

Together zine

EUROPEAN VICE
Sex workers
in Brussels

**POLITICAL
CHESSBOARD**
Uncertainty
'damaging'
economy

REAL ESTATE
Francophones'
moving' stories

MARKET FORCES
Saint Gilles:
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MADE IN BELGIUM
Kris Van Assche

Labour of Love
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to know before
St. Valentine's Day



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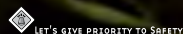
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A larger format, more pages, a cleaner layout style - you'll have no doubt already noticed the changes made to your magazine of choice.

Thus, 2008 marks the beginning of a new era for *Together Magazine*; our first priority, whether in social, economic or lifestyle reporting, is to ensure that our news and leisure features offer the very best to 'Bruxpats'.

So, with some pride, I invite you to discover Filipe Rufino's exclusive and insightful investigation into the plight of **Brussels' sex workers**, a report sure to raise eyebrows in the 'Capital of Europe'. Business correspondent Jeremy Slater analyzes the financial impact of the Belgian political crisis and the consequences wrought by the recent US credit turmoil on emerging superpower India, the continent in which our photographer, Cédric Van Lang, recently spent several weeks in the streets of Varanasi, Mumbai, Madurai and Kolkata to bring us a poignant photo-reportage. Our editor James Drew, meanwhile, chats to renowned Taiwanese director Ang Lee about his controversial latest epic, *Lust, Caution*, which is now out in Brussels.

Don't miss our two exclusive fashion photo-shoots from the renowned Dominique Models Agency, which offer some insider tips for the Spring 2008 season. And, for those who are already up to their necks in work and might otherwise have forgotten, allow us to

remind you that **St. Valentine's Day**, 14th February, will soon be upon us. The perfect occasion, then, for our star feature, '**Labour of Love**', where you will find a variety of different perspectives concerning *l'amour* - some light, some serious, all enjoyable!

For those who are perhaps unhappy in love, we hope that the predictions of our new recruit, astrologer and tarot master James Christie, will ease the pain and offer hopes for a brighter future. And you too can help build a happier future by helping Amnesty International help the world's oppressed. It couldn't be simpler - all you have to do is register at www.together-magazine.eu to receive a free subscription of our magazine, which will be delivered free-of-charge to your home. For every new subscriber, *Together Magazine* will donate 0.10€ to Amnesty International - why not take just a few minutes to help an organisation that fights for justice for so many people across the world?

Happy reading!

Jérôme Stéfanski
Publisher

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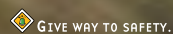


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FLASH

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

According to The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), violence against media workers in 2007 reached extreme levels for the third year in succession, with 171 confirmed deaths.

The IFJ recorded the following information in 2007:

- Murders and violent deaths: 134
- Deaths in accidents: 37
- The deadliest region was the Middle East with 68 killed
- Deadliest countries (for killings) were Iraq (65), Somalia (8) and Pakistan (7)
- Other hotspots were Mexico (6), Sri Lanka (6) and the Philippines (5)

NEWS

Tough passage for India

A serious failure in the US's financial system is threatening to affect not only Europe, but also further afield, in Asia's 'tiger' economies.

The UK, which shares a similar style of economy to America, has a financial sector already suffering badly from a downturn in fortune, brought about by loans made by sub-prime mortgage lenders going bad first in the US and now elsewhere. In the northeast of England, lender Northern Rock has, to all intents and purposes, been nationalised by the UK government, after the Bank of England had to support a run on the financial services company, which could end up costing the British taxpayer £38 billion (€53 billion).

With historic links that go back nearly three centuries between the UK and India, it now seems that an 'illness' that began in America has spread to Britain and will hit South Asia and the British Empire's former 'Jewel in the Crown'.

GOING GLOBAL

Not only are the economies of India and the UK closely linked, India is as much connected to the globalised world as any other country. Indian tycoons such as

**INDIA IS AS MUCH
CONNECTED TO
THE GLOBALISED
WORLD AS ANY
OTHER COUNTRY**

RatanTata have, in the past two years, bought the major tea company Typhoo Tea, one of the UK's biggest selling brands; Tata has also acquired

ownership of Corus, formerly an Anglo-Dutch-owned steel maker. Another Indian entrepreneur, Lakshmi Mittal, succeeded in a hostile takeover of the Franco-Belgium steel producer Arcelor in 2006. But such involvement in continental Europe may be coming back to haunt the businessmen and their own national economy, as the global economic climate turns gloomy following almost a decade of spectacular growth. ▀

THE PHOTOGRAPHS

In 2006, photographer Cédric Van Lang trekked across India, and here presents his series of illuminating photographs. His approach to the art is best summarised in his own words: "The aspects of India that attract me in terms of images are not those of postcards or pictures of Epinal, nor of great wide-open spaces, panoramic landscapes that stretch as far as the eye can see, nor even the expressive faces of the natives... rather, the India that fascinates me on an image level is the country of station waiting-rooms, of railroads, of small escarpées lanes, underpasses, obscure corners and quick, captured moments."



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*'Begging
on the ground'
Varanasi*

To this end, on 13 December 2007, the Royal Bank of India expressed concerns over developments in the American sub-prime mortgage market that may have serious consequences for economic growth in emerging economies, including India. In its 2006-07 annual report, the central bank stated that if the US economy were to slow down due to a heavy increase in housing-sector repossession, the effect on India could be "significant".

The report further pointed out that a worsening of conditions in the sub-prime market could lead to reassessment of risk by investors in all types of investments and asset classes, leading to a re-evaluation of all operations in emerging markets. The last time such serious re-analysis occurred was in 1997, following crises in the Asian and Russian banking systems.

"Recent developments indicate that sub-prime lending concerns are spreading globally," the Royal Bank reported.

HEDGING BETS

The bank added that the volatility in capital flows could increase because of the actions of hedge funds, which have a major influence on how the Indian market operates. The threat is of funds being repatriated to reduce their losses in the US - such activity is contributing to an increase in inflation that was already on the up because of higher food and agricultural produce prices, caused partly by India's heady economic boom of the past 10-15 years.

Though the bank remains reasonably optimistic about the continuation of high economic growth, it also expressed concern over supply constraints, due to a shortfall in agricultural performance and the physical and social infrastructure, which could affect future growth in the short term.

Another economic report pointed out that as the dollar's value decreases globally, driven by concerns over high

'The taxi driver's nap'
Kolkata



'Sleeping
in the morning'
Varanasi Railway
Station

US debt and the sub-prime crisis, the Indian national currency, the rupee, continues to rise. The effect of this on the economy is likely to be quite harmful

BAD NEWS IN ONE MONTH IS OFTEN FOLLOWED BY GOOD NEWS IN THE NEXT

in the near future, but the report states: "The news from different sectors of the economy is confusing and inconsistent." It goes on to explain

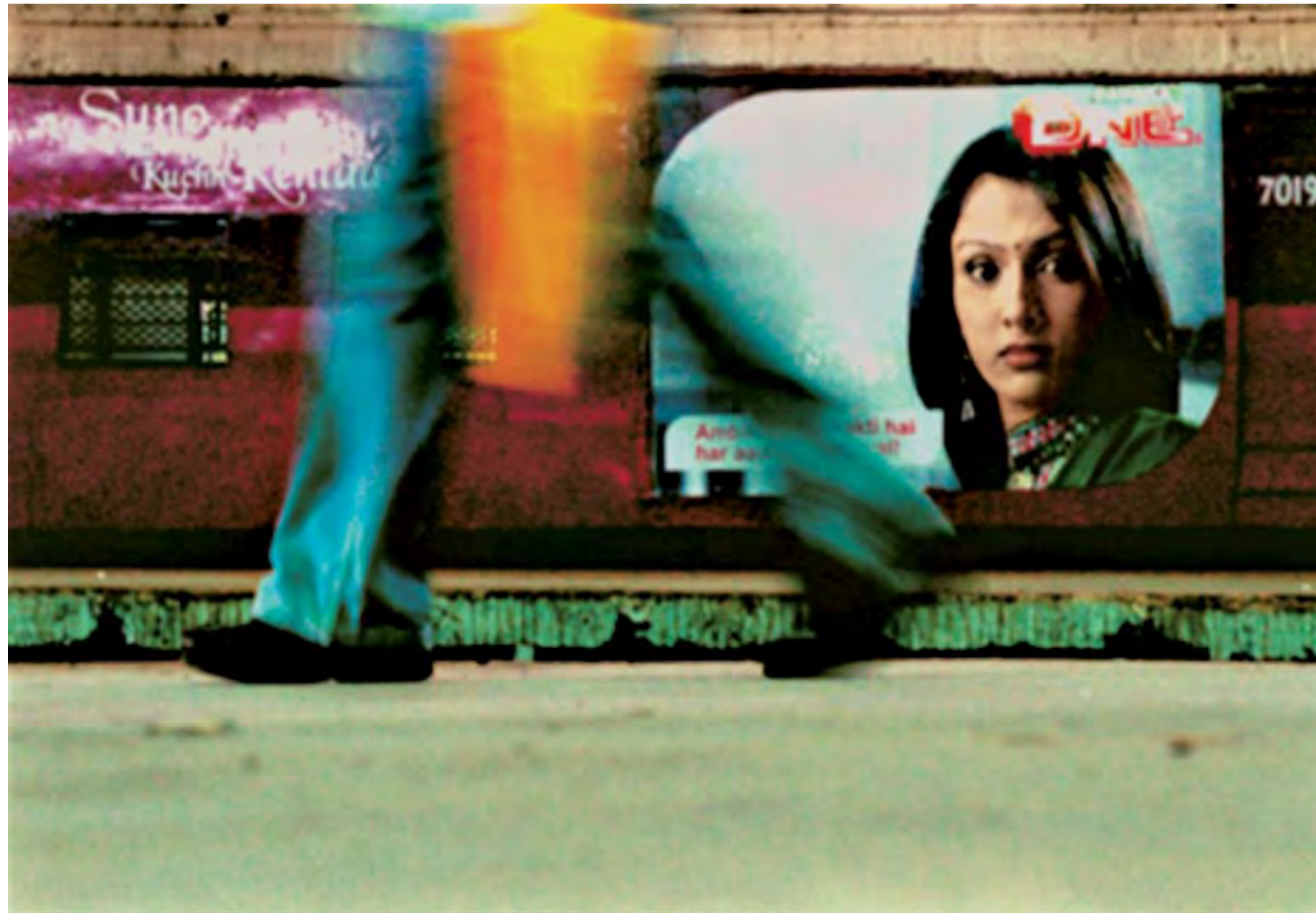
that bad news in one month is often followed by good news in the next. In October, industrial production soared 11.8%, with manufacturing rising 13.3%.

Earlier data from September showed that production had slipped to 6.8%. At the time, this was thought to be a blip and not a potential trend, but the effect of the sub-prime collapse still has some time to feed through the global economy and is likely to have an as-yet-unidentified effect on India.

‘SLACKENING DEMAND’

Even before the sub-prime problem hit the rest of the world, a mid-year economic review of the Indian economy predicted reduction in growth levels, purely attributable to cyclical demands in the economy. In the report there is no clear explanation of possible reasons for this expected slowdown, but there was evidence of a “slackening” of demand in manufacturing growth.

All this could have an effect on the outcome of India's next general election, due to be held in 2009. Current Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is to stand down and there is as yet no clear successor on the horizon. Perhaps, as the economy heads for potentially its first downturn in more than a decade, it is unsurprising that possible candidates are biding their time. Even worse for Singh, leftist parties within his coalition may withdraw their support over a nuclear deal being struck with the International Atomic Energy Agency. For the prime minister, it is perhaps a good thing that the economy hasn't yet completely ‘atomised’ as he would be in even deeper trouble than he already is.



'The woman watching walkers'
Mumbai Railway
Station



'Transit'
Mumbai Railway
Station

Text:
Jeremy Slater
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Cédric Van Lang

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Working girls

In the same week as the International Day Against Violence on Sex Workers (17 December 2007), our correspondent visited the red-light district near Brussels' Gare du Nord. You'd think that members of the oldest profession might deserve a return on their taxes in the form of protection from the authorities, but what we found was very different...

*Saturday evening,
Rue d'Aerschot*



Under Belgian law, prostitution in itself is not illegal, yet it's not recognized as a profession

Saturday evening, Rue d'Aerschot. The Brussels' night is as cold and dark as it gets this time of year, yet scores of men stroll up and down the street, just behind the Brussels Nord station. The red glow from the windows on my right and the lights of the occasional passing car to the left provide most of the illumination on this crowded street – and what's on display in the neon-lit windows is, presumably, why most of the men are here.

There are around two dozen windows, each exhibiting one to three scantily clad women who smile and make 'come-hither' gestures at the passing men, myself included. With a man-to-girl ratio of approximately ten to one, business is buzzing tonight – some potential 'customers' walk alone in silence, others in loud groups, drinking beer and screaming obscenities.

A small Asian man steps inside a booth just in front of me. A slim, high-heeled blonde, whose legs alone must measure at least a metre, welcomes him with two kisses on each cheek before leading him inside by the hand. The man is on the tips of his toes as they exchange kisses.

MEET ELENA

Elena (not her real name) works in the booth next door. She is a petite blonde with shoulder-length straight hair. Her intense green eyes match the colour of her lingerie. She says that her favourite part of her body is her rear; when I explain that I would be interested

in interviewing her, she replies in eastern European-accented English that she is "not allowed" to speak about her situation in Belgium.

WITH A MAN-TO-GIRL RATIO OF APPROXIMATELY TEN TO ONE, BUSINESS IS BUZZING

She would not elaborate on who had set this rule or why, and politely asks me to leave. She accepts, with visible satisfaction, a copy of the earlier edition of *Together* that came with a sample of popular facial cream, and apologises again for not talking more.

Despite her refusal, Elena, as I was to find out, was more open with a journalist than the other dozen or so women that I tried to interview that night. None was willing even to reveal their names, nationalities or employment situation. All looked to be of either eastern European or Middle Eastern origin, both tall and slim, petite and curvy, in their twenties or early thirties, with some exhibiting tattoos, piercings and protruding silicone breasts, while others wore long hair extensions and artificial suntan. I did not see any black, Asian or typically western-European types on this street.

A WELL-ORGANIZED BUSINESS ?

Rue d'Aerschot has been a prostitution area for more than a century after the train station was built, says Isabelle Jaramillo, co-ordinator of the Espace P..., an NGO that aims to improve working conditions for prostitutes in Belgium.

Over time, the street has become "a no-man's land", Jaramillo explained. "There are gangs and pimps down there that extort money from the women. We also have reports of girls that work on the street being attacked on the job and waiting more than an hour for the police to arrive, particularly on Friday and Saturday nights. Unlike in Amsterdam, there are no alarms in the booths. Most women rely on pimps, each other or even their dogs to protect themselves."

Despite the danger, space on the street is much sought-after by foreign prostitutes, as it is the easiest way for them to start

Prostitutes must be EU citizens, be at least 18 years old and pay appropriate state contributions

in the business and make some quick cash. Booths are usually open 24 hours a day, with the women renting the space for shifts of six hours, in groups of two or three. Most facilities are owned by *dames de compagnie* - usually former prostitutes themselves - who effectively run the business by dictating the women's weekly schedules.

Under Belgian law, prostitution in itself is not illegal, says Christian de Koninck, a

spokesman for the mayor of Brussels. Yet letting or managing a house for prostitution, soliciting to potential clients in public places and living on the earnings from the prostitution of another person(s) is against the law. Human trafficking or exploiting individuals for financial gain carries a maximum prison sentence of 15 years - prostitutes must be EU citizens, be at least 18 years old and pay the appropriate contributions to the state, he adds.



Yet prostitution is not recognized as a profession in Belgium. The booths in Rue d'Aerschot are technically defined as bars and the prostitutes as waitresses under Belgian law, meaning that they calculate their taxes using the same formula as all the restaurant businesses in the Scharbeek commune, with annual payments averaging 2,500€ per prostitute. But the women working in the streets behind Rue d'Aerschot have a different legal status, as they fall under the jurisdiction of the Saint-Josse commune.

The most experienced prostitutes work here as freelancers, under all sorts of creative job titles, from sex therapist to agricultural worker. These women pay a monthly rent of around 1,000€ for their booths - which are technically offices - in addition to the usual contributions that all independent workers in Belgium must pay. Finally, there are the Belgian prostitutes who work illegally in other areas of the city, from Avenue Louise to luxurious apartments and massage parlours in the city centre, Isabelle Jaramillo explains. Her organisation estimates that there are between 10-15,000 prostitutes in Belgium, a third of which are in Brussels.

STREET SCENES

Back on the street, I am still trying to talk to a prostitute. I decide to try one last booth before giving up. There are two women dancing at the window. A tall brunette with long curly hair that seems to have a life of its own opens the door just before I arrive. She is wearing a pink bikini and the almost-compulsory 10 cm high heels. A muscular bald man, around two metres tall, steps out with a smile reaching from ear to ear. He stops, shakes my hand, taps me on the shoulder and gives me a knowing wink before disappearing into the night. I explain to the women that I have

**'WE DON'T
TALK ABOUT
OUR LIVES!'**

arrived with a different purpose from my predecessor, and I find myself out of the door

in record time. "We don't talk about our lives!"

As I get out, a loud group of bicycle riders approaches. They are four kids, of Middle Eastern origin, aged no more than 13, drinking beer. Their presumed leader stops in front of the door I just exited and repeatedly slams his clenched fist into the glass, screaming obscenities at the top of his lungs. The woman inside back away from the shaking glass door, as if seeking refuge at the other end of the 5x5m-square booth.

I make the mistake of tapping the agitated kid on the shoulder, and telling him, with the authoritarian tone of a 26 year old, to take it easy. He says something in a language I do not understand and, suddenly, I am surrounded by four angry youths half my size. Though short, they are well-built

HOT SPOTS

There are between 10-15,000 prostitutes in Belgium, a third of whom are in Brussels. As the mayor recently admitted, their numbers are increasing in some quarters. Most Belgian sex workers arrange meetings with clients in private places by email, while foreign girls work in the following areas:

- Rue d'Aerschot: Prostitutes work in booths and on the nearby streets.
- Avenue Louise: Girls work here and in local apartments.
- The Flemish Parliament: Street workers to be found near this institution.
- Rue des Commerçants (Quartier Alhambra): On the street and in the area's hotels.
- Boulevard du Roi Albert II: Transvestites and transsexuals work the streets here.



and manage to pin me against the glass window as they threaten me with the confidence of Anthony Soprano wannabes. A group of two African men join in, pushing them away from the window and my still-surprised self. The youngsters hit back at the men, having presumably forgotten about me. A curly-haired head emerges from the door and asks me if I would like to come in "to stay away from trouble", which I gladly do.

"This kind of thing happens all the time here," says Dalila (not her real name) in French. She introduces herself and her workmate Vera (again, a false identity). A third girl smoking a cigarette in a small dark room in the back says 'Hi'.

"Sometimes it is drunken men, sometimes it's gangs of under-age kids. These kids are practically homeless. They have a lot of hate stored inside their hearts," Dalila adds.

Switching to English, she says she has been working as a prostitute in Brussels for four years and, despite being well paid, she is not happy with her situation. Her goal is to get out of prostitution, she says longingly. Dalila has a business project in mind, "but I do not talk about it so I don't have bad luck". As we both watch the brawl unfolding outside, I feel inclined to agree.

*Text: Filipe Rufino
Photographs: Colin Delfosse*

The most experienced prostitutes work in Brussels as freelancers



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Uncertainty 'damaging' economy

Following its recent political turmoil, the Belgian economy may still be in for further difficulties.

Until late last year, Belgium had been able to function as the 2007 national budget had been previously agreed.

However, with the year in its dying days, the cabinet found that it was unable to take several decisions that could steer the country through the potentially choppy economic waters that the world faces at present.

With a new government in formation, under the auspices of caretaker PM Guy Verhofstadt, it remains to be seen what extraordinary measures the current cabinet can adopt without complicating these tense political negotiations.

Also, Verhofstadt's efforts in creating a new government have met with resistance, as some deputies in the national Parliament were reluctant to participate in a cabinet that will have to introduce major changes to the way the country organises its finances.

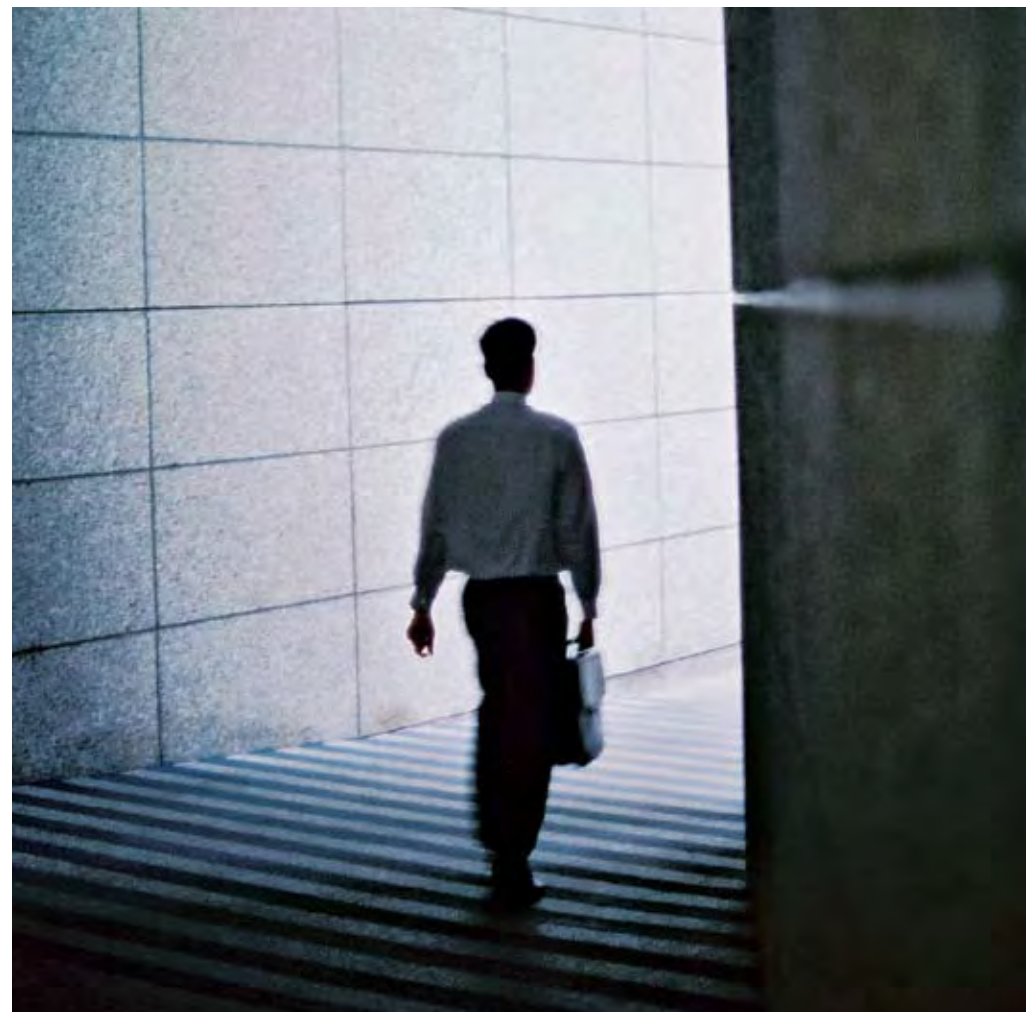
The broad economic picture may seem quite promising, but there are some underlying problems that potential cabinet members have recognised. One is the high amount of government debt and another is structural unemployment black spots in particular areas of the country, such as parts of Wallonia and Brussels.

In fact, the capital has one of the EU's highest unemployment rates, according to a recently released report from data collector Eurostat. The 17.6 percent level of unemployed citizens is more than double the European average of 7.4 percent and is similar to former East Germany. By contrast, another recent report claimed that Brussels was one of the EU's richest regions.

UNCERTAIN TIMES

Uncertainty is having an effect on economic inward investment. Belgium was the world's eighth-highest recipient of such investment in 2006, but with doubts about the future of the country greater than they were two years ago, economists admit to a negative outlook.

The unease is also damaging the relationship between labour organisations and Brussels authorities. In mid-December, thousands of trade-union members protested in the capital against rising prices and the failure of Belgium's politicians to form a new government. The mood of the demonstration was very sombre as representatives said that economic and social policy had been neglected because of the political paralysis. They were also protesting against high food and fuel prices brought on by poor weather during the summer, greater demand from consumers in India



Foreign investors may turn their back on Belgium if the political crisis continues

and China and also the euro being over-valued against the dollar. The demonstration was organised by the three main Belgian trade unions, which represent almost a third of Belgium's population of a little less than 11 million.

'BACKLASH'

"People are fed up with the discussions between the political parties. This is a very serious warning to the parties to take care of the people," Bernard Noël, a leader of the CGSLB, was reported to have said. "If they don't listen today, I am afraid of a backlash against politicians and things could get tougher in coming weeks," he added. Their protest followed a warning by

the European Commission that the prolonged political crisis was beginning to hit Belgium's economy. The Commission's report stated: "If this situation carries on, it risks delaying the realisation of the necessary budgetary steps and jeopardising the objectives set for 2008." The Commission added that the Belgian government was, "not in a position to contain a rise in the public deficit". There is, however, some good news, in that the country seems fairly well insulated from the current financial crises affecting the US and the UK, with house prices set to plateau in 2008 following several years of strong growth.

ROSIER FUTURE ?

For this, Belgium can thank its place in the European continental economy that is starting to pick up steam after almost five years of very sluggish growth at the beginning of the decade. In fact, current predictions for the country are pretty rosy, according to the UK-based Economist Intelligence Unit, which states that, broadly speaking, economic growth will be reasonably strong over the next few years as it is driven by consumer demand.

"The growth rate of consumer spending will ease slightly in 2008-09, as a result

of recent rises in interest rates. Our central forecast is that private consumption growth will stabilise at around 2% per year by 2012, providing the main spur to GDP growth, which will average around 1.9% over the forecast period," according to the recently published EIU report.

There is some hope for the Belgian economy, but what has been highlighted by the political crisis is that uncertainty will eat away at the foundations of any economy, no matter how strong they may be.

Jeremy Slater



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Terminal plan, pool project, logistical link

Following Bruxelles-les-Bains' marvellously refitted loft apartments and offices, Brussels Port is now making ever-greater strides towards 'river tourism', with the construction of a state-of-the-art passenger terminal, an open-air swimming pool and a revamped logistical facility on the way.

As both a maritime and commercial enterprise in the centre of the city, serving Brussels residents with river cruises, as well as water sports and other leisure pursuits, Brussels Port is now devoting its expertise, previously dedicated to urban integration and nautical safety, to creating a new passenger terminal. Unlike other major European cities, Brussels does not yet have a modern terminal worthy of the name.

State Secretary Brigitte Grouwels (CD&V), responsible for the Port of Brussels, has thus recently ordered a 30,000€ feasibility study into the creation of a passenger terminal in the outer harbour capable of accommodating large, sea-going

craft. And, at the same time, the construction of an open-air swimming pool near Tour&Taxis is a priority for this legislature.

**BRUSSELS
REGION INTENDS
TO GRANT 10€
MILLION FOR
THIS PROJECT**

A POOL FOR 2013!

Planned for the left bank of Béco quay, level with Rue Picard and not far from Place Saintelette, the prospect of an open-air swimming pool is setting Brussels abuzz. At 50 metres in length, the swimming pool will cover some 1,800 square metres. While this would entail the relocation of three business organisations in the harbour area, which is likely to be a source of controversy for Brussels Port authorities, with the inevitable loss of a number of jobs, Brussels Region predicts that the arrival of such a leisure facility in Brussels from 2013 will greatly strengthen the business and tourist links between city-centre districts and the canal and adjacent roads near Tour&Taxis. Brussels Region intends to grant 10€ million for the project - Minister-President Charles Picqué (PS), has also announced the creation of a 'Maison du Port', a "high-quality architectural and ecological project to offer educational facilities on the harbour landscape and to provide teaching projects on the development of harbour trades". Once constructed, the 6,000 m²

building will be home to various activities related to harbour life.

Work will begin on the Brussels International Logistics Center (BILC) near Tour&Taxis by the end of 2008 – a 55,000 m² logistics hotel, this is one of Brussels Region's major projects included in the Brussels Action Plan for 2005-2009.

As Brigitte Grouwels explains: "The central location of Brussels Port makes it ideal for the development of the Brussels Region Logistic Center. Its modernization and the construction of new warehouses will provide an important 'logistical pole' for the area, as from here, goods will be transported by small vans to their destinations." This 'logistical extension' of the port, work on which is scheduled to have begun by the end of 2008, is expected to create around 400 jobs in Brussels - many companies established in the harbour area are already very interested by the project, and their candidatures will be examined during

2008 by Brussels Port authorities. The new BILC will thus take its place alongside the canal, some 200 metres away from Tour&Taxis.

In addition to its logistical benefits for Brussels, the new building will also be of the highest architectural quality, with French group Sogaris having won the rights to the project in March 2007.

A 'new generation' building is foreseen to replace the existing structure; a 'monovolume' edifice with only cranes being used to enable the carriage of goods by water. Indeed, all goods must be able to be easily transported to and from BILC, without affecting the nearby population centres. Brussels Port is proud that 7.5 million tonnes of goods are transported by river annually in Brussels, equivalent to around 385,000 trucks that would otherwise invade the capital - more than a thousand trucks per day.

Ludivine Nolf

The planned BILC building

© Accarain Bouillot Architectes



FLASH

2008:
BLACK YEAR FOR BANKRUPTCIES?

The question is not so much whether this year will be better or worse than 2007, but, rather, if 2004's record levels will be surpassed. During the past 12 months, 7,721 companies were forced to close their doors for good - 0.38% more than in 2006, but still 3.32% fewer compared with 2004.

BUSINESS

The Property Barometer

In partnership with renowned free weekly newspaper *Vlan*, *Together Magazine* is proud to present The Property Barometer, our new regular assessment of real-estate fluctuations in Europe's capital. Our study is based on average prices charged in the classified house advertisements in *Vlan*'s Brussels edition over 10 weeks (9,909 adverts).



AVERAGE PRICE PER SQUARE METRE (FIGURES IN RED INDICATE FORMER AVERAGE PRICES)

	APARTMENTS		HOUSES
	RENT	BUY	BUY
1000 BRUXELLES (CENTRE)	9.65 € ↗ 9.47	2,490.86 € ↗ 2,434.41	1,734.96 € ↘ 1,850.52
1020 LAEKEN	8.06 € ↗ 7.97	1,957.09 € ↗ 1,938.99	1,756.64 € ↗ 1,660.06
1030 SCHAERBEEK	8.75 € ↗ 8.60	2,241.42 € ↗ 2,171.11	1,761.63 € ↘ 1,900.09
1040 ETTERBEEK	9.92 € ↗ 9.61	2,551.74 € ↗ 2,452.75	2,029.23 € ↘ 2,174.51
1050 IXELLES	10.69 € ↗ 9.59	2,599.87 € ↘ 3,113.46	2,151.19 € ↗ 2,235.61
1060 SAINT GILLES	8.91 € ↗ 8.25	2,275.49 € ↗ 2,204.92	2,246.03 € ↘ 2,247.53
1070 ANDERLECHT	9.02 € ↗ 8.39	1,954.70 € ↗ 1,904.93	1,616.51 € ↘ 1,713.57
1080 MOLENBEEK ST JEAN	8.55 € ↘ 8.73	1,817.34 € ↗ 1,720.84	1,526.13 € ↗ 1,726.82
1081 KOEKELBERG	7.75 € ↗ 7.31	1,826.24 € ↘ 2,091.45	1,517.39 € ↘ 2,200.10
1082 BERCHEM STE AGATHE	7.47 € ↘ 7.83	1,821.25 € ↗ 1,669.52	2,351.16 € ↘ 2,388.25
1083 GANSHOREN	8.74 € ↗ 8.28	1,833.87 € ↘ 1,890.77	1,977.14 € ↗ 1,782.14
1090 JETTE	8.53 € ↘ 9.00	2,029.03 € ↗ 1,959.32	1,543.25 € ↘ 1,623.88
1120 NEDER OVER HEMBEEK	9.45 € ↗ 7.54	2,605.91 € ↘ 2,611.09	1,249.46 € ↘ 1,470.95
1140 EVERE	7.49 € ↘ 8.61	2,446.86 € ↗ 2,279.69	2,040.13 € ↘ 2,234.09
1150 WOLUWÉ ST PIERRE	9.90 € ↗ 9.89	2,547.92 € ↘ 2,553.74	2,632.56 € ↗ 2,548.21
1160 AUDERGHEM	10.17 € ↗ 9.47	2,348.72 € ↗ 2,327.34	2,184.68 € ↘ 2,922.05
1170 WATERMAEL BOITSFORT	9.88 € ↗ 9.43	2,415.80 € ↗ 2,350.45	2,756.94 € ↘ 2,849.57
1180 UCCLE	9.43 € ↘ 10.33	2,689.13 € ↗ 2,670.84	2,385.83 € ↗ 2,295.26
1190 FOREST	8.58 € ↘ 8.75	2,145.16 € ↗ 2,104.09	1,730.93 € ↗ 1,663.19
1200 WOLUWÉ ST LAMBERT	9.91 € ↗ 9.62	2,578.27 € ↗ 2,522.28	2,556.05 € ↘ 2,670.64
1210 ST JOSSE TEN NOODE	8.27 € ↘ 10.59	1,882.66 € ↘ 1,891.37	2,092.74 € ↗ 1,642.86



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Real estate
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Francophones' moving stories

The political uncertainty that has engulfed Belgium in recent months has also brought instability to the residents of the Brussels periphery, where house-moving is now common in the French-speaking community. Real estate has entered a new era...



No-go zone: Flemish Region hostility towards the Francophone majority has grown

Six months have been enough to cause deep concern for the French-speaking people concerning their future in the Flemish Region. Language, community separation and inherent problems with the Flemish policy in regards to the Francophone population have plunged Brussels' periphery into uncertainty, and the absence of government has not helped the six communes affected, with anti-Francophone demonstrations increasingly prevalent. The real-estate sector has also been a collateral victim of the problems, as the majority of agencies to be found in Rhode-Saint-Genèse, Wezembeek-Oppem, Linkebeek and Crainhem have confirmed.

PROPERTIES FOR SALE

Increasingly, the communes' house- and apartment-owners are putting their properties up for sale, as the effect of the community's problems on their daily life worsens and, at the same time, outsiders are increasingly hesitant about looking to rent or buy. A surprising and worrying state of affairs for these communes, previously considered to be calm and well-appointed by the Francophone majority. "But it is not only French-speaking people who are unwilling to come and live here," a Crainhem agent explains. "All outsiders

seem increasingly concerned with the prevailing linguistic problems." In fact, many European and non-European nationals are concerned about the insecurity,

including the French, Spaniards, Italians, Africans and South Americans; previously, they were not affected by the problems, but have since been confronted on a near-daily basis by angry demonstrations requiring police intervention. And the political uncertainty that has now prevailed for more than six months in Belgium has only added to real-estate agents' concerns; nor do they see the situation improving in a hurry: "The dead end into which the communes have been plunged has really slowed the market down. We hope that things will stabilize again quickly; although prices are falling, people looking for properties nevertheless become reluctant as soon as one mentions a house in Linkebeek."

FALLING PRICES

In November 2007, a Rhode-Saint-Genèse real-estate company also admitted to having three customers in as many weeks indicating that they would put their house on sale if their commune becomes 100% Flemish. It's the same story in Wezembeek-Oppem, where prospective customers are very anxious about settling. According to the estate agencies on Brussels' periphery, the problem has worsened since the end of last summer. Drogenbos and Wemmel, on the other hand, where on average 60 percent of the population is French-speaking, did not seem as concerned by the situation, but admitted that prices had fallen in the area.

The installation of a new government and an end to the ructions in the Brussels-Hal-Vilvorde district may stabilise the situation – one can but hope.

Ludivine Nolf

'IT IS NOT ONLY FRENCH-SPEAKING PEOPLE WHO ARE UNWILLING TO COME AND LIVE HERE'

Resolving finance gripes

Providing New Year's resolutions for readers to help improve their financial health is all very well, but as such vows are all-too frequently (and quickly) forgotten, we suggest a few that should perhaps be implemented by certain organizations close to our hearts and wallets...

CALLING ALL BANKS: SORT OUT YOUR CALL CENTRES!

Unless you realize call centres are frequently on the other side of the world and that their staff are not always fully conversant with colloquial English, strange exchanges can ensue. Take this summary of a recent conversation with a charming lady in a well-known bank's call centre, somewhere in India. After having identified myself, the conversation went as follows:

Me: *I am trying to trace a payment that I made from my account three weeks ago that has not yet been received.*

Call centre: *I'll put you through to one of our account officers. Hold the line please.*

Musical interlude: Two minutes of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons (Autumn)* which is not my favourite piece of music at the best of times.

Call centre: *I'm sorry, the line is engaged. I'll try another one.*

Musical interlude: Two more minutes of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*.

Call centre: *I'm sorry, it's still engaged.*

Me: *I can't wait much longer. I have to collect my mother-in-law at the Eurostar terminal soon, so I've got to get my skates on.*

Call centre: *It's very nice of you to go skating with your mother-in-law. Is she very old?*

Me: *She's 84. I must hurry so I don't keep her waiting.*

Call centre: *I'll try to put you through again.*

Musical interlude: Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* for a third time.

Call centre: *I'm sorry, it's still engaged.*

Me: *Look, I really have to go and collect my mother-in-law now, because if I'm not there when she arrives at the station I'll be for the high jump.*

Call centre: *I'm so sorry! I thought you said you were going skating. Will your mother-in-law be high jumping too?*

Me (now fed up): *No, she prefers to pole-vault. Look I'll call you back later; it's time I got on my bike now. (Thinks - I'd better take the tandem. She must have somewhere to sit on the way home...)* ☐

STATISTICS

Total call time:
13 minutes
at my expense
Result – Nil



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The hell
of call centres

EU - CONSULT WITH CONSUMERS BEFORE CHANGING THE RULES!

New rules have recently been introduced that will make it harder for expats to buy an insurance product suitable for their home country, even if it's what suits them best.

The way the rules are now being applied, insurance companies may only offer products authorised in the investor's country of residence. Many companies with good products are now withdrawing their sales across national borders over penalty fears. The result? An expatriate must buy a product authorised under the rules of his country of residence, even if:

- It is in a language that he does not fully understand, under legislation that is unfamiliar and is significantly inferior to what is available to his compatriots who have stayed at home;

- it may be inappropriate for the country where he expects to be resident when the policy proceeds are to be taken, which is a major consideration. The policy may also require translation at the investor's own expense after returning to his home country to satisfy the tax authorities that it complies with their laws, and;
- it may be linked to a unwanted currency.

If an expatriate is restricted to buying only products that have been authorised by his host country, then he will almost certainly be deprived of access to the best-value products. There are millions of expatriates in Europe for whom complete freedom of choice no longer applies. How can this be fair?

Now, more than ever, it is important to seek sound financial advice.

Graham Reid

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Foto: Artur Żykowski



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W!ZZ

NDC: Hand-made for feet

Madonna wears NDC's hand-made shoes. Frenchman Arnaud Zannier and Enrique Corbi from Spain were already renowned in Kickers, London, for their shoe craftsmanship. But Enrique (designer) and Arnaud (marketing director) were frustrated, because they could not easily find shoes designed for their feet – so they branched out into one of the first brands to offer customers the chance to design their own.



So, the pair decided to branch out and leave London, where life is a little expensive, anyway, to begin their own business. They arrived in the noble town of Ghent; Zannier's wife is Belgian, which undoubtedly partly explains the decision, and decided to begin manufacturing the shoes of their dreams, both for themselves and for their wives. One might have thought that, with their Kickers reputation, they could have used this as a lure for prospective customers. After all, 'user-generated content' is all the rage at the moment, so why not? Nothing of the sort. The female shoes market is more complex, offering all styles at all prices. So, they decided to produce shoes according to their own taste, using the most beautiful leathers and always respecting 'hand-made' traditions.

This is not an arena for sophisticated marketing, nor for market research. The name they chose, NDC, is in fact not really a 'brand' at all – the three letters signify Nom De Code (code name) – it is the shoes alone that make the

“There were beautiful shoes and beautiful ranges such as Church's,” Arnaud explains. “There was creativity in sportswear, and Todd's and Hogan shoes were very classical. But, in 2001, it was difficult to find traditional hand-made shoes.”

Arnaud Zannier,
co-founder
of NDC

© NDC

*Tradition and
personalization:
the two essential
ingredients
for NDC*

© NDC

difference and which deserve the plaudits. Zannier and Corbi refuse absolutely to be 'fashion victims' – for them, only their love of beautiful work counts.

Six years on, a small team of ten people now controls the company and the range is available in 400 shops worldwide, including five in Belgium – the ambition is to double that in the next three years. This growth has been achieved by selling to people who share their tastes and which in turn they then share with others. In terms of company strategy, Zannier and Corbi have gained their reputation by respecting tradition while achieving their 'dream shoes'. Tradition and personalization; the two essential ingredients for all successful marques.

I ask Zannier whether they are contemplating going online? The interview is by telephone, but I nevertheless sense his hair bristling at the question. He's not fan of the internet; he buys his music on iTunes, but that's all. Buying online, he suggests, is incompatible with a luxury purchase: “Online trade take the pleasure away. The joy of a beautiful shoe begins with the search; buying a luxury shoe is not

**‘THE INTERNET
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TRIED ON’**

a necessity. If, thanks to the internet, the purchase takes only three minutes and delivery is made in 24 or 48 hours, where is the fun in that? The internet is a very useful way of making ourselves known, but not to sell what we create – a shoe must be touched, looked at, compared, tried on.”



The company is all about meetings. How the two founders met. Meeting with their customers, who must share their tastes. Meetings with the tanners. A meeting of minds, then? “We do not make products for X, we make products for us. Our customers must, therefore, be like us.” And this essential 'chemistry' also applies to NDC personnel – Arnaud never recruits from CVs, as, to him, professional experience counts for less than the first impression, the chemistry and attitude of the candidate. If it all clicks, *engagé*...

To conclude, I ask him how much he believes that luck has played a part in NDC's success? In general, businesses that stagnate or fail often blame bad luck, but for those that succeed? “Luck is something that one brings about oneself. Luck is like a train of opportunities – there are those who watch it pass, and those who jump aboard.”

With these words, our conversation ends. Arnaud leaves me to work on new models, to draw and create prototypes, a task that will occupy the pair until December, when the latest samples will be ordered ahead of the new collection becoming available in February. While you wait, you can cross Belgium, to discover their beautiful shoes in Liège at Verlainne, in Kortrijk at Victor Victoria, Antwerp at Coccodrillo and Bruges at Quicke.

Patrick Willemarck

Gregor Thissen: A made-to-measure man

Scabal CEO Gregor Thissen's looks are reminiscent of George Clooney, with whom he shares his birth year. Thissen has no more room for 'nonchalant' in his dictionary than he does for 'giving up'. As for 'ambition' and 'perfection', however...



Gregor Thissen,
a passionate and
ambitious man

BIOGRAPHY

Name: Gregor Thissen

Position: Scabal's CEO

Birthdate: 3rd January, 1962

Astrological sign: Capricorn

Anyone meeting Thissen for the first time might blanch a little at his reserved manner, but he can actually be very nice. On condition, that is, that you do as he says...

To attempt a portrait of someone as discreet as Scabal's CEO is like touching the fabulous tissues that he brings out of his designers, weavers and engineers, who discovered how to spin microscopic particles of lapis lazuli and diamond into the finest merino yarn. That is to say, you know the treasure is there. But how to discover the true nature of Scabal's leader, a 1962-born Capricorn? Is he, for example, as reliable as natives of this sign are purported to be? "Yes, I am," he answers.

BUSINESS WITHOUT BORDERS

In any international airport he blends seamlessly into the crowds of well-dressed businessmen. He speaks four languages, and his English is fluent. On the day of the interview, he does not wear his usual suit but a woollen sports jacket in attractive dark checked colours with striped shirt and a simple dark tie.

Upon entering Scabal's reception, all is quiet and furnished in warm wood, with monochrome pictures of men and women

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at work adorning the walls. Scabal has more than 600 employees, with 125 in Brussels (where every inch of cloth is scrutinized before being put on sale), the rest mainly in Huddersfield, England and Saarbrücken, Germany.

Scabal owns five lots along Boulevard d'Anvers, the avenue that used to be the haunt of 'fabrics by the yard' merchants. "Our clients still seem to like coming here since it's so close to the station and town centre," Thissen explains. "Even if the noise and the pollution are sometimes appalling, we stay in Brussels, because there is a sweetness of life not to be found in Paris, London, New York or Tokyo. I live in the outskirts of Brussels and I would not live anywhere else. Not that Brussels is attractive: some parts are downright ugly. Luckily, there are some signs of a clearer urban policy for the future."

And will his production facilities remain in Europe? "One of the problems is that excessive welfare leaves people complacent. We still keep our workforce here but it's an effort that we would like to see appreciated. Because manufacturing fabrics as Scabal does is not only a question of the workforce but also of tradition, experience and quality. It's all about roots, honesty and dedication: a whole feeling. We're almost defensive about it but now we think that it give us a competitive advantage."

THE MAN BEHIND THE MANAGER

Gregor Thissen is a father of three: 14, eight and six years old. At the weekends, he likes to cook for them. Do they appreciate his offerings? "They're very polite," he says, with the tiniest of smiles. "I think they appreciate the effort." What was his favourite meal when he was young? "My mother's potato salad."

"As a child, I always wanted to be older," he says. "I was serene about things from a very young age - my mother says I played chief but that's not true, I'm not a natural born leader. Of course, all parents cherish ambitions for their children, as I do myself."

He studied law and gained an MBA; one might think that his whole career was geared towards joining Scabal, but Thissen does not see it that way: "I just decided to give it a try here; it was still risky at the time. But there was the relationship with my parents, and it is a choice I never regretted."

Two years ago, Gregor Thissen was made Scabal CEO when his father delegated the strategic and operational management: "He still comes in every day. We all admire him and appreciate having his advice."

Thissen enjoys trying new things - take sports. After tennis came golf: "They say you play against the course but at the end of the day you play against yourself." He also likes indoor football: "I play with a bunch of men in their twenties who still accept me, but only as a defender. And yes, I'm competitive."

And there's also his VFR (Visual Flight Rules) pilot license that he absolutely had to have after making a trip to South Africa and Botswana, where he flew on safari. "Flying with a Cessna is such an experience. I was so impressed when I discovered the landscape that I decided there and then I wanted to be able to do that myself: fly, feel free and enjoy the view. But there it stopped. I like to discover new things, to conquer them till I control them. Then I move on."

For six years, he's also been in the Young Presidents Organization (YPO): a peer network that unites more than 10,000 leaders across 100 countries. "We educate each other. We work in small groups on a very honest and open level."

Not many of the items on my editor's wish-list can seduce Gregor to reveal more about himself. "None of your business," he says, gently but firmly, on questions such as his favourite holiday, second house, car, watch and other lifestyle trophies. Far from having a so called jet-set lifestyle, he prefers a simple family life: "To relax, because in business the competition is fierce, even if Scabal is at the very high end of the spectrum."

*Scabal,
the fabric of
dreams*

© Scabal

"Scabal will not go for any revolution," he adds. "We've integrated the whole chain, except retail. But we're wholesale producers, not retailers: a different business in a different world. We just want to improve our product, all the time. What I am proud of myself? Nothing special. I like to bring out the best in people; make them always strive for better."

Josephine Overeem

SCABAL'S STORY

Otto Hertz founded the Société Anglo Belge Allemande Luxembourgoise in 1938 - Scabal expanded rapidly after the Second World War in most European markets. In 1970, Johann-Peter Thissen joined the company and conquered the United States - where Scabal fabrics and suits soon seduced Hollywood as well as Hong Kong and Japan.

Thus, Scabal became a global company - in 1972, the group acquired a venerable existing manufacturer of fine traditional fabrics in Huddersfield, Yorkshire. From here on, Thissen had a direct impact on the creation and production of ever-more luxurious fabrics. In 1975, Scabal launched a ready-to-wear collection and a made-to-measure service.

Some 14 years later, Scabal acquired a high-level clothing manufacturer in Saarbrücken, Germany. That year, 1979, Scabal opened its flagship store on Savile Row and launched the Scabal Shirt and Tie collection. In 1991 Johann-Peter Thissen's only son, Gregor, joined the company at the age of 29. Scabal has hundreds of fabrics in stock and develops 12-15 new qualities of fabric and a total of 600-800 new designs and colours every season, all of which are now supported by sophisticated online back-up at www.scabal.com.

Today Scabal are considered European market leader in high-level personalized clothing.



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FLASH

PRIX MODO BRUXELLAE 2007

Economy and Brussels-Capital Minister Benoît Cerexhe awarded the fashion gong 'Prix Modo Bruxellae Young Designers 2007' to 'Girls from Omsk' by Russian designer Valéria Siniouchkina. Celebrating its 10th anniversary, the annual prize honoured a Brussels-based fashion designer who has shown fewer than 10 collections, with the jury's criteria based on creativity, technical quality (cut, materials, finish) and innovation.

LIFE-
STYLE

Through the gates of Singapore and Bali

The bay of Singapore by night

Asia – magic, mysterious, dream-like. And, from an economic perspective, a continent increasingly perceived as a superpower in waiting. For many years, Dave Deruytter lived and worked there – now back in Belgium, he offers his impressions of Asian culture. This month, Singapore and Bali are in the spotlight...

If visiting Asia is on your list of resolutions for 2008, why not take the gradual and soft approach? With Singapore and Bali, the risk of not enjoying your first Asian experience is virtually nil, and the euro's strength compared with the local currencies means that it also represents excellent value for money.

It's certainly a long trip - expect a 12-hour flight from any European airport. But, if you choose one of the top Asian airlines, you'll feel like you're on holiday from the moment you step on the plane. The beautifully attired cabin attendants deliver a very personal quality service, offering you a choice of European and Asian cuisine. In addition, many of the long-haul carriers flying to Asia have individual video screens, even in economy seats. So, just lean back and start eating, drinking, reading, playing and sleeping.



A traditional procession at Bali

© Dave Deruytter

Before you know it, you've arrived at Singapore's Changi Airport, with seven or eight hours of jet-lag already notched up. There are no VISA requirements for short-term visitors to Singapore – the luggage delivery is very fast, there are plenty of taxis so, in no time, you're at the reception desk in one of the many five-star hotels for which Singapore. The Raffles is the most expensive, and there are hundreds of other dream hotels on offer.

So, what to do in Singapore? Shop till you drop, knowing that designer clothing, shoes, bags and electronics are much cheaper than in Europe - yes. Eat your heart out with Asian delicacies - yes. Enjoy one of the most magnificent night safaris on earth in a zoo - yes. Party the night away on Boat Quay or Clark Quay - yes. Visit India town, China Town, the black and white villa quarter, the Merlion Park...a five-night stay in this city is simply overflowing with delights. Singapore is also considered as one of the world's safest and cleanest cities, so what are you waiting for?

THERE ARE NO VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR SHORT-TERM VISITORS TO SINGAPORE

A TRIP TO BALI

Knowing that the paradise island of Bali is only a two-and-a-half hour flight away, what could stop you from making the trip? Don't be

misled by certain travel agencies - you can acquire your Bali VISA upon arrival at the airport. It's a swift procedure and cheaper than buying it in your country of departure.

Bali is one of Indonesia's many islands, and the only one that is Hindu, not Muslim, in religious orientation. There's everything for the modern tourist - beautiful beaches, temples, very friendly and service-oriented locals. Plus, there are markets galore, overflowing with woodcraft, silver ornaments, clothing, shells and jewellery.

The Balinese are devoted to religion, with ceremonies and festivals forming a large part of daily life. Almost any reason suffices, be it age or event related.

It takes some time to get used to the way that the island's traffic system works. Renting a car with chauffeur is recommended - the service is inexpensive and offers extra insurance peace of mind. A car will enable you to see more of Bali - to visit the magnificent city of Ubud, the Besakih temple, rice paddy fields in the valleys, Mount Batur, and Lovina Beach, which is renowned for its dolphins.

And don't worry about taking the kids along – they're more flexible than grown-ups, and shake off jet-lag in no time. The ideal time to visit Bali is in July or August - for Singapore, any time will do. Allow Asia's charm to wash over you, but be careful – you'll be addicted before you know!

At current exchanges rates, let yourself go – notwithstanding the more expensive flight tickets, your holiday will cost you less than at similar quality hotels and resorts in Europe.

Dave Deruytter

Correction: In the abstract for Dave Deruytter's article 'Back in Beijing', which appeared in the November-December 2007 edition of *Together Magazine*, it was incorrectly stated that the author had left China's capital 'more than ten years ago', when in fact he left in 2000.



www.airfrance.be

Bordeaux

12 flights
a week

Lyon

17 flights
a week

Clermont-Ferrand

10 flights
a week

From Brussels Airport

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Saint-Gilles: Queen of markets

For many years, Brussels residents have been rediscovering the joys of open-air shopping. Organic fruit and vegetables, human contact and the perfumes of life: just a few reasons why many citizens make a beeline for outdoor markets.

Together Magazine presents a new series of articles, focusing on the markets to be found in Brussels and profiling a leading market-trader.

SAINT-GILLES: FOUR MARKETS, SECOND TO NONE

Located between the Anderlecht, Forest, Ixelles and Brussels City communes, Saint-Gilles accommodates several markets on a weekly basis, drawing thousands of faithful regulars. The markets are representative of Saint-Gilles' population: young, affluent, and dynamic.

So, the Marché du Parvis has brought happiness to the Saint-Gilloise population for more than a century. Every morning except Monday, the stall-holders take

their places opposite the church and along Rue du Fort - it is the area's oldest market.

Meanwhile, every Sunday, the celebrated Marché du Midi, one of Europe's largest, gathers some 50-60,000 people.

Also unmissable are Place Van Meenen every Monday

and, every Thursday, Place Victor Horta. Here, one can find almost anything, from flowers to quality clothes and fine cheeses, such as are offered by Marie and Daniel Migeotte, the stallholders we met who are still very passionate about their work.

'THYME WITH HONEY, 3 EGGS, AND A HAPPY SUNDAY!'

Marie sells dairy products direct from her family's farm. Working for 20 years alongside her husband Daniel in Belgium's markets, the pair, as they do every Sunday, had risen at 7h to fill their small van, to accommodate the Saint-Gilles market patrons, before traversing the 50 kilometres between Gouy-Les-Piétons and Brussels. The rest of the week is divided between the markets of Louvière, Courcelles and the family farm.

This morning, the temperatures are below zero but, in spite of the cold, the couple are in good spirits. The Migeottes sell dairy products: goat's milk cheeses, butters, fresh cream, cow cheese, yoghurts and



Marie Migeotte,
to be found at
Place Victor Horta,
Saint-Gilles,
every Thursday

© C. Delfosse

eggs are the core of their 'window display' – one of the best stocked on the market. And with good reason – young and old seem very keen to fill their baskets with these fresh products.

Marie and Daniel have noticed a 'rejuvenation' of the Brussels customers: "There are many young people who come to buy, but Brussels is the exception. In the countryside, people still buy their fresh produce directly from the farm."

Downtown, they also make established traders happy, those who want to offer quality products, without having to pay for a synthetic 'bio' label'. A few deliveries in the van keep their professional customers happy, but don't reduce their own trade, as word-of-mouth is the best advertising.

Marie knows the other market salespeople well; they pop by from time to time, to exchange gossip. Daniel, meanwhile, fills up the milk bottles: "Our passion for dairy products came from our parents," he explains. Usually, he adds, he doesn't stay at the market: "I help to set the stall up, then I return home."

It's already two o'clock, and the accustomed hour of departure has arrived. While their place on the Saint-Gilles market

is more expensive than the provinces, it's still very profitable, due to the number of customers. The man-hours needed to run it are far from negligible, the cost of overheads are increasing and stallholders face increasing competitions from the large supermarket chains – just a few of the changes that are making 'market-life' ever tougher. But the Migeottes are not deterred – and the time for hanging up their aprons is still a long way off.

Colin Delfosse

THE COMMUNE'S FOUR MARKETS – PRACTICAL INFO

- Midi Market (the region's largest): Every Sunday from 6-13h, in the streets around Gare du Midi.
- Parvis Market: From Tuesday to Sunday, 6-13h, on Parvis de Saint-Gilles and Rue du Fort.
- Place Van Meenen Market: Every Monday (opposite the commune) from 14-19h.
- Place Victor Horta Market: Every Thursday, from 10-15h.

More information can be found on Saint-Gilles' official website: www.stgilles.irisnet.be

THE OTHER DAYS
OF THE WEEK
ARE DIVIDED
BETWEEN
THE MARKETS
OF LOUVIERE,
COURCELLES
AND THE
FAMILY FARM

Stylish and social

BOZARSHOP

On 6 December 2007, the Palais des Beaux-Arts ('Bozar') in collaboration with Base Design and Actar, opened its first art-dedicated shop, Bozarshop, described as "Belgium's first international and multidisciplinary boutique". Books, CDs, DVDs, posters, postcards and various other gift ideas are available; the range on offer is closely connected with the agendas of both Bozar and the Cinémathèque Royale de Belgique. Bozarshop's launch forms part of a relaunch of the Palais, which has seen annual visitor numbers increase from 400,000 to 1,000,000 in five years. Open 7 days a week, from 10-22h, the store, to be found on Rue Ravenstein, seems likely to attract a young and chic clientele.

Bozarshop
Rue Ravenstein, 15
1000 Brussels
T. +32(0)2 507 82 00
www.bozarshop.com

GIORGIO ARMANI COSMETICS CORNER

As well as the famous scents by Giorgio and Emporio Armani, the luxurious Giorgio Armani Skincare and Cosmetics ranges are now on sale in Galeria Inno, Rue Neuve. The area dedicated to the marque is truly a shop within a shop, a cocoon where advice and guidance are now lavished on all the ladies eagerly seeking harmony, beauty and perfection. Open Monday to Saturday 9h30-19h.

Giorgio Armani
Cosmetics Corner
Galeria Inno
Rue Neuve, 111-123
1000 Brussels
T. +32(0)2 211 21 11
www.inno.be

ALZHEIMER CAFÉ BRUSSELS-EUROPE

A new 'Alzheimer Café' has opened its doors in Brussels' European district. It's the fourth of its kind in Europe's capital; the inauguration was held in the presence of notable Belgian officials, such as Social Policy and Family Affairs Minister Emir Kir, Brussels CPAS President Yvan Mayeur and Jan Jarab, who represented Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Commissioner Vladimír Špidla. Alzheimer Cafés form convivial meeting places once a month for patients, families, and health professionals - the objectives are to provide people with information (medical and psychosocial), focusing on the importance of speaking openly about the disease and easing the social exclusion of patients and their families. The Alzheimer Café Brussels-Europe will be held on the third Tuesday of every month, from 14-16h.

Alzheimer Café Brussels-Europe
North-East Contact Centre
Rue van Camphenout, 16
1000 Brussels
T. +32(0) 800 15 225
www.alzheimer.be



PULLMAN BRUSSELS AIRPORT

Forget the Sofitel Hotel at Diegem, near Brussels airport. Or, at least, forget its name. From now on, think 'Pullman'. As with 12 other hotels in the chain, this Sofitel has now been integrated into the new Pullman network launched by the Accor group. Forming part of a relaunch strategy for these top-of-the-range establishments, Pullman aims to offer businessmen and women a new range of services corresponding to the expected levels of excellence.

Pullman Brussels Airport
Bessenveldstraat, 15
1831 Brussels
T. +32(0)2 713 66 66
www.accorhotels.com

WAFFLES SNEAKER DELICACIES

At the end of the très chic Rue Dansaert, a stone's throw from the canal, a hyper-trendy boutique dedicated to the sale of fashionable sneakers has recently opened its doors. Laid out with real flair, the store offers around sixty exclusive models presented in alcoves that recall the shape of...a waffle. And those with sensitive noses will even detect a delicious waffle aroma in the air. Quite simply sublime!

Waffles Sneaker Delicacies
Rue Antoine Dansaert, 189
1000 Brussels
T. +32(0)2 219 05 75
www.ilovewaffles.be

Left to right:
- Bozarshop
- Giorgio Armani
Cosmetics Corner
- Pullman
Brussels Airport
- Waffles

Jérôme Stéfanski



Kris Van Assche's
Spring-Summer
2008
fashion show

© Gaëtan Bernard

KRIS VAN ASSCHE: KEEPING IT REAL

Forget the old gag about not knowing ten famous Belgians - in the first of a new regular feature, we profile renowned 'plat pays' residents. This month, a look at the young fashion doyen whose outfits are worn by stars the world over, but who's kept his feet firmly on the ground. Meet Kris Van Assche - his designs may be fantastic but, for KVA, being 'realistic' is key.



Kris Van Assche:
realistic dreamer

Tilda Swinton, Justin Timberlake, Chris Martin from Coldplay, Jude Law. A list of front-page names that would grace any red carpet. And they have another trait in common; their taste for garments that have sprung from the imagination of 31-year-old Belgian fashion designer Kris Van Assche.

And he's as precocious as he is passionate - his appointment as Dior Homme's Artistic Director in April 2007 is merely the latest blaze of glory from a young man whose career to date fully deserves the 'meteoric' moniker. Not only can KVA boast of having worked for the biggest and best, he's also launched his own brand, sold in more than 140 outlets worldwide.



Kris Van Assche's
Spring-Summer
2008
fashion show

© Gaëtan Bernard

Not bad for a student who was forever being told "Express yourself!" by his professors at the Royal Academy of Arts in Antwerp, from where he graduated in 1998 with a BA Fashion and Design Diploma.

Part of his success doubtless lies in the fact that he remained true to his design principles: "I was...the most 'realistic' student in my class," he explains, "but I always took care to make my creations wearable." Ten years on, and it would thus appear that 'realism' has proved payable.

'I WAS THE MOST REALISTIC STUDENT IN MY CLASS BECAUSE I ALWAYS TOOK CARE TO MAKE MY CREATIONS WEARABLE'

'CREATIVE AND USEFUL'

Patrick De Muynck, marketing consultant for Belgian gentlemen's fabric manufacturer Scabal is also a designer and professor at

Van Aasche's Antwerp *alma mater*, and thus had the opportunity to contribute to his progress: "Kris was a neo-romanticist," De Muynck recalls, "driven by aestheticism and intuition, with a particular way of rejecting avant-garde modernism...He always described his collections as 'creative' and his garments 'useful'."

In Van Assche's own words: "I hope that people see my collections and my style in the same terms that are the most important to me - elegant, contemporary, real. I try to balance out elegance with reality. Try to offer a way to dress up without disguise. I truly hope that this is what attracts people. My clothes are nonchalant and beautiful. Unpretentious and real."

KVA's rise to the top began shortly after graduating, when Hedi Slimane, then artistic director for Yves Saint Laurent's male collections, got word of the prodigy's talent and took him on as a trainee. He learnt the tricks of the trade *post haste* ("One does not graduate from the Academy of Antwerp to remain

an assistant forever") fast becoming Slimane's right-hand man. When YSL was purchased by Gucci, Slimane left to join Christian Dior, taking the Belgian uberkind with him and together, they played an active role in the revival of the man division of Christian Dior.

KVA quickly established his personal mission statement: "To succeed, it is necessary to be surrounded by qualified people representing the commercial, financial, and particularly manufacturing aspects of the brand; people who can be trusted to manufacture quality clothing to deadline." Putting words into practice, Van Assche drew his team together ahead of time. He resigned from Dior in 2004, and the official inauguration of the Maison Kris Van Assche took place in September of the same year.

Fast forward to Spring 2007 - Dior and Hedi Slimane separate, with the latter citing a need for 100% control of his own marque. And the successor? Guess who - take a bow, M. Van Assche, Christian Dior's new artistic director: "The position at Dior Homme is a new, huge challenge; I am flattered and very happy to be there." KVA is now charged with changing the image of 'Dior Man' by accentuating the Dior heritage while at the same time exploiting 'modernity'.

PODIUM PERFECTION, STREET STYLE

Van Assche's neo-classic style is now unanimously renowned. Balanced and sporting deceptive traditional appearances, his creations conceal a multitude of discrete and well thought-out details. As he declares: "There is an immense gap between what is worn in the street and on the podium. I chose to imagine clothing that my friends and myself would really want to wear...male fashion needs this balance today."

And his attitude towards success? Determinedly down to earth: "I love what I do, so, even faced with the most wonderful opportunities, you have this

sort of calm and distance, because, yes, things can get better, but they're already very nice...I realized my dream by starting my own label. It allows me to fully express my own aesthetic and ideas. When I started in Autumn 2004, it was really a big adventure; we did not know that the first show in January 2005 would be received as well as it was. It still is a big adventure. Sometimes, I cannot believe that I have shown six collections, six collections that are being sold, and I now am working on the next season... while it is a lot of pressure, it is also a lot of pleasure and self-fulfilment. Sales are very, very important - it is a business, after all. I have had seasons where some reviews weren't good, but the collection sold better than those with favourable notices."

And his ideas for the future? "I get a lot of my ideas from watching people. Random people. The 'Man on the Street' inspires me. No particular type of man - what I notice is a particular way of wearing something - taking a shirt and making it look individual. Unfashionable things sometimes inspire me - a crunched-up sleeve, a collar that's too large - and then I make something elegant from it."

Spoken like a true Belgian realist...

Jérôme Stéfanski

THE ROAD TO CHIC

- 12 May 1976:

Born in Londerzeel, Belgium

- 1994-1998: The Royal Academy of Arts, Antwerp - Studied Fashion and Design

- 1998: Graduates with a BA diploma in Fashion and Design

- September 2004: House of Kris Van Assche opens

- January 2005: Collection No 1 (Autumn-Winter 05-06 showcased in Communes, Paris)

- June 2006: Collection No 4 (Spring-Summer 07)

- April 2007: Kris Van Assche is appointed Dior Homme Artistic Director

LIGHT COLOURS

glasses
GIORGIO ARMANI
polo blue
RALPH LAUREN
polo green
LACOSTE
polo pistachio
AGNES B
jacket
MARLBORO
CLASSIC

photos
ANTOINE FONTAINE
styling
GEOFFREY MASURE
@ TOUCH
by DOMINIQUE
hair and make-up
FLORENCE SAMAIN
@ TOUCH
by DOMINIQUE
for CHANEL
AND REDKEN
model
OLIVIER L.
@ DOMINIQUE
MODELS
assistant photographer
SELIM DJEGHAM
studio
WWW.STUDIOS202.COM

glasses
LAFONT
shirt
PRADA
bow tie
LANVIN
sweater
HACKETT
suit
RYKIEL
HOMME
sneakers
REEBOK





glasses
DIOR HOMME
t-shirt and scarf
FILIPPA K
jacket and belt
HACKETT
watch
ROLEX



jacket
FILIPPA K
polo
LACOSTE
sweater
HACKETT

shirt and pants
RALPH LAUREN
tie
FILIPPA K
cashmere
and jacket
MAISON DEGAND



polo
SCAPA
sweater
SIGI
bow tie
APRIL 77
belt
HACKETT
pants
PEPE JEANS
shoes
RYKIEL HOMME



Find out more information
about the brands
on their websites:

www.agnesb.com
www.april77.fr
www.degand.be
www.dior.com
www.filippa-k.com
www.giorgioarmani.com
www.hackett.com
www.lacoste.com
www.lafont.com
www.lanvin.com
www.marboroclassics.be
www.pepejeans.com
www.prada.com
www.ralphlauren.com
www.rbk.com
www.rolex.com
www.scapafashion.com
www.sigifashion.com
www.soniarykiel.com

DRESS ME UP

Sevil:
tweed suit
PAULE KA
handbag Coquin by
DELVAUX
ring
REMINISCENCE

photos
ERCAN
styling
GEOFFREY MASURE
@ TOUCH
by DOMINIQUE
hair and make-up
CHRISTELLE LAURENT
@ TOUCH
by DOMINIQUE
@ GUERLAIN & REDKEN
models
SEVIL & JONATHAN
@ DOMINIQUE MODELS
& ILIR @ MINISTAR
dog
Chinese Crested
special thanks
TANDEM, SUMO,
UNLIMITED PR
& PR STULE
SOPHIE CARRE



Sevil:
glasses
DIOR
necklace
and earrings
REMINISCENCE
flower-print dress
SONIA RYKIEL
gloves by
DELVAUX
stockings
DORE DORE
sandals
COMPTOIR
DES COTONNIERS



Jonathan:
glasses
EMPORIO
ARMANI
t-shirt & watch
CALVIN KLEIN
suit
HUGO BOSS

Sevil:
raincoat
SOFIE D'HOORE
blouse & skirt
LES HOMMES
leather belt
DELVAUX
wicker handbag
PAULE KA
stockings
CETTE

Sevil
long dress
GUESS
necklace
and earrings
REMINISCENCE
silver bracelet
DODO

handbag
DELVAUX

Jonathan
tuxedo
with front-pocket
& butterfly
cravat Maison
DEGAND
shirt
RYKIEL HOMME



Jonathan:
 polo-neck sweater
 GUCCI
 lined suit
 GENTILUOMO



Jonathan:

jacket
 HACKETT
 polo & pull
 LACOSTE
 belt
 GUCCI
 watch
 GUESS
 bag
 GENTILUOMO
 jeans
 LEVI'S
 shoes
 PALLADIUM

Sevil:

dress
 FILIPPA K
 white mac
 POINT VIRGULE
 bracelets,
 lipstick by
 DELVAUX
 stockings
 YVES
 SAINT LAURENT
 handbag
 LOYD MAISH
 shoes
 SONIA RYKIEL

Ilir:

suit
 TOMMY HILFINGER
 shoes
 PALLADIUM



Together Magazine
 would like to thank
 Dominique Models
 Agency for
 the production
 of this photo-shoot.

Find out more information about the brands on their websites:

www.levistrauss.com, www.loydmaish.it, www.palladiumshoes.com, www.pauleka.com,
www.pointvirgule.be, www.puma.com, www.reminiscence.fr, www.sofiedhoore.be, www.tommy.com,
www.ysl.com, www.zadig-et-voltaire.com, www.beo-original.com, www.calvinklein.com, www.cette.com,
www.chanel.com, www.chinecollection.com, www.comptoirdescotonniers.com, www.delvaux.com,
www.diorhomme.com, www.dore-dore.com, www.emporioarmani.com, www.gentiluomo.nl,
www.guess.com, www.gucci.com, www.hermes.com, www.hugoboss.com, www.jmweston.com

CLOSE-UP COVERAGE

'Only when a man does not love a woman is he not afraid of sleeping with her' - **Jacques Brel**

'Love leaves a trail of suffering in its wake, a bit like when you've had a piss and you can smell your fingers'
- **Benoît Poelvoorde**

'Creation and love are the two forces of life. Nothing endures like creation and love' - **Jean-Claude Van Damme**

'Silence is the most beautiful proof of love' - **Amélie Nothomb**

'True love does exist, but it's really not that interesting... why not accept this, enjoy life and follow your passing fancies? They're so much more gratifying and enjoyable!'
- **Candy Bitch**

LABOUR OF LOVE

Page 78	Ang Lee: Angry love
Page 80	Sensual secrets
Page 86	Working out adultery
Page 96	Paint the town red
Page 100	The scent of desire
Page 102	In the name of the rose
Page 106	Love on the table

ANG LEE: ANGRY LOVE

***Lust, Caution* has courted controversy with its graphic depiction of a forbidden affair in Japanese-occupied Shanghai, 1942 - director Ang Lee speaks to *Together Magazine* about pushing emotional boundaries for art.**

The battle-lines are clearly drawn in World War II Japanese-occupied Shanghai – and young Chinese woman Wong Chia Chi (a startling performance from Wei Tang) is still undercover behind them. Her involvement with a group of drama-society students some years previously has led to her involvement in an ambitious plan to assassinate a top Japanese collaborator, Mr. Yee (Tony Leung Chiu Wai) whose trust she has gained by posing as Mrs Mak, befriending his wife (Joan Chen) and then drawing him into an affair. But the emotional transformation that Wong has had to undergo is set to bring terrible consequences...

'HUNTER AND PREY'

Taiwanese director Ang Lee, 53, is no stranger to depicting the chains forged by emotion – his previous film, *Brokeback Mountain* (2005), won him an Academy Award for Best Director, with its portrayal of two 1960s cowboys, torn by their love for

each other that dared not speak its name. Here, Lee has once again taken a short story as his inspiration – author Eileen Chang speaks of the man/woman relationship in her story as being about “the occupier and the occupied” and “hunter and prey” and this forms the thrust of Lee's perspective: “I thought the short story was written like a movie, like a detective movie, and I think we're relatively loyal to her writing.”

As far as the sex scenes were concerned, angry, confrontational congress that takes no prisoners, Lee had his vision clearly defined: “They were really why I wanted to film the story – what Wong Chia Chi chooses to do for patriotism, the idea aroused my curiosity, stirred up my demons, if you like.”

DEEP, DISTURBED EMOTION

But what did the director find the hardest to handle emotionally, the sex or the politics? “The actual shooting of the sex was very difficult for me, psychologically – the shyness comes in trying to verbalise what I wanted to shoot, particularly when it deals with really deep, disturbed emotion, as is the case in this film.”

After the 12 days that it took to film the sex scenes (“twelve and a half”, Lee interjects), weren't the actors

Ang Lee brings
raw emotion
to the screen

emotionally drained? “I don't know about the actors, but I'm talking about me, and yes, definitely,” he chuckles. “At a human level, it was very hard to withstand – I really don't know where the actors went to find what they did, but it was my responsibility to ensure that there was no emotional damage. There are other directors who might be OK with it, take it easy, but I can't.”

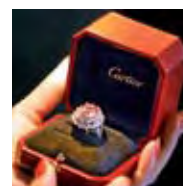
Lee has quickly established himself as one of the world's best directors – his back-catalogue includes *The Ice Storm* (1997), but it was his *Wo hu cang long* (2000) (aka *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*) that is considered one of his greatest works, a sprawling period film and martial-arts epic that, not unlike *Lust, Caution*, deals with love, loyalty and loss.

Lee seems attracted to self-destructive characters trying to escape the confines of a given society or mental state, be it latent homosexuals in *Brokeback Mountain* or even an obsessive scientist in *Hulk* (2003). Why? “I think for my next film, I'm going to try and break away from that pattern, but, yes, I've been using that since my first movie. I believe it reflects my own life – I'm a Libra, so always looking for what I think is absolutely the right thing to do, or maybe it's because I'm a scared fellow. I have a tendency to want to please and confirm people, but maybe I have a tendency inside to go against that... I don't know.

“Setting up obstacles is a good way to examine, cinematically, how characters overcome obstacles, and you see some truth of humanity – maybe that's just the way that I want to do it. I wish that I had a better way to do it – I'll keep searching.”

*Released in Brussels
on 30 January. 157 mins.
www.cineart.be*

James Drew



The 6.1 carat
diamond worn
in *Lust, Caution*

CARTIER CRACKER

Internationally renowned French jeweller Cartier has its own starring role in Ang Lee's *Lust, Caution* – a one-of-a-kind 6.1 carat Cartier white and pink diamond ring makes its debut in the film on the digit of lead actress Wei Tang.

To further their involvement with the film, Cartier has created a plum-coloured *Lust, Caution LoveCharity* bracelet with Lee to benefit the Film Foundation, which was created in 1990 by Martin Scorsese to promote film preservation. \$100 from the sale of each \$475 silk cord bracelet with gold miniature Love ring will be donated to the foundation.

www.cartier.com
www.film-foundation.org

**'WHAT WONG
CHIA CHI
CHOOSES TO DO
FOR PATRIOTISM,
THE IDEA
AROUSSED MY
CURIOSITY,
STIRRED UP
MY DEMONS'**



SENSUAL SECRETS

Whether decorated with printed flowers, embroidered lace, woven silk or hand-sewn white corsets, modern lingerie comes in a thousand and one styles, all ideal for a St. Valentine's Day gift.

*The Romantic:
Dim*

Colours, class and comfort, the season's watchwords, bring creativity to the unadorned female form - Spring's undergarments are the definition of femininity and fit for all tastes: languorous lace, glamorous push-ups, baroque brassieres, natural printed cotton - for under her clothes, a woman can now choose the look that suits! Simple, comfortable, easy-to-wear styles, mix with embroidered g-strings, uplift supports and structured gussets. Feminine, smart, shocking, nice or naughty - go with the flow! To each their own desire...

*The Seductress:
La Perla*



THE ROMANTIC

The season's fresh and fruity colours are in step with nature - the flowers bursting into life outdoors are also set to festoon wardrobes, to romantics' great delight. Garlands of embroidered flowers enhance the luminosity of briefs, g-strings and tangas - satin brings key refinement while fruity pink tones complement embroideries of flowers on lace. Plunging necklines, semi-transparent whites, the refinement of pearl and long-line bras with satin ribbons all play their part, while a range of slips, strings and tangas will doubtless draw envious glances from the romantically inclined...

THE SEDUCTRESS

Female undergarments are obviously key to the art of seduction - corsets, sexy laces and embroideries are kissing cousins to shorts, g-strings, boxers and push-ups in the branded collections that populate ladies' underwear drawers. But the sly seductress will go for sexily plunging necklines and constant colors - black, red, quickly! Lingerie should be worn in the mornings as well as evenings - bring a touch of glamour with his daily newspaper, perhaps? It would also seem that the present trend is towards self-assured femininity as true seduction, a concept that characterizes the Ejaby, Elixir and Le Bourgetin brands in particular. Corsets and garter belts

BIGGER BELGIAN BUSTS

Renowned Belgian brand Prima Donna, which, along with Marie Jo et l'Aventure, forms part of the Van de Velde group, has announced that, over the past 15 years, Belgian women's busts appear to have grown considerably. Liesbeth Van de Velde, grand-daughter of Prima Donna's founding family, told Together: "In 1992, based on our sale studies, the average size was a75B. Today, it's 75C."



*The Sensualist:
Lejaby*

have made a noticeable comeback, particularly as a corset can also complement a shirt very well. Underwear accentuates natural beauty - the seductress perhaps wishes, secretly, that her underwear could be seen, without, of course, suggesting any detail. Ah, the seductress...

THE SENSUALIST

Whether she leans towards glam rock'n'roll with the whiff of scandal or perhaps towards silky balconnets with fabulous straps, the 'hip attitude' fanatic loves to fill her wardrobe with alluring lingerie, graced with evocative, alluring tweaks. Hip lingerie is defined as much by its shape as by the pallet of its colors: monochromatic shades such as blue oil or diluted pink compete with sharp prints on fabric. How to choose?

And the unmissable find of the season?

The latest addition to the Wonderbra collection, a new master in the fine art of cheating when it comes to making men's heads whirl: the bra with 'Baptized

STOCKINGS TO ORDER

Why waste time buying your tights and stockings downtown, where proper fitting is rarely possible? Be among the first to discover Silk in A Box, where you will find a large range of traditional, fashionable stockings and tights for every occasion. It couldn't be easier; wherever and whenever you require, Silk in A Box will send your purchases directly to your letter-box (be it at home or work, under plain cover) and for the same price as you'd find in shops... www.silkinabox.be

Nipples', two small, perfectly moulded points!

THE NOSTALGIA-LOVER

An air of nostalgia...reminiscent of early 20th-century lingerie, all modest handkerchiefs and safety pins! But nostalgic styles, always

associated with 'good' girls, nevertheless exhibit a very simple sensuality, discrete and purified but still beautifully suggestive. Briefs, sexy strings and tangas set the scene, while pure pastel colours, such as pink and creamy shades, melt naturally on the skin...

*The Nostalgia-Lover:
Princesse tam.tam*



*The Sophisticate:
Marie Jo*

Hanro at
D-Underwear
Rue Antoine
Dansaert, 47
1000 Brussels
T. +32(0)2 541.27.31
www.dunderwear.be

La Perla
Boulevard
de Waterloo, 47
1050 Brussels
T. +32(0)2 649 99 80
www.laperla.com

Lejaby at
Droit de Regard
Rue Xavier De Bue, 68
1180 Brussels
T. +32(0)2 343 18 85
www.lejaby.com

Marie Jo, Marie Jo
L'Aventure
& **Prima Donna at**
Charme de Lune
Avenue de Fré, 213B
1180 Brussels
T. +32(0)2 375 89 59
www.charmedelune.be

*The best Brussels
boutiques in which
to buy lingerie are:*

Dim
Chaussée de
Bruxelles, 234
1410 Waterloo
T. +32(0)2 351 23 15
www.dim.be

**Passionata,
Simone Pérèl
& Wonderbra**
Inno Louise
Avenue Louise, 12
1050 Brussels
T. +32(0)2 513 84 94
And also at
Inno Bascule,
Inno rue Neuve
and Inno Woluwe
www.inno.be

Princesse tam.tam
Rue Antoine
Dansaert, 9
1000 Brussels
T. +32(0)2 511 07 01
www.princessetamtam.com

Selmark at
Louise Lingerie
Galerie Louise,
Shop 21
1050 Brussels
T. +32(0)2 503 04 01
www.selmark.be

THE SOPHISTICATE

No matter whether the sweater or dress is machine-made in the bust or the back, the choice can be adapted: a traditional bra for clothing worn close to the body, with push-up lift, without straps or have them transparent straps - the choice is wide. And nobility counts - satin, lace, silk and net curtain will always lend an air of privilege! The only choice left is between lace breeches, g-string or shorts, according to whether one wears a bra, a corset or a basque, not forgetting the importance of suspenders, a must for any woman who does not want to lose her 'shape' throughout the day or evening. Lastly, if you so wish, reveal your gorgeous bra under a beautiful jacket or transparent shirt...

Ludivine Nolf

WORKING OUT ADULTERY

JFK, Bill Clinton, Nicolas Sarkozy - the list of famous adulterers is long. But, in reality, according to our resident therapist, sex at the office is often much less glamorous and it's not only the wife and children who end up hurt...

More than 11 percent of women and 21 percent of men admitted to having an adulterous affair during their lives

© ControlIV



At 53, he's already been taking coaching sessions for a few months. He says he wants to reorientate his professional career, but he has so many irrational thoughts that he needs someone to talk to. He complains that nothing motivates him any longer - life seems dull.

And then, one day, he demands an immediate meeting. I see a man in shock. When he came home that evening, he found three suitcases outside the front door, with a letter from his wife, announcing that he could contact her lawyer, who had proof of his extramarital affair. The locks on all the doors had been changed. She had taken the children, and she never wanted to see or speak to him again.

He manages the Belgian branch of a multinational. I know him to be a very talented manager, with a good career that's had its ups and downs, some of them difficult to disguise in his resumé. Quick-thinking (perhaps a little too fast for some), very strategic (a bridge too far for others), handsome to those who like his type, with a boyish attractiveness that makes him stand out from the 'beer bellies' crowd.

He dreams of becoming a small-scale entrepreneur - we have covered that already. He knows he is having what they call a 'midlife crisis' and that basically he is becoming depressed.

THE AFFAIR HAS NEVER BEEN MENTIONED DURING THE COACHING. THAT IS, UNTIL THE STORM HITS THE COAST AND FINDS ITS DUNES AND EMBANKMENTS ILL PREPARED

LONELY ROAD

He's going through the painful process that has already had so many victims in management circles - international leadership moving in and taking over

decision-making, steamrolling over delicate local structures, customs and practices, breaking up human relations. Meetings abroad with far too many participants, no way to influence decisions, with only frustration as a pay-off. Two or three nights in the ubiquitous lonely hotel. Bar camaraderie at night fueled by too much single malt whisky and lonely porn to suffocate the longings in the hotel room. When he comes home from a trip, he hardly says hello to his wife and kids, slumps in front of the TV and starts watching ever-harder porn, even at home.

From what he tells me I know his wife to be a very bright, resilient businesswoman, a top consultant with her own firm and a fabulous figure, even after having had three children. She has become more and more successful in her work, getting into the top league, handling very delicate dossiers, working longer and longer hours.

But every time he comes home and wants her to look at a dirty movie, she gets more and more hurt. But she has a motto: be strong. Never explain, never complain. And then she's becoming ill. Psychosomatic, says her doctor. The menopause, madam. Here, take these pills, they help. They make for what is called an 'attractive society couple.' Agreeable company. He has never mentioned the affair during our coaching sessions. That is, until the storm hits the coast and finds its dunes and embankments ill prepared.

TEMPTATION CALLS

He blurts it out. At the Christmas party, a married woman starts small talk. He hardly knows her. She looks at him with big, admiring eyes, drinking in everything he says as if it's manna from heaven. It's balm for his wounded soul. He feels wonderful. She's even interested in his children's school results. They go for lunch. She proposes a restaurant out of town, in the woods. They walk

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a bit before returning to the office. He kisses her, she yields willingly. Nothing much is said. They understand each other so perfectly.

If ever he had dreamed about a mistress, he could not have wished for better. No, she's not even thinking about a divorce: she still loves her husband and her family. She's just so irresistibly attracted to him: she can't help herself. And so they become lovers. Every one or two weeks they slip away to their favourite refuge that is, coincidentally, also a small hotel. He is lured into the false intimacy of a text relationship: adolescent excitement during boring meetings. And then she starts texting him at home. He thinks his faithful wife must have picked up his beeping mobile and checked his inbox. He knows that the messages leave nothing to the imagination: "I'm yearning for your beautiful body and, by the way, how were the children's exams?"

TRUTH HURTS

His lawyer shows him the humiliating dossier that a private detective has assembled. His wife wants an instant separation and a fast divorce. She hangs up on him. He finds a furnished apartment. They agree he can see the children every other weekend. His sons and daughter move around like strangers at the small cheerless place, looking at him as if he is from Mars, munching their pizzas. His

mistress is now cold comfort. She does not want to leave her husband and cannot see him more often. As the excitement of hidden sin evaporates, she looks suddenly much less attractive. His whole life collapses. His company makes his job redundant by

merging Belgium and Holland.

Their lawyers have come up with a very convincing dossier showing that he did a bad job and that they don't owe him his stock options, so he has to hire yet another lawyer. It takes a month of hard fighting to get out on a not-too dishonourable basis.

I suggest that he offers his wife at least a shared-counselling contract, without any pressure on the outcome, but he is hard to convince. It's his daughter that creates the breakthrough. Mum and dad start visiting a relationship therapist. It takes months before they can talk to each other without screaming or tears, even in the presence of my colleague. After more coaching, he begins to see the pattern and what he can do about it. The other option. The fact that adultery was a consequence, not a cause. He accepts to look inside himself instead of around him for solutions and starts finding them. And lo and behold... she misses him too.

TERMS OF RE-ENDEARMENT

He accepts her terms for a retry. Never see the other woman again (no problem: with the excitement gone, their lovemaking had become mechanical, anyway). Change his behaviour. A tough one, that one - she calls it a 'remarriage'. He has 'lost' his wedding ring anyway, and she has taken hers off. They begin with weekends away, still sleeping apart. He's slow to learn, but he learns. To listen. To see her point of view too. To be people-, instead of task-oriented. He just listens to what she has to say - he had no clue his behaviour had been that awful. One day she decides to come clean to the therapist and admits she had already been considering a divorce for years and that she had, on more than one occasion, the opportunity to do what he did. She did not act upon it, because of the children - she is a devoted mother.

When his not-so golden handshake is

AFTER MORE COACHING, HE BEGINS TO SEE THE PATTERN AND WHAT HE CAN DO ABOUT IT. THE OTHER OPTION. THE FACT THAT ADULTERY WAS A CONSEQUENCE, NOT A CAUSE



paid, he decides to invest in a small service company with an old friend. They have no money for secretaries and learn to do everything by themselves. He does not earn even a third of his wife's salary. She accepts him back in the house in the evenings when she's away professionally, for the children. When she's on her way home she texts him, so he's left when she arrives. He accepts everything: he's so busy learning to feel that he forgets to be humiliated. Then, one evening, she does not text and stands there. Very vulnerable. She accepts his embrace, but nothing more. He sleeps in their bed. A week later they make love, for the first time since it all began. Their therapist says that around one third of her clients who file for divorce after adultery finally manage to stay together. This couple is one of them.

The children go back to normal, their school results getting better again. They all receive counselling, but it's him talking to them and listening that begins the healing process. "I've been very, very lucky," he says.

THE JOURNALIST

Josephine Overeem, 62, is a professional 'life coach'. She works both with companies to instill a lasting coaching culture and also offers individualised therapy. Her motto: "There is always another choice."

Couples who receive counselling have a much better chance of staying together

© Lou



ABUNDANT ADULTERY?

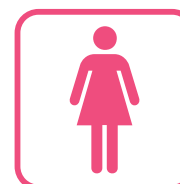
Alfred Kinsey's famous 1948 survey of American sexual behavior found that seven in 10 men had cheated on their wives, but more recent research shows that the prevalence of adultery is not so high. A study conducted in 2005 by the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center shows that slightly more than 11 percent of women and 21 percent of men admitted to having an adulterous affair during their lives.

According to *The Janus Report on Sexual Behaviour*: "More than one-third of men and one-quarter

of women admit having had at least one extramarital sexual experience." A survey by the National Opinion Research Center (University of Chicago) found lower percentages: 25 percent of men had been unfaithful and 17 percent of women. An article in a 1997 issue of *Newsweek* noted that various surveys suggest that as many as 30 percent of male Protestant ministers have had sexual relationships with women other than their wives. Does adultery have to end in divorce? Only about 35 percent of couples remain together after the discovery of an adulterous affair; the other 65 percent divorce.

DEFEATING DIVORCE

The five basic needs WOMAN:



AFFECTION

To most women this symbolizes security, protection, comfort and approval. It is basic. It can go from hugging to dinners out, from back rubs to kisses in the neck, from flowers to opening the car door.

CONVERSATION

Any man should learn to listen. The classic empathic sales tool of "active listening", with open questions, serves its purpose very well at home, too. It is a highway into her heart.

HONESTY AND OPENNESS

No sense of security without trust. No trust without an open, unambiguous attitude. Women have an antenna for contradictory information.

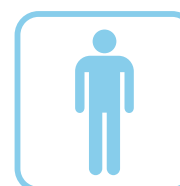
FINANCIAL FIDELITY

It might seem irrational but even if she has a good job too, she still needs to feel financially safe and well supported.

FAMILY FIRST

Being a good father and taking a leadership role in the family are very sexy to almost all women.

MAN:



SEXUAL FULFILLMENT

He needs this as much as she needs affection, but he'll have to understand that giving affection is the highway to getting great sex.

RECREATIONAL COMPANIONSHIP

He needs a playmate. She should organise this. At least from time to time join him in his interests, one way or the other. The rewards will be high.

AN ATTRACTIVE WIFE

A man wants other men to be jealous when he enters the restaurant with his companion. A wife that smells good and looks nice when he comes home might be difficult to realise, but hey: how did the wife do this when she was just his girlfriend?

DOMESTIC SUPPORT

It might take some wizardry, but coming home to a clean house, with the kids in pyjamas, a lovely dinner on the table, and a wife that has all the time in the world to hear him moan is a male fantasy. Don't wait till he gets the 'flu before taking care of him.

ADMIRATION

It's not only more flies that you catch with honey than vinegar - find a reason to praise him, however small. He'll feel like the world is his oyster again. Make him feel that you're proud of him. Men can take huge amounts of flattery without even blinking.

From *His Needs, Her Needs: Building an Affair-Proof Marriage* by Dr. Willard Harley.

The warning
signs are easy
to spot

© Hotblack

MID-LIFE CRISIS: TELL-TALE POINTERS

You can't stop thinking about
the babysitter.

You no longer recognize yourself
in the mirror.

You buy running shoes,
a motorbike, a convertible.

Your life seems boring.

You don't sleep well any more,
but you fall asleep in front of the TV.

You can't stand your boss's
incompetence any longer.

You can't stop yourself from yelling
irrationally at your wife, children
and secretary.

What's happened to your hair?

You feel like leaving it all behind you.

You have a burn out after a major
stress event and can't get over it.

You start watching porn.

You're too tired to make love.

You start having affairs.

You do things that cause raised
eyebrows among your friends.

Your best friend advises you:
"Get help, you're having a mid-life crisis."

You don't even think about it - there's
nothing wrong with you.

42 THE 'MOUNTAIN-TOP' YEAR

When coaching
someone older than
40, I like to talk about
the psychological
'seven-year' itch.

At seven, a child has its own teeth
and is beginning to read. At 14, the
hormones kick in and the mind and soul
begin to mature. At 21, you're supposed
to be an adult. In reality, after scrutinizing
hundreds of résumés, I can confirm that
it's usually around 28 that one makes a
decisive professional choice. Until 35, it's
the golden years. And then, doubts settle
in. Who am I? What do I want? Where
do I go? Is this all there is?

I call 42 the mountaintop-year. You can
look both ways. From then, on it goes
down. For women, but also for men,
the hormonal changes set in. The
metabolism slows down at an ever faster
pace: exercise is still possible, but it
takes longer and longer to recuperate.
Even frantic workouts and extensive
wellness cures can't hide the fact that
youth is slipping away.

I'd also like to point out – as Jung taught
us – that men do have a female soul
(Anima) and women a male core (Animus).
At the top of our life, it's about time
to integrate this hidden part into our
consciousness. Either you do it, or it
does you. Up to then, women have lived
very much inside their physical body:
their monthly periods, being pregnant
and giving birth are physical processes
that have a large hormonal impact. After

42, it's time to turn to the outside world,
to reverse the energy. The menopause
and the following climacterium can – if
well accompanied – be turned to your
advantage. The empty nest can reveal
itself to be a blessing in disguise. I know
many women who began a very
convincing second life after 42.

For men, it's more difficult. The world is
their oyster. At 42, when the inevitable
dynamics of body, soul and mind
demand that they start to look inside,
they often seem ill-prepared to do so.
So they start running (often literally).
Running away from their first wife,
running from or into their job, running
as if the devil were on their heels -
the French expression for a midlife
crises, *demon du midi*, says it so well.
Lowering testosterone means that
their libido needs more stimuli from
the female partner than it did at 20 or 30.
Middle-aged husbands tend to have
more accidents, choose irrational job
switches and run away from their inner
demons with ever-younger women
more often than their wives do.

Josephine Overeem

PAINT THE TOWN RED

Red, the colour of fire. Red, the colour of life. Red, the colour of passion. Red, the colour of love. Red, the colour of St. Valentine's Day!

FOR HER

1. MER DU NORD

This patent-leather bag will quickly become your darling's most essential accessory. After you, of course... 98€
www.merduNord.com

2. PIERRE MARCOLINI

The famous Cœur Framboise from Belgium's chicest chocolatier is now available, like a solitaire ruby, in its very own jewellery box. A beautiful way of declaring your passion. Also available in a 16-piece presentation set. 2.50€, www.marcolini.be

3. MANDARINA DUCK

This funky, cool GSM from Italian designer Mandarin Duck is equipped with an exclusive device that allows you to hang it inside your handbag. Result? No further 'excavations' needed to put your hand on your phone. Sharp! 129€, www.thephonehouse.be

4. THOMAS SABO

A hymn to eternal *amour*, the True Love collection proves that Thomas Sabo is now an internationally renowned brand. Pendant: 99€
Earrings: 98€
Ring: 139€
www.thomassabo.com

5. LE CREUSET

Dear ladies, do not see this as a macho gift! Rather, look upon it as an irresistible

declaration – in offering you this casserole dish, with its immaculately enamelled cast-iron heart, it proves that he's in love with your cooking, period. 70€, www.lecreuset.fr

6. LANCÔME

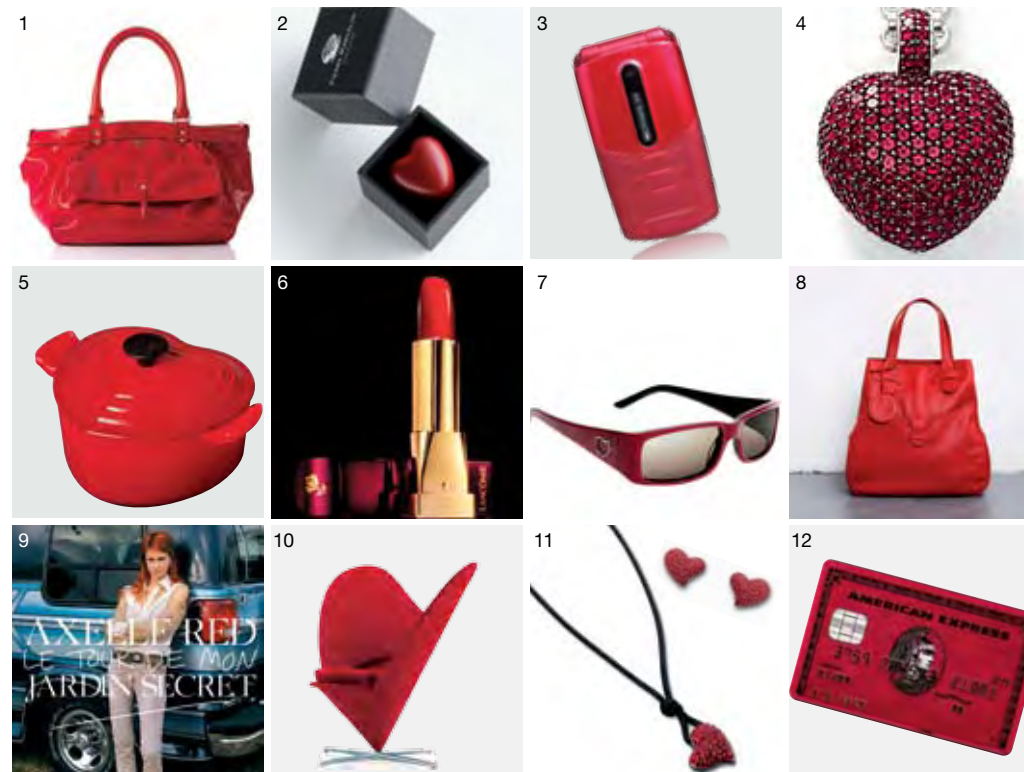
Impress your darling by recounting the fascinating history of this mythical lipstick. Splendid reinterpretation of Clé de Coquette, created in 1951, Le Rouge Absolu offers an exclusive limited-edition collection named Désir, thus paying homage to the colour Red Named Desire, launched by Lancôme at the same time as the Marlon Brando/Vivien Leigh classic, *A Streetcar Named Desire*. 26€, www.lancome.com

7. BLUE BLAY

As sporty as they are glamorous, these sunglasses are the finishing touch to allow your beloved to descend *les pistes* with elegance... for a very small price. 79€, www.safilo.com

8. FLOS FERRI

Delvaux is not the only creative Belgian producing outstanding leather creations - the young designer Julien Claes proves his worth with the launch of the ambitious Flos Ferri range, its name taken from Spanish legend - the tears of a girl, who wept ceaselessly upon the death



of her lover, crystallized when they touched the ground to form the iron-red flower, or Flos Ferri. So romantic... 340€, www.flosferri.com

9. AXELLE RED

Belgium's reddest singer returns with a DVD of live performances from her My Secret Garden tour. An enchantress. 30€, www.axelle-red.com

10. VITRA

Designed by Verner Panton in 1959, Heart Cone Chair has large projections reminiscent of Mickey Mouse's ears that could also, however, be interpreted as a contemporary take on the classic wing chair. Laminated body, satin stainless-steel base, polyurethane foam upholstery. 2,410€
www.brussels.vitrpoint.net

11. SWAROVSKI

Refinement and elegance are the watchwords for these jewels, made by the greatest crystal creator in the world. A highly accessible must-have. Pendant: 51€
Earrings: 70€

12. AMERICAN EXPRESS

She never stops borrowing your credit card to go shopping with her friends? Then offer her American Express Red. As well as being more chic, this card is also charitable - every time that it's used, American Express will donate 1% of your purchase costs to the Global Fund To Fight AIDS in Africa. No annual fee. Typical 16.9% APR Variable. www.americanexpress.com

FOR HIM

1. YON-KA

Essential oils to take care of your man's skin – otherwise, who else will? A complete range from Yon-Ka.
Scrub Mousse - 50ml: 23€
Masque - 75ml: 27€
Gel Mousse - 100 ml: 23€
Lotion YK - 150 ml: 27€
Shaving cream - 100 ml: 23.10€
Nutri-Cream - 40 ml: 37€
Anti-Age - 40 ml: 42€
Eye Gel - 15 ml: 32€
www.house-of-beauty.be

2. KITCHEN AID

Does he love toast for breakfast? Then visit *Mmmmh!* without further ado, and buy him this irresistible toaster - it's a design classic.
From 279€
www.mmmmh.be

3. WORLD CLASS

Champagne, foie gras, game dishes... the end-of-year festivals took their toll on his Apollo-esque physique, adding a few extra kilos. Solution? A World Class subscription. Presented in a superb box, this gift will open the doors of Belgium's three premier fitness centres (Brussels-Diegem-Antwerpen).
Price on demand
www.worldclass.be

4. TOM & CO

For months, he's been begging to share

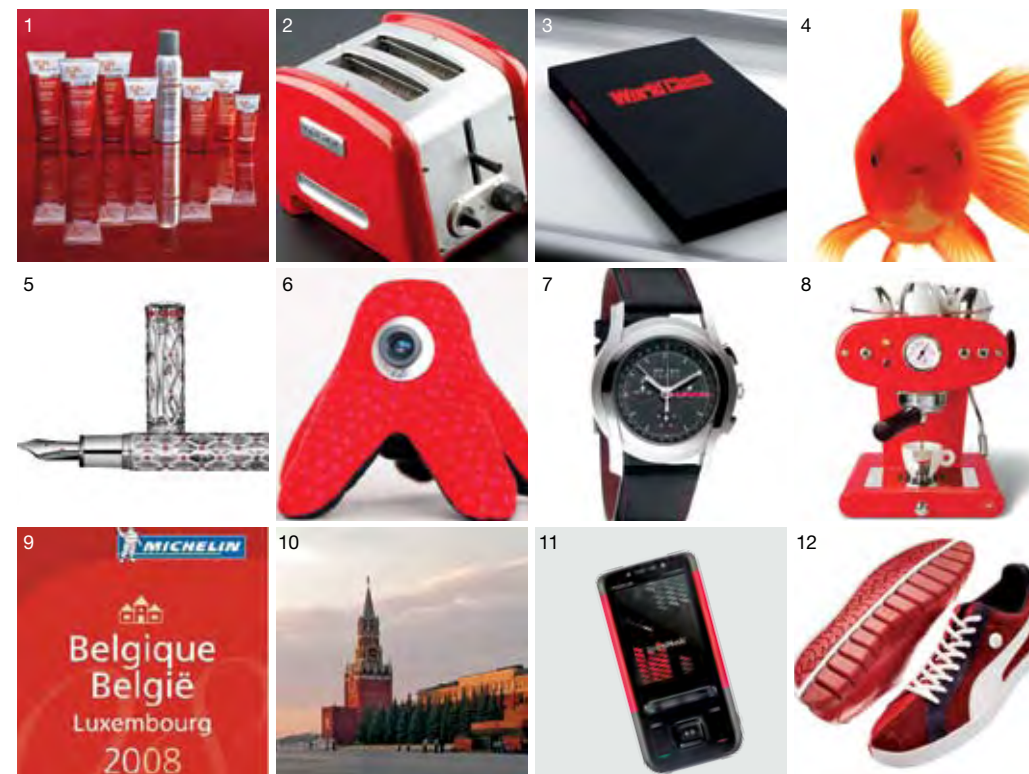
your home with a doggie. But dog hairs provoke your allergy and, besides, you know who'll leave Médor in the rain while Monsieur reads his newspaper. A good piece of advice? Begin gradually, by offering him this adorable Carassius Auratus, better known as the Red Lion.
3.05€, www.tomandco.be

5. MONTBLANC

Made as a homage to Prince Rainier III of Monaco, this sublime pen is limited to 81 examples worldwide, the sovereign's age when he passed away. The red and white rhombuses symbolise the Grimaldi family's arms - rubies, white gold, mother-of-pearl and diamonds combine to form an exceptional piece. 51% of its sale profits will be donated to the Princess Grace Foundation, a charitable organization that Rainier supported.
230,000€
www.montblanc.com

6. UNITED PEPPER

Designed in Belgium and made in Vietnam, this webcam will allow you to keep in touch with your companion during his business trips. Lili is manufactured entirely from renewable materials, under fair-trade regulations. Furthermore, the packaging is made from recycled material. What more could you ask for?
45€, www.unitedpepper.org



7. GUCCI

With this G Class Stopwatch chronometer on his wrist, there's no question of him ever being late for you again! The watch is also graced with multiple functions, including month, day of the week and date.
895€, www.gucci.com

8. ILLY

The third edition of the famous FrancisFrancis allows your man to put his very best foot forward every day.
495€, www.illy.com

9. MICHELIN

By giving him the 2008 Belgium Luxembourg Michelin Guide, chances are that you will soon be invited to the kingdom's very best restaurants! Now, isn't that an intelligent gift?
21.50€, www.amazon.co.uk

10. ESCAPE TRAVEL

What could be more romantic than a trip to Moscow to taste a local vodka on the world-famous Red Square? Escape Travel offers a four-day/three night stay in Moscow – flights from Brussels daily, except on Saturdays.
1,205€ per person, www.escapetravel.be

11. NOKIA

The Nokia 5610 allows you to store and enjoy photographs, video clips and musical files. A real guy's phone!
349€, www.nokia.com

12. PUMA

Had enough of his old tennis shoes? Take matters in hand! My-33 is the latest model footwear from the spring 2008 collection from famous Japanese creator Mihara Yasuhiro.
150€, www.puma.com

Jérôme Stéfanski

THE SCENT OF DESIRE

The time of rebirth and rediscovered pleasures, carefree Spring is synonymous with love. Like the season's first beautiful days, these fragrances will melt hearts and reanimate souls frozen by Winter. Ideal gifts, then, for 14th February...

FOR THE LADIES...

ROSE ESSENTIELLE BVLGARI

This elegant bouquet, composed of Othoman roses, patchouli and blackberry begins like a traditional Bvlgari, with its enveloping and sensual character. The key notes are dominated by two varieties of rose, the pure Prélude and the deeper, richer Turkish. At the scent's heart is fruity blackberry, softened by violet and jasmine. The delicate, seductive finish links wooded notes of patchouli and sandal-wood.
74.50€ (50ml)

L'EAU D'AMOUR JEAN-PAUL GAULTIER

JPG's ode to Spring's overtures. Its fresh blend of tangerine and coriander is an invitation to touch and kiss - Gaultier has also added the incomparably charming scents of amber, vanilla and musk; the

amber irradiates excitement and passion and, while musk is usually reserved for male fragrances, here it finds a place at the finish, discreetly fresh and crystalline, heating the bouquet perfectly.
49€ (60 ml)

PURE POISON CHRISTIAN DIOR

Pure Poison forms part of Christian Dior's exceptional trio, inspired by Chinese art, of limited edition fragrances Midnight Poison, Hypnotic Poison and Pure Poison. Locked in a bottle of opalescent transparency, Pure Poison has an ambiguity that charms and disarms. The narcotic softness of orange blossom mixes with gardenia's purity. Jasmine, bergamot and tangerine clarify and illuminate the top notes with their crystalline qualities while, in the ambergris and sandalwood, the seductive base notes of this fragrance are revealed.
78.75€ (40 ml)



FOR THE GENTLEMEN...

KITON BLACK

According to Ciro Paone, who created Maison Kiton in 1968, the fragrance Kiton Black was borne of a devotion to excellence and is intended for the true lovers of dress elegance. A sophisticated, very masculine scent - the first notes mix lemon, violet and red fruits, then the amber, leather and vetiver arrive. Perfectly suited to the philosophy of perfection preached by Neapolitan tailors.
54.70€ (75 ml)

CALVIN KLEIN MAN

Calvin Klein preaches an alluring, minimalist style. This philosophy is reflected perfectly in its latest perfume, baptized quite simply 'Man'. This new expression of the masculine ideal is sharp and laced with woody spices - a mixture refined by a semi-sparkling

freshness, and the black, brilliant enamelled bottle with chrome decor affirms the scent's purity and audacity.
54€ (50 ml)

COLONIA INTENSA D'ACQUA DI PARMA

Previously, all eau de Cologne d'Acqua di Parma have been unisex, but, owing to increasing demand, Gabriella Scarpa and her team have created an exclusively male fragrance. Modern, distinguished and intense, this fragrance is characterized by a sublime leather note that distinguishes it from all competitors. Resolutely virile without being aggressive, it marries notes composed of lemon, ginger, myrtle and artemis.
60.72€ (50 ml)

Pierre-Benoît Sepulchre



Nothing's left to chance - even the illumination is 'rosy'

© R.R.



IN THE NAME OF THE ROSE

To the great delight of Bruxpats, it's in the heart of Europe's capital that Rosy Rosa chose to establish its headquarters. In Geneva, Paris and Shanghai, it's already making them envious. Russians and Antwerp residents go crazy for it, and florists come from the four corners of Belgium for inspiration.

For a few months now, there have been rumbles in Brussels, whispers hinting at the opening of a new shop in the prestigious Galerie de la Reine, near Grand'Place. "An innovative concept", "a unique experiment" were the insiders' opinions in all the well-connected dinners and cocktail parties. The chatter, spread by the lucky people who had already had occasion to visit the establishment, was nothing short of eulogistic, but still a trifle vague. Perhaps a precise definition of the phenomenon is impossible - what really *is* concealed in Rosy Rosa? As a Fourth Estate representative, I decided to answer this question by meeting Nicolas Timsonet and Thierry Wirtz, the two 'founding fathers'.

IN THE BEGINNING, THE GALERIE

From the first moment, I can see that the pair takes joy in life and incorporates it into their work, just like their deliciously decorated shop. "Our desire was to restore the rank of royalty to the rose," Thierry explains. Barely eight months after the store's opening, it would appear that the ambition has been achieved..

Thierry was educated as an agricultural engineer, while Nicolas was and remains an interior architecture specialist. The pair had the good fortune to find a commercial

**'WE WANT
TO RESTORE
THE RANK OF
ROYALTY TO
THE ROSE!'**

outlet available in the Galerie de la Reine, but at that time, even though they were aware that this kind of opportunity does not come around too often, neither had found inspiration as to what exactly could be done with their new outlet.

Paradoxically, the impulse that led to Rosy Rosa was not commercial, but rather of a more sentimental nature. More precisely, the rose is to Thierry what Madeleine was to Proust. As Thierry says: "My grandmother kept a formidable rosary that I always used to visit before collecting the morning eggs. I adored this place – it was full of magic and perfume." So, one beautiful spring morning, Thierry was filled with nostalgia that brought these distant, happy memories flooding back - undeniably, it was time to restore the enchanted ambience conveyed by roses.

All that remained for the pair was to decide to collaborate in the Rosy Rosa adventure and to establish their intimate surroundings in the heart of the Galerie de la Reine. "It is a place that we particularly cherish," Thierry declares. "The Galerie de la Reine is synonymous with luxury, know-how, authenticity and attracts local and international clients of quality."

THE KINGDOM OF THE ROSE

Conceived and created entirely by Nicolas, the shop was designed to emphasize the flowers via neat and functional furniture. In order to best preserve the quality of 40 rose



Left - the fine art of Rosy cuisine

© R.R.

Right - appealing, intriguing, surprising, exciting, the boutique is dedicated to pleasure

© CC



Rosy Rosa
Galerie
de la Reine, 32
1000 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 502
32 32
www.rosyrosa.com

varieties, Nicolas developed a unique system - the 'piano'. This structure, laid out on two floors, has the advantage of permanently renewing the water in which the roses bathe, thus avoiding the excess formation of bacteria. The search for quality is at the heart of the mission: "A rose must live for a minimum of eight to ten days, and a maximum of three weeks. Every rose sold on the premises comes from Ecuador, a country with which Thierry and Nicolas have both maintained a privileged relationship. "Ecuador roses are the best roses," Thierry says. "Not only do they have an impressive colour range, but their petals are more abundant and the flower keeps for a long time." Available concurrently with the fresh flowers, customers can also find food

**THEY VISITED
MANY COUNTRIES
TO OFFER AN
UNPARALLELED
SELECTION
OF PRODUCTS
ENTIRELY
INSPIRED
BY THE ROSE**

for their roses between May and September, and Rosy Rosa also offers 'stabilized roses', natural flowers that have had their sap replaced with silicon, which preserves them for two years!

A VARIED BOUQUET

But the *coup de grace*, incontestably, is the range of rose-related products that are available. Animated by their preoccupation with perfection, Thierry and Nicolas visited many countries, including England, France, Italy, Bulgaria and Spain, to offer an unparalleled selection of products entirely inspired by the rose. From a gastronomic point of view, there's sugar, syrup, macaroons, liqueur, lemonade and tea, just for starters. Currently in negotiations with two of Belgium's largest chocolate makers, Nicolas and Thierry promise the imminent arrival of the 'chocolate rose.' There are cosmetics as well, with two prestigious feminine ranges available from Crabtree & Evelyn and Annik Goutal. Perfumes are also for sale, such as Rose Essentiel from Bulgaria. For 2008, Rosy Rosa also promises the arrival of a male scent.

As the icing on the cake, or the rose in the bouquet, Rosy Rosa offers parcel delivery and is open 7/7 from 9h30 to 20h. For St. Valentine's Day, Nicolas and Thierry can provide personalized, exceptional gifts. To be discovered, *post haste...*

Jérôme Stéfanski



LOVE ON THE TABLE

In hopes of spending a Valentine's night of passion between the sheets, nothing is more important than taking your beloved to a first-class restaurant – any error of judgement may prove fatal. Thanks to our made-to-measure selection, however, the odds are in your favour. Result guaranteed!

All images
© sensum.be

COMME CHEZ SOI

OPEN
12-13h30 and 19-21h30.
CLOSED ON
Sunday, Monday and Wednesday midday.

AVERAGE PRICE PER
'à la Carte' meal: +100€.
Fixed menus: Classic – 67€ (4 courses),
Saison – 128€ (5 courses),
Dégustation – 166€ (6 courses).

What can we possibly say about Comme Chez Soi? When you enter, you are walking into a gastronomic 'holy of holies'; it means opening your eyes (and your taste buds, obviously) to an exceptional culinary world, first allowing yourself to be won over by the sumptuous décor, a homage to Horta, which speaks for every one of the 80 years that this exceptional restaurant has been in existence.

In the early days, it was 'Chez Georges' but, three-quarters of a century later, it is now one of the stars of Belgian gastronomy. This gourmet palace's reputation rests in the hands of world-famous chef Pierre Wynants, who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of both kitchen and cellar, and he has now been joined by his son-in-law, Lionel Rigolet. The latter, after being educated at the most exclusive schools,



works hand-in-hand with Wynants to offer further modernist impetus to the perfectionist cuisine that has been in place here for decades - truly heavenly.

Place Rouppe, 23
1000 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 512 29 21

BON BON

OPEN FROM
12-14h and 18h30-21h30.
CLOSED ON
Monday, Saturday noon
and Sunday.

AVERAGE PRICE PER
'à la Carte' meal: 47€.
Fixed menus:
55€ (3 courses) - 65€ (4 courses)
75€ (5 courses) - 80€ (6 courses).

Christophe Hardiquet has a lucky star, just like everyone else. Except that he's got his because his talent has been recognised by the *Michelin Guide*.

He's now had it for a whole year, shining in a chic bistro décor where the panelling has taken on a lovely sheen and purple is the dominant colour.

The bar opens onto the dining room, offering up its own fabulous show: a skilful ballet performed by a squad



of young people and a 28 year-old chef motivated by talent and a taste for doing things really well. And doing things well means giving. Giving fine, good, natural produce. Giving means preparing this produce just enough to leave its soul untouched and to let it show off all its gourmet delights.

Our man enhances these dishes by playing to a brilliant score, taking diners to places where most chefs would never dream of venturing. Christophe Hardiquet has a star. Christophe Hardiquet is a star.

Rue des Carmélites, 93
1180 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 346 66 15



LE CORIANDRE

OPEN 12-13h30
and 19-21h30.
CLOSED ON
Saturday midday,
Sunday and Monday.

AVERAGE PRICE
per head: 50€
Lunch: 20€ (3 courses)
Set Menus: 30€ (3 courses)
47€ (6 courses)

You'll need to head for the Place Wiener, in Watermael-Boisfort. This is where Agnès and Damien have brought all their passion for gastronomy to life. After meeting at school (a hotel business school, obviously), falling in love and cooking up some wonderful meals in various Brussels restaurants, our hosts opened their own place.

A friendly bistro from the outset, Le Coriandre has evolved into a wonderful and very comfortable dining experience.

The cuisine hasn't changed, except that the chef has grown up. And his talent has also developed. His enormous respect for fine produce, his total enthusiasm, and his passion for rare spices and visual flair, offer up sublime dishes that are a real treat.

Agnès reigns over the dining room, perfectly complementing Damien's cooking. Putting the finishing touches to all this masterful skill, she listens to people as they enjoy her husband's dishes and always has plenty of suggestions to make from the excellent wine list, which shows a predilection for southern varieties.

If you've not been before, then give it a try straight away. Above all, enjoy.

Rue Middelbourg, 21
1170 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 672 45 65



LE PASSAGE

OPEN FROM
12-14h and from 19-21h30.
CLOSED ON Monday evening, Saturday
midday and Sunday.

AVERAGE PRICE PER 'à la carte' meal:
70€
Lunch: 25€ (2 courses)
Fixed menus: 45€ (4 courses)

Willing, clever, inventive, flavourful...

For 13 years, Pierre Duqué's Le Passage has kept questioning itself in order to keep enticing us, day in, day out. In the kitchen, Rocky Renaud, always true to the classic dishes of French gastronomy, invites guests on fantastic

journeys into modern territories that still manage to retain the true nature of the produce used, while making the most of their flavours, bringing absolute cooking rigour and emphasizing the right touches to enhance the whole result.

As a chef attentive to his clients' tastes, he provides the exact balance between decent price and gustatory pleasure. Convivial, calm and so much more than just another 'nice place'.

Avenue J. et P. Carsoel, 13
1180 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 374 66 94

RESOURCE

OPEN FROM
12-14h30 and 19-22h,
23h on Saturday.
CLOSED ON
Sunday and Monday.

AVERAGE PRICE
per head: 55€
Lunch: 15€ (3 courses)
Menu Resource: 38€ (chef's selection,
choice between 5 starters, entremets,
5 main courses and 5 desserts).
Menu 'Slow Food': 50€ (Selection
of vegetables, shellfish, fish, entremets,
main course, dessert or cheese).

Refined, delicious, creative, innovative
and balanced. These are just some of
the adjectives used to identify Christian's
cuisine. Recently opened a stone's throw
away from Place Rouppe, his restaurant,
'ReSource', is a real discovery. Working
in a variety of kitchens, in Paris among
other places, the chef learned
the essential rule of respecting a product
while revealing it. How can you not fall
for the vegetable appetisers – to be
crunched, sucked or left to melt on the
tongue? How can you resist the perfectly
presented dishes?

Here, everything is of a magnificently
mastered creativity. A modern cuisine
that's based on the well-known traditional
dishes. As he says himself, the chef
offers "an innovative, urban gastronomy
that combines the ethics and pleasures
of good eating", while his wine list leans
towards natural originality.

And it's Sarah who takes care of the decor
- very attractively, too. The surroundings
are light and comfortable with clean lines,
while elegant tones and majestic
lamps are accompanied by delightful,
appropriate music and contemporary
works of art - the owners' passion -
displayed on the walls.

One to add to your gourmet address
book, if you haven't done so already.

Rue du midi, 164
1000 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 514 32 23

More restaurants on www.sensum.be



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www.bbf.be Leader in furnished apartments

Memorable moments

A selection of good times spent networking – professional meetings and relaxation in prestigious settings.



© Together Magazine

AUDI DOODY!

To commemorate the Belgian launch of another jewel in Audi's crown, the new A4, Brussels great-and-good were offered scintillating Champagne, classy jazz and the finest hand-served oysters on 14 December at Audi Brussels HQ, as well as the chance to check out (though not yet test-drive)

the latest example of Vorsprung durch Technik. Truly, the car was the star...

Audi Brussels
Boulevard de la 2^e Armée, 201
1190 Brussels
T: +32(0)2 348 21 11
www.audi.com



© Together Magazine



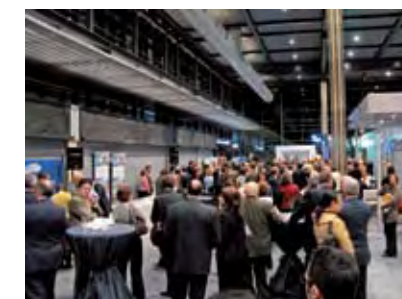
A WORLD CLASS BASH

On 7 December, in the ballroom of Brussels' prestigious Renaissance Hotel, international fitness club World Class celebrated its 10th birthday in Belgium. Following the event's success, World Class promises that we won't have to wait another

ten years for the next party!

Health Academy Brussels
Renaissance Hotel,
Rue du Parnasse, 19
1050 Brussels
T: +32(0)2 551 59 90
www.worldclass.be

© B.S.C.A.



TERMINAL, MAN!

5 December 2007 saw the inauguration of Brussels-Charleroi new terminal, which was expected to be operational as of 29 January. A fabulous opportunity for Bruxpats to discover for themselves the accessibility of this airport, which offers flights to more than 30

destinations throughout Europe at the very best prices.

Brussels South Charleroi Airport
Building S7C
6041 Gosselies
T: +32(0)71 25 12 11
www.charleroi-airport.com



Inside
Espace Art 22
© E.A.22

ARTISTS FIND THEIR SPACE

Brussels has an impressive range of art galleries, with a wide choice of scintillating work by numerous artists. Here, in the first of a new regular feature, *Together Magazine* opens a gallery's doors, chats to the owners and highlights an exclusive selection of the works on display. This month: Espace Art 22.

Art amateurs are frequently discouraged by their perception of the 'snooty' atmosphere that they believe awaits them in most galleries. This, says art historian Didier Brouwers, one of the joint owners of Espace Art 22, is exactly where his gallery is different.

"I began working in art around eight years ago," Didier adds, "then I worked for five years in a reasonably well-known Brussels gallery, but it was somewhere that only showed 'dead' artists, such as

**'HERE, WE REALLY
LET OUR VISITORS
RELAX, TAKE
ALL THE TIME
THAT THEY WISH
TO EXPLORE'**

Picasso, with works that were already very expensive. We wanted our gallery to work with young, contemporary artists, so when we met three years ago, the Espace Art 22 project was born."

"And I've been a photographer for the past thirty years," Eric de Ville explains, "and I began to become more and more interested in contemporary art, after visiting exhibitions and art fairs such as ArtBasel."

WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE

"The aim was to create a place that was welcoming," Didier continues,

"not like some other contemporary art galleries that seem to have a 'cold' atmosphere. Here, we really let our visitors relax, take all the time that they wish to explore – much more like a multicultural centre."

"And we are also welcoming to all our artists," Eric politely interjects. "We always want to discuss their work with them and, even if we think that it's not for us, we aim to help them find a gallery in which they may be able to show their work."

The gallery, which opened in October 2006 and which now hosts a major new sculpture, print/painting or photographic exhibition every five weeks, punctuated by short-term events such as literary conferences, recitals, artists' brunch meetings and concerts, is split into five key sections: Le Patio, Les Alcôves, Le Couloir, Le Studio and La Terrasse.

At present, Espace Art 22 is also showing works by dynamic Muscovite photographer Oleg Dou – a 24-year-old whose age belies the stunning maturity of his portfolio. Check out our profile on the next page...

Espace Art 22

Rue Van Aa, 22

1050 Brussels

M. (Didier) +32 (0)473 95 12 38

M. (Eric) +32 (0)495 21 23 22

www.espace-art22.com

Glasses
2006
Lambda print
mounted
on diasec
Edition of 6
100 x 100 cm

DOU'S VIEW

A compact profile of Russian Oleg Dou, a young photographer who's bidding fair to join the company of the greats, and who has a selection of his strikingly beautiful, surreal, even shocking takes on the human visage installed in Espace Art 22.





Tight 2
2007
Lambda print
mounted
on diasec,
Edition of 8
100 x 100 cm

Born in Moscow in 1983, where he still resides, Oleg Dou professes himself to have "always been interested in human individuality and self-expression...I have been creating different designs for many years, and I started photography in 2005 to mix it with design. The Naked Faces project is devoted to relationship between man's inner world with man's behaviour in society, which still restricts the behaviour and thought of a human being."

Dou's vision surpasses terms such as unique or challenging - his work develops and pushes to the limit the idea of a body, evoked by the surrealists, as an object of subversions and other mutations that undermine its identity.

Shown already in Paris and Moscow exhibitions, as well as such French and Russian publications as *Le Monde 2*, *PHOTO* and *Fotomasterskaya*, his photography, often strange and disturbing, pushes his subjects' images to extreme limits, seemingly without pity... but take a look at their eyes. Seemingly, they're the window onto Dou's soul.



Minimal Black
2006
*Lambda print
mounted on diasec,
Edition of 8
100 x 100 cm*

FOR ART'S SAKE

A PROTEST FOR INDIVIDUALITY

As the artist explains: "This project is a kind of a protest that is to show that a person should remain who he is and that people should perceive him in the way he is. The persons presented in my works lack individuality: the eyebrows and the eyelashes are removed, the skin is smoothed. I have always been trying to make observers to be not indifferent to my pictures but it does not mean that emotions should only be positive - they can express both alarm, fear, even revulsion."

www.douart.ru
www.espace-art22.com

James Drew



Animals Have A Soul
2006
Lambda print
mounted on diasec,
Edition of 6
100 x 100 cm



Cockroach
2006
Lambda print
mounted on diasec,
Edition of 8
100 x 100 cm

Together's 'To Do' list

Check out our guide to the best Brussels culture, as 2008 begins with a bang!

GIULIO CESARE IN EGITTO 20.01 > 03.02

A new staging of Handel's marvellous work, based on the original production by De Nederlandse Opera. Musical direction is provided by René Jacobs, with staging by Karl-Ernst and Ursel Herrmann. Giulio Cesare is played by Lawrence Zazzo (contratenore), while the role of Cleopatra is taken by Danielle de Niese.

La Monnaie
Place de la Monnaie
1000 Brussels
T. +32(0)70 23 39 39
(From 12am to 6pm)
www.lamonnaie.be

BLINDMAN 20x20 - 20TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT 09.02

The BLINDMAN saxophone quartet celebrates its twentieth anniversary in quite some style, with a concert involving three artists: Jan Fabre, Anouk De Clercq and Kris Verdonck. Works of a.o. Ockeghem, Bach, Mozart, Cage, Xenakis and Harvey will be performed and Eric Sleichim is also providing a new piece to inspire and entertain. No less than twenty musicians will appear on stage: the 'mother quartet' and

the four junior quartets (voice, drums, strings and sax).

Kaaitheater Hall
Saintelettesquare, 20
1000 Brussels
T. +32(0)2 201 59 59
www.kaaitheater.be

WOZZECK 26.02 > 04.03

From the very first bars of Austrian composer Alban Berg's (1885-1935) masterpiece, we sense a tension that does not subside throughout the three acts. It was composed between 1914 and 1922 and first performed in 1925. Since then it has established a solid place for itself in the mainstream operatic tradition, and modern productions are consistently sold out. Although the performance takes only slightly over an hour and a half, it is nevertheless an intense experience. The subject matter – the inevitability of hardship and exploitation for the poor – is brutal and uncompromisingly presented. The world of Wozzeck is tragic, depicting the inescapable, socially desired and organised fall of a man who attempts to oppose this through murder. Dietrich Henschel plays the central character, with musical direction from Mark Wigglesworth.



1. Christian d'Hoir

© Christian-dhoir.be

2. Edward Weston, Cabbage Leaf (1931)

© Bozar

3. Blindman

© Blindman.be

4. Joe Jackson

© AB

5. The Water Vocal – Endangered II installation from Iceland On The Edge

© Friarik Orn Friariksson

6. Transfer!

© Kaaitheater

La Monnaie

Place de la Monnaie
1000 Brussels
T. +32(0)70 23 39 39
(From 12am to 6pm)
www.lamonnaie.be

JOE JACKSON 05.03, 20h

Along with Elvis Costello and Graham Parker, Joe Jackson was one of the British-based artists who challenged the punk scene and brought a New Wave sound to the United States in the late 1970s. This perennial Brit's smash hits *It's Different For Girls* and *Is She Really Going Out With Him* defined an era - and he's back in Brussels with his power trio and the recently released *Rain* CD.

Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan, 110
1000 Brussels
T. +32(0)2 548 24 24
www.abconcerts.be

TRANSFER! 01 > 02.02

Jan Klata, angry young Polish director, tells the story, inspired by people who experienced the drama at the time, of the millions forced from their homes in the wake of the conference in Yalta (February 1945), when the border between Germany and Poland was redrawn. Klata, via a series of sobering set pieces, offers us a harrowing glimpse into a thankfully fading past.

Kaaitheater Hall
Saintelettesquare, 20
1000 Brussels
T. +32(0)2 201 59 59
www.kaaitheater.be

RICHARD III 12-16.02 20h, also matinée 16.02, 14h30

William Shakespeare's take on the last of the Plantagenets, Richard III, portrayed him in a light designed to suit the interests of the ruling Tudor dynasty

of Shakespeare's day, but also provided posterity with a villain, a monster, a psychopath who has fascinated and repelled audiences ever since, a manifestation of the human capacity for evil which continues to cast a spell over theatre-goers the world over. As Brussels Shakespeare Society Director Nick Roche explained: "We are having great fun mining the rich seam of the text for every nugget of meaning stored within it, and delighting in the immediacy and accessibility of Shakespeare's language."

Scarabeus Theatre
Rue Creuse
1030 Brussels
T. +32(0) 487 38 06 82
www.shaksoc.com

ICELAND ON THE EDGE 27.02 > 15.06

Presented via 20 eclectic installations, shows and concerts, *Iceland On The Edge* examines the stunningly vibrant cultural life of this North Atlantic volcanic island, inhabited by only around 300,000 souls, who, along with their ancestors, have fiercely guarded their independence since it was first granted in 1944. A standout is Water Vocal – Endangered II, a free-entry video and sound installation with waterfalls projected onto transparent canvases, with visitors' movements influencing the sound of the waterfalls. Experience life on the edge!

Centre For Fine Arts,
Rue Ravensteinstraat, 23
1000 Brussels
T. +32(0)2 507 82 00
www.bozar.be

JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOUR DREAMCOAT 28.02 > 02.03

With a cast of 120, the musical

spectacular of Andrew Lloyd-Webber's *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* will be lighting up Brussels' Auderghem Cultural Centre in early 2008 – a perfect way to shake off those winter blues. Lavish costumes, intricate choreography and fabulous stage sets make for an extravaganza of dance and movement – a multicoloured riot for all.

Auderghem Theatre
Boulevard du Souverain, 183
1160 Brussels
T. +32(0)487 758 275
or +32(0)494 738 423
www.greenparrot.be

IT'S OUR STORY: 50 YEARS OF THE EUROPEAN ADVENTURE Ends 23.03

Monday to Friday > 09-17h
Saturday, Sunday,
public holidays > 10-18h

If you didn't find enough time over the festive season to visit this excellent exhibition, fear not, for you have until the end of March. A two-hour stroll through innovative installations that retrace our common memories and ancestry since WWII.

Tour & Taxis
Avenue du Port, 83
1000 Brussels
T. +32(0)2 549 60 49
www.expo-europe.be

SCIENCETASTIC! Ongoing

Unbelievable, but true! An unforgettable experience, only two minutes away from the Grand'Place. Using light, sound, smell and touch, there are 80 exciting and interactive hands-on experiments, based on the themes of physics, illusion and the five senses. The experiments are even more surprising, in that they use

very simple tools from our daily life. Where else could you fly like a bird using a special mirror, have your picture taken in an impossible 'Escher' box, or play with your shadow as it stays on the wall while you move away? It's magic!

Tram Station Bourse
Boulevard Anspach 72-73
1000 Brussels
Underground, Level 1
T. +32(0)2 732 13 36
www.sciencetastic.com

FURNITURE DESIGN WILLY VAN DER MEEREN Ends 30.03

Monday to Sunday > 10-18h

An elegant overview of famous Belgian architect and designer Willy Van Der Meeren (1923 – 2002), tastefully and appropriately curled around the Atomium's spheres. A must.

Atomium
Boulevard du Centenaire
1190 Brussels
T. +32(0)473 38 20 58
www.atomium.be

POPHEART CHRISTIAN D'HOIR 18.01 > 23.02

Thursday, Saturday > 14-18h
Friday > 14-20h

Belgian photographer Christian d'Hoir has been working for 25 years, building up his reputation as an outstanding exponent of light technique and image creation. He gives a concrete form to his photographic experiences through exhibitions such as *Pop Heart*, in which the terms and techniques are constantly changing.

Jonas Gallery Brussels
Rue de Flandre, 35
1000 Brussels
T. +32(0)2 503 50 55

M. +32(0)479 98 37 63
www.christian-dhoir.be

THE ARCHIVES OF IMAGINATION – THE UNREAL IMAGES: EMBLEMS, SYMBOLS AND METAPHORS 25.01 > 30.03

Tuesday to Sunday > 10-18h
Thursday > 10-21h

Photographs are the visual timepieces of humanity - they reproduce, archive and take no judgemental stance on the past. The technology still determines our daily dealings with photography, but photographers - like painters - have also produced pictures with a more illusory, poetic-philosophical perspective.

Centre for Fine Arts
Rue Ravenstein, 23
1000 Brussels
T. +32(0)2 507 82 00
www.bozar.be

PAUL KLEE 01.03 > 11.05

Tuesday to Sunday > 10-18h
Thursday > 10-21h

The Centre for Fine Arts takes an unusual approach to the work of the Swiss artist Paul Klee (1879-1940), one that corresponds to the painter's own vision of the world. Klee worked with oil paint, watercolour, ink and more, often combining them into one work. He has been variously associated with expressionism, cubism and surrealism, but his pictures are difficult to classify. They often have a fragile, child-like quality to them and frequently allude to poetry, music and dreams.

Centre for Fine Arts
Rue Ravenstein/Ravensteinstraat, 23
1000 Brussels
T. +32(0)2 507 82 00
www.bozar.be

Hélène Noël

Stargazing...

Renowned international astrologer, psychic, palmist and tarotmaster James Christie offers a privileged insight into what could be in the stars for you this month.

SIGN OF THE MONTH AQUARIUS

New ideas come online this month and these next few weeks will turn out to be an effective period for impressing other people with your determination and dedication. This mood is enhanced by the fact that some of last year's plans should now be bearing fruit and boosting your confidence. Romantic aspects are very bright between the 12th and 18th and you can expect a financial boost around the 20th. During the very last days of the month there will be important conversations with lawyers and tax inspectors.



PISCES

Quite a fluid month with highs and lows – but the highs are higher than the lows and even the lows can be productive if they give you some time for quiet thought and reflection. February is a planning month and a time wherein you are happy to explore new ideas and redefine some long-term priorities. It is also a month for physical movement, so while some of you will be going through the process of house moves others will be enjoying mid-winter holidays and allied travel aspects.



ARIES

February looks like being a frustrating month for many Arians, for while there are no major pitfalls or disasters, things do not fall into place quite the way you expect and there are likely to be all kinds of delays. Looking on the bright side – nothing is being cancelled – it's just being delayed. The 4th and 5th sees you in an aggressive "let's do it now" mood, but by the 15th or 16th you'll be doing some rapid back peddling, especially if you've made some hasty promises on St. Valentine's Day!



TAURUS

February will be an exciting month as new plans and ideas are put into action and some new money starts finding its way into your bank accounts. It is absolutely vital that you pay maximum attention to all aspects of communication, and if you're in any way reliant on computers, make sure you've got a back up system in reserve. Your stress levels creep up the scale from the 21st onwards causing a few unwelcome ripples in your love life. Travel aspects around the 27th 28th are associated more with business than pleasure.



GEMINI

February promises to be quite a gentle month for the vast majority of Geminis so if you're tempted to rush and push just slow down a little and let things fall into place in their own sweet time. Romantic aspects are good throughout this whole period, but

the 15th and the 24th are particularly auspicious days for making important new contacts. A spending spree on the 27th and 28th will provide a lot of fun, but it will bend the plastic!



CANCER

A stodgy start to the month when nothing seems to happen according to plan or schedule but that energy changes around the 11th at which time travel aspects become relevant. Your concentration (and judgement) may become a bit erratic between the 20th and the 28th if you allow intensely emotional affairs to overwhelm your common sense and there will be a division of loyalties between the personal and professional aspects of your life at this time.



LEO

In all career and business aspects high levels of energy and enthusiasm make this month a bit of a breeze and you should be very well placed to please and impress both bosses and significant others. Important social events are scheduled for the 13th 14th and 15th but do be warned there is an element of sexual tension creeping into your love life around the 20th when a partner seems to expect an awful lot from you without giving much back in return.



VIRGO

A very safe and satisfying month for the majority of Virgoans, and especially for those members of the sign who know the value of what they've got and who have worked very hard over the last couple of years to get it. You'll busy in the first couple of weeks of February but there is some pressure coming off around the 15th and from then on it should be a smooth and easy ride. A lover's emotional needs dominate the romantic spectrum.



LIBRA

A lazy start to the month for a lot of Librans where you'll be happy enough to chug along at a nice steady pace without rocking

the boat – but then a letter or fax or phone call around the 8th or 9th changes your mood almost overnight and you'll be filled with a sense of urgency that says everything has suddenly got to be done right now! A spate of parties around the 19th causes headaches and hellish hangovers.



SCORPIO

February will bring a pattern of rather weird coincidences; of bumping into people you haven't seen for years and perhaps re-igniting a few old romantic flames. Potentially a sexy month full of secret assignments, but be warned, there is some jealousy and suspicion in the wind. Some old-fashioned "luck" money will fall into place between the 15th and the 19th and you'll find yourself seriously over-spending on luxury items from the 20th onwards.



SAGITTARIUS

A new found feeling of confidence permeates through Sagittarius this month and although I'm not sure what comes first, the chicken or the egg, either your sexual confidence boosts your professional attitude or some good things falling into place in the financial aspects of your life enables you to relax a lot more in affairs of the heart. Children will be a nuisance from the 22nd onwards on the principle that two is sexy and a kid is a crowd!



CAPRICORN

Capricorns may get conned into a false sense of security during the first days of the month but as February unfolds you're likely to become busier and busier by the day until by the 28th you're working flat out and returning to some of those stressful moods that have been such frequent visitors over the last few years. It's a very money orientated month and you can't afford to take chances or delegate too much responsibility. As for romance, forget it. You don't have time.

For details about private readings by James Christie, please contact www.magepublishing.co.uk or call +33(0)561 94 06 78.

Le Chat in love

It would appear that the imminent arrival of the Ambassador of Love, St. Valentine, has given Philippe Geluck's Le Chat 'pause' for thought, as he ponders his own romantic issues...



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