



## Tram crash

Coastal tram accident injures 20

3

## Building from Brussels

Flanders' chief architect  
in new exhibition

6

## City-tripping

Visit Geraardsbergen  
this summer

8



# Taming the beast

## Bike coaching teaches would-be cyclists how to master the streets of Brussels

PHILIP EBELS

The weather is just clearing up on a Monday afternoon in the Brussels' commune of Schaarbeek, after violent morning showers washed away the sticky heat of the weekend before. Abdel Azakhnini is glad. Otherwise, he might not have agreed to climb onto a brand-new Grandville city bike and pedal all the way from where he lives to where he works, at the tram depot close to the Terkamerenbos, on the other side of town.

"I only cycle when it's nice outside," he says, attaching the Velcro on his yellow reflector vest. "If it's not, I take the car."

Azakhnini, in fact, recently left his own bicycle with relatives in Morocco; the one he's on now is a loaner from Brussels' cycling organisation Pro Vélo. He likes to ride a bike but is used to the seaside in Morocco, where the climate is cycle-friendly.

Not like in Brussels, he says, where not only the weather is hazardous but "cars don't see you, and bike paths don't exist." Once he got stuck in a tram track and slipped. So when his employer, the Brussels public transport company MIVB, suggested he try the new bike-coaching project that aims to help cycling hopefuls tame this car-infested city, he gladly signed up.

Bike coaching, administered by Pro Vélo, is working with businesses to get their employees out of their cars and onto their bikes.

It is no secret that cycling in Brussels something of a challenge. Its infamous infrastructure is designed for cars, if anything, and is jammed most of the day on account of hundreds of thousands of daily commuters. Casual travellers, too, take the car, rather than any other means of transport, even if they don't exactly have far to go. More than half of motorised movements in Brussels are shorter than five kilometres. A quarter are shorter than one kilometre.

Brussels is also very hilly. There is a difference of almost one hundred metres from the European quarter to the centre of the city below. Early every morning, trucks carry rentable Villo bikes up the hill from the overcrowded parking stations below to the depleted ones above. Brussels is also very hilly. There is a difference of almost one hundred metres from the European quarter to the centre of the city below. Early every morning, trucks carry rentable Villo bikes up the hill from the overcrowded parking stations below to the depleted ones above.

→ continued on page 5

*"We need a mentality change. We need to have the bicycle in mind, automatically, when we make infrastructure decisions"*



## De Gelder murder trial delayed

The trial of Kim De Gelder for the murder of two babies and a care worker at a crèche in Dendermonde in 2009 will be delayed, after his lawyer last week filed a motion to have the investigating magistrate carry out a number of supplementary enquiries.

In addition to the three murders allegedly committed during a knife rampage at the Fabeltjesland crèche, De Gelder (pictured) is also accused of killing an elderly woman on a farm in nearby Vrasene one week prior to the attack.

Last week it was reported that the prosecution in the case intends to file another 25 charges of attempted murder – one for each of the staff

present at the crèche on the day of the attack. The prosecution will argue that De Gelder went there with the intention of killing everyone.

The investigation, according to the magistrate in the case, is now complete and ready to be presented to a court, which they hoped to do last week so that a trial date could be set. But the application from De Gelder's counsel will delay proceedings.

The file now goes back to the investigating magistrate. No details are available of the exact nature of the new enquiries, however, one of them may involve appointing a new panel of psychiatrists to determine if De Gelder is mentally fit to stand trial at all. ♦



## Solar-powered train debuts in Antwerp

Tunnel of solar panels successful, while a nuclear train provokes protest

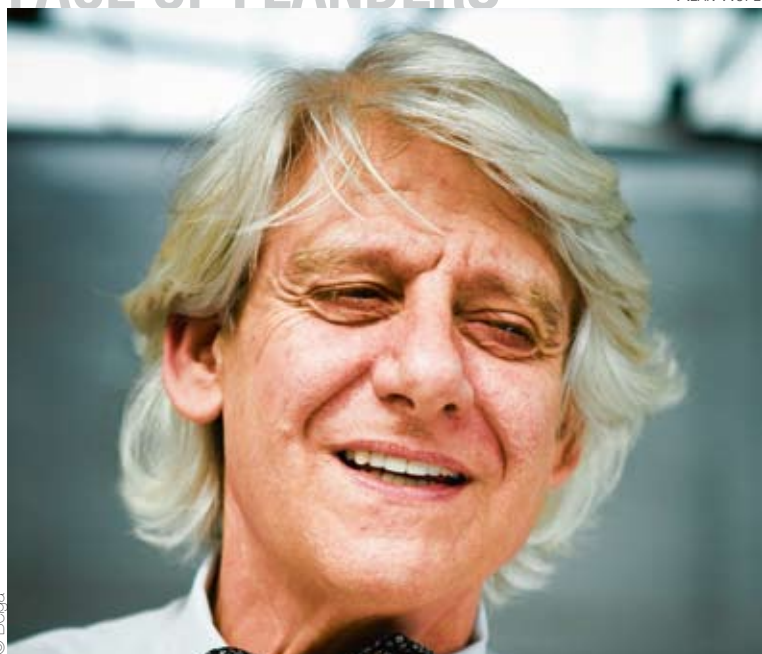
ALAN HOPE

Europe's first-ever solar-powered train debuted last week in Flanders, with a train from Antwerp Central riding the rails in a solar tunnel alongside the E19 motorway on its way to Brecht. The 3.4-kilometre tunnel that goes through Schoten and Brasschaat is covered in solar panels – 16,000 in all, presenting an energy-producing surface of 50,000 square metres, equivalent to eight football pitches.

→ continued on page 3

## FACE OF FLANDERS

ALAN HOPE



© Baka

## Piet Stockmans

When Prince Albert of Monaco and Charlene Wittstock sit down to eat at their wedding party next month, they and their distinguished guests will be placed in front of 500 plates made in Genk. The whole *beau monde* will be there. Master French chef Alain Ducasse will be behind the stove; the bride will be radiant in an exclusive creation by the legendary Giorgio Armani.

Good news for Stockmans, born in Leopoldsborg, Limburg province, in 1940 and now considered to be one of the leading ceramists in the world. Ducasse has called upon his services before, for his restaurant in Monaco. This time around, he's ordered a service on a Mediterranean theme.

Now, "I go to Ducasse every year to show him my new products," says Stockmans. The latest line struck Ducasse as perfect for the wedding. All it took was for Albert to agree. "I was in competition with all the major French porcelain manufacturers who had also made offers," say Stockmans.

Stockmans worked first in Maastricht, then for almost 20 years teaching industrial design at the Design Academy in Genk.

His atelier is also in Genk, on the C-Mine site of the former coal mines.

There they produce porcelainware by hand, which goes out to shops across the world. Among the range: a set of concentric circular plates ranging from four to 56 centimetres in diameter; a similar panoply of square plates; a cuboid salt-pepper-oil set; and of course the full range of tableware based on the trademark Ducasse design, called La Mer and made of a sea-blue and white porcelain that's almost meditative. Stockmans also designs exclusive sets for other manufacturers and sits on juries wherever in the world there is a ceramics award to be handed out.

"For me this is a unique way to be recognised by other chefs," he says of the wedding feast, which will be spread over two days. "Unlike the man who delivers the champagne, I don't have a shop in Monaco." His work is, however, available from shops all over Flanders and online, as well as gracing the tables of Sergio Herman's three-Michelin-star restaurant Oud Sluis in the Netherlands.

→ [www.pietstockmans.com](http://www.pietstockmans.com)

## News in brief

Belgians will soon be able to **donate blood until the age of 70**, with the passage of a bill that raises the age limit from 65. Introduced by senator Louis Ide, a medical doctor. "There is not a single scientific justification for the current age limit," she said. The measure has all-party support and is backed by the Flemish Red Cross; it will affect about 1,300 donors a year who are currently excluded because of age.

A 21-year-old man appeared in court in Dendermonde last week charged with **driving an NMBS train** on three occasions despite having no training whatsoever. The man pretended to be a late-stage trainee and persuaded drivers to hand over control. "He put hundreds of lives at risk," the prosecution said. The man said he had had a passion for the railways since childhood. A verdict is expected in September.

Residents living around the Mellaerts lakes in the Brussels commune of Sint-Pieters-Woluwe have started a petition against the introduction of **swan-shaped pedal boats** for hire, claiming the craft are offensive to the visual environment of the park. "They're completely out of place," one resident told *Télé Bruxelles*. "You'd think you were at the North Sea."

Antwerp has won this year's Award of Excellence from the European organisation **Cities for Children**. Antwerp is also this year's Youth Capital of Europe (see *Flanders Today*, 2 March). A Cities for Children special



mention went to the Genk-based news agency StampMedia, which aims its dispatches at young people.

Police in Brussels' commune Sint-Joost-ten-Node were able to stop a suicide attempt last week – by **shooting the man** who was threatening to kill himself. The man was brandishing a 25-centimetre knife and shards of broken glass with which he said he intended to take his own life. One officer was backed against a wall and shot the man in the chest. The man was taken to hospital and pronounced to be in stable condition.

Kris Peeters last week became the first Flemish minister-president to make an **official visit to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg**. Peeters met with prime minister Jean-Claude Juncker and discussed, among other topics, plans to introduce tolls for freight traffic on Flanders' roads.

The **aquarium in Antwerp Zoo**, this year celebrating its centenary, is to undergo thorough renovation to repair leaks in its concrete structure. The aquarium was revolutionary in its day for its use of reinforced concrete, which over time has been affected by environmental pollution, in particular salt from seawater. The aquarium will remain open for visitors as much as possible during the works later this year.

Flemish education minister Pascal Smet is taking action to prevent

children being removed from school by their parents **before the end of term in order to go on holiday**. Many schools this year will have finished with lessons and exams by 24 June. An action plan, which will be drawn up after this year's holidays, would look at how to rearrange lesson and exam schedules to close the gap.

The Council of State last week **overturned a ban on weapons dealers** in Antwerp that imposed fines and possible closure orders for the display of firearms, knives and daggers in shop windows. The ban was introduced after the murderous rampage of Hans Van Themsche in 2006, in which he shot a nanny and her two-year-old charge and injured another, shortly after buying a rifle from a local dealer. The court ruled that the city had no authority to impose the ban, which would require federal legislation. Antwerp mayor Patrick Janssen said the ruling was "incomprehensible".

Socialist senator Marleen Temmerman, a worldwide authority on women's health, has been **appointed to the chair of the HIV/Aids advice group** of the Geneva-based Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU). The news was announced last week during the UN summit on HIV and Aids. "This is an excellent chance to strive for a more streamlined and coordinated approach to Aids policy across the world," Temmerman said.

## OFFSIDE

## Shaping up

"Very flat, Norfolk," says a character in Noel Coward's play *Private Lives*. Jacques Brel, in his song "Le plat pays", described Flanders as "the flat land I call my own". The two regions, evidently, have that much in common.

But did you know that Flemish warriors accompanied William the Conqueror when he invaded England in 1066? That from the 14th century wool was shipped from Norwich, the second biggest city in England, to the flourishing textile manufacturers of Ghent, the second biggest city of northern Europe, after Paris? Or that canaries imported to Norfolk by Flemish emigrants in the 16th century eventually gave their name to the Norwich City football club?

Closer to our time, soldiers injured during the First World War in Flanders would often be shipped off to East Anglia for treatment. "A 1915 auction catalogue shows a sale was held at Norwich's Agricultural Hall on January 13 to help



A Norfolk landscape. Seem familiar?

© Shutterstock

Belgian soldiers," writes Derek James in the *Norwich Evening News*. "Most of the people of poverty-stricken war-time Norwich had very little, but the Belgians had even less. The sale catalogue is packed with mostly small, everyday items given by ordinary people to help people even less well-off than themselves. They donated a tin of food, an umbrella, a pair of baby shoes, a leg of mutton."

Later, in the Second World War, nurse Edith Cavell, a native of Norfolk, was executed by the Nazi occupiers in Brussels for spying.

All of this comes to us from

a fascinating project called SHAPING 24, organised jointly by Norwich city council and their counterparts in Ghent. Their website, in English, is full of information on the ancient bonds between the two regions.

The project is looking for personal histories from people with links to both sides of the pairing: Flemish people with ties to Norfolk, and East Anglians with links to Flanders (not only Ghent). If that's the case, they'd like to hear from you. Contact the project with details of your story at [info@shaping24.eu](mailto:info@shaping24.eu).

→ [www.shaping24.eu](http://www.shaping24.eu)

## FLANDERS TODAY



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## Train carried "as much nuclear material as Chernobyl"

→ continued from page 1

The tunnel (pictured right) was originally built for the high-speed rail link between Antwerp and Amsterdam, to protect the nearby Peerds woodland from the damaging effects of rail traffic. Along the way, the two municipalities of Schoten and Brasschaat decided to team up with Solar Power Systems, a company based in Schoten, to use the tunnel for the production of solar energy as well. The project also included solar power experts Enfinity and the rail infrastructure agency Infrabel. The project cost €15.7 million.

The solar panels will generate about 3,300 megawatt hours of electricity in a year and will power trains passing through the tunnel, as well as providing energy to rail infrastructure, including the central station in Antwerp. Every year, 4,000 trains will be powered by the panels. It is estimated the power produced will mean a reduction of 2,400 tonnes in Infrabel's carbon dioxide emissions for a year.

"Trains running on green energy travel completely normally," said a spokesperson for Infrabel. "Passengers won't notice any difference to a normal train."



### Nuclear train less popular

A train carrying nuclear waste travelled across Flanders from Borssele in the Netherlands to La Hague in northern France, despite legal attempts by the municipal councils of Ghent and of Morsel, Antwerp province, to stop it, as well as protests by Greenpeace.

The two councils had gone to court as the train was scheduled to cross their territories, presenting "too great a risk to a heavily populated area", they argued. Ghent tried to get an immediate injunction, but, according to the court, there was

no urgency to the case.

Trains have previously carried nuclear waste on the same route without protest, and only last month another train carried nuclear material through Ghent on its way to the Belgoprocess plant in Dessel, Antwerp province. Ghent filed its request for an injunction on 3 June, although news reports had reported the transport a month before. "The plaintiffs created their own urgency by not paying enough attention," the court ruled.

The Federal Agency for Nuclear Control (FANC) denied there was any risk. "The contents of the transport are dangerous,

but the packaging is resistant to accidents," a spokesperson said. The risk, she said, was "negligible". FANC measured the radioactivity of the train when it entered Belgian territory and found levels to be under the legal limits.

According to Greenpeace, the train contained the same amount of radioactive material as was released in the Chernobyl disaster. Greenpeace protestors stopped the train by blockading the rails at Essen, near the Dutch border. All train traffic in the area was delayed for a time. About 10 demonstrators were detained. ♦

### Coast tram crash injures 20

The driver of a coast tram was fighting for his life last week after an accident on 8 June in which 20 people were injured. The tram, travelling southwest from Knokke to De Panne, ran into a crane at full speed at the site of roadworks in Oostduinkerke.

The accident adds considerably to the total for accidents and injuries on the coast tram this year of 62, involving one fatality, one serious injury and 22 minor injuries, most of them to passengers in the tram. In 2010 there were 290 accidents, 80 of which involved injuries. Most of those involved passengers who fall over inside the tram; there were 47 cases involving collisions.

The exact cause of the accident is not clear. Mobility minister Hilde Crevits visited the West Flanders headquarters of De Lijn, which operates the tram, on Thursday. "The staff of De Lijn are in shock after the accident," she said. "I tried to

be encouraging. I'm grateful to the emergency services for their speedy response."

De Lijn had ensured that proper safety procedures were in place, but Crevits has asked for them to be reviewed. The accident will also be investigated by the prosecutor's office in Bruges. A re-enactment of the accident was due to take place this week.

In a works zone, speed limits are reduced to 30 km/h, compared to a tram's maximum speed of 70. The tram is not fitted with a tachograph to record its speed, but, according to De Lijn, the tram was running to schedule, suggesting it was travelling at a normal speed – something confirmed by witness accounts.

Last week the tram driver underwent surgery, after which his condition was said to be critical. Five passengers were seriously hurt. Among the other injured were five children from a school near Liège in Wallonia. ♦



## THE WEEK IN FIGURES



### 23%

of Flemish people never drink tap water, according to a survey by the Flemish Environment Agency. Almost half of those over 50 drink it daily, but only 36% of those aged between 24 and 35

### 75%

of Flemings have no idea how much a litre of tap water costs (3.47 cents)

### 117

young people (aged 18-24) died in road accidents in Belgium in 2009, or one-quarter of all road fatalities, while the age group makes up only 10% of the adult population

### €9.7 million

paid out last year to victims of violent crime who were unable to claim damages elsewhere, for example if the offender was unknown

### €120 million

lost by Belgian internet users last year to fraud, an average of €7,140 each, according to figures from the federal police. The worst case involved the loss of €310,000 on a fraudulent investment scheme

### Terrace terrors

Should you be sunning yourself on a terrace in Flanders in the coming weeks and happen to notice a poster advertising "De 10 geboden van de welgemanierde terrasbezoeker", it's all to do with a new (tongue in cheek) campaign by sector representative Horeca Vlaanderen and radio show Peeters & Pichal to teach the public how to use café terraces with respect for others. Here are the so-called Ten Commandments of the Well-mannered Terrace Client:

- 1 Leave tables and chairs where they are
- 2 Keep the volume down when talking
- 3 Waiter! Customer! Treat everyone with respect
- 4 Park your baby-buggy properly
- 5 Keep your dog on a leash
- 6 Pay your bill together, not separately
- 7 Try not to steal our glasses
- 8 Order together and pay the correct amount
- 9 Don't rev up your engine outside; and most importantly
- 10 Hold your vomit until you get home

## FIFTH COLUMN

ANJA OTTE

### Long hot summer

Congratulations Belgium! One year has passed since the federal elections with still no government. Belgians north and south of the language border have become used to not having a federal government. Most people simply shrug at the political quarrelling and get on with their business, which is exactly what the caretaker government of Yves Leterme is doing.

This may seem like a unique political experiment, a gentle form of anarchy in which politicians have made themselves redundant. But the effects in the long run may be damaging, as a number of necessary reforms are stalled. Still, this sinister anniversary has produced no mass protests, the outcome in the short run being limited to acres of extra newspaper pages.

Has any progress been made? Well, no. The issue of state reform, which the Flemish want and the French speakers fear, seems to be heading nowhere. Moreover, the reactions to recent recommendations from the European Commission showed the divide between Flemish and French speakers on other – social-economic – issues is deeper than ever.

*Formateur* Elio Di Rupo (PS) promised some progress before the holidays, but we may face yet another long, hot summer. N-VA, the largest party in Flanders, in fact has little interest in a speedy agreement. Most observers believe the party wants to keep the discussion on community issues going until October 2012, when local elections are planned. This would keep the nationalist N-VA in the spotlight and allow it to set up the grassroots structure it lacks so far across Flanders.

All other parties seem shell-shocked by N-VA's success. The Open VLD liberals, which caused the election by withdrawing its support for the previous government, are in doubt as to abhor or admire the nationalists. The socialist SPA struggles with internal division and the fact that its associated with the French-speaking PS, which N-VA holds responsible for the state the country is in. The Christian-democrat CD&V has aligned itself with N-VA but has yet to benefit from that strategy, which is increasingly contested. Moreover, CD&V is no longer the "people's party" it was for decades, recent post-electoral research shows.

According to a study by the Catholic University of Leuven, N-VA voters come from every walk of life – making it the new people's party – and are largely pro-Flemish and right wing. Also, they tend to show a cynical attitude towards politics in general.

Now there's a recipe for success – for after a year like this, who can help but become somewhat cynical?

## Wrap your presents in a solar cell

Scientists develop plastic-like solar cells that are thin, flexible and semi-transparent

Imagine that any object under the sun could generate electricity: the windows of your home, your garden furniture, your new dress, your car, even the road on which you're driving. Sounds unlikely? Well, it isn't.

Scientists have found a way to make very thin, plastic-like film that generates electricity. Film that can be folded around any object you'd care to. Solar cells, but not the kind that sit squarely on your roof. Rather, these are organic solar cells or – more down-to-earth – plastic solar cells. Tom Aernouts of nano-electronic research centre imec heads one of the groups of scientists and engineers that are working to improve this solar cell technology. According to Aernouts, organic solar cells have many advantages over the classic rooftop panel type of cells.

"Organic solar cells will be much cheaper," he explains. "You only need very thin layers of photoactive materials. And these can be printed or sprayed on large foils of plastic or on sheets of glass, with relatively simple equipment. Because they are lightweight and flexible, these foils are ideal to cover all sorts of surfaces and shapes. And we can make them semi-transparent, for use on windows, for example."

*"Because they are lightweight and flexible, these foils are ideal to cover all sorts of surfaces and shapes"*

Contrary to other types of solar cells, plastic cells do not need direct sunlight. "They keep on working, even if the sunlight is not coming in directly or is reflected or made diffuse by clouds," he says. The materials at the heart of organic solar cells are based on carbon, the atom that is also the basic building block of life. Aernouts: "Some of these organic molecules can absorb photons from the sun. It gets them in a higher energy state; they are excited, so to speak. What we do is tap into that excitement and channel

it into an electrical current. It is, in fact, the same trick that plants use: They also capture sunlight with dedicated organic molecules in their leaves. Plants use that energy to make new molecules; we use it to generate electricity – for example, to lighten up a room or charge a battery."

But if organic solar cells have so many advantages, why can't we just go and buy them?

"Actually, you can already buy them," says Aernouts. "Some start-up companies have made commercial products using them. But these are mainly niche applications, such as battery-loading backpacks or folding architectural elements. For a more widespread use, the technology is still not good enough. We have to make the cells more efficient, and we have to make them last longer."

The yardstick to compare solar cells is their conversion efficiency. Today, the world record efficiency for an organic cell is just above 8%, compared to 15 to 18% for the standard cells used in solar panels. Experts estimate that when they reach above 10% efficiency, you will start to see a more widespread use of plastic solar cells.

According to Aernouts, that 10% will be reached in the coming years, maybe as soon as 2013. "Up to now, it has mainly been a matter of sifting through millions of possible materials and finding the most efficient combinations," he explains. "In addition, our group at imec is also looking at new ways to layer the materials in a cell. We stack, for example, two cells with different materials on top of each other. The top cell is transparent, so the part of the sunlight that is not captured by the first cell goes into the second cell."

Also, today's cells degrade. They slowly lose their magic when they come into contact with heat, light and oxygen. But if you'd have these solar cells in your clothing, you'd want them to last one or more seasons. And as part of a building, they should keep on working for, say, 20 years. So that's another task that Aernouts' group is working on. "And as with the efficiency, it's one that we are sure to bring to a good end, given enough time and brains."

→ [www.imec.be](http://www.imec.be)



Imec organic solar cells coated on glass



A San Francisco bus stop topped with Konarka Power Plastic®



A café umbrella with Konarka Power Plastic®



Getting molecules excited: Tom Aernouts



Imec organic solar cells

# Taming the beast

## Brussels Region wants to reduce car use by 20% over the next decade

→ continued from page 1

No hills today, though. It is the first day of the training programme, and bike coach Julien Demoustier has spent some time on Google maps to find a more pleasant route than just down and up again, away from the traffic jams. He gives a last couple of tips, quickly declares that “it’ll be a beautiful trip,” and they’re off, student in front, teacher behind.

The new coaching programme is a follow-up of an event called Bike Experience that took place last month, explains Véronique Siquet of Pro Vélo. (You can see a bit of the experience on our cover.)

Bike Experience challenged the people of Brussels to leave their cars behind for at least two weeks. They would receive theoretical and practical training, then a bike coach would come and cycle with them from home to work. At the end of the day, the coach be there waiting for them at the office, ready to go back home again. They would even be able to borrow a bike if they didn’t have one of their own.

*“More than two-thirds of coached cyclists say they still today use the bicycle to go to work”*

“We aimed high,” says Siquet, “and wanted to reach at least 250 candidate bikers.” They received 500 applications, coaches and bikers alike, which is five times as many as last year when the project launched. A total of 150 cyclists were selected, of whom 137 came through in the end. “It was a great success,” she says. “More than two-thirds say they still today use the bicycle to go to work.”

### Mentality change

Maybe it’s the sun that appeared from behind a grey sky right after coach and student took off together, but things seem to be going pretty smoothly on this day, too. “Look out,” Demoustier says, “priority from the right.” Azakhnini had already seen the danger, and anticipates nicely.

The odd honk from an impatient driver – not something a seasoned city cyclist raise an eyebrow over – doesn’t affect him, either. “This is great!” he says, laughing, when they finally stop at a red light.

“These programmes are very important,” says Bruno de Lille, state secretary of mobility for the Brussels region, which is where most of the money comes from. “We need to give these people a helping hand. Cyclists need to learn to claim their rightful place in city traffic.”



Cycle coach Julien Demoustier (left) and converted city cyclist Abdel Azakhnini

A cyclist himself and a member of Groen!, the Flemish green party, De Lille only last month presented his five-year *fietsplan*, or policy paper on how to make the city more cyclable. “True,” he says, “Brussels can do a lot better. We have inherited a cycle-unfriendly infrastructure, but that doesn’t mean we should accept things the way they are. We need a mentality change. We need to have the bicycle in mind, automatically, when we make infrastructure decisions.”

And there is even someone to make sure that they do. Frederik Depoortere is the Brussels regional government’s official bike manager. Since 2005, he and his team “coordinate everything that has anything to do with bicycles,” he says. “We kind of streamline the government’s decisions.”

Compared to cities like Leuven or Amsterdam, “Brussels is from another planet,” he concurs. But, he doesn’t agree with the assertion, often heard in the northern part of the country, that cycling in Brussels is suicide. “Much has been done over the last 10 years or so. Brussels today is fairly cyclable, if you know where and where not to go.

The number of cyclists has increased steadily. I’m not alone anymore when I’m waiting for a red light.”

### Figuring out that it’s faster

Statistics prove Depoortere right. Bicycle use in Brussels has grown by more than 10% annually over the last decade. It has gone from next to nothing to accounting for almost 5% of everyday transport use (*see graph*).

The goal of the government is to quadruple that number and diminish car use by 20% over the next 10 years.

It is an ambitious aim, De Lille agrees, but not impossible. “We’re surfing on the waves of the tide,” he says. “Everybody seems to understand the need for a different approach to city transport these days. Business, for example, complain about the time and energy – and thus money – lost on trying to get from A to B. The bicycle is simply faster for short distances.”

Projects like bike coaching, however tangible and effective on a small scale, seem to be a drop in the ocean, though. As do awareness campaigns like the one that was launched late last month, “the 20 million km of Brussels”, which challenges residents to cycle at least 20 million km together over the summer.

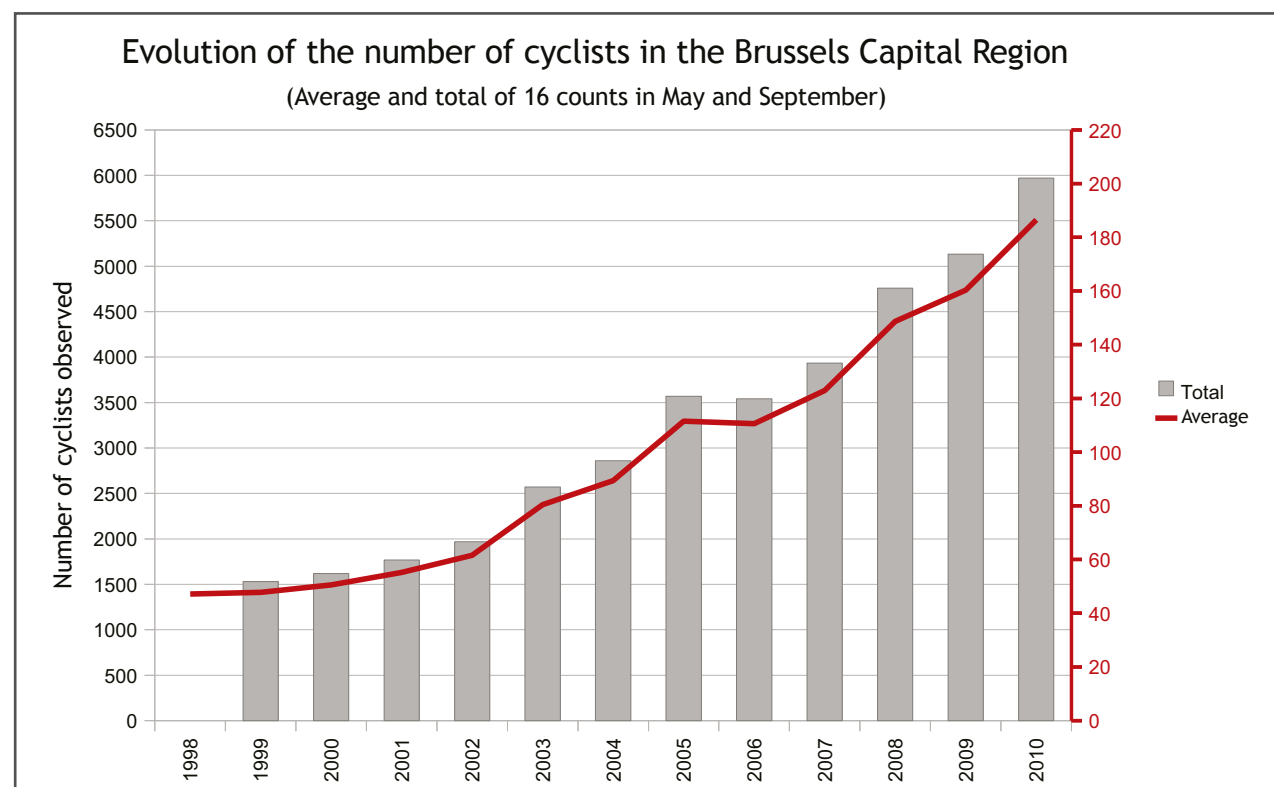
“The central axis that cuts the centre in half today is a four-lane autoway,” says Depoortere, dreaming out loud for a moment. “If we’d be able to make that into one big bicycle path, then things would really improve.”

Our two cycling heroes, meanwhile, are still doing fine. Azakhnini is getting the hang of it and picks up the pace. “Stop!” Demoustier points at a traffic sign, just before Flagey square, red with a white horizontal stripe. It’s missing the tell-tale sign below it saying *uitgezonderd fietsers* (“except for cyclists”), and they have to make a detour.

The ride is coming to an end as they pass the lakes of Elsenne and the stately houses at their flanks. Coach and student are both happy. “I’m going to buy a bike of my own,” says Azakhnini, convinced. He, like more than half of the participants in the project, has had to borrow one from Pro Vélo. “I’m really planning to go by bike every day,” he says.

Also when it rains? “Well,” he laughs, “we’ll have to see about that.” ♦

→ [www.provelo.org](http://www.provelo.org)



# Building from Brussels

A new generation of architects takes its work across the world

NICOLAS DE MOY

“51N4E” are not just the coordinates of a field west of Dendermonde. It is also the name of a young and promising international architectural practice in Brussels and of the latest in a series of exhibitions about Belgian architects, hosted by Bozar and the Brussels-based architecture magazine A+.

Architecture exhibits are never easy. Much more than with art, it is difficult to find new ways to attract the average visitor. But with the help of curator Dominique Boudet, former editor-in-chief of the French architectural magazine *AMC*, 51N4E: *Double or Nothing* succeeds remarkably.

You wander in as if by accident. The three exhibition spaces are all connected to the main Horta Hall and, if you're not paying attention, you might not even realise that you've reached them.

You stumble upon a large video projection of the drive from the airport to the heart of chaotic Tirana, capital of Albania. It is there, next to the city's central square, that the architects of 51N4E have constructed one of their most well-known creations, the TID

tower, which seems to be in its natural environment. You learn about the architectural plan and the concept behind it.

There are photographs of the tower in Tirana and a display of the regeneration efforts by the city's mayor to put some life and joy into the austere, grey blocks of the communist era. “He felt the need for urgency,” says Peter Swinnen, one of the 51N4E architects and current *Vlaamse bouwmeester*, or architect-in-chief for the Flemish government. “The people of Tirana were drowning.”

The presence of a sort of daybed in the second space requires visitors to take off their shoes, which creates an amusing, oddball airport security check feeling. There, you are witness to the renovation of a small house through the eyes of a dog strutting about the transformed space.

The third room is more conventional: plans and models of completed projects and those soon to materialise. Facing you is a gigantic depiction of the green spaces and boulevards of Brussels and how the west of the city had been forgotten by the grand schemes of

Leopold II in the 19th century.

The subtitle *Double or Nothing* refers to this emptiness in urban care. “You have to dare to choose between ‘nothing’ or pursuing an enlightened vision of the building process,” says Swinnen. “Unfortunately, politics in Brussels has been afraid of contemporary architecture – of the need to go beyond the status quo.”

The traumas inflicted on Brussels' urban environment in the past century have created an underlying sense of distrust with its people for anything modern in architecture. This series of exhibitions is a good way to get people back in touch with contemporary architecture, and 51N4E is an excellent entry.

The exhibition spaces are like private rooms in a great mansion, and the building itself becomes part of the exhibition. This simple demonstration of interaction, surprise and encounter creates a natural trajectory, like architecture should do. Change the way a space is perceived, and you change the experience of the visitor. ♦



The TID tower in Tirana, Albania, designed by Brussels architects 51N4E

## 51N4E: Double or Nothing

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→ [www.bozar.be](http://www.bozar.be)

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INSPIRING LEARNING



## Over the rainbow

ANDY FURNIERE

Brussels' tourist service aims to attract gay city-hoppers

Brussels has come out of the closet. Tourist service VisitBrussels has begun a campaign to present the city as the gay-friendly capital of Europe, “where gays are welcome everywhere and not just in nightclubs,” explains director Patrick Bontinck.

The campaign kicked off last month ago at The Pride, when thousands of gays from all over the world came to party in Brussels. “We also wanted them to discover the cultural side of the city,” says Martha Meeze of VisitBrussels. They handed out vouchers for museums and art galleries, plus a city map indicating the most gay-friendly hotels, restaurants, bars and shops. Meeze: “That way, couples don't have to explain why they want only one room with a double bed.” According to research, gay people spend more time and money on city breaks than the average. “Gay tourism is one of our most important target markets,” asserts Michaël François of the tourism department for the French Community Commission. They have recently allocated €40,000 to attract more gay tourists to Brussels.

“We don't just invent an image,” Meeze says. “We simply emphasise the fact that Brussels is an open-minded city where people with different cultural backgrounds and sexual orientations live happily together.” VisitBrussels is even planning to organise trips to Brussels for foreign journalists. Nathalie Rozalis of brasserie De Plattesteent, close to the Grote Markt and in the middle of the city's gay quarter, confirms that view. Next to the restaurant is a wall mural of the famous Flemish cartoon character Ragebol, walking arm in arm with his androgynous-looking girlfriend, Catherine; the mural is a popular gay symbol in Brussels. Rozalis believes that

almost half her clientele is gay. Belgium is already relatively gay friendly. The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) recently listed Belgium as fourth most progressive country in Europe concerning gay rights. Marriage was opened up to same-sex couples in 2003, and gay couples have been allowed to adopt children since 2006.

Yet, the reality is less than perfect, insists Michiel Vanackere, spokesman for Wel Jong, Niet Hetero, an organisation for the gay community of Flanders and Brussels. “We must not ignore that gays in Brussels are still frequent victims of verbal and physical abuse.” He says that he and his boyfriend have been shouted at because they were holding hands in the street. “Still, the city has a thriving gay community and, in general, people are tolerant. Most cities have a lot to learn from Brussels.” ♦

→ [www.visitbrussels.be](http://www.visitbrussels.be)



The Ragebol mural has become a gay symbol in Brussels

# Baggage handlers strike causes chaos

## Loss of company's licence could put jobs at risk

ALAN HOPE

Flights out of Brussels Airport were disrupted last Thursday, 9 June, because of a lightning strike by employees of freight and baggage handlers Aviapartner. The strike action was called following an announcement by Brussels Airport Company (BAC) that Aviapartner would lose its licence to operate at the airport in Zaventem from November. The announcement came as a shock to Aviapartner, which shares baggage handling at Zaventem with Flightcare, formerly a subsidiary of the now-defunct national airline Sabena. Aviapartner's services would be handed over to newcomer Swissport, formerly linked with Swissair, the airline that took over and then bankrupted Sabena. BAC gave no explanation for the decision, which was reported to have been contested within the airport operator's board. Aviapartner also pointed out that BAC's own clients, the airlines, were in favour of Aviapartner staying on. The company is based in Belgium but active across Europe, including many of the airlines' other destinations. Flightcare, which remains in place, is active only in Belgium

and Spain. Swissport, unions at the airport said, is present in many countries but has no experience in baggage handling. Federal mobility secretary Etienne Schouppe promised to ensure that the correct procedure had been followed by BAC. Belgium accounts for 26% of Aviapartner's earnings, and as many as 1,300 jobs could be at risk. Late on 9 June, unions reached an agreement with Swissport, which will take on the 750 handling staff at the same pay and conditions as at present. However, uncertainty surrounds another 600 jobs, mainly in administrative and check-in positions. The unions will be watching closely to ensure the agreement is held to. According to one union representative: "Swissport has a bad reputation nationally and internationally in regard to labour relations." The coming months will be "crucial" for the medium and long-term future of industrial relations at the airport, a representative said.



### Flights cancelled

One in four flights out of Brussels Airport on 9 June was disrupted. Among the hardest hit was tour operators Thomas Cook, for whom Aviapartner covers check-in and boarding as well as tarmac services. Three flights due to land in Zaventem were diverted to Liège, and six of eight planned

departures to Greece and Spain also left from Liège, with passengers ferried in buses to catch their flights. Other airlines working with Aviapartner include Air France, Alitalia, British Airways, Continental, KLM, SAS and United. In all, 72 flights were cancelled, affecting some 100,000 passengers. ♦

### City pays damages over contract

The city of Mouscron in Wallonia's Hainaut province has been ordered to pay damages of €235,000 to West Flanders catering company Hanssens after it failed to follow proper procedures in refusing Hanssens a contract to provide school meals. The contract, worth €1.6 million, was put out to tender in 2006 and was eventually awarded to Dupont Restauration, a French-owned company with a subsidiary in the city. Hanssens argued the legal procedures relating to public contracts had not been followed and took the case to court. It was argued that the then-

mayor had favoured Dupont on the basis of a promise to sponsor Excelsior Mouscron, their football club, which merged with RRC Péruwelz last year. Mouscron (known in Dutch as Moeskroen) is one of the few municipalities in French-speaking Belgium that has facilities for Dutch speakers, similar to those for French speakers on the periphery of Brussels. Until the language borders were drawn up in 1963, the city lay in West Flanders province. ♦

### Tax Freedom Day criticised

Last Friday, 10 June, was Tax Freedom Day in Belgium, the symbolic day when the average earner stops working for the tax man and starts working for him or herself. In other words, everything earned up to this point goes to taxes. Belgium is the third highest-taxed country in Europe; only residents of Sweden and Denmark pay more tax. The date when Tax Freedom Day falls, calculated each year by accountants PricewaterhouseCoopers, varies from country to country:

|                 |         |
|-----------------|---------|
| Hungary         | 9 May   |
| Luxembourg      | 10 May  |
| The Netherlands | 23 May  |
| Germany         | 28 May  |
| United Kingdom  | 30 May  |
| France          | 6 June  |
| Belgium         | 10 June |
| Sweden          | 2 July  |

Flemish socialist member of parliament Dirk Van der Maelen called the notion of Tax Freedom Day "populist nonsense" that ignored the benefits to the taxpayer of taxation. "Social and fiscal payments are not money thrown away," he said. "They go towards things like education, health care, social security, bridges and roads, police, fire services and public transport. The taxpayer gets a whole lot of necessary and beneficial services in return." Unions, meanwhile, pointed out that the total tax burden is not too high, but the way it is shared among different sectors is unfair. Labour, for instance, is highly taxed, while income on capital and assets is lower. In addition, large companies can avoid tax legally by using a variety of loopholes not available to normal earners. ♦

→ [www.preview.tinyurl.com/pwctax](http://www.preview.tinyurl.com/pwctax)

### Farming news

#### Veggie growers compensated, battery cages illegal

• The European Union agreed last week to **compensate vegetable growers** who lost income because of the effects of the EHEC bacterial epidemic in northern Germany. Growers will receive compensation amounting to 50% of their losses incurred between 26 May and 30 June, to a total of €210 million. The damages amount to about 32 cents per kilo of tomatoes and 9.5 per cucumber. Since the epidemic broke out, Russia has closed its borders to imports from the EU.

• The animal welfare department of the public health ministry last week sent out a letter reminding all poultry farmers that **traditional battery cages** for egg-laying hens become illegal in the EU from 1 January 2012. The new system will give the birds more space and allow them to forage, build nests and roost. About half of Belgium's 300 poultry farms use battery cages.

• Animal rights organisation Gaia later called for **battery eggs to be banned** from processed foods, now that supermarkets have largely switched over to free-range eggs. Some 5.5 million hens are still kept in battery cages, Gaia said, with eggs used mainly in the food industry. At the same time, the organisation launched a website listing brands that use chicken-friendly eggs: [www.boycotcot.be](http://www.boycotcot.be)

• Residents of Tielt, West Flanders, living around the Debra-Freeze slaughterhouse are lodging an official objection to plans to increase the plant's capacity from **one million to 1.5 million pigs** a year. Residents fear an increase in traffic, noise and smell nuisance. Meanwhile, in Ravels, Antwerp province, **residents objecting to extension plans** by a pig production facility have succeeded in convincing the provincial authority to reject the company's latest application for planning permission. The plans involve the construction of another shed to bring the number of animals housed up from 400 to more than 5,000.



Caretaker prime minister Yves Leterme (photo, right) meets Spanish foreign minister Miguel Angel Moratinos at the royal palace during the recent Belgian presidency of the European Union. Unusually, the tie the PM is wearing goes on sale in an online auction from 13 to 22 June. The auction is organised by Unizo, the organisation for the self-employed, with proceeds going to Trias, a local NGO that helps entrepreneurs in the developing world. "We are a land of driven business people," Leterme said, handing over the tie. "I'm a great supporter of the fact that Unizo and Trias encourage enterprise by sharing their knowledge with people in the south. Entrepreneurs are, after all, the basis of economic well-being the world over."

→ [www.vlavam.com](http://www.vlavam.com)

## THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

### Air • Brussels Airlines

Senegal Airlines and Brussels Airlines have signed a partnership agreement to increase air traffic between Europe and West Africa.

### Autos • sales

New cars registrations reached 54,888 in May, a 15% increase compared to the same period last year. The total for the first five months of the year is 5% higher than in 2010. Sales of industrial vehicles and trucks saw a sharp increase, up 38% for vans and 100 percent for trucks. The car industry federation expects the totals for the year to come close to last year's record of 540,000 new vehicles sold.

### Chemicals • Solvay

The Brussels-based chemicals and plastics group Solvay has invested some €60 million for a 30% stake in the Chinese Tianjin Soda Ash company. The move will strengthen Solvay's position in China as a major supplier for the glass industry.

### Cranes • Sarens

Wolvertem-based Sarens, one of Europe's leading crane operator and handling groups, is believed to have become the target of a takeover bid by the Dutch Hal investment group.

### Petrol • prices

According to the German auto association ADAC, Belgians travelling by car for holidays this summer should wait to cross the border before filling their gas tanks. Belgium is among the European countries with the highest prices for petrol, together with Switzerland and Denmark. The cheapest petrol prices right now can be found in Spain, Slovenia and Luxembourg.

### Supermarkets • Ahold

The Dutch group Ahold plans to open a second Albert Heijn supermarket in the Antwerp area after the successful launch of its first outlet in Brasschaat last year.

### Telecommunications • Belgacom

The country's leading telecommunications company is to build a new data centre in Evere to service is "cloud computing" customers. The new facility, to open in early 2013, will have state of the art cooling equipment.

### Telecommunications • Voxbone

The Brussels-based Voxbone, specialised in local and toll-free phone numbers, has signed a contract with the United Nations to supply UN agencies with a unique 888 telephone prefix worldwide. The move is expected to facilitate communications within the organisation at very competitive prices.

# GERAARDSBERGEN

## The Siren of cyclists has more on offer than just a steep hill

LAURENS BOUCKAERT

**W**hen I arrived in Geraardsbergen on a grey Monday morning, I had my reservations. As I'm the complete opposite of a cycling fanatic, walking up the infamous Wall of Geraardsbergen, a 110-metre precipitous climb and a traditional part of the Tour of Flanders, seemed a punishing routine rather than a rewarding experience.

But the battle against exhaustion was definitely worth it when I finally reached the top. The view over Geraardsbergen and its municipalities is simply stunning. And, to catch a breath, you can always enjoy a pint or a local dish at the convivial tavern 't Hemelryck that welcomes every brave soul who reaches the top of this unforgiving hill.

After this first, investigative climb, I descended to pick up my friend from the station in the late afternoon. We went up there together, and it seemed a lot less excruciating than before.

We decided to pay a visit to the Oudenburg chapel on the very top of the hill. The Congolese priest assigned there, who once made a guest appearance on the playful TV news programme *Man bijt hond*, was very welcoming and informed us of the warm disposition of the locals. Indeed, even on a grizzled weekday, the chapel was well attended. I managed to have a brief conversation with a middle-aged woman there to pray for a swift recovery from her breast cancer. I was touched by the serenity of it all; the atmosphere left a deep impression. Geraardsbergen is one of the oldest cities in Flanders. The cosy town of approximately 31,000 takes pride in its traditions and in its many historical monuments. To the Flemish and to cycling enthusiasts worldwide, the town bears much significance and mystique. But to most foreign tourists visiting Flanders, Geraardsbergen isn't a household name. Located in the southern part of East Flanders province, the city shares a border with the Walloon province of Henegouwen and is close to Flemish Brabant. Brussels is a 40-kilometre drive away. The Flemish Ardennes, one of the greenest areas in Flanders, have an unmistakable impact on the look of the city centre. Walking around on the central market place, you can spot the Wall with its steep cobbled roads and forest-like scenery looking over the neo-Gothic Sint-Bartolomeus church.

### First things first

There's no hurry for the wall-climb, though, if you're a first-time visitor to Geraardsbergen. Upon arrival, getting to the market place first is essential, where the tourist centre Permanensje is the place to be for travel tips and conducted

tours of the Flemish Ardennes. One of the guides there was astonished by my lack of knowledge of the city's history and sights. She assured me I could visit most places of interest on a one-day tour, but to get a grasp of the *real* Geraardsbergen, I would have to stay for at least a week.

Neighbouring the tourist centre is the stately, neo-Gothic town hall, which is worth a visit for its collection of 19th-century paintings and other works. We came uninvited and managed to get a brief tour of the building, including the impressive hall where the city's aldermen assemble. Announce your visit, though, and the guide will accompany you all the way to the roof for a breathtaking view over the city's historic centre.

The supposed highlight of Geraardsbergen is a statue of a little boy urinating, just outside of city hall. It is the city's very own Manneken Pis and is said to date from 1459, making it 160 years older than its Brussels counterpart. To be honest, the little man is just as underwhelming as his slightly more famous brother in Brussels. Aside from there not being huge crowds of enthusiastic Japanese tourists piling up around the peeing statue, I could genuinely not tell the difference.

*The Flemish Ardennes have an unmistakable impact on the look of the city centre*

City life in Geraardsbergen, as in many other Flemish cities, is centred around the central marketplace. Its epicentre is Sint-Bartolomeus church and it's surrounded by lots of archetypical pubs, restaurants and tearooms. The commercial centre is located in the streets nearby the market place, boasting no less than 250 stores. On Monday morning, you can have a good browse through the many food, clothes and sweets stands crowding the weekly market. The smell of grilled chicken certainly managed to titillate my nostrils. Architectural thrill-seekers will undoubtedly find the Vredestraat to their liking. It represents the typically Belgian mishmash of architectural history. This side street of the marketplace is home to some of Geraardsbergen's oldest mansions. Some of the houses are currently being restored, but, if you're lucky, you can get a guided tour from the tourist office of these brick witnesses of history. We weren't, but the outside view was enough to impress me.

Het Ideeënhuis (House of Ideas), for example, at Vredestraat 20, has a classicistic façade and an authentic 18th-century shop window, but is actually much older, dating from the middle ages. Other houses have glazed tiles dating from the beginning of the 20th century.

### Three Ms

When asking around among my Flemish friends about Geraardsbergen, I discovered that the city is particularly known for its three Ms: the *Muur* (the Wall), *Manneken Pis* and the renowned local delicacy, the *Mattentaart*. A friendly baker on one of the streets of the commercial centre told me all about it.

The *mattentaart* is the first local dish in Flanders to be granted Protected Geographical Status by the European Commission, something it has its rich history and unique flavour to thank for. The preparation is said to descend from the middle ages when farmers wanted to find a useful purpose for their unused curdled milk. The curd was added to pastry, and voilà, the *mattentaart* was born. The top and bottom consist of puff pastry, the middle of a mixture of curd (which they call *mat*), eggs and almond. Be sure to have one – its sweet taste reminded me of spring.

Geraardsbergen is not all puff and pastry. It is also home to a controversial, heathen celebration called *Krakelingen*. It is held at the end of February and is a salute to the light as it heralds the end of winter. Merrymakers move to the top of the Wall and throw down *krakelingen*, round rolls. Tradition has it that they drink live goldfish at the same time, which has enraged animal rights activists. The celebration is registered with UNESCO's List of Immaterial Cultural Heritage and, despite the criticism, remains very popular.

Nature is everywhere in Geraardsbergen. Apart from the small Grupello Park at the foot of the Wall, which is the steepest park in Flanders, the Abdij Park, or Abbey Park, surrounding the Sint-Adriaans Abbey is well worth a visit. The park is spacious and has a lovely pond. Next to that is a playground for the children and an arboretum for tree enthusiasts. Relaxing in the sun while watching the children play, visiting the marvellously restored abbey or examining the Canadian poplars: options galore for an easy afternoon. ♦

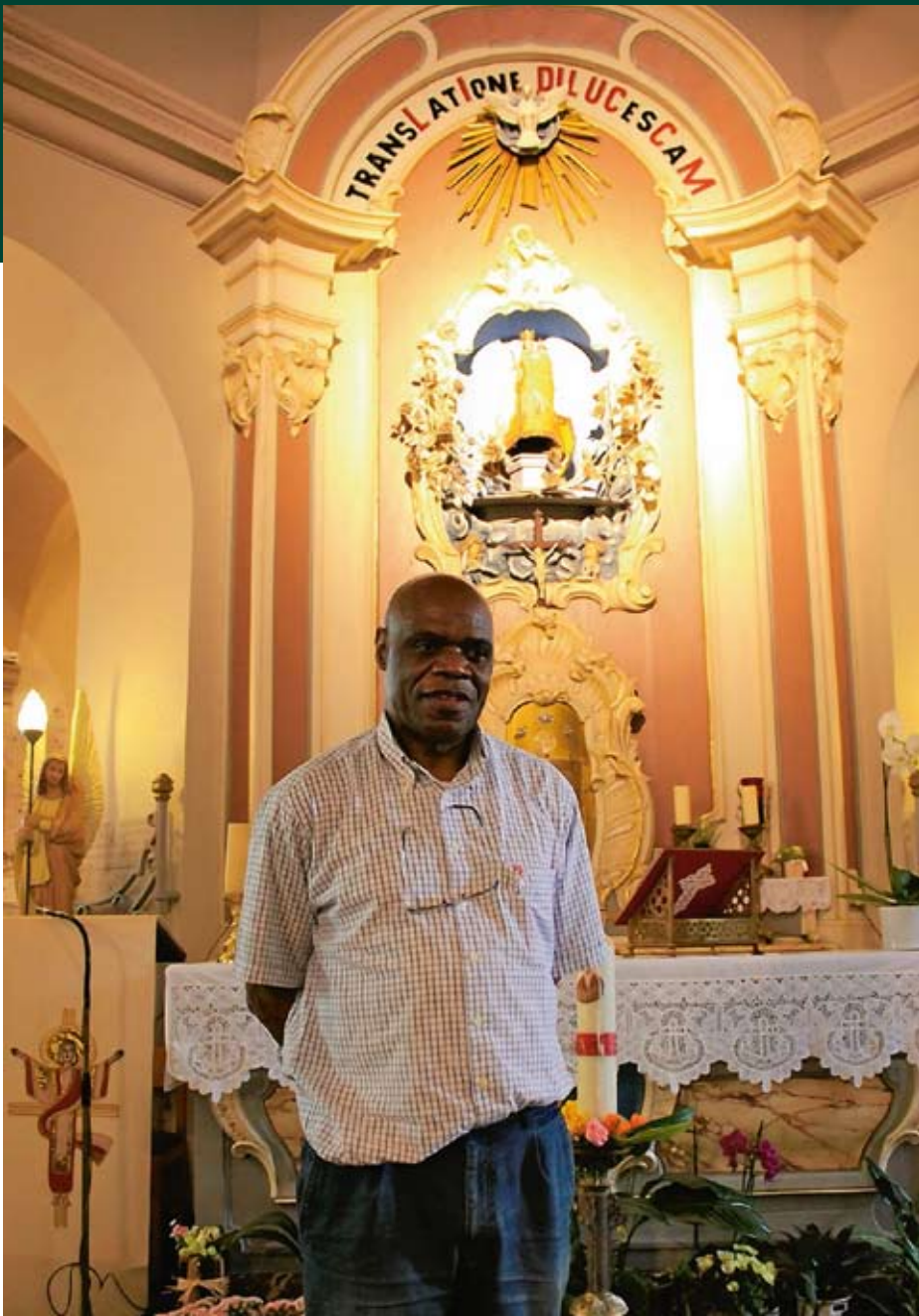
➡ [www.geraardsbergen.be](http://www.geraardsbergen.be)



The older brother of Brussels' Manneken Pis is in Geraardsbergen



The hill is hell, but the view heavenly



A friendly Congolese priest takes care of the chapel on top of the hill



© David Stockman

### Why Geraardsbergen?

If you want to combine culture, nature, culinary subtleties, an exciting bar life and, of course, the sweat of a monumental climb and a staggering view, all packed together in an easily accessible town centre, Geraardsbergen is your match. I found this town to be surprisingly vivacious and colourful. As Humphrey Bogart *should* have said in the movie: "We'll always have Geraardsbergen."



The *mattentaart*, a protected local delicacy

© David Stockman



The Wall of Geraardsbergen during the Tour of Flanders

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# Dancing Bollywood

A school in Ghent teaches women to dance to *Slumdog Millionaire*

COURTNEY DAVIS

In a dance studio on the northern side of Ghent, full-length mirrors cascade along the length of a wall, while tall windows fill the room with natural light. Thick white curtains hang from the back wall, further elevating the already-high ceilings. A woman makes her way across the wooden floor, stepping out, arms outstretched, head held high, before being followed by another dancer and another, until the room is dissected by a line of whirling women.

They have long hair, jangling bracelets and loose clothing, a far cry from your typical ballet or jazz dancers. The poise and elegance is similar, but the music and sensuality screams: "Bollywood".

It's a style of dance that has evolved from Indian blockbuster movies of the same name, famous for their bright clothes, kitsch dance numbers and plots centred around traditional romance. The moves are not so much individual as part of a greater picture, and add up over time to tell a story.

Instructor and master Indian dancer Maya Sapura (pictured) explains. "Bollywood is all about storytelling. It illustrates the lyrics of the songs. That is the main thing. For the rest you are free; there are no strict rules like with classical dances." That kind of freedom is well expressed with the flicking of wrists, the jutting of hips and the shaking of shoulders. This is a full body and highly feminine dance. With facial expressions and occasional poses, Bollywood manages to be both graceful and upbeat, as women sashay, turn, freeze, smile and jiggle to music that is, sometimes literally, from *Slumdog Millionaire*.

That 2008 Oscar-winning movie accounts for some the increased interest in Indian style dancing. "When I started dancing, when I was only five, it was thought to be kitsch," the 33-year-old Sapura says. "But now, opinion has changed. Perhaps because there are more Indian people in Europe. But really, I think people are discovering that when you dance, you feel happy afterwards. That is what I hear. People do it to feel good."

The women begin the one-and-a-half-hour class by warming up barefoot in the centre of the room. Ranging in age from 11 to 50, the nine women all

take turns at leading the group through Indian-inspired moves. "We have students who went to India on holiday and loved it," Sapura says. "Others saw the dance online or on TV or just want to spend time with a friend. And there are those who simply want to try something different than the mainstream."

The diversity of the women in the room is evident and includes a mother and child, a few hippies, student friends and a handful of women who came straight from work. Whether slowly twisting their fingers into intricate and poised positions or double bouncing to the energetic beat, arms swooping around them, their expressiveness is clear.

After warming up, the quiet room becomes more animated as the women prepare for their routine. "Ringa Ringa" from *Slumdog Millionaire* starts its infectious beat, and the women begin thrusting their hips in unison before the chorus begins and chaos breaks out. They drop any last remaining shyness as they start waving their arms, rocking their legs and nodding their heads side to side.

Rushing from one side of the room to the other, they are obviously trying to tell a story, but the plot that is most obvious is seen from the smiles when the instructor turns off the music. This is a dance that makes you happy.

The women quickly return to their starting positions and for the remaining half hour practice parts that are particularly tricky. The steps are relatively simple, but the overall dance is complicated and consists of many unrepeatable movements. It is obvious who the teacher is, as she stands in front of her students, clad in white.

With messy brown hair, dangling earrings and multiple bangles and rings, the teacher looks like she could be easily overpowered by her layers, but everything works to accentuate the dance. The bells on her scarf, the flashes of silver on her wrists, the swirling skirt: it all tantalizes without revealing. Her angles are sharp, her curves seductive. Details like a tilted head all come together for a tight and powerful effect. Suddenly, Bollywood isn't just in India anymore. ♦

→ [www.mayasaperadancecompany.com](http://www.mayasaperadancecompany.com)



## STREEKPRODUCT SERIES

ALAN HOPE

### The West Flanders Red

Of all the regional products with which Flanders is blessed, there's probably only one you'd actually pull over to the side of the road to admire, and that's the West Flemish red cow, one of 15 new products recently given the official *streekproduct*, or regional product, label.

The breed has a long history, going back to the Cassel Red, named after the town in northern France. In the 18th century, the meat became popular there and over the border in what is now West Flanders.

The animal has a striking appearance; according to the old breeding standard, it must have a uniform red coat, unlike other red breeds like the *rood-bont* from the Kempen region, and the East Flanders white-red, which are of mixed colour. The standard is no longer in use, but breeders still strive for that unique red colour.

The West Flanders Red was always known for its prodigious growing power and its superior quality of meat. It was also, though, a beast that could do double-duty, both milk

and meat. In the late 1980s, breeders began to select either milk or meat, but the breed became extremely rare.

Almost gone, but not forgotten, as farmers Johan Debruyne and Lieve Taveirne from Esen and butcher Hendrik Dierendonck from Sint-Idesbald, on the Flemish coast, decided two years ago to revive the breed. "Our idea was to let the Red graze in the polders and to fatten it up in the rich pastures by the farm," explained Dierendonck.

The proximity of the sea brings something special to the taste. The cows graze six months of the year in the open fields, and fully 80% of their diet is grass. "We try to give them the same food as 30 or 40 years ago," Dierendonck says, which means no artificial feeds designed to retain water in the flesh. At most, the cows might receive some linseed, high in fibre, vitamins and Omega-3 acids.

The recognition as an authentic regional product is specifically for the beef from female animals of four years and older. But



don't expect to see it in your supermarket any time soon. It's already in big demand from restaurants like top chef Kobe Desramaults' In de Wulf in Dranouter, his fellow Flemish foodie Olly Ceulenaere of Volta in Ghent and David Martin of Brasserie La Paix in Anderlecht.

The meat is extraordinarily tender and flavourful, and, in addition, it pushes all the buttons of top chefs when it comes to locally grown and authenticity.

→ [www.streekproduct.be](http://www.streekproduct.be)

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## Around the world in three days COULEUR CAFÉ

DAAN BAUWENS

Feel like celebrating the start of summer with an explosion of tropical music, surrounded by stunning scenery and a seemingly endless craze of sultry dances? And we haven't even mentioned food yet. For the 22nd time, Couleur Café will demonstrate that it is Brussels' hottest music festival. The old customs depot at the Tour & Taxis site will be transformed into a "tropical urban village", where the stars of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean will set the crowd of 70,000 on fire. Next to African superstars like Tiken Jah Fakoly and Seun Kutu, reggae artists Ziggy Marley and Alborosie, the festival also features the English soul singer Seal and popular Flemish bands like Selah Sue and Absynthe Minded. "We feature world music, but, as the Belgian artist Roland always says: 'World music is music from all over the world', including artists from the Balkans or rock bands from Belgium," says Irene Rossi of ZigZag, the non-profit organisation behind the festival. "But we try to stay close to where we started: the music we discovered in African cities, true blends of African roots with Western influences. The music is very urban, which has become so important." Patrick Wallens, who founded

the festival back in 1989, agrees: "It's an urban festival with music from a mix of cultures. You come across music that is being played in all metropolitan cities: New York, Kinshasa or Brussels." Wallens strongly recommends seeing the festival's Congotronics vs Rockers. A few years ago, Congolese artists in the suburbs of Kinshasa developed a new style of music that mixes traditional sounds with dance music rhythms. It was picked up by European and American indie artists, who last year released a tribute album to the new African style. Now the Congotronics perform with the westerners on the same stage. Band of Gypsies 2, meanwhile, presents quite a different cultural clash: Balkan. For their 20th anniversary, the Romanian band Taraf de Haïdouks invited the Macedonian brass band Koçani Orkestar to form one big band. The first band is Christian, the second is Muslim. They do not speak each other's language, nor do they have the same traditions or lifestyles. The 26-member band has now been booked around the world. Couleur Café also focuses on the bigger picture. During the festival, an exhibition at the Art Café features the work of 16 artists from all over the world investigating the mysteries surrounding religions in

different cultures. Next to that, several NGOs present their campaigns in the Solidarity Village. "It's always our intention to present more than music," says Rossi. "We want to offer an overwhelming experience in beautiful surroundings. We want people to come in and feel completely at ease." ♦

*Couleur Café offers "zen" camping for those who live outside of Brussels. Local residents can take special Couleur Café night buses to every corner of the capital or use their ticket to get free access to Brussels' public transport network. NMBS is offering a 50% discount on the train from anywhere in Belgium to Brussels and back*

24-26 June

Tour & Taxis  
Havenlaan 86, Brussels

→ [www.couleurcafe.be](http://www.couleurcafe.be)



### Antwerp

#### Kelly's Irish Pub

Keyserlei 27  
[www.kellys.be](http://www.kellys.be)  
JUN 17 20.00 Steve Keane  
JUN 18 20.00 Steve Jones

#### Trix

Noordersingel 28; 03.670.09.00  
[www.trixonline.be](http://www.trixonline.be)  
JUN 15 20.00 Converge + Rise and Fall + Oathbreaker  
JUN 16 20.00 Jason and the Scorchers + The Baboons

### Bruges

#### Het Entrepot

Binnenweg 4; 050.61.02.48  
[www.het-entrepot.be](http://www.het-entrepot.be)  
JUN 18 19.00 Boris + Russian Circles + The Ocean + Intronaut

### Brussels

#### Aloft Hotel

Jean Reyplein  
[www.noblige.eu](http://www.noblige.eu)  
JUN 18 22.30 Be Pink Party with DJ Markx from Hotnights

#### Fuse

Blaesstraat 208; 02.511.97.89  
[www.fuse.be](http://www.fuse.be)  
JUN 18 23.00 Vernon + Laurens + Pierre + Deg

#### Jazz Station

Leuvensesteenweg 193; 0474.83.50.77  
[www.jazzstation.be](http://www.jazzstation.be)  
JUN 17 20.30 Platform 1: original music by independent artists: General Bazaar, Bothan, Elvis Presley, more

#### K-NAL

Havenlaan 1; 0474.04.00.00  
[www.k-nal.be](http://www.k-nal.be)  
JUN 18 Arnaud Rebotini live + Crocodile Crew

#### LR6

Hoogstraat 204; 02.830.21.27  
JUN 16 21.00 Jean Louis/DJ Shalom  
JUN 22 21.00 Paul Biss and Ket Hagaha

#### Le Botanique

Koningsstraat 236; 02.218.37.32  
[www.botanique.be](http://www.botanique.be)  
Concerts at 20.00:  
JUN 17 Marques Toliver + Vetiver. Papercuts  
JUN 20 William Fitzsimmons JUN 21 Tom Vek JUN 23 Teme Tan + Alex Winston

#### Magasin 4

Havenlaan 51B; 02.223.34.74  
[www.magasin4.be](http://www.magasin4.be)  
JUN 16 18.00 Vader + Krisiun + Resistance + Essence  
JUN 18 19.30 Goatsnake  
JUN 23 19.00 Civil Civic + Cobson

#### VK Club

Schoolstraat 76; 02.414.29.07  
[www.vkconcerts.be](http://www.vkconcerts.be)  
JUN 16 21.00 Molotov + Romano Nervoso  
JUN 22 21.00 Maximum the Hormone + Tagada Jones

#### Vorst-Nationaal

Victor Rousseulaan 208; 0900.00.991  
[www.forestnational.be](http://www.forestnational.be)  
JUN 21 20.30 Toto

### Ghent

#### Bij De Vieze Gasten

Reinaertstraat 125; 09.237.04.07  
[www.deviezegasten.org](http://www.deviezegasten.org)  
JUN 16 20.30 Rosa Luxe: The Emperor Sings

#### Dok

Koopvaardijlaan 13  
[www.dokgent.be](http://www.dokgent.be)  
JUN 16 21.00 Hoquets  
JUN 17 21.00 Needle and the Pain Reaction  
JUN 18 21.00 Sir Yes Sir

#### Kinky Star

Vlaammarkt 9; 09.223.48.45  
[www.kinkystar.com](http://www.kinkystar.com)  
JUN 18 22.00 Le Prince Harry  
JUN 19 22.00 Black Haven  
JUN 21 The Black Lolas

#### White Cat

Drongenhof 40; 09.223.22.27  
[www.white-cat.be](http://www.white-cat.be)  
JUN 17 22.00 Fonkee Monk

## DON'T MISS

### Young Belgian Painters Award 2011

Until 11 September

Bozar, Brussels

The jury this year for the celebrated Young Belgian Painters Award was unanimous in its decision: Ghent artist Kelly Schacht walked away with the €25,000 award for her installation *Un Tour d'Horizon*, which tells a story using narration and *infini*, white paper backdrops used in photo studios. On opening night, performers mingled with the crowd, performing discrete actions in dialogue with the works, bringing the question of the role of the spectator to the fore. Despite its name, a Belgian artist of any discipline can win the Painters Award. All 10 finalists of the award are on show at Bozar.



→ [www.bozar.be](http://www.bozar.be)



### Antwerp

#### Buster

Kaasrui 1; 03.232.51.53  
[www.busterpodium.be](http://www.busterpodium.be)  
JUN 15 21.30 Gaspard Vangindertael

#### Café Hopper

Leopold de Waelstraat 2; 03.248.49.33  
[www.cafehopper.be](http://www.cafehopper.be)  
JUN 19 16.00 Harry Happel & guests

#### De Muze

Melkmarkt 15; 03.226.01.26  
[www.demuze-jazz.be](http://www.demuze-jazz.be)  
JUN 17 22.00 Thomas Champagne Trio - 10 years project

### Brussels

#### Jazz Station

Leuvensesteenweg 193; 02.733.13.78  
[www.jazzstation.be](http://www.jazzstation.be)  
JUN 16 End of year jazz vocal workshop concert  
JUN 18 18.00 Andy Declerck Trio + VIBES. 21.00 Titu Puoane & Erwin Pierreux Duo  
JUN 21-24 10.00-17.00 Public exams Brussels Royal Conservatory jazz ensembles

#### Le Cercle des Voyageurs

Liebevrouwbroersstraat 18; 02.514.39.49  
[www.lecerledesvoyageurs.com](http://www.lecerledesvoyageurs.com)  
JUN 16 20.00 Thomas Champagne Trio

#### Sounds Jazz Club

Tulpenstraat 28; 02.512.92.50  
[www.soundsjazzclub.be](http://www.soundsjazzclub.be)  
Concerts at 22.00:  
JUN 16 Igor Geheot Trio JUN 17 Witchunt  
JUN 18 Brussels Rhythm & Blues JUN 20

## MORE FESTIVALS THIS WEEK

Skullfest → Stadshal Oosthove, Wervik →

Felix Poetry Festival → Felixpakhuis, Antwerp

Vermaak Na Arbeid → Openbaar Entrepot, Leuven

# Agenda

Master Session **JUN 21** Igor Gehenot Trio  
**JUN 23** Fred Delplancq Trio

## The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45  
www.themusicvillage.com

Concerts at 21.00:

**JUN 17** Ivan Paduart Trio **JUN 18** Jo Scinta plays Louis Armstrong **JUN 21** Enrico Pieranunzi-Philippe Aerts Duo  
**JUN 22** Joe Henderson Tribute

## Ghent

### Bij' De Vieze Gasten

Reinaertstraat 125; 09.237.04.07  
www.deviezegasten.org

**JUN 18** 20.30 Ries De Vuyst & De Vage Klachten: Killing the Blues

### Vooruit

St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060  
www.vooruit.be

**JUN 22** 22.00 Too Noisy Fish



## Brussels

### Art Base

Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20  
www.art-base.be

**JUN 16** 20.00 Altland, klezmer and sevdalinka **JUN 17** 20.00 Ellyptica Ensemble **JUN 18** 20.00 Claudia Meyer (S Amer) **JUN 19** 20.00 Asad Qizilbash and Carlo Strazzante (India)

### Le Botanique

Koningsstraat 236; 02.218.37.32  
www.botanique.be

**JUN 15** 20.00 Tom Russell

## Ghent

### Vooruit

St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060  
www.vooruit.be

**JUN 15** 22.00 Free Birds That Change Colour



## Bruges

### Concertgebouw

't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02  
www.concertgebouw.be

**JUN 18** 20.00 La Petite Bande conducted by Sigiswald Kuijken with prizewinners from the Queen Elisabeth singing Competition: Haydn, Mozart

## Brussels

### Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00  
www.bozar.be

**JUN 15** 20.00 La Petite Bande conducted by Sigiswald Kuijken: Haydn, Mozart  
**JUN 19** 11.00 Esther Yoo, Robert Koenig, piano: Tartini, Schubert, Mendelssohn.

15.00 Belgian National Orchestra conducted by Walter Weller: Arriaga, Chopin, Martinu  
**JUN 22** 20.00 Vesselin Stanev, piano: Brahms, Schumann, Liszt

### D'Ieteren Gallery

Maliestraat 50; 02.772.34.26

**JUN 17** 20.00 Marc Grauwels, flute; Yves Storms, guitar; Diederik Suys, viola: Webern, Mozart, Sor, more



## Brussels

### De Munt

Muntplein; 070.23.39.39  
www.demunt.be

**Until JUN 30** 15.00/18.00 Les Huguenots by Giacomo Meyerbeer conducted by Marc Minkowski, staged by Olivier Py (in French with surtitles in French and Dutch)

## Ghent

### Vlaamse Opera

Schouwburgstraat 3; 070.22.02.02  
www.vlaamseopera.be

**JUN 21-26** 15.00/20.00 Verdi's Aida conducted by Dmitri Jurowski, staged by Peter Konwitschny, with Susanna Branchini/Michele Capalbo (Aida), Misha Didyk/Mikhail Agafonov (Radames) (in the original Italian with surtitles in Dutch)



## Antwerp

### Stadsschouwburg

Theaterplein 1; 0900.69.900

www.stadsschouwburgantwerpen.be

**JUN 15-16** 20.00 Malandain Ballet Biarritz in Roméo & Juliette, choreographed by Thierry Malandain

### Vlaamse Opera

Frankrijklei 1; 070.22.02.02  
www.vlaamseopera.be

**JUN 18-25** times vary Royal Ballet of Flanders in Onegin by John Cranko, staged by Jane Bourne. Special guest performances by Royal Ballet of London dancers Alina Cojocaru and Johan Kobborg in the leading roles on **JUN 23**

## Brussels

### Bronkstheater

Varkensmarkt 15; 02.219.99.21

www.bronks.be

**JUN 21-25** 20.00 PARTS student dance performances

### Théâtre 140

Eugène Plaskyalaan 140; 02.733.97.08  
www.theatre140.be

**JUN 18** 20.00 'Love', show by Art and Sens dance academy



## Antwerp

### Fakkelteater Zwarte Zaal

Reynderstraat 7; 03.232.14.69  
www.fakkelteater.be

**Until JUN 19** 15.30/20.30 De Speling in La Nonna by Roberto Cossa, directed by Jean-Francois D'hondt (in Dutch)

### Monty

Montignystraat 3-5; 03.238.91.81  
www.monty.be

**Until JUN 18** 20.30 Maatschappij Discordia and 't Barre Land in Repertoire, scenes from 33 different plays (in Dutch)

### Toneelhuis/Bourla

Komedieplaats 18; 03.224.88.44  
www.toneelhuis.be

**JUN 17-19** 15.00/20.00 Tutti Fratelli in Het Temmen van de Feeks (The Taming of the Shrew) by Shakespeare, directed by Reinhilde Decléir (in Dutch)

## Brussels

### KVS Bol

Lakensestraat 146; 02.210.11.12  
www.kvs.be

**Until JUN 16** 20.30 Weg by Josse De Pauw (in Dutch)

### Théâtre 140

Eugène Plaskyalaan 140; 02.218.37.32  
www.standupworld.com

**JUN 17** 20.30 'The Return Of Boothby Graffoe', music and comedy show presented by Stand Up Brussels with special guest Nick Pynn (in English; Indian buffet at 19.15 for €10)

## Ghent

### Theater Tinnenpot

Tinnenpotstraat 21; 09.225.18.60  
www.tinnenpot.be

**JUN 15-17** 20.00 Pieter Van Nieuwenhuyze in Muzikaal Verteltheater (in Dutch)



## Aalst

### Netwerk Centrum for Hedendaagse Kunst

Houtkaai; 053.70.97.73  
www.netwerk-art.be

**Until JUN 19** Sander Buyck: West Bank

Walls, photos of Palestine by the Flemish photographer

## Antwerp

### Contemporary Art Museum (M HKA)

Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60

www.muhka.be

**Until AUG 21** Ten Oosten van 4°24' (East of 4°24'), group show of artists from the Caucasus, India, China, Iraq, Egypt and more

### Extra City

Tulpstraat 79; 03.677.16.55

www.extracity.org

**Until JUL 3** Museum of Display, a series of presentations that look at definitions of 'art' and the 'institution' within the scenario of a fictional museum, with works by various artists

### 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

### Koningin Fabiolazaal

Jezusstraat 28; 03.203.42.04

www.provant.be

**Until JAN 8** 2012 The Moderns, top pieces from the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, including works by Emile Claus, James Ensor and Marc Chagall

### Maagdenhuismuseum

Lange Gasthuisstraat 33; 03.338.26.20

ocmw.antwerpen.be/

Maagdenhuismuseum

**Until JUN 26** Armoede... of kansen voor iedereen? (Poverty... or Opportunities for All?), images of poverty in Antwerp, from the middle ages to today

### Middelheim Museum

Middelheimlaan 6; 03.828.13.50

www.middelheimmuseum.be

**Until SEP 25** Erwin Wurm: Wear Me Out, open-air display of performative and living sculptures by the Austrian artist

### Museum aan de Stroom (MAS)

Hanzestedenplaats 1; 03.338.44.34

www.mas.be

**Until DEC 31** Masterpieces in the MAS: Five Centuries of Images in Antwerp, the first temporary exhibition in the new museum shows how Antwerp and Flanders significantly influenced 16th- and 17th-century Western European imagery

### Plantin-Moretus Museum

Vrijdagmarkt 22; 03.221.14.50

www.museumplantinmoretus.be

**Until AUG 28** Inzichten en Vergezichten (Insights and Panoramic Views), the book and designs of Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven, designer of the light panels for the new MAS Museum

## Blankenberge

### Belle Epoque Centrum

Elisabethstraat 24; 050.42.87.41

www.belle.epoque.blankenberge.be

**Until SEP 16** Hasseltse keramiek, Art Nouveau drip glaze pottery

## Bruges

### Raakpunt

7 Sint Jakobssstraat

www.raakpunt.be

**Until JUN 30** Decors, work by Flemish photographer Peter De Bruyne

### Site Oud Sint-Jan

Mariastraat 38; 050.47.61.00

www.expo-brugge.be

**Permanent** From Pablo Picasso to Joan Miró, permanent exhibition of more than 100 works by Picasso, plus works by Henri Matisse, Marc Chagall, Joan Miró, more

## Brussels

### Argos Centre for Art and Media

Werfstraat 13; 02.229.00.03

www.argosarts.org

**Until JUN 18** What Will Come, videos and installations by contemporary Spanish artist Jordi Colomer

**Until JUN 18** Mise en abîme: Dismantling the Economics of Television, videos by Richard Serra, Ant Farm, more  
**Until JUN 18** Ria Pacquée: Westerly Winds, photos, slides, notes and videos by the Antwerp-based artist

### Atomium

Atomium Square; 02.475.47.72  
www.atomium.be

# DON'T MISS

## Antwerp Pride

20-26 June



June is gay pride month around the world, and Antwerp throws its annual party with gusto, forgoing a central parade for seven long days of events and parties. Don't miss the opening party or the unforgettable Popi's Bus Tour. Saturday, 25 June, finds a Pink Fair in the Kammenstraat and a guided gay cafe tour, while the final day sees a closing festival, BBQ and something called Sex on Sunday. Have fun!

→ [www.antwerppride.com](http://www.antwerppride.com)

**Until DEC 9** Belgium & Immigration: Understand Better So We Can Better Understand One Another, interactive exhibition on migration to Belgium

### Autrique House

Haachtsesteenweg 266; 02.215.66.00

www.autrique.be

**Until DEC 31** Victor Horta: A Lost World, works highlighting decisive moments in the career of the architect born in Ghent 150 years ago

### Belgian Comic Strip Centre

Zandstraat 20; 02.219.19.80

www.stripmuseum.be

**Until OCT 2** The Publiart Adventure, comic strip in advertising

**Until JAN 15** 2012 Bob De Moor & De Zee, comic strips by the Antwerp artist and Hergé colleague, who was passionate about the sea

### Bibliotheca Wittockiana

Bemelstraat 23; 02.770.53.33

www.wittockiana.org

**Until OCT 1** Le Fonds Michel Wittock: de la passion au don (The Gift of Passion), collection of remarkable bookbindings from the Renaissance to the present day

### Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00

www.bozar.be

**Until JUN 24** Jean-Louis Vanesch:

Junctions, work by the Belgian photographer alongside select work from Antwerp's Photo Museum

**Until SEP 4** 51N4E: Double or Nothing,

sketches by the Brussels architecture firm

**Until SEP 11** Jeff Wall: The Crooked Path, works by the Canadian photographer together with prose responding to the work

**Until SEP 11** Young Belgian Painters Award 2011, works by the 10 finalists in the prestigious art competition

### Brussels Expo

Belgiëplein 1; 070.25.20.20

www.kingtutbrussels.be

**Until NOV 6** Tutankhamun: His Tomb and His Treasures, reconstruction of the Ancient Egyptian king's tomb, with over 1,000 replicas of funerary objects, including amulets, coffers, chairs,

weapons, musical instruments and more

### CIVA

Kluisstraat 55; 02.642.24.71

www.civa.be

**Until OCT 2** Brussel, een sterk staaltje van engineering (Brussels, Engineering Prowess), the world of engineers in the Brussels region

### Charliermuseum

Kunstlaan 16; 02.218.53.82

www.charliermuseum.be

**Until SEP 30** A Hard Existence, paintings of farmers, fishermen, servants and other manual labourers by late 19th- and early 20th-century artists

### City Hall

Grote Markt; 02.279.64.24

www.brupass.be

**Until SEP 25** Barok onthuld (Baroque Unveiled), a new way of looking at sculpture in Brussels and Belgium

### Costume and Lace Museum

Violettestraat 12; 02.213.44.50

**Until DEC 31** Hand-made clothing and accessories from before the invention of the sewing machine, including patterns, hats by Brussels milliners, men's waistcoats and women's corsets

### De Elektriciteitscentrale

Sint Katelijneplein 44; 02.279.64.45

www.deelektriciteitscentrale.be

**Until AUG 21** Jane Alexander: Security - Surveys (from the Cape of Good Hope), sculptures, installations, photographs and videos by the South African artist

### Flemish Parliament - De Loketten

IJzerenkruisstraat 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 influential Flemish artist

### Fondation pour l'Architecture

Kluisstraat 55; 02.642.24.80

www.fondationpouirlarchitecture.be

**Until AUG 28** Anne Heringer:

Building Differently, plans, sketches and photographs by the German architect

### House of Folklore and Traditions

Eikstraat 19; 02.279.64.11

culture@brucity.be

**Until JUN 26** L'Union fait la frite (Unity is Fried), paintings of Brussels fritkots by Belgian artist Gilles houben

### ING Cultural Centre

Koningsplein 6; 02.547.22.92

www.ing.be/art

**Until JUN 19** Joan Miró: The Lyrical Painter, work by the Catalan artist

### ISELP

Waterloosesteenweg 31; 02.504.80.70

www.iselp.be

**Until JUL 9** Laurence Dervaux, installations by the Belgian artist

### Jacques Franck Cultural Centre

Waterloosesteenweg 94; 02.538.90.20

www.ccjacquesfranck.be

**Until JUN 19** Untitled 5.11, installations by contemporary American artist Peter Downsbrough

### Jewish Museum of Belgium

Minimienstraat 21; 02.512.19.63

www.mjb-jmb.org

**Until AUG 28** After Images, multidisciplinary show by contemporary American artists

### Le Botanique

Koningsstraat 236; 02.218.37.32

www.botanique.be

**Until AUG 14** Sarah Moon: Coincidences, photos by the British fashion photographer and filmmaker

### Marc Sleen Museum

Zandstraat 33; 02.219.19.80

www.marc-sleen.be

**Until SEP 25** Nero

## DUSK 'TIL DAWN



## Vert Pop

18 June, 22.00-6.00

Hotel Marivaux, Brussels

A great party in a special venue in Brussels, that's what Vert Pop is all about. For the 2011 edition, the organisers chose the art deco cinema of Hotel Marivaux and put together a crowd pleasing line-up of DJ sets and live performances.

The annual Vert Pop party is sponsored by Belgium's two green political parties Groen! and Ecolo, hence the name. But don't think that means you're up for a formal and boring event. Previous editions brought together thousands of party people at locations such as the Gesu Church and Square on the Kunstberg (*pictured*). This year the 1924 cinema of Hotel Marivaux is the chosen venue, a beautiful location that has been closed to the public for more than 20 years.

The crowd is treated to two line-ups: one in the main hall, one in the studio. Headliner in the main hall is Front 242, pioneers of Belgian electronic music. Later on, music and love duo Vive la Fête (Els Pynoo and Danny Mommens) spin their typical '80s pop sound. Also in the main hall, the Belgian keyboard heroes of Spirit Catcher, who are currently working on new material.

In the studio, party concept Feestgedruis will get people in a dancing mood with progressive house and techno. They have a thing with pirates, so consider yourself warrned. Legendary Brussels DJ Darko will be there, too. Darko became famous for his Statik Dancin' parties and prefers to play minimal music. Also one of Brussels finest deck masters, Laurenzinho will make you dance your socks off to his house and techno tracks.

*Tickets to Vert pop are €10 and are available in presale at the concept store Hunting and Collecting, Kartuizertsraat 17*

➔ [www.vertpop.be](http://www.vertpop.be)

**Until OCT 16** War&Game(s), photographs by Virginie Cornet and toys from the period of the First World War

### Royal Museum of Fine Arts

Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.508.32.11  
[www.fine-arts-museum.be](http://www.fine-arts-museum.be)

**Until JUN 26** A selection of the most important artworks from the 19th- and 20th-century collection, including Salvador Dali, Giorgio de Chirico and Paul Delvaux

**Until SEP 4** Art and Finance in Europe: 18th-Century Masterworks in a New Light, 20 major works by Francesco Guardi, Benjami Wolff, Léonard Defrance, more

### Sint-Gorikshallen

Sint-Goriksplein 23; 02.502.44.24  
[www.sintgorikshallen.be](http://www.sintgorikshallen.be)

**Until JUN 29** Bruxelles Urbanitude, photos of Brussels landscapes by Alain Trellu

### Tour & Taxis

Havenlaan 86C; 02.549.60.49  
[www.tour-taxis.com](http://www.tour-taxis.com)

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

**Until JUN 19** Ivan Good, paintings of Ostend by the Flemish artist

**Until JUL 4** America: It's Also Our History!, three centuries of cross-Atlantic relations with frescoes, charts, audiovisual material, installations, objects and artwork

### ULB - Campus de Solbosch

Paul Hegerlaan 22-24; 02.650.37.65  
[www.ulb.ac.be/culture](http://www.ulb.ac.be/culture)

**Until JUL 16** Les Voyageurs du Savoir (The Travellers of Knowledge), interviews and portraits of international students

LISA BRADSHAW



## Film Histories

Until 30 June

Cinema Zuid

Before this landmark Antwerp cinema begins its summer programme, they finish up Film Histories, a months-long programme of key films from international cinema, from the birth of the genre to today. You'll find four films closing it out this month, including the very timely showing of Lars Von Trier's *Europa*, made back in 1991 before the Danish director was so famous he thought he could get away with anything.

*Europa* (pictured) heralded in a number of cinematic elements, including a hint of colour within a mostly black-and-white film (which *Schindlers' List* used two years later) and characters interacting with video images, while still keeping the story of an American in post-Second World War Germany easily narrative. *Europa* took home the jury prize from Cannes and a wealth of international awards.

Later on, you'll see *The Scent of Green Papaya* by Vietnamese-French director Tran Anh Hung, the story of a servant girl in Vietnam, which is partially famous for being shot entirely on a French soundstage, something many film-goers find hard to believe. Other films on the programme this month are the existentialist *Pickpocket* by China's Zhang Ke Jia and *Winter Sleepers*, the film that shot German director Tom Tykwer into international stardom.

➔ [www.cinemazuid.be](http://www.cinemazuid.be)

### Ukkel Cultural Centre

Rodestraat 47; 02.374.64.84  
[www.ccu.be](http://www.ccu.be)

**Until JUN 22** Les Avocats s'exposent, paintings by 10 lawyers

### Villa Empain

Franklin Rooseveltlaan 67; 02.627.52.30  
[www.villaempain.com](http://www.villaempain.com)

**Until SEP 25** Of Women's Modesty and Anger, rituals, wigs, clothing, make-up and more constraints that determined the life of women for centuries

### WIELS

Van Volkemlaan 354; 02.340.00.50  
[www.wiels.org](http://www.wiels.org)

**Until AUG 14** Charlotte Beaudry: Get Drunk, paintings, drawings and videos by the Brussels-based artist

**Until AUG 14** Nasreen Mohamedi: Notes-Reflections on Indian Modernism, paintings, drawings and photographs by the Indian artist

### Ghent

#### Dr Guislain Museum

Jozef Guislainstraat 43; 09.216.35.95  
[www.museumdrguislain.be](http://www.museumdrguislain.be)

**Until SEP 4** In the Margin: Belgian Documentary Photography, work that documents the deviant, the extraordinary, the unnoticed, the 'other'

### Museum of Contemporary Art (SMAK)

Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03  
[www.smak.be](http://www.smak.be)

**Until JUL 3** Michaël Sailstorfer: Raum und Zeit (Space and Time), sculptures by the German artist

**Until SEP 18** Jorge Macchi: Music Stands Still, paintings, sculptures, installations and video by the Argentinian artist

### Gaasbeek

#### Gaasbeek Castle

Kasteelstraat 40; 02.531.01.30  
[www.kasteelvangasbeek.be](http://www.kasteelvangasbeek.be)

**Until JUN 26** Jan De Vlieghe: Schatzkammer, paintings by the Flemish artist

### Hasselt

#### z33

Zuivelmarkt 33; 011.29.59.60  
[www.z33.be](http://www.z33.be)

**Until AUG 21** Kris Verdonck: EXHIBITION #1, installations and videos by the Flemish theatremaker and artist

### Knokke-Heist

#### Maruani & Noirhomme Gallery

Kustlaan 124-126; 0473.977.236  
[www.alain-noirhomme.com](http://www.alain-noirhomme.com)

**Until JUN 26** Stuart Cumberland, paintings by the English artist

### Koksijde

#### Nationaal Visserijmuseum

Pastoor Schmitzstraat 5; 058.51.24.68  
[www.visserijmuseum.be](http://www.visserijmuseum.be)

**JUN 17-DEC 31** Zeerotic: Over liefde en lust aan de kust (Searotica: On Love and Lust at the Coast), works on the theme of passion and the sea by Paul Delvaux, Leon Spilliaert, Aloïs Boudry and Edgard Tytgat, among others

### Kortrijk

#### Benedengalerie

Hazelaarstraat 7; 056.23.98.50  
[www.cultuurcentrumkortrijk.be](http://www.cultuurcentrumkortrijk.be)

**JUN 17-JUL 17** Niklaus Ruegg: Voucher voor een potplant, 3-D sculptures by the Swiss artist

### Leuven

#### Museum M

Leopold Vanderkelenstraat 28; 016.27.29.29  
[www.mleuven.be](http://www.mleuven.be)

**Until SEP 25** Pieter-Jozef Verhaghen: In het spoor van Rubens (In the Footsteps of Rubens), paintings by the 18th-century Flemish artist

### Machelen-Zulte

#### Het Roger Raveelmuseum

Gildestraat 2-8; 09.381.60.00  
[www.rogerraveelmuseum.be](http://www.rogerraveelmuseum.be)

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

### Mechelen

#### Speelgoedmuseum (Toy Museum)

Nekkerspoelstraat 21; 015.55.70.75

[www.speelgoedmuseum.be](http://www.speelgoedmuseum.be)

**Until JAN 8** 2012 Het circus kan beginnen! (Let the Circus Begin!), figurines, clowns and maquettes

### Meise

#### National Botanic Garden of Belgium

Nieuwelaan 38; 02.260.09.20  
[www.plantentuinmeise.be](http://www.plantentuinmeise.be)

**Until OCT 2** Groene Omzwervingen (Green Detours), works made of leaves and flowers by Sandrine de Borman following her year as artist-in-residence

**Until NOV 6** Kriebelbeestjes van het bos (Crawling Bugs in the Woods), photographs of insects by Barbara Cook

### Ostend

#### Kunstmuseum Aan Zee (MuZee)

Romestraat 11; 059.50.81.18  
[www.muze.be](http://www.muze.be)

**Until SEP 4** Jean Brusselmans, paintings from the 1930s and 1940s by the Flemish artist

### Tervuren

#### Royal Museum for Central Africa

Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11  
[www.africamuseum.be](http://www.africamuseum.be)

**Until SEP 4** FetishModernity, exhibition created by six European museums exploring the notion of modernity  
**Until SEP 4** Artists in Residence: Sammy Baloji & Patrick Mudekerezan, arts, sciences and collections

### Ypres

#### In Flanders Fields Museum

Grote Markt 34; 057.239.220  
[www.inflandersfields.be](http://www.inflandersfields.be)

**Until NOV 13** Tribute to Donors, a wide selection of donated works, including paintings, drawings and photographs



**Roller-Bike Parade:** Weekly roller skating and cycling parades

**Until SEP 23** 19.00 in Antwerp, Brussels, Hasselt and Koksijde  
[www.belgiumrollers.com](http://www.belgiumrollers.com)

### Antwerp

**Felix Poetry Festival:** Third annual festival featuring readings by international poets

**Until JUN 17** at FelixPakhuis, Godefriduskaai 30  
[www.felixpakhuis.nu](http://www.felixpakhuis.nu)

### Rommelant:

Second-hand and antiques fair  
**JUN 18-19** 10.00-18.00 at Antwerp Expo, Jan Van Rijswijcklaan 191  
03.260.81.22, [www.rommelant.be](http://www.rommelant.be)

**Show2011:** The Fashion Department of the Fine Arts Academy's annual fashion show

**JUN 16-18** 19.00 at Hangar 29, Rijnkaai 150  
03.202.46.46, [www.antwerp-fashion.be](http://www.antwerp-fashion.be)

### St Boniface Summer Fete:

Annual festival featuring stalls with English books, plants, produce, teas, cakes and more  
**JUN 18** 11.00-16.00 at St Boniface Anglican Church, Gretrystraat 03.238.29.51, [www.boniface.be](http://www.boniface.be)

### Blankenberge

**Scavenger Hunt:** A special walk to discover the seaside town, with prizes to be won

**Until OCT 15**, start at tourist office, Leopold III-plein  
050.41.22.27, [www.blankenberge.be](http://www.blankenberge.be)

### Bruges

**Rock'n'roll Wrestling Bash:** Mexican wrestling show with rock music accompaniment by The Wrestling Bash Orchestra

**JUN 22** 20.00 at Het Entrepot, Binnenweg 4; 050.61.02.48  
[www.het-entrepot.be](http://www.het-entrepot.be)

### Brussels

**Apéros Urbains:** Weekly aperitif every Friday in different areas of the city with live music, and after-parties at Fuse, K-Nal and Vaudeville

**Until SEP 2** 17.00-23.30 across Brussels  
[www.aperos.be](http://www.aperos.be)

**Czech Street Party:** Fifth edition of the annual street party with free concerts, entertainment, regional gastronomy and Czech beer, plus competition to win airline tickets to Prague

**JUN 17** 16.00-22.30 at Czech House, Carolystraat 15  
[www.czechrep.be/streetparty](http://www.czechrep.be/streetparty)

**D Festival:** Contemporary dance and performance festival (previously Danse Balsa Marni)

**Until JUN 23** at Théâtre Marni, Vergnietstraat 25  
02.639.09.81, [www.theatremarni.com](http://www.theatremarni.com)

**Jazz Jette June:** 22nd annual free jazz festival featuring concerts by Laurent Doumont, Tom Goldschmidt Quintet, Klezmic Zirkus, Brussel Swing Band, Groove Machine, Fabrizio Graceffa trio, Dixie Boys Band, more  
**JUN 17** 20.00-23.45 at CC Jette, 145 de Smet de Naeyerlaan  
[www.jazzjettejune.be](http://www.jazzjettejune.be)

**Polymor Films:** Four evenings of poetic and political film screenings by members of the Brussels-based film collective

**Until JUN 17** 20.00 at Bozar, Ravensteinstraat 23  
[www.polymorfilms.be](http://www.polymorfilms.be)

### Salon du Blog Culinare:

First edition culinary fair featuring some 100 food bloggers presenting recipes, cooking demonstrations and stands under the patronage of top chefs Yves Mattagne and Benoît Molin

**JUN 18-19** at Jubelpark  
[www.salondublogculinaire.be](http://www.salondublogculinaire.be)

**Son del Sur Flamenco Festival:** Fifth edition of the Spanish culture festival  
**JUN 19-21** at Bozar, Ravensteinstraat 23  
[www.bozar.be](http://www.bozar.be)

**Tanguy Viel:** The French author talks to Pierre Schoentjes on the occasion of the Dutch version of his book Parijs-Brest (in French and Dutch)

**JUN 17** 20.00 at Passa Porta, Antoine Dansaertstraat 46  
02.226.04.54, [www.passaporta.be](http://www.passaporta.be)

**Visueel Festival Visuel:** International street theatre festival with 33 shows by 18 companies from Belgium, Spain, the US and Slovenia

**JUN 17-18** in the centre of Berchem-Sainte-Agathe  
[www.visueelfestivalvisuel.com](http://www.visueelfestivalvisuel.com)

### Working Title Platform #02:

Workspacebrussels presents a series of works-in-progress, video installations, performances and workshops  
**JUN 17-19** at Kaaistudios, Beursschouwburg and Les Briggittines  
[www.workspacebrussels.be](http://www.workspacebrussels.be)

### Ghent

**Jovanka Steele:** Adventures in Europe-land: Stand-up comedy by the Ghent-based American comedian (in English and Dutch)

**JUN 18** 20.00 at Theater Tinnenpot, Tinnenpotstraat 21  
09.225.18.60, [www.jovankastele.be](http://www.jovankastele.be)

**Korte Metten:** Mini-festival of theatre, music and literature, featuring a pop-up bar on the Scheldt River

**JUN 16** 17.00 at Vooruit, Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 23  
[www.vooruit.be](http://www.vooruit.be)

### Hasselt

**Bonsai Exhibition:** Discover the culture of these miniature Japanese trees

**JUN 19** at Japanese Garden, Gouverneur Verwilghensingel 23  
011.23.95.40, [www.hasselt.be](http://www.hasselt.be)

### Leuven

**Terrasfilms:** Free open-air film screenings

**Until JUN 27** at Stuk, Naamsestraat 96  
016.32.03.20, [www.cinemazed.be/terrasfilms](http://www.cinemazed.be/terrasfilms)

### Meise

**Water Lilly Babies:** Have your child of 12 months or less photographed on the largest water lilies in the world

**JUN 19** at National Botanic Garden of Belgium, Nieuwelaan 38  
02.260.09.20, [www.plantentuinmeise.be](http://www.plantentuinmeise.be)

# bite

ROBYN BOYLE

## Poco Loco

What's the cuisine like in Peru? It's a question only a lucky few in Belgium can answer. But one day I stumbled across Poco Loco online, and curiosity led me to make a reservation. You can find all sorts of international cuisine in this country, but Peruvian is really unique.



© Robyn Boyle

The restaurant is located in a suburb of Ghent in a small townhouse nestled among rows of houses with no other businesses in sight. Don't be deterred, however, even if you find only one other couple inside. The place is small and cosy, its walls covered in photos of mountain-top panoramas and colourful hand-woven tapestries.

Owner Rossina Carnero left her home in Lima in 1989 to start a life with her Flemish husband, Gino. Cooking the diverse range of specialties from her homeland is her passion, so in 1996 the couple opened this bona-fide Peruvian restaurant.

Rossina greets us at our table with a warm and friendly "Goedenavond", her Dutch softened by a slight but undeniable Spanish accent. She suggests we try Peru's national drink: pisco sour.

I've never enjoyed a cocktail so much in my life. Pisco, a strong grape-distilled brandy, is mixed with sugar, lime juice and egg whites, then whipped up into a frothy drink. The egg-white top is so creamy, I ignorantly ask whether she made it with milk or cream.

I'd come back again for the pisco sour alone, but I don't have to. We get carried away and order two appetisers: *poppers con guacamole* and *wan tan frito*. The poppers are battered and fried spicy jalapeno peppers with sharp cheddar cheese oozing out of them. These come with a bowl of chunky homemade guacamole to offset the heat.

My dining companion also has a dish of greasy goodness in his *wan tan frito*, thin and crispy sheets of fried dough with a dab of meaty filling at one end. He hungrily dips these into the accompanying bowl of zesty salsa. There's salad on the side to balance out such sinfully saturated starters.

Finally, the mains: For me, that's *cau cau*, or chicken stew made with diced potatoes, peas and corn in a saffron broth. It's as simple as it sounds, but no less tasty for it. The flavours are subtle, thanks to the pleasantly bitter, honey-like saffron. The dish is very hearty, not to mention healthy.

The aromatic platter across the table is *lomo saltado*, succulent pieces of marinated strips of sirloin in a spicy mixture of tomatoes, onions and lightly fried potatoes. It reminds us of an Asian wok dish, and for good reason. Peruvian cuisine is one of the most varied in the world due to the large number of explorers and immigrants landing there throughout history, including the Chinese and Japanese. Both of our dishes come served with a pot of fragrant white rice.

We wash it all down with a half-litre of house red, about which I pose yet another naïve question: Is it from Peru? "No," Rossina assures me. "My country produces very little wine. This one is Spanish."

Not only did I have a delicious meal, in the end I also gained a few worldly lessons.

→ [www.restaurant-pocoloco.be](http://www.restaurant-pocoloco.be)

📍 Morekstraat 457, Wondelgem (Ghent)  
09.253.58.61

🕒 Wed-Sat 18.00-22.00, Sun 12.00-14.00 & 18.00-22.00

€ Mains: €10-€15

★ Authentic and diverse dishes from mystical Peru, plus great personal service

Contact Bite at [flandersbite@gmail.com](mailto:flandersbite@gmail.com)

## TALKING SPORTS

LEO CENDROWICZ

### Will Wimbledon yield to Clijsters?

Kim Clijsters has never won Wimbledon. She has thrice been victorious at the US Open at Flushing Meadow, and earlier this year claimed her first Australian Open at Melbourne. But the Championships hosted by the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, the oldest and most prestigious tennis tournament in the world, still elude Bree's favourite daughter.

The odds suggest she won't make it. Her record on grass is poor, and she has only twice made it to the semi-finals at SW19 (at least she has made the final – twice – of the French Open, another title that has been just beyond her reach). Others have better records: Serena Williams hasn't played a tournament in almost a year, and has barely even hit a ball in practice during that time, yet she is still a close second favourite to win Wimbledon. But more importantly where is Clijsters mentally? She arrived in Roland Garros for the French Open last month feeling eager but crashed out of the tournament in the second round, suggesting that she almost wasn't prepared to put in the necessary work.



© Regis Duvignau / Reuters

In fairness, it might just have been a bad day at the office on an admittedly very windy day. Plus, she may have still been recovering from her ankle-bending dance floor injury earlier this year.

But is the initial euphoria of her stunningly successful comeback into the game waning? Does she still have the excitement? Because while she's still the winner of two of the last three Grand Slam titles, it looked like in Paris as if that magic might be wearing off. Her Flemish heirs cannot at this point readily pick up from her. Yanina Wickmayer, who is 18th in the WTA rankings, has yet to fulfil the promise of her thrilling US Open semi

final in 2009. Kirsten Flipkens, at 25, has probably peaked, while An-Sophie Mestach and Alison Van Uytvanck, both just 16, are not ready yet. Nor should we forget Kortrijk-born Xavier Malisse, known to give even the toughest opponents a good match, but at 30 is relatively ancient for the tennis world.

So, if someone from Flanders is to win Wimbledon soon, it will have to be Clijsters. She's set to retire after the London Olympics next summer. Flanders will be willing her on this year and next, but it's getting late.

## THE LAST WORD...

### Fading fast

"Unless something is done, Belgium is facing a killing-me-softly scenario: Our country is at risk of quietly going under."

Pieter Timmermans, director-general of the employers' organisation VBO

### Smoke rage

"What do you think is going to happen if someone's had 10 beers and then someone wants to fine him for smoking?"

Fedcaf, the new federation of café owners, anticipates the smoking ban, which comes into force on 1 July

### Lofty sentiments

"You know what I like most about him? That he's too much of a gentleman ever to raise his voice. He's so shy and modest, considering he made the most successful film ever in your country."

Actor James Marsden (*X-Men*) is working on the American remake of *Loft* with Erik Van Looy

### Base-ic needs

"If Proximus offers me a really good price, I might think about switching over to them."

The only man in Belgium named Orthaire, whose name is featured in a Proximus ad campaign, is actually a client of Base

## NEXT WEEK IN FLANDERS TODAY #185

### Feature

After the winter we've had, we deserve this year's summer music festival season more than ever. We'll give you the low-down on the lesser-knowns, so you'll be ready to go next month

### Living

You might think that Leuven is all university hospitals and research centres, but our Travelling in Flanders series shows you that it's one of the region's most beautiful cities, too

### Arts

Internationally famed floral master Daniël Ost and fairy-tale designer Kaat Tilley in an exhibition at the gorgeous Coloma Rose Garden in Sint-Pieters-Leeuw. We'll describe it to you, if humanly possible