

MEET
IN

FLANDERS

magazine

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FEELING

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HERE

SEDUCE
THE SENSES

TRENDS FOR THE MEETINGS INDUSTRY



**MEET
& INNOVATE**

"The best way to predict the future is to invent it."



**TASTE
& ENJOY**

Chocolate snorting offers a new way to a cocoa high.



**TAKE A BREAK
& RELAX**

Incentives are ideally suited to motivate your co-workers.



**CREATE
& INSPIRE**

"You need to dare to bend the rules."



**EXPLORE
& ADMIRE**

Remarkable places with a rich history and interesting stories.

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Alden Biesen is more than a historic top location. The site, with its impressive moated castle, forms an awe-inspiring historic setting for meetings, training courses and conferences. We can help every private individual, company and association realize their ambitions, from a small-scale meeting to a full-on conference or a multi-day training course with catering.

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◆ www.alden-biesen.be ◆



WELCOME TO FLANDERS

My inner marketer feels inclined to start with a bold statement, such as “your next meeting destination”. I fully realise, however, that all the arrangements for your next meeting have long been made. And the meeting after the next is probably already planned too.

Yet I am sure you will consider Flanders as a destination for a future meeting or convention, once you become better acquainted with the region’s assets and opportunities - or better still, once you experience them first-hand. Let this Meet in Flanders Magazine be an introduction to a real treasure trove, especially if you are in the market for authenticity, craftsmanship and special venues amidst cultural heritage.

Flanders is exceptionally well located in the heart of Europe. As the capital of Europe, Belgium and Flanders, Brussels is an easily accessible and very attractive city. Within the Flanders region, travel times between Brussels, the historic art cities and other remarkable meeting destinations are usually under one hour.

Once arrived, Flanders reveals itself as a safe, comfortable and alluring destination for meetings, conferences and incentives. A destination where you can find reliable partners and excellent service suppliers. The region is irresistible because in cities like Brussels, Ghent, Antwerp, Bruges, Leuven and Mechelen, you can just leave your meeting venue and immediately immerse yourself in the ambiance of the historic city centre. Heritage and culture are omnipresent. This is a blessing to meeting planners who have to organise pre and post tours, spousal programmes and evening activities. I will not even mention our amazing culinary reputation, because the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

Flanders and Brussels offer a wide and versatile array of venues, hotels and service suppliers with a strong reputation for customer care. As of November 2016, not only Brussels, but Antwerp too will be able to host large conventions. Just a few more months and the new Flanders Meeting & Convention Center Antwerp will be ready to welcome over 1,000 delegates. In the years to come, VISITFLANDERS is set to invest in state-of-the-art meeting venues in Bruges, Ghent and Leuven.

So yes, everything is already arranged for your “next project”. However, knowing you are the type of person who looks ahead, I recommend you to have a chat with my colleagues from Meet in Flanders. They will gladly answer all your questions about Flanders and its potential as a destination for your future meetings and events.

See you soon,

Peter De Wilde
CEO VISITFLANDERS

PETER DE WILDE

“Let this Meet in Flanders Magazine be an introduction to a real treasure trove.”



coverpicture:
greetje van buggenhout
make-up: els van schoor
model: alexandra by
models office

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Dominique Persoone

Belgian chocolatier
When he created a chocolate-sniffing device for a Rolling Stones party in 2007, he never imagined demand would stretch far beyond the rock 'n' roll scene.



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Monks, innkeepers and brewers' guilds turned it into a man's job, but today, strong women are taking back the wheel.

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"Flanders has a rich eating and drinking culture. With our Flanders Kitchen Rebels, we can put Flemish gastronomy on the map, quite literally."

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Quality speaks for itself without fanfare, and reveals itself in all its glorious simplicity.



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The Tour of Flanders, one of Europe's oldest cycling competitions and considered one of the most difficult.

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Fantastic group activities on land, at sea or in the air.

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British journalist Derek Blythe: "It's an interesting city because of its diversity. The fact that there is no uniformity is quite charming."

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All the contact information you need to organise your trip to Flanders.

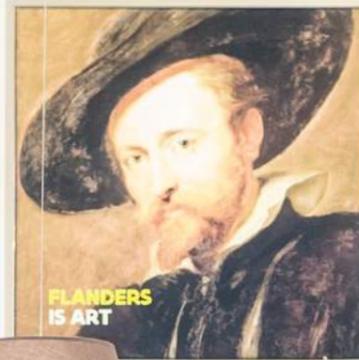
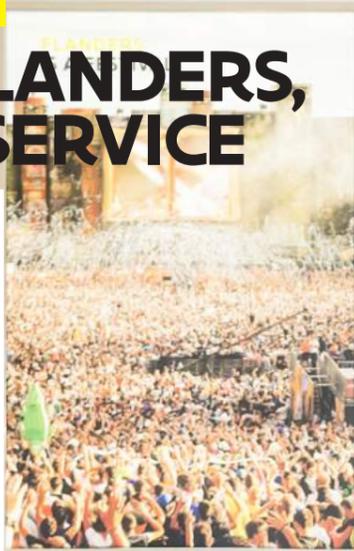


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FLEMISH COLLEGUES

MEET IN FLANDERS, AT YOUR SERVICE

Meet in Flanders is the Convention Bureau of VISITFLANDERS and responsible for the promotion and development of Flanders & Brussels as a meeting and incentive destination. **Our team** has in-depth product knowledge and offers advice and guidance free of charge. We provide tailor-made proposals and put you in contact with all the right suppliers on the market. Together with our local partners we organise site inspections and familiarisation trips to bring meeting planners to our wonderful destination. During these trips we not only allow you to enjoy the good life, but also give you a chance to experience our excellent hotels, restaurants, special venues, meeting venues, etc. At Meet in Flanders we want to convey our passion for our destination to the organisers of meetings, incentives & conferences. Together we hope to make your **next event a success!**



LIESBETH BAGGERMAN
MEETING CONSULTANT

"I live in Brussels now, and previously I lived in Leuven. So if you have any questions about these two vibrant cities, you can always ask me. I know a lot about beer too. People with disabilities can contact me for information on accessibility."

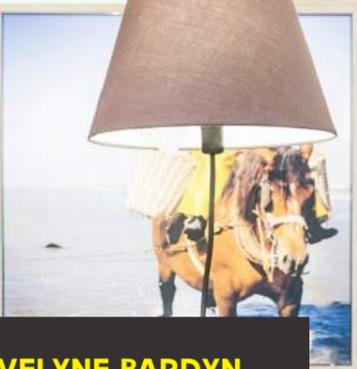
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EVELYNE BARDYN
SENIOR MEETING MANAGER

"I live in Ghent and absolutely love the city. I know all about Flanders for Associations, Flanders for Foodies, festivals and cultural events. If you have some questions concerning these topics, you can always ask me!"

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KARI ALLOO
MEETING CONSULTANT

"I just love fashion & design and art & heritage, and I turned these passions into my expertise. I live in Ostend, so I can give you some advice and tips about this city as well."

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SYLVIE LEJOUR
MEETING CONSULTANT

"In my spare time I am mainly busy with cycling. It's a big hobby of mine. The Flemish countryside is the best place for this hobby. Nevertheless, like most Belgians, I just love chocolate. If you would like some information or advice on these topics, you can contact me!"

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KANITHA PAKSEE
MEETING ASSISTANT

"Before I moved to Mechelen, I used to live in Antwerp. Currently, I'm working on the First World War Centenary project. If you need some information about events & going out, feel free to contact me."

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Meet in Flanders is **a one stop shop** for **meeting planners** looking to **organise conferences and events** in Flanders and Brussels.

COLLEAGUES ABROAD

MEET IN FLANDERS, AT YOUR SERVICE

UK



ROSE GARBER

MICE SECTOR REPRESENTATIVE
VISITFLANDERS

I'm very proud to represent Meet in Flanders. In a short space of time, I became a real Flanders-enthusiast. I don't settle for anything less than Belgian beer, Belgian chocolate and twice-fried chips. UK-based meeting & incentive planners who want to organise an event in Flanders, can always contact me.

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GERMANY



ALEXANDRA MICHALAK

MICE REPRESENTATIVE D/A/CH
VISITFLANDERS

I'm the go-to-girl for German, Austrian and Swiss meeting planners. I can answer all questions about Flanders. I have developed a passion for the region. From Brussels to the coast and from Antwerp to Flanders Fields, I know Flanders like the back of my hand.

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USA



BRECHT PUTMAN

MEETINGS & INCENTIVES MANAGER
VISITFLANDERS

I was born and bred in Flanders. Four years ago, I moved to the Big Apple to show American conference & meeting organisers the way to my native country. I can give the expert advice only a real Fleming can give.

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FRANCE



ANTHONY FOREST

TRADE / MICE
VISITFLANDERS

Being French, I love good food and fine drinks. Flanders' gastronomy is what first inflamed my interest in the destination. Once I discovered its wide range of special meeting venues and unique incentive possibilities, I truly fell in love with the place. It is this passion I want to convey to French meeting & incentive organisers.

anthonyforest@visitflanders.com
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TO MEET & INNOVATE



HECHTEL-EKSEL



Different shades of green...

Treehouse is a truly innovative concept. A green meeting venue and unique architectural project located amid the trees, literally. Meeting options for up to 15 people, with lounge, kitchen and state-of-the-art facilities.

www.the-treehouse.be

BRUSSELS

NO BLANDNESS PLEASE, WE'RE CREATIVE

Sleek white design is nice, but can be a bit bland. If you prefer stylish antiques, Scandinavian design and contemporary touches **the Library** offers a unique meeting space in beautiful, renovated houses. The ideal place for a special meeting, with catering available.

www.thelibrarygroup.be

BRUGES

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Looking for crisp contemporary design in an ancient city? **WorkAround** is a stylish business centre with light-filled meeting and conference rooms, a business lounge and bar in Medieval Bruges.

www.work-around.be

LEUVEN

Leuven Mindgate

To make sure that the world knows Leuven is a premier hub for healthcare, high-tech and creativity; the city, the university and a group of innovative businesses have created **Leuven Mindgate**. More than a business cluster, it is a masterplan designed to boost economic growth and lure international funds, top scientists and investors to the region, through collaboration and innovation.

www.leuvenmindgate.be

KORTRIJK

2800

THE NUMBER OF DELEGATES AT THE LAST CREATIVITY WORLD FORUM (CWF) IN 2014

29 nationalities from all over the world take part in workshops and come to lectures on innovation. "For our last Forum in Flanders in 2014 we had Tom Kelly from Ideo, one of the big players in innovation consulting, but also Marco Tempest, a Swiss magician who believes in open sourcing, very novel in a secretive industry like magic," explains **Pascal Cools of Flanders DC** (see also page 14). "The idea behind the CWF is simple: we learn best when we feel that we are playing, so we try to create a two-day playpen for grownups." The CWF is back in Flanders in 2017.

www.creativityworldforum.be

ALBERT EINSTEIN, SCIENTIST

"If you always do what you always did, you will always get what you always got."



ANTWERP

INCUBATOR

That is how DesignCenter De Winkelhaak sees itself, bringing together creative entrepreneurs in a multi-faceted and multifunctional building in the centre of Antwerp. If you want to benefit from this innovative atmosphere, they offer flexible meeting rooms and exhibition space for events, network sessions, workshops and creative labs. There is a design store and a coffee bar on the ground floor.

www.winkelhaak.be

“For Flanders, the market for meetings, conventions and incentives is extremely attractive.”

Why not plan a meeting in an unusual location, such as a green building or even in a library?



The meetings industry has experienced significant changes over the last few years due to global economic trends, changes in participants' needs and expectations, and increased competition among established and emerging destinations. These changes have created opportunities to benefit from new market conditions. With its central location in Europe, the presence of EU institutions and a large concentration of international organisations, Flanders has the potential to become a major player in the meetings and convention industry.

editor: diana goodwin

- 01 Auditorium BEL – Brussels
- 02 Solvay Library – Brussels
- 03 Pavilion De Notelaer – Bornem

THE MEETINGS INDUSTRY

DEFINITELY ON ITS WAY BACK

resurgence. In general, there is a trend towards stabilisation or even a slight increase in budgets, but there are regional variations. For instance, a slight decline in meeting budgets in Europe is expected for 2016 (-0.7%). Yet while a decline is predicted for the United Kingdom (-1.1%), a rise in Belgium and The Netherlands is also forecasted (+1.4%). At the same time, infrastructure in the top destinations has not kept up with demand, so that companies are faced with rising prices and stiff competition for popular venues during the peak months. The goal for meeting organisers is to find ways to cut costs without compromising quality. A **smart choice of location**, therefore, is more crucial than ever.

DELIVERING NEW EXPERIENCES

Conference delegates expect more from meetings than the traditional plenary sessions and panels. There is an evolution within the industry from top-down information delivery to bottom-up interactivity. Speakers don't distribute knowledge so much as coach and lead group activities. Increasingly, meeting programmes include round-table discussions, brainstorming workshops and break-out sessions. Given these developments, locations must be more flexible, providing informal seating areas and smaller gathering spots in addition to conference rooms and auditoriums. Moreover, participants increasingly have a sense of 'been-there-done-that'. They have higher expectations than ever before and want to **experience something new**. Meetings must offer an extra dimension and provide something unique that the participants can't find elsewhere. There's a greater trend towards using unexpected and unusual locations, like a warehouse or rooftop garden. Participants want to experience the local culture, not just in their free time, but as part of the conference itself. Mealtimes and breaks can be used to mirror the theme of the conference or provide a cultural experience. A location that offers added value in this respect has a clear advantage.

TECHNOLOGY IS KEY

It goes without saying that technological advances have had a huge impact on the way meetings are organised and experienced. Although the prediction that video-conferencing would eventually replace face-to-face meetings never came to pass, virtual meeting technology has certainly changed the way meetings are conducted and new applications continue to be developed. Social media, for instance, can play an important role in facilitating communication during an event, in collecting feedback and in fostering lasting connections between participants and organisers. Mobile meeting apps are a new development that are primarily used for large conferences, especially in North America. They will become more important in the future as meetings include more (and younger) participants who are accustomed to using mobile technology. These apps make information sharing easier, with real-time updates and location-based services that keep participants aware of exactly what's happening throughout the day. Given the importance of technology and mobile devices, it comes as no surprise that a fast and reliable wireless network is essential. Wi-fi is no longer an 'extra', but a 'must-have' and increasingly a deal-breaker. Many companies are sending their employees to conferences with a company laptop or other device that contains sensitive corporate information. Thus, data security is also becoming a requirement and networks must be secure, as well as fast and robust.

COMPETITION AND COLLABORATION

More and more destinations are discovering the economic potential of the meetings industry. All over the world, new infrastructure is being built and local authorities are taking measures to attract conferences and events. Established destinations face greater challenges to their market share and new destinations must struggle to distinguish themselves from the competition. A common mistake is viewing meetings and conferences as a sub-sector of the tourism industry, rather than as an important market with broad economic influence. Successful locations are coordinating their marketing efforts so that the conventions and visitors bureau, event locations, suppliers and other players are all working together to support each other's efforts. Another important strategy is to target specific sectors and industries. By identifying a location's particular academic, professional and cultural strengths, a strong case may be made for positioning that destination as a knowledge centre for certain kinds of meetings and events. Europe has long been the heart of the international meetings industry. However, in recent decades, this region has been losing market share. Facing increased competition, 22 European countries have joined forces to strengthen their position. Other regions are doing likewise. Such alliances are also appearing not just across borders, but across continents. In some cases, these collaborations extend beyond information-sharing to active partnerships.

More information about this research? mailbox@meetinflanders.com

CONCLUSION

With meeting organisers looking for destinations that can offer cost savings, unique experiences, technological innovation and local expertise, Flanders is in a position to benefit from current trends. Destinations like Brussels, Bruges, Ghent and Antwerp can provide competitive prices, new cultural experiences, state-of-the-art infrastructure and expertise, as well as an environment that is sensitive and responsive to the industry's needs.

6 GOOD REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD MEET IN FLANDERS

The only source of knowledge is experience, said Albert Einstein, so who better to ask about organising events and meetings in Flanders than Jeremy Luski of Breakbulk Events and Media, who has been doing just that for more than a decade?

editor: nathalie le blanc - pictures: visitflanders

350 exhibitors and sponsors and more than 7.000 participants are expected in Antwerp for Breakbulk Europe in May 2016. That makes this the largest exhibition and educational forum in the world addressing the needs of traditional breakbulk and project cargo logistic professionals. Breakbulk transportation is cargo that is not transported in containers or in bulk. Representatives of worldwide port and terminals, ocean carriers, breakbulk agencies, freight forwarding agencies, road, rail, barge and air transporters and equipment companies meet at Breakbulk Europe for an exhibition and conference with workshops, lectures and meetings. 2016 will be the 11th edition, and for the last five years Jeremy Luski, Vice President of Breakbulk Events and Media, has been in charge of the organisation. "I know Flanders very well, because I've been organising meetings and events here for about 12 years. It has a number of trumps that make it a great event and meeting location. Because of that, Breakbulk Europe doesn't just attract exhibitors and visitors from Europe, we have a worldwide audience."



A UNIQUE PLACE

Jeremy Luski: "Flanders is quite a unique place that has a lot to offer its visitors, whether they come for events, meetings or just as tourists. The country has a very intriguing history, which can be seen in fascinating museums but also in its architecture. It is known for its design and fashion, the shopping is excellent and it offers many forms of entertainment. I'm a foodie myself, so I love the gastronomy. We all know the well deserved reputation for good food, beer and chocolates and I really enjoy finding new

restaurants and bars every time I visit Antwerp or Brussels. Whether you are just looking for relaxation or are interested in art, music or food, there is something for everyone. Whatever the event you are organising, you will find a venue and whatever the interests of your participants, they will find something to their taste. We have been coming to Antwerp for 10 years now, and we have expanded our hotel-choices to Brussels as well. But every event organiser has to find out for themselves what is the best location. Ghent and Bruges are great cities as well, with their own atmosphere and advantages."

JEREMY LUSKI

"Good, trustworthy and competent partners are crucial in our industry."

GOOD PARTNERS

Jeremy Luski: "For an event to be successful, you don't just need the right participants, you also need the right venue, the right hotel, good suppliers and excellent customer service. All of which we find in Antwerp. Being a breakbulk event, the Port of Antwerp is our valued

partner, as a sponsor but also as our host. We also have an excellent working relationship with Visit Antwerp and VISITFLANDERS. That is very specific for what we as Breakbulk do of course, and any event organiser will have their own needs, but good, trustworthy and competent partners are crucial in our industry, and Flanders offers that."

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Jeremy Luski: "That Flanders is situated in the middle of Europe is very important. That makes it easily accessible for participants from all over the world. The air links are excellent but there is also

good train access from neighbouring countries, and if European participants prefer driving, they can. That kind of broad spectrum of options matters to participants, so strategically it is an important factor."



ANTWERP



BRUGES



BRUSSELS



MECHELEN



LEUVEN



GHENT

COMMUNICATION

Jeremy Luski: "The fact that most people I've come in contact with in Flanders speak more than one language is a boon as well. You will find it difficult to find someone who does not speak English, and French or German are also quite common. That makes communication easier, not just at the event or meeting, but also during the organisation process. We attract participants from all over the world, so we need a location that can deal with different attitudes, cultures and ways of doing business. Flanders has that."

THE POSSIBILITY OF A CAMPUS ATMOSPHERE

Jeremy Luski: "What Antwerp and Flanders offer us, is a campus atmosphere during our event. Business people meet each other at the exhibition and at workshops and lectures, but there are also receptions and parties, and because of how we organise things like transport and accommodation, they meet in different locations. You can talk to someone in their booth at the exhibition, and then bump into them a day later in a taxi or in the hotel lobby. That creates a very special, campus-style atmosphere. It means that you can make business deals and attract new clients or partners, or maybe you just make a new friend or acquaintance."

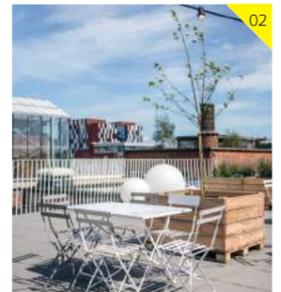
GOOD RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Jeremy Luski: "As an event organiser, we have to exercise due diligence before we choose a destination. The size of the event doesn't really matter, we always have to do a lot of research on various fronts, from venues and access to cost and convenience. We have to put ourselves in the delegates' shoes and ask the question: would I come to this event? What is best for them? What we also need to do, is compare apples to apples. We can't just compare costs, but need to look at what we get for that money. What we ultimately want is a good return on investment, and Antwerp gives us just that." ■

CONCLUSION Flanders is an all-inclusive destination.

Its convenient location, unique character, its versatility and its lack of a language barrier makes Flanders an all inclusive destination for event organisers. It attracts a diverse audience, and visitors who have been there, keep coming back.

- 01 Our meeting took place in De Hoorn
- 02 Stunning views from the Skybox



“Flanders is perfect for businesses that are innovative.”
Pascal Cools is not being coy, but then he is the director of Flanders DC, short for District of Creativity, a non-profit organisation initiated by the government of Flanders.

editor: nathalie le blanc
pictures: tim de backer

PASCAL COOLS

“Being creative needs to become standard practice.”

BUSINESS LUNCH

BUSINESS NEEDS CREATIVITY

Pascal Cools: “We have magnificent educational and knowledge institutions and an increasing culture of entrepreneurship, and in the last five years we’ve seen a real buzz around start-ups. On top of that, we have an internationally acknowledged creative reputation. Respected fashion designers, fashion schools that attract students from all over the world, renowned music festivals, advertising agencies that win Lions in Cannes... That means Flanders combines three crucial ingredients for innovative business: knowledge, entrepreneurship and creativity.”

Flanders is a small region, he points out: centrally located, geographically and culturally at a crossroad. The south of Europe starts here, as does the north. “Belgians are often asked to be CEOs or project managers in big international companies, because we have learned to work with different nationalities and cultures,” says Cools. “We are quite simply the right size: small enough for everyone to kind of know each other, but big enough to have a good ecosystem of companies and organisations, so that universities like the KU Leuven and nanotechnology companies like imec can thrive here.”

IF WE ARE SO SUITED TO INNOVATION AS A REGION, WHY DO WE NEED AN ORGANISATION LIKE FLANDERS DC?

“Because sometimes people need a little bit of a push. We are a neutral organisation without an agenda, but with a mission. We want to make entrepreneurial Flanders more creative, and creative Flanders more entrepreneurial. It gets really interesting if we can bring those

two worlds together. Innovation and creativity should become a way of thinking for entrepreneurs, because it’s what makes people, companies and regions unique. The government of Flanders was one of the first to realise the importance of innovation and we were the first District of Creativity in the world. Now there are thirteen, in places like Brazil, India and the United States.”

WHY IS INNOVATION SO IMPORTANT?

“Because it’s about looking to the future. I like to compare it to quality management. Companies know that only quality will guarantee them customers. Everyone wants an ISO-certificate and quality management has become part of the daily process. Innovation needs to become just as important. Quality management is about today; creativity and innovation management are about where you will be as a company or organisation in five months or five years. What we at Flanders DC strive for is for everyone to realise that if being creative has become standard practice, we will have made ourselves superfluous.”

BUT FOR NOW YOU ARE STILL VERY NECESSARY, DO YOU THINK?

“I think we are. On a day-to-day basis we do research into creativity and innovation and translate that knowledge into instruments that are useful for companies. Tools or checklists, online or on paper, that they can use with their staff or customers to assist them at brainstorming sessions and help them manage or generate new ideas. These can be workshops, training sessions or events. Our Creativity World Forum is one of the biggest conferences on that subject in Europe, but we also organise smaller

De Hoorn

If you’ve ever held a bottle of Stella Artois, you might have noticed the horn on its label. It’s there because the brewery where Stella was brewed in Leuven from 1926 onwards was called The Horn. Today this listed building is no longer a brewery but a meeting place. It has 3,000 m² (32,000 sq ft) of offices for creative businesses and is one of the most impressive event venues in the city. It offers a restaurant and smaller brasserie for

lunches or dinners. The Machine and Brewery hall and the Atrium are ideal for events, from presentations to receptions and parties. The Skybox on the top floor has a more intimate feel, with stunning views over the city of Leuven.

www.dehoorn.eu
events@dehoorn.eu

events. And we like to play a role in promoting innovation and creativity to a larger audience. We were involved in television programmes about inventions, for instance, and we have a service called SOS Idea, where anyone can get advice. So we are not just here for the professionals, but for anyone who lives in Flanders. What we really want to do is get people active and thinking, looking for good ideas, innovation or business opportunities.”

“When you talk about creativity, people immediately think about the arts, while we tend to associate innovation with technology. Semantics can sometimes make it difficult to get our message across. People associate creativity with artists, writers and musicians. For them, creativity is their raw material. But it’s also the process and the skill of solving problems and finding new solutions. It took a while for us to convince businesses in Flanders that even if you make potato chips, it pays to innovate. Not just technologically, but also in the processes, in marketing, in devising new products and concepts.”

IT PAYS FOR TRADITIONAL BUSINESSES TO THINK CREATIVELY, BUT YOU ALSO WANT TO ENCOURAGE THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY TO BECOME MORE BUSINESS-LIKE. WHY IS THAT?

“The creative industry is a powerhouse: in Flanders 125,000 people work in it. That’s more than in our automotive industry. The world is changing in a profound way. Volvo was sold for € 1.9 billion to the Chinese company Geely in 2010. Minecraft, a video game, was sold for € 2.2 billion in 2014.”

“The creative industry is not some crazy hipster doing some doodling or a bored housewife making jewellery; we →



Pascal Cools

need to take it seriously. But so do the people who work in it. They're a very broad group, ranging from artists to designers and advertising agencies. We want to convince even the people in the arts that thinking in a businesslike manner can help them become more professional without necessarily becoming commercial. There are too many artists who are being cheated or badly paid, or charging rates that are simply too low for them to survive on. We need to make sure companies understand what creativity is worth, so they are willing to pay for it. Luckily, more and more people are starting to share our viewpoint."

WOULD YOU SAY YOUR REAL PIONEERING WORK IS IN BRINGING TOGETHER CREATIVE PEOPLE AND ENTREPRENEURS?

"Together with the Agency for Innovation through Science and Technology (IWT) we have subsidised more than thirty projects that bring creative people like artists, filmmakers and fashion designers together with scientists, companies and organisations. The initiative is called Call for Innovation with the Creative Industries, or Cici. A good example is the collaboration between the University Hospital in Ghent and a designer. The scientists wanted to observe people's brains while they were doing everyday activities. They'd come up with some prototypes of portable and wireless brain scanners, but they were uncomfortable to wear. So the designers came up with something that looks a bit like headphones."

"Some projects are very small. Vlerick Business School realised that improvisation skills are important for managers, so their students now work with improvisational theatre. By guiding these projects, we've created a sort of portfolio of best practices that companies and the creative industries can tap into. Getting entrepreneurs and the creative industry to work together is a win-win situation. Consulting giant Accenture did a study asking the top forty companies in nine industries worldwide where their most important innovations came from. Depending on the industry, between 36 and 92 percent of ideas came from outside the company, from clients, partners or competitors. It's vital not to lock yourself in your R&D lab if you want to innovate. That's not an easy



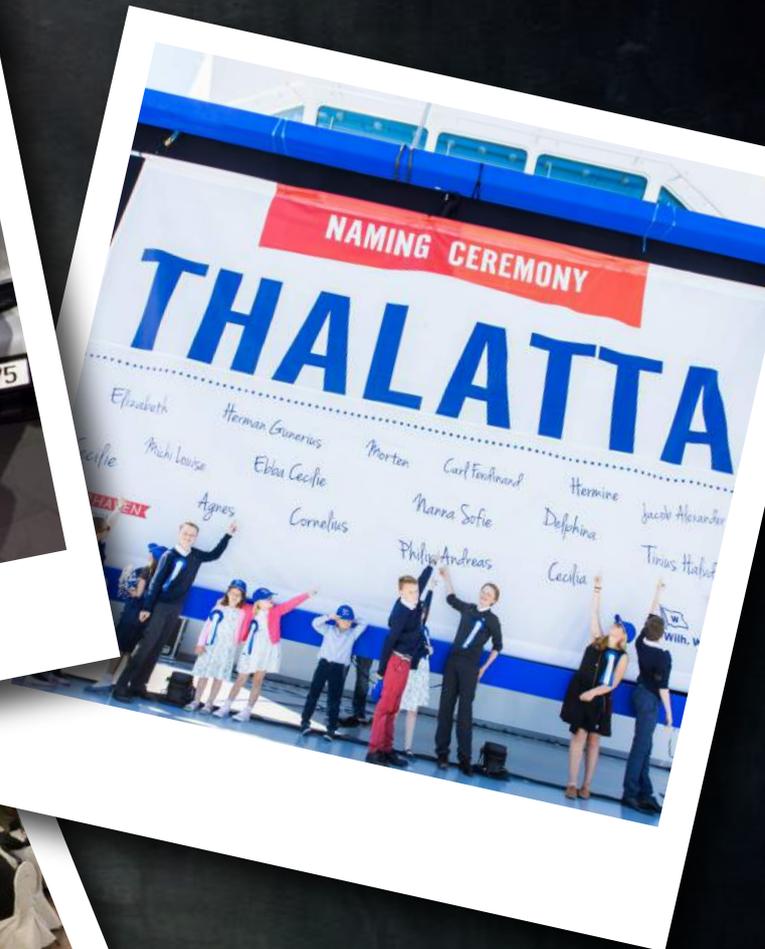
Creativity World Forum

Every year there is a Creativity World Forum in one of the 13 DC's, and every three years the biggest edition is held in Flanders. "We have twenty-nine nationalities who come from all over the world to listen to our talks and take part in workshops," explains Cools. "In 2014 the event took place in Kortrijk Xpo where 2,800 guests spent two days with us. We invited speakers on innovation in the broadest sense of the word. We had Tom Kelly from Ideo, one of the big players in innovation consulting, and Marco Tempest, a Swiss magician who believes in open-sourcing – very novel in a secretive industry like magic. The idea behind the Forum is simple: we learn best when we are enthusiastic and we feel that we are playing, so we try to create a two-day playpen for grown-ups."

www.creativityworldforum.be

message, because it seems counterintuitive. But that is what we advocate. An example of a company in Flanders that has broken new ground in this is Cartamundi in Turnhout. They produce playing cards and did a project with scent artist Peter De Cupere. He created cards featuring fictitious flowers. When you put a card on an iPad with the Olfacio App, you can play with the scents and plants to create your own unique flower. Innovation and creativity have become part of the DNA of Cartamundi. They have always been a world leader in the playing card industry, but today they are a multimedia entertainment company." ■

PREMIUM EVENT ARCHITECTS





01



TECHNOLOGY

INNOVATION IS WHAT WE DO

Two successful Leuven-based technology companies, imec and Materialise, are perfect examples of corporations with innovation in their DNA.

editor: nathalie le blanc
pictures: imec & visitflanders

- 01 'Priscilla' by Elvis Pompilio
- 02 3D model of a heart using the Mimics Innovation Suite by Materialise
- 03 FIX3D bike frame by James Novak



03

Let's say you visit a nano-electronics research centre that studies how to make chip-technology ever smaller, so those chips can be built into computers, cars, phones, but also clothing, building material and medical equipment, and ask them about innovation. You would expect the answer to be about engineering and technology. Not so, it turns out. "Innovation is what this company is built on. It is quite simply what we do. But the innovation that is in our DNA comes down to cooperation," explains external communications



02

director Katrien Marent of imec. "Of course we are technological innovators. Chip technology is our core research, and today we also focus on applications. In life sciences and healthcare for instance, sensors can be built into phones and clothing to become a kind of virtual health coach. We develop all this revolutionary new technology by cooperating with other companies, and that is where our innovation comes from. One of our strengths is that we create ecosystems for different companies to work together. Chip technology is

extremely complex and expensive. We do the pre-competitive development for multinational companies like Intel, TMC or Samsung and offer them joint research programmes, sharing costs, risk, talent and IP. That way we create process steps and modules for next generation chip technologies and generic system technologies and platforms. Samsung, for instance, created its Simband, something between a health band and a watch, based on an imec sensor platform. Here in Leuven we have the whole ecosystem in

KATRIEN MARENT, IMEC

"One of our strengths is that we create ecosystems for different companies to work together."



01

place to develop chips and applications, we cooperate with the suppliers, producers and developers. In our business, exchanging knowledge is very important and the main source of innovation."

MAKING TECHNOLOGY USEFUL

3D printing is one of the most exciting new technologies of the last decades, so any company working in that industry will be a natural innovator. "Innovation is indeed at the core of what we do," explains Vanessa Palsenbarg of Materialise, one of the global pioneers of 3D printing with their headquarters in Leuven. "What we do is not just developing new technology. We make that technology useful. Because technology is not revolutionary if it does not produce anything revolutionary. We have three core competences: software development, 3D printing, and engineering. Our expertise in these three domains and our ability to combine them in the creation of new applications are what make us unique in the industry." Materialise was founded 25 years ago, when CEO Wilfried Vancrean saw one of the first 3D printers and got fascinated with its

possibilities. "3D printing creates shapes that a human being could not produce, mould or cut before. Wilfried Vancrean saw how revolutionary that was. He bought one of the first 3D printers on the market and started Materialise. What followed was a long process of creating software and a good interface to make the printer useful and that became a business within our business. Today we are the market leader. We use the leading printers on the market and learned the needs of these machines. This means we can work with the machine manufacturers to understand what software is needed to print what clients want. For medical purposes we created complex porous structures that bone can grow into. But all those holes mean that the structure is very light, and that is quite useful if you want to build a fuel-efficient car. So what we do in the medical field can help us in automotive. It is this crossover and cooperation that feeds our innovation." You will see Materialise in the news because they printed a glamorous dress for Lady Gaga. But what really excites them, is the work they do in the medical industry. "Our goal is a

- 01 Edible growth by Chloe Rutzerveld
- 02 Kinematics dress by Jessica Rosenkrantz and Jesse Louis-Rosenberg
- 03 Shoe with 3D accent by Earl Stewart



03

better and healthier world. We don't need to 3D print things that can be made in a traditional way, we need to add value and turn rich data into physical objects that make our lives better." This mission has made Materialise a resounding success. When the company started in 1990, CEO Wilfried Vancrean dreamed of employing 50 people. In 2014, they celebrated their 25th anniversary with 1,400 people working in 16 countries.

AN INTERNATIONAL PLACE

From the US to Italy and from Malaysia to Colombia, Materialise is a truly global enterprise. And yet, its headquarters are still in Leuven, where it started as a spin-off from the university. "That relationship with the KU Leuven is crucial," explains Palsenbarg. "Just as you need innovation to move forward, you need graduates who are familiar with the technology and add value. It is about the people. We are market



© nervous system

leaders in many aspects of 3D printing, so we get applicants from around the world. The fact that we are innovators attracts interesting people who want to change the world." Imec has just built eye-catching new headquarters and has very similar reasons for staying in Leuven. "We work with 200 universities worldwide, and have a special relationship with KU Leuven and its main hospital Gasthuisberg," says Katrien Marent. "We are in the centre between academic research and industrial R&D. This allows us to drive R&D towards solutions our industry needs. Working in a multidisciplinary environment is important. We have a very diverse workforce: engineers, physicists but also biomedical experts. There are more than 70 different nationalities working at imec and they are very enthusiastic about Leuven. It's an international place and very open to new people. Almost everyone speaks English and it has a lovely quality of life." ■

- 01 Great Market Square
Leuven
- 02 Martin's Klooster Hotel
- 03 M-museum
- 04 Arenberg Castle



01



04



02



03

DID YOU KNOW?

Association conferences are a substantial part of the Meetings Industry, and they have specific needs that commercial conferences might not have; a central location, local expertise, interesting possibilities for the social programme... Leuven has those things in abundance, explains **Louise Derre from the research department of VISITFLANDERS**.

"Leuven is home to one of the oldest and most prestigious universities in Europe. This creates a multitude of interesting spin-offs, making the region a knowledge hub for lots of different industries and research fields. That is its main trump, but on top of that, Leuven has excellent accessibility and the city is very beautiful. About 65 percent of all MICE events in Leuven are association conferences and meetings, and the city has a lot of potential to develop that even more."

In November 2015 for example, Leuven hosted the third international 'Chirality at the Nanoscale' conference. In 2016 there are several **association conferences** planned on subjects as diverse as algebra (ILAS, 11-15 July), Immanuel Kant (2-3 June), medical ethics (EACME, 8-10 September) and energy (IEEE Energycon, 4-8 April).



Where to meet

1. M-museum is the place to be for drinks receptions and workshops, combined with a private guided tour of the museum. M places a number of spaces at your disposal for meetings, product presentations, workshops, conferences, lectures, receptions and dinners (see also page 81).

www.mleuven.be

2. Martin's Klooster Hotel offers beautiful meeting rooms. The hotel is part of a chain with equally charming counterparts in Bruges, Brussels and Mechelen.

www.martinshotels.com

3. The Faculty Club of the University of Leuven wants to be a meeting place for science, culture and entrepreneurship, and to that end, it offers not only an excellent à la carte restaurant, but also beautiful rooms for events, seminars, receptions and meetings (see also page 71).

www.facultyclub.be

4. Centrally located next to the train station is the Park Inn Hotel By Radisson, offering its world-renowned service and flexible meeting spaces.

www.parkinn.nl

5. If you are looking for a venue with a more modern but stylish feel, then SO-the best of both worlds is the place for you.

www.powerview.be



EXPERT ADVICE

EVELYN BARDYN
SENIOR MEETING MANAGER

A charming historic city with an **ancient university** and a culture of innovation and creativity, it makes Leuven the perfect location for conferences, meetings, events and incentives.

The city has impressive venues to offer, such as the brand new **M-Museum**¹, with an amazing rooftop view of the city and the beautiful **Martin's Klooster Hotel**², that shows how design and 17th century architecture are a perfect combination. From **cinemas** to **wine bars** and **concert halls**, the venues on offer are very diverse. In the countryside around the city you'll find **castles**, **breweries** and **old farmhouses**, so whatever your demands, Leuven and its surroundings will be able to meet them.

The University of Leuven has its own Convention and Special Events Office that offers its services to the University and its associates. **Meeting Leuven & Vlaams Brabant** is the go-to organisation for anyone outside the University. "Our goal is to provide the right contacts for planners wanting to organise a conference, meeting or event in Leuven and Flemish Brabant," explains Saskia Verhaert. "We can help you find superb locations, the right accommodation and interesting formulas. We provide inspiring ideas for events or social programmes, recommend restaurants and bring you together with PCOs if that is what you are looking for. And for your information: Leuven is just a 20 minutes' drive from Brussels Airport and half an hour from Brussels Midi Station, where the Eurostar and the Thalys stop."

*Meeting Leuven & Vlaams-Brabant,
Naamsestraal 3, 3000 Leuven,
www.meetingleuven.be*

LEUVEN



ART



HERITAGE



ARCHITECTURE



UNIVERSITY

colour your stay

parkinn.com/hotel-leuven

park inn
by *Radisson*

LEUVEN

Welcome to our world

The Park Inn by Radisson Leuven is centrally located alongside Leuven station at walking distance of the city centre and key attractions. The hotel is the perfect choice for conducting business and exploring the historic city of Leuven. The hotel offers 133 hotel rooms, including 13 Superior rooms and 2 accessible rooms, a RBG restaurant and bar, fitness facilities and spacious meeting facilities.

Time for you

All the rooms are in Park Inn signature style, with modern, vibrant, positive and uncomplicated colours. The 133 well equipped rooms are all with flat screen tv, hairdryer, walk-in shower, separate toilet, coffee and tea facilities and free wireless internet access.

Colourful dining

Guests will be spoiled for choice at the hotel's stylish RBG Bar & Grill restaurant with a selection of international dishes. The contemporary bar serves up a tempting variety of international drinks and Belgian beers.

Smart Meetings & Events

Set against the vibrant backdrop of Leuven, the hotel, with its 5 flexible meeting rooms with a capacity for 2 to 220 guests is an ideal venue for hosting any size of event. All meeting rooms have natural daylight and are equipped with the latest audio-visual technology and free wireless internet access. "Smart Meetings and Events" is a brand concept on the three Brand pillars: Connection, Choice and Community. This includes the tangibles like the food, the meeting rooms and the technology – and the intangibles like our services, support and reward points.

Why Leuven?

From its central location in Belgium, Leuven is easily accessible by air, train (with direct connection to the airport) or car. The centuries-old, dynamic University city has many attributes for the success of your meeting, congress, event or incentive. Magnificent medieval architecture, lively bars, superb restaurants, original meeting possibilities and a young, friendly atmosphere make Leuven the new exciting destination for your next event.

Park Inn by Radisson Leuven

Martelarenlaan 36, 3010 Leuven

T: +32 16 61 66 00, F: +32 16 61 67 00

info.leuven@rezidorparkinn.com



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We are...

- **centrally located in Flanders**, halfway between Antwerp and Brussels
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meetinmechelen.be

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T +32 (0)15 29 77 55, **E** meetinmechelen@mechelen.be

Your contact: Kurt Callaert



BRUSSELS

SALON DU CHOCOLAT

The concentration of chocolate-makers in Belgium is absurdly high, and you can see them at work at the Salon du Chocolat in Brussels. Exhibitions, tastings and demonstrations, your tastebuds will have a ball. Most spectacular is the famous fashion show of dresses made of chocolate.

TOUR & TAXIS
5-7 February 2016

Brussels.salon-du-chocolat.com

HASSELT

Jeneverfestival Hasselt

Does winning your own weight in jenever, Belgians' favourite white liquor, seem absurd? Not to the people of Hasselt. During the annual Jeneverfestival they organise a waiters-race where the winner wins just that. And they are not afraid of other bizarre ideas. Fountains spewing jenever instead of water, anyone? There is music, street theatre, an antiques market and fair, jenever walks and boat tours.

CITY CENTRE
15-16 October 2016

www.jeneverfeesten.be



ANTWERP

TASTE OF ANTWERP

The Taste of Antwerp is the biggest culinary festival in Antwerp.

The great selection of participating top restaurants, the beautiful location by the River Scheldt, and creative culinary execution make this festival one of the top food festivals in Belgium.

WAAGNATIE
12-15 May 2016

www.antwerpenproeft.be

TO TASTE & ENJOY



BRUSSELS

BELGIAN BEER WEEKEND

Sampling beer in one of the most beautiful spots of Brussels, that is the Belgian Beer Weekend.

The Grand Place and the beautiful square Beursplein are the perfect backdrop to taste the blonde, white, amber-coloured, fruit and strong beers brewed in our country. Classic cars, patron saints and music spice up the atmosphere.

GROTE MARKT
2-4 September 2016

www.belgianbrewers.be

3 out of 9

...of the World's Best Beers of 2015 are Belgian, according to the World Beer Awards. Vander Ghinste Oud Bruin is the Best Dark Beer, Rodenbach Rosso the best Flavoured Beer and Timmermans Tradition Oude Gueze is the Best Sour Beer. In 2014 the Belgian Tongerlo Blond was even voted overall Best Beer in the World.

10 kilos

**THAT IS THE AMOUNT
OF CHOCOLATE THE AVERAGE BELGIAN
EATS EVERY YEAR.**

No wonder we demand good quality.

COMIC & TASTY

THE TINTIN WAY

In Brussels you can meet European Union decision-makers, international business leaders, Belgium's brightest thinkers and innovators... and an intrepid boy reporter with a knack for adventure.

editor: diana goodwin
pictures: daniel fous



Famous Belgian fries



Tintin, created by Hergé



The Horta Brasserie

Brussels is the birthplace of Tintin, the beloved cartoon character, and of his creator, Hergé. The boy with an upswept lock of blond hair first appeared in 1929 and went on to star in 24 serialised illustrated albums. In 2011, Steven Spielberg directed a live-action movie called 'The Adventures of Tintin', introducing a whole new generation of children to the classic stories. A visit to Brussels wouldn't quite be complete without paying homage to one of its most recognisable celebrities or delving into its long-running love affair with comic books. The best place to begin exploring the world of cartoons is the Belgian Comic Strip Centre, housed in a spectacular Art Nouveau building designed by Victor Horta. The permanent exhibition covers the history of comic strips and there's an entire section devoted to Hergé and Tintin. This comic book museum (see also page 79) has a restaurant decorated with comic art—the perfect place to start or end a visit. Those dining at **Horta Brasserie** can enjoy the beautiful Art Nouveau décor and classic Belgian cuisine, including daily specials.

Hergé would often visit an 'estaminet' (a small public house) with an illustrious past, '**Het Goudblommeke in Papier**' to partake in a good Geuze beer. This is where the figureheads of 20th century Belgian

surrealism would meet up in the days of René Magritte. It was also the favourite bistro of poets and musicians like Louis Scutenaire and Jacques Brel. The café remains to this very day a favoured gathering place for artists and writers.

Tintin can be spotted in many locations in the city centre: on an oversized mural inside Brussels-Midi train station, or with his loyal companion, Snowy the dog, atop the neighbouring building of Editions du Lombard, long-time home of Tintin's publisher. He's also standing in the Grote Zavel square, as a life-sized bronze sculpture by Belgian artist Nat Neujean. The Tintin statue marks the entrance to the Comics Village, comprising an art gallery, a brasserie and a bar – all with a comics theme. Original artwork adorns the walls, and one room is completely devoted to

Tintin and his adventures. In fact, the Pub Lounge is dedicated to Captain Haddock, Tintin's friend and companion. It's the perfect place to sip Loch Lomond, the captain's favourite whiskey. **The Comics Café** serves both Belgian classics and the best American-style burgers in town. For a sophisticated encounter with Tintin and friends, head to the four-star **Radisson Blu Hotel and its Bar Dessiné**. This stylish lounge has original artwork on the walls and a comic-strip style menu. Patrons may choose from a long list of cocktails, fine spirits and Cuban cigars, along with small snacks and more substantial fare. The bar is available for events, including a cocktail-mixing class with the resident mixologist.

An encounter with the exciting world of Tintin and comic strips can turn a visit to Brussels into an adventure. And who knows what mysteries await when you follow Tintin's lead? ■

BRUSSELS



ART



HERITAGE



AIRPORT



HEAD QUARTERS



ARCHITECTURE



EXPERT ADVICE

LIESBETH BAGGERMAN
MEETING CONSULTANT

Why not organise an event with Tintin as the theme?

"We see that more and more people want to work with a theme for their event or meeting. If you plan an event for your staff, it has to be special – and then you can create a positive vibe for your co-workers. When it comes to your clients, you need to deliver out of the ordinary experiences. A normal dinner isn't up-to-date. You must always aim to exceed expectations. 'Customisation' and 'experience' are what it's all about."

The hotspots

Horta Brasserie

Both the museum and the restaurant are available to hire as event venues for dinners, receptions and parties.

www.brasseriehorta.be

Comics Café

Both restaurant and bar can be reserved for groups.

www.comicscafe.be

Het Goudblommeke in Papier

www.hetgoudblommekeinpapier.be

Radisson Blu Hotel

Featuring a stunning Art Deco façade designed by renowned architect Michel Jaspers, this stylish hotel in Brussels city center is ideal for business and leisure travelers. There are 281 rooms and suites. The hotel has 18 meeting rooms and can host conferences of up to 420 guests.

www.radissonblu.com/royalhotel-brussels

The Comic Route through Brussels, a must-do experience

More Tintin?

The Chatterbox Bus brings an original itinerary and a new way of discovering Brussels. The 'Into the Urban Art Jungle' city tour immerses you in the world of graffiti and its sources of inspiration: comic strips, manga, music...

www.busbavard.be

Discover this well-known Brussels figure with official guides. During a walk of more than two hours they will show you different locations, buildings, murals and anecdotes from the Tintin albums.

www.visitbrussels.be

You can also discover Belgium's best comic art on your own. Get your map at the **VISITFLANDERS** Visitor Information Centre and discover the key locations in the history of comic art. Be sure to see the Tintin mural in the street Stooftstraat between the Grand Place and Manneken Pis.

Grasmarkt 61, 1000 Brussels



ID-KIT

Who 20 years ago, Dominique Persoone and his wife Fabienne took their first steps into the world of chocolate. Today, The Chocolate Line is honoured everywhere as "the number 1 in the world". Dominique lives by his motto "follow your dreams", and so the story goes.



PORTRAIT

AMAZING, FUN & CRAZY

Talk to Dominique Persoone for a few minutes and the words you'll hear again and again are "amazing", "fun" and "crazy". It's fitting, because those are the words that best sum up the Bruges chocolatier, his outlook on life and the chocolates he creates.

editor: sally tipper
pictures: tim de backer,
jean-pierre gabriel
& visitflanders



04



- 01 The Chocolate Line "paint"
- 02 Chocolate painting at The Chocolate Line, Antwerp
- 03 Shopping at The Chocolate Line, Antwerp
- 04 "The chocolate King" demonstrates the working of the chocolate sniffer, which he designed for a rock 'n' Rolling Stones party

Persoone set up The Chocolate Line in Bruges almost 25 years ago – "a long time ago, when I still had hair" – just him, his wife and his mother-in-law. His empire now includes a store in Napoleon's former palace in Antwerp, his own cocoa plantation in Mexico, contracts to supply Michelin-starred restaurants, and clients as far afield as Japan and Dubai. Not to mention collaborations with renowned chefs Ferran Adrià and René Redzepi, regular TV appearances and requests to give demonstrations around the world. Crazy indeed!

GROWING COMPANY

"We started very small," he explains at his factory in a Bruges suburb, with beehives on the roof and machetes on the wall - souvenirs of the far-flung countries his work has taken him to. "My mother-in-law helped us at first and then the company grew and grew, and now there are thirty-nine of us." We have people working in the original shop in Bruges, in Mexico, here at the factory, and in the stunning boutique in Antwerp's Paleis op de Meir. "It's amazing," he says of that store. "Last year it was named the most beautiful chocolate shop in Europe. It's the original kitchen of the palace where Napoleon used to live. Working there is not easy, because the building is listed. You have to respect the history, and at the same time be OK with the hygiene laws, but it's really fun."

DOMINIQUE PERSOONE

*"For me, there's one law:
when it's good,
it's good, and when
it's bad, it's bad."*

SERIOUS CRAFTSMANSHIP

If you search for Persoone online, the one thing you can't avoid is the chocolate shooter, a contraption for snorting powdered chocolate that he developed for a Rolling Stones party. He's worked with the Red Hot Chili Peppers and Smashing Pumpkins, and was the official chef of the hugely popular Tomorrowland music festival, another successful Flemish export product. But there's a lot more to the tattooed chef than rock'n'roll. And though his flavours are fun, he's serious about craftsmanship and tradition.

"I'm one of four chocolatiers in the Michelin guide, and because of that I have the honour of being the chocolate

supplier to Michelin-star restaurants like Hof van Cleve and Hertog Jan in Flanders" he explains. "Of course, I'm known for making crazy creations and having fun. I do crazy stuff and I love it. But," he insists, "all I'm really doing is trying to improve the old classic recipes with new techniques. And that's something that, like so much, has been simplified by technology."

It used to be that when you roasted hazelnuts to make praline, the roasting would be uneven: too cooked at the edges and not cooked enough in the middle. How to get round that? Persoone has come up with a typically ingenious solution. "We use a wind machine, so the nuts are flying around and roasting at the same time, that way the roasting is perfect," he explains. "The machine isn't really for making praline, of course, but it's an amazing machine. It's stupid, too, because this way is so expensive! You have to drive to Italy, buy the machines... Most of my colleagues are trying to find a balance

DOMINIQUE'S FAVOURITES

Rock-Fort here in Bruges is really good. They serve high quality food and make suprising combinations.

www.rock-fort.be

Brugse Biertje, that's an amazing beer pub where you have all the different kinds of beer, really old school. It's not fancy or commercial, but it's always a full house.

www.brugsbeertje.be

Dominique's chocolate drink with fresh herbs

Serves 8



- 150 g dark chocolate
- 300 ml semi-skimmed milk
- 100 ml cream
- 120 g fresh basil leaves
- 80 g fresh tarragon leaves
- 100 g fresh mint leaves
- Water
- Pinch of baking soda

1. Chop the chocolate into small pieces and place in a heatproof bowl. Heat the milk and cream and pour over the chocolate, mixing until all the chocolate is melted. Cover the bowl and set aside until cooled, then chill in the fridge.

2. Wash the herbs. Bring the water to the boil and add the baking soda. Blanch the herbs in the boiling water for a few seconds, then plunge them directly into a bowl of ice-cold water. Remove and mix to a smooth green coulis. Pass the coulis through a fine sieve.

3. Whizz the chocolate into a foam using a stick blender, then do the same with the herbs. Pour the chocolate into a cup and add a few spoons of the herb coulis on top. Serve immediately.

Dominique's chocolate mojito granita

Serves 4

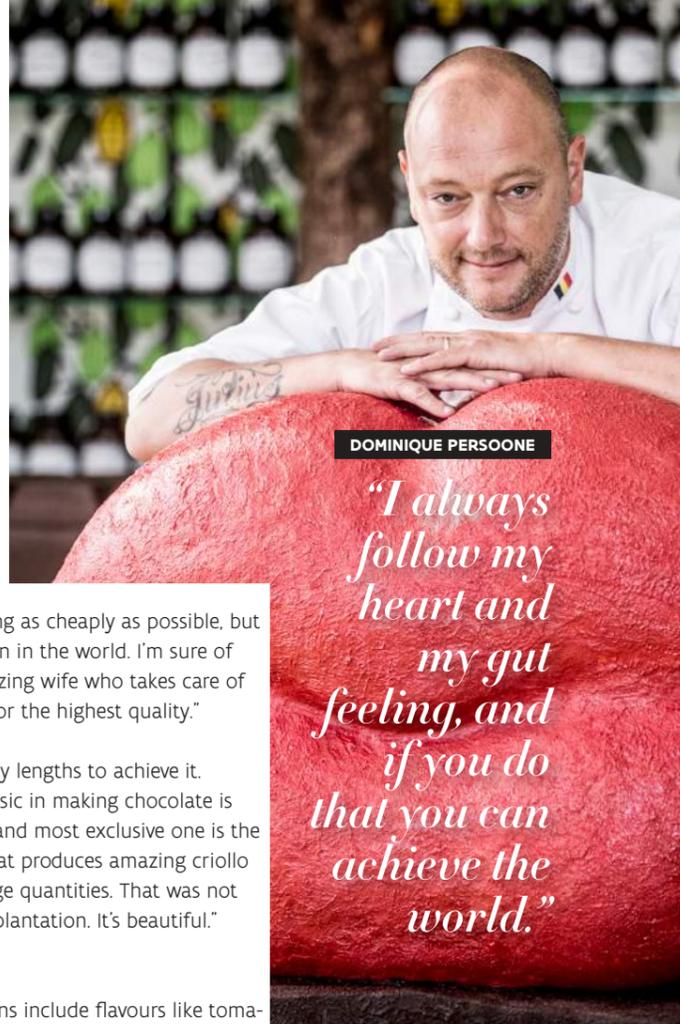
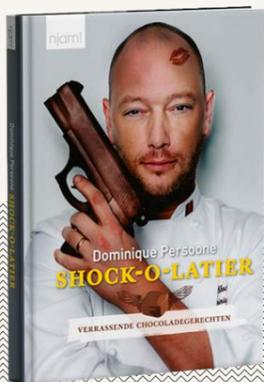


- 200 ml water
- 20 g cocoa powder
- 65 ml lime juice
- 45 g grated lime zest
- 200 g cane sugar
- 60 g dark chocolate
- 45 ml rum
- 30 cl sparkling water
- 25 g fresh mint leaves, washed and finely chopped

1. Add the cocoa powder, lime juice, zest and sugar to the water and bring to boil. After 1 minute, add the chocolate and stir until it melts. Add the rum and sparkling water and mix well, then add the mint leaves.

2. Pour the mixture into a container (an old ice-cream tub is ideal) and freeze. Every 30 minutes, break up the ice with a fork, repeating until the ice has a loose texture.

More of his chocolate recipes in this book:



DOMINIQUE PERSOONE

"I always follow my heart and my gut feeling, and if you do that you can achieve the world."

between quality and producing as cheaply as possible, but me, I'm the worst businessman in the world. I'm sure of it! Fortunately, I have an amazing wife who takes care of money matters, while I look for the highest quality."

And he's gone to extraordinary lengths to achieve it. "For me, the most basic of basic in making chocolate is the bean," he says. "The best and most exclusive one is the criollo. I discovered a farm that produces amazing criollo beans and wanted to buy large quantities. That was not possible, so I set up my own plantation. It's beautiful."

OPEN MINDED

His creations using those beans include flavours like tomato, tobacco, soy sauce, fried onions and bacon, and inspiration comes from the strangest places. "One day I went to the pet shop to buy food for my dogs," he says. "I noticed the parrot food: flax seeds, poppy seeds, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, and I thought, maybe you can make pralines with this. We did a test and it was amazing. So we got those ingredients with all the official food safety papers and now we make pralines with them. Crazy, huh? You just have to have an open mind. When we have our team meetings, my team often look at me like, uh oh, what's he talking about now, but when they follow my ideas they always say: why didn't I think of that?"

And what about those flavours? "When I started making chocolates with wasabi, olive oil, and other strange flavour combinations, people were saying I was a wacko, and a lot of people didn't even want to taste them," he recalls. "But the mentality is changing. Today's customer wants adventure. For me, there's one law: when it's good, it's good, and when it's bad, it's bad. You just have to be honest with yourself. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't."

CHOCOLATE COLLABS

Being a master chocolatier is a heady mix of calculation and inspiration and Persoone finds himself at the confluence of science and art. "I work a lot with scientists and it's really inspiring," he says. "We did a test a few months ago on the influence of sound when you're eating chocolate, really wacko, but it was fun and we learned a lot. I worked with the amazing professor Charles Spence from Oxford University, and with Bernard Larousse from FoodPairing,

on the science of flavours and ingredients. But in the end, I always follow my instincts," he says. "It's the only thing I know. I don't know anything about football or cars or cycling. That's all boring to me. It's food that excites me!

Persoone and his chocolatier colleagues are recognised the world over for the quality of their produce, but what is it that makes Belgian Chocolate the absolute best? "At the beginning of the last century we had amazing engineers who made amazing machines, which were able to mix the paste very thin – we mix it half as thin as they do in the UK, for example – and when the paste is very thin, the flavour gets much stronger," Persoone explains. Belgium's strict food laws also dictate what can and



01



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Chocolate offers lots of interesting possibilities for team-building activities in Bruges.

can't be labelled chocolate. Another important factor is the number of people wanting to join the industry. Enrolment at cooking schools is steadily decreasing, but the chocolate schools are going strong. "Everybody loves chocolate and everybody wants to be a chocolatier," he says, "and when you have a lot of people practising the same profession, quality goes up, because you learn from each other."

Recently, he worked with London tattoo artist Henry Hate, following a chance encounter on a TV show



EXPERT ADVICE

SYLVIE LEJOUR
MEETING CONSULTANT

"Chocolate offers lots of interesting possibilities for team-building activities in Bruges. Start the day at luxury hotel **De Tuilerieën** where the breakfast buffet comes complete with chocolate fountain.

Then set out for a walk through the city. Let a guide from **S-wan** take you and your group on a **'Choc! Around the clock!'** tour and discover Bruges' most exclusive chocolate emporia, where 'the black gold' is made and sold. Amongst others, this tour will take you to the haute couture chocolate boutique BbyB and the old-school, family run Confiserie De Clerck. Don't forget to include a visit of the **chocolate museum Choco-Story**.

You can hire this venue after hours and learn to make pralines, truffles and chocolate sculptures. Add some sparkling wine and you'll get the perfect event."



03

- 01 Shopping in Bruges
- 02 Chocolatier from Choco-story making chocolates
- 03 Chocolate workshop
- 04 Enjoying Bruges



04

BRUGES



HERITAGE



NATURE & PARCS



STAR RESTAURANTS



ART

The Chocolate line

Simon Stevinplein 19, Bruges
Paleis op de Meir 50, Antwerp

www.thechocolateline.be

De Tuilerieën ****

Dijver 7, 8000 Bruges

www.hoteltuilerieen.com

S-wan

Huis ter Beurze
Vlamingenstraat 35, 8000 Bruges

www.s-wan.be

Choco-Story

Wijnzakstraat 2, 8000 Bruges

www.choco-story-brugge.be

ANNE-CATHERINE DILEWYNS

“Just think: you put together a set of ingredients, do some technical stuff and then you have a lovely tasting beer.”



ANNICK DE SPELENTER

“When I was a little girl the whole family came together for dinner on Sundays and talked about beer and everything related to it.”



WOMEN IN BEER

When beer was first brewed thousands of years ago, it was a woman's business and remained so for centuries. In the Middle Ages monks, innkeepers and brewers' guild turned it into a man's job, but today strong women are taking back the wheel.

*editor: nathalie le blanc
pictures: tim de backer
illustrations: leen van hulst*

Flanders has a beer-tradition that goes back many centuries and young entrepreneurs build on that knowledge to create new products. **Annick De Splenter** runs Gruut, a small brewery in the centre of Ghent and **Anne-Cathérine Dilewyns** is the woman at the helm of the Vicaris-brewery in Dendermonde. Two brewers to be reckoned with.

“Brewing is in my blood,” De Splenter laughs. “I grew up in a brewery, and both on my father's and my mother's side of the family, we made beers like Straffe Hendrik and Dentergems Witbier. When I was a little girl the whole family came together for dinner on Sundays and talked about beer and everything related to it. I learned a lot from that, and it was clear from an early age that I wanted to continue the brewing business.”

When her father's brewery was sold she strayed from the profession, but the pull of brewing proved too strong. “Even while I was working other jobs, I bought my own brewing installation. I just knew I was going to do something with it.” That something turned out to be the city-brewery Gruut in the centre of Ghent, where she produces five outstanding Gruut-beers. “It took five years of preparation, study and organisation before I could start in 2009. But I was determined to keep on going.”

Anne-Catherine Dilewyns is the daughter of a dedicated home-brewer. Her father Vincent, a dental technician, experimented with a 100-litre (26 gallon) installation in his garage. His oldest daughter started helping him when she was just 12. “At first I just wanted to spend time with my dad, but quickly I became interested in the process

of brewing itself. It was fascinating to see him work on his recipes, adapting them countless times and friends and family helped us by tasting endlessly. They liked it, the demand grew, but we couldn't sell our beer because of regulations. That is when we decided to start brewing on a more professional level; in a brewery that rents out its installation to hobby brewers. That got slightly out of hand, after a few years we were selling 700 hectoliters (18,500 gallons) a year. I studied economics but did a two year brewing-course at the same time and when I graduated, my father asked his four daughters if we would be interested in starting our own, proper brewery. I had the business and practical knowledge, my father had his recipes, so we went ahead. I knew Vicaris could work and we opened in 2011. The first year I did everything myself, brewing, sales and administration. Today

my sister Claire works with us on the marketing and communication side, my father organises the tours and we have a brewer on the payroll. But my love for the product has not changed.”

NO HOPS, PLEASE

The Vicaris beers that Dilewyns produces are traditional in the sense that they are brewed with hops, but De Splenter chose a different path for her Gruut beers. “Before I started my own brewery, I retook the courses of the final year of Brewery Engineering in Ghent. Our knowledge of the chemical processes had increased so much since I first studied brewing that I wanted to be up to date. I got interested in the history of beer making and wanted to experiment with ‘gruut’, a mixture of herbs that was used in the Middle Ages instead of hops. There were no recipes for this herb mixture, and it took a year and a half

of experimenting to get my formula right. There were times when I wanted to throw in the towel, but my professor Guido Aerts stimulated me to continue, because what I was doing was reviving a lost tradition of brewing. The beers I brew now are all made with the ‘gruut’-recipes I developed myself. That is what makes them so special.” Dilewyns is also fascinated by the process of brewing. “Just think: you put together a set of ingredients, do some technical stuff and then you have a lovely tasting beer. It's a bit like alchemy, I think.” But brewing is hard work as well. “Physically, because the process can take up to 10 hours. Mentally, because you have to be very concentrated and ready to make adjustments all the time. But it is very rewarding,” De Splenter agrees. “I wouldn't do any other job.” ■

What to choose...



Pils

A golden colour, a subtle aroma of hops and with a slightly bitter aftertaste, this is the perfect beer to accompany a light lunch or quench your thirst on a hot summer's day. Think: Stella Artois, Vedett, Primus.



Abbey Beers

Fermented beers that are produced in abbeys or by religious orders. They can be double or tripel beers, blonde or dark brown, tend to have a sweet touch with a bitter finale and have an alcohol content of 4.5% and higher. Grimbergen, Tongerlo and Sint-Bernardus are prime examples. Trappist beers are produced in one of Belgium's six Cistercian-abbeys, but Flanders also produces blonde and dark double and tripel beers that are not linked to monks in any way, like Duvel and Vicaris Tripel.



White Beer

Beers like Hoegaarden or Gentse Gruut Wit are fresh, delicately sour and cloudy, made with wheat and seasoned with herbs like coriander or orange peel.



Lambic and Geuze

A Belgian speciality, Lambic is a flat, sour wheat beer, fermented and then aged in wooden barrels. Young and old versions are blended and refermented in the bottle to make slightly sour-tasting Geuze.



Specialities

Ales like De Koninck or Palm are amber coloured and spicy, but not stronger than pils. Kriek is a cherrie beer with Lambic as a base.



Meetings, Incentives and Beer...

Lamot Convention Centre - Mechelen

Lamot, on the River Dijle, was one of Mechelen's most famous breweries. There had been a brewery on this site since 1627. Today, the charming industrial building is an 'award-winning' conference centre with 8 multifunctional meeting rooms, exhibition space and a lovely Grand Café.

www.lamot-mechelen.be

Brewery Het Anker - Mechelen

Also in Mechelen, and still brewing the delicious Carolus beers, is Het Anker. Beer aficionados can visit the brewery, discover the wide range of beers and taste the first Belgian single malt whisky aged in beer barrels. The brasserie and hotel offer excellent meeting opportunities, with the brewery and officer's hall as truly atmospheric locations for events. For an even more spectacular tasting of Carolus beer, you can climb to the top of the St. Rumbold's Cathedral, one of Flanders' 15th century architectural treasures.

www.hetanker.be

Brewery De Halve Maan - Bruges

Brugse Zot that is what they brew in 'De Halve Maan' in Bruges. Tours, tastings and a modern brasserie that serves local specialities are offered to visitors to the brewery. It's event space can comfortably accommodate up to 400 people.

www.halvemaan.be

Brewery De Koninck - Antwerp

One of Antwerp's most iconic beers is a 'bolleke Koninck'. The brewery in the heart of the city recently opened a new and innovative Visitor Centre. Here you can learn all about this classic amber-coloured ale. The unique location gives you the opportunity to combine a brewery visit with a board meeting.

www.dekoninck.be

Leuven Leisure

Leuven is the beer capital of the world. Leuven Leisure proves this with Beer Walks that take you to historic breweries, extraordinary bars and 'the longest beer counter in the world', the city's charming Old Market Square. They offer a wide range of interesting tours on foot, by bike and by boat and can also organise tailor-made workshops and events.

www.leuvenleisure.com

Practical Information

The Gruut Brewery produces five beers: White, Blond, Amber, Brown and Inferno. Beer enthusiasts can visit the brewery and the adjoining bar and restaurant. With its opportunities for the organisation of drinks receptions, group visits and 'create your own beer' workshops, Gruut Brewery should be on every incentive organiser's list. Vicaris produces five beers, some of them seasonal: Tripel, General, Quinto, Tripel/Gueuze and Winter. Founder Vincent Dilewyns shows groups around during brewery tours and ends with beer tastings to make the experience complete. VISITFLANDERS has an extensive website that shows you all the breweries that offer tours, museums, events, specialised beer pubs and restaurants with extensive beer menus.



Discover more on www.visitflanders.com/en/themes/belgian-beer

REBELLIOUS GHENT

There's something rebellious in the spirit of the people of Ghent. This rebellious streak has long roots. In 1500 A.D. Emperor Charles V was born in Ghent. When he inherited his father's territories in 1506, his regent and aunt, Margaret of Austria went to war to stop Flanders having to pay homage to the French king, eventually achieving independence from France in 1528. Later, in 1539, the people had their own chance to rebel, in the Revolt of Ghent against the high taxes Charles was levying to fight his foreign wars. The rebellion was put down without much resistance, and the ringleaders were forced to walk through the city in their nightshirts with nooses around their necks.

editor: allan hope

pictures: tim de backer, piet de kersgieter
& visitflanders

Since then, the people of Ghent have borne the nickname Stropdragers, or Noose Wearers. Every year, during the 'Gentse Feesten' festivities in July, the scene is re-enacted by members of the Guild of Noose Wearers, to illustrate how Ghent's rebellious nature has never quite gone away. This rebellious streak adds to the authenticity of the city. In 2008, National Geographic Traveler Magazine ranked Ghent the third most authentic city in the world.

PETER DE WILDE, CEO VISITFLANDERS

"Eating well is becoming more important as part of the experience of international tourists. That's certainly a trend that's favourable for Flanders, with its rich eating and drinking culture. With our Flanders Kitchen Rebels, we can put Flemish gastronomy on the map, quite literally."

Signature Dish
Kobe Desramaults, De Vitrine,
Brabantdam 134, 9000 Ghent



FLANDERS KITCHEN REBELS

Belgium has a reputation for Burgundian appetites: for a love of good food, good wine and excellent beer. Flanders takes those appetites and adds a dimension of innovation, daring and adventure. The senior Flemish chefs – Peter Goossens, Geert Van Hecke and Gert De Mangeleer, together with Sergio Herman, who moved from Sluis in The Netherlands to Antwerp – provide the country's Michelin three-star restaurants. At the same time, a generation of young chefs, like Kobe Desramaults, Michael Vrijmoed, Olly Ceulenaere and Davy De Pourcq, ensures the future will be at least as star-studded.

Flanders Kitchen Rebels began by featuring 20 top chefs under the age of 35 from every corner of Flanders, including Brussels. For this year's 7th edition, the number has gone up to 25 chefs. The aim has always been to give exposure to young upcoming chefs and to encourage people to get to know and enjoy the amazing range of culinary talents Flanders has to offer.

www.visitflanders.com/en/themes/flemish-food/flanders-kitchen-rebels



KITCHEN REBEL DAVY
SEE NEXT PAGE.. →



DAVY DE POURCQ

KITCHEN REBEL IN GHENT

Davy De Pourcq is 27 years old and one of the 25 selected Flanders Kitchen Rebels for 2016.

Every year the city of Ghent provides its share of young Kitchen Rebels. In the early years the names included Olly Ceulenaere, formerly of Volta, now of Publiek; Jason Blanckaert of J.E.F.; and Kobe Desramauts of De Vitrine. This year they are Michael Vrijmoed of Vrijmoed, former right-hand man to Peter Goossens; Thomas De Muynck of Karel De Stoute; and Davy De Pourcq of Volta. We visited Davy at his fantastic restaurant near the medieval city gate 'Brugse Poort', to talk to him in the middle of morning prep. Davy De Pourcq is 27 years old and one of the 25 selected Flanders Kitchen Rebels for 2016. Davy runs the successful restaurant Volta, situated in a once-industrial area of Ghent that's now on the verge of gentrification. The restaurant used to be an electric power station, hence the name Volta. Today it's a magnificent, almost monumental, venue with a restaurant in the towering generator room, an upstairs bar, a private dining area and an open kitchen.

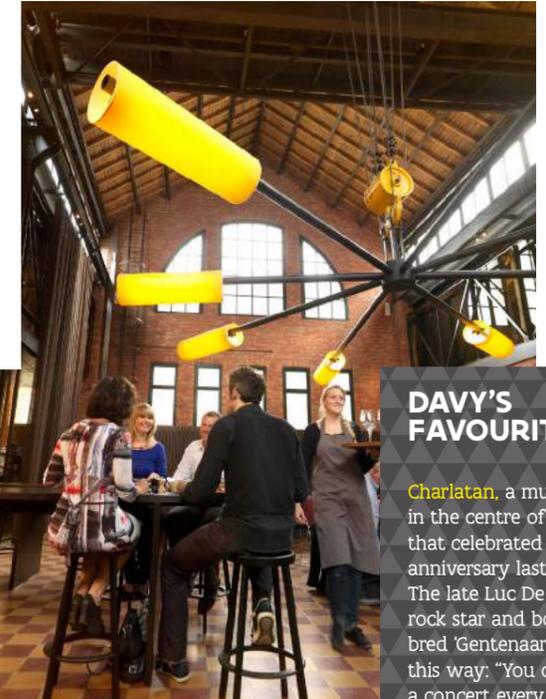
FLEMISH TWIST

The industrial setting of the main dining room creates a generous feeling of space. There is room for 60 covers and nothing feels crowded. When I visit, the kitchen is a hive of activity as the chef preps for the day, while the radio echoes from the ceiling as if in a cathedral.

Our chef Davy took over two years ago from the equally famous Olly Ceulenaere, when this top chef and 2014 Kitchen Rebel opened his new restaurant Publiek in Ghent. "After six years of hotel school at Ter Groene Poort in Bruges, I started an apprenticeship at Sergio Herman's Oud Sluis. Afterwards I worked for several renowned restaurants, including the three Michelin-starred Hof Van Cleve. I've been with Volta for three and



01



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a half years. The first eighteen months, I worked as chef de partie. When the previous chef left, I was asked to take over. Running a business is something quite different from working as a chef de partie. For me cooking will always be my main job. I'm a businessman on the side. There's a team of sixteen people working in the kitchen, bar, and restaurant. Leading a team demands a great deal of energy."

WHAT MAKES FLEMISH CHEFS SO SPECIAL?

"I think originality, a lot of Flemish chefs are on a quest to find themselves, to find their own identity and that is reflected in their dishes. Flanders has excellent cooking schools where we are taught the basics and challenged to add our own twists. Of course you don't learn everything in school. When I was twelve, I started working in a small restaurant in my home town. There was just one chef and I joined him on weekends. For me that was the real school, the place where I learned to work, not so much to cook but to work. The chef was pretty strict. That's what gave me a kick in the pants to become a chef too."



03

WHERE DOES YOUR INSPIRATION COME FROM?

"Fresh food, with fresh flavours, plenty of acidity, a light Asian touch but still based on classic cuisine. I work a lot with raw produce. Raw fish gives you the purest flavour. I always include it in my tasting menus, prepared in various ways: marinated, pickled or whatever it might be."

WHERE DO THE PRODUCTS COME FROM?

"Locally. 99 percent Belgian. I try to work as much as possible with seasonal Belgian products. A lot of my suppliers are local farmers. They advise me on what's available and tell me which products are at their best and what needs to wait. I only serve North Sea fish and shellfish."

IS THAT A QUESTION OF PRACTICALITY OR PRINCIPLE?

"It's a bit of both. I'm not using fish from Japan when there's such great fish right here. It's important to me to cook with local ingredients. It forces me to work according to the seasons, instead of importing cauliflower from Spain for example, when it's not in season here."

More information
www.voltagent.be

DAVY'S FAVOURITES

Charlatan, a music café in the centre of town that celebrated its 25th anniversary last year. The late Luc De Vos, rock star and born and bred 'Gentenaar', put it this way: "You can see a concert every day in Ghent, even on Mondays, but Charlatan remains the rock temple. I come every week and right away I feel at home."

www.charlatan.be

Revue, in the city centre, is a great place where lots of young people like to go. It's a fun eatery and bar, serving delicious tapas and drinks.

www.revuc-gent.be

Oak, Chef Marcelo Ballardín's restaurant, is a tiny place with only 20 covers. Here you find refined cuisine in a cozy environment. No ties! Just fun and very nice food.

www.oakgent.be

Vrijmoed, the new restaurant of Michael Vrijmoed, is one of Flanders' top gastronomic restaurants. It is located in the city centre and offers a unique menu with four to six courses, which can be either classic-style or vegetables-only.

www.vrijmoed.be

01, 02, 03
Davy De Pourcq's restaurant Volta in Ghent

GHENT



HERITAGE



FESTIVALS



STAR RESTAURANTS



ART



EXPERT ADVICE

KARI ALLOO
MEETING CONSULTANT

"Here's a secret within a secret: Ghent might just be the best European city you've never thought of visiting, in a country that continues to be criminally overlooked." It was voted one of Lonely Planet's 10 places to visit in 2011. If you're the type who prefers exploring away from the tourist hordes, funky Ghent is definitely the place to go to.

Ghent is praised for its brilliant mix of a wonderful past and a vibrant present. Here you can find one of Europe's finest water panoramas, captivating spires and centuries-old grand houses. But this is no place to simply kick back.

It's also Flanders' biggest university town, which means linger-as-long-as-you-like cafés, well-priced restaurants and a laid back atmosphere. **In Ghent you can take part in a graffiti workshop** and make your mark on a wall right in the centre of the city, but don't worry, it's all legal and above board! To find out more, go to www.ghent-authentic.com. You can also **discover Ghent by Night** together with Ghent Authentic and find some of the prettiest illuminated streets, squares and buildings.

Ghent prides itself on being a living, breathing city rather than a medieval decor. But they'll forgive us for pointing out that some of these night-time scenes are as pretty as any picture. **A cookery workshop** is the perfect way to whet your appetite. Whether you prefer local Ghent cuisine or a more oriental style of cooking, you can find inspiring ideas on www.eetavontuur.be. If you are looking for a cool venue to organise a private workshop, meeting or event, Red Loft is definitely worth your attention. You can check out stunning pics of this former textile factory on www.redloft.be.



- 01 Oak
- 02 Avalon
- 03 De Warempel

Where to eat veggie in Ghent

Vegetarians have it better in Ghent than anywhere else. There are plenty of places to eat meat-free at reasonable prices. This is just a selection:

Avalon

is next door to the Castle of the Counts, and offers a budget-friendly dish of the day and a menu. Open Tuesday to Saturday lunchtime only, apart from a gastronomic dinner on the first Friday and Saturday of the month. Reservation is required.

www.restaurantavalon.be

De Warempel

one of Ghent's most well-known vegetarian restaurants has a different dish each day, but be warned: it might occasionally involve fish. It's really small too, so be advised to reserve in advance. They also do catering and take-away.

www.warempel.be

Lekker GEC

close to the main railway station Gent Sint-Pieters, is an organic-vegetarian restaurant run by volunteers. It has that down to earth quality with self-service, and you only pay for what you eat.

www.lekkergec.be

De Groene Waaier

serves vegetarian and vegan meals with an Asian touch, as well as organic wines. However, it's only open on Friday evenings from 18:30. They also do concerts and cookery lessons.

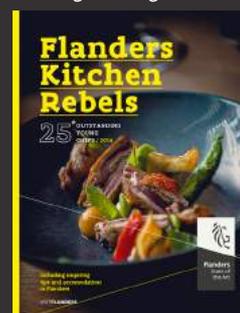
www.degroenewaaier.be

De Appelier

one of the pioneers of veggie food in Ghent, with two different dishes of the day every day, one at lunchtime and one in the evening. The prices are not to be beaten.

www.deappelier.be

www.flanderskitchenrebels.com
www.tov.be
www.visitgent.be
www.mytours.be
www.gentcongres.be



you can download the book at:
www.visitflanders.com

LOOKING TO ORGANISE YOUR NEXT EVENT IN BELGIUM OFF THE BEATEN TRACK?

JUST OFF THE ROAD YOU'LL FIND THE HIDDEN GEM: GHENT

Did you know that Ghent is easy accessible? It takes you less than one hour to get to the city from Brussels International Airport.

LONELY PLANET

“Europe’s best kept secret.”



Meet in Ghent

Ghent offers unique historic venues for inspirational meetings and dinners. You can even arrange meetings up to 1,000 guests. Ghent is a compact and sustainable city, so most venues and accommodation lie within the largest pedestrianised historic centre of Belgium. Best of all: a lot of the venues and accommodation offer affordable prices!



Vibrant university city

The internationally-renowned research university makes Ghent one of the largest bioscience clusters in Europe. With over 70,000 students, Ghent University is the largest university in Belgium. It all contributes to the vibrant character of the city.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TRAVELLER MAGAZINE

“The most authentic historic city in the world.”



At your service

The Convention Bureau MeetinGhent & East Flanders is your personal assistant for conferences and events in Ghent and East Flanders.

- It's a non-profit organisation, so you will get impartial and objective information and their service is free of charge.
- They offer advice and have in-depth product knowledge.
- They can provide you with tailor-made proposals and bidding assistance.
- If you're looking for site inspections and familiarization trips, this is the place to be!



More info?

meetingov@gent.be, +32 9 266 56 52

www.meetingov.be



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MUSIC

LEUVEN

THE NUMBER OF MUSIC FESTIVALS ORGANISED IN FLANDERS EVERY YEAR.

From huge events like Tomorrowland and Pukkelpop to small village festivals, from techno and jazz to rock and classical music. The festivals in Flanders make a total of 5 million music lovers happy.

BRUSSELS



RUN BABY RUN

Brussels is one of Europe's greenest cities, and its verdant parks and forests are the backdrop for the annual marathon in the fall, and a 20K race in spring.

www.zokmdebruxelles.be
www.sport.be/brusselsmarathon
Brussels 20K: 29 May 2016
Brussels Marathon: October 2016

BRUGES-LOUDENAARDE

BIRTHDAY CANDLES FOR THE TOUR OF FLANDERS

The cycling classic Tour of Flanders is one of the twelve world cup competitions, and the most important cycling event of the year in the region. This year it celebrates its 100th edition. Between the departure point in Bruges and finish line in Oudenaarde, cyclists face an exhausting ride across the hills of the Flemish Ardennes.

www.rondevanvlaanderen.be,
Bruges - Oudenaarde, 3 April 2016

BRUGES



Intangible but beautiful

UNESCO tries to conserve not just tangible cultural heritage like buildings, but also declares certain cultural events as Intangible Cultural Heritage for Humanity. For the past eight centuries, the people of Bruges have celebrated the arrival of a relic of the Blood of Christ. Each year on Ascension Day, The Holy Blood Procession goes through the city streets. Decorated floats move through the historic city centre whilst 1,700 actors and extras play out scenes from the Bible.

www.bezoekers.brugge.be/en/the-procession-of-the-holy-blood, 05 May 2016



Raise your glass

More than 100 Belgian brewers, 500 different types of beer, all in one location. **Zythos Beer Festival** is the largest beer tasting festival of its kind in Europe. Beer fans travel from all corners of the planet to discover that Belgians really are the best beer brewers in the world. A giant beer festival that you mustn't miss!

www.zbfbe, 23-24 April 2016

BRIEK SCHOTTE, CYCLIST AND CHAMPION

IN 1942 AND 1948

"The Tour of Flanders? Beautiful race. Tough race. Race for tenacious riders."

BRUSSELS

FOR ART LOVERS

The world of modern art is always moving and each year, more than 140 galleries from 20 countries take part in the contemporary art fair 'Art Brussels' to showcase their artists' work. For lovers and collectors an unmissable event that gets a facelift in 2016, with scenography created by new Artistic Director Katerina Gregos.

www.artbrussels.com, 22-26 April 2016

MUSIC, EVENTS & EXHIBITIONS

editor: diana goodwin
pictures: visitflanders

BOOM

TOMORROWLAND

People of tomorrow - Live for today! The groundbreaking electronic music festival that became a worldwide phenomenon started in Belgium as a one-day event. Now, with spin-offs in the United States and Brazil, the festival in the province of Antwerp brings together the world's top DJs and thousands of EDM enthusiasts for an unforgettable three days of sound, light, dance and fantasy. Mind-blowing sets and decorations, deluxe camping facilities, delicious food and drink, and a tight organisation are hallmarks of what's regarded as the best dance music festival in the world.

When July 2016 (exact date not yet available)

www.tomorrowland.com



ANTWERP

REUNION: FROM QUINTEN METSYS TO PETER PAUL RUBENS

Stop by Antwerp's majestic Gothic cathedral and see the exhibition 'Reunion: From Quinten Metsys to Peter Paul Rubens'. Eight monumental altarpieces from the collection of the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp, currently closed for renovations, have been reunited with the cathedral's own treasures in the very setting for which many of them were originally created. Don't miss this chance to see masterpieces by Antwerp's greatest artists, including Rubens' 'Descent from the



Cross and Raising of the Cross, as well as works by Rubens' predecessors and contemporaries.

When until 31 December 2017

www.kmska.be



BRUGES

DECEMBER DANCE

December Dance is one of Europe's finest festivals. This international festival of contemporary dance presents an exciting programme of established artists and young, up-and-coming talent. Young choreographers are given the opportunity to display their creations. December Dance also includes readings, workshops and discussions about dance.

When December 2016 (exact date not yet available)

www.concertgebouw.be

BRUEGEL'S WITCHES

Everyone knows that witches are old women who fly through the night on their broomsticks and brew strange potions in their cauldrons over the fire. But did you know that our popular image of witches was created centuries ago by Dutch and Flemish artists? Pieter Bruegel the Elder was especially fond of depicting witches riding brooms and stirring cauldrons, and many others followed his lead. This exhibition, held inside the medieval wards of one of Europe's oldest hospitals, features paintings, drawings, prints and manuscripts going back to the fifteenth century, and traces the evolution of artists' depictions of witches to the present day.

When 25 February 2016 until 26 June 2016

St. John's Hospital Museum, Mariastraat 38, 8000 Bruges
www.bezoekers.brugge.be/bruegel-s-witches

LUC TUYMANS: GLASSES

The MAS, Antwerp's innovative city museum, celebrates its 5th anniversary with three new exhibitions, including a collection of works by Antwerp's most renowned living artist, Luc Tuymans (1958). Tuymans is fascinated by people wearing glasses. They appear in three-quarters of his portraits. His subjects include historical figures, world leaders and ordinary people, and his depictions confront us with the intersection of recognition and knowledge. Criminals appear unremarkable and celebrities almost anonymous. This show represents a homecoming for Tuymans, who created the "Dead Skull" mosaic in the MAS Museum plaza in 2011.

When 13 May 2016 until 18 September 2016

www.mas.be



BRUSSELS

WINTER WONDERS

Brussels' annual holiday fair has become a favourite with locals and visitors, with its specialty food and drink stands, and the extensive Christmas market covering several city streets and squares. Take a spin on the outdoor ice-skating rink, or ride the giant Ferris wheel and merry-go-round. Finally, you won't want to miss the magnificent Christmas tree in the middle of the Grand Place, which sparkles every night during a sound and light show.

When 27 November 2016 until 3 January 2017

www.visitbrussels.be

OMMEGANG

Every summer, Europe's most beautiful square is transformed into a festive, outdoor stage set for a dazzling historical pageant and night-time spectacle. Be transported to 16th-century Brussels during the Ommegang, a procession featuring over 1,400 performers in elaborate costumes, complete with prancing horses, colourful flags,

live music, giant puppets and stilt walkers. Audience members can mingle with the artists before and after the performance, when the Grand Place becomes a swirling mass of movement and sound.

When 28 June 2016 until 07 July 2016

www.visitbrussels.be



THE POWER OF THE AVANT-GARDE

This exciting exhibition examines the relevance of the revolutionary power of the avant-garde at the beginning of the new

millennium. Twenty leading contemporary artists will engage in a dialogue with artists from the historical avant-garde (1895-1920). Around the turn of the last century, belief in a new world and a bright future, and the disillusionment that followed, left deep traces in the art world. Historical surveys of the main avant-garde movements emphasise the impact of the First World War on the art of the 20th and the 21st century.

When 29 September 2016 until 22 January 2017

BOZAR, Ravensteinstraat 23, Brussels, www.bozar.be

GHENT

GHENT FESTIVITIES

This free cultural festival has become one of the biggest and best city festivals in Europe. Started in 1843 and revived in 1969, it combines an outdoor music and arts festival with block parties, street fairs and dozens of street performances. Every year, the party takes over the entire city centre, lasting ten days and attracting over a million visitors. There's no telling what might happen at the 'Gentse Feesten'... But don't worry - we won't tell if you won't!

When 15-24 July 2016

gentsefeesten.gent



FILM
FEST
GHENT

FILM FEST GHENT

Every year the Ghent Film Festival presents some 200 features and short films from around the globe with a focus on film music. A major highlight of the festival is the World Soundtrack Awards, celebrating the role of the composer in filmmaking. Every year the festival also organises film music concerts and exhibitions with a thematic link to the movies.

When October 2016 (exact date not yet available)

Film Fest Ghent, Leeuwstraat 40, Gent
www.filmfestival.be



01



02



For the true cycling fanatic, the Tour of Flanders needs no introduction. This one-day road race in the Flemish Ardennes challenges cycling's top athletes with multiple hills and punishing cobblestones. It's one of Europe's oldest cycling competitions and considered one of the most difficult.

*editor: diana goodwin
pictures: visitflanders
illustrations: leen van hulst*

LIVE YOUR OWN TOUR

Do you have what it takes to ride the legendary hills of the Flemish Ardennes? Curious to feel what it's like to tackle those cobblestones? Ready to follow in the tyre tracks of Belgium's cycling heroes, like **Eddy Merckx** and **Tom Boonen**? Want to feel the burn in your thighs from pushing yourself to your limit, and beyond?

Or maybe you and your colleagues just want to enjoy a beautiful day out in the **Flemish countryside**, watching the world slip past from the saddle of your bike, and stopping every few kilometers for a cold Belgian beer. Either way, Flanders has everything you need to plan a fantastic cycling adventure.

For the die-hard cycling fan and serious athlete, there's one sure-fire way to win your bragging rights: By participating in the **Tour of Flanders Cyclo**, an amateur cycling event held the day before the professional race on the same course that the pros follow. There are three possible routes – **71, 127 and 239 km** – and registration is limited to 16,000 participants.

Throughout the year, serious cyclists can pit themselves against the Flandriens by following one of three **Tour of Flanders cycling routes**, which cover all the main sections of the race and every famous climb. A handy map shows the routes in detail along with information about hill gradients, nearby attractions and bike-friendly facilities.

FEELING COMPETITIVE?

With electronic time tracking, you can record your times and compare them against your colleagues' results. The time chip is free to rent and the rankings are published online for all to see.

For the non-gearheads, a day of cycling in the Flemish Ardennes can be a relaxing and leisurely experience. The best part is that you're not limited to one particular route – nor are the steepest hills mandatory. In fact, there are as many ways to enjoy a day of cycling as there are kinds of cyclists, whether your interest is sightseeing along the way, visiting local breweries, or seeking out the natural beauty of the countryside.

WHERE TO START

The historic city of **Oudenaarde** – only 25 minutes outside Ghent – is the end point of the Tour of Flanders and the unofficial capital of Flemish cycling.

The Tour of Flanders Centre in Oudenaarde combines a museum about the legendary bike race with a shop and restaurant. Here you'll find lots of information about cycling in the area, including maps and guidebooks. Pick up the new guide **'Berg and Cobbles: Essential Bike Routes in the Flemish Ardennes'** which includes a map of the Tour of Flanders routes. You can rent your time chip here, and after your ride, you can take a shower, stock up on souvenirs and enjoy a local beer in the brasserie. The Tour of Flanders Centre also includes meeting facilities for your team events. ■

www.crvv.be



Where to stay

The **Leopold Hotel****** is a brand-new boutique hotel overlooking the River Scheldt in Oudenaarde. Located next to the Tour of Flanders Centre, they specialise in cycling packages and offer secure bike parking.

www.leopoldhoteloudenaarde.com

Bike rental

Asfra-Flanders is a full-service bike shop less than a kilometer from the Tour of Flanders Centre in Oudenaarde. They have road bikes, city bikes, electric bikes, mountain bikes and time-trial bikes for rent.

www.asfra.be

Organised bike tours

Several companies offer cycling packages in the Flemish Ardennes, including trips based around the Tour of Flanders. **Velo Flanders** is a young company that specialises in organising guided cycling trips complete with overnight stays.

www.veloflanders.com

Go4Cycling

has years of experience in organising cycling trips as corporate team-building events and incentives. They work with Flemish cycling legend **Johan Musseeuw**, who's available to be your trip leader and guide, for a touch of real professional cycling expertise.

www.go4cycling.com

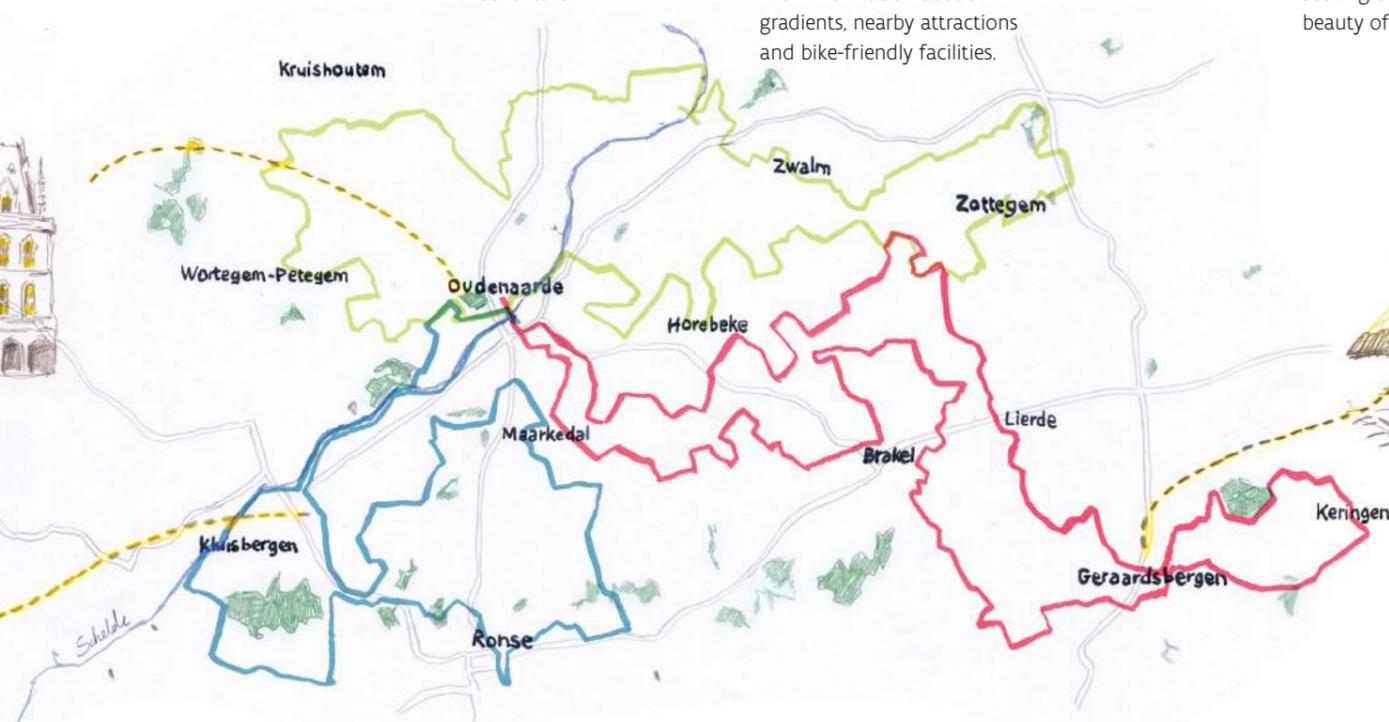
The Outsider

This event organiser, based in Oudenaarde, can do more than just plan your bike tour. They'll combine it with other sporting activities or even a game in the historic city of Ghent, if you like. The Outsider has its own adventure park and meeting venue.

www.theoutsidervlaamseardennen.be

✉ *More information
MeetinGhent & East Flanders Convention
Bureau, www.meetingov.be,
meetingov@gent.be*

- 01 The Tour of Flanders Centre in Oudenaarde
- 02 Cycling in the Flemish countryside



Liveyourowntour.com

is a comprehensive online resource for recreational cycling in the Flemish Ardennes. Find information about the Tour of Flanders, different bike routes, local pubs, accommodations, area attractions, bike rentals and more.

BY LAND, BY AIR AND BY SEA

Incentives are ideally suited to reward and motivate your co-workers. Fun activities that challenge your team, hone their skills and create new experiences are great ways to bring people together and foster camaraderie.

editor: diana goodwin / nathalie le blanc, pictures: imageselect & visitflanders

In Flanders, you can expand your horizons with fantastic group activities on land, at sea or in the air. Whether you choose an exciting day of sailing, of flying high above the clouds, or of cruising around the countryside – your team will have a blast, feel energised and be inspired to succeed.

LAND

What could be more fun than zipping around the scenic **Flemish countryside** in vintage cars, like classic Citroën 2CV's? For a more adventurous challenge, choose Vespa's or even quads. Along the way, you'll race down country lanes, past picturesque villages and farms, or along the coastal dunes.

Event Mosaic is a premier event design company specialised in creating customised, value-driven and high-quality corporate events. They can combine your "Fun on Wheels" incentive with culinary meals at gourmet restaurants, teambuilding challenges and eco-driving with electric hybrid vehicles.

www.eventmosaic.be



Your cross-country rally starts in Bruges, the crown jewel among historic cities. With its dream-like canals and cobblestones, Bruges offers exquisite dining and accommodation for business travellers and conference delegates along with a wide variety of attractions, museums and landmarks.

Where to stay

Grand Hotel Casselbergh**** enjoys an unbeatable location on a canal, right off the beautiful Burg square. It offers 118 luxurious rooms, state of the art meeting rooms, and a full-service spa in its 16th-century cellars.

www.grandhotelcasselbergh.com

Where to eat

Flemish through and through, that is how you can describe De Vlaamse Pot. Traditional local dishes like mussels, chicken casserole, baked eel and Flemish beef stew are permanently on the menu. Right in the heart of Bruges, this restaurant can accommodate 200 covers.

www.devlaamschepot.be



AIR

Flying is always exciting, but in a tiny plane it becomes even more thrilling. From **Kortrijk-Wevelgem Airport** it is possible to take off in a small Robin Dr 400/180 Regent plane. If history is what you are looking for, then a **Flanders Fields Memorial Flight** is a definite must-do. The World War I battlefields and cemeteries are even more impressive from above. Before you take off, you get an extensive briefing on the flight route. If there's a special place you want to see from up in the air, the pilot can make it happen.

www.hangarfluying.eu



Kortrijk is a beautiful city on the River Lys, in the province of West Flanders. Known for its medieval Broel Towers, UNESCO-listed bell tower and historic market square, it also boasts several museums, riverfront parks and a popular shopping district.

Where to stay

Park Hotel**** is a business hotel with restaurant, bar, meeting rooms and luxury spa facilities in the centre of Kortrijk.

www.parkhotel.be

Where to eat

Table d'Amis is a gastronomic restaurant in the historic centre of Kortrijk. Chef Matthieu Beudaert was named Top Young Chef of Flanders in 2013 and has one Michelin star.

www.tabledamis.be

SEA

Throughout a day of sailing on board a high-performance yacht off the Belgian coast, your team will learn new skills, work together and meet challenges. Afterwards, they will have an exciting story to tell the folks back home. A sea excursion can be combined with a culinary experience on board, as well as group seminars, meetings and team-building exercises.

Katmandu specialises in high-level team-building and team coaching during outdoor adventure activities, including sailing. On their High Impact Team Sailing trips, the captain and certified coach work together to challenge and motivate teams.

www.katmandu.be



Your sea adventure starts in Ostend, Belgium's premier city by the sea. More than just a beach resort, Ostend is the city of the great Flemish painter James Ensor and of Marvin Gaye, who composed his huge 1982 hit Sexual Healing during his two-year stay.

Where to stay

Thermae Palace Hotel****, this legendary Art Deco seaside palace, has hosted European royalty and international celebrities since it opened in 1933. The imposing hotel has 130 rooms, modern meeting facilities, and an exclusive beachfront location.

www.thermaepalace.be

Where to eat

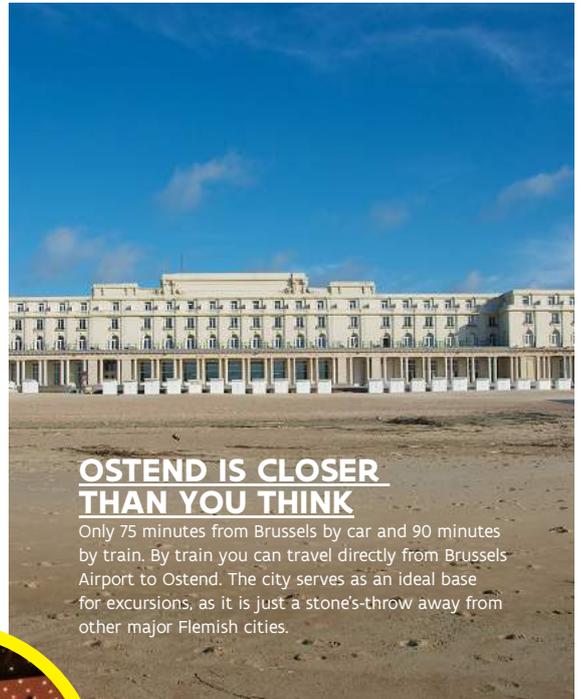
Napoleon's Fort is one of the most striking buildings on the Belgian Coast, and yes, the little general really did have this built in 1811. It was supposed to defend the coast from English attacks. Today it houses a lovely restaurant and bistro with view of the dunes and you can enjoy the Ostend skyline from the roof terrace. The fort is a great location for team building activities and there is meeting space available.

www.fortnapoleon.be

OSTEND - YOUR CONFERENCE CITY **BY THE SEA**

What greater pleasure is there for a conference delegate than to smell the fresh salty sea air and stroll along the beach after a day at the conference? Ostend will persuade the most demanding meeting planners with its right combination of infrastructure and leisure facilities. Most conference rooms have sea view and all of them offer free wifi.

Ostend has the widest choice of three- and four-star hotels on the Belgian coast. The most striking feature of Ostend is its five and a half miles of coast line. But Ostend offers more as it is often an inspirational source for artists like James Ensor and Marvin Gaye. Ostend is a compact city where all hotels and venues are within walking distance. Its centre has many shops, bars and restaurants. Thanks to its royal past, the city offers an interesting combination of Belle Époque and modern architecture. The city is the perfect destination for incentive groups. Located by the sea, Ostend combines both business and pleasure.



OSTEND IS CLOSER THAN YOU THINK

Only 75 minutes from Brussels by car and 90 minutes by train. By train you can travel directly from Brussels Airport to Ostend. The city serves as an ideal base for excursions, as it is just a stone's-throw away from other major Flemish cities.



CONGRESS VENUES

Kursaal Ostend is the 4th largest congress venue in Belgium and can host up to 3,000 delegates.

The Hip, located between the golf course and horse-racing track, offers a meeting hall with a capacity for 2,750 people and a VIP room for 300 guests.

Hotel Thermae Palace is located on the promenade. It has 8 newly renovated meeting rooms with sea view, and a capacity up to 2,250 guests.

De Grote Post is the old Post Office Building. Completely renovated and modernised, it can host up to 800 people, spread over 2 meeting rooms. The venue offers several break-out rooms as well.

SPECIAL VENUES

Fort Napoleon is a historical venue located in the dunes and is highly suitable for a product launch, team building event or company family day.

The three-master Mercator is a maritime museum ship and the ideal location for a reception or buffet for up to 200 people.



Ostend Convention Bureau, your partner in business & pleasure

Ostend has all you need to provide your organisation and guests with a truly successful event or a unique experience. The Ostend Convention Bureau is your one-stop-shop when planning a conference or corporate event. A personal account manager will give you free advice, bidding assistance and personal follow-up, saving you time and money. A free online hotel reservation tool is also at your disposal.

Oostende Convention Bureau
Toerisme Oostende vzw
T : +32(0)59 255 317 – F: +32(0)59 703 477 - meet@visitoostende.be

www.meet-in-oostende.be

LET'S GET TOGETHER

Every city has a place where locals go to catch up over drinks and meet new people. The hot new club that everyone's talking about, the comfortable neighbourhood bar, the cool café with free WiFi and good coffee. It can be hard to find those spots if you're new in town. Here's our guide to the best places in Flanders to meet colleagues for a cocktail, get some work done, or organise a meeting. You might even run into some locals while you're at it, so be sure to get their recommendations for what's good on the menu.

editor: diana goodwin - pictures: imageselect & visitflanders



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ANTWERP

Felix Pakhuis – Located in the middle of the old harbour district, this historic waterfront warehouse has been converted into a stylish restaurant and event venue. During the summer months, outdoor seating by the waterside and a pop-up bar draw locals looking for a bit of fun in the sun. The owners organise weekend and after-work events throughout the year and can also organise private events for up to 250 people.

www.felixpakhuis.nu

Zuiderterras – An architectural landmark overlooking the River Scheldt, this upscale restaurant was designed to resemble an Art Deco steamship. It's the perfect place to enjoy a glass of wine or a cocktail while watching the sun set, either from the breezy outdoor patio or through the dining room's panorama windows. With a reception hall, several meeting rooms and wrap around balcony, it's also an ideal location for your corporate events.

www.zuiderterras.be

CoffeeLabs – Located on the top floor of Idealabs, a tech incubator and venture capital boutique, this hip new coffee shop in the city centre serves espresso drinks, fresh juices, beer & cocktails, as well as healthy, seasonal food for breakfast and lunch. A popular meeting spot for creative types, young coders and local digerati, it's a place to network, refuel, and dream up your next big idea.

www.coffeelabs.be

BRUSSELS

Bravo BXL – This popular new café and jazz club in the fashionable Dansaert neighbourhood is the latest hit from bar impresario Frédéric Nicolay, the mastermind behind many of Brussels' most happening hotspots. Industrial décor, comfy couches and a relaxed vibe make it ideal for an afternoon rendezvous. When the sun goes down, live jazz in the basement turns it into the hippest music venue in town. Open 7 days a week for breakfast, lunch, cocktails and relaxed dining. Outdoor seating in the summer, and event capacity for 150 people.

www.bravobxl.com

Monk – Locals flock to this traditional Flemish bar with modern attitude, named after jazz legend Thelonius Monk, in the historic Saint Catherine district. They know it's the place for good food, a lively crowd, and the best local and regional craft beers. If you're there at lunch time, be sure to check out their famous spaghetti buffet, with a range of yummy sauces and toppings. At night, live jazz and swing bands take the atmosphere from chill to hoppin'!

www.monk.be



01



02

GHENT

Vooruit – This 100-year-old Art Nouveau landmark now serves as an arts centre with an exciting programme of music, theatre and cultural events. On the ground floor, the café offers a broad selection of coffees and beers, creative cocktails and freshly prepared food. Free WiFi and plentiful electrical outlets make it a popular spot to bring your laptop and get some work done. A great place to meet locals, soak up the scene and get inspired.

www.vooruit.be

Alice – Step back in time and enjoy some old-fashioned Flemish hospitality at this chic new restaurant named for the owner's mother. Black-and-white photos tell her story, while the vintage decor and antique china evoke her house and kitchen. With specialities including gourmet espresso drinks, exquisite cakes and pastries, and delicious lunches for small or big appetites, Alice is the perfect place for a breakfast meeting, business lunch or afternoon tea.

alice-gent.be

KORTRIJK

Viva Sara Kaffée – Are you passionate about your coffee? If so, then you have to check out this gorgeous café, run by brothers who grew up in the coffee business. More than a coffee shop, it offers true coffee lovers a total experience, where you can enjoy a selection of the best coffee beans, expertly roasted and served up by dedicated professional baristas. What makes it truly exceptional however, is the possibility to combine a private meeting with a barista workshop, thus creating the perfect meetcentive.

www.vivasarakaffee.be

- 01 Vooruit, Ghent
- 02 Alice, Ghent
- 03 Viva Sara Kaffée
- 04 B-IN, Bruges
- 05 Unwined, Mechelen



04



05

MECHELEN

Unwined – This popular wine shop and wine bar in Mechelen has a fantastic new location right under St. Rumbold's Tower on the main square. The front end is the shop, with a wide selection of hand-picked international wines and a small tasting bar facing onto the street. The back end boasts a swank lounge and an intimate outdoor seating area, where wine lovers can discover new favourites and savour a glass alongside gourmet bar bites.

www.unwined.be

BRUGES

B-IN – Enjoy an aperitif or cocktail with the best view in town. This chic waterside restaurant and bar in the historic heart of Bruges has a large outdoor seating area located right next to the canals. The contemporary Belgian kitchen offers seasonal and daily specials. A popular event location, B-In can accommodate large groups and specialises in culinary buffet dinners.

www.b-in.be



03

24 HOURS IN BRUSSELS FOR BEGINNERS

“It’s a particular city in an interesting country,” journalist Derek Blyth says about Brussels. “You might not fall in love with it immediately, but if you know where to go, it will be a very positive experience.”

editor: nathalie le blanc
pictures: istock & visitflanders

1 THE GRAND PLACE

“A classic, but always busy, so to really appreciate its beauty, visit it at an unusual hour, like before breakfast. It’s a welcoming and relaxed square and seems to have a calming effect on people. There are no signs telling you what you can and cannot do, an illustration of how tolerant Brussels is. The lovely buildings are not spoiled by advertising and what I like is that you can see how much good living matters to this city. The square is all cafés, restaurants and chocolate shops.”

BUSINESS FIRST Take your time to admire the ‘Brouwershuis’, a 17th century Guild House, home to the Association of Belgian Brewers and a unique venue for meetings and events in an historic atmosphere.

Grote Markt 10, www.maison-des-brasseurs.be

2 BREAKFAST AT MOKAFÉ

“If you are not having breakfast in your hotel, try Mokafé, a typical Brussels address, popular with locals and people working in Brussels. They serve traditional dishes for breakfast, lunch and dinner.”

Koningsgalerij 9

BUSINESS FIRST Also in the Royal Saint-Hubert Galleries, and 30 seconds away from Mokafé, is Theatre de Vaudeville, a 19th century theatre and perfect location for dinners and receptions.

Koninginnegalerij 13, www.chouxdebruxelles.be

3 SAY HELLO TO BRUEGHEL

“Brussels has an amazing variety of museums. It’s not difficult to find one that will interest you, whether that is modern art, comic strips or musical instruments. If it’s your first visit, why not go to the **Museum of Fine Arts** and get to know one of the most famous and most Belgian of painters, Pieter Brueghel? He didn’t paint kings and aristocrats, but the people he saw around him. His work is dedicated to fun and pleasure and also a bit chaotic, just like the city.”

BUSINESS FIRST The Fine Arts Museum is a perfect location for large gala dinners and cocktail receptions.

Regentschapstraat 3, www.fine-arts-museum.be

4 THE MAROLLES, BRUEGHEL'S STOMPING GROUND

“Brueghel got married and is buried in the Kapelle Church in Brussels and is rumoured to have lived in the Hoogstraat, where he raised his equally famous painting sons Jan and Pieter Bruegel the Younger. **The Marolles**, as this area is known, is quite charming, with an interesting flea market on **Vossen Square** and lots of lovely window shopping in the antique and furniture stores. It has many bars and restaurants, from traditional to hip. →



Derek Blyth is a British journalist who has lived in Brussels for 25 years. “It’s an interesting city because of its diversity. Lots of different cultures, languages and people. Nobody dresses the same here. The city’s architecture can feel a bit chaotic, but the fact that there is no uniformity is quite charming. I do walking tours in Brussels and there are spots where you can see perfect examples of all periods of this city’s history in one 360° turn. It is also a city where appearance is not everything. People don’t go to restaurants for the interior design or the hipness, but for the food. Good living really matters here.” Derek Blyth has written *The 500 Hidden Secrets of Brussels* and similar books on Ghent, Antwerp, The Coast and In Flanders Fields. He also organises urban walks.

www.mysecretbrussels.com

DEREK BLYTH

“It’s an interesting city because of its diversity. The fact that there is no uniformity is quite charming.”



01



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03

→ If you don't mind a busy décor and want a taste of how Belgian beer features in local cuisine, then try lunch at **Restobières**, with an impressive and original beer menu.”
Restobières, Vossenstraat 9, Restobieres.eu

BUSINESS FIRST Meeting planners can find hidden gems in the Marolles. The Halles des Tanneurs is a great example of industrial heritage and a unique venue for events, for 10 or 1,000 people.

Leerlooierstraat 58, www.hallesdestanneurs.be

A BIT OF SHOPPING

“Areas like **Louizalaan** and **Nieuwstraat** have all the traditional chains, but if you like your shopping a bit more off the beaten track, then try **Dansaertstraat** and **Kartuizerstraat**. Dansaert is known for its fashionista atmosphere, with Belgian classics like Rue Blanche and Annemie Verbeke, and of course Stijl, which sells all the well known Belgian designers. Nearby Kartuizerstraat is slightly more edgy, with concept stores and shops that sell quirky things.”

CHOCOLATE TIME

“If you need some lovely chocolates to take back to your family or office, try **Frederic Blondeel**, who takes real pride in his product, and the chocolates are handled like jewels. Once chosen, everything you buy is put carefully into a box and tied up with ribbons.” **Baksteenkaai 24, Strostraat 32, www.frederic-blondeel.be**

BUSINESS FIRST Laurent Gerbaud is the place for high quality chocolate and exclusive aromatic fruits. In the shop on Ravensteinstraat you can buy chocolates, enjoy a coffee and organise a chocolate workshop in his atelier.

Ravensteinstraat 22, www.chocolatsgerbaud.be

PEOPLE WATCHING WITH SOME COFFEE

“Coffee is served with some ceremony in Brussels. A nice jug of milk, a chocolate or maybe a piece of cake. Classic is the **Café Metropole** in the eponymous hotel.

- 01 Le Fabuleux Marcel de Bruxelles, shopping at Dansaertstraat
- 02 The Queen's Gallery
- 03 Musical Instruments Museum

A more contemporary alternative is the **Zebra Bar**. It was one of the first cafés to open on the St Gery Square and it helped transform the neighbourhood”

BUSINESS FIRST Hotel Metropole and its nine historic meeting rooms will add old world allure to your events.

De Brouckèrplein 31, www.metropolehotel.com

DINNER

“The area around Sint Katelijneplein and the Vismarkt has lots of good restaurants. Try inspiring Vietnamese cooking at **Little Asia** or go for some of the best fish in town at **Vismet**, a modern fish restaurant.”
Little Asia, Sint-Katelijnestraat 10.
Vismet, Vismarkt, Sint-Katelijneplein 23.

INTO THE NIGHT...

“The neighbourhood around the Vismarkt is ideal for wandering around at night, with pit stops in lovely bars like **Monk** and **Roskam**. **The Archiduc** on Dansaertstraat is quite infamous for its jazz concerts, cocktails and décor. Just ring the doorbell.”
Vlaamsesteenweg, Sint Katelijneplein, Dansaertstraat.

BUSINESS FIRST Looking for a trendy nightclub? Try **Spirito Brussels Club**, a dance temple in an old Anglican church or **Sett**, located on the iconic event and exhibition site of Tour & Taxis. Both clubs can be rented for private events. ■

Spirito, Stassartstraat 18, www.spiritobrussels.com.
Sett, Havenlaan 86C, www.sett.be

Unique ways to let your group discover Brussels:

Pro Vélo

Brussels is an exciting city to cycle through, and with Pro Vélo's group tours, you discover brilliant architecture, breweries, comic strips, green corners and hidden gems in the city. You don't need to be superfit, most tours are between 12 and 25 km (7^{1/2} and 15^{1/2} miles).

www.provelo.org

Bus Bavard

Literally translated Bus Bavard means 'chatterbus'. On foot, by bus or public transport, they offer flexible tours to suit all organisations, and from good food to antiques and history to fashion, any interest can be catered to.

www.busbavard.be

VIZIT

The city is a source of great stories and VIZIT's tour guides will help you to discover them. They organise walks, bike tours and day trips and are famous for their Nibbling Tours, eating and tasting your way around Brussels and several other Belgian cities. If you have an competitive group, the Natural Born Winners Tour with a contest aspect to the tour, is a good idea.

www.vizit.be

BRUSSELS



ART



HERITAGE



AIRPORT



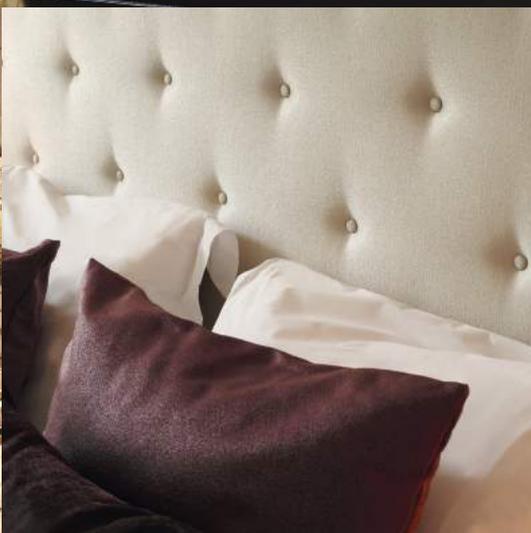
HEAD QUARTERS



ARCHITECTURE



LUXURY FOR TODAY
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OF BRUSSELS



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TO CREATE & INSPIRE



ANTWERP

Diamonds are forever

Antwerp is the diamond capital of the world, with 80% of all diamonds traded throughout the world passing through the city. The history goes back to medieval times, but today the most visible part of the industry is the streets of the Diamond District next to the Central Station. Perfect for shopping, of the buying or window kind. There is a Diamond Pavilion in the MAS Museum, where you can learn the history of the diamond trade.

DRIES VAN NOTEN, DESIGNER

“Clothes are just something you put on to cover yourself... Fashion is a way to communicate.”

FASHION

5 & 13

The ranking of Belgium's two biggest fashion schools in the 2014 Fashionista list.

The Antwerp Royal Academy of Fine Arts ranks number five, and made its name as an elite design school with a reputation for an avant-garde and experimental attitude and famous graduates like Dries Van Noten, Martin Margiela and Ann Demeulemeester. Number 13 in the world is La Cambre in Brussels. It has a more traditional reputation than its Antwerp sister, with graduates ending up in fashion houses like Lanvin and Chanel.



NICE TO KNOW

UGLY HOUSES

Four years ago Hannes Coudenys started a photo-blog about the ugly houses you inevitably come across when you walk, cycle or drive through Belgium. “My own house at the time was also ugly, but practical,” he wrote in the book based on his project. His social media efforts attract a million visitors a year and his project has been featured in design magazines the world over. His idea has caught on, and now there are ugly-houses-blogs in the US, Australia, Sweden and Norway.

Ugly Belgian Houses, by Hannes Cioudenys. You'll also find him on Instagram, Facebook and Tumblr.



EXPATS

ARE YOU A FAN?

Of Flanders that is. Maybe not yet, but after spending some time on the quirky fans of Flanders website you will be. It all started with a TV-series made by the Flemish Public Broadcasting Company, about and for expats. The site now not only shows funny little films, but also gives tips on the strange and unusual habits of the Flemish people, tells you what to do in Flanders for entertainment and collects blogs from expats with interesting stories about the place.

www.fansofflanders.be



MEETING IN BRUSSELS?

7 REASONS FOR CHOOSING COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT BRUSSELS

Courtyard by Marriott Brussels offers its guests the optimal setting for combining work and relaxation during their stay.



1 Business first

All conference rooms at Courtyard by Marriott Brussels are located on the first floor, so the conferencing part of the hotel is completely separate, inaccessible to other hotel guests. Our 11 conference rooms adjoin a large foyer and can all be configured to meet your needs, including your technical requirements.

2 Completely refurbished

Courtyard by Marriott Brussels recently finished a complete renovation. Within just two months, we upgraded all 191 guest rooms, with new furniture and bed linen. The result is impressive, with the turquoise and lemon green accents giving the rooms a very modern look and feel.

3 Reduce, reuse and recycle

Following the renovation we found a new home for our replaced furniture and bed linen. Everything was still in good condition, so Courtyard by Marriott Brussels donated the beds, desks, tables, chairs and armchairs to refugee agencies and other aid organisations. Our hotel staff also had an opportunity to purchase the furniture. The sales to staff yielded almost €10,000, all of which went to SOS Children's Villages!

4 Whatever you need

Your company and its preferences are our prime consideration at Courtyard by Marriott Brussels. It is why we offer you a tailor-made plan. Want to reserve 10 or more rooms, need conferencing or event accommodation, or a combination of the two? Simply tell us what you want and our team will do the rest. Creativity and originality are guaranteed and everything will fit your budget!

5 Eco is hot

Did you know that TripAdvisor confers GreenLeader awards on hotels and B&Bs dedicated to ecological initiatives like recycling, serving local and biological food and providing charging points for electric cars? GreenLeaders receive a status called Bronze, Silver, Gold or Platinum. The higher the status, the greater is the impact of their initiatives. The efforts of Courtyard by Marriott Brussels were rewarded with a Gold GreenLeader award!

6 Well-being

We are becoming increasingly aware of our well-being. If you feel comfortable in what you do, you perform better. As an organisation Courtyard attaches great importance to the well-being of its guests. We want your stay with us to be productive but stress-free. So wind down in a yoga session with an instructor, or take some vigorous exercise in our fitness centre complete with sauna.

7 Take a break

Just come out of a long meeting? You'll probably be ready for some fresh air. Courtyard by Marriott Brussels can provide you with a picnic basket packed with delicious bites, so that you and your team can enjoy the park in the lunch break. Don't have much time, but curious about the Belgian chocolate that everybody raves about? During the coffee break we can arrange a mini chocolate workshop, complete with a chocolate fountain! Or would you and your group like to learn how to prepare a Belgian speciality? Our chef will be pleased to show you how to make mussels, for example. Afterwards you can taste the dishes yourself at lunch or dinner.



COURTYARD
Marriott
BRUSSELS

Courtyard by Marriott Brussels
Avenue des Olympiades 6, 1140 Brussels, +32 2 337 08 08
www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/brucy-courtyard-brussels

SHOP IT

7 SHOPS MUST-DO STOPS

A selection of the fantastic range of Belgian flagship stores:

1 WIM BRUYNNOOGHE / ANTWERP

It took guts, but he did it: less than two years after graduating he opened his very own shop. That's terrific news for those of you who love the best in elegance and creativity, not forgetting beautiful, luxury materials and the perfect trim.

Frankrijklei 73, Antwerp.
www.storewimbruynnooghe.com

2 JO DE VISSCHER / GHENT

She waved goodbye to a career restoring modern art and followed her passion for fashion. As a result of this decisive switch, Jo De Visscher has her own successful label in feminine, affordable prêt-à-porter and her own store since December 2014.

Hoornstraat 6, Ghent. www.jodevisscher.be

3 KIM STUMPF / ANTWERP

Alpaca, angora, Italian wool, super kid mohair: only the best is good enough for Kim Stumpf and her creations feel like a second skin. The magic words are pure, unique, timeless, architectural and 100 percent Belgian.

Lombardenastraat 18, Antwerp
www.kimstumpf.com

4 LN KNITS / ANTWERP

Following the web shop and the pop-ups, there's now a permanent home for Belgian knitwear label LN Knits. The Designer Ellen Kegels works with 100 percent alpaca wool, and the fair trade beanies, scarves, cardigans and jumpers are handmade by Peruvian women.

Leopoldstraat 22, Antwerp.
www.lnknits.com

5 MAUREEN DE CLERCQ / BRUSSELS

Antwerp-born Maureen De Clercq not only fell for a fabulous building, but also for the buzz of Brussels and the bountiful boutiques in the Dansaertstraat. In her flagship store you'll find feminine, timeless pieces, 100 percent made in Belgium.

Léon Lepagestraat 60, Brussels.
www.maureendeclercq.be

6 A.F. VANDEVORST / ANTWERP

At last the well known red cross symbolising An and Filip, the duo behind A.F. Vandevorst, appears on a shop front. The store boasts not only clothes – mainly made of silk, fur and leather – but also shoes and accessories.

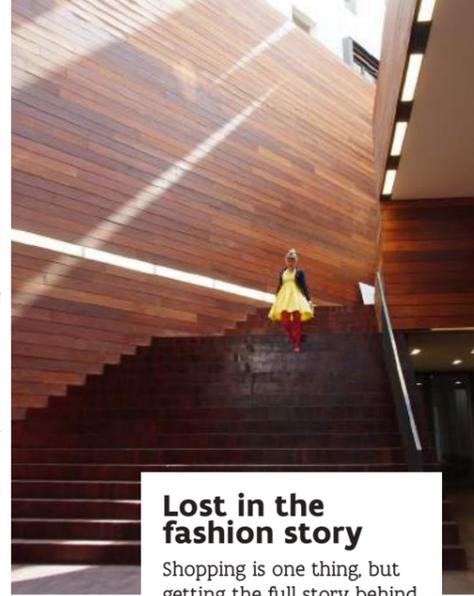


Lombardenvest 20, Antwerp.
www.afvandevorst.be

7 CHRISTIAN WIJNANTS / ANTWERP

Recently Christian Wijnants opened his own boutique. He chose the location especially for its mix of art, architecture and nature – three elements influencing his designs of strong, timeless silhouettes in which knitting plays the starring role.

Steenhouwersvest 36, Antwerp.
www.christianwijnants.com



Lost in the fashion story

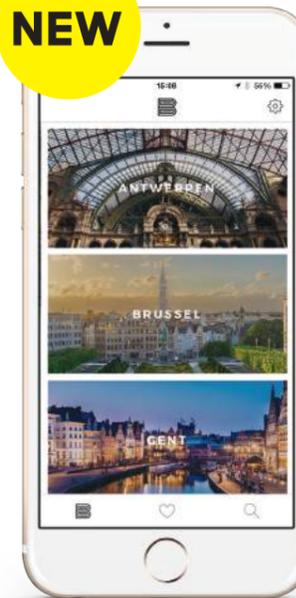
Shopping is one thing, but getting the full story behind the clever craftsmanship quite another. Flanders boasts two fabulous fashion museums, focusing on an impressive number of designers each year: the **MoMu in Antwerp** and the **Modemuseum in Hasselt**. Here you'll find Belgium's fashion talent in the well-deserved spotlight alongside other international names. Both museums not only give you an insight into the history of fashion, but also exhibit works of contemporary designers like Dries Van Noten, Yohji Yamamoto, Bernhard Willhelm and Ann Demeulemeester.

MoMu, Nationalestraat 28, Antwerp. www.momu.be
Modemuseum Hasselt, Gasthuisstraat 11, Hasselt. www.modemuseumhasselt.be



More information
www.visitantwerpen.be

NEW



BELMODO TAKES YOU TO THE HOTSPOTS

New in town and looking for the best places to go? Then let this brand new Belmodo Hotspots App be your quick & clever guide. This smartphone application will take you to the best selected addresses in cities such as Antwerp, Brussels, Bruges and Ghent, help you meander across Mechelen, Hasselt, and Leuven and show you the highlights at the coast. Besides fashion, there's also beauty, coffee, deco, drinks, food and places to stay. No need to waste valuable time, you can just go straight to where it's hot. Handy!

The Belmodo Hotspots App was created by Belmodo with the help of VISITFLANDERS. Belmodo is an online blogazine that you can follow on www.belmodo.be. The app can be downloaded using the Apple Store or the Play Store.

OLIVIER THEYSKENS IN DEZEEN MAGAZINE

“Since I was born, I have been obsessed with dresses and fashion. It came naturally to me.”

MUST DO

FASHION HUNT

Are you looking for an original fashion-inspired team building activity? Why not play the Antwerp Fashion Hunt? During this challenging and strategic city game you'll help aspiring fashion designer Alexander complete his graduation collection and graduate from the Fashion Academy by completing various activities, team and photo missions. The game can be played by groups of 6 to 200 participants and is suited for all ages, men and women alike.

The Antwerp Fashion Hunt was developed by Visit Antwerpen and can be booked through one of the following events agencies: admire.be, aab-allaboutbelgium.be, borealsdmc.com, jada-events.be, midnightcoffee.be, wave-events.nl

E CITIES SPLENDID STREETS

Away from the masses, the loud logos and bulging bags of the high streets, shopping takes on a new dimension. Be sure to visit these streets and shops with their Belgian labels when you visit one of Flanders' pretty cities.

1 GHENT

Onderbergen including Nathalie Vleeschouwer, a.puura, hat designer Els Robberechts and Hot Couture

2 ANTWERP

Nationalestraat including Dries Van Noten, Morrison, Garde-Robe Nationale, Stay, Elsa and Annelies Timmermans

3 BRUSSELS

Dansaertstraat including Stijl, Underwear, Essentiel, Annemie Verbeke and Christa Reniers

4 LEUVEN

Mechelsestraat (and surroundings) including Sûmo, Profiel and Louise & Co

5 KNOKKE

Kustlaan including Essentiel, Natan, Diane von Furstenberg, Andres and American Outfitters

6 HASSELT

Kapelstraat (and surroundings) including Stijn Helsen, Essentiel Store, Handsome, Jeurissen, Titi + The German Kid and La Bottega



- 01 La fabrika, Dansaertstraat Brussels
- 02 Shopping in Knokke
- 03 Dries Van Noten Flagship Store, Nationalestraat Antwerp



Wim Bruynnooghe



Jo De Visscher



Maureen De Clercq



"I don't want to design a jumper that you can wear every day. You even need to be in a certain mood to wear my socks."

PORTRAIT

TOM VAN DER BORGHT

This rebel from Ghent was scouted while at school and now his designs are sold in America and Japan. Yet designer Tom Van Der Borgh has managed to keep both feet on the ground: "We all dream of becoming the next Karl Lagerfeld but there is no chance of that happening."

*editor: klaar wauters
pictures: greetje van buggenhout
& alexander popelier*

TOM VAN DER BORGHT:
"You need to dare to bend the rules."

What to wear for an interview with Tom Van Der Borgh? The man who believes in an eclectic clash of colours and patterns, who makes clothes spring to life with digital knitting, ingenious structures and 3D effects.

A simple white blouse, almost like an empty canvas, seems the safest bet, to make sure that all the attention goes to his exuberant designs. And yet he himself is dressed in a surprisingly understated outfit. "I can't wear my clothes daily and that is not the idea either. I don't want to design a jumper that you can wear every day. You even need to be in a certain mood to wear my socks."

LATERAL THINKING

YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN PASSIONATE ABOUT FASHION AND YET YOU ONLY DECIDED TO ENROL IN THE ACADEMY LATER IN LIFE?

"I spent seven years working in the social sector, mainly with underprivileged teens. I liked my job but after hours I preferred to be creative. Until my health failed me. I found out that I have a congenital muscular disease and I became almost completely paralysed as a result. I spent six months in bed, I was incapable of doing anything. I had no idea how it would evolve because not much is known about this disease even now. I did know one thing however: if I would make it through this, I would only do what I really wanted to do from then on."

SO HOW DID YOU MAKE IT THROUGH?

"After six months I started to regain feeling in my hands. I gradually was able to do some simple motor exercises and a sewing machine proved the ideal partner for this. So I started to experiment. My mum, who teaches pattern-cutting and sewing, however, was quick to point out my technical shortcomings. So I took a pattern design and sewing course. That's where I learnt the tricks of the trade, along with a bunch of grandmothers and I immediately knew that this was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. So I enrolled at the fashion academy in Sint-Niklaas."

YOU WERE STILL AT SCHOOL WHEN YOU WON A MAJOR COMPETITION, THE TRIUMPH INSPIRATION AWARD. THEN THE PACE REALLY PICKED UP..

"I suddenly found myself at Berlin Fashion Week. I won the World Final of the Triumph Inspiration Award, I was even given the opportunity to show a few of my designs on the catwalk. And I received a lot of attention, also from buyers. Which was strange, because I was still at school. When I graduated later that year, things went quite fast. I showed my collections in Berlin, Paris, Vienna and London. And I was even contacted by a representative of Panama Fashion Week. I was the first-ever Belgian designer to show my designs there, which they thought was hot news. To be fair, being famous



is the last thing on my mind and suddenly there I was, in Panama. It was all quite surreal."

FASHION OR ART?

DESPITE THE FACT THAT YOUR DESIGNS ARE WIDELY ACCLAIMED, THEY ARE ALSO QUITE NICHE.

"It's never been my goal to develop a commercial fashion brand. Fashion to me means something new. Maybe the past inspires you or you are more interested in the future but what you make is now. That is what the best designers have always done, they create things you've never seen before. I think that is my artistic desire. My work is borderline fashion and art. I always say: it's too much fashion to be art and too artistic to be fashion. But fashion is also quite in-your-face. What you wear always provokes a reaction. Beautiful, ugly, weird, ridiculous, or a work of genius, I don't care. Those are the types of reactions I'm looking for. And I'm most interested in the reactions of ordinary people. Some of the grandmothers in my sewing course still email me their thoughts after I present a collection. I love it."



- 01 A Naked Safari by Tom Van Der Borgh
- 02 Blast Curse Bless Homa by Tom Van Der Borgh
- 03 A Naked Safari by Tom Van Der Borgh



- 01 A Naked Safari by Tom Van Der Borgh
- 02 A Naked Safari by Tom Van Der Borgh
- 03 Blast Curse Bless Home by Tom Van Der Borgh
- 04 Tom Van Der Borgh



01



02

DO YOU PURPOSEFULLY CHOOSE TO ADD HUMOUR TO YOUR DESIGNS?

"It happens naturally. Humour is part of my personality, largely because what happened to me. When I became ill, that sense of humour, and sometimes also irony and even cynicism helped me pull through. Above all, I think it's important that we don't take ourselves too seriously."

WHAT ABOUT THE BRIGHT COLOURS, IS THAT ALSO PART OF THE HUMOUR? OR DO WE ALL JUST DRESS IN BORING COLOURS?

"I still live in Belgium. I think that says it all? This is the country that brought forth surrealists, where new beat was basically created in the fields. I love that small town mentality. At times there is something a bit weird and drab about Belgium. I like countering it with something bright."

WHO ARE YOUR FANS?

"Americans for the most part, but I also have a large fan base in Asia. They think it's a must to have a unique, hand-made, one-off piece. I know of a man in Japan, he's 65 and has three daughters. He only wears Tom Van Der Borgh, in the most extreme way possible. He wants the whole look, from head to toe, straight off the page of the lookbook. I hope to meet him one day."

ON A ROLLERCOASTER

WHAT KIND OF AN ENTREPRENEUR ARE YOU?

"I'm beginning to realise that I'm a better entrepreneur than I thought. I'm not always convinced you can be both creative and an entrepreneur, but I know that I will never be able to trust anyone else with the business aspect. I mainly surround myself with the right people. My sister for example has an economics degree and helps me with my accounts. My husband, a real people manager, also plays an important role. But I do a lot myself. I'm an instinctive entrepreneur. I have no idea about management strategies but I know very well what I want and how to get it."

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS?

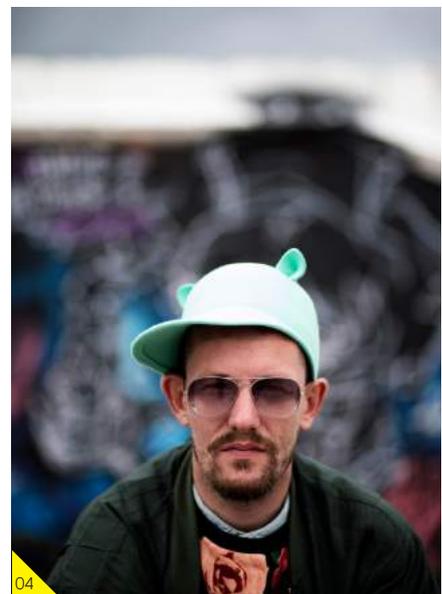
"Get your work out there, show it, get the ball rolling but always remain loyal to yourself. Always remember what you want to achieve. The fashion industry is a rollercoaster, it goes every which way. You need to be prepared for that."

YOU SHOW ONE COLLECTION A YEAR AND ALSO LIKE PARTNERSHIPS?

"You need to learn how to work with a commercial partner. There are limitations, which is far from evident. But I love it now. The know-how of a company combined with the know-how of a designer creates a strong product. I'm currently working with Citroën DS, Socio and Feeling Magazine, but I still have lots of other plans. I want to design a wallpaper collection and am searching for a partner to design duvet covers and other types of bed linens. I really believe in commercial partnerships for young designers. We all leave the Academy with hopes of becoming the next Karl Lagerfeld or Raf Simons. But either we become part of a major fashion brand or we become independent and want our own label. The reality is that you always need to remember your dream, but that you also have to dare to bend the rules a bit." ■



03



04

TOM'S FAVOURITES

Tom has been living in Ghent for almost twenty years. This is his list of top spots:

EAT: Aperto Chiuso

"A cosy Italian restaurant where they serve typical Italian fare: pure, simple, fresh and delicious food."

Aperto Chiuso 82, Sleepstraat, Ghent

DRINK: Café Labath

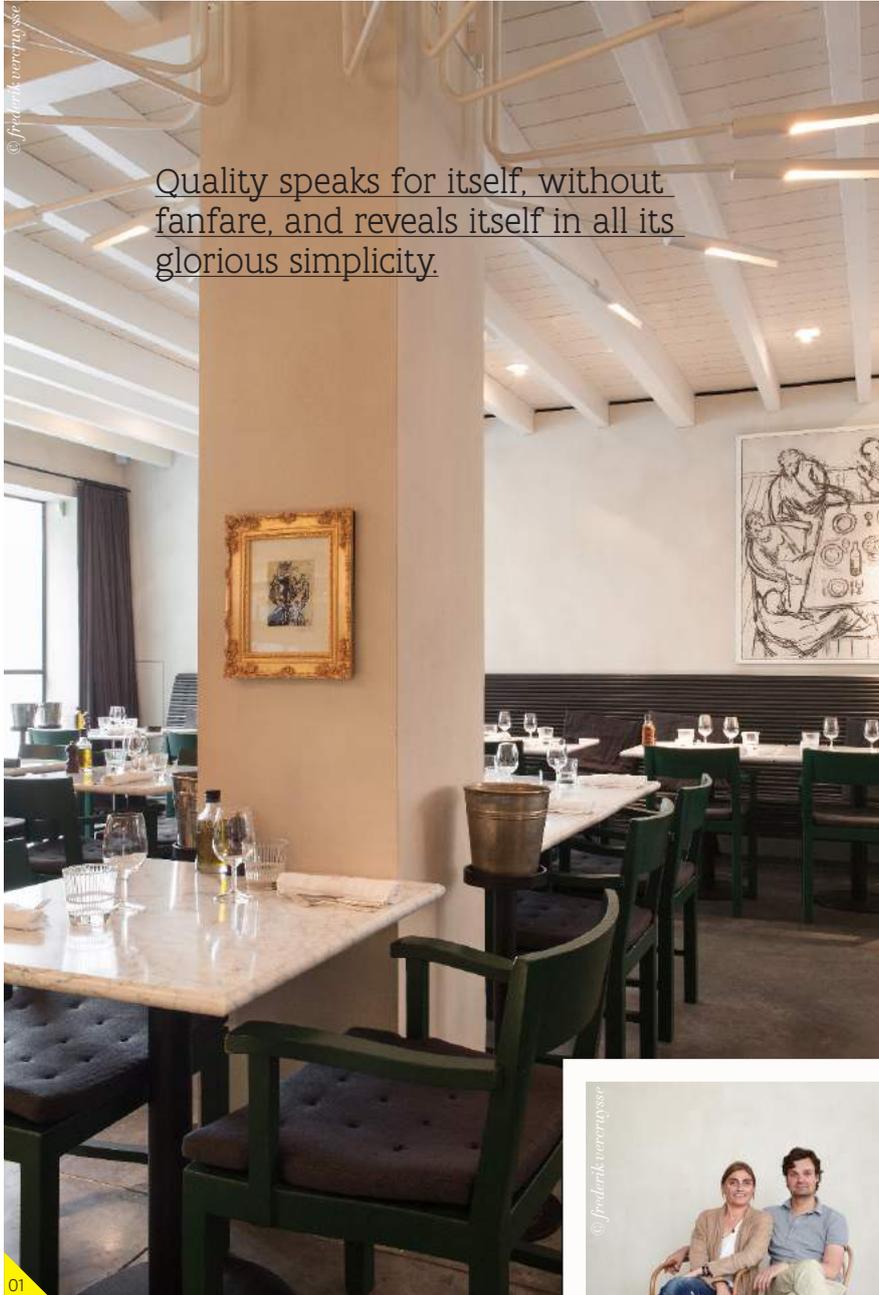
"The best coffee break in Ghent."

Café Labath, Oude Houtlei 1, Ghent

SHOP: Essentiel

"They always have something fun. Absolutely the best commercial Belgian brand of the moment."

Essentiel, Henegouwenstraat 2, 9000 Ghent, www.essential-antwerp.be



Quality speaks for itself, without fanfare, and reveals itself in all its glorious simplicity.

SHOPPING

CONCEPT STORES

Feel like lately you've spent too much time in cold, impersonal meeting rooms? A growing number of original meeting venues provide welcome relief. Ever considered organising your business meeting in a concept store? Here are four surprising, amazing and inspiring creative hotspots.

editor: klaar wauters
pictures: graanmarkt 13, île en ville & visitflanders

ANTWERP

GRAANMARKT 13

Don't worry, you've come to the right place. Graanmarkt 13 really is located in this stately town house. But the owners Tim and Ilse prefer subtlety. So don't expect an in-your-face logo, or an XL shop window full of mannequins or a long list of labels on the window. Quality, after all, speaks for itself, without fanfare, and reveals itself in all its glorious simplicity.



WHAT? Graanmarkt 13 is the place to go for a taste of design, fashion, art, culture and gourmet food. The first floor is a multipurpose space for exhibitions and events. The Store has creations by young talented designers as well as some outstanding design objects. In the cellar you will find the excellent restaurant of Chef Sepp Nobels, where he combines fresh ingredients into light and healthy fare. Don't forget to visit the roof garden where the chef grows his own vegetables and herbs. The bees make delicious honey and pollinate the cottage garden. →



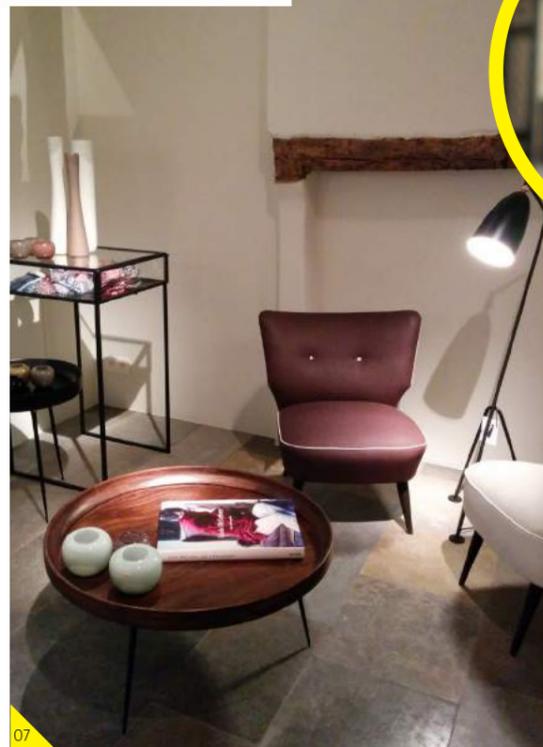
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- 01 Graanmarkt 13
- 02 Graanmarkt 13
- 03 Graanmarkt 13
- 04 Graanmarkt 13
- 05 Graanmarkt 13
- 06 Île en ville
- 07 Île en ville
- 08 Île en ville

TOPTIP Love it? Don't want to leave? You'll be happy to know you can rent the luxurious penthouse on the top floor.

BUSINESS FIRST The Gallery is the ideal setting for a business lunch but you can also rent it for meetings or private dinners.

Graanmarkt 13, 2000 Antwerp
+32 3 337 79 91 - www.graanmarkt13.be

GHENT

ÎLE EN VILLE

Together with her children, Charlotte and Maximilien, Michele dreamed of creating a unique place with an equally unique offering. She discovered a neglected 17th-century gem in the Beguinage in Ghent, covered in layers of dust. Lovingly, she restored this piece of heritage with respect for the building's history. At the same time, the light, crisp and contemporary look is impossible to ignore.

WHAT'S ON OFFER? Well-known (often Belgian) and lesser known names, a wide array of clothes, accessories, jewellery,

design items, furniture, books and leather goods. Don't forget to visit the first floor. You can regularly discover new work by promising artists in the art gallery.

TOPTIP Have you got a sweet tooth? Enjoy the perfect break with the Afternoon Tea & Sweets, from 3 pm until 6 pm.

BUSINESS FIRST The restaurant's atmosphere contrasts sharply with the hustle and bustle of the city outside. Here you can enjoy a quiet lunch, and some straightforward, simple yet tasty refreshments. In the evening, share a plate of tapas with your business partners to break the ice.

Begijnhofdries 39, 9000 Ghent
+32 9 336 33 08 - www.ile-en-ville.be



08



01

BRUSSELS

SMETS PREMIUM STORE

You'd expect to find Smets' temple of luxury on the stately avenue Louizalaan, but you're wrong. They chose the less glamorous Leuvensesteenweg instead. The gigantic concrete façade contrasts sharply with its surroundings. At the same time, it also separates the world outside from the hallucinatory world you expect (and get to see) inside.

WHAT? A whopping 3,000 m² (32,300 sq ft) full of luxury goods. How glorious it is! Every corner of this store has something different on offer but the objective is the same: to knock you off your socks. High-end labels and creative designers, clothes, cosmetics, furniture and accessories. SMETS has it all, as well as creations by young emerging designers.

TOPTIP Parking your car is easy because SMETS Premium Store has a large car park for 180 cars.

BUSINESS FIRST How about a business lunch with that SMETS wow-factor? Book a table at Bowery, where chef Maxime Maziers will ensure that every dish you are served has the same exceptional level of luxury and creativity. An after-work drink in S Bar, which serves the most exquisite cocktails, is also worth considering. Best of all, the terrace, ground floor and mezzanine are available for creative meetings, events and product launches.

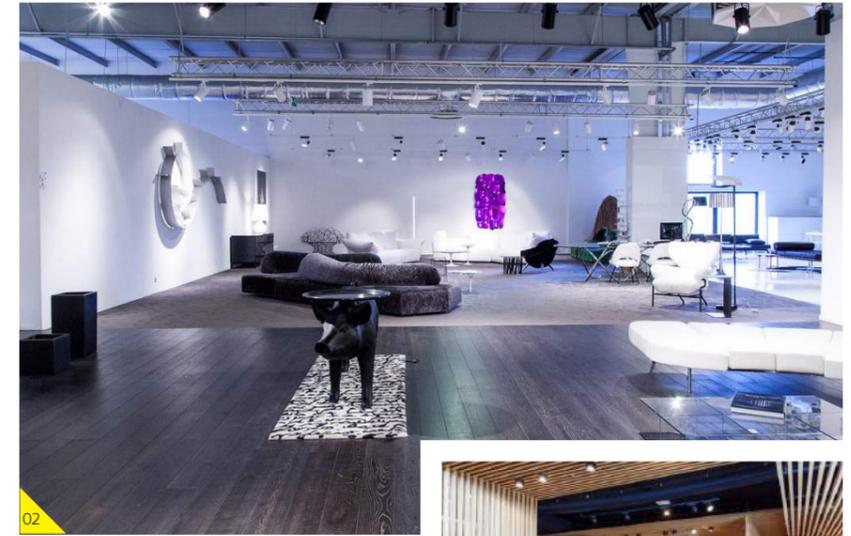
Leuvensesteenweg 650-652, 1030 Brussels -
+32 2 325 12 30 - www.smets.lu

ANTWERP

SEVEN ROOMS

Mr and Mrs Fox... an air of mystery surrounds the owners of Seven Rooms. In fact they like to remain anonymous but their magnificent loft is all yours. Spacious, with dazzling white walls, a minimalist interior and filled with a delectable design mix.

WHAT? Seven rooms, full of art, design, fashion and furniture, laid out around



02



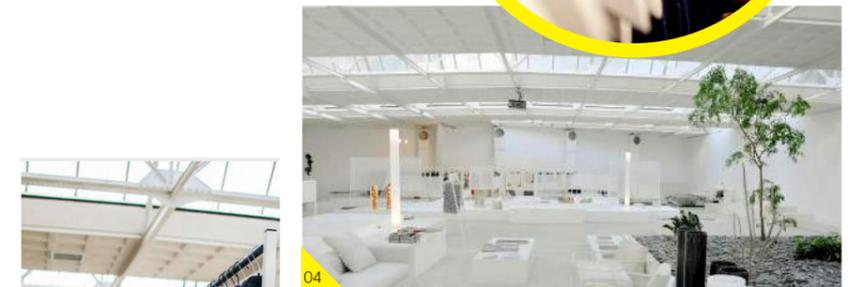
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an indoor Japanese garden. Browse their impressive collection of lifestyle books in the library and get yourself a bite to eat in the kitchen. Don't forget the walk-in closet full of exclusive women's labels. In the other rooms you can discover selections of furniture, accessories, artwork and design objects, collected by the owners on their travels around the world.

TOPTIP This is slow shopping at its best. The hostess welcomes you with a drink and a bite to eat as you take the time to explore this magnificent space. ■

BUSINESS FIRST One of the rooms as your perfect meeting venue? Deal!

Sint-Antoniussstraat 12, 2000 Antwerp
+32 3 227 12 00 - www.sevenrooms.be



04



05

- 01 SMETS
- 02 SMETS
- 03 SMETS
- 04 Seven rooms
- 05 Seven rooms

BEAUTIFUL BUILDINGS: AMAZING VENUES

Flanders is renowned for its wide array of historic buildings. Furthermore, the region boasts some exciting examples of state-of-the-art contemporary architecture. Though not always purpose-built – and perhaps because they aren't – these buildings make the most unique meeting and event venues. Here is a selection of venues that are definitely worth a place on any meeting and event organiser's list.

editor: diana goodwin
pictures: visit flanders



BRUSSELS ATOMIUM

Belgium's most famous landmark makes for a truly unforgettable venue. Built in 1958 for the World Fair and designed to resemble a giant iron molecule, it represented mid-20th-century optimism about the promise and possibilities of the atom. The Atomium was completely restored in 2006 so that its stainless-steel-clad spheres shine brightly by day and sparkle with hundreds of embedded LED lights at night. The redesigned interior incorporates retro-style furnishings to enhance the Mid-Century Modern vibe. Meeting space inside the 9 spheres can accommodate up to 800 people in total, with a breathtaking, panoramic view over Brussels.

www.atomium.be



OSTEND KURSAAL

This iconic Modernist building on the Belgian coast was built shortly after WWII as the last in a series of impressive seaside pleasure palaces that offered dining facilities and diversions to holiday goers. Its construction, in reinforced concrete clad in white Portland stone, was innovative for the time. The Hall of Honour is the centrepiece of the building, with huge glass windows overlooking the sea. Belgian artist Paul Delvaux's original 26 metre (85 ft) long mural can still be admired in the Delvaux Hall. The Kursaal offers a range of facilities to suit every need, from a 2,000-seat concert hall to smaller meeting rooms.

www.bzb-kursaalostende.be

MECHELEN LAMOT

Housed in a former brewery, this exciting conference centre combines industrial heritage with eye-catching contemporary architecture. The old brick construction was partially demolished and sliced open to join the historic building to a new cantilevered concrete structure clad in glass, giving a brilliant result. Centrally located on the waterfront in Mechelen, Lamot offers eight multifunctional meeting rooms, gourmet catering and a full-service, professional staff.

<http://lamot-mechelen.be/en>



- 01 Kursaal, Ostend
- 02 Lamot, Mechelen
- 03 Kursaal, Ostend
Delvauxhall and loungehall



The Hall of Honour is the centrepiece of the building, with huge glass windows overlooking the sea.



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ANTWERP
FLANDERS MEETING & CONVENTION CENTER ANTWERP

Flanders' newest and most spectacular meeting venue combines a historic setting with daring modern architecture and state-of-the-art technology. This exciting building complex in the heart of Antwerp incorporates a multipurpose, glass-roofed atrium, a brand-new, 2,000-seat auditorium, and multiple meeting and seminar rooms. With this range of facilities, the possibilities for your conference, meeting or event are endless. The buildings of Belgium's first zoological garden, built in 1843 combine Beau-Arts splendor with touches of Art Nouveau. In 2009, British architectural firm SimpsonHaugh won the competition to build a new concert & convention center on the site while respecting the listed 19th-century buildings. The result is a

tour-de-force of adaptive design that combines the beauty of the past with 21st-century comfort. The new Queen Elisabeth Hall, with its near-perfect acoustics, rich interior and sophisticated theatrical features, can accommodate even the biggest corporate presentations. Besides this, FMMCA has thirty additional meeting and breakout rooms, not to mention the zoo's beautiful 19th-century function rooms, such as the Marble Hall with its stately columns, or the Verlat Hall, with wildlife murals by Antwerp painter Charles Verlat. The adjoining Winter Garden is also available for cocktail receptions. As a bonus, your guests can enjoy a stroll or jog through the zoo. Flanders Meeting & Convention Center Antwerp is conveniently located next to Antwerp

- 01 Flanders Meeting & Convention Center Antwerp, profile
- 02 Atrium between Historical Wing and new built, Carnot Wing
- 03 MAS, Antwerp

Central Station—itsself an architectural landmark and routinely listed among the world's most beautiful train stations. The 4-star Radisson Blu Astrid Hotel, designed by star architect Michael Graves, is right next door. Antwerp's famous diamond district and Chinatown are close by, and the historic city centre is a mere 10-minute walk away.

www.fmcca.com
Flanders Meeting & Convention Center Antwerp is set to open at the end of 2016.

ANTWERP
MAS

Dutch architects Neutelings Riedijk designed Antwerp's new city museum to resemble a stack of shipping containers, stacked vertically in the middle of the old harbour, each level turned 90° to form a spiral. As visitors ascend the internal staircase, curtains of undulating glass create panoramic views of the world below. The red sandstone exterior is decorated with hundreds of hands, the traditional symbol of the city. Located on the top floor of the MAS is 9Beaufort, a premiere banquet hall with catering by a Michelin-starred chef, available for parties and events.

www.gbeaufort.be



04

BRUGES
PROVINCIAL COURT

Built at the turn of the 20th century as the seat of the provincial government of West Flanders, this Gothic Revival palace resembles nothing so much as a fairy-tale castle. With its ornate stonework, delicate spires and prime location on the Market square in Bruges, the Provincial Court

is a luxurious location for a special meeting or event. Inside, the historic interiors incorporate wood-beam ceilings, carved stone fireplaces, stained-glass windows and rich furnishings. The monumental spiral staircase, decorated with Gothic stone tracery and statues, is a real show-stopper.

www.meetinginbruges.be

LEUVEN
FACULTY CLUB

The Grand Beguinage of Leuven is a unique city-within-a-city, with traditional brick buildings lining charming cobblestone streets and peaceful canals. The former community for single women and widows was founded in the 13th century and is now a UNESCO World Heritage site. Part of the renovated heritage site, with original features like wooden beams and tiled floors, now houses modern conference facilities, with a range of multifunctional rooms that can accommodate between 10 and 200 people.

www.facultyclub.be/en



07

BRUSSELS
HOTEL SOLVAY

This architectural masterpiece was designed down to the last detail by Victor Horta for a wealthy Brussels industrialist in 1894. Incredibly, the stunning interior with its original Art Nouveau furnishings and décor has been preserved and is available exclusively for private events. The mansion's elegant living areas, with all their original furnishings, can accommodate private functions and parties. Guests arrive via the original carriage entrance and enter through the spectacular marble-floored foyer. The magnificent central staircase, with its intricate cast-iron and wood balustrade, is decorated with an original mural by Théo van Rysselberghe and crowned by a vaulted Tiffany glass skylight.

www.hotelsolvay.be

- 04 Provincial Court, Bruges
- 05 Faculty Club, Leuven
- 06 Faculty Club, Leuven, meeting room in the attic
- 07 Hotel Solvay, Brussels

FLANDERS MEETING & CONVENTION CENTER ANTWERP

CLOSER TO WHAT MATTERS

OPENING NOVEMBER 2016

**IBTM
WORLD**
Booth G50

© Ian Simpson Architects

Creating real live experiences is part of our heritage as a famous Gathering Place and 19th century ZOO - an inspiring location for an early morning run or engaging conversations amidst wildlife. Nature nurturing connections and bringing you closer to your purpose and true success. Closer to what matters to you.

- 30 meeting rooms accommodating 2,500 pax
- Auditorium seating 2,000 pax
- Adjacent to world's most beautiful railway station incl Eurostar and Thalys
- State-of-the-art technology and excellent service

Discover more on www.fmcca.com



FLANDERS
**MEETING &
CONVENTION**
CENTER

ANTWERP

PLANNING AN EVENT IN BRUSSELS? DON'T MISS OUT ON THE IDEAL LOCATION. UNIQUE VENUES OF EXCEPTIONAL QUALITY ARE ALL RIGHT HERE.

Try the BSV user-friendly venue search feature on www.venues.be
Find venues, get rates, book the venue. It's simple. It's free.



BRUSSELS SPECIAL VENUES is the leading non-profit event venue network in Brussels for corporate, association, institution or private events planners. It represents the widest choice of unique venues in Brussels, with adaptable events spaces and a range of diverse architectural styles to accommodate all tastes. Whatever the event, and whatever its size.

www.venues.be | info@venues.be

 **BRUSSELS
SPECIAL
VENUES**

A Collection of Unique Meeting & Event Spaces

CONCERTGEBOUW BRUGGE

Meet in style in the centre of Bruges



Concertgebouw Brugge is the perfect place for your meeting or event!

With 1,289 seats, the **Concert Hall** is the largest conference room in the region. Despite its size, it has a warm and welcoming atmosphere. And naturally it has excellent acoustics. The more intimate **Chamber Music Hall** envelops smaller conferences and seminars in a cosy glow.

The Lantern Tower has beautiful banquet rooms you can hire for an unforgettable party. **Forum 6** and **Forum 7** are ideal locations for a wedding party, birthday party, client event or press conference. Stylish, affordable rooms with a priceless view!

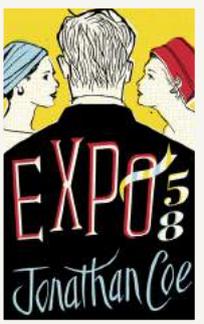
The Concertgebouw's modern architecture, artistic ambiance and versatility offer a wide choice of formats for events and parties of every size. **Every occasion or celebration will be unique.** You can choose from our own wide and varied repertoire, or, if you prefer, we can put together an individual package, tailored to meet your needs and budget.

Our central location in the heart of Bruges makes the experience especially memorable.

CONTACT

Francis Op de Beeck +32 50 47 69 75
francis@concertgebouw.be

TO EXPLORE & ADMIRE



Reading tip

BRUSSELS

Expo '58

When Flemish radio station Radio 1 interviewed author Jonathan Coe at the Atomium in 2010, they did not imagine this would lead to his next novel. But it did. Coe calls it one of his favourite buildings in the world and it inspired him to write Expo '58. In this book we join Thomas Foley, a civil servant responsible for the Britannia, the pub next to the British Pavilion at the World Fair in 1958. The Exposition, the cold war and love all feature in this charming novel that will make you want to visit the Atomium just to see what the fuss is about.

Expo '58, by Jonathan Coe.



FILM!

AND...ACTION!

Hollywood it is not, but international producers, directors and actors have found their way to Flanders and Brussels. The prestigious BBC series *The White Queen*, which tells the story of the 15th-century War of the Roses, used the cathedral in Ypres and the Bruges Town Hall as stand-ins for English medieval sites. In the 2015 film *Moonwalkers*, starring Rupert Grint and Ron Perlman, Brussels was the city-double for seventies London.

LONELY PLANET

“Smack in the middle of Brussels, Bruges and Antwerp, Ghent distils their greatest attributes into one engaging and enchanting city.”



MECHELEN

HIGH ABOVE MECHELEN

In Mechelen **Het Anker** brews the lovely Carolus beers. Beer aficionados can visit the brewery and taste their wide range of products. For an even more spectacular tasting of Carolus beer, you can climb to the top of the **St. Rumbold's Cathedral**, one of Flanders 15th-century architectural treasures.

www.hetanker.be

600,000

THE NUMBER OF FIGURINES THAT ARTIST KOEN VANMECHELEN WANTS TO CREATE IN HIS WORKSHOPS FOR THE COMBAT@CWRM PROJECT.

It is part of 'Gone West', the extensive four-year WWI memorial programme, organised by the Province of West Flanders. There will be a figurine for each victim of the war and in 2018, they will be part of an art installation in the no man's land between the two former frontlines.

Focus Flanders and @dmire are just two examples of DMC's that can help you organise activities in Flanders Fields and its surroundings, from guided battlefield tours to boat trips and culinary walks.

www.focusflanders.be, www.admire.be



01



02



03

WHEN IN BRUGES

Bruges is world-famous for its medieval canals and cobblestones, picturesque architecture and picture-postcard views. Most visitors spend time around the Market square, focusing on the main tourist sites, enjoying the many fine restaurants and browsing in the city's diverse shops. But Bruges has another side, far from the bustling crowds but closer than you think. There are hidden places in the city centre where few tourists venture—places of natural beauty and quiet charm. These spots offer the busy traveller a restful alternative to the standard tourist activities.

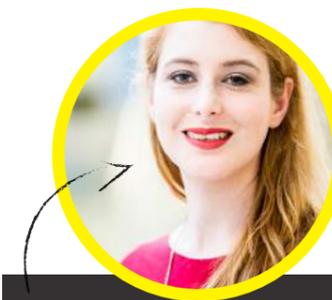
editor: diana goodwin
pictures: imageselect & visitflanders

One of the most famous historic buildings in Bruges is the **Basilica of the Holy Blood**, which was featured in the 2008 cult film "In Bruges." But did you know that the scenes set in the basilica were actually filmed on a different location? Colin Farrell and Brendan Gleeson are in fact in the **Jerusalem Church**, less than a kilometer away. This private chapel was built by the Adornes family in the 15th century. The church and the surrounding estate are still owned by their descendants. A new visitor centre tells the story of Anselm Adornes, the influential merchant, knight and diplomat whose pilgrimage to the Holy Land inspired him to build a chapel modeled on the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. To step inside the Jerusalem Church is to step back in time. The soaring central nave, stained glass windows and beautiful artwork

create an atmosphere of reverence and stillness. Afterward, stroll around the estate grounds and take a break in the tea room overlooking the gardens. A gift shop sells local specialties and the family's own wine.

There are hidden oases called **Godshuizen** scattered throughout the historic city centre. Look carefully and you can spot these secret gardens enclosed by rows of whitewashed houses on many of Bruges' streets. Look for the entry portals with the name of the 'Godshuis' painted above. These almshouses were built over the centuries to house the poor. They've been carefully restored and are still inhabited today.

Bruges is encircled by a ring of water is bordered by parkland. These **vesten** are the former city ramparts and include several of the original city gates. The green ring is the perfect place for a walk, bike ride or picnic.



EXPERT ADVICE
KARI ALLOO
MEETING CONSULTANT

Meet local amateur chefs and discover the real Bruges hospitality.

Go on a guided tour of the city and have a number of hobby chefs welcome you and your group into their homes. The family environment, combined with exquisite homemade dishes, creates a wonderful experience and gives you the opportunity to get in touch with some locals. This is an incentive your guests won't easily forget!

Hobby Chefs is an incentive organised by Geoffrey Van Hulle Event & Meeting Designers. This DMC specialises in VIP activities in Bruges. More information can be found on www.geoffreyvanhulle.be.

- 01 The Jerusalem Church, less than a kilometer away from the centre of Bruges
- 02 View on the Vesten of Bruges
- 03 The whitewashed houses called Godshuizen
- 04 Historic windmill along the Kruisvest
- 05 Church of Our Lady and cemetery, Damme



05

Ramble along the **Kruisvest** on the northeast edge of the historic centre and you'll come across four historic windmills, two of them are open to visitors from April to September.

Whether your goal is business or pleasure, Bruges has everything the traveller needs: stylish accommodations, world-class restaurants, fascinating museums and attractions, and plenty of places to unwind. Venture off the beaten track and discover some of Bruges' more peaceful and secluded treasures. A bit of nature, a quiet sanctuary, and your own corner of paradise awaits.

Speaking of paradise, Bruges boasts some of Flanders most beautiful listed houses. Amongst those is **Huis Jacquemine**, a 13th-century townhouse named after one of its first inhabitants. Recently renovated, the owners want to share this heavenly place with others. Jacquemine is an awe



04

... TO TAKE A BREAK & RELAX
LOCAL SECRETS

KARI

"Whether your goal is business or pleasure, Bruges has everything the traveler needs"

BRUGES



ART



ARCHITECTURE



HERITAGE



NATURE & PARKS



STAR RESTAURANTS

Original venues

Absolute Art Gallery is a contemporary art gallery in the heart of Bruges, overlooking the canals. Here, Belgian and international artists like Christine Comyn are represented. The gallery gives Bruges' historic atmosphere a modern day touch and is the perfect venue for private get-togethers and cosy drinks receptions.

www.absoluteartgallery.com

A tea pavilion in the Bruges waterways is what most visitors get to see of **House Empire**. This lovingly restored 19th century house with stylish salons and a beautiful garden is ideal for dinners and meetings of up to 100 guests.

huis-empire.com

The **Schipperskapel** or the former chapel for barges is now 'The Chapel of Awesomeness'. This cool venue offers exhibition and event space and adds value to all business events. With 2 meeting rooms, a large entrance hall and courtyard, this venue is ideal for drinks receptions, dinner events product launches.

www.schipperskapel.be

Bruges offers meeting planners an exceptionally large collection of special venues. The local convention bureau **Meeting in Brugge**, can help you find the right one for your event.

www.meetinginbrugge.be

IN FLANDERS FIELDS

With historic cities like Antwerp, Ghent and Bruges, and beautiful natural sites like Kalmthout Heath, Flanders has a lot to offer its visitors. One of the more poignant places to visit is Ypres, especially during the First World War Centenary.

editor: nathalie le blanc
pictures: visitflanders



01



02

01 City of Ypres
02 the Menin Gate Memorial Ypres

wasn't performed during the Second World War, but the very evening Ypres was liberated, the bugle players were back on duty.

EPICENTRE OF REMEMBRANCE

Ypres is a typically charming Flemish city. A beautiful market square, an impressive cathedral, winding streets and a great big monument smack in the centre. The Lakenhalle is a gothic hall built in the 14th century as a market place for the cloth trade that made the city prosperous in Medieval times. A 70 metre (230 ft) Belfry tower finishes the picture.

What you see looks ancient, but the city was pretty much completely demolished during WWI. Some of the most furious battles of that conflict were fought around Ypres, and for the duration of the war it was surrounded by German troops on three sides. There wasn't much left of Ypres by the time the war was over and it took 40 years to rebuild.

Today it is a lively town where you will always hear visitors speaking lots of different languages. The WWI heritage, the many memorial sites in the surrounding countryside, and the In Flanders Fields Museum have made Ypres

the epicentre of WWI Remembrance. The city performs this role with honour and pride.

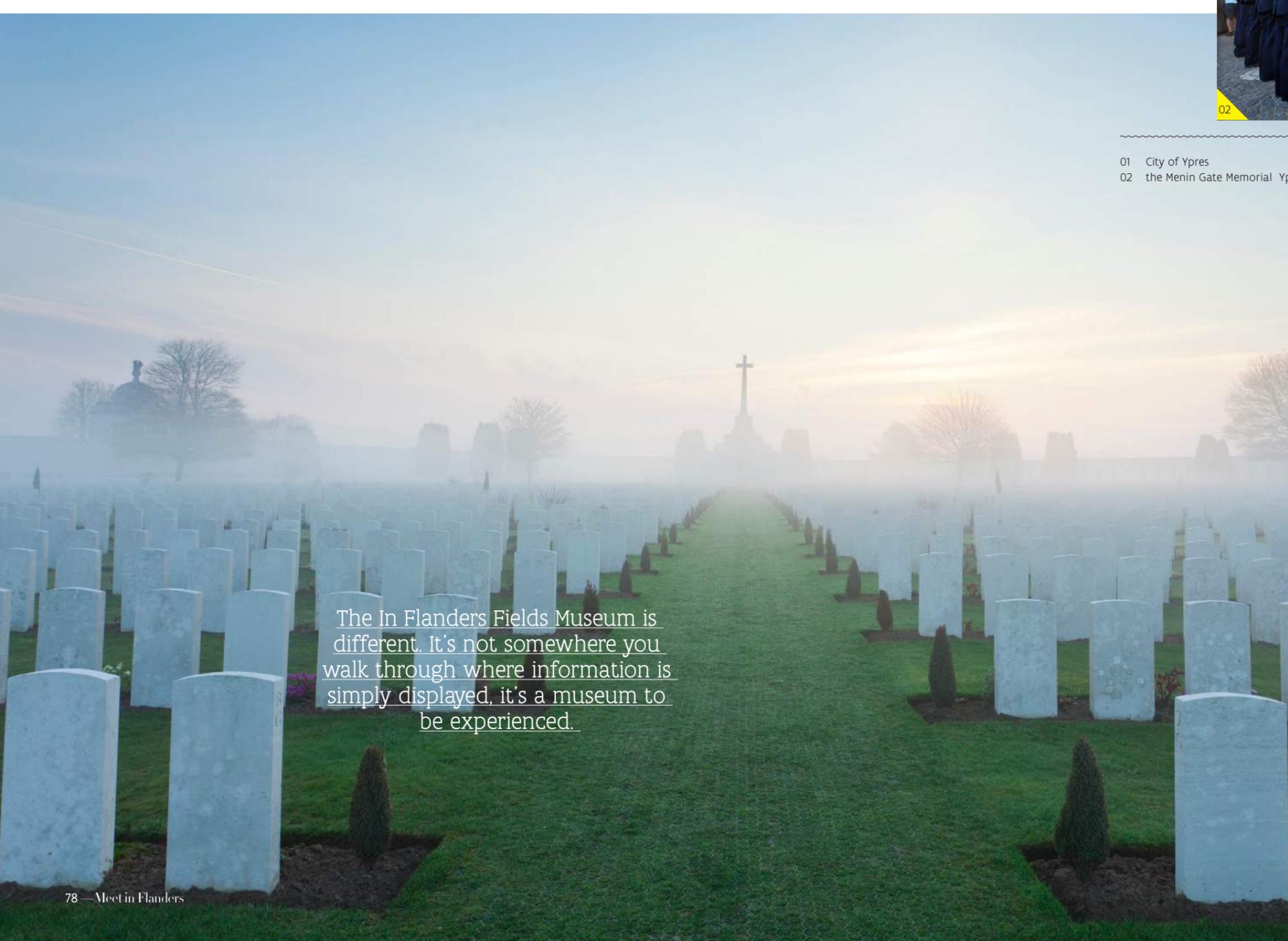
BIG HISTORY, SMALL STORIES

The In Flanders Fields Museum on the first floor of the Lakenhalle takes its name from a poem written by John McCrae, a Canadian poet who worked as a surgeon in Ypres in 1915. Museums can be stuffy, boring places, especially if they have to explain complicated and tragic historical events. In Flanders Fields is different. It is not a museum you walk through while information is simply displayed, it is a museum to be experienced. Before you go in, you are asked to enter some information into a computer and then you get a digital poppy-wristband. This allows you to follow four individuals who lived through the war. 600,000 people of more than 50 different nationalities were killed during this conflict. Millions of people were affected, and every one of them has a story. Visiting In Flanders Fields, allows you to discover just a few of these stories. Children who fled to France with their families, young →

“It's the most moving thing I've ever seen.” The young Brit puts his arm around the girl next to him. She wipes away a tear. “None of the more than 150 people was left unmoved by what they just saw under Ypres' Menin Gate. The Last Post ceremony has taken place daily since the first of July 1928. As a tribute to the soldiers who sacrificed their lives in World War I, members of the Ypres Fire Department play the Last Post. It is a deceptively simple ceremony. Traffic is stopped around the impressive Menin Gate, everyone gathers round, the bugle players stand in line, salute and then play the haunting song traditionally used as a last salute to the fallen. The ringing sound of the bugles under this huge gate seems to add to the emotion and makes the music go straight to your core. The Last Post is followed by a minute of silence, and then the firemen play a Reveille. Those six or seven minutes will not be easily forgotten by anyone who's ever witnessed the ceremony.

What adds to its beauty, is the steadfastness of the tradition. The Last Post is played every single night, summer or winter, even on Christmas and New Year's Day. It

The In Flanders Fields Museum is different. It's not somewhere you walk through where information is simply displayed, it's a museum to be experienced.



... TO EXPLORE & ADMIRE
IN FLANDERS FIELDS



01

men fighting in the trenches, nurses trying to save lives, mothers keeping their families safe; they bring a new perspective to statistics about victims and deaths, military movements and historical analysis.

When walking through the museum, you will be stopped in your tracks by the stories of regular people who experienced the hardships of war. You will for example listen to the story of a Belgian bicycle-maker who tells you what it was like to be a refugee, and be fascinated by the priest who explains what happened to his village. But most of all, you will be moved by French, British, Belgian and German soldiers, describing how the famous ceasefire came to happen on that first Christmas in 1914. These brilliantly acted iconic characters not only bring history to life, they make it painfully clear that the nature of war has not changed much over the past 100 years. Some of these stories sound as if they could be featured on the news today. Ypres is officially a City of Peace, and this museum certainly is a brilliant advocate for that. ■



02

IN FLANDERS FIELDS MUSEUM

During the four years of the World War I Commemoration, In Flanders Fields has an extensive programme of events. For instance, the museum regularly invites contemporary artists to exhibit. Visitors who want to dig deeper in the history of WWI can do research in the Knowledge Centre. There is also an information desk in the museum where visitors can find lots of tourist information about Ypres and the surrounding region.

In the Lakenhalle, Grote Markt 34, Ypres
www.inflandersfields.be



© Stad Ieper-Tijl Capoen

The Last Post, a must for every visitor

Every night at 8 o'clock, Ypres' firemen play The Last Post in memory of the hundreds of thousands of soldiers who lost their lives in WWI. Visitors are asked to behave respectfully. There is no applause, and absolute quiet during the ceremony is expected.



03

- 01 Poppy flowers as a symbol of the commemoration
- 02 In Flanders Fields Museum
- 03 Ijzertoren, Diksmuide



EXPERT ADVICE

KANITTHA PAKSEE
MEETING ASSISTANT

In Flanders Fields for meeting and incentive organisers

Enjoy the view

Combine a visit to the In Flanders Fields Museum with a climb of the 70 metre (230 ft) Belfry of The Lakenhalle and enjoy a magnificent view of the surrounding countryside. After this exhausting but rewarding climb you can treat your incentive group to a delicious lunch at the Museum Café.

www.inflandersfields.be

Where to meet?

Hotel Novotel Ypres*** is located in the city centre and just a short walk away from the In Flanders Fields Museum. It is the ideal location for meetings and events of up to 200 people.

www.accorhotels.com/ypres

Take a break

Legendary French military engineer and architect Vauban built the reinforcements around the city of Ypres. These 'kazematten' once served as the headquarters of British troops and as a bomb shelter for the citizens of Ypres. There's an attractive Visitor Centre, a museum and an eatery serving local specialities. The other vaulted brick rooms are used for exhibitions, receptions, lectures and meetings.

www.toerismeieper.be

Explore the countryside

The countryside around Ypres is not only rich in history, this western corner of Flanders is also beautiful. Perfect for a bike tour, a boat ride or even an afternoon on a Vespa. There are not only the sites that remind us of WWI, the area also has some charming villages, lovely castles, and fascinating nature reserves.

www.flandersfields.be

Some adventure

If you want a spectacular experience, then abseiling down the Ijzertoren is what you are looking for. This tower was built as a plea for peace after WWI, and sliding down its 84 metre (273 ft) is a high-octane activity reserved for thrill seekers who are not afraid of heights.

www.theoutsidercoast.be

A bit of fun

Your stay in Ypres doesn't have to be all about the war. Escape games are popular all over the world, and if you want to try a real-life version **The Longest Hour** is what you are looking for. Your visit to an abandoned house in Pateelstraat will be an experience you won't forget easily.

www.escapegames.be

YPRES



ART



HERITAGE



ARCHITECTURE



COMMEMORATION

A NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

We can't promise the exhibits will come to life and talk to you, but we can guarantee that an evening event in one of Flanders world-class museums will be a uniquely rewarding experience. Best of all, there are museums to suit every interest, from fine art to natural history, and from comic strips to automobiles. Here are some of our favourites.

editor: diana goodwin

M – The city of Leuven's new municipal museum is an innovative institution known for its unusual practice of exhibiting late-Gothic painting and sculpture alongside 19th- and 20th-century works of art. The building itself is a successful mix of old and new architecture. Besides fully equipped meeting rooms, the museum's garden courtyard and rooftop patio, with its panoramic view of the city, are also available for hire.

www.mleuven.be/en/about-m/event-facilities/

Belgian Comic Strip Centre – A museum dedicated to the 'ninth art', housed in an historic Art Nouveau building. This former warehouse designed by Victor Horta still contains much of its original interior décor, including beautiful wrought-iron railings, stained glass, and mosaic floors. The entrance hall with its central atrium makes an especially lovely venue for drinks receptions. As a bonus, guests can visit the museum's galleries, dedicated to classic and contemporary cartoon art.

www.comicscenter.net/en/hire-of-venue →



Victor Horta



01



02

- 01 Belgian Comic Strip Centre
© Daniel Fouss
- 02 Museum M, Leuven





01



STAM – Ghent's award-winning city museum combines historic architecture with modern functionality and design. An evening event here benefits from a variety of function and meeting rooms – including an authentic medieval chapel and refectory. Its beautiful location on the banks of the River Lys makes STAM even more unique. Guests can explore the museum's galleries and learn about the history of this fascinating city, from its earliest settlers to its greatest leaders.

www.stamgent.be

Red Star Line Museum

– This new museum, dedicated to the immigrant experience, is housed in the former warehouses of the historic Red Star Line shipping company.

The adaptive reuse project was carried out by the same team responsible for the renovation of the Ellis Island Visitor Center in New York. Highlights of the design include original architectural features, an interactive museum experience and an observation tower built to look like a steamship's smokestack. From the top of the tower, visitors get a panoramic view of the River Scheldt and the old harbour district.

www.redstarline.be

Museum of Natural Sciences

– Imagine a seated dinner in the Dinosaur Gallery amid the prehistoric skeletons, or a cocktail reception in the '250 Years of Natural Sciences' Hall with artifacts ranging from meteorites to fossils. Besides the natural

- 01 Red Star Line Museum
© Filip Dujardin
- 02 Museum of Natural Sciences

history displays, the museum offers a beautiful setting overlooking the Leopold Park in the European District. Both the museum's garden and terrace are available for hire. The experienced event staff can help you plan events for 15 up to 1,500 people.

www.naturalsciences.be/en/professionals/events



02



Autoworld – Combining an awe-inspiring architectural setting with an even more impressive collection of rare and classic cars, this is one museum that could never be considered boring or stuffy. The 19th-century steel-and-glass hall was built to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Belgian state and is part of the historic architectural complex at the heart of Cinquantenaire Park. The main hall houses the collection, while the mezzanine provides additional function space for up to 1,500 people.

www.autoworld.be/meeting-events

Fine Arts Museum of Ghent

– This beautiful building from the turn of the 19th century was fully renovated in 2007 to create a modern museum for the 21st century, while preserving its original Beaux-Arts architecture. After opening hours, you can hire the entire venue and allow your guests to have the galleries all to themselves. The strength of the museum is its permanent collection of paintings from the Southern Netherlands, including masterpieces by Rubens, Van Dyck and Jordaens.

www.mskgent.be

Bruges Beer Museum

– This delicious museum in the heart of Bruges introduces you in an interactive way to the most exciting aspects of Belgian Beer. Give your guests the chance to learn the history of beer and discover the different brewing processes. Let them taste, smell and feel the raw materials used to brew beer. Tastings, evening sessions, workshops, company meetings and events are all possible at this extraordinary museum. ■

www.brugesbeermuseum.com

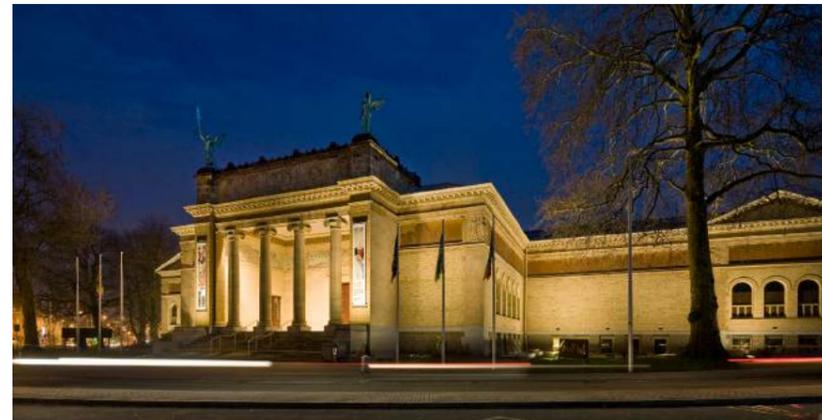


01

- 01 Autoworld
- 02 Museum of Fine Arts Ghent
© Michel Burez



02



GETTING TO FLANDERS

Brussels is at the heart of Europe, London, Paris, Cologne and Amsterdam are all less than two hours away.

Flanders, a place to meet

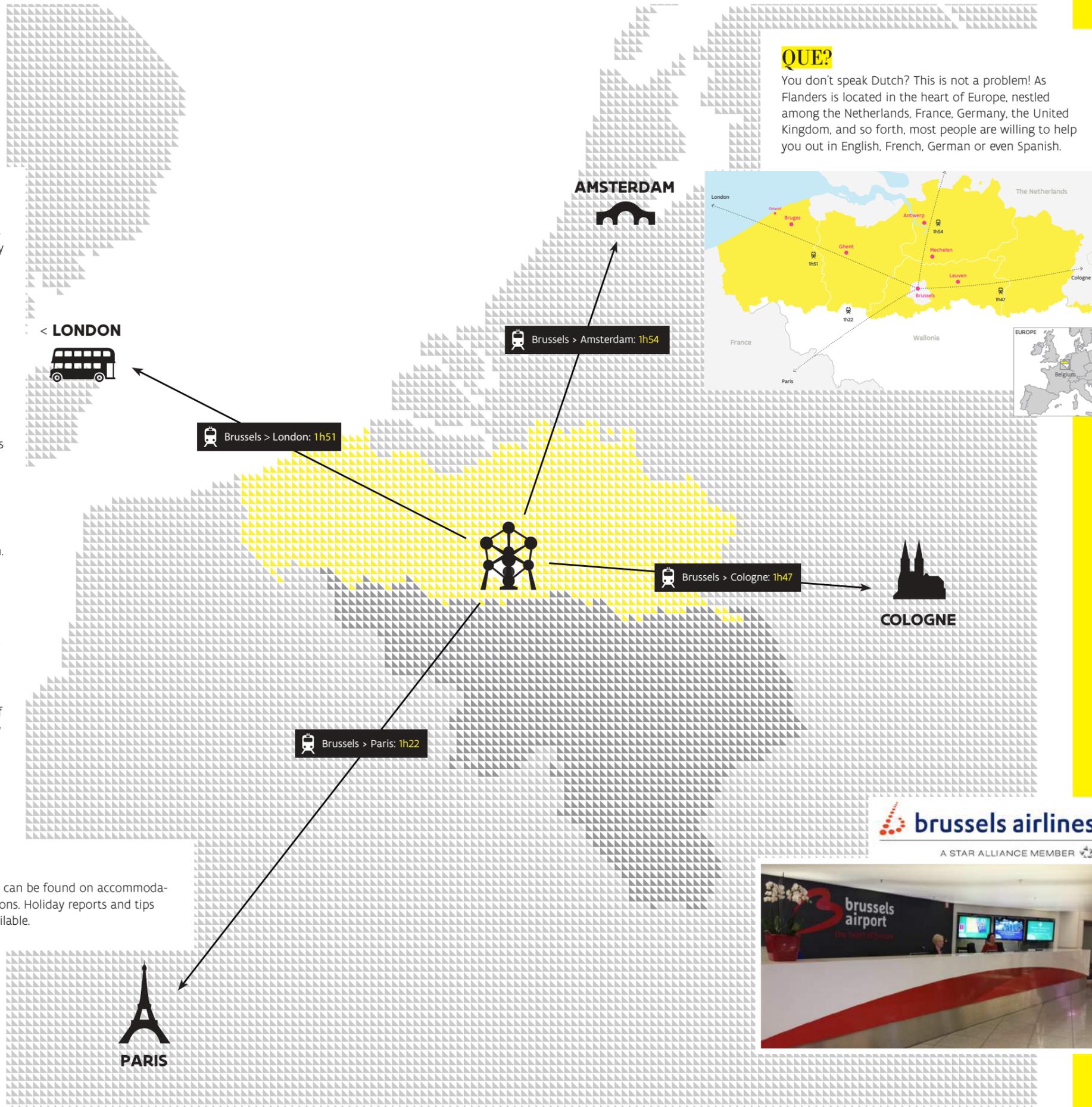
Flanders is the Dutch-speaking region in the northern part of Belgium and with Brussels as its capital it is the gateway to Europe. Brussels is home to over 1,200 international associations, the European Union (EU), the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Ranked among the world's top convention destinations, the infrastructure in Flanders & Brussels can handle very small to world size international meetings and conferences. The state-of-the-art transportation network not only allows seamless travel within the region but also to and from other parts of the world. Every day, thousands of people from all over the world fly into Brussels Airport. Belgium's main airport is located in the heart of the country, offering easy access to its major congress cities. Meeting planners from neighbouring countries can travel by high speed train. Amsterdam, London, Paris and Cologne are less than two hours from Brussels Midi Station. Travel times between Brussels, the historic art cities and other remarkable meeting destinations, are usually under one hour.

Flanders is the place to be for conferences & meetcentives. In this small but great region you can find everything you are looking for in a destination: beautiful historic cities with lots of art and culture, a refreshing sea breeze and excellent seafood on the coast, and the peace and quiet of the Flemish countryside. Everywhere, there are high quality hotels, restaurants and meeting venues. Let's not forget Flanders' worldwide reputation for high standards and customer care! Thanks to these qualities, organising an event or a meeting becomes very easy!

ACCESSIBLE FLANDERS

On www.accessibleflanders.be, information can be found on accommodation, transportation, museums and attractions. Holiday reports and tips form travellers with disabilities are also available.



QUE?

You don't speak Dutch? This is not a problem! As Flanders is located in the heart of Europe, nestled among the Netherlands, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and so forth, most people are willing to help you out in English, French, German or even Spanish.

TRAVELLING BY TRAIN

Coming from Paris, Amsterdam or Cologne?
www.b-europe.com
Coming from London?
www.eurostar.com
Traveling within Flanders?
www.belgianrail.be
The Belgian Railways offer different products and services.

TRAVELLING BY PLANE

Brussels Airport is the main international airport. There are direct train connections between Brussels Airport and all the major cities in Flanders.

www.brusselsairport.be

Brussels Airlines

Brussels Airlines' Official Carrier Programme is designed to meet the needs of organisers and delegates of international conventions.

For the organiser:

In addition to offering your delegates a substantial discount on air travel costs, the programme simplifies the management of air travel by allowing your delegates to book their own tickets via a personalised code.

For the delegate:

You and your accompanying partner are offered considerable discounts on the costs for air travel to the conference destination. Brussels Airlines participates in the Star Alliance Conventions Plus Programme and Star Alliance Meetings Plus Programme.

www.brusselsairlines.be

Business first

Focusing on excellence through hospitality, Meet in Flanders and Brussels Airport created a Welcome Lounge in the arrival hall of Brussels Airport. The use of the lounge is complementary and exclusively for organisers of conventions, incentives, fairs and events in Flanders & Brussels. This service allows DMC's, PCO's and event organisers to provide a personalised welcome to delegates arriving at Brussels Airport.

www.meetinflanders.com



CONTACT US

Flanders

www.meetinflanders.com
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Antwerp

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Bruges

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