observers a new period of uncertainty in Belgium's stormy 177-year history.

Continued on page 3



Business

The train journey from London to Flanders just got a little bit faster thanks to a new tunnel under London. The high-speed ride now brings you from Zuidstation to the heart of London in under two hours.

Arts

The Dr Guislain Museum is a grimly fascinating place based on the work of a psychiatrist who was ahead of his time in treating mental illness. We wander around the renovated rooms and look at a new exhibition.

7

10

Interview

Lut De Clercq is the chef at Ancienne Belgique in Brussels and godmother of this year's Week of Flavour. We ask her about her love of simple ingredients and how she feels about our eating habits.

16

Police detain illegal hormone suspects

Chief prosecutor denies tipping off dealers

Alan Hope

The former chief prosecutor of Oude-Ternaarde has denied allegations that he tipped off dealers in illegal hormones to police investigations. Hendrik De Jonge, prosecutor in the Flemish town for 16 years until his retirement in 2002, was interviewed by investigators last week and his home searched as part of a large-scale operation involving 17 suspects in the livestock business. Three men were detained, and police seized documents and computer material as well as live cattle for testing. The operation also involved the Federal

Food Safety Agency and the police Computer Crime Unit.

The European Union approved a ban on the use of growth hormones in cattle in 1985, though the measure did not come into force until 1989. The hormones are given to cattle to encourage the growth of muscle mass, which adds to the value of the animal at slaughter. They also produce leaner meat, in keeping with evolving consumer tastes.

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FACE OF FLANDERS

Koen Vanmechelen



Cosmopolitan Chicken Project

Koen Vanmechelen is obsessed with everything that goes cluck-cluck and lays an egg. In his quest to create the perfect chicken, he started a "Cosmopolitan Chicken Project" back in the summer of 2000 at the Watou poetry festival. The project involved cross-breeding a pure Flemish Mechelse Koekoek with a refined French Poulet de Bresse. He called the new breed Mechelse Bresses and took it along to a London art gallery to cross-breed it with an English Redcap chicken. The result was a Mechelse Redcap, which the artist exhibited at the Deweert Gallery in Otegem. And so it went on. The Mechelse Redcap mated with a Jersey Giant to produce a Mechelse Giant and the Giant was introduced to a Dresdner Huhn to beget a Mechelse Huhn. Seven years on, the breeding programme continues to produce surprising new races of chicken, each one taking its first name from the older breed and its second name from the new partner.

Vanmechelen is also interested in eggs. Only don't ask him which came first. He's a serious artist

looking for answers to big questions. He created some large glass eggs on thin metal legs which he called "Walking Eggs". But you get the impression that it's chickens that make him happiest. "I feel like a lost egg," he once said.

Don't make the mistake of thinking that the Cosmopolitan Chicken Project is just a

demented domestic fowl breeding programme. Vanmechelen sees it as a metaphor for globalisation, biodiversity, genetic manipulation and modern communication. He is now working on his tenth generation of superchicken, called the Turkse Denizli Longcowler. A handful of his cosmopolitan chickens

are now in residence at the Marijke Schreurs Gallery in Brussels. Some are alive and clucking while others are dead chickens mounted on plinths.

online

www.marijkeschreurshouse.com

Koen Vanmechelen



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independent newsweekly

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TALKING DUTCH

notes on language



Snotneus

In the cold November rain, most of us have ignored the age-old advice about wrapping up. The result is that buses and trains are full of sneezing commuters and a rise in sales of Kleenex zakdoeken for the nose and Vicks' ademvrije keelpastilles for the throat.

The other day, I was jolted out of my reverie on the platform of a metro station by a seasonal advert. There, accompanying a nasal spray, in huge letters was the word *Snotproblemen*? Wow, snot problems! Even though we talk openly about all sorts of topics that in the past would have shocked, English still has the "French option", which allows us to mention indelicate subjects by means of Latinate words. You may have a mucus problem but you would mostly avoid mentioning snot. Dutch on the other hand, for English speakers, has the charm of being much more straight in your face.

Well, I must confess I ignored the warnings about going out without *een dikke jas* thinking it was still T-shirt weather and as a result am suffering, *zakdoek* in hand, from *een verkoudheid*. You probably don't want to know that this cold is of the runny-nose variety, which means that I am trying to keep my *snotneus* under control with lots of noisy *snuiten* with my *papieren zakdoeken*.

Today's paper gives some advice I was thinking of taking: *Ga niet werken met een snotneus*. But then I thought: how do I explain to my boss that I have to stay at home because my nose is runny! Of course, *zieke mensen moeten thuis blijven*, but surely you don't qualify as sick just because you have *een snotneus*.

Being a bit of a hypochondriac, I popped into my *apotheek* to pick up a leaflet about colds. Let's check the symptoms of *een verkoudheid* first: *een verstoppe neus* (no, mine is runny not blocked); *niezen* (no, haven't sneezed yet); *keelpijn* (no, my throat feels normal); *hoesten* (no, haven't coughed); *tranende ogen* (no, my eyes are not weepy). Well, clearly, my cold isn't quite as bad as I thought.

So what's the cure? *Zorg voor een goede nachtrust*. I suppose a good night's rest is sound advice. *En drink voldoende*. Drink enough – water I suppose they mean. This I have all heard before, but now I read *Het is beter de neus niet te hard te snuiten*. How can it be better not to blow your nose too hard? Nothing is more irritating than a dripping nose. I think I will opt for *een warme bad* and *een goede nachtrust*.

By the way, when Vicks describes its throat pastilles as *ademvrije* it doesn't mean that they leave you breathless, but rather they allow you to breathe freely.

PS *Een snotneus* is also the word for a whippersnapper – when was the last time you used that word? So your homework this week is to find the opportunity to call someone younger than yourself "Snotneus!" it's just a matter of seizing the moment.

Alistair MacLean

online
www.vandale.be

FEATURE

Belga



Bye-bye Belgium: French-speaking members leave the room

Talks in Crisis

Continued from page 1

Many people see the vote as evidence that the nation is heading for a break-up. A poll conducted by *Le Soir* found that 47% of francophones believed that the BHV split marked the beginning of the end of Belgium. Meanwhile, a poll in *Het Laatste Nieuws* found

that nine out of ten Dutch speakers wanted to split BHV and 63% believed that an eventual break-up was inevitable.

The favourite to become the next prime minister, Yves Leterme, who once described Belgium as "an accident of history," insists that he does not intend to abandon efforts to form a new

government. He met Belgium's King Albert II after the breakdown in negotiations to explain the situation. The King asked Leterme to continue his task so that a new federal government could be installed as soon as possible. The palace then issued a statement saying that an early agreement was essential "in the interest of

Belgium's credibility and the cohesion of the country".

The King has tried to use his influence by talking to the presidents of both the Chamber of Representatives and the Senate. He also raised the idea of appointing a "Committee of Wise Men" who would try to bring the two sides back to the negotiating table.

What the foreign press is saying

As a spate of articles in the foreign press, asking if Belgium was on the brink of break-up, has left Belgian politicians annoyed and perplexed. *The Economist* was first in the field with a provocative article on 6 September saying that it was "time to call it a day" and recognise, in the case of Belgium, that "its job is done." *The Economist* was back on 10 November with an analysis of the BHV controversy. "Not with a whimper, but with a bang," it wrote. "After 150 days of squabbling over the formation of a new government, Belgium's political elite brought their fragile system of consensus rule crashing down on 7th November, with a direct clash between the two feuding linguistic groups."

On the same day, the *International Herald Tribune* painted a grim picture of a virtual state of war in Belgium. "Political analysts had said that effectively depriving French-speaking Brussels suburbanites of the right to vote for French-speaking parties would be tantamount to a declaration of war against French-speaking citizens of Belgium."

Daniel Hannan of Britain's *The Telegraph* saw the seeds of a wider European crisis in Belgium's troubles. "If Belgium can't survive, what hope for the EU?" he asked. "Belgium is failing because there are no real Belgians, just as there are no real Europeans. Rather, there are discrete peoples, with their own languages, television stations and political parties. A democracy without a *demos* – the unit with which we identify when we use the word "we" – is left only with *kratos*: the power of a system that compels by force of law what it cannot ask in the name of patriotism. And *kratos* alone cannot sustain a state."

Many foreign journalists chose to quote francophone Socialist MP Yvan Mayeur, who said: "We've lived with a certain balance. Today the Flemish have brutally broken that balance".

Yet the *Financial Times*, in an earlier article, noted that life continued as usual in the country. "In Belgium, it is business as usual. Trains run, the prime minister greets visiting foreign leaders, social security benefits



The crises: front-page news in Belgium

are paid and the country's famed bureaucracy functions unabated." The question some people are

asking is whether this is merely the calm before the storm.

BHV for beginners

Outsiders can be forgiven if they fail to understand the fuss over BHV. Many Belgians find it difficult to explain the complexities. We try to simplify the debate.

What is BHV?

BHV is a large constituency which includes bilingual Brussels Region along with a series of Flemish municipalities around the towns of Halle and Vilvoorde.

Why does it exist?

Provincial constituencies were formed when smaller constituencies were merged, but the Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde constituency was left untouched because agreement could not be reached. But in 2003 the constitutional court ruled that the district's boundaries were illegal and had to be changed.

Why do the Flemish want to split BHV?

All Flemish parties agree that the constituency should be split. They want to abolish the right of French-speakers living in Flanders to vote for francophone politicians and end a situation in which politicians such as Olivier Maingain can influence affairs within Flemish territory. They also object to French-speakers settling in Dutch-speaking suburbs without learning the language.

Why do the Francophones object?

The 120,000 French-speakers in Halle-Vilvoorde would lose the right to vote for French-speaking politicians. They would also be denied the right to have court cases heard by French-speaking judges. They see the Flemish as engaged in a campaign to create a linguistically pure Flanders.

Does last week's vote mean that BHV is now split?

No. The proposal needs the support of a majority of MPs in a plenary session of the Chamber of Representatives. The French-speaking parties have called on a procedure to slow down implementation.

So no one is speaking to the other side?

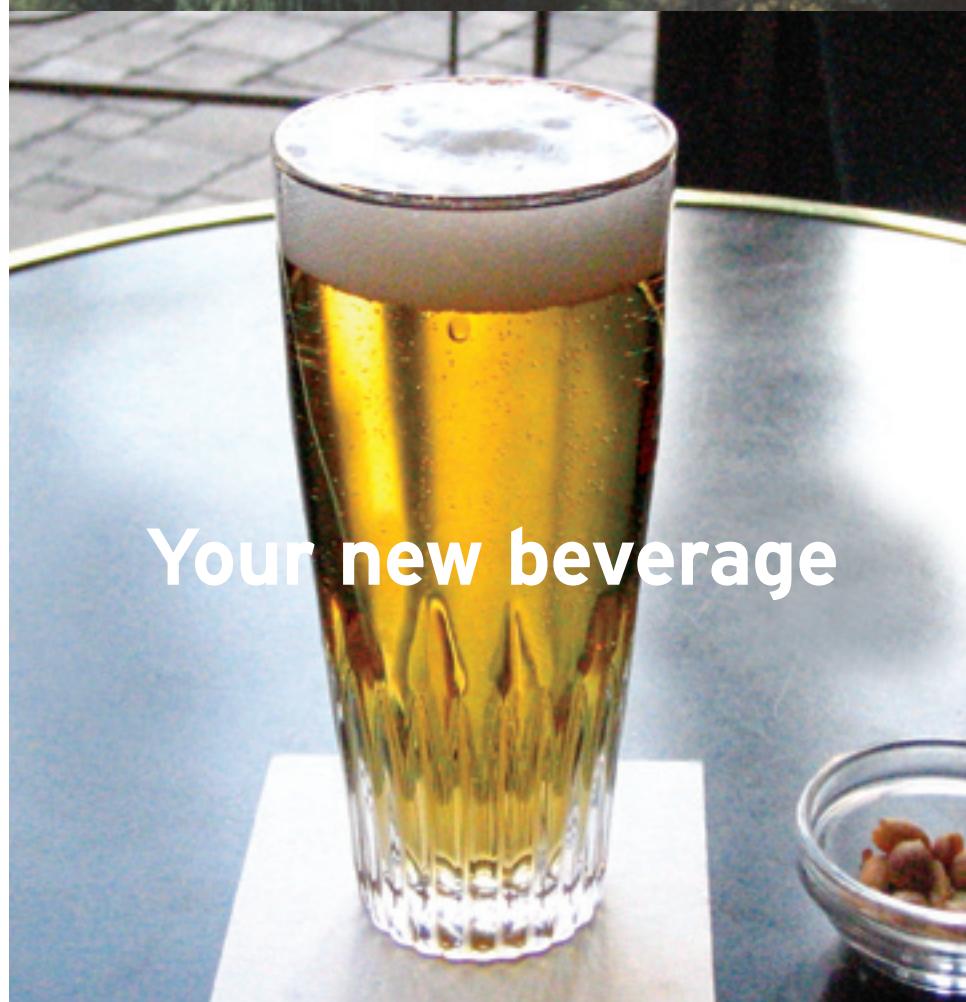
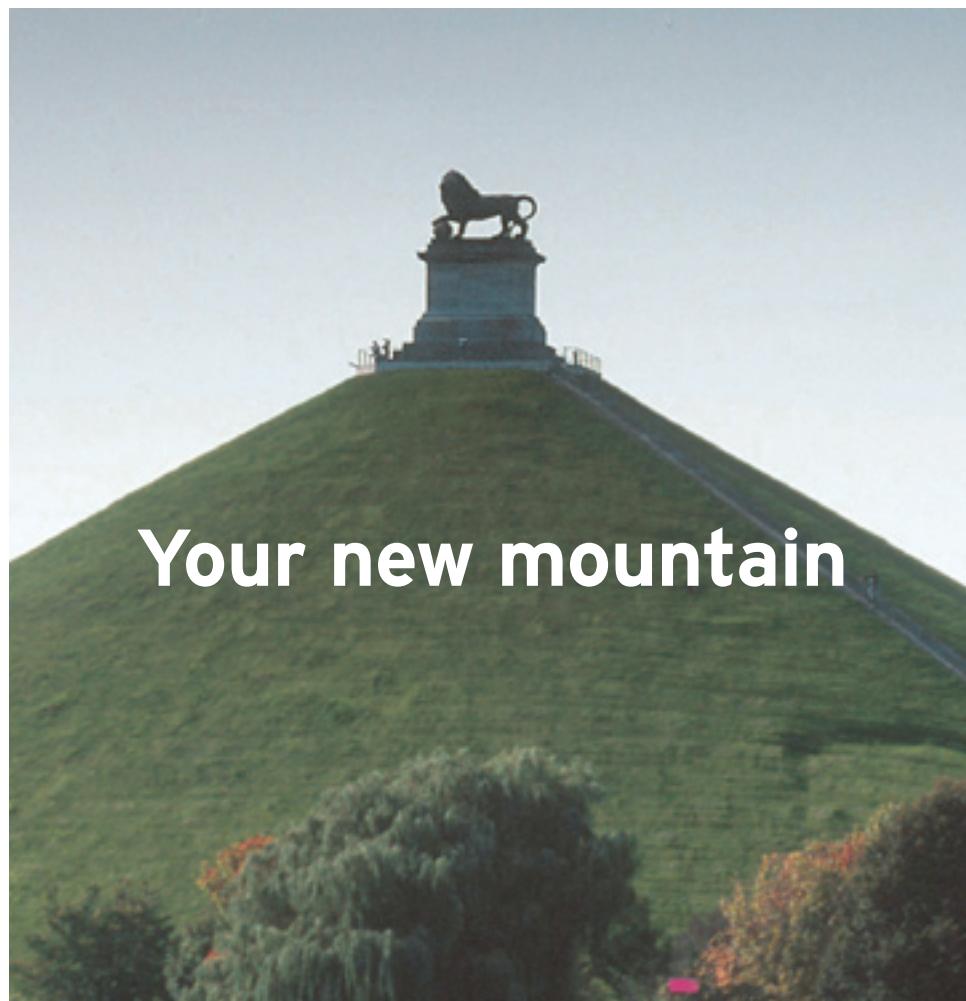
French-speaking leaders have quietly hinted that coalition talks could continue on other less controversial matters.

Is it the end of Leterme's efforts to form a government?

It is a major upset, but he is still carrying on with the task.

Is it the beginning of the end of Belgium?

It depends who you ask. Experienced observers with long memories remind people that Belgium has faced many crises in the past. It has, up until now at least, always survived.



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Police target illegal hormone dealers

Former prosecutor insists he is innocent

Continued from page 1

The ban was motivated by concern over the health effects of consuming beef grown with hormones, but also by the size of the EU's beef surplus, which the ban coincidentally helped to reduce. The measure has been a source of constant conflict with other beef-producing nations, led by the US, that dispute health claims and continue to use growth hormones.

In Europe, farmers engage in the clandestine use of hormones to increase their profits, encouraged by willing vets and covered by cooperative meat-processing businesses. The scale of the problem only became clear in 1992 when Karel Van Noppen, a government veterinary inspector, was the victim of a contract killing because he was too close to a hormone-trafficking ring.

According to allegations made against former prosecutor De Jonge, he tipped off associates in the hormone-trafficking business about the latest investigation techniques being used by investigators to track hormone cocktails. Since hormones occur naturally in animals, they are notoriously difficult to test for. Traffickers also make use of masking

chemicals, which help to disguise the presence of the active ingredients. In exactly the same way as in doping in sport, no sooner have investigators developed a test to find illicit substances, than the users invent another way to cover them up.

The operation last week took place in various undisclosed premises. Investigators are unusually tight-lipped about the details, because De Jonge's status as a former prosecutor means the prosecutor-general of Ghent is now involved. De Jonge himself, however, has spoken out against the allegations. In an interview in *De Standaard* he said, "I was questioned, but I am not under any suspicion." And he claimed his name cropped up in the inquiry because of his private friendships with businessmen previously linked to the companies being investigated, but who, like him, are now in retirement.

"My first wife died of cancer, probably linked to the use of hormones in meat," he argued. "And my second wife now also has hormone cancer. You can understand how, besides the legal reasons, I also have more than enough personal reasons to be a fervent opponent of any sort of hormone use at all," he said.

War dead remembered



While King Albert laid a wreath last Sunday at the Monument to the Unknown Soldier in Brussels, an estimated 10,000 people visited the war cemeteries and memorials of West Flanders to mark the end of World War One on 11 November 1918. Thousands converged on the Flemish village of Passendale to pay tribute to those who died during the 1917 Battle of Passchendaele (as it was then called). The visitors included Jim Prentice, Cana-

da's industry minister, who led a Canadian delegation to the Flemish village. Prentice honoured his great uncle, Roy Urquhart, 22, who died during the opening hours of the Canadian offensive on 26 October. His body was one of the many that were never recovered. "There are 100,000 bodies in the ground still to be found," says Franky Bostyn, curator of the Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917. "Every year, 40 to 50 are found."

Civil servants shun Brussels

Only 506 out of Flanders' 36,458 civil servants live in its capital city of Brussels, according to new statistics released by the Flemish region's office of public policy. The figures on where the region's civil servants live (regardless of where they work) reveal that Denderleeuw in East Flanders is the most popular town. Of its population of 17,400,

2.6% work for the Flemish region. This is followed closely by the coastal town of Bredene, which counts 2.5% civil servants, and Melle, also in East Flanders, with 2.3%. Surprisingly, retired civil servants tend to move to the larger cities, like Antwerp, which has 2,455 retirees, and Ghent, which counts 2,292.

Health ministry rules out insurance rewards for kidney donors

The federal health ministry has ruled out the possibility of Belgium adopting a proposed Dutch system of offering health-insurance discounts to people who sign up as kidney donors. The Dutch Council for Public Health Care (RVZ) wants to offer cheaper medical insurance to potential donors and pay some of the funeral costs of families who donate the organs of a loved one. But a health ministry spokesperson last week said the government was "absolutely against" the idea. "Whichever way you look at it, this is still a form of payment," she said.

NEWS FLASH



Kinepolis launches 3D movies

The Brussels-based Kinepolis Group is launching Dolby 3D cinema in multiplexes across Belgium, France and Spain. The new technology allows cinema audiences to look at 3D films wearing special reusable glasses. "The new generation of 3D cinema represents a new milestone in the history of Kinepolis," a spokesman said.

Dutch comedy award goes to Flemish stand-up

The Dutch Culture Comedy Award has been won by Michael Van Peel, a Flemish stand-up from Antwerp, taking both the jury and the public's choice prizes. Van Peel, aged 29, first took to the stage two years ago after being encouraged by Flemish-British comedian Nigel Williams. The prize citation spoke of his "intelligent, strong and topical jokes, which show a fresh comedy talent with an unusual amount of flair". He wins a trip to London and a tour with the other finalists, all of them Dutch.

"Best for research"

Belgium is the best country in the world for scientific research, according to a readers' poll by the US publication *The Scientist*. The magazine asked researchers in the US, Canada and Europe about their experiences in different research centres across the globe. The poll put Belgium in top position, followed by the US and Canada. Ghent University was singled out as one of the best environments for scientific research in Europe.

Desperately seeking

Job offers in Flanders reached a record level, according to figures compiled by the Flemish employment agency VDAB. The number of unfilled vacancies reached 33,000, with the biggest increase reported in Flemish Brabant province where vacancies were up 64% on the previous month. The biggest increase was in jobs for unskilled workers, with more than half of all vacancies seeing unskilled or low-skilled workers.

Two out of three Flemish children have sleep problems

Two-thirds of children in Flanders suffer from some kind of sleep disorder, according to Professor Karen Spruyt of the Brussels Free University (VUB). Children's need for sleep ranges from about 12 hours in a three-year-old to nine hours for a child of 14. However primary-school children are barely getting an average of nine hours, with late nights at weekends significantly reducing the average. "Going to bed late is not being compensated for by sleeping longer on other days," Prof Spruyt said. "Many primary school children need until Wednesday to recover from the weekend." The results of Professor Spruyt's research are published in a new book, *Slaapproblemen bij kinderen* (Children's Sleeping Problems).

Shops in metro stations

Transport company MIVB plans to put more shops in Metro stations in the Brussels area. The transport operator is targeting commuters who find it easier to pick up their daily shopping on the way to and from work. MIVB plans more food shops and newspaper stands, as well as flower and shoe repair shops. A bakery and café called Bonne Journée has already opened in Sint-Guido on metro line 1B.

Workers blues

A mere 13% of Belgian workers feels motivated, according to a study by the human resources organisation Towers Perrin. The report, which looked at 18 countries, found that 9% of Belgian workers were "wholly dissatisfied" at work.

Antwerp Opera reopens



Antwerp's opera house, the Vlaamse Opera, reopens this weekend, 17-18 November, following a two-year renovation. The Flemish firm Robbrecht & Daem produced the masterplan, which included the installation of new seating and state-of-the-art backstage facilities, at a cost of €23 million. The opera is organising an open day this weekend limited to 9,000 places (which have to be booked in advance). *The Marriage of Figaro*, scheduled for December, is the first production in the restored opera house. The Vlaamse Opera first opened in 1907 to stage "Germanic" productions, as a counterweight to the "French" opera staged at the Bourla Theatre.

online

www.vlaamseopera.be

Poll on "Greater Brussels" produces mixed results

Derek Blyth

More than half of residents in the six Flemish municipalities around Brussels want to join a "Greater Brussels" region, according to a joint survey carried out by the Flemish broadcaster VRT and the French-language RTBF. The survey found that 54% of residents in Kraainem, Wezembeek-Oppem, Linkebeek, Sint-Genesius Rode, Drogenbos and Wemmel favoured joining an enlarged Brussels Region.

The survey revealed differences between French and Dutch speakers, with 68% of francophone residents favouring the enlarged Brussels option while just 15% of Dutch speakers wanted this solution. Kraainem residents came out as the most pro-Brussels, with 64% in favour of a merger, while just 36% of Wemmel residents wanted to be part of Greater Brussels.

The poll also touched on the controversial topic of abolishing the "facilities", which allow French-speakers access to municipal services in French. Surprisingly, 40% of French-speakers were in favour of abolition, while 49% of Dutch speakers wanted the facilities to continue. Some 36% of French-speakers, however, said that they wanted the facil-

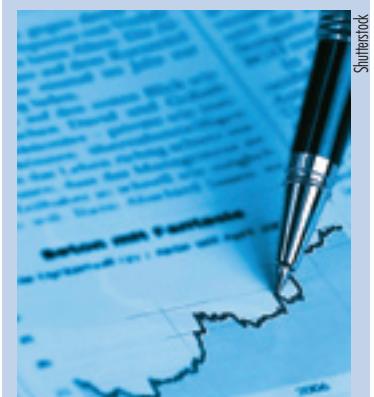
ties to be expanded to include other areas of daily life.

A huge majority (89%) supported the expansion of the facilities to include health campaigns in French, including information on breast cancer. A large number of French-speakers were also keen to receive the French speaking television channel Télé Bruxelles and to send their children to local schools subsidised by the French speaking community. They also yearned for French-speaking cultural centres and French-language books in local libraries.

The most heated issue is council debates, with 89% of French-speaking residents asking for council meetings to be held in French, whereas 80% of Flemish people believed that they should be held exclusively in Dutch.

The French speakers were also unhappy about the notorious "Peeters circular," named after former interior minister Leo Peeters, who instructed Flemish municipal councils to correspond only in Dutch unless residents had made a specific request to receive letters in French. Some 74% of French speakers wanted the rule scrapped, but 63% of Flemish residents insisted that it had to stay.

THE WEEK IN FIGURES



460

Number of Belgians held in foreign jails. The largest number, 113, are in French prisons, followed by 91 in Spain. More than half are serving sentences for drugs offences.

4.1%

Average rise in Belgian salaries in 2006, according to the consultancy firm Berenschot Belgium. The sharpest increases were in the pharmaceutical, chemical and IT sectors.

875

Number of bankruptcies registered last month, an increase of 17.7% on October 2006. "We have never seen so many bankruptcies," said Eric Vandenbroucke of the international credit reporting agency Graydon.

€430 million

Investment by Flemish public transport authority De Lijn aimed at doubling the number of passengers in West Flanders by 2022. The plan includes adding 20 bus routes and extending the coast tram to Veurne.

€2 million

Annual loss suffered by social housing organisations in Flanders due to fraud, according to Flemish housing minister Marino Keulen. About 1% of claims is believed to be false.

26

Number of bridges in Flanders that need urgent attention, according to the Flemish minister of public works Hilde Crevits. She ordered an inspection of the region's 1,864 bridges following the collapse last August of a bridge over the Mississippi River in Minneapolis.

820

Number of writers who participated in signing sessions during the Antwerp Book Fair, which ended last Sunday, 11 November. This was the highest number ever recorded in the fair's 71-year history. Some 160,000 people visited the 12-day event, held in Antwerp Expo. Among the best selling books were Pieter Aspe's crime thrillers and Goedele Liekens' sex manuals.

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BUSINESS

Eurostar changes stations



The Eurostar rail link from Brussels becomes a bit faster on 14 November when a new high-speed line opens across southern England. The new link cuts the journey time from Brussels by 20 minutes to an average of 1 hr 50 mins.

The 300 km/h service from Zuidstation now takes travel-

ers to the renovated St Pancras Station in north London instead of Waterloo International on the South Bank. The Eurostar management is convinced that passengers will feel the benefits of the move. "St Pancras is strategically better located with access to six different underground lines," says Eurostar's CEO

Richard Brown. The station also connects directly with mainline trains to the north of England and Scotland.

The company hopes that the new route will increase Eurostar's market share on the Brussels to London route, from eight million passengers this year to 10 million by 2010.

SCIENCE

Out-of-body experiences – are they all in the mind?

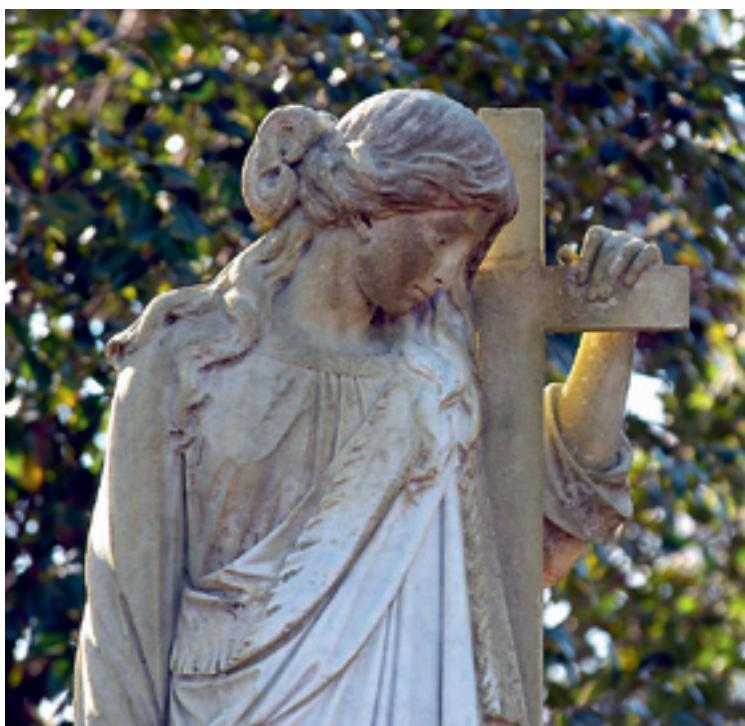
Antwerp research team unlocks the secret of near-death phenomena

Dirk De Ridder, a neurosurgeon at Antwerp University Hospital UZA, claims to have unlocked the secret of out-of-body experiences, according to a report in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. De Ridder says that he and his team stumbled on the cause by accident while they were trying to cure a 63-year-old man with tinnitus, or persistent ringing in the ears. The doctors implanted electrodes in the brain to administer tiny electric shocks to the overactive parts of the brain, but, instead of curing the patient, they triggered an out-of-body experience.

The man said that he felt as if he was 50 centimetres away from his body and off to the left. He had this experience two separate times lasting 15 and 21 seconds. The doctors then used 12 positron emission tomography (PET) scans to find out which parts of the brain were stimulated during the experience.

They found that the sensation was produced in a small area of the brain known as the supramarginal gyrus. This area is known for being associated with sensory stimuli such as sight, sound and touch.

The reporters concluded that the electronic stimulation altered a person's spatial self-perception without interfering with their overall awareness of the outer



world. In other words, it led to an out-of-body experience.

De Ridder told the US publication *HealthDay News*: "Self-perception is nothing else but a creation of your brain. But when something goes wrong in that brain area so that the integration of incoming information – sight, hearing, taste – is not happening as it should, then you can feel that you're not in your body."

The Antwerp researcher raised the possibility that these brain

areas were responsible for near-death experiences. "Whether these regions are activated in patients who report disembodiment as part of a near-death experience – and if so, how – is a provocative but unresolved issue," he says.

People who have near-death experiences sometimes feel an out-of-body sensation. Some argue that this is evidence of a life after death, but De Ridder's findings suggest that it may simply be a disturbance in the brain.

BUSINESS FLASH



Shutterstock

Brussels Airport

The national airport is to invest some €15 million to construct a terminal for low-cost airlines. The new terminal will occupy an unused area that previously held the airport's main operations. The terminal, expected to open in early 2009, could serve as a major operational base for EasyJet. Meanwhile, Flightcare Belgium, the subsidiary of the Spanish FCC group and the airport's leading handling company, will hire 400 people and invest €30 million over the next four years to cope with growing demand.

Metro

The German retailing group Metro plans to establish up to 15 stores in the next few years aimed at professionals in the food-related sectors. The company, which opened its fourth store near the wholesale market in Brussels last week, has plans for Bruges, Ghent, Ostend and Leuven. It already has stores in Wevelgem, Hasselt and Antwerp, all in Flanders.

Ideal Standard International

The US-based bathroom equipment and products manufacturer has confirmed Brussels as its European headquarters.

ING

ING, the Dutch banking group, and one of the leading local financial institutions, will reorganise its retail activities. The decision, which will affect some 850 people, includes a restructuring of its branch network and a development of its call-centre activities. The present network of 794 branches will be cut to 242 full-service offices and 552 fully automated outlets.

Distrigaz

Distrigaz, a gas import and distribution company with extensive operations in Zeebrugge, is now attracting interest from Spain's Gas Natural. The move comes as part of the reorganisation of the energy-related activities of Distrigaz' parent company Suez, following its merger with Gaz de France.

Stora Enso

The Finnish pulp and paper company Stora Enso is to invest up to €120 million in new heat and energy production capacity at its Langerbrugge facility, near Ghent. The investments will help the company reduce its reliance on fossil oils and cut its CO₂ emissions.

Ter Beke

The local delicatessen and food products company Ter Beke has acquired the Dutch Berkhouw Versnijlijn meat conditioning company. The move allows the Flemish company to strengthen its leadership position on the Benelux market.

CMB

The Antwerp-based shipping and transport company CMB has made an offer to acquire the famed French Aeropostale air transport company, currently owned by the French post office.

Auto industry

New cars sales on the local market rose in October to 46,150 vehicles, a leap of 11.2% compared to the same period in 2006. Market leader is Volkswagen, followed by Peugeot and Citroen.

Shares plunge 6%

Belgian stocks suffered heavy losses last week, with some €17 billion wiped off share values across the market. Brewer InBev lost 11% or €4.7 billion, while insurer Fortis saw €6 billion disappear. The losses were blamed on the credit crisis sparked by the US housing market.

Let's drive cleaner.



Golf BlueMotion. 115 g CO₂/km.

“Cleaner than clean”, Volkswagen eco-friendlier driving is now available on the brand new Golf BlueMotion: a pure delight. Thanks to refining a variety of elements, from the aerodynamics to the gear ratios, Volkswagen BlueMotion technology boasts outstanding efficiency in fuel consumption and class leading CO₂ emissions. Once you've tried it, you keep it. Even if you were offered two ordinary cars, we bet you would never ever agree to be deprived of your bright energy-saving Golf BlueMotion.



From high heels to high wire

World's biggest circus troupe returns to Antwerp



A rags to riches story: Cirque du Soleil

Lisa Bradshaw

Guess who's back in town with a new show? Cirque du Soleil chose Antwerp for the European premiere of *Varekai* because, as a spokesperson told me the last time the Cirque was in town, "We get a great response in Antwerp." In fact, Cirque gets a great response everywhere. Not bad for a troupe that 25 years ago was just a rag-tag bunch of jugglers and stilt walkers performing on the streets of

Baie-Saint-Paul in eastern Quebec province.

Back then they called themselves the Club des Talons Hauts (High Heels Club). One year they decided to throw a street performance festival, and it was a hit. Honing their skills and recruiting new blood, they soon took a show called *Cirque du Soleil (Circus of the Sun)* to Quebec. It was a hit, too. They set off on tour across Canada. In 1987, their fearless leader, a fire-

eater named Guy Laliberté, took them to the Los Angeles Festival – their first trip outside Canada. One particularly impressed businessman offered Laliberté a million dollars to buy the troupe. The fire-eater said no.

That was a smart move. Cirque du Soleil is now a multi-billion euro circus company, with 15 touring shows, 3,800 employees and 10 million spectators a year. Their ever-rotating staff of 1,000

Most of the films are in French, but some are in English or German with French subtitles. And many archaeologists from the films are present, so you can pose all your unanswered questions after the screenings. (Try that with TV.) The festival also hosts an area with information about archaeology in Belgium. "A lot of people know about archaeology in Egypt and America but nothing about what is going on in their own country," says Lemaitre.

On opening night, November 23, the festival screens *Marsoulas: la grotte oubliée* (*Marsoulas: The Forgotten Cave*), a film about the late 19th-century discovery of the Marsoulas cave in southern France that contains prehistoric drawings. Jean Clottes, one of the speleologists who discovered France's Chauvet Cave in the 1990s, will speak following the movie.

The festival will also show *The Mummy Who Would Be King*. In the late 19th century, a nondescript museum in Niagara Falls purchased an Egyptian mummy,

performers come from 40 different countries and specialise in all manner of athletics: gymnastics, dance, swimming, trapeze, bodybuilding, comedy, acrobatics, music.

The title *Varekai* refers to a Romany word for "wherever" and is based loosely on the story of Icarus. At the beginning of the show (after the clowns break in the audience), a young man falls from the sky into the magical forest of Varekai, which is populated with fantastical creatures. His many adventures take the form of circus acts in a show that celebrates the nomadic spirit.

Truth be told, *Varekai* is not so different from the other Cirque shows, except for new costuming, which is creatively animalistic. But it's a formula that continues to entertain with truly breathtaking feats of strength and athleticism. The colours are vivid, the lighting dramatic and the live music stirring and intense. Kids continue to go crazy for Cirque, and it's easy to see why. Plus, *Varekai* does throw in a few new tricks: a young woman balancing a series of canes is particularly mesmerising, and a dance based on Georgian resistance movements is marked by a kind of frenzied endurance. *Varekai* also includes what's known as the Icarian Games, in which one performer essentially juggles another with his feet – something not often seen in a modern circus tent.

Until December 16, under the Grand Chapiteau, Gedempte Zuiderdokken, Antwerp. Tickets from 070.223.230 or

FASHIONISTA Bag boy



Handbags are where fashion makes some serious profits: While not everyone can splash out on a Christian Dior ball gown, a Diorissimo Hobo Bag in black, white or pink provides enough of a fashion fix for more modest budgets. And, though the cut of Gucci might not flatter all figures, the Italian house's Positano tote always makes a positive impression.

Michaël Verheyden understands the money to be found in handbags, but lucre was not the lure for his plunge into designing them. "It was a natural progression," says the industrial design graduate. Form following function following fashion made designing the perfect city bag for the urban trendy a challenge. But for seven years now, Verheyden's low-key, practical bags have triumphed, winning over fashionistas from Tokyo to Berlin, back to his native Belgium.

Understated rather than overwhelming is Verheyden's design ethos. Eschewing logos, he crafts his messenger bags, clutches, totes and overnights in high-quality, discreetly stylish leather, linen and waxed cotton that whisper luxury. "Bling is not my thing," he says, shuddering at the thought of Britney, Lindsay or Paris fleeing their latest car crash clutching a Michaël Verheyden.

An Easter-egg bright Murakami by Louis Vuitton announces its price tag at 20 paces, but, Verheyden says with pride, "You could walk through the seediest neighbourhood in any city carrying a bag of mine, and no one would bother you because my bags don't scream, 'I cost a lot of money!'" Only on closer inspection of the fine detailing and exquisite construction do the soft-spoken pleasures of a Verheyden satchel reveal themselves.

Verheyden credits Raf Simons, head of his eponymous label and creative director of Jil Sander, with his intro to the world of fashion at age 19. "I did some modelling for him in Paris, and being there opened my mind to all these possibilities." Designing handbags provided the ideal combination of industrial design's reasoned and logical approach with the sweet surface thrills of fashion.

Even after 15 seasons, Verheyden remains a fashion anomaly for three reasons. He still lives in his hometown of Genk, so far resisting the allure of fashion capitals Antwerp, London and Paris: "Those cities are great for networking, but Genk is great for working," he says. "I have my workshop here, my family here – and those other cities are just a train ride away." Secondly, he makes bags for men, "but I'd just as soon carry all of my things in my pockets: I'm my own worst customer." And third, he is the exception that proves the rule: a straight man working in fashion. "But the business has perverted me a bit," he laughs. "When I used to see a woman, the first thing that I would look at were her breasts. Now, it's her handbag."

Steven Tate

online

www.michaelverheyden.be

FILM FREAK

International Archaeological Film Festival of Brussels



Prehistoric cave drawings in France: *Marsoulas*

I know, I know. You see the words "archaeological film festival" and you think *booring*.

"Books on archaeology can be boring – even for archaeologists," admits the festival chairman Serge Lemaitre. "The festival is a more accessible way to learn about what archaeologists do."

The International Archaeological Film Festival takes place every other year in Brussels and presents films on all kinds of aspects of

archaeology: major digs, ancient civilisations, cave discoveries and the unearthing of surprisingly fascinating objects. "They're not too scientific," assures Lemaitre. "It is science, but it's for everybody with an interest in history or archaeology. They are also beautiful films. They're about discoveries of archaeological excavations but also of the countries. You meet the people and see the landscapes."

who – they discovered 100 years later – turned out to be Rameses the First. Narrated by Stacy Keach, the story is rife with thievery, mistaken identity and a secret cavern of mummies. "You follow step by step the discovery of the identity of this mummy," says Lemaitre. "It's like a police investigation."

Also on the bill is a movie about a team of Belgian archaeologists on a major excavation of the ancient city Sagalassos in Turkey, complete with a 3D reconstruction to show what it was like 2,000 years ago. Another film charts the discovery of a cemetery from the Inca period, where the very first victims of European firearms on the American continent were discovered. All in all, a unique film festival: "It's like an adventure – but from your seat," says Lemaitre.

Lisa Bradshaw

November 23-25, Royal Museum of Art and History, Jubelpark 10, Brussels. 02.672.82.91, www.kineon.be

Body and soul

Ghent's museum of psychiatry reopens with a flourish amid extended collections and a new exhibition



Belgium's only museum of psychiatry displays sometimes uncomfortable truths

Lisa Bradshaw

In 1857, a Ghent psychiatrist did something radical. He began to treat the mentally ill like patients. Of course, nobody called Dr Joseph Guislain a "psychiatrist". There was no such term. The mentally ill were referred to as "aliens", and Guislain was an "alienist". But when he opened the doors of Belgium's first mental asylum in 1857 – a building and gardens he designed himself – modern psychiatry took one giant leap.

Before the appearance of Guislain's institution in northern Ghent, the mentally ill in Belgium were lodged in prisons, hospices and orphanages. There were also "madhouses", where conditions were generally appalling, and abuse was rampant. People were restrained in order to keep them in one place, and there was no concerted effort to cure or train people with special conditions – whether it was chronic, such as autism, or treatable, such as depression. *The Hospice pour hommes aliénés*, with the support of the city of Ghent, literally and figuratively freed the mentally ill from their chains.

With a more modern mental hospital now sitting next door, Guislain's original institution is celebrating its 150th birthday. It's been home to the Dr Guislain Museum for the last 20 years, which has just reopened after months of renovations with an expanded collection and an intriguing new exhibition. It's Belgium's only museum of psychiatry and also

houses temporary themed exhibitions, as well as an impressive collection of "outsider art" – work created by the mentally disturbed, prisoners or those who are otherwise marginalised.

Dr Guislain was the first in Belgium who said that people who are mad are sick, and that it is very important to try to find treatments for these people," explains Patrick Allegaert, the museum's curator. In 1850, Guislain, who was one of the first students of medicine at the University of Ghent, helped pen Belgium's earliest laws on the treatment of the insane. Then he set out to study other institutions for the mentally ill across Europe. Having been born into a family of architects, he came to the conclusion that environment played a huge role in wellbeing and strategically designed his hospital in a geometric Roman Byzantine style with an inner courtyard. It provided both a specific pattern – as repetitive patterns are essential for mentally ill people – and the feeling that you are in a home rather than an institution. Most visitors to the building wouldn't really notice the touches that, for Guislain, were an invaluable part of therapy. The bars on the windows, for instance, which the city of Ghent insisted on, are curved iron to appear more decorative than oppressive.

Guislain separated patients according to their illnesses and immediately established a special section for children – innovative ideas for the mid 19th century. In fact, photographs of the children provide the most poignant

display in the museum's history of psychiatry section. "It is not an easy history," admits Allegaert. "Sometimes there are practices in psychiatry that, even 20 years later, lead doctors to say: 'what have you done?'" The museum of psychiatry honours Guislain's vision while exposing some of his methods that were akin to torture. "There was a reflex to cover it up," says Allegaert. "But the museum wanted to take the opposite approach – to assert that when we practise psychiatry and talk about 'otherness' now, we have to know and to document the practices of the past."

The museum is a comprehensive history of psychiatry from the ancient Roman and Greek schools of thought up to late 19th-century European practices. It begins with a display on "humours", a prevalent theory that spanned centuries and claimed that the body was made up of four basic substances. When you're sick, they are out of balance, which required a treatment of bleeding or purging. There is also an extensive section on trepanning (boring into the skull to release evil spirits), a common practice in the middle ages. There are sections on witchcraft, exorcism, and the fascinating history of home health care and epilepsy, once thought to be a mental illness. (On St John's Day, local epileptics were forced to dance across the bridge at Molenbeek.)

There are also installations showing a typical 19th-century pharmacy, patient's room and devices used for treatments, including water shock therapy and body rota-

tion. These latter treatments were employed by Guislain himself.

Considered the father of psychiatry in Belgium, Guislain became a professor at the university and is credited with bridging the gap between a German emphasis on somatic causes of mental illness and the more philosophical approach of the French. "It's a little typical Belgian to do that – be a little French and a little German," smiles Allegaert. "But it was important to combine the two visions. That's still very true today. It isn't possible to reduce psychiatry to only physical and chemical processes – it's also social and psychological. All of these come together."

The Guislain Museum's outsider art collection is proof of the complex nature of mental disorders. It includes work by well-known outsider artists, including Willem Van Genk of The Netherlands and African-American painter Tim Brown. Van Genk is world-renowned in the outsider art genre for his installations of train carriages and stations made from cardboard, labels, candy

wrappers, parts of plastic toys and other throw-away bits of materials he finds. He uses wire to connect everything in a complex series of two-metre long networks. The use of found materials is such a creative process that the viewer becomes engrossed in examining the works. Brown's paintings on pieces of found plywood illustrate in simple, geometrical forms his experiences of growing up in 1920s and 30s Mississippi. After the death of his wife in the 1960s, Brown shut himself up in his house preferring only to communicate with the outside world through his paintings.

Outsider artists often use art to bring a sense of order to their lives, while others reproduce how they see the world, offering useful information for psychiatrists. "It's very important to show that people can be sick and even in an institution, and they still create high quality work," says Allegaert.

online

www.museumdrguislain.be

Sick: Between Body and Mind

Along with its permanent museum of psychiatry and outsider art collections, the Dr Guislain Museum presents ambitious temporary exhibitions. *Sick: Between Body and Mind*, an exploration of the relationship between psychological and physical symptoms of illness, opened last week. The multi-media show includes the work of outsider artists, professionals and diagnostic and spiritual objects from Europe, Africa and Asia.



Léon Spilliaert's "Alone"

Taking centre stage in *Sick* are several wooden sculptures by Zephania Tshuma. The Zimbabwean artist made the series in the 1980s and '90s to illustrate the shameful way his country dealt with the subject of AIDS. The popular theory was that AIDS was caused by a worm, and most of the table sculptures represent the search for the worm inside the body. Others depict men trying to talk to the worm, while women hanging onto poles may be avoiding the worm above them (their husbands) while being sneaked up on from below (their lovers).

Other standouts in the exhibition are Flemish artist Patrik Vermeulen's painting "The Catholic Wellness Industry", in which a long line of bedridden patients are travelling to a grotto to be saved, and dozens of selections from Canadian artist Dana Wyse's fantastical postmodern "Jesus Had A Sister Productions". Wyse makes little plastic packages of pills to address every need of modern life, such as "Be Creative", "Make Your Man Hold Your Hand", "Instant Afro" and "Look Good in Your Jeans" (that one is a syringe).

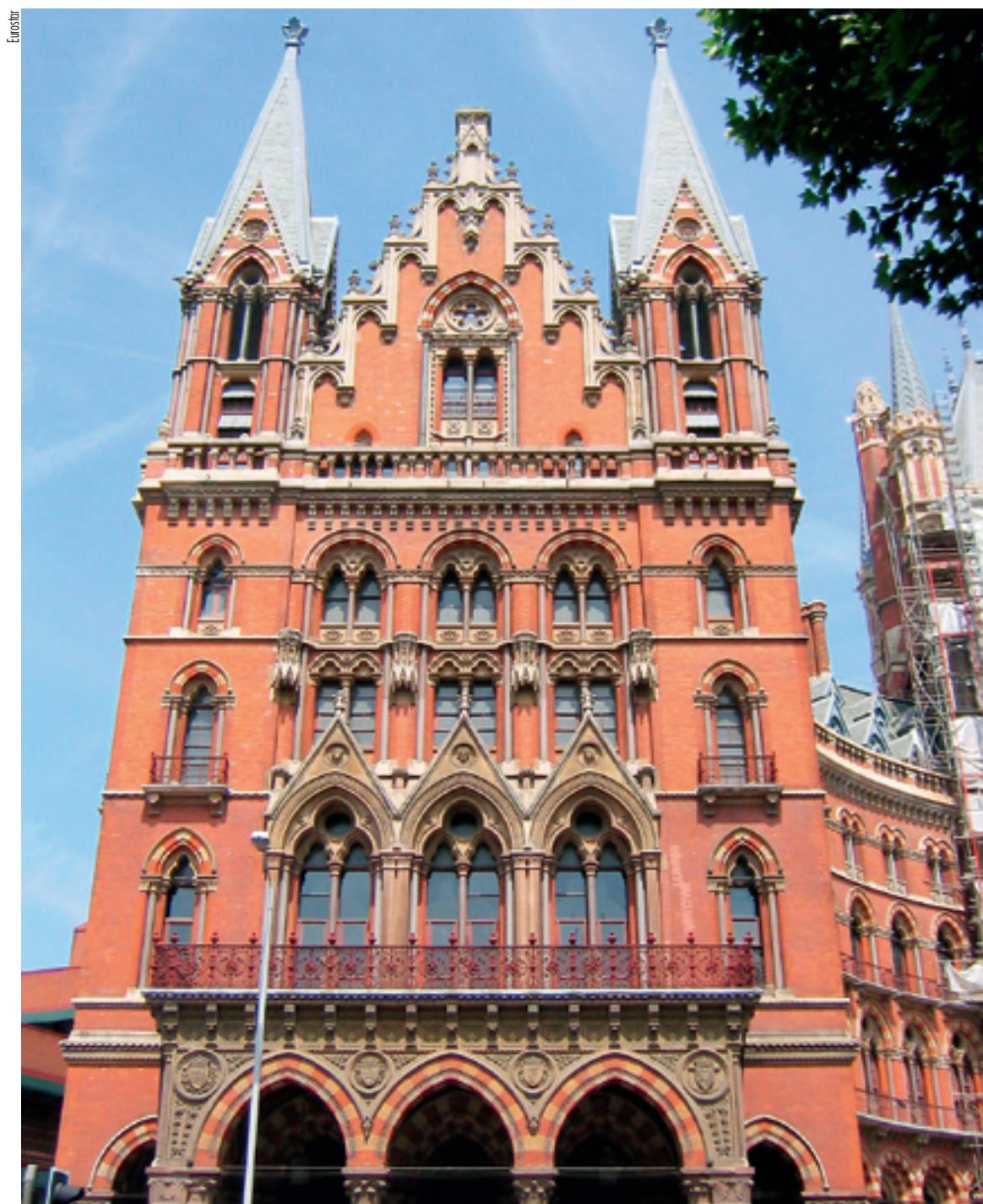
The exhibit also includes work by Belgian artists Félicien Rops, including the famous "Pornocrates" (in the "Fixation on the Woman" section) and Léon Spilliaert, whose work adds a haunting touch to the exhibition's look at feeling alone in the world.

LB

Until April 27, Dr Guislain Museum, Jozef Guislainstraat 43, Ghent. 09.216.35.95, www.tussenlichaamengeest.be

Flanders in London

How the Flemish built London



Flemish Gothic: St Pancras Station

The new Eurostar high-speed track brings Flanders and London closer together. But the links between Flemish and Londoners go back one thousand years

Derek Blyth

As one of the world's great multicultural cities, London's streets are teeming with people from all corners of the world. Its identity is a mixture of countless ethnic groups, among them an estimated 5,000 Flemish people. The Flemish presence may be modest, but immigrants from Flanders have played a major role in shaping the identity of London for 1,000 years.

The first wave went over with William the Conqueror and acquired large estates in the conquered territories. But the biggest number was made up of migrant workers who brought sophisticated skills to England's towns. Some were invited by King Edward III to develop the weaving industry, but most were Protestants fleeing persecu-

tion at the hands of the Spanish Catholics. The Flemish refugees became the earliest guest workers and the first asylum seekers, and they weren't always popular with local workers.

Flemish brick

Flemish labour was coming to London as early as the 13th century to work in the building trade. They had a good reputation as skilled craftsmen and contributed to the construction of many cathedrals and churches in southern England. The Flemish introduced brickmaking to London and were the first foreigners to settle in the city's famous Brick Lane. They arrived in the 1500s and gave the neighbourhood its foreign character. The French Huguenots came later, followed by European Jews

and, most recently, Bengalis from Bangladesh – but the Flemish were the first foreigners in the street.

Flemish words

Hundreds of Dutch words were imported into the English language by Flemish immigrants. Most that slipped into the dictionary were technical terms used by the bricklayers, clothworkers and brewers who crossed the sea to work for the English. The word "diaper" probably entered English because the cloth industry in Ypres produced a distinctive cloth referred to in French as d'Ypres.

Anti-Flemish riots

The Dutch-speaking workers weren't always welcomed by English labourers. During the Peasants Revolt of 1381, for

instance, a London mob attacked Flemish workers in Spitalfields and killed several hundred. "The cries of the slayers and the slain went on long after sunset, making night hideous," an observer wrote.

The demand grew for horse-drawn hearses, and two undertakers travelled to Flanders to buy three black horses. These were bred to create new stock.

Flemish stock exchange

The Flemish played an important early role in turning London into one of the world's biggest money markets. In 1569 Thomas Gresham borrowed the idea of a stock market from Antwerp and employed Flemish craftsmen to build London's first stock exchange, which he named the Bourse after Antwerp's Beurs. The architect was Flemish, and the stone, slates, iron and glass all came from Antwerp. "He bargained for the whole mould and substance of his workmanship in Flanders," said the English chronicler Raphael Holinshed. The English were reluctant to allow foreign workers, but Gresham was given permission to employ "strangers" from Flanders.

Flemish burial ground

The Flemish population was so numerous in London that they had their own burial ground next to the Thames. The graves were left undisturbed when London Bridge railway station was built nearby, but they were later moved to other cemeteries.

Flemish horses

Even in death the Flemish played an important role in London. Or at least their horses did. The Victorian cult of death involved hearses being drawn by black horses displaying black ostrich plumes. The horses originally came from the fields of Flanders where they were specially bred. The horses were replaced by cars in the early 20th century, but a few were stabled near the Pinewood Film Studio for use in horror movies and historical films.

Flemish art

Many of London's art galleries have large collections of Flemish art. The National Gallery holds some of the great works by Jan van Eyck and Hans Memling. It also has works by Anthony Van Dyck, who came from Antwerp but worked in England for six years and is considered one of the great English court portrait painters.

Flemish exhibition

The British royal family has always had a weakness for Flemish artists, and many of the great works of Flanders hang on the walls of royal palaces. Some of the best works are currently on show in the exhibition *Bruegel to Rubens: Masters of Flemish Painting*, at Holyrood Palace in Edinburgh.

The exhibition focuses largely on Antwerp as a centre of humanist learning as well as mercantile wealth. One of the key works on show is Quinten Massys' portrait of Desiderius Erasmus, commissioned by his English friend Thomas More.

Flemish gothic

Flemish travellers emerging from St Pancras Station might feel a tug of homesickness when they look up at the brick vaulted splendour of the station building. It was designed by George Gilbert Scott, who drew much of his inspiration from the great cloth halls and town halls of Flanders.

online

www.flanders.be/london



Flemish art: Quinten Massys' 1517 "portrait of Erasmus"

FOOD

All in good taste

Flanders transforms into a food paradise for the Week of Flavour



An Gyde

For the second year running, Flanders is buzzing with culinary activity this month. With an extensive programme of about 1,200 activities (you read it right – nearly double last year's figures), it's a genuine taste *tour de force*. Lut De Clercq, chef at the Ancienne Belgique concert hall in Brussels and head of the week's "quality committee", personally approved each and every one of the events with an eye to diversity and youth.

De Week van de Smaak, or the Week of Flavour, is an initiative of Flemish Culture Minister Bert Anciaux and the Flemish Centre of Popular Culture. "Food is part

and parcel of our cultural heritage and the cultural heritage of others," says Fien Danniau of the centre. "It brings people together; it's a binding force. We have restaurants working with schools, museums working with bakeries... food bridges a lot of gaps."

But, let's be honest: people rarely eat for cultural or historical reasons. There's a lot of hedonistic pleasure to be found at the dinner table. So, what's on the menu? More than 700 organisations in Brussels and the rest of Flanders have taken on the subject of taste. Themes like

culinary heritage, culinary culture, diversity of tastes, local produce, healthy food, traditional craft and fair trade have been organised in all kinds of ways. For 10 days, you

can take culinary citywalks, listen to stories about vegetables, visit exhibitions and peek in kitchens to see chefs at work.

Or perhaps you'd prefer to check out your mayor (49 of them are participating) sweating over the stove in a competition to create an original Italo-Flemish dish (the winner gets a visit from a real Italian *Maestro di Cucina* who brings 50 bottles of wine along).

You, too, can enjoy wine tasting, gastronomical quizzes or a Viennese ballroom night with Austrian delicacies. Or you can learn how to cook Thai, African, Moroccan or Mexican. Or you could stay closer to home and get a taste of Italy (this year's "Country of Flavour") or Kortrijk (this year's "City of

Flavour"). One thing's for sure: you can taste, smell, drink and breathe in to your heart's content. "Food is also about the stories that surround it, the craftsmanship, the forgotten and future habits," says Danniau.

Education plays an important part in the Week of Flavour. Younger kids can find their way to one of many participating farms, and "taste teams" of students in their final year of hotel school will take their passion for cooking to younger pupils. Full-blooded Italian master chefs will be there to assist and inspire. This year's special effort to bring food and taste to children has been dubbed *Eetiket*. The 93 restaurants sporting the Eetiket label guarantee a friendly welcome to kids. But *Eetik-*

et also aims to encourage restaurant-friendly children. To help get the message across, the eateries are distributing a booklet about a yeti who would like to go out to dinner. Giving lots of tips and tricks, it explains how even a big, hairy beast can behave in an exemplary way in a restaurant. Schools can join in, too: *Eetiket* offers free prepared lessons and booklets to teachers.

Fittingly, the City of Flavour hosts the closing event, a food festival in the heart of Kortrijk. A "circuit of taste" leads to several themed markets and squares. All along the circuit, the streets will bustle with culinary activity. You'll find entrants in the *latte* championship (choreography is of the essence!) and a big multicultural soup contest.

As for the Country of Flavour, Italy is certainly well chosen. It makes your mouth water just thinking about it. About a third of the week's activities are related to the country's sensual food. Limburg province, where the Italian community is historically well-grounded, is particularly abundant. You can go on a *Giro d'Italia*, or tour of Italy, a culinary voyage of discovery organised by proud Italo-Limburgians. You don't need a bicycle to do it – a Vespa will do just fine.

November 15-24, across Flanders. Pick up a programme in any *Standaard Boekhandel* or *Spar* supermarket.

See our interview with Lut De Clercq on page 16.

online

www.weekvandesmaak.be
www.eetiket.be

Having trouble deciding? Here's our top picks for where to focus your taste buds

Prison meals in Mechelen

Ever wondered what prisoners used to eat 500 years ago? The people of Mechelen can tell you. While digging an underground car park, they discovered an ancient prison. Archaeologists have gained insight into convicts' eating habits, and it turns out food wasn't part of the punishment. During the Week of Flavour, the city will serve up the authentic medieval prison meals. (If you're slightly less brave, you could settle for the exhibition in the city museum.) Other culinary archaeology can be found in Meetjesland's Roman menus or in Leuven, where they revive menus dating back to the 1890s.

Broodje Cité

Prepare to be guided. Frans Novak, a resident of Genk with roots in Slovenia, takes you on a Mediterranean tour of his hometown. You stroll around colourful shops filled with spicy fare and end by preparing your own special fusion sandwich with delicacies you found along the way.

Eco-cooking

Would you like to cook ecologically when you're at boy scout camp but don't know how? Rescue is at hand. Velt, an organisation dedicated to biological cooking and gardening, has compiled a guide full of recipes and tips. They are even prepared to come to your



campsite and show you how to veg it up. Those dreaded chickpeas will transform into a hearty vegetarian meal in no time.

Future and past vegetables

Yellow courgettes, red endives, micro-vegetables... The taste and form of our veg is no longer finite. Where do they come from? How do they get to your plate? Find out in Mechelen.

Some restaurants during the Week of Flavour, though, are taking the opposite approach and bringing back some traditional, "forgotten" vegetables like purslane, Jerusalem artichoke and parsnip. Each vegetable comes with a description, a recipe and directions on how to grow it yourself.

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Classical & new music**Brussels**

Bozar (Paleis voor Schone Kunsten)
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00,
www.bozar.be

NOV 14 20.00 Gil Shaham, violin;
Akira Eguchi, piano: Brahms, Bach,
Rodrigo, Sarasate

NOV 15 20.00 Freiburg Baroque
Orchestra conducted by René Jacobs:
Haydn's Symphony No 39, Mozart
ballet music (extract from *Idomeneo*),
Symphony No 39

NOV 17 11.00 & 14.00 *L'Apprenti*
Sorcier by Dukas with the Liège
Philharmonic, conducted by Pascal
Rophé, narrated by Maureen Dor (in
French, part of *L'Orchestre à la Portée
des Enfants*)

NOV 18 11.00 Javier Perianes, piano:
Nebra, Schubert, Debussy, de Falla
20.00 La Monnaie Symphony Orchestra
and Monnaie Choir conducted by
Kazushi Ono with Justus Grimm,
cello; Yves Cortvrint, viola: Strauss'
Don Quixote op 35, Prokofiev's Four
portraits and epilogue op 49

NOV 19 20.00 Prague Symphony
Orchestra conducted by Jiri Kout with
Peter Mikulas, bass: Smetana, Dvorak,
Martinu

NOV 22 20.00 Grigory Sokolov, piano:
Schubert's Sonata D 958, Chopin's 24
Preludes, op 28

De Munt

Muntplein; 070.23.39.39
NOV 19 20.00 Christine Schäfer,
soprano; Eric Schneider, piano:
Schubert's Winterreise D911

Epifaniekerk

Genèvestraat 470B; 02.705.17.55
NOV 18 16.00 Color 12 Guitares:
Nadine Rooseleir & Norbert Leclercq;
Rodrigo, Chopin, Britten, Ravel,
Bernstein, de Falla, Mozart, Leclercq
(tickets: 02.242.21.19)

Onze-Lieve-Vrouw van Lakenkerk
Onze-Lieve-Vrouwvoordeplein;
02.465.22.57
NOV 17 20.00 A Tout Chœur Choir &
Oracchio Orchestra: Handel's Messiah

Huis der Kunsten

Haachtsesteenweg 147; 02.240.34.99
NOV 16 19.00 Vibrato string quartet:
Hindemith, Dvorak, Schulhoff,
Beethoven

Royal Museums of Fine Arts

Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.512.82.47
NOV 14 12.40 Jean-Luc Votano,
clarinet; Sebastieno Brusco, piano:
Saint-Saëns, Schubert, Poulenc,
Bernstein
NOV 21 12.40-13.30 Albrecht
Breuninger, violin; Roberte Mamou,
piano: Beethoven, Ysaÿe

Royal Conservatory of Brussels

Regentschapsstraat 30; 02.213.41.37,
www.kcb.be
Concerts at 20.00:
NOV 16 Takacs Quartet: Haydn,
Janácek, Dvorák
NOV 22 Israël en Musique 1947-
2007, with musicians from Israel and
Belgium: music by classical Israeli
composers (tickets: 02.543.02.70 or
www.ambisrael.be)

Uccle Cultural Centre

Rodestraat 47; 02.374.64.84
NOV 22 20.30 Nuove Musiche
Orchestre, conducted by Eric
Lederhandler: Mozart concertos

Antwerp

Amuz
Kammenstraat 81; 03.248.28.28
NOV 15 21.00 Il Gardellino ensemble
with Camille Poul, soprano: Bach's
Brandenburg Concerto No 2, 4, Cantata
BWV 209, 51

DeSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28
NOV 14 20.00 Collegium Vocale Gent
Orchestra and Choir conducted by
Philippe Herreweghe with Dorothee
Mields, soprano, Matthew White, alto,
Jan Kobow, tenor, Peter Kooij, bass:
Bach advent cantatas
NOV 15 20.00 Tallinn Chamber
Orchestra, conducted by Andres
Mustonen and Latvian State Choir,
conducted by Maris Sirmais: Arvo Pärt,
Dubna, Messiaen, Ivanovs, Zarins,
Maskats, Esservalds, Vasks, Tormiss
(part of *Europalia*)
NOV 16 20.00 Frank-Peter
Zimmerman, violin; Antoine Tamestit,
viola; Christian Polterá, cello: Schubert,
Beethoven, Mozart
NOV 21 20.00 Andreas Haefliger,
piano: Beethoven and Schubert sonatas

Bruges

Concertgebouw
34 't Zand; 070.22.33.02
NOV 16 20.00 Il Gardellino ensemble:

Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No 2, 4,
Cantata BWV 209, 51, Sinfonia BWV 49
NOV 21 20.00 La Chambre

Philharmonique, conducted by
Emmanuel Krivine, with Viktoria
Mullova, violin: Beethoven violin
concerto, Schubert's Symphony No 9
NOV 22 20.00 Thomas Zehetmair,
violin; Ruth Killius, viola: Skalkottas,
Hartmann, Bartok, Holliger, Scelsi,
Martinu

Opera**Brussels**

De Munt
Muntplein; 070.23.39.39
NOV 17-18 Open Opera Tour: guided
tours with recitals, performances and
children's activities to celebrate the re-
opening of the opera house

Ghent

Vlaamse Opera
3 Schouwburgstraat (070.22.02.02)
NOV 15-DEC 1 Der Ring des
Nibelungen: Siegfried by Wagner,
conducted by Ivan Törzs, staged by Ivo
van Hove, with Lance Ryan

Jazz & blues

Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24
NOV 15-16 20.00 Brad Mehldau Trio

Bozar (Paleis voor Schone Kunsten)
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00,
www.bozar.be
NOV 21 20.30 Sonny Rollins

Flagey

Heilig Kruisplein; 02.641.10.20, www.
flagey.be
NOV 22 21.30 Magic Malik, flute;
Nelson Veras, guitar

Jazz Station

Leuvensesteenweg 193; 02.733.13.78
NOV 14 20.30 Walrus **NOV 15** 17.00
Fred Delplancq Quartet **NOV 16** 20.30
Chrystel Wautier Trio **NOV 17** 18.00
Françoise Derissen **NOV 21** 20.30
Roditi/Ignatzek/Rassinfosse

Le Grain d'Orge

Waversesteenweg 142; 02.511.26.47
NOV 16 Cora Lee & No Trouble

Sounds Jazz Club

Tulpenstraat 28; 02.512.92.50
NOV 15 22.00 Fred Delplancq Quartet
NOV 16-17 22.00 Chris Joris Quartet
NOV 19 22.00 Mastersession **NOV 20**
22.00 Da Romeo Band

The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
Concerts at 20.30:
NOV 14 Trio Cachai
NOV 15 A Tribute to James Brown

Antwerp

desingel
Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28
NOV 17 20.00 Campusconcert Jazz

De Bijloke

Jozef Kluyvensstraat 2, 09.269.92.92
NOV 22 20.00 John Taylor Trio

Pop, rock, hip-hop, soul**Brussels**

Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24
Concerts at 20.00 unless otherwise
noted:
NOV 14 Gogol Bordello,
NOV 14 22.00 The Aggrolites
NOV 15 Hollywood Porn Stars **NOV 22**
Anathema + Porcupine Tree
NOV 22 Delavega

Fuse

Blaesstraat 208; 02.511.97.89
NOV 17 23.00 Electric Room Presents:
The Black Dog + Sam Ostyn + Trish
Van Eynde + Deg - Pierre

Koninklijk Circus

Onderrichtsstraat 8; 02.218.20.15
NOV 16 20.00 Rufus Wainwright

Le Botanique

Koningstraat 236; 02.218.37.32
Concerts at 20.00:
NOV 14 John Vanderslice **NOV 14**
Sole and the Skyriders **NOV 16** Balooji
NOV 17 The Wedding Present **NOV**
18 Ben Weaver (in Rotonde). Total
Respect: Sharko, Puggy, Vezence
Hanao, Superlux, Mongoose, Opak
(in Orangerie) **NOV 21** Pocket + Half
Asleep + Moufle **NOV 22** Monsoon

Recyclart

Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34
NOV 16 20.30 Klaus Kermesse
'Première' + Carla Bozulich
NOV 17 23.00 Bloody Beetroots +
Crookers + Young Lovers + The Others
NOV 21 20.00 The Brunettes +
Crévecoeur

Vorst-Nationaal

Victor Roussealaan 208; 0900.00.991
NOV 18 20.00 Common + Kanye West
NOV 22 20.00 Rihanna

Antwerp

Lotto Arena
Schijnpoortweg 119; 0900.26.060

NOV 14 20.00 Bloc Party

NOV 16 20.00 The Kaiser Chiefs

Ghent**Handelsbeurs**

Kouter 29; 09.265.92.01

Concerts at 20.00

NOV 14 De La Vega **NOV 17** 20.00

Dolores O'Riordan **NOV 21** 20.00

Spinvis **NOV 22** 20.00 Zita Swoon

Leuven**Het Depot**

Martelarenplein 12; 016.22.06.03

NOV 21 20.00 The Van Jets

NOV 22 20.00 Fixkes

Stuk

Naamsestraat 96; 016.320.300

NOV 14 20.30 Creature with the Atom
Brain + White Circle Crime Club **NOV**

15 20.30 Dez Mona + Simple Brain
and the Long Haired Ponchomen

NOV 21 20.30 Pinback + The Dudley
Corporation **NOV 22** 20.30 Andrew
Bird

World, folk**Brussels****Ancienne Belgique**

Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24
NOV 14 20.00 Gogol Bordello, La
Phaze, The Aggrolites **NOV 16** 20.00
Thomas Lauwers + Zjef Vanuytsel **NOV**
18 18.30 Great Lake Swimmers + José
González + Will Johnson **NOV 21** 20.00
Loney, Dear + Vic Chesnutt

Au Stekerlapatte

Priesterstraat 4; 02.512.86.81

Concerts at 21.30

NOV 15 Os Meus Shorts **NOV 17** Ivan
& Les Singes Savants **NOV 22** Chambre

203 **NOV 24** Daniel Vincke solo +
Moustapha Ouriaghli

Bozar (Paleis Voor Schone Kunsten)

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.84.44

NOV 20 20.00 Son del Sur: Flamenco
Night

Espace Senghor

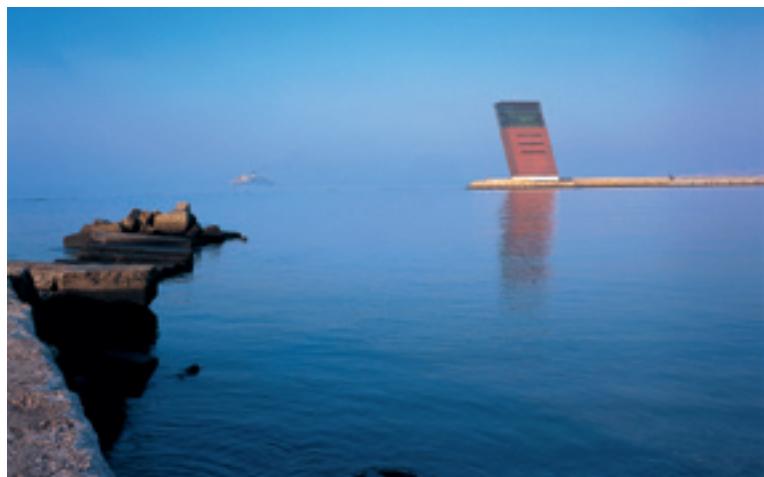
Waversesteenweg 366; 02.230.31.40

NOV 21 20.30 Bonga, Angola

Flagey

Heilig Kruisplein; 02.641.10.20,
www.flagey.be

NOV 16 20.15 Bassekou Kouyaté &
N'Goni Ba, Mali



The Void: Portuguese architecture on show at Bozar until November 30

photographs of projects by Portuguese architect Gonçalo 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
Koninginngalerij 17; 02.502.09.73
Until NOV 19 Royal Greenhouses of Laeken, some 50 photographs of the greenhouses' flora and architecture by Olivier Polet

Clockarium Museum
Reyerslaan 163; 02.732.08.28
Until JAN 28 Guided tour of the exhibition Steen-Goed: From Art Nouveau to Art Deco, with ceramics by Edgard Aubry and Roger Guérin

Costume and Lace Museum
Violetstraat 12; 02.213.44.50
Until JAN 27 Gerald Watelet, retrospective of work by the Belgian fashion designer

De Markten
Oude Graanmarkt 5; 02.512.34.25, www.demarketen.be
NOV 16-DEC 23 Cf. (Natuur, Nature), multi-media exhibition on the theme of nature with work by Klaar Cornelis, Kikie Crèvecœur, David Delesalle and others

Espace Photographique Contretype
Verbindingslaan 1; 02.538.42.20
Until DEC 30 Variations, photographs by Armyde Peigner

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

Jewish Museum of Belgium
Minimstraat 21; 02.512.19.63
Until DEC 31 Jewish Spaces and Itineraries: The Shoule of Molenbeek, Aspects of contemporary Judaism
Until FEB 24 Sarah and her Brothers, history through the eyes of the Kalisks family of artists

Koekelberg Basilica
Basiliekvoordein 1; 02.420.55.05
Until MAR 15 Leonardo Da Vinci: The European Genius, paintings, mechanical models, original drawings and manuscripts

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

La Médiafine
Stokkelsesteenweg 45; 02.761.60.29
Until NOV 25 Works by Gwendoline Robin and Eric Angenot

Loge Architecture Museum
Klusstraat 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

Park Tournai Solvay
Terhulpensteenweg 201; 02.660.99.80
Until DEC 23 Sculptures in bronze, steel and neon by Portuguese artist José de Guimarães

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 Héribert 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 België op kijkdoosprenten, some 400 views of Belgian cities dating from the 17th and 18th centuries
Until JAN 6 When the Manga Dreams About the West, comic strips by Jiro Taniguchi.
Until JAN 6 XPO2π: 50 jaar Jeugd en Wetenschap van België (50 Years of Youth and Science in Belgium)

Royal Museums 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

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

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

Sint-Gorikshallen
Place Sint-Goriks 1; 02.502.44.24
Until DEC 31 Brussels, urban landscapes and computer-reworked photographs by Georges De Kinder

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
Huidevetersstraat 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 & Taxis
Havenlaan 86C; 02.549.60.49
Until MAR 23 It's our History!, multi-media exhibition on the development of the EU and the lives of Europeans citizens since 1945

Young Gallery/Hotel Conrad
Louizalaan 75b; 02.374.07.04
Until NOV 24 Pistoleros, photographs by Karel Fonteyne

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
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
Until JAN 6 Lonely at the Top #6, Recyclable Refugee Camp TOURISM by Ives Maes

Extra City, Center for Contemporary Art

Klamperstraat 40; 0484.42.10.70
Until DEC 16 Numerous Incidents of Indefinite Outcome, works by Joachim Koester
Until DEC 16 The Nine Monads Of David Bell, works by Luke Fowler

FotoMuseum
Waalse Kaai 47; 03.242.93.00
Until JAN 6 Belgicum, Stephan Vanfleteren's humourous and nostalgic photographs of Belgium
Until JAN 6 Oorlogsmaatstel by film director Robbe De Hert. Ost.Modern, images from Eastern Europe by Annemie Augustijns

Until JAN 6 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 Caeckenbergh, 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 Berg Museum
Lange Gasthuisstraat 19; 03.232.42.37
Until JAN 27 Facing death, drawings of the artist's dying wife by Eugeen van Mieghem (1875-1930)

Rockox House
12 Keizerstraat; 03.201.92.50
NOV 16-FEB 10 Samson and Delilah: A Rubens Painting Returns, the famous painting shown along with other works of art originally owned by Antwerp's mayor Nicolaas Rockox

Sint-Gorikshallen
Place Sint-Goriks 1; 02.502.44.24
Until DEC 31 Brussels, urban landscapes and computer-reworked photographs by Georges De Kinder

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
Huidevetersstraat 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 & Taxis
Havenlaan 86C; 02.549.60.49
Until MAR 23 It's our History!, multi-media exhibition on the development of the EU and the lives of Europeans citizens since 1945

Young Gallery/Hotel Conrad
Louizalaan 75b; 02.374.07.04
Until NOV 24 Pistoleros, photographs by Karel Fonteyne

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
Until FEB 17 Head Shop/Shop Head, Paul McCarthy retrospective 1966-2007

Hasselt

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

Knokke-Heist

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

Leuven

Abdij van 't Park (Park Abbey)
Abdijdreef 7; 016.20.30.20, www.parkabdij.be
Until DEC 21 In the name of God: 1000 years of monasticism, from the origins of the first monastic orders to today

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

Ypres

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

Municipal Museum

Ieperleestraat 31; 057.21.83.00
Until NOV 18 Paintings by Ypres artist François Böhm (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 Belgium 02.507.85.94, www.europalia.eu

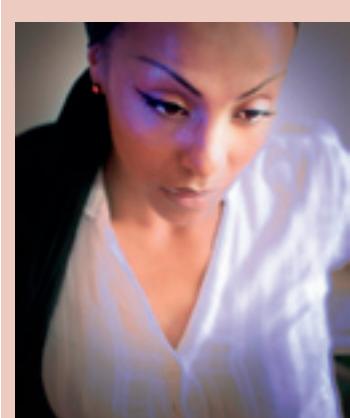
Moussem Festival: Dance, theatre, music and film from the Arab world. The programme focuses on the meeting point between traditional and contemporary at home and abroad
Until NOV 17 in venues across Brussels and Antwerp www.moussem.be

Week van de Smaak (Week of Flavour): celebration of food and cooking, including workshops, exhibitions, special menus, markets, visiting master Italian chefs and kids' activities
NOV 15-24 across Flanders 02.208.02.32; www.weekvandesmaak.be

Brussels

Bouglione Circus: long-standing Belgian circus
Until DEC 9 in the Park van Laken near the Atomium 0476.49.12.03, www.bouglione.be

Don't miss this week



Zap Mama, Nov 15, 20.00, Handelsbeurs, Ghent. Tickets from 09.265.92.01

The name refers to the group, but Mari Daulne is the hub that keeps this afro-European beat spinning year after successful year. Many are surprised when they find out Zap Mama is a Belgian group – thinking they come direct from Central Africa. For 17 years, Daulne has been pumping out irresistible Afro-Cuban rhythms and a sort of soul-gospel-funk. Yes, it's eclectic. Onstage, Daulne and band are energetic yet sublimely cool. Expect to hear plenty from this year's album *Supermoon*, which brings more of an afro-pop sound, delivered pitch-perfect through Daulne's savoury-timbre voice.

Velo Sport: bicycle and motorcycle show
NOV 16-19 at Brussels Expo, Heysel 02.582.08.57, www.expo-velo.be

Hors Pistes: Contemporary circus festival
Until NOV 28 at venues across Brussels 02.218.21.07, www.halles.be

Musica Universalis: Polyphony festival with music by composers from Flanders and northern France
NOV 20-JAN 11 at Kapel van de Miniemen, Miniemstraat 62 02.507.82.00, www.minimes.net

Philosophy Festival: Europe and its borders is the theme of this festival, which also focuses on French philosopher Michel de Montaigne. Programme includes lectures, debates, a book fair and children's activities
NOV 17-18 at Flagey, Heilig Kruisplein 02.641.10.13, www.flagey.be

Smart Living and designbrussels: interior design fairs
NOV 17-25 at Brussels Expo, Heysel 02.582.08.57, www.salonmaisonetdeco.be

Other towns

Cirque du Soleil presents the show Varekai
Until DEC 2 under the circus group's big top in the Zuiderdokken, Antwerp 070.22.32.30, www.cirquedesoleil.com

Dedonderdagen #14: a special evening promoting new talent at deSingel with music, dance, performances and visual art
NOV 22 from 20.00 at deSingel, Desguinlei 25, Antwerp 03.248.28.28, www.dedonderdagen.be

Spanish Riding School of Vienna: equestrian show
NOV 16-18 at Sportpaleis, 119 Schijnpoortweg, Antwerp 0900.45.045, www.srsantwerp.be

Trouw/Mariage: wedding fair
NOV 17-18 in Flanders Expo, Maaltekouter 1, Ghent 09.241.92.11, www.flandersexpo.be

MY FLANDERS

Lut De Clercq

Lut De Clercq is the chef at the Ancienne Belgique concert hall in Brussels and "godmother" of this year's Week of Flavour, a celebration of food across Flanders. We ask her about her love of simple ingredients and how she feels about what we put on our plates.

How do you feel about being chosen as the head of the quality committee of the Week of Flavour?

I am godmother of this year's edition and proud to be. I like the Week of Flavour because it is a very incorruptible project that involves all layers of society. It isn't a commercial venture. In fact, it's a great recipe for making something beautiful happen in Flanders every year. Entire villages in Flanders work together. You have 49 mayors cooking for their people. I like that way of doing politics a lot better than the stuff we've seen in the past few weeks.

We hear you are a champion of simple tastes.

I love dishes that bring the quality of the ingredients to the fore. I like purity in food. That doesn't mean that the preparation isn't complex, but the taste should be pure. If your ingredients are pure and of good quality, then you can start to think about how you can best expose their characteristics.

Do I sense a link to this year's Country of Flavour, Italy?

Yes. Italian cuisine is also about the quality of the ingredients. Plus, it is about home cooking. If you think of Italy, you don't think of triple Michelin stars. This is exactly the kind of food I cook at the AB restaurant. Everything is made fresh daily. Of course we use restaurant techniques, but we do make home-cooked food. We bake

our own bread everyday. And not in one of those ghastly machines that does the baking for you.

So your restaurant is meant to be a home for the people who come to eat there?

It really is! If you're an artist on tour for three months, the only thing that feels like home is the food. All the other things are very surreal. You sleep on a tour bus, sometimes with as 17 people, and there's always someone whose body odour or snoring bothers you. And wherever you go, you are subject to the goodwill of the concert promoter, who decides whether you will be well looked after or not. In some countries, the catering has been cut down to a minimum. The Ancienne Belgique made a choice 15 years ago to take extra good care of the artists. And it works – those artists are a lot happier on stage. The restaurant is a home away from home for the artists, and they appreciate that. And we have proof: the kitchen crew is used to regular marriage proposals – and that has nothing to do with our looks, I can assure you! It's all about the food.

The Week of Flavour has a focus on children. Why?

I think it's great that people who own restaurants are pushed to think about alternatives for children's menus. It doesn't always have to be a hamburger with fries or spaghetti. My mother used to take me along to the restaurant when I was only three years old. I didn't get a children's menu; I



Guido Zeilmakers

got smaller portions of whatever the grownups were eating. And I wasn't treated like a child, but like a customer. That makes you feel great when you're a kid. I loved the fact that I was able to say: "No thanks, no dessert for me; I'll pick something from the cheese trolley". I chose the weirdest cheeses, and I ate them all – because I had chosen them myself. If children always have to pick one of the same three choices in a restaurant, how on earth will they ever learn anything about variety in taste? And how would you expect them to think it's fun to eat out? Don't treat children like idiots when it comes to food. They're not, and they deserve a lot better than that.

Adults sometimes stick to the same meals, too...

People's palates are so numbed

down by all the ready-made meals they eat. I find that especially painful in children. If you look at the quantity of prepared meals in the supermarkets, you have to agree that they are no longer the makeshift contrivance they once were. It has become a way of life. A lot of people are convinced that there's no time for cooking in a day. But you don't need an awful lot of time. In the time needed to go shopping for a meal and microwave it, you can cook something a lot more nutritious and tasty!

Do you think it's possible that some people are genetically predisposed not to like certain flavours?

Maybe so. But children are too young to know that. You should decide that as an adult. When

I was a child, I hated Brussels sprouts. Now I can eat them, if they are prepared decently. There is one exception, though – one vegetable I never liked and that still has the power to drive me out of the kitchen. It's red cabbage. The funny thing is, I heard that Peter Goossens [the chef at the Hof van Cleve and godfather of the first Week of Flavour] feels exactly the same way. Maybe the organisers should take that into account when choosing a godmother, or father, for next year!

Interview by An Gyde

online
www.weekvandesmaak.be

THE LAST WORD

what they're saying in Flanders

"God can also be a construction of our brains. I'm going to research that."

Dirk De Ridder
Antwerp neurosurgeon
who found that out-of-body experiences were caused by the brain

"This is no farewell party, and I'm not giving any farewell interviews"

Ivan De Witte, 60,
CEO of De Witte & Morel,
which is celebrating 25 years
as Belgium's consultancy market
leader

"I followed what my conscience told me"

Jacques Wilmaert, 75,
Belgian pilot released
last week after being held in
Chad for alleged child abduction

DanceinFlanders **Oostduinkerke**
RubensinAntwerp **TeKoop** **Musica**
Universalis **Rockox** **FilmFreak**
next week in Flanders Today