



Dr Guislain, p.9

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Style and the city

It's the ultimate competition as two cities of fashion compete on the catwalk

Stéphanie Duval

June is a big month for Flemish fashionistas: this is when the Antwerp and Brussels fashion academies show off their student talent. The end-of-the-year fashion shows allow all students to display their skills and ideas, although the focus is mainly on graduates. Earlier this month, after four or five years of hard slog, these new, young designers got the chance to present their final collection before stepping off into the real world.

Many countries boast a major fashion school, but not many can lay claim to two that are internationally famous. Belgium can. Admittedly, La Cambre École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Visuels in Brussels has not yet attained the fame of its counterpart in Antwerp, the fashion department of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts. The celebrated "Antwerp Six", who graduated in 1980 and 1981, did, after all, put Belgium on the worldwide fashion map. Thanks to Marina Yee, Dirk Bikkembergs, Dirk Van Saene, Dries Van Noten, Ann Demeulemeester and Walter Van Beirendonck, Antwerp fashion has been taken very seriously ever since. And so has the fashion course at Antwerp Academy.

Antwerp alumni tend to stay close to the school after graduating. Walter Van Beirendonck even took up a position in 2007, following on the heels of Linda Loppa as department head. Véronique Branquinho, Dries Van Noten and Bvba 32 (the company behind Ann Demeulemeester and Haider Ackerman) support the students by donating fabrics and materials for their final collections.

But La Cambre has some impressive alumni as well. Olivier Theyskens is probably the most famous, though he didn't actually finish his education in Brussels. Others successfully launched their own labels after graduating from the Brussels institution. Among the school's rising stars are Valeria Siniouchkina with GIRLS from Omsk, Sandrina Fasoli and Michael Marson with their label Sandrina and Cathy Pill. Other graduates have gone on to take up positions at Chanel, Raf Simons, Maison Martin Margiela and Lanvin.

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Erianna Tardieu



Wings of desire: Yu Fukumoto's collection is inspired by the image of a butterfly collector



Business

The Lange Wapper bridge is designed to ease traffic congestion in Antwerp, but it has hit some snags along the way.

Active

The biggest Japanese garden in Europe is in Hasselt, of all places. Lisa Bradshaw travels to the Limburg town to experience a Zen moment.

Interview

Chantal Pauwels is head of the country's only classical ballet company. She talks to Marc Maes about financial worries and future plans.

Dutch agree to deepen the Scheldt

Agreement vital to secure China container trade for Antwerp

Alan Hope

The Dutch parliament has dropped objections to a plan to deepen the River Scheldt in the approaches to Antwerp, reportedly after Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters threatened to hold up agreement on a new Benelux Treaty due to be signed last week in The Hague.

The plan to deepen the Scheldt for a third time, this time to a depth of 13.1 metres, was first raised in 1997 but only agreed in 2005. The aim is to make the river navigable for larger container ships, especially those coming from China. At present,

they can only reach Antwerp at high tide, leading to costly delays.

However, the problem for Flanders is that, while the deepening is crucial for Antwerp, the major part of the Scheldt estuary is Dutch waters – from the Breskens-Vlissingen entrance in Zeeland to just north of Doel, the river is enclosed by Dutch territory on both sides.

The plan has upset Dutch farmers of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, on the south of the river, and the islands of Walcheren and South Beveland, lying to the north. They

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EDITOR'S NOTES

L'Archiduc

Flemish art is getting hot. American movie star Brad Pitt recently snapped up a painting by artist Luc Tuymans as a present for wife Angelina. He spotted it at Art Basel in Switzerland at the stand of Tuymans' Antwerp gallery Zeno X.

According to gallery owner Frank Demaegd, Pitt fell for the painting the moment he saw it. "He came round at least three times to look at it and then decided to buy it." The price of the painting has not yet been disclosed.

The work, titled "L'Archiduc", shows the empty interior of the Art Deco L'Archiduc café in the Dansaertstraat, in the heart of Flemish Brussels. Painted in muted tones, it is a relatively unknown work from 1979. Tuymans apparently painted it after spending an evening in the café.

Zeno X Gallery is now one of the most exciting galleries in the country for contemporary art. Located opposite the Fine Arts Museum in southern Antwerp, its list of artists includes Michaël

Borremans, who recently designed the cover art for the new album by Flemish rock band dEUS.

The artwork caught the attention of *The Guardian*'s rock critic Trevor Baker. In an article on "the dying art of record sleeve design," he wrote: "The only really eye-catching album sleeve I've seen so far this year has been by dEUS – who got artist Michaël Borremans to give them a characteristically sinister painting for their excellent new album *Vantage Point*. The care they put into the music is reflected in the care they put into the packaging."

By the time Flemish artists reach the stands of Art Basel, they have become far too expensive for ordinary people to acquire. But it's possible to have a miniature Flemish masterpiece in our homes for nothing more than the price of a CD.

Derek Blyth

online

www.zeno-x.com



Luc Tuymans, "L'Archiduc"

FACE OF FLANDERS**Rudy Aernoudt**

It was the Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu who advised: keep your friends close, but keep your enemies even closer. It's advice the Flemish government would have done well to listen to, following the release of a new book by whistle-blower Rudy Aernoudt.

Aernoudt is a man with a grudge and a willing publisher, and as Sun Tzu and Tony Soprano would both have known, you don't mess with the guy who knows where the bodies are buried.

Aernoudt has a CV you'd think would be impossible in a country like Belgium: he has held high positions in the Walloon, Flemish and federal civil services, as well as in the EU commission. He was a top adviser to Fientje Moerman in two posts: when she was federal minister for economy, foreign trade and science; and when she was Flemish minister for economy, enterprise and innovation.

It was as head of her cabinet that he brought about his downfall, when in December 2006 he filed an official complaint with the ombudsman alleging irregularities in the employment by the ministry of consultants. The ombudsman found them to be valid, and Moerman resigned in October 2007, declaring she was taking full political responsibility for the "shortcomings".

One month previously, the Flemish government sacked Aernoudt, alleging he had committed "grave acts which made further professional cooperation immediately and definitively impossible" – elsewhere it was alleged two employees had complained of harassment.

Jean-Marie Dedecker, the rogue MP who now has his own party, spoke for many when he claimed Aernoudt had been sacked for whistle-blowing – for revealing the sort of nepotism he claimed goes on at high levels of government, in this case, a consultancy which was taken on against the rules and which never fulfilled the contracts it was paid for. The consultancy just happened to have close ties to one of Moerman's Liberal colleagues, whose mother held 90% of the shares.

Now Aernoudt, who is fighting the sacking through the employment tribunal, has written a book which takes great delight in hanging out the government's dirty washing, first in Dutch and just this week also published in French. *Wedervaren van een cabinetard* (Roularta), is on the one hand a collection of sordid and mostly petty anecdotes about the sort of nepotism, back-slapping and palm-greasing most of us assume politics is all about. But it has higher aims, says Aernoudt in the foreword: "that the citizen, once he learns of it all, would rise up in rebellion". The book is not a settling of scores, then, but was written so that the citizens have the information they are entitled to.

It almost didn't happen. In March, after giving a reading in Herstal of the work-in-progress, Aernoudt returned to his car to find his rear window smashed and his laptop stolen – on it the only copy of the manuscript in existence. "I'm not yet paranoid enough to think that Fientje Moerman is behind this," he told *De Standaard*, making it perfectly clear from his reticence exactly who he thought was behind it.

"My anecdotes," he explained at the book launch, making it sound like he was talking about after-dinner stories in the style of Peter Ustinov, "are not a matter of washing dirty linen in public. They're just showing it as it is." One reviewer, though, thought it more resembled an "indictment from the gut" consisting of "ninety pages of score-settling". Many of his stories' protagonists can be readily identified, even though they are not named. It won't be a surprise at all should defamation writs come flying in.

Alan Hope

online

www.aernoudt.com

TALKING DUTCH**notes on language****Examens**

It's that time of year again. Timetables are being drawn up and pencils sharpened. Yes, the exams are almost upon us. In bygone ages, children were left pretty much to their own devices when it came to getting through school. Now parents fret that their little, or not so little ones will fail at school and so at life. This can infectiously affect some kids with frayed nerves, leading to pill-popping and worse as the result.

So what can parents do, or not do, to help? You could turn to *S.O.S. Brein*, a book written by Inge Provost and Bernard Lernout for tips on how children can be more efficient in their studying. They've applied their experience of training managers to the schools. By using these tips you don't have to work harder; the aim is *slimmer te werken* – to work more smartly.

Of course, parents have to shoulder some of the blame for failing children. What you mustn't do is *zeuren* – to complain: *moet je niet studeren*? shouldn't you be studying?

In plaats van zeuren, kun je beter naast je kind zitten en samenwerken. So, instead of complaining, you'd do better to sit beside your child and work together. That works up to a certain age I suppose.

Another no-no apparently is checking up that your child has learned what they're supposed to have learned. If little Johnny hasn't learned his stuff you might dent his confidence and destroy his motivation by testing him, and we wouldn't want that, would we.

Other ideas from the book are more to my liking. They suggest a 50/10 rule: *vijf minuten studeren en tien minuten ontspannen*. The only trouble with that is that 10 minutes of relaxation tends to become an hour. Playing music in the background is also beneficial but it should be *instrumentale muziek op een laag volume*. I'm not sure many kids go for Mozart's piano sonatas.

You should also make notes in the form of a mind map, you know, ideas in the page with connecting lines, rather than writing them out across the page. The authors call that *een gps voor het brein*. Depends on the way your brain works no doubt.

Their best tip is encouraging the student to repeat: *herhaling loont* – repetition pays. Research has shown that best results are achieved if you repeat just when you're on the point of forgetting. Now that's a tall order, like finding the exact daily intake of whisky that gives eternal life.

The cheekiest suggestion is that kids should present their poor school reports to their parents saying: *ik heb een interessant rapport*. Certainly, we all should learn from our mistakes and seeing failure as the springboard to success is no bad thing.

Yes, exam time is hard on children and parents alike. But what everyone can look forward to is that handful of days between the final exam and the results, when every child appears to be above average.

Alistair MacLean

online

www.vandaele.be

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FEATURE

Students of style

Etienne Todor

Continued from page 1

It's no wonder, then, that the Antwerp Academy and La Cambre shows attract fashion enthusiasts, as well as professionals looking for fresh talent. The judges of the final collections inevitably include influential names. This year, La Cambre's jury included designer Jean Paul Gaultier; Isabelle Aout, studio director of Maison Martin Margiela and Lucas Ossendrijver, head designer at Lanvin Homme. Antwerp Academy's collections were judged by key fashion figures such as academy alumnus Marina Yee, artistic director of Dior Homme Kris Van Assche and editor of Style.com Tim Blanks.

All the judges were unanimous in praising the Belgian students graduating from the two schools. Gaultier declared that he was "charmed" and "enthusiastic" about the work of the young graduates, who were already proving themselves to be true designers. Fashion journalist Tim Blanks went so far as to declare that Belgian fashion was "an essential thread in the fabric of the fashion world."

This year featured a large number of men's collections: a clear sign that male fashion is becoming more creative and adventurous. In Brussels, over 6 and 7 June, Ann Bruggeman's fourth-year collection particularly caught my eye. Firmly focused on shape,

she took James Bond clichés about men's clothing and made them her own. Her classmate Mansour Badjoko Wa Lileko adopted a very different approach to his men's collection, mixing African and Japanese culture with Western influences. Lively prints combined with subdued grey tones and highly original macramé accessories pulled together this beautiful collection.

The most impressive men's collections in Antwerp on 14 June were created by final year students. Antonin Tron showed a compilation of dark men's suits with a remarkable attention to detail. The pants were wide and flowing but never lost their tailored allure. The predominately black designs were highlighted by coats in rich jewel tones, creating a kind of Russian appeal. Even more extravagant were the dandies introduced by Romain Brau, whose models strode the catwalk clad in velvet, white fur and outrageous hats. The end result was 19th-century colonialism meets 1920s silent movies.

Hun Qui La won over the audience with his street wear collection inspired by monkeys: models wearing giant monkey heads danced on the stage to the rhythm of the clapping audience. Still, I couldn't help but think that the act was a way of deflecting attention from the actual clothes, designs you can already find hanging in street wear shops.



Fairy tale: Ann Eckers' enchanting collection for children finds inspiration in fantasy

This approach wasn't necessary with Yu Fukumoto's much more understated "The Collector" – a personal interpretation of the classic men's wardrobe inspired by the archetypal image of a butterfly collector.

Overall, both shows gave a general impression of optimism and colour. It seems that Belgians are finally turning away from

the sombre, gothic tones characteristic of earlier graduates' styles. Some collections were especially fun to watch, such as La Cambre's Hélène Balle's: a mix between typical Matryoshka dolls and 1980s hip hop culture. She succeeded in bringing together loud colours, graphic prints, a lot of zippers and huge sport bags into a coherent and flashy collection.

Meanwhile, La Cambre graduate Roxane Baines was inspired by women in transit, caught between flights in the duty-free zone. Her work incorporated packets of cigarettes embellished with sequins, offering a colourful and witty take on the dominant role of marketing in today's society.

Every bit as original, was Narelle Dore's Antwerp presentation of boxy designs in pastel, topped by equally boxy wigs in matching

colours. But it was Ann Eckers' children's collection in Antwerp that really stole the hearts of the audience and the press. Judge and renowned fashion journalist Tim Blanks proclaimed it his favourite, nothing that the concept was extremely original and well-executed. Eckers' inspiration was a fantasy tale she invented about little creatures living inside a

academy.

Different though both shows were, there was some remarkable correspondence between students in the two fashion cities. A profound admiration for Nicholas Ghesquière was once common factor: a lot of students played with volumes in a way reminiscent of the designer's work for Balenciaga. And then there was a recurrent

theme in both events, as many collections showed a concern for clothing's

duty to protect the wearer. Many collections were inspired by elements associated with knights and soldiers, while others simply paid close attention to the way clothes can protect us from the elements of nature.

Almost all the students shared an extraordinary level of technical skill. No experimental techniques were too difficult, and no challenge was left untried. When you combine this with the inspired visions of the students – the result of both talented and nurturing teachers – it's easy to see why all the world adores Belgian fashion.



Brussels style: Julie Dekegeleer's collection comes from the class of La Cambre

It seems that Belgians are finally turning away from the sombre, gothic tones characteristic of earlier styles

computer. The kids looked adorable in colourful techno outfits, with little lights beaming on top of their heads.

The students and their supporters insist that there are huge differences between Antwerp and Brussels. "At La Cambre, you start with a *tabula rasa*," explains La Cambre graduate Julie Dekegeleer when asked why she chose Brussels rather than Antwerp. "Our view of fashion is strictly personal and not based on formal fashion or history."

Marina Yee also mentions that both schools have their own specific identity, "and I hope they will stay true to their separate visions, as it makes Belgium all the richer for having more than one fashion

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www.lacambre.be
www.antwerp-fashion.be



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Agreement on Scheldt

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fear the effects of what is called *ontpoldering*, or de-polderisation, a process in which previously reclaimed land is once again swamped by the sea. An estimated 600 hectares of agricultural land will be lost, they say.

Earlier in the month, a committee of the Dutch First Chamber (the equivalent of the Belgian Senate) decided to postpone agreement on starting work on the Dutch side (work on the tiny portion of the river on Flemish territory is already under way). They wanted to wait for the report of the so-called Nijpels committee on alternatives to *ontpoldering*, even though there was an agreement from the Second Chamber in December last year to go ahead.

The decision came as a blow to Flanders, as it would have put off the start of work until at least the end of the year, at a time when the Antwerp shipping industry is desperate for Chinese container ships to gain better access to the almost-completed Deurganckdok. A delegation from Antwerp went to China last week to discuss ways of bringing some of the fast-growing Chinese shipping traffic to the port.

Antwerp currently lies far behind Hamburg and Rotterdam, with 1.2 million containers



Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters (centre) and Dutch prime minister Jan Peter Balkenende (second from right)

a year, or 10% of total traffic compared to Hamburg's 40% and Rotterdam's 33%. Rotterdam, for the time, being is at the limit of its capacity, so the way is clear for Antwerp to take more traffic. But this depends on better access to the Deurganckdok, which has an annual capacity of 6-7 million containers.

Peeters, who had optimistically taken a spade and broken ground on the project in Decem-

ber, promised to bring up the issue with Dutch prime minister Jan Peter Balkenende, and reports last week said he had declared himself willing to hold up the signing of a new treaty between the three Benelux countries on political cooperation within the EU. His spokesperson, however, denied that any pressure was brought to bear on the Dutch.

Whatever the case, the problem

appears to be solved, after Balkenende last week intervened personally to change the First Chamber's decision. Their Traffic and Waterways committee made a U-turn on the issue of the Nijpels report, and has agreed to ratify the agreement on the Scheldt before the summer recess. "There was a great deal of pressure applied," said one member of the committee, "especially by the Flemish government."

Lupins on the menu, research suggests

Europe could find an alternative source of vegetable protein in lupins, according to the results of a three-year research project by the Ghent university college.

Working at the Bottelare test-farm, researchers compared lupins with soya, the current main source of vegetable protein. They discovered that lupins cost less energy, cause less acidification of the soil and produce less CO₂. In addition, protein from lupins should be cheaper, since it can be produced in Europe and compete with imported soya, most of which comes from the US, and whose price is pushed up by the fact that much US-produced soya is genetically-modified and cannot be imported into the EU.

The team also experimented with lupin meal as a flour substitute in waffles and bread. They are also working in cooperation with Biofun and Alpro, both producers of soya products, to develop a lupin-drink similar to soya milk for those with milk related allergies.

Lupin seeds, also called beans, were eaten by the Romans and are still consumed in Southern Europe and South America – especially the Andes.

Report raises doubts over security of US nuclear weapons

Security of US nuclear weapons in Europe is lacking, with each site presenting "unique security challenges," a report by the US Air Force for the Pentagon has claimed. There are US weapons stored at one site in Limburg province, the Kleine Brogel base, which has an estimated 10-20 nuclear weapons, according to the Federation of American Scientists (FAS). Italy, the Netherlands, Germany and the UK also have nuclear weapons stored at their own national bases, with the rest being kept in US bases in Europe.

Ironically, the inspection that led to the report on European bases was triggered by an incident in the US, when six nuclear warheads went missing in transit for 36 hours in August last year.

Kleine Brogel is not mentioned by name, but the report makes clear that all European bases suffer from some form of security shortcoming, such as using conscripts with only nine months experience to guard nuclear weapons. Most sites "require significant additional resources to meet Department of Defence security requirements," the report, which was obtained by the FAS, concludes. On-the-spot inspections are impossible because host nations demand notice before inspectors can visit their national sites.

The report could lead the Pentagon to "consoli-

date" its overseas sites, the FAS reports, possibly by withdrawing its weapons from certain locations and relying instead on its own bases. Earlier this month, the commander of US Air Forces in Europe, General Roger Brady, visited Volkel base in the Netherlands and Kleine Brogel. "Both units are part of the team. This is a critical part of the 52nd Fighter Wing mission," he told an Air Force news site. "It's interesting and important for us to see what they do and how they do it, and we were impressed by their professionalism," he added.

A spokesman for the defence ministry rejected criticisms. "We have professionalised the guards in all our installations," he told *Time* magazine. "These are not conscripts but professional soldiers. Not only that, but everyone is trained specifically for security at air bases. The proof is that there have been no major incidents at our installations."

FIFTH COLUMN



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The c-word

The word 'corridor' is not totally new to us, but until recent it reeked only of Cold War, of the Balkans or even more remote territories. Now we have our very own corridor in this country, even though it is only an imaginary concept.

The corridor currently being discussed in Belgian politics is a narrow strip of land between Brussels and Wallonia. It passes through the Flemish commune of Sint-Genesius-Rode and consists mainly of one road through the Zoniën forest and a number of expat enclaves.

To French-speaking politicians, the corridor is not an imaginary concept, but a very real one. Why is it so important to them in the current discussions on institution reform? Because it links Brussels with Wallonia, two regions geographically cut off from each other by one Flemish commune, Sint-Genesius-Rode.

The fact that French-speaking politicians insist so much on the corridor implies that they think about the end of Belgium. What use would a corridor have otherwise? This is remarkable because the Flemish parties rarely reflect on this idea of a post-Belgium, not even N-VA and Vlaams Belang, whose very ambition is Flemish independence.

What Flemish parties of all tendencies do talk about, is not so much what should happen after the country falls apart, but the less hypothetical question of what is needed so that it can continue to function. They find the scuffles along the language border irritating at best, but hardly the centre of the debate. The fact that the corridor – imaginary or not – has become such an important concept says more about French-speaking paranoia than it does about Flemish ambition.

So how do the Flemish react to the idea of a corridor? There was a time when this would have caused great outrage. Not one bit of soil, was a familiar cry back then. You do not mess with borders and definitely not with the language border. Yet this time there is no outcry. There is mostly laughter. The liberal Karel De Gucht summed it up when he called the idea "too crazy for words". The only person who seemed to take it seriously for one second was Anne Sobrie (CD&V), the Flemish council member for Sint-Genesius-Rode, but she, too, de-dramatised the issue. "If the French speakers are happy with a bunch of trees, then maybe we should talk about it," she said.

There is one more thing about the corridor. Sint-Genesius-Rode is also the home of Herman Van Rompuy (CD&V), who plays a central role in the institutional discussions. The Flemish poetry-loving statesman is known for his sense of humour and his discreet way of handling sensitive issues. Maybe the tree-lined corridor will offer some inspiration for one of his famous haikus. Now that would be a discrete way of getting rid of it.

Anja Otte

Anja Otte is a freelance Flemish journalist whose work regularly appears in *De Standaard*.

Changing times

Study shows changes in work, rest and play

Belgian men sleep less now than 40 years ago, work less in their jobs and do more housework. Women, meanwhile, sleep more, work less and spend less time on housework and child care, according to a study on time-use by Belgians carried out by researchers at the Free University VUB.

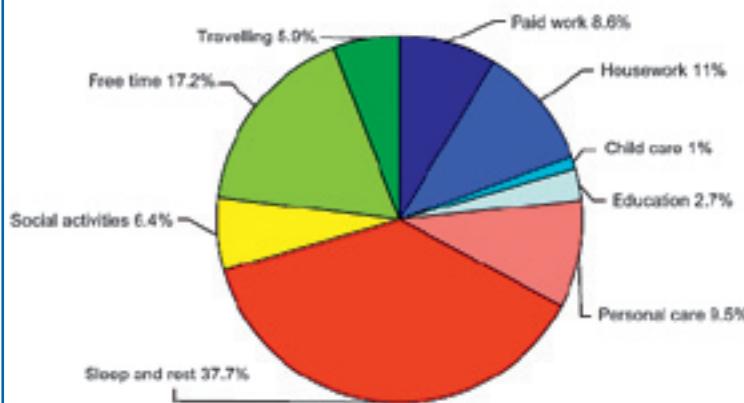
The team asked 6,400 Belgians to keep a detailed diary of their activities in 2005 and have now compiled the results, comparing them to previous research carried out in 1966. Some of the results are not surprising: while men spend seven hours more on household tasks, women spend 11 hours less. People spend less time eating and drinking and, in general, have more free time.

Some of the figures, however, are surprising: men now work an average of 25 hours a week in paid employment, compared

to an average of nearly 44 hours in 1966. Travelling time, despite advances in transport technology, now takes up 11 hours a week for men and 10h22 for women (nearly double the total for women 40 years ago).

Life in general is more relaxed: personal care and rest takes up 47% of our day, not counting free time and social activities. Walloons and Flemings work equally long hours, and both work longer than people in Brussels. The Brusseleer also spends less time on housework, though that may be because houses in the city are smaller and fewer have gardens, the study's authors said.

Online
www.time-use.be



Figures: Glorieux, I. & J. Minnen (2008) Website 'Belgisch tijdsbudgetonderzoek' Onderzoeksgrond TOR Vrije Universiteit Brussel & Algemene Directie Statistiek en Economische Informatie, Brussel.

Madonna is a fake, says expert



A painting thought to be a rediscovered masterpiece by the Flemish Primitive Jan Provoost (1465-1529) is in fact a fake, according to Professor Ron Spronk of Queen's University in Canada, who is an expert on the painter's work. The painting was tracked by the British art agency Trace last week to a location in the United States. It had originally been part of the collection of Bruges banker Emile Renders, much of which ended up in Nazi hands during World War Two. Other works in the collection disappeared without trace, although paintings occasionally turn up for sale. The federal government intends to make an application to the US for the recovery of the work, despite Professor Spronk's opinion. The painting has been estimated at €500,000, assuming the attribution is correct.

Meanwhile, a man has recovered a lost relic purporting to be a thorn from Christ's crown of thorns, missing for six months from the Sint-Salvator church in Harelbeke near Kortrijk. David Six was offered the relic by a young blond man at a flea-market in Zonnebeke, 30km away. "I haggled down to €150 and got a rucksack as well," said Six. The relic has since been returned to the church, which received it as a gift in 1818. Police were interviewing Six about the seller.

NEWS FLASH



A majority of Flemish communes – 183 out of 308 – expect to end 2008 in the red, according to a study of local government finance by Dexia bank. But the number of cash-strapped communes is down on last year, when the total topped 200. The entire shortfall this year is estimated at €125 million – €54 million less than in 2007. In Brussels, eight of the 19 communes in the region are in the red, while in Wallonia only 95 of the 262 have financial problems.

The Tongeren prosecutor's office last week carried out a reconstruction of the **murder of parachutist Els Van Doren**, who died in November 2006 after making a jump with a parachute that police allege had been tampered with. Fellow club member and love rival Els Clottmans was arrested and charged, but released from detention at the beginning of this year. A team of four parachutists staged the jump twice, filming proceedings with helmet-cams. On the ground, the prime suspect watched, as did the man with whom the two women – victim and alleged killer – had both been involved.

"This is the last year in which children will be locked up in closed detention centres for illegal immigrants," promised federal migration minister Annemie Turtelboom last week, following a meeting with Australian migration expert Grant Mitchell. Australia had 2,000 refugee children locked up in 2005, but abandoned the practice, and now has 600 families living under the guidance of refugee coaches.

Five Belgian products have been awarded protection under the European law that governs the naming of local products like Champagne and Cornish clotted cream. They are: the **Abbey-produced cheese** from Postel, east of Turnhout, a pear-tart from Avelgem, Piro sausage-roll from West Flanders, Brussels-made *bloempanch*, or black pudding, and apple and pear wine from the Pajottenland, between Brussels and Aalst.

The **supermarket chain Colruyt** has announced plans to build a new logistics centre in Beersel, south of Brussels. The company intends to demolish the old Progrès factory in Lot and construct a distribution centre for subsidiary Dreamland, the toys and baby-goods store. There will also be a warehouse facility for non-food delivery division Colli-Service. The new facilities, costing €30 million, will become operational in 2009 and 2010.



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Bridge of sighs

Lange Wapper likely to be late and over budget

Alan Hope

A new bridge and tunnel complex designed to ease traffic congestion in Antwerp needs more money and more time, according to the agency set up to run the project. One week earlier, environment minister Hilde Crevits told the Flemish parliament that the region's government was still supporting the original Oosterweel Link, as it is called, despite growing protest over its environmental impact.

The bridge and tunnel link is intended to ease Antwerp's traffic problems by completing the circle of the Antwerp Ring. At present, trucks coming from the left bank of the port have to cross the Scheldt through the Kennedy tunnel, then travel all the way around the southern part of the Ring before joining either the E34 in the direction of Germany, or the E19 in the direction of Brussels. The aim of the new link is to take heavy goods vehicles through a tunnel under the Scheldt and across the city on a viaduct to join the Ring close to the Sportpaleis.

The plan has at least three main problems, which have given rise to complaints from residents' associations and other groups, and which have now also provoked the ecology party Groen! into supporting a number of smaller legal actions under its own umbrella.

One complaint is the route of the Link, and the choice of a tunnel-viaduct combination, which some critics argue are not the best available options. Another point raised by objectors is that the authorities have not taken alternatives into account, and have ignored public consultation. A third criticism is that the traffic over the viaduct will pollute the urban districts over which it passes, which happen to be densely populated and rather poor districts.

The route presents a problem because unlike most by-pass projects it brings traffic from the edge of town directly over the city centre, emerging from a tunnel under the Scheldt to run on a 1.5km bridge over the urban districts of 't Eilandje, Deurne and Merksem. Groen! member Rudi Daems said: "I have seen various designs, and variations on them, and I think this bridge in that place is no longer fitting for these times. It is above the homes of 't Eilandje, and goes through the heavily-populated district of Merksem. The worst bottleneck will be at Deurne, where there will be an unbelievable crossroads of various motorways. We can expect there not only particulates but also traffic chaos."

The double-decker bridge, nicknamed the Lange Wapper after a character from Antwerp folklore,



is part of a 2.58km viaduct – longer than the Vilvoorde viaduct – that would run 14m above the residential areas below – much lower than the 20m-high Vilvoorde viaduct.

There have been alternatives, explains Manu Claeys, a writer who also heads a protest group called Straten-General. But from the beginning, he says, they were never given a chance to be heard. "Their minds were already made up in 2000," he says. The main alternative still supported by residents and experts is his group's so-called Plan B, which would use the tunnel under the Scheldt but then, instead of bringing traffic by viaduct through populated areas, would divert harbour traffic through the right-bank port area itself, joining the E19 to the north of the city. Westbound traffic could continue to use the Kennedy tunnel and Ring south, thus splitting heavy traffic over the two parts of the Ring.

"We have to walk and don't look back," commented Patrick Janssens, mayor of Antwerp, at one point when the protest reached a peak. Now some well-known names have taken his dismissive words and composed a protest song to the tune of the reggae-flavoured hit *Walk and Don't Look Back* by Peter Tosh and Mick Jagger. The song, by Stef Kamil Carlens and Zita Swoon and featuring Raymond van het Groe-

newoud, is posted on the protest site www.wappersong.be.

At a recent engagement, mobility minister Kathleen Van Brempt (who lives in Deurne) took the unusual step of announcing that she had called upon the authority responsible for the project, the Mobile Antwerp Management Company (BAM), to examine whether additional measures were needed to protect the people living around the viaduct area from the effects of fine particulates – an emission from diesel engines. It was odd enough that Van Brempt was speaking on a matter that comes under her colleague's remit – she was standing in for Crevits at the opening of a nature park on the left bank – but odder still was the fact that Crevits seemed not to agree with her.

In a full session of the Flemish parliament last week, both ministers were taking questions on the matter in advance of a committee meeting. Crevits made her department's position perfectly clear: the danger of fine particulates depends to a much greater extent on the amplitude of background emissions, which are caused mainly by traffic, and which affect a wide area. Local emission levels such as those produced by traffic on a bridge passing overhead are much less important, she explained. The government was already taking measures to reduce background

emission levels, with EU support.

According to forecasts from the government's planning bureau, by the year 2013, 79% of vehicle-kilometres will be accounted for by vehicles meeting the latest EU norms, which, she explained to Groen! deputy Rudy Daems, will lead to the "disappearance" of about 70% of particulates emitted by trucks. At the same time, emissions from cars would be "drastically reduced".

The non-profit Ademloos (whose name means "breathless") disagrees. They've set up a petition against the polluting effects of the whole project. At time of going to press, the number of signatures was approaching the 15,000 needed to be heard by the Flemish parliament.

"The bridge will mutilate the city," said planning expert Professor George Allaert of Ghent University in an interview with De Morgen in May. "Instead of taking traffic out of the city, the trucks will be pushed towards the centre. It would be hard to overestimate the impact on living conditions. The Lange Wapper goes right to the heart of the city."

Meanwhile, a report by BAM to the public works committee of the Flemish Parliament points out that the €1.85 billion price ceiling set in 2007 on the project will not be enough. Simply because of delays, the price has been pushed up to

€2.54 billion, as the cost of steel has risen sharply since 2006, when the costs were calculated. That means the project has increased in cost over its lifetime, from first estimates in 2001 of €500 million, by more than fivefold.

Finance minister Dirk Van Mechelen promised the budget was not yet at danger point, and also pointed out that the original tolls for using the complex – €2 for a car, €13 for a light truck and €15.6 for a heavy truck – would increase in line with inflation.

Moreover, the completion date for the project is gradually receding. Former Antwerp governor Camille Paulus, who was a driving force behind the Link, once expressed the desire to see it in operation in 2005. Not long ago, it seemed just about possible that the contracts could all be signed and work start in March 2009. That's now impossible. Even if everything went smoothly, it seems unlikely that work could begin before autumn 2009 at the earliest. And, with the growing number of objections, the project looks like becoming a bridge of sighs.

online

www.bamnv.be
www.antwerken.be
www.oosterweelverbinding.info
www.ademloos.be

The little shop on the corner

Lush brings green cosmetics to Antwerp

Stéphanie Duval

Lush, which has just opened in Antwerp, is not your average cosmetics shop. Customers not familiar with this British brand might feel a little confused when they go inside. They might even mistake the soap for cheese.

Founded in 1995 by Mark Constantine, Lush has the feel of a corner grocery store. The cosmetics are sold as if they were more like fruit and vegetables – that means fresh, without preservatives, and with as little packaging as possible. It's a very environment-friendly approach for the beauty industry.

The Antwerp store reflects this philosophy perfectly. Dozens of wooden crates hold colourful bath bombs that look – and smell – like apples, oranges or apricots. Lying on a table, you see something similar to a large cheese with smaller pieces wrapped in paper. Closer inspection reveals that this is sweet-smelling soap.

And so it goes on: a chunk of pâté turns out to be a body scrub, large bowls filled with blue wobbly jelly are actually containers holding shower gel, and tasty-looking bars of chocolate are in fact chunks of henna to colour your hair. In the middle of the shop there is even something resembling an ice cream buffet: silver bowls filled with delicious and colourful substances rest on a tub of ice to keep them cold. But, as shop manager Saskia Tourné explains, they are actually facial masks.

The link between cosmetics and edibles goes deeper. Lush works with organic ingredients whenever possible, taking advantage of the natural advantages of



fruits, vegetables and dairy products for skincare. That's why they stock blueberry face masks and an olive oil body lotion.

Despite its eco-awareness, Lush had to find a way to package its goodies. But they try to limit the wrapping to a minimum – and they strongly encourage recycling. The facial creams are packed in small containers made of recycled plastic, and the store offers a free facial mask to every customer who has collected five containers.

Some of the products are certified as vegan, and none of the cosmetics are tested on animals. So there's no guilt attached to this shopping experience.

online

www.lush.co.uk

BUSINESS FLASH

Thrombogenics

Thrombogenics, the Leuven-based bio-technology company, has signed a licensing agreement with the Swiss pharmaceutical group Roche to further develop one of its potential cancer-treating medicines. Thrombogenics will get a down-payment of up to €50 million and could earn a further €450 million together with royalties revenues if the product proves successful.

Sabena Flight Academy

Sabena Flight Academy, the flying school of the former national carrier Sabena, has been acquired by the Canadian CAE company, which specialises in training flying personnel, for some \$39 million. The move, which allows CAE to develop its operations in Europe, will provide further funds for Sabena's liquidator, who is expected to pay some €60 million to Belgian fiscal authorities later this year.

Dredging International

Dredging International, the Antwerp-based company, has won a €350 million contract to build an artificial island in the United Arab Emirates.

Belgacom

Belgacom, the country's largest telecommunications company, is considering an offer for Tele2Tango, the Luxembourg affiliate of the Swedish Tele2 company and the country's second largest mobile operator. It would be Belgacom's first foreign acquisition, as it stayed away from Europe's first consolidation wave in the early years of the 2000s.

Hansen Transmission

Hansen Transmission, the Lommel-based renewable energies equipment producer, is to invest €470 million in China and India to build production units slated to open in 2009. The move follows the company's acquisition by India's Suzlon Energy group in 2006.

Sunparks

Sunparks, the holiday village operator owned by the French Pierre et Vacances leisure group, is investing €20 million to renovate its Belgian parks, including properties in De Haan, Oostduinkerke and Mol.

Easyjet

Easyjet, the UK-based budget airline, has inaugurated a Brussels-Milan daily flight. The move follows the opening of services to Geneva, Nice and Berlin.

Henri Wintermans Cigars

Henri Wintermans Cigars, the Belgian cigar producer and distribution subsidiary of Scandinavian Tobacco, is investing €30 million to build Europe's largest cigar production unit in Lummen. The move will allow the company to integrate the production of its three existing sites in Leuven, Wilsele and Geel into one location and to increase capacity.

City Parking

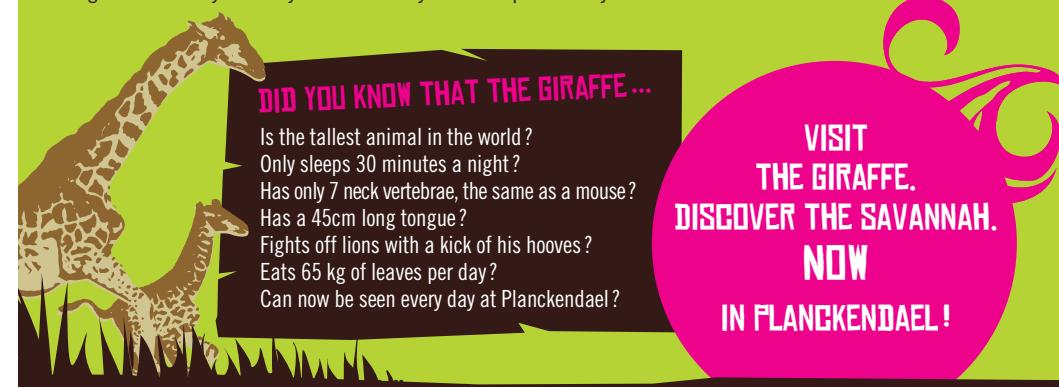
City Parking, the country's second largest private parking operator, has been acquired by the Dutch Q-Park company as part of a Europe-wide acquisition of City's owner, the French Epolia company.

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Planckendael

The giraffes at Planckendael are getting ready for your visit. They have recently moved to their new home, the savannah. They will be pleased to welcome you there, along with their neighbours: the impala, the crested guinea fowl and the zebra. You can make your visit into an exciting safari, a voyage of discovery through the habitat of these fascinating animals. Dare you go up the slope? You can go up 5 meters until you look the giraffes directly in the eyes. Oh and they would be pleased if you blink back!



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Strange science

Guislain's new exhibit stands at the crossroads of medicine and sideshow

Lisa Bradshaw

Step right up folks and see the most amazing, the most shocking, the most *alluurring* images ever witnessed outside of a doctor's surgery!"

If, like me, you have ever wandered into a "hall of mystery" or "world of freaks" show at a local fair or beachside attraction and simply left disappointed, you will be utterly grateful to the Dr Guislain Museum for delivering the goods. *Circus or Science* is an exhibition of the entire Roca Collection – anatomical wax models depicting all kinds of diseases and disorders. Although it's occasionally cringe-inducing, it's more light hearted than the typical exhibition at the museum of psychiatry in Ghent and just right for a summer show.

The collection was developed at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries by a Señor Roca of Spain, who travelled it around Europe as a sideshow at fairs. Wax artists made each wax head or torso to reflect specific diseases, such as advanced forms of cancers, tuberculosis, tumours or – a particular favourite – syphilis. The idea was to educate the masses about disease – but in such a way that they would want to pay for the pleasure and enjoy its many squeamish qualities.

To up admissions, such collections – and there were many in the 18th and 19th centuries – often reflected an element of morality. At least a third of the wax forms, carefully mounted behind glass in matching framed squares, show just what untreated sexu-

ally transmitted diseases look like *down there* – both male and female versions. Soldiers were often shuttled into the travelling exhibition by their commanding officers as a warning to stay away from loose women. The models are so explicit, often men and women were not admitted to the show at the same time. (The Guislain museum has no such rule.)

Wax collections such as these have a strange and fascinating history that goes back some 400 years when the European upper class could pay for a seat in an auditorium to watch autopsies take place. Shortly after that practice began, Dutch scientists discovered how to preserve organs by injecting wax into blood vessels. Whole bodies were preserved in this method, and it was the first time – in about the mid 17th century – that doctors and scientists in training could see actual samples of internal organs.

Eventually wax models were made – at first also for medical purposes. But it soon became clear that not only learned men would be interested in seeing what human bodies looked like on the inside. Many wax collections, in particular extremely artistic creations from Italy, were used for medical training and public view, but the Roca Collection is delightfully carnival.

Although most of the specimens in the collection accurately portray advanced stages of disease, some disorders are completely made up. There are also wax models of classic sideshow "freaks", such as a bearded lady and a cyclops,

that exist merely for effect. The collection also contains excellently preserved samples of actual Siamese twins in jars – in one case human babies and in another baby apes with two faces that share the same oversized head.

Certainly, the Roca Collection was meant to financially support its owner but, at the same time, its wax models, preserved specimens and drawings of other human abnormalities introduced the public to the kinds of birth defects they would otherwise never have dreamed of. It also must have been fascinating for women of the early 20th century to see wax models of pregnancy, including different ways a foetus is positioned in the body. At a time when this information would have been very difficult for the average woman to obtain, she could pay a couple of cents to see it first hand.

Guislain does well by the exhibit, splitting it between two spaces, each one accessible only through a doorway in one of its other two summer shows. Because there are about 100 squares of wax faces and torsos, splitting them up makes the show less monotonously overwhelming. They also play up the sideshow aspect of the collection with a rotating disco ball dotting the collection in lights and a scratchy version of Charles Trénet's 1938 song "Boum!" playing in the background.

After its travelling days were over, the Roca collection had a home in the Las Ramblas district of Barcelona, where people could still pay to see it, until it closed in 1935. This is the first showing of it



Wax figures and other oddities from the Roca Collection: Siamese twin apes in formaldehyde, "Anatomical Venus" and "Head with ulcers"

since then, thanks to the Coolen family of Antwerp, antique dealers and collectors of curiosa, who purchased it from a man in the funfair business – who clearly thought its life as a sideshow had come to an end. I'm not so sure he was right.

Until 7 September, Jozef Guislainstraat 43, Ghent

online

www.museumdrguislain.be



The Dr Guislain Museum is simultaneously hosting two other shows this summer. *Marc Maet: I Live in the Painting* is a selection of work by the late Flemish artist, who killed himself in 2000 at the age of 45. His well-known struggle within the local arts scene is reflected in his canvases: solidly postmodern, simple forms nonetheless incorporate classic artistic iconographies – the nose of traditional Venetian masquerade, for example, or Magritte's unmistakable pipe (photo, right). Often critical of the art scene's obsession with the young and new, Maet sought, in piece after piece, to place himself in the context of art history.

Across the hall are the altogether different paintings of Jean Rustin, whose work since the early 1970s I greatly enjoy, however macabre. Many institutions in Europe are hosting Rustin exhibitions this year

in honour of the French painter's 80th birthday. Guislain's show is, in a word, excellent: using only a few pieces, it clearly conveys the painter's shift in 1971 from abstract work with connotations of sexual violence to the haunting figurative paintings bathed in blues and greys for which he is so well known today.

The quintessential squat, bald Rustin figure, such as in "Près du comptoir électrique", at far left, is generally isolated, with eyes that reflect years of solitude or utter loneliness. Guislain's show focuses on, not surprisingly, on selections that are either obviously set in mental institutions or suggest such an atmosphere. Whether they are sitting



on chairs, lying on floors or standing alone in the middle of a room, Rustin's characters have the ability to horrify – but also to elicit an intense feeling of sympathy and the need to protect the vulnerable. **LB**

A country life

Old farmhouses are turning out to be rural Flanders' best accommodations



Lisa Bradshaw

There are two Dutch words every respectable holiday-maker in Flanders should know: *citytrip*, which is self explanatory, and *platteland*, which means the countryside. If you're looking for a long weekend this summer and live in one, you will probably head to the other.

City dwellers, look no further than the farms of Flanders.

They are known by different names, sometimes *hoevehotel* or sometime *boerderij*, but they both mean "farm", and these new kinds of guesthouses for tourists are sprouting up all over the region. According to *Plattelandstoerisme*, a marketing and advice firm for rural tourism, there are approximately 250 such guesthouses in Flanders.

Some of them are working farms that decided to renovate and take in guests and some of them are old farmsteads bought up and transformed into bed & breakfasts. Either way, these are not dusty rooms for rent or a space in the barn: *hoevehotels* are meticulously renovated, make excellent use of the original spaces and offer personal, friendly accommodation. They are easily the best choice for exploring rural towns of Flanders – or for just lazing about. And there are so many of them, you're spoiled for choice.

The phenomenon of farm guest housing started about 15 years ago in Limburg when farms were facing an economic downturn, which only worsened with the mad cow scare in the late 1990s, quickly followed by the dioxin

The view from your room at the Petrus Wittebroodhoeve (above) and the room itself (right)

chicken feed scandal. Some small farmers wanted to give up completely, and many found salvation in tourism.

"If you had been here an hour ago, you could have seen a cow having a caesarean section!" exclaims Joris De Pauw the moment my guest and I arrive at the Boskapelhoeve on the easternmost edge of East Flanders. Just hearing about it seemed like quite enough "farm" for us, but soon we trundled out to the barn to visit the new baby and the mother (all sewn up and resting comfortably). There are a lot of births at the Boskapel in the spring. "Tourists often call someone on their mobile phones when a calf is born," says De Pauw.

Back inside, he offers us a glass of the port they make themselves from walnuts – "shell and all". It's delicious. Now this is more my idea of a holiday.

The Boskapel has a great history: it was built after World War One as a "model farm" by the *boerenbond*, or farm union. Equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, the idea was to show farmers how they could run their own businesses. There was a blacksmith on site and a communal baking house where villagers came to make their own bread. For a time it was self-sufficient but eventually fell out of use and was sold to the Decock family.

De Pauw married into the Boskapelhoeve and while he and his wife, Lieve Decock, tell me about the place, his father-in-law



stands outside negotiating the price of a cow. With 80 head of cattle, they still run a farm, but it's a smaller operation than it used to be. With the guestrooms doing so well, they feel a security there they were missing before. "Animals get sick, they die. They are always a big risk," says Decock.

Around their property just outside the little town of Buggenhout, the province is buying up land, including theirs, to incre-

ase the size of the forest that borders them – a popular small nature preserve and recreation area. They have also lost buyers for their cauliflower and sugar beets because companies are choosing to buy closer to their locations in Limburg and West Flanders. "The bed and breakfast is solid, tangible," says Decock. "The prices don't fluctuate."

The family started with four rooms in 2003 and have since

expanded to nine. All are located in former stables, and the family lives in a separate house. In the middle of the courtyard is a pen with chickens and rabbits, and back towards the long driveway that separates the farm from the highway are two donkeys.

In the back of one of the buildings is a large terrace, where you can catch the afternoon sun and gaze at the cows, which come in close at twilight so you can almost touch them.

Every room at the Boskapel is different but all sport modern conveniences (internet connections, televisions) encased in decor with a hint of the past. Our room had a magnificent dark wood four-poster bed and an antique secretary desk with dozens of little drawers. The room across boasted art nouveau wallpaper and 1940s style bedspreads. But best of all, it had a dreamy view into the fields.

Though all the rooms have a degree of romance, if you want the real deal, request the bridal suite. Awash in fluffy pastel blues and white, it's a space that easily lives up to its name. You have the option of eating your morning's breakfast in its sitting area.

Everyone else eats breakfast in the large dining room, which is bathed in morning light and strong coffee. Every room includes breakfast – but for the farm's sauna, you'll have to pay a little extra.

online

www.boskapelhoeve.be

At the other end of the *hoevehotel* experience is the Karrehof. Aside from a few chickens and a very friendly Labrador named Bo, there are no animals in sight. What it does have are all the original trappings from 1799 when it was built here outside the small town of Heers in the far south of Limburg province.

The clay and straw farmstead was renovated with bricks in the 1800s. Other than that, it's still the same, and owner Isabelle Vanmarsenille has made sure to keep the integrity of the original farm intact. She inherited the Karrehof from family 26 years ago. Her father wanted to "break it up and use the bricks to build houses," but Vanmarsenille wanted to live on a farm. "I am completely in the right place here," she says. "I think it's important to feel content where you live."

It took her two years to get the place, which hadn't operated as a farm since the 1960s, into shape. She started with just one guest room, but now there are 10. It's a typical example of 17th- and 18th-century farm architecture, with



Lisa Budde

the house and stables encircling a central courtyard and a wall protecting the entrance. The only way in and out is through a huge wooden door.

Vanmarsenille lives on the property – as do all *hoevehotels* owners – with her three children. Her eldest son, Frederik, does the cooking: unlike others, which usually only offer breakfast, you can enjoy three meals a day here. This is certainly handy if you don't feel like driving because the Karrehof is in the middle of rural farmland, where you won't find a cafe on the corner.

All the meals are served family style in the gorgeous dining room, with a huge picture window that overlooks the back fields stretching to the horizon. The food is simple Flemish fare, well prepared, with a diverse selection of dishes. On this chilly spring evening, guests or

dered their after-dinner drinks to be served in front of the roaring fire in the enormous brick hearth.

The newer rooms at the Karrehof, which are singles and doubles above the dining area, are not very special – they're comfortable but reminiscent of any typical hotel. For a better experience, go with a group and get one of the suites, which are all hardwood and open beams.

The Karrehof has the advantage of being located in Limburg's Haspengouw, arguably Flanders' most beautiful region, and a multitude of walks and bike trails await. And this time of year, the grounds are lively with guests on a warm summer night.

online

www.karrehof.be

The dining room and 18th-century courtyard of Limburg's beautiful Karrehof *hoevehotel* (above); a stunning four-poster inside (left) and plenty of babies in the nursery outside (below left) at the Boskapelhoeve

It's tough to choose only three *hoevehotels* to call attention to out of the many excellent options in Flanders, but the Petrus Wittebroodhoeve would make any list. In East Flanders in the area known as the Flemish Ardennes, it sits between several small villages and is the perfect balance between "working" farm and "playing" farm.

The farmhouse and stables were built in 1670 in, again, the central courtyard style. But where many *hoevehotels* concentrate the entrance and room views on this courtyard, the Petrus has a little path around the outside of the property for guests to come and go. On one side is a beautiful grassy field full of buttercups, sheep, a pair of donkeys and one little, brown pony.

This is the farm view of all farm views, and the Petrus is the kind of place that literally *forces* you to relax. There's just no fighting it. With only two rooms – one that sleeps six – large windows that look out onto the field and your own a private terrace and garden, you feel totally alone in a silence so complete you'll soon forget what the roar of traffic sounded like. Unless you want to, you will never see your hosts after they check you in. (Americans and the Dutch tend to seek them out for a chat, while the Flemish keep to themselves, I'm told).

But you will see Geertrui Van Holderbeke when she serves you a breakfast fit for a king in a common area between the two rooms. She and her husband bought the old farm 15 years ago. They had no intention of creating guesthouses but decided it was a shame to waste all that space. A voice teacher, Van Holderbeke has enough holidays that she decided she could oversee two accommodations. Five years ago, they opened to the public, and now they are booked all summer long and most school holidays, usually with return customers.

All the farm buildings' original beams have been retained in the guest rooms of the Petrus and so have some other nice touches: the black stone slabs that held the rings the cows would be chained to still stand in the smaller guest

house's kitchen, and each room has a glass-covered circular view to the ground underneath, where several water sources flow under the buildings.

The name of the farm is also a slice of history: they found several names carved into the wood of the stalls where 17th- and 18th-century farmhands used to sleep. One of them was "Petrus Wittebroodhoeve".

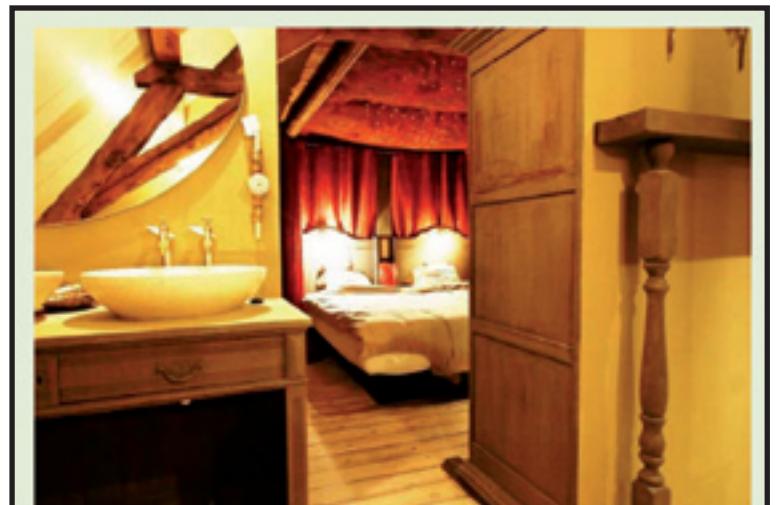
The farm is just outside the tiny town of Dikkelvenne, which, without a main road running through it, is like the town that Flanders forgot. Van Holderbeke's husband can suggest a walk that takes you through the countryside and includes the village. On the day we were there, a horse and cart was offering free rides.

By anyone's standards, this is a farm life worth living.

Hoevehotels are usually not more expensive than regular bed & breakfasts and often have weekly, as well as nightly, rates. Plattelandstoerisme lists 120 rural holiday homes in Flanders on their website and in an annual guide.

online
www.plattelandstoerisme.be

online
www.petruswittebroodhoeve.be



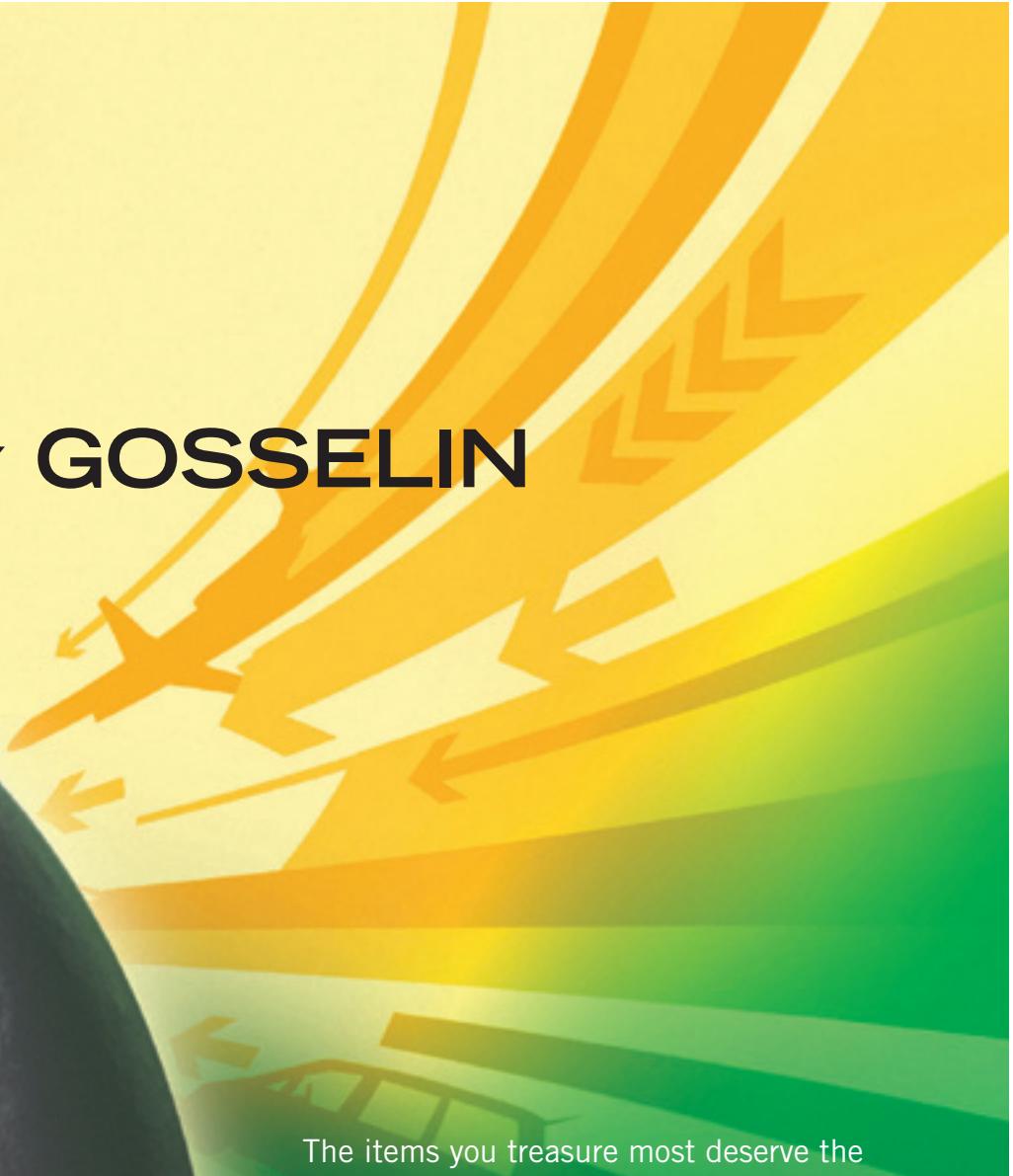
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Serenity on your doorstep

It sounds unlikely, but Hasselt is home to Europe's largest Japanese garden

Lisa Bradshaw

The koi at the Japanese Garden in Hasselt are the biggest I've ever seen. I shouldn't have been surprised – at 25,000 square metres, this model of tranquillity is the largest Japanese garden in Europe.

You notice the koi, which are actually just colourful domestic versions of the common carp, immediately because they swim right up to you as you cross the first stream of water over a little wooden bridge just at the beginning of the garden. It turns out, not surprisingly, that this is one of the two feeding places for the fish. "They're always begging," sighs the garden's manager Claire Lelièvre (who seems a little embarrassed for the koi).

Koi, which were first seen in Japan in the 18th century, are a mainstay of authentic Japanese gardens and, as Lelièvre points out, Hasselt's garden is as authentic as it gets. "There are a lot of so-called Japanese gardens where people think, 'oh we'll put some stones here and some water, and it will be a Japanese garden.' But this is the real thing, by the rules."

Those rules were set down by a 12th-century Zen monk, who transformed the Japanese cultural landscape with his imagery of stones standing in for mountains and pools of water for oceans. Every true Japanese garden contains both, as well as a lantern, usually made of stone, and an architectural structure (a tea house most often, or perhaps your own house). For centuries, only special artisans who had been individually taught the approved methods could design and build Japanese gardens, but in the modern world, there are trade schools teaching philosophies and practices.

Some of these trained landscapers travelled from Japan to Hasselt in 1992 to give the Limburg city its very own garden. Hasselt had become the sister-city of Itami, a small city in the Hyōgo jurisdiction of southern-central Japan, in 1985. Both cities decided they wanted to incorporate something of the other city's culture. That's why, in a central square of Itami, you'll find a full size Flemish carillon, complete with traditional keyboard and a set of 40 bells, and also why you find Europe's most authentic Japanese garden just outside the centre of Hasselt on the eastern edge of Kapermolenpark.

More than 30 Japanese workers collaborated with a Belgian contractor to finish the garden in just a few months. The stones were places by special Japanese stone-workers. The ceremonial house and tea house were constructed in Japan and "all they had to do was click them together," says Lelièvre. They had wanted to bring the stones



Photos by E.B. Delaunay

from Japan, too, but it proved to be too expensive. Finally, they found the appropriate stones in Austria. "They came by truck, and sometimes there were only two or three to a truck because they were so large," says Lelièvre.

The garden was finished in October of 1992 but couldn't open until the following spring because "autumn and winter are not good times to open a Japanese garden," Lelièvre says. And, besides, in the spring, the blossom is out on the garden's 250 cherry trees, perfect for the annual Cherry Blossom Day every April in the garden. *Hanami*, or cherry blossom viewing, is extremely important in Japanese culture, and ceremonies and parties are held every year under the branches of trees across Japan.

Hasselt plays host to many other important Japanese traditions. Last month was the Day of the Children, with traditional games, and on the 5 and 6 of July, you can make your wish for the coming year during the wonderful Tanabata ceremony. Based on a Chinese legend of two lovers who shirked their duties to spend more time with each other and were turned into stars by the angry gods, Tanabata involves written wishes for the coming year on strips of paper in Japanese ("good health", "true love", etc.). You choose your wish and hang it from a bamboo tree. At the end of the weekend, the tree is floated in the garden's lake, while two stars only visible on this night twinkle above.

The garden is usually not open in the evening, but there is a special night opening on 13 August, which

bathes the green trees, colourful flowers and serene waterfall in glowing lights.

Between 65,000 and 75,000 people visit the garden every year. There are different styles of Japanese gardens, and Hasselt's follows the traditions of a tea garden. These are designed to be viewed from a path on one's way to a tea house. But the gazebo and cherry trees beckon to those who want to venture out onto the grass. Visitors can see inside the teahouse, but it's only open for tea ceremonies to small groups who have arranged in advance.

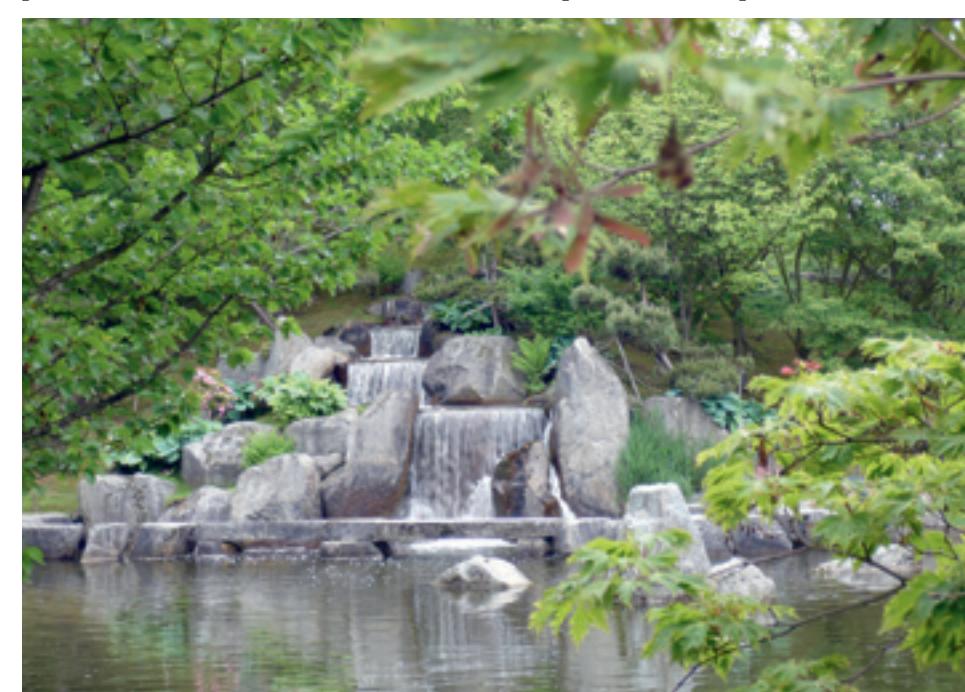
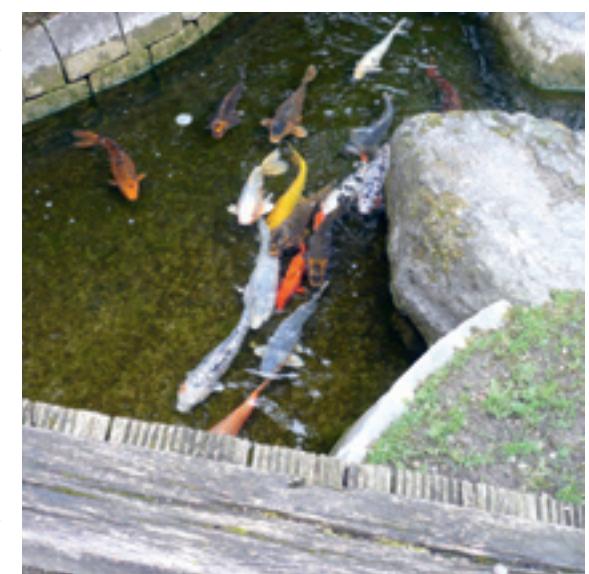
Little signs hint at what to look for in each area of the garden, such as "Architecture experience", "At one with the waterfall" or "A bridge to look at irises". One of the most peaceful sites is "Sand at the Sea",

where the koi are splashing and the garden stretches out in front of you in nearly full view. The lake is also home to the garden's centrepiece: a beautifully designed, multi-tiered waterfall that provides a constant backdrop of sound.

One of the underlying missions of a Japanese garden, explains Lelièvre, is to mimic the whole of nature in Japan. "It's a miniature Japanese landscape," she says. "In Japan, they have such small gardens because it's so crowded. But they make really

amazing things out of them. It's like walking in a painting; every step or two is another image."

Though Hasselt's garden is the biggest of its kind in Europe, it still only takes about an hour to stroll through. Of course the time spent on contemplation is entirely up to you.



Online
www.hasselt.be

Classical & new music**Brussel**

Atelier de la Dolce Vita
Liefdadigheidstraat 37a; 02.223.46.75
JUNE 28 20.00 Florilège: Portés par le souffle + Kokopelli Ensemble, conducted by Xavier Haag, with François Houtart, organ; Diane Gonnissen, soprano: Terpsichore, Houtart, Mendelssohn, Donizetti, Faure, Jongen

Bozar (Paleis voor Schone Kunsten)
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00, www.bozar.be
JUNE 27 20.00 Vlaams Radio Orkest conducted by Michel Tabachnik, with Vadim Repin, violin: Beethoven, Mussorgsky

Goethe Institute
Belliardstraat 58; 02.230.39.70
JULY 1 20.00 Viktor Ullman: Muziek aus Theresienstadt

Maison du Peuple
Sint-Gillisvoordeplein 37-39; www.muziekpubliek.be
JUNE 27 20.15 Francesco Schlimé, piano: Bach, Frescobaldi, Cage, Pärt, Schlimé
JUNE 28 20.15 Stephane Ginsburgh, piano: Prokofiev's The War Sonatas

ULB Delvauxzaal
Paul Hégerlaan 20
JUNE 25 20.00 Spirale Piano Trio

Zaal Maene
Argonnestraat 37; 02.428.45.80
JUNE 25 20.00 Works by Verdi, Rossini, Nielsen, Mussorgsky, Bizet
JUNE 27 20.00 Works by Kreiser, Schnittke, Chopin & Lecuona

Ghent
De Bijloke
Jozef Kluyvensstraat 2, 09.269.92.92
JUNE 26 20.00 Gala Queen Elizabeth Competition

Operastudio Vlaanderen
Bijlokekai 6
JUNE 26 20.00 Weill, Eisler & cabaret songs with Clarissa Worsdale (voice), Charlotte Pailhes (piano)

Opera**Brussels**

De Munt
Muntplein; 070.23.39.39

Get your tickets now for...

**Alicia Keys**

28 October, 20.30, Sportpaleis, Schijnpoortweg 119, Merksem. Tickets from 070.345.345 or www.sportpaleis.be

The only thing that can compete with Alicia Keys' vocal high notes onstage is her own piano. After an electric concert in Antwerp's Sportpaleis last spring, she's coming back in October. The young American rhythm and blues phenomenon's debut album pulled down five Grammy awards in one night in 2002 – a record for the prestigious event. Since then, the awards have come fast and furious. Her latest album *As I Am* is a more polished approach than the more wildly urban earlier stuff – whichever you prefer, you'll get a little of all at this show. And it's her fingers that set that piano afire.

Until JUNE 29 19.00 La Forza del Destino by Verdi, conducted by Kazushi Ono and Andriy Yurkevych

Les Brigitines
Korte Brigittenstraat; 02.506.43.00
JUNE 26-28 20.00 En chaussettes sur les quais by Walter Hus, staged by L'Opera des Marolles

Ghent

Vlaamse Opera
Schouwburgstraat 3; 070.22.02.02, www.vlaamseopera.be
JUNE 29-JULY 9 Götterdämmerung, the final opera of Wagner's Ring Cycle, conducted by Ivan Törzs, staged by Ivo van Hove

Jazz & blues**Brussels**

Bizon
Karperbrug 7; 02-502.46.99, www.cafebizon.com
JUNE 30 21.30 Blues Jam Session hosted by Roman

Sounds Jazz Club
Tulpenstraat 28; 02.512.92.50, www.soundsjazzclub.be
JUNE 27 22.00 Prizewinners XL-Jazz Competition: Guillaume Palomba Quartet + Bansuri Collective
JUNE 28 22.00 Wayne Shorter Tribute

Stekerlapatte
Priestersstraat 4; 02.512.86.81, www.stekerlapatte.be
JUNE 28 21.30 The Inflexibles

The Music Village
Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
Concerts at 20.30:
JUNE 25 Martin Mélotte Quartet
JUNE 26 Gypsy Night **JUNE 27** Agua de Beber, Brazilian music **JUNE 28** Bart Defoort, Ivan Paduart, Nick Thys, Lionel Beuvens Quartet

Antwerp
Cafe Mambo
Vlasmarkt 3
Wednesdays until AUG 27 21.00 Marcelo Moncada Quartet

Zuiderpershuis
Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00, www.zuiderpershuis.be
JUNE 25 20.30 Jyoti Fitzgerald meets Sandra Callas, jazz/classical

Ghent

Café De Geus van Gent
Kantienberg 9; 09.220.80.20, www.guezenhuis.be
JUNE 25 21.00 Jam session with guest performance by Rebeca Vallejo

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

Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24
JUNE 25 20.00 Monster Magnet

Biouel Boat
Havenlaan; www.losminos.be
JUNE 28 Los Niños Party- Circo Electronico: 23.00-6.00 Formica et son slip enchanté & Electric Reno. 23.00 Rick Shiver. 1.00 Headman – Manhead. 3.30 The Voracious

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

JUNE 25 20.00 John Cale Acoustimatic Band

DNA
Plattesteen 18-20; 02.512.59.92
JUNE 26 21.00 Sarcastic Irony

Fuse
Blaesstraat 208; 02.511.97.89
JUNE 26 23.00 The Ultimate: student party

JUNE 28 23.00 Richie Hawtin, Marco Carola

Recyclart
Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34
JULY 3 20.00 Comets on Fire + Creature with the Atom Brain

Stekerlapatte
Priestersstraat 4; 02.512.86.81, www.stekerlapatte.be
JUNE 27 21.30 The Flying Horseman

Antwerp
Lotto Arena
Schijnpoortweg 119; 0900.26.060
JUNE 28 20.00 Belle Perez

Petrol Club
Herbouvillekaai 21; 03.226.49.63, www.petroclub.be

JUNE 28 23.00 Mixhell + Members of Marvelas

Borgerhout
De Roma
Turnhoutsebaan 286; 03.235.04.90
JUNE 27 20.30 The Scene
JUNE 28 21.00 Borgeriro slotfeest with Douzi + afterparty with De Puma Van Vlaanderen

Hof Ter Lo
Noordersingel 30; 03.543.90.30
JUNE 25 20.00 Atmosphere + Kool Keith & Kutmaster Kurt + Brother Ali + Dzl & Meta
JUNE 26 20.00 Reagan Youth + The Adolescents + White Flag + Sunpower

Deurne
Openluchttheater Rivierenhof
Turnhoutsebaan 232; 070.222.192, www.openluchttheater.be
JUNE 28 20.30 Willy DeVille and the Mink Deville Band

JUNE 30 20.30 G Love & Special Sauce
JULY 2 20.30 Off the Record + Monza

Ghent
De Centrale
Kraankindersstraat 2; 09.265.98.28, www.decentrale.be
JUNE 26 20.00 Amenra

Sioux Café
Platteberg 8
JUNE 26 22.00 A Summer Blockbuster

The Medici Steps
Sint-Michielsplein 14
JUNE 29 21.00 Jivadev

Vooruit
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 09.267.28.28
JUNE 27 20.30 Lux Ortiz + DJ Mully + DJ Psar + DJ Knowledge + Fat Joe

Kortrijk

De Kreun
Jan Persijnstraat 6; 056.37.06.44
JUNE 28 19.30 Bandslam: Captain Compost + That's all Punx

World, folk**Brussels**

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

JUNE 26 19.00 Sufi Night: Massoumeh ensemble (Pakistan) + Akhawate el-Fane el-Assil ensemble (Morocco) + Aqnazar Alavatov (Tajikistan) + Nour Al-Din Khoarshid ensemble (Syria) + Sheikh Taha ensemble (Egypt)

Sounds Jazz Club

Tulpenstraat 28; 02.512.92.50, www.soundsjazzclub.be

JUNE 25 22.00 Caribe Con K

Theatre National

Emile Jacqmainlaan 115; 02.203.53.03
JUNE 25 20.15 Inti-Illimani: Homage to Salvador Allende

Windows

Philippe de Champagnestraat 50
JUNE 25 19.30 Sukarma

Gooik

GC De Cam
Dorpsstraat 67
JUNE 25 21.00 Ceili Moss

Dance**Antwerp**

deSingel
Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28

Until JUNE 27 20.00 Myth, choreographed by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui

Vlaamse Opera

Frankrijklei 3; 070.22.02.02
JULY 1-5 Royal Ballet of Flanders in Return of Ulysses, choreographed by Christian Spuck, music by Henry Purcell by the Royal Flemish Philharmonic, conducted by Benjamin Pope

Ghent

Zaal Cocteau
Jan Palfijnstraat 17
Until JUNE 29 20.30 Salsa Fever Party: Salsa, Merengue, Bachata, Zouk and more

Theatre

Brussels
Kaaitheater
Sainctelettesquare 20; 02.201.59.59, www.kaaitheater.be
JUNE 25 20.30 Tristero presents Living (without dialogue)

Kaaitheaterstudio's
Onze-Lieve-Vrouw van Vaakstraat 81; 02.201.59.59, www.kaaitheater.be

Until JUNE 26 20.30 We hebben een/ het boek (niet) gelezen (We did (not) read a/the book), based on Thomas Mann's The Magic Mountain (in Dutch)

Antwerp

Stadsschouwburg
Theaterplein 1; 077.37.38.39
JUNE 27-JULY 13 Fame, dance musical (in Dutch)

Ghent

Theater Tinnenpot
Tinnenpotstraat 21
Until JUNE 28 20.00 Cabaret De Vijfde (in Dutch)

Visual arts**Brussels**

Arts en Marge
Hoogstraat 312; 02.511.04.11

Until JULY 26 Overvloed (Abundance), outsider art show with work by Carol Bailly, Anacleto Borgui and Marcel Hecquet

Atomium

Atomium Square; 02.475.47.72,

www.atomium.be

Until OCT 19 Expo 58: Between Utopia and Reality, documents, plans, objects, films, photographs and scale models of Expo 58

Until OCT 19 Lucien De Roeck's Star, design of the famous symbol of Expo 58

Until OCT 19 The Pavilion of Temporary Happiness, built from 33,000 drink crates to house screenings and exhibitions about World Fairs (near the Atomium on Louis Steensplein)

Belgian Comic Strip Centre
Zandstraat 20; 02.219.19.80, www.stripmuseum.be

Until NOV 16 Smurf for All, All for Smurf, original drawings and documents celebrating the famous characters created 50 years ago by Belgian comic strip artist Pierre Culliford, known as Peyo

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

Until AUG 24 Architecture in the Pictures/Flanders Architectural Yearbook, photographs of 37 projects offering an overview of architectural developments in Flanders in 2006 and 2007

Until SEP 14 It's not only Rock 'n' Roll, Baby!, art works by musicians, including Alan Vega, Brian Eno, Laurie Anderson, Patti Smith, Pete Doherty and Yoko Ono, among others
Until SEP 21 Sioux in Paradise, sculptures, installations, video, models and drawings by Johan Muyle

CIVA
Kluisstraat 55; 02.642.24.71, www.civa.be

Until SEP 19 Documents on the gardens designed by René Pechère and Jacques Boulanger-François for Expo 58

Costume and

ISELP
Waterloosesteenweg 31; 02.504.80.70
Until AUG 16 N'oublie pas (Do Not Forget), drawings by Virginie de Limbourg
Until AUG 16 Ceramics by Pilar Zurimendi

Le Botanique
Koningstraat 236; 02.218.37.32
Until JUNE 29 Vodoun/Vodounon: Portraits of Initiates, photographs of voodoo priests by Jean-Dominique Burton
Until JUNE 29 Jérôme Considerant, installations

Museum van Elsene
Jean Van Volsemstraat 71; 02.515.64.22
Until AUG 31 The Belle Epoque, sculpture by Alexandre Charpentier and the museum's collection of posters by Toulouse-Lautrec, among other fin-de-siècle works

René Magritte Museum
Esseghemstraat 135; 02.428.26.26
Until JUNE 30 Dreaming of a Future World, paintings and drawings by the Flemish artist Edmond van Dooren

Rodolphe Janssen Gallery
Livornostraat 35; 02.538.08.18
Until JULY 19 Famous Aliens of Filmland, American folk furniture originals by Justin Lieberman

Royal Army Museum
Jubelpark 3; 02.737.78.33
Until JUNE 29 (H)erkenning! 175 jaar Leopoldsorde en Nationale Orden, exhibition on the oldest Belgian military order
Until NOV 30 A Paintbrush in the Barrel, World War One paintings, drawings and etchings by soldiers

Royal Library
Kunstberg; 02.519.58.73
Until AUG 23 Eugène Ysaÿe, exhibition on the Belgian violinist and composer, with photographs, letters and instruments
Until AUG 24 In de ban van boeken (Under the Spell of Books), Belgian book collectors, 1750 to 1850

Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.508.32.11, www.fine-arts-museum.be
Until JULY 6 Paintings and sculpture by contemporary South Korean artist Lee Ufan
Until SEP 21 The British Royal Collection: From Bruegel to Rubens, more than 50 paintings from the Queen Elizabeth II's collection, with major works by Hans Memling, Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Peter Paul Rubens and others, shown alongside masterpieces from the museum's collection
Until SEP 21 Expo '58: Contemporary Art at the World Fair, revisiting the 1958 exhibition 50 Years of Modern Art
Until AUG 31 Plecnik Project, life and professional achievements of Slovene architect Joze Plecnik (1872-1957)

Royal Museum for Central Africa
Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11
Until AUG 31 Knock on Wood! Forest and Wood in Africa, thematic exhibition on African trees and forests and their need for sustainable management
Until OCT 19 Expo 58, films and photographs, ethnographic objects, plants, artwork and animals that were displayed in the seven pavilions dedicated to the Belgian Congo at Brussels' World's Fair in 1958

Stadhuis
Grote Markt; 02.279.43.50
Until SEP 28 Oriental Fascination, Japanese etchings from the Feliks Jasienski collection in Krakow, shown alongside works by 19th and 20th-century Belgian artists influenced by Japanese graphic art, including Fernand Khnopff, Théo Van Rysselberghe, Rik Wouters, Leon Spilliaert and Henry Van de Velde

WIELS

Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.347.30.33
Until JULY 27 Mike Kelley Educational Complex Onwards: 1995-2008, retrospective with large-scale installations, sculptures, paintings and photographs by the American artist

Antwerp

Contemporary Art Museum (MuHKA)
Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60
Until AUG 17 Die Lucky Bush, contemporary art show curated by Imogen Stidworthy, questioning the physical and social impact of language, with works by John Cage, Jimmie Durham, Gary Hill, Aglaia Konrad and Michelangelo Pistoletto, among others
Until AUG 31 Visual art and sound installations by British artist and composer Cornelius Cardew
Until SEP 9 Fantasy, intervention by Koen van den Broek

Extra City

Tulpstraat 79; 0484.42.10.70
Until JULY 27 Blow Job, site-specific installation by Berlin-based Peter Friedl

Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten (Royal Museum of Fine Arts)

Leopold De Waelplaats; 03.238.78.09
Until JUNE 29 Willem Elsschots' Kaas: een beeldroman, graphic novel adaptation by Dick Matena

Middelheim Museum

Middelheimlaan 6; 03.827.15.34
Until AUG 17 Open air installations by Leo Copers

MoMu

Nationalestraat 28; 03.470.27.70
Until AUG 17 Moi, Véronique. Branquinho TOuTe NUe, retrospective of the Belgian designer marking the 10th anniversary of her fashion label

Bruges

Arentshuis
Dijver 16
Until AUG 3 Three Bruges Artists: Legillon, Verbrugge and Ledoux, 18th and 19th-century drawings

Groeningemuseum

Dijver 12; 050.44.87.43
Until DEC 31 Leuven loans, 15th- and 16th-century paintings and woodcarvings from Leuven's Van der Kelen-Mertens museum

Ghent

Dr Guislain Museum
Jozef Guislainstraat 43; 09.216.35.95, www.museumdrguislain.be
Until SEP 7 Circus or Science: The Roca Collection, anatomical wax models from the late 19th and early 20th centuries
Until SEP 7 Jean Rustin, retrospective of work by the French painter
Until SEP 7 I live in the painting, work by the late Flemish artist Marc Maet

Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (SMAK)

Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03, www.smak.be
Until JUNE 29 Kunst Nu: Wilfredo Prieto, installation by the Cuban artist
Until JULY 6 Guillaume Bijl, retrospective of the Flemish artist
Until JULY 27 Hors de soi (Outside oneself), installations by Benoît Félix

Hasselt

Modemuseum
Gasthuisstraat 11; 011.23.96.21
Until AUG 31 Looks: Mode 1750-1958, Two-hundred years of fashion history

National Jenever Museum

Witte Nonnenstraat 19; 011.23.98.60
Until AUG 31 The Orange Bulb Alambifleurics, olfactory installation by Peter De Cupere

Z33

Zuivelmarkt (Begijnhof) 33; 011.29.59.60
Until AUG 17 Bridge, installation by Michael Cross

Mechelen

Congres en Erfgoedcentrum Lamot
Van Beethovenstraat 8-10; 015.29.49.00
Until SEP 14 Van Pijl tot paviljoen, 20 models of the pavilions at Brussels' 1958 World's Fair

Cultuurcentrum

Minderbroedersgang 5; 015.29.40.00, www.cultuurcentrummechelen.be
Until SEP 14 Happy Days, collector's items and music of the 1950s recreating the atmosphere of Brussels' 1958 World's Fair

Ostend

Modern Art Museum
Romestraat 11; 059.50.81.18
Until AUG 31 Georges Vantongerloo: Pionier van de moderne beeldhouwkunst (Pioneer of Modern Sculpture), retrospective of work by the Flemish artist (1886-1965)

Waregem

BE-PART
Westerlaan 17; 056.62.94.10
Until JUNE 29 Contemporary works by Willy De Sauter and Virginie Baily

Ypres

In Flanders Fields Museum
Grote Markt 34; 057.23.92.75
Until SEP 7 Man, Culture, War: Multicultural Aspects of the First World War, a panorama of the diverse origins of those who fought in Belgium during WWI

Festivals & special events

Belgium Roller Parade
Until SEP 29 Weekly rollerskating parades in Brussels and other towns www.belgiumrollers.com

Wilkinson American Movie Day:
Annual film weekend celebrating America's Independence Day, showing 13 American blockbusters in five cinemas across Belgium
JULY 3-4 at Kinopolis Ghent, Metropolis Antwerp, UGC de Brouckère, Imagix Mons and Kinopolis Liège www.wamd.be

Brussels

Brosella Folk & Jazz 2008: Free music festival in celebration of the 50th anniversary of Expo58, including the Flat Earth Society
JULY 12-13 at the outdoor Green Theatre, Atomium www.brosella.be

Brussels European Film Festival: Annual festival of European cinema with a special Belgian selection and free open-air screenings, plus concerts and DJ sets
JUNE 28-JULY 6 at Flagey, Heilig Kruisplein www.fffbe.be

Couleur Café 2008: Festival devoted to urban world music, including R&B, hip-hop, afro, reggae, dub, salsa, rock and dance
JUNE 27-29 at Tour & Taxis, Havenlaan 86C 02.549.60.49, www.couleurcafe.be

Hallepoort Festival: Themed activities every weekend during the month of June to celebrate the re-opening of the Hallepoort, Zuidlaan
Until JUNE 29 www.kmkg.be

Marc Reugebrink & The Sound of Music: an evening with the winner of the Gouden Uil 2008, whose book Het grote uitstel comes with a soundtrack. Luc Janssen and DJ Zaki are guest artists
JUNE 26 20.00 at Passa Porta, A Dansaertstraat 46 02.226.04.54, info@passaporta.be

Jetsummer Danceweeks: Dance workshop festival with international artists
JUNE 27-29 at De Boeretang Park, Boeretangsdreef www.graspop.be

Take note



Wilkinson American Movie Day

3 & 4 July, across Belgium, www.wamd.be

It's not as though American film is exactly hard to come by, but this annual celebration of America's Independence Day (4 July) hosted by Wilkinson razors and Kinopolis offers the opportunity to see the best of America's summer blockbusters before the rest of the country. "Best", of course, is a relative term... among the dozen films, you've got *Hancock* starring Will Smith as a down-and-out superhero; *Wanted*, the new Angelina Jolie vehicle in which she seduces (no, really?) a pathetic young man and turns him into a fearless killing machine (photo); and *Mamma Mia!*, the film version of the Broadway musical based on the music of Abba. The event also includes a concert by 1980s pop icon Kim Wilde, who is not American but does have a song called "Kids in America".

Until JULY 11 at Dans Centrum Jette, Edmond van Cauwenberghstraat 55; 02.427.36.56, www.danscentrumjette.be

Midis/Minimes 08: Festival of classical music performed in a series of weekday lunchtime concerts, exploring music rarely performed and new Belgian and international artists

JULY 1-AUG 29 12.15 at Kapel van de Miniemen, Miniemenstraat 62, and the Royal Music Conservatory, Regentschapsstraat 30 02.512.30.79, www.midis-minimes.be

Monster Jam: The world's biggest monster truck show

JUNE 29 15.00 at Koning Boudewijnstadion, Houba de Strooperlaan www.monsterjam.be

Ommegang: Historic pageant on the Grote Markt re-enacting the entry into Brussels of Charles V and his court in 1549. The extravaganza includes 1,400 people in period costume, brass bands, horses and falconry displays

JULY 1 & 3 21.00 02.512.19.61, www.ommegang.be

Rock Around the Atomium: Musical festival taking you back to the 1950s

JUNE 28 14.00 at the Atomium, Atomium Square www.ask4.be

Antwerp

Zomer van Antwerpen (Summer of Antwerp): Arts festival including avant-garde theatre, concerts in neighbourhood squares, circus performances, outdoor film screenings and a live "sunset" show every night JULY-AUG in venues and public spaces around the city 03.224.85.28, www.zomervanantwerpen.be

Dessel

Graspop Metal Meeting: Heavy metal festival featuring Judas Priest, Kiss, Iron Maiden, Whitesnake, Def Leppard, Iced Earth, In Flames, Ministry, Saxon and Immortal

JUNE 27-29 at De Boeretang Park, Boeretangsdreef www.graspop.be

Ghent

African Roots Festival: With African dance demonstrations and performances, plus DJ sets
JULY 4 & 5 at De Site, Elsstraat and Jozef II straat www.rocsa.be

Beachparty: Beach party on a "tropical island" in Ghent's historic Sint-Pietersplein with swimming pool, cocktail bar, beach, BBQ and DJs Buscemi and Peter Luts

JUNE 28 19.30 www.pesco.be

Foute Party: Q-Music hosts performances by Tavares, Gibson Brothers, Bananarama and George Baker
JUNE 27 at Flanders Expo, Maaltekouter 1 09.241.92.11, www.flandersexpo.be

Hasselt

Hasselt in Congo: Presentation by Hasselt natives who worked in the Congo between 1908 and 1960
Until JUNE 29 at Het Stadsmus, Guido Gezellesstraat 2 011.23.98.90, www.hetstadsmus.be

Ostend

Dansand: New contemporary dance festival with artists performing on the beach. Curated by Kaaiteater's Kathleen Langendonck and includes performances by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, Wim Vandekeybus, Meg Stuart, Magali Desbazeille, Charlotte Vandendyne and Thomas Hauer. Also offers a dance workshop, Bal Moderne and popular dance films.
JULY 3-6 www.vrijstaat-o.be

Werchter

Rock Werchter: Four-day rock festival
JULY 3-6 www.rockwerchter.be

Zulte

Rock Zulte: one-day rockfestival featuring Under Authority Of The Vault, Crust, 4 AM Program, The Mere Exposure, Dead Souls
JUNE 29 14.00 at Parking Sporthal Zulte, Waalstraat 118 www.rockzulte.be

INTERVIEW

Chantal Pauwels

The Royal Ballet of Flanders has reinstated its reputation as a world-class company – but at a huge cost. Chantal Pauwels is working to bring creativity and financial management into balance

Marc Maes

I'm happy to work in one of the world's most fantastic ballet companies," says Chantal Pauwels, managing director of Belgium's only classical ballet company, the Koninklijk Ballet van Vlaanderen. "The ballet has a bright future ahead of it – but this will mean hard work."

The 2008 season is closing with *The Return of Ulysses* in Antwerp next week, and William Forsythe's *Impressing the Czar* at the prestigious Lincoln Center festival in New York later next month.

The Royal Ballet of Flanders was founded in 1970 by Jeanne Brabants, and today, after Maurice Béjart dissolved Brussels' Ballet du XXe Siècle and moved to Switzerland in the late 1980s and the Ballet Royal de Wallonie turned to contemporary dance in 1991, it is the only classical ballet company still surviving in the country.

The Royal Ballet's programming contains a mix of classical works, such as *Sleeping Beauty* and *Swan Lake*, in all their bombastic glory, and slimmed-down modern interpretations, like this year's *Impressing the Czar* and the euphoric Stravinsky programme.

After joining the ballet as communication manager in January of 2007, Pauwels was appointed managing director later that year. "My first task was to improve internal communication and strengthen our relation with the city of Antwerp, the authorities and the politicians," she explains. "After the renovation of the opera house, I was happy to return there for our productions." The city of Antwerp played a crucial role in the negotiations with the opera, "leading to the interchange of

infrastructure, which will hopefully result in a win-win-situation for both companies."

The ballet is based in a modern and beautifully equipped production centre in the fashionable Eilandje district in the north of the city. The building has a full range of rehearsal rooms and stages, studios and technical facilities. While the opera was being renovated, the ballet staged productions in the Eilandje but, with a capacity of just 300, the shows weren't cost effective.

Rather than a performance space of their own, like, for instance, the Danish National Ballet, which recently relocated to a new opera house, Pauwels prefers to see the future in terms of an intelligent use of existing infrastructure. "Our natural habitats are the opera houses in Antwerp and Ghent but, and, between productions, the opera team can make use of our production centre."

But their own production centre is invaluable, she says. "It allows us to finalise a production completely before going on tour. But we also want to serve other players on the market, which means opening it up for external rehearsals, auditions and performances by ballet schools, like Studio Arabesque or the Jose Nicholas Institute. This, in turns, helps us to reach new audiences."

Having production facilities close to the Port of Antwerp and the industrial zone has turned out to be a bonus. "All of our equipment for the *Impressing the Czar* production at the Lincoln Centre in New York was packed in two containers and transported door-to-door via the Antwerp port," says Pauwels. "We may not have

John Pauwels



optimised such synergies in the past, but we must persuade both authorities and private investors that culture opens doors and that artistic companies like ours are good for promoting the region."

The company is staging a special performances this month of *The Return of Ulysses* to mark a decade of trade relations between Antwerp and BASF Ludwigshafen.

In 2006, the Royal Ballet of Flanders renewed its contract with the Flemish Region, with the provision that it would continue to stage classical ballet with a live orchestra and that it would work to reclaim its position as a major ballet company.

And that they did. The appointment of Kathryn Bennetts as artistic director in 2005 was a crucial element in the process, notes Pauwels. This season saw the company touring 10 countries, with widespread acclaim.

To attract the international talent it needs, the Royal Ballet has to make dancing with the company as attractive as possi-

ble. "Ballet dancers are cultural nomads," explains Pauwels. "We have dancers from 16 countries working with us today. Apart from the need to earn money, they want to go where dancing is exciting and challenging." Bennett's staging of *Impressing the Czar*, for which the company has exclusive worldwide rights, attracted the dancers they were looking for.

Two of the ballet's principal dancers were invited to last year's Les Etoiles de Ballet 2000 in Cannes, an exclusive performance that includes only a few dancers hand-picked by European dance critics. "That proves that we have quality artists among us," says Pauwels. Antwerp, she notes, is an extra bonus, offering city value to resident dancers. "Ballet means hard work six days out of seven, but then it's good to be in a city with fine food, fashion, culture, language courses and a friendly atmosphere."

The Royal Ballet of Flanders employs 100 people – 49 full-time dancers and three students, along with technicians, costume designers, dressers, scenery builders, catering crew, administration and maintenance. At this point, Pauwels finds herself in a difficult position. The company's finances are worrying, with a €2.3 million deficit, partly due to the renovation of the opera building. As a result, Pauwels and the board have to reorganise and restructure.

Bennetts, on the other hand, has put the ballet back on the map, both in Belgium and abroad. "Artistically speaking, there's no going back," says Pauwels. "We were on the front page of the *New York Times* twice last year. The way forward for us is to combine artistic creativity with careful financial management."

The Return of Ulysses, 1-5 July, Royal Flemish Opera, Antwerp

online

www.koninklijkballevanvlaanderen.be

THE LAST WORD

what they're saying in Flanders

Pill popping

"For every problem we want a pill; doctors prescribe without hesitation, and the industry influences everyone."

Walter Vandereycken
psychologist at Leuven University

on news that anti-depressive use has doubled in the last 10 years

Football fashion

"Footballers really don't need anything more than a glove for their feet with some studs to prevent slipping on the grass. All the rest is decoration and pure business."

Dirk Bikkembergs
Fashion designer
presenting a new line in reflective football boots in Florence

Nodding off

"During the exam I was sitting in one of the front rows. I saw the woman start to nod her head and fall asleep."

Eline Tollenaere
geography student at Ghent University
whose class will have to resist an exam after an invigilator nodded off

InBruges JeneverMuseum Spider

Safari Knokke-Heist Flageyplein

ÉcranTotal

next week in Flanders Today