

Together

AUTUMN 2026 #138

magazine

SPORT

The Belgian league
Move today, live better

Travel

LISBON
TURIN
LES ARCS

NUTRITION

The perfect
breakfast?

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

When confidence dips
Building mental strength
Setting boundaries without guilt
The skill that changes everything
Turning desire into drive
Becoming your best self

Fashion

The gilded garden

Dining

Mina
Barbizon

WHAT'S ON?

Mariemont
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What's on Brussels

INTERVIEW

Brie
Larson



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Editor's LETTER

*Together:
Inspiring you
to reach your dreams...*



Brie Larson: "As an actor, you have to be conscious of that."

A season of possibility

There is something energising about autumn. As the leaves turn and evenings draw in, we look more closely at what brings warmth, meaning and joy to our lives. A conversation over dinner. A discovery on an unfamiliar street. The decision to begin something we have been postponing.

This autumn and winter, Together invites you to make room for those moments.

Throughout this issue, we explore what becomes possible when we invest in ourselves. Our features on confidence, mental strength and personal growth offer encouragement when the next step feels difficult. Progress often begins with a small promise kept: taking a walk, setting a boundary or trying again.

From Lisbon and Turin to the mountains of Les Arcs, our travel pages invite you to return with fresh eyes. Closer to home, restaurants, interiors, fashion and Belgian culture offer reasons to step outside familiar routines.

We also consider how artificial intelligence is reshaping our working lives. Our feature on the King Baudouin Foundation reminds us what becomes possible through generosity and shared effort.

That spirit runs through this edition: people creating, caring, learning and bringing ideas to life. It makes our international community in Belgium so rewarding.

As the year draws to a close, I hope these pages inspire you to reconnect, discover something new or embrace an unexpected beginning. May the coming months bring warmth, renewed confidence and many good moments shared together.

David Mc Gowan
Editor-in-Chief

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BELVUE!

museum 

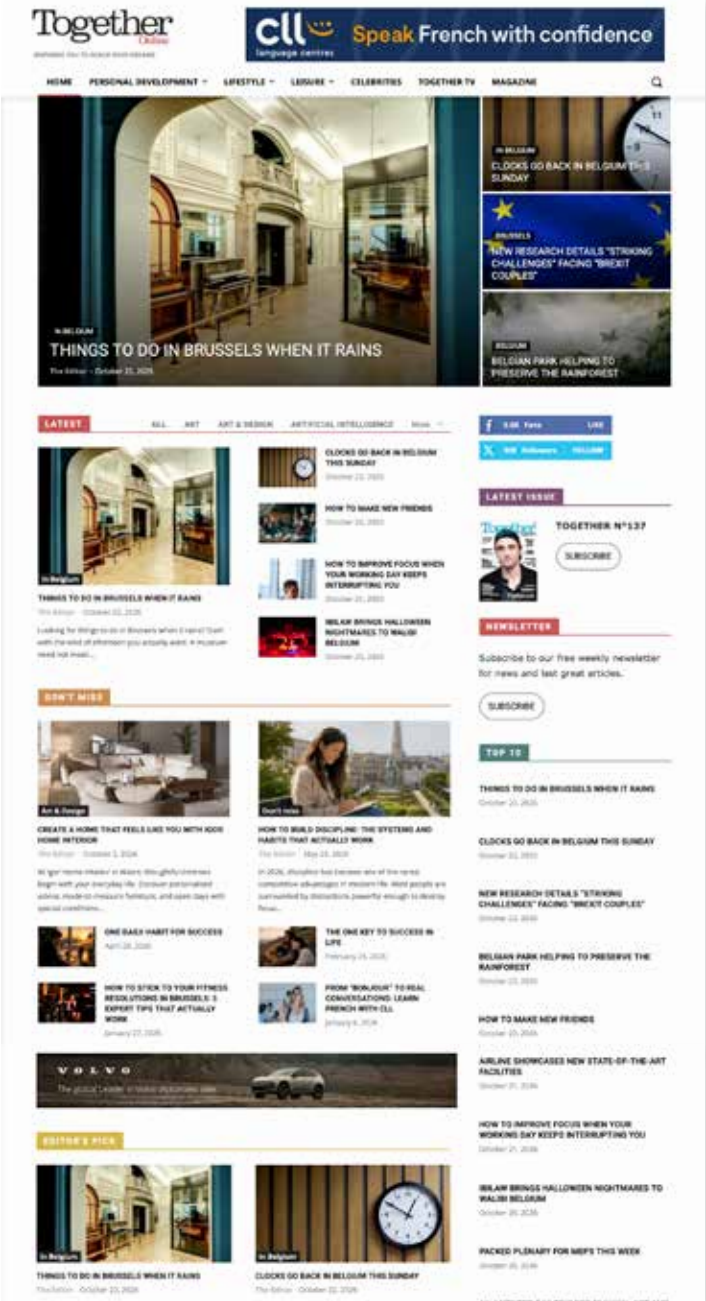
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Discover more of Belgium

From restaurants worth trying to cultural discoveries and places to explore, Together Online invites you to make more of life in Belgium. Find inspiration for your next evening out or weekend adventure at togethermag.eu.

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Dreaming of a change of scenery? Explore our travel features at togethermag.eu, with inspiring destinations and memorable hotel stays to help you plan anything from a refreshing city break to a longer escape.



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Starring in Belgium

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Lara Fabian

Lara Fabian returns to Forest National with her Je suis là tour, revisiting 35 years of songs alongside eleven musicians. For an autumn evening built around a powerful Belgian voice, this Brussels date pairs familiar favourites with the scale and warmth of a full live band.

Where? Forest National, Brussels

When? 12 November 2026

Booking: forest-national.be



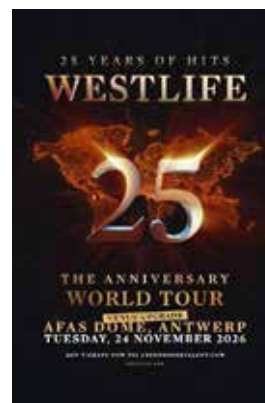
Swing

Brussels rapper Swing brings F5 to the Ancienne Belgique, moving between rap, R&B, soul and jazz. Recorded at the city's ICP Studios, the album weaves guitars, strings and voices around his personal writing. A homecoming for an artist whose musical range reaches well beyond hip-hop.

Where? Ancienne Belgique, Brussels

When? 13 November 2026

Booking: abconcerts.be



Westlife 25

Westlife bring their anniversary tour to Antwerp, with Shane, Nicky and Kian revisiting signature ballads alongside newer songs. Ana Sky opens the evening. The date has moved from Lotto Arena to AFAS Dome, so check the updated venue before heading out for this November celebration of the Irish group.

Where? AFAS Dome, Antwerp

When? 24 November 2026

Booking: afas-dome.be

Fifty years of making generosity count

Together Magazine celebrates the King Baudouin Foundation's anniversary by highlighting its enduring commitment to positive change, and the power of individuals coming together to make a lasting difference.



© Frank Toussaint

A young person finding the confidence to pursue a university education. An older resident having more say in daily life. A work of art remaining accessible to the public. These may seem like unrelated achievements, yet each reflects the same ambition: helping people build a better society together. For fifty years, that ambition has guided the King Baudouin Foundation, an institution whose influence

reaches across Belgium and well beyond its borders.

In 2026, the Foundation is marking half a century of shared commitment. Behind the anniversary lies a story about what happens when generosity is supported by expertise, patience and a willingness to try something new.

A gift with a purpose

The idea emerged as Belgium prepared to celebrate twenty-five years of King Baudouin's reign. Rather than a tribute with only symbolic value, the King wanted an initiative that would improve living conditions across the population.

In late 1975, Prime Minister Leo Tindemans proposed a foundation as a lasting expression of that ambition.

Established by royal decree on 29 December 1975, the Foundation began its activities on 31 March 1976. Independence and pluralism were central to its founding vision: it would serve the public interest across social, cultural and political divides, with particular attention to vulnerable people.

Its initial capital came from a national subscription involving citizens, businesses and organisations, matched by the state. That collective beginning still resonates today. Although the institution has grown considerably, its underlying proposition remains straightforward: people can achieve more when their resources, knowledge and commitment come together.

Turning goodwill into opportunity

Charitable giving often begins with a personal concern. Someone wants to support medical research, help disadvantaged children or preserve a treasured part of Belgium's heritage. The challenge is turning that intention into an effective, sustained contribution. The Foundation helps individuals, families, companies and organisations navigate that process. It now manages more than 1,700 philanthropic funds, connecting donors' priorities with practical initiatives. According to its anniversary dossier, it redistributed more than €202 million in 2025 and supported over 5,000 organisations and individuals.

Those figures convey scale, but the human stories explain the purpose. Boost, its talent

development programme, has supported more than 1,000 young people from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, helping strengthen their prospects of academic and professional success. The Prince Albert Fund has enabled more than 600 young professionals to gain international experience.

Other support takes different forms. Promising musicians can benefit from loans of instruments, while Belgodyssée has helped launch journalists' careers. Together, these initiatives recognise that talent is widely distributed, while access to the opportunities needed to develop it is less evenly shared.

Changing everyday lives

Some of the Foundation's contributions have become familiar features of Belgian life. Its anniversary dossier highlights its role in establishing Child Focus, developing the service voucher system and initiating the country's first Heritage Days in 1989.

Other changes attract less attention but touch people's daily experiences profoundly. The Foundation has helped spread Tubbe, a Scandinavian approach to residential care centred on autonomy and participation, to 226 Belgian care homes. Its emphasis on residents' involvement reflects a broader question: how can support preserve people's ability to shape their own lives?

The Foundation also brings researchers, practitioners, citizens and public authorities together to examine difficult problems. Following the 2022 energy crisis, its platform tackling energy poverty developed eleven recommendations to improve prevention and support for vulnerable households.



© Valentin Bianchi

This combination of practical assistance and research matters. Immediate help can ease hardship, while evidence and collaboration can reveal why that hardship persists and what might prevent it. The Foundation works across both dimensions, seeking improvements that can outlast a single grant or project.

Heritage that belongs to everyone

For readers who associate philanthropy mainly with social assistance, the Foundation's cultural work may be a surprise. Its collection comprises more than 29,000 heritage works and thirty-one archive collections, placed on long-term loan with over 100 museums and public institutions.

The principle is that safeguarding significant objects should also make them available to wider audiences. Preservation becomes a way of sharing knowledge and connecting generations, rather than simply keeping valuable pieces safe. It gives philanthropy a place in cultural life.

The BELvue museum, managed by the Foundation, extends that educational role. In 2025, its exhibitions welcomed 150,000 visitors, while more than 25,000 pupils took part in citizenship education workshops. History and democratic participation meet here in a setting designed to encourage learning and reflection.

Belgian roots, international connections

The Foundation reports activity in 80 per cent of Belgian municipalities, supported by a growing network of local philanthropic hubs. Alongside that local presence, it has developed connections that help generosity travel across borders.

A New York office opened in 1996, followed by Montreal in 2017 and Paris in 2021. It also co-founded the Myriad alliance in 2021, bringing together partners across Europe, North America, Asia and Oceania to facilitate international giving.



© Frank Toussaint

For Belgium's international community, this offers a relevant perspective: the causes people care about rarely fit neatly within national boundaries. The Foundation's longstanding engagement in Africa includes the biennial KBF Africa Prize, recognising people and organisations driving change on the continent.

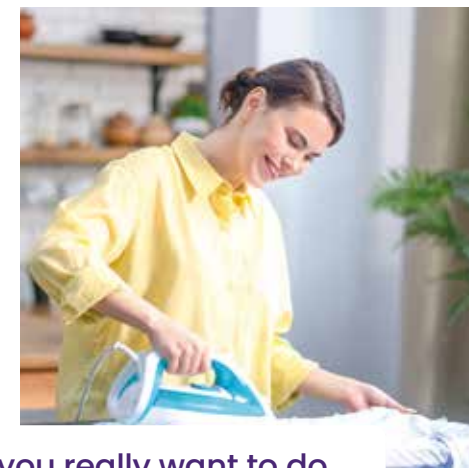
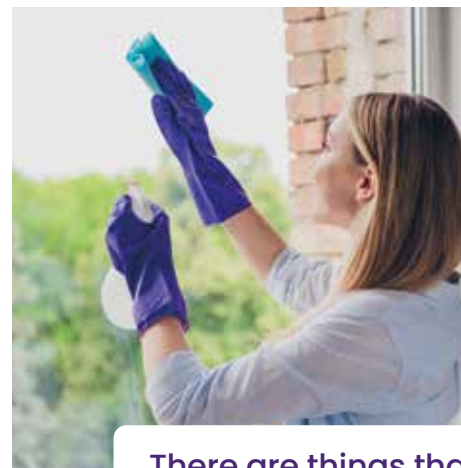
The next chapter

The anniversary also looks forward. A new strategy for 2027–2037 is due to launch at the close of the celebratory year, with future challenges including artificial intelligence's social consequences, democratic resilience and ecological and social transitions.

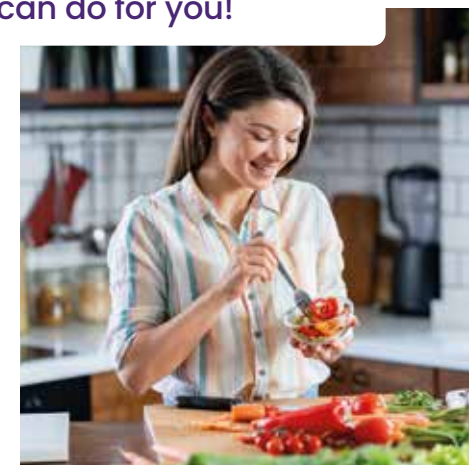
The Foundation is also exploring investment alongside grant-making. Brussels startup No Waste Republic, which it has co-financed, transforms surplus bread into breadcrumbs for the food industry, linking waste reduction with local employment.

Fifty years on, the invitation is broad: contribute money, time, expertise, care or opportunities. Through anniversary stories at 50ansfrb.be, the Foundation is celebrating those different forms of engagement. Its enduring message is that a more generous society is built through many people choosing to take part. ①

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Into the water, before the world wakes up

Together Magazine invites you to discover the joys of an early morning swim while Brussels is still half asleep. Just a few lengths are enough to loosen up your body, clear your mind and start the day one step ahead.



PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

*As the days grow shorter,
make room for ideas that help you grow.*

There are those who haggle for an extra ten minutes with their alarm clock, reluctant to leave the comfort of their warm duvet. And then there are the 'morning swimmers', those early risers who've chosen to start their day in the water, long before the city has fully woken up. For them, slipping into a swimming pool before heading to the office is more than just a way to exercise: it's a ritual, a moment of calm and a refreshing way to take control of the

day ahead. It's a trend that appeals to seasoned athletes as much as it does to those simply looking to incorporate more exercise, balance and wellbeing into their daily lives.

It must be said that, in the early morning, the swimming pool has a special charm. The atmosphere is quieter, the lanes are often less crowded, and there is something particularly satisfying about being active while much of Brussels is still asleep. Calm still reigns;

Fitness

the demands of the day can wait, and the phone, for once, stays in the changing room. There are no emails to answer, no meetings to prepare for and no notifications demanding immediate attention. All that remains is the movement – steady, rhythmic and almost meditative. Length after length, the mind begins to settle, thoughts become clearer and the body gradually finds its rhythm. “Training in the morning allows you to start the day with a different level of energy and clarity,” observes Francesca Meini, Pool Manager at Aspria Royal La Rasante.

Swimming also has a valuable quality: it engages the whole body whilst being gentle on the joints. Unlike many high-impact activities,

it allows the muscles to work without placing excessive pressure on the knees, hips or back. The resistance of the water helps strengthen the body, while the regular rhythm of breathing encourages concentration and relaxation. In the water, movements become more fluid and the effort feels less strenuous. It’s the perfect way to gradually wake up your muscles and mind, improve your endurance and shake off the last traces of sleep, without feeling as though you’re heading into battle before you’ve even had your first coffee. And perhaps most importantly, it offers the satisfaction of having already done something good for yourself before the working day has even begun.

40 minutes to change pace

There’s no need, incidentally, to turn every morning into an Olympic training session. The secret lies less in performance than in consistency. A 40- to 45-minute session is perfectly sufficient to enjoy the benefits of swimming without exhausting yourself before the day has started. Francesca Meini recommends starting with a 10- to 15-minute warm-up, paying particular attention to your breathing and allowing your muscles to ease into the movement, before moving on to 20 to 30 minutes of more vigorous swimming, followed by a few minutes of recovery. For a regular swimmer, this amounts to around 1,200 to 1,500 metres, to be adapted, of course, to your own level, physical condition and personal objectives.

Beginners, meanwhile, can take a gentler approach, alternating shorter lengths with moments of rest and gradually increasing the distance as their confidence grows. The idea is not to leave the pool completely exhausted, but rather to emerge feeling energised and ready to face whatever the day has in store.

Two to three sessions a week are enough to establish a routine, provided you stick to



your own pace. Choosing regular days can also help turn swimming into a habit rather than another resolution that disappears after a few enthusiastic attempts. And don’t neglect your fuel: it’s best to have a light snack before you take the plunge, particularly if you wake up hungry, followed by a more substantial breakfast afterwards. Hydration matters too, even if being surrounded by water makes it easy to forget that your body still needs to drink.

Make a date with yourself

Of course, the benefits of an early morning swim extend beyond physical fitness. In a world where our schedules are increasingly crowded and our attention constantly divided, dedicating the first moments of the day to ourselves can feel like a small luxury. Swimming offers a rare opportunity to disconnect, focus on the present and enjoy a little breathing space before the pace of everyday life accelerates.

At Aspria Royal La Rasante, free swimming, aqua aerobics, guided training sessions and adult classes allow everyone to create their

own aquatic routine, whether the aim is to improve technique, build endurance, regain confidence in the water or simply enjoy a moment of relaxation. The variety of activities also means that swimming need never become monotonous: some mornings can be devoted to a more energetic workout, while others can be about slowing down and enjoying the simple pleasure of being in the water.

Because perhaps that’s where the real appeal of a morning swim lies: in that little break we allow ourselves before diaries, meetings and notifications take over again. A moment that belongs entirely to us, when the day is still full of possibilities and there is no need to rush.

The hardest part? Getting out of bed. But once you’re in the water, with the first few lengths behind you and your energy beginning to rise, that early alarm suddenly feels like a very good decision. And by the time Brussels is fully awake, you’re already one step ahead!

www.aspria.com ⓘ



The Belgian league giving one-on-one sport a bigger stage

Together Magazine explores how LINEAL is transforming one-on-one basketball into a new championship, starting in Antwerp and Barcelona with ambitions to expand across Europe and beyond.



Two players face each other. One attacks, the other defends. Every movement matters, and there is nowhere to hide behind a teammate. One-on-one basketball has an immediate appeal: a direct contest of skill and nerve that is easy to understand, even for someone who rarely watches the sport.

Belgian startup LINEAL wants to give those encounters a continuing story. Founded in

early 2026 by David Dawoud and professional basketball player Manu Lecomte, it is building a structured league around individual competition, beginning with basketball and looking towards a wider future for one-on-one sports.

From a viral moment to a lasting rivalry

Online audiences already enjoy individual basketball battles. As LINEAL's September press release explains, creators and media

companies have demonstrated their appeal, attracting millions of views. Yet those encounters often reach viewers as separate clips or standalone events.

LINEAL's proposition is to connect them. Recurring live events sit alongside rankings, championship belts and athlete stories, giving each result significance beyond the evening itself. A victory becomes part of a player's journey. A defeat can create the possibility of a comeback.

For spectators, that continuity offers a reason to keep watching. They can follow athletes as they progress, understand what the next encounter means and develop an interest in rivalries over time. The aim is to make the competition engaging both inside the venue and through the content audiences watch afterwards.

A championship told in Chapters

LINEAL organises its competition into Chapters. Each introduces its own setting and challenges, while a shared championship lineage carries forward. The approach gives individual editions their own identity without losing the history that connects them.

There is a storytelling opportunity here. Sport becomes more compelling when people understand what is at stake and know something about the competitors. LINEAL wants the athlete's journey to remain visible, allowing supporters to follow the person as well as the performance.

**“WE DESIGN SPORT
TO BE WATCHED,
NOT JUST PLAYED.”**



“We design sport to be watched, not just played,” says Dawoud, LINEAL's co-founder and CEO, in the press release. “Basketball is our first arena; our ambition is to build the first global home for 1v1 sports, where the story continues and every Chapter has its own thrill.”

Antwerp and Barcelona lead the way

The first basketball championship, Chapter I: Origins, launched in September after LINEAL staged its initial events in Belgium. It links Antwerp and Barcelona, providing an early example of how the competition can connect players and audiences across European borders.

Players follow a route from city qualifiers to eliminators and a final. Two divisions provide separate championship opportunities: lightweight for players under 1.90 metres and heavyweight for those measuring 1.90 metres or above. Each division offers €15,000 and a championship belt.



According to the press release dated 29 September, the first qualifiers had already taken place in both cities, with further events leading towards December's eliminators.

That structure gives the European ambition a concrete starting point. Rather than simply introducing the same event in different places, LINEAL connects local encounters through a common competitive path. Antwerp and Barcelona become parts of one championship, with results contributing to a larger story.

For a Belgian sporting venture, the international dimension is particularly interesting. LINEAL is beginning with a format that requires little explanation across borders. The individual duel is readily understood, while the athletes and their stories can give each city's competition its own character.

Beyond the basketball court

Basketball is LINEAL's first sport, but its founders envisage a broader organisation dedicated to one-on-one competition. They plan to apply the approach to other sports capable of holding viewers' attention.

The press release does not identify which disciplines would come next. It does, however, describe the principles that would connect them: a clear route through the

competition, distinctive athletes and memorable challenges, all within a story that continues between events.

The ambition is therefore to develop a recognisable experience that can travel between sports. Audiences would encounter different skills and personalities, while retaining the pleasure of following challengers towards a championship.

LINEAL is also developing a youth basketball programme combining coaching with competition. This adds a development dimension to a project whose public identity centres on live events and spectators.

For readers discovering the concept, the simplest way to follow it is through the competitors: who advances, who falls short and who returns with something to prove. LINEAL's proposed expansion rests on that connection, taking the drama of a personal sporting challenge to audiences in different places.

A Belgian idea with international ambitions

Dawoud brings experience as a startup operator and youth basketball coach, alongside Lecomte's professional playing background. The company closed a €500,000 pre-seed funding round in August 2026, supporting its opening phase.

Its task now is to establish a competition that audiences want to follow repeatedly. The ingredients are straightforward: recognisable athletes, meaningful results and a championship worth pursuing.

From its Belgian beginnings, LINEAL is offering a new framework for a familiar sporting challenge. The contest starts with two opponents. The ambition reaches much further.

More info: <https://linealleague.com/> 

Move today, live better tomorrow

Together Magazine explores how combining cardio, strength training and enjoyable physical activities can support healthy ageing and lifelong wellbeing.



We usually begin exercising with an immediate goal: losing weight, feeling fitter or clearing our heads after a demanding day. As the years pass, another ambition becomes more compelling. We want to live longer, but we also want the energy and independence to enjoy those extra years.

That is where exercise becomes an investment in our future. The question is less about finding a miraculous workout than building a routine that keeps us physically capable. Research points towards a combination of cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength and, increasingly with age, balance.

Sport

Start with your heart

Cardiorespiratory fitness describes how effectively the heart, lungs and muscles work together to deliver and use oxygen during activity. It repeatedly emerges as an important indicator of long-term health.

A 2024 review in the British Journal of Sports Medicine examined 26 systematic reviews covering more than 20.9 million observations. Higher fitness was consistently associated with a lower risk of premature death. These findings do not promise a particular number of extra birthdays: observational research identifies relationships, rather than proving that one workout will extend your life.

Nevertheless, the practical message is encouraging. Improving cardiovascular fitness deserves a place in our lives, and doing so does not require marathon training.



Walking earns its place

Brisk walking is easy to dismiss because it looks ordinary. Yet it can provide meaningful aerobic activity without specialist equipment, expensive membership or a complicated timetable.

For someone who spends most of the day sitting, a regular walk is a realistic starting point. A lunchtime circuit, a walk to the station or an outing through a local park can turn exercise into part of the day rather than another obligation.

The World Health Organization recommends 150–300 minutes of moderate aerobic activity each week, or 75–150 minutes of vigorous activity, or an equivalent combination. Thirty minutes of brisk walking on five days reaches the lower moderate target.

You can also build towards that total through shorter walks. Starting with manageable amounts makes more sense than postponing movement until you have an uninterrupted hour.

Choose your kind of cardio

Running offers an efficient cardiovascular challenge, but it is one option among many. Swimming, cycling, dancing and hiking can all contribute to an active routine.

The useful choice depends on your fitness, health, preferences and circumstances. Swimming may appeal to someone who enjoys the water; cycling might fit naturally into a commute. Others find that a weekly tennis game makes movement something to anticipate.

Variety also creates flexibility. When weather, work or family commitments interrupt one activity, another can keep the habit going. A routine built around your actual life has a better chance of surviving than an ambitious programme you dread.



Strength protects independence

Aerobic exercise deserves attention, but it should not crowd out strength training. Maintaining strength matters when you climb stairs, carry shopping, lift luggage or get out of a chair.

A systematic review published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine associated muscle-strengthening activity with lower mortality and several major disease risks. Again, association is not a guarantee. The everyday value of remaining strong, however, is easy to understand.

WHO guidance recommends working all major muscle groups on at least two days each week. Resistance bands, machines, dumbbells and suitably challenging bodyweight exercises can all provide resistance. Good technique and gradual progression matter more than impressive weights.

Think beyond birthdays

Lifespan measures years lived. Healthspan concerns the time we remain healthy and able to participate in life. Most of us want both: the opportunity to travel, see friends, explore a city and play with grandchildren.

Balance belongs in that picture. For adults aged 65 and over, WHO recommends varied activity emphasising functional balance and strength on three or more days each week, alongside aerobic movement.

Exercise can therefore be judged by what it helps you keep doing. Maintaining physical capacity is a worthwhile goal even when the bathroom scales barely change.

Build a week you can repeat

A practical routine might combine brisk walks, two strength sessions and a swim or cycle. It need not begin at full volume. Someone returning after inactivity can start gently and increase the challenge as confidence and fitness develop.

Harder intervals can offer variety, but every session need not be exhausting. Allow room for recovery and adapt activities to your abilities. Seek individual guidance if a health condition makes the appropriate intensity uncertain.

Make the arrangements easy to keep. Put walking shoes by the door, reserve a regular slot for training and agree a meeting time with a friend. On busy days, adjust the plan rather than abandoning it altogether. A shorter outing still keeps movement in your schedule and makes returning to your normal routine feel considerably more achievable.

The best exercise for living longer is ultimately a sustainable combination. Keep your heart challenged, preserve your strength and choose movement you enjoy enough to repeat. The goal is to build a body that lets you keep saying yes to life. ❶



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What makes a good breakfast?

Together Magazine rethinks breakfast, exploring how protein, fibre and healthy fats can help you start the day feeling satisfied and energised.



First things first: you don't have to eat breakfast if you're simply not hungry in the morning. Some people feel perfectly well without eating as soon as they wake up, and there is no need to force yourself to have breakfast just because we have long been told that it is "the most important meal of the day".

What I would not recommend, however, is deliberately skipping breakfast simply to cut

back on food and lose weight – particularly if this means ignoring or fighting your hunger. Restricting food intake can increase hunger and, for some people, may lead to compensatory eating later in the day. More broadly, weight loss triggers a number of physiological adaptations that can make maintaining the weight you have lost challenging.

So, if you are hungry in the morning, what should you put on your plate?

Nutrition

Protein: your ally for lasting fullness

Protein is particularly effective at promoting satiety. Of all the macronutrients, it has the strongest effect on helping us feel full. Including a sufficient amount of protein at breakfast can therefore help keep hunger at bay and reduce the temptation to snack before lunchtime.

Protein also provides amino acids that the body needs for a wide range of essential functions. One of these is tyrosine, which is involved in the production of dopamine and noradrenaline – two neurotransmitters that play a role in alertness, attention, motivation and our response to certain stressful situations.

That is another good reason not to overlook protein at breakfast. However, it is worth keeping one important point in mind: eating more tyrosine does not automatically mean that the brain will produce more dopamine. The effect depends on a number of factors, including the body's physiological state and its actual needs.

Rethinking the refined-carb breakfast

At the other end of the spectrum, I would avoid breakfasts made up largely of refined, carbohydrate-rich foods, particularly when they are eaten on their own.

A familiar example is white bread or baguette spread with jam, perhaps accompanied by fruit juice or another sugary drink. Pastries and some highly sweetened breakfast cereals fall into the same category.

These foods are rich in readily available carbohydrates and can cause a sharp rise in blood glucose after eating. In response, the body releases insulin, which helps cells use and store glucose and gradually brings blood glucose levels back towards their usual range.

For some people, this may be followed by a significant drop in blood glucose, along with unpleasant symptoms such as intense hunger, irritability, weakness, trembling, sweating or difficulty concentrating. This is known as reactive hypoglycaemia.

Even when there is no actual episode of hypoglycaemia, however, some people find that a breakfast very high in refined carbohydrates leaves them feeling hungrier or more prone to sweet cravings later in the morning. This can easily turn into a cycle of snacking.

Pairing carbohydrates with protein, fibre and healthy fats helps slow carbohydrate digestion and glucose absorption and moderate

“ THERE IS NO
REASON WHY
VEGETABLES SHOULD
BE CONFINED TO
LUNCH AND DINNER. ”

the blood glucose response compared with eating a highly refined carbohydrate food on its own.

Keep it simple

There is no need to overcomplicate breakfast. In practice, I recommend applying the following principles. The aim is not to weigh and measure every ingredient, but simply to bring together, as much as possible, the key components of a balanced meal:

- **A source of protein:** eggs, fromage blanc (quark), skyr, plain yoghurt, cheese, tofu, fish, etc.
- **A good-quality source of carbohydrates,** preferably minimally refined and/or rich in fibre: wholegrain or wholemeal bread, oats, low-sugar muesli, or homemade oat-based pancakes or pancakes made with legume flour, for example.
- **A source of healthy fats:** walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts, seeds, nut or seed butter, or a vegetable oil suited to the preparation.

And there is no reason why vegetables

should be confined to lunch and dinner. They can work beautifully in a savoury breakfast too: tomatoes, mushrooms, spinach or other cooked vegetables can be served alongside eggs, for example.

A few simple ideas to get you started:

- **Savoury:** eggs, wholegrain sourdough bread and a handful of walnuts.
- **Dairy-based:** fromage blanc or skyr with oats, chia or flax seeds and a few almonds.
- **Porridge:** oats cooked with milk or a calcium-fortified plant-based drink, ideally unsweetened, with a source of protein and a small amount of nut or seed butter.
- **Keep it really simple:** wholegrain sourdough bread, cheese and a few walnuts.

The goal is not to eat the “perfect” breakfast every single day. It is simply to move away, whenever possible, from a breakfast that is predominantly sweet and towards a genuinely nourishing meal – one that provides, among other things, protein, fibre and good-quality fats. ❶



How to keep going when confidence dips

Together Magazine explores how a gentler approach to difficult mornings can help you regain your balance and take the next step with confidence.



Yesterday, you had energy, ideas and something useful to say. Today, an unanswered email feels intimidating and a routine meeting seems beyond you. Nothing obvious has changed, yet your confidence appears to have slipped away overnight.

Such mornings can be unsettling, particularly when you are used to being capable. You may start questioning your judgement,

comparing yourself with others or wondering whether yesterday's assurance was misplaced. Before drawing conclusions, pause. A difficult day deserves attention, but it need not become a verdict on your ability or your future.

Understand the dip

Confidence is often specific to a situation. You might feel comfortable on a tennis court and uncertain at a networking reception. A

demanding week, an awkward conversation or an unfamiliar responsibility can alter how prepared you feel. The circumstances matter.

Motivation and confidence are different, too. Confidence concerns whether you believe you can do something; motivation concerns whether you feel inclined to do it. You can know your subject thoroughly and still struggle to open the presentation. Recognising that distinction helps you choose a useful response rather than simply demanding more enthusiasm.

Begin with what you need

Before pushing harder, check the basics. Have you eaten, taken a break or allowed yourself enough rest? Are several unresolved worries competing for your attention? A glass of water will not solve a serious problem, but neglecting ordinary needs can make an already demanding day harder to navigate.

Consider stepping outside. A short walk through your neighbourhood or a Brussels park offers a pause between worrying and returning to your desk. The NHS includes physical activity and connecting with others among its steps to support mental well-being. Keep the outing gentle if your energy is low; it need not become another performance target.

Make the task smaller

An ambitious list can feel paralysing when you are already doubting yourself. Choose one useful priority and define a manageable beginning. "Sort out my career" might become "read one suitable vacancy". "Finish the presentation" might become "draft the opening slide".

Decide what would count as enough for this morning. A modest, clearly defined finish line can help you direct your attention. Leave space to revise it if circumstances change or your energy drops further today.



**“YOU DO NOT HAVE
TO PERSUADE
YOURSELF THAT
EVERYTHING WILL
GO BRILLIANTLY.”**

Try giving that first step ten minutes. When the time is up, decide whether to continue, pause or ask for help. This is an experiment, without any guarantee that motivation will arrive. Sometimes beginning makes the next step easier; sometimes it reveals that you need information, recovery or a different approach.

Speak to yourself fairly

Notice the language you use when something feels difficult. “I never get anything right” turns one uncomfortable moment into a sweeping accusation. A fairer response might be: “I am finding this hard today. What would make it more manageable?”

You do not have to persuade yourself that everything will go brilliantly. Find something believable to rely on: you have prepared, you can ask a question, or you have handled a similar situation before. NHS guidance on low self-esteem recommends challenging negative beliefs and treating yourself more kindly. Fairness is more useful than forced optimism.

Prepare for the uncomfortable moment

Give the worry a clear shape. If a meeting feels intimidating, review the relevant figures and write down one contribution you want to make. If you are nervous about a reception, prepare two questions you would enjoy asking. Practical preparation provides an anchor when general reassurance feels unconvincing.

Support can be equally practical. Put your phone aside if scrolling is leaving you feeling inadequate, and contact someone who listens without judgement. Explain what is troubling you and what kind of help would be useful. You might need perspective, assistance with a decision or simply some company.

Give the day a fair ending

Before closing your laptop, record one thing you completed, one difficulty you faced and one adjustment that could help tomorrow. Include ordinary achievements: making an uncomfortable call, clarifying a misunderstanding or keeping a modest commitment. These belong in the account alongside unfinished work.

If you need an immediate reset, place your feet on the floor, relax your shoulders and breathe gently. Name the specific concern, check what you need and choose one manageable action. There is no requirement to transform your mood before beginning.

Rest also belongs in the plan. Reduce your workload or postpone something optional when recovery is needed. If low mood, anxiety or loss of motivation persists, worsens or interferes with everyday life, speak with your GP or a qualified mental health professional. Confidence will fluctuate; responding with patience, preparation and realistic expectations can make those uneven days easier to live through. ❶

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How to become mentally stronger

Together Magazine explores how everyday choices, a positive mindset and knowing when to seek support can help build lasting resilience.



Some people appear remarkably difficult to knock off course. A career setback, a painful separation or an unexpected disappointment shakes them, yet they eventually find their footing. Watching from outside, we might assume they possess something we lack: a naturally tougher mind.

But mental strength need not mean being fearless or unaffected. It can mean feeling upset without letting that feeling make eve-

ry decision. You can be anxious and still act, disappointed and still adapt, exhausted and willing to acknowledge that you need rest.

The aim is not to become invulnerable. It is to develop a more useful response when life becomes difficult.

Make room for emotion

Many of us learned to associate strength with silence. Keep going. Do not complain.

Hide the tears. Yet looking composed tells us little about how someone is coping.

Begin by naming what you feel. Is it anger, embarrassment, fear or sadness? Acknowledging an emotion gives you an opportunity to consider your response.

Before sending an angry message, step away. Before abandoning a project after criticism, separate the useful feedback from the sting. You do not have to deny your feelings to choose your actions carefully.

Practise manageable discomfort

Avoidance can be wonderfully tempting. We postpone the awkward conversation, distract ourselves from uncertainty or reach for our phones whenever boredom arrives.

Sometimes stepping back is sensible. But routinely escaping every uncomfortable moment leaves little opportunity to discover what we can handle.

Choose a challenge that stretches you without overwhelming you. Make the telephone call you have delayed. Ask a question in a meeting. Complete a demanding task in small stages.

This is not an invitation to endure harmful circumstances. Manageable discomfort and damaging stress are different. The point is to practise meeting ordinary difficulty with intention.

Put your energy where it helps

You cannot dictate other people's opinions, undo yesterday or guarantee that a carefully prepared proposal will succeed. Trying to command these things can consume an entire day.

Instead, ask: what is available to me now? Perhaps you can prepare more thoroughly, clarify a misunderstanding, set a boundary or choose a different approach. Perhaps the

only useful action today is to stop revisiting a decision that has already been made.

Recognising the limits of your influence frees attention for the choices that remain yours.

Question the story in your head

A thought can feel convincing without being accurate. One unanswered email becomes evidence that somebody dislikes you. One mistake becomes proof that you are incapable.

Pause and distinguish the event from your interpretation. What happened? What are you assuming? What other explanation might fit?

The aim is not relentless optimism. Sometimes circumstances really are disappointing. But describing a problem accurately makes it easier to respond.

"I handled that conversation badly" suggests something you can improve. "I ruin everything" turns one experience into a verdict on your identity.

Keep realistic promises

Self-trust has a practical foundation: doing what you reasonably intended to do.

Choose commitments small enough to honour on an ordinary day. Walk for twenty minutes. Finish one important task. Spend ten minutes preparing for tomorrow.

An ambitious routine that repeatedly collapses may be less useful than a modest one you maintain. When you fall short, adjust the commitment rather than launching another round of self-criticism.

These choices offer concrete reminders that you can take action even when motivation is uneven.



Change direction when necessary

Persistence matters, but so does judgment. Repeating an approach that clearly fails is not automatically a sign of strength.

Consider what the situation requires. A misunderstanding may need a conversation. An overloaded diary may need fewer commitments. A goal may need a different route.

Ask yourself whether you are protecting the objective or simply defending your original plan. Allowing yourself to adapt can preserve energy and open possibilities that stubbornness closes.

Learn, then let yourself recover

After a mistake, reflection asks what happened and what could change. Rumination keeps replaying the scene without producing a useful next step.

Write down the lesson. Make a repair where possible. Decide what you will do differently. Then give yourself permission to return to the present.

Recovery also involves other people. Tell a trusted friend when you are struggling. Ask for practical assistance. If distress persists or disrupts daily life, seek professional support.

It also helps to judge progress over time rather than by your mood on a single morning. You may feel confident on Monday and uncertain on Tuesday while remaining equally capable. At the end of the week, consider which situations you faced, which reactions you handled differently and where support helped. Look for specific changes instead of demanding a permanent feeling of confidence. A difficult day does not erase the useful habits you have been practising or the progress made.

Mental strength grows through repeated, imperfect practice. Today, that might mean one honest conversation, one manageable challenge or one decision to rest. You do not need to meet every difficulty alone. You need a response that helps you move forward. ❶

How to set healthy boundaries without feeling guilty

Together Magazine explores how setting healthy boundaries can protect your wellbeing, strengthen relationships and encourage mutual respect.



Many of us find it difficult to say no. We agree to invitations when we would rather rest, accept extra work when we are already overwhelmed and tolerate behaviour that makes us uncomfortable because we want to avoid conflict.

In the short term, saying yes can feel easier. In the long term, however, constantly putting other people's needs before our own

can lead to stress, resentment and exhaustion.

Healthy boundaries allow us to decide what we are comfortable with and communicate those limits clearly. They are not about controlling other people or shutting them out. They are about taking responsibility for our own time, energy and emotional wellbeing.

Self help

What are personal boundaries?

A boundary defines what you will and will not accept in a relationship. Boundaries can relate to your time, personal space, workload, finances, privacy, emotions or how others speak to you.

For example, a boundary might mean not answering work messages late at night, telling a friend you cannot lend them money, asking a family member not to comment on your appearance or refusing to continue a conversation when someone becomes aggressive.

Boundaries differ for everyone. What feels acceptable to one person may be uncomfortable for another. The important thing is to identify your limits rather than allowing others to define them for you.

Why is it so difficult to set boundaries?

People often struggle with boundaries because they fear disappointing others. Saying no may make you appear unhelpful or selfish, or risk rejection and confrontation.

For some, the habit begins early. If being agreeable earned approval, you may have learned to ignore your needs. At work, a willingness to help can be rewarded—until it becomes an expectation and your generosity works against you.

Guilt does not necessarily mean you are doing something wrong. Sometimes it simply means you are doing something unfamiliar.

Recognise where a boundary is needed

Resentment is often an important warning sign. If you repeatedly feel irritated, drained or taken for granted after interacting with someone, a boundary may be missing.

Ask yourself:

- Do I regularly agree to things that I do not want to do?

- Does this person expect immediate access to my time or attention?
- Do I feel responsible for managing their emotions?
- Am I afraid of how they will react if I say no?
- Do I leave our conversations feeling anxious, guilty or exhausted?
- Is this relationship consistently one-sided?

Your emotional response can reveal where your limits are being crossed, even before you have consciously identified the problem.

Start with a clear and simple message

A boundary does not require a lengthy defence. In fact, excessive explanation can make it sound as though your decision is open to negotiation.

You can be respectful while remaining direct:

- "I'm not available this evening."
- "I can help for 30 minutes, but I cannot take responsibility for the entire project."
- "I don't discuss my finances."
- "Please speak to me respectfully, or we will need to continue this conversation another time."
- "I'm unable to lend you money."
- "I need more notice before making plans."

Try to focus on what you will do rather than attempting to control the other person. You cannot force someone to speak calmly, but you can decide to end the conversation if they become abusive.

Avoid overexplaining

When people feel guilty, they often provide multiple reasons for saying no. This can unintentionally invite the other person to challenge every explanation.

If you say, "I cannot come because I have work, I am tired and I have an early morning," someone may try to solve each obstacle for you. A simple "Thank you for inviting

me, but I won't be able to come" is often enough.

You are allowed to make decisions about your own time without presenting a case for approval.

Expect some resistance

People who benefited from your lack of boundaries may resist change. They may question your decision, make you feel guilty or accuse you of behaving differently.

That does not mean your boundary is unreasonable. A respectful person may feel disappointed but will accept your decision. Someone who repeatedly ignores, mocks or punishes you for expressing a reasonable limit reveals something important about the relationship.

There is no need for anger or aggression. Calmly repeat: "I understand that you are disappointed, but my decision remains the same."

Be consistent

A boundary is effective only when followed by action. If you refuse to respond to work messages after 7pm but continue answering them, the boundary becomes unclear.

Consistency does not require perfection. You may choose to make exceptions, but these should be conscious decisions rather than the result of pressure or guilt.

When a boundary is repeatedly ignored, decide how to respond. You might end the conversation, leave the room, decline requests or reduce contact. This is not about punishment but about protecting your limits.

Accept that discomfort is part of the process

Setting a boundary may feel uncomfortable, particularly if you have spent years pleasing

other people. Your voice may shake. You may replay the conversation afterwards or wonder whether you were too direct.

This discomfort usually becomes easier with practice. Each time you express a reasonable limit and survive the other person's reaction, you build confidence.

Remember that temporary discomfort is often preferable to the lasting resentment created by repeatedly abandoning your own needs.

Boundaries can strengthen relationships

It is tempting to believe that boundaries create distance. Yet they can make relationships more honest and sustainable.

When you communicate clearly, others understand your needs. You are less likely to become resentful or withdraw without explanation. The relationship becomes based on mutual respect rather than obligation, fear or frustration.

Not everyone will like your boundaries, but those who genuinely respect you will learn to accommodate them.

Begin with one small boundary

You do not need to transform every relationship overnight. Choose a situation in which you feel uncomfortable or overwhelmed.

Decide what needs to change, express it clearly and reinforce it calmly. Starting small allows you to practise tolerating discomfort without becoming overwhelmed.

Setting boundaries is not a rejection of others. It is a commitment to treating yourself with the same consideration you offer everyone else. ❶

What one skill makes almost everything in life easier?

Together Magazine explores how managing your reactions can help you navigate difficult conversations, pursue ambitious goals and face everyday challenges with greater confidence.



You receive a message that irritates you. A client says no. Your partner makes a remark that lands badly. You sit down to tackle an important task, then reach for your phone.

Different situations, same challenge: what happens between the feeling and your next move?

If one skill deserves consideration as a way to make life easier, it is self-regulation: the ability to manage your attention, emotions and behaviour in service of what matters to you.

There is no scientific league table proving that it beats every other skill. Communication, critical thinking and adaptability all

have strong claims. But self-regulation has an unusually broad reach. It helps you use your other abilities when pressure, disappointment or temptation might otherwise get in the way.

The skill behind the skills

Consider how often the difficulty is knowing what to do versus actually doing it.

You know an angry email could damage a relationship. You know the important project needs attention. You know a disagreement would benefit from listening. Yet, in the moment, relief can feel more attractive than the sensible choice.

Self-regulation creates room to choose. You can feel irritated and still write a measured reply. You can feel uncertain and still ask a useful question. You can feel bored and still complete the next small part of a task.

Its value is visible in long-term research. In a 2011 study, Terrie Moffitt and colleagues followed roughly 1,000 people from childhood to age 32. Childhood self-control predicted adult outcomes including physical health, substance dependence and personal finances, even after accounting for intelligence and social class.

That finding needs careful interpretation. The study was observational; it does not prove that practising self-control guarantees health or wealth. Childhood self-control is also broader than any single adult exercise. Nevertheless, it offers evidence that managing behaviour matters across several areas of life.

Managing emotions without burying them

Self-regulation can sound like an instruction to suppress everything inconvenient. But appearing calm and handling a feeling constructively are different achievements.

Research by psychologists James Gross and Oliver John examined two approaches: reappraisal, which changes how we interpret a situation, and suppression, which inhibits the outward expression of emotion. Their studies associated habitual reappraisal with better wellbeing and interpersonal functioning than habitual suppression.

Imagine a colleague questioning your proposal. Your first interpretation might be that they are undermining you. Another possibility is that they have spotted a weakness or need more information.

You need not assume the best. Simply asking what else could explain the behaviour can keep an uncertain interpretation from becoming an unnecessary confrontation.

The feeling still deserves attention. Anger may signal unfairness; anxiety may highlight uncertainty. The practical question is what response will address the situation.

Why relationships benefit

A disagreement becomes harder when each person is responding to the other's tone instead of the original problem.

Self-regulation gives you a chance to notice that shift. You might say, "I want to discuss this, but I need a few minutes before I can do it properly." The important part is returning to the conversation.

It also helps you listen to criticism without immediately assembling a defence. You can ask for an example, identify what is useful and disagree with the rest.

These are everyday applications of the skill, rather than promises of effortless relationships. Sometimes the appropriate response is a firm boundary or a difficult decision. Composure can help you make either clearly.



How to practise

Start with a recurring moment of friction: checking your phone while working, becoming defensive or avoiding an uncomfortable conversation.

First, notice and name what is happening. "I feel embarrassed" is more specific than "This is terrible." In a 2007 brain-imaging experiment, Matthew Lieberman and colleagues found that labelling emotions in negative images reduced amygdala activity relative to comparison conditions. This was a laboratory finding, not proof that naming a feeling resolves everyday distress, but it provides a reason to explore the practice.

Next, create a small pause. Put the message aside before replying. Step away briefly from an escalating discussion. Ask yourself: "What do I want this next action to achieve?"

Then make the useful action manageable. Open the document and write one paragraph. Prepare the first question for the call. Put your phone somewhere you cannot reach automatically.

Changing the surroundings matters too. If every notification interrupts your work, turn notifications off for a defined period. If a task repeatedly feels overwhelming, reduce its scope. You can arrange conditions that make a considered choice easier.

Finally, review the moment without turning it into a verdict on your character. What triggered the reaction? What helped? What would you try next time?

A more useful kind of progress

Self-regulation does not remove grief, financial pressure, illness or other people's behaviour. Nor does it require you to feel confident and composed every day.

Its practical promise is smaller and more credible: you can become better at deciding what to do with the feelings and distractions that arise.

Progress might mean sending one fewer impulsive message, returning sooner to a task or recovering more quickly after a difficult conversation.

Those choices look modest in isolation. Repeated across work, relationships and daily routines, they can change how much avoidable difficulty you add to an already demanding life.

Perhaps the skill that makes almost everything easier is the ability to pause long enough to choose your next move. ❶

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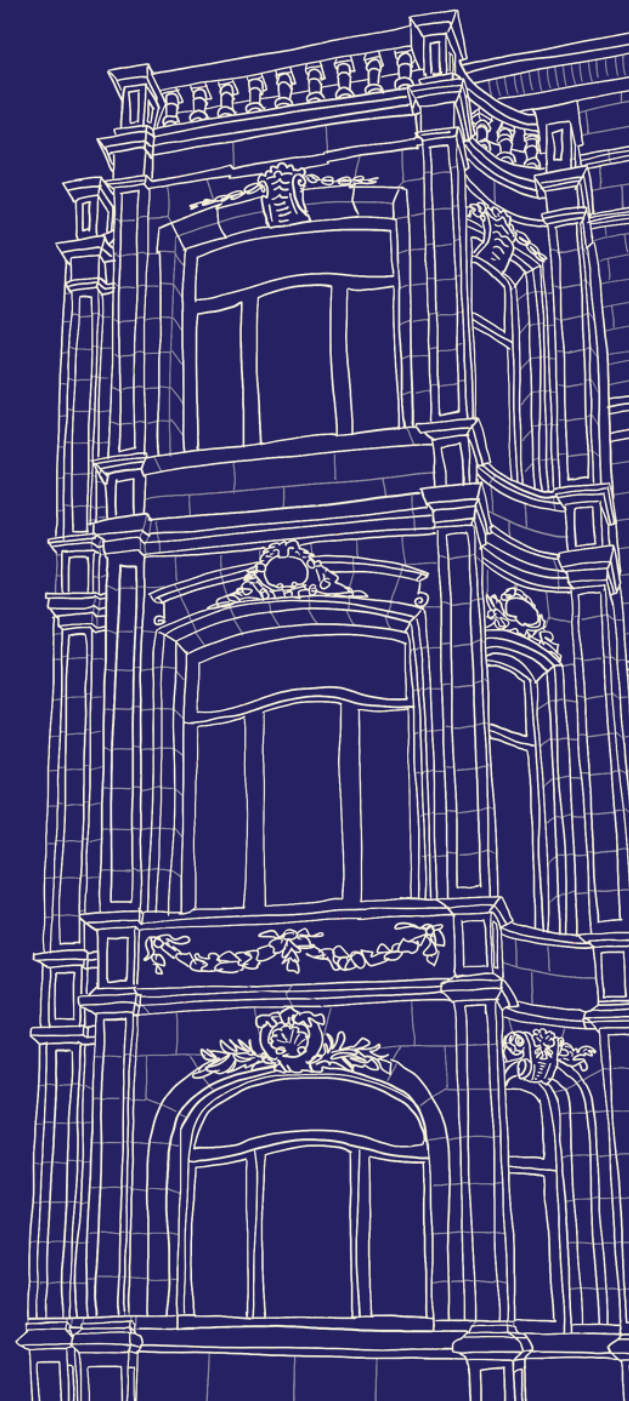
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Sexual transmutation: turning desire into drive

Together Magazine explores Napoleon Hill's philosophy on transforming desire into creativity, ambition and a more purposeful life.



From desire to direction

Napoleon Hill believed our strongest impulses could inspire achievement. Nearly a century later, his idea invites a thoughtful look at how we use passion, attention and ambition.

Desire has a way of interrupting the ordinary. An encounter, a glance or an unexpect-

ted attraction can make an otherwise unremarkable day feel charged with possibility. We become alert, curious and intensely aware. But must that feeling lead immediately to action, or could it become the starting point for something creative?

That question sits at the heart of sexual transmutation, one of Napoleon Hill's more

unusual ideas in *Think and Grow Rich*. Hill proposed that sexual desire could be redirected towards imagination, enterprise and achievement. His language can sound mysterious today, yet the practical question remains accessible: where do we choose to invest our strongest feelings?

Understanding the idea

For Hill, transmutation meant changing the expression of desire. Instead of allowing attraction to occupy all our attention, we might direct some of that intensity into writing, making music, developing a business or pursuing a demanding personal goal. The impulse becomes an invitation to create.

It is an intriguing philosophy, but it deserves careful framing. Hill's theory is not an established scientific explanation of success. Treating sexual energy as a substance that can be converted into wealth would take the metaphor too literally. Desire alone cannot replace skill, opportunity, sound judgement or sustained work.

The useful interpretation is more modest. Strong feelings do not always require an immediate response. We can acknowledge them, make deliberate choices and give our attention to something we value. This applies as readily to excitement, frustration and longing as it does to attraction.

**“ MOVEMENT
CAN OFFER ANOTHER
CONSTRUCTIVE
OUTLET. ”**



Give passion somewhere to go

Imagine arriving at your desk distracted by someone you have met. Your mind keeps returning to the conversation. Rather than fighting the feeling or following every impulse, pause. Notice what is happening, then choose one concrete task that deserves your involvement.

Perhaps it is the opening paragraph of an article, a proposal you have postponed or a difficult passage of music. Give it twenty uninterrupted minutes. The aim is simply to practise choosing what happens next, even when your attention feels pulled elsewhere.

This is where the concept becomes practical. A vague intention to become successful offers little direction. A defined action gives enthusiasm somewhere to land. Finish the sketch. Prepare the presentation. Make the call. Progress becomes visible when feeling is followed by a manageable step.

Movement can offer another constructive outlet. A walk, a swim or a game of tennis creates space between an impulse and a decision. Choose an activity you enjoy, without turning every session into another test of achievement. Sometimes the most useful outcome is returning to your day with a clearer sense of what matters.

Self help

Protect the attention you need

There is little value in cultivating motivation if we immediately scatter it. Messages, social feeds and endless browsing can fill the spaces in which an idea might otherwise develop. The question is personal: which habits leave you satisfied, and which repeatedly take more time than you intended?

Try a small boundary. Put your phone away while working on a meaningful project. Close unnecessary tabs. Decide when you will return to messages. Create a setting in which the activity you have chosen has a fair chance of holding your attention.

Avoid making this an exercise in punishment. Ambition does not require constant productivity, and a distracted afternoon is not a character defect. Rest, friendship and pleasure belong in a full life. The purpose of a boundary is to support your choices, rather than make your days smaller.

Leave room for intimacy

Hill also considered love alongside sexual attraction. Whatever we make of his wider claims, this introduces an essential consideration: other people have needs, feelings and ambitions of their own. A relationship deserves care in its own right, beyond anything it might contribute to our professional progress.

Intimacy and ambition can share a life. Giving a project your attention need not mean withdrawing affection, neglecting your partner or treating desire as something shameful. An honest conversation about time, expectations and closeness may be more valuable than another elaborate routine for personal improvement.

A more deliberate life

To experiment with Hill's idea, begin with one question: what would I like this feeling to help me do? Choose a worthwhile action, set aside a short period and see what fol-

“ INTIMACY
AND AMBITION
CAN SHARE A LIFE. ”



lows. Afterwards, consider whether the experience helped you feel engaged, or simply added pressure.

Keep the experiment grounded in everyday life. You do not need a dramatic transformation or an extraordinary burst of inspiration. A page written, an idea explored or a promise kept is enough. Repeating a useful choice matters more than imagining that one powerful emotion will change everything in a single remarkable moment.

The lasting appeal of sexual transmutation lies in the possibility of agency. We may not choose every feeling that arrives, but we can often choose our response. Desire can invite connection, creativity or reflection. Giving it direction means deciding, with curiosity and care, which of those possibilities deserves our attention today. ①

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How to be the person you want to be

Together Magazine explores how psychology can help turn motivation into lasting habits, greater confidence and meaningful personal growth.



Most of us can picture a version of ourselves we would like to meet: calmer under pressure, more attentive at home, healthier, more courageous or more purposeful at work. The distance between that person and our everyday behaviour can feel frustratingly large.

It is tempting to bridge the gap with a dramatic resolution. From Monday, everything changes. Yet research on motivation and

behaviour suggests a more workable approach: choose a meaningful direction, translate it into specific actions and create conditions that help you repeat them. You do not need a new personality before you begin. You need somewhere practical to start.

Choose a life that feels like yours

Before deciding how to change, ask why you want to.

In research published in 1999, psychologists Kennon Sheldon and Andrew Elliot found that goals consistent with people's interests and core values were associated with more sustained effort and greater likelihood of attainment. Achieving those goals also brought greater wellbeing benefits.

That does not mean every worthwhile activity must be enjoyable. It means your reasons matter.

Do you want a promotion because the work interests you, or because you fear looking unsuccessful? Do you want to become fitter to enjoy life with your family, or to satisfy somebody else's expectations?

Choose qualities you value, then describe how they would appear in daily life.

Turn an ambition into an appointment

"I want to be more disciplined" offers little guidance when you are tired and your phone is within reach.

A more useful instruction is: "After breakfast, I will spend twenty minutes on my most important task before checking messages."

Psychologists call these arrangements implementation intentions: plans linking a particular situation to a particular response. A 2006 meta-analysis by Peter Gollwitzer and Paschal Sheeran, combining 94 independent tests, found that such planning improved goal attainment.

The practical lesson is to decide when, where and how you will act. Prepare for obstacles too: if your usual lunchtime walk becomes impossible, take a shorter walk after work.

A plan gives your intentions a place in the day.

Repeat, without demanding instant transformation

Habits develop when actions are repeated in a consistent context. Their defining feature is increasing automaticity: less conscious deliberation is needed to get started.

In a study published in the *European Journal of Social Psychology*, Phillippa Lally and colleagues asked volunteers to repeat a chosen eating, drinking or activity behaviour daily. Their modelling showed substantial variation in how long automaticity took to develop.

There was no universal deadline. Importantly, missing one opportunity did not materially disrupt the habit formation process.

Choose something manageable and attach it to a reliable cue: read after making tea, stretch after brushing your teeth, or prepare tomorrow's priorities before leaving your desk.

These are practical applications of habit research, rather than a formula guaranteed to work for everyone. Consistency matters more than a perfect streak.

**“ THE PRACTICAL
LESSON IS TO DECIDE
WHEN, WHERE AND
HOW YOU WILL ACT. ”**



Measure what you actually do

Progress is easier to assess when it leaves a record.

A 2016 meta-analysis led by Benjamin Harkin examined 138 experimental studies involving almost 20,000 participants. Interventions encouraging people to monitor progress improved goal attainment, with larger effects when progress was physically recorded or reported to others.

Keep the record simple. Note the walks completed, applications submitted or evenings spent giving your family undivided attention.

Review it weekly. What worked? What repeatedly got in the way? Does the plan need adjusting?

Track behaviour you can influence, while recognising that outcomes also depend on circumstances. You can prepare carefully for an interview; you cannot guarantee an offer. A useful record guides decisions rather than becoming another reason to criticise yourself.

Respond to setbacks with honesty and kindness

Many people worry that self-compassion means lowering their standards. Experi-

mental research suggests a different possibility.

In four experiments published in 2012, Juliana Breines and Serena Chen found that responding compassionately to personal shortcomings could increase motivation to improve. In one experiment, participants spent longer studying after an initial test failure.

The findings concern particular experimental situations, not a promise that kindness solves every difficulty. Still, they challenge the assumption that harshness is always motivating.

Acknowledge the mistake, identify its cause and choose a repair. "I skipped the session because my plan was unrealistic" gives you something to change. "I am hopeless" offers no instruction.

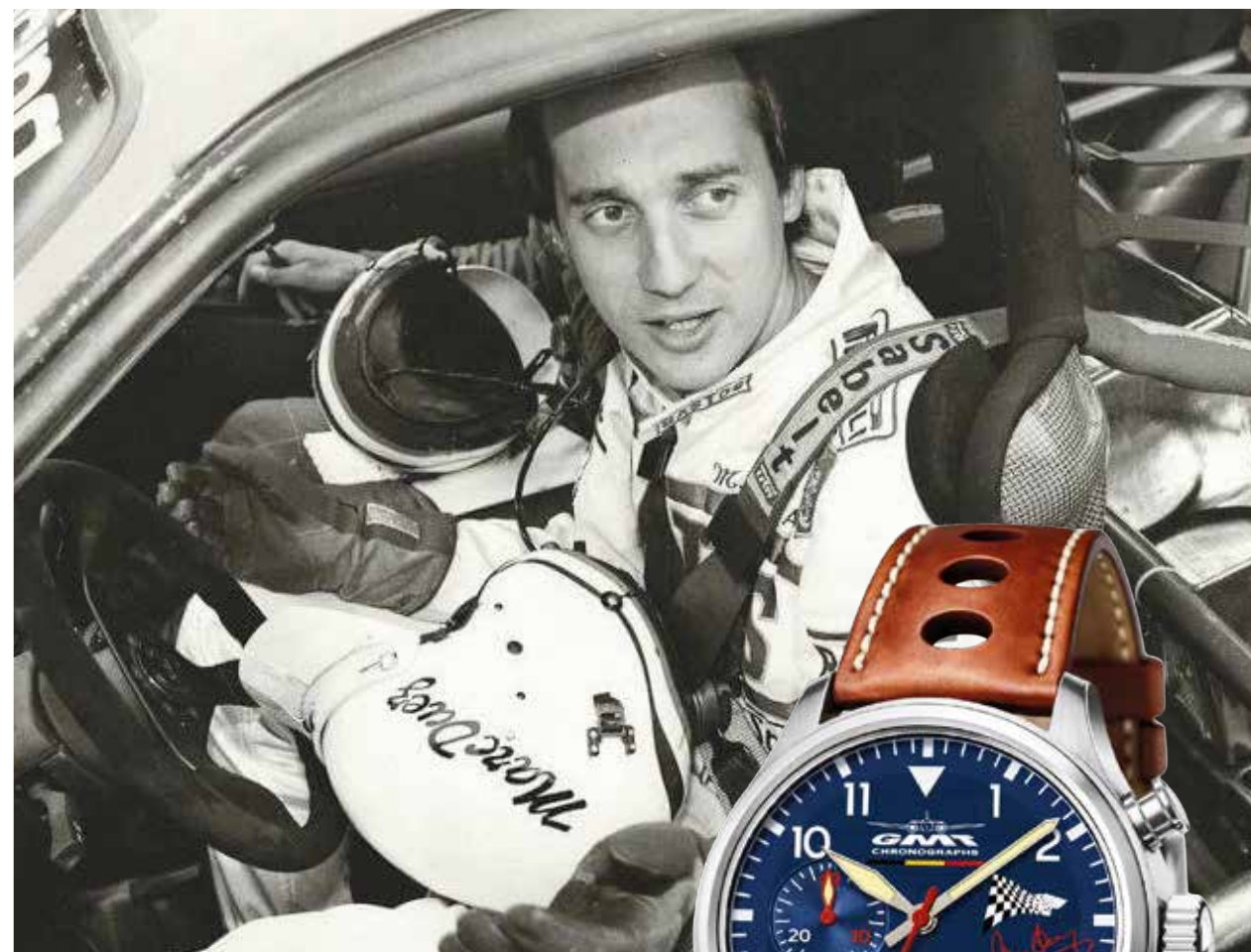
Begin with one ordinary day

These studies examine specific behaviours and motivational processes; they do not prove a single method can remake an entire life. Resources, health, responsibilities and opportunities matter too.

Start with one quality and one action. If you want to be attentive, put your phone away during dinner. If you want to be courageous, initiate the conversation you have postponed.

Make that first action easy to begin. Put the book beside your chair or reserve the time in your diary. Ask someone supportive to check in with you. Treat these arrangements as experiments: retain what helps and change what does not.

Then review, adjust and repeat. The person you want to be becomes more tangible when your values appear in the choices you make today. ①



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Will AI make your job obsolete?

Together Magazine explores how the changing job market is creating new challenges and opportunities for young workers.



Artificial intelligence can now draft reports, answer customers' questions, translate documents and write code. For anyone whose livelihood involves a screen, the question feels personal: will there still be a place for me?

Research available in autumn 2026 offers a complicated answer. AI can replace tasks, reduce demand for certain workers and help businesses expand. These effects can happen simultaneously. A growing eco-

nomy does not guarantee security for every employee.

The most useful starting point is understanding the difference between what technology can do and what employers actually choose to automate.

Exposure is not redundancy

The International Labour Organization's 2025 global assessment estimated that one in four workers held an occupation with

some exposure to generative AI. In high-income countries, the proportion reached 34%. Clerical occupations remained the most exposed.

These figures describe potential task exposure, not predicted redundancies. Because most occupations include activities requiring human input, the ILO judged job transformation the most likely overall outcome.

Consider an accountant. Software may accelerate document processing, but advising a worried business owner involves context, trust and responsibility. Automating part of the work changes the role; whether it reduces staffing depends on demand, costs and management decisions.

The first rung looks vulnerable

One of the clearest recent warning signals concerns people starting their careers.

In August 2026, Stanford's Digital Economy Lab updated its analysis of American payroll data through June. Employment among workers aged 22 to 25 in highly AI-exposed occupations was approximately 19% below where it would have been had it kept pace with employment among similarly aged workers in less-exposed occupations.

That is a relative employment gap, not evidence that AI eliminated 19% of those jobs. The researchers explicitly describe the findings as observational, rather than definitive proof of causation.

Nevertheless, the pattern deserves attention. Adjustment appeared to occur mainly through reduced hiring, while experienced workers showed no comparable gap. The immediate risk may be fewer opportunities to enter a profession.

For employers, this creates a strategic problem: if machines perform the introductory tasks through which juniors traditionally

learn, how will tomorrow's experienced professionals develop?

Productivity can create opportunities

There is evidence for a more encouraging story too.

A study published in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics* in 2025 examined AI assistance for 5,172 customer-support agents. Productivity, measured as issues resolved per hour, increased by 15% on average, with larger gains among less experienced and lower-skilled workers.

This demonstrates improvement in a particular workplace, not a universal productivity boost or a guarantee of job security. But it shows that AI can help people become more effective.

Research discussed by Yale School of Management in September 2026 also found that task reallocation and growth at AI-adopting firms could offset reduced demand for exposed occupations. Its underlying data largely predated widespread generative AI, so it cannot settle what happens next.

The economic logic remains relevant: when services become cheaper or better, customers may buy more. Whether that generates enough additional employment remains uncertain.

What this means for Belgium

European evidence adds useful local context.

A June 2026 policy brief from the Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research examined more than 75 million vacancies across Belgium, France, Germany and Luxembourg. It found changing skill requirements within occupations, including greater demand for judgement, decision-making and leadership alongside technical skills. However, the vacancies covered 2018 to



2023. The findings illuminate an earlier transition and should not be presented as a verdict on today's rapidly advancing systems.

For Belgium's international workforce, the practical implication is to examine the content of a role. Routine digital production may become easier to automate, while navigating clients, organisations and complex decisions can remain valuable.

Build a role around responsibility

A joint international report published in August 2026 identifies AI literacy as an increasingly foundational skill, alongside higher-order thinking, socioemotional capabilities and adaptability.

Start by reviewing your working week. Which tasks are repetitive? Which require checking uncertain information? Where do people depend on your judgement?

Learn to use an approved AI tool for a bounded task, then evaluate accuracy and time saved. Develop the expertise needed to spot errors. Strengthen your ability to explain

decisions, negotiate and understand what customers actually need.

Employers have responsibilities too: provide training, protect opportunities for juniors and involve workers in redesigning their roles. Expecting everyone to adapt alone risks wasting talent.

There is no honest promise that learning AI will protect every career. Some jobs will disappear, and new opportunities may require different skills or locations.

But the latest evidence supports a more useful response than either panic or complacency: understand how your work is changing, keep learning and move towards responsibilities where your contribution is clear. The challenge is preserving meaningful routes into work while making new tools useful to people.

For workers and businesses alike, adapting starts with evidence, experimentation and a willingness to learn. 🗣️

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Debt and AI: risk or opportunity?

Dave Deruytter explores the risks of rising global debt, its impact on investments and how artificial intelligence could be both part of the problem and a powerful solution.



There seems to be a debt bubble... Is AI part of the problem or is it the solution?

Public debt-to-GDP ratios are very high in many developed countries, and debt levels are also high in some industries. What is the risk? What are the solutions? What does it mean for your investments?

When looking at Japan, the US, France and many other developed countries, we notice historically high public debt-to-GDP ratios. This is often because expenditure has been growing faster than revenue. The types of rapidly growing expenditure vary, from military spending in the US to social security spending in France.

Given that interest rates are quite high, with the potential to increase further because of higher inflation, the servicing of that debt becomes increasingly painful for the budgets of those countries.

With the current geopolitical instability, and in the absence of real prospects for improvement, the outlook for interest rates looks bleak. Indeed, oil and gas prices could stay high for some time to come, fuelling inflation.

How about the economic growth picture (GDP)?

The US is doing quite well for the time being, while economic growth in Japan and France is lacklustre. Even in China growth is slowing, among other reasons, because of persistent problems in the domestic property market. In conclusion, economic growth is unlikely to offer much help. The countries concerned have options other than stronger growth for improving their debt-to-GDP ratios.

For one, they can reduce the number of government staff. Still, that is not very popular and can cost votes in the next election. It can depress consumer spending, which is an important engine for GDP growth.

In the same field, governments can strengthen enforcement of their social and tax laws and regulations. That should result in fewer social security payments and more tax revenue. The same caveat applies here: this can reduce spending by recipients of social security payments and depress business investment.

Finally, there is the option to review the efficiency of public services. Could governments do the same, or more, with less? Could AI help? In France and other continental European countries, substantial subsidies to individuals and companies alike could also be reviewed. Again, these mea-



sures have the potential to depress consumer spending.

There is more to the debt bubble than government debt alone.

In the AI sector in particular, borrowing has recently increased substantially to fund enormous new data centres. Some of that debt is between the various players in the AI ecosystem themselves, whether they supply software or hardware. The solutions here are essentially linked to the potential of AI to generate the huge economic benefits that the financial markets are pricing into the share prices of the AI companies. Maybe the AI companies can raise additional equity rather than taking on more debt. However, the recent focus on the risks of AI caused a pause in the rise of the AI valuations.

What can the "high debt, rather high interest rates" situation mean for your investments?

For bonds, this is not good news. Higher interest rates mean lower bond prices. However, the shorter the bond's maturity, the smaller the price drop. For fixed-term de-

Finance



posits of less than one year, higher interest rates are actually good news. Savings accounts also offer higher interest rates. Nevertheless, the return on a savings account normally cannot compensate for inflation.

For shares, the news is typically not good either, as companies have to pay more on their debt. For the AI companies and other promising sectors, there may still be the option to raise extra capital to fuel growth or even repay some of the debt. Still, it will depend on whether AI products deliver on their promise of much higher profits without causing too much unemployment pain. Indeed, too many redundancies will hurt consumer spending, leading to fewer sales and lower tax revenues.

Returning to governments, population decline has long been forecast in many developed countries, raising the risk of labour shortages. Increased efficiency in business or government through AI can more than compensate. For example, AI has created a

big boost in robotics to cater for the needs of ageing societies and beyond.

In conclusion, the picture of the high debt levels and the solutions is quite balanced. If the geopolitical situation should start to improve again, brighter prospects are on the horizon.

One can definitely say that “the rumours of the demise of AI have been largely exaggerated”. After the current “pause”, it may well come back with a bang, to help address many of the potential issues in government and business alike.

History shows that it is always better to embrace change, whilst understanding and mitigating its risks, than to stand on the sidelines to complain and watch it all happen without benefitting from it. In my forty years of professional experience, I have never seen anything as potent as AI to do a lot of good in so many fields, and by a large margin. ①



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A safer autumn starts at home

By David Mc Gowan

Darker evenings make autumn a timely moment to review your security. Richard from MCA Security explains how early detection, intelligent cameras and professional monitoring can help protect homes and businesses.



Autumn changes our routines. Curtains close earlier, lights come on sooner and many return home after dark. For Richard at MCA Security, it is time to reassess property protection.

Richard highlights darker evenings as a period requiring vigilance, with monitoring centres reporting increased burglary activity. His advice: consider how intruders could be detected before reaching a door or window.

With over 35 years of experience and 6,000 clients, MCA Security combines security

technology with risk assessments, installation and ongoing support for homes and businesses.

Protection begins outside

An indoor alarm provides an important safeguard, but exterior detection adds protection. Richard recommends outdoor detectors where appropriate, helping identify intrusions before someone forces an entrance.

Perimeter protection uses outdoor movement detectors and infrared barriers to monitor approaches. The aim is to trigger an



early alert and deter intruders before damage occurs.

Effective protection requires thoughtful design. Richard stresses that installers must consider foliage, shrubs, parasols and objects that could interfere with detection. Equipment should suit its surroundings rather than trigger unnecessary alerts.

Intelligent cameras complement this approach by identifying what triggered an alarm. Detection draws attention to an event; images help assess it.

Intelligence that makes a difference

According to Richard, a key advantage of intelligent cameras is their ability to reduce false alarms.

Analytics distinguish relevant activity from harmless movement, making notifications more useful and helping owners focus on events requiring attention.

Some cameras feature integrated LED lighting, improving visibility while deterring anyone approaching the property.

Real-time notifications let owners check images promptly, whether at work, travelling or elsewhere in the building. Together, these features connect detection with a clearer understanding of what is happening.

Keeping watch from anywhere

For frequent travellers and second-home owners, remote access offers reassurance.

Depending on the installation, smartphone apps allow users to activate alarms, receive alerts, view camera images and control lighting. MCA Security offers these features through the Daitem Secure app, including personalised lighting scenarios.

Richard recommends combining these tools with professional monitoring. Notifications are useful, but owners may be asleep, in meetings or unable to check their phones.

A monitoring centre provides additional support. MCA Security operates around the clock, with operators able to review images, verify alerts and contact the police when an intrusion is confirmed.

Experience beyond the equipment

Richard believes a security installation depends as much on service as on technology.

MCA Security's process covers risk analysis, design, equipment selection, installation, commissioning and instruction, followed by maintenance and support. Solutions are tailored to homes, shops, schools and businesses.

The company holds INCERT certification A0064 and Belgian Ministry of the Interior authorisation number 20 1413 06.

This autumn, reviewing your security means asking three questions: where could someone approach, how would an intrusion be detected, and who would respond? Answering them beforehand is an investment in peace of mind.

MCA Security

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*Photographer Philippe Meysmans
Art Direction & Stylist Nicholas Sirot
Make-up artist Philbur for CLARINS
Hair Pascale for Le boudoir de Pascale phone: 0476 56 09 21
Model Emily @Dominiquemodels
Special thanks to Le château de Seneffe www.chateaudeseneffe.be
Phone: +32 64 55 6913 - info@chateaudeseneffe.be*

*Right page: Total look **Natan couture**
Handbag Dior
Black ribbon La Maison Dorée - Hat creation by Nicholas Sirot*

*Philbur used Clarins make-up:
Beauty flash balm - Double Sérum foundation L5N
XXL Mascara - Blush Cheeky 01 - Lips 706S
Eyes: Gel pencil Bananas & Blueberry Milk @ MAC*



Dress **Natan**
Yellow feather brooch **Indress @Cachemire Coton Soie**
Brooch on the dress **Celeste Mogador @Cachemire Coton Soie**
Blue ribbon **La Maison Dorée** - Hat creation by **Nicholas Sirot**
Bracelet **Messika Jewellery**
Ring **Pasquale Bruni jewellery**





*Dress Natan
Yellow & mauve feather brooches Indress @Cachemire Coton Soie
Brooch on the dress Celeste Mogador @Cachemire Coton Soie
Blue ribbon La Maison Dorée - Hat creation by Nicholas Siro*

*Right page:
Feather dress Natan couture
Yellow feather brooch Indress @Cachemire Coton Soie
Hair: Volumizing Tonic Aveda*





Silk dress Montero 1902 @Cachemire Coton Soie
Black ribbon La Maison Dorée - Hat creation by Nicholas Sirot
Ring Pasquale Bruni jewellery
Scarf creation by Nicholas Sirot

Left page:
Blouse Natan
Velvet dress Pierre-Louis Mascia @Cachemire Coton Soie
Bracelet Virginie Chateau @www.virginiechateau-shop.be
Red ribbon La Maison Dorée - Hat creation by Nicholas Sirot



Vest Dior
Red leather belt Furling @Cachemire Coton Soie
Victorian-inspired dress @www.arachne.brussels



Right page:
Blouse & suit jacket @www.arachne.brussels
Skirt & shoes Dior

A dress across time

Together Magazine explores how Arachné Brussels revives eighteenth-century fashion through an exquisite robe à la française, revealing the craftsmanship behind its timeless elegance.



The first impression is theatrical: a broad skirt, a cascade of bows, softly blurred flowers and fabric falling from the shoulders towards the floor. Look again, however, and Arachné Brussels' latest creation becomes something more intriguing than a beautiful silhouette. It is an invitation to consider how clothes are built, how history is interpreted and how much work can be concealed within a single finished garment.

The Brussels label has designed and made an eighteenth-century-style robe à la française day dress, drawing on the construction and dressmaking techniques of the period. According to its accompanying dossier, the ensemble required more than 30 metres of fabric and approximately 250 hours of work, from developing the design to completing the finishing details.

Those figures give the photographs another dimension. Every gathered border, flower and bow becomes evidence of time spent turning an idea into something that can be worn.

An enduring fascination

The project arrives as Sofia Coppola's *Marie Antoinette* celebrates its twentieth anniversary. At the Petit Trianon in Versailles, an exhibition running from 22 September 2026 to 24 January 2027 explores the film's creation, aesthetic choices and cultural impact. Developed in collaboration with Coppola, it returns attention to the relationship between historical settings and contemporary imagination.

Arachné identifies the film anniversary and exhibition among the inspirations for its creation. Its own contribution is a dress made in Brussels, an exploration of a historical form through the practical language of fabric and construction.

There is a useful distinction here. An exhibition can explain an image through photographs, objects and stories. A reconstructed garment asks another set of questions: where does the volume come from, what supports it, and how do separate pieces combine to produce the finished outline?

Arachné's ensemble offers a way of looking beyond the familiar romance of ribbons and sweeping skirts.

The structure beneath the spectacle

The robe à la française is recognised particularly by its pleated back. The Metropolitan Museum of Art describes the style's defining arrangement of pleats falling from the rear neckline towards the hem, with an open front revealing a petticoat and stomacher.

In Arachné's photographs, the contrast between front and back is striking. From the

front, bows and gathered decoration draw the eye towards the centre of the body. From behind, the long folds give the textile pattern room to unfold.

Producing that silhouette involves several layers. The ensemble includes a pannier made from metal and polyester, a white cotton petticoat and sleeveless cotton stays, laced at the back and finished with tabs.

The pannier supplies underlying width, while the stays help establish the shape beneath the gown. These supporting pieces remind us that historical dress is an arrangement of structures as much as a surface of ornament.

Over them sit a gathered skirt, an organic cotton stomacher and an organic cotton gown with Watteau pleats. The sleeves include georgette undersleeves, adding another texture to the composition.

Each component contributes to the whole. Understanding the dress means paying attention to what the photographs conceal as well as what they display.

A pattern designed to deceive

The textile deserves its own close inspection. Rather than selecting a ready-made historical-looking print, Arachné developed a pattern specifically for this creation.

It is described as a trompe-l'œil reproducing the visual effect of warp printing. Its softened outlines evoke the slightly diffuse, vibrant appearance associated with eighteenth-century textiles.

The important word is "effect." Arachné's dossier explains a visual reinterpretation of the technique; it does not claim that the fabric itself was produced through historical warp printing.

That distinction makes the design more in-



teresting. The project combines attention to period construction with an explicitly contemporary treatment of the textile image.

In the supplied photographs, green leaves and blue, violet and reddish flowers appear against a pale ground, crossed by light diagonal bands. The edges seem to dissolve slightly rather than settle into crisp outlines.

Across the broad skirt, that softness creates movement even in a still photograph. Along the gathered trimmings, the same motif becomes compressed and broken, changing character as the fabric changes shape.

The work within the details

The decoration rewards patient looking. A succession of large bows occupies the front, while gathered strips frame the opening of the gown. Fabric flowers introduce rounded forms among the folds.

Arachné lists silk and EcoVero Lenzing among the materials used for the gathered trimmings, bows and flowers. Their arrangement gives the surface depth: decoration rises from the garment rather than existing only as a printed image.

The result illustrates how embellishment can shape our reading of clothing. A border directs attention. A bow establishes a focal point. A repeated flower connects one part of the design to another.

The 250 hours reported for the project cover the entire process, not simply sewing. Design development, construction and finishing all belong to that total.

For viewers, it is a reminder that the completed object reveals only part of its making. The decisions and adjustments disappear, leaving a seemingly resolved whole.

History through contemporary materials

The dress also brings together materials that prevent it from being mistaken for an

untouched historical object. Alongside cotton and silk, the dossier specifies polyester, FSC-certified viscose and EcoVero Lenzing. The gathered skirt uses the latter two materials, while organic cotton appears in the stomacher and gown. This is a contemporary creation engaging with historical methods.

Material descriptions alone cannot establish the environmental impact of an entire garment. What they do establish is the project's mixture of period-inspired construction and present-day textile choices.

That combination invites a broader appreciation of reconstruction. Bringing a style into the present involves interpretation, even when its makers pursue close attention to historical technique.

Arachné's dress makes that dialogue visible. Its silhouette points backwards; its making belongs to now.

Seen together, the photographs offer a compelling sequence: the ornamented front, the sweeping profile and the expansive pleated back. Each view reveals a different aspect of the same achievement.

For Together readers, the fascination lies in that change of perspective. What begins as an arresting fashion image becomes a study in patience, structure and skill: history made vividly tangible, one carefully considered layer at a time.

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The post-summer beauty edit

Skin, hair, glow & the new beauty essentials

by **Nicholas Sirot**

After summer, skin can feel drier and hair can lose its radiance — making the new season the perfect time to refresh your beauty routine. Our selection brings together the latest essentials from ISDIN, Filorga, La Rosée,

René Furterer, Authentic Beauty Concept, Nuxe, Manucurist and Longcils Boncza, alongside fragrances from Miss Dior, Acqua di Parma, S.Oliver and Vitry.

Beauty, from the inside out

In the spotlight, Advanced Nutrition Programme™ introduces a different approach to beauty: taking care of the skin from within. Skin Even IQ, combining five targeted supplements, is designed to help even skin tone and reduce the appearance of pigmentation. Supersize Skin Collagen complements this inside-out beauty philosophy.

A new-season beauty ritual where skincare, hair-care and inner nutrition come together to restore radiance and embrace the post-summer glow.



Longcils Boncza - Tubing mascara for length and definition
 La Rosée - Repairing hair mask, Moisturising detangling conditioner
 Miss Dior - Eau de parfum
 Advanced Nutrition Programme - Supersize skin collagen support
 Manucurist - Revives radiance & nourishes active glow,
 Wisteria nail polish - quick-drying, intense colour
 La Rosée - Purifying shampoo
 Nuxe - Hair & Scalp hydra-plumping serum
 Dior - Wallet
 s.Oliver - Eau de toilette Simply us for women

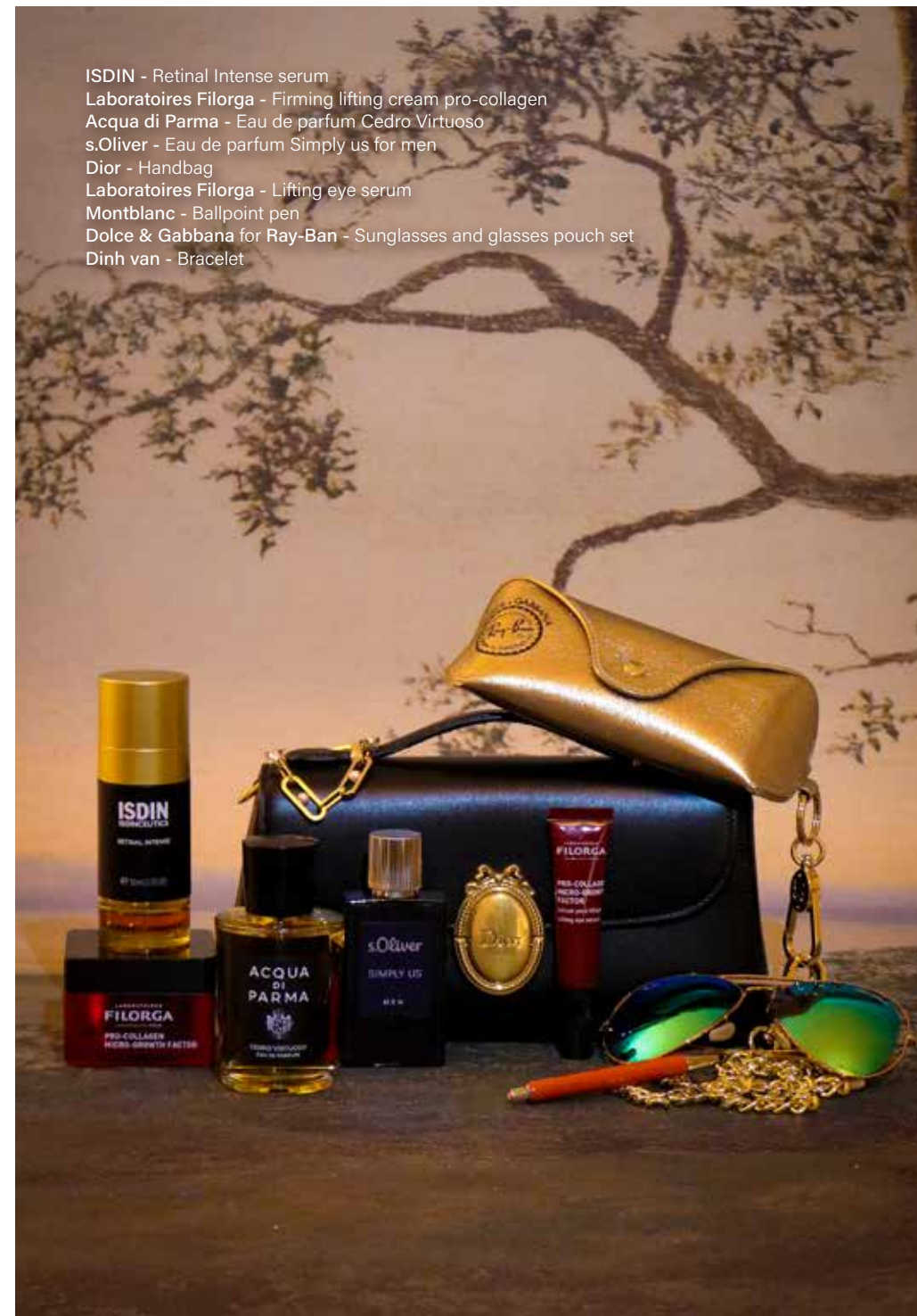


Beauty

Apeer - Calming Serum protects & moisturises
 Authentic Beauty Concept - Amplify foam conditioner
 & Amplify spray conditioner for fine hair
 René Furterer - Triphasic Night Serum Density Creator
 Vitry - Eau de toilette Vert céladon Les eaux Mémoire
 Manucurist - Nail polish Lime & Plumping care polish aqua glazed
 Gilles Dewavrin - Country Squire scented waxes



ISDIN - Retinal Intense serum
 Laboratoires Filorga - Firming lifting cream pro-collagen
 Acqua di Parma - Eau de parfum Cedro Virtuoso
 s.Oliver - Eau de parfum Simply us for men
 Dior - Handbag
 Laboratoires Filorga - Lifting eye serum
 Montblanc - Ballpoint pen
 Dolce & Gabbana for Ray-Ban - Sunglasses and glasses pouch set
 Dinh van - Bracelet



A home that feels like you

Together Magazine invites you to look beyond fleeting trends and picture-perfect interiors to discover Igor Home Interior, where thoughtful design begins with the people who call a space home, their habits, memories, and personal sense of comfort.



Luxador

There is a particular kind of room that looks immaculate in a photograph but feels strangely lifeless in person. The sofa is fashionable, the colours are carefully coordinated and every object appears to have been placed at precisely the right angle. Yet somehow, nobody seems quite at home.

At Igor Home Interior, the team begins from a different premise. Before discussing fabrics, finishes or the latest shape of coffee table, they want to know how their clients actually live. Where does everyone gather at the end of the day? Is the dining table the

heart of the home? Are there children, pets or much-loved objects to accommodate? What should the room feel like when you walk into it?

It is an approach built less around imposing a signature look than around listening. Although our conversation was with Justine and Virginie, they are part of a wider team whose complementary skills and personalities are central to the Igor experience. The most satisfying interiors, they believe, are not the ones that follow a formula. They are the ones that make sense of a person's life.

A complementary team

Both women arrived at Igor by different routes. Justine joined a little over a year ago after working as a graphic designer in the events sector. She had studied interior architecture, however, and the desire to return to it never disappeared. She missed sustained contact with clients and wanted to work on projects that would last beyond a single event.

Virginie's professional background was more varied and included experience in property. She learned the interiors business at Igor, developing the practical eye that comes from seeing how furniture behaves not only in a showroom but in real homes.

The commercial team also includes Jessy, an experienced interior architect, and Alain, who brings more than 30 years of experience in the sale of made-to-measure furniture. Their different expertise and temperaments allow clients to benefit from several perspectives while receiving coherent advice throughout a project.

That continuity extends beyond the showroom. Igor has its own delivery and installation team, Micka and Alain, who ensure that each piece is delivered and installed with care and professionalism. Together, the team provides the practical knowledge and close attention needed to accompany clients from the first conversation to the final placement of the furniture.

Trying to define Igor's style in three words proves almost impossible - and that is rather the point. A walk through the showroom moves between contemporary design, ethnic influences, industrial notes, romantic charm and Scandinavian simplicity. Sofas, tables and chairs sit alongside lighting, rugs, tableware, decorative pieces and outdoor furniture. The selection is broad without feeling indiscriminate. What connects it is character: each piece should bring something distinctive while remaining capable of living comfortably with the rest.



Bib

Home design

Advice before decoration

The real signature of the business is not an aesthetic category at all. It is the relationship around the purchase: personal contact, follow-up, honest advice and the possibility of adapting a piece to the client's needs.

That changes the role of a furniture shop. Instead of simply presenting a finished display and asking the customer to choose from it, the team interprets, questions and occasionally challenges. Damien, Igor's owner, leads the selection of new pieces, while the showroom team contributes what

“FOR NOW,
WARMTH IS WINNING
OVER SEVERITY.”



it hears every day: the dimensions people struggle to find, the colours they are ready to introduce, the comfort they expect and the practical problems that appear again and again.

One of the most common is scale. Faced with a large empty wall, clients often assume they should fill it from end to end. A generous living room seems to call for the largest possible sofa. But once the furniture arrives, the room can feel smaller, heavier and much more awkward to navigate.

Good planning protects the space around furniture as carefully as the furniture itself. A little breathing room allows the architecture to reappear and lets people move naturally. Sometimes the most valuable advice an interior specialist can give is that a slightly smaller cabinet, table or sofa will make the entire room feel more generous.

The return of warmth

For now, warmth is winning over severity. Wood remains a central material, while clients increasingly look for soft, tactile fabrics and rooms that feel cocooning rather than formal. Light-toned upholstery continues to appeal, although the Igor team often encourages a more confident colour when the room can carry it.

Bouclé's great moment may be beginning to fade, but the appetite it revealed has not. People still want texture - surfaces that invite touch and make a room feel lived in. Curves are also holding their ground. Even when a table or cabinet remains essentially rectangular, rounded corners and softened edges remove some of its rigidity.

These details reflect a wider shift away from interiors that look untouched. A well-designed home need not resemble a showroom. It should have rhythm and balance, certainly, but also comfort, personality and permission to be used.

The Igor team is understandably reluctant to declare any look timeless. Trends rarely disappear altogether; they are absorbed, diluted and reinterpreted. Made-to-measure furniture, however, is likely to endure because it answers problems fashion cannot solve: an awkward corner, an unusual wall width, a very specific storage requirement or simply a household that does not live in the way a standard catalogue assumes.

Small changes that shift a room

Not every transformation needs a renovation budget. When the main furniture is staying, the team recommends starting with the elements that can alter a room's atmosphere quickly: cushions, rugs, artwork and, above all, lighting.

A different rug can connect furniture that previously felt unrelated. A handful of cushions can introduce a new palette without overwhelming it. Artwork adds a personal focal point. Lighting, meanwhile, changes almost everything: the apparent colour of the walls, the depth of the timber and the texture of the fabrics.

It is also where online inspiration can become deceptive. A deep red sofa may look rich and inviting in a bright photograph, then feel heavy in a Belgian living room with limited daylight. Pinterest and Instagram are excellent tools for identifying what attracts us, but a saved image captures one room, one exposure and one moment. It cannot simply be transplanted into another home.

The useful question is not how to reproduce the image exactly, but what quality within it created the attraction. Was it calm, contrast, softness or colour? Once that is understood, the idea can be translated to suit the real proportions and light of the room.

Igor's home service helps to close that gap. It includes professional advice, measurements and the loan of wood and fabric



Luxador

samples, giving clients the chance to see how a material responds in the place where it will actually live.

Making room for the things that matter

The most memorable homes are rarely furnished from scratch. They contain pieces with history: a cabinet inherited from a grandmother, a Chinese chest, a parent's chair or a painting brought back from a journey. Such objects can give a room its identity, but they need space to do so.

The Igor team generally advises limiting the main visual vocabulary to two styles. Three can work with care; beyond that, a room risks losing focus. This does not mean hiding the unusual object. Quite the opposite. A richly detailed inherited cabinet may deserve to become the protagonist, supported by quieter furniture and a restrained background.

A material or colour from that piece can be repeated discreetly elsewhere, creating a link without resorting to perfect matching. The same principle applies to texture. Smooth timber, woven fabric and a tactile rug can live beautifully together, provided one leads and the others support it. If every surface demands attention, none of them receives it.

Home design

Furniture made around real life

Made-to-measure design sits at the heart of Igor's approach. A model in the showroom is often a starting point rather than a final answer. Dimensions, materials, textures, doors, drawers and interior layouts can all be reconsidered according to the room and the person using it.

Tables can be developed around precise proportions and finishes. Cabinets can be made to the centimetre. Sofas may not always offer the same degree of adjustment, but a wide choice of modules and fabrics can produce something close to a bespoke result.

Mobitec, the Belgian furniture maker highlighted during the conversation, is a good example of that flexibility. Its customisable chairs, armchairs and tables give clients considerable freedom to shape the look and feel of a piece, helping the Igor team respond to different rooms, colour schemes and practical requirements.



Nova

“MADE-TO-MEASURE DESIGN SITS AT THE HEART OF IGOR'S APPROACH.”

That flexibility sits alongside a wider selection of sofas, lighting, rugs, textiles, art and outdoor furniture. Igor's services also include curtain making, seat restoration, delivery and installation, allowing the team to consider the room as a whole rather than as a collection of isolated purchases.

Belgium's international population might seem to invite neat distinctions between local and expatriate tastes. The Igor team is wary of them. Its members have recently advised Chinese and English-speaking clients, among many others, but find far more variation between individuals than between nationalities.

Diplomatic clients may sometimes work to tighter timelines, yet the design process remains essentially the same: listen carefully, ask useful questions and understand the person rather than relying on a cultural template.

That matters because interior design can easily reduce people to lifestyle profiles. A more revealing conversation begins with an ordinary evening at home. Does the family linger at the table long after dinner? Does someone work in the living room? Are weekends spent hosting large groups or re-treating to a favourite corner? The answers often overturn the original shopping list.

A client may arrive convinced that an enormous sofa is the priority, only to reveal that friends invariably gather around the dining table and stay there for hours. In that home, the dining area deserves more room, comfort and perhaps more of the budget. Function is not the enemy of beauty. It is what allows beauty to be enjoyed.

An interior with its own story

The most useful advice from the Igor team is also the most liberating: begin with your life, not the trend. Think about the atmosphere you want, then test it against reality. Watch how daylight travels through the rooms. Notice where people naturally sit and which routes need to remain clear. Consider which possessions already carry meaning before buying anything new.

An outside eye can reveal both possibilities and contradictions. Someone may ask for an extremely pared-back interior while also longing for softness and cocooning comfort. Neither desire is wrong, but they need to be reconciled. The answer might be clean lines in warmer materials, fewer pieces with richer textures or a calm palette animated by one intensely personal object.

This is where Igor's apparent diversity begins to make sense. Contemporary, exotic, industrial, romantic and Scandinavian influences are not competing looks so much as possible ingredients. The discipline lies in choosing only those that support the home's story.



Maroon

Originality need not announce itself loudly. It can live in the curve of a table, the restoration of an old chair, a cabinet designed for an awkward wall or a fabric that changes character throughout the day.

In an age of instantly copied images and rapidly circulating trends, such a patient approach feels quietly radical. It asks us to look past what is fashionable and pay attention to what is true: the dimensions of the room, the movement of the household, the pleasure of a material and the memories held by an object. When those things come together, an interior stops being a composition to admire from the doorway. It becomes unmistakably home.

More info here:

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LIFE OF LEISURE

Interview

Brie Larson: beyond the spotlight

Together Magazine explores how Brie Larson is redefining her Hollywood career, embracing creative freedom, new challenges and a passion for storytelling beyond the spotlight.



Brie Larson has long since moved beyond the confines of a traditional Hollywood trajectory. An Academy Award winner for her extraordinary performance in *Room*, she has built a career that balances blockbuster visibility with fiercely independent creative instincts.

As an actor, producer and director, she has increasingly sought opportunities that allow her to shape not only the characters she plays, but the stories being told.

Her portrayal of Carol Danvers in the Marvel Cinematic Universe brought international recognition on an enormous scale. Yet

Interview



Larson's interests have always extended beyond superhero cinema. Her work on *Lessons in Chemistry* demonstrated an ability to carry an intimate, character-led drama, while her feature directorial debut, *Unicorn Store*, revealed an interest in stories that sit a little outside Hollywood's conventional boundaries.

In 2026, she ventured into another beloved fictional universe, voicing Princess Rosalina in *The Super Mario Galaxy Movie*. For Larson, a lifelong gaming enthusiast, the role offered an opportunity to explore the emotional possibilities of animation while drawing on a world she already knew and loved.

Her next projects promise further contrasts. In *Skeletons*, a psychological thriller produced by J.J. Abrams and directed by JT Mollner, she enters unsettling territory: the story follows a young boy who begins to suspect that his parents are concealing a disturbing secret about his mother. Filming wrapped in Australia in August, with the film scheduled for release in June 2027.

Then there is *One Italian Summer*, announced in September. Larson will star in and executive produce the adaptation of Rebecca Serle's bestselling novel, with *Fleabag* and *Enola Holmes* director Harry Bradbeer at the helm. Set against Italy's Amalfi Coast, the story explores grief, family and the enduring bond between a mother and daughter. Its planned theatrical release is May 2028.

The projects reflect an artist whose interests are difficult to contain within a single genre. Larson has spoken about the importance of stepping back between roles, protecting her energy and resisting the pressure to measure success solely through external recognition. She is increasingly interested in the circumstances in which work is made, as well as the finished result. Grounded yet exploratory, the 37-year-old remains curious about the ways stories can be told, the people who tell them and the possibilities that emerge when an artist is prepared to change direction. At this stage of her career, the question is not simply what she will do next, but how much freedom she can create to do it on her own terms.

You've had time to reflect on your journey within the Marvel universe. How do you view that chapter now, with a bit of distance?

I think distance gives you clarity, and also compassion for yourself. At the time, it felt enormous - like stepping into something that could define you if you weren't careful.

Now, I see it as one part of a much bigger picture. I'm grateful for it, genuinely, but I don't feel owned by it. That's important. I've learned that you can be part of something huge without letting it become the entirety of who you are.

And honestly, the biggest shift has been internal. I don't carry the same pressure anymore to prove that I deserve to be there. I've done the work. I've shown up. That's enough.

Would you return to that world again, or does it feel like something you've moved beyond?

I've learned not to speak in absolutes. What I will say is that it would have to feel mea-

ningful... not just in terms of the story, but in terms of where I am personally.

I'm much more protective of my time and energy now. If something asks a lot of me, it has to give something back creatively. That's the balance I'm looking for.

You stepped into another huge global franchise this year, voicing Rosalina in *The Super Mario Galaxy Movie*. What drew you to that world?

I've loved those games for years, so it didn't feel unfamiliar; more like being invited into something I already had a relationship with!

What really pulled me in was the scale of it, but not just visually. There's something emotional about that universe that people don't always talk about. It's playful, yes, but it also carries a kind of quiet depth, especially in the Galaxy world.

Naturally it's a fun movie, and to shift from some of the more serious drama into this games world is a great feeling. I'm really grateful to have been given the opportunity.



Interview

You've worked in live action at every scale. What appeals to you about voice acting?

It's incredibly freeing. You're not thinking about how you look, or where the camera is, or whether you've hit your mark. It's just you and the emotion and the voice.

At the same time, it's very technical in a different way. You have to trust that what you're doing will translate through animation, through timing, through everything that's added later.

You've spoken about how cinema can learn from video games. There is a sense that the world is shrinking as regards this genre and the crossover, right?

Definitely. I think video games have been quietly doing some of the most innovative storytelling for a long time.

They understand immersion in a way that film is still catching up with - not just visually, but emotionally. The way you experience

a story as a participant rather than just an observer is incredibly powerful.

Being part of something that sits between those worlds always feels really exciting. It feels like the beginning of something, not the end of something.

You've increasingly stepped into producing and directing. How has that changed your relationship with storytelling?

It's changed everything. Acting is very vulnerable, but it's also quite specific - you're one piece of a much larger puzzle.

When you're producing or directing, you're holding the whole thing. You're thinking about tone, pacing, the emotional arc of every character, the rhythm of the story. It's incredibly demanding, but also incredibly fulfilling.

What surprised me most is how much calmer I feel in those roles. There's less uncertainty. I understand the architecture of what

we're building, so I don't feel like I'm floating inside someone else's vision; I'm helping create it.

Is creative control something you actively sought, or did it evolve naturally?

It evolved, but I think it was always there underneath. I've always been curious about how things are made. Even early on, I'd be asking questions, 'Why are we doing it this way?', 'What does this moment mean in the bigger picture?'

At a certain point, you realise that if you want those answers, you have to step into the roles that allow you to shape them. It's not about control for the sake of control; it's about responsibility for the story.

You've balanced large-scale projects with smaller, more intimate work throughout your career. Is that still important to you now?

More than ever. The scale doesn't matter to me as much as the intention behind it.

There's something incredibly special about small films - the intimacy, the focus on character, the ability to sit in quiet moments. That's where I feel most connected as an actor.

At the same time, I've learned a lot from big productions. The discipline, the technical precision, the collaboration at scale - it all feeds into how I approach everything else. Ideally, I want to keep moving between those worlds.

Your next film, *Skeletons*, takes you into psychological thriller territory. What appealed to you about a story that seems to play with our assumptions about family and trust?

I like stories that allow you to experience something from an unexpected perspective. *Skeletons* has that quality. It begins with a situation that feels familiar — a family, a

child trying to understand the adults around him — and then gradually introduces questions that make you reconsider what you're seeing.

I find that kind of storytelling exciting because it asks you to be an active participant. You're watching, making assumptions and trying to work out what is happening, but you can't necessarily trust your first interpretation.

I also enjoy the challenge of working in a genre that creates a very particular atmosphere. Psychological thrillers depend on tension, on what is revealed and what is withheld. Sometimes a pause or a look can tell you as much as a long speech.

As an actor, you have to be conscious of that. You can't give everything away too early, but you also need the character to feel emotionally real. I'm always interested in finding that balance between the mechanics of a story and the human experience underneath it.

You've also signed on to star in and executive produce *One Italian Summer*, a story about grief and the relationship between a mother and daughter. What drew you to that material?

I was drawn to the emotional premise. Grief is such a complicated experience because it changes your relationship with the past, but it also changes the way you imagine your future. You can miss someone enormously and still discover things about them that you never understood while they were alive.

I think the most interesting stories about family recognise that we never know another person completely, even when we love them deeply. We see our parents in a particular way when we're young, and as we get older, we begin to understand that they had their own fears, ambitions and uncertainties.



Interview

I love the idea of a story that allows a character to look at someone she thought she knew and discover a different perspective. There's something hopeful in that, even when the journey begins with loss.

Producing the film is exciting, too, because it gives me an opportunity to be involved in shaping the story beyond my own performance. I enjoy that broader responsibility. When you care about a piece of material, you want to help create the right environment for it to become the best version of itself.

You've spoken before about needing to step back and reconnect with yourself between projects. Is that still part of your process?

Yes, and I think I understand it better now. For a long time, I thought that feeling empty after a project meant something was wrong. Now I realise it's actually part of the cycle.

You give so much of yourself to a role... emotionally, physically, mentally. Then you need time to refill that. If you don't, you're just operating on residue.



Has your idea of success changed as your career has evolved?

Completely. Early on, success felt external and was about recognition, about being seen, about proving something.

Now it's about whether I feel aligned with what I'm doing, whether I'm proud of the work, whether I've stayed honest. There's a lot less noise in that version of success, but it's much more sustainable.

You've maintained a relatively grounded public presence despite the scale of your career. Is that something you consciously protect?

Very much so. I think the idea of losing touch with reality is something that genuinely scares me.

I like ordinary things. I like routines. I like being able to walk into a space and just exist without it becoming a moment. Fame is part of the job, but it's not the part I'm interested in nurturing.



Do people really still fail to recognise you when you're out and about, shopping and doing everyday things?

People find it really unbelievable, but it's true. I can navigate through my daily routine relatively unnoticed.

There's this surreal dichotomy where, on the red carpet, I'm seen as this persona, this character almost, with a kind of visibility that's hard to escape. Yet, when I'm running errands or just going for a stroll, I blend into the crowd seamlessly... and I'm glad of that!

Looking ahead, what kind of projects excite you most at this stage?

Projects that feel alive. That's the best way I can describe it.

I'm drawn to stories that ask questions rather than answer them. Things that feel slightly uncomfortable, slightly unknown.

We all need to challenge ourselves, no matter what we do. I think there is a feeling that

actors can step back and keep doing the same thing... and I guess some can.

But that's definitely not me and will never be. When I do take a step back it's not just because I need to recharge – it's also because I want to take time to figure out what direction I need to go in next. Some of that is about getting hold of fear; the rest is really waiting for the right opportunity to come along to match wherever I am in my head. It's sometimes a complex set of conditions to have to handle!

Finally, what continues to ground you as both an artist and a person?

Curiosity, without question. If I stay curious – about people, about the world, about myself – then I'm moving forward. The moment I feel like I have all the answers, that's when I'd worry, and I think most actors would echo those sentiments. ①

DAU wins the Silver Lion for Best Director at Venice

By Federico Grandesso



Ilya Khrzhanovsky's *DAU* has won the Silver Lion for Best Director at the 83rd Venice International Film Festival, where the film had its world premiere in official competition. The award was presented at the Festival's closing ceremony by the Venezia 83 International Jury, chaired by American director, actress, screenwriter and producer Maggie Gyllenhaal. The jury also included Tunisian director and screenwriter Kaouther Ben Hania, British composer and artist Da-

niel Blumberg, Italian professor and film scholar Francesco Casetti, French director and screenwriter Xavier Giannoli, Afghan director and screenwriter Shahrbanoo Sadat, and Hong Kong director and producer Johnnie To. More than two decades in the making, *DAU* is inspired by the lives, work and intellectual world of several physicists who worked in the Soviet Union during the 20th century.

Shot over four years on an enormous purpose-built set in Ukraine, the 195-minute film unfolds across several decades and explores science, freedom, intimacy, power, morality and individual responsibility within a totalitarian society. For this feature, Khrzhanovsky worked with three cinematographers, Jürgen Jürges, Manuel Alberto Claro and Lol Crawley, to create three distinct visual worlds, each with its own treatment of light, colour, sound and rhythm. The film is edited by Ilya Permyakov and Rob Myers, with a screenplay by Ilya Khrzhanovsky, Susanne Marian, Vladimir Sorokin and Ilia Permyakov.

The cast includes Teodor Currentzis, Radmila Shchogolieva, Anatoly Vasiliev, Maria Nafpliotou, Vladimir Azhippo, Dmitri Tcherniakov, Dmitry Cheglakov, Demian Kudryavtsev, Ekaterina Andreeva, Victoria Skytska and Konstantin Leshan, with performances by Carsten Höller, Marina Abramović and Romeo Castellucci.

Together Magazine met film director Ilya Khrzhanovsky in Venice's historic casino building, where he presented *DAU* in competition.

How did you design the atmosphere of the movie, this city, this dark place?

Different shooting blocks were filmed according to different principles. Visually, we have different production designers, different costume designers, different cameramen, different principles of casting, because, for example, if you look at the photos, people in the USSR before the Big Terror, 1936-1937, they have a completely different language, completely different expressions. Then you can see the tension appearing on their faces. If you look at a photograph taken in the 1960s, you'll see completely different people. In some countries, in Europe for example, there was no totalitarian regime like in the USSR nor like Nazi occupation, you will see completely different photos. Even the

way people behave, how the body language changes, it's very interesting.

It takes a lot of time to create different types of atmospheres. And I tried to do it also with colours, textures. For example, for every scene with extras, we created all the elements, for example, the ground: we did many installations of what the ground should look like, what kind of fraction of stone or what kind of oil, mud, what kind of elements could create the atmosphere of those times. I'm also talking about the costumes' colours. For the first shooting block in St Petersburg, the idea was to use colours like those in a Soviet avant-garde painting. We drew on the principles of Lyubov Popova, Kandinsky and Malevich, important Soviet avant-garde artists, and made all the colours as bright as possible. Then we changed the pattern of those colours and finally, on the last shooting block in Moscow in the late 1940s and early 1950s, we used the principle of costumes like the stone figures and for that we took inspiration from Magritte. It was different. We tried to look up to different artists, sometimes different poetry, which can inspire us to create this kind of image and then to achieve the most realistic acting possible. We tried to keep a very natural way of acting that at some point in close-up shots you can feel that it's happening right now, right here, but in a wide shot you can see it's set in another time, a different time.

By way of introduction, *DAU* is a multi-disciplinary project at the intersection of cinema, art, and anthropology, which premiered in Paris in early 2019. *DAU*, by contrast, is a 2026 drama film inspired by the lives of Soviet physicists who developed the atomic bomb. The film follows the brilliant scientist Dau across four decades of life in the Soviet Union, from 1928 to 1968. My question would be about, if I'm not wrong, the last digital release of the movies coming from the project dates back to 2022, but in general there is a

Cinema

time gap between those releases and this release now. What caused this gap, and what will happen to the other films from the project?

To be honest, I prefer to distinguish between the project and the film, because they were done in a completely different way, according to completely different principles. The project is bigger than me. It has a completely different structure and a completely different cinematic language. For example: if I saw something out of focus in the project, the camera shaking, I would always keep it, because, in my mind, it suggested that everything was real (which, of course, was not), because it was important to keep the feeling of “reality”.

I have two reasons why I didn't finish this movie before. One was that I wanted to take my time and try this risky experiment. If you film the movie and then you don't edit it, you're not coming with a point of view, like a quantum physical observer, when the observer is coming, then everything is coming. Then the reality exists. I decided to take this time and look at what will happen. If I apply the passing of time also to a character, to an actor, what will it change? Because I can never, not in any of my darkest dreams, imagine that it would end up like it has now in this Russian-Ukrainian war with all this right-wing madness. Another reason was that I didn't want to destroy the mythology of the DAU Project, because if I released this film first, then everyone would understand that the DAU project was also actually made up.

How long did it take to edit the film, and can you imagine it being edited differently?

I try to use the same principle. I have different editors. I have two great editors. One of them, Ilya Permyakov, originally trained as a philosopher. His PhD was about Heidegger and he understood a lot about general structural things; he also worked for

me on two movies: *Dau Degeneration* and another couple of others. The other editor, Rob Myers, mostly worked on music videos for Rammstein, for example. He took part in the editing of the movies, but he has a completely different language. I also try to combine these languages inside the movie. That's why some bits look different from others. Everything that was about reality we did with Ilya, and everything that was about other dimensions, dreams, this kind of strange space in between, we did with Rob Myers.

Then, of course, they also switched to the materials, took the Czechoslovak, but tried to create a new, different language. It was always important to combine and to make a project bigger than just my point of view. Because of this, the editing process took almost three years.

I wanted to ask you about the style that brings the audience inside the action. It seems like you are there. I wanted to ask you about the red coat that this character has. What was the reason for that?

For the set, for the big scenes, especially for the first scene of the movie, the opening scene of the movie in St. Petersburg with the bell, it was shot by Lol Crawley, a cameraman who later did *The Brutalist*. At that time, he was very young, and I think it was his first or second movie. We auditioned 47,000 people in St. Petersburg to find the right characters for this scene: it has precisely the colours to create this kind of strange reality, which looks real because people walk naturally, but at the same time it's kind of sporting with a completely different concept, a figurative and non-figurative reality. The principle is that the set is always bigger than what you see in the camera, which is kind of strange, because normally you build things just for the camera, and then one metre to the left or right there's nothing, but if you have a bigger set, if people are doing things for a long time (we developed the scene for



six months with 12 theatre directors), the whole environment becomes part of the set. That took a very long time. I think 40% of what we did was never seen on camera. My belief is that you can create an abstract reality, but it has to look real and immersive, because it's in a way real for that moment.

As for the red jacket: only a few elements remain in the film that are directly connected with Landau, because he's really important for the movie. It's still very different from his story. It's inspired by the story of Lev Landau, but then I shifted it in a completely different direction. One of the elements though, I read that in Copenhagen, was that he wears a red jacket. Everyone told me he looked like a postman, because postmen also wear red jackets. I decided to keep his red jacket for Kharkiv, where everything is grey, to stress the fact that he's different, and he's not afraid to be.

I wanted to know if you were inspired by the modern theatre, or the work of theorists, or maybe you have other references, Russian references.

Yes, it's true, I am absolutely inspired by the theatre and, in a way, even more than by the cinema. In my youth, I wanted to be a theatre director more than a film director. I spent a lot of time also in different theatre

labs to try to understand how you can work with actors, how you can make their acting more real and transcendental at the same time, how you can make it happen. Of course, Artur and other great theatre directors in the West, but we have in the movie Anatoly Vasiliev, who is one of the most important, and probably after Stanislavski, the most important theatre director and theorist. He played the character Krupitsa in the film, who created a new way of working with actors and the structure of dramaturgy and so on. There was another great director who lived in Russia, Boris Yuhananov, who died last year, a unique person. Of course, I could not forget about where the theatre takes its origins: dramaturgy, because I also tried to touch some of the elements of Greek tragedy. In cinema, we normally have a very natural way of acting (now it's more and more natural), or a very abstract way of acting; in theatre it's different, it's a combination, it has another type of language and rules: comedy, or Greek tragedy, the way you show death, how you show different elements, sometimes I use these concepts of the tradition in combination with natural, real acting. ❶

Lisbon from the Lapa Palace

David Mc Gowan discovers the charm of Lisbon and the timeless elegance of Olissippo Lapa Palace, where historic luxury, stunning river views and peaceful gardens create the perfect city escape.



With its garden pool, gracious interiors and sweeping Tagus views, Olissippo Lapa Palace makes a long weekend in Portugal's capital feel like a proper escape.

Some cities make you feel on holiday almost immediately. Lisbon did it before we had even reached our hotel. Our taxi driver, warm and wonderfully enthusiastic, turned the journey into an introduction to the Por-

tuguese capital, sharing its history as we travelled through its streets. We arrived at Olissippo Lapa Palace around fifteen minutes after leaving the airport. Transfers will depend on traffic, but the ease of that arrival made an appealing first impression.

For anyone wondering whether a short break is worth the effort, Lisbon offers a persuasive answer. A long weekend leaves room for wandering, eating well and dis-

covering somewhere new, with enough time left over to sit beside a beautiful pool. Choose the right hotel and even three nights can feel restorative. Here, on a hillside in the elegant Lapa neighbourhood, you also get the pleasure of briefly making an old palace your home.

A neighbourhood worth walking

Lapa has a quieter rhythm than Lisbon's busiest visitor districts. Embassies and handsome residences give the neighbourhood an air of established elegance, and walking through it becomes part of the holiday. Look up from your phone and there is plenty to admire: elaborate façades, impressive doorways, balconies and buildings that invite you to imagine the lives unfolding behind their windows. This is a particularly rewarding introduction to a city whose character is often found between its major sights.

From the hotel, enthusiastic walkers can continue towards Santos, Chiado and the historic centre, allowing time for Lisbon's hills and inevitable pauses. The walk is an excursion to enjoy, rather than a quick dash to an attraction. When your legs suggest an alternative, ask the concierge about the traditional trams serving the surrounding area and the best route that day. Travelling through Lisbon by one of its old trams adds another small pleasure to the outing.

Lisbon rewards curiosity

The capital's history helps explain why its streets feel so richly layered. Roman and Moorish chapters preceded its capture by Portugal's first king, Afonso Henriques, in 1147. Later, Lisbon became a centre of maritime exploration and trade, drawing wealth and influences from across the world. The devastating earthquake of 1755, followed by tsunami and fire, transformed the city. Reconstruction under the Marquis of Pombal gave the lower town its distinctive ordered



streets, contrasting with the winding lanes of older districts.

You need no ambitious sightseeing programme to enjoy these different faces. Wander towards a square, follow a promising street, stop for coffee and let the afternoon develop. Chiado offers elegant shopping streets and cafés; Alfama invites slower exploration of narrow lanes and unexpected viewpoints. Down by Praça do Comércio, the city opens towards the Tagus. Across Lisbon, the changing relationship between buildings, hills and water makes even an aimless walk feel full of discoveries.

By evening, squares and restaurant terraces take on another energy. Young, stylish crowds gather over glasses of wine, conversations spill between tables and dinner becomes something to linger over. There are plenty of opportunities to taste Portuguese wines and make a meal the centrepiece of the night. The friendliness we encountered made exploring especially enjoyable. Our taxi driver's impromptu history lesson was a lovely example of the welcome that can



**“ THAT HISTORY
GIVES A STAY HERE
AN ATMOSPHERE THAT
MODERN LUXURY
ALONE CANNOT
SUPPLY. ”**



make a brief visit feel unexpectedly personal.

A palace with a past

Returning to Lapa Palace brings a different kind of discovery. Its story begins with a house built in 1870 for a son of the Viscount of Porto Covo. It subsequently passed to Luís Leite Pereira Jardim, the Count of Valenças, who transformed it into a palace. His ambitions extended to a tower from which he could admire Lisbon and the Tagus, a reminder that the appeal of this elevated position is hardly new.

The Count commissioned distinguished Portuguese artists, including the brothers Rafael and Columbano Bordalo Pinheiro, to contribute to its decoration. The residence became a setting for glittering society gatherings and remained with the family until 1988, when his heirs sold it to the Simões de Almeida family. Following restoration and conversion, it opened as Hotel da Lapa in 1992. Later owned by Orient-Express, it was acquired by Olisippo Hotels in 2009, continuing its life as a place to welcome travellers.

That history gives a stay here an atmosphere that modern luxury alone cannot supply. There is something deeply appealing about passing through rooms conceived for another era, then retreating to the comforts of a contemporary hotel. You can appreciate the craftsmanship and sense of occasion without feeling you must behave as though visiting a museum. For a few days, the palace becomes the setting for ordinary pleasures: waking slowly, dressing for dinner or deciding where to have a drink.

Water and time to unwind

The views are a particular pleasure. What can feel like a sea panorama is actually the broad Tagus estuary, whose expanse brings light and openness to the outlook. From the Rio Tejo Bar's terrace, it provides a beautiful

backdrop to a drink and a leisurely conversation. Selected rooms also enjoy river views; others face the gardens, so it is worth requesting your preferred outlook when booking. A view like this deserves time in the itinerary.

Then there is the outdoor pool, a fabulous reason to spend part of the day at the hotel. Set within peaceful gardens, it gives the stay an almost resort-like dimension. After walking Lisbon's slopes, the prospect of a swim and a lounge is irresistible. Outdoor pool heating and poolside services follow seasonal arrangements, so check these when planning a cooler-month visit. Even a city break benefits from an afternoon when the only decision is when to swim again.

The heated indoor pool makes relaxation appealing throughout the year. There is also a spa, sauna, Turkish bath and a well-equipped fitness room, giving guests several ways to unwind or keep up their routine. Equally memorable is the staff's warmth. We found them extremely friendly and approachable, making it easy to ask for advice or help. That ease matters on a short stay, when a thoughtful recommendation can shape an entire afternoon and leave more time simply to enjoy being away.

For a long weekend, resist the temptation to fill every available hour. Devote one morning to the historic centre and another to exploring at a gentler pace. Stop for a pastel de nata, browse a shop that catches your eye and choose a lunch table where you can watch the neighbourhood go about its day. Return to the hotel before you are exhausted, leaving time to enjoy the gardens. That balance makes the journey feel like a holiday. Couples can build a romantic escape around it; friends can combine sociable evenings with peaceful mornings. And anyone travelling alone has the pleasure of setting their own rhythm, with the hotel team on hand whenever a suggestion,

**“ THE HEATED INDOOR
POOL MAKES
RELAXATION
APPEALING
THROUGHOUT THE
YEAR. ”**



reservation or practical detail would make the day easier.

Three nights can hold a surprising amount: a tram ride, a late dinner, a wander through embassy-lined streets and a quiet hour overlooking the river. At Lapa Palace, leave space for the hotel itself. Lisbon will tempt you outside; the pleasure of returning to your palace may be what makes you book again.

Olisippo Lapa Palace

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W16 Aparthotel: the new gem of Brussels hospitality

"Each space is equipped with everything needed to feel at home, with the added quality of a luxury hotel."

Brussels welcomes a new player in the world of high-end accommodation. The WHITLOCK16 Aparthotel, nestled just steps away from Montgomery Square, opened its doors in February 2026 at 16 Boulevard Brand Whitlock, in one of the most sought-after neighbourhoods of the European capital. And from the very first moments, the tone is set: here, luxury is not a selling point, it's a philosophy.

The early results speak for themselves. Occupancy climbed above 70% from the very first month and reached 92% by June — a remarkable trajectory for a property in its opening year, and a clear sign that the concept resonates with the city's visitors. And against all expectations for a property so close to the European institutions, the WHITLOCK16 also stays remarkably full on weekends — proof that its appeal reaches well beyond the business crowd.



AN INTERIOR DESIGNED BY FLAMANT

What immediately stands out when stepping into the W16 is the understated elegance and refined interior design. The establishment has formed an exclusive partnership with Flamant, the renowned Belgian brand known for its furniture and lifestyle expertise. Each studio has been conceived as a true living space, where every piece of furniture tells a story and comfort rivals aesthetics. A perfect blend of contemporary design and exceptional craftsmanship.

STUDIOS FOR EVERY TYPE OF STAY

The WHITLOCK16 caters to a remarkably diverse clientele — families, consultants, expats, and staff of the European institutions all feel equally at home here. It also appeals to tourists who deliberately choose the W16 as their base, happy to reach the city centre in just a few minutes by metro. Whether for a single night or several weeks, each space is equipped with everything needed to feel at home, with the added quality of a luxury hotel. Flexibility lies at the heart of the offering, and the comfort remains impeccable throughout.



That promise is echoed by guests themselves. On BOOKING.COM, the W16 holds an outstanding rating of 9.2/10 — a truly exceptional score, when one considers that only around ten four-star hotels manage to maintain an average above 9 out of 10. Across the OTAs — BOOKING.COM, EXPEDIA.COM and others — reviewers consistently praise the spacious studios, the easy access and proximity to the metro, the spotless cleanliness, the private terraces at the back, and the overall sense of comfort. Many also highlight the prime setting, a short walk from the Parc du Cinquantaire and a lively choice of restaurants.

A FULLY AUTONOMOUS APARTHOTEL

The WHITLOCK16 is designed to be entirely self-sufficient. Before arrival, guests simply receive a link via WhatsApp that opens a dedicated app featuring digital keys — granting seamless access to the building, their room, and all common areas. No front desk, no waiting, no friction: just effortless, contactless comfort from the moment they arrive.

The W16 Aparthotel is already establishing itself as a must-visit destination for anyone seeking excellence in Brussels.

STARBUCKS CAFÉ WITHIN REACH

To start the day right, WHITLOCK16 residents benefit from an exceptional collaboration with Starbucks. This partnership allows guests to enjoy their favourite beverages in a refined setting that combines friendliness with prestige.

A TECHNOGYM FITNESS ROOM

For fitness enthusiasts, W16 spares no expense. A fully equipped fitness room featuring Technogym equipment — globally recognised as a leader in high-end fitness — is exclusively available to residents. The perfect way to maintain your workout routine without compromise, even while travelling.



AN IDEALLY LOCATED ADDRESS

Just 50 metres from Montgomery Square, the WHITLOCK16 Aparthotel enjoys a strategic location in the heart of a lively, well-connected neighbourhood, surrounded by restaurants, shops, and European institutions. A metro station lies right at its doorstep, placing the whole city within easy reach.

www.w16aparthotel.be

Touring Turin!

Together Magazine visits Turin, internationally renowned for car manufacturing, and discovers one of Italy's most underrated destinations.



Turin, or Torino as it is known in Italian, is the capital city of the Piedmont region. Nestled near the Alps in the heart of Piedmont, it serves as a useful gateway both to the Alps and to the surrounding region which is famous for its excellent wines. However, it would be a mistake to overlook the city itself as a destination. It offers visitors a combination of grand architecture, world-class museums, café culture, pleasant parks and outstanding cuisine. All set

in a historical milieu that rivals better-known Italian city destinations like Rome and Florence for ambience and attractions.

Turin was home to the House of Savoy and briefly served as the first capital of Italy following unification in the 19th century. Turin's royal heritage is still visible throughout the city, especially at the magnificent Royal Palace of Turin. This former residence of the kings of Savoy is now open to visitors and

an essential part of any city itinerary. See the sweeping staircases and ornate halls that lead up to lavish apartments still bedecked with antique furniture revealing the wealth and influence formerly centred here. The armoury is also a highlight of the tour as it showcases an incredible collection of arms and armour from across the ages. Nearby is the San Giovanni Cathedral which houses the famous religious icon, the "Shroud of Turin". In front of the palace and leading towards the heart of the city is the elegant Piazza Castello, surrounded by arcaded buildings, grand cafés and high-end boutiques. Turin is in fact an excellent shopping destination, whether in these designer boutiques or any of the many more modestly priced fashion retailers around the city.

Museum Central

Part of the historical centre of Turin has been inscribed on the World Heritage List under the title "Residences of the Royal House of Savoy". Many of the regal buildings in the surrounding city centre area have been turned into museums. These include the Reunification Museum and the Egyptian Museum. This latter is considered to have one of the most important collections of Egyptian antiquities outside Cairo, making it one of Turin's premier cultural attractions. Another museum, the National Museum of Cinema, is located in the Mole Antonelliana. This towering 19th-century structure is one of the city's most iconic landmarks and has become the symbol of Turin. The observation deck at the top offers spectacular views across the city and the nearby Alps.

Turin's reputation as an industrial city is not without a basis. It is in fact home to much of the Italian automotive industry, including the headquarters of Fiat, Lancia, and Alfa Romeo. It is therefore logical that among the local museums we find the National Automobile Museum. This celebrates Italy's automotive history as well as Turin's long connection with car manufacturing. It



features an impressive collection of classic vehicles, futuristic prototypes, and multimedia exhibits as well as homages to past racers and their vehicles. Well worth a visit for both car enthusiasts and the curious alike.

Chocolate

Italian cuisine is a key attraction for any visit to Italy and Turin does not disappoint. Turin is famous for its cafés and closely associated with the introduction of chocolate to Europe. The city has a chocolate museum and even a chocolate festival. Visitors can also go on chocolate tours in the city to visit cafés historically associated with it.



“ WITH ELEGANT
BOULEVARDS, ARCADES
AND RIVERSIDE WALKS,
IT IS A PLEASURE TO
EXPLORE THE CITY
ON FOOT. ”

Parklife

Turin also boasts some excellent city parks. The 840,000 m² Pellerina Park is Italy's most extended urban green area and has been nominated as “The best Italian park”. However, Valentino Park, which runs along the west bank of the River Po, is also spectacular. Covering an area of 500,000 m², it's a lovely spot for a stroll and goes all the way to the National Automobile Museum from the city centre.

With elegant boulevards, arcades, and riverside walks, it is a pleasure to explore the city on foot. Offering a wealth of historical, cultural, architectural and gastronomic attractions, Turin is well worth a visit and an excellent alternative to some of Italy's more famous tourist cities.

Where to Stay

We recommend the NH Collection Torino Santo Stefano, located right beside the San Giovanni Cathedral and Royal Palace. It was designed by renowned architects Gabetti and features a tower-like design with a viewing area on top. This affords views across the city and over the old Roman city gate still standing just behind the hotel. The perfect central location from which to explore the city!

<https://www.nh-collection.com/fr/hotel/nh-collection-torino-santo-stefano> ⓘ



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Les Arcs Film Festival: opening the winter season

Mark Browne explores the celebrated film festival which marks the opening of Les Arcs' winter ski season



© Merci Creative

As autumn progresses, the focus of travel plans inevitably turns to the winter months ahead - and the upcoming ski season in particular! Many resorts seek to make a splash to kick off the start of the season with something special designed to entice a broader audience than the early season powder hounds and tempt them up to the mountains.

The Film Festival in Les Arcs is a great example of such an event. Now celebrating its 18th edition, this film festival has earned a solid reputation as a calendar event on the independent film festival circuit. In 2026, the festival runs from 12 to 19 December.

A topical theme!

Each year the film festival in Les Arcs is organised around a specific theme that captures the public zeitgeist. This year the theme of the festival will be a focus on the connections between artificial intelligence (AI), humans and living organisms - through the lens of cinema (of course!). This theme will be explored throughout the festival programme - consisting not just of film screenings but also panel discussions and industry events. Experts on the topic of AI will participate in the discussions to ensure deep, multifaceted and lively debates. A worthy topic for exploration by everyone given the accelerating pace of technological change in this regard in the world today! Festival screenings take place across all of the resort's seven cinemas and the festival will feature over 100 different films! These will compete before the festival's judging panel, which will award ten trophies under a range of different headings. The final line-up of films to be screened is being released in early November.

Previous themes to have been explored at the festival include gender equality, the ecological crisis and democracy. This is shaping up to be another fantastic way to enjoy an early season visit to the mountains while exploring and learning more about a key issue of our times.

About Les Arcs

Les Arcs is located at the gateway to the Vanoise National Park, which, together with the nearby Gran Paradiso National Park, forms the largest protected natural area in Europe. The resort offers a fantastic panorama of the most beautiful peaks in Savoie and Mont Blanc. This gives a breathtaking backdrop to the event even for those who prefer to admire the views rather than engage in winter sports on the local slopes.

The resort offers four high-altitude bases — Arc 1600, Arc 1800, Arc 1950 and Arc



© Nicolas Secerov



© Merci Creative



© Merci Creative



© Nicolas Secerov

2000 — as well as Bourg-Saint-Maurice in the valley below. It is part of the broader 'Paradiski' ski area consisting of Les Arcs, La Plagne and Peisey-Vallandry. This combined area offers 425 km of ski slopes, three slalom stadiums and three modern freestyle facilities (snowpark, boardercross and half-pipe). The advanced artificial snowmaking system in place means that access to the slopes is guaranteed throughout the entire winter season, including during this opening period. Each of the centres has its own atmosphere and style with a good selection of bars and restaurants as well as accommodation options.

Off the slopes, the resort area has all the infrastructure needed to host a successful festival, including 30,000 beds spread across its hotels as well as seven cinemas. Not to mention multiple bars and restaurants! There are regular inter-resort shuttle buses running throughout the festival to allow visitors to get around easily and attend the events and evening parties, as well as the film screenings themselves, of course. The funicular to Arc 1600 and gondolas are also operational.

Many of the hotels offer festival deals and early-season discounts to further entice early-season visitors to kick off their own winter season. Despite the popularity of this opening festival, the slopes are refreshingly open and uncrowded when compared to peak times around New Year and the holiday weeks later in the high season.

Whether the bigger draw for you is the film festival or the prospect of early-season snow sports action on relatively uncrowded slopes, the opening festival at Les Arcs offers a great incentive to get people back on the piste early this season! ❶


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Mina: an Italian evening in Ixelles

Together Magazine discovers a new culinary hotspot near Place Fernand Cocq, where fresh pasta, sharing plates and creative cocktails come together in a lively atmosphere.

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ÉVÉNEMENTS PRIVÉS & PROFESSIONNELS

RÉCEPTIONS

BUFFETS

COCKTAILS

SERVICE À TABLE

OLIBAN À EMPORTER



Respirez, voyagez, vous êtes... Oliban



bition is a neighbourhood address where dropping in for a drink can turn into staying for dinner. Food, conversation and the rhythm of the evening are intended to carry equal weight.

That idea shapes the layout. At the front, the bar and high tables create a setting for cocktails and plates to share. Further back, a quieter dining area offers a different pace. The restaurant has almost 80 seats, including its terrace, allowing the two sides of the concept to coexist.

The kitchen places homemade fresh pasta at the centre of its identity. The announced selection includes pappardelle al ragù, rigatoni cacio e pepe and fettuccine al limone with sage and courgette. These familiar Italian references establish the direction of a menu that also makes room for seasonal suggestions and more individual recipes.

Some evenings call for a quick aperitif; others deserve a table, a leisurely meal and another glass of wine. Mina, the Italian restaurant and bar at Chaussée d'Ixelles 183, has been conceived to accommodate both.

Created by Daniel Moriamé and a long-time friend, the project takes its inspiration from the conviviality of Italian dining. Their am-

Sharing dishes are another important part of the proposition. Artichokes alla giudia, polpette pugliesi and Italian charcuterie served with burrata feature among the antipasti, inviting diners to begin with several plates in the middle of the table.

Alongside pasta and antipasti, Mina's offering includes fish and meat dishes, homemade desserts, and some vegetarian and

Barbizon: the art of bringing people together

Together Magazine discovers a welcoming brasserie in Overijse, where Delphine Roberti de Winghe and Arnaud Le Grelle bring together delicious food, warm hospitality and the joy of sharing.



gluten-free options. Products imported from Italy underpin a kitchen whose stated priorities are simplicity, authenticity and flavour. The menu is designed to evolve with ingredients and the kitchen's inspiration rather than remain fixed.

Drinks have received attention. The cocktail list was developed with Samuel Suarez, whose background includes 15 years behind the bar at Belga Queen. A wine selection drawn largely from Italy continues the theme, connecting the restaurant's dining and drinking identities.

For readers looking beyond the familiar choice between a cocktail bar and a restaurant, Mina offers an appealing possibility: one address that accommodates different kinds of evening. Its concept leaves room for a spontaneous drink, a shared starter or a fuller dinner, without insisting that every visit follow the same script.

The promise is straightforward and recognisably Italian: good company, dishes made for sharing and time around the table. In Ixelles, Mina is setting out to make that combination its calling card for the neighbourhood.

Mina:

Chaussée d'Ixelles 183, 1050 Ixelles
Opening hours: Tuesday–Saturday,
18:30–23:30
Instagram: @mina.brussels



Photos © Tribe Agency

A restaurant can be somewhere to eat, but it can also become a meeting point: a place for family lunches, drinks with friends and celebrations that deserve more than a table at home. At Barbizon in Overijse, that broader understanding of hospitality guides the ambitions of Delphine Roberti de Winghe and Arnaud Le Grelle.

The pair describe their vision as a lively brasserie serving generous, artisanal cooking, where lunch and dinner sit alongside opportunities to meet, enjoy a drink or organise an event. Their emphasis extends beyond the kitchen to the welcome, service, surroundings and comfort of guests.

In a statement accompanying the restaurant's press materials, the owners also offer a candid perspective on what it takes to

“ ONE ADDRESS THAT
ACCOMMODATES
DIFFERENT KINDS OF
EVENING. ”



sustain that experience. A bill, they explain, supports considerably more than the ingredients on a plate. It pays for staff, suppliers, energy, maintenance and the many practical details that allow a restaurant to function.

Their argument is that investing in the setting and the team forms part of the same craft as cooking: receiving people well. They also acknowledge that Barbizon is still developing, with menus, working routines and details being adjusted. Constructive criticism, they say, belongs to the process of improving the business.

For Together readers planning a gathering, the venue's practical offering is worth considering. Alongside the brasserie, Barbizon has an event room available seven days a week for occasions accommodating between 30 and 250 people. Free parking is provided on site.

The address is Drève de Willerieken 95, with dinner service from Tuesday to Saturday and lunchtime opening on Friday and Sunday, according to the supplied information.

Barbizon's proposition is rooted in a familiar pleasure: sharing food and time with others. Its owners are setting out to create a house that can accommodate both everyday encounters and larger milestones.

Opening hours:
Monday: Closed
Tuesday–Wednesday: 18:30–00:00
Thursday: 18:30–01:00
Friday: 12:00–15:00 and 18:30–01:00
Saturday: 18:30–01:00
Sunday: 12:00–15:00

www.barbizon.be ⓘ



Le Magasin de Porcelaine: Belgian craftsmanship at Mariemont



Porcelain reveals the changing tastes and working lives of Belgium at Mariemont. Le Magasin de Porcelaine follows a Brussels manufactory active from 1830 to 2020, exploring the people who made, sold and used its creations. Historic objects meet contemporary craftsmanship through work from Hainaut, opening a conversation about design, materials and the skills behind everyday things. For visitors interested in interiors and decorative arts, it offers a cultural outing beyond Brussels, with time to explore through spring.

Practical information

Where? Domaine & Musée royal de Mariemont, Chaussée de Mariemont 100, 7140 Morlanwelz.

When? 26 September 2026–9 May 2027; exhibition remains open after 15 November.

Opening hours: Tuesday–Sunday, 10:00–17:00 October–March; 10:00–18:00 April–September. Last admission 45 minutes before closing; holiday exceptions apply. Tickets: Adults aged 27–64: €9. Reduced and free admission categories available. ⓘ

What's on

Shades of Shiva: a journey into the heart of Indian spirituality

Together Magazine explores *Shades of Shiva*, a captivating photographic journey by Philippe Meysmans and Georges Morlegghem, revealing the power of faith, devotion and spirituality in India.



How did *Shades of Shiva* come about?

Philippe: *Shades of Shiva* was born from a journey shared by two friends, photographers and passionate travellers with a deep fascination for India.

We travelled there during the Kumbh Mela, the world's largest religious pilgrimage, held only once every twelve years.

We wanted to capture the presence of men whose faith and devotion to Shiva occupy a central place in their lives.

How did you choose to photograph them?

Georges: In Varanasi, on the sacred banks of the Ganges, we set up a mobile photographic studio.



The black backdrop became both an aesthetic and symbolic choice: it allowed us to remove the surrounding environment and focus the viewer's gaze on what truly mattered - the colours, the faces, the expression, and above all, the intensity that emanated from each individual.

What did you discover through these portraits?

Philippe: Day after day, these encounters led us to question our own relationship with spirituality.

Georges: In the West, we sometimes tend to keep this dimension at a distance.

In India, we encountered spirituality as a fully embodied force, one capable of giving profound meaning to a life. It is this force that we sought to reveal through our images.

Shades of Shiva

Sablon d'Art Gallery

1-31 October 2026

Joseph Stevens street 25, 1000 Bruxelles

Thursday to Sunday, 11:00-18:00

What's on

Jean Brusselmans: Painter by nature

Together Magazine explores BOZAR's major retrospective of one of Belgium's most distinctive modern painters, celebrating his unique vision of landscapes, everyday life and artistic independence.



Jean Brusselmans, *Still Life with Slices of Smoked Sausage*, 1936, oil on canvas, Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp - Flemish Community © photo: Hugo Maertens

Belgian modernism has no shortage of celebrated names, yet some of its most intriguing figures remain surprisingly unfamiliar beyond the country's borders. This autumn, BOZAR turns its at-

tention to one of them. Jean Brusselmans – Painter by Nature is the first comprehensive exhibition dedicated to the Belgian painter since 1980, bringing together around 120 works to reconsider an artist whose inten-

sely personal vision never fitted neatly into the movements surrounding him.

Born in Brussels in 1884, Brusselmans developed his practice during a period of extraordinary artistic change. Cubism, Expressionism and abstraction were transforming European painting, but Brusselmans resisted becoming an obvious disciple of any one school. Instead, he gradually constructed a visual language of his own, grounded in observation and painterly tradition while moving between figuration and abstraction. BOZAR describes him as an artist who remained independent of contemporary trends, a quality that helps explain both the originality of his work and why he can be difficult to categorise.

A landscape made personal

Nature sits at the heart of the exhibition, but Brusselmans was not interested in simply reproducing what he saw. The landscape of Brabant became material to be reorganised: fields, trees, houses and skies reduced to strong shapes, rhythmic patterns and carefully constructed areas of colour. Familiar rural scenes acquire an unexpected sense of order, hovering somewhere between the recognisable world and something more abstract.

That relationship became particularly important after Brusselmans settled in Dilbeek, on the outskirts of Brussels. The surrounding countryside offered an apparently modest repertoire of subjects, yet he returned to it repeatedly. Farmers, labourers, village life and the rolling Brabant landscape all entered his work. Rather than chasing novelty through subject matter, Brusselmans found variation by looking more closely at the world immediately around him. BOZAR's accompanying programme describes him as capturing the character of the Flemish countryside through these recurring scenes of work and rural life.

The result is painting that can initially appear straightforward but becomes more complex the longer it is observed. A field can become an arrangement of planes; the branches of a tree create an almost architectural structure; a domestic scene is held together as much by geometry and colour as by the people or objects within it. There is discipline beneath the apparent simplicity.

An artist apart

Part of the fascination of *Painter by Nature* lies in seeing Brusselmans within the wider European art world without reducing him to it. The exhibition places his paintings in dialogue with contemporaries including Fernand Léger, Piet Mondrian and Rik Wouters. These comparisons reveal connections, but they also make his independence clearer.

Where Mondrian progressively pushed landscape towards pure abstraction, for example, Brusselmans retained his attachment to the visible world. Yet neither was he a conventional realist. His paintings continually negotiate the space between what something looks like and how a painter might reconstruct it on canvas.

That tension gives the work a surprisingly contemporary quality. At a moment when artists were often associated with movements and manifestos, Brusselmans seems less concerned with belonging than with developing a coherent way of seeing. His modest life and close relationship with his surroundings became not limitations but the foundation of a remarkably recognisable artistic identity.

Rediscovering a Belgian modernist

A retrospective of this scale inevitably raises a larger question: why is an artist capable of sustaining an exhibition of around 120 works still relatively underappreciated? BOZAR does not attempt simply to elevate Brusselmans through reputation. Instead, the breadth of the exhibition allows visitors to



Jean Brusselmans, *The Lady with the Rose*, 1939, oil on canvas, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels, © photo: Grafisch Buro Lefevre

see his artistic development for themselves and to understand how persistent themes evolved over decades.

Seen together, the works reveal an artist interested in the extraordinary possibilities hidden within ordinary surroundings. His subjects rarely require spectacle. A landscape, a worker, a house or a familiar stretch of countryside is enough. What matters is the act of looking and the transformation that occurs once those things enter the painted image.

More than seventy years after his death in 1953, Brusselmans therefore feels particularly deserving of another look. Painter by Nature presents an artist deeply rooted in Belgium but engaged with some of modern painting's central questions: how far an image can move away from reality without abandoning it, how colour and structure alter perception, and whether an artist needs to belong to a movement at all.



Jean Brusselmans, *The Walk*, c. 1929, oil on canvas, The Phoebe Foundation, Antwerp

For visitors familiar with Belgian modernism, the exhibition offers an opportunity to reconsider a distinctive figure within it. For those encountering Brusselmans for the first time, it may be the more rewarding experience: the rediscovery of a painter who spent his career looking closely at a relatively small corner of the world and found within it an entire visual language.

Practical information

Exhibition: Jean Brusselmans – Painter by Nature

Location: BOZAR, Rue Ravenstein 23, 1000 Brussels

Dates: 2 October 2026 – 31 January 2027

Opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday, 10:00–18:00

Tickets: Standard admission €20; reduced rates available, including €14 for visitors under 26 and €18 for over-65s.

Website: bozar.be ⓘ

Wozzeck: a dark masterpiece returns to La Monnaie



One of the 20th century's most unsettling operas comes to Brussels this November as La Monnaie presents a new production of Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*. Written after Berg encountered Georg Büchner's unfinished play *Woyzeck* in 1914, the opera follows a vulnerable soldier pushed towards psychological collapse by humiliation, isolation and abuse.

A century after its 1925 premiere, *Wozzeck* remains remarkably confronting. Rather than presenting its tragedy at a distance, this production explores the increasingly fractured world of its central character, as the boundaries between memory, reality and imagination begin to disappear. Belgian director Christophe Coppens oversees the staging, sets, costumes and lighting, while La Monnaie music director Alain Altinoglu conducts. Scott Hendricks takes the title role, alongside Jennifer Holloway as Marie.

Berg's uncompromising score makes *Wozzeck* a challenging opera, but also one of the repertoire's most powerful experiences. Its themes of alienation, social exclusion and the treatment of society's most vulnerable give the work an uncomfortable modern resonance.

Practical information

Performance: *Wozzeck*

Location: La Monnaie, Place de la Monnaie, 1000 Brussels

Dates: 8–22 November 2026

Language: German, with surtitles in English, French and Dutch

Conductor: Alain Altinoglu

Director: Christophe Coppens

Tickets: €18–€170, with reduced rates available ⓘ

What's on

The fabric decides: Edith Dekyndt × Cristóbal Balenciaga



Edith Dekyndt Portrait Barth Decobecq

Contemporary art meets haute couture at Bozar, where Belgian artist Edith Dekyndt enters into dialogue with the rarely seen archives of Cristóbal Balenciaga. The Fabric Decides explores the memory embedded in materials and the ways they endure and change over time.

The exhibition shifts attention towards gestures, skills and forms: the traces of making that give an object its character. By bringing Dekyndt's practice together with fashion archives, it opens a conversation between two different creative worlds.

For readers interested in fashion, design or craftsmanship, the appeal lies in looking

closely. The meeting of art and couture encourages a different view of fabric, one that considers what it can retain as well as the shape it takes. The exhibition continues into January, leaving time for an autumn visit or a return later in the season.

Practical information

Where? BOZAR, Rue Ravenstein 23, 1000 Brussels.

When? 14 October 2026–31 January 2027.

Opening hours: Tuesday–Sunday, 10:00–18:00; holiday exceptions apply.

Tickets: €10 standard; reduced rates available.

Website: bozar.be ⓘ

Kanal opens: A new chapter on the waterfront



Brussels' transformed Citroën garage opens its doors as Kanal on 28 November, with a free inaugural weekend that invites the city inside. Ten exhibitions share the spotlight with performances, concerts, DJ sets, films and workshops for children and families.

The appeal goes beyond a single exhibition. The opening offers a chance to discover the scale of the former industrial building and explore a new cultural address beside the canal. Architecture, contemporary art and live performance come together in a programme designed for wandering, watching and returning.

Set aside time to explore rather than rush between attractions. The weekend combines the discovery of the building with events across its spaces and surroundings, making it an inviting introduction for art enthusiasts and curious first-time visitors alike.

Practical information

Where? Kanal, Place Saintelette 21, 1000 Brussels.

When? 28–29 November 2026.

Tickets: Free admission for the opening weekend; consult the programme for event times.

Website: kanal.brussels ⓘ

The shooting bar



The world's first place where you can legally shoot guns while getting drunk

Brussels has just opened something that shouldn't exist – and yet, gloriously, it does. Welcome to Shooters, where loaded weapons and loaded patrons finally meet in perfect, slightly unhinged harmony.

It must have been ten years since I last found myself on Dansaertstraat, and I never could have imagined my return would involve machine guns and martinis in the same hand. Directly across from L'Archiduc, Shooters bills itself as “the world's first shooting range bar” – a combination so audacious it sounds like someone's liability nightmare, yet here I am, about to live it.

A Terrible Action Film Made Real

Upon entering, my gaze is captured by four young saints beaming down from enormous faux stained-glass windows, their halos earned through their trainers and Desert Eagles. A few flights down, baroque sculptures face tables with poker chips and whiskey glasses. It feels as though I've walked into a terrible action film – and therefore an excellent one.

“This is something that's never been done anywhere in the world,” says co-founder Romain Félix. “Real shooting with real drinks.”

He pushes a machine gun into my hands. The weight surprises me. This isn't laser tag or some sanitised arcade experience. These are authentic airsoft replicas firing real projectiles at 100 m/s, detected by Belgian-developed technology with 1mm precision. The recoil is genuine. The kickback rattles through my shoulders. The experience is disturbingly lifelike.



“ REAL SHOOTING
WITH REAL
DRINKS. ”

I grew up with the most gruesome video games – Mortal Kombat, Carmageddon, Postal – and yet I remain gentleness personified. I don't believe games incite violence. But standing here with a replica AK-47 in one hand and a cocktail menu in the other, I understand why some eyebrows might be raised. There's something deliciously absurd about the whole setup.



From Childhood Dream to Adult Reality

Where I'd expected virtual villains, I'm shooting plates and bottles against the clock – the irony not lost on me given the cocktail waiting at the bar. Félix explains they've recreated everything from classic shooting ranges to Nintendo's Duck Hunt, but with real bullets hitting real screens. Up to 40 people can play simultaneously, transforming precision shooting into a bizarre social sport.

Félix is clearly practised; I need to concentrate fully. This is no casual game. My reaction speed, my precision, my focus – all are tested.

After one game mode, we've broken his record. And, before I know it, Félix is simply Romain. Here, amid the clatter of virtual clay and actual whiskey, bonds form faster than I've experienced anywhere else. An hour ago I'd never met this man; now we're brothers in arms, celebrating our victory with a drink that tastes better earned with gunpowder residue still fresh in the air.

Reservations are open for one-hour sessions at Shooters, which can be found on Rue Antoine Dansaert 25 in Brussels city centre.

Website: www.theshootingbar.com

Instagram: Shooters_brussels

What's on

MAD Parcours: Follow Brussels' creative trail



MAD Parcours Adeline Halot Alternative

For three days, MAD Parcours opens the doors of Brussels' independent fashion and design scene. Its third edition brings together studios, boutiques, galleries, concept stores and showrooms, with encounters, collection presentations, installations and demonstrations of craftsmanship along the way.

The city-centre route is easily explored on foot. Thematic itineraries cover independent fashion, collectible design, contemporary jewellery and ceramics, allowing visitors to follow their own interests rather than a fixed schedule. A printed map is available at MAD Brussels and participating venues.

With free admission and a late opening on Thursday, the event lends itself to an afternoon of discoveries or an evening spent exploring unfamiliar addresses. It is a chance to meet local creatives and see the ideas and techniques behind the objects they make.

Practical information

Where? Participating venues in central Brussels; information point at MAD Brussels, Place du Nouveau Marché aux Grains 10.

When? 12–14 November 2026.

Opening hours: Thursday

12:00–21:00;

Friday and Saturday 12:00–18:00.

Tickets: Free.

Website: mad.brussels ⓘ

InterClassics Brussels: Rally legends and collectible cars



Automotive history takes centre stage at Brussels Expo as InterClassics returns for its eleventh edition. This year's Rally Legends theme turns the spotlight on the cars and personalities that shaped rallying, alongside a broad selection of classics, youngtimers and supercars.

Collectible car dealers fill an exhibition space of 40,000 square metres, giving visitors plenty of room to compare eras, designs and engineering approaches. The fair's Art Area adds another perspective, with paintings, models, visual artworks and furniture inspired by motoring.

For enthusiasts, collectors or anyone drawn to beautiful machines, the pleasure lies in

looking closely: bodywork, interiors and the details that distinguish one generation from another. Friday's extended opening hours also offer an evening option for a visit after work.

Practical information

Where? Brussels Expo, Place de Belgique, 1020 Brussels.

When? 20–22 November 2026.

Opening hours: Friday 10:00–21:00;

Saturday and Sunday 10:00–18:00.

Tickets: Adult online pre-sale €22

until 19 November; €23.50 online

during the fair; €25 at the door.

Website: interclassics.events ⓘ

What's on

Shaping the Possible: Pierre Lallemand at the Design Museum



Design Museum Brussels explores more than thirty years of work by Belgian architect and designer Pierre Lallemand. Drawings, models, prototypes, furniture and experimental pieces reveal a practice in which making an object is also a way of testing an idea.

The exhibition begins with his early lighting designs on the Brussels scene of the 1980s, before following the international experiences that shaped his thinking. Work in Italy and the United States broadened a creative approach that moves between the scale of furniture and that of architecture.

Bicycles, sailboats, sculptures and architectural studies demonstrate the breadth

of his interests. For visitors curious about how design develops, the exhibition offers an opportunity to look beyond the finished object and examine the research, technical choices and formal experiments behind it.

Practical information

Where? Design Museum Brussels, Place de Belgique 20, 1020 Brussels.

When? 20 November 2026–7 March 2027.

Opening hours: Daily, 11:00–19:00;

last admission 18:30. Holiday hours vary.

Tickets: €8.50 for temporary exhibitions;

€11 including permanent exhibitions.

Reduced rates available.

Website: designmuseum.brussels ⓘ

Cinemamed: Mediterranean stories on screen



Brussels' Mediterranean film festival returns with a programme that connects cinema to the cultures and experiences of the region. Screenings across the city offer an opportunity to discover films beyond the usual mainstream releases and encounter the people and perspectives behind them.

Cinemamed combines films with discussion, meetings and a convivial festival atmosphere. Palace and Aventure are among the participating venues, with further events at cultural spaces around Brussels. The wider festival also brings together concerts, workshops and Mediterranean flavours.

For the magazine's international readers, it is worth checking the language and subtitle information when choosing a screening. Build an evening around a film that sparks your curiosity, then leave time for conversation afterwards. The festival runs into early December, making it a welcome cultural escape as winter approaches.

Practical information

Where? Palace, Aventure and participating cultural venues in Brussels.

When? 26 November–4 December 2026.

Tickets: See the 2026 screening programme and booking website for current prices.

Website: cinemamed.be ⓘ

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What's on

Le jour du kiwi: A missing yoghurt and a change of heart



Practical information

Where? Théâtre Royal des Galeries, Galerie du Roi 32, 1000 Brussels.
When? 19, 20 and 21 November 2026 at 20:15; 22 November at 15:00.
Full run: 28 October–22 November.

Language: French.
Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes, without an interval.
Tickets: Standard €19–€32; reduced rates available.
Website: trg.be ①

Feydeau chambre 21: A room full of comic possibilities



© Gaël Maleux

Paris, 1920. Confined to room 21 of a psychiatric hospital, Georges Feydeau transforms doctors and nurses into characters in his imagination. Thierry Barbeau and Pierre Berriau borrow the misunderstandings and concealed intentions of farce to create a fictional encounter with the playwright. Directed by Valérie Lemaître and Michelangelo Marchese, this French-language comedy brings the carefully timed chaos of vaudeville to Le Public's Grande Salle.

Practical information

Where? Théâtre Le Public, Rue Braemt 64–70, 1210 Brussels.
When? Selected performances from 17 November to 31 December 2026. Full run: 12 November–31 December; no performances 24–25 December.
Language: French.
Tickets: See the official booking calendar for dates and prices.
Website: theatrepublic.be ①

What's on

La Souricière: Agatha Christie for a winter evening



A snow storm traps a group of strangers in a country guest house, while a murder in London casts suspicion over their gathering. Agatha Christie's *La Souricière* invites audiences to follow the clues and decide whom to trust. The Comédie Royale Claude Volter presents Pierre-Alain Leleu's French adaptation, directed by Michel de Warzée, with a cast including Danielle Fire, Stéphanie Moriau, Bruno Georis and Bernard d'Oultremont. Keep the ending a mystery until you take your seat.

Practical information

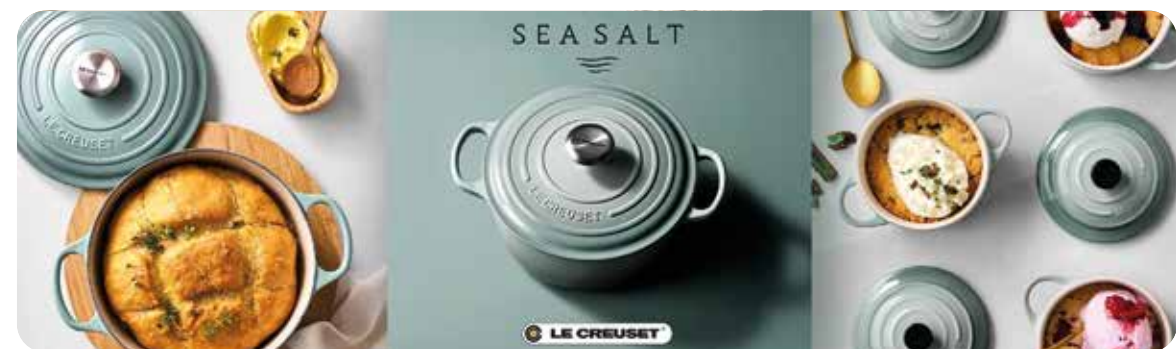
Where? Comédie Royale Claude Volter, Avenue des Frères Legrain 98, 1150 Brussels.

When? Selected dates from 2 to 31 December 2026; see the calendar for holiday performance times.

Language: French.

Tickets: See the official ticket office for current prices.

Website: comedievolter.be ①



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What's on

Fatoumata Diawara: Malian voices at Ancienne Belgique



Fatoumata Diawara brings her voice and guitar to Ancienne Belgique, connecting Malian traditions with jazz, pop, Afrobeats and desert blues. The concert accompanies *Massa*, an album exploring family, motherhood, resilience and the memory of her father. Organised by Ancienne Belgique and Greenhouse Talent, the evening takes place in AB's main hall, with Imane Guemssy announced as support. A chance to hear a distinctive voice carrying personal stories across languages and borders.

Practical information

Where? Ancienne Belgique,
Boulevard Anspach 110, 1000 Brussels.
When? 24 November 2026;
doors open at 19:00.
Tickets: €36 in advance;
€37 at the door; student rate €28.80.
Website: abconcerts.be
greenhousetalent.com ⓘ



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