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#17 / APRIL-MAY 2010

# Together

magazine

YOUR  
**HOME**  
IS YOUR  
**CASTLE**

**VERSACE &  
RALPH LAUREN**  
Home Collections

**HELPING  
BRUSSELS' HOMELESS**  
Samusocial's work

**LIB-DEMS' DILEMMA?**  
Uncertainties over  
Europe



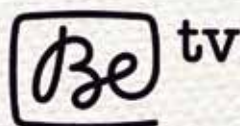
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EDITORIAL

# A home run!

As Irish novelist George Moore wrote: “A man travels the world over in search of what he needs and returns home to find it.” Too true – and, with spring having now officially arrived, the *Together* team dedicates our latest edition to that place where, for each of us, the heart is.

But we begin on a sombre note – last year, 35 people who were not fortunate enough to have a roof over their heads died on the streets of Brussels. Patricia Kelly highlights the tireless work of municipal humanitarian organization for the homeless **Samusocial**, who are under increasing pressure despite their efforts to help the growing number of displaced people in their care.

Emma Portier Davis has cast a newlywed's eye over the **latest interior design creations**, while Federico Grandesso, quite apart from enjoying a splendid trip to the **Magazan Beach Resort in Morocco**, takes a look at the latest **Versace and Ralph Lauren Home Collections**. Our financial expert Graham Reid, meanwhile, assesses the best ways for expats to **hold on to their houses during their stay in Belgium**, and Cillian Donnelly examines the benefits available to householders who choose to make their homes **eco-friendly**.

Your home *should* be your castle and, according to our latest recruit, renowned Belgian gastronome **Eric Boschman**, there's no reason why you shouldn't eat like a king either – check out his choice of two excellent **châteaux restaurants in Eat Together**, while our wine expert Alex Hewetson muses on how the grape can take you home in **By The Glass**.

With the UK general election just around the corner, we're proud to present a revealing political analysis by John Sheridan concerning the **Liberal Democrats** – despite the chances of power swinging to this party

in the (increasingly likely) event of a British hung parliament, and the Lib-Dems' Europhile tendencies still appearing to be distinctly at odds with the Conservatives, few party members that we spoke to seemed willing to comment. One did, however – have a look.

And what else? Well, as ever, your faithful correspondent has been out and about chatting with the great and good, such as **Catherine Pérèle**, CEO of leading lingerie designers **Simone Pérèle** and fashion house **Comptoirs des Cotonniers'** Creative Director **Brigitte Comazzi**, Kimberley Lovato returns with her **Sensual Secrets**, co-editor Colin Moors opens our eyes to groovy gadgets in **Must-Haves**, and Natasha Abudarham offers further life-improvement advice in **Go Get It!**

We have an excellent giveaway to whet your appetite – *Together* teams up with **Sub-Zero & Wolf**, the *sine qua non* of kitchen appliances, to offer 20 readers the chance to join us for a gala dinner and demonstration evening at the American marques' newly opened Living Kitchen showroom in Brussels.

And, of course, there's all the fashion, health, art and events features that you've come to expect from your favourite Brussels magazine – enjoy it at home, with our blessing! ☺



**David Mc Gowan**  
Publisher

© Yvan Barbera



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# Video stars

Check out Armand Richelet-Kleinberg's latest videos – freshly uploaded, just for you.



## 1. BUBBLES IN BRUSSELS

For two months, beginning on 1<sup>st</sup> May, selected bars and restaurants of hotels across the city will be offering a tasting of three **Drappier champagnes** and *amuse-bouche* for just 19€. *Bon appétit!*

## 2. CANNES FILM FESTIVAL

Cannes 2010 runs from 12<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> of May. *Together* will be there, *naturellement*, along with **VIP Belgium**, to party hard!

## 3. MUSICBRUSSELS.COM

Our co-editor James Drew chats with Suki Jenkins and the bands behind the **MusicBrussels.com** initiative that was recently launched to great acclaim in the capital of Europe, as featured in the March edition of *Together*.

## 4. COMPTOIRS DES COTONNIERS

An exclusive look at the recent competition organized by Comptoirs des Cotonniers' shops worldwide, to recruit mums and daughters for their upcoming Paris fashion show. Check out our interview with **Comptoirs des Cotonniers' Creative Director Brigitte Comazzi** on page 32.

## 5. PEAK PERFORMANCE GENERAL STORE

A behind-the-scenes peek at the recent opening of the **Swedish sportswear** giant's new Avenue Louise outlet – see **Fresh Openings**, page 72.

## 6. BURMA BOUND

More news on *Together's* trip to **Burma** for our readers in November. ☺

– To check out these great videos and more, go to [www.together-magazine.eu/videos.shtml](http://www.together-magazine.eu/videos.shtml) –

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# Sub-Zero & Wolf: So cool, it's scary

*Together* teams up with the worldwide leader in premium refrigeration and cooking appliances to offer 20 readers the chance to join us for a cooking demonstration and tasting dinner in the recently opened Sub-Zero & Wolf Brussels showroom.

Sub-Zero & Wolf's 'Living Kitchen' Brussels showroom combines minimalist architecture with an art gallery, and is an inspiration for home owners, kitchen designers, architects and interior designers alike.

Sub-Zero & Wolf, the worldwide leader in premium refrigeration and cooking appliances opened the showroom in Brussels last year, and the launch is part of a European expansion of the luxury American brand. Synonymous with delivering specialist culinary results in the home, Sub-Zero & Wolf is the brand of choice for high-profile chefs, celebrities, architects, interior designers and kitchen designers.

The showroom features a wide range of Sub-Zero & Wolf products including the new pioneering line of 'Built-In' refrigeration. The innovative Built-In range has a unique 'air purification' system that removes harmful gases and odours, a process that was developed by NASA to aid food preservation. A wide selection of wine preservation units are also on display alongside Wolf's comprehensive range of built-in ovens, hobs and dual fuel ranges, which offer the user precise control to deliver truly professional results.

## PRO 48

Large double refrigerator-freezers are the height of luxury, provide a dynamic focal point and

bring state-of-the-art technology into the kitchen. The largest residential refrigerator-freezer on the market, the PRO 48 from Sub-Zero is crafted from 100 per cent stainless steel and has a robust heavy-gauge cabinet that is magnetically sealed to hold in cold air and preserve food for longer.

## THE BUILT-IN REFRIGERATOR

Sub-Zero introduces the new high-performance Built-In refrigerator-freezers, using pioneering technology originally developed for NASA. The worldwide leader in premium refrigeration has engineered the new Built-In line to meet the demands for sleek and integrated appliances combined with state of the art expertise.

## DUAL FUEL

Sizeable industrial style cookers are a huge trend, offering the technical features normally associated with a professional appliance and creating a real showpiece in the kitchen. Designed with the at-home chef in mind, Wolf's Dual Fuel Range are precision instruments that have been built to last. Available in a range of sizes and configurations, the dual fuel and gas-range top feature large control knobs which emphasise the robust design and are available in either vibrant red or sleek black. The dual fuel combines high-performance gas cooking combined with dual convection electric ovens and offers multiple operation modes.



## WINE PRESERVATION

The Sub-Zero WS30 Series wine storage range features large freestanding and integrated models, ideal for creating a centrepiece in the kitchen. Impeccable humidity and temperature levels safeguard the wine, with two independent storage

zones which enable red and white wine to be stored within the same unit. UV resistance in the glass doors guarantees that each bottle remains protected from sunlight. A quiet compressor protects the wine from the harmful effects of vibrations and is housed in a special anti-vibration unit. 🍷

## THE PRIZE

*Together* has teamed up with Sub-Zero & Wolf to offer ten readers plus partners the chance to join us for an exclusive demonstration and dinner at the new Sub-Zero & Wolf Showroom in Brussels on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> June. All you have to do is send us your answers to the two simple questions below, along with your name, address and daytime telephone number, to [info@togethermedia.eu](mailto:info@togethermedia.eu), labelling your email **Sub-Zero & Wolf Competition**. The deadline for all entries is 10<sup>th</sup> May 2010, when the winners will be selected at random. Good luck!

- (i) In which country are Sub-Zero & Wolf appliances made?**  
**(ii) Which Sub-Zero fridge is 100 per cent steel?**

Sub-Zero & Wolf  
 Rue Charbostraat, 6  
 1030 Brussels  
 T. +32 (0)2 733 30 30  
[www.westye.eu.com](http://www.westye.eu.com)

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



# From internal to infernal affairs

WRITER: FEDERICO GRANDESSO

Those who have been here, and those on their way.

## IVO JOSIPOVIC

Newly elected Croatian President Ivo Josipovic was in Brussels on 5<sup>th</sup> March to advocate Croatian EU accession. The reform of the judiciary and public administration, respect for minority rights and full co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) are still challenges for the Croatian government.



## LOU REED

Lou Reed, together with Sarth Calhoun and Ulrich Krieger, stormed Ancienne Belgique on 22<sup>nd</sup> April, as part of his MM3 (Metal Machine Trio) tour, which is due to end in Mallorca on 30<sup>th</sup> April.

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



## ROBERT ZOELICK

World Bank President Robert Zoellick visited Commission President José Manuel Barroso on 26<sup>th</sup> of March, for a discussion that focused on future co-operation between the Commission and the World Bank in countries of mutual interest, as well as the financial and economic crisis.



## JOHN MALKOVICH

An exciting premiere beckons for Belgium, with John Malkovich set to grace BOZAR with *Infernal Comedy*, which will be staged on 12<sup>th</sup> May at 20h. The world-famous actor, who is also the director and writer, will play Austrian serial killer Jack Unterweger in this thrilling musical spectacle, which is to be performed for the very first time in Brussels. [www.bozar.be](http://www.bozar.be)



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*“Bricks and mortar make a house, but the laughter of children makes a home.”*  
– **Irish proverb**

*“Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,  
Be it ever so humble, there’s no place like home.”*  
– **John Howard Payne (1791-1852)**  
**American actor, author, playwright and poet**

*“Life’s a voyage that’s homeward bound.”*  
– **Herman Melville (1819-1891)**  
**American author, essayist and poet**

*“Peace at home is peace in the country.  
Peace in the country is peace in the world.”*  
– **Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (1881-1938)**  
**Turkish army officer, revolutionary statesman, founder and first president  
of the Republic of Turkey**

*“The most important work you and I will ever do will be within the walls of our  
own homes.”*  
– **Harold B. Lee (1899-1973)**  
**American, 11th president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints**

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YOUR HOME IS  
YOUR CASTLE

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# Safe and warm at home? Spare a thought

WRITER: PATRICIA KELLY

A memorial service was held recently for 35 homeless people who died in Brussels last year. With an average age of 48, they ranged from Stephane, aged 21, to Rene, 80. Around half were found on the streets.

**N**o government can afford to have homeless people dying on the streets, least of all one that prefaces over the Capital of Europe, and that is more likely to happen in winter, especially one as cold as the one we've just witnessed. So for several months when the weather is at its worst, the federal, regional and city authorities subsidize additional accommodation for the homeless in Brussels to supplement existing shelters. But the end of March signified the end of winter as far as the good burghers of Brussels are concerned and the city's annual **Plan Froid**, which provides unconditional emergency housing every night for up to 500 men, women and

children, came to a close. Hundreds of people, mostly men, once more without a roof over their heads, swelled the ranks of those sleeping rough on the streets.

## GROWING CRISIS

Even with the winter allocation of extra beds at temporary shelters throughout the city, the municipal humanitarian organization for the homeless

**Samusocial** claims

it was still forced to turn away between 50 and 100 people every night for lack of space. With the extra beds gone, 120 places remain at its permanent shelter for a homeless population that is steadily rising. Those seeking sanctuary have access to psychiatric and medical aid, a hot meal and the opportunity to shower as well as temporary occupancy of a communal room of between two and eight beds.

**HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE, MOSTLY MEN, ONCE MORE WITHOUT A ROOF OVER THEIR HEADS, SWELLED THE RANKS OF THOSE SLEEPING ROUGH ON THE STREETS**





"For the past five or six years we've seen an increase in the number of women on the streets," says Samusocial's Director of Communications Christophe Thielens. Many of them display psychological problems, he adds, although it remains difficult to identify the causes. When I met him, he was in the process of organizing a campaign to raise public awareness of the humanitarian crisis about to hit the streets of Brussels.

### ANYONE CAN BE HOMELESS

There are more families on the streets than before and an increase too in the number of eastern Europeans, tempted to

try their luck in the richer cities of the West and forced to turn to shelters for help when reality sets in. Female beggars from the East working the streets with young children tend to be part of organized networks; Thielens says he doesn't know where they sleep, but he doesn't class them as homeless. "We rarely see them here." Asylum seekers, drug addicts, alcoholics, runaways, victims of domestic violence – they all come through the doors. Age and social class are no barrier to becoming homeless –

Samusocial's drab and rather dispiriting premises are also swarming with children. "We've even got a former airline pilot here at the moment," Thielens adds.

A 24-hour helpline receives 400 calls for assistance every day. The organization is unique in sending out medically qualified mobile assistance teams to roam the streets and railway stations of Brussels every night of the year in an attempt to bring in the homeless or offer help on the spot if they refuse to budge. In 2008, they came across 1,203 different people living on the streets. The same year, 5,650 different people passed through the centre. Social workers are on hand to help find more permanent accommodation and jobs and deal with officialdom, but the majority of people who sleep here are expected to spend the day elsewhere. Yet the few day centres that exist for the homeless have limited space and there's often no option to spending daylight hours as well as the night on the street.

Further towards the city centre in Rue Terre-Neuve, the night shelter Pierre d'Angle has room for 48 men and women without children in dormitories; it's free, but there's no food and the occupants are turned out in the morning. Mobile kitchens serve hot food at the city's railway stations – the queues of the hungry and homeless are long.

### OPEN HOUSE, OPEN HEART

Some have found a saviour in **Ahmed Ben Aberrahman**, owner of the 3-star Mozart Hotel, a baroque mixture of Maghreb mosaics, imitation Louis XV furniture and art deco lamps plastered with portraits of Barack Obama, located behind the Grand'Place. He's been offering free accommodation to the homeless for years when business is slack; between 15<sup>th</sup> December 2009 and the end of February this year he hosted an average 60 people every day, around 3,500 nights' accommodation. A Muslim and originally from Morocco, his only rule is no drinking, which he describes as "disastrous". He says his homeless customers are given three meals a day if they want them, and the use of telephone and laundry. Two refugee families stayed for eight months and he says one man stayed in his room for a week and wouldn't come out "because he couldn't believe it".

Aberrahman shrugs off his largesse: "I've got 54 rooms here and I only need 25 or 30 to keep me happy." No wonder, then, that he was recently elected *Bruxellois* of the year. "We can destroy poverty," he proclaims.

But with perhaps fewer resources at our disposal, what can the rest of us do? There's no point in volunteering, says Samusocial's Christophe Thielens, unless you offer a specific professional service, but they're happy to receive donations of clothes and bedding. And what he would really like is your money – donations may be paid into **Samusocial's bank account, 000-0000031-31.** ☎

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

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# Castles in the air?

WRITER: EMMA PORTIER DAVIS

Our writer checks out the latest in home design.

**B**elgians are said to be born with a brick in their stomach: When they want a home, they don't buy one, they build one. Unsurprisingly then, hundreds of thousands descend every year on Belgium's multifarious homes exhibition Batibouw, in a bid to put together their dream abode.

**'MOST PEOPLE IN BELGIUM ARE VERY CONCERNED WITH THEIR HOMES AND HERE YOU FIND ONE PLACE WITH EVERYTHING'**

This year's fair, the 51<sup>st</sup>, was sprawled across 12 exhibition halls at the Heysel Palace near Brussels with 1,000 companies, ranging from brick-makers to mortgage providers, showing off their wares to a public of around 337,000. Here is where you will find everything you ever imagined you would need to build, renovate, or

refurbish and plenty you never thought about. My favourite pointless item was the vacuum hose which connects through sockets in each room to a centralized dust collector. Advantage?

**WHERE THE HEART IS?**

We (I dragged along my Belgian husband

who made it clear he would not be proving the national adage true) started out by taking the whole thing rather seriously, carefully noting the names of manufacturers of useful products and nodding wisely (I'm a good actor) at various widgets.

We've been trying to buy a house for several months now and after a series of viewings of decidedly naff properties with sinks in cupboards, ovens in bathrooms and a house with one bedroom converted to a bar with peeling, smoke-stained wallpaper, renovation is becoming a jaded notion.

One of the exhibition halls is dedicated to bricks and cement. Another has every type of floor covering you could imagine. And Belgium being Belgium, I'm informed by a parquet salesman that the range is particularly wide as Walloons typically like dark stuff while the Flemings go for neutrals.

Batibouw spokesman Frédéric François said: "This is an exhibition where you get to discover, to feel, to compare new products. Most people in Belgium are very concerned with their homes and here you find one place with everything from construction materials to details such as lighting."





## GOING GREEN

We studiously make our way through a hall of window products, have a pit-stop by the roaring fireplaces (the latest designs are set behind glass panels – funky fireside seats made of logs and covered in sheepskin), and check out insulation materials.

A big trend this year was green products with the caveat that they must provide a return on investment, given the financial squeeze of late. There were all types of solar panels, wind technologies (useful but boring to look at), biofuel heaters (ugly), and the theme of the moment: insulation.

"A lot of homes in Belgium are not very well insulated or ventilated and yet you could save about forty to sixty per cent on energy use," said François. "This can be done using wind or solar energy but what is really affordable, is insulation, double glazing, better heating systems."

However, while insulation might be cheap, an eco-renovation would increase our costs by around 10 per cent and even though we would recoup this in about seven years, according to the enthusiastic marketing types, I don't know how ready I am to suck up the cost in the meantime.

## A TOUCH PRICY

By this point, I was beginning to realize that Project House remained as depressingly expensive as ever, despite reassurances from François that the show caters for every budget. A quick glance at a book stall with budget renovation ideas provoked sniggers and disbelief at their idea of 'cheap'.

So we decided to tackle the rest of the exhibition (well, before we got really bored) seeking out the most ludicrously extravagant purchases possible.

Our future garden would need to be at least ten metres long and four metres wide to accommodate the elaborate swimming pool. However, I would need a serious mortgage extension as this would set me back 88,570€. I aimed for an invisible gulp, and told the salesman I'd get back to him.

Moving indoors but sticking with the water theme, I found a bath tub fitted with a television, music centre, underwater lights that change colour, a head rest, a built-in champagne bucket and – a little finishing touch – rests for the glasses. I don't care about the price (and you have to ask for most of these), I want it.



The home cinema salesman saw through me. I would need a room big enough to sit around six metres from the 2.4 metre wide screen (I think of all the so-called third bedrooms we've seen). I gasped when he told me that for the projector alone, I'd need from 4,000-60,000€.

We got lost looking at electronic gadgets for the home. There were televisions galore (although not a patch on the cinema) and all-in-one key pads to control all the electronics in your home from music to air conditioning. At just under 500€, I could afford it but quite honestly would I want to resort to such sloth?

After just getting more depressed, I had the chance of a final guffaw before we headed away from the madness. In rainy Belgium, you can import a Bora-Bora style beach hut for your backyard. The cost, said the salesman, sneering at my scruffy attire, is 10,000€.

I retorted that it just didn't feel the same without the Pacific lapping away under our feet as he whisked off to two suckers who actually looked like they were seriously contemplating buying the thing.

## SURVIVAL GUIDE

**1. Don't go on a Sunday.** The crowds of people who have (unimaginative souls) nothing better to do when shops in Belgium are mostly closed will drive you crazy.

**2. Take a notepad.** There's an overwhelming amount of stuff. The chances of remembering what you saw in the first ten minutes are about as high as being able to navigate your way back there.

**3. Prepare your look of 'don't bother me'.** Remember it's the ultimate in sales events.

**4. Prepare your look of feigned interest.** This is essential for the many moments when the quoted price is way out of your league. Cue poker face.

**5. Take a packed lunch, unless you like over-priced hot dogs, sandwiches, and drinks.** ☹

*Batibouw returns from 24<sup>th</sup> February to 6<sup>th</sup> March 2011.*

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

# BLONDE AMBITION

PHOTOGRAPHER: FRÉDÉRIC BASTIN  
HAIR (REDKEN) AND MAKE-UP (M.A.C.): SOPHIE ENGELEN  
STYLING: RUBEN DEBUCK



Shirt:  
PAULE KA  
Cardigan:  
NEW LOOK  
Flower-printed shorts and necklace:  
URBAN OUTFITTERS  
Ring:  
JUTKA AND RISKA  
Hat:  
ELVIS POMPILIO





Glasses:  
AMERICAN APPAREL  
Knitted top:  
JUTKA & RISKA  
Belt and necklace:  
URBAN OUTFITTERS  
Leather skirt:  
CARIN WESTER  
Ring:  
H&M



Blazer:  
ZARA  
Lace bra:  
URBAN OUTFITTERS  
Glasses:  
AMERICAN APPAREL  
Necklace:  
CLUB MANHATTAN  
Ring and hat:  
VINTAGE





Yellow blazer:  
WOOD WOOD  
Shirt:  
COS  
Lingerie:  
URBAN OUTFITTERS  
Necklace:  
CLUB MANHATTAN



Blazer with flower print:  
FREE PEOPLE  
Shirt:  
COS  
Shorts:  
PATRIZIA PEPE  
Ring:  
VINTAGE





Shirt:  
COS  
Shorts:  
PATRIZIA PEPE  
Ring:  
JUTKA AND RISKA



Top:  
PAULE KA  
Trousers and sunglasses:  
JUTKA + RISKA  
Necklace:  
CLUB MANHATTAN  
Plateau pumps:  
PAULE KA  
Hat:  
NEW YORK TIMES  
Ring:  
VINTAGE  
Bracelet:  
H&M



# Va-va-voom Versace, lovely Lauren

WRITER: FEDERICO GRANDESSO

*Together* unveils two giants' latest take on interior mode.

1. The new Versace Vanitas, which will be at the Salone del Mobile 2010 from 14<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> April in Milan.  
[www.cosmit.it](http://www.cosmit.it)

2. Ralph Lauren Home

**THERE ARE TWO PARALLEL AND YET CONTRASTING MOODS, CLASSIC AND MODERN, OFFERING A VARIETY OF SOPHISTICATED HINTS AND INSPIRATIONS FOR CONTEMPORARY CHIC**

**T**he new philosophy of the contemporary fashion designer is, not unlike *Together*, to sell a dream to the customer. To do that, it is necessary to create a lifestyle in which the contemporary *fashionista* can feel the designer's touch in the ambience. For this reason, brands such as Versace are investing heavily in 'lifestyle philosophy'. The strategy ranges from the

opening of a hotel in Australia, to the latest made-to-measure concepts to decorate your private jet. But, moving back to interior design, let us take you to a noble palace in the fashion district of Milan, Via del Gesù.

## VERSACE HOME

Here, you will

discover that the combining of opposites is the winning formula of Versace Home, which takes inspiration from neoclassical, baroque and ultra-modern styles to create a flow of unexpected harmonies. The essence of the Versace style runs through a series of strong, captivating designs, which uniquely combine the appeal of precious materials with a strong flavour of vibrant colours and bold ideas. The collection takes in every room of the home,

offering a wide selection of bed linen, bath towels, table cloths, furniture, lamps and accessories. There are two parallel and yet contrasting moods, classic and modern, offering a variety of sophisticated hints and inspirations for contemporary chic. Warm wood tones, golden lacquers, soft lines and clean graphics mix with baroque volutes, gold, silver and stunning velvets and silks.

If Italian style is not enough for you, why not enter the universe of **Ralph Lauren Home**. Two new collections are ready – **La plage coll** captures the tranquil elegance of the seaside with an artful mix of chic and rustic elements and nautical shades of white and blue. On the other hand, the Grand Hotel collection is more glamorous and uses a sophisticated palette of navy, cream and white with touches of gold and references to evening wear. In other words, a summer holiday in an elegant Riviera suite, with the expert touch of Ralph. What more could you want? ☺

## Polo Ralph Lauren

Boulevard de Waterloo, 52  
1000 Brussels  
T. +32 (0)2 511 82 08  
[www.ralphlauren.com](http://www.ralphlauren.com)

## Versace

Boulevard de Waterloo, 63-64  
1000 Brussels  
T. +32 (0)2 511 85 59  
[www.versace.it](http://www.versace.it)



1.



2.



# 'Chic à la française'

WRITER: DAVID MC GOWAN

As a brand, Comptoirs des Cotonniers defines itself in two words – close and natural. *Together* talks to Creative Director Brigitte Comazzi.

**L**aunched in 1995, the brand has developed on the international scene since 2004 with outlets now in Europe, Asia and the US. Today, Comptoirs des Cotonniers has more than 300 boutiques worldwide.

*Together* went backstage to discover the keys to the success of this inspiring brand, and talked to Creative Director Brigitte Comazzi, who heads a 20-strong team of stylists.

## INTERVIEW EXPRESS

**'WE DON'T JUST CREATE FOR THE SAKE OF CREATING, WE CREATE TO FIT REAL WOMEN, REAL PEOPLE'**

**Together:** So, how did you join the team of Comptoirs des Cotonniers?

**BC:** Around five years ago, I had my own clothes collection, and it was thanks to this I was head-hunted to join the team.

**What are the secrets of the brand's success?**

*Being close to our customers. We don't just create for the sake of creating, we create to*

*fit real women, real people. When we design our clothes, we imagine our clients wearing them, we imagine ourselves wearing them. We create for all women, for everyday wear, not just for special events. What is important, is to create a wardrobe that's varied enough for our clients to be able to wear exactly what they want, where they can combine our clothes as they please. I think it's bad to impose a style – our clients are not fashion victims, some adore fashion while others need to be guided just a little, without making them look like a fashion magazine advert. They just want to have clothes that they feel beautiful in, so, we offer them the possibility of lots of different looks, thanks to the many combinations that we make possible.*

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

Comptoirs des Cotonniers has also taken the recent initiative to recruit mothers and daughters to strut their catwalks, holding a competition in their shops worldwide to find the lucky would-be models. *Together* captured some of the magic moments behind the scenes – check it out online at [www.together-magazine.eu/videos.shtml](http://www.together-magazine.eu/videos.shtml) 



# Lingerie that's lingered

WRITER: MICHAEL GAIQ

*Together* talks with Catherine Pérèle, CEO of one of the finest lingerie companies worldwide, which is named after her mother Simone Pérèle. In short, a woman who makes women feel beautiful.

**‘WOMEN NOW ARE PROUD OF THEIR BODIES. THEY’RE NOT AFRAID TO SHOW OFF, BUT AT THE SAME TIME THEY WANT TO REMAIN ELEGANT’**

In the 1940s, the French entrepreneuse Simone Pérèle developed a business idea – 70 years on, that idea has evolved from a one-store operation into one of the lingerie industry's cornerstones. With stores in more than 80 countries across three continents, you'd be forgiven for considering Simone Pérèle as being a large company. However, according to Catherine Pérèle: "It's the little things that make us successful. We're about attention to detail and making sure everything is just right."

## BORN INTO LINGERIE

Pérèle says she developed her passion for the profession at a young age. After all, her mother is the company's founder.

"My mother had the idea that a bra could be something more than just body support," Pérèle explains. "At the time, that was quite a revolutionary thing." Seventy years ago, when her mother founded the marque, bras and underwear were not the fashion statement that they have become today – women had very little choice when it came to undergarments. But Simone Pérèle, a corset-maker living in Paris, knew that underwear didn't have to be so generic.

Following the philosophy that women's bodies needed to be liberated in order to reveal their natural beauty, she began creating sophisticated, high-quality lingerie, which was such a hit that she soon began selling her products to some of the finest boutiques in Paris.

While styles and trends have changed over the years, Simone Pérèle has remained committed to providing the highest quality products on the market. Now under the leadership of Simone's children, Catherine and Philippe, Simone Pérèle remains synonymous with elegance and quality.



## INTERVIEW EXPRESS

**Together:** What sets your company apart from your competitors?

**CP:** *There is a difference between being sexy and elegant. A customer of Simone Pérèle values sophistication more than being flashy. We've been doing this for a long time and we pride ourselves on making things to the highest standards. Women now are proud of their bodies. They're not afraid to show off, but at the same time they want to remain elegant... I think they appreciate the quality in everything that we create.*

**How important is it to you to continue your mother's vision within the company?**

*Some of the strongest memories I have from my childhood are being around the couture houses with my mother. I was around this business from a very young age. It's not necessarily the lingerie I remember most but the understanding of value and excellence. She taught me at a young age that those*

*two qualities are important in everything you do, whether that is how you dress or how you run a business.*

**What has been your biggest challenge?**

*There are a lot of competitors in this business. We see fads that come and go but we always try to stay true to who we are. Sometimes it is easy to get caught up in what is considered trendy. But we know that if we just keep doing what we do best, we will continue to be successful.*

**What are the secrets of your success?**

*As a brand we really pride ourselves in our attention to detail. I would say that the technical side of our products is a huge key to our success. Not every bra or piece of lingerie is made in the same way. There are at least 20 to 25 different parts and as many suppliers involved in each bra. And it takes us months to develop a new one. We really care about the products we make. 🇫🇷*

[www.simone-perele.com](http://www.simone-perele.com)



# Is your 'GPS' switched on?

WRITER: NATASHA ABUDARHAM

Our personal development specialist offers more advice on how to make your life extraordinary.



**C**an you imagine leaving the house every day without knowing where you're going? It's likely that you'd wander around aimlessly, until you came across something to your liking. It sounds absurd, doesn't it? Unfortunately, there are many people who do just that, without even realizing it. So, it's time to switch your 'personal GPS' on.

Achieving extraordinary status is all about setting goals for the future and taking steps towards achievement. Setting goals is a critical

part of life. Without them, feelings of failure, disillusionment and unhappiness will be forever present.

## HIGHER RESOLUTIONS

Many people evaluate their life at the end of the year and have an irresistible urge to make life changes on 1st January. As the New Year arrives, we have fresh ideas and bags of excitement but, by the time February rolls around, we've fallen back into our old ways and our resolutions seem like a distant memory.

This method of changing old habits and setting new patterns is a sure-fire way to fail, because we have high expectations, we have to give things up and thus we become judgmental about our failures from previous years. On top of that, there is the natural fear and resistance to change that we all experience at some point in our lives. Combine these factors, and you've already set negative emotions in place which become stumbling blocks for our will-power and good intentions. No wonder the new

year stops being exciting before we reach February.

## WHY NOT RECOGNIZE YOUR OWN INSTINCTIVE GOAL-ACHIEVING ABILITY?

We already set mini-goals every day, when we brush our teeth, prepare our food, go to work, yet often these go unrecognized because they are things that we

naturally do without question. However, this is in itself a great achievement, so why not recognize your own instinctive goal-achieving ability?

Setting goals should be a priority in everyone's life who wants to achieve more than merely 'ordinary'. Luckily, I have some top tips to help you on your way.

## REACHING GOALS

**1.** Begin by scheduling some time to write down your goals. Take a look at the bigger picture, and daydream about how you want your life to look in five years, three years, one year and 90 days. Examine every area of your life, such as financial, relationships, career, health, fun and recreation and personal growth.

**2.** For any goal to be achieved, it needs to be established within the subconscious mind, otherwise you'll be relying on willpower alone. I don't know about you, but the older I get, the less my willpower seems to want to co-operate! Get the

subconscious involved by visualizing your goals as often as you can with feeling, meaning and value. Ask yourself questions such as: 'What's my why, why do I want to achieve these goals?', 'How would I feel on an emotional level when I've got to where I want to be?' If you've tried before and not succeeded, ask yourself: 'Why has this failed in previous years, what can I do different this time around?'

**3.** Write down the benefits you'll experience when you achieve your goal and the benefits for others. The more benefits there are, the more reasons you have to achieve them.

**4.** Break your goals down into bite-size, easy-to-achieve chunks. Commit to doing something small every day that contributes to your end goal. These small steps will actually get you to your destination a lot quicker than trying to do it all in one swoop. The more you try to achieve in one go, the bigger the task facing you, and we all know that being overwhelmed can stop us in our tracks and result in stagnation.

**5.** Find yourself an accountability partner, a mentor, support group or an expert, so you have people to help guide you through your growth. Most of all, have patience. Rome wasn't built in a day, nor was it built by one person.

So there you have it – turn your GPS back on, have a destination in mind and, before you know it, you'll have reached it before you ever thought possible.

*Go Get It! specialist Natasha Abudarham lives in Brussels and provides private courses, group workshops and is a motivational speaker. She is also the host of Europe's Secret to Success internet radio show every Monday at 17h. For more information, go to [www.natashaabudarham.com](http://www.natashaabudarham.com)* 

# Mums get fit at Aspria

WRITER: CHARLOTTE DE KESEL

The Aspria Club experts have launched 'Fit Mums', a pre- and post-natal exercise programme specifically designed to meet new mothers' exercise needs. You will be looking and feeling great in no time.

**D**eveloped and led by pregnancy and exercise experts, the Fit Mums programme is designed to help you stay safely active during your pregnancy, and then target those 'mummy muscles' that may have become weak after birth. What's more, it's a fun and sociable way to exercise with like-minded people and you can even bring your baby to the class.

The Fit Mums programme is free for members of Aspria Club and is also open to non-members. Each session lasts two hours and includes one class as well as time to spend in the club. It can also include two hours in the crèche for your baby. There is no need to book, but if you would like further information, call +32 (0)2 508 08 00.

## DURING PREGNANCY

**Wednesdays, 10h45: Pre-Natal Yoga class:** Agatha, the pregnancy expert, will demonstrate moves to tone and strengthen your muscles to support your body during labour and birth.

**Sundays, 17.30-18.15: Aqua Pregnancy class:** Feel light while still keeping fit.

**The wonderful pregnancy massages of Sylvie Bianchi:** Sylvie is an expert in pre-natal massage who can re-energize and rebalance you. From 80€ for members,

90€ for non-members.

**Eat healthily:** Order your box of organic fruit and vegetables on the internet. It will be delivered every Tuesday afternoon and, from March, deliveries will be increased to four times a week. From 13€ for a 'one week for two' box. [www.reason2.be](http://www.reason2.be)

## AFTER THE BIRTH

**Tuesdays, 11h:** Post-pregnancy reconditioning class. Natalie Skinner, the post-pregnancy exercise expert, incorporates Pilates and conditioning-based exercises to bring your body back into shape. Your baby is welcome in his or her carrier or, alternatively, Melba would be delighted to look after your little one in the crèche (from three months onwards). Free for members, 25€ for non-members.

**Fridays, 10h30:** Corrective exercise stroller class: Not just a stroller class, but corrective exercise and conditioning, allowing mother and baby to exercise together. When the weather is good, the class takes place in the park next to Aspria. Free for members, 25€ for non-members.

## IN THE SPA

As a complement to your regular training regime, **endermology for body and face** can help you rediscover your figure by flushing away toxins and firming the skin. From 30€ for members and 35€ for non-members.



**Baby massage by Sylvie Bianchi:** A moment of pure pleasure for you and your baby. Sylvie will teach you how to repeat the same movements at home. Ideal for babies suffering from intestinal problems or who have trouble sleeping. From 50€ for 30 minutes for members, 60€ for non-members.

## IN THE FITNESS ROOM

**Personalized post-natal programmes or personal training with a coach.** From 55€ per hour.

**Fitness and well-being seminars:** Organized throughout the year. Free for members, 25€ for non-members.

The **aqua classes** are perfect for new mums – they are low impact, fun and give you a real list.

## ASPRIA'S ADDED EXTRAS

Aspria's restaurant and lounge area is the perfect place to relax and socialize with other new mums after the classes. Discover Aspria's **'Kids Movement' classes**. The fitness and crèche managers will bring out the best in your child through hand-eye coordination, using colours and imagination. Mondays from 11-11h45. Cost: 3€ per hour.

The **pool** is open for members' children on Wednesday afternoons and at weekends. And don't forget the **organic boxes** to help your baby eat well too. 🌱

## Aspria Club

*Pool – Sauna – Steam Room – Spa: treatments and massages – More than 140 group classes every week – The best instructors – State-of-the-art fitness equipment – Innovative FUNctional Training Studio – Spinning – Fit Mums ante- and post-natal programme – Crèche*



## Aspria

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

## Royal La Rasante

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# SCENTS- SATIONAL

A round-up of some the finest fragrances available.

## 1. ORIENS VAN CLEEF & ARPELS EAU DE PARFUM FOR WOMEN

This new fragrance from Van Cleef & Arpels is floral and is as opulent and elegant as its bottle suggests.

RRP: 30ml – 42€, 50ml – 68€, 100ml – 100€

## 2. ARMANI IDOLE D'ARMANI EAU DE PARFUM FOR WOMEN

An opulent floral fragrance with fruity top notes and oriental flowers.

RRP: 50ml – 42€

## 3. SHISEIDO ZEN PURPLE EAU DE PARFUM LIMITED EDITION

This fragrance reflects the essence of summer night while wrapping you with beautiful scents of exotic flowers on a base composed of sensual musk, cedar and warm amber.

RRP: 50ml – 51€

## 4. VOYAGE D'HERMES EAU DE TOILETTE

This fragrance launched in April 2010 is radiant and soft. It is a woody, fresh, musky scent. One to share, for both men and women.

RRP: 35ml – 62.50€

## 5. HUGO BOSS EAU DE TOILETTE FOR MEN

An original masculine fragrance with top notes of grapefruit, with cedar wood and geranium.

RRP: 100 ml – 49€, 150ml – 65€.

## 6. AZZARO CHROME SPORT EAU DE TOILETTE FOR MEN

A stimulating blend of citrus and spicy notes collide with warm, woody notes creating a pure, fresh and energizing sensation.

RRP: 50ml – 50€

## 7. SHISEIDO ZEN AFTER-SHAVE LOTION FOR MEN

With a refreshing cooling effect, this after-shave lotion helps prevent razor burn and leaves your skin feeling smooth and fit for maximum comfort. Empowered with the scent of ZEN for MEN, skin appears toned and vibrant.

RRP: 50ml – 58€

## 8. BURBERRY SPORT EAU DE TOILETTE FOR MEN

A citrus, woody fragrance that's guaranteed to lift the spirits.

RRP: 30ml – 37€, 50ml – 50€, 75ml – 65€

## 9. BURBERRY SPORT EAU DE TOILETTE FOR WOMEN

A floral fragrance with a zesty, fresh, feminine top note.

RRP: 30ml – 37€, 50ml – 50€, 75ml – 65€

– With thanks to **Yvan Barbera** for photos and fragrances arrangement –



# Small 'console'-ation

WRITER: COLIN MOORS



**Together's expert takes a look at two more 'electric dreams'.**

I'm not so sure what else the Nintendo DSi XL really brings to the party. If I may stay with the party analogy, bigger cake is better cake but we all know that this doesn't necessarily hold true in the world of hand-held consoles or electronics in general. Nintendo, of course, is to blame for the fact that for many years, any hand-held console was referred to as a 'Gameboy', so strong is their brand. Even today, the Nintendo

handhelds outsell the Sony PSP (in my opinion, a much cooler portable) by more than two to one.

## HANDS ON

Having listened to its public, Nintendo has brought out a version of the top-selling DS for people who don't possess the fingers and hands of a 12-year-old. What they don't seem to have bothered with, however, is to make it in any way attractive to anyone over 12. Sure, my stubby fingers fit the XL much better, and I found the device to have a good quality feel to it. It doesn't have a lot of 'give', which is a good thing, as these LCD screens can crack even if you only look at them in an odd way. Solidity of build is definitely a plus. The specifications – for those who are wondering – boost it to a full 93 per cent bigger in screen size than the old model. Two 2.4-inch LCD units, a 133 MHz processor, Lithium-Ion battery with an alleged 15-17 hours average playing time. In addition, it has 16MB of RAM and 256MB of built-in flash memory.

The downsides of this console don't only run to the fat-fingered older gamers (of which your reviewer is one). The unit hosts two 0.3 Megapixel (MP) cameras for a start. 0.3 MP? In the days when even the cheapest mobile phone comes with 2.0 MP as standard, they could surely have made a better effort than this. There are new, bigger screens – twice the size of the original DS, so obviously that means twice the pixels, twice the resolution, doesn't it? No, it doesn't. Anyone who has ever sat too close to the TV will tell you what happens if you enlarge the picture without upgrading the resolution. Messy.

## RECOGNITION WHERE IT'S DUE

The paltry 256MB of memory on board will not last you long, I'll venture. Yes, it can be expanded to 32GB by fitting an SD card, but that's another expense – a small one, but it's still your money. You may also want to download some games or applications from the online service Nintendo provides (DSi Shop). You may *want* to, but unless you're using the WEP encryption method on your Wi-Fi, you're going to be digging around for some time to find where to register your key for other, more secure, ways of connecting. That doesn't sound like a company that wants my business.

There is a small upside. I found the speech recognition to be very well balanced, trying a range of voice strength and distance from the unit. The handwriting recognition was nothing short of superb. My family thinks I should have been a doctor, my writing is so bad. I found it hard to fool Nintendo though. Top marks. All in all, this could have been so much better without spending anything in R&D. More internal memory, better default Wi-Fi connectivity, a camera you could use in real life and better resolution. As I mentioned at the outset, Nintendo listened to its public, but at certain points they must have had their fingers in their ears singing: "La-la-la, I can't hear you".



# iWhat?

## GOT A MINUTE?

Oh, I get it. The Vuzix iWear is a pair of sunglasses (iWear – eyewear, oh, how I laughed). Aside from the quite dubious name, it's the sort of thing I'd have wanted as a kid. OK, it's the sort of thing I want now. Looking very much like an ordinary pair of wraparound shades, these glasses not only come with built-in stereo speakers, so you can look cool as you listen to whatever the hell is cool these days, but also video. Yes – that's right, video. 2D or 3D, your choice. Technology magically

makes movies from your mobile device appear on the inside of the glasses. You could stand in the middle of a conference on emerging technologies in the food processing sector while really watching two hours of Tex Avery cartoons. I probably gave away too much about myself there, but you get the idea. The makers claim a battery life of around six hours, so you won't have to listen to the sardine-can labelling seminar at all.

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



# ‘Peaches and cream’

WRITER: KIMBERLEY LOVATO

Our authority on seduction moves into the olfactory arena.

**I**n the previous *Together*, I talked about the sensory nature of seduction; making it about the sensual experience rather than the sex itself, be it with a look; a touch; a soft kiss on a bare shoulder. But in the art of love and seduction, there is one sense that can't be underestimated, and that's the power of scent.

## ATTRACTIVE AROMAS

It has been said that 75 per cent of what we perceive as taste actually comes from our sense of smell. And we've all experienced the power of a specific scent to return us to an exact moment in time that had been long ago boxed up in the attic of our memory. Perhaps it's the whiff of a certain perfume that transports you instantaneously to your mother's room, watching her get ready for a night out with your father. Or maybe the smell of warm bread reminds you of Christmas at your grandmother's house?

I know the smell of jasmine and orange

blossoms drops me back in my childhood in California in an instant. Even estate agents capitalize on the power of scent, specifically warm scents, such as that of freshly baked cookies, coffee or cinnamon to persuade prospective buyers to feel 'at home'. Certain scents, for example vanilla, have even been linked to promoting thoughts of sex, so, if there is a run on vanilla candles after this article publishes, you'll know why! Whatever the scenario, scent is compelling, and nowhere more so than when it comes to attracting the opposite sex.

## SMELLS LIKE TEEN SPIRIT?


In my early 20s, I liked a boy. He was attractive and smart, fun to be with and an imaginative date planner. He opened doors for me and never ever let me pay for my own dinner. "Well if you write it all down, he looks good on paper," a friend joked after I gushed one night. It would turn out, however, that all this man's 'pros' would be commandeered by one 'con', namely his smell. To be clear, he was always clean and wore nice cologne but up close, behind the mask of perfume, was the smell of his 'essence' to which I had such a negative reaction that I nearly gagged (not a good plan when a man wants to kiss you). I struggled with this for months, but in the end, I just couldn't get past it. I couldn't explain it.

## FRAGRANCES FLOURISH

Then I read about pheromones – these are natural chemicals that animals, including human beings, release to attract the opposite sex. They cannot be identified, but can register a response, negative or positive. This discovery has blossomed into a booming industry centred on products containing pheromones, and people are buying in. The global cosmetics, toiletries and fragrance industry is estimated to be worth roughly 6.8€ billion. But scent as a seduction tool is nothing new. Men and women, throughout history, have

manipulated plants and herbs to produce scents to lure the opposite sex and Indian, Chinese, and other cultures still use scents to evoke sexual and spiritual responses.

With all this in mind, you might be overwhelmed at the thought of choosing the right scent for your chase. But don't be. I think the bottom line is we can't really control or explain why we are or are not attracted to someone. It's the alchemy of the smell of the person, mixed with your chemistries, spiced with a few invisible pheromones, and maybe a dash of distant memory, that produces the magnetism. There is no rhyme, reason, nor recipe.

I eventually met a man who told me I smelled of peaches and cream and reminded him of summer. I'm not sure why, since I don't bathe in peaches and cream-scented anything, but that's how I smelled to him. We are still married. Ah, the power of scent. 

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

**CERTAIN SCENTS, FOR EXAMPLE VANILLA, HAVE EVEN BEEN LINKED TO PROMOTING THOUGHTS OF SEX, SO, IF THERE IS A RUN ON VANILLA CANDLES AFTER THIS ARTICLE PUBLISHES, YOU'LL KNOW WHY!**



# Edouard VII: Fit for a king

WRITER: MICHAEL GAIQ

When you're planning your next stay in 'The City of Light' and you are looking for the perfect blend of luxury, location and service, there is really only one choice: Hôtel Edouard VII.

A superior four-star traditional French hotel situated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> arrondissement of Paris, close to the Louvre, **Edouard VII** has been renovated to provide a high quality of service and accommodation.

## EDWARD'S CHOICE

Constructed in 1877, this Haussman style hotel was the favourite of England's King Edward VII – when he was the Prince of Wales, Edward often stayed in the hotel and it is was thus named in his honour. One step inside, and it is easy to see why the king was such a frequent visitor.

Marina Bessé took on the challenge of redesigning the hotel in 2009, and

*Together's* publisher David Mc Gowan met Marina to find out more. So, how did she begin to redecorate the whole hotel? "Well, first I tried to imagine Edward VII's character, through writings, photographs and archives. Also his life, his personality, his passionate encounters, his loves, his favourite places. Edward

*VII was a man who liked women, so we decided to name the suites after the women that were close to him.*

*"I tried to capture emotions, interpret them and translate them into designs,*

*materials and colours, to play with different periods so the past and the present can come together, and then bring together fabrics, materials, colours and details. I brought old styles up to date and imagined the rest of the story.*

*"Clothing was very prominent and important in the days of Edward VII, and this has been reflected in the redecoration. The walls can be read like coats or jackets; floors like dresses or trousers; the armchairs, sofas and tables like jewellery and fashion accessories, and the ceilings like hats."*

Providing all the amenities of a larger hotel, this 70-room sanctuary, located in the heart of Paris, also offers guests the very best service.

Once inside Hôtel Edouard VII, enjoy a meal in their restaurant or unwind in their comfortable bar. With its dark wood and stained glass windows brilliantly displaying the bar's range of drinks, this is the perfect spot to meet friends or clients. The bar will serve you anything from coffee to their very own Edouard VII cocktails.

Surrounded by the luxuries of the Edouard VII, it would be understandable if you never wanted to leave the hotel. However, the attractions of Paris are bound to pull you outside – and you won't have to go far to enjoy them.



The Edouard VII is conveniently located between the Garnier Opera House and the Louvre Museum. It is the only hotel that is located on the Avenue de l'Opéra. It is also just a short walk from the Champs Élysées, the Palais Royale, and some of Paris's finest shopping areas. More than 130 years ago, King Edward VII made this hotel his home away from home. After one night's stay, you will want to do the same. 📍

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Our video wizard Armand Richelet-Kleinberg has visited the Edouard VII. Check out his investigation online at [www.together-magazine.eu/videos.shtml](http://www.together-magazine.eu/videos.shtml)





EVENT AND PARTY YACHT  
*Cannes Film Festival*  
— FROM —  
THE 12<sup>TH</sup> TO THE 23<sup>RD</sup> OF MAY

Experience unforgettable moments on board of the VIP BELGIUM Yacht during the Cannes Film Festival.

This floating club will host the most prestigious events of the Festival.

Many celebrities, international DJ's and media will be on board, come and join us !

  
VIP BELGIUM



**Jean Claude Van Damme**

will be the patron of the concept and will set up his press and sales office on board of the yacht during the Festival, from 10am to 6pm.

The VIP BELGIUM EVENT AND PARTY YACHT is the "Place to be" during the Film Festival.

For further information or bookings, please visit [www.vipbelgium.be](http://www.vipbelgium.be)  
or call 0032/486.525.580





# Morocco: More, more, more!

WRITER: FEDERICO GRANDESSO

Our writer enjoys the high life in 'The Western Kingdom'.

Arriving smoothly from Casablanca, thanks to the brand new motorway, you cannot imagine the revolution that took place with the opening of the **Magazan Beach Resort** in El Jadida. If you arrive by night, a jungle of lights will welcome you at the main entrance, and, arriving at reception, you are immediately aware of the mixture between glorious Moroccan architectural tradition and contemporary design.

## THE OPENING

But let's go back to the opening. The resort was inaugurated on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2009, with a show for 3,000 invited guests costing some 12.5 million MAD (dirham). The

250-hectare beach-front resort was graced by 50 El Jadida horses in full tbourida costume and more than 250 local musicians, including trumpeters and drummers in full traditional dress. The rose, Morocco's famed signature flower, was showcased in gardens with more than 100,000 fresh red, white and pink blooms and three-metre sculptures, each covered with more than 1,000 flowers. But a glamorous opening is never truly a success without an impressive list of VIP guests from all over the world, and here too Magazan Beach Resort did not disappoint with **Naomi Campbell, Naomi Watts, Lindsay Lohan, Liev Schreiber, Jean- Michel Jarre** and **Clotilde Courau** among the invited dignitaries.

## DREAMS COME TRUE

It's a 500-room resort, which itself give you an idea of the scale that we are talking about here, and any visit is best begun with a gastronomic tour of the eight restaurants available. If you have any doubt, Belgian Catering Executive Director **Bart Callens** will point you in the right direction for a perfect *dégustation*.

Among the choices is the Mediterranean restaurant **Olives**, which is located at the heart of the resort overlooking the landscaped gardens and pool, and serves a wide range of Italian and Mediterranean cuisine. Or, if you prefer fruits of the sea, **Sel de Mer** offers fresh fish specialties grilled on the barbeque and Spanish specialties such as mouthwatering tapas, traditional gazpacho and paellas. And, as you are in Morocco, you have to sample the local flavours – **Morjana** offers tajines, seafood pastilles, kebabs and vegetarian couscous, served alongside delicious pastries.







After a good meal, you need to relax and prepare for an exciting night out? The place to go is the Mazagan ESPA – located in the resort's palm and orange trees, the spa is a haven dedicated to relaxation of body and mind, and features 12 treatment rooms overlooking the ocean, including two couples' rooms and an additional luxury VIP two-person suite. A wide range of ESPA facial and body treatments are on offer and an authentic Moroccan hammam is also available. Fitness fans can work out in the fully equipped gym, attend a daily pilates or yoga class, or try out some of the watersports offered which include surfing, windsurfing, fishing and jet-skiing. If you've not had enough sport, you should try out the pearl of the resort, its fantastic 18-hole, par 72 golf course designed by Gary Player, which stretches along the beach and sand dunes at the ocean's edge.

### BUY A PIECE OF PARADISE

So, you're relaxed and ready for a glittering night at the casino? Open 24 hours a day,

with more than 400 slot machines and 50 gaming tables (including roulette, Blackjack, Punto Banco and Poker) it's the biggest in Morocco and the only one in a 200-kilometre radius. After your flutter, dance until the early hours in the Sanctuary Nightclub designed by New York architect Jeffrey Beers, which features numerous bars and lounge areas and can host up to 1,000 guests.

But Mazagan is not only about holidays – during February, the first Contemporary Art Encounter took place in Azemmour and El Jadida, where the general public had the opportunity to meet with 15 artists and to discover their work exhibited in 20 prime locations.

Inside the resort, there will soon be the possibility of investing in a private villa, with 67 being built close to the golf course, with unrestricted views of the green and the ocean. The villas will be ready to buy from September 2010, costing from 850,000€ to 2€ million. So, will you go, and will you stay? You decide. ☺

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



# Really do not be too hard on other airports.



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#### **FACT: IRISH CASTLES UP FOR GRABS**

Fancy *really* making your home your castle? Well, Ireland has many to choose from at the moment – though how likely you are to become the next owner is still dependent, naturally, on you having readies at the ready. At the pricier end of the scale, why not check out the Gothic-style Glengariff Castle estate in Bantry Bay, Co Cork? It's on sale at 8€ million, a bargain compared with its original asking price of 15€ million, and the late 18<sup>th</sup> century gem, built in the 1790s by Colonel Simon White, brother of the first Earl of Bantry comes complete with tax breaks and planning permission to turn the castle into a 94-bedroom hotel with a conference centre and build 18 apartments. A little too pricy? Well, more affordable is the restored 15th century Strongford Castle built by the de Burgos in Craughwell, Co Galway, which has been on the market for around a year, and has been slashed to a mere 650,000€. Mind you, it does only have three bedrooms. For more information on the above 'keeps', and many others, check out the selling agent Helen Cassidy Auctioneers' website at [www.premierpropertiesireland.com](http://www.premierpropertiesireland.com)

#### **FIGURE: 84,760,130€ (75£ million)**

That's how much the most expensive 'castle' in Europe, namely Updown Court, in Windlesham, England, would set you back. The very best of luck with getting a mortgage.

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# REPORTAGE

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# A Liberal dilemma?

WRITER: JOHN SHERIDAN

With a hung parliament looking an increasingly likely prospect for the UK ahead of the 'awkward' member state's imminent general election, an investigation by *Together* into the potential for the Liberal Democrats has revealed interesting disparities within the party.

According to Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe MEP Andrew Duff, one of his party's demands to enter a UK coalition government 'would be to stop arch-Europhobe William Hague (pictured) becoming Foreign Secretary'.

Might the answer to the UK's refusal to integrate into the EU to the same degree as other member states lie in a hung parliament? Since its entry into the EEC in 1973, Britain has been tagged alongside Denmark as an 'awkward member'. Successive Conservative and Labour governments have entered the European political process with suspicions concerning the preservation of the UK's 'sovereignty', which was actually never in peril, as the Treaty of Rome and all subsequent treaties assured national governments the final say on any policy.

The EU is formed via international treaties, and its institutions are charged with implementing the various agreements – national governments have the right to comply or decline. The EU is not a federal government organization, trying to absolve countries of their statehood, but relies rather on individual nations to enforce its policies, as it has no coercive powers of its own.

The most powerful voice for integration into Europe has been the Liberal Democrats – in the event of a hung parliament in the UK, which appears to be a likely result of the forthcoming UK general election, they will almost certainly hold the balance of power, and herein lies an opportunity, perhaps, to finally cast aside the 'awkward member' label, if indeed the party has the strength and willingness to make pro-European decisions.

Contrary to popular belief among Britain's citizens, the UK needs the EU more than the Union needs the UK, with Chancellor Alastair Darling hinting at this during his Budget speech (even though it was delivered in a Eurosceptic fashion, demanding that Europe to follow his proposals and not vice-versa) with his comments that some 60 per cent of UK trade was with the EU. But only 8.7 per cent of Union trade is undertaken with Britain – historically, the UK joined begrudgingly, finally accepting that it would no longer be a world power following

decolonization, with that distinction reserved for new superpowers the USA and Russia, post World War Two. Britain saw that its place in the economic world would be strengthened by co-operation with its near neighbours, although it took Charles De Gaulle (who vetoed British entry on a number of occasions) departing from French politics for the UK to be finally allowed membership.

Britain is in fact better protected than some of its neighbours, with its status as a 'Dualist' society, in which an act of parliament is needed for changes in EU law to become changes in national law, unlike 'Monist' societies, such as the Netherlands, where changes in EU law automatically become national law.

In fact, Britain's sovereignty is in far more danger from the USA than the EU if the Chilcot Inquiry is to be believed – for example, did Tony Blair lie to UK citizens and parliament at the behest of the American president? Another accusation levelled at the EU is its cost to the British taxpayer but, as it is calculated as a percentage of the country's percentage of the Union's GDP, where is the conflict? In today's neo-liberalist market economy, after all, you get what you pay for.

And so to the opportunity that awaits the Liberal Democrats – should they hold sway over the composition of the next UK government, their challenge will not only be convincing their partners in government of the advantages of closer integration with Europe, but changing the mind-set of the masses. For decades, Britain has been drip-fed less-than-positive reports concerning the relationship it had with Europe.

Apocryphally, former prime minister Margaret Thatcher had two speeches ready for the media, dependent on how any negotiation with Europe turned out – if positive, she took credit for what she wrestled away from the hands of Europe, if negative she described the outcome in terms of what Europe had 'foisted' on Britain.

Andrew Duff: 'EU relations would have to be a key bargaining chip with any coalition partner.'



*Together* made concerted efforts to get answers to the following questions from several Liberal Democrats representatives:

1. How important would European relations be in any discussion between your party and either the Conservatives or Labour?
2. Would you see it as an opportunity to change the mind-set of the British people, who are used to hearing negative reports about the relationship between Britain and Europe?
3. Do you believe it could be the greatest opportunity for the Liberal Democrats to gain parity with Labour and the Conservatives if the above objective was met, if indeed that is one of your party's goals?

Eventually, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) MEP Andrew Duff, who is the Lib Dems' constitutional affairs spokesman, told *Together*: "EU relations would have to be a key bargaining chip with any coalition partner. Indeed, one of the main goals of the Lib Dems in or near to government would be to overhaul Britain's European policy. This can't be accomplished at once or in a hurry, but we would need to extract a decision to start on the process.

"As far as the Tories are concerned, I am sure that one of our demands to enter a coalition government would be to stop arch-Europhobe William Hague becoming Foreign Secretary."

This would seem to clarify that the Liberal Democrats' role is to convince the British people that the EU is an equal partner in the pursuit of economic growth and that, instead of hindering British progress in economic, social and security matters, it is in fact its greatest ally. If successful, the rewards could be momentous for the party, and would represent a huge step towards parity with the Conservatives and Labour.

However, a Liberal Democrats spokesperson, while declining to comment on specific questions, sought to distance the party from Mr Duff's comments: "Andrew was speaking in a personal capacity and his views do not reflect the position of the Liberal Democrats. It is up to the people to decide the result of the next election. We do not intend to engage in hypothetical discussions about possible outcomes before people have even had a chance to vote."

It is now up to Nick Clegg and arguably Britain's most trusted politician at present, the Lib Dems' treasury spokesman Vince Cable (though, to be fair, there are not too many runners in that race at present, in the light of recent MPs' expenses revelations) to first garner enough support to put themselves in a position to hold the balance of power, and then to have the courage to act on what they would have us believe are their principles. ☺

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# Home is always dear

WRITER: GRAHAM REID

Your home *should* be your castle, says our financial expert – whether you rent or buy, the main objective is to have a roof over your head at a total outlay that will prove affordable over the period during which you need to live in the property.

## IN BELGIUM THERE IS NO INTER-SPOUSE EXEMPTION FROM SUCCESSION DUTIES SO THEY ALREADY TAKE EFFECT ON THE FIRST DEATH, ALBEIT AT REDUCED RATES

### THE MARKET IS DIFFERENT

Many newly arrived British expatriates take one look at property prices in Belgium and say: "Wow, it's so cheap compared with the UK that I

must be better off buying a property rather than throwing my money away renting!" However, this may turn out to be a false assumption because taxes and notaries' fees paid at the outset will amount to somewhere between 15-18 per cent, depending on the cost of the property and in which part of Belgium it is located. Historically, growth in value has also been more sedate because the market is less influenced by interest-rate changes. So, if your job

takes you away from Belgium within a few years and you have to sell, then you may face a considerable loss.

### INHERITANCE LAWS ARE DIFFERENT

In Anglo-Saxon jurisdictions, joint-ownership means that on the death of one spouse the survivor automatically inherits the property. However, under Belgian law this is not the case unless the property is bought under a convention known as a *tontine*, which requires a specific form of legal documentation.

Belgian notaries are notoriously unwilling to spontaneously recommend buying under this regime when drawing up deeds for expatriates. The result is that you can find that you each own half a house, rather than jointly owning a whole house, and the half of the deceased spouse already passes under Belgian law to the legal heirs which, by law, must include the children. So if you have children, even by a previous marriage, you cannot just assume that your property will automatically pass in its entirety to your spouse.

Another point to bear in mind is that in Belgium there is no inter-spouse exemption from succession duties so they already take effect on the first death, albeit at reduced rates. This is so even if the same assets passing under another tax or legal system, such as the UK, would not be taxed. This can be a serious problem if the tax paid cannot be offset against other taxes.

### LEAVING BELGIUM

If you leave Belgium and decide not to sell your house it will still be subject to Belgian succession duty. However, if a deceased owner is non-resident the outstanding mortgage is no longer deductible from the value, so succession duty will be payable on the full value rather than the value net of the mortgage.

Buying through a company can be advantageous, but if you plan to finance via a mortgage, the protection that the law gives you as a borrower is far less strong. For example, you could face substantial penalties if you want to renegotiate the terms of the loan that you would not face if you had purchased as an individual.

### NOW THE GOOD NEWS

Having sounded thoroughly dismissive thus far about property purchase in Belgium, be assured that there are still some positive aspects. The quality of materials used in home building is usually high compared to many other countries and properties are generally well designed and spacious. Good properties are also available on the rental market and, because the private landlord pays very little tax on his rental income, rents are lower compared to the cost of the property than in many other European countries.

However, if you intend to emulate Henry VIII in either the number of "castles" you acquire or the number of spouses – do make sure you plan it correctly and get good advice. ☛

# Green homes: A viable alternative

WRITER: CILLIAN DONNELLY

The EU has a plan to regenerate both the economy and environment at a stroke, starting with your own home.

**E**co-architecture, along with convergent policies on energy efficiency and the push for green technologies as one of the main drivers of the EU's research, development and innovation (R&D&I), and thus economic, plan, has been on the agenda for a few years now, with the EU keen for us all to live in low-energy, sustainable housing. So far, around 20,000 low-energy houses have been built in Europe, mainly in Austria and Germany, with

other member states offering incentives for architects, builders, and of course, the public, to come on board.

## LOW-ENERGY LIVING

There is no absolute definition of low energy housing, but typically such buildings use high levels of insulation and low levels of air infiltration. Some also utilize solar and hot-water recycling technologies. In Flanders, for example, a low energy house is defined as being 40 per cent more efficient than is standard for homes, with 30 per cent for schools and offices, and a very low energy

building as 60 per cent for homes and 45 per cent for schools and offices. Coupled with eco- or green-architecture, which aims

to design buildings incorporating varied techniques to allow for minimum negative impact on the natural environment, such as water-efficient plumbing fixtures and locally obtained, environmentally-sound wood and stone, the future of European housing policy seems set.

However, in the absence of a concrete, co-ordinated EU policy, individual member states are currently pushing ahead with their own plans for low energy housing, which will hopefully lead to carbon-neutral buildings within the next decade.

In Denmark, for example, it is foreseen that all new buildings will use 75 per cent less energy than current levels by 2020. By the same time, Germany will have eradicated domestic use of fossil fuels, and France will be making not just carbon-neutral houses, but 'energy-positive' dwellings. The UK will go neutral in 2016, with Finland a year earlier. Ireland is more ambitious still, with zero-energy buildings set to be in place by 2013.



**IN THE ABSENCE OF A CONCRETE, CO-ORDINATED EU POLICY, INDIVIDUAL MEMBER STATES ARE CURRENTLY PUSHING AHEAD WITH THEIR OWN PLANS FOR LOW ENERGY HOUSING**



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## FINANCIAL MECHANISMS

While these targets (which are not legally binding, mind you) all appear well and good, money still remains an issue, with the added up-front cost of building an energy-efficient home so far having proved to be something of a barrier to market uptake. In order to combat this, several financial mechanisms have been put in place across Europe to reduce the cost of land, technical solutions or capital, including low interest-rate loans, tax reduction or carbon taxes. For instance, in France, new buildings respecting high environmental standards can be exempted from property tax for between 15 and 20 years, and in an example of what the EU institutions like to call best practise, member states are currently swapping all sorts of know-how in this area, with one such example being the Bâtiment Brussels project, launched in 2007, which aims to financially support eco-construction projects. So far, around 16 per cent of the

city's construction activity has been supported through the scheme.

If all this seems nice and attractive, you could always up sticks and settle in an ecovillage, which is an urban or rural community that aims to "integrate a supportive social environment with a low impact way of life" according to the aims of Cloughjordan Town, one such village in Ireland, but it's by no means the only one. The Global Ecovillage Network Europe (GEN-Europe) currently supports projects throughout the EU and beyond. Founded back in 1996, it currently works with various national partners in countries such as Germany, the UK, Norway, Israel and Senegal.

So, if you are thinking of a change of lifestyle, you could do a lot worse than going green with your home. You won't be alone. ☺

[www.gen-europe.org](http://www.gen-europe.org)

# Burma-bound, Together



More news of our exciting voyage for readers.

**W**edged between the sparkling waters of the Indian Ocean and the soaring peaks of the Himalayan

Mountains lies the beautiful country of Burma – a great, but still largely undiscovered destination.

*Together* is inviting our readers to join us for a week in exotic Burma, where we will stay in some of the country's finest hotels and witness its awe-inspiring beauty. Exact dates are yet to be confirmed, but the trip will take place between October and November this year, and also offers a unique humanitarian opportunity. Check out our website for more information – we've uploaded a video that will tell you all you need to know. [www.together-magazine.eu/video\\_Burmabound.shtml](http://www.together-magazine.eu/video_Burmabound.shtml)

## ITINERARY

**Day 1: Arrival in Yangon** – After arriving, spend the day visiting ancient Buddhist monuments, or just relaxing at the five-star Traders Hotel. [www.shangri-la.com](http://www.shangri-la.com)

**Day 2: The Journey Begins** – We will take a short morning flight to Bagan, and will stay at the Thiripyitsaya Hotel. [www.bagan-thiripyitsaya-sakura-hotel.com](http://www.bagan-thiripyitsaya-sakura-hotel.com)

**Day 3: Mandalay** – After a 30-minute flight to see temples, Buddhist monuments and golden pagodas in Mandalay, we'll spend the night at the Mandalay Hill Resort. [www.mandalayhillresorthotel.com](http://www.mandalayhillresorthotel.com)

**Day 4: Fit for a King** – The day starts with a quick flight to the Shan Plateau, the former capital of the Shan Kings, where we'll spend the night at the five star Inle Princess Resort. [www.inleprincessresort.com](http://www.inleprincessresort.com)

**Day 5: Relaxation** – Take in the sights near Inle Lake, or enjoy a nearby vineyard.

**Day 6: A Final Farewell** – Day six takes us back to Yangon – visit the National Museum, or check out China Town and the Tao Temple.

**Day 7: Head for Home** – Back to Brussels after an exciting week.

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## INTERESTED?

Contact our publisher, **David Mc Gowan**, [david@togethermedia.eu](mailto:david@togethermedia.eu), or call him on +32 (0)2 400 00 00. Please label your email **Burma Trip** and hurry, because spaces are limited – we will be organizing an information session soon for all interested readers, so keep an eye on our website and check our next edition for further details. ☺

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# Nights and castles

WRITER: ERIC BOSCHMAN



*Together* is delighted to welcome Belgium's most renowned sommelier, Eric Boschman, to offer his thoughts on the exceptional dining offered at two nearby châteaux.

## VA-VOOM WITH A VIEW

There is so much to admire at **Le château de Namur** – the setting is simply marvellous. From the terrace, there is an unbeatable view of Namur, and the young staff, under the stewardship of Jean-Marc Préaux (who has held the reins in the kitchen for many years) present their cuisine with bravado and professionalism. Delectable dishes are on offer,

such as the carpaccio de Saint-Jacques aux truffes, fried goose liver. Or perhaps their veal will tempt you – flavoured with hazelnut oil and finished with a light tomato and rosemary *jus*? In a setting as romantic and cosy as Le château de Namur, in good company, one always dines very well. As a bonus, for those who wish to make the experience even more of an event, there are facilities to host a banquet, a seminar or – for the really daring – a wedding!

### Le Château de Namur

Avenue de l'Ermitage, 1  
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[www.chateaudenamur.com](http://www.chateaudenamur.com)

Open 12-14h and 19-21h, with Sunday brunch from 12-15h

## THE RESTAURANT GOES BY THE WINSOME NAME OF CHEZ CLÉMENTINE, TO HONOUR THE MEMORY OF THE PRINCESS

### FIRST-CLASS DELIVERY

There are those jobs that all the boys dream of having when they are little – an astronaut, Formula 1 driver, a policeman or even a postman. And, when you arrive at Le **Château de la Poste**, you can't help but

think that the would-be post-office employees may well have been on to something all those years ago, as this château used to be a holiday home for post-office employees and their families a few decades ago. The setting dates from 1895, and was the official residence of Princess Clémentine, daughter of Belgium's good King Léopold II, for more than 40 years. Recently returned to private ownership, Le Château de la Poste now belongs to Olivia Gustot, who gave it a face-lift but preserved the setting's beautiful heart and character. There's a

very homey feel, and the restaurant goes by the winsome name of **Chez Clémentine**, to honour the memory of the princess. And, of course, there is also Chef Valentine Wouters, whose flair and imagination bursts out of dishes such as Breton farm chicken, roasted with gratin dauphinoise and cloves of garlic and served with rocket salad, or the lamb, which is braised for seven hours and served with a tomato and coconut sauce. Don't worry if you arrive *en famille* and the little 'postmen' want spaghetti hoops – it's service with a smile. ☺

### Le Château de la Poste Restaurant Chez Clémentine

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

Open 12-14h and 19-21h, with Sunday brunch from 12-15h





# Of vine times

WRITER: ALEX HEWETSON

Our much-travelled wine expert reflects on where the grape can take you.

Some of you may be lucky enough to have grown up in a house where your grandparents lived or an ancestral home, or maybe in an abode where your parents still abide. Alas, I was a nomad 'ere I was born, and as such the corner that is my home is a caravanserai of memories, garnered and gathered to make a memory fireplace that I visit when *dulce domus* calls me.

## HEAVEN SCENT

When I think of 'home', I often associate it with friends, dinner and wine. The olfactory sense is the teleport that transcends time and distance; nothing takes you right back there like a smell...good or bad. Some 14 years ago, I was in Texas, 7,000 kilometres from Brussels and, culturally, the other side of the galaxy. I was unhappy and took solace in walking my baby daughter around a nearby park one afternoon – while pushing the pram, I passed a vast mound of cedar mulch...bang! I was no longer in Houston but in London, with my nose in a glass of **Chateau Gazin 1970**, a great wine

with a wonderful cedary nose, long and powerful, sat in a vast Georgian drawing room in Kensington with a close friend on a winter's evening some 10 years before. The memory cheered me up no end, and softened the harsh edges around me.

It is almost always red wines, Madeiras and ports that evoke those lovely comforting moments, of cosy winter nights safe and sound, with a fine old bottle of Fonseca Vintage, close friends around a crackling blaze in the fireplace, the dining room table strewn with bottles and a vast array of cheeses. I remember I once managed to lay my hands on a **Leacock's 1863 Solera Malmsey**, Solera being the process of adding later vintages to a barrel of the original year, to produce mature, rich Madeira. The system has been abused but a good Solera bottle should contain around 10 per cent of the founding vintage. It just seemed the right thing to open and, though it was Monday the next day, the rich warming drink added to our mirth and helped us all to face the oncoming week and the world outside. At that moment, my small

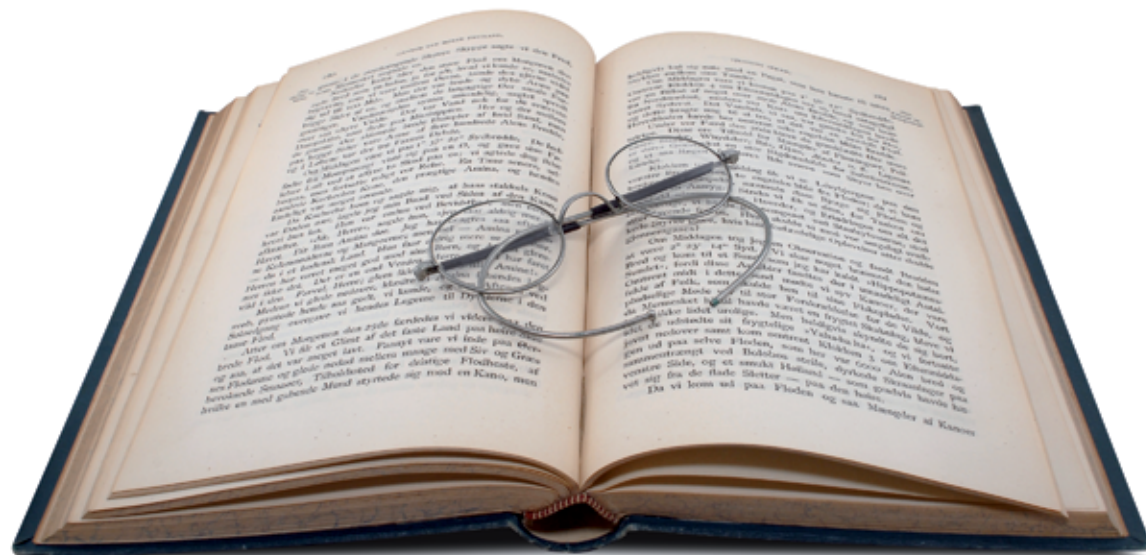
Clapham flat was indeed my home and my castle.

## TIME TO WANDER

Other libations have the opposite effect and take me back to holidays and travels. Every time I sip a Calvados I have a vision of the lovely bronzed limbs and dark hair of the young woman who served me in a bar in La Rochelle. Her smile turned my insides to water, and I needed another large 'Calva' just to calm down. Also, a fine Burgundy or Rhone will evoke in me all that is reassuring, secure and homely, and when the moment itself is gone, the memories are there to comfort you, wherever you are.

Here, at last, it is spring and I'm drinking a glass of Vinho Verde, a light refreshing white wine from Northern Portugal – a restaurant terrace in Colares beckons me, with soft Atlantic winds kissed by a warm sun. My shutters fly open after our long cold winter, the hearth is swept clean, and it is time to say goodbye to home and be a vagabond once more... ☺

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# Top times with a top team

WRITER: JAMES DREW

*Together* was recently delighted to be invited to a very special networking event, hosted in the heart of Brussels by The Top Management Club in collaboration with the British Chamber of Commerce.



1. Author Baudouin Velge with British Ambassador to Belgium Dr Rachel Aron

2. LTA Relocation's Laurence Wandel enjoys her favourite magazine

3. Together writer and photographer Federico Grandesso with Dr Aron and guest Catherine Stewart

© YVAN BARBERA

The guest list was as impressive as the venue – on 25<sup>th</sup> March, the Official Residence of the UK Permanent Representative to the EU on Rue Ducale in Brussels, kindly provided by the British Chamber of Commerce, played host to an exclusive networking evening, with the British Ambassador to Belgium Dr Rachel Aron making one of her final official appearances before stepping down and Baudouin Velge, managing director of Interel Public Relations, a British Chamber of Commerce patron, also present to discuss his recent book *The Kaupthing Affair – An Inside Story* with more than 50 top-flight guests.

Over delicious canapés and fine wines, Velge gave a fascinating taster of his insider account of the political and personal stories behind the complex rescue operation that took place to salvage the Icelandic Bank Kaupthing, and the accounts

of 20,000 Belgian savers – a member of the board of two BEL20 companies, Bekaert and Cofinimmo, and member of the Advisory Board of BT Benelux, Velge certainly knows how to keep an audience hooked, as his book also reveals. With a Pierre Marcolini chocolate tasting to top off proceedings, a delightful evening was enjoyed by all, with Dr Aron expressing her thanks both for the hospitality on offer and the support she had received during her time as Ambassador.

The Top Management Club (TMC) is a private organization, founded in June 2009 and owned by LTA Relocation, one of the leaders in the relocation industry for the expat and native communities. The networking evening was the third TMC event of its kind and LTA's Laurence Wandel, one of the superb hosts for the evening, told *Together*: "We realized that there was a need for a club that brings people closer together, and that this was particularly true for top

managers and their partners. So, we launched the club last year, to provide a relaxed setting where expat and local top managers could socialize and network with their husbands and wives – the club aims to be primarily social, rather than completely business-driven, but we still provide excellent networking opportunities."

TMC normally organize an event every two months, and the evening of 25<sup>th</sup> March also signalled an important new collaboration, namely between the networking specialists and this very magazine, which was proudly announced by Wandel – we will be keeping you posted of all future TMC/LTA events, and 'working ensemble' again soon, so watch this space. Forward, *Together!* ☺

## LTA Relocation

T. +32 (0)2 539 41 62

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[lw@ltarelocation.be](mailto:lw@ltarelocation.be)[www.ltarelocation.com](http://www.ltarelocation.com)

# Laetitia, Lauren, Los Angeles

WRITER: FEDERICO GRANDESSO

From Paris to LA, we show you where you should have been.



1. We take you back to 27<sup>th</sup> February in Paris, for the 35<sup>th</sup> Cesar Film Awards at Theatre du Chatelet, where **Laetitia Casta**, as usual, had the paparazzi and public swooning.

2. And **Ralph Lauren** also dazzled the City of Light recently with a new boutique. Lauren, unveiling his newest **Polo Ralph Lauren** store on the Boulevard Saint Germain, told the world: "I wanted to create a unique environment that captures the glamour, culture and the artistic spirit of the Paris that I have fallen in love with. Now, with this store opening, in the most romantic part of the city, I finally feel I have been able to tell my whole story in Paris." The store is home to a premier assortment of Ralph Lauren collections as well as **Ralph's** – the very first Ralph Lauren restaurant in Europe. [www.ralphlauren.com](http://www.ralphlauren.com)

3. Swiss watchmaker and jeweller Piaget, renowned for its jewellery collections and exceptional lines of

watches, has further strengthened its longstanding ties with Hollywood by sponsoring the Independent Spirit Awards. Design, video, film, music and fashion are all creative territories that Piaget explores and integrates into its collections. Thus, it was only natural that Piaget teamed up with Film Independent to celebrate the best of independent films. Singer **Mariah Carey** arrived wearing Piaget at the 25<sup>th</sup> Film Independent Spirit Awards in Los Angeles on 5<sup>th</sup> March, held at Nokia Theatre, L.A. Photo: Jordan Strauss/Getty Images.

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

4. Actress **Jodie Foster**, also at the 25<sup>th</sup> Film Independent Spirit Awards. Photo: Jordan Strauss/Getty Images.

5. Actors **Jeff Bridges** and **Andy Garcia** in the Piaget Lounge at the 25<sup>th</sup> Film Independent Spirit Awards. Photo: John Shearer/Getty Images. ☺



# Rampant chic

The new season heralds an inundation of innovative and dazzling fashion and sportswear in Brussels – *Together* marks the arrival of five new boutiques.

## 1. LIU JO

In March, Italian brand Liu Jo opened a new point of sale in Brussels, to further strengthen its Benelux presence. Offering a diverse product range, including Liu Jo, Liu Jeans, Liu Jo Accessories, Liu Jo Shoes and Liu Jo Underwear and Beachwear collections, the chic Avenue Louise boutique, authentically Italian in style, is an intimate and elegant arena that unveils the Liu Jo universe in a pleasant and relaxed way in the refined atmosphere of Brussels' most prestigious avenue.

### Liu Jo Store

Avenue Louise, 50/A  
1050 Brussels  
T. + 32 (0)2 503 67 99  
[www.liujo.com](http://www.liujo.com)



## 2. SUPERDRY STORE

The renowned UK clothing brand, as vouched for by none other than David Beckham, opens its latest Belgian store – and where better to acquire your must-have Osaka T-shirt or Brad leather jacket? Enjoy.

### Superdry Store

Sionstraat  
Kortrijk 8500  
T. + 32 (0)2 534 80 15  
[www.superdry.com](http://www.superdry.com)

## 3. PEAK PERFORMANCE GENERAL STORE

Top Swedish sports-fashion export Peak Performance has opened a new two-level 'General Store' in the heart of the city, offering a wide selection of the brand's full range of active sportswear for skiing, training and golf, as well as the latest casual collections. The fifth such store to be opened in Belgium (with the others to be found in Antwerp, Brugge, Gent and Leuven), the concept communicates authenticity as well as the trademark's Mountain Resort Brand vision, with dark wood, steel and concrete central design elements, alongside flat screen TVs showing the season's skiing and golf. The sporty place to be.

### Peak Performance General Store

Avenue Louise, 32-46A  
1050 Brussels  
T. + 32 (0)3 303 38 00  
[www.peakperformance.com](http://www.peakperformance.com)



## 4. BOUTIQUE ATELIER ELVIS POMPILIO

Creative designer extraordinaire Elvis Pompilio has opened a boutique dedicated to the fine art of hat-making in Grand Sablon – located in an exquisite mansion, both floors present Pompilio's world-renowned creations for men and women and his workshop, with all hats made there exclusively available in Brussels. For Pompilio, it's all about responding to his clientele's requests, to share the spirit of creation – judge for yourselves, but we doubt you will be disappointed.

### Boutique Atelier Elvis Pompilio

Rue Lebeau, 67  
1000 Brussels  
T. +32 (0)2 211 1188  
[www.elvispompilio.com](http://www.elvispompilio.com)



## 5. VIAGE

An entertainment complex as you've never seen before has opened its doors – an exciting new experience, unique in Europe, takes the concept of a great night out to a new level. VIAGE is the largest such complex in Europe – how fitting that it is in the epicentre of European cultural and political life.

### Viage

Boulevard Anspach, 30  
1000 Brussels  
T. +32 (0)2 300 01 00 (General Information)  
T. +32 (0)2 300 01 72 (Events and Group Reservations)  
T. +32 (0)70 443 443 (Tickets)  
[www.viage.be](http://www.viage.be)



# HOME: WHERE THE ART IS

WRITER: JAMES DREW

Fancy transforming your loft, apartment or your house into an exclusive art gallery for an evening? Private View, an audacious and dazzling new way to view art, could be right up your street.

He's not a man to rest on his laurels, is Jérôme Stéfanski. The founder of *Together*, since handing over the publisher's reins in late 2008, has been hard at work on a brand-new art exhibition concept, which he has recently launched to considerable acclaim. Working with José Soto, himself the subject of a *For Art's Sake* feature in *Together* #15 ([www.together-magazine.eu/previous.shtml](http://www.together-magazine.eu/previous.shtml)), Stéfanski's aim is to discover, promote and exhibit an exceptional talent stable, in an environment as appealing and unique as your own living space.

## A 'MADE TO MEASURE' EVENING

Whether you live in an antiquarian cottage or industrial-style apartment, Private View offers a completely 'made to measure' evening, allowing you to relax with friends and enjoy fine art at your leisure. Of course, the initiative is not only about selling good times – naturally, it's also focused on allowing artists a unique 'window to the world' on their work. Private View select the artists (painters, photographers, sculptors) according to

precise criteria – the quality and originality of the work and its sales potential. Then, the evening's hosts choose an artist from Private View's Premium and First categories, and their only further responsibilities are to ensure that their home is attractive and welcoming, and that they provide an endorsed guest list, to be approved by Private View.





## ART, LUXURY, GASTRONOMY

Then it's over to Stéfanski & Co – a full red carpet entrance, welcoming lighting, live chamber music, full delicatessen service and a champagne bar will all be provided, as well, of course, as the presentation of the art that's on display.

Clearly, an evening that mixes art, luxury and gastronomy is likely to succeed when it comes to the question of sales, and here also Private View does not disappoint – 75 per cent of the exhibited art being sold is by no means unusual. Because of

Private View's unique business model, the company can offer art at prices markedly lower than would normally be found in a traditional gallery.

For the future? Well, for 2010, Private View is aiming to organize at least ten exhibition evenings – Antwerp, Ibiza, New York City are already on the schedule, so why not *chez vous*? For art as you want it, you know who to call. 📞

### Private View

T. +32 (0)475 416 362

[www.privateview.eu](http://www.privateview.eu) - [info@privateview.eu](mailto:info@privateview.eu)



© PEOPLE ATTITUDE  
Jérôme Stéfanski (centre) with painter Christian Soto (left) and his brother, art director José Soto

# BELGIUM BURSTS WITH TALENT

Launched and sponsored by the new Audi A1, MadeByBelgians.be is an intriguing artistic endeavour in which aspiring artists of all shapes and sizes are judged by social network surfers, with the chance of winning 5,000€, 7,500€ or even 10,000€ to realize the project of their dreams.

The initiative is simplicity itself – a crowd of Belgian artists (some 60 in total) are graded according to their votes gleaned directly on

[www.madebybelgians.be](http://www.madebybelgians.be) and its associated Facebook page.

Including names as eclectic as 'Soumaya, DanceMachine' and 'JellyFish', and including art forms as diverse as DJing, urban sculpture and streetwear, madebybelgians.be is all about les Belges making themselves known to the wider artistic world.

Take, for example, Urban Golf Belgium (pictured) – a young, dynamic agency that organizes events for companies and the general public alike, and 'Urban Golf' is at the heart of the experiment, namely abstract and slightly rebellious concepts. Offering team-building, marketing and product-presentation events, Urban Golf Belgium declare that winning the first prize of 10,000€ would ensure the organization of the very first



made by  
**BELGIANS**  
sponsorisé par la nouvelle Audi A1

Brussels Urban Golf Brussels Open, with Belgian and foreign players playing across the city over a 9- or 18-hole course. Perhaps it might be wise to stay off the roads and streets on that day, what do you think?

Anyway, you know what to do – get to the website, go to the Facebook page, and make your vote known. Remember, it's all about the art! 📞

[www.madebybelgians.be](http://www.madebybelgians.be)  
[www.urban-golf.be](http://www.urban-golf.be)

# Together's 'To Do' list

WRITER: JOHN SHERIDAN

Spring's in full swing – and the Brussels cultural events calendar is really warming up too.

## ARTBRUSSELS 2010

23.04.10>26.04.10

As part of Artbrussels 2010, the 10,000€ Illy Prize, highly coveted in the art world, will be awarded to the most promising and innovative artist on display. Some 30,000 visitors are expected to attend the four-day fair, which will be held in no less than 170 galleries throughout the city. All modern art forms will be represented, from sculpture, photography and contemporary painting to video and art performances.

### Brussels Expo, Halls 1 and 3

Place de Belgique, 1  
1020 Brussels  
T. +32 (0)2 740 10 25  
[www.artbrussels.be](http://www.artbrussels.be)

## EL ÁNGEL EXTERMINADOR A ROOM FOR SPANISH CONTEMPORARY ART

29.04>20.06

This exhibition presents the work of 28 contemporary Spanish artists on the theme of 'border experiences', and is complemented by five live art performances, to provide a wonderful sample of the contemporary Spanish art scene.

### BOZAR

Rue Ravenstein, 23  
1000 Brussels  
T. +32 (0)2 507 82 00  
[www.bozar.be](http://www.bozar.be)

## EL GRECO

Runs until 09.05.10

Time is running out to see El Greco on foreign soil. This exhibition of the artist's work has been running since February, and will be heading back to Spain soon, never to return. A must for all Renaissance art lovers.

### BOZAR

Rue Ravenstein, 23  
1000 Brussels  
T. +32 (0)2 507 82 00  
[www.bozar.be](http://www.bozar.be)

## DANIEL & GEO FUCHS

Runs until 14.06.10

After the enormous success of their last project, Toy Giants, the Fuchs brothers bring us their artistic take on nature and force through their photography – a strange and alluring combination of human and natural power.

### The Young Gallery

Place Wiltcher, Conrad Hotel  
Avenue Louise, 75b  
1050 Brussels  
T. +32 (0)2 374 07 04  
[www.younggalleryphoto.com](http://www.younggalleryphoto.com)



1. Brussels  
Gay Pride

2. Fête de  
la Musique



## FÊTE DE L'IRIS

08.05.10>09.05.10

The iris is the symbol of Brussels, and a special two-day programme of music and street entertainment is being organized to celebrate this little white flower. An open day including live jazz will also be held at Brussels Parliament, as part of this unique celebration of 'flower power'.

### Brussels Tourist Office

Rue Royale, 2-4  
1000 Brussels  
T. +32 (0)2 513 89 40  
[www.fetedeliris.be](http://www.fetedeliris.be)

## BRUSSELS GAY PRIDE

14.05.10>16.05.10

If colour and friendliness is your cup of tea, be sure to check out the Gay Pride Parade through the centre of Brussels on Saturday. A gay and lesbian village will also be set up for the weekend in the area around Rue St Jacques, and the festival is being held as part of 'Rainbow Week' a yearly Belgian celebration of gay pride.

Rue du Marche au Charbon, 42  
1000 Brussels  
T. +32 (0)2 502 75 20  
[www.thepride.be](http://www.thepride.be)

## PRELUDE

28.05.10>12.06.10

The Gallery presents the work of two young designers, Amaury Poudray and Remi Bouchaniche, specifically created for this exhibition. With their use of ancient and new materials, they emphasize their aim of linking concepts that are seemingly in contrast.

### The Gallery

Rue de l'École Moderne, 17  
B-1070 Brussels  
T. +32 (0)2 217 63 58  
[www.thegallerybruxelles.com](http://www.thegallerybruxelles.com)

## FÊTE DE LA MUSIQUE

June 2010

The festival that takes over Brussels in June – music lovers of all genres are catered for, and best of all, it's completely gratis. The opening evening concerts take place in Grand'Place, before the later events spread across the city during the remainder of the month.

T. +32 (0)2 209 10 90  
[www.conseildelamusique.be](http://www.conseildelamusique.be)



# Getting the massage

When *Together* was kindly offered the chance to send a lucky volunteer for an Oriental Massage at Brussels' Royal La Rasante, we could hardly refuse, now could we?

To cut to the chase, our only-too-willing volunteer enjoyed a soothing Oriental massage, suffused with exotic oriental aromas – the special treatment lasts an hour and costs 80€ for members, 85€ for non-members of Royal La Rasante Spa &



Fitness Club. At the hands of the expert masseuse, our Pam luxuriated in essential oils to warm the skin and revitalize the senses, and enjoyed the deep relaxation that only a massage of this calibre can offer.

## RELAXED AND SOOTHED

In her own words: "It was beautiful – I was in real danger of falling asleep, because the Oriental is a very relaxing kind of massage, based on stroking/sweeping/rhythmic movements that are designed to relax and soothe, rather than the deep, often forceful movements associated with Shiatsu and other massages that are designed primarily to detox and energize. The oils used smelled simply divine, and they are designed to heat the muscles and work on the senses, according to my masseuse. Gentle music played in the background – I think I actually did drift off once when I closed my eyes, and the sensations were far more intense with them closed. Afterwards, I felt totally calm and relaxed – what a pick-me-up!

Pam added: "When I visit again, I will be sure to check out the other treatments available, including facials, pedicures, and nail work – I might even bring along my other half, let him try the 'Royal Male' spa treatment, if he's really good!"

Who could refuse such an offer? ☺

**Royal La Rasante**  
Rue Sombre, 56  
1200 Woluwe-Saint-Lambert  
Brussels  
T. +32 (0)2 609 19 10

[www.aspria.com/royal-la-rasante](http://www.aspria.com/royal-la-rasante)

## ADDRESSES

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[www.americanapparel.net](http://www.americanapparel.net)

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Cos  
[www.cosstores.com](http://www.cosstores.com)

Club Manhattan  
[www.clubmanhattan.nl](http://www.clubmanhattan.nl)

### E

Elvis Pompilio  
[www.elvispompilio.com](http://www.elvispompilio.com)

### F

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[www.filippa-k.com](http://www.filippa-k.com)

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

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### J

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[jutkaenriskahyves.nl](http://jutkaenriskahyves.nl)

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Paule Ka  
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### R

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

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### V

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Vintage  
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### W

Weekday  
[www.weekday.se](http://www.weekday.se)

Wood Wood  
[www.woodwood.dk](http://www.woodwood.dk)

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