

Bad Belgians

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Baaaad in Leuven

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#185



Fresh festivals

Try on a different music fest this summer

LAURENS BOUCKAERT

Home of notorious concert-goers, impeccable logistics and inviting venues, summers in Flanders are traditionally overwhelmed with music festivals. Aside from the regulars (such as the celebrated **Rock Werchter** on the first weekend of July, multiple award-winner for best festival in the world; the 10-day city feast **Gentse Feesten** in July; and the celebration of alternative music in all its forms that is **Pukkelpop**), there are many more that are worth a visit but have, until now, escaped the international radar. For your consideration, *Flanders Today* rounds up four of the region's best hidden festivals.

 ➤ *continued on page 5*

"We are a peculiar festival in a musical landscape of boring uniformity"

Clijsters out of Wimbledon

Flemish tennis star Kim Clijsters (pictured) has not made it to Wimbledon, which began on 21 June. Following an injury sustained in last week's preparatory grass court tournament in Rosmalen, the Netherlands, the world's Number Two will miss what could be her last chance to win the coveted Grand Slam trophy, something that has evaded her in her 12-year career.

Clijsters' sustained an injury to her right ankle in April but recovered in time to play at the French Open in May, where she was knocked out in the second round by Arantxa Rus of the Netherlands. The injury sustained at Rosmalen is also to her right ankle but is not a flare-up of the one from April,

her trainer said; this time she has a bruised ankle and a pinched tendon.

"I'm extremely disappointed that I have to pull out of Wimbledon," said Clijsters last week. "I feel very frustrated that this should have happened just before one of my favourite tournaments. I always enjoyed being part of the atmosphere of Wimbledon, but I have no other choice than to rest and to avoid playing tennis for a couple of weeks."

Flanders' other tennis hopeful, Yanina Wickmayer (WTA 19), had just won her first match at Wimbledon as *Flanders Today* went to press, beating American Varvara Lepchenko (WTA 85) 7-5, 6-3.



Traffic chaos at Vilvoorde

Roadworks on the viaduct will snarl things up all summer

ALAN HOPE

Major roadworks began this week on the Vilvoorde viaduct, part of the Brussels Ring, with something less than the expected chaos. Some lanes of the viaduct will be closed at all times until 7 September, with contra flows operating on the Ghent-bound motorway until 17 July, then on the Brussels-bound motorway the rest of the period. While the summer was chosen because of the lower volume of commuter traffic, the works will also affect traffic from Antwerp and Leuven towards the coast, and from East and West Flanders towards the Ardennes. Traffic from the north of Brussels going towards the coast will be forced

to travel through the city to the Leopold II tunnel emerging at the Basilique, before joining the E40 at the Groot-Bijgaarden interchange.

On the first day, delays were reported to be "limited" – a maximum of 25 minutes during the morning rush hour, compared to the 45 minutes expected. A poll organised by *Het Nieuwsblad* showed one in five respondents planned to take Monday off to avoid problems. Nearly 70% planned to leave earlier or later for work.

 ➤ *continued on page 3*



ALAN HOPE

Antwerpen Centraal

There's something endlessly fascinating about railway stations, with their promise of departure to distant parts, tearful farewells, joyous arrivals. That's especially true of the great 19th century railway cathedrals, which even today harbour echoes of billowing steam and porters hurrying to load steamer trunks.

As of last week, no railway station is more feted than Antwerp Central, awarded the Europa Nostra prize for Conservation in this year's cultural heritage awards. Europa Nostra is a group of 250 NGOs, 150 associate organisations and 1,500 individuals from more than 50 countries who are "committed to safeguarding Europe's cultural heritage and landscapes". There are 27 awards in total, selected from 140 projects in 31 countries.

Antwerp Central was built between 1895 and 1905 as a terminal station. Its enormous steel and glass roof, designed by Clement Van Bogaert, was high enough, at 43 metres, to allow the steam to escape. The rest of the station is the work of Louis Delacenserie, inspired by Lucerne station in Switzerland and the Pantheon in Rome. It remained a terminus, meaning

trains to the Netherlands, for example, had to ride in and then back out the same way, until 2007, when work on a tunnel to allow high-speed trains to pass straight through was completed. The station now has 14 platforms on three levels, and the Thalys passes on its way from Paris to Amsterdam.

"The jury appreciated the immense quality of the work executed in all its elements, from the outstanding conservation of the station building with its huge canopy, to the creation of the three-level railway underpass," the prize citation states. "New and old, contemporary and historical, are found to be in perfect symbiosis."

In 2009, Newsweek magazine voted Antwerp Central one of the top railway stations in the world. In 2010, it was chosen by the visitors of the website stedentripper.com as the finest in the world. "This European award is the most prestigious," commented Jannie Haek, managing director of rail authority NMBS.

Also included in the Europa Nostra awards were the Hertogenmolen (Duke's Mills) in Aarschot, Flemish Brabant, and the Villa Empain in Brussels.

→ www.europanostra.org

FLANDERS TODAY

Flanders Today, a free weekly English-language newspaper, is an initiative of the Flemish Region and is financially supported by the Flemish authorities.



The logo and the name Flanders Today belong to the Flemish Region (Benelux Beeldmerk nr 815.088). The editorial team of Flanders Today has full editorial autonomy regarding the content of the newspaper and is responsible for all content, as stipulated in the agreement between Corelio Publishing and the Flemish authorities.

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FLANDERS TODAY

JUNE 22, 2011

News in brief

Albert Barrez, who served 13 years in prison for the **murder of veterinary inspector Karel Van Noppen** in 1995, has been returned to prison after being released on parole two years ago. Barrez admitted to being in contact with a fellow prisoner he met in the Leuven prison, breaching the terms of his release. Barrez was one of four men who plotted to kill Van Noppen to escape an investigation into hormone trafficking.

had already been filled in with the correct answers. The college authorities said the mistake was due to an error in the copy centre. The students were given a new paper which had been prepared for re-sits.

that there was €25,000 stashed in the base. The ashtray was the property of an elderly woman in Hoboken, near Antwerp, whose daughter sold it at a street market to a young couple. Her mother later revealed it had been the cache for her life savings. Following press attention, the couple returned the ashtray with the savings intact.

The lower house of the federal parliament last week approved a law that gives an accused person the right to be **represented by a lawyer from their first interview with police**. The new law brings Belgium into line with the requirements of the European convention on human rights but was opposed by the two socialist parties who claim investigations could be endlessly delayed by procedural matters. The bill, which passed by 79 votes to 26 with 37 abstentions, now has to be approved by the Senate.

The US State Department is advising American tourists visiting Belgium to be **vigilant to the presence of thieves** in train and metro stations, some of whom spray their victims with shaving foam to create a distraction. The three main Brussels stations are, the warning says, rife with pickpockets.

Students sitting down to a wood technology exam in the Ghent University College last week were surprised to find their **exam papers**

Work on the construction of a new bus station in Aalst, East Flanders, has been suspended for three months because a building due to be demolished has been **colonised by 15 pairs of house sparrows**, a protected species. The birds have built nests in the front and rear façades of the empty building, according to bird protection society Vogelbescherming Vlaanderen, which by law cannot be disturbed until after the breeding season. Work has been stopped until September, after which the society will work with the town council to create new nest sites for next year.

The trial began in Brussels last week of a man accused of taking part in the seizure of the stone-dumping vessel Pompei, owned by Aalst-based dredging company Jan De Nul. The **pirate activity occurred off the coast of Somalia** in April 2009. The crew of the ship were held hostage for more than 70 days and only released on payment of a ransom said to be around €2 million. The man, Omar Mohammed Abdiyahad, denies involvement. He faces a possible 10 years in prison. The verdict will be delivered on 29 June.

The plaice has been named **Fish of the Year** by the Flemish Centre for Agriculture and Fisheries Marketing (VLAM). The flatfish (*Pleuronectes platessa*) is native to all European coasts and available all year round but best between June and October, when the flesh becomes firmer and more flavourful following the spawning season. Plaice, which contains only one gram of fat and 63 calories in 100g, was also named in 1990, 1998 and 2001. VLAM is organising various marketing events to bring the fish to the public's attention.

→ www.vlam.be

An Art Deco ashtray sold for €4 at a flea market has been returned to its rightful owner, after it was revealed

OFFSIDE

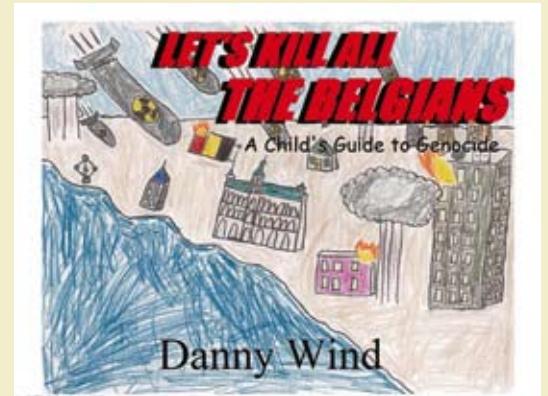
Belgocide book causes international ire

A hand-drawn, self-published book by a man in St Louis in the US state of Missouri has caused an uproar, with its advice on how to tackle the threat of world domination by the Belgians.

In Danny Wind's *Let's Kill All the Belgians: A Child's Guide to Genocide*, the author and illustrator warns that Belgians are out to take over the world, kill your puppies and force you to eat waffles three times a day. The only remedy, the book explains, is to behead the marauding Belgians, set them on fire or stab them with a sharpened crucifix. In the end, the US government needs to drop nuclear bombs on Belgium – before moving on to deal with the threat from Sweden.

Wind, who also writes for a number of comedy websites, drew his lurid cartoons with crayon. "If there's any purpose to the book at all, it's as a parody of a strain in American politics that tends to demonise certain groups (Muslims, Mexican immigrants) without actually knowing anything about them," he explained in an email to *Flanders Today*. "I picked Belgium because it was about the most inoffensive country I could think of. I thought that would make the joke obvious, since who could actually hate the Belgians?"

Lulu, which prints and sells self-published books, pulled the book from its website after an apparently large number of complaints from Belgians. The company, based in Raleigh, North Carolina, did not respond to questions from



Danny Wind

Flanders Today. On the book's page, however, one poster wrote: "Even if this is supposed to be funny, I can't fathom what sick urge prompted you to commit such a book. Yes I'm Belgian, as you probably guessed by now, and damn proud of it. And you, sir, are a sick bastard." Wind says he is "quite surprised" by the attention the book has gotten "since I wrote it mostly for my friends, who I thought would enjoy it and get the joke. It had only sold 19 copies before the Belgian media picked it up. I'm quite sorry to have upset so many people." The book has since been restored to Lulu.com, where it can be bought for €9.94.

→ www.lulu.com

Snail's pace

Brussels is the European capital of road congestion, with traffic jams on 39% of roads every day, according to GPS manufacturers TomTom



Commuters use alternative routes

→ continued from page 1

According to the Flemish traffic centre, many commuters appear to have heeded the warnings and chosen alternative routes to work, some of which have been put online in map and video by the Flemish roads and traffic agency (AWV). That led to some problems on secondary roads, including the Van Praet junction, where the A12 enters Brussels, and the Reyers tunnel carrying traffic from Leuven and Liège to Brussels. Both black spots reported delays of up to an hour. The A12 itself, from Antwerp via Boom to Brussels, was completely blocked at places in both directions.

The major test was expected to be Monday's evening rush-hour, as *Flanders Today* was going to press. Then the E19 junction with the Ring at Machelen will be closed, with traffic coming from the north of Brussels forced to follow a diversion.

While motoring organisation Touring predicted that the congestion could turn out to be less than on a normal weekday, given the driving public's response

to the wide-spread publicity, Flemish motorists' association VAB, saw things differently. "The problems will be greater than ever before," warned VAB's Marc Van Damme. "The summer weather will bring out day-trippers. Many cars will overheat in the endless tailbacks and break down – a big problem since the hard shoulder is now closed. And forget about escape routes in the area because the secondary roads will be chock-full."

Some companies have come up with novel solutions. Microsoft employees, whose HQ overlooks the Ring at Zaventem, have been advised to work from service stations along the way, and internet provider Telenet has agreed to open up its broadband in stations in Groot-Bijgaarden, Nivelles and Waarloos to allow them to work from 7.00 to 10.00, thus avoiding peak times. Others have made arrangements to allow staff to work from home.

Brussels Airport, meanwhile, is providing a shuttle bus for passengers coming from the



© Boerkentz / Wikipedia

direction of Antwerp to be dropped off at the end of the E19 and bussed to the Zaventem departure area. The service will run for at least three weeks and could be extended if there is demand, Brussels Airport Company said. The Vilvoorde viaduct is not the

only traffic spot to avoid this summer. Until 26 August, both the Woluwe tunnel and the Meiser-Reyers tunnel, leading to Leuven, will be closed for repairs.♦

→ www.viaductvilstvoorde.be

THE WEEK IN FIGURES



€250,948

paid out so far this year in Belgium to people who spent at least eight days in prison on remand and were later found not guilty

3,866

people in prison on remand in April of this year, or 35% of the total prison population

24,000

texts submitted by students to the Catholic University of Leuven this year that have been researched for possible plagiarism, compared to 13,000 last year. The tests are carried out by IT company ICTS. The university declined to reveal how many tested positive

€34,000

in fines handed out by the city of Blankenberge last year for public urination, rubbish dumping and dogs fouling the streets. The town plans to increase its fines to €45 for litter and €75 for urination

60

special buses and 175 drivers deployed by De Lijn to shuttle festival-goers from Leuven railway station to Rock Werchter, which runs from 29 June to 4 July. Last year more than 106,000 fans made use of the bus service

Dutch decision will cost Flanders a quarter million

"Treaties have to be honoured, and that goes for the Netherlands, too." It was a stern warning from Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters, following news last week that the Dutch government of Mark Rutte had decided to renege on an agreement relating to the deepening of the Scheldt sea channel.

Flanders and the Netherlands (under then prime minister Jan Peter Balkenende) signed a series of treaties in 2005 under which the Scheldt would be dredged at 12 critical points to allow large ships to access the Port of Antwerp. Since most of the Westerschelde, as the channel is known, is in Dutch waters between Zeeuws-Vlaanderen and Walcheren island in Zeeland province, the work had to be carried out by the Dutch.

The first problems surfaced in 2009, when, in response to what was seen as foot-dragging by the Dutch government, Open VLD member Annick De Ridder called for a boycott of Dutch mussels and oysters.

The dredging has since been carried out, but the latest problem surrounds one of the other measures in the treaty. That measure calls for the Hedwigpolder, a stretch of land below sea level along the coast of the Westerschelde near the entrance to Antwerp harbour, to be surrendered to the water so that it can become a breeding place for water birds and a site for the growing of the typical water plants of the estuary. This is to be done in compensation for existing estuary marshes that will be flooded as a result of the dredging.

Instead, the Dutch government announced last week it had decided to flood two different polders, close to Vlissingen at the other side of the Westerschelde. The consequences for Flanders, the government calculated, will be a cost of about €250,000. "The Dutch government has shown itself to be untrustworthy in this matter," Antwerp's alderman for the port, Marc Van Peel, said.♦

Belgium in Top 10 for internet speed

Belgium is in ninth place in an international ranking of internet connection speeds drawn up by digital marketers Web Analytics World. Belgium's average speed of 5.5 Mb/s is 13% up on last year's average. The peak speed of 22.8 Mb/s is up more than 50% and places Belgium in seventh place in the world. Despite the ranking, Belgium is still far behind the world's fastest internet country, South Korea.

Average internet connection speeds

Country	Speed (megabytes per second)
South Korea	13.7
Hong Kong	9.4
Japan	8.3
Romania	7.0
Netherlands	7.0
Latvia	5.9
Czech Republic	5.7
Switzerland	5.6
Belgium	5.5
Canada	5.5

Barbie off the shelves

Toy store chain Fun, one of Flanders' biggest with 31 stores, has stopped buying products from manufacturer Mattel, after the US company failed to give a satisfactory response to a campaign by Greenpeace. Greenpeace maintains that Mattel uses materials from the Indonesian rain forest in its packaging. Greenpeace last week carried out light-hearted protests at two Fun stores, continuing a campaign that has already seen protests in Australia and Indonesia, as well as in Vienna, London and Helsinki (pictured).

"Fun was one of the first retail chains in the country to recognise its social responsibility by obliging suppliers to always work with quality products that are socially and environmentally responsible," company chairman Bart Coeman said. "If action groups call the environmentally aware approach of our suppliers into question, we see it as our responsibility to demand answers from suppliers on behalf of the public."♦



© Greenpeace

FIFTH COLUMN

Meulebeik

Two trendy advertising agencies stated last week that they found it impossible to work in the Brussels commune of Molenbeek because of the security situation. One decided to move out entirely; the other has introduced extensive security measures, with a security guard on the scene to keep an eye on the parking lot and to escort the staff to their cars or the metro.

Molenbeek has always been working class (making it one of the most "Flemish" communes in Brussels). Most Flemish people know the folksy song "Gigippe van Meulebeik" by the comic Urbanus, which, underneath all the jokes, bears witness to poverty of long-gone days, knitting sweaters and socks from leftover wool.

In recent decades, however, *Meulebeik* has become a synonym with illegal activities of all sorts and all the problems that come with a large, deprived immigrant population. If the knitting lady Gigippe is still around, she has probably had her bag snatched a few times. The canal zone is especially hard hit. The area is being gentrified, but this is a slow and painful process, as the advertising agencies experiences prove. The staff of one of the agencies, BBDO, speaks of 152 incidents in the last decade, 10 of which involved physical aggression this year alone. The reaction of Molenbeek mayor Philippe Moureaux angered most Flemings, as he minimised up to the point of denying what is happening.

Moureaux is a minister of state in his 70s but still a leading figure in the socialist PS, the largest French-speaking party. He was one of the architects of many state reforms, which resulted in the federal Belgium, which is now up for reform again. Moureaux's reaction contrasts sharply with that of Antwerp mayor Patrick Janssens, a socialist like him, who admitted that the Antwerp police did not handle recent football riots well and introduced tough measures for the young culprits, including grounding them at night.

The Flemish deplore the situation across the political spectrum. Many find Moureaux's reaction exemplary to the claim that "French speakers just don't get it". Moureaux views the commotion as a Flemish conspiracy – insulting the well meaning advertising agency's staff even more. "Who feeds you all this," Moureaux asked a journalist from *De Morgen* newspaper, who happens to live in the area and knows what is going on from his own experience.

Now what would Gigippe make of all this?

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GOSSELIN MOVING
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Fresh festivals

→ *continued from page 1*



If you are hardcore...



If you are serene...



If you are a child...



If you hate routine...

Graspop Metal Meeting

De Stenehei, Dessel (Antwerp province)
24-26 June

→ www.graspop.be

Highlights:

Scorpions, Ozzy Osbourne, Judas Priest, Slipknot, Rob Zombie (*pictured*), Mastodon, Journey, Foreigner, Monster Magnet

Graspop Metal Meeting actually began as a mainstream pop festival in 1986, but 10 years later decided to radically change its course after a disappointing edition (with artists like Joe Cocker and Simple Minds). It is a decision that has proved successful, and the festival, the oldest and biggest metal festival in the lowlands today, has managed to maintain a loyal following ever since.

If you're not a real metalhead, don't despair: it's not all satanic roars, brutal riffs and agonising blast-beats. There's also plenty of room for radio-friendly hard rock or hardcore punk rock.

This year, you can relive the '80s with bands like Journey, Scorpions and Foreigner. Punk rockers will be pleased to see The Dwarves, Parkway Drive, Terror, Pro-Pain, D.R.I or Bring Me The Horizon. This year's crowd-puller is Ozzy Osbourne, who never ceases to amaze at age 62 and always manages to incorporate some of Black Sabbath's many monumental songs from their first four masterpiece albums. The bat-decapitating nutter goes on stage after Judas Priest, a household name in the world of hard rock. Connoisseurs will look forward to the sleazy doom of Britain's Electric Wizard, the revolutionary psychedelic metal of Mastodon and the stoner rock veterans of Monster Magnet, both hailing from the US.

I'm always surprised at the serenity of the atmosphere at Graspop, a festival of mainly aggressively charged music. "We have our own thing going here," explains organiser Peter Van Geel, "and the people who come to the festival are seen as part of us, as part of the celebration of metal music. I'm pretty proud of it all, really."

Cactus Festival

Minnewaterpark, Bruges · 8-10 July

→ www.cactusfestival.be

Highlights:

Bryan Ferry, Lamb, Mogwai, Janelle Monáe, Lyle Lovett (*pictured*), Isobel Campbell & Mark Lanegan, Cold War Kids, Hooverphonic, Kate Nash

Cactus is easily one the most beautifully located festivals in Europe. It is set in the stunning Minnewaterpark in Bruges, an almost spiritual environment that has a consoling effect on visitors and musicians alike, who often perform with breathtaking intensity during the course of this long-running festival.

"Many artists have said that the setting has something magical," claims organiser Patrick Keersebilck. "They tell me that it's comparable to a gig in a hall because of the patience and composure of the crowd, as well as the clear acoustics."

Cactus is a former winner of the award for Best European Small Festival, but big names haven't been shunned for this year's edition. Bryan Ferry is headlining day one and "thinking man's cowboy" Lyle Lovett is one of the acts on day two. The emphasis is on contemplative songwriters and alternative performers, but Cactus also has something in store for music loving maniacs who like to dance: the up-and-coming R&B funk goddess Janelle Monáe. "It's only her second gig in Belgium after an impressive appearance in Brussels earlier this year," Keersebilck says. "I think she's the next big thing in contemporary soul and R&B."

Keersebilck believes in a less-is-more philosophy. "There is only one stage," he says, "which forces people to really give their unbridled attention to the music. It's not like the window-shopping audiences of Werchter or Pukkelpop." He seems to have a soft spot for world music, which attracts a more cosmopolitan crowd. "This edition we have a Nigerian artist, a Swedish band, a Congolese band and even a German musician playing reggae [Gentleman & the Evolution]. We are a peculiar festival in a musical landscape of boring uniformity. That's what is attracting the crowds."

Openluchttheater Rivierenhof

Deurne (Antwerp) · Until 3 September

→ www.openluchttheater.be

Highlights:

Manu Chao, Midlake, Joss Stone, Guido Belcanto, Dinosaur Jr, CocoRosie, The Pogues, Arno, K's Choice, Gotan Project, Daan

Rivierenhof is a luscious park just outside the centre of Antwerp and, during the summer, a restful background for concerts of different styles and genres. It is home to "not the biggest festival", as the tagline reads. "But we are the longest," chuckles production manager Sylvie Svanberg. "It is not the kind of festival where people camp and stay the night," she says. "Gigs are only in the evening, and there are no hamburger stands or *frietkots*."

The festival insists on quality rather than quantity, and the line-up is one of the most diverse you'll see in the whole of Flanders. There's a Cuban salsa night, by Zule Max and Marga (on a Friday free of entrance fee); 1950s big band from Pieter Embrechts & The New Radio Kings; heavy grunge by Dinosaur Jr; indie folk and folk rock by CocoRosie and Midlake; alcoholic folk punk by The Pogues; soul by Joss Stone and even a comedy night starring Flemish funny people Jeroen Leenders, Lies Lefever and Bart Cannaerts.

There are some afternoon performances, too, strictly reserved for the little ones. Kapitein Winokio (*pictured*), the popular singing sea captain who comes up with new versions of traditional children's songs, makes an appearance both in late August again - his June show sold out fast. The Ketnet Band, the cover band from the children's TV network, is also paying a visit to the park. The Openluchttheater (Open-Air Theatre) Rivierenhof is a family-friendly festival that promotes quality and diversity in a green environment just outside of Flanders' biggest city. Be quick with the purchase of tickets.

Rock Herk

Municipal Park Olmenhof, Herk-de-Stad (Limburg province) · 15-16 July

→ www.rockherk.be

Highlights:

Swans, Blood Red Shoes (*pictured*), Two Gallants, Shameboy, Don Rimini, N-Type, Errors, A Place To Bury Strangers, The Sore Losers

This festival also takes place in a lovely park. The one thing that sets it apart from the rest: It's free!

Since it began back in 1983, Rock Herk has never charged a dime. The cost of this excursion might be, however, that you have never heard of any names on the bill. Programmers are "primarily occupied with the future of alternative music," says organiser Marc Croes, a heartfelt belief in the Limburg-based festival resounding in his voice. "A good example is Buffalo Tom, a now-famous rock band that we had over in the early 1990s, way before its initial breakthrough. We also had The National, back in 2007."

Is there an act he'd like to recommend? "I'm definitely looking forward to seeing Swans," he says, "a recently reunited American post-punk band from the '80s and '90s with a very dark but compelling sound." He admits to being more of a guitar man himself, hence he's also looking forward to Saturday, the pre-eminent rock day. "Brighton-based power-rock duo Blood Red Shoes is one of my favourites." The first day of Rock Herk is traditionally reserved for electronic music. Universally acclaimed dubstep DJ N-Type is one of the masters of dance ceremony in the tent sponsored by hipster magazine VICE, while Flemish electro act Shameboy will get a party started on the main stage.

"The people who organise Werchter thought we'd never last," says a militant Croes. "That was 29 years ago. And look at where we are now. There will always be room for an independent niche-festival in the Flemish circuit, especially if it's free." For a cheap view of the future of alternative music on a municipal island of calm, Rock Herk is where you should be heading this summer. ♦

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Companies deny “BBB” discrimination

A list of clients of Adecco employment agency is leaked to the public

ALAN HOPE

Some of Belgium's leading companies, including Delhaize and Electrabel, have expressed dismay at a leaked document that suggests they have made discriminatory demands on employment agency Adecco in recruiting staff. Both Adecco and several companies denied existence of the document, and last week major businesses took great pains to prove they did not discriminate with regard to nationality or ethnicity in their hiring practices.

The list of more than 90 companies was published in *Solidair*, the magazine of the Flemish workers' political party PVDA, which claims it came from the documents in the case file against Adecco when the company was convicted earlier this month of racial discrimination. No explanation was given as to how the party obtained the document, which dates back to 2001, around the time of the first complaints that eventually led to the court decision.

The list of Adecco clients includes their requirements for employment – in most cases, normal qualities seen in any job ad, such as language skills, good appearance and experience. But next to some vacancies is the notation “BBB”, which apparently means “Blanc Bleu Belge”, a thoroughbred race of Belgian cattle. The notation is alleged to be code indicating the applicants for the job are expected to be white Belgians, and not

immigrants.

It is not known if the notations in question were made on the instructions of the companies or whether Adecco wrongly interpreted instructions. Most companies stressed that such employment practices were not then nor are now in line with company policy. So far, Adecco has declined to comment on the document's existence, let alone its content.

Jozef De Witte, director of the Centre for Equal Opportunities and the Fight Against Racism said his organisation sent out a letter to all of the companies concerned two years ago to inform them they had been mentioned in the case against Adecco and asking them to make clear their commitment to avoiding racially based employment practices.

“Only about 10 of them replied,” he said last week. A test carried out two weeks ago found racial questions coming up in 28% of the cases where his centre's volunteers went along to temp agencies, ostensibly in search of a job.

No blacks or Arabs

In a series of internal emails leaked to *De Morgen*, Adecco admits this notation was used and that senior managers tried to find a more discreet way of indicating the same requirements. The emails are also notable in showing that one or two managers protested the practice.

Some of the notes made by Adecco,



© Belga

however, are much less mysterious: No Arabs, must be a good Belgian, no blacks or Arabs, no foreigners.

Retail clothing chain Benetton, which has based its “United Colors” marketing campaign for decades on ethnic diversity, said the accusation was “unfair and ungrounded”. A spokesman for Benetton Retail Belgium said the allegation has “caused untold damage to the fundamental characteristics of the group”.

Supermarket giant Delhaize, power utility Electrabel and clothing store C&A expressed “surprise” at finding themselves on the list of discriminating clients of Adecco. “This in no way conforms to the policy we follow,” a spokesman for Delhaize said.

“We can only speculate why Adecco

included us in their files,” C&A said. “It's a complete mystery to us.”

The director general of Adecco in Belgium and Luxembourg, Mark De Smedt, commented: “I can't confirm that such a list exists. I have never seen it, and I have to wonder how it came to be on the internet.” Among other companies named were Press Shop, Interbrew (now AB InBev), Fnac and BMW.

Also last week, federal employment minister Joëlle Milquet said she would look into ways of tightening up legislation that bans discrimination on the basis of race in job advertising. She also said she would bring representatives of the employment agency sector together to look into setting up a single reporting point for complaints about possible discrimination. ♦

Belgacom TV offers free football

Belgacom will offer all of its football coverage on digital TV for free, after it lost a bid to carry the most important matches of the Jupiler Pro League last week.

Until this year, Belgacom TV was able to offer its subscribers all of the major football matches in Belgium, while the rights to the summaries were held by the Flemish public broadcaster VRT. This year football authorities accepted new bids, making it clear they were looking for more than the €44.7 million Belgacom has paid for the full package of rights. In order to increase revenue, football authorities split the rights up

into various packages.

The right to broadcast the three main matches on any match-day went to Belgacom rival Telenet. Belgacom retains the right to five other matches, while the summaries go to commercial channel VTM.

Telenet's winning bid was €55.2 million a season for the next three seasons, a sum analysts were agreed would be impossible to recoup from football subscriptions alone, especially since the price does not take account of production costs. Belgacom paid €1 million for its share. However the football rights are considered by Telenet to be a

loss-leader in convincing households to switch from Belgacom for their whole multimedia package: telephone, digital TV and internet.

The decision to split the rights means many football fans have to equip themselves with two decoders: one for the main matches and one for the subsidiary games – especially if the subscriber is a fan of a particular team, which could find itself in a different package from week to week. Café owners who screen matches are up in arms at how the sport has been split in two.

In Brussels, meanwhile, many fans

will find themselves faced with the impossible. Telenet is only available in seven of the capital's 19 municipalities; its French-language partner VOO is available in six more. In the remaining municipalities – Brussels City, Anderlecht, Molenbeek, Sint-Joost and Watermaal-Bosvoorde – neither of the two is available.

Belgacom's decision to give away its football for free – something not economically possible for Telenet – suggest the rights awards announced last week may only be the start of a long and difficult road to find a solution for the nation's football fans. ♦

Glass research centre opened

Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters last week officially opened the “glass house”, new research centre in Melle, East Flanders, with 800 square metres of laboratory space and more than 3,600 square metres of greenhouse space. The centre is the initiative of the Institute for Agricultural and Fisheries Research (ILVO), together with the University of Ghent, Ghent University College and the Flemish government. The greenhouse space can be divided into various modules to allow different growing conditions to be replicated, while the building as a whole is built according to the latest sustainability standards. The new complex cost €5.25 million. “I'm certain this complex will keep Flanders at the top of agricultural production,” Peeters said. “It will also stand as a symbol of our future-oriented cooperative approach to problems in agriculture and horticulture, still an economically powerful and modern sector in Flanders.” ♦

→ www.ilvo.be



THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Air handling • Aviapartner

Aviapartner, responsible for aircraft and ground handling at Brussels Airport, will contest the recent decision by the airport to award the next seven-year contract to Swissport and Flightcare. Another bidder, Menzies, based in Scotland, will also contest the decision.

Auto hire • D'Ieteren

The Brussels-based car importer and services group has sold its 60% stake in Avis Europe to the US Avis-Budget group for €720 million, a 60% premium on the latest Avis Europe stock price. The deal will allow D'Ieteren to develop its Volkswagen-Audi distribution activities in Belgium and to further invest in its fast-growing Belron car windows repair activity.

Food service • COS

Alster-based Catering Operating Solutions (COS) will take over 11 motorway restaurants from the Italian Autogrill catering group. The move, which concerns more than 25% of the total Belgian motorway catering market, involves renovations costing €3.5 million.

Metals • Nyrstar

Non-ferrous metals group Nyrstar is spending some €474 million to acquire the Canadian Breakwater zinc and gold mining group. The decision helps the company, based in Balen, Antwerp province, secure supplies for its smelting operations and keep control of zinc ore prices. Breakwater, with mines in Chile, Honduras and Canada, brings Nyrstar's self-reliance on its own zinc resources to 43%.

Plastics • BASF

Germany's plastics and chemicals group BASF is considering a major investment in its Antwerp facilities to create the world's largest polyurethane TDI compound production unit with a capacity of some 300,000 tonnes a year. The company has already acquired 50% of the 400 megawatts Zandvliet power station.

Retail • Uplace

Work on the €600 million Uplace shopping centre in Machele, Flemish Brabant, can begin now that the financing package has been agreed between the Bruges-based Verhaeghe group, the Australian Westfield property developer and the Dutch APG company. The new 190,000 square-metre facility is expected to open in 2014.

Software • Microsoft

The US-based software giant Microsoft is opening two research and innovation centres specialised in e-Health development in Kortrijk and Genk later this year. The two facilities are expected to provide work for up to 400 employees when fully operational.

THE EDUCATED CITY

Although tinged with a constant air of studious authority, Leuven knows how to have a good time

LISA BRADSHAW

I am enamoured of botanical gardens. They are wild with growth and neat with sculptured paths. They sprout benches in just the right places and have little offshoots that feel like a secret.

Leuven's botanical garden provides all this superbly – but also casually. Because it is free of charge, open until 20.00 and only a 10-minute walk from the centre, locals just wander in and out, day and night, bringing drinks or books or MP3 players. Workers have a chat at the end of their day, students come to study. It's like a meeting place in an oasis.

You might say this of Leuven in general, though that would sound a bit romanticised. But, as the capital of Flemish Brabant is about to launch a summer-of-romance campaign concurrent with a new exhibition at its award-winning museum (see sidebar), I'm going out on a limb: Leuven is not only a terribly romantic city, it's so full of things to do that it easily provides for a three-day weekend – more if you venture to its castle-enshrouded and bicycle-path-ridden outskirts.

Fonske on holiday, too

Let's just get the bad news out of the way early: Part of Leuven is under construction. Of course if you live in Flanders, this is so common, you've long ago ceased to be disappointed. And in fact – unlike projects in, say, Ghent and Turnhout – it's fairly unobtrusive. Transport is still normal, and tourist attractions largely unimpacted. Works are not taking place, fortunately, on the Grote Markt (in front of the glorious City Hall) or on the Oude Markt (in front of the glorious bars). But they are taking place in the Maarschalk Fochplein next to the Grote Markt, which means that the beloved Fonske is out of commission until work is complete in the autumn of 2012. Who is Fonske? I'm glad you asked.

Though only in place since 1975, Fonske is the symbol of Leuven – a fountain sculpture by Jef Claerhout of a little man pouring knowledge and wisdom from a cup into his open head. Not only does it signify Leuven's main economy and claim to international fame – the university – it also beats the hell out of Manneken Pis.

The city's other major sculpture might seem less humanitarian, but that's certainly up to interpretation. Everyone has an opinion, in any case, on "Totem", Jan Fabre's astounding needle that pierces a giant beetle 23 metres in the air. In the square of the university library, smack in the middle of the city, it could be a sign of Fabre's trademark cheekiness or it could be the desire to emphasise the more brutish side of science.



Leuven's Groot Begijnhof is the most beautiful example of its kind in Belgium

The Bible in stone

As photographed as these landmarks are, they don't hold a candle to the number of shots taken of Leuven's famous *stadhuis*, or city hall, a jaw-dropping example of Late Gothic architecture at its most flamboyant. With six turrets, an ornate parapet and a roof studded with dormers, the building is so intricately carved, it looks delicate, as if it was cut from lace. Leuven developed into a commercial centre in the 11th century, situated on the route between the Rhineland and Bruges, and this 15th-century city hall is its third. Sometimes referred to as "the Bible in stone", it is carved with biblical scenes and boasts 236 statues, each mounted on its own niche. Grab a brochure at the tourist office, which is located in the city hall on Naamsestraat, to identify some of the figures. On the bottom level you'll find artists, scholars and other Leuven VIPs of yore, including Erasmus and Mercator. Further up are saints and representatives of municipal privileges. Higher still are dukes and counts of Leuven and Flemish Brabant.

Taking a tour of the city hall is the only way to get inside, where you'll see the foyer, which was once an open-air area from which you reached municipal offices; the Gothic room, with its gorgeous hand-carved beams and paintings by Tournai artist Andre Hennebicq; and the Parlour, with Pieter-Jozef Verhaghen's masterpiece "Moses is Introduced to Pharaoh's Daughter". There are two tours per day, but not always in English, so check ahead.

The architecture in Grote Markt is made more magnificent by the presence of Sint-Pieters Church. Built over 75 years in the 15th century, it replaces the city's oldest church from 986, which burnt down in the 12th century. As you approach town from the train station, you see the back of the church with its seven magnificent apse chapels.

Inside is a nice little museum of religious relics, particularly a wooden head of Christ – all that's left from an entire crucifixion sculpture destroyed in a fire during the First World War. Although it dates from the 12th century, it has a modern, almost Art Deco look. The museum is most famed, though for "The Last Supper" by Early Netherlandish painter Dirk Bouts, who was based in Leuven for the last 20 years of his life.

In the footsteps of beguines

But this is a summer holiday, after all, so to the outside. In the south of Leuven's city centre is the Groot (Large) Begijnhof, one of the most lovingly maintained communities of its kind.



Leuven's picturesque Botanic Garden is free of charge and open late



Leuven's super Goth city hall is always photographed at an angle because the square is not big enough

Beginhoven were a series of connected homes and gardens that formed a kind of commune inside cities. You can find them across Flanders, and Leuven has two – the other, called the Klein (Small) Begijnhof – is on the other side of the city centre.

Beginhoven were extremely unique – home to *beguines*, or women who were not nuns but devoted themselves to prayer and charity. They lived in a *begijnhof* but were not bound by vows of poverty. Some lived off their own money; others performed services like child care and sewing. Leuven's Groot Begijnhof is now populated by university staff and students and is an idyllic area in which to walk around. On a recent sunny weekday, I was the only soul in sight.

Besides the botanical garden, Leuven sports a large park, home to palm trees. Yes, you read that right. They are kept in a greenhouse at the botanical garden most of the year, but in the summer, they are moved to Sint-Donatus Park, or "city park" to the locals. Those same locals also swear by the much smaller Dijle Park, on the banks of the Dijle River behind Leuven's art centre STUK. With a lake and romantic bridge, young locals called it "paradise park".

What I find paradise are the discoveries to be made in the Heverlee wood, just outside the centre along Kardinaal



© Layla Aerts

Holiday at home

If you've decided to forgo a big holiday this year, that doesn't mean you have to spend summer days at home. This month in Flanders Today, we'll show you the best places in Flanders to while away a week



© Layla Aerts

Romance and the bug: Jan Fabre's sculpture on the huge square of the university library

ough to get it all in frame from the front; to its right is Sint-Pieters Church, to its left the currently absent Fonske Mercierlaan. Winding paths go through the forest and along the river Dijle. Bridges offer nice vantage points for nature and university architecture. I happened upon a small, modern, glass-encased chapel and a little workspace called the *boshut*. Wouldn't you just want to work in a tiny building called the forest hut?

Herverlee is perhaps the best example of Leuven's special quality: a seamless integration of its famous university into every-day life. The city has been existing with Belgium's oldest university for so long, it is part of the fabric. Buildings are scattered in every part of town, and gates are flung open to show inner courtyards; there's nothing stopping you from poking around. Ask for a public toilet in the tourist office, and you will be directed down the street to a university building.♦

→ www.leuven.be

Eating

For a small city, Leuven is packed to the rafters with restaurants. The tourist office has a handy booklet, though they're largely upscale. If you're more of a downscale type, don't miss **De Werf**, a clever little cafe at one end of the otherwise quiet, grassy Hogeschoolplein. The interior has the appearance of a do-it-yourselfer who gave up: Trowels and other tools are plastered to the rafters, while holes in the wall and gouges in the wooden tables go unfilled. The theme is continued in the sandwiches, which are whimsically delivered in Tupperware. But if you're really hungry, you're better off with one of the many hearty salads or pasta dishes. It's veggie friendly, there's a huge terrace out front, and prices are all under €10.

If your budget is a little bigger, try **Kokoon** just down the street, which is still considered a great value by *Leuvenaars*, with its modern, gastronomic take on fish and lamb. Kokoon is located just off the Muntstraat, Leuven's own restaurant alley. Don't worry, it's not a tourist trap; locals eat here, too.



© Lisa Bradshaw

The *Leuvenaar*'s favourite meals under €10 can be had at De Werf

Drinking

Leuven has 30,000 students in a city with a population of less than 100,000. In Flanders, this of course means that the bar to human ratio is impressive. In fact, Leuven has a square called **Oude Markt**, which the local Use-It tourist group calls the "Longest Bar in Europe". That's a slight exaggeration – there are brasseries here, too, and even a *frietkot* (which must do quite a business after midnight). But there are indeed more than 30 bars. Every bar on the square sports a terrace, and if you sit there, it doesn't matter which you choose, really, though the best beer selections can be found at **33** (also many whiskeys) and **Den Bierkelder**, which has been known to serve your drinking needs until 8.00. Elsewhere, the quirky **Bar de Sol**, with a lovely terrace, is totally off the beaten path right outside the main entrance to the Begijnhof quarter. **Toewip**, near the station on Diestsestraat, is run by a man and his two twin daughters, Miranda and Mirella. You can't tell them apart even before you start drinking.

A romantic view

Steamy and dreamy painters at Museum M this summer

That Leuven is a romantic city is unarguable – the city hall is enough to make one swoon. This summer, the capital of Flemish Brabant is capitalising on that look by building a whole holiday theme around the Museum M exhibition *A Romantic View: The Rademakers Collection*. The group of 70 paintings come from the private collection of Dutch TV director and producer Jef Rademakers and was an enormous success last year in Saint Petersburg's Hermitage. Because the best-known painters of the Romantic period of the 19th century are mostly French and British, it's easy to assume that the once prolific low countries had run out of painters. Not so, as Museum M is about to show.

The Romantic period was marked by painting that focused on daily life, pastoral labour and domestic concerns. Flemish master of the genre Basile de Loose is here, with his occasionally amusing, occasionally idyllic portraits of family and social life, as is Dutchman Barend Cornelis Koekkoek, known during his lifetime as the "prince of landscape painting".

The city of Leuven gets in on the act with new maps of "romantic walks" and "romantic bike rides". They are working with a number of area hotels and restaurants for entire romantic packages and are staging lunchtime carillon concerts.

And why not? Between the country's loveliest *begijnhof* and rather endless captivating views in a number of green spaces, Leuven's got the goods to sell.

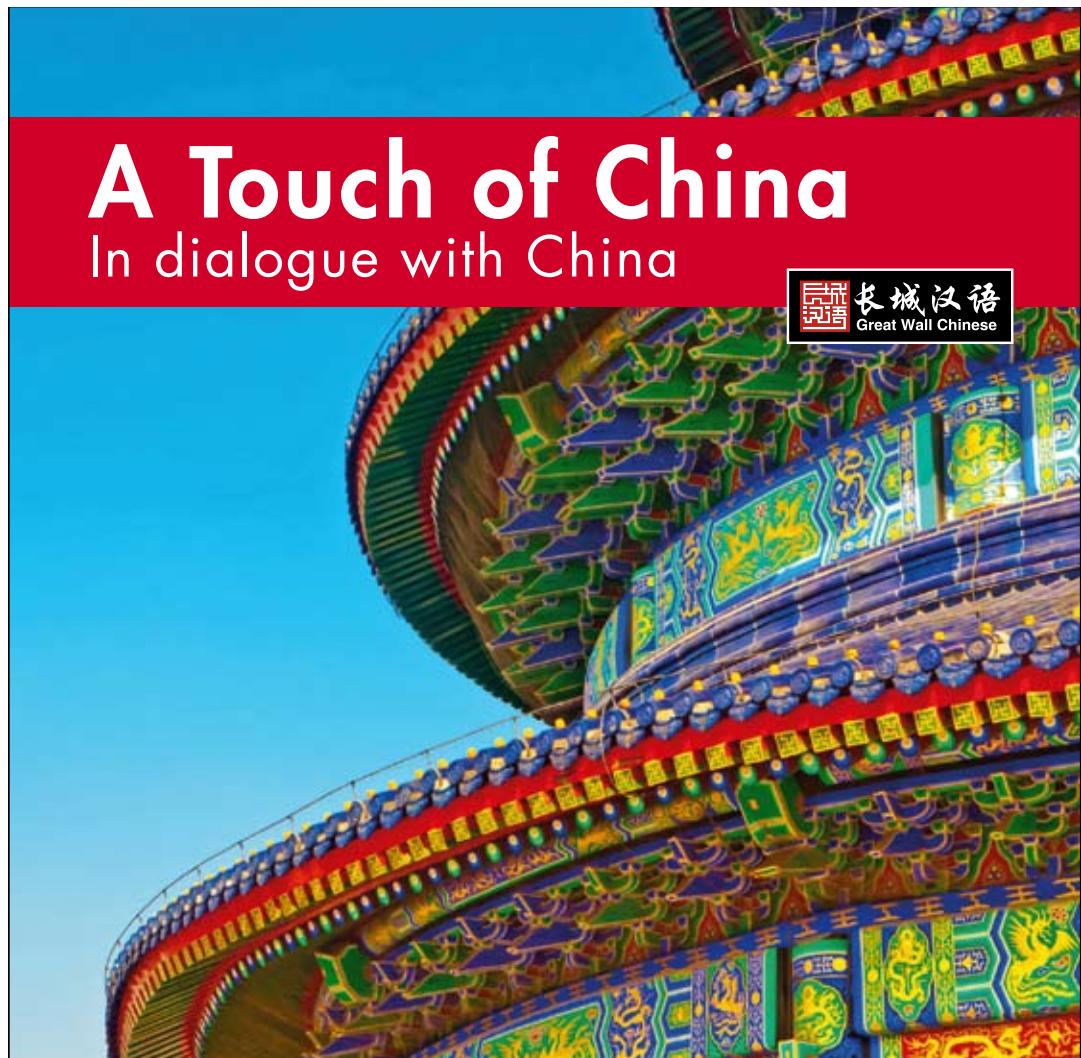
→ www.tinyurl.com/summer-in-leuven



© Toerisme Leuven

Sun and students on the Oude Markt (hint: in the summer, most of the students are gone)

travelling in Flanders



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Bed of roses

Two spectacular designers add sparkle and celebrity to Coloma's Rose Days

DENZIL WALTON

With its impressive displays of more than 3,000 types and varieties of roses from 26 countries, Coloma in Sint-Pieters-Leeuw is one of the most extensive rose gardens in Europe. Created in 1995, it has grown to become a popular international tourist attraction. Among its varieties you'll find antique roses, the most recent hybrids, as well as climbing roses, rambling roses and bush roses.

To widen the international appeal of the garden's Annual Rose Days, the Flemish Agency for Nature and Forests and the municipality of Sint-Pieters-Leeuw have enlisted the help of the world-famous floral artist Daniël Ost and fashion designer Kaat Tilley to exhibit their exclusive creations at the beautiful, historic Castle Coloma. The rose garden is located on the grounds of Coloma Castle, the most famous building in Sint-Pieters-Leeuw. Built as a fortress in the 15th century, Coloma Castle was transformed into a country residence (known in Dutch as a *lusthuis*). Through the ages, the castle changed owners several times and was eventually purchased and restored by the municipality.

Park Coloma, covering an area of 15 hectares, was originally conceived and laid out in the French style, with inter-crossing narrow walkways, right-angled ponds, a canal and overall geometrical symmetry. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the English garden architectural style was adopted and still remains evident today, particularly in the south-east section of the park, with its curves, meandering paths and more luscious vegetation.

Five rose gardens

The Coloma rose garden is divided into five areas. The first incorporates a traditional geometric structure, with a variety of garden pergolas and glazed or wooden verandas. Internationally recognised varieties in red and white are planted in designs to represent the heraldry of the municipality.

The second garden occupies a slightly higher position and hence gives good views over the gardens. Here the emphasis is on roses cultivated by Flemish horticulturists. The third rose garden could be called a living history book. A remarkable collection traces the evolution of the rose across the ages, culminating in the most recently cultured varieties.

The landscape style of the fourth garden is more organic, with pergolas and verandas overflowing with international roses. The fifth is of special interest to devotees of rose bushes, where 400 long-stemmed roses form a fine spectacle. Finally, there is the rose orchard, an original combination of a fruit tree arboretum with no fewer than 125 varieties of climbing roses.

In the park next to the rose garden is the Museum of the Rose. Here you can find all you want to know about roses. The museum is particularly proud of its interactive digital rose encyclopaedia.

Ost and Tilley

During Rose Days, Daniël Ost and Kaat Tilley showcase their unique talents at Coloma Castle. Ost is one of the world's most celebrated artists and a master in floral design. His creations are dream-like, and his floral sculptures feature all kinds of flowers, plants, twigs, sticks and leaves.

Ost is particularly famous in Japan, where the Japanese floral decorative art *ikebana* is a firmly embedded art form. In 2009, he was contracted to decorate the Golden Temple of Kinkaku-Ji in Kyoto, as well as design the Christmas decorations in the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo. Last year he was in Tokyo to conduct workshops and master classes on subjects such as Christmas wreaths and Christmas table arrangements.

Elsewhere in the world, Ost's artistry is also in demand: He was recently put in charge of the floral decorations for the official inauguration of the Museum for Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar.

Fashion designer Tilley, who came up through the fashion department at Antwerp's Academy of Fine Arts, straddles fashion and art with designs that are romantic and lush – the stuff of fairy-tales. Tilley has designed outfits for, amongst others, Diana Ross, Barbra Streisand, Naomi Campbell, Melanie Griffith and Halle Berry. Her work has earned her international acclaim and admirers around the world.

Ost, Tilley, a castle and one of Europe's most comprehensive rose gardens. Don't miss it. ♦



Roses@Coloma

25-27 June
Coloma Rose Garden and Castle
Joseph De Pauwstraat 25
Sint-Pieters-Leeuw

www.natuurenbos.be



In the Belgian Pavilion, Angel Vergara paints up the news

CULTURE NEWS

The website of Flemish TV channel Ketnet has been selected as **best children's website** of the year by Child Focus, the organisation for missing children. The site was unanimously chosen by a jury from 25 nominations provided by members of the public. The site provides entertainment, education and information in a relaxed manner, the jury found.

White as the winter moon

The Flemish presence at the Venice Biennale

CHRISTOPHE VERBIEST

The Venice Biennale, the biannual showcase for who's hot (and not) in contemporary art, is simply a collection of exhibitions. Including the events that are not officially part of the Biennale but are taking place at the same time, we're talking about more than 150 exhibitions.

Loads of them are small and can be visited in 15 minutes, like say, the national pavilions at the Guardini. But some of them are large group exhibitions. You can find Flemish artist David Claerbout's video "The Algiers' Section of a Happy Moment" as part of the *Il mondo vi appartiene* show in the Palazzo Grassi. Flemish artist Hans Op de Beeck's new installation, meanwhile, is part of *One Thousand Ways to Defeat Entropy* at Arsenale Novissimo.

Several exhibitions this year have a strong link with Flanders.

■ Edge of Becoming • Axel Vervoordt

Antique dealer and hyperactive collector Axel Vervoordt, based in Schilde, Antwerp province, constructed one of the most impressive exhibitions at the previous Biennale (*Infinitum*), and with *Tra, Edge of Becoming* he's at it again. *Tra* ("art" read backwards, but also a prefix that means "beyond") presents works by almost 160 artists.

These are mostly contemporary (Gerhard Richter, Michaël Borremans, Anish Kapoor) and include some big names (Paul Klee, Man Ray, Alberto Giacometti), but also Joos Van Cleve, a Renaissance painter from Antwerp or Pieter de Hooch, a 17th-century Dutch master are not out of place. In the beautiful, labyrinthine Palazzo Fortuny, the works are thematically grouped because "*TRA* will enhance their secret relationships, their capacity to echo meaning, their power of reverberation." You can try and decipher the different metaphors and symbols the curators created by grouping them. But you can also just enjoy the works: paintings, sculptures, photos and video installations.

→ www.tra-expo.com

■ Belgian Pavilion • Angel Vergara

Angel Vergara is a francophone Belgian painter with Spanish roots, and his exhibition was curated by Flemish colleague Luc Tuymans: The Belgian Pavilion at the Guardini stresses national unity. To avoid linguistic disputes, the Flemish and French-speaking communities alternately select an artist for the Biennale. This year is the francophones' turn, but more than ever it's a *Belgian* choice, symbolised by the flags flapping on top the pavilion. One flagpole holds the Belgian flag, the other one both the Flemish and Walloon flags.

But what about art? Vergara created one large new work, "Feuilleton", which occupies the entire pavilion and is based on the seven deadly sins. He presents a perpetual stream of (news) images, shown on seven screens. But he also paints on the images, and the visitor is welcomed to the pavilion by a freshly made fresco: a combination of wild brushstrokes and the names of the different sins. At the opening of the Biennale, it was rumoured that the Belgian Pavilion was one of the favourites for the Golden Lion, but it didn't win the prize.

→ www.labienale.org

■ Nato a Venetia • Koen Vanmechelen

In the late 1990s, Koen Vanmechelen launched his Cosmopolitan Chicken Project (CCP), for which he crossbreeds poultry of different species. In *Nato a Venetia* (Born in Venice), the 15th generation (the Mechelse Fayoumi) sees, literally, the light of day. The CCP flourishes on the crossroads between art and science, so it doesn't come as a surprise that *Nato a Venetia* is shown at Palazzo Loredan, which houses the Venetian Institute for Science, Literature and Arts.

In Venice, Vanmechelen also started his Open University of Diversity, "a biological and intellectual breeding centre", with scholars doing research over the next five months, but in which the visitors, also, are invited to take part. If you're not tempted, you can always look at the eggs in the breeding machines.

→ www.koenvanmechelen.be

■ PIETAS • Jan Fabre

For the third time in a row, Jan Fabre has a Venice exhibition parallel with the Biennale. Two years ago, he exhibited in an impersonal old warehouse, difficult to access. This time around he has chosen a building that reflects his magnitude much better: the stately Nuova Scuola Grande di Santa Maria della Misericordia.

Few exhibitions have been the subject of a more fiery debate than "PIETAS". The central piece is a sculpture in Carrara marble – white as the winter moon – a reinterpretation of Michelangelo's famous "Pieta", held in the Saint Peter's Basilica in Vatican City. But Fabre's Virgin Mary is now a skeleton, and the dead Jesus she holds in her arms is Fabre himself, barefooted, dressed in a suit, holding bare brains in his right hand and covered with beetles, snails and insects.

Reinterpreting (art) history with a wink, attacking religion, images of insects, the *homo Fabre* and brains – this one work reads as a crash course in the Fabre universe. (Only sexuality is lacking.) The pieta is surrounded by four huge marble sculptures of brains, adorned with religious references. The ensemble rests on a floor covered with gold leaf. It's one of the most striking images of this Biennale. ♦

→ www.janfabre.be



The talk of Venice: Jan Fabre's "PIETAS"

A drawing by James Ensor (1860-1949) on loan from the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp has been stolen while on show in the municipal museum in The Hague. "The Triumph of Death" was part of an exhibition that ended last week, when the theft was discovered. A similar drawing was recently sold for €132,000 in Amsterdam. Police are investigating.

Travellers on the Brussels metro will soon be able to listen to **songs in both French and Dutch**, after the public transport authority MIVB decided to reverse an earlier decision to play only music in English, Spanish and Italian to avoid language disputes. Managers will now devise a quota system to determine how the songs are shared. Music after 21.00 will continue to be drawn from the classical canon.

The Bronks youth theatre in Brussels has become the **first-ever Belgian nomination** for the Mies Van der Rohe Award, the European Union prize for contemporary architecture. The building on Varkensmarkt, striking for its liberal use of glass, was designed by the MDMA partnership of Martine De Maesseneer and Dirk Van den Brande and opened in 2009. The prize was won by British architect David Chipperfield's Neues Museum in Berlin.

Peter De Caluwe, director-general of De Munt opera house in Brussels, has been **ominated for a second term** in the post, running until 2019, on a unanimous vote of the board of directors. De Caluwe, who came to De Munt in 2007, was born in Landen, Flemish Brabant, and previously worked at De Munt in the 1980s under Gerard Mortier.

The management of Antwerp's premier concert venue, the Sportpaleis, last week unveiled **plans for a complete renovation of the venue**, which will add 5,000 new seats and bring safety and comfort up to the latest standards. The work will be carried out during the summer over the next three years, to be completed in 2014.

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European cinema indoors and out BRUSSELS FILM FESTIVAL

IAN MUNDELL

The open-air screenings at the Brussels Film Festival have become a highlight of the capital's summer season, filling the square in front of the Flagey arts centre with light and sound. Usually it takes a big production to dominate the space, and amongst this year's selection the Italian film *Io sono l'amore* (*I Am Love*) fits the bill. This tale of a power struggle within Italy's industrial aristocracy features a commanding performance from Tilda Swinton and positively operatic themes of love, family loyalty and death.

But festival programmers have also taken the more adventurous step of selecting Alex Stockman's *Pulsar* for the outdoor screen. This low-key Flemish film about a man (Matthias Schoenaerts) giving way to paranoia in downtown Brussels might seem an odd choice, but its themes of crossed wires and internet intrusion will resonate with the babel of voices around the square, to say nothing of the pulsing stars above. Weather permitting, of course.

Stockman himself is chair of the short film jury. This competition for Belgian shorts is where the other Flemish films can be seen, including Wannes Destoop's *Badpakje 46* and Pieter Dirkx's *Bento Monogatari*, both selected this year for the Cannes Film Festival.

Eleven feature films compete in the festival's main competition, which used to be limited to first and second films but was opened up in 2010 to accommodate more mature work. This wider scope means the inclusion this year of films by veteran directors such as Agustí Villaronga, whose *Pa negre* (*Black Bread*) is a tale of evil lingering on after the Spanish civil war. The film proved a favourite in this year's Goya awards, Spain's equivalent of the Oscars.

Most of the entries have been at other European film festivals before Brussels, and good things have been said of *Una Vita tranquilla* (*A Quiet Life*), directed by Claudio Cupellini. It tells the story of a former Neapolitan gangster whose past comes back to haunt him after a decade living under a new identity in Germany.

There's also a buzz around *Happy Happy* by Anne Sewitsky, a Norwegian comedy with a joyful taste for bad behaviour, and Alexander Mindadze's *Innocent Saturday*, set in the wake of the Chernobyl disaster.

For something in English, choose Irish film *Parked*, which stars Colm Meaney as a man who beats rising rents by living in his car. Out of competition there's also *Late Bloomers* by Julie Gavras, staring Isabella Rossellini and William Hurt

as a couple trying to come to terms with approaching old age (pictured).

Most of the programme is European, but there are also some independent US films thanks to a tie-in with the Sundance Channel. The best is *Nights and Weekends*, the story of a long-distance relationship from mumblecore darlings Greta Gerwig and Joe Swanberg. For the first time the festival will screen some of its films at Bozar as well as Flagey. It's also at Bozar that the main musical event takes place, a concert by moody British band Tindersticks of music written for films by the French director Claire Denis. ♦

22-29 June
Flagey and Bozar
Brussels
→ www.brff.be
Subtitles vary, check programme listings

MORE FILM THIS WEEK

Terrasfilms → STUK, Leuven

Out Loud! → Beursschouwburg, Brussels

Marlene Dietrich cycle → Cinematek, Brussels



Antwerp

Buster
Kaasrui 1; 03.232.51.53
www.busterpodium.be
JUN 25 21.00 Asimov acoustic show
JUN 29 21.30 D-Turn
JUN 30 21.30 The Bobby James Family

De Roma

Turnhoutsebaan 327; 03.292.97.40
www.deroma.be
JUN 24 20.30 Major Tom, David Bowie tribute
JUN 30 20.30 Colin Benders & Eric Vloeimans: Kytecrash

Kelly's Irish Pub

Keyserlei 27
www.kellys.be
JUN 24 20.00 Basically Basic
JUN 25 20.00 Steve Keane

Lotto Arena

Schijnpoortweg 119; 070.345.345
www.sportpaleis.be
JUN 25 20.00 Idool 2011 Live: Winner Kevin Kayirangwa and the other nine finalists of this year's TV contest

Noorse Kerk

Italiëlei 8
www.zvezdoliki.be
JUN 26 15.00 Zvezdoliki, musical poetry

Queen Elisabeth Hall

Koningin Astridplein 26; 0900.26.060
www.elisabethzaal.be
JUN 26 20.00 Michael Bolton

Trix

Noordersingel 28; 03.670.09.00
www.trixonline.be
JUN 27 21.00 Expats Docu party
JUN 29 19.30 Boysetsfire + Valient Thorr + Antillectual

GET YOUR TICKETS NOW

Zomer van Antwerpen

1 July to 28 August

This just in from Flanders' longest, most diverse summer festival: Advance ticket sales are up this year, and 60,000 tickets have already been sold. So if you don't want to be disappointed, buy now for some of the more popular performances, such as *Bodyscan*, where a tour through an empty hospital shows you just how strange the human body really is, and *Le Bare*, a live infomercial of a "revolutionary new product". See next week's *Flanders Today* for complete info on the Summer of Antwerp.



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→ www.zva.be

Vooruit

St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060
www.vooruit.be
JUN 24 20.15 The Godfathers + De Brassers **JUN 29** 19.30 Wu-Tang Clan: Rebirth Tour

Kortrijk

De Kreun
Conservatoriumplein 1; 056.37.06.44
www.dekreun.be
JUN 24 00.00 School's Out: The Opposites + We Seem To Have Misplaced Our Igloo + Sherman



Antwerp

Buster
Kaasrui 1; 03.232.51.53
www.busterpodium.be

JUN 28 22.00 Pierre Anckaert Quartet featuring Will Scruggs

Café Hopper

Leopold de Waelstraat 2; 03.248.49.33
www.cafehopper.be
JUN 26 16.00 Yvonne Walter
JUN 27 21.00 Patronato

De Muze

Melkmarkt 15; 03.226.01.26
www.demuze-jazz.be
JUN 24 22.00 Fre Madou Trio
JUN 27 22.00 Jazzyfiel
JUN 28 22.00 De Muze Vijf

Brussels

Art Base
Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20
www.art-base.be
JUN 25 20.00 JAZZchord (Arg/Bra/It)

Jazz Station

Leuvensesteenweg 193; 02.733.13.78
www.jazzstation.be
Until JUN 24 10.00-17.00 Public exams Brussels Royal Conservatory jazz ensembles

Sounds Jazz Club

Tulpenstraat 28; 02.512.92.50
www.soundsjazzclub.be
Concerts at 22.00:
JUN 23 Fred Delplancq Trio **JUN**

Agenda

24 Laureats de concours XL - Jazz 2011, prizewinners concert. **JUN 25** Nicolas Kummert Voices. **JUN 27** Master Session. **JUN 28** Julien Tassin Trio 'Tribute to Jimi Hendrix'. **JUN 29** Chamaquiando, salsa. **JUN 30** Igor Gehenot Trio.

The Music Village
Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
www.themusicvillage.com
Concerts at 21:00:
JUN 22 Joe Henderson Tribute **JUN 24** Richard Rousselet Quintet **JUN 25** The Smoky Midnight Gang **JUN 28-AUG 27** Brussels Village Festival, the summer jazz & Latino festival **JUN 28-JULY 2** Thomas Champagne Quartet

Ghent
Vooruit
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060
www.vooruit.be
JUN 22 22.00 Too Noisy Fish



Antwerp
Zuiderpershuis
Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00
www.zuiderpershuis.be
JUN 24 20.00 Brazilian Caravan

Brussels
Art Base
Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20
www.art-base.be
JUN 24 20.00 Oscar Miranda & Cesar Guzman (Argentina)
JUN 26 18.00 Bhimanna Jadhav & Apurba Mukherjee (India)
JUN 30 20.00 Necati Çelik (Turkey)

Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be
JUN 24 20.00 Kaushiki Chakrabarty sings Khyal and Thumri from northern India

Piola Libri
Franklinstraat 66-68; 02.736.93.91
www.piolalibri.be
JUN 24 19.00 Apero Showcase: Daniele Moraca in acoustic concert



Brussels
Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be
JUN 22 20.00 Vesselin Stanev, piano: Brahms, Schumann, Liszt
JUN 25 11.00/14.00 Liège Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Pieter-Jelle de Boer, with Joachim Loneux, dance, accordion; Bruno Coppens, narrator: Badelt & Zimmer's Pirates of the Caribbean, 20.00 Thomas Hampson, baritone; Wolfram Rieger, piano: Schubert, Liszt, Mahler

Miniemerk
Miniemerstraat 62; 02.511.93.84
www.miniemen.net
JUN 26 10.30 Miniemerk orchestra and choir conducted by Benoît Jacquemin: Bach



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)

DON'T MISS

Roller Bike Parade

Until 30 September

Across Belgium

Sure, they claim it's about green mobility and healthy living and all that, but everyone knows this annual months-long event is really just a big party. It started in Brussels but has now spread across Flanders to Ghent, Koksijde and Hasselt: Revellers strap on skates or hop on their bikes and roll *en masse* across the city. There's always a big truck with a boombox, occasionally crazy outfits and ever-present bottles of Evian, which sponsors the whole thing. Take part in the evening event or just stand around and gawk – the joy is, in any case, infectious. The next one is this Saturday in Ghent.

→ www.belgiumrollers.com



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Ghent

Vlaamse Opera
Schouwburgstraat 3; 070.22.02.02
www.vlaamseopera.be
Until JUN 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 23-26 15.00/20.00 Burn the Floor, ballroom and latin dance

Vlaamse Opera
Frankrijklei 1; 070.22.02.02
www.vlaamseopera.be
Until JUN 25 14.00/20.00 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
Until JUN 25 20.00 PARTS student dance performances



Antwerp

Arenbergschouwburg
Arenbergstraat 28; 070.222.192
www.arenbergschouwburg.be
JUN 23 20.30 Alex Agnew and the quest for new material, stand-up comedy (in Dutch)

Fakkelteater Rode Zaal

Hoogstraat 12; 070.246.036
www.fakkelteater.be
JUN 23-26 15.00/20.30 Hotel Vocal Special Edition, musical theatre (in Dutch)

Fakkelteater Zwarte Zaal

Reynderstraat 7; 03.232.14.69
www.fakkelteater.be
JUN 24-25 20.30 De Speling in La Nonna by Roberto Cossa, staged by Jean-François Dhondt (in Dutch)

't Kwartier

Keistraat 11; 0475.28.66.10
www.tkwartier.be
JUN 26 20.00 Koen Crucke in Overstekend Wild, musical theatre (in Dutch)

Stadsschouwburg

Theaterplein 1; 0900.69.900
www.stadsschouwburgantwerpen.be
JUN 24-26 15.00/20.00 Walter's Mooiste Momenten, variety show (in Dutch)



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
Until SEP 18 Collection XVIII: If you shoot a bullet in a vacuum, will it keep travelling forever?, selected works and films by British artist Emily Wardill

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/
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

Photo Museum

Waalse Kaai 47; 03.242.93.00
www.fotomuseum.be

JUN 24-SEP 25 Elinor Carucci: Insight, photos by the Israeli-American photographer

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 Hasselt 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

Mariistraat 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

Atomium

Atomium Square; 02.475.47.72

www.atomium.be
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 Publart 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

JUN 29-SEP 25, Tues-Sun 10.00-18.00, open Thurs until 21.00 Beyond the Document, works by 14 contemporary Belgian photographers.

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

Marc Sleen Museum
Zandstraat 33; 02.219.19.80
www.marc-sleen.be
Until SEP 25 Nero, Yuri Gagarin and Other Astronauts, space travel in comic strips

Museum van Elsene
Jean Van Volsemstraat 71; 02.515.64.22
www.museumvanelsene.be
Until SEP 4 Explosion: Graffiti art in Brussels, 25 years of urban art including works by both pioneers and contemporary artists

Press Club Brussels
Froissartstraat 45; 02.213.00.40
www.europeandemocracy.org
Until JUL 15 Voices on the Rise: Afghan Women Making the News, a photojournalism project presenting the challenges and achievements of women in Afghanistan

Royal Museum of the Armed Forces
Jubelpark 3; 02.737.78.33
www.legermuseum.be
Until SEP 4 1945-2002: Belgian soldiers in Germany, rare photographs documenting 60 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries
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
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
Until JUN 29 Bruxelles Urbanitude, photos of Brussels landscapes by Alain Trellu

Tour & Taxis
Havenlaan 86C; 02.549.60.49
www.tour-taxis.com
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
Until JUL 16 Les Voyageurs du Savoir (The Travellers of Knowledge), interviews and portraits of international students

Villa Empain
Franklin Rooseveltlaan 67; 02.627.52.30
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 Volxemlaan 354; 02.340.00.50
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
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
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

Gasbeek

Gasbeek Castle
Kasteelstraat 40; 02.531.01.30
www.kasteelvangaasbeek.be
Until JUN 26 Jan De Vliegher: Schatzkammer, paintings by the Flemish artist

Hasselt

Het Stadsmus
Guido Gezelstraat 2; 011.23.98.90
www.hasselt.be
Until AUG 28 Hasselt aan Zee: Een eeuw marineschilderkunst (Hasselt on the Sea. A Century of Marine Paintings), works by 20th-century artists inspired by the sea

z33

Zuivelmarkt 33; 011.29.59.60
www.z33.be

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

Koksijde

National Visserijmuseum
Pastoor Schmitzstraat 5; 058.51.24.68
www.visserijmuseum.be
Until DEC 31 Zeerotica: Over liefde en lust aan de kust (Seerotica: On Love and Lust at the Coast), works on the theme of passion and the sea by Paul Delvaux, Leon Spilliaert, Alois Boudry and Edgard Tytgat, among others

Kortrijk

Benedigalerie
Hazelaarstraat 7; 056.23.98.50
www.cultuurcentrumkortrijk.be
Until JUL 17 Niklaus Ruegg: Voucher voor een potplant (Voucher for a Pot Plant), 3-D sculptures by the Swiss artist

Leuven

Museum M
Leopold Vanderkelenstraat 28; 016.27.29.29
www.mleuven.be

Until SEP 25 Pieter-Jozef Verhaghen: In het spoor van Rubens (In the Wake of Rubens), paintings by the 18th-century Flemish artist
JUN 23-SEP 4 Through the Romanticist's Eyes, 19th-century Dutch and Belgian paintings from Jef Rademakers' collection
JUN 23-SEP 11 Gert Robijns, contemporary art installations by the Flemish artist

Lier

Stedelijk Museum Wuyts-Van Campen
Florent Van Cauwenberghstraat 14
www.bruegeland.be

Until DEC 31 2016 Bruegeland, paintings by Pieter Bruegel and artists influenced by him

Mechelen

Speelgoedmuseum (Toy Museum)
Nekkerspoelstraat 21; 015.55.70.75
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
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.muzee.be
Until SEP 4 Jean Brusselmans, paintings from the 1930s and 1940s by the Flemish artist

Sint-Pieters-Leeuw

Coloma Castle
Joseph Depauwstraat 25
www.sint-pieters-leeuw.be
JUN 25-27 Roses@Coloma, works by floral artist Daniël Ost and fashion designer Kaat Tilley, in the Castle Park's

Rosarium featuring more than 3,000 types of roses from 26 countries

Tervuren

Royal Museum for Central Africa
Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11
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
Until NOV 13 Tribute to Donors, a wide selection of donated works, including paintings, drawings and photographs



Basilica Festival! Limburg leg of the Festival of Flanders, featuring classical, jazz, contemporary, carillon concerts and musical cycling tour

JUN 24-JUL 9 across Limburg
www.basilica.be

Flemish Harbour Day: The harbours of Ghent, Antwerp, Ostend and Zeebruges are open to the public with special activities for the whole family

JUN 25 at four harbours across Flanders
www.vlaamsehavendag.be

Roller Bike Parade: Weekly roller skating and cycling parades

Until SEP 23 19.00 in Antwerp, Brussels, Hasselt and Koksijde
www.belgiumrollers.com

Theatre at the Cinema: The Cherry Orchard, live via satellite on the big screen from the National Theatre of London

JUN 30 in Kinepolis cinemas in Brussels and Flanders
www.kinepolis.com/theater

Antwerp

Boekenmarkt: Outdoor book market every fourth Saturday of the month

JUN 25 11.00-16.00 at Sint-Nicolaasplaats 03.226.40.68

Murga Parade: Fifth annual multicultural festival featuring parade, concerts, acts, workshops, bbq and more

JUN 25 14.00-00.00 across the city centre
www.murga.be

Blankenberge

Sand Sculpture Festival: International sand sculpture festival with a Disneyland Paris theme

Until SEP 12 across from Sea Life Centre in Blankenberge, Koning Albert I-Laan 116
www.zandsculptuur.be

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

Bruges

Rock'n'roll Wrestling Bash: Mexican wrestling show with live music by The Wrestling Bash Orchestra

JUN 22 20.00 at Het Entrepot, Binnenweg 4; 050.61.02.48
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

Central Park Festival: New festival for Brussels' university and college students with some 20 rock bands plus DJs on two stages

JUN 29 at Jubelpark
www.centralparkfestival.be

Couleur Cafe: Sixth edition of the world music festival
JUN 24-26 at Tour & Taxis, Havenlaan 86C
www.couleurcafe.be

D Festival: Contemporary dance and performance festival (previously Danse Balsa Marni)
Until JUN 23 at Théâtre Marni, Vergniestraat 25 02.639.09.81, www.theatremarni.com

Out Loud!: Annual series of rooftop concerts and film screenings featuring documentaries of late and living legends such as John Lennon, Genesis, Lemmy and Mark Sandman
Until JUN 25 22.00 at Beursschouwburg, August Ortsstraat 20-28 02.550.03.50, www.beursschouwburg.be

Plazey Festival in the Park: Free family-friendly festival with concerts, circus workshops and children's theatre and activities
JUN 26-JUL 3 13.00/18.00 at Elizabeth Park, Koekelberg 02.412.00.50, www.plazey.be

Recyclart Holidays: Free summer activities on Thursday & Friday evenings featuring concerts, screenings, communal bread making, workshops and more

JUN 30-AUG 5 at Recyclart, Ursulinenstraat 25 02.502.57.34, www.recyclart.be

Ghent

Hindu Nights: Annual über popular rock & roll dance party, featuring Drew McConnell, Paul Gallagher, Eppo Janssen, more

JUN 24 23.00 at Vooruit, Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 23
www.vooruit.be

Kozzmozz: Summer techno dance party, featuring Kr!z, Spacif, Alan Fitzpatrick, more

JUN 25 23.00 at Vooruit, Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 23
www.vooruit.be

Star Warz: Drum 'n' Bass dance party, featuring Optical, S.P.Y., Rockwell, more

JUN 23 22.00 at Vooruit, Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 23
www.vooruit.be

Hoogstraten

Holy Blood Procession: Annual Eucharistic celebration and parade in honour of the Holy Blood of Christ

JUN 23 11.00 at Sint-Katharinakerk
www.hoogstraten.be

Leuven

Terrafilms: Free open-air film screenings

Until JUN 27 at Stuk, Naamsestraat 96 016.32.03.20, www.cinemazed.be/terrafilms

Zomer van Sint-Pieter: Lunch-time concerts, a sister event to the Midis-Minimes festival in Brussels

JUN 30-AUG 26 at Saint Peter's Church, Grote Markt
www.zomer-van-sint-pieter.be

Lier

Australian Fine Wine Tasting: Boat cruise and wine tasting event organised by the Australian Society in Belgium

bite

ROBYN BOYLE

Het Landhuys

Back before the smaller villages in Flanders fused with their bordering cities, each had its own town hall. These days, Nokere is part of the larger Kruishoutem, and therefore no longer has use for its beautiful mansion of a town hall. But about 15 years ago, Dominiek and Annelies Cannaert-Detremmerie knew exactly what to do with the property, and so their restaurant Het Landhuys became an essential part of Nokere's charm.

The stately, white-washed brick building stands tall and proud atop the town's sloping cobblestone street. Inside is cosy and stylish, without being overly fancy. My dining companion has her young son along, so we opt for a table on the sunny terrace with a small playground. It's located at the back of the restaurant, adjacent to a lovely tree-lined castle lane. We are greeted with complimentary teasers: a shot glass of curry cappuccino and another filled with cream of asparagus soup and bits of ham. We are inspired to order a carafe of what turns out to be good-quality house red wine. It's a busy Saturday evening, yet we are the only ones dining outside. The servers are nonetheless very attentive,

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continuously jogging back and forth to keep us content. My friend orders a steak, and when it arrives we are glad to see it is anything but ordinary. One thick, generous slab of entrecote rests on a bundle of colourful seasonal vegetables, including green asparagus, young carrot and snow pea, all held together by a strip of smoked bacon. Both the veggies and the meat are tender and flavourful, not the least bit overpowered by the savoury brown sauce. Tarragon-stuffed new potatoes make the meal complete.

Our youngest dining companion has a kids' serving of chicken with fries and homemade apple sauce, which looks so enticing we have to try a few bites. The dish is very fresh and healthy, even worthy of an adult's more discriminating taste.

Meanwhile I'm thoroughly enjoying my trio of duck: just-pink slices of breast fillet, pan-fried liver and ragout. The fillet is butter-browned and incredibly moist. Underneath, a warm round of liver is so velvety and rich it melts on your tongue. Next to this, the ragout provides variety in the form of tender chunks of stewed duck and tangy tomatoes. It comes with perfectly matched mushroom gravy,



© John Martens

a slice of spinach quiche and the same mini tarragon potatoes and bundle of seasonal veg.

We finish off the whole first-class experience with a strong cup of cappuccino and some tasty little cookies and chocolates. Surprisingly, the bill comes to a very reasonable €75 altogether.

→ www.hetlandhuys.be

► Nokeredorpstraat 26,
Kruishoutem; 09.383.60.76

🕒 Thurs-Sun, 12.00-14.30 &
19.00-22.00

€ Mains: €15-€25

★ Refined Belgian-French cuisine in
a rustic, elegant setting

TALKING DUTCH

Say this five times in a row: *De kat krabt de krullen van de trap.*

Tongue in a knot? That's the idea. It is a *tongbreker*, a tongue twister, and is meant to titillate your speech ability – or to frustrate you to insanity. I used to have a lot of fun as a kid, spending whole afternoons with my classmates repeating phrases like these over and over again as fast as we could until, inevitably, we cracked up. (On rainy Tuesday afternoons, I secretly still do.)

Tongbrekers exist in every language and are of course utter nonsense. The phrase above literally means "The cat claws the curls off the stairs" and has no more meaning than "How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?"

Now say this five times in a row, as fast as possible: *De knecht snijdt recht en de meid snijdt scheef.* (The servant cuts straight, and the maid cuts askew.) Ah, the Dutch language. Such music. Or this: *Zeven zwarte zwanen zwemmen in de Zuiderzee.* (Seven black swans are swimming in the South Sea.)

They're not all fun and games, though, *tongbrekers*. They have played a rather sinister role in history. The Bible recounts the story of the Ephraimites, who fell to the mercy of the Gileadites, similar peoples but with slightly different dialects. To determine who was who, they asked everybody to pronounce the Hebrew word *shibboleth*, and whoever pronounced it wrongly would be killed.

Similarly, the Dutch near the end of the German occupation used to ask people in the streets to say "Scheveningen", the name of a beach town near The Hague. The Germans, apparently, have problems pronouncing the deep-throat gurgling "g" or "ch" sound so characteristic of the Dutch dialect from the Netherlands. (The



Flemish produce a much more civilized, breath-like sound instead.)

My classmates and I used to have a club, and whoever was unable to say *hottentottentententoonstelling*, a famous Dutch tongue twister meaning "exhibition of tents of the hottentot people", was roundly refused membership.

Today, it is unlikely that you be stopped at the frontier and asked to produce a gurgling, breathing or any other kind of sound. But it never hurts to practice. So here you go, one for the road: "De Spaanse prins spreekt prima Spaans." (The Spanish prince speaks a fine Spanish.)

PHILIP EBELS

THE LAST WORD . . .

No place like home

"I've been bullied and threatened from the start. I've had my home hijacked by decree."

Artist Wim Delvoye is to sell his castle in Melle, East Flanders, following problems with municipal planners

Hands behind your head

"Are they afraid over there of a 62-year-old Antwerp lady?"

A former school head was revealed to have sent a death threat to former US vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin

Former glories

"I used to be a barracuda. Now I'm a stickleback at best."

Flemish politician Jean-Marie Dedecker laments the present

Sassy selling

"You get a guaranteed discount; we get a lawsuit."

Advertisement for clothing retail chain Zeb, which refuses to observe the ban on price reductions in the weeks before the July sales

NEXT WEEK IN FLANDERS TODAY #186

Feature

Read our surprising interview with Flemish finance minister Philippe Muyters, who has a revolutionary new approach to work and the labour market

Living

Believe it or not, beer sellers in Belgium 15 years ago thought lambic was a thing of the past. Now they have the same fear for old Flemish brown ales – with good reason, says our beer correspondent

Agenda

We introduce Festival Spotlight, your summertime guide to the best music fest of the week