

INSPIRING YOU TO REACH YOUR DREAMS

#23 / MARCH 2011

Together

magazine

DREAMING FOR REAL

PHILIPPE GELUCK
‘Le Chat’ creator
in conversation

SERGE BENSIMON
Fashion designer

HEAVENLY SKIING
Paradiski pistes, Les Arcs

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Your dreams, our dreams

With this edition, *Together* renews its commitment to inspiring you, our readers, to reach your dreams.

We dream that you will let our team of talented writers guide you blissfully into the year ahead, and show you how life in Brussels can be everything you've wanted.

Firstly, we hope that you enjoyed our collaboration with Biotherm on distribution day – thanks to your generosity, the regeneration of green spaces around Brussels is in good hands. **The Forest Agency**, the organization responsible for the preservation of the Sonian Forest, is now able to plant more trees, with your donations. On 13th March, the Biotherm team, together with the foresters will help inaugurate a new natural area in the capital of Europe, so many thanks again!

Onwards into the articles. First up, there's a chance for you to win a speech-consultation session with **Know Your Voice** – ideal for everyone who wants to improve their primary communication tool, from both a personal and professional perspective.

Then, we have interviews with Moët & Chandon's Chef du Caves **Benoît Gouez**, creator of Belgium's iconic Le Chat

Philippe Geluck, Lilù handbag collection founder Emmanuelle Adam and fashion icon Serge Bensimon.

Travel wise, our editor James Drew reports on his dreamy trip to **Les Arcs** where he took to the slopes for the first time in 26 years. Find out how he fared...

Our intrepid adventurer Andy Carling tells of how he made his **dream of conquering a mountain a reality**, Rose Grider analyzes dreams' health-giving properties, and our new **Go Get It!** Correspondent Helen Kerrison urges us to break a bad habit, asap.

And, of course, as you've come to expect from your favourite Brussels high-class magazine, there is more than enough superb fashion, exciting events and simple, old-fashioned fun to go around – enjoy, and we will see you again soon. ☺



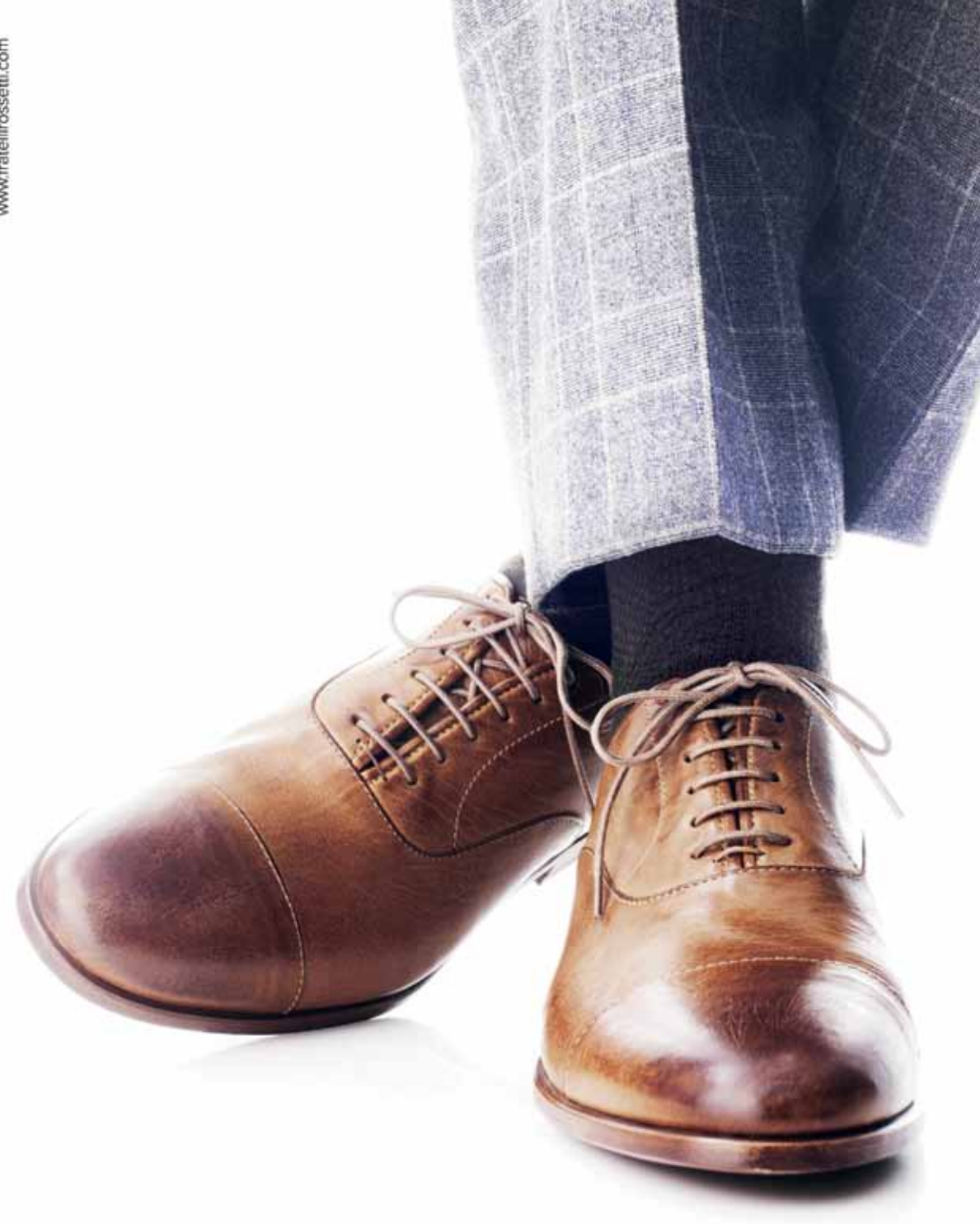
David Mc Gowan

David Mc Gowan
Publisher



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Together Online

In the Spotlight

Five Things Expats Moan About



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In the Spotlight

Qatar Airways Expands With Addition of Brussels



TRAVEL

In the Spotlight

Nice Touch



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Do you speak too fast, or in a m-o-n-o-t-o-n-e or high pitched voice?
If you could change something about your voice, what would it be? ©

You are the master of your own voice. Learning to educate and optimize your voice to its maximum potential is a life-time investment – and you can discover the full potential of your voice with the *innovative, creative, and effective* methodology of Ask Your Voice. Marie Terese Letorney is an internationally acclaimed opera singer and a guest soloist with Europe's finest orchestras for 20 years. Based on her international experience and classical training and as the founder and managing director of Ask Your Voice, Marie Terese has developed an innovative high-quality patented method that is effective and creative. It helps optimize your speaking voice to its maximum potential. With her

unique combination of a B.A. Music Degree and a Master's Degree in Management from Boston University-Brussels, she has further developed her Ask Your Voice method for the professional voice. As Marie Terese explains: "As a voice consultant, my reward is helping my clients to discover the beauty, power and many colours of their voice. The human voice is the most important tool for communication, especially in today's diverse globalized world. Remember, your voice is your identity, your brand!" ©

THE PRIZE

Together has teamed up with **Ask Your Voice** to offer three of our readers the chance to win a voice enhancing consultation session. To enter, all you have to do is send us your answers to the two simple questions below, along with your name, address and daytime telephone number, to info@togethermedia.eu, labelling your email **Ask Your Voice Competition**. The deadline for all entries is 30th April 2011, when the winners will be selected at random. Good luck!

- (i) Who do you think is a great speaker?
- (ii) What is the title of the lead story on www.togethermag.eu today? ©

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High commanders, high flyers

WRITER: FEDERICO GRANDESSO

Who's been, who's on their way...

GENERAL DAVID PETRAEUS

NATO's commander of troops in Afghanistan, General David Petraeus, was in Brussels on 26th and 27th January for a NATO Military Committee meeting, to follow up on the Lisbon Summit. Under the chairmanship of Admiral Giampaolo Di Paola (CMC), top-level military representatives from 66 countries discussed the implementation of the New Strategic Concept, its military consequences and the evolution of NATO and NATO-led operations. Concerning Afghanistan, the focus was on the longer-term perspective for the country.



JAMES BLUNT

It will certainly be a great return for James Blunt to Brussels at the Forest National on 8th March – James will perform in a smaller venue in FN for a very intimate Brit-pop concert. Following two years' work, his third album *Some Kind of Trouble*, with its first smash single *Stay The Night* was released in November 2010. With it, he will doubtlessly enrapture his Brussels fans once more.



JANET NAPOLITANO

United States Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano was in Brussels on 5th January for a two-day visit. Among her various meetings, a highlight was her appointment with Transport Commissioner Siim Kallas – discussions were focused on US civil aviation security measures, particularly their implications for EU-US mail shipments. Both sides agreed that air-passenger security remains a serious challenge and that exchanging experience regarding the use of security scanners in US and EU airports is necessary.



KATY PERRY

International pop starlet Katy Perry will be in Brussels for a concert on 10th March at Forest National. Following her success at the MTV Video Music Awards, Katy will begin her biggest-ever tour in March, 'California Dream Tour 2011,' which is set to start in Lisbon on 20th February and finish in Dublin on 7th November – a real marathon! But singing is not enough for our Katy – she will also be launching her new fragrance, *Purr*, due in 2011. So if you are in NYC or London, look for the glamorous cat-shaped bottles! ☺




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On October 29, 1941, U.K. Prime Minister Winston Churchill visited Harrow School to hear the traditional songs he had sung there as a youth, as well as to speak to the students. When he was invited to give a speech, Churchill stood before the students and said: *“Never, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, give up. Never give up. Never give up. Never give up.”*

And, to be successful in your life and business, here is what Winston Churchill advised: *“Never give in, never give in, never; never; never; never – in nothing, great or small, large or petty – never give in except to convictions of honour and good sense.”*

PERSONAL
DEVELOPMENT

Break a habit

WRITER: HELEN KERRISON

Doing the same thing again and again limits your opportunities. It is time to break out of the 'small room'.

Well, I've just got back from a really inspiring few days with my mentor, Lisa Sasevich, in San Diego, and how great I feel!

On the plane back I was thinking about how empowered I felt and how just getting into a different space (mentally and physically) has such a hugely positive effect. It felt like moving out of a small, dark, cramped room into the light of a massive, 360° amphitheatre!

MOST OF US, MOST OF THE TIME, OPERATE WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THAT SMALL, DARK CRAMPED ROOM...AND WE DON'T EVEN KNOW IT! WE'RE ON AUTO-PILOT

And what that gives is VISION...the vision to think big, to trust instincts and embrace the total enormity of what's possible. Not bad, eh?

But, here's the thing. Most of us, most of the time, operate within the confines of that small, dark cramped room...and we don't even know it! We're on auto-pilot. We do the same things every day, we get the same results, we accept the same results

and so on. And, what happens when we repeat the same actions again and again? They become habits, and habits are comfortable. We know them, we trust them, they don't surprise us, they're safe...hmmm.

So, I am challenging you to break a habit today (preferably a bad one!). Say 'No' to something you do repeatedly that's not

moving you forward, that's keeping you in the 'small dark room'. Ask yourself, what opportunities have I not acted on today because I felt safer doing my old familiar stuff? Identify one, act on it and step into that amphitheatre. It really is the only place to be! 🍷



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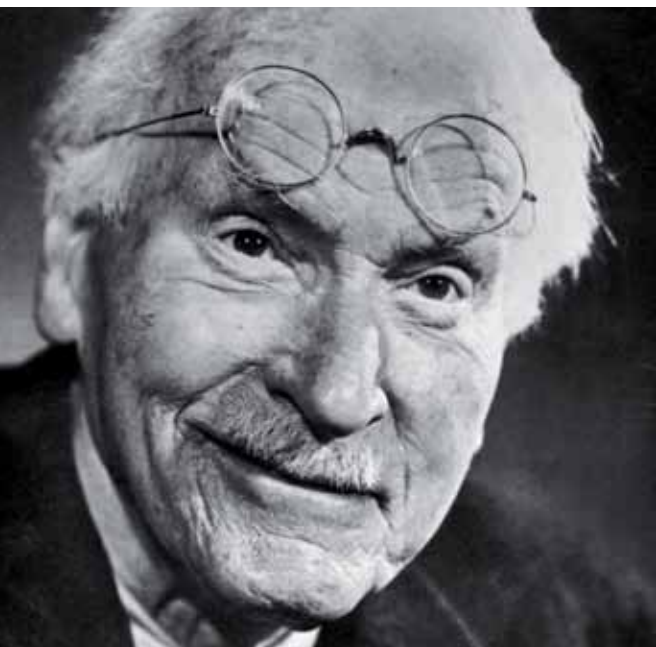
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Perchance to dream...

WRITER: ROSE GRIDER

Why we dream has been the source of fascination and research since time immemorial – but one thing we do know, it is good for us.



Carl Jung

What does it mean to follow your dreams? From a romantic point of view, this can be interpreted as a gentle encouragement, an attempt to inspire us to do what truly makes us happy. If you really think about it, though, the actual act of dreaming is a far cry from our conscious goals and hopes for the future. Here at *Together*, we thought it was only fair to do a little investigation on the nitty gritty of dreaming because, after all, our number one goal is to inspire you all to reach your dreams.

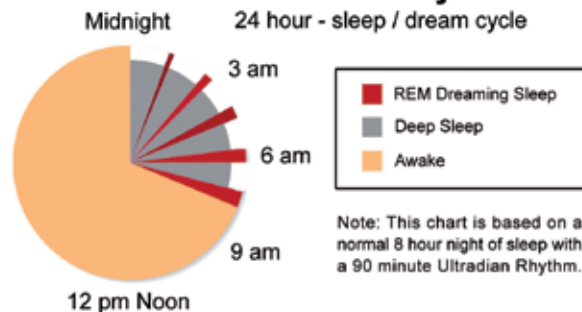
'REM'-EMBER ME

When you sleep, and I'm talking about that deep, completely out of it REM (rapid eye movement) stage, dreams hit full throttle, but why? At this phase of the cycle, blood pressure climbs, heart rate increases, respiratory patterns fluctuate and brain activity, instead of taking a breather like one would assume, sharply rises. All of these factors combine to create a breeding ground for those bazaar, movie-like narratives that take place while you 'rest'.

Kind of ironic, if you think about it. It seems as though our entire body needs to shut down during those wee hours of the night in order to rejuvenate for the next day. But it just so happens that (sometimes more than others) our minds take a wild, confusing marathon to the moon and back. For years, the science behind dreaming has been studied. Much progress has been made in the ongoing discussion of whether or not our dreams actually have significance, but opinions vary among many. Sigmund Freud, often referred to as the father of psychology, takes the standpoint that our urges and impulses unsuitable for societal reveal have to come to surface somehow, so they jump at the opportunity when we sleep.

Carl Jung, on the other hand, is probably more recognized for his research on dreaming. Although Jung and Freud worked closely together for a portion of their careers, Jung's take on dreaming is less barbaric and probably closer to the more idyllic and sentimental outlook many of us choose to have on dreams. He felt that their purpose is to give a glimpse of our unconscious, allowing us to have a clearer idea on what we ought to do to

Circadian Rhythm: 24 hour - sleep / dream cycle



achieve wholeness. And in the event you have a problem, dreams may offer a solution, symbolically or literally, to help you in your waking life.

DREAMS OR DAYDREAMS?

Yes, much has been done with dream research, but what about daydreaming? Are they comparable? Or is daydreaming just a fancy way of saying that your mind is wandering while awake? This is a matter largely untackled by modern psychologists, but it is interesting to think about nonetheless. Next time your thoughts

go elsewhere during the work day, on a bad date or simply eating breakfast, take a second to see if there are any similarities between both types of dreams. If yes, maybe that's telling you something.

One thing we can all agree on is that dreams are pretty crazy things. When we get all cosy under the covers at the end of a long day, it's almost as if we surrender ourselves to areas of the brain that are impossible to discover while awake. A little creepy, but more like cool, if you ask me. And researchers aren't the only ones who eat this stuff up; the media, particularly filmmakers, attempt to explore this subject all the time. One of the more recent efforts to explain the power of dreams was taken on by the film *Inception*, released last year. This movie goes well beyond the simple act of dreaming, but figuring out how to get into the heads of others and being able to "see" their dreams is the driving theme. Pretty deep stuff. Let's save that discussion for another day. ☺



Begone, Valentine Scrooges!

WRITER: BELLE DE BRUXELLES

How to approach things differently during the year's most romantic month – our gal says don't dismiss it, simply find your own way to keep Valentine's special.

Herds of sheep will march their intendeds into restaurants on 14th February. Why? Because they feel they have to.

They will pay an extortionate amount of money to eat dinner in a restaurant crowded with a zillion other people doing just the same thing. They will dutifully dole

out chocolates and send each other a mass-produced card. Now where, oh lovers of romance, is the joy in that?

HOW ABOUT YOU FIND YOUR OWN WAY TO CELEBRATE AND GIVE THE OBJECT OF YOUR DESIRE A DAY TO REALLY REMEMBER?

BAH? HUMBUG?

On this one, Belle de Bruxelles has what may seem like a shocking, cynical confession to make. When it comes to

St. Valentine's Day, she applies the same sentiment expressed by Ebenezer Scrooge in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*: "Keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine." This message she directs especially at marketers of

kitsch greeting cards, chocolates and cutesy toys.

But wait. Before you close your wallet or purse with a sigh of relief and announce to your lover that it's all a load of Hallmark-inspired nonsense and that you will be romantic anyway for the other 363 days of the year (but will you, really?) how about you find your own way to celebrate and give the object of your desire a day to really remember?

A survey of several Brussels' acquaintances revealed that many of them revile St. Valentine's Day. There was not one single, positive comment. In fact, they were so caught up in venting their spleens about the hideousness of the commercialisation of St. Valentine's Day that there was no romantic association left in their minds.

Just like Christmas, St. Valentine's Day has indeed been hijacked by people seeking to make a buck or several million. But, amid the present-buying frenzy of Christmas (and many of us are still recovering come February), most of us still see it as a time to reflect on nobler ideas such as joy to the world or the warmth of loved ones getting together. Yet, we still shun Valentine's Day without sparing a thought for its origins.

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ORIGINS OF AMOUR

For sure, the origins of St. Valentine's Day are less clear than those of Christmas (although agnostics and atheists among you could logically agree that they are no less certain). There are several references to Saint Valentine in history. The common thread in these stories of the Valentine celebrated on 14th February appears to be that he was a Christian martyr imprisoned by the Romans.

More romantic and possibly embellished versions of the story have him healing his jailer's blind daughter, falling in love with her and sending her a love letter on the eve of his execution, hence our modern-day obsession with sending greeting cards. Another version has him conducting secret marriage ceremonies of soldiers, defying a Roman order that warriors be prohibited to wed.

Call me slushy, but this doesn't really sound all that kitsch and cute, does it? It certainly sounds a million miles away from the tedious, tried-and-tested formulae into which we have all slipped in modern times in the same way that the humble origins of Christmas are quite separate from the orgy of consumerism we see today.

BRING THE ROMANCE BACK

Even going back just as far as Victorian times, we see a much more authentic celebration of this feast day when gentlemen would write personalized letters to their loved one. Go back a little further and scoff, if you dare, at the words penned

as a sign-off by Napoleon Bonaparte to his beloved Josephine: *"Mio dolce amor, a thousand kisses; but give me none in return, for they set my blood on fire."*

Swooooooon.

Such a handwritten note from the heart (even if you are not the best scribe in the world, just make it personal) sure beats the shallow sentiment of the last-minute purchase of a shop-bought card adorned with a picture of whatever is the latest trend in cuddly bear cartoons and a boiler-plate message printed inside.

On our first Valentine's together, my lover refused to see me, claiming what a load of rubbish the event was. He insists to this day that the hand-written card he left that night in my letterbox was not a Valentine. Still, with its beautifully chosen poem, it remains in my bedside table and to this day makes me weak at the knees whenever I read it. Far more memorable than a dinner in a fancy restaurant.

But dinner need not be so tedious either. What is wrong with having one day when you turn off the TV, turn the lights down low and cook up a romantic feast? Indulge yourselves with oysters, lobster, fish and chips and a pint of lager – whatever turns you on, in fact. Order in if you're too busy to cook. Only make sure you eat at the table – the only time to move from there is when you've digested your food, and are ready to feast on each other. ☺



I tell you, it's a conspiracy!

WRITER: CILLIAN DONELLY

Should, perhaps, the theories be taken seriously?

Just over 50 years ago, on 17 January 1961, addressing the nation as he ended his eight-year tenure as President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower warned of the growing threat of the military-industrial complex: "In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties of democratic processes."

COMPLEX

Although the concept was scarcely understood at the time, it has gone on to represent all that is crooked about the confluence of the ruling elite, large-scale industry and the military establishment in world politics, not to mention a byword for that shadowy force that is seemingly behind all political conspiracy theories, most notoriously the assassination of Eisenhower's successor, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the sainted JFK.

Three days later on 20 January, JFK was sworn in and, in an inauguration speech that has been celebrated and replayed these past five decades, made an undeniable impression on history. Sadly, he would never live to see the fruits of that early promise; a casualty some say, with dubious taste, of the same military-industrial complex spoken of by his predecessor. Eisenhower's words of warning had perhaps turned his successor into a victim.



Even after all this time, the words (indeed, the very concept of) 'military-industrial complex' chime with menace. Eisenhower, a moderate Republican who had been a celebrated World War II general, knew of the close relationship between politics and the military, itself an invaluable part of the US economy. That he chose to make this a focal point of his

farewell address was no doubt an indication of how seriously he felt about this then-obscure concept and about the way in which direction he felt America was travelling. Kennedy may have got the best lines ("ask not what your country can do for you ..." etc), but it is Eisenhower who struck at the heart of society.

"I'm suggesting, Mr. President, there's a military plot to take over the Government of these United States next Sunday..."



THE TIME IS 1970 OR 1980 OR, POSSIBLY, TOMORROW. FROM THE ASTOUNDING BEST SELLER.



CRISIS

In 1962, Fletcher Knebel and Charles Bailey imagined, in their book *Seven Days In May*, a military coup against a beleaguered US president; a novel the authors chose to preface with the relevant extract from the Eisenhower speech. The perpetrator of the coup, James Mattoon Scott, is a right-wing

EVEN AFTER ALL THIS TIME, THE WORDS (INDEED, THE VERY CONCEPT OF) 'MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX' CHIME WITH MENACE

martinet general, partly based on Douglas MacArthur. Kennedy was alleged to have read it, and was inclined to take its febrile content quite seriously, privately telling friends that had the Cuban Missile Crisis gone any other way he might have faced a coup of his own (the character of Scott is also heavily indebted to Curtis

LeMay, the four-star general who clashed repeatedly with Kennedy and his staff, particularly over the missile crisis).

By the time *Seven Days In May* was made into a film in 1964, Kennedy was dead, and the rumours were already circulating.

US President Dwight D. Eisenhower

Headed by Mark Lane, the so-called conspiracy theorists were looking for



answers, and when they turned out to be inconclusive, it was the military-industrial complex that took the hit. By the middle of the next decade, post-Watergate, conspiracies were a positive boon, with lurid pulp fiction and increasingly paranoid Hollywood thrillers dominating the cultural landscape. Incidentally, John Frankenheimer, a close friend of JFK, who directed the screen version of *Seven Days In May*, kick-started the whole industry when he filmed Richard Condon's novel *The Manchurian Candidate* in 1962, while Condon would later write a thinly veiled Kennedy conspiracy novel, *Winter Kills*, itself filmed during the the conspiracy theory fad of 1979.

Flash forward to today, and echoes of Eisenhower's speech, with its paranoid implications, are still around; in every internet wacko, in our continuing fascination with WikiLeaks and the secrets revealed and in every whisper that swears that the bars and restaurants around the Berlaymont in Brussels are all bugged.

Well, it is the second-most spied-on city in the world and there's bound to be a bit of surveillance, right? But for whose benefit? 🗳️

Tax court – your last resort

WRITER: GREGORY GOOSSENS

If you have had a bruising encounter with the authorities and are convinced that they are being very unreasonable, sometimes the only way out is to battle with the taxman.



BETTER NOW THAN LATER

Of course, no one likes paying taxes, but if you calculated them in advance online or with some special software, normally you know what to expect. After you receive your tax bill you have two months time to make payment. After that, a late payment interest will be applied. In any case, with the best of intentions, opening that brown envelope is not

IN SOME CASES GENERAL DISPLEASURE CAN SUDDENLY TURN INTO UTTER SHOCK. 'WHAT? ARE THEY SERIOUS? THIS CERTAINLY MUST BE A MISTAKE!'

something we look forward to. And even if the amount of tax due is what you estimated to pay that year, it is always a good thing to double check.

Your dealings with the Belgian Tax Administration will normally be routine. You file your tax return in June in which you properly report your earnings for the previous year and your tax bill will arrive in March or April the year after. If you missed the filing deadline, the Tax-On-Web application can still prove to be useful as it normally gives you a couple days more to file your return and you have the questionable advantage that your tax bill will arrive even quicker.

In some cases general displeasure can suddenly turn into utter shock. "What? Are they serious? This certainly must be a mistake!" If your tax is wrong or unreasonable, you have the right to appeal or to authorize a professional adviser to file a protest letter on your behalf. Take your time and try to figure out what went wrong, but do not wait too long to take action. Your letter should arrive with the tax authorities within six months as from the date on which the assessment was sent to you.

What is important is to set out in detail why you do not agree with what you are asked to pay. Maybe you forgot to mention something in the return, maybe the taxman overlooked a deductible business expense or he wrongly considered a particular type of income as taxable. When it is obvious a mistake was made, it is often not even necessary to write a letter. You can simply call your local tax office and explain why you think the assessment is wrong. Your local taxman will gladly help you through the process and, if possible, send you a corrected tax bill.

If the tax issue is more complex, the only possible next step will be to start up an administrative appeal procedure. This means that you must protest in a letter in which you set out the different reasons why you do not agree with the assessment. This letter has to be sent to the regional tax directorate. The address is mentioned on the back of your tax bill.

DON'T MISS THE POST!

The established complaint procedure is quite formal and you should make sure you mention all the relevant references.

**SIX MONTHS
MAY SEEM A
LONG TIME, BUT
IF YOU ARE TOO
LATE, YOUR
COMPLAINT
WILL SIMPLY BE
REJECTED**

An appeal is only accepted in Dutch or in French and preferably sent to the authorities by registered mail. If you want to look evil in the eye, you can also bring it to the tax office yourself and ask for a stamp confirming the date of receipt. When you appeal you can also ask for a meeting face-to-face with the tax director. This often proves to be an efficient approach. And, most important, do not forget to sign your protest letter. If the assessment is also made in the name of your spouse or partner, then both of you must sign it.

Six months may seem a long time, but if you are too late, your complaint will simply be

rejected. After that, the taxman is normally no longer required to process your appeal. The only option left in that case is then to simply pay your taxes. So make sure that your letter gets there in time!

The positive thing about a tax bill being challenged is that you do not need to pay it until the authorities make their decision. When filing an appeal, make sure you also contact the tax collector (mentioned on the back of the tax bill) to let him know that you challenge your tax assessment and this to avoid any undesired collection measures. If you decide to pay your taxes but challenge them afterwards, you will receive a tax-free interest of 7 per cent in case it turns out you are entitled to a refund.

After receiving your letter, the tax director has six months to draw up his decision. Make sure to give him a call now and then to ask about its progress, as the tax authorities tend to wait till the very last moment to react – try to get some information, or you will stay in the dark until they reach their verdict.

After six months, if you have not received a decision (or did, but do not agree with it), you can take your case to court within three months as from the date of the decision. Going to court may seem like a big step but may be the only chance to save your finances, as the regional tax director tends to simply confirm the viewpoint of his subordinate.

The next thing to do would be to evaluate the economics of a court procedure by comparing potential tax savings with anticipated costs. There might be several reasons that may make you hesitant to go to court: the cost of hiring an attorney, the wait time, the uncertainty of its outcome, etc. Interest also continues to accrue upon your unpaid tax balance during the proceedings. ☹

Gregory Goossens
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“If a little dreaming is dangerous, the cure for it is not to dream less but to dream more, to dream all the time.”

– Marcel Proust (1871-1922)

French novelist, critic, and essayist

“All of us tend to put off living. We are all dreaming of some magical rose garden over the horizon – instead of enjoying the roses that are blooming outside our windows today.”

– Dale Breckenridge Carnegie (1888-1955)

American writer and lecturer and famous developer of self-improvement courses

“All life is only a set of pictures in the brain, among which there is no difference betwixt those born of real things and those born of inward dreamings, and (there is) no cause to value one above the other.”

– H.P. Lovecraft (1890-1937)

American ‘weird fiction’ author

“I have heard it said that the first ingredient of success – the earliest spark in the dreaming youth – is this: dream a great dream.”

– John Alan Appleman (1912-1982)

Renowned American legal practitioner

“Dreaming permits each and every one of us to be quietly and safely insane every night of our lives.”

– William C. Dement (1928-)

Pioneering American sleep researcher

DREAMING
FOR REAL

Le Chat: Heightened visibility

WRITER: JAMES DREW

Philippe Geluck, creator of what is perhaps Belgium's most iconic figure 'Le Chat' (who has graced the back pages of every edition of *Together* to date), was in Brussels recently to launch a unique range of Le Chat themed reading glasses. Read on...

Philippe Geluck was born in Brussels in 1954. As an artist, he has worked in many different domains – theatre, radio, television and, of course, comic books, of which several million copies have been sold worldwide.

His monumental exhibition, 'Le chat s'expose', took place in Paris in 2003 and Brussels in 2004. Then its international fame spread – the worldwide popularity of

Le Chat and the unique way in which Geluck has represented the 'belgitude' were what convinced leading optical designer Iris design, Thierry Holemans and the Val Saint Lambert crystal factory to collaborate with Le Chat and his creator.

Thus the Le Chat glasses from the 'Le Chat sort sa griffe' collection came into

being, and are a perfect confirmation of everything that constitutes the rich tapestry of 'belgitude'.

Jewelry artist Thierry Holemans is very attached to Brussels and the spirit, which is so typical for its residents. His creations, a mixture of old and advanced techniques, are a symbol of the Belgian avant-garde.



'I AM VERY HAPPY TO BE WORKING WITH IRIS DESIGN ON THESE FRAMES FOR READING GLASSES, AS I BELIEVE THAT ANY ENCOURAGEMENT TO READ IS A VERY POSITIVE THING'



The Val Saint Lambert crystal factory is a Belgian tradition that was brought back to life by its new chairwoman, Sylvie Henquin. The name evokes know-how, luxury and Belgian quality.

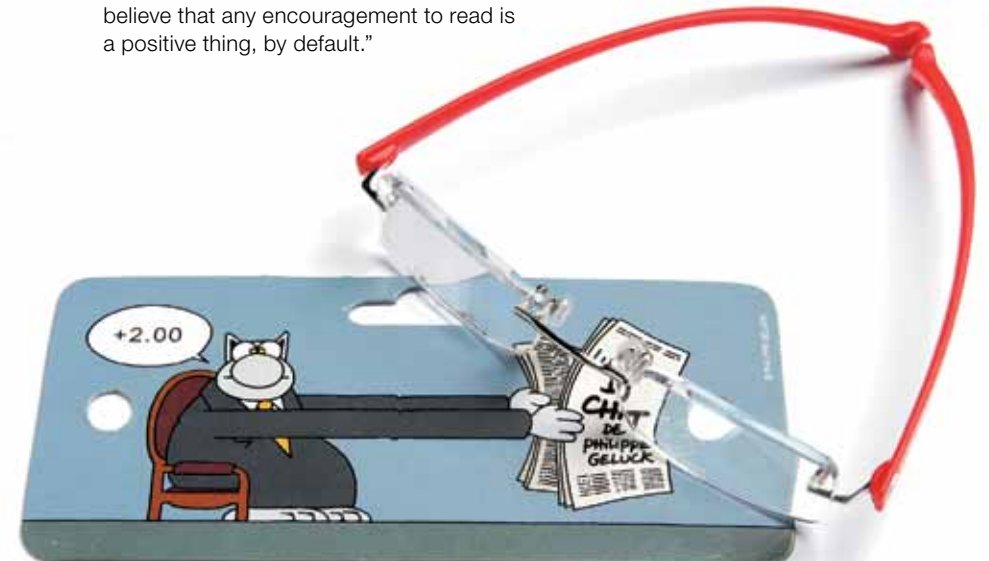
The partnership, together with the 20 years' experience of the founders of Iris design, has led to the creation of these exceptional new frames.

As Geluck explains the 'commercialization' of his brand: "Well, I think that, with success, a certain amount of commercialization is inevitable, and I am very happy to be working with Iris design on these frames for reading glasses, as I believe that any encouragement to read is a positive thing, by default."

And the secret of his success? "I think that it is vitally important, in this life, to not allow yourself to be sidetracked away from what is most important, be it your creativity, your family and those you love. I have been very lucky, but I know that I have made some of my own luck, and that is the most important thing to me." ☺

Iris design
 J. Wanden Broeckstraat, 11
 1780 Wemmel
 T. +32 (0)2 569 09 37
www.irisdesign.be

www.geluck.com



Endless inspiration

WRITER: MATTHEW SCHUR



French fashion designer Serge Bensimon is as generous – he’s known to give free merchandise to children, celebrities and everyone in between – as he is passionate about his work. He travels all over the world in search of inspiration, finding it in unlikely places: India, Africa, even in the Amish-populated areas of Pennsylvania.

The company, Bensimon, which was started by Serge and his brother Yves more than twenty-five years ago, thrives on fashionable simplicity. The clothes are comfortable and timeless, providing attire that’s not relegated to any specific season. Then

there are the iconic tennis shoes. Celebrities (Cameron Diaz, Julia Roberts) wear them and the top fashion magazines (*Vogue*, *Marie Claire*) have written about them.

The brothers, with Serge handling the creative and marketing side and Yves advising the administrative aspects, have come along way from their humble beginnings selling army surplus clothing. Now, with an international clientele and numerous stores – including concept stores that sell furniture and various accessories – Bensimon has evolved into a recognizable brand and notable presence in the fashion industry.

As Serge waded through the busy holiday season, he took time to talk to us about his unlikely influences, aversion to the colour black and why he considers Julia Roberts to be ‘just a woman’.



INTERVIEW EXPRESS

Together: What can people expect from your summer line?

SB: Clothes that represent the summer lifestyle. It’s a mix of folk and country. When I first started my company, I went to America working with Banana Republic and I was inspired by the American way of life. I liked the way the American people dressed. My line is almost the same way, but it’s the French way.

The clothes are very comfortable, very accessible, very good cotton. Everything is washed, which means it’s ready to wear.

Are there any areas in particular that caught your attention?

The last season was inspired by the Amish, so

Pennsylvania. But also California – L.A., San Francisco – a little of Indian culture. It all depends on the time and the season. For my company, it is really a traveling company. You can wear the clothes at any time – it’s really out of fashion.

That being said, it seems unlikely that your line, with its vibrant, almost flashy colours, was inspired by the very traditional Amish style. How did this come about?

When I first came across it, it was like twenty years ago. And I came across the movie *Witness*. When you see the movie, all the men are making the houses. Everybody has a blue shirt, but it’s all different shades of blue. The women have great, checkered clothing. They are a country people, on the farm. For me, the Amish live a very natural way. During wintertime, they make furniture. So I started making that kind of furniture for my concept store. I am the first person to have a concept store in France and later the first to have one in

Belgium. Mixing furniture, clothing and accessory together is very interesting for me.

Why are colours so important to you?

The colours are important to me for a very, very big reason. Almost all people within fashion, they use black. When I started, I decided, don’t make black. I’ve never done black in thirty years. When you decide that you aren’t making anything black, you have to find something else, so you have to get thinking. I can have dark blue, dark grey, dark brown – but never black. Our line has a wide range of colours. Now it’s so funny, because people will see something and say, “these are Bensimon colours”. Summer or winter, we always have a lot of colours.

What is it about black that you never wanted to use it?

I just remember when I went to my first show; all of the stands had a black colour. I realized if I do black, people won’t recognize me. So, I decided to do another way. It was very difficult. Everyone knows black is very good for sales. Without black, you need more imagination, more creativity, and for Bensimon, creativity is very, very important.

Given the great success of the Bensimon tennis shoes, how does it feel to have people like Julia Roberts and Cameron Diaz wear your shoes?

I’m very proud. I like it because I’ve never changed my lifestyle or what I was doing. I’m very close with some of these celebrities, like Sigourney Weaver. But, I’m a very a normal person, very simple, so it’s easy to have a conversation together. For me, Julia Roberts is just a beautiful woman. When I see her, I don’t see a movie star, I see just a woman. Of course, I’m glad she wears the shoes, or anybody else. But because I’m very simple, the shoes are very simple. Simplicity is good word for the Bensimon brand.



Our writer Matthew Schur, left, with Serge Bensimon

You've mentioned your Amish and American influences, but your influences seem to come from other parts of the world as well. Are there any recent adventures that have inspired you?
Traveling is very important for inspiration and I've been traveling for thirty years. Right now, I'm very impressed with what I'm seeing in Japan, especially with what they are doing with furniture. Their clothing is very professional too – very original, very different style. At the same time, what I see out of Africa, with the safaris, was also inspiring. It's all different kinds of things. Two or three years ago, Ellis Island was my inspiration. I spent a few days over there, and you see a mix of people from all over the world.

How do you pull all of these different inspirations together?
I've been working in this business for a long time. It's something I know how to do. It's like if you make movies or music, you have some idea in your head. After you travel and see many things, eat many things and experience all these different cultures, you

have to know how to share it with the people you're working with. I'm not working alone– it's like a band.

With all this traveling, is there a place you feel most comfortable in?
I love Paris. Because it is really my city. But people always ask me: "What city do you like the best?" When I'm in Paris, I love Paris. When I'm in New York, I love New York. When I'm in Chicago, I love Chicago. The same for when I go to Tokyo. Because every city has something. I'm a very positive person, and I always take the good out of something.

What is the secret to your success?
To be honest. I decided at the very beginning to never change. I also work because I enjoy it. I enjoy the people that work with me. It's not because I have success, it's because I love work. When people come back into my store two, three years, even ten years later, "I remember I bought these pants from you, do you have the same ones?" That's what really pleases me. ☺

WHEN PEOPLE
LOVE
 A PLACE,
 THEY KEEP ON
coming back

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Joining the ISB community as a student teacher in training, Megan subsequently returned to ISB to complete a one-year internship. Today, she is a full-time teacher in our Early Childhood Centre. We take it as a compliment that our young teachers are so keen to stay. Megan is just one of the people who make ISB what it is today.

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Climbing the 'mountains of the moon'

WRITER: ANDY CARLING

How, for our intrepid correspondent, a decision to try something different made a dream possible.

I should never have taken up mountaineering, mainly because I was so bad at it. I've lost count of the crags and cliffs I've fallen off, but I remember the avalanches I've been in and the occasional long drop, such as falling headfirst down a Scottish gully after getting to within 10 metres of the top. Some 200m later, I was dazed and confused at the bottom, with only a dodgy knee and a deep scar where my ice axe had impaled itself.

staying with a friend, who was a Himalayan expert. Our conversation moved on to the commercialization of mountaineering and that it was harder to do any exploration. As I headed off to bed, I picked up a small guidebook to read, on the Ruwenzori mountains of Uganda.

Published in 1972, it was recognized as a small but insanely complete guide to the 150-kilometre range on the Congo/Uganda border. These fabled mist covered



'LIFE INTO PERSPECTIVE'

It's these precious moments that, as a friend said, "puts life into perspective". But in 1990, I was a young climber in the English Lake District, who had been all over the local rocks, started snow and ice climbing in Scotland and was taking the next step. I was progressing to the French and Swiss Alps.

There were a couple of problems. One was that I had a healthy concern for my own well-being that expressed itself as a wish

to stay alive. This is a barrier to the heights of mountain climbing. Secondly, I was more interested in doing something different. After a weekend's ice climbing, I was

THERE WERE A COUPLE OF PROBLEMS...A HEALTHY CONCERN FOR MY OWN WELL-BEING THAT EXPRESSED ITSELF AS A WISH TO STAY ALIVE... SECONDLY, I WAS MORE INTERESTED IN DOING SOMETHING DIFFERENT



mountains have fascinated travellers for millennia. Around 500 BC, the Greek poet Aeschylus wrote of "Egypt nurtured by the snows". Not to be outdone, Aristotle, some 150 years later, declared the source of the Nile to be "The Silver Mountain".

An account of a journey to the Ruwenzori was written by the Syrian geographer Marinus of Tyre in 120 AD. He related the tale of an Ancient Greek merchant, Diogenes, who claimed a 25 day journey inland from the African East coast to "two great lakes and the snowy range of mountains where the Nile draws its twin sources". Three decades afterwards, Ptolmey wrote of the *Lunæs Montes (Mountains of the Moon)* being the source of the Nile.

GORDON BENNETT!

The mystery began to clear after the mountains were sighted in the far distance by the British explorer Henry Morton Stanley in 1876. He took a brief respite from savagely beating his porters to name them after his boss, the editor of the *New York Herald*, Gordon Bennett, whose lifestyle and editorial flair turned his name into a slang term for 'I don't believe it'. Sadly, the 5,107m main summit has been renamed Mount Stanley.

The more I read, the more intrigued I was. However, looking at the remoteness and other factors, such as a conflict going on in the area, I realized this was a journey I was never going to make.

Then I stopped. Why would I never go there? What was stopping me? I then acknowledged that the main thing stopping me was...myself. So I decided to go. To make the trip happen, there were several steps I had to take, so I tackled them.

FRIENDS INDEED

Finding a climbing partner was easy. I take pride that many of my friends were up for climbing through a jungle to scramble over glaciers on the equator. The biggest issue was information. The guidebook had been out of print for many years, but I tracked down a second hand copy from the original publisher, who only sold me the book after I had assured him that I was actually going there. Maps were more difficult. I found a 1:150,000 map, that seemed to be alarmingly vague.

Money was another problem, so we booked the cheapest flight to Nairobi, jumped on a bus to the Ugandan border, then another to Kampala and one more to Kasese in the foothills of the mountains.

The warm and misty atmosphere also meant that anything living grew to outlandish size. Earthworms were 3 or 4 centimetres thick and the heather grew to the size of trees. As we entered the heart of the high peaks, we were already higher than Mont Blanc, but we were still having to cut our way through jungle.

It was a hard trek into the Bigo bog, under the main summits. This is why the range is also known as the 'Mountains of the Mist', and the bog turned out to be very big indeed. We spent days jumping from tuft to tuft to make progress.

Eventually we got on the rocky slopes and then to the glacier, where we climbed above the mist to the summit.

Since then, I've never told myself that I can't do something. I'm also going to return to the Ruwenzori. I've had an idea for a journey that has never been done. Want to come along? ☺



In need of inspiration?

This month on www.togethermag.eu

10

cool places in Brussels to go on a date

10

worst-case scenarios in a relationship

10

cars that make you look a fool

10

European dishes that should never have been invented

MAGIC MIRROR

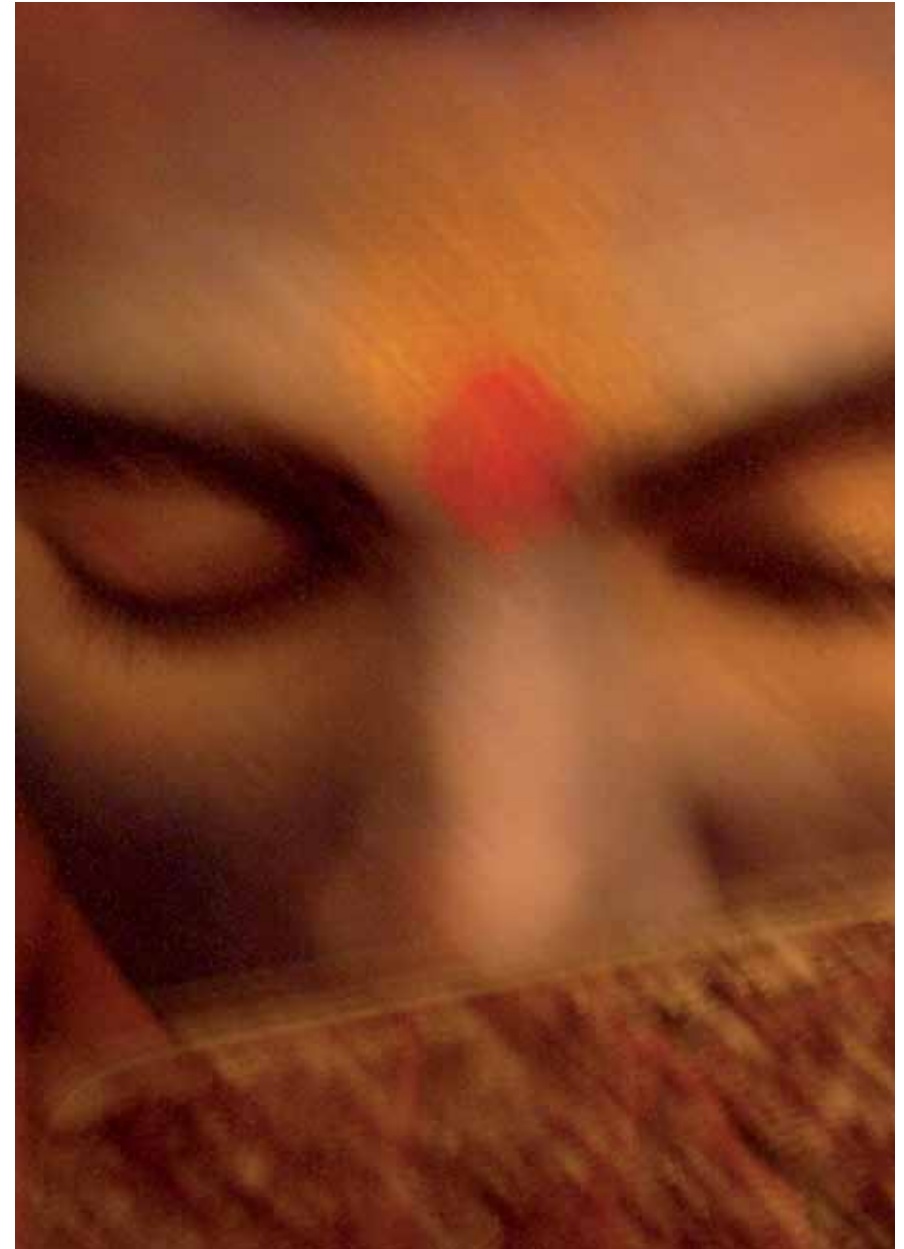
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PHOTO RETOUCHING: WWW.GAELEGRISARD.BE

STYLIST: JAN GALAND

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MODELS: FLORENCE, LILY, MARIE EVE, SOPHIE, GLENN, GEOFFREY AND PIERRE ALEXANDRE



Perfume:
La Nuit de l'Homme
by YVES SAINT LAURENT



Smoking jacket and hat:
IDIZ BOGAM



Dress:
ISABELLE BAJART
Perfume:
Belle d'Opium
by YVES SAINT LAURENT



Dress:
RAMON AND VALY

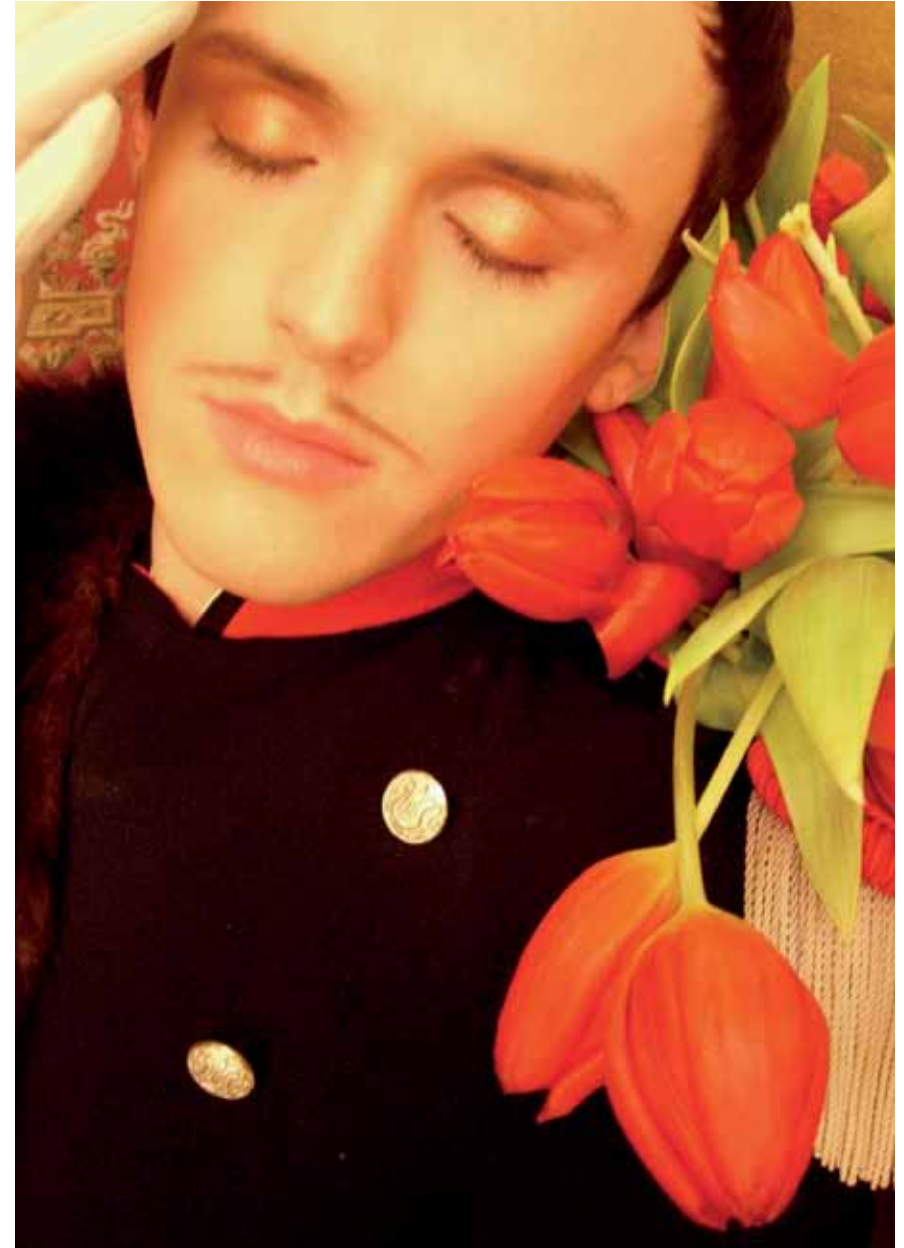
Hair:
Extra-strong hold volume mousse
and gloss control (tec-ni-art)
by L'OREAL PROFESSIONNEL



Dress:
ISABELLE BAJART



*Make up YSL:
FOUNDATION TOUCH (IVORY)
EYEBROW ENHANCER DUO
TOUCH BLUSH SIENNA
ROUGE PUR COUTURE (ROSE LIBERTIN)*



*Jacket:
FOX HOLE*

In the bag

WRITER: MELANIE LOTH

Lilù creator Emmanuelle Adam took the lead from her parents when deciding to launch her handbag collection in 2004, as she tells *Together*.



"I've been used to my parents who carry out their dreams and take their own initiative," Adam explains. "It's something that I always wanted to have a go at and really try out."

'IT IS A LOT OF FUN TO BE TALKING TO WOMEN WHO WEAR THE BAGS AND KNOW WHAT THEY WANT, THEY HAVE LOTS OF GOOD IDEAS'

"It is a lot of fun to be talking to women who wear the bags and know what they want, they have lots of good ideas," Adam explains. "I am enjoying this moment and all

this information – hopefully I will be able to design bags that are even more beautiful and attractive."

HANDBAGS WITH A TWIST

The brand would like to expand to include belts and other accessories as well as open a second shop in the future. Its bags are catered towards women who like beautiful, luxurious things. Adam has the exceptional foresight to know that women want a bag that is noticed, but at the same time something that is not merely 'trendy' and which lasts longer than a season.

"We try to have classic handbags but always with a twist and also practical," Adam said.

At their shop, the team works on developing special, unique items. Shops that carry the Lilù collection will continue to get what Adam calls the "usual collection," but having a shop allows Adam to design more handbags that she really enjoys. She knows that they might not be definite bestsellers, but it lets her use exquisite materials and accessories that she loves. This includes a bag in the shop right now that was made using special leather from Italy – when that bag is gone, it's gone; they don't have any others like it.

Buyers who purchase the Lilù collection for other shops are supportive of the flagship store because the collection they buy is slightly different from the handbags sold in the store.



"[The buyers] are not really seeing me as competition," Adam said. "They also enjoy the fact that I have my own brand shop because it gives a good image to Lilù; it is an accomplishment."

HELP ALONG THE WAY

Adam attributes her success to the many people who have helped her along the way. She said she has always been lucky to know the right people in different spheres of the business: "I have had people push me in the right direction every time."

She tries different opinions before making big decisions, because, she says, it helps her be more aware of the many different possibilities.

"I try to make the best decision and, if it doesn't work, then I just change," she said.

Adam knows that the handbag industry is not always easy. Every January and June when the next season's prototypes have to be finished, Adam is working late evenings and weekends; she feels like stopping and getting an office job. But Adam always finds new inspiration to keep going: "It's my passion, I wouldn't stop."

www.lilu.be

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Boston University Metropolitan College
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Paris Fashion Week 2011

WRITER: FEDERICO GRANDESSO



CACHAREL SS 2011
© Press Office Cacharel

Our man-on-the scene was there, naturellement...

CACHAREL

A very feminine, fresh and youthful summer collection from Cacharel, full of delicate dresses, pants, skirts and blouses in bright reds, yellows and pinks. The florals are replaced by dresses soaked in colors reminiscent of Jackson Pollock paintings, not forgetting the ultra-glam glasses.

LOUIS VUITTON

For the (hopefully) hot summer of 2011, Marc Jacobs is playing on the theme of opulence! In his collection, inspired by China, silk blooms with joyful colours of red, pink, orange, purple, yellow and not forgetting the floral prints. The petite and brightly coloured handbag is *the* must have!

SONIA RYKIEL

Rykiel 1970s summer mood is a triumph of woollen T-shirt dresses, oversized sweater dresses and striped cardigans. It has big roomy tunics with a very vivid palette, featuring soft mustard, bright orange and shades of brown. The handbags are both hippie-chic and 1970s 'office-ready', but still very Parisian.

YOHJI YAMAMOTO (2011 COPYRIGHT: MONICA FEUDI)

At the end of the show, imagine a black t-shirt with its slogan "THIS IS ME THIS IS ME THIS IS ME THIS IS ME", mixed with a bright yellow skirt flared in an original inflatable fabric. Yamamoto, a master, is always able to surprise – the rainbow prints in leggings, bodysuits and sundresses were also much appreciated. 📌

www.modeaparis.com



LOUIS VUITTON SS 2011
© Press Office Louis Vuitton



SONIA RYKIEL SS 2011
© Press Office Sonia Rykiel



YOHJI YAMAMOTO FEMME SS 2011
© Monica FEUDI

What dreams are made on?

WRITER: JEREMY SLATER

The unconscious state has been the inspiration for some of the most striking pieces of music written, as our writer recounts.

Dreams form an important part of our lives. Scientists say that they help us unpick the problems we face when we are conscious, while psychologists use them as the door to our unconscious state, prying into the depths of our mind in order to help us better understand ourselves and the world. Little surprise then, that dreams are an important theme in many artistic works,

including classical music.

ONE NEED ONLY LISTEN TO THE OVERTURE OF DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE (THE MAGIC FLUTE), TO FIND ONESELF TRANSPORTED TO A SUBLIME STATE OF GRACE

BARD'S WAY

Perhaps the best known piece of classical music that refers to dreams is Felix Mendelssohn's interpretation of William Shakespeare's comedy *A Midsummer Night's*

Dream and, after nearly 150 years, it is still an audience favourite. In 1826, Mendelssohn composed an overture for a concert performance that was inspired by the play; it was first performed a year later and that is how it remained for 15 years – an opening movement adrift from the rest of a performable work. In 1842, partly because of the continuing popularity of the overture, and partly because his employer King Frederick William IV of Prussia liked the incidental music that Mendelssohn had

written for other plays staged in the royal palace, the composer was commissioned to write incidental music for a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, to be staged in Potsdam. He incorporated the existing overture into the other pieces, including the Wedding March that is still played or performed most often during weddings.

Other composers that have used Shakespeare's play as their inspiration are Henry Purcell, in the *Fairy Queen*, Carl Orff, *Ein Sommernachtstraum*, which was first performed in 1939, and the well-respected 20th century British composer Richard Vaughan Williams.

One of the greatest composers of the past three hundred years, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, was also inspired by sleep and the dream state. *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* and all of his last opera *Die Zauberflöte* (The Magic Flute), are dreamlike. One need only listen to the overture of the latter, to find oneself transported to a sublime state of grace.

Unfortunately, a once-popular orchestral work written about the importance of dreams has passed from the public's mind. *The Dream of Gerontius* is a work for voices and orchestra in two parts, composed by the late romantic British composer Edward Elgar in 1900. It used the text from the poem of the same name by the theologian Cardinal John Henry Newman, and relates the journey of a pious man's soul from his deathbed to his judgement before God and into Purgatory. It is widely regarded as Elgar's finest choral work – some consider it to be his masterpiece. It was performed frequently across Europe in the decade after its composition, but now rarely receives a public performance.



MODERN MUSES

Dreams still inspire later generations of composers. *Dream Sequence (Images II)* (1976) is a quiet, mysterious piece and is perhaps the most extreme of the avant garde explorations of modern composer George Crumb (born in 1929). The night

and sleep are a recurring inspiration for the American composer, as his pieces *Nocturnes*, *Night-Music*, *Zodiac Musings*, *Dreams*, *Images*, and *Sleep* suggest. The instrumentation for *Dream Sequence* is

essentially a piano trio plus percussion, though the percussion and piano become a discrete group, and the two strings play as a duo.

Sleep is also important to fellow US contemporary classical composer Howard J Buss. His own *Dream Sequence* (1987) is for trombone and four percussion

instruments and was inspired by astronomer and astrophysicist Carl Sagan's poetic observation about dreams: "Late at night, when it is very still and the obligatory dreams have been dreamed, the gazelles and dragons begin to stir." It contains subdued, mystical sections that contrast with energetic and rhythmic episodes in a manner resembling a progression of dreams. Buss (born in 1951, a generation younger than Crumb) is recognized internationally as a significant composer. His "patriotic" *Fanfare* is included in the Presidential Collection of Ronald Reagan. Someone, apparently, who knew quite a lot about sleep.

And for lesser mortals too when we wake we wonder what was the importance of what was just dreamt; in those few moments before true wakefulness we move between the world of dreams and a more prosaic reality. No wonder so many composers have tried to sustain that half spiritual state for longer than a few seconds. It is a moment that is both sublime and often full of hope. ☺

'LATE AT NIGHT, WHEN IT IS VERY STILL AND THE OBLIGATORY DREAMS HAVE BEEN DREAMED, THE GAZELLES AND DRAGONS BEGIN TO STIR.'

How best to Begin

WRITER: JAMES DREW

We profile another local leading artist.

OLIVIER VAN BEGIN

Born in 1978 in Furnes, Olivier Van Begin demonstrated his artistic gift early, allowing

his spirit and imagination to develop. As he explains: "Like all children, I had friends, of course, but I was also a rather solitary and independent boy – I had built my own small world, my small bubble, my own universe."



"On the advice of one of my teachers who had noticed my creativity, I continued my artistic studies, and I found myself at Brussels Saint-Luc Institute for three years, where I first discovered computer graphics (and programs) which have served me well with my creations. My work is very much based on my own reflections of contemporary human

behaviour. My topics are injustice, violence, poverty, but, to give the impression of hope, the bright colours I choose also represent positivity."

Little more to be said – enjoy Van Begin's work here, and check out more at his website. 📍

www.lagalerie.be

On Christmas morning in 2002, West Virginian Jack Whittaker woke up to perhaps the biggest surprise of all – he had won the lottery. This wasn't just any jackpot; it was the largest sum (\$314.9 million) won by a single winning ticket ever. Whittaker had won the ultimate life of leisure on a random Powerball ticket.

Whittaker's story seems like a dream come true, but it is actually more of a cautionary tale. Through his winnings, he discovered the greed in humanity. He was very generous with his money, but that led to disastrous consequences, because everyone seemed to want a piece of his winnings. He received so many requests for gifts and money that he slowly turned sour. The luckiest man in West Virginia considered this enormous gift a curse.

Many people dream of winning the lottery, but the moral of the story is that a life of leisure may not be all that it seems. The best way to enjoy your life is to dabble in leisurely pursuits while chasing your dreams. Take comfort in the fact that you are not a multi-million euro lottery winner because what do you do on the day that dreaming ends?

LIFE OF
LEISURE

Skiing in paradise

WRITER: JAMES DREW

For the first time in 26 years, our (relatively) fearless editor donned skis and took to the slopes of Les Arcs, a ski resort to be found in Savoie, France, in the Tarentaise Valley town of Bourg-Saint-Maurice, which is part of the huge Paradiski system of slopes.



A little background first – the Les Arcs resort was initially developed thanks to a successful collaboration in the early 1960s between Roger Godino, developer and constructor in mountain tourism and Robert Blanc, who was a native of the area, a ski instructor and high mountain guide. Slowly but surely, Les Arcs began to take shape with the help of engineer architects and town planners who shared the same

creative spirit – to wit, three basic rules were observed:

- Respect for the area and the natural surroundings.
- The conservation of existing old mountain chalets, which were not to be copied for more authenticity.
- The use of local materials.

The five areas – Bourg-Saint-Maurice, Arc 1600, Arc 1800, Arc 1950 and Arc 2000 – are located at an altitude reaching from 810 to 3,225 metres, with skiing mostly available only above 1,200 metres. The ski area consists of 106 runs, 54 lifts and 200 kilometres of descent. The highest peak in the resort is the Aiguille Rouge (Red Needle), which has a piste with a 2,100m vertical descent. Since the opening of the new Vanoise Express cable car in December 2003, Les Arcs has become part of the Paradiski group of ski-connected resorts, which also includes the La Plagne area. Paradiski has 425km of pistes in total.

And so, this is what we, your editor and his good friend (and far more competent skier) Laure were letting ourselves in for – and to be fair, I really wasn't that nervous before taking to the slopes for the first time in more than a quarter of a century.



By way of a backdrop, the last time I was on a piste was during a school trip to Austria in 1985, and York City, while we were away for a week, managed to beat Arsenal 1-0 on a last-minute penalty in the third round of the FA Cup.

Which is probably only perilously close to interesting for the large portion of our readers, so back to the matter in hand – just how did it feel to be slip-sliding away once more?

Well, all the reassuring sentiments that friends expressed to me about it being “just like riding a bike, James, you won't forget” didn't prove to be quite as accurate as I hoped. Naturally, our first night's stay at the excellent Hotel Grand Paradiso (www.grandhotelparadiso.com) had been spent discussing just how bad things might go for me the following day, but very little of that actually came to pass. Starting out, obviously, on a green slope (they are coded as green, blue, red, and black in ascending levels of peril), my first obstacles to overcome were once again getting the hang of the simple rope-pull system, which is used as a lift on the easiest slopes, then remastering the 'snow plough', which is the most basic directional technique, involving angling one ski against the other, depending on which way you want to go, or pressure on both together in order to stop.

Filmed evidence is available, thanks to Laure, who assures me it will not be posted on YouTube, of my first efforts to



pick up any speed at all but, thankfully, it didn't take too long, under patient, wonderfully calm instruction, for me to mostly get the hang of it again. I wouldn't say that I was 'away' after that, but I was feeling confident enough to relax a little more, as opposed to merely bracing for impact.

Note to self – I will be returning, and I will be booking some lessons, simple as that. Just don't even talk to me, though, about the more advanced ski-lifts – while they provide a spectacularly enjoyable ride up the slopes, I could not, for the life of me, negotiate myself off the bloody things once the ride had come to an end. Grrrr. Again, as with all things skiing, it is obvious that the only way to conquer it is to try, try again – and that is exactly what I intend to do on my next visit.

Les Arcs is renowned for having excellent beginner ski areas in each resort, although absolute beginners have little to progress to – away from the nursery slopes, as I found myself, things get trickier quickly.

ARC 1600

At 1600 metres, this is the lowest of the resort areas and is linked directly to the Bourg Saint Maurice TGV train station by the 'Arc en Ciel' funicular railway. It is also connected to the other villages by regular free shuttle buses and ski lifts. Arc 1600 was the first area to be built on and is also referred to as Arc Pierre Blanche. Arc 1600 now has 30 shops, hotels and meeting rooms to offer guests.



ARC 1800

Arc 1800 is the largest of the resort areas and consists of four 'villages' known as 'Charvet', 'Villards', 'Charmettoget' and 'Chantel'. It has around 100 shops, shuttle services, hotels, meeting rooms, a two screen cinema and an ice rink. There is a good selection of restaurants catering to most tastes including Casa Mia, voted 2003 resort restaurant of the year in a worldwide competition. The village has previously hosted the snowboarding and dance music Snowbombing event. This area is linked to the La Plagne resort by the Vanoise Express cable car, departing from the village of Peisey.

ARC 1950

Arc 1950 is a recent village development by the Canadian ski resort developer Intrawest, which also developed such resorts as Whistler and Mont Tremblant in Canada. It is linked (during the day to late evenings) to Arc 2000 by a free pedestrian accessible gondola Cabriolet. It has a wide variety of shops and, for a mountain, a huge variety of eateries including Italian, Mexican, French, Savoyarde, creperie, American and an Asian crossover restaurant. Furthermore Pubs, wine bars, lounges and a nightclub. The village is completely "ski in-ski out" and the hotels and apartments have by far the highest standard and comfort level in Les Arcs.

ARC 2000

Les Arcs' highest station has more than adequate transport links. It has a wide selection of shops, a cinema screen and



meeting facilities. Being the highest, it often has the best snow, although the nursery slopes above 2000 have a reputation for being crowded and there aren't so many tree-lined pistes for when the weather deteriorates. The Varet gondola is a quick way to get up to the higher parts of the resort and there is also a new selection of six seater chairlifts including Arcabulle, Bois de l'ors and Marmottes to quickly ship you to the different sides of the mountain. Arc 2000 is well known for hosting speed skiing (not for the faint hearted) and other events over the course of the season.

OTHER VILLAGES

At one end of the ski area are the villages of Vallandry, Peisey and Plan-Peisey, from which the Vanoise Express cable-car departs (to La Plagne, the other half of the Paradiski huge ski domain).

At the other end, across the valley from Sainte-Foy-Tarentaise, are the villages of Le Pre and Villaroger. A continuous run with 2100 metres vertical drop links Aiguille Rouge to Villaroger and although rather low at 1200 Villaroger can be reached for most of the season given artificial snow and it is north facing. Administratively these villages are not part of the Les Arcs ski domain, but are seamlessly linked. Their ski area is largely wooded, but with some open slopes above. This can provide especially good skiing when fresh snow has fallen or a welcome relief when the weather is windy or bad.

LA PLAGNE

For skiers of average ability, there is an excellent trip from the villages to the Glacier de Bellecôte, one of the seven wonders of Paradiski. At 3,250m the culminating point of the domain enjoys, during clear weather, a view over the Deux Alps glacier and even La Meije. One blue run later, the Déversoir, Mont-Blanc shows itself at the arrival of the Traversée chair lift. Take the red run, the Combe, to go down to Roche de Mio, then another red, the Sources, to return to Belle Plagne using the run with the same name, which descends all the way to Plagne Bellecôte. The Funiplagne is easily accessible, (you arrive by the Colosses chair lift and the blue run the Bridge) and once you are at the top of La Grande Rochette the view opens out onto an exceptional 360° panorama. It's time for a lunch stop on the Champagny-en-Vanoise side via the red run Kamikaze.

On the terraces of Verdon Sud, why not delight in the reblochon farci or la croustade,

bread soaked in white wine and covered in oven-baked cheese... All to be gently digested on the red run, the Bois, down to the pretty village of Champagny-en-Vanoise. The return route towards Plagne Bellecôte is by cabin lift the Borseliers, Rossa and Quilis chair lifts. Best of luck with those – I am sure you will prove to be more competent than I did...

And, exclusively in La Plagne, the Vaudey team will offer you the chance to become the pilot of a Pisten Bully machine, a 430 horsepower Polar 300 piste groomer. At the controls of this impressive beast, you are accompanied by a pro on a closed circuit. It costs 60€ for 20 minutes (adults) and 20€ for 10 minutes (child) and, believe us, it is the only way to fly! ☺

www.lesarcs.com

www.paradiski.com

www.la-plagne.com



Arc 1950

Check out our new, bite-sized tasters of places that we're sure you want to go.



Dear Together,

I am writing this to you in a state of complete relaxation – here, the views of Mont Blanc are incredible, particularly when you are enjoying them from an outdoor jacuzzi. In just a few minutes, I will be enjoying a hammam...

This is my first stay in a Pierre & Vacances Premium Holiday Village, and my stay has been simply marvellous. The Arc 1950 Village is cosy and intimate, and our children love the authentic 'Christmas' atmosphere. They also love roasting marshmallows on fires in the village, while my husband is simply crazy about the Paradiski pistes – he even went on La Plagne today!

For my part, I have skied for a few hours each day, before returning to the apartment, and the evenings have normally found us with friends at the bar, where we have enjoyed the excellent local cuisine dish.

In short, a wonderful holiday, just a few hours from Brussels. Wish you were here...

Marie H.
Tervuren

For more information about where Marie wished we were, go to www.arc1950.com. And why not send us your holiday musings and pictures, to thepostcard@togethermedia.eu? We'd be delighted (and doubtless jealous) to hear from you!



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ENGEL & VÖLKERS

Wonderful Sardinia

WRITER: JEROME STEFANSKI

It's less than two-and-a-half hours travel between Brussels and Cagliari – so there's really no excuse not to enjoy this island in paradise, renowned as much for the beauty of its landscapes as for its perennial sunny climate.



Villasimius, to the south-east of Cagliari, has many beautiful beaches

Sardinia is really not far from Belgium, with Ryanair offering tickets to the island for less than 80€ from Brussels South Charleroi Airport. When you know that it is possible to depart Thursday late afternoon and return on Monday just after lunch, the temptation to try a long weekend there grows and grows...

300 DAYS OF SUN! Sardinia's Mediterranean climate is characterized by its hot, wet summers, cooled by sea breezes, with temperatures reaching as high as 35 °C in high summer. The island

basks in no less than 300 days of sun rock every year, from seven hours in winter to ten in summer – and the sea bathing is delightful between April and October, with water sports available all year round.

BEST TIME TO GO?

Without doubt, the best times to visit Sardinia are during spring and at the beginning of autumn, when the temperatures approach 30°C and the island is very pleasant to visit without the hordes of tourists that descend in summer. The white, sandy beaches and their car parks are thus wonderfully empty, as are the majority of the island's attractions. The restaurants, such as the famous Italian 'gelateria' do not disappoint – eat to your heart's content!

MOUNTAINS, PLAINS, RIVERS AND COASTLINE

It is near-impossible not to be charmed by southern Sardinia. Its landscapes are so varied, with transparent seas of azure blue, luxuriant vegetation and beautiful mountains. Despite the high temperatures, greenery is omnipresent in both winter and summer, thanks to the mountains and the sea, which guarantee ideal precipitation. It's ideal for nature lovers, water-sports enthusiasts and those who love to hike in the mountains and forests, as well as those who want nothing more than to lounge around and sun-bathe!



Left: Poetto Beach, Cagliari

Right: T Hotel Executive Family Suite

CAGLIARI

Cagliari is Sardinia's largest city, with 164,249 inhabitants. Founded between the 7th and 6th centuries BC by the Phoenicians, the city is located at the southernmost end of Campidano plain, in the centre of the vast gulf that bears the same name. With vast wetlands in the east and west, Cagliari extends along the coast across nine limestone hills, among which number Mount Urpinu, the San Michele hill with its medieval castle and the Capo Sant'Elia headland. Since its creation, Cagliari and its important port have been the door to Sardinia. All the people with ancestry on the island have chosen the city, including the Punic, Romans, Vandals, Byzantines, Pisans, Aragonese and Piedmontese. In the present urban structure, one can still find the history: the necropolis at Tuvixeddu, the Roman amphitheatre, Palais Royal, and so on.

Poetto is one of the most beautiful beaches on the Mediterranean; a 7km coast that's dominated by the Sella del Diavolo headland. Legend tells that Lucifer, after falling in the sea, left his footprint on the stone that was thereafter named Sella del Diavolo. Poetto is the most popular beach among Cagliari residents all year round – indeed, in winter, it is the ideal place for a bite of lunch with the sea urchins and, in



summer, it's a bathers' paradise, with aperitifs and live music available everywhere.

In short, Cagliari is a dynamic city filled with restaurants, bars, night clubs and other attractions. It is the ideal city from which to begin your visit to Sardinia, as it offers the ideal transition between life downtown and the wilder life along the coast!

T HOTEL: THE PLACE TO STAY

For our readers, *Together* has sampled a stay in Cagliari's most beautiful hotel, with its impressive decor that combines contemporary design, comfort and serenity. The T Hotel and its impressive 64-metre tower, with its circular shape and 15 floors, is the dominating feature in the surrounding landscape. Located in the centre of Cagliari, 10km from the international airport, 2km from the port and 2km from the station, this very modern four-star hotel offers a panoramic view of the city, as well as very reasonable tariffs that vary according to supply and demand.

THE ROOMS

The hotel comprises 207 sound-proof and contemporary rooms, with a traditional double room costing 99-189€, and an executive continuation 300-439€.



T Hotel Spa and swimming pool

THE WELLNESS CENTRE

The T Spa is very impressive, with its vast hydrotherapy pool and 6 hydromassage nozzles, steam bath, emotional showers, chromotherapy and herbal tea parlour. You can enjoy the spa by paying the charge of the entrance, or choose between the different attractive packages offered. Near the spa, the free fitness room will let you maintain perfect form thanks to its state-of-the-art equipment!



T Bar, T Hotel

T BAR, T BISTRO, T RESTAURANT

These three gastronomical delights offer refreshment throughout the day – we were very impressed by the T Bar, with its gigantic reversed central cone as a centrepiece. The bar offers a full local wine list as well as aperitifs and digestifs at very reasonable prices. Whether with friends or as a couple, it is pleasant to sample the delicious, complimentary antipasti that's freshly prepared by the chef – T Bar is truly an asset to the hotel.

And if you are looking for a good local restaurant downtown, a museum or a pretty beach, the cordial and obliging hotel team will be happy to point you in the right direction. ☺

T Hotel
 Via Dei Giudicati, 66
 09131 Cagliari - Italy
 Tel +39 (0)70 47400
www.thotel.it

ABOUT SARDINIA

Area: 24,090km, comprising:
 Hills: 16,352 km2
 Mountains: 4,451 km2
 Plains: 3,287 km2
 Coastline: 1,897 km
 1,631,880 inhabitants

AVERAGE TEMPERATURES IN THE CAGLIARI REGION

January: 15°C
 February: 15°C
 March: 17°C
 April: 19°C
 May: 23°C
 June: 27°C
 July: 30°C
 August: 30°C
 September: 28°C
 October: 24°C
 November: 19°C
 December: 16°C



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Viage, located in the heart of Brussels, will provide you with the ideal night out no matter what your mood is. Whether you are craving an elegant meal or just a quick drink, both can be satisfied at Viage's restaurants or bars. If you're feeling lucky, try your hand at roulette, blackjack, poker or the slot machines in the casino, if you're searching for a dining experience that's far removed from the ordinary, might we suggest the Viage Viage Musical Dinnershow?



amazing, four-hour event includes a three-course menu accompanied by prosecco, wine, coffee and appetizers.

This unforgettable production comes from Chris Van Tongelen of the showbiz world who is the artistic director of the show. Noteworthy performers Jan Schepens, Sasha Rosen and Fleur Brusselmans will join Van Tongelen on stage every show, with more than 20 additional singers, dancers and musicians completing the cast to create a memorable evening filled with mind-blowing music and dancing. This tailor-made experience is sure to please any fan of fine food and good times.

You can see the Musical Dinnershow on select Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays this upcoming spring: 17/02, 24/02, 03/03, 19/03, 27/03, 07/04, 21/04, 12/05, 19/05, 16/06 and 23/06.



The name Viage stems from the Italian word, *viaggio*, which translates to journey or voyage. The creators of the Viage Viage Musical Dinnershow have taken the meaning of their name seriously – it is truly an exquisite journey.

VIAGE VIAGE MUSICAL DINNERSHOW

A visit to Viage Viage Musical Dinnershow will prove to be unlike anything you have done before. The four-hour show mixes musical performances from internationally renowned shows such as *Evita*, *Grease* and *Mamma Mia!* with an unparalleled dining experience during the show. This



The Musical Theater Show is also offered on 7th May and 4th June if you are looking for a slightly shorter musical evening. This two-hour variant includes all of the same musical acts as the longer show and is suited for a larger audience. It is a great option if you still want the fantastic music but can't commit to a four-hour event.

THE DETAILS

The dinner show is all-inclusive at 128€. The musical offers varying prices of 28€, 33€,

38€ or 78€. Tickets for both shows can be purchased online through Sherpa at www.sherpa.be, or at the Viage Ticket Box Office. For more information and show times, visit www.viage.be

Viage Brussels
Boulevard Anspach, 30
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www.viage.be

Oysters from Ostend!

WRITER: PAUL STUMP

Our writer explores the whys and wherefores of the oyster's rise to the pinnacle of luxury foods – and asks why Belgium doesn't make more of its fabulous stocks.



few, if any, other comestibles can or do. The truism of champagne's status as an oyster's ideal accompaniment (Chablis is another) merely speeds up the dollar signs that revolve in the eyes of the greedy when talking oysters.

OSTEND PEARLS

It was no accident, then, that Belgium's own contribution to the world history of the human consumption of this humble mollusk should fasten on Ostend; the oysters associated with the town are legendary for their quality, yet the fact that the same renown does not attach to oysters grown in the vicinity of, or landed at, neighbouring towns such as Zeebrugge, Nieuwpoort-aan-Zee or Koksijde is probably not unassociated with the surge in Ostend's fame at the end of the 19th century when, with its spa and Kursaal and casino, it became one of Continental Europe's most fashionable (read, most exclusive) resorts. Liveried footmen and coachmen vied with servile waiters and maitres d' in a blur of chandelier crystal and a clamour of silver service to refuel the resort's aristocratic clientele at the close of expensively-leisured days. Had, say, St Idesbald prospered likewise, we would now be hymning the St Idesbald oyster rather than the Ostend.

Few, if any, foodstuffs have ever connoted ostentatious wealth and consumption more readily. To this day, oysters are still regarded with a mixture of green-eyed envy, boggle-eyed avarice and reverential wonder by those for whom plutographic (that is not a real word, possible synonym: elitist?) popular culture has substituted actual quality by mythology.

Picture the scene – you're in a 1960s movie set for a film of the high-camp, jet-set caper variety; Bond at a push, Austin Powers if your luck's out.

Talking of luck, the set would probably be that of a casino in a European resort – Cannes, St Moritz, San Remo, or (best of all) Monte Carlo. The tittle of choice is champagne; the canapés and nibbles are (but of course) caviar (black) or oysters.

The scene is specific but need not be; anywhere to which the 'snob appeal' of 'fine dining' attaches will suffice. And it is this snob appeal that perhaps, more than anything, enables the oyster to exercise such a hold over the public's imagination in the way that

THINK ZINC

The science of all this is a little more prosaic, but like the pearls nestled and polished within shells – actually, tiny pieces of sand buffed up to magnificence – all myths have a grain of truth at their hearts. The truth of aphrodisiac power is prosaically scientific, but acts as a useful counterweight to the vulgarian lout who will readily brag to whoever is bored enough to believe that a dozen oysters kept him at it all night long. It's quite simple, really; the oyster is rich in zinc, which tends to heighten sensory experiences of all types. The etymology of the French term 'huitre' is a better icebreaker – it is said to refer, ironically, to the eight months of the year in which one is allowed to eat oysters (anyone with a basic grasp of French vocabulary will get the gag there).

The costly altitude of oyster prices was brought home to the present writer when, growing up in south-east London in the 1970s, a taste for seafood – a staple of Thames boatmen – was developed among the shabby stalls of Woolwich's open market at the gates of the old Arsenal ground, which is as about as far as one can get from the tassels and cut glass of top-end restoration. "Cockle or whelk, cockle or whelk," bellowed old man Dennard, the place's premier fishmonger; "I've got a nice crab". And my word, he did, along with brimming pint-glasses of unshelled prawns and that bewildering cockney standby, jellied eels. But oysters? Never did they cross his slab. Once they had been a favourite of the poor in coastal or maritime haunts, but when they began infiltrating the Russian Imperial court – and the publicity garnered became commonly known – those days were at an end. Oysters were posh food. Where was the mileage in stocking them for a working-class clientele? And so Belgium introduced your correspondent to the oyster; and to this day, the relative sweetness of Ostendais oysters' glaucous flesh remains a Proustian memory; or perhaps that was the indefinable comingling of that sweetness with the briny tang that renders the oyster of all seafood the most evocative of its origins.

This, rather than the price tag and the queasy pleasure of partaking in such a monetary

outlay, was what made that first oyster a Damascene experience – irrespective of smutty innuendo or guff about pearls. Which is just how it should be. This piece has no pretensions at acting as a treatise on the relative merits and demerits of Ostendais versus Portuguese or Pacific specimens (although most authoritative judges, chefs and writers alike, return to that tenderness and sweetness of palate found in the former as an acme of desirability). Rather, let it serve to remind that Belgium is the home of one of the great gastronomic treats which, unlike beer or chocolate, is the work solely of nature's hand with man's assistance merely coincidental. And just because they cost more than crayfish, mussels or whelks shouldn't make Belgium backward in coming forward as to their multifarious merits. Who knows? If demand rises steeply enough, prices might fall.

SERVICE STYLES

Service of oysters, of course, is regarded with particularly fawning avarice; for it implies the payment of a second or third party to open the rugged little shells (there are now innumerable oyster knives and even oyster gloves on the market, to allow the consumption of oysters at home minus the dangers of self-inflicted lesions). Furthermore, one can experiment more freely with how best to consume such treats; purists tend to sniff at the American tendency to cook or grill oysters in their shells a la Oysters Rockefeller, which can neutralize the moisture and thus the flavour, although superstars of French cooking such as Paul Bocuse have recently adopted a more conciliatory attitude to the practice.

A good idea is to find what oyster specimens tickle your fancy the most, grill the least desirable ones and eat the others raw, with a dash of lemon, or shallot vinegar, or even Tabasco sauce. The rule of thumb re accompaniment should still apply, be it Chablis or champagne as an accompaniment, although in Belgium a top-of-the-range Lambic beer might suffice. Whatever, it'll be worth the outlay, even if the only afters you require can be served in a dish and you've more pearls than a maharajah's ransom. ☘

Champagne! Ruinart suite adorns Brussels Hotel Plaza

WRITER: WILLIAM DOWLING

Together is overflowing with French nectar this edition.

Champagne in Reims is justifiably famous, not just for its spectacular wines and perceived socialite extravagance, but also for its history and tradition. Of course, this 300-year history has been surrounded in mystery, visits from kings, decimation by world wars, and many other catastrophes, and now represents the zenith of the world's prestige wines.

RUINART: A MUST

A visit to one of the premier houses of Champagne, which is a two-and-a-half hour jaunt from Brussels, is an absolutely must. Ruinart, an ancient house of Champagne produces wines that represent leading excellence and tradition. Being one of the oldest houses and sitting in the heart of Champagne, its history is clouded with many stories, gifts from Charles II of France and was a hideout during World War II. The inspiration to begin this winery came from Dom Ruinart who, alongside his close friend Dom Pérignon, began making wines in Champagne.



His nephew, Nicolas, began Ruinart in 1729 and set in motion one of history's most successful entrepreneurship stories.

Today's Ruinart is no less fascinating. The very young and skilled staff are leading this traditional winery with the excellence and respect that it deserves, with their talents and dreams held in every glass of lively champagne that is produced by Ruinart. So, if you decide to jump in your car and take a trip to Champagne you must stay overnight, and don't forget to visit the Cathedral at Reims.

BUBBLY NEWS

In early February Ruinart, the world's oldest champagne house, declared its intentions to continue the noble history of Brussels' Hotel Le Plaza – completely renovated, with particular attention to tradition, the hotel's new jewel is The Plaza Suite by Ruinart – a 60 square metres in size, on the hotel's seventh floor, the suite is distinguished via its Ruinart-style decoration from renowned designer Maarten Baath.

The Plaza Suite by Ruinart is available from 495€ for a 'Luxury Break in Plaza Suite by Ruinart', which may also be reserved for weekends, bank holidays and school vacations. The package includes one night in suite, breakfast served in the room, a commemorative bottle of Ruinart champagne,

late check-out (14h), a fruit basket and coffee/chocolate, car park and porter service. So, what are you waiting for? ☺

www.ruinart.com

Hotel Le Plaza Brussels
Boulevard Adolphe Max, 118-126
1000 Brussels, Belgium
www.leplaza-brussels.be



Forever knowing bubbles

WRITER: JAMES DREW

On the launch of a new international advertising campaign featuring Moët & Chandon's 'cover girl' Scarlett Johansson, *Together* had the chance to meet with Benoît Gouez, who has been the prestigious champagne house's Chef de Cave since 2005.



In January, Moët & Chandon announced the launch of a new international advertising campaign featuring movie starlet Scarlett Johansson. Created by the Works Advertisement Agency in Paris and brought to life in autumn 2010 by famous British photographer Tim Walker, the new campaign evokes the class and sophistication synonymous with the

world's leading champagne house. As Moët & Chandon President and Managing Director Daniel Lalonde declared: "Moët & Chandon, the champagne that has been loved and appreciated since 1743, is a universal symbol of love of life and success. This new campaign illustrates a return to the elegance and the immutable glamour, both of Moët and Scarlett."



TALKING 'CHAMPERS'

Meanwhile, Benoît Gouez, Chef de Cave at Moët & Chandon since 2005, was not inspired to become a world-renowned champagne expert from an early age, as he explains: "My career was shaped by

series of chance encounters and fortunate circumstances, and, above all, by a flair for the profession that I discovered I had."

'WITHOUT A DOUBT, I FEEL THAT THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT VIRTUES IN THE PROFESSIONAL SPHERE ARE OPEN-MINDEDNESS, AND INTEGRITY'

But it is a huge responsibility, surely, to ensure that when Moët & Chandon declares a year as a

vintage, Gouez gets it right. Does he ever feel that he has perhaps overrated a vintage or, worse, not declared a year when he should have? "Well," he chuckles "mistakes are always possible, of course, but I feel now that my experience and appreciation of the Moët brand are enough to stand me in good stead."

And is there perhaps not a sense of 'normality', even concerning champagne, that comes with being the world's most popular brand?

"Well, there are always our high standards to be maintained. While I cannot yet reveal exactly what it will be, there is a champagne innovation on its way from Moët during 2011."



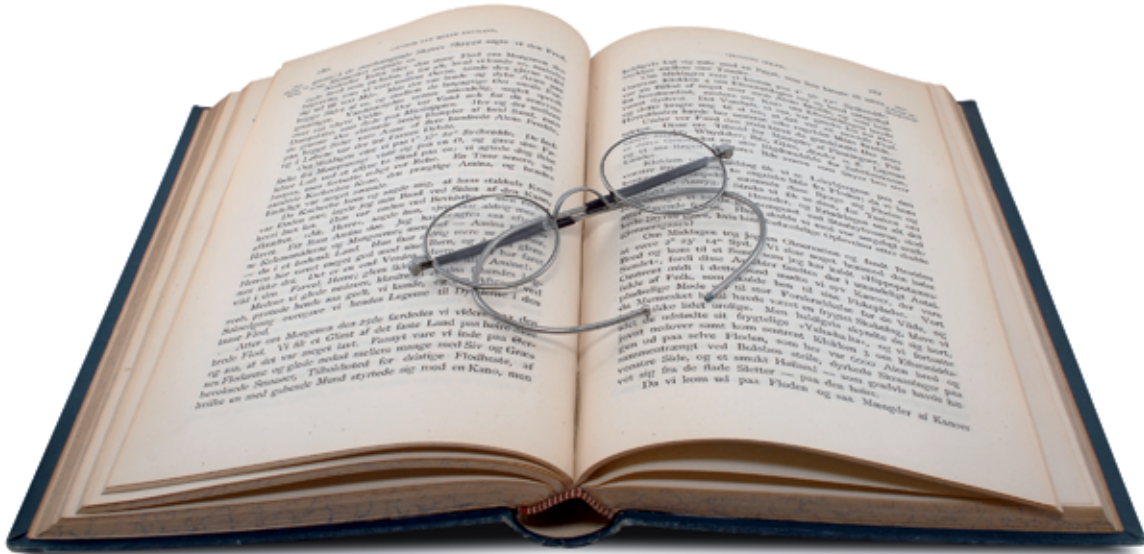
Our breath is truly baited, Benoît – and, to finish as ever, what would you say is the secret to your success?

"Without a doubt, I feel that the two most important virtues in the professional sphere are open-mindedness, and integrity. Any 'success' I have had, I attribute to these qualities." ☞

www.moet.com



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PLACES TO BE

Staying out, staying alive!

WRITER: FEDERICO GRANDESSO

The beautiful people on show, around the globe.



1.

1. Punta del Este-Uruguay-Polo in Punta (Photo by Federico Giorgetti)

PUNTA DEL ESTE, URUGUAY

Punta del Este, Uruguay, is a favourite jetsetters' destination at this time of year...a wondrous landscape filled with beaches and lagoons, one of the world's chic beach restaurants, La Huella, and a line-up of parties reminiscent of the French Riviera. On 27th December, Lacoste got the party started with the legendary Cindy Lauper who, for the crowd-pleasing price of 170,000€ per ticket, gave a very private concert at the party's 600 invitees, including footballer Diego Forlan and model Valeria Mazza. Corporate brands such as Hilfiger, Mini and BMW all organized similarly exclusive events in breathtaking countryside estates. And, should you have wanted to mix and connect, Punta is not only a great party venue but also an excellent environment in which to familiarize oneself with polo. The sport, which is still considered to be for the elite in Europe, is actually an everyday pastime for Uruguayan and Argentinean *gauchos*. So it is no surprise that during veraneo, the Argentinean summer break, there are plenty of competitive and friendly events.



2.

2. Boris and Lilly Becker, Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week (Photo by Brauer Photos for Mercedes-Benz)

AN UNMISSABLE NIGHT IN BERLIN

The event has now become a tradition, and invitations are now without doubt the most sought-after during Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in Berlin – we're talking, of course, about the Mercedes-Benz/Vogue Fashion Night. For the fourth time, Vogue Editor-in-Chief Christiane Arp and Mercedes-Benz Cars Head of Brand Communications Anders Sundt Jensen invited fashion's famous faces to the exclusive get-together in the Restaurant Borchardt. Just like last season, Andrea Karg, Dorothee Schumacher, Viktoria and Gerd Strehle, Kilian Kerner, Marcel Ostertag, Michael Sontag, Patrick Mohr and Dimitri were there, along with numerous other celebrities, including the stars involved in the current Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week campaign, Karolina Kurkova and Craig McDean, as well as Nico Rosberg, Lilly and Boris Becker, Berlin's Mayor Klaus Wowereit and Sylvie van der Vaart. The guests clearly had plenty to talk about – they schmoozed and partied until well past midnight.



3. Kelly Rowland performs at the MTV Staying Alive Fundraising and farewell event to celebrate the achievements of Bill Roedy, Chairman and Chief Executive of MTV Networks International (Photo by Chris Jackson/Getty Images for Staying Alive Foundation)

4. At the cake-cutting ceremony in Brussels following Qatar Airways' inaugural flight from Doha. From left: Belgian cycling legend Baron Eddy Merckx; Qatar's Ambassador to Belgium, H.E. Sheikh Meshal Bin Hamad Al Thani; Brussels Airport CEO Arnaud Feist; Belgian Prime Minister Yves Leterme; Qatar Airways Chief Executive Officer Akbar Al Baker; Qatar's Minister of State for International Cooperation H.E. Dr Khalid Bin Mohammad Al Attiyah and Qatar Airways Vice-President Europe Paul Johannes (Photo by Qatar Airways)



4. **QATAR AIRWAYS**
Qatar Airways has continued its European expansion drive with the launch of scheduled flights to Brussels. Belgian Prime Minister Yves Leterme officially welcomed the inaugural service to Europe's capital city on 1 February. Flight QR941 arrived at Brussels International Airport to a welcome ceremony attended by the Belgian premier, government officials and local dignitaries. Qatar Airways Chief Executive

5. Gwyneth Paltrow attends the Baume & Mercier Gala Evening for 21st SIHH High Jewellery Fair (Photo by The Image Gate/Getty Images)

Officer Akbar Al Baker led a high-profile delegation on the inaugural non-stop flight from the airline's operational hub in Doha, capital of the State of Qatar. Onboard guests included Belgium's Ambassador to Qatar H.E. Luc Devolder and media from Qatar, Dubai, India and Singapore. The latest route launch edges Qatar Airways closer toward its milestone of 100 destinations, with Brussels becoming the carrier's 98th network point. The Brussels-Doha route will be served by a wide-body Airbus A330, which will feature up to 30 seats in Business and up to 275 seats in economy. The aircraft offers seatback TV screens providing passengers with an interactive entertainment system.



5. **BAUME & MERCIER, GENEVA**
To celebrate the start of a new chapter in its history, the Swiss Maison d'Horlogerie Baume & Mercier threw a spectacular seaside garden party. The event was highlighted by the presence of Gwyneth Paltrow and various international celebrities. Baume & Mercier invited 950 guests to a garden party to reflect its new brand universe – seaside living in the Hamptons, namely 75 tons of sand, 800 square meters of grass and 7,000 hours work were needed to create this glamorous, magical combination of sea and land. As Paltrow explained: "The motto of Baume & Mercier, 'Life is About Moments', very much reflects my personal philosophy. That's why I said 'yes!' when the brand offered me the chance to represent it!"

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togethertmag.eu

Google TV versus Boxee

WRITER: COLIN MOORS

Together always aims to bring you the very best in emerging technology – this month, it's all about the black box in the living room that most people's furniture points towards. Our writer has the vision.

First up for your viewing pleasure is Google TV. Much noise was made (largely by Google, it must be said) when the new 'biggest thing to ever happen to television' was released on an unsuspecting and largely uninterested public. It doesn't seem to have exploded, supernova-style, as other Google products have, but there may well be a long settling-in period, and Google certainly has the financial resources to play the waiting game.

The upside of Google TV will be that it's designed to be "...a platform that combines your current TV programming and the open web into a single, seamless entertainment experience." The downside appears to be more tangible and less like a sales pitch – three months after the launch, there still seem to be very few companies committed to making products to support the technology. At the time of writing, only Sony and Logitech had any hardware available, although more big-name companies intend to show off their new Google TV kit in the many spring 2011 trade shows.

Using only a single high-definition (HDMI) connection – which is mandatory – or a TV with built-in Google TV hardware, you'll be able to watch programs from around the world, and search global TV schedules for that

unmissable soap opera from Guatemala. You'll be able to access online video, thanks to the Android operating system (Google's own) and the Chrome Internet browser (also Google's). If you're bored with the 10,000-plus hours of programming schedules at your fingertips, you could perhaps search the web, rent a movie from one of the major online providers – streamed directly to you, check your local weather without waiting for a forecast and even make an HD video call to your mum – while watching football.

Sadly, for a hardened geek such as myself, I can't really see it making a very big noise when it launches here in Europe "sometime in 2011." Google TV is what is known as an 'Internet appliance,' a multi-function device that appears to be all things to all people. The big question remains; is this what the public wants from their TV?

Unfortunately, some TV networks aren't happy about Google hijacking their content and many of the big names in the US (NBC, ABC, CBS) have actively prevented Google TV users from accessing their online full shows. Many of the subscriptions also seem to be paid, so in addition to coughing up for the hardware, you're going to need to spend more money subscribing to channels, video-on-demand stores and the like.



Google TV™

Even from an entirely pragmatic viewpoint, I can't see this being a winner with everyone. If you buy the box, you'll then have to hook it up,

FOR THOSE THAT JUST DON'T WANT TO MESS AROUND WITH THE MECHANICS OF GETTING THOUSANDS OF HOURS OF TELLY ONTO THEIR PC, THE BOXEE IS A GREAT ALTERNATIVE

virtually or actually to your cable, satellite, wi-fi and possibly audio kit. In addition to that, your telly would now have a keyboard and possibly even a camera. For those people that aren't inveterate knob-twiddlers, it could be several steps too far. I could be wrong – Google has revolutionized or

stamped its mark on so much of what we do online now, the next logical step would be to corner the market in the other thing that captures the attention of 90 per cent of the population.

BOXY BUT BEAUTIFUL?

Somewhat easier to cope with is the unattractively named and well, let's say 'interesting' looking, Boxee Box. For those that just don't want to mess around with the mechanics of getting thousands of hours of telly onto their PC, the Boxee is a great alternative. The process behind it is similar to the illegal P2P or peer-to-peer TV networks, but

the Boxee relies on free-to-air programmes and is considerably more stable. Backed by the Boxee company (well known to geeks for a while now) and with hardware made by the industry giant D-Link, this is essentially free global telly. All you need do is search for something and if it's available anywhere online, Boxee will suck it up and squirt it out into your TV.

Naturally, you'll need to connect it to your wi-fi, but that's pretty much all you'll need to do. Once connected, you can enjoy not only free TV, but also free movies, music videos and music. It will browse photos on Flickr, Pandora and many other photo storage services, and even has a feature where you can recommend what you see to a friend via your favourite online service – Facebook, Twitter and the like – and all this without a browser in sight. There's going to be trouble in my house soon – I think I may have just talked myself into buying one. ☛



Beauty news

WRITER: DELPHINE STEFENS



TEINT MIRACLE BY LANCOME

Those familiar with Éclat Miracle, Lancôme's serum of light, and who are fond of its soft velvety texture and long-lasting illuminating effect will love Teint Miracle. Lancôme's foundation is nothing short of miraculous. First, the lightweight texture is easy to smear, with either a foundation brush or one's fingertips and it provides a beautifully fresh and bare skin sensation. Second, the oil- and fragrance-free formula is suitable for sensitive skin and is enriched with a soothing rose extract. Teint Miracle also has fewer powdery types of filler, so fine lines are not accentuated but rather diminished, as is redness, and complexion thus appears flawless. Third, the foundation offers eighteen hours of hydration and with its Aura-Inside™ technology, the skin looks radiant, as if lit from within and finally, its SPF 15 protects the skin from sun damage. Teint Miracle is available in a multitude of shades and intensities making a perfect match with one's complexion easy. And for an all over glow, you may consider adding a dash of Éclat Miracle.

www.lancome.be



PURE COLOUR WILD VIOLET BY ESTÉE LAUDER

Summon spring in your makeup, with Estée Lauder Creative Makeup Director Tom Pecheux's luminous and lively Wild Violet colour palette: warm and muted neutrals for your eyes, spiced up with deft touches of violet for maximum depth, a rich and smoky charcoal for your fingertips and, last but not least, intense coral, cherry and violet for ultra-vibrant, lush lips that will instantly give you the ultimate seasonal look! If you would rather steal the show with your eyes, the limited edition Untamed Violet Double Wear Eye Pencil and Estée Lauder's new Sumptuous Extreme Black Mascara should do the trick.

www.esteelauder.com



ALL-SENSITIVE™ CLEANSER AND MOISTURIZER BY AVEDA

Back by popular demand, the All-Sensitive™ collection is as gentle as ever with a new and improved formula that is now aroma-free. The cleanser removes makeup and impurities and is full of botanicals and anti-oxidants while the moisturizer is enriched with a soothing oat extract and organic aloe to hydrate and condition your face and neck. Both products can be used morning and night.

www.aveda.com



FURTHER LIMITED EDITIONS AVAILABLE IN MARCH

One limited edition that you will definitely need is The Essential Body Collection from La Mer, to prep and pamper you head-to-toe for spring by nourishing and

softening your skin. Exclusively available at the brand's official retailers, it brings together The Body Refiner, The Body Crème, The Hand Treatment and The Lip Balm. Another must-have is the much-anticipated return of the Happy In Bloom fragrance by Clinique; a seasonal variation on Clinique's classic, Happy. This limited edition dons the flashy colours of spring and its crisp and bright scent is an olfactory jump ahead into a world in flower.

www.cremedelamer.com

www.clinique.com



LAB SERIES SKINCARE FOR MEN

The new and advanced formula of the Lab Series shaving cream is enriched with aloe vera and caffeine and guarantees maximum comfort as it prevents irritation and stinging. A spritz or two of the antioxidant rich after-shave spray on your clean face and neck will instantly soothe and moisturize your skin and maintain and help improve its ability to protect itself on a daily basis. Both products are formulated for all skin types.

Together with Biotherm



Biotherm is at the heart of the green wave. The brand uses more natural ingredients, paraben-free formulas and recyclable packaging; it is determined to preserve the planet while offering the best natural cosmetic expertise.

That is why they developed Skin.Ergetic – the first anti-fatigue moisturizer face care with “fresh cosmetics.” In the product, Biotherm combines the natural power of fruit and vegetables with cosmetic expertise to fight against the signs of fatigue on your skin. The brand is not only concerned with preserving the look and beauty of your skin, but the “skin” of the planet as well.

Biotherm wanted to make the heart of Europe greener by planting new trees in the Brussels’ Sonian Forest. To complete this mission, Biotherm teamed up with Together magazine.

We were stationed at Schumann and Place du Luxembourg where we offered apples, which are one of the main ingredients in Skin.Ergetic, to everyone in the area. Passers-by were able to contribute to the Forest Agency – the organization responsible for the preservation of the Sonian Forest. Those who contributed could sign up to come help plant the trees on 13th March.

The event was a huge success and we expect to see many trees planted in the near future. People can still sign up to plant trees on 13th March by sending an email to info@togethermedia.eu. Together would like to thank Biotherm for this amazing opportunity to help energize the planet and we support them in all of their future green endeavors. 🍏

Welcome to a fruitful day of life!

Fruit your office with Fruxino – your daily-fruit service. Fruxino specializes in delivering the finest fresh fruits to Brussels’ and Flanders’ professionals – it’s a great way to keep yourself and your colleagues fit and healthy.



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www.fruxino.com
T. +32 (0)78 152 999

Daily deliveries in Brussels and Flanders.

Men

We've got the blues...

WRITER: ROSE GRIDER

...and so will you, if you don't follow your dreams.



1. METROPOLITAN OCEAN SCOOTER BY HONDA

Jet around town in a fun and functional way. Being stylish doesn't hurt, either.

www.honda.com

2. FONDUE SET

Now it doesn't get any better than blue fondue. This stylish set from IKEA will be the centerpiece of your parties.

www.ikea.com

3. SPECS BY RAY BAN

Glasses that will add an extra punch of attitude and charm to your everyday look.

www.ray-ban.com

4. BELT BY CORNELIANI

Stylish and sophisticated, these belts will add a touch of refined fun to your look.

www.corneliani.com

5. JOHNNY WALKER SCOTCH BLUE LABEL

A sip of this velvety goodness will make you feel ethereal.

6. TERRE BLEAUE T

With a relaxed fit and vintage feel, this will be your go-to shirt.

www.terrebleue.be

7. LUGGAGE BY TOMMY HILFIGER

Your belongings will be voyaging first class when kept in these sleek and attractive suitcases.

be.tommy.com

8. SKI WEAR BY PEAK PERFORMANCE

Keep yourself insulated on the slopes with this smart and sexy piece.

www.peakperformance.com

9. KODAK PLAYSPORE HD WATERPROOF POCKET VIDEO CAMERA

With electronic image stabilization and 2.0 in. color display, you will never miss a moment because of a little water.

www.kodak.com

Women



1. SPRING TRENCH BY GEOX

Lightweight and practical, this piece will tie your spring wardrobe together.

www.geox.com

2. COBALT SHADES BY PRADA

Keep the light out of your eyes with these chic stunners.

www.prada.com

3. A SHIRT FOR HER BY VAN LAACK

From fit to aesthetic, this shirt will be sure to keep a girl happy.

www.vanlaack.de

4. SOFA BY 3 SUISSSES

Cute and cozy, this quirky piece will add a spark to your living room.

www.3suissses.com

5. THE HOT BLUE JEAN

Casual and sexy, these jeans by Liu.Jo from the Bottom Up collection will make you feel brand new.

www.liujo.it

6. ANDIGA POWER BLUE BY KIPLING

This sensible and attractive handbag keeps all of your necessities safe while catching the eyes of others.

www.kipling.com

8. THE RING UPON RING COLLECTION BY PANDORA

14 carat gold and sterling silver rings set with precious and semi-precious stones. You won't feel blue wearing this gem.

www.pandora.net

7. ORIENS BY VAN CLEEF & ARPELS

With notes of mandarin, black current, raspberry, jasmine, patchouli and praline, this sweet and sensual perfume is as subtle as it is enchanting.

www.vancleef-arpels.com

9. SURFBOARD BY ROXY

You will be inspired to search for some waves with this hot beach accessory.

www.roxy.com

Together's 'To Do' list Belgium

WRITER: ROSE GRIDER

Here, there and everywhere – there's so much to enjoy in our round-up of events in Belgium and further afield.

SUNDAY BRUNCH

Every Sunday, come with your family and enjoy a delicious, unforgettable brunch at the Crystal Lounge – free entertainment and food for kids up to 10. A wonderful way to end one week and begin another.

Sofitel Brussels Le Louise
Avenue de la Toison d'Or, 40
T. +32 (0)2 514 22 00
www.sofitel.com



AFFORDABLE ART FAIR

25>28.02.11

After successful bouts in London, New York and other major cities, the Affordable Art Fair is coming to Brussels. There will be works from over 300 artists, and all pieces fall below the €5,000 mark.

Tour & Taxis
Avenue du Port 8c
1000 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 420 60 69
www.affordableartfair.be



ARS MUSICA

March>April

Celebrated composers and performers from around the world are coming to Brussels for a contemporary classical music festival.

Bozar
Rue Ravenstein, 23
1000 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 507 82 00
www.arsmusica.be



VIAGE MUSICAL DINNERSHOW

03.03.11

Come enjoy an incredible three-course menu including champagne and appetizers, as well as highlights from more than 15 top musicals – nights out don't get any better than this.

Viage Theatre
Boulevard Anspach, 30
1000 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 300 01 00
www.viage.be



ANIMA INTERNATIONAL ANIMATED FILM FESTIVAL

04>13.3.11

Around 100 films, all in international competition, will be featured. There are kids' workshops, previews, don't miss the Golden Cartoon award ceremony.

Flagey Centre
Place Sainte-Croix
1050 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 533 34 20
www.animatv.be/anima



JAMES BLUNT

08.03.11

In 2005, he released his first album, *Back to Bedlam*. Blunt is one of the only British artists to have reached the top of the US charts in less than a year, and he's back in Brussels for another tour promoting his latest album, *Some Kind of Trouble*.

Forest National
Avenue Victor Rousseau, 208
1190 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 340 21 23
www.forestnational.be



MADE IN ASIA

18>20.03.11

An Asian leisure and culture fair with everything from decoration, design, and fashion to aromas and local produce.

Brussels Exhibition Centre
Place de Belgique, 1
1000, Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 474 82 63 90
www.brueexpo.be



Together's 'To Do' list International

BEATLEMÁNIE!

Ends 06.04.11

The Czech Museum has arranged a unique Beatles exhibit featuring two parallel storylines. The first tells the band's history, and the second follows the lifestyle of youth in the former Czechoslovakia at the time of The Beatles.

Czech Museum of Music, Prague

T. +420 257 327 285

www.prague.net/czech-museum-of-music



INTERNATIONAL CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL

03>13.03.11

Medieval Obidos' streets will be devoted to the display of cakes and sweets. If you love chocolate, this is a must..

Obidos, Portugal

www.cm-obidos.pt



COLOGNE CARNIVAL

07>09.03.11

Locals view it as Germany's answer to Mardi Gras. It is a huge event marking beginning of Lent, with many festivities and a monster Rose Monday Parade.

Cologne, Germany

www.koeln.de



ITB BERLIN

9>13.03.11

Recognized as one of the world's leading travel trade shows, ITB Berlin is the perfect B2B-Platform for trade visitors. Come meet business partners and do business while broadening your knowledge of destinations, tour operators, booking systems, carriers and hotels.

Messe Berlin GmbH

Messedamm 22 D - 14055 Berlin

T. +49 (0)30 30380

www.messe-berlin.de



TAMPERE FILM FESTIVAL

09>13.03.11

Known as one of the most influential short film festivals, tens of thousands flock to this endearing Finnish city to view some of its 500 films and take part in the supporting seminars and other activities.

Tampere, Finland

Locations around central Tampere

Tel. +358 3 223 5681

www.tamperefilmfestival.fi



RUGBY: ITALY VS FRANCE

12.03.11

See Italy and France go head to head.

Stadio Flaminio

Rugby Road, Twickenham, London

T. +39 (0)641999

www.6nations.co.uk



LAS FALLAS

15>19.03.11

The final days of winter and the arrival of spring are celebrated with a healthy dose of bonfires, fiestas and fireworks. A very popular event for both locals and visitors.

Valencia, Spain

www.lasfallas.net



ST. PATRICK'S FESTIVAL PARADE

17.03.11

There is no better place to celebrate St. Patrick's Day than Dublin – come see the famous parade, featuring street theatre troupes, artists, marching bands and dancers.

City Centre, starting at Parnell Square, Dublin

T. +353 (0)1 676 3205

www.stpatricksfestival.ie



ATHENSE XCLUSIVE DESIGNERS WEEK (AXDW)

19>22.03.11

AXDW is Greece's international fashion week. It is renowned as the most important event in the country's fashion industry – there will be parties, concerts, photo and art exhibitions and charity events too.

D. Areopagitou & Syggrou

Ave. 2 ZIP 11742 - Athens

T. +30 210 9211 0134

www.ax-designers-week.com



Get ready for revival

WRITER: DELPHINE STEFENS

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Frey Wille
Place Louise, 6
1060 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 537 09 19
www.frey-wille.com



MAISON LANCEL

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Maison Lancel
Boulevard de Waterloo, 55
1000 Brussels
www.lancel.com



BE READY FOR SPRING: SPA CINQ MONDES, DOLCE LA HULPE

You're thinking that winter will never end and you're in a hurry to see the sun again? You're not alone. Patience – the beautiful days are approaching and, to start spring bright-eyed and bushy tailed, Spa des Cinq Mondes in Dolce La Hulpe Hotel presents Rituel Tropical Revivifiant, a revitalising two-hour session that will undoubtedly lift your spirits. Following a 30-minute massage, you will enjoy an aromatic scrub, before finally delighting in a full 'Taoist' facial. All this for less than 200€, and it's located less than 20 minutes from the centre of Brussels, in the heart of a natural idyll – so what else have you got to do?

Spa Cinq Mondes au Dolce La Hulpe Hotel
Chaussée de Bruxelles, 135
1310 La Hulpe
T. +32 (0)2 290 99 01
www.dolce-la-hulpe-brussels-hotel.com



SCAPA HOME

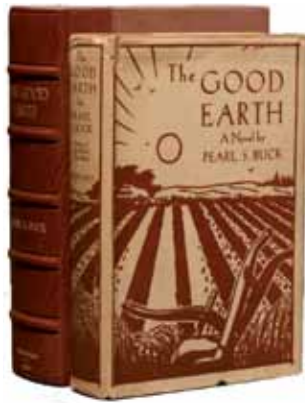
The interior design collection of Belgian fashion label Scapa opened a new flagship store in Antwerp recently. True to its roots, Scapa Home stands for quality materials, fabrics and a timeless, refined style. Here, you will find beautiful bedding, bath towels, tablecloths, tableware and much more. The oak furniture, available for in and outdoors, is made exclusively in Belgium and can also be made to measure. Scapa Home has a creative team available by appointment should you need personalized advice or professional insight. So whether you are looking for an elegant decorative object or new sleek kitchen cupboards, Scapa Home offers a perfect mix of the classic and the contemporary. ☺

Scapa Home
Arenbergstraat, 12
2000 Antwerp
T. 32 (0)3 234 87 52
www.scapahome.eu

Historical heroes

WRITER: MELANIE LOTH & ROSE GRIDER

Two riveting reads to take you into spring.



THE GOOD EARTH
PEARL S. BUCK

€9

This Pulitzer Prize winning novel chronicles the life of a family before the 1949 Chinese revolution. The story follows Wang Lung, a farmer in a small village, and his wife O-Lan, a strong, dependable, but unfortunate looking slave. Wang Lung grows good crops every year, allowing him to save up some money. With his cache of money, Wang Lung is able to slowly buy more land. He sees land as the most precious resource to sustain his life. When the family is forced to flee their village because of a drought, Wang Lung still refuses to sell the land knowing he will return to it someday. Published in 1931, the book was chosen for Oprah's Book Club in 2008 and it is obvious that the story still resonates.

ML



THE RED TENT
ANITA DIAMANT

€12

First released in 1997, Anita Diamant's *The Red Tent* continues to be an exemplary piece of historical fiction, telling the story of an innocent girl who was given no voice in the Old Testament. Briefly mentioned in Genesis, Jacob's only daughter, Dinah, was a mysterious, forgotten figure, lost in an abundance of biblical accounts. But in this truly beautiful book, we are told what really happened to Dinah and the women who surrounded her – with love, heartbreak, betrayal and adventure, characters we know only as names from the Bible become human. Jacob's four wives and 12 sons are Dinah's reality, and we witness her trying to cope, with both extraordinary and tragic results. Although there are times when it seems that all hope is lost, you will put the book down completely happy. ☺

RG

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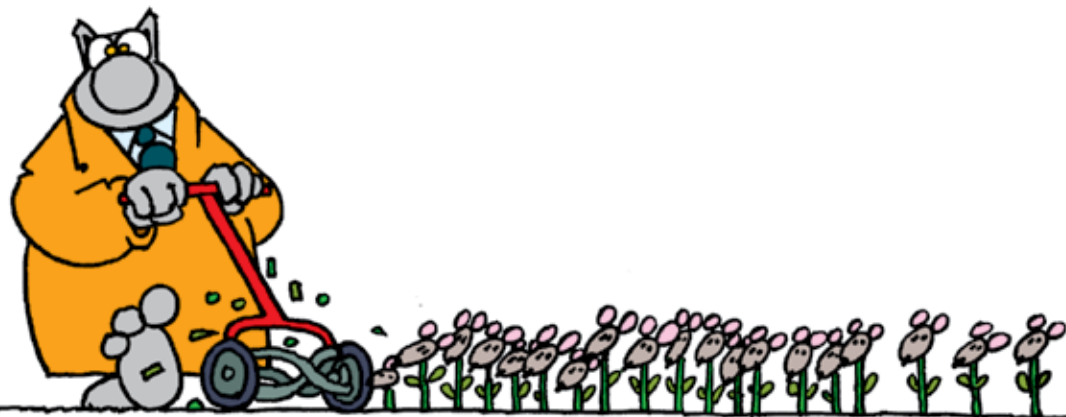
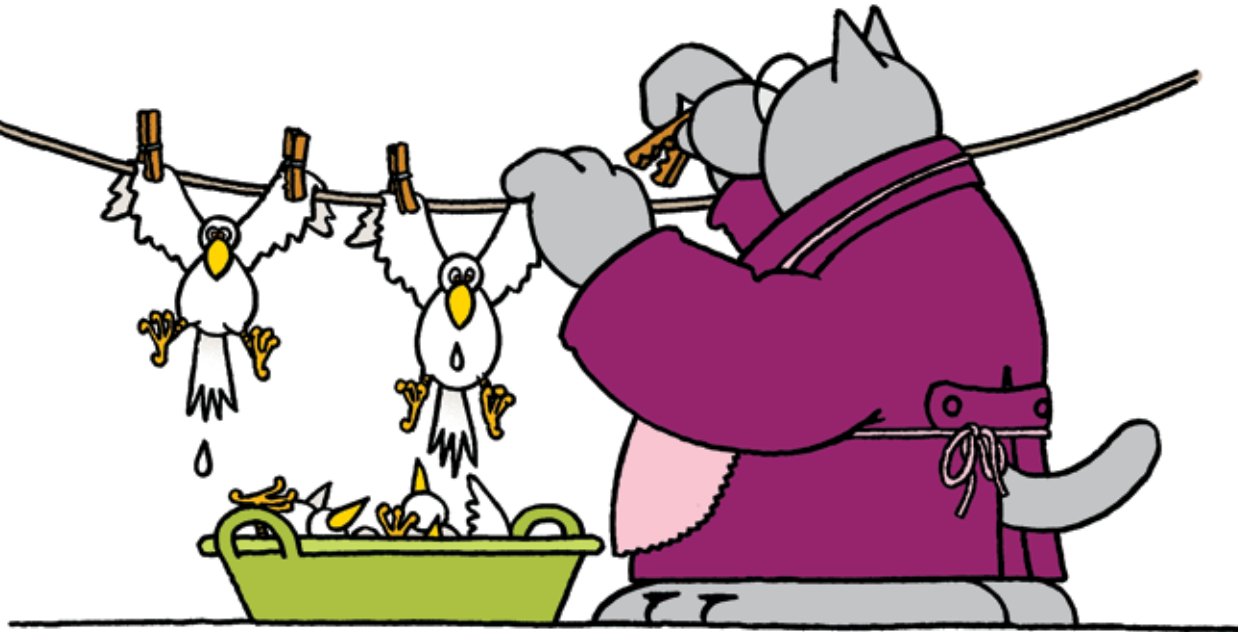
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 Armand Richelet-Kleinberg:
www.camera-man.weebly.com

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 Yvan Barbera: www.reflexstar.com

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 T. +32 (0)496 723 950
hello@studioletmesee.be - www.studioletmesee.be

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Think



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INNOVATION FRESH COSMETICS

- 1 ANTI-FATIGUE POWER
- 2 INNOVATION FRESH COSMETICS
- 3 MAXIMUM EFFICIENCY

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