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#26/SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2011

# Together

magazine

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EDITORIAL

# Buzz around Brussels with *Together*

There's an eco theme running through this issue of your favourite Brussels lifestyle magazine with articles on everything from bio wine to green investing and bee-keeping

**A**stonishingly, someone, somewhere, near you, has got a beehive in their back garden or on their roof terrace. At high season there are about 40 million bees operating in Brussels alone. Crucial for our existence, because they pollinate our crops, whole colonies across the world are mysteriously dying out. On page 36, the Brussels-based Swedish correspondent **Teresa Küchler** takes a piercing look at the rapidly declining honey bee population, coupled with a rise in urban bee keeping

Meanwhile, British journalist **Geoff Meade** has been buzzing around Brussels in an electric car. Read all about his adventures and how to hire one on page 30. And enter our competition on page 8 to win the opportunity to drive a car just like it.

Our cover picture is of the Brazilian singer-songwriter star **CéU** who tells us she's excited about her Brussels debut, thanks to the Brazil theme of this year's **Europalia** international arts festival – see our interview with CéU on

page 58 and learn more about the festival on page 62.

Elsewhere, as usual, there's a wealth of information about life and love, where to go, what to do and where to shop, in addition to suggestions by *Together* writers for travelling farther afield.

Visit the website to tell us what you think of us – we can take it – and contribute to the magazine by commenting on individual stories that take your fancy. We look forward to hearing from you at [www.togethermag.eu](http://www.togethermag.eu) and hope you enjoy this September/October issue of *Together*.

And if you like this issue of *Together* magazine, then be sure to look out for the November and December issues. ☺



**Patricia Kelly**  
Editor-in-Chief





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# Together

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LIFESTYLE

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### Brussels Teams In World Robotic First



## TECHNOLOGY

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# WIN an electric experience with ZEN CAR

Together teams up with the new Brussels car-sharing scheme Zen Car, offering readers the chance to win free driving hours in an electric car



**Z**en Car is a Brussels car-sharing scheme for electric cars backed by the Brussels Capital Region.

Shop in the city, go for lunch, or just visit friends, and say goodbye to parking problems: a network of dedicated Zen Car parking places, charging points, and car pick-up spots, is growing by the month.

An ideal complement to public transport, these 100% electric cars are a silent and non-polluting form of negotiating crowded city streets. Subscribers may hire a car by the hour or by the day.

Buzz around Brussels with *Together* – read about our test-drive on page 30 by journalist Geoff Meade.

## THE PRIZE

Zen Car and Together are giving ten lucky readers a driving package worth €100. All you have to do is email your answer to the question, along with your name, address and

daytime telephone number, to [info@togethermedia.eu](mailto:info@togethermedia.eu) with the subject Zen Car Competition.

The deadline for entries is October 31, 2011. Winners will be selected at random, and the publisher's decision is final. The competition is open to readers over the 21 with a clean, valid driving licence who fit the Zen Car subscription criteria.

**Answer this question: What is the title of the lead story on [www.togethermag.eu](http://www.togethermag.eu) today?**

Ten winners will receive free sign-up, and three months free subscription plus six free driving hours. ☺

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# Starring in Belgium

A new season of big concerts in Belgium. Here's **Federico Grandesso's** list of what not to miss

## RIHANNA

The 23-year-old Barbadian singer-songwriter is reported to have changed her hairstyle 13 times since it was dyed red nearly a year ago. Check out the latest Rihanna style in both hair and music – Rihanna in concert in Antwerp at the Sportpaleis on October 22 – tickets start from €40.

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



## LENNY KRAVITZ

Look forward to one of his legendary elaborate stage performances with New York rock lothario Lenny Kravitz at Antwerp's Sportpaleis October 30. Tickets start at €40.

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



## GEORGE MICHAEL

It was already fully booked back in July, but it could still be worth putting your name on the waiting list to see George Michael in concert, just in case. Forest National on October 8.

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



## BRUNO MARS

A chance to see the diminutive Hawaii-born singer in action at Forest National October 19; seats start at €39.50

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



## TORI AMOS

Tori Amos will be at the Bozar Centre for Fine Arts October 29; tickets for the concert of her new album Night of Hunters range from €43 to €69.

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



## PAUL ANKA

He's been delighting audiences for 40 years with hits such as *Put Your Head On My Shoulder* and now here's a chance to catch the only concert in Belgium this year featuring Paul Anka in action. See him at the Viage theatre in Brussels, renowned for its musical dinner-shows, on November 1. Tickets at €78.

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*“The formula for achieving a successful relationship is simple: you should treat all disasters as if they were trivialities but never treat a triviality as if it were a disaster.”*

– **Quentin Crisp (1908-99)**

**British author and raconteur; from his book *Manners in Heaven* (1984)**

*“Life is what happens to you while you’re busy making other plans.”*

– **John Lennon (1940-80)**

**British rock musician; from his song *Beautiful Boy* on the album *Starting Over* (1980)**

*“The most difficult job in the world is not being President. It’s being a parent.”*

– **Bill Clinton (b. 1946)**

**US President 1993-2001; in a newspaper interview (1998)**

*“I find television very educational. Every time someone switches it on I go into another room and read a good book.”*

– **Groucho Marx (1895-1977)**

**US comic actor; quoted in *Halliwel’s Filmgoer’s Companion* (1984)**

Sources:

The New Penguin Dictionary of Modern Quotations; Oxford Concise Dictionary of Quotations

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# PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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# Step-by-step

Measure and reduce your carbon footprint with these tips from **Marianne Rousson** of the environmental consultancy Green Strategy

Our daily activities may conceal the significant amount of collateral damage being inflicted on us and on our environment. Carbon released into the atmosphere is a major pollutant and has a detrimental impact on oceans, climate and, in turn, on our ability to enjoy a stable climate and healthy environment both now and for years to come.

Yet some of the activities we value the most can be fairly carbon sober: time spent with family and friends, developing personal creativity, learning and education, exercising...people who consciously decide to reduce their carbon impact often find they acquire a less hectic, more fulfilled way of life that is more in tune with their core values. Cultivating simple pleasures instead of "always more" is the right way to go - and there's no guilt attached.

With an average 12 tons of carbon dioxide released per person per year, Belgium is one of the worst emitters in Europe - but what can be done to lower an individual's carbon footprint? The family circle is a good place to start, as the shift towards

lower carbon has the potential to improve not only your own quality of life but also that of those around you. There are a few easy steps to start a carbon-conscious life, and bear in mind that simplicity is the key.

## STEP ONE

Calculate your carbon footprint with an online calculator such as the Guardian newspaper's online quick carbon calculator or the **Bilan Carbone** Personnel ([www.calculateurcarbone.org](http://www.calculateurcarbone.org)). If you choose a different calculator, make sure it includes spending habits, as this is a big chunk of our footprint.

## STEP TWO

Act where it matters. Cutting 10% of a high carbon activity is better than reducing a very small source of emission by 30%. Households typically have three major sources of impact: mobility, food, heating and energy consumption. By acting on these, you can make a real difference.



Mobility can increase your carbon footprint very rapidly if you choose to travel by plane or drive a car every day. Typically, the train will save between 70% and 90% of emissions compared to a trip by plane. A return trip to New Zealand will exhaust your total yearly carbon allowance. As for cars, there are healthier options to choose from when moving around the city. A brand new car will negate your efforts elsewhere by eating up from six tons for a small car to 35 tons for a SUV.

A low-carbon food diet is a win-win option for your body, as the prime culprit is red meat. Why not organise a weekly meat-free day at home - this is an enjoyable activity and benefits the whole family.

Heating a house can be a CO2 gusher - don't let your emissions go through the

roof: insulate your roof properly, ideally with renewable and breathable material such as wood fibre. Wood fibre also performs well in summer preventing your house from overheating. Reduce bedroom temperature to 16°C and living room temperature to 18°C.

Finally, money matters and the things that money buys, or can do, may have a huge carbon impact. You will be ahead of the trend by choosing value over volume. Choosing an ethical bank - such as Triodos or the Cooperative Bank, for example - will save you the chore of looking for sustainable low carbon investments yourself. ☺

### Green Strategy

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# Good vibrations

Personal fitness trainer **Marcel Koolhoven** is offering *Together* readers a free half-hour Power Plate session at his boutique gym near the Sablon, and says he's convinced of the efficacy of these vibrating exercise platforms

**R**eturning to the office and getting back into a daily routine after the holidays is not always easy. Whether you're fit and tanned with a figure refined by fruit, salad and sport or carrying excess weight from a summer of over-indulgence, now's the time to establish a fitness regime that will

take you through autumn and the dark days of winter with a spring in your step. I've found the perfect solution with Power Plate - yes, it's that strange machine that vibrates while you exercise. But don't dismiss it as a fad - based on the science of

acceleration training, a 30 minute session on a Power Plate machine is the equivalent of a 90 minute traditional workout in the gym.


## ASTRONAUT TRAINING

The Russian space programme first used acceleration training in the 1960s to

counter the effects of zero gravity and help prevent astronauts' muscles and bones wasting in space. Many years later, the Dutch Olympic team coach Guus van der Meer decided to apply the same principles to training his athletes and launched a commercial version of the Power Plate in 2000. With its ability to help in pain relief and improve muscle strength, and potential to maintain and even increase bone mineral density, the machine has fast become a favourite of athletes in training around the world. A varied regime of exercises on the Power Plate, each one lasting between 30 and 60 seconds, stimulates an increase in circulation, oxygenates the blood, improves the removal of toxins and reduces the appearance of cellulite.

My own involvement with these machines began when I walked into a small gym in the heart of Brussels, just a stone's throw from the Mannekin Pis statue. A friendly and cosy place with four Power Plate machines, the added advantage of the Ro-An Centre is the presence of a professional coach at your side throughout the session to ensure safe, risk-free fitness training with optimal performance. I became an aficionado when just two half-hour sessions a week over the space of a year helped me lose ten kilos. A recent study showed that regular Power Plate training combined with a sensible diet helps achieve sustained long-term weight loss of up to ten per cent.

## CELEBRITY CULT

Ro-An is not only a centre, it's a method as well, inspired by the Chinese concept of Chi energy associated with excellent health, mental clarity and physical vitality. The method uses micro-movements that activate the flow of Chi and its circulation throughout the body and cells. This encourages calm, soothes tension and relaxes the body. You end the session feeling good in both mind and body. Convinced of the efficacy of Power Plate machines combined with the Ro-An method, I underwent intensive training to qualify as an instructor and took over this particular fitness centre earlier this year. Madonna, Rihanna, Mark Wahlberg, Rafael Nadal, Elle MacPherson, Serena Williams and Hilary Swank are among a growing army of Power Plate fans - and if it's good enough for them, it's good enough for you. Come and join us - you've got the Power. 

## Centre Ro-An

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Visit our website [www.togethermag.eu](http://www.togethermag.eu) to comment on this article and find out how to claim your free half-hour Power Plate session at the Ro-An Centre with a personal trainer

Photo of Marcel Koolhoven  
by Yvan Barbera

# Staying the course

What should a couple do to last a lifetime together – relationship counsellor **Suzette Reed** takes a look at being happy ever after

There is an ad campaign for a bank that runs a strap line “for the journey”. It taps into the belief that human beings all share a similar journey through life – starting out, making partnerships, careers, children, juggling demands, hitting unexpected obstacles and so on. The campaign is successful as it touches something deep in the human psyche about continuity and preparing for different stages of life and trying to make them as smooth as possible.

Life is a journey, and the life stages and circumstances are the curves in the road. So, what makes some marriages and partnerships last a lifetime while others skid on the first curve? No two relationships are the same, but there seem to be the same five characteristics in most successful relationships.

## BE REALISTIC

It's tricky out there and things won't always go smoothly. Marriage is not a fairy tale and “happy ever after” needs to be left in the story books. Human beings can't be perfect but they can be accepting of each other's failings and oddities – within reason.

## DON'T TAKE EACH OTHER FOR GRANTED

Over time, roles, responsibilities and expectations can become fixed in a relationship. As the journey carries on these will need to be reviewed and renegotiated, taking into account the new life stage and the challenges and responsibilities that come with the new territory.

## COMMUNICATION IS VITAL, BUT SIMPLY TALKING ISN'T THE ANSWER

The important thing about communicating is the interaction between talking, really listening and trying to understand. This whole picture is about having emotional intelligence and having the ability to empathise and be honest and fair with each other.

## TRANSLATING WORDS INTO ACTIONS

Listening and understanding is great, but it is what happens next that matters. Turn discussion into actions – the actions may not be huge, but they do need to happen. Don't over-promise and under-perform; on the other hand, show commitment to really making change. Negotiate and be prepared to compromise, always being aware of core values that are a bottom line and acceptable.

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*Together founder Jérôme Stéfanski and his bride begin their journey*

### MANAGING CONFLICT

Research into successful relationships indicates that managing conflict is the real crunch point, and seems to have the most significant effect on relationships. Conflict is inevitable, and it is how it is resolved that makes relationships work. Some people squabble, others argue loud and long, some walk away from conflict.

The overall goal of addressing the issue isn't about who wins, it is about resolving the situation. Putting the other person down and being over controlling doesn't

help, nor does dragging up past issues. Stick with the present and try to focus on the resolution, and what would help. The most important thing is that each recognises, even in conflict, the other person's point of view and validates them as a person.

Most people want a loving, supportive, adaptive relationship and they want to be in it for the long haul. When people commit to each other they mean it, but the journey can be over some tricky terrain; keep an eye out for the next curve in the road. 🧭

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# Saving the planet - the sustainability struggle

An award-winning playwright as well as an academic, Tim Jackson has been at the forefront of European research and teaching in sustainability for more than 20 years. He tells eco-writer **Sonja van Renssen** that saving the planet means reversing a consumer lifestyle



**T**im Jackson is not your typical eco-warrior. Indeed, the slim, well-dressed man with the grey hair could not look less like a warrior if he tried. Yet the words he preaches are words of revolution. Professor of Sustainable Development at the British University of Surrey, and Economics Commissioner on the UK's Sustainable Development

Commission, Jackson is trying to sell the idea that having more belongings or possessions doesn't necessarily make society any happier.

"Outside formal economics, the idea just doesn't exist," he says. "There's no model for it in ecology, it isn't what we talk about in literature or philosophy. It isn't even how people express themselves in daily life."

In his book *Prosperity without Growth*, Jackson controversially argues that if the environment is not to be destroyed, the idea of economic growth may have to be abandoned. He firmly believes the key to a sustainable future is less consumption, and that this requires a change in lifestyle - the problem being a consumption-based society. "What characterises the consumption society is not just that it consumes a lot but that it dedicates that consumption to all sorts of social and psychological tasks like creating identity. You

can't really extricate materials out of that without changing people's lives," he says.

## IF THE ENVIRONMENT IS NOT TO BE DESTROYED, THE IDEA OF ECONOMIC GROWTH MAY HAVE TO BE ABANDONED

### MATERIAL SUBSTITUTES

The economic crisis has shown just how deep the problem lies with governments begging people to consume and spend more to keep their economies afloat.

Policymakers who insist lifestyle is too complicated an issue to get mixed up with should accept that they already are involved, says Jackson. For him, today's world is, above all, tragic. "It's the sustainability question that puts it most clearly... you can be philosophically unsatisfied with the idea of more stuff, but as soon as you put a notion of limits in place, it becomes tragic."

The tragedy, according to Jackson, usually plays itself out by divisions between those who can afford material goods, and those who suffer the impact of a consumer society. Material goods have become a substitute for religion and spirituality, Jackson believes. With no formal religious affiliation, he has, nevertheless, since childhood, taken an interest in the dimensions of life beyond the material, beyond death. "For me there is a very clear sense that many of the things we actually value are not material in nature."


### HAPPINESS INDICATOR

Comparisons between this generation and life 50 years ago depend on how happiness is measured, says Jackson. He says he is "not entirely convinced by a happiness index because it is difficult to measure happiness and it isn't clear happiness is the only worthwhile outcome." Instead, he proposes looking at a variety of indicators "measuring the strength of society" from the physical, such as life expectancy and infant mortality, to the psychological and social, such as participation in education and voluntary community work.

"Life expectancy for example has increased; but some indicators go in the wrong direction: an erosion of community, a loss of meaning, a fragility of identity. We have created a society that's pretty good at pumping materials through it in pursuit of higher incomes and sometimes that's given a better quality of life, we shouldn't deny that, but it isn't sustainable in the way it's been created."

### RE-THINKING SOCIETY

Creating a sustainable society requires action on many levels, he says: re-thinking public space is just one example. If there were more public libraries, parks, museums and village halls to hang out in, Jackson says perhaps people would be less inclined to hit the shops as a means of participating in society. Urging action at an individual level such as cycling more or investing in ethical funds, Jackson also pushes for action at the community and, ultimately, the political level as a means of driving change in the very way the world is structured.

"It's not about simple individual change to one's own lifestyle," he concludes. "It's about challenging the structures that lock us in as individuals and communities into an unsustainable lifestyle." As for his own level of happiness: "I think happiness is a little over-rated," is the wry response. An award-winning playwright, he expresses some regret at not being able to write full-time and dreams of writing more plays. "No doubt I will get back to it one day." 

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# Green investment not so black and white

With an increasing number of savers being enticed by eco-investments, financial writer **Laura Cohn** finds that green funds are not for the faint of heart

**S**o you separate your recyclables, take public transport to work, and check the energy rating on the new household appliances you purchase. But like many other environmentally-conscious city-dwellers, you are thinking of putting a lot

more money where your mouth is by investing in one of the growing number of "green" mutual funds being marketed to the ecologically-minded with disposable income.

giant Black Rock, which manages \$3.7 trillion, and DWS Investments, an asset management group owned by Deutsche Bank. With oil prices sky-high, and post-tsunami Japan making the world jittery about nuclear power, it would seem only logical that a shift to renewable energy sources is finally at hand. So green investing will not only burnish your environmental credentials, but should provide quick and heady returns, right?

Not so fast. The reality is, these mutual funds have had a mixed track record. Since the growth of alternative energy is largely supported by government subsidies – and not the enthusiasm of concerned consumers – green industries may be among the last to return to growth once the global economy emerges from its funk.

## VOLATILE

The austerity push in Europe has already led officials to cut government incentives for wind and solar power, crimping the ability of eco-friendly companies to invest in new technologies. Spain, for instance, recently slashed its solar-power subsidies to shore up its budget. On the other side of the ocean, a plan in the US that would have required utilities to generate a small portion of their power from renewable sources has been blocked by Congress.

## GREEN INDUSTRIES MAY BE AMONG THE LAST TO RETURN TO GROWTH

You're certainly not alone.

According to Lipper, a leading rater of mutual funds, savers have nearly €6.6 billion currently invested in such green funds – more than twice the amount just five years ago.

## MIXED RECORD

On the surface, there are compelling reasons for the rush to these funds, some of which are run by the world's biggest money managers, like New York-based



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Government incentives for wind and solar power are being cut



The reliance on government support has also made green funds incredibly volatile. According to Lipper, Europe's 15 largest funds focusing on renewable energy took a bath as the markets tanked in 2008, falling by as much as 63%. Even though they recovered in the ensuing years, most of the funds have spent 2011 back in the red. "Green funds aren't for the faint of heart," says Steven T. Goldberg, a partner in Tweddell Goldberg Investment Management, an investment adviser. "It's a very long-term investment—something to hold for at least 10 years."

#### CALCULATED RISK

If you're willing to wait that long, take a calculated approach. Devote only a small part of your spare cash to the strategy,

perhaps just 3%. Pick a fund that holds a wide swath of stocks – some invest not only in renewable energy producers, but multinationals that are environmentally conscious – to diversify your risk. And above all, understand what you're buying. "The 'green' label can mean several different things," warns Kathryn Young, an analyst at the mutual fund rater Morningstar. Some of the funds can have a green label, but their list of investments can include companies that are eco-questionable.

In other words, if you're looking for a solid investment return, it may be worth looking elsewhere. And if you're looking to be more green, you might just want to buy a Prius instead. ☺

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VINCENT MERCKX  
EDITIONS



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Brussels ranks ninth on the European Green City Index, given top marks for water and its environmental plan, but held back by high levels of energy consumption per head in residential buildings, among the highest in western Europe.

The study by the Economist Intelligence Unit, sponsored by Siemens, reveals that the more residents get involved, the better a city's ranking. Citizen participation as practiced in Brussels calls on residents to develop green ideas for their neighbourhoods with the most promising receiving technical and financial support.

With a score of 78.01 out of 100, Brussels beats London, Paris, Madrid, Rome and Dublin. Bottom on the list of 30 cities was Kiev with a score of 32.33 compared to the top green city, Copenhagen, with 87.31.

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GREEN  
MATTERS

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# Zen driving – silence in the city

Less of a car, more of an attitude, the electric car is set to make inroads in city driving. Residents of Brussels may now take advantage of a new car-sharing scheme giving them temporary use of an electric car any time they're in need of motorised transport. **Geoff Meade** took one for a spin and pottered around town

People are smiling and waving, the world is full of happiness and even traffic wardens perk up as I pass by. I feel as if I'm a cartoon character driving a toy car. One morning I stop at the kerb to pop into a shop. Manuela at a little Italian restaurant has already put the chairs and tables outside on the

pavement and is sitting there, watching the world go by, waiting for the first customers to arrive for lunch.

As I park nearby she is wide-eyed and staring. She calls her husband, who comes out and walks over to the car.

He's peering at me through the window and grinning even before he realises he knows me. His

sister-in-law is not far behind, wiping her hands on her apron, wanting to know what's going on. What? How? Where? they ask. An acquaintance passes by in his car full of children and toots his horn, gives a big grin and calls across with a jolly: "Oh yes! Very cool, Mr M!" The children wave, and shout "Hurrah!" Or it seems as if they do. The fuss is about my little car. Everyone is delighted by its appearance, before they even know anything about it.

## IT'S NO FERRARI

In the good old days I would now have to describe it, but thanks to Google you can save me the bother by typing in "Tazzari Zero" to see for yourself. I'll just wait a minute while you do that...isn't it cute? Isn't it exactly like those characters in the Disney movie "Cars"? A little boxy thing with a smiley front grill and chubby alloy wheels, like a cuddly grinning cat with big fluffy paws. It's Italian, so even though the Tazzari is no Ferrari, you'd expect it to go "vroom, vroom" as it pulls away from the kerb or the traffic lights. But of course it doesn't, because this car, being electric, makes no noise at all. Not a sound. It just moves, without any of the aural backdrop that has heralded motoring ever since the first Model T Ford farted down the road in a cloud of black smoke. With the Tazzari, it's as if part of life's soundtrack has been stolen; it's like watching a workman operate a pneumatic drill without being able to hear it.

EVERYONE IS  
DELIGHTED BY  
ITS APPEARANCE,  
BEFORE THEY  
EVEN KNOW  
ANYTHING  
ABOUT IT



Geoff Meade test drives Zen Car's Tazzari Zero

© Yvan Barbera





© Yvan Barbeira

## I HAD THE CAR FOR THREE DAYS AND DIDN'T GO NEAR A MAINS SOCKET, ALTHOUGH I ZIPPED AROUND TOWN CONSTANTLY

### EVER READY

So what is it? It's a two-seater town car powered by lithium-ion batteries and with a power cable and a normal two-pin plug where the engine should be. This seems to flummox people: an ordinary two-pin plug? Not a hefty, industrial-style five-pronged plug or something? After all, this is a car, not a hairdryer. But no, just a two-pin plug that goes in any ordinary socket, and takes six hours to fully recharge, giving the Tazzari a good 100-plus kilometres of travel.

I had the car for three days and didn't go near a mains socket, although I zipped around town constantly, just for the pleasure of seeing the look on people's

faces. The eerie silence when driving this car is all on the outside; inside, there's the whizzy sound of battery power, just like an electric golf cart. The faster it goes, the whizzier it sounds to the occupants. And it can go fast - relatively. There are big plastic buttons on the dashboard. The green one is for maximum energy economy, yellow

for more power and red for super-whizzy - or "Race", as the handbook calls it. Basically, the buttons denote where on the speed range the power limiter cuts in and the car runs out of puff.

With the red button lit up, it's good for more speed than really necessary, but this is a small car and anything above about 70 kilometres an hour gets a bit bouncy unless the road is smooth. Acceleration is great, though, particularly in "Race" mode. With no engine, and therefore no gears, the power pull is linear. It's easy to park, brilliant around town and can be plugged in at home or at work provided there's an

extension cord long enough, or a power socket in the garage.

### SILENCE IS GOLDEN

Here's the bad news: the showroom price of the tiny Tazzari is €20,300 - before VAT - for the cheapest of three hardtop models, or €23,900 for one of a limited edition of 150 convertibles.

So don't buy one - join Zen Car instead, a Brussels car-sharing scheme backed by the Brussels Capital Region. A network of dedicated Zen Car parking places, charging points and car pick-up spots is growing by the month. For a €40 joining fee, a €6 monthly subscription, an hourly rate of €7 and unlimited mileage, driving around Brussels could be totally zen, a silent experience.

Back to the Tazzari itself: some people say silent cars are dangerous because pedestrians can't hear them coming, and Toyota is already adding engine sounds to its Prius hybrid model to make it noisy. This is completely ridiculous; silent cars simply require more awareness from their drivers, all the time. It's not too much to expect for a quieter world and, if necessary, manufacturers can put a polite reminder on the dashboard, something along the lines of "Silence is Golden" - because the Tazzari is not just about reducing air pollution, but cutting noise pollution too. And having a laugh at the same time. ☺

Win a free subscription to Zen Car plus free driving hours - see page 8. Zen Car is also offering all *Together* readers free registration if they take out a year's subscription - simply mention *Together* magazine. Offer lasts until October 31.

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# Solar train



Belgium recorded a global first with the launch of a solar powered rail service this summer. Through the use of 16,000 panels over a tunnel just outside Antwerp Central Station, *Together* web editor **Jeremy Slater** reports that enough power is generated to run 4,000 Thalys and other international trains per year

**T**he project between rail infrastructure manager Infrabel, and energy companies Enfinity and Solar Power Systems was finished ahead of schedule, and now supplies power not only for the trains, but signals and lighting systems for the track that runs through northern Antwerp and the commune of Schoten.

"It is a milestone in green innovation as these are the first trains to be powered by solar energy in Europe," said Infrabel

spokeswoman Chloe van Driessche. "The panels provide enough energy to power both the trains and infrastructure."

Electricity from the 50,000m<sup>2</sup> of solar technology goes straight to the national grid and could if needed produce the annual energy needs of one thousand families.

Although Enfinity provided much of the investment for the project and will take a share in the profits from energy generation, Infrabel came up with the idea.

"When the tunnel for the international rail service was completed we realised we had quite a lot of free space and started thinking what this could be used for," said van Driessche.

Now Infrabel is hoping to look for other potential sites and also for a system that would encourage green car use. "There is a possibility of using the energy to promote a 'park and ride' service making train travel even more environmentally friendly," added van Driessche.



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# City buzzes

Often perceived as a strictly rural craft, bee-keeping is fast appealing to ecologically-minded city dwellers. **Teresa Kùchler** reports on a fashionably eccentric urban trend allowing city folk to relate to nature while enjoying the buzz of the big city. Photos by **Yvan Barbera**

The beehives in Marc Wollast's garden in Watermael-Boitsfort, a quiet residential Brussels suburb, are bustling with commotion even on a somewhat cool and rain-laden summer evening. The honey bees are returning home after a long day's work collecting nectar from nearby trees, bushes and flowers - up to a five km radius of their crowded, swarming nest, although each is capable of travelling much farther to bring back a single 10mg load of pollen.

## BEES ARE COMPLETELY COMPATIBLE WITH CITY LIFE

"As long as I don't stand right in their flight path, they usually won't even give me a glance," Wollast explains calmly, surrounded by small creatures with needle-sharp stings.

A tax accountant turned full-time environmentalist, Wollast confesses to one of his neighbours being upset about the bees when he began. "But bees are completely compatible with city life," he says. "My daughter is nine, and we have always kept bees, even when she was a baby. She has never been stung."

### QUEEN OF THE SCENE

Each hive houses some 60,000 pedigree bees. This evening, the mood is rather gloomy; the bee season is ending, and heaps of male bees, or drones, lie flopping about outside the hive, slowly dying. A worker bee drags a starved and weakened drone, helplessly struggling for life, towards the edge of the hive, and mercilessly pushes him over the edge.

"When the drones have done their job, which is to mate with the Queen, and only that, they become useless," explains Wollast.

There's one Queen per hive, the mother of most, if not all, of the bees in the hive; she is the only bee that lays eggs, up to 2,500 every day. The worker bees are female and never sleep, they only nap. Each worker has a lifespan of about 45 days and makes 1/12<sup>th</sup> of a teaspoon of honey in her lifetime, a product endowed with many medicinal and life-enhancing properties.



*Elise Bouvy with honeycomb*





Etterbeek beekeepers harvesting honey

## GENTLE GENES

Increased demand for locally produced and organic food has made more people want to cultivate in the city, transforming back gardens and patios into lush havens filled with flowers, fruit and vegetables. But reliable pollination is a must for bountiful crops, and the best pollinators around are bees. Buying them is a bit like buying pedigree dogs: they come with reference to their lineage, or genealogical descent. Apiarists - or bee experts - maintain it is bad practice to keep breeding from the same line of bees, just as for humans. Additionally, city bees should ideally stem from gentler ancestors than the colonies placed in large green areas with few human visitors.

In Brussels, there are some 200 city beekeepers and 600 hives. Wollast's own organization, *Apis Bruoc Sella*, with the principal aim of raising awareness about food and biodiversity issues rather than recruiting beekeepers, runs tours of beehives and workshops on honey harvesting. He has placed three hives on top of the Belgian capital's administration centre on the busy Boulevard Anspach. From the top of this 12-storey building, the bees not only have a spectacular view of stressed shoppers and traffic jams, but also of flower-filled gardens, balconies and city parks where nectar is aplenty.

## ROOFTOP HONEY

The Sofitel hotel on Place Jordan at the centre of the EU quarter will from next year offer guests home-harvested rooftop honey at the breakfast buffet; nearby, across the Leopold Park, the EU's Economic and Social Committee will soon also welcome new tiny tenants. Despite a growing interest in urban beekeeping, all is not well in the apian world. Having produced honey from flowering plants for millions of years, bee populations are being devastated by the

mysterious Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), which decimates whole bee communities and has been blamed on everything from a virus or mites to pesticides, GMO crops or climate change. Researchers simply cannot explain why bees are succumbing to all kinds of different plagues and miseries, which, earlier, they could resist. According to a study by the European food safety agency EFSA, the bee population in Europe has diminished since the mid-noughties by an average of 10% per year. In some European regions, more than 80% of bees have vanished.

The annual value of pollination, according to Ashok Khosla, President of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), is estimated to be worth around US \$1.3 billion. Of 100 crop species that provide 90% of the world's food, seventy are pollinated by bees. On a typical continental breakfast table, not only would honey disappear if there weren't any more bees, but also coffee and orange juice. Bees pollinate both coffee and orange trees. The price of milk would soar, since bees pollinate most types of animal feed; without them, farmers would have to feed livestock, such as cows, with more expensive food such as cereals. But that would only be a problem for a little while, since most kinds of cereal would soon disappear too.

Big agri-companies, mostly in the US but also increasingly in Europe, now have to lease beehives with domesticated bees to pollinate their fields, because wild bees are no longer to be found. Others take to hand pollination, where student workers transfer pollen between plants or fruits, using a tiny artist brush or cotton swab - costly and cumbersome work. Many urban beekeepers are therefore on a mission, hive by hive, to help bee communities survive.





A Brussels bee in the Generation Europe garden

### AIR MILES

A more cheerful reason to admire urban apiculture is what it has done to increase the variety of jars, pots and flavours offered in specialized city honey shops and chic cafes. For the inveterate, appreciation of honey is seen akin to having an awareness of good wine, and there is growing consensus that bees living in cities produce better honey than those kept in the countryside, because of the varied nectar available. Bees are the only insects that produce food that humans eat.

Parallel to the railway embankment dividing the Brussels communes of Ixelles and Etterbeek, beehives complement the long, narrow communal garden planted with flowers, fruit and vegetables – many of them old and rare varieties – tended by local residents. Enthusiast Gérard Leriche explains that honey from urban bees is multifloral, a mixture of up to 15 different pollens, compared to the monofloral honey from intensively cultivated countryside bees with access to just single crops. “One kilo of honey is the result of bee visits to between four and five million flowers,” he says. And the collective hive will have had to fly more than 100,000 miles to collect it.

### SCARCE RESOURCE

Several streets away from the Etterbeek

embankment gardens, Catie Thorburn keeps two hives in her own flower-decked back garden and a further five in the equally attractive office garden of the Generation Europe Foundation, of which she is founder and president. Foundation board member Elise Bouvy is studying for a Masters in managing sustainability at the UK’s Schumacher Institute (named for economist E. F. Schumacher, author of the iconic *Small is Beautiful*). With British bees dying out faster than their continental cousins, honey harvested from the Institute’s residential college garden is not available for breakfast, says Bouvy. “It is treated as a scarce resource, and is only made available for medicinal purposes,” she explains.

Catie Thorburn’s neighbour, Dianna Rienstra, claims to be able to taste the flowers from her own garden when she opens a jar of what she describes as: “Liquid gold from Catie’s bees.” Rienstra doesn’t keep bees herself but helps with the honey harvest. “The taste of the honey is complex and changes as spring and summer unfold,” she says. “It’s particularly delightful to open a jar in the grey winter months. Beekeeping also brings neighbours closer together – it builds community.”

• Additional reporting by *Together* journalist

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# Horns of plenty

Organic wines are nothing new, says **Alex Hewetson**, who takes a look at the history of wine-making and recommends some labels

In 1515 when the Prince de Conti bought the famous Romanée Conti vineyard in Burgundy, all viticulture was essentially organic. The use of concentrated chemicals for fertilizers and pesticides was unknown. So, in a roundabout way, organic wine producers are going back to their roots.

Organic wines are made from grapes that are not exposed to manufactured chemicals; growers almost exclusively use natural materials to enrich the soil, and all manner of unguents and anodynes to protect the precious grapes from nasty little diseases, hell-bent on ruining our enjoyment of a lovely Rhone or Amarone. Scourges like odium, black fly and blight need to be warded off the vines with constant vigilance.

## OF GODS AND WINE

"So where," I hear you ask, "does bio-dynamic wine come in, and what is the difference between that and organic?" Well, it goes all the way back to 1924, when the famous philosopher Rudolph Steiner gave a series of lectures to farmers, worried that the chemicals they was using were affecting the quality of their crops. So he proposed a set of procedures, designed to be holistic, that saw the farm as an entity, uniting man, nature and spirit.

It does not necessarily involve dancing around in cloven hooves to the great god Pan at midnight, but it does involve using, say, animal intestines filled with manure, buried in the vineyard in winter and then used as fertilizer in early spring. The idea is an integral, totally natural approach to nurturing a vineyard. Obviously, chemicals are strictly avoided, and any sprays and powders used are entirely natural, with the belief that the healthier the vine, the more resilient it is to disease.



Philosopher Rudolph Steiner



Wine producer Dominique Derain

## OPEN A BOTTLE

Let's start with a few producers in **Burgundy**. For the top end, try **Domaine Laflaive**; by using bio-dynamic techniques, the producers state they turned a dying vineyard into one that now produces some of their best wines. Slightly cheaper is a grower in **St Aubin** who I have met on a number of occasions: **Dominique Derain** is totally committed to bio-dynamic winemaking and, indeed, his **Pommard 2008** (€26) is stunning. Years ago he worked for a well-known **Burgundy** producer, making a wine which won an award, but was then fired for not using sulphites - added preservatives - in the very wine that won such accolades. Discover his wines and sales at [www.domainederain.com](http://www.domainederain.com).

Listed here are some wine shops selling bio-dynamic and organic wines in

Belgium, and it is also worth checking out the larger Delhaize supermarkets. I tried a Delhaize organic **Chardonnay** from **Argentina** the other day, a bit sharp for my tastes, but very reasonable at €5.

[www.fruitsdelapassion.be](http://www.fruitsdelapassion.be)  
64 rue de Thorembois, B-1360 Perwez  
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3 rue du Loutrier, B-1170 Watermael-Boitsfort

And with that, it is time to return to the vineyard, bury some cow horns in the dark earth and play panpipes to invoke the blessings of Dionysus. 🍷

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# Bio-licious

Brussels has a well-established organic food scene with a vast array of bio shops and organic restaurants - **Hughes Belin** offers a selection



Les Filles - Plaisirs Culinaires

**WHAT ALL THESE SMALL SHOPS HAVE IN COMMON IS THE WARMTH OF THEIR CUSTOMER SERVICE**

Close to Flagey, **Dolma** (*Chaussée d'Ixelles 329, 1050 Brussels*), a friendly vegetarian restaurant combined with a bio shop, has kept up with the current trend for fine food at affordable prices; the same goes for **La Saga** near the Cinquantenaire (*Ave de la Chevalerie 9, 1040 Brussels*), a small organic shop with a great selection of essential oils and incredibly tasty food served in the vegan restaurant at the back. Not far away, near Plasky, **BioLogic** (*Ave de Roodebeek 143, 1030 Brussels*) constantly updates its

stock with new products – hemp seeds, stevia (a natural sweetener) and seafood – and has a delicious range of home-made soups, sandwiches, salads and spreads. Close to the Grand-Place, **Natural Corner** (*Rue de l'Escalier 1, 1000 Brussels*) opens seven days a week offering a wide variety of foodstuff as well as a range of organic cosmetics and free advice on how best to use them.

What all these small shops have in common is the warmth of their customer service but the same can be said for the much bigger **Sequoia**, a bio supermarket with branches in Uccle (*Chaussée de Saint-Job 532*) and Stockel (*Rue de l'Eglise 101*) featuring no less than eight thousand organic products ranging from food, wine and cosmetics, to cleaning products and books.



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La Saga - fine food at affordable prices

### THE TASTE OF LOVE

Taste love in the dishes served up at the slow food restaurant **Trop Bon**, close to Flagey (*Chaussée de Vleurgat 1*) using seasonal produce sourced from farms on the outskirts of Brussels. At Watermael-Boitsfort in *Place Keym*, **Chez Josy** is the perfect example of a restaurant where the clientele is made to feel at home, with quality cooking and a warm setting - try the home-made lemonade.

More central, almost in front of the Cirque Royal at Madou, **Bio Lounge** (*Rue de l'Enseignement 116-120*) is a small zen-like refuge of peace and harmony with excellent food and service at bargain prices. Just two doors away at **Wine Walk**, drink organic wine at affordable prices or buy a bottle to take away. But if fresh juices and smoothies are more to your taste, then **Greenz Biobar** in Uccle

(*Rue de Nieuwenhove 84*) is definitely the place to be and delicious salads, soups and sandwiches are available as well.

In St Gilles, a popular venue for lunch is definitely **Les Filles – Plaisirs Culinaires** (*Rue Vanderschrick 85*), a sociable *table d'hôtes* - meaning clients share the same big table - with a tasty three-course, eat-as-much-as-you-like lunch for just €18. The three women who run this restaurant also offer a catering service, company lunch deliveries and cooking courses. All ingredients are organic or sourced from small farmers. Last but not least, **Kamilou** snack bar with three locations in Ixelles (*Rue d'Edimbourg 26*), St Gilles (*Rue Fernand Bernier 1*) and Wiels brewery (*Ave Van Volxem 354, 1190 Brussels*) deserves a mention: friendly, simple, tasty, fair trade, local and organic. ☺

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# Georgious and green

The beauty industry was quick to jump on the bio bandwagon but **Delphine Stefens** sorts out some brands with the organic seal of approval



**T**he eco-beauty enthusiasts of today have come a long way since the hippie era and they want it all: cosmetics that are good for them, as well as for the planet, and products that look and smell nice, in addition to making them look pretty. And whether it is out of genuine concern or more to do with marketing strategy, the beauty industry is more than willing to oblige. However, adjectives, logos and labels abound and certification standards differ from one continent, or even country, to another so it can be difficult to ascertain what is really green or safe. In Europe, the recent Cosmetics Organic Standard, or COSMOS-standard, developed by BDIH (Germany), BioForum (Belgium), COSMEBIO and ECOCERT (France), ICEA (Italy) and the Soil Association (UK) to

define minimum requirements and common definitions for organic and natural cosmetics will hopefully bring solace.

[www.cosmos-standard.org](http://www.cosmos-standard.org)

**AVEDA** was founded in the US in the late 1970s and was the first beauty company in the world to achieve a Cradle to Cradle certified sustainability endorsement from the product audit firm McDonough Braungart Design Chemistry (MBDC) which verifies a company's use of healthy materials. The Aveda Skin Care Starter Sets (from €23.80) are based on Aveda's Elemental Nature philosophy aimed at restoring the balance between body and mind. A questionnaire helps determine individual requirements.

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

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



The Greek organic skincare brand **KORRES** started life in the back rooms of the oldest homeopathic pharmacy in Athens. The company offers an organic skin and hair care range, a make-up line and sun care products. The Yoghurt moisturising cream and Yoghurt moisturising mask, individually priced at €24.20 for 40 ml, are made with real organic yoghurt and sound so yummy you may actually want to lick your fingers.

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



**Bio-Beauté** by Nuxe is a French brand based on what it calls Pulp Cosmology, extolling the benefits of organic fruit for skin beauty. To put it into practice, try the Toning Exfoliant made with redcurrants for

the body (150 ml for €17.90) and Comfort Exfoliant made with red berries for the face (60 ml for €14.90). These gels are applied to dry skin and transform into oil for easy massaging before emulsifying for a speedy rinse. Both products are certified organic and have been especially formulated for sensitive skin.

[www.bio-beaute.fr](http://www.bio-beaute.fr)



**BRAVO** to everyone who helped Giorgio Armani and Green Cross International meet their **Acqua for Life** challenge mentioned in our May issue to provide a minimum of 40 million litres of safe drinking water to children and their communities in Ghana through the construction of water supply systems. Thanks to customer support, 43,314,986 litres were made available to a total of 16 communities of 27,000 inhabitants who now have access to safe drinking water. Among them, 3,500 children will have a safe source of supply at school, thus able to spend less time looking for water and more time at study.

[www.acquaforlifechallenge.org](http://www.acquaforlifechallenge.org)

[www.gci.ch](http://www.gci.ch) @

# Accessible art

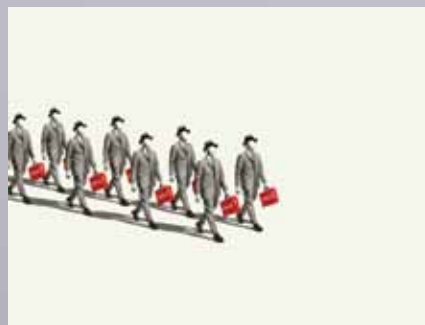
Over the next few pages we present a selection of work by artists from all over the world who have been jostling for space to exhibit at the Brussels Accessible Art Fair, October 28-30, held in the prestigious Conrad Hotel on the Avenue Louise. *Together* magazine is a media sponsor of the event – reporter **Kelly Gerhinger** met the Fair's founder and director

Created just four years ago by Canadian Stephanie Manasseh, the Accessible Art Fair has become a major event on the Brussels cultural calendar. Held in May and October in Brussels and February in Antwerp, the concept has been taken abroad to Tel Aviv and Vienna; Paris is in the works for next year. Manasseh, 47, says that when she first moved to Brussels from Montreal she met a lot of ex-pats who were interested in art but intimidated by the language barrier, put off visiting galleries by what they deemed an unapproachable atmosphere. She decided to fill the gap with an event that would enable artists and art lovers to meet

face-to-face. The occasion is an opportunity to acquire high quality, contemporary, and original artwork at affordable prices – up to a ceiling of €5,000 – and is beginning to attract serious buyers.

"I tell people it's not really about investing," says Manasseh. "It's about buying something you love."

October's event will showcase work by 50 artists – both established and emerging – including furniture made of cacti from France and, for the first time, an exhibitor from China. ☺



*The Marketing Department by Marcel Cueppens. This Belgian freelance art director and graphic designer began creating economic, highly conceptual digital paintings just two years ago*



Stephanie Manasseh © Michael Chia





*Dalmatien - the work of Carolina Toyos from Spain is full of calm, beauty and sensuality*



*Untitled – originally from Montreal, Canada, Johanan Herson was identified as a promising talent at an early age, having won a prestigious award for children's art at the age of eight*



*Israeli-born Leead Shamir works with acrylic on canvas and plywood using all sorts of materials, producing colourful and multi-layered work*



*In his creations such as Juice, Albanian Dastid Miluka plays with characters that evolve through a hide-and-seek game of reality and fantasy*



*Dutch artist Marloes Wijtsma constantly finds inspiration from her travels around the world, absorbing impressions and emotions she experiences and the warm and varied colours that she sees*



*Arch 001 – the French abstract artist Laetitia Schlessier-Gamelin creates a universe of shapes, textures and colours combining chaos and movement together with structure and balance*

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*“Cum dignitate otium. Leisure with honour.”*

- **Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC)**

**Roman orator and statesman; from *Pro Sestio*, a collection of his speeches**

*“Leisure contains the future, it is the new horizon.”*

- **Henri Lefebvre (1901-91)**

**French philosopher, artistic director of Radiodiffusion Française 1944-9; from his book *Everyday Life in the Modern World* (1962)**

*“Increased means and increased leisure are the two civilizers of man.”*

- **Benjamin Disraeli (1804-81)**

**British statesman, Prime Minister 1868, 1874-80; from a speech in Manchester April, 1872**

*“The secret of being miserable is to have leisure to bother about whether you are happy or not. The cure for it is occupation.”*

- **George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)**

**Irish dramatist; from his treatise *Parents and Children* (1914)**

Sources:

The New Penguin Dictionary of Modern Quotations; Oxford Concise Dictionary of Quotations

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LIFE OF  
LEISURE

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# Heavenly Brazilian

A phenomenon on the Brazilian music scene with a growing international reputation, *Together* tracked down singer-songwriter CéU – pronounced <say-you> - at home in her native São Paulo on the eve of a Belgian tour

**B**orn in São Paulo 31 years ago to a musical family, CéU decided to become a musician when she was 15, studying music theory as well as learning to play the violão, a nylon-stringed Brazilian guitar. But her father – a composer, arranger and musicologist – tried to put her off the idea.

“My father was worried because it is hard to survive in music, to earn enough money to pay your bills,” she says. “Music has a lot of different challenges. It’s a profession where you have to work really hard and never lose the focus of the thing, or you get lost.” Her stage name CéU – which means sky or heaven in Portuguese – is a shortened version of her full name Maria do Céu Whitaker Poças, the Whitaker part an established Brazilian name with Scottish

roots from her mother’s side of the family.

## CÉU MEANS SKY OR HEAVEN IN PORTUGUESE

Brought up listening to European classical music such

as Chopin and Debussy, CéU’s music reveals a myriad of influences – the reviews have her pulling together sounds of Brazil such as samba, bossa nova and carnival music with the sultry tones of blues and New York jazz, soul, rhythm and blues, hip

hop, Afrobeat and electrojazz. The critics struggle to classify and compartmentalize it, yet they continue to rave about her, praising a unique sound sung in a sweet, flute-like voice.

It’s a success she attributes to a mixture of things, including luck and “the good work that my crew is doing,” adding: “I am just a natural person and I feel that people like this, they like the idea that I am the girl next door.”

After a year studying music in New York in 1998 – where she developed a taste for the music of Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Lauryn Hill and Erykah Badu – CéU returned to São Paulo saying she wanted to write music from the perspective of someone living in Brazil rather than outside the country. Earning both Grammy and Latin Grammy nominations, CéU says her first album released in 2007 was heavily influenced by Brazilian traditional music.

“I was worried about showing the world that I am Brazilian,” she admits, adding that in 2009 when her second album came along, titled *Vagarosa* – which translates as ‘slow, easy-going, leisurely’ – she had more confidence in her own identity, using the album to give listeners a picture of life in São Paulo.



© Allison Louback



Married to Brazilian music producer Gui Amabis, CéU was expecting her now three year old daughter Rosa when she started writing material for *Vagarosa*. She credits being a mother – “such a beautiful thing to do” - with changing her voice, as well as her mood.

“I did my latest album when I was pregnant and finished it when she was six months old,” she says. “She influenced me a lot on this album, this mood of being a mum. these beautiful things and feelings. Being a mother has changed me totally, spiritually, made me a better person. My voice has changed a lot too. I feel it is somehow stronger and more open, maybe deeper.”

Her twin ambitions, she says, are to “keep doing music that is true to me and my heart” and “to see my daughter grow up healthy.”

With two albums under her belt, CéU is working on new compositions for a third but the new work won't be ready for her Belgian dates in October, when she'll be playing Turnhout, Namur and Brussels, under the aegis of the Europalia international arts festival, with basically the same band she's performed with since 2005.

“They're as much my family as my daughter,” she says.

Performing to ecstatic reviews wherever she has played in Europe, her international appearances are rarer since Rosa was born.

“I try to take my daughter with me, but I cannot travel as easily as before; it can be too much stress, so I leave her here in Brazil which can be tough on me,” she says. “I have to think before travelling around the world. But there are still a lot of places here that I haven't played – Brazil is a big country.” ☺

• CéU in concert at Theatre 140,  
Avenue Plasky 140, 1030 Brussels  
on October 15 at 20.30;  
tickets €15, €11, €8, €7.  
[www.theatre140.be](http://www.theatre140.be)  
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# Nuts about Brazil

Discover Brazil without leaving Brussels – **Federico Grandesso** discovers Europalia and waxes lyrical about a day out with a difference



This year's Europalia features Brazilian folk dance

© Marisa Viana

events, concerts, dance lessons, art workshops or street arts.

The **Bozar** Gallery of Fine Arts (*Rue Ravenstein 23, 1000 Brussels*) is hosting a number of exhibitions including one from October 12 onwards tracing the evolution of Brazilian art from the 1950s to the present day. Culture vultures may also want to view the exhibition dedicated to prize-winning Brazilian architect **Paulo Mendes da Rocha** - and why not take in the photographic display, open from October 6, featuring work dating as far back as 1840 through to the present day. There's a full programme of events online at [www.europalia.eu](http://www.europalia.eu).

## AUTHENTIC CUISINE

After a rich cultural start to the day it's time to discover culinary art and Club.Brasil will also feature a bar-restaurant selling Brazilian cocktails and snacks. Further afield but within walking distance is **Saudades do Brasil**, a restaurant at *Place de la Vieille Halle aux Blés 30* offering authentic Brazilian cuisine. Owner/chef **Sandro Martins de Mello** serves up a range of beautifully prepared and presented food and takes time to explain the menu and ingredients involved. Try *Costelinhas* (marinated grilled spare ribs) or *Salada Búzios* (avocado, scampi, red onions and tomatoes). Among the specialties *Moqueca mixta*, a mixed fish grill and *Churrasco*, a selection of grilled meat. Count around €30 a head for a three course meal; the house wine at €18 a bottle is eminently drinkable.

The international arts festival **Europalia**, held every two years to highlight a different country's cultural heritage, turns its spotlight this year on Brazil with a series of exhibitions and programme of events including music, dance, cinema, theatre, architecture, literature, fashion and design from the beginning of October until January 15.

Every weekend **Club.Brasil** at the Europalia information centre in the *Mont des Arts, 1000 Brussels*, will hold a series of free



© Marina França and Marília Felipe

Brazilian stilt walkers

## LEARN TO SAMBA

In the evenings, learn to Samba on Tuesday nights at the **Brussels Samba School** in S' Josse ([www.ecole-de-samba-de-bruxelles.be](http://www.ecole-de-samba-de-bruxelles.be)) and then dance the night away to live music and party at the heart of the club scene at **Canoa Quebrada**, a

flamboyant Brazilian disco-bar serving delicious tropical cocktails in the Bourse/St Gery area (*Rue du Marché au Charbon 53 – [www.canoa-quebrada.be](http://www.canoa-quebrada.be)*). A small bar on site **la Canoinha** is the ideal place to socialize and practice speaking Portuguese until the early hours of the morning. ☺

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# Tropical romance

A small tropical island located in the middle of the Indian Ocean about 900 km east of Madagascar and 2,000 km from the nearest point of the African coast, Mauritius offers unique picture-postcard settings and a mosaic of cultures. **Anthony Healy** found out why it has a reputation as one of the most romantic places in the world



Unknown for many centuries, Mauritius was first visited by Arab sailors in the Middle Ages, but it wasn't until 1507 that the Portuguese established a base on the island.

Given a subsequent lack of interest by the Portuguese, the Dutch gave Mauritius its name in 1598 in honor of Prince Maurice of Nassau, then Head of State of The Netherlands. But they, too, finally gave up and left the island in 1710, despite attempting to produce dividends from the introduction of sugar-cane.

The French, already in control of neighbouring islands, established themselves in 1715 and made the island prosperous. During the Napoleonic wars, it became a base from which French pirates organized successful attacks on British commercial ships. The British fought back and took control of the Island in 1810, abolishing slavery in 1835.

Renowned for being the only home of the now extinct Dodo bird, Mauritius gained its independence in 1968, becoming a republic in 1992.

I stayed at the Trou aux Biches Resort & Spa, a five-star rated Beachcomber hotel offering privacy, personal space and luxury. A popular resort for weddings and honeymooners, visitors do not have to be newly-wed to experience the joys of the sandy beach and quiet lagoon at Trou aux Biches. The hotel offers a choice of cottage-style suites built into crescents with large pools at the centre of each crescent; or guests can opt for a cosy villa set in the gardens. All villas and beach front suites boast private pools.

Action-lovers are encouraged to make

full use of the sports centre, offering aerobics, body-building, cardio, fitness, spinning, personal training and beach volleyball. Less competitive activities include table tennis, biking, kayaking, water-skiing, sailing and scuba diving.

Relaxation is an essential part of the Trou aux Biches experience. The massive spa offers some extensive pampering, greeting guests with a wide array of massages and scrubs in a scenic natural setting. There are also two saunas, a balneotherapy and algotherapy room, and a relaxation pool.



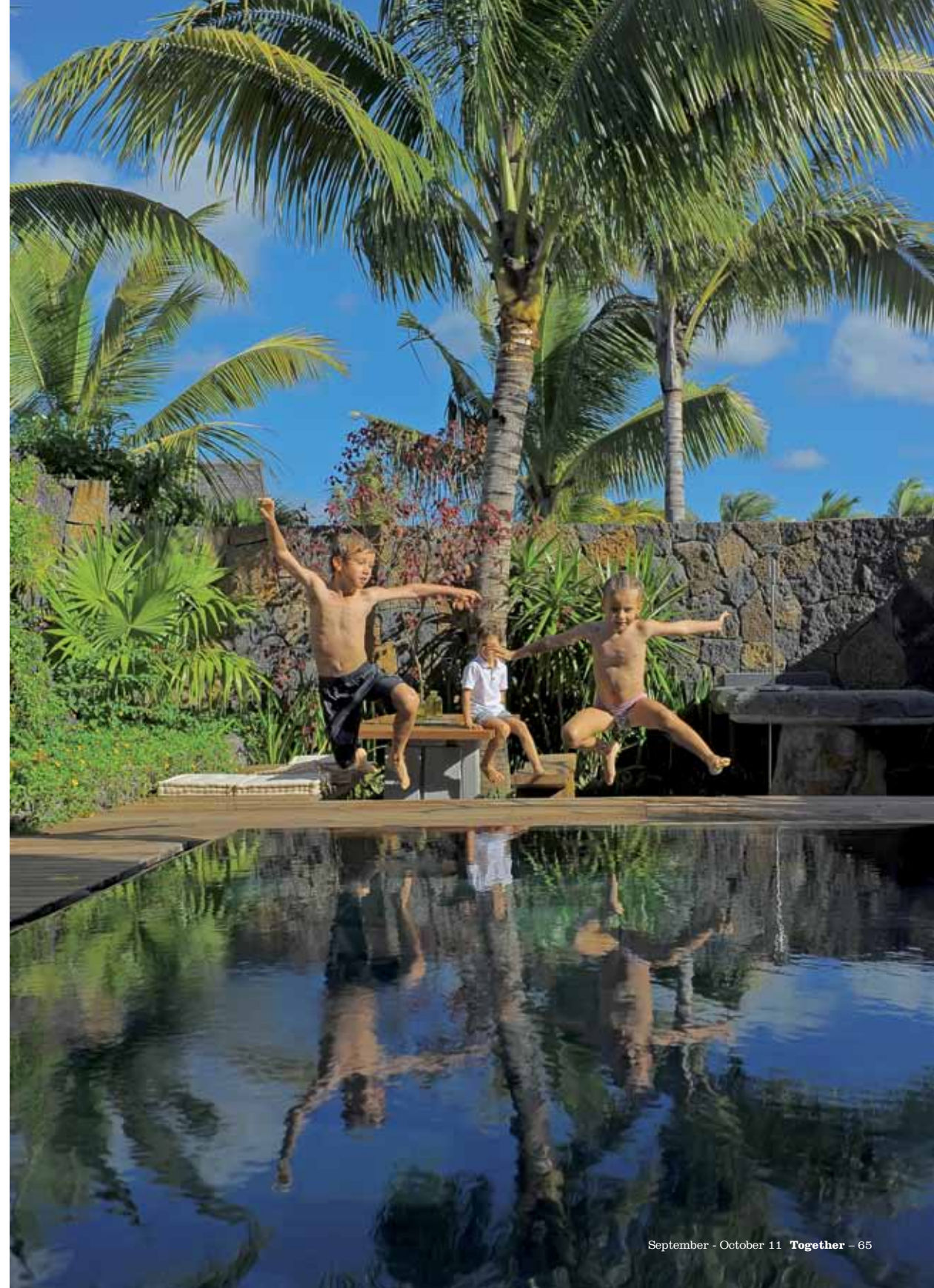


The island hotel Trou aux Biches caters for all ages: children aged 3 to 12 can splash around in a private pool or play in the garden at the mini-club, which includes a games room, napping area and kitchen designed exclusively for children. Activities vary from day to day, but range from swimming pool games and water-skiing trips to sandcastle-building competitions, treasure hunts and trips to the local aquarium. Mini-club staff also offer baby-sitting services.

The teens-club staff organize activities

such as snorkeling, movie nights, tennis tournaments, wake-boarding and cocktail demonstrations. Parents may rest assured that their children are socializing in a relaxed environment, under staff supervision.

And for hungry guests, after all that activity, there are six different restaurants from which to choose: Blue Ginger, L'Oasis, Mahiya, La Caravelle, Le Deck and Il Corallo offer flavours from around the world, ranging from Asia to the Mediterranean.







Enjoy cooler coastal temperatures while shopping on the Grand Bay or basking on the Pereybere beach, and view the capital from the top of Signal Mountain or go deep-sea fishing – the island is an ideal location for a variety of water sports. Port Louis is the main focus point for entertainment with the Place d'Armes and Chinatown two of the main hot spots, the latter packed with tiny shops and restaurants offering authentic Chinese cuisine. Located in the most ancient part of Port Louis, Place d'Armes is home to the cathedrals of St. Louis, established in 1932, and St. James, inaugurated in 1850. The municipal theatre, built in 1822, making it the most ancient theatre in the

Indian Ocean region, can also be found here, as can the central market and a number of museums.

**Bottom line:** half board starts at €600 per day for a Junior suite; up to €1500 per day for a two-bedroom villa with private pool. The package includes unlimited water skiing, sailing, kayak and snorkeling in the lagoon. Refer to the website for special offers, including early booking, free nights, honeymoon and family specials. 📞

**Trou aux Biches Resort & Spa**  
Tel: +230 204 6800  
[www.trouauxbiches-resort.com](http://www.trouauxbiches-resort.com)





# Romance on board

Glide through gilded seas at the helm of a superyacht with sails as the sun sets over the Mediterranean – a fantasy for many became a dream come true for chartered designer **Peter Burnet**

My passion for sailing had taken me throughout the Mediterranean and the waters of the West Indies, Malaysia and Thailand, and from Australia to Singapore, before I embarked on what many thought to be a voyage of madness – I was going to design and build my own superyacht and, as the ultimate romantic gesture, marry my long-suffering lover Jilly on board.

I WAS GOING TO DESIGN AND BUILD MY OWN SUPERYACHT AND, AS THE ULTIMATE ROMANTIC GESTURE, MARRY MY LONG-SUFFERING LOVER JILLY ON BOARD

on paper napkins and vine leaves in the local taverna. But after a frustrating, ice-cold winter in Istanbul attempting to design and plan the project with Turkish specialists, I came to accept that I needed an English architect who would understand both my dream as well as my language,

coupled with a shipyard with an open mind in a warmer climate.

I was fortunate to find an architect who had the right experience and ability to patiently explore my whims and turn my ideas into a sleek hull with a powerful sailing ketch rig, with accommodation for ten guests and four crew; but my choice of shipyard was something of a mixed blessing.

## SHIP AHOY

The southern coast of Turkey is renowned for its hospitable and silver-tongued salesmen. This is fine if you want to buy a carpet but not so good if you want a shipyard that normally builds coastal *gulets* to construct a superyacht to the stringent standards of a commercial passenger vessel code.



*Spirit under sail*



*Spirit at bay*

But I was always a sucker for a good salesman. The deal was done - I would supply the plans, technology and know-how and the shipyard would supply enthusiasm and traditional skills, creating a marketing showcase for the yard.

I named the yacht *Spirit of the East* as a compliment to my hosts for the next two years, a celebration of the joint venture and

of our love for Turkey - and what a two years they turned out to be.

The arguments were as heated as the summer sun, the delays as consistent as the call to prayer by the Imam. But throughout 24 long, exhausting months, we managed to finish each work day with a slap on the back and a glass or two of appalling Turkish raki.



Spirit at sea



Peter Burnet: living the dream

## TRADITIONAL THANK YOU

Needless to say, the goodwill and the raki ran dry upon completion of the yacht, when the shipyard made its request for the traditional 'thank you' for a job well done. I assumed a firm handshake would be more than adequate, but they assumed a €250,000 tip would be nearer the mark. Two days of heated arguments ensued, a fracas which my bride-to-be ignored, as she concentrated on the critical task of locating an English-speaking Christian priest to perform the long-awaited wedding ceremony.

We settled on €20,000, more appalling raki, and Jilly found a priest propped up in the local bar.

We stood on the slipway, champagne bottle in hand and waited for the launch...and waited...and waited...and waited some more. Eventually, things started moving but at the last minute I was told there was one more traditional payment due to the *gangmeister* who controlled the slipway: "No cash, no splash," he announced. When he was €200 better off, which doubtless helped him swing his mighty sledge hammer, the chocks were away and so were we.

## FREE SPIRIT

*Spirit* eased down the boiled lamb fat-greased slipway and with gathering momentum she lurched slightly – in time with my heart – and then elegantly slipped into the water. Would she float? The terrifying thought crossed my mind as she parted the waves for the first time. Absolutely – as the engine burst into invigorating life, and swept her into a beautiful ellipse around the bay. I was in dually love and the *Spirit* was free.

Due to a technical hitch with *Spirit of the East*, our wedding actually took place in a stunningly dilapidated Greek chapel in Turkey with wonderful views over the bay (and of the superyacht). Around the chapel we planted bougainvillea in honour of Jilly, of our guests, and to commemorate most memorable wedding day imaginable. They still flower today.

## LOVE BOAT

For our three-year honeymoon on *Spirit of the East* we set out to circumnavigate the Mediterranean, exploring eastern Turkey, leisurely island-hopping through Greece, weaving our way to Venice via Montenegro and Croatia, lingering through east and west Italy and her islands. We meandered around Malta, were arrested in France, fell hopelessly in love with Sicily and rode camels in the desert in Tunisia.

Recession led to economic depression but, fortuitously, a buyer was found for *Spirit*. It's not always true that a sailor's happiest day is when he sells his yacht but – then again – we'd lived our dream of fantasy and passion and sailed the seas while tasting Europe at its best. In short, we had romanced the superyacht. ☺

*Peter Burnet is currently building Spirit of Chelsea, a luxurious 23 metre houseboat moored on London's River Thames, available for charter during the Chelsea Flower Show, Wimbledon and the 2012 Olympics.*

[peterburnet@yahoo.com](mailto:peterburnet@yahoo.com)



# Take a break in Belgium



Stay at La Dolce and visit nearby Waterloo

Get away from it all without leaving the country. **Martin Banks** reviews two spa hotels in the Belgian countryside ideal for weekend breaks away from Brussels

## DOLCE HOTEL, LA HULPE

Imagine staying in a delightful hideaway deep in a beautiful forest. It may seem the stuff of dreams but this tranquil and serene scenario exists no more than a 20 minute drive from the hustle and bustle of Brussels city centre. Owned by a US-based chain, this four-star hotel is set in the wonderful Soignes Forest, with 264 guest rooms and suites, a conference centre and excellent dining.

Aside from its surroundings, perhaps the one thing that sets it apart from a lot of other hotels is the exclusive Cinq Mondes spa - a big pull for guests who come from as far away as Germany and France to avail themselves of its relaxing charms and wide selection of treatments and massages. This, combined

with an array of other revitalizing leisure activities, including tennis courts, mountain bike trails, indoor pool, sauna and fitness room, makes for a particularly soothing stay.

The hotel boasts two restaurants, the Argan and the Tree O, the first offering informal dining, including a regular buffet, and the latter more gastronomic fare. The hotel also offers dinner in the sky - ideally suited for groups, diners seated at the table are hoisted 20 metres above the ground. Strapped to their seats, they are served a four-course meal and regally entertained by a pianist - best experienced in the absence of high wind.

The hotel is situated in the former IBM training centre and it is worth pointing out that it sits on a main bus route for those wishing to get there using public transport. Guests with a bit of time on their hands will find there is no shortage of things to do in the immediate area, be it a visit to the nearby Folon Foundation at La Hulpe, exhibiting the works of Belgian artist Jean-Michel Folon, or the battleground at Waterloo.

Many guests, according to Hadi Hotteite, a Lebanese-born manager at the four-star hotel, simply prefer to avail themselves of the wonderful spa facilities and the equally impressive tranquil setting and he says it is a perfect place to wind down for a few days.

**Bottom line:** from €85; buffet breakfast extra at €35 for two.

### Dolce Hotel

*Chaussée de Bruxelles 135*

*B-1310 La Hulpe*

*T.+32 (0)2 290 9800*

[www.dolce-la-hulpe-brussels-hotel.com](http://www.dolce-la-hulpe-brussels-hotel.com)



Stay at the Hotel Lac and visit Reinhardstein Castle in the Ardennes

## HOTEL LAC DE ROBERTVILLE

A bit farther away from Brussels, this beautifully restored four star spa and wellness hotel overlooks the Robertville Lake, a well-known beauty spot at the gateway to the hills of the Belgian Ardennes. This family-run haven of peace and tranquillity has 13 rooms, a swimming pool and Jacuzzi, all overlooking well-tended gardens.

Owners Elisabeth and Jean-Pierre Robert-Rey, who live on the premises, bought the hotel five years ago and spent several months restoring it. At the edge of the Hautes Fagnes natural park, each room has been tastefully restored and individually decorated.

The hotel restaurant, overseen by Jean-Pierre who used to work in some of the best restaurants in Brussels, is split in two: one part offers a brasserie menu and the other more up-market gastronomic fare. The menu is eclectic but well prepared - and the

delicious breakfast is also worth a mention.

The hotel is a great base from which to visit local attractions such as the Spa-Francorchamps F1 race track, just 20 minutes away. Also worth a trip is Reinhardstein Castle, built in 1354 and restored in 1969, open at weekends and during school holidays. Delight children with the Forestia animal park at nearby La Reid, more than 40 hectares of plains and woods, home to 300 animals belonging to 30 different species.

**Bottom line:** weekend double from €160, including breakfast. Friday package deals with access to the wellness centre from €17 followed by a two-course dinner €39 a head. 🍷

### Hotel des Bains

*2 Haelen, B-4950 Robertville*

*T.+32 (0)80 679 571*

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

# Drive to the sun



The almost certain prospect of heavy rain on Belgian national day could be the reason why thousands of Belgians desert the country and head for St Tropez, to the extent that the week of July 21 is known as Belgian Week in the French resort. **Anthony Healy** joined the exodus on the sunshine route to the south of France

St Tropez has been attracting the fashionable and famous since the 1920s, achieving international recognition back in the '50s thanks in no small part to French actress Brigitte Bardot's decision to live there. Littered with luxury yachts and expensive cars, the place is a magnet for the international jet set, a veritable millionaire's playground, although the beautiful beaches and pretty town are equally accessible for the rest of us mere mortals and holidaymakers in search of Provencal authenticity and the occasional celebrity sighting.

Behind the wheel of the new Audi TT Roadster, I felt a bit like a tourist attraction myself, although it was the car that drew the

attention of passers-by, not the driver. With initial reservations about driving the 1200 kilometre distance at night, not least among them the prospect of traffic jams, the trip turned out to be pure pleasure. The comfortable and stylish interior, with its hand-stitched leather finish, the Bose stereo system, and the sporty feel to the car combined to make the drive a lot of fun. Despite the soft top, normal conversation is possible, even at full throttle.

Driving along the Côte d'Azur's mountain roads gave me the opportunity to push the 1.8 litre turbocharged engine to its 160bhp limit. Capable of 0 to 100km/h in 7.4 seconds, the front-wheel-drive TT feels perfect, light, and pointy with just the tiniest hint of front-end wiggle under heavy acceleration that kept me on my toes. On tight bends, the car feels like it is sticking to the road and enjoying every moment. The Audi slogan «Advancement through technology» makes absolute sense, and applies just as much to the sporty aspect as it does to the technology. I was more than happy with performance and style. And St Tropez during Belgian Week isn't too bad either. ☺

Starting price : € 26.991 without VAT

St Tropez - littered with yachts, a veritable millionaire's playground





# TROPEZ FASHION



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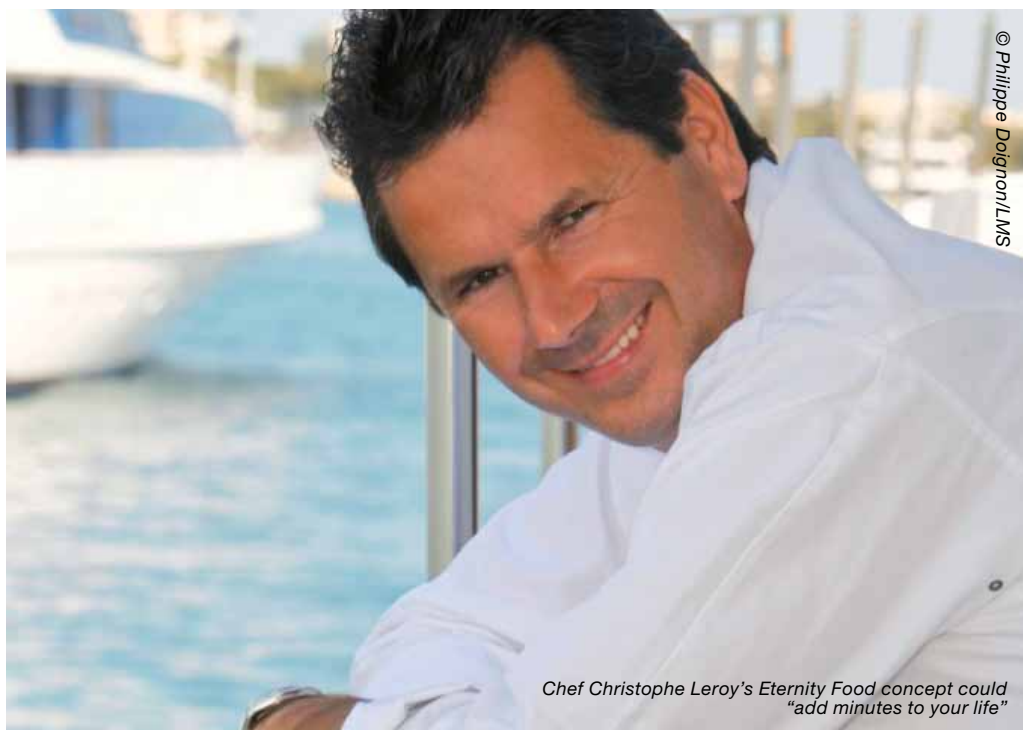


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# Eat for eternal youth

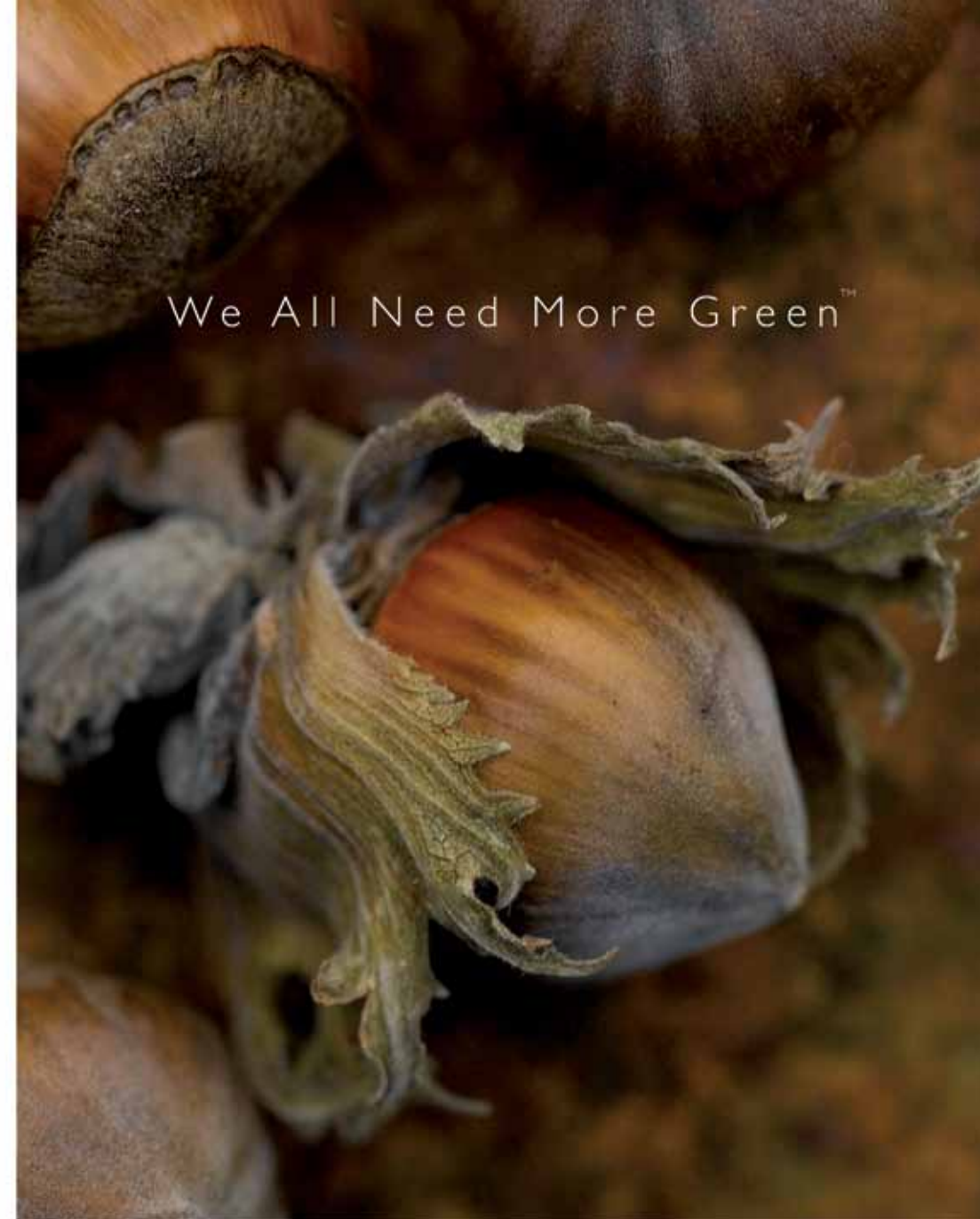
Internationally renowned chef Christophe Leroy has come up with a new culinary concept, when filling your face could be good for your face. **Delphine Stefens** checked out the menu at his flagship restaurant in St Tropez



*Chef Christophe Leroy's Eternity Food concept could "add minutes to your life"*

Christophe Leroy's Eternity Food concept made its debut on the menu at Les Moulins de Ramatuelle this summer. Claiming it will "add minutes to your life when you eat", this charming and hospitable chef, looking younger than his years, has created an anti-ageing menu that could

revolutionize eating-out habits. A concept developed with friend and adviser Didier Audebert, the Eternity Food menu, at €46 for a three course meal (without drinks) only combines foods that are known to be exceptionally high in antioxidants such as goji berries, oily fish, broccoli, cherry tomatoes, Brussels sprouts and the like.



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With a number of restaurants and hotels to his name around the world, Leroy also runs an event planning and catering company that has given him the reputation of party planner to the rich and famous. With a new restaurant in Miami on the cards, his heart and soul, and that of his cuisine, is nevertheless still nurtured every summer in St Tropez.

After a prize-winning debut in St Tropez as chef at the Chateau de la Messardière, Leroy opened his first restaurant, La Table du Marché, in 1992. An instant hit, it still exists today and has branches in the French Alps resort Avoriaz, the Caribbean island St Martin, and

Marrakech in Morocco.

In 1998, Leroy opened Les Moulins de Ramatuelle on the *Route des Plages*, between the Bay of Pampelonne and St Tropez port. More a provençal country house than a mill in appearance, it boasts five rustic bedrooms and is set in a tree-shaded garden, with an impressive kitchen

garden, surrounded by vines. With food prepared by chef Marc Alès, the restaurant is open seven days a week for both lunch and dinner and the food meets all expectations.

Living dangerously, I risked premature ageing to try alternatives to Eternity Food. Lunch options include a courgette risotto and a beef stew or *daube de joue de boeuf*; then there's roasted pineapple with orange or rum baba. For dinner, a

classic at this address is chilled potato soup with truffles; but the ravioli with truffles and celery is definitely also worth the effort as is *galette de pigeonneau* with cabbage and foie gras. And a beautiful veal chop with chanterelle mushrooms and almonds coming in a close second. Side dishes include phenomenal mashed potato with truffles, or potato pie, also with truffles.

**Bottom line:** One night/two people including breakfast from €277; lunch menu from €29 (two courses); six course Signature menu €129 (excluding drinks). 🍷

Hôtel Les Moulins de Ramatuelle  
*Route des Plages*  
83350 Ramatuelle  
France  
T. +33 (0)4 94 97 17 22  
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# Enchanted Palais

Lingering in the lap of luxury, **Delphine Stefens** was a guest of Pan Deï Palais, a hotel with an Asian influence at the heart of St Tropez village

Cross the threshold at 52 Rue Gambetta and trade the legendary bustle of St Tropez port for the enchanted world of Pan Deï Palais, built in 1935 by a besotted French general for his wife, a Punjabi princess. An oasis of calm, it became a hotel in 2006 and joined the Relais & Châteaux family in 2011. Open all year round, there are twelve bedrooms and suites and probably three times that many staff prepared to pander to every whim.

A typical day at the Pan Deï starts with breakfast, served until noon, poolside if weather permits, the mosaic-lined pool set in a beautiful patio garden with palm and cedar trees. Linger in the sun on a deckchair or take a nap in the shade of a four-poster. Hotel guests may also lunch by the pool - try homemade duck foie gras and beef tartar with summer truffles. Alternatively, the friendly receptionists will readily help guests organize a day on the beach, providing transport, a beach bag and towel.

After too much sun or simply a desire to be pampered, the Pan Deï spa, in collaboration with Valmont beauty and skin care specialists, offers an exclusive

after-sun treatment - the "Princess Pan Deï".

In the evening, the hotel is open to non-residents for drinks and dinner. The atmosphere is elegant yet relaxed, and a tasting menu perfectly illustrates the restaurant's world cuisine approach. A la carte, the ravioli stuffed with truffles and celery turnip and the mille-feuilles lobster ravioli with langoustine coulis make for a light yet delicious meal.

For those wishing to experience St Tropez life to the full, the hotel offers use of its 31 metre motor yacht, moored at the port, which comes with four cabins, two salons, and a crew of five – ready to whisk visitors across the waves to wherever they would like to go.

**Bottom line:** classic room starting at €195 per night, breakfast (€32 per person) not included; Tasting Menu (three courses) €90 excluding drinks. 🍷

**Pan Deï Palais**  
52 Rue Gambetta  
83990 St Tropez, France  
T.+33 (0)4 94 17 71 71  
[www.relaischateaux.com](http://www.relaischateaux.com)  
[www.pandei.com](http://www.pandei.com)



The mosaic-lined pool at Pan Deï Palais



# Second-hand fashion



Now is the time to think about buying tickets for the annual **Les Petits Riens** charity fashion show, scheduled for November 18, featuring clothes, accessories, jewellery and furniture fashioned from cast-offs

**R**ecognised as a major event on the Brussels fashion calendar, this is the ninth year running that the Belgian charity *Les Petits Riens* has invited dozens of designers to create one-off pieces using what they can find amongst the donations of second-hand goods and clothes it receives.

With a catwalk show the highlight of the event, Edouard Vermeulen of the couture label Natan, jewellery designer Isabelle Lenfant and furniture designer Paul Quadens are among the top names who have agreed to participate. Every exhibit is auctioned in aid of *Les Petits Riens*, with funds raised this year destined to finance a new shelter opening in January 2012 for homeless youths between the ages of 18 and 24, with the objective of helping reintegrate them into society.

*Les Petits Riens* is a major player in the fight against social exclusion and poverty in Belgium. Established in 1937, the charity accepts clothes and household goods, as well as financial donations, and sells them in a number of outlets around the country.

With an average 600 customers a day, the headquarters at Ixelle's Rue Americaine, more a warehouse than a shop, is a treasure trove of second-hand goods from furniture and household appliances to books and bicycles. Next door, Retro Paradise offers a selection of quality vintage clothing, and the nearby Baby Paradise is exactly what its name suggests.

The **Second Hand Second Life** fashion and design show will be held Friday November 18 at Tour et Taxis from 19h; tickets at €30 and VIP tickets for €55 go on sale at the end of September – check *Les Petits Riens* website for details. ☎

**Les Petits Riens**  
Rue Americaine 101, 1050 Brussels  
[www.petitsriens.be](http://www.petitsriens.be)

**Tour et Taxis**  
Avenue du Port 86c, 1000 Brussels



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# Bags of Bulgari booty

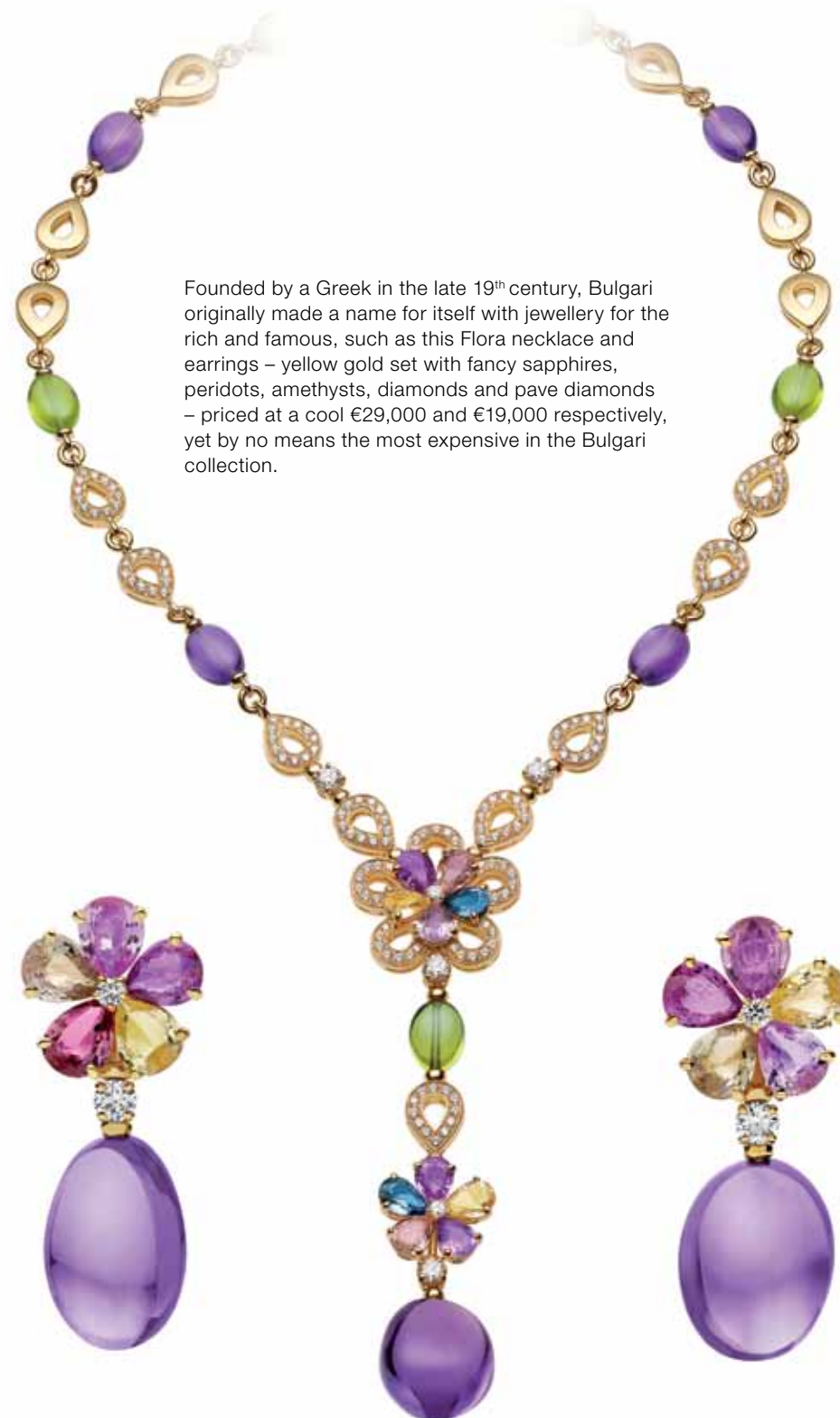


Acquired by the French group LVMH (Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy) earlier this year, the Italian brand Bulgari markets several lines in luxury goods including watches and handbags.

## A TRADEMARK SERPENT THEME IS CONSTANTLY UPDATED

The grey satin Aida evening bag (above) studded with stones and golden pearls retails at €4,900 with prices for the Isabella

Rossellini signature bags (overleaf) starting at €1,120. Often associated with large, chunky, and sometimes flashy jewellery and watches – a trademark serpent theme is constantly updated – the new B.Zero1 collection featuring different coloured ceramics set in gold or steel is more understated than usual. With a hotel in Milan to its name and another in Bali, Bulgari is opening a third in London's Knightsbridge in May next year. Browse the Brussels store at 36 Boulevard Waterloo, 1000 Brussels. 📍



Founded by a Greek in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Bulgari originally made a name for itself with jewellery for the rich and famous, such as this Flora necklace and earrings – yellow gold set with fancy sapphires, peridots, amethysts, diamonds and pave diamonds – priced at a cool €29,000 and €19,000 respectively, yet by no means the most expensive in the Bulgari collection.





Isabella Rossellini signature handbag in cotton canvas and leather with enamel and Tiger's-eye clasp, €1,120 from Bulgari



B.Zero1 pink gold and white ceramic pendant (€1,400) and matching earrings (€1,900) from Bulgari



Bulgari classic Serpenti lady's gold watch  
€18,200

Men's watch in steel and ceramic with alligator bracelet by the late Swiss designer Gerald Genta, €17,600 from Bulgari



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# Together's To Do list Belgium

Where to go and what to do – enjoy our selection of upcoming events



Madame Moustache -  
nightclub with a difference



Madame Moustache -  
something new every night

## NOCTURNES DU SABLON

24.11>26.11.11

For several days every year, at the same time of year, the shops in the Sablon district stay open late until 23h. Originally organized by the art galleries and antique dealers of the area to drum up business, now all the shops join in to kick off the festive season, many of them offering a free glass of wine or champagne to customers. The Sablon's Christmas tree and decorations are usually in place by then and horse-drawn carriage rides add to the sense of occasion.

Nocturnes du Sablon  
Place du Sablon, 1000 Brussels  
T.+32 (0)2 512 21 33  
[www.sablon.org](http://www.sablon.org)

## MADAME MOUSTACHE

Quirky, offbeat and reportedly one of the hippest places in Brussels, Madame Moustache et son Freakshow is a nightclub with a difference. Be it soul, funk, blues, rock – you name it, there's something new going on every night and lots of live music to dance to. No selection at the door, just a queue to get in. Tuesday through Sunday 17h-04h.

Madame Moustache et son Freakshow  
Quai au Bois à Brûler 5, 1000 Brussels  
T.+32 (0)485 534 494  
[www.madamemoustache.be](http://www.madamemoustache.be)

## MOMU FASHION MUSEUM

14.09.11>19.02.12

The MOMU Fashion Museum in Antwerp is hosting a retrospective exhibition "Dream the World Awake" featuring the work of Belgian designer Walter Van Beirendonck ([www.waltervanbeirendonck.com](http://www.waltervanbeirendonck.com)). One of the so-called "Antwerp Six", a group of influential avant-garde fashion designers who graduated from Antwerp's Royal Academy of Fine Arts between 1980-81, Van Beirendonck's work is characterised by unusual colour combinations and strong graphics.

Antwerp ModeMuseum – MoMu  
Nationalestraat 28, 2000 Antwerpen  
T. +32 (0)3 470 27 70  
[www.momu.be](http://www.momu.be)

## BÂTARD FESTIVAL

19.10>22.10.11

Bâtard is a platform and meeting place for young performance artists, working in Belgium and the Netherlands, giving them an opportunity to showcase their work to the public. The eighth edition of the festival takes place at the Beursschouwburg (Bourse Theatre) in Brussels and other locations nearby.

Bâtard Festival  
Rue Ulens 29, 1080 Bruxelles  
T.+32 (0) 472 58 14 48  
[www.batard.be/2011](http://www.batard.be/2011)

**OPENDAY**

**Tuesday September 27, from 10.00 to 17.00**  
(by appointment)

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[www.international-montessori.org](http://www.international-montessori.org)

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# Together's To Do list International

Our round-up of events both near and far



Stockholm Beer & Whisky Festival

## PIANO COMPETITION

15.10>2.10.11

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Hong Kong International Piano Competition organised by the city's Chopin Society features pianists from all over the world whose dates of birth are on or later than October 15, 1981. The jury picks six winners from an initial selection of 35 with the overall winner taking home \$25,000 and a recording contract. The first of four rounds starts on Sunday October 16, with a gala performance and prize giving ceremony on Monday October 31 at the HK City Hall Concert Hall. Tickets to different stages of the competition range from HK\$150-HK\$350 (about €13-€31) with day passes allowing entrance to all events also available.

Hong Kong City Hall Concert Hall  
Edinburgh Place, Central  
Hong Kong Island  
[www.chopinsocietyhk.org](http://www.chopinsocietyhk.org)

## CHOCOLATE EXHIBITION

14.10>23.10.11

If Belgian chocolate doesn't fulfil those cravings, get yourself to Italy to sample the fare at the Eurochocolate International Chocolate Exhibition in Perugia, Italy. An important date in the international chocolate calendar, the Umbrian capital plays host to six thousand different types of chocolate.

Perugia, Italy  
[www.eurochocolate.com](http://www.eurochocolate.com)

## BEER FESTIVAL

17.09>03.10.11

Barrels of beer and big brass band concerts at the annual Bavarian Oktoberfest beer festival in Munich, Germany. Hop from beer tent to beer tent – there are 14 of them. And the organisers have put up an Oktoberfest dictionary on the website to help non-Bavarians communicate with the locals.

Thereisienwiese - Munich, Germany  
[www.oktoberfest.de](http://www.oktoberfest.de)

## ST. NICHOLAS PARADE

13.11.11

The annual St. Nicholas Parade in Amsterdam takes place in mid-November as the great man himself arrives in the city in the run-up to December 5, the eve of St Nicholas Day when excited children receive their seasonal gifts – but only if they've been good. A national event, the arrival of St Nicholas in Amsterdam has been celebrated since 1934. An estimated 300,000 children line the streets for this momentous event.

Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
[www.stnicholascenter.org](http://www.stnicholascenter.org)

## MONTH OF PHOTOGRAPHY

01>30.11.11

Galleries throughout the Slovakian capital of Bratislava host a variety of photographic exhibitions throughout the month of November, organised by the Fotofo Society and the Central European House of Photography with the main focus on central and eastern European photography. Workshops, lectures, competitions and concerts are planned.

Fotofo  
T. +421(0)2 5441 8214  
[www.sedf.sk](http://www.sedf.sk)

## BEER & WHISKY FESTIVAL

29.09>01.10.11 and 06>08.10.11

Visitors must be over the age of 20 to attend Stockholm's Beer & Whisky Festival, an opportunity to talk to the experts about more than 1,300 different types of beer, whisky, cider, calvados, cognac and champagne. This annual trade fair in the Swedish capital is in its 20th year and attracted 34,000 visitors in 2010. One 199 Swedish Kroner ticket (about €21) gains access to both weekends in September and October. Plenty of food available and live music to accompany the drinking.

Augustendalstorget 6, 131 52 Nacka Strand  
Stockholm, Sweden  
T. +46 (8) 662 94 94  
[www.stockholmbeer.se](http://www.stockholmbeer.se)

# Choosing an eBook

The Amazon Kindle is probably the major player in the eBook market and the one most people will have heard of; **Colin Moors** checks it out along with a few others

With the latest **eInk** technology, provision for all major third generation mobile standards and the fact that a computer isn't a prerequisite to enjoying a good read, the **Amazon Kindle** is attractively priced and accessible. It is by no means the only **eBook** reader available and has been criticized by some for using a 'closed' file format, meaning Kindle eBooks cannot be shared with non-Kindle users. The latest version has an internal storage capacity of 3 gigabytes equivalent to 3,500 standard paperbacks.

Another publisher getting in on the **eReader** market is **Barnes and Noble** with their cosily named range of **Nook** machines. The basic version, priced to compete with the Kindle, has a capacity of around 1,000 books – nowhere near the Kindle, but more than enough for the average reader. The big advantage of the Nook is that by slotting in a **microSD card**, the capacity can be extended to 32 gbytes. With support for text files only (ePub or PDF), the Nook falls behind the Kindle, which also supports audio formats.

In a digital marketplace Sony ought to be somewhere and, sure enough, they have their own eBook reader. Called simply **Reader**, Sony's offering is a similar size

to the others and has expandable memory. The downside for some may be the lack of AC power-charging, as it's a USB connection only and has no **wi-fi** or **3G** connectivity.

All the major readers have access to various free book resources on the internet, such as **Project Gutenberg**, a resource of some 36,000 free, out-of-copyright books in many popular reader formats. They may also be used for electronic borrowing of eBooks from public libraries where this feature is supported and the three big names listed here also allow owners to lend a book they have bought to an online friend, depending on the author's permission and copyright limitations. ☺



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# Have eBook, will travel

The advent of the electronic book is revolutionising reading habits, with millions of book titles available for download. **Jacki Davis** charts her conversion

My name is Jacki and I'm a bookaholic. Forget sightseeing or beach sports. My idea of the perfect holiday is to spend entire days with my nose buried deep in a book – up to 20 of them in fact, during my annual August sojourn in the sun.

But like every addiction, it has its downsides: a suitcase crammed full of books instead of holiday clothes, leaving space for little more than a few bikinis and sarongs; and the dilemma of where to put the latest additions to my ever-growing book mountain.

I knew it couldn't go on, but giving up my 20-a-month habit was unthinkable – and then salvation came, in the unlikely form of an eBook (in my case, a Kindle), a gift from my husband. I say unlikely because, at first sight, it simply wouldn't do at all: it didn't look like a book, feel like a book or smell like a book. How could such a soulless and unappealing object keep my endless cravings at bay?

But, lured by the prospect of lighter suitcases, a few nice outfits to go with my holiday tan and an endless supply of books on tap, I decided to give it a go – and after just a few days, I was hooked. The sensation, strange at first, of clicking from one page to the next instead of turning them by hand soon seemed normal, and to my surprise, the screen was perfectly legible even in bright sunlight. Finished a book faster than you expected? Don't panic. Just pop along to the virtual bookstore, browse the virtual shelves, select the one you want, press a button and, lo and behold, a few seconds later, there it is...the virtual book of your choice ready to read. Forgotten your reading glasses? No problem. Just increase the font size to suit your vision. Lost your page? Relax. Every time you turn on your eBook, it takes you back to the last page you read. The Kindle has not cured me of my addiction, but it is no longer – literally – such a burden. ☺

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# Eye tech

Already successfully published in the traditional fashion, author **Walter Ellis** thought it would be simple to electronically self-publish one of his novels



If a tree falls in the forest and nobody hears, is there any sound? And if a digital novel is self-published on Amazon and nobody knows, are there any sales? Well, you've come to the right man if you're looking for an answer to the second question.

Several weeks ago, I uploaded my novel London Eye to The Kindle Store at Amazon. The book had nearly been published in the UK a couple of years back, only to fall at the final hurdle. But I am fond of it and believed that justice had not been done to my tale of three men in a pub heading towards their fiftieth birthdays as their lives collapse around them.

It didn't look too complicated. You simply write your book, most obviously as a Word document, select your price - 99p in my case - type in your name and the title and upload the material. Presto! Twenty-four hours later, there it was, complete with my publisher's description of the contents. You could buy it on Amazon.com, Amazon.co.uk and Amazon.de - though not, for some reason, on Amazon.fr or Amazon.it.

The problem was that after I proudly downloaded a copy onto my own Kindle, I immediately discovered all kinds of formatting errors. Some paragraphs appeared without indents; others came out with double-indents. In instances where I had changed the font to indicate that a particular passage represented a personal communication or official document, the selected fonts had been ignored. There were also, of course, typos and occasional misspellings that I should have corrected earlier but had failed to notice.

Putting things right was a nightmare. Twenty-four hours went by before version two came up online, only to reveal that most of the original errors remained stubbornly in place.

And every time I made another repair, another day went by. In the end, I got it just about right. At any rate, I gave up trying. That was when the cone of silence, or cloak of invisibility, descended. At least when a tree falls in the forest, there is a chance it will be made into a book. When an eBook goes up on Kindle, there is virtually no chance of a sale.

To date, I have sold precisely 24 copies, earning royalties of 35% of the retail price totalling some €10. The philosophy of self-publishing is that it levels the pitch, equalising the availability of the books of Dan Brown and Joe Nobody. The truth is that everybody knows who Brown is and is keen to read everything he produces, while nobody (but nobody) knows Nobody.

Well, I am not Nobody. I am Walter Ellis, and my novel, London Eye, deserves its place in the sun. So go for it. Make me a bestseller. My pension could yet depend on it. ☺



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Founder:  
Jérôme Stéfanski

Publisher:  
David Mc Gowan

Editor-in-Chief:  
Patricia Kelly  
[patricia@togethertmedia.eu](mailto:patricia@togethertmedia.eu)

Website editor:  
Jeremy Slater  
[Jeremy@togethertmedia.eu](mailto:Jeremy@togethertmedia.eu)

Sales advisor:  
Elodie Andriveau: [sales@togethertmedia.eu](mailto:sales@togethertmedia.eu)

Contributors:  
Martin Banks/Hughes Belin/Peter Burnet/Laura Cohn/Jacki Davis/Walter Ellis/Philippe Geluck/Kelly Geringher/Federico Grandesso/Anthony Healy/Alex Hewetson/Marcel Koolhoven/Teresa Küchler/Geoff Meade/Colin Moors/Jordan O'Day (marketing)/ Suzette Reed/Marianne Rousson/Jeremy Slater/Delphine Stefens/Sonja van Renssen

Video director:  
Armand Richelet-Kleinberg:  
[www.camera-man.weebly.com](http://www.camera-man.weebly.com)

Photographer:  
Yvan Barbera: [www.reflexstar.com](http://www.reflexstar.com)

Design:  
Studio LetMeSee - Yves Reynaert  
T. +32 (0)496 723 950  
[hello@studioletmesee.be](mailto:hello@studioletmesee.be) - [www.studioletmesee.be](http://www.studioletmesee.be)

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Together Media  
Boulevard St Michel, 47 | B-1040 Brussels  
T. +32 (0)2 400 00 24 - [info@togethertmedia.eu](mailto:info@togethertmedia.eu)

# Cat Walk



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