

Freight fall 7

Freight traffic fell drastically this year, but the Port of Antwerp can expect a recovery next year when a more flexible sailing schedule is introduced and the Western Scheldt is finally deepened

**It's good to be queen** 9

Matthias Schoenaerts stars in the new film *My Queen Karo*, based on a Flemish director's experiences in the squats of 1970s Amsterdam. Read our interview with one of Flanders' most popular actors

**Food for the soul** 10

A Spanish expat photographs Flanders' biggest stars with their favourite foods for a new photo book that is deliciously playful and poignant



Talk the talk

ALAN HOPE

Dutch is the language of 21 million people, but its influence spreads a lot further than you might think

In Brussels, the problem for tourists – and for those dealing with tourists – is always: which language to speak? It's a perennial shock to those who come here with their degrees in French to find that every shop assistant, it seems, is fluent in at least two languages, and competent in two more.

Ironically, Dutch is not necessarily one of those languages. As an English speaker in Brussels, for instance, there's a good chance you'll get a better reception than a Dutch speaker gets, even though it is their country and their capital, too.

The Huis van het Nederlands in central Brussels, set up only

three years ago, has already taken giant steps toward changing that situation, with, for example, Dutch courses for the sales staff in the shops lining Nieuwstraat – which everyone else (including Dutch speakers) calls Rue Neuve.

The latest initiative is a trilingual (Dutch, French and English) phrasebook for workers in the cultural sector, which sets out, in a simple format, how to say things like "The performance starts at eight o'clock" or "I'm sorry but she's in a meeting right now".

Some 40% of visitors to cultural events are of foreign origin, though that figure also includes



French and Dutch people who already speak one of the national languages. More surprising is the fact that eight out of 10 foreign visitors to the capital will take in at least one museum during their stay here.

There are more than 100 museums in the Brussels region, but the guide is not for museums alone. It's intended for those in

every aspect of cultural work, as well as staff in shops, restaurants, hotels and box offices. "All of those functions also form part of the cultural experience," says Gunther Van Neste, director of Huis van het Nederlands.

"English was included at the express request of the sector," explains Van Neste. "The Brit-

ish Council helped with the translations." And indeed, the English in the dictionary is faultless, with the exception of a few Americanisms, like "Sure you can" and "in the neighbourhood".

► *continued on page 5*

Four walk free on murder charges despite "confession"

Four men accused of the murder of a farmer 12 years ago were last week freed by a court in Ghent after the jury decided a confession made eight years ago was false.

The murder took place in Maldegem near the Dutch border in January, 1998, when Roger Van Rie was gunned down at the door of his house. It soon emerged that the crime was carried out on the orders of local contractor Ivan Lippeens, who had previously had a relationship with Van Rie's wife. The actual killers were determined to be three local drunks, who had made comments about the murder in a local bar while under the influence.

One of the men, Carlos Ardeel, admitted the killing, and only he passed a polygraph test given in 2001 to all of the accused, the first time the controversial technology had been used in Belgium.

But it later emerged that Ardeel suffers from Korsakoff's psychosis, a condition common among chronic alcoholics, which is characterised by "memory holes" and fabrication – making up stories to cover up the memory holes. He is now detained in a psychiatric institution. Apart from the drunken boasts and Ardeel's confession, there was no evidence against the men. However, the case file consisted of

40,000 pages of statements and other documents.

The lawyers for the defence initially pleaded for a mistrial on the grounds that a reasonable delay in bringing the case to court had long been exceeded. Even in Belgian terms, 12 years is a long time, as could be seen in the attempts by witnesses to recall what had happened all that time ago. In its verdict, the jury stated: "Truth and untruth are no longer possible to distinguish in this case, and, above all, there is a lack of material evidence." ♦

Rent and power costs bring headaches to poor

80,000 in trouble with electricity bills alone

ALAN HOPE

An increasing number of Flemish families are having trouble paying essential bills like rent and electricity, according to figures produced for the first time by the Flemish Union of Cities and Municipalities (VVSG). At the end of 2008, 65,855 households applied for aid from the local social help agencies (OCMW) after being unable to pay their power bills. By the end of September this year, the figure had risen to 74,737 and was expected to exceed 80,000 by the end of 2009.

Families in difficulties with commercial power utilities can turn to the distribution network

manager for social provision or to install pre-paid metres. The number of those metres in service rose from about 35,800 last year to more than 38,200 now. Last year, 70,000 people appeared in front of the Local Advice Committee for a decision on whether to cut off their power supply, and 60,000 applied for help in arranging debt payment schedules.

A similar trend is seen in rent arrears, the VVSG found, though exact figures from earlier periods are not available: in the past year, more than 10,000 families have been threatened with eviction for non-payment of rent.

► *continued on page 3*



CONTENTS

News	2 - 3
• News in brief	
• Fifth Column: the doctrine of state reform	
Feature	5
• The influence of Dutch on English	
Focus	6
• The coast had a super summer, according to the tourist trade	
Business	7
• Studio 100 voted Enterprise of the Year	
• State milked money from air traffic control, say airlines	
Arts	8-10
• Controversial photo exhibition raises issues and eyebrows	
• Movies: Matthias Schoenaerts and <i>My Queen Karo</i>	
• Delicious photos: a new book pairs celebrities with food	
Living	11
• Zuiddag: students work a day in Africa	
• Fashionista: revitalising Antwerp	
Agenda	13-15
• <i>Portraits</i> by Stephan Vanfleteren in Ghent	
• Three pages of arts and events	
Back page	16
• Face of Flanders: Jef Nys	
• Talking Dutch: our language expert looks at counting sheep	
• Bite: sushi, sushi, everywhere	
• The Last Word: what they're saying in Flanders	



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Derek Blyth

News in brief

If you want to **sell records to gays and lesbians**, make sure your song has a good dose of kitsch and camp, according to research carried out by communications masters' student Katrien Vangaelen at the Catholic University of Leuven. Gays like not only work by fellow gays such as Paul De Leeuw and Yasmine, Vangaelen found, but also work with a certain "Eurovision aspect," as well as songs which address their own experiences.

The defence ministry has intervened to stop the **construction of a wind energy park** involving four wind turbines in East Flanders, claiming the turbines would disturb the radar installation at Semmerzake, south of Ghent. The park would have provided enough green energy for 3,000 households. The military operates a 15km exclusion zone around radar installations, with the exception of three windmills in Melle, which were built before the measure came into force.

The government has ordered **containers to house up to 700 asylum-seekers**, after it was announced that Fedasil, the asylum agency, can no longer find accommodation for applicants. The "containers" are in fact prefabricated housing modules (which bear a passing resemblance to the cargo containers in which many asylum seekers found their way to Belgium in the first place). But the modules may not be available until July next year, while a 125-place asylum centre in Ekeren has to close by January.

The number of passengers **passing through Brussels Airport** fell by 9.6% in the first nine months of the year, representing 1.4 million fewer people than the same period in 2008. European flights lost the most traffic. Cargo flight tonnage, meanwhile, fell by 27.7% in September alone, and by 35.9% for the year to September.

A 54-year-old **teacher who attacked a boy** during a brick-laying class and pushed his head into a bucket of mortar walked out of court in Leuven last week with no sentence. According to the judge presiding, the media attention was punishment enough. But the teacher, Carl Arnauts, will have

Zoo lions to move to new home, with access for neighbours



© Shutterstock

Construction work started last week on a new enclosure for the lions at Antwerp Zoo. The new home, to be completed in 2011, will include an artificial canyon landscape, a watercourse (to separate lions from the public) and furry little creatures running around hoping not to be eaten.

The lions, currently housed in an area of about 100 square metres, will move to the area where donkeys and yaks currently reside. That will give them an area of 1,200 square metres, but they will have to share. "The meerkats (*Suricata suricatta*) and Yellow mongooses (*Cynictis penicillata*) will take over an area right beside the lions," said Sander Hofman, the zoo's curator of mammals. "If they want to, they can also enter part of the lions' territory."

On the savannah, it seems, such peaceful co-existence is an everyday thing. A meerkat (*pictured*) or a mongoose is a meagre morsel for a large cat. That's not to say that it never happens: they do sometimes fall prey to a cat that may have just enough of an appetite. "No zoo has yet been successful in bringing these species into a single living space in a balanced way," a statement declared.

For that reason, the lions' grounds will be supplied with about 60 bolt-holes for the mongooses and meerkats (in fact a species of mongoose) to use as an escape.

The benefit to the lions, other than the occasional snack, is a return to their natural behaviour, Hofman said. In the wild, a lion is constantly alert, but zoo lions tend to switch off and become inattentive and lethargic. "We try to stimulate their natural behaviour as much as possible, for example, by delivering their food to different places," says Hofman.

Also in 2011, the zoo will take part in the first European breeding programme for African lions.

→ www.zooantwerpen.be

to pay damages to the boy, now aged 15, and his father: a total of €1,000 in all. He will also have to stay out of trouble for five years and undergo psychological counselling.

"I'd be amazed if the balls had been perfectly round," he said. "If you work with the primitive materials they used in 1958, it's virtually impossible they could be round."

The **spheres of the Atomium are not round**, according to an engineer writing for *Eos* magazine, and confirmed last week by the outgoing chairman of the Atomium non-profit organisation. According to engineer Samuel Verbiese, at least one of the balls has become distorted, a fact that is visible to the naked eye from the restaurant. But the renovation of the monument that took place in 2006 at a cost of €27m was not shoddy work, according to ex-chairman Bruno De Lille.

De Standaard newspaper last week launched an **iPhone application** for its popular mobile online site. The site is now the most visited mobile site in Belgium, offering traffic information, a TV guide, weather and news. The application, or "app" as they are known among the netteratti, will cost €3.99 and give one year's full access.

7,000

investigations opened by the Foreigners' Office so far this year into suspected marriages of convenience, staged to obtain residency for one of the partners. The figure is expected to go up to 10,500 by the end of the year



Safety net for poor has "too many holes"

→ *continued from page 1*

The economic crisis is partly to blame, but the trend goes back further. Benefits (and some wages) in Belgium lie below the poverty line, the organisation claims, and need to be increased. "It seems to me unworthy of a society to pay benefits to people that are too low for them to pay their basic costs," said VVSG's Nathalie Debast.

The private housing market is the only recourse for many families who are unable to obtain social housing due to shortages, but it's becoming too expensive for them to afford. At the same time, energy prices are constantly rising. OCMWs, meanwhile, need not only more resources but also the ability to reach families who are having difficulties but are not aware of the steps they can take to find relief.

"More proactive work needs to be done," Debast said. The organisation called, among other measures, for the automatic granting of bene-

fits to those who are eligible, without claimants needing to apply. It also urged the Flemish government to give more support to OCMWs to make their services more accessible.

- Meanwhile, families in Flanders who are having financial problems are either postponing important medical treatments or going into debt to pay for them, according to research carried out by the Christian Mutual Society (CM).

People with chronic medical conditions, which are often at the root of financial problems, routinely decline to buy new glasses or visit the dentist. However, in tougher times, they may also put off a visit to the doctor or a specialist, because they know they will not be able to afford medicines. "This research shows that there are too many holes in the safety net," said CM chair Marc Justaert. ♦

→ www.vvsg.be



More people are becoming homeless for non-payment of rent

FIFTH COLUMN

ANJA OTTE

The doctrine

Political scientists talk about politicians all the time, but it rarely works the other way around. There is one political scientist, though, that has Flemish politicians talking: Bart Maddens, the inventor of the so-called Maddens Doctrine, recently published in his book *Omfloerst separatism? (Veiled Separatism?)*

This "doctrine" is a strategy to achieve the big state reform that Flanders has been requesting for ages. The problem is that the French speakers have decided that there is nothing they want from it, which makes it hard bargaining. Maddens' solution? Flanders should stop begging for something it cannot get. Instead, it should let things rot until the francophones realise that something must change. The way to do this, he argues, is for Flanders to stop supporting the federal level and just get on with its own business – for instance, by starting its own social security.

The Maddens Doctrine, theoretical though it may be, has some influence on real-life politics. Whereas the previous Flemish government started out demanding state reform within a strict timetable – stating its demands in quite a muscular manner – the present government agreement has a completely different tone. Sure, Flanders still wants its reform, but there is no need for strong language or a strict timetable. Since all else has failed, this Flemish government prefers to sit and wait. The agreement also says that Flanders will "exploit its competences to the maximum" – a phrase also reminiscent of the Maddens Doctrine.

Still, few parties believe in the new style of confrontation. Somehow, reality is just too complicated for the Maddens doctrine to find much support. The Christian Democrat (CD&V) party president Marianne Thyssen, for example, has explicitly rejected it. How could her party let the federal level "rot" when this includes a CD&V prime minister? Open VLD, too, has no reason to adhere to the doctrine, as it also sits in the federal government. SPA, although an opposition party in the federal government, has also warned about damaging the federal level since it pays out pensions.

So maybe the francophones have little to fear from the Maddens Doctrine. Then again, budget minister Guy Vanhengel (Open VLD) has recently stated that the federal level is at this point "bankrupt". Is this what Maddens was hoping for? It is worrying anyway – and not just for the French speakers of this country.

THE WEEK IN FIGURES

3,600

theme park visitors voted the Anubis ride at Plopsaland in De Panne the best new attraction of the year in the Benelux. Plopsaland is owned by Studio 100 (see story on page 7)



5,051

service cheques used for day-care in the year to end August, a tiny fraction (2.25%) of the 225,000 available. Most parents used the cheques to extend day-care beyond normal hours

€6,349

paid by a 33-year-old man from Ukkel found guilty of fare-dodging on at least eight occasions. The man was caught four times in one day. The case came to court when he refused to pay the fixed penalties

200-300

nominations to senior posts in the finance ministry made last week. The number is in fact a tiny proportion (0.1%) of the 30,000 civil servants employed by the ministry

48,000

unemployed people received a double benefits payment last week after a mistake in the system used by the post office. The money will be reclaimed from recipients

1,000

Belgians affected by credit card fraudsters who copied details of cards used in Spain. Atos Worldline, the company which operates the credit card system, blocked 10,000 cards as a precaution

7/10

young people are in favour of a complete smoking ban in cafés, according to a poll carried out by the Anti-Cancer Foundation

150-200

Belgian victims of super-fraudster Bernie Madoff, who is serving a 150-year sentence in the US for defrauding clients of at least €44bn. The Belgian victims lost an estimated €30-50m

88%

of children between 6 and 12 have a mobile phone, and half of those never leave the house without it, according to a poll carried out by TV channel Nickelodeon



Frank Vandenbroucke, the former cycling champion who died on 12 October in suspicious circumstances in a hotel in Senegal (see *Flanders Today*, last week), was buried at the weekend in his home town of Ploegsteert. The funeral had been announced by the family as a private affair, but a large crowd turned up on the day and was able to watch proceedings on a giant screen outside

the church. The coffin was brought to the church from a nearby café, which is run by VDB's mother Chantal. Numerous well-known faces from the world of cycling were present for the ceremony. The photo shows VDB's eldest daughter, Cameron, who spoke during the service. His other daughter, Margaux, as well as his ex-wife Sarah Pinacci, were not present. ♦

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Talk the talk

How Dutch crossed the Atlantic

→ continued from page 1

Yankee Doodle

It's easy, as an English speaker, to see the influence English has had on Dutch. Less obvious, perhaps, is the influence Dutch has had on English, which is the subject of a new book by Amsterdam linguist Nicoline van der Sijs. In her new book *Cookies, Coleslaw and Stoops*, she examines the way 20 million or so Dutch speakers changed the language of the 300 million or so who now speak English on the North American continent.

The idea is simple: Dutch colonists who went to the New World in the 16th century and onwards gave a great many of their own words to the new variant of English that was developing there.

If I had a quibble with the book, it would be that Dutch has been a major influence on English in general, and on Scots English in particular, long before the New World was discovered. With both English and Dutch being Germanic languages, it doesn't take a book to tell us that Scots words like *kirk*, *dominie* and *foreby* are all from the Dutch.

More surprising are the number of words Van der Sijs comes up with as loan-words from Dutch to English. Some of her examples, while academically irreproachable, are obscure. No English speaker nowadays uses words like *gat* (a narrow passage), *astamagootis* (a restless person) or *dorp* (a village).

Having said that, it's a delight to explore such ideas, if you're at all interested in words and language. While this book is filled with jewels – like the reason why the low-life area of town is called the Bowery – it's enough for some of us that a word like *astamagootis* even exists, even if it isn't any longer a part of spoken English.

How Dutch is it?

Until now, if you went by what the dictionaries said, you'd be led to believe that there is such a thing as "correct" Dutch, and something called "Belgian-Dutch". Thanks to the work of two university professors, however, and the cooperation of one of the main publishers of dictionaries, that's about to change.

The two academics, Professor Willy Smedts of the linguistics department of the Catholic University of Leuven, and Professor Willy Martin of the Free University of Amsterdam, have drawn up a database of about 4,000 words and expressions which are typically

Belgian-Dutch. At the same time, the dictionary publisher Prisma is to mark words with a particularly Dutch meaning as Dutch-Dutch variants, rather than suggesting, as has been the case until now, that they were "standard".

This represents a major step in bringing Belgian-Dutch out of the ghetto of dialect and allowing it to stand alongside what has always been called Standard Dutch.

The project started when the Taalunie, a body that includes Belgian and Dutch members, set up a committee to look into the possibility of publishing commercially unattractive dictionaries (which offered less profit), between Dutch and languages like Romanian, Portuguese or Arabic.

The first step was to create a database of Dutch words from which the translations would be made. Publishing companies like Van Dale have such a database, but they charge a fee every time it's used. So the decision was taken to set up a new database.

Along the way, Professor Smedts told *Flanders Today*, they took the decision not only to include common Belgian-Dutch words, but also to identify those which are particularly Dutch-Dutch.

There are three divisions, according to Smedts. Firstly, there are words that differ for cultural reasons, such as the lowest level of the judicial system, equivalent to the Justice of the Peace. In Belgium, it's called *vredegerecht*, while in the Netherlands it's known as *kantongerecht*. The body which oversees the government budget here is called the *rekenhof*, and in the Netherlands the *rekenkamer*, and local council aldermen here are *schepenen*, while over the border they're *wethouders*.

None of the terms is wrong, or substandard, or indeed correct: they are speaking of different things in different countries. But still a Dutchman would have no idea, faced with a *schepen*, what you were talking about.

The second division concerns words like *waterzooi*, for which there is no Dutch equivalent, or the Dutch Christmas pastry known as *kerststollen*, which does not exist in Flanders. There, too, the words are speaking of things that do not exist outside of the region.

The third division is the most contentious and concerns words where an equivalent exists on the other side of the border. The database constructed by Professor Smedts, called the Belgian-Dutch Reference Database



Not communicating: the Tower of Babel, seen here in a painting by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, fell down because the builders spoke too many different languages

(RBBN), consists of about 4,000 words which, when used by themselves or in certain constructions, form particularly Belgian-Dutch expressions that are not used by other Dutch speakers.

These include obvious regional variants such as *plezant* (where the Dutch would say *leuk*), *schoon* (the Dutch say *mooi*) and *proper* (the Dutch say *schoon*). Some examples are surprising for those who have lived here for some time. Imagine finding out that standard Dutch does not recognise words like *koersfiets* (racing bike), *microgolf* (microwave), *dikke nek* (pompous twit) or *solden* (sales).

"We took a descriptivist approach. It's no longer a matter of saying Dutch-Dutch is correct, and that Belgians are speaking inferior Dutch," Smedts says. The development represents a move towards the recognition of pluricentrism – variants of the same language, as has long been the case in English, with Australian English, American English, and so on.

"There are only really, with the Dutch and the Flemish and Suriname, about 21 million Dutch speakers in the world. We have no interest in seeing a split, or even in seeing the variants moving farther apart," Smedts concluded. ♦

→ www.huisnederlandbrussel.be

Cookies, Coleslaw and Stoops: The Influence of Dutch on the North American Languages is published by Amsterdam University Press

→ www.kaup.nl

The RBBN can be consulted (free registration) at www.inl.nl, go to Products and Lexica

Loan-words from Dutch to English



bed-pan
cupidor (a spittoon)

boor (from *boer*, a farmer)

caboose

canal



stoop (the Dutch now prefer the French *trottoir* to their own word *stoep*)

bakery

brewery

pants



pinkie (the littlest finger, as well as a small sailing vessel)

Santa Claus

sleigh

turkey

Coasting along

Forget the recession. The coast had a great summer

MARTIN BANKS

The dark nights may be setting in and the memories starting to fade, but it is generally agreed that this summer has been one of the best ever for businesses on the Flemish coast.

In truth, many businesses were bracing themselves for the opposite, fearing that trade would plummet in the wake of the economic downturn. But the verdict of hotelier Marc Decoussemaeker-Dhooge sums up the mood: "It's been an absolutely great summer."

One of the reasons, of course, was the soaring temperature which meant that record numbers of people, including Dutch and Germans, flocked to the coast during July, August and well into September.

That spelt good news for people like Marc who, with his wife Anne-Marie and son Thierry, runs a complex of 54 self-catering bungalows and studios amid 25,000 square metres of private dunes at Sint-Idesbald.

"We enjoyed days of excellent weather," says Marc. "A couple of weeks ago I was on a Mediterranean cruise. It was raining and Thierry told me to get back

to the Belgian coast where the weather was glorious!"

Business has boomed, he says, partly as a side-effect of the recession. "I think it's true to say that more Belgians have been staying at home this year instead of taking foreign holidays and that's obviously been good for us," says Marc. "I feared the economic crisis would really hurt, but the weather saved us. We've been getting visitors from everywhere, with the exception of the Brits who still pass us by on the way to the south of France."

It's been a good summer, too, for local attractions like the ever-popular Plopsaland at De Panne, whose press officer Filip Loos says, "We have done very, very well this season. For the first time, we had more than one million visitors, including 500,000 in July and August."

The company runs similar parks at Hasselt and in the Ardennes, which have had 300,000 and 400,000 visitors respectively. Other local places of interest, such as the Abbey Museum Ten Duinen in Koksijde and the National Fisheries Museum in Oostduinkerke, have enjoyed



similar success.

The Fishery Museum boasts some splendid displays that tell the fascinating story of fishing on the Flemish coast. Ann Legein, from the museum, said that while up-to-date data is currently unavailable, the museum has seen no shortage of visitors. "You might have thought we would have suffered with all the good weather, but that's not been the case at all," she said.

Danny Oislagers, who runs the Seastar boat tour company at Nieuwpoort, says it's been one of the best summers he can remember. "We have carried 120,000 passengers so far."

Heidi Vandenbussche, a press officer with the Flemish tourist office, estimates that upwards of 600,000 people were visiting the coast on any given day during

the summer. Data is still being compiled, but she is confident that this year will top the 2008 figures, when some 16.4m tourists visited the coast as day trippers and 5.1m stayed overnight. Her comments are echoed by Dirk Marteel, communications officer at Westtoer, who says, "The weather has an important impact on the success of the Belgian coast as a holiday destination. But it also has other important treasures which inspire tourists, such as its gastronomy, culture and recreation. There is also an increase in impulse holidays and health and well-being visits. I think most are pleasantly surprised by how good it's been. Now, fingers crossed for a repeat in 2010." ♦

→ www.dekust.org

* Most frequent visitors to the coast are Belgians, followed by Dutch, Germans, French and British.

* About 18.3 m day visitors have visited the coast this year, 6m of them last summer.

* More people are taking short breaks, and the number of longer, overnight stays has fallen.

* The average time spent in hotels, B&Bs and holiday houses in July and August was 7.5 nights.

* People spend an average of 2.6 nights in hotels and 11.6 nights in holiday homes.

* Average net hotel occupancy rates in July were 73%, rising to 82% in August.

* In 2008, 2.8 million people spent a total of 17.2m overnight stays in second homes at the coast.

* At peak times, there were 600,000 tourists, excluding local residents, at the coast this summer, including 250,000 day visitors.

* About 32% of tourists' expenditure at the coast is spent in the two summer months.



Londoners will soon be able to sample the finest food that Flanders can offer in a major presentation organised at Harrods.

"We are not resting on our laurels," says Dirk Marteel, communications officer at Westtoer. "We have entered into a partnership with Harrods and Eurostar in an effort to promote the coast. The central theme is gastronomy, with chefs from the Flemish coast organising demonstrations of coastal products."

The food festival, which runs from 25 November to 8 December, is being organised by the Flanders-Brussels tourist office in London to highlight the variety of regional specialities, Michelin-starred restaurants and gastronomic delights that Flanders – in particular the coast – has to offer.

Flanders will have a strong presence in the store's famous Food Hall. The region will also have displays in the chocolate bar and

in some of the restaurants, like the Sea Grill, Rôtisserie and Georgian Restaurant.

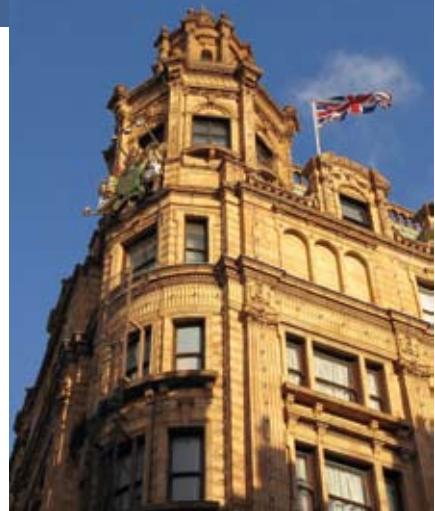
Some of the best Flemish chefs will be working in Harrods to create special menus, and various Flemish products will be on sale – including charcuterie, seafood, cheese, beer, chocolate, biscuits and jenever. The branding of Flanders also extends to a window display.

Dawn Page, Director of Tourism Flanders-Brussels UK, said: "We are delighted to be hosting this event at Harrods and to have the opportunity to showcase just how well you can eat in Flanders."

She added: "Flemish food is a surprise to the British, who think they need to go to France or Italy to eat well. We are delighted to be able to put the record straight."

→ www.visitflanders.com

Harrods ahoy



Going beyond the dream

Studio 100 named Enterprise of the Year

ALAN HOPE

Studio 100, a Flemish TV production house that has grown in recent times to an international multimedia provider, was last week named Enterprise of the Year in a competition organised by Ernst & Young, BNP Paribas Fortis and *De Tijd* newspaper. Studio 100's CEOs Gert Verhulst and Hans Bourlon, who share the top job, were earlier this year named Managers of the Year by the magazine *Trends*.

Studio 100 was set up in 1996 by Verhulst and Bourlon, together with Danny Verbiest, who at the time was the voice of Samson the dog in the TV series *Samson & Gert*. Verbiest left the company in 2005, and his place was taken by venture capitalists Fortis Private Equity.

In the beginning, *Samson & Gert* was the company's only production, but they added *Kabouter Plop*, *Mega Mindy* and a growing range of other children's shows. In 2002, the com-

pany took over the management of girl-group K3. More recently, they produced a film of *Mega Mindy* and the smash-hit musical *Daens*.

The company has also expanded its horizons beyond the Dutch-speaking world, with a takeover of EM Entertainment in Germany last year and their archive of programmes like *Lassie* and the classic *Pippi Longstocking*. Studio 100 has also signed cooperation agreements with the BBC for two animation series, while the rights to air *Bumba*, the series for toddlers, has been sold to Al Jazeera. The company is now active in virtually all media markets, as well as licensing a massive amount of merchandising of its top properties and running theme parks based around *Kabouter Plop*. Last year's sales were €107 million, with forecasts of €125m for this year.

"We're a people business. We don't deal in cutting-edge technology,"



© Boga

Prince Filip (left) presents the Enterprise award to Gert Verhulst (middle) and Hans Bourlon

said Bourlon. "It's all about people making fantastic things from a blank sheet of paper. We're the perfect example of the creative economy, and we should be proud that we've been able to overcome language barriers with our creativity."

Verhulst added: "Twelve years ago we had our first staff meeting with 10 people in an old building that was

much too big for us" said Verhulst. "Hans took a marker pen and wrote our main goals on a wall that was due to come down. An amazing number of those plans have come true. But there was nothing about wide-reaching international plans on that wall. That's what we're busy making happen today. Studio 100 is going beyond even its original dreams." ♦

Antwerp freight down, with recovery far off

Freight traffic in the port of Antwerp fell by 19% during the first nine months of the year, and the port's director-general, Eddy Bruyninckx, sees no recovery in the near future, he said last week.

The fall in freight is in line with the results seen at the end of the first half, a fall of 20%, suggesting things may not be getting better, but they're not getting worse. Container traffic fell by "only" 17.4%, while dry bulk freight was down 16%.

On the other hand, automobile traffic was down 24.5%, conventional freight down 38%, and, worst of all, iron ore fell by 64%, as a result of the closure of the smelting ovens of ArcelorMittal in Liège. Steel fell 44.5%, and wood pulp and paper by 52%.

"Volumes seem to have stabilised in the past few months," explains Bruyninckx. "In the third quarter, the amount of shipping freight has

remained the same, and we suspect that this trend will continue for the remainder of the year. At the moment there are not enough signs for an economic revival in the last quarter of 2009."

But there is good news on the horizon: "Regular calls by the very largest container carriers have been approved by the Permanent Commission for Supervision of Scheldt Navigation," he said. "The test calls by these vessels have been judged successful, and so we can now introduce a more flexible schedule for sailing up and down river, to and from Antwerp."

The calls by these ultra-large container carriers will be further facilitated by the deepening of the Western Scheldt: the necessary dredging work has finally been approved. "So Antwerp will be ready when the world economy picks up once more." ♦

→ www.portofantwerp.com

Airlines file complaint against government

The Association of European Airlines (AEA) has lodged a complaint against the Belgian government with the EU authorities. The AEA claims that the government broke EU laws by withdrawing sums of money from Belgocontrol, the agency that assures the safety of traffic in Belgian airspace.

The complaint concerns the sale of a building owned by Belgocontrol near the North Station in Brussels in 2007 – after Belgocontrol had been made into an autonomous government agency with its own finances. Belgocontrol made €40 million from the sale, but €20m had to be handed over to the state, with a bill for another €10m still outstanding.

This is in breach of EU rules, which state that the money

raised has to remain within Belgocontrol, claimed Vincent De Vroey of the AEA. As a result of the government's taking the lion's share of the money raised, AEA members are being forced to pay increased tariffs to Belgocontrol, which is forced to ask more to make up the loss.

Federal mobility minister Etienne Schoupe, meanwhile, defended the government's right to the money, as the building was government property. He blamed the rising tariffs for airlines on the 10% pay increase given to Belgocontrol staff last year. Last month, staff at Belgocontrol at Zaventem stopped work for several hours in protest at increased pressure of work. ♦

→ wwwaea.be

Hacker holds Belgacom for ransom

A hacker who claimed to have broken security on internet modems last week threatened to reveal the account information of 285,000 Belgacom clients. The hacker posted the logins and passwords for 30 accounts on an online forum for Skynet users to show he had the information.

Belgacom, which owns Skynet, has until 30 November to increase its download limits, the hacker's message said, or the other account details will

be made public. Until that date, 1,000 clients will have their details revealed.

A spokesman for Belgacom initially said there was no indication that the hacker is in possession of the information he claims to have. However, it later became clear that the 30 already posted are all genuine.

The hacker claims to be an American and says he is disgusted with Belgacom's limit of 25 gigabytes of download capacity each month for normal inter-

net clients. Download limits are only making their first appearance in the US, but here they have historically been much lower than they are now. Belgacom is not alone: Telenet, the other major ISP, allows 20 gigabytes. However, that is enough for all but the most avid downloader of videos or films: most people come nowhere close to using their limits in a month. Belgacom explained that its extra download packets, where users pay €5 for an additional

5Gb of capacity, sell only a few thousand a year.

The case is now being investigated by the federal police's computer crime unit. Belgacom stressed that logins and passwords can be changed with little difficulty and that anyone who comes by that information illicitly will not be able to obtain, for example, access to online bank accounts or credit card details. ♦

THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Advertising • Happiness

Brussels-based Happiness has been named the world's third best creative advertising bureau by the Cannes Report, the authority on creative advertising. Three other Flemish agencies made it to the top 15 – Mortierbrigade, Boondoggle and Famous.

Autos • Ford

Ford Genk, the Limburg-based assembling affiliate of the US car company, has been earmarked to produce three new models after 2012. The plan involves the Mondeo and two other vehicles, as yet unnamed. The plant has three cars in production today – the S-Max, the Galaxy and the current Mondeo model.

Biotech • Movetis

Movetis, a biotechnology company affiliated to Janssen Pharmaceutica and Johnson and Johnson of the US, will be floated on the Brussels stock market in the next few months. The company, which specialises in anti-constipation medicines, is seeking to raise up to €100 million.

Electronics • Saturn

German-owned appliance and electronic equipments distributor Saturn plans to open a 6,000 square-metre store in Ghent in early December. Another store will open in Kortrijk early next year.

Finance • Cobepa

Industrial and financial holdings company Cobepa has acquired a 8% stake in Bank Degroof, the Brussels-based private and investment bank.

Flowers • Monceau

Monceau Fleurs, a French group specialised in self-service outlets for flowers and plants, is planning to open up to 20 franchised stores in Belgium over the next five years. The company already has over 400 outlets in France, Spain, Portugal and the UK.

Investment • Carlyle Group

Investment fund Carlyle Group is working with Benelux Property, a real estate developer, on plans to construct up to 7,000 student apartments (or kots) in Belgium and The Netherlands. Universities in Brussels, Antwerp, Ghent, Bruges and Leuven suffer from a permanent shortage of student residences, with Ghent alone said to be up to 5,000 rooms short.

Packaging • Soenen

Packaging products company Soenen Golf Carton, based in Hoogelde, West Flanders, has acquired the French Otor cardboard firm. Otor is headquartered in Novillars, in eastern France.

Scandals and other policymakers

The photos that shocked and a few that changed history at Botanique show

ANNA JENKINSON

One image at the photo exhibition *Controverses* is the subject of a bit more controversy than had been anticipated when the collection moved to Brussels last month: the photograph of a naked, 10 year-old Brooke Shields.

Standing in a marble bath with gold taps, steam up to her knees, all that the pre-pubescent Shields is wearing is a necklace, red nail polish and a lot of make-up. These womanly accessories on her child's posed, naked body make very uncomfortable viewing and raise many questions, including where the boundary lies between art and child pornography.

It is this image that the Tate Modern in London had planned to include in its current *Pop Life* show, before the obscenity squad of the Metropolitan police paid them a visit, and the photograph of the actress and model was removed.

No such fuss in Belgium, mind you. Pascale Bertolini, press officer at the Botanique, where *Controverses* is showing, says there has been no

reaction from the authorities or any complaints from the public. Still, a sign saying "Warning to the public: visitors, and particularly the young, may find some images offensive" is clearly on display at the entrance and on publicity material.

Like many of the photographs in the exhibition, this 1975 shot of Shields has been the subject of legal proceedings; in one case, the American celebrity tried to prevent its use. The court rejected Shields' claim for \$1 million in damages because her mother had signed a contract ceding all image rights to the photographer Garry Gross.

Each of the pictures has a controversial story to tell. "Sometimes it's to do with a legal conflict, sometimes a public debate, but always the expression of conflicting opinions," says Christian Pirker, a Swiss lawyer and one of the curators of the exhibition, which was originally shown in Switzerland.

Some of the photos look harmless enough, but the explanatory



Always looking to shock with its advertisements, Benetton's "Kissing Nun" got banned in Italy and France

note details the controversy that the image unleashed. Take, for example, Napoléon Sarony's 1882 portrait of Oscar Wilde, posing on an armchair, wearing breeches and a velvet jacket, hand against his cheek. Unauthorised copies of the photograph prompted Sarony, whose clients also included the actress Sarah Bernhardt, to go to court over the matter.

Sarony convinced the US court of the work's artistic value and originality, through aspects such as the choice of clothing, composition and the use of lighting. The court ruled that the photograph was "an original work" and, for the first time, extended copyright protection to photographs.

The controversy surrounding the more recent images is better known. There is the shocking photograph of naked inmates piled on top of each other at Abu Ghraib, with two American soldiers giving a thumbs-up sign. Also featured is the picture of Sophie Dahl from 2000 used to advertise Yves-Saint-Laurent's

Opium perfume, the one where she is in a suggestive pose, lying on her back, naked except for jewellery and gold stilettos. The image prompted so many complaints to the UK Advertising Standards Authority that it was removed from national billboards. In France, the picture was posted in bus shelters for weeks without any similar outcry.

The French weren't as laid back in 2005, however, about the image of Jean-Paul Sartre with a cigarette in his hand. The portrait, taken at a Paris theatre some 60 years earlier, was used by France's National Library to advertise an exhibition on Sartre. To comply with a 1991 French law banning direct and indirect tobacco advertising, the library decided to airbrush out the offending cigarette.

The photograph chosen by the Botanique exhibition for its own posters is "Kissing Nun", created in 1992 by Oliviero Toscani for a Benetton advertisement. Depicting a young nun dressed in white kissing a priest

dressed in black, the image was banned in Italy following pressure from the Vatican and withdrawn in France in the wake of complaints from religious associations.

Another famous kiss in the collection is Robert Doisneau's photograph of a young man and woman kissing on a busy Parisian street, an image found on many a student's bedroom wall and one that raised the question of a photographer's right to use photos of the public.

Power plays an important role in most of the work, be it the power of editors making selections, armies controlling wartime photos or authorities imposing bans. With such powerful subject matter, it's an exhibition that successfully shocks, provokes and challenges. ♦

Until 22 November

Le Botanique
Koningstraat 236, Brussels
► www.botanique.be

Culture on a shoestring

Arsene50 offers last-minute tickets at low, low prices

With the economy in the doldrums and everybody watching their expenses, tending a vegetable garden these days seems a much more sensible occupation than going to the opera. Luckily, you needn't give up culture for horticulture altogether thanks to arsene50.be, a website with last-minute, half-priced tickets to most of Brussels' cultural venues.

Arsene50 was set up in 2003 by the Brussels Stichting voor de Kunsten (Foundation for the Arts) and has been growing steadily since. You used to have to brave the queues at one of two selling points to buy tickets for the evening's shows, but now you can just book online. The two box offices, inside Flagey and the Arenberg cinema, continue to sell tickets, but their main purpose now is to inform and guide visitors through the city's vast cultural offerings.

Arsene50 encourages an entirely new approach to going out: instead of making long-term plans, you can decide on the spur of the moment what your mood, your social life or even the weather dictate. The price cut and short time lag mean that people are much more willing to act on impulse, and therefore take risks.

Although the website can be accessed at all times, bookings only take place from Tuesday to Saturday between 14.00 and 17.30 and only apply to shows on the same day. Exceptions are shows held on Sundays and Mondays, for which tickets are bought on the Saturday. Some degree of advance planning is made possible by the e-newsletter, to which one can subscribe for free and which gives a provisional list of shows for the week. Bear in mind, though, that changes can and do occur.

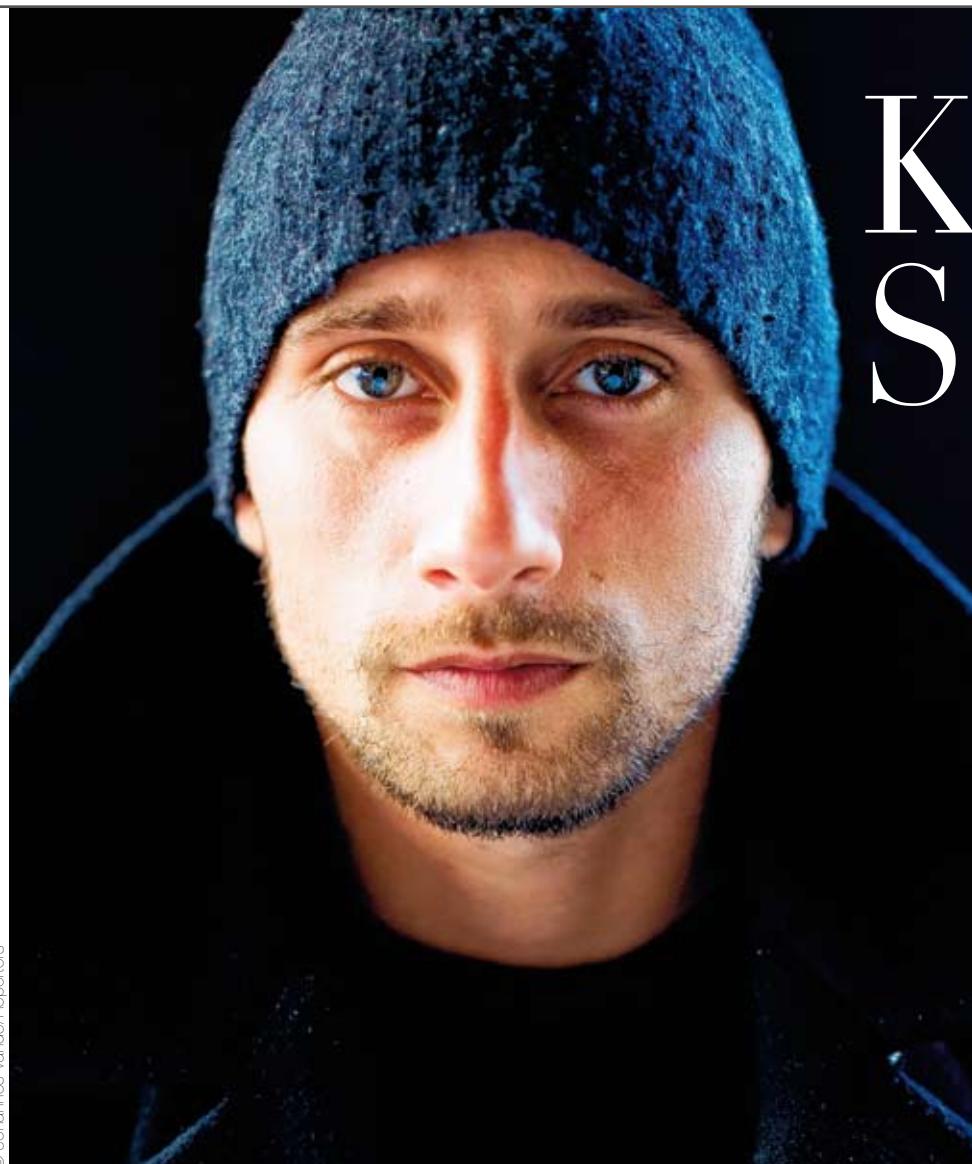
More than 130 venues take part in Arsene50 and nearly as many unsold tickets are put up for grabs each day. Among participants are Bozar, KVS, the Beursschouwburg, the Europa festival and the Queen Elisabeth music competition, but also many small cultural centres and jazz clubs. Last week, I had a choice between attending a French-language adaptation of Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* at the Théâtre des Martyrs for €8.50, viewing Lynn Shelton's film *Humpday* at the Arenberg for a fiver or catching Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* at De Munt for just €11 (top category tickets were going for €53).

Not that you really have to choose – for that sort of price, who wouldn't be tempted to go out every day? ♦

► www.arsene50.be



From opera to theatre to movies, visit Arsene to see it cheap



© Johannes Vande/Reporters

King Schoenaerts

The star roles just keep coming to Flanders' favourite young actor

LISA BRADSHAW

Matthias Schoenaerts has been working in movies since he was 16 but has broken out as Flanders' most sought-after young actor in the last couple of years. With the lead role in horror film *Linkeroever*, the part of bad-boy Filip in the blockbuster *Loft* and a turn as the shy, sweet soldier in the television drama series *De smaak van de Keyser*, it seems that Schoenaerts is suddenly everywhere.

And his star power is about to pump up another notch with the role of 1970s protester Raven in the new Flemish film *My Queen Karo*. Director Dorothée van den Berghe asked the 31-year-old actor back after working with him on her first film, 2002's *Meisje*. "It's the first time that's ever happened to me," Schoenaerts tells me. "It's a heart-warming experience to be asked again by the same director. It makes me feel humble."

To avoid "burnout", Schoenaerts is taking a few months off before starting a new film next March. "I want to have time to prepare myself," he explains. "The last two years were so busy I've just decided not to do anything until then – to be starving again. You need to be 'hungry' to start a project. If

you're overfed, it's just another meal. But if you're hungry, you're like, 'I'm going to eat it all!' And I'm really looking forward to the next project, so I want to be completely in the zone for it."

That film, *Rundskop (Beef Head)*, is about hormone trafficking (with a nod to the real-life case that shocked Belgium in the early 1990s). Schoenaerts this year shot *Pulsar*, which will release sometime next year. He plays a man driven to a breakdown by the energy from all his communication devices.

The son of the late Flemish actor Julien Schoenaerts, he is drawn to roles that are ambiguous – avoiding the "good guy, bad guy" cliché. In *My Queen Karo*, which releases this week across Flanders, his character thinks he's doing everyone a favour by deciding what's best for them. Fighting against the establishment in Amsterdam, "he ends up becoming what he hates," says Schoenaerts. "There is an authentic and honest side to him, but also a very selfish side. I like roles where there is a contradiction going on – that have some kind of connection with people who I see in my everyday life. People are never just 'this' or 'that'; people are many things at the same time." ♦

REVIEW



My Queen Karo

Amsterdam, 1974. Squats, protests, clashes with police and free love. Raven (Matthias Schoenaerts) has brought his partner and daughter from Belgium to the Dutch capital to live in a shared community squat with other young idealists. The notion of no boundaries flows from the psychological to the physical. Everything is shared and out in the open: food, money, sex. It's meant to be simple, peaced-out living, but problems arise when Raven's "no rules" policy puts his own ideals above the needs of his family.

All of the complicated relationships in Flemish director Dorothée van den Berghe's *My Queen Karo* are witnessed through the eyes of Raven's 10-year-old daughter, Karo, who loves both her parents dearly. So when Raven moves his new girlfriend into the house – along with her two children – Karo struggles desperately to support both her devastated mother (played to vulnerable perfection by Déborah François) and her charismatic father, plus tries to combat the jealousy posed by two more kids in the house.

My Queen Karo is one in a string of recent films about girls dealing with the demands of marginal lifestyles. French film *Stella* finds a pre-adolescent girl growing up above her parents' bar; the nine-year-old in Flemish film *Lost Persons Area* (based on the director's youth) scrabbles about in and around her trailer in an industrial wasteland. What they have in common are parents who are loving – but distracted.

In every case, the girl must find a way to turn her independence to her advantage. For Karo, it's swimming, where she trains to beat her own time because, as a helpful downstairs neighbour tells her: "You need something you can measure".

Anna Franziska Jäger, the daughter of Brussels dance pioneer Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, makes her film debut as Karo, bringing both the strength and confusion the character requires; she is a joy to watch.

► www.myqueenkaro.com

Peace, love and Amsterdam

Director Dorothée van den Berghe brings her personal memories to new film

My Queen Karo focuses on the experiences of a girl living in a 1970s commune with her young, idealistic parents. Is that girl you?

I'm from Belgium, and we moved to Amsterdam, and for me, as a child, it was a big change. I did go to an anti-authoritarian crèche, but we didn't actually live in a squat with a community. But it was very common at that time to do so. The situation in Amsterdam was dire with housing, so even "normal" families lived in squats. When I went to play with my friends, I very often came into one of these communities. I don't have exactly the same story, but I was inspired by these situations. I wanted to look at this through the eyes of a child. The reality of grown-ups can be complicated, but a child sees only pieces of reality, a part of it.

There are a few Flemish movies this year that deal with youth in an autobiographical way.

Yes, we want to show that if you are mistreated in your youth, you are going to be a filmmaker or a writer [laughs]. In these

films, you see that the [children] are observing. As a filmmaker, you are also observing a lot. So we have these characters who are observing and, at a certain moment, decide to make their own decisions, to make their own lives.

This is set in the 1970s, but it could be set now. You have so many people co-parenting, and the children have to deal with two families and with new children in the families. In *My Queen Karo*, this child does not want to choose between her mother and her father. She is meandering between them, and in the end, she chooses her own direction.

You used Matthias Schoenaerts in your first film and asked him back for this one.

It's very nice to work with Matthias because he is very concentrated. I've never worked with an actor who is so well prepared. In Flanders, we don't have many natural cinema actors; they come from the stage. But he is perfect for film; it's really his medium. Raven is a strong character and not always that nice. I think he's a lot like Matthias, who can also be very charming or very intense. ♦



Dorothée van den Berghe



Anna Franziska Jäger, right, is the head-strong Karo



"Brains for me": Tom Lanoye with calf brains

My life with food

A Spanish photographer links two Flemish passions to magical effect

LISA BRADSHAW

It took an outsider to make the link that led to such a simple – yet such a brilliant – concept. Spanish photographer Isabel Miquel Arques lived in London and Amsterdam before moving to Antwerp four years ago with her Flemish husband. "What struck me first," she says, "was the quantity and quality of Belgian artists. There are so many in such a small space! Dancers, artists, writers. The Flemish don't even realise the uniqueness of this."

The second thing she soon discovered was a passion for good food. "It doesn't have to be complicated, but they love to eat well. It's just how they live."

Putting the two together resulted in her first book, *Portret met garnaalkroket* (*Portrait with Shrimp Croquette*). "It's a book about creativity, born out of admiration for this small country."

It's a photo book so full of fun and celebrity, sales should be no problem, and the press have been eating it up. (Get it?) Suddenly everyone wants an interview with a photographer they never heard of.

The celebrities in the book – including designer Dries Van Noten, artist Jan Fabre, rock singer Arno and actress Marie Vinck – hadn't heard of her either, but her ability to get nearly everyone she contacted to agree to be photographed is a testament to the approachability of well-known Flemish people – however busy – and her own power of friendly persuasion.

Miquel Arques asked each subject to name their favourite food, and then she brought it along on the shoot. Some of the choices surprised her – like Brussels hat designer Elvis Pompilio's *drop* – the Belgian version of liquorice, which comes

rolled up like a wheel. "He eats hundreds of them," smiles Miquel Arques. "When you don't know the people, you think the choice is strange, but then when you get to know them, it's like, oh yeah, of course."

Interestingly, no one had to think too long to come up with their food of choice. "It's not something with a lot of thought or theory behind it," explains the photographer. "The answers were very straightforward and quick. And the choices pretty much explain something of who they are." Hence, you'll find photographer Stephan Vanfleteren – who famously hates being photographed – with a shrimp croquette, a safe, traditional Belgian starter. He wore his late father's old, oversized jacket in which he sort of hides himself. Contemporary artist Jan De Cock, whose work more than one critic has called "raw", chose a giant slab of steak, bones twisting out from the bloody chunk. Fit young actress Vinck (the victim in last year's blockbuster *Loft*) holds a bowl of steamed rice in a simple clay pot. Contemporary artist Luc Tuymans said his favourite food was "three packs of cigarettes a day". She shot him enveloped in smoke.

Sometimes the unexpected would happen, most notably when Miquel Arques visited fellow photographer Lieve Blancquaert. Blancquaert had chosen raspberries, and Miquel Arques strung them together to wear like a necklace. She took the shot, but she knew something was wrong. The photo was "too perfect", she explains. She didn't feel the real Blancquaert was coming through, so she asked her to eat the berries. Blancquaert made a huge mess of it, and berry juice got everywhere. Then Blancquaert told a story about how she always took raspberries to the bedside

of a friend who recently died. She became very emotional, and there was the authenticity Miquel Arques was looking for.

In a rather comforting twist, many celebrities chose food that reminded them of their youth. "It's what they like the most. Like a child, it's very simple and authentic," says Miquel Arques. Flemish writer Tom Lanoye, for instance, grew up behind the counter of his parents' butcher shop. "His answer was immediate, 'brains for me,' he said. He told me, 'this is my childhood, where I came from. This is my heart.' That's telling enough." ♦

→ www.isabelmiquelarques.com



Lieve Blancquaert and a half-eaten necklace of raspberries

CULTURE NEWS

Boek.be, the Flemish confederation of booksellers, publishers and importers, is the first in Flanders to launch a website devoted to information and sales of e-books and e-readers. There are already more than 3,000 Dutch-language titles on the site, and the organisation will add French- and English-language books by the end of the year. Boek.be is working with local booksellers to offer consumers recommendations on the site and even to share a part in the sales – users can choose their favourite bookstore when buying a title. The public is invited to become familiar with the site during Antwerp's big book fair, which runs from 31 October to 11 November.

→ www.e-boek.org

Flemish pop duo Clouseau is teaming up with the NMBS for a unique series of 10 concerts – all in one day. This Friday, 30 October, the pair – brothers Kris and Koen Wauters – will perform songs from their new album *Zij aan zij (Side by Side)* at 10 train stations across Brussels and Flanders. They start bright and early at 6.00 in Ostend before finishing up at 17.30 in Antwerp Central. Tickets are not for sale; instead, they will be given away via radio and newspapers, plus on the duo's website. You can even ride the rails and go to all 10 shows.

→ www.clouseau.be

The prizes just keep rolling in for the new Flemish film *De helaasheid der dingen* (*The Misfortunes*), which last week won the three biggest prizes at the Cinésonne European Film Festival in Paris. Besides Best Film and the Public Choice prize, Koen De Graeve and Kenneth Vanbaeden (who play father and son in the film) were jointly awarded the prize for Best Actor. Unusually for a Flemish film, *De helaasheid* will open in France in December in both a subtitled and a dubbed version – voiced by French-speaking Belgian actors.

→ www.dehelaasheidderdingen.be

Austria launched a three-day charm offensive last weekend in Mechelen in an attempt to lure holidaymakers away from their usual winter vacations in France. With Swiss co-operation, representations of mountain village resorts in both countries laid on Schnapps, Gruyère and a snow slope at the **Snowcity Festival**. In the 16th century, Mechelen was the capital of the Low Countries under Austrian rule. According to statistics agency Eurostat, France is the favourite winter destination of Belgians, with 30% heading there last year. However, Paul Mayer of the Austrian Tourist office says: "Not only does the skiing cost less, we have better snow, cosier villages and better après-ski parties than in France."

→ www.austria.info

Because young farmers in Africa deserve more

Flemish students work a day for their peers in South America and Africa

KATRIEN LINDEMANS

On Friday, 16 October, businesses and government agencies across Brussels and Flanders were infiltrated by thousands of Flemish secondary school students. But their intentions were good: they were all taking part in Zuiddag, or South Day, a project whereby at least €30 of their wages earned during one day of work were sent to African farmers.

Zuiddag was first organised four years ago by Bart Vetsuydens and his wife, who had been aid workers in Brazil. Based on Norway's "Operation Daywork", which has been going since 1964, Zuiddag not only puts Flemish students to work for their "southern" (African and South American) peers, it also sends a handful of students directly to the affected areas to witness firsthand where their work and money is going.

"It's not only fund raising but education as well," explains Vetsuydens. "We want to connect the youth from the different continents because they hold the key to change in our societies."

Five thousand students aged 15 to 18 took part in Zuiddag this year, a ten-fold increase over four years ago when the campaign was localised in Vetsuydens' home in Halle. Thanks to Flemish Region subsidies, the project now covers all of Flanders.

The charity of choice this year was Vredeslanden (Peace Islands)

for their project "Young farmers deserve more!" The project builds youth farms in the schools of Lira, Uganda. In these model farms, local students learn all about sustainable agriculture and take this knowledge back to their rural families to improve the harvest.

Because creating awareness on both sides of the continental divide is as important as raising money, eight Flemish students visited the project and their peers in Uganda. Together they prepared an awareness campaign and magazine for participating schools in Flanders. They even started a blog to stimulate contact between students in north and south.

Then, in the week leading up to Zuiddag, a group of students from Uganda came to some Flemish schools to tell more about the project and explain what the money made on Zuiddag will be used to achieve.

Considering the project's Nordic origins, it's no surprise that the Norwegian Embassy in Brussels was pleased to hire a student for a day. Almost everybody working in the embassy has experienced Operation Daywork back in Norway. "It's the first time we've joined this project, but we're very enthusiastic," says embassy spokesperson Rita Sandberg. "Every company could use the helping hand of a student every now and then. The project also creates awareness in young people and emphasises the importance of



Flemish and Ugandan students worked together on sustainable agriculture in Lira

youth empowerment."

For their part, students can target a company and ask them to join the project or choose an employer from the Zuiddag database. That's what 17-year-old Heleen Wyffels did. From Paridaens School in Leuven, she chose the Norwegian Embassy "because it looked like a very interesting option," she says. "I helped with passport demands and the cultural agenda and also composed an overview of topics in the Flemish newspa-

pers. I could work on my English, and, at the same time, I helped my supervisor with her Dutch."

All participating students know very well what the project is all about, as do the employers and schools. Reactions become more numerous and positive every year, encouraging organisers to do even better the next time around. Because, even though the next Zuiddag doesn't happen until 2010, the first steps have already been taken. All feedback formu-

lae are carefully read because any remark can help to grow and improve the next edition.

"The project is all about offering chances to young people," says Vetsuydens. "That's why it's important we keep finding companies that want to work on their social responsibility – to give our project a chance. That way, students in the north can give students in the south a chance as well." ♦

⇒ www.zuiddag.be

fashionista

STÉPHANIE DUVAL

Fashion capital in question

Ever since the group of designers known as the "Antwerp Six" put their city on the fashion map in the 1980s, it has been Belgium's fashion capital – and some dared even say the importance of Antwerp stretched far beyond these borders.

While there once was a time I would have agreed, lately I haven't seen much reason to.

Most of the students graduating from Antwerp's fashion academy come from abroad, and Brussels' La Cambre is quickly catching up, in any case. And when it comes to shopping, there's not much new going on in Antwerp. Besides Princess Blue, very few shops offer new and exciting brands.

Concept stores (hipster "lifestyle shops" selling more than just clothes) shook things up in Antwerp for awhile, but both the leaders – Clinic and Fish&Chips – have evolved towards

more commercial projects. It's an evolution I can fully understand, yet regret. Newcomer Hospital tried to fill the void at the beginning of this year, but perhaps it tried too hard. The shop is empty more often than not – possibly due to a limited and uninspiring selection.

There seemed to be a lack of energy, of new ideas. But if what I'm seeing now is any indication, this may turn out to be the calm before the storm.

Early evidence is Ra 13 in the Kloosterstraat, which opened the doors to its 800 square metres last week. Ra is essentially a concept store; it houses fashion, books, magazines, cool objects, a café and a DJ booth. But the appeal of the store lies in its offer. There's no other place where Gareth Pugh, Henrik Vibskov, Hannah Marshall and Peter Jensen are united under one roof. Besides these international names, Ra

is stocking new Belgian talent.

Founders Anna Kushnerova and Romain Brau – both Antwerp academy graduates – also want to make Ra a platform for multidisciplinary talent. Installation art gets as much attention as the clothes surrounding it, and the duo plans live events. Time will tell if all the aspirations become reality, but it's encouraging to see the initiative.

To discover the other two promising stores, patience is required. Jorrit Baars is preparing the launch of Your (also in Kloosterstraat), with more than 1,000 square-metres of fashion, cosmetics, objects, books and even cars. He opens in February, and he isn't revealing names yet, but it's clear he's targeting a decidedly fashion-forward audience that knows what it wants but isn't able to get it in Antwerp.

The third shop, called Graanmarkt after its location, remains somewhat of

a mystery. All we know is that it will open in February and the owner has contacted some major foreign labels. We don't know for sure which ones, but that's okay. Sometimes it takes a little fashionable mystery to shake up a city that has been dormant far too long.

⇒ www.ra13.be



Flemish-Brabant & Leuven, one big painting

Scattered all over the world, and now temporarily united in M, the brand new museum in Leuven: more than 100 unique works by and about Rogier van der Weyden. And there is much more to see in Leuven, the capital of Flemish Brabant. In this student city you will find a rich cultural heritage, the beautiful beguinage and the oldest university of the Low Lands. Moreover, Leuven is an excellent operating base from which to discover the rest of Flemish Brabant, with its breathtaking scenery and delicious regional cuisine.

For more information please go to www.leuven.be/welcome



Cost-cutting panic or investments in human capital?

In times like these, where we have to do more with less, there are two types of managers. **Those who cut costs** across the board, and **those who even now choose to continue to invest** prudently. Which type are you? The financial crisis and the uncertain economic situation are confronting managers with new challenges, but all too often they are also driving them to take decisions that are infused with panic and doom-and-gloom. But the ones who are forward-thinking and keep to their own course don't slam on the brakes – instead, they invest in the future.

Knowledge determines your competitive power

An organisation that wants to maintain and strengthen its competitive position in the global economy must be powered by a well-oiled knowledge engine. Your workforce is your greatest capital and lifelong learning is an absolute necessity. The acquired knowledge flows back into your company and your knowledge capital grows larger and larger, increasing your competitiveness. This will keep you competitive in the rapidly changing economic context. We call this 'learning with impact'.

Investing in training: costs versus benefits

Too often, training is still regarded as a cost instead of an investment. However, companies that view their personnel policy from a strategic standpoint continue – even when the economy becomes a serious challenge – to invest in training programmes for their most strategic employees. Investing in talent and training now guarantees you a significant jump on the competition when the economy gets going again.

Vlerick, your partner in tailor-made training programmes

Those who have participated in a Vlerick training programme are undoubtedly better prepared than other employees to take on today's challenges. Via in-company programmes – focused on the development of individual employees as well as on organisational development – Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School offers you a collaborative project fully tailored to your needs. Thanks to in-depth knowledge of both local and international economic environments and years of

experience in training management talent, the School can develop a specially adapted management training programme for every organisation, in each phase of its development, targeting the most diverse aspects of its business.

More info on our management programmes?

Consult www.vlerick.be



Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School

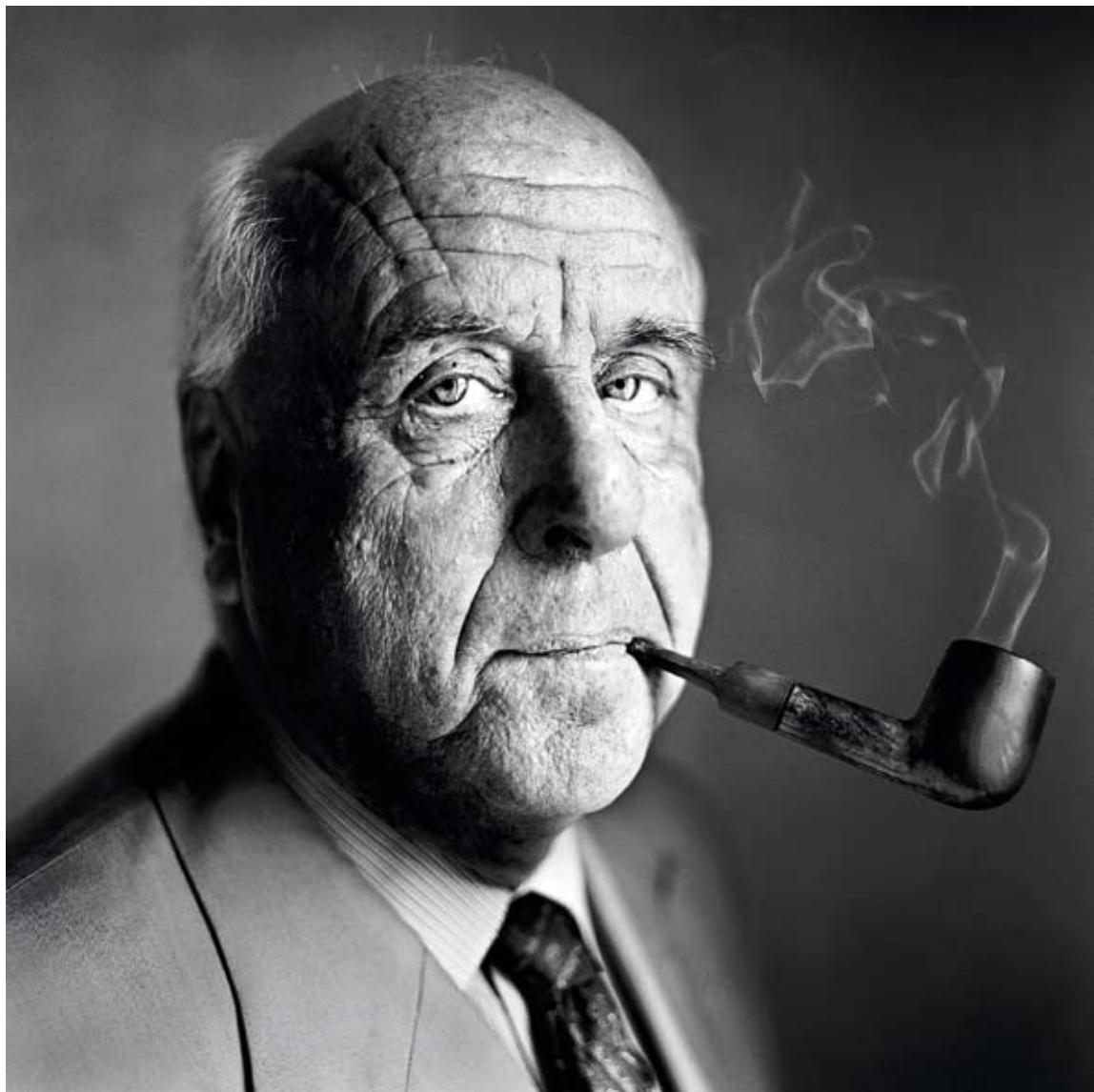
Boekenbeurs

Antwerp's annual book fair begins on 31 October for 12 days filled with author talks, book signings, children's activities and plenty of opportunities to buy both local and international titles

www.boekenbeurs.be



FLANDERS TODAY
OCTOBER 28, 2009



Portrait

LISA BRADSHAW

Photography seems to more and more take over the exhibition landscape, as evidenced in this very issue of *Flanders Today*. It could be that, more than painting, sculpture or abstract installation, photography provides a sort of mirror into ourselves – something to which we can more intimately relate.

No one does this better than Flemish photographer Stephan Vanfleteren, who delivers what all great portrait photographers do – insight into the subject – while also providing endless amounts of information on human nature. If you pair seeing this show in Ghent with exploring the photo book by Antwerp-based photographer Isabel Miquel Arques (page 10), you could not know more about the personalities of Flemish celebrities short of meeting them personally.

Portret 1989-2009 is set in an old, once-forgotten building near the art centre Vooruit, but now it's under renovation. In this in-between state, with its dusty floors and cobwebs in the corners of the dirty windows, it's a perfect setting

for Vanfleteren's trademark black-and-white photos that never fail to make one stop short at first sight. The show is made up of large-scale photos of well-known Flemings, tiny name tags affixed under each. But most of the Flemish who come here know who they all are without having to check. Another section finds a collage of smaller images across one wall of the warehouse-sized space – with no name tags. It's fun, in fact, to try to name them all – or at least which movie you just saw them in.

There's cyclist Tom Boonen looking reflective, aging rock singer Arno looking tired, "chicken artist" Koen Vanmechelen looking weird and actor Jan Decleir looking like he wants to be grumpy, but just can't. Some images are so spot-on in revealing how the Flemish view their heroes that you begin to wonder if this is the way they really are or simply the way Vanfleteren knows the public wants to see them. Still, images don't lie: it's hard to imagine Flemish crooner Eddy Wally being able to pull off a look like politician and diplomat

Étienne Davignon (*pictured*) – or vice versa.

There are very few women in this show – although one playful portrait of lingerie designer Muriel Scherre finds her drinking from her pin-up decorated coffee mug. But Vanfleteren seems to prefer the grizzled, five-o'clock shadow look of men both young and old. Regardless of their public or personal stature, he brings their vulnerability to the fore – such as the case of a shirtless Gabriel Rios in front of a rainy window or Marcel van Maele, the Flemish poet and sculpture, blind for nearly 20 years, who died in July. The photo is probably recent – a droopy-eyed man coming to the end of a long and difficult battle. ♦

Until 3 December

Wintercircus Mahy
Lammerstraat 11, Ghent

→ www.lannoob.be/portret



MORE PHOTOGRAPHY THIS WEEK

Tannery Schotte → *Museum 't Gasthuis, Aalst*

Masters of Photography → *Fifty-one Fine Art Photography, Antwerp*

Still Life: Contemporary Chinese Photography → *Bozar, Brussels*



GET YOUR
TICKETS NOW!

Madame Butterfly

3 November to
9 December

Vlaamse Opera, Antwerp & Ghent

Puccini old-fashioned? Not according to Canadian stage director Robert Carsen, who sees the exotic tragedy

Madame Butterfly as a study of the "incomprehension, intolerance and violence that stem from the confrontation of diametrically opposed traditions and ideologies": therefore, very modern indeed. Carsen directs this new production at the Vlaamse Opera (for which there are very few tickets left) starring sopranos Karine Babajanyan and Yunah Lee taking turns in the role of the Japanese geisha Cio-Cio San, tenor Mikhail Agafonov as her inconstant American lover Pinkerton and Chinese conductor Muhai Tang in the pit. Ucondac teret resta vercesenatus Cat, nihil vit.



→ www.vlaamseopera.be

Maison du Peuple

Sint-Gillisvoorplein 37-39; 02.217.26.00,
www.maison-du-peuple.be

OCT 30 20.00 Garner 21.00 Extint (free concert)

VK Club

Schoolstraat 76; 02.414.29.07,
www.vkconcerts.be

NOV 3 20.00 Rootz Underground + Danakil

Vorst-Nationaal

Victor Rousseaulaan 208; 0900.00.991

OCT 28 20.00 Sean Paul

NOV 1 19.00 Eros Ramazzotti

NOV 5 20.00 Motörhead

Kortrijk

De Kreun
Jan Persijnstraat 6; 056.37.06.44,
www.dekreun.be

OCT 29 20.00 Absynthe Minded

OCT 31 21.00 Jacked with Soda 'n' Suds + Ed & Kim + Dj Manaia + Kill Frenzy + Hector & Nate

NOV 1 20.00 Susanna & The Magical Orchestra + New Found Land + Big Train

Leuven

Het Depot
Martelarenplein 12; 016.22.06.03

OCT 29 20.00 DJ Vadim + Breakestra

Agenda

FLANDERS TODAY
OCTOBER 28, 2009



Antwerp

Amuz
Kammenstraat 81; 03.248.28.28,
www.amuz.be
OCT 31 21.00 Vlaams Radio Koor,
Brussels Jazz Orchestra, Capella
di Voce and Camerata Aetas Nova
conducted by Kurt Bikkembergs: Jazz
Requiem by Nils Lindberg

Queen Elisabeth Hall
Koningin Astridplein 26; 0900.26.060,
www.fccc.be
NOV 4 20.00 Diana Krall

Berchem

CC Berchem
Driekoningenstraat 126; 03.286.88.20,
www.ccberchem.be
OCT 31 20.30 Guido Belcanto & Willy
Willy

Brussels

Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24,
www.abconcerts.be
OCT 29 20.00 Flat Earth Society
NOV 2 20.00 Miles Davis: Kind of
Blue at 50: film screening + Jimmy
Cobb's So What Band
NOV 4 20.00 Roberto Fonseca

Archiduc
Dansaertstraat 6; 02.512.06.52,
www.archiduc.net
OCT 31 17.00 Gowk

Café Central
Borgval 14; 0486.72.26.24,
www.lecafecentral.com
OCT 28 20.00 François de Roubaix
Tribute

Flagey
Heilig Kruisplein; 02.641.10.20,
www.flagey.be
OCT 28 20.15 Richard Bona Sextet
OCT 30 20.15 Soledad 'Best of and
New Pieces'

Jazz Station
Leuvensesteenweg 193-195;
02.733.13.78
OCT 28 20.30 Pieter Vandergooten
Quartet **OCT 29** 20.30 François
Bourassa Quartet **OCT 30** 20.30 Alain
Bédart Auguste Quartet + Sweet &
Hot **OCT 31** 18.00 Toine Thys Quintet

Le Bar du Matin
Alsembergsesteenweg 172;
02.537.71.59,



<http://bardumatin.blogspot.com>
OCT 29 21.00 Hermia-Tassin Quartet
NOV 5 21.00 Talking Loud

Maison des Musiques
Lebeaustraat 39; 02.550.13.20
OCT 30 12.30 Alexandre Cavalière &
Pascal Mohy

Sazz'n Jazz
Koningsstraat 241; 0475.78.23.78,
www.sazznjazz.be
OCT 30 20.00 Fatoum

Sounds Jazz Club
Tulpenstraat 28; 02.512.92.50,
www.soundsjazzclub.be
OCT 28 22.00 Chamaquiando, salsa
OCT 29 21.00 The Singers night **OCT**
30 22.00 Piwiz Trio **OCT 31** 22.00
Barbara Wiernik **NOV 2** 22.00 Master
Session Erik Vermeulen **NOV 3** 22.00
Tuesday Night Orchestra **NOV 4** 22.00
Caribe Con K - Los Soneros del Barrio

Stekerlapatte
Priestersstraat 4; 02.512.86.81,
www.stekerlapatte.be
OCT 29 20.00 Martin Daniel Piano
Solo

The Cotton Club - Grand Casino
Duquesnoystraat 14; 02.289.68.66,
www.grandcasinobrussels.be
OCT 31 21.30 Ben & Cleo (free)

The Music Village
Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45,
www.themusicvillage.com
Concerts at 20.30:
OCT 28 Joy Adegoke **OCT 29** Graham
Walker Quartet with Guy Cabay **OCT**
30 Amina Figarova Sextet **OCT 31**
André Donni-Lolo Meyer Quartet

Théâtre Marni
Vergniestraat 25; 02.639.09.80
NOV 3 21.30 Julian Burdock Blues
Experience

Ghent
Handelsbeurs
Kouter 29; 09.265.92.01,
www.handelsbeurs.be
OCT 30 20.00 Flat Earth Society

Vooruit
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060,
www.vooruit.be
OCT 29 20.00 Huntsville
NOV 4 20.00 Myra Melford & Trio M

Grimbergen
CC Strombeek
Gemeenteplein; 02.263.03.43,
www.cstrombeek.be
OCT 29 20.30 Living Roots

Ternat

CC De Ploter
Kerkstraat 4; 02.582.44.33,
www.ccdeploter.be
OCT 30 20.30 Living Roots



Antwerp

Zuiderpershuis
Waalse Kaaï 14; 03.248.01.00,
www.zuiderpershuis.be
OCT 30 20.30 Lucía Pulido
(Colombia)

Borgerhout

De Roma
Turnhoutsebaan 327; 03.292.97.40,
www.deroma.be
OCT 31 20.30 For the Love of Africa:
benefit concert with Tutu Puoane,
Jef Neve, Bert Joris and more, in
celebration of world pianist Jack van
Poll's 75th birthday

Brussels

Art Base
Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20,
www.art-base.be
OCT 30 20.00 Reena C Shrivastava
and Kousic Sen, Indian raga

Théâtre Molière
Bastionsquare 3; 02.217.26.00,
www.muziekpublique.be
NOV 4 12.30 Elias Bachoura (Syria;
free concert)

Theatre National
Emile Jacqmainlaan 115; 02.203.41.55,
www.theatrenational.be
OCT 29 23.00 La Chiva Gantiva (free)
OCT 30 21.00 Abd Al Malik 22.45 W
Victor (free)
OCT 31 21.00 Groundation 22.45
Mocking Birds + DJ Kwak (free)



Antwerp

Amuz
Kammenstraat 81; 03.248.28.28,
www.amuz.be
NOV 1 15.00 Haydn Barytontrio
Budapest: Haydn

Brussels

Atelier Marcel Hastir
Handelstraat 51; 02.657.22.09,
ateliermarcelhastir@gmail.com
OCT 30 19.00 Anne Vandewalle, piano:
Bach, Schumann, Debussy, more

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00,
www.bozar.be
OCT 29 20.00 Accademia Bizantina,
conducted by Stefano Montanari: Händel
OCT 30 20.00 Liège Philharmonic and
Namur Symphony Choir conducted
by Pascal Rophé, with Marie-Ange
Todorovitch, mezzo: Lekeu, Ysaye, Franck
OCT 31 20.00 Ictus ensemble: Steve
Reich's Music for 18 Musicians **NOV 1**
11.00 Laura Pok, recorder; Cindy Castillo,
organ: d'Outremont, Frescobaldi, Vitali,
more Bozar Sunday Good Morning)

De Munt

Muntplein; 070.23.39.39, www.demunt.be
OCT 30 12.30 Malibran string quartet:
Beethoven, Brahms

Flagey

Heilig Kruisplein; 02.641.10.20,
www.flagey.be
OCT 29 20.15 Brussels Philharmonic:
Mozart, Chopin, Dvorák's Symphony No 9
From the New World
OCT 30 12.30 Blindman New Strings
ensemble
NOV 5 20.15 Huelgas Ensemble,
conducted by Paul Van Nevel: Massaino,
von Bruck, Lassus

Kerk van Onze-Lieve-Vrouw ter Kapelle
Kapelmarkt; 02.507.82.00, www.
placedelachapelle.org
OCT 28 20.00 Grainedelavoix, conducted
by Björn Schmelzer: works from the cult of
Mary Magdalene in 16th-century Dutch

Miniemerk

Miniemerstraat 62; 02.511.93.84,
www.minimes.net
NOV 4 20.00 Ricercar Consort, conducted
by Philippe Pierlot: Pohle, Weckmann

Royal Music Conservatory
Regentschapsstraat 30; 02.213.41.37,
www.kcb.be
OCT 28 20.00 Parkanyi Quartet: Haydn,
Bartok, Beethoven

OCT 29 20.00 Royal Conservatory Gala
Concert to mark the start of renovation
work
OCT 30 20.00 Semplice Quartet: Brahms,
Ada, Piazzolla

Theatre Saint Michel

Pater Eudore Devroyestraat 2; 02.732.70.73
OCT 30 20.00 Brussels Philharmonic
Orchestra, conducted by Roger Bausier,
with Meral Güneyman, piano: Aaron
Copland, George Gershwin, Leonard
Bernstein, more

Ghent

De Bijloke
Jozef Kluyvensstraat 2, 09.269.92.92,
www.debijloke.be
OCT 31 20.00 Brussels Philharmonic,
conducted by Carlos Kalmar, with Wu
Qian, piano: Mozart, Chopin, Dvorák

Ghent

Vlaamse Opera
Schouwburgstraat 3; 070.22.02.02,
www.vlaamseopera.be
OCT 30-31 14.00/20.00 Royal Ballet
of Flanders in Impressing the Czar,
choreographed by William Forsythe

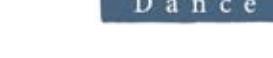
Brussels

De Munt
Muntplein; 070.23.39.39, www.demunt.be
Until NOV 3 15.00/20.00 Stravinsky's The
Rake's Progress, staged by Robert Lepage,
with De Munt Symphony Orchestra and
Chorus, conducted by Lawrence Renes



Brussels

Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24,
www.abconcerts.be
NOV 5 20.45 Joost Van Hyfte & Xander
De Rycke, comedy (in Dutch)



DON'T MISS

Halloween in Flanders

31 October

Although Americans complain that this beloved holiday gets short shrift in Belgium, it's catching on more and more every year, as this month's offerings prove. The best bet for adults is easily Gaasbeek Castle's Victorian Fright Night, an interactive show of refined ladies, bizarre noblemen and other creatures from the underworld, followed by (blood) red wine and pumpkin soup, at the 17th-century castle in Flemish Brabant. For kids, there's no beating Puyenbroeck, which hosts an all-day event that includes a spook castle, scary stories, pumpkin throwing and a children's disco.



→ www.kasteelvangaasbeek.be
→ www.halloweeninpuyenbroeck.be

Antwerp

deSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28, www.desingel.be
OCT 29-31 20.00 Damaged Goods in
Do Animals Cry, choreographed by Meg
Stuart (dance/theatre in English)

Brussels

Theatre 140

Eugène Plaskylaan 140; 02.733.97.08,
www.theatre140.be

Until OCT 29 14.30/20.30 Cie Melting
Spot in Deng Deng! Hip-hop (Chad)

Théâtre Marni

Vergniestraat 25; 02.639.09.80
OCT 29-31 20.30 Cie Giolis in It was a
Slip of the Tongue, choreographed by Lisa
da Boit and Giovanni Scarella

Ghent

Vlaamse Opera

Schouwburgstraat 3; 070.22.02.02,
www.vlaamseopera.be
OCT 30-31 14.00/20.00 Royal Ballet
of Flanders in Impressing the Czar,
choreographed by William Forsythe

Brussels

Brussels

Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24,
www.abconcerts.be
NOV 5 20.45 Joost Van Hyfte & Xander
De Rycke, comedy (in Dutch)

KVS Box
Arduinkaa 9; 02.210.11.12, www.kvs.be
Until OCT 31 15.00/20.30 Compagnie Cecilia in The Broken Circle Breakdown Featuring The Cover-Ups of Alabama, musical theatre (in Dutch with French surtitles)

Kaaitheater
Sainctelettesquare 20; 02.201.59.59, www.kaaitheater.be
OCT 29-31 20.30 De parade in Mayerling by Rudi Meulemans, staged by Hilde Wils and Meulemans (in Dutch)
OCT 30-31 20.30 Onder de vulkaan (Under the Volcano) by Malcolm Lowry, adapted by Guy Cassiers (in Dutch)

The Warehouse Studio
Waelhemstraat 69a; 0492.64.16.60, atc.theatreinbrussels.com
OCT 30-31 20.00 English Comedy Club and Bedford Swan Theatre Company in My Mother Said I Never Should by Charlotte Keatley (in English)

Leuven
Stuk
Naamsestraat 96; 016.32.03.20, www.stuk.be
OCT 29-30 19.30-23.30 Abattoir Fermé in Chaostriologie, staged by Stef Lernous (in Dutch)

Ostend
Kursaal (Casino)
Monacoplein 2; 070.22.56.00, www.kursaalostende.be
NOV 1 20.00 Kamagurka geneest (Kamagurka Heals), comedy (in Dutch)



Aalst
Netwerk: Centre for Contemporary Art
Houtkaai; 053.70.97.73, www.netwerk-art.be
Until NOV 7 Time as Activity: video art and installations by international artists

Stedelijk Museum 't Gasthuys
Oude Vismarkt 13; 053.73.23.40
Until DEC 23 Leerlooierij Schotte: Heden versus verleden (Tannery Schotte: Present versus Past), photos of an abandoned tannery before its reconversion, by Henk van Rensbergen.

Antwerp
Cathedral of Our Lady
Handschoenmarkt (03.213.99.51)
Until NOV 15 Reunion: from Quinten Metsys to Peter Paul Rubens, masterpieces from the Royal Museum of Fine Arts return to the Cathedral

Contemporary Art Museum (M HKA)
Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60, www.muhka.be
Until NOV 8 A Larger Europe #1, art from republics of the former Soviet Union
Until JAN 3 Textiles: Art and the Social Fabric, installations, sculptures, film, flags and banners
Until FEB 26 Collectie XXIV: presentation of the museum's permanent collection

Havencentrum Lillo
Scheldelaan 444, Haven 621; www.havencentrum.be
Until DEC 14 Tabula Scaldis: Tafeereel van de Schelde, panoramic drawings and other documents take visitors on a tour of the River Scheldt from end to end

Middelheim Museum
Middelheimlaan 61; 03.828.13.50, www.middelheimmuseum.be
Until DEC 19 Camiel Van Breedam, recycled assemblages by the Flemish artist and jazz musician

Mode Museum
28 Nationalestraat; 03.470.27.70, www.momu.be
Until FEB 21 Delvaux: 180 Years of

Belgian Luxury, history of the famous leather goods house

Rockox House
Keizerstraat 12; 03.201.92.50, www.rockoxhuis.be
Until NOV 15 A Gift to God, private patronage of religious art during Antwerp's Golden Age

Bruges

Bruggemuseum-Gruuthuse
Dijver 17; www.uivindingvanbrugge.be
Until APR 25 De uitvinding van Brugge: De stad van Delacenserie (The Discovery of Bruges: The City of Delacenserie), the 19th-century architectural facelift of Bruges, thanks to local architect Louis Delacenserie

Brussels

Archief en Museum voor het Vlaams Leven te Brussel
Arduinkaa 28; 02.209.06.01, www.amvb.be
Until OCT 31 Herinnering & Migratie: Erfgoed van nieuwe Brusselaars (Memory and Migration: Heritage of New Brusselaars): film, documents, texts and poems record the experience of Brussels' immigrants

Argos: Centre for Art and Media

Werfstraat 13; 02.229.00.03, www.argoarts.org
Until DEC 19 Actors & Extras, contemporary artists explore the contrast between the work of actors and extras in cinema

Atomium

Heysel Park; 02.475.45.75, www.atomium.be
Until DEC 13 Africa: Fast forward, joint exhibition at the Atomium and Central Africa Museum, Tervuren, on the African continent today

Autoworld

Jubelpark 1, www.autoworld.be
Until OCT 30 The golden age of automobile photo-journalism, tribute to photographer André Van Bever

Bozar (Paleis voor Schone Kunsten)

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00, www.bozar.be
Until JAN 3 Portraits of Artists: 80 Years of the Centre for Fine Arts in Pictures
Until JAN 24 Son of Heaven, 50 centuries of Chinese power and glory with 250 masterpieces from China's most prestigious museums (part of Europalia)

Horta Museum (Winter Garden)

Amerikastraat 25; 02.543.04.90, www.hortamuseum.be
Until OCT 31 Jean-Charles Delallante, sculpture

ISELP

Waterloosesteenweg 31; 02.504.80.70
Until NOV 14 Flesh, drawings by Dany Danino, sculpture by Hughes Dubuisson and ceramics by Sofi Van Saltbommel

Jacques Franck Cultural Centre

Waterloosesteenweg 94; 02.538.90.20, www.ccjacquesfranck.be
Until OCT 31 Marc Rossignol: Cacher/ Montrer, paintings and installation

Le Botanique

Koningsstraat 236; 02.226.12.57
Until NOV 22 Controverses: Een juridische en ethische geschiedenis van de fotografie (Controversy: A Judicial and Ethical History of Photography)

Museum of the National Band of Belgium

Wildewoudstraat 10; rini@rinihartman.nl
Until DEC 13 Rini Hartman: 8 Visions of Hope, exhibition by the Dutch artist on the eight themes of the UN Millennium Development Goals

WIELS

Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.347.30.33, www.wiels.org
Until DEC 6 Ann Veronica Janssens: Serendipity, installations by the

contemporary Belgian artist

World Bank Brussels
Marnixlaan 17; 02.552.00.32
Until OCT 31 In the Eyes of a Woman: Roma Portraits, the lives of various Roma communities seen through the eyes of female photographers

Deurle

Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens
Museumlaan 14; 09.282.51.23, www.museumdd.be
Until NOV 29 Absence is the Highest Form of Presence, work by Robert Gober, Julião Sarmento and Luc Tuymans

Geel

Gasthuismuseum
Gasthuisstraat 1; 014.59.14.43, www.gasthuismuseumgeel.net
Until MAR 31 God of Doctoer?, collection illustrating the history of healing in Geel

Ghent

Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (SMAK)
Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03, www.smak.be
Until NOV 15 Raphaël Buedts, furniture objects

Until NOV 22 Nick Ervinck, GNI-RI sep2009 EITOZOR, installations

Until NOV 22 Sculptural collections by various artists

Until DEC 6 Klaus Scherübel: Mallarmé, Het Boek, installations

Until DEC 6 Coming People 2009: Forwarding backyards, end works by students

Museum of Fine Arts

Fernand Scribedreef 1 – Citadelpark; 09.240.07.00, www.mskgent.be

Until FEB 7 Roar China! Lu Xun, Maserel and Avant-garde Graphic Art (1919-1949) (part of Europalia)

Until FEB 7 Max Beckmann, prints and paintings from the collection of the Von der Heydt Museum in Wuppertal

Grimbergen

CC Strombeek
Gemeenteplein; 02.263.03.43, www.ccstrombeek.be

Until DEC 10 Shot by both Sides, video installations by Pieter Geenen and Johan Grimonprez

Hasselt

Fashion Museum
Gasthuisstraat 11; 011.23.96.21, www.modemuseumhasselt.be

Until NOV 8 In Her Shoes, trends and evolution of women's shoe design, from 1900 to contemporary designers

Kemzeke

Verbeke Foundation
Westakkers; 03.789.22.07, www.verbekefoundation.com

Until NOV 15 Artificial Nature, outdoor sculpture and installations by contemporary Belgian and European artists

Leuven

Museum M

Leopold Vanderkelenstraat 28; 016.20.09.09, www.mleuven.be

Until DEC 6 Rogier van der Weyden 1400 | 1464 Master of Passions, work by the 15th-century Brussels city painter, the first exhibition in Leuven's new museum

Machelen-Zulte

Het Roger Raveelmuseum
Gildestraat 2-8; 09.381.60.00, www.rogerraveelmuseum.be

NOV 1-FEB 21 Espace: Raveel en Nederland (Raveel and the Netherlands), paintings

Mechelen

Speelgoedmuseum (Toy Museum)
Nekkerspoelstraat 21; 015.55.70.75, www.speelgoedmuseum.be

Until JAN 3 Thirty-five years of Playmobil

Tervuren

Royal Museum for Central Africa

Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11, www.africamuseum.be

Until JAN 3 Persona: Ritual Masks and Contemporary Art, masks from the museum's and other collections, shown alongside works by contemporary African artists



Europalia China: Festival celebrating Chinese art and culture, ancient to contemporary, with more than 450 events
Until JAN 30 across the country www.europalia.eu

Festival of Flanders: Major annual event encompassing seven festivals across Flanders, with dozens of cities staging hundreds of classical and contemporary performances and related events
Until OCT 30 across Brussels and Flanders www.festivalvlaanderen.be

Opera in the Cinema: Opera performances on the big screen
Until MAY 1 in Kinopolis cinemas across Flanders: **NOV 7** Turandot by Puccini

Brussels

BookSwap: English-language book exchange

NOV 3 20.00 at The Duke Taverne, Aqueductstraat 111-113 bookswapclub@yahoo.com

Brussels 2009 BD Comic Strip: City-wide festival celebrating Brussels-based comic strip artists and the rich history of the Belgian comic

Until DEC 31 across Brussels www.brusselscomics.com

Chippendales: "Only The Best" tour

OCT 30 20.00 at Koninklijk Circus, Onderrichtsstraat 81 0900.26.060, www.proximusgoformusic.be

Freedom Festival: Multidisciplinary festival promoting human rights, with concerts, theatre, performances, exhibitions, screenings and talks

Until OCT 31 at Theatre National, Emile Jacqmainlaan 111-115 www.festivalvandevrijheid.be

Mobicar: International fair for caravans, motor homes

OCT 24-NOV 1 11.00-18.00 at Brussels Expo, Heysel 02.474.89.81, www.mobicar.be

Ghent

Countryside: Lifestyle fair promoting rural activities

OCT 31-NOV 3 10.00-19.00 at Flanders Expo, Maaltekouter 1 09.241.92.11, www.countryside.be

Halloween Party: Expats in Ghent invites everyone to its Halloween party: live music and a free drink if you come in costume

OCT 31 21.00 at Foley's Irish Pub, Recollettenlei 10 www.foleys.be

FACE OF FLANDERS

Jef Nys

Jommeke creator dies at 82

Comic-strip artist Jef Nys died last week at the age of 82 and was buried in the honour garden of the Schoonsehof cemetery in Antwerp, alongside Flemish literary giants such as Hendrik Conscience, Willem Elsschot and Herman De Coninck. It was, in the end, the recognition that had escaped him during his lifetime.

It's been described as the best-behaved of all Flemish comic strips. Certainly it was the best-selling: the adventures of Jommeke, with his trademark bowl-cut hairdo; his friend Filiberke, not quite the full shilling; his acid-tongued parrot Flip; identical twins Anne-mieke and Rose-mieke; and nutty Professor Gobelijn.

The series has sold 55 million albums, which is all the more remarkable considering that Jommeke is virtually unknown outside of Flanders, even in the Netherlands. That may be why, five years ago, Studio 100 declined the opportunity to film what Nys considered his best work - *Kinderen baas* (*The Kids are in Charge*) - after the Flanders Audiovisual Fund refused funding, calling the project "too commercial".

There's also been virtually no merchandising of Jommeke,

though that may change next year when, independent of Nys' death, publisher Ballon Media plans to expand the Jommeke brand.

Although Nys is best known for the 249 *Jommeke* albums (number 250 is scheduled for release in July 2010) and for 11 albums featuring the gnomes Langteen and Schommelbuik, he was more diverse in his earlier years when he drew a whole series of biographies of saints, artists and clerics, including Breughel and Pope Pius X.

Nys' success, however, never quite compensated for the fact that Marc Sleen (*Nero*), Willy Vandersteen (*Suske and Wiske*) and of course Hergé (*Kuifje*) were considered artists, and he wasn't - because Jommeke was aimed at children. Nevertheless, the serried ranks of celebrities and fellow artists who lined up last week to pay tribute testify to Jommeke's effect.

Reading Jommeke albums with my children, I always found them only mildly amusing, with a welcome streak of absurdity in Filiberke and madness in Gobelijn. Jommeke, like Kuifje, I found



ALAN HOPE

bland and colourless.

"In my will it's made very clear that Jommeke must never come in contact with violence, racism, religion or sex," Nys said in an interview in 2003. "I said to myself, Jef, keep Jommeke the way he is. Despite the changing times, you need to provide children with a beacon of light, I think."



→ www.jommeke.com

bite

SHARON LIGHT

Spate of sushi

When I first moved to Brussels five years ago, I went through sushi withdrawal. The best-known places were also incredibly expensive, and it seemed that sushi within my meagre budget range was only the pre-made variety, waiting in a disposable plastic box at Sushi Factory (no, thanks).

Yet slowly but surely, Brussels seems to have cultivated a taste for Japanese fare. Chez Oki opened a few years ago, experimenting with French/Japanese fusion - but still on the pricey side. And then suddenly one day it seemed that little sushi shops started opening all over town. Here's a brief selection of sushi-on-a-shoestring, Brussels style.



Anata This was my saving grace in my early Brussels years. Right next to the Beurs, their menu includes the classic, basic sushi: salmon and tuna in abundance, assorted other fish, a few vegetables. I'm also a fan of their excellent bento boxes. Anata also offers the best service of all the budget sushi restaurants - there are usually multiple chefs in the kitchen/sushi bar, and the staff does its best to serve quickly.

Shilla This Ukkel venue is the newest branch of a chain with locations in Overijse, Amsterdam and Warsaw. The seating area is small but comfortable, the menu is focused on sushi, and you can get a little shopping done in their Japanese mini-mart. Shilla

(and Anata) get extra points for excellent miso soup - very light and not too salty. Bonus: Shilla offers a fidelity card so you can eat your way towards free meals. www.shillaeurope.com

Sushi Shop Although located on Louizalaan, Sushi Shop is surprisingly well priced. This is but one branch of a growing European empire, and a second Brussels site is under construction on the Grote Zavel. The menu is both extensive and adventurous, and the sushi is far and away the most colourful and creative I have seen in Brussels. They also run a busy delivery/take-away service.

Sushi World With branches both in the centre of town and in Sint-Gillis, Sushi World specialises in ambitious flavours and vibrantly coloured sushi. Prices are comparable to Sushi Shop, although the setting is less upscale. There are nice touches, such as serving a "spring" sushi roll (sushi wrapped in rice paper and lettuce instead of nori) with a sweet-and-spicy dipping sauce, and each table is pre-set with both regular and low-sodium soy sauce. I was particularly impressed with their cooked tuna roll: while other venues have simply used the canned stuff, Sushi World offered grilled sushi-grade tuna. Delish. www.sushiworld.be

TALKING DUTCH

ALISTAIR MACLEAN



slaap →

Did you remember to give yourself an extra hour in bed on Sunday? Now, many of us have a few more days of getting up in daylight, but we are still doomed to coming home in the dark for the coming months.

For some, it's time to think about hibernating until the spring. For many, however, sleep is quite elusive. And nowhere in Europe has more insomniacs than Belgium. Or, rather, no one pops as many sleeping pills as the Belgians: 736,000 per day!

Why this should be is a bit of a mystery. Perhaps it's to do with the patient-doctor relationship: if you aren't happy with your doctor, you're free to find another who does prescribe something to see you through the night. One theory is that the patient places the responsibility for a solution on the shoulders of the doctor - *de arts*. The doctor wants to help but often has too little knowledge of alternatives, *en dus schrijft de arts slaappillen voor* - and so the doctor prescribes sleeping pills.

The problem is addiction: *wie aan de pillen verslaafd is, raakt moeilijk van af* - those who become addicted to the pills find it difficult to come off them. Interestingly, *mensen zeggen dat ze niet van slaappillen beter slapen* - people say that they don't sleep better with

sleeping pills, but they keep taking them *vanuit hun afhankelijkheid* - because of their dependency.

And if you need advice on how to get a good night's sleep: *een slaapritueel inbouwen* - build in a sleep ritual; *opletten met koffie en alcohol* - be careful with coffee and alcohol; *geen activiteiten voor het slaapgaan* - no activities before going to sleep; and *opstaan als je liegt te woelen* - get up if you're lying tossing and turning.

A real alternative is to buy a copy of *het Boek van Klaas Vaak* - the *Book of Sleepy Klaas*. As Wil Huygen writes in the introduction, now we know that *de slaap komt met Klaas Vaak* - sleep comes with Klaas Vaak, a little gnome-like chapie whose life's work is to bring sleep to us all. He does this through his expert flicking of *slaapzand* - sleep sand in our eyes each night.

The book describes the intricate preparations he makes every day before setting off on Suzanne, his flying donkey, to send us off to the land of nod. This richly illustrated book shows how Klaas Vaak manages to flick *slaapzand* into the eyes of royalty, prisoners and even one-eyed pirates.

So, see if you can catch a glimpse of Klaas Vaak as he speeds by. When you rub your eyes, you'll know he's been.

The last word →→→

Winning voters

"I try to take the point of view of a Flemish person at home on the couch. The amount of technical information people now receive doesn't necessarily convince them. The way you present something is what counts."

Hilde Crevits, public works and mobility minister, responding to the No vote in the Antwerp "Lange Wapper" referendum

Call to charity

"Beggars are people, our fellow man, for whom we have to get rid of all feelings of anxiety and animosity. A change of mentality is needed, and the MVB measures are anything but helpful." Brussels priest Staf Nimmegheers, on a decision by the public transport authority to discourage passengers from giving to beggars

Right to protest

"There was a strong side-wind, which made the vehicle leave the road. It spun around three times, then rolled over and finally hit a tree and came to rest."

Spokesperson for Belgium's entry in the world championships for solar-powered cars, the Umicore Inspire