

Together

magazine

SEPT/OCT 2023 #128

Fashion

Le Tanneur
Back to attitude

What's on?

ANTONI TÀPIES
TINTIN

Travel

ZURICH

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA

La Monnaie
Opera Vlaanderen
Opéra Royal de Wallonie

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Investing in art
Fat-free diets – in or out?
Four top tips to prevent
burnout

Dining

THE POET
DE JONKMAN

INTERVIEW

Margot
Robbie



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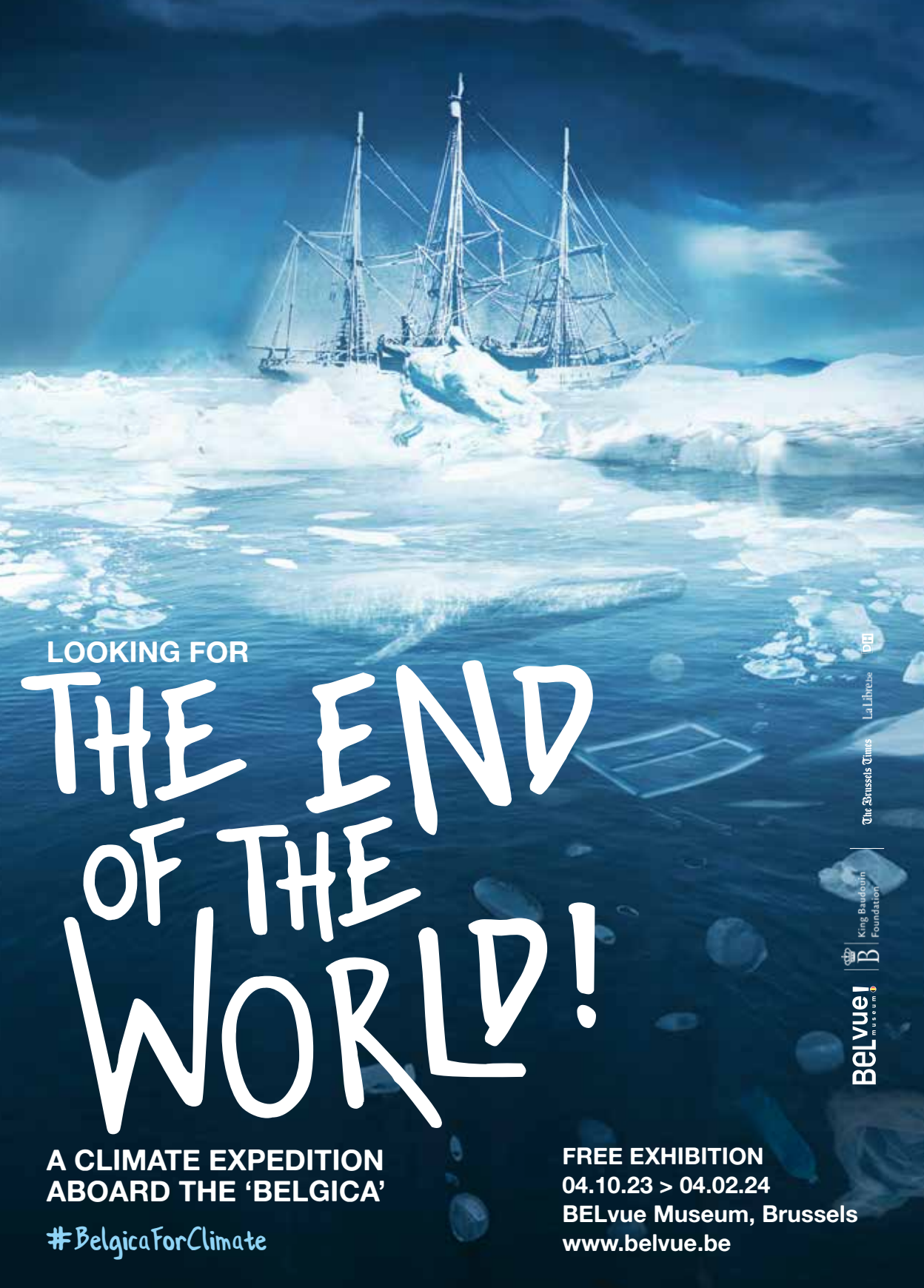
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when you can drive a star?

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Editor's LETTER

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And we're back!

Summer was just great, can we have it back please? I know you're all raring to go, refreshed and ready to push forward with your plans; but before you put your foot to the floor and go full throttle, Robbie Stakelum urges us to manage our commitments, stay focused on our priorities and occasionally - and politely - say, no! Our regular contributor Arnon Barnes suggests we look at the low-hanging fruit and identify three relatively small things that can be achieved with ease that could really make a difference.

Interested in art? As always, we have lots of interesting suggestions on art in 'What's on', but have you ever thought about art as an investment? We spoke to Christine Mostert, Head of Art Advisory Services at Degroof Petercam about investing in art and some of the things that you probably need to consider. We also meet a collector, Patric Tuytens, who has put his collection on display in Ronse at his MERode gallery.

In our politics article we meet with Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, leader of Belarus's United Transitional Cabinet. Tsikhanouskaya went into exile three years ago following Lukashenko's brutal crackdown on those who want a brighter and more democratic future in Belarus. We learn about her fight and the European future she dreams of for her country.

Tally ho!

Catherine Feore
Editor



Margot Robbie: "I admire the societal view that we need to look after each other"

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Rugby: Crouch, bind and set!

Have you been enjoying the rugby world cup? Want to learn more about the game and get involved with a local club? We speak to Deirdre Fulrong, President of BBRFC Celtic and learn that the benefits of rugby go well beyond the pitch.

Belgian wines in the spotlight

Over the last few years the reputation of Belgium's wines has been growing. The soil is particularly suitable for cultivating those grapes essential for making sparkling wines, but great whites and reds are emerging. We look at a couple trailblazing domaines.

A night at the opera

Belgium is home to three exceptional opera houses: La Monnaie, Opéra Royal de Wallonie , and Opera Vlaanderen. They are renowned for the quality and originality of their productions. We take a brief overview of what each has in store in their 2023-2024 seasons.



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GOING PLACES TOGETHER

Starring in Belgium

We suggest three hot tickets



Madonna - Celebration Tour 2023

She's back on the road. Madonna may not be a great singer, but she does love performing. In a viral video Hollywood a-listers dare the global superstar to go on tour and perform her mega hits of the last 40 years. Madonna, needless to say, rises to the challenge. If you are of a certain age you will enjoy the tunes that got you on the dance floor over the last four decades.

21-22 October

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Rodrigo y Gabriela

The Mexican guitar duo started their career in 1999 busking on Grafton Street in Dublin, where they were discovered and seem to have been on a fairly non-stop tour ever since. Their first eponymous album went straight to number one in the Irish charts in 2006 striding past Johnny Cash and the Arctic Monkeys, who were at the top of their game at the time. Their guitars are also the rhythm section, there is a touch of flamenco, some pure rocking, a bit of Mexican folk, I venture a small Irish influence, but above all else there is pure joy in delighting and entertaining their audience. You will not be disappointed!

30 October

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Das Rheingold

When you've been around for a bit, you realise that talismans usually spell trouble and should be avoided. With Wagner's 'Ring Cycle' we're talking about around 16 hours of trouble spread over four operas. La Monnaie has decided to take on the great cycle and will be performing parts one and two: Das Rheingold and Die Walküre, in the coming season. There's something for everyone here: gods, goddesses, demi-gods, Nibelungen dwarves, water nymphs and, of course, humans. What's it all about? Well, the ring gives you power, but the downside is that you have to renounce love. Spoiler: it doesn't end well if you're a god, for mortals there's hope and the possibility of redemption through love.

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Les Petites Cantines, connection through food

Nuala Morgan took part in one of the 'participative banquets' organized by Les Petites Cantines, and found the recipe for social inclusion.



It was while she was laid up on her sofa after a skiing accident that Daphné Vaxelaire, a lawyer working in public affairs, experienced the reality of social isolation that so many face. Unable to work, confined to her neighbourhood, she realised that this was, in fact, the reality for many people. "I had a lot of good people around me, yet I saw how difficult this situation could be for those who fall out of the 'system' - the long-term sick, unemployed, elderly," Daphné re-

members. "I wanted to create a place where people of all backgrounds and circumstances could meet and create a connection." And what better way to create connections than over a meal. Along with her co-founder Natasja, Daphné established the Brussels branch of 'Les Petites Cantines' [the Little Canteens], a participatory restaurant where everyone joins in, and only pays what they can.



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This was in July 2021, at the end of the seemingly-interminable period of lockdowns and restrictions due to the Covid pandemic. We had all experienced the sudden shift in our daily routines. No longer able to go out to work, to meet friends on the other side of town, or take part in the activities that normally got us out of the house, many of us can relate to this feeling of being cut off from the world. But there was something more that Daphné was missing. "Brussels is an extremely multicultural city, and I wanted somewhere where you could come across people from all walks of life, of all different ages and origins."

Social isolation is a confirmed phenomenon in Belgium, where around a third of people consider themselves 'very alone,' and another third 'moderately alone.' The University of Ghent's 'National Happiness Survey' shows that this feeling is decidedly more prevalent among the unemployed, the long-term sick, and students.

So when Daphné came across the network of Les Petites Cantines, the idea struck a chord. The premise is simple - a place that

is open to people of any age, any background, worker, unemployed, student or retired - to share food and connection. Emphasis is put on everyone joining in where they can. Helping prepare the meal, set the table, or clear up afterwards is all part of the process. It helps create this feeling of social connection, insists Daphné. It also removes the focus from paying for a meal, as participants can contribute in other ways. Those who can, pay a contribution, allowing those who cannot to enjoy the moment. The meal becomes an act of solidarity and community-building.

For the moment, the cantine holds pop-up banquets and aperitifs in the delightful Elzenhof (Flemish House) in Ixelles, on average once a month. "We have 10-12 volunteers in the kitchen, preparing a meal for up to 50 participants," explains Daphné. For the smaller-scale apéros, around 8 volunteers cater for around 20 participants.

The sourcing and preparation of the food follows the same values of inclusion and community. The Barn organic covered market at Fernand Coq supplies unsold stock for use

in Les Petites Cantines kitchen. (This partnership is a precursor of a new law announced for 2024, where supermarkets will be obliged to donate their unsold, still edible stock to charities working with those in need). Based on what is

available, the menu is planned and whatever ingredients are missing are bought in. The menus are mainly vegetarian, for both environmental and economic reasons. At this late-summer feast, the menu featured individual swiss chard flans, with a delicious orange and beetroot dip, ratatouille and

rice-stuffed peppers and tomatoes, and a summer fruit crumble to finish. It was designed by a mother-daughter combo, who are not professional cooks but whose driving passion is avoiding food waste.

The public is really intergenerational, with participants enjoying "the good atmosphere and lovely exchanges", or "the open, relaxed environment where you can sit next to someone you don't know and have a laugh together". More than 50 guests were seated around communal tables on the delightful terrace when I attended. All ages were indeed represented, from small kids to active seniors. I shared a table with a group of international students and a few Ixelles residents: Bernadette, a retired paediatric nurse, and Aurélie, a sexologist whose kids love taking part in the meals. Around half of the group were first-timers, as I was. Others were back to enjoy this inclusive neighbourhood get-together, sharing tips on similar initiatives - communal composting, services exchange and so on.

And how is the food? "Delicious!" "A veritable feast" and "a great meal cooked together" are some of the comments left by participants.

It's important that the food tastes good and is enjoyed by all, but the emphasis here is



not on an amazing gastronomic experience, but on an amazing social experience.

Les Petites Cantines is part of a network first established in Lyon, France, and now operating in more than 10 cities, with another dozen in the process of setting up.

Daphné's ambition for the Ixelles chapter is to find a more permanent venue where the cantine would be open for lunch every day. "We would love to find a shared space with other associations who could use it for activities outside of mealtimes," explains Daphné.

Until then, all hands are welcome to volunteer in the organization, menu planning and shopping. The association, set up as an asbl, also welcomes those with communication or financial planning skills, to help spread the word and ensure the financial sustainability of the initiative.

To find out more about the project or to become a volunteer, an apéritif is organised on 26 September, 6pm at Elzenhof - Ave de la Couronne, 12 (Ixelles). The next banquets are planned for 16 September and 29 October, at the same address.

All information can be found at www.bruxelles.lespetitescantines.org ⓘ



PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

*Think of small things you can change to
make a difference to your day-to-day*

New: AquaCircuit Classes

Aspria is constantly innovating,
this time bringing the principles
of CrossFit to the pool



Forget everything you thought you knew about group classes practiced in the pool. Aspria invites you to (re)discover the joys and benefits of training in the water with a unique concept: AquaCircuit. This form of aquatic CrossFit is already shaping up to be one of the new sports trends to watch closely in the coming years – and you can now try it for yourself.

What is AquaCircuit?

Much more than a simple class, this complete and dynamic workout routine takes full advantage of the natural resistance that occurs underwater to effectively work your muscle groups in isolation and put your cardiovascular system to the test, while reducing the impact on your joints.



“ YOU CAN CHALLENGE YOURSELF AT YOUR OWN PACE, PUSHING YOUR PERSONAL LIMITS AND ACHIEVING RESULTS QUICKLY ”

Participants in the class are split into small groups, supervised by trainers, guiding them through a series of varied workstations featuring specialized underwater equipment. So whether you're a seasoned sports fan or just looking to get back into shape, AquaCircuit is tailored to suit everyone.

What makes this unique?

The great innovation with this approach comes from the emphasis placed on training intensity, while still keeping the activity accessible for everyone. You can challenge yourself at your own pace, pushing your personal limits and achieving results quickly. The AquaCircuit offers you a unique experience where water becomes your training partner, enabling you to achieve smoother and more effective movements.

How does it work?

AquaCircuit sessions start with a carefully designed warm-up to prepare your body for exercise. You then follow this up with a series of intense fractional workouts based on the tabata principle (40 seconds of effort and 20 seconds of recovery), stimulating every muscle in your body.

Each group, of no more than four people, is allocated a specific workstation for three to four minutes: AquaBike, water treadmill, trampoline, step or boxing (using a punching bag and dedicated gloves). The coach explains the specific movements to be performed and then starts the music. It's up to you to push yourself during the 40 seconds of effort! The aim is to give it your all before the 20-second recovery period. This pattern is repeated three times and, when the music playlist ends, each group can change workstation and start again.

Finally, each session ends with a well-deserved stretch and relaxation.



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“ THE WATER INCREASES THE INTENSITY OF THE EFFORT AND THE RESULTS WILL BE VISIBLE VERY QUICKLY ”

The extra benefits

The benefits of working out in the water are varied. As well as strengthening your muscles and improving your cardiovascular capacity, you benefit from increased resistance while avoiding the stress on your joints. With its buoyancy, water also allows for a feeling of lightness, which reduces the risk of injury and promotes recovery.

For Nicole Mattez, trainer at Aspria, saving time is another key advantage of AquaCircuit: «45 minutes of AquaCircuit is the equivalent of 1.5 hours of dry training. The water increases the intensity of the effort and the results will be visible very quickly.»

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Fat-free fashion – in or out?

Together's nutrition guru, **Liz Cassidy**, proffers some not so fatuous dietary advice



We're all familiar with the concept of 'lean cuisine.' Influencing our own home-cooking, its commercial manifestation appeared on supermarket shelves half a century ago as foodstuffs to help achieve an aesthetic or healthily svelte physique. But can a fixation with leanness obscure the nutritional and physiological benefits of our perceived perennial enemy, fat?

Energy, fat and filling out

If we consume too much fat, it may contribute to excessive calorie intake. Not rocket science. Gram for gram, fats contribute just over double the calories of either the protein or carbohydrate content of food. The body transforms any energy surplus, from lean or fatty foods, into stores including into fat tissue, generally the culprit in an expanding waistline.

Why your body needs fat

However, if a zero-fat body composition is your aspiration, think again. Body fat around our limbs and organs performs critical functions, among them shock absorption, insulation, and storage and transport of vitamins like A, D and E. Fats are in the packaging ("membrane") of each and every cell. Fatty tissue secretes hormones involved in appetite regulation like leptin, so that we start to feel full when eating, preventing persistent hunger. With low fat tissue and body weight, oestrogen balance is potentially impacted. This can interfere with female reproduction by affecting menstruation and fertility.

Oil your brain cogs

Our cognitive powers rely heavily on fats, representing, as they do, over half of our brain mass. There's a growing body of evidence that your grandmother was right – fish, but especially oily fish, is indeed 'brain food', as a rich source of the omega-3 fatty acid found in the highest abundance in our brains. That's "DHA" (docosahexaenoic acid). Don't skimp therefore on the occasional mackerel or sardine toast, salmon salad, rollmop, or anchovy pasta dish. You'll be heeding developing science on minimizing your risk of cognitive decline. Be aware too that plant compared to marine sources yield much less DHA, though plentiful walnuts, chia, flaxseed and dark leaves can still boost your supply to some extent.

Healthy what - fat?

You can already spot that not all fats are equal. If you follow recommendations for a healthy heart and circulation, you'll be aware that heavily processed fats, common in junk food, are a no-no, and that saturated fat, found in animal products like dairy and meat, should constitute less than 10% of

your calories to help keep harmful cholesterol in check.

While going fat-free is not advisable, limiting overall fat consumption is. Below 35% of your daily calories should be from fat. Use a food intake app, which will do the maths for you, or scrutinise food labels. Fat gives texture and taste, important for food enjoyment. Healthier fats are the way to go. Add unsaturated options like olive oil to salads, or munch on daily handfuls of hazelnuts, almonds, walnuts or pumpkin seeds.

Athletes may periodically follow low fat regimes to make weight, or just because

**“ OUR COGNITIVE
POWERS RELY
HEAVILY ON FATS,
REPRESENTING,
AS THEY DO,
OVER HALF OF OUR
BRAIN MASS ”**

accessing more of their calories from carbs will benefit an intensive training routine. For good health though, none of us should get less than a fifth of our energy from fat, since many vitamins and plant nutrients, such as beta-carotene in orangey-red veg, need fat to optimize absorption. In any case, you may notice persistent

peckishness with little dietary fat. We absorb it slowly, so it prolongs satiety.

What about fat distribution and your health? Beware of accumulating too much weight around the middle to avoid visceral fat wrapped around your liver, heart or other organs. This increases risk for chronic disease such as coronary heart disease or diabetes. Women should aim for a waistline of below 80 cm and men, below 94 cm (90 cm for African Caribbean or South Asian ethnicities).

Lean, mean, fast machine

Perhaps you're a dedicated gym-goer, with a routine to get ripped. Or maybe you hit the tarmac or pedals daily, chalking up the miles. Either way, you'll know that body fat is a potential hindrance, interfering with

Nutrition

definition or else with lightness and speed. There are indeed good reasons to aim for leanness with performance in mind, and for shifting fat mass via training favouring muscularity.

So, should we all target low body fat to the same degree? No. First, just to survive, we require an essential amount of fat tissue to support basic physiological functions like warmth, energy management, or hormonal signalling. This differs by gender, for men 2-5% of overall body mass and, for women, significantly more at 10-13%. Add to this the non-essential fat component and we might expect relatively fit males to have up to 17% overall and females, up to 24%. If you're a successful athlete, training and competing regularly, knock off about 4% from these ceilings.



“ REGULAR EXERCISE MAY INCREASE YOUR ABILITY TO USE FAT WHILE MOVING ”

Of course, many of us may fall somewhat beyond the athletic or fit category, carrying substantially more fat. Note too that, as we age, muscle mass and strength decrease, accompanied by more fat deposition. All the more reason to stay active and include strength-oriented movement like weight training.

Fat to fuel your sport?

Ideally, no. Eaten just before your daily jog, fatty foods can cause indigestion or an unpleasant stitch in your side. Carbs are a better, more readily metabolized option. But, you might wonder, is it possible to increase your fat-burning potential? Possibly. Regular exercise may increase your ability to use fat while moving. The fittest people utilise the most fat when exercising, and lower intensity and longer training also enhance our reliance on it. So tune your sports routine if this is your goal.

In my genes

Finally, genes and fat metabolism? Gene variants may influence how you fare with different types of dietary fat, for instance predisposing you to increased obesity risk or slower weight loss with higher saturated fat intake. But on the upside, you may be lucky, with other variants helping you stay trim by switching in more monounsaturated fat - delectable olives, avocados or peanuts. So talk to a nutrition expert and gen up - your genes may amaze you! ①

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PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Sport

Crouch, bind and set!

Catherine Feore meets the president of
one of Brussels most popular sports clubs



The Rugby World Cup has put the game of rugby football in the spotlight – we met with Deirdre Furlong, president of BBRFC Celtic, to find out a bit more about the game.

People who play rugby say that it is much more than a game. Rugby prides itself in having a unique ethos. The World Rugby Playing Charter lists integrity, passion, solidarity, discipline and respect as the defining characteristics of the game.

This is echoed by Furlong: "The rugby skills, physical fitness, and responsibilities of each position of playing can be taught, but what

is really important in rugby are the values of the sport which we also try to instill in the players and throughout our club and these – in my opinion – are equally important as the physical skills. For example, a strong sense of team-work, commitment, integrity through honesty and fair play and mutual respect. I would also say resilience is an important element to be able to stay focused and handle pressure. These values do not just remain on the pitch, but extend beyond into players' daily lives."

"Everyone can learn how to play rugby" says Furlong, "and one of the things I love most about the sport is that no matter your

“ NO MATTER YOUR SHAPE OR SIZE, THERE IS A POSITION FOR YOU ON A RUGBY TEAM ”

shape or size, there is a position for you on a rugby team. I'm a small person (157 cm) and weigh around 52 kilos.”

“Touch rugby is also an important part of our club and is a very popular sport, which men and women can play together. It is a very fast paced, skillful sport without the physical intensity of tackling, or scrums. More and more clubs are setting up touch rugby teams and there is now also a competitive league in Belgium. So this can be a wonderful alternative to Rugby 15s.”

BBRFC Celtica is a large club with over 400 members. A little more than 50% are Bel-

gian and the last time they counted, they found they had members from more than 29 nationalities: “We are a local international club.”

When I was growing up not many women played, but Furlong says that is definitely changing: “I started playing back in 2006 there was only one division for women, now there are two. In Belgium, there is a project under way called Power Girls Play Rugby 2022-2025, set up by the Belgium rugby federation in collaboration with the Flemish and Francophone rugby governing bodies to help women's rugby grow in Belgium and provide a full pathway from youth school to adult women's rugby.”

The rules

I asked Furlong for a brief overview of the rules: “The objective like any team sport is to score points by carrying or kicking the ball over the opposing team's try line and grounding it (a try) or kicking the ball through the goalposts (conversion, penalty, drop goal).

“The team's 15 players are divided into forwards (larger, more physical players) and backs (more agile, speedy players) and each have their own specific roles to play. The ball must absolutely be passed backwards and players can tackle their opponents to stop them advancing, but this must be done legally and referees are very strict on this. The game involves set pieces: scrums and line-

“ SAFETY IS A TOP PRIORITY IN THE CLUB AND THEY HAVE TAKEN SEVERAL MEASURES TO MINIMIZE THE RISK OF INJURIES ”



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“ RUGBY GOES BEYOND BEING JUST A SPORT, IT IS A FAMILY, A COMMUNITY, A TRIBE ”

outs, which are awarded after infractions or out of bound play.

For a scrum the referee gives the instruction: 'crouch, bind and set' and the full scrum of each team engages and pushes against each other.

Beyond the basics, Furlong acknowledges that some of the laws are more complicated, but I get the feeling that at BBRFC Celtic you're in safe hands, so you can learn as you go.

Safety

There have been some concerns voiced about injuries over the years. Furlong says player safety is a top priority in the club and they have taken several measures to mini-

mize the risk of injuries. The coaching, refereeing, protective gear and commitments to age-appropriate games to ensure the safety of younger players have been carefully put in place to support this objective: "While rugby is a physical sport, efforts are continually made to reduce the risk of injuries and ensure the well-being of players."


The club is always looking for new players. Furlong's confident that if you come along and give it a try – no pun intended – you will not be disappointed: "Playing rugby can be a fantastic experience, offering physical fitness, life-long friendships, and the thrill of competition. I would say that rugby goes beyond being just a sport, it is a family, a community, a tribe." ❶

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Brussels College of Art and Design - Where fashion flourishes

Nicholas Sirot visits the first end-of-year show of

The first graduates of the fashion section of the College of Art and Design (CAD) present their collections at the Arsenal. The fashion section was established three years ago under the patronage of two prestigious figures in Belgian fashion, Edouard Vermeulen, CEO and fashion designer at Natan Couture, and Jean-Paul Knott (www.jeanpaulknott.com), who built his craft working with renowned fashion houses like Yves Saint Laurent, Louis Féraud, and Cerruti.

CAD is already internationally recognized for its programs in Interior Architecture, Design, and Digital Design and Communication. The launch of the fashion section was an audacious new direction, especially as it emerged during the pandemic's turmoil. Nevertheless, CAD deployed all its expertise, and has thrived, benefiting fully from the school's well-known *modus operandi*: teachers with professional experience, involvement of industry experts, an approach that emphasizes practice and a philosophy centered on tangible results. The course is taught in English. They also have close links with the Nantes School of Design.

Vermeulen and Knott led a professional jury alongside Jean-Paul Lespagnard - fashion designer and artist, Olivia Hainaut - accessories designer, Anaïs Carion - Managing Director of MAD Home of Creators, Sarah Levy - accessories designer, and Ellen Robinson - fashion designer consultant at Julia



CAD - Ana d'Ansembourg 3 years graduate 2023

June, Christopher Lardot - fashion Illustrator, Alice Legein - fashion & interior designer, Francisco Fantini - leather designer, Stephanie Alvin - fashion designer technical swing and draping. They evaluated the end-of-year collections, consisting of eight silhouettes per student; the students received the guidance of their department heads, Margaux Bolle, fashion and interior designer, and Mansour Badjoko, fashion designer at Mansour Martin.



CAD - Fanny Nalmpantidis 3 years graduate 2023

Out of the five third-year students, all of them excelled with distinction! For Philippine d'Hoofschmidt, it's a childhood dream come true. For Malou Marsin, the influences of Jean-Paul Gaultier and Thierry Mugler inspired her throughout her journey at CAD. Fanny Nalmpantidis, originally a pianist, pursued her passion for fashion design. Anna d'Ansembourg's aspiration is to create her own eco-friendly brand. Nina Del Marmol, in her work at CAD, wanted to highlight the "monstrous aspect of the body" and treat clothing like costumes. "I want to tell a story through my clothes," she says.

CAD's pedagogical team stands out due to its wealth of experience and its commitment to nurturing individual talent. Professors, often active industry experts, share their unique perspectives and invaluable expertise with students. This seamless interaction between mentors and apprentices weaves an invisible thread connecting generations

“ CAD’S PEDAGOGICAL TEAM STANDS OUT DUE TO ITS WEALTH OF EXPERIENCE AND ITS COMMITMENT TO NURTURING INDIVIDUAL TALENT ”



CAD - Malou Marsin 3 years graduate 2023

“ THE SCHOOL IS CONSCIENTIOUS IN ENSURING STUDENTS ARE UP TO DATE WITH CONTEMPORARY TRENDS ”

“ CAD SCHOOL IN BRUSSELS IS MUCH MORE THAN AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION, IT IS A PLACE WHERE CREATIVITY BLOSSOMS ”



CAD - Nina Del Marmol 3 years graduate 2023

of creators, ensuring that fashion traditions are preserved while evolving with the times.

The course, called 'Textile Design & Fashion', distinguishes itself in several ways. There are mandatory internships in companies, and a comprehensive curriculum encompassing styling, sewing, draping, and even the creation of accessories such as bags and jewelry. Textile design courses complement



CAD - Philippine D'Hoffschmidt 3 years graduate 2023

the fashion work, because understanding different textiles and materials is central to design work. Furthermore, the school is conscientious in ensuring students are up to date with contemporary trends, whether it be slow fashion, textile recycling, upcycling, or other environmental concerns. CAD School thus positions itself at the forefront of innovation and sustainability in the fashion industry.

In the end, CAD School in Brussels is much more than an educational institution, it is a place where creativity blossoms, where dreams transform into reality, and where the future of fashion is sketched with the skillful hands of aspiring creators. It is a sanctuary of creativity where fashion, with all its diversity and brilliance, finds its purest expression.

For all information about CAD:
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Four tips for preventing burnout

Life coach **Robbie Stakelum** looks at what we can do to manage commitments

The summer break was great for disconnecting from work, leaving behind stress and getting some essential time to just relax. However September marks the back-to-school season, not just for children, but also for the working adult as we inevitably face the return to reality. Holding on to that sense of calm in the face of deadlines, events, reporting and office politics can be a challenge, so let's explore how to prevent burnout as we head back to work.

In December 2018 I suffered a burnout, I was pushing myself too hard both at work and in my personal life, I wasn't managing any sort of work-life balance, indeed the concept was totally alien to me and I had unconsciously put myself on a road to burnout. In the aftermath of that burnout I did a lot of soul searching, I wanted to ensure that I didn't repeat the same mistakes again (I'm quite proud to say I have not!) but in that process I realized that the roots of my burnout had started that previous September. Having had a relaxing summer, I was fully energized



for work and wanted to hit the ground running. I was too eager and quickly overcommitted myself. While at the same time, I had started a course that I was ready to give my

all to. Both in and out of work I was spreading myself too thin.

In my experience, I was the architect of my burnout. We often associate burnout with toxic workplaces where managers micro-manage and harass staff and tear you down, while that does happen it's not the only recipe for burnout. You can also be passionate and committed to your job, or you can be a chronic people pleaser or a perfectionist where you struggle to set and maintain healthy boundaries which mean you overburden yourself with work and stress.

When it comes to burnout you have to examine your own behaviours, mindsets and



“ WHEN IT COMES TO BURNOUT YOU HAVE TO EXAMINE YOUR OWN BEHAVIOURS, MINDSETS AND BELIEFS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO BURNOUT ”

beliefs that in a strange sort of cocktail contribute to burnout. Those are the things you can exercise control over. This doesn't rid your employer of any responsibility around contributing to burnout, however it is a two way street, and often I see clients who exhibit the same burnout causing behaviors in multiple jobs.

So let's focus on the factors you have control over.

Don't be afraid to say NO

Saying 'no' doesn't mean you're incompetent or unprofessional. On the contrary 'no' actually means you are fully aware of your resources, priorities and what needs to get done. Clients I work with are so driven to please others that they don't realize that it comes at a cost to them. You have limited hours in a day so don't spread yourself too thin.

A helpful motto for those who struggle with saying no and setting boundaries is to remember 'Everything you say yes to requires a no somewhere else in your life.' Agreeing to take on additional work, travel or projects comes at a price somewhere else in your life. Similarly saying yes to going out for dinner, drinks or socializing with friends, can also mean saying no to much needed downtime to relax. It's a balancing act you need to cultivate over time.

Self-help

Communicate Effectively

A blunt 'no' has a poor return on investment. You are acutely aware of your workload and priorities, but others are not. Don't simply tell your colleague something is not possible; you need to communicate it effectively. Clearly explain your workload, your priorities and propose a time frame when you can offer them support. You may not feel like you have the time or patience for that conversation but trust me it'll cost you less in the long-term and avoid some tense conversations.

Remember most people are so caught up in their own world they forget what is going on around them, if you don't communicate effectively how can you reasonably expect others to be able to meet your needs?

Let go of Perfectionism

Remember 'Done is better than perfect.' A contributing factor to burnout is compound stress, the culmination of increasing workload as you struggle to complete tasks. One solution here is to talk to your manager about workloads, but often I find clients struggle to finalize a task until it is 'perfect'. Perfection is a myth, and pursuing such unrealistic standards often means you can't delegate tasks to others, for fear they won't do a good enough job, and you effectively hoard tasks and live under high levels of stress and pressure for prolonged periods, which is not good for either your physical or mental health.

Find a way to destress

Life will always have moments of stress that are sadly inescapable, and you need to have systems in place to release stress. We hold stress in the body and so walking, running, the gym, yoga, swimming, pilates and other

physical activities are helpful to both release endorphins and discharge the stress.

Find, and plan for, activities that you enjoy that can create some distance between you and your job such as reading, cooking, being in nature, gardening, the cinema etc. You don't need to do everything, but just try out different activities that work for you, and provide a healthy way to discharge stress. For example, after a bad day you may de-stress by meeting friends for a drink or takeaway, and in the moment that can feel like a healthy way to de-stress. However if you always turn to drink and unhealthy foods to manage your stress it will negatively impact your physical health, as your body is not getting the nutrients and energy it needs, which can impact on your sleep cycle which then lowers your resilience to

stress the following day, kick-starting a vicious cycle of stress.

Year on year we are seeing a rise in burnout from work. It's normal and ok to feel stressed at work, but it doesn't have to

be chronic or result in burnout. By setting boundaries and saying no, communicating your needs and situation effectively, letting go of perfectionism and planning activities to discharge your stress you'll be in a better position to prevent burnout.

Robbie Stakelum is a Brussels-based coach, supporting clients feeling lost and disconnected to find a sense of purpose by capturing clarity and building balance. Want to work with Robbie? You can find out more about his coaching practice, set up a free discovery call or find out if coaching is for you by checking out www.robbiestakelum.com or get in touch direct with Robbie by email via robbie@robbiestakelum.com 📧

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The Wizard of Oz Formula

Matthew Cossolotto suggests ways you can pack more punch into your presentations



Welcome to our fifth article in Together's Public Speaking Master Class from a real pro, Matthew Cossolotto (aka The Podium Pro). He recently launched a speaking business and a new website (www.MatthewCossolotto.com) highlighting his Personal Empowerment Programs (PEPTalks) focused on three main topics: Habits, Speaking, Promises. We hope you enjoy this new article in our series that's designed to help you reach

your peak potential as a speaker and enhance your leadership skills.

All speechwriters and speakers – not to mention comedians – know about the 'Rule of Three'. We're all familiar with this famous quote from Shakespeare's Julius Caesar when Mark Antony addresses the crowd after Caesar's assassination: "Friends, Romans, Countrymen," he intones, "lend me your ears." Long before that fateful day, Cae-

sar himself used the rule of three when he declared: "Veni, vidi, vici" ("I came, I saw, I conquered").

The appreciation of threes goes way back in time. Aristotle's *Ars Rhetorica* employs the rule of three when he discusses the three main methods of persuasion that every speaker should employ: Ethos, Pathos and Logos. Briefly, Ethos deals with the speaker's personal character and credibility. Pathos appeals to emotion or the psychology of the audience. And Logos is based on reasoning or logic to make the case.

Introducing The Wizard of Oz Formula

I'm not about to quibble with Aristotle, or to try to improve on his rules of persuasion that have stood the test of time since the 4th century BC. But I would like to humbly propose a slight variation. Something I call The Wizard of Oz Formula. As you'll see, this formula is also grounded in the all-important rule of three. And in some ways these three elements loosely mirror Aristotle's Ethos, Pathos and Logos.

Picture the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Cowardly Lion. I'm sure we all remember those lovable, colorful characters from the motion picture *The Wizard of Oz*. You'll recall that the Scarecrow was searching for a brain, the Tin Man a heart, the Cowardly Lion courage. A la Aristotle, I suggest that every successful speech should contain some portion of those three elements: Brains (similar to Logos: information, data, logic, reasoning); Heart (akin to Pathos: passion, emotion, enthusiasm); and Courage (aligned with Ethos: character, a sense of purpose, a speaker who demonstrates courage also embodies character and credibility).

In many speaking situations, it's a good idea to issue a call to action, to ask members of the audience to do something and not simply to take in the information.

“ IN MANY SPEAKING SITUATIONS, IT’S A GOOD IDEA TO ISSUE A CALL TO ACTION, TO ASK MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE TO DO SOMETHING AND NOT SIMPLY TO TAKE IN THE INFORMATION. ”





“ “IMAGINE” IS AN IMPORTANT WORD TO USE IN GIVING SPEECHES ”

A key message from The Wizard of Oz is that the qualities being sought by all three characters are already present inside each one. As the story unfolds, the Scarecrow learns he is already smart. The Tin Man has demonstrated that he, indeed, has a heart. And even the Cowardly Lion displays unexpected courage in the face of adversity. But all three imagine that the Wizard has special powers to somehow bestow these sought-after qualities on each of them.

“Imagine” is an important word to use in giving speeches. Audience members respond well when speakers ask them to imagine a future that is better than today's reality. Just think about Martin Luther King's *I have a Dream* speech, delivered just over 60 years ago. His dream still fires the imagination of his listeners to this day.

Dorothy's three friends “imagined” that the Wizard was all-powerful so they accepted the idea that he could somehow magically grant them what they thought they wanted (and in fact already possessed): brains, heart, and courage. Imagination is powerful. Speakers should tap into that power. They should also make use of those three qualities in every presentation: brains, heart, and courage.

PodiumPower Comes from the Inside

Here's another little secret: Being a great speaker comes from inside too. Just like Dorothy's wish to return home. Ultimately this comes from the inside. Tapping her ruby slippers together, she tells herself repeatedly: “There's no place like home. There's no place like home.” And she awakens in her bed surrounded and supported by family and loved ones.

Along those same lines, I'm asking you to think about the Wizard of Oz Formula and repeat to yourself, almost like a mantra, the following simple sentence: “The audience supports me, the audience supports me.” It's a bit like tapping an imaginary pair of ruby slippers together and finding yourself back home surrounded by admiring loved ones.

About the Author

A former NATO speechwriter, Matthew Cossolotto is the author of *The Joy of Public Speaking* and the forthcoming *Harness Your HabitForce* and *Embrace Your Promise Power*. Matthew provides coaching and conducts public speaking workshops and other Personal Empowerment Programs (PEP Talks) in Brussels and beyond. Visit: www.MatthewCossolotto.com. 📞



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PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Self-help

What is high potential activation?

Sarbani Sen takes a look at how we hold ourselves back and how we can free ourselves from negative habits



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‘High potential activation’ is an approach based on the idea that we under-function most of the time because we are in automatic mode. Being in automatic mode is a very common way of leading our lives. We know what time we get up, when to pick up kids from school, etc and most of the time we cut ourselves out from feeling or improving some aspects of our lives. That’s how we end up cluttering

our homes, overeating or eating poorly, not making time to take care of our bodies and waiting till they scream with pain, or disease. By operating on autopilot, we miss out on opportunities for self-reflection and personal growth. This constant state of under functioning can prevent us from truly living our lives to the fullest and achieving our full potential. It is important to break free from this cycle and actively engage in self-care

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“ ACTIVATING OUR HIGHEST POTENTIAL IS GETTING BACK TO OUR NATURAL STATE OF EASE ”

and self-improvement, allowing ourselves to experience true fulfilment and happiness.

Activating our highest potential is getting back to our natural state of ease, to see the opportunities as they come, to understand the deeper meaning of things, to have more clarity about our lives, our relationships, to take better decisions.

When we think of it, we are walking superheroes with unlimited potential but we don't use the technology we are made of: intuition, intelligence, stamina, serendipity. These are states of higher consciousness. By tapping into these states of higher consciousness, we can unlock our full potential and experience a greater sense of fulfilment in our lives. It is through harnessing our intuition, intelligence, stamina, and serendipity that we can navigate challenges with ease and find true happiness in the present moment.

How do we reach these states of higher consciousness ?

We activate our highest potential when we get into a state of ease and joy. Ease is our natural default state, when we are fully ourselves, in the flow of life, confident of whatever happens trusting life, events and people around us. This is the state where we can create our biggest dreams. The opposite state is one of fear, judgment, self criticism or biased conclusions from our childhood. Many of us still struggle with emotions and

ideas that were built during early childhood and that prevent us from achieving or living the life we truly desire. Most of us actually block ourselves and get in our own way most of our lives. Until we understand we need to clean out these old patterns, reboot our system and upgrade. By recognising and acknowledging these patterns, we can begin the process of healing and transformation. It is essential to let go of the limiting beliefs and negative self-talk that hold us back, allowing space for new possibilities and growth. Through self-reflection, therapy, or personal development practices, we can gradually release these old patterns and replace them with empowering thoughts and actions. This journey of self-discovery and self-improvement enables us to create the life we truly desire and embrace our fullest potential.

One of the methods for getting us there is kundalini yoga. It reactivates the neural pathway between the hypothalamus and pineal gland. It also helps manage the parasympathetic and sympathetic systems, which are in charge of the sometimes reactive attitude we have in life, through breathing exercises and movement.

Activating our highest potential means reconnecting to all the possibilities that life offers at any given moment; hacking our minds to step into the now.

“ MANY OF US STILL STRUGGLE WITH EMOTIONS AND IDEAS THAT WERE BUILT DURING EARLY CHILDHOOD ”

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PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Self-help

By tapping into higher consciousness, we can experience a heightened sense of awareness and clarity, allowing us to make conscious choices and live a more fulfilling life. Kundalini Yoga serves as a powerful tool to awaken this potential within us, enabling us to access deeper levels of consciousness and unlock our true selves.

To get there it is important to take some time to look into all the aspects of our lives that need decluttering. By utilizing a range of tools, we can create a harmonious environment that supports our personal growth and self-discovery. Additionally, exploring these different aspects allows us to identify any areas of imbalance or negativity that may be holding us back from reaching our true potential.

You might wish to attempt the six steps to change programme if you feel ready to go

**“ BY UTILIZING A
RANGE OF TOOLS,
WE CAN CREATE A
HARMONIOUS
ENVIRONMENT
THAT SUPPORTS
OUR PERSONAL
GROWTH AND
SELF-DISCOVERY ”**

on this path. This curriculum was thoughtfully chosen to support anyone wishing to begin the cleansing process in a structured manner. People who adhere to the six steps to transformation programme can acquire the skills and direction needed to successfully traverse their personal growth journeys. This programme provides a methodical approach that guarantees a thorough examination of many self-discovery areas, enabling participants to address any underlying difficulties and create constructive changes in their life.

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A first step towards taxing actual rents

By requiring "professional" tenants to provide the tax man with information on their landlord, the government is taking a first step towards a tightened tax regime for real estate investors, writes Marion van der Donck



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In Belgium, buy-to-let investments are considered to be relatively advantageous in terms of income tax. Indeed, in principle the actual sums received in rent go untaxed. The tax authorities go by the index-corrected cadastral income of the property to establish the taxable base. This cadastral income (CI) is a notional (fictitious) income which is deemed to represent the rental income which owners earn from letting their properties. That being the case,

most cadastral incomes are benchmarked in 1975 and are very far removed from reality, especially for old houses. Even though this (index-corrected) CI has been raised by 40%, taxation based on the CI remains considerably more rewarding to landlords than having the actual rents taxed.

This taxation regime (CI raised by 40%) applies to properties that are let as well as to unlet properties, such as second homes

Real estate

in the Ardennes or by the seaside. The cadastral income 'à la Belge' also applies to second homes abroad even though, in principle, this income is not taxed twice in Belgium. The income must be declared, but is exempt from tax subject to the application of applicable progressive tax bands provided Belgium has signed a Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation with the country concerned. Which means that this foreign CI (cadastral income from properties let abroad) pushes up the average tax rate of the other sources of income of the tax payers but is not directly taxed.

Actual rents

Nonetheless, in some cases, at the same time it is the taxation based on the actual rents that applies in Belgium. When the tenant uses the property for professional purposes (meaning a natural person carrying on his business activities or a company occupying the property), it is the gross rents actually received that need to be declared. Gross rents are understood to refer to the rent and the "rental benefits", such as the maintenance and repair costs that have been paid by the tenant where they should have been defrayed by the landlord.

In both cases – cadastral income or rents actually received – the income is taxed via the tax return at the tax payer's marginal rate, that is to say at his highest tax rate (a rate which soon runs up to 50%).

But in the case of the taxation of the actual rents, the tax man allows deductions of 40% in flat rate costs from the taxable base. These costs are capped in consideration of the non-index-corrected cadastral income multiplied by a 5.37 revaluation coefficient (2023 income year, 2024 tax return). Declaring the actual maintenance costs is not possible.

It is also worth pointing out that the interests over loans taken out to purchase or re-

“ IT IS WORTH POINTING OUT THAT THE INTERESTS OVER LOANS FOR A PROPERTY ARE DEDUCTIBLE ”

novate a property, regardless of the amount and regardless of the kind of loan, are deductible from the entirety of the income derived from real property. Which means that contracting loan debts allows landlords to greatly reduce or even cancel out the taxation of the income derived from real property in their personal income tax.

Conversely, there is no getting away from the real estate tax, an annual tax that is payable by property owners. This tax is based on the cadastral income of the property. On average, the real estate tax amounts to around 40% of the amount of the CI. However, each region, each province and each municipality have the power to establish their own "local tax surcharges over and above the real estate tax".

The hunt for actual rents

Given that taxation based on the actual rents is higher than taxation based on the cadastral income, the tax administration is looking to get its hands on income derived from real property which has not been properly declared. To do so, at its latest spending review, the government has decided to require the tenants who wish to deduct the rent they pay in order to carry on their professional business to fill in an attachment. In other words, to deduct rent as a business expense, they will need to provide the tax man with a set of details. These details

will enable the tax administration to check whether the landlord is correctly declaring the rents actually received, rather than the cadastral income.

It also appears that in some cases, the landlord does not need to be informed of the fact that the tenant is using his property for professional purposes, even if the landlord has specified this is not allowed in the tenancy agreement. So he risks facing a tax reassessment. With the new obligation, this kind of situation should no longer occur.

Information

In which cases will tenants be required to include this attachment with their tax returns? In all situations where the tenant is a legal entity (companies, not-for-profit organisations liable for corporation tax or legal entity tax). For natural persons, the obligation exists if the taxpayer deducts all (or part) of his rent as an actual business expense.

In the attachment, the taxpayer will need to specify the landlord's identity details, the address of the property, the amount of the annual rent paid and which he wishes to deduct as a business expense.

All the same, one of the points of the text bothers the Liberal party (MR). The text sets out that, where tenants deduct part of their living address as a business expense, but where part of the living address is used as private living quarters, the entirety of the rent is to be taxed as a business tax for the landlord, that is to say based on the rents actually received. The sole exception: if the parcelling into the business part and the private quarters has been expressly specified in the tenancy agreement, which is not always the case. This specification could therefore considerably drive up the tax burden on landlords in those cases where this parcelling has not been specified in the contract at the outset.

Tax reform

This "minor" new feature is in keeping with the intention of the Minister of Finance, Vincent Van Peteghem, to tax the actual rents instead of the cadastral income. This intention is part of an all-encompassing tax reform, to be progressively rolled out in several phases over several years. The first phase still leaves the rental incomes unaffected. It remains to be seen whether the other phases will see the light of day – and when – as this will be a job for the next government.

“ THE TAXATION OF THE ACTUAL RENTS IS AN EVER-RECURRING HOT POTATO IN THE BELGIAN TAX SYSTEM ”

The taxation of the actual rents is an ever-recurring hot potato in the Belgian tax system, but it is so politically sensitive and a source of major disagreement, that to date no government has dared to really tackle it. In his proposal, Vincent Van Peteghem announces the taxation of actual rental incomes at a rate of 25%, with a 30% deduction of flat rate costs. His proposal also allows for the actual expenses incurred, such as for renovation works, to be deducted which would obviously be an incentive for landlords to swiftly move towards renovating the housing stock. The tax reform plan also sets out a global exemption in the amount of 6,000 euros (interests, dividends and rental incomes) per year. ❶



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Une estimation de bien peut se faire de plusieurs manières, la comparaison, l'expérience, la rentabilité, le prix au m², etc.

Personnellement, je procède à toutes les manières d'estimer possible et si je me retrouve dans une fourchette entre 5% à 10%, en fonction du bien évidemment, alors l'estimation semble correcte.

Je prends le temps également de faire des brainstormings immobiliers, en fonction de votre patrimoine, des attentes, des envies, des lois, des exigences futures, nous estimons, anticipons et prévoyons un plan d'avenir immobilier. Car oui l'immobilier est une question de temps.

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KBC BUILDING MAKES WAY FOR AMBITIOUS REAL ESTATE PROJECT

Formerly a bank, soon a UNIQUE INVESTMENT.

Brussels/Havenlaan - On the site where the imposing KBC building stood until recently, the prestigious The Banks will soon rise. This will be the vibrant heart of a revamped and substantially greened Canal Zone. With a clear emphasis on quality and liveability, the housing and living project represents a highly attractive investment.

FUTURE-ORIENTED PROJECT IN A PROMISING NEIGHBOURHOOD

Location, location, location: those looking for an investment with unprecedented growth prospects will find exactly what they are looking for in The Banks. This ambitious project provides an answer to the acute shortage of decent housing in and around Brussels. Indeed, under the influence of the ever-increasing number of expats in our country, demand for centrally located quality rental apartments has been growing steadily for years. "Brussels is the capital of the European Union and home to a lot of big multinationals," said Esa van den Heuvel, spokeswoman for property developer Triple Living. "Every year, our capital attracts more and more expats and highly educated high potentials. And these will effortlessly find their way to The Banks. If not for its vibrant, green neighbourhood and spacious, quality homes, then for

its accessibility and excellent central location near Tour & Taxis and bustling Noordwijk."

ATTRACTIVE AREA

Currently, the Brussels Canal Zone is undergoing a veritable metamorphosis. With new bridges and parks, cultural attractions and projects like The Banks, the old industrial zone is slowly but surely becoming a more than attractive meeting place. The Banks' design is strongly committed to improve the quality of life for residents and is in line with the major greening and upgrading of the wider area. "The Banks is an innovative and green residential site," explains Herwig Thirion, project manager of The Banks. "The sophisticated landscape design is by Bas Smets, who will also redesign the area around Notre Dame in Paris. The large central courtyard garden with several play areas is the ideal meeting place for residents and

connects the site to the future three-hectare Becopark on the waterfront. That should be ready by 2024."

UNRIVALLED GROWTH POTENTIAL

The Banks and its surroundings offer unprecedented growth potential. "The sky is the limit for this neighbourhood," says van den Heuvel. "Thanks to the development of Tour & Taxis, the neighbourhood has already received an incredible boost in recent years. In the future, the area will become much more interesting for investors. For example, on the former Citroën site, there will be the Centre Pompidou, a 35,000-square-metre art museum. The old freight station at the Tour & Taxis site - the Gare Maritime - is now a giant market and events hall. And those who want to cross over to bustling Noordwijk can now simply take the Suzan Daniel Bridge, which, for a long time, was the neighbourhood's missing link."

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TRIPLE LIVING



The art of investing

Art is an investment unlike any other, **Catherine Feore** takes a look at its potential as an investment



Brussels Gallery Weekend © Antonin Weber

It is estimated that the value of global art transactions was worth more than €60 billion in 2022. Art has a market, a value and is therefore an asset – maybe an unusual one, but nevertheless it can form part of your portfolio of investments.

Why invest in art?

Just as people often turn to gold in turbulent economic times as a hedge against inflation, art can be seen as an asset that can retain, or maybe even exceed its original value. The art market has wit-

nessed an average annual growth rate of 5% over the past 50 years, outperforming other alternative investments. The usual provisos for all investments apply, value can go down as well as up. Owners may look at their art based more on the pleasure they derive from possessing it, but investing in art isn't necessarily a choice between head and heart.

“ART CAN BE SEEN AS AN ASSET THAT CAN RETAIN, OR MAYBE EVEN EXCEED ITS ORIGINAL VALUE”

To have a better understanding of art as an investment, *Together* met with Christine Mostert, Head of Art Advisory Services at



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MErode, photographer Kim Langie

Degroof Petercam. Mostert, who has over 30 years' experience in the art market and art services, is clear from the outset: "We do not offer what are described as 'financial' investments in art. We see art more as an investment with a financial value. Our approach is to assist our clients with all the questions they may encounter when they own, or when they wish to start a collection. From the moment of acquisition, the 'life' of

**“ YOU MAY CHOOSE
WITH YOUR HEART,
BUT YOU NEED TO BUY
WITH YOUR HEAD, THAT
MEANS FINDING AN
ACCURATE AND OBJEC-
TIVE IDEA OF VALUE ”**

**“ IT’S A VERY SPECIAL
TYPE OF INVESTMENT,
WHAT WE DO IS
ACCOMPANY THOSE
WHO WANT TO INVEST
IN ART AND ADVISE
THEM ON ANY ART
RELATED QUESTIONS ”**

a work of art faces many issues all the way to its handover."

"It's a very special type of investment, what we do is accompany those who want to invest in art and advise them on any art related questions they might have, from insurance to questions linked to estate planning. If they want to acquire art we can provide advice and objective information."

Degroof Petercam has a department dedicated to supporting their clients in the management of art. They have access to a full spectrum of specialists who can advise on everything, including valuation, authentication, restoration, conservation, storage, inventory, strategy and legacy planning. They have access to an excellent range of independent advice for their clients, with no conflict of interest.

When I asked if it was a risky investment, Mostert explained that you always have to be comfortable with the amount you are spending. As a rough guide, she said that the amount spent on art would not normally exceed 10% of someone's personal wealth: "You also have to be comfortable that you are paying the right price. You may choose with your heart, but you need to buy with your head, that means finding an accurate and objective idea of value, this requires

expertise." Degroof Petercam art advisory experts have tools to look at auction prices and have access to a wide range of external experts and those with authoritative knowledge of their field, often with an in-depth knowledge of the supply and demand for different artists and particular works. The value of a work depends on many factors: authenticity, provenance, rarity, condition, format. "The prices at auction can give you a good idea," say Mostert. "We go deeper and look at the value in the private market, with the advice of independent experts. Some auction houses may have someone who is specialized in a particular artist, for example Magritte."

Historically, art has shown the potential to preserve and even increase in value over time. There are major collectors like the late Paul G. Allen, co-founder of Microsoft,

whose collection was auctioned by Christie's last year for a total value of \$1.5 billion; of course, it helps to reach eye-popping prices if your collection includes Van Gogh, Cézanne, Gauguin and Picasso. Works by more recent artists like Jean-Michel Basquiat and Jasper Johns were also sold for over €50 million in 2022.

Charles Saatchi revolutionized the art market with his support and celebration of young British artists (YBA), putting their art on display, most notably at the Sensation exhibition of 1997 and selling the works through Christie's. Challenging and controversial artists like Tracey Emin, Damien Hirst and Marc Quinn received the full glare of publicity and haven't looked back since. Nikolaos Antoniou, who features in our 'What's On Belgium' section has also attracted the attention of this voracious collector.

To discover up-and-coming artists there is a great selection of galleries in Brussels. During 'Brussels Gallery Weekend' 45 galleries throw open their doors offering talks, guided routes and activities for all the family. It's a great introduction to contemporary art and will hopefully inspire people to visit these galleries throughout the year. Galleries are the places where you can often find the most cutting-edge artists.

I asked if there was a lot of interest in art as an investment in Belgium. "Belgium is known for its number of collectors," says Mostert. "There is a real culture of art collecting in our country. But very rarely is it a purely financial investment. Many collectors are entrepreneurs, and their interest in contemporary art brings both emotional and intellectual pleasure. It's a good fit with the entrepreneurial spirit: the novelty, the challenge, the connection to a changing world that needs to be understood." Mostert points to the range of contemporary art centres in Belgium, mentioning WIELS (www.wiels.org), CC Strombeek (www.ccs-



MErode, photographer Kim Langie



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trombeek.be), SMAK in Ghent (www.smak.be) and The Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens in Sint Martens Latem (www.museumdd.be).

Degroof Petercam can also help clients with succession planning for their art, whether that be to bequeath works to a family member, or to a museum, or charitable foundation.

One of the Belgian collectors Mostert mentions is Patric Tuytens, so Together decided to dive deeper.

Meet the collector

You won't find Patric Tuytens sipping champagne at a gallery opening, he won't be avidly following the latest shortlist for the Turner Prize and he certainly won't be looking at his collection with a calculator at his side, pondering its resale value; that's just not who he is. That said, Patric Tuytens is an entrepreneur, and in some senses this goes to the heart of his collecting philosophy – though he would vigorously deny that he has one: "I'm not tied to one particular movement or approach. I like to support young artists, often they have installations, working with video and sculpture; I like artists who think outside the box, for me it's an impulse."

Patric's parents Albert and Marie-Henriette – but who everyone knew as 'Pico', started collecting contemporary works of art and so Patric grew up surrounded by art and by people who cared a great deal about it. Albert put some of the works on display in the textile company he founded; he wanted to share the art with a wider audience. In his words: "Even if the staff don't like art, they've seen it anyway."

"Art is part of my life. I go to galleries, but I don't like openings," says Tuytens. For him, art collecting is a passion and a hobby. When he travels for work, or pleasure, he will always visit the local galleries. Recent-



Patric & Marie Tuytens, photographer Mahira Benizem Langie

**“PATRIC TUYTENS IS
AN ENTREPRENEUR,
AND IN SOME SENSES
THIS GOES TO THE
HEART OF HIS
COLLECTING
PHILOSOPHY”**

ly, he was at a wedding in Greece and took the opportunity to visit galleries there. The passion is shared with his wife Françoise: "When we visit a gallery my wife and I go separately, at the end we compare notes on what we did and didn't like." Patric's daughter Marie has also got the bug, she trained at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp and based her thesis on her grandparents' collection.

MErode

Of course having a lot of art creates a dilemma. Where do you put it all? The Tuytens were running out of room and started to look for a space that was light and spacious. A former textile company in the heart of Ronse on Mérodestraat presented the perfect location. The capitalized ME is a way of emphasizing that this is the place for Patric's



'The floor is yours until it's mine' © Schscht

art. It is possible to organise group visits to this really rather special collection, which is described as: "A personal, idiosyncratic, mainly Belgian-tinted collection, consisting of both established artist and young artists."

Marie says that her father always says to visitors that they are not trying to convince people of what is beautiful, or what is a 'good' work of art: "We just want people to approach the collection with an open mind."

His most recent acquisition, "The floor is yours until it's mine" by the artist collective Schscht, (made up of Koosje Schmeddes - NL, and Dirk Schellekens - B), based in Antwerp. The piece shows a domestic Persian rug suddenly changed by adding handrails from a swimming pool. "I immediately liked it," says Patric, "without knowing the thoughts of the artists. Afterwards, I learned that it is about how a Persian rug was really once the most prized possession of a home and how that has evolved in a global era when you are more likely to want a swimming pool." The artists say that the work poses the open question of what replaces the old? How does evolution take place? Which things are kept, which are modified or added?

Having set out to write an article on the va-

"GREAT ARTISTS AND SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEURS REQUIRE COURAGE AND IMAGINATION"

lue of investing in art, I am in a sense stumped. Patric Tuytens does not see art as an investment per se. When I ask about the legacy of his collection he is flippant: "If I pass away and my children don't like my art they can sell everything, or throw it away."

However, I am determined to turn this into an investment story! It's in the finance section after all. So, I would have to argue – indeed, I've little choice – that Tuytens collection is an investment, it's an investment in his very way of thinking; his openness to being challenged, to looking at the world in a different way. Entrepreneurs take risks; you have to be ready to shake things up and turn things upside down. You don't have full control of global politics, or when the next pandemic is going to occur, or any number of other "variables." However, a successful entrepreneur knows that one way to guarantee failure is to stay locked in a mindset that says, "but this is the way we've always done it." If you want your business to grow, you have to push boundaries, think in novel ways about how you do business, innovate and occasionally stick your neck out. Great artists and successful entrepreneurs require courage and imagination, the connection is not accidental. Can a monetary value be placed on a way of thinking? Probably not, but it does have a value.

For more information on how to visit the Tuytens collection go to: www.meroderonse.be 📍



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Finish the year strong

Arnon Barnes talks about the small wins to daring actions we can take to make our business better



Let's discuss your strategy on how to finish this year strong. While summer vibes might still be lingering in your head it's good to shake things up and get serious about some courageous action and audacious energy to achieve your business goals by the end of 2023. Even better, let's go for exceeding your own expectations.

**“SOMETIMES IT'S
NOT THE RESULTS
THEMSELVES THAT ARE
THE DRIVING FORCE
OF YOUR SUCCESS”**

To revisit your strategy and goals from an empowering perspective, it's good to take a step back and focus on the business jour-

ney instead of the set goals. Because sometimes it's not the results themselves that are the driving force of your success. Amazing results are inevitable when committed people do the work and pave the way with their motivation, talents, innovation, and persistence. In other words, let's focus on you and your team.

Here are a few things you should consider on your business journey to get bigger & better results.

Points of Innovation

Usually, business owners plan new launches or innovations to be executed far ahead. They often need time, funds, manpower, and partnerships to get new things off the ground. But sometimes, finding small innovations can be easy and fast, even fun. New things tend to bring excitement, so let that work in your favor. Get your team together and come up with 3 relatively small new things that can be implemented in the coming months. For example: add something small but useful to your product so your customers will love it even more. Or change something small in the way you work, add a new element to your promotions, or try making a sale in a fun way. Do something different, it will fire you & your team up.

I often see entrepreneurs stuck in a tunnel vision of big & scary goals while they don't notice the small opportunities that might bring big results. Keeping an open mind to new things ahead refreshes our spirits and brings excitement and motivation. New things keep us connected reminding us there is always something new you can try or create.

Points of Improvement

Next, let's have a look at the existing business processes and find small improvements that can be easily achieved. It's good to focus on both ends of your business, you and your team, and customers. Think of something that will speed up production, minimize paperwork, or just reorganize records. Maybe something like refreshing the look & feel of your online presence by adding an exciting element, asking your customers for feedback or finally adding automation in your purchasing process.

“ GET YOUR TEAM TOGETHER AND COME UP WITH 3 RELATIVELY SMALL NEW THINGS THAT CAN BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE COMING MONTHS ”

Something that creates a more pleasurable workflow for your team will always translate into a happier customer. Improvement is usually a process of simplifying things. So, what can you simplify for your customer or within your own processes?

You see, we often tend to stick to our ways, even if they don't work anymore. Answer a simple question: What can I improve today and implement within a week? You will be surprised how your business can grow by you improving on small things.

Points of encouragement

Let's get personal because encouragement can go a long way. As with previous points, it's good to focus both internally and externally: on yourself and your team, and on your suppliers, customers, and partnerships. Encouragement is often found in recognition and acknowledgement. So let your team know you see them, you see their hard work and their achievements. Ask for their ideas or just have a friendly chat. Send a handwritten Thank-you note to a customer or invite someone who supported you recently to lunch. And don't forget yourself. Make a list of things you have achieved this year so far. Things you've conquered, negotiated, disasters you've prevented, and deals you've made happen. And celebrate yourself and those wins.

You are here, you are doing your thing – you are amazing! Being an entrepreneur is not a walk in the park. It might seem so from a distance, but we know better. You know you can get where you want to be. You might not know how yet – but you know you will be there. You will find the resources, support, and knowledge to get to your dreams.



“ INVEST TIME IN IMPROVING AND SIMPLIFYING PROCESSES, AS YOU WANT YOUR BUSINESS TO WORK SMOOTHER AND MORE EFFICIENTLY ”

Points of daring action

Now let's talk action! Every time I'm hosting big events, I see a recurring issue with many entrepreneurs. They know what they need to do – but they don't act on it! Taking action is an indispensable habit for every business owner. Taking daring action is a must for business owners that have big ambitions to grow and succeed. Usually, we tend to procrastinate especially when emotions get in the way. Fear of misfortune, fear of failure, lack of energy, persistent issues within your team, or simply a consistent flow of things gone wrong.

Listen, all that shitstorm is a part of every business journey. Don't get surprised by it – expect it. Every business owner knows – you will constantly be challenged if you want to achieve great things. So just know

the challenges will be there, but they won't necessarily hold you back. You learn to deal with them on the go. You learn to step forward through fear and do it anyway. You know some customers might get upset or won't pay on time, but you will continue to serve anyway. Your team might change over time, but you will always find support to help you achieve your goals. Even if times do get rough... remember to keep taking action and move forward regardless.

Daring action has nothing to do with being blunt and fierce. It has more to do with you being resilient and true to your business goals and your talents. Daring action is challenging yourself to deliver on what you are good at. And if it backfires, well, in that case, you have found a way that is not working for you. Learn the lessons, lick your wounds & go again!

Daring action combines all the points above into a result driven business-growth-cocktail. Here is your strategy to finish this year strong:

Take time to identify new opportunities, as you know, innovation is important fuel for your business journey. Invest time in improving and simplifying processes, as you want your business to work smoother and more efficiently. Pay attention to people within and around your business, as they are the real assets of your success. Seal your business growth by taking consistent and focused action and wake up every morning being proud of being a business owner.

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Combating disinformation in the digital age

Together looks at how the EU's Digital Services Act can help combat disinformation



Executive Vice President - Margrethe Vestager

The rise of the digital era has undoubtedly brought about numerous benefits, but it has also given rise to new challenges. One of the most pressing issues we face today is the proliferation of online disinformation. Recognizing the urgent need to address this problem, the European Union introduced the Digital Services Act (DSA).

This groundbreaking legislation, which came into force in August, aims to tackle disinformation head-on and create a safer digital space for all users. The Commission has identified seventeen platforms and two

search engines that meet its threshold of having at least 45 million monthly active users. The list includes names we will all be familiar with: Facebook, TikTok, Twitter/X...

Disinformation refers to the deliberate spread of false or misleading information with the intent to deceive or manipulate individuals or entire communities. It has the potential to undermine trust, manipulate public opinion, and even impact the functioning of democratic processes. The DSA recognizes that disinformation poses a significant threat to society.

"The whole logic of our rules is to ensure that technology serves people and the societies that we live in - not the other way around. The Digital Services Act will bring about meaningful transparency and accountability of platforms and search engines and give consumers more control over their online life. The designations made today are a huge step forward to making that happen," said Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice-President for a Europe Fit for the Digital Age.

One of the key pillars of the DSA is the clear delineation of responsibilities for online platforms. Previously, platforms have often been seen as passive intermediaries, inaccurately claiming that they do not have control over the content shared on their platforms. The DSA shifts this perspective by holding platforms accountable for the content they host and disseminate. Platforms are required to implement measures to combat disinformation, including content moderation, fact-checking mechanisms, and transparency measures for advertising.

Under the Act, platforms are obliged to establish risk management systems and cooperate with authorities to detect and remove harmful content promptly. Additionally, the Act promotes transparency by requiring platforms to disclose information about their content moderation policies and algorithms.

Platforms are required to provide users with clear and accessible tools to report disinformation. They must promote media literacy and critical thinking.

Disinformation can have particularly severe consequences for democracy and electoral processes. The DSA addresses these concerns by imposing specific obligations on platforms during election periods. Platforms are required to take proactive measures to identify and label content that may influence elections. They must also ensure

transparency in political advertising, allowing users to understand who is behind the ads they see. By safeguarding electoral processes, the DSA aims to preserve the integrity of democratic institutions.

Penalties

To ensure compliance with the DSA, robust enforcement mechanisms and penalties have been put in place. Platforms found to be in violation of the Act can face significant penalties, such as fines or even service suspension. The DSA also empowers national authorities to monitor and enforce these regulations effectively. By establishing clear consequences for non-compliance, the Act aims to create a more accountable digital environment.

Global dimension

Disinformation is a global challenge that requires international collaboration. The DSA recognizes this by promoting international cooperation between the EU and third countries. By sharing best practices, coordinating efforts, and fostering dialogues, the Act aims to create a united front against disinformation worldwide. This collaborative approach recognizes the interconnectedness of digital spaces and the shared responsibility to combat disinformation.

The EU's Digital Services Act represents a significant step forward in tackling the rampant spread of disinformation online. By establishing clear responsibilities for platforms, promoting user empowerment and awareness, safeguarding democratic processes, and fostering international cooperation, the DSA lays the foundation for a safer and more trustworthy digital landscape.

People who follow these issues closely are waiting with baited breath to see if the Commission will take swift action. With European parliamentary elections next year, the act has arrived just in time. ①

THE MONTGOMERY INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL (EIM) • BRUSSELS

Joins the international Ermitage Education group.

The EIM was founded almost 20 years ago and was accredited by the International Baccalaureate (IB) in 2015. With a 100% success rate in the Baccalaureate exams and an exam average exceeding the global average by at least 4 points, the school has consistently ranked among the top international schools in Belgium for several years.

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Big news for international education in Brussels: the EIM is now part of the ERMITAGE EDUCATION GROUP. With over 2.000 students, this group brings together the EIM and two French schools: ERMITAGE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL near Paris and SAINTE VICTOIRE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL (SVIS) in Aix-en-Provence.

The Ermitage Education Group, with its wealth of experience in the IB, is known for its high level of teaching and will now be able to offer all students the possibility of international exchanges and placements during the school holidays.

David Gerone, founder of the EIM, explains: «*It is important for every school to be able to create friendships and work links with students from other countries*».

Danielle Franzen, Head of School of EIM, invites you to **OPEN DAY on November 14th**, to discover our bilingual and English-speaking programs at the heart of a dynamic school with a strong and close-knit international community.



Be Successful

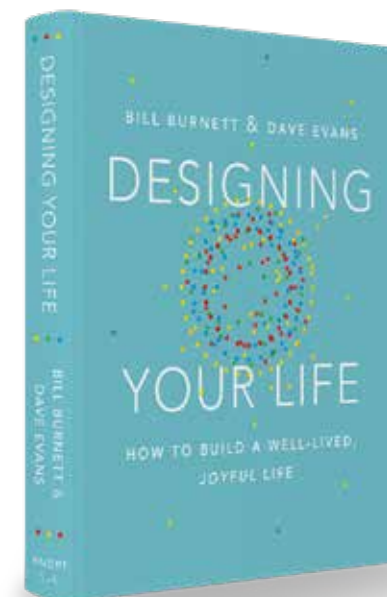
Claire O'Sullivan on two books that inspire

'Drawing on their experience as founders of the Stanford Life Design Lab, Bill Burnett and Dave Evans are experts in weaving together design-thinking principles with the pursuit of personal happiness. In their best-selling book, *Designing Your Life: How to Build a Well-Lived, Joyful Life*, they challenge the conventional notion that success precedes happiness and propose that contentment stems from designing a life tailored to your unique needs and desires.

The book's central idea is that dissatisfaction can be viewed as a design problem. When discontentment enters our work or personal lives, it's a signal that something doesn't align with our values or interests.

Through reframing, Burnett and Evans encourage readers to approach challenges from new angles, opening up pathways to solutions. A particularly valuable lesson is guidance on how to distinguish between actionable and unsolvable problems, helping readers focus their efforts on what they can change.

To this end, the book also aims at practical solutions. Many of the chapters conclude with thought-provoking questions and exercises that prompt deep reflection to help you develop a strategy to change your life for the better. It doesn't just provide theoretical concepts; it equips readers with tools such as mind mapping and the 'good time journal'. These techniques are introduced progressively, with later chapters demonstrating how to combine them for maximum impact. The authors make it clear that to



gain the most benefit from the book, readers must be open to doing the work. To help you, there are free downloadable worksheets on the book's website that complement the exercises and aid in self-discovery.

'*Designing Your Life*' is useful for anyone seeking a more meaningful life. It doesn't promise a one-size-fits-all solution, but walks you through some reflective techniques to help you design a life suited to your aspirations. The book offers a transformative approach to the quest for a well-lived life. Whether you're at a career crossroads or searching for something different in your life, this book can help you unearth the insights you need for greater personal fulfilment.

www.designingyour.life

Books

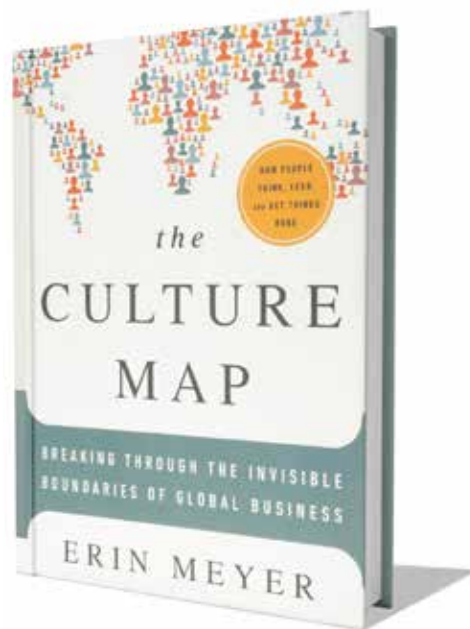
'The Culture Map' by Erin Meyer

This book is a must-read for anyone living or working in an international environment, 'The Culture Map' will help you reassess some of your assumptions about how colleagues and managers are communicating with you. It can inspire you to improve your self-awareness of your own communication style so that you can work more effectively with teams composed of people from different backgrounds and reduce misunderstandings.

According to Meyer, while we may like to consider ourselves as unique individuals, our exposure to different cultures through our upbringing and experience may also play a subconscious role in shaping how we view our interactions with others. Understanding this can help us become more skilled at cross-cultural communication and may be key to improving our professional performance.

Meyer's book considers various dimensions of culture using a framework of eight different behavioural scales, and provides insights as to how two cultures' relative place on these scales can influence how they are perceived by one another. For example, whether it's more common for decisions to be made via a top-down (manager decides) or bottom-up (decision by consensus) process; or whether direct or nuanced language is more appropriate when communicating via email; or the extent to which trust is primarily built based on relationships or is solely based on work results.

Meyer is clear that using this approach is not an excuse to stop paying attention to individual personalities. The goal is not to promote cultural stereotypes or clichés, but rather to empower people to better understand other cultural business norms when working in international teams or organisations.



What's more, organisations often operate according to a combination of their own specific communication and behavioural expectations. Many even build this into their organizational design and explicitly communicate this to employees through internal guides. The norms of a law firm can differ significantly from the etiquette in a non-profit, for example.

Whatever scenario you're faced with, this book provides a useful framework for thinking about culture that can help you to more flexibly adapt to different professional environments, so you can collaborate effectively and achieve your goals. The narrative style makes for easy reading, combining clear examples of different types of miscommunication with straightforward analysis of the underlying causes and practical suggestions to achieve better outcomes when working in multicultural teams.

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VILLA • Dans un quartier prisé d'Uccle, à proximité du Fort-Jaco, charmante et spacieuse villa avec jardin arboré et grande terrasse idéalement orientée. La villa se compose au rez-de-chaussée d'un spacieux hall d'entrée menant aux pièces de réceptions comprenant un vaste séjour avec feu ouvert, cuisine équipée avec un coin à déjeuner ainsi qu'un bureau au rez de chaussée. Au 1^{er} étage: la suite parentale offre une salle de bains complète et un dressing attenant, 2 chambres supplémentaires avec salle de douche ou salle de bains attenante. Cave et cave à vin. Possibilité d'acquérir en complément un magnifique bâtiment de style cottage, en parcelle arrière, avec piscine intérieure, équipement spa et confortable appartement 2 chambres à l'étage. Propriété d'exception !



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Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya

Together editor **Catherine Feore** met with Belarus's leader in exile



Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya with supporters

On 9 August 2020, Belarus held national elections. Alexander Lukashenko, who had been in power since 1994 was «re-elected» as president, with a highly implausible claim to have won over 80% of the vote. The election was recognized as being neither free, nor fair, by most of the rest of the world.

This was the start of Lukashenko's sixth term in office, but this time was different: Belarusians had had enough and had already coalesced their opposition to the regime around one unifying candi-

date, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, the wife of an imprisoned pro-democracy activist Siarhei Tikhanovsky. People poured onto the streets in a massive peaceful protest, workers who had been thought to be supportive of the dictator shouted, 'Leave!' when he visited their factories, EU foreign ministers, the European Parliament and the EU's High Representative refused to recognise Lukashenko as the legitimate president and called for fresh elections.

**“ SINCE 2020, THE
LEVEL OF REPRESSION
IN OUR COUNTRY IS
ONLY INCREASING ”**

Lukashenko reacted in the only way a dictator knows how, with more brutal repression. He would always have one friend he could rely on: Vladimir Putin. Leading members of the opposition would be forced to flee or find themselves abducted, then imprisoned under trumped-up charges. Of the three women who were the faces for change – Tsikhanouskaya, Veronika Tsepkalo and Maria Kolesnikova – two left and Kolesnikova, who stayed, was bundled into a van and eventually sentenced to 11 years of prison. Like with many other prisoners under this regime, including Tsikhanouskaya's husband who has been in prison since May 2020, there has been no news from them for months on end.

Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya updated us on the situation in Belarus: “Since 2020, the level of repression in our country is only increasing. Every day in Belarus, about 20 to 25 people are being detained. Since 2020, half a million people have fled the tyranny of this regime. Up to 1,500 people are now detained under politically motivated charges, prisoners are ill treated and often held in solitary confinement. I haven't heard any news about my husband for more than five months. Nothing at all.”

It's a bleak picture, the opposition to the regime has been forced underground as it's impossible to do anything without risking detention. Tsikhanouskaya points to someone who donated the equivalent of €20 to the Ukraine Army who was given a six year prison sentence. Even wearing red and white nail polish, the colours of the legitimate Belarusian flag, can lead to punishment.

However, there is an opposition in Belarus: “Despite the danger there are small structures in Belarus communicating between themselves, it's a national movement and as soon as the right moment appears they will be ready to go onto the streets again. At the moment I'm asking people to stay



Maria Kalesnikava

**“ I AM ASKING PEOPLE
TO KEEP THIS FIRE
BURNING INSIDE THEM
AND PREPARE FOR THE
RIGHT MOMENT ”**

safe and not to be too vocal as it's dangerous and I don't want people to be detained. I am asking people to keep this fire burning inside them and prepare for the right moment.”

Those who have already left Belarus have more freedom: “We can be more active because we are in safety, but our task is not just to exist within this ‘exile bubble’ we must keep in contact with Belarusians constantly. I'm communicating through video messaging, through different social networks. Lukashenko wants to isolate people, Belarus is like one huge prison, not just for those who are in real prisons.”

I ask Tsikhanouskaya if she knows how much support Lukashenko has: “In 2020, when we still had the possibility of carrying

Politics

out some sort of reliable polls, his support was around 20%, it is not likely to have increased because people can see the crimes he's committed and because of the Russian invasion. People see how Russia is step-by-step occupying our country."

"Lukashenko says that our country does not participate in Russia's war with Ukraine, but Belarus is already participating. The first missiles in the war were launched from our territory." Tsikhanouskaya has given her support to volunteers who have formed a battalion to fight with Ukraine.

When Tsikhanouskaya originally addressed the European Parliament, EU membership was not something that was mentioned, I asked her if she'd changed her view on this: "In 2020 there wasn't a geopolitical choice, we wanted to change the political situation, to get rid of the dictator and build a new democratic country. But now Belarusians see that Russia means war, Russia means poverty, Russia means imperialism. Belaru-

"BELARUSIANS SEE THAT RUSSIA MEANS WAR, RUSSIA MEANS POVERTY, RUSSIA MEANS IMPERIALISM"

sians who escaped went to the European Union for safety and to escape repression. Now people understand that we should be a member of the European Union. I know that will take time and a lot of effort, but it's where we are going. We are working with European institutions like the OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) and there is a contact group in the Council of Europe."

Tsikhanouskaya acknowledges the measures the EU and others have taken. Over the last three years she has had a dizzying schedule of meetings with many governments and has cemented relationships with parliaments, there are strong links with at least thirty. Her bravery and that of the united opposition have been acknowledged by the awarding of the Sakharov Prize and most recently in the awarding of the Swedish Anna Lindh prize.

However, she is concerned, for example, that sanctions are too easily circumvented and that this needs to be given greater attention. She would like Europe to have a system of secondary sanctions like in the US, where economic sanctions are also issued against foreign companies or individuals that are trading with countries subjected to primary sanctions. She gave an example of birchwood sold by Kazakhstan to Europe that actually originated in Belarus.

Tsikhanouskaya would also like to see a more proactive approach to those in prison.



European Parliament President Roberta Metsola and Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya

She says the Red Cross and others could be doing more: "Every day they should be demanding access to see political prisoners for themselves. More can be done to support the relatives of prisoners." But she doesn't think there is any realistic hope that people will be released: "The system will not release people, we have to treat the illness not the symptoms, the system itself will have to be dismantled."

Lukashenko recently signed a decree forbidding consulates from issuing or replacing passports to those living abroad. Naturally, those who had to flee do not want to return to Belarus to receive a passport. Tsikhanouskaya is calling for an innovative approach from the international community to address this problem, asking for the recognition of an alternative passport for "New Belarus": "It's a very ambitious project, it has never been done, but we have no other choice."

There isn't one single thing that needs to be done, there are a range of measures inclu-

ding making the regime more accountable for its crimes and providing further support. She would like to see an EU comprehensive plan, a sort of Marshall Plan, for both Belarus and Ukraine.

Finally, I ask how close Belarus's fate is to that of Ukraine. Would a Ukrainian victory have a domino effect? "Lukashenko relies on Putin for economic and political support," says Tsikhanouskaya.

"WHEN PUTIN FAILS IT WILL BE A FAILURE FOR LUKASHENKO"

"When Putin fails it will be a failure for Lukashenko." Nevertheless, she says there will be a need for continued pressure. If there is a negotiation at the end of the war she says that the fate of Belarus must not be determined without the voice of the Belarusian people. To that end, the leader of the United Transitional Cabinet is working day and night: "We have paid a very high price, but I believe that future generations of Belarusians will appreciate the price paid for democratic institutions." ❶



European Council President, Charles Michel and Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya © European Council

LIFESTYLE

*This autumn's packing
a lot of attitude*

LIFESTYLE

Luxury

Timeless Elegance: 125 years of craftsmanship with Maison Le Tanneur

Nicholas Sirot celebrates a brand
that has stood the test of time

On its 125th anniversary, Maison Le Tanneur takes us on a captivating journey through the history of French craftsmanship and elegance. The master leatherworkers have gracefully navigated through the ages while preserving their essence, guided by immutable values of quality, creativity, and sustainability. Since 1898, Le Tanneur has evolved into a benchmark in the world of French leather goods.

**“A CAPTIVATING
JOURNEY THROUGH
THE HISTORY OF
FRENCH
CRAFTSMANSHIP
AND ELEGANCE”**

The story begins in the heart of the Belle Époque, thanks to the meeting of two exceptional men, one a leatherworker, Charles Bonnardel, and the other a tanner for three generations, Francisque Bornex. Together, they created the first luxury leather item: the revolutionary ‘Seamless’ wallet. From this union, Maison Le Tanneur was born, their iconic wallet is still crafted in their workshops near Le Mans today.



The revolutionary purse “Le Sans Couture”

Auping Auronde

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In 1900, this first 'Seamless' creation, now an emblem of the House, won the silver prize at the Universal Exposition in Paris. Buoyed by this success, Le Tanneur built an immense manufacturing facility in Belley, a pioneer in industrialization, laying the foundation for the brand's prosperity. In 1963, General de Gaulle, during his visit to Belley, received a magnificent desk set in box-calf leather and a leather jewelry box for his wife. These watch and jewelry boxes, which would be - come iconic for the House, are still available today.



General De Gaulle is his adornment in Box-calf



General De Gaulle office adornment



Tann's school bags

An Admirable Evolution

The 1980s and 1990s marked the rapid success of Maison Le Tanneur with its school brand, Tann's. The same decades saw the birth of the first vanity cases and briefcases for men, quickly embraced. The brand's rejuvenation and feminization began with the introduction of the first lines of canvas and leather handbags, accompanied by an explosion of colors. Ranges of full-grain cowhide leather and coated cotton canvas bags merged the House's craftsmanship with exceptional flexibility, highlighting details inspired by the world of saddlery.



The ranges of full-grain cowhide leather and coated cotton canvas bags combine all of La Maison's know-how.



"Le 1898", a symbol of its century-old French heritage



Le Tanneur Basket LE 125.
Price: **€899.**

**“ 125 YEARS AFTER
ITS INCEPTION,
MAISON LE TANNEUR
CONTINUES TO
REINVENT ITS
HERITAGE ”**

Heritage and transformation

125 years after its inception, Maison Le Tanneur continues to reinvent its heritage. The legendary seamless wallet was adapted in 2018 in the historic Belley workshops, becoming a modern handbag named 'Le 1898', paying homage to its century-old French legacy. This year, to celebrate its 125th anniversary, Le Tanneur still enchants with 'Le 125', an exceptional tote, made in France, blending semi-vegetable-tanned leather and taurillon leather, a noble material from an excellent French tannery. It perfectly embodies the alliance between tradition and modernity. In parallel, Le Tanneur, bridging past and present, introduces a new collection, 'Bureau 2.0', a nod to its collection of leather desk items called 'Les Personnels' that adorned General De Gaulle's desk. Crafted in smooth vegetable-tanned leather with chalk-white stitching, this capsule includes a notebook cover, an agenda cover, a wrist rest, and a mouse pad. It revitalizes the historic craftsmanship of the House.



Le Tanneur Basket LE 125.
Price: **€899.**

**“ LE TANNEUR CONTINUES TO TRAVERSE
THE AGES THROUGH ITS COMMITMENT TO
EXCELLENCE AND ITS ABILITY TO OFFER
MODERN AND TIMELESS PIECES ”**



Le Tanneur A4 notebook cover in smooth tan leather. Price: **€229.**



Le Tanneur A5 diary cover in smooth tan leather. Price: **€129.**

Le Tanneur's story is just beginning

Over the decades, Maison Le Tanneur has reinvented itself while preserving its authenticity. It is more than a brand; it is a story of heritage, artisanal craftsmanship, and dedication to the art of leather goods.

As we celebrate these 125 years of success, we are confident that Le Tanneur's future will be as radiant as its past. This house continues to traverse the ages through its commitment to excellence and its ability to offer modern and timeless pieces. We eagerly await the new creations and innovations from this classic reference in leather goods.

Happy anniversary, Le Tanneur! ①

Back to Attitude

*Photographer Maria Dawlat Art Direction & Stylist Nicholas Sirot
Hair & Make up Boris Mignot using SCHWARZKOPF & CLINIQUE
Model Marinke @ MODELSOFFICE.BE*

*Shirt: Dior
Vest: Natan
Earrings: Ole Lynggaard
Sunglasses: Emporio Armani*



Shirt & Tie: Dior Tuxedo jacket: Natan Beret: Dior



Total look & handbag: Dior
Jewelry: Ole Lynggaard



Women suit: Caroline Biss
Blouse: Natan
Earrings: Ole Lynggaard
Bracelet: Dinh Van



Shirt & skirt: Dior Vest: Natan Cow-Boy boots: Unisa
Earrings & rings : Ole Lynggaard Sunglasses: Emporio Armani

Shirt: Natan
Suit: Guess
Jewelry: Ole Lynggaard



Shirt: Christian Wijnants
Vest: Jean-paul Knott
Waders: Steve Madden
Jewelry: Ole Lynggaard



Dress coat: NIRACHA ROESEMS
2 year @ C.A.D (Brussels Fashion school & Textile design)
Jewelry: Olivia Hainaut
Waders: Steve Madden



Dress: ANNA D'ANSEMBOURG 3 year @C.A.D (Brussels Fashion school & Textile design)
Vision glasses : Ray-Ban

Dive into winter elegance

Discover winter 2023 fashion trends with **Nicholas Sirot**

Winter is fast approaching, and with it, a new wave of captivating styles. From the opulence of soft textures, to bursts of bold colors, immerse yourself in a whirlwind of fashion that celebrates individuality and daring. Discover the fashion trends that will brighten your season with a touch of contemporary elegance. Let us guide you through the must-haves that will dazzle your wardrobe this year.



Le Tanneur
Large shopping bag LE 125.
Price: **€899.**

American Vintage
Coat Orange Fluo.
Price: **€375.**



Chameleon by Van Esser
Rings. Price: **€169.**

stuv

The essential fire

An ideal combination of simplicity and performance, the Stuv P-20s pellet stove combines visual pleasure with efficiency. In addition to a wide view of its calm flame, its ingenious design offers you a high level of user comfort. With CO and fine particle emissions nearing zero*, it is one of the most innovative and sustainable Stuv stoves.



Model shown: Stuv P-20s pellet stove

*Power range: 3,7-8,1kW - Efficiency: 90,3% - CO emissions: 0,001% - Fine particle emissions: 5 mg/Nm³
Energy efficiency class: A+ - Ecodesign 2022

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Filippa K Women
Cropped Shearling
Jacket. Price: **€2.000.**



Actitude-Twinset Pullover.
Price: **€169.**



Actitude-Twinset
Trousers.
Price: **€205.**



vanHaren Boots.
Price: **€99.**


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The BaByliss 9000 Cordless Collection is powered by lithium-ion with ground-breaking Micro Heating Matrix technology for consistent, even heat and long-lasting results whatever your look. Featuring a 25mm curling tong, a 28mm waving wand, a 30mm hot brush and a triple barrel waver.



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Beauty regaining radiant glow: Post-vacation face care secrets

By Nicholas Sirot

Vacations, with their sun exposure, salty water, and sea breezes, are a rejuvenating adventure for the soul but sometimes a challenge for our delicate skin. As we bid farewell to the gentle rays of the sun and unforgettable moments, it's time to pamper our skin with facial care that will bring out our natural radiance. Follow this guide for a post-vacation skincare routine and ensure your skin remains as refreshed as your memories.



Babor Aloe Vera
Cleansing Bar.
Price: €29,90.

1. The Purifying Cleansing Ritual:

After indulging in summer pleasures, our skin deserves a reset. Opt for a gentle yet effective cleanser to remove accumulated impurities, excess sebum, and sunscreen residue. Cleansers containing natural ingredients like aloe vera or white tea are ideal for soothing the skin and reducing inflammation, boosting, and reactivating.



Babor HY-OL Cleansing Oil
& HY-OL Reactivating Booster Set.
Price: €46,90.

2. Gentle Exfoliation:

Sun exposure can cause a thickening of the skin's stratum corneum on the face and body, making the complexion dull and tired. Gentle exfoliation will help remove dead skin cells and reveal a brighter complexion. Opt for a mild scrub with fruit enzymes or acids (BHA) for smooth and radiant skin.



Dior Shimmering
Body Scrub.
Price: €88,00.



Babor Clarifying
Face Peeling Cream.
Price: €29,90.



Nannic Silky Smooth
Face Exfoliant.
Price: €21,40.

3. Nourishing Hydration:

Hydration is key to restoring skin balance after days in the sun. Choose a hydrating serum packed with hyaluronic acid, a hydration superhero that attracts and retains moisture in the skin. Complement it with a moisturizing cream rich in Pro-retinol to nourish and protect the skin from free radicals.



Babor Triple Pro-Retinol
Renewal Cream.
Price: €119,90.



Mylène Aurage
Beauty Serum.
Price: €27,95.



ISDIN Isdinceutics Hyaluronic Concentrate Serum.
Price: **€35,43.**



ISDIN Isdinceutics Hyaluronic Moisture Normal Skin.
Price: **€38,95.**

4. Regenerating Masks:

Give your skin an extra dose of care with regenerating masks. Red clay-based masks deeply purify pores, while sheet masks infused with revitalizing essences instantly refresh tired skin. Choose masks containing ingredients like aloe, vitamin C, or cucumber extract for a soothing and brightening effect.



Sisley Express Radiance Mask with Red Clay.
Price: **€102.**



Babor Triple Pro-Retinol Eye Zone Patches.
Price: **€49,90.**

5. Nourish from Within:

Remember that outer beauty often stems from inner health. Stay well-hydrated with water and incorporate antioxidant-rich foods into your diet, such as berries, leafy greens, and nuts. Omega-3s found in fatty fish also contribute to skin health.



RoC Hydrate & Plump Serum Capsules.
Price: **€39,99.**

Dietary supplements can help, such as **Physalis Collagen Pro**.
Price: **€26.**

6. Restorative Sleep:

Quality sleep is the foundation of radiant skin. Vacations can disrupt our sleep schedules, so it's time to get back to a regular routine. Good sleep promotes cell regeneration, allowing your skin to regain its natural glow.

In conclusion, after experiencing wonderful moments on your vacation, it's time to dedicate some time to your skin to restore its splendor. A well-thought-out facial care routine, combined with a balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle, will allow you to prolong the benefits of your vacation and display a radiant glow that reflects your inner well-being. Take care of your skin, it deserves all the attention you give it. ①

A boathouse to dream about

In Trouville, Clotilde renovated two homes that had fallen into disrepair, writes **Sophie Lagess**

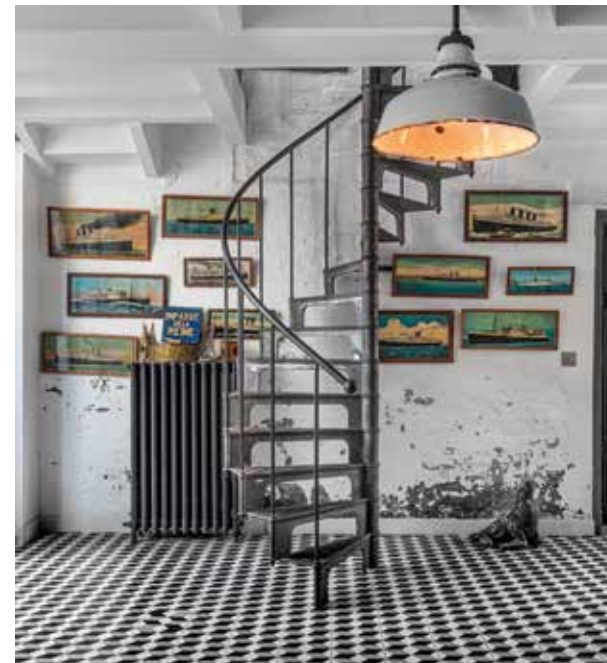
As a former fashion industry press attaché, Clotilde has a passion for homes. And flea markets. Considering herself not so much an interior designer but rather as a "builder", she bought a former boathouse in Trouville. With a track record that saw her buy and fully renovate some fifteen properties, the interior designer with a passion for home decorating fell in love with the building, which is made up of two adjoining homes that were in a pitiful state! "The two homes were not at the same level, which took a lot of work and effort to redress," the happy property owner explains.



Photos © Serge Anton

**"I DON'T LIKE
NEW THINGS!
I NEVER BUY
ANYTHING NEW"**

Intended to serve as a holiday home, the new owner has since moved away from Paris and now spends much of the year living here. Clotilde has left her mark on each of the houses she has renovated, choosing to go for a warm and cozy style: "I don't like new things! I never buy anything new. The items you see here all came from flea markets. It's in my DNA; my mum used to be an antiques dealer. These items imbue homes with life, steeped in their own history, whether in the



**"I LOVE TO BROWSE
AROUND FOR THINGS,
I LOVE ITEMS, SUCH AS
ANTIQUE CROCKERY"**

books or the paintings on the walls. I love to browse around for things, I love items, such as antique crockery. Stepping inside through the front door, you sense the whole atmosphere right away. It is in the smell of the open fireplace, the wood, the trinkets, the whole place simply oozes history."



“CLOTILDE LOVES THE COZINESS OF THE ENGLISH COTTAGE”



Measured by the success of her unerring taste for decoration, the various homes Clotilde has transformed never fail to win over visitors. “These are homes I bought for myself, which I subsequently put on the market again. Some of them I gave a makeover, renovated and furnished them and then sold them on with all the household effects in them. People would often call round to visit, asking me if a particular knick-knack was up for sale. So I chose to take a different approach. I decorate the entire home, buying the paintings, the crockery, even down to the bath sheets... The new owners get all of these household effects which I leave in the home when they buy the property.” Clotilde loves the coziness of the English cottage, where you cuddle up in the snug by the fireplace, with a warm mug of tea. ❶

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LIFE OF LEISURE

Interview

Not just a Barbie girl, in her Barbie world

Together meets Margot Robbie to learn more about the actor, who is also a producer



Margot Robbie, at just 33, worries she may be on a downward career trajectory. The evidence, of course, suggests otherwise, with *Barbie* the Aussie actress has been propelled back into the box office elite.

Robbie is most famous for her performances in blockbuster movies, but she has also starred in a number of highly rated independent

films. In fact, the latter have seen her most critically recognised roles.

For 2018 biopic-mockumentary *I, Tonya* – she played the role of the film's central character, American figure skater Tonya Harding – Robbie received nominations from the Academy Awards, BAFTA, Golden Globes and Screen Actors Guild.



“ BARBIE HAS BEEN WITH SO MANY GIRLS GROWING UP ALL OVER THE GLOBE AND WE KNOW JUST HOW VITAL IT WAS THAT WE GOT THIS JUST RIGHT ”

The same four also nominated her for their Best Actress in a Supporting Role category for *Bombshell*, two years later. Performances in *Once Upon A Time In Hollywood* and *Babylon* were further recognised for nominations by BAFTA, the Golden Globes and SAG.

Robbie has been married to Tom Ackersley since 2016, and along with Josey McNamara and Sophie Kerr, they co-founded the production company LuckyChap Entertainment, which produced *I, Tonya*, *Promising Young Woman* (2020), the Hulu series *Dollface* (2019-2022) and Netflix's mini-series *Maid* (2021), and this year's highlights *Barbie* and *Boston Strangler*.

What's it like to be in a film you star in, where you are also one of the producers - especially one that has enjoyed such huge success?

I think it's every girl's dream to be Barbie, and every adult's dream to make a girl's dream come true, so this does feel like a very special project.

Barbie has been with so many girls growing up all over the globe and we know just how vital it was that we got this just right. We're all thrilled with the outcome and hope that the audiences are too.

It's something I've been busy working on for some time now – I think about five years,

to be honest. It was originally planned for release before the Covid outbreak.

Was it difficult to put such a 'young' story into an adult context?

Yes and no. It's a playful take on Barbie – it has to be. The film is about detaching expectations and transporting yourself into a different world, and that's what we did with this film. I'm very proud of it.

I am so thankful and relieved that Greta agreed to direct. It was quite a stressful period when we were discussing who we wanted and it's never a certainty that you're going to get the one you want.

When Greta said yes, it was genuinely one of the happiest days of my life. You can't believe the amount of work which has gone into it and I'm confident that many dreams will be realized.

You were also in *Asteroid City*, what was it like working with Tom Hanks, amongst others?

There are no words. It's strange how actors exist for a long while and then, almost unnoticed, ascend into icon territory, and Tom Hanks is definitely at that level.

He has such a calmness, such a presence. So much kindness, but huge professionalism. I was in awe of him before we did the film, and I am even more in awe of him now.

Your movie *Babylon* was the ultimate tale of Hollywood excess, in an era when the brakes were off as far as how people lived and partied...

It was a golden era, that's for sure. It was that post-war period when people were getting back their energy and ambition.



Interview

It was a race to the top and it didn't come packaged with any notion of guilt or shame. People could just go out there and pursue the dreams they wanted.

It is about effort and reward. Of course, not everything works that way, and I think we're more aware of that in this generation.

Do you reward yourself?

Yes and no. In the current era it seems we all have to hold back our pursuit of anything that means self-reward.

I admire the societal view that we need to look after each other – I just worry how genuine it is; and I say that as someone who sees a lot of the things I talk about, from both sides.

I think it's okay to give ourselves a pat on the back and not feel bad, or that we're taking something away from someone else.

Were you disappointed that *Amsterdam* didn't do well in the box office?

It's interesting – financiers will take a different view of a movie to everyone else, and understandably so.

They are looking at the bottom line and a return on investment. For an actor, a director, a producer, and everyone else working on a movie, we gauge it on whether the potential of the project, from the basic material of a script, has been fulfilled artistically.

Amsterdam was a really interesting break for me. It had humour, irreverence and a quirkiness that few of my movies have had; so speaking personally, I count it as one of my best successes.

And a nice filming location too?!

It had its perks!



**“AMSTERDAM
WAS A REALLY
INTERESTING
BREAK FOR ME.
IT HAD HUMOUR,
IRREVERENCE
AND A QUIRKINESS”**

Interview

Did you always want to be an actor?

I did, but my parents were trying to steer me towards being a lawyer. I think I would have been good in the courtroom, but law wasn't where I saw myself.

For a long time, they thought film was just a hobby of mine. They were surprised when they saw a huge poster of me on a building in Times Square.

When I came to America that was the dream – to be in Times Square. I did it the hard way – I had to move across the other side of the world and did all those menial jobs before getting a break. I know I have been lucky in many ways, but I do believe as well that you make your own luck.

You have resisted the option to revisit Harley Quinn in *Suicide Squad*, when opportunities have come along to do so. Why is that?

I've actually found it very therapeutic to step away from Harley, but it's also terrifying. It's like having all the security you ever need or crave sat right in front of you, yet you find yourself tossing that out the window, then needing to replace it.

So why do it?

For me it's about fear – it's about never accepting that you need to take the easy option.

Most actors need constant proof or reassurance that they've still got it – whatever 'it' is. I am no different on that front. I need to keep taking chances, because standing still with the same project or the same concept is, in fact, going backwards, and I have already felt in certain moments that my career is at risk of a downward trajectory,

It's fair to say I will do absolutely anything to avoid that from happening.

Does this pursuit of always moving forward come from growing up around a number of siblings?

You mean, can I blame it on them?! I think the way we grew up was reflective of most other families – the general bickering and snapping, fighting over the front seat, fighting over clothes, fighting over toys... just fighting as all good families do!

But we were always loving each other. I loved it – I look back at my upbringing and it



“ MOST ACTORS NEED CONSTANT PROOF OR REASSURANCE THAT THEY’VE STILL GOT IT – WHATEVER ‘IT’ IS. I AM NO DIFFERENT ON THAT FRONT ”

just makes me smile. We've all grown up so close. We're really tight.

What were you like as a kid?

I was really dramatic. Not in throwing tantrums, pulling my hair... well not much, but I loved putting on shows – there was always a show in my house.

I was obsessed with movies, with anything on TV; and whatever I saw, I would re-enact it for my mum who had enough on her plate running a house, looking after four kids and all that.

I've read you used to put on shows and charge family members to watch them. It sounds like you were a very shrewd kid who was cut out for this industry?!

Yeah, I like to think I was quite savvy. I remember stealing my older brother's stuff and then setting up a stall down the road and selling it all... just terrible!

Do you sense your first Oscar win is just around the corner, after two nominations?

Who knows? For a long time, the nomination was the dream. I kind of worry that if I did win an Academy Award, I would tick off that childhood dream and wonder where I was going to go next.

I mean, I'm sure I'd find somewhere, but when you dream of something, then you achieve that, and you can't top it... well, it can be difficult to then think up a new target.

That sounds like a scary personal conundrum...

It is scary, but fear has played a role in where I've got to today. I know that sounds strange, because I always play quite loud, confident, bombastic characters, but the fragility of the industry and of being an actor is there all the time.

And the reality is it goes so far beyond past success, or bank balance. Actors are exhibitionists, and for as long as the exhibition is running, everything is fine. But once people stop coming to watch the show, the exhibit is useless, and rejection – ultimate rejection – is a familiar but horrible feeling for any actor. ❶

Yorgos Lanthimos wins the Golden Lion

Federico Grandesso attends the Venice Film Festival for *Together*



There were almost no Hollywood stars on the red carpet at this year's 80th Venice Film Festival because of the Hollywood writers' strike. Nevertheless, festival goers were not disappointed with a stunning number of A-list directors.

The festival jury, chaired by director and screenwriter Damien Chazelle (*Whiplash*, *La La Land*, *First Man*, *Babylon*), seems to have satisfied the critics in awarding the Golden Lion to Yorgos Lanthimos (*The*

Lobster, *Dogtooth*) for his film *Poor Things*. The film is about the fantastical evolution of Bella Baxter (Emma Stone), a young woman brought back to life by the brilliant and unorthodox scientist Dr Godwin Baxter (William Dafoe). Under Dr Baxter's protection, Bella is eager to learn. Hungry for the worldliness she is lacking, Bella runs off with louche Duncan Wedderburn (Mark Ruffalo), on a whirlwind adventure across the continents. Free from the prejudices of her times, Bella grows steadfast in her purpose to stand for

equality and liberation. It's based on the novel by Alasdair Gray of the same name. As you would expect from Lanthimos, it's a little over-the-top, and some might think that at 141 minutes, not every film has to be the director's cut.

The festival had several entries looking at socio-political topics, especially immigration and environmental protection. The Special Jury Prize went to Zielona Granica in Agnieszka Holland's *The Green Border*. It's set in the treacherous and swampy forests that make up the so-called "green border" between Belarus and Poland; refugees from the Middle East and Africa trying to reach the European Union are trapped in a geopolitical crisis cynically engineered by Belarusian dictator Alexander Lukashenko. In an attempt to provoke Europe, refugees are lured to the border by propaganda promising easy passage to the EU. The honoured director didn't spare criticism against the EU: "Wake up Europe," shouted during the closing ceremony.

The Silver Lion was awarded to the director Matteo Garrone for his film *Io Capitano*. Its star actor won the Marcello Mastroianni award for Best Young Actor. The film tells the story of Seydou and Moussa, two young men who leave Dakar to make their way to Europe. A contemporary journey through various countries, the challenges of the immense desert, the horrors of the detention centres in Libya and the dangers of the sea.

The presence in the main competition of filmmakers like Garrone and Holland confirm the growth of militant political directors in the vein of British filmmaker Ken Loach (*The Old Oak*, *I, Daniel Blake*, *The Wind that Shakes the Barley*) and the documentary director Gianfranco Rosi (*Sacro GRA*, *Fire at Sea*).

Pablo Larraín and Guillermo Calderón were jointly awarded the prize for the best



Emma Stone in *Poor Things* by Yorgos Lanthimos

screenplay for their film on Augusto Pinochet, *El Conde (The Count)*, portraying the Chilean dictator as a 250-year-old vampire seeking death. The Coppa Volpi for Best Actress went to Cailee Spaeny for the film *Priscilla* by Sofia Coppola; some may be surprised that Emma Stone did not win, but this is because the rules do not allow the same film to win in more than one category. Peter Sarsgaard won the Coppa Volpi for the film *Memory* by director Michel Franco. The stunning *Dogman* by Luc Besson went home without a single award; in fact, while French films were well-represented, none received a prize.

Festival's sources revealed that the Silver Lion – Grand Jury Prize given to *Evil Does Not Exist* by Oscar winner Ryusuke Hamaguchi generated extensive discussions among the jury members. Takumi and his daughter Hana live in Mizubiki Village, close to Tokyo. Like generations before them, they live a modest life according to the cycles and order of nature, this life is endangered when a cynical company from Tokyo tries to create a glamping retreat for city dwellers. The film has an intriguing denouement and was one of many films that had an environmental theme. ❶

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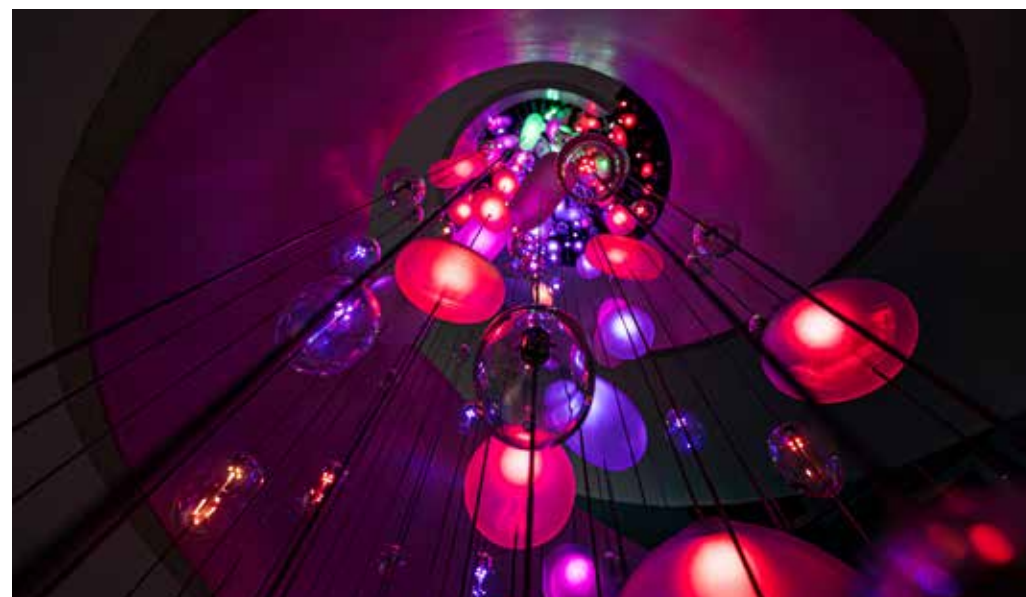
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Zurich: Culture re-imagined!

Mark Browne takes a fresh look at Zurich, one of Europe's traditional cultural centres



With its well preserved historic old town quarter and renowned cultural highpoints, such as the famous 19th century Opera, as well as almost 100 art galleries and 50 museums, Zurich has long enjoyed a reputation as a cultural capital hub.

However, Zurich doesn't rest on the legacy of its historic laurels, the city continues to make noticeable efforts to place itself to the forefront of the European cultural and artistic scene. This includes hosting a range of

festivals as well as temporary visiting exhibitions in its many host venues, all of which make it a tempting city break destination for enthusiastic culture vultures.

For example, the Kunst Zürich, to be held in late October, is an international contemporary art fair combining recent and emerging artists with the works of the more well-established. Digital Art Zurich is an international digital art festival taking place in October. Another annual public art exhibit is the city campaign, featuring decorated sculptures



“THE CITY’S
STREETS
PERMANENTLY
BOAST OVER
1,300 WORKS
OF ART”



based on a central theme temporarily distributed in public places across the city centre. However, the city’s streets permanently boast over 1,300 works of art.

The city also has several theatres, including the impressive historic baroque Theatre am Neumarkt and the large Schauspielhaus Zurich. Film is also well represented locally, with the annual international Zurich Film Festival taking place from the end of September to October.

Music Maestro

Zürich has long boasted prominent chamber and symphony orchestras. One of the largest and most popular annual events in Zürich nowadays, is the Street Parade in August, which is one of the largest techno and dance music festivals in the world. There is a range of local night spots to enjoy these, and other current music genres, year round. For example, Jazz and Blues are celebrated at the Rapperswil festival in June.

Apart from the metropolitan cultural attractions, Switzerland is of course more generally synonymous with the natural beauty of its mountains and lakes. Visitors can also experience both while enjoying a cultural city break within Zurich. The city borders Lake Zurich, whose crisp clean waters offer boating and swimming options in the

summer as well as a stunning spectacle year-round. The Uetliberg mountain plateau on the northeast edge of the city, rising up to 870 metres, is easily accessible and affords panoramic views over the entire city and lake. Its densely forested slopes act as the city’s lungs. The slopes are traversed by an elaborate network of both walking and biking tracks for those wishing to get some exercise, but there is also rail access to the summit for those who wish to appreciate the spectacular views on a more relaxed basis!



“ ITS BLEND OF
THE BEST OF
SWISS HOSPITALITY
WITH FIVE’S
INTERNATIONAL
FLAIR HAS SET IT
APART ”



Where to stay?

For those wishing to truly experience the modern and trendy side of Zurich there can only be one option – the newly opened FIVE Zurich. It has recently been fully renovated and re-styled after being brought into the Dubai-based FIVE group of luxury hotel properties. Continuing the cultural theme, the hotel features an eclectic modern art collection and eye-catching design features, as well as hosting alternating exhibitions of works from contemporary artists such as Pedro Martin Rojo.

With several award-winning restaurants, a rooftop nightclub and a buzzing outdoor pool scene, It has quickly established itself as the hottest dining and nightlife destination in all of Switzerland. Its blend of the best of Swiss hospitality with FIVE’s international flair has set it apart.

The hotel is situated in the countryside at the edge of the city on the foothills of the Uetliberg plateau, affording city or forest views and direct access to its many forest trails, as well as swift access to the airport and cultural attractions of the city centre. The hotel even provides mountain bikes – ideal to help sporty guests with a detox after indulging in its culinary and party options; although the lavish wellness spa, complete with indoor pool, hot tub and full range of treatments, also provides a more sedate avenue of achieving that aim.

*Mark Browne was a guest of
FIVE Zurich. ❶*



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LIFE OF LEISURE

Wine

Beer or wine, you'll feel fine

Gault&Millau present their first guide to Belgian wine



Karel and Tine Henckens, Andeneyck Winery, Limburg

Belgium is no longer just the home of the world's greatest beers - we now have some pretty fine wines to choose from as well. Gault&Millau presented its very first Belgian wine guide this year. In order to assess the wines Gault&Millau assembled a jury of 30 nationally and internationally renowned sommeliers for several blind tastings, it wasn't an easy task!

The wine sector is booming in Belgium, there are more than 250 registered wine-growers, cultivating more than 800 hectares of vineyards. That may seem modest compared to the middle ages, when Belgium boasted more than 10,000 hectares, but Belgium's enthusiasm and aptitude for

winemaking looks like it's on an upward trajectory that shows no signs of slowing down. Almost 50% of Belgium's production is dedicated to sparkling wine, usually made using the painstaking technique of refermentation in the bottle. The Domaine du Chant d'Eole in Hainaut put some noses out of joint a few years ago, by winning a prestigious sparkling wine competition, surpassing some rather well-known French Champagnes in a blind-tasting. Gault&Millau describes their Cuvée Réserve Brut 2018 as "truly top class!"

Together had the chance to speak to Dimitri Vander Heyden and Sophie Wautier of Domaine W, at the Gault&Millau awards



ceremony held in the Steigenberger hotel. Domaine W is fascinating on many levels. They've used participatory financing to construct the company. "Club W" members benefit from deductions and what looks like a lot of fun exclusive events. Their wine is the only biodynamically certified wine in Belgium. The decision to choose the biodynamic method - which is more stringent in its approach than simple bio wines - was based on their experience of living in Austria where the best wines are produced using this method. Their Brut de Brabant (Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier) received a 'coup de coeur' mention.

Chardonnay is the most widely planted grape variety, accounting for around a third of the total hectareage. Hein Henckens, scion of the Henckens' Aldeneyck winery in Limburg says: "The Chardonnay has a good acidity here. Not everybody is used to that because sometimes they can be very buttery, ours have a more mineral-like taste." According to the Gault&Millau guide, wines from cooler regions are in great demand because of their extra refinement that comes from their acidity and modest alcohol content.

Only 15% of Belgian wine is red and a large portion of this is - like in Burgundy - supplied by that most capricious, but rewarding of grapes: Pinot Noir. Indeed, there are



“ CHARDONNAY IS THE MOST WIDELY PLANTED GRAPE VARIETY, ACCOUNTING FOR AROUND A THIRD OF THE TOTAL HECTARAGE. ”

many similarities between the Burgundy region and Belgium in terms of soil and climate. Hein says the Limburg region has the climate that Burgundy enjoyed thirty years ago. While everyone is a loser with climate change, the impact has been somewhat favourable for wine growing in Belgium. Aldeneyck's Charles 2018, was the winner in the Gault&Millau red wine category and is described as, "the archetypal Pinot Noir in all its glory." The fact that Karel Henckens has given the wine his name shows it is a wine he is particularly proud of.

Interestingly, Hein explains the Maasvallei/ Limburg PDO (Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée) is the only cross border 'terroir' in Europe, straddling the Meuse - or the Maas as it is known in that part of the world, it is the warmest and driest part of Belgium.

Aldeneyck's Riesling 2019 was also a winner. Hein says Riesling is not as popular in Belgium, but that it can produce great wines: "My dad is such a fan of it" - as is the guide that describes the wine as: "Lively, fresh and with a subtle presence of residual sugar."

With every year knowledge and expertise is growing, but Belgium still only produces around 2 million litres of wine on average per year. This may sound like a lot, but it's a lot less than we consume. On the whole, Belgian wine growers don't like to get bogged down in bureaucracy, you won't hear many passionate defences of the eight protected designations, or even the looser protected geographic indications (Vin de pays des jardins de Wallonie and Vlaamse landwijn), this may change over time.

The Wine Guide Belgium 2023 has text in Dutch, French and English:
www.gaultmillau.be 📖



The Poet - Fancy a quickie?

Need to find somewhere for lunch near the European Parliament that's reasonable, rapid and at the same time delicious? **Catherine Feore** has found it.



The reference to poetry may be a little tangential, but as for a French person striving for 'exact and faultless workmanship', let me introduce you to The Poet's chef Jérôme Ragon. Ragon's gastronomic journey draws inspiration from his family and culinary roots in France, specifically Nantes, and his extensive international experience, including in Asia and Australia. There is a strong emphasis on locally produced seasonal ingredients and each dish feels freshly conceived while embedded in tradition.

I went to The Poet to try their 'Quick Lunch', not to be confused with a lunch at Quick. Quite the opposite, the lunch was perfection. While the dishes were the product of excellent craftsmanship, there was an absence of the niminy-piminy showy-off tendency that one sometimes encounters with this level of cooking. This is just great tasting, nicely presented food.

The main course was cod cooked in a beautifully flavoured beurre blanc, with navette leaves - nothing is wasted! For me, this was heaven on a plate. Paul Bocuse often stated



As someone from a land of poets, the first thing I ask myself about 'The Poet' is, "which one?" Apparently, 'The' Poet is a reference to the restaurant and after-work cocktail/beer hangout itself, rather than a particular poet. It is on Rue du Parnasse and situated in the Renaissance Hotel - though it has a very separate identity. The Parnassian poets were a group of French poets who, according to Wikipedia: "strove for exact and faultless workmanship"



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that butter was his favourite ingredient; who am I to disagree with the great chef. Ragon seems to agree, he says it's inspired by his grandmother and the Breton love of butter. One of my pet hates is chefs who are mean with sauces, this was the perfect amount. The dessert was an ice cream with limoncello, it was served on a 'chocolate soil' - inspired by a recipe by Heston Blumenthal.

The two-course menu is outstandingly good value at an amazing €25, I can't think of anywhere else in Brussels where you would have this level of cooking at this price. I would add that this is a short walk from the European Parliament; it is difficult to impossible to find a restaurant of this calibre, at these prices, in the vicinity. As it is a set

menu, the kitchen can deliver this exceptional meal, in a working-lunch time frame of 45 minutes. Frankly, it is perfect for a business lunch, but why limit yourself to a business luncheon - this place is great!

Just to show the lengths that *Together* is ready to go to for its readers, I also had one of their cocktails as an aperitif. Not something I would normally do at lunchtime, but I felt that I should test their cocktails since they have a dedicated mixologist. They have an extensive and interesting menu; I use my favourite cocktail - a Margarita - as a test; again, I can report that The Poet came up trumps.

www.thepoetbrussels.com ⓘ



De Jonkman - Something fishy

Catherine Feore meets a couple of Belgian food and drink heroes

While reading the Gault&Millau guide to Belgian wine (see wine section), I was wondering why I hadn't come across many Belgian wines in the wild. The guide came to the rescue as it also contains a list of restaurants that have a focus on Belgian wines. They are rated with little chefs toques and De Jonkman, just outside Brugge (Sint Kruis) has four reflecting the fact that it has no fewer than 18 Belgian wines on its menu.

De Jonkman has two Michelin Stars, but one feels that the Michelin Green Star, signifying sustainable practices, is the one that is closest to chef/owner Filip Claey's heart. There are only fourteen restaurants in Belgium who have received this additional accolade and it definitely isn't just window dressing. Claey's is passionate about sustainability.

I noted that he has a quote from fictional boxer Rocky Balboa on his WhatsApp, he laughs: "Yes, that's because I've had to fight, if you want to create something right, it's a fight. It would have been much easier to cook mainstream fish that people know, like



salmon or tuna. I decided to use bycatch, the fish that fishermen can't sell easily and I probably lost around 40% of my business by making that choice."

Claey's is passionate about sustainable fishing, which inspired him to establish North Sea Chefs (www.northseachefs.be) that celebrates lesser known fish: "If you want to catch one kilo of sole you usually catch around 40 kilos of fish, just to obtain that one kilo," explains Claey's. By promoting these fish he creates a win-win situation, where fishing is more sustainable and the fisherman earns more for his catch. The City of Brugge has been inspired by this movement and has organized a 'Fisherman-to-fork' week where restaurants will promote local fish breeds.

Claey's is humble about what he's achieved: "It's a global problem, I don't think I'm Mother Teresa or that I can change the world, but I can be an example for my region, for my country. I just think we have to take our





“ I’D SAY THAT 95% OF OUR CUSTOMERS ARE DELIGHTED WHEN THEY LEARN THAT THE WINE COMES FROM BELGIUM ”



share of responsibility.”

Coming back to what took me to De Jonkman’s - wine, Filip says that you need a good connection between chef and sommelier. Filip has worked with sommelier Vincent Pharazijn for over five years and one feels there is a perfect understanding between them.

When I ask Pharazijn for an example where

a Belgian wine has paired well with a dish, he says there are many examples: “Filip has created a caviar dish that he makes with some butter milk and coffee, I paired it with a sparkling wine coming from the Domaine of Entre-Deux-Monts (Heuvelland). I’d say that 95% of our customers are delighted when they learn that the wine comes from Belgium, it fits in very well with the ethos of the entire restaurant. I’m very happy when I find a wine, or a beer, that works perfectly with a dish that Filip has created.”

The restaurant also has around 85 different beers, Pharazijn has a particular passion for gueuze which he says works particularly well at a gastronomic level and can be combined with many dishes. Filip says that its bitterness and sourness complements the sweetness of langoustines, and also works well with goat’s cheese.

“We’re a classic restaurant, so of course people expect most of the pairing to be with wine,” says Pharazijn. “But I work with other drinks. We might pair a glass of sherry or Madeira with a starter, or a saki. Right now Filip is creating a dish based on a tartar of sea bass, with seaweed from the North Sea. It has a really umami flavour and it works well with sake or a Riesling from the Maas valley (Limburg).”

The restaurant is known for its stylish, as well as friendly welcome. Sandra Meirlevede, Filip’s partner is the ultimate hostess. They share the same passion and have created a haute de gamme experience for their diners.

If you are looking for the perfect getaway, the restaurant also has arrangements with B&B MANSION9BRUGES and Kasteel Ten Torre, which is less than five minutes from the restaurant in Oedelem.

www.dejonkman.be ❶



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WWW.MUSEE-MARIEMONT.BE



Domaine & Musée royal de Mariemont, 100 Chaussée de Mariemont, 7140 Morlanwelz | Open: Tue - Sun, 10am to 6pm (last entry at 5) | Exhibition open from 16 September 2023 to 7 January 2024.

A Night at the Opera

Together provides a quick overview of the enticing programmes for 2023-2024



La Monnaie © Simon Van Rompay

Belgium is home to three exceptional opera houses: La Monnaie (Brussels), Opéra Royal de Wallonie (Liege), and Opera Vlaanderen (Antwerp/Ghent). All three are famous for the quality and originality of their productions. We take a brief overview of what each has in store.



La Monnaie



Das Rheingold - Richard Wagner - La Monnaie

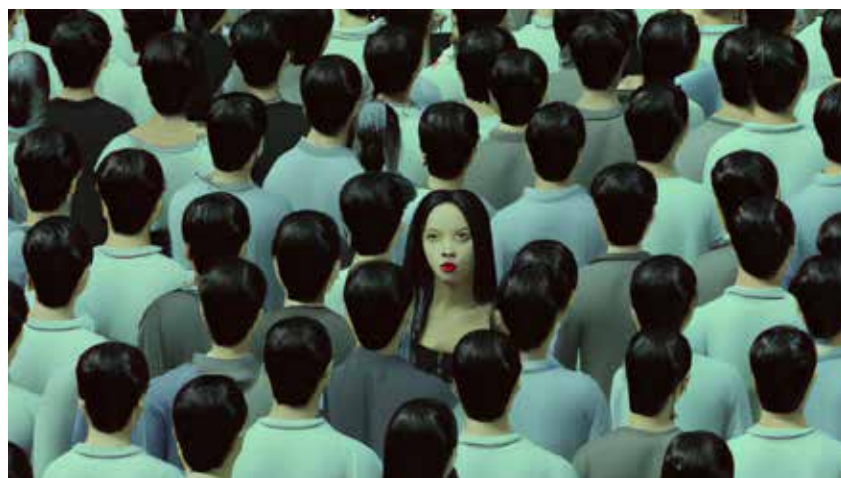
Fate comes knocking at La Monnaie

Are we just the toys of destiny? La Monnaie's interpretation of this season's motto, 'there will be fate' balances 'divine' inevitability and the 'human' power to act – can we be masters of our destiny? Who knows? But maybe we can learn from Wagner's gods or Ali Abdi Omar's journey.

Cassandra (Focroulle, Jocelyn), *Das Rheingold* (Wagner), *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*

(Haendel, concert performance), *The Tale of Tsar Saltan* (Rimski-Korsakov), *Die Walküre* (Wagner), *Nostalgia e Rivoluzione* (Verdi, based on highlights from his 12 early works), *Ali* (Filastine, Soler Mallol, made in collaboration with its subject: Ali Abdi Omar), *The Turn of the Screw* (Britten), *Turandot* (Puccini).

www.lamonnaiedemunt.be



Turandot - Giacomo Puccini - La Monnaie

Théâtre Royal des Galeries

Directeur : David Michels



Encore un instant

Fabrice Roger-Lacan



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What's on



La clemenza di Tito -
Mozart

Eye to eye

Opera Vlaanderen is known for consistently pushing the boundaries of artistic expression and championing contemporary composers.

'Eye to eye' is a reference to the French-Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, who devoted his philosophy to the encounter with the Other (with a capital O). Levinas, who had first-hand experience of the horrors of war, held that mankind is a "totalizing" being, seeking to dominate his environment and making himself the centre of the universe. However, the moment we meet, the 'Other' it puts us in a position where we

must act ethically: we can be guilty of totalising the Other from then on, or we can listen. We are head to head and eye to eye.

La Clemenza di Tito (Mozart), *Crusade* (De Smet and Neyrinck), *The Pearl Fishers* (Bizet), *Brodeck* (Janssens), *Jenůfa* (Janáček).

As with the other opera houses there is also a fascinating dance programme and concert performances. Opera Vlaanderen's programme includes: Fauré, Strauss and Schubert.

www.operaballet.be



Le Nozze di Figaro -
Mozart

What's on

Projection

Opéra Royal de Wallonie-Liège has chosen 'to project (itself)' this season. Images projected onto faces display diversity, invite identification and create a link between the public and each work. The programme contains many classics.

Nine operas in stage version constitute the heart of the season: *Idomeneo* (Mozart), *The Tales of Hoffmann* (Offenbach), *Pelléas et Mélisande* (Debussy), *I Capuleti e i Mon-*



Opera Royal de Wallonie Liège



Opera Royal de Wallonie Liège



Idomeneo
Mozart
19>28.09

www.operaliege.be



Il Barbiere di Siviglia
Rossini
18>28.10

www.operaliege.be



Les Contes d'Hoffmann
Offenbach
19.11>02.12

www.operaliege.be

tecchi (Bellini), *Rusalka* (Dvořák - the Czech classic performed for the first time in Liège), *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (Rossini), *Die Zauberflöte* (Mozart), *Falstaff* (Verdi), *Carmen* (Bizet) and 'L'Opéra en fusion' which invites 80 young people to work and collaborate for fifteen months to create a show inspired by the lyrical repertoire. Conducting legend Zubin Mehta will also conduct *Requiem* (Verdi), bringing together the talents of the Choir of the Royal Opera of Wallonia-Liège with the Chamber Choir of Namur, for an exceptional evening.

www.operaliege.be ⓘ

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What's on

Tintin: An Immersive Adventure

An exhibition for the many admirers of Belgium's greatest investigative reporter



Immerse yourself in the world of Tintin, Belgium's most famous red-haired reporter. From 27 September at Tour & Taxis, an unprecedented exhibition allows young and old 'from 7 to 77', to (re)immerse themselves in the creative and fictional universe of one of the greatest comic strip authors of the 20th century.

Tintin, the Immersive Adventure, features the entire 'paper family' of the famous saga. Tintin, Snowy, and the faithful 'close guard' formed by Captain Haddock the Thom(p)

sons, Professor Calculus, Castafiore and many others. Not forgetting, of course, the unpleasant - but oh so unavoidable - villains.

Extending over 1600m², the digital creation conjures Tintin into life from his black-and-white beginnings in 1929 (Tintin in the Land of the Soviets) and over the course of eight 'chapters' brings his friends and enemies to life. Take a trip to the moon in the famous red and white rocket, or get lost in the jungle of the Picaros.

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It will surely be a trip down memory lane for many, igniting the desire to re-read the comic books of our youth.

A specially-curated soundtrack featuring Iggy Pop, the Beatles, David Bowie and Jacques Brel will have you humming along as you follow our intrepid reporter on land, air and even under the sea.

Tintin, the Immersive Adventure is the latest production from Culturespaces, a pioneer in the creation of digital art centres and immersive experiences. Previous shows



include Vincent Van Gogh's 'Starry Nights' and Gustav Klimt's 'Gold in Motion', bringing art classics to life for a new audience.

They collaborate with Tintinimagination, the exclusive holder of the world rights for the exploitation and representation of Hergé's work.

The exhibition runs every day of the week, until 7 January 2024.

For more information and booking:
www.tintin-immersiveadventure.com 📍



Stanhope's little secrets

Travel back to the late 19th century when the Stanhope Hotel Brussels was built as a residence for a noble Belgian family. Today, it seamlessly merges four buildings, offering an elegant and refined experience to international guests. The Stanhope's walls hold captivating stories and privileged moments that shaped its unique heritage. It blends history and modernity harmoniously.

The rooms, whether classic or contemporary, exude warmth and luxury. The Royal Suite, with its refined decor and antique furniture, has hosted famous figures. The hotel also features a hidden sanctuary — a serene garden with an ancient magnolia tree, offering peace and contemplation amidst the city's chaos.

Food enthusiasts will be delighted by the gourmet cuisine at the Brighton restaurant, led by renowned chef Laurent Gauze. Local and seasonal produce create creative and delicious dishes, complemented by an impressive selection of regional and prestigious wines.

Exploring the hotel reveals a charming old-fashioned telephone room, reminiscent of the early days of long-distance communication. It's a nostalgic space steeped in history.

Beyond luxury, the Stanhope is a place of revealed secrets, preserved history, and the perfect blend of refinement and modernity. Whether staying, dining, or visiting, every moment spent at the Stanhope is a unique experience.



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What's on

The practice of art - Antoni Tàpies retrospective opens

Bozar presents the largest retrospective dedicated to Spanish post-war artist Antoni Tàpies (1923-2012) in nearly two decades. This monumental exhibition, curated by the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid in collaboration with Bozar and the Fundació Antoni Tàpies, offers a comprehensive overview of Tàpies' body of work, featuring over 120 paintings, drawings, and sculptures.



Hieroglyphics (1985) © Barbara Lambrecht-Schadeberg

Tàpies' artistic journey is one that evolves and transforms over time, and this retrospective beautifully traces the various phases of his career. Visitors are initially introduced to his early self-portraits and works in-

fluenced by surrealism and dadaism. However, the highlight of the exhibition is Tàpies' exploration of 'matérisme' or 'informal art' in the 1950s, where he incorporates raw materials, stains, and signs into his art. Using everyday materials like string, sand or straw, he suggests that beauty can be found in small, everyday objects.

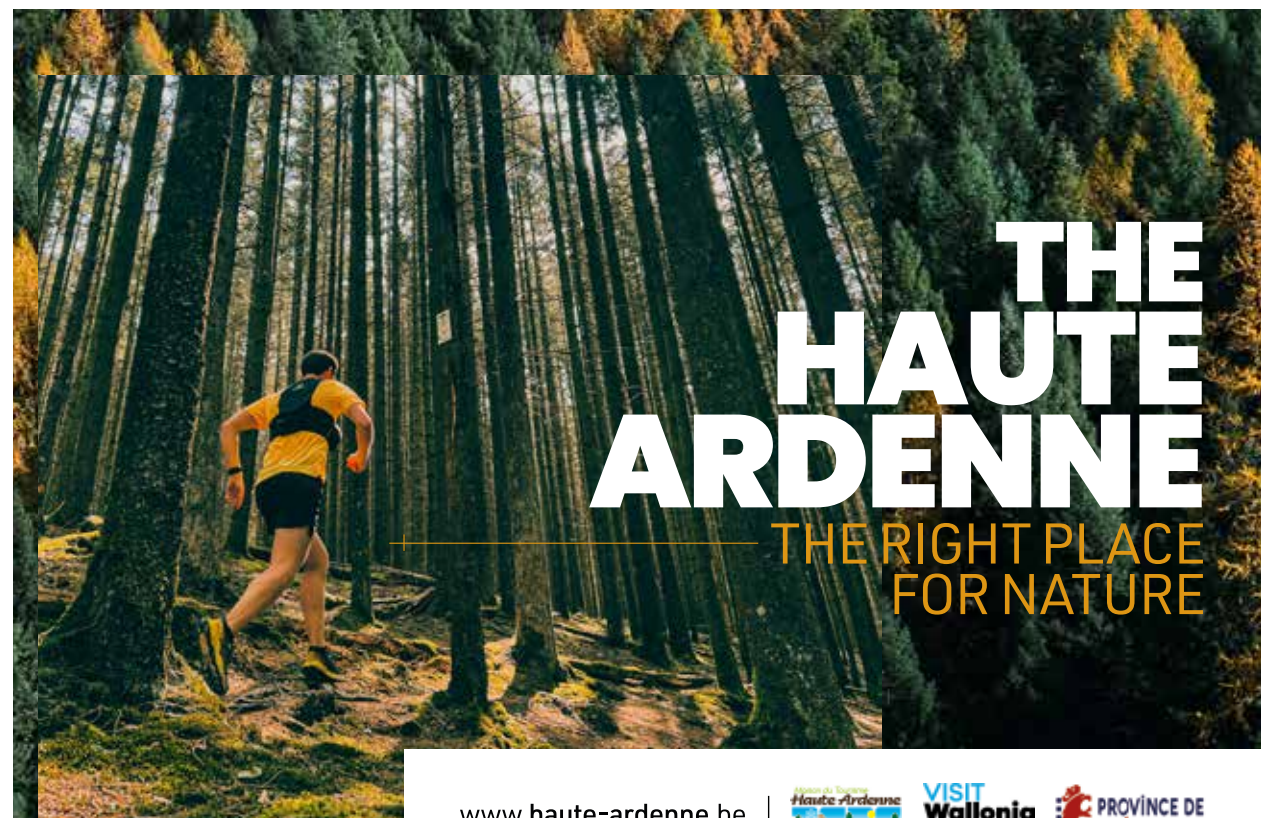
Walking through the exhibition, one cannot help but be captivated by Tàpies' ability to push the boundaries of artistic expression. His matérisme technique challenges conventional notions of art, blurring the lines between painting and sculpture. Tàpies' work exudes a tactile quality that invites viewers to engage with the pieces on a visceral level, forging a profound connection between the art and its audience.



Blue with Four Red Stripes (1966)



Eggbasket and Newspaper (1970) © Comissió Tàpies





Matter in the Form of a Foot (1965) © FotoGasull

A self-taught artist during the interwar period, Tàpies reflected on the human condition, his historical situation and the artistic practice, especially the limits and contradictions of painting. His very prolific oeuvre is scattered all over the world.



Figure on burnt wood (1947) © FotoGasull



Antoni Tàpies in front of a large-format woodcut in the Stoob studio in St. Gallen (1993) © Franziska Messner-Rast

Manuel Borja-Villel serves as the curator of this historic exhibition, the first Tàpies retrospective in Belgium in nearly four decades. This showcase, inaugurating the «Year of Tàpies» («Any Tàpies»), makes its European debut at Bozar as part of Spain's presidency of the EU Council, before travelling to Madrid's Museo Reina Sofía and Barcelona's Fundació Antoni Tàpies.

The retrospective also highlights Tàpies' commitment to addressing profound societal issues. His artwork reflects his engagement with politics and his quest for social justice, making it not just aesthetically stimulating but also intellectually thought-provoking.

The exhibition runs from 15 September to 7 January 2024. ①

Did I see this?

Nikolaos Antoniou invites visitors to take a different approach to seeing

At his latest exhibition, Nikolaos Antoniou challenges the viewer to perceive different realities and accept the unpredictable, illogical and surreal in equal doses. The paintings are about the artist's personal world, but the viewer can create their own stories and interpretations of the past and present, real or dreamed.

Antoniou's collages use printed material, such as newspapers, photographs, digital print; at the same time he works on paintings, using acrylics: "I find collage more journalistic in a way, it has more immediacy. Painting takes longer and requires more preparation, it's a different approach."

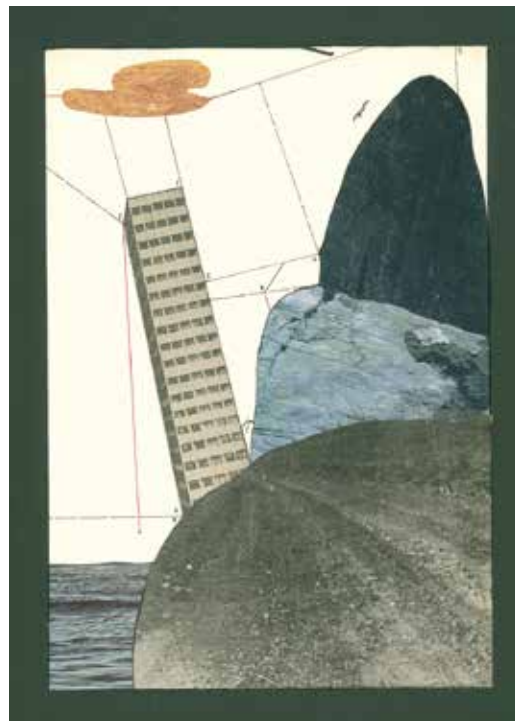
Antoniou hasn't taken a conventional path as an artist, like Tàpies - who also features in this edition - he is self-taught. Born in Greece, he first exhibited at the local arts centre. He went on to study mathematics at Ioannina, Greece, where he had two exhibitions, one private and one at the French Institute. A collage and an acrylic painting were exhibited at the French Institute in Athens as part of a group exhibition for young talents.



He continued with postgraduate studies at Durham (UK) where he became the artistic director of the monthly Durham University Arts Magazine. While a student in Durham, he had the chance to meet Charles Saatchi who bought one of his collages for his private collection. In 2019, one of his acrylic paintings, 'The Prophecy', was selected for the Royal Academy of Arts, Summer Exhibition in London.

When asked if there is a link between his mathematical studies and his art, Antoniou says: "Mathematics is very associated, I think, to a certain surrealism. I did my PhD on stochastic network modeling, which is very philosophical, it's about understanding the world through a probabilistic viewpoint. Mathematics is a creative science in the sense that you play with logic, the logical and the probable, it's an artistic idea."

Antoniou works in business development strategy and communications, which consumes much of his time; nevertheless, he has always managed to find time for his artistic pursuits, publishing poetry, short stories and developing further art works, which can now be enjoyed at this latest exhibition.



“ THE VIEWER CAN CREATE THEIR OWN STORIES AND INTERPRETATIONS OF THE PAST AND PRESENT, REAL OR DREAMED ”



Press Club Brussels, 12 October – 6 November, 09h00-18h00, (not accessible during events), Rue Froissart 95, 1040 Bruxelles.

A few pieces will also be exhibited at the specialty coffee shop United Tastes, in Ixelles next to Place Luxembourg, Rue Caroly 39. A perfect opportunity to take a pause and reflect. ①

The best of the big screen



Bernadette

The *Grande Dame* of French cinema, Catherine Deneuve, returns to portray another, Bernadette Chirac, wife of the former French President Jacques Chirac in the satirical film *Bernadette*. In taking on the role, Deneuve said that she admired the former first lady's "strength and freedom". Initially perceived as aloof when her husband was first elected, the aristocratic first lady renounced her own political ambitions, and also tolerated her husband's many extramarital affairs. An adviser takes her in hand to work on her image; based on an opinion poll he has carried out of the Elysée staff, which reveals she is judged to be "old-fashioned, austere and cold". According to Deneuve, the film is "the story of a woman who emerges from her mould and acquires strength and freedom over time. It was never a question of copying her, but of taking inspiration from her," Deneuve told the French newspaper *Libération* last year. Release date 4 October. Running time: TBC.

The Exorcist: Believer

On 7 August, we learnt about the death of William Friedkin, the director of the multi-Oscar winning *The French Connection* (1971), and who also directed one of the greatest horror films ever made, *The Exorcist* (1973). *The Exorcist: Believer* is in fact the sixth film in the *Exorcist* franchise and is directed by David Gordon Green, who most recently directed the less than stellar denouements to the *Halloween* franchise, *Halloween* (2018), *Halloween Kills* (2021) and *Halloween Ends* (2022). The last direct sequel in the franchise was in fact the very good *Exorcist III*, which was directed by the original novel's author William Peter Blatty. I have serious doubts as to whether this will follow in *Exorcist III*'s exalted footsteps, but it is all about the parents of demonically possessed girls, desperate for help, who seek out someone who has had similar experiences. There are another two sequels planned as part of a trilogy, which, to this huge fan of the original film, indicates only the increasing cynicism of Hollywood, milking all the old hits for every last cent. Release date 11 October. Running time: 121 minutes.

James Drew makes his pick of the current crop of films coming to your screens in the next few weeks



The Old Oak

Directed by renowned left-wing British director Ken Loach (87), *The Old Oak* is a co-production between the United Kingdom, France and Belgium. A pub landlord T.J. Bannatyne (Dave Turner), who lives in a previously thriving mining community in County Durham faces a battle to hold on to his pub The Old Oak, which is the last remaining public space in which people can meet in his town. At the same time locals are incensed when Syrian refugees are placed in their struggling town. In the midst of heightened local tensions, Bannatyne strikes up a friendship with one of the refugees, Yara (Ebla Mari). The film is the latest collaboration between Loach and Paul Laverty, Loach's favourite screenwriter with whom he has collaborated with on over ten films, from *The Wind That Shakes The Barley* (2006) and *I, Daniel Blake* (2016). Expect a bit of northern grit, as well as an uplifting story with compassion in the face of adversity. Like all Loach films, it might be a good idea to bring your handkerchief.

113 mins. Release date 25 October.

Running time: 113 minutes.

Coup de Chance

Woody Allen is back, with his 50th film, *Coup de Chance*. This is the first time he has made a film in French. The film premiered at the 80th Venice International Film Festival on 4 September, and it stars Lou de Laage, Valerie Lemerrier, Melvil Poupaud and Niels Schneider. It's a thriller and the last time Allen attempted to write a pure thriller it was the unconvincing *Cassandra's Dream* in 2007, though *Match Point* in 2006 was truly dark. Fanny (de Laage) and Jean (Poupaud) appear to have everything: they seem to be as in love as when they first met, have successful professional lives and a magnificent Paris apartment. However, when Fanny crosses Alain (Schneider), by a 'stroke of luck', Fanny begins to have feelings of doubt and a tangled web begins to be woven... The film is, according to certain reports, set to be his last; Allen is now 87! For some people, Ronan Farrow's writings about his sister Dylan's alleged molestation by Allen will make a film a 'no-go'. Release date 27 September.

Running time: 93 minutes.

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