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#28/DECEMBER 2011/JANUARY 2012

Together

magazine

WINTER
STYLE

**EVER
BEWITCHING**
Emma Watson
interview

**DRESS TO
IMPRESS**
From downtown
to designer

DAVOS DAYS
Politics and
winter sports

CLASSIC SEXY KELLY BROOK TALKS CAREER

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Wishing you a stylish winter

Our contributors have supplied this issue of the magazine with plenty of ideas to help you celebrate the festive season, from food and drink to gift suggestions, shows to see and places to visit

As I write this, Christmas lights and decorations are going up all over the city and the Christmas Market stalls dotted around the *Grand Place*, the *Bourse* and the *Place Ste Catherine* are doing a brisk trade.

But as the days get colder and the nights grow longer, spare a thought for those less fortunate, especially children – this issue highlights the work of **Unicef** and the **HappyPack** gift concept, an opportunity to give presents to friends and family and support the world's vulnerable children at the same time.

To give readers a true sense of our **Winter Style** theme, we've got interviews with actress and model **Kelly Brook** – who agreed to be on the cover – and actress and model **Emma Watson**; what a coup to have both of them in the same issue! Through their work, both of these British beauties have access to the fashion industry's top stylists and make-up artists, but their own advice is much more down-to-earth. The best piece of beauty advice Emma Watson says she has ever received is: "Don't over pluck your eyebrows and always take off your make-up before you go to bed." Kelly Brook told me she swears by regular facials and drinking plenty of water to keep her skin glowing.

Meanwhile, there's exciting news for those of us who need a little extra help with what nature

intended – the opening of a **Bobbi Brown** cosmetics store in Brussels. The brand is based on a simple philosophy that with the right make-up and knowledge women can look like themselves, only prettier and more confident. The new store is expected to open during December in time for Christmas and is right next door to the **Cosmeticary** cosmetics store in *Rue Orts* opposite the *Bourse* – form an orderly queue behind me!

Looking ahead to 2012, our first issue of the year in February will be dedicated to all things Belgian – **Made in Belgium** will spotlight the people, products, design and services that are growing this country a reputation far beyond its borders. It's not all *moules* and *frites*, you know, although one look at the bowler hat I'm wearing in the picture might persuade people otherwise. Made entirely of mussel shells by top milliner **Elvis Pompilio**, it forms part of his private collection of one-offs. Pompilio offered to lend it to me – the perfect sartorial statement for a winter Belgian wedding in the Ardennes.

It remains for me to join Publisher **David McGowan** and the *Together* team in wishing all our readers both peace and prosperity for the year to come. ☺



Patricia Kelly
Editor-in-Chief

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Le Chat competition – win a 2012 Le Chat diary

Together has ten copies of cartoonist Philippe Geluck's 2012 Le Chat diary to give away to readers

Simply think of a caption – in English – to fill the speech bubble in this cartoon of cartoonist Philippe Geluck's iconic cat and long-suffering mouse. Send your caption by email before 28 December 2011 to

info@togethermedia.eu with the subject Le Chat competition. The ten best entries will receive a diary and the one we think is the funniest will be published in the next issue of *Together* magazine along with the winner's name. The publisher's decision is final.



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Starring in Belgium

Here's **Federico Grandesso's** choice of entertainment for the festive season

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

The National Orchestra of Belgium conducted by Koen Kessels, artistic director of the Hermes Ensemble, together with the Children's Choir of the Flemish Opera, will give a Christmas concert in the Centre for Fine Arts, Henry Le Boeuf Hall on 23 December. Tickets from €10.

www.bozar.be



MIDDAY CONCERTS

A concert at noon – quite an original idea for the holidays; a number of concerts at lunchtime by winners of the Queen Elisabeth international music competition include one by the string quartet composed of Elisa Kawaguti, Stefan Willems, Leo de Neve and Jan Sciffer on 21 December. At the Centre for Fine Arts, tickets €8.

www.bozar.be



dEUS

The Belgian rock band dEUS is currently on tour promoting its new album *Keep You Close* and the single *Constant Now*. Eclectic melodies mixing different genres such as rock, punk, blues and jazz – playing in Belgium at Antwerp's Lotto arena on 16 December, and Forest National 17 December, with tickets at €40 and €36 respectively.

www.forestnational.be – www.sportpaleis.be – www.deus.be



OPERA

A contemporary and innovative interpretation of the opera *Nabucco* by Giuseppe Verdi, transposed by Geert Allaert and Frank Van Laecke, is a triumph of special effects where light plays an important role. Forest National, 29 and 30 December. Tickets €49-€64.

www.forestnational.be



DURAN DURAN

Welcome back to the iconic 80s group Duran Duran with a new masterpiece *All You Need Is Now* produced by Mark Ronson. With 80 million albums already sold, success is guaranteed. The tour brings the group to Forest National on 29 January. Seats at €56.

www.forestnational.be



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“Personal isn’t the same as important.”

– **Terry Pratchett (b.1948)**

English fantasy writer; from **Men at Arms (1993)**

“We should therefore claim, in the name of tolerance, the right not to tolerate the intolerant.”

– **Karl Popper (1902-94)**

Austrian-born philosopher; **The Open Society and its Enemies (1945)**

“If a man does not make new acquaintance as he advances through life, he will soon find himself alone. A man, Sir, should keep his friendship in constant repair.”

– **Samuel Johnson (1709-84)**

English poet and critic, quoted in James Boswell’s biography **Life of Samuel Johnson (1791)**

“Disinterested love for all living creatures, the most noble attribute of man.”

– **Charles Darwin (1809-82)**

English natural historian; **The Descent of Man (1871)**

“Dream the impossible dream.”

– **Joe Darion (1917-2001)**

American songwriter; **The Impossible Dream (1965 song)**

Source: Oxford Concise Dictionary of Quotations

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Model of British beauty

We spoke to actress and model **Kelly Brook** – on the cover – to find out what she's been doing in Belgium and where she's planning to go next

Kelly Brook's choice of designers for a night out are Bruce Oldfield or Marchesa for red carpet events; when she's sitting in the front row at fashion events she says she would opt for Isabel Marant, and for every day she wears J Brand jeans and the American Vintage label. But the designer names and up-market labels this British actress and model normally sports haven't prevented her from promoting a range of glamorous party clothes for the high street chain New Look – she's been working with them since 2007

– featured here in some of our photos.

FASHION ADVICE

Constantly photographed wherever she goes, Brook suggests investing in good shoes and handbags: "They always make an outfit look more expensive," she explains. She tends not to follow fashion trends herself, but says she dresses for her shape. "I love the 1950s, so always

try to find outfits that nip me in at the waist," she says.

CLASSIC BUT SEXY

"I like to think my style is classic, but sexy," she says – a bit of an understatement from someone who has graced the cover of the American edition of Playboy. "Being on the cover of Playboy was a career high point – everyone from Cindy Crawford to Naomi Campbell has done it."

Having studied at London's Italia Conti Academy of Theatre Arts, Brook started modelling professionally when she was 16 and swiftly rose to national prominence, shortly followed by international recognition. With numerous films and TV acting and presenting roles to her credit, as well as several stage plays, and currently shooting for both television and cinema, Brook claims to prefer modelling to acting.

"I enjoy being on location," she explains. "Modelling has taken me all over the world and I have worked with everyone from David Bailey to Ellen Von Unwerth, who shot the American Playboy cover. I am into clothes and style and I just love great photography." Brook is also somewhat of an entrepreneur, with perfume and clothing among the lines that carry her name.



Ben Riggott
for New Look



All photos this page Ben Riggott for New Look



Clutching her treasured Hermes Birkin bag – contents: Chanel lipsticks, iPhone and credit card – Brook advises anyone aiming for a similar career to “rise above the critics and keep moving forward”. The secret, she says, is to “remain positive and don’t lose faith in yourself”.

“We have a fab recreation ground near where we live in London,” says Brook. “We go to the track and he gives me drills and exercises to do – I usually can’t walk for days afterwards, but I always see great results.”

Brook says she tries to eat regularly and never diets. “I love dancing and loathe going to the gym, so I have to enjoy exercise. I like walking my dog, riding my bike and Pilates.”

She partners Boris Johnson to promote the Mayor of London’s Sky Ride, part of a national campaign to get one million people cycling regularly by 2013. She is also employed by Reebok to front workout videos. But admits she remains partial to cups of tea and biscuits – the British HobNobs brand, to be precise.

REMAIN POSITIVE AND DON'T LOSE FAITH IN YOURSELF

IN SHAPE

With the eyes of just about everyone in the world on her figure, Brook concedes it is important for her to stay in shape and says she believes a balanced diet

and exercise are vital, working out when she can with partner Thom Evans, a former Scotland International rugby player who is currently sprint training for the next Commonwealth Games.

FILMING

Brook has recently been in Belgium’s Waterloo shooting part of an upcoming live action series *Metal Hurlant* for French television, based on the French cult comic books. “My episode is *Masters of Destiny* and I co-star with Joe Flanigan of *Stargate Atlantis* fame,” she explains. “We have eaten some great meals and drunk far too much, but are having a great time.”

Next stop is Belfast, in Northern Ireland, to play the *femme fatale* in a comedy with British comedian Leigh Francis, based on his alter ego Keith Lemon, to be released in the summer of 2012 – called *Keith Lemon: The Film*, it sees Lemon following

his dreams of becoming a successful entrepreneur, just like his hero Richard Branson.

Brook divides her time between London and Los Angeles, and says she’s planning to spend more time working in LA during 2012. She also owns a farmhouse in Kent where she’s intending to spend Christmas.

“I will be with my family in Kent building log fires and wearing silly Christmas jumpers. I am hoping to go somewhere warm for New Year, so maybe St Barths,” she muses, planning in any case to see in the New Year wherever she is with Thom Evans. 📸



Kelly Brook with Mayor of London Boris Johnson

Banish those butterflies

Tips for overcoming a fear of public speaking from **Marie Terese Letorney**, Director and Founder of **Ask your Voice™**

Why is it that when you are about to give a speech, deliver a presentation or introduce yourself, you feel that familiar flutter in your stomach, palpitations, and tightness in the throat, accompanied by an annoying dry cough. You can place an order at a restaurant, give advice to your children, discuss strategy during a team meeting, cheer at a sports game, sing in the church choir or talk for hours to friends on the telephone, all without a problem; yet once under the spotlight, you experience anxiety or panic formulating sounds, let alone words.

STUMBLING FOR WORDS

If you are one of those people, the fear of speaking can be so paralyzing that it can leave you stumbling for words, dominating sentences with 'ahs' and 'ums' or, in extreme cases, stammering or stuttering. The ingredients of this cocktail that makes you tongue-tied are adrenaline, not breathing properly and not having the right mind-set before you even begin to open your mouth. It is important to challenge your fears when speaking, because your voice is part of your identity and what you have to say is important. It's time to speak up with confidence and ease.

ADRENALIN RUSH

Adrenalin is a hormone produced by the adrenal gland in the body causing stimulation of the heart-rate. A rush of adrenalin starts in the nervous system as a reaction to high stress or strong physical exertion. If this happens just before speaking, in whatever situation, breathing will be faster, leading to the tone of the voice sounding higher than normal or the voice shaking. This is the moment to immediately focus on breathing by gently exhaling, blowing out that compressed air of tension a few times before speaking. This will release blocked air caused by misplaced adrenalin, which in turn often causes the larynx to move higher, giving the feeling of a tight throat, sweaty palms and butterflies, inducing panic.

POSITIVE ENERGY

Gently exhale out and let the mind assist. Let the right side of the brain take over by thinking of a peaceful image or sweet memory, or imagine a favorite melody in your head while exhaling out that blocked breath to formulate sound into words. Your nerves will not get the better of you when you introduce yourself, and people will understand your name the first time instead of asking you for it again later. When you can feel your breathing calm down at the beginning of a presentation, your voice will not elevate or quiver. Keep that positive energy going by connecting your relaxed breathing with your thoughts while you speak.



We actually train our ear by the way we speak: get to know the sound of your voice by letting your ear adapt to the very essence of the sound of your voice.

I HAD A SEVERE STAMMERING IMPEDIMENT WHICH DISAPPEARED THROUGH SINGING AND LEARNING HOW TO BREATHE CORRECTLY TO CONQUER ANXIETY

Join a Toastmasters organisation or rehearse in front of friends or family or in front of the bathroom mirror.

By doing this, your ear will be trained to hear your voice relaxed and panic free. Both your ear and your brain will remember these sensations, and eventually you will automatically know when you are not breathing correctly

because you will hear and feel a difference in the way you sound. The brain is a powerful muscle, and the more you practice these tips the quicker you will develop a new habit.

TAKE UP SINGING

Try humming to help prepare before speaking – hum in the morning while getting ready for work, hum in the car and repeat your presentation en route, or hum as you walk. By humming you are already connecting your breathing with your voice and you are also hearing your voice in a relaxed position.

It might be an idea to take up singing, especially if you are one of those who stammer or stutter – join a choir, sing at home, sing in the car, and sing with your children or with friends. Singing is actually sustained speech – you are connected with your breathing and physically cannot stutter or stammer. As an international opera singer and voice specialist, I speak with the voice of experience: from the age of nine until I was 18, I had a severe stammering impediment which disappeared through singing and learning how to breathe correctly to conquer anxiety. I had to learn to appreciate and love my voice and so can you. ☺

www.askyourvoice.com

Keeping fit on the road

Travelling for work and living out of a suitcase and in hotels may not be as exotic as it sounds, especially for the frequent business traveller. Aspria's Health and Well-being Manager **Richard Earney** has some fitness advice for those who are constantly on the road



Frequent travellers need to keep fit

A large number of the corporate people we deal with are frequent travellers and time after time at Aspria we hear the same complaints:

- I constantly feel tired and lethargic in meetings;
- I feel drowsy and always dehydrated coming out of planes and trains;
- I am sick and tired of airport food, eating out and too much alcohol;
- I can't maintain my exercise

programme, lose motivation, feel stiff and often experience lower back pain.

Planes, trains and extended time on the road can give an already sedentary lifestyle a push over the edge. More often than not, cramped into seats that have become increasingly smaller over the last few years or, dare I say, we have become increasingly larger. Overly air conditioned planes leave us feeling dehydrated; come winter time, these environments are fantastic places for spreading bugs and colds.



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UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS

Then there is the food. It is nigh impossible to find healthy eating options in many airports and railway stations. Eating in hotels night after night can bolster the waistline – think of those business dinners, usually accompanied by an alcoholic beverage or two, followed by a trip to the hotel bar. Overall, we're neglecting vital components of well-being, such as sleep, nutrition, exercise and lifestyle balance. If you have some specific weight loss or sports or exercise-related goals, then this lifestyle is not going to help at all. It leads to frustration, poor performance and lack of energy and this will not help you reach your goals, or improve productivity or energy at work – something else to consider in this highly competitive age.

PLANES AND TRAINS

When you are stuck at the airport or railway station, look for a juice bar. Load up on water, not caffeinated drinks and limit sugary snacks. Think about whether you really need that airplane food. More often than not, it's overly processed and laden with fat and you're only eating it because it has been put in front of you. Find raw nuts or fruit to snack on, until you can find a healthier option - this will also help you maintain a more constant energy level throughout the day. Use the stairs, not the escalators, to keep the body moving. It sounds simple, yet it is noticeable how few people do this.

AT THE HOTEL

Set the alarm 15 minutes early. Focus on doing some stretching to get the body moving first thing in the morning. This will help mobilize the myofascial system

of the body, which will no doubt be blocked and feeling tight from travelling and sitting in business meetings. Even better, have a fitness expert give you an individualized hotel-based programme – this will hold you accountable and it can be tailor-made to suit your goals and time frames.

EATING OUT

Try to make the best choice of what is available. Opt for salads, lean meat, poultry or fish, preferably grilled or baked as opposed to fried. No need for extra salt just because it is on the table. Limit creamy sauces or ask to have them put on the side. Replace the fries with vegetables. Cut out the bread, especially white bread. And ask yourself whether you really need that dessert.

Discipline is a key ingredient and depends on how much you want to achieve your goals, feel better, and improve work productivity and energy – if you want this badly enough, then self-control and willpower are necessary. However, by making some simple changes, you will instantly feel better. Find the motivational cues that keep you on task, focus on how good you feel when you do make the right choices and keep that in mind when the going gets tough.

Aspria has an expert team of trainers and specialists that will come up with bespoke Business Fit programmes for you or your company; don't hesitate to get in touch to find out how we can help you feel better, increase productivity and maximize potential. 📞

www.aspria.be

Home alone

Couples who live apart from each other are becoming increasingly common; relationship counsellor **Suzette Reed** takes a look at the growing trend of Living Apart Together



Actress Helena Bonham Carter and her partner live in adjoining houses

Living and intimate relationships are about two people sharing time together, doing things together, and having a close relationship; about sharing the same space both physically and emotionally.

Well, yes and no – more and more couples are in committed relationships but choose to live apart. Living Apart Together (LAT) is a growing lifestyle pattern, and often a lifestyle choice.

Estimates by the now defunct Center for the Study of Long Distance Relationships put around 18% of couples in northern Europe into this category.

Research by demographer John Haskey of Oxford University suggests three main reasons for people in relationships to live apart and that this is a rapidly growing phenomenon. LAT couples generally fall into three categories: apart, but sadly; apart, yet gladly, and apart, but working on it.

SADLY APART

LAT couples who are apart, but sadly so, may be those whose work takes them away from home; or there may be other family commitments keeping them apart – such as former relationships or caring for other family members; or they may be subject to legal or residency requirements.

Some couples choose to have separate homes and come together when they want to, falling into the gladly apart

YOUNGER COUPLES ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE FAMILIAR WITH MANAGING LONG DISTANCE RELATIONSHIPS

category. They often live close together but have a separate space in the same house or in the same area, sharing responsibilities for family needs but acknowledging they need to have room – think English actress Helena Bonham Carter

and her partner, director Tim Burton, who live in adjoining houses with a communicating door.

The third category of couples – apart, but working on it – are trying to find a way forward with the commitment they have for each other, alongside a need to make sense of the differing pressures they're under and decisions each one has to make.

LETTING GO

Younger couples are more likely to be familiar with managing long distance relationships. Their first experience of intimate relationships, either at university

or in their early careers, is often a choice between trying to keep together with geographical distance between them, and letting go of the relationship.

Difficult choices – but how much more tricky when the commitment has been made and others may be involved. Career paths that separate families, albeit temporarily, can be complicated. Negotiating the ground rules for families that are not in the same home and may not be in the same country can be fraught. In an age of fantastic networking opportunities, we can text, email, Facebook, tweet and Skype – all means of bringing us closer together. But time zones and work pressures can impinge on family life and finding time to spend together is really vital – and, after all, a cuddle is always a lot better than a Facebook post. Couples and families that are in for the long haul need to make plans together and be realistic and optimistic about how and what is possible.

Some relationships thrive when there is a bit of distance between the couple, but this can only happen if mutually agreed; if one partner feels ambivalent or put upon by the decision, then things can quickly turn sour. The quality of time spent together needs to be the focus, rather than the quantity. Communication is the key to managing a way through the challenges, and communication is as much about listening as it is about speaking if absence is to make the heart grow fonder, rather than leading to a case of out of sight, out of mind. ☘

Is the influence of Davos on the wane?

The World Economic Forum bills itself as something special; originally intended as a bridge between political and business decision-making, this annual event held in the Swiss ski resort of Davos wants nothing less than to change the world. Report by **Cillian Donnelly**



Eyes turn once again to Davos

Describing itself as “an international organisation committed to improving the state of the world”, the World Economic Forum (WEF) boasts some heavy hitters from among its attendees: political bigwigs,

business innovators and captains of industry, civic leaders and, occasionally, Bono. It certainly aims to be broadly inclusive, and its mission statement is bold. “By engaging business, political, academic and other levels of society,” it says it can “shape global, regional and industry agendas”. Which is undoubtedly setting the bar high, and when it meets between 25-29 January, 2012, its theme is no less than ‘The Great Transformation: Shaping New Models’.

DAVOS MAN

Of course, there are those who cast a somewhat cynical eye on the proceedings. The WEF has been dismissed as a capitalist love-in, little more than a junket and, with reference to the ultra-secretive organisation beloved of conspiracy theorists everywhere, a bit Bilderberg-light. There may or may not be elements of truth in these assertions, but the simple fact is that people queue up to take part. It is certainly the place to be seen, or, like Nelson Mandela and F. W. de Klerk in 1992, use the event to make a grand political statement.



Kofi Annan used Davos to announce the Global Health Initiative

Voguishly dubbed 'Davos Man' by American political scientist Samuel P. Huntington, who saw the kind of person who frequented the five-day get-together as the type to care less about national borders, and instead put their belief in the eroding power of globalisation, it is sometimes hard to escape the conclusion that Davos exists solely to pander to the global fantasies of white, male elites.


GLOBAL RESCUE

Such people will, naturally, swear that they take part only to do their bit in meeting the challenges of global improvement, rather than for the clean air, picturesque mountain

scenery and world-famous ski slopes. Davos is also, by way of coincidence, a top Alpine resort – see our feature on page 70. Located in the Swiss Alps, the town is nestled in one of Switzerland's biggest and best ski areas; something that British Chancellor of the Exchequer, George

Osborne, availed of in 2011, apparently in preparation for a major speech he was due to deliver later that day.

In addition to accusations of encouraging awayday antics, latterly the Forum has also been criticised for becoming something of a marketplace for the latest electronic gadgets: hand-held devices and phones of all kinds are routinely road-tested at the event by their parent companies, who help make up the 1,000 or so that fund the World Economic Forum. Recently, as if to perpetuate the gadget-boy stereotype, technology hook-ups with new media, such as YouTube and Facebook have helped to broadcast the Forum's message.

But even dispensing with the cynicism, it is hard to deny that the Forum is now a somewhat one-sided affair, a showcase for big egos and devoid of diversity. Good initiatives have certainly come out of Davos in the past, such as the Global Health Initiative, announced by Kofi Annan in 2002, but increasingly its pronouncements seem somehow less vital. In January, as the world's eyes turn once again to Davos, and looking through all the gloss, the question is, can all the hard work of global rescue really be achieved – or is the pull of some of the resort's other attractions too much of a distraction? 

GOOD INITIATIVES HAVE CERTAINLY COME OUT OF DAVOS IN THE PAST

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Emerging markets score points for investors

Financial advisors are urging investors to put their cash into emerging markets as the economies of the developing world expand, writes **Laura Cohn**

For investors, 2011 was a stomach-churning roller coaster ride. Toward the end of the year in particular, stock markets around the world saw wild gyrations as investors tried to sort out the fate of the eurozone, the outlook for the US economy and the likely outcome of the US presidential election

At one point, from August through the first part of October, the market was so volatile that the Dow Jones Industrial Average either fell or rose more than 100 points about two thirds of the trading days. The result: markets were the most volatile they'd been since the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008.

STRATEGISTS SUGGEST INVESTING IN THE EMERGING MARKETS, POTENTIALLY THE NEW ENGINES OF GROWTH

markets, potentially the new engines of

growth in the global economy. Developing countries used to be highly speculative bets that offered high risks, but potentially high rewards. But in the current environment, they may not be as risky as they appear. For nearly two generations, growth around the world has been driven by the West, particularly the consumer-driven US economy. But now, analysts expect growth in both the US and Europe to sink to levels below 2 percent. Economies in the emerging markets, on the other hand, are forecast to expand by 4-6 percent – or more.

That's quite a change. "We have a global economy today where two-thirds of the growth is coming from the developing world, not from the US and not from Europe," notes Lisa Shalett, chief investment officer for Merrill Lynch Global Wealth Management, in a webcast to investors. "People are underexposed to the paradigm shift."

At the moment, Shalett says, investors on average have just 3 percent of their portfolios in emerging markets. But that figure should be closer to 8 percent, she advises, in a report "The Great Global Shift: New World, New Rules" co-authored with Ian Bremmer, president of the New York-based consulting firm Euroasia Group. "There's really a need for a more global perspective," Shalett says.

MARKET SHELTER

As the New Year begins, with so much unresolved in Europe and the US, where should investors go to seek shelter? Strategists suggest investing in the emerging



WHERE TO LOOK

So where in the developing world to look? Strategists advise starting with the so-called BRIC nations of Brazil, Russia, India and China, long the emerging markets powerhouses. Jim O'Neill, the chairman of Goldman Sachs Asset Management who coined the term "BRICs" a decade ago, is now also pointing to South Korea, Turkey, Mexico and Indonesia.

Emerging markets stocks can certainly be volatile. When the Standard & Poor's 500 stock index fell 4 percent from late summer through early fall, for instance, the MSCI Emerging Markets index declined by 14 percent, as concerns about demand for products made in the emerging world rattled investors.

But reduced demand for exports may not be as dire for these economies as investors thought at the time. Analysts expect the reliance on exports to fall in the years to come, as an expanding middle class gains purchasing power and buys high-end European and US goods.

FISCAL HEALTH

There are other compelling reasons to invest. According to the International Monetary Fund, emerging markets have healthier fiscal houses than those in the developed world. In fact, developing nations' debts are about 35 percent of their economic output, compared to more than 100 percent for the mature markets. Fiscal health supports growth, analysts note.

If you want to invest in such markets, the best place to put a small slice of your portfolio – 8 percent or less – is into a mutual fund to diversify your risk. The T. Rowe Price Emerging Markets stock fund, which has about half its holdings in the BRICs, and the rest in the stocks of companies in countries such as South Korea and Mexico, is a good place to start.

Without spreading cash into emerging markets funds, Goldman's O'Neill warns, investors will be missing out on any chance of near-term gains. "People who can't get their head around the idea that these are the growth engines of the world are missing out on the biggest thing of our generation," he says. ☛

Fighting climate change with low-energy buildings

A new building designed to use minimum energy and take what it needs from renewable sources has been unveiled in Brussels and, as **Nigel Griffiths** reports, the same technology is available to renovate old buildings

With its energy use a startling one-twelfth of that of a classic building, just sitting in the brand-new Aeropolis II building is a remarkable experience. It is light and airy, the temperature is perfect, and there is comforting, homely wood paneling everywhere. Its energy footprint is negligible and it is termed a near zero energy building or nZEB – already a buzzword in the corridors of the European Commission. Designed by the innovative Architectes Associés, this is a new breed of construction based on the passive house building concept and the company is already working on its next nZEB project.

IT IS TERMED A NEAR ZERO ENERGY BUILDING

Classed as the largest operational passive energy building in the Benelux, Aeropolis is naturally ventilated and acoustically excellent, achieving its exceptional low energy qualities through the use of airtight walls and roof, triple glazing, solar protection and reinforced insulation. It is also equipped with a 'Canadian well' system, which uses the stable temperature of the water table some

metres below ground to add heat to the building in winter, and cool it in summer.

The passive house building concept combines massive low tech – prefabricated concrete sections and wooden panels – with a fearsome computerized energy management system to cut energy consumption to the bare minimum. The design takes into account additional factors such as the direction of sunlight, shade, under soil temperatures and local renewable energy sources – a solution to cutting energy use and CO₂ emissions sitting below our feet and over our heads.

The buildings we live and work in represent the bulk of energy consumption in Europe. A massive 40 percent of energy goes into heating them, cooling them and keeping the lights and computers on. New EU-wide laws have been agreed to ensure all buildings are built to nZEB standards after 2020. The problem is that most of the energy consumption takes place in old building stock, particularly the system-built constructions of the 1960s when low construction cost rather than energy consumption was the design priority.

Yet new studies show that a concerted programme aimed at reducing energy consumption in buildings can cut up to 32 percent of the total primary energy used. This is equivalent to 4 billion barrels of oil per year or the total production of the coal and nuclear energy sectors in Europe.



The Aeropolis building at Ave Urbain Britsiers, B-1030 © Architectes Associés M. Detiffe

The Buildings Performance Institute Europe, BPIE, states that the technology exists to deliver the major part of the savings, but it is not being deployed.

"Renovating or retrofitting of the existing stock of residential and commercial buildings can bring about the energy cuts we need to reach Europe's climate targets," says BPIE's Executive Director Oliver Rapf.

"BPIE is recommending establishing ambitious renovation strategies across Europe which can cut the energy consumption of buildings by over 70 percent by 2050. This will drastically reduce the EU's dependency on the import of fossil fuels and give a huge boost to the economy."

Retrofitting involves certain investments but is always profitable over the long run – but who should pay for the upfront costs? Residential property owners are often elderly and a 15 year cost-saving programme may not appeal. Many residential blocks are co-owned and

persuading a housing association to agree on heavy long-term expenditure is understandably a major challenge. By contrast the massive public buildings sector can perhaps be coerced more easily into doing the 'right thing'.

RENOVATE EUROPE

In addition to establishing the technical backdrop to retrofitting, BPIE has been bringing together EU officials and energy, construction and financial experts such as the European Investment Bank, to search for ways of financing it. The German authorities are already pushing ahead and targeting banks as the one-stop-shop to provide information, advice and finance to individual house owners.

The European Alliance of Companies for Energy Efficiency in Buildings, EuroACE has also picked up the baton, launching a major campaign "Renovate Europe" to spread the word. EuroACE Secretary General Adrian Joyce is passionate about the task: "Buildings account for 40 percent of Europe's energy consumption and ambitious action to tackle unnecessary energy use in the EU's building stock should be an absolute priority of European energy policy."

Reducing energy demand, Joyce points out, can also save taxpayers money and make their homes more comfortable, while building renovation has the potential to create over a million new jobs in Europe.

"European governments must make the right choice for the future and push for the deep renovation of buildings as part of an ambitious energy agenda," Joyce adds. "Missing the energy saving targets of this approach means turning our backs on new jobs, cheaper running costs for consumers and business and is refusing to use available proven technologies to effectively curb carbon emissions." ☞

www.bpie.eu
www.renovate-europe.eu

The **winter sales** start on Tuesday, 3 January 2012. A number of stores in the centre of Brussels participate in the **Afterwork Shopping** scheme and remain open until 20h each Thursday. Shops on the City of Brussels turf are allowed to open every Sunday during the lead-up to Christmas – 4, 11, 18 and 25 December – yes, even **Christmas Day** – although the initiative is discretionary, so don't expect all shops to be open on these Sundays. Shops in the prestigious *Avenue Louise/Avenue de la Toison d'Or/Boulevard de Waterloo/Rue de Namur* area reversed an earlier decision to stay open late on 15 December, and are now instead participating in **Louise Christmas Sunday**, giving customers an opportunity to shop on Sunday, 18 December from 12h-18h.

WINTER
STYLE

Magic touch

She will always be associated with the Harry Potter films, but actress and model **Emma Watson** is proving there is more to her than playing Hermione

Emma Watson says she can't remember a time when she wasn't famous, having auditioned as the little witch Hermione Granger at the age of nine, adding there have been times when her life has been rather odd.

"I think some of my best anecdotes revolve around just how surreal the whole situation was," she says. "I could come from a day at school when I'd be doing maths one minute and then changing into a premiere dress the next. If you'd taken a snapshot, it would have looked ridiculous to see me sitting in the canteen speaking to elves, witches and wizards in full costume but it became perfectly normal to me because it was my life."

As far as the Harry Potter films are concerned, she says she'll never forget riding on a broomstick or "being tortured by Helena Bonham Carter".

Reading for a liberal arts degree (English, history and art) at the Ivy League Brown University in the US, Watson is currently on an exchange with Oxford in England – she claims her home there is her favourite hideaway – and will spend her final year back at Brown.

"My studying has always been very important to me because I feel it's cocooned me in a way. It's been a really nice escape because although the film industry is amazing, there are sides of it which are very superficial and crazy. I find

my education very grounding, it keeps me motivated and I really love learning."

Currently an ambassador for the beauty brand Lancôme, following in the footsteps of such luminaries as Julia Roberts, Kate Winslet and Penelope Cruz, Watson is the face of the brand's perfume Trésor Midnight Rose.

"In summer, in the garden of my father's house in London [born in Paris to British lawyers, Watson's parents divorced when she was five] we always have jasmine growing on the balcony. So the scent of jasmine, which you can find in the fragrance, always makes me think of summer evenings and being outside. I just love it. Also, roses are my favourite flowers." Elsewhere in the fashion world, Watson has twice been chosen as the face of Burberry in their advertising campaigns and she also collaborated with the fair trade pioneer charity People Tree, putting her name to a clothing line she helped them develop.

"There are aspects of the fashion industry that can be cruel to the environment and cruel to people who work in the industry. It's good to encourage people to consider what they are buying, where it comes from and just to care about it."

But acting is the only career on her horizon – "hopefully making brilliant and interesting films" – with the current release *My Week with Marilyn* one of her post-Potter film roles alongside Kenneth Branagh and Eddie Redmayne.





Tom Munro for Lancôme © 2011



Tom Munro for Lancôme © 2011

"Most of my scenes were alongside Eddie Redmayne who is such a lovely guy and a great actor so it was a real pleasure to work with him. I play a wardrobe assistant on Marilyn Monroe's last big film that she did and I don't want to give too much away but it's another stellar British cast with a really great director – Simon Curtis."

Watson also has some insights into the storyline and the character she portrays in the film of the coming of age novel *Perks of Being a Wallflower*, written and directed by Stephen Chbosky and due for release in 2012: "I play a girl called Sam who has had a pretty difficult childhood and a hard time growing up. She's really screwed up the first two, three years of her time at high school and hasn't had very good grades. She's not

been treated well by guys she's dated and has been made to feel worthless. It's about her finding her sense of worth. I felt really compelled by her story and her struggle to find belief in herself. It's a really nice story."

While she says her education keeps her feet on the ground, keeping her motivated, Watson says she would love to try theatre.

"I think performing live, getting that energy and doing it in that way is a really special experience," she says, adding she would "love to do some Shakespeare one day and play Juliet or Ophelia". Shakespeare, she says, would have been one of her ideal dinner party guests: "I'd love to know where he got the inspiration from to write all those amazing stories." 📖

DRESS TO IMPRESS

WINTER STYLE

Shirt
PAULE KA

Red dress
STOULS FOR CACHEMIRE COTON SOIE

Shoes
NEW LOOK

Ring
POMELATO

PHOTOGRAPHER: GREGOR COLLIERNE
www.gregorcollienne.com

STYLIST: NICHOLAS SIROT
www.nicholassiro.com

HAIR AND MAKE-UP: BÉATRICE STICH FOR L'ORÉAL PROFESSIONNEL AND YVES ST LAURENT
www.beatricestich.com

MODELS: LOLA, AMBER, MAXIME OF DOMINIQUE MODELS AGENCY
www.dominiquemodelsagency.com

Total look blue print dress and black coat
LUC DUCHÈNE

Shoes (black and red)
HUGO BOSS



DRESS TO IMPRESS

Total look
DIANE VON FURSTENBERG

Shoes
SONIA RYKIEL



Blue navy cape
RUE BLANCHE

Hats
ELVIS POMPILIO

Yellow coat
TARA JARMON

Bordeaux coat
NEW LOOK

Right:
Blue navy cape
RUE BLANCHE

Shirt
NEW LOOK

Brooch
SONIA RYKIEL

Bag
LANCEL

Left:
Top
FRED PERRY

Bordeaux coat
NEW LOOK

Trousers
JEAN PAUL KNOTT

Hat
ELVIS POMPILIO



Yellow coat
TARA JARMON

Trousers
FRED PERRY





Left:
Black top and vest
SABRINA FASOLI

Black legging trousers
NEW LOOK

Shoes
HENNES &
MAURITZ

Middle:
Blue smoking jacket
SONIA RYKIEL

Trousers
SONIA BY SONIA
RYKIEL

Right:
Grey smoking jacket
FILIPPA K

Black top
HENNES & MAURITZ

Left:
Top
GÉRARD DAREL

Fur waistcoat
SABRINA FASOLI

Shorts
COMPTOIR DES
COTONNIERS

Shoes
COMPTOIR DES
COTONNIERS

Hat
HERMES

Right:
Leather coat
GÉRARD DAREL

Top and shorts
SABRINA FASOLI





*Total look (dress and cape) Hermes
Amber wears the new HERMESSENCE scent
"SANTAL MASSOIA" by Hermes*



*Yellow dress
TARA JARMON*

*Blue coat
HENNES & MAURITZ*

Designer smellies

No design house is complete these days without a perfume to its name. Beauty Editor **Delphine Stefens** shares her favourites



CHANEL N°5

"A woman's perfume, with the scent of a woman" is how Coco Chanel described it. Extrait de Parfum for her €238,98/30ml

After taking the fashion scene by storm, designer Coco Chanel took on perfume. She commissioned perfumer Ernest Beaux to compose something befitting herself and her clientele, a modern and elegant scent. Not the usual single note floral of the day

but a unique composite fragrance. As the story goes, Beaux submitted several samples labelled with numbers and Chanel picked sample N°5, and a legend was born. Chanel launched what became the world's most famous perfume back in 1921, and numerous designers have followed suit ever since.



VIKTOR & ROLF

Flowerbomb. The flowery and patchouli blast limited edition for Christmas. Eau de parfum for her €113,85/50ml



MAISON MARTIN MARGIELA

The unisex floral, woody and musky fragrance is unchanged but bottled in a festive silver flask for this 2011 limited edition. Eau de toilette €95/50ml



TOMMY HILFIGER

Eau de Prep Tommy. A hint of juniper berry and a splash of tonic are some of the ingredients of this preppy cocktail. Eau de toilette for him €64,20/100ml



YVES SAINT LAURENT

L'Homme Libre. A leathery and woody scent with a refreshing dash of pink pepper. Eau de toilette for him €82/100ml



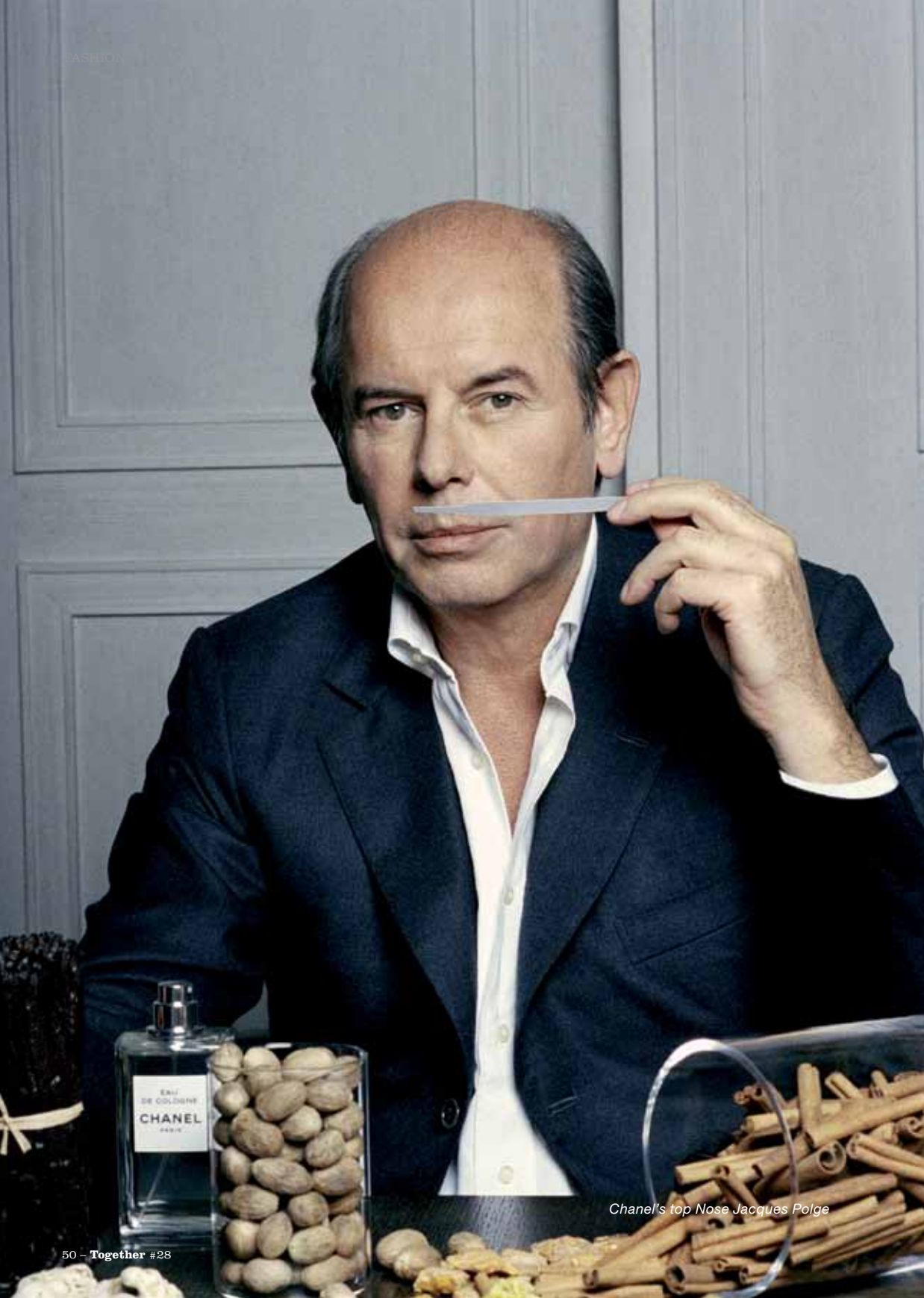
TOM FORD

Santal Blush is an intense unisex private blend of sandalwood, spices and florals. Eau de parfum €420/250ml; exclusively available at Senteurs d'Ailleurs, 1A Place Stephanie, B-1050 Brussels



LANVIN

Eclat d'Arpège. A lilac and lemony modern twist on the Lanvin illustrious classic of 1927. Eau de parfum for her €100/80ml



Chanel's top Nose Jacques Polge

Now smell this

Perfumer **Jacques Polge** is the third generation “Nose” at Chanel; Coco Mademoiselle and the men’s fragrance Bleu de Chanel are among his many creations

Following in the footsteps of two Chanel legends, Ernest Beaux and Henri Robert, the respective creators of Chanel No. 5 and No. 19, Jacques Polge is the guardian of a unique olfactory heritage. Year upon year, he ensures that the original scent of all the Chanel fragrances is reproduced to the letter.

Trained to recognize hundreds of different smells, Polge arrived at Chanel in 1978. “I worked for six months with my predecessor, Henri Robert, who by then was quite old – I think he was over 80. I’ve been here ever since,” explains Polge, whose son has followed him into the business and is also a Nose, although with a different company.

With a passion for poetry, Polge was studying literature and English at Aix-en-Provence when he heard that a company in Grasse – the French town known as the perfume capital of the world – was looking for Noses for its branch in New York. “Fragrance,” he says, “is a form of poetry. It doesn’t speak but it gives so much.”

He studied the basics in Grasse but says: “It was only in New York that I began to truly understand what I was doing.”

Upon his return to France, Polge worked in Paris for an established perfume company which creates fragrances for couturiers. “We learned why a fragrance suited one brand and not another. It’s a very specific approach to creation, a reflection on style.”

Polge’s role at Chanel includes the selection of beautiful raw materials, including ylang-ylang from the Comoros Islands and patchouli from Indonesia, as well as rose and jasmine from Grasse which contribute to the scent of Chanel No. 5. The job isn’t all about a sense of smell – he explains that a perfumer also has to have a good memory, and will know what a scent will smell like by simply reading a formula.

He says he believes that each fragrance must “take you somewhere”. But the voyage is also a mystery: “If it lacks this vital element, it isn’t able to surpass time.”



What makes Chanel perfumes different to others, he explains, is that the company makes its own fragrances and has its own laboratory. “At Chanel, fragrance is designed like a luxury, small-scale product. To this extent, the brand culture is exceptional and the working conditions unique.”

Polge says he loves jasmine and rose, but dislikes “the invading crudeness of tuberose and mimosa”. For men, he prefers woody notes – sandalwood, vetiver and cedar. His favourite moment during the creation process, he says, is at the beginning “because you have the impression that anything is possible”. Afterwards, he says, it becomes more difficult. “Then a moment arrives when you feel that things are coming to a close, things become obvious and the message becomes stronger.” He admits to being apprehensive about how a new product will be met by the public: “I’m always a bit worried. I always want to know how it will do.”

Pocket watches on parade

The pocket watch is making an unexpected comeback; **Delphine Stefens** makes a selection

The main reason for watches to move from pockets to wrists in the early twentieth century was practicality.

Louis

Cartier designed one of the first wristwatches for his aviator friend Alberto Santos-Dumont, who found it difficult to pull out his pocket watch while navigating his plane. It was a commercial hit and Cartier still features a Santos collection today.

The pocket watch was gradually replaced by the wristwatch but never fully ceased to exist and is now making an unexpected comeback. A watch nowadays is indeed much more about attractiveness than usefulness. Take De Bethune's DBM alligator smartphone cover with an encased watch – with so many people checking their phones to



De Bethune DBM: price upon request

find out the time of day, it is a bold reinvention of the pocket watch. Bell & Ross, on the other hand, channels the past with the PW1, or Pocket Watch 1,

from its Vintage Collection. Founded just under twenty years ago, the brand looked to the early 1900s and the military for inspiration, yet the result of this nostalgic exercise is surprisingly modern. While the pocket watch could become the must-have accessory of the modern-day dandy or fashionista, it may also become a sound investment. Those opting for a true antique or vintage specimen will find the value of pocket watches of highly praised manufacturers or brands has not increased as much as for wristwatches, because fewer people wear them these days – at least, for

now. For the best of both worlds, consider a single-hand wristwatch by MeisterSinger, a brand launched ten years ago but inspired by seventeenth century single-hand clocks. ⌚



MeisterSinger Ur Uhr No 1
€998



Bell & Ross PW1
€2,000



Harnais pocket by
La Montre Hermès
€1390

WATCH IT !

Together's selection of watches for him and for her to suit every pocket



Swatch Touch available in various colours €110



Victorinox lady's watch with diamond surround €1,395



Victorinox man's watch €1,750



Poiray lady's dress watch with interchangeable straps in semi-precious stones. From €650 at Howards, 30 rue Ernest Allard, B-1000



Louis Erard limited edition (80 pieces) in rose gold with alligator bracelet €5,590



Philip Stein lady's watch €1,340



Philip Stein man's watch €2,570



Peigniet Paris Royal in pink gold at €19,950



Maurice Lacroix Les Classiques collection, hand-wound, stainless steel, leather strap €2,040



Seiko Ananta diver's watch, limited edition of 700 €4,000



Montblanc Star collection in steel, €3,450



Cartier Pasha Skeleton in white gold with diamonds, price upon request Franck Dieleman © Cartier 2010



Jaeger-LeCoultre Grande Reverso Lady Ultra Thin in pink gold with diamonds €23,100

Innovative jewellery puzzles

Having designed jewellery since she was a child, Italy's Licia Mattioli is set to conquer the world with good taste, according to **Delphine Stefens**

Recently appointed President of Federorafi, Italy's national federation for silverware, gold and jewellery manufacturers, Licia Mattioli is the first woman to hold that position.

Mattioli started in jewellery making fifteen years ago in her native Turin when, together with her father Luciano, she bought Antica Ditta Marchisio, one of Italy's longest established goldsmiths, bearer of the first trade mark delivered by the city in the 19th century, which is still

used today. A lawyer, then in her late twenties, Mattioli set about revolutionizing the business with the guidance of her

father and deepening her own understanding of business management.

One of the first things she did was study the vast archives of the Antica Ditta Marchisio which manufactures jewellery for several world-renowned brands, looking into design from both an aesthetic and a technical point of view. Launching the company's own Mattioli brand in 2000, she says she wanted "the designs to be playful and the earrings light", trusting to instinct that this is what women want.

The brand's iconic Puzzle collection illustrates Mattioli's penchant for straight lines and clean shapes as well as her sense of proportion. This translates, for instance, into a pair of fine earrings that comes with three pairs of pendants that can easily be changed allowing their owner to mix and match.



Jewellery chief Licia Mattioli

STRAIGHT LINES AND CLEAN SHAPES



Puzzle pink gold necklace with brown mother of pearl and ebony, price on request



Tibet pink gold ring with brown diamonds €4.380



Puzzle pink gold earrings with diamonds and interchangeable brown mother of pearl jackets €990



Saturno pink gold ring with smoky quartz and moonstone €2.090

Opening her first boutique in Rome, Mattioli says she did not do so "just for the sake of it", but instead waited and looked for "the ideal place that would correspond to the image of the brand and feel right". Inaugurated about a year ago, the Mattioli shop on Via del Babuino in Rome is a superb Art Deco oasis of calm in the midst of this busy fashion thoroughfare. Decorated in tones of beige and black, the exquisite furniture and lighting blend into a cosy whole, giving customers a sense of being at home. And that's exactly what Licia Mattioli was looking for: "A place that feels like a salon

where we can welcome friends and customers alike."

Mattioli's next stop may very well be Moscow or even Shanghai, for this warm, yet strong-willed woman's modern take on jewellery-making is definitely winning hearts as well as a share of the market. A key to her success, says Mattioli, is that "as a true Gemini, I always strive for the perfect balance between my creative and managerial selves". ☺

•Available in Brussels at Howards, 30 rue Ernest Allard, B-1000



Jewellery by Caroline Swolfs –
www.carolineswolfs.be

Things we like



For writing thank you letters: luxury fountain pen
€750, rollerball €630, ballpoint €545 from the
Montblanc Princess Grace collection



Rotary wine rack holds 9 bottles, Girbal
Le Soïn du Vin €37.50 www.girbal.be



Selection of flavoured extra virgin olive
oil, Oliviers & Co €36.90 box of 5x50ml
flasks www.oliviers-co.com



Lounge about on a selection of cushions from
Home Concept Store, 70 Rue de Namur,
B-1000

www.bensimon.com

Horsey heaven

Award-winning French artist **Marine Oussedik** is renowned throughout the equestrian world for her paintings and sculptures of horses, now reproduced on a range of china



Artist Marine Oussedik and her horse Jeff

Passionate about everything to do with horses, Marine Oussedik has been drawing and painting them since she was five years old. The go-to artist when equestrian magazines and books need illustrating, she is also an accomplished horsewoman and rides every day when she can. Having graduated from the Paris art college l'Ecole Supérieure d'Art Graphique, and with a permanent exhibition at the Living Museum of Horsemanship in Chantilly, France, Oussedik, 44, has exhibited all over

the world. Among the works in her diversified portfolio are children's books and toys, and her Horses of the Wind series has now been reproduced on a range of fine china, available at the Gien store in the Brussels Sablon, including a limited edition of hand-painted pieces. A wider selection of her work will be displayed at the Salon of Animal Artists in France during December (see Together's international To Do list on page 94).

www.marine-oussedik.net



The Eagle

Companions



Salukis



Bronze by Marine Oussedik



Face to Face

“A man travels the world in search of what he needs and returns home to find it.”
- **George Moore (1852-1933)**
Irish novelist; *The Brook Kerith* (1916)

“Living is my job and my art.”
- **Montaigne (1533-92)**
French moralist and essayist; *Essays* (1580)

“Let’s have one other gaudy night.”
- **William Shakespeare (1564-1616)**
English dramatist; *Anthony and Cleopatra* (1606-7)

“We have no more right to consume happiness without producing it than to consume wealth without producing it.”
- **George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)**
Irish dramatist; *Candida* (1898)

“Everything not forbidden is compulsory.”
- **T. H. White (1906-64)**
English novelist; *The Sword in the Stone* (1938)

“If people don’t want to come out to the ball park, nobody’s going to stop ‘em.”
- **Yogi Berra (b.1925)**
American baseball player

Source: Oxford Concise Dictionary of Quotations

LIFE OF
LEISURE

Flemish jewel of France

Situated in northern France near the border with Belgium, Lille is at the crossroads of Europe's high speed rail network. **Colin Moors** recommends getting off the train and spending some time there

A jewel in the midst of old Flanders, Lille – or Rijsel in Flemish – is a town that has gone from being down-at-heel with a dying cloth industry to a must-see attraction for shoppers, diners and day trippers. Lille is so close to Brussels you could reasonably go there for lunch, but there is a whole lot more to this town than the food.

Since the arrival of the Eurostar terminal in 1994, and the subsequent revival of the town's economic fortunes, Lille has proven to be the very model of how best to invest a massive amount of cash. Getting there from

Brussels couldn't be easier – an hour or so by car, or a gentle half hour by Thalys.

THEY ACTUALLY WANT PEOPLE TO COME AND ENJOY THEIR TOWN

French, of course, is widely spoken but the locals will also converse in Ch'ti, a form of Picard spoken in Northern France. Why not download an app for your smartphone and learn some – it exists, really. Alternatively, they will happily chat in Flemish – the languages make no difference to a town that's full of friendly people. There's certainly a warm welcome in most establishments; it's almost as if they actually want people to come and enjoy their town.

GENERAL DE GAULLE

The first place most people will probably

want to visit is the Grand Place. Also known as *Place du Général de Gaulle* and named after one of Lille's more famous modern-day sons, the square is a delightful if somewhat odd mix of French and Flemish classical architecture that really embodies the flavour of Lille itself – a hybrid town and happy to be so. The highlight of the Grand Place is the beautiful *Vieille Bourse*, a Flemish Baroque construction forming a square with a courtyard and ornately decorated with plaques, carvings and some rather mischievous looking gargoyles. Although it may look as if it was purpose-built, the square is actually many houses all joined together – they knew how to do a house conversion in those days.

CITADEL

A little further out of town, around one kilometre or so, is the old citadel. After Lille was reclaimed by the French in 1688, the citadel was built and the city walls strengthened to resist the advances of any other country that fancied invading and claiming it for their own, an unfortunate hazard of being Lillois in those days. The citadel was built to resemble a five-pointed star and was double-walled and moated to ensure nobody could just walk in uninvited. The designer, Sébastien le Prestre de Vauban, designer of over 150 fortified buildings, called it "queen of the citadels". He may well have kicked himself when it was overrun by forces loyal to Spain, Holland, England and Portugal just 24 years later.



La Vieille Bourse, highlight of Lille's Grand Place

These days, happily, the citadel can be sauntered into without fear of cannon fire. Home to the French Rapid Reaction Force, it's quite a sedate ramble around the two km perimeter – just watch out for the armies of joggers and roller-bladers. For children, and indeed the whole family, there is a zoo just outside with many species of birds, apes and other assorted fauna. There's even a pair of rhinos. Best of all, admission is free, and it's open from March through December.

FOOD AND DRINK

All this jaunting around will doubtless leave you feeling hungry. Before the restaurant recommendations, two points

to bear in mind. Firstly, the people are lovely but appear to be in no tearing hurry – it's probably best to fit in with their

LILLE IS VERY MUCH THE PLACE TO GO FOR LUNCH

timetable and not rush. Secondly, the Flemish influence converges somewhat with the French, so you'll get good quality French food and Flemish portions. The two watchwords here are 'delicious' and 'huge'. For a languorous lunch, try *Au Paon d'Or* (2 Place de Béthune, 59000 Lille T.+33(0)3 20 42 83 52). It's just off the tourist trail, but not by much, and the *vispotje*, *moules* or even ham and *frites* are really tasty. Again, service is pleasant, but leisurely.

For something extremely Lillois, try *La Guinguette de la Marine* (8 Ave Léon

Jouhaux, 59000 Lille T.+33(0)3 20 39 85 43), a family-run place you simply have to book to eat in. The place is dripping with authenticity, from the swings at the bar (yes, swings) to the cheesy soundtrack, matched only by the cheesiness of the menu. Try the *Flamische de Maroilles*, a quiche-like affair made with the local cheese, or the 'Welsch', a dish made with bread, ham and cheese – lots and lots of cheese. Not recommended for low fat diets, but divine. Both are served with more frites than you can shake a salt cellar at and washed down with an artisanal beer.

Speaking of beer, Lille may well have the highest number of beers and bars per capita outside our own dear Brussels. If you can't find a place to get a drink in Lille, you really aren't trying. Probably the best bet is to give *Les 3 Brasseurs* (18 Place Gare, 59000 Lille T.+33(0)3 20 06 37 27). Savour one (or many) of their beers, or take a chance on La Mousse du Moment, the latest experimental beer being brewed. They are all brewed on the premises and taste fresh and lively. Best value is the tasting palette, offering the four main beers in 12cl glasses. In reality, these glasses tend to be filled to around 16cl, so you get a lot of beer for your money. The gluttonous could go for the metre of beer (10 x 25cl) or share it with friends if they insist.

Lille is very much the place to go for lunch – but don't be surprised if you end up staying the whole day, and go back for more. ☺



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The Magic Mountain resort of Davos

Every January, thousands of people ascend to the Swiss mountain resort of Davos. Made famous by the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting – first held there in 1971 – **Dianna Rienstra** and **David Watkiss** discovered that Davos is much more than a crossroads where the rich and famous meet, greet and negotiate



Panorama view of Davos

Nestled in a picturesque valley in East Switzerland in the canton of Graubünden and flanked by the Landwasser River, the village of Davos is typically home to about 12,000 residents and a highly amusing population of mountain dogs.

RUMOUR HAS IT THAT KLOSTERS IS FALLING OUT OF ROYAL FAVOUR

It is a charming resort with multiple restaurants, cafes, bars, shops, art galleries and

museums. Thomas Mann captured its spirit in his 1924 novel, *The Magic Mountain*, and the German impressionist

painter Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's work is housed at the eponymous museum.

Renowned for its rejuvenating mountain air, Davos launched itself as a health resort in 1860 and as a sports centre in 1930. The hearty, Swiss German-speaking locals are hospitable and apparently don't mind the 2,500-plus people who book all accommodation, fill the restaurants and crowd the ski slopes for five days every January during the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting. They also seem unbothered by hundreds of Swiss army officers who patrol the streets, oftentimes barricading them for security purposes to protect heads of state, ministers and captains of industry.

THE SNOW EVENTUALLY DISAPPEARS TO REVEAL 700 KM OF WALKING PATHS

The meeting has spilled into neighbouring Klosters where Britain's Prince Charles and family have been skiing for three decades, although rumour has it that Klosters is falling out of royal favour, much to the consternation of local politicians and business owners.

SIX MOUNTAINS

The Davos-Klosters area is one of the largest ski resorts in Switzerland with six

mountains – Jakobshorn, Madrisa, Parsenn, Pischas, Rinerhorn and Schatzalp – 300 km of *pistes*, 45 lifts and 85 descents. One pass for all mountains is available. Skiers and snowboarders of all levels can find ample diverse, beautiful and challenging terrain.

The 360-degree views of the Alps from the top are stunning. Davos also has indoor and outdoor skating rinks, a sports centre and two sled runs. The snow, usually excellent between December and April, eventually disappears to reveal 700 km of walking paths and mountain bike trails.



Mountain skiing on Davos-Pischa

LOCAL COLOUR

Just eight km from Davos, Klosters is imbued with old-world charm. However, those in search of nightlife had better stick to Davos. An exception is *Gaudy's Graströchni*, a bar that can also be reached over a picturesque 14 km ski run from the top of Parsenn. Its bright yellow roof is reminiscent of a circus tent – and a circus is exactly what can be found inside. With music ranging from Eurotrash to Oom-Pah-Pah, ebullient locals, ski bums and tourists are packed together quaffing a wide range of drinks – ice cream shooters (miniature cones filled with liqueur and topped with chocolate and cream), tequila shots, hot wine, schnapps, beer, wine and Prosecco are all being consumed in large quantities, even though the Swiss measure out careful portions in decilitres.

WHERE TO STAY

Accommodation is surprisingly affordable. Many Davos hotels offer a free ski pass and double rooms starting at just SFr 87 (€72). There are dozens of hotels, hostels and self-catering apartments for couples or families. The magnificent *Hotel Bélvédère* built in 1895 is around SFr 170 (€140) per night. Try the *Hotel Schatzalp*, opened in 1900 as a world-class sanatorium, starting at SFr 155 (€125), or at least have a drink, lunch or dinner in this otherworldly place, perched 300 metres above the village, accessible only by foot or funicular. Views are breathtaking and visitors can ski out from here to the nostalgic Schatzalp-Strela runs. But tobogganing 2.5 km down to the village after happy hour or dinner is ill advised.



The Swiss mountain resort of Davos



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Take the Glacier Express to Davos

EAT AND DRINK

Every type of cuisine is available, ranging from typical Swiss at the *Pot Au Feu* and *Bistro Gentiana* restaurants to Italian, Thai and Asian. The *ArthausHotel* restaurant offers a feast for the eyes and world-class cuisine. The *Hotel Europe's Zaubenberg*

BREAKFAST IS A TREAT ANYWHERE

Restaurant serves amazing Chinese, next to its piano bar and casino. However, this is Switzerland – rib-sticking cheese

fondue and rösti are de rigeur in most places. Many restaurants – on or off the mountains – serve lunch and drinks outside, blankets included, but be sure to use sunscreen.

Restaurants and bars cater to all budgets, and cosy coffee houses abound. Breakfast

is a treat anywhere, but *Café Schneider's* is an institution and shrine to the canton's famous *Nusstorte* – a dense, caramel-walnut pastry. End an evening at *Ella's Restaurant* wine bar and jazz club or at one of the noisy-but-fun piano bars.

GETTING THERE

It would be a shame to miss the spectacular train ride from Zurich Airport via Landquart, lasting two hours and 45 minutes. Davos is also accessible via the Glacier Express, a train that chugs through the heart of the Swiss Alps over 291 bridges and through 91 tunnels, averaging 40 km per hour. The seven-and-a-half hour, 270 km trip includes crossing the Oberalp Pass at about 2,044 metres. Fine dining onboard is available at €25-€35. ☎

<http://www.davos.ch>



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No need to go far for festivities

During the magical end-of-year period, **Jérôme Stéfanski** suggests crossing the borders to discover what surprises and experiences neighbouring countries can offer



Some people think Amsterdam is only good for crazy young travellers who are mainly interested in “sex, drugs and rock ‘n’ roll”. On the other hand, the capital of Holland is also a romantic town, where each moment is unique. Upscale districts are often cheek-by-jowl with mass-tourist sites, with plenty of ‘coffee’ and sex shops. There are also many exclusive shops offering rare and original products for under the Christmas tree. That’s why,

ideally, you should plan your trip before visiting the city, and a good city trip starts with the selection of a hotel that meets every need. In Amsterdam, where it is difficult to drive a car because everybody rides a bike, the best hotel is probably one that’s located near the main tourist conveniences, but not exactly in the epi-centre of such attractions.

HISTORICAL AND COSMOPOLITAN

For those who want a wonderful experience in an historic hotel that blends a warm family environment with international standards, we strongly recommend that you stay at Hotel Pulitzer. The hotel comprises 25 historical canal side houses dating back to the 17th and 18th centuries, all with a rich history and their own story to tell. Founded 35 years ago, Hotel Pulitzer is located in the middle of the Amsterdam Canal District, which has been added to the UNESCO World Heritage List. Around the hotel, you will discover many art galleries, fashion boutiques, top bars and romantic restaurants and also museums. The train station is located only one kilometre away, the international Schiphol airport is 20 km or 20 minutes by taxi. A member of the Luxury Collection group, this hotel offers 230 rooms and suites. While each of the rooms is unique in its design, they all share the comfort and conveniences that are the standards of a five-star hotel.



Keizersgracht 238 is the hotel’s restaurant, with a fresh and energizing new concept that is considered the best grill experience in Amsterdam – a variety of flavors that invites the guest to travel around the world. One of the highlights is the ever-changing recipe influenced by the seasons of the Netherlands. Guests can also enjoy the lush outdoor garden, which is the perfect setting in summer months for a delicious meal under the Dutch sun.

Hotel Pulitzer Amsterdam
Prinsengracht 315-331,
1016 GZ Amsterdam, The Netherlands
T.+31(0) 20 80 80 368
www.pulitzeramsterdam.com

CONTEMPORARY STYLE MEETS AUTHENTIC SPIRIT

Williers is one of the smallest and the most peaceful towns in France, in the north-east of the Ardennes region. Located between the Belgian towns of Bouillon and Virton, Williers is close to Belgium and access is easy from Brussels, thanks to the E411. It’s here that the story of Odette began – the old café, where the local inhabitants met each other to play cards and share a drink, became the most exclusive hotel of the region.

The original idea of the founder was perhaps a little bit risky, but bold – transforming the historical site into a contemporary and luxury hotel, without forgetting to preserve the original warmth and reassuring atmosphere. The owner met the challenge and guests who visit Chez Odette immediately feel at home.

Because only nine exclusive rooms are available and located in two separate

houses, you can be sure that you will enjoy discreet luxury and top service. Each room is a relaxing haven styled in dark wood and candlelight – four different categories are offered to meet your requirements, but even the starter category is spacious and decorated in style, with its own real chimney and stock of logs. If you have the chance to stay there, you should absolutely try Chez Odette, the hotel restaurant that is run by talented chef Cédric Lamkin, a purist of his craft who creates a visual and sensory feast using only the best seasonal ingredients and his innovative imagination. After dining, have a drink at Odette’s bar, which is the heart and soul of the hotel.

Here, you can enjoy a local beer from Orval, sample Odette’s special Guignolet-Kirsch or a Picon with white wine, while tasting fine cheeses and country pate and view a gallery of old black-and-white prints depicting scenes from the village in years gone by, providing a greater understanding of this special little place. And, for those who want a sweet souvenir from their countryside trip, Odette has just launched a new luxury candle. The perfect occasion to bring home a part of the multi-sensorial atmosphere that reigns here. Last but not least, two years ago Odette opened Odette en Ville, a hotel-restaurant located close to the Place du Chatelain in Brussels.

Chez Odette
Rue Principale, Williers 08110
France
T.+33(0) 3 24 55 49 55
www.chez-odette.com



Celebration dining

The holiday period over Christmas and New Year is often a reason – or an excuse – to eat out somewhere special. Food critic **John Hellon** recommends a few of his favourite downtown Brussels restaurants for the festive season

Think of the city of Brussels and what first comes to mind is its magnificent Grand Place with its gothic town hall and gilded baroque town houses. On the first floor of one of the houses commanding a splendid view of the square is the dining room of **La Maison du Cygne**. Lying unseen in the cellar are no less than 20,000 bottles of fine wines. A sophisticated cuisine includes specialties like a terrine of foie gras, grilled sole with Sancerre-

flavoured butter, roast pigeon with broad beans grown on salt flats. This is a fine restaurant, though there have been occasional reports of excessively slow service. And a meal there does not come cheap. A fixed price menu costs €90. *La*

Maison du Cygne is closed on Sundays and on Saturdays at lunchtime. 2 Rue Charles Buls (Grand Place), T.02 511 82 44.

To enjoy a fine view of the Grand Place without going to great expense – perhaps if you have children with you – get a table

near a window at the upstairs dining room of **T Kelderke** on the south side of the square. Open every day till late, 15 Grand Place, T.02 513 73 44.

The picturesque old quarter known as the *Ilôt Sacré* is, with a few honourable exceptions, best avoided by gourmets. One of the exceptions is **Aux Armes de Bruxelles**, dating from 1921 and, until recently, run by successive generations of the same family. Happily, the new owners have preserved its custom of serving traditional Belgian fare at tables covered in impeccably starched white napery. It's a place to enjoy mussels or shrimp rissoles – *croquettes aux crevettes* – and *waterzooi*, a uniquely Belgian chicken stew, or beef stewed in *Gueuze*, a traditional Belgian beer. Closed on Mondays, 13 Rue des Bouchers, T.02 511 55 50.

A few minutes walk away, *La Place de la Monnaie* provides a fine perspective for the eponymous opera house. On the north-east of the square on the *Rue des Princes* you'll find one of the city's longest established and finest Italian restaurants, **Roma**. Freshly-made pasta and fish are specialties. Closed on Sundays, Mondays and at lunchtime on Saturdays, 12-14 Rue des Princes, T.02 219 01 94.

Once extremely conservative in its taste, the city has undergone a relatively recent flowering of more exotic fare. One early example, situated near the Grand Place and dating from the mid seventies is **Al Barmaki**, an excellent Lebanese establishment – the wide variety of meze is outstanding. Open only in the evening, 67 Rue des Eperonniers, T.02 513 08 34.

A yet more exotic establishment is the Japanese **Samurai**, a little restaurant on several floors, tucked away in a shabby shopping gallery near the *Bourse*, the Brussels stock exchange. Though the dishes come from the classic repertoire, you may be in for some delicious surprises. As well as the familiar *sushi* and *sashimi*, for example, you can enjoy fried scallops and pieces of soy paste in a salty *bouillon* made from dried tuna and sprinkled with finely chopped radish. Lobster is served in a lobster *bouillon* with asparagus tips, mange-tout peas, carrots and other

mange-tout vegetables, all cooked al dente. Fare of this impeccable quality does not come cheap and you should count around €70 for a full meal with a moderate amount of sake. 28 Rue du Fossé aux Loups, T.02 217 56 39.

While Brussels lies well inland, you could be forgiven for imagining it was a seaport. Just two blocks north-west of the Place de Brouckère, focal point of the central boulevards, lie the church and square of Ste. Catherine and the now purely decorative erstwhile fishing harbour, its untroubled water merely inches deep. On the square you'll find **La Belle Maraîchère**, a bustling fish restaurant, one of the many in the neighbourhood and among the best. Run by generations of the Devreker family for almost 40 years, the specialties include lobster and an outstanding fish stew. Closed on Wednesdays and Thursdays, 11 Place Ste. Catherine, T.02 512 97 59. 🍷



Sophisticated cuisine at La Maison du Cygne



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In 2009, Nescafé Dolce Gusto made a spectacular entry into the Belgian coffee machine market. The concept behind it was to combine the quality of high-pressure (15-bar) coffee machines with the ease of use and the variety of multi-beverage systems.

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Making coffee is now fun and intuitive... Ideal for New Year's Eve parties.

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It's still as easy as ever to use: with the new scroll control, it is easy to choose the recommended dosage for the capsule or to adjust it to every person's wishes. After selecting hot or cold water, the GENIO will prepare the drink and stop automatically once the required dosage is reached. The result: the drink you want... as many times as you like!

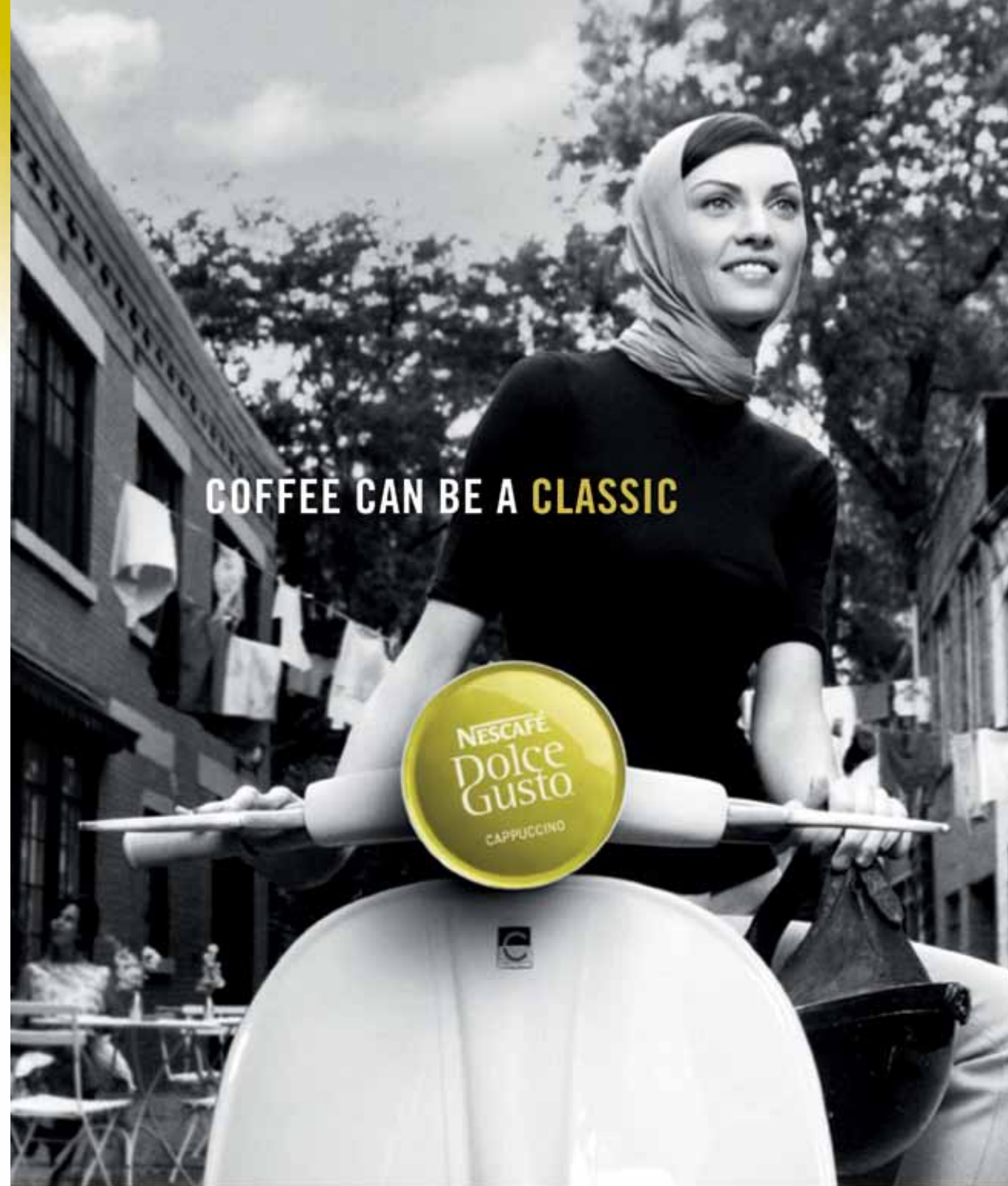


An even more STRIKING, FUN LOOK

GENIO also has a unique design, with the same compact proportions and rounded lines consumers expect from Nescafé Dolce Gusto machines. But the big change with this one is the scroll feature, which has LED display controls that indicate the dosage.

The fun continues ONLINE

On the Belgian Nescafé Dolce Gusto website: www.dolce-gusto.be it is possible to get more than 20 different capsules and order original accessories for Nescafé Dolce Gusto. So it is possible to enjoy your coffee to the full... Nescafé Dolce Gusto GENIO machine will be available from November 2011. The recommended retail price is €129 for the red machine and €139 for the titanium machine. Capsules: €4.79 for a box of 16 capsules



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COFFEE IS NOT
JUST BLACK

Celebrity grapevine

The celebrity fashion for owning a vineyard is on the increase, according to **Alex Hewetson**



A growing trend in the world of wine is the involvement of famous people with vineyards; I might have said rich and famous, but there are many rich people who are quietly involved in wine without all the fanfare and razzamatazz that goes with celebrity. The glitterati who indulge in their viniferous whims vary greatly, as does their involvement.

MADONNA

There are three types of celebrity wineries: those bought by stars for their own consumption – this category includes David and Victoria Beckham, Sting, Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, and Johnny Depp; others have an interest in wine but watch it being produced from a distance – Madonna, for instance, who collaborates with her father Silvio “Tony” Ciccone in the family-owned Ciccone Vineyard and Winery in Michigan in the United States.

Then there are those involved in every aspect of the process, such as French comic actor Gerard Depardieu, a serious aficionado who has vineyards in France, including the Chateau de Tigne label, as well as California, Algeria, Argentina, Morocco, Spain and Sicily. In the business for more than 30 years, Depardieu’s produce sells in Belgium at the

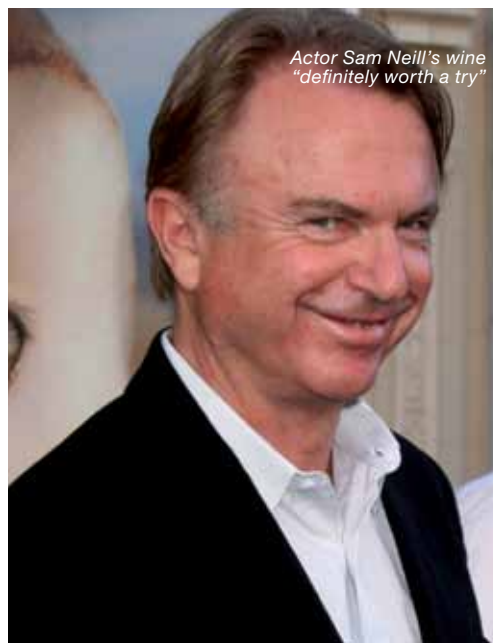
Brussels gastronomic store Rob The Gourmets’ Market in Woluwe-St-Pierre.

But if you are titillated by the prospect of drinking wines made by the stars, not all of them are available here in Belgium. Of those that are, be prepared to pay upwards of €15 a bottle.





Actor Gerard Depardieu's wine sells in Belgium



Actor Sam Neill's wine "definitely worth a try"

GOLFERS' PASSION

Let's take a few sports personalities for starters. If you are not an ice hockey fan, you may not have heard of Canadian Wayne Gretzky, but he is widely considered the greatest ice hockey player of all time. Having retired from crushing opponents on ice, he indulges in the more genteel pastime of making wine, in association with wine professionals who produce the various styles of wine on his estate (No. 99 Estates Winery) in Ontario. A number of golfers also have a passion for wine – Nick Faldo (Nick Faldo Wines) and Greg Norman (Greg Norman Estates), to name but two, both have wineries in Australia – Norman also in California – and are keen to produce wines of serious quality, making it clear they wish to be respected for their wares.

JURASSIC WINE

In the world of show business, the players

include the Italian-American movie director, producer and screenwriter Francis Ford Coppola of *Godfather* fame. His winery, the Rubicon Estate in California, is well respected, producing reds of different quality and price, but mercifully none named after his films – I dreaded seeing something along the lines of *Apocalypse Reserve* on the shelves during my visit there. Bottles from the Coppola winery can be obtained from Belgian wine seller Rousseu Wines. Another actor of renown who has established a winery is Sam Neill, the paleontologist Dr Alan Grant in *Jurassic Park*. His Two Paddocks winery on the South Island of his native New Zealand is where he produces quality Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling, Merlot and Pinot Noir – definitely worth a try. There is sadly no supplier in Belgium, although the English wine merchants Haynes Hanson & Clark in London do stock Two Paddocks produce. 🍷



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Spirit of the times

A pancake flambéed with Grand Marnier, the crêpe Suzette created in the late 19th century, remains a classic of French cuisine, says food writer **Hughes Belin**, who gives us a taste of history as well as some ideas for Christmas cocktails

The French have long been champions at marketing some of the best spirits worldwide, especially those based on grapes. This is the best explanation for why nearly everyone has heard of Grand Marnier, and why it is displayed in bars the world over, be they private or commercial – although only devotees will know that the bottle is shaped like an alembic for distilling cognac. With more than 130 years of history behind it, Grand Marnier is a liqueur that pleases connoisseurs as well as the uninitiated.

The drink's orange flavour comes from the zest of exotic oranges called *citrus bigaradia* (bitter orange oil), hand-picked in Haiti, and soaked in alcohol. The warm, oak flavour comes from double-distilled cognac. Sugar is added for smoothness, and the final product is a unique blend.

Grand Marnier limited edition Quintessence retails at €750

ENTHUSIASTS

Our forefathers probably had only one

way to enjoy Grand Marnier: a small after-dinner glass with or without ice, with or without cigar. Cognac enthusiasts who still like the incomparable taste of orange, sugar and cognac after dinner can opt for a bottle of *Cuvée du Centenaire* made with between 12-25 year-old cognacs; or there's *Cuvée du Cent Cinquantaire* made with 25-60 year-old cognacs. Or for between €500 and €600 (depending on the country) opt for one of just 2,000 available bottles of Quintessence limited edition made with 100 year-old cognacs.

But for most, today's drinking habits have changed: digestive liqueurs are becoming less popular because "one for the road" is no longer an option. However, aperitifs are

still in demand, especially if they're not too strong – and that is a great breakthrough for Grand Marnier. This liqueur is terrific in cocktails, from the famous Red Lion, created in 1933, to the B52 – popular in the eighties but requiring the skill of a barman to perfect. ☺



GRAND MARNIER RECIPES

Some delicious long drinks are refreshing and easy to make: try Grand'O, Grand Ginger and Grand Tonic

GRAND GINGER

In a long glass with five ice cubes, pour 1.5 shots (45ml) Grand Marnier liqueur, 4 shots (120ml) ginger ale, add a squeeze fresh lime and garnish with a wedge of lime.

RED LION

In a shaker of cracked ice pour 1 shot (30ml) Grand Marnier liqueur, 1 shot (30ml) London dry gin, ¾ shot (22.5ml) orange juice, ¾ shot (22.5ml) lemon juice, add a dash of grenadine. Shake and serve in a chilled cocktail glass. Optional: moisten the

rim of the glass with water or juice and dip in caster sugar.

B52

An explosive cocktail with layers of three different liqueurs: ½ shot (15ml) coffee liqueur, pour ½ shot (15ml) Irish cream liqueur delicately over the back of a cold bar spoon, add ½ shot (15ml) Grand Marnier. The cocktail may be flamed. Drink through a short straw.

For more recipes: www.grand-marnier.com



Inspired giving

The children's charity **UNICEF** is promoting a gift scheme that is intended to make a difference to children in need throughout the world

Unicef's HappyPack gift concept – marketed under the name Inspired Gift in most English-speaking countries – are an opportunity to give meaningful presents to friends and family while providing essential support to children in any one of the 155 countries and territories where the charity operates.

VACCINES

As the world's largest provider of vaccines for developing countries – 3 billion doses a year to 55 percent of the world's children – Unicef is funded entirely by the voluntary contributions of individuals, businesses, foundations and governments. The charity supports child health and nutrition, good water and sanitation, quality basic education and the protection of children from violence, exploitation, and AIDS and is also one of the world's largest buyers of mosquito nets.

UNICEF IS FUNDED ENTIRELY BY VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

PERSONALISED GIFT

"When you buy a HappyPack on behalf of a friend or family member, we will send that person an electronic personalised



gift card with a photograph and description of the gift and your personal message," explains Digital Fundraising Officer Sandrine Devers. "Your purchase will then be dispatched to countries depending on where the need is greatest."

Customers may choose from a wide range of life-saving and life-changing supplies such as vaccines, school supplies, medicine and toys. HappyPacks cater for all budgets starting from 5,5€ for 150 sachets of vitamins and minerals. Just €27 will buy the baby weighing scale illustrated in the picture. Devers also suggests offering HappyPacks to business contacts and team members in place of traditional corporate gifts. ☺

www.happypack.be/en



Just €27 will buy this baby weighing scale

The best things come in small packages

The iconic Aston Martin *marque*, long associated with James Bond and an image of powerful sports cars, has now appeared on a small city car, although as **Bob Monard** reports, the Aston Martin Cygnet has all the luxury associated with the company's super car range



Well, I could never have imagined that one day I would find myself picked up at the airport by a smart chauffeur driving a prestigious car. But that's exactly what happened. After arriving at London Heathrow on a flight from Brussels, I found myself face-to-face with a tall and impeccably dressed man who invited me to accompany him to the car park where I was confronted by a car of sublime beauty, a grey metallic Aston Martin Rapide. What a pity I was only the passenger.

The V12 engine snorts, my stomach lurches

– I'm happier than a kid at Christmas. It is reassuring that I still have the ability to be amazed – the climb up the six-speed automatic transmission is like listening to opera.

Into London and through Hyde Park, we arrive at the Hempel Hotel in Craven Hill Gardens, in time for a stroll and a shower before dressing for dinner at the Conran Shop.

DISCOVERY

My dining companion is John Muirhead, marketing communication manager at Aston Martin; my host is keen on motor racing and familiar with the Spa-Francorchamps track... after an excellent evening in his company and a sumptuous breakfast, it's time to discover the Cygnet. This little three door city car is just three metres long, 170 cm wide and one metre high and weighs just over 900 kg. Under its bonnet sits a 1.33 litre 4-cylinder 98 hp engine coupled to a six speed manual transmission making the Cygnet the mechanical twin of the Toyota iQ.

"Our little Aston Martin represents elegance, style and exclusivity: it's in the DNA of our heritage," says John Muirhead, explaining the rationale behind the Cygnet – in a changing world, survival depends on diversification.



"We needed an alternative to our sports cars for the city. We also wanted to respect the environment. Manufacturers such as Mercedes, Audi and Fiat have small models. We want to remain loyal to Aston Martin owners while attracting other motorists," he adds.

ICONIC BADGE

It's got the iconic aluminium Aston grille, side air vents, spoiler and skirts; the seats are heated and the leather interior is hand-stitched – a very British touch. But is this enough to justify the price of €38,350 euros (manual version) and €39,830 euros for the automatic?

While our London excursion through the interminable traffic jams raised many smiles, a cyclist expressed his disapproval commenting: "The badge isn't everything – it's not the spirit of Aston Martin."

I agree, since simply sticking on the prestigious logo made famous by the

Volante, Vantage, Lagonda, Virage and other DB9 models presupposes top quality, whether it's design, the engine or the finish or simply the glory days or yore. And while British engineers have indeed transformed the iQ into the Cygnet, they should have added an exhaust that is more fun and more in the spirit of the AM tradition as Citroën did with its DS4 and Peugeot with its RCZ. This doesn't cost a lot, but changes the mood altogether.

Available in grey-green, white, burgundy, black, garnet and fuchsia, our Cygnet cruised from the Bluebird Cafe to Borough Market with a pit-stop at Daylesford Organic before afternoon tea at Claridges, the Art Deco palace which has charmed visitors for more than a century.

Well balanced and with excellent suspension, this car has been well thought out; no gas guzzler, it negotiates the traffic with agility and can stop on a sixpence, proving that small and luxury can go hand-in-hand. 🚗

Together's To Do list Belgium

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



Christmas shopping on the streets of Brussels



GRAND PLACE FESTIVITIES

>01.01.12

The 2011 *Electrabel* Nights in the Grand Place of Brussels will feature some spectacular illuminations showcasing new technologies. In the centre of the ancient square will be a spiral-shaped sculpture of light. Its coloured rays will shimmer across the Christmas tree and surrounding buildings, creating an all-round sense of mystery and magic. Each week-end until the end of December there will be spectacular evening events beginning at 20h, such as a crystal musician with a costume made of mirrors, a giant-winged butterfly fluttering around, a fire-dancer and a moon-climbing acrobat - not to mention a magical choir on Christmas Eve.

Grand Place, Brussels

www.brussels.be/artdet.cfm/4952

CHRISTMAS MARKET

>01.01.12

Hailed as "Europe's most original Christmas market" by British tour operators, the Brussels Christmas Market stretches over two kilometres. It includes stalls, chalets, attractions, activities and cafes. People come to enjoy the food and drink, buy gifts and souvenirs and stock up on delicacies for the holiday period.

Grand Place, Bourse, Place Ste Catherine area, B-1000 Brussels

Mon-Thu 12h-21h; Fri 12h-22h; Sat-Sun 11h-22h; 24&31 Dec 11h-18h; 25 Dec&1 Jan 12h-22h

www.brussels.be/artdet.cfm/4952

SKI IN BRUSSELS

>01.01.12

The Mont des Arts area of central Brussels will become an in-town ski slope with snow for the 150 metre slope generated by a snow machine. Skiers will get to the top with real ski lifts. At the top of the slope, a five metre high launching ramp will enable courageous skiers to hit the slopes at speed. Professionals will be on hand to give lessons, surrounded by fir trees, wooden chalets and mulled wine stands.

Mont des Arts, B-1000 Brussels

ICE SKATING

10>01.01.12

Skaters should try the Place Ste Catherine area and its 60 metre long skating rink. The 1,000 square metres of ice can accommodate up to 300 people at a time. A smaller rink for young children is located right next to the main one. Children will also be able to amuse themselves playing inside the **Ice Monster** - a 40 metre long dinosaur made of ice lurking in the shadow of the traditional Big Wheel on the Place Ste Catherine which provides a panoramic winter view of the city.

Place Ste Catherine area, B-1000 Brussels

HISTORY OF SABENA

>26.02.12

An exhibition commemorating Belgium's former national airline is on show at the Cinquantenaire Museum in Brussels. The pioneering Belgian carrier, founded in 1923, made its first long-haul flight to the Belgian Congo in 1935 – a trip that took five and a half days. In the colonial era it epitomized romance, adventure, and elegant air hostesses dressed in distinctive Sabena livery. Its 78-year history is relived ten years after the company collapsed.

Cinquantenaire Museum

Parc Cinquantenaire 10, B-1040 Brussels

www.kmkg-mrah.be/cinquantenaire-museum

CLUB.BRASIL

>15.01.12

As part of the Europalia festivities, a series of free events, concerts, art workshops and dance sessions are being held every weekend at Club.Brasil in the Mont des Arts. The programme changes every week to highlight different themes showing the multiple aspects of Brazilian culture: samba, electronic music, bossa nova, jazz and instrumental music, Sertão and north-eastern rhythms. Concerts – Thurs 19h, Fri 20.30h, Sat 19h, Sun 17h; dance – Sat 17h; art workshops – Sun 15h.

Club.Brasil

Dynasty Building, Mont des Arts, B- 1000 Brussels

www.europalia.eu

JEWELLERY EXHIBITION

>15.01.12

The City of Mons is hosting an international exhibition of contemporary jewellery bringing together designers from Belgium, Germany and Portugal to present their creations. The event is hosted every three years by a different country. The 2011 edition in Mons will demonstrate the wide-ranging use of materials and techniques behind today's innovative designs, ranging from the stunningly beautiful to boldly humorous. On display will be 60 works by Christian Wuytack, as a tribute to the late Belgian designer, who specialised in enamel work.

European Triennial for Contemporary Jewellery 2011

Les Anciens Abbatoirs, Place de la Grande Pêcherie, Mons

www.wcc-bf.org/en

Together's To Do list International

Our round-up of events both near and far



Aachen's celebrated Printen biscuits



The Angel Market in Neumarkt, Cologne, Germany

ART EXHIBITION

15.12>18.12.11

French artist Marine Oussedik is renowned throughout the equestrian world for her paintings and sculptures of horses. A selection of her work will be exhibited at the Salon of Animal Artists in Paris - Salon des Artistes Animaliers.

Hôtel de Guénégaud - Maison de la Chasse et de la Nature

60 Rue des Archives, 75003 Paris, France

www.marine-oussedik.net

POLO MATCH

26.01>29.01.12

The highest snow polo tournament in the world at an altitude of 2007 metres will be held at the altiport site of the French ski resort Courchevel. The Argentines and the French, last year's winners, will be competing. Snow polo is played on a smaller field than traditional lawn polo with the aim of the game – to score as many goals as possible in four quarters lasting seven minutes – is identical.

BMW Polo Masters Courchevel

Courchevel, France

www.courchevel.com



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COLOGNE CHRISTMAS MARKET

>23.12.11

The city boasts eight individual markets with four of them located around Cologne Cathedral. They attract almost two million visitors every year. More than 160 festive wooden chalets can be found around the Cathedral, the site of the largest Christmas tree in the Rhineland. Watch artisans at work, enjoy original mulled wine and an unlimited choice of local delicacies. Children especially will find lots to do here – a nostalgic children's roundabout, a puppet theatre, a Santa Claus grotto and many toy stands. Endless fun and entertainment.

Cologne, Germany

www.cologne-tourism.com

CHRISTMAS IN AACHEN

>23.12.11

Aachen describes itself 'The City in the Heart of Europe' – situated on the Belgian and Dutch borders, it is a convenient base for day trips to Liege and Maastricht.

Every year in the period leading up to Christmas the squares and streets around Aachen Town Hall and the cathedral are transformed into a paradise of light and colour, festive sounds and seductive smells. Look out for Aachen's celebrated Printen biscuits, gingerbread and marzipan bread. Aachen calls itself 'The City in the Heart of Europe' – situated on the Belgian and Dutch borders, it is a convenient base for day trips to Liege and Maastricht.

Aachen, Germany

www.aachen.de

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