

Manhattan transfer 5

This week Flanders House moves into the New York Times Building in midtown Manhattan. The new director Philip Fontaine explains how he plans to promote the links between Flanders and America.



Red sings the blues 8

Axelle Red has just released her first album in English. The fiery singer from Hasselt talks to An Gyde about empathy, change and idealism.



The big issue 16

Flanders has just got bigger. Or has it? Alistair MacLean ponders recent rumours that Flanders has expanded in this week's Talking Dutch column.



If I can make it there

As the government prepares to open a new Flanders House in downtown Manhattan this week, we look at 400 years of Flemish-American relations

DAVID BAECKELANDT

When Henry Hudson sailed up the broad river that bears his name in September 1609, he had little idea of the impact of his voyage. But his exploration set the stage for Dutch colonisation in the New World and forged a trail that subsequent adventure seekers would follow from Europe to the Americas.

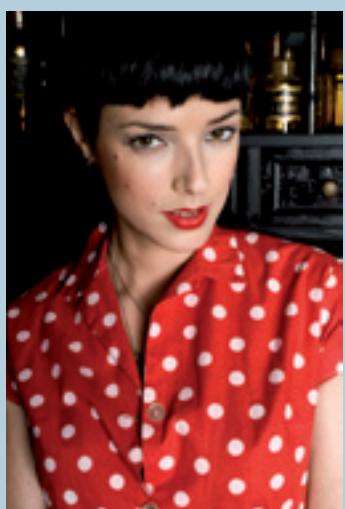
Americans rightly look at his arrival as one of the seminal events in the exploration and discovery of the United States. The British, too, looked with pride at the accomplishment of their native son, who came from Wales. But the contribution that Flanders made to this discovery seldom receives the credit it deserves.

No one who looks at the history can deny that Flemings made a sizable contribution to the success of explorers to the New World. After all, it was Gerardus Mercator, born in the Flemish river town of Rupelmonde, who first delineated the Western Hemisphere into North and South America on his world map in 1538. Mercator's projection map, first printed in 1569, represented the meridians of longitude by equally spaced parallel lines, which greatly increased the accuracy of navigational maps (and the likelihood that ships knew roughly where they were).

→ *Continued on page 4*

Hot porn gets cold shoulder

Valentine Day stunt axed



Plans by Studio Brussel to shoot a pornographic movie as part of the station's Valentine's Day celebrations have received a cold shower from the standards committee of the VRT, the public sector broadcasting authority that runs the station.

"We didn't decide in advance how far we wanted to go," commented DJ Stijn Van de Voorde, while the broadcast was still a burning issue. Programme collaborator Murielle Scherre, who runs the lingerie line La fille d'O, was considering "a couple

who demonstrate their kissing technique, a masturbating girl," and a few other unmentionable features. Last week 100 people showed up at the broadcaster for auditions.

In the end, VRT authorities made the decision for them. The plans were cancelled, but not, the VRT said, because StuBru had done anything wrong. "There existed the perception that the VRT was going to make pornographic material," a statement read, whereas the Valentine's action was intended to be "playful". ♦

ALAN HOPE

Fortis vote leaves doubts

Calls for finance minister to resign

ALAN HOPE

The CEO of Fortis has called on all parties to come back to the negotiating table following the rejection of the agreement to sell to BNP Paribas, in a vote by shareholders in Brussels last week. The decision left the bank in the hands of the government and brought calls for the resignation of finance minister Didier Reynders.

Fortis, once Belgium's biggest bank, was taken over by the government last September after the share price plummeted. A deal was immediately agreed under

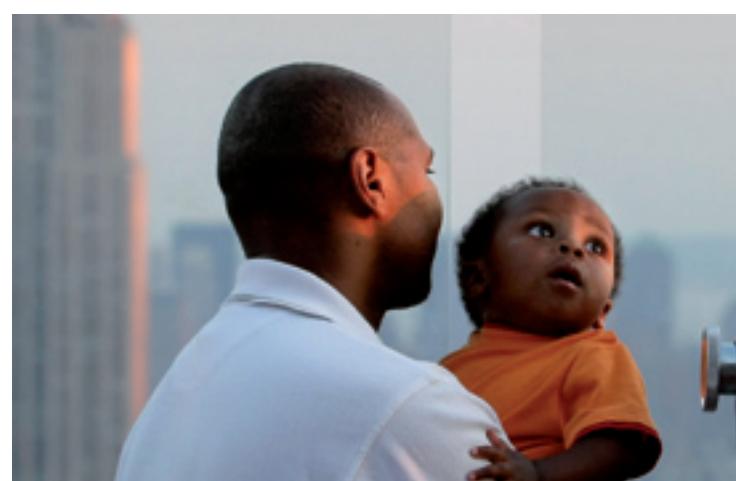
which Fortis would be taken over by BNP Paribas in return for equity.

But small shareholders, united into two main groups, opposed the sale as it would render their holdings virtually worthless. In addition, it was considered that the value the deal put on Fortis was far too low, especially as BNP's own shares have come down in price since the deal was signed.

Also at issue is about €10 billion worth of junk → *Continued on page 3*

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FLANDERS TODAY

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Editor: Derek Blyth
Deputy editor: Lisa Bradshaw
News editor: Alan Hope
Agenda: Sarah Crew, Robyn Boyle
Picture research: Esther Bourréé
Prepress: Nancy Temmerman
Contributors: Marie Dumont, Stéphanie Duval, Sharon Light, Alistair MacLean, Marc Maes, Ian Mundell, Anja Otte, Monique Philips, Saffina Rana, Leander Schaerlaeckens, Steven Tate, Denzil Walton
Project manager: Pascale Zoetelaert
Publisher: VUM

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Gossetlaan 28, 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

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FLANDERS TODAY
FEBRUARY 18, 2009

News in brief

ALAN HOPE

Data disclosure

Brussels hospitals have to allow the Flemish Brussels Committee (VKB) access to data on staff appointments and the language competency of employees, the Council of State has ruled. The VKB wants to ensure that hospitals in the capital conform to language requirements. At present, Flemish watchdogs claim too many staff are monolingual French speakers, which presents problems for the proper treatment of Dutch-speaking patients. ♦

Coffee shop closed

The mayor of Terneuzen in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, the coastal province in the southern Netherlands that borders Flanders, has closed the country's biggest coffee shop, which attracted up to 2,500 drug tourists a day, many of them bringing their purchases back to Flanders. Police found more than the legal limit of 500 grams during a raid in 2007, which led to a six-month closure. A repeat offence in 2008 has now led to the definitive closure. ♦

Assisted death

All animal shelters in Antwerp should set up a euthanasia committee to oversee putting animals to sleep, according to the city's animal welfare alderman Luc Bungeneers. The proposal is contained in a charter for shelters passed last week by the city council. "Why should we do less for our animals than for humans?" Bungeneers asked. ♦

First aid scam

The Flemish Ambulance Association (VAV) has issued a warning about companies that sell first-aid kits to small businesses and claim the proceeds go to the association. The VAV has no connection with the sales and receives nothing. The sellers were first reported in Antwerp and the Kempen area; last week a similar scam was reported to police in Bruges. The sellers, usually cold-calling on the phone, offer a car first-aid kit for €150. ♦

Trial begins

The trial of Kenny Bolle started in Bruges last week. Bolle, 20, is accused of stabbing to death Bart Bonroy in Ostend in February 2007 because he wouldn't give him a cigarette. He also injured another man in the same incident. ♦

Biggest gift ever goes to cervical cancer

A former leading businessman has made the largest private donation ever to help research at Leuven University. Luc Verelst, formerly the owner of the Verelst construction company, gave €1.25 million for research into cervical cancer after his sister was recently diagnosed with the disease.

The money will be spent on basic research, as well as the organisation of an international conference in Leuven where researchers can exchange the latest information. "Cervical cancer is treated as a poor relation by the pharmaceutical industry, and I wanted to do something to change that," Verelst said. "The number of victims may be lower [than for other cancers], but the damage is just as great."

Every year in Belgium 1,350 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer, with survival rates of up to 92% if diagnosis is made early. It is the fifth most deadly cancer in women worldwide and the fourth most common among women in Belgium. But its relative numbers compared to breast and lung cancer means financing for research is hard to obtain. "Government investment is ridiculous," Verelst said. "It's not my style to sit and wait for things to change."

One encouraging research area concerns the so-called anti-PIGF molecule, which shuts down blood vessels to stop tumours growing, and which was discovered at Leuven.

Verelst is also the founder of the Solid International private foundation, which supports development projects in the third world. ♦

vehicle more or less unharmed," Milow wrote on his blog. ♦

Rule relaxed

The government plans to scrap the annual requirement for chronically ill or disabled people to provide a medical certificate. At present, even someone with an incurable condition or an amputated limb must provide proof every year that their condition persists. ♦

Man eats dog

The public broadcaster VRT has apologised to the producers of the hit series *Van vlees en bloed* (Of Meat and Blood) whose final episode last week was ruined in the closing moments by the appearance of a DOG – an onscreen logo and message announcing the next programme. "I was extremely angry, swore quite a lot, then went out for some fresh air," admitted writer-director-actor Tom Van Dyck. A VRT spokesman said: "We're just as upset as Tom Van Dyck and his colleagues at [production house] Woestijnvis." ♦

Phones down

The collapse of the Proximus mobile phone network for a period on Thursday, 12 February, was due to a faulty machine that traces the locations of phones, according to Belgacom, which owns the operator. The disruption is the most serious for 15 years, with one machine causing a chain reaction among the others. Traffic on the network was reduced to 20-30% the normal rate at the worst point. Consumer organisation Test-Aankoop criticised the lack of communication between the company and its users, some of whom were unable to contact emergency numbers. ♦

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for global citizens



Future of Fortis uncertain as shareholders revolt

→ Continued from page 1

credit instruments, which Paribas had agreed to take over. So long as that poisoned package remains with Fortis Bank, the bank's creditworthiness will never recover. If €7 billion is passed to Fortis Holding, as the government intends, bankruptcy could loom.

The shareholders managed to win a court ruling that their views must be taken into account, which led to a suspension of the sale and to last week's vote. Their case was bolstered when Ping An, the Chinese insurance company, which, with a 5% stake, is the single largest private shareholder, said it would oppose the BNP Paribas deal.

And so it turned out. The "Yes" camp, which followed the government's and board's view, won 49.74% of the vote, and the sale was rejected. As if that tight margin weren't dramatic enough,

it later emerged that the government's defeat came as the result of a blunder.

The 5,000 or so shareholders who attended the meeting at Heizel to vote in person received a shock as proceedings opened, when they learned that the government intended to use a block of some 125 million of its own shares to vote – despite the fact that these are non-voting shares. That looked like the death-blow to opposition to the BNP Paribas sale. But then, just as surprisingly, the government's block of votes was withdrawn from the count, apparently as a result of a misunderstanding. The vote went ahead, and the "No" side won narrowly.

The deal's opponents immediately called for new negotiations with Paribas – which had been their goal all along. They also called for the resignation of Reynders,

whose attempt to steamroll the vote had "poisoned" the debate, according to Fortis CEO Karel De Boeck. Reynders is already implicated in the alleged attempt by the government to interfere with the court case brought by shareholders that led to yesterday's vote – allegations that have already led to the resignations of prime minister Yves Leterme and justice minister Jo Vandeurzen.

Meanwhile, the government is to open new discussions with BNP Paribas, according to Reynders himself, speaking on RTBF television at the weekend. At the same time, the board of Fortis will get together with shareholders' representatives.



The "No" vote won

A visitor to the new evolution gallery at the Museum for Natural Sciences in Brussels admires one of the exhibits. The gallery houses the exhibition *The Story of Life in Six Chapters*, which concentrates on changes in life forms that have taken place during six eras, from the Cambrian to the present. The exhibit was opened on the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin, who popularised the theory of evolution by natural selection.



THE WEEK IN FIGURES

63,000

Number of children in Flanders who will receive a free copy of the book *Voor nu en nog heel lang* (For Now and a Lot Longer) in a €350,000 campaign to improve reading skills. The book contains short stories and illustrations by top children's writers from Flanders and the Netherlands. The operation, launched by culture minister Bert Anciaux, applies to children who turn seven in 2009. [image: kinderboek © Tom Schamp]



6%

New rate of VAT on house construction, demolition and rebuilding, down from 21% for the whole of 2009. The measure, intended to give a boost to the building industry, concerns only the first €50,000 of costs and excludes second residences, rental property or additions to property such as swimming pools.

€322,548,747,424.22

Belgium's national debt at the end of January this year.

6,000 – 10,000

Number of jobs that could be created by the completion of the Oosterweel link joining the left bank of the Schelde in Antwerp with the main motorways to the Netherlands, Germany and the south, according to Karel Vinck, chairman of the Antwerp Mobility Management Agency. Vinck now appears to be considering a new route for the link, which has been the subject of much local protest on environmental grounds.

1 year

(Suspended) sentence given to a 35-year-old Antwerp woman who admitted hitting her 10-year-old son with a belt and shoe on the head, feet and lower legs. The abuse was spotted by a school doctor.

13%

Number of Belgians who admit to flirting on airplane trips, according to research by British Airways. The biggest flirters are Germans, with one in three chatting up a member of the opposite (or the same) sex, and one in 10 managing to get a date.

€650 million

Paid out in Belgium last year on entertainment, including €247 million for computer games alone – more than was spent on music or DVDs. ♦

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Last December, we held a series of focus groups across Flanders to find out what people thought of *Flanders Today* and how we might improve the newspaper. A total of eight groups met in Antwerp, Ghent, Leuven and Brussels. Some were regular readers, while others had never set eyes on the newspaper. The participants included students, company executives, journalists, diplomats and teachers. Almost all wanted to know more about Flanders.

We received an enormous amount of useful input and, as far as possible, have revamped the newspaper to reflect our readers' suggestions. Mostly, you were satisfied with the original, so we have been cautious with the changes. We have expanded the agenda by one page and moved the news section. We have also added several new features, such as a weekly restaurant reviews, and, on alternating weeks, a café review and nightlife section.

The rest remains untouched. We still have Anja Otte on Flemish politics (returning next week) and Alistair MacLean's hugely popular Talking Dutch column (which has moved to a new space on the back page). We are keeping culture news, film reviews, fashion stories, interviews, travel articles and bike trails.

This week we mark the opening of the new Flemish House in midtown Manhattan by focusing on the links between Flanders and America. We realised quite soon that there was really too much to say in one issue, so we have invited David Baeckelandt, who wrote our cover story and is an expert on American-Flemish links, to contribute a monthly Letter from America, beginning on 4 March.

Our cover photograph this week was taken by Jimmy Kets, a Flemish photographer who, we think, captures the spirit of America. ♦

Culture News

Save De Morgen

Top Flemish stars like Arno, Axelle Red, An Pierlé and Luc De Vos will take part in an event this Friday, 20 February, to protest against job losses at De Morgen newspaper.

www.reddemorgen.be.

Fabre gets honour

Flemish artist Jan Fabre, who last year made history as a guest of the Louvre in Paris, has been awarded an honorary doctorate by Antwerp University.

Night of the Stars

TV series Katarakt, Sara, De Smaak van De Keyser and Matrousjka's 2 are nominated in this year's category of Best TV Fiction at the Night of the Flemish Stars. Eric Van Looy and Roos Van Acker are among the nominees for Best Presenter, while Aspe stars Lucas Van den Eynde and Maaike Cafmeyer are in the running for Best Actor and Actress. The awards will be announced on 29 March.

Paris posting

Multimedia production house Studio 100 last week announced the opening of a new animation studio in Paris, to be known as Studio 100 Animation. The creative director will be Jan Van Rijsselberge, whose credits include Cosmic Cowboys, Zombie Hotel and Shorts of Steel.

Werchter acts

Britpop sensations Oasis and Nashville rockers Kings of Leon will headline the Thursday and Saturday of this year's Rock Werchter from 2 to 5 July. Coldplay is already lined up for Friday and Metallica for Saturday. Meanwhile, Marilyn Manson and Mötley Crüe will top the bill at the Graspop festival in Dessel near Antwerp from 26-28 June.

Desperately seeking

Fashion stylist Jani Kazaltzis is desperately seeking women of all ages and body types to feature on the cover of his new book. Details at www.opdecovermetjani.be



If I can make it there

➡ Continued from page 1

The Flemish in America

One year after Mercator printed his world map in Antwerp, Abraham Ortelius printed the world's first modern atlas. This brought together in one volume a collection of the best maps of each region, regardless of provenance.

This atlas, the *Theatrum Orbis*, was the first to depict America as a continent. The term "atlas", incidentally, was first coined by Mercator. So it is perhaps no surprise that the first atlas dedicated solely to the New World was also printed by a Fleming, Corneille Wytfliet,

Van Meteren, who was born in Antwerp and knew the cartographers and printers. (His father was Jacobus Van Meteren, who funded, printed and distributed the first English vernacular Bibles, while his mother was an Ortelius, making Van Meteren a cousin of Abraham Ortelius.)

Hudson spent several months in the Netherlands up until his departure in April 1609, where he met Judocus Hondius, the creator (with Plantin) of the first Sea Atlas and heir to Ortelius' and Mercator's cartography business.

When Hudson pushed off from the quay at Amsterdam on a clear spring day in 1609, he had been headhunted, financed and supplied by the Flemish

on presses at Leuven in 1597.

At roughly this same time, the Antwerp publisher Christoffel Plantijn printed the world's first maritime atlas, the *Spieghel der zeevaerdt*, known in English as *The Mariner's Mirror*. The sea atlases were indispensable in the age of sail, right up into the 20th century, and were used on virtually every British voyage to the New World. Henry Hudson was more than likely one of the very early users of *The Mariner's Mirror*, if only because he was friendly with Plantin's collaborator Judocus Hondius.

Hudson not only benefitted greatly from the legacy of the discoverers and cartographers before him, but leaned almost exclusively on Flemings for his cartographic information. He first came to the attention of the Dutch by way of the Dutch Consul at London, Emanuel

Henry Hudson's responsibility was to explore and seek a Northwest Passage (over the top of the North American continent) to the riches of the Indies. His craft, De Haelve Maen, or The Half Moon, was one of the nearly 100 *fregats* operated by the Dutch East Indies Company (VOC). This type of ship – a "frigate" in English – was, incidentally, invented by the Flemish.

The agreement that Hudson signed to undertake this voyage (his first to America but third as captain) was countersigned by the Antwerp-born merchant Dirk van Os, whose home in Amsterdam served as the headquarters of the VOC.

Eight of the top 10 shareholders of the VOC came from either Flanders or Brabant and the company's oldest financial document (signed by Van Os) is the oldest surviv-



© Jimmy Kels

ing stock certificate issued by a company involved with America. This company, with its powerful Flemish identity, was the foundation on which the Dutch maritime empire was built in the 17th and 18th centuries and which, in large part, was responsible for the prosperity of the Golden Age of Dutch history.

Hudson, while an experienced navigator, received most of his charts and maps from Pieter Plancius, a native of Dranouter in West Flanders. Plancius' son-in-law, the Englishman Matthew Slade, was not only a Protestant but, for many years, one of the top three leaders in the main English Separatist Church at Amsterdam. This is the same congregation that the Pilgrims joined when they first moved to the Netherlands. So it may very well be that the spark for the Pilgrim's emigration came from the heated discussions among the Flemings supporting Hudson.

In the end, when Hudson pushed off from the quay at Amsterdam on a clear spring day in 1609, he had been headhunted, financed and supplied by the Flemish. His crew of 20 included three Flemings and at least another half-dozen Netherlanders. When he returned in 1610 from his first voyage to America, the first printed record of his discoveries was made by Van Meteren in Dutch. Only one copy of this work (*Commentarien ofte Memoriën van den Nederlantsen Staet*) exists in the United States. It is kept under lock and key in the Library of Congress.

The immediate exploitation of his discoveries was financed by Brabant merchants, like Martin Vogelaers, and carried out by sailors who were sent on fur trading expeditions to the Hudson River area as early as 1611.

The Dutch and Flemish sailors built the first recorded European settlement in New York in 1613 from the remains of one of

Hudson anniversary

The Henry Hudson 400 Foundation has planned a programme of events to mark the 400th anniversary of Hudson's sea voyage to New York. There will be a flotilla of Dutch barges in the Hudson, walking tours of Dutch Manhattan and a New York Night in Amsterdam. ♦

➡ www.henryhudson400.com

Philip Fontaine

INTERVIEWED BY
LEANDER SCHAERLAECKENS

The new director of Flanders House in Manhattan talks about his work, his vision of America and how much the Flemish have influenced the American dream

How did you end up in Manhattan?

I am originally from Brussels and studied International and European law at the Catholic University of Leuven. I started working for an American company in Brussels in 1992. Its headquarters were based in Cleveland, Ohio and it operated in sports marketing and retail. Pretty soon I was transferred to Cleveland and put in charge of international marketing and sales. I emigrated to America and set up new markets for them in Japan, Asia, Australia and Latin America. I worked for them for about six years, during which time I travelled a lot, all over the world.

In the late 1990s I observed the internet becoming very important and decided that I'd better get in on it. So I packed up and moved to San Francisco with my suitcase in hand, to find a job in the internet sector. This industry was booming and a lot of ambitious, young people headed to Silicon Valley. I was one of them and briefly worked at some start-ups before getting my big chance as an international product manager at eBay. I was put in charge of the eBay France website, which was the first foreign-language version of eBay. Later I was promoted to director general of eBay France and spent my time jetting back and forth between San Francisco and Paris.

In 2002 I moved to New York to be with my Italian girlfriend. I kept working in the online sector, on various projects for Morgan Stanley and Travelport, including Orbitz and Cheap Tickets, for the past three years, I've worked as director of online technology/e-commerce for PPR/Redcats, a big French group that owns Fnac, La Redoute and the Gucci Group. I was responsible for web sites with billions of dollars in sales.

In September 2008, I became executive director of the new Flanders

House in New York. The Department of International Affairs of Flanders was looking for a Fleming (I grew up in Laken, Brussels and Grimbergen), but they also wanted someone who thought, worked and acted as an American.

What is Flanders House?

Flanders House, which opens on 25 February, is a non-profit organisation that consolidates all of the teams and services that work for Flanders in the US. The people that work for Flanders Investment and Trade (FIT), Tourism Flanders-Brussels (TV) and Flanders International (IV) will all work from the same location so that they can create a more consistent image of Flanders in the US. We want to establish a single point of contact for Flanders in America.

"Americans are the children of the 16th-century rebels of Flanders and the Low Countries."

Another important goal is to invest in Flanders' image in the United States. That image is a blank canvas at the moment. Brussels is known as an important, international centre, but few people here know Flanders. We want to invest in branding Flanders in the American market, to get across the message that it is a small yet very dynamic and productive region with highly educated people, at the heart of the European Union.

Where are you based?

Flanders House is located on the 44th floor of the new New York Times building on West 40th street and Eighth Avenue. We have about 500 square meters of space, along with various conference rooms. Much of our infrastructure will be open to

Van Mieghem

Flanders House opens with an exhibition on the Antwerp artist Eugen Van Mieghem who painted emigrants setting off for America from the Flemish port



FLANDERS TODAY
FEBRUARY 18, 2009



Philip Fontaine

partners from both Flanders and the US. The University of Ghent for example will use some of our rooms for a few months every year to recruit PhD students for its bio and plant technology departments. Flanders House wants to be more than just offices. It wants to become the central meeting point where any Fleming or Flemish organisation –public or private, business or non-profit– can interact with its American partners and US society at large. We will also have use of the New York Times Center Auditorium to hold larger debates or presentations. Some of the space on the 44th floor

American mentality. America never behaved like any other British colony. From its inception it rebelled against foreign and unelected monarchs and officials. That spirit of urban rebellion came out of Flanders and the Netherlands and was the strongest in the Northern states of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The colony of New Netherland (often referred to as Nova Belgica) was founded by Hollanders, Brabanders, Flemings and Walloons. While these Protestant free thinkers lost the use of the Dutch language, they insisted on protecting and exercising their civil rights as free men in relation to the English. That's what sets the United States of America apart from, say, Australia or Canada. The idea of gaining and maintaining your freedom through your own hard work, 'can do' ability and education comes from our culture. The Ameri-

can values of entrepreneurship, world trading and openness are also linked to the Low Countries. Flanders (or the Southern Netherlands) subsequently lost much of this inheritance under centuries of occupation by foreign powers.

There's a story here that was lost of adventurous citizens who sought to build a new society that was more tolerant, open and multicultural. That story became America. People of many races and cultures are given a chance here. English historians wrote that the Puritan English stock settlers had founded America with their arrival at Plymouth Rock, but this is a myth. Many American historians are stating this openly now. Americans are the children of the 16th-century rebels of Flanders and the Low Countries. ♦

will be multifunctional and can be turned into exhibition space. We'll be opening with an exhibit of Eugen Van Mieghem which will run until the end of September 2009 before moving on to other museums in New York.

What links do you see between Flanders and the United States?

There are strong links between Flanders, the Low Countries and America. We share many values and ideas. This relationship is underestimated and often even misunderstood on both sides of the ocean. The values that came from the Low Countries to America in the 16th and 17th centuries shaped to a large extent the

WHERE IS FLANDERS?

Flanders, New York

"This lightly populated, heavily wooded hamlet in northwest Southampton Town was virtually uninhabited by whites in colonial times. Among its early settlers were Dutch who settled in the area about the end of the 18th Century. They gave the location its name because it reminded them of Flanders, a region of Holland."

→ found in
www.newsday.com



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putting people first

Colruyt profits from crisis

The no-frills supermarket chain Colruyt increased its market share in the last months of 2008, partly at the expense of deep-discount competitors Aldi and Lidl. Colruyt now has a market share of 23% nationwide, just behind market leaders Carrefour and Delhaize, and equal with the German discounters Aldi and Lidl.

As the economic crisis grew, it had been expected that Colruyt, with its trademark combination of quality products and lower prices, would take advantage of the fact that people in tougher economic times still have to buy food and household products, but want to spend less all the same. That put Colruyt at an advantage over the Big Two, leaving the lower end of the

market to the German duo.

But one problem Aldi and Lidl have is market saturation. From pursuing a policy of growth through new openings, they have now arrived at a situation where the possibilities for new stores – Aldi has about 430, and Lidl 300 – are now severely limited. Lidl experimented with in-store growth by increasing the number of A-brand products it carries. That however brings it into direct competition with Colruyt. At the same time, Delhaize has been aggressively pushing its 365 line of deep-discount products by playing specifically on price comparisons with Aldi.



© SHUTTERSTOCK

Wind power

The Halle-based discount retailer Colruyt is to invest €60 million in a distribution centre in Ghislenghien, in Wallonia. Colruyt already operates eight distribution centres, six of them in Flanders. The new project will employ up to 1,000 people and receive its power from 10 wind turbines. ♦

Supermarket market share in Belgium 2008

Carrefour	26%
Delhaize	25%
Colruyt	23%
Aldi + Lidl	23%
Other	10%

Delhaize takes on Unilever

Supermarket chain Delhaize has taken 250 products made by British-Dutch conglomerate Unilever off its shelves, threatening a boycott until the multinational cuts its prices.

Unilever, according to a statement released by Delhaize, has demanded that the supermarket take a full range of products "without regard to the needs and demands of the consumer". The range links popular brands to less-popular ones, and amounts, Delhaize claims, to abuse of a dominant market position.

Unilever, on the other hand, said it had kept its price rises below 2.5%, which is less than Belgium's inflation rate in 2008. In its own statement, the company said it was "of the utmost importance" that consumers were still able to buy its A-brands.



Dove products are removed from the shelves in Delhaize

The products involved in the boycott – some 250 in all – cover a wide range, from Robin starch and Sun dishwasher tablets to Effi margarine and Dove bodycare products.

Last week Unilever took out a series of full-page ads in newspapers advising customers to shop elsewhere than Delhaize. The ads show a series of products and the message: "Unfortunately, these are off the shelves in Delhaize. Luckily they're freely available in other supermarkets."

Competitor Carrefour also tried to profit from the dispute. "Let Delhaize's customers come to us," a spokesperson said.

Delhaize is running a risk in boycotting such a major supplier. Customers in Delhaize branches are being directed to other name-brands, or to Delhaize's own range. But such a wide range of products is involved that the danger exists that customer brand-loyalty might force them to look elsewhere for their favourite brand, at the risk of not coming back. ♦

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electronic payments made in Belgium last year, a 5% increase on 2007. There were 837 million payments, and 107 million cash withdrawals.

THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Banking • Delen

Bank Delen, the Antwerp-based private banker, has been named the Best Private Bank in Belgium by the UK financial magazine *Euromoney*.



Dredging • Jan De Nul

The Antwerp-based dredging company Jan De Nul is the country's favourite employer, according to a survey of 10,000 workers by temp agency Randstad. It beat off competition from GlaxoSmithKline, the pharmaceuticals company, and Price Waterhouse Coopers, the audit and consulting firm.

Electronics • Eldi

The electronics and household appliances distributor Eldi, which operates 116 stores in the country, expects to open three more outlets later this year.

Electronics • Punch

Punch International, the electronic equipments manufacturer which supplies parts to clients such as Xerox, is repatriating the activities of its Slovak production unit to its Hamont-Achel site in Limburg.

Food • Snick

Snick Ingredients, the food additives and condiments supplier for the food industry, has been acquired by the Dutch Acomo company.

Transport • Eurostar

Eurostar traffic in the Channel tunnel is back to normal after almost six months of extensive renovation following the September fire that closed part of the tunnel.

Correction

DC Industrial, part of the Group De Cloedt, has won a contract from the European Maritime Safety Agency to handle cross-border oil spills in the North Sea. The contract covers the area between Brest in northern France, the British coast and Denmark. In *Flanders Today* we wrongly reported that this contract involved Dredging De Cloedt. ♦



Flanders under pressure at work

Six out of ten people in Flanders find work pressure "high" or "very high", according to the results of a poll carried out by employment agency Jobat. Two-thirds worked an average of six hours per week in overtime.

Pressure is greatest, according to respondents' own evaluation, among top managers, 81% of whom said things had got worse over the last year. They were followed by financial managers (77%), sales and health workers (72%) and marketing staff (70%). At the other end of the scale, ICT workers, logistical staff and engineers felt least mounting pressure – 61%, compared with 32% who thought nothing had changed. In 7% of cases, respondents said their work pressure had in fact declined.

The least likely to suffer work-pressure, according to the majority of respondents, are government workers, followed by teachers. The most likely are health workers, followed by transport.

Surprisingly, only 50% said the economic crisis had increased pressure in their business

sector. A small group, 7%, even thought the crisis had made things easier. On the positive side, 58% said pressure helped create solidarity among co-workers, 52% said it upset relations with colleagues, and the same number said it gave them "a kick".

Jobat and research bureau Profacts interviewed 3,500 people among its readers and subscribers between 23 January and 6 February. ♦

Reasons for increased pressure at work

- ♦ too many different jobs to do
- ♦ too little time
- ♦ lack of communication
- ♦ lack of cooperation
- ♦ too many interruptions

Flanders bears the brunt of tax audits

Flemish taxpayers and businesses account for 70% of all tax audits, according to government figures, although only 55% of auditors are capable of working in Dutch. The situation, according to secretary of state in charge of fraud control Carl Devlies, has not changed since the imbalance was first pointed out last year. Nor is it likely to change in the near future, he told the parliament's finance committee. His department, he said, was carrying out an enquiry into the reason for the discrepancy. Once that is done, the information will provide a tool to compare the different services across the country. But it would be late 2010 at the earliest before proposals for concrete measures to rectify the situation could be brought forward, Devlies said. ♦

Some brands made by Unilever:

- Calvé - Cif - Coral - Knorr
- Lipton - Maizena - Signal
- Sunsilk - Zwan



The Buddhism blues

Axelle Red's first English CD is looking for a little empathy

Axelle Red is one of Flanders' superstars in more ways than one. The striking redhead hails from Hasselt in the quiet Flemish province of Limburg. But she's hardly provincial, or quiet.

After obtaining a law degree back in 1993, she kicked off an extremely successful musical career, with albums sung in French and Spanish. Audiences all over the world – but particularly in Belgium and France – have been falling for her inventive mix of French lyrics and hot soul ever since. She never worked with just any old soul musicians – only the very best: Wilson Pickett, Sam Moore, Ann Peebles, Percy Sledge.

Red also stands out as a champion for human rights. As an ambassador for Unicef, she has traveled the globe to fight injustices against women and children. She worked with Bob Geldof on Live 8 and with Tom Barman on the Belgian 0110 concerts against intolerance. She sang with Peter Gabriel and Youssou N'Dour at the 60th birthday of the United Nations and campaigned for Oxfam.

For both careers, Red, who just turned 41 this month, has been appropriately honoured. In 2006, the French minister of culture awarded her the highest artistic honour in the country, making her "Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres". A year later, Belgium's King Albert II followed suit. Last year, Hasselt University added to that an honorary doctorate.

Her new album is maybe then unsurprisingly called *Sisters & Empathy*. What's surprising is that it is in English. Sporting the painting "Lover" by Sam Dillemans on its cover, it includes a booklet of 72 pages, complete with a reading ribbon.

An Gydé: One line that stands out in the new album: "Is it vanity to think we have empathy?"

Axelle Red: Well, if you take the word "empathy", it raises the questions "empathy for whom?", "empathy for what?" Buddhists would even say empathy for animals, empathy for the goldfish you keep at home [*laughs*]. In my search for a way to become a better human, that was what was at stake. When we talk about empathy we have to bear in mind we are all actually animals. Even if we want to do the right thing, it's very difficult to do so.

You could also make the case that empathy is a new fashion trend, a fad. In that case, I would be polishing up my own public image. On the other hand, if I say that I'm an exception, that again would be vanity. So if I think that I myself have empathy, I am in fact vain, if you catch my drift. Almost all



© Jan Welens

people have the ability to have empathy. It is located in the most ancient part of our brain. We have the ability to either have sympathy and compassion – or Schadenfreude and sadism. Primates have empathy. Even parrots apparently have it.

Do you think empathy can save the world?

That has been my Big Question for the last year. And I do think it's possible; I don't think it's something utopian. And it's slowly evolving. I think that all the people who voted for Barack Obama are using the more creative part of their brain. The right side has been stimulated for years, and the system is totally based on that. The emotional side, the left, has been understimulated. We can work on that. We could stimulate each other so we act more on our feelings. Because you can try to impose your own moral laws, but people are much more likely to do the right thing when they *feel* something is right.

Do you think Obama can produce the change that is necessary?

The most important thing is that Obama gives hope to people. People made clear that they wanted a change. People who used to think that they had power because they had money, now maybe will start to understand that they can get esteem by being good. That shift in value judgment is really incredible. Other leaders are also beginning

to understand that they should become more human in order to have legitimate authority. I'm convinced that people will always choose good over bad, if they are given the choice.

That's a very idealistic vision.

[*Laughs*] Well, it took me nearly two years to get that positive vision back because I had lost it completely. Look, I was born with a positive attitude, and I am naïve, and I really want to keep that intact. I don't want to punish other people because I have been disillusioned by one person. We should all be more blind in a way, more oriented towards the presumed innocence of people. During my travels, I have met people who have every reason to hate but who still find it in themselves to be positive. That makes me think if they can do that, it must be possible for everyone.

It sounds like making this album record was a therapeutic exercise?

Totally! But this one was indeed very important for me. The record before this I was very conscious that I wanted to create a positive record, as a kind of therapy. But the [*critical*] backlash was equally hard. In *Sisters & Empathy*, I want to address certain issues, but I'm not pointing the finger at anyone or claiming I have all the answers. I want to raise questions so other people can figure out their own answers.

If you had to choose between musician and human rights activist, which would you pick?

Then I'd be a mum [*laughs*]. Or partner. But I think my music is at the service of human rights. I wouldn't be able to live without music, but you can always make music, whether you turn it into records or not. As to the human rights part: that's most important of all in daily life. The actions I perform at home have to be beneficial to humanity in the same way as when I'm going to the Council of Europe to discuss rape within marriage. We divide too much between "making money", "being creative", "being a mum" or "working for human rights" – while in fact it's all part of the big picture.

On the new album, you worked with Flemish rock hero Tom Barman and blues musician Steven Debruyn. The focus seems to shift from soul to rock and blues.

It's positioned somewhere between the three. It's cool that the boundaries between these genres are fading. I didn't want the record to sound "cute", and the guitars really helped with that. Some of my musician friends used to say: You always travel so far, but the best stuff is right here at your doorstep. And it's true.



Axelle Red is in concert on 2 May in the Antwerp Sportpaleis. Tickets from 070.345.345 or www.sportpaleis.be

→ www.axelle-red.com



© Bart Devaele

No one makes films like Fien Troch, and Fien Troch makes films like no one else." That's what the jury of the Flemish Culture Awards said about the 30-year-old director before handing her the coveted prize for film earlier this month. "It's a beautiful compliment," she tells me over coffee in downtown Brussels, "but it's a lot of pressure!"

It's also quite a statement considering that Troch has only made two feature-length movies. But both of them are emotionally startling meditations on the suffering that follows loss and have appealed both to domestic and international audiences. Her first film, *Een Andere zijn geluk* (*Someone Else's Happiness*) won several awards at international film festivals, and her

new film *Unspoken* was a favourite at the Toronto Film Festival, where it premiered last autumn.

Troch thinks that the Culture Awards jury is referring in part to her style. "I'm pretty radical in terms of the look of my films," she says. "I'm very detailed."

She need not explain. The nearly geometric precision of the scenes in *Een Andere zijn geluk* and visually extreme settings – the stark whites of a sterile home, the bright colours of symmetrically arranged boxes in a grocery store – give it a wholly unique atmosphere. "When I'm writing my script, I'm already thinking about how it has to look," she says.

She also refused to get to close to the

Like no one else

Fresh from winning a Flemish Culture Award, Fien Troch releases her highly anticipated second film

LISA BRADSHAW

actors, choosing panoramic long shots of their modern landscapes. "I felt immediately when I was writing that the film is about loneliness, and the way to show the loneliness of 12 or 15 characters is to keep a distance," she says. "I wanted to strengthen the feeling of loneliness with the image – then you feel the loneliness, too."

With her new film, however, Troch gets in closer. *Unspoken*, which releases in cinemas this week, focuses on only two people – a couple who cannot communicate after the loss of their daughter. Where *Een Andere zijn geluk* focused on the breakdown of a town after the mysterious death of a child, *Unspoken* looks at the situation several years down the line.

"It was important to me that it was set four years after the daughter goes missing," explains Troch. "Right after something like that happens, you are allowed to be devastated, to go crazy and stay in your bed. A more difficult period must be when the outside world thinks you should be starting to get your life back together, get over it. But I don't think you ever get over losing a child. It gets easier, maybe, but

the feeling – it doesn't go away."

But the ability to talk about the feelings does go away, which is another difference between Troch's films and so many others. "I try to tell my stories without words – with silences, with images." In both her films, people cannot seem to say what they really want. This is a huge contrast with Hollywood films the director was so fond of when she was growing up, where everyone said "I love you" and "I miss you" and "I'm sorry" like it was nothing.

"That became to me like 'the way things should be'. And then I was confronted by situations where that didn't work," Troch explains. One time, when the director was about 10, her father was away working for three months. "I had in my head that when he came back I was going to run towards him – probably in slow motion – and say 'I missed you, and I love you'. But then at the airport when we saw him, I was very shy, and I just said 'hello'". Troch lay awake that night fretting about the experience. "I was so disappointed in myself" she exclaims. "I had prepared for that moment for three months. And maybe that way is much more beauti-

ful, but life isn't really like that. Sometimes you don't dare to say things."

Her father, by the way, is celebrated film editor Ludo Troch, who edited *Unspoken* (and about 70 other films). The family lived in Londerzeel, just north of Brussels, and Troch moved to Brussels after starting film school, the only woman in her class.

Her Londerzeel connection explains the Flemish village of her first film, and the Brussels life the setting and language (French) of *Unspoken*. But why again a missing child? Because it's a tragedy that people continue to struggle with for the rest of their lives and one that is central to all her characters' inability to communicate. "What can you say after four years?" she asks. "I miss her? Your partner knows that. What can you still say?"

But now that Troch has an eight-month-old son of her own, she realises how intimate such a story can really be. "It gets very personal all of a sudden. If I tried to make it now, the suffering of the parents would be much too close. I think I'm done with it. I've made two films about it now." ♦

REVIEW

Unspoken

Grace and Lukas live in a pleasantly rambling Brussels apartment surrounded by elderly neighbours and newborn kittens. While he is busy with his job as a tax inspector, she is happy to putter about, going swimming, doing small home repairs.

It all seems pretty idyllic, until Grace (Emmanuelle Devos) becomes obsessed with a peeling patch of ceiling she can't seem to control and Lukas, well, he is obsessed with teenage girls.

Second-time director Fien Troch releases information in *Unspoken* very slowly, allowing you to find out just a little bit more as the tension between the couple continues to grow. As the title suggests, it's a mute tension. Staring at each other across a dinner table or at the front door, neither Grace nor Lukas is able to say anymore what is in their hearts – that they miss their daughter, who disappeared several years earlier.

Troch's first film, *Een Andere zijn geluk* (2005), dealt with emotions immediately following the death of a child in a Flemish town. In *Unspoken*, years have gone by, but still, this couple is in crisis, surrounded by a silence that is deafening. Lukas, who has taken a lover (when he's not frequenting strip clubs) is constantly on the brink of words he cannot find. Grace seems to punish him with her lack of accusations. You know she could put him out of his misery if only she would say *something*.

Meanwhile, someone keeps phoning and not speaking. Lukas (Bruno Tedeschini) is convinced it's their long-lost daughter, who would now be a teenager. He talks to the silence at the other end of the line. Grace, meanwhile, has more complicated feelings. "I don't know if I want her to come back," she quietly admits.

Troch's films are marvellous at conveying with very little dialogue the complex emotions associated with unbearable situations. Though it occasionally lays the metaphors on a bit too thick and lacks the subtleness of her first film, *Unspoken* is an excellent reflection on the processing of pain and the psychology of loss. LB ♦

No words but a piercing gaze: Emmanuelle Devos in *Unspoken*

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Villa Vorlat

De Notelaer was transformed into the home of the Vorlat family in the Flemish TV drama series *Stille Waters*

FLANDERS TODAY
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Saved by a Spaniard

Bornem is one of the culturally richest cities in Flanders, thanks to some cash injection from the south

The quiet town of Bornem has so much to see that a day, or even a weekend, is never going to be enough. You have, within the town and its surroundings, no less than two castles, a hunting pavilion, three military forts, two children's farms, museums, art galleries, churches and abbeys, a brewery and nature reserves.

The region also has excellent walking and cycling routes alongside the River Scheldt, as it lazily loops around the town on its way to Antwerp. What's more, it is liberally sprinkled with inviting restaurants keen to impress you with local delicacies.

Located 20 kilometres southwest of Antwerp, just off the busy N16, Bornem first appeared on ninth century maps, where it can be seen to hold a strategic position near the confluence of the rivers Scheldt, Rupel and Durme. The earliest known Lord of Bornem is Lambrecht, who in 1007 was promoted to the position of Lord of Ghent. From 1088 onwards, Wennehaar, a Templar Knight, boosted the development of the town by allowing the local monks to build an abbey.

Fast forward to 1586, an important date in Bornem's history, when the whole town was bought by Pedro Coloma, a rich Spanish noble. He rebuilt the ruined castle and constructed a new link between the Scheldt and the Old Scheldt via a lock, which, incidentally, is the oldest hydraulic structure in Flanders.

From the mid-19th century, basket weaving was a large and profitable local industry. Its collapse in the 1950s spurred the establishment of the industrial estate on the N16, which secured local employment.

So what's on the list for a day – or more – in and around Bornem?

→ Go on location

Bornem was catapulted into the public eye a few years back with the popular TV drama series *Stille Waters*. The programme drew particular attention to De Notelaer, an 18th-century hunting and summer pavilion on the banks of the Scheldt.

The showpiece of this building – constructed in the 1790s – is the octagonal Italian Salon, with its parquet floor, pillars, wall paintings of mythological figures by Antoine Plateau and arabesques on the dome. The Scheldt landscape is reflected in its huge mirrored doors.

The Flemish Community bought and restored the building in the early 1980s and opened it to the public. It is now managed by Erfgoed Vlaanderen, the Flemish Heritage Foundation. The success of *Stille Waters* attracted other Flemish productions to Bornem and its surroundings; the area can be glimpsed in the movies *Team Spirit*, *Coco Flanel* and *De Zaak Alzheimer*.

www.notelaer.be



De Notelaer

DENZIL WALTON

→ Storm a castle

Down the road from De Notelaer is Castle d'Ursel. For over 400 years it was the summer residence of the noble d'Ursel family, who employed international architects to alter the building in accordance with the latest trends. Now the property of the province of Antwerp, it is currently being renovated, but the cellars, ground floor and first floor can be visited on certain days. The castle also hosts cultural activities such as exhibitions and classical concerts throughout the year. Whenever you go, choose a dry day to make the most of the landscaped gardens, which incorporate both French and English styles.

www.kasteeldursel.be

The neighbouring Castle Marnix de Sainte Aldegonde is equally impressive. Its history goes back to the ninth century when a mediaeval stronghold stood at this spot on the banks of the Scheldt. But when the route of the river changed around 1240, the stronghold lost its strategic defensive position. This was the castle that was rebuilt in the 16th century by Coloma, and in the 19th century renovated by the architect Henri Beyaert.

Castle Marnix can be visited by groups only – except for the last two Sundays of August and the first two Sundays of September, when anyone can come through the doors. The guided tour introduces the castle's extensive collection of 16th-century paintings, its 18th-century furniture, engravings by Pieter Breughel the Elder, a lace cabinet and a room filled with antique dolls. A permanent exhibition focuses on Philip de Marnix, secretary to William of Orange, while the outhouses contain a collection of perfectly preserved antique carriages.

www.kasteelmarnixdesaintealdegonde.be

→ Tour a quirky museum

Bornem and the surrounding area will keep you busy in museums for days. Notable are the local history museum De Zilverreiger, the Museum of Shipping and Fishing and the Havesdonckhoeve agricultural museum in the village of Wintam. In nearby Ruisbroek, the De Bres museum focuses on the disastrous floods of 1976, when the Scheldt burst its banks and flooded



the village. This led to the Sigma plan to raise and strengthen dikes, which protected low-lying areas in the tidal part of the Scheldt.

www.toerismekleinbrabant.be

The literary-minded should visit the Emile Verhaeren Museum in Sint-Amands. Verhaeren (1855-1916) was a Flemish poet who wrote in French and is one of the chief founders of the school of Symbolism. After a Jesuit education, he studied law at the University of Leuven, where he associated with young, radical writers and artists at a time of cultural renewal. After a very brief career as a lawyer (he was involved in only two cases) he dedicated his life to poetry and literature. His first collection of poems, *Les Flamandes*, describes, sometimes provocatively, his country and the Flemish people. It was an immediate success in the avant-garde world but caused great controversy in Catholic circles.

Verhaeren went on to become one of the most prolific poets of his era and a prominent figure in Belgian literature. His works were translated into more than 20 languages, and he travelled widely throughout Europe giving lectures. He narrowly missed the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1911 (which was awarded to his friend and fellow Fleming Maurice Maeterlinck). The museum displays his own original manuscripts and letters as well as those of his friends and contemporaries such as van Rysselberghe, Spilliaert and Meunier.

www.emileverhaeren.be

Also in Sint-Amands is a museum dedicated to the history and science of milling. Through a comprehensive collection of sketches, photos and documents, it details the development of the windmill in Flanders from before the Crusades to modern times. You'll learn about different types of mills, how they were constructed, where they were located and how they work. The museum also looks at the fascinating social importance of the local miller.

www.molenmuseum.be

→ Catch a train

If you prefer steam power to wind power, then you'll want to take a trip on a beautifully restored steam train. Two dating from 1907 and 1927 have been fully restored, while another four are awaiting renovation. The latest addition, a locomotive built in 1876, is one of the oldest steam trains in the world.

The trains run on occasional weekends on the line from Dendermonde to Puurs through July and August as well as during special events. Mark your calendar for 26 April (National Heritage Day) and 4-5 July (Steam along The Scheldt weekend).

www.stoomtrein.be

→ Take cover

The National Redoubt is the name given to the collection of strongholds encircling the city of Antwerp that was

Move it, move it →

Follow junctions 1, 5, 21, 22, 27, 21, 5 and 1 for one of Bornem's most scenic 10-km walks



FLANDERS TODAY
FEBRUARY 18, 2009



Castel d'Ursel

Primavera Pianistica piano festival, March 21-27
Children's arts festival, 19 April



built in the second half of the 19th century. The idea was that if Belgium was invaded, the government and army would pull back behind this ring of fortifications to resist and hold out for a long period.

By 1879, a first defence line of eight brick fortresses had been built, just five kilometres from the city gates. By 1914, a second line of 30 smaller concrete fortifications had been added, a further 16 kilometres from Antwerp. One of the best preserved is Fort Liezele, just down the road from Bornem, in Puurs. In its prime, Fort Liezele could hold a garrison of 350 soldiers.

Most of it lies underneath a thick layer of earth and concrete. The former armaments magazine features a multi-media presentation on the National Redoubt. Further rooms include displays of authentic uniforms, weapons, original photos and other historical objects. Subterranean galleries lead to the barracks, prison cells and a fully equipped kitchen. Above ground are gun turrets, an armoured observation post and original trenches and bunkers. It's open on Sundays from April to October.

www.fortliezele.be

→ Breathe some fresh air

The extensive networks of walking and cycling paths throughout the region all operate on the same ingenious principle. Every intersection has a number and a signpost with arrows towards the next numbered intersections. So all you have to do is get the walking or cycling map of the region (at the tourist office in Bornem) and plan your route by jotting down the list of intersections you want to walk or cycle through.

A particularly attractive walk of around 10 kilometres starts in the centre of Bornem and heads northwest along the Old Scheldt to the oldest lock in Belgium (the one built by Pedro Coloma). It then follows the (new) Scheldt upstream for a couple of kilometres before doubling back to the Old Scheldt. Here you get excellent views of Castle Marnix de Sainte Aldegonde on your way back to Bornem.

An excellent cycle route in this area starts at Mariekerke and incorporates not just one but two ferry crossings over the Scheldt. The ferryman will appear as if from nowhere every 90 minutes to take you across. And if you are wondering who pays the ferryman, it's not you; they are free to use.

→ Get yourself some beer

Bornem gives its name to two beers: Bornem Double and Bornem Triple. Both are served in generous quantities at local festivities, like the Mariekerke Eel Festival at the end of May. However, the region is most famous for its Duvel beer, which is brewed at the Duvel Moortgat brewery in nearby Puurs. The visitor centre is open every day, but a guided tour must be booked in advance. The beer was originally called Victory Ale to commemorate the end of the First World War. Apparently, during a tasting, a local shoemaker and friend of Albert Moortgat described the beer as "*nen echten Duvel*" or "a true Devil". And Duvel was born.

→ Taste the local delicacies

Good restaurants are not hard to come by in Bornem or the surrounding villages. A few recommendations: Restaurant Den Heerd on Sint-Amandssteenweg; Kaffemangee in Stationsstraat and Hotel Restaurant 't Land van Bornem in Kardinaal Cardijnplein. Parents with children might like to consider Eetkafé De Gouwe Luzze, which has a garden with swings, slides and a trampoline, as well as an indoor play area with toys and video games. ♦

► www.bornem.be

fashionista

Nostalgia

Fashion comes in cycles: of colours, themes and shapes that were once hot, then not, and years later return to the catwalks. But it seems like this year something more profound is going on. Maybe the direction fashion is taking right now is a direct consequence of ongoing wars or the disastrous financial crisis. After all, scary times often result in specific fashion changes.

And that fashion tries to be everything the world is not: colourful, happy, sweet and nostalgic for "better" times. This nostalgia is literally everywhere, from the music we play to the movies we watch. Remember last year's movie *Leatherheads*, with the beautiful Renée Zellweger dolled up as a roaring 1920s dame? And who doesn't like to take a look at actress Zooey Deschanel and singer Katy Perry, who both dress like pin-ups from the 1940s every day of the year?

Closer to home, we've got Lady Linn on the radio, whose jazzy and soulful pop sounds like it's straight from a 1950s vinyl record. Her fame rivals the popularity of Radio Modern, the party that moves around Flanders and attracts thousands of rock 'n' roll and swing lovers. They find everything about these old-fashioned nights out irresistible, from the swing dancing class at the start of the evening, to the full skirts and ponytails for the ladies, and James Dean hairstyles for the men.

All of a sudden, that is what everyone likes to be: a lady or a gentleman. Thus, dressing with class and an eye for nostalgic details is vital. Fortunately, the fashion scene is catching on, creating special brands to offer a fitting wardrobe to these stylish fashionistas with a penchant for the past without them having to haunt vintage shops for just the right items.

Some of the new labels have matching retro stories, like Eda Mae and Edith & Ella. The latter

was named after the grandmothers of the designers, while the former is a combination of Lula Mae – the real name of Holly Golightly in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* – and Eda Peel, a girl pictured on cigarette packs in the 1930s. And one designer from Austria, Lena Hoschek (pictured), unapologetically recreates styles from the past in a luxurious way that doesn't seem dated at all. No wonder Katy Perry loves this designer to pieces.

All this retro fashion obviously needs the perfect setting to be sold in, and that is what Antwerp shop Lila Grace is about. The owners even created a character called Lila Grace to inspire their customers and make them feel welcome. Because that is what this fashion and cultural spirit of nostalgia is all about: friendliness, happiness, pleasure. What better way to dress this spring (if it ever comes), than with a smile? ♦

► www.lilagrace.be

STÉPHANIE DUVAL



Austrian designer Lena Hoschek

• Agenda •

19 February – Tom Waits for Spring

Three master musicians – Jef Neve, Rony Verbiest and Antje De Boeck – interpret the great Tom Waits in shows across Flanders in March. www.tomwaitsuntispring.moonfruit.com



FLANDERS TODAY
FEBRUARY 18, 2009



Youth Film Festival

LISA BRADSHAW

Love, family, fear, politics – topics you find in abundance at any film festival are also present at this annual February event in both Bruges and Antwerp. The Youth Film Festival rounds up the best films about and for young people from around the world. This means animations for three-year-olds right up to young love for the teenage set. The good news is that many of the films will appeal to adults as well.

Topping the programme is the Norwegian film *The Ten Lives of Titanis* the Cat, which won an award from Amsterdam's Cinekid, plus Best Feature in the children's section of the Berlin Film Festival last year. A mysterious adventure awaits a 12-year-old girl when a real-live cat pops out of an old photo in her cellar.

The number-one choice for teenagers is *Boy A*, British director John Crowley's quietly tense study of a newly released young prisoner who committed a famously heinous crime many years before. A multiple award-winner across Europe, Andrew Garfield won a well-deserved BAFTA for his performance of a vulnerable outsider, desperate to make a break with the past.

The programme is helpfully split up by age group, and you can hardly go wrong with anything on the bill for smaller kids, which includes *A Tale of Two Mozzies* by the famous Danish animator Jannik Hastrup, and *Butterflies*, about a little girl in Sweden who can fly – sometimes.

There are many Dutch-language films from the Netherlands, but the only one from Flanders is in the shorts programme. Danny De Vent's fanciful cartoon *Swimming Lesson* finds a little boy falling into a huge swimming pool and discovering a whole new world. Films at the festival that are not in Dutch are either dubbed or subtitled in Dutch. There is a special focus on film from France this year, including *The Children of Timpelbach* (photo), in which a town is left in the hands of its children for one day.



The Youth Film Festival also includes workshops for children and teenagers. It's the only festival of its kind in Belgium and appoints special age-appropriate juries. Kids from around Flanders write in to say why they should get to judge the films. Ten-year-old jury member Basil Claeys from Borgerhout, for instance, wrote: "Good films make you forget that the story is invented, that there are special effects involved and that the things you see are not real. If a film does not look real, it is usually not a good film."

Well said, Basil.

→ www.jeugdfilmfestival.be

MORE FILM THIS WEEK

Anima Film Festival → Flagey, Brussels
Agnes Varda → Bozar, Brussels
Ciné-Privé → Living rooms in Ghent



Mechelen

CC - Stadsschouwburg
Keizerstraat 3; 015.29.40.00,
www.cultuurcentrummechelen.be
FEB 16 19.30 The Bochabela String Orchestra, Jean Bosco Safari and Violet

Roeselare

Cultureel Centrum De Spil
Spilleboudtreet 1; 051.26.57.00,
www.despil.be
FEB 20 20.30 Claire Chevalier, piano:
Satie, Poulenc

Schoten

Kasteel van Schoten
Kasteeldreef 61; 03.680.23.40,
www.schoten.be
FEB 22 11.00 Aperitif concert with
Het Nuove Musiche Strijkkwartet:
Haydn, Schubert and Tchaikovsky

Waregem

CC De Schakel
Schakelstraat 8; 056.62.13.40,
www.deschakel.be
FEB 18 20.00 Webern, Denisov and
Ustvolskaya

Zoerle-Parwijs (Westerlo)

GC De Zoerla
Gevaertlaan 1; 014.53.92.00
FEB 20 20.00 Lemmens Institute
Harmony Orchestra conducted by Jan
Van der Roost



Antwerp

Vlaamse Opera
Frankrijklei 1; 070.22.02.02,
www.vlaamseopera.be
Until FEB 21 Mazeppa by Tchaikovsky,
with the Flemish Opera Symphony
Orchestra

Brussels

De Munt
Muntplein; 070.23.39.39,
www.demunt.be
Until MAR 1 15.00/19.00 Le Calisto
by Francesco Cavalli, with De Munt
Symphony Orchestra and Choirs



Antwerp

Kelly's Irish Pub
Keyserlei 27; www.kellys.be
FEB 20-21 21.00 Steelyard Blues Duo

Ardoorie

Cultuurkapel De Schaduw
Wezestraat 32; 0479.80.94.82,
www.deschaduw.net
FEB 20 20.30 Midnight Maniacs

Asse

Klein Kunstencentrum 't Smiske
Gemeenteplein 7; 02.306.68.65,
www.tsmiske.be
FEB 20 21.00 Jammin 't Smiske,
jam session

Berlare

CC Stroming Berlare
Dorp 101; 052.42.35.31,
www.berlare.be
FEB 22 19.00 Singer

RESTAURANT OF THE WEEK

Branche

Lange Kievitstraat 125,
Antwerp



When the location is the heart of Antwerp, one expects to find class and design. Whether it be a historical jewel or a modern contribution, we accept no less than the best. And Branche Restaurant rises to the challenge in style.

Only a short walk from Antwerp's gorgeously renovated Central Station and the diamond district, Branche offers a total package. Perhaps due to the fact that it is connected to the sleek Golden Tulip Hotel, patrons are treated to a pampering of the senses. With a welcoming atmosphere, live music and a great view, this restaurant offers more than a good meal.

The name is derived from the English "branch", reflecting the design concept: Nature and her colours infuse the spaces with a feeling of comfort and serenity. Columns built of individual stones, richly coloured hardwood floors and earth-tones in the seating generate a mellow ambiance. The floor-to-ceiling windows let in an abundance of light to contrast the darker tones and offer a view of the surrounding neighbourhood.

From Monday to Saturday, visitors are treated to live music in the evenings by internationally renowned jazz musicians like Lynn Hilton and Billy Evans. (Branche has put together a CD of light jazz hits from performing artists, which is for sale at reception.) Should you come for lunch, similar music is played in the background.

But of course, the main point of business is the meal. The menu, updated seasonally, features several popular dishes such as Insalata Caprese and Grilled Salmon but also includes some selections from distant locales, no doubt catering to the tastes of the international clientele that frequent the hotel and, hence, the restaurant.

According to the manager, the hamburger is Branche's "signature dish". Bold move. Though the towering burger is a little difficult to navigate, the spices are unique – flavourful but not overpowering, with green peppercorns providing just enough punch. The accompanying fries – holy sustenance in Belgium – hold their own.

The wine list provides a basic but accurate description, enough of a guide for the wine drinker if not for the oenophile. The restaurant does shine in this area, though, by offering quite a number of choices by the glass. Whereas many restaurants offer a passable house wine, Branche puts quality wines of all sorts at the diner's disposal for a reasonable price. ♦

Open: 7.00 to 22.00

Meals: €16-22

http://antwerp.brancherestaurant.com

DUSTIN BENNER

Le Grain d'Orge
Waversesteenweg 142; 02.511.26.47
FEB 20 Made J



Sounds Jazz Club
Tulpenstraat 28; 02.512.92.50,
www.soundsjazzclub.be
Concerts at 22.00:
FEB 18 Chamaquiando, salsa FEB 19
Pieter Claus Quartet FEB 20 Pierre
Anckaert Trio FEB 21 Gino Lattuca
Quartet FEB 23 Master Session FEB
24 Da Romeo & The Crazy Moondog
Band FEB 25 Caribe Con K

The Cotton Club - Grand Casino
Duquesnoystraat 14; 02.289.68.66
FEB 21 22.00 BPM 165 Quartet

The Music Village
Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
Concerts at 20.30:
FEB 18 Cocktail Dress FEB 19 Otra
Faceta FEB 20 Philippe Duchemin
Trio FEB 21 Buster & the Swing FEB
24 Imagine... The Beatles on Jazz FEB
25 Merijn Bruneel Group FEB 26 The
KMG's

Théâtre Molière
Bastionsquare 3; 02.217.26.00, www.
muziekpubliek.be
FEB 20 20.00 Manouche Blues:
Tchavolo Schmitt, Quint Care d'As

Ekeren (Antwerp)
Ekerse Theaterzaal
Oorderseweg 8; 03.541.14.18, www.
moretus-ekeren.be/etz/
FEB 16-17 20.00 Tutu Puaone &
Group

Ghent
Vooruit
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060,
www.vooruit.be
FEB 18 21.30 Rat Records label night:
Gowk / Han Bennink trio

Kortrijk
Mozaïek
Overleiestraat 15a; 0485.50.91.22
FEB 22 19.00 Superior Danceband,
New Orleans jazz

Kuurne
Polyvalente zaal
Kattestraat 188; 056.37.27.79,
www.kuurne.be
FEB 19 20.00 Jef Neve, Antje De Boeck
and Rony Verbiest: "Tom Waits until
Spring"

Leuven
C.C. Oratoriënhof
Mechelsestraat 111; 016.22.81.07,
www.oratoriënhof.be
FEB 20 20.00 JazzOra

Stuk
Naamsestraat 96; 016.32.03.20,
www.stuk.be
FEB 22 22.00 Jazz op Zondag

Scherpenheuvel
CC Den Egger
August Nihoulstraat 74; 013.46.06.50,
www.denegger.be
FEB 22 11.00 Jef Neve solo

Strombeek-Bever (Grimbergen)
Cultural Centre
Gemeenteplein; 03.263.03.43,
www.ccstrombeek.be
FEB 26 20.15 Hamster axis of the
One-click Panther

Minnemeers
Minnemeers 8; 09.223.22.27
FEB 19 19.30 The Next Big Thing

Hamme
CC Jan Tervaert
Kaaiplein 34; 052.48.09.48,
www.jantervaert.be
FEB 26 14.00 Liedjes van toen en nu

Hasselt

Muziekodroom
Bootsstraat 9; www.muziekodroom.be
FEB 25 20.00 Paramount Styles

Heusden-Zolder

CC Muze
Dekenstraat 40; 011.80.80.89,
www.muze.be
FEB 19 20.15 En Wat Dan?: concert
with David Poltrack, Roos Van Acker,
Triggerfinger

Kessel-Lo (Leuven)

Jeugdhuis Sojo
Eén Meilaan 35; 016.22.90.29
FEB 20 19.00 Hypnos 69

Kortrijk

Concertstudio
Conservatoriumplein 1,
www.dekreun.be
FEB 24 20.00 The Sedan Vault +
Paramount Styles

De Kreun
Jan Persijnstraat 6; 056.37.06.44,
www.dekreun.be
FEB 18 20.00 DIY Promo: Tijis
Vastesaege

Den Trap

Burgemeester Reynaertstraat 19;
056.20.49.24
FEB 19 20.00 WOMEN + White
Circle Crime Club

Leopoldsburg

CC Leopoldsburg
Kastanjedreef 1; 011.34.65.48,
www.ccleopoldsburg.be
FEB 28 20.15 Yasmine houdt woord:
music and poetry with Yasmine (in
Dutch)

Middelkerke

De Branding Middelkerke
Populierenlaan 35; 059.31.95.53
FEB 20 20.00 Guido Belcanto

Mol

CC 't Getouw
Molenhoekstraat 2; 014.33.08.88, www.
getouw.be
FEB 21 21.00 Double Bill

Roeselare

Cultureel Centrum De Spil
Spilleboudtstraat 1; 051.26.57.00, www.
despil.be
FEB 25 20.00 Arid

Sint-Niklaas

Stadschouwburg
Grote Markt 1; 03.766.39.39
FEB 21 20.00 En Wat Dan?: concert
with David Poltrack, Roos Van Acker,
Triggerfinger

Tessenderlo

CC Het Loo
Vismarkt; 013.67.50.88,
www.cchetloo.be
FEB 28 20.00 Gorki

Tienen

Cultuurcentrum De Kruisboog
Minderbroederstraat 15; 016.81.28.20,
www.tienen.be
FEB 25 15.00 DoReMi Band

Turnhout

De Warande
Warandestraat 42; 014.41.94.94
FEB 20 20.00 Belgian Roots Night:
Tribute to Buddy Holly
FEB 21 20.15 Arid

Vilvoorde

CC Het Bolwerk
Bolwerkstraat 17; 02.255.46.90,
www.cultuurcentrum.vilvoorde.be
FEB 20 20.30 Solo! Frank Vander
Linden

Bruges

De Werf
Werfstraat 108; 050.33.05.29
FEB 19 20.30 Erik Vermeulen Trio
FEB 26 20.30 Jeroen Van Herzele
Quartet

Brussels

Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24,
www.abconcerts.be
FEB 20 20.00 Bruno Vansina & band
+ Mauro Pawlowski

Archiduc

Dansaertstraat 6; 02.512.06.52,
www.archiduc.net
FEB 21 17.00 Ben Sluijs, Nathan
Wouters, Jakob Warmendoel
FEB 23 22.00 Fris Dane

Jazz Station

Leuvensesteenweg 193-195;
02.733.13.78
FEB 19 20.30 Buster and the Swing
FEB 25 20.30 Massot/Florizoone/
Horbaczewski

Ypres

CC Ieper – Lakenhallen
Grote Markt 34; 057.23.94.80,
www.acci.be
FEB 20 20.15 Arid



Antwerp

Zuiderpershuis
Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00,
www.zuiderpershuis.be
FEB 19 20.30 La Camorra, tango
(Buenos Aires)

Borgerhout

De Roma
Turnhoutsebaan 286; 03.292.97.40,
www.deroma.be
FEB 20 20.30 Ghalia Benali, Arabic
music and dance

Bornem

CC Ter Dilst
Sint-Amandsesteenweg 41;
03.890.69.30, www.terdilst.be
FEB 18 20.30 The Galata Mevlevi
Music & Sema Ensemble (Turkey)

Bruges

Het Entrepot
Binnenweg 4; 050.47.07.80,
www.boombal.be
FEB 25 20.00 Boombal:
Live folk music dance party

Stadsschouwburg
Vlamingstraat 29; 050.44.30.60,
www.cultuurcentrumbrugge.be
FEB 22 20.00 Ana Moura, fado

Brussels

Beursschouwburg
Auguste Ortstraat 20-28; 02.550.03.50,
www.beursschouwburg.be
FEB 25 20.30 Diaspora Sounds #3:
Abid Bahri, Ahmed Khalil and Jean-
Paul Estiévenart
FEB 26 20.30 Wixel & The Bear That
Wasn't

Le Botanique
Koningstraat 236; 02.218.37.32,
www.botanique.be

FEB 22 20.00 Horse Feathers

Théâtre Molière
Bastionsquare 3; 02.217.26.00,
www.muziekpublique.be
FEB 25 20.00 Shaman poems and
traditional music from Kyrgyzstan

GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!

The Presidents of the United States of Amer- ica

19 March, 20.00

Handelsbeurs, Ghent

The catchy and clever alt rock band from Seattle is back, just in time to celebrate once again being able to be proud of its name. Audience: try to get them to play the special Obama tribute "Movin' In". Bass player Dave Dederer is replaced by Andrew McKeag, but you won't notice as the beloved Chris Balow belts out the original hits, plus those from last year's album *These Are the Good Times People* ♦



Ghent

Theater Tinnenpot
Tinnenpotstraat 21; 09.225.18.60, www.
tinnenpot.be
FEB 18 20.00 Shaken not stirred

Koksijde

CC Casino Theaterzaal
Casinoplein 11; 070.22.50.05

FEB 21 20.00 Bruno Deneckere + Mel
Dune

Leuven

30CC Predikherenkerk
Onze Lieve Vrouwstraat; 016.23.84.27,
www.30cc.be
FEB 22 16.00 Assim, traditional
Indonesian gamelan music

Lier

CC De Mol
Aarschotsesteenweg 3; 03.488.06.79,
www.lierscultuurcentrum.be
FEB 18 20.15 Anne Clark

Lommel

CC De Adelberg
Adelbergpark 1; 011.55.35.11,
www.ccdeadelberg.be
FEB 20 19.00 Sanseveria

Roeselare

Cultureel Centrum De Spil
Spilleboudtreet 1; 051.26.57.00,
www.despil.be
FEB 25 20.30 3MA: Sissoko, Rajery &
El Maloumi

Scherpenheuvel

CC Den Egger
August Nihoulstraat 74; 013.46.06.50,
www.denegger.be
FEB 20 20.00 Bart Peeters

Vilvoorde

CC Het Bolwerk
Bolwerkstraat 17; 02.255.46.90,
www.cultuurcentrum.vilvoorde.be
20.30 Na Afrika



Antwerp

deSingel
Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28,
www.desingel.be
FEB 19-22 15.00/20.00 Sutra,
choreographed by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui

Stadsschouwburg

Theaterplein 1; 0900.69.900,
www.sherpa.be
FEB 23-25 15.00/20.00 Divine
Performing Arts, Chinese dance and
music show

Brussels

Halles de Schaerbeek
Koninklijke Sinte-Mariastraat 22;
02.218.21.07
FEB 19-21 20.00 Test, Still & Figure
This, dance trilogy 21.00 Trois plateaux,
dance/installation by Simon Siegmann

Ghent

Vooruit
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060,
www.vooruit.be
FEB 18-19 20.00 Andros Zins-Browne
FEB 20-21 20.15 Needcompany in The
Porcelain Project by Grace Ellen Barkey



Ardoorie

CC 't Hofland
Oude Lichterveldsestraat 13;
0479.80.94.82, www.deschaduw.net
FEB 22 18.00 ManManMan, musical
cabaret

Antwerp

Toneelhuis/Bourla
Komedieplaats 18; 03.224.88.44,
www.toneelhuis.be
FEB 19-21 20.00 De Koe in Laat op
de avond na een korte wandeling (Late
in the evening after a short walk) (in
Dutch)

Troubleyn Laboratorium

Pastorijstraat 23; 03.248.48.48
FEB 21 20.00 Troubleyn in De
orgie van de tolerantie (The Orgy of
Tolerance), new work by Jan Fabre (in
English)

Zuiderpershuis

Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00,
www.zuiderpershuis.be
FEB 25 20.30 De Varkensfabriek in Jan
Janssoon, de blonde arabier (in Dutch)
FEB 26 20.30 Cocoo Jumbo Sister,
musical theatre

Brussels

KVS Bol
Lakensestraat 146; 02.210.11.00,
www.kvs.be
Until FEB 22 15.00/20.00 Mental
Finland, directed by Kristian Smeds
(in Finnish, with Dutch, French and
English surtitles)

Scarabaeus Theatre

Hollestraat 19-27; 02.649.79.16
Until FEB 21 15.00/20.00 Brussels
Shakespeare Society in Othello (in
English)

Ghent

Capitole
Graaf van Vlaanderenplein 5;
0900.69.00, www.capitolegent.be
FEB 19-22 15.00/20.00 Suske en
Wiske: De Circusbaron, musical theatre
for the whole family (in Dutch)

Theater Tinnenpot

Tinnenpotstraat 21; 09.225.18.60,
www.tinnenpot.be
FEB 22-28 16.00 Mijnheer Papier
(Mister Paper) (in Dutch, ages 5 and
up)

Heusden-Zolder

CC Muze
Dekenstraat 40; 011.80.80.89,
www.muze.be
FEB 17 20.00 Zien met nieuwe ogen
(Seeing With New Eyes) (in Dutch)
FEB 26 20.15 Zoals de Dingen Gaan
(As Things Go) (in Dutch)

Ostend

Kursaal (Casino)
Monacoplein; 0900.69.900,
www.musichall.be
FEB 20-22 20.00/15.00 Annie,
musical (in Dutch)

Roeselare

Cultureel Centrum De Spil
Spilleboudtreet 1; 051.26.57.00,
www.despil.be
FEB 18 15.00 De Maan, De jongen
(The Moon, The Boy) (in Dutch, ages
4 and up) 20.00 Saint Amour Special:
Poetry, readings and music by various
artists



Antwerp

Contemporary Art Museum
(MuHKA)
Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60,
www.muhka.be
Until MAR 27 Le[s] moi[s] de Lizène,
works by Liège artist Jacques Lizène
Until MAR 29 Lonely at the Top:
Klankeffecten # 5, works by Juan Pérez
Agirregoiako
Until MAR 29 Insert the Passing of a
Perfect Day (Revisited), installations by
Kathleen Vermeir

Extra City

Tulpstraat 79; 0484.42.10.70
Until MAR 8 Justine Frank: a
retrospective, work by the 20th-century

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Jewish-Belgian Surrealist, who is the alter ego of contemporary Israeli artist Roee Rosen

Bruges

Arentshuis
Dijver 16; 050.44.87.11
Until SEP 27 The Museum of Museums 2009, project by contemporary artist Johan van Geluwe

Brussels

Algemeen Rijksarchief
Ruisbroekstraat 8; 02.513.76.80
Until FEB 28 1918: De kanonnen zwijgen: opnieuw vrede? (The Canons Are Still: Peace Again?), the aftermath of the First World War in Belgium

Argos Centre for Art and Media
Werfstraat 13; 02.229.00.03, www.argosarts.org
Until APR 11 Language Works: Video, Audio and Poetry, works by Vito Acconci
Until APR 11 I'm With You in Rockland, video work by Karl Holmqvist

Belgian Comic Strip Centre
Zandstraat 20; 02.219.19.80, www.stripmuseum.be
Until MAR 8 The New Children's Comic Strips, works by young comic strip artists

DON'T MISS

Wiels closing party

20 & 22 February
Van Volxemlaan 354
Brussels

Wiels is closing *Un-Scene*, its popular exhibition of young Belgian artists, with two days of performance and partying. Several artists present theatre-ish pieces, such as Danai Anesiadou in *One Measure A Circle, Beginning Anywhere*, a mix of objects, autobiography, black magic and avant-garde cinema (in English). The closing party features DJ Dennis Tyfus, and all weekend you can catch the Artists in Residency Show, where the arrangement of scenes will change from hour to hour. ♦

→ www.wiels.org



© Jérôme Mayer

Bibliotheca Wittockiana
Bemelstraat 23; 02.770.53.33
Until FEB 28 25 Years of Passion Shared, hand-crafted bookbindings since the Renaissance

Bozar (Paleis Voor Schone Kunsten)
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00, www.bozar.be
Until MAR 8 Reality as a Ruin, photographs from Antwerp's photo museum
Until MAR 15 Image/Construction 3 Cities, Brussels, Bruges and Liège seen in monumental photographic montages
Until APR 19 Robbrecht & Daem: Pacing through Architecure, works by

the Ghent-based architects

FEB 20-MAY 17 Monumental-size installation by contemporary Italian artist, Maurizio Cattelan (part of Turin/Italian Spring festival)
FEB 20-MAY 24 From Van Dyck to Bellotto: Splendor at the Court of Savoy, paintings from Turin's Galleria Sabauda, with works by Flemish masters, including Brueghel, Rubens and Van Dyck, and Italian painters from the 15th to 18th centuries (part of Turin/Italian Spring festival)
Until JUNE 30 N.i.c.h.e. 360 architecten, scale models by Jan Mannaers and Stephane Beel

Czech Centre

Troonstraat 60; 02.213.94.30
Until MAR 6 The Life and Times of Karel Capek, photographs and documents on the Czech writer and journalist (1890-1938)

De Elektriciteitscentrale European Centre for Contemporary Art
Sint-Katelijneplein 44; 02.279.64.35
Until MAR 29 Moet elke wredeheid wel gezegd? (Should Every Cruelty be Said?), work by 102 artists on the theme of Belgium today

Design Flanders

Kanselarijstraat 19; 02.227.60.60
Until MAR 8 Austrian Design, innovation and technology

Flemish Parliament - De Loketten
IJzerenmarktstraat 299; 02.552.40.43
Until FEB 21 Works by winners of the Henry van de Velde Awards&Labels 2008 design competition

Fondation pour l'Architecture

Kluisstraat 55; 02.642.24.80, www.fondationpourlarchitecture.be
Until OCT 18 De tijd van de boetiek (The Time of the Boutique), 200 years of shop windows and interiors

ING Cultural Centre

Koningsplein 6; 02.547.22.92
Until MAR 15 Oceania: Signs of Ritual, Symbols of Authority, sculptures, masks, artefacts, weapons and utilitarian objects from Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia

Jewish Museum of Belgium

Minimstraat 21; 02.512.19.63
Until APR 19 Robert Capa, retrospective of the work of the Jewish-Hungarian photo reporter (1913-1954) and founder of the Magnum agency

Kelders van Cureghem

Ropsy Chaudronstraat 24; 070.25.20.20, www.cavesdecureghem.be
Until MAR 1 Body Worlds 4, anatomical exhibition of human bodies by German scientist Gunther von Hagens

Le Botanique

Koningstraat 236; 02.226.12.57
Until FEB 22 Dark Pool, photographs and video by Belgian artist Marie-Jo Lafontaine (also shown in the Gesù church, in front of Le Botanique)
Until FEB 22 Angel, photographs by Marie Le Mounier

Natural History Museum

Vautierstraat; 02.627.42.38
Until AUG 30 X-treme, surviving in the most extreme climates and environments

Prague House

Palmerstonlaan 16; 02.230.94.91
Until FEB 19 The Crown Jewels, replicas of precious symbols of Czech history

Royal Army Museum

Jubelpark 3; 02.737.78.33
Until MAY 3 Tribute to Pierre de Caters, first Belgian aviator, who flew over Belgium 100 years ago

Royal Museum of Art and History
Jubelpark 10; 02.741.72.11
Until MAR 8 Continental Superstar,

mechanical organs from the Ghysels collection, with recreated dance floor, bar and lighting

Sint-Gorikshallen

Sint-Goriksplein 1; 02.502.44.24
Until APR 5 Archeologie om de hoek (Archeology around the corner), archaeological finds in Brussels

Stadhuis

Grote Markt; 02.279.43.50
Until MAY 10 DeKadence: The Bohemian Lands 1880-1914, paintings, drawings, sculptures and photographs

Tour & Taxis

Havenlaan 86C; 02.549.60.49
Until MAR 31 That's Opera: 200 Years of Italian Music, a look behind the scenes at the making of an opera
Until APR 26 It's our Earth!, interactive exhibition on sustainable development, with interventions by Belgian and international artists

WIELS

Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.347.30.33, www.wiels.org
Until FEB 22 Un-Scene, works by young Belgian artists

Deurle

Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens
Museumlaan 14; 09.282.51.23

Until MAR 1 Large format paintings by Dirk Skreber
Until MAR 1 Paintings by Albert Saverys
Until MAR 1 Picture this!, drawings by Benoît van Innis

Ghent

Dr Guislain Museum
Jozef Guislainstraat 43; 09.216.35.95, www.museumdrguislain.be

Until APR 12 The Game of Madness: On Lunacy in Film and Theatre, show exploring representations of madness in films, plays, paintings and contemporary art

Kunsthal Sint-Pietersabdij

Sint-Pietersplein 9; 09.243.97.30, www.gent.be/spa
Until MAR 29 Flemish wall tapestries from the 15th and 16th centuries

Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (SMAK)

Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03, www.smak.be
Until FEB 22 The Absence of Mark Manders, installation by the contemporary Dutch artist

Until FEB 22 Pluto, installations by contemporary German artist Max Sudhues

Maaseik

Maaseik Museum
Lekkerstraat 5; 089.81.92.99
Until MAR 31 The Terracotta Army of Xi'an: Treasures of the First Emperors of China, warrior sculptures from the world-famous Terracotta Army shown with 200 artefacts from the Qin and Western Han dynasties

Machelen-Zulte

Roger Raveel Museum
Gildestraat 2-8; 09.381.60.00
Until FEB 22 Ensor & Raveel: Kindred Spirits, drawings and paintings by the two Belgian artists

Mechelen

Speelgoedmuseum (Toy Museum)
Nekkerspoelstraat 21; 015.55.70.75, www.speelgoedmuseum.be
Until MAR 31 Gils, Belgische saga van de elektrische trein (Belgian Saga of Electric Trains)
Until SEP 30 Cowboys and Indians

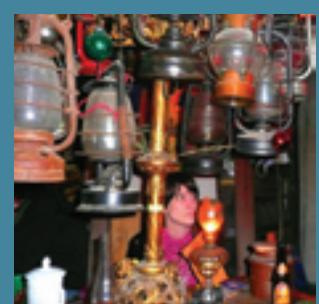
Tervuren

Royal Museum for Central Africa

CAFE SPOTLIGHT

't Velootje

Kalversteeg 2, Ghent



Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11, www.africamuseum.be

Until AUG 31 Omo: People & Design, Hans Silvester's photographs of southwestern Ethiopia's nomadic tribes and objects from the museum's collection

Carnival: Carnival celebrations around



the country, ranging from parades and folkloric festivities to giant bonfires 02.504.03.90, www.toervl.be

Aalst

Carnival celebrations: Parades, children's carnival, onion throwing, Voil Jeanetten parade, burning of the carnival doll and more at Flanders' biggest carnival celebration
FEB 22-24 in Aalst centre www.aalst.be

Antwerp

Antwerpse Kleppers: Theatre festival showcasing Antwerp talent, including premières from tg Stan, De Koe, De Tijd and Berlin companies, plus screenings, comedy and music
Until FEB 21 in Het Toneelhuis/Bourla, Komedieplaats 18 03.224.88.44, www.toneelhuis.be

In Wonen: Home and decoration fair Until FEB 22 at Antwerp Expo, J Van Rijswijkstraat 191 03.260.81.22, www.antwerpexpo.be

International Lute Festival: Classical music festival featuring Europe's lute masters
FEB 20-22 at Amuz, Kamenstraat 81 and Kapel Elzenweld, 45 Lange Gasthuisstraat 03.229.18.80, www.amuz.be

Brussels

Anima 2009: International Animation Festival featuring Japanese filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki, a tribute to Fritz the Cat filmmaker Ralph Bakshi, festival guest Bill Plympton, plus sneak previews of the latest Wallace and Gromit and Naruto features
FEB 20-28 at Flagey, Heilig Kruisplein 02.641.10.20, www.anima2009.eu

Carnabruzelas 2009: Rio-style carnival party with French-Brazilian group Kaoma
FEB 21 21.00 at Tour & Taxis, Havenlaan 86C
www.carnabruzelas.be

Recht Averecht (Inside Out): free screening of Brussels-based journalist Maria Tarantino's first film (in Italian with Dutch and English subtitles)
FEB 18 20.30 at KVS Box, Arduinkaa 9 02.210.11.00, www.kvs.be

Ghent

Flanders Collection Cars: International fair for vintage and rare cars plus spare parts and miniatures
FEB 21-22 at Flanders Expo, Maaltekouter 1 09.241.92.11 www.flandersexpo.be

Although perhaps initially intimidating, Lieven is in fact very hospitable and delightfully child-like in all his trademark Mickey Mouse attire. So sit back, pet the jet-black, floppy cat and enjoy the music – anything from Johnny Cash to Celtic hymns. This is Belgian Surrealism at its best. ♦

→ <http://tvelootje.mine.nu>



FACE OF FLANDERS



Thomas DeGeest

Known as "the waffle guy", Thomas DeGeest brings a taste of Belgium to New York

When Flemish business consultant Thomas DeGeest swapped his executive suit for life as a street vendor in New York, he was following his entrepreneurial dream. But little did he know how much delivering a taste of Belgium to the folks of Manhattan via a bright yellow van would fully test his management skills.

DeGeest's need to escape his comfortable if predictable career was maybe an early mid-life crisis. "I was looking for something that had meaning," he tells me during my recent New Year trip to the Big Apple. "Waffles are part of my country; it's something I'm quite passionate about, and it's something that makes people happy. Starbucks feeds addiction, but we bring a genuine moment of joy."

But the move from the corporate world to the street was a real eye-opener. "I came from a place where the rules were well established, but the streets of New York are a completely different story," he says. "One day we were parked on a corner when an ice-cream vendor came along and started raising hell. Suddenly his boss was on the phone threatening to kill me if I didn't move out of the spot straight away." DeGeest, 38, has also had fights with the police over parking places for his van with Wafels & Dinges blazoned across the side. "Yes, it's fun, but there's a lot of hassle. There's an underground world to getting permits, for example."

The native of Bierbeek in Flemish Brabant spent 12 years in the US management consulting for clients like IBM and Price Waterhouse before donning an apron and firing up the waffle

iron 18 months ago. He bakes two classic waffles – the dense, chewy Liège style encrusted with caramelised sugar, and the light, crispy Brussels style. Both are accompanied by a selection of *dinges* – Flemish slang for "whatchamacallits".

The Wafels & Dinges van has a busy schedule in several Manhattan locations and an up-market suburb of Brooklyn. It's difficult to miss the retro 1968 Chevy Box truck, painted in the Belgian colours. He uses a rope attached to the front to tow it into place every day. He's currently building a new stand, "which will be much more open so that you can see everything inside. Speakers will blast out the music of Jacques Brel for the full Belgian experience." He's also considering setting up a shop in the city.

Wafels & Dinges' product may have originated from Belgium, but the menu has an American twist. "I made up a story that the Brussels waffle came to the United States in 1964 and

"I consider myself Flemish first, in terms of dialect, humour and food, then a Belgian who has also grown into a New Yorker"

then ended up in the gutter, and now I'm reintroducing it with the permission of the King," DeGeest laughs. The parody extends to DeGeest's pretence that he's been appointed the Special Envoy for Wafels by the Belgian Ministry of Culinary Affairs, providing him with a successful publicity machine – essential in a city of famously-fickle foodies.

He loves inventing new dishes. The most American – and proving to be a big hit – is a southern-inspired, pulled pork waffle, served with coleslaw. Other crowd-pleasers are WMD (Waffle of Massive Delicious-

ness) and the Liège cinnamon waffle.

The New York area boasts around 5,000 Belgians, according to DeGeest, and, while there's no animosity, he's noticed that Flemish and French speakers have separate social networks. "I consider myself Flemish first, in terms of dialect, humour and food, then a Belgian who has also grown into a New Yorker," he explains. "The wonderful – and terrible – thing about life in this city is that it never stops. It's also a positive place in the sense that anything can happen; people look for the up side rather than the down side, which is not always the case in Belgium."

Still, in the city that never sleeps, DeGeest finds himself yearning for a real day off: "What I miss most about my home country is chilling out on Sunday afternoons with pistolets and lait russe."

Thomas advises Belgian tourists visiting Manhattan to invest in good shoes and walk the different neighbourhoods at the best times – like the Lower East Side at night or Central Park on Saturday afternoon.

His eating out tips include finding a good hamburger place and sampling some of the fantastic Asian restaurants.

"And, of course," he adds. "You have to try street food, which has really boomed in the last few years."♦

→ www.wafelsanddinges.com

He bakes two classic waffles – the dense, chewy Liège style encrusted with caramelised sugar, and the light, crispy Brussels style

SARAH CREW

TALKING DUTCH

ALISTAIR MACLEAN



Ruimte →

Time is running out. It's a race against time. Such expressions reflect the pressure time puts on us. With space, it's not quite the same. Of course when someone faints in public, the cry is often "give her some room – *geef haar de ruimte*", and nowadays people under pressure often say that they need some space, as well as time.

We all know that space is the final frontier. It is also a commodity in short supply in Flanders. If you were living here in the 1990s you may remember a gang of young men laden with theodolites boldly asking if they could measure your garden. You may have hesitated before allowing anyone semi-official to see that conservatory at the back of your house for which you had no planning permission. In fact, their mission was not to check on illegal garden sheds but to seek out information for Flanders' first Ruimtelijk Structuurplan – Spatial Structure Plan. No doubt it was invaluable for planners and real estate lawyers to know how much industrial land or forest there is but, frankly, a bit of a bore for most people.

Well, 10 years on, it was decided to update this information, and, lo and behold, the results show that *er is 7,500 hectare meer Vlaanderen dan vroeger* – there is 7,500 hectares more of Flanders than previously. You might think that land has been reclaimed from the sea (admittedly a small part of the gain has been) or that there

have been land raids across the linguistic frontier into the Walloon Region. Yet there have been no reports of land loss from any of the neighbours. The surveying may have been more sophisticated this time round, or not.

The adjective *ruim* is broader in its meanings than "roomy": *een ruime uitzicht hebben* – to have a broad view; *een ruime huis* – a roomy house; *een ruime assortiment* – a large assortment; *ruim kunnen ademhalen* – to be able to breathe freely; *ruim een kilo* – well over one kilo; *ruim op tijd* – in good time. The verb *ruimen* means to clear, usually with a particle: *wegruimen* – clear away; *opruimen* – tidy up.

So there is now no longer *verloren ruimte* – wasted space in Flanders. Yet the words of a Flemish government spokesman give some pause for thought. Read this carefully: *Vlaanderen is niet groter geworden* – Flanders has not gotten bigger; *er blijkt gewoon 7,500 hectare méér Vlaanderen te zijn dan vroeger* – it simply appears that there is 7,500 hectares more Flanders than there was before. So it's not bigger, it's just that there's more of it.

Interestingly, for the federal government, Flanders remains as big as it was 12 years ago, which means that these 7,500 hectares don't exist. You may be idly wondering where this twilight zone land is; after all, you might see some potential there. If you find it, do return to tell your tale.♦

→ www.vlaanderen.be/rsv

The last word → → →

In praise of populism

"What's wrong with populism? Look up what the word means: putting into words what people are thinking and feeling. That's exactly what Jean-Marie Dedecker is doing with his party, and that's why I have made this decision."

TV personality Anne De Baetzelier, who will stand for the Lijst Dedecker in the coming elections



No stigma

"We don't want to stigmatise areas. That would needlessly provoke a subjective feeling of insecurity. We also don't want to scare off potential passengers."

Public transport authority De Lijn, which has identified 161 problem neighbourhoods but refuses to say where they are located

Against the odds

"At midday I treated myself to a finger of peanut butter. In the evening I got a mouthful of noodles."

Dries Stevens, explaining how he survived 12 days alone in the jungle