

A close-up portrait of actress Emma Stone with her signature red hair and green eyes, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. She is wearing a black top.

Together

magazine

DEC 2015 / JAN 2016 #64

LUXURY

*World's most
expensive watches*

Motoring EUROPEAN MOTOR SHOW

TRAVEL

*Singapore Sling
Messing about on the river
The slopes of Aravis*

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

*Work less
The power of the mind
Food for fuel*

MONEY

Welsh 'tax town'

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WINE *Know your champagne*

FASHION SHOOT Country house

Emma Stone

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Editor's LETTER

*Together:
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ON THE COVER



*Emma Stone is currently
starring in Aloha*

TO A HAPPY AND A SAFE 2016!

Many of us in Brussels and beyond can't shake off the concerns that came with the infamous lockdown, when the capital fell silent, save for the rumble of army trucks and the wailing sirens of ambulance, fire brigade and police vehicles.

I know I speak for many people who have settled here who say something seemed to change that weekend about how we look at the city we now call home. A few weeks on, soldiers still patrol the Christmas markets, in eerie contrast to the dazzling party-time lights.

Facebook – sometimes much vilified – was a safe place for people to express how they felt and I published this that weekend:

It matters not what type of 'faith' you have: the word is big enough to stand on its own two feet, unshackled by institutions and vested interests, free from boundaries. It matters not how you arrive at its door, a place where everything is still possible. It matters not that you find yourself staring up at the world from a deep, dark well – keep looking and the stars will soon appear.

It still feels relevant, and I think it always will. Stay safe and enjoy the festivities.

Paul Morris
EDITOR



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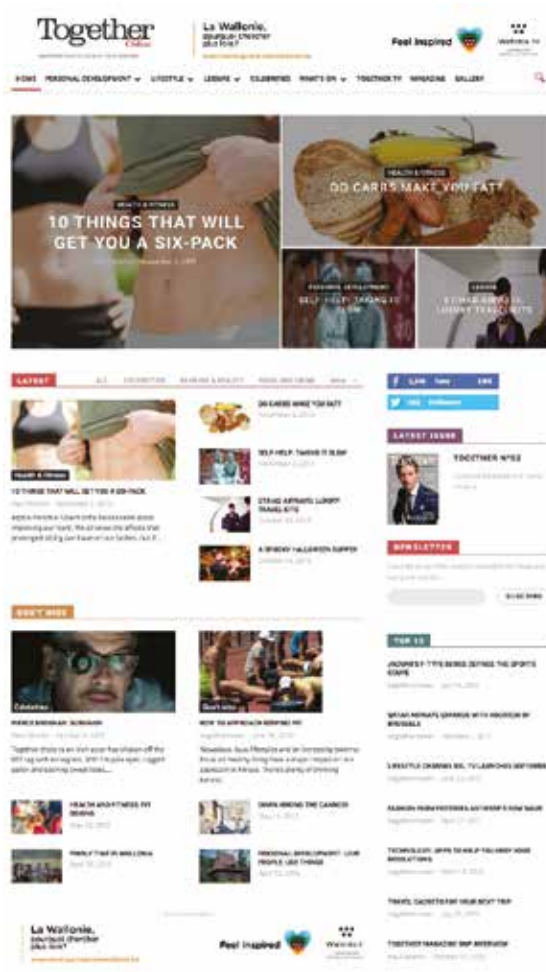
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Cinema star interview: Eddie Redmayne

Together meets up with a young actor who is clearly destined for great things. Eddie Redmayne is something of a paradox. He's an actor who studied alongside Prince William at Eton, read art history at Cambridge and wrote his dissertation on the artist Yves Klein

Arcs 1950: Paradiski

Caroline Dierckx and friends headed for a sporty, rejuvenating getaway. From both a sporting and tourist point of view, Les Arcs repeatedly meets the challenges. With breathtaking panoramas, spend a few days in... Paradiski.

Wine: Domaine de la Combe Julière

Let's talk about a region that smells like sunshine, which witnessed many popes, where the cicadas sing and from which the wines have been shunned for too long: The Côte du Rhône. In recent years the Rhone Valley has been standing up to the challenge of raising its standards to a quality that can rival the the best.

Tokyo by Design

It's hard not to have high expectations of your first trip to Japan, with its exquisite food, minimalist décor and near-mythical history. As an avid traveler and lover of new experiences, I was anticipating a sensational cultural immersion.

[... read more on www.togethertmag.eu](http://www.togethertmag.eu)


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Starring in Belgium



Naomi Shelton & The Gospel Queens

If you're looking for vintage soul, gospel and funk, the AB Club is the place to be with Gospel Queens as backing vocals. Even though Naomi sang in the church from a very young age, it was only in 2009 that she debuted in style at 66 years of age with *What have You Done, My Brother?*, followed up by the impressive *Cold World* in 2014. Her backing singers come in the form of The Gospel Queens. **16 February 2016.** Ancienne Belgique. **Tickets: €18** - www.abconcerts.be



Buika

This exceptional singer from Palma De Mallorca is closing in on her tenth CD, the latest being *Vivir Sin Miedo*. The AB describes her as "one moment jazzy, the next with a flamenco-feel, or floating on Latino or Afro rhythms... but always with that rousing voice". Wikipedia situates her between Nina Simone and Amy Winehouse. Pretty good company. **27 February 2016.** Ancienne Belgique. **Tickets: €30** www.abconcerts.be



Arno

The Ostend-born Belgian legend's twelfth album *Human Incognito* comes out in January, a new and exciting adventure which dovetails nicely with a new European tour. **16 April 2016.** Ancienne Belgique. **Tickets: €30** www.livenation.be



Rod Stewart

With over 200 million albums sold worldwide, Rod Stewart is one of the biggest-selling artists of all time. With his unmistakable voice, style and hairdo, he has forged an incredible popularity worldwide – for five decades! The only thing he loves just as much as singing is his beloved Glasgow Celtic. Sportpaleis Antwerp. **15 May 2016. Tickets: €60 and upwards** - www.livenation.be



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Looking after people in difficulty

Paul Morris talks to three organizations who help people in distress

Samusocial

One of the main players in Belgian aid services is Samusocial, which is the local branch of Samusocialinternational. They provide a free number (0800 99340) that anyone can call. So who uses the number? Christophe Thielens explains: "Homeless people and people in distress contact us, normally about housing requests or information on social services, etc. The social services, hospitals and police also dial up when they come into contact with someone who needs help. We also get calls about tourists who have been mugged, women who are victims of domestic violence or people evicted from their apartment. The general public also uses it to report anyone they come across who requires our services."

Christophe said: "Our mobile teams, composed of a driver, a nurse and a social worker/or a psychologist drive around Brussels looking for people who seem to be in physical or social distress. The teams provide a friendly ear, food and hot drinks, blankets, clean clothes, care products and primary medical care and psychological support."

Samusocial also provides emergency accommodation for many of these people and offers the same service in their centres, including psychological consultations and medical consultations (provided by Médecins du Monde).

Christophe said: "We try to stimulate them to accept a social support plan. A social worker helps them to make appointments in

specialized services (public administration, public social services, medical appointment, etc.); drug addicts, alcoholics and people with psychiatric problems are referred to rehabilitation centres; other people are oriented to nursing homes, hospitals, private housing, centres for victims of domestic violence, etc. Samusocial offers psychological support as well."

In winter, they have at least 900 additional beds (November-March), 600 beds more than the 300 beds they have available all year round. They also have other initiatives aimed at finding permanent housing for people who have lost their way in life.

Samusocial has also had to react to the asylum crisis, providing a permanent hygiene framework and

humanitarian standby 24h/24 to support the most vulnerable people.

So, how is this all paid for? Christophe explained: "The remaining state funding is insufficient to meet the growing exclusion of people from society. Samusocial seeks to develop partnerships with the private sector to provide the means to boost its power to react. Partners such as Carrefour, Belfius, Interparking financially support us. Samusocial also invites the general public to support our efforts through financial donations (online or www.samusocial.be on the account BE04 0000 0000 3131 - all donations of more than €40 tax deductible).

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CHARITY

Solidarité Grands Froids

A non-profit organization dedicated to helping the homeless and the helpless, Solidarité Grands Froids' motto is "Improving life in the streets".

Help the homeless

From November to March, this operation allows the holding of two weekly social changing rooms in collaboration with the Brussels Samusocial, making two premises available Tuesday and Friday evenings.

Volunteers sign up for the distribution, and the calendar manager oversees all registrations in collaboration with leaders of the social changing rooms.

This project attracts a hundred volunteers every year.

Solidarité Grand Froids' Cynthia Simpson explains: "Basically, our core business is to provide clothes to the homeless and try to be there for them to make their everyday lives a little 'warmer'. We believe in educating homeless children by giving them the correct tools, such as school books, as well giving as access to books in one of the three bookshops we have set up. We also organize events such as Saint Nicolas and other Christmas activities."

Recycling

- Collection of items such as dishes, furniture to assist organizations helping people reintegrate into life.

- Libraries: The books are distributed to organizations such as children's homes, and those that need aid with literacy.

- Plastic bottle tops are collected to help the Belgian Center for Guide Dogs (le Centre Belge

pour Chiens-Guide).

Cynthia adds: "In addition, we act as 'wholesalers' to various associations, since we have noticed that many people want to help but no one takes care of organizing it. We donate to any association that makes a request and also organize teambuilding events for large corporations."

Social Reintegration

Two very strong strings to Solidarité Grands Froids' bow are Mamy Douceurs and SolidariFemmes. Mamy Douceurs' task is to help homeless children living in the street through donations of clothing, diapers and school supplies..



SolidariFemmes is a group with the very specific remit of helping women in distress. A number of them have fled their homes and often arrive with their children to protect them and rebuild their lives in a refuge. After intense psychosocial work done by professionals, these women have to find

a home and rebuild their lives but they often have nothing.

"Our specificity is that all our donations toward any beneficiary are free of charge," says Cynthia. "You can donate directly to: Account Number (IBAN): BE82 6511 5585 6168."

Volunteers

Join us in our distribution of warm clothing to the homeless and our other projects: info@solidaritegrandfroid.be
Tel: +32(0)477 33 85 47
Warehouse: 191 Blvd. Souverain, 1160 Auderghem (Tuesday, Friday, 12h00-16h00)
www.solidaritegrandfroid.be

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The mind is a flexible mirror, adjust it to see a better world

PERSONAL
DEVELOPMENT

Fitness

Your biological clock is ticking

Our regular fitness contributors at Aspria explain the most recent evolution in their fitness and wellbeing programmes



Aspria Brussels Royal La Rasante is launching AspriaPro, with the aim of offering its members personalized holistic health programmes which put your safety at the forefront. In addition to a full renovation of its fitness facilities, the goal of this project is to offer you the very best to allow you to take care of your health.

The further we advance through life, the more we might be tempted to 'cheat' a little when someone asks our age. Yet the number of candles on our birthday cake reminds us every year to face the facts: our chronological age is moving inexorably upwards. Who hasn't dreamed of reversing that process? Of losing a

few years rather than gaining them?

Let's leave the realm of dreams. Because there is an age which we can control, one which results from our physiological development, namely our biological age. If some elements which influence it which must be taken as given – genes, metabolism and the environment in which we live – others can absolutely be improved by our behaviour.

In practice, it's possible for us to adopt a healthier way of life because we are stakeholders in our own health and wellbeing. How? By getting rid of bad habits such as smoking and alcohol, choosing a balanced

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Fitness

diet, reducing stress levels and taking part in regular physical activity. Aspria has taken up the challenge with AspriaPro.

Seeing the expert

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The results of these tests, combined with an analysis of your lifestyle habits, allow us to determine your biological age and to create a programme which is adapted to it and to your personal goals, in a way that is safe, evolving and varied. The palette of activities and services offered include fitness, swimming, sauna, group classes, massages, sports and diet coaching.

So having the age of your arteries isn't necessarily your destiny! In Germany, where AspriaPro has already been available for several years, more than half of the members have reduced their biological age by three years or more. At Aspria Brussels Royal La Rasante, the planned fitness facilities will combine perfectly with AspriaPro to give members the opportunity to rejuvenate themselves biologically in the near future. And their families will also benefit from your return to youth.

To find out more visit aspria.com/evolution



So what is this biological age?

Biomarkers of aging are biomarkers that better predict functional capacity at a later age than chronological age. Stated another way, biomarkers of aging would give the true 'biological age', which may be different from the chronological age.

Validated biomarkers of aging would allow for testing interventions to extend lifespan, because changes in the biomarkers would be observable throughout the lifespan of the organism. Although maximum lifespan would be a means of validating biomarkers of aging, it

would not be a practical means for long-lived species such as humans because longitudinal studies would take far too much time. Ideally, biomarkers of aging should assay the biological process of ageing and not a predisposition to disease, should cause a minimal amount of trauma to assay in the organism, and should be reproducibly measurable during a short interval compared to the lifespan of the organism.

Although graying of hair increases with age, hair greying cannot be called a biomarker of ageing. Similarly, skin wrinkles and other common changes seen with aging are not better indicators of future functionality than chronological age. Biogerontologists have continued efforts to find and validate biomarkers of aging, but success thus far has been limited. Levels of CD4 and CD8 memory T cells and naive T cells have been used to give good predictions of the expected lifespan of middle-aged mice.

Biological clocks, for example the epigenetic clock, are promising biomarkers of aging. Wikipedia.org

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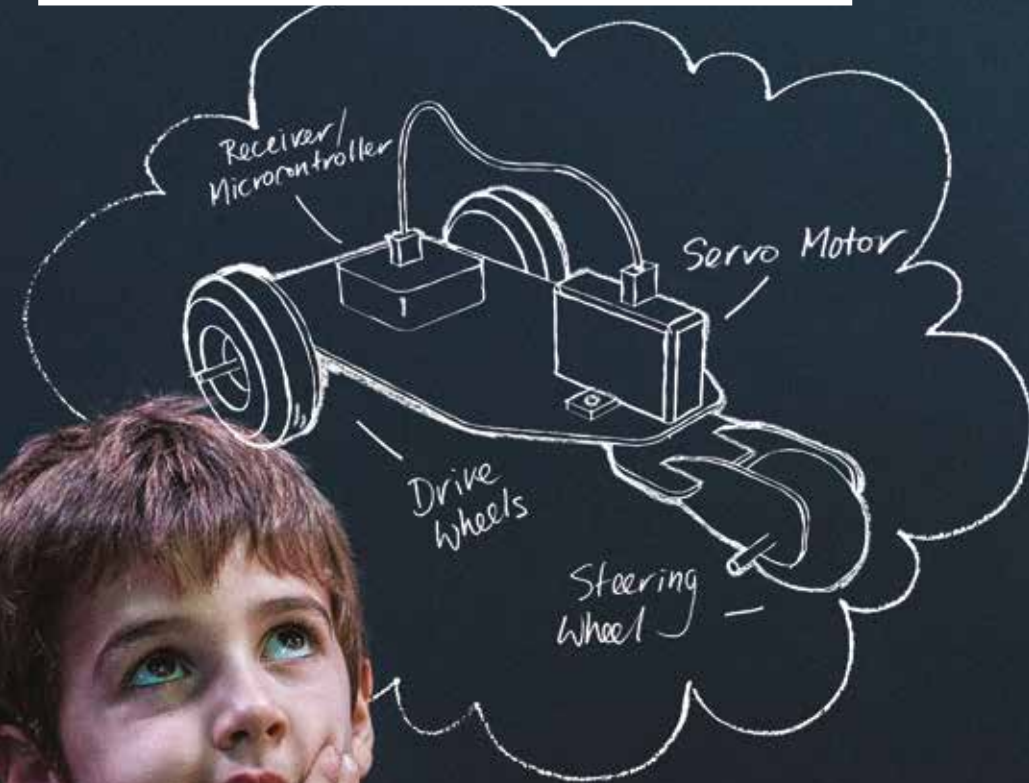
Amit Ray

There are many authors who write on the subject of positive thinking and the power of the mind. Stephen Richards, author on mind power and cosmic order, claims: "You are essentially who you create yourself to be and all that occurs in your life is the result of your own making." To use an analogy, the unconscious mind is to the conscious mind as the dog is to his master. Both the unconscious mind and the dog can be tamed. Similarly, both the unconscious mind and the dog can be masters. Put differently, either you take your dog for a walk or the dog takes you for one. We are either in command of our thoughts or we let them rule (ruin) our decisions.

Do you know someone who is almost always happy, smiling and positive? On the contrary, do you know people who are negative,

complain and are rarely happy? Both of these emotional and mental ways of behaving are part of human nature. We can either let our emotions take over our mental state or we can decide to be happy and make the best of every situation. Richards reminds us that we are ultimately responsible for our thoughts and circumstances when he states that "our way of thinking creates good or bad outcomes". The question is, who controls your mind and how do you gain a positive outlook on life? Just like yawning or laughter can be contagious, so are the thought patterns of the mind. Positive thinking is infectious. But so is negative thinking. It is more addictive to be around positive people than those who are negative. Negative thoughts, words and attitudes are like poison. They create negative and unhappy feelings, moods and behavior which can lead to negative states such as failure, frustration and disappointment. Ultimately, we attract and are attracted to people who resemble us.

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“TAME YOUR MIND
WITH CONSISTENT
FOCUS ON YOUR GOALS
AND DESIRES”

Most of our thoughts are done in an automatic manner. We are often not aware of our thoughts let alone how we integrate them in our minds. Usually, we automatically accept these thoughts, letting them shape our actions, behaviour and decisions. It can become harmful when negative thoughts sink into our mind and affect to the extent that they rule our lives. There are some tricks and processes taught in psychology such as NLP (neurolinguistic programming) that deal with positive thinking and the power of the mind. It all starts by being aware of your thought process and believing that you can control your thoughts. By becoming aware of your thought process and by acknowledging that you can be the resource of your thoughts, you can turn a negative thought into a positive outcome. Any time a negative thought appears, replace it with a constructive thought and keep doing this until you see your situation under a more positive light. Persistence will prevail. Just as an athlete works on his skills and strength, engaging the mind can lead to mental strength and a positive thought process. Going back to the dog-master

analogy, domesticating a pet animal is like raising a child. It takes patience and maturity but with time and diligence the dog just like the child can become obedient and disciplined. You wouldn't want your child to run around the house making constant messes just like you would rather your dog tended to his needs outdoors.

To sum up, don't make excuses or wait for life to be what you expect it to be. Start today, start small and enjoy each step as you create it. Read up on the topic, attend courses and lectures and surround yourself with people who have a positive outlook on life and who can have a good influence on you. Constructive and lasting changes take time but by taming the mind and cultivating mental strength, positive thoughts will emerge, irrespective of the difficulties and challenges we face.

To end with a statement by Richards: "Never allow your mind to wander untamed like a wild animal. Tame your mind with consistent focus on your goals and desires." 🐾


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PERSONAL
DEVELOPMENT

Self help

The task ahead

Gemma Rose put the case for the right to not devote ourselves entirely to our jobs



“We have been trained too long to strive and not to enjoy,” wrote John Maynard Keynes in his essay *Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren*. Keynes believed that by the year 2030 all our economic problems would be solved, that automation would free up our time and we’d be working a 15-hour work week. Our worries would be focused on what to do with this leisure time. So adamant was the belief – shared by other economists, intellectuals and trade union leaders – that the work day would be substantively shortened, that *Life* magazine in 1964 dedicated a two part series to it with *The Emptiness of Too Much Leisure* and *The Task Ahead: How to Take Life Easy*.

Except that hasn’t really happened. We are working longer hours, with more interruptions and demands on our time. Organisations expect our total devotion, just as cults do, and if you don’t submit, you get punished. Netflix expects ‘A’ players in their team: if you are adequate, that’s enough to get you fired. If you want flexible hours, you may suffer stigmatization, as illustrated in a study by Professors Joan Williams and Mary Blair-Loy at Stanford University, published in 2012. If you ask to reduce your workload, you get penalized for it, as a recent study by Erin Reid at Boston University highlighted.

We live in a society which perpetuates the ‘ideal worker’ myth, where not only are we expected

to work harder, but also be smarter. The strivers are rewarded whereas those that believe there is more to life than being a slave to your desk are perceived as idlers. Yet, we also live in a society where one part of the population is over-worked and another can't even get a job.

There is an increasing amount of evidence to show that working too much is not good for us, whether you are in a 'bullshit job' (a term that has been academically coined) or in a job you love. Authors from the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health looked at a range of studies that suggested that employees who work long hours have a 40% increased risk in coronary heart disease. Too much work also kills productivity and is unhealthy for the environment. *The Washington Post* reported that even though

American productivity seems enormous, once it becomes proportional to productivity per hours worked, the US ranks much lower, even below countries that have a shorter work day. Concerning sustainability, the UK think tank the New Economics Foundation found in their book *Time on Our Side: Why we need a shorter working week* that having a growing economy cannot be reconciled with environmental sustainability.

And we're not happy.

Of course, we seem to strike a better chord concerning work-life balance here in Belgium than in the US or the UK, but that's not to say that it's an uncommon phenomenon or that it's not on the rise.

A past performance review inspired this article. I was doing a good job, I worked on average 40 hours a week but I had requested to reduce my workload (not my working hours). To my



surprise, my position was in jeopardy partly because I was not considered ambitious enough. It made me ask the question: what is the purpose of work? If we view work from a purely economic standpoint, work is meant to serve the needs of society, and once that is done we can take a break. But what has happened is a burgeoning of jobs which really don't serve society, and in fact serve no one. As Tim Wu from the *New Yorker* writes in 'You Really Don't Need to Work So Much': "But in white-collar jobs, the amount of work can expand indefinitely through the generation of false necessities – that is, reasons for driving people as hard as possible that have nothing to do with real social or economic needs." Perhaps for the time being, one of the ways to work less is to 'fudgel', that is to pretend to

work when you're not really working. But this seems dishonest.

Instead, I would rather support the movement for a shorter working week, such as at the British magazine, *The Idler's* essay *Bring on the four-day working*

week.

"We work to have leisure, on which happiness depends," said Aristotle, leisure being the pursuit of arts, reading, playing sport, philosophy, or perhaps the simple merriment of idleness.

Back in 1930, John Maynard Keynes had a vision of the life we would be living in one hundred years' time: "We shall honour those who can teach us how to pluck the hour of the day virtuously and well, the delightful people who are capable of taking direct employment in things, the lilies of the field who toil not, neither do they spin."

How I wish he was right. ●



My time at BSB was great preparation for life and study at Harvard. I really enjoyed the challenging IB Diploma curriculum alongside wider opportunities, including musical performance, public service and debating, all underpinned with a global perspective."

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Food as fuel

Dietician **Sophie Bruno** looks at food choices before, during and after workouts

That time of year is upon us yet again. Christmas is traditionally a time of over-indulgence; with the calories stacking up over the festive period, exercising to shed some of those extra kilos you may have gained has never been so appealing. Why not jump-start those New Year's resolutions and embrace a healthy you now.



Perhaps you have set yourself some different types of goals over the holiday season. A charity run for fun? Training for your first half marathon? Or maybe you are simply aiming at improving your stamina and performance. No matter what your goal is nutrition plays a pivotal role in supporting the training and competitive demands of sport. Good food choices ensure that you have adequate energy to drive performance and aid recovery.

There are no strict rules or dietary plan that you must adhere to. However, there are some nutritional strategies and tips that may optimize performance.

Before: Fuel up

Carbohydrates are vital for performance during sport; muscles rely on carbohydrate as their main source of fuel. Carbohydrate is stored in muscles as glycogen. As the body's stores of glycogen are limited, topping up the stores each day is key. The amount you require depends on your training programme and dietary goals. In general, the more intense the

training programme the higher the amount of carbohydrates your diet should contain. The consequences of carbohydrate poor diets encompass energy deficits during exercise, early fatigue, loss of concentration and delayed recovery. For your pre-workout meal, combining carbohydrate with protein and fat will provide sustained energy and maximum performance during a training session.

Timing of a pre-workout meal

The timing of your food before a workout can make a big difference to how you feel and will have an impact on your performance. For most workouts, you should aim to eat 2 – 4 hours before exercising. If you have no time for a meal then have a smaller, healthy snack up to 30 minutes before training.

After: Refuel your tank

The most effective refuelling to kick-start recovery occurs within 0-30 minutes immediately after exercise; for a rapid recovery, both carbohydrate and protein should feature in

your post-exercise snack or meal. The combination of both nutrients promotes faster muscle repair and greater muscle growth, replenishes glycogen stores and reduces post-exercise muscle soreness. If you only focus on high protein intake without an adequate supply of carbohydrate, the protein will be utilized for energy purposes instead of being used to build muscle. Aim to consume 1g carbohydrate per kg body weight following the exercise.

Protein for power

Furthermore, the post-workout meal or snack should also comprise protein. Protein is required for building and repairing muscle and plays an important role in how the body responds to exercise. One of the biggest myths is that consuming large amounts of protein equates to large biceps. Muscle is gained through a combination of resistance training and a diet that contains adequate energy and carbohydrate.

“ CARBOHYDRATE WITH PROTEIN AND FAT WILL PROVIDE SUSTAINED ENERGY ”

The ideal post-exercise protein dose to trigger maximum muscle protein synthesis (MPS) is 15 – 25g (or about 0.25g per kilogram of body weight). Exceeding this amount will not increase MPS for most people. Eating less may produce smaller gains. Leucine, a branched chain amino acid and component of protein, is the key trigger that stimulates MPS as well as promoting muscle recovery after exercise. Milk, whey, casein, egg, meat, poultry and fish are rich sources.

500ml milk with a banana is an example of a healthy option that delivers carbohydrate and protein in amounts that optimize recovery as well as providing other nutritional needs. Milk will provide the protein needed to maximize muscle adaptation after exercise. It also contains the optimal amount of leucine that promotes muscle building after exercise. You can also obtain 20g protein from three eggs or 250g Greek yoghurt or 25g whey powder or ricotta, honey and banana on toast.

As muscle recovery continues for several hours – perhaps up to 24 hours – you should continue consuming protein at regular intervals throughout the day; aim for 15 – 25g of protein at each meal.

Hydration

Maintaining adequate hydration is essential for physical and mental performance. It is paramount to start each exercise session well hydrated, to take on board appropriate fluids during the workout and restore hydration levels as soon as possible afterwards in order to optimize the recovery process.

For low-intensity exercise lasting for a short duration, water is a good choice for rehydration. Water is affordable and convenient for most recreational exercisers. Sports drinks containing electrolytes are unnecessary unless you are

training for over an hour. For moderate to high intensity and endurance sports lasting longer than an hour a drink which contains carbohydrate and electrolytes, such as milk or a

commercial isotonic sports drink, is generally more effective than water in enhancing performance. These drinks contain carbohydrate to help delay fatigue by delivering glucose to the muscles and electrolytes to replace sodium lost in sweat. It is important to note that some studies show that milk rehydrates you more effectively than isotonic sports drinks.

Lastly, the sports world is overflowing with bars, pills, powders and specialized foods that all pledge fitness or performance enhancements. They are particularly popular in the athletic as well as recreational sporting domain. Recreational exercisers do not normally require supplements to complement their diet.

Focusing on achieving a healthy, balanced diet with adequate hydration will supply the necessary nutrients and energy for sport and achieving fitness goals. **1**

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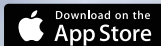


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PERSONAL
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Technology

Tesla: Electric but not static

Colin Moors takes a look at the
electric motor company's Model S

Photo © Steve Jurvetson



Photo © Jeff Cooper



It may surprise you to learn that the electric vehicle is almost 200 years old – although the early iterations are a far cry from the environmentally friendly and ubiquitous hybrids and eco hire vehicles we see around every day. The 1990s saw a lot of excitement and huge R&D budgets going into the production of electric vehicles, only to be blown away by the next wind due to a combination of societal and fiscal factors, as the excellent documentary *Who Killed the Electric Car?* attests to. After several false starts and due to a lot more people wanting to do their bit for the environment, the electric vehicle is back with a bang – and the biggest bang of them all is being made by Tesla.

As far as the luxury motoring business goes, you can't get more cutting edge than Tesla. They make being a nerd useful and cool, not an easy job to pull off. The particular nerd that manages the whole operation is Elon Musk. A South-African-born entrepreneur, Musk started his path to success with a software company called Zip2, providing city guides to the media. When the company was sold, he bought into a company that later became PayPal. His share of PayPal was over 10% when it was bought by eBay, giving him plenty of cash to play with. So much cash, he bought into an up-and-coming car company in 2004 with the express intentions of creating an electric luxury sports car first, then to move on to mass production of cars for regular people, saloons, sedans and the like. The best laid plans of mice and men, as the saying goes – Musk and his team had spent hundreds of millions and delivered fewer than 200 cars by 2009 and had to be bailed

“ THERE ARE NO
BUTTONS, DIALS OR
SWITCHES ”



out by the Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing Loan system set up by the US government, an injection of some \$465 million. They managed to pay the loan back in full, including interest (something still not achieved by Ford or General Motors) and pushed out 33,000 vehicles in 2014.

The Tesla is associated with luxury and style but as promised, the main thrust of the company is now going to be the delivery of vehicles 'for the rest of us'.

The latest thing you can buy, if you have around €160,000 burning a hole in your wallet is the Tesla Model S. It's a big chunk of cash but this is the full-spec option and they do squeeze a lot of features in for the money. Anyone who loves cars will have something good to say about a Tesla but my favourite option is on the top-of-the-range Model S, the P85D. There's a button on the dashboard that takes the acceleration speed of this 2-tonne behemoth from 0-60 mph (96 kph) in a comparatively sluggish 3.1 seconds to a frankly scary 2.8 seconds. The modes are labelled accordingly: 'sport' and 'ludicrous'. I kid you not.

With all this power at your fingertips you might be wondering if you could take it to the shops without having to recharge it. The answer is yes. In fact, you could drive the basic 70 kWh battery model from Brussels to Knokke, run around and do a bit of shopping, then drive home. Technically, you could drive from the south of France to the very top of Sweden for free on the Tesla Supercharger network. Admittedly, if you really wanted to do this, it would take some careful planning and a lot of

hoping that you wouldn't get stuck in traffic (good luck with that, fellow Belgians). Of course, you can charge your car anywhere there's a charging point and many garages these days have a quick charge option to keep you rolling. Still, southern to northern Europe for free would soon start recouping the initial investment.

The other stuff that'll keep you going back for one more go in a Tesla is the dash. You've got your minimalist LCD displays in the BMW and Mercedes, yes but the Tesla S has a 17-inch touchscreen dash. There are no buttons, dials or switches, it's all done via the screen. Media playback is hard to miss on such a huge screen – no more scrabbling around and stabbing wildly at tiny software buttons, it's all there in front of you. Climate control, locks and lighting are all similarly easy to get to. GPS? Of course – Google maps overlaid with street and satellite data. What else? Obviously, there's a speedometer and the usual display in front of the steering wheel for the ruggedly traditional.

You might think that all this technology would make you weary – well, if it does, you could always let the car drive you around. The Autopilot (that's really what it's called) will steer within a lane for you, so with traffic-aware cruise control on you could conceivably read a book – just don't tell anyone I suggested that. It'll change lanes for you as you use the indicator, too, in case you're really tired. When you're done being driven around, it'll look out for a parking space for you, then park in it for you as well.

All in all, I'd say it was money well spent. ❶



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Ozaam: Making the property market work for you

Two entrepreneur friends went on holiday... and developed an app

There are moments in our lives that are certain to cause stress. Buying, selling or renting a house is definitely among them. Anything that helps us get through it must be welcomed with open arms. And that is exactly what Ozaam have come up with in the form of an app which they say will make sure that you don't miss out on your dream home.

Ozaam is the first 100% new generation mobile real estate platform. With the application, access to property information is quicker and more efficient. Simply enter the code on the estate agency's panel and in seconds you will have access to all the information on property for sale or rent (photo, price, size, description). With one click you can fix an appointment with an agency or consult all their similar properties and those of others.

Ozaam has developed a new optimized search system for mobile phones. It is based on the technique of 'swiping'. Swipe to the left if the property doesn't interest you, or to the right to add the property to your 'likes' list, which you can check whenever you want to.

So who came up with this ingenious idea? It was invented by two young Belgian entrepreneurs, Julien Meyers and Romain David. And the notion had an interesting beginning.

"One Saturday morning, my wife gets out of the car to do a bit of shopping," said Romain. "Right in front of me I see a fantastic house for sale. I call the number on the estate agent sign but no one picks up, so I decide to visit the estate agent's website on my smartphone. Five minutes later, my wife comes back and I still haven't been able to find out anything about the



property. I said to myself that, with the technology we have now, it's incredible not to be able to find information about a property instantaneously. The next day, I went on holiday with my childhood friend, Julien. We came up with the initial outline of the Ozaam business plan on the plane and thought about how we could create something that would work for the buyer and the agent."

Julien said: "Above all, it is a mobile app that gives anyone who comes across a For Sale sign instant access to information and photographs relating to the property. We give the agent the visitor's contact details, so they can get back in touch with them to schedule a viewing."

Romain adds: "One last benefit has emerged since the launch: lots of property owners who had not wanted a board on the front of their house have now agreed to one. They want to make sure they're on Ozaam. The agents don't get turned down as often and have more For Sale signs going up!"

Clearly a plan that is coming together!

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EU priorities

Gerry Callaghan looks at the major issues ahead in 2016

Photo © Za'atri camp for Syrian refugees in Jordan



As 2015 draws solemnly to a close, we pick ourselves up and carry on. The European Union has endured economic instability, a refugee disaster and devastating attacks on its people. But what the tragic events in Paris highlighted is that the people of Europe stand together. If even solely as an act of defiance the EU must and will push ahead. Events might modify the content of the agenda but we, ultimately, must dictate the direction we take.

Foreign Policy

The EU will focus efforts on three key priority areas: tackling terrorism and preventing radicalization, disrupting organized crime and fighter cybercrime.

The situation in Syria will be paramount on the EU agenda. Over the course of 2016 we will become more aware of the result of increasing airstrikes against ISIS targets in the troubled

North African nation. The formulation of a more diplomatic policy should be top of the agenda. It is possible that more of the same, bombing and ground troops, in our foreign policy could only serve to escalate the situation. It will not solve it.

EU High Representative Federica Mogherini stated that the EU's ultimate goal would be solving the crisis in Syria. She said: "A political solution is the only possible way to defeat Daesh (ISIS) in Syria and Iraq."

The process started in Vienna at the end of 2015 and the international community is working to make progress in three areas in the new year: starting a political process, working on a ceasefire and providing humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people.

She said the only way to make progress was to bring all sides together.

Migration Policy

The EU will focus migration policy on four different pillars. The first will aim at reducing the incentives for irregular migration by addressing the root causes and dismantling smuggling networks. Secondly, better management of the EU's external border, in particular through solidarity towards Member States that are located at the EU's outer borders. It will look at strengthening the common asylum policy based on solidarity towards those needing international protection. And lastly, the bloc will look at developing a new policy on legal migration. In view of the future demographic challenges the new policy needs to focus on attracting the workers that our economy needs.

The signing of the EU-Turkey agreement at the beginning of December should reduce the heavy flow of migrants into the EU. Europe's leaders are desperate to slow the flow of refugees, and at first glance Turkey appears to be the clear winner in a deal agreed at a summit in Brussels.

The EU will pay an initial sum of €3bn towards the cost of Syrian refugees residing in Turkey, there will be renewed momentum in EU accession talks and for 75 million Turkish citizens there is also the apparently real possibility of visa-free travel to Schengen countries by 2016. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan would relish achieving the long-sought goal of visa-free travel for all.

However, even if the European Commission recommends visa liberalization next year, there is a strong possibility member states will object. France, by then in the midst of a presidential election cycle with the far-right National Front growing in popularity, might well be to the fore of countries blocking the deal.

TTIP

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is a deal to cut tariffs and regulatory barriers to trade between the US and EU countries, making it easier for companies on both sides of the Atlantic to access each other's markets.

**“ WE,
ULTIMATELY,
MUST DICTATE
THE DIRECTION
WE TAKE ”**

Overshadowed in 2015, the trade agreement will come more into focus in 2016 as a deal looms ever closer. Met with increasing opposition, the controversial deal aims to bring closer ties between the two trading blocs.

TTIP talks started in July 2013. A second round of negotiations was held in November and a third round in December 2013. The stakes are huge for both partners, as EU-US trade accounts for up to €2bn per day, making it the biggest trade relationship in the world. Industries it would affect include pharmaceuticals, cars, energy, finance, chemicals, clothing and food and drink.

However, campaigners believe the inclusion of the investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) clause, designed to protect the overseas assets of investors, could open public services for privatization, lower standards and challenge local government authority. Fears focus on the fact that companies can sue governments using ISDS in non-transparent, private tribunals for perceived devaluing of their assets. **1**

Crickhowell goes offshore

Dave Deruytter looks at the consequences of an entire Welsh town going offshore to avoid tax just like Google and Starbucks

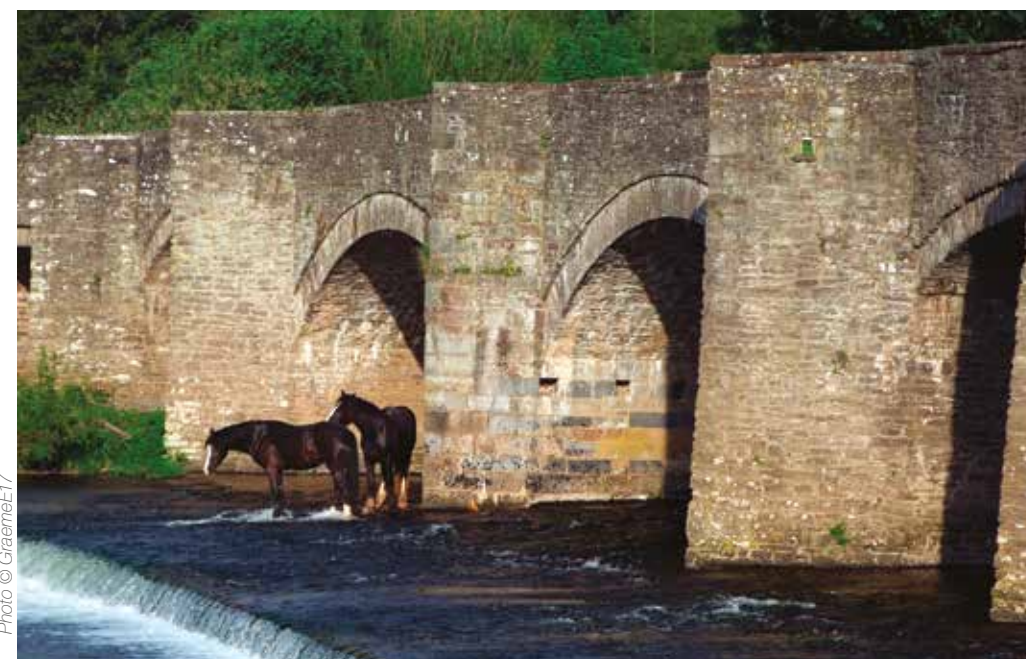


Photo © GraemeE17

‘Enough is enough’ the small business owners in the Welsh town of Crickhowell must have thought when learning yet again in the press about the near zero percent in taxes that large international groups pay on their revenues.

As a reaction they have decided to apply similar tax avoidance schemes to their own revenue. In doing so the entrepreneurs hope that the authorities will pay due attention to the perceived unfairness of the situation before other towns follow suit and bring the finances of their country into great difficulty.

For years multinationals have been criticized for their practice of international tax optimization. Though legal in most cases, those tax schemes are judged as too aggressive or unethical by the ever better-informed general public. People want their social security, roads, trains and schools to stay affordable. Allowing multinational companies to structure their taxes via a Channel island, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Luxembourg or another tax friendly country depletes the coffers of the tax authorities of the much-needed money to keep on supporting those social benefits and the rest



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VOS DECORATIONS SUR MESURE
UW DECORATIES OP MAAT

of the country's infrastructure.

Sometimes this unfair competition has a direct effect. If you are a coffee-shop owner paying your taxes locally, you are not amused by what a multinational company like Starbucks can do on their pricing by lowering their tax bill.

It is all very well that the OECD has presented its recommendations on BEPS (Base Erosion Profit Shifting) practices. First they need to be implemented, then they still need to result in real increases of the amount or percentage of taxes multinational companies actually pay. Many fear that new international loopholes will be found sooner rather than later.

In that respect the revolt of the Welsh town is commendable. Hopefully they succeed in one way or another to get real attention and support. No one wants their social security system to go bankrupt or schools to become so expensive that only the rich can pay for decent education.

At the same time, this action should draw attention to a serious mismatch in the situation of the financial markets today. On the one hand, investors receive near zero interest income on very long term government bonds, and on the other hand investors in the stock markets keep on looking for 10% or more return on equity. If interest rates stay low for the foreseeable future, this is not sustainable. It should lead to yields on equity to also become lower.

The protest of this Welsh town also supports the popular disintermediation drive of the likes of Uber or Airbnb. Although those two do not target large multinational companies, they allow for the general public to earn extra revenues. And the likes of online payment systems, peer to peer lending and crowd funding ventures are targeting the franchise of large multinational banks, whilst the latter still seem to be paying rather high amounts and percentages of taxes on their business.

It may be time for a coffee disintermediation company to step up and create an app that delivers coffee to you from a nearby house at a lower price than the multinational groups do in

their shops. It is only a question of time before such a thing will happen. The same could also be done with pizzas or other food. We ain't seen nothing yet on what the digital revolution can bring to this table. Multinational companies be warned.

Finally, isn't all this a strong call for a new rating agency to be created, one that looks at the sustainability of companies including tax?

Today, we essentially have risk rating companies like Moody's and Standard & Poors looking at the creditworthiness of a company. They essentially only judge the Balance sheet and Profit & Loss account of a company and its evolution. On the stock market you have stock ratings by analysts who evaluate the potential of a company as far as its future stock price potential is concerned. Also, there the financials are important, yet the strategy and the potential to innovate and grow are measured too. All these ratings are not enough the public seems say. They are calling for a real sustainability index, and particularly one that includes a measurement of the taxes a company pays, its contribution to society, also locally. It looks pretty clear that if such a rating existed and would be widely used and visible, consumers will reconsider their purchase of goods or services from a poorly-rated company and move to its better-rated competitors.

A widely-used sustainability rating would at the same time give the 'Buy local' initiatives more reasons to be cheerful. Of course, the corporate tax percentage alone is not everything – the CSR initiatives of a company, the number of people it employs, its ecological footprint should all be integrated into the equation.

If the Welsh tax revolt can grow and keep momentum, it might just become the trigger needed for a 'fairer' international tax system for multinational companies. Although some do not find anything 'fair' about taxes, even they like an orderly society with a great social and physical infrastructure. If you would leave all that to capitalism the risk is high that it will not work, at least not for all or for most of us. ❶



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Bulgari Magsonic Sonnerie Tourbillon. When Bulgari incorporated the Gerald Genta brand under its own name, one of the more complicated models was this vividly designed, ultra-complicated timepiece that combined a tourbillon-style regulation system with an array of chiming functions. The movement contains more than 900 hand-finished parts and the case is partially produced from the special 'magsonic' alloy meant to enhance the music sounds. **€590,000.**



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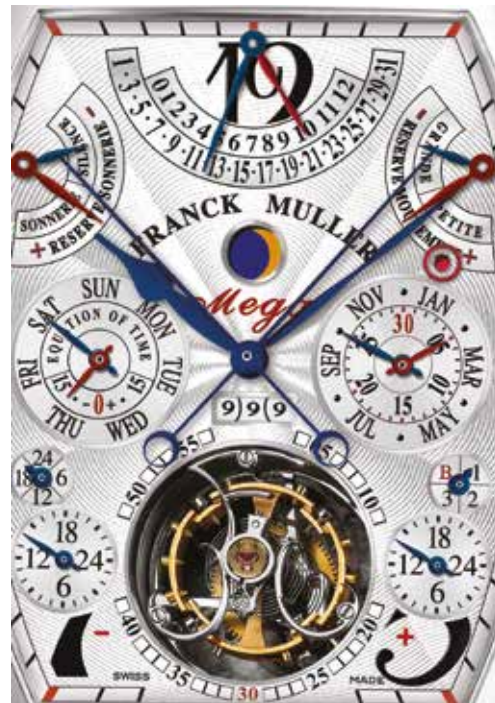
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Maitres du Temps Chapter One Round Transparence. At the height of the 2000s watch boom the new watch maker Maitres du Temps launched its Chapter One timepiece in 2008. Classic yet incredibly complex, the Chapter One helped frame an era of imaginative design that nevertheless honoured the past. **€510,000.**



Christophe Claret DualTow Night Eagle
Christophe Claret DualTow Night Eagle. Limited to 68 pieces, the Christophe Claret DualTow Night Eagle is a modified version of the earlier DualTow concept that typifies the uniquely complex and modern style of watchmaker Christophe Claret. Time is told on two moving belts, while the movement also offers a chronograph with a special planetary gear system. **€560,000.**

Franck Muller Aeternitas Mega 4
Franck Muller Aeternitas Mega 4. At the time of its production the Aeternitas Mega 4 watch by Franck Muller was the most complicated timepiece in the world with more than 36 distinct complications. The incredibly complex movement contains almost 1,500 individual parts which litter the dial with hands and dials to indicate all the information. **€2,300,000.**



**“ THE SHABAKA
COMBINES ART
DECO LINES WITH A
NEO-EGYPTIAN
THEME AS WELL AS
A PERPETUAL
CALENDAR
MOVEMENT ”**

George Daniel Co-Axial Chronograph
George Daniel Co-Axial Chronograph. Considered to be the most important watchmaker of the 20th century, English George Daniels only produce a few dozen timepieces across the span of his entire life. Among his more notable achievements was the invention of the Co-Axial Escapement, a system he later sold to the Swiss watchmaker Omega. The Daniel's one-of-a-kind Co-Axial Chronograph wrist watch sold for around **€585,000** at auction in 2012.



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LIFESTYLE

Luxury Watch

MB&F HM4 Final Edition

MB&F HM4 Final Edition. Release as a limited edition of just 8 pieces, the MB&F Horological Machine Number 4 Final Edition completes the brand's total of 100 HM4 watches that were produced starting in 2010. In black titanium, the aviation inspired watch offers an exotic case shape with one horizontal window to indicate the time, and one window to act as power reserve for the mechanical movement.

€218,000.



Audemars Piguet Royal Oak Grande Complication

Audemars Piguet Royal Oak Grand Complication. Gerald Genta's enduring Royal Oak design for Audemars Piguet has remained an icon of sports luxury since the early 1970s. Its most complicated and exclusive version to date is the Grande Complication, which contains a masterful in-house made movement that combines the time, chronograph, perpetual calendar and minute repeater.

€700,000.



Jean Dunand Shabaka

Jean Dunand Shabaka. The Jean Dunand watch company wasn't around for long. He was inspired by a 20th century Swiss art deco artist with movements produced by the talented watch designer Christophe Claret. Perhaps their most iconic model, the Shabaka combines art deco lines with a neo-Egyptian theme as well as a perpetual calendar movement that partially indicates information on rolling cylinders.

€470,000.



Patek Philippe 5004T

Last but not least the Patek Philippe 5004T. Produced as a one-of-a-kind model in 2013 for an auction, the Patek Philippe 5004T is the only titanium version of the no longer produced reference 5004 watch collection. In a surprise move, Patek Philippe created a sportier look for the 5004 dress watch as a way to say farewell to the otherwise conservative collection. The 5004T sold at auction in 2013 for the princely sum of **€3,760,000.**





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Jewellery: Fiona Paxton @ Cachemire Coton Soie



Shirts & trousers C&C

Jackets: Stella Mc Cartney @ Karen Muir

Basket: Golden Goose @ Bellerose

Bowties: Jupes @ Cachemire Coton Soie



Dress Parosh

@ Cachemire Coton Soie



Suit: Hermès
Shirt & bowtie: Tom Ford



Total look:
Diane Von Furstenberg



Hermès perfumes:
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Les jardins de Monsieur Li
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Terre d'Hermès



Dress Parosh @ Cachemire Coton Soie



Dress:
Filles à Papa @ Icon
Ring: Bigli Gianfranco



Dress: & Other stories
Jewellery: Sveva @ Cachemire Coton Soie
Coat: Diesel
Shoes: Zalando Pacomena



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Agent provocateur
First Van Cleef & Arpels
Extraordinary Oscar de la Renta
Jewel Bugs: Olivia Hainaut



Cape Eva Velasquez
Tights Chantal Thomas
Shoes E(x)it
Clock Frederique Constant



Shirt: C&C
Veil: Olivia Hainaut



Suit: Diane Von Furstenberg
Shirt: Stella Jean @ Cachemire Coton Soie
Bowtie: Tom Ford

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LIFESTYLE

Beauty

A little frost

Our beauty expert **Delphine Stefens** offers some festive sparkle

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LIFESTYLE

Shopping

Shopping



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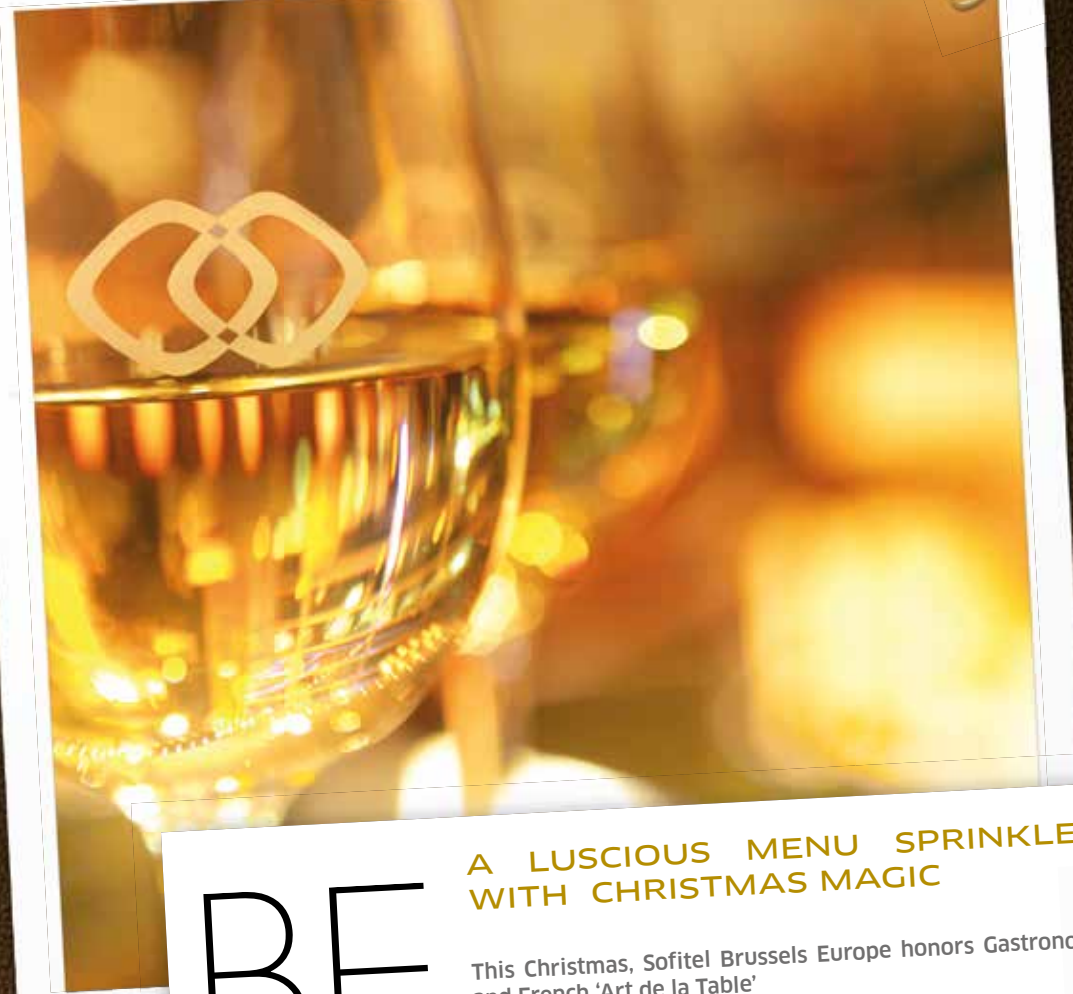
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The European Motor Show 2015

Our motoring correspondent **Bob Monard** looks forward to the European Motor Show and in particular the new kids on the block

Although this edition is called (take a deep breath!) "Auto/Moto 94th European Motor Show Brussels", the Auto Show has always been held at Heysel! After Frankfurt and Paris and before Geneva, it gathers cars, motorcycles, tuning, bodywork, accessories, media, entertainment, banking and insurance in 100,000 m2 in the Heysel Halls overlooking the Atomium. It runs from 14-24 January, 2016. Though each of the 700,000 visitors have their own reason for coming (to buy, curiosity or just for a walk), it nevertheless remains true that the newcomers capture the attention of most people.

In Hall 1 you will be able to admire a collection, as outstanding as it is prestigious, of exceptional dream vehicles to delight young and old. In the centre of the Hall, the Terrace of the Motor Show with its olive trees and pool will welcome you for an enjoyable moment of relaxation. Hall 2 will host an exclusive exhibition of youngtimers; come admire the vehicles that left their mark on the 70s, 80s and 90s. In the centre of the Hall, you'll feel like a kid again; a roller rink and numerous musical events await you!

Then come discover Hall 12 and its Tech Track! Imagine a

futuristic ambiance, a hall decorated entirely in black, light shows, etc. And in the centre a test track and the very latest automobile and motorcycle technologies will be unveiled. Now you know everything. Or almost. I can tell you the fair is open from 10h00 to 19h00 on weekdays, there's a gala evening on 12 January and night openings are scheduled for 15, 18 and 22 January. *Together* hopes you have a great time at the show and wishes you happy motoring in 2016.

A for Alfa Romeo

The Fiat Group's sports brand presents its Giulia which puts the 159 out to grass. A large family sedan with rear-wheel drive, it boasts petrol engines from 180 to 330 hp and diesel versions from 135 to 210 hp. The jewel in the crown is the Quadrifoglio whose 6-cylinder turbo releases a whopping 510 nags.



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Jean Callens

Tombé dans la marmite quand il était petit, Jean Callens a créé, en 2004, avec son frère Olivier, le Callens Café, le dernier opus d'une partition familiale presque centenaire.

Tradition et classicisme s'harmonisent avec cette étincelle d'originalité inhérente à l'équilibre de la fratrie qui les unit et les guide. Cela se ressent dans les ambiances habilement composées d'un décorum aux multiples facettes. De la «Brasserie», dans la plus pure tradition, à la salle «Premium» plus feutrée, en passant par le bar event de «L'Appartement», tout invite aux réjouissances et à la découverte. Côté fourneaux, Jean Callens orchestre avec raffinement une cuisine cosmopolite qui fait la part belle à notre terroir pimenté, avec l'art et la manière, par des saveurs bigarrées... une incitation au voyage...

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A for Audi

The new A4 inevitably makes one think of the previous one. More aerodynamic, lighter, larger, with more driving aids, it also offers an estate model called Avant with 505 dm3 loadable volume. Eurosuper engines 150-252 hp and TDI 150-272 hp.

I for Infiniti

The premium compact Q30 seduces by its comfort and its ability to go anywhere! Versatile, dynamic and intuitive, Q30 participates in the renewal of the Infiniti range in its Premium segments. 109 to 170 hp and all-wheel drive.





B for Bentley

Look no further: the brand new Bentley Bentayga is the fastest SUV! 5 metres long, 2,350 kg, 12-cylinder biturbo with 608 hp, 8-speed automatic transmission, all-wheel drive, wood, leather, chrome, carpet, heating-ventilation-massage seats... this piece of luxury can reach to 300 km/h!

B for BMW

Discover the X1 newly refurbished and now converted to front-wheel drive like the 2-series Active Tourer. And it is now 3 cylinders. But the star is obviously the new 7 Series. 5.10 metres or 5.24 metres long, with self-parking and hybrid petrol, it offers 326-450 hp in gasoline and 211-320 hp in diesel. In total, two European and six Belgian premieres from the Bavarians.



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J for Jaguar

Jaguar has a lot of interesting news. Following the XE sedan available in petrol (200, 241 and 340 hp) and diesel (163 and 180 hp) which all now have all-wheel drive, a new generation multimedia system and Apple Watch connectivity, the XF is hitting the road. Lighter by 200 kg, she looks more than ever like business class status, with luxury, comfort and serenity both in gasoline (240-380 hp) and

diesel (163-300 hp). But the newcomer for spring 2016 will be the F-Pace. A stylish SUV of 4.73 m equipped with V6 petrol and diesel of 380 and 300 hp.

J for JEEP

The urban SUV Renegade appeared here fifteen months ago and has made many people very happy, especially because of its look and interior roominess. A stylish 4x4 (115-170 hp) offered in multiple variations.

C for Citroen

The Cactus M is the Mehari of 2015! A concept car that will appeal to nostalgic Citroen fans since it comes with convertible as standard!



L for Land Rover

The benchmark in four-wheel drive has been and remains without any dispute Land Rover. At its booth the public will discover the Range Rover Autobiography SV, ever more luxurious and powerful, with its 5-litre V8 offers 550 hp. As for the new Range Rover Evoque Convertible, this is the first compact SUV luxury convertible in the world: its design ensures a

characteristic profile, roof open or closed. Its 4-cylinder gasoline and diesel are matched to an automatic 9-speed gearbox. Its lightweight cloth top folds in just 18 seconds. With a trunk of 251 litres and a ski hatch, it hosts four adults very comfortably and has the latest generation infotainment system with 10.2-inch touch screen.

L for LEXUS

The RC F has a new 5-litre 477 hp engine and 530 N.m of torque: the most powerful Lexus V8. RC F replaces the IS F and guarantees a hair-raising performance. Ultimate driving pleasure...

As for the RX, the fourth generation model is 4.89 meters long and inspired by the curves of the NX. It comes with 300 hp and a 3.5-litre Eurosuper and an electric engine. That's what we call Hybrid!

For the first time in Belgium, we also welcome the new GS F, RC 200t and 300h and the GS with 300 hp and 450 hp.



LIFESTYLE

Motoring

M for Maserati

Maserati shows off its Quattroporte, Ghibli, GranTurismo and GranCabrio. No place for little engines since the power of these jewels from Modena fluctuates between 275 and 530 hp. Mechanically beautiful and aesthetically sublime: the sign of the Trident.



M for Mercedes

All set for the Stuttgart star! Indeed, there are no fewer than three new developments that now adorn the catalogue – besides the class A, with its redesigned bow, A160 declination and 102 hp as its entry ticket, the GLC class will make you forget the GLK. Interior space and trunk volume have increased and there are three engine styles: a 211 hp petrol and two diesel 170 and 204 hp. Last but not least, the C class Coupé, with a radically different silhouette from its previous incarnation: yippee! A particular pleasure is when the accelerator

awakens the 156, 184 and 211 horsepower fuel Eurosuper, with 170 and 204 hp, for those who prefer diesel. For purists, the signature AMG 510 hp delivers.

The Class S Convertible carries a high level of elegance, not least with the 455 hp of the S500 running alongside the 585 hp of the AMG 63. And, announced but not confirmed when Together went to press: the new E-Class Saloon, an SLC successor to the SLK, with the GLS taking over the GL and SL.



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LIFESTYLE

Motoring



M for MAZDA

Two Belgian premieres on this Japanese stand. The new MX-5 is pure fun! This very sexy cabrio with 131 and 160 hp simply breathes... a real treat that reconciles you with the joy of driving.

M for Mini

Now with four doors and two doors to the trunk, the capacity of which ranges between 360 and 1250 litres, the Clubman is 4.253 metres long, 1.8m wide and its wheelbase reaches 2.670m, with electric brakes and automatic 8-speed Steptronic. Under the hood, there are three 102-192 hp engines and three diesel at 116-190 hp. With her extended family, she keeps her DNA intact: a unique style that has not changed one iota. Wow!

M for Mitsubishi

A successful exterior design with outstanding engine flexibility for the new Outlander. Under the hood, a gasoline and a diesel 150 hp and a hybrid at 203 hp or a mere 42 grammes of CO2 per kilometre.





P for Peugeot

Around for two years, the 308 GT offered 205 hp. So, add 65 more horses and here the 308 GTi 270 comes with a superb chassis, dream steering, suspension that is as athletic as it is relaxing, with very sound brakes – the lioness combines the superlatives with wise insurance and much determination. Yes, there are still ways to have fun aboard a safe and comfortable compact car. The 308 GTi? A genuine treat!

P for Porsche

In Stuttgart, the future 911 is the focus of attention. Bye-bye to the famous flat 6 atmo 3.4 and 3.8 litres, which are eclipsed in favour of a new 6-cylinder 3-litre turbo, with 370 horsepower for the Carrera and 50 hp more in the trunk of the Carrera S, which also offers AWD. Also worthy of mention are the new Porsche 911 Carrera 4 and 911 Targa 4, which provide increased performance with refined sobriety.



R for Renault

After the Espace and Kadjar, there are two new irons in the fire: Talisman and Mégane.

The successor to the Laguna, with its impressive 4.85 metres length and 1.87m width, the Talisman also sports an astounding grille. With a really special and decidedly hi-tech interior, it doubles as an estate that gives pride to pace rather than its load volume of 572 dm³. Under the hood, there's a two 4-cylinder 1600 cm³ turbo, a TCE 150 petrol and 200 hp, and diesels of 110, 130 and 160 hp. With a more dynamic silhouette, the 4th Mégane stands on the platform of its Pulsar cousin. More important, it is also well endowed with equipment and spacious in the rear trunk. The GT version boasts to 4-wheel steering and a 205 hp RS.

S for Smart

The Smart fortwo Cabrio will be the first released in Belgian with sliding roof and removable fabric roof pillars. Note also the tailor-made Smart fortwo, the Smart fortwo electric drive and a national Belgian edition of the Smart fortwo and forfour black.



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LIFESTYLE

Motoring

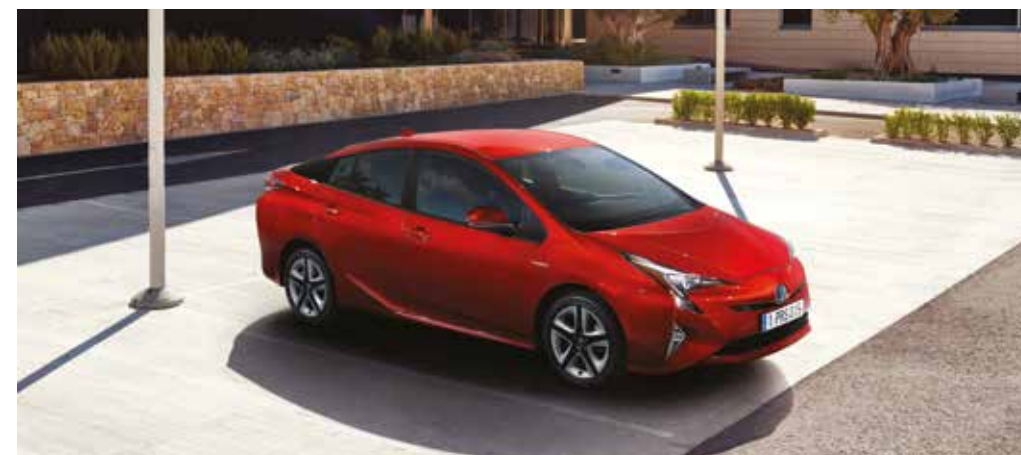
R for Rolls Royce

The new convertible Rolls Royce, the Dawn is already imposing itself as a classic. Based on the overall aesthetics of the Wraith, it reaches 5.29 metres with four seats. The soft top disappears in 20 seconds – associated with an 8-speed automatic gearbox, the V12 Bi-turbo 6.6-litre 570 horsepower releases its power to great effect. Despite its 2.6 tonnes, the very, very fast cabrio can reach 250 km/h and goes from 0 to 100 km/h in 4.9 seconds.



T for Toyota

A world first: a Belgian premiere! After the Auris and Avensis, the new Prius 4 readily identifiable Mirai has an exclusive trendy look, with RAV-4, which contains the DNA of Toyota's stylistic range. The Mirai runs on hydrogen and boasts 154 hp and 550km driving range, while being 100% road clean. And that's not all – the Yaris Two-Tone is also set to make its first appearance in Belgium.





V for Volkswagen

Stealing all the DNA of the Golf 7, the updated Tiguan now offers five seats: longer, wider, lower and larger in the rear trunk, with FFSI commander and TDI engines at front or back, and there is also a seven-seat and four-door coupé. Nothing less will do!

V for Volvo

As the second of its kind after 12 years of loyal service, the XC 90 grows but has lost weight, with luxury and overall quality its new masters. All-wheel drive is standard or optional to pass the 190 hp D4, D5 225 hp and 407 T8 on the road. A very nice, large SUV that's planned for 6-7 people.
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LIFE OF LEISURE

Those looking to soak up history, cute cobble stone streets or nature will be very disappointed

Advertorial

Viage: An exciting New Year's Eve is guaranteed

Grand Casino Brussels Viage has the ideal mix of fun, glamour and gastronomy to help you bring in the New Year.

We all know what it's like – Christmas is over, and all that remains is the customary melee that is a normal New Year's Eve. We're quite sure you know what we mean – you can't book a table for love nor money, and wherever you do finally manage to get to is very likely to be stratospherically priced and crammed to the gills with other 'happy' punters.

Well, why not give the usual stress a miss this year, and do something that's just a little more spontaneous, accessible, glamorous and exciting and, providing you keep your 'flutter' budget in check, needn't cost the earth?

We're talking Grand Casino Brussels Viage in the centre of Brussels – now well established as Brussels only 'live action' gaming emporium, and they have a two-fold plan to let you see in the New Year in style and with more than your fair share of thrills.

First, have you ever visited a real casino? Whether a play at the tables is what you're after, or if 'fluttering' is not your thing, there is more than enough in the ambience, atmosphere and entertainment of Viage to keep everyone happy.

For the big night, Viage is offering free entrance for members, with DJ Luvwax playing the very best tunes all night, the 'Retronettes' offering any assistance you may require if it's your first time at the tables and even hula-hooping hips instruction from the Lila Chupa-Hoops, a photo corner, stilt walkers, leopard ladies and much more entertainment!

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And, even if you don't have a bet, Viage is promising plenty of exciting entertainment to keep you enthralled. Seriously, why would you consider anything else? Start 2016 with a memory that will remain with you all the way to next New Year – and we know where you will be going then too!

For more information and to book a table, go to www.viage.be

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Emma Stone: A star on the rise

Together spoke to a young actress who is living her dream, despite being naturally anxious



When Emma Stone was a young girl growing up in Arizona she would often lose herself in a dream world where she was playing in classic Hollywood films. But Stone was no idle fantasist. At 14, she used a PowerPoint presentation to convince her parents to let her go to L.A. and start making the rounds of studios to jumpstart her acting career. Permission granted, the redheaded beauty has since gone on to become one of Hollywood's most popular actresses. While enjoying the popularity that has come with her role as Gwen Stacy in the

Amazing Spider-Man franchise films, she has made her mark chiefly as a superb comedienne who has delighting audiences and critics alike in films like *Superbad*, *Easy A*, *Crazy Stupid Love* and last year's Woody Allen Riviera romp, *Magic in the Moonlight*.

"Comedy is my true love," Stone admits. "That will always be my favourite movie genre and nothing can compete with that. But I've also been lucky to have the opportunity to experiment with roles outside of comedies because I want to be able to explore different

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kinds of stories that require a different style of acting. I've always been interested in studying the human psyche and acting is an incredible way of trying to understand how we think and behave and why life can be so complicated to figure out."

Her new film, *Aloha*, written and directed by Cameron Crowe (*Almost Famous*, *Elizabethtown*), gives Stone a chance to test her comic mettle once again in the form of Crowe's typically ironic and endearingly humorous look at relationships. Set in Hawaii, *Aloha* sees Emma play a sprightly U.S. Air Force liaison officer who spends most of the film trying to cheer the spirits of Bradley Cooper's dispirited military contractor fallen on hard times. Co-starring Rachel McAdams (as Cooper's ex), Bill Murray, John Krasinski and Alec Baldwin, *Aloha* benefits from allowing romantic sparks to fly between two immensely likeable stars in Stone and Cooper, while Murray provides plenty of deadpan irony.

The 26-year-old Stone is currently basking in the afterglow of her Oscar-nominated performance in *Birdman* and recently marked another milestone in her career when she made her Broadway debut in the Rob Marshall/Sam Mendes revival of *Cabaret*. Her sensationally exuberant performance in the iconic role of Sally Bowles won her rave reviews from normally tough New York critics. Wrote *N.Y. Times* theatre critic Ben Brantley: "Ms. Stone's version has the avid eyes and angularity of early vintage Joan Crawford and a dance-till-you-drop energy that's all drive and no gears... Stone is scintillating."

With respect to her first Academy Award nomination, Emma was somewhat flabbergasted: "I'm not sure that I will ever know what this means overall. It's a wonderful, very strange feeling. Nothing I can really wrap my head around quite yet. It's just an honour... I got a text from my mom which is how I found out! "It came on the same day as her birthday so it was a double celebration.

Emma Stone lives in New York City with her long-time



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LIFE OF LEISURE

Interview

boyfriend, Andrew Garfield, with whom she fell in love while working together on *The Amazing Spider Man*.

Together: Emma, in the past year you've played in a Woody Allen movie, worked with Cameron Crowe on *Aloha*, and now you're making your Broadway debut as Sally Bowles in *Cabaret*. Is this too much success for one girl too handle?

Emma Stone: (Laughs) No, I can handle it! (Laughs) This business has lots of ups and downs and it's just wonderful when things work out and you feel you're flying high and enjoying every minute of what's happening to you. I've been living with this dream for most of my life and it still feels kind of surreal when you find yourself doing exactly what you aspired to. I can still

remember a few years ago when I was crying on my couch by myself when I didn't get some roles I wanted really badly and feeling so upset. That helps make this time in my life that much more meaningful and fulfilling because you know you had to struggle to get here.

It must be an extraordinary feeling to be

playing on Broadway?

It's something I could never even imagine happening. *Cabaret* was my favourite film when I was 10 years old and I can't even express how it feels to be actually playing Sally Bowles. And working with Woody Allen was another incredible thrill for me. I've grown up watching his films over and over again and then I'm in the south of France sitting at a table with Woody and Colin Firth. Please don't wake me up! (Laughs)

You're also getting to work with another director, Cameron Crowe, who's also noted for his own particular ironic take on life?

Cameron Crowe is a director I've always adored and I loved the script and the kind of character I get to play. Shooting in Hawaii is also an incredible pleasure, especially after I got to spend a summer shooting *Magic*



in the Moonlight in one of the most beautiful places you can ever want to be. You sometimes feel that you're part of a fairy tale when you get to be part of these projects and that's part of your thinking anyway as an actor. It just enhances the process.

You've been working a lot lately. Do you like staying busy?

I've been pretty busy, but I'm not a workaholic, really. I enjoy my time away from work and that's where my real identity lies. I make sure that I don't lose sight of my friends and family and the people I love. Sometimes it's hard to go out in public as much as I would like especially when photographers are always hanging outside your home.

I try to live as normally as I can, and even though it's disturbing to see them following you to your favourite café because they know where you live and know where you like to go. I still don't understand why it's so interesting to take photos with a telephoto lens of me drinking coffee because I do that every day! (Laughs) But I'm getting better at just not paying any attention to that. Everything else about my life is great so why let that kind of thing get to you?

What do you like to do when you're not working?

I'm happiest when I'm hanging out with my friends and getting to read a lot at home. I also love travelling when I have some free time because it's much more interesting to be able to explore a city or places when you're not spending most of your day on the set and then going back to rest at your hotel at night and then getting up at 6 am to start work the next day. I have to be careful sometimes not to spend so much time on the internet because it starts to become a black hole and it's so easy to get sucked in before you realize it! (Laughs)

In the past you've talking about how you've suffered from anxiety. Has acting over the years been of some therapeutic value to you?

Acting was a way of overcoming my anxiety. I'm much more secure now, but I still deal with anxiety. Acting allows me to make productive

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use of my overly sensitive side and channel all that nervous energy which would otherwise be more of an obstacle in life. My work is such an important and wonderful creative outlet for me that I couldn't imagine my life without it.

You seem to be a rather carefree and engaging woman. Is it hard on occasion to be out in the public constantly?

Sometimes I try to show that I'm a little cooler and more relaxed than I actually am. But I prefer being myself and not trying to hide my nervousness or vulnerable sides rather than trying to put on a facade or hide behind any contrived public persona. I think the public also appreciates it when you are able to be natural and just relate to people as honestly as possible.

You live in New York as opposed to L.A. Do you prefer the lifestyle here?

I love New York because there are so many different things going on and people are involved in many different kinds of work which is different from L.A. where life revolves around the film business and it's hard to spend one day without meeting or being with people who are in some way connected to your industry.

New York gives me a chance to feel that I can get away from thinking about the business and

also be in a place where people don't really care that much if you're an actor. I feel I can be more anonymous here because the city has a life of its own and people respect your privacy.

Your parents and particularly your mother have been an inspiration to you. How they have influenced your life?

I was very lucky to have two parents who have always encouraged and supported me. They knew nothing about the film business yet they were ready to support my dream because they believed in me and wanted me to fulfil my dreams. My mother agreed to accompany me to L.A. when I was only 15 even though that meant a big change in her life and you never forget that kind of love and really unselfish act. (Emma Stone and her brother and father all have tattoos of Blackbirds on their arms as a sign of support for her mother, Krista, who survived a battle with cancer four years ago -ED)

What are your goals for the future?

I want to become more real and live as authentically as possible. I want to become a better individual and now just try to be happy but also to be braver and scare myself sometimes by taking on new challenges. I want to keep evolving as much as I can. ①



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Singapore Sling

Simon Leysen enjoys the perfect start to an Asian adventure



“ ITS LITTER-FREE STREETS ARE PACKED WITH ITALIAN SUPER CARS AND HIGH-END SUVS ”

Most cities have a defining landmark in their skyline. New York has the Empire State Building, Paris has the Eiffel tower and the London skyline features the Houses of Parliament. Singapore recently joined Dubai in the small club of cities that have a hotel as their defining landmark. The Marina Bay Sands Hotel, completed in 2010, is an impressive architectural achievement but it is first and foremost testament to the never-ending push for modernity of this city state. Singapore is both admired and ridiculed. This ‘nanny state’ of 5 million is impeccably clean, bordering on sterile, and organized to a level that would even please North Korean choreographers.

Yet, the progress it has made since independence is mind-boggling. It is now a regional economic powerhouse. A business friendly government, low taxes and the rule of law (down to imposing hefty fines for a failure to flush public toilets) has attracted business from across the globe and fostered a vibrant local business scene. And it shows. Its litter-free streets are packed with Italian super cars and high-end SUVs.

Holiday destination?

But should you go there on holiday? The answer really depends on who you ask. Those looking to soak up history, cute cobble stone streets or nature will be very disappointed. Yet Singapore is still an interesting place to visit, albeit for a short trip.

A confluence of cultures

Since the British established a trading post in Singapore in the early 19th Century this quiet settlement has developed into a metropolis that is home to many cultures. Malay, Chinese, Indian and a range of smaller communities make up the melting pot that is Singapore. This mix of cultures, religions and cuisines makes the city vibrant and colourful. You can stroll through the narrow lanes of China Town, visit temples in Little India and enjoy a G&T at Long Bar of Raffles, all within a few city blocks.

Duck lovers’ paradise

Melting pots generally lead to tasty cooking pots. Singapore is no exception. Restaurants are good and there are some true hidden gems. Khansama Tandoori, New Ubin Seafood or the more trendy and upmarket White Rabbit



will not disappoint. However, nothing beats the duck in one of the many eateries in Chinatown.

Will I get bored?

Don't stay for two weeks: unless you are a shopaholic, you will get bored. Singapore is perfect for a three-day stopover on an Asian tour. It is hassle-free and a nice change after spending time in some of the more intense Asian cities. You can spend a day discovering the different neighbourhoods, a day Museum hopping, a morning shopping for electronic on the cheap and an afternoon buying gifts in Haji lane. Unless one likes rollercoasters, haunted houses and feels an urge to spend the day at Universal Studios (the Transformers ride actually makes it a worthwhile visit), three days is about as much time as one needs in Singapore. So, not quite Hong Kong, New York or Barcelona, but a pleasant three days. Just don't jaywalk, it will cost you a thousand dollars.

Asia Light

I have heard Singapore referred to as 'Asia Light', and that sums up the place in two words. It has the energy of a large Asian city without any of the chaos. This makes it an ideal

starting point for an Asia trip; a nice place to relax and get into the Asian groove without being overwhelmed. Singapore is the place to get over your jet lag. It is easy to fly to with direct flights to most European hubs, and Singapore Airlines offers a Business Class experience that is second to none.

When to go

You can visit all year around. The only thing to watch out for is 'the haze', this annual event drowns the city in thick smog caused by forest fires in Indonesia and brings the city to a standstill.

Where to stay

Singapore has hotels galore. You can be flash and stay at the Marina Bay Sands or be nostalgic and go for Raffles, both of which will set you back a fair dime. My recommendation would be the Pan Pacific Hotel in the Marina Bay area. This 700+ room, recently renovated property offers superb comfort combined with excellent service and a large choice of dining options including 24h room service which is perfect to get over the killer jet lag. ❶

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Travel

Awesome Vancouver

Dave Deruytter heads far West to a part of Canada with a flavour of the East



When British captain George Vancouver sailed to the west coast of Canada in the latter half of the 19th century he must have had a very different sight of the coastline than the one tourists have today. Then western Canada consisted of rough land and mountains with brown bears and salmon aplenty. There were towering Douglas firs as far as the eye could see and only a few thousand Indians inhabiting the place.

Today, Vancouver is a bustling city with many high-rise buildings, nice beaches, lots of greenery and a population of more than 2.5 million in the agglomeration. Of the current inhabitants more than 25% are of Asian origin. There is more than salmon, fish and chips and

hamburgers on the menu in the restaurants. This should come as no surprise since Tokyo is closer to Vancouver than Brussels is.

A great feature of Vancouver city is that it is close to many places worth visiting: the mighty Fraser river rapids, the ski resort of Whistler, the Sunshine Coast and of course Vancouver Island with all its attractions, including Victoria, the capital of the province of British Columbia, in the south.

You should definitely go for a biking daytrip. Start in the centre of Vancouver or near Canada Place by the ocean then cycle around Stanley Park all the way to English Beach. From there you take the well-kept and pleasant biking lane all around False Creek. On the way you have

great views of the coastal buildings of Vancouver with the hills and mountains in the background and superb pleasure marinas on the front. I recommend you continue biking a bit further to Kitslano Beach for another moment of relaxation. On a rainy day the Museum of Anthropology should be high on your wish list with its magnificent collection of Indian totems in a great architectural setting.

To catch the atmosphere of the early days of Vancouver a stroll and a meal in Gastown is a must. Look out for the steam clock and a statue of Gassy, one of the early pioneers of the city who gave his name to this neighbourhood full of great souvenir shops, including some fine local woodcraft. Just make sure your purchase fits into your luggage. There is no room on the average airplane for a full size Indian totem or a life-size wooden grizzly bear!



**“ DRIVE THROUGH
CATHEDRAL GROVE WITH
DOUGLAS FIRS THAT ARE
CENTURIES OLD. ”**

For foodies and shoppers there also is the superb Granville Island. Small boats take you back and forth, and it's not really far away from the Vancouver city centre if you like to walk.

In summer there is always something going on at the many beaches of Vancouver, the coastal walkway and in the city centre. And from Vancouver city you can make daytrips to the surrounding towns, even take a boat trip for some whale spotting.

To fully discover the greater Vancouver area, including Vancouver Island, it may be more convenient to rent a car for ten days and leave Vancouver city behind you. That way you have more time to enjoy the Fraser River and the Hells Gate rapids whilst staying at Harisson Hot Springs for a day or two. The ski town of

Whistler has great accommodation and things to do in summer such the Peak to Peak gondola and a hike on the Black Comb Mountain. A ferry will take you to the Sunshine Coast where there are many options of boating, hiking and picnicking.

Another ferry or two and you are on Vancouver Island, a kind of a mini Canada. Surface wise it's a bit larger than Belgium. The island is best known for the Pacific Rim National Park, with its pristine rain forest, the great natural beaches and the towns of Ucluelet and Tofino. Whale watching, bear watching, island hopping, hiking and biking, surfing and sunbathing. There is surely something to do there for everyone and the restaurants of Tofino succeed in excelling, providing great salmon and other seafood. I ate the best burger ever there because it had salmon as its main ingredient and other seafood for the rest.

When you cross Vancouver Island from coast to coast, from Parksville to Tofino, you pass through and over an important mountain ridge with snowy peaks and you drive through Cathedral Grove with Douglas firs that are centuries old.

It will be difficult to get enough of this island, but when the time has come to go back home, please remember that you can also fly home from Victoria International airport at the southern tip of the island. That way you can enjoy its great old harbour, the Empress hotel, the fine wining and dining, whaling and hiking or biking. Alternatively you ferry back to Vancouver to fly back home from there.

Whatever your choice, one thing is for sure: you will be back. I certainly will. ❶

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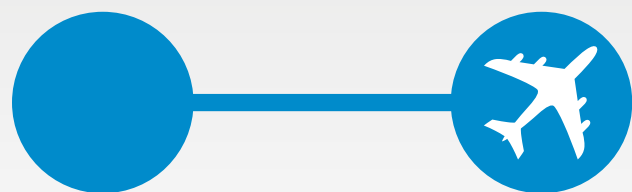
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LIFE OF
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Skiing

The Alps: Magical resorts and unique discoveries

Together reviewed the ski and après-ski on the slopes of Le Massif des Aravis

Photo © P. Lebeau



In the heart of the Alps, 50 minutes from Geneva and 30 minutes from Annecy, the pleasures of winter have never been so close. Le Massif des Aravis has four resorts – multiple choices, and all close to one another.

La Clusaz, le Grand-Bornand, Manigod and Saint-Jean de Sixt

With 220 km of slopes, 82 lifts, two snow parks and a famous 130km cross-country route, this area is prime territory for enthusiasts but also for beginners. Each resort retains its personality.

Grand-Bornand equals a grand time for all. Indeed, you can ski in the resort on slopes that are home to French Olympic medalists who were so successful at Sochi – a wonderful achievement across all disciplines. With 90km of ski trails (including 22km of tracks in

guaranteed snow), 29 ski lifts: the concept of 'complete ski village' is alive and well here. Discover breathtaking landscapes, especially when you lunch at the Terres Rouges restaurant at the summit, offering a 360° panoramic view of the Aravis.

www.restaurant-terres-rouges.fr

The resort also still retains the charm of an authentic Savoyard village with its 400-hundred-year-old chalets and farms producing Reblochon farmhouse cheese. Among other things, Le Grand-Bornand is the principal agricultural commune in the Haute-Savoie. Once you've rested your skis, the resort is not short of activities, not least the exclusive ski-bob 'made in Grand-Bornand'. The skibob involves standing astride a bicycle-type frame attached to skis – the equipment was designed in a neighboring town and is

Skiing

approved by the Ministry of Transport. Accessible to skiers and non-skiers, the skibob can be used from the age of 10. A truly unique sensation at controlled speed (a unique braking system allows easy speed control) – it's different, it's fun, and you discover a new way to get down the snowy slopes .
www.essf-grand-bo.com

La Ferme de Lormay is a small gastronomic venue but big on taste. Off the beaten track, beneath the stars, sits a former cottage. With just a few tables, a wood fire, you discover Albert Lormay's amazing and exquisite cuisine. It is one of those places one is hesitant to share because the world and his uncle would want to eat there. Book in advance.
www.lafermedelormay.com

Manigod is entirely complementary to the other Aravis resorts, a natural destination, protected and preserved, offering a breath of fresh air to those lucky enough to discover it. A family ski area, located at 1,500 metres above sea level, Manigod boasts an open

environment where alpine skiing, cross country skiing, snowshoeing and tobogganing will delight the whole family. The areas of La Croix Fry and Merdassier are the sunniest. And for those not keen to strap on the skis you can opt for snowshoeing under a starry sky with a glass of wine and some Reblochon de Savoie beneath the branches of a splendid spruce tree – a unique experience.



Connected to Manigod, La Clusaz is one of the most sought after resorts in the French Alps and is part of the closed circle of resorts with the longest tracks: the top of the village Balme has a ski drop of 1,500m ski. And for a well-deserved break, stop at Les Fermiers where you can enjoy 'The Brasérade' and 'Reblochonade' which make it an absolute must. www.lesfermiers.com. Here, too, activities other than skiing abound: Skiing Joering (ski pulled by a horse: a good level of skiing recommended), Snowpark, huskies...

It is also worth highlighting the excellent commune of La Clusaz with its 5-star Au Cœur du Village, which opened its doors in 2010. The hotel is at the foot of the slopes and ski lifts, a luxurious and refined retreat combining wonderful accommodation with exceptional service. Discover the CINQ restaurant where you will discover chef Thomas Eudier's refined cuisine where revisited traditional and local food mingle. The Spa at the hotel is also well worth a visit: The Crystal Spa is an ode to wellbeing, with its swimming pool, a beautiful hammam, sauna and the prestigious Cinq Monde treatments, with a range of care that will provide total relaxation.
www.hotel-aucoeurduvillage.fr

It goes without saying that the Lake Annecy Ski Resorts area offers a multitude of activities in addition to skiing. Family, friends, discerning sporting types and non-skiers will all be kept happy. ❶

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So many rivers to float

Intrepid traveller **Lesley Williamson** cruises the rivers of the South of France on an inflatable raft



As barges were the easiest way to transport heavy wine casks around Europe for centuries, it is no coincidence that France's network of ancient trade routes is accessible today by sea, canal or river. In an attempt to combine 'slow' travel to connect with the gentle flow of nature and explore a land fashioned by the history of its waterways, I travelled with an inflatable raft to slip, sample and float my way through France's epicurean rivers.

My summer 2015 love-affair was introduced to me in Canada – it's a Vancouver Island traditional leisure indulgence, weekend hobby or aquatic social gathering commonly known as 'river tubing' on inflatable rafts. Due to my natural obsession for everything nautical, I joined in (with my newly-purchased Canadian inflatable SeaHawk) to cruise down Stamp River Falls in Port Alberni and the Cowichan river. The Cowichan Valley, 'land warmed by the sun' in Coast Salish, enjoys some of the warmest temperatures in Canada and certainly some mind-blowing views of the majestic conifer forest and mountain peaks – you have to see it to believe it.

My journey started in the morning when the river is stirring into life, when frogs are croaking and songbirds trill along the banks. Distinctive bald eagles, the world's largest birds of prey, are looping high in the sky. Floating down the gentle current, admiring the surrounding drooping oaks and weeping willows, marveling at the scenery, I embraced the perspective of a new way of life... or perhaps just a sensational summer of travelling back in Europe.

August in Belgium, with summertime in full swing, I conducted a successful test of



Seahawk on an 'urban river safari' through Ghent to get the best up-close views of the city's stunning architecture. Friends I managed to embark with me were suspiciously yet genuinely intrigued by the concept, and later on surprisingly enchanted by their experience – perhaps seduced by onboard hospitality facilities. I was itching to expand my horizons and somehow convinced my best friend to volunteer as a crew member to explore France's rivers. Research began, and so did my belief and confidence in self-taught navigational skills on an inflatable boat.

The Vézère and the Dordogne rivers wind gracefully through some of France's most picturesque landscapes, embellished with fine medieval castles built during the early Middle Ages by barons seeking to consolidate their power or protect their wealth. This land has invited exploration and settlement for centuries on the traditional mode of river transport, the gabarre, a wide, flat-bottomed barge known for its stability. At the confluence of the Dordogne, the southern part of the Vézère drifts down a steady, lazy current cupped in a tree-lined valley, providing an ideal waterway for novice and experienced 'floaters' alike. The joys of relaxing on this gently winding river from Montignac to St Léon-sur-Vézère lasted about six hours for a 10 km long journey. Architectural highlights include the fairytale 15th-century Château de Belcayre hanging over the river and the medieval fortress of Chateau de Losse.

Still on time for aperitif, we deflated in the meander of the river, in St Léon-sur-Vézère. Ranked among France's most beautiful villages, St Léon was awarded with the tourism label of Les Plus Beaux Villages de France which gathers 155 referenced authentically preserved

villages throughout France.

Fairytale castles and foie gras

Tackling the Dordogne River the next day was approached with a certain upgrade of facilities – a cooling section for drinkables and a provision of culinary delights on board. Dordogne is fiercely proud of its food heritage and exciting your taste buds is simply a way of life here. We picked up a fresh baguette from the local boulangerie and in a tenacious respect for local gastronomic traditions grabbed a small pot of foie gras du Périgord, figs, walnut jam, knobbly yellow quinces and Cabécou goat cheese from a town market. We were spoilt for choice of a good bottle of wine to wash down all these delicacies with the local vineyards of Bergerac, Duras, Marmande or close by Monbazillac or Saussignac. Alternatively the sweet dark walnut wine is a local aperitif of excellence here.

Passing by one inspiring chateau after another, the water leads us to the exquisite riverside village of la Roque-Gageac. Wedged between towering cliffs and the Dordogne River, it is known for its subtropical microclimate due to its unique setting. The view from the river is breathtaking, with troglodytic cave dwellings nestled in the rising cliffs.

The undulating river banks are lively, populated by kayakers on a well-deserved picnic break. The flow of the crystal-clear waters has created riffles, pools and idyllic white sandy beaches and lagoons. Downstream, we passed under a couple of old stone bridges waving to enthusiastic kids, enjoying picturesque scenes of fly-fishing, family barbecues and a festive riverside atmosphere of quintessential France.

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INTO THE
PRESENT
MOMENT AND
AWAKENS THE
SENSES ”**



The day was drawing to its end after an ambitious 17 km journey down the Dordogne, and as we approached disembarkation shores in silence and serenity, the splendid shadow of the medieval fortified chateau of Castelnaud rose from the mist of the river in a surreal sunset at the meeting points of the Dordogne and Ceou Rivers.

The legendary Gorges du Tarn

Heading south for more water adventures, mountain scenery and abundant wildlife, the Millau viaduct is the gateway to reach the high limestone plateaux of the spectacular Gorges du Tarn, known as Les Causses and classed as a UNESCO world heritage site. We ventured to the most exciting and attractive section of the Tarn River which runs north of the pretty little village of Rozier, 21 km northeast of Millau along a twisting road at the foot of one of the longest and deepest gorges in Europe. The narrow scenic road follows the left bank of the river up to Les Vignes, a tiny perched village over an ideal departure point on the river, equipped with an inviting water toboggan.

Both sides of the river are spiked with pinnacles of sheer eroded rocks and cloaked with woods of feathery pine. The steep environment sets scales into perspective – from my cosy embarkation the grandeur of the precipitous trench is impossible to capture on camera, the majestic landscapes are too difficult to fit in a lens. About a kilometre downstream, rapids start splashing. Nothing too impressive for

Seahawk, riding rapids on an inflatable is fun, safe and bouncy. Oh, and big adrenalin kicks.

Paddling an inflatable is nothing like paddling a kayak. It is smooth, gentle and reactive mainly. Your faith lies more in the drifting current than in your paddling skills and allows focusing on onboard entertainment and conviviality. A distinct 'non-sporty' rafting experience you can quickly get addicted to, for a perfect escape on a hot summer day. Floating brings your awareness into the present moment and awakens the senses. Life slows down.

Everyone has a personal preference when it comes to crew navigation techniques on the river. I'm a big fan of rowing in turns. Team collaboration somehow reaches its limits and sharing the task with one paddle each is bound to stimulate divergences in rhythm and strategy, to create tensions and could easily ruin a relationship, occasionally cause murder on board. My tip is to leave your part-time co-sailor paddle as you offer to spread the local tapenade or foie-gras on a piece of crispy baguette and quench our thirst with a fruity rosé.... Team work it is in the end!

For more information on the region, check out :
www.les-plus-beaux-villages-de-france.org
<http://uk.france.fr/en/dordogne>
<http://www.ot-gorgesdutarn.com>

Text and Photography by Lesley Williamson ❶

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Paris, my love...

Sophie Van Crutchen and her husband enjoy the delights of Paris and Hotel Thérèse

Paris, November 6, 2015.

It was time for my husband and I to escape for a romantic getaway weekend. For us it had to be the City of Light! Leaving our little boy in the capable hands of Granny, we were carefree as we headed off to take the Thalys at Brussels Midi station. On the program: shopping, a night at the theatre and good restaurants! The watchword: ENJOY.

We chose to set our suitcases down at Hotel Thérèse. Located in the heart of the 1st arrondissement, this boutique hotel has been on our to-do list for some time. It is a chic and confidential spot, frequented by a regular clientele who like to stay on the Right Bank in a lively and historic neighbourhood, close to the Palais Royal, the Louvre and the shops of Place des Victoires. And rue Saint-Honoré, where Hotel Thérèse features an elegant neoclassical facade stretching from number 5 to number 7.

We arrived at Tea Time and we gladly helped ourselves to a drink and some pastries

generously laid out in the cosy lounge – an agreeable moment before discovering our room. Wow! I knew immediately we would be fine here. The room is spacious and particularly warm with its thick carpet and furniture chosen with care. The hotel has just been renovated, and the decoration was entrusted to interior designer Jean-Louis Deniot. Mission accomplished: the place is modern without being cold. An amusing detail, the room key is attached to a small leather key ring that looks like an erotic whip. No doubt a reference to the famous club Les Chandelles, located very close by. I promise you, during this weekend we remained well-behaved... and faithful!

The following morning, we enjoyed a sumptuous breakfast served in the hotel's basement, in a room full of charm with a vaulted ceiling. The service was perfect. At noon, we lunched on the terrace of the Monsieur Bleu restaurant which offers a varied menu and a great view of the Eiffel Tower (20 Avenue New York, 75116 Paris). We ended the day with a

shopping session on Avenue Montaigne and a musical dedicated to France Gall and Michel Berger at the Palais des Sports. Sheer joy! We returned to the Hotel Thérèse in a light hearted mood. On the Sunday, before leaving, we took a pleasant stroll along the Canal Saint-Martin. A lockkeeper opened the way to pleasure craft and children played in the parks. In early autumn the weather was mild, the sun shone in the sky in an atmosphere best described as light and poetic.

Brussels, November 16, 2015.

It was with a heavy heart that I took up my pen to write this article. As I wrote down the words to describe the magical, romantic weekend we enjoyed a week ago, television channels

worldwide looped the terrifying images of the attacks on Friday, November 13th, a day that will stay forever in my heart when I think of Paris. Just seven days ago we were strolling in the streets around the Bataclan. We even thought of stopping at Le Petit Cambodia to eat. These places have witnessed a nameless barbarism. But have no fear, Paris will always be Paris. Pay tribute to this magical city by visiting it again and again. Do not give in to panic. Celebrate Paris. Celebrate life. Celebrate freedom. PEACE.

Hôtel Thérèse

5-7, rue Thérèse - 75001 Paris
Tel: +33 (0)1 42 96 10 01
www.hoteltherese.com



Swissôtel Amsterdam



Paul Morris
spent the
weekend in
Amsterdam on
and around the
Dam

You can't get more central in Amsterdam than the Dam, which acts as a dam for the River Amstel. Amsterdam has come a long way since its origins as a small fishing village in the late 12th century. Dam Square testifies to the city's success, boasting the neoclassical Royal Palace, which served as the city hall from 1655 (during the Dutch Golden Age) until its conversion to a royal residence in 1808. Beside it stands the 15th-century Gothic Nieuwe Kerk (New Church), where royal investiture ceremonies and weddings are held. Horse trams once rattled through these streets but now it's the tourists and lots of them. They are there not just to see the Dam but also as a means of spreading out into the city to the nearby streets where they can find everything from the fascinating Oude Kerk to the unusual Hash Marihuana Museum.

Swissôtel Amsterdam is very fortunate to find itself right on the Dam, at the corner of the square facing the upscale department store De Bijenkorf (the beehive) which started out as a small haberdashery store. It is a four-star boutique hotel just a short walk from Amsterdam Central Station. It is surrounded by shops, museums and restaurants and is a 20-minute drive from Amsterdam Schiphol

International Airport.

Behind its historical facade of 19th century buildings, Swissôtel Amsterdam offers 110 comfortable, sound-proofed guest rooms and suites; tranquility and sophisticated style in the middle of a lively city. All rooms offer contemporary and modern facilities such as comfortable bedding with Egyptian cotton and Pürovel bathroom amenities, made from Swiss essential oils.

Guests can enjoy complimentary Wi-Fi, state-of-the-art TechnoGym equipment in the Swissôtel Fitness, and free use of the Business Center which offers Apple computers, refreshments and small delicacies. The Dam Plaza restaurant is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. In summer one can enjoy a refreshing drink on the terrace whilst watching the people pass by on Dam Square.

And soon the hotel will be opening a stylish roof terrace that overlooks the tiled rooftops of the city's finest old buildings.
Swissôtel Amsterdam
96 Damrak - Amsterdam 1012 LP
www.swissotel.com/hotels/amsterdam 📍



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LIFE OF
LEISURE

Dining

Cuisine à la Corse

Corsica is blessed with many options when it comes to preparing its gastronomy



Corsican cuisine has many connections to Italian gastronomy but if there is one ingredient that stands out on l'Île de Beauté it's the humble chestnut. And the use of chestnuts goes way back in the island's history. For many years it has played a significant role in Corsican life, as witnessed by a traditional wedding lunch in 19th century Castagniccia which boasted twenty-two different courses prepared using chestnuts as the main ingredient. The pork they ate surely tasted of it too since the pigs were left to eat chestnuts on the forest floor and were also fed on chestnut flour.

Rich in calories, this flour is used to prepare polenta and cakes. Popular dishes include *Fritelli castagnini* (chestnut flour fritters) and *nicciu* (chestnut flour, cooked between two iron plates).

Meat and game are also abundant. Stews are very popular, such as *Stufatu* made with beef meat, ham, garlic, onion, clove and herbs, as is *Sanghi di maiale incu l'uva secca*, a blood sausage with raisin, similar to the French boudin, and popular wild game includes wild boar (*singhjari*), thrush (*tordulu*) and hare (*levru*).

Surrounded by water Corsica is inevitably a paradise for fish lovers, with forty different species to choose from. Fish soup (*azziminu*) is



made with both sea fish and river fish. The national cheese, brocciu, is used also with fish, such as sardines stuffed with brocciu (*sardine piene incu u brocciu*), and Corsicans are also partial to roasted eel (*anguilla arustita*).

For those with a sweet tooth we return to the chestnut once more, since its flour is the base for many of the island's delicious cakes, such as *Falculelle* from Corte made with brocciu, sugar, flour and egg yolk, and cooked in the oven over a chestnut leaf.

Many special cakes are baked to fit feast days. *Strenna* (a pie made with flour and sdruttu dough and a brocciu filling) is prepared in Vico for New Year's Day, *panzarotti* (beignets made with flour, rice and yeast) are prepared in Bastia for St. Joseph's day and the dramatically titled *pan di i morti* for All Souls' Day in Bonifacio.

Wash it all down with a glass of wine from, among other regions, Cap Corse, Sartène or Ajaccio. If ale is more your thing, try *biera accumulata cu a castagna* – that's right, chestnut beer brewed by the Pietra Brewery. *Bon appetitu!*

For more information about travelling to Corsica: *Corsica Travel*, the Belgian specialist travel company for Corsica. www.corsicatravel.be



Au Repos des Chasseurs



Menu de Noël - 24 et 25 décembre

55,00 € p.p. - Soirée dansante

Amuse-bouche

Les perles blanches (Huitres)

Ou Foie gras aux dés de vieux porto

Ou Emincé de Saumon d'Ecosse garni

Consommé aux quatre filets

Filets de dorade aux crevettes grises

Ou Dinde tradition farcie aux marrons

Ou Filet de chevreuil sauce Grand Veneur et champignons des bois

Assortiment de fromages transalpins

Bûche de Noël

Réveillon de la Saint-Sylvestre 2016

74,50 € p.p.

Ambiance et cotillons assurés & Soirée dansante

Bouchées gourmandes

Bisque de Homard à l'Armagnac

Ou Consommé Mosaïque

Le ½ Homard en Belle vue

Ou Le foie gras du Périgord

Râble de lièvre sauce Arlequin pommes airelles chicons et croquettes

Ou Bar de ligne aux légumes croquants et sauce Mousseline

Ou Charolais de bœuf aux champignons des bois

Roue de fromages transalpins

Délice de Saint-Sylvestre

Ce menu sera servi également le 01/01/2016 au prix de €59/pers



SOGNO D'ITALIA

St Sylvestre - 59,50 € p.p.

Ambiance et cotillons assurés
& Soirée dansante

Amuse-Bouche

Consommé aux 4 filets

Foie Gras au Vieux porto

Ou Emincé de Saumon fumé et ses toasts

Le ½ Homard Belle Vue

Ou Ravioli farcis aux Cèpes et truffe

Filets de Sole à la Fiorentina
sauce Mousseline

Ou Filet de Boeuf aux Champignons des bois

Ou Faisan à l'Oro spumante,
pommes airelles, chicons et croquettes

Délice de la St Sylvestre

Ce menu sera aussi servi
le 1er janvier 2016 à 45 €/pers

Fermé le 24 décembre 2015 au soir

DA PEPE

St Sylvestre - 54,50 € p.p.

Ambiance et cotillons assurés
& Soirée dansante

Amuse-Bouche

Consommé aux 4 filets

Foie Gras au Vieux porto

Ou Emincé de Saumon fumé et ses toasts

Le ½ Homard Belle Vue

Ou Ravioli farcis aux Cèpes et truffe

Filets de Sole à la Fiorentina sauce
Mousseline

Ou Filet de Boeuf aux Champignons des bois

Ou Faisan à l'Oro spumante,
pommes airelles, chicons et croquettes

Délice de la St Sylvestre

Ce menu sera aussi servi
le 1er janvier 2016 à 45 €/pers

Fermé le 24 décembre 2015 au soir

CICCIO BELLO

St Sylvestre - 59,50 € p.p.

Ambiance et cotillons assurés
& Soirée dansante

Amuse-Bouche

Consommé aux 4 filets

Foie Gras au Vieux porto

Ou Emincé de Saumon fumé et ses toasts

Le ½ Homard Belle Vue

Ou Ravioli farcis aux Cèpes et truffe

Filets de Sole à la Fiorentina sauce
Mousseline

Ou Filet de Boeuf aux Champignons des bois

Ou Faisan à l'Oro spumante,
pommes airelles, chicons et croquettes

Délice de la St Sylvestre

Ce menu sera aussi servi
le 1er janvier 2016 à 45 €/pers

Fermé le 24 décembre 2015 au soir

LIFE OF
LEISURE

Dining

Bistro dining



Bistropolitan

An excellent newcomer has arrived in the Montgomery area, located conveniently close to the Metro station. And it has one of my favourite things on the menu: elbow room. The tables are nicely spaced and the space (we went in the evening) suffused with a soft lighting effect that still made it possible to see the very fine food on the plate.

They are aiming for "a chic, casual, contemporary, trendy bistro with an ambiance somewhere between a Parisian brasserie and a New York restaurant". And these adjectives certainly apply. The fresh produce is evident in dishes that are tasty and refined – at democratic prices.

My daughter woke up the following day and was still raving about the perfectly prepared risotto she had for a starter and for me the roasted Suprême de Coucou de Malines, swaddled in bacon and accompanied by hash browns went down very well with their excellent choice reds. And book a table in clement weather – there's a very large terrace with even more elbow room, and above your head it's 384,400 km to the moon.

105 Avenue de Tervuren
Etterbeek 1040
www.bistropolitan.be

Louis Delhaize

Louis Delhaize is celebrating 140 years of serving the Belgian public.

The brand currently boasts a network of more than 300 affiliated stores and 32 branches in Belgium. Clearly defined as convenience stores, they aim to meet the needs of conviviality, quality and speed of contemporary consumers. They offer a solution for everyday food purchases, the supply of fresh produce and baked goods, and also local services such as Post & Parcel points.

It is a 100% Belgian family brand and - quite rare these days - opts for intimacy with the customer to create a relationship worthy of neighbourhood shopping. And if you are shopping for the festivities, Louis Delhaize stores have several wine and spirits exclusives, including a series of non-sulphite natural wines, and two very special Scottish products: award-winning NB Gin from North Berwick and three excellent whiskies from the Tweeddale distillery in the Lowlands.

www.louisdelhaize.com

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Champagne galore

Photo © Phillip Capper



Champagne? Which would you choose for the festive season? Do you prefer a 'sec'? A Blanc de Noirs? A Millésimé? Do you prefer it to come from the Marne Valley? We take you into the magical world of champagne to help you make the best choice!

The traditional champagne we drink is the champagne called 'brut'. It is a blend of years and of grape varieties and has 'brut' sugar content. Let's see how we arrived at this conclusion and what it means.

How to differentiate the different types of champagne? By their sugar content, their sub-region, the grapes used and their category.

The sugar content

In Champagne, eight categories have been established (in decreasing order): Doux, Medium dry, Dry, Extra Dry, Brut, Brut Nature, Extra brut and Non dosé.

The theory is quite simple: the less sugar in it the closer you stay to the basic taste of wine and thus its authenticity and its soil. The classic is Brut champagne. Doux, semi-dry or dry are quite marginal.

The grapes used

Three grapes are recognized in the Champagne 'appellation': Pinot noir, Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay. So we distinguish the blended champagnes, where three grapes are used from the Blanc de Blancs (100% Chardonnay) and Blanc de Noirs (100% Pinot).
- The Pinot Noir is characterized by its powerful red fruity aromas.
- Pinot Meunier is characterized by its flexibility

Geoffroy van Lede of le-vin-du-mois.be takes a look at the various types of bubbly

and fruitiness.

- Chardonnay is characterized by its finesse and floral notes.

The subregions.

As in any vineyard, the wines are predominantly influenced by local typicalities of the soil and their grape variety. The Champagne region is divided into four subregions: Mountain and Val de Reims (two Pinots), the Valley of the Marne (Pinot Meunier), Côte des Blancs and Sézannais (Chardonnay) and the Côte des Bar (Pinot Noir).

The categories: Millésimé, Blanc de Blancs, Blanc de Noirs, Rosé

A champagne Millésimé is a champagne vinified with the juice of a single year. A Blanc de Blancs is champagne made from white grapes (to differentiate it from blended champagnes). A black white champagne is a white champagne made from black grapes (the grape juice is always white). A Rosé champagne refers to its color.

Now that you know a bit more about champagne, try different ones to find your own taste. And never forget: each wine or champagne is always produced by a winemaker, and he is the most important element in determining the quality and authenticity of your drink. For classic champagnes trust the brands that blend the best grape varieties and vintage to offer a constant taste throughout the vintages. For authenticity and personality, head to independent winemakers who dedicate themselves entirely to viticulture and winemaking.

Find these wines and our subscription concept on our site www.le-vin-du-mois.be or call 0498 586 545



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What's on Belgium



Le Salon du Mariage

If you've just popped the question and set a date... Le Salon de Mariage might well be a good place to start your planning, a world dedicated to wedding and reception in a prestigious location in the heart of Brussels. For inspiration "combine the latest trends on the bohemian theme 'Hippie Chic'." **23 and 24 January 2016.** Cerole de Lorraine, Place Poelaert, Brussels.

www.lesalondumariage.be



L'Opera Seria: There's No Business Like Show Business

Gassmann's 1769 opera is a comic narrative that takes aim opera seria. In this parody, he was responding to a popular trend in the second half of the 18th century. Together with Calzabigi, he presents an opera company that has only one day to prepare an opera for the

stage. But with performers who are only interested in their own 'moment of glory' and a composer and a librettist who are at daggers drawn, a positive outcome is by no means assured. **Until 16 February 2016.** La Monnaie. **€15-€130**
www.lamonnaie.be

Tina Gillen

Luxembourger Tina Gillen has been working as a painter since the late 1990s. She is interested in the boundary between figuration and abstraction, between the flat surface and the space. Her work is built up of clearly visible layers. You can recognize familiar architectural elements, such as façades and buildings, which nonetheless evoke a feeling of detachment. For BOZAR she has made ECHO, a monumental installation which has been specially created for the Council Room.

Until 7 February. BOZAR. €20
www.bozar.be

Photo © Koen De Waal



Winter Wonders

After all the drama in Brussels there is nothing like the annual two kilometre ode to the festive season to cheer us up. Skate on the expanded ice-rink, shop till you drop and sip a mulled wine as you witness the dramatic light show in the Grand'Place. **27 November 2015 - 3 January 2016.** Central Brussels.
visitbrussels.be



The Affordable Art Fair Brussels

For the last edition 15,000 visitors came see the art on show from 92 local, national and international galleries, who brought a array of contemporary art by more than 1,000 artists.

The Affordable Art Fair aims to make art as fun, affordable and accessible as possible, in an inspiring and friendly atmosphere where you can find thousands of original paintings, prints, sculptures and photographs all under one roof, ranging from €60 to €6,000. **26-29 February 2016.**

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affordableartfair.com/brussels/



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Wallonia: The perfect place for Christmas fun

Some of Wallonia's most beautiful spots offer unique Christmas markets, including the abbeys

Abbaye de Stavelot



**“ HEAD DOWN TO
THE ABBEY'S
CELLARS ”**

Belgium is well-known for its excellent Christmas markets, and Wallonia has its fair share, from the Abbaye de Stavelot to the heritage city of Durbuy.

Abbaye de Stavelot

Stavelot prides itself in creating the magic of Christmas with a traditional market, flea market, illuminations and puppets. The festive season really does burst into life as the abbey is once again at its very best – old and young alike can head down to the abbey's cellars or walk under the esplanade on avenue Ferdinand Nicolay.

You can find objects of elegant and sometimes unusual antiquity, or artisan decorations to put on your Christmas tree and gifts to put under it. Take a pause and enjoy a mulled wine and a hot chocolate in a warm and convivial place.

5 December 2015 - 3 January 2016

13 December: flea market

13 December: Christmas market from 10h00-18h00

Christmas atmosphere with every weekend – see the agenda on the website for more info.

Abbaye de Stavelot

Cour de l'Abbaye 1

4970 Stavelot

tourisme.stavelot.be

Maredsous Abbey

A relative newcomer to the Christmas market scene, Maredsous Abbey offers a traditional Christmas artisan market, with numerous exhibitors, original artisans, concerts and plenty of entertainment and an ice-rink. All the usual seasonal products will be present: regional produce, cured meats, artisan craftwork and gift ideas, etc.

The added bonus is clearly the venue, Maredsous Abbey, which lends itself perfectly to the spirit of the Christmas holidays. The beers and cheeses help as well!

29 November - 28 December 2015

**Abbaye de Maredsous - Rue de Maredsous 11
5537 DENEE (ANHEE) (MAREDSOUS)
tourisme.maredsous.be**

Maredsous Abbey



Abbaye Saint-Gérard de Brogne

Another Wallonian abbey that delights in organizing its annual Christmas events is Abbaye Saint-Gérard de Brogne where you can discover original items for the Christmas festivities in the abbey's beautiful cloister, with all manners of gifts for Christmas. You can also taste various dishes such as pâté, jam, truffles, nougat, biscuits, speculoos and various kinds of alcohol.

Saint Gérard believes that an abbey is the best place to rediscover the true magic of Christmas, a festive moment, bursting with colours and flavours.

12 December -13 December 2015

**Abbaye Saint-Gérard de Brogne - Place de Brogne 3
5640 SAINT-GERARD (METTET)
www.brogne.be**

Abbaye Saint-Gérard de Brogne



Durbuy

'The smallest city in the world', as it likes to call itself, has a wonderful Christmas Village and Market, nativity scene and Christmas stories.

You'll find all the seasonal and gourmet produce to delight your guests. You will also find quality artisan products, gift ideas and 1,001 things to add that special something extra to your Christmas dinner table.

For the children (and the big children) an ice-skating rink will be installed in the city centre. After your exertions on the rink head off to visit the Topiary Park.

27 November 2015 - Sunday 3 January 2016

**Parc Roi Baudouin
6940 DURBUY
www.tourisme.durbuy.be**

*For further information on tourism in Wallonia:
www.tourismewallonie.be*

Durbuy



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What's on

What's on International

Only one hour from Brussels by train, Rotterdam has a vibrant cultural scene



Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra – Dance workshop and concert

De Doelen is a world-acclaimed concert hall in the Mauritskwartier district in Rotterdam where around 600 concerts are given each year. This concert/workshop explores the music - go along and dance to Strauss. **10 January 2016.** De Doelen. **€15** - www.dedoelen.nl



Six of Rotterdam

First held in 1936 but with a few breaks over the years the spectacular six-day indoor cycling event pits the world's best race against each other, with live shows by top artists and other entertainment.

7-12 January 2016. Ahoy Rotterdam. Tickets from **€29.50** - www.zesdaagserotterdam.nl



Cinema: *Dinner for Adele* (*Adéla ještě nevečerela*)

Bizarre mystery-spoof by Oldrich Lipský, set in Prague in 1900. Detective Nick Carter is asked to find a missing dog. He meets a carnivorous plant and a malicious Baron. With gadgets by legendary animation filmer Jan Švankmajer. **12 January 2016.** Tsjechisch Centrum Den Haag/Rotterdam. www.czechcentres.cz/hague

Where to stay

Head through by train and as you walk out of the station you can't miss the towering Manhattan Hotel. The 230 rooms and suites are all furnished in a contemporary style with spacious floor areas, and the view from the top floor is stunning. www.manhattanhotelrotterdam.com
For more info on Rotterdam: rotterdampartners.nl

Cinema

Picturenose.com's **James Drew** takes his customary pick of the films released over the next month



Cowboys

One of the real surprises of this year's Cannes film festival – *Cowboys* (*Les Cowboys*) is a 2015 French drama film directed by Thomas Bidegain. It was screened in the Directors' Fortnight section of the festival – it begins at a country western rally somewhere in eastern France. Alain (François Damiens) is a pillar of the community, whose daughter disappears, turning his life upside down. *114 mins.*


Bridge of Spies

And just about the world's favourite director Steven Spielberg returns for a Christmas release based on apparently genuine historical espionage – in 1957 Brooklyn, New York, Rudolf Abel (Mark Rylance) finds a secret message on a park bench and manages to read it just before FBI agents burst into his rented room. He manages to keep the message to himself, but other evidence in the room leads to his arrest and prosecution as a Soviet spy. James B. Donovan (Tom Hanks), a lawyer who specializes in insurance settlements, is asked by his partners to take on Abel's defence against the United States' charge of him being a KGB spy. A 'fair' trial, to reduce the Soviet Union's chances of using the situation for propaganda, but what are the chances of that, with Abel refusing to co-operate with the US government on any intelligence revelations? The plot thickens... *141 mins.*

Star Wars: Episode VII – The Force Awakens

Well, here it is – after new Bond *Spectre* (2015) (which Picturenose did not rate one little bit), Star Wars returns to our screens, doubtless to the delight of billions. Understandably, plot details are somewhat scarce, save that it is set approximately 30 years after the events of *Return of the Jedi* (1986), and features the return of Luke, Leia, Hans, Chewbacca, C-3PO, R2-D2 as well as some new leads. So, will it be any good? Well, your guess is as good as mine, but I will be up for it, naturellement. *135 mins.*

In the Heart of the Sea

And Ron Howard returns with what looks to be a stirring historical adventure thriller. In 1820, the whaling ship Essex is crewed by Captain George Pollard, Jr. (Benjamin Walker), first officer Owen Chase (Chris Hemsworth), second officer Matthew Joy (Cillian Murphy) and cabin boy Thomas Nickerson (Tom Holland). During their voyage, the ship is sunk when it is rammed and split in half by a very large and enraged bull sperm whale, ultimately leaving its crew shipwrecked at sea for 90 days and more than a thousand miles from land. After the attack, the crew sails for South America and is forced to resort to cannibalism. Gulp, and ulp! *122 mins.* 

For regular reviews go to www.picturenose.com

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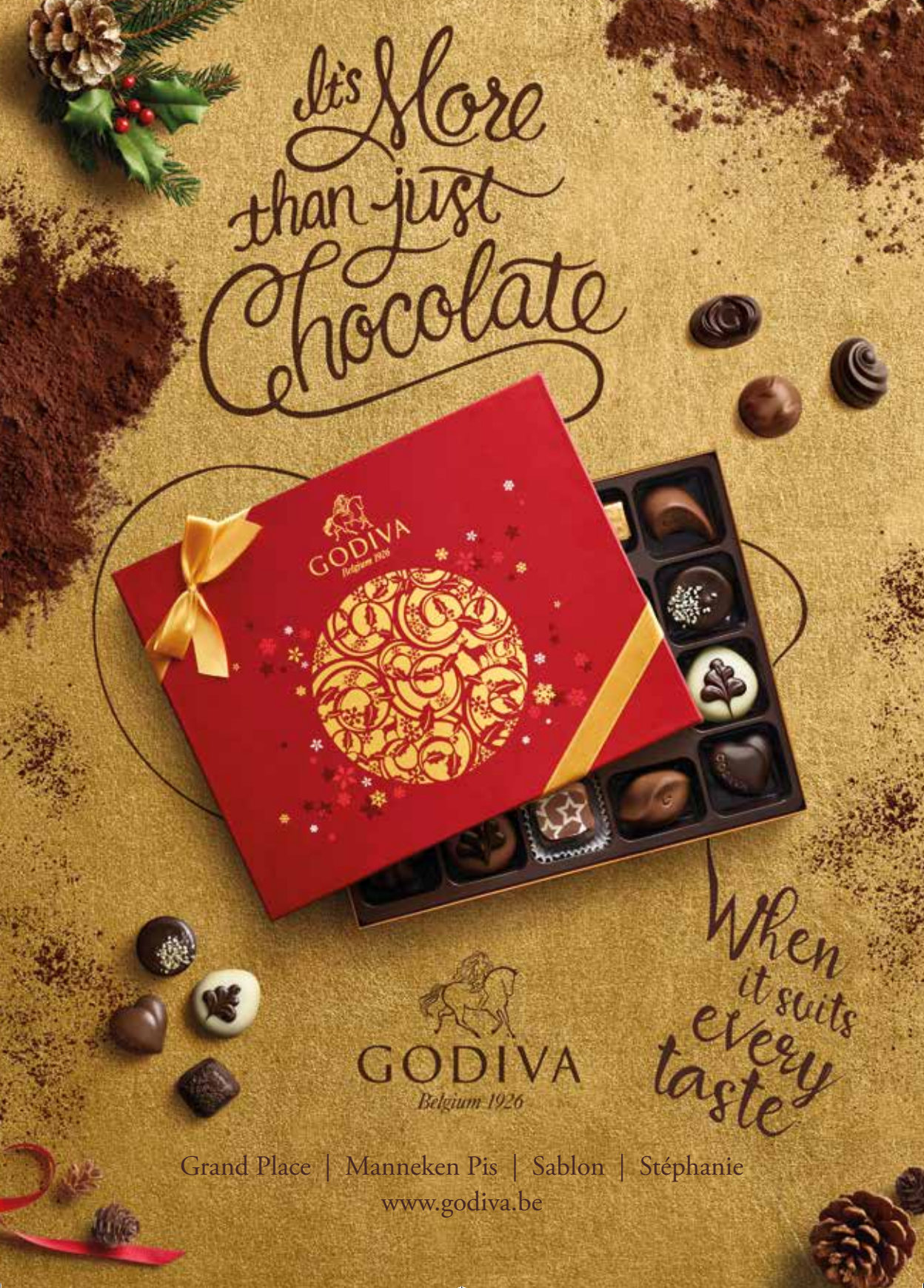
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