

**Crackdown
on courses** 3

It will soon be more difficult for people to get cheques to follow courses such as sewing and flower-arranging, as the Flemish government intends to cut this form of spending in half



**Up for
the challenge** 9

Stand-up comedian Nigel Williams has mastered the art of being funny in Flemish, but how will he fare onstage in his native English? Alan Hope talks with the comic as he gears up to get some laughs in Edinburgh



**Water sports
galore** 10

Kayak, dive and make a splash at De Gavers, an unexpected stretch of woods and water next to Kortrijk



© Reuters

#140



Kings of dreams

Indians are strengthening their position in Antwerp's diamond business

KARISHMA BHANSALI

They sport crisp Italian couture, drive swanky Mercedes and enjoy the good things in life, but they also believe in karma and are staunch followers of Jainism, a religion that preaches vegetarianism and non-violence.

They did not have the luxury of graduating from high school, but they are now CEOs of large companies and entrepreneurs who control 60% of the global diamond trade.

They are Antwerp's Indian businessmen, and they globalised the diamond business long before concepts such as global sourcing and cheap manufacture became buzzwords in the business world.

Diamonds had been changing hands in Antwerp long before the Indians arrived. As long ago as the 15th century, Jewish diamond cutters have been faceting diamonds and traders have

been selling them on Hovenierstraat – the heart of Antwerp's diamond quarter.

The Indian connection began in the 1930s and 1940s, when the ruling Nawab of the small farming village of Palanpur in Gujarat state secretly encouraged his trustworthy Jain administrators to buy large diamonds from Antwerp for members of the Indian and Nepali royalty.

As the visits became more regular in the 1960s, the Indians closely observed the market and realised the enormous potential of a diamond-manufacturing industry based on small low-quality rough diamonds – which the Jewish dealers overlooked when they cut larger stones.

A fledgling industry developed and soon an entire community became involved in sorting and cutting small and beautiful

sparklers, more affordable and opening up a whole new market.

In a way, Indians democratised the diamond, leading to a mutually beneficial marriage between mining giant De Beers and the Indians. "De Beers didn't follow the European attitude of generalising problems in the third world," says Dilip Mehta, CEO of Rosy Blue, an Indian diamond company that moved to Antwerp in 1973.

Rosy Blue was one of the first ten Indian companies to secure a sight or a contract to buy rough diamonds directly from De Beers and gain the prestige of being a De Beers sight holder in 1969. Today it is the largest diamond company in the world, operating in over 15 countries with more than 100,000 employees.

► *continued on page 5*

Van Den Broeck claims fifth place in Tour de France

LEO CENDROWICZ

Flemish time trial specialist Jurgen Van Den Broeck was the surprise element in the Tour de France, finishing fifth overall as the race ended in Paris on Sunday.

In doing so, the 27-year-old Omega Pharma-Lotto rider became Belgium's first top-five Tour de France finisher since Claude Criquielion in 1986. The result will likely propel him to the sort of stardom enjoyed by classics riders like Tom Boonen and Philippe Gilbert.

While Spanish winner Alberto Contador and runner-up, Luxembourg's Andy Schleck,

were the two dominant riders in the Tour, Van Den Broeck's performance raised eyebrows all round – including the Herentals-born man himself, who was only aiming to make the top ten.

Van Den Broeck, who finished just 6'54" behind Contador in the final rankings, won the World Junior Time Trial Championship in 2001, came sixth in the 2008 Tour of Italy, and 15th in the 2009 Tour de France.

Mario Aerts, 35, also from Herentals, was the first Belgian in the King of the Mountains rankings, coming in 12th, and 33rd overall. Jurgen Roelandts,

25, from Asse, was the leading Belgian in the green jersey rankings for sprint points, coming in ninth, and 120th overall. And Francis De Greef, 25, from Rumst, was the top Belgian in the white jersey rankings for younger riders, coming in 11th, and 72nd overall.

The other successful Flemish in the Tour include Duffel-born Kevin De Weert, 28, who came in 18th overall; Johan Vansumeren, 29, from Lommel, who was 30th; and Jurgen Van de Walle, 33, from Eernegem, who was 63rd. ♦

New VRT boss announced

Former marketer faces major challenges

ALAN HOPE

The name of the new head of the Flemish public broadcaster VRT has been announced. After months of head-hunting by the Flemish government, media minister Ingrid Lieten last week announced the post will be filled from September by Sandra De Preter – the first time a woman has led the organisation.

De Preter's predecessor, Dirk Wauters, left the job in December last year, and his place has been filled since then by Piet De Roe – the second time De Roe has taken over the reins *ad interim*. Lieten explained, "We were looking for someone with media and management experience to lead such a large and complex business as the VRT. It is also above all a high visibility business which requires great courage to lead. Those factors made the search more difficult."

De Preter herself said, "If an opportunity like this comes along, you don't let it go. The VRT is the finest media business in Flanders, and it's an honour to be able to lead it. The thing that attracted me the most is that the VRT fulfils a social role in a quality way. I'm looking forward to working with the people there."

If De Preter's CV is distinguished by one thing, it would be bad habits. After graduating in business economics from the Catholic University of Leuven and obtaining an MBA from Helsinki Business School, she went to work in marketing for, successively, British-American Tobacco, makers of Lucky Strikes and John Players, biscuit manufacturer Delacre, and chocolate maker Barry Callebaut.

► *continued on page 3*

OFFSIDE

ALAN HOPE

New number plate causes language split



Belgium is to introduce "unsafe" new number plates, it is being alleged. The decision appears to have been influenced, as so much in Belgium, by "community" considerations.

The new number plates conform to EU regulations, featuring seven characters in ruby-red on a white background. The original plan, put forward by former federal mobility minister Etienne Schouuppe, was for the plates to feature black characters on a yellow background – the colour combination shown by research to be the most effective for road safety and automatic number-plate recognition.

But black and yellow is a colour combination associated with Flanders, and Schouuppe's proposal met with opposition from French-speaking parties, who favoured sticking with the "traditional" Belgian combination of red-on-white. Even when Schouuppe proposed adding a red border to the plate, turning it into a Belgian tricolour, the opposition remained.

This is not the first time that plans to improve road safety have met with controversy. In 1990, the black-yellow combination was proposed for the metal poles supporting traffic lights. That idea was also scotched under suspicion that the minister proposing it, who happened to be a member of the nationalist Volksunie, had Flemish ulterior motives.

The United Kingdom, the Netherlands and France have all adopted black-on-yellow plates. But, due to the Belgian decision, the chances of European harmonisation now seem to have vanished.

The plates themselves will cost €20, and will be introduced gradually as new numbers are issued. Each plate will have the usual three letters and three numbers, preceded by the index number 1. There are 12.2 million possible permutations. When those are exhausted, the index number changes to 2, and so on up to 6. Existing number plates do not need to be replaced.

"If this really is a decision on community grounds, that's pure Kafka," said police union representative Philip Van Hamme. "That's bordering on the unbelievable."

Motoring organisation VAB meanwhile complained at the cost of the new plates. "Ten years ago minister [Isabelle] Durant made everyone buy a reflective number plate," said a spokesman. "Now motorists are again being asked to cough up."

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FLANDERS TODAY
JULY 28, 2010

News in brief

Antoinette Beumer, director of the **Dutch remake of the Flemish hit film Loft**, was injured last week in a fall from scaffolding while filming in a studio in Brussels. She broke her jaw and injured her wrist and hand, while a cameraman sustained a broken foot. Filming has meanwhile been held up. *Loft*, with nearly two million tickets sold, is the most successful Flemish film of all time, but the Dutch preferred to make their own version. The original director, Eric Van Looy, meanwhile, is in the US filming an English-language version.

Antwerp Zoo last week took delivery of **two Komodo dragons**, the world's largest species of lizard, as part of a worldwide breeding programme. Female Keli from Colchester Zoo measures 2.2 metres and weighs 21 kilos. Her intended, Jaka, is 70 cm shorter and weighs only 11 kg. The two will be kept apart until mating time, after which, it is hoped, Keli will lay as many as 30 eggs. The Komodo dragon comes from an island in Indonesia where there are only about 6,000 individuals remaining. There are 43 examples in European zoos.

Kris Dierckx has taken over as **director of Flanders House**, the Flemish government's

representation in New York City. Dierckx has been serving as acting director since October last year, following the departure of Philip Fontaine after allegations of mismanagement. Dierckx graduated in law and international relations from Antwerp University, and has previously represented Flanders at the United Nations in Geneva.

area. There have been 18 break-ins at apartments in Blankenberge alone in the past month, with peak times around 16.00-17.00, when holidaymakers are at the beach. Similarly, daytime burglars struck 12 times at one bungalow park in De Haan. "Coastal crime is an annually recurring phenomenon," said a spokesman for the Bruges prosecutor.

The **Special Tax Inspection unit** of the finance ministry is not working as well as it should, and may even be using illegal methods, according to a report from the government's own Court of Auditors, reported in *De Tijd* newspaper. The unit has a shortage of inspectors, especially VAT specialists, the report says, and there are no clear criteria as to which tax areas it should be investigating. In some cases, fraudsters are excused prosecution if they cooperate sufficiently, while others are taken to court, leading to inequality and "random" policy application.

Police in the coast zone have warned tourists to keep an eye on their belongings while on the beach, and to lock their apartments when leaving for the day, following an increase in the number of gangs of organised thieves in the

FACE OF FLANDERS

ALAN HOPE

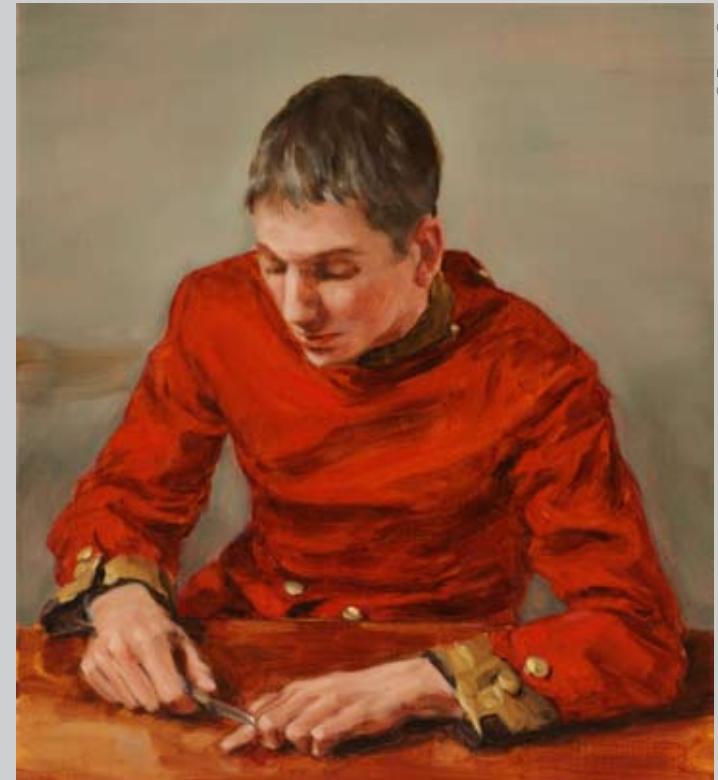
Michaël Borremans

When Queen Paola calls the painters in to do up a room in the palace, she goes for the very best. And so it is that visitors to the palace, now open to the public until 5 September, can enjoy six paintings and a video installation by Michaël Borremans, now hanging in the violet-tinted Marshals' Salon.

Borremans, with Luc Tuymans one of Belgium's two greatest living painters, first came to the Queen's attention five years ago when he exhibited at the City Museum for Modern Art (Smak) in Ghent. She later contacted him personally and suggested he might like to add to the collection of modern art she is gradually building up, with the assistance and advice of former Smak director Jan Hoet.

"I was allowed to come and look at the rooms in the palace to see if they would inspire me to do something," he explained. "It gave me a chance to work in a context far removed from the art world." Inspiration came in the shape of 17 paintings of footmen, six of which are on show. "I visited the palace several times," he said. "Each time I was waited on by footmen. That's the way it is at every court. The footman is a permanent feature, always present in the background. So he becomes a metaphor for continuity."

In addition to that, Borremans



© Peter Cox

points out that his portraits of footmen will now hang in the midst of portraits of former royals and other nobles. His commission thus becomes a tiny act of social levelling. And of revolution, for these are no ordinary, obsequious and self-effacing footmen. Each painting depicts a single model in livery – Borremans was given a genuine 19th-century example to work from – but with something not quite right. In one painting, the

footman is cutting into his own finger; in several, his jacket is on back to front; in yet another, he appears to be poking his finger in his own eye. Some reports have called the works surreal, but that doesn't describe their air of menace. One wonders what the shuffling hordes of tourists will make of them.

The Royal Palace is open daily except Monday from 10.30 to 16.30, entry free.

www.monarchie.be

FLANDERS TODAY

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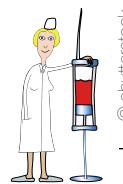
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Derek Blyth

Just a little prick

Patients lining up for this year's flu jab can look forward to a less painful experience, thanks to a new shorter needle. The new vaccination goes into the skin rather than the muscle, but is equally effective, experts said.



New VRT boss will start by implementing cuts

→ continued from page 1

She herself appears to have become disillusioned about the usefulness of her career. In an interview published in *De Morgen* newspaper three years ago she said, "As a marketer I had the feeling that what I was doing was pretty useless. Where is the societal dimension in the fact that you're getting people to eat more chocolate and cookies?"

That was her view when she took a different career direction, stepping over in 1998 to join Sanoma, the Finnish-owned international maga-

zine company which publishes *Flair*, *Story*, *Libelle* and *Goedele* in Flanders, among other titles generally aimed at women. There she rose to publishing director, and then for a time to acting CEO. It may have appeared that she could succeed to the top job, but that place was taken by Aimé Van Hecke, who ironically had just stepped down from the job she now takes over, at the head of the VRT.

That post presents her with a number of challenges. She must get on with the VRT board, which has not always been the case for her predecessors. She will have to form a working relationship with the Flemish government, in which case her apparent lack of any political affiliation will probably be an advantage. "I've no experience on that front," she admitted. "But I'm a fast learner."

That's important because the autumn, and her entry into the job in September, will bring the start of negotiations with the government over plans for

the VRT's future for 2012-2016. The broadcaster is already facing cuts of €65 million by the end of 2011, designated by Piet De Roe (and thereby leaving De Preter little or nothing to do but implement them). The commercial channels, led by the VMMa (VTM and 2BE) will not stand to see the VRT distort competition by taking more subsidy from the public purse. The government, in the form of media minister Lieter, wants to see the VRT continue as the reference broadcaster for all of Flanders. The commercial channels want the VRT to be restricted to news, information and culture, leaving the likes of game shows and big dramas (both of which have brought the VRT major success in recent years) to the free market. Both of those desires could be reconciled, but likely not to the VRT's advantage. The chances are the organisation will continue in some slimmed-down form.

"I'm not going to announce any great vision here," De Preter said last week



Sandra De Preter comes from the world of women's magazines

on the announcement of her appointment. "I'm first going to take the time to inform myself and to talk things over with the people inside the organisation." ♦

THE WEEK IN FIGURES



39%

voted Princess Mathilde their favourite member of the Belgian royal family, ahead of King Albert II on 22.7% and Prince Laurent on 12.6%. Crown prince Filip, Mathilde's husband, scored a lowly 2.1%

60%

of Belgium's military are overweight, and 15% even qualify as obese, with a body mass index over 30

15,000

revellers attended this year's Bal National in the Marollen quarter in Brussels on the eve of the national day. The popular event, now in its eighth year, saw performances by Nicole and Hugo as well as Kate Ryan

15.5%

of primary school children found to have learning difficulties in 2008-2009, according to figures from the Flemish education minister Pascal Smet. In secondary school, the figure went up to 29.4%

1,150

military personnel allowed to leave the service early next year, according to the defence ministry, in an effort to reduce numbers. Those released from their obligation to serve their allotted term include 15 senior officers, 15 junior officers, 510 NCOs and 610 enlisted men and women

2/10

trains run late in the evenings, according to the latest figures from rail authority NMBS. Overall, trains ran on time 87.5% of the time, dropping to 80.9% in the evening rush hour

King calls for peace and understanding

Better relations between the language communities, closer relations between Belgium and Congo, and progress towards the goals of the European Union – the three main desires expressed by the King in his traditional televised speech to the nation on the eve of last week's national day.

"Communal tensions have caused turmoil in our land, and led to early elections which brought major political changes," he said. "Now we have to turn towards the future. It is essential for our regions and communities to create new forms of cooperation with which everyone can feel at ease. Painful issues which have led to divisions need to be resolved, and a new balance found between the federal state and the entities which make it up."

The King also recalled his recent visit to the former colony Congo on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of independence. And he made allusion to an issue which he declined to address

during the trip, leading to criticism: the severe human rights issues in the country, particularly in the case of women.

"To those Congolese who we met I expressed my admiration for the courage and determination throughout a history which has known happy moments such as this anniversary, but also difficult and dramatic periods. That admiration is for the whole population, a young and lively people where the role of women deserves special mention. As well as creating homes, they also work constantly for the benefit of their families, despite in some areas being severely mistreated," the King said.

Finally, the King promised he and the Queen, as well as other members of the Royal family, would take part in various meetings and seminars on specific subjects during the Belgian presidency of the EU, such as family policy, the fight against poverty and human trafficking, as well as the development of a Europe-wide Child Focus. ♦

Government scraps subsidy for flower-arranging and wine courses

The Flemish government is to halve the amount of money it spends on training cheques – from €20 million to €10 million, with effect from 1 August.

The training cheques system was intended to help those in work to gain the skills needed to improve their position on the jobs market. Those in work who wish to follow courses to improve their job prospects, either in their spare time or during working hours, could pay for them with the cheques, which cost the employee only half of their face value, with the government paying the rest. Costs covered including tuition, course materials and exams, but not travel costs, childcare or other indirect expenses.

The system was introduced in 2003. However the government's training agency which administers the system, the VDAB, now estimates that only 40% of the cheques are being used for job-related training. "The other 60% is going towards courses that have more to do with lifelong learning or personal interests," said labour minister Philippe Muyters in a statement issued last week. "We're talking for example about courses in photography, sewing, wine tasting, cookery, bookbinding, tour-guide and flower arranging. The use of the cheques for these courses will no longer be possible." A spokesperson for the VDAB explained: "Courses in wine will still be available, but only if you plan on becoming a sommelier."

If the figures are correct, then the decision should mean an extra €2 million for courses which conform to the original intention of the cheques scheme, or a saving of the same amount if the demand is not there. The only courses now recognised by the cheques system are those which are accredited for paid educational leave – where a much stricter set of criteria have always applied. Anyone who has already bought cheques for a course which is no longer approved will be reimbursed. ♦

→ www.vdab.be



Wine-tasting courses are available, but only if you plan on becoming a sommelier

214,000

cheques requested in 2009, up from 200,000 in 2008

€185

average value per applicant in 2009

€250

maximum value allowed per applicant

€4.5 million

initial budget in 2003, rising to €20 million last year

FIFTH COLUMN

ANJA OTTE

Taboos

When it comes to state reform, almost every party has taboos. For a long time, state reform in itself was a taboo to the French speakers. We ask for nothing, they would say. This put them in an excellent negotiating position, but it has contributed to the political standstill since 2007.

Three years on, even the French speakers are convinced that some sort of state reform is needed. There are still taboos though. Social security is one of them. The French speakers fear that once this is split up, there will be nothing left to hold Belgium together. They also object strongly to the idea of children "receiving less child support, simply because they live in one part of the country". Or the unemployed being treated in a different way, for the same reason. Yet according to indiscretions, that is exactly what is on the table at the government formation talks. Time does chip away at taboos.

There are Flemish taboos too. Especially N-VA, the nationalist party that won the 2010 federal elections, has plenty of them. N-VA sticks to the principle of never compromising on matters that make Flemish independence harder to achieve. One of these is a federal constituency, comprising the whole country. Such a constituency would make it a lot easier to resolve the prickly issue of BHV. It would also undo the present situation of Belgium consisting of "two democracies". Most parties favour the idea of a federal constituency, but to the N-VA it remains taboo.

Besides taboos, there are also practicalities that stand in the way of state reform. Changing the constitution requires a majority of two-thirds in parliament. This majority can be achieved by a government made of many parties, or, alternatively, support can be found amongst the opposition.

Everyone looks to the greens now for their support. Joëlle Milquet, of the French speaking Christian-democrats, called for them to join the government, just to be sure. Her plea was not received well, as Milquet has a reputation for disrupting state reform talks in any possible way. Caroline Gennez, of the Flemish socialists, however, asked for the same thing. Her message was directed at N-VA and CD&V. Both parties would rather leave the greens out, as their presence would strengthen the leftist element. This, they feel, would go against the general right-wing way Flanders voted. And so, along the long road towards a federal government, new taboos are born....



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Kings of dreams

Antwerp's Indian businessmen continue to sculpt the global diamond landscape

► *continued from page 1*

The Indian diamond community in Antwerp started as a handful of Gujarati families, but expanded to 300 in the 1970s when a wave of Indians, encouraged by Belgium's lenient immigration laws, settled in the city. They spotted a golden opportunity at the time, following a crash in the global diamond market that left many of Antwerp's traditional traders shaken.

"At that time, confidence in the market was completely lost," recalls Kaushik Mehta, managing Director of Eurostar. He spotted an opportunity before the crash and opened a diamond-polishing plant on the outskirts of Antwerp. "Many companies and factories were closing down," he said. "It was a very risky venture for us to be taking."

India's largest export

Antwerp is now home to some 500 Indian families directly involved in the diamond trade. The sector is currently worth €26 billion, representing 8% of Belgium's exports and employing 30,000 people.

The port city is a multicultural melting pot of the diamond business, and is home not only to Indians and Jews, but also Chinese, Japanese, Lebanese and African communities.

As diamond cutting has shifted to cost-effective centres in India, some 1,000 cutters remain in Antwerp out of a diamond-polishing industry that employed 25,000 in the 1970s.

Indian economic might now spans the globe from India to the US, and Surat in Gujarat state is now the world's diamond-cutting capital. Meanwhile, diamonds have become India's largest export.

Indian companies have now expanded into manufacturing larger stones measuring up to five carats. They have set up polishing and manufacturing facilities in countries ranging from China and Thailand to South Africa and Russia.

Despite their meteoric rise, Indians have not forgotten the salient traditions of the business; they still seal multi-million dollar deals with a simple handshake and the Jewish word *mazal* – a custom picked up from their Jewish counterparts.

Chetan Choksi, managing director of

Diminco says: "The Indian community has been part of the Jewish business and vice versa. We are both from conservative religions and have similar cultural and traditional values."

Trust is intrinsic in an industry where packets of diamonds worth millions are transported across the world. This requires a large family network to keep the businesses operating. "The most trustworthy counterparty is definitely a family member," says Choksi. "The Indian community consists of large, hard-working international families that are not afraid to adapt and are very flexible," says Freddy Hanard, CEO of the Antwerp World Diamond Centre (AWDC, the industry's main representative body). "They live according to the 'one pocket principle' which basically means they all work to benefit the family."

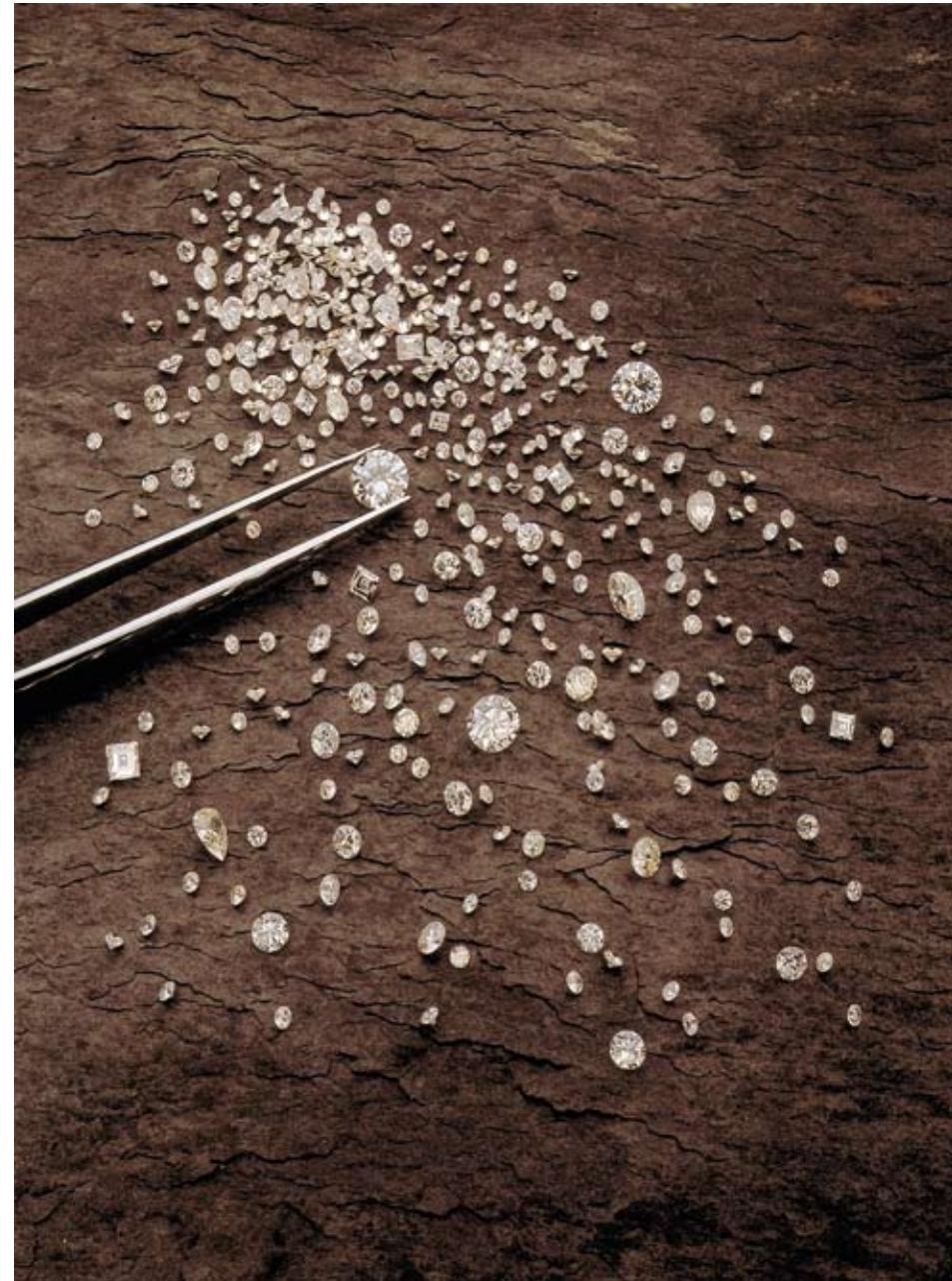
For Indians, Antwerp represents a stable, secure and transparent one-stop shop for conducting their business activities. The city is essentially the world's main rough-diamond trading centre where all the major diamond-mining companies are present. The diamond-mining giant De Beers, which controls around one-half of the world's diamond market share, has an office here, along with other major companies such as Rio Tinto, BHP and Alrosa.

At present, over 80% of the world's rough diamonds and 50% of polished diamonds pass through the port city. The fortified pedestrian streets in the diamond district, close to Central Station, are home to 1,800 companies, four diamond exchanges, and a highly respected and credible diamond-grading facility.

Also present are two specialised banks which finance the trade – ABN Amro and the Antwerp Diamond Bank – along with strong government institutions like the AWDC. Indian banks such as State Bank of India, ICICI and Bank of India have also set up in Antwerp to cater to the growing financial needs of Indian businesses.

One crucial factor is the unflinching support of the Belgian government, which has led to the Indian community becoming strongly embedded in the diamond landscape.

In May 2006, diamond dealers from India



gained a historic political victory when they won five out of 12 seats on the board of the diamond industry's key government organisation – formerly known as the Diamond High Council (HRD), and now part of the AWDC. This effectively broke the monopoly position that Jewish traders had exercised on the board for many centuries.

A place to call home

They may lead global lifestyles that take them to the four corners of the world, but the Indian community see Antwerp as home – while many have even adopted Belgian nationality out of choice.

In order to give back to the city that offered them a world of opportunity, the community has invested in social projects in local schools and hospitals.

"Over the past ten to 15 years, more children from the Indian community have studied at Flemish schools, and this brings the language and culture into your home," says Vijay Goel

of the Antwerp Indian Association (AIA). The AIA is a cultural organisation that helps to facilitate integration into the Belgian community. At the same time, it infuses the community with Indian cultural events all year round – with Indian cricket tournaments forming the highlight of the calendar.

But the community's largest contribution to Belgium is the construction of a Jain Temple in the suburb of Wilrijk – where many Indians live. This massive project – an undertaking of the Jain Cultural Centre of Antwerp – is due to open this August. It is already considered the best Jain Temple outside India in terms of craftsmanship.

According to Marc Huybrechts, Honorary Consul General for India: "The Jain temple will be a tourist attraction and convey the values of the Indian community – non-violence and respect for others." ♦



MORE ON INDIA IN FLANDERS TODAY

18 August

Behind the scenes at Antwerp's Jain Temple

1 September

Diamond community faces global challenges

Flawless

ALAN HOPE

If we're honest, we all find something attractive about jewel thieves. The idea conjures up images of Raffles, the gentleman thief played by the smooth but slightly dangerous Anthony Valentine; or of the Pink Panther, played by the impossibly debonair David Niven. The emperor Vespasian said, *Pecunia non olet* (Money has no smell), which is simply wrong. Diamonds have no smell, and they also sparkle beautifully. Who wouldn't want to steal some?

There was something suave and debonair, on the surface at any rate, about Leonardo Notarbartolo. Although the authors of *Flawless: Inside the Largest Diamond Heist in History* describe him as "good-looking" and "handsome" with an "open and expressive face" and a "captivating smile", anyone who could see behind the exterior would have found a man who lived in a shabby furnished apartment devoid of any personal touch, who came to work each day in his office in the Antwerp Diamond Centre just to kill time, the office sparse and chilly, his presence there a mere cover for his real activity. Notarbartolo was there to rob the place. His charms must have worked their magic on Julie Boost, the building manager, because she rented him an office without carrying out any background check. Had she done so, she'd have found he was indeed the proprietor of a chain of jewellery stores as he claimed, and a moderately successful designer of jewellery. But he was also well-known to the police of Turin as a thief. Renting him an office in the Diamond Centre was precisely like offering a fox the keys to the henhouse.

And what a henhouse it was. Back then, in 2003, security measures were less than they are now, but still designed to be both water-

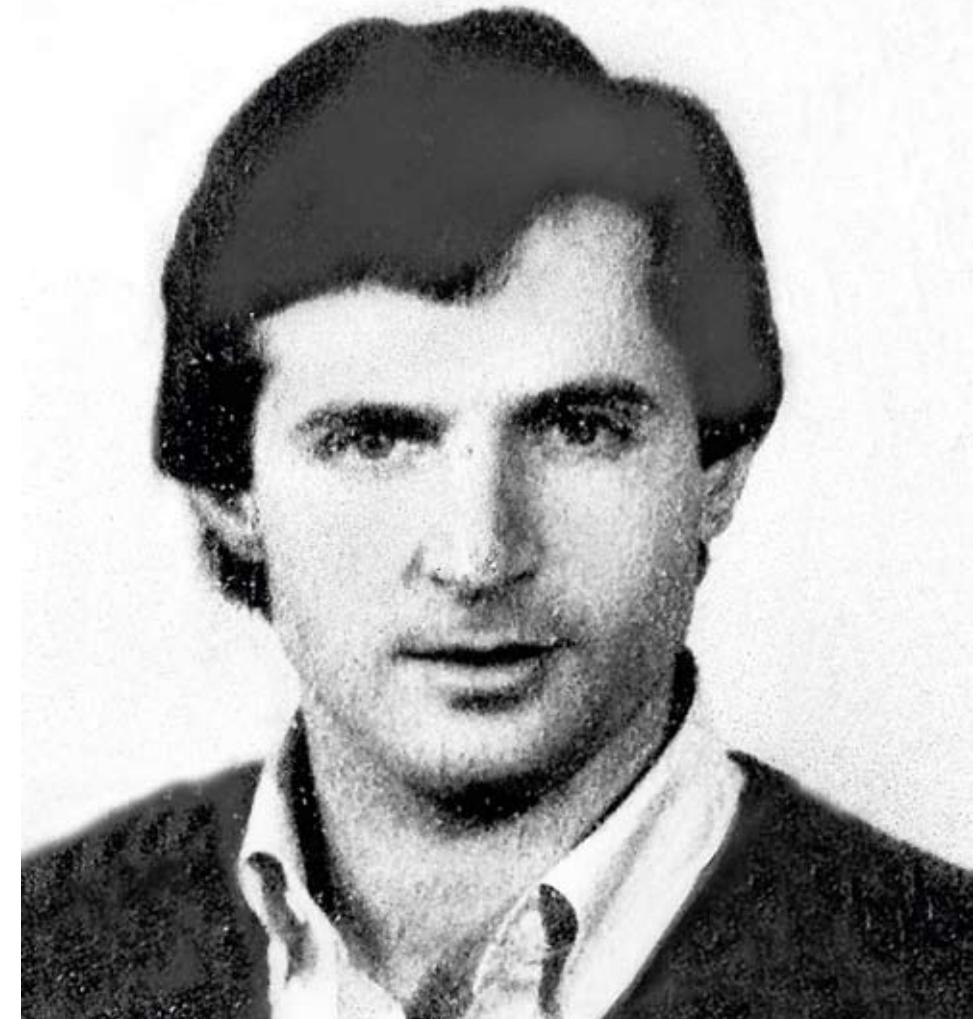
tight and intimidating. In the small city area occupied by the Diamond Centre, police had installed a virtual exclusion zone: traffic in and out was controlled by a series of retractable bollards; video surveillance was complete and constant; the police were in constant attendance, and even had their own station within the diamond triangle. More than 80% of the world's diamonds pass through Antwerp, and every day there are millions of euros-worth being traded and transported, sometimes in armoured cars, sometimes in a dealer's pockets. Security is taken very seriously.

Notarbartolo's job was to infiltrate that security cordon, more like a spy than a robber. In the end, he lived and worked there for more than two years before finally pulling off a robbery that would bring him and his colleagues from the so-called School of Turin – a loosely associated gang of criminals with a commitment to professionalism and a strict no-violence policy – somewhere between €100 million and €400 million.

Most of those involved have been caught and imprisoned. The diamonds were never recovered. Because of the nature of safe deposit boxes, many owners chose not to report their full losses because the contents were undeclared or illegal, making an accurate tally impossible.

The narrative, by Scott Andrew Selby, an academic and expert on diamonds, and Greg Campbell, journalist and author, is thoroughly researched – perhaps even too thoroughly. The writers aren't afraid to include every detail they find out, as well as some things they couldn't have, like the interior ruminations of the characters.

That's the sort of hyped-up enthusiasm we expect from thriller-writers, a breed not



known for wearing their research lightly. On the plus side, the book reads more like a thriller than a documented history of a criminal case. Even for someone who was around in 2003 and wrote about the case in passing, there's a wealth of material here – including details about Antwerp any potential jewel-thief would be advised to note carefully. The robbers followed an ingenious plan, robbed the Diamond Centre with disdainful ease, and made a tidy getaway practically under the noses of guards and police. Not a shot was fired, nor even a voice raised in anger. It should have been the perfect crime, but all it took was one mistake: a bag containing household rubbish was dumped by the roadside along with detritus from the robbery itself. In the bag, a half-eaten salami sand-

wich with Notarbartolo's DNA. That too, might have gone unnoticed, were it not for one officious character fed-up to the teeth with fly-tippers dumping their trash in his environment.

For August Van Camp, a member of the conservation organisation *Jacht en Natuurbeheer* (Hunting and Nature Conservancy) and self-appointed caretaker of the Floordambos woods in Vilvoorde, it was just the umpteenth load of illicit garbage to be dumped by passing motorists. When he started sifting through it for evidence of the tippers' identity, however, he soon realised it was more. The police came, matched the rubbish to the robbery, tested the sandwich for DNA traces, and the game was up. ♦

The Antwerp Diamond Centre robbery ranks among the biggest of all time, even at the lower estimate of the haul. Looking at a list of some of the richest heists, it's clear why criminals go for diamonds: because they're pound for pound the most valuable thing around. Here, in no particular order, are a few of the biggest, or most spectacular, diamond robberies from around the world:

Lufthansa: the theft in December 1978 of cash and jewels from a vault at JFK airport in New York only netted about \$6 million, but the robbery has become famous because it was featured in the movie *Goodfellas*. The robbery was also particularly bloody, not during its execution but afterwards, as mobster Jimmy Burke (played in the film by Robert De Niro) set about bumping off a dozen of his associates to prevent any of them from turning on him.

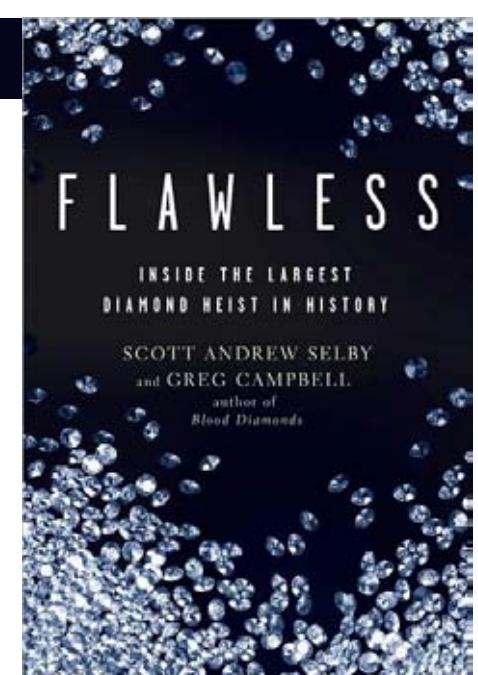
Schiphol: Diamonds again, uncut diamonds, which are impossible to trace, but which brought the robbers of a KLM cargo truck in 2005 an estimated €120 million. The diamonds were on their way to Antwerp. The fact they knew which truck to target, and had KLM uniforms, suggested an inside job.

Knightsbridge Security Deposit: The robbers of the Knightsbridge Security Deposit in central London in July 1987 were hardly the smoothest operators: they pretended to want to rent a box, then pulled guns on the guards. The robbery netted them about €65 million at the time – worth about €75 million in today's money.

Harry Winston: four armed men, three of them dressed as women, burst into the upscale Paris jeweller's in December 2008 and cleaned the place out of about €100 million in stock. No shots were fired. No fewer than 25 people have since been arrested in connection with the crime. A robbery the year before had netted thieves €10 million.

Millennium Dome: a diamond robbery which would have been the biggest of all time, were it not for the fact that it was foiled at the last minute. The gang planned to steal stones being exhibited at the Dome in London in 2000, one of which was worth €235 million on its own. Scotland Yard got wind of the plan, and caught the men red-handed as they smashed into the Dome armed with a JCB, sledgehammers, ammonia and tear-gas.

ABN Amro Antwerp: Not one of the richest diamond hauls, but in its preparation similar to the Antwerp Diamond Centre heist. The thief, calling himself Carlos Hector Flomenbaum, had been a cheerful, pleasant customer of the bank for more than a year, and had won trusted keyholder entry to the safe deposit强室 when, in March 2007, he rifled five boxes and emptied them of about €30 million worth of stones.



Flawless: Inside the Largest Diamond Heist in History by Scott Andrew Selby and Greg Campbell is published by Union Square Press. ISBN 1-4027-6651-3

→ www.sterlingpublishing.com

Foreign investment down by two-thirds

ALAN HOPE

Foreign inward investment into Belgium fell last year by 70%, according to the 2010 World Investment report by the UN's conference on trade and development (Unctad). Belgium has fallen from second place on the world table of countries attracting inward investment to tenth place. The United States continues to lead the table.

In 2008, foreign investment in Belgium stood at €85.2 billion, slightly down from a peak in 2007 of €91.4 billion. Last year, however, the figure plummeted to €26.3 billion, or a return to the level of 2005.

Dropping from second to tenth place, Belgium saw itself overtaken by China, France, Hong Kong, the UK, Russia, Germany, Saudi Arabia and India. Belgium still performs better than the Netherlands, Spain and Italy.

As *Flanders Today* reported in April, the US alone accounted for a drop of more than €4 billion, according to figures from the National Bank. The American Chamber of Commerce in Belgium then repeated its argument that Belgian employment costs are too high, and its labour market too inflexible.

The cost of employment was blamed by outgoing junior economy minister Vincent Van Quickenborne, reacting to the Unctad report. "This relapse cannot solely be attributed to the economic crisis," he said. "We are still suffering the effects of a wages handicap when compared to the countries around us. Our employment costs are 10% higher than those in Germany."

Van Quickenborne, a Flemish liberal whose party looks like being consigned to the opposition when a government is finally formed, warned that the fall in inward investment would continue unless the handicap is dealt with.

The Unctad report also shows a decrease in Belgium's outward investments – the investments its companies make abroad. In 2008, outward investment stood at €100 billion – a large part of which was the takeover by InBev of the American brewer Anheuser-Busch. In 2009, however, the net outward investment was negative – companies actually pulled €11.6 billion back from abroad.

New ad scam warning

The advertising scammers responsible for fake "business guides" (see *Flanders Today*, 16 June) are back on the prowl, the small business organisation Unizo warned last week.

This time the company responsible calls itself "Nieuwe Bedrijvengids BVBA," and is currently sending out mailings identical to those of a previous scammer, Belga Marketing BVBA.

The pitch is the same: the target business receives a mock-up of their "free" entry in the business guide, in order to approve the details, which normally contain one deliberate mistake. The form is actually an order form, with the details hidden in the small print, for expensive advertising in a business guide. Business owners who take advantage of the "free" offer find themselves facing a bill for thousands of euros for advertising they did not want. The guides, if they ever appear at all, are of poor quality and limited circulation.

Unizo has already started legal action against the practice, which has been operated many times in the past with only the names changing. The organisation advises any business who receives such an offer not to correct the details contained therein, and not to return the form to the sender. ♦



THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Chemicals • Tessenderlo

Chemicals company Tessenderlo has been fined €83.75 million by the European Commission for price-fixing in the animal feed market. Two other companies were also fined, and two of those initially accused were found not guilty. The Commission said the cartel, which divided up the market in phosphates (used in animal feed) and illegally fixed prices, had been operating for more than 35 years.

Clothing • Sloggi

Underwear company Sloggi has been ordered to remove posters showing women cycling while wearing only underpants in the colours of the Tour de France, after a ruling from the Jury for Ethical Practices in Advertising. The jury said the ads demeaned women. The company defended the posters by saying that it makes underwear, and was only displaying its product.

ICT • RealDolmen

Michel Akkermans, chairman and CEO of e-finance company Clear2Pay, has been named to succeed Ashley Abdo as chairman of ICT company RealDolmen, based in Huiizingen. Akkermans graduated in economics and finance from the Catholic University of Leuven before going on to train in computer science and electronic engineering.

Insurance • Avero

Insurance company Avero Belgium has been sold by its Dutch owner, Eureko, to the Swiss group Baloise, for €75 million. Baloise is the parent company of Mercator Verzekeringen of Antwerp. The company said the joint company would have a strong market position as a result of the sale.

Media • VMMA

The Flemish media company VMMA, owners of VTM and 2BE, are to move into film distribution, in partnership with E1, distributors of films like *Law Abiding Citizen* and *Coco avant Chanel*. The company previously diversified into mobile phone operation with Jim Mobile, and also publishes books linked to TV properties like cookery programmes.

Satellite • Thales Alenia

Bremen-based group OHB Technology has taken over Thales Alenia Space Antwerp from its parent company, the French Thales, for an undisclosed sum. The Antwerp company is a specialist in equipment for ground stations for communications and earth-observation satellites. OHB made a previous attempt to acquire Verhaert Space in Kruibeke.

Telephony • Mobistar

Mobistar, which this week (30 July) brings the new iPhone 4 to market in Belgium, last week announced a 3% increase in consolidated net profits for the first half of the year, at €132.4 million. Turnover was up 7.5% to €818.8 million. The company also revised its full-year forecast up slightly, from €210-230 million to €225-245 million.



Innogenetics sold to Japanese

The Ghent-based biotechnology company Innogenetics has been sold by Abbott Laboratories to the Japanese holding company Fujirebio for €86 million. The sale comes as a result of an order from the EU Commission for Abbott to divest itself of part of Innogenetics to avoid obtaining a dominant position on the EU market.

Innogenetics, based in Zwijnaarde, was set up in 1985, and specialises in diagnostics in the fields of infectious diseases, genetic testing, transplantation, cancer and degeneration of the nervous system. The company employs 330 people.

Innogenetics was independent until the end of 2008, when a bidding war between Belgian chemicals giant Solvay and the American GenProbe led to Solvay taking the company over for €200 million, and delisting it from the Euronext stock market.

Then in September of this year, Solvay sold its pharmaceutical division, including Innogenetics, to Illinois-based Abbott Laboratories. Part of the EU Commission's requirement, before it would approve the deal on competition grounds, was that Abbott divest itself of part

of Innogenetics; instead the company decided to keep Innogenetics together and sell off the whole thing.

Fujirebio said the acquisition would bring it a strong sales apparatus and marketing structure not only on the European continent, but also in the US, Brazil, South-East Asia and China. The acquisition has to be approved by the EU Commission, which is expected to be done by the end of August. ♦

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STERCKX N.V. 1640 Rhode-St.Genèse, St. Genesius-Rode, Mr Philip Van de Walle, Tel 02/359.94.85, philip@sterckx.be

• 1500 Halle, Mr Yves Tielemans, Tel 02/363.15.35, yves@sterckx.be

“I want to get an arse-kicking again”

Stand-up comedian Nigel Williams prepares for a new challenge: performing comedy in his own language

ALAN HOPE

Nigel Williams looks like he'd be funny: round face, devilish goatee, mischievous eyes. On the day we meet in Antwerp, however, he's just out of hospital where he was treated for blood clots in his lungs. "The doctors told me I might have died, if I hadn't got to the hospital in time," he says. It's no laughing matter.

This was supposed to be a time to work on his forthcoming show at the Edinburgh Festival, where he'll be performing as part of the Free Fringe. "I've never done stand up in Britain – and I've never done it in English. I don't speak English a lot any more at all, so it's a challenge: can I converse with people who are living in a totally different environment? Which is why I'm going to Edinburgh this year – to get my arse kicked."

Williams was born in Bristol in southwest England in 1954, and worked as an aircraft fitter at the British Aircraft Corporation, building Concorde. He moved to Belgium in 1976, where he worked in Mechelen then Antwerp, and that's where something clicked. He opened a bar, took up comedy and in November 2000 won the Humo Comedy Cup.

He tours around the cultural centres of Flanders with themes such as a penis monologue, a show called *Terrorist*, and the current show called *Geloof Mij!* (Believe Me) in which he takes on religion. He's clearly not one to shy away from controversy.

"The trick is, I mix it all up. I don't say this first ten minutes is going to be about the Catholics, the next ten minutes about the Muslims. You can't pick on one without the other; they're all just as bad as each other. You can pick and choose as you go."

He goes off into a flight of fantasy about *Dicrocoelium dendriticum*, a parasite which infests the brains of ants to make them basically volunteer to be eaten by sheep so they can grow in the animals' gut, and how it might actually be something similar that's attacked the brains of religious fanatics. On the printed pages of *Flanders Today* it doesn't look like much. But this stuff is funny and challenging at the same time. "It's like a mixture of stand-up and cabaret, more like spoken word. If you want to go and watch a comedian, go and watch one where you can come home and go, that guy interested me, I want to read a book now."

As well as the show, there's a less structured stand-up routine, which will form the basis of the Edinburgh show. It only lasts half an hour and doesn't allow for the exposition and development of the main show. "In Edinburgh I've got this

little half-hour set and that's basically back to stand-up, just talking about what it's like when you leave home and what happens when you come back, all that sort of stuff."

Although he came to performing comedy late in life, Williams is a child of the Seventies. He used to watch the old-style comics at the working men's club where he got paid for picking up skittles. He was around when the "alternative" comedians like Alexei Sayle and the Comic Strip were turning comic attitudes on their heads – he's of a generation not afraid to admit they used to like Ben Elton.

Watching him, what comes across is his political engagement, and beneath the cheerful exterior and the comic banter, his anger. Back in April, *De Standaard* accompanied him on a trip back to the south-west, where members of his family – he's one of a family of nine girls and four boys from a council estate – still live. The piece is marked by his growing frustration and regret at what has happened to his beloved working class. Talking to him – we come from very similar backgrounds – you're struck by the idea that he's eternally grateful to have got out, but that there's a sort of survivor's guilt as well.

"A lot of the young comedians here, all they do is tell jokes about Moroccans and Turks and people with handicaps. They're never shooting upstairs. Shoot up at the people who can defend themselves, they've got money to defend themselves, they've got enough money to laugh at you," he explains. "Don't laugh at the people who can't defend themselves."

Does comedy have to have a purpose?

"If you're only getting up there onstage for the jokes, I'm not interested, mate; I've got books with jokes in. When I started doing comedy Ben Elton was kicking out at Thatcher, and I thought, this is great. Here was a guy making people laugh and giving them something to take home with them. In Belgium, if you say something about politicians, they get frightened, they cower, but they're quite happy to make jokes about mongols."

Just days before we spoke, the Flemish newspapers were reporting that the Ghent prosecutor has sent police along to a show called *Circus Vangheluwe* at the Gentse Feesten. The show took its name from the former Bishop of Bruges, who resigned after admitting sexual abuse of a family member. The work of comedians Gunter Lamoot and Piet De Praitere, the show provoked complaints from a group calling itself Art for Children before anyone had seen it.



"Sending police along is exactly what used to happen to Lenny Bruce. They would have policemen all along the back wall of the hungry i nightclub in San Francisco just in case Bruce said anything wrong. And that's what happening in the comedy clubs as well – don't mention this, don't mention that..."

Edinburgh will be an adventure. He's performing nightly, splitting a one-hour slot with Adam Fields, a stand-up who was born in London but now lives in Amsterdam. The audience won't have paid, but that doesn't mean they'll put up with any old rubbish.

"The way it works now," Williams says, "I go around cultural centres and I've got my own sound and light technician, they're there when I arrive, I go on stage and go blah blah, go home and everybody's happy. I want to get an arse-kicking again, get up on stage and nobody laughs – they make you work, because that's what comedy should be. You shouldn't only be bringing the audi-

ence out of their comfort zone, the audience should be bringing you out of your comfort zone, pushing you to do something more than you've been doing."

"That's what I love," he continues. "I love doing bars much more than cultural centres. You go to a cultural centre, the people have paid €15-20, they're sat in a nice seat, they expect a night out, fair play to them. You go to little bars where they haven't paid a penny and people are drinking all the time and that's when you're fighting. That's what I love, I love the fight. I love the comedy combat, it's cool."

→ www.nigelwilliams.be

Nigel Williams appears from 16-29 August at The Newsroom (Venue 93) in Leith Street, Edinburgh, nightly at 20.45. Shows are free. The show *Geloof Mij!* returns to touring from end October.

Beat the heat

Water sports and walking trails abound in De Gavers, West Flanders

TEXT AND PHOTOS: MELISSA MAKI

Flanders has an impressive amount of dedicated green, public space. For the last four months, it's been our aim to entice you to get out and explore the fine provincial parks that this region has to offer. These outstanding areas offer an endless assortment of recreation. And – best of all – you can take part in many of the activities for free. Our fifth and final edition in this family recreation series takes us to De Gavers, a domain in West Flanders where water sports rule.

De Gavers is a 170-hectare domain in Harelbeke, a small town located in the southeast portion of the province. It's known as the green lung of Kortrijk (it's only about five kilometres away). The park's woodsy paths and sizeable lake support a wide range of recreational options, from jogging to diving. All ages and personalities will find something here to enjoy.

Gavermeer, the domain's 65-hectare lake, makes De Gavers the perfect choice for recreation on a hot summer's day. The lake accommodates a variety of water sports, including sailing, kayaking, diving, fishing and swimming.

De Gavers is also home to both a sailing and windsurfing club. If you are a newbie, Zeilclub Gavermeer and Windsurfing Gavermeer offer

training (for both youth and adults) and equipment rental. In the summer they also organise camps for the kids.

Portions of the Gavermeer are set aside for scuba diving and swimming. Both are on the eastern edge of the lake, separated by a peninsula. The swimming area features lifeguards, kayak rentals and a brand new bathing pavilion (complete with toilets and changing rooms). The sandy beach and shallow swimming area is cordoned off by a boardwalk, which serves as a great jumping off point. I had fun watching a series of younger kids playfully practicing their cannonball dives.

If you're looking for more of an adrenaline rush, De Gavers is also home to Oenanthe – a group that organises adventure sports and team building activities. Their unique offerings include tree climbing, BMX biking, paintball, archery and obstacle courses. Oenanthe also arranges kids' summer camps.

Nature lovers will enjoy the De Gavers' woodsy walking trails (there are over 11 km of trails). I particularly enjoyed the scenic route that circles the lake. Those who prefer to pick up the pace might enjoy the five-kilometre jogging loop.

There are some beautiful bike rides in and around De Gavers. With the Leiestreek West



cycling network map (€6) you can find safe and scenic routes that take you through a portion of De Gavers. The park also features a horse-riding route and mountain biking route (you can rent mountain bikes on site).

No matter how fast your pace or what method of transport you take around the park, De Gavers' lovely natural surroundings won't disappoint. The park's nature reserve attracts an abundance of birds. I saw several herons on my visit. Birdwatchers can observe from two different blinds, one in the southwest portion of the lake and one near the eastern edge of the park. If you're lucky, you might spot some birds rare for the region, like the shag and marsh sandpiper. More than 250 species of birds as well as many species of dragonflies and butterflies can be found in the park. If you'd like to learn more about the park's flora and fauna, you can get in touch with Natuurwerkgroep De Gavers. This voluntary membership group organises monthly guided walks each month that focus on the domain's natural environment (with the exception of August).

For those who can't bear to leave the peace of this natural setting, there are even overnight trekker's huts for rent on site.

After gallivanting around De Gavers, you can relax and enjoy a drink and snack at the café, located near the west parking lot. Here you'll find all the basic offerings of a Belgian café, like beer and *broodjes*, but they serve a variety of ice cream treats too. The café has a terrace with a lake view and there's a playground for the little ones nearby.

De Gavers is undergoing a series of major renovations right now that will improve the domain's facilities and recreational options. This includes the bathing pavilion and a new reception hall. Unfortunately, during this time you can't visit De Koutermolen, the park's key landmark. De Koutermolen is an impressive wooden windmill. Though rebuilt in the 1980's, the mill has parts that date from the 18th century. Visits to De Koutermolen are expected to resume in 2011.♦



De Gavers

Eikenstraat 131, Harelbeke

→ www.west-vlaanderen.be/gavers

Upcoming events at De Gavers

Gavermania – Thursday 26 August

- A fun-filled day of varied sports activities for youth (€5.50)

Open Gaversdag – Sunday 29 August

- Open Gaversdag is the perfect opportunity to get an overview of the domain's many offerings. The organisations of De Gavers will offer free activities to the public from 14.00 to 19.00. Windsurf, sail, kayak or take a guided walk.

Other West Flanders recreational options

De Palingbeek in Ieper has a rich history. It's located on the former frontline of World War I battles and the land still shows signs of this dramatic past. The 200-hectare domain features an exhibit on the war as well as environmental education and an organic farm with animals. De Palingbeek also includes walking routes and a playground. *Vaartstraat 7, Ieper*

Het Zwin

Het Zwin is a truly remarkable, unspoiled natural area on Belgium's coast. The 150-hectare park borders the Netherlands (25 hectares are Dutch). Het Zwin is a paradise for bird watchers, especially with the migrations that occur in the fall and spring. The reserve is a fantastic place for cycling and guided walks in the park. These take place every Sunday. Tours in English can be arranged. You can also download listening tours on the park's website www.west-vlaanderen.be/zwin

Graaf Léon Lippensdreef 8, Knokke-Heist

Pétanque's new hip factor

The once sleepy sport from the South of France is becoming one of the hottest hobbies among young people in Flanders

COURTNEY DAVIS

Jonas, Jeroen, Maarten and Wouter stare in contemplation at the silver balls arranged on the gravel pétanque courtyard. Under the shadow of the Zevergem church on an overcast Tuesday evening, these gentlemen are determining the winner of that particular set. One reaches into his pocket and pulls out a measuring tape to resolve the distance dispute and Maarten is declared the winner.

Pétanque, a low-key sport with its origins in Marseille, typically brings to mind images of retired men. After all, the game takes two to three hours to play, requires no great athleticism and involves a fair amount of sitting, waiting and watching. This is not a game to be rushed but savoured; it certainly explains its devoted players in the 70+ demographic.

But amongst legions of fans across Belgium, perhaps most surprising is its rising popularity with younger people. This jean-clad foursome, for example, are not retirees, but scruffy, handsome guys aged 26 to 31, with nary a grey hair in site.

Maarten Dhaenens understands the misconception: "A lot of people think it's an old man's game but that is changing. I mean, why wait until you are old to chill?" he laughs. Maarten and his friends explain the allure with the same words being bandied about repeatedly – relaxed, low-key. "It is something to do. It is so chill, especially when it's warm, with a bottle of wine or Ricard." They have the same mellow air as retirees with all the time in the world.

Sportsmanship

When I ask about rules, I'm told with a grin that there is only one: "Play better than the others." Despite the cava-

lier quip about rules, I learn that this group, and most players, are in fact quite polite and adhere to an understood set of rules. Pétanque's name roughly translates to "feet together", the game's cardinal rule. This explains the handful of silver bike rims hanging on the fence behind the court; they are for players to stand in to make sure they're not moving their feet. While this particular tool might not be used in a 'real' pétanque club, the fact remains – respect the rules.

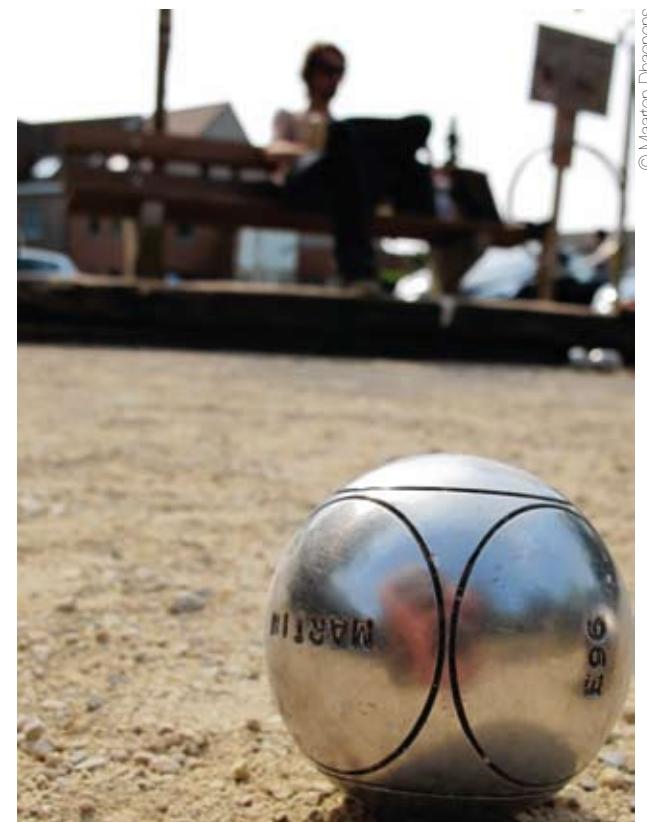
Hans Dekeyser, a young man from Ghent, explains, "We always play outside and not in some official pétanque club. So it's definitely friendly competition but no less serious; we also stick to the rules." He admits his favourite part about the sport is winning, but goes on to clarify, "Not to win, but to knock out the rest of the competition with your last ball, changing the entire score... and hearing the swearing in the back. *That I love!*"

The premise of the game is relatively simple and similar to horseshoes. There is a target, a small orange ball cutely called *cochonnet* or piglet, which you try to get as close to as possible by throwing metal balls called *boules*, while standing with your feet together. Because it can be played on almost any surface, from sand or gravel to grass, and because age, agility, strength and speed don't apply, the game appeals to a wide population.

Generally, there are two types of players: pointers and shooters. Pointers aim and precisely lob the boules, rolling a few feet to stop as close to the cochonnet as possible. Shooters, on the other hand, aim to knock out the opponent's boules with speed and accuracy. It is played in two teams, with one, two or three people per team. Each player has three boules on teams of singles and doubles.

In groups of three, which the Zevergem group plays, they have only two boules each. The ideal team would have two pointers and one shooter. Points are scored once all the boules have been thrown. Here more rules come into the game but, simply put, the team that has the balls closest to the little piglet gets one point per boule. The game is played to 13.

The boules themselves also have some restrictions; they must be made of metal, be of a certain weight and diameter (around 700 grams and fitting into one's palm) and in the case of the Zevergem team, be a source of pride. Two players had their boules custom made, based on the length of their forefinger to thumb, and engraved with their names; A third uses his father's set, while the fourth has store-bought boules (although he was quick to point out the strong reputation of the manufacturer).



© Maarten Dhaenens

The appeal

The teams are together to prepare for a six-month long tournament, with 14 teams competing, each one made of people living on a particular street. Wouter, who lives across the road from the pétanque court and pops by nearly every day, says, "It's a great way to get to know the people of the village, both older and younger generations." When asked why he likes to play so much, however, the sport is barely mentioned. This is also the case with Hans, from Ghent: "You get to meet up with friends on a regular basis and spend time outside in the park. There are two lanes, benches and a huge tree. With some food and a bottle of wine, what more do you need?"

Perhaps younger people are learning to appreciate a slower pace of life, taking the time to relax and enjoy more simple things. With this in mind, Jelle Pauwels from Antwerp started a pétanque group in 2003 that is specifically geared towards younger players. With 95% under 40, and 15% in their twenties, pétanque has clearly shaken its previously boring reputation. The group is called *Provencal Zon* (Sun in Provence), after Jelle's inspiration for the idea upon several visits to the South of France. The attraction certainly has a lot to do with the game's contradictory nature: "Playing pétanque gets you out of your lazy chair to interact with people, have a drink and a laugh, and be competitive at the same time." ♦



© Hans Dekeyser

Jojo shoes: Responsibly hip

KATRIEN LINDEMANS



What if you could make the world a little better, simply by buying a trendy pair of canvas trainers? Not just any trainers, but Jojo Shoes. This clever idea is the result of an intensive collaboration between Brussels friends Matthieu Vaxelaire and Christoph Nagel. And when two minds think alike, great things can happen.

Matthieu and Chris (both 24) met at the Brussels business school ICHEC. With a shared passion for solidarity and respect for the environment they came up with an idea for 'intelligent consumption': making people want to buy a product because of its looks and its sustainability. All they needed was a designer to turn their conception into reality.

With the help of Joachim de Callatay (2005 graduate of Brussels Fashion Academy La Cambre) the Jojo shoe was born: a canvas trainer with a simple design but a rather grand mission. On the back of every shoe you'll find a blue or a green mark. Buying a pair with a green mark equals supporting the plantation of a new tree in the Jojo Forest in Dosso, Niger. A blue mark guarantees a full year of drinking water for

one person in Africa. Both projects are part of the 'Millenium Project' by the United Nations.

Choose, act and check

Jojos (also the designer's nickname) are made from organic cotton in a factory in Brazil where labourers work in humane conditions. The shoes have the same design for men and women and come in a wide range of colours.

Once you've chosen your colour, you need to decide which good cause you're supporting. If you want to check up on how the tree planting or drinking water projects are doing, visit the Jojo website.

Launched in June, about a thousand pairs of shoes have been sold so far. The Jojo project almost seems too good to be true - so if we must make some criticism, it would be that Jojos are not the most feminine or elegant shoe for those with small feet. ♦

Jojos are available in a few shops in and outside Brussels, and also via the website

→ www.jojoproject.com

Binnen **Ackroyd Publishing** zijn we op zoek naar een (m/v)

SALES MANAGER



Ackroyd, de multimedia uitgever van o.a. The Bulletin en xpats.com, is dé absolute referentie voor de Engelssprekende community die werkt en leeft in België. Ackroyd maakt sinds 2007 deel uit van de Corelio-groep en is ook uitgever van Brussels Unlimited, Newcomer en Expat Directory. Het publiceert ook de wekelijkse krant Flanders Today in opdracht van de Vlaamse Overheid en het driemaandelijks WAB (Wallonia and Brussels) in opdracht van AWEX & WBI. Naast gedrukte uitgaven is Ackroyd organisator van talrijke evenementen voor zijn doelgroep, zoals o.a. de Welcome Fair.

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Jouw uitdaging

- Als Sales Manager Ackroyd Publishing ben je de stuwend en sturende kracht achter een steeds belangrijker wordend bedrijf binnen Corelio.
- Je neemt de eindverantwoordelijkheid over de inkomsten van Ackroyd Publishing. Dit betekent de inkomsten uit lezers- en advertentiemarkten.
- Teneinde de inkomsten te laten stijgen bepaal je samen met de general manager en de hoofdredactie een marketing & sales strategie die op korte en lange termijn geïmplementeerd dient te worden. In dat kader bekijk je de verdere synergiën met Corelio om de interne organisatie te optimaliseren.
- Hiervoor kan je rekenen op een team van medewerkers die aan jou rapporteren. Samen met 3 commerciële medewerkers sta je in voor de verkoop van alle advertentieruimte (thema en rubrieken) in onze publicaties en op onze sites. Je speelt zowel een rol als coach, trainer en motivator van het sales team. Je zet de juiste doelstellingen, volgt nauw op en coördineert het behalen van deze doelstellingen. Je bent ook in staat om nieuwe projecten te bedenken, ontwikkelen en te coördineren.
- Samen met de marketing event coördinator werk je acties uit die resulteren in meerverkoop of meerbereik van onze titels en events.
- Jullie doel: in de beste verstandhouding de beste resultaten halen.

- Naast jouw coaching taken neem je zelf nog een aantal key dossiers (zoals Flanders Today) in handen en vertegenwoordig je Ackroyd op de markt. Als professioneel commercieel talent geloof je in een lange termijnrelatie met jouw eigen klanten, waarbij een win-win relatie wordt nagestreefd. Daarnaast ben je geïnteresseerd in de community van Expats en in staat om creatief nieuwe dingen te ontwikkelen.

Jouw profiel

- Jouw commercieel talent is bewezen door een aantal jaar succesvolle relevante commerciële ervaring, bij voorkeur in advertentieverkoop en een ondersteunend diploma hoger onderwijs. Je bent in staat te onderhandelen op hoog niveau en mee te denken op managementniveau.
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- Je beheert vlot het Engels en het Frans.

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Klaar voor de job van je leven? Stuur dan je cv met motivatiebrief naar jobs.advertising@corelio.be of naar Gossetlaan 30, 1702 Groot-Bijgaarden t.a.v. Jeroen Verhasselt

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PleinOPENair

SAFFINA RANA

Nestling in a deck-chair, looking up at a huge open-air screen as the stars come out and finding yourself gasping or laughing out loud with a couple of hundred other people is just the tonic for a balmy summer evening. Especially if it's in an original location like the esplanade of the natural history museum in Brussels, where the free PleinOPENair festival of film and music kicks off on 30 and 31 July. Hosted over two consecutive weekends by the volunteers of the Nova independent cinema, the programme is as eclectic as the venues. Bring some sandwiches and a hip flask or grab an organic fruit juice or an artisanal beer at the drinks tent and start the evening at 20.00 with a concert and an enthusiastic crowd before taking your place for the main feature at 22.00. Catch the double-bass rhythms of French band Fantazio on the 30th, blending elements of psycho-punk, jazz, ska, electro and rap with sharp, poetic lyrics.

Since Europe has recently been dealing with an economic downturn and banking crisis that remain invisible to most of us, the films are themed around more palpable, natural and physical threats. The starting point of South Korean director Bong Joon-Ho's monster blockbuster *The Host* (*Gwomul*) on 30 July is based on a real life incident, when in

2000 an American military base emptied toxic chemicals into the Han river in Seoul, prompting a national scandal. In *The Host*, the chemicals create a mutant squid monster, which carries off a teenage girl six years later. Her family thinks she is dead, until one night they receive a phone call from her mobile. But standing in the way of their efforts to find her is a paranoid government, and the ending is both surprising and unconventional.

If you can't handle subtitles, there's paranoia in English on the 31st in *The Conversation* by Francis Ford Coppola, a 1974 thriller starring Gene Hackman, in which a secret surveillance expert has a crisis of conscience when he suspects that a couple he is spying on will be murdered. The film is complemented on 1 and 7 August by workshops mapping the capital's surveillance cameras during a walk through the city. They're free, but reserve your place by sending an email to pleinopenair@nova-cinema.org.

The festival's second weekend takes place on 6 and 7 August at Square Lainé, a large green oasis that connects Park Duden and Vorst Park in Brussels, creating a segue between the upper bourgeois areas of Brussels with the lower industrial quarters. The original wood in the domain of Vorst Abbey was called Kruysbosch

(Wood of the Cross) after a large stone cross in the Park. The abbey was dismantled after the French revolution and the Park was sold to a Muslim merchant and became known as The Muslim Wood until it changed hands again in 1869, bought by a German lace merchant, Guillaume Duden whose name part of it still bears today. After the speed-jazz and wild electronic melodies of avant-garde Antwerp band Capsule on 6 August, catch the French gem *Wesh Wesh, Qu'est-ce qui se Passe?* with English subtitles. It's a canny, touching exposé of a modern French ghetto, passing between fiction and documentary to tell the tale of Kamel, played by the director Rabah Ameur-Zaïmèche, who returns to the rough suburbs of Paris after two years in jail. But that's not all. Pull on your head for French subtitling at the Gézu Klooster convent on Wednesday 4 and 11 August, where there'll be screenings and debates on asylum seeking and t-shirt printing workshop by Brussels NGO group No Border. And if you miss any of the bands at 20.00, don't worry, they'll also play at midnight after the main films. ♦

→ www.nova-cinema.org

MORE OPEN-AIR CINEMA THIS WEEK

Inglourious Basterds – Cinemix → *Bibliotheek Lichtaart, Kasterlee* →

Sex And The City & Ice Age 3 → *Openluchtcinema, Geraardsbergen*

Feestfilms – Zomer van Antwerpen → *Hangar 19A, Antwerp*



Antwerp

Café Capital

Rubenslei 37 – Stadspark; www.cafecapital.be
Until SEP 9 18.00-5.00 Bar Jeudi: food lounge, exhibitions, music and dance parties every Thursday night

de shop

Braziliëstraat 1; 03.232.01.03
www.destadavanelsschot.be
Until SEP 10 Fridays 22.00 Jolly Joker Club

Rivierenhof open-air theatre

Turnhoutsebaan 232; 070.222.192 www.openluchtttheater.be
JUL 30 20.30 Mr P and The Cadillacs

Trix

Noorderingel 28; 03.670.09.00
www.trixonline.be
AUG 2 19.00 Converge + Kylesa + Kvelertak + Gaza

Brussels

Café Central

Borgwal 14; 02.513.73.08
www.lecafecentral.com
JUL 29 23.00 Coeurvert **JUL 30** 23.00 Melodik Pinpon, Noyzkrypters, Hugo Freegow **JUL 31** 23.00 La Technique Américaine **AUG 5** 23.00 Erectionnocturnes - video by Kouglof

Hasselt

Muziekodroom

Bootstraat 9; 011.23.13.13
www.muziekodroom.be
Until AUG 12 22.00 Summer Camp 2010 parties with different music styles every Thursday night

Ostend

Kursaal (Casino)
Monacoplein 2; 070.22.56.00
www.kursaalostende.be
JUL 29 20.00 Shaggy



Antwerp

Café Hopper

Leopold de Waelstraat 2; 03.248.49.33
www.cafehopper.be
AUG 1 16.00 Groove Juice Special

Rivierenhof open-air theatre

Turnhoutsebaan 232; 070.222.192 www.openluchtttheater.be
JUL 28 20.30 John Butler Trio

Brussels

Recyclart

Station Brussel-Kapellekerk
Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34 www.recycleart.be
JUL 29 18.00 In Vitro + Skiv Trio + Electric Quartet + Open Jam Session
JUL 30 22.00 Les Trucs + Goat of Mendes + End User + Rotator + Mers + Excuseexcuse **AUG 5** 20.00 DJ Pinchado (Arg). 22.00 Cinemusik: Beatbox Colombia, outdoor screening + DJ Pinchado



Brussels

Le Bar du Matin

Alsembergsesteenweg 172; 02.537.71.59
<http://bardumatin.blogspot.com>
JUL 29 21.00 Mokoomba, funk (Zim)
JUL 30-AUG 1 21.00 Brussels Soul Weekender, European DJs

Recyclart

Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34 www.recycleart.be
JUL 29 18.00 In Vitro + Skiv Trio + Electric Quartet + Open Jam Session

GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!

Gorillaz

25 November

Lotto Arena, Antwerp

They may be a virtual band, but that doesn't stop them from putting on a real show. The Gorillaz have added Antwerp to their Escape To Plastic Beach tour, their first visit to Belgium. The British group's not a band, really, but more of a multimedia project, the result of two brilliant minds coming together: Damon Albarn, the frontman of Blur, and Jamie Hewlett, comic strip illustrator. What they've created is a funky world where fictitious band members 2-D, Noodle, Russel Hobbs and Murdoc Niccals produce some of the most distinctive and highly danceable hip-hop, rock, pop and electronica tracks out there today. The animated musicians have already sold over 15 million albums worldwide. Tickets go on sale 31 July.



→ www.sportpaleis.be



Bruges

The English Theatre of Bruges

Walplein 23; 050.68.79.45
www.tematema.com
JUL 30-AUG 1 20.00 Luke Wright's Cynical Ballads, performance poetry



Antwerp

Contemporary Art Museum (M HKA)

Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60
www.muhka.be
Until AUG 22 August Orts: Correspondence, work by the four Brussels artists who make up the Auguste Orts production platform on aspects of apparatus (camera movement, editing, sound vs image) and the unstable status of language
Until SEP 19 Art Kept Me Out of Jail, performance installations by Jan Fabre

Diamond Museum

Koningin Astridplein 13-23; 03.202.48.90
www.diamantmuseum.be
Until AUG 31 Hart voor HarD, jewellery in the shape of a heart

Fashion Museum (MoMu)

Nationalestraat 28; 03.470.27.70 [www.momu.be](http://momu.be)
Until AUG 8 BLACK: Masters of Black

in Fashion & Costume, historical phases of the colour black, its diversity in hue according to material and masterpieces by contemporary designers

Mekanik Strip

Sint-Jacobsmarkt 73; 03.234.23.47 www.mekanik-strip.be

JUL 31-SEP 13 Art Trek, graffiti, silkscreens, collages, paintings, drawings and graphic design by 14 young international artists

Middelheim Museum

Middelheimlaan 6; 03.828.13.50 www.middelheimmuseum.be

Until SEP 19 New Monuments in the Middelheim Museum, Belgian artists focus on the future of the monument

Photo Museum (FoMu)

Until SEP 5 Filip Tas, work by the late Antwerp-based photojournalist, critic and visual arts instructor, who helped usher in a new era of media photography

Until SEP 5 American Documents, Walker Evans' 1940s Labour Anonymous series and part of Robert Frank's The Americans from the 1950s join several well-known American photographers of the 1970s, including Diane Arbus, Robert Adams, Lewish Baltz and Mitch Epstein

Until SEP 5 Jacky Lecouturier - POLAROID (and others), polaroids by the Belgian photographer

Royal Museum of Fine Arts

Leopold De Waelplaats; 03.238.78.09 www.kmska.be

Until OCT 3 Closing Time, curated by Flemish artist Jan Vanriet, who presents his own work alongside related pieces from the museum's collection

Bruges

Hospitaalmuseum

Mariistraat 38; 050.44.87.11 www.museabrugge.be

Until NOV 7 Ivory in Bruges, rare pieces from museums, churches and monasteries

Kunstcentrum Oud St.-Jan

Mariistraat 38; 050.47.61.00 www.miro-brugge.be

Until OCT 3 Expo Miró, lithographs, ceramics and manuscripts from the surrealist painter Joan Miró

Brussels

Archief en Museum voor het Vlaams

Leven te Brussel

Arduinkaa 28; 02.209.06.01 www.amvb.be

Until AUG 31 Herinnering & Migratie: Erfgoed van nieuwe Brusselaars (Memory & Migration: The Heritage of new Brusselaars), presentation of the stories behind the arrival of 19 new immigrants to Brussels

Atomium

Heysel Park; 02.475.45.75 www.atomium.be

Until AUG 31 BE.WELCOME. Belgium

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and Immigration, the migration experience in Belgium via an interactive exhibition

Belgian Comic Strip Centre

Zandstraat 20; 02.219.19.80 www.stripmuseum.be

Until AUG 29 Moomin: Tove Jansson's Dreamworld, work by the Finnish illustrator and author

Until JAN 30 The Studio of Franquin: Jijé, Morris and Will, rare documents and drawings show mutual influences between the four comic-strip artists who revolutionised the art form in Europe

Belvue Museum

Paleizenplein 7; 02.511.44.25 www.belvue.be

Until SEP 12 Facing Brussels, contrasting views of the city by 11 Francophone and Flemish press photographers

Until SEP 19 Brussels, A City with a View, interactive exhibition focusing on Jean-Baptiste Bonnecroy's 17th century painting Gezicht op Brussel, showing panoramas of the city

Until AUG 27 21.30 Camera Belgica, sunset screenings of 20th-century Belgian films on the museum's terrace

Bibliotheca Wittockiana

Bemelstraat 21; 02.770.53.33 www.wittockiana.org

Until SEP 11 Parti pris: the duo Léon Wuidar and La Pierre d'Alun, books and illustrated bookbindings

Until SEP 11 Françoise Clabots, books, objects, prints and drawings

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00 www.bozar.be

Until SEP 26 GEO-Graphics: Mapping Historical and Contemporary Art Practice in Africa, African objects from Belgian museums come face-to-face with work of contemporary African artists (part of Visionary Africa)

Until OCT 10 A Passage to Asia: 25 Centuries of Exchange between Asia and Europe, a selection of 300 objects, including funeral urns, jewellery, semi-precious stones, gold and glass, Buddhist and Hindu images, ivory, manuscripts, textiles and archaeological finds

Brussels Info Place (BIP)

Koningsplein; 02.563.63.99 www.biponline.be

Until DEC 31 Europe in Brussels: fragmented past, shared future?, a video exhibition looking at the European quarter, from its beginnings to the present day www.europeinbrussels.be

De Elektriciteitscentrale

Sint-Katelijneplein 44; 02.279.64.45

Until OCT 3 Fighting the Box: 20 Belgian Designers, 20 Stories Behind the Products, the relationship between local designers and the international industry

European Quarter

Wetstraat;

www.thehumanrightsproject.org

Until SEP 10 The Human Rights

DON'T MISS

Internationaal Cartoon Festival

Until 12 September

Knokke-Heist

Flanders continues to produce some of the world's best cartoonists, as evidenced by this year's annual cartoon festival, held in a very unique beachside exhibition hall at Rubensplein. The event features the works of, among others, Flemish artist Jonas Geirnaert who brought us the lovely but crotchety dwarf 'Kabouter Wesley', first seen in the magazine Humo in 2008. Geirnaert created the character as a means for himself to let off some steam. Finally, Press Cartoon will hand out the prizes for best published cartoons in Belgium and in Europe, respectively.

→ www.cartoonfestival.be



Project, outdoor exhibition of photographs of South Africa by Lukas Maximilian Hüller and Juliane R Hauser

Folklore Museum

Eikstraat 19; 02.514.53.97 www.brussels.be

Until AUG 22 Manneken-Pis: A Very European Member of Brussels, costumes from the wardrobe of the famous Brussels icon, contributed by every member of the EU

Hallepoort Museum

Zuidlaan 29; 02.533.34.51 www.kmkg-mrha.be

Until AUG 29 Brussels Calling!, works by 10 Belgian and international artists, who were all lured by the capital at one time or another

ISELP

Waterloosesteenweg 31; 02.504.80.70 www.iselp.be

Until AUG 21 Médium, work by Belgian photographer Vincen Beeckman

Jewish Museum of Belgium

Minimstraat 21; 02.512.19.63 www.mjb-jmb.org

Until OCT 3 Bericht aan de bevolking: De joodse geschiedenis op affiches (Message to the People: Jewish History in Posters), more than 250 documents from the museum's collection

Justus Lipsius building

Council of the European Union
Wetstraat 175, Atrium and 5th floor; www.consilium.europa.eu

Until DEC 31 Fashion & Design - Second Hand Second Life, 11 works by Belgian fashion designers and six pieces of furniture by Belgian artists made out of recycled clothing, objects and furniture from the Spullenhulp charity

Le Botanique

Koningsstraat 236; 02.218.37.32 www.botanique.be

Until AUG 8 Congo in Limbo, award-winning series by Belgian photographer Cédric Gerbehaye

Natural Science Museum

Vautierstraat 29; 02.627.42.38 www.naturalsciences.be

Until AUG 29 Whales and Dolphins, discover how mammals gradually adapted to living in water and why whales and dolphins are now endangered species

Until AUG 31 Biogeosafari, treasure hunt around Brussels on the theme of biodiversity in the city www.biogeosafari.be

Royal Museum of the Armed Forces

Jubelpark 3; 02.737.78.33 www.legermuseum.be

Until AUG 31 Andreas Magdanz: Camp Vogelsang, large-format photos of the Rhineland training camp in North Westphalia by the German photographer

Until OCT 30 Lisolo Na Bisu (Our

Story) and Tokopesa saluti (We Salute You), objects, documents photographs and audiovisual material reveal 125 years of Belgo-Congolese military relations

Royal Museum of Fine Arts

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

Until SEP 26 Charles van der Stappen (1843-1910), sculptures by the Belgian artist

Until SEP 26 Marcel Broodthaers, modern works with objects from everyday life by the late Belgian artist

Royal Museums of Art and History

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

Until AUG 29 Isabelle de Borchgrave's I Medici: A Renaissance in Paper, life-size paper replicas of historical garments

Until AUG 29 Doorsnede (Intersection), 14 contemporary artists show their work among the museum's permanent collections

Until SEP 5 Art and Finance in Europe, new look at masters of the 17th century with 20 works from the museum's collection, including Seghers, Breughel, Francken, Rembrandt and Rubens

Town Hall

Grote Markt; 02.279.64.31 www.brussels.be

Until SEP 19 The Age of Symbolism in Latvia, paintings, etchings and drawings from turn-of-the-20th-century Latvia, including work by Jānis Rozentāls, Vilhelms Purvītis and Jānis Valters

WIELS

Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.340.00.50 www.wiels.org

Until AUG 15 Rehabilitation, multi-media show by young artists on the theme of architectural renovation

Until SEP 12 Wangechi Mutu: My Dirty Little Heaven, collages by the New York-based Kenyan artist, Deutsche Bank's Artist of the Year

Yaruna

Waversesteenweg 214B; 02.512.93.12 www.anunsroom.com

Until OCT 14 Jeanne: A Nun's Room, installation by Scottish artist Paul Morris

Deurle

Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens

Until JAN 9, 2011 Devout/Divine Fashion vs. Religion, examples of religious symbolism in designs of the past decennia

Literair Museum
Bampsalaan 35; 011.26.17.87
www.literairmuseum.be
Until NOV 7 Tom Schamp: Feest in de stad (Party in the City), work by the Flemish illustrator

Kortrijk

Museum Kortrijk 1302
Houtmarkt-Begijnpark; 056.27.78.50,
www.kortrijk1302.be
Until JAN 9, 2011 OnGELOOFlijk: van hemel, hel en halleluja (UnBELIEVEable: From Heaven, Hell and Hallelujah), religious objects and symbols from the past 500 years

Leuven

Museum M
Leopold Vanderkelenstraat 28;
016.27.29.29 www.mleuven.be
Until AUG 22 Anthony van Dyck: Masterpiece or Copy?, two seemingly identical versions of the painting St Jerome with an Angel by Anthony van Dyck
Until AUG 29 Philippe Van Snick, paintings, installations and sculpture by the Flemish artist
Until SEP 12 Angus Fairhurst, retrospective of the the late artist, a member of the Young British Artists movement

Machelen-Zulte

Het Roger Raveelmuseum
Gildestraat 2-8; 09.381.60.00
www.rogerraveelmuseum.be
Until SEP 19 Biënnale van de Schilderkunst: het sublieme voorbij (Biënnale of Painting: The Sublime Past), a subjective look at painting over the last 100 years (also at Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens in Deurle)

Meise

National Botanic Garden of Belgium
Nieuwelaan 38; 02.260.09.20
www.plantentuinmeise.be
Until OCT 24 Boxes Brimming with Life, photo installations by Flemish wildlife photographer Tom Linster

Ostend

Kunstmuseum aan zee (Mu.zee)
Romestraat 11; 059.50.81.18,
www.pmmk.be
Until AUG 29 Bij Ensor op Bezoek (Visiting Ensor), the world of master Flemish painter James Ensor seen through the eyes of a variety of artists, writers and filmmakers who visited him in Ostend
Until AUG 29 Louise Bourgeois, 14 works by the recently deceased French-American artist from the collection of her Ostend friend and fellow artist Xavier Tricot

Tervuren

Royal Museum for Central Africa
Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11
www.africamuseum.be
Until SEP 30 Bonjour Congo, photographs and documents from Brusselaars on the presence of the Congo in Brussels
Until JAN 9, 2011 Congo River: 4,700 Kilometres Bursting with Nature and Culture, interactive exhibition on the lifeblood of Congo, from source to mouth
Until JAN 9, 2011 100 Years in 100 Photographs, outdoor exhibition celebrating the 100th anniversary of the African Museum building
Until JAN 9, 2011 Indépendance! Congolese Tell Their Stories of 50 Years of Independence, multi-media exhibition looks at the Democratic Republic of Congo from independence to today

Ypres

In Flanders Fields Museum
Grote Markt 34; 057.239.220
www.inflandersfields.be
Until AUG 15 Toiling for War, films, photos and objects tell the story of the presence of 140,000 Chinese workers in

the Second World War
Until OCT 10 More Force Than Necessary, photos and films by Brazilian artist-in-residence Rodrigo Braga



Belgium's EU Presidency: Belgium takes the helm of the European Union Council for six months and launches a series of events to mark its presidency
Until DEC 31 across the country
www.eu2010.be

Antwerp

Antwerpen Proeft: Culinary festival with more than 25 caterers and restaurants serving local specialties. Also includes Bollekkes-Feest, tasting festival for the local De Koninck beer
AUG 5-8 on the Vlaamse Kaai and Waalse Kaai
www.antwerpenproeft.be

Parkfeesten Hoboken: Free outdoor music festival every Wednesday
Until JUL 28 20.00 in Broydenborg Park, Marneflaan 3
www.hoboken.be

Sfinks Mixed Festival: Outdoor festival featuring a mix of folk, roots and world music concerts, dance performances, film and circus. Line-up includes Goran Bregovic and his Wedding & Funeral Orchestra, Youssou N'Dour & The Super Etoile De Dakar, Orquesta Buena Vista Social Club featuring Omara Portuondo, more

JUL 30-AUG 1 at Molenveld Boechout 03.455.69.44, www.sfinks.be

Zomer van Antwerpen: Annual outdoor summer festival with parties and concerts, circus acts, performances, films, BBQs and more
Until AUG 29 across the city
www.zva.be

Bruges

Klinkers: 16th edition of the world music festival featuring Olah Gipsy Allstars, Olga Pericot y su grupo flamenco, Kocani Orkestar, more
JUL 30-AUG 14 in the city centre
www.klinkers-brugge.be

Brussels

Apéros Urbains: Weekly aperitif plus after-parties at one of three partner clubs: Fuse, K-Nal and the Vaudeville; free entrance with purchase of drink at Apéros Urbains
Until SEP 3 across the city
www.aperos.be

Bal moderne: Brussels' parks are transformed into dance floors in a series of public dances organised by Bal moderne where you can learn a new choreography in 45 minutes
Until AUG 28 across Brussels
0476.47.03.67, www.balmoderne.be

Bruksel Live: Free outdoor music festival featuring Willow, School is Cool, Mintzkov, Das Pop, more
JUL 31 at Ossegempark – Groentheater (near the Atomium)
www.bruksellive.be

Brussels Beach: A full-fledged beach, with deck chairs, cocktails, food, water sprays, sports, circus acts, concerts, canal cruises and more
Until AUG 22 along the Akenkaai on the canal
www.brusselbad.be

Bruxellons 2010: Annual summer theatre festival with an emphasis on comedy
Until AUG 30 at Château du Karreveld, Jean de la Hoeselaan 3
02.724.24.24, www.bruxellons.net

Ecran Total: Annual summer film festival featuring more than 70 films

DUSK 'TIL DAWN

SAFFINA RANA

Wood

There's something quite magical about walking through the woods in the dark of night and hearing the sound of a distant bass-line. Enter the *Ter Kamerenbos* from half-way up Franklin Rooseveltlaan on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights in Brussels, and you'll clearly hear its call. The anticipation of a good night out becomes palpable as you walk towards it and see a strobe light flickering between the trees. Head up a small, sign-posted dirt track and in the middle of the clearing you'll find a fairytale-like stone barn house flanked by tall arched windows and turquoise wooden shutters. This is **Wood**, and by midnight on a Thursday the party inside is in full swing. Bright young t-shirted things in basketball boots shake their stuff alongside a pastel-coloured-sweaters set. By 2.00 the sweaters have left and the joint is jumping. **Wood** opened as a restaurant at the end of last year. But after clearing away the plates, it has been laying on some of the finest underground house and electronica DJs in Brussels and Paris. DJanes hit the decks on Fridays and since the beginning of April, Thursdays are free and have become the packed **Woodstrasse** nights, where resident Cue V and Laurenzinho host an eclectic range of Berlin DJs – Catch Patrick Chardronnet there on 29 July. When your feet start singing, chill on the sofa or white leather chairs upstairs in eaves and marvel at the hanging plants sprouting from the fish-bowl lights. The only disappointment at **Wood** is the poorly stocked bar. Beware the prices even if you're on the wagon – a diet Coke and a bottle of Corona beer come to €8.50. Tip: Carry a handy packet of tissues, as the black toilet paper in the gorgeous unisex loos has usually all been nicked by later in the evening.



→ www.thewood.be

Until SEP 14 at Cinema Arenberg, Koninginnegalerij 26
02.512.80.63, www.arenberg.be

Festivaeria: Outdoor summer festival providing a platform for young artists with an open stage for musicians, singers, DJs, dancers, bodypainters, jugglers, photographers and street theatre artists

Until SEP 18 at Jubelpark
www.myspace.com/playnewconcept

Midi Fun Fair: Annual carnival with rides and games

Until AUG 22 from Hallepoort to the end of Zuidlaan
02.279.25.31, www.kermis-feest.be

Midis-Minimes: Lunchtime classical concerts all summer long

Until AUG 27 at Miniemenkerk, Miniemenstraat 62, and the Royal Conservatory, Regentschapsstraat 30
www.midis-minimes.be

Mini-Europe by Night: Sound and light show with fireworks and music 'Emotions in Europe'

Until AUG 14 22.30 at Mini-Europe, Bruparck, at the foot of the Atomium
www.minieurope.com

Recyclart Holidays: Free summer activities, including concerts and film screenings

Until AUG 19 at Recyclart, Station Brussel Kapellekerk, Ursulinenstraat 25
02.502.57.34, www.recycleart.be

Reggae Bus: Free Reggae, roots and dub music, entertainment and bar

Until SEP 4 15.00-23.00 at Jubelark
0499.35.23.35

Visionary Africa: Festival of literature, music, performance and exhibitions recognising the 17 African nations celebrating their 50th anniversary of independence

Until SEP 26 at Bozar, Ravensteinstraat 23
www.bozar.be

Dranouter

Dranouter Folk: Diverse folk festival featuring Tori Amos, Suzanne Vega, Ozark Henry, more

AUG 5-8 at Dranouter Folk Meadow (West Flanders)
www.folkdranouter.be

Ghent

Parkkaffee: Cultural festival in the park, with dance and theatre performances, circus and magic acts, children's entertainment, workshops, campfires, concerts, food and more

Until AUG 31 at Groenstaakstraat 37
09.227.99.94, www.parkkaffee.be

Knokke-Heist

Internationaal Cartoon Festival: 49th annual cartoon festival with more than 300 cartoons from all over the world featuring guest Flemish cartoonists Jan De Maesschalck and Jonas Geirnaert, plus the Press Cartoon Belgium prize competition

Until SEP 12 on the beach at Rubensplein
www.cartoonfestival.be

Leuven

Belevenissen: Outdoor music festival with free concerts every Friday night

Until JUL 30 20.30-23.30 in six locations across the city centre
016.27.22.54, www.leuven.be

M-idzomer

Summer festival combining concerts, comedy, theatre, exhibitions and spoken word. Line-up includes Absynthe Minded, Milow, The Bear That Wasn't, more

JUL 29-AUG 1 at M in Leuven, Leopold Vanderkelenstraat 28
016.27.29.29 www.m-idzomer.be

Zomer van Sint-Pieter

Lunchtime classical concerts every weekday
Until AUG 26 at 12.15 in Sint-Pieterskerk, Grote Markt, and 30CC-Schouwburg, Bondgenotenlaan 21
www.zomer-van-sint-pieter.be

Lokeren

36th edition of the outdoor music festival with line-up including Admiral Freebee, The Opposites, Flip Kowlier, Therapy?, Vaya con Dios, AIR, M.I.A., more

JUL 30-AUG 8 at Grote Kaai
www.lokersefeesten.be

Mechelen

15th edition of outdoor drive-in film event with champagne bar, food and music from 20.00; screenings start at 22.00
Until AUG 28 20.00 at Spuibeekstraat 5

015.55.77.33 www.utopolis.be

Ostend

Cirque du Soleil: Varekai

JUL 29-AUG 29 20.00 at Big Top, Oosterroever, Fortstraat
059.70.11.99 www.cirquedesoleil.com

European Beach Hockey Tour:

Opportunity for people of all ages to try beach hockey and watch European teams compete, plus cookouts and afterparties

JUL 30-AUG 1 on the beach at Koningin Astridlaan 7
www.europeanbeachhockey.be

FuZee! Third edition of the cultural festival featuring four Saturdays of international street theatre, fire and light displays, a parade and more

Until AUG 28 on the beach
www.fuzee.be

Ostend City of Culture: Flanders' first City of Culture, a biennale designation to highlight culture in certain Flemish cities. Circus, parades, performances, exhibitions and more, all year long

Until DEC 31 across Ostend
http://cultuur.oostende.be

Zomershow: Fun summer revues, with singing, dancing and comedy, for the whole family

Until AUG 28 at Casino Blankenberge, Zeeidijk 150
www.zomershow.be

Tienen

Suikerrock: 24th edition of the rock music festival featuring Jamiroquai, Seal, The Australian Pink Floyd Show, more

JUL 28-AUG 1 at Grote Markt 016.82.32.55 www.suikerrock.be

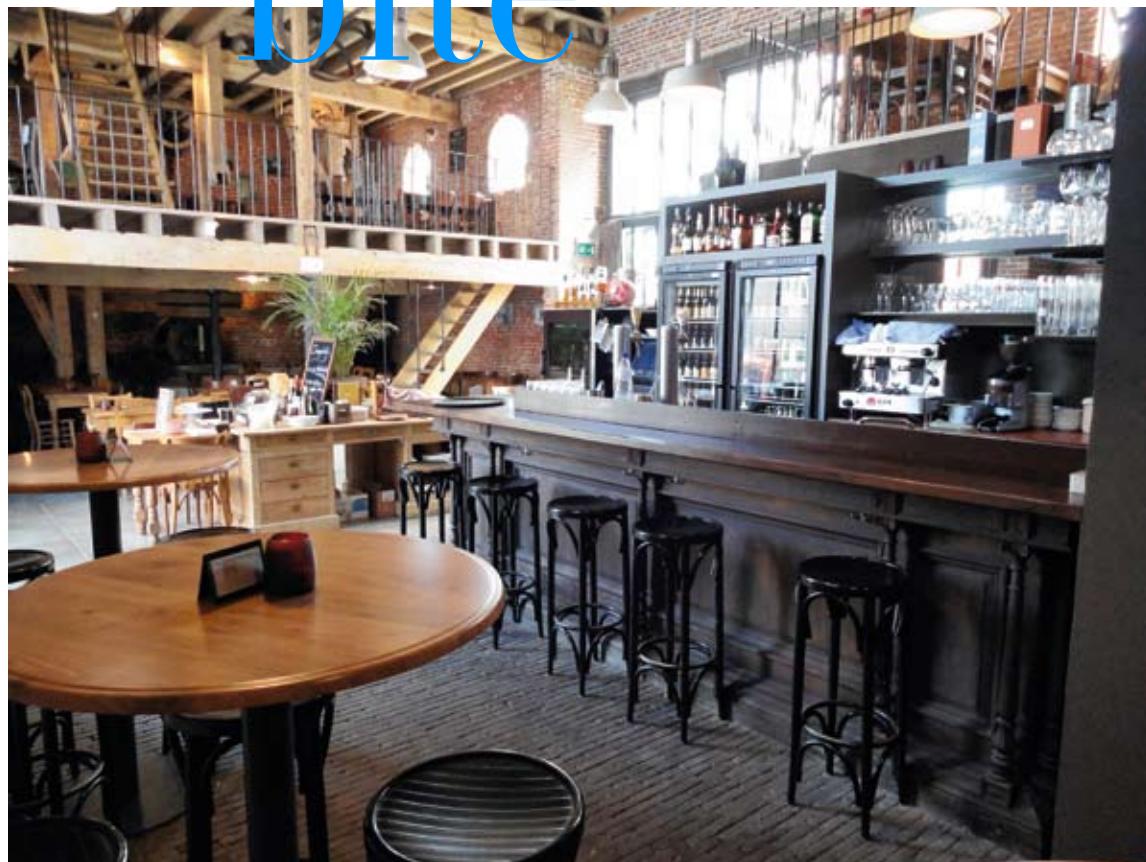
Watou

Kunstenfestival Watou: The outdoor arts parcours featuring work by more than 100 artists, writers and poets, focusing on the link between word and image

Until SEP 5 in Watou
www.watou2010.be

bite

ROBYN BOYLE



Tanderus

Often only cycling fanatics have heard of Nokere, a tiny village at the foot of the Flemish Ardennes, just outside of Kruishoutem half-way between Ghent and Kortrijk. It was always best known for its annual cycle event *Nokere Koerse*. But now those with a real appetite for life are also finding their way to Nokere, ever since the opening of restaurant Tanderus there just over a year ago. Previously the charming little village with its cobbled streets and brick houses painted white was home to two establishments: 't Handelshuis, the local café, and Het Landhuys, a rather up-scale restaurant. Therefore Tanderus is a play on words meaning '*het ander huis*' (the other house). And does it ever stand apart. Formerly an old 19th-century grain mill, the building was left to crumble into ruin for many years until a local family purchased the property and did a tremendous job of restoring it while keeping the authentic elements intact. The old steam chimney stands tall and proud next to what is now a sunny patio and outdoor bar. Inside, all the original cranks and gears are in place, nestled among wooden beams and exposed brick. The decor is as historical and natural as it is cosy and contemporary. It gets quite busy, especially at the weekend, but there always seems to be a table for me on one of the two levels (there is a third level too, serving as a playroom for little ones).

The starters, tomato-basil bruschetta and fried calamari, were divine but next time I would just save room for the main as the portions are incredibly generous. Check the chalkboard for their seasonal suggestions, which at this time feature mussels from Zeeland – natural, or with garlic and/or wine. The giant mussels are served in a pot holding almost

one and a half kilos. Open the lid and take in the aroma of the sea, carrot and onion, and in my case white wine and garlic. These shelled beauties were steamed to the ideal balance: firm yet still a bit soft without being the least bit chewy. And they were simply exploding with flavour, perfectly complemented by an accompaniment of golden fries and smooth homemade mayonnaise. Decide to pass on the suggestion and you won't be disappointed in the least. Also on the menu are plenty of tasty tapas, royal salads, Flemish specialties, pastas and more.

No room for dessert unfortunately, as I would have liked to have tasted their 'baked good of the day', *pannekoeken* or ice cream creations. Instead I ordered another Geuze Boon, my companion another Tripel Karmeliet, and we moved into the adjoining veranda to digest the whole experience. There we sat on tree-stump stools around the flickering fireplace and chatted with the couple in charge. Sigrid and Henk were finally taking a load off after another night of pouring every ounce of passion they have into their work. And the result is there for the savouring.

→ www.tanderus.be

► Nokeredorpstraat 30, Nokere (Kruishoutem)
🕒 Wed-Sun from 12.00 until...
★ Where everybody knows your name and the food is top-notch

Contact Bite at flandersbite@gmail.com

NEXT WEEK IN FLANDERS TODAY #14

Feature

Ghent doesn't just look like one big construction site, it is. We look at some of the exciting development projects in the works

Arts

Exotic influences in classical music are the focus of this year's MA Festival in Bruges, the local leg of the famed Festival of Flanders

Active

With more than 1300 km of navigable waterways criss-crossing the region, there's no doubt that the best way to see Flanders is by boat

TALKING DUTCH

ALISTAIR MACLEAN



‘peuk’

It's the knock-on effects that are often overlooked. Take the long-overdue law banning smoking in the workplace. In recent years we've all passed office buildings with smokers huddled against the wind inhaling the last of their cigarettes before tossing the *peuk* – the fag-end into the gutter.

The more thoughtful smoker may use *een asbak* – ashtray, though drains also serve. Tossing *een peuk* into any hole in the street may have horrendous consequences. Take the shop in Bruges in a narrow street with old coal holes into the cellars. Surveying the damage that the fire had wreaked in her cellar, the owner complained, “*Voorbijgangers gebruiken mijn keldergat als asbak* – Passers-by use my cellar hole as an ashtray”.

One solution might be installing *asbak tegels* – ashtray tiles. These are sunk flush with the street and are a good resting place for *peuken*. But how many of these would be needed to be effective and they would surely trap high heels of smokers and non-smokers alike. Ghent has tried to solve this litter problem by installing posts, *peukenpalen* where you can stub out your cigarette. They must be working because 52 kilos of *peuken* are emptied from them each week, which makes you wonder what on earth they do with such a mountain of filters.

But this is a time to get away from the smells and noises of the city. So let's head for the beach and fill our lungs with sea air. There is though no getting away from the problem, as you will be greeted by posters with “*Ons strand is geen asbak* – Our beach is not an ashtray”. The organisers of the campaign claim that *peuken* on the beach lead to *ergernis en overlast* – irritation and nuisance. At first I thought this is a bit strong: there's plenty of sand and what harm can the occasional *peuk* stubbed out in the sand do?

Well a lot apparently. The numbers for a start: 4300 *peuken* per 100 metres of beach, which is astonishing, and you do feel for the poor soul who collected and counted them. And since one of the pleasures of a stay at the coast is a stroll along the waterline, the last thing you want is *een vieze peuk tussen de tenen* – a disgusting fag-end between your toes. It doesn't end there. Once these castaways end up in the water they can kill: *vissen verwarring de peuken met voedsel* – fish confuse the butts with food. And they are not *bio-afbreekbaar* – bio-degradable.

Smokers may have feared they were a dying breed but in fact despite all the efforts to dissuade people, 32% of Belgians are regular smokers. So the *peuken* problem looks as if it's here to stay.

THE LAST WORD . . .

A sinking feeling

“These sewers are more than a century old. The brickwork has turned to dust, which is why every day we have about 40 small to large cases of subsidence.”

Geert Dekegel of Vivaqua, after an eight-metre hole appeared in the road in Sint-Gillis in Brussels, the third such case since June

Playing it by ear

“One is okay, but there will be a second one. Lotte can easily have a brother or sister, I think that would be fine. We'll see about that when it comes along”

Top athlete Tia Hellebaut, currently making a comeback, but for how long?

Mind made up

“I'd rather have a second child than a comeback.”

Top athlete Kim Gevaert, with a second baby on the way

Wanderlust

“I consider daydreaming a necessity. Often I seek it out actively. I wander off, and sometimes I make discoveries. It's all about creativity”

Painter Michaël Borremans (see Face of Flanders, p2)