

WHERE NEWS & BUSINESS MEET GLAMOUR & GOOD TIMES

FREE / #7 / MARCH-APRIL 2008

Together

magazine



INTERVIEW
Brussels Region
Minister
Evelyne
Huytebroeck

EUROPEAN VICE
In the grip
of gambling

REAL ESTATE
Housing at
any cost?

'TOUCHY'
Flanders & Kosovo:
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The issues of climate change and the environmental problems related to energy consumption are everywhere in our daily lives. Yet there's an interesting contradiction that also appears to be prevalent – in a nutshell, preserve nature, pollute and consume less...but spend more!

With 'safeguarding the environment' being twisted into a major marketing ploy, Together Magazine investigates 'greenwashing' – the theme of the study **Green: The colour of money?** by Colin Moors, part of our special dossier, **Back to Nature**, which is printed entirely on recycled paper and also features an exclusive interview with Brussels Environment Minister **Evelyn Huytebroeck**.

Our editor James Drew, meanwhile, investigates the potential dangers posed by a worldwide phenomenon in our latest European Vice article, **Gambling: Your money and your life?** Gambling addiction is examined with particular reference to Brussels and Belgium: an addict offers an insight into how much his habit has affected his life, and there's also an exclusive interview with the president of the European Gaming and Amusement Federation.

International politics expert Cillian Donnelly looks at **the relationship between Belgium and Vietnam**,

a country that's becoming increasingly attractive for Belgian companies as an alternative trade partner to China, according to the Brussels Business and Enterprise Agency. Donnelly also provides a daring insight into **the link between Kosovo's recently declared independence and Flanders' efforts towards the same goal**. To be read without prejudice...

For myself, I have to say that it was really no hardship whatsoever to visit **Milan** recently, during **the latest fashion week**. Details of the trip, plus the best outlets for a low-cost, super-stylish, Spring-cleaned wardrobe, are revealed...

Staying in the hyper-glamour mood, our **exclusive fashion shoot** honours a luxury product that's so often given to our 'Dear Mamas' on Mother's Day (11th May): **perfume**.

And, at the start of the season of rebirth and renewal, let us turn to Victor Hugo: 'It is sad to think of all that nature has to say, to which mankind does not listen.'

Enjoy *Together Magazine* #7, and have a special Spring!



Jérôme Stéfanski
Publisher

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Where do you read it?

As *Together* goes from strength to strength on the Bruxpat scene, we felt the time was right to let our readers have their say – where they read us, what they think. Over to you...

**Neil L: Irish, 32,
European Officer, Ixelles**

I read it, on the day I've received it, with my first cup of coffee at the office.

**Pierro I: Italian, 27, European
Commission Stagiaire, Etterbeek**

I leaf through it at the office, then I usually take it with me to lunch. I love it!

**Melissa B: Belgian, 42,
Lawyer, Uccle**

The format lets me put it in my handbag and read it whenever I have a little free time, sometimes in strange places: the car, the queue at the supermarket, while I'm waiting for my daughter at school. I also leave often a copy in my practice's waiting room, as many of my customers are expats.

**Jean-Sébastien: French, 29,
Banking Assistant, Schaerbeek**

It's not perhaps the most glamorous location, but I must confess that I read it in the toilets! As I do most magazines, in fact...

Cynthia: Spanish, 50, Lobbyist, Waterloo

I read it first thing in the morning at the office, then in the car on the way home, when I'm stuck in traffic. I always let my husband have it after I've finished, because, although he speaks Spanish and French very well, his English leaves a little to be desired, so reading this kind of magazine really helps him progress.

**Sergueï: 41, Bulgarian,
European Officer, Ixelles**

When your hostesses present it to me in the morning, I resist the temptation to open it, waiting instead for when I'm returning home on the Metro. It's always a little pleasure, after a long working day. Don't make fun! Each to his own...



KENZO COMPETITION

What about you? w Where do you take *Together*? Send an original photograph of you reading the magazine in your favourite place with your address and daytime phone number to competition@togethermedia.eu, and you could win one of three bottles of Kenzo's perfume, Parfum d'Été (50ml). Competition closes 30th April. Good luck!

Dear Together,

TRANSLATION ISSUE

Sir,
It's astonishing that, in two days, I have been handed two new English-language magazines, one of which was yours, in the street. Certainly, it's a good deal better than what I was handed the day before! The articles are much more interesting, and I dare to hope that you will eventually be a good alternative to *The Bulletin*.

My only gripe is the slightly off-centre English. I know that 'International English', English as a lingua franca, is increasingly prevalent, but if you really intend to target an English-speaking audience, perhaps you should take more care over language – I won't offer you example after example, but occasional phrases and sentences read as obvious translations.

But, really, congratulations for bringing out something that looks so good and might end up being very good as well.

Aline T

Editor's reply: *Thank you, Aline. It was a pleasure to receive your constructive feedback. It's very much appreciated, and I'm happy that Together is generally to your liking. On your point concerning translation, I am aware that occasional lapses in nuance do occur, which we are striving to eliminate. However, I feel that, for the very large part, our articles are clear and well written. I look forward to your continued input.*

James Drew

THANK YOU, MY TOGETHER

Sir,
What a success! When I was handed a copy of your recent edition, I was very impressed by the magazine's evolution. The new size, the articles, the photographs, the quality of the paper... you really should sell it in shops. I would be the first to buy it, trust me. By the way, I work in the expat-editing sector, so I know what I'm talking about.

Georges W

Publisher's reply: *Thank you very much for your compliments. In fact, we are considering selling Together over a wider area, in addition to its free distribution, because the positive reactions that we have received suggest that there is a real opening in the market. But fear not - your free magazine is here to stay, I promise you!*

Jérôme Stéfanski

FRUSTRATION WITH FRANCOPHONES

Sir,
Concerning 'Francophone's moving stories' (TM 6 – Jan-Feb 2008).

Here is a suggestion for those 'worried Francophones' in Brussels' periphery. If they are so obsessed with their insistence to be pampered in French, why don't they consider 'settling' in Brabant-Wallon? As a Flem, I often go there to walk on Sunday afternoons and I find it a very

beautiful region, in fact I might even consider living there. But, if I ever did, I would never dream of asking for 'facilities' in my native language, but quickly integrate with the local people.

In all honesty, your 'touching' article in *Together* on 'Francophones' moving stories' is a mix of half-truths, unexplained basic facts and one-sided misinformation that we are used to reading in the French-speaking media. I count myself lucky to know quite a few expats from various countries, living in the Flemish region who, instead of siding with a certain French-speaking expansionist mentality, have embraced the region and its culture with enthusiasm.

Publisher's reply: *Thank you for your reaction. Our article did not aim to criticize the Flemish population, but to relate, objectively, the real facts. Our magazine doesn't want to circulate politically correct or 'communal' opinions, but I don't accept that this article is comprised of 'half-truths, unexplained basic facts and one-sided misinformation'. I know that this topic is 'touchy' and I understand your frustration, but the author Ludvine Nolf is a respected, professional journalist who cannot be blamed, surely, for reporting the facts as they were presented to her by the residents and estate agents in Brussels' periphery.*

J.S.

Let us know what you think – send your emails to info@togethermedia.eu

Haute cuisine, cool car

Together, in collaboration with Europcar and Le Château de Limelette, offers you the chance to discover the charms of an authentic four-star hotel spa, with your drive there at the wheel of the new Volkswagen Tiguan.

Picture the scene. It's a sunny morning in May, and you're taking delivery of your Europcar vehicle from their Brussels outlet, then you head straight for the green heart of Brabant Wallon: Limelette.

From Brussels, 20 minutes is all you require to reach Le Château de Limelette hotel. And, when you're driving the Tiguan, time passes even more quickly. The latest in the Volkswagen range, this compact SUV has everything going for it. Powerful yet sober, compact but spacious - you can

count on its high road-handling in town and cross-country.

Le Château de Limelette, meanwhile, invites you into its atmosphere of luxury and calm - during your gastronomical weekend, you will enjoy a night in a double Prestige room, breakfast, three-course dinner at the Saint-Jean-des-Bois restaurant and admission for two to the Thalgo Center, including massage and a hydromassant bath with essential oils.

On Monday morning, you'll be forcing a smile when you return the car and head for the office - never mind, eh?

The new VW Tiguan



Thanks to Europcar and Le Château de Limelette, you can enjoy the charms of a gastronomic weekend

Fancy winning this fabulous prize? It's as simple as Simon - go to www.together-magazine.eu and answer the questions below:

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- b. 10 vehicle categories, totalling 2,500 cars
- c. 12 vehicle categories, totalling 7,000 cars?

2. How many separate booths are there in Le Château de Limelette Thalgo Center?

- a. 3
- b. 23
- c. 33

3. How much does this copy of *Together* weigh, to the nearest milligramme, not including the plastic cover and perfume sample?



Go to www.europcar.be and www.chateau-de-limelette.be for help with the questions.

Competition organised under jurisdiction of a huissier de justice. Full rules available on request.
Organiser: Together Magazine, rue d'Alost 7, 1000 Brussels.

FLASH

FEDERAL AND REGIONAL INVESTMENT PLAN

The federation of energy suppliers and producers (FEBEG) is demanding an investment deal with Belgian authorities for 'essential' investments to counter the growing electricity output deficit. Despite efforts made towards encouraging conservative energy use and 'green' electricity, Belgium will still need some 15-20€ billion additional investment in electricity/gas production and infrastructure between 2008-2020 to satisfy demand.

NEWS

Rockers, movers and shakers

A new feature – we present a selection of the great and good who have recently visited the capital of Europe.

PAKISTANI PRESIDENT

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf toured the EU institutions near the start of 2008, with a trip to the European Council and Parliament.

PRINCE OF WALES

One might have the impression that there's a new Al Gore in Europe – in February, the UK's Prince Charles gave a speech at the European Parliament that drew a standing ovation for his commitment to fighting climate change and the destruction of the rainforests.

BELLE ESTELLE

Beautiful french porn-star Estelle Desanges and girlfriends Dolly Golden Delicious, Nina Roberts, Cellilia Vega, Ovidie and more than a hundred exhibitors from X-rated entertainment were in Brussels for the 16th Erotica Festival, held at the cellars of Les Caves de Cureghem (Anderlecht) from 14th-17th February.

BABYSHAMBLES

On 20th February, at Ancienne Belgique, angry young rocker Pete Doherty

and his group Babyshambles ended their European tour that began on 8th January in Lisbon.

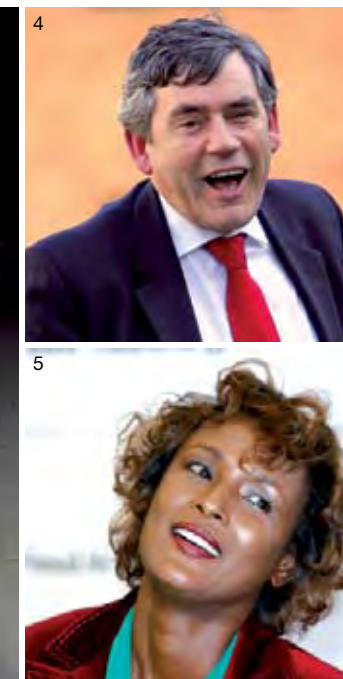
UK PRIME MINISTER

Britain's Prime Minister Gordon Brown made his long-awaited first visit to the European Commission on 21st February. The fact that it has taken so long for Brown to accept an invitation from Commission President José Manuel Barroso says a lot about his and Britain's relationship with Europe, according to analysts.

MODEL MISSING

Waris Dirie, Somali-born model turned women's rights campaigner who launched a worldwide campaign against female genital mutilation disappeared for three days earlier in March.

Seen getting into a taxi on Tuesday 4th March after a mix-up over a hotel, Dirie was not seen again until Friday afternoon, when police found her walking on Brussels' Grand'Place after they had announced, just hours earlier, that they were launching a nationwide search for the former model.



1. Pervez Musharraf
2. Prince Charles
3. Pete Doherty
4. Gordon Brown
5. Waris Dirie
6. Condoleezza Rice
7. Estelle Desanges

Dirie, 43, gained international fame as a Chanel model and acting in the 1987 James Bond movie *The Living Daylights* before launching her campaign against female genital mutilation in 1996.

Now a UN goodwill ambassador, she was due to speak on genital mutilation in Brussels at two conferences on women's rights organized by the European Union, including one on 6th March, attended by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

US SECRETARY OF STATE

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice visited Brussels on 6th March, along with more than 50 international women leaders, for External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner's conference - *Women: Stabilising an Insecure World*, held on the eve of International Women's Day (8th March, www.internationalwomensday.com). She also attended the EU-US ministerial meeting in the European Council.

Federico Grandesso



THE WRITER

Former PR- and press-officer in Milan for an Italian designer, Federico Grandesso, 33, specializes in fashion, showbiz and EU affairs.

Flanders and Kosovo: Same battle?

The province of Kosovo declared independence from Serbia on 17th February 2008. The announcement had been expected since 10th December 2007, but was postponed until after the Serbian presidential elections on 3rd February, over fears that the issue would fuel an insurgence of right-wing nationalism at the polls. Its ramifications continue to be felt, however, with particular reference to Flanders' independence...

As it turned out, the more moderate Boris Tadic was the victor in Kosovo, but this by no means ensures a swift conclusion to the complex issue of Kosovar self-determination.

The day following the announcement, EU foreign ministers were in Brussels, discussing, among other things, the Union's response to the Kosovo declaration. The UK, France, Italy and Germany were quick to give recognition to the new state, as was the US. Other EU member states followed. Russia and, unsurprisingly, Serbia, claimed the declaration of independence was a violation of international law, and violent protests erupted in the Serbian capital Belgrade, with the US and Slovenian (the first breakaway state from the old Yugoslavia and current holder of the EU Presidency) embassies being attacked.

But some member states are very reluctant to recognise Kosovo as a new independent nation. Several have formally rejected its independent status. Cyprus, Romania, and Slovakia all fear the stirring of similar nationalist feeling within their own borders; Spain certainly does not want to deal with a similar declaration of independence from the Basque or Catalan regions.

Belgium, meanwhile, has also formally recognised the new state of Kosovo, fuelling speculation among some observers that it may lead to renewed calls for Flanders' independence, the fear being that the precedent Kosovo has set will encourage other enclaves or regions to make similar declarations of autonomy.

But, while it has been acknowledged that the situation in Kosovo does indeed merit a precedent in international law,



Flanders and Kosovo: Independence fray

Before the logos were added, this photograph was taken at Apostrophe Antiquities, Rue Blaes 50, 1000 Brussels, www.apostrophe1.com

© Together Magazine

EU sources are quick to point out that it remains a very specific, if contentious, example. The ethnic Albanians in the region were subject to brutal repression by the Serb authorities and, since the atrocities of 1999, it has ceased to be governed by Belgrade and has remained a UN-NATO protectorate. It also has a different currency from the rest of Serbia; the Kosovars have embraced the euro.

"The situation in both countries is quite different," confirms MEP Philip Claeys, a member of the Pro-Independence Vlaams Belang party, who adds that comparisons between the regions are not always helpful. "What we who want independence for Flanders do regard as positive, however, is that if a region like Kosovo, with a population of two million can survive, why not Flanders, which has six million people? The Flemish economy is also doing much better."

Assessing the question of Flemish independence, is Annemie Neyts-Uttebroek MEP, a member of Open VLD, convinced that the example of Kosovo will be used to kick-start a similar movement in Belgium? "Absolutely not. I have never seen an example where one part of a country wants independence just because another did it first. The same applies to the Basque region also."

Looking at the wider situation, she is not put off that, so far, Kosovo does not have the backing of all member states, pointing out that no individual country has withdrawn support for the formation of the new civilian offices, due to open in Kosovo in early July with the backing of the Union.

"There you can see", she continued, "that we all support the efforts of the EU, particularly in the areas of police, security and justice."

The point made by some that the recognition issue will hamper eventual Kosovar accession to the EU, she says, is overrated. "After the 1830 revolution and the London Conference, which accepted the Kingdom of Belgium, it took the Netherlands nine years to recognise it. That's the historical truth."

"But there are never two identical situations. Many people seem to forget that this all started when Milošević rolled back the status of the Kosovars. He destroyed the status quo. After all the bombings and misery, how could we return? Things had been fundamentally changed."

Cillian Donnelly

What's your stance on the issue of independence, both for Kosovo and Flanders? Let us know at info@togethermedia.eu

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Warming to Vietnam

With analysis of 'tiger economies' very much in the news, formidable fiscal champions who wait like coiled snakes, ready to strike, and with Belgium one of the countries keen to cement relations with the potential 'tiger' that is Vietnam, we assess the status quo of the still-enigmatic south-east Asian state and its hopes for the future.

Vietnam is an emerging economy. Sadly identified in the popular imagination with a brutal, elongated war, the past two decades have witnessed the country gradually moving away from its insular, centrally driven economy towards one that is increasingly open to market liberalisation and international integration. Market reform is now the way forward, and the country has a set of escalating ambitions to meet the challenges of what may lie ahead.

**THE BELGIAN
AMBASSADOR
TO VIETNAM
HAS INDICATED
THAT, ALONG
WITH CHINA,
VIETNAM IS
HIS COUNTRY'S
FAVOURLED
NATION FOR
INVESTMENT
AND TRADE
RELATIONS
OUTSIDE
OF EUROPE**

MONEY TALKS

The West is, unsurprisingly, taking notice, with Belgium one of the countries keen to make moves towards closer collaboration. In January, the Belgian and Vietnamese governments signed a co-operation agreement worth around 1.22€ million, which will

aid the Textile Research Institute in Vietnam with research, training and development of textile-testing techniques. Also in January, the Belgian government presented a non-refundable loan of 4.3\$ million to help local authorities improve their planning processes. In addition, Belgian Ambassador to Vietnam Hubert Cooreman has indicated that, along with China, Vietnam is his country's favoured nation for investment and trade relations outside of Europe.

In the development field, there have also been close ties between the two countries. In March of last year a new co-operation agreement covering the period 2007-2010 was signed in Brussels. Vietnam is set to receive a total of 32€ million for water and sanitation improvement, the promotion of good governance and other projects, including scholarships for students and combating corruption. This is the highest sum that Belgium has thus far provided Vietnam, which is one of its 18 development and co-operation partners.

In education, too, there is a sense of joint-purpose. The Belgium-Vietnam Education Fund, founded in 2006, aims to provide the means by which Vietnamese students, particularly from



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Street life...

disadvantaged areas, can access the best education and training facilities. All of which indicates that, from a business as well as a social perspective, Belgium and Vietnam have much further to develop in the years to come.

Vietnam itself has seen Gross Domestic Product (GDP) steadily grow by around 7-10 percent in recent years, explains Michel Allé, director of the MA in Management in Vietnam programme at the Solvay Business School in Brussels, which has been operating for the past 13 years and maintains close ties with two universities in Vietnam, the Open University of Ho Chi Minh City and the national Economic University of Hanoi: "This growth has come initially from exports to western countries like the US, but this is changing, with goods now being exported to elsewhere in Asia. Companies are also moving away from places like China and investing in Vietnam instead."

Vietnam is rich in commodities such as timber and rubber, he explains, and is also benefiting from increased tourism, which has led to an average 3-5 percent yearly increase in local consumption. Belgian travellers to Vietnam are also on the increase, having now apparently overcome a longstanding apprehension of tourism standards in the country; a concern that may initially seem strange, given the northern part of Vietnam's somewhat 'continental' image, with French spoken and croissants regularly served at breakfast.

BRIGHT FUTURE

With tourism and business migration on the increase, it is little wonder that a recent survey by the accounting and consulting firm Grant Thompson International found that Vietnam is the world's third leading country for 'business optimism' after India and the Philippines. 2008, business leaders predict, is set

to be a good year for investment and growth. This positive trend continues in the wake of Vietnam's economic integration into the wider international area, which began in the late 1990s, when initial talks about joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) began, adds Allé. Vietnam eventually became a member in January 2007, which allows the country to take advantage of the phasing out of quotas on textiles for WTO partners, thus benefiting one of Vietnam's biggest industries.

As well as the WTO, Vietnam is also a member of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), and has entered into a significant bilateral trade agreement with the US, which has seen exports to America rise dramatically since 2001.

All this sounds promising, but there is a downside. As Michel Allé adds: "The local population is getting wealthier, but only in the cities. Outside that, there is

still deep poverty. The wages are below that of a lot of other countries in south-east Asia, including China." Other problems linger. Last December, four labour activists of the United Workers/Farmers Union were sentenced to between eighteen months and four years in prison for "abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the state" as part of a wider crackdown on political dissent following the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation Summit in Hanoi in November 2006, which highlights that the spectre of communism still lurks behind the country's market-reform policies.

SOCIAL CATCH-UP

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is high on the agenda for foreign and domestic investors, but Vietnam is still lagging behind countries such as India and Bangladesh, which have introduced new business practices aimed at improving working conditions and

A pig's head and guts - shocking, perhaps, but real Vietnamese cuisine



Vietnamese children from a Danag village

satisfying international standards, and with the average wage being between 37\$-62\$ a month, demand for higher pay now accounts for the vast majority of strikes held in foreign-invested companies.

A shortage of skilled workers, too, is said to be a threat to continued growth, especially in the face of an increasing workforce population, one of Vietnam's most pressing problems.

VIETNAM IS THE WORLD'S THIRD LEADING COUNTRY FOR 'BUSINESS OPTIMISM' AFTER INDIA AND THE PHILIPPINES

On top of this, university standards are thought to be below par by employers, who continually demand extra training of new graduates. To combat

these and other problems such as labour-force migration, the Vietnamese government has made priorities of job creation, reforming salary policies and putting in place a more advanced social-welfare system.

But like many business and political figures, Allé is also optimistic about Vietnam's economic future. "People there are very quick to use a lot of the new technologies," he says, concerning the workforce's adaptability. "So the competitive edge of Vietnam is very good compared with some other places such as Malaysia. Right now, Vietnam continues to economically grow more than other south-east Asian countries. I think the prospects are good for the next ten years or so. But they started late, so now the biggest problem is catching up."

Cillian Donnelly



A slice of
Hanoi life

Photographs:
Vanessa Fitzgerald



expats unlimited

Being an expat, chances are that you lead a hectic life! And any new venture in life will invariably spring a surprise, some pleasant, some not so nice... For such eventualities, it's a great comfort to be able to count on a rock-solid venture partner, like 'Inter Partner Assistance' which, in association with Expat & C°, have thought up **Masterkey2Health** for people like you. A **unique health-insurance policy** that adapts itself to the region in which you live, your social security and your status. And this throughout your entire working life. In a nutshell: **a single, all-in, whole-life policy**, expressly tailored to the needs of you and your family. So clear your mind of all concerns: **Masterkey2Health** will take care of you all, wherever you are.

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*Just a game,
or an addiction?*

© Inya

Gambling: Your money and your life?

According to recent research by Gamblers Anonymous, more than 100,000 Belgians are defined as 'seriously addicted' to gambling, losing between 1,000€ and 5,000€ per month on the habit. We examine how the worldwide jeux explosion is reflected in Brussels and Belgium.



A Brussels player

In the course of investigating this article, I had the opportunity to speak with Eduardo Antoja, president of EUROMAT, the European Gaming and Amusement Federation, concerning his organisation's attitude towards the issue, as well as with a self-confessed gambling addict about the personal grief that his addiction has brought.

For most people, gambling is simply an occasional, enjoyable thrill – the prestigious surroundings of a casino for example, with its blend of refinement and heart-racing excitement, provides a great night out, with any losses or gains taken on board as part of the experience. But for some, the thrill and the risk become the *raison d'être* – and that is where the dangers can begin...

'QUIET ADDICTION'

Donald Van Rossem, chairman of Brussels' St. Pieters Leeuw Gamblers Anonymous, told *Metro* of his concern in February this year at what he describes as "the explosion of problem gambling, and the personal

tragedies that lie behind this 'quiet' addiction".

'Quiet' because, unlike other well-documented addictions, such as alcoholism or illegal drug use, problem gambling is not a 'social' phenomenon – while casinos, gaming halls and bookmakers in Belgium obviously attract many people, losing large sums of money on a regular basis is something that the addict tends to do alone.

Gamblers frequently become unreliable in the workplace, miss deadlines and/or meetings and produce poor quality work. At times, physical and emotional health problems associated with excessive gambling can further diminish work performance and attendance. Evidence has shown that depression, high blood pressure, anxiety and other stress-related illnesses have been found in both gamblers and their partners.

Problems that John (*not his real name*) is only too familiar with – a British expat in his late 40s, he has lived in Brussels for 15 years, but the past seven have been

For some gamblers, it's a small step from a social thrill to secretive betting

a catalogue of disasters, all brought about by his gambling habit, which turned in a very short time from an occasional, enjoyable social activity at the casinos of Knokke and Namur into an all-consuming addiction that brought him, even as a previously successful accountant, to the brink of bankruptcy and divorce.

He agreed to meet me for a coffee near one of his former haunts, a gaming hall near De Brouckere, but, fortunately, John has not visited the establishment for some time.

HOOKED ON THE RUSH

"I have started attending Gamblers Anonymous [GA]," he explains. "I had to, or my wife said that she would divorce me and take the children. I've already lost one job and we've been forced to move home, so I can't lose my family as well."

For John, roulette was the downfall: "I just started getting hooked on the glamour of the game – when I first started, I had a couple of really good nights where I made around €10,000, and I thought I was made. I wasn't – my visits, losses and lying started to become ever more frequent, until I realised that it was taking control of my entire life. I was losing thousands every month, but I just couldn't quit the rush, and I also began losing in gaming halls across Brussels; every day of the week, any time that I had a spare hour, be it during the day or after work, I was there."

According to researcher Christophe Druine, of the Rodin Foundation (www.jeu-pathologique.be), a Belgian think-tank devoted to researching

'I WAS LOSING THOUSANDS EVERY MONTH, BUT I JUST COULDN'T QUIT THE RUSH'

and alleviating problems associated with addictive behaviour, the 'rush' or hormone release is similar to that caused by



a stressful, exciting event, such as parachute jumping.

"Addicted gamblers have told me so many times that their heightened excitement and elevated mood often continue for several hours," Druine explains. "This strong physical response then acts as a reinforcement, luring players back for just one more 'rush'," he adds.

John is still optimistic about the future: "As with Alcoholics Anonymous, GA works on the premise of encouraging its members to take it one day at a time. I haven't gambled for two weeks now, and I'm not giving up hope."

As I leave him, I walk round the corner past the *salle de jeux*, with its tempting, flashing lights that hold the fantasy of big profits but the all-too frequent reality of large losses. I only hope that John can keep seeing beyond them into his future – fingers crossed.

If you feel that you have a gambling problem and a desire to stop, help is available at www.gamblersanonymous.org

TOGETHER INTERVIEW

Eduardo Antoja, president of EUROMAT, the European Gaming and Amusement Federation, was receptive to the social concerns that I expressed to him concerning problem gambling, but nevertheless strident in his defence of the measures adopted by his organisation.

Together Magazine: Do you agree that the Amusement and Gaming Federation must take some of the responsibility for addressing the problem of compulsive gambling?

EA: *The industry we represent – low-stake, low-prizes gaming in public places – provides society a service that consumers demand. It is a proven fact that consumer protection is better achieved when and where gaming is regulated and controlled, as it is in most European countries, than when it is prohibited, such as in Portugal, France or Greece. In all these countries, there is a proliferation of illegal gambling and addiction problems far above those encountered in regulated ones.*

This view does not mean we are not aware that the abuse or misuse of the services we provide can create problems in some specific cases, especially for more vulnerable individuals such as minors or addiction-prone individuals. Our industry is not different from other economic sectors, and we are committed to avoiding potential dangers.

How effective do you believe that your stated policy is, taken from your online *Responsible Gambling* document “urging member associations, and through them, the entire gambling sector, to co-operate with national authorities, public and private institutions, user groups and organisations concerned with responsible gambling, in the development of prevention programmes to avoid the risks

associated with the abuse or misuse of gaming devices and facilities”?

There are, in Europe, two basic approaches to combating problem gambling. On one side, the contribution model, where industry operators are asked to pay for the prevention and treatment of gambling problems; on the other, the taxation model, where the gambling operators are required to pay high taxes, and then the public-health system takes care of addicted gamblers. The UK is a clear example of the first approach and Spain of the second. Other member states lie in between. We at EUROMAT have no preferences; it is a question of different social models.

Do you believe that the proposed introduction of ‘super casinos’, as has recently been mooted in the UK, is a sign of a healthy society, or does the proliferation of such gaming establishments not make the rise of irresponsible gambling ever more likely?

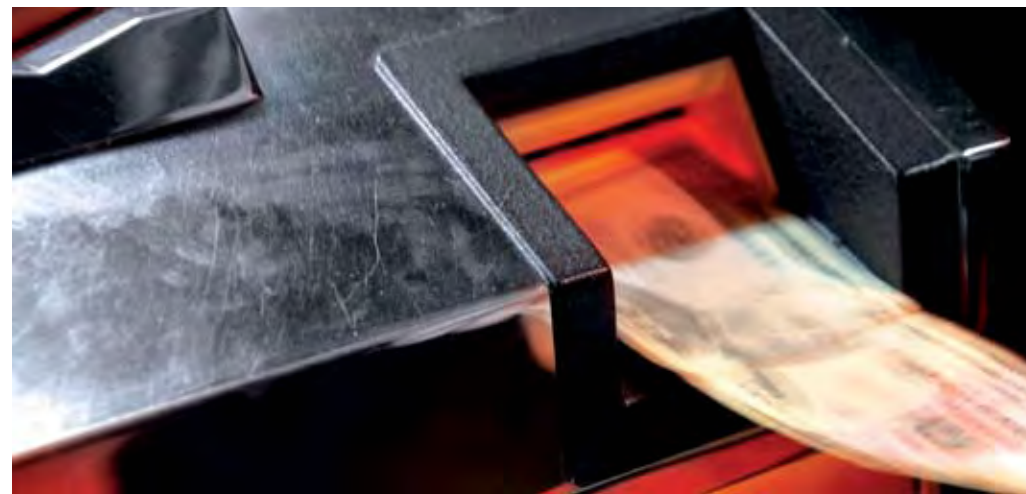
I am afraid that this is a rather theoretical question, as super-casinos will not be introduced in the UK, but possibly in Spain. The debate now concerns what creates higher levels of addiction, at table or remote gambling. Many experts are of the opinion, based on limited evidence, that the bigger addiction threat comes from screen based-games. But I prefer to wait for more solid studies before expressing an opinion.

Is stricter regulation still needed? An increase in the age limit for gambling, perhaps?

It is not a matter of stricter regulations, but of encouraging responsible behaviour. Increasing the age limit for gambling, but not for driving or alcohol consumption? Wouldn't this be a double standard?

www.euromat.org

James Drew



Gambling debts can rapidly spiral out of control

ADDICTION: ROOT CAUSES

Gamblers Anonymous (GA, www.gamblersanonymous.org) provides some insight, indicating three factors that seem to be prevalent in gambling addicts: an inability and unwillingness to accept reality, emotional insecurity and immaturity, which translate into an unwillingness to grow up and accept responsibility. There is also evidence to support the fact that many gamblers subconsciously want to lose because they want to punish themselves. There is no single cause of gambling addiction, though there appears to be a genetic component; as people with any history of addiction in their families are at an increased risk of developing the problem.

Compulsive gambling usually begins in early adolescence in males and at a later age for females. Some people are fascinated from the time of their initial exposure but, for others, the process is more gradual, until they suddenly have a big win, or there is some other stress factor bringing on a period of compulsive gambling. Usually,

people who go on to become gambling addicts have a big win early in their gambling experiences.

GA insists that extensive therapy, preferably in groups, is the only way to treat gambling addiction. It is essential that the person concerned acknowledges the progressive illness and has a real desire to stop. Continued denial of the issue will result in the failure of therapy.

A compulsive gambler can never gamble again – not even on a small scale. A complete change of lifestyle is needed. People who have had a problem with compulsive gambling in the past never seem to be able to gamble on a small scale or in a responsible manner again. The old obsession and the same destructive behaviour patterns return.

The self-help guide *Overcoming Compulsive Gambling* by Alex Blaszczynski is a much-recommended reference book on the subject, and can be ordered from Waterstone's Brussels (www.waterstones.be).



- 1. The glamour of a casino – a gambler's heaven or hell?
© Mattypee30
- 2. A flutter on the horses is very popular in Belgium
- 3. Euromillions Lottery: Wealth beyond your wildest dreams?
- 4. The poker craze has exploded across Europe in recent years
- 5. Secret bets can be made anywhere...
- 6. Web of danger?

GAMBLING IN BRUSSELS

- 1. In addition to Brussels Grand Casino, there are 25 gaming halls to be found in Belgium's capital.
- 2. There are 79 Ladbrokes bookmakers outlets to be found in Brussels, and 295 nationwide. www.ladbrokes.be
- 3. Approximately 28€ million is spent in Belgium every week on the National Lottery's Euromillions game (around 15€ million spent in Brussels) with tickets available online and from thousands of outlets nationwide. www.lotto.be
- 4. According to www.pokerclub.be, there are around 50 social poker clubs that meet on a weekly basis in Brussels.

- 5. Private gambling is impossible to measure accurately, be it in the office, at home, with friends or on the street corner. A word of advice – without legal regulations, taking your chances can be even more risky...
- 6. The internet is a huge temptation for many addicts – available the world over, online betting can pose many dangers, not least of which is the fact that under-age gamblers, armed with someone else's credit card, can cause serious problems for themselves and their parents. On the well-known site www.unibet.com, there is virtually no limit to what you can bet on – odds are even offered on the next celebrity to commit suicide...

POKER: OLD GAME, NEW CRAZE

You'd have to have been living on a desert island to have missed the Texas Hold'Em Poker 'epidemic' that has swept the world since the turn of the 21st century – recent statistics indicate that some 100 million people play the game globally, be it in a social setting with friends, professional tournaments with huge prizes at stake, or on the internet, which now hosts thousands of websites devoted to the game.

Featured in the recent adaptation of *Casino Royale* (2006) with the tense battle of cards between 007 and Le Chiffre, Hold 'Em originated in the United States. A very simple game to learn, but one that nevertheless has unparalleled possibilities for psychological interplay, the casinos of Ostend, Knokke and Chaudfontaine now hold regular tournaments in prestigious, beautiful gaming rooms devoted exclusively to Texas Hold 'Em, with professionally trained dealers in place to ensure fair play.

BELGIAN GAMBLING: A BACKGROUND

The country has nine casinos, in Blankenberge, Chaudfontaine, Dinant, Knokke-Heist, Middelkerke, Ostend, Namur, Spa and, since January 2006, Brussels, with its Grand Casino in Rue Duquesnoy. In addition, there are some 250 electronic gaming halls located in various Belgian towns and cities, which offer computerised versions of popular casino games such as roulette, blackjack and poker. Belgian gaming laws have long been among the strictest in Europe - casinos were originally banned in 1902. The law remained in place until the 1999 Gaming Act, which allowed for one casino in a limited number of towns, and also permitted the opening of gaming halls, with the granting of a certain number of licences, based on strict criteria involving solvency, well-maintained, regulated premises and machines and the 'good character' of applicants. However, the operation of games on the internet or mobile phones in Belgium currently infringes the Gaming Act. Since the market for such operations has continued to grow despite this fact, a draft bill governing games of chance is still pending in the Federal Parliament of Belgium.

Green light for regional parking agency

The recent conference of the 19 communal magistrates of Brussels approved, in principle, the creation of a regional parking control agency, a move that is seen as vital to a more integrated parking-management scheme across all of Brussels' districts.

Brussels Region and the 19 communes it comprises had not previously reached agreement on a harmonious parking policy. In fact, the rules and plans in effect vary noticeably from commune to commune.

Brussels Mobility Minister Pascal Smet (S.P.A.) had, however, made clear his aim to move towards a regional parking agency: he had even begun to draw up plans for an ordinance pilot-study on

the benefits of the fees that would be paid by the motorists.

HARMONISING CITY BY-LAWS

It is now (nearly) a done deal - following many months of debate, the magistrates' conference in January agreed in principle on the creation of a regional agency for parking control, which would have as its key responsibility a harmonisation of the mechanisms and procedures of communes' parking by-laws across the entire Brussels Region. The creation of this agency should ensure that every commune adopts a parking control plan: conference President Didier Gosuin, who is also the MR's leader in the Brussels parliament, said that each of the 19 plans should not only take into consideration the specific local needs but also the regional objectives of by-law harmonisation.

TEN PERCENT OF THE BENEFITS DERIVED FROM COMMUNAL TRAFFIC TAXES WOULD GO TO THE PARKING AGENCY

the issue. But, until now, he had only received muted approval from communes that would be able to control the impact of these measures at a local level and could reap



Parking fines in Brussels are a very lucrative source of funds, but still far less punitive than in other European capitals

FIXED POLICIES AT REGIONAL LEVEL

"The general policy must be fixed at a regional level. It's a matter of creating, by way of example, the same sort of neighbouring district cards, the same ticket machine tariffs, the same signalling techniques," Gosuin explained. "The communes would then be responsible for their implementation on the roads, as parking is a communal enterprise. They would, for example, define where the ticket machines would be placed as well as which zones would become blue, green or red. Of course, to allow this regional parking agency-to-be to complete general tasks, such as the management of available parking, ten percent of the benefits derived from communal traffic taxes would go to the parking agency. The conference of magistrates has also put in place a working group to assess the existing situation and propose concrete harmonisation solutions. The region will not decide on the set-up of zones, it can only validate the traffic plans that the communes submit."

BRUSSELS PARKING =14€ MILLION PER YEAR

Brussels' communes are not likely to deprive themselves of the income from taxation linked with their traffic policies.

Last year, they earned around 14€ million, of which more than half went to the City of Brussels' coffers. But if the tariffs are harmonised throughout the regional district, it will be the communes (as part of a working group created by the conference) that fix their levels. A full assessment, as well as tariff proposals are due to be presented soon.

Ludivine Nolf

NET TRAFFIC TAXATION AND TICKET MACHINES - 2007

Bruxelles-Ville: 7.9€ million (2006), 660 ticket machines
Etterbeek: 1.5€m, 374
Ixelles: 1€m, 250
Jette: 780,000€, 22
Saint-Gilles: 700,000€, 67
Saint-Josse: 692,000€ (2006), 0
Schaerbeek: 550,000€, 101
Woluwe-Saint-Lambert: 450,000€, 0
Uccle: 350,000€ (2006), 120
Woluwe-Saint-Pierre: 280,000€ (2006), 67
Koekelberg: 0€, 0
Anderlecht: 90,000€, 0
Berchem-sainte-Agathe: 78,000€, 0
Watermael-Boitsfort: 21,195€, 0
Ganshoren: 0€, 0
Molenbeek: 0€, 0
Forest: 0€, 0
Evere: In deficit, 15
Auderghem: 90,000€ (2006), 0

Palais des Congrès: Hip to be Square

The Palais des Congrès renovations continue apace – the work should be completed by September 2009, with the focal point set to be the launching of a magnificent brasserie-terrace and an expansive 'green' square in Le Parc du Mont des Arts.

Say goodbye to Palais des Congrès, and hello to Square Brussels Meeting Center. So named, perhaps, because it hasn't actually been home to any *grands congrès* for years? Whatever the reason, Brussels' famed area, raised on the Mont des Arts during the 1958 World Fair, is undergoing a much-needed facelift. The renovation was given the green light in April 2007 with a September 2009 deadline, and is hoped to tempt many people back to the city, as the Square fills with hip meeting places, theatres, festivals and expositions. The re-opening has been given the symbolic date of 20th September 2009, 20h09!

IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE PROJECT HINGES ON A COMPLETE CHANGE, OUTSIDE AS WELL AS IN

CONGRES SAGA

It should be remembered that, in 1958, the Brussels Palais des Congrès was already renowned as an international conference centre, to such an extent

that Brussels ranked second in the world's leading convention cities, until 1997. Unfortunately, due to lack of maintenance, it fell into disrepair. 'Ambient' humidity destroyed the carpets, chairs and the frescoes by Paul Delvaux and René Magritte, and the translation booths and projectors became outdated. And, of course, there was the asbestos in the walls.

So the Palais had to shut its doors in 1993, much to the benefit of other Belgian convention centres, which quickly snaffed up many important events. It was in that same year that the federal government finally decided to renovate, starting with asbestos removal, which finally took place in 2006. In total, 60€ million has been pumped into the brand-new Square, an investment offset by the economic interest generated in this latest Brussels focal point, and in Belgium itself.

LONG-AWAITED RENOVATION

The final plans for the new Square Brussels Meeting Center were presented in 2007 and has been under construction



1. Palais des Congrès by night
2. The Exhibition Hall
3. Inside the Meeting Center
4. The Delvaux-Magritte Hall

© 72 DPI
Project: A2RC

ever since. The new building will comprise three auditoriums, able to accommodate 1200, 500 and 300 people, as well as 20 'adjustable' meeting rooms (with partitions) which will hold between 10-100 people. It should be noted that the project hinges on a complete change, outside as well as in. Therefore, the new central element for the Palais des Congrès will be an impressive green glass cube with a view onto Mont des Arts, which will serve as the entrance hall and main window. The arcades above the park will be enclosed with large glass walls and home to a trendy new brasserie. The cherry on the cake, however, will be the first floor's magnificent bay-window terrace.

Rumours abound that this will be the largest and most beautiful terrace in Brussels, with a breathtaking view over the city and Place Royale. The top floor of the building will be reserved for private functions such as receptions, wedding

parties and birthday dinners, offering views of the same impressive panorama. Eventually, the new Palais is set to spread across five hectares, including the parking area.

A REDEVELOPED AREA

Joint efforts will also be made with other organisations from the district to allow conventioners to discover all that Mont des Arts has to offer culture-wise - Horeca (Hotel, Restaurant, and Café Associations) has been asked to begin work on the common goal of making the district more attractive, with commercial enterprises aiming for a homogeneous concept, such as 'Food Street' or 'Art-Gallery Street'.

Ludivine Nolf

*Square Brussels Meeting Center,
Rue Coudenberg, 3
1000 Brussels
www.square-brussels.eu*

FLASH

BELGIANS WANT TO CALL IT QUILTS AT 62

According to a study by the Directorate-General Statistics and Information (SPF Economie) concerning the transition from active working life into retirement, most 50-year-olds still in full employment want to stop working at 62.

Additionally, it was found that women generally want to retire earlier than men and that Brussels residents were those who wished to remain at work the longest.

BUSINESS

The Property Barometer



In partnership with renowned free weekly newspaper *Vlan*, we are proud to present The Property Barometer, THE assessment of real-estate fluctuations in Europe's capital.



This study is based on the asking prices of private individuals and estate agencies in their advertisements published in *Vlan*'s Brussels edition over a ten-week period (10,032 adverts). Obviously, prices at which properties are sold can vary. Check out thousands of adverts on www.vlan.be, in *Vlan*'s property section and in *Vlan.be Immo Magazine* – your real estate rendez-vous, 90,000 copies, twice per month.

AVERAGE PRICE PER SQUARE METRE (FIGURES IN RED INDICATE FORMER AVERAGE PRICES)	APARTMENTS		HOUSES
	RENT	BUY	BUY
1000 BRUXELLES (CENTRE)	9.50 € ↘ 9.93	2,342.94 € ↘ 2,415.04	1,878.52 € ↘ 2,130.42
1020 LAEKEN	9.20 € ↗ 8.69	1,936.56 € ↗ 1,933.43	1,984.13 € ↘ 2,047.50
1030 SCHAERBEEK	9.12 € ↗ 8.55	2,030.78 € ↘ 2,112.20	1,580.23 € ↘ 1,671.64
1040 ETTERBEEK	8.94 € ↘ 9.30	2,612.20 € ↗ 2,564.25	1,881.52 € ↘ 1,948.44
1050 IXELLES	9.43 € ↘ 9.65	2,693.62 € ↗ 2,574.53	2,224.15 € ↗ 2,190.60
1060 SAINT GILLES	8.87 € ↘ 9.69	2,238.91 € ↘ 2,284.96	2,182.89 € ↗ 2,040.81
1070 ANDERLECHT	8.16 € ↘ 9.31	1,847.36 € ↘ 1,905.25	1,702.19 € ↗ 1,497.48
1080 MOLENBEEK ST JEAN	8.12 € ↘ 9.20	1,713.17 € ↘ 1,855.53	1,667.21 € ↗ 1,305.16
1081 KOEKELBERG	8.36 € ↗ 8.26	1,888.48 € ↘ 1,898.64	1,503.28 € ↘ 1,568.04
1082 BERCHEM STE AGATHE	9.61 € ↘ 9.65	1,789.49 € ↗ 1,777.19	2,692.40 € ↗ 2,283.79
1083 GANSHOREN	7.93 € ↘ 8.00	2,032.34 € ↗ 1,899.19	1,812.50 € ↘ 2,214.28
1090 JETTE	8.39 € ↘ 8.63	1,958.90 € ↘ 1,958.90	1,506.82 € ↘ 1,559.99
1120 NEDER OVER HEMBEEK	9.22 € ↘ 10.08	2,204.71 € ↘ 2,373.70	1,476.19 € ↘ 1,588.83
1140 EVERE	8.09 € ↗ 7.28	2,097.48 € ↘ 2,338.07	1,877.35 € ↘ 1,980.82
1150 WOLUWÉ ST PIERRE	9.83 € ↘ 9.93	3,033.37 € ↗ 2,530.95	2,795.16 € ↗ 2,665.08
1160 AUDERGHEM	9.70 € ↘ 10.01	2,524.07 € ↗ 2,423.05	2,440.85 € ↗ 2,277.49
1170 WATERMAEL BOITSFORT	9.95 € ↗ 9.19	2,392.88 € ↘ 2,405.81	3,636.68 € ↗ 3,207.23
1180 UCCLE	8.85 € ↗ 8.83	2,784.38 € ↗ 2,761.28	2,916.64 € ↗ 2,835.92
1190 FOREST	8.54 € ↘ 8.62	2,146.55 € ↗ 2,139.05	2,550.65 € ↗ 2,189.08
1200 WOLUWÉ ST LAMBERT	9.85 € ↘ 10.04	2,585.01 € ↗ 2,571.38	2,696.65 € ↘ 2,582.91
1210 ST JOSSE TEN NOODE	7.33 € ↘ 8.00	2,049.01 € ↗ 2,032.52	1,404.76 € ↘ 1,884.15

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Housing at any cost?

If Brussels-Capital's ambitious accommodation plans are to be believed, 5,000 new homes should be constructed by the end of 2009. But the project, which has been slow to start, has thus far received far-from unanimous support...

For an increasing number of Brussels residents, the housing crisis is a fact of life. With rent frequently as high as 40 percent of private income, the number of housing, and low-income housing projects are still insufficient in the light of the high and constant demand. This was the key reason behind Brussels-Capital's famous housing plan (started four years ago) which was supposed to have created 5,000 houses, of which 3,500 were for low-income earners, by the end of Brussels-Capital's term of office in 2009. As to the public land mobilised to build these houses, it has, for the large part, been placed at the region's disposal by the 19 Communes and Brussels' CPAS offices, thus creating an upsurge in housing demand across the city.

INNOVATIVE BUT DISAPPOINTING

It should be noted that the impetus of this housing plan was decided under the previous legislation by Brussels Minister Alain Hutchinson (PS), whose regional competences have since been taken over by Socialist front-bencher Françoise Dupuis. Given the status quo, it would appear that the government aimed high with its target construction of 5,000 low-income accommodations in five years, particularly in light of the fact

that the Communes had previously constructed no new houses for some time, barely finding enough in their budgets to renovate existing housing. This meant that, as soon as work began on the plan, it hit setbacks, prompting controversy in both political and professional circles and the Communes, as well as the residents of the areas due to accommodate the housing projects. The critical consensus is that this has been an "ill-conceived" project which, from its outset, appears to be barring citizens and regions from engaging in any constructive dialogue.

TIMID ADVANCES

The housing plan is disappointing. In fact, the first tenders to the private sector were to extend to 700 accommodations, but only one project was approved, with a limit of 105 homes on housing estates in Uccle (which has forced many to re-evaluate the private interest generated by the housing plan). Françoise Dupuis has at least assumed a heartening stance as the expiry date on her party's term edges ever closer. In January, it was announced that, of the 5,000 homes promised, 4,200 now have sites on which to build them. For the remainder, they await being undertaken as projects subject to market fluctuations. Among these is Reyers, which will provide space for nearly 200 new homes on



The Ernotte project

the open-air parking lot near the RTBF, Rue Colonel Bourg.

'SOCIAL OVERLOADING'

The construction plans had, theoretically, cited 234 housing-estate accommodations and 82 houses in Ixelles edging on its border with Watermael-Boitsfort, but this made the residents of Dries-Ernotte-Boondael, who are at the centre of an active and vehemently anti-housing committee, furious – with good reason.

GIVEN THE STATUS QUO, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE GOVERNMENT AIMED HIGH WITH ITS TARGET OF 5,000 LOW-INCOME ACCOMMODATIONS TO BE BUILT IN FIVE YEARS

The housing plan is intended for the public land of Ixelles, which has the lowest percentage of low-income housing estates in Brussels, but is also located mere metres away from Watermael-Boitsfort, which has the highest level of low-income housing in the Brussels-

Capital Region (2,145 low-income homes in total). It is understandable that these close bordering neighbours oppose what they claim to be a "dangerous sociological concentration".

Active since 2005, the Ernotte-Boondael committee has gathered more than 1,500 signatures from local residents, notwithstanding the arguments put forward by Françoise Dupuis, who has stated that the project in fact constitutes a "model of social diversity implanted in a hilly green setting, constructed to guarantee a feeling of tranquillity". But Watermael-Boitsfort Magistrate Martine Payfa (FDF), who has devoted up to 80 percent of her budget to the area's police force, is in agreement with the general mood: "This project breaks the sociological balance of a district. Françoise Dupuis should agree to review her numbers on the subject of low income housing in Brussels." As *Together* went to press, the Ixelles district had still not provided the necessary urbanization permits to begin work on the construction sites.

Ludivine Nolf

Flemish and French media: Another dividing line?

Renowned advertising agency McCann Erickson has analysed the media and advertising prevalent in the Flemish-speaking north of Belgium compared with the francophone south, and has reached some surprising conclusions.

While there may very well be a 'Belgitude' attitude that binds the inhabitants of this small country – a subtle blend of humility, humour, even surrealism is frequently cited – Francophones and Flems nevertheless remain very different as far as TV broadcasting, the style of daily newspapers and advertising in general are concerned.

According to McCann Erickson's survey, produced in collaboration with the Solvay Business School, the TNS Dimarso Institute and involving 3,000 respondents, with results announced at the end of January, it comes down to preferences between straight-talk and soft-soap. The study found that, in Flanders, newspaper readers, for example, prefer a straightforward approach and hard facts while, on the other hand, French speakers want to be

seduced by a newspaper's writing and design styles.

The trend would also appear to be that the French-speaking media are more emotional than their northern counterparts: a recent example was provided following an interview given by the bishop of Namur, Monseigneur Léonard, who was subsequently accused of homophobia.

ABOUT McCANN

McCann Erickson is a world-renowned advertising agency with established networks in many countries. Its Belgian office is located in Hoeilart. Because of its reputation for creativity, McCann manages publicity for prestigious customers such as L'Oréal, Mastercard, Ethias, Harley Davidson, Nestlé and Microsoft.



Anita Descheemaeker,
General Manager
of McCann Belgium
© McCann

The Francophone press went for headlines such as 'Fury over Monseigneur Léonard anti-gay remarks', while Flemish daily newspapers adopted a far more neutral tone.

So, do we really need two separate advertising campaigns for Belgium? McCann Erickson's Head of Strategy Hakim Benbouchta summed it up: "One would be tempted to say yes; 'tone' and language use are very different in the north and south of the country. In short, you need to seduce the Francophone and convince the Flem!"

**'YOU NEED TO
SEDUCE THE
FRANCOPHONE
AND CONVINCE
THE FLEM!'**

If one also takes into account other divergent elements, such as cultural references and humour, the ideal would indeed appear to

be the development of two different campaigns."

It's only a survey, of course, but it would appear that the two halves of Belgium will have to look even harder to find common ground.

James Drew

ONLINE OBSERVATIONS

Ambitious advertising agency Vanpipperzeel is broadcasting international commercials on its blog and giving French and Flemish speakers the opportunity to post their views online. At a glance, the two communities' different perceptions become apparent. Go to <http://lapubetvanpipperzeel.blogspot.com>

When science meets nature

In February, Biotherm's international team visited Brussels to announce their pioneering work on 'dermobiologic' skin care. A perfect opportunity to meet International Brand Manager, Charlotte Franceries.

Charlotte Franceries

© L'Oréal Produits de Luxe

The name 'biotherm' sums up the brand's qualities perfectly - 'bio', highlighting the effectiveness of a biological approach to solving skin problems and 'therm', which indicates the origins of 'dermobiologic' skin care, namely thermal plankton. Since its launch, Biotherm has preserved the goal of optimizing the benefits of natural substances via scientific research, an objective strengthened with intelligent, sincere marketing.

CEASELESS INNOVATION

Charlotte Franceries is openly ambitious: "I want Biotherm to become the world's most inspirational skin-care label in three years!"

Pretentious? Not at all. Ambitious? Certainly. Realistic? Absolutely. Take a look at the brand's history – Biotherm has long been a pioneer, a fact that

Franceries underlines with pride: "We were the first to launch anti-wrinkle sun care, oral cosmetics, and, along with Vichy, skin-care for men." The brand continues to assert

'I WANT BIOOTHERM TO BECOME THE WORLD'S MOST INSPIRATIONAL SKIN-CARE LABEL IN THREE YEARS!'



KEY FACTS

2007 L'Oréal turnover:
17.063€ billion

Group's growth:
+8.1 percent

Growth of 'Luxury Cosmetics' section:
+8.4 percent

Launch of Biotherm:
1952

L'Oréal buy Biotherm: 1970

Countries in which the brand is sold:
More than 70

Source:
www.zonebourse.com,
24/01/08



*Rides Repair:
The first in a new
range of products*

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its visionary, scientific approach and its open lines of communication with the public...

INTERVIEW

Together Magazine: Since 1970, Biotherm has been a part of the L'Oréal group. What role does your brand play in this powerful multinational?

Charlotte Franceries: L'Oréal's aim is to develop distinct brands perfectly attuned to various customer profiles. These brands increase the group's share in the international cosmetics market. Biotherm's mission is to market premium skin-care products that are also accessible, fresh, natural and bursting with energy. Biotherm represents a complete lifestyle and an attitude that allows all our customers to maintain their vitality and reveal their beauty.

At L'Oréal, Biotherm is a part of the 'Luxury Products' section. How do you define a 'luxury' cosmetic?

In my opinion, a luxury cosmetic is a product that says what it does and

does what it says. Sincerity is at the heart of our mission. Luxury according to Biotherm is not mere ostentation and glamour, but also a choice of lifestyle, the reality of powerful elements, inspired by innovation and quality, sensuality and nature.

Biotherm has been built on the values of innovation, quality and nature. Now, the 'dermobiologic' skin-care approach announces thermal plankton as the latest skin-care innovation. How do you intend to educate your customers about this new concept?

To answer this question, it is essential to define 'dermobiologic'. The term 'probiotic' is already relatively well known, referring to the micro-organisms that stimulate our immunities and which are found in foods such as fruit and vegetables. The innovation lies in the discovery of the probiotic effects of thermal plankton on the skin. It stimulates the natural defences and rejuvenates skin cells. We are aware that we have to let our customers know about this revolutionary discovery – it's for



Dermobiotics,
by Biotherm

© L'Oréal Produits
de Luxe

this reason that we have developed a communications strategy across various media. The internet enables us to develop, for example, CRM campaigns and publish articles on health-related websites and forums. Our magazine advertisements clearly explain dermobiologic processes and effects, and our sales outlets will feature a display containing thermal plankton to demonstrate its effectiveness.

What makes Biotherm different from its competitors?

Without doubt, our market position can be defined as follows: the most effective,

**'IN MY OPINION,
A LUXURY
COSMETIC IS
A PRODUCT THAT
SAYS WHAT IT
DOES AND DOES
WHAT IT SAYS'**

natural brand and the most natural, effective brand. This perfect blend of nature and utility is the element that really distinguishes us from our competitors. The brands that

can honestly assert such harmony between these two values are few and far between.

How do you define a strong brand?

In my opinion, one that is based on the veracity of its products' claims. Thus, a strong brand is one that does not lie and people will buy again. This is the concept of 'sincerity' of which I spoke earlier - and it's a precious principle.

A brand must be sincere and transparent towards its clients - Biotherm has established its marketing strategy on this principal. Let's take the example of thermal plankton. This micro-organism has been in our products for decades - we could easily have used it as a selling point long ago. But it took many years for our researchers to discover its probiotic qualities, which is why only now can we truthfully inform our customers about the lengthy research process, when other, less-scrupulous brands, would merely announce the discovery of another 'miracle' ingredient...

How important are the emerging superpowers' markets to Biotherm?

From an economic point of view, there is of course a very high potential in the emerging superpowers' markets, and the huge numbers of future consumers that they represent. But also, in my opinion, these countries offer another very important dimension: the broadening of intellectual horizons, and a new skin-care philosophy, because each culture has different physiological and hygiene standards. Chinese skin does not have the same characteristics as Russian - for this reason, it is vital to provide personalisation by modifying the formulas of products according to where they are sold. Local culture also plays a very important role - as I have always believed, we must first understand the way in which local women have used cosmetics for the past fifty years. In Europe, for example, our cosmetics have been long-conditioned by the well-known Nivea cream, thick and luxuriant. Conversely, in countries such as Brazil or the United States, the cosmetic standard is much more fluid and light in texture.

**'A STRONG
BRAND IS ONE
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OF SINCERITY:
A PRECIOUS
PRINCIPLE,
IN MY OPINION'**

Which country takes the best care of its skin?

Japan, without a doubt. The average Japanese woman uses between five and seven skin-care products daily, which goes

FROM THERMAL SPRINGS...

With origins dating as far back as three billion years, thermal plankton was among the very first life-forms to appear on Earth. An extremely soft microflora, it flourishes in mountains' thermal springs, particularly those with high rock-salt levels. It has anti-ageing, curative and regenerating properties for skin.

... TO THE FIRST 'PROBIOTIC' SKIN CARE

Dermobiotic. Behind this science-fictionesque name is a revolutionary scientific process; while thermal plankton has been used in all Biotherm products for more than 50 years, its 'probiotic' role was only recently discovered by researchers.

As Lucien Aubert, director of Biotherm's development and research laboratory explains: "Pure Extract of Thermal Plankton stimulates the skin's self-defence mechanisms. Like probiotic food, it acts as an anti-oxidant at the heart of skin cells, with bright, vital, youthful skin the result."

hand-in-hand with the country's culture, in which hygiene, well-being and beauty (both external and internal), are paramount.

Jérôme Stéfanski

China and India: Different paths to power

China and India have been the focus of much media attention recently – the former has double-digit growth, huge foreign exchange reserves, enormous foreign investment inflow and the imminent Beijing Olympics, while the latter is toe-to-toe on economic growth, enjoys democratic and religious diversity, offshore centres and a ‘car for the poor’.

What are the reasons for these two success stories? What do they have in common? What makes them so different?

To state the obvious, both countries have huge populations that are attracting foreign and domestic investors with deep pockets in high numbers. China is home to around 1.3 billion people, while India recently cruised past the 1bn mark – while China still has a birth-control programme, the ‘one-child policy’, India is leaving demography up to nature and culture.

What capitalist wouldn’t want to sell a ballpoint pen with a five-cent net profit to those two populations combined? It could bring him, or her, up to 115€ million in net profit.

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

But there are more differences than at first apparent. On the one hand, there’s China, with its state-controlled socio-capitalism, while India has its caste system and democracy.

China knew state-controlled communism until 1978, when then-leader Deng Xiao Ping proclaimed “To become rich is glorious” on his ‘Southern Tour’ of the country. With that hugely publicised statement, the country began an unprecedented 30 years of fast growth towards economic stardom; a race that was only temporarily hindered by the Tiananmen Square student revolt in 1989. Looking back, the Chinese already had a mercantile attitude, a trader and gambler spirit, dating back many centuries. Even earlier in history, they perfected social and state



After surviving the tsunami, India is now ready to reap the benefits of a new generation.

management with Confucianism and Taoism.

India is a younger ‘modern’ country than China, and used its earlier years to bring social, cultural and religious diversity under control in a democracy, notwithstanding its lingering caste system. As such, it began its own economic race later, but by no means less eagerly or successfully. India

has always been an important trade partner of the West, not least in spices and textile fabric. In its long history, India’s religions have created

CHINA’S HERBAL MEDICINE AND ACUPUNCTURE KNOWLEDGE ARE RECOGNIZED WORLDWIDE

great civilisations, constructions and monuments, but religious skirmishes are still prevalent.

HERBAL HEALING, IT INPUT

Differences between the two countries also lie in the fact that while the Chinese have an economic history of herbal medicine and optical lens technology, the Indians are very strong in IT and cultural diversity. China’s knowledge of herbal medicine and acupuncture are recognized worldwide, with many western devotees, thanks to the recent ‘Return to nature’ and ‘bio’ hype.

In fact, this was the spur for one of the first weighty foreign investments in China in recent decades – Xian-Janssen, a joint venture between Janssen Pharmaceutica of Belgium and a herbal medicine manufacturer in Xian, China’s former capital city, best known for its ‘Terra Cotta Warriors’. Less well known is the level of Chinese expertise in optical lenses, which has brought many medical equipment manufacturers to the country.



En route for a business revolution! An Auto Rickshaw on the streets of Delhi

India is the offshore centre of choice for big business worldwide, particularly for IT, call centres, software development and cartoons. The cultural diversity of its people and their democratic freedom stimulate flexibility, team work and creativity - this has not only led to the creation of 'Bollywood', making India the world's largest film-producing nation, but also to original business ideas, such as the recent announcement of a 'car for the poor' that costs only a fraction of even the smallest western vehicles.

Both countries have understood the fatal attraction of their countries through the sheer size of their domestic markets, and are making sure that foreign investors can only enter slowly but surely, giving local companies time to adapt while obliging foreign capitalists to create joint ventures with local companies to ensure a continuous transfer of knowledge. Furthermore, both governments are trying to maintain a system of import barriers and export

subsidies, doped with low domestic currencies, for as long as possible.

All of which sounds very positive, so what are the challenges for the future? As their economies race ahead, it is vital that China and India keep control of inflation, ensure that the added value of their economies increases, and monitor and guide the demands of the ever-growing 'well-off' section of the population for social and democratic reforms - other large countries, such as Russia, Indonesia, Brazil, Vietnam and Turkey will not need much encouragement to attack China and India's current dominant position in the world economy.

Dave Deruytter

ABOUT THE WRITER

Dave Deruytter works for an international bank and spent several years in Asia.



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FLASH

ISLAMIC ART HONOURED

A new exhibition hall dedicated to Islamic art, *Art Of The Islamic World*, was opened at Brussels' Parc du Cinquantenaire Royal Museum of Art and History at the end of February. Measuring 52 metres in length, 14 metres wide and six metres high, and costing 2.1€ million, the spacious, impressive new section was constructed between November 2006-December 2007.

LIFE-
STYLE



PASSION FOR FASHION

The Milano Moda Donna Autumn/Winter 08/09 (Women's Fashion Week) took place from 16th-23rd of February. Our Italian journey aimed to corner the latest fashion trends and to make the most of the sales in order to grab some great bargains. There was only one condition: we had to keep the travel costs down, so there'd be more money to spend in the Italian boutiques...

The starting point for our shopping adventure was www.ryanair.com - we booked two Brussels to South-Bergamo return tickets at the modest price of 76€, including taxes. With our suitcases empty, our spirits light and our wallets bursting we made our way to the brand-

THERE WAS ONLY ONE CONDITION: WE HAD TO KEEP THE TRAVEL COSTS DOWN, SO THERE'D BE MORE MONEY TO SPEND IN THE ITALIAN BOUTIQUES...

new Brussels South Charleroi Airport terminal at 6h, Saturday. The terminal has already been quite a success, with its rather minimalist but very practical style. Brussels to Charleroi was by car, although we could have

taken the shuttle from the Gare du Midi, which has a direct link to the airport (10€ pp/one way).

We were impressed by the service, cleanliness and quality on the plane – and the last of our negative preconceptions about low-cost flying disappeared when we landed, promptly, 90 minutes later in Bergamo. After disembarkation, we made our way to the Sixt desk, THE low cost car rental specialist (www.sixt.com). The keys to our 'Smart For Two' convertible were already waiting at the desk, and we smirked while paying the meagre bill: 47€ for three days rental! Thus, our goal, as spelt out in the introduction, was achieved – a return trip from Brussels to Bergamo + car rental = €123 for two people.



Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II

DAY 1 : BERGAMO

We drove towards our bed for the night - ten minutes later, having passed through the centre of Bergamo and navigated the narrow roads that led to the hilltops, we reached La Valletta, a beautiful three star guest house, with eight rooms of varying comfort: superior standard suite, from 85€ per night with double bed and 5.50€ per person for breakfast (*Via Castagneta 19, Città Alta Bergamo, T. +39 (0)35 242 746, www.lavalletabergamo.it*). Above all, the view over the valley was breathtaking, as was the warmth with which we were greeted, not to mention the quality of the wine cellar!

After settling in to our room, we went up into the hills of the town and discovered the timeless charms of a typical market: the local cheese and olive bread truly revived us. Our shopping green light, 14h30, was drawing nearer - the shops

would soon be re-opening, so we made our way back to the centre of town.

The wide boulevards in Bergamo centre contrasted with the quaint little alleyways that took us up into the hills. If you do go by car, be aware of the parking-space indicators - Italy has opted for a system of parking signs painted on the ground. Blue lines indicate tourist and visitor parking, yellow (of which there are far more) are for locals' use only. Our initial ignorance cost us a parking ticket of 22€ in Bergamo... I think we can all agree that there are better welcome gifts!

Bergamo is the perfect town for window-shopping, for several reasons. Firstly, the sales last longer than in Milan. At the end of February, shops frequently advertise reductions of up to 70 percent. Moreover, Bergamo's size is more manageable, which allows you to relax, without having to worry about missing any of the essential shopping areas. Lastly, shop and restaurant prices are generally cheaper than in the Milan metropolis.

The **Via XX Settembre** is the main shopping street, and is a pedestrian area surrounded by picturesque houses in the Renaissance style. Luxury shops rub shoulders with well-known brands, and the local specialities aren't left out either - they're usually to be found in multi-brand boutiques and specialist tailors. A good example of this is **Boggi**, a fashion house founded in 1939, which makes made-to-measure three-piece suits, starting at around 500€. The number of men's and women's collections available at **Sisley** and **Zara** over two floors is impressive, while in the Galleria **Mazzoleni**, the **Mont Blanc** boutique invites you to purchase a pen to make your work colleagues green with envy. At **Lui-jo**, madame will be won over by the creativity and refinement of the accessories and T-shirts, inspired by Snoopy, and **Calvin**

Klein has a ten-metre window here. At **Baume & Mercier**, you will find world-famous Swiss watches, while at number 85, the popular boutique **Dev** offers a large choice of leather luxury goods including belts, lady's slippers, wallets and brand-name handbags such as **Tod's**, **Hogan**, or even **Fay**. Before leaving the street, take the time to stop at number 58: **Twice**, the ice cream parlour. There you will experience the most delicious *glaces*, with magical flavours: Nutellone, Cioccolato, Stracciatella, Fior di latte, Meringa, The sodas are still on tap, just like they used to be, but if that's not your thing, why not enjoy your ice cream with a glass of San Pellegrino, the famous local water?

Milano by night

A little further along, the road parallel to Via XX Settembre, is the **Via Broseta**

housing typical Renaissance galleries that were the glory of Italy and, of course, there are also classical style fashion boutiques.

At the crossroads of **Via Gian Mario Scotti** and **Via Silvio Spaventa**, contemporary-design lovers will be blown away by the choice and quality that **Anteprima** offers - a true temple of interior design offering well-known brands such as **Varenna** and **Poliform**. Adjacent is **Krugg**, where the gentlemen will find exactly what they are looking for fashion wise, with other brands on offer such as **Piombo**, **Zegna**, **Corneliani** for clothes and **Santoni** for footwear.

Lastly, you mustn't leave Bergamo without going up the **Via G. Triadoschi**,



famous for its luxury shops such as **Trussardi** and **Max Mara**. At number 38, there's a **Biffi** for you, which has sales on big brands: **Gucci**, **Dior**, **Moncler**, **Janvin**, and **Prada**.

In the evening, be tempted by a fashionable aperitif at **La Scala Café** which offers live music, famous wines and a variety of foods in a smart casual ambience (*Via Ponti 24*, T. +39 (0)35 459 2555). Next, take the **funicular** that links the hills with the rest of the town for an unforgettably romantic experience (*Viale Vittorio Emanuele*, T. +39 035 236 026). This will give you access to the old city, choc-full of history and with a charming restaurant to boot: **Il Gourmet** (*Via S. Vigilio 1*, T. +39 (0)35 437 3004), where you can enjoy the most fantastic linguini and delicious regional cheeses accompanied by a Tuscan Chianti.

DAY 2: MILAN

Some 45 kilometres and a toll of €2.40 separate Bergamo from Milan. Before we left, we heard much sniping about the city: Milan is dirty, grey, industrial, cold, and expensive. Lies, all lies! Milan is majestic, rich in culture, warm and approachable. There is excitement on every street corner, especially during fashion week. Businessmen in tailored suits hang around young models who have come to try their luck in the castings organised by the Montenapoleone area's big brands. Fashion is everywhere, even places where you wouldn't normally expect it: church walls, phone booths, buildings under construction. Milanese dualism is everywhere; the profane and the sacred, the handcrafted and the industrial are cheek by jowl.

For our stay, we chose a hotel in the **San Siro** district, where the famous stadium of the same name is the home ground for AC and Inter Milan, the city's two legendary teams. The **Best Western Astoria** offers the advantages of being only a few minutes from the town centre,

within walking distance of public transport, and in a quiet area. By reserving on www.lastminute.com, you can make the most of a standard double room and breakfast from 70€, a reasonable price for a four-star establishment (*Viale Murillo 9*, 20149 Milan, T. +39 (0)2 4009 0095). One piece of advice, however: for longer holidays, a hotel with more facilities and comfort may be more suitable.

Having barely put our luggage down, we took the road towards Serravalle and its large outlet centre. It was Sunday - the only opportunity we had to get some good bargains. After 45 minutes on the motorway we found the Mecca of good deals: **Diesel**, **Hugo Boss**, **Moncler**, **Prada**, **Dolce & Gabbana**, **Benetton**, **Versace**, **Sisley**, **Bulgari**, **Calvin Klein**, **Trussardi**, and also **Nike**, **Bose**, **Napapijri**, **Nautica**, **Swarovski**, **Baldinini**, **Asics**, **Adidas**, **Lacoste**, **Cerrutti**, **Les Tropeziennes**, **Geox**, **Bric's**, **Reebok**, **La Perla**, **Levi's**, **Samsonite**... they were all there! Around 180 brands, all with sales of 30 to 70 percent all year round. Enough to make you go doolally, at least for a day (*Via della Modal, Serravalle Scrivia*, T. +39 (0)143 609 000, www.mcarthurglen.it/serravalle).

Back in Milan that evening, we lounged around the town centre, taking in historical monuments such as the famous **Teatro alla Scala**, the **Duomo** built by Napoleon in the 18th century and the sumptuous **Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II**, which houses boutiques of **Louis Vuitton**, **Gucci**, **Mercedes Clothes**, **Berluti** and **Aqua Di Parma**. Even at this late hour, some shops were still open. We ate at a charming, warmed, canopied, terrace not far from **Castello Sforzesco**, the second most important monument in Milan after the Duomo, created in 1368 by Galeazzo Visconti. When we returned to our hotel we slept, our minds full of dreams....

The next day, to savour our final Italian morning, we settled ourselves in the **Emporio Armani Caffè**, where we had

a delicious cappuccino while gazing at Mr Armani's latest creations (*Via Manzoni 31*, T. +39 (0)27 231 8680). A little further and we could have taken an aperitif in the no-less renowned **Dolce & Gabbana Martini Bar** (*Corso Venezia 15*, T. +39 (0)27 601 1154).

After that, we crossed the road to enter the beating heart of Milanese fashion: **Via Montenapoleone**. To the great happiness of our credit cards, we began with **DM Magazine**, an outlet shop that offers designer clothes at paupers' rates: **D&G**, **DKNY**, **Diesel** and even the Belgian star, **Kris Van Assche** (*Via Montenapoleone 26*, T. +39 (0)27 600 6027). The big designer names are all to be found in this street and surrounding area: **Celine**, **Chanel**, **Christian Dior**, **Yves Saint Laurent**, **Burberry**, **Geox**, **Omega**, **Baldini**, **Valentino**, **Ermenegildo Zegna**, **Iceberg**, **Corneliani**, **Jimmy Choo**, **Pomellato**, **Alexander McQueen**... it's all rather

impressive. At this time of year, it is not uncommon to see notices hastily pinned to windows announcing addresses for *haute couture* labels castings. Nor is it rare to see superbly skeletal young women crossing the road to get to them, while their tender companions wait for them in their ageing rented Opel Corsas with out-of-town number plates - again, Italian dualism, town and country, rich and poor.

It was already Monday afternoon and time to get back on the road to Bergamo, to give back our rented Smart and take our flight back to the flat country that we call home. We check our bags: our wallets are now very light, but our suitcases fit to burst. While waiting to get on the plane, I quickly call James, my editor, to explain my idea for an article concerning the recent announcement of Kosovo's independence...and so back to reality we go.

Jérôme Stéfanski

In Milan, fashion is everywhere...even where you don't expect it!

© Together Magazine



ENERGY REVOLUTION IN BRUSSELS

In an exclusive interview, Brussels Region Minister Evelyne Huytebroeck (Ecolo) sets out her vision of how to preserve quality of life and a healthy environment for all Brussels residents.



A militant ecologist since 1982 and MEP since 1989, she has always strived, in her own words, "for more ecological independence". In order to explain the nature of her work and her efforts towards a greener Brussels, the minister spoke with *Together* about the objectives in place to make Europe's capital a durable city landscape that reconciles economic development and job creation with environmental protection and social justice.

TOGETHER MAGAZINE INTERVIEW

Together Magazine: Where does Brussels rank among European cities in terms of efforts to counter the effects of climate change by 2020?

Evelyne Huytebroeck: *Brussels will see very clear progress as early as 2010. Thanks to structural reforms being installed to improve buildings' energy efficiency (70 percent of our CO2 emissions), we will see a constant reduction in CO2. In order to anticipate the new standards to be set by the European Commission in 2020,*

we are preparing Climate Plan 2020 with all concerned parties (trade unions, employers, MPs) in order to make Brussels a leading city in the fight against climate change.

What are the key priorities of Climate Plan 2020? Is your work advancing well?

Yes, we're making great strides. Of course, it's obvious that the climate issue is all-encompassing – food production, for example, is also a considerable CO2-emissions source, just like transport or buildings. But, as environment minister, I believe that it is also important to stress that we can all be part of the solution – this is the essence of the plan, which I believe will make it a success.

But FDF deputy Didier Gosuin last month deplored "the incapacity of the political world to take strong environmental measures". What do you think of his plan to reduce urban speed limits to 30 or 40 km/h to combat emissions?

I think that if Mr Gosuin had perhaps been more active during the past 15 years, there would be less ground to cover. But let us not dwell on the past. I think it is a bad idea, because, in fact,

**'BRUSSELS WILL
SEE VERY CLEAR
PROGRESS AS
EARLY AS 2010'**

it is at 50 km/h that vehicles are at their lowest emission levels, less than at 30 or 40 km/h. In addition, it is structural solutions

to traffic circulation problems that will be most effective against air pollution, an issue that I'm working on with Brussels Mobility Minister Pascal Smet.

The most recent European study, in 2004, cited some 1,100 untimely deaths directly or indirectly attributable to pollution. Now, the tally may be higher. What counter-measures are being adopted? Will they improve citizens' health? How can we better prepare for 'pollution peaks'?

The battle must be fought on two levels. When there are peaks, of course, and the Brussels Region is the only part of Belgium that will have an integrated system as of next Winter, with alternate traffic flow and even traffic prohibition if the situation becomes too serious. But it is also necessary to combat, on a daily basis, pollution levels which, although not in contravention of legal requirements, are nevertheless unacceptable because of their detrimental effects on people's health. It is against this 'permanent exposure' that we must fight. And, if we combat such 'daily pollution', there will also be far fewer 'peaks'.

But hasn't the government refused to test the proposed alternated traffic circulation system before its installation? Why?

Such a test is not necessary, insofar as the plan has already been closely analysed by our police – we don't want to inconvenience citizens unnecessarily.

Evelyne Huytebroeck

As Ecolo group leader for 15 years, and co-president of the party from 2002 to 2004, Environment, Energy and Water Policy Minister Evelyne Huytebroeck, 50, is the first female Ecolo Brussels minister. Huytebroeck has also previously been responsible for Tourism, the French Community Commission Budget and assistance for handicapped people.

IT WON'T STOP ME SLEEPING, BUT...

Brussels Region has expressed an interest in satellite road-tolls. Such a system is already operational in Germany for heavy goods vehicles, with a toll being charged for lorries of 12 tonnes and more using the German road network. What options are being studied for Belgium and what would be the environmental impact?

The rationalization of road use is a major issue with regards to the environment, and will be for the ten next years. We are fully aware of the constant increase in road users and the distances they travel, and the health impact on health of this increase in traffic has many negative effects - just look at the pollution peaks in Winter! Toll systems are being introduced in many countries, with London undoubtedly the best-known example. All European countries will introduce them eventually - its inevitable. I believe that the most effective method would a GPS toll system, which would take all desired parameters into account, such as the vehicle's pollution, the hours during which travel takes place (ie during peak hours or not), whether the journey could have been made by public transport, the vehicle's environmental performance, and so on.

**'THIS
ULTRAMODERN
STATION WILL
PUT BRUSSELS
AMONG THE
CLEANEST CITIES
IN EUROPE'**

The system could initially be applied to HGVs in 2012, to evaluate its effectiveness.

The new water purification facility for north Brussels went online from

11th March. What effect will this have on the environment?

The purification facility will be able to purify 100 percent of Brussels's waste water. Moreover, it will produce 15 percent of its own energy and waste will be recycled. This ultramodern station will put Brussels among the cleanest cities in Europe as far as water is concerned.

Your motto is 'Small actions, big results'. So, how should we contribute to sustainable development?

By taking small, simple actions that cost nothing and which do not reduce comfort, individual energy consumption can be decreased by at least 20 percent! This is enormous, particularly when you look at how energy prices are rising. More and more people are joining the Energy Challenge - it is very simple: www.defi-energie.be

Finally, is Brussels undergoing a full energy revolution?

I certainly think that things will never be the same again after this legislature. Thanks to our ordinance on the energy performance of the building industries, thanks to public-awareness campaigns and the financial assistance that we've offered, Brussels has already partly caught up with other large European cities.

Ludivine Nolf

*With thanks to Evelyne Huytebroeck and her cabinet for their assistance.
<http://evelyne.huytebroeck.be/>*



The number of Dutch people who travel from Belgium and Germany has increased

Consumers' knowledge of carrots seems hazy

Be eco-friendly, wash your clothes at 30°C

GOING DUTCH...

Travel agency ebookers.nl have noted a sharp increase (around 51 percent) in the number of Dutch holidaymakers departing from Belgium and Germany in recent weeks. One suggested explanation is the introduction of an air tax to compensate for aeroplane pollution, imposed by the Dutch state, which is being applied to reservations from 1st July 2008. The cost? 11.25€ for European travel and 45€ on intercontinental destinations, but it applies only to passengers departing from the Netherlands. Holidaymakers who leave from Brussels, for example, save 45€ per person...

CONSUMERS AND CARROTS

A study undertaken by CRIOC has announced some worrying news: consumers' knowledge of carrots seems hazy. In fact, certain perceptions are downright wrong, such as the belief that eating carrots assists tanning and improves

mood. However, it's not all bad news – customers generally have a very positive attitude towards the vegetable, even though only one interviewee in five indicated that he or she preferred large carrots...

BELGIUM URGED TO WASH AT 30°C

Environmental organization Ecolife has launched a nationwide advertising campaign, *Passez à 30°*, urging all Belgium to wash clothes at 30°C. Modern detergents can clean well even at low temperatures - washing at 30°C instead of 40°C is the most economic and green way of getting garments clean, equivalent to an energy saving of around 33 percent per wash! If such a reduction were implemented in every wash across the country, the energy savings would be equivalent to more than 500,000 hearth-fires over one year, and would represent around a tenth of Belgium's 'green' energy.

Jérôme Stéfanski

SPRING- CLEAN YOUR LIFE

Our life-coaches, highlighting cases from their profession, show how nature and nature's renewal can be a source of well-being and recovery.

*Burn-out
is worse when
it's not recognized
as such*

The man who sat in front of me had been there and done that. As a public servant and financial wizzkid, he had always been used by his superiors as their favourite trouble-shooter and fixer.

BURN-OUT

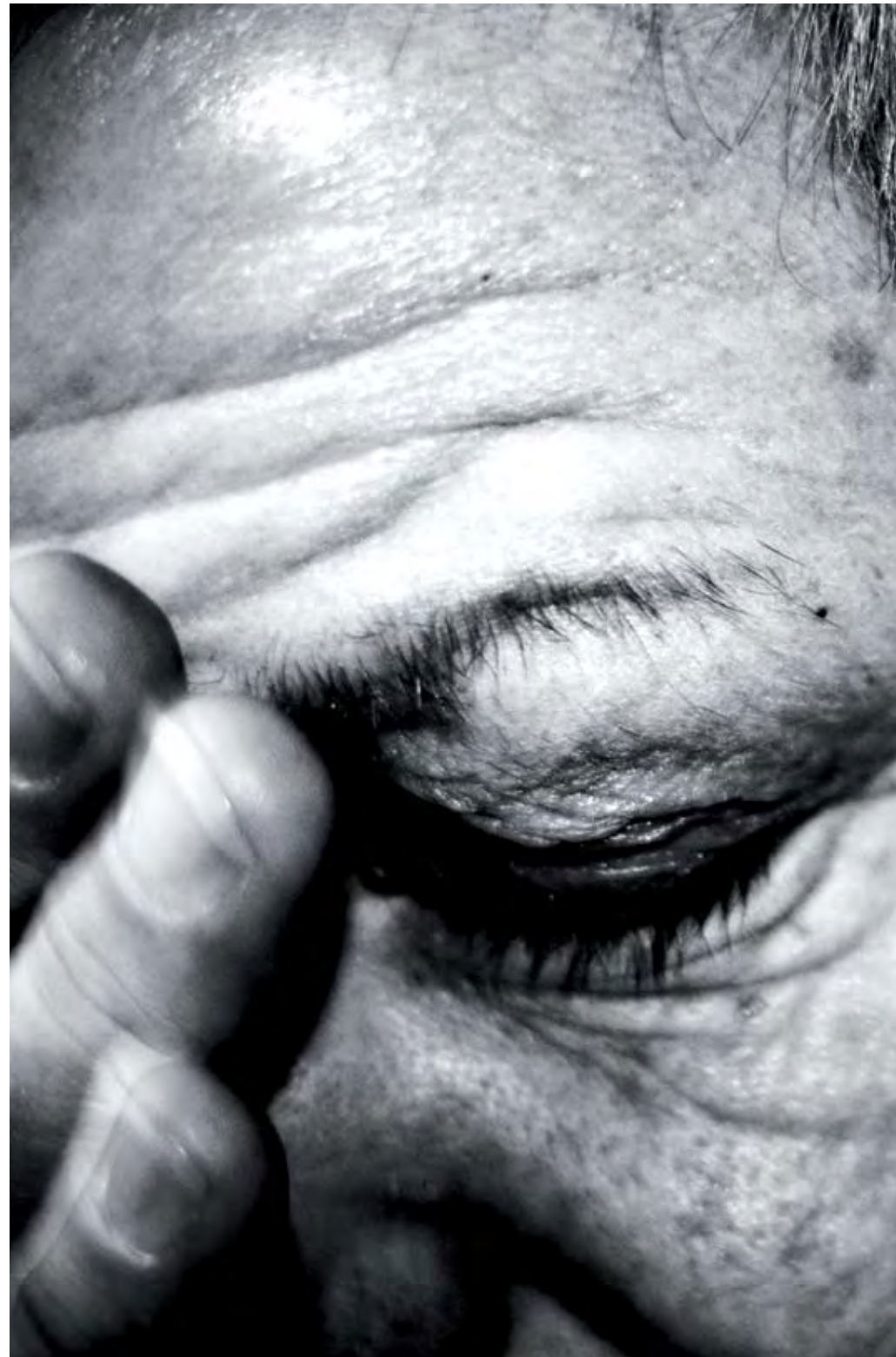
The past 20 years he had opened more secret closets than he could remember, being very much aware that most of what he might discover would have to stay strictly sub rosa. He had served faithfully - the usual 14-hour day, six days a week, 100% availability 24/24. But, at 44 he had stumbled into a burn-out that he had not recognized as such. He had been treated for depression with medication after medication, until one seemed to work. It had one disadvantage, however. After a year of treatment, it had left him

His wife, fed up with waiting for him to come home and fall asleep, dog-tired, stayed with him for the sake of the children, as she said, and for the generous money he had always brought in, as he thought. He supposed she had a lover. He could not even be angry any more. He had tried getting better by playing golf, climbing the Kilimanjaro, seeing gurus, doing a six-day workshop about The Challenge of Leadership at Fontainebleau and recently a wellness-cure in a very expensive Alps spa. There, there was a famous cook, two politicians, an opera singer, a writer and himself. His rigid, unhappy, reserved and desperately persevering Capricorn self.

At 46, he looked much older than his age. His shoulders were stooping and pulled up 5 cm too high. His gaze was vague, his hands were restless. He hardly finished a sentence before fading out in inaudible mumbling. What brought him here? His oldest daughter had suggested that he should maybe see a female coach and had found me through word of mouth. What could be a good outcome of his coaching? He lifted his head, and said: "To stop with the pills."

**I PROPOSED
THAT HE BUY THE
MOST EXPENSIVE
ORCHID IN TOWN,
AND OBSERVE IT
EVERY DAY FOR
FIVE MINUTES**

impotent. Not only physically, but also psychologically: his senses, feelings and emotions were flattened, his contact with the world around him dulled.





*Look at
an orchid,
to observe
one's soul?*

FOLLOW THE MOVEMENT

I knew it would be to no avail to continue with the classic coaching approach. He had come for something different. But what? And then I remembered what Johannes Benedict Schmidt, with whom I trained, repeatedly said: "Follow the movement." Instead of inviting him to walk around, head in the air, sniffing Spring, I proposed that he buy the most expensive orchid in town, and observe it every day for five minutes. If he wanted to stoop and look down, he would at least see something beautiful. A week later, his first comment was that the flower's style was "pretty penis-like". The tiniest of smiles that accompanied his remark made me think that he might very well already be on the path towards healing...

He described the incredible texture of the white petals, the intricate form that the flower created to fool insects. He had been on the internet and bought a book about orchids and the strongest magnifying glass he could find. And then he looked up at me and said: "It is as if I observe my soul." Each day, he said, he was looking forward to those five minutes, almost obsessively.

After three weeks, he started forgetting to take his pills. After two months, he still trawled the internet to find exceptional

orchids and bought two: one for his wife, one for him. Apparently, this new passion amused her. She asked to look through the magnifying glass as well. Of course, some additional coaching was needed to make him discover that there is almost always at least one other option. He got a grip on his 'lifescript'. He did some constellations. He cleaned his body with herbs. He started photographing his orchids, and then drawing them. In a room full of Cattleya's, Dactylorhiza and Aspidendroides, he fell in love with his wife again.

Today, he is a much-prized consultant who can afford to pick and choose his clients. And when his head is still slightly bowed, he now has a very attractive way of looking to one side with the tiniest of smiles, that he discovered while looking at an orchid for five minutes every day.

Josephine Overeem

THE WRITER

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."

What I like, and frequently recommend to 'coachees' is to take time to go for a walk or a ride, alone or with partner, and to simply smell, feel, listen and look at nature and its beauties.

It also provides an opportunity to concentrate on feelings. Look at your inner you: do you feel renewal in your body, life and soul? Have the lengthening daylight hours, warmer days and blooming of the trees and flowers had a positive effect? So why not just enjoy it? Forget, for a moment, those when, why and where questions; get out of your daily routine and those overheated offices and homes. Discover the green world outside and take some time to care for yourself.

WALK OF LIFE

It is well known that when you have a problem, taking a walk of at least 15 minutes helps to distance yourself from the situation. It means that you'll be able to look at it from another point of view, like a spectator and then easily and clearly define the problem, the obstacle(s) and eventual solution(s). A short stroll is also a good habit to get into before important meetings, presenting a conference, or taking an important decision. You'll be able to focus on your area of concern, and put the rest into perspective.

Elvis Presley, for example, would always put his dressing-room trailer a 1,000 yards away from the stage or arena to allow him a small walk and put him

*A good hike
in Spring is
a perfect way
to get your problems
in perspective*



in a confident frame of mind before the show started.

It's also interesting to link this with the power that endorphins have on your state of mind – these are the natural opiates that your body produces to control pain and generate pleasure.

They are naturally released when you exercise. But, because they are neuro-transmitters, they also create more connections in your brain, so they make you more intelligent - why wait? Go for a walk, preferably outside, to breathe some fresh air and to feel nature's rebirth. You'll discover a new you.

CHERRY PICKING

In Japan, the coming of the cherry blossom is a very important celebration and is an official bank holiday - from early March until April, the Japanese eagerly await the official announcement of the opening of the flowers. Once the sacred moment arrives, they rush to the parks to celebrate Hanami, spending the day under a cherry tree, eating, drinking sake and singing with family, friends and colleagues. Companies send out new employees to reserve the best places under the trees. So, what could be so important for a nation to celebrate cherry blossom when they only have ten official holidays? Could it be the magic of Spring and nature, perhaps?

So, does walking now seem an obvious thing to do? I'm glad to hear it. Enjoy, and remember that in Belgium we celebrate Spring by offering a small bouquet of sweet-scented daffodils.

Muriel Troonen

THE WRITER

Muriel Troonen, who will be 40 this year, is a professional life and job coach. She works with people to develop happiness in their private lives and jobs. Her favourite expression: "Be kind to yourself and pamper yourself."



THE COLOUR OF MONEY?

When was the last time you bought something that did not claim to be 'eco-friendly', 'bio-certified' or from a 'sustainable source'? As consumers strive to ensure that they are not polluting or increasing their 'carbon footprint', manufacturers produce more goods to support this burgeoning market. But are they taking advantage of 'green' intentions?

The Levi's Eco line
© Levi's

In Belgium, the range of 'bio' foods and similar products is increasing every year, with 'green' Belgians spending more than 300€ million annually. Organic goods are made with strict limits on the use of pesticides, chemical fertilizers and genetically modified crops - their production is also scrutinized by independent testing and regulation and products that conform are awarded the 'Biogarantie' label, so the consumer can buy with confidence.

Since February 2005, the Kyoto Protocol has been in force, obliging United Nations countries to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions, such as carbon dioxide and fluorocarbons. The USA famously signed the Protocol without ratifying it, but has now joined the rest of the UN in supporting Kyoto's successor, discussed in December 2007 at the Climate Change Conference in Bali. Now that practically the entire planet is committed to change, the onus on consumers to buy environmentally friendly products

and to play their part in reducing waste and lowering greenhouse-gas emissions will be even greater.

GREEN DAZE

There is a problem, however. Some companies use carefully crafted wording or simply lie in order to persuade you to choose their product, and not only the multi-national giants so hated by environmental lobbyists, either. For example, not far from where this writer used to live, the local car-breaker's yard recently changed from being 'Bob's Scrap Yard' to 'Bob's Automotive Recycling Centre'. Same place, same staff, but infinitely better for Bob's green credentials, wouldn't you agree?

This selling approach has become known in environmental circles as 'greenwashing', a portmanteau of 'green' and whitewashing, and is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as: "Disinformation disseminated by an organization so as to present an environmentally responsible public image."



Greenwashing can take many forms. Multinational corporations may focus their advertising and public relations output solely on how they are looking after the future of the environment, while shifting attention away from their environmental sins of the past and present. Consumer products can use the ecological angle to coerce the would-be green shopper - they may claim that their product is CFC-free or carbon neutral, for example, often without hard evidence to support such claims.

The oil industry has long been the pariah of the green movement, so the companies need to find ways of making themselves seem 'greener than green'. Chevron is one such example. In 2007, they ran a series of poster advertisements and double-page spreads in newspapers and magazines. The message was simple: 'Will You Join Us?' The adverts took the form of imparting a simple statistic relating to environmental issues: "By 2030 the number of cars in the world will increase 50% - so why should you care?" was one such thought-provoking statement. And, if this piqued your curiosity, a website was on offer to which you could navigate for more information. The site itself (www.willyoujoinus.com) is still running and is full of information about biodiversity, sustainable energy sources and energy-saving tips. This is produced by the very company that spends billions of dollars every year extracting non-sustainable fossil fuels from the ground. Worse still, Chevron is awaiting a verdict in the Ecuadorian courts for allegedly illegally dumping 18.5 billion gallons (70bn litres) of toxic drilling waste into the Amazonian rain forest between 1964 and 1992, causing untold environmental damage

IS CHEVRON REALLY A COMPANY AT THE LEADING EDGE OF THE ECO-MOVEMENT?

and seriously compromising the health of the populace. So, is Chevron really a company at the leading edge of the eco-movement?

LEVI'S ECO-GREEN JEANS

This season, you can even sport the latest addition to your denim collection with justified ecological pride - Levi's jeans are in the news again, with the recent announcement that their Levi's Eco line has been granted the EKO-Sustainable Textile logo by Control Union Certifications, a biological production control and certification body recognized at the highest international levels. The logo confirms that, during all stages of their manufacture, Levi's Eco jeans respect European regulations for the bio-renewable productions of textile. In short, the jeans are manufactured from certified bio cotton, with buttons made from coconut shells and non-galvanized metal. In addition, Levi's also guarantees that all workers involved worldwide in the production of the jeans receive thorough training and that their work condition conform to the highest ethical standards. Be seen in your jeans - be green! For more information, go to www.eu.levi.com

OFFSETTING THE TRUTH?

Cars have a huge negative impact on the environment but are also a vastly, profitable business. Volkswagen ran a 2007 advertising campaign in the United States, promising to 'offset' the carbon emissions of each of their cars bought for a full year after purchase. The initiative was launched in association with The Carbon Fund, a recognized non-profit company based in the US that seeks to reduce global carbon emissions. In order to offset the carbon, a tree would be planted by The Carbon Fund and Volkswagen would cover the cost. So, for an \$18 investment at no cost to the purchaser, consumers could drive away with a clean conscience.



*Greenbacks:
Being eco-friendly
can be highly
lucrative*

Unfortunately, cars are designed with an average life expectancy of ten years. In financial terms, that's another \$162. Even if, as a Volkswagen driver, you paid up to look green, you'd still have to wait 100 years before 'your' tree had soaked up the carbon of a single year's motoring. When trees die, they also release a percentage of their stored carbon back

into the atmosphere - so perhaps offsetting is a good choice of word.

YOU'D STILL HAVE TO WAIT 100 YEARS BEFORE 'YOUR' TREE HAD SOAKED UP THE CARBON OF A SINGLE YEAR'S MOTORING

GREEN GIANTS

It isn't all bad news. International aviation accounts for between four and nine percent of the climate-change

GOING GREEN ONLINE

Did you know that your internet searches can now be put to use financing humane and environment groups? That's exactly what www.ethicle.com, the first completely ethical search engine, is now offering. The site, which works for causes as diverse as Amnesty International, The Red Cross, Greenpeace and the WWF, will make a contribution of a centime for EVERY GOOGLE SEARCH made for an NGO of their users' choice. Thanks to its official partnership with the world's biggest and fastest search engine, Ethicle guarantees effective and fast results. www.ethicle.com.

GUIDE TO GREENWASHING

A handy guide is the *Six Sins of Greenwashing*, produced by Terrachoice, one of America's largest environmental marketing agencies.

The hidden trade-off:

Paper that claims to be recycled or containing recycled content but with no information on how its manufacture affects the environment.

No proof:

Products that claim energy efficiency or environmentally friendly manufacture with no verifiable sources to back up their claims.

Vagueness:

Beware of wording such as 'green', 'earth-friendly' or 'natural'. These terms are often used to confuse the consumer.

Irrelevance:

If you are told that your kitchen detergent is 'CFC-free', ask yourself if it ever contained CFCs.

The lesser of two evils:

Organic cigarettes may be a good choice for the environment but the health issues and pollution factor nullify any benefit.

Fibbing:

Also known as 'lying'. Unscrupulous companies may use one or more of the recognizable environmental logos to support their claims of eco-friendliness. A quick search on your favourite search engine is all that's needed to verify.

impact of global human activity and, at least until the end of its first commitments in 2012, will not be subject to the Kyoto Protocol. Reacting to this and to harsh criticism from environmental groups, British Airways in February began an initiative to mitigate the effects of carbon emissions from their flights. As well as the now-standard reforestation schemes, the company is funding the construction of alternative power sources in developing countries, such as wind farms in China and hydro-electric powered factories in Brazil. It is also funding University of Cambridge research into eliminating carbon dioxide emissions from aviation. In addition to their 'Help Us to Help You' approach, BA encourages customers to pay a small additional sum on top of their flight costs to offset the environmental effects of their journeys. The money will go towards their carbon offsetting projects worldwide and constitutes a very small percentage of the price. Based on their current figures, they estimate a journey of 1,100 km will cost around €6.

There are other global companies that set the standard for what is achievable in reducing, reusing and recycling. InterfaceFLOR, a global flooring company picked up the 2007 Green Apple award for environmental performance thanks to its continuing efforts to counter all negative impact on the environment within the next twelve years. They take every factor of business into account, from insisting on the use of electronic documents whenever possible to eliminating all waste from the production process. Their cardboard waste, for example, is shredded and used on farms for animal bedding – then it is sold on and composted. Such is the impact of this company its CEO, Ray Anderson, was named an 'International Hero of the Environment' by Time magazine in 2007.

And the good news doesn't stop there - BAE systems, suppliers of weaponry

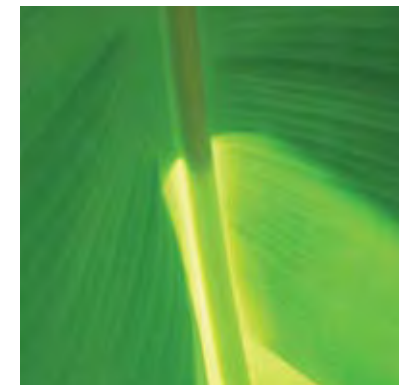
The colour of money...

and ordnance to armies around the globe has their own initiatives to prevent unnecessary environmental harm. They are manufacturing troop carriers that can be powered by either diesel or electricity and are working towards producing a completely lead-free bullet. They also stopped using depleted uranium in their weapons as long ago as 2003.

So, what effort can consumers make to ensure they're getting a green deal? Well, something that we all do at least once a week is shop for food. There is a huge market for bio and environmentally friendly products, but their labelling can be confusing, so some research is necessary. Logos such as Biogarantie, The Soil Association and the Marine Stewardship Council have been around long enough to be instantly recognizable, but be careful not to be conned into thinking you are a supermarket eco-warrior by misleading labelling.

Luckily, you live in Belgium. This country is justifiably proud of its green credentials, including its bio-farming, its well-regulated labelling systems and a plethora of renewable and sustainable energy projects. But what you perhaps didn't know is that the country is also a world leader in another respect – the amount of sulphur dioxide emitted per populated area. Latest figures put Belgium firmly at the top of the table, at 21,390 tonnes per capita. It also ranks 12th in the world for carbon dioxide emissions per capita, only four places behind Canada. This, together with seven nuclear power stations supplying a population of only around ten million people brings the green issue into a much sharper focus. The global problems of waste, energy efficiency and sustainable production are also obviously a problem for Belgium – and something that we must all do something about.

Colin Moors



FORET DE SOIGNES GETS 1,450 EXTRA TREES

On the 23rd of February, building heating specialist Informazout asbl, in collaboration with environmental protection agency Natura Belgica, planted 1,450 trees (covering a full hectare) in the Forêt de Soignes.

Informazout President Thierry Van Coppenolle rolled up his sleeves along with many local volunteers and their children to plant the trees, in order to renew and diversify a section of the Forêt de Soignes, as part of Informazout's environmental policy.

Thierry Van Coppenolle declared: "This year will be about economical and environmentally friendly energy consumption, and the combination of our high-output oil-fired boilers and renewable energies such as solar can play a central role. Moreover, our combination of oil-powered heating and solar energy also reduces CO2 emissions." For more information, go to www.informazout.be

ETHICAL INVESTMENTS

In recent years, there has been increasing interest in issues such as climate change, poverty, fair trade and human rights and this continues to create demand for ethical investment opportunities.

*Winds
of change*

Most people are happy to invest through funds since they lack the time and facilities to do the necessary research into individual companies. There are now around 100 green and ethical funds in the UK alone, with estimated investments of around 12€ billion.

Recent years have seen a fourfold increase in the number of ethical funds. This has led to greater diversity and the availability of new thematic funds focusing on issues such as renewable energy, sustainable investment, human rights and even religious beliefs, in the form of a range of funds for Islamic investors.

Green and ethical investment funds should certainly be considered as an option if such issues are of concern.

WHAT IS AN ETHICAL FUND?

Like all funds, ethical funds pool together the money of hundreds of investors

UNLESS YOUR INTEREST IS OF A VERY SPECIFIC NATURE, YOU WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO SETTLE FOR A FUND THAT HAS A GENERALLY ETHICAL APPROACH

into a single fund, which in turn invests in the stock market in accordance with ethical principles. A range of different social, environmental or other ethical factors influences the choice of investments.

HOW DO THEY WORK?

The difficulty in selecting this kind of investment is that no two people have identical views on what is really 'ethical' and no two ethical funds will share exactly the same standpoint.

For example, some people could well consider alcohol as having such magical or medicinal properties that puts it on a par with penicillin, while others consider it to be a plague on society. Exaggerating just a little, one can imagine an intense debate raging on the subject of the acceptability of biodegradable land mines, or even free-range mink farms.

The conclusion is that, unless your interest is of a very specific nature, you will probably have to settle for a fund that has a generally ethical approach. Conversely, if a very specific inclusion or exclusion policy is required, then far more time must be spent on research and advice.

Approaches to ethical investment vary according to different strategies. The three main ones are based on a policy of screening, preference or engagement. These strategies can be used in combination or alone:

- Screening is when companies may be included or excluded from a fund's portfolio because of their involvement in certain activities deemed to be negative, such as heavy polluters, arms companies and animal testers; or positive, based on contributions to

society and the environment such as companies providing waste and recycling services, promoting fair trade, organic farming or renewable energy.

- A preference or best-in-class approach applies social, environmental and ethical guidelines to give a preferred selection when all other factors are equal. For example, this kind of ethical fund might apply criteria that enable investments in the oil and gas sector, but limited to those oil companies that have a better record on the environment and human rights than their rivals.

- A third approach is where the fund manager actively engages in dialogue with companies to encourage them to adopt the best social and environmental practices. This can involve meetings with senior management and voting at relevant annual general meetings.

INFLUENCING CORPORATE BEHAVIOUR?

Contrary to what one might think, the engagement choice seems to offer the best option for really influencing

company managements. In the first two cases the shares are already in issue and, while systematically refusing to buy shares in a non-ethical company may have a small effect on the share price, it will not carry much weight with an otherwise successful company whose shares are always in demand.

PENSION FUNDS ARE BY FAR THE LARGEST GROUP OF SHAREHOLDERS AND HAVE CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE OVER COMPANIES, SO THEY COULD BE A MAJOR VEHICLE FOR DRIVING IMPROVEMENTS IN CORPORATE BEHAVIOUR

directors will listen to the opinions of shareholders that attend annual meetings particularly if they hold substantial voting rights in the company. Using shareholder votes to support or even table resolutions concerned with a company's social and environmental behaviour may not achieve a majority vote, but the significant support they do get raises awareness of the issues with shareholders as well as with the company itself.

The apartheid regime in South Africa accelerated interest in ethical investment in the 1980s and a number of companies were persuaded to close down their operations.

Occupational pension schemes are now required under UK Law to say whether they take account of any social, environmental or ethical factors when deciding what stocks to invest in. Pension funds are by far the largest group of shareholders and have considerable influence over companies, so they could be a major vehicle for driving improvements in corporate behaviour.

HOW WELL DO THEY PERFORM?

There is little evidence to suggest that ethical funds generally perform worse than others. Companies that are run on ethical lines tend to be well run in all other significant areas and so produce good results. However, economic conditions can have an influence on the relative performance. If ethical funds specifically decline to invest in a booming investment sector because it is 'non-ethical', they may find themselves performing less well than both their less scrupulous peers and any index of which that sector has become a major constituent. Unfortunately, having convictions may then have its price. However, it may be small price to pay for the comfort of knowing you are

playing your part by investing in a socially responsible manner. If you are interested in ethical investment a qualified financial adviser can help you with your selection.

Graham Reid

THE WRITER

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

WHEN GOING GREEN PAYS

In Belgium, the Triodos Bank is the only financial institution that invests its savers' and investors' funds only in companies and projects that are both profitable and sustainable. The bank's 2007 turnover was 431€ million, a rise of 24 percent compared with 2006. Its portfolio increased by 25 percent, to 186€ million, and customers' deposits increased by 23 percent, to 415€ million. The net profit, of 1.5€ million, is a rise of 16 percent.

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GOING FOR GOOD ROAD MANNERS

A survey, *Courtesy On The Road*, was carried out by TNS Opinion in 12 member states between December 2007 and January 2008 for Responsible Young Drivers, a foundation promoting road etiquette.

The aim of the survey, which involved Portuguese, Polish, Dutch, Luxembourger, Irish, French, Greek, Estonian, Czech, Bulgarian, Austrian and Belgian citizens, was to increase drivers' understanding of aggressive behaviour on the road, analysing in particular the relation between drivers' self-perceived courtesy, their level of irritability towards fellow road users and the offensive behaviour to which they had been recently subjected.

Drivers' experiences vary greatly from country to country, from a little more than half of respondents in Poland feeling that aggressiveness on the road has increased, to nearly nine in ten in Bulgaria.

It would appear that good manners behind the wheel are prevalent in the Czech Republic, where a clear majority of drivers (60%) said that they had not suffered aggressive behaviour from other motorists in the past twelve months.

IT WOULD APPEAR THAT GOOD MANNERS BEHIND THE WHEEL ARE PREVALENT IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Among the different types of aggressive behaviour experienced, lights-flashing is by far the most widespread in Luxembourg, France and Belgium, but appears to be relatively rare in Estonia and Portugal.

Sophie Van Cruchten

To see the full survey results, go to www.courtoisie.be

Responsible Young Drivers (RYD) is a road-safety association for 17- to 29-year-olds that organizes more than 300 campaigns every year in discos, schools and public/private events. The association is represented across Belgium, with a network of more than 600 voluntary branches. A Belgian initiative that's spreading across the EU, RYD has many of its projects subsidized by the European Commission, such as the European Road Courtesy Day, which took place on 22nd March 2008. www.ryd.be



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KEEPING TABS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The recently introduced ban on smoking in public places and environmental protection come together to create a simple, effective and innovative concept: 'GreenDMedia'. Allow us to explain...

It is now impossible to walk around Brussels without noticing them - most often, outside fashionable bars, restaurants, hotels and other businesses in the town centre and periphery. Since the beginning of 2008, they've spread like wildfire in public areas, almost like a new variety of street furniture - where once there were public ashtrays, now there are 'Filter Collector Displays'!

A GOOD BET, NO BUTTS

A year ago, when Gauthier Van Reepinghen and Pierrick Halfants were chatting about the community spirit engendered by simply smoking outside

a restaurant, they could scarcely have imagined the end result. Over the course of several months, the idea grew in the minds of the two entrepreneurs, and what had begun as a joke soon became a lucrative business

plan. The (rather ambitious) brief was to create an advertising display that fulfilled the function of an ashtray, but didn't look like one. After a few months of research, the 'GreenDMedia' was complete and the first advertising campaign launched in December 2007.

QUALITY ADVERTS

"One Second [Dutch mints] was the first product label to have any confidence in us," Gauthier explains. "Laurent Mercier, the manager of the brand, was like a coach to us; he offered a lot of advice and his support was crucial. Moreover, the product that was being promoted was perfect for the concept of GreenDMedia. Nicorette was the second big sponsor to support us. Other brands followed, such as T élé Bruxelles, Bruxelles Propreté and the media group Sud Presse."

SOCIAL PHENOMENON

"Socialisation is at the heart of our approach," Gauthier adds. "As in other countries after the ban on smoking in public places came into effect, the same has happened in Belgium; the creation of a community of people who congregate



Nicorette advertising campaign outside Le Toucan restaurant

© Green-D-Media

outside buildings. This has gone so far that even non-smokers have started going outside with smokers." The phenomenon has been dubbed 'smokelising', a blend of smoking and socialising, which in turn has led to 'smurting', a term developed by marketing men to characterise the act of flirting during a fag break.

LIMITLESS BUSINESS

Today, GreenDMedia has more than 500 'booths' in Brussels, offering campaigns for one week, 15 days or a month. In April, a national network will be launched, with 1,200 displays in the north and south of the country. For now, HORECA establishments are the main targets, but in future other niche market will be added: hairdressing salons, businesses, schools, sports clubs. A European patent will then be Gauthier and Pierrick's next goal,

in order to begin developing the displays in other member states.

ENVIRONMENTAL BOOST

As the name suggests, the Filter Collector Displays are repositories for cigarette butts, which thus make the job of street cleaners easier. After they are collected, the filters are incinerated, just like non-recyclable rubbish. As Gauthier proclaims: "This incineration is actually beneficial to the environment because it releases important gases which are a source of energy. We want to go a step further by making these displays from natural materials, but there are still obstacles in our way, like making them strong enough as well as inflammable."

Jérôme Stefanski

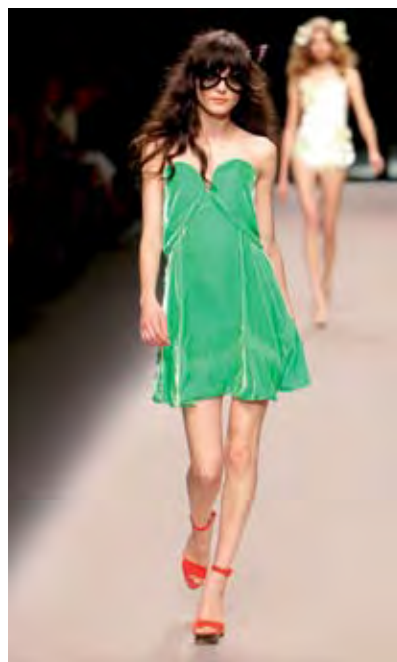
www.greendmedia.com

**THE (RATHER
AMBITIOUS) BRIEF
WAS TO CREATE
AN ADVERTISING
DISPLAY THAT
FULFILLED THE
FUNCTION OF
AN ASHTRAY,
BUT DIDN'T
LOOK LIKE ONE**

GREEN ATTITUDE

After the season of snow flakes comes the bloom of budding flowers - everyone has a craving for nature. Mint, pistachio, emeralds and lawns, the spirit is definitely green.

FOR HER



SONIA RYKIEL

A slice of the Spring-Summer 2008 collection, demonstrating the sheer elegance of Rive Gauche fashion.
www.soniarykiel.fr

1. KENZOKI

Fresh Frosty Bamboo, a beautiful, revitalising, stimulating body moisturizer.
200ml: 40.68€
www.kenzoparfums.com

2. LONGCHAMP

Fashion designer Longchamp revisits the legendary handbag designed for Kate Moss in an attractive grass-green hue.
490€, www.longchamp.com

3. VAN CLEEF & ARPELS

A Premier Bouquet with green motifs: a fine and delicate foliage, expressing tenderness and the harmony that binds women to nature.
Eau de toilette spray 100ml: 74€
www.vancleef-arpels.com

4. MARIELLA BURANI

The renowned Italian designer has merged fabric and leather for these patterns with their delightfully 'retro' tone.
208€, www.mariellaburani.com

5. DE GREEF

A pure Art Deco mounting - the emerald (± 8.00ct) is superbly held by white gold rings encrusted with diamonds (± 1.25ct).
Classic Collection: 19,680€
www.degrees1848.be

6. KIBIO

Smooth your unbecoming wrinkles and lift the delicate skin around the eyes with *Sérum Intemporel pour les Yeux* by Kibio.
42€
www.kibio.com



7. LAFONT

Glamorous glasses, to see the green side of life.
Vence: 180€, www.lafont.com

8. FABIENNE DELVIGNE

Designer Delvigne tips her hat to turbans.
Bardot: 380€
www.fabiennedelvigne.be

9. ANNICK GOUTAL

A shower of pure softness from Petite Chérie. A sunflower oil and vitamin E cocktail.
200ml: 45€
www.annickgoutal.com

10. IKEA

A cocoon-like atmosphere is provided

by IKEA's ergonomic pillows, which react to weight and body heat.
From 5.99€
www.ikea.be

11. HABITAT

Silk flowers, for those who don't have green fingers!
9.95€, www.habitat.net

12. CONVERSE

From the Retro collection, this bag, hewn from ultra-flexible vinyl, has an air of luxury and is also easy to wash. How can you resist?
Converse Retro Patent-Bowler-Bright: 49.95€
www.converse.com

On the podiums and elsewhere, the trend is towards 'green'. The ideal moment, then, to 'Spring' back to life...



FOR HIM

HUGO BOSS GREEN COLLECTION

Here's a fine way to be in perfect harmony with nature; smart and relaxed, at the same time.
www.hugoboss.com

1. KARTELL

A perennial classic - Charles Ghost by way of Philippe Starck.
163€, www.kartell.it

2. CARTIER

Lavender, sandal and patchouli mix

with aromatic fern in Pasha, an essential parfum suggesting serenity, control and restraint.

Eau de toilette 50ml: 47€
www.cartier.com

3. PUMA

Relax (or play) in style with Puma's latest trainers.
Puma Basket: 75€
www.puma.com

4. PEPE JEANS

Very clearly green – a beautiful aged-leather belt from Pepe Jeans.
45€
www.pepejeans.com

5. CONVERSE

Always quick off the starting blocks, Converse adopts the season's colour.
64.95€
www.converse.com

6. MARC O'POLO

A resolutely stylish, simple and masculine watch.
Prices on request
www.marc-o-polo.com

7. RENÉ FURTERER

Astera, a shampoo made from essential oils for sensitive scalps, ideal for the after-sport shower.
150 ml, 13.45€

8. PEAK PERFORMANCE

There's an irresistibly vintage look to this perfectly cut sports shirt, with its Peak label proudly emblazoned.
Hardy Polo: 65€
www.peakperformance.com



9. LA AMARARILLA DE RONDA LA

Among the leaders in cuisine, health and design, Phillipe Starck has propelled this olive oil onto the international market.
A treat for the taste-buds, easy on the eye, and above all, good for you!
250ml: From 11€
www.amarilladeronda.com

10. ILLY

Flashy colours, flexible lines, innovative choice of materials: with X1, even coffee becomes an extraordinary aesthetic experiment.
Illy X1 pour café moulu: 569€
www.illyeshop.com

11. NALU

Coca Cola announces its latest energising drink - Nalu carries an extra caffeine boost, and also provides essential 'pick-me-up' vitamins B3, B12 and E. A classy product, with packaging to match.
25cl can: 0.95€
www.allosupermarche.be

12. CASE LOGIC

Compact and bijou, this digital camera carry-case will be the ideal companion for your long Spring strolls - it's equipped with belt and wrist fasteners.
12.99€, www.caselogic.be

Magali Eylenbosch
Jérôme Stéfanski

GREEN DELIGHTS

In the season when nature bursts back into glorious life, a selection of events taking place in and around Europe's capital.

PARC JOSAPHAT : A NATURE OASIS IN SCHAERBEEK 02.04, 15h

A perfect opportunity to enjoy a convivial family stroll in Parc Josaphat, a reserve notable not only for its beautiful trees, but also varied fauna such as otters and rare bird life.

Parc Josaphat
1030 Schaerbeek
T. +32(0)2 642 24 92
www.centrepaulduvigneaud.be
Meet at 15h at the Avenue Azalées/
Avenue van Vollenhoven railway
bridge - Tram 23, Bus 66.
The walk lasts approximately 90 mins.
Disabled access.

BRUSSELS 1958-2008 17.04, 22h15

On 17 April 1958, 'Expo 58', the first World's Fair of the post-war period was enthusiastically inaugurated in Brussels. A marvellous firework display will be mounted in BruPark at 22h15 on 17 April 2008 from the Atomium's spheres to mark the opening of the AVB/AGR/ARA commemoration exhibition and the temporary pavilion – and many more events are already planned for the rest of 2008.

Atomium Square
B-1020 Brussels
T. +32(0)2 475 47 75
www.brussels-expo58.be
www.atomium.be

CYCLE SAFELY 19.04, 14-18h

Want to rediscover your cycling skills, but afraid of venturing into Brussels' traffic? Would you like your children to go to school by bike, but you're concerned for their well-being? Why not take an afternoon to reacquire the rules and reflexes in a safe environment, then reclaim the road?

Parc du Cinquanteaire,
Mérode Metro Station
1000 Brussels
T. +32(0)2 502 61 30 (Julio Sanchez)
info@gracq.org
www.gracq.org/formation/info.html

SPRING FESTIVAL 04 > 31.05

In a delightful walk, accompanied by a 'nature' guide, you'll have the chance throughout May to appreciate the natural beauty of the diverse special 'Natura 2000' preservation zones, as promoted by Uccle's Plateau Engeland. In a convivial atmosphere, you'll also have the chance to meet artists,



Parc Josaphat
© Emich.be

craftsmen, nature-protection groups and the friendly locals who provide tasty refreshments and entertainment for your children. Impromptu free concerts, barbecues and games are all part of the fun.

Plateau Engeland
Avenue de l'Hélianthe
1180 Uccle
T. +32(0)2 375 45 73
www.plateauengeland.be

AVENUE DE TERVUREN FESTIVAL 11.05, 10-19h

This year, the Avenue de Tervuren will be celebrating its 111th anniversary. This magnificent road, surrounded by beautiful greenery, will be closed to all traffic from 10-19h, to host numerous festivities along its entire length. There will also be a 'rummage' sale on the Avenue des Celtes, an antiques fair on the Rue des Tongres and, last but not least, the preparation and sampling, from 16h, of a giant omelette, made with 10,000 eggs.

Avenue de Tervuren
1000 BRUXELLES
T.+32(0)2 627 23 23
www.etterbeek.irisnet.be

BRUSSELS 20K 25.05, 15h

It's that time of year again, when brave souls put their best feet forward, to take part in one of the most enjoyable and beautiful 20k races in Europe. From the cannon-fire that launches proceedings in Parc du Cinquanteaire at 15h, the course takes in Avenue Louise, Bois de La Cambre, Avenue Franklin Roosevelt and many other Brussels beauty spots, before the gruelling Avenue de Tervuren brings the weary runners full circle. Some 25,000 will be there to run, with many thousands more cheering them on their way. A day to be proud to be Bruxellois!

Brussels 20k
Esplanade,
Parc du Cinquanteaire
1000 Brussels
www.20kmdebruxelles.be

INTERNATIONAL MARINA CONFERENCE 2008 25 > 28.05

For four days, the the International Marina Conference (IMC2008) will play host to delegates from all over the world, with marina-operation and management specialists rubbing shoulders with tourism experts and politicians. An initiative of the VVW-Nieuwpoort Marina, the conference will feature speakers from Australia, Belgium, France, Germany, Holland, Japan, the UK and US in lively, interactive discussions, and IMC 2008 also offers an exceptional opportunity for a family vacation, with a full sightseeing and social programme planned, taking advantage of Ostend's close proximity to charming, historic Bruges. The conference will also include an all-day field trip to marinas dotting the Flemish coast in northern France and Belgium, with optional post-conference tours of English Channel ports also available.

CMM VVW-Nieuwpoort
Watersportlaan, 11



Nostalgia,
Expo 58-style
© Atomium.be

8620 Nieuwpoort
T +32 (0)58 23 52 32
www.imc2008.com

IN BRIEF

More unmissable events coming
your way....

ONCE UPON A TIME... IN SCHEUTBOS

27.04, 10h

Take a stroll and read stories
in a beautiful park...

Parc du Scheutbos
1080 Molenbeek-Saint-Jean
T.+32 (0)2 414 48 99

ETTERBEEK MIEVEAL MARKET

09 > 11.05, 10-22h

Avenue Du Deuxième Régiment
De Lanciers
1040 Etterbeek
T.+32 (0)2 627 23 23
www.etterbeek.be

RED BULL DIY SOAP BOX RACE

**11.05, 10h competitors
arrive, 14h race starts**

Place Royale
1000 Brussels
T.+32 (0)56 54 00 76
www.redbullzeepkistenrace.be

BICYCITY

18.05, 9h

Bicycles reclaim the roads...

Place de l'Université
1340 Louvain-La-Neuve
T.+32 (0)10 411 073
www.gracq.org/ottignies-lln

Wizzit the other side of Europe

From Brussels South Charleroi
to Sofia (new), Bucharest,
Budapest, Katowice/Cracow and Warsaw.

€ **19⁹⁹**
from

One way price, including all taxes,
charges and payment handling fee.
Number of seats at indicated price is limited.



Foto: Artur Żytkowski



wizzair.com

W!ZZ

Wizzit the other
side of Europe

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to Sofia (new), Bucharest,
Budapest, Katowice, Warsaw and Warsaw.



from €1.99

One way price, excluding all taxes and charges and payment handling fee.
Number of seats as indicated price is limited.



La Ferme de l'Hoste
at the Place
du Châtelain's
market

© Together
Magazine

Making my way under a tiny Belgian 'sky cry', a little by chance, I eventually return to my home country.

"Good evening, monsieur," I say. In front of me, two sparkling eyes say something untranslatable. I reply with a smile. The counter is covered with a garden's wonders. What I see reminds me of strolls in my childhood. Carrots twice the size that you usually find at the supermarket, rounded courgettes, plastic-filmless broccolis, coriander and corn, for real. I dream. Thierry tells me that all the vegetables are grown in local Belgian farms, the star being La Ferme de l'Hoste. Sunny fruits flow from southern Europe or Africa, depending on the season, but always by the same routes. Every single mushroom is traceable and grown like it used to be in fairy tales: naturally.

Thierry is a very busy gentleman but confides that he has a project for you and me. In March, he will not only honour our Brussels markets with his beautiful delicacies, but will also offer his kindness to oh-so-busy people such as we. He will bestow the unbelievable opportunity of avoiding interminable Saturday queues at clinically clean supermarkets and buying 'bling' pseudo-eco products.

Every Friday, someone from the countryside will come to your office and leave a wooden box full of your green-flavoured reveries, if you so wish, and why wouldn't you?

Hélène Noël

IXELLES MARKETS

- Universal products market Châtelain: Every Wednesday from 13-19h30, Place du Châtelain, 1050 Ixelles.
- Universal products market Boondael: Every Thursday from 13-19h30, between Avenue Léopold Gilbert and Rue Léopold Delbove, 1050 Ixelles.
- Flowers and plants market Étangs d'Ixelles: Every Saturday and Sunday from 7-13h30 Square du Souvenir, 1050 Ixelles.
- Universal products market Flagey: Every Saturday and Sunday from 7-13h30 Temporarily situated Avenue Général De Gaulle, 1050 Ixelles. www.elsene.irisnet.be
- La Ferme de l'Hoste Rue de l'Hoste 101 1300 Wavre www.lafermedelhoste.be

Seventh heaven

Our latest selection of unmissable openings. At the start of Spring, your AmEx Black will be red hot...

'MARCEL' AT PRIVEJOKE!

Since 20th February, Chez PriveJoke has installed its latest collection, Marcel Spring/Summer 2008. All Marcel's huge successes are here, such as le Fabuleux, le Vieux, le Haut, le Pablo, le Clochard, as well as sport shirts, pullovers, waistcoats, jackets and other gems. Fans are forewarned!

Privejoke

Rue Marché au Charbon, 76
1000 Brussels
T. +32(0)2 502 63 67
www.privejoke.be

ALL THE MOD CONNI...

Asymmetrical lines, original cuts and flexible fabrics. At a glance, you can recognize the distinctive silhouettes of Conni Kaminski, the German fashion doyen. From now on, you can discover his collections in a new shop located in up-town Brussels. As always, beauty goes hand-in-hand with elegance and comfort.

Conni Kaminski

Rue Marché au Charbon, 102
1000 Brussels
T.+32(0)2 640 83 85
www.connikaminski.com

REASSURINGLY CLASSY

Stella Forest has cracked the Vert Chasseur district in Uccle - and its outlook appears to be resolutely accessible. The designer is striving for

a more timeless style, perhaps putting aside the 'hippie' label, but remains very much inspired by emblematic ethnic fashion. Undoubtedly, an address to allure the active and modern woman.

Stella Forest

Chaussée de Waterloo, 1093
T. +32(0)2 375 40 11
www.stellaforest.fr

CARTIER OFFERS NEW BOX OF DELIGHTS ...

Architect Bruno Moinard designed this Cartier boutique in a style that's both cordial and contemporary. The luxurious collections are presented in an open and convivial setting, unless one prefers to admire truly exceptional pieces in the intimacy of the 'curiosity cabinet'. Veined black marble, bronze-gilded logos, its design is reminiscent of a 'mini-theatre' that opens its curtains by day but is dark in the evenings...

Cartier

Boulevard de Waterloo, 54
1000 Brussels T.+32(0)2 537 51 61
www.cartier.fr

RETURN OF THE ELEPHANT

Côte d'Or, Belgium's favourite chocolate, is celebrating its 125th birthday in a big way. Their recently opened cosy salon in Petit Sablon invites you on a journey into the heart of enjoyment - take the time to prepare a personalized box for yourself or someone close, or why not try



1. Marcel Corner at Privejoke
2. Conni Kaminski
3. Stella Forest
4. Cartier



Top to bottom :
- Côte d'or
- Hüsnüye Kardaş
- LXP Boutique

one of the master chocolatier's latest creations : Pepper Pink Pécan Nut, Lemon-Yellow Ginger, Caramelized Currant Almond and Pistachio Salt Flower?

Côte d'Or
Place du Petit Sablon, 1
1000 Brussels
www.cotedor.be

HÜSNIYE KARDAS

A Belgian of Turkish origin, Hüsnüye Kardaş is set for prosperity and respect – and his latest outlet is good news for those who appreciate the pure lines, structured cuts and sober tone of his gentlemen's clothing. It's his eye for detail that makes the difference.

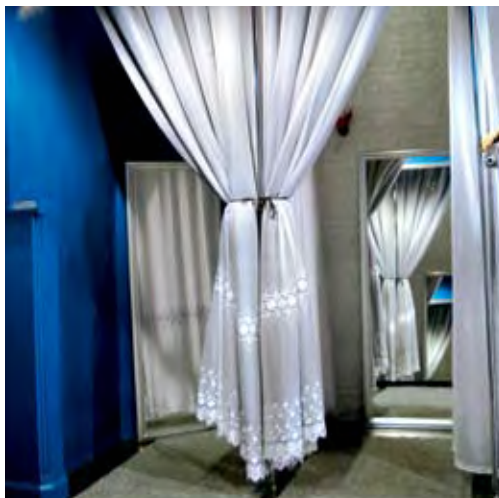
Hüsnüye Kardaş
Rue de Flandre, 30
1000 Brussels
T. +32(0)2 345 40 62
www.husniye-kardas.com

FASHION NEWS FROM ANTWERP

BIG NAMES, SMALL PRICES ...

LXP Boutique is the latest concept to have already gone down a storm in the US, allowing customers top-brand accessories and clothing for an evening, a week, or even a month, at mini-prices. Open since the 21st of February, Ann Eyckmans has created an airy, spacious boutique featuring the cream of couture. To provide a personalized service worthy of their stock, customers are naturally requested to make an appointment.

LXP Boutique
Hopland, 53
2000 Antwerp
T. +32(0) 495 29 95 99
www.l-xp.com



Magali Eylenbosch



**All you need to know
about the process of finding
a home in Belgium**

**Take advantage of our ING Home Services offer
+32 2 464 66 64 – expat@ing.be – www.ing.be**

Finding a suitable home when you are coming to live in Belgium may seem difficult but there is nothing you need to know about making such arrangements. That's a task for the ING Home Services experts. Real estate agencies, home rental guarantees, residential finance/insurance and - most importantly of all – advice, are all available to you even before you arrive. ING's Expat Services have 40 years of experience to help make your stay in Belgium as financially smooth as possible.





100% BRUSSELS FASHION IN PARIS

Paris Fashion Week, 26th February - 2nd March, was a fashionistas' frenzy. We report from the heart of *chic*...

Belgian mode was the belle of the ball in Paris

In addition to the customary world-renowned podiums of Roberto Cavalli, Chanel and Dolce & Gabbana, this year's Fashion Week saw, for the first time, a show totally dedicated to Brussels' design.

Christened '101% Brussels Fashion' (with the extra one percent the added value brought by Brussels' international talents) and organized by Modo Bruxellae, the event was held jointly at

Academy Oréal, Rue Royale and Jardin des Tuileries over five days. The beautiful Autumn-Winter collections on display included designers such as Cathy Pill, Christophe Coppens, Eric Bauduin, Girls From Omsk (Valeria Siniouchkina), Isabelle Lenfant, Jean-Paul Knott, Pili Collado, Sandrina Fasoli, Annemie Verbeke and Sofie d' Hooze. The initiative was the result of Brussels International Development, which promotes the city's most promising designers and, through their work, Brussels creativity.

Verbeke's work
© A. Verbeke



ANNEMIE VERBEKE

Annemie Verbeke adores contradiction, twisting materials with a masculine air into sharp contrasts – each of her collections is very sophisticated and her approach to dresses and skirts is particularly acclaimed. For Winter, Verbeke was inspired by the universe of writer Nancy Cunard - a 'Bauhaus' style, with lines and squares, in earthy red, yellow, brown and beige, as well as more primary pastels such as those used by Mondrian; red, black, blue. Annemie Verbeke also has a Brussels shop

*Rue Antoine Dansaert, 64.
www.annemieverbeke.be*

CATHY PILL

She's only on her fifth collection, but Belgian mode already swears by her work - Cathy Pill, thirtysomething Cambers graduate, is the talent

*Cathy Pill's
fashion show*

to follow in Brussels and Belgium. Beautiful and gifted, the young woman has worked hard in her Dansaert district workshop to present her Autumn-Winter 2008-2009 collection in Paris. Always faithful to her vision, Cathy Pill mixes pure, single-circuit lines while maintaining the scorching femininity that makes her style so successful: "I like to be modern and sophisticated but remain simple," Pill explains, talking about her show at the Academy Oréal. "I aim for a wardrobe that can be worn every day." This year, the designer has worked with woven Jacquard and also offers a splendid coat-dress. And her favourite offering? A small dress in yellow that's characterized by its luminous glare...

*Rue Antoine Dansaert, 74
1000 Brussels.
www.cathypill.com*





Left:
Christophe Coppens

Right:
Coppens' showroom

© C. Coppens

CHRISTOPHE COPPENS

Death's-Heads, accessory sets, hair-bands, hats - for the Winter season, Christophe Coppens goes Gothic with a rebellious haute couture in which black rules! The Belgian designer stands out once again, with a remarkable collection of accessories for both men and women – this year, he has also launched a super-modern deco-design collection. Tokyo will love it.

L'Atelier Coppens

Nouveau Marché aux Grains, 23,
1000 Brussels.
www.christophecoppens.com

JEAN-PAUL KNOTT

After working for Yves Saint Laurent, Krizia and Louis Féraud, creating costumes for Ballet Maurice Béjart, Jean-Paul Knott, who owns a company and gallery in Brussels, has been Maison Cerruti's artistic director for men's and women's collections since October 2007. Talent and quality, to be discovered without delay...

www.jeanpaulknott.com



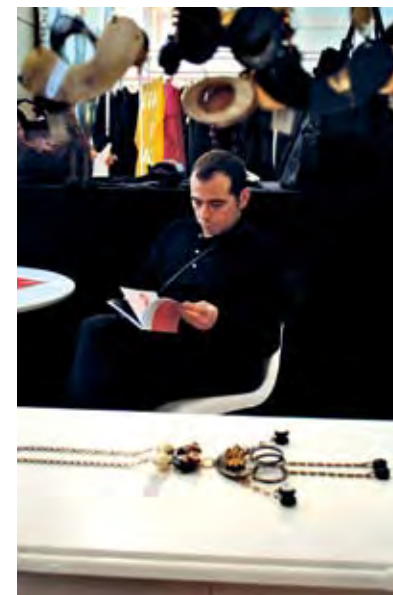
ERIC BAUDUIN

Eric Bauduin, one to watch! His bags are made from second-hand items from Petits Riens, which obviously allows him a wide choice of stock materials. The Belgian designer gave a successful presentation of his collection, largely in leather with pure and mineral colors in the 101% Brussels Design showroom. A delight to carry on the arm, even more so thanks to the bags' recycled nature.

www.ebauduin.be

ISABELLE LENFANT

Rock stars adore her. So do we! Lio, Axelle Red, Felix Da Housecat... they all rate the refined style of Isabelle Lenfant, whose creations, christened IL by the creator, are 18-carat gold masterpieces, sometimes white but predominantly pink, to 'wear life differently'. Her aim is "to open life up by bandaging its wounds" - Isabelle began her career under Xavier Delcour. Then, after meeting a famous jeweller (whose



Left:
Eric Bauduin
is reading...

Right:
Bauduin's work

identity is still a closely guarded secret) the doors of this noble profession were opened to Lenfant, and her own jewellery took shape. Magic!

www.i-l.be

Les précieuses



LES PRECIEUSES

Sometimes shiny, often colourful, frequently blazing, are the chains and balls. of Les Précieuses. An admirable collection that you can dream of owning in its entirety - jewels in Brussels that you won't want to miss. Creator Pili Collado makes necklaces and bracelets that are true trophies for the neck and wrist. We love it!

Discover Les Précieuses at
83 Rue Antoine Dansaert,
Brussels. T.+32(0)2 503 2898

THE WRITER

Ludivine Nolf is a young Belgian journalist who specialises in fashion and beauty and is equally well informed on Brussels news, be it social, economic or cultural. Nolf has also worked for national daily newspapers and magazines.

Photographs : Modo Bruxellae



Left:
Sandrina Fasoli's
creation

© E. Laurent

Right:
Girls From OMSK

© G.F.O.

SANDRINA FASOLI

The Brussels tandem, Sandrina Fasoli and Michael Marson, are now respected as far afield as Japan and the United States. Located in Paris since 2005 in a small Marais boutique, Sandrina Fasoli has maintained her poetic and nostalgic fashion sense. Guess what? Everyone loves it, Paris most of all. The pair's particular vision of fashion, halfway between femininity revealed and innocence rediscovered, allows the duo to play delightfully with materials and clothing preconceptions.

No shop yet in Brussels? Never mind, get yourself to 5 Place du Marché aux Grains, Paris.
www.sandrinafasoli.com

GIRLS FROM OMSK

Present in Paris, naturally, Valeria Siniouchkina showed off her Girls From Omsk brand; a streetwear-

rock'n'roll style redefined by the designer, adapted to the feminine form with more sophisticated ingredients. Result? Colourful, sporty, smart, which one can imagine went down a storm at Jardin des Tuileries! More good news? The marque was launched online earlier in March...

www.girlsfromomsk.be

SOFIE D'HOORE

She looks at fashion with a purist's eyes. Sofie D' Hoore is a demanding perfectionist, whose selection and cut of fabric is rarely equalled. For Winter, the designer is offering her customarily structured and comfortable clothing. Her motto: "I dress women, I don't disguise them!"

www.sofiedhoore.be

Ludivine Nolf



Aspria Club, your weight loss partner!

If you want to lose a few extra pounds, it is important that, in addition to eating a balanced diet, you exercise in order to build or maintain muscle tone. Because toned muscles burn more calories, even when resting.

At Aspria Club, we offer daily group classes that help you lose those extra pounds in a fun, dynamic and friendly environment.

**Why not come along for a free
Discovery Day and find out how
Aspria Club can help you?**

Complimentary Discovery Day must be taken before 25 April 2008.
Access to the Club includes all activities which are part of
a Gold membership



Lose kilos, save euros.

At Aspria Club, all new members are offered free advice from a nutritionist and a fitness trainer, as well as 6 personalised cardio training sessions. This combination of nutrition and exercise guarantees you effective weight loss.

In addition, sign up **before 30 April 2008** and take advantage of an exceptional **50% reduction on joining fees**.

To claim your free Discovery Day or to enjoy this exceptional offer contact one of our membership advisers by calling 02/508 08 12 for an appointment and mention "Together".

More details about this offer can be found on
brussels.aspria.be

Brussels' Finest Health and Fitness Club
Rue de l'Industrie 26 - 1040 Brussels - brussels.aspria.be - Tel. 02/508 08 12





Perfume:
AGENT
PROVOCATEUR
SIGNATURE
BY AGENT
PROVOCATEUR
Total look:
AGENT
PROVOCATEUR
www.agentprovocateur.com



Perfume:
HAPPY SPIRIT
BY CHOPARD
www.chopard.com

Perfume:
LE PARFUM
BY MAX MARA
Dress and bag
by Max Mara:
www.maxmara.com



Perfume:
BELLE EN RYKIEL
BY SONIA RYKIEL
Total look:
SONIA RYKIEL
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Rouge Shiseido: 9 Red
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ROUGE TOMATE

OPEN
12-14h30 and 19- 22h30
Closed Saturday, Sunday
and national holidays

PRICES
A la Carte: 55€
Plat du jour: 15€ (including coffee)
Lunch: 22€ (2 courses and coffee)

Rouge Tomate has long been recognised as a splendid, well-connected restaurant – now, it's enjoying a renaissance without loss of success or its primary philosophy, one that centres on cuisine for pleasure and good health. Its decor is still striking: in the impressive maison de maître on Avenue Louise, the striking dining area, warmly illustrated with mouth-watering images is divided into three sections, with beautiful parquet floors. A unique concept in Brussels: food inspired by a judicious alchemy between taste and top santé, regulated by diet expert. And, for summer days, the terrace offers a green paradise, making it one of the most pleasant dining spots in the city. All you could wish for...

*Avenue Louise, 190
1050 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 647 70 44*



GENVAL.LES.BAINS

OPEN
9h-midnight every day

PRICES
Menu a la Carte: 29€ (2 courses)
'Discovery' menu: 60€ (4 courses)
Lunch: 16€ (2 courses)

Open for five years, Genval.Les.Bains has not taken long to become the terrace for lunches in the sun. Obviously, the chef is a purist: rigorously dedicated to quality and freshness, with a respect for authentic tastes. The flavours are never smothered with thick sauces or blazing peppers; rather, they are accentuated by inventive, fresh, divinely scented herb bouquets. In short, a purified culinary style that tallies superbly with the architectural environment of the restaurant - airy decoration, sandy tones... and tables so peaceful that one can pass hours there, taking a world tour via the superb wine list, without tiring of the waiter's smile, nor of the romantic view of Lac de Genval...

*Avenue du Lac, 87
1332 Genval
T. +32 (0)2 655 73 73*



L'ORCHIDÉE BLANCHE

OPEN
12-14h30 and 19-23h
Closed Saturday lunchtime

PRICES
Per person: 30€ average
Quick lunch: 9,50€ (2 courses)
Orchidée Blanche Menu: 25€ (4 courses)
Mandarin Menu: 32 € (5 courses)

For 20 years, L'Orchidée Blanche has been the ultimate Vietnamese restaurant in Brussels. Katia Nguyen and her team of charming young ladies offer two different dining environments in the restaurant's recently renovated, purified decor. The first floor is very Zen, a harmonious mixture of stone and wood, while the ground floor has clear teak walls, slate and dark furniture that emphasise the dishes presented on original crockery, imported from Vietnam. The brown teak walls suggest a colonial atmosphere that's accentuated by the filtered lighting – an exotic air with exotic cuisine that places the restaurant among our city's best. Time for a visit...

*Chaussée de Boondael, 436
1050 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 647 56 21*



All images
© sensum.be

LE VERT D'EAU

OPEN:
12-14.15h and 19-21h30
Closed Saturday lunchtime,
Monday and Tuesday

PRICES:
Per person: 50€ average à la carte
Lunch: 16€ (2 courses)
'Dans la carte' Menu (3 courses): 40€
Traditional Menu: 33€

It's always a joy to speak about chef Jean-Pierre Fleuvy. He left his Michelin-starred Chouan in Brussels and settled in this deliciously bucolic Plancenoit, forsaking the high-class city setting to offer a more pastoral, relaxed gastronomy. But the man's talent has quickly gained a deserved reputation, with quality that's guaranteed by the very best handpicked farm produce. Jean-Pierre Fleuvy, of course, has never lost his talent and his dishes are still a textbook on fine French traditional cuisine, with a devilishly modern influence. The daily blackboard suggestions only prove the point further...

Rue de la Bachée, 131
1380 Plancenoit
T. +32 (0)2 633 54 52

CHOU

OPEN
12-14h and 19-22h30
Closed Saturday and Sunday

PRICES
Per person: 60€
average à la carte
Lunch: 30€ (2 courses
with wine and coffee)
Surprise Menu (4 courses):
40€ and 60€

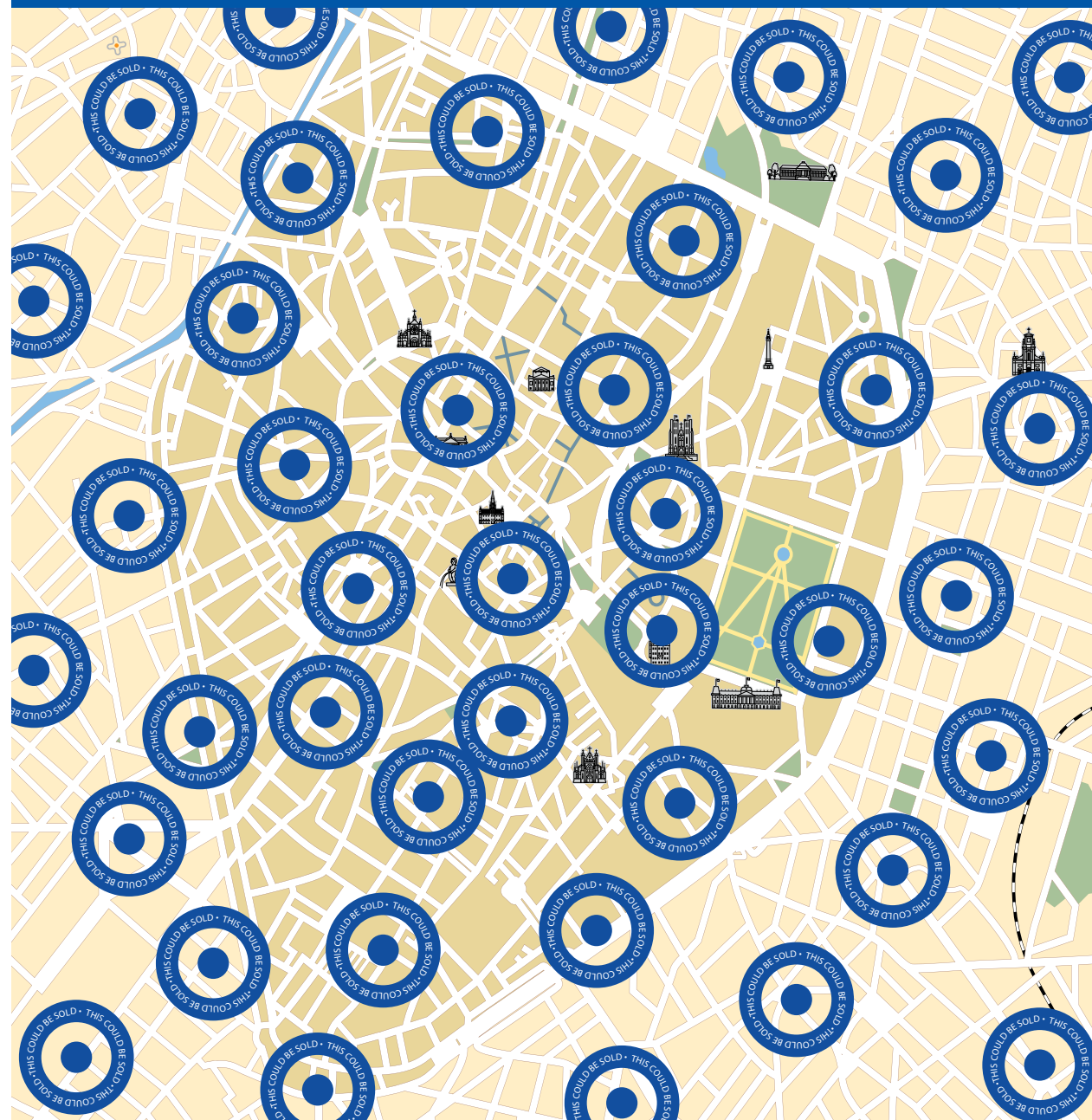
The decor is one of a kind. Architect Daniel Servé did not leave any detail to chance: walls, floor, tables, chairs - all form a part of the picture. In addition to the open kitchen, the dining area allows you to eat with a view of the cellar, thanks to a glass floor. Marvellous.

The cuisine on offer is fine - Domenica Aubry is an inspired chef who gives his dishes simple, seasonal tastes, complemented by the wide-ranging wine list. Try without delay.

Place de Londres, 4
1050 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 511 92 38

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HÔTEL COSTES

Last month, Ubiquity Concept held the latest edition of its now-famous Hôtel Costes evening, which celebrated a retrospective of the ten previous events, with nearly two thousand guests attending. International DJs Stephan

Pompougnac and Lorenzo Ottati set the sizzling tone...

Hôtel Costes
Concert Noble
Rue d'Arlon, 82 - 1040 Brussels
www.lessoireesdescompilations.be



RED NIGHT

At the beginning of February, within the framework of the renowned Antwerp Fashion Week, Campari held its second Benelux Fashion Designer events, where VIPs admired the collections of talented designers such as Shampoo&Conditioner (Belgium), Girls from Omsk (Belgium), Rianne

De Witte (Netherlands) and Mada Van Gaans (Netherlands). After the show, the dancefloor drew devotees for the Fusion Party...

Campari Benelux Fashion Designers
Waagnatie Hangar 29, Rijnkaai 150
2000 Antwerp
www.campari.com



EU STUDIES FAIR

The EU Studies Fair is a one-day fair and workshop that brings together prospective students, universities and academic institutions, to offer postgraduate courses in EU and International Relations, Business and Law. The ninth edition, which took place on Saturday 16th February 2008

was a real success - more than 600 students visited the 50 exhibitors.

EU Studies Fair 2008
Crowne Plaza Hotel
Rue Gineste, 3
1210 Brussels
www.europeanvoice.com



Martin's
Cocktails

DISCOVERY OF THE MONTH

At the beginning of Spring, what could be more relaxing than sipping a cocktail or two with friends and colleagues in a cosy but trendy corner? Mojito, Daiquiri, Luther III, Margarita, Gin-fizz, Cosmopolitan...they're all here. And let's not forget the latest additions - Martin's Cocktails. Four summer colours, four exclusive recipes, plus four flashy shakers to collect after you've enjoyed

their contents. Boom, boom! From 7th April, check out After Work Cocktail, from Tuesday to Thursday, 17-19h.

ICONES

Lounge Bar & Restaurant - Terrace
Martin's Central Park Hotel
Boulevard Charlemagne 80
1000 Brussels
Tel: + 32 (0) 2 230 85 55
www.martinsrestaurants.be

NEXT PARTIES

CasiNoce

28th March, Acte 3
Chaussée de Nivelles, 29-31
1420 Braine l'Alleud
www.noces.be

Gay & Friendly Tea Dance

30th March, You
Rue Duquesnoy, 18
1000 Brussels
www.leyou.be

Fashion Food

3rd & 4th April, Knokke Out Café
Astridlaan, 7
8300 Knokke Heist
www.fashionfood.be

Café d'Anvers

4th April, Café d'Anvers
Verversrui, 15
2000 Antwerp
www.cafe-d-anvers.com

Anarchic

18th April
K-Nal, Avenue du Port, 1
1000 Brussels
www.anarchic.be

Dior: The Backstage

28th April
Tour&Taxis, Avenue du Port 86C
1000 Brussels
www.thebackstage.be

Hôtel Costes

2nd May, Concert Noble
Rue d'Arlon, 82
1040 Brussels
www.lessoireesdescompilations.be

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Mirano
Chausée de Louvain, 38
1210 Brussels
www.atseven.eu

THE BACKSTAGE

FRIDAY APRIL 25th

The Backstage returns for a new season with its unique concept of fusing people, fashion and music. The Backstage is also a big party night featuring DJ Lorenzo Ottati, L Fêtes and Miss Luna.

The Backstage along with "Les soirées des compilations Hôtel Costes", is the second event project of Ubiquity Concept agency.

The Backstage shows fashion as seen from the inside, and for one night only showcases a gigantic transparent cube, inside Tour & Taxis, in which you can discover all the secrets of the models, make-up artists, and hairdressers as well as the designers of GIRLS FROM OMSK (winner of Modo Bruxellae 2007).



More information on :
www.thebackstage.be

Tour & Taxis
Avenue du port 86 - 1000 Bruxelles





*Michael Chia
and his famous
circular pictures
printed on plates*
© Hôtel Silken

HOTEL SILKEN'S PHOTO PROJECT

From the outside, the Hotel Silken, near our historical European buildings, looks like, say, a hotel. But, as soon as you enter the environs, artistic feeling flourishes...

In the lobby, where I'm waiting for General Manager Frédéric Hill, I can't believe my eyes. There are pictures everywhere. Later, Frédéric confides that he was told that the hotel is actually the biggest private original photographic museum in Europe, and also that he's facing a difficult situation: there's no wall space left.

ZOOM ROOM

The hotel hosts its own exhibition space, The ZOOM Gallery, and has photographs everywhere, from corridors to meeting areas. Every room has a picture, along with the artist's resumé. On every door, there's not only a number, but also an artist's name. The shows change four times per year, with the seasons.

THE PHOTOPLATES AWARD WINNER'S SIX CIRCULAR PICTURES ARE PRINTED ON DINING PLATES

Frédéric explains that every Hotel Silken project is associated with photography. For example, in 2007, the establishment aimed for an eco-label to become

a 'green' hotel- so he got in touch with professional photographers and asked them to work on a nature theme for the hotel's 2008 calendar.

The most important Hotel Silken photography event is the annual Photoplates Award, which has run since 1996 and went to Michael Chia this year. The winner's six circular pictures are printed on dining plates, which are used exclusively by the hotel for twelve months in its restaurant, 'L'Objectif', before going on sale.

Which means that I have twelve months to wait before I can own my *Happy Rain*...

Hotel Silken
Boulevard Charlemagne, 11-19
1000 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 231 09 09
www.hotelsilkenberlaymont.com

The ZOOM Gallery
Michael Chia
Happy Rain and Dreams in Dreamland
21/01/2008 – 25/04/2008

Happy Rain
exhibition

© Michael Chia

HAPPY BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY PARTY!

Michael Chia was not only baptised with an angel's name; he was blessed with angels' eyes, too. On his way back from Mongolia in May 2007, he landed in Seoul.







Fantasia,
from *Dreams*
in *Dreamland*

© Michael Chia

FOR ART'S SAKE

That particular day happened to be Buddha's birthday, 11th May. Michael unfolded his digital camera in order to immortalize the multicoloured, incensed, buried-under-flowers, (not to mention holy) festivity.

That's exactly when everything went wrong, or might have, if Michael was not... Michael. A huge tropical rain decided to fall - if Siddhartha Gautama had been hanging around, he would certainly have smiled at the ensuing panic. Everything was cancelled, drowned, washed away. No procession, no incense sticks, not even an already-fading single flower. All that was left was a few tonnes of warm water and an infinite field of Korean umbrellas.

BOX OF TRICKS

But Michael is not just an angel, he's also a photographer. He held his breath, took his digital camera and opened his eyes. Wide open, Michael's eyes. And the magic puzzle, the Lemarchand Box, began to click. And unclick. And click again.

I must confess that I dislike the idea of commenting on images. If a picture needs a comment, the picture doesn't tell a story, and Michael Chia doesn't cheat. That said, I'm just a writer. You're probably in a hurry to an important meeting or business lunch and, if you're a little like me, you're on the verge of being late. So, if you're a little late anyway, look at that shower of umbrellas. Look carefully. If you're really attentive, you may notice a smile, discreetly translucent. And if you're very lucky, birthday candles, raining gently. Happy Rain!

Hélène Noël



Yes,
from Dreams
in Dreamland
© Michael Chia



Flutterbyes,
from Dreams
in Dreamland
© Michael Chia

Together's 'To Do' list

Our choice of Brussels' artistic arenas, as the year warms up...

BIFFF 27.03 > 08.04

It's that time of year again – for ghosties, ghoulies and long-legged beasties, the places to be is Tour&Taxis, Cinema Nova and Film Museum for the 26th BIFFF festival, filled to the brim with the very best and latest from the world of horror, sci-fi and fantasy films. As ever, the festival has numerous additional events included, from the world-famous International Body Painting Contest to the Vampire's Ball, where only suitably attired densizens of the night will be allowed admittance. Ghastly fun!

Brussels International Festival of Fantastic Film
Rue de la Comtesse de Flandre, 8
B-1020 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 201 17 13
www.biff.org

GILBERTO GIL 'GIL LUMINOSO' 2.04, 20h

Gilberto Gil, Brazilian music superstar and ex-minister of culture, will sing solo for the first time in Brussels, at the Salle Henry Le Bœuf in Bozar.

BOZAR
Rue Ravenstein, 23
1000 Bruxelles
T. +32 (0)2 507 84 27
www.bozar.be

SUERTE Y DUENDE To 19.04

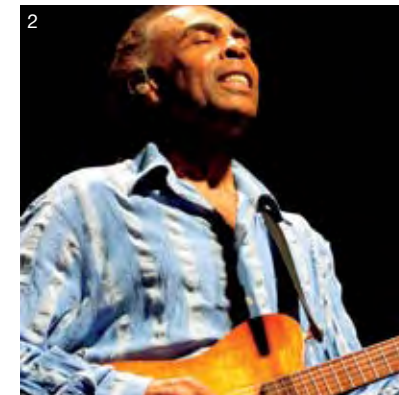
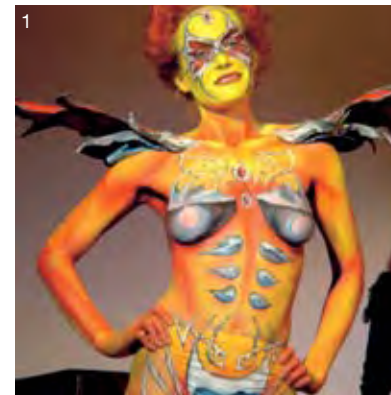
Jonas Gallery brings the work of emerging young Moroccan/French artist Chourouk Hriech (guest of honour at the Frieze Art Fair 2007 and heading for this year's Biennale de Lyon) into the Brussels remit, with a selection of his striking, disturbing drawings.

Jonas Gallery
Rue de Flandre, 35
1000 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 503 50 55
Email: info@galeriejonas.be
www.jonasgallery.webbuilder02.hostbasket.com/page125987.htm

SPRING'S CONTEMPORARY ART 24 > 27.04

Following the success of last year's inaugural expo, Philippe Lichtfus presents his second edition of the very best painting, sculpture, ceramic work and photography in the magnificent confines of Brussels' Indigo Studios, allowing more than 35 contemporary artists the opportunity to display their work in public for the first time - a fresh, dynamic perspective on contemporary art.

Indigo Studios
Rue de la Victoire, 96
1060 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 534 75 72



1. Bodypainting at Brussels International Festival of Fantastic Film

© BIFFF

2. Gilberto Gil

© Bozar

3. Hriech's work

© Chourouk Hriech

4. Les Disparus de Saint Agil

© Musée du Cinéma

www.printempsdesartsactuels.be
www.indigostudios.be/agenda/agenda.php

LES DISPARUS DE SAINT AGIL 27.04, 15h

Christian Jaque's milestone of youth-culture cinema. In a college, three friends form a secret society. Their objective - going to America. A night, after one of their secret meetings, one of them see a man coming out from a wall. Are they going mad? Erich von Stroheim and Michel Simon star in this 1939 classic.

Musée du Cinéma
Rue Ravenstein, 60
1000 Brussels

T. +32 (0)2 641 10 20
www.cinematheque.be

PAUL KLEE To 11.05

In the latest of its monographic exhibitions devoted to major modern artists, BOZAR offers the work of Swiss artist Paul Klee (1879-1940), one that corresponds to the painter's own vision of the world - a mental world in which, from a poetic point of view and in complete freedom, he saw - imaginatively, even ironically - the world as a vast stage, a huge set in which characters move.

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



Jan Fabre's work art
© Jean Fabre

AIRCRAFT To 17.05

Aircraft, by New York-based photographer Jeffrey Milstein, has caught the eye of the art world; his large-scale photographs are not of model airplanes, nor are they retouched - the artist waits for approaching airplanes at LAX, snapping crystal-clear shots of the incoming Leviathans, which, in their presentation here, become portraits, all leaning in for their close-up shot. In these photographs, the planes stand upright and alone, taking on a new persona.

Young Gallery
Fine Art Photography
Avenue Louise, 75B
1050 Brussels
T. +32 (0) 374 07 04
www.younggalleryphoto.com

BORROWED TIME To 18.05

With 251 works on display, this exhibition brings the full range of choreographer and plastics artist Jan Fabre to the fore, not only from the perspective of famous photographers but also via his own drawings and draft works.

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

James Drew

MAGRITTE MUSEUM NOT A PIPE-REAM

On February 29th, minister Sabine Laruelle (SPF), Deputy Prime Minister Didier Reynders (Régie des Bâtiments) and Suez Group Director-General President Gerard Mestrallet signed a convention relating to the creation and the installation of a new museum entirely devoted to one of Belgium's most internationally renowned artists René Magritte in the Altenloh Hotel, on Place Royale in Brussels. The Magritte Museum has been made possible thanks to a collaboration between the Suez Group, Belgium's Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, the Magritte Foundation and the Régie des Bâtiments - the museum, which is expected to cost around 4€ million, is scheduled to open in Spring 2009. www.regiedesbatiments.be

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Spring forecast

Astrologer James Christie takes us into April with his heavenly predictions.

SIGN OF THE MONTH

ARIES

21st March-19th April

The 7th of April will be a red-letter day for reunions and social gatherings and creates a bright mood and fast tempo for the rest of the month. On the career front, you'll be working towards specific targets and dates with a sense of enthusiasm and optimism and on or around the 20th onwards you will take a quantum leap forwards with long-term professional ambitions. Romantic aspects get very physical in the last couple of days, but if you're playing away from home this will soon become very messy and complicated.



TAURUS

20th April
20th May

A very tough and tiring month on the work front, but it's also a highly remunerative period. You must use this opportunity to pay off a few old bills, especially credit card accounts, or there will be embarrassing moments later in the year. Romantic aspects are stable apart from a hiccup around the 17th, but you need to monitor your health in the latter days of April.



GEMINI

21st May
21st June

A flighty, flirty month in which affairs of the heart seem to take precedence in all things. New love affairs flourish and while this might be great for your libido, it does create an element of distraction at a time when, professionally, you really need to be on the ball. April 7th, 8th and 9th is a highly social period and you'll be spending heavily on entertainment.



CANCER

22nd June
22nd July

As The Bard observed, "there's something rotten in the state of Denmark" and in this month, in which travel and movement plays a very key role, Cancerians might be advised to give Denmark a miss. Conversations – arguments, probably – concerning property are relevant between the 10th and 17th and the interests of children, especially their education, are very high on your agenda at all times.



LEO

23rd July
23rd August

April starts with a lot of tensions and frustrations in relationships coming to something of a head. If there's a God-Almighty explosion between the 3rd and the 8th, this may not actually be a bad thing if it clears the air and enables you to move on. Either way, professional concentration must be finely focused on a single project from the 14th onwards. Get this one right

and everything falls nicely into place around it. Get it wrong and we're back to square one.



VIRGO

23rd August
22nd September

For the better part of April, you should be able to sit back and let someone else do all the worrying and running about. Put your feet up, have a rest, go with the flow – and if there is a decrease in revenue, it is only a small one that you can easily accommodate. The first three weeks of the month favour relationships, domestic routines, holidays and vacations.



LIBRA

23rd September
22nd October

A dangerous month for single lady Librans, especially those with long legs and predatory eyes. Careful girls. If you're only bluffing, you'll be outed and cut down to size. Gentlemen have a safer month, but only because they'll be so damned busy that they wouldn't recognise a sexual opportunity if one got up and slapped them in the face. All Librans should avoid making and breaking promises and all Librans will need to be flexible with their working hours between the 6th and the 11th and again around the 22nd.

SCORPIO

23rd October



21st November

A fast and furious month full of travel and movement, of very long hours spent getting somewhere (at last!) with committees and quangos, and for burning the candle at both ends in pursuit of sexual satisfaction. Just for once, business and pleasure mix quite wonderfully and from the 15th onwards the old adage of "it's not what you can do, but who you know" will be proven right time and again.



SAGITTARIUS

22nd November
21st December

On the social/emotional scene an old friend becomes a new friend and this is a month for important

meetings and reunions. On the down side, it could also be a period where part of your past catches up with you! Matters appertaining to tax and VAT become highly relevant from early April onwards, and you'll be spending long hours on the phone and even more hours in front of a computer screen.



CAPRICORN

22nd December
19th January

April is going to be one of the busiest and most cash productive months of your year so you really need to make a maximum effort to capitalise on this positive trend. There is a welcome lull between the 12th and 18th which enables you to catch your breath and pay some attention to family matters – but be warned, there will be at least one emotional confrontation at this time!



AQUARIUS

20th January
18th February

The first half of the month is dominated by boardroom and professional politics with some very high stress levels peaking around the 7th to the 15th. However, as you move into the latter ten days of April, political machinations in the bedroom seem to take precedent and around the 23rd you'll be walking on emotional egg shells. A partner's jealousies and insecurities should not be ignored at this sensitive time.



PISCES

19th February
20th March

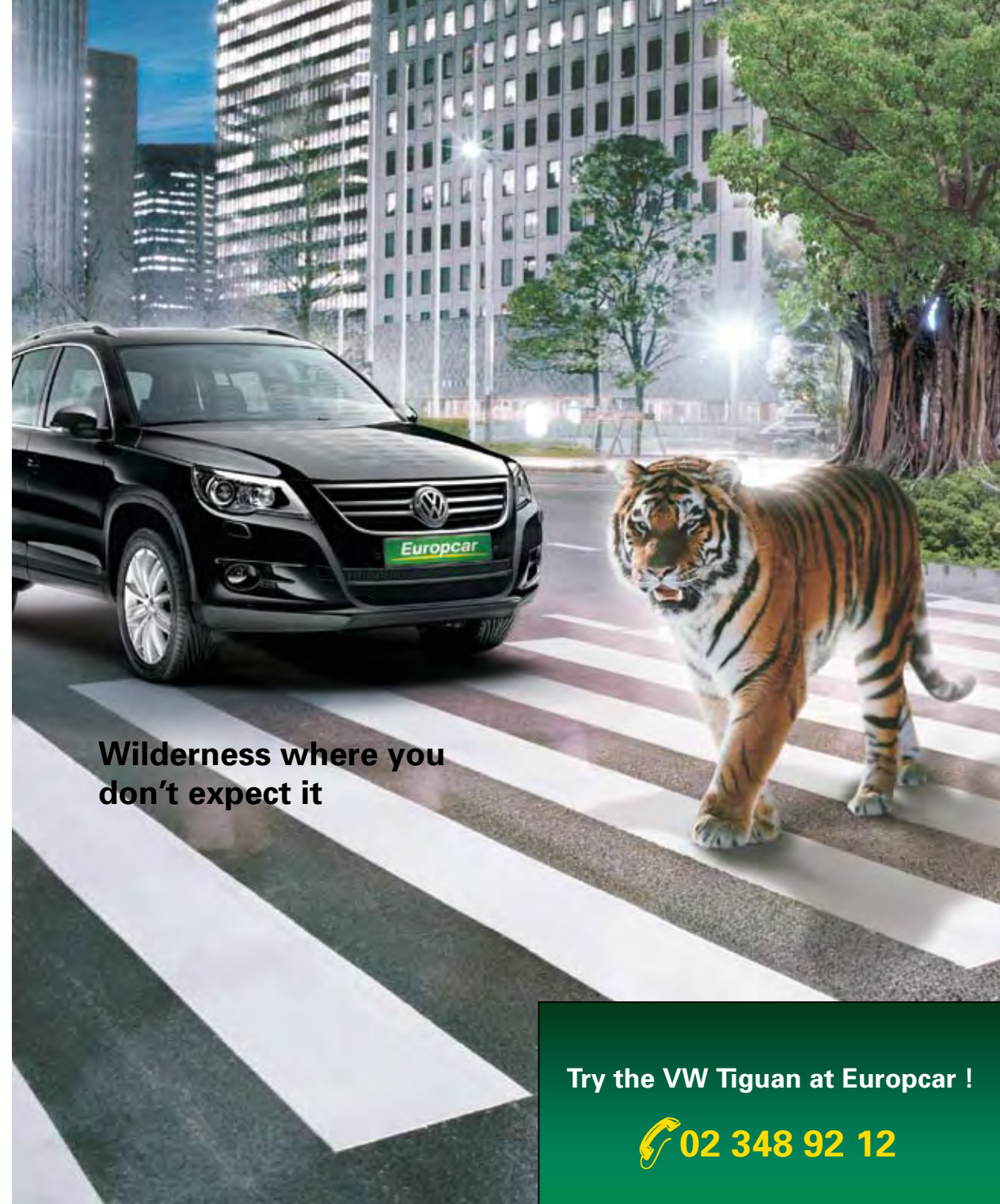
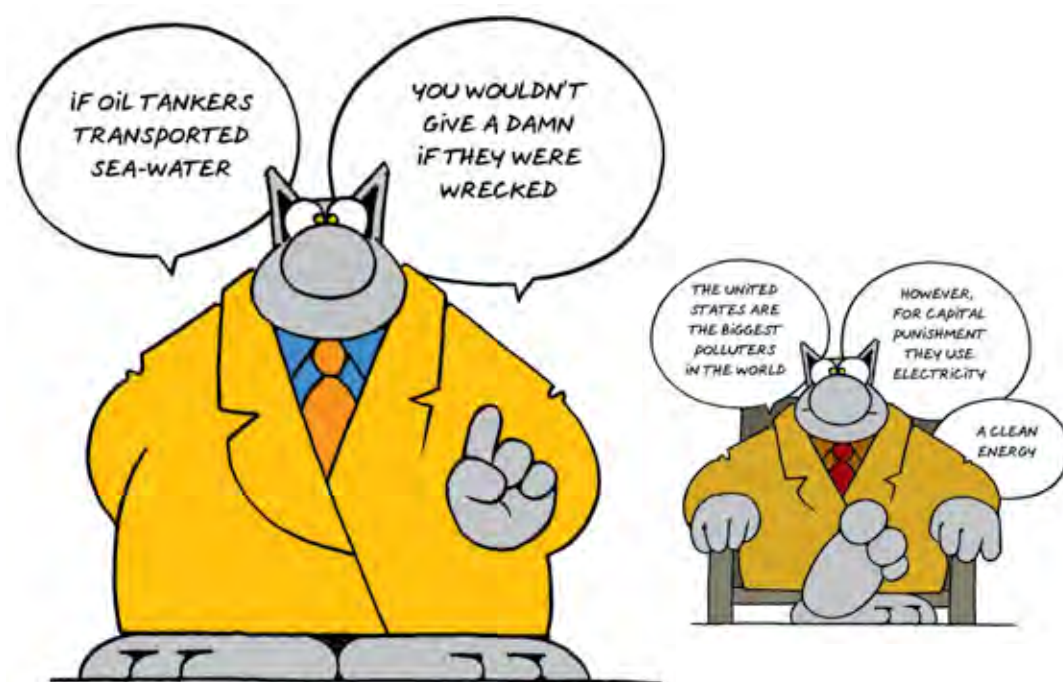
There is a Piscesian tendency to let one's pride get in the way of one's common sense, and if at various times throughout April you've got to swallow your pride and ask someone for a little bit of help, this may be no bad thing. You'll be surprised at how many friends you've got who do actually have your best interests at heart.

James Christie

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

Le Chat: Eco-friendly

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