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magazine

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**New Year
resolve**

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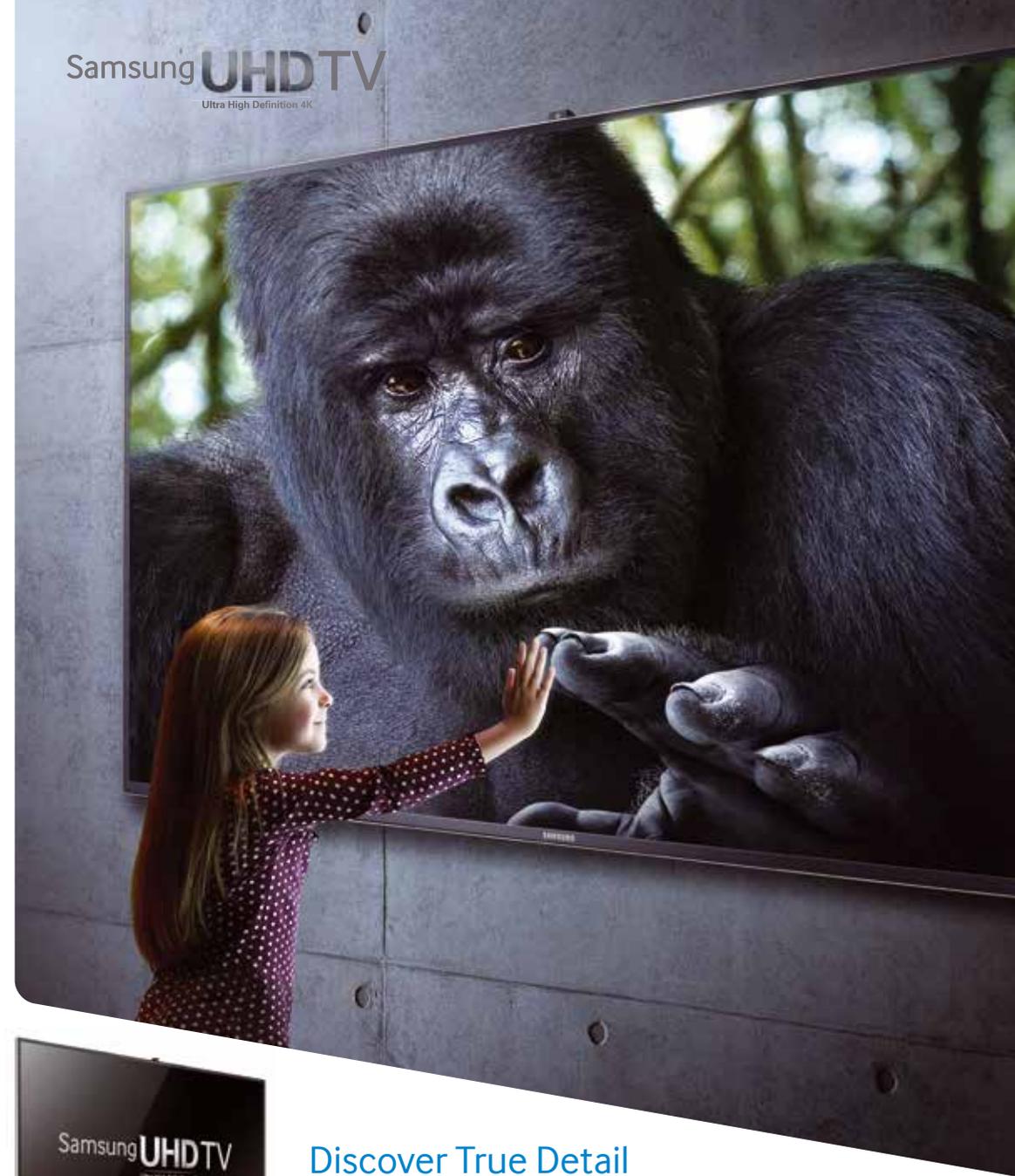
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RINGING OUT THE OLD

Editor's LETTER

In the 250 or so words at my disposal it would be well nigh impossible to recall all the wonderful gifts we have showered upon you in 2013. Just a few then:

We chatted to no less than three Oscars winners (Nicholson, Winfrey and Lawrence). We have climbed up to the Kasbah, sailed out into Halong Bay, skied on tricky Alpine slopes, rowed on the chilly waters of the Thames, soaked up Cretan comforts and conquered the Coliseum.

ON THE COVER



Oscar-winner Jennifer Lawrence, currently starring in *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*

Our personal development experts have offered up advice on everything from stress management to the perfect fitness programme to the secrets of sensual seduction. And our general topics have ranged from 3D printing, through saving money to the latest political upheavals – not forgetting our article on the pressing issue of the moment: the Thigh Gap.

We have fed you Argentinean steak, Greek mezze, Vietnamese banh cuon tom and filled your shopping baskets with all manner of watches, jewellery and the finest champagne.

Our fashion team, led by stylist Nicholas Sirot, has brought you over 100 pages draped in the latest trends, while beauty expert Delphine Stefens has looked after your skin tones in all kinds of weather.

All of these fine pieces are available for catch-up on our website: www.togethermag.eu

And so have yourself a merry little Christmas and, as we say in Scotland, a guid New Year!

Paul Morris
EDITOR



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Starring in BELGIUM

Book ahead for James Blunt

Moon Landing is the fourth album by James Blunt. It's an album about "dreams, longing, first love. About looking in the mirror and seeing the boy you were, the man you are – and learning to be comfortable with that, flaws and all. About getting back to basics and rediscovering the power of music to communicate emotion directly and honestly, without too much polish or complication". **2 April 2014.** Forest National. Tickets: €45
www.livenation.be



Mogwai

The Glasgow post-rock band is back for two nights, bringing their lengthy guitar-based instrumental pieces that feature dynamic contrast, melodic bass guitar lines, and heavy use of distortion and effects. **1 and 2 February.** Ancienne Belgique. Tickets: €16
www.livenation.be



The Sound Of The Belgian Underground

Another very Belgian affair: a unique festival bringing together ten local acts from the alternative circuit over a single night. The AB's partner is Subbacultcha! who promote progressive contemporary independent music and art. 26 January 2014. Ancienne Belgique. Tickets: €10
www.abconcerts.be



Montevideo

"What if Giorgio Moroder had ever lived with the Bee Gees?" That was the question asked by Focus Knack. Find out for yourself as this Belgian band take on the AB with tracks from their debut album *Personal Space*. **25 January 2014.** Ancienne Belgique. Tickets: €16
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PERSONAL
DEVELOPMENT

Health & Fitness

'Tis the Season: Your wish list, complete!

Patti Bruns makes your Christmas gift choices that bit easier



It's official – the holiday season is well and truly upon us! The evidence is everywhere – kids bonding over advent treats, shoes placed by the door in the hope of some St. Nicholas swag, and yes, the ubiquitous request for my entire family's Christmas lists. Last year, I threw caution to the winter wind and didn't send out my list. My thinking was this: these are family members, they know me, surely Santa and his elves will come through with a neat pile of perfect presents. Let's just say it was hit and miss on the big day. Lesson learned.

So, I've compiled a list of gifts for the fitness fan on your 'to-buy-for' roster. Or perhaps, like me, you should just clip this article and pass it on to the Santa in your life. Be sure to read to the end, I have a little surprise for a few lucky readers!

Road ID (starting from €20, www.roadid.com)

Available in a variety of colors and bands, this ID bracelet is custom printed with all the details someone would need if you need help. You can personalize your band with your emergency contact information, medical conditions, and even a personal mantra. Not just for outdoor sports addicts, the new Wrist ID Slim is perfect for kids too.

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PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Health & Fitness

The GRID Foam Roller (starting from €20, www.tptherapy.com)

From the geniuses at Trigger Point Performance Therapy, the GRID is the gold standard in foam rollers. With an aggressively textured surface, this foam roller provides targeted massage to aching muscles. Foam rolling improves blood and oxygen flow to muscles, speeding recovery and maintaining flexibility. Now in three sizes (from mini to large) it is perfect for anyone on your list, athlete or otherwise.

Compressport R2 Calf Guard (€35, www.compressport.be)

Proudly made in Europe, the R2 race and recovery calf guard is the go-to compression garment for cyclist and runners. Designed to enhance recovery by boosting venous return to the heart, these calf guards help reduce the build up of toxins in the lower leg during long workouts and races. These might look a bit goofy but newbies and pros alike swear by them. In fact, Belgian Frederik Van Lierde won the Ironman World Championship in them in October!

Finis Forearm Fulcrum (€18, www.finisinc.com)

Guaranteed to earn you a few curious glances at the pool, the Forearm Fulcrum looks a bit strange but is devastatingly effective in correcting a weak pull in all four competitive swimming strokes. Engaging the forearm from fingertips to elbow, this tool promotes muscle memory for proper hand, wrist and forearm position. This will shake up your pool training and make you more efficient in the water.

LifeProof iPhone and Galaxy Cases (from €65, www.lifeproof.com)

Waterproof, dirt proof, snow proof and shock proof, all in a thinner, lighter, stronger protective

phone case. These are all great features if you are never far from your phone. Available in a wide range of colors, this attractive and durable case ensures full functionality of your phone. So crank up the tunes and off you go!

Jaybird, BlueBuds X Bluetooth Headphones (€170, www.jaybirdstore.com)

This little trinket is right at the top of my Christmas list. These tiny buds fit securely in your



ears and connect by Bluetooth to your devices. Finally, no annoying cord flopping around. Employing the latest sound technology and lasting eight hours without a charge, these headphones also have voice control and sport a 'sweat-proof' guarantee. There isn't much these headphones won't do, except maybe work out for you.

Falke Primaloft Jacket (€180, www.falke.com)

Perhaps the perfect winter running jacket! This jacket is available for both men and women, and looks good enough to wear on your post-run errands. Falke has outdone itself by creating a super-comfy jacket that provides warmth from wind and cold, while being breathable and quick drying. You are guaranteed to love running in this jacket. Just the thing if 'run a 10km' is on your loved-one's resolution list.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Health & Fitness

MIO Alpha Heart Rate Monitor (€199, www.mioglobal.com)

A unique addition to the performance monitoring market, the MIO Alpha offers the first accurate strapless heart rate monitoring system for athletes. Using optical sensing (think the clip they put on your finger while in the hospital) – data is displayed on the screen of your watch-style monitor. With built-in Bluetooth technology you can connect it to your smartphone apps to track speed, distance and routes. For athletes wanting accurate intensity zone training, it is

possible to set your zones, and then follow the green, red or blue lights to keep your workout on track.

Don't forget about filling those stockings! Fitness fans love good quality socks, gloves (with touch screen fingers), energy gels and bars, electrolyte tabs, goggles and swim caps. Visit your local running or triathlon store for tons of other great ideas. 📌



COMPETITION

And now, drum-roll please, a little something for you, our loyal readers! Our friends at Aspria, Royal La Rasante have generously offered five guest passes for two so that you can enjoy a day at the club! The first five people to write an email mentioning the title of this article and the password 'Santa baby' will win a set of passes. Send your email to paul@togethermedia.eu.

I'll leave it to you to decide if you give those away, or if you treat yourself and a friend to a fabulous day at the club!

Happy Holiday!

*Patti Bruns is a Personal Trainer at Aspria Royal La Rasante
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Keep your cool at Christmas



Health coach **Tom Meyers** offers up some sound advice on how to avoid the pressure of the festive season

MINIMIZE YOUR STRESS BY RECOGNIZING YOUR STRESSORS

The holiday season is here – the days are getting shorter and darker and we look forward to the festivities, to the laughter and visits to friends and family or, perhaps, a well-deserved holiday. For some, however, the Christmas period is not so cheerful since it is the time when one looks back at another year gone by. Perhaps you have lost someone dear or have become estranged from family and friends due to changes in your personal life. And you feel very lonely.

Regardless how you get by during this period, the festive season always comes with an unwelcome guest: stress. All that extra pressure and expense can be at a cost, not just to your



wallet but also your health.

Stress over the holiday period and the effect on our health is very often neglected or not recognised at all but it is very real. This end-of-year stress shouldn't come as a surprise as this period brings along a huge number of changes, challenges, pressures and obligations over a very short period of time, such as parties, shopping, finding that last-minute present, cooking, organizing visits to friends and family, to name but a few obvious stressful activities one encounters. Other stressors are the need to deal with expectations, family tensions and trying to find suitable arrangements when faced with new family situations.

The period is also for many an opportunity to take a well-deserved holiday, a chance to unwind and relax. However for those people with stressful jobs, or heavy workloads or

who've been working overtime to meet deadlines, when at last they have time to relax, they simply fall ill. This is a medical condition that is on the rise and can be experienced during the year too, at weekends or on your annual summer holiday – it has been coined 'leisure sickness' and is associated with colds or flu-like complaints, nausea, fatigue and muscular aches and pains.

Do you want stay on top of Christmas this year? Beat the feeling of being on edge all the time, don't worry about presents, people's expectations or what to make for dinner. Avoid spending Christmas and New Year in bed nursing that cold or that back problem that seems to emerge on the first day of your holiday. Stay free from stress and depression and maybe enjoy yourself for a change this holiday season. Here are some tips you might like to consider.

- Build resilience by allocating several times each day time for breathing exercises, meditation or other relaxation techniques
- Don't abandon healthy habits
- Eat and drink in moderation
- Get enough sleep
- Learn to say no, plan less and enjoy more
- Budget your Christmas expenses
- Suggest a change to your family and friends as regards to giving presents this year
- With blended families plan ahead and set aside your differences in favour of the children
- Don't expect to be stress and hassle free – have realistic expectations
- Acknowledge your feelings
- Be prepared, plan ahead, make a list of gifts and shop early

Keep your cool for Christmas this year by implementing some of the practical tips described above. Minimize your stress by recognizing your stressors and by starting to practice regular health promoting behaviour to reduce their impact. With a little planning, preparation and a positive frame of mind you too can enjoy this Season of Light. ●

For more information on how to beat stress during the holidays go to www.tommeyers.be or listen to Health Matters on www.radiox.be.

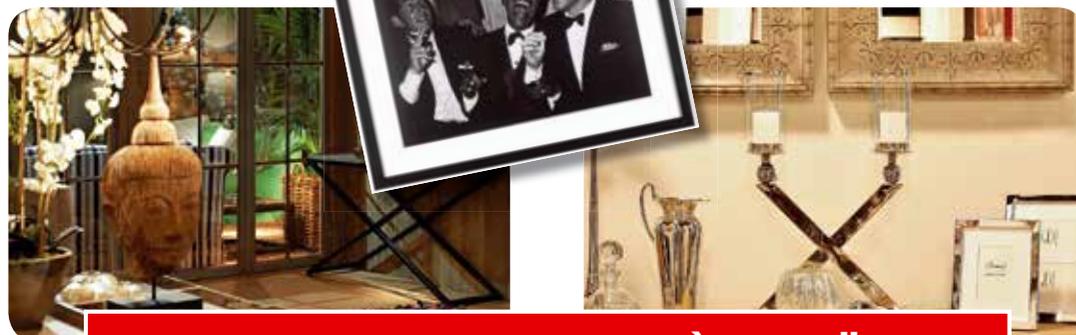
Make your New Year's Resolutions stick!

Natasha Black finds a way through the maze of those dreadful annual promises

Yippee, another New Year is upon us! A much loved time to evaluate your life, what you did or didn't achieve and in doing so creating an irresistible urge to make 2014 your best year yet by setting New Year's resolutions.

Your new goals and fresh ideas fill you with excitement but it's likely that by the time February comes, you will have fallen back into your old ways and those all-important changes you wanted to make (aka New Year's resolutions) become a distant memory.

This method of changing old habits and setting new patterns is a sure fire way to set you up for failure. The very nature of NYRs is to start doing some good stuff and stop doing some bad stuff, so you set yourself high



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PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Resolutions

expectations, try to give up things that you enjoy and without knowing it you start to become judgmental about past failures. And as if that wasn't enough, there's the natural fear and resistance to change that everyone experiences at some point in their lives.

Mix up these factors, and you've already set negative emotions in motion, which become stumbling blocks around your willpower and good intentions. And I don't know about you but the older I get, the less my willpower seems to want to co-operate.

It's no wonder the New Year stops being fun and filled with excitement before February is upon you!

But what if all that could change? What if I gave you a sure-fire method that would make your resolutions stick, so you make some real, long-lasting positive change in your life? Would that be beneficial to you?

Step 1: Choose ONE resolution

This is an absolute must! When you set yourself too many things to change in one go, you can guarantee it will be overwhelming and a feeling of being deprived sets in. Within days or hours your NYRs have fallen to the wayside and you're left feeling like you fell at the first hurdle.

Are you going to start

doing something or stop doing something, choose ONLY one!

Step 2: Commit to Resolution Success

Make an out loud declaration to yourself that you are going to do what it takes to make this a reality for you. Envision yourself in three years time having fully embraced your new reality. When you wake up and before you go to sleep, take a couple of moments to step into this vision. Whenever your commitment feels like its wavering, bring the vision to the forefront.

This is a great way to succeed before it's happened!

Step 3: Write down all the reasons why being successful is important to you and those around you

When you dig really deep to know and understand your reasons for wanting to make this change, it gives you even more impetus to follow through. Ask yourself questions like, 'what's my why, why do I want to achieve this?'

When you flounder, go back to the list and use it as a powerful tool to keep you on track.

Go beyond the why and write down the benefits you'll experience and those around you when you achieve your goal. The more benefits there are, the more reasons you have to achieve it.

If you've tried



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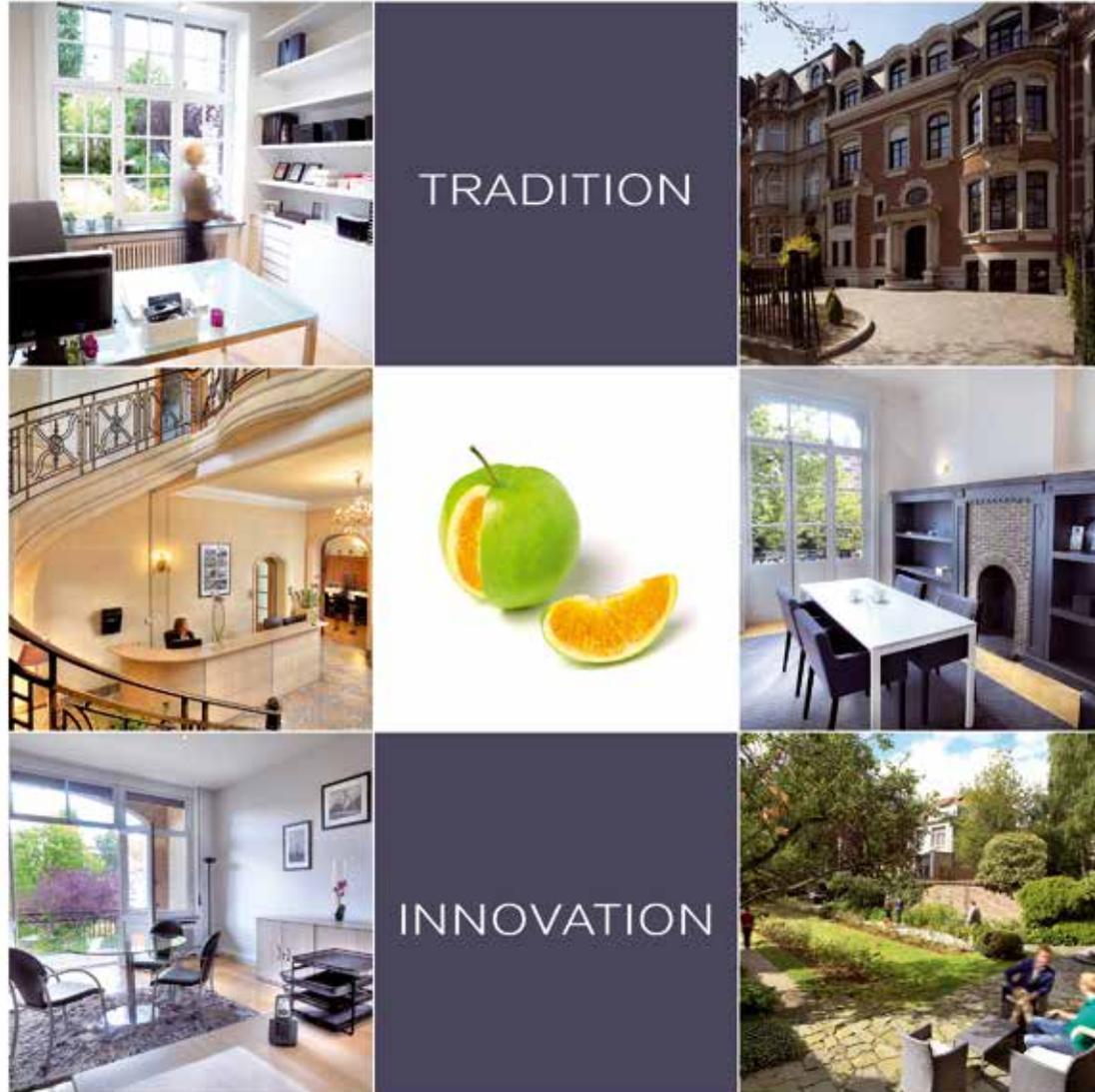
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PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Resolutions



before and not succeeded ask, 'why has this failed in previous years, what can I do differently this time?' There is absolutely no point in trying to achieve the same thing over and over again using the same strategy. If it hasn't worked yet, try a different method.

Step 4: Get help and go deeper into uncovering the emotions that are under the surface

For every unfulfilled goal there are emotions waiting to be released to turn them into fulfilled goals. Let me give you a couple of examples: if you want to give up smoking or maybe lose weight, it's not just a case of giving up the nicotine or cakes because your body will actually stop craving those things pretty quickly. What takes you back to smoking and overeating are the emotions that get covered up by the action. Yep, that's right, it's not the action that's addictive, it's the emotional cover-up that is.

If you really want to make positive life changes then find a professional who can help you zap those pesky emotions!

Step 5: Enlist 'Fall off the Wagon' partners

Find support in people who know you, love you and support you no matter what, no questions asked. This is really important, you need to have a support circle around you, people you can rely on who will give you a leg up when you are falling off the wagon. List these friends and then tell them your NYR plans. Ask them if they'll be your 'Fall off the Wagon' partners and tell them exactly how they can support you.

Step 6: Smile and know that you can have whatever you want – you just need to put your focus on making it a reality

You can achieve whatever you put your mind to. If you want something badly enough do not allow yourself to give up, because you will definitely find a way. Be open to new ways of doing things, make sure you get help and most of all enjoy the process. After all starting something new or giving up something that doesn't serve you is going to be a good thing!

❶

Green shoots

Dave Deruytter suggests that the green shoots of economic growth need fertiliser and water to grow

There are more than a few signs that the world economy is slowly but surely recovering. Given the depth and width of the financial and economic crisis that started back in 2007, the recovery is clearly slow. The green shoots are still only limited in number. The lawn of world economic growth is still looking pretty bare with only a few patches of green.

Of the developed countries Germany in particular is doing reasonably well. And if it would introduce a minimum wage, however low, for the first time in recent history, the EU might be on the path of limiting the social dumping on its territory. In the south of Europe the economies of Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece may have hit the bottom after falling substantially since the onset of the economic crisis.

The US and Japan, at least to some extent, are doing just as well as Germany, but their economies are doped by substantial quantitative easing by their central banks. It remains to be seen what happens when that easing is stopped and when the central banks start selling the vast amounts of financial assets they have bought to pump up the economy and the financial markets.

China is in a league of its own. The headline figures are still quite impressive with 7% real economic growth, but even local commentators are getting worried about excessive real estate investments. The question is not whether there

is too much real estate development, there are simply too few people who can afford to purchase them or who can pay the high rents. So, too much real estate too early? The Chinese banking system, historically pretty opaque on the side of asset quality and bad debts, might take a serious blow if there is a real estate crisis. Meanwhile, with an absence of strong leadership, India is sadly struggling to steer its economy to substantial economic growth.

Brazil is starting to see the first protests with demands for social advantages from its still cheap labour force. Russia has always been a raw material play, particularly energy, mixed with infrastructure and basic industries, leaving it vulnerable to slow worldwide economic growth.

All of this is well known by many now, but there are a few elements in the world economy of which the effect is underestimated.

One is the fact that on the internet too much products or services are free, or free if you allow your personal data to be sold to the highest bidder. In our capitalistic system, one would want to see more internet surfers paying for the added value provided by the services they take. Given the vastness of the internet this would add a sizeable positive effect to growth and it would be much better than the alternative of charging 1 Eurocent tax, or internet security fee, per e-mail and per gigabyte of data on the web.

CHINA IS IN A LEAGUE OF ITS OWN



The other fact is that we currently seem to have a jobless economic recovery worldwide. Unemployment rates remain stubbornly high in most countries. Here again it would be advisable that companies do not put excessive strain on their workforce, rather hire more workers in order to have happy and healthy workers and thus more business. The not-to-be favoured alternative is that governments change their taxation system to achieve this, in the sense that they introduce a lower tax rate for companies that employ many people, eventually relative to their economic sector, and a higher tax rate for companies who employ fewer people, eventually relative to their added value.

Related to these observations, if we want to keep the social structure and related medical and pension advantages that Europe has developed since the Second World War, it is important that similar schemes appear in the developing economies in order to make sure that the whole European manufacturing industry, and even parts of the service industry, do not delocalize there. We need a level playing field for trade and investment and the WTO or the OECD should guarantee that. At the same time, the EU and the rest of the developed world should keep up the speedy advance and investment in research and development, both for basic research and industrial research.

All in all the solutions are there to find the required fertiliser and water to foster the green shoots of the lawn of the world economy until it is as bright green as a snooker table. But it will take strong leadership, entrepreneurship and courage to get there fast enough. The last thing we need is another lapse in the growth of the world economy. ❶



MISTLETOE AND WINE

When the first star appears in the sky, the ceremonial meal begins.

Christmas, not so traditionally

James Drew visits the traditions that make Christmas special around the world

For as long as the season has been in existence, Christmas has been associated with 'what we've always done'; as with most Christian festivals, the holiday has done its fair share of borrowing liberally from the pagan festivals that preceded it – for example, the traditional spruce Christmas tree itself, which was first introduced to England by Queen Victoria's Prince Albert, has its roots in ancient times, when it was perceived as being a potent symbol of perennial fertility.

So, while you're getting in the mood for your very own festive traditions, here are a few from countries around the globe – and each, hopefully, are just a little bit 'different'. Enjoy...

What's in a date?

In Russia and Ukraine, Christmas is not marked on 25 December, but rather on 7 January – the Orthodox calendar uses the former 'Julian' calendar for religious festivals, and so in the traditional Russian Christmas, prayers are made and people fast, sometimes as long as 39 days, ending on Christmas Eve (6 January), when a 12-course supper is served, in honour of the 12 Apostles. Worth the wait, one can but hope.

Shoe in

In the Czech Republic, many single women still frequently perform a curious ritual on Christmas Eve, to see if they will marry the following year.

With their backs to the door of their house, they throw one shoe over their shoulder. If the shoe lands with the heel towards the door, she will definitely stay single, while if the toe points towards the house, she should start making wedding preparations.

The witching hour

In Norway, tradition holds that witches and evil spirits roam on Christmas Eve, to steal brooms and ride the skies. Thus, all the cleaning tools are hidden, and men fire their guns to scare the witches, ghosts and goblins away.

Setting up a straw goat

In the Swedish town of Gavle, a giant goat made of straw has been erected for the past 40 years, to mark the beginning of the festive season. However, since 1966, the goat has only survived ten times to Christmas Day, with vandals, normally dressed as elves or even Santa Claus himself, setting the monument afire.

If it sticks...

In Slovakia, at the beginning of a traditional Christmas Eve dinner, the head of the family takes a spoonful of 'Loksa' (which is a traditional Christmas dish made from bread, poppy seeds and water) and throws it at the ceiling – apparently, the more mixture that remains stuck to the ceiling indicates the richer the 'harvest' (agricultural or financial) will be in the coming year.



Acquired taste

In Greenland, the height of Christmas delicacies is considered to be 'Kiviak', which is the raw flesh of an auk, wrapped in seal skin and placed under a rock for several months, until the ensemble is in an advanced stage of decomposition, and is a 'treat' that most Greenland residents find 'delicious'. Apparently.

Rock 'n' roll

In Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, the roads of the city are traditionally closed on Christmas Eve morning, so the faithful may roller-skate to Mass.

Dreaming of a warm Christmas

In South Africa, many enjoy a Christmas dinner in the open-air – the traditional dinner is either turkey or roast beef with mince pies, or suckling pig and yellow rice with raisins, vegetables, and plum pudding, with crackers and paper hats de rigeur. In the afternoon, families go out into the country and usually there are games or bathing in the warm sunshine.

Small clay figures, called pesebre, are placed under the Christmas tree – Father Christmas is known as Viejito Pascuero, and he wishes everyone a Feliz Navidad y un Prospero Año Nuevo. Easy for him to say...

In with the new

In Scotland, the first person to set foot in a house in a New Year is thought to be very influential to the fortunes of the people who live there and strangers are, in general, thought to bring good luck – depending on the area, it may be better to have a dark-haired or fair-haired stranger set foot in the house. This tradition is known as 'first footing'.

The first footer should be equipped with a shot of whisky, a lump of coal (to keep the hearth warm) and a bite to eat (usually shortbread)... but normally if you have the whisky with you you're in... ☘

Ring in the new

Martin Banks takes a look at our annual New Year resolutions



Ricky Gervais at Comedy Central's 'Night of Too Many Stars'

IT'S NOW ALL ABOUT ACCOMPLISHING BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES

Whether it's a firework display in Brussels' Grand Place or just sitting at home watching the television, champagne glasses clink and kisses are exchanged as countless people toast the New Year.

As a wave of celebration travels across Belgium and the rest of the world, many of us will vow to kick bad habits and improve ourselves in an effort to make this coming year better than the last. New Year's Eve has always been a time for looking back to the past, and more importantly, forward to the coming year.

In fact, revelry and resolutions have been essential to ringing in the New Year since 2000 BC when Babylonians held semi-annual festivals around the spring and autumn equinoxes. The custom of setting 'New Year resolutions' began with the Romans who tended to make their resolutions with a moral flavour: mostly to be good to others.

So, all in all, the idea of promising to do this or do that at the end of each year is nothing new.

The only thing that has changed is that, rather than making promises to gods, nowadays we make promises to ourselves, such as losing weight, getting better organized, spending less, enjoying life to the fullest and staying fit (the top five New Year's resolutions for 2013).

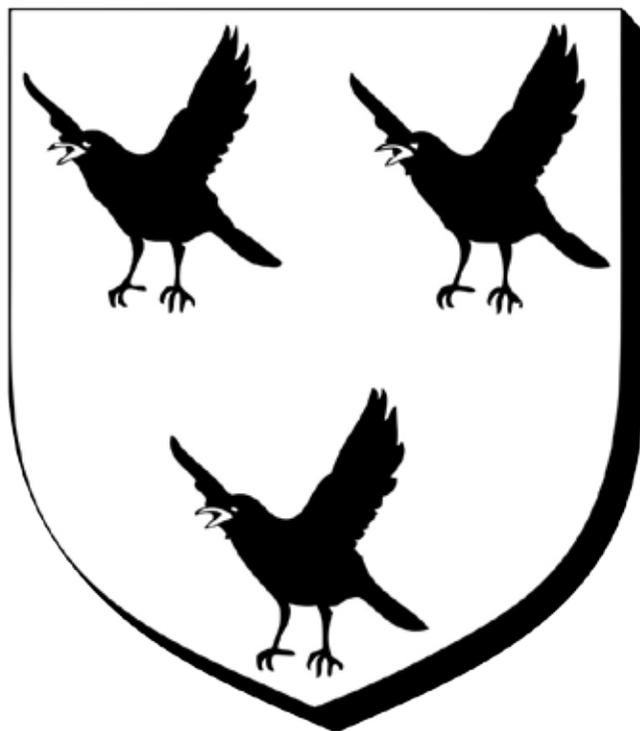
However, since we cannot possibly rain thunder and lightning on ourselves as punishment for not keeping these and other promises, it need not surprise us that sooner or later we fail in



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MISTLETOE AND WINE

Traditions

staying true to our words. More often than not, New Year's resolutions are nothing more and nothing less than a 'to do' list for the first week of January.

By the time these seven days of the New Year are gone, so is our motivation to stop smoking, get out of debt, learn something new and lose weight (the resolutions most often forgotten last year).

The statistics speak for themselves: according to a survey, only 64% of resolutions made on January 1, 2013 made it past one month while a mere 46% got beyond six months.

More often than not, people tend to wake up on the morning of January 1 and no longer feel the need to eat junk food, drink a tad too much or smoke.

Maybe the answer then is not to take it all too seriously and, rather than resolving to stay fit and spend less, we should just start the New Year with a good old laugh. When it comes to resolutions, some of this writer's favourite funnies include these: only get divorced and remarried once this year; spend less than €1,000 for coffee at Starbucks this year; and claim all my pets as dependents on my taxes.

Or maybe we just listen to what Mark Twain thinks about New Year's Day: "Now is the accepted time to make your regular annual good resolutions. Next week you can begin paving hell with them as usual."

Psychologists explain the whole thing by saying that people often scribble down various New Year's resolutions without taking the time to ponder on them and figure out how badly they want to change a given behaviour and/or achieve a given goal.



Almost nobody bothers to also piece together a strategy that would allow them to stick to their New Year's resolutions. A University of Washington study in 1997 found 47% of the 100 million adult Americans who made resolutions gave up on their goals after two months. This figure

has risen to 80% in the past decade, according to recent research completed at the University of Minnesota.

The practice has certainly come a long way since it revolved around paying off debts and returning borrowed goods – it's now all about accomplishing behavioral changes.

Personally, I can fully relate with the UK celebrity cook Mary Berry who said her 2012 resolution was "to have computer lessons. My skills are rubbish, I have never typed".

Some resolutions like Lady Gaga ("I resolve never be afraid to be kicked in the teeth") are just odd while others are a tad tedious, such as rocker Jon Bon Jovi who welcomed 2013 by saying, "I like to kiss a year goodbye and welcome another one because every day is just something new and exciting."

Maybe comic Ricky Gervais' 2013 resolution is something readers of Together might recognize: "I want to be even more brilliant but it's proving impossible."

While the official statistics on resolutions may appear grim, take heart – your intentions to make 2014 the best year yet aren't doomed. Experts agree that writing down resolutions, sharing goals with others and tracking your progress really can help you achieve success.

❶

Let's talk turkey



© fluteflute

As the big day approaches **Colin Moors** offers Christmas dinner alternatives from across the globe

WHEN THE FIRST STAR APPEARS IN THE SKY, THE CEREMONIAL MEAL BEGINS

Christmas, at least in my country of birth, is a time for eating and eating big. Many mainland European countries have their main festive meal on December 24, Christmas Eve. In the UK, however, it's December 25, the big day itself and people go absolutely nuts, heaving vast swathes of food onto already groaning tables. Traditionally, the food was always goose or, if the household had plenty of money, peacock, swan or a roasted boar's head. Naturally, around the time of the introduction of the turkey to the UK (circa 1520) the majority of the population didn't have the wherewithal to display a swan in the centre of the table.

The unfortunate turkey became popular for two reasons – it was not expensive and it gave more meat than the scrawny chicken strutting around in those days. No British Christmas would be complete without a Christmas pudding, a heart attack waiting to happen. The pudding is usually made well in advance to allow it to mature and contains beef fat, sugar, spices breadcrumbs, cognac, flour and kilos of dried fruit. It's flambéed before eating, adding another alcoholic dimension to the proceedings. If that doesn't kill you, the coin secreted in the pudding for good luck might just do for you.

If all that sounds a bit much, you could always spend Christmas in a Scandinavian country but don't expect them to go easy on the booze. Beer and aquavit are all traditional parts of the repast, as is the ubiquitous glögg, a warmed wine drink made with spices and fruit. It may seem innocent enough but make sure you trust the person who made it. I've seen rum, vodka and whiskey all stirred in by enthusiastic party hosts. In Denmark, the tradition was once roast pork with potatoes, red cabbage and gravy. But goose is now becoming the centrepiece of choice – odd for a country whose GDP is highly pork-related. For pudding the Danes and the Swedes plump for rice pudding. It goes by a variety of names, including risalamande, the more French riz à l'amande or julgröt. In all cases, a peeled almond is hidden inside and whoever gets it is entitled to a special gift.

Lithuania, just across the water from Sweden couldn't be more different. Their Christmas dinner, held on Christmas Eve, is very traditional and a fairly austere occasion if done properly. They make up for it by extending the frivolities until twelfth night, so it's not all bad news. Hay is spread on a table before it is covered with a white table cloth, symbolizing the birth of Christ in a manger. Places are set, including settings for people who can't make the meal, or who have died in the past year, as it's believed that the spirit of the person will join the feast.

When the first star appears in the sky, the ceremonial meal begins. There are twelve dishes, representing the number of apostles (or months in the year), and they may contain no meat or dairy and must not be hot. Fish is allowed, with eel and herring popular choices. These are accompanied by hard biscuits and poppy seed milk, beet soup and roasted or boiled potatoes. The only alcohol allowed is home-made cider. It's considered unlucky to not try at least some of every dish but worse yet, if you leave the table while someone else is still eating, you'll be the first at the table to die, which seems harsh if you really need the toilet.

Saving the best for last, let's have a look at Japan. Given that around 98% of people are Shintoist or Buddhist, if they have a religion,

IT MAY SEEM INNOCENT ENOUGH BUT MAKE SURE YOU TRUST THE PERSON WHO MADE IT

Christmas lunch is a big deal. Is it udon noodles? Sushi? Teriyaki? No, you'll be guessing all day. It's KFC. Yes, the Colonel is busy on Christmas Day, which isn't a national holiday in Japan. Kentucky Fried Chicken is the go-to meal, with a family bucket costing around €25, complete with chocolate cake. Some KFC joints are so popular, customers order their Christmas lunch a month or two in advance, or will queue for up to two hours to get it.

Christmas cake is also hugely popular but not the booze-laden European dried-fruit fest. Huge, cream-filled and cream-topped pillows of cake with fresh fruits are consumed on the 24th, giving rise to the now outdated expression that a young woman over 25 and unmarried was a 'Christmas Cake' or no good after the 25th. For the Japanese, it's all about cake and chicken, not religion.

When you think about it, none of this is any stranger than stuffing money into puddings, dragging a perfectly healthy tree indoors to die or leaving food out for the big guy and his reindeer. ●



WHITE CHRISTMAS

PHOTOGRAPHER: Aylen Torres
STYLIST: Nicholas Sirot
HAIR & MAKE-UP: Juan-Carlos Salazar @Make Up For Ever
HAIR PRODUCTS: Keune
MODELS: Laura & Jules @ IMM agency
SPECIAL THANKS @ Sophie Carrée press office (Séverine & Mickael)



Collection Hermessence: Vanille Galante



Handbag : Louis Vuitton
Perfume Cartier: Déclaration d'un Soir and Baiser volé
Col: Louis Vuitton
Ring: Jaipur Creation les Ateliers de la Maison du diamant
Ring (on the handbag): with Perle Maison De Greef

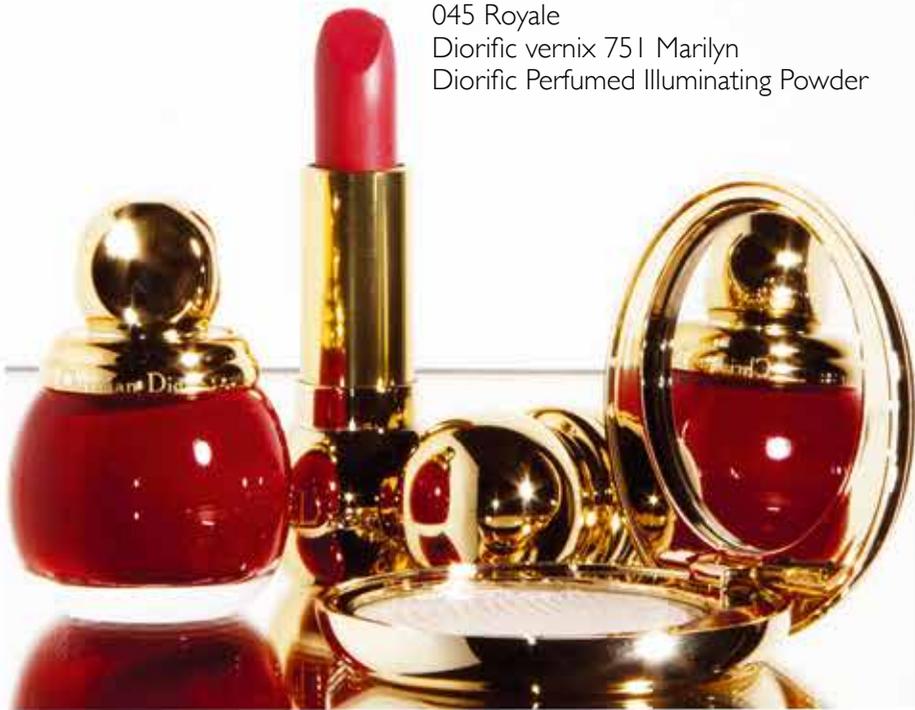


Top: Marjorie Vermeulen
Coat: Bellerose
Handbag: Louis Vuitton
Jewels: Les Precieuses

Heart Box & Swarovski Box Godiva - Cosmik Vodka
Shoes: Pretty Loafers - Bracelet: FreyWille



Lipstick: Diorific collection Golden Winter
045 Royale
Diorific vernix 751 Marilyn
Diorific Perfumed Illuminating Powder



Bracelet: Sara Esther
Shorts: Christian wijnants
Blouse: Marjorie Vermeulen



Place Vendome by Boucheron
Baiser volé by Cartier
Rêve Van Cleef & Arpels Body by Burberry
Classique by Jean Paul Gaultier
L'eau D'Issey by Issey Miyake
For Her by Narciso Rodriguez



Top: Control
Shorts: Jean Paul Knott
Shoes: Diesel
Pouf army: Felicie Aussi



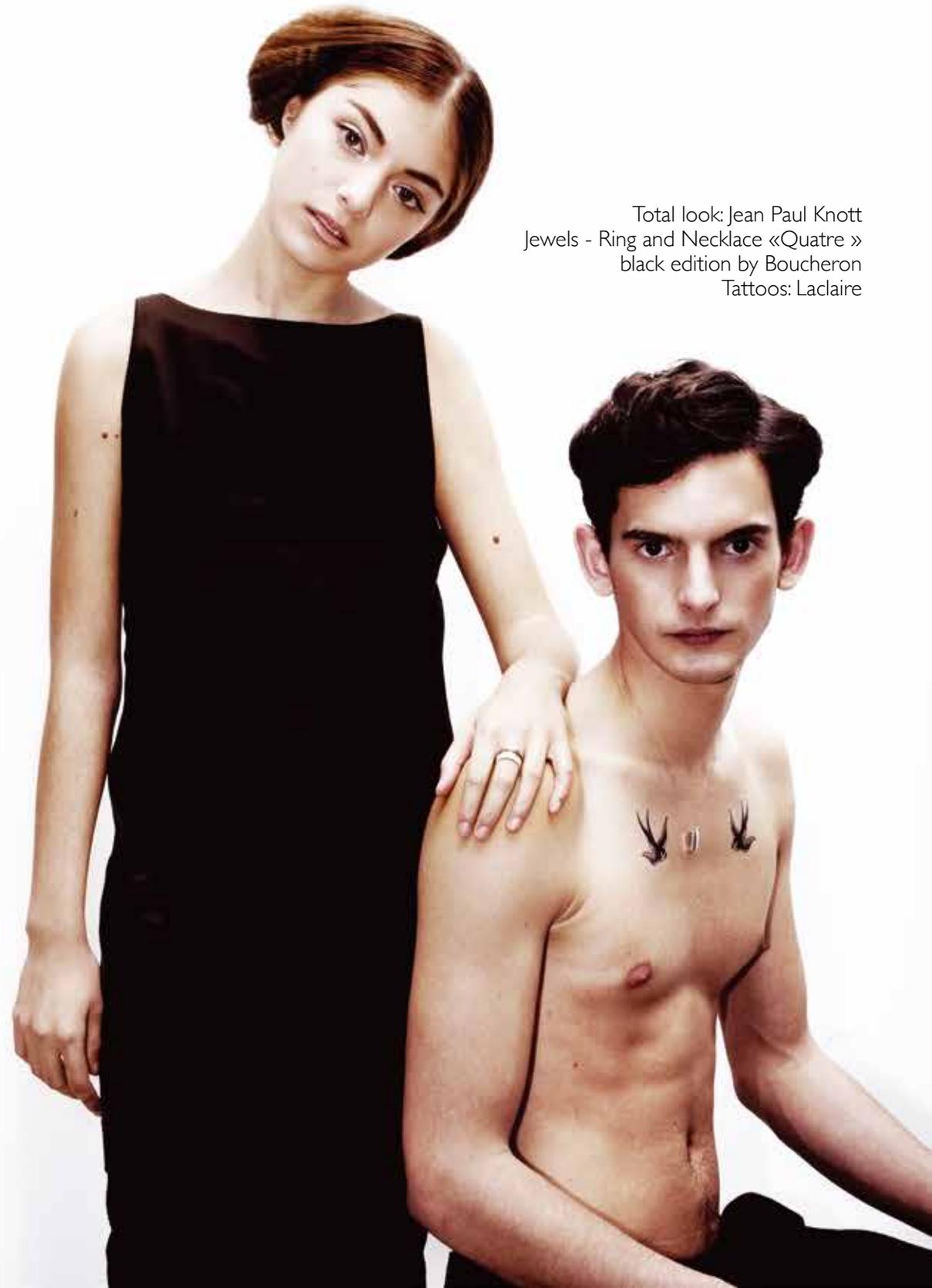
Top: Jean Paul Knott
Trousers: American Vintage



Nail polish: Stone,
Oxblood, Poppy black,
Mascara: 03, Lip glow 12:
Burberry



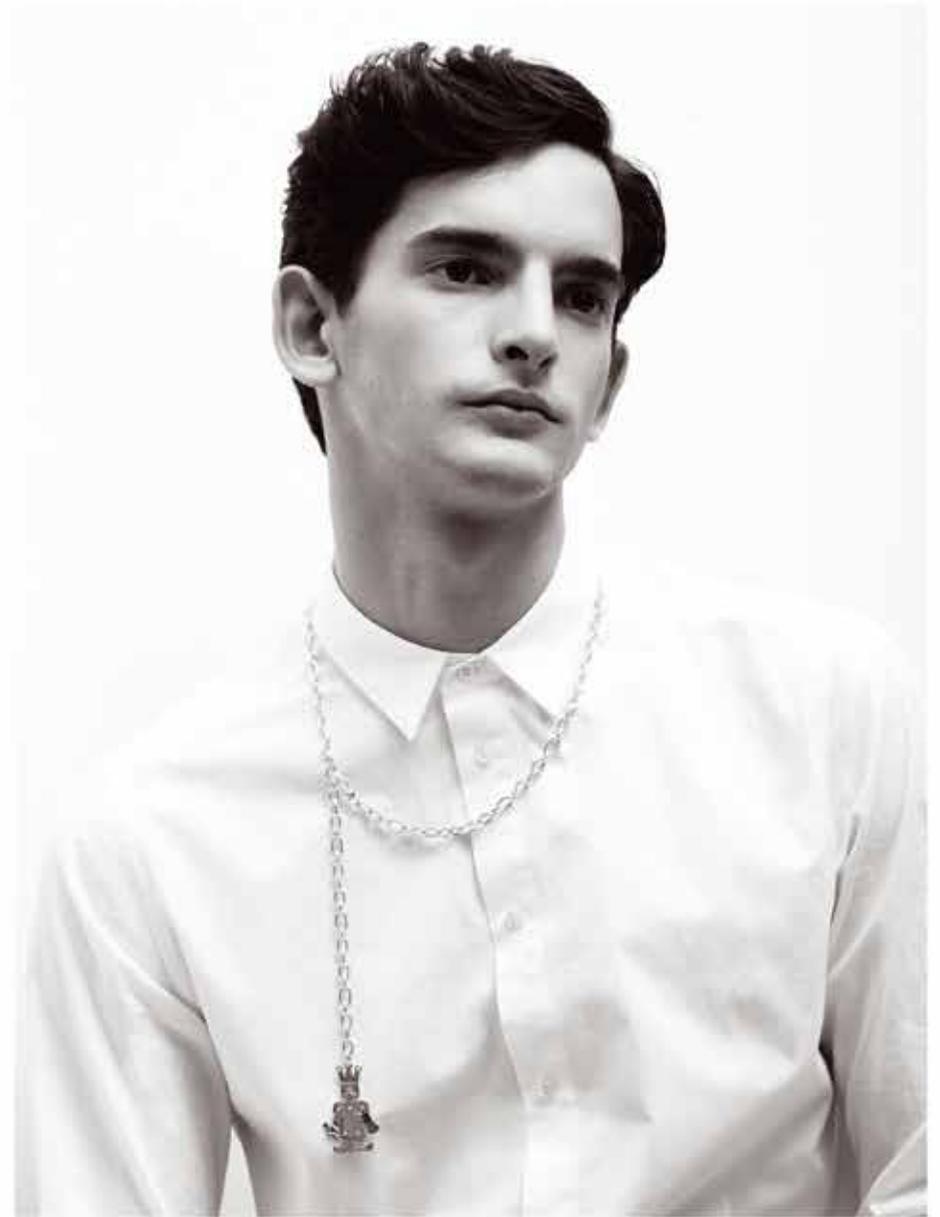
Perfume for men and women by Boucheron



Total look: Jean Paul Knott
Jewels - Ring and Necklace «Quatre »
black edition by Boucheron
Tattoos: Laclaire



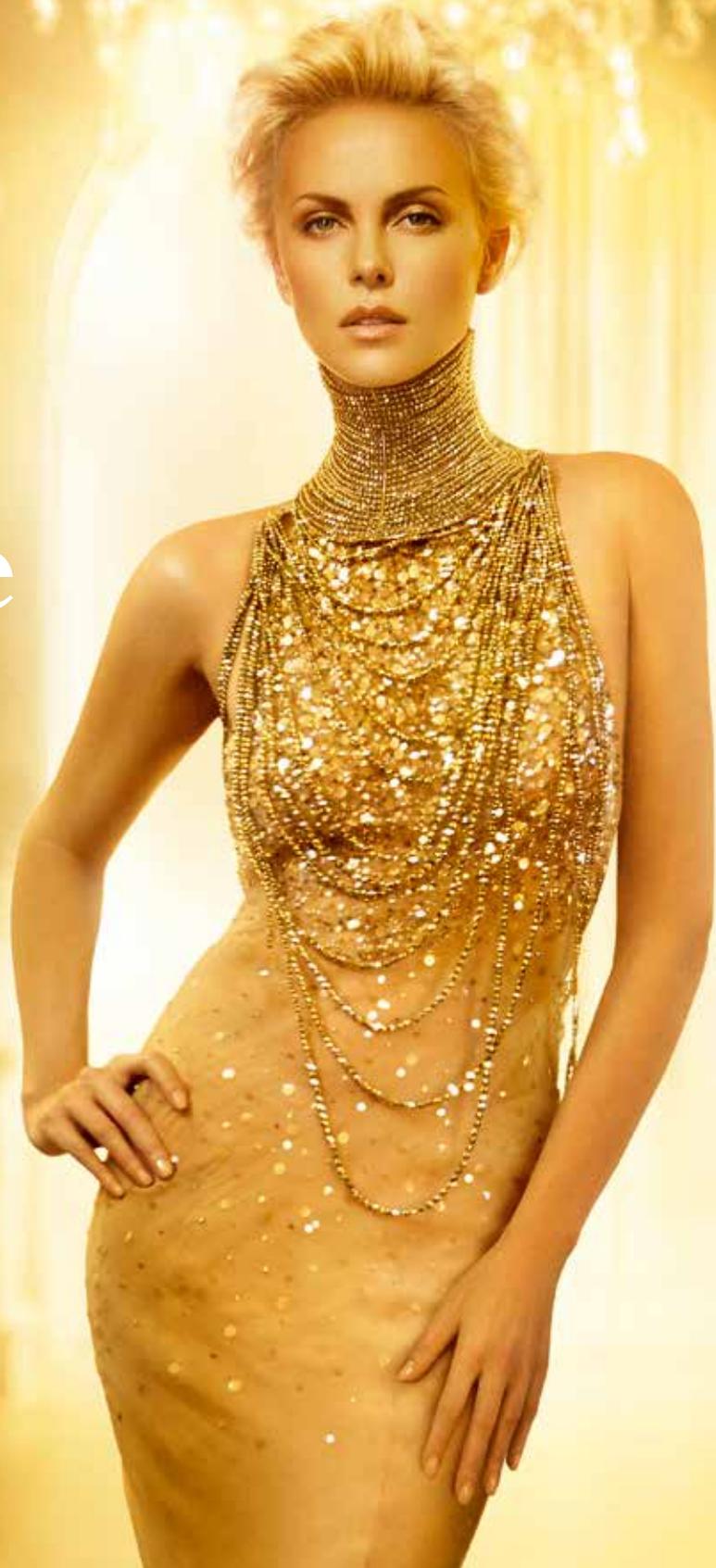
Black watch: Victorinox
Montreal brown bracelet: Van Esser
Inox watch: Omega
Inox watch: Victorinox



Shirt: Control
Necklace: Pomellato 67

Jadore
Dior

L'Or



BEAUTY
NEWS

Touch of holiday sparkle

Our beauty expert **Delphine Stefens** has chosen some festive beauty



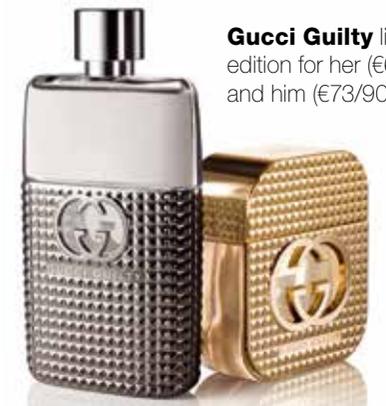
Pure Colour Gelée Powder Eyeshadow in Cyber Gold by Estée Lauder (€25,87)



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creamy eyeshadow in pencil format by Terry (€30). Info: www.cosmeticary.com



N°117 Bronze Ligne Graphique limited edition eyeliner by Chanel (€33)



Lash Sparkles Or précieux by Givenchy (€28). Exclusively at Ici Paris XL: www.iciparisxl.be



N°189 Rouge Etincelle L'Absolu Rouge (€31.50) and **Hypnôse Star Etincelle Edition Noir Midnight** by Lancôme (€31)



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LIFE OF
LEISURE

Cars

The European Motor Show

Once more the halls of Brussels Expo will reverberate with the roaring of engines large and small, as the world's finest automobile brands vie for the attention of thousands of eager car fanatics.

Together's **Bob Monard** gives us a run-down on some of the big names that will be making an appearance at this year's catwalk of the automobile industry.

AUDI

In 2013, the brand with the five rings unveiled its **A3 notchback saloon** to great acclaim, and its new A3 Cabrio. But the heart still beats fastest for RS, be it **RS5 Coupé**, the **RS6 Avant** or **RS7**. All three are powered by a 560hp twin-turbo V8, the most 'satisfying' five-cylinder 450hp. Integral transmission, four-wheel and S tronic auto box are the icing on the cake.

And press down firmly on the right pedal for the pleasure that the engine brings at a brisk pace, while feasting on its guttural roar.

Sure, responsive, precise - the **Audi RS** is a tasty treat like few others. The quattro all-wheel drive technology truly adds dynamism. What a feast!

And **A1 Quattro** 256hp and **A4 Avant RS4** 450hp also serve up a tasty treat. Sporty, robust and muscular, they boast dynamic silhouettes with an air of genuine exclusivity.



BMW

Known for racy and powerful vehicles that have proven to be a first choice in motorsport, BMW proves that is also 'switched on' - enter its latest offering, the **i3 electric**. This top-class vehicle has 170hp and 150km of autonomy and is a sheer delight to drive. The i8 is in the same vein. Other news: the 2 and 4 cabriolets replace the 1 and 3 convertibles.

BMW 3 GT is 6cm higher than the three 'normal' versions, and its tank takes 520 litres. Another top-class vehicle that is synonymous with quality and functionality. Rightly, through the years the Munich manufacturer has received a great deal of flattery - model after model.

The cars are equipped with xDrive, which detects even the slightest over-steering or under-steering, providing variable torque split between the front and rear axles. With 4-wheel drive technology, BMW's clever xDrive ensures that each axle offers maximum traction. BMW provides serene acceleration when coming out of corners. xDrive: Intelligent AWD from BMW.



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LIFE OF LEISURE

Cars

FIAT

Undisputed star of the history of the automobile, the Fiat 500 was redesigned in 2007 and never ceases to delight fans of this nostalgic, modern vehicle.

The **500 Living** is designed to decently accommodate five adults and two little cherubs. With boot space of 168-1,584dm³, it relies on its Twin Air engine 900 cm³ 105 hp and 1,400 cm³ 95 hp. Diesel engine's numbers: 1300cm³ with 85hp and 1600cm³ with 105hp.

Friendly, fun and spacious...the 500 is an exciting travelling companion.

With its all-terrain look due to its raised ground clearance and exclusive interiors, the **500**



Trekking also boasts exclusive accessories (special bumpers front and rear, strengthened body protection) – great if you want to be spotted! Better still, it is fitted with Traction+, which improves control on poor surfaces. Also the City Brake Control system adds greater safety when driving in the city!



A sublime incarnation of the true Jaguar sports car, the **Type F** is as powerful (340, 381 and 495hp) as it agile.

Its aluminium frame combines clean lines, lightness and rigidity for optimal handling – an exceptional dynamic for a classy coupé.

The **XF Sportbrake** is a double coupé designed with versatility for families. Its one-piece tailgate opens onto a very generous storage space (1,675 litres with the seats down).

JAGUAR

Beauty, refinement and pure exaltation of power: the **Jaguar XJ** embodies passion in motion. Its aluminium structure and technology are right on the cutting edge of innovation, delivering flexibility and unparalleled manoeuvrability.

Comfort, luxury and quality are the key words! Our overall approval extends to the diesel engines: 2 litres (163 and 200hp) and 3 litres (241 and 275hp). The Jaguar Drive Control™ system regulates the engine and transmission depending on driving preferences and road conditions.

Cars

MASERATI

Based in Modena fifteen kilometres from Ferrari's home in Maranello, the trident brand has no need to use up all the consonants to describe its range of cars since G and Q alone suffice. Alongside the **Granturismo** (4244cc/411hp and 4691cc/439 and 460hp), we'd like to highlight the **Grancabrio** (4691cc and 450 and 460hp). Then there's the **Ghibli** whose 3-litre V6 330hp with a choice of 409hp, 410hp and 275hp in its diesel range.

As for the **Quattroporte**, it features a 3-litre V6 twin-turbo 409 hp and a 3.8-litre V8 530hp which is as melodious as it is cavernous! Year after year, Maserati remain splendid ambassadors of the Italian automotive culture,



where aesthetics, elegance and refinement are the touchstones. Maserati's high-performance luxury sports cars ensure a driving pleasure with a very exclusive identity – and our hair blowing in the wind brings back memories of many a festivity.



MERCEDES

Always on top of safety technology, the manufacturer based in Stuttgart has filled up its E collection by feeding it eleven new driving assistance systems.

These new E functions favour comfort, quality and driving pleasure. A special congratulations

for soundproofing and suspensions.

This great car manufacture offers up the high-end E 63 AMG, with a tasty and melodious 5.5-liter V8 that drives 525 galloping horses!

Every seven years, it offers a new look and new, both aesthetic and technological. The 2013 S-Class has lived up to Together's expectations because it is again chock-full of innovations, as evidenced by the S 65 AMG 630hp engine.

The very exciting 45 AMG 360hp, like its bigger brothers, can be seen in the Mercedes House in Brussels' Sablon, an essential meeting place for all those who appreciate elegance and craftsmanship.

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Cars

MINI

What a success story in the small car segment! New things just keep coming in the world of MINI – the **MINI Clubman** and **MINI Convertible** both confirm this unique top-class brand's leading position when it comes to sporty driving pleasure, efficiency and customization.

The **Roadster** is the sixth model in the brand's current range and first the two-seater convertible. It's a sporty and compact two-seater with a fabric hood that opens manually. Designed for discerning customers who appreciate elegance, sportiness, open-top driving pleasure and an irresistible style – on top of that it inspires with its handling thanks to powerful engines and sophisticated chassis technology.



ALL4 (all-wheel drive) provides maximum driving pleasure and the **MINI Paceman** enriches the range of AWD models.

The third generation of the Mini takes it bow in 2014.



125 and 155hp, while the diesel has 116 and 150hp.

As a B-segment crossover, the Peugeot 2008 includes both onboard peripheral vision and innovative features: the in-car positioning is distinctive, structured around a small steering wheel, combined with excellent head-room and touch screen technology. Under the hood, we find 82 and 120hp engines (petrol) and 68 and 92hp diesel. It is off the beaten track, with its elevated posture, safety protection and grip control.

PEUGEOT

Lighter, shorter, more compact, with a larger boot, the **Peugeot 308** 2014 vintage also benefits from a completely redesigned dashboard, with dials perfectly placed above the steering wheel, and there is a generously sized (10 inch) touch screen to control everything. The two petrol engines come in 82,

Dynamic and flexible, elegant and athletic, this 2008 star is marked by its spaciousness, modularity and comfort.

An elegant and refined sports car, the **208 GTI** represents a successful synthesis of performance, safety and fun. The latest Peugeot 'bomb' won us over with its flexibility, accuracy of driving and discreet great looks.

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Cars

PORSCHE

The type **991** appeared in 2011, and was the brand-new 911 turbo, with its sensational four-wheel drive and steering. For 50 years, the 911 has perpetually renewed and modernized, without altering the DNA that has shaped its legendary success. A lighter vehicle, it operates on a six-cylinder 3.8-litre turbo 520hp and 560hp (Turbo S).



The undisputed king of Stuttgart, with its **Carrera Cabrio** 350 and 400hp and 476hp GT3, as well as its **Boxster** 211, 265 and 315hp variants, with **Cayman** 211, 265 and 325hp, **Panamera** 299, 300, 400, 430 and 511hp – it is also available in diesel (211hp and 250hp) and, recently, as a hybrid 379hp.

A powerful and luxurious 4x4, the **Cayenne** is powered by a 3.6-litre V6 (299hp) and hybrid

(333hp), a 4.8-litre gasoline V8 (400, 420, 500 and 551hp) and two diesel models: the Mach 1 litre V6, 211hp and 245hp V8 and a 4.2 diesel 382hp.

The highly anticipated **compact SUV** will come in 340 and 400hp gasoline and 258hp diesel versions.

LAND ROVER

The imposing Range Rover has been the star among off-roaders since 1970. With its prestigious, super-luxurious bourgeois limousine interior, its comfort is breathtaking; the seats, soundproofing and suspension are all simply delightful, like an up-scale sedan vehicle. Majestic on the highways (258, 339 and 510hp) or steep forest trails, the Land Rover range's flagship never stops improving.



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RENAULT

The **Renault Captur** is a seductive fusion of MPV, SUV and sedan. An elegant alternative to the versatile **Cité**, it offers two petrol engines at 90 and 120hp, plus a 90hp diesel.

Moving on to the **Clio Grandtour**, the choice is between petrol at 73, 90 and 120hp and diesel at 75 and 90hp – its personality is a hundred miles away from Renault's ultra-popular utility vehicles.

Beefier, and with a traction control system, the crossover **Scénic** is now thinking outside the box and has a look that definitely plays a part – elevated cockpit, fender extensions, roof rails, most distinguished.

However, it retains 2WD flanked by extended grip for torque and brakes. Under the hood, it's



115 or 130hp gasoline and 110 or 130hp diesel. The XMod? A refreshing alternative.

And the **Renault Twingo** is celebrating its 20th anniversary – to mark the occasion, Renault presents the Belgo-Luxembourg limited edition Renault Twingo '20TH' at €9,270. Renault Twingo – it's been there for 20 years!

VW

Succeeding the legendary **Beetle**, **Beetle Mark II** represents a lifestyle on four wheels. The famous cult car is now lower and wider, but retains its distinctive protruding wings and large wheels and the character of its interior, in 105 to 210hp model.

A legend now as ever!

The Golf variant comes in 605 to 1,620 litre versions – it's 100kg lighter than its previous guise, and offers as much space for passengers. With a quality fit and finish, and sharp soundproofing – nothing is missing, and it resembles a sedan, with its luxurious ventilation.

Volkswagen is continuing its expansion of the Golf range with the launch of the series' flagship: R. The **Golf R** is a super-car four-



wheel drive, powered by a new 300hp TSI engine. The sport chassis has been lowered by 20mm, there's a new dynamic steering and electronic stabilization ESC Sport program, enough to reach 100km/h on 5.1 seconds. With the 6-speed DSG, the car can reach 250 km/h!



SKODA

What progress Skoda has made during the past 20 years – powerful and simple engines under the hoods of seven product lines. Thus, we now have the **Citigo** 3 and 5 doors, the versatile 5-door and **Fabia Combi**, the compact **Roomster** MPV and **Rapid Spaceback**, family cars **Octavia** and

Octavia Combi and the excellent **Royal Superb** and **Superb Combi**, all at the top of their game. Do not believe that the purr of the 3-cylinder 999 cm³ of the **Citigo** and the leg-room for rear passengers in the **Superb** are one-offs – these are now the common denominators of Skoda's production lines: the brand's devotion to construction and finishing have seduced reliable and attractive car enthusiasts, a very important market share. Available in both petrol and diesel.



VOLVO

The new Drive-E Volvo engine guarantees more pleasure and clean driving.

Volvo has opted for smaller but more powerful engines, with its power curves promoting drivability and economy.

Its **S60**, **V60** and **XC60** feature three new 4-cylinder engines: the turbo-charged T6 petrol 306hp, 245hp T5 and D4 turbo diesel 181hp. To ensure energy efficiency, the engines are twinned with either a new 8-speed automatic transmission or a manual 6-speed optimized transmission. Four types of chassis are available: Comfort, Dynamic, Four-C and lowered Chassis Sport.

The **V60 Plug-in Hybrid** is the world's first rechargeable diesel hybrid. Its front wheels are driven by a 5-cylinder 2.4-litre turbo-diesel 215hp and the rear axle is driven by an electric engine that delivers 68bhp. In Sweden, clean driving and safety go hand in hand.

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Jennifer Lawrence: Catching fire

Together caught up with fast-rising star Jennifer Lawrence as she talks *Hunger Games*, arachnophobia and the simple joys of the couch



Academy award-winning actress, Jennifer Lawrence, 23, stars in the adventure drama, *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*, in which she reprises her role as the iconic Katniss Everdeen, heroine of the blockbuster franchise based on the best-selling novels.

Lawrence is naturally effervescent and speaks in an entertaining and unguarded way which makes her a lot more likeable than the regular Hollywood actress. Best known for her roles in *Winter's Bone*, *Silver Linings Playbook*, and as Raven Darkholme, Mystique, in *X-Men: First Class*, she will also in 2014 soon reprise in *X-Men: Days of Future Past*. She will next star in *American Hustle*, in which she reteams with her *Silver Linings Playbook* co-star, Bradley Cooper, set in the 70s. A stellar cast, it also includes Amy Adams, Jeremy Renner and Christian Bale.

Lawrence's performances have prompted *Rolling Stone* to declare her "the most talented young actress in America". *Time* magazine named her "one of the 100 most influential people in the world", while *Elle* magazine naming her "the most powerful woman in the

entertainment business".

In her romantic life she has been in an on-again, off-again relationship with British actor, Nicholas Hoult, 23, her co-star in *X-Men First Class*, and who most recently starred in *Jack the Giant Slayer* and *Warm Bodies*.

Catching Fire was shot partially in the jungles of Hawaii. I know you have a fear of spiders – so how did you cope with the shoot?

Well, not easily. (laughs). It was really upsetting because Hawaii was supposed to have no spiders. Everybody told me there were no spiders, so then when I saw three spiders in a row, I started crying. (laughs) Yeah, jungles are not easy when you are afraid of everything.

Where did your fear of spiders come from?

I don't know, I don't know. I think I am an actual legitimate alcoholic. Alcoholic? (laughs) That's what you guys hear that I'm a legitimate, real alcoholic. (laughs) No, what's it called? An arachnophobic, that's what I am.

Is *Catching Fire* more action-oriented

than the first *Hunger Games* movie?

I don't think there's more action; I think they are both pretty active.

This must be an amazing period for you, *Silver Linings Playbook* with David O. Russell, and his next film *American Hustle*, as well as *Hunger Games*. Can you talk about this journey a little bit and how it impacted you as a person and as an actress?

I don't really feel any different although I guess I am busier. It's really just been an incredible journey and then *Hunger Games* came out and did as well as it did, that was fantastic, and having *Silver Linings*, which felt like a very risky movie be successful, we were all very relieved when it came out that people weren't upset and they liked it and they responded well to it. It was a huge thing and then Oscar season was crazy and exhausting. Yeah, I don't know, it's been pretty fun.

Was it a surprise for you?

A surprise doesn't really cover it. (laughter) It doesn't feel like an 'Oh,' it feels like an explosion. That was just kind of nuts because

that was one of those things where you can never really prepare for it in your mind before it happens. You can't even go there, the possibilities of it happening seems kind of too big and too overwhelming, too unbelievable and then it does happen, and you are like, 'Oh. It's not that big of a deal.' (laughs)

People say you're probably the most genuine person in Hollywood...

Oh thank you...

You've experienced Hollywood a lot, yet it must be overwhelming to be at the height of fame but also the level of expectation you're under. How do you process this? Even for a more mature person, it would be a huge challenge.

I don't know. I try to look at everything in a very realistic, undramatic way. I think it's easy to dramatize things and especially in this industry where things can get very over glam-o-fied, things are made to seem very glamorous when in fact they are really not. And I think I haven't taken my eyes off the ball and I haven't taken my eyes off my job and work comes first. I mean in the grand scheme of things, family



comes first, but yeah, there are a lot of distractions in this industry and unfortunately, none of them are very appealing for me. I don't really like staying out late, so the parties aren't really that appealing and I think I really just actually like working. I really just like my job, so I like to do whatever keeps me working and it's what I want to be able to do. I think that keeps me grounded and distracted.

Now that you experienced the first big success of *Hunger Games* and now with the second one coming up, how was it different?

I did what I did on the first one and just completely blocked it out. (laughs) I don't think it's healthy for me to know the giant scope of it. I know our fan base and I don't need to know more than that, I know that it's huge and I don't need to go into details. (laughs) They started to pull up the reaction videos of trailer and I was in ADR and they thought it was funny and I thought it was very overwhelming for me. I try not to think about it. I am involved in the first part, in the making it, and then this part is something I try to go through with blinders on because I think it can be really kind of scary.

How do you choose roles? You seem to take a lot of risks in your career.

I don't feel like I ever choose roles necessarily, it has to be a director that I want to work with and

directors are very important to me because those are people you learn from. A lot of times you can have a great script but a director can either make it or break it. So a director I think is probably the most important thing to me. Because that's also such a huge relationship, the relationship between an actor and director is so important and especially being as young as I am and not really having a lot of experience. I want to learn from people who I want to really learn from and be like.

What about you in terms of spacing your choices, how far ahead do you want to schedule movies in terms of jumping from one to another? Do you want to speed it up or do you want to slow it down?

I would like to slow it down because as an actor you don't want more than one or two movies out a year or people get sick of it. But then I also have these coming out every year and I want to be able to do small movies where I started and passion projects at the same time. I said yes to this movie for the same reasons, but they are very big and they can be very overwhelming, and I don't want them to be the only thing that people can see every year. I want to have different stuff out there, and at the same time it really doesn't leave me a lot of time off.

I DON'T REALLY FEEL ANY DIFFERENT ALTHOUGH I GUESS I AM BUSIER

Do you need time off?

I haven't lately. I think youth and caffeine has kept me going up until now but I don't think anybody needs it more than me. (laughs)

How can you unwind? Where do you escape? What recharges you?

Nothing. I do nothing other than bad TV and a couch. Honestly, bad TV is like a form of meditation. Shut your brain off for hours and hours at a time. I travel for work, I so I don't want to travel when I go on vacation; I just want to stay put. I will go to Kentucky. I have a baby nephew who I am addicted to so I like to be a baby sitter for a few days. It's good unwinding like that but then it gets exhausting.

You seem to go to all the film festivals – do you enjoy that?

(laughs) I love film festivals. My career started out in film festivals, the first couple of movies I did got into Venice and the Los Angeles Film Festival, so I am a big fan of festivals and I am a big fan of France so I love the Cannes Film Festival.

If you had to define Katniss in Part Two, what would be her quality?

Well she's changed. She's suffering from post-traumatic stress from the first Hunger Games and she's also trying to get her life back together, but her life is very different. There's a whole element of her life that her best friend doesn't understand anymore, and even her mother doesn't understand it, nor does her sister. They don't understand her to some extent now because she has lived this kind of incredible disaster that only Peeta (Josh Hutcherson) knows and can relate to. And then, in the first movie, she never meant to be a hero to anybody, she was just trying to save her sister's skin and she was trying to save her own skin and Peeta's but now she has this entire responsibility of all of these people. She started out as the reluctant hero and now she really has to make the choice of either stepping up to the plate and saving this group of people or running. And she wants to run.

Do you like her?

I do, very much. 🍷

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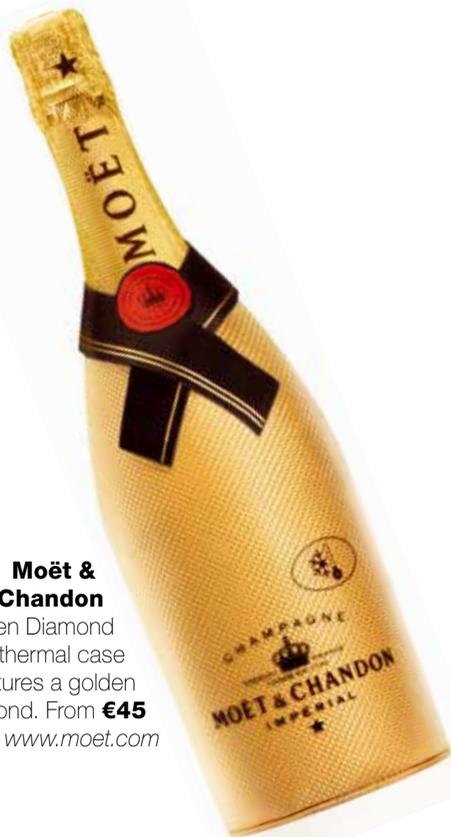
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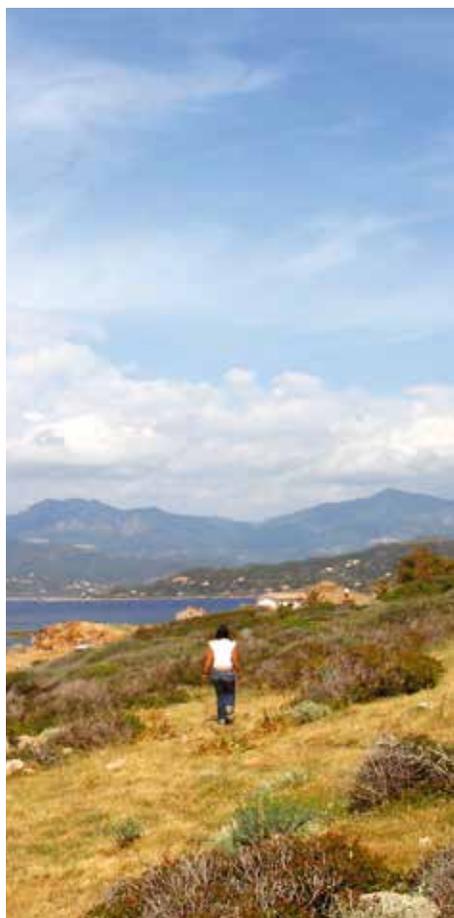
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Corsica: The Island of Beauty

Together takes you on a tour of an island brimming with mountains, lakes and stream



Closer to Italy than France, to which it has belonged since 1769, Corsica is an island that is full of contrasts and surprises. Birthplace of one Napoleon Bonaparte and, locals would have you believe, Christopher Columbus, it is separated from the continental mainland by the Ligurian Sea.

Sit back with a glass of Cap Corse in hand as we guide you around the island – you'll find out why it's known as L'Île de Beauté.

Bastia

Resolutely turned towards Italy, Bastia has retained a charm comparable to the old Tuscan cities with its colourful facades, tall elegant houses with wrought iron balconies, narrow streets garlanded with colourful cloth and its shaded squares. City of art and history, Bastia is rich in chapels, convents and churches housing beautifully preserved sumptuous baroque decorations.

Pointing north, Cap Corse is a rocky spine covered with scrub oak forests and vineyards. Home to sailors and fishermen, the jagged coastline boasts a succession of stunning landscapes: small sheltered harbours; Genoese towers above hidden coves; steep mountainsides plunging into a sea of tropical waters.

Nestling in a beautiful gulf, the small seaside resort of Saint-Florent is laced with small winding streets and there is lively a port. A short boat ride away you'll find the perfectly preserved white beaches of Agriate. For wine lovers, head inland and visit the vineyards on the sunny slopes of Patrimonio.



Further south the mountainous region Castagniccia spreads out, dotted with steep green valleys, hilltop villages and secret paths.

La Balagne

This area in northwest Corsica extends from the Gulf of Girolata to the white sandy beaches of Agriate.

The main tourist town of Balagne is Calvi, which offers one of the most beautiful panoramas in all Corsica. In the foreground a huge bay of white sand, lined with pine trees, a lively harbour and marina below a citadel erected on a promontory above the sea – beyond, green valleys rise gently towards the highest peaks of the island.

L'Île Rousse is another seaside resort on the coast. Its name comes from the colour of the small islands of Pietra which take on a gorgeous red hue at sunset. A city beach, small pedestrian streets and squares lined with palm trees add to the charm of this small town.

In the mountains around Balagne hilltop villages offer spectacular views, always with the sea as a backdrop. Quiet and beautifully preserved, villages such as Pigna, Aregno and Sant'Antonino contain many historical, architectural and religious treasures. At the foot of the high mountains, other villages are known as the starting points for beautiful walks or

hikes, especially Calenzana and its famous hiking trail 'GR20'.

The centre

An arena of greenery and fresh air, the interior of the island is brimming with majestic mountains carved over the centuries, lakes, gorges and mountain streams – a land where hikers roam among the sheep and beneath the bearded vulture and the red kite.

Ranked since 1966 a national heritage site, the Restonica valley, dominated by Monte Rotondo, is carved out of deep gorges and rock pools. Lake Creno, thanks to its relatively low altitude, is lined with black pine, so fragile but so beautiful.

Further north, the valley of Asco, wild and wonderful, is the ideal base for lovers of barely passable mountain heights. Heading towards the west coast, we find the splendid Niolo region and its Scala di Santa Regina, which offers breathtaking scenery? and the crystal clear springs of Bocognano.

In the heart of the island lies Corte, proudly perched on a promontory – once the island's capital, the citadel offers panoramic view over the Restonica valley.

The west coast

The west coast of Corsica extends from Porto



to the Gulf of Valinco and its splendid sandy beaches .

The Gulf of Porto and the Calanques de Piana, classified by UNESCO as World Heritage sites, offer another spectacular and colourful panorama of Corsica: bright red steep cliffs covered with green scrub plunging into crystal-clear turquoise waters. Breathtaking.

Inland, small villages cling to the mountainsides; they have kept their authenticity and extraordinary charm, such as the village of Evisa on the edge of the vast Aitone forest.

Les Iles Sanguinaires glowing at sunset make the bay of Ajaccio one of the most beautiful in the Mediterranean. The 'imperial city' owes its fame and splendour to its prodigal son, Napoleon. Many sites, streets, museums and statues recall the memory of the man who was the first emperor of France – and beyond.

The Gulf of Valinco houses a succession of coves and beaches. Propriano is a small lively resort, ideally located between the sea and the mountain.

The south

This region includes the towns of Bonifacio, Porto Vecchio, Pinarello, Solenzara and the impressive mountains of the Alta Rocca.

Porto Vecchio, Corsica most popular tourist destination, owes its fame to a succession of bays with white sand and crystal blue waters lined with pine trees. The beaches of Santa Giulia, Palomaggia Rondinara and Cala Rossa

are simply heavenly. It's a hip town, a must in the summer season with its small marina lined with restaurants and cafes, and the old stone town with trendy boutiques and shaded terraces.

Further south lies the fortified town of Bonifacio, an exceptional site atop limestone cliffs 60 metres high – a veritable natural rampart that affords the marina's boats protection from the Mediterranean regions' capricious winds.

Facing Bonifacio are Sardinia –only 12km away – and the Lavezzi archipelago, an unspoilt nature reserve, famous for scenery that is comparable to the Seychelles (minus the coconuts) and its exceptional seabed.

From the seafront you're only a few minutes away from the Ospedale massif and its vast pine forest that dominates the Gulf of Porto Vecchio. Many sporting activities are available: hiking, canoeing, hunting, fishing or swimming in the river.

We'll leave the final word to far-travelled French environmentalist and writer Nicholas Hulot: "This is in my opinion one of the most beautiful islands in the world. There are, it goes without saying, islands that can compete with it, especially in the Pacific, but none offers so much beauty in so many different ways." ●

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Qatar Airways: Step aboard the Dreamliner



As part of Qatar Airways' European expansion the Boeing 787 Dreamliner started operating out of Belgium for the first time on 1 December, on the Brussels-Doha route, a six-hour flight.

The airline has increased the number of its flights between Brussels and Doha to provide a daily service with a flight in the morning and another in the afternoon giving access to 17 new destinations from the Belgian capital. Qatar Airways is entirely state-owned, a government initiative to draw more tourists and business people to the country. For the eighth year in a row, it won the 'Best Middle Eastern Airline' award at the TTG Asia Travel Awards. Made of composite materials, the 787 is lighter

and more economical than any aircraft of the same size and with the same range. Unique features include larger windows, reduced cabin noise and a cabin air filter. The Dreamliner is the environmental leader in its sector, with 20% less fuel consumption and CO2 emissions than any equivalent craft. It is also important to note that the aircraft is quieter than its competitors, an additional asset to the communities located around the airport of Brussels.

The Dreamliner has a capacity of 254 seats including 22 Business Class and 232 in Economy. 

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A Transport of Delight

Colin Moors

flags down a
Brussels tram
with a
difference



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You probably don't think it's possible to take a two-hour tram ride around our quirky and loveable capital without being serenaded by a guy with an accordion who knows no other tune but *Hava Nagila* or sharing an intimate experience with someone enjoying Dubstep at volume 11. It's not only possible but also a very enjoyable evening out. Imagine, if you will, a tram filled to the gunwales with Pommery Champagne, a Michelin-starred menu and only the faintest noise of two chefs working almost effortlessly but barely heard over the buzz of conversation - conversation largely centred around food. This is the evening my partner and I were treated to on our very first outing on the Brussels Tram Experience.

Trams and gastronomy would hardly seem to be a match made in heaven but I will open my account by raising my hat to the chefs for the evening, working diligently and professionally in a kitchen the size of an Ikea bookcase. I often wonder how they don't kill each other but I neglected to ask, as they were busy. And I was hungry. For those worried about going out to dinner and needing a meal afterwards, have no fear; you won't need to make any plans after this outing. They manage to serve haute cuisine in portions designed to fill, not to fool around. Don't worry about your dinner flying off the table either. The designers of the tram experience took the phrase "a place for everything..." to

LIFE OF LEISURE

Dining

heart, and carved special grooves and slots in the tables so nobody has to part company with their dinner on a difficult bend.

We started with amuses bouches and starters by Pascal Devalkeneer of Le Chalet de la Forêt (2 Michelin stars). The trio of amuses bouches were designed to entertain - a job they accomplished with aplomb. We opened with cauliflower crumble with speculoos biscuits, tripped lightly through an earthy and rich Porcini Cappucino, an umami explosion, and finished with the crème brûlée made with Leffe and hay. I really wanted this last one to be special and it certainly was. The best of the three, in my opinion. The starter was a scallop tartare with sweet chestnut mousseline and coffee oil. The

Rich, deep, light and elegant all at once. An enormously satisfying dish. My concern here was not with the food but the choice of wine. The Viñas del Vero Cabernet Sauvignon 2011 from Spain was in itself a very agreeable Cabernet, plenty of spice and well-balanced. For me, it didn't really pair well, overpowering some of the subtleties of our main course. Life is sometimes hard.

Before the terminus was Christmas Under the Stars (Noël dans les Paillettes) by Pierre Marcolini, whom I believe will need no introduction to *Together* readers. A white cone of what appeared to be a flimsy shell gave way to the most enormous concoction of sweet and bitter chocolate and praline. Imagine enjoying



© www.visitbrussels.be

coffee oil worked well against the sweet scallop and the chestnut provided the perfect vehicle for both. For me, there was a touch too much chestnut but opinions vary.

Next stop, main course. This was a hind fillet with a Syrah reduction with forest honey and spices, Roscoff onion fondue, black salsify (very Belgian) and caramelized chestnuts. This dish was created by Lionel Rigolet, from a restaurant you may have heard of - Comme Chez Soi (2 Michelin stars). No complaints here and the level of conversation dropped as people ate first with their eyes, then their cutlery. All the flavours were balanced superbly.

one of Marcolini's chocolates. Now imagine it weighed 100 grammes. You're getting close. Truly a stylish finish.

This menu is their seasonal offering and will be available from 10 December. I recommend you book early, as seats are filling already. Don't miss out, this really is a meal to remember. www.visitbrussels.be

AN EARTHY AND RICH PORCINI CAPPUCINO, AN UMAMI EXPLOSION



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Ristorante Bocconi

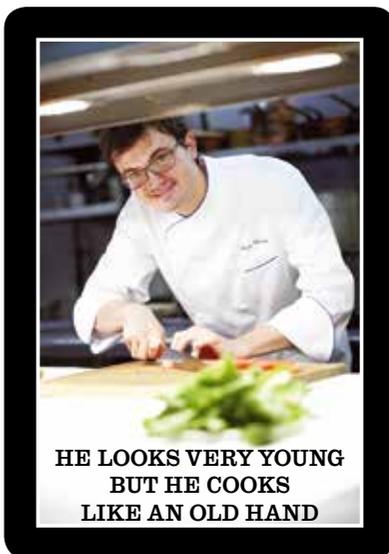
Paul Morris finds a little bit of Lombardy just off rue du Lombard

It's an overused adage but I have to use it in this case. Location, location, location. Ristorante Bocconi is part of the five-star Amigo Hotel, which is slap-bang in the middle of Brussels, only a two-minute stroll away from Manneken Pis and la Grand' Place.

Marco Visinoni discovered his passion for cooking when he was a child, whiling away his afternoons in the kitchen watching and helping his mother prepare the family meals. Culinary school and weekends and school holidays as an apprentice chef in several restaurants in his hometown of Rovetta in the Seriana Valley prepared him for work in the most renowned restaurants in the area, in particular in Pierino Penati, a Michelin-starred restaurant in Vigano.

And now he finds himself at the helm of arguably the best Italian restaurant in town. It really does bring a bit of Italy to Brussels 1000. Marco became Bocconi's executive chef in the summer and has worked with the restaurant team (overseen by legendary Italian chef Fulvio Pierangelini) to introduce a series of new modern dishes inspired by authentic Italian cuisine and laced with Belgian produce.

He looks very young but he cooks like an old



**HE LOOKS VERY YOUNG
BUT HE COOKS
LIKE AN OLD HAND**

hand: every dish sparkles with juices. I asked him, "How do you manage to keep such rich juices flowing in all your dishes?" He simply smiles as if to say, "Now that would be telling."

The staff are young here too and keen to please. The best seats are to be had at the window, not just because you can see tourists and locals walking the narrow street past souvenir and lace shops but because the semi-circular benches are pleasing to the eye and create a very cosy atmosphere.

Several of the dishes are inspired by Marco's native Lombardy such as the traditional veal ravioli and herbs, or risotto with prawns, beans and peas, and the succulent Vitello Tonnato. You can ring in the New Year with some of his new concoctions such as the beef carpaccio with white 'Alba' truffles, or lobster and leek risotto (his rissottos are simply fab) or capon consommé with home-made cappelletti.

I never eat desserts but my dining partner declared the chocolate cake as the "best in the world" no less, which brought a great big smile to the face of a young chef who is clearly going places. ●

www.ristorantebocconi.com



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Waer Waters: THE RESORT LIFE

Samantha Sturgis plunged into the soothing waters of a new Brussels resort

AN ENTIRE BUSINESS TRIP CAN BE CONDUCTED IN ONE DAY

Luxurious, modern, and minimal, Waer Waters is a new resort and spa which opened last year. Located at the port of Brussels, the 6,000 m² wellness centre provides an experience that combines smell, touch, taste, sound and sight to rejuvenate the mind and body. Their holistic approach is based on four principals: hydrotherapy, exercise, rehabilitation and gastronomy.

Waer Waters is luxurious and modern with a main swimming pool that spans 25m and can be used to swim proper lengths. Water has the ability to heal and is therefore a main attraction at the wellness centre. Whether you're swimming inside or outside, in warm or cool temperatures, the bathhouse has two zones, one for dressed members and one for those who prefer to swim nude. Waer Waters has something to suit everyone: kelo wood saunas, hammams and massages are part of the numerous features offered.

Waer Waters' fitness centre will tailor an exercise regime to your body and mind's capabilities. The fitness centre and gym include a cardio zone, circuit training area, functional area and a stretching area where personal trainers are ready to guide you to achieve the workout that your body needs. No more

excuses: there is an exercise for everyone including aquagym, squash, tennis, spinning, dance and yoga.

Waer Waters offers up a culinary experience while you remain cosily wrapped up in a bathrobe at the spa lounge. Non-spa visitors are welcome to enjoy Brasserie Rodenberg's fine cuisine, food for the soul such as fresh salads, pastas, fish and meat dishes – ideal for a business lunch. Waer Waters understands that mixing business with pleasure can be a delicate balance. An entire business trip can be conducted in one day: a lunch meeting at the brasserie, playing squash, sharing a circuit fitness class, relaxing with a massage and ending the evening with a cocktail with colleagues at the bar.

Waer Waters has only dipped its toes in the water – renovations for 2014 currently include additional squash courts, fitness clubs and expanding an already spacious parking lot along with many other exciting new features. With a growing business there is room for everyone, no matter what time or day. Both members and non members are accepted. Book your reservation on the website: www.waerwaters.com 

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Hotel Dolce La Hulpe Brussels: Enjoy without moderation.

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- Free Wi-Fi and parking

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Book a treatment or a massage at the Spa Cinq Mondes from €45 for half an hour per person

And if you're looking for gift ideas for under the tree, have a look at the wide range of gift certificates and Cinq Mondes product gift boxes at www.dolcelahulpegifts.be

About Dolce La Hulpe Brussels

Dolce La Hulpe Brussels is a 4-star hotel and resort in a contemporary design located in the heart of the Sonian Forest and just 15km from the centre of Brussels.

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LIFE OF
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What's On

Winter Wonders: TRIP THE LIGHT FANTASTIC

The most original Christmas
market in Europe



British Tour Operators voted Brussels' annual Winter Wonders the most original in Europe – the Christmas market stretches for 2 km with a series of shops, chalets, attractions, activities and outdoor eating and drinking areas. It all takes place in the very heart of the city of Brussels and gives locals and tourists the opportunity to (re)discover the city's winter charms, the conviviality of its inhabitants and many seasonal traditions from around the world.

You will find over 200 stallholders, for the most part

togethermag.eu | 105



artisan producers. Winter Wonders' ice skating rink is the most popular winter attraction for visitors. The 60-metre long ice-rink consists of more than 1,000 square meters of ice with a skating area that can accommodate up to 300 people at once. New this year is the addition of the Swiss Chalet with capacity for 150 seated diners. It's not all about numbers but... the Ferris wheel is 55 metres tall and offers a fabulous view over a very festive Brussels.

Lord of the Rings and Harry Potter.

Following last year's well-publicized debate about the Christmas tree, this year's spruce in the Grand-Place harks back to a sober, more traditional style. It originates from the western Hertogenwald Forest in the Hautes Fagnes. Whatever you do don't miss the sound and light show as those ancient buildings are given a new modern life.

And this year Winter Wonders has been extended to

take in place de la Monnaie, which has recently been given a new lease of life. Described as a "heart-warming iceberg" and "an immersive, playful, sound, architectural and luminous journey" it reacts to visitors' movement... à voir, as they say in these parts. ❶

Practical info:

Friday 29 November 2013 to Sunday 5 January 2014.
From Monday to Thursday and Sunday: 11am to 9pm.
Friday, Saturday: from 11am to 10pm.

Holidays:

Tuesday 24.12: from 11am to 6pm
Wednesday 25.12: from 2pm to 9 pm
Tuesday 31.12: from 11am to 6 pm
Wednesday 01.01: from 2pm to 9pm

www.plaisirsdhiver.be

For the smallest among us Andrea's baroque merry go-rounds and their fantastic characters take their passengers on a magical journey. And they'll be screaming on The Slalom slide and perhaps with a tinge of fear in the presence of The Ice Monster, a dinosaur with a ferocious appetite for children and adults – it was designed by an American firm best known for its creation of sets for large Hollywood productions such as

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See you soon!



Cheers!

The Treasure of San Gennaro



When in Rome... **Samantha Sturgis** visited the treasures of a city a good deal further to the south

Visiting the Treasure of San Gennaro exhibition is the best way to spend a rainy afternoon in Rome. For the first time ever the precious collection of religious riches (normally safely guarded in a vault in Naples cathedral) are on display for all the world to see. The exhibition features 70 items, including jewels, golden chalices, paintings and silver statues that are said to be worth more than the Crown Jewels in the Tower of London and the Russian imperial crown.

I entered the museum with a pair of headphones and an iPod and listened to a retelling of the history of Naples – a series of narrations explained the significance of each piece of art. The exhibition displays the empty reliquary that holds what is purported to be the saint's blood, which is said to liquefy during religious ceremonies – and it's a bad omen if the blood remains solid. Scientists say the blood liquefies due to the warmth generated by

the hands of the archbishop when conducting the ceremony. But who can be sure?

They say diamonds are a girl's best friend, so naturally my personal favourite highlights were the bejewelled San Gennaro necklace and the bishop's mitre, which was created in 1713 and is made of gold-plated silver and encrusted with 3,326 diamonds, 164 rubies and 198 emeralds.

Each piece of art has a story to tell, such as that of a pair of diamond earrings fastened to a large necklace that was donated by a Neapolitan woman in thanks for surviving a plague that took the lives of many citizens in the late 19th century. Do not miss one of the most important and priceless collections of religious art ever assembled. The Treasure of San Gennaro will be running at Fondazione Roma Museo until 16 February 2014. www.fondazioneromamuseo.it

What's on Cinema

What's on Cinema

Picturenose.com's **James Drew** examines the greatest tracking shot in movie history, and presents a round-up of a few choice cinematic cuts heading your way over Christmas.

Orson Welles' seminal *Touch of Evil* (1958), which starred and was directed by the great man (and was pretty much his last truly great film, period) has what is widely considered by critics to be the very finest long take in movie history. On the US-Mexico border, a man plants a time bomb in a car. A man and woman enter the vehicle and make a slow journey through town to the U.S. border. Newlyweds Miguel 'Mike' Vargas (Charlton Heston) and Susie (Janet Leigh) pass the car several times on foot. The car crosses the border, then explodes, killing the occupants.



Sounds simple, doesn't it? Oh, no? Sublime, certainly, but the choreography, technical precision and dedication to the art that this shot required is anything but simple. With cinematographer Russel Metty, Welles created a legend. The amount of coordination and effort that was required to make this shot successful was unbelievable – in three minutes and thirty one seconds the setting, the plot, mood and criminal depths that dominate the film are all established, an opening shot that absolutely

sets the tone for the movie.

Watch it and be amazed at bit.ly/16Nuj1s

Captain Phillips (2013) Belgium release: 4 December

Paul Greengrass's film has already met with considerable acclaim – Tom Hanks stars as the eponymous Captain Phillips, falling foul of Somali pirates. A tense, exciting and thrilling journey into maritime mayhem.

The Secret Life of Walter Mitty (2013) Belgium release 25 December

Remake of the 1947 Danny Kaye classic, adapted from James Thurber's 1939 short story, and this time directed by and starring Ben Stiller as a Life magazine worker who lives inside his own imaginary worlds. He is on a hunt around the world for a missing picture, which is needed for the final edition of the magazine. Will it be as charming and funny as the first film? With Stiller involved, there is a good chance.

Nymphomaniac (2013) Belgium release: 1 January 2014

No two ways about it, this is the film that everyone will be talking about and probably for quite some time into 2014. Rarely a director known for skirting controversy, Lars Von Trier brings us the story of Joe (Charlotte Gainsbourg), a self-diagnosed nymphomaniac, who is found by Seligman (Stellan Skarsgård) beaten in an alley. Seligman takes her home to care for her, and Joe recounts the story of her life, from birth to the age of 50. As the ad line puts it, forget love. ●

For full reviews, go to www.picturenose.com


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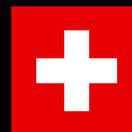
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Martin Banks meets an entrepreneur who has decided to spend his own money to make a difference



Ukraine entrepreneur Igor Yankovski has launched a one-man drive to bridge the "gaping information deficit" between his country and the international community. Europe's second largest country, Ukraine forms an important part of the pipeline transit route for Russian gas exports to Europe. But recent moves to reach an association agreement with the EU - seen as a key step towards eventual EU membership - have again fuelled tensions with Russia.

But can most of us in the West say we know the real Ukraine, its people and culture? According to Yankovski, the answer is a resounding No and that is something he hopes to address with the launch of a foundation which aims to support young talent and promote cultural dialogue between Europe and Ukraine.

He's committing an estimated €2.25m of his wealth into various projects aimed at developing "mutual understanding".

A recent speech at the British School in Budapest, where his son is a pupil, provided the inspiration. "The speech was about Ukraine and even the teacher in my son's class seemed to have very little knowledge about Ukraine. He didn't know, for instance, that Ukraine is geographically in the centre of Europe.

"This is an international school with a multi-national student base so what does that tell you about what people know about my homeland? It tells me that there is a gaping information deficit, a void that needs to be filled if we are to cultivate a better understanding of each other's cultures."

As part of the foundation's launch, Yankovski was in Brussels recently to host an exhibition of paintings Ukraine Through Children's Eyes by Ukrainian children at the European Parliament.

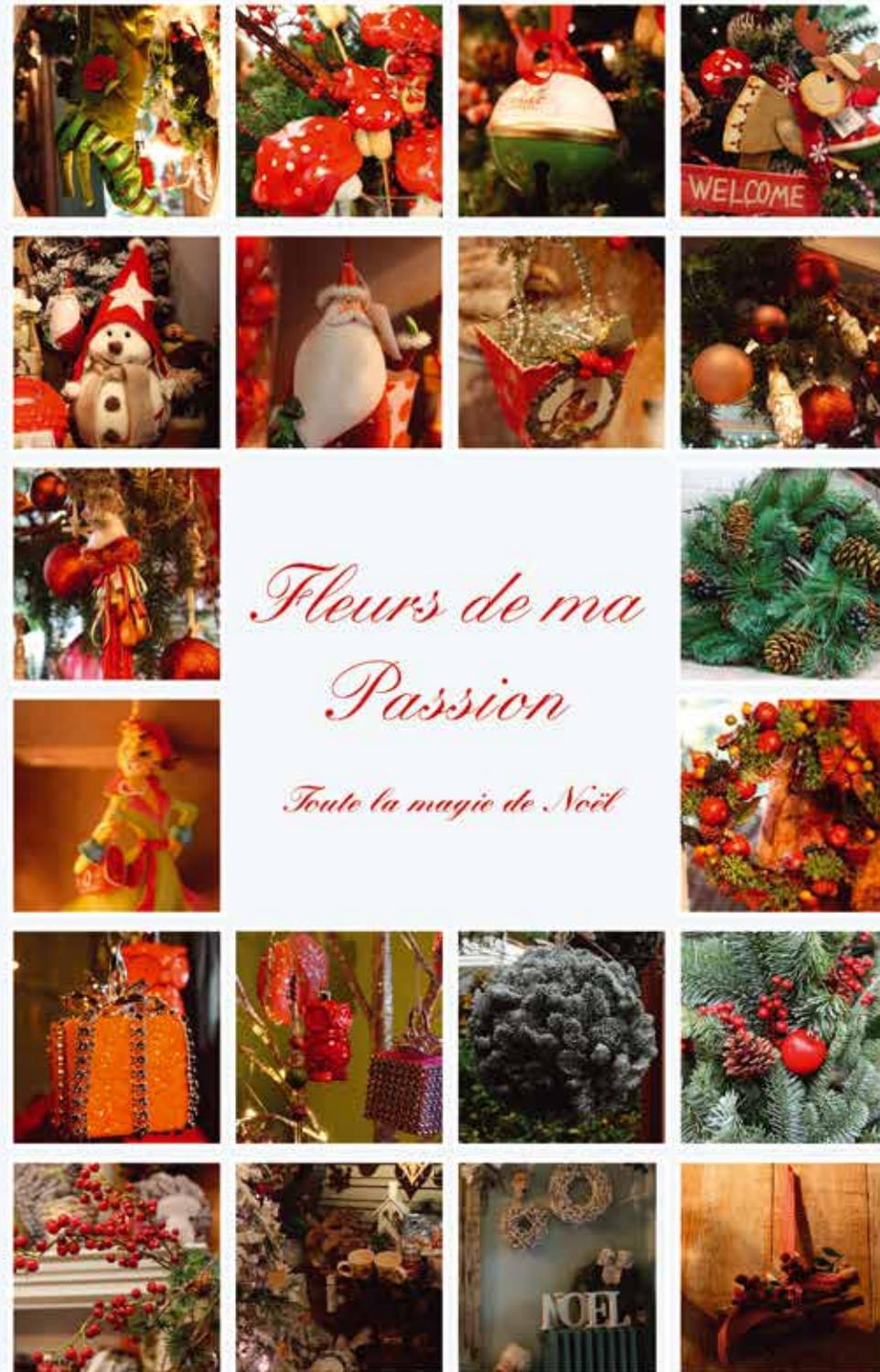
Yankovski says that it is only through such cultural exchanges that Europeans can hope to cultivate mutual understanding of this country of 45m inhabitants.

Yankovski sees his country's future as being firmly in the European family: "The aim of the foundation is to help showcase the amazing pool of talent we have in Ukraine. That is why I plan to fund scholarships to help young Ukrainians do this."

He added: "I travel a lot and am always struck at how little is known in Europe about Ukraine and vice versa."

"The foundation may be based in Ukraine but I want to reach out to as many people as possible." ●

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Toute la magie de Noël*

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