

Life altering

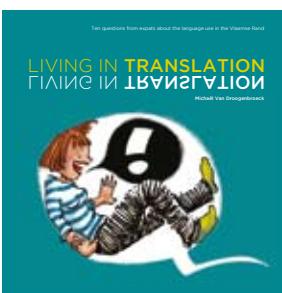
Photos by Lieve Blancquaert

p13

Winning de Ronde

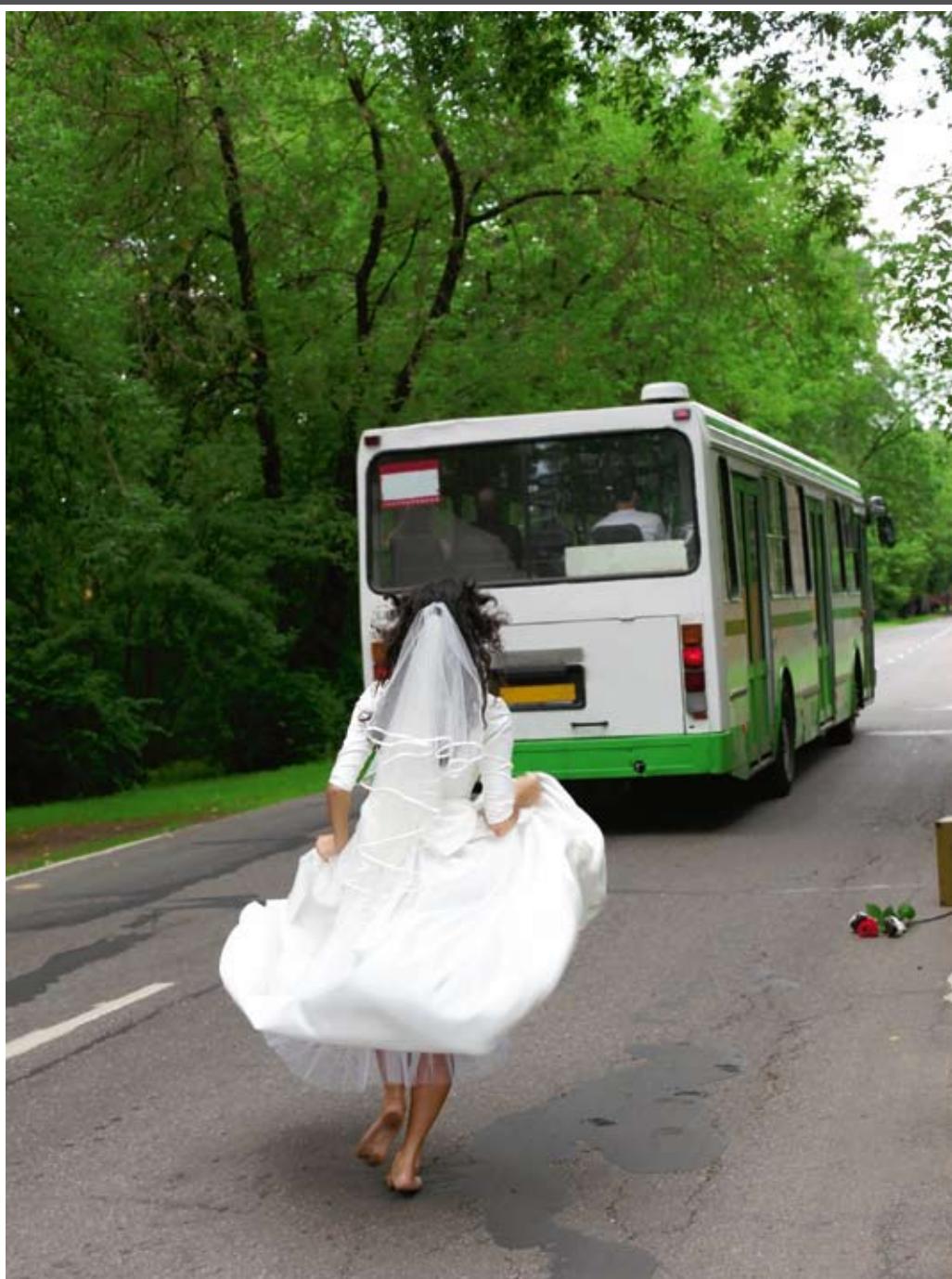
Nick Nuyens takes home cycling crown

16



Living in Translation

Delivered with your *Flanders Today* this week is *Living in Translation*, a new booklet to help negotiate the complicated language situation around Brussels by VRT journalist Michael Van Droogenbroek



“I don’t”

With partnership agreements ensuring legal protections, more and more Flemish couples are choosing not to get married

COURTNEY DAVIS

In a country with a history as rich as Belgium's, you might expect its population to firmly hold on to its traditions. And you'd be mostly right. Yet more and more couples are choosing to forgo the institution of marriage and skip right to the other aspects of domestic bliss. Partners are buying homes and having children, all the while ignoring what used to be a crucial first step in that relationship process.

Rates of marriage in the EU – and particularly Western Europe – have been on a steady decline in the last three decades, and Belgium's rate of four per 1,000 residents is still lower than the 4.9 EU average. Part of this can be attributed to its very liberal stance towards partnerships: Belgium is a strong proponent of allowing couples, both gay and straight, many of the same rights without the backing of a marriage certificate.

If a couple legally registers their partnership, they are responsible for any joint expenses of the household while also both benefiting from any assets acquired during the partnership.

Valerie Dullaerts, from Erpe-Mere, East Flanders, has been with her partner Björn Heindryckx for six years and recently had a child. "For me, marriage is not important," she says. "We have a legal document, *wettelijk samenwonen* (legal civil union), and have – almost – the same rights as a married couple. I'm glad that we have the legal document, as it's reassuring to know that everything is OK for our child should something happen to us in the future."

This written declaration, available to Belgian residents, establishes that each individual file separately for taxes and social security. Lawyer Marc Quaghebeur of Vandendijk & Partners in Brussels clarifies the differences between being married and being registered. "Not being married means that, as a couple, you don't qualify for all the same benefits, such as social security or the pension of your spouse after death, plus there is no extension of Belgian nationality or immigration assistance."

► *continued on page 5*

Badgers spread across Flanders

The badger is slowly but surely making its way from the two known populations, both in Limburg, across Flanders to the farthest reaches of the coastal dunes, according to a study carried out by the Institute for Nature and Forestry Research (INBO).

The researchers carried out autopsies on 30 badgers that had been killed by traffic and collected by volunteers. The results show the presence of badgers in all the Flemish provinces. In Limburg, where two sizeable populations in Haspengouw and the area around Voeren.

Some of the animals were determined to be "far dispersers": solitary animals, mainly young females (sows) and older males (boars), who have left the den and wandered into other areas. One young female was found in Overijse, Flemish Brabant, in March 2009 and another in Buggenhout, East Flanders, which had been foraging among grain stores.

Others, however, could not have been wanderers from the Limburg dens. One female found in Adinkerke, West Flanders, behind the sea-dunes, had recently given birth, making it highly unlikely she had travelled from Limburg. However, no trace of a local den was found in the dunes.



"We have discovered that some of the animals have been in contact with mates and have reproduced, which is spectacular news for the provinces outside of Limburg," commented INBO spokesman Koen Van Den Berge.

► www.inbo.be

Call for special tribunals to judge abuse damages

Parliamentary commission also suggests statute of limitations be increased

ALAN HOPE

The government should set up an independent tribunal of arbitration, which would determine damages to be paid to the victims of sexual abuse by clergy, according to the report of a parliamentary commission released last week. At the same time, the statute of limitations on sexual abuse – the time-limit during which legal proceedings must be brought – should be extended from 10 to 15 years.

Those were two of the main recommendations from a list of about 70 contained in the report. The commission consisted of members of parliament from all parties (except Lijst Dedecker), including the chair of the commission, French-speaking socialist Karine Lalieux. The 483-page document includes testimony from numerous interested parties, from victims to medical experts to representatives of the church, among them Cardinal Godfried Danneels, former archbishop of Belgium.

► *continued on page 3*



ALAN HOPE

Carlos Brito

Carlos Brito may be Brazilian, but his time at the top of InBev, the Leuven-based brewery, took the company from being a local beer producer to the very heights of international business and a huge source of Flemish pride. Brito is included in this year's just-published list of the world's best CEOs by *Barron's*, the American financial magazine, alongside such names as Jeff Bezos of Amazon, Steve Jobs of Apple and über-investor Warren Buffett.

The recognition will come as some consolation after news that his personal earnings in 2010 were down to €4.4 million from the previous year's €7.2 million. Admittedly, 2009 was a banner year for the company now known as ABInBev, following the takeover of Anheuser-Busch in 2008, which made the new company the biggest brewer of beer in the world.

Luckily, *Barron's* doesn't only look at earnings. It takes into account reputation for management, gathered from interviews with analysts and business colleagues. The magazine described Brito's style as "a no-frills, high-performance corporate culture that's become a textbook example of smart management". Brito is a CEO known for scrapping executive parking spaces, whose

staff meetings sometimes last five minutes and who sits at a common table in an open office. Brito was born in Rio de Janeiro in 1960 and studied mechanical engineering before earning an MBA at Stanford University in California. He worked for Shell and Daimler before taking a job with Brahma, a Brazilian brewer, in 1989. His experience there – Brahma merged with Companhia Antarctica Paulista to become AmBev in 1999 – would be repeated a decade later in Belgium: AmBev merged with Leuven-based Interbrew, forming InBev. Then InBev took over Anheuser.

The rest is history: the AB takeover was an audacious move akin to a mouse swallowing a cat whole, and that at a time when the impending credit crisis was forcing companies worldwide to tighten their belts.

Barron's gave special attention this year to companies' approach to Asian markets, which just happens to be where Brito is turning next. Belgians are drinking less beer, and brewers are looking elsewhere for growth markets. Where better than a market of one billion people, where InBev already has a strong presence in Fujian and Jiangxi provinces, with a GDP growth of 12 to 13%.

FLANDERS TODAY

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FLANDERS TODAY

APRIL 6, 2011

News in brief

The new acting chief of the federal police, Paul Van Thielen, has severely criticised a new law allowing **anyone arrested to have a lawyer present** during questioning. Van Thielen told members of the federal parliament the law would create delays of up to 2.5 hours in each of the 80,000 cases of arrests every year, requiring the equivalent of 226 new officers and costing €13 million. The law has been forced on the government by the European Court of Human Rights.

Ronald Janssen will go on trial on 23 September before a court in Tongeren, accused of the **murders of 18-year-old Shana Appelmans** and her boyfriend Kevin Paulus, 22, in January of last year. Janssen is also charged with the murder in 2007 of teenager Annick Van Uytself as she cycled home after a party. During the investigation it was revealed that Janssen had been a suspect in the Van Uytself case but was not seriously investigated. Janssen, a teacher at a local technical college, is accused of raping and torturing Appelmans before her death.

GPs and other doctors are prescribing the **PSA blood test**, used to diagnose prostate cancer, routinely and unnecessarily, at a cost to medical insurers of €4 million, the mutuality CM said. In 2009, 1.5 million men were tested with the PSA (prostate-specific antigen) test, although it is not considered a foolproof diagnostic test for prostate cancer, the most common form of cancer in men. CM called on doctors to restrict the test to high-risk patients.

A 71-year-old woman from Schilde, Antwerp province, is facing a sentence of up to 10 years and a fine of €44,000 for her role as "**Godmother**" of a **drugs network** that smuggled cocaine into Antwerp harbour in containers. Police investigating the case uncovered evidence of at least seven shipments of 80kg each and seized one load weighing 280kg. The woman denies being leader of the gang.

Students from Ghent University will be joined by students from Antwerp and Leuven for this year's **hitchhiking race to the south of Europe**: destination Venice. Last year Ghent students raced to Barcelona, with the winner receiving a round-the-world trip. This year 300 students from each university will make their way to Venice using only their thumbs for the same prize, as well as a cup and a party for the winning city.

The hit Flemish TV show *Benidorm Bastards*, in which old people are shown getting into outrageous situations while a hidden camera records the reactions of onlookers, has been **sold to the American network NBC**. Its own version, *Off Their Rockers*, will be presented by Betty White, formerly of *The Golden Girls*. *Benidorm Bastards*, produced by the production house Shelter, recently won a Golden Rose, and the format has been sold to 20 countries.

The government is requesting that the January decision of the Brussels court of appeal regarding the **bankruptcy of former national airline Sabena** be overturned. The court ruled that new owner Swissair was responsible for driving Sabena to bankruptcy but awarded the government only a fraction of the damages sought – €300,000 instead of one billion. In addition, administrators of the assets of Sabena, who had asked for €2 billion, received only €18 million. If the ruling is overturned, the case would begin again.

Around **100 taxis took part in a motorcade** through Brussels last week to protest against new rules and against "unfair competition" from taxis in the Flemish areas around the capital, following a court ruling allowing them to pick up and drop off fares within the city. The drivers object to new rules forcing them to mark their cars with a distinctive yellow and black chequered stripe, which they have to pay for themselves. Brussels transport minister Brigitte Grouwels pointed out that the new system also involved an increase in fares to compensate drivers for the changes.

Letter to the editor

For some months now, we have been using *Flanders Today* in my advanced English class in the Cultural Centre of Bornem. We read nearly every week the interesting articles, and some pupils have even gone to see the places mentioned; the pubs were popular! I would like to surprise them in the paper with warm greetings and also of course to the nice staff and director of the Cultural Centre of Bornem.
Christiane Ivens

OFFSIDE

No country for old men

The Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe commune in Brussels is the country's most feminine municipality, with women and girls making up nearly 55% of inhabitants, according to figures from the economics ministry. (Across the country as a whole, women have a slight 51% majority.) The reason for Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe's bias, according to one population expert, is because the municipality lies on the richer eastern side of the capital, with a presence of a large number of older people. Since women tend to outlive men, that leads to a preponderance of the fairer sex. Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe takes its name from the Woluwe river that runs through it and through the adjoining Sint-Pieters-Woluwe and Sint-Stevens-Woluwe, which is now part of the municipality of Zaventem. The district was previously agricultural, with settlements dating back to the Bronze Age, and it started becoming residential only in the 19th century as rich people bought up land to build castles and villas. In 1880 the population was only 1,649; it now stands at around 47,000, about 25,000 of them women. Elsene, according to the same figures, is the Brussels commune with the most single people, accounted for mainly by the large student population living close to the two Free Universities VUB and ULB. The most masculine place in Belgium, meanwhile, is Merkplas in the northern Kempen area of



De Broquevillelaan in Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe

Antwerp province, with men accounting for 52% of the population. The name refers to a former fording place (*plas*) over the river Mark. The 8,000 or so inhabitants are known as *spetters* (splashers). In the past, the town was a magnet for casual workers who could find jobs in various industries and on farms in the area. Nowadays Merkplas is best known for its prison, where the percentage of men in the population is considerably higher than 52%. Finally, the most equal municipality in Flanders is Baarle-Hertog, an odd Flemish enclave partly surrounded by Dutch soil. The population there is 2,504: exactly 1,252 men and 1,252 women. For now.



Church has chance for “renewal and catharsis”

→ *continued from page 1*

The commission was set up after the long-running story of sexual abuse of children by priests culminated in the revelation that the Bishop of Bruges, Roger Vangheluwe, has abused his own nephew over a period of years. The shock was compounded when it appeared that Danneels, who is now retired, had attempted to convince the victim not to go public until Vangheluwe himself retired.

The church's position in public opinion was not strengthened when they fought to prevent an investigating magistrate from taking possession of witness statements gathered by a committee set up by the church itself, under the chairmanship of the highly regarded child psychiatrist Peter Adriaenssens. The independent tribunal proposed by the commission would be composed of psychiatrists, lawyers and other experts. One member of the tribunal would be nominated by the victim and one by the church, with a possible third to ensure a casting vote. They would determine the level of damages in an individual case, taking into account medical and therapy costs and loss of

earnings. The damages decided would be legally enforceable, even in cases where the statute of limitations for a criminal act had expired.

“We are saying two things to the church. You must recognize your moral responsibility toward these victims,” said chairwoman Lalieux. “And if these victims officially demand recompense, we offer a process of arbitration to empower all the victims. The church will grow in stature if it takes part in these recommendations and agrees to this arbitration tribunal,” she said. According to N-VA member Siegfried Bracke, the report was not “a settling of scores with the church”. The commission's recommendations, he said, would give the church an opportunity for “renewal and catharsis”.

The proposal to extend the statute of limitations on the crime of sex abuse is a recognition of the delay that is often involved before victims bring a complaint. The 15-year limit would start when the victim reached the age of 18. Several items that had been expected to be included among



© Reuters

the recommendations, such as an obligation for priests to breach the secret of the confessional in cases of admissions of abuse, did not make it to the final report.

The High Council for Justice, on the other hand, recommended keeping the statute of limitations at 10 years, but raising the age at which the time starts from 18 to 25, in recognition of the difficulty many victims have in

coming to enough terms with their experience to make a complaint. The difference would, for example, allow more time for evidence to be gathered or for corroborating evidence to come to light. ♦

The complete report (in French and Dutch) can be downloaded at:

→ <http://tinyurl.com/3g7dy3n>

THE WEEK IN FIGURES



4.1%

of GDP, the size of the 2010 federal budget deficit, according to the Institute for National Accounting. 0.5% less than the figure presented by the government earlier this year

€72

per year and per family, the size of the increase in electricity tariffs approved for Eandis last week by the energy regulator CREG

18,673

notifications of suspect money transactions made by banks, bureaux de change and other financial institutions in the fight against money laundering

€320 million

in arms exports from Flanders in 2010, mainly of components for weapons systems. Germany was the main customer, with sales of €89 million. Countries in North Africa and the Middle East bought €30.9 million of exports

9,436

motorists caught speeding at the site of road works on the E17 between Nazareth and Zwijnaarde in just two weeks, good for about half a million euros in fines. The road works end in August

Liberals, nationalists vote to block quotas

Flemish nationalists of N-VA and liberals of Open VLD have threatened to block the introduction of new laws forcing larger



“Burqa ban” approved

Parliament's home affairs committee last week passed the so-called “burqa ban”, making it illegal for anyone to go out in public with their face wholly or substantially covered. Belgium becomes only the second country, after France, to introduce such a ban.

Muslim women are most affected by the ban, but during discussions in the committee, proponents were careful to raise issues such as security, mindful that a law passed to affect only one population group could be struck down as unconstitutional. A proposal to send the bill to the Council of State for advice was rejected by the committee, as was the suggestion to consult with organisations like Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch.

About 200 women in Belgium wear the full-covering burqa. According to Eva Brems, the human rights professor who voted against her Groen! party line to oppose the ban, the bill has two main faults: it effectively turns victims into criminals, and it makes the assumption that women wear the burqa against their own will.

As for the more common *hijab* headscarf which is the subject of much polemic, it is not affected at all by the ban. ♦

companies to reserve 30% of their board positions for women. The measure was approved last month by the commercial law committee of the federal parliament by nine votes to eight.

Now liberal senator Bart Tommelein has promised to join with N-VA in an attempt to block the measure by a procedural move. Some forms of legislation do not require to be passed by both Chamber and Senate, but the Senate can “evoke” the bill and bring it into the upper house with the support of 15 members. N-VA has 14 seats and has pledged to evoke the measure. Once the bill is in the Senate, it can be delayed. However the Chamber

has already raised enough votes for a reference to the Council of State for an opinion on its legality – another delaying tactic.

The move by Tommelein is a blow to several prominent women in Open VLD, including former party president candidate Gwendolyn Rutten (pictured) and interior minister Annemie Turtelboom, who are in favour of limited application of quotas for women. On VRT radio, Rutten explained her party's position on the question but said that she would be voting in favour of the measure, while making a personal statement of her views. ♦

Record belongs to Cambodia, not Belgium

Apparently, the world got it wrong: Belgium has not reached the world record for a country without a government. Cambodia was without a government for 353 days between July 2003 and July 2004. Counting from the day of the elections last June, Belgium will only match

that record in about two months. However, if you count from the day the last elected government fell, on 26 April 2010, the all-time record will be passed later this month. Few people see either record as unattainable. ♦



© Shutterstock

One in three of the blue handicapped parking badges in circulation in Belgium is not valid, according to a study by motoring organisation Touring. In 2005, the five-yearly renewal system was scrapped, and Touring now says older people are simply passing the cards on to their children and grandchildren. The abuse, the organisation said, makes it more difficult for the genuinely handicapped to find a suitable parking space. Touring called on the government to carry out a widespread check of the cards in use.

FIFTH COLUMN

Carnival prince

Prince Laurent has come under criticism for a trip to Congo, which the palace as well as (caretaker) prime minister Yves Leterme had advised against. The prince blames the “stupid Flemish press” for the commotion. The incident shows the somewhat strained relationship between the Flemish and the monarchy.

It wasn't always like this. In a 1950 referendum to determine whether Leopold III could stay on the throne after his behaviour during the Second World War was found to be anything but patriotic, the Flemish overwhelmingly voted in favour of their king. It didn't save Leopold III, who was forced to abdicate and was succeeded by his 18-year-old son Boudewijn, but, still, it looked like the Flemish had saved the monarchy at least.

What has happened since? Traditional Flemish nationalists have always had a strong republican streak, fuelled by the belief that our royals act as members of the French-speaking *ancien régime*. Politicians of all parties declare themselves republicans, but only in private. As the socialist Louis Tobback once said: “In any other country, I would be a republican, but not in Belgium.”

Our country is so complicated and divided that the monarchy has a role as an independent mediator, is what he meant. (Although even the king is said to be exasperated by the current political stalemate.)

What's more, the monarchy still enjoys some popularity in Flanders. It may not be the same as it was in the '50s, but people still prefer royals over Lady Gaga on their cookie tins. For this reason, few politicians want to get rid of the monarchy altogether.

As with so many things, they look to the north for inspiration. In Scandinavia, they see exactly the type of monarchy, with a limited ceremonial role, that they wish for. Even the Christian-democrats, once the great defenders of the monarchy, share this view.

These days, carnival is still being celebrated in towns around Flanders. Prince Laurent, a troubled character but one of the more popular royals nonetheless, is often compared to a carnival prince: a folksy figure that gets to enjoy some (fake) power for just one day. With virtually no hope of ever becoming king, he is always in for a laugh.

But, prince Laurent finds out once again, when it comes to serious matters, even he has to stick to the rules. If only because we pay him to do what he does, which is, frankly, very little.



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putting people first

“I don’t”

Fewer young couples equate romance with marriage

→ *continued from page 1*

Many legal benefits of marriage are financial, and this eventually compelled Evelyne, 32, and Pieter, 33, of Ghent to set a date to get married this summer, after more than a decade together. “When we purchased a house together four years ago, for us that was a bigger commitment than getting married,” says Evelyne. “After 12 years, I don’t need a marriage certificate to show I love Pieter, but on the other hand there is an extra financial benefit, so that’s also something to think about.”

As she and Pieter plan their non-traditional ceremony in Las Vegas, she says: “I’d love to be able to say to people with pride that Pieter is my husband. But aside from that, getting married offers nothing more than what our relationship means to me now – but with the added benefit of the legal mumbo jumbo.”

That legal mumbo jumbo appeals not just to her and Pieter but also to same-sex couples who aren’t often afforded the same rights as heterosexual couples in other countries. In 2003, Belgium rectified that by being the second country in the world to open up marriage to same-sex couples.

Gentenaar Kyra Mistiaen, 33, who has been with her partner for eight years, also chose marriage for the ease it can provide. “It had only been a few years since we’ve been allowed to get married as a gay couple, so we started thinking about it. It would make things easier when having a child and buying a house.”

Not deciding not to...necessarily

But for a number of couples, the motivations for getting married just aren’t compelling enough. “Legally registered couples and married couples are treated very similarly,” says Quaghebeur.

In fact, the legal benefits of getting married aren’t strong enough for Quaghebeur to recommend getting married. “You get married if you have a specific need, or at a later age when you have more wealth or property; so providing your spouse more rights and security would be the incentive,” he says. “For young couple, there is a small tax saving if one of the two isn’t working. There are some medical benefits. But generally speaking, there is no real incentive to get married.”

Gabriel Reid, a Canadian living in Ghent with his Flemish partner Sylvie Lierman for the past three years, agrees. “To be honest, neither of us really thinks about getting married at all,” the 33-year-old says. “It’s more something we just haven’t decided to do, as opposed to something we’ve actively decided not to do.”



Marriage as social action: More than 700 couples renewed their marriage vows in Sint-Niklaas in 2007 as a show of support for their new alderman, Wouter van Bellingen, after three couples in the town refused to be married by Van Bellingen because he is black.

© Francois Lenoir / Reuters

The reasons to get married or not tend to come down to each couple and their own personal reasons. So is there no longer a sentimental element? While the legal aspects are what led Mistiaen to get married, further conversation reveals something more. “It means that I will and want to spend the rest of my days with the person I love, all written on a little piece of paper. Plus, it was the most romantic thing to do, and we had the best party ever!”

Those who don’t get married often respect that romantic idea but don’t necessarily believe it themselves. “Being married means whatever it means to people who decide to get married,” says Reid. “If a wedding is the product of love between two people, then that’s what it means for those people – a symbol of their love for each other. You can compare it to religion: some people are religious and some aren’t, but those who aren’t generally don’t go out of their way to make a conscious decision to not be religious. They just aren’t. On its own, marriage doesn’t have any specific meaning to me.”

And just like religion, sometimes it takes a little faith. Although Quaghebeur doesn’t see the legal benefit of being married, this hasn’t stopped him being married for more than 20 years. “I think it’s a step in your relationship to commit for the rest of your life. Taking a jump together into the void and knowing it’s going to work out.” ♦



“Buying a house together was a bigger commitment than getting married”: Evelyne and Pieter



Gabriel and Sylvie, together is enough

How to get married in Belgium



1 Well, first you have to live in the country! If someone resides in Belgium for a minimum of three months, they are legally allowed to marry here

2 Go to the marriage office in the town in which you live, which might be in the *gemeentehuis* (town hall) or a separate administrative centre. You’ll sign a *huwelijksaangifte*, which states that you will be getting married anywhere from two weeks to six months in the future. If you don’t get married within this period of time, you have to get another *huwelijksaangifte*

3 You’ll need to give them some information such as: wedding date, if there are any pre-nuptial agreements, names of witnesses, where you’ll live after getting married and important details such as whether either of you has children

4 Get married at your town hall in a civil ceremony. Church comes after, if you’re so inclined, but Belgian law only recognises the civil service

5 Bring both parties’ original birth certificates and certificate of residence, plus proof of marital status. These need to be quite official, so check with your embassy to make sure they’ll be accepted as legal documents

6 This civil service can be free, but if you want upgrades such as specific times, dates or a more regal, impressive room, there are fees

7 Get your marriage certificate! Legal proof that you’re now a newlywed couple

MARRIAGE IN FIGURES

Belgian marriage numbers:

In 1970, 90% of women, 86% of men aged 30-34 were married
In 1991, 79% of women and 72% of men were married
In 2006, 55% of women and 44% of men were married

This isn’t just because people are marrying at a later age:
In 1970, 88% and 88% aged 40-44 were married
In 2006, 68% and 65% aged 40-44 were married

from www.un.org/esa/population

Speaking of couples...

don’t miss page 10

Flick or tweet

Leave it to a social network expert to write a book in one week

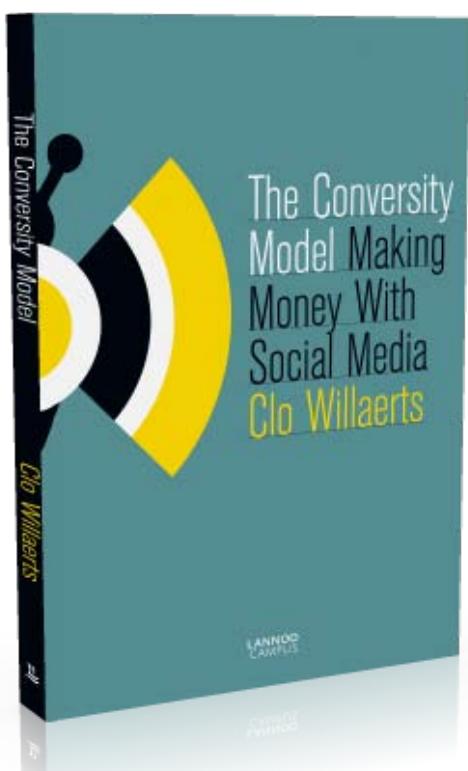
COURTNEY DAVIS

When I ask author Clo Willaerts what it was like to write her first book, she answers far more honestly than I expected: "It was horrible!" But when she explains why, she creates more questions than answers.

"I had only given myself one week to write it, and wrote nothing worth saving in the first three days. Fortunately, I had been putting all my notes in a mind-map. When I exported that to a Word document, I already had about half the pages I needed."

Hang on – a week? How good can the book be?

Apparently good enough. Willaerts (*pictured*) is one of the foremost experts on social media in the country. Published in February in English and in March in Dutch, *The Conversity Model: Making Money with Social Media* is already required reading for students at EHSAL Management School in Brussels.



"The hardest part for a first-time author like me was getting 'into the zone,' she says. "But once I got a kind of writer's high, I kept writing day and night."

Willaerts is a prolific public speaker and guest lecturer in the Netherlands and Belgium. As the organiser of Brussels Girl Geek Dinners and Business Unit Manager of Conversity.be, a division of Sanoma Magazines that assists companies with social media presence, she leads the way in all things online and has more than 8,000 Twitter followers.

"Social media is an area where you have to learn and teach every single day," she explains. "It changes so often. When I work with clients, I focus on their industry, company objectives and company culture."

Her client list is extensive, and her work has an obvious impact. "I like the way Flanders DC uses Twitter to stimulate entrepreneurs to use more creativity in the way they do business. I love the way Flanders Investment & Trade is using YouTube movies to convince Flemish entrepreneurs to enter their yearly contest."

Examples like these pepper her book, which is split into three parts, the first of which distinguishes between social media and social networks. In the second, she discusses social media in business and concludes with her "conversity" model. She clearly describes various examples such as Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, Netlog, LinkedIn, Hives, Facebook and blogging, while offering extensive references and links.

The conversity model is based on four layers: observation, conversation, conversion and innovation. Observation is knowing your customers, conversation is engaging with them, conversion is where Willaerts works her magic and innovation is about empowering and caring for the people using the social media tools, both internally and externally. She explains: "Companies should train their employees how they can use social media. For example, by keeping their eyes open and



being a kind of antenna for what's being said in social media about their company, or about their competitors."

Willaerts' desire to share her passion is one of the driving forces behind the book. "I feel like I'm on some kind of a mission to convince people that you should only put time, effort and money into social media if it helps your company reach its goals. I don't expect managers to read my blog or my tweets every day. A book allows them to have some kind of archive."

She also wants to serve those looking to spend more time on the subject. "When someone's reading a book, they're opening their mind to the voice of the author. It's as if they are saying: for the next hour, two hours or six hours, I'm going to let you into my head, and, at the pace I want, I will let you talk me through a way of thinking. I see that as a privilege and an honour." ♦

► www.conversity.be

IN THE HOUSE

The Flemish government is against a plan to introduce a new **tax on business and first class air tickets** because it would mainly affect flights out of Zaventem and Deurne, according to minister-president Kris Peeters, speaking last week in the Flemish parliament.

Peeters was responding to a question from Eric Van Rompuy, who lives in Zaventem. The tax, which the federal government wants to introduce for environmental reasons, only affects more expensive tickets so would have little effect on airports in Wallonia, which deal mainly in low-cost flights, Peeters said. The tax would also be in breach of the rules of the Chicago Convention, which forbids the levying of taxes for reasons other than the use of an airport. Finally, he said, 2012 will see the introduction of a CO₂ emission-rights system which will affect all airports equally, and the introduction of a new green tax in Belgium alone would "not be sensible". The Flemish region will take part in a working group on the question, where environment minister Joke Schauvliege will explain Flanders' objections.

Groen! party member Bart Caron claims that the majority parties are trying to **silence the opposition** by refusing to accept their questions relating to government policy. Caron said that the parliament's steering committee has thrown out eight questions from him this year alone. The latest was directed at Kris Peeters and concerned a statement by Carl Decaluwe, the parliament's media specialist and a party colleague of Peeters.

"The majority is manipulating the agenda," Caron claimed. "The consequences for the parliament are severe."

It is indeed the role of MPs to scrutinise the work of the government, said parliament speaker Jan Peumans (N-VA). "But questioning the government over a statement made by one of their colleagues is not part of that responsibility." Peumans said he made it a priority to defend the rights of all members to hold the government to account. Caron had submitted 14 questions this year; seven were admitted, six were found to be inadmissible, and one was withdrawn, the speaker said.

Welcome to our new monthly column, where we'll tell you what your ministers are talking about in the Flemish Parliament

In Wolvertem, a giant stirs

ALAN HOPE

The tiny village of Wolvertem, part of the municipality of Meise in Flemish Brabant, seems an unlikely place to find one of the titans of Flemish industry. Last week, Sarens, a company specialised in lifting technology and heavy transport, announced the introduction of the world's largest heavy-lift crane.

The new Sarens Giant Crane SGC-120 (*pictured*) can lift up to 3,200 tonnes and, when fitted with the longest of its three booms, stands 130m tall, taller than the Statue of Liberty.

Sarens, a family-owned company, was set up in Wolvertem in 1955. Grandfather Sarens used a horse and cart to transport trees; nowadays the fourth generation of his company employs 2,900 people in 39 locations worldwide, with a turnover last year of €370 million. They helped build one of the new stadiums for the 2010 World Cup in South Africa and did all the heavy lifting at

the construction of the biggest petrochemical plant at the Port of Dahej in Gujarat, India. Closer to home, their cranes helped fit the rotors to the wind turbines of the Thornton Bank wind farm off the coast of Zeebrugge. And they installed a 700-tonne absorption column at BASF's site in the Port of Antwerp, a job requiring pinpoint precision while moving a 70m-long column from the water to a waiting circle of 48 anchor bolts.

The advantages of the SGC-120 go beyond its huge lifting power, explains global sales director Pieter De Backer. Despite the enormous forces at work, the crane has a carbon footprint of only 43.6 metres: All the weight rests on a base consisting of two rings, under which are fitted weight-distribution mats. This means the site does not need special preparation before the crane arrives, and it can be installed in the middle of an operating site. ♦

► www.sarens.com



Electricity prices rise in Flanders

Provider releasing “disinformation” claims solar industry

ALAN HOPE

Electricity prices for the majority of consumers in Flanders will increase by about €72 a year per household, after a decision by the energy regulator CREG. The reason? Too many people are installing solar panels, thanks to environmentally inspired premiums totalling 170,000 in 2010.

Each installation of power from renewable sources includes a “green power certificate” for every 1,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of capacity, worth about €330 per megawatt-hour, which can be sold on the open market or for a fixed price to electricity companies. Critics of the price rise say energy provider Eandis is using new sources of cheaper electricity as an excuse for customers having to pay more for electricity – including those who have not installed solar panels.

According to Eandis, the extra cost of all those solar panels – €543 million between 2009 and 2011 – has to be recouped. “No-one could have predicted the incredible success of the premiums,” a spokesman said.

But according to BelPV, the federation representing the photo-voltaic industry, which makes and installs solar panels, Eandis has employed “disinformation” in claiming a price

increase of €6 a month per home. The real cost to them of the green power certificates, claims BelPV, was more like €2 a month per home.

BelPV described the reasoning of Eandis as “intellectually incorrect”. Eandis reckons its costs at €543 million; according to BelPV, the true price is €175 million for this year, and €190 million for 2012.

The association also points to the massive profits made by Eandis’ major shareholder, Electrabel, from the continued use of nuclear power – something that in recent weeks, following the Japanese nuclear crisis, has come under renewed scrutiny. BelPV points out that Infrax, the other main distributor in Flanders, estimates its own costs at about €2 a month per client.

About €142 of an average family’s annual payment to Electrabel is for nuclear energy that costs Electrabel next to nothing. Eandis makes about €240 million a year in profit, a third of which goes to Electrabel.

The Gezinsbond, or Family Union, meanwhile, said that passing the cost of the certificates for solar installations along to private consumers was “unacceptable”, while



Solar panels blamed for dearer electricity

companies were installing far larger solar installations and escaping the price increase. “Households install relatively small solar installations to cover their domestic consumption,”

the Gezinsbond said in a statement. “Large industrial installations take up 40% of the certificates, and yet energy intensive industries are exempt from the price rise.” ♦

Good and bad news on bankruptcies

The number of companies that went bankrupt in March was down in Belgium by a slight 2.5% on the same month a year ago, according to research bureau Graydon. However, the total so far this year is up on 2010 by just over 1% at 2,705, hitting a new record high. Graydon speaks of “a tentative trend towards stagnation, albeit at an especially high level”.

The trend is not equal across all Flemish provinces: The number of failures is still rising in Limburg and West Flanders, falling in East Flanders and moving hardly at all in Antwerp and Flemish Brabant.

In March alone, bankruptcies affected 2,327 jobs, bringing total job losses for the first quarter to 6,109 – that’s 9% fewer redundancies than in 2010 for the country as a whole and 12% fewer in Flanders. In Brussels Region, company closures saw job losses in the first quarter increase by 40% compared to the same period in 2010. ♦

Prosecutor to review bullying claims after suicide

The Ghent prosecutor’s office is reopening the investigation into two complaints of harassment in the workplace by a man who last week committed suicide, citing his suffering as the reason for his act.

Marcus Van den Abeele, 42, worked for Wegmarkeringen De Groote in Deinze, a company that carries out roadway markings and striping. According to his mother, he had persistently complained of bullying at work, which involved being sprayed with paint and being physically assaulted. Despite complaints to management, no action was taken. Last week the company said it had behaved correctly.

Van de Abeele also made at least two official complaints to police in the past year, which were recorded but later dropped. The prosecutor will now re-open the files to determine if the original decision needs to be reviewed. While a verdict of not guilty in a trial protects an accused person from further proceedings, the dropping of charges by magistrates – mainly a decision made on the basis of the difficulty of proceeding compared to the severity of the crime – can always be reversed and proceedings restarted. ♦

Bonus resolution passed

As expected, a resolution to curb the excessive bonuses paid out to the directors of banks who were bailed out by the government in 2008-2009 passed unanimously in the federal parliament last week. A similar resolution, which has only a symbolic effect, was earlier agreed by the Flemish parliament.

Meanwhile, it was revealed that the remuneration package this year for Didier Bellens, CEO of the state-owned Belgacom, went up 10% in 2010 to €2.23 million. The government recently put a cap on pay rises for industry of 3%. The seven members of the Belgacom management committee saw their collective pay go up to €10.3 million, an increase of 24.4%. ♦

Fair trade booming

The market for fair trade foods in Belgium grew twice as fast in 2010 as the food market in general, according to the annual report by Max Havelaar, the main dealer in the sector. Last year, 200,000 families bought a fair trade product for the first time, bringing the number of customers to 1.65 million, or 35% of Belgian households.

That represents annual growth of 7%, compared to 3.4% growth in food retailing as a whole between 2009 and 2010. The main fair trade purchases were coffee and manufactured products like biscuits, chocolate and cane sugar. A survey by market researchers C-Change revealed that 69% of people said their purchases were guided by social and environmental concerns. ♦

InBev can register Budweiser brand

Brewer AB InBev has the right to register Bud and Budweiser as trademarks in Europe, despite the competing claims of the Czech Budvar company, the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg ruled last week. The case has been running since 1996, when Anheuser-Busch was still an independent American company. They have been marketing Budweiser since 1876, 19 years before the Czech brewer started using the name. A previous ruling gave AB the right to use the name in 23 of the 27 member states of the EU, excluding the major markets of Germany and the Czech Republic. ♦



THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Air transport • Brussels Airport

Brussels Airport has increased its number of destinations to 214 following the opening of new lines to nine cities, including Podgorica, Montenegro; Pristina, Kosovo; and Tirana, Albania. Meanwhile, Brussels Airlines, which increased its traffic by 9.5% in February, may see its leading shareholder Lufthansa increase its stake to 100% this April by converting a share-buying option.

Autos • Volvo

The Ghent-based Volvo assembly unit will increase production to 250,000 vehicles this year to meet demand for its best-selling S60 model. The move, which entails hiring an additional 200 workers, comes after the company earmarked a further investment of €200 million in the plant. Volvo Trucks, also in Ghent, is also looking to hire more than 200 workers for the launch of the FE Hybrid truck in June and to push output to some 144 trucks a day. About 3,500 workers are already employed on the site.

Banking • KBC

A range of institutions, including the US KKR investment fund, the Swiss Credit Suisse and the French Credit Agricole have shown interest in buying KBC’s Luxembourg-based KBL private banking affiliate. Few, however, are expected to pay more than €1.1 billion, significantly less than the €1.35 billion offered by the Indian Hinduja bank but rejected by Luxembourg authorities on transparency grounds.

Energy • Keppel Seghers

The Keppel Seghers water treatment company, based in Willebroek, Antwerp province, and owned by the Singapore Keppel group, has won a €187 million contract to build a co-generation power plant in the Manchester area fuelled with household garbage.

Leisure • Plopsaland

Theme park operator and TV producer Studio 100 is investing €8 million in its Plopsaland park in De Panne on the coast. The new indoor facilities will feature a Maya the Bee theme, owned by the company.

Restaurants • Chez Leon

The Brussels-based Chez Leon restaurant group, best known for its mussels, fries and typical brasserie atmosphere, is launching a chain of restaurants in China called Fritket, as a follow up to the success of its Belgian frietjes stand at last year’s world exhibition in Shanghai.

Software • GIMV

The Flanders government investment fund GIMV has sold its stake in the British Psytechnics voice recognition software to the US Netscouts Systems.

Telecommunications • Belgacom

The country’s leading telecommunications company has won a €36 million contract over four years to supply mobile telephone services to the European Union.

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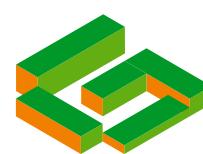
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Mad Mayer

The obsessed Antwerp art collector who left us thousands of works and bought “Dulle Griet” for a song

ANNA JENKINSON

Fritz Mayer van den Bergh was a 19th-century art collector with an eye for a bargain. He picked up Pieter Bruegel the Elder's now-famous "Dulle Griet" (or "Mad Meg" to English speakers) at a Cologne auction for about 500 francs, the same year Antwerp's Royal Museum of Fine Arts bought Rubens' "Prodigal Son" for approximately 45,000 francs.

The Antwerp-based collector also bought a number of alabaster sculptures, such as "The Arrest of Jesus" from the first quarter of the 14th century, at a time when there was little interest among private collectors for this type of work. The self-taught expert built up an impressive collection of paintings, sculptures and many other artworks, all of which is today kept at Antwerp's Museum Mayer van den Bergh.

The museum, home to about 5,000 pieces, mainly from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, is one of those that you visit and simply wonder why on earth it isn't better known. Every nook and cranny of the house, built in a Gothic Revival style, hides another treasure. Its collection of sculptures is the second most important in Belgium, after that of the Royal Museums of Art and History in Brussels.

Mayer van den Bergh had always wanted to house his entire collection in a museum, but his untimely death in 1901 when he was his early 40s (he is believed to have fallen from a horse and then died from a wound) meant he never achieved this wish during his lifetime. It was his mother Henriëtte who realised the dream, employing an Antwerp architect to design the museum next door to the family residence.

Mayer van den Bergh lived with his mother in this home until his death, prompting speculation as to why he didn't marry. My guide around the museum said he did have a girlfriend in Kortrijk, but she apparently wasn't of a high enough social standing in the eyes of his mother, who was the daughter of a senator and who married into a large pharmaceutical family.

A portrait of Henriëtte Mayer van den Bergh hangs in the ground floor of the museum: It depicts a very stern-looking woman, one who could have easily put off any potential daughter-in-law.

The museum's collection is vast, covering many centuries and ranging from paintings to woodcarvings and from tapestries to illuminated manuscripts, so there's no way you can see it all properly in one go. To help visitors navigate their way around, the museum has put together thematic tours concentrating, for example, on portraits or on works depicting saints or angels. It's a useful way to narrow the focus of your visit.

Among my favourite exhibits are the small-scale mediaeval sculptures in marble, ivory and alabaster, each carved in exquisite detail. "The Arrest of Jesus" is one example of how a succession of scenes are related in one small piece, with the apostle Peter cutting



One of Belgium's biggest art draws, Pieter Bruegel the Elder's "Dulle Griet" hangs in the Museum Mayer van den Bergh

© Wikipedia Commons

off the ear of a man knelt in the foreground, Jesus healing the wound by laying his hand on him and Judas, meanwhile, kissing Jesus' cheek (*pictured below*).

This piece was one of several hundred that had belonged to Carlo Micheli, a keen collector of mediaeval miniature sculptures who had worked in the Louvre's moulding workshop. When Micheli died, his daughter put the entire collection up for sale. The "all or nothing" approach meant that the 451 works were beyond Mayer van den Bergh's budget, but he borrowed some money and bought the lot in 1898, facing off competition from the Louvre and the Jubelpark Museum in Brussels. He later sold over half the pieces. The museum, which opened in 1904, claims to be the world's first to have been built around an existing collection. The fact of it being the collection of one man also means that it cannot acquire new works.

That said, the rules were bent in 2006 for a portrait painted by Cornelis de Vos. Four in a series of individual family portraits were already in the Mayer van den Bergh collection, and so when a missing portrait of one of the daughters turned up, it seemed like an opportunity not to be missed. To circumvent the rules, the painting was bought by the King Boudewijn Foundation and loaned to the museum. The series, commissioned by the wealthy Antwerp merchant Joris Vekemans (1590-1625), gives a wonderful insight into the luxurious clothing worn by the parents and children of a well-to-do family at the time.

Another must-see is the Gothic Room, where you find Juan de Flandes' "Herod's Banquet", a recently restored side panel from the artist's Miraflores altarpiece, painted around 1500 for Isabella of Castile. The panel, which is one of five parts, shows the head of John the Baptist being presented by Salome to Herod and Herodias.

Despite the title describing the scene as a banquet, there are no other guests or musicians present, and the long white dining table is empty but for the plate bearing the bloody head. The centrepiece of the polyptych is in a private collection in Madrid, while the other side panels are to be found in the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Museum of Art and History in Geneva and the National Museum of Belgrade, the latter only being discovered in 2003 during an inventory.

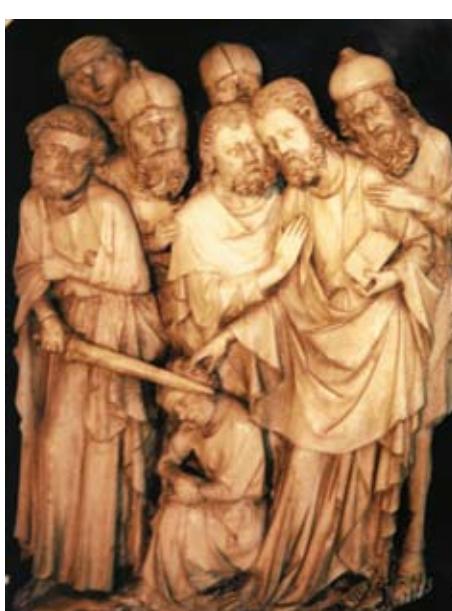
The four side panels were temporarily reunited at the end of last year during an exhibition at the Museum Mayer van den Bergh focusing on Juan de Flandes and the Miraflores altarpiece. In between such major exhibitions, the museum puts on smaller displays such as its upcoming *De Burcht: Verdwenen stadskern van Antwerpen* (*The Vanished City Centre of Antwerp*), objects dug up from this old centre of Antwerp alongside watercolours and drawings of the district.

Entrance tickets for the museum can be bought separately or as part of a combined ticket for the Mayer van den Bergh museum and the Rubens House. ♦

→ www.tinyurl.com/mayervdb



Visiting the Museum Mayer van den Bergh is like strolling through a private home, with a find around every corner



Miniature mediaeval sculptures are one of the many joys of the museum



What lies beneath

When the sun comes out, the clothes come off. Who's selling Flanders' best lingerie?

STÉPHANIE DUVAL

It doesn't take a survey to understand that lingerie plays an important role in Flemish women's lives. A simple stroll through any little village's main street will tell you that.

Lingerie boutiques are as omnipresent in Flanders as pharmacies, and, throughout the years, many have started to consider them equally essential. The necessity of good, high quality underwear is one taught to girls from an increasingly young age, and thus the notion that expensive lingerie is an indulgent luxury is ever more frequently replaced by a belief that every decent wardrobe starts with a few good pieces of lingerie.

Most of the boutiques you'll encounter on your walk from the local bakery to the butcher have been around for a good long while. A careful look will reveal that many of them carry the same brands and collections. A heavy focus on French lingerie is often complemented by the labels of Flanders' biggest lingerie company, Vandeveld.

Founded in 1919 and located in Schellebelle, East Flanders, Vandeveld produces and distributes the insanely popular brands Marie Jo and PrimaDonna, and their sister collections Marie Jo L'Aventure, Marie Jo Intense and PrimaDonna Twist.

"My seamstresses have been doing what they do for 20, 30 or even 40 years. That, to me, is worth something."

Many a local lingerie boutique will readily admit to running their businesses based largely on these brands. The fact that most of these shops are thriving proves many Flemish ladies are perfectly happy with this selection, probably thanks to their impeccable quality and fit.

But in recent years, some new kids on the block are taking a radically different approach to the concept of lingerie and the way it is sold to women.

Women's lingerie 2.0

While Dutch designer Marlies Dekkers was starting to make waves in The Netherlands during the early 1990s with her S&M-inspired lingerie, Belgium was still generally very conservative when it came to underwear. In retrospect, most agree it was Ann Cuyvers who started a revolution by opening her Antwerp shop De Erotische Verbeelding: the first luxury boutique that offered a mixture of little-known and risqué lingerie brands (including Marlies Dekkers) and an array of women-friendly sex toys and porn films. The gap between seedy sex shops and chaste lingerie boutiques suddenly narrowed.

The second boost to a growing enthusiasm toward celebrating women's sexuality came in the form of Murielle Scherre, the designer from Ghent behind La Fille d'O. Inspired and

intrigued by 1975 erotic cult film *Histoire d'O*, she launched her own take on women's undergarments.

Scherre's designs are a far cry from the styles that flooded (and still flood) the lingerie market in Brussels and Flanders. "I always work with fabrics that aren't showy as such; I don't use lace, and I almost never incorporate colour," she tells me. "To a lot of people, a new print is the determining factor for whether they like the design or not, but I don't use those, either. My collections are made from simple elements. The fabrics are mostly black, and you'd never pick them out from a heap of fabrics."

So what's the draw? Scherre: "Nothing comes close to their quality."

The designer has enjoyed the support of an enthusiastic – but small – group of followers since founding La Fille seven years ago; it hasn't always been easy to keep the business afloat. She produces everything in Belgium and buys her materials either here or in a neighbouring country, which should make consumers happy. But it also means her products are priced accordingly.

"It's very important to me to have everything produced here in Belgium because we have the know-how and the experience here," she says. "I think we still don't have enough respect for the skills around here. It's not something you can just teach anyone; it's an art that is perfected through years and years of experience. My seamstresses have been doing what they do for 20, 30 or even 40 years. That, to me, is worth something."

Though La Fille d'O is without a doubt a luxury brand, its prices are not more expensive than most of the boutique labels. But there's another reason why her label still flies a little under the radar. Scherre's designs (pictured) have a graphic quality that stems from innovative ways of looking at the female body. The designer explains that people often don't register her work as "lingerie".

Every new collection comes accompanied by salacious photo shoots of Scherre's voluptuous friends – many of them part of the burlesque performance group Devilles Harem Girls – who often also model the designs at live events. A select club of women rave wildly about Scherre's efforts to break women free from the limited – and limiting – image people have of them. "I make a niche product, so it can be hard to reach people and make them understand what I do," she says, "but I wouldn't want to be any nearer to what mainstream brands are doing."

Undressing Flemish women

Ever since she opened De Erotische Verbeelding in 1993, Ann Cuyvers has been devoted to providing erotic lingerie and toys for women in a luxurious and comforting environment. Last year, she moved her shop to Antwerp's Kloosterstraat, where she is surrounded by avant-garde designer boutiques and antiques stores.

It took a few years, but De Erotische Verbeelding succeeded in rising above taboos and becoming a fixture on the Antwerp shopping scene. Moreover, Cuyvers and her shop became role models, inspiring many new lingerie boutiques to take a similar approach.

In Flanders, one of the best-known



examples is Bar d'Oh in Ghent. Tinneke Van Ghysegem opened her boudoir-like shop in 2006. "I used to go to London and Paris quite often, and I'd see shops like Coco de Mer and Agent Provocateur," she says. "I always thought Flanders should have something like that, too."

Disappointed by the brands on offer in lingerie boutiques, Van Ghysegem went for little-known labels with a decidedly romantic and often retro look. But what truly sets the shop apart from the rest, according to its owner, is the exceptional service: "I'm very open and honest, and I have a gentle way of dealing with customers. We'll never sell something when we're not 100% convinced it fits the person trying it on. I like to create a long-term relationship with them, while I think most shops are only in it for the immediate sale."

Just like De Erotische Verbeelding, Bar d'Oh also sells bedroom toys, perfumes and accessories geared towards making women feel wonderful. So does Yntimity, a shop whose two locations take a less retro and more modern approach to women's sensuality. "We were the first in Limburg to offer accessories

such as little whips, vibrators and massage oils," says owner Claire Deruyck. "We select them because they are created with women in mind, not men. In combination with the lingerie and books, we supply the full – lightly – erotic package."

All of these shops offer a humorous or delicate introduction to a heightened enjoyment of sex, but they all agree their focus is on lingerie. "We always look for brands that are pretty, sexy and wearable and of great quality, too," says Cuyvers.

Good lingerie has to support as well as entice, confirms Scherre when she talks about designing her seductive collections, and it has to have an effect on both the wearer and the spectator. "In a way, my job is threefold: I have to design something that I like, something that will make its wearer feel beautiful and something that the person who sees her wearing it will find sexy or pretty. You're building something with pretty subjective building blocks, and it's quite the challenge." ♦



Murielle Scherre loves you and your body



De Erotische Verbeelding looks out for "sexy, wearable and great quality"

Our favourite lingerie hot spots

Maison La Fille d'O (Ghent)

The retail home of designer brand La Fille d'O

→ www.lafilledo.com

Bar d'Oh (Ghent)

→ www.bardoh.be

Coeur Pistache (Ghent)

→ www.coeurpistache.be

De Erotische Verbeelding (Antwerp)

→ www.erotischeverbeelding.be

Underwear (Brussels)

Carries La Fille d'O

→ www.dunderwear.be

Yntimity (Hasselt and Genk)

Carries La Fille d'O

→ www.yntimity.com

Changing our ways

The Flemish are eating and cooking more ethnic foods than ever before

DENZIL WALTON

Despite worried contestants on TV reality show *Komen eten* sticking to North Sea scampis and chocolate mousse, ethnic food is in fact being taken up by the cooking masses in Flanders. Once confined to hard-to-find specialty shops, ethnic food is now readily sold in supermarket chains across the region.

Luc Willemssens, Chief Buyer at HGC-Hanos Belgium, one of the country's leading wholesalers for the catering industry, says Flanders has a huge market for ethnic foods thanks to its gastronomical heritage and a multicultural mix of people. It's one of the reasons why the company started a dedicated ethnic foods page this year in its promotional folders. In his 15-year career with HGC-Hanos, Willemssens has noticed two major changes in the industry. "The first is the growth of oriental restaurants in Flanders," he says. "I remember seeing the first Chinese restaurant open in my home town: Now we have Thai, Indian, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Japanese, Nepali..."

The second change concerns the traditional Belgian-French-Italian cuisine. "Chefs are becoming much more experimental. They are using different types of flours, spices, herbs and grains from all over the world in their dishes," he explains. "I doubt if a restaurant exists in Flanders that does not now use ethnic ingredients. Even highly conventional Flemish fish and meat dishes often contain non-conventional spices and herbs." Obviously this is good news for HGC-Hanos, as they are selling more and more ethnic foods every year. It's also one of the reasons why

Willemssens attended Ethnic Foods Europe 2011, an industry exhibition that took place recently at Brussels Expo.

Ethnic Foods Europe was the brainchild of Ronald Holman from Expo Communications in Breda, the Netherlands. He first considered organising an ethnic foods exhibition in Europe 10 years ago, but the market just wasn't there. "In the last decade, the market has changed dramatically," says Holman. "Instead of being limited to smaller importers, there are now a lot of major players in the market, with significant budgets."

Holman describes ethnic food as any food that is not Western European in origin. Most of it originates from the Far East, Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa. He sees a bright future here for the market. "Flanders is increasingly becoming a melting pot of cultures, with more and more nationalities establishing themselves here. You just have to walk through any Flemish city to realise this. And of course all these people want to eat what they are accustomed to eating."

A further factor is that the Flemish are keen global travellers. When they enjoy the food of a region, they come back and look for it in Flanders. Holman expects to see certain ethnic foods become mainstream. "This has already happened in the UK, where Chicken Tikka Masala is now the most popular dish in restaurants and has even been called Britain's true national dish." He expects to see similar ethnic dishes rising up the popularity charts in Flanders and also the arrival of new ethnic foods from regions such as the Arabian Peninsula and Turkey. ♦



Mike and Anna Pearce know their Thai food

Buying ethnic

Most of the customers to Kaew Thai in Zaventem are Thais, Filipino, Indonesian and Japanese, but Mike Pearce, who owns the shop with his wife Anna, is seeing more and more Europeans visiting. "Europeans are certainly cooking more oriental food at home, and Thai is seen as particularly tasty, healthy, quick and easy," says Pearce.

The couple opened the shop six years ago, with a Thai focus because Anna is Thai. An ardent cook, she plans to open a takeaway in Zaventem in the near future.

Specialised food comes with specialised import and sales problems. Last year's rice crisis in Thailand – the world's largest rice exporter – led to high prices and shortages. This year there is a scare surrounding Thai coconut milk. "In addition, the regulations for the import of fresh vegetables to Belgium are constantly becoming stricter," adds Pearce.

Another potential challenge is from the big supermarket chains, which are expanding their stocks of Thai foods and ingredients. Though Pearce is not overly concerned. "Many of them are repackaging Asian foods under different, often unknown, labels. We buy authentic products with brand names that are well known in their country of origin."

Moreover, unlike the Delhaize in Zaventem, Kaew Thai stocks products in bulk. So if you need a three-litre bottle of authentic Thai *gkati* (coconut milk), you know where to go.

→ www.kaew.be

Drinking ethnic

Introducing another foreign beer to Belgium might seem like a crazy idea for obvious reasons, but Cobra International has a clear target group. "Indian restaurants," says the company's Andres Ruiz. "Cobra is a non-gassy Indian beer, the perfect complement to spicy food such as curries." Cobra, crafted and originally brewed in Bangalore, India, and now made by the Molson Coors Brewing Company in the UK, is already huge in the UK. "We are now introducing it into the European mainland, starting this year in Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and France."



**Al het stadsnieuws in 3 talen
Toute l'info régionale en 3 langues
The local news in 3 languages**

 www.tvbrussel.be



Cost-cutting panic or investments in human capital?

In times like these, where we have to do more with less, there are two types of managers. **Those who cut costs** across the board, and **those who even now choose to continue to invest** prudently. Which type are you? The financial crisis and the uncertain economic situation are confronting managers with new challenges, but all too often they are also driving them to take decisions that are infused with panic and doom-and-gloom. But the ones who are forward-thinking and keep to their own course don't slam on the brakes – instead, they invest in the future.

Knowledge determines your competitive power

An organisation that wants to maintain and strengthen its competitive position in the global economy must be powered by a well-oiled knowledge engine. Your workforce is your greatest capital and lifelong learning is an absolute necessity. The acquired knowledge flows back into your company and your knowledge capital grows larger and larger, increasing your competitiveness. This will keep you competitive in the rapidly changing economic context. We call this 'learning with impact'.



Investing in training: costs versus benefits

Too often, training is still regarded as a cost instead of an investment. However, companies that view their personnel policy from a strategic standpoint continue – even when the economy becomes a serious challenge – to invest in training programmes for their most strategic employees. Investing in talent and training now guarantees you a significant jump on the competition when the economy gets going again.



Vlerick, your partner in tailor-made training programmes

Those who have participated in a Vlerick training programme are undoubtedly better prepared than other employees to take on today's challenges. Via in-company programmes – focused on the development of individual employees as well as on organisational development – Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School offers you a collaborative project fully tailored to your needs. Thanks to in-depth knowledge of both local and international economic environments and years of

experience in training management talent, the School can develop a specially adapted management training programme for every organisation, in each phase of its development, targeting the most diverse aspects of its business.

More info on our management programmes?

Consult:

www.vlerick.com/expats

Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School

Kristof Van Heeschvelde

Daily life subconsciously affected by memories pervades the work of this Flemish artist, on view in Turnhout
 → www.detweebehelft.be



FLANDERS TODAY
 APRIL 6, 2011



The life of a photographer LIEVE BLANCQUAERT

LISA BRADSHAW

Lieve Blancquaert tells me something that goes a long way towards understanding her exhibition in Ghent: "All the big things; I really chose the experiences that changed my life."

A retrospective of a photographer as prolific as Blancquaert, who turns 48 this year, should be massive, but you'll be hard-pressed to spend more than about an hour in this intimate show that winds through the city's old Bank van de Arbeid (Labourers' Bank). But what you do find are startling moments in time.

A refugee camp in 1985 Honduras. Kids playing in the street in Poland, 1987. A street musician in Berlin in 1989, "one day after the wall fell". Navy men drinking champagne on a dock in 1993 Siberia. The history of the last 25 years falls from Blancquaert's camera like a documentary.

Many photos – but always few enough that you ache for more – are part of series, such as portrait projects of those suffering from AIDS in Kenya and women now living without men in post-genocide Rwanda. Congo 2009, though, is not made up of portraits; these are images of women in a dilapidated maternity ward in Kasongo Lunda, where one in 13 die in childbirth. These stationary black-and-white images themselves are impossible to forget, so when Blancquaert says that being here changed her life, it's not difficult to believe.

The Flemish photographer, who lives in Ghent, has worked in journalism – both print and television – but she is also often Belgium's first choice for humanitarian assignments, such as Oxfam's famous annual campaigns, which Blancquaert photographed for four years. She put *bekende Vlamingen* (Flemish celebrities) in all manner of odd and striking situations, such as TV presenter Michiel Devlieger emerging ominously from a moss-covered lake and former Miss Belgium Dina Tersago naked under strategically placed fair-trade candy.

The lighter portion of *Lieve Blancquaert: Photographer* shows how celebrities readily shed their clothes for Blancquaert: actress Marie Vinck is only partially covered by a sheet; author Kristien Hemmerechts and her late husband Herman de Coninck are sharing a bath; former prime minister Jean-Luc Dehaene is squatting in a barrel, his naked shoulders peeping out.

Anyone familiar with Dehaene realises that he is known for his, shall we say, ample frame. Of the dozens of photos in this section, it's this one that really begs the question: How did she get him to do it? "I had to ask him; it was for Oxfam," says Blancquaert. "I spent three hours composing the email: 'Please can you go naked into a barrel?' I was thinking, he's never going to answer this. But within two minutes, I got an OK!"

Celebrities might be signing onto the Oxfam campaign to do a good deed, but more likely they know that anyone who's anyone in Flanders has been in front of Blancquaert's lens. She shapes a photo to make her subjects seem funandvulnerablesimultaneously. And she talks to them about real things, sometimes to the point where they start to cry. And then she snaps her shot. The process of photographing celebrities here at home and those suffering poverty, illness or the violence of conflict zones in other places is entirely different, explains Blancquaert. The celebrity shots are fun and "important," she says, "but those are not the moments that changed my life."

At the beginning of the exhibition is a statement by Blancquaert: "My goal after 25 years is still the same: to decrease as much as possible the distance between my camera and my brain." She is, she says, "much closer. But I'm still not there." ♦

Until 6 May

Bank van de Arbeid
 Voldersstraat 1, Ghent

→ www.lannoo-events.be

Lieve Blancquaert will be at the exhibition signing the companion book between 20.00 and 21.00 on 7 April



MORE PHOTOGRAPHY THIS WEEK

Marjan Verschraegen → CC Stroming, Berlare

Wild Brussels → Espace photographique, Brussels

Viva Vélo: 20,000 km Asia → De Centrale, Ghent



Antwerp

Arenbergschouwburg
 Arenbergstraat 28; 070.222.192
www.arenbergschouwburg.be
APR 6 20.15 Stef Bos
APR 12 20.30 Sir Yes Sir

Lotto Arena

Schijnpoortweg 119; 070.345.345
www.sportpaleis.be
APR 9 20.00 Stan Van Samang

Trix

Noordersingel 28; 03.670.09.00
www.trixonline.be
APR 8 20.00 Nid & Sancy + Disko Drunkards
APR 13 20.00 White Hills + Ludicra + Liturgy
APR 14 20.00 Baths

Brussels

Aloft Hotel
 Jean Reylein
www.brusselshotnights.com
APR 9 22.30 Noblige second act, hotnights party

Ancienne Belgique

Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24
www.abconcerts.be
 Concerts at 20.00:
Until APR 6 Domino #15 alternative electro festival: **APR 13** Trey Songz

Fuse

Blaesstraat 208; 02.511.97.89
www.fuse.be
APR 9 23.00 Josh Wink + Pierre Efdemin + Jonas Kopp + Fader

K-NAL

Havenlaan 1; 0474.04.00.00
www.k-nal.be
APR 9 22.00 Wirspielen Die Ganze Nacht + Fortyfive

Koninklijk Circus

Onderrichtsstraat 81; 02.218.20.15
www.cirque-royal.org
 Concerts at 20.00:
APR 6 Archive **APR 7** Grand Corps Malade **APR 9** Volkan Konak **APR 12** Valery Meladze

Le Cercle des Voyageurs

Lievevrouwbroersstraat 18; 02.514.39.49
www.lecercledesvoyageurs.com
APR 8 20.30 Eastok

Magasin 4

Havenlaan 51B; 02.223.34.74
www.magasin4.be
APR 13 19.00 The Cesarians + Tormenta

Piola Libri

Franklinstraat 66-68; 02.736.93.91
www.piolalibri.be
APR 8 19.00 Teek

Recyclart

Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34
www.recycleart.be
APR 7 21.30 Vialka
APR 8 22.00-5.00 Flux Pavilion + Kromestar + Jack Sparrow + more

The Wood

Floralaan 3-4; 02.640.19.68
www.thewood.be
APR 7 22.00 Woodstrasse first anniversary with Solomun & David August

VK Club

Schoolstraat 76; 02.414.29.07
www.vkconcerts.be
APR 9 21.00 Kiss & Drive + Africa Unite

Vorst-National

Victor Rousseaulaan 208; 0900.00.991
www.forestnational.be
APR 8 20.00 Soprano
APR 10 20.00 Jamiroquai

Ghent

Charlatan
 Vlasmarkt 6; 09.224.24.57
www.charlatan.be

APR 8 20.00 Steak Number Eight
APR 9 20.00 Frankie & The Heartstrings + The Future Dead

Vooruit

St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060

GET YOUR
 TICKETS NOW!

Liza Minnelli

8 July, 20.00

Kursaal Ostend

It's not often you can refer to someone as a living legend (though promoters try), but for stage and screen star Liza Minnelli, it's certainly fair. Known as much for her parentage and her marriages as for that uncompromising voice, she's a honest-to-god Great American Diva. Don't miss this chance to come to the cabaret.



→ www.kursaalostende.be

www.vooruit.be
APR 7 19.30 Dum Dum Girls, 21.00 The Subs: Release Party + guests Highbloo + Partyharders + Les Petits Pilous
APR 13 20.00 Yuko + Conquering Animal Sound

Kortrijk

De Kreun
 Conservatoriumplein 1; 056.37.06.44
www.dekreun.be
APR 10 20.00 Deerhunter + Lower Dens

Leuven

Het Depot
 Martelarenplein 12; 016.22.06.03
www.hetdepot.be
APR 7 20.00 Josh Ritter and The Royal City Band
APR 11 20.00 Chocolate Genius
APR 12 20.00 Eli 'Paperboy' Reed



Antwerp

Rataplan
 Wijngemstraat 27; 03.292.97.40
www.rataplanvzw.be
APR 7 20.30 Eve Beuvens Trio + Mathilde Renault Trio

Brussels

Archiduc
 Dansaertstraat 6; 02.512.06.52
www.archiduc.net
APR 9-10 17.00 Viktor Perdieus Trio
APR 10 17.00 Samo Salomon Trio

Atelier 210

Sint-Pieterssteenweg 210; 02.732.25.98
www.atelier210.be
APR 6 21.00 Aidan & The Italian Weather Ladies
APR 7 21.00 Hoquets + Castus + Viktor French
APR 8 21.00 The Guilty Brothers Experience + Morpheus Secrets + Brains

Café Kafka

Visverkopersstraat 2; 02.504.99.00
 Until **APR 21** 21.30 Jazz on Thursday featuring Darius Clynes, piano; Calvin Renee, bass

Jazz Station

Leuvensesteenweg 193; 02.733.13.78
www.jazzstation.be
APR 6 20.30 Rassinfosse, Pierre and Wiernik
APR 13 20.30 Fabien Degrise Trio

Agenda

Sazz'n Jazz
Koningsstraat 241; 0475.78.23.78
www.sazznjazz.be
Until APR 16 21.30 Sazz'n Jazz Quartet

Sounds Jazz Club
Tulpstraat 28; 02.512.92.50
www.soundsjazzclub.be
Concerts at 22.00:
APR 7 Marc Lelangue Blues Band **APR 8** Fabian Fiorini **APR 9** Brussels Rhythm & Blues **APR 11** Jef Neve solo **APR 12** Philip Catherine Trio

The Music Village
Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
www.themusicvillage.com
APR 6 20.30 A3 **APR 7** 20.30 Toine Thys Trio **APR 8** 21.00 Faith Gibson & Sabin Todorov Trio **APR 9** 21.00 Snaauwaert + Matta's Brazilian Voyage **APR 12** 20.30 Ruby **APR 13** 20.30 Adam Rafferty

Ghent
Vooruit
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060
www.vooruit.be
APR 8 20.00 Dave Douglas

Hasselt
Muziekodroom
Bootstraat 9; 011.23.13.13
www.muziekodroom.be
APR 14 20.30 JW Jones Blues Band



Antwerp
De Roma
Turnhoutsebaan 327; 03.292.97.40
www.deroma.be
APR 7 20.30 Chango Spasiuk
APR 9 20.30 Graindelavoix: Muntagna Nera

Brussels

Art Base
Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20
www.art-base.be
APR 8 20.00 Luis Reis (Por/Sp)
APR 10 18.00 Rupam Ghosh, Indian classical violin and Amit Chatterjee, tabla (India)

Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be
APR 9 20.00 Intwatawa: polyphonic Pygmy singers (Rwanda)

Théâtre Molière
Bastionsquare 3; 02.217.26.00
www.muziekpubliek.be
APR 7 20.00 Barbara Furtuna (Cors) & Constantinople (Iran/Can)
APR 8 20.00 Cuarteto Cedron (Arg)
APR 12 12.30 Tcha Limberger

Ghent
Handelsbeurs
Kouter 29; 09.265.91.65
www.handelsbeurs.be
APR 9 20.15 Antwerp Gipsy-Ska Orkestra
APR 10 20.15 David Pérez, flamenco



Antwerp

Amuz
Kammenstraat 81; 03.292.36.80
www.amuz.be
APR 8 14.00 Children are born coomposers: educational project with Italian Baroque music. 21.00 Les Muffatti conducted by Peter Van Heyghen: Giovanni Bononcini

deSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28
www.desingel.be
APR 6 20.00 Ferran Savall, guitar; theorbo, voice; Jordi Savall, viola da gamba; David Mayoral, percussion: Tobias Hume, Marin Marais, more
APR 7 20.00 Akademie für alte Musik Berlin and Collegium Vocale Gent conducted by Daniel Reuss: Carl Heinrich Graun's Der Tod Jesu
APR 9 20.00 Arcanto Quartett: Beethoven, Mozart, Britten

Bruges

Concertgebouw
't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02
www.concertgebouw.be
APR 9 20.00 Orchestre des Champs Elysées conducted by Philippe Herreweghe: Schumann
APR 13 20.00 Waar is mijn ziel?: musical performance based on Monteverdi's madrigals by Muziektheater Transparant and B'Rock conducted from the harpsichord by Frank Agsteribbe

Brussels

Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be
APR 7 20.00 DeFilharmonie conducted by Xian Zhang: Britten, Barber, Ravel **APR 8** 20.00 Koninklijk Concertgebouw orchestra conducted by Ludovic Morlot: Messiaen, Dutilleux, Franck **APR 9** 20.00 Symphonieorkest Vlaanderen conducted by Andreas Delfs: Martinu, Haydn, Tchaikovsky **APR 10** 11.00 Helen Kearns, soprano; Sébastien Parotte, baritone; Gijs Van der Linden, tenor; Philippe Riga, piano: Massenet, Schubert, Strauss, more

Flagey

Heilig Kruisplein; 02.641.10.20
www.flagey.be
APR 6 12.30 Triofenix: Beethoven, Leó Weiner 20.15 Vlaams Radio Koor conducted by Bo Holten: Hendrik Isaac, Josquin Des Prez, more
APR 8 12.30 Caridad Galindo, piano; Lionel Stoffel, soprano: Mozart, Dvorák, more

Musical Instrument Museum

Hofberg 2; 02.545.01.30
www.mim.be
APR 13 15.00 Koenraad Sterckx, Gabriel Hollander, piano: Bach, Chopin, Liszt, more

Royal Music Conservatory

Regentschapsstraat 30; 02.213.41.37
www.kcb.be
APR 10 15.00 Bruocella Symphony Orchestra conducted by Jan Steenbrugge: Wagner, Gliere, Brahms

Ghent

De Bijloke
Jozef Kluyvensstraat 2; 09.269.92.92
www.debijloke.be
APR 8 20.00 Akademie für alte Musik Berlin and Collegium Vocale conducted by Daniel Reuss: Carl Heinrich Graun's Der Tod Jesu
APR 9 20.00 Sergei Istomin, cello; Viviana Sofronitsky, pianoforte: Mendelssohn, Liszt, Chopin

Handelsbeurs

Kouter 29; 09.265.91.65
www.handelsbeurs.be
APR 8 20.15 Yossif Ivanov, violin; Itamar Golan, piano: Ravel, Stravinsky, more

Conservatorium

Hoogpoort 64; 09.225.15.15
www.debijloke.be
APR 9 20.00 Bruocella Symphony Orchestra conducted by Jan Steenbrugge: Wagner, Gliere, Brahms

Brussels

De Munt
Muntplein; 070.23.39.39
www.demunt.be
APR 10-16 15.00/20.00 Toshio Hosokawa's Hanjo conducted by Koen Kessels, staged by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker

DON'T MISS

Balkan Trafik Fest

14-17 April
Bozar, Brussels

Is it the beautiful seas? The folk legends mixed with contemporary culture? Their penchant for cool-looking panama hats? Whatever it is, this festival in Bozar, celebrating its fifth year, is one of the most chillin' events of the year. The highlights of the festival of all things southeastern are many, including an opening night "Balkan Boat" on the Brussels canal sporting the Macedonian gypsy brass band Mladi Braka Kadrievi, the avant-premiere of Bosnian filmmaker Danis Tanović's *Cirkus Columbia* and an orchestra supported monologue by the Balkans' most famous composer, Goran Bregović. Maybe it's the name - trafik - that makes this festival seem so keen. They're like travellers passing in the night - they come, they play, then poof! They're gone.



→ www.balkantrafik.com

Ghent

Vlaamse Opera
Schouwburgstraat 3; 070.22.02.02
www.vlaamseopera.be
APR 7-17 15.00/19.00 Die Frau ohne Schatten by Richard Strauss, conducted by Alexander Joel, staged by Marco Marelli



Antwerp

Toneelhuis/Bourla
Komedielaan 18; 03.224.88.44
www.toneelhuis.be
APR 13-16 20.00 Ultima Vez in IT 3.0, choreographed by Wim Vandekeybus and Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui

Brussels

Kaaitheater
Sainctelettesquare 20; 02.201.59.59
www.kaaitheater.be
Until APR 8 Rosas Early Works: Four early pieces by Flemish choreographer Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker

Ghent

Vooruit
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060
www.vooruit.be
APR 6 21.30 Needcompany in Ontdekkingdag (Discovery Day), choreographed by Grace Ellen Barkey

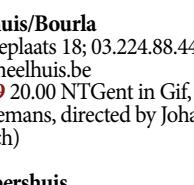


Antwerp

HetPaleis
Theaterplein 1; 03.202.83.11
www.hetpaleis.be
Until APR 13 15.15 Walpurgis and HetPaleis in Prinses Turandot, adapted and directed by Hans Schmidt (in Dutch; ages 3 and up)
Until APR 16 20.00 Kakkekwielen in Apocalypsuw, directed by Adriaan Van den Hoof (in Dutch)

Nova

Schijfstraat 105; 03.259.04.20
www.nova-kiel.be
APR 9 20.15 Youssef El Mousaoui in Child's Play, one-man show (in Dutch)



Toneelhuis/Bourla

Komedielaan 18; 03.224.88.44
www.toneelhuis.be
APR 8-9 20.00 NTGent in Gif, written by Lot Vekemans, directed by Johan Simons (in Dutch)

Zuiderpershuis

Waalse Kaaï 14; 03.248.01.00
www.zuiderpershuis.be
APR 13-14 20.30 Secret Gardens, the story of Moroccan political prisoner Aziz Binebine, directed by Dahlia Pessemiers/ Benamar (in Dutch and French)



Brussels

De Munt
Muntplein; 070.23.39.39
www.demunt.be
APR 10-16 15.00/20.00 Toshio Hosokawa's Hanjo conducted by Koen Kessels, staged by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker



Brussels

Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be
Until APR 16 14.00/19.30 Le Journal d'une femme au Kosovo (The Diary of a Woman in Kosovo) by Zenel Laci (in French with subtitles in English and Dutch)

KVS Bol
Lakensestraat 146; 02.210.11.12
www.kvs.be
APR 7-10 times vary Vorst-Forest by Titus De Voogdt & Johan Heldenbergh (in Dutch)

Kaaistudio's
Onze-Lieve-Vrouw van Vaakstraat 81; 02.201.59.59
www.kaaiitheater.be
APR 6-9 20.30/19.00 tg STAN & guests in Oogst (Harvest), new scenes, short extracts and one-act plays from the company's repertoire (in Dutch)

La Maison Blanche
Sint-Jobsteenweg 606
www.atc.theatreinbrussels.com
APR 13-16 20.00 The American Theatre Company in Café Theatre (in English)

Ghent
NTGent Schouwburg
Sint-Baafsplaat 17; 09.225.01.01
www.ntgent.be
Until APR 30 20.30/15.00 Een bruid in de morgen (A Bride in the Morning) by Hugo Claus (in Dutch)



Antwerp

Fashion Museum (MoMu)
Nationalestraat 28; 03.470.27.70
www.momu.be
Until AUG 14 Unravel: Knitwear in Fashion, a wide variety of knitted garments and accessories from across the centuries, with a focus on high fashion pieces and their vernacular interpretations

Plantin-Moretus Museum
Vrijdagmarkt 22; 03.221.14.50
Until JUNE 5 Playsante huysinghe op eenen hof, prints, drawings, topographic views and books provide a glimpse at the numerous country homes bought up outside of Antwerp in the 16th century

Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Leopold De Waelplaats; 03.238.78.09
www.kmska.be
Until APR 30 Museums in the 21st Century: Concepts, Projects, Buildings, the most significant trends in contemporary museum architecture

Zilpermuseum Sterckshof
Hoofvunderlei 160; 03.360.52.52
www.provant.be
Until JUNE 12 Van haarnaald tot schoengesp: Accessoires in goud en zilver (From Hairpin to Shoe Buckle), 14th- to 20th-century European accessories in gold and silver



Agenda

FLANDERS TODAY
APRIL 6, 2011

Brussels

art&(marges
Hoogstraat 312-314; 02.511.34.20
www.artsetmarges.be

APR 8-JUNE 5 Mad about Hungary, drawings by patients from Pécs psychiatric institution

Beursschouwburg

August Ortsstraat 20-28; 02.550.03.50
www.beursschouwburg.be

Until MAY 27 Waiting and Watching: South African Moments, four young photographers' photos of ordinary South Africans

Biblioteca Wittockiana

Bemelstraat 23; 02.770.53.33
www.wittockiana.org
Until APR 30 Mikhail Karasik: Onder druk van tijd (Pressed for Time), lithographs

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be

Until MAY 8 Venetian and Flemish Masters, works from the Accademia Carrara in Bergamo, Italy, shown alongside Flemish masterpieces from Antwerp's Royal Museum of Fine Arts, spanning the 15th to the 18th centuries

Until MAY 8 Luc Tuymans: Retrospective, works by the contemporary Flemish painter
Until MAY 15 Architecture for Justice: Brussels Courthouse, Imagine the Future!, display of projects submitted for the courthouse's modernisation/conservation plan, plus announcement of prizewinners' ideas

Design Vlaanderen Galerie

Kanselarijstraat 19; 02.227.60.60
www.designvlaanderen.be
Until MAY 20 This is Humin, innovative design projects by 30 companies and 20 designers from across Flanders

Espace Photographique Contretype

Verbindingslaan 1; 02.538.42.20
www.contretype.org
Until APR 24 Miroirs de l'intime (Mirrors of the Intimate), photography group show

Flemish Parliament - De Loketten

IJzerenmarktstraat 99; 02.552.40.43
www.vlaamsparlement.be

Until JUL 11 Raoul De Keyser: De dingen die ik zie (The Things I See), drawings and paintings by the Flemish artist

ING Cultural Centre

Koningsplein 6; 02.547.22.92
www.ing.be/art
Until JUN 19 Joan Miró, the lyrical painter, 120 paintings, etchings, sculptures and drawings by the Catalan artist

Jacques Franck Cultural Centre

Waterloosesteenweg 94; 02.538.90.20
www.cjacquesfranck.be
Until APR 25 Toiles urbaines (Urban Canvases), paintings drawings, sculptures and installations by street artists

Le Botanique

Koningsstraat 236; 02.218.37.32
www.botanique.be
Until APR 23 Norbert Ghisoland, photographs by the late Belgian photographer (1878-1939)



Residence "De Statie" is a new building project consisting of 7 new flats situated in Hoegaarden. This rural city has the advantage of being less than 2 minutes away from the E40 motorway Louvain/Brussels. (24 kms from Louvain/46 kms from Brussels). These modern flats are built with high quality materials and are submitted to a registration fee of 10%.

3 examples:

One-bedroom flat - 98 m²: large 40m² living room, 10m² kitchen, garden, 28m² terrace for €260,000.

Two-bedroom flat - 139 m² (duplex): 23m² living room, 29m² kitchen, 11m² terrace for €275,000.

Three-bedroom flat - 134 m² (duplex): 27m² living room, 30m² kitchen, 14m² terrace for €293,000.

Interested? Call immo K: +32 (0)16 82 17 78 or send an e-mail to: info@immok.be. We will be glad to help you with any queries!

Immo K
Leuvensestraat 103
3300 Tienen
016 82 17 78
016 82 17 79
info@immok.be
www.immok.be

Museum van Elsene

Jean Van Volsemstraat 71; 02.515.64.22
www.museumvanelsene.be

Until MAY 15 Olivier Debré, lyrisch abstract (Lyrical Abstraction), retrospective of the French painter

Prague House

Palmerstraatlaan 16; 02.230.94.91

www.prague-house.eu

Until MAY 5 Czech Collage from the Pražská Plynnárenská Collection, post-war collages by various Czech artists

Royal Museum of the Armed Forces

Jubelpark 3; 02.737.78.33

www.legermuseum.be
APR 8-OCT 16 War&Game(s), photographs by Virginie Cornet and toys from the time of the First World War

Royal Museums of Art and History

Jubelpark 10; 02.741.72.11

www.kmkg-mrah.be

Until APR 24 Tussen hemel en hel (Between Heaven and Hell), exhibition on death in the Middle Ages

Tour & Taxis

Havenlaan 86C; 02.549.60.49

www.tour-taxis.com

Until APR 15 Nintendo 3DS, 3D photographs by six Belgian photographers on the occasion of the launch of the new game console

Until MAY 9 America: It's Also Our History!, three centuries of cross-Atlantic relations with frescoes, charts, audiovisual material, installations, objects and artwork

Until MAY 31 From Brussels: Xiè Xiè Shanghai, a look at the Belgian pavilion from the World Expo last year in Shanghai, plus information on business opportunities involving China (www.thankyoushanghai.com)

Until JUN 19 Zes miljard mensen (Six Billion People), photo project by Yann Arthus-Bertrand

APR 9-30 Ironic Landscapes, photographs by Jos Tontlinger

WIELS

Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.340.00.50
www.wiels.org

Until MAY 15 David Claerbout, photographs by the Flemish photographer

Deurle

Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens
Museumlaan 14; 09.282.51.23

Until JUN 5 Christopher Williams, photographs by the American

photographer

Until JUN 5 On the Way to the Peak of Ecstasy, film projects by Flemish artist Thomas Bogaert

Until JUN 5 Picture This: Sophie Kuijken, paintings by the Flemish artist

Ghent

Bank van de Arbeid

Volderstraat 1; 051.42.42.11

www.lannoo-events.be

Until MAY 6 Lieve Blancquaert: Photographer, retrospective of the Flemish photographer's work over the past 25 years

Design Museum

Jan Breydelstraat 5; 09.267.99.99

www.designmuseumgent.be

Until JUNE 13 Fantasy Design, works by young people from Belgium, Denmark, Finland and Spain

Until JUN 13 L'Objet Sublime, over 300 ceramic works from 1875-1945 France

Dr Guislain Museum

Jozef Guislainstraat 43; 09.216.35.95

www.museumdrguislain.be

Until MAY 8 The Weighty Body: Of Fat and Thin, Perfect or Deranged, a history of fasting for personal, esthetic, religious or economic reasons

Kunsthal Sint-Pietersabdij

Sint-Pietersplein 9; 09.243.97.30

www.gekleurdverleden.be

Until APR 25 Gekleurd verleden: Familie in oorlog (Coloured Past: Family at War), stories of the Second World War by everyday people in 1944

MIAT

Minnemers 9; 09.269.42.00

www.miat.gent.be

Until APR 23 Viva Vélo, photographs by Ghent natives Steven Geirnaert and Heidi Renwa of their 20,000 km bike trip from Hungary to China (www.foto-velo.be)

Museum of Contemporary Art (SMAK)

Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03

www.smak.be

Until JUN 5 Joy and Disaster, group show featuring contemporary Hungarian artists

Until JUN 5 Carlos Rodríguez-Méndez: Agua Caliente, Hot Water, gigantic minimalist sculpture by the Spanish artist

Until JUN 5 MARCEL: The Marcel Broodthaers Room, work by the Belgian artist

Until JUL 3 Michaël Sailstorfer: Raum und Zeit, sculptures by the German artist

Stadsmuseum Gent (STAM)

Bijloke - Godshuizenlaan 2; 09.269.87.90

www.stamgent.be

Until MAY 1 Enlightened City, a study of how light affects a city through diaries, models, paintings, photographs and installations

Hasselt

Fashion museum

Gasthuisstraat 11; 011.23.96.21

www.modemuseumhasselt.be

Until JUN 5 Alter Nature: The Future That Never Was, a look at the year 2000 from the point of view of designers from the 1960s and a glance at new possibilities in fashion

National Jenever Museum

Witte Nonnenstraat 19; 011.23.98.60

www.jenevermuseum.be

Until JUN 5 De kunst van het drinken (The Art of Drinking), paintings of drinking scenes by 19th- and 20th-century Belgian artists

Kemzeke

Verbeke Foundation

Westakker; 03.789.22.07

www.verbekefoundation.com

Until APR 10 Certified Copy, works by 20 international artists on reproduction and cloning

Leuven

Museum M

Leopold Vanderkelenstraat 28; 016.27.29.29

www.mleuven.be

Until MAY 15 Freek Wambacq, installations by the Belgian artist

Until MAY 22 Pedro Cabrita Reis: One After Another, A Few Silent Steps, sculpture, paintings, photos and installations by the Portuguese artist

Until JUN 12 Gebonden Beelden, rare books

Tweebronnen

Rijsschoolstraat 4; 016.30.08.69

www.leuven.be/bibliotheek

Until MAY 1 Geert De Smet, sketches and sculptures by the Flemish artist

Machelen-Zulte

Het Roger Ravelmuseum

Gildestraat 2-8; 09.381.60.00

www.rogerravelmuseum.be

Until JUN 19 Tussenruimte: Het onzichtbare zichtbaar maken (Space In-between: Making the Invisible Visible), paintings by Flemish artist Roger Ravel on white frames

Mechelen

Exhibition Halls

Minderbroedersgang 5; 015.29.40.00

www.cultuurcentrummechelen.be

APR 14-JUNE 5 Jan Dibbets 3X, photographs of conceptual works by the Dutch artist

Het Firmament

Brusselpoort; 015.34.94.36

bite

ROBYN BOYLE



Vogelnestjes

Embarrassing but true, the first time I saw this typically Flemish dish I asked myself "how they got the egg in there". I was mesmerised by these meatballs with a surprise at the centre, and even more so after tasting them. Not only are *vogelnestjes* (little bird's nests) a fun and easy dish, they are scrumptious, especially when served with a Madeira sauce and a side of mashed potatoes.

A similar food in the UK is the Scotch egg, usually eaten cold with pickles or a salad. And in the Netherlands they also eat *vogelnestjes*, but more as a snack. The Flemish version is warm and forms the basis for a hearty meal. *Vogelnestjes* can be prepared in a few different ways: deep fried, pan fried or in the oven. I tried them all. Perhaps not surprising is that the least healthy method (in the fryer) gave the best result. This is mostly because when fried the meatballs form a nice crunchy outer layer, adding an extra texture contrast. The result is, in all cases, yummy: juicy meat on the outside, firm egg white and soft yolk on the inside.

Ingredients (for two):

3 hard-boiled eggs
1 whole raw egg
White of 1 egg
600g minced meat
Bread crumbs
Salt and pepper

Madeira sauce:

20g butter
1 onion
250g mushrooms
20g flour
1/2 litre beef bouillon
1 sprig fresh thyme
1 bay leaf
1 1/2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 dl Madeira wine

First prepare the sauce. Sauté chopped onions and mushrooms in butter and season to taste with salt and pepper. Add flour and let cook for a few minutes before slowly pouring in the beef bouillon, stirring all the while. Next, add the tomato paste, thyme and bay leaf. Let simmer over low heat for 10 minutes before adding the wine.

While the sauce is simmering, make the mince-meat, mixing

the meat, the raw egg and bread crumbs, plus herbs if desired (paprika and parsley both work nicely). Salt and pepper to taste. Hard-boil three eggs for eight to 10 minutes. After cooling and peeling, cover each hard-boiled egg with the mince. Roll and pat with your hands until the egg is fully encased. Finally, roll each meatball in a bit of raw egg white, followed by a thin layer of bread crumbs.

For the stove-top version, brown the *vogelnestjes* on all sides in butter before adding to the Madeira sauce. Cover and let simmer about 20 minutes over low heat.

Alternatively, place the *vogelnestjes* in an oven at 220°C for about 30 minutes, spooning melted butter over them from time to time to prevent them drying out. Better yet, drop them in a fryer at 180°C for about 10 minutes or until they float to the top. Cut each *vogelnestje* in half before serving with the Madeira sauce and mashed potatoes or fries.

Contact *Bite* at flandersbite@gmail.com

TALKING SPORTS

LEO CENDROWICZ



Nick Nuyens wins the Tour of Flanders by a hair, sprinting against the French Sylvain Chavanel (left) and the Swiss Fabian Cancellara

Nuyens wins Tour of Flanders

Nick Nuyens from Lier clinched the Ronde van Vlaanderen, or Tour of Flanders, on Sunday, out-sprinting French cyclist Sylvain Chavanel and last year's winner, the Swiss Fabian Cancellara, in the final metres to claim a dramatic victory. In an unpredictable finish at the end of the 256km race from Oostkamp to Ninove, 12 riders still had a chance with two kilometres to go. Nuyens came out less than a tire-length ahead to grab the biggest victory of his career in a time of six hours and 42 seconds.

Nuyens was taken on by Saxo Bank after classics giant Cancellara left the team. The Swiss rider was lined up as virtually the only favourite for the second cycling "monument" of the season having coasted to victory in a smaller classic race midweek and by virtue of his unrivalled domination of Flanders and Paris-Roubaix last year.

But the 30-year-old Nuyens worked his way into

the elite 12-man group at the foot of the final climb, the Bosberg, and only he and Chavanel could react when Cancellara attacked inside the final four kilometres of action. Despite another late burst from Cancellara, it was Nuyens who emerged to take a narrow but famous win in front of his home crowd.

Quickstep's Tom Boonen, winner of last week's Gent Wevelgem, came two seconds behind to take fourth, while Herzele-born Staf Scheirlinckx of Verandas Willems came eighth.

"This victory is unexpected, as I wasn't at my best today, but I raced intelligently," said Nuyens, who was competing in his seventh Tour of Flanders. "I felt very relaxed during the final sprint. It was only in the final 50 metres that I started to fully realise what was happening – that I was about to win this beautiful race."

→ www.rondevanvlaanderen.be

THE LAST WORD . . .

Accidents will happen

"The rows of onlookers were impossible to predict. There are often events organised on the car park at Waarloos, and they don't lead to any problems."

Hajo Beeckman of Road Safety Flanders, after an event organised by the campaign Go-For-Zero distracted drivers and caused a five-car collision

Lo-fat Flanders

"So much chocolate and beer, but I see so few obese people. Everyone walks and cycles down the street, just like that!"

Mark Luttrell from Memphis, Tennessee, in Bruges to prepare his city's Belgium Festival

Too cool for school
"I haven't been a fan of Justin Bieber for long. I thought his first songs, like "Baby", were pretty childish."

Loi, 12, was a rare boy among the crowds at the teen idol's concert in Antwerp last week

Dad who?

"The children have never let it be known that they have a problem with my long days, maybe because their mother is there for them. I feel a strong bond with my kids, but I don't have the feeling they miss me."

Self-employed Patrick Strubbe, on news that the OECD reported Belgians spend less than one hour a day with their children

NEXT WEEK IN FLANDERS TODAY #175

Feature

It's a veritable schools crisis: Brussels' Dutch-speaking institutions are full, and Antwerp needs half a billion euro to build new schools. News editor Alan Hope talks to educational experts

Arts

While the Brussels International Fantastic Film Festival takes over our fair capital, we take a look at a new book of surreal and gothic fiction by Flemish authors – in English

Living

It seems that young women in Flanders are keen to break into male-dominated worlds: We have a woman champion poker player, and now the European women's lightweight boxing champ. Sports writer Leo Cendrowicz talks to Delfine Persoon