

Together

magazine

Jeremy Hackett

CINEMA

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FASHION

Blue Jeans

Vietnamese
gastronomy

Naturally...

A NEW 30,000 M² DEALERSHIP IN 2014

Communiqué



A victim of its ongoing success, BMW simply had to expand! Stefan De Smet, General Manager of BMW Brussels, talks us through the totally new dealership that BMW Brussels will open in 2014 - a dealership with an innovative structure and concepts.

THE BRAND NEW BMW BRUSSELS



BMW Brussels was created in Evere, a district of Brussels in 1987. At the time, it was the only subsidiary in the country. In 1988, a second subsidiary opened in Ixelles. This eventually moved to the Brand Store on the Boulevard de Waterloo in 2007, bringing BMW greater visibility in the European capital. Since then, the installations in Evere have been handling BMW's service for the growing clientele.

To meet this constant growth, BMW is developing an ambitious project on the Chaussée de Louvain in Evere, beside our second-hand sales centre.

This new 30,000 m² dealership has been developed according to a new philosophy. Firstly, the showroom is large enough to present all the new BMW models, as well as the motorbikes (such as the electric scooter and the new range of BMW i electric cars). But our

clients will also receive a welcome worthy of a hotel.

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Editor's LETTER

Spring has been hiding its light under a bushel, and we were bombarded with hailstones that belong to the month of March, but open up our pages and we'll take your mind off it for a while.

It's surprising how some people who have been abandoned as a child have that extra bit of gumption in them, to take life by the collar and make something of themselves, perhaps, subconsciously, proving something to the parents somewhere out there they have never met – sort of 'see what you're missing'. Our interview is with Jeremy Hackett, who knows all about that.

Babies, of course, have no say in what happens to them in early life but mothers have a difficult choice to make when it comes to how they should come into this world. It's a prickly subject but we take a look at natural childbirth, which is bound to elicit a heated response.

Now the weather is more clement, we're encouraging you to get out into nature and simply relax. I think I just saw a ray of sunshine so I'm off to the woods to hunt for some bees – as you'll read in these pages, they've been doing a mysterious disappearing act of late.

ON THE COVER



MÉLANIE LAURENT
Now starring in
Night Train to Lisbon



Paul Morris
EDITOR



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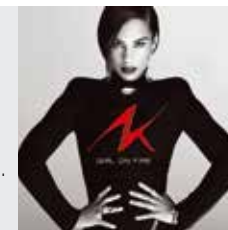
Together offers a choice of music in Belgium in the weeks ahead

Alicia Keys -

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Chilly Gonzales & Mons Orchestra

A Canadian, multi-talented musician/producer (born Jason Charles Beck, aka Chilly Gonzales), he is best known for his MC & electro albums such as *The Entertainist* and *Presidential Suite*. **6 May.** Cirque Royal. Tickets €29. www.cirque-royal.org



PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ring a ring of roses

The hunger scale



How hungry are you right now? On a scale of 1-10: 1 being painfully full, 10 being so hungry you can barely concentrate on this article. Remember that number, we will come back to it later.

Food and exercise are key elements to your health and wellbeing. Too much or too little of either one and the balance is thrown off and you risk illness, injury and overall unhappiness. This fact has spawned a multi-billion dollar industry of quick fixes. Eat this, don't eat that, workout like this, don't ever do that. The fads change with the tides and, like fashion, old trends come back decades later in a new form. But, I have a secret: There is no magic bullet! If you want to maintain your wellbeing or become fitter, you must balance your energy intake with your energy expenditure. Calories in, calories out.

We can have some fun though, we can strive to choose healthy foods and, re-examine when we eat to ensure that we get the most out of our meals and workouts.

Quality Counts

We are surrounded by food all day, every day – the good, the bad and the ugly! Unlike any time in history, we have access to a huge selection of natural foods from around the world. This is awesome, but also a bit daunting, as we have begun to ignore our normal appetite triggers and eat for reasons other than hunger.

Let's review the key food groups that provide essential macro-nutrients, carbohydrates, protein and fat, along with essential vitamins and minerals. These foods, in their natural form, should form the bulk of your diet.

Personal trainer
Patti Bruns offers
some advice on
what to eat and
when

• **Fruit and Vegetables:** Your Mum was right, these are key to staying healthy! Fruit and vegetables provide carbohydrates and are packed with nutrients and minerals and are high in fibre and water. They also help you feel fuller for longer without loading up on calories.

• **Lean Protein:** Most people eat enough protein, but choose good sources such as chicken, turkey, fish and nuts. A small serving of nuts is a perfect snack as they contain healthy fats that help you feel full.

• **Whole Grains:** The closer grains are to their natural form the better. White breads, rice and pasta convert into simple sugars in the bloodstream, leaving you feeling

hungry more quickly. Choose whole grain carbohydrates to maximize nutrition.

• **Low Fat Dairy:** A great choice when trying to get both carbs and protein in one tidy package. Dairy contains calcium and vitamin D, which are important to bone and muscle health.

• **Fat, Processed Foods and Treats:** This group should be the one you visit the least. Some fat is essential in your diet, but favour vegetable-based fat. Processed foods are often packed with fat, sugar and sodium. Like sweet treats, processed foods should be a 'sometimes' choice and not be consumed regularly.



Timing is Everything

When you eat, the calories are destined for one of three places:

1. Fat can be stored as deep fat in tissues within the body.
2. Protein, carbohydrates and fat can be stored within muscle cells to power future work.
3. Carbs and/or fat can be used for immediate energy.

The goal is to time your meals and snacks so that your body learns to partition calories towards muscle cell storage and immediate use, rather than fat storage. The basic rule is to pair energy intake with energy expenditure. Here is how you can do this:

• **Eat Breakfast!** This will reduce your appetite throughout the day and reduce the amount of total calories you consume over 24 hours. By skipping breakfast, you end up super hungry, an 8-10 on our hunger scale, and overeat later in the day.

• **Eat Often!** Spreading calories throughout the day will help to keep you around 4-5 on the hunger scale. This is where you cruise along not wanting to eat but having lots of energy to tackle your busy day. Three meals and two healthy snacks works well for most people.

• **Eat BEFORE Exercise!** Two to four hours before your workout is perfect. This will improve your performance and teach your body to use calories for immediate energy needs. Over time, you will increase the food calories burnt and decrease the number of calories stored as fat.

• **Eat AFTER Exercise!** The sooner the better! The recovery window is about two hours, so ensure that you eat carbs and protein together within this timeframe. Your body will shift these calories toward muscle cell storage, making you leaner over time.

So, back to your hunger number. If you follow these guidelines, you should hover between a 4-7 on the hunger scale. Remember, 4 is nicely full after a meal. It takes about 10 minutes for your brain to register how full you are, so stop before you are at 3 on the scale. Meals should be consumed when you are at a 7, beyond that you will be so hungry that you are more likely to overeat.

Your body is wise, and it will tell you what it needs, so listen to it. Feed it well and at the right times during the day and you will be leaner and happier all summer long. Now that sounds like magic right there!

*Patti Bruns is a Personal Trainer at Aspria Royal La Rasante
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some answers in
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Don't believe everything you think

Have you ever thought, "I'm going to kill my neighbour if he ever wakes me up again on Sunday morning?" And did you? Kill him, I mean?

Crime statistics suggest that you didn't. We all have these automatic thoughts that pop up in our heads, such as "I'm going to scream if the other queue moves faster." But we rarely act on them, they just come and go.

Our mind is a thought-producing machine, churning out tens of thousands of them per day. Sometimes, they are the product of deep and intelligent analysis, other times some practical stuff we want to remember or often just absurd daydreams. This is a continuous process, most of it occurs in the background, and many of these thoughts escape our attention, as we are absorbed in the hustle and bustle of our daily lives.

It's fine that thoughts about killing your neighbour or screaming in the supermarket escape our attention. But other thoughts

have a more profound effect.

Do you sometimes feel that you could get more out of your life? Maybe you are secretly dreaming of something but you just can't make it happen. Or you are suffering from the pressure of all the 'shoulds' and 'musts' in your life, and there seems so little time for what you really value.

Sometimes, there are external obstacles that prevent you from reaching a better life: the problematic job market, a lack of time or money, or skills that you simply don't have.

Often, however, the obstacles are of a very different order. For example, the belief that what you want isn't important. The belief that you ended up in this situation due to the choices you made and giving up what you currently have is not an option. The fear of failure, a whisper that says, 'Don't do it.'

These beliefs and emotions can linger in the back of your mind. Some of them may

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remain unnoticed, or you may just take them for granted. It may be time to take a good look at them.

Try out a simple mindfulness exercise. Find a time and a place where you won't be disturbed. Sit down with your eyes closed and focus your attention on your breathing. You don't have to breathe in a particular way, just follow the movements of the breath with interest, as if you have never experienced this before. Now, probably quite quickly, you will find that your mind gets distracted. This is perfectly fine; this is what minds do. Just take a look where your mind wanders to, and then bring your attention back to your breathing. Repeat this over and over again, each time you notice that your mind wanders away from your concentration on your breathing. Do this for as long as you want, preferably at least 15 to 20 minutes.

You might be amazed by the number of thoughts, or by their nature. This exercise is like an audit of your mind. What exactly is really going on in your head?

If you repeat this exercise regularly, you can gain insight into the patterns of your mind, how your thoughts and emotions interact and how they affect what you do, or what you don't do.

You may discover that the thoughts that come up are just events taking place in your mind, little stories that pop up but that are not necessarily connected to reality. Thoughts are just thoughts, not facts. This can be a very liberating discovery.

And you may also discover that you have a choice: you can go along with the story created by your mind or you can create your own story. So the question is not so much what you do with the thoughts and emotions that keep you stuck. You don't necessarily need to challenge them or replace them by more positive beliefs. You don't have to do anything with them. The ultimate question is what you want to do despite these thoughts and emotions. They're just thoughts, not facts.



Mindfulness meditation can teach you this. It's fine to read an article or a book about it, but it's better to find it out for yourself, by regularly taking some time to observe the meanderings of your mind.

Once you learn to bypass the censorship of your mind, a more daunting question can appear: what is it exactly that I want? Sometimes, it can actually be quite comfortable to feel slightly miserable and complain about your situation, without really trying to alter it. Finding out what you want to do or who you want to be can be a difficult task. There are not many people who have a very clear vision of their goals in life.

As a matter of fact, you can use the same kind of self-observation techniques to discover these goals. Observe yourself, this time not in silence but in action. When you're busy doing things, what is it that you like doing, what are you good at? Try to see it as objectively as possible, again listening very carefully for any limiting thoughts that your mind might produce.

Just because your mind tells you that something is impossible it doesn't mean it is. Don't believe everything you think.


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Relationships

A roller coaster of emotions

Suzette Reid offers advice on helping children cope with separation and divorce



The decision to separate is never an easy one. Both partners are likely to experience a roller coaster of emotions. Even when a separation has been expected, it's common to feel a sense of shock or numbness as you begin to work through the practicalities that the decision involves. Many parents feel anxious about the future and overwhelmed by the number of decisions that need to be made.

When there are children in the relationship it is important not to lose sight of their needs. You may not be a couple anymore but you will not stop being a parent.

Research has been carried out into the factors connected with reducing stress for children at the time of divorce. These tips might help:

- Children will be better able to cope if their parents can be seen to share the responsibility for their welfare. So, telling them together about when and what is going to happen will show them that you can still be Mum and Dad even though you are no longer together as a couple.

- Whilst you want to be open and honest with the children, try to keep in mind what they can cope with at their different ages. They do not need to know every single detail about what

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

has gone wrong, nor should they be involved in any conflict between you and your partner.

- Try to keep as normal a routine as possible going. When the routine has to change, introduce the changes as slowly as you can, and talk them through with the children.
- Remind them that you will always be their parents even though you may not wish to be a couple and reassure them that it is not their fault that you have decided to divorce – this is between the two of you.
- Do everything you can to help yourselves adjust to your new situation, especially if you are the parent with residence.
- Reassure them that you have decided to separate from each other but not from them; you are still their parents. Do not put them in a position where they have to choose between you.

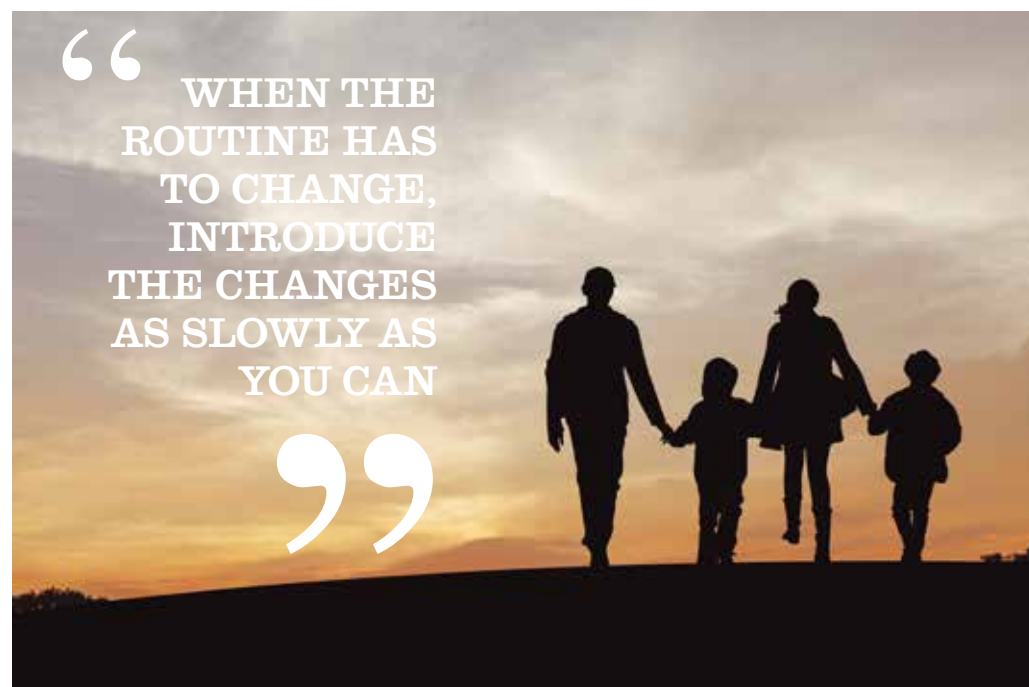
The relationship counselling agency Relate recently published findings from 143 young people counsellors as part of the Understanding Teenagers' Ups and Downs campaign. 64% of the counsellors said that mental health/depression was the most common new issue affecting young people seeking help. Second most common was family break-up, reported by 43%, and third was dealing with parents with mental health problems, 23%.

Counselling can help in addressing the difficult issues when a relationship breaks up. Talking calmly and honestly to each other in an impartial environment often minimizes the harsh and hurtful words that are said in anger. A counsellor will support you as well as helping you to look at what went wrong in order to prevent the breakdown of future relationships.



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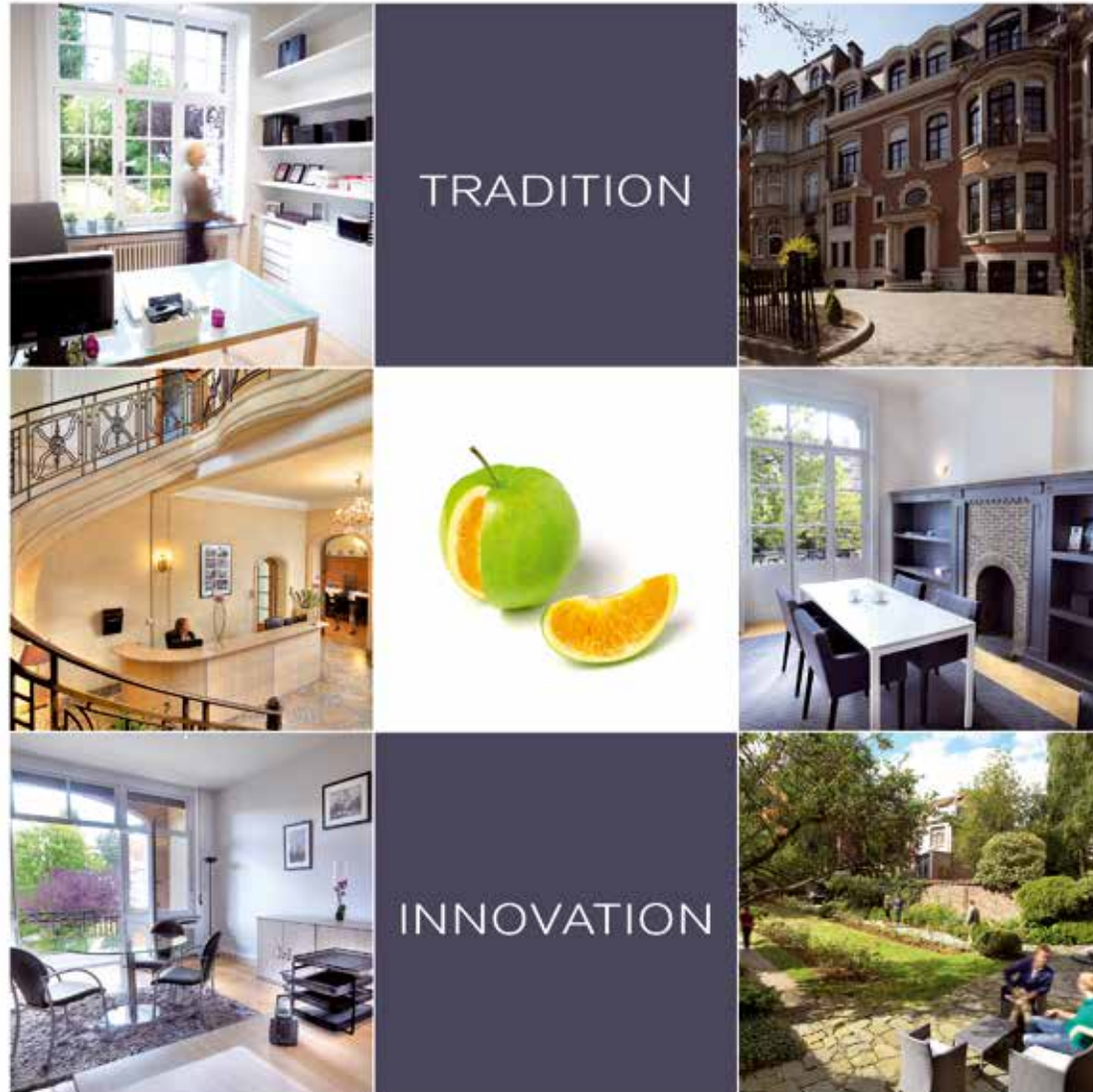
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Social networking

It's the task of *Together's* regular contributor **Colin Moors** to bridge the social networking chasm

Just being sociable



MÜNCHHAUSEN RIDES A CANNONBALL

Back in the Dark Ages, when the commute to work could be seriously disrupted by a mastodon broken down on the only road out of town and when such news would only reach you when the carrier pigeon came from your neighbour, people somehow managed to get on together and form relationships. Some of them even got on so well that we are here today writing and reading this.

Of course, the activity has changed but the connections remain the same. People still connect and form relationships around common interests. For those of us straddling the chasm between the old days of albums and land lines and the transistor-filled gadgetry of now, the etiquette could easily become confusing. I sit somewhere in the middle and am comfortable with technology. However, it would be very easy to make a

social faux pas. Back in the days when a colour TV meant you were richer than Croesus himself, I used to meet my friends in the bar. Imagine the following scenario:

Me: Hello Pete, how's things?

Pete: Great, thanks. Hey, have you seen my latest photos? Here's one of a cat in a sock pretending to be that worm thing from that science fiction book. Oh, look, here's one of a kitten who can't spell properly. If you're not busy after, we could go back to my place - I've got a Betamax video of a monkey throwing its own poo around.

Behaviour such as this would likely get you banned from the bar for life, if not detained indefinitely for your own safety. The other advantage of talking crap in a bar with your friends is that you could insult someone and they'd wake up the next day with a vague



PRE-FACEBOOK LUXURIOUS BATH

feeling of malaise and not much recollection of what you said about their fluctuating weight issues, not: #JabbaThePete - he's so big his shadow weighs 11kg LOL xD #fatty

If you really screwed up you could simply switch towns, reinvent yourself as someone who wasn't certifiably insane and move on. The internet, however, ensures that any gaffe or stupidity on your part shines like a supernova for the whole world, literally, to see. Forever. Only 30 or so years ago, you could craft a CV which was economical with the truth and attaching a photo would have meant stapling a Polaroid to the front. Now, if you sit in an interview as an Adonis with an IQ of 150, your game could quickly be rumbled by the interviewer producing an A3 print of a Facebook picture of you sitting in your underpants eating cheesy snacks whilst watching the Cartoon Network. Please note that this has never happened to the author of this piece, it's a purely fictional scenario.

So if it has its down sides, what are the positives? Lies, for a start. In the days before IM on the smartphone, if you'd planned to meet at the zoo gates at six o'clock, that's when you had to be there. Now you can just open Facebook chat or MSN and type "just leaving now, with you in 10" - something some of my friends appear to do while still

“
**STUPIDITY
ON YOUR PART
SHINES
LIKE A
SUPERNOVA**
”

laying in the bath sipping Pinot Grigio. You know who you are. Need to prove that Anderlecht won the Champions' League in 1998?* Simple, just go to the toilets, mess around with the Wikipedia entry (possibly killing two birds with one stone), stroll back into the bar and prove your sporting knowledge to everyone. Take the drinks you won and go home before the page gets put right.

If cornered in a discussion on Facebook, simply Google your way out of trouble. Even if your theories would make Baron Münchhausen himself appear rational, there will be plenty of spurious data and any number of conspiracy theorists to back up your claims. In the bad old days in the bar, we would be forced to observe that a friend's pink shirt was slightly effeminate to conceal our obvious ignorance.

Clearly, this small-world stuff gives us the opportunity to accomplish all manner of exciting things with people anywhere on the planet. Instead, we write on walls and worship pictures of cats. So, not so different from the Egypt of the first millennium.

* It was Real Madrid, no angry letters please.



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NICOS ANASTASIADES

Pick a pocket or two

Gerry Callaghan sees a dangerous precedent being set in Cyprus

“ WE CAN ONLY SPEND WHAT IS IN OUR POCKET.

”

Last month, Cyprus agreed that bondholders, investors and savers with more than €100,000 would incur significant losses in exchange for a €10bn rescue package.

The 'troika' deal, with the European Central Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the European Union, will see wealthy depositors in Cypriot banks lose up to 60% of their savings.

In addition to this, Cyprus will decrease the size of its banking sector, increase taxes and reduce the public sector workforce, with the country also being forced to privatize some state-owned businesses.

Officials in Cyprus warn of a forthcoming default by the end of April amid the escalating financial crisis. If the deal is not approved by 24 April then President Nicos Anastasiades' administration will be unable to pay state salaries and pensions on the cash-strapped island nation.

Cypriot Finance Minister Harris Georgiades told parliament's finance committee: "Public funds will have reached their limit by the end of the month. It's time to pay the bill. We can only spend what is in our pocket. There is no other option."

The minister said the country's faltering economy is at a crossroads and that Nicosia

“
**MANY FEAR
THAT CYPRUS
WILL BECOME
THE
'GUINEA PIG'**
”

must secure EU bailout funding.

Meanwhile, Cyprus Accountant General Rea Georgiou has stated that at least €75m is needed to pay its bills this month. "The cash deficit for April is €160m. The €85m in reserve is not enough and we need a similar amount to avoid a default," Georgiou said.

The overnight transition of Cyprus from prosperity to near financial meltdown has grasped the attention of the international community. Many fear that Cyprus will become

the 'guinea pig' for an economic experiment. That is, permitting international creditors to raid the savings of a country's citizens to pay for the banking sector's failures.

Thousands of bank workers took to Nicosia's streets recently to voice their fear that their pension funds would be lost, as many jobs in the once thriving financial sector will disappear.

The Cyprus crisis is not a one-off problem encountered by a small marginal country; it is a symptom of the entire problematic EU system. Cyprus cannot repay its debt, while the EU cannot simply go on throwing money to fill the Cypriot financial void.

From this, there is a possibility that the crisis will create a division in Europe, between the north and south. The south will become an area with a cheap labour force, free from the welfare state, an area appropriate for outsourcing and tourism. The gap between the developed and developing worlds will now exist within the EU itself.

The lesson of the worldwide crashes after the 2008 collapse of Lehmann Brothers is clear. The unfathomable web of financial funds and transactions, from individual deposits and retirement funds to the functioning of derivatives, will no longer do. In essence, it must be made much simpler and brought under regulated social control.

There exists a fear of the international banking system itself, and distrust of these financial institutions has spread globally. The institutions wield so much power that they can force our governments to take money from our personal account without permission. If it can happen to European citizens, under the so-called protective blanket of the EU, then is it only a matter of time, now that the precedent has been set, before it becomes standard practice?

It is well known that the control of wealth and power go hand in hand, so maybe it is time for the ordinary people to stand up and take control of the wealth that they actually create.

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Doing what comes naturally

Drug-free childbirth without medical intervention is a topic that spawns vitriolic debate. My own simple question 'what do you all think of natural childbirth?' on a social networking site fielded a series of comments - many of them from indignant mothers - within minutes. Check out any web forums on the topic and you will find it generates intense polarisation.

Childbirth in many industrialised countries is a medical affair, reducing choice for mothers, reports
Emma Portier Davis

Regardless of whether you believe childbirth should be natural or not, there is a worrying trend in many countries in the developed world towards what practitioners in favour of natural childbirth describe as a 'medicalization' of childbirth. As an increasing number of births take place in hospitals, mothers-to-be are often processed in the easiest, and sadly in some cases the most lucrative, way for medical staff.

“
THE RATE OF
C-SECTIONS IN THE
UNITED STATES HAS
INCREASED
FROM 21% IN 1996
TO 32% CURRENTLY

While some industrialised countries buck this trend (a UK mother complained of societal pressure to have a natural birth), c-section rates, the use of epidural anaesthesia, episiotomies and delivering on the back - the least conducive position to an easy labour but the most convenient for the obstetrician - are all rising.

The American Association of Birth Centers says the rate of c-sections in the United States has increased from 21% in 1996 to 32% currently. According to the World Health Organization's 2011 World Health Statistics, the 2000-10 rate in Belgium is just over 36%, Italy 38.9%, Australia 31.2% and in Cyprus, more than 50% of women have c-sections.

”



In many European countries, the predominant and in some cases the only pain relief offered is epidural, an anaesthesia injected into the lower back. More than 90% of women in Belgium have epidurals and hospitals offer them as a matter of course. The delivery rooms at larger hospitals have bathtubs to be used to ease labour pain but water births are almost unheard of and the use of TENS machines (see box) is permitted but you must learn how to use it yourself.

Over in the States, 98.8% of births take place in a hospital and increasing fears by doctors of legal repercussions if they do not perform c-sections at the first sign of trouble has led to certain hospitals being dubbed chop shops. Around 92% of women deliver on their backs rather than in gravity assisted positions like squatting or on all fours, according to the Association.

Aside from the risks associated with medical interventions - let us not forget that c-sections

are major abdominal surgery - the last thing a woman in labour wants is to be ordered around and encouraged to take meds to make life easier, and perhaps more lucrative financially, for the doctors rather than because it is necessary for the safety of mother and baby.

Many mothers also say they felt empowered and in control because they managed the pain without intervention. That is not to say, however, that medical intervention cannot in many circumstances be the best for mother and baby. Jo Everatt, midwife and owner of Antenatal and Baby in Brussels (www.antenatalandbaby.org), says: "There are parameters. Natural childbirth is not for all cases. The health and safety of the mother and baby must come first." There are also mothers who are, quite naturally, terrified of child birth and convinced from the outset that the best way for them to manage the pain will be with intervention. "They should do what feels natural for them," says Everatt.



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"Some women just don't want a natural childbirth. Childbirth should be about the mother's satisfaction based on her expectations being met and, of course, the best way for mother and baby," says Everatt. "One of the risks for post-natal depression is a traumatic birth where the mother is unprepared or they have to deal with the unexpected."

The good news is that globalisation is resulting in the adoption by hospitals around the world of different techniques. "The international community is changing the system," says Everatt, adding that in Brussels, where there is a large expatriate population, hospitals are becoming gradually more open to alternative pain management.

Certainly, a woman who gives birth without meds should not be flaunting this as a badge of honour in front of a peer who wanted an epidural. The point is that women should be encouraged to examine all the options to have the best experience possible rather than being bossed by busy obstetricians into more convenient forms of childbirth.

Empowerment through choice

Emma recounts her own natural birthing experience

Shortly before the birth of my first child a seasoned mother gave me three pieces of advice: leave your dignity at the hospital entrance, scream as much as you like, and make sure you know how to ask for the drugs. She guffawed when I said I hoped, all being safe with the baby, for a natural childbirth. Before I get lambasted for advocating natural childbirth (clearly, this is a very touchy topic among Mums), I was basically scared of the only medical pain relief on offer here in Belgium ie. an epidural. Having a needle poked into my lower back and losing the sensation in my legs scared me more than the prospect of labour pains and I wanted to feel in control of what was happening.

The day I went into labour was just the start of many examples of how children throw you a curve ball. After waddling around shopping and

“ THE LAST THING A WOMAN IN LABOUR WANTS IS TO BE ORDERED AROUND AND ENCOURAGED TO TAKE MEDS ”

lunching with a friend, labour started out of the blue with fierce contractions only seconds apart. They were breathtaking and wiped away all notions of a relaxed labour with soft music and perhaps a soothing massage from my husband.

During the frantic car ride to the hospital (watch for those speed cameras) if I could have spoken, I would have told my husband to forget everything I said about natural childbirth if I could have mustered up the energy to speak. As I was wheeled in to the delivery suite I was greeted with the rather unwelcome news that I was anyway far too advanced for an epidural. Some greater force took over as I realized the natural childbirth I had in a pre-labour stage wanted was now the only option. I recalled the breathing techniques from my pre-natal classes and single-mindedly focused on these. I managed not to scream or swear although my husband, desperate to put into practice something from class, was given short shrift when he attempted a back rub.



EMMA AND BABY MATTHIAS

I got mildly irritated when the obstetrician made her first appearance and started blabbering on about my birth plan mid-contraction. And when she told me to lay on my back on the delivery table and motioned towards the leg supports, I flat out refused and persuaded them to allow me to deliver laying on my side, a better if not optimal delivery position.

Just three hours after the first sign of labour, our son entered the world and I became oblivious to everything except our now family of three and stared dreamily at my offspring while the doctor started the process of stitching up tears. I announced, however, to my husband that I was sore enough not to claim, as a friend had done, that I could do it all over again in the very near future.

I cannot deny that it felt good to have managed without the drugs. Certainly when birthing experts describe this as empowering for women, I would have to agree. I just cannot quite put my hand on my heart and say I would have refused the epidural if I had had the chance. But I know that in the throes of labour, the most important thing for me was to decide how to cope for myself.

Pain distraction techniques*

TENS - Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation uses electric current to stimulate the nerves during a contraction, thereby lessening the pain. Although not proven scientifically, it can be an effective distraction

Mantra - reciting something short and snappy

Rhythmical music

Calming music

Water emersion

Counting - repetition

Dancing or stepping

Finger tapping

Rocking or swivelling on a ball

Visualisation - imagine a place that brings you pleasure and warmth

Breathing techniques

Humming

*These distraction techniques are provided by Jo Everatt of Antenatal & Baby

Getting down and dirty

Most of us love nature documentaries, whether on The Discovery Channel or YouTube. We can be gripped by a pack of lions hunting impala, or amazed by a slow-mo of mating butterflies. We can marvel at the interior of a termite mound or shriek at a great white shark attacking penguins.

Nature documentaries can be wonderfully educational. But, ironically, at the same time they can isolate us from Nature. We think we are experiencing Nature, when we are not. We are merely experiencing others' experiences of Nature, whether it's the TV presenter, the cameraman, the scientist or the celebrity. We're experiencing Nature vicariously – through the eyes of someone else.

I believe that nature documentaries should inspire us... not to sit down and watch the next episode, but to get out there and observe Nature for ourselves. If we don't do this, if we satisfy ourselves through these vicarious experiences, then I think we are missing something extremely valuable. We are missing coming into direct contact with Nature.

The investment is minimal. If you're interested in birds, buy a pair of binoculars. Bugs and

butterflies? A magnifying glass. Stars? A telescope. Whatever you're interest, buy or rent the relevant guide book.

Where to go? Forget the exotic safari to a distant location. Start local. Your garden or nearby park. The forest down the road. The lake at the end of the tram ride. Take off for an hour, or even less.

Get down and dirty. Trawl your net through a pond and empty the contents into a jam jar. Lie on your back on a summer evening and just gaze at the stars. Sit in a forest with your eyes closed and listen to the birds. I honestly think you will be amazed at what you will discover when you come into contact with Nature.

Some of my most memorable experiences in life have been close encounters with Nature.

I remember leaning over a canal bridge one balmy summer evening, day-dreaming as the dusk began to fall and the midges started to bite. Along the towpath a large white bird materialized. I thought at first it was a seagull, but as it approached I realized it was a barn owl out hunting. I sank below the parapet with just my eyes peeking over. The barn owl came closer and closer, but instead of flying under the bridge it flew over it, immediately above me. For a brief moment it hovered silently about a metre over my head. I looked up into the deepest, most gorgeous dark eyes of this totally wild bird – an experience I remember to this day, forty years later.

Then there was the large oak forest that I visited one evening in May. I sat down amongst the trees, when I heard a faint rustle behind me. I was itching to turn and look, but stayed as still as a statue. Faint footsteps padded closer. I caught a movement out of the corner of my eye. I slowly turned my head to see a beautiful female Muntjac deer, contentedly chewing leaves, totally unaware of my presence. It was followed by her two youngsters. As I watched them disappear into the foliage, there was a louder rustling behind me, and gambolling into view came three fox cubs, followed by the



Nature writer Denzil Walton makes a strong case for confronting the great outdoors

BARN OWL OUT HUNTING

“
**LIE ON YOUR BACK
ON A SUMMER
EVENING AND JUST
GAZE AT THE STARS**
”

vixen. One cub even came up to my outstretched legs and sniffed at my boots before disappearing.

Then there was the time I was walking in the Ardennes near La Roche, and after a tiring almost vertical climb I was sitting on the grass catching my breath when I heard a distant croaking like a frog. Frogs are always on the ground, so I looked on the ground, but I then

realized that the croaking was coming from above me – in the sky. I looked up to see one of the great spectacles of the world of nature – a flock of magnificent cranes on their northerly migration from Portugal and Morocco to Scandinavia.

The flock I was watching suddenly stopped and started circling in the sky... once, twice, three times. I thought for a minute they were lost. But then I heard some more croaking behind me and an even larger flock of cranes appeared. The first group had simply decided to wait a bit to allow the second flock to catch up. It was an absolutely wonderful experience.

So, this spring, why not take some time out, and get out there. Get into contact with Nature. Feel it, touch it, smell it, listen to it and observe it. I believe you will be uplifted, stimulated and rejuvenated. You will experience a sense of wonder. You may even feel reborn.

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Nikky

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Dungarees: New Look
Necklace: Naves stones
Shoes: Pinko



Frederick

Shirt and jeans: Diesel
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Nikky

Total look: Diesel
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Frederick

Top: Scotch & Soda
Necklace: Thomas sabo

**Nikky**

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Ring: Gianfranco Bigli
T-shirt: Tommy Hilfiger
Shirt jeans: Diesel
Skirt: Diesel
Panty: Patricia P  p  
Shoes: Be original

Frederick

Top: Scotch & Soda
Jeans: Replay



Nikky

Collar jeans: New Look

Bra: Ères

Panty: Patricia Pépé



Nikky

Shirt and short: Diesel

Necklace: Naves stones

Ring: FreyWille

Frederick

Vest: Melinda Gloss

Jeans: Diesel



Smear caffeine, wear jeans and bare all!

This month **Delphine Stefens**
has some rather unusual advice...

With a little help from my friends...

Aquadrainant from Oenobiol®

This food supplement contains Aquadrainol® based on grape extract believed to aid blood circulation and drainage to prevent water retention. Legs not only feel lighter but also look finer.

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With the cold weather lingering on, nourishing your body skin is more necessity than luxury. So while you're at it, why not go for something that will do just that but also promises to do so much more? Cream, lotion or gel to tone, firm or slim; take your pick and start rubbing and kneading and get ready for this season's must-have accessories: soft and smooth bare legs and tummies. Can you feel the heat already?



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Ref : Placebo-controlled randomized trial aimed at evaluating the effect of Cynatine HNS plus® supplementation on hairs. Facoderm srl, Italy.



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Toned Thighs Action by Yves Rocher

The new line Minceur Intensive launched by Yves Rocher has three products focusing on different areas: a dimpled skin smoother, a shaping gel for bums and tums and a firming lotion for thighs. The key ingredients of the lotion include usual suspect caffeine as well as green coffee and horse chestnut. The texture is very light and ideal for massage.

150ML/€27,99



Body Lift Cellulite Control by Clarins

With more than 8 plant extracts, this new gel targets the renewal of adipose tissue. Existing cellulite is reduced and prevented from expanding while the skin is moisturized and toned. Check-out the Clarins anti-cellulite self massage method™ online for optimal results (int.clarins.com)

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Celluli Eraser by Biotherm

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More than honey

James Drew takes a look at Belgian beekeeping, as a new documentary film goes deeper into the world of bees and apiarists than ever before

In a quote famously attributed to one Albert Einstein, which is interesting as the great man was neither an entomologist nor an expert on bees: "If the bee disappears from the surface of the earth, man would have no more than four years to live."

The quotation last surfaced in the public domain around 2006, when the sudden, mysterious disappearance of honey bees in the United States, Europe and Brazil was a reminder of Einstein's alleged utterance, as beekeepers lost the bulk of their hives and suffered significant losses in honey production. To this day no one can explain why the bees failed to return to their hives. It is a fact that the honey bee is totally responsible for the pollination of more than 90 fruit and vegetable crops worldwide, so the loss of a majority or all of our bee pollinators for those crops that do not self pollinate, but rely on the insects and

“

**NO BEE GIVES
ORDERS, BUT
EVERYBODY
BEHAVES**

”



other pollinators such as birds to help them reproduce, would be nothing short of devastating.

It is fair to say, then, that Markus Imhoof's *More Than Honey*, which takes an in-depth look at honey bee colonies in California, Switzerland, China and Australia, both from the perspective of the apiarists and their bees themselves, is an extremely timely and largely convincing look at the role that bees play in preserving a great many of mankind's organic and industrial concerns.

In addition, thanks to breathtaking micro and macro camerawork, as well as fascinating CGI recreations of bees' highly complex and still as-yet not-fully-understood behavioral patterns, Imhoof's film takes us inside a world that is at once entirely alien (while still beautiful, thanks to the visuals) but nevertheless governed by societal rules that each and every bee obeys without deviance, at least normally – hence the immense confusion over whither the US and Europe's errant bees.

The film as a whole strives (and occasionally struggles somewhat) to writ large bee society as a metaphor for a human utopia: "No bee gives orders, but everybody behaves," says a scientist at one point. In addition, the close-up look at the insect's advanced hive structure and mankind's role in keeping it operational ensures that the viewer comes to care about the fate of our little buzzing friends from a completely humanistic perspective. *More Than Honey* (2012), while frequently overplaying its obvious point that bees represent so much more than



the sticky stuff, is nevertheless an intriguing, beautiful and even moving account of the alarmingly fragile nature of both the bee and human condition.

And such sentiments are echoed by Etienne Vandeghinste, president of FRUPAH, the Royal Federation of Professional Beekeepers Union in Hainaut, Belgium. FRUPAH offers beekeeping courses for those who wish to learn more about bees' or even want to become a beekeeper. In addition, the Beekeeping Institute of Charleroi, which is based in Ransart, represents a unique facility in Francophone Belgium. Renowned for the quality of its training courses, its history can be traced to before 1889. The Institute is dedicated to breeding, studying and improving native honey bees. In parallel with the Groupe des Goulettes, the institute is seeking to create a disease-resistant honey bee.

Vandeghinste told *Together*, "Recent research, while not suggesting that bees can actually 'count', nevertheless shows that they are able to make generalizations based on a given number of items, an ability that is probably pivotal to their navigation, by recognizing a given route to their hive or a source of pollen.

"This level of organisation is virtually unparalleled in any type of society apart from human, and it provides further evidence of just how closely linked our species may well be, in ways that we are only just beginning to understand."

www.abeille-hainaut.be

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MÉLANIE LAURENT
AT THE BERLINALE
INTERNATIONAL FILM
FESTIVAL

**LIFE OF
LEISURE**

Cinema

Night train to Lisbon

I've never read a book that was so inspiring it caused me to leave my job, board a train and interview people for the better part of a week. However, I have seen a film or two that made me yearn to throw my computer out the nearest window, grab my passport and leave all worries behind. The picturesque shots of Lisbon and the film's cinematography are the brightest portion of this film. Just not quite bright enough.

Bille August directs Pascal Mercier's international bestselling book of the same name about a man who leaves his boring life behind and travels to Lisbon to find out more about a mysterious book. The story begins with Raimund Gregorius (Jeremy Irons) saving a young Portuguese woman from committing suicide on a bridge in Switzerland. Before long the young woman disappears leaving behind her red coat, a train ticket to Lisbon and a small book. Raimund reads a few passages from the book and is surprised by its philosophical

Tom Donley
leaves
everything
behind and
heads for the
cinema



MÉLANIE LAURENT & JACK HUSTON IN A CLINCH

depths. Noting that the young woman's train leaves within the hour, Raimund hurries to the train station hoping to her. With no sign of her and the train departing, Raimund spontaneously jumps onboard the night train to Lisbon. However, he is no longer interested in finding the young woman, but instead wants to find the author who wrote this inspiring book.

The film partly follows Raimund as he attempts to uncoil the events within the book written by a Portuguese doctor, Amadeu de Prado (Jack Huston). The rest of the movie focuses on flashbacks based on the conversations Raimund holds with people from Amadeu's book. Amadeu's book is a series of notes he accumulated as he reflected on events that took place during António de Oliveira Salazar's dictatorship.

It is unclear when the book begins in Amadeu's life, but Amadeu had become a doctor before deciding to assist his friends in a coup against the then government. Raimund finds Jorge O'Kelley (August Diehl) and Joao Eca (Marco D'Almeida), two of Amadeu's friends, upon his arrival to Portugal and is told stories about Amadeu and Jorge's girlfriend from this time, Estefania (Melanie Laurent). A love triangle soon develops as Estefania falls for Amadeu and the future of the group is changed. Estefania and Amadeu soon create an intimate relationship that fizzles just as quickly as it sparked.

Overall, the portions of the film told in flashbacks are the most effective scenes in the

film. Mélanie Laurent (brilliant as Shosanna in *Inglorious Basterds* (2009)), August Diehl (just as brilliant as Major Hellstrom in *...Basterds*) and Jack Huston (who plays one of the best characters in recent years in the TV series *Boardwalk Empire*) all provide quality and convincing roles. However, the pacing of the storytelling never allows any tension to be built and the fine performances by these three young actors are less effective as a result.

Overall, however, the film is worth seeing for the flashback scenes and enticing shots of Lisbon – I can say with confidence the city just moved up on the list of places I want to visit this summer.

111 mins.

Read regular reviews on www.picturenose.com

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**A LOVE TRIANGLE
 SOON DEVELOPS AS
 ESTEFANIA FALLS
 FOR AMADEU**

”

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Jeremy Hackett talks clothes and sport with **Paul Morris**

Jeremy Hackett: Posh rags to riches

“

**THE PICKINGS
WERE THIN SO
WE STARTED
MAKING OUR
OWN CLOTHES**

”

As a child, Jeremy Hackett was abandoned by his mother and given over to a home, where he remained until the age of five when he was taken in by foster parents. In recent years, he searched for and found his mother and his father whose identity his mother had kept from him. “She said to me: ‘I let my guard down.’ I sort of knew he was probably American. I got word that my half brothers and sisters were in Australia and I was headed out there for business and I thought why not, don’t put it off and found myself surrounded by them – and they all looked like me.” Later, he would go to America to meet his father. “So now I have 11 half brothers and sisters!”

In his late teens he left Bristol and headed for London. “I had been going back and forth, trying to bring London things to Bristol but soon realized that I should be there, where things were happening. I used to travel across the UK,

head up to Scotland – we were selling second-hand clothes then – and try and pick up some tweeds. But the pickings were thin so we started making our own clothes.”

Hackett has gone from second-hand clothing to a worldwide fashion business. Most successful businessmen and women can pinpoint a moment or two that inspired them to greater heights. “I don’t



©Hackett London

know about inspiration, we just did the next thing. We closed the shops in Fulham and found this place." 'This place' is 137/138 Sloane Street on the corner of very chic Sloane Square. "There were three little shops and we knocked them into one. The way we always did things was to just do it, even though we didn't really have the money."

Take one step inside Hackett's flagship store and you would get the impression that this is some ancient family store. Hackett smiled, genuinely bemused. "People think we've been around for ages. It's only 30 years." The impression is strengthened by the bespoke tailor's department on the second floor (where you can also get your shoes polished old school) and the barber's on the third floor. The barber's is like bread and milk in supermarkets – always put it as far away as possible so the customers have to go through the rest of the place to get there. "I've seen men come in for a twenty quid haircut and leave having been fitted for a new suit."

Hackett is constantly checking people out, commenting on what they're wearing. Does he think about fashion all the time? "Yes, all the time."

Ronnie, the driver assigned to take us to the Boat Race, took us past that first shop in Fulham. "I used to shop there," he said. "All second hand clothes – it was cool, we were cool."

Parked outside the London Rowing Club, which Hackett also sponsors and where he entertains during the event, an Aston Martin DB9 is parked. Neil Bugler, Hackett London's Sponsorship Manager, is looking after it (Hackett: "They wouldn't let me drive it."). Aston Martin is another partner in the company's sporting portfolio. Bugler has been with Hackett for 20 years and runs the sponsorship side of things. "That first shop used to get burgled regularly by kids from the high rises. They didn't get much but those curious porthole windows were listed and had to be replaced, which cost a packet."

“
**I DON'T KNOW
ABOUT
INSPIRATION, WE
JUST DID THE NEXT
THING**
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"Sport's important as part of our image. The boat race was such an easy fit, really. Likewise Aston Martin and our polo sponsorship." Hackett provides both rowing crews with formal wear and fleeces and jackets. The 'Battle of the Blues' range bears the crests of Oxford and Cambridge Rowing Clubs and includes rugby shirts, polo shirts, sweat shirts and T-shirts, all available in Hackett stores and online.

Men's Health said of Hackett's book *Mr Classic*: "For the man of 2008 who can see that the devil is in the detail, this book is indispensable." As the photographer took his publicity shots on the terrace overlooking the Thames, Hackett donned a natty yellow scarf and asked: "Did you spot the rowing tie-pin?"

He really does have an eye for detail. An old painting hangs in the London Rowing Club dining room and he wants to use a detail from it for a one-off shirt. It's a rowing picture from the turn of the last century. He points out a young rower, standing hands on hips admiring the others in the water. Hackett has spotted the scarf that gives the young man an air of timelessness.

As the crowds gather and the water level (and the anticipation) rose, Hackett headed down among the revelers, ten-deep now by the riverbank, his camera at the ready. To take photographs of the race, no, rather of the people and, even more specifically, the clothes on their backs.

www.hackett.com
©Hackett London

On the riverbank

Paul Morris recalls his first boat race

My first live boat race was in the mid-1980s and the build-up consisted of heading for the Sun Inn in Barnes at the appointed hour, ordering a pint of their splendid Guinness and, in a light drizzle, waiting for Derek's mate Andy Sproat to arrive from Scotland: he was a fisherman and drove an estate car all the way down to London, selling his wares to restaurants on the way. Luckily for us there was a sufficiency of chilled oysters for all.

“
**THE LIGHT
BLUES HAVE
LOST EACH
AND EVERY
ONE OF THEM**
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BNY Mellon



“ ‘WHICH BLUE ARE YOU?’ IS THE ORGANIZERS’ CURRENT SLOGAN ”

Then a cry went up, the boats were coming! and in an instant... they were gone, soon obscured by the trees, and so we turned back to our bivalve molluscs and stout. We retired to the pub and watched Cambridge lose on TV (I am a curse, I have seen five boat races in the flesh and the light blues have lost each and every one of them. No prizes for guessing who lost this year).

Nowadays, a giant screen by the riverbank relays every moment, every stroke of the oars, and each and every grimace of pain in the battle of the blues. And the banks are now lined with sponsors of every hue and there are umpteen concessions where you can eat and drink.

Often held up as a last bastion of the Corinthian spirit, the Boat Race, as it is commonly called, has been held annually since 1856. The competitors have to row for 6.8 km on the River Thames in West London, starting at Putney and ending at Mortlake. 'Which Blue Are You?' is the organizers' current slogan, since Oxford sport dark blue and Cambridge in a lighter blue although this year's chilly weather merited 'How Blue Are You?'). Despite my hex, Cambridge is ahead on wins with 81 victories to Oxford's 77. There was a dead heat in 1877, which some say was due to the judge falling asleep and missing the finale.

For many, a question mark still hangs over the event. Is it really just a way of preserving the class divide, with teams from privileged backgrounds representing two of the country's elite institutions? As I watched the swell of the river, that didn't seem to matter: it's the one occasion in the year when Londoners and visitors alike (around a quarter of million) are inexorably drawn to this sadly underutilized waterway. Perhaps, each year there is only one true winner: the Thames.

www.theboatrace.org

Merry England

Merry Brownfield takes lots of photographs at parties. In fact, for ten years now she has worked as a freelance social events photographer, photographing fashion and art parties. She decided to put a book together, a project completely unconnected to that glittering world.

"I wanted to do something that was mine. And I thought of all the traditions that are still alive and how it often, if not always, involved dressing up and in the strangest attire. And it made me think how eccentric the English still are. That these traditions live on. And while they still do, I wanted to record a series of photos up and down the country."

So she left the "social butterflies and fashion icons" behind and traipsed the length and breadth of the land in search of "the heritage of English style in all its eccentric, individual glory". This was all a far cry from *Elle*, *Vogue* and *Tatler*: these were real people who chose the eccentric path. She baptized her book *Merry England - The Eccentricity Of English Attire*.

"The only thing I didn't manage to track down was punk rockers, because they've largely gone now. There was a convention somewhere but I couldn't make it. A convention of punk rockers. really!" Sprinkled throughout there are quotes from experts on English style, such as Sir Peter Blake, Sir Paul Smith and Betty Jackson. There may be a paucity of punks but there are straw bears, a coat and badge race, men in pink frocks and what looks like a plant experiment gone wrong. Wicker Man, anyone?

The book is available at www.cathkidston.co.uk (search for Merry England)



Paul Morris finds proof positive that eccentricity is alive and well

Photo Merry Brownfield



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Pullman London St Pancras

The Pullman London St Pancras Hotel towers above the King's Cross district, affording stunning views of St Pancras, the British Library and beyond. Recently renovated, it is bright and spacious. The lobby has a forum feel, half an atrium, a high-ceilinged open space that connects reception bar and the Golden Arrow restaurant. At breakfast you can watch commuters hurry past as you tuck into your eggs and bacon.

It has just over 300 rooms, bright and modern rooms and the staff are very friendly. There are plenty of meeting places if you're in town for business and The Shaw Theatre, with seating for 446.

It's only a few minutes' walk to St Pancras International station so it's a handy overnighter for Eurostar trips and, of course, for the Underground since King's Cross station is a veritable transport hub and Euston station is also close by – you have the choice of six lines that will take you in under a quarter of an hour to many of London's tourist highlights.

Within easy walking distance are the British Museum, London Zoo and the Sherlock Holmes Museum and a little further away Buckingham palace, St Paul's Cathedral and the Houses of Parliament.

**LIFE OF
LEISURE**

Travel

London hotels



One Aldwych

Standing on the corner you can tell immediately why so much light floods into the hotel at 1 Aldwych: it sort of has the shape of the flat-iron building in New York and so much of it is open to sunlight (on a good day). You pass through a grand big Lobby bar area before you get to the reception which is guarded by a dog... that doesn't bite. It's a sculpture by Justine Smith, made from papier maché and covered in old copies of the Beano comic.

Though it's bang slap in the middle of the Covent Garden area and surrounded by theatres, you'll have to tear yourself away from the inner comforts: a swimming pool with underwater music; a gym with personal trainers; two highly-regarded restaurants (ideal for pre-theatre); and a tucked-away guest lounge called Lounge One where you can chill and read from a selection of Rizzoli books. It also boasts a permanent collection of contemporary art and sculpture, with over 350 pieces, and there's also a private cinema.

If you do venture out, walk round to Covent Garden with its three lively markets, selling everything from handmade soaps to antiques. There are plenty of pubs and restaurants, too. The Duke of Wellington pub does a roaring trade in salt beef and cooked ham in its lunchtime carvery corner.

www.onealdwych.com

For more about your visit to London:
www.londonandpartners.com





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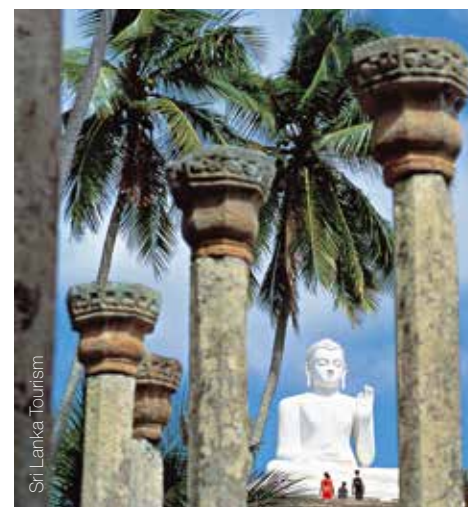
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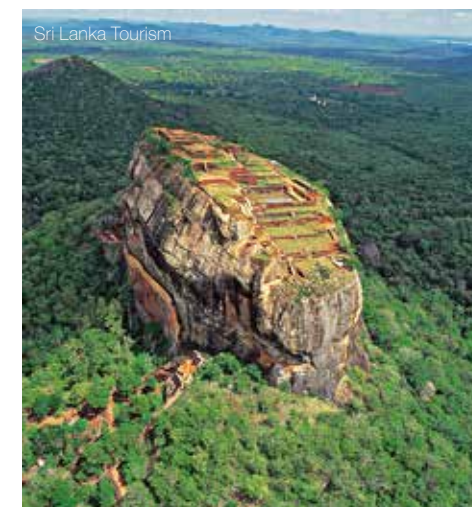
Colombo: The gateway to Sri Lanka

Federico Grandesso
walked the colonial path in
Sri Lanka's former capital



Colombo is surely your first port of call when visiting Sri Lanka. It is the most vibrant and ethnically diverse city of the island, definitely worth a visit! After a long civil war, which ended in May 2009, the country is open again to tourism, and relieved locals are very welcoming. If you land at Colombo airport at the weekend you will notice the heavy flow of people travelling in and out. According to my driver, this is a positive sign since it means the population is finally enjoying the freedom to move safely again and enjoy day trips.

At first sight Colombo may appear chaotic and noisy but you will easily find some quiet and peaceful spots, such as the posh Cinnamon Gardens with its villas and rich mansions. The rich colonial past is soon evident in places where the Portuguese, Dutch and British left their mark on the country's heritage. The Church of Wolvendaal is a good place to start a historical tour. Large enough for a thousand-strong congregation, construction on the church began in 1749, and it took eight years to



finish it. It was dedicated for public worship by Reverend Matthias Wirmelskircher, Rector of the Colombo Seminary. It is built in the form of a Greek cross in the Doric style, with walls nearly five feet thick. The dome was originally arched with brick and surmounted with a brass lion. The lion had a crown on its head, a sword in one hand and seven arrows in the other, representing the seven united provinces of the Dutch Republic.

For getting around, take the iconic tuk-tuk tricycle taxi and head for the popular colourful market area of Pettah, where you can browse for the best silk masterpieces and craft objects. And don't miss the 'Dutch' Kayman's Gate Bell, which dates back to the 16th century. Going back to the fort area you will discover a nice courtyard, redolent of 17th century Dutch architecture, with the oldest building in the area. It served as the Fort Police Station during the 1980s and 1990s. Renovated by the Defence and Urban Development Ministry, it now adds a splash of colour to the city.

If you want a deeper insight into the Dutch cultural background, the Dutch Museum on Prince Street will help. It was built by the Dutch governor Thomas van Ree during the 17th century and later used as a military hospital. To complete the 'colonial' tour, the Parliament building reflects the grandeur of the period, while the Colombo National Museum helps to understand Europe's former role in the country. The museum was founded by Sir William Henry Gregory, the British Governor of Ceylon (Sri Lanka). Housed in a fine colonial-era building, it is famous for its collections of ancient royal regalia; Sinhalese art work, (carvings, sculptures, etc.) antique furniture, chains and Ola manuscripts. It contains more than 4,000 palm leaf manuscripts and ancient medieval jewellery.

Had enough of culture? For a relaxing moment the central five-star Hotel Cinnamon Grand is your oasis within the city. Admire the sun setting on the ocean, as you take a walk on the Galle

Face Green, the city's best promenade with its tasteful street food and lively vendors – this is certainly authentic Sri Lanka.

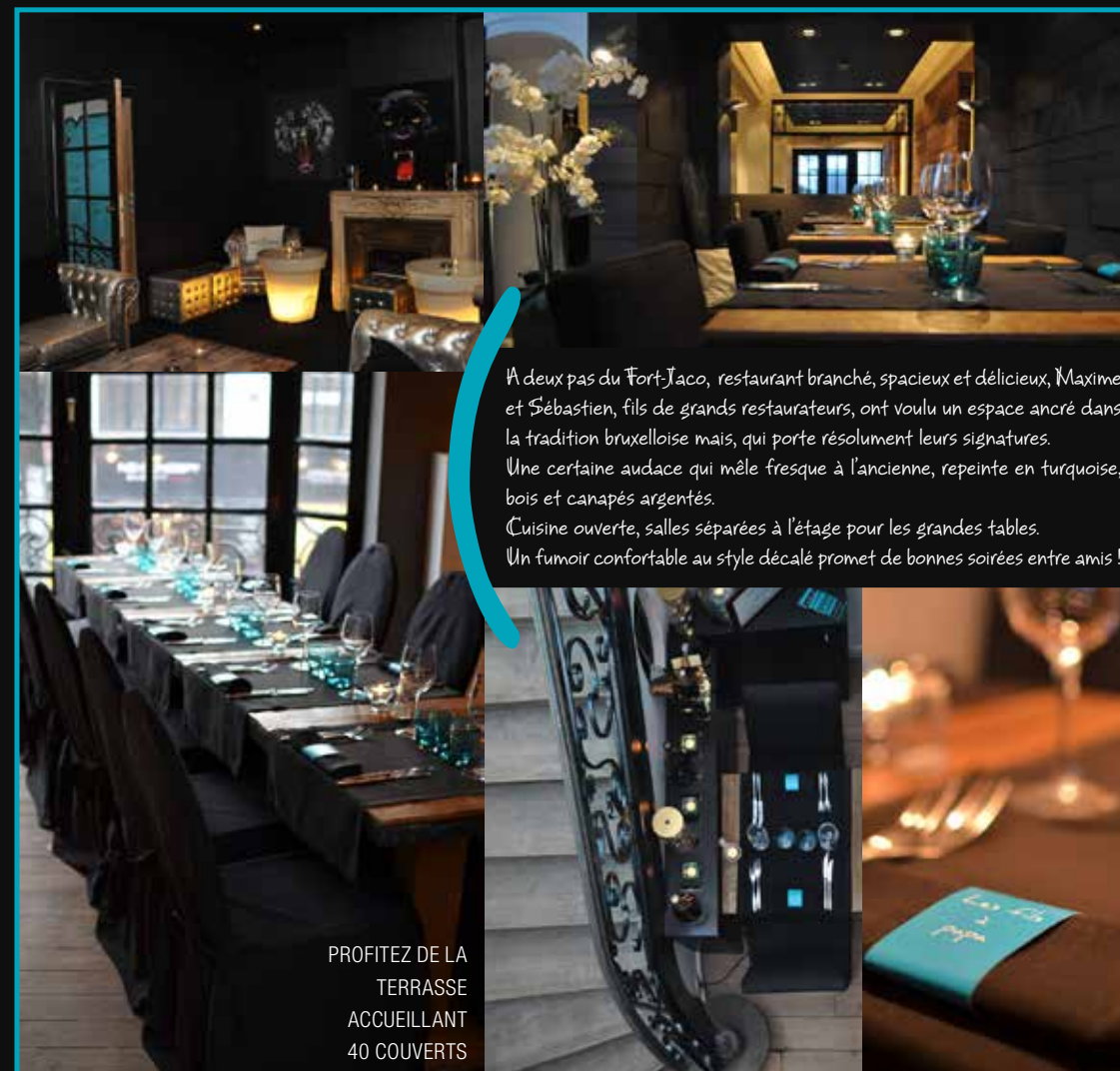
After a few days in the big city, you might want to relax on a romantic beach. Not far from Colombo, only an hour's drive away, you will find Negombo. Famous for its luxury beach hotels and pretty lagoon, this little city is also well-known for its typical fish market where you can admire the fishermen's gesticulations and inhale the fascinating olfactory sensations of this mysterious land.

A last suggestion, if you have time left, head for the coastal city of Galle. Must-see sights are the stunning and well-preserved fortification and also the old capital Kandy's royal complex with its sacred Temple of the Tooth, housing one of Buddhism's most sacred relics (including the tooth of the Buddha) – this is a serious magnet for followers of the Buddhist faith from all over the world.



Les fils à papa

RESTAURANT - BAR



À deux pas du Fort-Jaco, restaurant branché, spacieux et délicieux, Maxime et Sébastien, fils de grands restaurateurs, ont voulu un espace ancré dans la tradition bruxelloise mais, qui porte résolument leurs signatures. Une certaine audace qui mêle fresque à l'ancienne, repeinte en turquoise, bois et canapés argentés. Cuisine ouverte, salles séparées à l'étage pour les grandes tables. Un fumoir confortable au style décalé promet de bonnes soirées entre amis !

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The winefields of Vietnam

Alex Hewetson seeks a decent wine from former minefields

With so many dark matters looming over us in international news, it is very refreshing to hear of something positive and peaceful that has emerged from a former, tragic war zone. If I told you that Vietnam grows vines and produces wines, some in what were formerly mine fields, I'd certainly expect you to be surprised.

Wine-growing in Vietnam began long before the eponymous war of the 1960s and early 1970s. Vietnam was once a part of French Indochina from 1887 to 1940, and it was during this time that vines were first planted there. However, Vietnam is in the tropics and you might wonder how on earth they grow grapes in such sweltering temperatures.

The area that is probably best for traditional viticulture is in the highlands, on the slopes of the Ba Vi mountain to the west of Hanoi – these vines were of the European *vinifera* family. Yet table grapes are grown in much hotter and more humid areas of the southern coastal plains; not surprisingly, these grapes are mainly for eating and grape juice, and not really suitable for making anything approaching a quality wine. The first company to produce wines was a joint venture between a British and local company – astonishingly, there was no French involvement at

“
THESE GRAPES ARE
MAINLY FOR
EATING AND GRAPE
JUICE
”

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DEFECTION OF NLF AND NORTH
VIETNAMESE TO THE SIDE OF THE
REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM



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where! Rally now under the Chieu Hoi Program;

all, despite its historical presence. The company didn't do particularly well and stopped production some ten years ago.

Today, there is a local wine in circulation called Dalat, but it's nothing to write home about. Not surprisingly, a recent joint Australian venture has produced better results, after all the Barossa Valley and Western Australia are hardly cool climates, and their expertise would help wine production considerably in somewhere like Vietnam.

It is not perhaps the overall quality that is so magical about wine production here, but the miracle that grapes grow at all. Most importantly, that where weapons of horrendous destruction once lurked, something is now grown that brings people together to toast each other's health, and the shadow of war at last recedes.

“
WHERE
WEAPONS OF
HORRENDOUS
DESTRUCTION
ONCE LURKED,
SOMETHING IS
NOW GROWN
”



As European wines struggle to get a grip on Vietnamese drinking habits, go into any market and you'll discover a fine selection of snake or scorpion wines. The use of the creatures in the process is said to cure all known ills – you really can claim it's for medicinal purposes.



L'Orchidée Blanche: Flower of the Orient

James Drew samples a little gem of a Vietnamese restaurant



There are more than a few compensations to patience – having very much enjoyed dining in Brussels as a happy resident of the ‘capital of Europe’ for the past 12 years, I nevertheless had always felt that, while lovers of Belgo-French, Italian, Spanish, Indian, you-name-it cuisine have always been very well catered for, there was nevertheless a lacuna when it came to finding restaurants that best represented Asian gastronomy.

The fact that I did not find L'Orchidée Blanche sooner, however, may perhaps be because the restaurant does give the impression of hiding itself away from the world somewhat – as it is tucked into a row of shops just a little way down the road from Cimetière d'Ixelles, you would be forgiven for passing the unassuming, thin premises without a second glance, but that would be a real mistake, as I finally discovered, to my delight.

Once inside, the first impression gained from the attractive, xen-like interior is that of hustle without bustle, discreet elegance and attentive service. Another good sign, and one that I always look for

in a restaurant representing a country and a culture, was the fact that, for a busy Thursday night, there were more than a few Asian diners at table – the locals' vote goes a long way with this diner.

My partner and myself were quickly ushered to a pleasantly 'tucked away' table (there was definitely already a theme developing) and, over a couple of champagne aperitifs, delightfully decorated with orchids, made our choices.

The extensive menu, representing as it does an extensive range of subtly flavoured dishes in meat, poultry, fish and vegetarian varieties, was initially a touch intimidating, but the very friendly and helpful waitress quickly put us at our ease. As we were to discover, the key to Vietnamese cuisine is not excessive spice, but rather combinations of flavours that work to excellent effect.

My guest felt that Canh Chay, a light, fresh vegetable soup based on a delicious, delicate bouillon was to be her opener while I, never being able to resist meat somewhere in a meal out, opted for Loba Bot, which represented five



PINEAPPLE FRITTERS IN HONEY

varieties of differently flavoured beef.

While we were concerned that it might prove a touch heavy for our choice of dishes, we nevertheless opted for the Château Barrail du Blance St Emilion Grand Cru, and our fears were completely unfounded – a magnificent red chosen from an extensive carte des vins representing an excellent choice from the length and breadth of Europe, as well as the New World. Sadly, there were no Vietnamese wines to try but, as my colleague Alex Hewetson's excellent article explains elsewhere, the trade and craft is still very much in its infancy (but growing, nevertheless) in the country.

My carnivorous tendencies more than appeased by my very tasty entrée, it seemed only right and proper that my other gastronomic love, namely calamars, should be satisfied by my plat principal – flavoured with piment rouge, it was nothing less than delightful, while my friend, who had already declared her soup as delicious, opted for the intriguingly titled marmite du pêcheur de l'île du Dragon, namely scampi fried in lemon and crushed spices. Nothing less than wonderful as well, she said, and you can't say fairer than that.



FIVE FLAVOURS CHICKEN

“**THE LOCALS' VOTE GOES A LONG WAY**”

With its accessible but wonderfully civilized ambience spread over two floors, an open kitchen that allows full view of the preparation of the food and coming in at around €50 per head including pudding, it is difficult to see how L'Orchidée Blanche could easily be topped in terms of dining pleasure, service and value – definitely a secret you will want to share.

L'Orchidée Blanche
Chaussée de Boendael, 436 - 1050 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 503 3529 - www.orchidee-blanche.com
Open 12-14h30 and 19-23h.
Closed Saturday lunchtime.

What's On BELGIUM

Here are our suggestions for events in Belgium

Kandinsky and Russia

Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) is considered by many to be the master of abstract art and art theory. He settled in Munich to teach at the Bauhaus and when the school was closed by the Nazis, he moved to live in France for the rest of his life, where he died in Neuilly-sur-Seine. He was a multifaceted individual – he graduated in law and economy then studied art at the age of 30. He soon proved to have a prodigious output.

The Belgian exhibition is complete and you will have the chance to see his first full abstract painting, a masterpiece painted in 1911, loaned by the Georgian National Museum. Many of the works are from Russia and Georgia, leaving museums to travel and allow a wider public to discover the spirit of Kandinsky and his contemporaries. We also get an insight into the man's spirituality, through the Orthodox Church and animism practiced by the tribes of Siberia. The paintings are not only beautiful but reflect objects and elements of Russian daily life and traditions at that time. **Until June 30.** Musée Royaux des Beaux-Arts. Tickets €8. www.expo-kandinsky.be



IMPROVISATION 11, 1910, St. PETERSBURG
THE RUSSIAN MUSEUM



Anne de Harlez

Anne de Harlez is a Belgian sculptress who is exhibited worldwide. Her recurring themes are the egg and the fallopian tubes. Galerie Arielle d'Hauterives, Bruxelles. **May 17 to June 16.** www.arielledhauterives.be

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5



Brasserie 135 invites you to share delicious moments in a modern and warm setting overlooking the Sonian forest. Our chef, **Pascal Marcin**, member of the Masterchefs of Belgium, Master Rôtisseurs of Belgium, the Eurotoques and the Culinary Academy of France proposes **a menu that prides local products and their wonderful flavours.**

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TOGETHER MAGAZINE READERS OFFER*

UPON PRESENTATION OF THIS COUPON, WE WILL OFFER BRASSERIE 135'S GUESTS AN APPETIZER: JANSZ PREMIUM NON VINTAGE CUVÉE. *VALID UNTIL THE 31ST OF MAY 2013

Tosca

Opera Zuid present Tosca, an opera in three acts by Giacomo Puccini. **6 and 20 June.** Capitole Gent and Stadsschouwburg Antwerp. Tickets from €24.00. www.musichall.be



Antoine Watteau

An exhibition of the great early eighteenth century French painter. This will be a unique opportunity to rediscover a master. **Until 5 May.**

BOZAR. Tickets €10.00. PHOTO : © Jean Schormans www.bozar.be



Annie The Musical

The little redhead is back, bawling her lungs out.

7 - 12 May.

Capitole Gent and Stadsschouwburg Antwerp. Tickets from €29.00. www.musichall.be



What's On INTERNATIONAL

Feria de Caballo

The Jerez Horse Fair (Feria de Caballo) is a 500-year old festival in Gonzalo Hontoria Fairgrounds, showing off the famous Jerez horses. It's also an opportunity to sample some local sherry and dance to a bit of flamenco.

6-12 May. Jerez, Spain www.feriadelcaballoespanol.com



Some Like It Hip Hop

Sadler's Wells' Some Like It Hip Hop returns to the Peacock Theatre to kick-start the summer. "Zany and zippy, hilarious and heartwarming. A WINNER." The Times. Peacock Theatre, London. **Until 30 June.** Tickets check website. www.sadlerswells.com

In the Light of Amarna

100 Years of the Nefertiti Discovery The ruins of 'Amarna', the ancient Egyptian city of Akhetaton, are illuminated and explained in detail, allowing Nefertiti's time to be understood within its cultural-historical context. **Until 4 August.**

Neues Museum, Berlin. Tickets €10.

www.smb.museum PHOTO: Neues_Museum



ABBA The Museum

The long-awaited museum dedicated to all things ABBA will open its door on the **7th of May** 2013. Stockholm, Sweden. Tickets 195 SEK. www.abbathemuseum.com



Eileen Gray

Unique retrospective of the aristocratic, somewhat secretive Irish artist. **Until May 20.** The Centre Pompidou, Paris. Tickets €13. www.centrepompidou.fr



Give Eur-Hope

A bunch of eurocrats want your money for a very good cause



Eurocrats don't give a damn....
Wrong !
Ever heard about Give Eur-Hope?
No?
No big deal: it is an association launched by a bunch of EU civil servants about two and a half ago years.

Purpose: fight poverty and social exclusion.

Our stuff is real action, not nice Sunday speeches.
The beauty of our system: every cent we get is spent. As we are all volunteers, there are no overhead costs.

At this stage, Give Eur-Hope has spent over €70,000 on some 20 projects across the EU. Just an example: recently, we offered a violin to a young girl living with her Mom in a shelter for beaten women in Frankfurt.

What's the link with fighting poverty, you'll ask.
Easy: the girl has a real talent for music but because of the poor conditions she lives in, she can't afford to buy a violin.

How can I help?
Come by and see us on May 30 at the Irish Gala Night – we'll have great dances and



music. Two illustrious Irish/Belgian artists will be performing: well-known in Celtic circles throughout the world, Shantalla is composed of Irish living in Belgium (two members of the band are eurocrats), and Perry Rose is a very popular songwriter with Irish and Belgian parents. We also have some Belgian kids doing some nifty Irish dancing. All the artists are playing for free.

We will use the funds raised to support various projects in Ireland fighting homelessness, poverty and social exclusion.

Why Ireland? The Irish have been "running the EU" since January 1, 2013, for a six months period.

Want to join us, have fun and help a great cause? Tickets are only €20, buy them from irishgala@expatrium.be
See you there! And spread the word!
Show starts 19h30
Théâtre Saint-Michel
Rue Père Eudore Devroye, 2
1040 Etterbeek, Brussels

The Give Eur-Hope team.
www.giveeurhope.eu
www.expatrium.be
www.shantalla.eu
www.perryrose.com



Cat burglar



LE CHAT by Philippe Geluck

Vorsprung durch Technik



La nouvelle Audi A3 Sportback.

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De lignes pures associées aux fonctionnalités les plus innovantes? D'une sportivité en progrès? Vous appréciez ces atouts et pouvez en bénéficier grâce à la nouvelle Audi A3 Sportback. Son design fait la différence; son dynamisme est impressionnant en toutes circonstances. Découvrez l'avance Audi dans un véhicule largement en tête de sa catégorie. La nouvelle Audi A3 Sportback.

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