

CO2 emissions up 6

The Flemish Environment Agency's latest report reveals that Flanders' carbon dioxide emissions are greater than those allowed by the Kyoto protocol. The government's claim that emissions were down was in reference to much less dangerous gasses


GIFT GUIDE 7

Welcome December holiday shopping instead of running from it with the Flanders Today Gift Guide. We'll show you which streets in which cities to target to make the most of your time

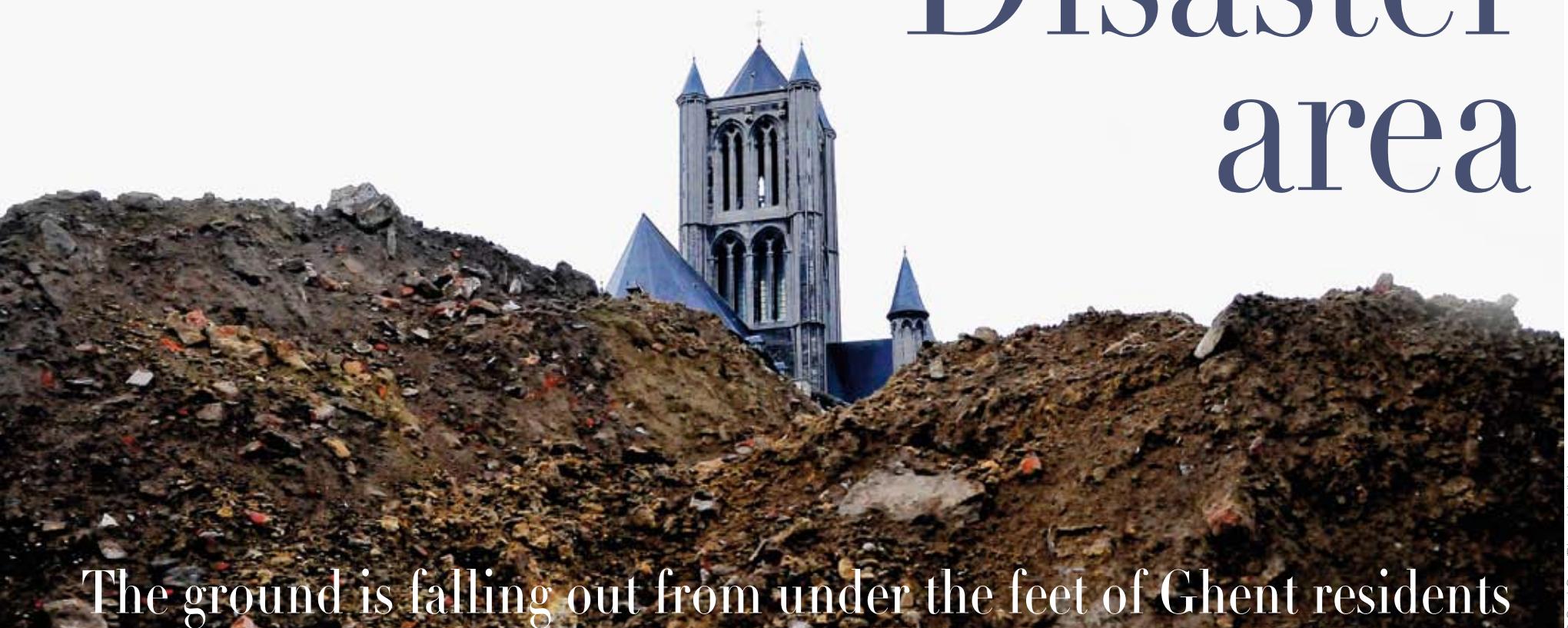

Dossier Koen 11

Koen De Bouw is back in *Dossier K*, a follow-up to the extraordinarily successful film *De zaak Alzheimer*. De Bouw describes the toughest scenes to film, while our critic tells us what to expect from the new flick



#109

Disaster area



© Stad Gent/Dienst Voorlichting

The ground is falling out from under the feet of Ghent residents

NIKOLAJ NIELSEN

The wooden crates of Kandla White Beige stones imported from India have finally arrived, one month later than expected. But here they are, lined up against the Post Plaza, facing the mud caked and potholed Korenmarkt in the historic centre of Ghent. The stones, sawed and then carved by hand, are rectangular with rugged edges and will be used to turn the Korenmarkt

into a striking new square. Once cleaned and arranged, they will shimmer with tones of blue and grey.

"They come from somewhere in Rajasthan," says Paul Robbrecht, one of the chief architects involved in the project. "We checked to make sure the stones were properly excavated in the right way, and that everyone was paid," he adds. The colours match Ghent's historic buildings, but these stones were also selected because

the original quarry, located only 35 kilometres away, that supplied the stones for Ghent's historic churches, is empty.

Cut through the normally picturesque Korenmarkt, both the figurative and literal heart of the city, is a four metre-wide gap for a future tramline that will have a new stop on Cataloniestraat. The tramline dig, resulting in dust as far as the eye can see, is entirely fenced in, and a wooden footbridge allows pedestrians and cyclists to

criss-cross the area. Beyond the fencing, in front of the magnificent 12th-century Sint-Niklaas church – Ghent's oldest – is a yellow bulldozer, construction material and a blue port-a-john.

 ➤ *continued on page 5*


Down to earth

De Winne ends historic space mission

ALAN HOPE

Flemish astronaut Frank De Winne last week landed in Kazakhstan after a six-month stay on board the International Space Station (ISS) as the first European ever to command a mission. De Winne was immediately taken to the Russian base Star City, near Moscow, where he was due to be examined by Professor Floris Wuyts of Antwerp University, an expert on the effects of weightlessness.

De Winne, 48, landed in Kazakhstan in a tiny module along with his Russian and Canadian colleagues Roman Romanenko and Robert Thirsk.

After a six-month stay in space, he looked thin and pale but was otherwise healthy.

After landing, De Winne remained for much of the time lying down, to avoid the shock of suddenly being subject to gravity again after being weightless for so long. One of the immediate effects of gravity is to pull the blood into the legs and away from the brain, heart and other organs. As usual in these situations, De Winne was placed on a tilting table which gradually brings him from a prone position to an angle of about 60 degrees, allowing the body to re-acustom itself to being upright.

➤ Frank De Winne enjoys some fresh fruit after six months of spaceman diet

 ➤ *continued on page 3*



CONTENTS

News 2 - 3

- News in brief
- Fifth Column: Bring in the new
- Smoking ban put off until 2014

Feature 5

- Disaster area: what's going on in Ghent's streets?

Business 6

- Carbon dioxide levels up, not down
- Business in brief

Gift Guide 7 - 10

- Our guide to shopping for gifts in Flanders
- More glühwein? The low-down on Christmas markets

Arts 11

- Dossier K's Koen De Bauw, plus review

Agenda 13-15

- Zita Swoon blows out 15 candles
- Three pages of arts and events

Back page 16

- Face of Flanders: Google Zeitgeist
- Talking Dutch: our language expert looks at Christmas trees
- Bite: Food pairing on the web
- The Last Word: what they're saying in Flanders



FLANDERS TODAY

Independent Newsweekly



Editor: Derek Blyth

Deputy editor: Lisa Bradshaw

News editor: Alan Hope

Agenda: Sarah Crew, Robyn Boyle

Art director: Michel Didier

Prepress: Corelio P&P

Contributors: Rebecca Benoot, Robyn Boyle, Courtney Davis, Emma Portier Davis, Stéphanie Duval, Anna Jenkinson, Sharon Light, Katrien Lindemans, Alistair MacLean, Marc Maes, Ian Mundell, Anja Otte, Saffina Rana, Chrisophe Verbiest

Project manager: Pascale Zoetaert

Publisher: VUM

NV Vlaamse Uitgeversmaatschappij

Gossetlaan 30, 1702 Groot-Bijgaarden

Editorial address: Gossetlaan 30

1702 Groot-Bijgaarden

Tel.: 02.373.99.09 – Fax: 02.375.98.22

E-mail: editorial@flanderstoday.eu

Subscriptions: France Lycops

Tel: 02.373.83.59

E-mail: subscriptions@flanderstoday.eu

Advertising: Evelyne Fregonese

Tel: 02.373.83.57

E-mail: advertising@flanderstoday.eu

Verantwoordelijke uitgever:

Derek Blyth

News in brief

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has appealed against the one-year suspensions of **Yanina Wickmayer** and **Xavier Malisse**, claiming the sentence is not harsh enough. The two stars were suspended in November for failing to declare their whereabouts while on tour, which is against anti-doping rules. Malisse and Wickmayer are also appealing the sentences, claiming they are too severe for a case where no doping is actually involved.

The treasurer of the **Belgian Royal Chess Union** has been accused of embezzling nearly €100,000 from the organisation's funds, the balance of which now stands at no more than €530. The man has admitted the fraud, but the union sees little chance of being able to recuperate its money.

Next year will see the arrival of **charging points for electric cars** in the main Flemish cities, after innovation minister Ingrid Lieten last week set aside €400,000 for pilot projects. The minister also called on companies, universities and government agencies to work together to push forward the initiative. The development of greener cars could also play an important role in the survival of auto manufacturers like Opel Antwerp.

Police last week raided a house in Ganshoren and detained a 20-year-old man alleged to be the hacker who posted **Belgacom client information** on the Internet and threatened to post details of 285,000 accounts if download limits were not increased. The man, who calls himself Vendetta, is reported to have confessed to the offence.

The Muslim executive has accused animal rights organisation GAIA of creating a "media circus" around the **slaughter of animals**. Last week, GAIA released photos of shocking slaughterhouse practices, which the organisation said were linked to the production of halal meat – even though Muslim food laws were not being respected in the cases shown. Muslim executive vice-chair Isabelle Praile called for tighter controls on slaughterhouses.

Shop owners in Dunkirk have protested at a new campaign by their counterparts across the border in Adinkerke to lure **tobacco tourists** to West Flanders to buy cheap cigarettes. Last week the French government increased tobacco excise duties by 6%, leading Flemish tradesmen to start advertising their cheaper wares at the hypermarkets frequented by mainly British day-trippers who travel to Dunkirk for alcohol and cigarettes.



© liz merrill

Amateur art is good for one in three

When she took up her new job as culture minister, Joke Schauvliege was criticised by some of the grandes of the cultural world because, when asked what cultural activity she had last attended, she mentioned an amateur theatre production in Evergem six months previous.

She may have earned the sneers of Erwin Mortier and Tom Lanoye, but she apparently had a direct line to the heart of the electorate. According to a study carried out by Professor Mark Elchardus of the Free University of Brussels (VUB) and a team from the University of Ghent, one in three people in Flanders participated in some artistic activity in the last six months. That's not, like the minister, as a spectator: that's the number of people who actively "do art" in some form or another.

More than one in four described themselves as "regular" practitioners of the arts, including, in first place, photography (nearly 8% of respondents), playing an instrument, keeping a diary or writing down short *pensées*, drawing and something called "multimedia", presumably involving computers, video and/or music.

These regulars are committed: the average amount of time spent on artistic hobbies in a week was 7.6 hours, or the equivalent of three evenings a week. (Or, say, a one-hour piano lesson and less than an hour of practice a day.)

The passion, as is so often the case, dies off with age. The number of 14- to 17-year-olds with an artistic hobby is a staggering 64%, or nearly two in three. By the time we reach the over-65s, the proportion drops off to just 12%.

Kim DeGelder, accused of the murder of two babies and a careworker at a crèche in Dendermonde last January, has been transferred to the high-security wing of Bruges prison "for safety reasons". The prison authority said that De Gelder's medical condition was a cause for concern but denied that he was being treated as a suicide risk.

The federal Kringloopfonds, intended to finance the social economy, including sheltered workshops for the long-term unemployed, has reported a €25 million hole in its budget thanks to investments in CDOs – the controversial collateralised debt obligations that were blamed for bringing down the world financial system in 2008.

The fund raised €75m from private individuals by offering them "ethical investments," but instead put €25m of the money raised into junk obligations, the parliament's social affairs committee heard last week.

The Flemish government has extended the deadline for applying for a premium for the installation of **solar panels**, after heavy demand left many installers without equipment. Applications for the premium, which nevertheless drops from €450 to €350, can be submitted up to 1 March.

Kai-Mook, the baby elephant who this year made Antwerp Zoo front-page news, has been nominated as Product of the Year by the Ghent-based Marketing Foundation. Voting from 21 December at www.standaard.biz/productvan2009. Results on 2 January



De Winne ends historic space mission

→ *continued from page 1*

De Winne was also subjected to a centrifuge chair, which spins 42 revolutions a minute to exert a force of 1G on the occupant. The purpose of the experiment is to see if the extra gravity helps astronauts recover more quickly. If so, it might be possible to use it to help combat the effects of ageing in ordinary people.

While on the mission, De Winne's crew carried out a number of experiments, including looking at the effects of a vacuum on the production of soap bubbles and the

development of an environmentally friendly soap and on the crystallisation of proteins for the production of medications. They also conducted practical tests on a wearable augmented-reality computer.

De Winne, Romanenko and Thirsk left behind two remaining crew members, the Russian Maxim Surayev and the American Jeff Williams, who took over from De Winne as commander. Three more astronauts – from Russia, the US and Japan – will arrive on 23 December. ♦

ISS facts and figures

- *total distance travelled by Frank De Winne:* over 100 million kilometres
- *length of mission:* 188 days
- *days served as mission commander:* 46
- *maximum altitude:* 400km
- *time taken to descend in landing module:* 3.5 hours

VUB awards international doctorates

The Free University of Brussels (VUB) awarded nine honorary doctorates this week to a variety of international personalities.

Chris Van den Wyngaert is a professor at the University of Antwerp, as well as a judge on the International Criminal Tribunal at The Hague. She previously served

on the UN's Yugoslavia tribunal, where she was the lead judge in the trial of war criminal Radovan Karadzic.

Herman Van Veen (pictured) is a renowned Dutch cabaret performer, who has also performed in French, German and English. A singer, storyteller, painter and musician, he is also an activist for the rights of the child and long-time goodwill ambassador for Unicef.

Johann Olav Koss is a Norwegian doctor and former top skater, as well as founder of Right to Play, which helps bring play and sport to children in some of the world's most disadvantaged areas. Jacques Moeraert, meanwhile, is better known as the political cartoonist ZAK whose work appears in *De Morgen* and *De Volkskrant*.

Dutch physicist Ad Bax was awarded the honour for his lead-

ing research into nuclear magnetic resonance, the science at the basis of MRI examinations. He now works for the National Institutes of Health in the US. Also in the US, Daniel Gould is a specialist in sports science and psychology and an expert in the relations between stress and sporting performance. He has also carried out research into the role of parents in the development of top tennis players.

David Garland, meanwhile, lectures in law and sociology at New York University, with a speciality in penal policy, the death penalty and social solidarity, while Bruno S Frey is a Swiss economist and authority on welfare economics. In 2004 he was appointed to a panel to look into alternative solutions to global problems.

Finally, VUB awarded an honorary doctorate to Sir John B Gurdon,



the British developmental biologist who played a pioneering role in research into cloning and cell nucleus transplantation. ♦

→ www.vub.be

New device reduces risk of blood clots

Belgian surgeons last week celebrated "an enormous breakthrough", with the implantation of a new type of artificial heart valve in a 70-year-old man suffering from atrial fibrillation. The Watchman implant is designed to stop blood clots from travelling to the brain, where they can cause strokes and even death. The device has never before been implanted in Belgium.

Atrial fibrillation is the most common sort of heart-rhythm disturbance, in which the muscles of the two upper chambers, the atria, quiver instead of contract in a normal heartbeat. An estimated 100,000 to 300,000 people in Belgium suffer from the condition, which leads to fatigue, weakness and shortness of breath. Because blood does not circulate properly, it can form clots, which can then travel through the arteries to the brain. The problem has until now been treated with blood thinners, but they increase the possibility of internal bleeding.

The Watchman implant prevents this by stopping clots from leaving the atria and going into the arteries. Last week's surgery was carried out by Pedro Brugada, scientific director of the Centre for Heart and Vascular Diseases at the Free University Hospital in Jette. The whole procedure is estimated to cost about €5,000, which is less than a long-running course of blood thinners. ♦

Smoking ban in 2014 at the latest

A total ban on smoking in bars will be introduced in July 2014 at the latest, according to a compromise proposal agreed last week by representatives of the coalition parties. Earlier in the week it had seemed likely the ban would fail, after French-speaking socialist leader Elio Di Rupo gave his backing to Flemish liberal opposition.

The compromise extends the timetable initially contained in a bill approved by the Senate last month, which would have seen all bars become smoke free by 2012. That date is still in the compromise, but now as a target rather than a strict deadline.

The agreement reached last week now clears the way for a restricted ban to come into force on January 1, 2010 which will make it illegal to smoke in all establishments where food is served. (The new measure includes olive and cheese plates, but excludes snacks like potato chips and peanuts.)

The January ban is expected to be approved by the public health committee and the full chamber this week. The government will later bring forward a bill on the full ban and begin discussions with the catering industry on the details. ♦

FIFTH COLUMN

ANJA OTTE

Bring in the new

There are two contenders left in the elections for the new Open VLD president, to succeed the eternal Guy Verhofstadt: Marino Keulen and Alexander De Croo.

Keulen is relatively well known as a former Flemish minister. As minister of the interior, he was the one who blocked the appointment of three French-speaking mayors after they had broken language laws several times. This has given him an undeserved reputation as a Flemish hardliner, whereas in fact Keulen is one of the most soft spoken and affable of politicians (which makes one wonder: is this what Open VLD needs to become successful again?).

Keulen is also a protégé of Patrick Dewael, who, along with Verhofstadt, is one of the "old guard" within Open VLD. If anything, he stresses continuity. He does not want Open VLD to run any risks. Which is exactly what Alexander De Croo represents. The 33-year-old party member has never been elected and, for all the elections in this country, has only been a candidate in one of them. Still, he is a household name, for he is the son of Herman De Croo, one of the most colourful characters in Belgian politics.

Herman De Croo is a traditional liberal, who wants little to do with anything modern and has never shied away from rendering small services for any of his voters. This has made him quite popular, or has given him, in his own words, a "high penetration grade" in his constituency.

Herman De Croo is notorious for several things. For one, he is particularly clever at manoeuvring within Open VLD. He is respected by the militants but has never been taken entirely seriously by the so-called establishment of Verhofstadt and Dewael. He is also known for speaking his very own variant of the Dutch language, a mixture of East-Flemish dialect, Gallicisms and self-invented expressions he calls "Decrooisms". Finally, he seems to have been around forever and plans to stick around for much longer. "I will stay in the House of Representatives until I die," he said. "At which point I will move on to the Senate."

His son Alexander now profiles himself as a bit of a rebel. He shrugs off his lack of experience. "If that is what you want, you have to pick someone who has been in parliament since 1830 [the date of Belgian independence]," he says. "And that can only be my father."

THE WEEK IN FIGURES



7%

increase in the use of drugs within Belgian prisons, according to a report from the prisons authority. More than one in three of the country's 10,000 prisoners admitted to using drugs during the past year, mainly cannabis, heroin and tranquillisers

858

businesses went bankrupt in November, bringing the total for the year so far to 8,684, a 13% rise on the same period in 2008. The catering industry, construction, transport and telecoms were the sectors hardest hit

23h 47min

spent per week on housework by women, according to the Institute for Equality between men and women. Men on average devote only 13h 52m to household tasks

€40

cost of hiring a Norway spruce for the Christmas season, under a plan operated by Champwell Biopromo of Arendonk. The trees will be taken away and replanted in January near the Francorchamps race track (see Talking Dutch, page 16)



A new events series in the capital of Europe

"Brussels meets Europe" is an initiative of British Chamber of Commerce in Belgium, AmCham Belgium, Beci (Brussels Enterprises Commerce and Industry), and The Bulletin. These organisations are joining forces to organise four high-level events per year, each with a well-known speaker from a particular field. For the third Brussels Meets Europe Business Networking Lunch, we warmly invite you to join us and listen to:



Thomas Leysen,
Chairman of VBO-FEB/Chairman of Umicore

"Brussels & Europe, living apart together"

December 15 2009,
12.00-14.15

Sheraton Hotel – Place Rogier
3 – 1210 Brussels (Close to
metro Rogier, Brussels North
train station and public car park
Rogier)
Price: €85 – All included
(cocktail, lunch and service
charges).

Registration requirements:

Reservation deadline:
11 December, 2009.
Space is limited.
Register with an email to
events@ackroyd.be with your
full contact details and make a
bank transfer to KBC account:
432-2012221-02 (85€/
participant).

Please clearly mention the
number of people attending and
your name on the bank transfer
form.

You will receive your reservation
number once the payment has
been registered.
Invoice upon request.
For more information, please
call 02.373.83.25.

Thomas Leysen, born in 1960, has
been Chairman of Umicore since
November 2008.

He holds a Master of Law Degree
from the University of Leuven
(Belgium) and began his career in
the maritime business in Hamburg,
London and Tokyo. From 1983 to 1988,
he managed the Transcor group,
which he built into an international oil
and coal trading company with activi-
ties in Europe, America and Asia.

He joined Umicore in 1993 as
member of the Executive Committee,
and successively managed several
industrial divisions. He became
Executive Vice President of the com-
pany in 1998 and Chief Executive
Officer from May 2000 to November
2008.

In addition, Leysen is Chairman of
the Board of Corelio, Belgium's largest
newspaper-publishing group, member
of the Board of CMB (Compagnie
Maritime Belge), UCB, Norddeutsche
Affinerie, Etex Group as well as member of
the Supervisory Board of Bank Metzler in
Frankfurt.

He is Chairman of FEB – VBO (Federation
of Belgian Enterprises) and past Chairman
of Eurométaux (the European metals indus-
try federation). He is also President of the
BJA (Belgium-Japan Association) and a
member of the Trilateral Commission and of
the European Round Table of Industrialists
(ERT).

Within the cultural sphere, Leysen is
member of the board of trustees of the
Rubens House Museum in Antwerp and
chairman of the Art Purchase Fund of the
Fondation Roi Baudouin.

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**

Disaster area

Ghent's Kobra project is scheduled to be complete by 2013

» *continued from page 1*

Anyone who has been to Ghent in the last few months cannot have missed it: two of the city's main downtown squares, located next to one another, have been demolished in the city's most ambitious development project in 40 years.

For the moment, the massive engine of the bulldozer is silent, the black smoke and fumes gone. Near the wooden footbridge, a lone Hema employee is handing out flyers to indifferent tourists and locals.

The people rushing through this area are going somewhere else – away from the stacked concrete pipes, the deep trenches and multi-coloured hoses. Almost nobody, except the frustrated employees and owners of surrounding businesses, will remain when the machines start once again early Monday morning.

Johan de Baet, who owns the Du Progress family restaurant on Korenmarkt, is patiently waiting for it all to end. "Business has been down by 30%," he says. Today, on this brisk November Saturday afternoon, the majority of his tables are empty.

As one couple prepares to leave, De Baet embraces them, a peck on the cheek, and wishes them a pleasant day. He hands them a chocolate given to him by the city officials. On the wrapper is written in Dutch: "Hang on a little bit. Construction is almost finished. Look inside." Despite the loss in revenue, Johan supports the

Korenmarkt renovation project scheduled for completion in March 2010. "In the end, it will be worth it," he says.

"We shut several times because we couldn't even get in. Luckily, we have some die-hard football fans"

Wannes Haghebaert, the city of Ghent's Project Communicator, explains that businesses that are losing revenue can, under a set of criteria, obtain financial assistance. But in real terms, the amount offered is insufficient, according to one business owner.

"It's like €80 a day," says Emma Lawrence, who runs the The Celtic Towers on another part of Korenmarkt. "It's not even worth the paper work. We shut several times because we couldn't even get in. Luckily, we have some die-hard football fans."

Lawrence, who comes from the south of England, has been running Celtic Towers



Businesses at the foot of Sint-Michiel's Bridge, including The Celtic Towers pub (right), are suffering but hopeful



The promise of the future: models show the public – and frustrated business owners – what their downtown will look like when the last stone is laid

for two years and says they've lost 50% of their business. The pub, ideally located at the foot of Sint-Michiel's bridge, once had an outdoor terrace that ran the length of the building. Outside, the pub's Eire flag waves in a strong wind above a narrow sidewalk where people now rub shoulders to pass one another.

Just beyond the sidewalk, behind a chain-link fence, is a large pit for a future underground bicycle shelter and a public toilet facility. Where the bridge ends,

the ground drops to a clean layer of concrete surrounded by broken earth. At the far end, are two small bulldozers with their shovels turned down into the mud.

In the pub, the warm glow of the candles on the tables radiate onto the burgundy red walls and crossed wooden beams. Lawrence takes an order from a table of British customers. Two young men are seated at the bar. The pub is mostly empty. "It's going to be an amazing place when it's finished," says Lawrence as she peers out the window. "It's worth it if you can survive."

Both the Korenmarkt and the bicycle shelter at Sint-Michiel's bridge belong to the first phase of

the city's Kobra project. Managed by the Flemish Region, Kobra is a three-phase development project that started this year and will end in 2013. The first phase rings up at nearly €6 million.

Each phase runs for two years. And each phase requires a new assessment which, according to the co-coordinator of the Objective II for the city Ghent, is a huge administrative hassle. Nobody knows, for instance, how the remaining two phases will be financed.

Objective II is an EU-approved European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) finance scheme that hands out money for urban renewal projects. Forty percent of the funding for phase one of the Kobra project comes from the ERDF. The city of Ghent funds 50%, and the remaining 10% is provided by a consortium of Flemish businesses.

Emile Brauplein, just next door to Korenmarkt between the belfry and Sint-Niklaas church, will have a small sloping green and an open wooden pavilion equipped with a bicycle shelter and a café. But that has to wait until 2011. At the moment, it is an archaeological site where researchers are currently digging around in 800 year-old remains found below the leftover cellars of buildings that were demolished on the site in the 1960s.

Ice skaters will have the opportunity to glide across the 13th- to 19th-century ruins on Emile Brauplein during the annual Christmas market, which will continue as usual on the square, as well as on the nearby Sint-Baafsplein.

The second phase of the Kobra project, which is scheduled for 2011, also involves turning Goudenleeuwplein and the Poeljemarkt into squares. A new municipal hall is scheduled for phase three. ♦

» www.gent.be/kobra



Emile Brauplein has become an archaeological site after 13th-century foundations were found while digging up the square

- 1) high wage costs
- 2) constantly changing regulations
- 3) paperwork

→ www.waarwakkervanligt.be

Carbon dioxide emissions fail Kyoto norms

Although other emissions are down, CO2 is up by 7%

ALAN HOPE

Flanders produced more carbon dioxide last year than the Kyoto protocol allows, despite claims from the environment minister Joke Schauvliege that the norms had been met, the independent Flemish Environment Agency (VMM) has revealed. As world leaders meet in Copenhagen for the climate change summit this week, the detailed breakdown by the VMM shows there is more work to be done in Flanders than previously thought.

The Kyoto protocol set a target for Flanders of a 5.2% decrease in the emission of greenhouse gases over the period 2008-2012, compared to the reference year 1990. In fact, the total reduction in greenhouse gases between 1990 and 2008 was more than 10% – leading to Schauvliege's triumphant announcement earlier this year when the figures became known.

But all greenhouse gases are not equal, and the reduction was mainly a result of less methane, nitrous oxide and chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), which are used as refrigerants, solvents and propellants. As far as carbon dioxide is concerned, 2008 saw emissions 7% higher in Flanders than in 1990. Moreover, CO2 contributes the most to global climate change, according to VMM, because it is produced in greater quantities. It is also one of the gases members of the public can do something about, by moderating consumption of fossil fuels – by far the largest source of CO2 emissions.

Industry and power account for more than one-half of all emissions of CO2. Nitrous oxide is produced by agriculture and methane from livestock. CO2 is also produced by traffic, and emissions are rising compared to 1990 levels because there are more vehicles in circulation travelling on average greater distances. ♦

→ www.vmm.be



Industry and power are the main sources of greenhouse gases

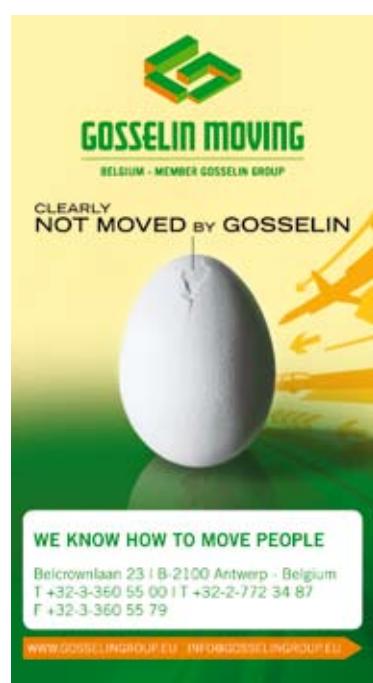
Unemployment growing faster in Flanders

Unemployment in Flanders rose by 20.7% in the year to end October – more than double the increase seen in Wallonia and Brussels, according to figures released by the state employment agency RVA. There were 163,169 people out of work and receiving benefits in October, exactly 28,000 more than the same time a year before.

Wallonia has more unemployment in absolute figures: 200,608, but the annual increase was only 4.3%. In Brussels, the growth in the jobless figures came to 6.5%, while the national average stands at 10%.

However, the number of long-term unemployed is falling. Just over 195,000 people across the country have been out of work for two years or more – nearly 58,000 of them in Flanders. Men are the most affected, and men under 25 most of all: the annual increase in that segment of the population was 34%, bringing the total to 23,895.

Although the figures for September and October were better than those for the summer months, with 6,832 fewer unemployed in Belgium, and 3,675 fewer in Flanders, it's too early to speak of a recovery. According to Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters, by the end of 2010 unemployment in the region will have gone up by 43% on 2008 figures, with no sign of an improvement before 2011. ♦



Black boxes planned for restaurants and cafés

New restaurants will from next year be obliged to install a "black box" in their cash registers, in accordance with a new law that aims to combat VAT fraud in the industry. The black box will be legally required in all eating establishments, including snack bars and cafés, by January 2013. Analogous to the flight data recorder aboard an aircraft, the box records two types of information: the hours worked by each member of a restaurant's personnel and all financial transactions. The box – in fact a software application – cannot be tampered with and will be available to inspectors for checks on working

hours and tax declarations. The catering industry is recognised as being one of the worst offenders in both tax evasion and employing illegal staff. Restaurant owners regularly take cash payments that never pass through the books. The industry is also a centre of underground economy, with staff working either entirely or partly undeclared hours, allowing them to escape taxation, while their employers escape social security charges. According to some estimates, 54% of hours worked in the industry are undeclared, and up to 30% of total income is undeclared. ♦

The government's agreement to cut VAT on restaurant meals from 21% to 12% from January was linked to a serious plan to tackle these two problems. The restaurant industry is likely to benefit more than customers from the VAT cut, as most owners have said that saving will only be passed on to customers in small part, if at all. Some industry representatives have warned, on the contrary, that the fight against tax fraud will impose up to 20% extra costs on owners, which could lead to higher prices in restaurants. ♦

THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Banking • BNP Paribas Fortis

BNP Paribas Fortis, the country's largest financial institution, will open an additional 24 private banking centres in the country over the next three years. This will bring the total to 35 locations, most of them in Flanders.

Brewing • AB InBev

Leuven-based AB InBev, the world's largest beer group, has finalised the sale of its Central European activities to the CVC Capital group for some \$2.2 billion. Meanwhile, the company is rumoured to have turned down a €1.7 billion offer from Bain Capital for its stake in the German Beck's beer company.

Cars • sales

Sales of new cars jumped nearly 16% in November to 35,136 registrations, the first increase in a year. Over the past 12 months, sales have dropped 12.5% on average. The current market leader is Renault, followed by Peugeot, Citroen and Volkswagen.

Chemicals • Solvay

Brussels-based chemicals and plastics company Solvay has inaugurated a €10 million ethylene carbonate plant in South Korea. Ethylene carbonate is a chemical additive that extends the capacity and life of batteries.

Economy • Consumer confidence

Business confidence rose sharply in November – the biggest monthly increase since the spring of 1999, according to the National Bank. The composite indicator was higher for the eighth consecutive month, spurred on by an upturn in the manufacturing sector.

Retail • Kipling

Bag and luggage company Kipling has inaugurated a new store design concept in the Wijnegem shopping centre, near Antwerp.

Retail • Metro

German retailer Metro has plans to develop its activities in Flanders with the opening of Cash & Carry stores in Ghent and Bruges over the next two years. The company, which already operates six hypermarkets under the Makro brand, is introducing the Cash & Carry concept for buyers for businesses and non-profit organisations.

Telecoms • Belgacom

Belgacom, the country's largest telecommunications group, could be privatised before 2015, according to economy minister Vincent Van Quickenborne. The Belgian state currently owns 53% of the company.



FLANDERS TODAY

Gift Guide

2009

Ghent!

A daunting-sounding street – Serpentstraat – nevertheless offers the best shopping in the shortest amount of time in Ghent



Leuven!

Find the street that Flanders forgot in Leuven, where you can escape the crowds and shop for gifts. Will wonders never cease

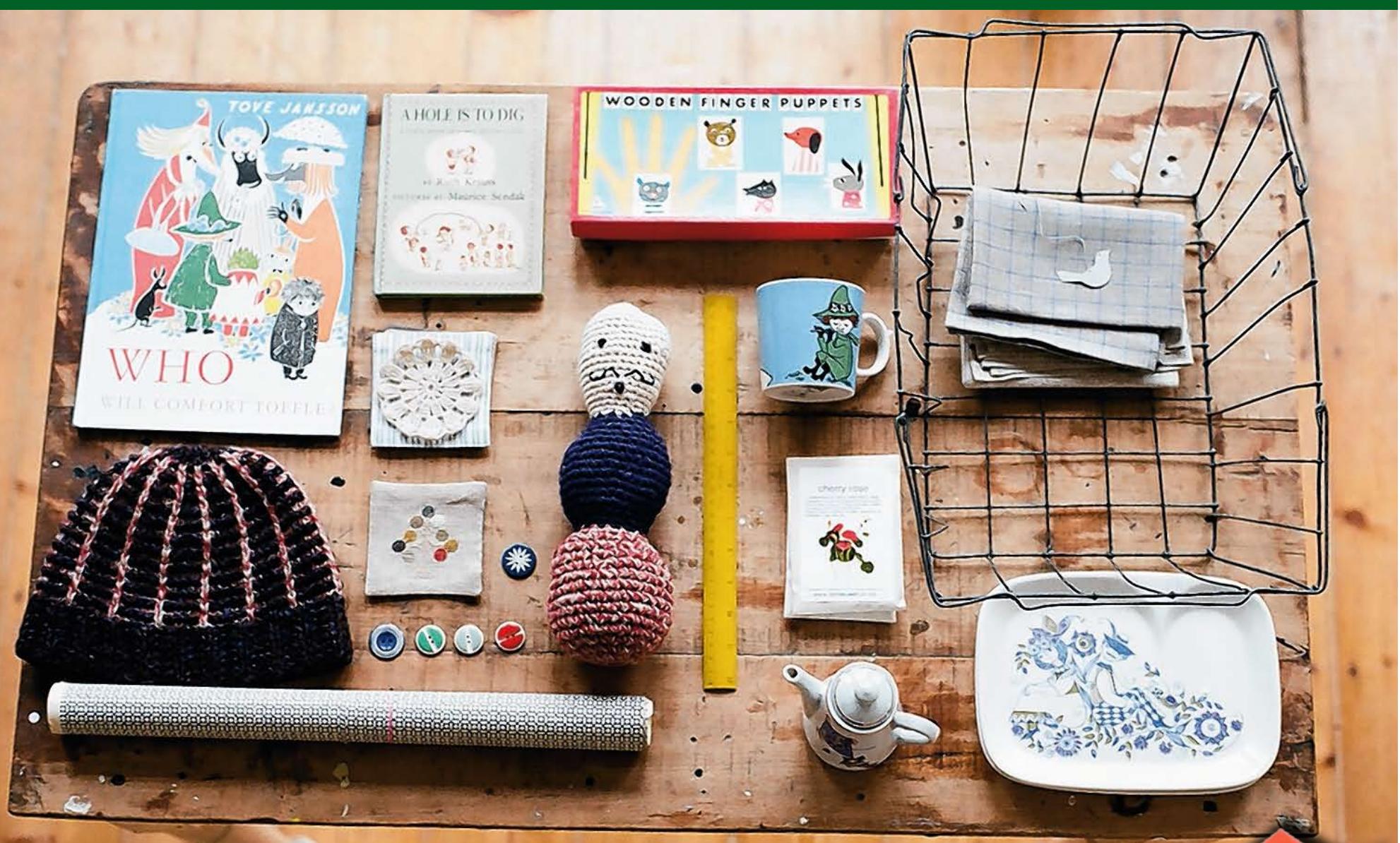


Bruges!

In a city internationally famous for its holiday atmosphere and shopping, you can pick up luxury goods for pets and the best deals on the best beer in the country



THE BEST SHOPPING STREETS IN ANTWERP, BRUSSELS, GHENT, LEUVEN AND BRUGES



Simple pleasures

It's time to buy the presents. This energises some people and makes others want to go into hibernation until spring – or at least until after the holidays. These people were our guiding lights as we went into our Gift Guide this year: how do we make holiday shopping less stressful? we asked ourselves. One idea stood out among the rest: stay away from the "shopping centre".

In Flanders, that can mean a mall – like Antwerp's Wijnegem

Shopping Centre or Brussels' City 2. But that can also mean the dreaded "shopping street". You know what we mean. While these might be the places to go for the January sales, we like to think that holiday shopping should be...dare we say it...fun. It should be a discovery tour, where you find unique objects people will really love, and where you enjoy the process of finding them.

So we looked in five cities for five very special streets. We

sought side streets that are less hectic, that offer an eclectic variety and that are – even during the busiest time of the year – friendly. These are places where shopkeepers still say hello, where the gift wrapping is free of logos, where the little cafe still has a table and where cobblestones twinkle under the falling snow. (Ok, we might have gotten a little carried away with that last one.) Happy holidays and enjoy your shopping experience



What to buy in ...

Aalmoezenierstraat, Antwerp

STÉPHANIE DUVAL

There is one street in Antwerp people tend to overlook, and it puzzles me not only because it is right off of Nationalestraat (one of the most popular shopping streets in Flanders' capital of shopping) but also because there are just too many great little stores to ignore. I'm talking about the Aalmoezenierstraat: a heaven for fashion addicts, foodies, gadget aficionados and fans of vintage and quirky design. In other words: the ideal place to shop for presents.

You'll find high fashion for smaller budgets at the **Labels Inc** outlet (n°4) and for bigger budgets at couture boutique **Sien** (n°2). Right across the street, at **De Spaanse Olijfboom**, there's plenty of choice between olive oils, authentic **Pata Negra** and even terracotta pots for kitchen freaks (n°3A). Pop into **Carl Tackoen** for design objects to spoil the party hostess (n°22) or find your music buff cousin a rare album at **Vinyl Records** (n°27).

Very few women would be unhappy to unwrap a cute purse, so make sure to drop by **Bonaventura** (n°38). This beautiful, tiny shop surprisingly houses the biggest collection of vintage handbags in Antwerp. If you are looking for something a little more out of the ordinary, **Gizmode** is the place to be. You'll go wild discovering all of the techie gadgets and original interior objects (n°33).

My two favourite stores, however, are focused on kids. Find your little ones a cool tin toy or piece of clothing at **Little Vintage** (n°3) or a creative gift at **Mieke Willems** (n°28). The latter is filled with rare finds from Japan and elsewhere, including homemade interior decorations and vintage furniture (see photo on the previous page). So you're bound to leave with something for yourself as well. But hey, who said you couldn't buy yourself something this season?



They're meant for your sandwich, but you can find lots of uses for these cool plastic boxes from Gizmode



Japanese *kokeshi* dolls at Cha Yuan in Brussels



Flanders Today tip: nearly everybody drinks tea

Baljuwstraat, Brussels

KATRIEN LINDEMANS

Halfway along the famous Louizalaan you'll find a side street called Baljuwstraat, a must to visit if you're looking for presents. There are a few obvious gift shops: chocolate shop **Irsi** (n°15) has a special champagne chocolate for the holidays, and in **Vinothèque Velu Vins** (n°106) you can taste almost everything before purchasing. Visit **Le Bridgeur** (n°61) if you're looking for a wooden board game or any present related to bridge.

But a few of Baljuwstraat's shops are different. **Home Factory** (n°63) sells household items with a twist. How about a humorous doormat to enter the New Year? Or give love and warmth to your beloved with a heart-shaped hot water bottle. All items have great gift potential and come in a wide price range.

For more serene gifts, have a look in **Cha Yuan** (n°97). Besides tea, you'll find beautiful Chinese cups and teapots, and even CDs with Zen music. This shop also sells traditional, handmade *kokeshi* dolls. Although there is a lot of disagreement on the history of these wooden dolls, some people claim they were originally made by farmers from leftover wood and given as a token of love to family and friends.

Zao (n°96) must be the shop with the most gift items per square metre – from cute baby outfits and toys, to rabbit-shaped candles, elegant notebooks, perfume and cream made from olives. Finally, don't forget to spoil yourself with a new outfit for the holidays. Outlet store **DOD**'s women's shop (n°64) stocks evening dresses by Valentino and Armani and party outfits and heels by many other designers. Make sure you've finished your Christmas shopping before entering this shop, because the four floors of fashion will keep you very busy.

Parijsstraat, Leuven

REBECCA BENOOT

Running parallel with the Oude Markt, Parijsstraat is an aptly-named narrow street with elegant, towering town houses, where funky little shops have replaced the usual chain stores. Pedestrianised and eclectic, it honestly puts the joy of shopping and giving back in those few short weeks of December that have become something of a consumer-crazed nightmare.

For foodies, **Il Pastaio** (n°33) is excellent for Italian delicacies, and **Vinipure** (n°20) offers a superb selection of wines. There are plenty of gift shops in the Parijsstraat ranging from jewellery to classy knick knacks, but for something truly special, I suggest you pay a visit to Marleen Gielen (n°51). Her tiny shop carries a beautiful range of custom-made hats, an excellent gift for fashionistas.

At the other end of the spectrum, **Twits**, a dynamic skate/snowboard shop offers the latest trends and best brands for

adrenaline junkies (n°44). Music lovers will probably also be excited to find a cool and colourful Skullcandy headphone in their stocking, exclusively at Twits. If it's music that you are in fact after, also check out **JJ Records** (n°32). This small shop has an impressive selection of alternative and old-school rock music, including plenty of underground Belgian bands. They also sell vinyl, collector's items and concert tickets.

Graphic novels are really hot right now, so head to **Het Besloten Land** (n°16) where you'll find a wide variety of commercial hits and some harder-to-find comics. Cool gadgets and figurines of beloved cartoon characters are also on hand. Finally, **Smuk** (n°14) is the perfect place for handmade mugs and bowls. You'll also find rather fabulous lamps, plus clothes, and even art from the gallery upstairs.





Vlamingstraat, Bruges

ALAN HOPE

You might think €159 is a fair price for a cashmere sweater, until you discover it is only 30 centimetres long. Surprise, it's for your lapdog, the sort of lapdog, in fact, who might favour a Toile de Jouy collar costing €59, or one with dangling pompons from Hermès for €135.

They're all at **D&V Luxury Pet** (n°8), opened just a month ago by Franck Degryse and Marjorie Verbraeken, who, despite their Flemish names, are from Northern France. The shop is just off the tourist-dominated Markt, on the sedate Vlamingstraat.

"Like everyone else, we came here on a holiday, and it struck us that there was room here to bring in a French concept that didn't exist yet in Belgium," says Degryse. The concept is simple: luxurious clothing, accessories and equipment for dogs and cats. The top-of-the-line items are miniature couches for your pet to lounge on, in fabric for €299 or in leather for €375. There are carrying bags Mariah Carey would covet between €89 and €349. But the range also includes feeding dishes going all the way down to €7 for a chic, designer plastic model, just big enough for a spoonful of caviar, perhaps.

Up the street, where Vlamingstraat turns into Academiestraat on the way to the public library, is **Bacchus Cornelius** (n°17), owned by Inge Corneillie, an aficionado of beer. And not only beer, but also wine and jenever, a chocolate-flavoured version of which she makes herself (about €12.30). She's also one of only a few women to have a diploma in jenever connoisseurship.

But it's the beer that overwhelms. You've surely seen shops with many kinds of beers before, but never with a range this exotic. Everywhere you look there's another variety you've never heard of and will probably never hear of again: Sint Canarus Tripel, Lam Gods, Moeder Overste and Ezel, all between €1 and €2 per bottle. There's the very attractive Brugse Zot in a huge bottle for €9.30, and the Vuuve ale with spices, which tastes better if mulled.

There are also, for the man who has everything, glasses for every sort of beer imaginable, and unlike some shops in more touristy areas both in Bruges and in Brussels, you won't come away feeling as if you'd been fleeced.

Serpentstraat, Ghent

COURTNEY DAVIS

Don't let the shortness of this narrow pedestrian street off of Vrijdagmarkt fool you. Many an innocent soul has thought that they were just going to cut straight through it and has wound up trapped for hours.

Zoot Costumiers (n°8) is where to go for the fashion hipster in your life. The clothing is by designers with a vintage bent; Belgian brands like Lovely Mariquita and Red Juliet are sold along with Zoot's own popular label. A baby-blue sailor dress is €113.

Next door is **Zsa Zsa Rouge** (n°22) for all things kitsch and totally random: in other words, excellent gifts, including brightly coloured bike bags, polka-dotted flamenco shoes (for only €41) and a cut-to-order range of retro plastic table linens. Right across the street is **Petit Zsa Zsa** (n°5), for parents who want their kids to be cooler than they are. It's pricey but posh: tiny Ego Mania t-shirts are €37 and soft plush toys about €20.

New age is the name of the game at **Dhoogpoorte** (n°1), which carries music, accessories and a large range of books, from numerology to medicinal herbs – mostly in Dutch but a few in English. A good selection of high-quality incense is found here, including the perennial hippie favourite nag champa.

Skazou (n°20), a women's fashion boutique, is the new kid on the block, having been open for only three months. But it's a welcome addition: a distinct style that attracts art teacher or yoga instructor types, with flowing dresses, long necklaces and a lot of linen. The prices are surprisingly low: a simple, comfy sweater is €42; a scarf you can wear six different ways is €30.

Ruth's Place (n°9) is a Mecca of pottery and, oddly, plastic flowers. It's full of unique hand-crafted items from all over Europe, including Belgium, and it's hard to tell who is friendlier, Ruth or the Labrador parked at the door.

You'd be remiss to not stop in the 25-year-old **Popville** (n°26b), home of not just hundreds of records but posters, graphic novels and vintage furniture and accessories. Musty and cluttered, you can dig for treasures, like the Las Vegas Grind vol 4 for €15.

If you plan ahead, make a reservation to relax at the always-packed **Marco Polo** (n°11), an intimate, rustic Italian restaurant on Serpentstraat that features local ingredients and adheres to the Slow Food movement.



Holiday markets and other icy diversions

Brussels

Christmas Market around the Beurs, on Vismarkt and on Sint-Katelijneplein until 3 Jan

Ice skating rink on the Vismarkt until 3 Jan

Guest country on Sint-Katelijneplein: Mongolia

The ooze of Reblochon cheese over the potatoes in the steaming plate of Tartiflette at the Brussels Christmas Market is hardly manageable with a plastic fork in gloved hands. But this indulgence, along with deep fried bananas, mulled wine and the quiet exhilaration of the big wheel ride that follows has become a ritual to welcome the arrival of winter.

→ www.winterinterpret.be



© Tony Gleeson

Ghent

Christmas Markt on Sint-Baafsplein until 30 Dec

Ice-skating rink on Emile Braunplein until 10 Jan

East Flanders products holiday market, 20 Dec, Het Groot Vleeshuis, Groetenmarkt

Don't let the horror of our cover story this week keep you out of Ghent for the annual Christmas Market. Sint-Baafsplein is one of the squares spared by construction, and the ice rink will go right over the archaeological dig on Emile Braunplein. Ghent's market is small but chic – less of the silly trinkets, more of the hand-crafted scarves. Live musicians and dancing elderly couples defy the chill in the air.

→ www.visitgent.be

Bruges

Snow and Ice Sculpture Festival on Stationsplein until 10 Jan (theme: Ice Age 3)

Christmas Market on the Markt and Simon Stevinklein and Walplein until 3 Jan

Ice skating rink on the Markt until 3 Jan

Flanders Today tip: the best waffles in Flanders are sold on the Simon Stevinklein during Bruges' annual Christmas market. Do yourself a favour and ask for the chocolate sauce

→ www.winterinbrugge.be



Mechelen

Christmas Market on Grote Market, 18-20 December

Short but sweet is the Mechelen holiday market, with a host of live entertainment and horse-drawn carriage rides. If you don't live there, it's worth a day trip

→ www.kerstmarktmechelen.be



Antwerp

Christmas Market on Groenplaats until 27 Dec

Ice skating rinks on Grote Markt until 3 Jan

Winter Barbecue on Grote Markt on 27 Dec from 13.00

→ www.antwerpen.be/winter



Hasselt

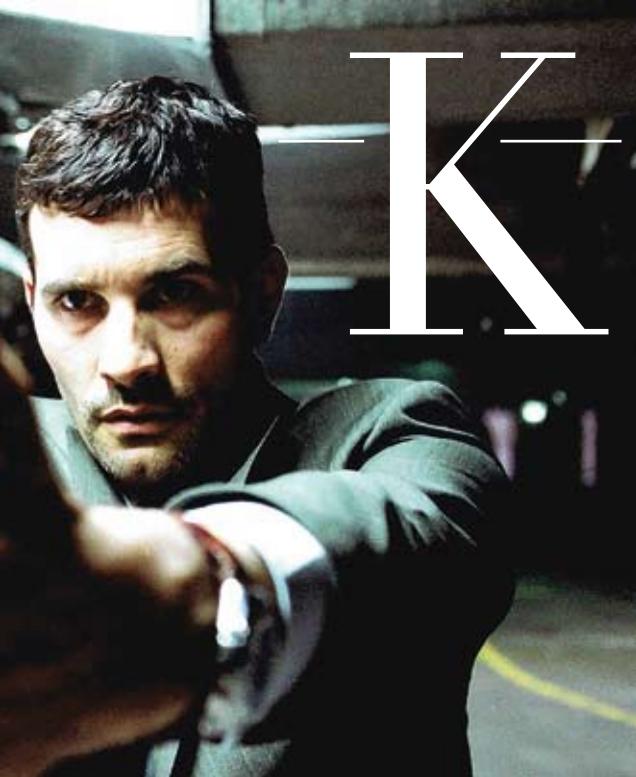
Christmas Market and Ice Skating Rink on Kolonel Dusartplein until 3 Jan

Christmas Concert (Handel, Piazzolla) at Music Conservatory, Kunstlaan 12, on 13 Dec, 11.00

Children and the Christmas Story, with Margoda Choir, at St Lambertus Church, Vijversstraat, on 17 Dec, 20.00

→ www.winterland.be





CHRISTOPHE VERBIEST

Early last year, Koen De Bouw was one of the last three candidates being considered to play the killer in *Angels & Demons*. "It's useless to ponder about it," he smiles. "The last three or the last 300, the result is the same."

De Bouw, who turned 45 a few months ago, has been in more than 50 television series and movies, both in Belgium and the Netherlands. As the star of both last year's blockbuster *Loft*, 2003's *De zaak Alzheimer* and the recent TV series *Los zand*, De Bouw is the most-recognised actor in the region. He still remembers vividly why he wanted to become an actor. "As a teenager, I read an ad in a newspaper – a theatre company was looking for youngsters to play Cowboys & Indians. I knew very early on I wanted to make it my profession because I wasn't suited to become an astronaut." With a big grin: "My profession is playing Cowboys & Indians."

For the past decade, De Bouw has played

in 30 films and television series. "I try to be in a play once a year, but it's just difficult to combine it all. But theatre, for me, is still the source; it's the place where all the basic, fundamental stories are told – stories that have proven their value for ages."

In 2003, De Bouw personified police commissioner Eric Vincke in the Flemish film *De zaak Alzheimer*, a star-making role in a film that was released outside of Belgium's border. How does it work, playing the same character after such a hiatus? "It's a bit like cycling," muses De Bouw. "Even if you didn't ride a bike for six years, you'll still be able to do it."

The actor has already agreed on a third instalment of the Vincke & Verstuyft series, although there is not yet any concrete plans for a third film.

De zaak Alzheimer was directed by Erik Van Looy, *Dossier K* by Jan Verheyen (see review). De Bouw is an easy interviewee, but when asked the obvious question – to compare

the two popular Flemish directors – he stays silent and resumes after a long pause: "It's impossible to answer."

De Bouw has a few very emotional scenes in *Dossier K*, scenes that appear difficult to play. "Not at all," he retorts. "For an actor, those are scenes to be grateful for. The audience likes them, and you have to play quite simple emotions. On the other hand, things that look easy are often more difficult, like a dialogue in a car, for instance."

Shooting at night, he continues, is the most demanding. "Try standing two nights in a row in the rain." He's actually referring to Van Looy's last film *Loft*, in which he played the lead. "At one point I said: 'one more take, guys, and it's over'. That was a first in my career; but I was on the brink of exhaustion."

Van Looy obviously doesn't hold it against him because he's already asked the actor to play the lead in *De premier* (*The Prime Minister*), his next film. The screenplay still has

to be written. "My confidence in him is so complete that I'm willing to play in any film he's planning to make," says De Bouw. But he has never been a contender in *De slimste mens ter wereld*, the highly successful television quiz Van Looy presents. "Erik has asked me often, but I've always declined."

But you can see him on the television, though, since he's the face of VTM's gardening show *Groene Vingers*. De Bouw is an avid gardener and owns a house with six acres of land in the Ardennes. He has even suggested that he will one day stop acting and retreat to that house. He must be kidding, surely.

"It might sound reckless, but I think I could let go of acting." He keeps silent for a while, then adds a firm "yes".

Even if Koen De Bouw is ready to stop acting, we aren't really ready to let him go. ♦

See last week's issue of Flanders Today for an article on *De slimste mens*

REVIEW



Dossier K

Spilt blood will be avenged. This ominous quote opens *Dossier K*. It stems from the Kanun, a set of laws introduced in Albania in the 15th century that has regained popularity after the fall of the communist regime, especially among members of Albanian mob families that have swarmed over Europe.

Two of these rivalling families fight a bloody vendetta in Antwerp, a case for the team of Vincke & Verstuyft. But the policemen also have to deal with obstructions within the Belgian judicial system. That should come as no surprise, since the film is based on a book by Flemish author Jef Geeraerts, in whose thrillers the criminals are as much present inside as outside the system.

Dossier K is the second instalment in the Vincke & Verstuyft franchise, after *De zaak Alzheimer* (released in English as *Memory of a Killer*). With an attendance of 750,000, it holds the fifth position on the all-time Belgian box office list. It was directed by Erik Van Looy, whose *Loft* last year climbed to the number one spot on that list.

Van Looy, who co-wrote *Dossier K* (as well as *De zaak Alzheimer*) with Carl Joos, had to pass the directorial reins to Jan Verheyen, after signing a five-year contract with production company Woestijvis, while the *Dossier K* is a production of its rival Eyeworks. Enter Verheyen for his 10th film in 18 years, which makes him, by far, the most productive Flemish director of the past two decades. But not the best, surely. Of his many films, I only really like 2005's melodrama *Buitenspel*.

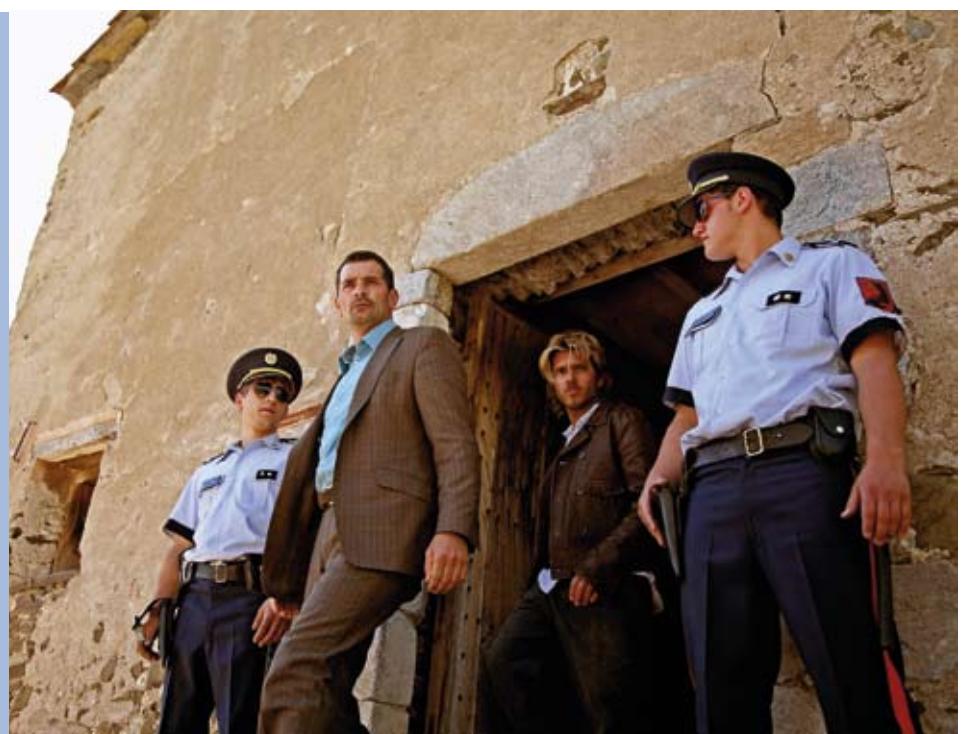
Moreover, in his previous police film *Vermist* he adopted the irritating visual lingo of the American thriller of the last decade, with quick, disorientating cuts and a shaky camera. But none of that here: *Dossier K* is filmed with an elegance and a sense of *mise en scène* I would never have associated with him.

As a matter of fact – and this is a bold statement – Verheyen does a better job than Van Looy. He is aided by a script in which the dark humour is better balanced and the emotions cut deeper. And by excellent actors. Werner Desmedt, returning as Verstuyft, is suffering less from his poster boy image. Koen De Bouw – underplaying is his middle name – is great, as ever. True, the suspension of disbelief in *Dossier K* at moments asks a lot from the viewer. But apart from that it's a highly entertaining and gripping thriller.

There still are more Vincke & Verstuyft novels to adapt, and I hope than Verheyen will direct them. Never thought I would write that. CV

K is for Koen

Six years after *De zaak Alzheimer*, Koen De Bouw again incarnates commissioner Eric Vincke





All you need to know about banking services on arriving in Belgium

Take advantage of our ING Expat Convenience Services

+32 2 464 66 64 - expat@ing.be - www.ing.be

Many banking services are available to expatriates living in Belgium but there is nothing you need to know about making such arrangements. That's a task for the ING Convenience Services experts.

Your bank accounts and cards can be ready for you the moment you arrive in Belgium. ING's Expat Services have 40 years of experience to help make your stay in Belgium as financially smooth as possible.





Zita Swoon

CHRISTOPHE VERBIEST

It's always a festive evening when Zita Swoon is around, and it certainly will be this week during three nights at the Ancienne Belgique in Brussels, where the band of Stef Kamil Carlens (or SKC) celebrates its 15th birthday. But the concerts also signify the start of a sabbatical of two years – as a pop band, at least. Starting next spring, they'll tour with the stage performance of *Dancing with the Sound Hobbyist*. After that, SKC (pictured) will write music for yet another dance production, work on a project with African voices and focus on instrumental music with the Zita Swoon Orchestra. His "regular" band might be on a hiatus, but this man ain't going to relocate to the devil's workshop.

To celebrate the birthday, the band has released the double-album anthology *To Play, to Dream, to Drift*. The first CD presents a cross section of Zita Swoon's albums to date – heartfelt pop, stabbing rock, capricious blues and one truly irre-

sistible disco funk track. The second disc collects previously unreleased tracks (interesting for fans, but not a must for the rest of mankind).

Strictly speaking, Zita Swoon formed in 1996, but the same line-up of musicians had already been playing together for a few years as Moondog Jr, a name used as a tribute to American poet and musician Louis Thomas Hardin (who went by the name of Moondog). When that self-same artist threatened to sue them, a band name-change was in order.

Zita Swoon has invited some amazing guests to the Ancienne Belgique: English musician (and PJ Harvey soul mate) John Parish, Belgian godfather of rock Arno and Tom Barman, the mainstay of dEUS. SKC was a member of dEUS until starting his own band. But he's present on dEUS' seminal debut *Worst Case Scenario*, just re-released in a remastered version with, as a bonus DVD, a documentary on the genesis of that album.

But if you're on a shopping spree you, don't forget to look for some classic Zita Swoon albums as well, like *I Paint Pictures on a Wedding Dress* and, released under the moniker Moondog Jr, *Everyday I Wear a Greasy Black Feather on My Hat*. But be aware that their beauty and ingenuity might make you swoon. ♦

9, 10 (both sold out) & 12 December
Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110
Brussels

→ www.abconcerts.be

MORE BELGIAN BANDS THIS WEEK

Daan → *Roma, Antwerp*

Hulkk → *Charlatan, Ghent*

Bony King of Nowhere → *Club Terminus, Ostend*



© Géraldine Jacques



Antwerp

CC Berchem
Driekoningenstraat 126; 03.286.88.20,
www.ccberchem.be
DEC 11 20.30 Nuff Said
DEC 17 20.30 Hannelore Bedert

De Roma

Turnhoutsebaan 327; 03.292.97.40,
www.deroma.be
DEC 12 20.30 Daan
DEC 17 20.30 Ana Moura

Lotto Arena

Schijnpoortweg 119; 070.345.345,
www.sportpaleis.be
DEC 15 20.00 Pet Shop Boys

Petrol

Herbouvillekaai 21; 03.226.49.63,
www.petrolclub.be
DEC 12 21.00 Frank Zappa Tribute
DEC 17 21.00 Customs + Tim Vanhamel + Creature with the Atom Brain + Nils Holgerfun

Sportpaleis

Schijnpoortweg 119; 070.345.345,
www.sportpaleis.be
DEC 10 20.00 Rammstein
Until DEC 18 15.00/20.30 Clouseau 2010

Ardoorie

Cultuurkapel De Schaduw
Wezestraat 32; 0479.80.94.82,
www.deschaduw.net
DEC 11 20.00 Earwag (free)

Brussels

Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24,
www.abconcerts.be
Concerts at 20.00:
DEC 9 Thought Forms + Beak **DEC 11** The Notwist & Andromeda Mega Express Orchestra **DEC 12** Zita Swoon plus special guests **DEC 14** Christophe

Fuse

Blaesstraat 208; 02.511.97.89, www.fuse.be
DEC 12 23.00 Paul Kalkbrenner Live + Ivan Smagghe + Geoffroy

Indigo Studios

Van Volxemlaan 388; 02.534.75.72,
www.indigostudios.be
DEC 14 20.30 Indigo Sessions with Kush!

K-NAL

Havenlaan 1; 0479.605.429, www.k-nal.be
DEC 12 23.00 A Mountain of One Live

Koninklijk Circus

Onderrichtsstraat 81; 02.218.20.15,
www.cirque-royal.org
DEC 12 20.00 Tina Arena

Le Bar du Matin

Alsembergsesteenweg 172; 02.537.71.59,
<http://bardumatin.blogspot.com>
DEC 10 21.00 Rue Royale

Le Botanique

Koningstraat 236; 02.226.12.57
Concerts at 20.00:
DEC 9 The Temper Trap **DEC 10** Nits + Hallo Kosmo **DEC 11** Pitcho + Staff Benda Bilili **DEC 13** Sukilove **DEC 14** Sleepy Sun

Recyclart

Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34,
www.recycleart.be
DEC 10 20.00 Elastics' Things, improvisation concert

VK Club

Schoolstraat 76; 02.414.29.07,
www.vkconcerts.be
DEC 14 20.00 Cercueil + Keiki + Battant
DEC 16 21.30 Biffy Clyro

Vorst-Nationaal

Victor Roussealaan 208; 0900.00.991
DEC 9 20.00 Akon, with Cardinal Offishaal and Colby O'Donis
DEC 10-12 20.00 André Rieu

GET YOUR
TICKETS NOW!

Milow

19 March, 2010
Koninklijk Circus
Brussels

This Flemish singer's natural ease and catchy pop make him one of Belgium's most popular musicians for good reason. His ironically sensitive cover of rapper 50 Cent's "Ayo Technology" broke Milow out beyond Belgium's borders last year, making him the most downloaded Belgian musician of 2008. His last concert in Brussels sold out, and this one surely will, too.



→ www.botanique.be

Ghent

Handelsbeurs
Kouter 29; 09.265.92.01,
www.handelsbeurs.be
DEC 10 20.00 Frank Vander Linden

Vooruit

St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060,
www.vooruit.be
DEC 10 22.00 A Mountain of One (free)
DEC 13 20.00 Casablanca Carambol Company

Hasselt

Muziekodroom
Bootstraat 9; www.muziekodroom.be
DEC 10 20.30 Boyd Small Band

Kortrijk

De Kreun
Jan Persijnstraat 6; 056.37.06.44,
www.dekreun.be
DEC 10 20.00 Porn + The Melvins + DJ Rock4
DEC 16 20.00 DLGZ rock 5tet + Apse + DJ Logul

Leuven

Het Depot
Martelarenplein 12; 016.22.06.03,
www.hetdepot.be
DEC 10 20.00 The Raveonettes
DEC 11 23.00 Mr. Oizo + Shadow Dancer + Kutz + Cardopusher
DEC 12 20.00 Aroma Di Amore

Stuk

Naamsestraat 96; 016.32.03.20,
www.stuk.be
DEC 10-11 22.30 Slapwel records label nights, featuring Steinbrüchel, Peter Broderick, Wouter van Veldhoven
DEC 15 20.30 Motek + Apse



Antwerp

Buster
Kaasrui 1; 03.232.51.53,
www.busterpodium.be
DEC 11 22.00 Songs from Ornette
DEC 12 22.00 Planet Echo

De Hopper

Leopold De Waelstraat 2; 03.248.49.33,
www.cafehopper.be
DEC 13 16.00 Royal Roost
DEC 14 21.00 Eve Beuvens Quartet
DEC 15 21.00 Equinox

De Muze

Melkmarkt 15; 03.226.01.26,
www.demuze-jazz.be
DEC 17 22.00 Thomas Champagne Trio

Rataplan

Wijnegemstraat 27; 03.292.97.40,
www.rataplanvzw.be
DEC 10 20.30 The Ballroomquartet
DEC 12 20.30 Tuur Florizone and Ensemble Piacevole

Zuiderpershuis

Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00,
www.zuiderpershuis.be
DEC 10 20.30 Pierre Vaiana, saxophone

Bruges

De Werf
Werfstraat 108; 050.33.05.29,
www.dewerf.be
DEC 12 20.30 Bart Defoort & Emanuele Cisi Quintet

Brussels

Archiduc
Dansaertstraat 6; 02.512.06.52,
www.archiduc.net
DEC 12 17.00 Work & Dans Dans
DEC 13 17.00 Peter Hertmans Quartet

Atelier 210

Sint-Pieterssteenweg 210; 02.732.25.98,
www.atelier210.be
DEC 14 20.00 Thomas Champagne Trio

Jazz Station

Leuvensesteenweg 193-195; 02.733.13.78
Concerts at 20.30:
DEC 10 Bart Defoort & Emanuele Cisi Quintet
DEC 12 F, B and I

Le Caveau du Max

Emile Maxlaan 87; 02.733.17.88
DEC 10 19.30 Greg Houben and the Manu Hermia Quintet

Sazz'n Jazz

Koningsstraat 241; 0475.78.23.78,
www.sazznjazz.be
Concerts at 20.30:
DEC 10 Swing Swamp quartet **DEC 14** Octet Red **DEC 15** Nicolas L'Herbette Class **DEC 16** Mrs Okkido + Sayma

Sounds Jazz Club

Tulpstraat 28; 02.512.92.50,
www.soundsjazzclub.be
Concerts at 22.00:
DEC 9 Chamaquiendo, salsa **DEC 10** 21.00 The Singer's Night **DEC 11** Sabatum Quartet **DEC 12** Peter Hertmans Quartet **DEC 14** Master Session **DEC 15** Laurent Doumou Soul Band **DEC 16** Caribe con K - Los Soneros des barrio, Caribbean music

Ten Weyngaert

Bondgenotenstraat 54; 02.340.95.80,
http://tenweyngaert.vgc.be
DEC 13 16.30 Bai Kamara Jr, Anu Junnonen and Tuur Florizone (free)

The Cotton Club - Grand Casino

Duquesnoystraat 14; 02.289.68.66,
www.gcb.be
DEC 12 21.30 Sarah Letor & Band (free)

The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45,
www.themusicvillage.com
DEC 9 20.30 Lennart Van Praet Trio **DEC 10** 20.30 Bloody Mary with drummer Anne Paceo **DEC 11** 21.00 Richard Rousset All Stars Quintet **DEC 12** 21.00 A Tribute to Nat King Cole **DEC 15** 20.30 Pieter & Hannelore, chanson

Théâtre 140

Eugène Plaskylaan 140; 02.733.97.08,
www.theatre140.be
DEC 10 20.30 Ibrahim Maalouf Sextet

Ghent

De Centrale
Kraankindersstraat 2; 09.265.98.28,
www.decentrale.be
DEC 13 20.00 Pierre Vaiana, saxophone, and Ensemble Al Funduq Canzuni

Vooruit

St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060,
www.vooruit.be
DEC 16 20.00 Rêve d'Eléphant Orchestra



Antwerp

Zuiderpershuis
Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00,
www.zuiderpershuis.be
DEC 12 20.30 Nouredine Khourchid (Syria)

Brussels

Art Base
Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20,
www.art-base.be
DEC 11 20.00 Luis Reis, Latin music
DEC 12 20.00 Asad Qizilbash & Carlo Strazzante, Indian classical music
DEC 13 17.00 Cuba Trova concert with Rey Cabrera

Atelier de la Dolce Vita

Liefdadigheidstraat 37a; 02.223.46.75,
www.atelierdolcevita.be
DEC 11 20.00 O'Tchalaï voyage, world music and music from the Balkans

Espace Senghor

Wavervesteenweg 366; 02.230.31.40,
www.senghor.be
DEC 12 20.30 Ross Daly, music from Crete

Piola Libri

Franklinstraat 66-68; 02.736.93.91,
www.piolalibri.be
DEC 10 18.30 Ricordando Fabrizio De Andre

Sazz'n Jazz

Koningsstraat 241; 0475.78.23.78,
www.sazznjazz.be
DEC 11-25 20.30 Cemre Group, Turkish folk

Stekerlapatte

Priestersstraat 4; 02.512.86.81,
www.stekerlapatte.be
Until DEC 17 20.00 Zongora DEC 10 20.00 Eric Bribosia

Théâtre Molière

Bastionsquare 3; 02.217.26.00,
www.muziekpublique.be
DEC 11 20.00 Osama Abdurasol Ensemble (Iraq)
DEC 16 12.30 Luc Pilartz & Arnaud Degimbe



Antwerp

Amuz
Kammenstraat 81; 03.248.28.28,
www.amuz.be
DEC 17 21.00 Gary Cooper & B'Rock: Bach

De Roma

Turnhoutsebaan 327; 03.292.97.40,
www.deroma.be
DEC 11 20.30 deFilharmonie conducted by Takuo Yuasa: Moesorgski, Bruch, Prokofjev

deSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28,
www.desingel.be
DEC 9 20.00 Pavel Haas Quartet: Schubert, Sjostakovits, Smetana
DEC 10 20.00 Mariinski Choir conducted by Andrej Petrenko: Rachmaninov
DEC 12 20.00 Sophie Daneman, soprano; Christianne Stotijn, mezzo; Joseph Breinl, piano: Purcell

Queen Elisabeth Hall

Koningin Astridplein 26; 0900.26.060,
www.fcc.be
DEC 9 20.00 Orchestre d'Auvergne conducted by Arie van Beek, with Anna Kasyan, soprano: Handel
DEC 12 15.00 deFilharmonie with Li Chuanyun, violin; conducted by Takuo Yuasa: Mussorgsky Bruch, Prokofjev

Bruges

Concertgebouw
't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02,
www.concertgebouw.be
DEC 15 20.00 Symfonieorkest Vlaanderen

conducted by Paul Meyer, with Frank Braley, piano: Mendelssohn, Schumann

Brussels

Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00,
www.bozar.be
DEC 12 12.00 Farewell concert by the Prometheus Ensemble with Jan Michiels, piano; Kurt Van Eeghem, introduction: Dvorak, Janacek
DEC 13 11.00 Bratke Marcelo, piano: Villa-Lobos, Milhaud, Nazareth 15.00 Belgian National Orchestra conducted by Walter Weller, with Martin Helmchen, piano: Strauss, Beethoven, Schoenberg

De Munt

Muntplein; 070.23.39.39, www.demunt.be
DEC 11 12.30 Concertino, with Zygmund Kowalski, violin; Yves Cortvint, viola; and Sébastien Walnier, cello, among others: Onslow, Beethoven

Flagey

Heilig Kruisplein; 02.641.10.20,
www.flagey.be
DEC 12 20.15 Huelgas Ensemble conducted by Paul Van Nevel, with Bl'ndman saxophonists: lamentations, Dutch folk songs and German polyphony
DEC 13 11.30 Musiq'Académies with Pascale Vanlerberghe

Koninklijk Circus

Onderrichtsstraat 81; 02.218.20.15,
www.cirque-royal.org
DEC 13 20.00 Concert Da Capo 2000: Brussels Capital Orchestra and choruses conducted by Robert Janssens; Vocal Collectif Orchestra and Choir and Children's Choir conducted by Philippe Lambert: Olivier dos Santos, Seroka, Beethoven, Robert Jannsens' new work (world premiere)

Miniemerk

Miniemerstraat 62; 02.511.93.84,
www.minimes.net
DEC 13 10.30 Miniemerk Orchestra and Choruses conducted by Benoît Jacquemin: Bach cantatas (free)

Musical Instruments Museum

Hofberg 2; 02.545.01.30, www.mim.be
DEC 13 11.00 Jozef De Beenhouwer, piano: Mendelssohn, Schumann, August De Boeck

Royal Music Conservatory

Regentschapsstraat 30; 02.213.41.37,
www.kcb.be
Concerts at 20.00:
DEC 9 Danel String Quartet: Haydn, Weinberg, Beethoven **DEC 10** Lisa Batiashvili, violin; Milana Chernyavskaya: Debussy, Saint-Saëns, more **DEC 13** Carols for Christmas!, traditional carol concert (www.carolsforchristmas.eu) **DEC 16** Ryo Terakado and François Fernandez, violin; Rainer Zipperling, cello; Boyan Vodenitcharov, fortepiano: Haydn, Mozart

St Michael and St Gudula Cathedral

Sinter-Goedeleplein; 02.507.82.00
DEC 15 20.00 Young Belgian organists: Cindy Castillo, Bach, Mernier; Els Biesemans, Franck, Gubaidulina; Jean-Philippe Merckaert, Bach, Messiaen

Théâtre du Parc

Wetstraat 3; 070.233.939, www.demunt.be
DEC 14 20.30 Bejun Mehta, countertenor; Julius Drake, piano: English songs by Purcell, Haydn, Vaughan Williams, Lennox Berkeley and more

Dendermonde

CC Belgica
Kerkstraat 24; 052.20.26.40,
www.ccbelgica.be
DEC 12 20.00 Vlaams Radio Koor in Mother and Child, a Christmas concert conducted by Johan Duijck, with Bart Naessens, organ: Pärt, Sandström, more

Ghent

Vlaamse Opera
Schouwburgstraat 3; 070.22.02.02,
www.vlaamseopera.be
Until DEC 22 Christoph Willibald Gluck's Iphigénie en Aulide and Iphigénie en Tauride, conducted by Christophe Rousset, directed by Pierre Audi (in the original French, with Dutch and French surtitles)

Antwerp

Zuiderpershuis
Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00,
www.zuiderpershuis.be
DEC 11 20.30 Patricia Guerrero, flamenco

Bruges

Concertgebouw
't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02,
www.concertgebouw.be
DEC 9 20.00 Royal Ballet of Flanders in Artifact, choreographed by William Forsythe (part of December Dance)

Stadsschouwburg
Vlamingstraat 29; 050.44.30.40
www.cultuurcentrumbrugge.be
DEC 11 20.00 Lutz Förster solo, choreographed by Jérôme Bel (part of December Dance)

DON'T MISS



Alexander Nevski

11 December deSingel, Antwerp

The grandfather of all film soundtracks, Prokofiev's music for Sergei Eisenstein's epic *Alexander Nevsky* is also one of the most rousing and perfect ever composed. Both film and music will be presented by the Brussels Philharmonic, conducted by Ernst Van Tiel and joined by the singers of Saint-Petersburg's famed Mariinsky Choir, who have this music under their skin. Film and music were created in 1938, but the events they describe date back to the Middle Ages, when a Russian prince defeated an army of Teutonic knights on a frozen lake. A masterpiece.

→ www.desingel.be



Brussels

De Munt
Muntplein; 070.23.39.39, www.demunt.be
Until DEC 22 Christoph Willibald Gluck's Iphigénie en Aulide and Iphigénie en Tauride, conducted by Christophe Rousset, directed by Pierre Audi (in the original French, with Dutch and French surtitles)</p

Brussels

Halles de Schaarbeek
Koninklijke Sinte-Mariastraat 22;
0900.26.060, www.halles.be
DEC 11 21.30 Finally I Am No One,
choreographed, staged and performed by
Tarek Halaby

Kaaitheater
Sainctelettesquare 20; 02.201.59.59,
www.kaaitheater.be
DEC 16-19 19.00/20.30 Rossas in Zeitung,
choreographed by Anne Teresa De
Keersmaeker, with music performed by
Alain Franco, piano

Leuven
30CC - Schouwburg
Bondgenotenlaan 21; 016.32.03.20,
www.30CC.be
DEC 9 22.00 Damaged Goods in Do
Animals Cry, choreographed by Meg
Stuart



Antwerp

CC Berchem
Driekoningenstraat 126; 03.286.88.20,
www.ccberchem.be
DEC 9 20.30 Kommil Foo in Wolf, cabaret
(in Dutch)
DEC 12 19.00/21.00 LOD and Zeven in
Naar Medea, part 2, music theatre by
Inne Goris and Pieter De Buysser, music
by Eavesdropper (in Dutch)

Brussels

Kaaitheater's
Onze-Lieve-Vrouw van Vaakstraat 81;
02.201.59.59, www.kaaitheater.be
DEC 10-11 17.00/19.00 A Brave Search
of the Ultimate Reality (part of Working
Title festival)
DEC 11-12 22.00 Investment (part of
Working Title festival)

Kaaitheater

Sainctelettesquare 20; 02.201.59.59,
www.kaaitheater.be
DEC 9-10 20.30 Troubleyn in Orgy of
Tolerance, staged by Jan Fabre (in English)
DEC 12 19.00 Abbatoir Fermé in
Chaostrilogie, staged by Stef Lernous (in
Dutch)

KVS Bol

Lakensestraat 146; 02.210.11.00,
www.kvs.be
DEC 15 20.00 Kraap's Laatste Band
(Krapp's Last Tape) by Samuel Beckett,
with Steven Van Watermeulen (in Dutch)

KVS Box

Arduinkaaai 9; 02.210.11.12, www.kvs.be
DEC 11 20.30 Sunset on Mars,
choreographed by Germán Jauregui (part
of Working Title festival)

Théâtre Mercelis

Mercelisstraat 13; 0477.408.704,
ecc.theatreinbrussels.com
Until DEC 12 15.00/20.00 The Cherry
Orchard by Anton Chekhov, staged by
Malinda Coleman (in English)

Leuven

30CC - Schouwburg
Bondgenotenlaan 21; 016.32.03.20,
www.30CC.be
DEC 15 20.00 NTGent in Underground,
staged by Johan Simons (in Dutch)

Stuk

Naamsestraat 96; 016.32.03.20,
www.stuk.be
DEC 9-11 20.00 SKaGeN in
DegrotemonD, staged by Valentijn
Dhaenens (in Dutch)
DEC 10-11 20.30 Toneelhuis in Maria-
Magdalena (Wayn Wash III), staged by
Wayn Traub (in Dutch)
DEC 15-16 20.30 LOD and Zeven in Naar
Medea, part 2, music theatre by Inne
Goris and Pieter De Buysser, music by
Eavesdropper (in Dutch)



Aalst

Stedelijk Museum 't Gasthuys
Oude Vismarkt 13; 053.73.23.40,
www.aalst.be/museum
Until DEC 23 Leerlooijer Schotte: Heden
versus Verleden (Present versus Past),
photos of an abandoned tannery before its
conversion, by Henk van Rensbergen

Antwerp

Contemporary Art Museum (M HKA)
Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60,
www.muhka.be
Until JAN 3 Textiles: Art and the Social
Fabric, installations, sculptures, film, flags
and banners

Havencentrum Lillo

Scheldelaan 444, Haven 621; 03.569.90.12,
www.tabulascaldis.eu
Until DEC 14 Tabula Scaldis: Tafeereel
van de Schelde, panoramic drawings and
other documents take visitors on a tour of
the River Schelde from end to end

Middelheim Museum

Middelheimlaan 6; 03.828.13.50,
www.middelheimmuseum.be
Until DEC 19 Camiel Van Breedam,
assemblages by the Belgian artist

Modemuseum (MoMu)

Nationalestraat 28; 03.470.27.70,
www.momu.be
Until FEB 21 Delvaux: 180 Years of
Belgian Luxury, history of the Belgian
leather goods manufacturer

Royal Museum of Fine Arts

Leopold De Waelplaats; 03.238.78.09,
www.kmska.be
Until JAN 17 In the Footsteps of Bartók:
Lajos Vajda and Hungarian Surrealism

Zilvermuseum Sterckshof

Hooftvunderlei 160; 03.360.52.52,
www.zilvermuseum.be
Until JAN 10 Coral and Bells: A
Collection of Rattles, silver and gold rattles
and jingle bells decorated with precious
stones, shown alongside miniatures and
children's portraits

Bruges

Bruggemuseum-Gruuthuse
Dijver 17; www.uitvindingvanbrugge.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

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, plus historic propaganda footage

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

Belgian Comic Strip Centre

Zandstraat 20; 02.219.19.80,
www.stripmuseum.be
Until DEC 13 Kazuo Kamimura: Lorsque
nous vivions ensemble (When We Lived
Together), focus on the Japanese manga
artist

Beurschouwburg

August Ortsstraat 20-28; 02.550.03.50,
www.beurschouwburg.be
Until DEC 19 Out of Bounds, video
group show curated by Christel Tsilibras

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 3 Sexties, comic-strip
illustrations and texts by Guido Crepax,
Paul Cuvelier, Jean-Claude Forest and Guy
Peelaert

Costume and Lace Museum

Violettestraat 12; 02.213.44.50
Until DEC 29 Grada: Mystery Writing by
Women, Croatian women's ancestral art
of embroidery applied to contemporary
fashion and utensils

KVS

Arduinkaaai 9; 02.210.11.12, www.kvs.be
Until DEC 17 Nuit Américaine,
photographs of the America west by
Flemish photographer Peter De Bruyne

Le Botanique

Komingsstraat 236; 02.226.12.57,
www.botanique.be

Until JAN 3 Controversies, notoriously
controversial photographs

Royal Museum of Fine Arts

Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.508.32.11,
www.fine-arts-museum.be

Until JAN 31 Delvaux and the Ancient
World, some 60 paintings and drawings
by the Belgian artist

Until JAN 31 The Art of Gaming, works
from the collection of the National Lottery
on the occasion of its 75th anniversary

Royal Museum of the Armed Forces

Jubelpark 3; 02.737.78.33,
www.legermuseum.be

Until FEB 28 Aanvalleuh!, works by
Belgian comic strip artists

Until APR 11 Dieren in de oorlog
(Animals in the War), archive photos
and films of animals affected by the First
World War

Royal Museum of Art and History

Jubelpark 10; 02.741.72.11, www.kmkg-mraa.be

Until APR 18 Isabelle de Borchgrave's I
Medici: a Renaissance in Paper, life-size
paper replicas of historic costumes

DEC 12-27 World Press Photo

Tour & Taxis

Havenlaan 86C; 02.549.60.49

www.tour-taxis.com

Until MAR 28 It's Our Earth 2! From
Kyoto to Copenhagen, interactive
exhibition exploring the effects of climate
change on the natural world

Until MAR 28 John Fitzgerald Kennedy:
The American Dream, photographs,
audio-visual documents and objects
relating to the assassinated US president
(www.jfk-expo.be)

Geel

Gasthuismuseum

Gasthuisstraat 1; 014.59.14.43,
www.gasthuismuseumgeel.net

Until MAR 31 God of Doctoor?,
collection illustrating the history of
healing in Geel

Ghent

Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (SMAK)

Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03, www.smak.be

Until JAN 10 Michel François, Plans
d'évasion, retrospective

Until JAN 31 Faux Jumeaux (False
Twins), changing exhibition curated by
Michel François

Until FEB 7 Ben Benouuisse - Jan Fabre
revisited, performance art

Until MAR 14 GAGARIN The Artists in
their Own Words, a collection of texts by
participating artists

Museum of Fine Arts

Fernand Scribedreef 1 - Citadelpark;

09.240.07.00, www.mskgent.be

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

Until FEB 7 Fernand Léger's Le Grand
Déjeuner, masterpiece painting on loan
from the Museum of Modern Art in New
York

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

Cultuurcentrum

Kunstlaan 5; 011.22.99.33, www.ccha.be

Until JAN 10 Helikon: Intens en divers
(Intense and Diverse), works by the 1960s
artist group

Kortrijk

Broelmuseum

Broelkaai 6; 09.269.60.04,

www.broelmuseum.be www.imal.org/TheGate

Until FEB 14 Fantastic Illusions,
exhibition exploring how Belgian and
Chinese artists build illusory spaces,
including The Gate, an installation by
Yannick Antoine and Yves Bernard

FACE OF FLANDERS

Zeitgeist report

English, you'll have noticed, has no word for *Zeitgeist*. Nevertheless, there's nothing we like better than to take apart the trends of the moment. Hence the popularity of Google's annual Zeitgeist report, the latest of which has just been released.

Blame the economic crisis, but the fastest-growing search queries in 2009 in Dutch-speaking Belgium were the word *goedkoop* (cheap) followed by the words for airfare, holidays, petrol, loans, city trips, excursions, weekends, tiles and clothing. Clearly, Flanders is trying to save money, though the prevalence of travel shows that things haven't yet got tough enough to keep people from getting going. The only stay-at-homes appear to be DIY enthusiasts putting down tiles (or putting them up, depending).

Among the "hottest tickets" of 2008 were home-grown events like techno party Tomorrowland (number four on the Belgian list), pop festival Pukkelpop (first) and stand-up gigs by Alex Agnew (pictured), the Anglo-Flemish comedian (10th). Other hot tickets common to the rest of the world were gigs by Madonna, U2 and Michael Jackson (which never happened).

The most popular search queries of the year were, in descending order: Facebook, YouTube, Netlog, Hotmail, Google, video, jeux, Yahoo, Wikipedia and MSN. The internet obviously dominates searchers' thoughts, no matter how odd it may seem to use Google to search for a website, rather than simply add .com to the word itself. And who used Google to search for Google?

Google's results are not always split by language, but in the fastest-rising categories, both sides of the language divide are represented. At number three is *météo belgique*, at numbers eight and nine *stemtest* and *gentse feesten*. The rest is universal: pc bank-



©Christophe Ketels/Belga
ing, Zumba, eBay, and the ubiquitous Facebook and YouTube.

On a global level, it's the oddities that prove interesting, rather than the expected poll-leaders (like Michael Jackson). The global fastest-rising list includes terms like *tuenti*, *sanalika* and *torpedo gratis*, which will doubtless require more internet searching from our readers. Entertainment includes names like *naruto shippuden*, *peliculas id* and *poker face lyrics*. The fastest-rising search in food and drink was acai berry, no doubt in response to the recent spate of acai-oriented spam.

The biggest declines in internet searching, in the meantime was Beijing 2008, followed by Euro 2008. Also on the way out: Heath Ledger, Amy Winehouse, Barack Obama, *kraloyun* and *emule* – the last two being, respectively, a games site and a file-sharing application.

→ www.google.com/zeitgeist

TALKING DUTCH

ALISTAIR MACLEAN



kerstboom →

Behind our garden shed is a 10-year-old spar – spruce, which pushes out its branches every spring. Each January we plant our *kerstboom* – Christmas tree, but, with the one exception, they have all died.

Finding the right tree is not always easy, so this year I'm tempted to adopt. Yes, 5000 *fijnsparren* – Norway spruces are waiting in a wood near the F1 circuit at Francorchamps to be adopted. The idea is that you pay €40 to take a spar into your home for a couple of weeks. This may seem a bit on the steep side, but *voor de levering en de ophaling van uw boom wordt gezorgd* – the delivery and collection of your tree is taken care of.

For your part, you have to promise (!) *hem mooi te versieren* – to decorate it nicely and *af en toe een beetje water te geven* – water it now and again. When little Sprucey (or whatever name you've given it) is collected, it's not tossed on a pyre in some pagan *kerstboomverbranding* – Christmas tree burning. No, in fact, since the tree still has its roots, it will be replanted with a label attached (so you'll have to name it after all).

For each of the next three years you can pay €20 *om een oude bekende in huis te halen* – to get an old friend back in your home

for the festive season. After that time your tree, like our strapping spruce, will be too big for your living room and will live happily ever after in the forest.

If, as they gently put it, *uw boom om één of andere reden de volgende kerst niet haalt* – your tree for one reason or another doesn't make it to the next Christmas, you will be given a replacement. Fears that your old pal will be thrown to the flames are allayed: *zij dienen als voeding voor de nieuwe* – they serve as feeding for the new ones. Or to put it bluntly, your chum will be put through the shredder.

This sounds all very green, but what about all that transporting to and fro? Well, in all fairness, it's a new initiative and there was no time to arrange eco-transport. *Volgend jaar zal het vervoer volledig elektrisch zijn* – Next year the transport will be completely electric.

But surely a lovely plastic tree like the one my brother-in-law Alex screws together each year is a greener solution. The tree adoption agency replies that *een kerstboom moet je kunnen ruiken* – you should be able to smell a Christmas tree. *En er mag al eens een naald afvallen* – And it should shed a needle or two. Tell that to Alex's wife.

→ <http://champwell.typepad.com>

bite

SHARON LIGHT

Food pairing

Food pairing, the matching of unusual flavours in revolutionary combinations, is chic these days. Bruges-based Bernard Lahousse has made a career of it. A bioengineer with a penchant for gastronomy, he works as a consultant with world-renowned chefs and major food companies at the cutting edge of food science. After some time in the business, it became apparent that a website could facilitate this work.

Enter www.foodpairing.be. In 2007, Lahousse has been putting some of the basics of his research online as a resource for chefs and companies, and the average foodie can benefit. It was a success from the very beginning, with over 100,000 visitors in its first month online.

The site has two functions: first, food pairing – what goes well with what. Second, the "replacement" feature, indicating what ingredients can combine to make, for example, a basil flavour.

As Lahousse stresses, the site is for "inspiration only". While a set of several flavours may combine to taste like basil, the difficulty is in the proportions. In other words, you'll need a month of laboratory work to replicate basil using coriander, tarragon, cloves and laurel.



But that was hardly going to stop me from having a go of it. I started with a food pairing: Brussels sprouts and mango. With some trial-and-error, I believe you could find a preparation that would bring out the complimentary flavours, but I was not inspired to put in too much time on this combination. I moved on to grapefruit – first sampled with coriander, then with peanuts. Both combinations were strangely compelling, and I imagine some of my forthcoming houseguests will be treated to a salad with these three ingredients. Score one for food pairing.

Lastly, I tried my hand at a food replacement. For my "control", I heated apple juice with a cinnamon stick. To replace the spice, my second pot used lemongrass, lemon peel and cardamom as mulling spices. The results were surprisingly similar. I was keenly aware of a peppery element in the cinnamon missing from the experimental version, but I can also imagine that a few tries working with the right ingredients could create an effective cinnamon replacement.

For the creative home cook, Foodpairing.be delivers on the "inspiration" it promises. Take a peek and then start surprising your friends, family and your taste buds.

→ www.foodpairing.be

THE LAST WORD... Send a letter

"It's as if you rented a DVD, but you don't have to bring it back later."

Marianne Wauters of Games, Movies and More, who have developed a DVD that self-destructs after two days

Last time round

"I'm glad I'm Zwarte Piet and not Sinterklaas. The Saint is always so serious, whereas I get to be a bit silly at least."

Gust Gabriels, 74, of Wuustwezel, who is stopping after 55 years by Sinterklaas' side

WORD...

Changing gear
"My son is crazy about Top Gear. I said to him this morning that I would score the best time. This evening, I'm going to have to disappoint him."

Kris Peeters, Flanders' minister-president, after taking part in a newspaper's "Star in a Reasonably Priced Car" challenge

Bah, Humbug

"Father Christmas is a narcissistic neurotic with bad taste, as you can see from his gnome clothing and all that business with the reindeer."

Actor Jan Decleir in *Het Nieuwsblad*