

STUDENT GUIDE INSIDE!

**The first of our four-part special:
Ghent University**

Lernout and Hauspie found guilty of fraud

Massive trial reaches verdict, but no decision yet for thousands of investors

ALAN HOPE

Jo Lernout and Pol Hauspie, once thought to be the bright future of Flanders' technological development, were this week found guilty in a Ghent court on a range of charges, including fraud. After 20 months of deliberation, the court found that the pair of entrepreneurs had invented non-existent contracts with customers in order to hype their company, Lernout & Hauspie Speech Products (L&H), and drive up its share price. The fraud only came to light in 2000 after Microsoft obtained a stake in L&H, sparking interest in a company from an obscure corner of West Flanders whose success story seemed too good to be true.

Last Monday's verdict, which had not been read out in full by the time *Flanders Today* went to press, was the culmination of an investigation that started in 2001 and a case that saw thousands of mainly small investors losing fortunes. At one point, the attendance at the trial was so large the proceedings had to be moved from the justice palace to the International Convention Centre in Ghent. This week, only Lernout and Hauspie, as well as senior directors Nico Willaert and Gaston Bastiaens, were present in the court. Other defendants were represented by their lawyers. At the reading of the verdict, four of the absent accused were immediately acquitted – one of the company's lawyers, two members of the legal service and the director of the Flanders Language Valley Fund (see below).

The court ruled that the rights of the defence had in their cases been breached. A number of procedural matters, including some raised by Dexia Bank, were then dealt with and, in the main, overruled by the bench. Motions to have evidence ruled out were rejected, but the substantive verdicts were still awaited.

Lernout & Hauspie was founded in 1987 by Jo Lernout and Pol Hauspie, two entrepreneurs

from Ypres, West Flanders, whose goal was to teach computers to understand spoken language – an idea that must have seemed to belong to the realm of science fiction at the time, and which has still not been fully realised.

They financed their company by asking for support from friends and family: private investors provided €1.11 million in the first five years. In addition, L&H received venture capital of €750,000, with the backer pulling out after a year with a profit of 30%. The Flemish government, meanwhile, gave out grants worth up to €750,000 a year in R&D subsidies, as well as more than €3 million from the risk capital fund GIMV.

The two entrepreneurs managed to carry a lot of people along on their dream journey. The company was seen as a representative of the new Flanders, focused on new technology rather than dated industries such as coal. It was also a boost to West Flanders, and Ypres in particular, which had long been associated only with the tragedy of the First World War. The local pride, together with a limitless future for computers, convinced a great many people to sign up. The civil side of the case, which will be dealt with at a later stage, involves some 15,000 former shareholders who are claiming damages that could amount to €1 billion.

From the outset, L&H's dreams far outstripped the reality. Speech recognition programmes had been developed by the US military in 1971. In 1982, the Dragon company was founded, but it only developed the continuous speech dictation software Naturally Speaking in 1997, a decade after L&H had started up. The Ypres company, meanwhile, saw the use of its speech technology products limited to toys and gadgets.

► *continued on page 3*



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Flanders bans the car... ...for a day

Last Sunday, 19 September, was car-free Sunday across Belgium, where more than 30 municipalities, among them Antwerp, Bruges, Ghent and Mechelen, took part in the Europe-wide event. Brussels was in fact the largest car-free area in all of Europe, with 160 square kilometres included in the zone. Although it wasn't completely car-free – the authorities handed out more than 27,000 permits to drivers allowed to ignore the ban, including doctors.

A petition calling for the event to be made monthly in the capital has already gathered nearly 2,000 signatures, but the region's mobility minister Bruno De Lille said that this was unlikely. However, he repeated a call for Brussels to become one of Europe's most ecological capitals, with 20% less traffic by 2018.

Meanwhile, last week saw the introduction of a 30 km/h zone in Brussels within the inner ring. The new speed limit applies to all roads except the main North station-South station artery and the Diksmuidelaan. One taxi driver told *Flanders Today*: "I haven't noticed any

difference because the congestion is so bad it's impossible to go over 30 anyway." A similar point was made by a local resident of Ghent in regards to car-free Sunday. In the centre of town, she said, "the difference was barely noticeable because most of it is closed to traffic anyway."

Car-free Antwerp attracted 200,000 visitors to the city centre where they could take part in an alternative *parcours*, involving Segway, Twike, electric bike, kick-bike and roller skates, among other conveyances even more mysterious. On the Grote Markt, 1,100 cyclists helped set a new world record for simultaneous bell-ringing.

In Bruges, 50,000 people visited the centre for the third car-free Sunday to take part in a number of activities, including a mass aerobics session. Visitors who came to Bruges by train were able to enjoy the newly-renovated station, inaugurated at the weekend. In Brussels, too, the square in front of the revamped Central Station, now traffic-free, was officially opened by mayor Freddie Thielemans.

OFFSIDE

Who you gonna call?



© Shutterstock

More and more people are finding themselves too busy on weekdays and Saturdays to find the time to get married, so the demand is growing for Sunday weddings, according to an article last week in *De Standaard*. And for the occasion, the happy couple may have recourse to the services of Rent-a-Priest. Rent-a-Priest was founded in 2000 in Halle, Flemish Brabant by Catholic priests Rudi Borremans, Norbert Bethune and André Brems. Borremans has since been sacked from his parishes in Everberg and Meerbeek for his controversial views on homosexuality – he is gay and lived for a time with his partner. Bethune was also dismissed over doctrinal issues, among them the celibacy of the priesthood, about which he has written a book. He is now married with an adopted daughter but still considers himself a priest. Brems, meanwhile, has long been active on social issues like poverty and exclusion.

The three have now been joined by others and offer services to those with no parish to turn to for reasons of conscience or doctrine. The priests of Rent-a-Priest carry out baptisms, which are valid, according to Canon law professor and new CD&V senator Rik Torfs. They also administer the final sacrament to the dying and, of course, officiate at marriages.

Until the beginning of this year, marriages in Belgium were only legal after a trip to the town hall, but now the law has been made more flexible, allowing marriages to take place at other locations within the municipality.

The Sunday weddings being arranged by Didier Deylgat, interviewed in *De Standaard*, unfortunately do not qualify. Deylgat owns a function hall in West Flanders that is not considered a legal alternative. Nevertheless, couples can gather with their friends and families, be married by a priest, drink toasts, sing karaoke and make ribald speeches just as at any other wedding. The only difference is, they'll have to report to the town hall during working hours to make the whole thing legal.

"This initiative is perfectly in keeping with the spirit of the times," Bethune commented. "Requests are coming in for Sunday weddings from every part of society, not just the alternative wing."

→ www.rentapriest.be

FLANDERS TODAY

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FLANDERS TODAY
SEPTEMBER 22, 2010

News in brief

Jan Peumans, speaker of the Flemish parliament and member of the Flemish nationalist N-VA, was last week **attacked on a visit to Wallonia**. Peumans and his wife were visiting an ice cream parlour in Visé, just across the language border from Riemst in Limburg, where they live. The man called Peumans a dirty Fleming and said he had no business being in Wallonia.

Operating rooms in hospitals have waiting lists of up to three months to deal with toddlers who require full anaesthetic to treat the **number of cavities** they have, announced Professor Dominique Declerck on the VTM programme *Telefacts*. The dentist said that the problem had become too serious for ordinary dentists to handle. The causes of the problem are poor oral hygiene and too many sweets and sugary drinks.

The average **life expectancy for a baby born in Flanders** keeps rising, according to the latest figures. In 1999, a baby boy could expect to live for 75 years and a girl for 81 years. In 2008, the latest year for which figures are available, boys could expect to reach 78 and girls 83. The five-year gap appears to be constant, even though the figures are going up for both sexes. Flanders is fifth in Europe for life expectancy, after Italy, France, Sweden and Spain.

Belgium should scrap its ban on **foreigners entering the profession of notary**, the advocate-general of the European Court of Justice advised last week. Discrimination on the grounds of nationality is illegal in the EU. Belgian notaries draw up legally-binding contracts, such as those regarding house sales. The advocate-general's role is advisory, but his opinion is usually followed by the whole court, which will rule on the matter later.

A woman whose body was found **buried** in the dunes at Zeebrugge was suffocated to death, either before being buried or because of it, police said. The woman, aged 25 to 35, had been in the sand for about two weeks before she was discovered by some kitesurfers. Her identity remains unknown.

Belgium last week achieved the complete destruction of its remaining stocks of **cluster munitions**, federal defence minister Pieter De Crem announced. Belgium (following Spain, Moldavia and Norway)

becomes one of the first signatories to fulfil its Oslo Treaty obligations – well within the eight years the treaty allows. Belgium had 115,210 cluster missiles.

A Flemish atomic expert has been given a senior post at the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna. **Herman Nackaerts**, 59, will be in charge of the service responsible for inspections to ensure atomic energy facilities are not diverted to military ends. Nackaerts graduated in civil engineering from the Catholic University of Leuven and previously worked for the EU's atomic safeguards inspection.

Twelve-year-old schoolchildren in Brussels and Antwerp will receive **lessons in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR)** from staff at the Antwerp hospital network (ZVA) and the Free University of Brussels (VUB).

FACE OF FLANDERS

ALAN HOPE

The Sandbag Soldier

At the end of this year, In Flanders' Field Museum (IFFM) in Ypres closes its doors for a month, and in September next year for six months for a major renovation project.

The museum opened in 1988, and since then has won nothing but praise for its approach, which combines stillness and respect for its subject, the First World War in Flanders, and a dynamic and modern multi-media presentation of its collection. IFFM won Flanders' Museum Prize this year.

One of its innovations is the artist-in-residence programme, which hosts a different artist every year. Last year's was 73-year-old Flemish artist Camiel Van Breedam.

This year's is Brazilian artist Rodrigo Braga, whose commission was to represent in his own way a war that was already history when his grandfather was born. Braga, 34, visited the trenches, cemeteries and monuments, soaked up the museum collection, and delved into the archives and produced a number of works for the show *More Force Than Necessary*.

One of the most striking is "The Sandbag Soldier", made entirely from jute, just like the sandbags, and portrayed rising up out of a heap of them – a fitting memorial to those millions of men who sank down into the mud of Flanders and never emerged. His feet are encased in sandbags; a jute mask covers his face.

Braga was born in Manaus in northern Brazil and now lives and works in Recife on the country's far eastern coast. For *More Force Than Necessary* – his first exhibition outside his homeland – he made 16 works, including photos, films and installations like "Cocon", where he has woven a nest using barbed wire wound around two trees. In the video "Front" he stands face to face with a wax soldier.



© IFFM

The IFFM calls him "an extremely attentive and sensitive observer" who was impressed by the attention the museum gives to the misery of the ordinary soldier and the suffering of civilians.

"What you see here is an up-to-date, sensitive and critical comment about the Great War," commented museum curator Jan Dewilde, "and an artistic way of discussing power, fear, loss, survival, pain, memory and the cycle of life and death."

More Force Than Necessary runs until 10 October; a lavish catalogue in Portuguese, Dutch and English is available to purchase, containing a DVD of Braga's videos.

→ www.inflandersfields.be

Rising rent

Due to a shortage of properties, student apartments in Brussels have gone up by one-third over the past decade. A basic student bedsit in the capital now costs €287 a month, compared to €258 in Ghent



© Rijksmuseum

West Flanders' dream of bright high-tech future dashed by lies and ambition

→ continued from page 1

In 1993, American telecoms giant AT&T invested €7.5 million. L&H was quoted on the Nasdaq technology index, and the company carried out a series of takeovers. In 1997, Microsoft took an 8% stake in the company for a price of \$45 million (€34.5m), which rocketed L&H to world attention, but which also brought it under closer scrutiny that would eventually lead to its downfall. L&H had ambitious plans not only to develop as a company, but to be in the forefront of a technological revolution in West Flanders. They opened Flanders Language Valley (FLV) in 1997. Essen-

tially a business park, FLV was intended to become a hot spot where cutting-edge tech companies would gather and cross-fertilise, along the lines of Silicon Valley. The Flanders Language Valley Fund, a venture capital outfit, had its offices in FLV right next to L&H.

In 2000, L&H took over Dictaphone for a massive €690 million, €300m of it debt. Less than three weeks later it took over Dragon itself for €353m – a small sum for a company whose Nasdaq rating set its worth at €11.6 billion.

But the huge acquisitions aroused the curiosity of the *Wall Street Journal*, which did a little digging into the company and reported that most of its Korean customers didn't actually exist. Continued investigation uncovered a range of irregularities in the company's accounts, which led to the suggestion that L&H had hyped their own success as a means of manipulating the share price, which went into freefall as a result of the allegations. The American stock market regulator SEC began an investigation, and the share price fell even further. Thousands of investors, including most of the West Flanders business community, saw their



© Belga

Pol Hauspie (left) and Jo Lernout dashed the hopes of investors and the Flemish government for a European technological industry similar to Silicon Valley

investments turn to ashes.

The company made some partial admissions and filed for bankruptcy protection. Hauspie stepped down in November, and Lernout followed in March of 2001. The police arrived at L&H in April and placed Lernout and Hauspie in detention, where they spent nine weeks, charged with stock market manipulation, forgery and criminal conspiracy. The company was declared bankrupt in October 2001 and its assets bought up by US company Scansoft that December.

The case against the two men, as well as 19 others, including Dexia Bank and auditors KPMG, started in Ghent in 2007, with the prosecution calling for sentences of five years for the two businessmen. Hauspie pled guilty to fraud, but Lernout continued to claim his innocence. The case ended before the court in January 2009; since then the three-man bench has been considering a case file amounting to 400,000 pages of evidence. This week's judgement alone runs to 2,100 pages and would take two weeks to read out. ♦

THE WEEK IN FIGURES



410,857

plots of building land vacant in Flanders, enough to build one million homes. Most are in the hands of families who bought for their children or as an investment, with only 16% held by the government and private developers

35,681

people turned up to watch Kim Clijsters play Serena Williams in an exhibition match at the Koning Boudewijn stadium in Brussels in July, a world record for a tennis match, the Guinness organisation has confirmed. Clijsters was due to play Justine Hénin, but the Wallonian player had to cancel due to injury

6%

VAT rate on home renovation works extended by the government last week until mid-2011. The reduced rate was introduced in 2000 to help stimulate the construction industry and would have expired at the end of the year

€1,000,000

grant by Flemish fashion designers Lieve Van Gorp and Griet Reulens to the Flanders Institute for Biotechnology (VIB) for research into dystonia, a disorder of the central nervous system from which Reulens suffers. This is the first time a private partner and a research institute have jointly established a medical research foundation

Education reform plans welcomed

Plans for a far-reaching reform of secondary education in Flanders have been welcomed by Catholic as well as secular teaching organisations, but others have criticised the proposal. The reform was announced last week by Flemish education minister Pascal Smet in a policy document entitled "Mensen doen schitteren" (Letting People Shine).

The plan would scrap the current method of "tracking" – dividing secondary students into various streams of study: traditional academic (ASO); technical (TSO); business- and work-oriented studies (BSO); and a fourth branch of cultural and artistic studies (KSO), which accounts for only a small percentage of secondary students.

Instead, Smet intends to introduce a first year that's broadly the same for all, leading to a third year in which further study choices are phased in. Some would be

work-oriented and others geared towards higher education. Students would be able to select a mixture instead of being forced into one unwavering track as at present. "All students should be allowed to develop their talents to the full," Smet said, adding that the current system is weighted down with "social prejudice," with TSO and especially BSO often seen as inferior to ASO. Thus a student who might be more suited to a BSO education might be forced out of prejudice into an ASO stream, despite it being unsuitable for the student's talents.

In the new proposed system, all students would follow 12 subjects in the first year, narrowing it down in the second year. In the third year, each student would select two "interest areas" from six in the scientific, language, business and arts fields. The interest areas would, the plan says, offer a wide-ranging view of aspects of society,

allowing students to become acquainted with diverse themes.

The proposal was welcomed by Chris Smits, secretary-general of Catholic secondary education. The minister, he said, had presented a valid analysis of the problems of Flemish education, such as the consequences of a mistaken study choice.

For Raymonda Verdyck, managing director of community education, the Smet proposal comes very close to what her organisation has been advocating. The reform would allow students in the first and second years to sample from a broad range of areas, allowing them to make a more informed choice later.

Flemish liberal party Open VLD even argued that Smet had not gone far enough and expressed fears that the reform would take too long. The Smet proposal would begin to come into effect in 2014. ♦

New head for Carillon School



The Royal Carillon School in Mechelen has appointed a new director to replace Jo Haazen, who retired earlier this year. Koen Cosaert (pictured) was previously a teacher of harmony and music theory, carillon and campanology (bell-ringing) at the Mechelen school and its Roeselare branch. He is also the city carillon player for Harelbeke, Izegem, Kortrijk and Roeselare. Cosaert studied violin and organ at the conservatory in Kortrijk and earned a degree in musicology from the Catholic University of Leuven with

Double murder in small village

Police have arrested the men alleged to have gunned down two Turkish brothers, Ugur and Süleyman Aygün, in the sleepy West-Flemish village of Meulebeke at the weekend. The shooter, a fellow member of the town's surprisingly large Turkish community, is reported to have had an argument with the two brothers, one of whom lived in Roeselare, and then went home to fetch a weapon. Süleyman died instantly, and Ugur later in hospital from abdominal wounds. ♦

FIFTH COLUMN

ANJA OTTE

Plan B

This publication went to press at another of those make-or-break moments in the formation of the new federal government. Over the past couple of weeks, N-VA and PS – the winners of the elections on either side of the language border – have become increasingly irritated with one another. The French speakers' refusal to offer "guarantees" about a reform of the finance law (which controls the division of the budget between the regions and communities) has exasperated N-VA. At the same time, PS president Elio Di Rupo has become frustrated with N-VA's Bart De Wever, describing him as an "unreliable speaking partner".

The optimism that emerged after the June elections has evaporated, as the formation talks drag on in the same way they did in 2007. With the French speakers, however, some things have changed. They seem, for one thing, to have lost their fear of abandonment, which often paralysed them in the past.

In 2006, a fake TV news report on a French-language channel called "Bye Bye Belgium" was enough to send many of its French-speaking viewers into a panic (while its lack of realism stunned the Flemish). These days, however, French-speaking politicians talk more and more – and in less apocalyptic terms – about "Plan B": the end of Belgium.

This, they say, is not something that they want, but they are preparing themselves for it nonetheless. They even have a clear idea about the future shape of their country. That would be Wallo-Brux (although it seems unlikely that this would be its actual name), comprising Wallonia and Brussels.

The French-speaking scenarios all start from the idea of a Flemish break-away. Yet, paradoxically, there are few similar scenarios in Flanders. One reason for this is that the idea of independence is less attractive for the Flemish than most French speakers fear. Even the nationalist N-VA, which has Flemish independence as its ultimate goal, remains vague about Plan B, stating merely that Belgium will "dissolve" somehow into a European level of government and regional levels.

The main issue that remains unclear is what would happen to Brussels should Flanders become independent. Brussels is both the capital of Belgium and of the region of Flanders. It is also the workplace of hundreds of thousands of Flemish commuters. Because of this, the old Flemish nationalist rhetoric often included phrases such as "not giving up on Brussels". Maybe that is why Plan B is less discussed in Flanders, as an independent Flanders might involve exactly that.

Temp agencies accused of racism

Existing laws sufficient, government says

ALAN HOPE

The Flemish government has no plans to introduce new laws to tackle alleged racial discrimination in the temporary employment sector, following claims last week that the sector systematically turns down applications from job seekers of foreign origin. "The regulations as such are clear: the law already covers what's not permitted," said Flemish labour minister Philippe Muyters.

The VRT documentary programme *Volt* last week revealed that, according to its own investigation, six of the 10 temp agencies questioned went along with requests from clients not to pass on applications coming from foreign applicants – specifically those of North African background. The anti-discrimination organisation Kif Kif, together with the Centre for Equal Opportunities and the Fight against Racism (CGKR), called on the government to do more. Jozef

De Witte, director-general of the CGKR, said that Muyters "behaved as if the problem didn't exist".

"The temp agencies need to finally look into what's going on in their own sector and take severe action against those companies who are ruining the profession," De Witte said. "Government labour inspectors have to make it their priority to control temp agencies, as must the justice system and the police, who can no longer turn a blind eye to the problem."

CGKR took in 48 complaints in 2009 alleging discrimination by temp or other selection agencies, usually at the request of the employer-client. The government does not have the authority to carry out undercover checks on the sector, but Muyters explained that outside agencies carried out such checks, with the cooperation of the temp sector. The number of checks carried out



© Reuters

Too often, agencies are told not to take on immigrants in 2009 was substantially increased as a result, he said. The minister also has the power to place temp agencies under pressure to reform by giving their licence of operation a temporary status. Muyters "has made use of that possibility a number of times," a spokesman said.

The industry organisation Federgon pointed out that, of the 500,000 people they put to work in a year, 15% were of immigrant origin. By comparison, the proportion of immigrants working for the government is only 2%.

Dexia to cut 385 more jobs

Dexia bank, chaired by former Belgian prime minister Jean-Luc Dehaene, will cut 665 jobs, more than half of which will come out of Belgium. The Dexia board last week agreed the measure, the third round of job losses in a cost-cutting exercise designed to save a total of €520 million, of which €360m has already been realised. In the first two rounds, 1,500 jobs were lost across Europe.

Some 60% of jobs, or 385, will be cut in Belgium, most of them in banking support operations. The rest of the job losses take place in Luxembourg (140), France (70) and elsewhere (70).

Dexia's management has promised that the number of forced redundancies will be kept to a minimum, but unions were last week preparing for possible action in protest at the cuts. Some members protested last week outside the bank's headquarters in Brussels.

"Surely the working man doesn't have to pay for a crisis that was caused by mismanagement by executives?" one protestor asked. Unions fear that the promise will not be kept: the average pay differential between the banking and insurance divisions of the company amounts to about 30%, making banking more vulnerable. Dexia was first hit by the banking crisis in 2008, when rumours about liquidity caused a scare on the stock market, pushing the share price down from around €10 to €6.62 in a single day. That led to further panic selling, and the bank was forced to ask the government for a bailout in the form of a capital injection of €6.4 billion by the governments of Belgium, France and Luxembourg.

There was also a state guarantee of up to €150 billion on bonds and other securities. In return for that state guarantee, Dexia will this year pay out €500m in commissions, €300m of it to Belgium.

Cost-cutting exercises are imposed on the bank by the EU Commission in order to justify state aid and to prevent unfair competition. ♦

New future for JET Studio

The take-over of the legendary Jet Studios by two Brussels studio owners would safeguard the 1940s recording facility for the future. Rudy Coclet of Rising Sun Studio and Pascal Flamme, owner of Caraïbes Studio have decided to buy Jet, referred to as "the Abbey Road of Belgium".

The current owner of Jet, the oldest recording studio in the country, was

no longer able to make the studio financially viable, and it was thought that new owners might have other plans for the building. But Coclet and Flamme will still use it for recording, renovating some of the interior and equipment. A preliminary sales document has been signed by the three parties, pending the official sale, set for December. ♦



© Deter Telemans

No power station for Antwerp port

Antwerp city council has rejected an application for an environmental permit to allow the construction in the port area of a high-tech coal-fired power station by the German energy provider E.ON. The proposed facility would have had an output of 11 mW, or the equivalent of 8% of the electricity consumption of the whole country.

The city objected because it would also have produced "six million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions, or the equivalent of three million cars," according to Rik Röttger, alderman for environmental matters.

E.ON has already been granted a production permit by the federal government, and an application for a building permit is currently lodged with the Flemish government. But Antwerp's refusal could stop the project from going any further. A public enquiry on the question resulted in 474 objections, including four petitions. Negative feedback was also received from the Flemish Environment Agency, as well as the Flemish environment ministry. • Meanwhile, Antwerp port's management company has started interviewing contractors for "one of the biggest infrastructure projects

of the coming years" – the building of a second lock on the Waasland harbour in Beveren on the left bank of the River Scheldt. Construction is due to begin next year, for completion in 2016. The new lock will have the same dimensions as the Berendrecht lock – the largest in the world at 68 metres wide by 500 metres long – but will be deeper. Construction will involve 740,000 cubic metres of concrete and 20,000 tonnes of steel. "The addition of this large lock is of special importance for the competitive position of the port of Antwerp," said Flemish public works minister Hilde Crevits. ♦

THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Banks • Argenta

Antwerp-based bank and insurance company Argenta is planning to add some 50 new branches to its existing network of 479 independent agents in Flanders.

Gas Transport • Fluxys

The country's gas transport and pipeline operator Fluxys is bidding up to €500 million to acquire Thyssengas, operator of Germany's 4,000-kilometre gas network.

Handling • Brussels Airport

State secretary for mobility Etienne Schoupe has paved the way for a third handler at Brussels Airport when the existing contracts with incumbent operators Aviapartners and Flightcare expire in October 2011. Other players such as Menzies Aviation, Swissport and World Flights Services are said to be interested in the airport, which handles 17 million passengers a year.

Pharmaceuticals • KUL

The Catholic University of Leuven (KUL) and the European Investment Fund are investing a further €16 million in the Centre for Drug Design and Discovery, a fund that promotes research and development of drugs against Aids, cancer, asthma, dengue fever and Alzheimer's.

Ports • Sea Invest

Ghent-based stevedoring and transport group Sea Invest has inaugurated a €150 million oil products terminal in the Port of Antwerp. The company has plans to build a further €250 million stocking area nearby to open in 2013 in partnership with the Swiss Glencore group.

Ports • Zeebrugge

The Port of Zeebrugge is considering a €600 million investment to develop off-shore docking facilities for large container ships and NLG carriers. This option is seen by port authorities as the only one that can ensure a development of its activities.

Tobacco • ST Group

The Danish-owned Scandinavian Tobacco Group has invested €32.5 million in Lummen, Limburg province, to build Europe's largest cigar production facility. Inaugurated last week, the facility employs some 450 workers – 90 more than in previous facilities in Geel and Leuven – and will produce one billion cigars a year.

Twist my arm

A conference teaches you how to encourage customers to keep coming back

SARAH MARKEWICH

In the last couple of hours alone, I received many emails I didn't open and a few I did, including one from Amazon telling me I would love a certain book and one from Facebook saying I had been tagged in a photo. I clicked the "like" button on Facebook twice and wished a few "friends" happy birthday.

Meanwhile, I got annoyed by a text message from my mobile service asking me to use digital invoices from now on, but expecting me to type in a long URL they included to activate this service. Which I did.

Sound familiar? Whether you like it or not, all companies have persuasion goals, and many are tracking our behaviour and trying to influence what we do and buy. Some get it right and have us signing up for whatever service or product they are offering us. Others annoy us too much, don't seem trustworthy or get us at the wrong time and send us running. The really clever ones not only get us and impress us, but they keep us coming back for more – and even persuade us to bring our friends along for the ride.

How can your company be one of the clever ones without blowing its budget? According to BJ Fogg from California's Stanford University Persuasive Technology Lab, it can "take baby steps" with low-risk, frequent testing and then "pick up speed" as it goes along.

Fogg, along with other international guest speakers and co-organiser Christel De Maeyer from The Studios at Howest University College in West Flanders, will focus on techniques to test and influence user behaviour at the Design for Persuasion Conference in Ghent this month.

Fogg advises companies to "try something really small with little risk and get used to the idea of trying. The risks aren't expensive, but the benefits can be enormous. Learn what works in the process and, if all else fails, bring an expert like me in to help."

De Maeyer put together the first-ever Design for Persuasion conference last year in Brussels. It brought together more than 170 attendees from various sectors to network and find out about online persuasion and influence. Each presentation is a short and snappy 20 minutes.

"Many said it was an eye-opener," says De Maeyer. "It's a very international conference with ideas and people coming from all different perspectives – from psychological to sociological and from marketing to entrepreneurial."

De Maeyer arranged the conference through European Collaborative Innovation Centres (E-Clic), a project of the EU's Interreg programme, which helps Europe's regions form partnerships to work together on common projects. This year Fogg and his assistant will also do a workshop the day before the conference. They will introduce the "Behaviour Wizard" tool, which, according to Fogg, gives a very clear and systematic view of behaviour change and insights that you can apply to practical business goals.

Though most of the presenters are international, Pieter Wuyts is from very close by – the Ghent-based email optimisation company 8 Seconds, which is becoming a market leader in real-time testing. He will demonstrate how technology can help you improve your email campaigns.

"Everyone knows that they should be testing to increase performance, but most don't do it," says Wuyts. "We take away all of this trouble." He will introduce an easy-to-use tool so that clients can eventually do everything themselves to see what is effective. "Guessing doesn't work," says Wuyts. "Testing does."

Wim Soens from the Kortrijk-based internet company Indiegroup, will speak about Enterprise 2.0 – web 2.0 for business. According to Soens, innovative internal communities within big companies brought together by collaborative software are "really the next big thing". Think Facebook for companies. "Systems like SharePoint and intranet are linked to rigid and tight structures," he explains. "With persuasive design, the focus is on the people and not the process. You need to adapt the process to the person sitting in front of the computer."

Many will also say that mobile is really the next big thing. Fogg goes as far as to say that it's the next step in human evolution, with the technology being part of our bodies in that we will have mobile phones or smart devices with us at all times.

"It's hard to do things effectively on mobile," says Fogg, explaining that in terms of persuasion, mobile is still emerging, which means lots of companies will make mistakes as part of a learning curve. The Design for Persuasion Conference will give them a peek into some of those upcoming persuasive technologies and trends, as Fogg asserts: "If you don't keep up with those trends, you'll become irrelevant." ♦



Design for Persuasion

30 September, 9.30-17.00
Marriott Ghent
Drabstraat & Korenlei

→ www.designforpersuasion.com

Win a free registration to Design for Persuasion!

Want to go to Design for Persuasion? Answer the following question found via the website www.designforpersuasion.com:

What three elements have to come together for a behaviour change to happen, according to BJ Fogg? Email your answer to: christel.de.maeyer@howest.be

Winners will be notified by email.

"The first barrier is fear"

African migrants need to be encouraged to get HIV tests, says new study

TANIA RABESANDRATANA

In terms of Western Europe, Belgium is one of the worst HIV-affected countries: it is one of the four that reported more than 100 new cases of HIV infections per million inhabitants in 2008 – while Finland diagnosed only 29 and Germany 34.

About 45% of these new cases were among migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, who only account for 0.65 per cent of the Belgian population. These figures don't even reflect the actual extent of the problem: an estimated two-thirds of Sub-Saharan African migrants carry the virus without knowing it.

At the Institute for Tropical Medicine (ITM) in Antwerp, Dr Lazare Manirankunda investigated why so many migrants wouldn't get tested for HIV, although free testing and treatment are available in Flanders. He carried out in-depth discussions with immigrants from a number of countries, including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana and Nigeria, living in Antwerp and Ghent.

"The first barrier is fear," Manirankunda says: fear of dying, fear of being rejected, fear of being deported. Also, African migrants often perceive that their own risk of being infected with HIV is low because they associate HIV with promiscuous sexual behaviours. All in all, HIV and health in general are low on the migrants' list of worries.

"They are here to survive and find a good life," explains Manirankunda. "An HIV diagnosis would mean the end of that goal."

This study was carried out as part of the HIV-SAM project, launched in 1996 at the institute to curb the HIV epidemics among Sub-Saharan African migrants. A team of three specialists works in close contact with African organisations to reach out to the community. They co-organise health promotion activities throughout the year during social and cultural events.

The activities now focus on fighting the stigma by inviting, for instance, people living with HIV and AIDS to share their experiences. Also, HIV-SAM is now reaching out to medical doctors and hosting a seminar for general practitioners on 30 September at the institute.

"Doctors are often worried that pushing migrants to get tested might be considered discriminatory, or even racist," Manirankunda notes. However, studies showed that Sub-Saharan migrants respect their doctor's authority and will often agree to testing if he or she suggests it. The researcher insists: "Doctors have a responsibility." ♦

→ www.hivsam.be



HIV testing – and treatment – is free in Flanders

From public relations to porcelain

Westmalle potter refines French ceramics for a Flemish table

DENZIL WALTON

It was during a vacation in Wales that Anja Meeusen saw the light. She was visiting friends in Carmarthen who were taking evening classes in ceramics. She tagged along and was invited by the tutor to "have a go" at the wheel.

The result was a complete disaster, but something clicked within Meeusen. "At that moment, as I desperately tried to prevent the clay from shooting off the potter's wheel, I knew this was what I wanted to do with the rest of my life."

It was not just the creativity involved, but the total package. In Carmarthen, the pottery teacher was busy at the wheel while her husband ran a tea shop using cups and plates made in the workshop. Meeusen realised that pottery would also encompass her passion for fine food. She spent the remainder of her time in Wales visiting as many potters in the area as she could.

Meeusen was 22 at the time and had a promising job in public relations. But so great was her desire that she gave up her job to learn the requisite skills. However, she soon realised that no course existed in Flanders that could meet her needs. All the academies were focusing on decorative ceramics; the utilitarian aspect was taboo.

So she packed her bags and headed off to a region of Europe where hand-made, functional pottery is most definitely part of the culture: the south of France.

For two years she worked as an apprentice, moving from one *atelier de poterie* to another. She received board and lodging – and tuition – in return for her work. Tasks included washing the wheel, sweeping the floor, even painting a fence. But in between were wonderful opportunities to watch and learn from outstanding craftspeople. She mastered the potter's wheel, learned how to operate a kiln and, by the end of her apprenticeship, was turning out her own designs.

Returning to her home town of Westmalle, Meeusen listed her three main objectives: look for a suitable workshop, develop her own style, find some customers. She rented a garage and set up her first wheel and kiln. She decided not to copy the traditional multi-coloured French pottery. Not keen on eating fine food off brightly coloured plates –

and firmly believing that restaurant owners would feel the same – she developed her own style of sober simplicity, with everything in white and off-white.

Meeusen also decided to make two types of products. One was a safe bet: oven-proof stoneware with clay from the Westerwald region of Germany. The other involved greater risk: porcelain pottery with Limoges clay. "It's the finest and smoothest material for pottery that exists," she says, "and produces the most exquisite, translucent results. However, it's a much more challenging and difficult to work with."

Up and running, it was time for the next stage: look for customers. Armed with a cardboard box carefully packed with dishes, she visited interior design shops, restaurants and hotels.

"At first it was extremely slow-going," she admits. "In Flanders there is no culture of hand-made pottery – unlike in England and France – so people were initially reluctant. However, counteracting this is the great Flemish desire to eat well. Chefs began to realise that serving their dishes on unique hand-made porcelain plates provided their restaurants with added value."

As word got around, Meeusen's business began to take off. After seven years in her little garage she was able to move into a workshop. She now has two kilns, custom-made by Vuurvast in Flemish-Brabant.

Her clientele is impressive, including award-winning chef Roger Van Damme of Het Gebaar in Antwerp, the Mnu partnership of top chefs and hotels in Bruges and Antwerp. A recent order for 2,000 identical porcelain water beakers for Belgocatering pushed her well beyond her normal 70-hour work week.

Meeusen is one of a very few full-time hand-made porcelain potters in Flanders. She is aware that it's a dying art and feels that she has a responsibility to pass on her knowledge and skills – especially considering that were it not for the opportunity to "have a go" in a workshop in Carmarthen, her own life might have turned out rather differently. ♦

→ www.ptzeporselein.be



Anja Meeusen handmakes every piece of pottery herself with a wheel and kiln in Westmalle

One-pop shopping

Temporary shops and little-known labels are taking over the fashion scene

STÉPHANIE DUVAL

Are they shops? Are they galleries? Surely they're not "concept" stores? The latest generation of new boutiques in Flanders refuses to be labelled. They pop up and disappear, only to pop up again at a different location. It's the new frame of mind for entrepreneurial fashion and design lovers: they want to sell what they like, how they like.

For a long time, flagship stores were the main source of what was hot and happening in fashion. With the motto "the bigger, the better", they are an entire universe of their own brand. After a while, those brands started carrying lifestyle and home interior products, and the "concept store" was born.

Marketing creatives then turned that into a platform more free and inspiring, not selling just one brand but a mixture of brands and products that fit into the same concept. Think of, for instance, Antwerp's Urban Outfitters or Fish&Chips.

But as it goes in hipster land, with every one of the concept stores that appeared, the idea became less and less appealing, more and more mainstream and impersonal. And concept stores are seen to be a reaction to mega-stores. However innovative and creative they claim to be, in the eyes of many, they're not created organically, they're not "real".

Enter the pop-up shop. The owners tend to stand for something, their ideals more important than commercial appeal, their passion trumps their business plan.

Ironically, this might be the smartest move they could make. More and more consumers are looking for "authentic" products, value for money in the sense that they're buying more than just an item, they're buying a story, someone's dream. Shopping is becoming increasingly more personal, and that's why these three new shops in Belgium are so in step with the *Zeitgeist*.

Pop-Up #2 is a project of the young artists and fashion designers of Atelier Solarshop. Once in a while, they open up a temporary shop (right now at 48 Dambruggestraat, Antwerp) or organise an exhibition – whatever works best at the time. This allows them to sell unique products while introducing international talent to the local community.

→ www.ateliersolarshop.blogspot.com

Caméléon Coquet (12 Adolphe Buylaan, Brussels) is the same idea in a different atmosphere – less avant-garde, more crafty creative. Aside from selling interesting objects from around the world (including an abundance of Japanese fabrics and paper),



The Pop-Up Shop in Antwerp's Dambruggestraat is only open until 9 October

they also allow you to make things yourself using the letterpress in the back. Laurence and Jean-Yves want you to simultaneously discover and be discovered. You can rent space in the shop to display your own work.

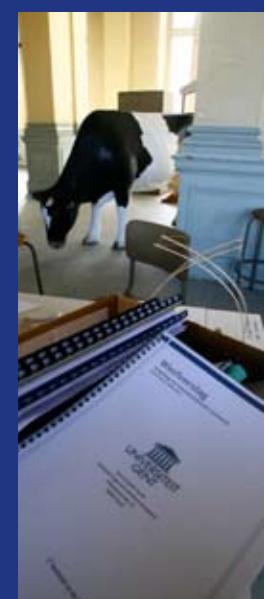
→ www.lecaméléoncoquet.over-blog.com

Five Fridays is a completely different story. Paula started out with a showroom, selling

Scandinavian brands to clothing stores all over Belgium. But her passion for little-known designers led her to open up this new shop (81 Kloosterstraat, Antwerp), where she sells vintage and contemporary design, accessories, fashion and art. Still with a strong focus on Scandinavian style, but with a distinctive eye for the truly unique.

→ www.fivefridays.be

GHENT



Photos: Monique Philips

Welcome to UGent

TANIA RABESANDRATANA

Ghent has been dubbed both "the new Bruges" and "Belgium's best-kept secret" by the Lonely Planet travel guides. If the city's architectural charms and cultural life are known only to a select few, the same can't be said of Ghent University's pluralistic teaching and first-rate research, which are hardly a secret in the international academic world.

Ghent University, or UGent, goes by the motto "dare to think". It is one of the most liberal educational institutions in Flanders: the official mission statement insists that the university encourages critical and creative thinking, welcomes all cultures and backgrounds and strives to entrench its social commitment and broaden its international horizons.

A bit of history

UGent began operating in 1817, much later than other Flemish universities. At the time, the city was part of the Southern Netherlands. Only 13 years later, this region split from the Netherlands, and Belgium was founded; UGent was hardly hit in the process and spent the next several decades building its student population to the 33,000 it boasts today, making it Flanders' second-largest university after the Catholic University of Leuven (KU Leuven). At the end of the 19th century, universities earned

the right to award degrees and developed their research departments, and Ghent University was swept by a modernisation wave.

In 1930, Ghent became the first Flemish university to teach its entire curriculum in Dutch. At its creation, the university's language was Latin. After 1830, French entered the curriculum, as it did all forms of education in the new Belgian state. Ghent gradually introduced Dutch, which gave many more Flemings the opportunity to study. Of course today, you'll

find many programmes in English and English spoken among the thousands of international students and researchers based here.

Eight years later, Ghent-born medical researcher Corneel Heymans' work on the regulation of respiration earned him the Nobel Prize in physiology and medicine. Decades later, state reform extended the Belgian regions' decision power in education, and a 1991 decree gave universities more autonomy. Since then, Ghent University has been growing steadily.



Welcome to UGent

Reaching the stars

University rankings are a delicate affair; they don't all use the same criteria and are often too dry to capture the atmosphere of a campus, or evaluate how the university integrates itself within the broader social reality of the country. Still, when a university scores high on most rankings, it's a sure sign that it's doing something right in a competitive environment.

UGent is the second-best Belgian university, according to the Leiden ranking, which evaluates the impact of scientific publications. The influential Times Higher Education consistently ranks UGent third in Belgium, behind KU Leuven and UC Louvain.

This year, Ghent University proudly reached the authoritative Shanghai ranking's top 100. Its 90th position is 30 places up from 2005. It is the first Belgian university to make it to the top 100 since the ranking's creation in 2003, a mark that reflects the institution's excellent research facilities.



World-class research

Ghent University is big on natural sciences: Rector Paul Van Cauwenbergh is a professor of medicine, and vice rector Luc Moens is a chemist. In particular, UGent is keen on life sciences. Earlier this year, the university picked five of its strongest fields (photonics, biotechnology and engineering, immunology and molecular imaging, neurosciences and bioinformatics) and launched research partnerships to attract the brightest brains in Europe.

"We cannot compete with the major foreign universities in financial terms," says the vice-rector. "But the academics are primarily convinced by the scientific challenge... the present expertise of the researchers working here, the infrastructure and, in particular, the ambitions of the research groups."

That ambition is to become no less than world leaders in these areas. Last year, the university spent some €213 million on research. UGent also aims to attract scientists armed with funding they have earned elsewhere. The European Research Council (ERC) is one of the most prestigious funding bodies; set up by the European Union, it awards five-year research grants to the most promising researchers, whatever their origin or discipline.

Six ERC-funded researchers have chosen UGent's labs for their work - ranging from nanoporous materials to the study of 15th-century Egypt - and four more will start later this year. Locally, the Research Foundation Flanders' Odysseus programme also lures first-class scientists into the region, awarding them funding to run their own scientific projects at Flemish universities. At UGent, the Odysseus programme finances various research projects, including experimental psychology, English language, particle physics and plant biology.



Driving entrepreneur

According to a recent study by the ARC Centre of Excellence in Australia, Ghent's department of plant systems biology is simply the best in the world. This department is a joint venture of UGent and the Flanders Interuniversity Institute of Biotechnology (VIB) - an institute for gene technology that combines basic research with pro-active technology transfer to accelerate the use of research results for the creation of commercial products by home-grown start-up companies.

UGent is generally keen on developing entrepreneurship in the region: in 2008, it teamed up with the City of Ghent and the Development Agency of East Flanders to launch Gent BC (Big in Creativity), an on- and offline networking service for budding science-based companies around Ghent. Its goal is to achieve 10 new spin-offs per year.

→ www.ugent.be

International students

Ghent University is home to about 33,000 students and more than 7,500 staff, spread across 11 faculties. The largest are medicine, psychology and education, with the arts and philosophy close behind. Foreign students are most numerous in the sciences - about one-third of bioscience engineering students are from abroad, and a quarter in veterinary science (mostly due to Dutch or German neighbours escaping strictly capped student numbers).

Exchange students abound in the scientific disciplines, too. Ghent is particularly popular

as a study destination among Spanish and Polish students taking part in the EU's Erasmus scheme. The newer Erasmus Mundus programme, funded by the European Commission, broadens horizons even further. It offers joint degrees in at least two European universities and awards scholarships to the best students from Europe and beyond. UGent has happily jumped on the Mundus train and takes part in eight such international Master's programmes, with topics ranging from rural development to marine biodiversity, through to fire safety engineering.



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Student Survival Guide

Getting the best out of Ghent

COURTNEY DAVIS



Graslei: the place to hang out on a sunny weekend



Transport

First and foremost – **you need a bike**, pronto! All of Flanders is bicycle crazy, but nowhere as much as Ghent. There is a second-hand market for bikes every Sunday on Nederpolder in the earlier part of the morning. Another option is to rent one annually from StudentENmobiliteit.

Yes, there is public transport, but, as you might have noticed, huge parts of Ghent are currently under construction, and transport is a bit hectic at the moment. So take our word for it: be like a real Flemish student and bike.



Sweat it out

If the *frietjes* and *pintjes* have you packing on the pounds, hop on your bike and head to **Blaarmeersen** for a run. The five-km route around the canal is popular with joggers, while the nearby park has a lake for swimming, tennis courts, a skate park and plenty of group activities, from roller derby to Frisbee.

Gyms in town range from cheap-o €15 a month for a dank room with free weights, to €275 a year for students at the Stadium Gym, with its Zumba classes and rock climbing walls.

For groceries, there are a handful of chains, with **Aldi** and **Lidl** being rock-bottom cheap and, hence, popular with students. But don't overlook your neighbourhood store, which often sells inexpensive fruits and vegetables. If it is after 19.00, a night shop will have what you are missing, though for an inflated price. If fashion is what you are after, the main shopping drag is the Veldstraat, which has all the big chain stores. For more local flair, **Zoot Costumiers** on Serpentstraat has women's clothes by Belgian designers, all with a kitschy or retro feel. **Cream** on Hoogoort and **Limits** on Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat are punk powered with a nerdy 80s undercurrent.

Bar hopping



Belgium produces, if we even have to tell you, the best beer in the world. Order something different every time from the generally extensive menus. However, if you want to fit in with fellow students (and pay next to nothing), you will fast learn how to say *pintje*, which will get you the cheapest beer on tap.

Any student in Ghent quickly becomes well acquainted with Overpoortstraat, the number one student hang-out, with its wide range of bars of various scenes and crowds, from a drum and bass club night at **Decadance** to a casual beer at the Irish pub **The Porter House**. The best way to enjoy the atmosphere is on a Thursday night – the Flemish students' traditional party night – when the street is closed to cars, and wandering from one venue to the next is part of the adventure.

But make sure you expand your horizons. **Sioux** is a perennial favourite, hidden behind some buildings on Platteberg, not far from the Zuid shopping centre. Its cosy and dark interior pumps out some serious beats for low-down dancing into the early morning.

Around the corner, **Make-Up Club** might not have a sign, but the crowd lined up by the bouncer is a clear indicator of its location on Ketelvest. With its oh-so-trendy DJ line-ups, this is the one spot to wear your funkiest and finest.

On Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat, meanwhile, lies the Mecca of Ghent's culture life, the **Vooruit**. The monstrous building was constructed by the Socialist party in the early 20th century and has several theatre and concert halls, mixing gold-leaf décor with a young, riot vibe. Have a drink in its ever-popular bar between acts. The website www.gratisingent.be lists free events happening in the city. It's a service of **Use-It**, "tourist info for young people". Be sure to grab a Use-It map of Ghent in the tourist office below the Belfort – easily the most informative and downright fun map of the city you will find.

Caffeinated people watching



Many start their weekends on the **Graslei**, the epicentre of Ghent, with meticulously restored Gothic architecture flanking the canal. Perfect for nursing a hangover on a Sunday morning or socialising with strangers on a crowded Saturday night. When the sun comes out, you find hordes of students sitting on the cobblestones, having a picnic and a laugh.

If the weather drives you indoors, nearby **Simon Says** will warm you right up. The coffees are strong and lovingly made, as indicated by the foam hearts in your cappuccino. **Julie's House** down the road on Kraanlei offers cupcakes, brownies and Sunday brunches, while **Coffee Lounge** on Belfortstraat is a cosy internet cafe. Some would say, though, that the best coffee in Ghent still comes from **Mokabon**, an old-style café in the endlessly-inspiring Donkersteeg. It just opened a take-away coffee window out front, Ghent's first.



Coffee love at Simon Says

Congratulations, you've chosen Ghent, home to not only one of the country's most dynamic universities, but also an incredibly diverse city rich in culture and laid-back style. Your student area boasts cheap shops and plenty of watering holes, but, Ghent not being that huge, the rest of the city centre is your oyster, too.

Spend spend spend!



Air your laundry

In Flanders, you'll quickly discover the tradition for most students to head home on the weekend to visit family and old friends. At least that is what is said, but, given the bags of dirty laundry lugged onto public transport every Friday, it's quickly apparent heading back to the folks has the added benefit of clean clothes.

For you, there's **Wassalon** right in the Overpoortstraat or **Mister EcoWash** on Brabantdam, conveniently close to both the Zuid transport station and Trappistenhuis. Choose from one of hundreds of beers on the menu; it makes waiting for your undies to dry far more enjoyable.

Ask and you shall receive

For books, banking and other crucial information, turn to the International Relations Office (IRO) of Ghent University on Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat. It's a one-stop-shop of details, with a front desk manned by those adept at dealing with the many hurdles and questions facing students new to both the university and to Ghent.

→ www.international.ugent.be

Not all cheap eats are equal



Eat like a king for €4 at Soup Lounge

While you will undoubtedly discover countless pitas and *frietjes* (French fries), and the pizza delivery guy will be on a first-name basis, take note of a few healthier alternatives when the grease gets to be too much.

Soup Lounge, smack in the centre Overpoortstraat, offers a big bowl of soup, two rolls and a piece of fruit for €4. Make sure you ask for "alles" so you get everything on offer dumped in the soup: meatballs, fresh veggies, croutons, parsley and a handful of shredded cheese. Be aware, though, that the soups are made with chicken stock.

For real vegetarianism, head down to Kantienberg and Voetweg to **Frietcultuur**, where you'll find a surprisingly posh *friet* shop with some of the best veggie burgers in town. Arriving on nutty whole-grain bread and heaped with vegetables, the crispy *spinazie* (spinach) burger is good, but the sunflower burger is equally tasty. Fries are cooked in vegetable oil, too.

For those looking for a proper evening out, the well-priced **Amadeus** serves all-you-can-eat ribs in a colourful and lively setting. Afterwards, meander through the atmospheric cobbled maze of the Patershol district.



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A man with a plan

On the eve of their first tour, meet the Isbells, Flanders' most promising new band



© Paul Lamont

CHRISTOPHE VERBIEST

“*I can't change the world with melodies, but I'll try,*” sings Gaëtan Vandewoude on the eponymously titled debut of his

band Isbells. I don't know about the big world, but he surely has changed a lot of small worlds.

When the album was released in November of last year, expectations were realistic: selling a few thousand copies would be an excellent result for Zeal Records, the very small, one-man indie label from Leuven.

Almost one year later, 10,000 copies of the debut album have been shipped to homes all over the Benelux. And it will be released in other territories, like Germany, Australia and Japan.

Vandewoude is, of course, delighted, but also down-to-earth. Unless Isbells tops the charts in those exotic countries, they won't be touring there. Not that they're in need of gigs: after a spring and summer loaded with festival appearances in Belgium and the Netherlands, they're embarking this week on a concert tour. It's quite a long way from last year's second gig ever, for less than 10 people, organisers included.

“If you listen carefully, you might, on a few songs, hear a car driving by”

I meet Vandewoude, the band's mainstay, at home in a small hamlet on the border between Limburg, Flemish Brabant and Liège. He dreams of turning the stables that came with the house into a recording studio, but for the time being he has converted just one small room, these days cramped with instruments and a huge mixing console. This is the place where he

wrote and recorded the songs for *Isbells*, a melancholic album with folky, sparsely arranged music.

“I recorded it mostly at night, while my wife and daughter were sleeping,” he confides. “It best suited the atmosphere of the music, but also there are no phone calls or emails to answer, and almost no noise is seeping in. Although, if you listen carefully, you might, on a few songs, hear a car driving by.”

Vandewoude (second from right in photo) is a veteran of the Flemish independent music scene, playing in different bands, including Soon, which met with some fame a few years ago. “Although music has always been extremely important to me and it led to some great experiences, like mixing a Soon album in London or playing at Pukkelpop, I never fully engaged,” he concedes.

Two years ago, he decided to get serious. “I turned 30 and decided to go all out. If not, I probably would have regretted it for the rest of my life.” Vandewoude quit his job at Ikea and started writing songs. “I was a man with a plan: making a CD with my music,” he chuckles. “I started writing as many songs as possible, recorded them in a demo and went out looking for musicians.”

Enter Bart Borremans, Naima Joris en Gianni Marzo. “They are great musicians, but it was as important that we hit it off on a personal level, too,” says Vandewoude.

Artists that resonate in the band's music are Nick Drake, Fleet Foxes and Bon Iver, although Vandewoude stresses that only the latter was a source of inspiration. Strikingly, those sweet sadcore gems Vandewoude pens differ greatly from what Soon – or other rock outfits he played in – delivered.

“My vocals are the most distinctive element to Isbells' sound, but it sounds atrocious

when I try to sing loudly,” he says. “So, when I take my acoustic guitar and start singing, I automatically resort to a high pitch.” He still plays rock music, for that matter, with Soon. “I need variation,” he smiles.

Vandewoude writes personal lyrics “rooted in my life but not necessarily autobiographical.” A good example is “Time's Ticking”, with its ominous: “*You gotta go / Cause I don't need you anymore / You gotta go / And there is nothing left to fight for.*”

“I've been together with the love of my youth, Elke, for 15 years. But in the past few years, six or seven relationships in my close circle of friends fell to pieces. That makes you think. Elke always assumes a new song is about her, and when she heard “Time's Ticking” for the first time, she turned really pallid,” he remembers. “But I reassured her it was not about us,” he smiles. “Now that incident makes us laugh.”

Meanwhile, from the song “Dreamer”: “*Your prayers will be heard the moment you start believing.*” Vandewoude: “I'm really convinced of that. The song is about me jumping into the void by choosing fully for music. You always have to believe 100% in what you do. And look: my dream has come true.”

“No matter how grim the lyrics sometimes are,” he concludes, “they always end with at least a glimmer of hope.”

25 September, 20.00

De Warande
Warandestraat 42
Turnhout

See website for a complete list of concert dates

→ www.isbells.be

CULTURE NEWS

Brussels' art house Cinema Nova is collaborating with the Chinese Independent Film Archive for **DOC.be**, a festival of Belgian documentaries running through 30 September in Beijing. There will also be screenings from the programme of about 30 films in Hong Kong and other cities across China. The selected films are mostly from the last 10 years and are made by Belgian filmmakers on diverse topics set both inside and outside of the country. A handful of directors are in China to present and discuss their work, including Elias Grootaers (*Not Waving, But Drowning*), Laurent Van Lancker (*Surya*) and Claudio Pazienza (*Scenes from a Wild Boar Hunt*).

→ <http://cifa.nova-cinema.org>

Invention is born of necessity, and the Canvas television station is looking outside its VRT bosses for collaborations and funding for **new TV specials this autumn**. With VRT tightening its belt, its affiliates have to get creative. Canvas bought the hit HBO TV series *True Blood* together with digital channel Acht and will begin airing it next month. The station has also collaborated with Antwerp University to make *Wildcard Myanmar*, a five-part series in which Antwerp poet Ramsey Nasr travels to Myanmar with university medical students. “The collaborations are profitable and can also enrich the content of the programmes,” says station manager Jan Stevens.

→ www.canvas.be

Four Ghent politicians found themselves at the local club the Charlatan earlier this month to take part in a **music video by the band Arquettes**. Mayor Daniël Termont himself will be seen singing in the video for the single “*Gutters*”, along with Siegried Bracke (guitar), alderman Mathias De Clercq (drums) and city councillor Vera Dua (bass). Another local boy, TV personality Nic Balthazar, directed the video. “The message is that Ghent is the Belgian rock city of the future,” said Balthazar, “and that politicians don't have to only support the opera but also the youth culture.”

→ <http://vi.be/arquettes>

The Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp **will shut its doors** on 4 October for three years to undergo extensive renovations, and it's going out with a bang: not only can you visit both the permanent collection and the temporary exhibition *Closing Time* for free until 3 October, you'll find that the museum will stay open until 22.00 and host special closing activities, including night tours, a discobar, a new performance by Stefan Perceval (about life in a museum) and a closing night bash that includes a musical and a sell-out of the museum shop.

→ www.kmska.be

A taste of the afterlife

Capilla Flamenca have recorded one of the most complex works in polyphonic history

MARIE DUMONT

In 1506, a plague swept over Valladolid in Spain, killing thousands of people. One of them was Alexander Ackermann, a Flemish musician better known under his Latin pseudonym, Agricola. A prodigiously gifted singer and improviser who'd left his native Ghent to hit the roads of Europe, Agricola was coveted by the courts of France and Burgundy as well as the Medici and d'Este families. In his early 50s when he died, he left a large body of work, including his magnum opus, a mass called *In myne zyn*.

If this sounds like an odd title for a mass in Latin, that's because it is borrowed from a three-part love song that was on everybody's lips at the time. *In myne zyn* is an old spelling of *in mijn zin*, or "in my mind".

Agricola turned it into an obsessive leitmotif, passing it from one voice to the next, changing its rhythm or drowning it under a sea of ornaments. Other songs were also blended in, some of them pious, others secular or even racy.

For a composer today to weave snatches of Jacques Brel's "Ne me quitte pas", Schubert's *Ave Maria* and the Rolling Stones' "Let's Spend the Night Together" into a coherent and solemn whole would be pretty unthinkable, but this mixture of religious and secular was much more common back then. "Physical love was seen as the most sacred thing, as it could create new life," explains Dirk Snellings, the bass singer and artistic director of the Leuven-based vocal quartet Capilla Flamenca, who've just recorded a CD of the mass and will be performing it live next month.

The musicologist who wrote the CD's liner notes likens the piece to the teeming world of Flemish primitive Jan Bruegel, where various scenes are played out side by side, mixing high and low, comic and tragic, and peppered with allusions and jokes that are often lost on us today.

"There is so much happening in it at the same time," agrees Snellings (*pictured in the very middle of the photo*). "For the listener, it feels as mysterious as standing



© Mel Peters

in front of a piece of Arabic calligraphy, staring at all those different lines that somehow fit together. You can choose to focus on this voice, or follow that ornament. It's simply spellbinding."

Named after the group of singers that Charles V took along with him when he left his native Ghent in 1517 to become king of Spain, Capilla Flamenca are among today's most bewitching ambassadors of the so-called Franco-Flemish school, the intricate polyphony that flourished in the Low Countries in the 15th and 16th centuries and spread all over Europe. Made up of four male Flemish singers, the group radiates mutual empathy – the kind that comes with years of working together.

Capilla Flamenca have revived exquisite motets, courtly love songs and rousing Christmas music by the likes of Roland de Lassus and Pierre de la Rue. But *In myne zyn* is probably their most daunting project so far.

"Even by the standards of the time, this was highly complex music," Snellings says. "It was Agricola's last mass, and you can't help feeling he wanted to pour everything he could do into it."

Agricola, it turns out, was largely untouched by the Renaissance ideal of

structure and clarity that was beginning to sweep over Europe. His feet still firmly planted in the Middle Ages, his aim was to overwhelm, if only to give his listeners a sense of the afterlife and a glimpse at the complexity of the cosmos.

Today, this music can be enjoyed by just sitting back and letting yourself be swept away by this great ocean of sound – my five-year-old daughter has started to play it when she needs to unwind after a busy day. But it also helps if you know what to listen out for, which is why the CD includes recordings of the original songs, effectively providing us with some of the musical culture that Agricola's contemporaries would have shared. It is then enormously satisfying to follow the melody as it weaves in and out of the mass, morphing from simple ditty to ever-more-sophisticated polyphony.

Capilla Flamenca also has made a video of the piece, which will soon be posted on their website. It is probably the first of its kind in the early music world, although the underlying concept is hardly new: "People would look at paintings as they stood listening in the church," says Snellings, who also regularly sings in art exhibitions and will perform at the inauguration of Ghent's new STAM

museum next month. "The pictures made clear what the words and music didn't – they were the Bible of the poor."

Capilla Flamenca does its best to reach out to modern audiences. In 2003, they took part in *Foi*, an arresting contemporary dance production by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, their suave voices providing a striking counterpoint to the apocalyptic world depicted on stage.

"We live in the present," says Snellings. "Look at Leuven, it still has lots of beautiful old buildings, but there are some fine modern ones as well." Still, he and his friends are never happier than when performing in the churches for which this music was composed, such as the Abbey van 't Park in Heverlee where the CD was recorded. "Our voices rise and fill the space, developing rich harmonics. We can make the sound light, brilliant or soft. It all feels natural and effortless." ♦

In myne zyn

2 October, 20.00
Sint-Niklaas van Tolentijn Church
Kerkplein, De Pinte

→ www.capilla.be

In praise of Mortelmans • Why doesn't the father of Flemish symphony get more credit?

PAUL STUMP

At the turn of the 20th century, Europe's division into great Imperial power blocs resulted in the emergence of a nationalistic spirit in smaller regions, including, of course, Belgium – and, it hardly needs adding, Flanders within it.

All sought political, economic and cultural self-determination. Each new geographical entity wanted – and needed – its own literature, dance, music. In Belgium, for example, Art Nouveau became the signature national architecture.

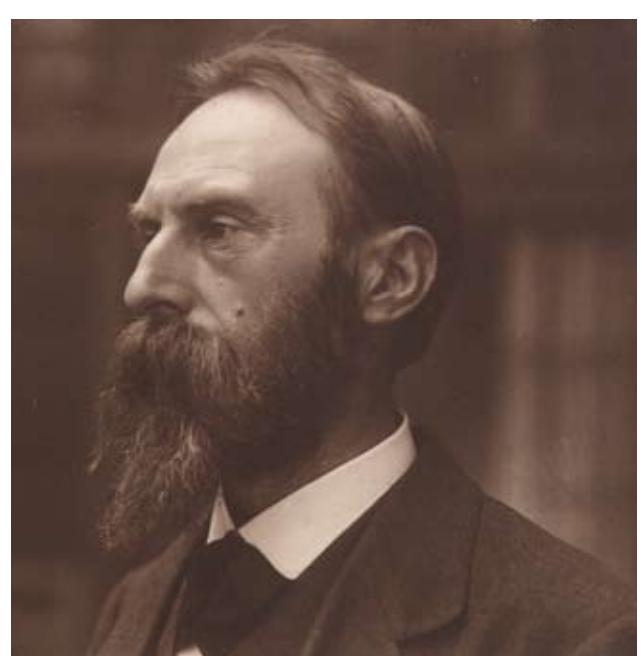
Music in Flanders concentrated largely around the Antwerp Conservatory and its formidable head of composition, Peter Benoit. The favourite pupil of this musical patriarch was a young man from Antwerp named Lodewijk Mortelmans (1868-1952) whose *Homerische Symphonie*, now recorded by the British independent label Hyperion, allows us to witness the birth of the Flemish symphony, as well as serving as a milestone in Belgian cultural evolution.

There's little notably Flemish-sounding about this grandiloquent, hour-long musical of episodes from the *Iliad*. Another composer, August de Boeck, was more adept at incorporating folk and popular tunes into his music. But Mortelmans' symphony is important for marking a decisive break with the French influence of vocal writing,

and thus embodied the Flemish cultural resistance as a whole. Mortelmans' Flemish pride did not stop him from accepting the award as winner of the Belgian category of France's greatest composition prize, the Prix de Rome, in 1893. But he was ever dedicated to Flanders, drawing up never-realised plans for a Flemish operatic festival along the lines of Wagner's annual bash at Bayreuth in Bavaria. Hyperion's CD, featuring the Royal Flemish Orchestra under the baton of the adventurous British maestro Martyn Brabbins, is not the first appearance of Mortelmans' music in commercial recordings. The now defunct Discover International label commissioned some of his orchestral works in the early 1990s, as did the Naxos company, including the *Mythe der lente* (*Myth of Spring*) and *Morgenstemming* (*Morning Mood*), also heard here.

Flemish radio stations like Klara have also recorded Mortelmans' works, and one enterprising fan has even uploaded clips of performances of the composer's rare-as-hen's-teeth piano miniatures to YouTube. Is it too much to hope that a Flemish body will do what it's taken a British record label to do and dust off some of these hidden treasures? Mortelmans (*pictured*) could certainly make a joyful noise, and it's time the whole country made a bit more of a din about this first Belgian symphonist. ♦

→ www.lodewijkmortelmans.be



Lodewijk Mortelmans' *Fantasy Dance* and the symphonic poem *Myth of Spring* will be performed by Vocal Collectief on 23 October at DeSingel in Antwerp

Agenda

Henk Van Rensbergen

One of the world's best photographers of abandoned spaces, Henk Van Rensbergen shows his latest work in a soon-to-be-renovated historical mansion in the centre of Antwerp
→ www.abandoned-places.com/salvator



FLANDERS TODAY
SEPTEMBER 22, 2010



Planet Janis and Jimi

ALAN HOPE

Flanders has no shortage of fine female singers: Dani Klein, Axelle Red, Lady Linn and even Natalia, transformed from talent-show wannabe to real soul diva. And then there's Beverly Jo Scott, who may have been born in Texas, but who's spent the better part of her life in Brussels. She's paired most famously with Arno, is popular on the festival circuit and is a permanent fixture at the Ancienne Belgique, Brussels' rock temple.

She'll be back in the AB on 2 October for something especially groovy: her ongoing project Planet Janis, a tribute to the influence of Janis Joplin, coupled with a tribute to Jimi Hendrix.

Joplin, also born in Texas, died on 4 October, 1970, almost exactly 40 years ago to the day. The 40th anniversary of Hendrix's death was just last week, on 18 September.

The Planet Janis show is now in its sixth year. "I discovered her when I was young, and she encouraged me to be myself," says Scott (pictured above). Nobody, not even the blues legends by whom she was so heavily influenced, sang like Joplin. "Her voice sounded really strange at the time. It's still not my favourite voice among singers, but she's one of my favourites for personality."

Joplin's life was cut short by drugs and booze: she died of an overdose when she was only 27. Her voice had an incomparable edge, and a youth spent as a social outcast (despite a churchy, middle-class upbringing) gave her insight into the isolation and alienation

contained in the blues.

Like Joplin, Scott started off singing in church. "I also had kind of an unusual voice, but not in that raucous way," she says. "I sang alto from when I was very young." Since then, she's inhabited the world of blues-rock, a much-maligned genre thanks to too many bad pub bands.

Scott doesn't sound like Joplin, but that's OK because Joplin's voice and style are so particular that a little goes a long way. Scott, meanwhile, better fits the company of someone like Bonnie Raitt, with a voice that speaks of too much bourbon and too many no-good guys. She's seen it all and sings in sad resignation rather than a shout of pain.

"I was attracted to Janis because I wanted to show a different aspect of her – how she worked hard, how she was educated, her influences and what made her what she was – another side of her than just the whiskey bottle and the bad-ass attitude."

Scott won't be alone onstage: French blues guitarist Paul Personne and Antwerp's alt-rock duo Black Box Revelation are there to pay their respects to the legends of 1960s rock and roll, as well. ♦

2 October, 20.00

Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110
Brussels

→ www.abconcerts.be

MORE ROCK THIS WEEK

Psycho 44 → **JH Jokot, Niel**

Guns N' Roses → **Sportpaleis, Antwerp**

TelRock → **Parochieterrein Bunt, Ekeren**



Antwerp

Fnac
Groenplaats; 03.213.56.57 www.fnac.be
SEP 25 14.00 Bai Kamara + Udo

Jolly Joker

Rijnskaai 14; www.jollyjoker.be
SEP 25 22.00 Les Plastiscines +
Tommigun + Katia -Rock Ahoy- Vlerick + The Glimmers

Rataplan

Wijngemstraat 27; 03.292.97.40
www.rataplanvzw.be
SEP 22 20.30 Ifa y Xangô
SEP 23-25 20.30 Postume werken

Sportpaleis

Schijnpoortweg 119; 070.345.345
www.sportpaleis.be
SEP 24-OCT 8 20.30 Milk Inc.

Trix

Noordersingel 28; 03.670.09.00
www.trixonline.be
SEP 24 20.30 The Telescopes
SEP 25 20.00 The Neon Judgement

Brussels

Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24
www.abconcerts.be
SEP 22 20.00 Jason Derülo
SEP 27 20.00 Brandon Flowers
SEP 28 20.00 Killing Joke. Broken Glass
Heroes + The Morning Benders

Beursschouwburg

Auguste Ortsstraat 20-28; 02.550.03.50
www.beursschouwburg.be
SEP 29 21.30 S.H.O.W. presents No
Border Camp, concert and debate

DNA

Plattesteen 18-20; 02.512.59.92
SEP 24 20.00 Lewis Cat

Koning Boudewijnstadion
Marathonlaan 135; 0900.26.060
www.livenation.be
SEP 22-23 U2

Le Botanique

Koningsstraat 236; 02.218.37.32
www.botanique.be
Concerts at 20.00:
SEP 22 Balthazar. Sad day for Puppets +
Mystery Jets **SEP 23** Les Nuits du Soir:
Music for Rabbits + Nestor! + Drums
are for Parades + Auryn + Polyphonic
Size. Love Amongst Ruin **SEP 24** Love
Amongst Ruin with Steve Hewitt from
Placebo. Lezarts Urbains: Sidéral, Stan,
13HOR **SEP 25** Gaffa + Naïf

Magasin 4

Havenlaan 51B; 02.223.34.74
www.magasin4.be
SEP 25 19.00 Los Tiki Phantoms + The
Stopping Smokers + Hell O Tiki + DJ
Mr Slick

Maison du Peuple

Sint-Gillisvoorde 39;
www.maison-du-peuple.be
SEP 24 20.00 Queimada: Hot Griselda,
KV Express, A Contrabanda

Recyclart

Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34
www.recycleart.be
SEP 24 21.00 Umbrelladelika! Label
night 2.0: Lowdjo & Polle Van De Gash
+ Egon Fisk + Phoebus & Shepherd +
Sunken Foal + more

The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
www.themusicvillage.com
SEP 23 12.30 Venus in Flames

Ghent

Charlatan
Vlasmarkt 6; 09.224.24.57
www.charlatan.be
SEP 24 20.00 An Pierlé & White Velvet

Handelsbeurs

Kouter 29; 09.265.91.65
www.handelsbeurs.be
SEP 29 20.15 Eilen Jewell

Kinky Star

Vlasmarkt 9; 09.223.48.45
www.kinkystar.com
Free concerts at 21.00:
SEP 24 Kraak: Alkerdeel **SEP 25**

GET YOUR
TICKETS NOW!

Creativity Forum

21 October, 8.30-20.00
Hangar 29, Antwerp

As far as these creativity conferences go, this is probably Flanders' best, especially for English speakers, and if you register before 1 October, you save €50 on the fee. The annual event is sponsored by the region's District of Creativity and brings some of the brightest minds to Flanders to share their secrets of success – which is always about innovative thinking. This year the speakers are all women – from Randi Zuckerberg, director of marketing at Facebook (and Mark's sister), to Flemish reproductive rights advocate Marleen Temmerman (pictured), to Christie Hefner, former CEO of *Playboy* magazine, who took the publication onto television and the internet – making it the first American national magazine on the world-wide web.



→ www.flandersdc.be
JonGeDuld Festival SEP 26 Hear, hear!
SEP 28 The New Industry

Minus One
Opgeestenlaan 455; 09.223.22.27
www.democrazy.be
SEP 25 22.00 Deep Medi label night
with Kromestar, Silkie, Goth Trad

Vooruit
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060
www.vooruit.be
SEP 23 22.00 Magic Arm
SEP 24 20.00 Drums are For Parades
SEP 28 20.30 Bedroom Community
label night: Sam Amidon + Valgeir
Sigurdsson + Ben Frost + Nico Muhly

Ingelmunster
Kunstkroeg De Fagot
Stationsstraat 48; 051.31.00.74
SEP 27 20.30 No Crows

Kortrijk
De Kreun
Conservatoriumplein 1; 056.37.06.44
www.dekreun.be
SEP 25 14.00 Noisefest II: Naked On
The Vague + Attestupa + Sewer Election
+ Family Battle Snake + BBBlood + Sink

Leuven
Het Depot
Martelarenplein 12; 016.22.06.03
www.hetdepot.be
SEP 24 20.00 Big Bill
SEP 28 20.00 10cc



Antwerp

Buster
Kaasrui 1; 03.232.51.53
www.busterpodium.be
SEP 24 22.00 Groove Juice Special

Café Hopper
Leopold de Waelstraat 2; 03.248.49.33
www.cafehopper.be
SEP 26 21.00 Yvonne Walter
SEP 27 21.00 sixTension

De Heksenketel
Pelgrimsstraat 22; 03.283.56.73
www.heksenketel.org
SEP 26 15.00 Daniel McBrearty

Den Hopsack
Grote Pieter Potstraat 24; www.denhopsack.be
SEP 27 21.00 Jam Manouche
SEP 29 21.00 Jokke Schreurs

Bruges

Concertgebouw
't Zand 34; www.concertgebouw.be
SEP 30-OCT 3 Jazz Brugge festival: Victor Toth Trio, Keith Tippett, Brussels Jazz Orchestra, The Skopje Connection, Michiel Braam, more

Brussels

Art Base
Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20
www.art-base.be
SEP 25 20.00 Swingajo Trio, Django swing

The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
www.themusicvillage.com
SEP 22 20.30 Romain Verwilghen
Duo **SEP 23** 20.30 Circacincos, Astor Piazzolla music **SEP 24** 21.00 Dave Pike Quartet: tribute to Roger Vanhaverbeke
SEP 25 21.00 Phil Abraham Quartet + guest André Donni **SEP 28** 21.00 Marco Llano Quintet **SEP 29** 21.00 Gustavo Nasuti

Ghent

Vooruit
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060
www.vooruit.be
SEP 25 20.00 Jef Neve Trio



Antwerp

Zuiderpershuis
Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00
www.zuiderpershuis.be
SEP 24 20.30 Sokratis Sinopoulos

Brussels

Art Base
Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20
www.art-base.be
SEP 24 20.00 Musicauta (Italy)

Atelier 210
Sint-Pieterssteenweg 210; 02.732.25.98
www.atelier210.be
SEP 29 20.00 What the Folk! Murder (Denmark)

K-nal
Havenlaan 1; 0474.04.00.00
www.k-nal.be
SEP 25 23.00 Fritz Kalkbrenner Lives (Germany)

Le Bar du Matin
Alsembergsesteenweg 172; 02.537.71.59
<http://bardumatins.blogspot.com>
SEP 23 21.00 Fanga, Afro beats

Piola Libri
Franklinstraat 66-68; 02.736.93.91
www.piolalibri.be
SEP 23 19.00 Sandmoon, indie folk (Lebanon)
SEP 28 19.00 Le Double, indie folk (Belgium)

Zinnema
Veeleidestraat 24-26; 02.555.06.00
www.nfalykouyate.com
SEP 25 20.00 N'Faly Kouyaté and Kora Friends (Guinea)



Bruges

Concertgebouw
't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02
www.concertgebouw.be
SEP 24 20.00 Brussels Philharmonic and Flemish Radio Orchestra conducted by Michel Tabachnik: Wagner, Scriabin
SEP 25 20.00 Champ d'Action: Frederic Rzewski
SEP 26 11.00 Frederic Rzewski, Daan Vandewalle, piano: Rzewski, 14.00 Daan Vandewalle, piano, and Collegium de Dunis, choir, conducted by Ignace Thevelein: Rzewski, 17.00 Het Collectief with Marianne Pousseur, soprano: Rzewski, Henri Pousseur, Louis Andriessen

Dukes' Palace Kempinsky
Prinsenhof 8; 050.44.78.86
SEP 24 19.30 France Springuel, cello: Bach

Brussels

Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be
SEP 23 20.00 Liège Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by John Axelrod: Wagner, Schumann, Mahler
SEP 24 20.00 Les Agrémens and Namur Chamber Choir conducted by Guy Van Waas: Cherubini, Gluck, Ferdinand Hérold, Schubert
SEP 26 11.00 Bezhod Abduraimov, piano: Bach, Chopin, Liszt
SEP 29 12.40 Birgit Erz, violin; Ilona Kind, cello; Karla Haltenwanger, piano: Mozart, Shostakovich 20.00 De Munt Symphony Orchestra conducted by Hartmut Haenchen: Mahler, Boesmans, Berg

De Munt

Muntplein; 070.23.39.39 w
www.demunt.be
SEP 29 20.00 De Munt Symphony Orchestra conducted by Hartmut Haenchen, with Mireille Delunsch, soprano: Mahler, Boesmans, Berg

Miniemenkerk

Miniemenstraat 62; 02.511.93.84
www.minimes.net
SEP 26 10.30 Orchestra and Choir of the Miniemenkerk conducted by Piers Maxim: cantatas and motets by JS and JC Bach

Musical Instrument Museum

Hofberg 2; 02.545.01.30 www.mim.be
SEP 23 20.00 Christophe Rousset, Ioannes Couchet harpsichord: Couperin, Froberger
SEP 26 11.00 Michel Poskin, violin; Tony Nys, viola; Sébastien Walnier, cello: Beethoven, Albert Huybrechts

Royal Music Conservatory

Regentschapsstraat 30; 02.213.41.37
www.kcb.be
SEP 22 20.00 Café Zimmermann with Céline Frisch, harpsichord; Sophie Karthäuser, soprano: Bach
SEP 27 20.00 Denis Kozhukhin, piano: Haydn, Liszt, more

St Michael and St Gudula Cathedral

Sinter-Goedeleplein; 02.507.82.00
www.cathedralestmichel.be
SEP 28 19.30 Thibault Boudart, carillon: 20.00 Capella Sanctorum Michaelis et Gudulae conducted by Inge Feyen; Schola Cathedrales Bruxellensis conducted by Herbert Beirens; Jozef Sluys & Xavier Deprez, organ

Ghent

DeBijloke
Joseph Kluyzenstraat 2; 09.269.92.92
www.debijloke.be
SEP 24 20.00 DeFilharmonie conducted by Philippe Herreweghe, with Dagmar Peckova, mezzo: Mahler, Bruckner
SEP 25 20.00 Capriccio Stravagante conducted by Skip Sempé: Lully, Marais, Praetorius

Leuven

Kruidtuin
Kapucijnenvoer 30; 016.23.84.27
www.30cc.be
SEP 28 19.00/21.00 Capilla Flamenca conducted by Dirk Snellings: Philippe de Vitry, Guillaume de Machaut



Antwerp

Vlaamse Opera
Frankrijklei 1; 070.22.02.02
www.vlaamseopera.be
Until SEP 28 15.00/20.00 L'Amour de loin by Kaija Saariaho, conducted by Koen Kessels, staged by Daniele Finzi Pasca (in the original French with Dutch surtitles)



Antwerp

Theater 't Eilandje
Kattendijkstraat-Westkaai 16; 03.203.95.85 www.kbvv.be
Until SEP 24 15.00/20.00 Royal Ballet of Flanders in Coupe Maison 5

Zuiderpershuis
Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00
www.zuiderpershuis.be
SEP 23 20.30 Adela Campallo, flamenco

Brussels

Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be
SEP 22 20.30 Germaine Acogny in Songook Yaakaar

Théâtre Les Tanneurs

Huideveterstraat 75; 02.512.17.84
www.lestanneurs.be
Until SEP 25 20.30 Line of Oblivion, choreographed and performed by Johanne Saunier to music by Arturo Fuentes



Antwerp

Fakkeltreter Rode Zaal
Hoogstraat 12; 070.246.036
www.fakkeltreter.be
SEP 23-OCT 3 15.00/20.30 Judas TheaterProducts in NO NONSENSE, music theatre (in Dutch)

Het Paleis

Meistraat 2; 03.202.83.60
www.hetpaleis.be
SEP 25-OCT 9 15.00/20.00 De Blinde Koning (The Blind King), directed by Dimitri Leue (in Dutch)

Theater aan de Stroom

Blancefloerlaan 181; 070.22.33.30
www.theateraandestroom.be
Until OCT 3 (times vary) Fluistercompagnie in Bent, directed by Jean-Paul Van Steerteghem (in Dutch)

Ardoorie

Cultuurkapel De Schaduw Wezestraat 32; 0479.80.94.82
www.deschaduw.net
SEP 23-30 20.30 Yerma vraagt een toefling (Yerma wants a baby), directed by Steven Duyck (in Dutch)

Brussels

KVS Box
Arduinckstraat 9; 02.210.11.12 www.kvs.be
Until SEP 23 20.30 Ruhe, music theatre with Collegium Vocale Gent, directed by Josse de Pauw (in Dutch)

Kaaitheater

Sainte-Catherine Square 20; 02.201.59.59
www.kaaitheater.be
SEP 23-25 20.30 Nature Theater of Oklahoma in Life and Times: Episode 1, music theatre directed by Pavol Liska and Kelly Cooper, with music by Robert M Johanson (in English)

Ghent

Vooruit
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060
www.vooruit.be
Until SEP 24 20.00 Compagnie Cecilia and Het Paleis in Schöne Blumen (Beautiful Flowers), written and directed by Arne Sierens (in Dutch)



Antwerp

Contemporary Art Museum (M HKA)
Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60
www.muhka.be
Until NOV 14 Lonely At The Top: Modern Dialect, contemporary artists look at the work of late Flemish architect Renaat Braem

Extra City

Tulpstraat 79; 03.677.16.55
www.extra-city.org
Until OCT 31 The Formative Years, works by German experimental filmmaker and artist Heinz Emigholz
Until OCT 31 (Conditions of Agency), objects, performances, texts, videos and interviews by Dutch artist Falke Pisano

Fashion Museum (MoMu)
Nationalestraat 28; 03.470.27.70
www.momu.be
Until FEB 13 Stephen Jones & The Accent of Fashion, retrospective of works by the British hatmaker

DON'T MISS



© Hugo Maertens; hair styling Pascal van Loenhout for Bumble&Bumble

Expats in Belgium

Have your say!

Fill in our Expats Survey on

www.xpats.com/survey

and win one of the following prizes:

- 2 Round trip tickets to Riga + 1 night in a hotel, including breakfast, spa and airport transfer offered to you by Air Baltic
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- 50 pairs of free tickets to Walabi
- 50 pairs of free tickets for UGC cinemas in Brussels or Antwerp
- 15% off for 20 prize winners in Brussels' restaurant La Quincaillerie



Fotomuseum

Waalse Kaai 47; 03.242.93.00
www.fotomuseum.be
SEP 24-JAN 16 Boris Becker:
1984-2009, photographs by the German
modernist
SEP 24-JAN 16 Willy Kessels:
1930-1960, photographs by the Flemish
modernist

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
Until OCT 3 Jongbloed! (Young Blood),
electronic music, mixed media/video,
graphic design and photos by nine



BNP Paribas Fortis

Film Days

24-26 September

Across Flanders and Brussels

The title might not read like a barrel of fun, but if you like the idea of spending €3 to see a new release, good times are yours this weekend. Continuing the democracy, it's happening in cinemas across the country, in tiny towns and big cities alike. On the list are films already showing, plus several brand new releases, like Ben Affleck's critically acclaimed new movie *Town* and *Charlie St Cloud*, starring the irresistibly cute Zac Efron as a young man preoccupied with the untimely death of his brother.

→ www.filmdays.be

Bukowski Cycle

Until 29 October

Cinematek, Brussels

There are two good reasons to catch the mere four flicks that make up this series at Cinematek over the next few weeks: Films based on the work of Charles Bukowski have been refreshingly free of spit-shining, keeping the work of the late Los Angeles-based poet as grimy and bleak as the original, and one of them is Flemish. That one would be Dominique Deruddere's 1987 movie *Crazy Love*, based on several Bukowski short stories that cover burgeoning (and tortuous) sexuality, teenage misery and, most unforgettably, necrophilia. The other films in the series are Italian filmmaker Marco Ferreri's *Tales of Ordinary Madness*, Franco-Swiss director Barbet Schroeder's hard-hitting *Barfly* and Norwegian filmmaker Bent Hamer's fantastic *Factotum*, starring Matt Dillon as Bukowski himself (pictured above).

→ www.cinematek.be

young artists inspired by the Closing Time exhibition

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 Sint-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

Atomium

Atomium Square; 02.475.47.72
www.atomium.be

Until NOV 14 Intersections: Belgian
Design, parcours of works by young
Belgian designers Jean-François d'Or,
Nicolas Destino and Linde Hermans

Belgian Comic Strip Centre

Zandstraat 20; 02.219.19.80
www.stripmuseum.be
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

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?, 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

De Loge Architecture Museum

Kluisstraat 86; 02.642.24.80

Until OCT 10 Dynamo Belgian Young
Design Awards, works by the young
Belgian designers who participated in
the Dynamo Prize competition

Jewish Museum of Belgium

Minimstraat 21; 02.512.19.63

www.mj-bjm.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

Magritte Museum

Koningsplein 1; (0)2 508 32 11,
www.musee-magritte-museum.be

Until JAN 2 The painting The
Threatened Assassin comes to the
museum on loan from MoMA in New
York to hang beside its companion piece
The Secret Player, bringing Magritte's
sole diptych temporarily together

Royal Museum of the Armed Forces

Jubelpark 3; 02.737.78.33

www.legermuseum.be
Until SEP 26 Made in Belgium:
Figurines, more than 6,000 toy soldiers,
on the occasion of the publication of the
book of the same name by Paul Herman
and Jacques Witmeur

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

Yaruna

Waversesteenweg 214B; 02.512.93.12
www.anunroom.com

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

Gaasbeek

Gaasbeek Castle

Kasteelstraat 40; 02.531.01.30

www.kasteelvangaasbeek.be
Until NOV 7 Dragon Brood!, collection
of works and objects on the theme of
dragons

Ghent

Design Museum

Jan Breydelstraat 5; 09.267.99.99

www.designmuseumgent.be

Until OCT 24 Super Normal:
Sensations of the Everyday, objects from
around the world selected by designers
Naoto Fukasawa and Jasper Morrison

Until OCT 24 Piet Stockmans:
Retrospective, works by the legendary
Flemish porcelain designer

Until OCT 24 Nilton Cunha: Good
Luck, works in silver and Corian by the
Flemish designer

Museum of Fine Arts

Fernand Scribedreef 1 – Cidadelpark;

09.240.07.00 www.mskgent.be

Until OCT 3 Stijn Cole: Sunset/Sunset,
contemporary works by the Flemish
artist-in-residence

Museum of Modern Art (SMAK)

Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03 www.smak.be

Until OCT 3 Xanadu! The SMAK

collection presented by Hans Theys
Until DEC 3 Inside Installations,
10 installations from the museum's
collection

Until OCT 17 Coming People, group
exhibition of final year projects by
students of the Royal Academy of Fine
Arts and St Lucas College of Science
and Arts

Until NOV 21 Tegenlicht (Backlight),
young visual artists and writers confront
famous artists from the literary, arts and
music scene

Grimbergen

CC Strombeek

Gemeenteplein; 02.263.03.43

www.ccstrombeek.be

SEP 25-OCT 21 The Tragedy of the
Applause, group show of work by artists
of the Ohio Co-operation in dialogue
with Canadian artist Jeff Wall. Free
concert on opening night

Hasselt

Fashion Museum (MMH)

Gasthuisstraat 11; 011.239.621

www.modemuseumhasselt.be

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

LiteraryMuseum

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

Kemzeke

Verbeke Foundation

Westakker; 03.789.22.07

www.verbekefoundation.com

Until OCT 31 Green Summer,
ecological projects and art works

Until OCT 31 Stan Wannet: De
Hondenmepper, moving installations
and robotics by the artist-in-residence

Until OCT 31 Wout Hoeboer
(1910-1983): Dandy Dada, retrospective
of the surrealist Dutch painter

Kortrijk

Museum Kortrijk 1302

Houtmarkt-Beginpark; 056.27.78.50,

www.kortrijk1302.be

Until JAN 9 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 DEC 5 The Anjou Bible: A Royal
Manuscript Revealed, a rare manuscript
from the 14th-century Royal Court of
Naples

Until SEP 26 Marcel Broodthaers,

Until SEP 2

ROBYN BOYLE

bite



© Johan Martens

't Oud Clooster

Around the 14th century, the entire block along the Zwartezustersstraat in Ghent belonged to the Klooster der Zwarte Zusters (Convent of the Black Sisters). When the convent shut down some 400 years later, the nuns moved out and the building was split up into several properties. One of those now houses 't Oud Clooster (The Old Convent) restaurant. The place is not easy to find, despite its location just 100 metres from Veldstraat, the city's main shopping street.

Two massive wooden doors stand wide open under an inviting arched entrance that leads to two smaller doors; the one on the left is the restaurant's upper level, while the right door takes you to the lower level and bar. Either way, you'll get a friendly greeting and a seat at one of the 20-odd tables – especially if you have reserved in advance, as 't Oud Clooster is well known among locals and fills up quickly. Owner Marnix Bonte says his key to success is simple: a relaxed atmosphere and excellent quality for the price. Searching for a property to house a restaurant in his native Bruges 15 years ago, Bonte eventually fell in love with the history behind this central Ghent neighbourhood.

He honours the building's history through its decor: crosses, statues of Mary and Jesus, an old piano and clock, an impressive chandelier made from beer bottles and even a menu resembling a church missal. But the omnipresent religious feel is overtly tongue-in-cheek: a painted devil with angel wings on one wall, a Monty Python quote in the menu, and the featured beer on tap is Moeder Overste (Mother Superior).

In addition to the varying suggestions, the menu is refreshingly limited. Choose from the house speciality brochettes, Flemish stew

made with Westmalle Dubbel, tortellini and spaghetti, shrimp croquettes, calamari, bacon-and-goat-cheese salad and oven dishes like lasagne and moussaka.

The portions are royal in size, but I still couldn't resist an order of *apérohapjes*, with three different tasty starters: fried scampi, samosas and mini-skewers of chicken, served with two sauces – one spicy and one cooling. We devoured them in no time and washed them down with two big glasses of the dark amber, lightly bitter Moeder Overste. I was already a bit full before my real meal arrived: Brochette Oud Clooster is a long skewer of humongous pieces of tender beef, covered in the house speciality red sauce, a mysterious mix of flavours, including a tangy tomato and a hint of sweet fruit. A side salad as long as the brochette, takes up half of the plate. Fresh fries and mayonnaise came with it, although you also have the option of rice or bread. My companion had the same, except his brochette was smothered in a creamy Roquefort sauce.

Finally, if you're able to, try the desserts: rice pudding or tiramisu. I recommend either with fresh mint tea. And the boss was right about price-quality, as all this goodness came to a mere €45 in total.

Zwartezustersstraat 5, Ghent; 09.233.78.02
 Tue-Sat, 18.00-midnight
 An ideal place to feel cosy on a blustery evening

Contact Bite at flandersbite@gmail.com

NEXT WEEK IN FLANDERS TODAY #149

Feature

The biggest ships in the world pull into the Port of Antwerp every day. We meet the crew responsible for manoeuvring them through the narrow waterways and getting them safely docked at shore

Student Guide

We welcome international students to Flanders this autumn with a four-part series: This week, we look at the country's oldest university, the Catholic University of Leuven

Arts

Antwerp choreographer Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui is impressing audiences again with *Babel*, which premiered in Brussels last spring and is, at long last, back in Flanders

TALKING DUTCH

ALISTAIR MACLEAN



‘wandelen’

The little rectangles that look like Polish flags are a bit like the markers made by tramps: they show the way and give help to those in the know. Every sizeable town has these inconspicuous red and white stripes on lamp posts and litter bins; in the countryside you'll find them on trees and fence-posts.

The initiated notice them as they pause to check the guidebook. They are in fact markers to guide you along one of the many *grote routepaden* – long-distance paths – that criss-cross the country and Europe. Recently, I was out walking along the GR 12 route, which runs from Paris to Amsterdam. Over the past couple of years, my *wandelvriend* – walking companion, Terry, and I have been walking the stretch from Brussels via Antwerp to the Dutch border. Sitting in a car speeding along the E19 motorway, you might think nothing could be more boring than plodding through such *platteland* – countryside (“flat land”). Not at all.

The first section from the Grote MarktinBrusselstoGrimbergen takes you past the palace at Laken, the Atomium and then through a pedestrian tunnel under the orbital motorway *de Ring*, and then, as if by magic, you are in cornfields with the silhouette of the *abdij* – abbey – of Grimbergen ahead.

On the next occasion, we

made our way by De Lijn bus

to where we had stopped and, with *wandelgids* – walking guide – in hand, headed out of Grimbergen to soon stop at the delightful Tommenmolen mills for a coffee.

And so over the months through Mechelen, Lier, Deurne to the border at Putte and a drink on the Dutch side of the street. Bus and train served well at each stage, but the section to Amsterdam will require some *overnachtingen* – overnight stays.

All the way, the *wandelgids* was an indispensable back-up to the flags, which would sometimes be inadvertently masked with posters advertising the local *kermis* – fair – or *Chirofuij* – Chiro dance; as I said, people just don't see the flags anymore.

The guide is also a great way to check your Dutch and save the frustration of retracing your steps: “*We nemen de rechte weg aan de linkerkant van de vijver* – We take the straight path on the left side of the pond”. At one point the *wandelgids* crosses another great route, the E2, “*die Schotland verbindt met de Middellandse Zee* – which connects Scotland with the Mediterranean.” We decide to leave that walk until we're both retired.

Flanders may have few truly rural villages, but follow the red and white markings, and you will discover that there's still a lot of *platteland* to enjoy.

→ www.groteroutepaden.be

THE LAST WORD . . .

Let there be light

“The cows don't get out, but their stall is bathed in light, air and space. That gives them a feeling of being outside. When the weather is good, the stall is open for maximum ventilation.”

West Flanders dairy farmer Patrick Costers, describing the latest husbandry techniques imported from Denmark

Struck off

“I had written about five pages about him. Now all we say is that he was religious studies teacher in 1965, nothing more.”

John Goddeeris, responsible for the official record at the school attended by ex-bishop Roger Vangheluwe, admits to censorship

The happy prince

“A very nice evening, really. You see that, don't you? I'm happy. The music was great. I didn't dance; I'm not really any good.”

Prince Laurent, spotted last weekend leaving the Studio 54 disco event at Antwerp's Sportpaleis

Sized up

“Bigger bosoms have always been with us, but the size was always associated with being overweight. Nowadays you see super-thin girls wearing size 36 or 38, and an E or even F cup is not at all unusual.”

Fashion journalist Lut Clincke, commenting on the arrival of the new Freya lingerie range, which goes up to size K