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magazine

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*THE NEW
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TRAVEL
The shimmering Côte d'Azur
A weekend in Bonn

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INTERVIEW

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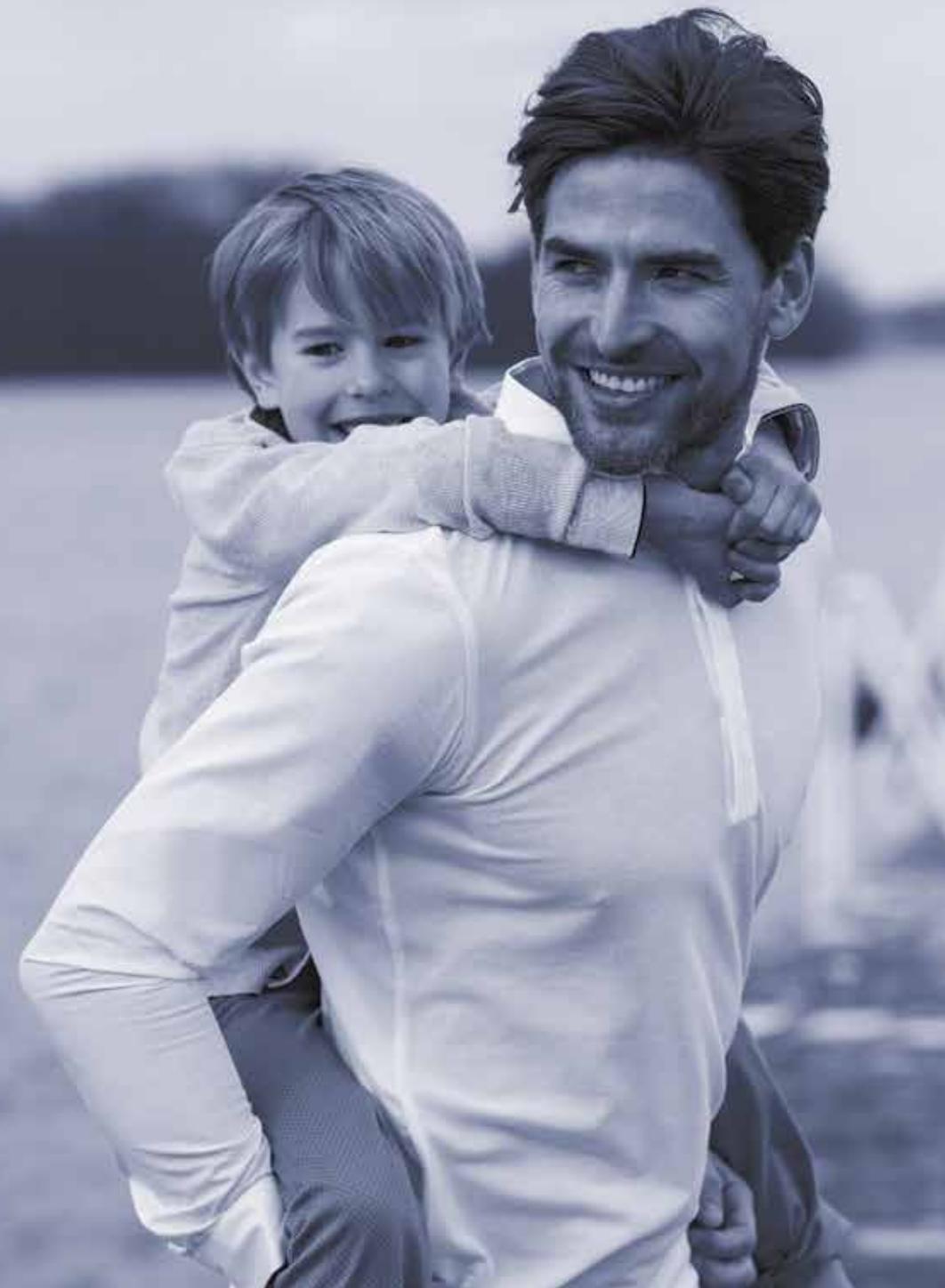
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Editor's LETTER

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

ON THE COVER



Natalie Portman stars in Terrence Malick's *Knight of Cups*

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

There are two sure signs of spring's arrival. Firstly, all manner of folks suddenly appear on the streets and in the parks, indulging in exercise (some dressed as if they think they are invisible because they are running). Secondly, my personal favourite, café terraces start blooming once more as they sprawl out across the pavements and sun worshippers take their habitual places with coffee or something stronger.

More and more expats are turning exercise into money for charity, with events such as Relay for Life, the Brussels 20k and Oxfam Trailwalker. The latter is a sporting challenge for teams of four, in which you have to hike 100km in the Hautes Fagnes in under 30 hours. If you achieve it you benefit Oxfam solidarity projects in sustainable agriculture, access to water and education, as well as the fight against violence against women. And you get to discover one of Belgium's best preserved natural regions.

You can find out about these team events in the media aimed at the expat community. They really are one of best ways of meeting people in Brussels. Meanwhile, as I sit writing this on a local café terrace, enjoying a cup of Pure Tea, a woman at the table next to me asks me where I come from. There are all kinds of places to meet people and enjoy what's great about the outdoors.

Paul Morris
EDITOR



/togethermagazine

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My weekend in the Ardennes

Let us inspire you and start dreaming of your next vacation



Holidays in the Ardennes with Easter around the corner

The countdown of the Easter holidays has begun. Many of us are impatiently waiting to welcome the first sign of a well-deserved break: **Easter Monday**. We've got just the right fix for you.

Nothing beats dreaming away to your next vacation into the nature. Especially for you, **Ardennes-Etape** selected the very best holiday houses in the Ardennes. Midst a range of over **1400 holiday houses**, you will definitely find your ultimate match: cosy chalets, luxury villas or authentic castles. Spring, summer, fall or winter... each season in the **Ardennes** has its own characteristics and typical beauty.

Durbuy and **Malmedy** are two of the most enchanting towns in the country. The nature surrounding Bouillon is breath taking. The national reserve of the **High Fens** is the ideal location for all hikers or even skiers (during winter). Dinant's rich history, but also La Roche-en-Ardenne or Bastenaken, guaranty a cultural experience for the whole **family** or a **group of friends**.

On top of that, the region of the Belgian Ardennes is a true dream destination for pleasure-seekers. After all, the Ardennes-Etape motto is "*Que du Bonheur!*" or "Pure happiness". You will find tons of **gastronomic restaurants** and **breweries** that are worldly renowned. Furthermore, the Ardennes region disposes of the finest **local products** such as Ardennes ham or cheese.

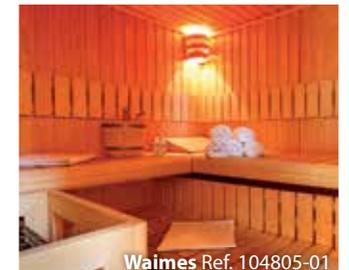
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Together
magazine

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Starring in **Belgium**



Santana

A musical legend, Mexican guitarist and composer Carlos Santa is coming to town, playing classics and new material from the highly-rated *Corazón* album. In 2003 *Rolling Stone* magazine listed Santana at number 15 on their list of the 100 Greatest Guitarists of All Time. He has won 10 Grammy Awards and three Latin Grammy Awards. **1 July**, Palais 12 - Brussels Expo. **Tickets from €57** www.livenation.be



Laura Marling

The British folk revelation has completed her latest CD, *Short Movie*. As witnessed by the first single (of the same name), it will be a compelling change of course, mainly based upon her extensive stay in L.A. Not yet 25, she has already released five moving CDs and been on the road for about 10 years. **12 May**, Ancienne Belgique. **Tickets: €19** www.abconcerts.be



Rock Werchter 2015

The annual event this year includes artists such as Foo Fighters, Muse, Florence + The Machine, Damien Rice, The Chemical Brothers, Lenny Kravitz, Ben Howard, Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds, Kasabian, Sam Smith, Roisin Murphy, The Script, The Prodigy, Elbow and many more. **25-28 June**, Festivalpark, Werchter. **Tickets from €95 (one day ticket)** - www.livenation.be



C.W. Stoneking

C.W. (Christopher William in full) Stoneking is an extremely credible and hyper-talented Australian, with a striking voice and the help of his remarkable National Reso-phonics guitar and tenor banjo. The recent *King Hokum* and *Jungle Blues* albums will feature heavily. **9 May**, Ancienne Belgique. **Tickets: €28** www.abconcerts.be

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Relay For Life

Michaela Menache explains how the International Community of Brussels is helping fight cancer

30 -31 May marks the International Community of Brussels' 5th edition of Relay For Life and 30 years since the American Cancer Society's first Relay For Life. Currently, over 5,000 Relays take place across more than 20 countries.

Relay For Life was brought to Belgium under the auspices of the Foundation Against Cancer in 2011 with three events and has since evolved to 26 Relays across Belgium. The objectives are:

- To raise funds for the fight against cancer
- To support scientific research
- To promote prevention and healthy lifestyles
- To provide social care for people affected by cancer, all of this within Belgium.

What a wonderful way to give back to our host country!

In December 2014, €17 million were granted by the Foundation to 67 scientific research projects, a growing proportion of which was as a direct result of funds raised at Belgian Relay for Life events.

Last year, our International Community of Brussels' Relay raised over €123,000. This year we have set the bar even higher. This 24-hour community event has three key ceremonies. The opening ceremony, where we celebrate survivors as they walk the first lap, the Luminaria Ceremony, at nightfall where candles are lit to remember those who lost their battle against cancer and the closing ceremony where we pledge to fight back against cancer.

There are numerous ways to get involved: you can volunteer to help out on the day, sponsor the event, donate to a person/team or create your own team. A team is a group of friends, family and/or colleagues who walk or run around a track and relay with each other and raise money before and on the day.

A fun time is guaranteed with activities and entertainment for all ages throughout the 24 hours.

For more information visit: relayforlife.be/relays/international-community-brussels-2015
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PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

*It's not only a failed Everest expedition
which has called into question the value in setting goals*



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**PERSONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

Fitness

Fit Boxing

Rachid Mallem suggests that you take up boxing to improve your overall fitness



Boxing workout for me? Are you kidding me? No way! You might be positively surprised by all the benefits it delivers.

For any level, any age or either gender, boxing has so much to offer. You don't need to be exceptionally fit to come and join one of the many boxing group classes at Aspria Brussels Arts-Loi. What you need is your motivation; the rest follows easily. Forget all the stereotypes and give it a try.

Classes are created depending on your need to give you the kind of fitness workout you are looking for, combining a full body workout with cardio exercises and learning the techniques that have given boxing the name the 'noble art'. We go deep inside to bring out all negativity and transform it to positivity – does that make sense? Through a complete body warm up we develop your agility, increase your cardio capacity and strengthen your muscles. You

won't gain muscle, but your body will be strengthened and conditioned, you'll lose weight and feel better because you're healthier.

You might think the power comes from your arms but it comes from your hips. Save your energy and ask your body to help you. Boxing is a complete coordination workout where each part of your body plays a role. This is why at Aspria Brussels Arts-Loi, every member feels so happy after each class, in complete harmony and peace with their entire body. We work as a team even if the effort is individual. We motivate each other when the workout becomes harder. We take pride in what we achieve after a long day of deadlines, stress... and we go back home to sleep like a baby!

It's all about hard work and dedication. Boxing has never been such fun. Keep in mind that the will is more important than the skills.



Tips:

1. Stay calm and never stop breathing out when you punch. Always look at your target when you punch
2. Learn to keep your eyes open during the heat of the battle
3. Throw short hooks, short uppercuts and short rights but long jabs
4. Don't work out until complete failure. If you go until you fail every day of the week without reason, you'll probably overtrain and quit boxing very soon
5. Drink one cup of water every hour minimum
6. Make friends in the gym, be humble and have fun
7. Don't waste energy showing off on the bag, nobody cares. Stay calm and punch lighter on the bag so you can last more rounds, keep your form together and punch sharp
8. Punch as fast as your body can turn so you won't sacrifice power. Use your whole body instead of just the arms to punch.

Rachid Mallem is Wellbeing Manager at Aspria Brussels Arts-Loi

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Astrology: Seeing stars

Sarbani Sen, life coach and astrologer, gets personal with the planets



CANCER



TAURUS



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CAPRICORN



PISCES

Have you heard about Astro-coaching? What do the planets have to say about our daily lives? What is the impact of the Moon, Venus and Mars, or Uranus, Pluto and the Sun? I'd like to tell you about the first encounter with my teacher and how I started going deeper into this art of reading a birth chart.

When I first went to see him, I expected to hear about my future and how successful I would be in the next two to five years and how I would meet the man of my life a couple of months later, and be married happily ever after. Well,

none of that happened.

Instead, what my Astrology teacher told me that day really made a difference to the vision I had of my humble self. It changed my life perspective and the way I handled my daily life. Thanks to his insights, I could finally grasp why I wanted to do the things I did (without understanding them because I thought they were weird), and why at certain hours of the day I became like a grizzly and why at some periods I hunted for sex (and felt very ashamed about it).

In Astrology we compute your birth

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Health

chart using the date, time and place of birth. Everything has a meaning and an impact – this doesn't mean we can't do anything. On the contrary, Astrology helps us to better manage the beautiful 'self' we get to carry in this life and asks us to be caring and understanding of it.

To start with, we'll look at the personal planets, the ones that affect us every day. Roughly, we will screen the Sun (the social self), the Moon (the body, instincts, needs), Venus (love and romance), Mars (work, energy, husband), Mercury (intellect, communication), Jupiter (success) and Saturn (duties and challenges). Uranus, Pluto and Neptune are slower planets which will rule a whole generation – usually we don't go deep into them as they will give us more sociological information.

We also need to take into account the 'house' in which the planet is found. Imagine life as a stage and pretend that the planet is the actor wearing the costume of a sign. The house could be seen as the setting where the scene is shot.

In Astrology, we consider that the Sun is the first 'hat' that life will ask us to wear in this scenario. It represents the way we show ourselves in social life, the 'façade' us. Our 'rising planet' (or ascendant) is the second hat we have to wear. We usually start using it by our forties once, we've mastered the first one. Having a midlife crisis? Sudden changes in your likings and beliefs? Look at the ascendant: there might be some information there. For the third and last hat, we look at our 'mid heaven'.

For example, the Moon will tell us about our inner child, our most

basic needs, the way we live in our bodies. Of course, we have to look at all the other planets too and the way they interact amongst each other: opposition, square or conjunction, all that will give us more information on the scenario that is unfolding for us.

In Astro-coaching, we use Astrology as a map of possibilities and potentials, whether they are exploited or not. It works for all areas of our daily life: work, challenges and potentials, new projects, new marriage, problems with children etc...

For example, I have a Sun in Aquarius. What does that mean? Aquarians have a tendency to think global, collective and ahead of their times, constantly striving to make things better for all. Maybe this is why we find many of them in sociology studies, education and coaching.

The Moon in Aries, for example, tells you where you get all that energy from, why you need to do sports every day or pick fights more than is necessary. When I became aware of that, I took up physical exercise as a new religion, and it actually saved my relationship. This is, of course, only one example of what a moon in Aries can do for you.

And finally, a little look at Venus. If in Pisces like me (added to a Black Moon in Libra) you have the perfect recipe for a serial lover. But we'll keep the details of that one for another time...

Astro-coaches can also look at the couple as a whole, called 'synastry'. Together we can discover the challenges, the strengths and the real meaning of being together.



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Failing on Everest

Gemma Rose thinks the less goal-oriented we are, the more likely we are to achieve them

Not too long ago, the self-help world was taken by storm by the book *The Secret*, by Rhonda Byrne: selling 19 million copies, grossing over \$300 million, topping the *New York Times* bestseller list, and having Oprah as its biggest fan. The premise of the book was that you could achieve everything that you wanted through visualisation and the power of positive thinking. A couple of famous examples from the book recommended visualising free parking spaces when you entered the car park, or if you are single, making extra room in your closet for that special someone. A relative swears by the parking space trick, whereas a friend did meet someone shortly after making space in her closet. Unfortunately, the relationship didn't last. Maybe she didn't leave enough room?

What *The Secret* and many self-help books – as well as business management and leadership gurus – adore doing is getting us to set goals and targets as the key to success.

So life inevitably becomes a myriad of targets and goals. In some cases setting goals and targets work. According to a study conducted late last decade by clinical psychologist Dr. Gail Matthews, at Dominican University, California, she found that people who wrote down their goals and committed to them were on average 33% more likely to achieve them than those who didn't write them down. A colleague has admitted to me that he's achieved every single goal he's ever written down, because he wrote it down. But other clinical studies stated in the Ted Talk 'Keep Your Goals to Yourself' by Derek Sivers, showed that telling someone your goals made you less likely to achieve them (even if you wrote them down), because your mind tricks you into thinking you have already succeeded, so you stop trying.



Photo © Rhonda Byrne: Rhonda Byrne, writer of *The Secret*



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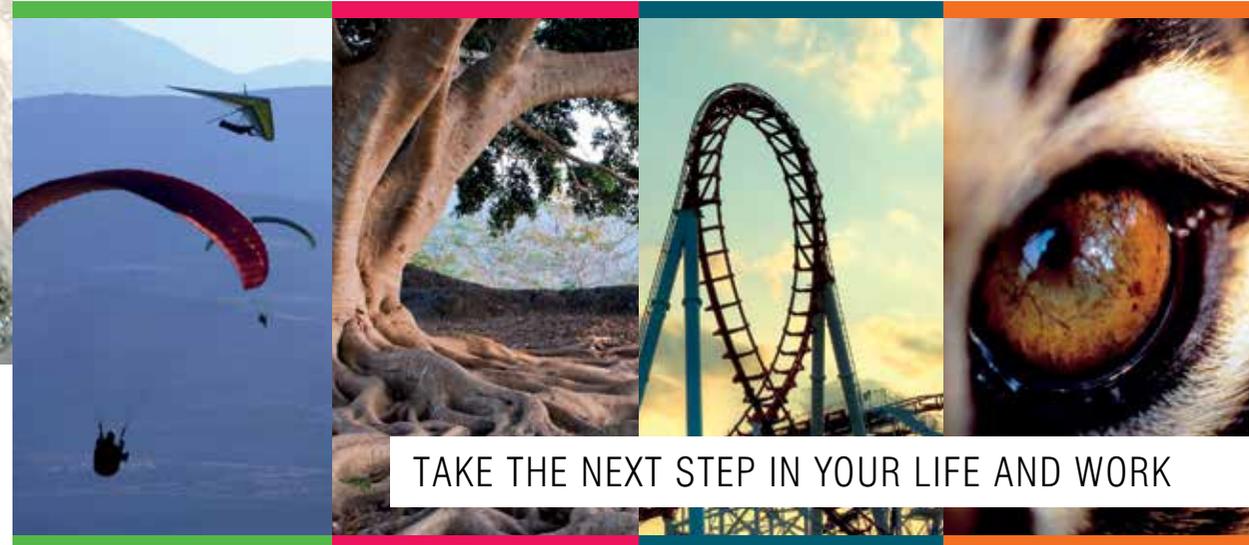
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PERSONAL
DEVELOPMENT

Self-help



Aside from whether you achieve your goals or not, being goal-oriented can kill you. In one of my favourite books on self-help, Oliver Burkeman's *The Antidote: Happiness for People Who Can't Stand Positive Thinking*, he refers to the 1996 Mount Everest tragedy where eight climbers died in a 24-hour period. The climbers had arrived too late to the summit thus were caught by the darkness, devastatingly cold temperatures and blizzards on their return. But why did they continue to the summit knowing that they would be late? Burkeman suggests a reason: 'goalodicy': they had invested so much in getting to that summit, they had fixated so much on that goal, that not even a suicidal mission was going to force them to turn back.

It's not only a failed Everest expedition which has called into question the value in setting goals. Burkeman refers to businesses that were so committed to a target that they failed to see the bigger picture and consequently went bankrupt; or CEOs who achieved their dream of becoming millionaires but at the cost of failed marriages.

Another favourite self-help book of mine is *F**k it: the ultimate spiritual way* by John C. Parkin. He thinks that sometimes we should just say "f**k it" to plans and goals. Plans and goals can keep us so fixed and inflexible that we may miss out on the bigger stuff, the unexpected, the unpredictable, serendipity. Paradoxically,

Parkin notes that by caring less about whether you achieve your goal, you might be more likely to achieve it.

For much of my distaste of *The Secret*, perhaps I agree with it on one point: it recommends the simple rule of telling the Universe what you want, not worrying about how you will get it, but just having faith that you will.

I had not planned to write a personal development column for *Together*, but I had an idea: to write on wellbeing and to share my thoughts and insights to the public. I started a blog; I wrote regularly, but I did not really have an end goal in sight. Several months into the blog, I stumbled across an issue of *Together Magazine*, lying on a window sill near my neighbourhood, with Scarlett Johansson on the cover. I picked it up and flicked through it, instantly knowing that this was the type of magazine I would like to write for. In the Editor's letter of that issue, Paul Morris ordered us to seize the year: "Carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero, meaning 'seize the day while trusting little on what tomorrow might bring!'"

I seized the day; I dropped him an email. This March, I celebrated my first anniversary writing a column that I love.

Revelation

In part three of our seduction series *Belle de Bruxelles* by sexologist **Caroline S.**, Amanda and Lea head out into the night...

10 months already...

Amanda rages at the world. Sad and bitter, she feels desperately alone. The days pass, she loses the thread of her life. Nothing is important now. Unable to find energy and courage, she vegetates on the couch all day, watching American series and thinks back to all those times with him.

Leah, her best friend, bombards her with phone calls. She tries every trick to get her to change her mood but to no avail. Amanda appears to be bolted to the sofa. That night Leah arrived with pizzas. She could not leave her alone for another night of rehashing the past. Desperate to help her friend, Leah is determined to get her out of her house!

From the wardrobe they choose a beautiful red dress, tight and short, one that Amanda has never worn. This amazing dress reveals her slim waist and enhances her cleavage. It makes her look sexy and confident – a femme fatale. Leah looks at her admiringly. She is very beautiful, if only she knew. A touch of deep red of gloss on the lips, a little makeup and voila! In front of the mirror, Amanda is so moved that she can barely keep her tears back. Her friend is right: she has to resume her life and move forward.

She allows herself to be led through the maze of city streets. Eventually, they reach a nice small but crowded bar. The air is clammy, stifling. Around them are men and women of all ages. She feels uncomfortable among all these people but does not want to disappoint her girlfriend and forces a smile. After a few



agonizing minutes they manage to reach the bar and order two cocktails. Leah grabs Amanda's hand and pulls her towards the dance floor. Under duress, she gets carried away by the music. Her body sways to the rhythm, she closes her eyes, slides her hands down her legs and back up. It is sensual and provocative. Amanda is blissfully unaware that all eyes are fixed on her. She is a captivating beauty, simply sublime in the little red dress.

Leah approaches and kisses her on the cheek, her skin is smooth and sweet. Captivated by her beauty, her heart pounds when they are eye to eye, and Leah realizes the intensity of her love for her and the power of her desire. Troubled, she lowers her gaze.

Timidly, she puts her hands on Amanda's hips, the excitement rises, her breath quickens, her movements are smooth and fluid. Naturally, their bodies come together, skim, touch. They share a powerful sensuality. They do not take their eyes off one another. The intensity between them is palpable. Attracted to each other like magnets, Lea is now just inches from her mouth. Time stops, as if suspended, they are alone in the world. She caresses her cheek tenderly with the back of her hand, touches her mouth with her fingertips, and, without kissing her, whispers in his ear: "I am yours..."



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Out or in?

Gerry Callaghan takes a look at the UK's option as EU membership becomes a very hot potato



Five years after the development of the first UK coalition government since the Second World War, election polls are indicating another hung parliament. With the UK General Election on 7 May drawing close, EU membership is poised to dominate in the final push for government. On one side is the Eurosceptic UK Independence Party and pockets of the Conservative Party, and on the other are the pro-European Liberals, Greens and Scottish National Party, with Labour saying that no referendum is needed unless there is a further substantial shift in power from London to Brussels.

UKIP leader, Nigel Farage has said that his party will not rule out a coalition to allow the Conservatives to form a government if the election fails to produce a majority government. However, Farage has insisted that such a deal would require an in/out referendum is held before the end of 2015, something that UK Prime Minister David Cameron labelled unlikely, saying, "The sooner that renegotiation can get done, the better. But frankly the chances of

doing that inside 2015, after an election in May, are pretty slim".

The most concerning issues for anti-EU proponents is the free movement of people around the 28-nation bloc and some of the perceived costs of the EU's employment and social policies. Large-scale immigration into the UK turned into a sensitive topic after EU enlargement into central and Eastern Europe in 2004. But free movement is a core EU principle and many British employers welcome it, as do the 1.8 million UK citizens working or retired elsewhere in the EU.

Cameron has said that "the EU isn't working properly" and a continuation of the status quo is no longer an option. The governing Conservative Party have promised an in/out referendum on EU membership before the end of 2017 if the party are re-elected. The Prime Minister will campaign for the UK to stay in the EU, but only if the institution is able to reform. He believes that "Britain's national interest is best served in a flexible, adaptable and open European Union", while calling for the relaxing of the rules barring limits on migration from within Europe.

However, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker is adamant that the UK and EU need each other and pledged to do all he can to ensure the UK remains in but not at the expense of altering central treaties. The Luxembourgish official says he is reluctant to change the treaty provisions that allow EU citizens the free movement of labour. He told a conference organized by Friends of Europe and the Jacques Delors Institute that he was "in favour of a fair deal for Britain" but emphasized



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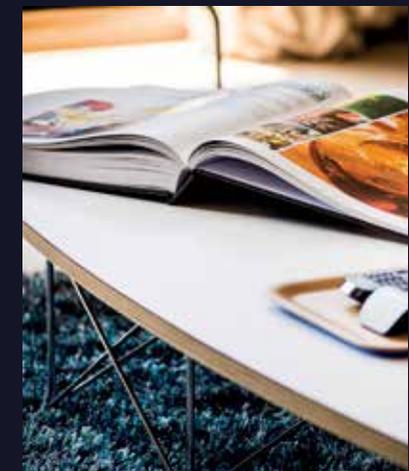
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PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Politics

that “there are red lines”, adding “I’m not ready to give up [on the] freedom of movement for workers”.

In any case, attacks on free movement of workers lost traction last year when the UK succeeded in tightening housing benefits for newly arrived EU immigrants, in order to clamp down on what the government calls ‘benefit tourism’. Many opinion polls over the past couple of years have indicated that the UK public remain divided on the EU question, with opposition peaking in November 2012 at 56% compared to 30% who wanted to remain a member.

A recent survey by TNS also shows neck-and-neck, with 37% of the UK population in favour and 40% against. The survey found older Britons more hostile and younger voters more supportive of the EU. Only 14% of voters said they believe Cameron can renegotiate Britain’s terms successfully. Britain would still face EU regulations costing £31.4bn per year, around 94% of the current costs, if it left the EU and opted for a relationship with Brussels along the lines of the one negotiated by Norway, a leading pro-reform think-tank argues. Open Europe, which campaigns for major reforms in Britain’s relationship with the EU, says that the UK would still have to uphold the “most burdensome EU rules” if it was to adopt what is known as the Norway option. Under this scenario, dubbed in the past by Open Europe as the “nearly but not quite an EU member” model, Britain would have access to the EU single market as a member of the European Economic Area (EEA). But it would have no vote over EU rules. The findings come in a report which says that the only way Britain could ‘free’ itself from the £33.3bn costs of EU regulations is through radical reforms within the EU or a “far better trading model” as an EEA member than the current arrangement negotiated by Norway.

According to former UK attorney general, Dominic Grieve, two million UK citizens working abroad could become illegal immigrants overnight if Britain were to leave the European Union. In an attack on Eurosceptics inside and outside his Conservative Party, Grieve

condemned those who want to tear up the UK’s international treaty obligations and withdraw from both the EU and the European Court of Human Rights.

Delivering a lecture in central London entitled ‘Britain’s International Obligations – Fetters or Keys?’, Grieve warned the UK leaving the EU would cause more problems than it solves. “The requirements of any free trade agreement would make British removal from the clauses dealing with freedom of movement impossible,” he clarified, “with the curious consequence that the single biggest cause of domestic irritation with the EU, immigration, would remain unaltered. But without its maintenance some two million UK citizens working in EU countries would find themselves becoming illegal immigrants overnight.”

**“ TWO MILLION
UK CITIZENS
WORKING
ABROAD COULD
BECOME ILLEGAL
IMMIGRANTS
OVERNIGHT ”**

Quantitative Easing: The New Normal?

Our economics expert **Dave Deruytter** offers a comprehensive overview of the current global situation

Up until the global financial and economic crisis that started at the end of 2007, all was pretty much calm and stable on the economic and political front around the globe. Inflation in the West hovered around the 2% target set by the Central Banks. China was growing in double digits, stimulating the other BRICS countries to fast growth in its wake. Few people were aware then that the over-indebtedness of US households and the too high real estate prices there were going to make the real estate market explode, leading to the bankruptcy of the over-leveraged US Investment Bank Lehman Brothers and putting banks in serious difficulties around the globe. Many months of global fear and stopgap measures followed – until the US Central Bank, the Federal Reserve, decided to embark on a new, ambitious and bold program of financial asset buying called Quantitative Easing (QE) to lower interest rates even further and flood the financial markets with liquidity.

Some other countries followed suit, whereas the EU stopped short of QE and only a few years later lapsed into a deep government debt crisis. Ireland, Portugal, Spain and particularly Greece had to be saved with massive amounts of

money. In the meantime, the Cyprus debacle had to be settled including a haircut for the debtors there: they did not get the full amount of their investments or savings back.

Today, with the start of QE in Europe too, we are in the last stage of what central banks can do to help to revive the world economy. Indeed, the US QE seems to have had its positive effects on growth and unemployment there, not without adding an unprecedented \$4 trillion of assets to the balance-sheet of the Fed.

How did the other countries that also have applied QE to their economies fare? The UK is doing reasonably well, whereas in Japan the economy went through a kind of a rollercoaster

ride. The latter country still seems not yet to be completely out of the deflationary spiral that has lingered on for a quarter of a century now.

Before the QE started in Europe, its economy was essentially running on just one engine: Germany. The introduction of QE in Europe, and the subsequent further fall in the Euro against the USD and other major currencies, is helping that Germany's economy to grow even faster. Not only is there improved consumer confidence, and thus spending, adding to growth, but also the German companies rake in extra profits on their cheaper exports or gain market share overseas. It is expected that France and other European countries will also soon see similar positive effects. Belgium, given its status of a subcontractor to the economies of neighbouring countries, will certainly benefit too.

Looking at the other large economies, China is growing in a lower gear now, at around 7% per year and may even have to slow down further to be sustainable in the longer run. Its real estate market is still fragile and the loan quality of its banks is doubtful as a consequence. India, on the other hand, is witnessing a fresh awakening

with new political leaders embarking on business friendly policies and good neighbourliness with big brother China and the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) countries.

What is worrisome is that inflation is and stays stubbornly low worldwide. Deflationary pressures are still abundant: excess capacity, high youth unemployment, no salary increases, internet companies successfully gaining market share through disintermediation with low-cost business models.

The high level of country debts and budget deficits also looks unsustainable. And the political scene is not stable yet either, with important conflicts at the eastern frontier of Europe and in the Middle East. And the Russian economy has taken a huge hit given the multilateral sanctions the economy is undergoing.

The micro economy though, that is the economy at the level of the companies themselves, is doing very well in general. Low interest rates make borrowing very cheap and international tax optimization schemes reduce



*Donghai Bridge is one of the longest bridges in the world
Photo © Donghai Bridge*



PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Economics

overall tax levels for quite a few multinationals to the single digit range. This leads to good profit margins and high share prices. The latter are also fuelled by the near zero interest rates.

If inflation is to come back, it should probably come from higher effective tax rates for companies. The Base Erosion Profit Shifting (BEPS) initiative of the OECD is aimed at that. This initiative is progressing slowly but surely, yet surely slowly. Another focus should be on taxing the added value of the internet appropriately or to at least make sure the benefactors of that added value pay for the internet security and for the use of the privacy information of the surfers they sell on so freely today. That information is a kind of a raw material to them and should be taxed like any raw material. There is no visible progress on this front as of today.

Unemployment is at very healthy levels in the US, but stays far too high in Europe. The latter seems to still have a long way to go. Particularly youth unemployment needs to be tackled in Europe. Initiatives to make sure that those young people can gain experience and have interesting lives are essential. A bold initiative on the level of internships in companies and lower tax rates for companies that hire young people should be pursued.

Whereas Europe only just started its QE program, in the US the attention is already on the possible 'tightening' again of the Federal Reserve. And there we will see whether we have a true New Normal on the macroeconomic front or not.

Freddy Van Den Spiegel, Professor at VUB and Vlerick Business School, says: "Governments' top priority should be to return to 'normal' monetary policy as soon as possible. That means that interest rates should be brought back to normal levels and direct money creation by central banks should be reversed.

"Both deficit spending and QE are dead-end streets and lead to distortion of markets and many unintended consequences. QE, leading to lower exchange rates and negative interest

rates, is like exporting the problems of one country to the rest of the world. Today, it is clear that it is leading to major financial imbalances in an important number of financial markets and emerging economies."

Will the Fed start its 'tightening' by selling some of its \$4 trillion in QE assets, meaning unwinding the program slowly but surely? If yes, one may be inclined to say that QE is a real new tool for Central Banks to manage their financial markets and that a New Normal has come into being for the global macro economy. Yet, if the Fed just keeps its QE assets and increases interest rates first in the old way, then one can be less sure about a New Normal. In that case the Fed will keep the QE assets for a long(er) time and one may argue that then those assets should be added to the overall debt of the country, leading to an extra 20% indebtedness for the US. That would result in an increase of the debt to GDP ratio there to unsustainable levels, and without a clear view of how to get it back down again.

All in all countries should be able to collect enough taxes to make their debt manageable, and there are probably few other options than to make sure that companies pay a high enough effective tax rate after all tax optimization. Given the increased weight of internet companies in the economy, they too should pay their part. On top of that, the added value of the internet and its services should be taxed by VAT like any other added value. Probably only then a true New Normal can be expected.

For that to happen, courage and international coordination is needed by the leaders of the developed world. Just as much as a settlement of the political unrest at Europe's Eastern Border and in the Middle East is needed. China is not off the hook either in relation to the tension with its neighbours on land and sea ownership issues, or on the level of putting its economy in order for sustainable future high growth.

There is still a long way to go before a solid New Normal will be present around the world. In the meantime, volatility is to be expected.

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LIFESTYLE

Dream cars

Dream cars: Part Two

Our motoring correspondent **Bob Monard** opens the bonnets of another dozen luxury vehicles

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LIFESTYLE

Dream cars

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LIFESTYLE

Dream cars

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LIFESTYLE

Beauty

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LIFESTYLE

Beauty

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BLOW UP

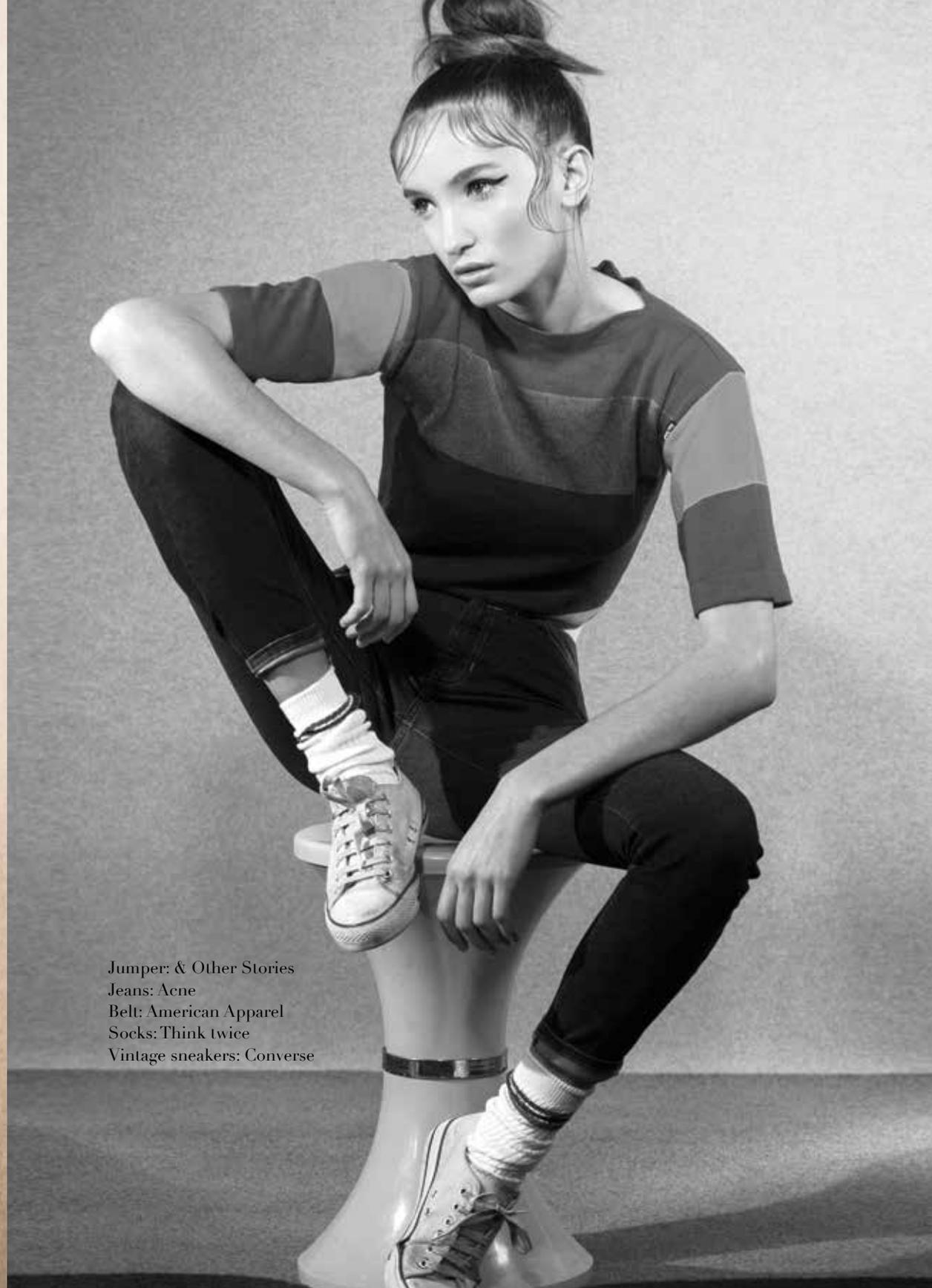
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LIFESTYLE

Shopping

Shopping



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LIFESTYLE

Shopping



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Steven Deduytsche

This golf bag comes from the handmade in Belgium bag maker: **€995**
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LIFESTYLE

Tradition

Easter eggs: Symbol of change

Colin Moors looks at the long and (sometimes) illustrious history of the Easter egg

If I were to say "Easter eggs" to you, you may think of different things depending on your age and your technical knowledge. If you want to see hidden content on one of your DVDs or Blu-Ray discs, there's often a seemingly impossible series of buttons you could hold down in sequence on your remote which will grant you access to content you won't see in ordinary circumstances. Why the manufacturers want you to jump through these hoops is anybody's guess but these hidden gems are commonly referred to as 'Easter eggs'. Of course, the vast non-geek majority will think of either brightly painted boiled hens' eggs or the sickly choc-fest that is the multi-million-euro chocolate egg industry.



Photo © Toelstede

The majority of Europeans probably think nothing of the usual symbols of Easter; The Easter Bunny, Easter eggs, lamb dinners and chicks. The Easter bunny is particularly strange in that it was exported to America in the 1700s by German settlers in Pennsylvania in the form of the Osterhase, a magical hare that would lay coloured eggs in the nests made by children. The tradition was quickly taken up and expanded from simple coloured chicken or duck eggs into chocolate ones, along with other forms of confectionery. The tradition, such as it is today, seems to have stemmed from its popularity in the US but re-exported to Europe.

“ THE BUNNY HIMSELF IS PRE-CHRISTIAN AND LINKED WITH THE GODDESS EOSTER ”

Although many Christians might claim the egg to be the exclusive domain of their faith, there's quite a lot of compelling evidence to suggest that the tradition of painting, giving and consuming unusually coloured eggs was around some considerable time before what we accept to be the year of the birth of Christ. The bunny himself is pre-Christian and linked with the goddess Eoster (or Ostara) from where we derive the name for the festival. It's believed that the early Christians of Mesopotamia used to dye eggs red around the Easter period to symbolize the blood of Christ.

Tradition



Photo © Михаил Овчинников

All the bunnies, lambs and eggs all have one common link, of course - rebirth. Spring is a time of new beginnings and the egg is universally recognized as a potent symbol of renewal. It's easy to see how the pagans at the vernal equinox and the Christians celebrating Easter were moved to adopt the egg as a symbol of life and of changes to come.

Of course, where there is a strong tradition based on age-old values and beliefs, there's someone making an awful lot of money from it. Somebody who already had a large amount of money, the prestigious Legion d'Honneur and the patronage of the Tsarist court in St Petersburg was possibly the most famous Easter egg maker of all, Peter Carl Fabergé. If you are of a certain age, you may be thinking "what, the company that used to sell the awful after-shaves in the 80s?" Well, no but the story of how that all came to be is a long, winding one and can wait until another column.

Fabergé (the Russian one) was commissioned by Tsar Alexander III to produce an Easter egg for his wife, Maria. The tradition was followed by Tsar Nicholas II, who ordered two each year, one for Maria (his mother) and one for his wife, Alexandra, a tradition that continued until the October Revolution in 1917. Of the 50 made by him and his company, 43 survive today. The eggs were famous for their intricate and painstaking design and the fact that the one stipulation was that every egg should contain a surprise. Rarely more than 10 cm by 6 cm, the size restrictions meant that the surprises inside needed to be crafted with an amazing level of

accuracy. The contents were often artistic pieces or studies of subjects close to the heart of the Tsar's family.

You may imagine that such artistry would be hard to put a price on. You'd be wrong. The latest discovery of a Fabergé original was an egg-themed timepiece found at an antiques stall in the American Midwest in 2012. A dealer bought it not knowing its origins, for around \$8,000 and then had a hard time selling it on, as prospective buyers thought he'd overpriced it. It eventually sold to a private buyer for around €28 million.

On the other end of the scale, it's now possible to buy a now-traditional chocolate egg made by either Cadbury's or the Nestlé company for a few pounds in the UK. Here in Belgium of course, you have the option of Marcolini, Neuhaus and the like but these tend to be more specialized and sophisticated. The Brits go mad for chocolate eggs though. It's estimated that 90 - 100 million chocolate eggs are sold every year in the UK at an average of 9 per child, or some 2.5 kg of chocolate.

So that about sums it up for the history of the humble Easter egg. I'm just pleased I managed to avoid bad puns about eggs, right up until the piece was ova.

“ THE EGGS WERE FAMOUS FOR THEIR INTRICATE AND PAINSTAKING DESIGN ”

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LIFE OF LEISURE

It has become synonymous with its world-renowned annual film festival but there is more to Cannes

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LIFE OF
LEISURE

Interview

Natalie Portman: Beyond the conventions

Together caught up with an actress-producer-director who has gone Parisienne



The past year has been an interesting adventure for Natalie Portman. Following her marriage to long-time boyfriend Benjamin Millepied, the exquisitely beautiful actress moved to Paris last year where she has been soaking up French culture and adapting to her new world as wife, mother and Parisienne!

"I think it was destiny that brought me to live in France," Portman says. "My father named me Natalie as an homage to a song by (legendary French singer) Gilbert Bécaud. I shot my first film with French director Luc Besson. And now I'm living in Paris with my French husband and our son and immersing myself in the language and culture. It's very inspiring to live in Paris, I feel very lucky."

Now 33, Portman is similarly looking to expand her film horizons by taking on more varied projects and testing herself like she never has before. One of her most interesting new films is *Knight of Cups*, Terrence Malick's latest avant-garde film starring Christian Bale as Hollywood screenwriter experiencing an existential meltdown in the cesspool of L.A. and Natalie Portman as his love interest.

Making its world premiere at this year's Berlin International Film Festival, aka Berlinale, *Knight of Cups* was met with the kind of controversy that greets every Terence Malick film. Though some critics complained about its lack of depth, others hailed it as a stunning visual and emotional journey. Certainly, Bale and Portman deliver fascinating and compelling performances that were a mix of improvisation and planning according to Malick's free form filmmaking technique that permeated recent films like *To The Wonder* and *The Tree of Life*.

Meanwhile, Portman, who won an Oscar for her performance in *Black Swan* in 2011, has recently drawn considerable attention as a 'Miss Dior' campaign model for the luxury goods company which recently launched a huge new international campaign.

In the daring new commercial for l'eau de Dior, directed by Anton Corbijn (*A Most Wanted Man*) Natalie plays a 'Miss Dior' bride who decides to choose freedom over matrimony by running away from her own wedding to the tune of Janis Joplin's Piece of My Heart.

Set amid the seaside beauty of the French Riviera in the fabled Hotel du Cap Eden Roc in Cap Ferrat, the spectacularly shot film sees Portman jumping out of her heels and shedding her couture wedding gown to reveal a little black dress underneath.

In addition to *Knight of Cups*, Portman served as executive producer of the feature-length documentary, *The Seventh Fire*, about a Native American gang leader, which also made its world premiere at the Berlinale. Portman is currently editing her first feature film as a



**“ IT’S VERY
INSPIRING TO LIVE
IN PARIS, I FEEL
VERY LUCKY ”**



director, *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, a drama based on the memoir by noted Israeli author Amos Oz.

Natalie Portman lives in Paris with Benjamin Millepied, director of the ballet department of the Paris Opera, and their three-year-old son Aleph. For our chat, Natalie, campaign spokesperson for Dior, was wearing a fabulous white and black Dior dress with black heels. Her hair was darker and longer than we've seen of late and combed back.

Together: Natalie, you're appearing in a very remarkable new commercial directed by Anton Corbijn. What can you tell us about that experience?

Natalie Anton is such an exciting director to work with and is one of the boldest directors – his visual sense is extraordinary. This film is much more physical than any of the other (commercials) I've done for Dior and it felt like we were doing an action film in a way. But the beauty of it is what also really stands out.

Does Miss Dior offer a positive image for women?

The idea of Miss Dior was to portray this free-spirited young woman who is both independent and anxious to indulge her passions. I hope as a woman that I can also embrace in my life that same kind of spirit and passion, and that was a major reason that I wanted to be part of this campaign. The campaign is a celebration of being true to yourself and not being limited by things other people try to impose on you. There's a message of personal freedom and expression and it's basically saying: "Be yourself."

Your new film, *Knight of Cups*, is also shot in a very avant-garde way. How was it working with legendary director Terrence Malick?

It was really inspiring. He doesn't do things in a conventional way and that's inspiring. He makes you realise how many things in life are conventions, and he taps into magic because of the way he is able to escape rules and pre-established ways of thinking and making a movie.

I've been a fan of Terry's for my whole life. Days of Heaven is my favourite film ever. He makes really incredible, impactful films, both visually and emotionally. Working with him was also a very intense experience because it was the first film I made after the birth of my son, and it was a beautiful way to get back to work.

Were most of your scenes improvised?

Much of it was but it was based on extensive notes and suggestions about the dialogue. Terry would give us a lot of different possibilities and choices in terms of the dialogue and what lines we would find most comfortable saying. There was quite a lot of discussion beforehand.

It's a very interesting way of creating a film and it gives you a lot of freedom to be able to develop your character and experiment with your own approach to acting. Terry wants you to interpret rather than execute what he is asking you to do and that not only puts you at ease as an actor but it also pushes you to discover and use your own inspiration and ideas while you're playing your character.

What kind of atmosphere was there on the set?

I wasn't there as long as Christian but we both had a lot of fun on the set and we really enjoyed being able to work in a way that upsets all the conventions and usual techniques of filmmaking. It's very liberating.

You've recently finished directing your first film, *A Tale of Love and Darkness*. Did working with Terence Malick influence your approach?

I felt very, very lucky to have worked with Terry right before I directed for the first time. He reminded me that the rules of filmmaking are not necessary and the way we do things, the rituals we have, aren't necessary and that you can find your own way and to allow the mistakes and welcome the problems.

Working with Terry was a gift in that sense. He opens your mind and your eyes to what you can accomplish in the way you tell a story that goes beyond the dialogue and how you can



“ IT’S SO
INTERESTING TO
PLUNGE INTO
ANOTHER
CULTURE ”

create the atmosphere that is going to envelop audiences when they watch the film.

Do you feel that your life has changed a lot since moving to Paris?

It's so interesting to plunge into another culture and experience a different way of living. The city is so rich in terms of the architecture, the bookshops you find at every corner, the way everyone dresses so well. No Parisian ever walks around in shorts and even the children look very chic (laughs).

How is your French coming along?

It's improved a lot and I've been taking lessons and studying as often as I can. I feel I'm getting to the point where I'm slowly becoming more comfortable speaking French and being fluent in the language.

I'm hoping that one day I will be able to work in a French film and do the role in French. I would really love to be able to do that and I'm very motivated to get to that level.

Do you feel that becoming a mother has changed your perspective on how you see your life?

There's a sense of greater responsibility and maturity that you develop very quickly. You know you're beginning a new chapter in your life and it's wonderful to watch your child grow and learn every day. I love being a mother and this is a very happy time in my life. I also have a lot more confidence overall and that's been why I decided to direct my first feature that we made in Israel last year. It's been a big step for me and I felt honoured to tell the story based on the early years in the life of Amos Oz, who is a very respected Israeli writer and journalist and who is a major advocate of a two-state solution. It's not a political film but it's a story I hope will bring understanding and promote dialogue which we need to establish peace.



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Down among the Cannois

With the Cannes Film Festival fast approaching **Paul Morris** marks your card on where to lay your head

The town of Cannes is one of the jewels of the glistening Côte d'Azur. It has become synonymous with its world-renowned annual film festival but there is more to Cannes than cans (of film that is). The town has excellent shopping, restaurants and, of course, that stunning view from the beach out to the Med.

Of course, one of its main virtues is where it's at, positioned perfectly for the rest of the French Riviera and the hills of Provence. Head east along the coast and you'll come across delightful places such as Antibes, Nice (my favourite southern town), Beausoleil and Menton; go west to Frejus, Sainte-Maxime and Marseille; or a very short trip north to perfumed Grasse and the exceptional St Paul-de-Vence.





Hotel Colette ****

Located in the centre of Cannes, in the heart of the rue d'Antibes shopping area and a five minute walk from La Croisette beach, the boutique Hotel Colette is the ideal place for business or holiday travelers visiting the Cote d'Azur.

There's a very fresh feel to Hotel Colette and since it's relatively small it has a comfortable, homely character. With 45 air-conditioned and fully renovated rooms, this four-star hotel provides every amenity you need to enjoy your stay in Cannes. If the sun is too much for you at midday then enjoy the complimentary high-speed WiFi and flat-screen television with fifty international channels and Canal+.

If you're coming by train you only need to haul your suitcase 100 metres. And the hotel is only 300 metres from the Palais des Festivals, which is just round the corner.

I stayed in the Junior Suite, which has an adjoining lounge and is decorated with a light, sophisticated colour scheme, with bright walls and dashes of reds and purples, making the 30m² seem even more spacious. Throughout the hotel the decor has some amusing touches – I liked the paper thin rhinoceros head lamp coming out of the wall.

Hôtel Colette
5 place de la Gare, Cannes 06400
www.hotelcolette.com



Hotel Montaigne & Spa ****

Just over the road (la voie rapide) from the Colette is a hotel whose main selling point is water, and lots of it. It has you covered from gourmet food to sports facilities to large conference rooms but the Spa area makes the visit really worthwhile.

Spa Montaigne boasts 250m² of top of the range equipment. With its indoor pool, large Jacuzzi and swan neck, the Spa Montaigne has established itself as the leading spa on the French Riviera.

Spa Montaigne also provides you with a spacious sauna, a multi-jet shower and a scrubbing bench for all traditional cares. Additionally, there is a fitness room equipped with cardio-training devices and the latest Power Plate machine with an integrated coach to help push you during the difficult training phases. The spa is also equipped with five care cabins including one double room and a spa jet.

And the face and body care centres tone up and refreshen your sense of wellbeing.

The rooms are spacious and bright, and you can choose from six categories, from a single at 25m² to a Junior suite at 35m².

Hotel Montaigne & Spa
4 rue Montaigne 06400 Cannes
Tel: +33 (0)4 97 06 03 40
www.hotel-montaigne.eu

Hotel de Mougins ****

if you want to get away from the hustle and bustle, there is nowhere better than Mougins, and in particular Hotel de Mougins. Ideally situated in the hills of Cannes, the Hôtel de Mougins is only 15 minutes from the Cannes Croisette and Grasse, and 25 minutes from the International Airport of Nice.

The site was once open meadow and then became a stone-built country house in the 18th century, and it is around this that the hotel was built. Great care and attention to detail ensure that the newer buildings blend in perfectly.

Each room looks out on the garden, whether from the ground floor or first floor. And the hearth of the place is a huge one-hundred-year-old ash tree in a Provençal garden that smells of lavender and lemon. It is really a very relaxing environment but there are also activities within the grounds such as the swimming pool and tennis court. And if golf happens to be your thing the area is well served by courses such as the Royal Mougins Club.

Kick back afterwards on the terrace of Le Jardin restaurant and your day is complete.

Hôtel de Mougins
205, avenue du Golf, 06250 Mougins
www.hotel-de-mougins.com



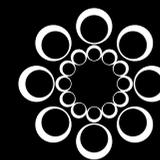
Restaurants

Cannes is very well off for good food – given its location seafood is very popular. One seafood place in particular stands out: ASTOUX et BRUN. It has been around since 1953 (three generations of the same family) and is centrally located, with a spacious comfortable terrace. Folks come for the succulent seafood platters and fresh fish, of course, but it's also a good place to watch fellow Cannois and Cannoises go by. It's that kind of town. Open daily, year round. www.astouxbrun.com

Another favourite of mine is La Mère Besson, also established in the 1950s but concentrating firmly on traditional Provençal dishes. It's tucked away on Rue Frères Pradignac but don't give up - it's worth going round in circles for.

Another favourite is not so much a single restaurant but rather a little street – rue Sainte Antoine in Le Suquet neighbourhood - that climbs up from the town, with narrow steps. Restaurants seem to cling to its walls for dear life and there is great variety to be found. There are also art galleries and shops. Keep going up and you'll reach the church and Castle with a fine view of the harbour and the town. Le Manoir, on Petite Rue Saint-Antoine, has a growing reputation, with a mix of traditional and modern fare.

www.lemanoircannes.fr



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Eric's garden: A first love

For professional gardener Eric Hupin the seeds of his business were first sown when he was in his 20s. It was during a short spell living and working on Long Island in New York that he first really discovered his love of gardens and landscaping.



Ostensibly in the Big Apple to learn English, the Belgian says: "It was during my time there that I realized I really loved gardening."

However, when he returned home his career went in a very different direction with him opening a women's fashion shop in the centre of Brussels.

"After about six years," he recalls, "I decided to stop that and return to my first love... gardening."

Eric, now aged 50, owns Eric's Gardens, a thriving company that specializes in providing gardening maintenance services to people across a wide geographical area, including Tervuren, Wezembeek, Waterloo, La Hulpe, Ohain, Woluwe, Stockel as well as in Overijse where the company is based.

It is not a garden centre and not open to the public but involves regular maintenance of gardens, ranging from mowing lawns, weeding flower beds and hedge trimming to providing a "spring (or autumn) clean". The customers are a mix of people who rent their homes and homeowners.

"We make sure that everything is as it should be in the garden," says Eric, who is backed by a team of ten fully qualified and experienced gardeners (and five vans).

He explains: "We follow the growth of the grass and I would say that, on average, we would try to visit the same garden every ten days."

Regular maintenance is important."

Having pulled the plug on ladies fashion, he founded the business alone and totally from scratch in 1997 and it has rapidly become a successful garden maintenance company.

"We try to make a difference through our reliability and what I think is our caring and positive attitude. Our objective is to satisfy the customer and make their life that bit easier."

"We have always been oriented towards the expat community, largely because I speak fluent English and I also believe that it is important to communicate fully with your customers and also understand their needs."

Born in Uccle, he acknowledges the contribution of the "friendly, reliable team" he has built over the years, saying that they, like him, are "dedicated to customer service".

He also believes that his motto that "you never stop learning" has stood him in good stead over the years. "It was in New York that I first started to learn about gardening and I have to say that I have never stopped learning ever since."

The secret of his success? Eric pauses before declaring: "We take care of families."

Eric's garden
47 Bredestraat - Overijse 3090
ericsgarden@skynet.be
02 688 00 56 - www.ericsgarden.be



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Gastronomic Brussels



Les Caves du Sablon

If you want rushed food in a rowdy atmosphere, this restaurant is most certainly not for you. If, though, you are into top class food and wine served in rustic-type surroundings this will be right up your cobbled street.

This is a wonderfully evocative restaurant at the heart of the antique district in Brussels which is appropriate as the original owner was and is a local antique dealer. It was opened some 30 years ago by a now elderly Brussels antique dealer but is currently owned by Olivier Cazaubon. The à la carte menu, featuring a small but select choice of delicious dishes such as roasted St Jacques, sea bass and kidneys, is excellent. But perhaps the main thing that makes Les Caves rather different is the fantastic selection of 'bio dynamic' wines, produced without artificial stimulants. They are also rather tasty and relatively affordable and there is little that Olivier does not know about them. 9 Rue des Pigeons, Brussels www.lescavesdusablon.be

Belli e Buoni

Marco Macauso imports and distributes fine Italian products in Belgium and it was a natural move to open up a restaurant and a shop. This is a little corner of Italy, where excellent fresh pasta shares the shelves with fresh pesto. The ground is dedicated mostly to the shop and on the first floor there is a dining room that fits forty. And one of the big pluses for Belli e Buoni is its terrace, since because of its location the sun blesses the tables throughout the day.

Marco says that people often ask him what the plat de jour is and he replies simply: "Everything." He's clearly passionate about the place and the range of Italian goods is impressive, right down to the tea from Florence. At lunchtime one of the highlights is undoubtedly the buffet of fresh, seasonal vegetables, and there is a choice of six or seven fresh pasta dishes, one or two fish or meat dishes and a selection of desserts. And all at a very reasonable price.

36 Avenue de Tervuren, Brussels
www.belliebuoni.be



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Nestled in the heart of the Sonian forest, Dolce La Hulpe Brussels is a contemporary design hotel featuring the only Cinq Mondes spa in Belgium! Located barely 15km from the center of Brussels, this high-end hotel and resort is the ideal place to unwind after a hard week of work.



Stanhope Hotel: Where the healthiest food will keep you coming back for more



Laurent Gauze is the name, and he's the man aiming to bring you the healthiest, most delicious gastronomic delights at Stanhope Hotel, Brussels.

And his mission began around a year ago, as the Chef explains: "We were approached by two food experts who wanted to advise us about good, tasty, healthy food. Most importantly, they were very keen to recommend products to use in Stanhope's cuisine that corresponded to the seasons – the idea was to offer the healthiest, tastiest plate, produced with locally sourced, seasonal meat and vegetables."

But surely, when you're visiting a hotel as prestigious and luxurious as Stanhope, eating healthily is not exactly at the front of your mind?

"Yes, but don't forget, what we are still offering here are gastronomic specialties that are fresh and of the highest quality and, in addition, we are attempting to 'reeducate' our clients to eat

the most natural products possible. It's a question of less fat, more fibre and protein, and I know for a fact that what we offer here is just as much of a treat. It's also about adopting a slightly less 'aggressive' style of cooking – this ensures that what we serve retains all its flavours and nutritional value."

So, what are my chances of getting a really, really good steak-frites that's still good for my health at Stanhope then?

"But of course you can – there is nothing that is bad for health with the steaks we serve here; it is our responsibility to ensure that all the meat we serve in our restaurant comes with full 'bio' approval, with a fully registered origin, either from Belgium or France, and, while our meat is lean, there is nothing intrinsically bad for the health in the tasty fat that is inevitable in a great beef steak. It's just a question of moderation, and we have found that this does not exclude flavour."

Sure enough, sure enough – it seems that scarcely a week goes by without yet another in-depth study revealing that we have got it all wrong up to now about what is or isn't good in our diets – at time of writing, the 'experts' were declaring that it's now all about the types of fat that we eat, and not that fat is evil per se.

Laurent laughs. "Nothing, or hardly anything," he says "is intrinsically bad for the health. Unless you are drinking gallons of the stuff, alcohol, say the good red wine that we can offer you with your steak, is in fact good for health in certain respects. "

And it would appear that Laurent and Stanhope are very serious about healthy, delicious dishes – the latest menu (which is changed on a monthly basis) is set to mark the formal arrival of spring, and will be available at Brighton Restaurant very shortly, and will be featuring such delights as Velouté or Gazpacho of peas, zucchini and fenne, smoked duck lardons with hazelnut oil (entrée), crusty turbot and green asparagus (fish) and tournedos of farm lamb saddle with piperade vegetables and Espellette pepper gravy (meat).

"We are already ensuring that the products we will be using correspond only to spring, and they are all locally sourced," Laurent proudly confides. "Our suppliers are as proud of their produce as we are of serving them and, for myself, I try to be the best advert that I can possibly be for the health food I prepare and serve – for the most part, what I serve is what I eat."

You're unlikely to find a better recommendation – and a world of healthy, scrumptious gastronomy awaits you at Brighton Restaurant of the Stanhope Hotel.

Stanhope Hotel Brighton Restaurant

Rue du Commerce, 9
1000 Brussels
Tel: 02 506 91 11 - www.stanhope.be

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Culinaria 2015: The Belgian effect

If there is one thing that brings Belgians together, it is food



After six successful editions and with the support of Brussels Capital Region, Culinaria has grown into an event on an international scale, showcasing the very best in gastronomy. Every year, Culinaria presents its visitors with a different theme and introduces the latest trends in gastronomy.

Belgium, a multicultural melting pot

Its finest restaurants are deeply rooted in the multicultural renewal brought about by immigration. Belgian gastronomy is a real mixture of local traditions and foreign influences. This is particularly clear in the number of foreign Michelin-starred chefs present in Belgium. Restaurants here draw on French bistro culture, Irish butchers and Italian, Korean, North African or Peruvian cuisine.

For its seventh edition, Culinaria will pay homage to this multicultural melting pot which has contributed to its international renown, bringing together the cream of Belgian and international gastronomy for five days of

discovery and culinary delight.

Food and workshops

This festival of food presents five days of Michelin-starred dishes, original workshops and delectable discoveries on the theme of the 'Belgium effect' for inquisitive and adventurous gastronomy lovers, epicureans and foodies.

A gathering of chefs

The festival has encouraged chefs to shrug off their modesty and tour the world's biggest culinary gatherings. Internationally acclaimed, their cooking has become a benchmark of true quality.

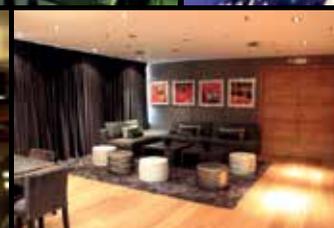
The French press has dubbed Wallonia "the new culinary Eldorado" at the very moment that Brussels and Flanders are bursting onto the scene as the new place to be for foodies in Europe. Culinaria looks beyond its own borders once again by hosting international chefs.

Among the Belgian chefs attending are Damien Bouchéry & Bénédicte Bantuelle (Bouchéry), Sang Hoon Degeimbre (L'Air du Temps **), Gert de Mangeleer (Hertog Jan ***), Bart De Pooter (Pastorale **), Kobe Desramault (In De Wulf *), Alex Joseph (Rouge tomate), Yves Mattagne (Sea Grill **) and Lionel Rigolet (Comme Chez Soi **).

The desserts menu is taken care of by Joost Arijis (Joost Arijis), Jean-Philippe Darcis (Darcis), Marc Ducobu (Ducobu), Pierre Marcolini (Maison Pierre Marcolini) and Tom Van Look (Pâtisserie Academie).

From 6-10 May. Tour & Taxis.

www.culinaria2015.com



Avenue Louise, 480 (entrée avenue Emile Demot)
1050 Bruxelles – Tél. : 02 647 66 68
callenscafe@skynet.be – www.callenscafe.be

Nouvelle terrasse couverte à l'abris du vent et chauffée

Wine of the month: Beyond Beaujolais nouveau

Geoffroy van Lede of vin du mois proves that Beaujolais is much more than the Beaujolais nouveau



Photo © Geoff Wong

to drink. They are great wines to share with friends around a good table of culinary product from Lyons (red meats, rillettes, meat stews). The wines of Beaujolais are mostly to be drunk in their youth while the crus are medium-grade.

Each appellation puts its terroir at the centre of the vinification, offering unique typicity: robustness and complexity in a Morgon and Moulin-à-vent; minerality in the côte de Brouilly; fruit and

roundness for the Brouilly, flower and femininity in the Fleurie or full-bodied and fruity in the Saint-Amour. So everyone can find some pleasure among the different appellations of Beaujolais.

Following declines in the commercial success of the Beaujolais nouveau, the winemakers have had to have a rethink and you can now find some very good price/quality ratio wines, pioneering winemakers in their winemaking techniques and wines that put the pleasure at the centre of their taste.

The wine of the month:

For the month of April, we selected **Juliéna 2013, Chateau de Belleverne**. It's a very pleasing wine, fruity and with a good body to accompany red meat, charcuterie and rillettes. You can also drink it lightly chilled as an aperitif.

Find this wine and our subscription concept on our site www.le-vin-du-mois.be or call 0498 586 545

The worldwide launch of the Beaujolais Nouveau on the third Thursday of November is the event that has been the fame and the fall of Beaujolais wines. Now in decline, this great marketing production floods the market for a few weeks with great media coverage and numerous events in wine shops, distributors and wine bars.

The Beaujolais nouveau or "primeur" is a wine from that year, with a very short and forced vinification (between September and November). It has a very pronounced typicity (festive, gaseous, with distinct aromas of banana and red fruit). Unfortunately, this wine hasn't really helped the appellation – because of Beaujolais nouveau all the other wonderful wines from the region! Let's discover them...

Beaujolais: 12 appellations

The Beaujolais offers 12 appellations, including 10 crus. All are based on the gamay grape and the wines are generally fun, refreshing and easy

What's on Belgium



Retrorama Flashback

Retrorama, Europe's largest vintage and retro market is expanding to include a complete Music Festival and has renamed itself Flashback Festival. After a highly successful first edition in 2014, Halls 5 and 10 of Brussels Expo will once again set the stage for Retrorama, the largest retro and vintage market in Europe. a chance for young and old to (re)discover and (re)experience the 50s to the 80s. There is 17,000 square metres of vintage clothing and haute-couture, design furniture, jukeboxes and record players, vinyl records and arcade games, a unique collection of old & youngtimers and a retro cinema and roller disco dance floor. For this edition, the event has been expanded to include its own music festival. **28 to 31 May**. Hall 5 and 10, Brussels Expo + Esplanade. **Tickets from €25.** flashback.brussels/en/homepage

What's On

Tram Experience

Surely one of the most unusual ways to dine out in Brussels. Board a tram that has been fully decked out as a modern gourmet restaurant. Aboard, you will be served a three-course meal

put together by top chefs from some of the best gourmet food cities of the world, whilst you tour Brussels by night for two hours.
www.tramexperience.be



Guignolet in the Park

Puppets have always had a place in the hearts of children and Brussels is renowned for its Guignol shows. Every year the park resounds to the laughter – for four months infants and parents alike soak up legendary stories and new adventures of Guignolet. The tales are written, directed and performed by the the Royal Theatre 'Les Coeurs de Bois' company.
www.guignoletdansleparc.be



Work/Travail/Arbeid: Rosas & Ictus

What would it mean for choreography to perform as an exhibition? This question is the point of departure for Work/Travail/Arbeid. In response, Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker re-imagines Vortex Temporum to the radically different temporal, spatial, and perceptual conditions of the museum. The choreographer does not simply bring performances into a new kind of space, but rethinks dance as a nine weeks long exhibition, accessible to the public. The original choreography, made for the condensed time of a performance is expanded in cycles of nine hours. Each hour offers new constellations of dancers and musicians dispersed through the multiple spaces of the museum. This project transforms the conditions that have long been essential to dance and gives a new form to the rigorous choreographic writing for which De Keersmaeker is known. **Exhibition & Performance until 17 May**
www.lamonnaie.be

MAKING A DIFFERENCE/A DIFFERENCE IN MAKING

Trainers, aeroplane parts or prostheses; it's only a question of time before printing three dimensional objects drastically changes our everyday lives. In the exhibition MAKING A DIFFERENCE/A DIFFERENCE IN MAKING BOZAR has selected a series of 3D printed objects which have an influence on the environment, society and the individual. The MAKING A DIFFERENCE section gets you thinking about the opportunities 3D printing creates. The A DIFFERENCE IN MAKING part provides insight into the developments the first 3D experiments had to go through before revolutionary designs were possible. How large is the creative universe of the three dimensional? What impact does 3D printing have on our day-to-day lives? This exhibition provides you with all the answers.

The exhibition is taking place on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Materialise, a Belgian company specialised in 3D printing and software.
24 April-7 June.
www.bozar.be - www.a-difference-in-making.com



Photo © Anne Van Aerschot



What's On Cinema



Picturenose.com's **James Drew** previews films coming your way in Belgium

She's Funny That Way

Wow, Peter Bogdanovich still directing? It would appear thus – the director of such classics as *What's Up Doc* (1972) returns to the silver screen with a film that centres on a hooker-turned-Broadway-star (Imogen Poots) and follows the “recurring intersection between these two facets of her life”. A Broadway director (Owen Wilson) pays for her escort services despite being married to the star (Kathryn Hahn) of his new play *A Grecian Evening*. The play's writer (Will Forte) falls for her as well, despite the fact that he's already dating her therapist (Jennifer Aniston), whose alcoholic mother (Joanna Lumley) is in rehab. Belly laughs? Quietly moving and dry amusement, more like. *93 mins.*

The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel

The sequel to 2011's sleeper hit comes to town, with an unsurprisingly ensemble cast of stars Judi Dench, Maggie Smith, Bill Nighy, Celia Imrie, Penelope Wilton, Ronald Pickup, Diana Hardcastle, Tamsin Greig, Tena Desae, Dev Patel, Lillete Dubey, David Strathairn and Richard Gere – if you loved the first one (and lots did), there's every chance you'll be in line for this, right? *122 mins.*

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These Final Hours

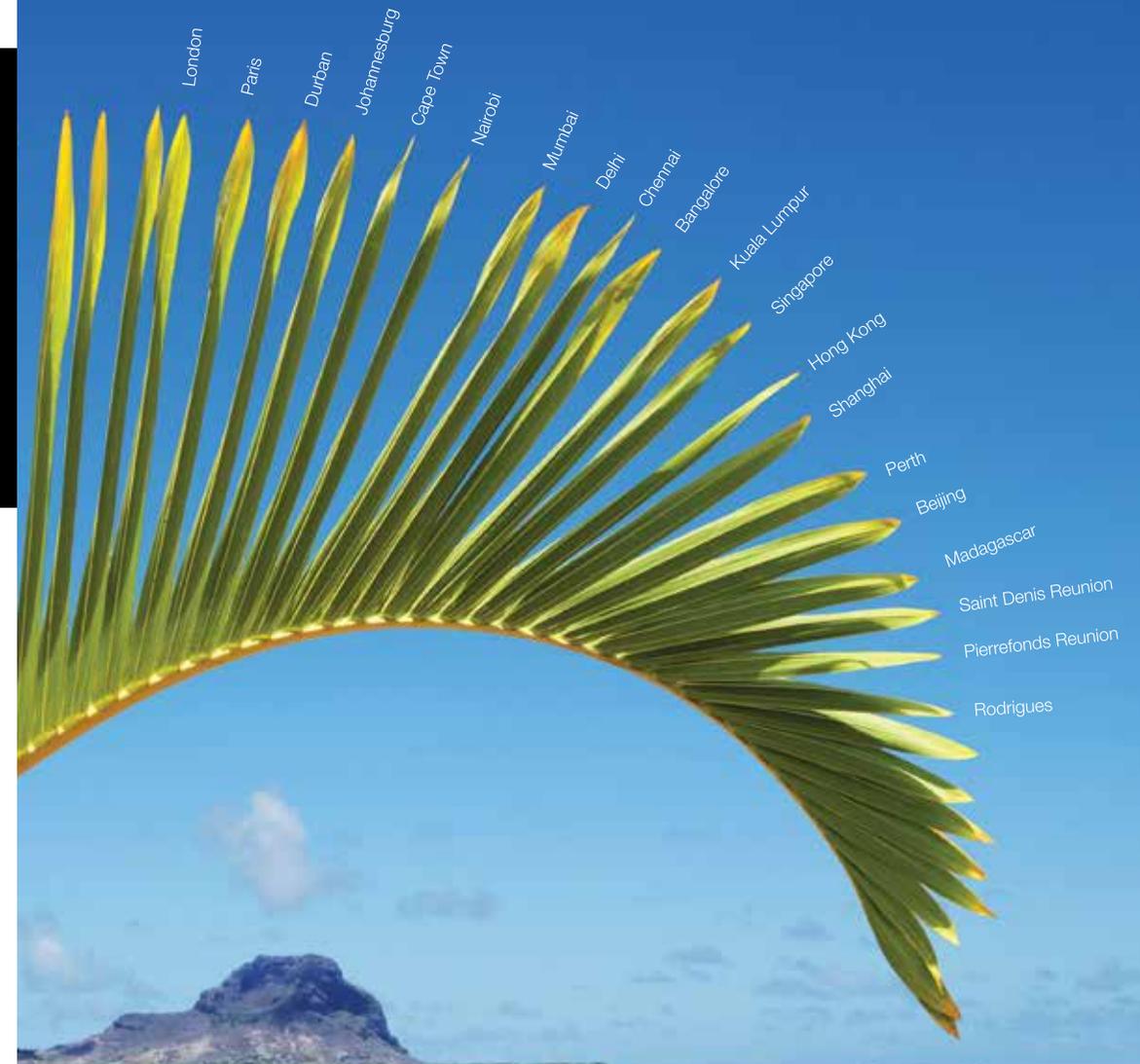
It has taken two years for this 2013 apocalyptic Australian drama to reach Belgian screens, so has it been worth the wait? Well, just like in *The Road*, it looks unlikely that there will be much of a Pollyanna ending to this one – it takes place in Perth and begins 10 minutes after a meteor has hit the North Atlantic, leaving approximately twelve hours until the subsequent global firestorm reaches Western Australia. Society, as you would imagine, starts to unravel pretty damn fast, but is there still time and room for humanity? That is the question. *87 mins.*

The Water Diviner

Russel Crowe directs and stars in this historical drama – following the Battle of Gallipoli, in 1919, an Australian farmer, Connor (Russell Crowe), travels to Turkey to find his three missing sons. While staying at a hotel in Istanbul, he meets Ayshe (Olga Kurylenko), the hotel owner. He makes his way to Gallipoli. Once there, he finds his sons' graves and evidence that one might still be alive. *111 mins.*

Read more reviews: www.picturenose.com

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What's On International: Bonn

Masterpieces of avant-garde photography

The New Vision 1920-1950 (collection Siegert)

After the successful show to Man Ray, the Max Ernst Museum in Brühl (not far from the centre of Bonn) presents a significant photographic exhibition featuring by over 100 photographers working from 1920 to 1950. Developed in cooperation with the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, "RealSurreal" presents some 200 masterpieces, rare original prints from, among others, Herbert Bayer, Brassa , André Kertész, László Moholy-Nagy, Albert Renger-Patzsch, Umbo oder Wols. Until 19 July. Max Ernst Museum in Brühl. Tickets: €8

www.maxernstmuseum.lvr.de

The Rhine in Flames

The Rhine in Flames is a fireworks spectacular that takes place along the most scenic stretches of the Rhine every year between May and September. From Rüdesheim to Bonn, spectacular pyrotechnics and curtains of fire bathe the riverbanks and landmarks in a magical red glow, and a flotilla of illuminated riverboats glides beneath mesmerizing patterns of light in the night sky – a romantic and unforgettable experience for the whole family. From 4 July. Check the website for dates. www.rhein-in-flammen.com



Herbert Bayer, Einsamer-Grossstädter, 1932-1969.

Il Divino: Homage to Michelangelo

The exhibition explores the enormous influence Michelangelo had and continues to have on European art from the Renaissance to the present. It shows works by important artists of the last five centuries who engaged in a dialogue with Michelangelo's work and his artistic principles. The potential and the continued relevance and immediacy of

Michelangelo's art is evident in the way artists such as, Raphael, Pontormo, Allori, Giambologna, Annibale Carracci, Caravaggio, Rubens, Fuseli, Rodin, Cézanne, Moore, Mapplethorpe or Lüpertz responded to it. Until 25 May. Bundeskunsthalle, Bonn. www.bundeskunsthalle.de/en



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Where to stay in Bonn

Here are two options which are very different. The first is a youth hostel but not like you've seen.

Basecamp's accommodation is 16 vintage caravans, two night sleepers, two Airstreams and quite a few other oddities to stay for the night – in indoor campground. Located inside a former storage facility, it claims to be “the only indoor vintage faux campground of the galaxy”. It has a total of 120 beds across 15 retro caravans, two night sleepers, two American Airstreams, two Volkswagen transporters, a Trabant, a Citroen HY and other oddities.

The caravans were outfitted by acclaimed German television and film set designer Marion Seul with each of them having a different theme including furnished front lawns, bibelots and historic props. Prices range from €22 to €74 per night. Perfectly suited for travellers, backpackers and groups that have a taste for adventure. www.basecamp-bonn.com



The second option is altogether different. The **Kameha Grand Bonn** is a design hotel located by the Rhine – in fact a few steps from it. The place has been designed around space, in the shape of a beautiful, light-flooded atrium. The building curves dramatically towards the river. In fact, the entire hotel gives you room to breathe, with high ceilings and plenty of elbow room in the bars and restaurant. Designer Marcel Wanders says: “A hotel should entertain, inspire and stimulate, so it needs a design that supports these qualities.” One of the big pluses is outside with kilometre upon kilometre of river walks, going east and west along the banks. www.kamehagrand.com



And no visit to Bonn is complete without a visit to the excellent micro brewery restaurant called **Bönnisch**. The name comes from a Riparian dialect of German. It has a horseshoe-shaped bar, behind which a fine barman manages to keep up the pace of pouring and chatting. And the 300g Argentinean steak is one of the most succulent you'll ever come across. It's the kind of brauhaus you don't want to say 'tschüss' to. www.boennsch.de

More info on Bonn: www.bonn-region.de



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Hedge fun



LE CHAT by Philippe Geluck

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MY MAGNIFIQUE VOYAGE

Terrace, April 2nd

It was 6.30pm and spring had just begun in Brussels. I decided to enjoy the last rays of sunshine on this lovely terrace, one of the most charming in the capital. I sat near the soothing fountain and I ordered a signature cocktail (it was delicious!).

It's the kind of moment when you say to yourself

Life is Magnifique

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