

# Together

MARCH 2015 #56

magazine

Focus  
*Sisters  
in Islam*

*Health  
& Fitness*

Kick  
start  
your day

The Stanhope  
Step back  
in time

Motoring  
**DREAM  
CARS**

**PERSONAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

Love people, use  
things

*TRAVEL*

Family fun  
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## Editor's LETTER

*Together:  
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to reach your dreams...*

### ON THE COVER



Will Smith  
is starring in *Focus*

## TWO FOR JOY

A sure sign of spring in the air is the sight of love birds haring around in the skies, in pairs, collecting twigs from hither and thither. From my Brussels balcony I can see airspace full of them, from huge crows to tiny little shrill birds with a tail that rises when they chirp.

In the high tree opposite, two magpies have begun to build their nest – at lunchtime I have been able to witness their progress. And it has been swift, let me tell you: a dark, rough shape has begun to stamp its personality on the thin, bare branches. It's a stunning work of engineering and often makes me wonder why we make things so complicated (the magpie has no need for an IKEA Allen key).

If you visited the recent Batibouw exhibition in Brussels, you will know exactly what I mean. The sheer choice of products to improve your home is staggering, and it's not for nothing it's held just before the buds start appearing once more as we, in our own peculiar way, attempt to improve our nests.

And if you were feeling somewhat aggrieved that you didn't find what you were looking for then you are in good company: the magpie has been found to engage in elaborate social rituals, including an occasional show of grief. It also has the ability – rare in animals – to be able recognize itself in a mirror.

I'm not overly superstitious by nature (and I think the magpie is hard done by) but I am glad that there are two of them engaged in joyful pursuit outside my window.

Enjoy the spring – you've deserved it!

**Paul Morris**  
EDITOR



 /togethertomorrow

 @together\_Mag





# Ice watch

**Ice-Stores :** Antwerpen - Bastogne  
Brussels - De Panne - Knokke



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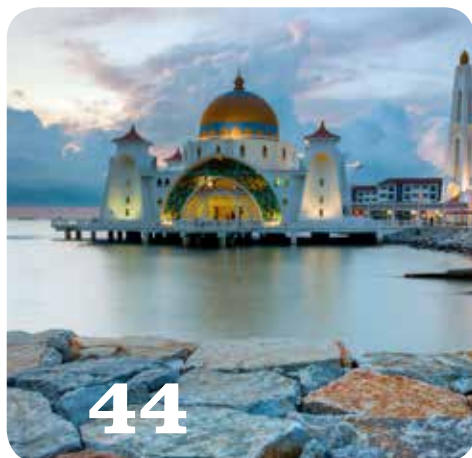
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In search of peace

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magazine

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**Devonly delights**

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

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**The pursuit of happiness**

Tom Meyers offers seven tips on the road to true contentment



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# Starring in Belgium



## Mark Knopfler

Knopfler, one of the greatest guitarists of all time, is back on tour – good news for fans impatient to discover for the first time live songs from his new album *Tracker*. He is also no mean writer, with world-wide hits such as *Money For Nothing*, *Sultans of Swing*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Walk of Life*. **June 5.** Sportpaleis, Antwerp. Tickets: **€45-€80** - [www.livenation.be](http://www.livenation.be)



## Fleetwood Mac

After 16 years absence, Christine McVie is back on tour with the other members of Fleetwood Mac. 'On Tour with The Show' brings all five stars together on stage, for the first time in years, offering up classic hits such as *Albatross*, *Go Your Own Way*, *Little Lies* and *Everywhere*. **June 6.** Sportpaleis, Antwerp. Tickets: **€69-€114** - [www.livenation.be](http://www.livenation.be)

## Calexico (plus The Barr Brothers)

This is also a fourth visit for this Tucson, Arizona-based Americana/Tex-Mex/indie rock band – all three concerts were sold-out. The band's two main members are Joey Burns and John Convertino.

Their highly anticipated new album is due for release 14 April 2015.

**27 April.** Ancienne Belgique.

**Tickets: €33**  
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## Marcus Miller

American jazz-funk bassist Miller makes his fourth visit to AB, offering fine, first-class, streamlined, strongly muscled, sharply played and funky rock-jazz-fusion. Among many other musical partners he has played sessions with Aretha Franklin, Boz Scaggs, Scritti Politti, George Benson and Joan Armatrading.

**22 April.** Ancienne Belgique.

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# Escalpade: Bringing hope, brick by brick

The ASBL Escalpade is once more raising funds through the sale of... chocolate



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RESOURCES ”**

**T**he first shovelfuls were dug in November 2013, and now the school's new expansion is 100% operational. The new premises adds two classes, while a space 'snoezelen', a physiotherapy room and a large kitchen have also been constructed for a total amount of €370,000. The 375m<sup>2</sup> building now allows 60 children with Type 4 physical disabilities and the 25 staff to feel less cramped.

Escalpade is an elementary school in Louvain-la-Neuve (60 children), a high school in Limal (50 adolescents), and soon a day centre for 30 adults with motor disabilities.

Infrastructure like this requires substantial financial resources, of which the government, foundations and other donations cover a part. Especially since the ASBL injects €50,000 each year to fund the school's operating costs.

Hence the launch of the tenth edition of the Escalpade Bricks Operation, once again under the patronage of Joachim Gerard, professional wheelchair tennis player, who recently reached the semifinals of the Australian Open.

Specifically, small boxes of chocolates will be sold in the coming weeks, at the exits of large stores in Walloon Brabant, an operation that should provide the association between €100,000 and €120,000.

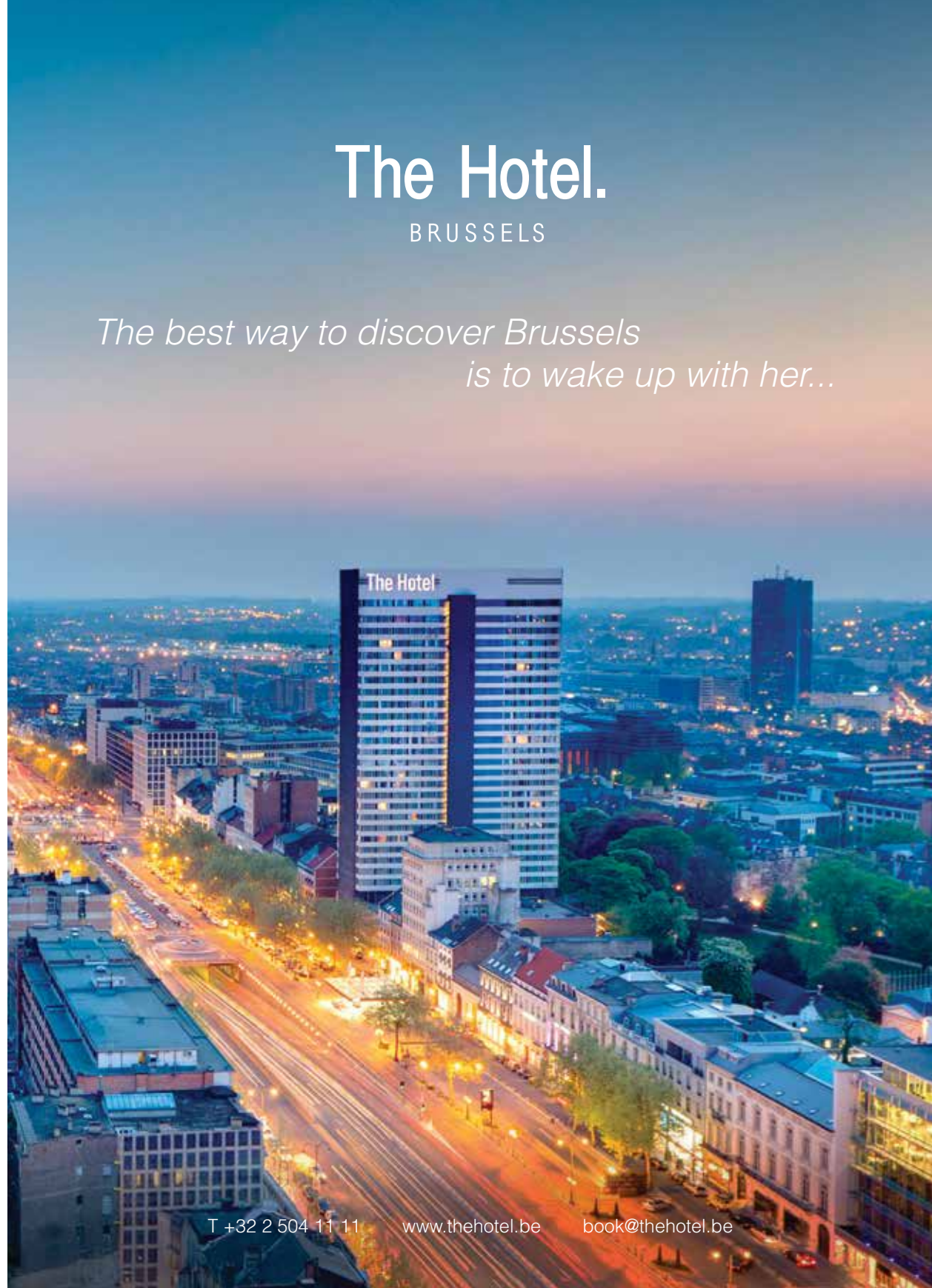
This amount will allow Escalpade to finance its projects. "Escalpade is an ASBL that is both strong and fragile", says Claire Miclotte, its president. "It is a chain composed of many links (foundations, donors, volunteers) without whom nothing would have been possible."

All this effort has a single purpose: to ensure improved quality of life for children with physical disabilities and to fight for their personal development by providing a suitable education.

[escalpade.be](http://escalpade.be) 

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is to wake up with her...*







# PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

*Burkeman concludes that Kibera's residents accept that life is insecure and unlikely to change*

*Kibera Slum in Nairobi  
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# Kick start your day!

**Suzy Sumner** offers  
useful tips to get you off to a  
flying start in the morning

**H**ow we start every morning is so important for setting our energy levels for the day. Grabbing a croissant and coffee on the way to work may give you an instant rush of energy, but chances are you will be hungry again before lunchtime and will certainly be looking for sugar or caffeine to get you through the afternoon...

So here are five simple tips to start your day in a way that can help your energy last much longer:

**1)** Rehydrate – When we sleep we lose water in the body, so when we wake up we are dehydrated. Start the day with a big glass of water.

**2)** Lemon juice in warm water – This is a boost to the liver and helps to alkalise the body (yes, even if the lemons taste acidic). Disease thrives and grows in an acidic environment, so alkalising is a good step.

**3)** Have a good breakfast – Whole-grains, fruit, nuts, seeds. Here are a few easy and versatile recipes.

## **A great way to start the day - cold version**

**Prep time:** 5 minutes

**Prep notes:** This is best prepared the night before and left in the fridge. In the morning, there's no need to worry about preparing breakfast - it's all ready to go!

**Cooking time:** 0 minutes

**Yields:** 2 people

**Ingredients:** This is a variation of a German Bircher Muesli. The base is either oat flakes or another type of flake (spelt, rye, wheat)... you can buy flake mixes in organic/health shops. Simply oat is great too. Choose 3-5 of the following to add (around a dessert spoon of each):

- dried fruit (apricots, sultanas, cranberries, goji berries...)
- coconut
- nuts (almonds, brazil nuts, walnuts, hazelnuts...)
- seeds (pumpkin, sunflower, hemp, sesame, poppy...)

Mix together and cover with milk - I prefer to use unsweetened almond milk or rice milk, but there are many milk options out there. I do not recommend using soya milk however. Cover and place in fridge overnight. In the morning add some fresh fruit - chopped apple, pear, banana, blueberries... whatever is in season...







**Another great way to start the day - warm version**

**Prep time:** 5 minutes  
**Cooking time:** 5 minutes  
**Yields:** 2 people

**Ingredients:** 1 apple or pear chopped  
2 dessert spoons of oat or other flakes  
Choose 3-5 of the following to add (around a dessert spoon of each):  
- dried fruit (apricots, sultanas, cranberries, goji berries...)  
- coconut  
- nuts (almonds, brazil nuts, walnuts, hazelnuts...)  
- seeds (pumpkin, sunflower, hemp, sesame, poppy...)  
Half teaspoon cinnamon (optional)  
Almond, rice or other milk or yoghurt  
1 banana

Place the chopped apple or pear in a small pan with a bit of water and heat gently.  
Add oat or other flakes and a bit more water and cook until soft (add more water if starts to stick)  
Turn heat down and mix in other ingredients.

Take off heat.

Add bit of milk if using it or put in bowl with chopped banana and a dollop of yoghurt.

**4)** Have some greens – It may sound strange to have spinach for breakfast, but mix it into a smoothie and you won't even taste it. Here's an easy green smoothie recipe:

**Green smoothie (winter)**  
**Ingredients:**

1 banana (peeled!)  
1 pear - not peeled  
1 kiwi (peeled!)  
dessert spoon linseeds or chia seeds or both  
1 date  
spoon of goji berries  
4 brazil nuts  
2 stalks of kale (don't use tough part of stem) or equivalent spinach or pak choy or....  
glass and half of cold water

Put all ingredients in the blender and press go... for about one minute.

**5)** If you need a coffee in the morning, drink it after you have eaten – caffeine causes your body to release sugar into your bloodstream which in turn causes the pancreas to release insulin. On an empty stomach, this can cause a sharp drop in blood sugar which can then set up more sugar cravings. Having a wholegrain breakfast in your stomach will help modulate this.

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# Say 'namaste'

**Brielle Gregory** talks Ashtanga with Stanislava Benova

**W**hen thinking of yoga, most of us probably picture poses and bends and perfect postures. We may picture someone meditating with peaceful music playing in the background. We don't typically picture a person reading, or taking deep breaths during a hectic day of work.

What many of us don't realize is that when we do everyday activities like these to help ourselves relax and get disconnected from the outside world, we're actually practicing the art of yoga just as much as the person doing a backbend.

"People think that yoga is just physical postures and then there's separate meditation and separate breathing," says MYogis yoga teacher, Stanislava Benova. "You see yoga in the gym so you think yoga is this physical thing. Yoga is actually everything."

Benova credits yoga with bringing her life better balance and helping her to become happier, more self-confident and more trusting in herself. Her road to yoga, however, was a curvy one.

Benova had always been physically active from a young age and was even a professional swimmer until a knee injury at the age of 15 forced her to slow down. It was then that she began taking classes, such as aerobics and tap dance, to begin getting her body moving again.

After a while, she began competing in aerobic competitions that required great flexibility. Benova started taking yoga classes to increase her flexibility and strength, although she found the classes at first weren't really challenging her.

"The teacher was just demonstrating and you

were trying to copy what the teacher was doing," Benova says. "It was not really yoga actually."

Then, at a Christmas workshop in Belgium, Benova was introduced to a style of yoga known as Ashtanga yoga.

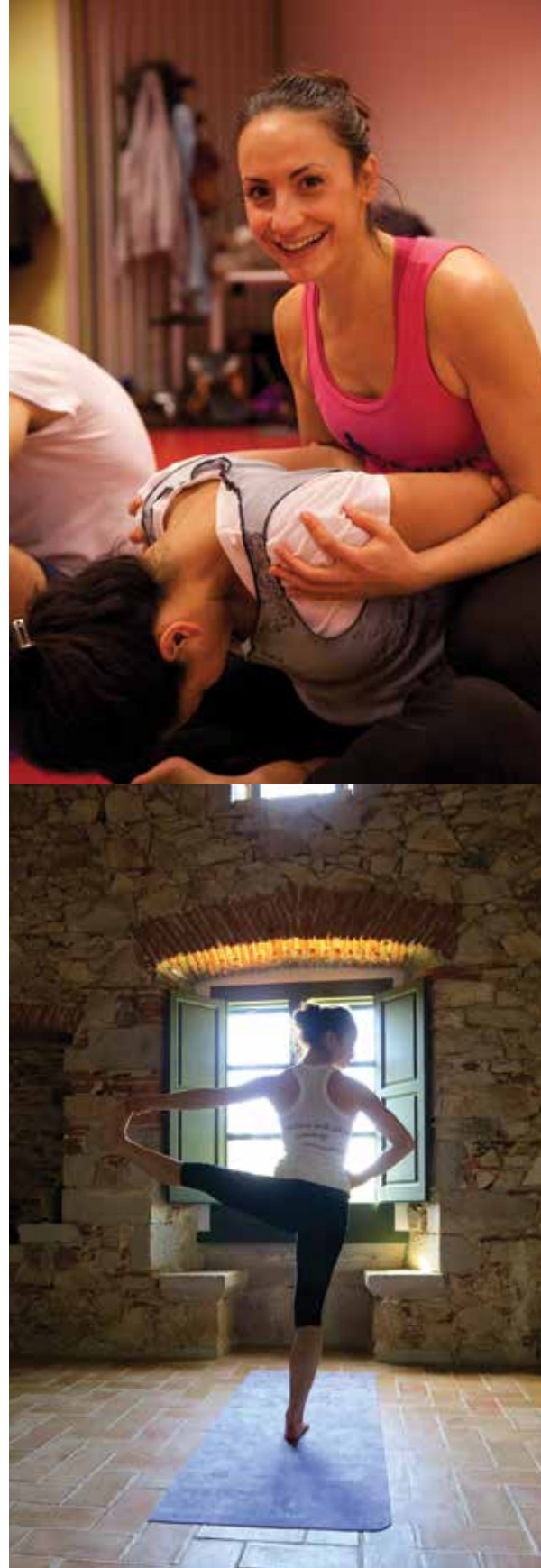
"It hurt a lot, it was more physical, and I started to be more interested in that," Benova says. "I found out it's completely different than the other styles of yoga. It was different because in Ashtanga yoga, you go more inside of yourself. You discover yourself from inside."

Ashtanga is a structured system of yoga that is made up of several set series that a person can practice. Every posture and movement is connected with the breath while the person holds a point of concentration. These combined facets then create an internal heat, which is meant to purify the body, the mind, the bones and the intellect.

The four series in Ashtanga are primary, secondary, intermediate and advanced, although the advanced series could take years to achieve. Each series begins with a salutation to create a meditative state of mind and ends with a closing sequence that prepares the body for relaxation.

The salutation and closing sequence are the same for everyone practicing, but the movements in between the two vary from person to person, making Ashtanga a much more individualized practice.

"You can imagine the sequence like a hamburger," Benova says. "You have the bread, which is the same for everyone, and you have the meat which is the same. Then you have



## "YOGA IS ACTUALLY EVERYTHING"

everything inside which is what changes."

Benova says she thinks the Mysore style Ashtanga classes make for the best option in yoga. Rather than following a teacher and copying the teacher's moves, in Mysore classes, people can do the series at their own pace to make it as personal as possible. The teacher is simply there to help make adjustments to the poses.

She also says yoga makes for a better physical alternative to other activities like running because it bends the spine and forces the body to stretch. In running there is only one constant motion and there is no stretching, which is why many runners end up with knee and hip problems.

"We're strengthening the ligaments, the bones," Benova says. "Yoga helps you to stretch and strengthen at the same time."

Aside from the many physical benefits of yoga, such as better cardiovascular and digestive systems, increased strength and flexibility, lower blood pressure and better bone strength just to name a few, yoga also has a multitude of mental benefits. This, above all else, is what sets it apart from other physical activities such as running or playing tennis.

"Yoga is a path or journey to your own soul, to be connected to yourself," Benova says. "To be focused, to know what is important to you. To be present, because we're not nowadays. We're looking too much back or too much forward and we're not being right now in the moment."

Among the other mental benefits are less stress, better sleep, a more directed mind,



## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Yoga

more balanced energy and a better connection with oneself.

"If people are more connected with themselves, they know what they want in their life," Benova says. "You can't find happiness from outside things – you have to find it in yourself."

One of the best ways to get connected through yoga is by participating in a yoga retreat. Benova will be hosting an Ashtanga retreat in Ibiza from 23 to 28 May that will feature five days of Ashtanga yoga, energizing activities and even some lounging by the crystal clear Ibiza beaches.

Although Ashtanga is a more physical form of yoga, youth is not a prerequisite to be successful in the practice.

"It doesn't require being young and flexible and strong," Benova says. "Everybody can do it. There's a proverb, 'If you can breathe, you can do yoga.' Everybody can breathe, and everybody can do yoga."

For more information about Stanislava Benova's classes and Ashtanga yoga, visit [www.myogis.com](http://www.myogis.com)

For information on the Ibiza Ashtanga yoga retreat, visit [www.suryaretreats.com](http://www.suryaretreats.com)

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# Love people, use things

**Gemma Rose** returns to the old adage that money cannot buy happiness



Kibera slum in Nairobi © Trocaire

I stay a couple of days in a village in Sumatra, Indonesia. Houses are situated each side of the long, dusty track, which is about a car's width. The start of the village meets the facilities of the main road: shops, food stalls and mosques. The end meets the cemetery. The houses are mainly bungalows, with cemented front rooms and back kitchens, sheltered under a mix of tiled and corrugated iron roofs. The sound of sweet tranquillity is occasionally interrupted by the roars of motorbikes and the squeals of children running around or playing games, barefooted.

I stay with a middle-aged widow, Kak, and her elderly mother. During my stay, her brother,

sister-in-law and two little nephews visit us. They come from Kak's home village, over two hours away. They travel on a motorbike: the father is the driver; the mother sits behind him with their baby in between. Their toddler is perched in the front.

Kak's living room is bare except for four blue plastic chairs with a matching coffee table, a straw mat, a television and a wooden cabinet. I tend to sit on the chairs but I feel uncomfortable as everyone prefers to sit on the floor. She has three bedrooms. Only one of them has a bed, which I sleep in. The other bedrooms have mats and duvets in them. Her kitchen has two gas rings for a stove and a fridge-freezer (being



one of the few houses in the village that has such a luxury). Her water comes from a well in her bathroom, next to the kitchen. Her toilet is a squat-toilet with no flush. Her shower is a big bucket of water, and a smaller one with a handle to help douse oneself with. Kak grows vegetables and fruit in her garden, and she keeps chickens and goats. She sells cocoa to her neighbours, as well as the ice from her freezer.

Kak, having lost her husband only three years ago, sometimes feels lonely but she is never alone. Neighbours stop by to greet or take her to the shops; children play in her front patio; her adopted son pops over for a visit, welcoming me with banana fritters.

Compared to living standards in Belgium, Kak is poor. Yet, I highly doubt that she is any less happy than I am. Life in this little village seems basic— people have just enough to get by and have little access to higher education or good healthcare. Yet, there is a strong sense of community: neighbours help each other out, buy and sell things to one another, give each other lifts on their motorbikes.

Seeing Kak feed her goats got me thinking about materialism and happiness. Does more money really make us happier? In her book *Flourishing*, clinical psychologist Dr. Maureen Gaffney highlights studies stating that beyond a certain level of a household's salary (for example, enough to provide decent accommodation, food and education), this isn't true.

Neither does the latest technological device or car increase our happiness. According to the University of Berkeley's Greater Good Science Centre in the article 'How Gratitude Beats Materialism', the more materialistic a person is the less happy they are likely to be because they tend to place their happiness in novel goods or things. Once the novelty inevitably fades, so does the supposed happiness. They then move on relentlessly and fruitlessly to the next bigger and better thing. Instead of appreciating the present, they take it for granted and yearn for the future. As the stoic

philosopher Seneca said: "The greatest hindrance to living is expectancy, which depends upon tomorrow and wastes today."

In *The Antidote: Happiness for People Who Can't Stand Positive Thinking*, Oliver Burkeman looks at how a bit of negative thinking might help us be happier, and that too much positivity may make us feel worse. For his research, he visits Kibera, a slum outside Nairobi, infamous for its "flying toilets". He finds that despite rampant HIV, no running water or electricity and high crime, its inhabitants appear to be pretty happy. Burkeman argues that it would be wrong to attribute their happiness to the patronizing and prejudiced stereotype that people in underdeveloped societies are 'simpler'. Rather, Burkeman concludes that Kibera's residents accept that life is insecure and unlikely to change. As he notes, "It's not at all OK that there is severe poverty and disease, but you do get one thing from living without the privileges we have: you don't have the option of mistakenly believing the next car or next apartment is going to bring lasting happiness forever. You don't have the luxury of falling into that delusion so you face the world as it is."

Materialism, comparison, obsession with wealth and security certainly adds to the unhappiness of those of us who live in more affluent societies. Practising gratitude can counteract such feelings or state. Staying with Kak made me realize that I don't need much of anything to be happy. There is, however, one exception. On a daily basis, Kak made connections with her family, friends, neighbours and animals. In our more developed societies, we are becoming increasingly starved of connection, having to make do with social media as a substitute. "Love people, use things," goes a formula for happiness suggested by the New York Times. Perhaps it's that simple. 🍌

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# Beyond limits

In part three of our seduction series, Belle de Bruxelles by sexologist Caroline. S, Amanda recalls Alex...

Alex. Is. Dead. These three words resonate over and over in Amanda's mind. It was like a stab in the heart when the doctor came out of the operating room and pronounced sentence. She collapsed, unable to move or even cry. Suddenly exhausted, she managed to get up, her legs trembling. She could barely stand. Her relatives tried to help her, to comfort her, but she had only one thing on her mind – to get out of the hospital as quickly as possible. In the middle of the parking lot, confused, cheeks flooded with tears, she began to scream as she had never screamed before. Cries of pain and love, despair and tenderness. She knew that nothing would ever be the same again.

Alex was the irresistible and sexy big brother type. 6' 3", blond with blue eyes, athletic, sociable, with a heart of gold. Always cheerful, he had an innocence in his eyes that made all the girls melt. Alex and Amanda had grown up together and from the age of 15, they fell naturally in love. Their future was set, a logical sequence of events that nothing could upset.

Alex knew his wife's sensitive points, he knew exactly how to bring out the desire in her, how to caress her, kiss her, make her tremble. For several months, employing disturbing and sensual foreplay, he pushed beyond the limits, releasing them from their fears.

He loved everything about her: her delicate lips, the curves of her body, her voluptuous, firm breasts. He could admire her for hours. Undress her slowly with safe and delicate gestures, run his fingers through her long hair,



caress her body and feel the tension rising in her - an intense excitement. But most of all, he liked the idea of owning, dominating. He felt the precise moment when breath shortens, followed by panting and groaning, Amanda arched in a final exhalation of pure sensation and pleasure. She was utterly and only his.

Alex had the gift of spicing up their sex life, and he became more and more demanding. He loved flirting with the limits and initiated Amanda into new practices. Their erotic games intensified. One night, he pushed her violently against the wall and with a quick, sudden gesture he tore her blouse. Instantly, the atmosphere was electrically charged. The room was dark, save for the dozens of candles forming shadows. Unable to move - he kept his hands behind her back - Amanda was forced to face him, to look at him. He bound her wrists with tight, leather straps. His gaze was intense, intimidating and overbearing. He ordered her in a firm voice not to struggle, spread her legs and took off her little lace panties and forced her to look down and kneel before him. The pressure on her wrists became painful, and Amanda was troubled by the intensity and power of her desire for this man - she would always be unable to resist such ardour. Lost in paradoxical feelings, head thrown back, her body stiffened in a manner that was both sweet and painful, a voluptuous explosion of the senses and emotions.

That night, however there was no indication of the terrible accident awaiting them. The evening had started rather well with a dinner alone together. They were relaxed. A few minutes later Alex would lose control of the car... ❶

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# Yalta: Past, Present, Future

**Martin Banks** reviews a conference dedicated to the anniversary of the historic Yalta meeting of 1945

**F**rom the Magna Carta to the Battle of Waterloo, the anniversaries of key events in world history are being marked in a series of commemorations in 2015. The list also includes the evacuation of Dunkirk in 1940 and the Battle of Agincourt in 1415.

Arguably none were more significant than the meeting in Yalta in February 1945 of the 'Big Three', Joseph Stalin, Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill.

Seventy years after that meeting of the leaders of the 'anti-Hitler coalition' experts again converged on Yalta for Yalta-45: Past, Present, Future, an international gathering to mark the 70th anniversary of that historic Yalta conference.

It heard that conflicts in Ukraine and elsewhere underline the urgent need for the UN to return to its traditional peacekeeping role and "full international" dialogue.

Held 70 years to the day when the Big Three met from February 4-11, 1945 to map out Europe's post-WW2 future, the Crimean resort of Yalta and Livadiya Palace - the old summer palace of the tsars - was again the venue.

Over the course of that seven-day meeting the three war leaders made plans for the final



defeat and fate of Germany, making key decisions which would shape world history for the rest of the 20th century and beyond.

Peace and reconciliation was also the theme of the 2015 conference, organized by the International Association of Peace Funds, Civil Society Development Foundation and Foundation for Historical Outlook.

The two-day forum was attended by 130 political scientists, politicians and civil leaders from 23 countries and covered 25 presentations, provoking lively and evidence-based debates.

Sergey Naryshkin, Speaker of the Russian parliamentary lower house, urged the West to "stop using Crimea as a cause for

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## “ AN URGENT NEED FOR THE UN TO RETURN TO ITS TRADITIONAL PEACEKEEPING ROLE ”

important step toward the end of the war.

This contact between the Soviets, advancing from the East, and the Americans, advancing from the West, meant that the two powers had effectively cut Germany in two.

The international community, says the resolution should “in the spirit of Yalta” additionally strive for “earnest collaboration and constructive dialogue”.

Before the meeting in 1945, it had already been decided that Germany would be divided up into zones to be occupied and administered by the Soviet Union, the United States, Britain and France. It had also been agreed that once the Allied forces entered Germany, the German war machine and military would be disassembled.

Prior to the conference, Roosevelt and Churchill agreed to meet in Malta for preliminary discussions, and as Churchill famously declared in his message to the US President: “No more let us falter! From Malta to Yalta! Let nobody alter!”

The 1945 Yalta conference probably represented the high-water mark of Allied wartime collaboration and, in recognition of this, a monument to the three world leaders was unveiled in front of the Livadia Palace at the close of Yalta-45: Past, Present, Future.

The monument, entitled ‘The Big Three’, is a ten-ton statue and the work of Russian sculptor Zurab Tsereteli.

It is a fitting memorial to those highly historic events back in February 1945. ❶

confrontation”, adding, “I hope international discussions like this will contribute to a better mutual understanding and our Western partners will finally stop using Crimea as a cause for confrontation.”

Naryshkin, also head of the Russian Historical Society, said only an “open and fair” dialogue could bring the current “spiral of mistrust” in Europe to an end and “stop provocations and unilateral actions”.

Other speakers included Tatjana Zdanoka, a Latvian MEP for the Greens Party, who said: “The postwar generation must fight for the historical truth although I have to say that this struggle is becoming tougher and tougher.”

Further contribution came from Alain Guyot, of French civil society group Le Roue-Europe who cautioned that, with “war at the doors of Europe” the “valuable” contribution of such events “must not stop here”.

His call for an international “conference for peace” was echoed in the wording of a resolution overwhelmingly adopted by attendees.

This states that the far reaching decisions reached seven decades ago by Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin had established a “reliable and robust architecture”, based on the leading world powers’ influence.

It goes on to add, however, that this system of international relations as well as European security structure, had since been “destroyed”.

The resolution therefore calls for a return to the “dominant peacekeeping role of the United Nations, full international dialogue and rejection of a unipolar world model”.

It also condemns “attempts to revive ideas of Nazism of any kind”, underlines the “timeliness and significance” of the post war alliance and calls for an international ‘Day of Honour’ in recognition of this, possibly 25 April, marking the day Soviet and American troops met at the River Elbe, near Torgau in Germany, marking an



# Sisters in Islam: In search of peace

**Gemma Rose** learns more about Ratna Osman's journey from extremism to reformism

The first thing I notice about Ratna Osman – the Executive Director of Sisters in Islam (SIS), a Muslim women's NGO based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia – is her hijab, or *tudung* in Malay. It's not quite a hijab in the traditional sense where only her face is left uncovered. Rather, her hair is covered in a wrap leaving her whole neck visible. Ratna has worn the headscarf since the age of 15. "I used to say that once I reach 50, I'll take it off because then I would be considered an old woman," she recalls to me, "but now that I'm approaching 50, I still think I'm quite young!" she giggles. Her beaming smile is the second thing I notice. It's broad, complemented by dimples, on a face that exhibits much warmth and hospitality. "I'm not sure if I'll ever take it [the tudung] off," she reflects. "It's become part of my identity."

The headscarf remains a controversial issue in Muslim-majority Malaysia, where it is not compulsory. In her youth, Ratna felt ostracized from her peers, both Muslim and non-Muslim, for covering her hair. "I was part of a small minority wearing it at that time," she explained. "I was laughed at, jeered at, made uncomfortable. A teacher told me to take it off because it was an obstruction. Most of my close friends stayed away from me. It was quite a lonely world," she says. "Now, it's the other way around." She refers to cases where Muslim girls at school have been harassed for exposing their hair. "And I feel for those who are not covered. They have the right to dress as they are because I believe in the freedom of choice, and that nobody needs to dictate to another human being. Only God can do that."

Choice of dress is one of the many issues on which SIS campaigns.. They are opposed to

any type of restriction on dress, whether it's the ban on the hijab or on uncovered hair. In a press statement on the issue, they note that "... the Qur'an infers that modesty can be achieved in different forms of dress suitable to different cultures, times and places. Thus, to legislate or regulate on women's dress based on a perceived single 'Islamic' standard is a misguided attempt at representing the breadth of thought and scholarship in Islam." Even the way a woman wears the headscarf "should not be regarded as a reflection of their degree of piety".

SIS was created by a small group of women in 1987 in response to the adverse effects the new Islamic Family Laws were having on Muslim women. They examined the shortcomings of the law and as a consequence, began to question generally why Islamic law and policy in Malaysia seemed unjust. They re-read the Qur'an meticulously, as well as engaging in Islamic scholarship, and concluded that it was "male-centric interpretations influenced by cultural practices and values of a patriarchal society" that were oppressing women, not Islam. SIS has since evolved into an organization which provides legal advice. It campaigns against issues such as polygamy, child marriage, and violence against women and educates the public. It has also launched an international movement, Musawah, for family law reform across the Muslim world.

Despite their ground-breaking work, Ratna wasn't so sure about them at first. "SIS wanted an expert in Islamic family law. I had studied Sharia and thought it was good to make use of it. I hesitated whether to apply because I thought there was something not right about



them," she laughs. "I thought that they were really westernized. But my current boss at the time, who is non-Muslim and knew more about SIS than I did, encouraged me to apply as she thought I would fit in."

By then Ratna had experienced a spiritual awakening of her own. Before wearing the tudung she described herself as a typical city girl, wearing short skirts and going out with friends. She had received basic religious education, but she did not observe the daily prayers. The practice of Islam in her family was more about spiritual guidance than a way of life. She was not sure what being a Muslim entailed. But a two-day course organized by her school's Muslim students' society radically changed her.

"I attended a lecture on what it means to be a pious child. The religious teacher warned us that if we didn't cover our hair, our parents would go to hell. I was horrified! I thought, 'What?! They are talking about sending my parents to hell?!' I never heard of this kind of Islam before," she exclaims. "So, I said to myself, 'I need to change!' And I cried so much

that night, scolding myself for being a bad daughter."

From that moment, Ratna covered her hair and vowed to be a good Muslim. She immersed herself in works by conservative Muslim scholars and attended more courses organized by the society. As a result, she shunned watching television and listening to music, regarding them as sinful. She gave up sports, distanced herself from non-Muslims and of course, boys: "I could only talk to them about serious matters. My voice could not be soft nor friendly – no giggles or laughter – otherwise they would desire me and I'd be sending them to hell," she pauses. "My views were pretty extreme."

Her change of behaviour and lifestyle caused conflict in her family, particularly with her father. At the beginning, he thought that the headscarf was just a phase. But as Ratna continued to wear it, he raised the issue. "He asked me for how long was I planning to wear it," she recalls. "I looked at him, thinking, 'How dare you ask such a question! And I replied, 'Until the day I





die!" she exclaims, mimicking a voice of rage. Her father, worrying she was following the extremist path, tried to put things in context. One such example relates to the Prophet Muhammed's love of the colour green. He reasoned that the Prophet loved green because it was the colour of plants, which, unlike in Malaysia, are so rare and precious in the desert. Another example was the preference of Arabic dress amongst conservative Muslims, deemed to be more pious. "The Prophet wore that type of dress because he was an Arab. We don't have to," he advised her. "We stick to our own culture."

"I was so angry with my father for saying these things," she admits. "I thought he was being blasphemous. I would pray to God, asking Him to guide my father, who has sinned." She now sees where he was coming from. "He was trying to understand Islam in a way that made sense to him." With hindsight, she remarks at the similarity of her father's views to those of SIS today.

Studying Sharia law at the International Islamic

University in Pakistan opened Ratna's eyes to the diversity of Islamic thought and opinion, where such differences were celebrated. "Funnily enough, studying Sharia law made me a more open-minded Muslim." As she began to challenge her own fundamentalist beliefs, she began to question the injustices towards Muslim women. For instance, why does the daughter receive less inheritance than the son? The frustrating response of her lecturer, "there is wisdom in God's words", only seared this sense of injustice even more.

By the time she joined SIS, Ratna had taken a different path to what was originally envisaged: divorced, raising three sons and working long hours in the corporate world. Yet with such independence of mind and important responsibilities to bear, the view that men were superior to women was entrenched in her. In her youth, she thought that the practice of polygamy was the man's absolute right, that a wife was subservient to her husband, and that he had the right to hit her if she misbehaved. "I believed that this was the last resort for a wife who was really, really bad. I had this naïve,



romantic notion that marriage was supposed to be blissful; so why would a wife ever misbehave?"

It was only at SIS that Ratna began to read the Qur'an with a different perspective. "When it comes to the verse on wife beating, there are many contrasting interpretations as to whether the word in question actually means to beat your wife or whether it means to leave her. In other parts of the Qur'an, that word means to travel or to leave." It finally sunk in that the long-held, male-centred interpretation of a Muslim woman's position in relation to a man has nothing to do with protecting her dignity or honour, instead it's about control. "This has really affected how men view women, and how women view themselves," she sighs. "That no matter how good I am, nor how clever I am, men are the leaders."

SIS has provided many epiphanies. She realizes that the Qur'an is a living book: it provides guidance on how to live in the 21st century. But to properly understand it, one must appreciate the context of when it was revealed,

as well as distinguish between its messages of universalism and those specific to 7th century Arabia. SIS has confirmed her instincts of one's duty to strive to overcome the injustices facing Muslim women. She is also assured that the Qur'an does not coerce nor compel, and that women and men are equal. Finally, she is convinced that the practice of Islam today has become highly politicized.

"A Muslim is someone who is comfortable with their faith in God, loves God and wants to live a good life. They do not harm others, nor pass judgment. They can live peacefully with both Muslims and non-Muslims." Peace plays a big part in a Muslim's life. "I believe that one practices Islam in the way that one feels at peace. The word 'Islam' has the same root as the word salaam, peace in Arabic. That is the core identity of what being a Muslim is."

I notice Ratna's beaming smile once more, on a face, at peace. ●





# LIFESTYLE

*Marginal in their configuration as in the selling price, they are the 'Dream Cars'*

# Dream cars: Escape the lethargy

**B**elgium boasts a fleet of more than 7 million cars, 5.5 million of which are privately owned. So it's safe to say that the overwhelming majority of Belgians own a car. They have become an inseparable aspect of our daily lives –this four-wheeled friend performs a multitude of unexpected tasks every day. In addition to these SUVs, Crossovers, sedans, coupes, Cabriolets, vans and trucks, there is a much smaller number of 'motors' that make us dream. Marginal in their configuration as in the selling price, they are the 'Dream Cars'.

At the recent FEBIAC Salon at Heysel, fifty super luxury cars gathered under one roof, including Alpina, Aston Martin, Audi, Bentley, BMW, Cadillac, Corvette, Ferrari, Imperia, Infiniti, Jaguar, KTM, Lamborghini, Lotus, Maserati, McLaren, Mercedes-Benz, Noble, Porsche, Rolls -Royce, Tesla. Not to mention the recent Belgian E-Car. Very enticing!

It is true that if you can shell out between €150,000 and €800,000 for this type of vehicle, you won't be scared off by options at €10,320 (the cost of navigation on the R8 Spyder, and also the retail price of a Citroen C1 5-door).

Aficionados of curves and gleaming fuselages, addicts of supercharged horsepower – look no further! Dreaming can chase away the cobwebs, and we can always imagine. Below is part one of our luxury car series.

Our motoring correspondent **Bob Monard** gets behind the wheels of some very luxurious cars

## **Bentley**

With a 12-cylinder/625hp engine, the Flying Spur Bentley also offers a V8 turbo from 507hp, needing only 5.2 seconds to get from 0 to 100 km/h and reached 245 km/h at the cutting edge.

The Mulsanne at 512hp and 537hp and the Continental GT 507-624hp complete the offer



The Flying Spur Bentley



## LIFESTYLE

Dream cars

### **Aston Martin**

Aston Martin's V12 Vantage S Roadster boasts a 6-litre/573 horsepower engine, going from 0 to 100 km/h in 4.1 seconds. Unless you prefer the 470 hp of the DB-9 or DB 9 Volante?

### **Audi**

In Munich, the high-end is the BMW M6 Gran Coupe. In Stuttgart, think in terms of the CLS AMG. In Ingolstadt, they are proud of the RS7. Audi Sportback is tailored like a coupe, with a twin-turbo V8 engine with 560hp fishing up to 700 Nm between 1750 and 5500 rounds. Crème de la crème: at a constant speed, 4 of the 8 cylinders can take a nap.

For lovers of unfiltered sensations, there is also the R8 at 430hp, 525hp and 549hp.

### **Jaguar**

Echoing its sisters XF and XJ vehicles, the Jaguar F-Type inherits four-wheel drive. It has a retractable hood, cold air intake, 550hp and 300 km/h (where allowed). Beautifully crafted, straight from the text book.

Aston Martin V12 Vantage S Roadster



Jaguar F-Type



Audi Sportback



## LIFESTYLE

Dream cars

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with user-friendly pipette goes for a weightless formula and barely there effect for the ultimate nude but radiant skin make-up. Available in six shades.

**Lancôme's Miracle Cushion** (€42 and €30 for a refill) liquid cushion compact introduces a new and easy way to apply foundation. The latter is more like a refreshing and hydrating silky serum with SPF 23 that can be used as a primer, bb or cc cream and foundation depending on how much you dab. Available in six shades.



**Dr. Hauschka's Foundation**  
(20ML/€21.50)  
smells of citrus, coconut and vanilla and is enriched with botanical oils, waxes and extracts to nurture the skin while illuminating it with a light to medium coverage thanks to mineral pigments. Available in five shades.



## LIFESTYLE

Beauty

# Shades of Spring

Our beauty expert **Delphine Stefens** kisses winter's dull-looking skin goodbye

## LIFESTYLE

Beauty



### **Bourjois' Silk Edition**

(€13.99) compact powder promises a natural and feather light matte finish for up to eight hours without drying out the skin. Available in six shades at Di, Galeria Inno and Kruidvat.

### **Clinique's Beyond Perfection Foundation + Concealer**

(€34.10) is a two-in-one lightweight formula that can be smoothed on as a foundation or applied in dots like a concealer thanks to the special applicator. It offers full coverage and adapts to your skin, either absorbing excess oils or adding hydration.



### **Yves Rocher's Zéro Défaut Flawless**

skin foundation 14H (30ML/€18.90) combines botanical and mineral pigments for a total of 16 shades for a perfect match and finish that lasts for up to 14 hours.



### **BE Feather Finish Matte Foundation**

(€15.95) is available in 10 shades at Ici Paris XL and on [www.iciparisxl.be](http://www.iciparisxl.be)



*Miss Dior*



Très Miss, très Dior



# SWEET TEMPTATION

## AT MAASMECHELEN VILLAGE

At the crossroads of Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, Maasmechelen Village is home to more than 100 boutiques offering leading local and international brands at reduced prices all year round. Brands including Links of London, Guess, Façonnable, Karen Millen, Gant, Geox, Le Creuset, Escada, Lacoste, Peuterey, Marc O'Polo, Ted Baker, UGG® Australia and Swarovski are available with savings of 30% to 60% on the recommended retail price. Shopping is convenient here as the Village is open on Sundays and bank holidays. Enjoy shopping in a spacious village-style setting with a pedestrianised boulevard that lends itself to a relaxed and stress-free atmosphere. After all that shopping, you might choose to relax and dine in one of the restaurants located in the Village. With both regional and international dishes on the menu, you'll be spoilt for choice. **During March, enjoy culinary delights outside of the restaurants, with various cooking events in the Village.** Discover the sweet temptation of pralines, beignets, gin and tonic, and North Sea crab during the cooking demonstrations. **Each Sunday famous Belgian chefs, including Roger van Damme, will present a culinary workshop.** Arrive at the Village in comfort and style with the Shopping Express® daily coach service – just an hour from the centre of Brussels to Maasmechelen Village. Book your free coach tickets online with the promotional code 'TOGETHER' at [MaasmechelenVillage.com/shoppingexpress](http://MaasmechelenVillage.com/shoppingexpress).

**Book your front row seat** to attend this fun and unforgettable cooking experience by emailing [event@MaasmechelenVillage.com](mailto:event@MaasmechelenVillage.com).

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# CHILD'S EYES

Photographer: Aylen Torres

Stylist: Nicholas Sirot

Make Up artist: Crystal D (0474 932 984)

Model Jonas @ Dominique models

Coat: R+Huberty  
Shirt: The Kooples





Total look: Cos



Shirt: The Kooples  
Trousers and belt: The Kooples  
Coat: Control Studio





Total look: Hermes





Top: Jean-Paul Knott  
Trousers: R+Huberty



Total look:  
The Kooples



Shirt Fred Perry  
Belt: The Kooples  
Trousers: Dior homme





Bomber: Cos  
Shirt: The Kooples



# Shopping

## Daniel Wellington

Daniel Wellington Classic Glasgow with signature NATO strap (originated from the British navy) and pink gold: **€149** - [www.danielwellington.com](http://www.danielwellington.com)



## Eau de Cartier Vétiver

Vétiver Bleu is the latest fragrance of the collection inspired by elegant vetiver. The perfumers of the fragrance wanted to find the perfect balance of serious and gentle emotions while choosing subtle aromas and deep, warm accords of the root, highlighting crystal freshness. **From €54**

[www.cartier.com](http://www.cartier.com)

Photo : Vincent Wulveryck © Cartier



## Nayestones

Natalie Schayes dreamed of working with metal, polishing silver and playing with gold. She studied jewellery at the Arts et Métiers in Brussels and learned how to master precious metal. Her creations are called 'Nayestones'. From the Full Moon collection: moon ring and bracelet in 18k gold with two diamonds. **€1,495** - [www.nayestones.com](http://www.nayestones.com)



caroline biss





# The Stroller



## Performance in style

20 years ago, we designed the world's first modular stroller so you and your youngest travellers could explore the world with absolute ease. Iconic, innovative and loaded with functionality, all our strollers ensure a smooth and smart ride. Built to last, they can be endlessly upgraded to suit your mood, style or journey. Life truly is a great adventure...

bugaboo

## LIFESTYLE

Shopping



### Nona Jewels

Nona, solid sterling silver pendant and zircons: **€69**  
[www.nona-jewels.be](http://www.nona-jewels.be)



### dinh van

From French outfit dinh van's Bubbles collection for children, in yellow and white gold. Din van created a children's range in 1975, 40 years on this new fresh look is in the shops: **€200** - [www.dinhvan.com](http://www.dinhvan.com)



### Maurice Lacroix

Pontos watch in stainless steel and sandblasted black dial, calfskin strap, decorated laser. The Pontos combines Swiss watchmaking traditions and technical mastery with modern design: **price on request**  
[www.mauricelacroix.com](http://www.mauricelacroix.com)

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## LIFESTYLE

Shopping

### Breitling

The authentic flight captain's watch. A chronometer-certified chronograph to measure flight times, a second timezone display in 24-hour mode to juggle time differences around the planet, a scratch-resistant high-tech black ceramic bezel: the new Chronoliner reinterprets the spirit of aviation in an original and timeless style:

€6,840

[www.breitling.com](http://www.breitling.com)



### Tollet Joailliers

Tollet bracelet collection, 'extensible' in pink gold. Classic and timeless, this elegant bracelet is worn everyday and with any outfit: €6,200 - [www.tollet.com](http://www.tollet.com)



### Venizi

Cristal Flower bracelet in braided "lace" mesh with studded flower cubic zircon, sterling silver 925 rhodium: €149 [www.venizi.com](http://www.venizi.com)



### Jewel in a Box

White Golden Bracelet Set with Natural Diamonds. 18kt White Gold. Diamonds: ca 4.00ct E/F-VVS/VS Brilliant Cuts (195 stones). Estimated retail price: €12,000. Price Jewel in a Box: €5,900 - [www.jewelinbox.be](http://www.jewelinbox.be)



### Girard-Perregaux

The blue hour Girard-Perregaux 1966. Aristocratic, unusual, timeless in an elegant of blue dresses: €15,200 [www.girard-perregaux.com](http://www.girard-perregaux.com)



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# LIFE OF LEISURE

*Be at the very heart of the grandiose reconstruction of an event  
which continues to speak to the collective imagination*





# Will Smith: Keeping it all in Focus

**Together** sat down with a man readjusting his life... with a great deal of success



Once Hollywood's biggest A-lister, Will Smith, 46, was forced to reassess his status two years ago in the wake of box office bomb *After Earth*, co-starring son Jaden.

After a string of hit movies including *I, Robot*, *Men in Black*, *Hitch* and *I Am Legend*, Smith was accustomed to basking in the glow of success.

Raised in middle-class Philadelphia, the charming actor has always been able to talk himself in and out of any situation, skills he demonstrated in hit TV sitcom *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* 25 years ago before reinventing himself as a movie and rap star.

Married for 18 years to Jada Pinkett Smith, the

couple have son Jaden, 16, and daughter Willow, 14, while Smith has a son called Trey, 22, from an earlier marriage.

Now he is looking to recapture his former box office glory with stylish romantic thriller *Focus* co-starring Margot Robbie.

## **Together: Have you ever been pick-pocketed?**

I've never been robbed in the pick-pocket kind of way. I had things that got stolen before, nothing as clever as we put together in this movie. I was in Vegas with Apollo [Robbins, a pick-pocketing consultant and body language expert] and he was: "Ok, listen. I need you to have the feeling. I'm gonna need you to walk in that store. I need you to go in and steal







something. We'll give it back but I just need you to feel like..." I was: "Dude, look at me!?" Everybody knows who I am. I would have to wear a mask! A 6 foot 5 black dude puts on a mask and robs a store. No, man!" It was really interesting and it's such a terrifying feeling... Everything! And that's what Apollo was saying: "That thrill, that's the thing! That makes it beautiful and exciting and fun." But I was like, "Yeah you know it's different for black people."

#### **What made you want to be in *Focus*?**

Will Smith: The collision between lying and loving was really interesting for me. It just hit me at a great point in my life, the material I was looking for and the things that I wanted to do. I always wanted to have a parallel with what's going on in my life, the concept of vulnerability and authenticity was in the forefront in my life. And then I read *Focus* and I just thought it was such a genius way to talk about the absolute necessity for authenticity and openness to create an environment for love and the fact that character has that struggle was perfect for me.

#### **What do you mean by when loving meets lying?**

Oooh, now we're gonna get all deep! First, what I learned with Apollo, and I'd never looked at the world in this way, is that everybody is running a

con. Every single person, when you wake up in the morning, you choose the things, the clothes you wear, how you do your hair... You choose all of the things that present the image that you think is gonna get you the things that you want. And the things that we don't like about ourselves, we find something to cover those up, the things that we do like, we try to illuminate them versus a purely authentic presentation of ourselves and what happens with the world. What I realized, working on this film, is you can't love through a mask! So you put a mask on that is what you want the world to think you are but you are not that. So then people try to love the mask but that's not how you want to be loved because that's not how you really are. So until you can take that mask off and bare yourself, warts and all, you actually can't have the love that was the reason you put the mask on in the first place so... All of that to say that there is probably a little bit of lying that has to happen in the beginning so you can get comfortable - but until you can bare yourself purely and authentically, there is really no way around that existential loneliness.





**You've been nominated twice for an Oscar but haven't won one yet. How important are awards to you?**

It is a really huge honour to be nominated for an Academy Award, it's one of the most elite groups of that year. To be able to say I was nominated is huge, fantastic and wonderful but for me it doesn't go beyond fun. It's a great opportunity, you meet people and you hangout and these couple of weeks before the Academy Awards are like the best parties ever on earth! For me, that time is the beautiful time, it's actually anti-climactic when you get to the Awards, it's almost like the fun is over. It takes a little bit of a weird shift to have somebody better than others where you are a wonderful group and you are honoured as a group in those weeks leading up to the Academy Awards. I wouldn't say I had any desire to win an award of any kind. For me, I always look at box-office, when people go to work and they work hard and they have their money on Friday night and they are gonna decide where they are gonna spend their money. For me, it's much larger than any award, it's a greater vote of confidence and artistic connection than an award could ever be so I'm much more concerned about how people are reacting to the material than an awards group.

**Do you feel pressure to deliver a box-office hit?**

The pressure for box-office, I had a huge revelation and experience with the failure of *After Earth* for me was emotionally devastating. I'm big Willy weekend! I smash at the box-office! I'm number one, \$100 million - we start there! Therefore for that to happen, to realize "Oh shoot, I can lose!" It was really emotionally difficult. I had to back up for a second. I was allowing myself to be defined by what other people think of my movies and *Focus* was the first film that I made where I actually approached it purely about people, purely about having fun, having a good time, I don't care if it's a success, I don't care if it's number one or number 10. I can't allow myself to be defined by the success or failure of my movies. It was hugely liberating for me to come into *Focus* strictly about having fun, Buenos Aires, New Orleans and I'm gonna go shifting from the goal orientation which made me crazy for a lot of years to path orientation and into this moment right now, enjoying this moment and not worrying about what tomorrow is because we don't have too much control over that.

**You and Margot Robbie became very close while making this movie?**

We had done 10 or 15 auditions with other people before Margot walked in and when she walked in to the room for the audition, she had flown from Croatia and apparently her luggage had been lost which was apparent in what she was wearing.

**What was your first reaction to Margot in that audition room?**

My first thought was she didn't want the job but we started working and then all of a sudden, whatever she clicked into, it was one of those moments. When Margot walked out of the room Denise di Novi [producer] literally jumped up and down and clapped. It was so magical. You can't create chemistry, you either have chemistry with people or you don't, and you can have the best actors and directors and screenplay in the world and if your leads do not have chemistry, it can kill everything. As different as we are, chronically and now geographically and genetically - it was this crazy chemistry and magic that happens when we start performing together.

**And most actresses would be intimidated to meet Will Smith?**

Margot was 23 - she was like: "Who's Will Smith!"

**How much fun is it to be Will Smith?**

You know, things are really good. I'm having a good time now. I'm feeling myself making a shift, a transition in my life and it starts to reflect more in my artistry. I'm anxious to see where things go but it's a really great time to be me. I'm loving my life, I'm excited to see where the great river takes me.

**Focus makes you a little paranoid about losing your passport, where you leave your passwords.**

It's a new world and the time spent with Apollo, we also saw the technology side of it. We went to a hacker's convention, we walked in and he told me to turn my phone off because it's always reaching for Wi-Fi or satellite connection so when you walk to a place, your phone doesn't know where it is so it's reaching and

the guy was showing us on his laptop every time someone's phone would reach for their own network. On his computer, he would grab the signal and then starts to figure out how to trick your phone that this is your own network and let him in. He was showing everybody's cell phones coming up on his laptop. It's a scary new world out there but I'm excited about it.

**But your kids must keep you up with the technology?**

My son said something to me probably three years ago that I didn't get. He had broken up with his girlfriend and I was checking on him to see if he was OK and he said, "Cheating is over. You can't really have a girlfriend because cheating is over." I didn't understand what he meant and he said, "If I go to the movie with a girl and someone takes a picture that I think is a selfie and send it. It's the end!" I didn't get it when he said it but that's what technology does. It's forcing a transparency that's gonna force people to be more transparent, authentic and vulnerable which is gonna create better relationships. Right?!

**How was your experience filming in Buenos Aires, Argentina?**

We had a fantastic time in Buenos Aires and it was my first time there, it really became a part of the fabric of the interaction. It's like these things can only happen in these kind of locations, that far from home. What happens with the actors, which is fantastic, is that when you actually go to the place, you actually start to live there, you become a different person, you actually are behaving differently than you would if you were shooting on the Warner Ranch. It was really a beautiful experience for all of us. ①



# Escape Hunt: Riddle me this!

Scoring very high on TripAdvisor, this adventure venue will work your little grey cells



## COMPETITION WIN A TEAM ROOM

We have tickets for a team room at Escape Hunt, for a team of four. Fancy yourself as a bit of a sleuth? Then simply send an email to [paul@togethermedia.eu](mailto:paul@togethermedia.eu) with the answer to this question in the subject: In the books by Arthur Conan Doyle what was the name of Sherlock Holmes' elder brother?



**T**he Escape Hunt Experience is an adventure based on the classic 'escape the room' games now popular in many places across the globe. Originally these were online point-and-click computer games such as Myst and Crimson Room. They were then made into real life games in Japan around 2007. Players are locked in a simple room with objects and feel they are inside a computer game while searching for clues and solving puzzles trying to escape.

The Escape Hunt Experience boasts that it offers a "true experience, like a mini theme park where you are transported back over 100 years and play the part of a famous London detective with your colleagues trying to solve a murder

mystery". As a team you play against the clock in one of the rooms to find the killer's identity and so make your escape. The adventures last around 90 minutes, as after the 60 minute game you can chat about your experience in our lounge area over a cup of tea and then dress up in period costume for photos.

This experience is unusual in that you don't have to be a crowd to play – it's available from only two players in a private room with your own dedicated game master play with you. You will need to use all your skills and intellect combined with nerves of steel to solve a great mystery. With your team, you hunt for clues and solve puzzles to escape from the room. You have one hour to do so, or else... you

could be trapped inside forever!

The venue also offers team building (if you're fed up with paintball in the mud) and also corporate events.

So who is this experience aimed at? The Escape Hunt Experience is aimed at anyone who likes puzzles. The adventures have been intentionally designed to appeal to different age groups, genders and backgrounds. Equal numbers of tourists, expats and Belgian citizens appear to enjoy the game.

Prices start from €22 per person. Game prices are per person and depend on the number of players. To book, simply go to the booking

page and select your group size, choice of game room, date and time and then pay using our secure system with credit card.

Escape Hunt is open seven days a week, 365 days a year with first game at 10h00 and last game at 22h00. The room can accommodate groups from 2 – 5 players, or more players can play against each other in two rooms.

Escape Hunt  
13-15 Rue de Livourne, 1060  
Brussels

Still puzzled? Check the website:  
[brussels.escapehunt.com](http://brussels.escapehunt.com) 

# Cancellation assistance

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all year round

**F**or the moment, the holiday trend appears to be to go away more often during the year, but also to shorten the length of your stay. So, that's more frequent short trips, but there's only one option for cancellation insurance, which is now annual, particularly as travel agencies offer great promotions for those who book well in advance, without thinking or knowing what might happen in the six to nine months before your holiday! As a holiday is certainly a significant financial investment, Europ Assistance pro-actively responds by offering NoGo, cancellation insurance that offers financial protection against any contingencies that may prevent you from departing or force you to interrupt your trip.

## When the sky falls

You may not like it, but many surprises can occur before or while you travel. Perhaps you missed your flight because of traffic congestion due to an accident? Your visa is refused? One of your children has to take unexpected exams? A new work contract? A parent or other relative is hospitalized? Your car is put out of action due to an accident a week before your departure?

## Whatever the problem,

### NoGo covers you in case of:

- personal health problems or accident, death
- redundancy, house burglary, divorce, de facto separation

- Exceptional circumstances make it impossible for you have essential vaccinations, jury service, the adoption of a child...

In short, NoGo offers financial protection in case of cancellation, modification or interruption to your travels for a whole year – you can book with peace of mind at all times.

Cancelled, modified or interrupted... if cancelled, you receive cover of €2,500 per person per trip and up to € 12,500 per trip for everyone insured. You can also choose to defer your journey and, in this case, Europ Assistance will provide the fees charged for changing your dates of stay. For an early return due to a new work contract, we will refund the days that you do not take, and even the cost of ski passes and lessons where required.

## Valid for every stay formula

NoGo covers all your stays abroad from €150 and above, regardless of the length of stay, and also in Belgium from three nights or more. All types of reservation are covered: internet, travel agency, tour operator, owners, as well as all travel documents (for plane, train, boat rental vehicle, mobile home) and various forms of accommodation (hotels, houses, holiday homes, camping). NoGo also covers entry tickets for shows, attractions, excursions and prepaid reservations.



## Already a Europ Assistance customer?

For couples, NoGo costs €163 year, €143 for individuals and €193 for your family. (NoGo covers all registered members, even if they do not have the same travel destination). Apart from the advantage of a €35 reduction, combining NoGo cancellation insurance with Annual Europ Assistance will offer complete peace of mind and protection for all your travels. ①

Practical information :

**Europ Assistance**

**Tel.: 02 541 90 00**

**[www.europ-assistance.be](http://www.europ-assistance.be)**

**[www.facebook.com/europassistance](https://www.facebook.com/europassistance)**

**With NoGo, Europ Assistance's trip cancellation insurance, you protect your holiday budget all year round, for short or long stays abroad and in Belgium, no matter what booking method you use.**





# INTO THE WOOD

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LIFE OF  
LEISURE

Travel

## Family time in Wallonia

Wallonia is the  
ideal place in  
Belgium for a  
family adventure



Le Pass © CGT - A. Siquet

“ IF RAIN  
THREATENS  
TO STOP PLAY,  
DISCOVER THE  
PASS SCIENTIFIC  
ADVENTURE  
PARK ”

**W**inter's end is nigh – it's time to stick your nose outside and head for Wallonia, packed with activities and stunning landscapes. And it's on Brussels' doorstep.

Indeed, many attractions re-open their doors in the spring. This is an opportunity to organize day trips (or longer) and discover the different activities as a family.

*Together* has selected just a few activities from a multitude of choices. Make sure to check the site for their hours.

### Recreation centre and wildlife parks

In Namur the **Pirouette** recreation centre is aimed at a young audience (0-12 years). Let your kids get organized in a Canadian-style game module – the very little ones will love the space. [www.pirouette.be](http://www.pirouette.be)

On the banks of the Semois discover **Récréalle**, where the whole family can make a day of it, descending the river by kayak, playing mini golf, riding electric mini-quads, cycling or hopping aboard the mini-train to the mines. [www.recrealle.com](http://www.recrealle.com)



## “ FOR A CHANGE OF PACE HEAD FOR LA ROCHE WILDLIFE PARK ”

For a change of pace head for **La Roche** wildlife park, where you'll walk among lynx, foxes, deer, wolves and a herd of wild boar in an environment close to their natural lifestyle. Check out the fun and educational journey among the birds of the forest. There will be plenty to talk about at bed-time.  
[www.parcagibierlaroche.be](http://www.parcagibierlaroche.be)

If rain threatens to stop play, discover the **PASS** Scientific Adventure Park. Children and parents skip class together in an interactive and fun way. PASS helps visitors understand how the world changes through the development of science and technology. Topics such as genetics, health, robots, television and sports are all up for discussion. There's also a panoramic elevator and a playground. PASS has already welcomed more than 500,000 visitors since it opened. - [www.pass.be](http://www.pass.be)

### **Bastogne War Museum**

Located just a stone's throw from the famous Mardasson Memorial, the Bastogne War Museum represents a new way to remember the past, specifically devoted to the Second World War in Belgium. We are offered a fresh perception in a modern and interactive framework of the causes, events and consequences of World War II through the lens of the Ardennes Counteroffensive – the 'Battle of the Bulge'. - [www.bastognewarmuseum.be](http://www.bastognewarmuseum.be)

### **The Battle of Waterloo**

In June 2015, be at the very heart of the grandiose reconstruction of an event which continues to speak to the collective imagination: the Battle of Waterloo! To commemorate the Bicentenary of a battle that left Europe stunned and that was instrumental in determining the future of our regions, the ASBL 'Bataille de Waterloo 1815' is planning the most impressive reconstruction ever seen in Europe: 5,000 re-enactors, 300 horses and 100 canons.

Attend two exceptional re-enactments of two different phases of the Battle. These shows promise to be different, fun for all, and full of emotions on the front line. You will also have the opportunity to visit the museums, take a wander through the bivouacs and discover life as it was for the troops 200 years ago. - [www.waterloo2015.org](http://www.waterloo2015.org)

### **Museum out of the ordinary - Marmaille & Co**

Gone are the days of boredom at the museum. An initiative by members of the association Museums and Society in Wallonia aims to enable young people to visit the museum in a playful way (special guide, special welcome, treasure hunts etc). These activities use various themes such as art, archaeology, science, technology and industry. More than 40 museums are participating in the project throughout the year in Brussels and Wallonia. - [www.marmaille.be](http://www.marmaille.be)

For more information: [www.tourismewallonie.be](http://www.tourismewallonie.be) 



Photo  
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Battle of Waterloo Reenactment  
© Chantal Crevecoeur



Cristallerie du Val Saint Lambert  
© CGT - A. Siquet



# Stanhope Hotel: Step back in time



It's an architectural, cultural and gastronomic gem waiting for you in the heart of Brussels – immerse yourself in history, class and relaxation at Stanhope Hotel.

**A**ccording to Stanhope Hotel's Executive Housekeeper, Tom Michiels: "We are very much in the British style – the hotel opened in 1991, and it was the first five-star hotel in Brussels. The original hotel had 50 rooms – every room is differently decorated, and each has a different British name. All the furniture used in all the rooms is originally from London. The aim was to recreate a classically English town-house hotel, very much after the fashion of The Ritz or The Savoy."

And there can be no doubting the effort and care that has been made in furnishing the hotel's beautiful rooms – in terms of look and feel, you can easily step from the 1920s to 30s to 40s (one room is nicknamed 'Meryl Streep' by regulars, given its similarity to the feel of *Out of Africa*), but each is immaculately Zen, symmetrical and very luxurious.



"In 1996, our owner Mr. Olav Thon (a very successful Norwegian real-estate investor) bought the hotel, and in 2010 we added an extension that we named 'The House of Lords', which was decorated by a Norwegian by the name of Mr Strand. We asked our loyal customers at the time what they really liked, and what they thought we could do better – they asked us to maintain the same style, but to make it a touch 'lighter', with larger desks for their laptops and two sinks in the bathrooms. Previous to this, in 2004, we adjoined the hotel to a 100-year-old town-house at the back of our establishment; there are 13 additional rooms, with a large royal suite on the first floor, which is in fact our second royal suite – a very traditional building. Finally, our most recent renovation also opened in 2010, and it is called 'The House of Queens'."

Given the hotel's location, tucked away off a busy street



near Place du Luxembourg and the historic city centre, one might think that it is much smaller than it really is, a point to which Tom responds: "In fact, it's a labyrinthine interior design but, because of its nature, it allows our clients to enjoy unmatched privacy, tucked away in the confines of the hotel, and it feels like home, you don't have corridors with 20 rooms one after the other.

"We have a very loyal clientèle – around 75% are regular clients, some come every week, some come every month, some come every season. For this reason, we offer very personalized service.

"Our most recent addition, the House of Queens, was designed by the very famous Belgian decorator Pieter Porters – we asked for a similar style, but more modern which involved the use of black as a colour and the addition of chrome furniture. Now, virtually all the street is the hotel, so we can't extend any further! (laughs)."

A tour the followed of the hotel's renowned gastronomic Brighton Restaurant, beautifully decorated in Regency style. The restaurant is overseen by Chef Laurent Gauze, and overlooks a delightful private garden. The visit also included a peek at the immaculate breakfast area. "We have a motto," Tom explains. "Breakfast, which normally comes before the client pays his or her bill, is our last chance to make a favourable impression. It is for this reason that we offer only top-quality locally sourced ingredients, pristine

surroundings and, hopefully, a truly delicious breakfast."

And the hotel has royal connections: "Lord Viscount Linley, one of the sons of the late Princess Margaret, Queen Elizabeth II's sister, is a very famous decorator, and he created an original room for Stanhope Hotel."

As part of the Thon Hotels group, Stanhope Hotel is also a modern conference venue in Brussels - advice and assistance is always on hand from the hotel's professional conference hosts, with top-quality meeting rooms and technical equipment. There are conference facilities provided for all types of events - from comfortable group rooms to large congress halls. As a conference hotel, Stanhope can offer tailored events, suited to fit your needs.

So, for a hotel brimming with modern charm, first-class service and a great deal of history, as well as one that is honoured with the coveted 'Green Key+', which highlights its ecological efforts from room-cleaning to the cooking, you would be well advised to pay the Stanhope Hotel a visit – only drawback is, you'll have to leave at some point. **📍**

**Stanhope Hotel**  
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# Bulthaup: The comfort of the kitchen

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eaten in a kitchen  
showroom, start now



**T**he Bulthaup trademark is all about creating a genuine living space in the kitchen, where friendliness and architecture are closely related. Building on the success of the concept combining gastronomy and showroom kitchens at Gosselies, owner Bernard Hofmans has brought the concept to Woluwe-St-Etienne, where kitchen showroom and gourmet restaurant are now integrated into 850 sqm.

Eating here feels like you are in a loft atmosphere. The restaurant, raised up in the middle of the space, allows visitors to discover the full range of Bulthaup materials. The Bulthaup restaurant is different from traditional restaurants in the sense that the chef cooks in front of customers in a Bulthaup kitchen with electrical appliances designed to be used by the general public.

When the weather permits, head out to the sunny terrace.

Chef Pierre Godart, who earned his stripes with

famous brands in the Brussels gastronomic landscape, orchestrates 'live' gourmet cuisine, constantly reviewing his menu according to market produce.

Perhaps the sight of Pierre rustling up his delicious fare will inspire you to take a cooking class at Bulthaup: you can be chef d'orchestre this time. Pierre cooks to his original recipes while you learn his techniques – then, best of all, enjoy the fruits of your achievements by sitting down to eat.

Take your hard work home and impress your guests!

The restaurant is open from Monday to Friday from 12h00 to 15h00 and from Thursday to Saturday from 19h00 to 22h00.

The kitchen show room is open from Monday to Saturday from 10h00 to 18h00.

[www.woluwe.bulthaup.be](http://www.woluwe.bulthaup.be) 



# Made in Belgium

**Paul Morris** visited a restaurant that is Belgian from top to toe

**A**s you walk the long arched entrance hall and spot the late 19th century stained-glass windows in the high ceilings up ahead, you know you are entering a pretty special restaurant, designed by a very creative interior designer.

Antoine Pinto has given the superb former Hôtel de la Poste in downtown Brussels a complete new lease of life. It's a sophisticated multifunctional complex housing a restaurant, an oyster bar, a beer bar and a club – it clearly reveals his respect for the original space and volumes.

Enough about the design, they serve food and drink, too. At Belga Queen, all products used in the creation of the stunning dishes are of the highest quality and come exclusively from Belgian sources. Pinto swears by Belgian ingredients, Belgian dishes, Belgian beers and, maybe more surprisingly, Belgian wines.

From the Lobster baked on a hot plate, birds beak peppers, lemon juice and lobster oil to the Belgian Charolais tenderloin, Gardian sauce with spices and médaillon of marrow (or sauce on your choice), seasonal vegetables and cone of fries BQ, the menu is varied. And served with



some style since the waiters and waitresses have special black-and-white uniforms – they reminded me of monks as they scurried beneath the cloistered pillars.

As you eat and sip, you can hear the hubbub from the oyster bar and chatter from down below, as if the entire place has been imbued with festive pleasure. Talking about pleasure, a notice in the menu said: "Belga Queen offers you a

new experience with 'Pimp your dish with caviar'. In co-operation with the Belgian house Imperial Heritage Caviar. Belga Queen proposes you customize your dishes with Russian caviar Osietra." So we did...

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# Wine of the month: Clos Les Verdots

**Geoffroy van Lede** of vin du mois heads for the Bergerac region

**T**his month at the French Salon de l'Agriculture, President Hollande tasted Bergerac wines and claimed that they were "the bomb" – a perfect prompt to rediscover this luminous Occitan area located in south-western France, along the Dordogne River. Bergerac is known for its beautiful environment, diverse fauna and rich, flavourful local food. Above all, Bergerac is the cradle of a plethora of fine wines, from Côtes de Montravel to Monbazillac.

## Discovering the Bergerac region

Dordogne is historically a winemaking region: in the 19th century, it was entirely occupied by vineyards. Today, with 13 official appellations and close to a thousand winemakers, this heritage has been honourably preserved.

The Bergerac territory itself encompasses a variety of different soils and climates. Vineyards with the Bergerac appellation can be located on either side of the Dordogne River, and therefore receive different sun exposures. Soils are mainly composed of clay and different types of limestone, some containing more sand, and some more acid than others. This allows for a variety of different wines and contributes to the region's rich gastronomy.

As the river cuts through the area, there are many valleys and plateaus - ideal for good sun exposure.



## Meet David Fournout, a local award winning winemaker

The Fournout family has been making wine for over a century in their vineyard, the Clos Les Verdots. Today, David Fournout is in charge of the domain, combining traditional methods and innovative techniques. Passionate about nature, he strives to practice an all natural

viticulture and pays close attention to climate variations to constantly adapt his work.

The wines age on-site, in an alluring maturing cellar dug directly into the rocky ground by David's father. While digging, Mr. Fournout discovered that the Verdots river flowed underneath the domain - the river now flows through the cellar!

## Our selection: Clos des Verdots Tradition (red wine)

The Clos des Verdots produces different types of wines. The 'Traditional' range compiles the domain's oldest wines. They mature during up to 18 months in vats. The red version, composed of three different types of grapes, is supple, silky and fruity. It is best enjoyed while still young and can be perfectly paired with any meal. It has won several awards and was rated 16/20 by the renowned guide Gault Millau.

You can find the Clos des Verdots (9€) and many other wines in our web shop: [www.le-vin-du-mois.be](http://www.le-vin-du-mois.be), or call us on 02 498 586 545 ☎



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LIFE OF  
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What's On

# What's on Belgium



## Tatouages:

### Bruno Timmermans' Solo Show

Belgian artist Bruno Timmermans made himself known for his work 'New Icons'. Now he presents works from his new series 'Tattoo'. Timmermans is a digital photographer, and this new exhibition is the result of an accumulation of images and transparencies on a body or a face. **Until 11 April**

[www.mazelgalerie.com](http://www.mazelgalerie.com)



## The greening challenge 2015

Over the last five years, some of the world's most iconic monuments and buildings, have gone 'green' to mark St Patrick's Day. This year we're asking everyone to join in the fun and bring a little bit of Ireland to their workplace. It could be websites, homepages, company logos; events, conferences, meetings, coffee mornings, office blocks, reception areas, shop window displays – in fact we'd like to see almost anything 'go green' this St Patrick's Day! Share your pictures with the world on Twitter and spread the word to your friends and associates!

[www.tourismireland.com](http://www.tourismireland.com)



## Un Ballo in maschera

'È scherzo od è follia?' A joke or pure madness, or is one really looking into the future in Un Ballo in maschera? This work is a masterpiece of variety, of the fusion of differing stylistic elements, a work that relates first to the French opera comique and then to the Italian dramatic style, with characters who are among the most powerful Verdi ever created. La Monnaie, Brussels.

**12-27 May**

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



### THE SULTAN'S WORLD. The Ottoman Orient in Renaissance Art

The exhibition focuses on the power of attraction which the Ottoman Empire exercises on Western artists such as Bellini, Dürer, Memling and Tintoretto. They were inspired by the Ottoman culture and the pomp and circumstance of the courtly life of the sultans. The mutual fascination brought about a never before seen cultural exchange between East and West.

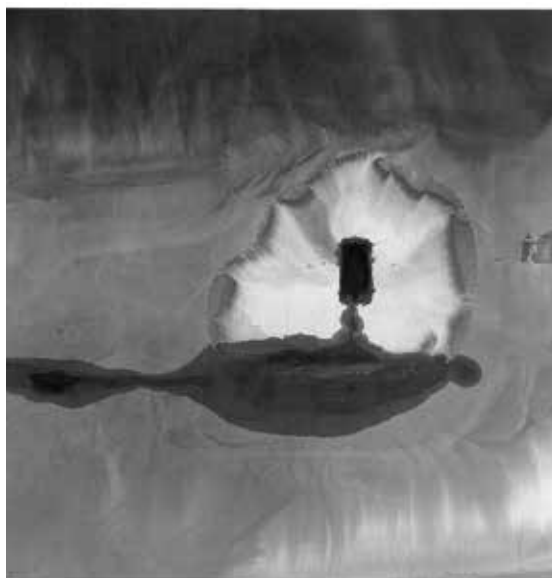
The public discovers works from artists such as Gentile Bellini, Albrecht Dürer, Jacopo Tintoretto, Melchior Lork, Hans von Aachen and Hans Memling and works from Paolo Veronese and his studio. The Sultan's World brings together in six thematic chapters around 160 works of art and valuable objects (such as paintings, etchings, sumptuous fabrics, scientific instruments, coins, refined manuscripts, luxurious carpets and oriental weaponry) from the period of ca. 1420 till ca. 1620. BOZAR. **Until 31 May** - [www.bozar.be](http://www.bozar.be)

### GAO XINGJIAN: Retrospective

The GAO XINGJIAN Retrospective invites you to discover the powerful and poetic work of an extraordinary contemporary artist. French-Chinese, a prolific author awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2000, Gao Xingjian is diverse: playwright, filmmaker and renowned artist. His work is devoted to the free exploration of a stream of consciousness through the movement of ink on paper. Through an inner journey, the artist gives us work that is expressive, humanist and universal.

He uses ink with a questioning, contemporary Western approach but one that is rooted in a traditional Chinese style. It attempts "a fresh, initiatory journey that will reinvigorate these uncertain times".

Museum of Ixelles, Brussels. **Until 31 May**. [www.museumofixelles.irisnet.be](http://www.museumofixelles.irisnet.be)



# Mons 2015: European city of culture



### Van Gogh au Borinage

It was while he was in the Walloon coal-mining area of the Borinage, from December 1878 to October 1880, that Vincent van Gogh abandoned his career as a preacher and decided to become an artist. This exhibition takes you through this crucial period, during which the artistic ideas he developed largely set the course for his work. With some seventy paintings, drawings and letters by and from Van Gogh, the exhibition – which also includes over twenty works that the artist copied or that influenced his work – beautifully portrays his various sources of inspiration. The aim is not just to provide an insight into the beginnings of Van Gogh's artistic career, but also to depict the living conditions in the Borinage at that time. Beaux-Arts, Mons.

**Until 17 May** - [www.mons2015.eu](http://www.mons2015.eu)

### Mons Superstar: Ideas and men

Mons Superstar is a must if you wish to encounter great men and women at the heart of a city and its region, and the perfect introduction to this European Year of Culture. Travel back in time to explore the dynamism of Mons and learn about the insane wagers and calculated risks, the triumphs and tribulations of fired-up inventors, zealous idealists and pragmatic engineers, all of whom have helped transform this city and its surrounding region. - [www.mons2015.eu](http://www.mons2015.eu)



© Collection Hainaut Vigilance Sanitaire

### Atapolis

This contemporary art exhibition, supported by the WIELS contemporary art centre in Brussels, will present a group of artists fascinated by the phenomena of circulation, exchange and transfer of artistic cultures and practices. The title alludes to the ideas of Edouard Glissant, an influential commentator on cultural hybridity, who long ago began to argue in favour of interconnected and egalitarian relations between human beings, between the community and nature, between the animate and inanimate world, and between the imaginary, the symbolic and the real. **13 June-18 October** - [www.mons2015.eu](http://www.mons2015.eu)



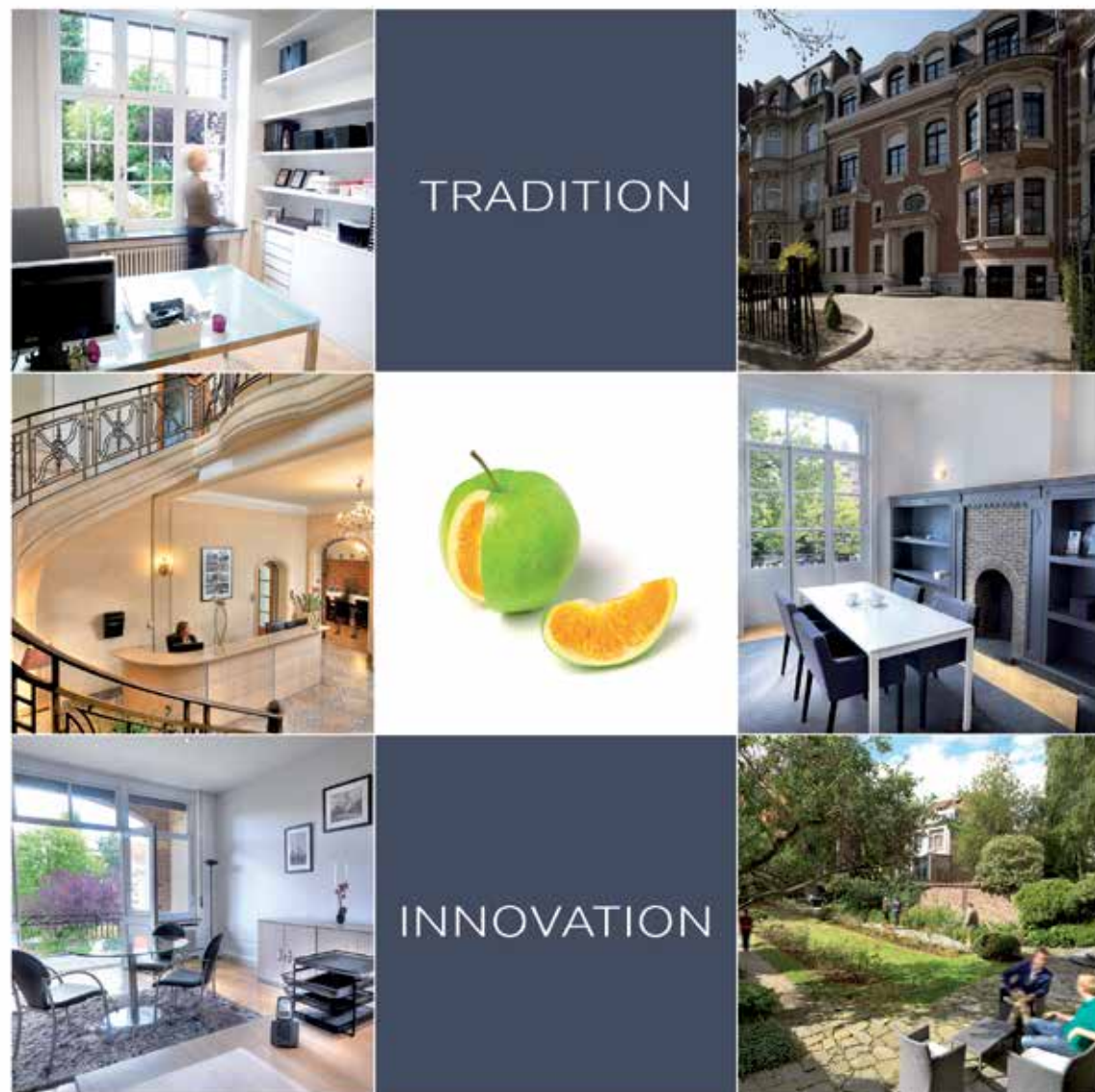
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Cinema

## What's On Cinema

Picturenose.com's **James Drew** selects his pick of March's cinema releases



### Inherent Vice

The great, nay, stellar Paul Thomas Anderson (*There Will Be Blood* (2007)) returns to our screen with this, a truly daring adaptation of Thomas Pynchon's crime-comedy-drama, starring Joaquin Phoenix as Larry 'Doc' Sportello, a Gordita Beach private investigator and hippie/dope head. Doc is hired by his ex-girlfriend Shasta Fay Hepworth (Katherine Waterston) to help prevent a plot involving her new lover Mickey (Eric Roberts), whose wife and her lover plan to have abducted and committed to an insane asylum. The plot, most definitely, thickens... - 149 mins.

### Chappie

Intriguing-sounding sci-fi from Neil Blomkamp (he of the marvellous *District 9* (2009)), concerning Chappie, an experimental robot built and designed to learn and feel, who must fight back against forces planning to take him down. A big cast, including no less than Hugh Jackman and Sigourney Weaver, are along for the ride. - 120 mins.

### Amour Fou

A 2014 Austrian film directed by Jessica Hausner, starring Christian Friedel and Birte Schnöink. The story, set in Berlin in 1810 and 1811, follows the German writer Heinrich von Kleist and his lover Henriette Vogel in the final stages of their lives. It was screened in the Un Certain Regard section at the 2014 Cannes Film Festival. - 96 mins.

### Blackhat

And director Michael Mann returns, with a tale of computer terrorism and counter-terrorism. Chris Hemsworth plays Nicholas Hathaway, a hacker serving time who is giving a chance for freedom in exchange for finding those responsible for attacking a nuclear plant in Chai Wan, Hong Kong, where coolant pumps were caused to overheat and explode by hackers, and an assault on the Mercantile Trade Exchange in Chicago, which caused soy futures to rise. The world is an increasingly fragile place – what can Nick do? - 133 mins.

Read more reviews: [www.picturenose.com](http://www.picturenose.com)



# What's On International



## Bootshaus Club

Located in Cologne, on a port by the Rhein, this former storage facility for boats fits a crowd of 1,500 people and has always been a refreshing alternative to the generic club scene in Cologne. Bootshaus is known for its cutting edge electronic bookings from established to underground artists and for breaking acts into the German market, allowing you to "dance to euphoric house music, go ballistic to rough electro sounds or drift into the morning with thumping techno bass". - [www.bootshaus.tv](http://www.bootshaus.tv)

## Alibis. Sigmar Polke. Retrospective

Sigmar Polke (born 1941 Oels, Silesia [now Olesnica, Poland], died 2010 Cologne), was one of the most important artists in recent decades. The exhibition displays works spanning from 1963 to 2010 is the first in over fifteen years and also the first since the artist's death. It is also the first time that all the media with which the artist engaged intensively throughout his career are brought together in one exhibition, emphasizing the fact that Polke's work always resisted classification in art-historical terms. Museum Ludwig, Cologne. **Until 5 July** - [www.museum-ludwig.de](http://www.museum-ludwig.de)



## Lyonel Feininger: Striding the world

Despite being a major international figure in twentieth-century art, Lyonel Feininger (New York, 1871-New York, 1956) remains best-known in the USA and Germany, the two countries where he spent most of his life. With the current exhibition, the André Malraux Museum of Modern Art (MuMa) in Le Havre (Normandy) in turn pays tribute to Lyonel Feininger. For many members of the French public, it will be an introduction to his work, shedding light on Feininger's oeuvre via 139 works, spanning his entire career, from 1907 to 1949. MuMa/André Malraux Museum of Modern Art Le Havre (Normandy). **18 April-31 August**. [www.muma-lehavre.fr](http://www.muma-lehavre.fr)



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