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magazine

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CONFRONT IT

Editor's LETTER

*Together:
Inspiring you
to reach your dreams...*

ON THE COVER



Hilary Swank stars in
The Homesman

There are three people who feature in this month's edition whose life courses are rather unusual – and inspiring. One is an Oscar-winning actress who, as a child, lived in a trailer then in the family car for a while in Los Angeles until her mother found gainful employment; the second left his home on the French-Swiss border at the tender age of 13 and made his way slowly (this was the early 1800s after all) to seek work in Paris and ended up founding a fashion empire that in 2012 turned over €3.2 billion; the third was a pioneer of skiing who visited a valley close to Mont Blanc in 1935 and determined to turn it into a ski resort.

The Mission, Roland Joffe's 1986 epic film, tells the story of a Jesuit priest who must climb the perilous Iguazu Falls in Argentina to gain the trust of the native Guarani. Writer Robert Block journeyed to this harsh landscape as part of his preparation for the film. When asked why he replied: "I had to confront it." And that is what these three individuals have in common: they faced sometimes seemingly insurmountable difficulties and overcame them.

We are heading for another year and we all have things we want to put right. I hope you find the strength and courage in 2015 to set your world straight. Happy holidays!

Paul Morris
EDITOR





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The Louis Vuitton story
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Motoring:

European Motor Show
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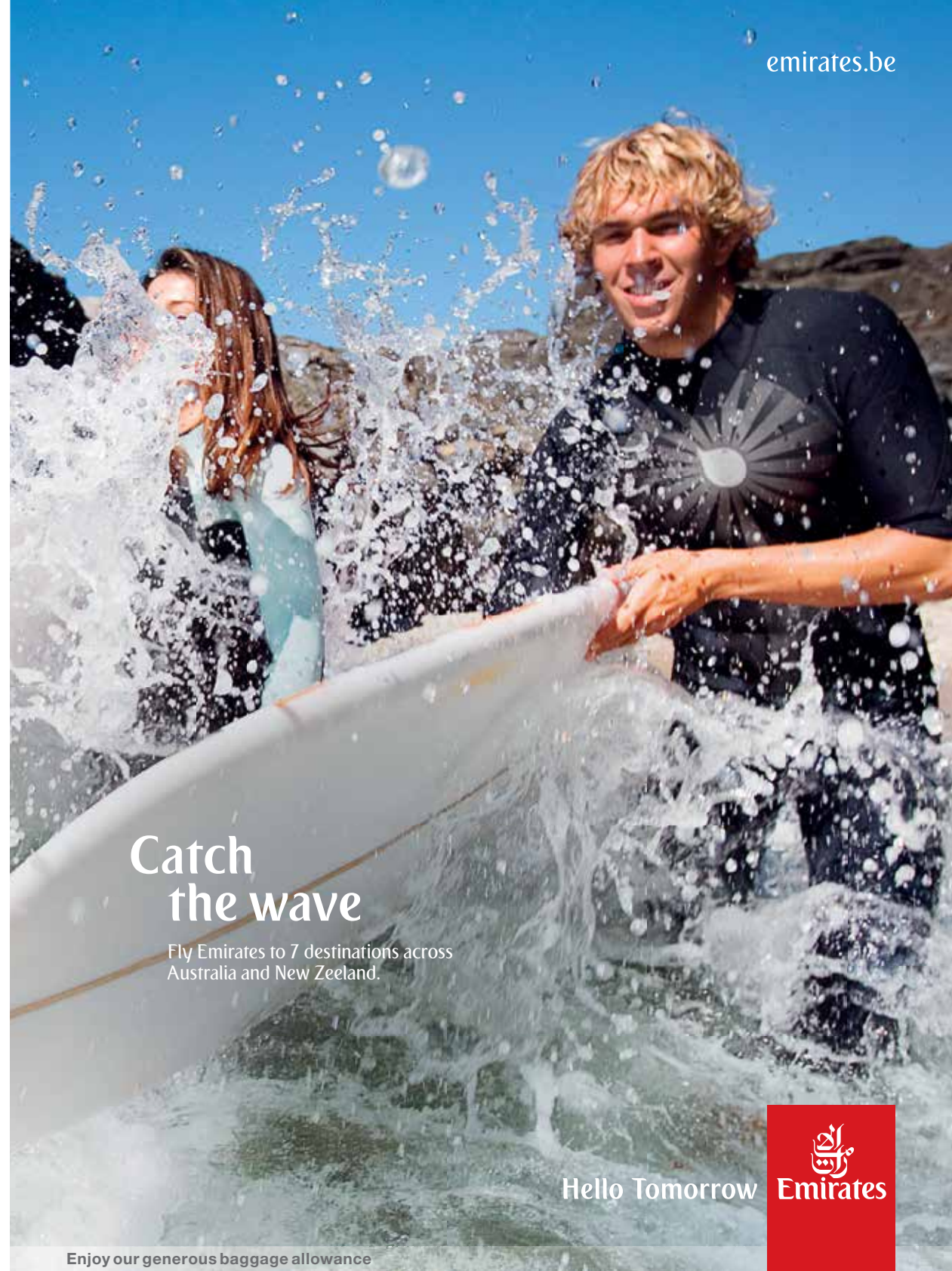
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Icones restaurant in Brussels

James Drew visits a restaurant where it's a question of 'Belgitude'

@ TECHNOLOGY



Innovation: How will we ever live without them? Colin Moors marks your card on what's coming soon innovation-wise

@ HEALTH



Neck, shoulder and back pain

Tom Meyers confronts a growing work-related health issue

@ INTERVIEW



Brad Pitt

Together hooks up with a Hollywood family man with an impressive list of movies under his belt

@ TRAVEL



Croatia: Advent in Zagreb

Together highlights a city that pulls out all the stops for the festive season

@ LIFESTYLE



Swedish fashion: A smörgåsbord of style

Jeanie Keogh headed north to discover the elusive Nordic esprit

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Starring in Belgium

The Black Keys

The Black Keys are on the road to celebrate the release of *Turn Blue*, their eighth very well-received album. **February 24, 2015.** Antwerp Sportpaleis. **Tickets from €35** www.livenation.be



Interpol

Interpol is an American rock band from New York City. Their fifth studio album, *El Pintor*, was released on September 9, 2014, the band's first album since the departure of bassist Carlos Dengler. **24 January.** Forest National (club). **Tickets from €37** www.livenation.be



The Sore Losers

Raw '70s blues-rock, flirting with garage rock & a dash of psychedelica, the Belgian band from Limburg. They play, among others, tracks from their second album *Roslyn*. **20 December.** Ancienne Belgique. **Tickets: €22** www.abconcerts.be

Lambchop play Nixon

In 2015 it will be 15 years since the release of *Nixon*, the breakthrough album by the alt-country band from Nashville. Lambchop was, at the time of the release, overwhelmed by enthusiastic reactions from the old continent while America looked the other way. The band will play the entire album. **29 January 2015.** Ancienne Belgique. **Tickets: €23** www.abconcerts.be



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Adopting fitness habits

Monica Schettino suggests we throw away that list of New Year's resolutions



2 015 is unfurling in front of us and, just like every year, you'll be making a list of New Year's resolutions. Just like every year, you'll probably include the same New Year's resolutions as the previous year: give up smoking, lose a few kilos, play sport regularly, restore your work/life balance... But why aren't we able to keep our New Year's resolutions?

It's quite simply because our brains hate change. These new habits which you want to establish just demand too much effort. Your brain does everything it can to resist, without

you even realizing.

So should we give up our desire for change? Certainly not! Transfer your wishes into actions, and you'll transform your New Year's resolutions into lasting changes... Here are some tips to help you achieve this.

A single, unique resolution at a time

How long that list is! How many ambitions! First of all, we need to accept that we have to focus on one single, good resolution at a time, for two reasons:

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Fitness

1. To minimize effort. Each good resolution, each new habit you want to adopt, demands significant effort because it involves change. By minimizing effort, the subconscious works to reduce the resistance our brain puts up in an attempt to avoid change.



Get into a routine

Choose the days of the week when you're going to visit the gym and note them down in your diary. It will soon become an integral part of your planning, not just part of your intentions. Once you've got into a workout routine and started

getting results, you'll find that this activity becomes a habit, a ritual with benefits which you appreciate.

Reward yourself

Once you've established your new habit as part of your life, award yourself a little treat to congratulate yourself on your performance.

Start all over again

Don't wait until 1 January 2016 to start again if you have several other 'bad' habits which you'd like to get rid of. Take advantage of the energy generated by your success and pick yourself up to take on a new challenge. You could improve your eating habits, for example. Again, you need a single, realistic objective which you once again follow until it becomes one of your habits. For example, you could decide not to skip breakfast anymore, or to eliminate commercially produced ready-made meals little by little, replacing them with simple, home-cooked meals.

Now, you have no more excuses for failing to stick to your New Year's resolutions!

Yours sportingly
Monica Schettino
Wellbeing Manager Aspria

“ OUR BRAINS HATE CHANGE ”

Zen habits blogger Leo Babauta says: “It's neither your self-discipline, the reward, your strength nor your desire, it's not even your motivation which guarantees success. What you need is your power of concentration.”

And that's why it's so important to me to hope that you get involved in regular physical activity in 2015.

Be realistic

No point in telling yourself that you should work out every day if your professional and family life are already overloaded. Set yourself some realistic objectives: once or twice a week is still a positive change.



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Beer belly: End of a myth?

Nutritionist Dr. Kathryn O'Sullivan has carried out a study that she says proves we are being too harsh on beer

The new year is coming and with it the lists of good intentions. Every year, dieting is on top of the list and men make an annual solemn promise to work off their weight, because 50% of men in Belgium have a BMI rating that is too high.

Many people believe that beer contains more calories than other alcoholic beverages such as wine. 75% of women overestimate the number of calories in beer. 10% believe falsely that beer contains fat. However, drinking beer in moderation does not result in a 'beer belly'.

This was confirmed by nutritionist Dr. Kathryn O'Sullivan from Manchester. She has over 20 years of experience. As a clinical dietitian she conducts research on public health and healthy nutrition. O'Sullivan published a study about calories in beer and found that contrary to popular belief, drinking beer does not automatically result in weight gain. Moreover, of all alcoholic beverages, beer contains the fewest calories. The alcohol level determines the number of calories, the higher the alcohol content, the more calories. Even in comparison with a tall cappuccino, a half pint of beer provides fewer calories (almost half as much: a half pint 88 kcal vs tall cappuccino 168 kcal). As long as there is a balance between calories taken and calories burned, you will not gain extra pounds.

O'Sullivan confirmed that the beer belly is a myth. Occasionally drinking a beer doesn't automatically lead to a beer belly. An excess of calories resulting in weight gain and, depending on the personal instance, accumulates fat



mainly on the level of the hips (pear-shaped) or at the level of the abdomen (apple formation). The latter is commonly known as the 'beer belly', but according to scientific research this has nothing to do with beer consumption.

Beer has health benefits in moderation. Moderate beer drinkers have a normal to low BMI. Drinking beer in moderation can therefore fit into a healthy lifestyle. She said: "Enjoyed in moderation, beer, like wine, can provide many essential vitamins and minerals and moderate consumption may also protect against many conditions such as heart disease, osteoporosis and diabetes." ●

The pursuit of happiness

Tom Meyers offers seven tips on the road to true contentment

On the road to Santiago de Compostela © Noel Feans



The promotion of wellbeing is essential to the pursuit of happiness. Self-realization or honing and living your potential and the sense of fulfilment it brings you is one way to promote that wellbeing.

However, self-realization, being in alignment with your life's purpose, is a long-term process, a life-long mission, to be enjoyed every step of the way as there is no true end to self-realization – it is more like a direction than a destination.

Just like a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, it's not about arriving, it's about the experiences, the teachings on the way, the stories, the landscapes, the smells, the tastes of the local delicacies, the culture and, of course, the victory over oneself, having walked

the distance and fulfilled a dream.

When you arrive you do look back on your achievement, contemplating on how you did it and then look towards the future, ready for the next challenge on your path. Self-realization is being in perpetual discovery of oneself, of peeling off the layers, in order to come closer to the real you.

Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are also about short-term objectives. To have a vision and become who you were born to be is essential, but living is about here and now. Do not get caught up in the vision itself and forget to live in this moment. And that moment is very much in peril in today's hectic, online, harder, better, faster and stressful environment, where time becomes as elusive as our health,



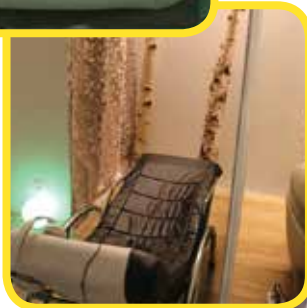
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wellbeing and happiness.

You can change the tide and become a master of your own happiness and live a life where you manage your stress. Stress is after all an essential survival response and part of being human. If you're living a super-human life, stress does become a nuisance.

Research suggests that up to 40% of happiness depends on our habits and activities.

How to promote health, wellbeing and happiness in seven simple steps:

Step 1: Take time-out

If not you, who will do it for you? Taking breaks is essential and short breaks now and then help you to make up time afterwards. This might be counter-intuitive but it's true. For example when you struggle writing, when you hit that wall, go for a walk, breathe in some fresh air. You'll feel more focus afterwards.

Step 2: 'Return to Ease'

Numerous scientific studies have proven that breathing exercises, where you become mindful of your breath and induce a sense of calm and joy, a meditation or a mindfulness exercise, help to reduce anxiety, treat depression, reverse the effects of stress and help you to be more focused. The more you practice the quicker you'll get back into the zone after a stressful moment.

Step 3: Inner forgiveness

Can you forgive yourself? There is something very liberating in inner forgiveness, which changes your attitude towards a past experience. To be the observer of yourself, your thoughts, your feelings and to forgive yourself by accepting what was and to let go of the anger, fear, rage and other emotions that you feel when recalling an unpleasant memory, to detach from past experiences and to let bygones be bygones. In the process of self-observation and changing your attitude, you self-correct, heal wounds and ultimately alter

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Self-Help

the direction of your future.

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Step 4: Gratefulness

What have you been grateful for recently? Practicing grateful living as inspired by the teachings of Br. David Steindl-Rast is a universal practice that fosters personal transformation, cross-cultural understanding, interfaith dialogue, intergenerational respect, non-violent conflict resolution and ecological sustainability. Instead of seeing the worst in everything, start seeing the opportunities. Stop complaining, pointing the finger at others and take an observer's perspective. What has this situation taught you? Then be grateful for the lesson learned.

Step 5: Compassion and altruism

When is the last time you helped someone? Research suggests that meaningful social interaction helps you to reduce stress and enjoy better mental and physical health.

“ LIVING IS ABOUT HERE AND NOW ”

Step 6: Hugs

Our society is deprived of touch, especially single people and the elderly, and it has a detrimental effect on their health. Hugs have healing power, even hugging yourself. Hugs trigger the release of the hormone oxytocin which is known to be important for trust and a sense of wellbeing by reducing fear. A hug a day keeps...

Step 7: Creativity

When was the last time you created something? Knitting, painting, cooking, ironing, doing the dishes or hands on, physical work are all activities with an end result, which help you gain resilience and prevent and treat depression.

In other words the 'pursuit of happiness' is in your hands.

For more health and wellness tips, tune in to the feature Health Matters on www.radiu.eu or visit www.tommeyers.be 📍

Settling for an '8'

Gemma Rose
wonders if we
should settle for
second best in love

When I recently read an article by Lori Gottlieb for the *Atlantic* magazine, written in 2008, *Marry Him! The case for settling for Mr. Good Enough*, I was initially saddened by what she had to say: that once a woman is over 30 and is single, she obviously wants to get married and have children. Thus, she should start being less picky because once she gets to 40, the dating pool reduces considerably and she only has the dregs to choose from. Gottlieb was then in her early 40s and a single mum. She yearned for a man in her life and regretted dismissing so easily those men she met in her 20s and 30s. Whether you should hold out for the love of your life or settle, Gottlieb is clear:

"My advice is this: Settle! That's right. Don't worry about passion or intense connection. Don't nix a guy based on his annoying habit of yelling "Bravo!" in movie theatres. Overlook his halitosis or abysmal sense of aesthetics. Because if you want to have the infrastructure in place to have a family, settling is the way to go. Based on my observations, in fact, settling will probably make you happier in the long run, since many of those who marry with great

expectations become more disillusioned with each passing year."

Following the success – or the controversy – surrounding this article, Gottlieb wrote a book (under the same title) to delve deeper into the issue. Although I have not read the book, subsequent interviews with Gottlieb suggest that the book paints a slightly less depressing picture compared to the original article. She appears to say that the person of our dreams does not exist; that we should give people a chance rather than simply dismiss them because there was no instant chemistry, or because they were called Sheldon. Go for the '8', she says, instead of holding out for the '10', because you'll be waiting a long time.

There is the romantic notion that one person can provide us with everything. The Ancient Greeks believed that we received different types of love from different people, with obsession and sexual passion (when combined) being the most troublesome, fleeting and the least important. Friendship between equals served as the strongest of emotional bonds. In Europe, the Middle Ages viewed

"GO FOR THE '8' INSTEAD OF HOLDING OUT FOR THE '10' "

marriage as an economic contract, with love playing little part. This notion that one person can provide all types of love, with the emphasis on passion and 'true love', is still relatively new, sowing its seed in the 18th century, cemented and glorified by Hollywood. In the Philosophers' Mail article, *How we end up marrying the wrong people*, one of the reasons we do so is because we have shifted from a marriage of security to the marriage of instinct, where feelings play the decisive factor: the instant chemistry, the sparks, the butterflies, the passion.

Is choosing based on instinct and feeling the best way to find The One? The Philosophers' Mail thinks it's unlikely because we are not very good at knowing ourselves, let alone knowing the other person. We may feel that we are meant to be with our partner, when in reality they may be very wrong for us. But this feeling brings about a sense of familiarity – whether consciously or not – of past relationships. A partner who is emotionally unavailable may remind us of an emotionally unavailable parent. It is this familiarity that makes an objectively disastrous relationship seem so right. We don't know what a

good relationship is because it is possible that we were never surrounded by one. Therefore, we could easily dismiss someone where there was no initial spark as boring or 'not our type' because we are uncomfortable with being treated well by a reliable, authentic person. Sexual attraction and lasting love do not necessarily go hand in hand.

So what does it actually mean 'to settle'? Are we settling if we are with a person who sets our loins on fire but gives us crumbs of their time,



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PERSONAL **DEVELOPMENT**

Self-Help

makes us feel inferior or manages the relationship wholly on their terms? Are we settling if we are with someone to whom we were not initially attracted but who treats us with care, love and respect? The reason it seems hard for some to find lasting love could be due to the failure of balancing instinct with rationale and charm with character.

To save ourselves from the terrible relationships, we need to think maturely and critically about what we want in a partner and from a relationship. This means accepting the likelihood that the person may not tick all the boxes; but, they must tick those that really matter.

Most importantly, to find – as Gottlieb puts it – a ‘10’ or an ‘8’, I think we must match up to that score too. Gottlieb, through her mistakes, alludes to this pervading sense of entitlement without doing any of the work to merit it. A small column in the Guardian, What I’m really thinking: the matchmaker echoes this sentiment: “You get mad when imperfect partners are found for you, but are breathtakingly unaware that you are someone else’s compromise. You can’t find someone in your ordinary life, but expect me to perform the miracle that eludes you. Good luck to you, but love and life aren’t like that.”

Common dating advice yells at us not to settle. I agree, don’t settle. But before you take this advice to heart, I challenge you to fully understand what settling means. And I challenge you, above all, to date yourself. ❶

**“ THE
EMPHASIS
ON PASSION
AND TRUE
LOVE IS STILL
RELATIVELY
NEW ”**



A second skin

In our new seduction series *Belle de Bruxelles*, **Caroline S.** follows Amanda out into the night...

Amanda feels alone tonight. Utterly alone. Another rough day, like all the others since Alex left. She needs something else. To forget everything and exist in some other way. A desire to be beautiful, a desire to be her.

In the mirror there is nothing, absolutely nothing: the face of a woman of 32, tired, some wrinkles that nothing can wipe away... an inexplicable sadness haunts her, day and night.

Amanda stares at her reflection, saying nothing, wondering: "Who is she? Who is this stranger in the mirror?" She feels nothing, neither sadness, nor anger. No emotion – as if her heart has suddenly stopped beating. She looks down mechanically.

Who is this woman in the mirror that looks like her, so mournful? A friend? An enemy?

Since when did she cease to exist ? SINCE WHEN?

Amanda puts on a little black dress, short. She is always in black – it's like a second skin. Elegant, fine, she wants to look beautiful tonight. Amanda hesitates... Raises her hair, slowly. A touch of red gloss on the lips. And what if she wasn't Amanda tonight. A shiver runs through her. She looks at this body of hers in the mirror. Its generous curves, this firm body that she takes such good care of. Something has changed... a new gleam in her eyes. She's ready.

Her heart sinks – in the hallway she sees Alex's



gym bag. Amanda shakes her head, she must leave. Outside, it's cold. She shivers and pulls up the collar of her coat, rushes out into the street, suddenly raises her hand to hail a taxi.

Music is playing in the taxi – she knows it well. Lost in her thoughts, she hears nothing, neither Eddy the driver chatting, nor the sounds of the night.

Alex ... Alex ... nothing can erase his image. Yesterday, he was with her. Yesterday, he had slowly caressed her body, for hours on end. He had such a unique way of looking at her, piercing her heart, awakening in her an inexplicable desire, all-consuming and uncontrollable. He was her double, her friend, her lover...

23h00, Amanda steps out of the taxi. The bar is crowded, the smell of the people and their conversations are jumbled up in her head. It's so hot that she has trouble breathing, her heart races. She slides in among the crowd, bumping into some of them. All around her: unknown faces. She turns her head, trying to keep control of her emotions. She staggers, regains her balance in extremis and adjusts her dress, delicately.

Tonight, Amanda just wants to forget everything: her life, her pain, Alex. To be someone else in this moment. A man approaches her, slowly, his body brushes against hers, their eyes meet, intensely – time stops, she feels a powerful, sweet heat rising within her, violently. She feels beautiful, she smiles at him. "Good evening, my name is Eve." ❶

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A bridge too far?

Martin Banks has a look at new EU legislation that affects the engineering industry



The Falkirk Wheel in Scotland
© Sean McClean

The world of engineering faces an uncertain future, but it is hoped that EU legislation could help build more solid foundations.

Look around you and you'll be reminded of the role engineering plays in our everyday lives. Engineers help design the bridges and roads we drive on, the phones we use and apartment blocks we live in. But do we really appreciate their contribution to society?

According to an alliance of engineering federations the answer is a resounding No.

That is why the seven engineers federations, in an unprecedented show of strength, have recently joined forces in a campaign they hope will lay the foundations for a brighter future for their profession.

In November they converged on Brussels for a 'European Engineers' Day' conference where many issues of concern were highlighted. One particular area of current concern for engineers is that of labour mobility – the ability of an engineer to ply their trade in an EU member state other than his/her own.

That is where the new EU legislation comes in.

International mobility is now seen as a normal part of the career for many of us but, in the past, a fully qualified professional in one EU country would not necessarily have met the requirements to practice in another member state unless he/she had completed a training course in that country.

EU rules on what is called "mutual recognition of qualifications" were introduced to overcome this.

The Professional Qualifications Directive is supposed to make it easier for engineers (and others) to have their professional qualifications recognized in another member state.

Jose Manuel Vieira, president of the European Federation of National Engineering Associations, (FEANI) says that many of today's challenges are of an "international nature" and stressed the value of the "Engineering Card" as an "important tool" to facilitate mobility and recognition of engineering qualifications. FEANI will promote this tool more intensively in the following months.

He adds: "Internationalization and cross border recognition of engineering qualifications are important and forge a better future for society. The importance of quality assessment of their initial and continuing education needs to be recognized."

The European Engineer's Day conference was attended by some 150 participants from industry, academia and professional organizations. It was organized by the European Federation of National Engineering Associations and European Council of Engineering Chambers and European Council of Civil Engineers.

The day long gathering also heard that Europe is already facing a serious skills shortage in engineering, one that will worsen if more students don't take up the career. Participants called for urgent action at EU and national state level to address the shortage.

"If we are to compete in the global race," argued Dane Flemming Pedersen, of the European Federation of Engineering Consultancy Associations (EFCA), "we need to equip our people with the skills to adapt, innovate and flourish."

Concerns about Europe's engineering prowess are nothing new. In 1830, Charles Babbage, father of the computer – back then they were steam-powered – published his Reflections on the Decline of Science in England. He lamented that the UK, previously "eminently distinguished for its mechanical and manufacturing ingenuity," was in real danger of falling behind other nations.

The reason? Its failure adequately to support science.

In the long years since Babbage made his observations, considerable resources – both intellectual and financial – have been channelled towards addressing the shortfall of skilled scientists and engineers.

Yet, Europe is still far from being able to say "job done".

"INTERNATIONALIZATION AND CROSS BORDER RECOGNITION OF ENGINEERING QUALIFICATIONS ARE IMPORTANT "

The European Engineer's Day event was told that meeting many of today's challenges and environmental changes will require "unprecedented" levels of public funding and some, such as Austrian chartered engineer Klaus Thurriedl, of the European Council of Civil Engineers, has called for greater investment and resources both at EU and national level in order to boost future engineering innovation.


He says EU and policymakers have an important role to play in supporting the engineering profession, adding: "The success of the European economy will depend upon our ability to unlock the potential of the SME-sector and our endeavours to support engineering entrepreneurship in our countries."

It is a view shared by Swedish engineer Ulrika Lindstrand, another conference attendee, who also believes it is "vitally important" to raise "public knowledge and appreciation" of engineers along with their professional concerns and "capacity to solve the arising problems in a changing world".


"You get the feeling," she laments, "that we engineers have become almost invisible in society today and the public does not seem aware of the good work the profession does."

No less a figure than Neil Armstrong said that if any one of the engineering breakthroughs of the 20th century were removed, our world would be a very different – and much less hospitable – place.

EU policymakers, are you listening? ●



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Charity

Tricothon: Knit a hat for a smoothie

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1.6 million people and one in five children in Belgium live below the poverty line. Poverty is also often synonymous with social exclusion. It is time to roll up our sleeves. The association Compagnons Dépanneurs battles poverty and exclusion in Wallonia and Brussels in helping the poor to do small work (painting, wallpapering, various repairs, small power plants, etc.) to allow them to live in decent standards.

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The association fights against poverty and exclusion in Wallonia and Brussels by helping the poor to do odd jobs (painting, wallpapering, various repairs, small electrical work, etc.) to allow them to live in a decent place.

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Souvenirs de Pomme

Our fashion expert **Jeanie Keogh** meets two sisters who inspire people to be more flamboyant

I am going to go out on a Twiggy limb and make a bold fashion statement, or rather, a bold statement about fashion. There are two types of jewellery wearers: those who select their clothes then add jewellery to match, and those who choose their jewellery and subsequently plan their ensemble around it.

Sister jewellery design duo, who make up Souvenirs de Pomme, understand this difference and cater to the naked-without-earrings feeling unique to those who are mad about accessories. Creator Delphine Cordie, the elder sister of this young Flemish pair, opened the business a year after their iconic and perpetually-stylish grandmother (alias Pomme) died in 2008, bequeathing them her Hermes Kelly bag along with other timeless luxury brand treasures. The nostalgia was so great that upon inheriting their grandmother's things, Delphine decided to turn her jewellery-making hobby into a profession and pay tribute to her late grandmother's panache.

Speaking to younger sister Emilienne Cordie, who joined the business full time a year ago, it was easy to imagine the two as young girls playing dress up, raiding their beloved grandmother's costume jewellery box and adorning themselves with 60's era clip-ons, baubles, bangles and colourful strings of pearls.

One thing is clear, though, the Cordie sisters' girlhood pastime is certainly not child's play. Five years into the business, which they run out of a small workshop in Deule, a suburb of Gent,

Souvenirs de Pomme is well on its way to becoming a lucrative, long-term venture. Their collections are displayed in 18 stores across Belgium, the business has expanded enough to warrant working with an Italian supplier so as to concentrate exclusively on design, and they are soon to launch a more exclusive line. The long-term goal is to dangle their collections in front of international noses once they've made enough of a name for themselves here in Belgium.

Their overall concept is to inspire people to be more flamboyant and fun in their accessorizing, while making something of high quality which will stand the fashion test of time and can be passed down to children as their grandmother did with them.

"For us, jewellery should be something really much more special than just something materialistic. It should have a story, like the story of our grandmother, and it should really be a kind of a treasure you hold onto, like a memory



Fashion

or a souvenir of a special occasion or a special party," said Emilienne.

On the other hand, the Souvenirs de Pomme philosophy is just as much that fancy jewellery should not be something locked away in a velvet-lined mahogany box that must only be worn for high tea with the Belgian queen. Extravagance and luxury have their place in daily life, for those who are daring enough to bust out jewellery that says, 'In case you didn't notice, I look fabulous,' even if you're cleaning the house.

Or, in Emilienne's words: "Every day should be a party."

Souvenirs de Pomme style guide is – put on a pair of jeans, a white shirt and a pair of oversized bright pink earrings and several mismatching bracelets (what they call arm candy) and the day revolves around their chink and chime. Jewellery is the fulcrum point of the ensemble and their ideal client is someone with the confidence to pull it off.

"With jewellery you can really make a statement, and use colour and wear a really black outfit and make it really pop. For us, accessories are so much more fun to combine than clothing," she said.

Moreover, jewellery is not season-related, she said, so there is more freedom to design without having to be a slave to what others in the industry are doing. For their upcoming spring summer 2015 collection, the Cordie sisters departed from fashion almost entirely,

instead choosing to collaborate with a local chef and in a hybrid of food/fashion photography. (Although it does beg the question: who leaves an expensive earring lying on a fruit plate except perhaps Marie Antoinette?)

Emilienne said of the concept: "We didn't really look for inspiration in fashion, we looked to food because it is something that is much less related to time. We like to be inspired by things other than fashion because we think that art and food are related to aesthetics and beauty so we found a really creative cook. We were really drawn to his creativity and the texture and colour and the way he composed and placed the food."

Indeed, the jewellery does look good enough to eat, to say nothing of the food by Tom van Lysebettens, whose restaurant Cochon Deluxe will open in February.

Souvenirs de Pomme's current autumn/winter collection – called Stardust – used darker colours and worked with onyx and burnt quartz, this season is "more eclectic and a bit abstract" Emilienne said. The coming season, set to launch in January, has "a lot more colour, a lot more gold".

Wherever the future of Souvenirs de Pomme is headed, it can only be said that these ladies certainly have a lot more up their sleeves ... besides the obvious bracelets, of course.

www.souvenirsdepomme.be
www.cochon deluxe.be



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BEAUTY

For her

Holiday shimmer

Our beauty expert **Delphine Stefens** adds an extra touch of sparkle to the festive period for boys and girls

For her...

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BEAUTY

For her & him



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BEAUTY

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Louis Vuitton: Born to roam and reign

Shannon Robb traces the journey of a fashion icon

Louis Vuitton's fashion empire travelled a path from humble, provincial beginnings in eastern France to become a mainstay on the Champs-Élysées and one of the world's most luxurious brand names.

Today, the name Louis Vuitton is king among luxury brands in the modern fashion world. For decades it has maintained its reign. The monogrammed fashion empire found its success quickly with innovative and fashionable trunks that suited the needs of a Parisian elite embarking on global travels during the 19th century.

As a 13-year-old moving to Paris, it's doubtful that Louis Vuitton could have anticipated what was awaiting him down the road.

Vuitton was born on 4 August, 1821, in Anchay, a poor region in the Jura Mountains of eastern France, not far from the Swiss border. At 13, he left the region and his provincial life, journeying west and working odd jobs for two years to pave his way to the city that was a growing centre of luxury, fashion, and expensive taste.

When he finally arrived in 1837 at the age of 16, Vuitton became an apprentice to Monsieur Maréchal, a box maker and packer on Rue Saint-Honoré. During his time at Maréchal's atelier, Vuitton had his first brush with royalty. He served as the personal packer of the Empress of France and wife of Napoleon Bonaparte, Eugénie de Montijo.

Box making was a respected profession and



© ERIC LEGUAY

the services of professional packers were in high demand at the time to accommodate the popular fashions, including the cumbersome and difficult-to-pack hoop skirt. Parisian elite and royals required these skilled packers to box and transport their various luxuries and fashion items because the expensive and fragile contents had to be securely packaged for travel.

Vuitton remained with Maréchal for 17 years before opening his own professional workshop on Rue Neuve-des-Capucines in 1854.

He had earned a reputation at Maréchal's for his ability to handle the precious cargo, and he assured clients that his own workshop "securely packs the most fragile objects, specializing in packing fashions". But Vuitton also exhibited the innovation and vision that would allow the sovereignty of his name as a coveted brand to begin taking shape.

Vuitton produced handmade, custom trunks, which he offered to clients in addition to his packing services. Designed with fashionable colours and created with canvas and glue instead of the leather that was typically used, Vuitton had created a durable and beautiful product that appealed to customers. His slat trunk, introduced in 1858, is said to be the first piece of modern luggage, a symbol of the age of easier and increasingly popular global travel.

By 1889, the extreme popularity of Vuitton's luggage with an elite clientele had inspired counterfeits to emerge on the market. At the



© LOUIS VUITTON / ANTOINE JARRIER

Exposition Universelle that year, Vuitton introduced a new canvas decorated with a trademark design to deter the imitations. The 1889 Exposition was the same year the Eiffel Tower was unveiled, so the public who had travelled to the exposition and encountered what would one day become one of the country's most recognized landmarks also encountered an icon of French fashion.

The brand grew in popularity as the Vuitton workshop developed more innovative products in its luggage line. New designs continued to secure Vuitton's name as a luxury brand, and a tumbler lock, supposedly impossible to break into, was introduced in 1890.

Two years later, on February 27, 1892, Louis Vuitton died at 72. Despite the loss of its patriarch, the business carried on and expanded under the direction of Louis's son Georges, who had already carried the Louis Vuitton bags across the Channel and opened the first overseas store in London.

In 1896, the famous monogram canvas that has since become synonymous with the name was designed, and in 1914 a Louis Vuitton store opened on the Champs-Élysées. The largest luggage store at the time, the location marked the Louis Vuitton name as the world's most luxurious travel brand, a status it has upheld for over a century. The company is consistently named one of the most profitable brands in the world and earned a spot at number ten on Forbes's World's Most Valuable Brands list in November 2014.



Portrait of Louis Vuitton (1821-1892)
© ARCHIVES LOUIS VUITTON

Over the decades, royalty, celebrities, and members of elite society have remained loyal patrons of the designer name. Vuitton's unmistakable monogrammed canvas bags have graced the wrists, arms, and shoulders of Princess Diana, Jackie Onassis, Jane Fonda and even Coco Chanel, herself a fashion powerhouse.

In recent years, the brand has expanded to stamp far more than luggage with the LV logo, but its foundations in travel and in combining beautiful form with impeccable function have remained strong.

When Marc Jacobs was appointed the fashion house's first creative director in 1997, he was faced with introducing ready-to-wear clothing collections for men and women.

"What I have in mind are things that are deluxe but that you can throw into a bag and escape town with, because Louis Vuitton has a heritage in travel," he said in an interview with US Vogue.

Just as Louis had developed a product the Parisian elite needed to accommodate their lifestyle of luxury and travel, Jacobs recognized the need to keep up with the current demands of fashionable society while carrying on the traditions of the Louis Vuitton business, an empire that has travelled a long path of success. ❶

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Photographer: Aylen Torres
Stylist: Nicholas Sirot
Makeup artist: Noel Inocencio for Mac
Models: Louise @ IMM Brussels

Total look by Hermes





Louise: Audio headset
Momentum by
Sennheiser

Collection: Samurai by Rituals - Foaming face wash
Calming after-shave lotion - Anti-wrinkle face cream

Perfume "la Panthère" by Cartier
"Déclaration" by Cartier
Champagne brut "Palme d'or" with glasses
Champagne "So Jennie" exclusive edition
Natan for Mandarine Napoléon
Bracelet: Frey Wille



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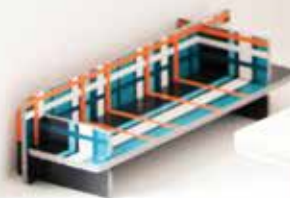
Whisky box: Speyside single malt scotch whisky
Oud Wood eau de parfum: Tom Ford (on the left)
Audio headset: audio Momentum by Sennheiser
Presentation box: Tom Ford after-shave
& eau de parfum Noir (on the right)
Louis Vuitton travel book
Mobile phone: Samsung galaxy alpha
Wallet: Apc - Pen: Mont Blanc
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(paint pot)
Plum dressing
(eyeshadow)
Haute and naughty lash
(mascara)
Lips: naked liner
Creme cup (lipstick)
Nice buzz (lipgloss)



Handbag:
"Constance"
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Total look by Diesel
Motorcycle helmet with
Swarovski by Kask



Model H Deco
Plate by Hermes



Dress:
Apc & Vanessa Seward
Jewels set Sara Esther

Diamonds are Antwerp's best friend



Colin Moors checks on the current health of an industry that makes the second city tick

Ask anyone to think of a town or city associated with diamonds and they will probably say "Antwerp" and there are many reasons why this should be so. Ever since diamonds were first dug out of the ground in India and Alexander the Great brought them to Europe, the stones have fascinated and delighted the wealthy and aspirational. A must-have for any serious engagement proposal, the diamond you choose for your loved one will almost certainly have had a connection with Antwerp in one way or another.

Antwerp has been the hub of diamond distribution and sales for well over 500 years. After Bruges decided against diamonds and decided to concentrate on the port as its revenue earner, Antwerp became the main hub, with some 40% of all world trade passing through in some way. By the end of the 17th century, Amsterdam had all but cornered the market, due to the trade links forged by The Netherlands. The Dutch capital kept the good stones for itself and only traded the smaller, less desirable ones to Antwerp. This, however, proved to be an advantage, not a disaster. Such was the skill of the diamond cutters in Belgium's second city, they could take apparently worthless rough diamonds and turn them into something both beautiful and sought after. The skill to do this was obviously in high demand too, bringing a lot of business back to Antwerp as its reputation grew.

Surviving the depression of the 30s was difficult, with many cutting shops closing. Many traders and craftsmen fled to the UK when the anti-Jewish measures were put into place by the occupying Nazis between 1942 and the end of the war. After the war, the exiled workers brought their skills back to Antwerp, their talent and tenacity quickly re-



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LIFESTYLE

establishing the city as a major force in the industry.

Many businesses in the city span many generations, having carved out a reputation for quality, passion and creativity. One such company is Geretti, founded in 1929. Now a fourth-generation family jeweller, Geretti is one of the most reputable diamond traders in Antwerp. I asked the owner, Marc Geretti, what made his business different from the dozens of others you could walk into stepping off the train in Antwerp Central. He said: "The client can choose their own diamond and mounting and we can finish it for them on the same day. This way, they can take home a truly original and personalized piece of jewellery at a great price."

So why should people go to Geretti when there are many other merchants available? "As a family business" he said, "we try to get to know the client on first-name terms and treat them in the best possible manner irrespective of their budget."

Geretti has a very high score on TripAdvisor. "We follow up on the client's satisfaction," he explained. "This is evidently what people appreciate and why they are willing to share their positive experiences on the internet. Sites such as TripAdvisor are handy for the international traveller to ensure they visit the right places and to avoid any unpleasant experiences."

Geretti, as other producers in Antwerp do, adheres to the principle of the four Cs. These stand for:

- Cut. Not what you might expect. Cut in this case refers not to the shape of the diamond itself but the quality of the way in which the diamond has been crafted, also known in the trade as the 'make'. The cut lies entirely in the hands of the artisan cutting the diamond and can dramatically increase or decrease the value of the finished product, depending on the skill used.

- Carat. Known as 'karat' in the US, to differentiate between gold and diamonds, this is

the weight of the finished diamond. One diamond carat is equal to 1/5 of a gram. A carat may also be sub-divided into 100 points, so if you are looking at a 0.25 point diamond, it will be quarter of a carat. Price per carat is no measure of quality, however. That depends on the cut, among other factors.


- Clarity. How clear a diamond is and how many of the natural imperfections have been removed during cutting.

- Colour. Colours will range from colourless (transparent) to a straw yellow. The less colour, the more valuable the diamond.

There is an equally important fifth C that you will find with all reputable dealers - certification. Several independent bodies exist to grade the diamonds and issue certificates to ensure none of the important four Cs has been overstated and that all are accurate. Geretti and many other Antwerp dealers use the Diamond High Council (HRD) agency.

What next for the city's industry? Far from resting on their laurels, the tradesmen of today have put training programmes and workshops in place to ensure the skills are once again passed down to the next generation. The Antwerp World Diamond Centre (AWDC) has an Antwerp Diamond Masterplan, with project highlights reaching into 2020, in order to remain competitive and to open the industry's contacts to other Belgian business, with a view to expanding on the already impressive 5% the diamond trade contributes to gross exports from Belgium, at a yearly turnover of over €42 billion.

With other aspects of the plan including job creation, innovation, education and a more transparent and open method of trading, it would appear that one of Belgium's most distinguished and profitable sectors is in safe hands for perhaps another half century.

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Interview

Hilary Swank: From a trailer park to a Hollywood trailer

Together sat down with an actress whose life is the epitome of rags-to-riches

Two-time Academy award winner, Hilary Swank, 40, stars in *The Homesman*, a western saga opposite Tommy Lee Jones and Meryl Streep.

Swank made her film debut in 1992 in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* before her breakout role in *The Karate Kid* franchise. It was her role in *Boys Don't Cry* which earned her a Best Actress award, at the Oscars in 1999. In 2004, she took home the honours again in the sports drama, *Million Dollar Baby*. Other notable movies include *The Gift* (2000), *P.S. I Love You* (2007), and *Amelia* (2009).

Her off-screen life is a rags-to-riches story. She was born in Nebraska; her mother was a secretary and a dancer, and her father, a Chief Master Sergeant in the Oregon Air National Guard who later became a travelling salesman. She also has a brother, eight years her senior. Due to financial woes, the family moved to a trailer park in Washington when she was six years old.

Her parents separated when she was fifteen, and she and her mother moved to Los Angeles where they lived out of their car until her mother had saved enough money to rent an apartment.

Romantically, Swank met and married Chad Lowe (brother of Rob), in 1997 after meeting him on the set of *Quiet Days* in Hollywood.



They divorced in 2007. In 2006, she began dating her agent, John Campisi until the summer of 2012. She has since been in a relationship with French real estate broker, Laurent Fleury, with whom she lives part of the time in his apartment in Paris.

Together: You often portray strong women that have overcome immense adversity. Do you see a parallel to yourself at all? You came from quite a humble background.

Hilary Swank: Yeah, to be able to see the common thread between characters that I've played and my own life I can only say that it's not that I search out those types of characters. It's not like I call my agents and say, 'Bring me the women who aren't afraid to follow their dream!' I think what happens is when the scripts come across my desk, there's just either a fire that lights in my belly or there isn't.

Did life change after two Oscar wins? Did that put more pressure on you?

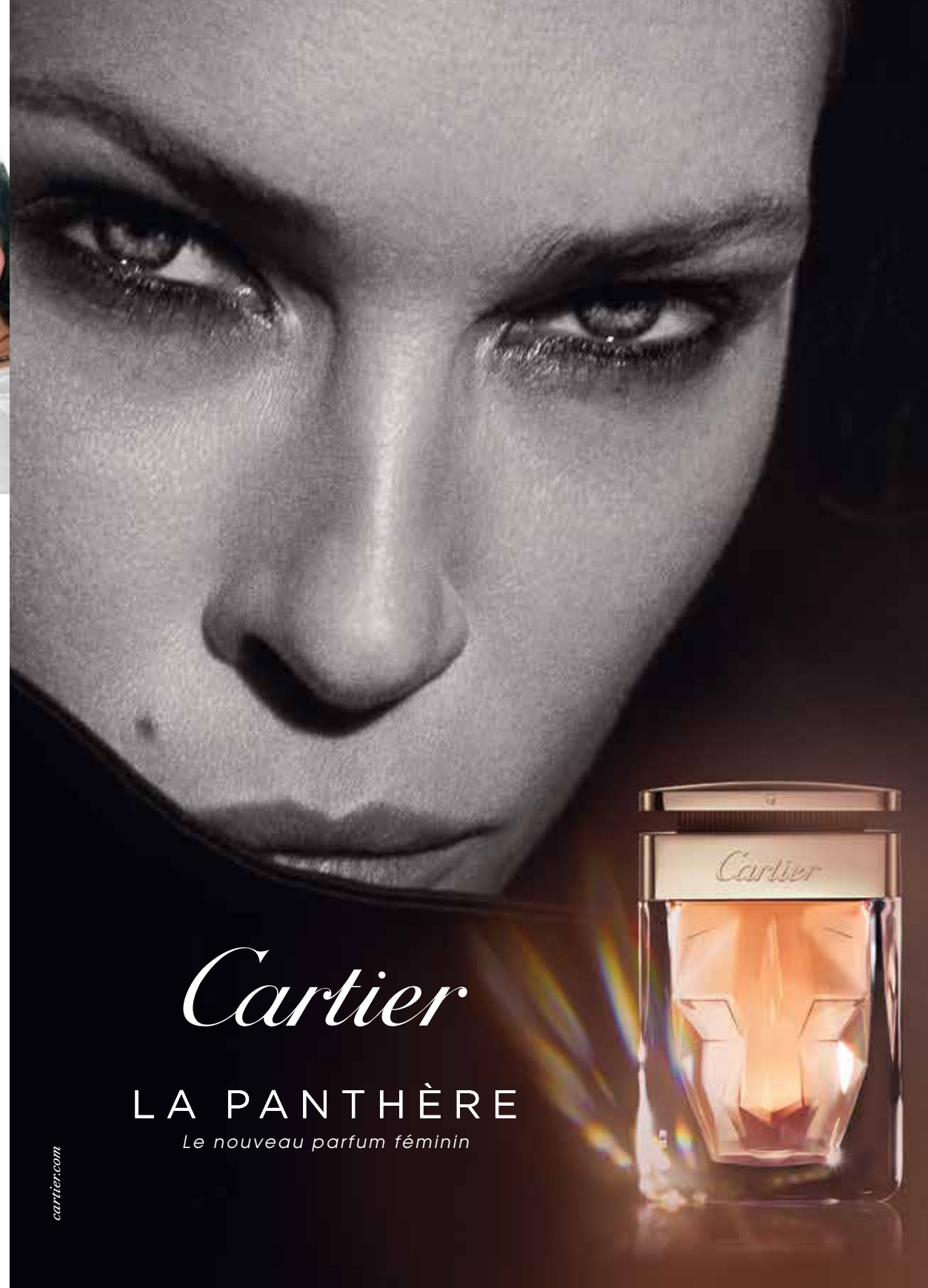
You know, I think the interesting thing is, it's almost the pressure you put on yourself. Not after *Million Dollar Baby* but after *Boys Don't Cry* and you're winning an Academy Award and you're so young and you aren't known for anything else really, except for that one film, you think, 'Where do I go from here?' You're like all the way up here and you've gotten this incredible acknowledgment about your work, something that you never expected to happen. And so you put this enormous pressure on yourself and think, 'I can't mess up now.' And of course, you're going to make mistakes, you're going to make a movie that doesn't work and there is no such thing as perfection. I watch *Boys Don't Cry* and *Million Dollar Baby*, and I see the flaws. I see where I could have been better. I have so much to learn and achieve and I don't ever want to rest on my laurels and say, 'Yeah, it's easy from here.' And a lot of people say, 'Well, now you've done that, you can kind of just sit back.' I'm like, 'Sit back?' (laughs)

You don't seem to work that much - I imagine that's by choice?

Usually I only like to do a movie a year mostly because it takes a few months to film a movie,



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and then the preparation for it is a few months, and so that is already almost half a year. Then you have to go and promote it and that's a full time job.

Are you one for bringing the character home?

No, I've learned that it's best to try to walk away from it, because first of all, a short day on a movie set is fourteen hours, and that's really not the norm. It's anywhere from fifteen to sixteen hours, sometimes eighteen hours a day, and so you're practically living your character anyway because when you leave the set, you're learning your lines for the next day and then going to sleep. So other than sleeping you're never really only out of character, but if you're trying to walk around in it like on the weekends and stuff, I just find you kind of lose your mind. (laughter) It might be why a lot of actors go crazy. I'm not kidding, you are in it, you're in it so deeply and I think that it's really what happens to a lot of actors.

It is an industry that showers you with all sorts of things, what do you do to keep yourself grounded?

I have great friends around me, my family, and I think that because of my background because of where I come from, because of how I grew up, it's just not something I forget. It helps me to not take what I have now for granted. I really appreciate that I get to travel and that I see the world and that I can pay my bills. It's an incredible feeling to say that I can actually buy that pair of shoes and get my groceries, and I don't take that for granted; I don't ever forget it, and I appreciate a sale as much as the next person. I really think about where I'm spending my money, and I like to spend my money on my family. I think it's just about not forgetting where you come from.

When you first arrived in LA - what do you remember most about that time when you look back at it?

Well, at that moment, the thing is you only know that those things are not the norm when you've had life experience. For me, when people say, 'Wow; you grew up in a trailer.' But it didn't feel like that. I didn't feel, 'Oh, poor me,

“ YOU PUT THIS ENORMOUS PRESSURE ON YOURSELF AND THINK, ‘I CAN’T MESS UP NOW.’ ”

I'm in a trailer park.' It wasn't a bad experience. I had a roof over my head and I had food, and so it wasn't that being poor and having those experiences was a negative. The negative part of it was learning about class at such a young age, not from my friends, but from my friend's parents, who would say, 'You aren't to hang out with her.' At six years old, to have a parent say, 'You're not welcome in our home, you need to go.' Or, 'You can't play with my son or daughter.' Now I see children, I just think, 'How could anyone do something like that?' It really boggles your mind but I think that it's really an insecurity. I think it's a fear of the unknown. And it also taught me compassion. It's hard to rise above when I see those people if I go home and they want to talk to me now because I'm famous and they want to have conversations, it's hard for me to rise above it. But like I said, you just have to try and find compassion and to recognise that when people are different, it's threatening to some people.

Do you think that upbringing has changed your response to the celebrity spotlight and media intrusion?

I don't know; I think any sort of an intrusion is an intrusion. I find that people are very kind and supportive to me, even through some of my difficult times in my life; I mean just the nature of being an actor is that your private life is out on display. We are humans, we go through our own hard times and we make mistakes and we're out there for everyone to see and everyone to comment on and say how they



would do it differently. Sure, it's easy to judge, it's easy to point a finger at someone else and say, 'Oh, I would do that so differently,' but growing up now, I kind of feel like I grew up in the business. I've been doing it now for over half my life and it's just one of the side effects of my job, is to be under that kind of constant scrutiny.

Has that had a bearing on where you feel you are at in your career now?

No, I feel like I'm really blessed. I feel like I get a lot of opportunities and my job brings me so much joy, and every time I'm on a movie set, I just kind of sit there in awe, and the kind of surprise and beauty of what I get to be a part of never ceases to amaze me.

Being an actress in Hollywood, has it been difficult to be taken seriously?

Well, if anything, I don't think one of my problems is being taken seriously. (laughs) I think people think I'm really serious; I think one of my problems is people think I'm too serious. Just from the nature of my jobs, everyone says, 'I thought when I was going to meet you, you'd be so intense (laughter) which makes sense to me because my movies are pretty intense, but

sure, there are moments when I'll read a movie and they'll say, 'We're casting the guy first, and if the guy commands a lot of money, then we'll cast the woman off of the budget, what's left over for the girl.' So they won't even necessarily go after the actress that's right for the role, they'll go with whoever will work for the money.

And what's your response to that, do you say, no, then I'm not doing that project then?

No, I would never say that, not if it's something I really want to be part of. I mean I didn't become an actor to make a certain amount of money, but it's frustrating to think that it has to be cast that way, but I think it's getting better.

How would you describe your style?

My friends and I joke that I have one foot in the meadow and one foot in the ghetto, (laughs). That probably sums it up. ❶



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You can also take to the snowboards, hike in snow shoes or go Nordic walking.

When you have completed these strenuous (but fun) exercises, it's time to rest those weary bones in the indoor pool... or (for an extra fee) head for the Wellness centre Club Med Spa by CARITA where you'll find 11 polyvalent treatment rooms and a soothing Turkish bath.

Suitably refreshed, the taste buds will be tingling by now – time for the chefs to surprise you with their creativity and skills.

Two restaurants - Les Cerfs and Le Celeste - offer different atmospheres according to the season, and La Laiterie is a speciality restaurant that serves lunch and dinner around mountain and international themes. Among the many bars dotted around the resort, The Roc Bar has intimate spaces with access to the large outdoor terrace.

This is a very family friendly resort, with supervision for children from four months – in fact, it offers childcare that suits your child's age.

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Travelling across the Alps brings us to Pragelato Vialattea, a resort that offers an alternative to those who don't, can't, won't ski but are ready for a bit of golf or hiking.

Located in Italy's Piedmont region at an altitude of 1,600 metres, this new Club Med resort offers a friendly welcome and *una pizzico de la dolce vita*.

The heart of the resort has 20 groups of chalets which provide top-end accommodation with lots of space for families in a modern reinterpretation of the traditional, warm and cosy chalet ambience.

It's an ideal choice for families with children from twos to teens, so that parents can enjoy their holiday to the full.

This is Italy after all and the chefs pull out all the stops to ensure you have a fabulous and entertaining meal.

The main restaurant proposes four different moods, with four dining rooms arranged in a star shape around the buffet.

There is a paddling pool, indoor pool and outdoor pool included in the price but if you take the optional extra Club Med Spa by PAYOT you'll find seven treatment rooms, a 'duo' room for tandem treatments and a Zen relaxation area, a moment of sheer relaxation and comfort around an open fire.

Whether it's now, in the spring or in the summer months, it's always a good time to head for the hills... www.clubmed.com



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Seize the skis

Thanks to a pioneering visionary the slopes of Les Saisies are not what they used to be



Looking at the Col des Saisies mountain pass in the Beaufortain region of France a century ago one would be forgiven for thinking that the only significant history going in these hills was that of nature herself, gradually eroding the mountains and moving ice and snow around.

But the homo sapiens has a habit of trying to conquer even the most difficult of challenges. Austrian ski instructor Erwin Eckl was a pioneer of winter sports. His love for the mountains led him to the pass and, as soon as he laid eyes on it, he decided to settle there and create his own business. He didn't see just rugged snow-clad slopes – he saw an opportunity. In French 'saisir' mean to seize and Eckl certainly seized the day as he dreamed of a thriving tourist spot on barren hills ... barren but with plenty of snow and stunning views of Mont Blanc.

Take a look at the resort now and even Eckl would be astonished by what has become of the spot where he built the first hotel, in the middle of snow fields at the foot of Mont Bisanne. He equipped the chalet with a kitchen, five bedrooms and a dormitory for up to 30

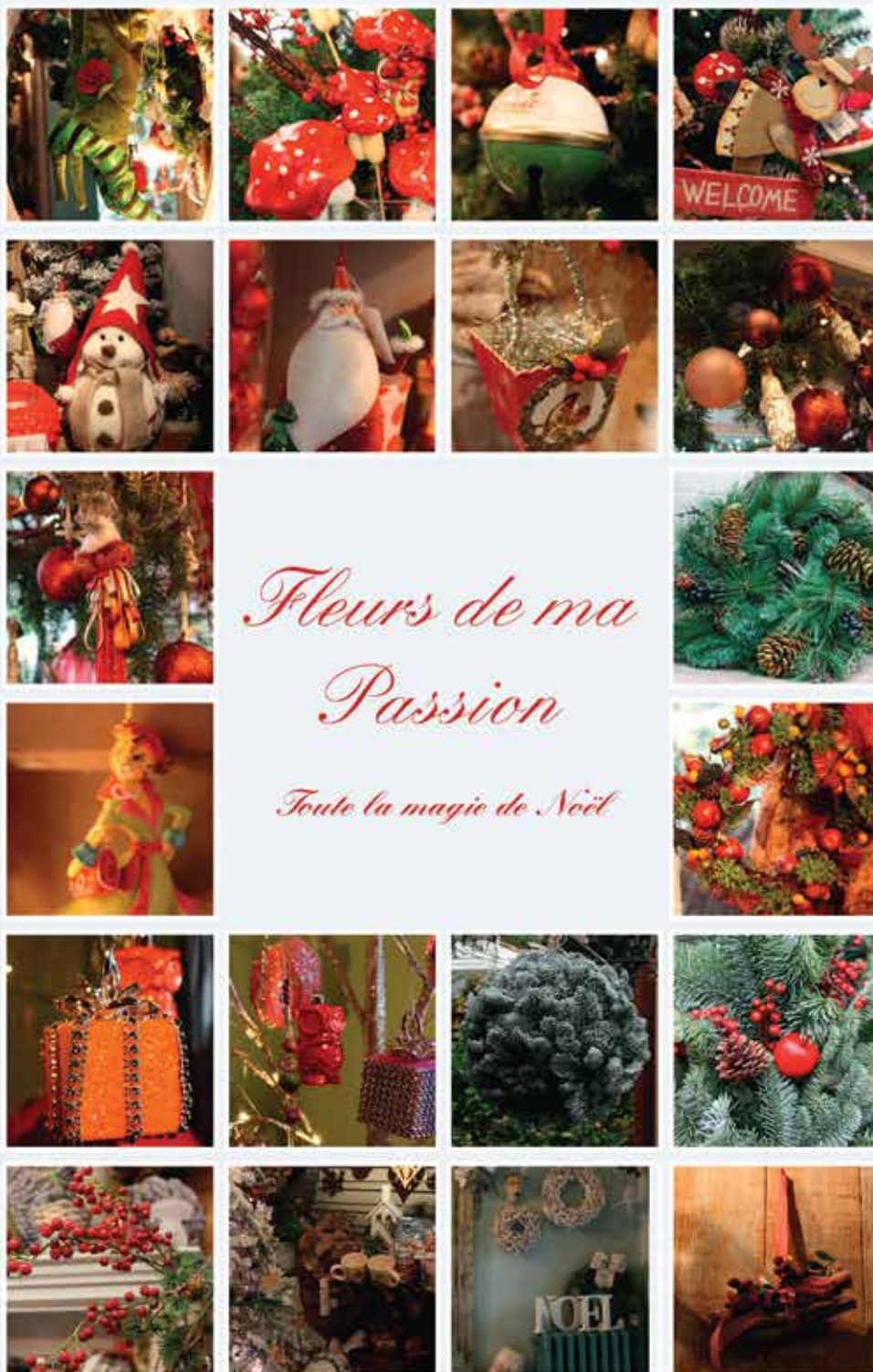
people. He installed water and electricity and transported the goods on his back or by dog sled and took his clients ski touring to the summits of Bisanne, Char du Beurre and La Legette.

Accommodation

The accommodation on offer now is a far cry from those humble but comfortable beginnings. Among the many places to rest you weary head (and arms and legs) is Les Saisies Club 'Les Embrunes'.

Les Embrunes is a refurbished Belambra Club at the heart of a medium-altitude spruce forest, overlooking Mont Blanc. The slopes are at your door step so you can immediately enjoy downhill, cross-country and snowshoes in a magnificent setting.

Meals options include lunches, dinners, lunches + dinners, half board or full board throughout the season in a restaurant with mountain views. There are also buffet meals with themed evenings and a regional evening during the week. Afterwards relax by the fireplace in the bar.



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Here, the children are king, especially during the end of year festivities. Just for them, the resort organizes a week of special entertainment, shows, manual workshops and a Christmas market to keep them busy until Santa comes.

- Kids' clubs for children aged three to five throughout the season
 - Kids' clubs for children aged 6-17 during the French school holidays
 - Entertainment for all from 5.30 p.m. throughout the season and every day
- Other club advantages are access to equipment, and a ski room with individual lockers, luggage store, WiFi area, bar with fireplace, games area.

Wining and dining

We will get to the skiing but some of the other après-ski venues on offer include The Original - Fondue Bar, a busy winter venue with its outdoor terrace with its wood stoves and high tables. The pasta bar proposes various kinds of organic pasta from the Alps: Savoie crozets, German knöpfle, Austrian spätzle or Italian tagliatelle.

The Tahiti Eden lounge rustles up a selection of alpine dishes, traditional Italian pizzas and Swiss cheese fondues.

On the slopes

Then there is the skiing with six village resorts: Les Saisies, Hauteluce, Crest-Voland-Cohennoz, Notre Dame de Bellecombe, Flumet and Praz sur Arly, offering:

- 185kms of slopes;
- 148 slopes;
- Gentle skiing (31 green slopes and 59 blues)



or strictly sporty (49 red slopes and 11 black);

- 27% of the ski area is equipped with artificial snow-making facilities.

At Les Saisies skiing is not the only obsession; it offers an impressive choice of alternative activities for all the family, including a toboggan run on rails. Visitors can enjoy an 800m long ride, up to eight metres above the ground, with rapid acceleration, hairpin bends, 360° to 540° turns and a series of waves & jumps.

The resort boasts international experience in the Nordic field but also fantastic facilities for beginners and amateur cross-country fans. This Nordic domain is one of the largest and highest in Europe, offering 120 kilometres of trails and a varied choice of itineraries, through forests and across clearings, between 1,600 and 1,700 metres altitude.

And small children can enjoy their first sensations free of charge. A special ski pass, valid on the alpine and Nordic slopes, is available to children under five, an ideal opportunity to learn to ski at an early age. Surely, Erwin Eckl would have approved.

Getting there

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By train: Albertville station

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Italian countryside

Tucked away and almost totally protected by seductive scenery, L'Albereta Relais & Châteaux is located on the gentle slopes of the Bellavista hill, completely immersed in the Franciacorta countryside. Bordered by vineyards, the hotel invites you to rest and rejuvenate. The surrounding landscape is authentic, dotted with ancient towers and medieval castles, grand mansions and silent abbeys.

Located just an hour from Milan, L'Albereta is a perfect base for shopaholics. Not far away,

surrounded by hills, Lake Iseo offers breathtaking views and a wide variety of water sports. In winter, after a long invigorating stroll, you can enjoy a Spritz aperitif on one of the many terraces around the lake.

Peaceful heaven

The Albereta boasts 57 rooms including nine suites and nine junior suites, decorated in a chic and comfortable medieval style. The tones are warm, the lines soft. Fine wood rubs shoulders with the linen bed sheets and marble. Large fireplaces make the atmosphere even more magical. Balconies, terraces and gardens open on a nature reserve blessed with green vineyards, tall pines, magnolias and lime trees.

The Espace Vitalité Henri Chenot offers much more than a spa and a gym. No less than 32 highly-qualified professionals (doctors, dieticians, osteopaths, etc) will help you get in shape. The 'Biontology' programme is based on the elimination of toxins, stimulation and regeneration and promises to take your body to the maximum level of psycho-physical wellbeing.

The Albereta has one of the finest, highest-ranked restaurants in Italy. The Leonefelice offers modern cuisine, using the finest ingredients from the surrounding countryside. For those who want to control their figures, the dietetics restaurant Benessere offers healthy and tasty dishes, made with a limited number of calories.

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Comme toujours ce type de problème survient souvent au plus mauvais moment et presque toujours à l'improviste. Tout se complique lorsque vous devez trouver un corps de métier pour intervenir rapidement, surtout le weekend ou les jours fériés. Vous ne savez pas à qui faire appel, votre chauffagiste, plombier, installateur... n'est pas immédiatement disponible ou est en vacances... La panne et les dégâts semblent être plus graves que prévus, obligeant votre famille de trouver une solution d'urgence afin de ne pas devoir passer plusieurs nuits dans le froid ou dans une maison inondée. Encore plus ennuyeux pour vous, vous êtes en vacances ou séjourner à l'étranger au moment où surviennent les problèmes domestiques. Qui appeler? Où trouver un corps de métier fiable? Il faudra également tenir compte de la durée d'attente pour avoir un réparateur qui est généralement en moyenne de 5 jours. Face à ce constat, Europ Assistance a imaginé une solution efficace pour vous aider à résoudre rapidement ces inforts du quotidien: l'assistance habitation House Assist. House Assist, c'est un réseau de professionnels disponible 24h/24 7j/7 pour vous dépanner ou effec-

tuer une réparation provisoire, sans oublier la prise en charge des habitants ainsi que l'organisation des petits travaux et le service information et conseils.

Une disponibilité 24h/24 pour vos urgences domestiques

Chaudière en panne, canalisation bouchée, vitre cassée, porte de garage bloquée, problèmes d'humidité, panne de courant,... Europ Assistance intervient 24h/24 - 7 jours sur 7 pour vous dépanner ou effectuer une réparation provisoire. Europ Assistance prend en charge et paye directement au réparateur les frais de déplacement, de main d'œuvre et les pièces de remplacement à concurrence de 400€ TTC dont 50€ pour les pièces de rechanges.

Une prise en charge personnalisée des habitants

Un incident imprévu s'est produit à votre habitation et vous vous trouvez ailleurs ou à l'étranger? Une situation délicate à gérer, sauf avec House Assist, qui vous aide à faire face aux conséquences pratiques d'un incident à votre habitation. Une panne à votre chaudière ou à votre installation électrique qui ne peut être réparée en 24h? Europ Assistance vous fournit une solution d'appoint ou vous relogé à l'hôtel. Votre domicile est inhabitable suite à un sinistre? Europ Assistance vous assiste pour vous reloger, surveiller votre domicile, transporter votre mobilier ou faire garder vos enfants. Votre porte de garage est bloquée et vous ne savez donc



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pas sortir avec votre véhicule? Nous mettons une voiture de remplacement à votre disposition. Vous avez perdu votre clef de votre domicile, votre enfant s'est enfermé dans sa chambre? Nous vous envoyons un serrurier.

L'organisation de petits travaux et services à la demande

Qui n'a jamais dû faire face à de petits travaux de réparation ou de rénovation chez lui à la maison? Pour tous les petits travaux domestiques et réparations occasionnelles, Europ Assistance met à votre disposition son réseau de professionnels car ce n'est pas toujours évident de trouver rapidement un corps de métier disponible. Avec House Assist fini d'éplucher les annuaires ou internet, un coup de téléphone et tout sera réglé. De plus vous pourrez compter sur une équipe qui se tient à votre disposition pour vous informer sur les démarches administratives et juridiques liées à votre habitation (sinistre, déménagement, achat,...).

House Assist est une solution simple et efficace au quotidien, qui prévoit aussi bien des solutions d'urgence pour votre habita-

tion que pour ses habitants. Idéal pour avoir l'esprit tranquille et profiter de son chez-soi.

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Martin Banks finds some Belgium connections in the rolling hills of Devon

Devonly delights

With so much current focus on the WW1 anniversary commemorations, it is perhaps worth recalling that Exeter was the first English provincial city to welcome Belgian refugees.

Exeter is the capital of Devon and, throughout the war, the county housed some 8,000 Belgians escaping the conflict. A group housed in Tor, Torquay inspired author Agatha Christie to create the Belgian detective Hercule Poirot.

The first group of Belgian refugees arrived in Exeter in October 1914 and were housed across Exeter and the county as a whole. By 1915, in addition to Exeter's relief organization, Devon also had a county committee to distribute the Belgians to local towns and villages. The Belgians found various jobs, including chauffeurs and confectioners.

The legacy of the Belgians in Devon lives on today in the character Hercule Poirot with highly popular Agatha Christie themed tours to "Greenway", the author's holiday home near Dartmouth. Now managed by the National Trust, the property offers visitors an extraordinary glimpse into the private life of the Queen of Crime.

The Belgian link continues with the medals given to Clara Andrew (in Topsham Museum) and the grave of Marie van der Hayden in Chudleigh.

Less than a year ago, Devon was hit by some of the worst flooding seen in the region for many a year but the county and its all-important tourist industry has hit back strongly and is once again attracting visitors in large numbers, including Belgians in search of those WW1 and



Poirot connections.

With lots of cheap, direct flights from Zaventem to Exeter, getting to this delightful part of the UK is no problem. In fact, Exeter, with its wonderful cathedral and historic centre, is a good starting point to explore the whole South West. While there, you really should try to sample the delights of Carluccio's, the prominent Italian restaurant brand launched in the 1990s, offering fantastic, value for money food. Another great local eating option is the local branch of Las Iguanas, which started out in nearby Bristol and offers delicious, authentic South American food, made with passion, love and lots of Latin magic.

Just further inland and a terrific base for any

visit is the 44-room Moorland Garden Hotel on the edges of Dartmoor which, in the past, has accommodated the likes of acting luminaries David Niven and Rex Harrison.

Today, it is owned by Brian and Sonia Meaden, the parents of Deborah Meaden from BBC TV's hugely popular Dragon's Den. It has undergone a major refurbishment and affords very pleasant accommodation. Food is sourced locally by head chef Bruce Cole and, last year, the restaurant won the highest award in the 'Taste of the West' competition. There are even delicious, pre-packed picnics available (weather permitting!) in the lovely gardens of the hotel which this year celebrates its 80th anniversary. It offers special Christmas packages for those in search of a romantic festive break.

Nearby is the world-famous Dartmoor Prison, notorious for once housing Britain's most dangerous prisoners, and its excellent visitor museum. Here you can learn about Dartmoor's torture devices such as the 'Flogging Machine'.

While in the area, a trip to nearby Plymouth is recommended to see the historic areas such as Plymouth Hoe, the Barbican and Royal William Yard where old Naval buildings have been brought back to life for businesses such as the pleasant Le Bistrot Pierre, an atmospheric Parisian brasserie-style eatery, ideal for visitors from Belgium who may be missing their traditional food.

Plymouth, scene of Sir Francis Drake's legendary game of bowls, is also home to the National Marine Aquarium, the UK's biggest aquarium which is also well worth a visit.

For those travelling with children, the award-winning Pennywell Farm, dubbed 'Devon's Friendliest Day Out' and just a few kilometres away, is highly recommended.

For all the delights of Exeter, Dartmoor and Plymouth, the majority of visitors to Devon still head for its lovely seaside towns, such as Torquay, self-styled gateway to the 'English Riviera'. The area is packed with water sports and gentle walks, and Torquay is steeped in

maritime history.

You can also 'canoe the coves' and catch and cook your own dinner. But if that option sounds too much like hard work, the town is stacked with some of the best places in Devon to eat, including Rockfish, a relatively recent concept where you can tuck into everything from good old traditional fish and chips to more refined seafood dishes.

A short walk takes you to the TLH Leisure Resort's excellent Toorak Hotel which, with its wonderful leisure, dining and entertainment facilities, is perfect for a traditional family holiday, whatever the time of year.

From here you can book an Agatha Christie Tour, including vintage bus and short trip along the river Dartmouth to Greenway, to the writer's holiday home. Belgian interest in the author has intensified after it emerged earlier this year that a retired Belgian policeman who fled to England during the First World War may have been the inspiration for Christie's Poirot. Whatever the source, the tour is sure to fascinate fans.

The motorway network to the South West is generally excellent and for those driving to Devon from Belgium, P&O Ferries offers a short Calais-Dover sea service with the most number of crossings per day (23 crossings each way, each lasting 90 minutes).

For the uninitiated, you'll find that there is more to this spectacular and diverse county than you might have thought. As well as beautiful beaches and stunning scenery, you'll find national parks, rustic villages and towns, historic buildings and ruins, extreme sports and the best in food and drink.

In fact, the most difficult decision you'll have to make is where you want to visit first.

For plenty of tips look no further than Visit Devon, the local tourist authority, whose website www.visitdevon.co.uk is jam packed full of ideas. More information is available at www.englishriviera.co.uk and www.POferries.com 

Découvrez l'Île de Beauté

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Cheers!

Wine of the month: Welcome to Muscadet



Photo © Jameson Fink

Geoffroy van Lede of vin du mois highlights wine that owes its flavour to the dregs

The AOC Muscadet has much more to offer than one would think. Through the years, the AOC has lost some of its prestige from the good old days, but now, under the lead of new and ambitious winemakers, the region is proposing some wonderful wines at an excellent price-quality ratio. This ambitious generation, led by Guy Bossard & Jo Landron, enjoys working with new winemaking techniques (biodynamic) as well as creating some new crus with higher quality standards (Le pallet, Clisson, Gorges and soon La Goulaine).

Discovering the vineyard

The Muscadet appellation is mainly situated in the Loire Atlantic department, in the region of Nantes. It is made from only one grape variety: the melon of Burgundy.

There are several appellations in Muscadet: Muscadet-Sèvre et Maine, Muscadet-Côtes-de-Grandlieu, Muscadet-Coteaux de la Loire and Muscadet with no particular denomination.

The Muscadet is a dry wine with floral and fruity aromas that can be aged on its lees where it will draw a slight effervescence called 'beading'. This wine goes particularly well with seafood.

The Muscadet-sur-Lie

'Sur lie' can be added to the label if the wines have spent one winter in barrels or vats and are still in their lees (deposits of dead yeast) at the time of bottling, which is between 1 March and June 30 or between 15 October and 30 November.

Our selection: Muscadet de Sèvre et Maine Sur lie 2013, Domaine La Tourlaudière

This Muscadet is a very pale green gold. This wine offers a pleasant liveliness, and the palate is fresh. Light in alcohol (12%), it has an excellent balance of flavours, acidity and roundness. A wonderful wine to go with oysters!

Did you know how the 'sur lie' technique was discovered?

The discovery of this process was almost accidental in the early 20th century, at a time winemakers from the Nantes region kept the best barrel of the harvest to celebrate major family events. Preserved without siphoning, this barrel gave the wine a particularly fresh character on the palate and a full bouquet.

You can find the Muscadet and many other fine wines on our web shop:
www.le-vin-du-mois.be

Winter Wonders Package at the Stanhope Hotel

At Christmas time Brussels is the perfect blend of tradition and modernity, and Winter Wonders snakes its way through the centre of town, lighting up every corner.

The luxurious Stanhope Hotel, the first in Brussels to be awarded five stars, is getting into the spirit of the festive season.

Customers who booked a hotel stay between 21 November 2014 and 5 January 2015 will have the opportunity to take advantage of our Winter Wonders packages, which among others, includes:

- 2 nights stay in a beautifully appointed room
 - Buffet breakfast daily
 - A festive snack English snack one of the days of the stay
 - A Winter Wonders package, with vouchers for ice skating, the Ferris wheel, the Giants of the Earth exhibition and various discounts on more than 20 cultural places and attractions.
- From 339 euro (VAT included), per room for two nights based on an occupancy of two adults for a standard double room. Terms and conditions apply.
www.stanhope.be



Photo © Benoît Vos

Chez Felix

Chez Felix is a new Brussels wine bar that has just opened its wine shop space. Run by Pierre Stuyck and Xavier Pansaers, two epicureans who are passionate about gastronomy and the art of wine, it offers wines that are mostly organic, biodynamic or natural, while also keeping a classic range. It is also possible to eat an assortment of tapas and cheese and charcuterie boards. There is a large range of wines to takeaway in the wine shop.

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www.felixbar.be



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The European Motor Show 2015

Our motoring correspondent **Bon Monard** gets behind the wheels of the latest cars

AUDI

The brand with the four-ring logo has two new featured cars: the TT and A6.

Still low-slung and boasting its exclusive roof spoiler, the third generation TT has evolved mainly with the improvement in its driving qualities. Very nifty, it now offers outstanding suspension comfort. Under the hood you'll find the 1.8 petrol engines for the TFSi 180 hp, for 2.0 TFFSi 230 hp and 310 hp for the TTS. And a 2-litre TDI diesel with 184 hp. Seriously sporty, this new TT is also available as a roadster and is not a gas guzzler. In the interests of efficiency and security, all digital instrumentation is nestled between the tachometer and the speedometer.

Just like the TT, the A6 features the single-frame grille, elegantly upgraded and flanked by dramatic, angular headlights. After three years on the roads, this excellent tourer has been revitalized to be even more aggressive, sleeker, more dynamic – wrapped up in comfort. Xenon headlights come as standard, new S tronic dual-clutch on the front-wheel-drive models, with a reduction of 22% of CO2 emissions and a new Nvidia processor, twice as fast for infotainment.

With TFSi petrol engines from 190 hp to 333 hp and diesel from 136 hp 326 hp, it is even more playful when it comes to the S6 and S6 Avant variations, at 450 and 560 hp respectively!

From 16 to 25 January, motor cars will invade the halls of Heysel. Devoted to commercial and recreational vehicles every other year, the show will unveil the latest innovations in the automobile sector. Together takes you on an advance tour, pointing you in the right direction when you hit the stages beneath the Atomium. Enjoy. And happy motoring in 2015!



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LIFE OF LEISURE

Motoring



BMW

There's a new rival to the recently remodelled B series – step up the Series 2 Active Tourer, a compact minivan with front-wheel drive. It's not a rear-wheel drive like its Munich cousins! To get it on the move, it's fitted with 136 hp and 231hp petrol engines for the 218i and the 225i, and a 150 hp diesel for the 218d. Agreeable and reassuring, the series 2 has a beautiful interior space that makes it practical for daily use. And it looks good – for its family dynamics it gets our vote. Even though the plug-in hybrid i8 sport plays it 'clean' for the environment, it is nevertheless a first class sporty choice with impressive consumption that matches its performance. As for the X6, it aims to be more muscular and more spacious.

Finally, there's the X5 and X6 with an 'M' for Motorsport, with a 4.4-liter V8 turbo with a whopping 575 hp. Hot and sporty!



JAGUAR

Jaguar loves quality, and the proof comes in the form of the XE, which eclipses the X-Type, a model that was singularly lacking in personality. Very seductive, this family of vehicles distinguishes itself by its overall quality and driving pleasure. Inspired intelligently by its refined big sister, the XF, as well as the splendid F-Type coupé, they opted for an aluminium monocoque structure and a 2-litre diesel engine with 163hp that will despair the oilmen. A 3-litre V6 petrol engine with 340 hp graces its S version. Finally, luxury without an excessive price. As for the F-Type R AWD, it should soon surpass the 1600 km/h and so targets the land speed record set by the Bloodhound SSC. Closer to home, the Jaguar range will extend in 2015 from the six models currently on the market to 14.



LAND ROVER

Bye, bye, the Freelander. Hello, Discovery Sport! Passed on by Ford to India's Tata group, Land Rover has plenty of pleasant surprises up its sleeves.

A shining copy of the Evoque, it has been designed with an aluminium/steel mix to delight fans of traction and all-wheel drive; they have a 4-cylinder engine in common, 240 hp petrol, 150 to 190 hp diesel. Decidedly upscale with its steel /aluminium structure, it is strong on safety and will delight fans of multimedia. Best of all, this versatile car has room for seven people.

GEBROEDERS MERCKX

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JEEP

Boasting a Jeep badge with Fiat DNA, the Renegade is an all-terrain of 4.23 metres. Square and justifiably proud of its Willys grille belted with round headlights, it is spacious and comfortable. Richly endowed and offering many customization opportunities, it sporty road handling will delight lovers of off-road. Four versions grace the catalogue: Sport, Longitude, Limited and Trailhawk. The engine choices include eurosuper and diesel, with a power range of 110, 115, 120, 136, 140 and 170 hp. It has traction mode and 4x4, and nine-speed automatic transmission for some. Guaranteed fun.

FIAT

The legendary 500 already comes in Abarth, Cabrio, L, Trekking and Living models but it has always wanted to be an adventurer. Done deal with the new X model. Either X Urban with 2WD for 120 and 140 hp. Or X Cross with 4-wheel drive and 140hp to take you anywhere. Nicking its structure and transmissions from its cousin Renegade, it aims to be as comfortable in town as it is in the country. More manly than the 500, the Fiat X is very proud of its family name. You'll understand much better after a few kilometres aboard this elegant crossover.

VOLVO

The imposing vertical grille, barred by the updated logo, is highlighted by tapered LEDs. The XC90's large hood, its girth and shoulders and pronounced taillights are evidence of a stylized template that is anything but puny. It comes with the eDrive D5 (225 hp) and D4 (190 hp) diesel engines and the T5 (254 hp) and T6 (320 hp) petrol versions, which are both 2-litre 4-cylinders, with an automatic 8-speed gearbox.

Security, connectivity and autonomous driving are the watchwords. Add to that the generous interior space for seven people in comfortable luxury and its agility - they all boost in the best possible way the new career of the XC90, launched appeared in 2002.

ŠKODA

The 3rd generation Fabia makes a strong case: clean, easy on petrol, safe and comfortable, this city slicker brilliantly meets the requirements of modern mobility by being functional and having technology at a competitive price.

Its new design is coupled with 105 internal variations and the largest boot (330 litres to 1150 litres) of the segment. Fuel-wise, this versatile car includes a 1,000 cm³ (60 hp)



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Similar offers are available for Volvo V40 (starting price €17 995), Volvo V40 Cross Country, Volvo S60 and Volvo V60. Please note that the images may show cars with extra equipment. While we try to make sure that all data are accurate, we are not responsible for typographical and other errors that may appear.

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Motoring

and 1200 cm³ (110 hp). And a two-diesel 1.4 TDI 75 and 105 hp. Plus a three-cylinder 90 hp.

Compact but roomy sedan-fed new technologies, Fabia proves itself to be a pleasant and reassuring travelling companion.

VW

Volkswagen's latest Passat has been narrowed, widened and lowered. Easily recognizable with its horizontal chrome bars at the front and its rear Audi A8 styling, it now also offers an imposing road presence.

Under the hood, ten new direct-injection turbo engines (petrol, diesel and TSI/TDI) deliver 120 to 280 hp. There are also built-in security features, such as the emergency brakes and pedestrian detection for town driving and immobilization of the vehicle in case of emergency manoeuvres, which is assisted by the built-in driving assistant feature.

Of course, the car maintains its excellent handling, comfort and legendary finish. More innovative, more efficient, safe and exciting, the 8th generation Passat is even more dynamic than its predecessor, which is saying something!



RENAULT

For their Twingo 3, which has been developed along with the new Smart, Renault have moved away from traction and the engine being under the bonnet. In a nod to the 4CV, Dauphine and R8, the block 3 (not 4) cylinder 12-valve is located in the trunk (188-980cm³), and it's a rear wheel drive. This metamorphosis has directly improved the vehicle's turning radius, which now exceeds 4.30 metres. Another feature in the compact (3.6 m) city model is two back doors, which will doubtless delight rear-seat passengers and, in addition, there's a high driving position, large Mercedes seats, two glove boxes, an electric sunroof, rear-view camera – the list goes on!. Concerning the engine, the 999cc provides 71 hp and 90 hp turbo at 898cc. With its customizable urban chic, the Twingo 3 is already turning heads in cities.



MERCEDES

The new C Estate is distinguished by its simple, sporty design, coupled with an interesting engine capacity, that's been increased from 490 to 1,510 litres. A versatile lifestyle vehicle, it boasts a 4-cylinder 115 hp to 204 hp in diesel and 156 hp to 333 hp in petrol. A hybrid diesel (204 hp + 27 hp) and 350 plug-in hybrid petrol are also available. A series of safety devices (Intelligent Drive) also serve to improve both comfort and security. With its superb sound insulation, the



Motoring

C model is a treat to drive: the steering is breathtakingly precise, the shock absorption is first-class and the gearbox (6-speed or 7-speed) is at the perfect height. The B-Class also offers a new layout for autumn: improved appearance, better equipment, security devices and an intelligent power supply.

It comes in Smart Fortwo and Forfour, with a roomy interior, excellent handling and stunning stability, Mercedes is proving to be very consistent with up-to-date flair and finery.

MINI

What a success story! Not content in repeating the success of the work of Sir Alec Issigonis, which first appeared in 1959, the Mini continues to add to its models. From a Convertible, to a Countryman, Coupé, Hatch, Paceman and Roadster, BMW has further extended the Mini range, with the latest Hatch that has been elongated a further 7cm in its wheelbase to provide more comfort for rear passengers and include two additional doors. Not to mention the boot, which has increased by 67 litres of cargo volume to 278 litres. This third instalment runs on petrol in 102, 136, and 192 hp, while the diesel comes in 95, 116 and 170 hp, while there is also a 3-cylinder model that runs on both types of fuel.

More accessible and spacious, this five-door hatch's name will always be... Mini!



MASERATI

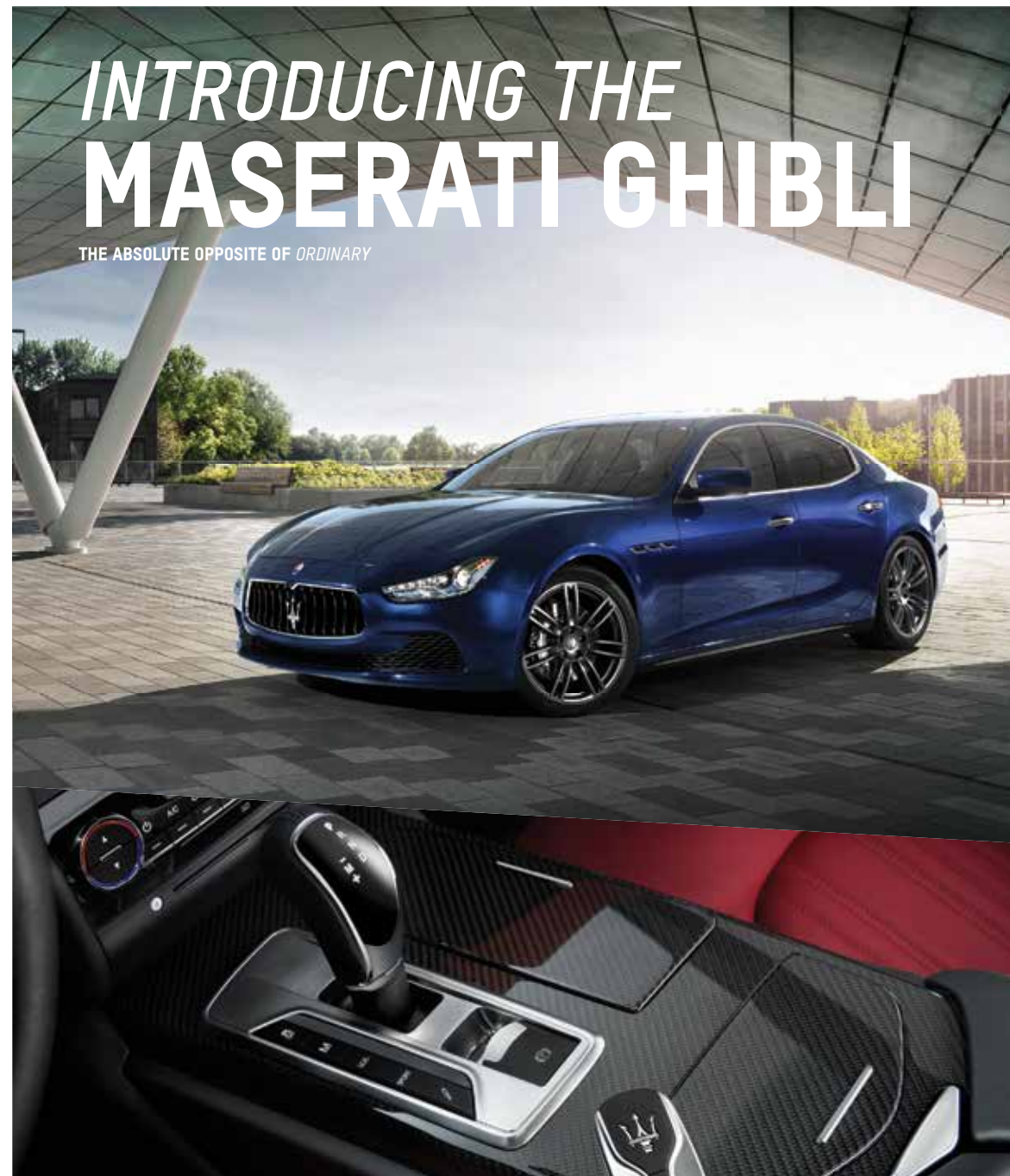
Maserati's exclusivity is based on elegant design, luxury interiors and the hum of their engines. Attention to detail, the subtle quality of the finish, the charm of Italian tradition – there are so many features that characterize the class and exclusivity of Trident in the sports car culture.

Maserati offers a four-seater GranCabrio convertible with a smouldering V8 4.7 litre 450 hp, and Grancabrio Sport and MC.



The GranTurismo coupé comes with V8 4.2 and 4.7 litre at 411, 439 and 460 hp, while the prestigious S Biturbo Quattroporte and Biturbo GTS opt for 6- and 8-cylinder 409 hp to 530 hp.

And, as far as the great V6 Ghibli is concerned, it's available in diesel (275 hp), and 'normal' (330 hp) S (409 hp) and SQ4 (410 hp).



INTRODUCING THE MASERATI GHIBLI.

The Maserati Ghibli offers all the style, luxury and dynamic performance that you would expect from a Maserati, combined with a unique, exclusive appeal. The Ghibli is powered by a range of advanced 3.0 litre V6 engines including, for the first time, a 275 horse power, V6 turbo diesel engine, with a CO2 emission of only 158 g/km. Every Maserati Ghibli benefits 3 years full warranty with unlimited mileage.

DIESEL ENGINE: V6 60° 2987 CC - **MAXX POWER:** 275 HP AT 4000 RPM - **MAX TORQUE:** 570 NM AT 2000/2600 RPM - **MAX SPEED:** 250 KM/H - **ACCELERATION 0-100 KM/H:** 6.3 SECS **FUEL CONSUMPTION (COMBINED):** 5.9 L/100 KM **CO2 EMISSIONS:** 158 G/KM



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Motoring



INFINITI

Very much representing up-scale Nissan, Infiniti is all about six exceptional cars with exclusive design, unexpected luxury and dazzling dynamics. The Q50 sedan 170 hp, 211 hp and 306 hp is a technological jewel, while the Q70 (238 hp, 306 hp and 320 hp) embodies the essence of the powerful luxury sedan. Elegance lovers go for the Q 60 (320 hp) in the cabrio version, while the QX 50 (238 hp, 242 hp and 321 hp) is for those who love fine lines, while crossover fans will only have eyes for the QX 70 (238 hp, 320 hp and 390 hp).

Infiniti's credo? Rigour, excellence and a determination to be the best. Or, simply the best, as Tina Turner would put it...



PEUGEOT

At 3.47m by 1.61m by 1.46m, the 108 is a city vehicle that we can really appreciate: a petite car that's cheerful, friendly, lively, compact and very handy – everything you need at a glance!

With a 3-cylinder 1 litre 69 hp in petrol and 1.2-litre 82 hp in diesel supported by a 5-speed gearbox, it's also alert in suburban traffic. Good for cities, where the electric sunroof works wonders, while its suspension, comfort and driving performance also dazzle – this posh 108 is a real pleasure to drive. And, as for the 308 SW – both beautiful and functional, enchanting and well endowed, it's perfect for those who go for great versatility with a very tasteful interior.

In short, the 508 has a new look – and it's a success, to say the least.

CITROEN

Innovative and resolutely fun, the Citroen C4 Cactus has positioned itself as a real alternative to compact sedans. Via a tasty mixture of hatchback, SUV and a street fighter, it combines excellent utility with aesthetics, while providing comfort, ease of use and a first-class cost-design ratio, with Airbumps enhancing its look while protecting its chassis.



Attractive and easily customizable, it's a seductive proposition, with the petrol model at 75 hp and 110 hp, and its very economical 100hp diesel. The Cactus is simple yet strong, with an uncluttered interior that provides greater comfort and conviviality. No wonder it's already garnering flattering reviews. Decidedly original and far from trivial, it is perfectly in line with Citroën's insistence on presenting vehicles that are 'off the beaten track'. •

What's on Belgium

Eddy Merckx and Jacky Ickx: The exhibition

Eddy Merckx is the most successful cycle racer of all time, first across the finish line 525 times. Jacky Ickx's career is one of the richest and longest in the history of motorsport. His list of achievements is unrivalled in its variety.

In 2015, Eddy Merckx and Jacky Ickx both celebrate their 70th birthday, as well as their long friendship. So it's high time for the first major exhibition about this pair of Belgian sporting legends.



Authentic race cars that made 'Mister Le Mans' great, original racing bikes on which 'The Cannibal' broke the One Hour world record or won the climb to the Col du Tourmalet, never-before-seen photos and films, and highlights and memorabilia from national and international collections, are all brought together for the first time at the Heysel in Brussels in a dazzling display covering no less than 2,000 square metres.

Eddy Merckx and Jacky Ickx have also given some of their personal souvenirs to put on show. Add to this the interactive exhibition route and the stunning installation by renowned Belgian photographer Stephan Vanfleteren and you have a complete and fascinating picture of what made these two extraordinary sporting heroes great. Tickets from €8
Trade Mart, Square de l'Atomium 1, Brussels
6 December 2014 – 21 June 2015
www.merckx-ickx.be

The Little Fashion Week

After the Fashion Weeks in New York, London, Milan and Paris, it is now in Brussels to host his own... but for the little ones!

It's an opportunity to discover the biggest brands in the world of children's fashion from around the world but especially to support the creation and Belgian production. The weekend of events highlights the work of international designers gathered around the universe of children: fashion, design and illustration.

14, 15 16 February 2015
Tour & Taxi – Brussels
www.littlefashionweek.com



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The Wizard of Oz

The Wizard of Oz at Forest National

We're off to see ... a bit of post-Christmas magic.

Banish those post-festive blues by following the Yellow Brick Road – all the way to Forest National in Brussels for a brand new production of that timeless classic, *The Wizard of Oz*.

This new show by Music Hall Productions has been totally reconceived for the stage and contains all the much-loved songs from the Oscar-winning movie score, all the favourite characters, plus a few surprises along the way.

For those unfamiliar with the show, it tells the story of how, when a tornado rips through Kansas, Dorothy and her dog, Toto, are whisked away in their house to the magical Land of Oz. They follow the Yellow Brick Road toward the Emerald City to meet the Wizard, and en route they meet a Scarecrow that needs a brain, a Tin Man missing a heart and a Cowardly Lion who wants courage. The wizard asks the group to bring him the broom of the Wicked Witch of the West to earn his help.

Most of the musical's songs are taken from the 1939 film and were written by Harold Arlen and E.Y. Harburg but *The Wizard of Oz* also features songs by the acclaimed British composer Andrew Lloyd Webber. It was his 18th musical.


New numbers written by Lloyd Webber and long-time musical partner, Tim Rice, include a song for Professor Marvel (*The Wonders of the World*) and the Wicked Witch of the West (*Red Shoes Blues*).

It was a modest box office winner when it was released back in 1939, but MGM's grand Technicolor fantasy film won the hearts of millions more when it debuted on TV for the first time in 1956. It became an annual tradition for



many families to huddle around the telly and watch the tale of a girl and her dog travelling the Yellow Brick Road.

So, come on, why not click your heels together and join Scarecrow, Tin Man, Dorothy and Toto as they journey through the magical Land of Oz to meet the Wizard?

Beware! Watch out along the way for the Wicked Witch of the West and her winged monkeys. The show runs at Forest National from 2 to 4 January. Details on times and prices are available by calling 0900 69 900 or by visiting www.sherpa.be or www.forestnational.be 

Disney Dreams of Christmas

Martin Banks asks: How about an extra special treat for the kids (and yourselves) this Christmas?

If you fancy pushing the boat out consider taking a relatively short trip to Disneyland Paris which, this year, has organized two months of fantastic festive fun.

This Christmas will see Merida, the Scottish princess from the film Brave (awarded Best Animated Feature at the 85th Oscars) appear at Disneyland Paris for the very first time, along with Anna and Elsa, the sisters from hit Frozen, both appearing in person at the Princess Pavilion in Fantasyland.

When night falls, the first show you shouldn't miss is Magical Christmas Wishes – the illumination of the Christmas tree that stands 24 metres high and is adorned with 1,000 decorations.

The night-time show Disney Dreams of Christmas features Olaf, the hapless snowman from Frozen who conducts a production with the help of projections, fountains, special effects and fireworks.

Christmas here is also about the traditional

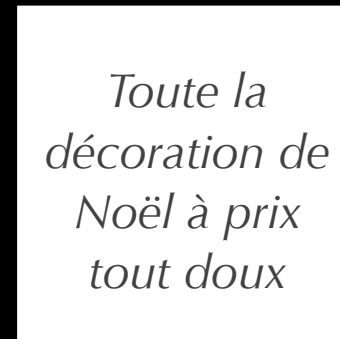
magic of New Year's Eve parties, celebrated with Mickey and pals. On the agenda are shows created as only Disneyland knows how, including an enormous Christmas tree, frosted decorations, encounters with Disney characters in their party outfits and, of course, Father Christmas. It all includes an essential ingredient for Christmas magic: snow falling every day on Main Street, USA.

This year, the theme is decidedly 'gourmet' with a parade dreamt up and created especially for Christmas with Disney heroes appearing in their tastiest costumes ever.

Despite some indifferent headlines in 2014,

Disneyland Paris remains Europe's No. 1 tourist destination, boasting more than 275 million visits since opening in 1992.

It is a comfortable three-hour drive from Brussels and makes for a great Yuletide treat for both children and adults alike. The above shows all run until 7 January, but, of course, at Disneyland there is always another show around the corner. ❶



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At the movies in 2015



Picturenose.com duo
James Drew and
Colin Moors gaze
into 2015 to mark our
card on next year's
cinema releases



First, Mr. Drew ...

The Imitation Game

Everyone's favourite new boy, Benedict Cumberbatch, is at it again in this thrilling take on Alan Turing, who led a team of code-crackers at the top-secret Code and Cypher School at Bletchley Park, during the worst of World War II – all that stood between the allies and Nazi Germany's seemingly uncrackable Enigma code. He helped Britain win the war, but his post-war decline, stemming from the then criminal offence of maintaining a gay relationship, is also examined in Morten Tyldum's (*Headhunters* (2011)) moving, penetrating study of genius. 114 mins.

Blackhat

In Michael Mann's upcoming thriller American and Chinese authorities work together to stop a conspiracy involving a mysterious cyber criminal. Chris Hemsworth stars as Nicholas Hathaway, the man on the run who has been released from prison on a dangerous search that leads them from Chicago to Hong Kong. Morgan Davis Foehl and Mann provide the tortuous, twisting screenplay. 123 mins.

Tomorrowland

Intriguing premise to Brad Bird's (*Mission: Impossible – Ghost Protocol* (2011)) sci-fi mystery thriller, starring George Clooney, Britt

Robertson, Hugh Laurie and Judy Greer, in a tale of two people bound by a shared destiny, a teen bursting with scientific curiosity and a former boy-genius inventor, who set out to discover the secrets of a place somewhere in time and space that exists in their collective memory. 118 mins.

Mad Max: Fury Road

Max is back and, thankfully, it is George Miller (who made the previous three films) returning to what he does best. You're probably grateful to hear that it's not Mel Gibson as the angry one anymore, but rather shooting star Tom Hardy. Apparently, Miller said he was 'completely carried away' by the script (by Miller, Brendan McCarthy and Nico Lathouris), but it is difficult to see what novelties can be added to the tale of loner Max who meets Furiosa (Charlize Theron), a woman who wishes to cross the desert, in a post-apocalyptic landscape. Oh well, what do I know? It might be good, I s'pose... 117 mins.

And now Mr. Moors...

Goosebumps

Based on the hugely popular series of children's novellas and the television series of the 90s, Goosebumps sets out to scare the pants off kids in celluloid form in the summer of 2015. Jack Black stars as R. L. Stine (the real-life writer of the Goosebumps series) who keeps his grisly secrets locked in his books. When his daughter meets her new neighbour, the boy lets loose Stine's creations on an unsuspecting village. There is allegedly a cameo from the real Stine, just to add to the fun. *Gulliver's Travels* (2010) saw Black originally paired with director Ron Letterman and I can't see this being anything other than the one to see this summer.

Taken 3

Yes, I know it's getting ridiculous now but it took me a while to tire of watching Neeson do something other than wielding a light sabre, looking serious or saving the Jewish people. Running out of friends and relatives to lose faster than Jessica Fletcher in Murder, She Wrote, Neeson is quoted as saying he'd do the film on the condition that "nobody gets taken". Instead, he's framed for a murder he didn't commit and employs his range of special skills to find the real killer. They should have framed him for kidnapping and turned the whole thing 180° but hey, I don't write these.

Beyond the Brick: A LEGO Brickumentary

As the astute among you might have guessed, a documentary about Denmark's biggest export since Schnapps and pickled fish, LEGO. Oscar-winner David Junge takes a step back from the harrowing subject of acid attacks on young women in Pakistan (*Saving Face* (2012)) to work alongside Oscar nominee Keif Davidson to ask the big question: is LEGO merely a plaything, or something more? Adult fans of LEGO (AFOLs) and artists try to convince us they aren't just slightly bonkers.

Ted 2

Think of this preview as a cautionary tale. Doubtless a massive payday for Hollywood luminaries such as Liam Neeson, Mark Wahlberg and Morgan Freeman, *Ted 2* is likely to be as hilariously funny as it was last time. By which I mean not at all. The bear smokes weed, swears and sounds suspiciously like Peter Griffin from *Family Guy*. Riveting. Which is one thing I'd rather be doing than watch this. It'll be taking on *Fifty Shades of Grey* for the worst film of 2015. You heard it here first.

More reviews at picturenose.com, and cinebel.be is a good spot for local release dates, as is imdb.com. 1

What's on international



View from the Front Representing the Great War

This major exhibition focuses on how those who experienced the war perceived and represented the Front, from the beginning of the conflict to its end. It brings together the contrasting approaches to the different fronts – Western, Italian and Eastern – as well as to the front lines in the Middle East, the Dardanelles and the Balkans. Over 500 exhibits help answer questions such as: "What did those who fought in the Great War see?" **Until 25 January 2015.** Musée de l'Armée, Hôtel des Invalides, Paris. **Tickets: €8.50** www.musee-armee.fr

Irving Berlin's White Christmas

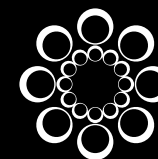
White Christmas tells the story of two ex-army pals as they team up with a pair of sisters to put on a show to save a remote Vermont ski lodge that's fallen on hard times.

A little mischief, a few misunderstandings and a whole lot of romance are the perfect excuse for a magical evening of laughter, tears, breathtaking dance numbers and some of the greatest songs ever written, including *Sisters*, *Blue Skies* and, of course, the legendary *White Christmas*. **Until 3 January 2015.** Dominion Theatre, London. **Tickets: £44.50** www.dominiontheatre.com



Pictures Galore and Collecting Mania - Advertising in Miniature

The Jewish Museum Berlin continues its series of exhibitions on consumer and economic history with this exhibition about advertising. The starting point is a comprehensive collection of advertising stamps – stamp-sized images used mainly for corporate and product advertising that were donated to the museum by a private collector. It shows the broad collection of motifs used in the small images – from art stamps to stamps with explicit Jewish reference and some industries where Jewish entrepreneurs were prominently represented. **Until 31 May 2015.** Libeskind Building, basement, Rafael Roth Learning Centre. Tickets: €8.50 - www.jmberlin.de



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Model displayed: Infiniti Q50 2.2d. Official fuel economy figures for the Infiniti Q50 2.2d in l/100 km : combined 4,4. CO₂ emissions : 114 g/km. Environmental information : A.R. 19/03/2004 : www.infiniti.eu. *Give priority to safety.



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