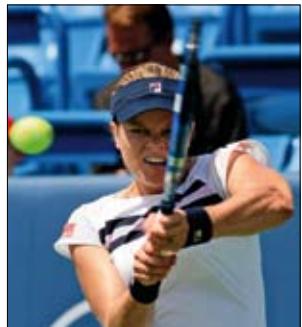


Comeback Kim!.....3

The former number one women's tennis player in the world was back in top form at the Cincinnati Open last weekend. Belgium's Kim Clijsters eventually lost in the quarter-finals, but not before one American columnist said she was "raising holy hell on the WTA Tour"

**Girls will be girls.....9**

Geoffrey Enthoven's new film *Meisjes* opens this week across Flanders, put together by a veritable dream team, including *Aanrijding in Moscou* screenwriter Jean-Claude Van Rijckeghem.

**Bringing up bio.....11**

In the third instalment in our fresh food sellers series, we meet the only bio meat producer in Belgium. Find out who they are, why they do it and where you can buy their naturally raised and grain-fed beef



The good old days

In today's modern, fast-paced world, more and more people are opting for holidays that hurl you back in time

ROBYN BOYLE

Going back to basics has never been so hot, as evidenced by the growing popularity of charming bed and breakfasts and renovated farmhouses with guest rooms decorated to look like your grandmother lived there: a basket of firewood by the door, handmade soaps in the bathroom, a claw foot tub, creaky wooden floors, wrought-iron beds and shelves lined with jars of homemade jam. Is this nostalgia a sign that we are yearning for a simpler, more rustic lifestyle? Do we want to give up our gadgets and Ikea stainless steel in favour of spinning wheels and cast iron?

Due to globalisation, many of us are now living in a complex environment with an abundance of information. Mobile phones and internet wave made us ever availa-

ble – and not without consequence. When given a bit of time off, more and more people are choosing to spend it somewhere simple and peaceful. The quick pace of life combined with advanced technology has created a strong need to go back to the way things were – to slower, less demanding times.

"We see a lot of tourists today who are looking for a full *experience*," says Lea Winkeler of Flanders Tourism, who has seen a strong increase in the popularity of Flemish country holidays over the last 10 years. "There is a clear demand for authenticity – the way things really are, or really *were*. By staying in the countryside, guests have more contact with the locals and are closer to the source of their food. This is the experience they're after."

→ *Continued on page 5*

Consumer group challenges Coca-Cola "study"

Consumer protection organisation OIVO has lodged a complaint with health minister Laurette Onkelinx and consumer affairs minister Vincent Van Quickenborne alleging that Coca-Cola has misled consumers with claims that its products are a healthy part of everyday drinking.

Coca-Cola has produced a study entitled *The Place of Drinks in the Nutrition of Belgians*, in which it lays out the importance of sufficient hydration. In the study, the company claims "a variety of drinks" is important for healthy fluid intake. The European Food Safety Agency, according to Coca-Cola, recom-

mends a daily minimum for adults of 1.5 litres of non-alcoholic drinks. "All non-alcoholic drinks help to fulfil our water requirements," the paper says.

OIVO argues that Coca-Cola is "lying by omission" in this claim, since it is not necessary to drink carbonated and sugared drinks for good hydration: plain water is sufficient. But the Belgian does not drink enough: according to a consumer health poll, 85% of people think their daily fluid intake is sufficient. However, if soft drinks are excluded, only 25% are drinking enough, which means that 60% of people are making up their

daily quota with sugared drinks.

"Coca Cola is using misleading commercial practices in the guise of health advice in order to entice the consumer into drinking its products," OIVO says. "In this way, Coca-Cola is covering up and withholding extremely important information."

Coca-Cola, as might be expected, stood by its study. "We have always stressed that our drinks, if taken in moderation, have a place in a balanced lifestyle," a spokesperson said. ♦

→ www.oivo-crioc.org

De Clerck called to account

Parliamentary justice committee returns for emergency session

ALAN HOPE

Members of the parliamentary justice committee have returned from recess early to meet in an emergency session with justice minister Stefaan De Clerck. The committee, particularly its opposition members, are demanding explanations from De Clerck on a number of situations that have arisen since parliament broke up in mid July.

• **Prison escapes.** Together with the spectacular helicopter jail-break by three men from Bruges prison, successful escapes took place at Merksplas prison and the Justice Palace in Brussels, where armed men freed three prisoners

awaiting trial. Four men are still at large. Last week, Lesley Deckers, who helped organise the Bruges escape and was the only member of the group still at large, was arrested at the home of a friend in Beringen. She and the friend are being detained. One of the escaped prisoners is back in his cell in Bruges, and the two others are in prison in Morocco.

• **Released prisoners.** Albert Barrez left prison legally by the front door, but the timing of his release could not have been worse for De Clerck. Barrez was sentenced to 25 years in 2002 for

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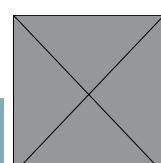
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FLANDERS TODAY
AUGUST 19, 2009

News in brief

Police in Turnhout stepped in last week to seize hundreds of goldfish, which were being given away as prizes for children at the fairgrounds. The practice has been outlawed since 1995 but continues unchallenged, with both fairground stallholders and parents considering the fish in a bag of water as a "traditional" prize. "We're not going to make a federal case out of it," said a spokeswoman for the prosecutor's office. "We received a complaint, and we had no option but to step in."

A ban on quad bikes, implemented in Antwerp and planned in Brussels, is unlawful and will not stand a legal challenge, said motoring organisation Touring. Road traffic legislation is a federal matter, the organisation argued, and any local regulation that affects traffic policy is unlawful. The two municipalities seek a ban because of noise nuisance, which is normally under the jurisdiction of municipal authorities.

The federal police are working on a website that will feature the Most Wanted criminals in Belgium. The advocate-general of the Brussels appeal court promised the site would only be used for "serious criminals on the run, not for petty thieves". Magistrate Jacques De Lentdecker admitted the idea was inspired by the famous FBI list. "But we're not going American all the way," he said. "For example, there's no question whatever of offering rewards."

Flemish showbiz hairdresser Glenn Geheimer died last week after becoming infected by the bacterium *Streptococcus pyogenes*, which leads to abscesses and tissue necrosis. Geheimer is thought to have been infected during a liposuction operation, but the microbe, while often associated with trauma, does not require a wound to enter the body. The disease often leads to amputations when flesh is destroyed by the pathogen's own toxins. In the worst cases, it can lead to total system breakdown or to toxic shock syndrome, which is what killed Muppets creator Jim Henson in 1990 following a bout of *Streptococcus* flu.

Marc Van Pauw, mayor of Destelbergen (population 17,500) in East Flanders, is Flanders' busiest politician, with 19 paid posts and 15 more unpaid jobs. Van Pauw is general manager of the National Investment Company, chairman of Alken Maes and Henschel Engineering and a director of a home healthcare organisation. "I work

Antwerp artists show in Singapore

A prestigious exhibition of works by Antwerp-born or based artists opened last week in the National Museum of Singapore. *The Story of the Image* features 150 works by old masters like Pieter-Paul Rubens and Anthony Van Dyck, as well as modern artists like Luc Tuymans and Berlinda De Bruyckere. Works were lent from three major Antwerp museums: the Royal Museum of Fine Arts (KMSKA), the Museum for Contemporary Art (MuHKA) and the Plantin-Moretus Museum.

Singapore and Antwerp are both bustling port cities and have long and close relations beyond shipping ties. Both port authorities are sponsoring the exhibition, and the city of Antwerp sees it as a calling-card for Antwerp's culture and dynamism. "We wanted to give an image of the past, present and future," explained Philip Heylen, the city's alderman for culture. "A window display of the best we have to offer artistically."

"It is a demanding exhibition that challenges the visitor," said Lee Chor Lin, the Singapore museum's director. "You don't see just pretty and pleasant images; it's not an easily digestible show. But a museum like this has to dare to show more difficult work."

The exhibition was opened by foreign-affairs minister Yves Leterme, as his first overseas assignment in his new job. The local press has already registered mixed feelings. "This exhibition is extremely subversive and different from what the Singaporean public is used to," Lee said.



A series of sculptures by Berlinda De Bruyckere was described as "provocative" by one local critic

long days," he said.

into balance in times of economic crisis.

Mobility minister Hilde Crevits

has demanded an enquiry into allegations that bus drivers for De Lijn are trading shifts among themselves for cash. The existence of a market in shifts, in which some drivers work double or even triple shifts, came to light last week in Gentbrugge. Working overtime could bring drivers into conflict with legislation on drivers' hours. Crevits now wants to know if the practice is more widespread than one depot.

A system designed to guarantee mortgage payments if a homeowner is laid off work has attracted 5,500 applications since it was introduced in April – around 300 a week, housing minister Freya Van den Bossche announced. The government will now study a proposal to extend the scheme to cover tenants of rental accommodation.

The state security agency, the Belgian equivalent of Britain's MI5 or America's CIA, has begun advertising for new agents on Facebook and YouTube. The use of social networking sites is the idea of Selor, the government's employment agency. The Facebook ads are directed at likely candidates, so if you haven't seen one, consider yourself unsuitable. The YouTube film uses actors in place of real agents, whose identities must never be revealed.

» www.youtube.com/watch?v=06MDTwJ5zCA

The government is looking into ways to encourage people to donate their organs while they are still alive, perhaps in return for payment. A fall in the number of road accident fatalities has left transplant services with a shortage of organs



Summer recess brings non-stop problems for justice minister Stefaan De Clerck

→ *Continued from page 1*

the contract murder of government veterinary inspector Karel Van Noppen in 1995. Last month, he was released with an ankle bracelet and given a job as a warehouse assistant. Another man, Germain Daenen, who acted as a go-between in the murder, was released on parole two months ago. Two others remain in prison.

• **Fortisgate.** The apparent existence of backroom interference between politicians and magistrates in the Fortis case led to the resignation of De Clerck's predecessor Jo Vandeurzen and prime minister Yves Leterme. Recent revelations suggest interference may have reached as high as the top of the Cassation court, while at the same time raising new questions about the role of finance minister Didier Reynders. There have been calls for a reconvening of the Fortis commission. Meanwhile, a member of the commission, socialist deputy Renaat Landuyt, claimed that the head of the Brussels bar received threats of "severe sanctions" against him in his capacity as a lawyer. Landuyt wanted the commission to be able to interrogate the government's

lawyer in the Fortis affair, but the head of the bar, Alex Tallon, refused to allow the testimony.

• **New allegations.** Last week it was revealed that Glenn Audenaert, head of the judicial section of the federal police, sent a letter to De Clerck last month warning of the possible involvement of a lawyer and a senior judge in a fraud scheme. The details are not clear, but the two are alleged to have colluded over rulings in an attempt to extort money out of companies involved in court proceedings. Robert Peeters, the lawyer in the case, has filed suit against persons unknown for defamation and breach of professional confidence. He also claims that Audenaert's allegations are an attempt to pay him back for a number of cases in which he has revealed the existence of hidden bank accounts containing sums of black money. The judge in the case, Francine De Tandt, meanwhile, appears to be the victim of a well-orchestrated campaign of damaging revelations which, regardless of their accuracy, seem carefully coordinated in order to do the maximum damage. De Tandt is the chair of the Brussels tribunal of commerce. ♦



© Reporters/Tim Dirven

Beleaguered justice minister Stefaan De Clerck

THE WEEK IN FIGURES

351

polling places will be open in Antwerp on 18 October for voting in a city-wide referendum on the route and form of the Oosterweel motorway link

16

minimum voting age for all Antwerpers who intend to take part in the referendum

726

incidents of "tagging" of trains in 2008, down from 1,034 in 2007

€1.8 million

the cost of cleaning up the graffiti, compared to €2.3 million the previous year

€75

a day for life: the prize offered by the new scratch card Win for Life 75

25

applications for subsidy for the installation of a soot filter in diesel cars, introduced by the Flemish government six months ago

€400

the maximum subsidy, or 80% of the cost price

€6 million

set aside for payments, of which barely €10,000 has been used

€832,000

to be raised by Natuurpunt to purchase the Stappersven-Kalmhoutse reserve, a 360-hectare area of heathland. Donors will be able to "adopt" a piece of the heath

1 in 6

people admitted to exaggerating the facts in their CV in order to improve their chances of getting a job. One in 20 said they had outright lied



Comeback Kim

Kim Clijsters plays her first Grand Slam since coming out of retirement

Kim Clijsters, former world number one, was last week knocked out of the Cincinnati Open after making it to the quarter finals. In her first major tournament since giving birth and retiring from the sport in May 2007, Clijsters appeared strong and very determined, leading former world champion Lindsay Davenport, herself a previous comeback star, to forecast that Clijsters stands a good chance of becoming the first mother to win a Grand Slam since Evonne Goolagong in 1980. The US Open is the only Grand Slam tournament Clijsters has ever won – in 2005 against Mary Pierce.

Her first match last week against Monica Bartoli was done in straight sets, 6-4, 6-3. The same fate lay in store for the Swiss Patty Schnyder, 6-2, 7-5. In the following round, Svetlana Kuznetsova of Russia managed to salvage the second set 6-4, but then had to give way to the Clijsters onslaught, losing 6-4, 4-6, 6-2.

It took Dinara Safina, currently the top women's player in the world, to stop the juggernaut in a match lasting only 75 minutes. Clijsters took the first two games, and that was the end of the set for her, as Safina made it 6-2. In the second set, Clijsters again went

to 2-0, then 4-2 and 40-15 before Safina came back to win 7-5.

"Dinara was very strong today; I have nothing but praise for her," Clijsters told the VRT after the match. "Especially in the first set, she made very few mistakes. She really shut me out, constantly playing very deep and giving me barely a chance to open up the game."

"I think I was fortunate that Kim had to play three sets yesterday against Kuznetsova," Safina admitted. "It's not easy to be out of competition for two years and then have to play a match like this the day after a three-setter. I think that worked to my advantage." ♦



FIFTH COLUMN

Mussel wars

As a youngster, Annick De Ridder called for a party congress on the immigrants' right to vote, an issue that put Open VLD under heavy pressure. The 2004 congress is legendary, as it nearly moved the then-prime minister Guy Verhofstadt to tears. De Ridder's political talent was instantly recognised, and soon after the Antwerp lawyer entered the Flemish Parliament at the age of 25.

Here she made her mark, too. She hammered away at the socialist minister for mobility, Kathleen Van Brempt, constantly complaining about the empty buses she spotted. A waste of taxpayers' money, noisy and polluting, she called them, gaining her considerable public approval.

And now De Ridder is calling for a boycott of mussels from Zeeland. Yes, that's correct, a Zeeland mussel boycott. Now that's drastic. Has she gone out of her mind?

Well, no.

De Ridder hopes to change the minds of the Dutch on the dredging of the river Scheldt on their territory. This is necessary for the Port of Antwerp to be accessible to larger ocean ships. The Netherlands and Flanders agreed on the dredging in 2005, when they signed a series of treaties.

The Netherlands has never been keen on keeping its part of the bargain, though, and in Flanders there is some suspicion that this might have something to do with lobbying by the Port of Rotterdam.

This is costing us money. Big money. Not only will the port of Antwerp miss out on business; it also makes for thousands of trucks using our roads on their way from Rotterdam to wherever their goods are needed. So Annick De Ridder hits back. With the Zeeland mussel boycott.

There are some adverse effects to this. For one, it brings into the open what everyone in this country knows, but which we never tell tourists: Belgian mussels aren't really Belgian, they're Dutch. Next, it shows a difference in attitude. Belgians tend to have a more flexible attitude towards the judiciary.

In the meantime, Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters remains hopeful that the matter can be resolved peacefully, through diplomacy, rather than by mussel wars. Thank God, for He knows we love our mussels!



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ING 

The good old days

A new-found passion for getting closer to nature may be driving the back-to-basics trend

→ *Continued from page 1*

There is one other very important reason why people choose more and more for a holiday in the country, explains Winkeler: "The opportunity to do absolutely nothing."

"Our guests come here to unwind," confirms Hein Steenkiste of Hoevehotel Bladelijn in West Flanders. "For them, a stay in the countryside is like turning back the time. It's also kid- and budget-friendly, which is not always the case at a hotel. My sister-in-law is the chef, and she makes traditional farmer fare typical to the region. Gastronomy is another reason they visit. But really, more than anything, it's to get away from it all."

This form of escapism has been good for Flanders' tourism sector. After all, to step away from the obligations of daily life, one does not necessarily need to travel far or spend a lot of money. These days, the best holidays are close to home, in a place unhurried and authentic.

Studies by Plattelandstoerisme (Rural Tourism) show that 77% of guests opting to spend their vacation in the Flemish countryside actually live in Flanders. They may drive a couple of hours and only stay for a few days, but they fulfil their goal: to escape the city, turn off their phones and just enjoy the simple life. "Flanders is very densely populated," Winkeler asserts, "meaning that most people live in places that are busy and noisy. It's only natural that they look to escape for a while, to come up for air."

Longing for the past

Surprisingly, the deterioration of the economy in the past year has also given a boost to this particular sector. The Western world is experiencing a major shift in mentality, from overt consumerism to conscientious reduction and conservation. With less budget to spend on holidays, more people are drawn to lodging that is as affordable as it is comfortable.

Thoughts are then naturally drawn to

the past, to a time when life was a lot less extravagant. After tasting progress, industry and technology in all its shapes and forms, people are perhaps realising that nature already had it pretty well figured out.

Even up until the latter part of the 20th century, for example, many small Flemish communities were still very much self-sufficient, with everything they needed coming from local farmers, bakers, etc. Now, it's rare that you find someone willing to visit four different shops in order to get all their groceries for the week. But this is still the best way to know you are getting fresh produce. It's also the most natural route, removing the middle man, transport, packaging and so on.

Finally, consumers are again becoming more critical of the quality and origin of the food they eat. This trend is directly linked to tourism, as tasting the regional specialties has always been a big part of travel.

A desire for authenticity is not necessarily about nostalgia for the era of our childhood. Authenticity is about rediscovering old values and traditional methods and learning to appreciate them in a new context, adapting them to a modern life.

Growing your own apples, making apple sauce and then potting it up for the winter is no longer seen as a chore, for instance, but as an enjoyable luxury for those who have the time. This newfound passion for getting closer to nature is what is driving the back-to-basics trend. Pure, raw and wholesale products that come straight from the source are in higher demand as a result. And there's no better place to find such products than at a farm, and preferably one that provides cosy sleeping quarters as well.

Taking advantage of the trend

Striking while the iron's hot, guest houses and B&Bs are popping up across Flanders to offer an alternative to the electronic excesses of the modern world. Stay in a renovated 18th-century farmhouse surrounded by fruit orchards and walking trails. Or a



© Ioon Coussent

charming B&B in the woods that provides the opportunity for horseback riding or biking. In the morning, you'll be treated to a breakfast made fresh by the hosts.

"I make everything myself," asserts Rosa Van Hoecke, of Servaeshoeve, a classic courtyard-style farmstead in the undulating fruit region of Haspengouw in Limburg province. "I prepare everything using all products from the area, so a lot of fruit dishes. There's also fresh-baked bread and *stroop*." (That's a sticky, sweet syrup made from boiled apples or pears).

Van Hoecke has also noticed an increased interest from guests who want to stay on her and her husband's working farm. "It's not just families anymore," she notes. "We're seeing more and more couples without children, too, who come here for walking and cycling. It has something to do with nostalgia, surely, but, most of all, it's to relax, get outdoors and enjoy the home-made meals." ♦

→ www.hoevetoerisme.be



Hoevehotel Bladelijn

In West Flanders, not far from the French border, lies Bladelijn, an idyllic walled farmstead dating back to the 14th century. The closest village, Lampernes, is known as one of the quietest in Flanders. Perfectly restored without losing any of its authentic elements, Bladelijn is a friendly and inviting farm hotel with 10 unique guest rooms, all decked in wood and warm colours. The dining area boasts stone walls and vaulted ceilings. Here you will enjoy a buffet breakfast in the morning and a home-cooked, three-course Flemish meal in the evening. Located inside a nature reserve 15 kilometres from the coast, the area is lush and flat. Bladelijn offers special walking or cycling packages. *Zadelstraat 8, Diksmuide, 051.55.50.83*

→ www.bladelijn.com

Servaeshoeve

In Limburg, nestled among rows of fruit trees, lies Servaeshoeve, a 17th-century farm still active today (photo left). The hostess, Rosa, prepares delicious meals using all the regional goodies. Jean, her husband, also makes you feel right at home, more than happy to tell you all about his cattle and crops. The building itself is large and majestic and flawlessly finished with lots of wood, exposed brick and soothing earth tones. Each of the cheerful, bright guest rooms has an agricultural theme. A bike ride or walk through the surrounding hills takes you past tiny village churches, castles, orchards and grain fields. This is the area around the town of Grootloon, and it is a paradise for outdoor lovers. *Grootloonstraat 101, Borgloon, 012.67.23.03*

→ www.servaeshoeve.be

Kasteelhoeve de Tornaco

Also located in the rich landscape of Haspengouw in Limburg is Kasteelhoeve de Tornaco. The original castle-farm was practically in ruins when the current owners converted it into a gorgeous complex, integrating the main estate with five guest rooms, horse stalls and an inner courtyard. Every room perfectly illustrates the beauty in keeping it simple: white bedspreads, hardwood floors, exposed beams. In addition to cycling and walking, hosts Ronny and Ivo have something extra special to offer guests – horse tourism. Take guided tours by horseback, either with your own horse or with one of their dozen or so Haflingers. Or opt to be carried across the land, as these horses are also ready to pull you in a carriage. *Romeinse Kassei 5, Borgloon, 012.67.26.00*

→ www.detornaco.be

Vitaya turns 10

One of Flanders' youngest TV stations is coming of age

ALAN HOPE

Last week Vitaya, one of the youngest TV stations on the Flemish media scene, celebrated its 10th birthday: in 1999 the station, owned by Media ad Infinutum, received its broadcast licence. One year later it came on the air, to mixed reactions.

Call it "lifestyle" programming if you will: fashion, beauty, animals, house and garden, cookery, medical and health. Critics immediately dubbed it a "women's channel", soon to be joined by VijfTV, owned by SBS and known by wags as "WijfTV".

Vitaya, in any case, seems to have found its market. While the station only achieves a market share of 4%, in the target group of women aged 18 to 54, it gets 7.7%. The recipe has not only caught on with viewers, it has also influenced other TV channels, claims chief executive Yvette Mignolet. "We started with lifestyle programmes; now you find much more lifestyle on other channels," she says.

Most programming is store-bought: series like *Ik Vertrek* (from TRÖS in the Netherlands) which looks at Dutch families who go to live abroad; *Top Chef* (from Bravo in the US), hosted by Salman Rushdie's ex; or *The Commander* (from ITV in the UK), which is a new vehicle for *Silent Witness*'s Amanda Burton. •

Although, to be fair, most TV formats these days are adapted from international programming. VTM's *Mijn Restaurant* is modelled on an Australian original, VRT's *Witte Raven* on *Faking It* from Britain's Channel 4. And Vitaya is now also generating its own programmes, including cookery and news shows.

In its first decade, Vitaya has gone from one hour a day to a full 24-hour service, with programmes regularly repeated. It has also experimented with both narrow-casting and with the new fashionable 360° approach. Digital channel Vitaliteit features only health-related programmes like *Diet Doctors* and *Farm of Fussy Eaters*. And the company has launched *Vitaya* magazine, a joint venture with Sanoma Magazines, publishers of *Humo* and *Goede*.

Vitaya has also gone into business with Trinny and Susannah to sell "Magic Knickers", with plans for an extended line of slimming clothes. October sees the relaunch of the website with links to social networks. And there's the promise of more user-generated content, a buzzword that translates to viewer home videos, blog posts and photo albums. •

→ www.vitaya.be

Padma Lakshmi, the former Mrs Rushdie, is host of *Top Chef*

"My name is Philippe Bogaert. I am a hostage in Qatar. This is my Twitter SOS."

ALAN HOPE

In less than 140 characters, the dramatic situation of a Flemish man trapped in what he has called "a mediaeval system" was conveyed. Think what you will of the message-board site Twitter: for Philippe Bogaert, it is a lifeline.

Bogaert (pictured) has been detained in Qatar since October 2008. After moving to the Middle Eastern country in April last year to take up a job as broadcast manager of Dialogic Qatar, Bogaert found himself trapped in a dispute between the company and one of its clients. Dialogic Qatar is a subsidiary of Dialogic SA, based in Brussels, and operates as a communications consultancy, particularly in the field of sports. The Qatar subsidiary was contracted to organise the Qatar Marine Festival.

Bogaert, a TV producer, was unaware of an ongoing dispute with a Dialogic client, who was refusing to pay for services received. Three months after arriving, he was asked to replace managing director Harald Vervaecke, with the aim of rescuing the festival project, in jeopardy because of alleged mismanagement on Vervaecke's part. Ten days later, however, Dialogic lost the Marine Festival contract.

Dialogic SA ordered Bogaert to put the Qatar subsidiary into liquidation, but one of its Qatari

sponsors refused to take part in proceedings. Under Qatari law, foreign companies require a local sponsor who vouches for them in official matters, while in most cases acting as a silent partner. The sponsor's unwillingness to cooperate in the liquidation made it impossible to realise. Bogaert resigned, and that was accepted by the Dialogic SA board.

But the Qataris had another view.

"My name is Philippe Bogaert. I am a hostage in Qatar. But tonight I will try not to think about it for once."

The sponsor, Farukh Azad, refused to recognise the resignation and would not grant Bogaert an exit visa. As the local sponsor, Azad is legally responsible for the debts of the company, so he filed suit against Bogaert for negligence in the loss of the festival contract and claimed €3.2 million in damages.

Bogaert was unable to leave Qatar, but at the same time he no longer had a job or an income. The only money he has is what he picks up in tips for playing the piano in bars and hotel lounges around the Qatari capital Doha. By last December, he could no longer support himself and was given refuge in the Belgian ambassador's residence. Eight months later, he is still there, and, according to the foreign affairs

ministry, there is not much hope of a solution to his situation any time soon.

Two months ago, insult was added to injury, when he was sentenced in his absence to three years in prison for passing bad cheques – a direct result of his continued existence in legal limbo. He was able to pay a deposit to appeal and to suspend the judgement, but that means that from now on he has to be represented at all hearings by a local lawyer – which of course costs money.

Bogaert received a visit from his parents in mid July and at the end of the month took part (via the online programme Skype) in a party held by about 500 friends and supporters in Vilvoorde. That raised about €4,000 to help pay legal costs and for a visit from his wife Els and their two children. That visit took place last week.

At the same time, Azad was filing another lawsuit, this time alleging harassment and stalking – in the form of Bogaert's blog, in which he laid out the whole story of his predicament. The blog has since been taken down, with only a page of thanks to supporters remaining.

"My name is Philippe Bogaert. I am a hostage in Qatar. But thanks to you, I'm fighting back!" ♦

→ <http://twitter.com/hostageinqatar>

Cardoen sales up by 60% in face of crisis

Car dealer passes on savings to consumers

Cardoen, one of Belgium's biggest car retailers with outlets in Dendermonde, Hasselt, Wilrijk, Vilvoorde and Lichtervelde, as well as across Wallonia, announced a 60% increase in sales in the first half of the year, with more than 8,500 cars sold compared to just over 5,300 in the same period a year earlier. Sales went up €27 million to more than €99 million.

How are such results achieved, when the world is in the grip of an economic crisis that saw the total number of cars sold in Belgium down by 17%?

"The crisis has had a major influence on the purchasing behaviour of the consumer," explains CEO Karel Cardoen. "He's no longer going to go automatically to the brand's

own dealer; he's deliberately looking around for the cheaper alternative." Cardoen dealerships have also been able to buy cars for good prices from overstock held by European manufacturers, and supply has never been stronger. Cardoen, for example, normally offers a discount of about 20% on list price, but that figure has now grown to 25%.

The forecast for the rest of the year is more of the same. "The recent failures of large dealers and importers into Europe, like Krymans in the Netherlands, will increase the supply even further," Cardoen said. "The crisis is an opportunity to buy a car for a really low price." ♦

→ www.cardoen.be



CEO Karel Cardoen says customers are looking for cheaper alternatives

THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Aircraft • Sabena Technics

Aircraft maintenance company Sabena Technics is considering appealing the decision by the ministry of defence to award the contract for maintenance of flights for the government and the royal family to a French broker working for Portuguese airline Hi Fly. The negotiations between Avico and the ministry were carried out by two former ministry colleagues, Sabena complains.

Aluminium • Coil

An extraordinary general meeting of shareholders of the Landen-based aluminium products group Coil failed to block a bonus for controversial CEO Tim Hutton. The bonus takes the form of a 5% share, which some prominent shareholders have opposed because no dividend was paid out this time around. But critics failed to muster the 25% support needed to block the bonus.

Automobiles • Opel

Unions at Opel Antwerp reacted with "cautious optimism" to news that General Motors, the factory's parent company, had welcomed the bid by Austro-Canadian company Magna. According to union spokesman Rudi Kennes, Magna is the only bidder who still sees a future for the Antwerp plant. Magna has also received the support of German chancellor Angela Merkel.

Brewing • InBev

The second half of the year promises to be more difficult than the first, with no sign of recovery in the stagnating beer market, according to InBev CEO Carlos Brito. He announced €315 million in cost reductions in the second quarter, bringing the total for the first half to €610 million, on course for a calendar year target of €1 billion.

Drugs • UCB

Pharmaceuticals giant UCB will lend 10 researchers to competitor GlaxoSmithKline to help fulfil an order for 12.6 million doses of the vaccine against A/H1N1, otherwise known as swine flu. Clinical tests begin this week on volunteers in the university hospitals of Ghent and Antwerp.

Telecoms • Belgacom/Telenet

The duopoly formed by telecommunications companies Belgacom and Telenet is getting stronger, despite the desire of regulators and consumers alike to open up the market. The two companies together saw their market share grow in the first half of the year from 85.6% to an even 90%. Part of the reason was Belgacom's takeover of Scarlet at the end of last year, with 120,000 customers moving from the market's third player to its first.

Netlog passes 50 million

Belgian social networking site Netlog, the brainchild of two Ghent entrepreneurs, last week signed up its 50 millionth member. The membership is spread over 50 countries, with 2.5 million members in Belgium – just ahead of Facebook with 2.4 million.

The numbers put Netlog near the top of the social networking tree – depending on what you mean by "social networking". Some sites, like movie-rental site Flixster, have more members, but networking isn't their core business. Others, like Friendster, have more user accounts, but most of them are inactive after members migrated to newer sites like Facebook.

Facebook remains the world leader with 250 million members, but, despite beginning as a closed system for some US colleges, has seen its typi-

cal member profile grow older since its popularity really took off. Netlog was launched when co-creator Toon Coppens was a computer student of 18; his partner Lorenz Bogaert is six years older. The pair credit their targeting of a particular demographic for their success. "We specifically aimed at a younger public: between 18 and 24. Any older, and you don't belong to our core target group," Coppens said. "Look at it this way: if an 18-year-old goes to a bar, he obviously doesn't want to run into his uncle or auntie, does he?"

Netlog recently launched in the Middle East; next on the agenda is China. "Where will it all end? We don't know ourselves," Coppens says. "How many young people are there in the world?" ♦

→ www.netlog.be

Pop-up ad agency will last three weeks

A new advertising agency was formed in last week – and will disappear again in three weeks' time. It's called Sekkaki, a nod towards the convicted robber who escaped by helicopter from Bruges p5agency Proximity BBDO.

Back in June, Proximity BBDO put out an appeal on Facebook for young marketing or advertising graduates to apply for the three-week internship in Kortenberg, near Leuven, including full board and lodging at the agency's Villa Kortenberg. They received 72 responses, and drew up a final list of 12.

posted notices on the doors of competitors in Brussels and Leuven, like Duval Guillaume and Mortierbrigade, ordering them to take three weeks off and go home, while the so-called "pop-up" agency Sekkaki took over.

The group's website promises to work for clients "with some fresh visions and fast ideas" for free, but only for the remainder of the three weeks. "A short push, a delightful experience. Like unconditional sex, something you can't refuse," the site claims. ♦

→ www.sekkaki.be

New channels line up for the autumn season

Three new TV channels are due to hit screens across Flanders this autumn, the region's main cable provider Telenet announced last week.

Exqi Plus is the channel of Gabriel Fehervari, boss of Alfacam, one of the world's leading providers of broadcast technical services. Exqi has been negotiating for years with Telenet for a place on the cable. "We want to thank Telenet for this chance," Fehervari said. Exqi will have the broadest range of programming, including a news broadcast, a sitcom, a quiz show and sport.

VMM, the largest independent broadcaster in the region, adds VTM Kzoe to its bouquet of three channels already on cable

– VTM, 2BE and youth channel JIM. VTM Kzoe (pronounced "kazoo") is aimed at children age four to 10 and will share cable space with business channel KanaalZ. Kzoe's schedules will mainly be filled with old shows like *Kabouter Plop* (pictured), which were shown on the main VTM channel. In the longer term, the channel is expected to produce some of its own programming.

The last newcomer is Discovery Channel, which carries mainly documentaries, nature programmes and reality shows like *Mythbusters*.

Discovery and Kzoe plan to begin broadcasting on 1 October. Exqi will begin later, possibly by mid November. ♦



Hey Red, where you goin'?

The fantastical and dark worlds of fairy tales beckon from Hasselt

REBECCA BENOOT

Once upon a time, an unsuspecting *Antwerpenaar* went to Hasselt to indulge in some shopping and sightseeing. Little did she know that when she got off the train she would encounter a magical and inconspicuous place called the Literair Museum Hasselt. Shocked and amazed by this unexpected delight, she entered into the realms of this enchanting house where fairy tales temporarily come to life.

Yes, boys and girls, that *Antwerpenaar* was me. I was beckoned inside a 19th-century neo-classic house by the irresistible title *Zeg Roodkapje, waar ga je heen?* (Say, Little Red Riding Hood, Where Are You Going?).

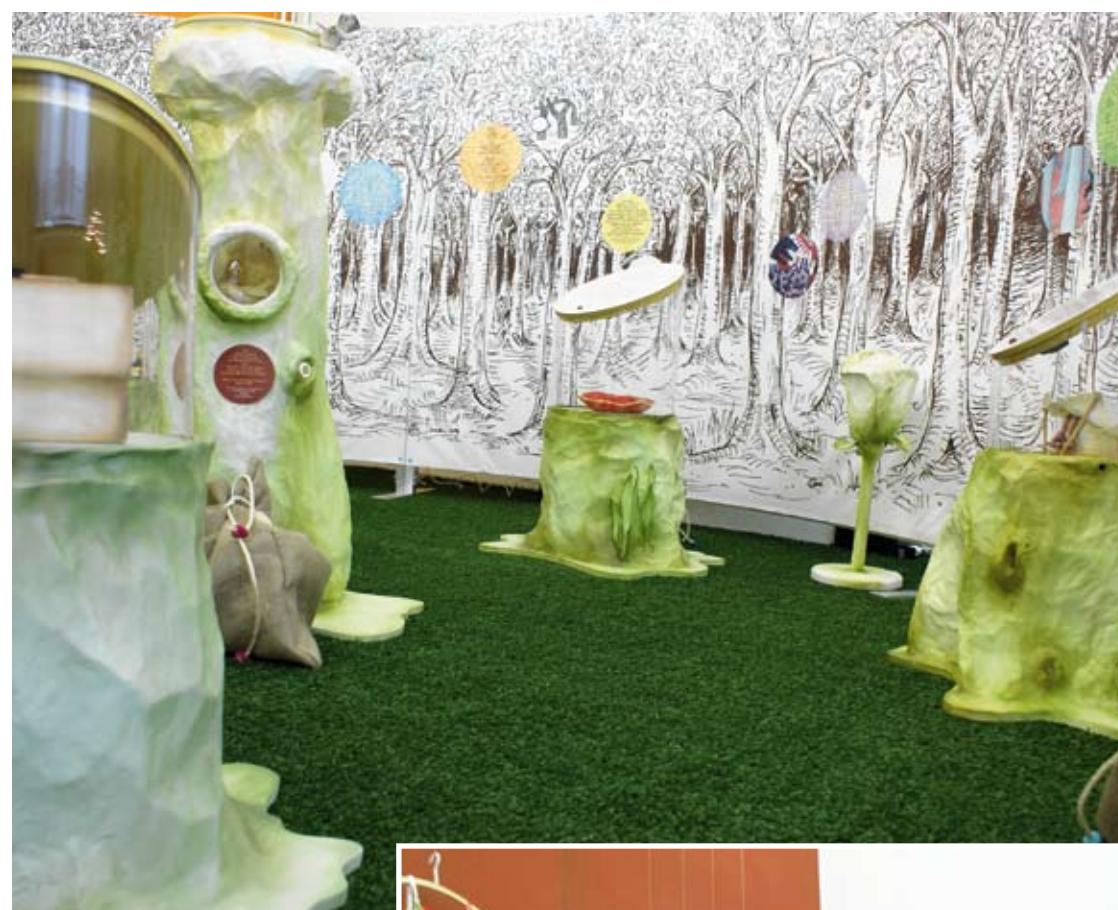
Since the 1990s, fairy tales have been making quite a comeback in Flemish literature. Authors like Peter Verhelst, Bart Moeyaert, Toon Tellegen, Anne Provoost and many more have been using these timeless classics either as a basis for their own stories or revamping them aided by a wide variety of talented illustrators. In this colourful and fun exhibition for both adults and kids, these contemporary adaptations take centre stage.

You walk in to find a modern-day enchanted forest, which isn't only beautiful but also interactive. Countless objects from frogs to sparkling toadstools were created in papier-mâche by Gent artist Micheline Vanderveken, who has done a spectacular job.

You can sit down in the big bad wolf's chair, listen to what Snow White's mirror has to say or follow the trail that the seven dwarfs have left, it's up to you. If you can rip yourself away for a bit of reading, Dr Vanessa Joosen, a researcher at the University of Antwerp, has equipped this display with explanations about the nature of fairy tales. These texts are accompanied by original drawings by Flemish illustrators Sabien Clement and Golden Owl winner Carll Cneut, among others.

Besides this great little show, the Hasselt Literary Museum has a permanent exhibition called *Giftige appels op gouden bordjes, eten en drinken in sprookjes* (Poison Apples on Golden Plates: Food and Drink in Fairy Tales). This also dream-like collection was brought to life by, again, Vanderveken, a papier-mâche artist who is responsible for turning this small and little-known museum into a true work of art.

Fairy tales are packed with references to food, like poison apples and gingerbread houses, all of which are illustrated quite vividly. Familiar tales by



Wander through settings of contemporary Flemish fairy tales at the Literary Museum

The Brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Anderson and other penningers of fairy tales are here, together with information on the meaning behind these seemingly innocent bedtime stories. Don't forget to explore the lower floor of the house, which is stuffed with Vanderveken's creations that are slightly reminiscent of the Land van Laaf in the Netherlands' amusement park De Efteling. Be sure to look up at the ceiling and the lavishly decorated table that resides there.

An ingenious display of small, wooden cabinets enclose a short biography and the works of several Limburg children's books authors and illustrators. Discover how each earned their cabinet, along with a delightful diorama of one of their most cherished memories or experiences.

Even the basement has been turned into a unique adventure. Get a flashlight at the front desk and explore the literally dark and gloomy world of coal mining. In this intricately recreated shaft, books, objects and photographs tell you the story of that famous Limburg coal. Beware, small kids might not take to this very well, but older ones will relish this grim experience where things just might go bump in the night. The last permanent feature in the museum is *Van Schrijver tot Lezer, hoe een boek gemaakt wordt* (From Writer to Reader: How A Book is Made). The entire second floor is dedicated to



explaining to kids and adult book enthusiasts alike how books are put together. Starting with a few ideas or notes that the author is toying with, to the publisher, the illustrator, over to the printing and finally selling of the books. Brightly decorated panels take you through these various steps along with several draft versions of children's books that illustrate the process for youngsters. (It's an eye-opener for grown-ups, too.) Located between the train station

and the city centre, the Literary Museum, at a mere €2.50 entry, is well worth the visit. The setting both inside and out will leave you feeling like you might just live happily ever after. ♦

Zeg Roodkapje

Until 20 February 2010
Hasselt Literary Museum
Bampselaan 35

→ www.literairmuseum.be

CULTURE NEWS

De Smaak van de Keyser, the popular Flemish drama series that showed on TV één late last year, has won the prize for best script in the prestigious Seoul International Drama Awards. Scriptwriter Marc Didden and co-director Frank Van Passel will travel to Korea next month to accept the award personally. The award follows on the heels of a number of other international prizes for the show about three generations of Hasselt women in a family of jenever distillers.

Viewers of quality Flemish TV programming were dismayed last winter when it was announced that television producer Woestijnvis, responsible for popular shows like *De slimste mens ter wereld*, *Man bijt hond* and the 2006 drama series *De parelvissers* (*The Pearl Fishers*) fell out with TV station VRT, resulting in the breaking of a contract that went back more than 10 years. But several new Woestijnvis programmes have shown up on the autumn schedule of TV één, including the drama series *Los zand* (*Loose Sand*), partially set in Namibia and starring über-popular Flemish actors Matthias Schoenaerts and Koen De Bouw, and *De jaren stillekes* (*The Quiet Years*), in which long-time TV personality Steven Van Herreweghe looks at blasts from the past with special guests.

It was a surreal experience for this reporter to open *De Morgen* newspaper during the morning commute to the statement: "Don't be surprised to see someone in the train reading a book on an eReader in the coming weeks" only to look across at a woman with one of the electronic books open in her lap. She must have bought it on holiday in the US, where the new Kindle eReaders are so popular, they will soon be available across Europe. Although eReaders, book-sized electronic devices to which you can download books off the internet, are already sold in Flanders, they were difficult to find and no more popular than in other markets, where they were seen as too clunky and hard on the eyes. Kindle, developed by Amazon.com subsidiary Lab126, are slimmer and lighter, and they use new "e-ink" technology that makes them easier to read. Kindle should be available here by the end of the month. Both Sony and Apple are also said to be copying the technology.

The Flanders Today ingenious award of the week goes to the Museum of Fine Arts in Brussels for its *August Fairy Tales in the Museum* programme, which gathers kids together in front of different paintings and tells them the "fairy tale" behind the picture. Children learn about the historical facts behind the image and are encouraged not to think of museums as boring and stuffy. This could very well educate a few parents, too.

→ www.fine-arts-museum.be

The embodiment of the odd

The Les Brigittines Festival, staged both in a 17th-century chapel and in the chapel's contemporary mirror image, is gleefully peculiar

SHARON LIGHT

Les Brigittines' International Festival has always been weird, but this year they are truly owning it. The festival's theme, announced proudly on the cover of the programme and website, is inescapable: "Gezichten van het Vreemde", or "Strange Faces". Consider yourself warned.

What the Brussels festival hopes to achieve with this strange-ness is a little less clear. "We endeavour to show performances that suggest a strong inner world," explains Patrick Bonté, the festival's director. "We are very attentive to creators working on a language and structure."

This year in particular, he sought performances with "strangeness as a point of view for understanding the world. What's important for me is that the artists we invite speak the language of today. What they suggest is not a mirror of the world but a reinterpretation of the world."

The festival is both the opening and the closing of the art centre's season. With the departure of artistic director Monique Duren this past June, the institution that launched 12 years ago remains a bit in flux, awaiting the arrival of a new director to both give it a direction and to develop the programming for the coming year. In that way, this year's festival is perhaps also strange in that it anticipates a season's programming that does not yet exist.

Les Brigittines itself is formally called the Brussels Contemporary Art Centre for Movement and Voice. It is exactly these qualities that you can expect to experience at the festival. But both the centre and the festival pride themselves on highlighting artists who blur the boundaries between dance and theatre.

This year's festival is scheduled in such a way that some evenings will see a clear thread through the different performances. Two Belgian companies – Compagnie Mossoux-Bonté and Abattoir Fermé – tackle nightmarish situations in *Kefar Nahum* and *Mythobarbital*. Another evening will see the

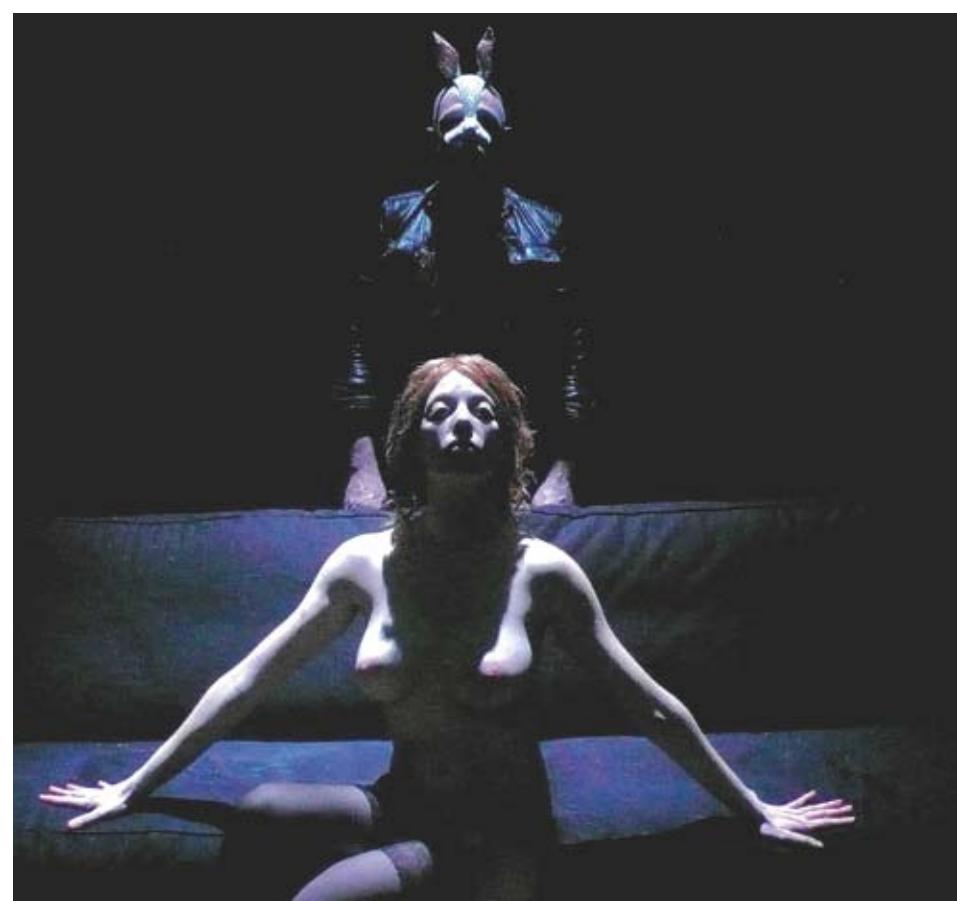
Danish Kitt Johnson and the Italian pathos-formel studying and toying with skeletons. "Often the artists don't know exactly if they are dancing or performing theatre," notes Bonté. "They mix media because their universe needs to use these different media." This is clearly a festival that thinks outside the box.

The box itself – that is, the theatre – plays its own role in the festival. The 17th-century mansion was converted into a church by the Brigitten order not long after being built in the Marollen district, and one still strongly feels that purpose in the performance space. Take out the seating and lighting, and you are still clearly in a church – from the slightly chilly humidity, to the bare brick walls, to the resonant acoustics.

The building is special in other ways; Bonté calls it a "hybrid" space, having worked there both as the festival director and as a director with his own Brussels theatre-meets-dance company, Compagnie Moussoux-Bonté. "You are kind of in a bubble," he says. "But you can hear the trains and the ambulances. Real life is present, but at the same time you are in another world."

From a theatrical perspective, the chapel presents certain challenges – including a mere nine-meter breadth that virtually eliminates any wing space. Each production must be workable in this eccentric space and must be able to load in and out quickly to accommodate the breakneck pacing of seven chapel productions within the festival's two weeks.

A further four productions take place in the Brigittines' secondary space in the newer half of the building: an intriguing steel-and-glass double of the Brigittines chapel. Completed in 2007 by Italian architect Andrea Bruno, it mirrors the older building in its outline and volume, while attempting to bring the chapel in line with its more modern surroundings. The striking newer structure houses two additional smaller performance or exhibi-



Happily strange, happily naked: Among other things, the Brigittines Festival is infamous for its on-stage nudity

tion spaces, as well as the offices of the arts centre. The contrast of the two buildings side by side is eye-catching and successfully achieves the architect's objectives.

Les Brigittines aims to cram as many people as possible into these various spaces through the duration of the festival. They want the festival to be accessible, and in the past they have sold out many performances to a mix of people from across Belgium and beyond.

The festival is international but includes Belgian artists every year. Bonté emphasizes the importance of linking works across borders, allowing productions to share a

dialogue with one another. Belgium, he says, is a "schizophrenic world – two languages, two cultures – and Brussels is at the heart of that mixed ambiance. Maybe that's the reason why we go between the disciplines so easily." ♦

1-3 September
Korte Brigittinenstraat
Brussels
→ www.brigittines.be

FILM REVIEW

Meisjes

It must have sounded like the perfect pitch. Three septuagenarians (Claire, Magda, Lutgard) revive the successful girl group they had almost half a century earlier. The motor behind the project is Sid (Jan Van Looveren), Claire's prodigal son who for years has been trying to get a break as an rhythm & blues musician. And indeed, *Meisjes* (called *The Over the Hill Band* in English) could have been a heartwarming tragicomedy.

But it isn't.

More on the story: Claire (Marilou Mermans) has two sons. The other – the caring and fussing Michel (Lucas Van Den Eynde, the title character in the recent musical *Daens*) – doesn't approve of his mother's plans, and certainly not when the escapade leads to an amorous adventure (she's only just widowed). Furthermore, her health deteriorates.

Lutgard is a stiff upper lip who's only interest in music is leading a children's choir, while for Magda the project is a chance to inject some excitement into her somewhat boring life. But it isn't that simple, in the end, to pick up the thread where they left it decades before.

Meisjes is the fourth feature by Geoffrey Enthoven, one

of Flanders' most promising directors who three years ago was awarded the Cavens Prize for Best Belgian Film for his second feature *Vidange perdue*. And rightfully so. Co-scripter Jean-Claude Van Rijckeghem, meanwhile, was a driving force behind *Aanrijding in Moscou*, a remarkably convincing comedy with a melancholic twist that just pulled down its 15th international prize. *Meisjes* tries to be the same, but fails.

The screenwriters have given *Meisjes* the structure of a melodrama, a genre that blends easily with other genres (horror, western, sci-fi), but merging it with comedy is very difficult. But the lack of power and imagination is not all to blame on the screenwriters. Enthoven has difficulty with the timing, and the characters are more "types" than fleshed-out human beings, with the result that almost all the actors have been much better in other films.

The above might sound harsh for a film that I can easily say isn't really bad. But considering the people collaborating on it, it should have been a lot better.

Christophe Verbiest

→ www.meisjesdefilm.be

★★★★★



Stage fright: Marilou Mermans

Splendour in the plants

Summer at the National Botanic Garden of Belgium

LISA BRADSHAW

If you, like me, are having a hard time giving up on the idea that you are still on holiday, try easing yourself back into the daily grind slowly by becoming a tourist in your own country for the rest of August. There are plenty of castles to get lost in and towers to climb in Flanders, but perhaps my best day this month was spent at Meise Botanical Garden.

Because of fresh blooms in the spring and sublime colours in October, those are the months that attract the biggest crowds, so there are actually less visitors to the garden during the summer. On a weekday, you will hardly run into another soul on the 92 hectares, leaving you free to discover the immaculately groomed lawns, paths, waters and greenhouses that are home to 18,000 different kinds of plants.

Summer is also the best time to visit the desert house in the Plant Palace, the garden's centrepiece of 13 interconnecting greenhouses, each with its own climate and region. Although it's a greenhouse, temperatures are actually not constant all year long. In the winter, the desert house is kept to a 25 degree minimum during the day, "but it would cost too much to keep the temperature higher," explains Koen Es with the garden's education department. "In the summer when the sun comes out, it can easily reach 40 degrees." And the cacti certainly like that. They are at their best right now, bright green and blooming.

Sadly, what you won't see in the Plant Palace this summer are the garden's famous *Victoria amazonica*, the largest water lilies in the world. The pond in which the awe-inspiring tropical plants grow is currently being renovated. Because they are annuals, meaning they die and are re-sewn

every year, you won't find them back in full force until late next spring. "We put new seeds in the ground in January and fresh soil with a special secret fertiliser," explains Es. "Our gardeners won't tell what they use."

Curb your disappointment by doing the special walk "Planten op uw bord", or "Plants on Your Plate", at Meise until 31 August. A brochure leads you to a number of edible plants and tells you all kinds of facts about them, including a citrus fruit tree, cocoa beans and the juniper berry (used to make jenever). Some even come with recipes (unfortunately, not the jenever).

There's also a Darwin Trail, marked until the end of the year, which traces the scientist's work with specific plants, and an exhibition in the garden's castle called *Diatoms: The Glass Lungs of Our Planet Revealed*.

The bees are also especially active at this time of year at Meise, which might not sound like a good thing, but the bee hives, viewed through glass in a rustic cabin surrounded by wildflowers, have never been more lively.

Even if you have no interest in orders and genera and don't know the names of any plants to save your life, the botanical garden is simply a magnificent place to stroll or lounge about. The restaurant in front of the orangery lake serves up some beautiful salads, but you are also welcome to bring your own food and sit at one of the sunny (or shady) tables, with Mediterranean plants to your left, swamp cypress to your right. I've seen people plant themselves there with a book, a picnic basket and a bottle of wine and stay for hours.

► www.botanicgarden.be



© Lisa Bradshaw

Tyre tracks

DAVE MEYER



Ostend to Nieuwpoort

This is a great ride to take with a bathing suit and towel in your bag. You could even make it the basis of a summer day trip from Brussels: just take a bike on the train to Ostend, and in a short ride you're on the beach and away from the crowds, pedalling until the water seems

nicest for a swim.

From the front of the Ostend train station, cross the canal towards the church and then turn right along the water, passing fish merchants and fishing boats – all the first signs of what is to come.

The path curves left and joins the promenade. The crowds can be thick for this section, so take some extra caution as you pass the casino and the string of cafes and bathing cabins. The long pillared arcade that lines the way on the left is the former Royal Gallery, built by Leopold II around the turn of the century; the far end is the Thermae Palace Hotel, added in the 1930s.

Leaving Ostend, the crowds thin out, making this a nice spot for that swim break. In the far distance, the city of Nieuwpoort is just visible.

Well-preserved dunes appear on the left, truly coming alive after passing the town of Raversijde, where Second World War

anti-aircraft guns and pillboxes still survey the sea. These are the remains of Hitler's Atlantic Wall, now preserved in a fascinating open-air museum.

Follow signs for bike path 80 and then 81, passing through Middelkerke. Coming into the town of Westende, the route passes a gothic-style sculpture of a backhoe, and then a tall wooden bee-hive. On the far side of town, after the windsurf rentals, follow signs for path 81 and 12 to the left and away from the water.

The route makes a series of turns through town here and then heads out into farmland, with cows lazing about in the fields, even in some cases foraging for grass right up to the edge of more remnants of the Atlantic Wall. A wind farm and rows of solar panels at the entrance to Nieuwpoort remind us of the future, though.

At the Ijzer river, turn right, and then left at the intersection, crossing a series of canals and then turning right at the

T junction. Follow signs for path 67 around the round-a-bout and off to the left, through Nieuwpoort Stad, or the city centre of Nieuwpoort.

Stick to the water's edge, past the rows of docked yachts. The path becomes a separate paved bike way here and eventually peters out to the west of the iconic red-and-white lighthouse on the beach of Nieuwpoort aan Zee, a quieter seaside town well removed from the crowds of Ostend.

Distance

23 kilometres

Difficulty

Easy if the wind is at your back, but a different story entirely if it's not

Time

1.5 hours



A natural conclusion

Natuurvlees Dobbelaere is the only producer of bio meat in Belgium

COURTNEY DAVIS

Natuurvlees Dobbelaere is changing people's ideas about bio products. Most people in Belgium associate organic food shops with vegetarianism, but this wholesale meat supplier is slowly altering this misperception as they produce more than 50 organic meals for organic supermarkets and small shop all over Flanders.

"We even make our own natural salami," says Iwan Dobbelaere, one of the owners who has been working in the industry since he was a teenager. "We process 500 kilograms of cured meat every five weeks. We store it for three to four weeks, occasionally smoking it with Beachwood so the meat lasts longer and has a nice smell."

From turkey salami to Ardennes salami, Natuurvlees Dobbelaere produces seven types of hormone free, natural charcuterie. Iwan says you can see a difference in the meat. "There is a less of a sheen on cured meats. And with minced meat, the colour of naturally produced meat is much brighter and fresher," he explains. This means that when the meat is red, it is from being fed a variety of grains, not just corn (as is often the case in industrialised beef production).

That's only the beginning. In addition to making bio ready-made meals and natural salami, the company, based in West Flanders, butchers and processes 10 cows, 60 pigs and three pallets of chicken every week. Natuurvlees Dobbelaere gets its chickens from the

Netherlands but its pig and cow arrive locally from East and West Flanders. The two pig farms and two cow farms work exclusively with the Dobbelaere family and are producing animals in accordance to the strict rules needed to label as natural or bio.

This is because *all* of the meat Natuurvlees Dobbelaere sells is natural, and some of it is bio. What's the difference? Both mean that the animals are not injected with hormones or antibiotics and are fed only vegetarian meals, such as grain, grass, cereal and hay.

While "natural" meat means that six or seven cows are allowed to graze per acre, "bio" requires a more stringent two animals per acre. And bio also necessitates that all the feed is also certified organic. To put this into perspective, the regular meat industry (not labelled as natural or bio) can raise up to 12 cows per acre, which are fed mostly corn, resulting in a less flavourful end product.

While Natuurvlees Dobbelaere has always been producing natural meat, it only recently added the necessary steps to be bio, completing the long process of certification. They were encouraged to take this step when the supermarket chain Bio-Planet asked them to create these products for them. "We have been raising natural beef and cows in Belgium for over 20 years, but this step towards bio is what the public wants," says Iwan.

Bio-Planet, a subsidiary of supermarket chain Colruyt, had



© Photos: Julie Van Schooten

Koen Gevaert, chef at Natuurvlees Dobbelaere, has made ready-made meals 40% of the company's production

nowhere else to look. There were no bio meat producers in the country. "We're the only producer of bio meats in all of Belgium," says Joeri Dobbelaere, Iwan's brother. "This is pretty special."

It's indeed impressive to witness the family-run facility and its dedication to processing healthy animals. In fact, the Dobbelaere family also gets its beef from a fifth farm; Iwan and Joeri's grandfather's cattle farm, which raises the Dobbelaere's most famed meat: the beef from the Blond d'Aquitaine cow. This connection to history and tradition only adds to the appeal of the company.

Joeri and Iwan's father, Ruby Dobbelaere, founded the company 10 years ago. Formally all butchers, the father now runs the grandfather's farm, and the two sons manage the business.

Before forming the company, the family worked in the local tradition. This meant going to the farmer's land once or twice a year and slaughtering a single cow or one or two pigs on site before coming the next day to pick them up and butchering them. Ten years ago, the government banned on-site

killings and required the butchering of all animals to take place in a government-regulated slaughterhouse. (This was understandably in the name of hygiene and sanitisation, although you can sense resentment from the butchers about this lost way of life.)

Now, the animals arrive at the main site in Moerkerke freshly slaughtered, and they are then butchered into the appropriate cuts of meat – and occasionally incorporated into recipes. Enormous cows arrive on hooks in four pieces, (sans hide and head). There is surprisingly little gore and zero smell. In fact, the entire site is immaculate; the only time I got a whiff of anything was of gorgeous smoke when checking out the cured salami.

That salami is housed next to the kitchen, where the company has focused its attention. "We would like to continue to produce new meals and ready-to-eat meals," says Koen Gevaert, company chef, and the man behind the many a harried couple's answer to dinner. "With both men and women in a family working, there is less time to shop, prepare and cook a meal. People want meals they can quickly prepare but also to know they are

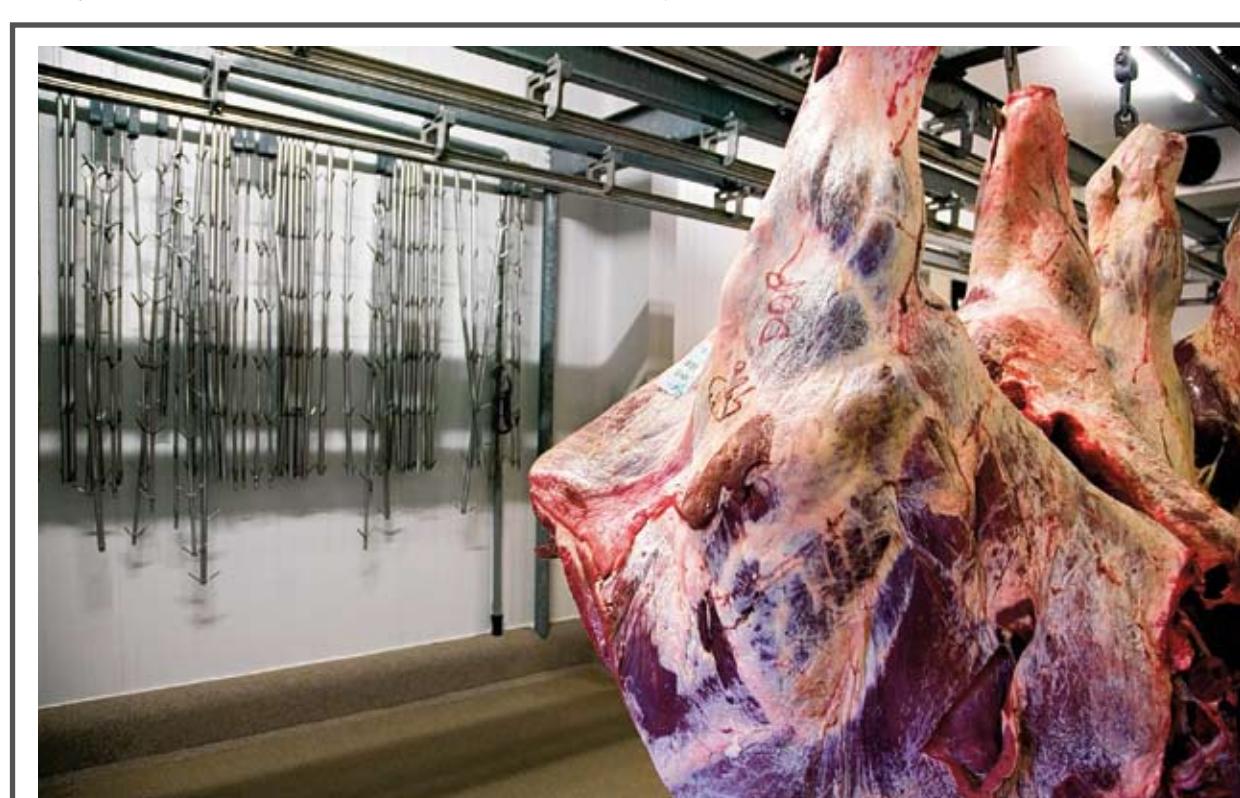
made with ingredients they would have bought themselves."

Gevaert joined the company fresh out of college as a chef and has been working on recipe development over the past 10 years. A decade ago, about 25% of the company's products were ready-made meals. This has grown to 40%.

The range of these meals (all bio) include pasta with bolognese, *vol au vent*, pizza napolita and the ever popular *stoverij*. A single package of the Flemish beef stew, which serves two, costs about €9. Natuurvlees Dobbelaere products can also be found in restaurants and butchers. In addition to their other butcher shops in Ostend, Ghent, Eeklo and Wijnegem, they provide meat to about 30 restaurants and a dozen or so butchers in East and West Flanders.

The Dobbelaere family is that rare breed that looked ahead, took a Flemish tradition and altered it to fit a changing market. Satisfied with their number of shops and an increasing output of ready-made meals, the company is now looking to begin distribution abroad. ♦

► www.natuurvleesdobbelaere.be



BUTCHER SHOP 101

VOCABULARY: beef – *rundvlees* • pork – *varkensvlees* • turkey – *kalkoen* • chicken – *kip*

BELGIAN SPECIALTIES: You know that white cow you see everywhere? That is the Blond d'Aquitaine, a breed originally from France. Dobbelaere's grandfather was a cow farmer and today, the farm produces some of the best known natural meat in Belgium.

HOW TO ORDER: To make the Flemish specialty *stoverij* (a sort of beef stew) according to tradition, you need the neck of the cow. Every butcher will know what to give you if you simply say: "stoofvlees". Buy about 500 grams for two servings. "Don't forget a good brown beer for the sauce," adds Joeri Dobbelaere.

HOW MUCH TO ORDER: For a meal, about 200 grams per person. "However," Joeri laughs, "The Flemish really like their meat, so maybe you should order more!"

PROPER STORAGE: Meat from a supermarket or shop that has been vacuum sealed can last up to 20 days in the refrigerator; meat hand-wrapped in paper by a butcher should be eaten within five days. Frozen, it can last anywhere from three to 12 months depending on the cut; ask your butcher if in doubt.

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GOSSELIN MOVING

BELGIUM - MEMBER GOSSELIN GROUP

♦ Agenda ♦

The Wood

The latest cooler-than-thou nightspot in Brussels has just opened in the heart of the Terkamerenbos (or Bois de la Cambre). Party in the dark woods until dawn breaks

→ www.thewood.be



FLANDERS TODAY
AUGUST 19, 2009



Worlds Inside, Outside

REBECCA BENOOT

Flemish photographer Nele Van Canneyt has been capturing her surroundings on film for more than 10 years. Tired of the grey tones in her native Ghent, she started travelling the world in search of vibrant colours and meaningful compositions. She succeeding beautifully: her work bursts with life and longing.

But Van Canneyt's pictures don't just look pretty, they also explore the relationship between people and their surroundings and often the state of mind of an individual at one particular and unsuspecting moment.

Urban decay and solitude are recurring themes: simple, elegant and sad. Van Canneyt is truly fascinated by how people behave in their environments and is constantly in search of images that show people in their purest form. When no one else is looking, she captures the beauty and sorrow in the little things.

Like "The Museum", one of the images in her exhibition in Antwerp, in which a man simply

stares at a painting. Far from the mundane subject a less talented photographer might make with the work, Van Canneyt's tight composition, light and depth transforms the photo into a painting that exudes the sophisticated loneliness in our modern-day society.

One of the most striking features of *Worlds Inside, Outside* is that the photos don't need any explanation; speaking for themselves, they invite the spectator to create his or her own story. There is also often a filmic quality, making you long for more. "Sleeping", for instance, features a father and daughter in terrible circumstances – how, why and what comes next jumps to mind. This shot is also a prime example of how the photographer combines harsh reality with the moving beauty of a particular moment.

None of the photographs was staged; Van Canneyt just goes in search of images that represent her and others' thoughts and feelings. These aspects make her work

universal, relatable and unique. In the end, she is able to find peace in a chaotic world by focusing on the complex and mesmerising elements that make us all human.



Until 27 August

Gallery In-Between
Paardenmarkt 90, Antwerp

→ www.nelevancanneyt.com

MORE GALLERY SHOWS THIS WEEK

Louis Blondiau → *Gallery Garden, Brussels*

dé/montage → *Grusenmeyer Art Gallery, Deurle*

Regards sur les corps → *Galerie Pascal Polar, Brussels*



blogspot.com
AUG 27 21.00 The Young Sintras

The Music Village
Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45,
www.themusicvillage.com
AUG 25-29 21.00 Buster & The Swing

Ghent
De Centrale
Kraankindersstraat 2; 09.265.98.28,
www.decentrale.be
AUG 23 14.00-18.00 Muziekmozaïek,
jazz guitar workshop by Roni Ben Hur



Brussels
Café Bonnefooi
Steenstraat 8,
www.bonnefooi.be
AUG 26 22.00 Flor Da Pele (Brazil)

DON'T MISS

Boterhammen in het Park

24-28 August
Warande Park
Brussels

This annual event celebrates 20 years for a good reason. In the heart of Brussels, it delivers Dutch-language music for free during your lunch hour. It even delivers the sandwiches, available to buy on site, and activities for the kids if you're lucky enough to be hanging out with them for the day instead of at work. Bands include pop and chanson group Yevgueni (no one knows how to pronounce it, so don't sweat it) and Luc De Vos of the rock band Gorki.

→ www.boterhammeninhetpark.be



Café Merlo
Baksteenkaai 80; 0499.11.67.45
AUG 26 22.00 No Angry Young Man
(Belgium)

Deurne
Openluchttheater Rivierenhof
Turnhoutsebaan 232; 070.222.192,
www.openluchttheater.be
AUG 20 20.00 Collie Buddz
AUG 21 20.00 Panache Culture +
ONESTY



Brussels
Onze-Lieve-Vrouw ter Kapelle
Kapelmarkt; 02.507.82.00
AUG 22 20.30 Ribattuta Ensemble:
organ music

♦ Agenda ♦

St Michael and St Gudula Cathedral
Sinter-Goedeleplein; 070.22.21.07,
www.ticketnet.be
AUG 25 20.00 Peter Van de Velde,
organ: Bach, De Maleingrau, Villa-
Lobos



Brussels
Tour & Taxis
Havenlaan 86C; 02.548.25.80,
www.tour-taxis.com
Until SEP 5 20.30 Peter Pan, adapted
from Régis Loisel's comic strip, staged
by Emmanuel Dekoninck (ages eight
and up; in French with Dutch and
English surtitles)



Antwerp
Cathedral of Our Lady
Handschoenmarkt; 03.213.99.51,
www.dekathedraal.be
Until NOV 15 Reunion: From
Quinten Metsys to Peter Paul Rubens,
masterpieces from the Royal Museum
of Fine Arts return to the cathedral

Diamond Museum
Koningin Astridplein 13-23;
03.202.48.90,
www.diamantmuseum.be
Until AUG 31 HRD Awards 2009 - A
Fairy Tale: diamond jewellery design
competition

Fotomuseum
Waalse Kaai 47; 03.242.93.00,
www.fotomuseum.be
Until SEP 13 Fotografie in België
tijdens het Interbellum (Photography
in Belgium Between the Wars)
Until SEP 13 Theatres of the Real,
contemporary British photography
Until SEP 13 Geert van Kesteren:
Baghdad Calling + Why Mister, Why?,
photos from the Iraq war
Until SEP 13 Nick Hannes: Red
Journey, photographs from Russia
Until SEP 13 De film van mijn leven
(The Film of My Life), prize-winners of
the Canvas photography contest, plus
work by Flemish photographer Lieve
Blancquaert

Middelheim Museum
Middelheimlaan 6; 03.827.15.34,
www.middelheimmuseum.be
Until SEP 27 Chris Burden, videos,
sculpture and installations by the
contemporary American artist

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

Blankenberge
Cultuurcentrum Casino
Zeedijk 150; 050.43.20.43, <http://cultuur.blankenberge.be/>
Until OCT 4 Masereel en de zee
(Masereel and the Sea), retrospective
on the 120th birthday of the
Blankenberge-born Franz Masereel,
with drawings, wood cuts, paintings
and ceramics

Bruges
Arentshuis
Dijver 16; 050.44.87.11,
www.brugge.be
Until SEP 27 The Museum of
Museums 2009, intervention by
contemporary artist Johan van Geluwe

Brussels
Belgian Comic Strip Centre
20 Rue des Sables (02.219.19.80),
www.comicscenter.net
Until SEP 27 Arithmetics of Troy,
comic strips by Christophe Arleston
(part of Brussels BD Comic Strip
Festival)

Belvue Museum
Paleizenplein 7; 02.511.44.25,
www.belvue.be
Until SEPT 20 Be-Arts, works by
Félicien Rops, Hugo Claus, Henri Blès
and Rik Wouters

Bozar (Paleis Voor Schone Kunsten)
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00,
www.bozar.be
Until SEP 13 Sophie Calle,
photographs, audio and video works by
the contemporary French artist
Until SEP 13 Disorder, sculptures and
paintings by French conceptual artist
Bernard Venet and comic strips about
Venet and the art world by Belgian
artist Jacques Charlier
Until SEP 13 Portraits of Artists: 80
Years of the Centre for Fine Arts in
Pictures

Until SEP 13 Young Belgian Painters
Award 2009, works by the finalists
Until SEP 13 100 Sex d'Artistes,
imaginative illustrations by Belgian
artist Jacques Charlier depicting the
genitals of 100 internationally known
artists

Until SEP 13 Repromotion, installation
of sculptures and photographs by
Belgian contemporary artist Jan De
Cock

City Hall
Grote Markt; 02.279.64.35,
www.brussel.be/artdet.cfm/4440
Until SEP 27 The Brussels Epic of
Willy Vandersteen, works by the
Flemish comic-strip artist (part of
Brussels BD Comic Strip festival)

Costume and Lace Museum
Violettestraat 12; 02.213.44.50,
www.brucity.be
Until SEP 29 stoffen & +, textile works
by Marie Beguin, Kathrin Laurent and
Charlotte Walry

Czech Centre
Troonstraat 60; 02.213.94.30
Until SEP 10 Jiru: Two generations of
photographers, prints by Czech Vaclav
Jiru and his nephew Jiri Jiru, who,
upon his return to the Czech Republic
after living in Brussels for 20 years,
became President Vaclav Havel's official
photographer

**De Elektriciteitscentrale (European
Centre for Contemporary Art)**
Sint-Katelijneplein 44; 02.279.64.35
Until SEP 27 Nothing is Permanent,
exhibition of contemporary art from
the 1970s to today, selected by long-
time Brussels gallery owner Albert
Baronian

Elsene Museum
Jean Van Volsemstraat 71; 02.515.64.21
Until SEP 13 Fading, works by 40
contemporary Belgian artists

**European Economic and Social
Committee**
Belliardstraat 99 - 6th floor;
02.546.86.78
Until AUG 31 My Europe, art and
design by 40 contemporary Czech
artists

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

Hallepoort
Zuidlaan; 02.534.15.18
Until OCT 25 Archeologie om de
hoek (Archaeology around the corner),
archaeological finds in Brussels over the
past 20 years

Jewish Museum of Belgium
Minimstraat 21; 02.512.19.63,
www.new.mjb-jmb.org
Until OCT 15 Een geheugen op papier
(A memory on paper), Jewish life in
Belgium recorded in historic postcards

MIVB Headquarters
Koloniënstraat 62; 02.515.20.52
Until SEP 26 Metro Art Memory,
retrospective and genesis of 80 works
in the Brussels' metro, with models,
drawings and sketches by Pierre
Alechinsky, Paul Delvaux and Hergé,
among others

Royal Museum of Art and History
Jubelpark 10; 02.741.72.11,
www.kmkg-mrah.be
Until AUG 30 Vegetal City, how to
reconcile city and nature, the vision
for a sustainable future by Belgian
architect Luc Schuiten

Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.508.32.11,
www.fine-arts-museum.be
Until AUG 23 Alfred Stevens:
retrospective of the Belgian artist
(1823-1906)

Until SEP 6 Art and Finance in
Europe: 16th-Century Masterworks in
a new light, works from the museum's
collection

WIELS
Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.347.30.33,
www.wiels.org
Until SEP 13 Ben Cain: The Making of
the Means, large-scale installation by
the former artist in residency

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

Deurle
Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens
Museumlaan 14; 09.282.51.23,
www.museumdd.be
Until SEP 13 When the mood strikes...
Wilfried & Yannick Cooreman's
collection of contemporary art, with
works by Franz West, Thomas Schütte,
Jean-Marc Bustamante and Jan

FLANDERS TODAY
AUGUST 19, 2009

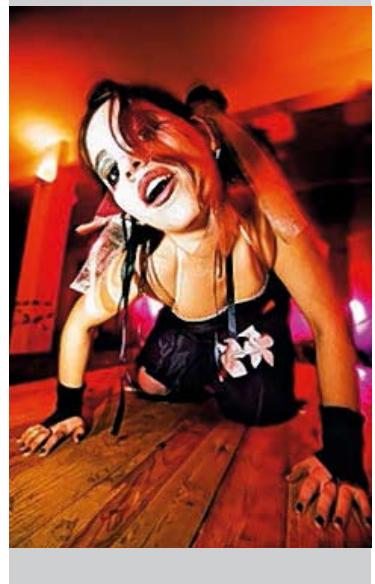
DON'T MISS

O(n)ZE Festival

20-30 August
Ancienne École De
La Batellerie
Brussels

Don't miss the last party
Bulex will ever throw in the
Batellerie, a former school
for canal watercraft on a
little-used section of the
Brussels canal. The abandoned
building has been the perfect
space for the group, which
prides itself on finding
the quirkiest underground
spaces in the capital for its
special blend of arty, all-night
parties. This one lasts for 11 days and 11
nights. And on the 12th day,
the party gods rest.

www.onzefestival.be



Vercruyse among others
Until SEP 13 Robert Devriendt,
paintings by the contemporary Flemish
artist

Ghent

Caermersklooster
Vrouwebroersstraat 6; 09.269.29.10,
www.caermersklooster.be
Until SEP 13 Delftig vermaak, ijdel
vertier (Distinguished leisure, vain
diversion), paintings and photographs
of Ghent's bourgeoisie from the mid-
19th century to the *Belle Epoque*

Design Museum
Jan Breydelstraat 5; 09.267.99.99,
<http://design.museum.gent.be/>
Until OCT 11 Yrjö Kukkapuro,
retrospective of the Finnish designer
from the late 1950s until the present
day
Until OCT 11 Ceramics by Raoul Dufy
(1877-1904)
Until OCT 11 Schoonhoven Silver
Award: Poetry in Silver, silver
competition with 55 international
artists

Dr Guislain Museum
Jozef Guislainstraat 43; 09.216.35.95,
www.museumdrguislain.be
Until SEP 13 Burland Toyland, works
made from recycled materials by Swiss
outsider artist François Burland
Until SEP 13 Unknown Secrets,
paintings by Serbian artist Goran
Djurović
Until SEP 13 De Tentoongestelde
Mens: Andere culturen als amusement
(Exhibited People: Other Cultures
as Entertainment), posters and
photographs from carnival shows and

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asylums that put the physically or mentally handicapped on display

MIAT

Minnemeers 9; 09.269.42.00,
www.miat.gent.be
Until AUG 23 Felt: From Tradition to Modern Art, work by István Vidák
Until OCT 18 Ghent on porcelain cards from 1840-1865

Museum of Fine Arts

Fernand Scribedreef 1 – Citadelpark; 09.240.07.00,
www.mskgent.be
Until SEP 20 Raoul de Keyser, works on paper (1964-1979) by the contemporary Belgian artist

Sint-Pietersabdij

Sint-Pietersplein 9; 09.243.97.30,
www.gent.be/spa
Until SEPT 6 Walder De Mulder, photos of conductors, photographers and other artists from the 1960s to the 1990s by the Ghent-based photojournalist
Until SEPT 6 Walter De Buck Verbeeldt (Represents), sculpture and drawings by the Ghent artist, singer and founder of the legendary Gentse Feesten

Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (SMAK)

Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03,
www.smak.be
Until AUG 23 Beyond The Picturesque: Interpretations of Landscape in Contemporary Art
Until AUG 23 Meteoriti, sculptures by Buzhan Bassiri
Until AUG 30 Carl De Keyzer: Trinity, photographs on power and violence by the Flemish Magnum agency photographer

Hasselt

Modemuseum
Gasthuisstraat 11; 011.23.96.21,
www.modemuseumhasselt.be
Until AUG 31 Ti + Hann: Temporary Shop II, installation/pop-up store
Until OCT 31 In Her Shoes, trends and evolution of women's shoe design, from 1900 to contemporary designers

Z33

33 Zuivelmarkt (Béguinage) (011.29.59.60)
Until SEP 27 Werk nu (Work Now), group show on the world of work by 20 international contemporary artists

Kemzeke

Verbeke Foundation
Westakkers; 03.789.22.07,
www.verbekefoundation.com
Until NOV 15 Artificial Nature, outdoor sculpture and installations by contemporary Belgian and European artists

Mechelen

Speelgoedmuseum (Toy Museum)
Nekkerspoelstraat 21; 015.55.70.75,
www.speelgoedmuseum.be
Until JAN 3 Thirty-five years of Playmobil

Overijse

Den Blank
Beginhof 11; 02.687.59.59,
www.denblank.be
AUG 21-SEP 13 Afgedankt (Discarded), photos of abandoned places by Flemish photographer Henk van Rensbergen

Tervuren

Royal Museum for Central Africa
Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11,
www.africamuseum.be
Until AUG 31 Omo: People & Design, functional objects made and used by the Omo people of south-western Ethiopia
Until JAN 3 Persona: Ritual Masks and Contemporary Art, masks from the museum's and other collections, shown alongside works by contemporary

African artists

Ypres

CC Ieper - Lakenhallen
Grote Markt 34; 057.23.94.80,
www.acci.be
Until OCT 4 Wat overblijft (What remains), recycled assemblages by Camiel Van Breedam



Aida - Outdoor Opera: Verdi's Aida performed outdoors; conducted by Giuliano Betta and Eric Lederhander and staged by François de Carpentriens
Until SEP 19 at historic sites across Belgium
www.ideefixe.be

Beaufort 03 - Art by the Sea: Third edition of the contemporary art triennial, with works by 29 Belgian and international artists
Until OCT 4 at outdoor locations up and down the Belgian coast as well as in Ostend's Kunstmuseum aan zee 070.22.50.05, www.beaufort03.be

Palm Parkies: Series of concerts in parks, including BBQ and drinks
Until AUG 26 from 19.00 across Flanders
www.parkies.net

Antwerp

Jackyland: Concerts every Thursday by local talent, followed by after-parties
Until SEP 10 at Magiq Spiegeltent, Oosterweelsteenweg (Noordkasteel) www.jackyland.be

Zomer van Antwerpen: Annual summer arts festival featuring concerts, theatre, circus, open-air film, sunset barbecues and a woodland bar
Until AUG 30 across Antwerp 03.224.85.28, www.zva.be

Blankenberge

Sand Sculpture Festival: Annual event featuring sculptures and reliefs by the best sand sculptors in the world; this year's theme is pirates
Until AUG 31 in Blankenberge www.zandsculptuur.be

Bruges

Nomad: 40 Years of Roland Patteeuw a walking tour of art organised by one of Flanders' hardest working curators, with work by Roger Raveel, Dan Van Severen, Raoul De Keyser, Jef Geys and more
Until SEP 1 at indoor and outdoor locations across Bruges 050.44.30.40, www.ccbrugge.be/Nomad

Brussels

Boterhammen in het Park 2009: Free outdoor lunchtime festival of Flemish and Dutch rock and pop music, plus children's activities. Bring a picnic or sample the sandwiches on sale
AUG 24-28 12.00 at Warande Park www.abconcerts.be

Bruparck: Themed family weekends, including music and dance, acrobatics, pirate shows, Knights of the Round Table and more
Until AUG 23 at Bruparck, Eeuwfeestlaan 20, Heysel www.bruparck.com

Brussels 2009 BD Comic Strip: City-wide festival celebrating Brussels-based comic strip artists and the rich history of the Belgian comic
Until DEC 31 across Brussels www.brusselscomics.com

Brussels Beach: Urban beach with sand, concerts, sports, family entertainment and 50 straw huts selling exotic food and drink

Until AUG 23 on the banks of the Akenkaai (Sainctelettesquare) 02.279.50.49, www.brusselbad.be

Brussels by Water: Guided boat tours and other activities in the port of Brussels and surrounding rivers and canals
Until SEP with departures from Brussels, Vilvoorde and Halle 02.203.64.06 www.brusselsbywater.be

Brussels Summer Festival: Outdoor festival with an eclectic mix of music, plus street theatre and cultural activities
Until AUG 23 in venues and squares around the city www.abconcerts.be

Brussels Urban BBQ: Giant barbecue prepared by award-winning chefs. The third edition includes wine tasting and a "Baby Bus"
AUG 23 12.00-16.00 at Kunstberg, Museumplein www.urbanbbq.be

Bruxellons 2009: Annual theatre festival featuring popular theatre, music, cabaret and a children's programme, plus buffet and bar
Until SEP 26 at Château du Karreveld, Jean de la Hoeselaan 3 02.724.24.24, www.bruxellons.net

Feeëriën 2009: Free outdoor music festival with a diverse programme, including bluegrass, piano, electro-acoustic, jazz and ukulele
AUG 24-28 19.00 at Warande Park www.abconcerts.be

Midi-Minimes Festival: Classical music festival with short, lunchtime concerts grouped according to historical period
Until AUG 28 12.15 at Miniemenkerk, Miniemstraat 62, and Royal Conservatory, Regentschapstraat 30 02.512.30.79, www.midis-minimes.be

Royal Museum of Fine Arts family events: Art workshops for children (ages six to 13; in Dutch)
Until AUG 28 at the Fine Arts Museum, Regentschapstraat 3 02.508.33.33, www.fine-arts-museum.be

Deerlijk

Deerlycke: Folk and family festival featuring music by EmBRÜN, Urban Trad, Lo Còr de la Plana, Beoga, Daemona Nymphe and The Pressgang, among others, plus kids' activities
AUG 21-23 in Tapuistraat www.deerlycke.be

Ghent

Parkkaffee: Activities in the park for the whole family, including live music, magic and circus workshops, tarot card reading, campfires, plus food and drink
Until AUG 31 at Parkkaffee, Groenstaakstraat 37, Mariakerke 09.227.99.94, www.parkkaffee.be

Haacht

Swing Wespelaar: Music festival featuring Schoel Dilu Muller & The Cisco Blues Band, Sammy Cuba, Chantel McGregor Band, Marcus Malone, Louisiana Red and Keith Dunn, among others
AUG 21-23 on Kerkplein www.swingwespelaar.be

Hasselt

Muscadet Aperitiefconcerten: Outdoor live music ensembles, choirs and orchestras every Sunday morning
Until AUG 30 11.00 at Het Stadsmus, Guido Gezellesstraat 2 011.29.98.90, www.hetstadsmus.be
Pukkelpop: Rock festival featuring Arctic Monkeys, Faith No More, Placebo, Kraftwerk, dEUS, Razorlight, www.pukkelpop.be

The Offspring, 50 Cent, N*E*R*D, Snow Patrol, My Bloody Valentine and many more
AUG 20-22 in Kiewit www.pukkelpop.be

Kalmthout

Kunstkrakerspel: Activities for children using text and theatre, followed by performances
Until AUG 21 at Suske en Wiske Kindermuseum, Beauvoislaan 98 03.666.64.85, www.terranova.provant.be

Knokke-Heist

International Cartoon Festival: Annual event this year highlights the increasing role of internet and television in cartoons. Includes Press Cartoon Belgium, featuring guest cartoonist Kevin Kallaugh
Until SEP 27 at Lagunahall, Krommedijk 57 050.630.430, www.cartoonfestival.be

Leuven

Zomer van Sint-Pieter: Classical music festival with short, lunchtime concerts grouped according to historical period. Sister festival to Brussels' Midi-Minimes
Until AUG 28 across Leuven 016.23.84.27, www.zomer-van-sint-pieter.be

Lommel

Lommel Leeft 2009: Free concerts in parks and public squares
Until AUG 27 across Lommel (Limburg province) 011.39.97.99, www.lommelleeft.be

Mechelen

Maanrock: Music festival featuring Sandrine, The Magical Flying Thunderbirds, Soulsister, Stijn, Lalalover, Yevgueni and more
AUG 22-23 on Grote Markt, Vismarkt and Ijzerleen www.maanrock.be

Parkpop: Concerts by pop, rock, blues, salsa, reggae, disco or soul groups every Thursday evening
Until AUG 27 20.30 in Kruidtuin, Bruul 129 015.29.78.68, www.parkpop.be

Vis-Pop: Free music festival featuring Kung Fu Junkies, Laura Vane, The Vipertones and Buscemi, among others
AUG 21 on the Vismarkt www.vis-pop.be

Ronse

Bruul 2009: Free summer music festival with performances every Friday, featuring Raymond Van Het Groenewoud, Sons of Queen, Sois Belle, Paul Severs and Freddy Birset
Until AUG 21 20.00 at Bruulpark, Ronse (East Flanders) 055.23.27.94, www.bruulronse.be

Watou

Watou 2009: Annual festival of contemporary art, architecture and poetry. This year's title is Tussen Taal en Beeld: Verzamelde Verhalen (Between Language and Image: Collected Stories), which looks at the relationship between image and language
Until SEP 6 in indoor and outdoor venues across Watou (West Flanders) 059.56.45.98, www.watou2009.be

Zulte

Hoeverock: Free rock and blues festival, featuring concerts every Tuesday
Until AUG 25 19.30 in Het Gouden Hof, D'hoestraat 32, Olsene (East Flanders) <http://hoeverock.wordpress.com>

LISA BRADSHAW

CAFE SPOTLIGHT



Ter Biestmolen Biestmolenstraat 18, Zwalm

Much like the people in our cover story this week, I tend towards nostalgia. I like cosy with plenty of wood and a sense of history. So it's no surprise that I was taken with Ter Biestmolen, located in rural East Flanders.

At first I was sceptical. Ter Biestmolen is huge, and huge is the enemy of cosy. But on closer inspection, the wide open, airy spaces of the first and second floors are no match for the dim light, low ceilings and heavy beams cutting through the ground floor. You have to bend over taking your seat in the back or you'll hit your head. Now that's a cafe.

It's also a full-service restaurant, and the large spaces upstairs make it an excellent place to book for events with lots of people. So does the indoor sightseeing. Ter Biestmolen is an old water mill. Very old, in fact: documentation dates it from before 1063, when the Count of Flanders used the income generated from the grinding of grain to support the Ename monastery (still known today for their excellent beer).

The mill eventually became privately owned, with a major expansion in the late 19th century. It finally shut down in 1970 after a 900-year run. In 1983, it became a protected monument.

But it was just last year that the beautifully restored mill opened as a restaurant, owned by Peter De Deken, whose family has a history of buying and renovating old mills. He has done the same thing with two other mills in this region called the Zwalmstreek. You can see the interior workings of the Biestmolen mill on every floor; my beer actually got warm while I poked around like I was in a museum.

The Zwalmstreek is very popular with cyclists and walkers, and all De Deken's establishments can be found along the signposted *Zwalmbeek wandelroute*, or walking route. They are full of outdoor enthusiasts popping in for a little liquid refreshment. Fortunately, Ter Biestmolen has terraces both in front and back.

→ www.terbiestmolen.be

FACE OF FLANDERS

Annick De Ridder

Last week, a proposal published in *De Morgen*, as well as in a number of Antwerp media, encouraged Flanders to impose a boycott on mussels and oysters from Zeeland. This rather unlikely idea would be in retaliation for Dutch recalcitrance over the issue of dredging the sea channel known as the Western Scheldt.

The proposal is the work of Annick De Ridder, a member of the Flemish parliament for Open VLD. De Ridder was joined in her op-ed piece by Ludo Van Campenhout, a member of the federal parliament and, like De Ridder, a member of the board of the Port of Antwerp.

The Western Scheldt needs to be dredged at 12 locations to make it possible for large container ships to make their way to the port of Antwerp, which they can currently only do at specific tide times. But most of the channel is in Dutch waters, and the Dutch are dragging their feet. The Port of Rotterdam is the main beneficiary if Antwerp is unable to handle the traffic.

Antwerp politicians on all sides are furious at the potential economic losses for the city and



ALAN HOPE

Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters last week called in the Dutch ambassador to talk to her about the issue.

Flemish politicians and the Antwerp port authorities want to force the Dutch to act. But the idea of economic sanctions is so far out in left field that the suggestion of such measures, made by De Ridder and Van Campenhout, earned them little more than embarrassed silence from their political fellows. The very idea brings back memories of the Cod War of the 1970s or the boycott of Chilean wine by students in the 1980s.

The De Ridder plan is, regard-

less of political opinion, bound to fail. You do not mess with the stomachs of Flanders, whatever the justice of your cause. Flemings are proudly insistent on pointing out that they are Bourgondiërs, fond of good food. Stand between a Flemish and his dinner at your peril, and right now is the season for mussels.

Peeters diplomatically called for calm. An editorialist in *De Standaard*, on the other hand, was more abrupt. De Ridder's proposal was "nonsense", the paper declared. "Above all, denying ourselves Zeeland mussels goes against our own interests. They are too delicious."



Win VIP tickets to closing night!

The Ostend Film Festival is the only film festival on the Belgian coast, and this year it celebrates Flemish film at both its opening, when it screens Geoffrey Enthoven's new film *Meisjes*, and at its closing, when you'll find *My Queen Karo* lighting up the big screen. The second feature film by Dorothée Van Den Berghe, whose first film *Meisje* won several awards, *My Queen Karo* follows the story of a 10-year-old girl living with her young parents in a 1970s Amsterdam commune (photo above).

Win a pair of VIP tickets to *My Queen Karo* on 25 August by sending an email to editorial@flanderstoday.eu by 15.00 on Friday, 21 August, with "VIP tickets" in the subject line. Winners will be informed the same day.

FILMFESTIVAL OOSTENDE

KINEPOLIS OOSTENDE | CINÉ RIALTO

19 aug - 25 aug 2009

(Don't worry, Alistair MacLean just needed a little holiday. He'll be back with a fresh instalment of "Talking Dutch", next week!)

The last word ➔ ➔ ➔

Wilderness years

"These are not exactly golden years for the church, but perhaps that means this is just the right moment to do something like this."

Matthieu Jottier, 26, is the only Flemish priest to be ordained this year

make entrance free."

Pieter Maes, organiser of the Markrock music fest in Leuven

Slow motion

"Because of our fast lifestyle and modern technologies, we sometimes seem to have no time just to stand still with the past. We're suffering from collective amnesia, and that is dangerous because that's where ignorance comes from."

Katerina Gregos, curator of the Contour video art biennale in Mechelen

Sailing into the wind

"The king has had a second yacht since last year. Two years ago he bought the Quatuor, but that was while he was waiting for this new one. The Quatuor is now for sale."

A spokesman for the royal palace explains why the king needs two yachts

bite

SHARON LIGHT

Special delivery

Believe it or not, Monday is one of my favourite days of the week. That's the afternoon I head over to my local bio shop to pick up my weekly vegetable pack.

The concept is simple: for a weekly subscription fee, you receive a bag full of organic, often locally grown, in-season fruits and vegetables. The catch is that you have to take what they give you. Depending on your perspective, this may not even be a catch – I enjoy the surprise of unpacking my bag as I start to dream up recipes.

If you aren't a "kitchen creative" type, no worries. Many services provide recipes, tailored to what shows up in your weekly delivery. (When in doubt, there is always Google.)

Some vegetables come in abundance – this summer has seen lots of lettuce, and last winter we were visited weekly by leeks – while others appear very sporadically. I had never prepared salsify until it appeared in my vegetable bag for two weeks in a row, and I was thrilled when last week's delivery included chard for the first time this year.

The prices are competitive with supermarket



costs for organic fare, so the key is figuring out which packet suits you: fruits, vegetables or both, available through most services in small or large.

Sometimes I supplement with a couple of items from the store, but generally my €8 fruit-and-veggie bag gets me and my husband through most of the week. That would be the small mixed bag from Julianne (a project of bio farm Lochting-Dedrie Roeselare), which includes five types of vegetables and two kinds of fruit. Bigger packets offer both more types of produce as well as larger quantities of each.

This week's selection included tomatoes, leeks, a head of lettuce, a Chinese cabbage, a half a dozen plums and several apples.

At a minimum, that's stir-fry, a salad and pie. Their weekly newsletter tells you the names of the farms where each item was grown, so you can give yourself two pats on the back: one for bolstering the local economy, and a second for eating healthy.

➔ www.julienne.be

➔ www.biodichtbijhuis.be
(click on "verdelers")