

WHERE NEWS & BUSINESS MEET GLAMOUR & GOOD TIMES

#15 / DECEMBER 2009 - JANUARY 2010

Together

magazine

BUBBLES & BIJOUX

Tasting stars,
gems of wisdom

LAETITIA CASTA
SANTO VERSACE
Tamara Ecclestone
Agnès Cromback

A masterpiece from
fashion-shoot stylist
Geoffrey Masure



Dior



Ingrid Bergman TM 2009 The Family of Ingrid Bergman by CMG Worldwide, a division of The Family of I Bergman (www.ingridbergman.com)

UNFORGETTABLE. | “I have no regrets. I wouldn’t have lived my life the way I did if I was going to worry about what people were going to say”. Ingrid Bergman’s unwavering belief in her personal choices changed Hollywood glamour forever. Natural beauty and talent made her one of the cinema’s timeless female icons. Montblanc pays tribute to an unconventional star, a woman of integrity and sophisticated elegance.

— *The Ingrid Bergman “La Donna” Edition. A refined mother-of-pearl style lacquer cap, featuring Ingrid Bergman’s signature, and a drop-shaped amethyst on the clip. MONTBLANC. A STORY TO TELL.*

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EDITORIAL

‘Pop’ culture, ‘jewels’ of wisdom

As 2009 draws to its close, and party time begins in earnest, I would first take this opportunity to thank the *Together* team and all our faithful business partners and press agencies for the enormous effort they have made to help our magazine soar on Brussels’ international scene during the past 12 months.

Of course, I am saving the most important contributor until last, and that would be YOU, Constant Reader – we wouldn’t be here, if it wasn’t for the unstinting support that we have received from each of the international community who has been kind enough to have taken a magazine from us on distribution day, to (hopefully) enjoy at leisure. So, thanks again.

And we hope that this last edition of the year will repay our readers’ fidelity – given the season, it seemed more than appropriate to devote *Together* #15 to certain pleasures that help make the world go round, namely champagne and jewellery.

Or, as we have chosen to label them, **Bubbles & Bijoux**. So, what do we have for you in the chill-box and treasure chest? Well, Patricia Kelly opens our eyes to **diamonds, past and present**, while Kimberley Lovato offers a personal appreciation of the ‘black diamond’ that is **the truffle**. New recruit Paul Stump offers a trenchant analysis of how historic jewellery titan **Fabergé** came to be associated with a certain 1970s aftershave, and there’s a chance to discover the work of ‘recycled jewellery’ designer Sarah Drew.

And what about the bubbly? Well, as you’d expect, our resident wine expert Alex Hewetson offers an enlightening appreciation of **Dom Pérignon**, and we highlight some of the more stylish champagne accessories available – perfect for presents.

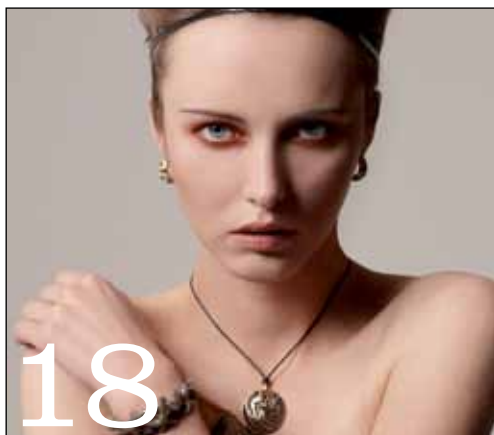
Emma Portier Davis, meanwhile, provides an insight into a non-drinker’s perspective on the growing number of ‘work related’ champagne parties, and we have some wonderful **Tissot T-Touch Expert watches** up for grabs in our competition.

Of course, we also have interviews galore – Federico Grandesso chats with **Tamara Ecclestone, Laetitia Casta and Santo Versace**, while I was fortunate enough to meet Tiffany & Co.’s **Agnès Cromback**. In addition, our **artistic director**, Geoffrey Masure, has put together an incredible **fashion and jewellery photoshoot**. But, as ever, I don’t want to spoil all the surprises. Rest assured, however, that Brussels-life commentary, fashion, fine dining, political analysis and travel are as well represented by your favourite leisure magazine as you have come to expect. Which leaves it for me only to wish you the very best for Christmas and the New Year, and look forward to sharing 2010 with you. Truly, we have great days ahead – forward, *Together!* ☺



David Mc Gowan
Publisher

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More to see, more to do...

WRITER: ARMAND RICHELET-KLEINBERG

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1.
Campari
Calendar 2010

LE CAFÉ 'CIRIO'

A tour of café-restaurant *Le Cirio*, which is to be found near La Bourse in the heart of Brussels. This delightful Art Nouveau establishment was the last to be designed by Francesco Cirio in 1885, and the 'Beautiful People' still drink there...

2.
Les Petits Riens
fashion show

CAMPARI CALENDAR 2010

In the sumptuous setting of Château La Rocq, *Together* reveals the 2010 Campari calendar – a flight in a helicopter, a glamorous reception, and an exciting, fragrant aperitif. What more could you ask for?

FASHION FOR HUMANITY

For more than 70 years, Les Petits Riens asbl has fought poverty in Belgium. On 16th October at Tour & Taxis, the charity organized a fashion show and auction, with the assistance of 17 designers and 13 stylists. Take a peek behind the scenes...

FAB FILM FEST

During the recent 36th Brussels International Independent Film Festival, our co-editor James Drew met with film producer Adel Adeeb to discuss his exciting cinema collaboration between Egypt and Belgium planned for 2010, and Egyptian film star and singer Yosra, who was at the festival to accept a Lifetime Achievement Award.



TOGETHER FASHION SHOOT

Together reveals the secrets of our stunning fashion photo-shoots – see our models, photographers and style supremo Geoffrey Masure in action...

'TWENTY EAT'

Want to enjoy Brussels' best restaurants at much-reduced prices? Check out our video online, and get in touch with Stéphanie (stephanie@twentyeat.com, T. +32 (0)473 453 808) to enjoy 20 meals at some of the city's finest eateries.

BURMA BOUND

Together is arranging a trip to Burma for our readers during 2010 – more information in our next edition but, for now, find out more with our online video!

UNITED ARTISTS FAIR@TOUR & TAXIS

From 13th-22nd November, 34 artists' work was exhibited at L'Entrepôt Royal, Tour & Taxis. With organizer Dominique De Jaegher as your guide, take an enchanting and enthralling trip into the heart of art. To check out these great videos and more, go to www.together-magazine.eu/videos.shtml @



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Tissot: Time to touch

Together teams up with renowned watch manufacturers Tissot to give readers the chance to win a man and woman's touch-technology timepiece.

Today's world has smoothly integrated tactile technology into all aspects of everyday life. From making phone calls to buying train tickets, our fingers do the walking. In 1999, just ten years ago, it was a different story.

THE DYNAMIC MODELS IN THE TISSOT TOUCH COLLECTION ALL FEATURE A TACTILE FACE WHICH IS SENSITIVE TO THE TOUCH AND PROVIDES A DYNAMIC INTERFACE BETWEEN THE WEARER AND THE WATCH'S VARIOUS FUNCTIONALITIES

Then, touch technology was a rarity, which made the birth of the patented technology of the Tissot Touch watches all the more exciting, setting the scene of innovation that has shaped the first ten years of the collection's life.

Mention the word 'Tissot' all over the world and the chances are that many will respond with the word 'Touch'. The Tissot Touch Collection has taken the brand to new heights with its unrivalled ability to keep pace with an environment focused on easily accessible technological advancement. It has achieved this through a

unique combination of proven Swiss watch-making expertise and the courage to explore new territory. 'Touch' has launched Tissot into the 21st century with head-turning style and fascinating functionality.

TISSOT TOUCH TECHNOLOGY

2009 marks the tenth anniversary of a major technological advance achieved by Tissot – the development of tactile technology for precision watch-manufacturing. The dynamic models in the Tissot Touch Collection all feature a tactile face which is sensitive to the touch and provides a dynamic interface between the wearer and the watch's various functionalities. The Tissot Touch Collection was launched in 1999 and since then has consistently strengthened its leadership position by introducing tactile technology to contemporary models in various styles and using dynamic yet elegant materials.

- Tissot T-Touch:

Born ahead of its time in 1999.

- Tissot Touch Silent T:

Providing good vibrations since 2003.

- Tissot Touch Navigator:

In 2004 Tissot proved just how small the world can become.

- Tissot T-Touch Expert:

Essential equipment for adrenalin-fuelled mountain lovers since 2008.

- Tissot Sea-Touch:

Celebrating a decade of technological leadership above and below sea-level.



Tissot, with its signature 'Innovators by Tradition', has been pioneering craftsmanship and innovation since its foundation in 1853. Today Tissot is a member of the Swatch Group, the world's largest watch producer and distributor. For 156 years the company has had its home in the Swiss watch making town of Le Locle in the Jura mountains but now also has a presence in over 150 countries. The Tissot innovation leadership is enabled by the development of high-tech products,

special materials and advanced functionality. With a broader, more versatile range of high-quality timepieces at an attractive price than any other Swiss watch brand, Tissot also expresses its commitment to making excellence accessible. As official timekeeper and partner of NASCAR®, FIBA, AFL, CBA, MotoGP and the World Championships of cycling, fencing and ice hockey, Tissot is committed to respecting tradition, underlining its core values of performance, precision and setting new standards.

HOW TO WIN

To take your chance to own a Tissot T-Touch Expert watch, send us an email, with Tissot Competition in the subject line, to info@togethermedia.eu with your full name, address and daytime phone number, indicating whether you would prefer the male or female model.

In addition, help us shape the future of *Together* by answering the following three questions:

- (i) What is your favourite *Together* section?
- (ii) What is your least-favourite *Together* section?
- (iii) What subjects would you like to see covered by *Together* during 2010?

Many thanks for your input – the deadline for all entries is 15th January 2010. Good luck! ☺

www.tissot.ch

Competition organized under the supervision of a bailiff. Full rules available on request. Organizer: **Together Magazine**, Boulevard Saint-Michel 47, 1040 Brussels.

On location

WRITER: FEDERICO GRANDESSO

The year's final round-up of famous faces to grace Europe's capital...

BRUSSELS TURNS MOVIE SET

From 3rd November for nine weeks, Brussels has become the shooting location for François Ozon's film *Potiche*, with stars (www.premiere.fr/Star/Catherine-Deneuve) Catherine Deneuve and Gérard Depardieu already seen on the city's streets. *Potiche*, which is due to be released in November 2010, tells the tale of Suzanne (Deneuve), the submissive, 'trophy' wife of rich industrialist Robert Pujol (Depardieu), who runs his factory with an iron hand and is as tyrannical with his workers as he is with his mistress, children and wife. But when Robert is kidnapped by his disgruntled employees, Suzanne proves to be a woman of action...



THE PRODIGY

English electro-rock group The Prodigy was in Brussels on 18th November for a concert in Forest Nationale, and gave a performance that will apparently also be remembered by seismologists, with Belgian press reports indicating that the Uccle Royal Observatory (and local residents) detected strong vibrations! At the beginning of 2009 the group, who also played in Belgium during the summer, released their fifth album, *Invaders Must Die*.



DR JACQUES DIOUF

European Commission President José Manuel Barroso met Dr Jacques Diouf, Director-General of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Brussels on 9th of November, and underlined that sustained funding and targeted investment are needed to improve long-term food security. "But investment must be complemented by sound governance," Barroso added. The FAO was one of the main beneficiaries of the EU's 1€ billion food facility proposed by Barroso and approved in December 2008 by the EU Council. Dr Diouf also visited the European Parliament to discuss the consequences of the economic and financial crisis for food security in developing countries with the Development Committee.



THOMAS ENDERS

Airbus CEO Thomas Enders visited Science and Research Commissioner Janez Potočnik on 17th November, to discuss the Clean Sky Joint Technology Initiative (JTI) that aims to develop breakthrough technologies to reduce the impact of the air transport on the environment. ☺



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“Great love affairs start with champagne and end with tisane.”

– **Honore de Balzac (1799-1850), French novelist and playwright**

“Alas, I am dying beyond my means.”

– **Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), as he sipped champagne on his deathbed**

“There comes a time in every woman’s life when the only thing that helps is a glass of champagne.”

– **Bette Davis (1908-1989)**

“Jewellery, to me, is a pain in the derriere, because you have to be watching it all the time.”

– **Eartha Kitt (1927-2008), American actress, singer and cabaret artist**

“Will the people in the cheaper seats clap your hands? And the rest of you, if you’ll just rattle your jewellery.”

– **John Lennon (1940-1980)**

BUBBLES
& BIJOUX

A RUINART MOMENT



1729: Ruinart was history's first 'champagne house'.
1735: On the behest of King Louis XV, artist Jean François de Troy created the first painting depicting a meal accompanied by champagne, *Le déjeuner d'huîtres*.
1959: The year of the first Dom Ruinart Cuvée.
2009: Ruinart pays tribute to its eminent visionary by celebrating 50 years of the eponymous cuvée.

To celebrate 50 years of its prestige cuvée, Dom Ruinart champagne has commissioned Netherlands-based designer Maarten Baas to reinterpret the art of table-setting that emerged in the 18th century – the century that saw the birth of Maison Ruinart.

Maarten Baas, who has caused international sensations with his hand-made furniture, has created an original piece, an exclusive ice bucket that is the ultimate homage to the eminent visionary Dom Ruinart, to whom the cuvée is dedicated.

CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE

Dom Thierry Ruinart lived in the 18th century and his culture of excellence is his greatest legacy.

And, once again, Maarten Baas has excelled himself – Maison Ruinart naturally turned to him to create a new piece to mark the 50th anniversary of the Dom Ruinart cuvée. Fifty years that have produced 21 prestigious vintages – half a century of the finest champagnes.

And inspired by table settings from the 18th century, the latest Baas design is the ultimate homage to the visionary Ruinart and his cuvée. A prodigious rebel, Baas loves to break the rules – his work is a subtle fusion of the modern-day ice bucket and 18th-century centrepieces, both sumptuously extravagant and elegantly refined.

A baroque-style champagne bucket, its base appears melted like ice left in the sun, spilling into a striking silver-plated puddle that exudes modern design. This silver plated piece seems to want to fuse with the table, which becomes the perfect showcase for its smooth, brilliant lines.

This exclusive interpretation of classic table decoration combines the refinement of the Siècle des Lumières with the purity of contemporary design. An original piece in a limited series reinvents the art of chilling and serving exceptional Dom Ruinart cuvées. ☞

www.ruinart.com



THE MAGIC FLUTE



When it comes to sophisticated glassware, nobody does it better than **Chef&Sommelier**, a leading brand of the world-famous **ARC INTERNATIONAL** glass-production group, based in Arques, France. And, in keeping with the theme of this edition of *Together*, one of their latest creations is a champagne flute to take your breath away....

The innovative flute forms part of Chef&Sommelier's 'Arom'Up' range – so called because the glasses are designed, via their shape and aesthetic, to accentuate the aromas specific to wine varieties, and the flute is no exception.

The 21cl glass, which is made from ARC INTERNATIONAL's patented and incredibly resistant Kwarx Advanced Material, should be filled with champagne to the 10cl mark (at the peak of the glass's upward curve). Then, the structure's laser-designed technology goes to work - thanks to the innovative design, the characteristic bubbles of champagne and sparkling wine are given full rein, allowing for an impressive 'central-pillar' style effect in the glass, while the floral aromas that are given leave to exude without hindrance by the flute's

unique shape are simply beautiful. A simple test – try a champagne in Arom'Up flute, then taste the same wine served in a traditional glass. The combination of the finest champagne scents, combined with the flavour accentuating delicacy of the glass's rim, will convince you it's a different wine, and that is a promise. But don't take our word for it – try for yourself. The flutes are available from Girbal in Brussels, and are delicately priced at only 7.50€ each.

What are you waiting for, Christmas?

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www.lessoinsduvin.com
www.chefsommelier.com

To find out more about the wonders of the golden nectar, *Together* recommends **I Am Drinking Stars! A History of Champagne**, which is edited by Gerhard Steidl and, according to Corinne Perez of Dom Pérignon: "...tells the luxurious story of champagne, stretching over 400 years. Pivoting around one of champagne's pioneers Dom Pérignon and the brand named after him, the book explores the delectable overlap between history and legend." A perfect Christmas present – in Brussels, it is available exclusively at *Filigranes*, see details below. ☞

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AND QUIETLY FLOWS THE DOM...

WRITER: ALEX HEWETSON



What better theme for *Together's* renowned wine expert to get stuck into than champagne? Our man presents a perfectly chilled study of Dom Pérignon.

No, no, no, my dear novice, we do not want to make the wine that way." "And pray why not, Frère Pérignon?" "Because it will cause re-fermentation, my child."

An imagined conversation between Pierre Pérignon and one of his acolytes at the Abbey of Hautvillers near Epernay in France, circa 1695. What is not imaginary, however, is that Dom Pérignon produced wines that were not sparkling, and constantly struggled against secondary fermentation, the very process that is required for naturally bubbly wine, or what is now known as the *méthode champenoise*.

Horror of horrors, and contrary to legend and popular belief, Dom Pérignon did not invent champagne. It was the English scientist and physician Christopher Merret who was the first to make sparkling wine intentionally – and I can already hear

our French readers reaching for their shotguns and dyspepsia tablets. Merret documented the addition of sugar to a finished wine to create a second fermentation (and presented the Royal Society with a paper in which he detailed *méthode champenoise*) in 1662, some six years before Dom Pérignon set foot in the Abbey of Hautvillers and almost 40 years before it was first claimed

HORROR OF HORRORS, AND CONTRARY TO LEGEND AND POPULAR BELIEF, DOM PÉRIGNON DID NOT INVENT CHAMPAGNE

that the famed Benedictine monk had invented champagne.

IN PURSUIT OF PERFECTION

So if he didn't invent champagne, and in fact made wines that didn't undergo secondary fermentation, why is our dear 'Dom' so venerated, with the ultimate accolade of having one of the great prestige cuvées named after him? Well, it was his untiring and very successful dedication to raising the standards of viticulture in and around the Abbey of Hautvillers near Epernay and the region for which he is remembered. Things that today we

take for granted, such as the very strict pruning, restricted height and growth of vines to allow greater concentration of flavour from the grapes, as well as highly controlled fermentation conditions and processes, were all originally of his doing – he worked thus for around 47 years, and paved the way for the 19th century's great champagne explosion, if you will pardon the pun.

'POP' CULTURE

Cuvée Dom Pérignon was first made by Moët et Chandon in 1921, but not released onto the market until 1936. It is made from 60 per cent Chardonnay and 40 per cent Pinot Noir grapes, with the skins of the latter being removed before the wine is made. It is only produced in 'great' years, because it originates from a single vintage, not a blend of years, such as is the case with its non-vintage sibling, Brut Imperial. When aged, it has wonderful flavours and great length – it is expensive to make and truly a symbol of wealth and luxury. The current vintage on sale is the 2000, which follows the pattern of being released eight years after the harvest.

Hello... I have just heard a crisp, clear 'pop' from the living room – mayhap the blessings of "The Dom" are gushing into my glass, and I can savour the rich, biscuity notes of one of Champagne's greatest scions. ☘

More than meets the eye.



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Scarf:
ESSENTIEL

Spider earring:
CHAUMET

Watch:
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Glasses:
LAFONT



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*Dress:
PATRICIA PEPE*

*Fur hat:
PAULE KA*



*Bracelet, watch,
necklace and earrings:
PIAGET*

*Hat:
ESSENTIEL*

*Polo-neck:
PAULE KA*



Ring and leopard watch in gold and diamonds:
CARTIER

Bonnet:
STEPHEN JONES

Dress:
HOSS INTROPIA



Rose-gold bracelet, rose-gold and topaz earrings:
POMELLATO

Hat and leopard fur:
FABIENNE DELVIGNE

Glasses:
LAFONT

CREATIVE AND PRODUCTION DIRECTOR: GEOFFREY MASURE
PHOTOS: GAETAN CAPUTO - WWW.GAETAN-CAPUTO.COM

MAKE-UP: CHRISTELLE LAURENT FOR GUERLAIN
MODEL: AGATA J@NEWMODELS

TIME TO RESIST

Photos: Chantaine Lorca
Creative and production director : Geoffrey Masure



- 1. Longines
- 2. Lacoste
- 3. Longines
- 4. Tommy Hilfiger
- 5. Hermes
- 6. Hugo Boss
- 7. Hugo boss

Shot in the grounds of
Château de la Hulpe,
with the kind permission
of Olivier Vanham.

DRESS TO IMPRESS

LESSONS IN STYLE



*Jumpsuit, bonnet,
gloves and boots:
HERMES*



*Cotton shirt, trousers,
calfskin trenchcoat with woolen collar:
HERMES*

*Glasses:
LOUIS VUITTON*

DRESS TO IMPRESS



*Beret, gloves, jacket
and trousers:*
HACKETT

Scarf:
BELLEROSE



Leather jacket, trousers and bracelet:
GIORGIO ARMANI

Lamb's wool scarf:
ESSENTIEL

DRESS TO IMPRESS



HIM

Coat:
AGNES B

Scarf:
ESSENTIEL

HER

Fur coat, dress and belt:
ESSENTIEL

Bag:
PAULE KA

Ring:
POMELLATO

Earring:
THOMAS SABO



Riding boots,
jacket and suede trousers:
ZEGNA

Hat:
HACKETT

CREATIVE AND PRODUCTION DIRECTOR: GEOFFREY MASURE
PHOTOS: FREDDY D'HOE
MAKE-UP: DAVID BETTEGA FOR L'OREAL PROFESSIONNEL
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Tea at Tiffany's

WRITER: DAVID MC GOWAN



© Yvan Barbera

Together meets Agnès Cromback, France and Benelux president of premier diamond retailer Tiffany & Co., in Paris.

It was Tiffany & Co. that introduced the engagement ring as we know it today - the celebrated 'six-prong' Tiffany® Setting lifts the diamond above the band and into the light, resulting in a ring of unparalleled beauty.

In 1837, Charles Lewis Tiffany and John F. Young opened Tiffany & Young, with 1,000\$ backing from Tiffany's father. Located on Broadway opposite

Manhattan's City Hall Park, the store originally sold stationery and a variety of 'fancy goods', including costume jewellery.

Unlike other stores of the time, Tiffany's prices were always on full display, which spared the customer from having to haggle with the proprietor, and the boutique also departed from the norm by insisting on cash payment rather than extending credit or accepting barter.

In addition, a distinctive shade of blue was quickly chosen to symbolize the company renowned reputation for quality and craftsmanship. Tiffany & Co. has long been renowned for its luxury goods, especially jewellery. And Agnès Cromback was only too happy to fill out the story, when Together met her in Paris recently.

INTERVIEW EXPRESS

Together: So, Agnès, how did the Tiffany legend begin?

AC: *What made Tiffany into what is known as is our fidelity, since 1837, to our ethic of valuing customers' sentiments. We have a wonderful job, in that we only see people when they are happy – Tiffany has always been about celebrating happy moments, and has never lost its soul, or suffered an identity crisis. It has always been about putting feelings first, the best possible quality and the respect for our customers.*

What are your plans for the near future? Have they been put on hold by the economic climate?

Tiffany's expansion has not been slowed by the economic climate, compared with other jewellers, we are still growing in Europe.

We started in London 15 years ago and in France in 1999, so Europe is far from being a mature market for us.

How does Tiffany set itself apart from other luxury jewellery brands?

Nowadays, concepts have evolved, and many other jewellery makers are following our lead, but what still differentiates Tiffany from other brands is that when you walk into a Tiffany shop, our jewels are always on view to be admired by our customers. I think people know that they can come into Tiffany & Co. and not be intimidated.

How have you managed to balance your family and professional life?

You know, nothing is perfect. I could say I would have liked to spend more time with my three children, but when you like what you do and you do it with enthusiasm, it's an enormous pleasure. I love what I do, and it is very time consuming, but on the other hand I spent ten years in Xerox, where it was less fun. Life is what you make it, and I think it's a huge luxury to enjoy what you do in life. The great thing about working with Tiffany & Co. is that there is a lot of humility, a lot of kindness, and it's a really nice atmosphere in which to work. It has given me access to another world. When I go to New York and work with my colleagues from Mexico or Australia or Korea, we're all together and you realize that what works for you doesn't necessarily always work for someone else, which is very enlightening. There are times in

life that are more difficult – when the children are small, they need you a lot more, then they become bigger and they need you more intellectually and then one day they leave home. And that day, you're happy to have held on to a job and other interests. I also believe that doing a job that you enjoy brings another energy into a household, and is a good example for young people.


In the ten years you've worked at Tiffany & Co., what have been your best experiences?

It's like a baby you see growing up, as a team we helped our baby grow and develop. My best experiences have also been the people I have met, the many friendships I have made.

And the secret to your success?

I believe that you have to be sincere, be yourself, be enthusiastic, and you have to work hard. We get on well, we work hard and we don't take ourselves too seriously – and the sharing of goals is very important.

Fancy finding out more about Tiffany & Co.?

Then pay a visit to Louis Comfort TIFFANY – Couleurs et Lumière, an exhibition being held at Musée du Luxembourg until 17th January, which is the first monographic expo of the legendary jewellery-empire founder. 

www.museeduluxembourg.fr



Dazzling down the ages

WRITER: PATRICIA KELLY

A polished peek at the past and present of the diamond industry.



A rich friend once lent me her diamond necklace – there were around 40 stones, whoppers, and it was worth a small fortune. She travelled with it attached to her bra strap with a huge nappy pin, claiming this was the safest way to transport jewellery. “Careful,” she warned. “Everyone will admire it, but the women who recognize the stones as being real won’t speak to you.” She was right. One glance from several women, intimidated by the real bling hung round my neck, was all it took for me to become the object of their envy. Diamonds were, indeed, my best friend on that occasion.

HARD CURRENCY

Thousands of years before they were worn for adornment, diamonds were used to ward off evil and provide protection in battle; they were swallowed to cure illness and ground up in food to kill people.

Confiscated by conquerors as the spoils of war, which is how the Koh-i-Noor arrived in the British crown jewels, diamonds have more recently been smuggled and sold to finance conflict in countries such as Sierra Leone – so-called blood diamonds. Made of carbon, one of the planet’s most common elements and brought up from deep in the bowels of the Earth by volcanic activity, diamonds are the hardest natural



substance known to man, with the majority of mined gems destined for industrial use in dentists’ drills and the like.

In their natural state, diamonds look like rough glass pebbles, and lose up to half their weight when cut and polished. They were first mined in India, appearing in European jewellery in the 13th century – a Hapsburg marriage is the first recorded betrothal sealed with a diamond ring in 1477 – remaining the

prerogative of royalty until the 19th century, when the exploitation of diamond mines in South Africa by the English-born businessman and politician Cecil Rhodes who founded De Beers, the biggest diamond firm in the world, made them available to anyone who could afford them. Since then, most of the world’s gem-quality diamonds have been mined in Africa, although diamond deposits have been discovered in 35 countries, including Botswana, Russia and Canada, which are the top producers


– output from the world’s richest deposit, however, which was discovered in Australia in 1979, has fallen sharply as the diamonds have been depleted.

DIAMOND DEMAND

Some of the largest diamonds in the world are owned by British royals and the Thai king – the French, having got rid of the monarchy, sold off their crown jewels in 1887, mainly to wealthy Americans. The United States remains the world’s largest market, where

around half the world’s polished diamonds are sold. It was there that the diamond industry became an early victim of the US banking crisis during Christmas 2008, when sales slowed down. Diamond dealers depend on credit, because they have to bridge the gap between acquisitions and sales – dozens of companies in the diamond centres of Antwerp and Israel with unsold stock have gone under. Other industries slashed prices during the recession to shift excess stock, but diamond-mining companies simply turned back production to bring supply in line with lowered demand and support a recovery in demand and prices.

In India, where nine out of ten diamonds sold worldwide are cut and polished, half a million workers were laid off, more than half the workforce. But the pace of recovery is picking up and, while the recession meant top-end demand for gems from the rich temporarily dried up, small gems used in engagement rings have kept the market alive – a legacy of the industry marketing diamonds as a symbol of love and commitment.

And the slogan identified by Advertising Age as the 20th-century’s best? It was coined by a copywriter working on a De Beers campaign – ‘A diamond is forever’. 

DIAMONDS ARE THE HARDEST NATURAL SUBSTANCE KNOWN TO MAN, WITH THE MAJORITY OF MINED GEMS DESTINED FOR INDUSTRIAL USE IN DENTISTS’ DRILLS AND THE LIKE

THE WRITER

Patricia Kelly is a former CNN correspondent and bureau chief.

Living the Dream



Our **Living the Dream** edition of *Together*, coming your way in February 2010, will feature an exclusive interview with Antwerp-born international adventurer, extreme-sports guru and author Marc Sluzny, who sums up his attitude to life thus:

"I want to taste all the dreams and big adventures of this world – that would be something extraordinary to accomplish in one lifetime."

Find out what motivates Marc and pushes him onwards in his quest for ever-more amazing achievements – only in *Together*. **See you soon!**

www.marcsluzny.com



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'NOT FOR ME, THANKS'

WRITER: EMMA PORTIER DAVIS

Brussels business seems to run solely on champagne-fuelled schmoozing. Our girl finds out what life is like for abstainers.



Journalists, it must be said, are renowned for their capacity for alcohol so my decision to stop boozing was met with several raised eyebrows, darting looks to my (actually un-pregnant) abdomen, and accusations that I was getting old and boring.

PARTY POOPER?

The first few parties were a serious drag. I found myself gazing longingly at the trays of champagne as they glided past while I nursed a glass of water – fizzy, if the organizers were feeling particularly racy that night. People who were mere business acquaintances felt it was okay to make a joke or inquiring comments regarding my nephalism – even certain friends were positively begging me to head down their road to oblivion. Then there was the nagging doubt that while I will remember everything people told me the next day

(a dangerous trait in a journalist and one I told myself would make up for my abstention), I'm aware that bounding up to people is not quite as easy as it is after a swig of the bubbly stuff. Networking events have been built around booze for this very reason. What are often quite false social occasions where we are supposed to delight in the company of relative strangers, can be sufficiently oiled by liquor.

TOO GOOD TO MISS?

Champagne – possibly because it screams luxury and sophistication – has become the (expensive) beverage of choice at these events, where public relations gurus hope to impress their guests by giving them this subliminal message about their importance. The elitism associated with champagne was spurred during the 17th century when the English put aside their animosity for their Gallic neighbours and imported barrels of the stuff. At one point, the bubbly version (initially scorned by the French) was more popular in England. And aside from its colourful, omnipresent history – the region of Champagne being ransacked by the Russians who became one of the world's largest consumers of the golden nectar and being on the front during both World Wars – champagne is just, well, let's face it, pretty damn good.

ADDICTION ALLEY?

None of this helps me adapt to my new, squeaky-clean life, so I referred to several fellow teetotalers and a psychotherapist from Brussels Community Health Service who spends much of his time dealing with people with alcohol addictions.

All concerned agreed that it is a talking point, but it won't ruin your social life and could even improve your professional outlook. One recent convert said: "I wish I'd had the good sense to give up before. It can be hard at first but I feel very much in control and I know I'm not going to say or do something stupid."

Nonetheless, one respondent admitted that she did feel the non-effect – "It's true that with one drink, I'm a little less shy so maybe abstaining does affect my networking abilities" – while another said

that the fact she didn't want to be identified said something too: "I don't want it to be an issue." Abstention from booze, however, says more about the people who ask questions and seem genuinely perturbed. Harry Pomerantz, psychotherapist, said this is because we generally feel better if everyone is doing the same thing. "We tend to mirror other people."

'I WISH I'D HAD THE GOOD SENSE TO GIVE UP BEFORE. IT CAN BE HARD AT FIRST BUT I FEEL VERY MUCH IN CONTROL AND I KNOW I'M NOT GOING TO SAY OR DO SOMETHING STUPID'

At a recent event, a fellow hack who I barely knew asked me at least three times why I wasn't drinking, slurring her words more and more as she scouted the room for a more complicit companion. Gradually the benefits become apparent. I felt healthier, I had no cringe-worthy recollections the next day, and I also realised just how annoying drunk people can be. Ever noticed how they get right in your face and speak so loud?

BOOZING UNDERMINES SCHMOOZING

As Pomerantz also explains, many people simply don't know when they've had enough. That point? "If every single time you come out of an event inebriated and don't have that self-control mechanism which says I must stop," he said. Ultimately, boozing like this leads to problems during the day, possibly undoing all those schmoozing efforts of the night before, that's if you hadn't disgraced yourself by

the end. A raging headache, poor sleep and dehydration will all make the little grey cells work just that bit slower.

For sure, moderate drinking is unlikely to put you in any danger health-wise or ruin your career, but it's worth bearing in mind how prevalent alcohol problems are in this city and to be able to recognise the signs. And if all of this doesn't convince you of the righteous path, a recent survey by Brussels consultancy Burson Marsteller found that evening receptions (champagne fests) ranked right down there as the preferred way for politicians and officials to receive information. Now, boozers of Brussels, get out of my face.

'POLITE' REFUSALS

- * Say you are driving (although this might not wash with less socially responsible nationalities).
- * A firm 'no thanks, I'll start with a water'.
- * Give short answers - you don't have to explain yourself
- * Tell the truth or a limited version of it – you are not going to be 'on antibiotics' forever.
- * Move the conversation fast – you're there to discuss work not your former, rampant alcoholism, yet-to-be-publicly-revealed pregnancy, penchant for sleeping with your boss when drunk, etc
- * Stuff yourself silly with the canapés and tell people drinking is cheating
- * Tell them alcohol turns you into a crazed, violent person (maybe save this for persistent questioners)
- * Be confident in your decision – are you a teenager or a fully-fledged adult?
- * Don't feel embarrassed – leave that to the sozzled suckers who will wake with a raging hangover and that sinking feeling: "What the hell did I say or do last night?" ☹

RECYCLED RARITIES

Cornwall-based Sarah Drew, of SARAHDReW Jewellery, specializes in bespoke bijoux that use antique brooches, vintage glass beads, lace and beach-glass, with semi-precious stones. She talks to *Together* about her inspirations and an exciting book deal that's on the way for 2010...



Sarah Drew (left) and one of her jewellery creations



It's fair to say that Sarah, 35, caught the jewellery bug early – she began designing at the tender age of 14: "I used to sell earrings from a small suitcase to teachers and pupils at school! The inspiration was really down to my early love of jumble and car boot sales, and antique fairs. I'd always loved buying old bits and bobs, and liked things that looked a little old and worn. Also, I was quite a fashion-conscious teenager, with not much money, and I realized early on that getting things second-hand then customizing and modernizing them was an effective way to get expensive looks on the cheap. And you can get so much better quality for your money if you buy vintage!"

BIJOUX BEGINNINGS

Sarah's business officially started in January 2000, but she had spent the previous 18 months funding a trip around Australia by selling jewellery in Sydney shops ("and anywhere else when we were desperate!"): "People I knew really began admiring the pieces I'd made, and starting to get

married, so I set up the business to sell jewellery through boutiques and galleries, with help from the UK's Prince's Trust, after I returned from Oz."

And her self-taught passion is certainly taking her places – she's already supplied jewellery and tiaras to stores such as Liberty, Harrods and Browns Bride, and appeared on BBC2's *Coast* after the programme's producer saw her jewellery in a Newquay gallery: "It was great to have the chance to talk about why I like using reclaimed materials – I like things that look worn and have been something else, and the link to the beautiful outdoor beach environment – you pick something up, and it's nice to think about where you found it and the associated memory when you touch or wear a piece of jewellery made from the object."

'JUNKBOX JEWELLERY'

As well as designing and making her jewellery, Sarah looks after her two little boys and holds workshops

at hotels and cafes round Cornwall, and evening classes at St Austell College. And that's not all – a book deal beckons! Sarah has been commissioned to write *Junkbox Jewellery: 25 Inspirational Projects to Make*, which will be released by A & C Black in September 2010, and which features straightforward, step-by-step guides with photos to jewellery creation that will (says Sarah) be suitable for complete beginners: "The idea is that each project uses mostly recycled, reclaimed or found materials such as beach-glass, driftwood, sea-plastic and sea-string, or antique brooches, vintage beads and broken chains that can be found lying around the house. And the future? "Well, in fact, I am looking to start selling my creations in continental galleries, and I know that Brussels has a well-established tradition of fine jewellery."

Best of luck, Sarah – let's hope that Belgium is ready!" ☺

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Geretti diamonds are forever

WRITER: DAVID MC GOWAN

A look at the role Antwerp has played in the history of diamonds, and a chat with one of the city's longest-established traders.

The root of the word 'diamond' comes from the ancient Greek term *adamas*, meaning indestructible.

Certainly – there is no naturally occurring substance harder than diamond, with the gems used to cut and polish the stones seen in rings and jewellery.

KINGS' PRIVILEGE

Diamonds have been used by mankind for around 3,000 to 4,000 years, with the earliest stones being the exclusive reserve of leaders – since the gems were known for their indestructibility, kings studded leather breastplates with them to make a primitive (and expensive) 'bullet-proof' vest. The brilliant sparkle also warned off potential assassins, as diamonds were known as the sole domain of kings, and their 'magical powers' were believed to turn malicious against those who harmed their wearers.

As the trade in diamonds grew, so did the importance played by the city of Antwerp through the centuries, mainly due to its

strategic position at the far end of the trade route. Antwerp, located on the Scheldt River in Belgium, has been the on-off centre of the diamond trade (*diamanthandel*) for more 500 years, being only temporarily displaced by Bruges and Amsterdam during the 17th and 18th centuries.

Antwerp's 'diamond district' is close to the Central Station and is contained within a one square mile area, which handles more than 80 per cent of the world's rough stones. And our visit to Antwerp is rounded off with a visit to one of the oldest diamond centres in Antwerp that's still trading, by the name of Geretti. We are greeted by **Marc Rosenbaum**, whose family's long association with the diamond trade stretches back as far 1929.

INTERVIEW EXPRESS

Together: Can you tell us about the diamonds and jewellery you sell?

MR: *We have pre-made models of jewellery with diamonds, or we hand-craft the jewels that our customers want, based on their drawings or descriptions. We normally start by talking about size, quality and budget, and we try to meet all of our customers' needs.*

How does the quality of the diamonds you sell compare with the top luxury brands?

We buy our diamonds from the same places they do – there are rough diamonds in Africa, Russia,

Australia and Brazil, but they are mostly mined in Africa. So, their origin is the same – a diamond is a diamond. In addition, the materials used for the jewellery itself, such as platinum or gold, are also mostly the same. What is important, however, is when you buy a diamond larger than 0.6 carat, you must demand a certificate provided by the top diamond-certification companies, International Gemological Institute (IGI), Hoge Raad voor Diamant (HRD, 'Diamond High Council') or GIA (Gemological Institute of America). There are four main determinants for the price of a diamond, namely the '4 Cs', cut, carat (its weight), colour and clarity which is its purity of colour (from yellow to white), which will determine the diamond's brilliance.

And, to find out more about the fascinating history of diamonds, why not visit the largest diamond museum in the world in Antwerp? Details below. ☛

Diamantmuseum Provincie Antwerpen
Koningin Astridplein, 19-23
B-2018 Antwerp
T. +32 (0)3 202 48 90
info@diamant.provant.be
www.diamantmuseum.be

Special thanks to Geretti 'Diamonds to Wear'
Vestingstraat, 53
B-2018 Antwerpen
T. +32 (0)3 234 29 05
www.diamondstowear.com



Fabergé: Jewels of sweat

WRITER: PAUL STUMP

A look at how the name behind one of the world's most recognizable jewellery art forms – Fabergé eggs – came to represent culture of a quite different kind.



When the name Fabergé was first emerging to pre-eminence from the jewellery workshops of Imperial Russia, 're-positioning' was something liveried flunkies and domestic staff did to Old Masters adorning the walls of the haute-bourgeoisie. Some 150 years after Gustav Fabergé, scion of a family of Huguenot exiles who had fetched up in St Petersburg, to make his fortune by redefining the delicate arts of jewellery, his surname was lent to the images of boxers Henry Cooper and Muhammad Ali, quarterback Joe Namath, motorcycle ace Barry Sheene and West German soccer icon Franz Beckenbauer as the faces of a range of what were coyly called 'male cosmetics' but were in actuality deodorants and soaps and talcum powders to freshen up wannabe jocks and render them not only manly but fragrant enough to escort a lady also.

MAKING A SPLASH

This scarcely credible state of affairs – the usage of a name synonymous with refinement to promote competitive sports, which could perhaps best be compared to Auguste Escoffier opening a hot dog concession named Gus's, or the music of Schubert interpreted by Judas Priest – was at the behest of the chemical conglomerate Unilever. Their presence in cosmetics had already been established, but this was a new

wrinkle, an attempt to breach the growing market in men's cosmetics by balancing the apparently opposed extremes of locker-room chumminess and super-feminine delicacy, without imputations of effeminacy. The move may have raised eyebrows in sport, advertising, fine art and aesthetic circles, but it was an undeniable winner; the catchphrase, 'Splash It All Over', when emoted by Cooper or Ali, became a tiny part of the pop-cultural landscape and is well-remembered even today by retro freaks.

This extraordinary shift in identity was not the first change circumstance had wrought upon one of history's most extraordinary legacies; Gustav Fabergé (born 1841 in Parnu, now Parnau in Estonia) the patriarch of the jewellery dynasty that introduced the name to the world, could trace his antecedents back from pre-Bolshevik Estonia to the Huguenot persecution in French Picardy and through a multitude of name changes, following the Edict of Nantes in 1572.

In St Petersburg, Gustav Fabergé trained as a goldsmith under Andreas Spiegel, a specialist in constructing golden gift boxes. His apprenticeship ended in 1841 in the award of the title of Master Goldsmith, which occasioned the launch of his own firm after a spell with the celebrated concern of Kleibels, goldsmiths and jewellers to the Tsars.

SURPRISE, SURPRISE

It was through the Imperial offices of the Tsar Alexander III that Fabergé's signature creation, the golden, gem-encrusted egg, entered the world. The tsar commissioned one from Fabergé's in 1885 as a gift for his wife, the Empress Maria Feodorovna. This, the work of Gustav's son Carl who now ran the firm, represented a conventionally sized hen's egg, with a 'shell' of gold enamel plating which opened to reveal a gold chicken, which itself opened to produce a replica of the Imperial Crown from which a single egg made of ruby was hung. Thus began a royal conjugal tradition of the tsar presenting the tsarina with a surprise golden egg every Easter. Carl Fabergé concocted a new surprise egg on 54 occasions – each time, the tsar gave the creator complete carte blanche on design, providing there was a surprise incorporated.



SCENT SENSIBILITIES

In 1937 the tale took another twist and crossed the oceans; in the USA, an entrepreneur named Sam Rubin had registered the name Fabergé, conscious of its unimpeachable pedigree and class, as the trademark for a range of cosmetics. The original Fabergés were scandalized but were unable to raise the funds to fight Rubin in the courts, finally settling out of court in 1951 with the caveat that the Fabergé name be used solely for perfume products. Rubin sold his Fabergé concern to Unilever in 1964, and from 1989 onwards the production of objets d'art recommenced under the eye of the German Edgar Meyer, appointed workmaster and overseeing the production and dedication of special pieces for individuals, most notably Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin.

Meyer took Fabergé into cyberspace; he ensured that the firm's was the first international website for any manufacturer of luxury goods.

Fabergé thus found itself in a precipitate modern age seemingly utterly at odds with the world into which the name emerged and helped to shape – in the 1970s, however, the gulf seemed to yawn even wider, as here was a firm synonymous with mah-jong and piano tuition at the conservatoire pitching itself to a market-demographic more familiar with towel-fights in locker rooms and the creaking, clanging music of the overstretched multi-gym. Brut 33, Fabergé's market leader, skilfully attempted to position itself as a 'light' fragrance, free of any of the effeminacy associated with cosmetics, but also redolent of plutocratic wealth, success and excellence; the fact that even the slogans are still fondly remembered proves how brilliantly the firm achieved success, for whatever else Brut was, it was a first-rate commercial success and never mind the incongruity of the cheap counterfeit rhinestones of organised sports with the expertly set moonstones of a bygone age. ●

**THE
CATCHPHRASE,
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EVEN TODAY BY
RETRO FREAKS**

Fabergé found a particularly welcoming market in France, where Russophilia and Orientalism combined to produce the enthusiasm that greeted the dancers of the Ballets Russes and their choreographic representations of a fantastic and opulent East. It was no accident that both Maurice Ravel and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov wrote memorable compositions on the legend of Scheherazade.

This aestheticism was meat and drink to the revolutionary forces of Bolshevism, which in 1917 swept away the Russian

Imperial court and the empire's monied aristocrats-bourgeoisie who formed the backbone of Fabergé's clientele. The Fabergé family were also scattered into exile across Europe.

MUST-HAVES...

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4. REMY MARTIN XO EXCELLENCE AND ANONIMO WATCH MAGNUM EDITION

5. KIPLING CLIP WATCH

6. ILANGA «CRYSTAL COLLECTION»

7. SPECIAL RESERVE CHAMPAGNE NICOLAS FEUILLATTE IN ITS PRESTIGE 'EFFERVESCENCE' CONTAINER AND MAURICE LACROIX «FIABA COLLECTION»

8. MUMM CHAMPAGNE AND EP PEQUIGNET MOOREA TRIOMPHE LADY

9. DOM PERIGNON AND GIRARD-PERREGAUX 1966

10. GLENMORANGIE 18 YEARS OLD AND FREY WILLE WATCH

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7. BURBERRY BRIT
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www.burberry.com

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With many thanks to our photographer **Yvan Barbera**, who created a beautiful
display of after-shaves and perfumes to illustrate **Temptations**.



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SERNEELS: WORKING HARD AT PLAYING FOR 50 YEARS

WRITER: JAMES DREW

Ahead of the festive season, *Together* meets with Alain Serneels, joint-owner of Brussels' very own 'Aladdin's Cave', Serneels, which this year marks a half-century of making children (and the 'inner child') very, very happy.



It's an unforgettable experience for young and old, the first time you open the door and enter Serneels, to be found on Avenue Louise at the Wilcher's Site adjoining Hotel Conrad.

PLAY HAPPY

Ever since it was founded in 1959 by owners Alain and Brigitte Serneels' father Edmond, Serneels has remained faithful to its central philosophy – every toy is unique, made from natural materials, and each is created to form a link to strong emotions and happy childhood memories.

'THE GAMES AND TOYS THAT SERNEELS MAKE, AND HAVE ALWAYS MADE, ARE BUILT TO LAST, TO BE PASSED DOWN FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION'

Right from its beginnings, the store has always rejected commercialized fads, gadgets as well as all replica firearms, favouring instead quality brands, craftsmanship and games that stimulate children's imaginations – and, when you walk in, it's no exaggeration to say that you feel like you're stepping into a child-like wonderland, surrounded by beautiful stuffed toys,

wooden tricycles, dolls houses – in short, all the trappings of *Alice in Wonderland*.

So, Alain, is it difficult to compete with modern-day children's obsessions, such as Wii or PlayStation 3?

"Well, I think the problems come with what these kind of games can do to children. By the age of eight or nine, if they have been playing with video games like this since the age of three or four, they already have a hyper-blase attitude, because the games leave very little to the imagination. When you have really young children being given the very latest-technology photo/video-game/mobile-phone technology, I can't help but think that something of childhood is being lost too quickly.

"However, to be fair, we tend to rediscover the same young people a little later, when

they are reaching adolescence, say, and discovering the fun of social games. In addition, I believe that the joy of a really well-made toy or game endures – mass-produced toys today seem to be designed to be disposed of in a week, but the games and toys that Serneels make, and have always made, are built to last, to be passed down from generation to generation."

Perhaps surprisingly, given that it is such a national, even international institution, with the great and the good frequently passing through its doors, Serneels has not made a big fuss of its 50-year festivities. "Of course we are very proud," Alain explains "but we are proud every year, every day that we open our doors. Truly, my sister's and my life has been blessed with the joy that we know our store gives and have given to so many people since my father was in charge. You can't put a price on that." ☺

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www.serneels.com





Listening to Laetitia

WRITER: FEDERICO GRANDESSO

As the year draws to a close, *Together's* lucky correspondent talks with the utterly delicious French model and actress, Laetitia Casta, star of Malaysian director Ming-liang Tsai's Palme d'Or-nominated *Visage* (2009), which was recently released in Belgium.

INTERVIEW EXPRESS

Together: So, did you always want to be an actress or a model?

LC: You never know in life – I didn't know that I would become an actress but,

when I was doing modelling, I knew that I wanted to go beyond the superficial, I always wanted to be able to express my emotions. I have to say that I didn't feel completely at home in fashion, but maybe there is another path for me yet to take...anyway, I'm always on the move. In the case of *Visage*, Ming-liang Tsai was happy that I was a model before, but other directors have

been put off by that. I became a model by chance, I let it happen.

Do you ever need advice and support when you attend the international film festivals?

I believe in myself and I don't need advice. I'm from Corsica, we had Napoleon, my name is Laetitia and that was the name of Napoleon's mother [laughs]. I just do my work.

Is appearing naked on film a problem for you?

When it's poetic and the image is beautiful, I don't have a problem. It depends how the director looks at you – if you think of the sculptor Rodin, the beautiful nude sculptures he created, it's obvious that nudity does not have to be vulgar. Sometimes, I feel more naked when I'm fully clothed.

The ups and downs of acting?

It is difficult when you act and the director is not happy – you try to understand what he wants, but you don't get it. On the other hand, the most wonderful part is when you can give everything of yourself, and I also love it when you see a movie and you see something you never seen before. At the moment, there is no single role I have played that I prefer, in the end each part is an evolution in your career. In this job, it is very important to find yourself and it takes time to understand who you are and to be respected for who you are. ☺

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Santo speaks

WRITER: FEDERICO GRANDESSO

Together serves up an exclusive tête-à-tête – we meet Italian MP Santo Versace, who also happens to be the president of a certain fashion dynasty...



Russia and in the US. We have to reduce bureaucracy, and why not reduce the number of MEPs? If we can make decisions efficiently, we will be able to fight dumping and the problems that are blocking the fashion sector.

Italian creativity...your thoughts?

First of all, if we talk about creativity and hand-made quality in fashion I have to emphasize the roles played by Gianni Versace and also Salvatore Ferragamo – they began their careers in the south of Italy. Ferragamo was a design leader during the 1950s because of his extraordinary hand-made shoes, while Gianni made his name in clothes. Among Ferragamo's clients, you found queens, princesses and actresses such as Ava Gardner, Anna Magnani and Sophia Loren. In Italy, we had artists such as Giotto, Michelangelo, Bernini, but this glorious tradition is still alive today. If you talk about fashion, you can see that the Italians have some of the world's most important names and brands: Stefano Pilati in Yves Saint Laurent, Riccardo Tisci in Givenchy, Antonio Marras in Kenzo, Giampiero Lotito for Cartier and Frida Giannini in Gucci. In addition, we have also a new generation of talented Italian English-speaking managers, who will be future leaders on the fashion-management scene, I'm quite sure!

What do you think of Paris as a fashion capital?

Paris has a very cosmopolitan character, it is a city that welcomes designers from all over the world, from Lagerfeld to big Japanese names. Paris also has the advantage of having large groups such as LVMH, Cartier and Hermes, who invest heavily in advertising. In France, national government, local authorities, and the media work together to promote Paris as the country's fashion capital, while in Italy we have Milan, Rome and Florence – we are more divided. ☹

Tamara's world

WRITER: FEDERICO GRANDESSO



Our fortunate scribe caught up with none other than English socialite, model and Sky Sports Italia's presenter for the Formula One 2009 season, Tamara Ecclestone (daughter of Bernie), in the Spa Francorchamps Martini Racing Party recently for an exclusive chat.

INTERVIEW EXPRESS

Together: So, Tamara, you and fashion?

TE: I love fashion – I love the glamorous side of Formula 1, the parties, the fashion shows, and the Monaco atmosphere during the Grand prix. I was born in Milan so I like to go Monza, it's my favourite Grand Prix and it's a good combination because then I can go shopping in Milan. I normally also go to the city's fashion shows, and I will be in Paris for the next spring-summer schedule.

Let's talk about Italian designers - do you know Alberta Ferretti?

Yes, my sister modelled for her a few years ago and I love her fabrics – her show in Milan was an amazing experience. I like also other Italian designers and brands such as Dolce and Gabbana, Prada for the handbags and Miu Miu for accessories. Paris is fantastic, but Milan for me has something more special, perhaps because I was born there – it's my second home. Apart from Italy, the place where I feel best is London, because I have spent

many years there and it's my base. London is growing as far as fashion is concerned, too - I adore Vivian Westwood, I love her corsets and shoes, particularly her boots, and her eccentricities. Burberry is also amazing now, a brand that's still evolving and the media work together to promote Paris as the country's fashion capital, while in Italy we have Milan, Rome and Florence – we are more divided.

So, what's the key to success in fashion and F1?

In the fashion world you have to be confident, sure of yourself but not arrogant. Wherever you are, you have to feel comfortable. On the other hand, F1 is a tough industry and it's very difficult to get into, you need to get your foot in the door and really need to know what you want.

What about your future?

I love the TV presenting that I do for SKY sports and I hope to do more, in F1, fashion, travel and other glamorous things. I certainly want to stay in television. I also do a lot of charity work – for example, I have a project in a children's hospital where we take children to meet their heroes and to get the chance to live the F1 dream. I also have an animal-welfare association – I love animals and I have four dogs.

Perhaps cinema?

I would love to get into acting and I'm actually going to Los Angeles in a few months' time for some meetings, so hopefully something interesting will happen... I'm having lots of appointments with production companies and TV stations but I'm not saying any more, let's wait and see. In London, I worked for Channel Four a few years ago on a sports programme, but I would rather do something that is not so related to sport. I love travel, and going to the theatre and cinema. My agenda is very full – I wish I could have a little more time to myself. Sometimes, to relax, I take a girlfriend and we go to a spa for a day, but I turn off my mobile phone first!

What other sports do you enjoy?

I love football and I'm a huge Chelsea fan, but I also like tennis and I usually go to Wimbledon. I don't think I'll become a top tennis player, though – my backhand is appalling! [laughs] ☹

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Skiing in style

WRITER: MIRIAM GALEA



Our writer's very first skiing trip came about all of a sudden – following a call from her editor, our gal was en route for Club Med La Plagne in France. She had no idea who she would be travelling with, or what the programme would involve, but she figured it wouldn't be wise to miss out...

Being Mediterranean, my forté is swimming, surviving heat waves and harnessing road rage. For this reason, I decided to just buy myself a skiing jacket and borrowed a pair of bright-red sallopets from a generous friend.

DASHING TO THE SNOW

My editor had told me everything would be wonderfully provided for, from food and transport to the essential skiing equipment. I was reassured I would be fine even if I was a first-time skier, since everyone would be allocated to a different team according to their experience. Meeting up with my group at the airport, I was happy to find they were a rather jolly bunch of travel journalists and holiday promoters. After arriving in France, and en route between Lyon airport and the resort, I chatted with a Dutch journalist living in Belgium about the differences between the two countries and, by the time we arrived, I was feeling very comfortable about the next couple of days. Club Med La Plagne is an adorable, cosy resort surrounded by the snowy mountains, furnished in dark wood and wintry colours. Clad in warm pinks, browns, wines and purples, every room welcomes you with a spacious bathroom, a flat-screen TV and

roomy beds. Guests can choose between a Club Room, available with interconnecting rooms and optionally including a piste or Mont Blanc view, a spacious Deluxe room or a luxurious Suite complete with a terrace facing the valley. Club Med La Plagne stands elegantly at the foot of 425 kilometres of ski slopes and is just 60km away from nearby Albertville. Renovated at the end of 2006, the resort maintains a successful balance between contemporary architecture and winter magic.

'CONVIVIALITÉ'

With its 'hassle-free' package and the variety of services provided, Club Med La Plagne is the ideal destination for a

smooth holiday break for families who want to get away and have some all-round fun. Apart from excellent cuisine and refined accommodation, the resort offers skiing classes by professional instructors, from Beginner to Expert level. Snowboarding classes are also available. The resort

is very family-oriented and offers excellent child-care facilities, with two clubs for children aged 4-11 (Mini Club Med) and 11-17 (Junior Club Med).

The resort offers a range of leisure and fitness facilities. 'Wellness' has always been a priority for Club Med, and La Plagne comes complete with sauna, a

hammam, Jacuzzi, a cardio-training room and gym.

The Club Med team operates on a principle of 'convivialité', and makes sure that guests' every need is catered for. After a full day's activities, which of course begin with a full breakfast and are complemented by an excellent lunch, guests sit down to a sumptuous buffet dinner, followed by drinks and cocktails in the large lounge hall, where entertainment is provided on a nightly basis, with colourful, lively cabaret featuring dancing, singing and games. It is easy to feel instantly at home in such a warm and positive atmosphere, with the Club Med team interacting with guests and encouraging them to participate in the night's activities.

OF SLOPES AND SLIPS

My unexpected stay at Club Med La Plagne turned out to be a definite stroke of luck. I slept in the cosiest of rooms, enjoyed the most delicious meals, spent time in the most engaging company and treated myself to numerous saunas and Turkish baths. Not only did I pamper myself extensively, but I am also proud to proclaim that, after falling a dozen times or so and overcoming my fear of slopes and slipping, I came out of it dashing (rather) elegantly down the glistening mountain with a feeling of triumphant glee. Until the next time! ☺

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A hot-springs haiku

WRITER: DAVE DERUYTTER

Japan can seem strange to outsiders – but, as our correspondent reveals, there's nothing mysterious about the joys to be had spending time in the country's hot-springs hotels.



Japan is a country with a very high density of population – indeed, the archipelago's surface area is not very large, and there is an expanse of mountainous regions. Mount Fuji is the highest point in the country, at 3,776 metres and, under sea level, it's even more impressive – the ocean on the eastern coast is some 10,000 metres in depth. One of Earth's largest tectonic plates is moving under Japan and mainland China at this point, bringing regular earthquakes, such as the 'Big One' at Kobe. This continental drift is also the cause of volcanic activity, with geysers and natural hot-water springs found in abundance.

SPRINGS ETERNAL

Since ancient times, the era of the Shoguns, and before, Japanese people have perfected the culture and art of enjoying hot springs. Hot-springs spas, or 'Onsen' as they are called in Japan, are

the country's top luxury hotels. They are usually traditional-style complexes, to be found in the country – a guest's typical day consists of an early breakfast, followed by a hike in the surrounding countryside. Later, a light lunch, or a picnic (Obento) box on the hike, or a meal in a nearby restaurant is taken, followed perhaps by some shopping.

Then the key moment arrives – bathing in the hotel's magnificent hot springs. In the best spas, you will have a fabulous view from the Onsen – in winter, this might be in a stunning snow landscape, while in autumn, the beautiful colouring of leaves will take your breath away.

The Japanese will often stay in the Onsen for hours, fully absorbing the atmosphere and scenery into their body, mind and soul. The ultimate relaxation. ☺

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Thalys speeds into 2010...

From December 13th, international train operator Thalys will be fully high speed between Brussels-Amsterdam/Brussels-Cologne, with trains from Paris to the same destinations setting new records. *Together* has the chance for a chat with Thalys CEO Olivier Poitrenaud about the service improvements that are en route...


With the expansion of the high-speed rail network in Europe, studies show that passengers will be able to travel faster by train than by plane between half of all European connections by 2020 – and Thalys is aiming to ensure that it is the first European operator to profit from this development, by placing

Amsterdam and Cologne just three-and-a-quarter hours from Paris, which means that trains will go 51 minutes faster from/to the Netherlands and 36 minutes faster from/to Germany.

SWIFTER, SHARPER

As Poitrenaud (who has been Thalys CEO for a year and who has helped bring about the huge changes undertaken by the company) explains, it's all about seizing the moment: "Firstly, the opening up of competition between railways in 2010 is hugely important, and the companies that can offer the best to customers will be the ones that succeed. The creation of the new infrastructure means that key journey times are being reduced to less than three-and-a-half hours, which is a very important timeframe from customers' perspectives, as studies have indicated that this is frequently the maximum time passengers are prepared to travel on a train."

And that's not all – onboard service standards are set for a spring-clean: Poitrenaud explains: "Thalys is committed to the continuing enrichment of its array of services and offering the maximum comfort for its customers, while ensuring that time spent on a Thalys train is both time out, in a leisure sense, and useful time, whether for work or play."

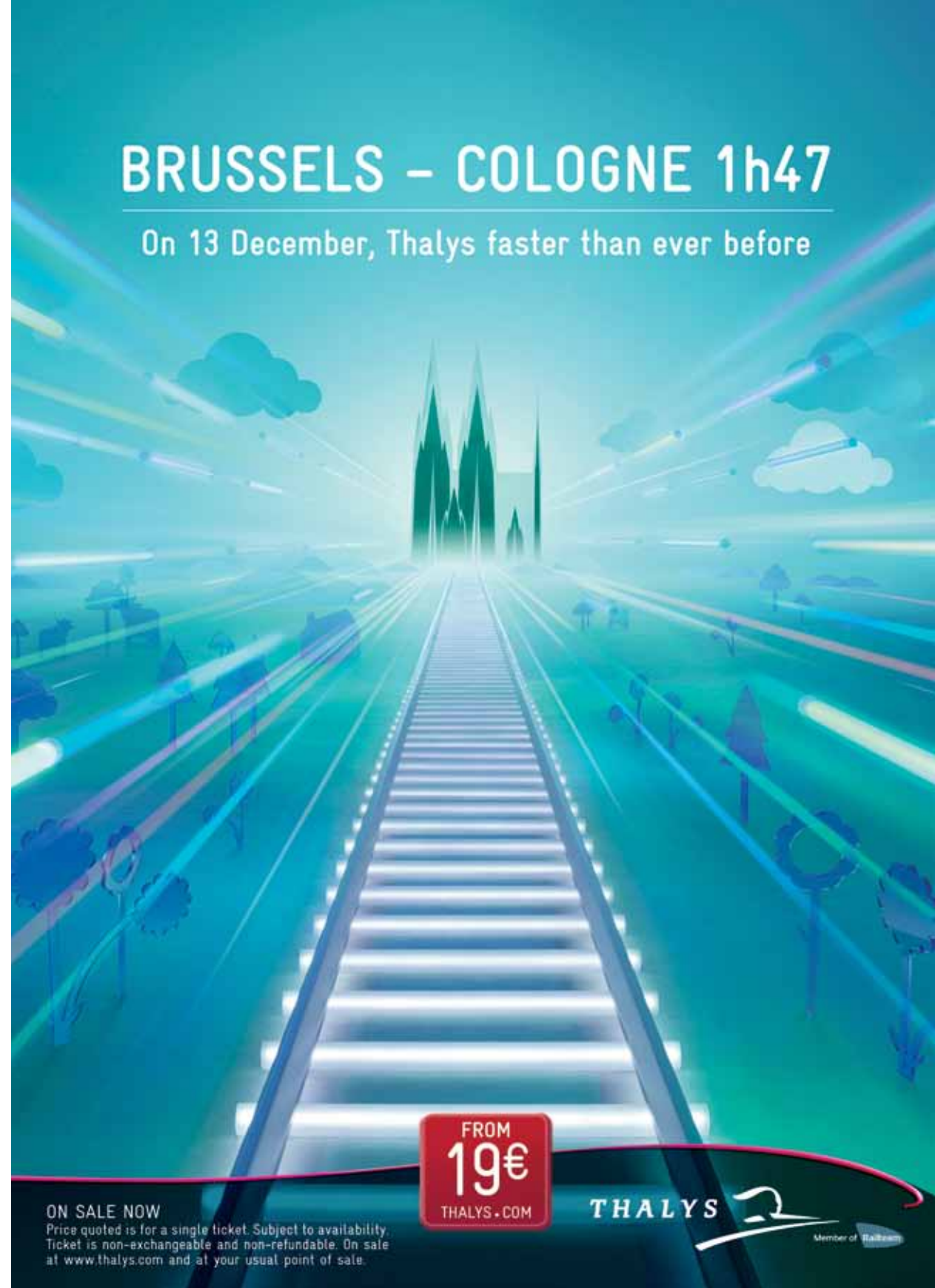
The past year has been marked by Thalys changes – in newly renovated trains (ten by the end of 2009), onboard personnel wearing new uniforms (created by Cologne-based fashion designer Eva Gronbach) offer an entirely new catering menu, both at the Thalys Bar and served to Comfort 1 passengers at their seats. So, it's looking like speed and service will be of the essence in 2010 – with Thalys a front-runner. 

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Web check-in lands

Low-cost airline Wizz Air is set to ease departure stress with the introduction of a new web check-in service.

Wizz Air, the largest low-cost airline in central and eastern Europe, which operates flights from Brussels-Charleroi Airport, launched the service for flights departing from Budapest in November, with the scheme set to be rolled out across all its airports by spring 2010.

EASIER, FASTER

The service also allows customers to check-in up to seven days before they depart, making their travel arrangements even more convenient by decreasing and potentially eliminating queuing at the airport.

Gyorgy Abran, chief commercial officer of Wizz Air, said: "All passengers have to

do is print their own boarding pass and present it directly at the gate or at the check-in desks, if they travel with luggage. We encourage our passengers to benefit from this service as it becomes available at their airport." Airports Council International (ACI) released a survey on 3rd November, which revealed that passenger self-service will be the main check-in method by 2010.

The data comes from ACI's sixth annual Airport IT Trends survey, which queried 172 airports worldwide and 56 of the top 100 busiest airports.

According to the survey, 40 per cent of the airports have already implemented web check-in for the majority of their passengers, with that percentage expected to double during 2010. ☛

www.wizzair.com
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FACT: IT'S NOT ALWAYS WISE TO DRINK CHAMPAGNE...

You would have thought it reasonable, as president of a country that had just sealed its automatic qualification to World Cup 2010 in South Africa with a 5-0 victory, to be allowed to raise a glass of France's finest tippie to celebrate. Not so, apparently – Serbian President Boris Tadic and his sports minister and football federation chief Tomislav Karadzic thought that a champagne toast was called for after their team defeated Romania 5-0 in a World Cup qualifier game on 10th October. However, a photo of the pair raising their glasses in celebration came to the attention of the authorities, for all the wrong reasons. The problem was that the game was played in Belgrade, where consuming alcohol in sporting venues has recently been criminalized in a bid to help prevent fights from breaking out at matches. Tadic and Karadzic must now appear in person in court during December, with the fines for drinking alcoholic beverages at sports events ranging from around 100-1,000€. Tadic, who says he will pay a fine if one is levied and could also face up to 60 days in jail if convicted, insists that he did not drink the champagne but only used it as a 'prop'. Tell that to the judge, Mr President...

FIGURE: \$7.98 million

And that's how much the record price stands at for a rare and flawless blue diamond which, since 10th October 2007, has been the most expensive precious jewel of its kind ever sold. The gem, which is 6.04 carats and sparkles with a rare blue hue, is almost as breathtaking as the price it fetched at the Hong Kong Sotheby's auction – a remarkable \$1.32 million per carat. Somewhere, there's a girl who just knows who her best friend is...

NEWS

And here comes the Belgian!

WRITER: CILLIAN DONNELLY

The Lisbon Treaty was finally concluded in November with the coronation of the European Union's first permanent President of the Council, Belgian Prime Minister Herman van Rompuy. *Together* takes a look at the rocky road to ratification.



European President Herman van Rompuy, left, meets NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen

At last the hullabaloo is over – the shouting has ceased, the bunting taken down and the confetti swept away. All of which, of course, is nonsense. On 19th November 2009, there was no drama, not razzmatazz or triumph, no public electioneering, no voting crowds. Instead, the final act of the long-cherished Lisbon Treaty, to appoint this unifying figurehead along with a corresponding Foreign Minister, was in fact a rather limp affair.

A FAMOUS BELGIAN?

Europe got a leader, all right, but one seemingly renowned for his reticence, whose very lack of public profile and world-stage charisma apparently made him the obvious choice for the post. That man is Belgian Prime Minister Herman van Rompuy.

Europeans can be forgiven for not knowing much about the modest Belgian – he has, after all, only being in charge of the country since December 2008. He writes Haiku and likes caravanning,

hardly the mettle of a revolutionary. But the man chosen by the EU heads of state has the precise qualities that are needed for the job – he is, as his proponents continually point out, a consensus builder, no 'Flash Harry' but instead a man who cultivates trust, unlike, say, rival for the position Tony Blair, whose enthusiastic support for the war in Iraq, not to mention his showbiz style, did not exactly endear him to all and sundry.

If it was the wish of the EU to ensure that its first President was a low-key appointment, then it has succeeded. It is the somewhat anti-climactic

POLAND, SENSING THE WRITING ON THE WALL, GRUDGINGLY SIGNED THE TREATY INTO LAW NOT LONG AFTER THE IRISH VOTE

accumulation of a process that began way back in 2001, and a far cry from some of the drama and backroom shenanigans that categorized the long fight for complete ratification. Back then, it was an embryonic European Constitution, an idea emerging from the Nice Treaty that the EU, then in

the process of enlarging to include states from former Eastern Europe, would need some sort of robust framework.

CONSTITUTIONAL CHAOS

The idea was worked on until it was finally worked out, under the Irish Presidency in 2004. The Irish electorate (which had previously rejected, then accepted, Nice) would, of course, kick up a little bit of trouble of their own on the rocky road to Lisbon, but back then it was all self-congratulation. Then the Dutch and the French had their say – the

Constitution was rejected in referenda, and the idea scuppered. Something new was needed.

Enter the Germans. Under their Presidency in 2007, the idea of a new, Reform Treaty was furiously worked upon. On 13th December of that year, negotiations on the content of the text were finalized in the city of Lisbon, and four days later, Hungary became the first Member State to adopt the new Treaty. Everything, it seemed, was OK again. Then, in June 2008, the Irish held a referendum. The Lisbon Treaty was soundly rejected. Eurosceptic governments in Poland and the Czech Republic clapped their hands in glee, Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy were livid, the Irish government was apologetic – this was it, the end of the line.

Well, not quite. As with Nice, Ireland simply held another referendum, this time using the threat of economic isolation as grounds for acceptance. It worked, and on 2nd October 2009 (after the government had gone to Brussels with a bit of deal-making of its own), Ireland overwhelmingly accepted Lisbon. Now the only hold-outs were Poland and the Czech Republic.

Poland, sensing the writing on the wall, grudgingly signed the Treaty into law not long after the Irish vote. Arch Eurosceptic Czech President Václav Klaus was left as the only barrier to complete ratification. The Constitutional court was considering its legality. Sarkozy was fuming, rumours of diplomatic threats were rife. It was all unbearably tense.



BLAIR WATCH

In the end, even Klaus buckled. The last opposition to Lisbon had been removed. Now, all we needed was the right person for that most important of jobs. Tony Blair

was the early front-runner; he had the experience, the charisma, the stomach for the world stage. What he didn't have, as it turned out, was friends, and when Germany and France both hinted that a good administrator (rather than a global superstar) was needed, Blair's chances began falling away rapidly. The Belgians can justifiably argue that the first European President should come from their small country; after all, it was one of the founders of the Coal and Steel

Community. But, even before he was formally chosen, van Rompuy had won plaudits for his ability to smooth over the

sometimes fraught relations between the Walloons and Flemings, and during the Presidency negotiations a new rumour began to emerge. Might not a Belgian President actually unify the country, as their man represented the European Union around the globe? Could it be Europe, in the end, that held the country together?

Fanciful stuff, maybe, but the point remains that, for the next two-and-a-half years at least, Herman van Rompuy will be the EU's public face on the world stage. Immediately after the announcement of his appointment, he was receiving messages of congratulations from Europe and elsewhere – US President Obama was one of the first world leaders to offer his support.

So, perhaps it would be wrong to dismiss national pride as a healer in times like these? Over to you, Herman... ☺

MIGHT NOT A BELGIAN PRESIDENT ACTUALLY UNIFY THE COUNTRY, AS THEIR MAN REPRESENTED THE EUROPEAN UNION AROUND THE GLOBE? COULD IT BE EUROPE, IN THE END, THAT HELD THE COUNTRY TOGETHER?



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A passion and an investment

WRITER: GRAHAM REID



Our financial expert takes a look at how fine wines can be made to pay...

Traditionally, an investment portfolio consisted of only three core elements – shares, bonds and cash on deposit. However, as a result of the serious reverses of the past few years, investors have discovered an increasing appetite for sectors that offer good returns but which are uncorrelated with the stock markets or interest rates. One solution is to invest in collectibles, such as fine wines, vintage cars, art, antiques and jewellery. However, few people have the time or the knowledge to do so successfully.

MAKE TIME FOR WINE

Taking wine as an example, many people may dream of investing in champagne and other rare tipples but, even if they have both the time and the knowledge, they lack the budget and perfect storage conditions. Knowing when to sell and having the means to sell part of their stock is also critical.

The solution is to invest in wine through a specialized investment fund, of which the Nobles Crus fund, based in Luxembourg, is an excellent example. Nobles Crus is a regulated SICAV that only invests in Millesime wines, champagnes and Primeurs. French, Italian and Spanish wines represent the majority of the portfolio.




The fund manager is Christian Roger who is a renowned expert and permanent member of the European Grand Jury of Wine Tasting. This is combined with 20 years' international banking experience, of which the past ten have been devoted to wine – a perfect combination of two separate but complementary disciplines.

The rarity and age of wines are obviously criteria of choice in the composition of the portfolio. With entrepreneurs in emerging countries becoming more affluent, whilst supply is fixed, the demand for Grands Crus is constantly increasing. This tends to keep prices on a permanent upward trend.

PASSION AND REASON

The wines are stored in a secure cellar in Geneva. They are valued monthly and investors have the possibility to buy and redeem every month. However, a minimum of five years is the recommended investment term. The monthly pricing is based on an average of four prices obtained via lists from wine merchants in Europe and the UK, and two from auction houses Christies and Sotheby's. At redemption, the investor has the possibility to redeem in cash or in kind and hence access a very exclusive wine cellar, which contains exceptional vintages that are not always

available in more classic markets, and moreover at trade prices. After all, why not enjoy drinking a little of the profit on a special occasion?

The founders have designed a fund that combines passion with reason. Their goal is to bring emotions back into finance, and in this context it is all the more natural that wine has been selected as their first investment theme. However, other sectors are being considered, such as rare watches and diamonds. Wine is a tangible product, the price of which is not directly correlated to the stock markets, and is a reasonable addition to any investment portfolio. 

THE WRITER

Graham Reid is director of Classic Financial Solutions NV. Brusselsesteenweg, 321 3090 Overijse.

FOR THERE'S NO-ONE WITH ENDURANCE...



...like the man who sells insurance. **Together** talks to Financial Adviser Olivier Heiderich, a good man to know when it comes to money matters.

INTERVIEW EXPRESS

Together: So, Olivier, tell us a little about your work?

OH: Well, I am a financial adviser for AXA (www.axa-adviser.be). What does that mean? Well, I offer advice to expats about what they are doing with their money, about savings, in particular savings that are tax-deductible, and also the protection of family assets. I would emphasize that I have a very strong financial background and that I am multilingual, I speak English fluently as well as French and Dutch, which I believe is very useful for expats in Belgium. Essentially, I aim to take the stress out of what the new arrival in this country wants to do with his or her money, insurance, to act as an intermediary between the customer and his or her bank and insurance company. In addition, AXA is one of the most stable bank-insurance companies in

Belgium, and provides insurance for one in three of all insured citizens.

Clearly a trusted organization, then?

Indeed – during the recent financial meltdown, for example, AXA was one of the few institutions that didn't take bail-out money from the state, they didn't need it, and they have very good products, in particular regarding the secure placement of savings, life insurance, and tax-deductible savings. Thanks to extremely competitive prices, AXA is very well placed to take over existing life-insurance policies that are linked to mortgages from other banks, and can often provide very attractive rates for new mortgage loans. A large part of my job concerns helping people with their tax declarations, to ensure that they pay the legal minimum of tax. In short, what do I do best? I conduct a specific analysis of a person's financial situation, to give them bespoke advice about what they should do with their money, to ensure good-value financial protection for them and their families. 🗨️

Olivier Heiderich

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Of bubbles and twizzles

WRITER: GEOFF MEADE



Our crafty commentator returns with his own take on Pérignon and pendants...

BUBBLES TROUBLE

The trouble is the bubbles, apparently, despite them being an integral part of the champagne experience. "Why," I asked my sister, "do you drink champagne if you don't like the bubbles?" "Oh," she said, "I don't mind bubbles per se, it's just that there are far too many of them." Which, considering that bubbles maketh the bubbly, is a bit like complaining that a box of Pierre Marcolini contains far too much chocolate. How many bubbles there are in champagne is not crystal clear, but the drink's defenders say that the number of bubbles and their impact depends on the glass into which the bubbly is poured.

If the glass contains even slight imperfections, the bubbles of carbon dioxide emerging from its depths sometimes have a hissy fit and don't follow pre-determined patterns of aeration, the little minxes. But that doesn't mean the bubbles should be pilloried. On the contrary, even if the bubbles don't emerge in regimented lines, they, more than any other aspect of the drink, are the carriers of flavour-enhancing chemicals and should be given a bit of slack.

As Professor Gerard Liger-Belair of Rheims University put it on the radio just the other day: "The magic thing is the bubbles. When you taste champagne,

you have plenty of bubbles which burst over the champagne surface and which are able to project above the champagne surface a myriad of tiny droplets. These aerosols of champagne are highly concentrated with aromatic molecules and flavours."

GIVE IT A 'TWIZZLE'

And the prof should know, because his life's work has been the study of champagne bubbles, as indeed it has for many of my colleagues, although without the scientific results. But how does all this relate, you may ask, to that piece of jewellery around my sister's neck? Well, it's not some hokum about how the gold's aura calms the cauldron of bubbles as they surge forth and explode in the champagne quaffer's face. No, it's more prosaic than that - the 24-carat bling is one of those 'twizzle-stick' things.

It looks like a little gold pencil but, when you swivel a little knurled knob it extends to reveal half a dozen gold prongs that can be lowered daintily into the champagne and...twizzled. For best effect, the 'twizzler' should keep the little finger of the twizzling hand held in the air while engaging in a clockwise stirring motion, with the stick rolled slowly between thumb and index finger.

The stirring motion aerates the champagne and allows those pesky bubbles to escape faster into the atmosphere than they otherwise would, meaning that there are fewer of them to go up the nose while sipping the champers. A solid gold twizzler is not compulsory, but it's a talking point at parties. In fact, a vulgar plastic stick does a better job, as my sister's jeweller confirmed when she took hers back because the prongs refused to open.

He peered at it through a lens and prised it apart. "It's clogged with sugar!" he exclaimed. "You haven't actually been sticking it in champagne, have you?"

"Well yes, actually," she replied. "Isn't that what it's for?" "No, modom," he said. "Jewellery is not FOR anything, even on those rare occasions when it appears to be..." 🗨️

TIME ON THEIR SIDE

WRITER: DAVID MC GOWAN



© Yvan Barbera

From late November onwards, the heart of Brussels has been beating to the rhythms of high-class Swiss timepieces. Hall Of Time, a boutique devoted to the very finest watches, has opened in the surroundings of the prestigious Hotel Conrad. We talk to owners Françoise Lanoizelet and Emmanuel Hankard.

INTERVIEW EXPRESS

Together: What was the inspiration behind Hall of Time?

Françoise: At 47 years old, I felt it was time for a new challenge. I had a successful career in direct marketing, but felt that in that field I no longer had anything to prove and needed a new challenge. It's important to have a challenge and new things to discover, otherwise it's just routine. My business partner has always been passionate about watches and, after working with him for many years, I became passionate as well – passion is contagious. When we decided to open the

shop, we went to see manufacturers in Switzerland and they explained that location is very important – location, location and location – so we were very lucky to find this outlet just by the magnificent Conrad Hotel.

Can you tell us about your brands?

Françoise: Our idea was to stock brands that were not readily available in Belgium – we did not want repetition. Many of the brands were available to be sold in this country, but the suppliers could not find anyone able to offer what we can in terms of space and visibility. As we were starting from nothing, we were able to do it, so now we stock, among others, Parmigiani Fleurier, De Bethune, Jaquet Droz, Roger Dubuis, Hublot, IWC, Baume Et Mercier and Pequinnet.

What is it that determines the price of watches?

Emmanuel: Everywhere you go, you can find out what the time is. So, from the moment that you are paying more than 50€ for a watch, it becomes a question of prestige, of luxury. The main factors that contribute to the price of a watch are research and development, the materials used, VAT and whether or not the watch has independent movement.

What have been the secrets to your success?

Françoise and Emmanuel: We believe that we are very demanding, both with ourselves and the people who work with us. We do our work as well as we can down to the smallest detail – we like accuracy and professionalism, and believe that these are the most important business traits. ☺

Hall of Time

Avenue Louise, 75R (Place Wilcher's)
1050 Bruxelles
T.+32 (0)2 539 34 50
www.halloftime.be

INTO 2010 WITH STYLE

Our regular round-up of the latest classy outlets to open their doors.

© Yvan Barbera



1. HOWARD'S STORAGE WORLD

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Chaussée de Bruxelles, 74-98
1410 Waterloo
T. +32 (0)2 351 36 72
www.hsw.com.au

2. ILONA CHALE

Jewellery designer Ilona Chale has opened a boutique that combines beautiful bijoux styles that are radiant, sophisticated and unique.

Ilona Chale

Rue Coppens, 3
1000 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 511 34 12
www.ilona-chale.be
Open Wednesday to Saturday, 11-18h and Sunday 11-15h.

3. LE BIVOUAC DE L'EMPEREUR, LE CAMBRONNE, LE WELLINGTON

In the shadow of the world-famous Lion's Hamlet, three historic tavern-restaurants, Le Bivouac de l'Empereur, Le Cambronne and Le Wellington have just been

renewed and renovated by Dominique and Catherine, who also own The Snug in Waterloo. All offer traditional, delicious fare in warm, welcoming settings.

Route du Lion, 315

1410 Waterloo
For reservations:
catherine.culot@skynet.be,
T.+32 (0)473 876 879 – T.+32 (0)384 67 40
www.restaurantdulion.be

4. SUB-ZERO WOLF BRUSSELS

Sub-Zero is the world leader in refined refrigeration, with the American company stretching back as far as 1945, when it was founded as the Sub-Zero Freezer Company by Westye Bakke. Now as then, each and every refrigerator leaving the premises has been hand-made, and each is a masterpiece of functionality, form and design. Wolf, meanwhile, goes back more than 70 years, and produces some of the world's best ovens. You see? Sometimes, as with this partnership, it does pay to blow hot and cold.

Sub-Zero Wolf Brussels

Avenue Charbo, 6
1030 Brussels
T.+32 (0)2 733 30 30
info@westye.be
www.westye.eu.com



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ADVERTORIAL

Black diamonds

From mid-December onwards, the markets start quivering with anticipation – growers and brokers begin weighing up the wonderful delicacy known as the Périgord truffle. Ahead of the festive season, *Together* devotes two articles to these black jewels – to begin, an introduction to the delicacy's delights from Brussels' gastronomic giant, 'Rob'.

The **Périgord black truffle**, scientifically known by the not-nearly-as-appetizing moniker of *Tuber melanosporum*, is a subterranean mushroom found in the forests of southern France, the most valuable of which are located in the Dordogne (Périgord) and Provence.

TRUFFLES AND TRUFFLES

However, not everyone is aware that there is also a wide range of other truffle varieties available. Each has its own season, markets, prices and recipes - the Italian summer truffle, the Provence winter truffle, the white Alba truffle, the Italian autumn truffle and the Périgord winter truffle - the list goes on. Which means, in fact, that truffles can be enjoyed virtually all year. "A good truffle, regardless of where it comes from," **Rob** partner Jacques Liens explains, "has to be firm – that's a sign of quality and freshness."

TRUFFLES IN THE KITCHEN

It is, of course, in the kitchen that truffles are in their prime, and combining truffles into dishes is the ideal way to take full advantage of this natural marvel. You can have **truffle omelette**, made with fresh eggs, **pasta with white truffles** cooked in gently heated butter, truffles on toast served with coarse salt, or carpaccio of Charolais with truffle shavings – all of the above can be sampled at Rob, as well as fresh duckling eggs stuffed with a truffle and Carine Dalcq, Rob's master cheesemaker, has created a matured truffles-blend of the triple-cream **Brillat-Savarin** cheese, named after the great

gastronome. As a rule, cook your truffles as little as possible and avoid seasoning them excessively condiments such as with mustard or vinegar. Truffles can be kept for up to ten days in the fridge.

As far as wines are concerned, the ideal accompaniment is **Pomerol**, because its mature Merlot vine releases its own truffle flavours, and an aged **Châteauneuf Du Pape**, which also exudes game and truffle aromas – in addition, most whites wines and even a good **Sauternes** can go very well with truffles.

PASSION FOR TRUFFLES

Among Rob's partners, Jacques Liens is the one who lives and breathes a passion, precision and awareness of truffles – a member of the world truffle academy, Liens has been the top expert at Rob for more than 30 years. His secret? An in-depth knowledge of the product, the seasons, the right places to go, the land and the prices. He selects and gauges truffles, and will only supply Rob once the required quality is available. And, to demonstrate the rigour and transparency of this truffle enthusiast, let it be known that every Rob truffle is individually 'nicked' or slit with his own knife. *Bon appetit!*

Rob

Boulevard de la Woluwe, 28
1150 Woluwe Saint-Pierre
T. +32 (0)2 771 20 60
www.rob-brussels.be

Love at first bite

WRITER: KIMBERLEY LOVATO

And now, a more personal perspective on the joys of truffling...

It has been said that a way to a man's heart is through his stomach, and that diamonds are a girl's best friend. I hover somewhere in between - it will probably come as no surprise to learn that this writer adores diamonds, but my favourite cut is in fact harvested not by miners, but rather by dogs and hogs.

**'DON'T WORRY,'
MARTIN
REASSURED
ME, 'MY WIFE
IS ARMED TOO.'
GREAT.**

We're talking, of course, about the black truffle of Périgord, and it was the famed 19th-century French gastronome Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin who first called truffles "the diamond of the kitchen" in his omnipresent food tome *Physiology of Taste*.

MIDGET GEMS

Black truffles mature between December and March, and at the famous annual market in Sainte-Alvère (Dordogne), January brings hordes of truffle-growers with their gems carefully wrapped in red and white cloths, hoping to sell their jewels in the ancient hall to worldly gourmands who eagerly snatch up a diminishing supply. Even in years when conditions are perfect, only small quantities of truffles are unearthed. At the beginning of the 20th century, French truffle production reached 1,000 tonnes per year. It's now only around 50 tonnes - the over-use of chemicals and climate change are cited as the top culprits of the decrease.

In Saint-Alvère, I met Hugues Martin, who invited me to his nearby truffle grove, where I followed him and his mangy mutt (in truth, I expected more from a truffle dog) around 30 acres of oak trees. Expecting to fall into yesteryear's ancient art of truffle hunting I, instead, stumbled into a John Le Carré novel, as Martin regaled me with stories of gun-toting poachers, mysterious buyers in limousines, and the 'disappearances' of well-trained dogs. Fetching prices ranging from 200€ to more than 1,800€ per kilo, depending on the yield and quality, truffles are more valuable than gold, inspiring daring truffle scuffles in the French woods. "Don't worry," Martin reassured me, "my wife is armed too." Great.

OF DOGS AND HOGS

Dogs are the most common 'tool', but farmers also use pigs to sniff out truffles. Risky, warns Martin, since pigs like to eat them. There is a third option: the truffle fly. Martin shows me a miniscule winged creature entombed in a box. According to Martin, this clever mouche smells a perfectly ripened truffle then lays its eggs on the ground above. Hunters twirl a long stick at the base of the trees, like a magic wand, looking for a cloud of disturbed flies. A dog can smell a truffle before it is fully ripe and provoke a premature harvest. "The fly never lies," quipped Martin.

BLACK DIAMONDS: BEST FRIENDS

A fresh truffle should be firm with a good perfume, he says, but has a short shelf life - around three weeks max. In Brussels, fresh and jarred truffles are available in specialty markets such as Rob or at the La Truffe Noire boutique. Fortunately, a little goes a long way when cooking, and it doesn't take much to capture the distinct flavor. At L'Atelier de la Truffe Noire (the establishment's gourmet shop and more casual eatery) in Brussels, I experienced true truffle alchemy - beef carpaccio with slivers of black truffle; scrambled eggs speckled with black truffle; tortellini with shaved black truffle; and finally, a matured

cheese stuffed with, you guessed it, black truffle. It was love at first bite. There is no question that a certain black diamond is the way to my heart (via my stomach). Perhaps it was also their rumoured aphrodisiac qualities that lured me in, or maybe it's simply that they just taste so good. Whatever the reason, I anxiously await their arrival each winter, with an effervescence that is rivalled only by the anticipation of seeing my best friend after a year's absence.

Kimberley Lovato is the author of *Walnut Wine & Truffle Groves*, which will be released by Running Press in April 2010. Check out her website at www.kimberleylovato.com

**THERE IS NO
QUESTION
THAT A
CERTAIN
BLACK
DIAMOND IS
THE WAY TO MY
HEART (VIA MY
STOMACH)**



Mais Quelle Passion!

Following on from our article about the recent Belgium launch of RestoPass, the restaurant-fidelity/reduction scheme that's based on real diners' opinions, we felt it was only fair to let you in on another eating-out secret, namely *Quelle Passion*. We spoil you, don't we?

Their website goes into a lot more detail, but basically, it breaks down like this – you buy the membership card online, choose

one of the participating restaurants on their, then you can invite someone to dinner and get a huge reduction on their meal!

In a sample bill for two people, for example, the less expensive starters and main courses are taken off the final bill. The desserts and the drinks (water, wine, coffee, liqueurs, fruit drinks, beer...) remain at their normal price.

Restaurants are joining up regularly (and so are theatres, in the latest innovation) – check out the site for more information. Bon appetit! 🍴

www.quellepassion.eu



Good diet, good science

WRITER: JEREMY SLATER

Together examines moves by Belgium's new Scientific Institute for Intelligent Nutrition (SIIN) to promote health for all.

SIIN aims to highlight the benefits of sound nutrition, via not only traditional messages on the need to eat plenty of fruit and vegetables as part of a balanced diet, but also with research programmes to encourage healthy food at affordable prices and by seeking the support of some of the country's top restaurants, to make a good diet a gourmand's delight as well.

HEALTH WEALTH

The institute's remit includes engaging with health professionals as well as nutritional experts such as politicians, and spokespeople for farming, the food industry and restaurateurs. It will also run educational programmes with schools to emphasize how diet can benefit health, assist scientists with research into innovations in food technologies, hold seminars to bring experts together to formulate new policies, conduct communication programmes with the Belgian media and implement a new 'healthy eating' diploma.

Inspired by France's Agence Française de Sécurité Sanitaires des Aliments and the Wealth Health Organization's cancer research fund, SIIN aims to place human health and that of the planet at the heart of the scientific, medical and political debate. In particular, the new institute intends to run campaigns to highlight the importance of Omega 3 and 6 oils that could improve brain function, and the role of sodium and potassium in protecting the body's cardiovascular system.

"We want to assist in a veritable revolution unique in the history of humankind's nutritional needs,"



explains Dr Olivier Coudron, co-founder of the institute and director of SIIN's research and science department.

A classification scheme to be used by everyone in the food-production business, from farmers to food manufacturers, shops and restaurant and café owners, is also planned. "This will make the scheme visible throughout Belgium and encourage people to eat more healthily," added SIIN's public relations expert, Gaëtane Ingels. 🍴

www.siin-nutrition.com



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'Good News' for Belgium cinema

WRITER: JAMES DREW

An important cultural agreement between Egyptian media and entertainment company Good News Group and Brussels International Independent Film Festival was signed recently – *Together* reports.

L Egyptian film producer and director Adel Adeeb has put €3 million in the coffers for an intriguing collaboration between Belgian and Egyptian cinema, to finance 50 per cent of two feature films.

Under the auspices of the 36th edition of the Brussels International Independent Film Festival, which was held in Brussels' Jacques Franck Cultural Centre from 3-8 November, and which focused on Egyptian cinema, the renowned producer/director of films such as *Laylat El-Baby Doll* (2008) (producer/director), *Halim* (2006) (supervising producer) and *Hysteria* (1996) (director) held a round table on the festival's final day, to announce the signing of an important agreement between Adeeb's Good News Group (www.goodnewsgroup.com) and the festival organizers to produce two full-length feature films, with €1.5 million to be provided for each.

'PROACTIVE COLLABORATION'



One of the films will be made in Egypt, the other in Belgium, using the native film talent of both countries. As Adeeb explained: "This is hopefully the starting point for voluntary, proactive collaboration which will hopefully become permanent and will extend to other film festivals in Europe.

"The idea behind the agreement with the festival is to ensure that we find a director, screenplay writer, distributor and of course actors on both sides of the

partnership. Our absolute priority is to ensure that the films in question will express the cinema of today, and help young directors who are looking for backing, seek out the stars of tomorrow and open up film distribution between the two countries. Thus, it will be a very encouraging initiative in the current audiovisual landscape, which appears at present to be lacking in finance and daring."

Belgium is the first EU country to embark on such an initiative, which is set to be realized during 2010 - organizers hope that other member states such as France and Italy will quickly follow suit. cover illustration is a Delacroix spin-off: French Revolutionaries led by a bare-breasted maid carrying a 'Get the Rich!' placard (check the anachronous Blackberry on one of the fallen aristos). Poor dears.

'OUR ABSOLUTE PRIORITY IS TO ENSURE THAT THE FILMS IN QUESTION WILL EXPRESS THE CINEMA OF TODAY, AND HELP YOUNG DIRECTORS WHO ARE LOOKING FOR BACKING, SEEK OUT THE STARS OF TOMORROW AND OPEN UP FILM DISTRIBUTION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.'



On the left:
Adel Adeeb

LIFETIME HONOUR
The festival also paid tribute to internationally renowned Egyptian actress and singer



On the right:
Yosra

Yosra, who received a Lifetime Achievement in Film Award for her work, which stretches back as far as 1980 and includes appearances in more than 90 films, including Marwan Hamed's much-acclaimed *Omaret yakobean (Yacoubian Building)* (2006), which has been screened in 38 countries worldwide. Yosra, who is also a UNDP Ambassador, and has previously won more than 50 awards for her films, spoke of her "absolute delight" at receiving the award, and thanked "the beautiful city of Brussels" for the honour.

The Brussels International Independent Film Festival, or Le Festival International du Film Indépendant de Bruxelles, has been held since 1974. It originally focused on Super 8mm films and is now an annual showcase for a wide range of independent cinema. 📽

www.centremultimedia.org/English-pages.107.0.html

And check out James Drew's interview with Adel Adeeb and Yosra at www.together-magazine.eu/videos.shtm

Just Mirano: Your Saturday 'Nice' Club



Just Mirano has rapidly made a watertight name for itself in Brussels' nightlife circles –situated on the site of a former cinema, the 'Saturday Nice Club' is a jet-set temple, and the biggest names in House have had a wild time there. Every Saturday, Just Party@Mirano offers a selection of the most creative evenings. Guests are carefully selected, sequins guaranteed, there's an exclusive entry policy and trendy look is obligatory. Open Saturday from 22h – it costs you 8€ before midnight, 10€ after. Let's boogie!

Just Mirano
Chausee de Louvain, 38
1030 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 227 39 48
www.justmirano.be

Around the globe



1. Model and actress Cindy Crawford attends the *Fantastic Mr Fox* after-party at The Times-BFI London Film Festival on 14th October 2009. (Photo by Samir Hussein).

2. Ben Stiller attends a dinner hosted by Roberto Armani at the Armani Ristorante in New York, to celebrate the opening of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, which runs at the Brooklyn Academy of Music from 27th November to 20th December.

3. HRH Prince Albert II of Monaco and Antoine Chevanne, CEO of Floriat Group, attend the Black Legend opening party on 29th October 2009 in Monte Carlo. (Photo by Tony Barson).

4. Donatella Versace attends the opening dinner and charity auction of Oi Fashion Rocks at Copacabana Palace in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 23rd October 2009. (Photo by Luciana Whitaker).

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TAKE A TRIP WITH JOSÉ SOTO

WRITER: JAMES DREW

We talk to an artist with a passion for Africa...



José Soto was born in 1959 in Saint Germain en Laye, France. He developed a passion for art early on, and combined with a love of travel and adventure, in 1983 took off in search of inspiration, first in France, then further afield in South America, where he found particular affinity with Brazil.

In 1993, he was awarded a special medal by the city of Paris, and, following an accident that left him temporarily without the use of his right arm, he came to Brussels in 2004 to open the Gallery Soto in Sablon, followed by the Futurart Loft in St Gilles.

In 2008, he left to find fresh inspiration in Miami, but returned earlier this year to direct ARTRIP, a project to display work by African artists.

In addition, Soto continues to exhibit his work regularly around the world, in locations as far flung as Vienna, Berlin, Los Angeles, New York and Dubai and, during 2010, he will be helping the founder of *Together Magazine*, Jérôme Stéfanksi, find artists for his Brussels-based initiative **Private View**, which offers private art shows for discerning clients.

www.privateview.eu

INTERVIEW EXPRESS

Together: How would you define your attitude to art?

JS: *There are many people who wish to perfect painting, but I try and speak to those who want to feel inspired. I want to put others in a creative frame of mind, which may evolve their own artistic careers. There is no need to be a Van Gogh or Gauguin to take pleasure in painting – the important thing is to satisfy passion, and know that tomorrow we will be better.*

Tell us a little about ARTRIP?

ARTRIP is designed to balance artists

and their work by linking the energy of creation with background research. It aims to show, therefore, painting intensified.

One such example is the work of Matar Khaly?

The heat and light of Africa is what shines through in the work of Matar Khaly. He revives the traditions of the Dogon people of Mali by painting with a knife, or sometimes even his hands. Matar likes to feel a direct contact with this subject. His characters are real! They dance and sing their history!

www.artrip.eu



1. Matar Khaly art
2. José Soto art
3. Matar Khaly

ART WITH A CONSCIENCE

Artfriendly is an art label that offers work at an affordable price.

"We are not gallery owners or agents", explains Pierre Fuzio, the originator of the idea. "The idea is to make art accessible to the greatest number of people and reach the public in places where it does not necessarily expect".

The project, Fuzio adds, is a citizens' initiative designed to inspire the public, and make them aware of their responsibilities – for every Artfriendly work purchased, the United Nations Environmental programme (UNEP) will plant a tree, and the goal is to have more than 10,000 planted in three years. 🌳

www.artfriendly.net



1.

1. Jean-Christophe Massinon – Petit Feu
2. Carole Agaësse – Blue
3. Will Barras – Corner
4. Ephameron – Drink Water et Birds



2.



3.



4.

Together's 'To Do' list

WRITER: JOHN SHERIDAN

Together takes you into 2010 with our customary choice of fun, cultural events. Enjoy!

PAUL DELVAUX & THE ANTIQUITY Ends 31.01.10

Up to 60 works (both oil paintings and drawings) will be exhibited by one of Belgium's most renowned artists of the 20th century. This particular exhibition concentrates on the relationship the artist had with ancient Greece, which

he used to extract subject matter to interweave with his own personal, subjective mythology.

Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium
Rue de la Régence, 3
1000 Brussels
T.+32 (0)2 508 32 11
www.fine-arts-museum.be



CHRISTMAS LIGHTS BY BIKE 19.12.09

Discover the festive lights of Brussels with the help of Pro-Velo. An organized bike-ride, to view the most beautiful lights on show in the streets and squares of Brussels for Christmas. And why not keep keep the chill out of your bones with a scheduled stop for a Glühwein?

Pro Velo
Rue de Londres, 15
1050 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 502 7355
www.provelo.be

FOUCHTRA 26>29.12.09

Finding it hard to keep the tots happy during the festive period? Look no further than Festival Fouchtra – the puppet theatre and animation shows will keep the little ones happy, while Mum and Dad

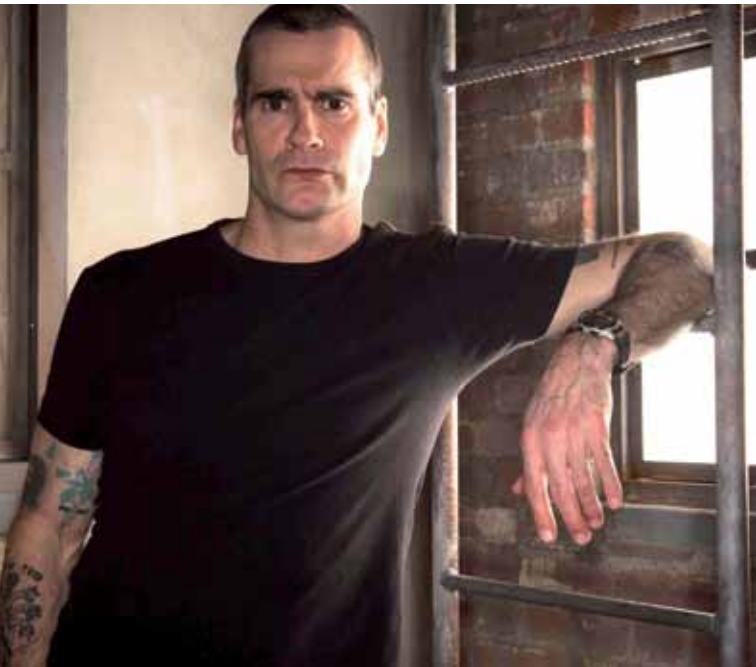
enjoy a little well-earned rest and refreshment in the café.

Rue Robert Scott, 14
1180 Brussels
T.+32 (0)2 374 7496
www.cie-ombre.be

EUROPEAN MOTOR SHOW BRUSSELS 2010 14>24.01.10

The 88th edition of the European Motor Show Brussels is under starters orders, with all the biggest names in the Belgian market ready to show off their latest creations and innovations. Once again, it's *the* place to be for every car, scooter or motorcycle enthusiast.

Brussels Expo (Heysel)
Place de Belgique
1020 Brussels
www.bruexpo.be



HENRY ROLLINS

25.01.10

“The truth, like humor, is where you find it.” So says Henry Rollins, who is set to host his own one-man-show, and who will not be worried about causing controversy. An evening of quintessentially American opinionated editorializing and storytelling – ‘wanna’ hear Henry’s version of the news? What are you waiting for?

Ancienne Belgique
Boulevard Anspach, 110
1000 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 548 2424
www.abconcerts.be



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A GOOD START LASTS A LIFE TIME!

www.international-montessori.org
02-767-6360 / 02-721-2111
Mechelsesteenweg 79 - 1933 Sterrebeek
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www.essentiel.be

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www.fabiennedelvigne.be

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www.giorgioarmani.com

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Happy New Year from *Together*!



All you need to know about banking
services on arriving in Belgium

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Many banking services are available to expatriates living in Belgium but there is nothing you need to know about making such arrangements. That's a task for the ING Convenience Services experts.

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A romantic kiss in Rome.

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