

wallonia and brussels

summer 2019

wab
magazine

Discover a region that combines
technical knowhow with quality of life

WHERE THE WILD FOOD GROWS

EXPLORE THE WORLD OF EDIBLE PLANTS
WITH CUISINE SAUVAGE

- Wallonia boosts its horse industry thanks to new EquisFair business cluster
- Couture lingerie designer Carine Gilson shares her passion for lace and silk



© Alexis Haulot

Editorial

Named Walloon of the Year 2018, Thomas Dermine (above) is a champion of his home city, Charleroi. The head of business accelerator Catch, he is playing a key role in the rejuvenation of the former industrial region by creating jobs at the former Caterpillar site. The 32-year-old tells us why he returned to Charleroi and why the city is such an attractive prospect, on both a personal and professional front. Similarly looking to boost business is the new Walloon cluster EquisFair, the topic of our Focus. Gathering various players from across the region's horse industry, its mission is to shine a light on the flourishing sector around the world.

In our culture and lifestyle section there's no shortage of creativity combined with business sense. Prolific animation studio nWave in Brussels specialises in feature films, while lingerie designer Carine Gilson transforms the finest lace and silk into chic creations. In Namur, Cuisine Sauvage is winning over food lovers to the benefits of cooking with wild plants. And with plenty of ideas in our cultural agenda for making the most of the season, we wish you an excellent summer!

Don't forget to download **the WAB magazine app**, available for Android and iOS. Go to Google Play or iTunes and keep up-to-date with news and events in Wallonia and Brussels

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AWEX Wallonia Export-Investment Agency
www.awex.be

WBI Wallonie-Bruxelles International
www.wbi.be

Welcome Offices
www.investinwallonia.be



Wallonia.be

EXPORT
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Cover: Wild food with Cuisine Sauvage
(c) Maxime H - Photographie Culinaire

SLEEP ON THE WILD SIDE AT PAIRI DAIZA

Pairi Daiza is offering an immersive wildlife experience with a 50-room resort in its Last Frontier themed zone. The 26-room Paddling Bear Hotel and 24 Indian-style wooden houses, lodges and suites provide guests with close-up views of the animals. The new facilities at the zoo and botanical gardens in Brugelette, Hainaut, opened in the spring.

pairidaiza.eu



© CID

SUMMER FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY

The Grand-Hornu industrial site in Hainaut opens to families this season with a packed programme of activities. In addition to design and contemporary art at CID and MAC's, visitors can explore the former coalmine, play outdoor games, join in creative workshops and sit back in a deckchair for an aperitif with books and magazines. Two-Michelin-star chef Sang Hoon Degeimbre has taken over the kitchen at the site's cafe-restaurant and picnic baskets are supplied to enjoy in the grounds.

grand-hornu.eu

3D-PRINTED AERO PART A WORLD FIRST

Liège high-tech aerospace company Safran Aero Boosters has been awarded certification for its lubrication unit equipped with a 3D-printed metal casing. Director-general François Lepot said the certification was a world first and the unit was currently flying on Airbus A320s. "This is a major step forward from a technical point of view," he said, announcing the news at the Paris Air Show in June.



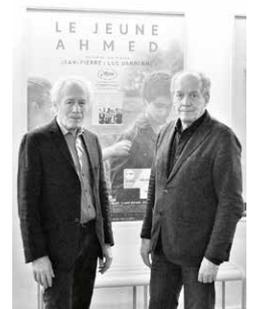
© Courtesy Natagora

Sheep to help Gaume's restored gardens grow

A crowdfunding campaign to breed sheep that will graze the Gaume's nature reserves has reached its funding target. The animals will help maintain the region's lawns and meadows that have been restored as part of the European grasslands programme, Life Herbages. In June, nature protection organisation Natagora inaugurated a sheepfold in Fratin where the sheep will be raised.

DARDENNE BROTHERS PICK UP DIRECTOR PRIZE AT CANNES

Liège filmmakers Luc and Jean-Pierre Dardenne – who have twice won the coveted Palme d'Or – took the Best Director prize for *Young Ahmed* at the Cannes Film Festival in May. Set in Wallonia, the film follows the story of a Muslim teenager who tries to kill his teacher after being indoctrinated by a radicalised imam. Jean-Pierre Dardenne: "What interested us was religious fanaticism and the possibility of rehabilitation for this boy."



TOP FRENCH HONOUR FOR NAMUR CONDUCTOR

The artistic director of the Namur Chamber Choir, Leonardo Garcia Alarcon, has been made a Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters by the French state. The Argentinian orchestra leader received the honour after a performance by the choir at the Palace of Versailles.



© Vincent Arbelet



© Julien Mattia/Le Pictorium/Beiga



WALLOON COMPANY AIDS NOTRE-DAME

Gaume company Artbois received an emergency call to supply 10 wooden beams to help shore up the walls of the fire-damaged Notre-Dame cathedral in Paris in April. When a blaze ravaged the ancient building, destroying its spire and most of its roof, there were fears that the walls would collapse. "We were called at 14.00, we received the plans at 15.30 and we cut to size some beams that we had in stock for another site," owner Patrick Vanhorenbeeck told local media. Artbois, specialists in glue-laminated timber work, delivered the 20m beams during the night in a special convoy that arrived early the following morning. "It concerned one of the most beautiful timber structures in the world. It was necessary to do the maximum to preserve what remained," Vanhorenbeeck said. Based in Etalle, Luxembourg province, Artbois has since been called on to further lend its technical expertise to the cathedral, which is to eventually undergo restoration.

artbois.be

NEW WINE STORE FOR ORGANIC PRODUCER

Organic wine domain Château de Bousval has inaugurated a new building for wine production, from pressing to bottling. Set in the rolling hills of Walloon Brabant, the 5.2-hectare vineyard celebrated the opening at the end of May with an exhibition of contemporary art by the Esther Verhaege Gallery. Architect Charly Wittock, founder of the firm AWAA, designed the building to merge into the countryside, which borders the Natura 2000 zone. Said Wittock of the sloped, green-roofed concrete and wood structure: "We located it in such a way that it followed the topography of the land and we could work with gravity. This means we don't use any mechanical motor to displace liquid." The winery is open to the public on reservation and the first harvest is expected in 2020.



© Château de Bousval

chateaubousval.be

SCIENCE BRIEFS

A team from the **applied sciences faculty at Liège University** has developed an ultra-eco-friendly vehicle that will compete in this summer's Shell Eco-Marathon in London. The international competition sees engineers and scientists try to achieve the longest distance with the lowest energy consumption. Liège has participated for the past 15 years and last year narrowly missed out on the top three.

A **pharmacy professor at ULB** has patented a process to manufacture personalised medicines using a 3D printer. Jonathan Goole's research shows how 3D printing makes it possible to produce drugs in small batches with a specific dosage, or with a specific coating to promote faster or slower absorption. This could pave the way for safe and effective personalised treatment.

A **UCLouvain researcher** has won the Prix Galien, Belgium's prize for the best research in pharmacology, for his work on targeting cancer cell metabolism. Judges said Cyril Corbet's research was a welcome boost in the fight against cancer and creates new perspectives for the future of cancer treatment. It is the fourth time UCLouvain's pharmacology and therapeutic centre has won the prestigious prize.

A **ULB engineering student** is heading to New York in July to compete in the world cup of Fortnite, a popular online video game. Howard Castiaux and his Swiss team-mate, Jérémy Dang, made the top 100, from almost 3,000 players worldwide, to qualify for the final. Castiaux spends three to five hours a day playing and a similar amount of time working on strategy. A \$30 million cash prize awaits the winner.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT Thomas Dermine

The 32-year-old Harvard graduate from Charleroi received the Destrée Institute's Bologna-Lemaire Walloon of the Year 2018 award for his role in boosting the economy of his home town



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Charleroi is my home town, the city of my heart



© Maxime Asselberghs/Belga

What does the award signify?

Although it was awarded to me, it's really an award for the collective efforts of my team and me at Catch to accelerate job creation in Charleroi. The decline of heavy industries across Europe hit Charleroi particularly hard, because of their concentration in the region. The city's socio-economic condition then reached a crisis point in 2016 with the thousands of job losses that came with the closure of the Caterpillar plant. The plan is to generate 6,000-8,000 new jobs by 2025 in new industries. In May 2019 we were slightly ahead, having already reached more than two-thirds of our objective, so we are confident we can do it.

What are the challenges?

The new jobs are completely different from the blue-collar jobs that are disappearing. All sorts of creative and biotech industries had started appearing in Charleroi by 2016, but there was a paradox – their growth was impeded because they couldn't find people with the right qualifications and skills locally to fill positions, yet there was huge unemployment in Charleroi among young people. The biggest challenge remains changing curricula, designing empowerment programmes and training to make sure we have the right workforce for these jobs. The challenge at the heart of all this is to break down the walls between public and private institutions, and between people.

The Walloon government asked you to help create the plan in 2016, after a paper you wrote at Harvard in 2014 exploring multi-stakeholder measures to reduce youth unemployment in Belgium. But you had a high-profile

consultancy career in London when they called. What made you decide to leave it for Charleroi?

Where I find meaning in my professional life is very important to me. Charleroi is my home town and the city of my heart. I felt there was deep value in stepping up to the difficult challenge of working on its socio-economic development.

What's the best piece of advice you've ever had?

When I was a teenager, one of my teachers in Charleroi told me, "If you're the smartest kid at the table, then you're not at the right table". It led me in deciding whether to return to Charleroi. I asked myself where I would be most challenged and learn the most.

What's your work-life philosophy?

Life is too short not to do the things you love. If you love the things you do, you will naturally be good at them.

What's next? Will you stay in Charleroi?

I will stay. I have already moved my whole family out here. I'm not too worried about finding another interesting challenge here, in the public or private sector. I left Charleroi when I was 18 for university. I came back at 31 and I'm very surprised by how dynamic the city is. There's a vibrant cultural scene, a huge city centre renewal, and a buzz that makes you feel like you're at the centre of something new happening. to the city And it's practically an extended suburb of Brussels: it's only 40 minutes away, it's cheaper to live in, with good schools and a good quality of life.

catch-charleroi.be

Royal treatments

Technochim wins innovation award for its multi-functional coating

By Andy Furniere

Technochim, a specialist in surface treatments, has won the prestigious Innovation Prize at the Contamin Expo trade show in Paris. The company, based in Ghislenghien in Hainaut, was recognised for its cutting-edge ceramic coating Coatix.

For 11 years, Technochim has been expanding its status as a leader in the development

of advanced treatments of metals – to increase their resistance to corrosion or for decorative purposes. The company first made a name for itself with a unique solution against rouging, a complex form of corrosion found in stainless steel, which poses particular problems in the pharmaceutical sector.

“Rouging of pharmaceutical installations

used to make vaccines risks contaminating those vaccines and introducing polluted substances into people’s bodies,” says Frédéric Groulard, CEO of Technochim. “We are the only company in the world with a treatment against all forms of rouging, including the most complicated type to remove, known as Class III rouging.”

This expertise gained the Walloon enter-





prise a firm reputation in the European pharma sector, with high-level clients such as GSK Vaccines and Sanofi Pasteur. Throughout the years, the firm has acquired knowhow in a wide range of treatment techniques, like degreasing, pickling, passivation, electropolishing, mechanical polishing and shot blasting. It also took over its supplier of chemical products, Derustinox.

Thanks to the expansion of its competences, Technochim now offers its services to clients all over Europe, including in France, the UK, Spain, Italy, Germany and Ireland. The company also teams up with the European division of American multinational Steris. At the time of writing, a team from Technochim was also preparing to leave for Russia, where they were to carry out maintenance of a particle accelerator known as a cyclotron. It has carried out similar operations in the US and South Korea as well, collaborating with med-tech company IBA of Louvain-la-Neuve.

While the pharmaceutical sector remains an important market, Technochim has drastically enlarged its scope. Its services are being used in the construction, chemical, agri-food, energy, metallurgy, aviation, space, luxury and design industries.

With the Coatix ceramic coating, Technochim is further consolidating its position on the global market of surface treatments. Coatix is a smart coating, with various functions that can be adjusted according to needs. It can be applied to metal surfaces as well as plastic and glass.

“Coatix can for example be water-repellent or very water-absorbent,” says Groulard. “We can ensure that it inhibits the growth of bacteria on surfaces and can integrate coloured zones, for example red and blue areas to warn technicians about which parts of the equipment are too hot to handle without hand protection.”

Pharmaceutical companies are again an important target group, but Coatix is useful in a range of industries. In Dubai, a gold-coloured Coatix coating will give a commercial centre the look of a palace, while also making the surfaces easy to clean. Closer to home, Belgian airports are interested in the coating to make stainless steel surfaces easy to clean.

“Public spaces such as airports and healthcare organisations like hospitals can benefit from Coatix for another important reason,” says Groulard. “The coating’s antibacterial prop-

erties can prevent many people from being infected by illnesses that are otherwise spread around more easily in such places.”

Technochim is already developing the next generation of Coatix, which staff will be able to apply more easily in situ because no oven will be needed to produce it – instead UV lamps will suffice to solidify the coating.

The company is also launching itself into the world of 3D printing, specifically in the aviation industry. Its chemical solutions can help to make the printed surfaces of aircraft parts smoother and more polished, a common challenge with current 3D printing technology. In this domain, Technochim is working with a top aircraft engines enterprise based in Wallonia.

technochim.eu



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We are the only company in the world with a treatment against all forms of rouging

Cell culture

Global trailblazer in cell therapy sets up shop in Liège

By Andy Furniere

Orgenesis, an international pioneer in cell therapy, has set up a daughter company in Liège to support the development of its innovative POCare cell therapy platform. The Nasdaq-listed company, with Israeli roots and headquarters in

the US, focuses on finding solutions against insulin-dependent diabetes, known as type 1 diabetes.

The foundation of its subsidiary Orgenesis Belgium, consisting of laboratories and of-

fices at Accessia Pharma, which provides infrastructure for pharma and biotech companies, is Orgenesis's second major initiative in Wallonia. In 2015, it took over MaSTherCell Belgium in Charleroi, a spin-off of the Free University of Brussels (ULB) that specialis-

© Orgenesis





es in manufacturing cell therapy products on an industrial scale. While MaSTherCell Belgium functions as a service provider, Orgenesis Belgium will focus on research and development. The Walloon subsidiary will boost the creation of new autologous cell therapies, used to treat patients with their own cells.

Orgenesis is a pioneer in the process of transdifferentiation or cell reprogramming, whereby a cell is converted into another type of cell to treat patients. The company has the knowhow to transform a type 1 diabetes patient's own liver cells into insulin-producing cells. People with type 1 diabetes struggle to produce the hormone insulin and as a result can't obtain the energy they need from glucose. The transdifferentiation technique can be used for other pathologies as well.

Specifically, the Walloon team will support the development of Orgenesis's Point of Care (POCare) cell therapy platform. The POCare strategy aims to integrate the process of collecting, processing and administering cells within the patient care setting for therapeutic treatment.

"We are excited to further expand in Wallonia, a leading centre for talent and R&D within Europe," says Vered Caplan, the CEO of Orgenesis (pictured). "The opening of our new offices and laboratories will strengthen the roll-out of our POCare strategy across Europe."

Efrat Assa Kunik, general manager of Orgenesis Belgium, says "the POCare strategy can help to significantly reduce development costs through joint ventures with local partners who bring strong regional networks. These networks include partnerships with local hospitals, which allow us to engage in continuous in-licensing of autologous therapies from academic and research institutes, and to use hospital networks for the clinical development of new therapies."

At the presentation of its new Walloon daughter company, the Orgenesis team cited different reasons for choosing the region as a base. Among them were the central position in Europe, the logistics infrastructure, the focus on innovative research, the large pool of life-sciences specialists, the tailor-made facilities and the ability to quickly set up clinical trials. Orgenesis also high-

lighted the advantages provided by BioWin, Wallonia's health competitiveness cluster.

The increased interest of major players shows how Wallonia is positioning itself as a European front-runner in cell therapy. In this respect, the region can also benefit greatly from Belgium's recent modification of the law regarding access to human cells and tissues to produce allogenic cell therapies – when donor cells are used to treat various patients – for medical applications or scientific research.

Belgian companies can now obtain or import these human materials in a more transparent way. As a consequence, more patients will benefit from the innovations in cell therapy. "Thanks to this new legislation, Belgium reinforces its unique eco-system involved in the research and development of cell therapies," says Frédéric Druck, secretary general of biotech sector federation bio.be/essenscia. "It makes it even more attractive for local enterprises to develop activities in this field and for international companies to start up a European production unit for cell therapy here."

orgenesis.com



We are excited to further expand in Wallonia, a leading centre for talent and R&D within Europe

Waste not

A family company in Mons is transforming waste disposal around the world

By Betina Kiefer

AMB Ecosteryl is a family company based in Mons that specialises in developing and producing solutions to sustainably process and recycle medical waste. Established in 1947 as a manufacturer of machinery for extraction industries, AMB moved into the environmental sector after the decline of mining companies locally. It has been developing environmentally friendly technology to process medical waste over the past 17 years

AMB offers a unique and sustainable process in its field, which has traditionally been reluctant to innovate. Most medical waste is incinerated, a process that is known to be environmentally unfriendly. “The first innovation is the reduction achieved in the use of resources, as our units only need a low power consump-

tion to operate,” says Andrew Cantillo E, AMB’s sales manager in the Americas, who is based in Brussels. “No water, no gas, no fuel or other chemical products are required.” This process also creates no contaminated by-products, such as wastewater or chemicals.

The process begins with automated weighing and loading of waste, which then goes through a four-shaft shredder system. “This shredding feature, combined with the heating of waste through the action of microwaves, gives the opportunity to select polypropylene and other plastics after decontamination to recycle it or recover it,” Cantillo says. This is advantageous, as these plastics have a significant resale value.

The second main innovation is that the ma-

chines operate continuously, with no need to add waste in batches, and can be operational 24/7. After shredding, waste is brought into a microwave zone then placed in a temperature-controlled hopper for an hour until it is fully decontaminated. It is then added to a container. In this process, waste can be reduced to up to a fifth of its original volume.

About 90% of waste processed by Ecosteryl equipment is reused, instead of going into landfill or being incinerated. Its process is suitable for a wide array of regulated medical waste, except when it is nuclear or toxic. Neo-Ecosteryl, AMB’s latest technology, integrates recycling into its process. After decontamination, medical waste is separated by type or colour. This allows waste to be commercialised as input for medical packaging, plastic, energy generation or cement kilns.

AMB also provides services to ensure optimal operations and maintenance. When its machinery is shipped to clients, AMB sends engineers to provide local training on operations and maintenance. The Ecosteryl team provides maintenance and support remotely, through integrated internet access installed in all its machinery and on-site visits for clients are also possible. The equipment can be installed in less than two days, and can be easily disassembled for relocation. Its machinery is long-lasting, and the first Ecosteryl machine ever installed in France is still operational.

Despite AMB’s field of expertise, most of its clients are not healthcare facilities but usually major environmental companies specialising in waste management of dangerous materials. A smaller portion include





hospitals looking for cost-effective solutions for their waste, as well as the public sector, such as health and environment ministries.

“Today we have a solid client network from America to Africa, Asia and Europe,” says Cantillo. “We are leaders in France, covering most of the alternative technologies industry. Our biggest ambition is to better valorise medical waste worldwide. This is why we offer the industry cutting-edge solutions to decontaminate medical waste and then to recycle it.”

ecosteryl.com



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Our biggest ambition is to better valorise medical waste worldwide



Start me up

Wallonia's tech incubator is one of the best-performing in the world

By Sarah Crew

Founded in 2000 by the Walloon government, tech incubator WSL has been ranked among the highest performing incubators in the world. A study carried out in 2017 and 2018 by the international association UBI Global placed it in the top two according to criteria such as turnover, retention rate in Wallonia, access to investors and the variety of services offered.

WSL has a total annual turnover of €607 million and supports engineering science projects across Wallonia. It boasts a survival rate for its techno-entrepreneur companies of 95%, with an annual job creation rate of 11%. Employing 866 people directly and 2,000 indirectly, WSL is spread across the region. From its original site

in Liège Science Park, it is now present in Charleroi, Gembloux, Louvain-la-Neuve, Mons and Namur. It provides technical assistance to tech companies that want to develop both in Wallonia and abroad.

Collaboration is at the heart of the incubator. Originally set up to launch university spin-offs within the space sector, its mission expanded to other partners, including institutions of higher education, the Walloon Export and Foreign Investment Agency (Awex) and the region's various competitive clusters.

According to director-general Agnès Flémal (pictured), WSL occupies a world-renowned position, which is impressive con-

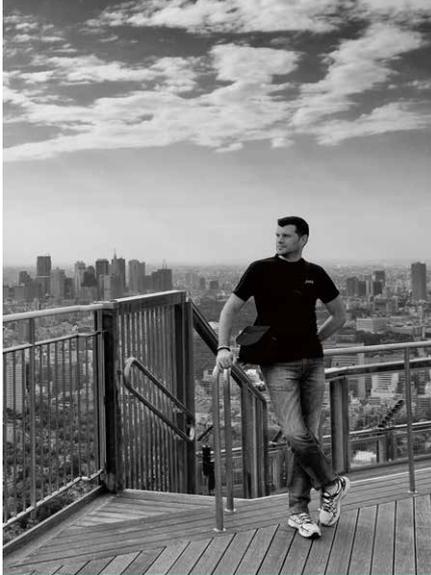
sidering the size of the region. "Over the years, we have developed a field laboratory, built on a network of start-ups that form our community. We accompany them in the long term while maintaining our capacity to innovate," she says.

Flémal underlines future challenges for WSL in calling for continuing and increased support of long-term projects connected to Deep Technology, in particular from their launch. Deep Technology relates to innovation based on substantial scientific advances directly or indirectly linked to major planetary and societal issues that require long-term, large investment.

wsl.be



MEET THE BRUSSELS EXPAT



Sebastian Boatca from Romania is making the most of the latest stop on an international journey

Before arriving in Belgium, I studied in Romania and Switzerland; I also worked and lived for a short period in Norway, then moved back to Romania. Brussels has been my city since 2015, when my wife obtained a work contract. Adapting to a new country, city and culture can be demanding, but it is always easier for those who love to travel, those who have already lived in different cities and countries and who embrace the changes for a better, more interesting and challenging life.

I work in the secretariat of a unit of one of the directorates of the European Commission. I especially like working with colleagues of so many nationalities – the multicultural work environment has always been captivating to me. And I'm a passionate photographer, continuously looking for inspiration. I love to travel; travel photography is one of the most solid parts of my portfolio. Travelling, apart from enriching your life, also helps to make the world a bit smaller, easier to understand. Before moving to Belgium, I contacted Viewfinders photography club in Brussels and joined as soon as I arrived here. My passion and involvement in the club saw me become an associate committee member, then vice-president, with an active role in organising the club's activities: writing for the monthly newsletter, making public presentations, preparing workshops, exhibitions and much more.

Since coming to Belgium, I'm proud to have had two solo photography exhibitions, to have participated in a Viewfinders group

exhibition and in two group exhibitions with colleagues. I'm already thinking about two future exhibitions on projects I started while visiting Japan. Time is always insufficient, with a full-time job and being a husband and a father, but if there is a will...

There are always captivating things to discover here. Not only from a photographic point of view, but when the weather is fine, almost every weekend is an opportunity for my family to enjoy the recreational activities. Wallonia is very beautiful and every time we have the opportunity, we leave Brussels to enjoy a nice weekend as a family, changing from residents into tourists. Villers Abbey is one of our favourite places to visit. I have made several series of photographs there and with Viewfinders I visited a moving photography exhibition, outside among the ruins. The High Fens boardwalk is a very quiet, calm place. We sometimes stop there while going from Eupen (which is a nice city) to Aachen. And Liège has a certain unique flavour, something we always sense and, I might say, truly specific to this town. I've had the best French fries in Liège, and the waffle has another significance when savoured there.

And let's not forget that by car, in less than two hours, we can visit beautiful places in France, Germany, Luxembourg or the Netherlands. Each time such an opportunity arises, it means more material in my portfolio, not to mention more beautiful memories with my family.

sebastianboatca.com

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Travelling helps to make the world a bit smaller, easier to understand

Free rein

Wallonia boosts its equine economy with new EquisFair business cluster

By Sarah Crew

With the aim of exploiting the economic potential of the region's horse industry, the EquisFair business cluster was launched at Liège Airport in February this year. While equine activities in the region are already renowned for their quality and quantity, the sector's objective is to further elevate its image at home and abroad.

Wallonia's business clusters are economic hubs that bring together companies, training centres and public or private research

units with a common goal of partnership, joint projects and international visibility. EquisFair – the seventh business cluster in the region – benefits from a three-year subsidy from the Walloon economy ministry.

The region has a long tradition of horse breeding, and the equine industry generates more than €1 billion a year. But it remains underexploited, according to one of the cluster's founders, Jean-Philippe Lejeune, technical director of the European Horse Centre at Montle-Soie in Luxembourg province.

"A recent study by the centre for the Walloon

agricultural ministry revealed its enormous potential," he says. He believes the sector's image needs updating because of its reputation as an elite activity. "Horses are part of many people's lives, whether it be for pleasure or participation in international competition. Economic activities around horses are very diverse and they merit being showcased."

Belgium's speciality is the breeding of show-jumping horses, Lejeune says. "The country's three studbooks are regularly featured in the top ten of world rankings. While there are a few larger stud farms, the aver-





• Lara de Liedekerke at the 2018 World Equestrian Games

© Victor Krijt

age breeder in Wallonia owns two or three breeding mares, which produce the same number of foals each year,” he says. The cluster is an excellent opportunity to boost the sector and all its activities: “I believe it will improve its image, federate its businesses and facilitate their access to financial aid for research and export, as well as being a useful development tool at a local and international level.”

Since its launch, EquisFair has attracted considerable interest, with requests for information and membership from a variety of organisations. In addition to eight found-

ing members, the 14 active members reflect the depth and diversity of the local equine industry (see boxes on following pages). A study by the European Horse Centre revealed the region’s enormous potential.

The cluster aims to make the sector in Wallonia more professional, increase marketing and assist research and development in new products. For opportunities abroad, it is focusing on three main areas: an export strategy for high-value products such as surgical and food supplements; an export strategy for standard and high-quality products that will increase collaboration

between Wallonia and Flanders, France, the Netherlands, Germany and Luxembourg; and promoting the available space in Wallonia that could be of interest to foreign investors.

Other strategic priorities have been outlined, which include encouraging innovation, reinforcing commercial links and exploring new markets, sharing good practices, developing partnerships and working groups according to certain topics, and creating synergies with existing clusters and competitive poles in the region. As part of the mission to promote the sector at home and abroad,



THE EUROPEAN HORSE CENTRE

The European Horse Centre in Luxembourg province was founded in 2000 to promote horse breeding in Wallonia. A non-profit organisation, it is one of eight founding companies behind the cluster, and acts as an interface between horse breeders, equine businesses and various administrative bodies. It works closely with the province, Liège University – in particular the veterinary medicine department – and the Equestrian League Wallonia Brussels.

An important part of its remit is to carry out research and other services for the agricultural ministry, annually evaluating and responding to problems raised by breeders in the region. Research includes examining orthopaedic pathologies linked to growth, which have a significant economic impact for breeders. An additional branch of the centre's activities consists of training, participating in equine promotional events powered by the Walloon region, and providing expertise to Walloon Ecuries, which supports horse-breeders.

While the centre receives subsidies for these activities, it also offers private services, such as cross-country facilities for horses and riders and the organisation or partnership of competitions and equestrian events. It is also an EU-certified reproduction centre, handling the insemination of mares, embryo transfers and the production of frozen sperm from stallions according to strict sanitary and quality standards.

linalux-montlesoie.com



ACTIVE MEMBERS

Alcyon Belux supplies a complete range of products to veterinary centres.
alcyonbelux.be

BiopTis is active in equine health and performance, working with two Liège University research centres.
bioptis.com

Cavalo Concept is an outdoor and sporting goods company that creates designs for riders.
cavalconcept.be

Ekism provides apps for riders with identity data storage, an equipment and feed checklist, a training and care diary and financial project management.
ekism.be

Tagalo is an app that reinforces the safety of outside riders in case of accidents and falls.
tagalo.com

Equideo provides video and live-streaming of horses and ponies.
equideo.be

Kevin Bacon's is a family business making laurel hoof dressing products.
kevinbacons.com

SBS Studbook is a voluntary organisation that keeps records for Belgian sporting horses, in particular show-jumpers.
sbsnet.be

an inventory of all actors is to be drawn up, and the cluster will identify the weaknesses and strengths of the sector in Wallonia and neighbouring regions to help develop the international strategy.

The cluster is already publicising its activities by taking part in events around the world, giving smaller businesses a chance to showcase themselves. Coming up on its agenda are participation at: Libramont Agricultural Fair from 26 to 29 July, the

equestrian branch and research laboratory of the Conférence Liège Créative on 16 October, the technology economic mission to Texas, US from 23 to 25 October, Jumping International de Liège from 29 October to 4 November, Fieracavalli International Horse Festival in Verona, Italy from 7 to 10 November, and an economic mission to China led by Princess Astrid from 16 to 22 November.

equisfair.be



Trenker Labs is a pharmaceutical laboratory that produces and distributes medication and food supplements. trenker.be

Roland Quoidbach is a safety coordinator specialised in equestrian projects. coordonateursecuritechantier-quoidbach.be

Compositi makes accessories for horses and riders. compositi.be

Liège Airport's purpose-built Horse Inn provides overnight accommodation for the more than 3,000 horses that transit the freight hub each year. horse-inn-liege.com

EEM World organises equestrian events and is the creator of the Masters Grand Slam brand and the Longines Masters. eemworld.com

SA Clarenne Travaux specialises in developing equestrian grounds. clarennetravaux.be



IN FIGURES

- €1.1m** turnover of the equine sector in Wallonia
- 6,600** direct and indirect jobs
- 2,200** businesses
- 77,233** hectares of agricultural land (11% of total agricultural surface)
- 131,000** horses in Wallonia



© FEI/Dirk Caremans

THE FOUNDERS

The European Horse Centre is a publicly and privately funded facility that represents and promotes the equine industry in Wallonia. linalux-montlesoie.com

Delhez Bois/Cleanbox is the leading manufacturer of 100% natural, dust-free and biodegradable wood shavings for stable boxes. delhezbois.be

EQScience offers a range of services for equine industry companies, ranging from science and healthcare to consulting, coaching, marketing and management support. eqscience.com

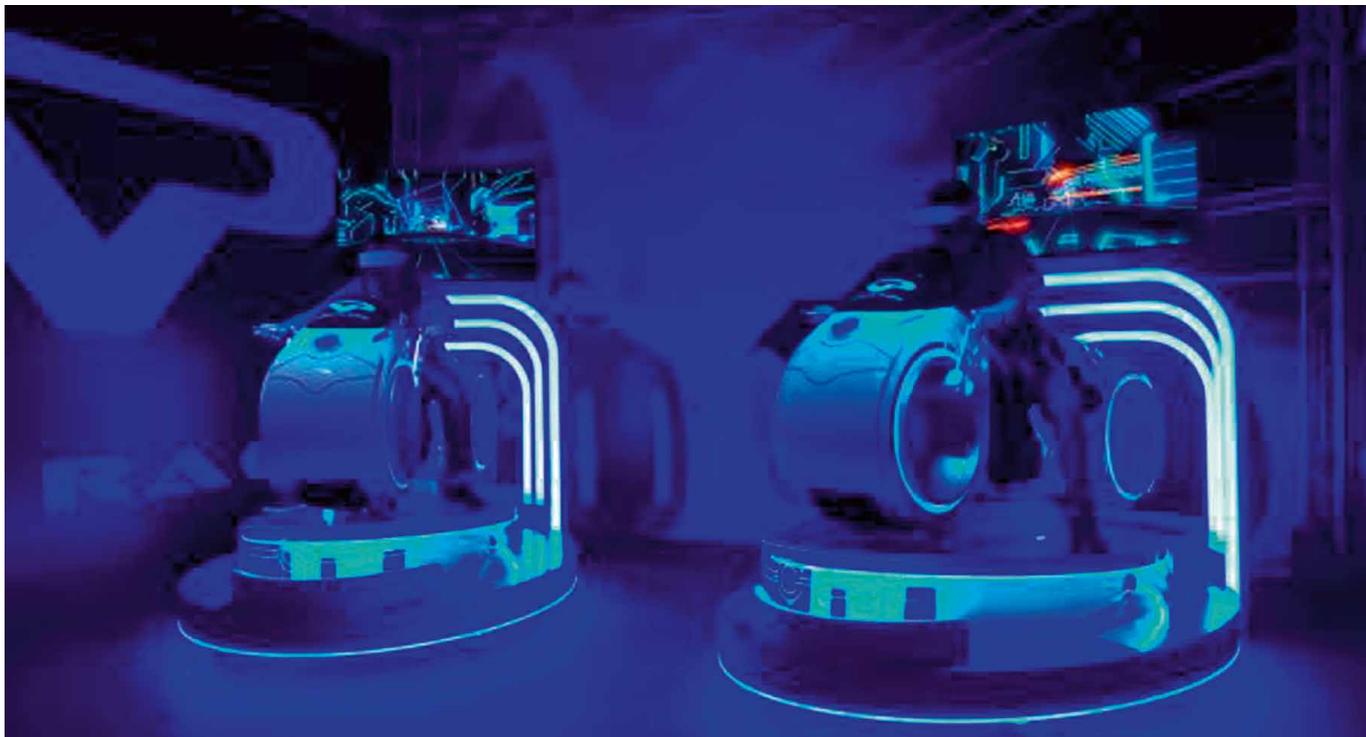
Moulin Georges sprl has been providing quality horse feed for 50 years and has recently developed complementary food. Its brands include Hippoforme and Kara. hippoforme.be

Peter Müller DURAfence is a specialist supplier of custom-made wooden enclosures, sturdy fences and gates. petermuller.be

Progenus offers a full range of services to its partners for DNA research, from the development of a test to a complete research project. progenus.be

Revatis is a Liège University spin-off developing a system of regenerative veterinary medicine. revatis.be

Haras Sonnenhof is a stud farm that breeds, raises and trains horses. The family business is based in Saint Vith. sonnenhof.be



Virtually real

Europe's biggest virtual reality park has opened in Mouscron

By Tomáš Miklica

Virtual reality (or VR) needs space. To set up a room-scale virtual reality at home, you ideally need at least 3 square metres – so that you can move or even walk during the experience without walking out on the immersion. The more space you have, the better the immersion, the stronger the experience, the greater the fun. But would hundreds of square metres really mean hundreds of times the fun?

Jean-Louis and Frédéric Verbaert decided to find the answer, and built a virtual reality park taking up 4,000 square metres. Mou-

scron, a city in Hainaut between the Belgian-French border and the Wallonia-Flanders border, has thus become home to Europe's largest virtual reality site.

For the Verbaert brothers, this is a continuation of their previous business venture in Tournai, Virtual Cabs. Except now, instead of four cabins with 15 square metres of virtual reality, the two entrepreneurs invite you to experience something that would be absolutely impossible to recreate at home. "It's a real 2.0 VR wireless immersion," says Frédéric. "You can move, feel and touch everything on your own. A

huge difference compared to a home VR experience."

The Virtual Park project was supported by the intercommunal association IEG and by Wapinvest. In total it hosts seven activities. Most of them are suitable for visitors over seven years old and built for a multiplayer experience. Sensors ensure that you know exactly where the barriers are and that you 'see' all the other players even though you are cut off from the real world by the characteristic headset.

The games let you cooperate and compete.



Up to 40 players can fit into The Playground, a smart space of synchronised lighting and sound systems combining interactive games and exercise. Elsewhere, two players can race each other on Tron-like bikes while 14 others can fight in a combat robots arena. And the co-founder's favourite? "At the moment, our best activity is Arena 42," says Frédéric. In this full-body tracking experience, two teams of four players compete to conquer Mars. Its 400 square metres definitely give a new meaning to what a room-scale virtual reality game is.

All the activities encourage visitors to stay for the day and enjoy to the fullest a

technology that has yet to become mainstream, without the usual space limitations and without the motion sickness linked to seated virtual reality games. "Motion sickness can't happen at Virtual Park because, in fact, you are moving for real in the space," explains Frédéric.

Additionally, the park prevents long exposure to virtual reality. "To avoid fatigue, our experiences are timed between five and twenty minutes and people have around fifteen minutes of break between the activities." Visitors can take a pause from virtual reality during augmented reality (AR) experiences, too. These do not require a headset and rather than creating

a new virtual world they enhance the real-world environment.

Virtual Park is open six days a week and can host up to 300 people a day. As the virtual reality technology is developing constantly, the Verbaert brothers need to keep up with it. "We are always aware of the news around VR," Frédéric says. "Furthermore, the structure of our park is not fixed. We have the possibility to progress the same way the VR technology will. Why not dream about a fully immersive experience spanning across all the 4,000 square metres?"

virtualpark.eu

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We have the possibility to progress the same way the VR technology will

Dream factory

A small independent animation studio in Brussels is doing things differently

By Ian Mundell



In an unassuming Brussels street, not far from Midi station, you'll find Europe's most productive independent animation studio: nWave. Its latest feature film, *The Queen's Corgi*, is still in cinemas around the world, and the next – a sequel to 2017's *Son of Bigfoot* – is well under way.

"We always have two projects running, and when we're halfway through one feature film we have to start the next," says Ben Stassen, co-founder of the studio and co-director of most of its movies.

nWave's focus on feature films, all developed in-house, sets it apart from most European animation studios. These tend to work for hire on other people's projects as well as their own, or produce cartoons for TV alongside

big-screen animation, but Stassen thinks both are a distraction. TV animation has to be cheaper, with necessary concessions to quality, while working for others means a loss of control.

More importantly, making a steady stream of features helps sustain nWave's creative community. "Top animators want to keep working on feature films that are great quality and shown all around the world," he says. "At nWave they can go from one feature to the next. That has attracted some talented people, and created a sense of loyalty."

Roughly a third of nWave's 120 digital animators are Belgian, a third French, and the rest drawn to Brussels from around the world. They work in teams, specialising in tasks such

as character modelling, movement, shading and texturing, or building 'special effects' such as the movement of clothes or hair.

"When we began in 1994, one animator would work on all the different stages of a film, but now it is more specialised and sophisticated," Stassen explains.

nWave started out making computer-generated attractions for places such as theme parks, and was an early specialist in stereoscopic 3D. Its first animated feature was *Fly Me to the Moon* in 2008, about three young houseflies who hitch a ride on Apollo 11. This was followed by two films about the undersea adventures of Sammy the Turtle, then *House of Magic*, *Robinson Crusoe* and *Son of Bigfoot*.



© Kmeron

Its most recent feature film, *The Queen's Corgi*, tells the story of Rex, top dog at Buckingham Palace until he disgraces himself during an official dinner with Donald Trump. Exiled to the streets of London, Rex has to find his way back into the Palace, and the Queen's good books.

Making animated films for the global market means nWave is inevitably compared to US giants such as Pixar. This can be tough when Pixar has at least €100 million to spend on each film, while nWave has €20 million at most. This, incidentally, is an enormous budget by Belgian standards, made possible

by the Tax Shelter incentive for investment in audiovisual productions.

Yet despite these constraints, nWave's animators aspire to achieve Pixar's quality. Talent helps, but so does being ruthlessly efficient. Decision-making is streamlined, and last-minute changes are out of the question. "When we do something, we do it once, we don't do it twice," Stassen says.

Meanwhile, the money is spent where best tells the story. For example, crowd scenes demand a lot of expensive animation, so when the Queen meets Donald Trump in *The Queen's Corgi*, it is at a private dinner rather than a state banquet. But when Rex joins a canine Fight Club, the drama demands a lot of dogs, and that is where the animators have gone to town.

"We are not Pixar, but we are really proud of our quality," Stassen says. "And with our budget, Pixar would barely make five minutes of a film like *The Queen's Corgi*."

nwavedigital.com

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Top animators want to work on feature films that are great quality and shown all around the world



Growing wild

Cuisine Sauvage promotes edible plants with foraging walks, cooking classes and gourmet tours

By Sarah Crew

Environmental consultant turned wild food campaigner Lionel Raway believes he has found the perfect recipe for his non-profit wild plant association, Cuisine Sauvage. “By reconnecting people with nature, opening their minds to the potential of harvesting plants, there is the possibility of some food self-sufficiency,” he says.

From the airy interior of the newly renovated cookery school in a villa on the outskirts of Namur, Raway, a former teacher, explains his philosophy: “A two-hour walk in the forest gives sufficient knowledge of

four to five plants that provides people with some autonomy.” He adopts a pragmatic approach to promoting the benefits of wild food. “Cooking with plants is not a religion or a dogma – we are not saying that they are better – simply that they also exist.”

Benefitting from financial support from the Walloon Region, “which considers it better to prevent than to heal”, Cuisine Sauvage’s underlying educational philosophy is presented in the form of a series of leisure activities. “We are in the world of play, interactivity and exchange,” he says.

“Wild plants speak to us all as they touch on wellness and health, on pleasure, on our purse, and it’s a multi-sensorial experience to pick a plant, touch it, smell it and eat it, which is the greatest connection to nature.”

The association, which was founded in 2011, encourages the public as well as companies, school groups and chefs to introduce wild plants into their diet. Nature walks and cookery classes are organised in Brussels and Wallonia, available on demand in private homes in a programme that runs from April to October.



Visible from the school's windows, the Mosan Valley is a perfect playground for foraging and harvesting plants. "We visit the sites, we pick plants, then we prepare the various dishes in groups before eating them together around this large communal table," says Raway, indicating the knotted blonde slab of wood that forms a convivial centrepiece.

For discovery tours of gourmet wild plant cooking, participants hop into go-karts, known as cuistax, for a carbon- and waste-free experience around Namur's historic citadel. Catering for between 100 and 400 people, they have enormous potential for international companies, says Raway: "There are panoramic views of the valleys, we explore underground tunnels, descend the citadel's streets and of course eat and drink in some of the best restaurants that are reserved for us."

Namur has a gastronomic reputation and Cuisine Sauvage is popular with local chefs. "They want to be in the avant-garde and see edible plants as a free and abundant resource. When they prepare a dish with wild plants in their restaurants, they are serving as ambassadors," he says. Having also trained a chef and a naturalist, he appreciates their enthusiasm. "When we go into the woods and ask them to smell something, they immediately start imagining food pairings and that's really fun; we learn something too."

One challenge for the association is helping people overcome their natural fear of eating plants. While it's frequently quoted that 96% of all plants are safe to consume, Raway says 80% are good to eat and only



© Maxime H - Photographie culinaire

around 10% are tasty. He prefers to concentrate on the last group, a nevertheless extensive list that includes wild garlic, chervil, nettles, dandelions, garlic mustard, cuckoo flower, chestnuts, poppies, pine, wild strawberries, daisies, hops, cobnuts, wild sorrel, wild blackberries, sage and elderflower.

One of these, nettles, grow abundantly in many a garden. Raway refers to it as an example of the long-term advantages of eating such produce. "By occasionally eating nettle soup, there are two benefits: connecting with nature and reducing your carbon footprint. For each kilo of vegetable you produce yourself, that's one kilo that has not been grown, fertilized, harvested, stocked, transported, wrapped

in plastic, delivered to stores, barcoded, transported by you and eventually thrown in the bin," he says.

While there's nothing new in the wild plant movement – "it's been around for thousands of years" – Raway is convinced of its future: "Up to now, I had the feeling that eating wild plants was a marginal activity. We know now that the planet is in difficulty and we don't know what we will be eating and how we're going to feed the world, but it's clear that among the panoply of options, there are wild plants. It's just necessary to give people the desire to take advantage of the nature around them."

cuisinesauvage.org

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By reconnecting people with nature, there is the possibility of some food self-sufficiency

Undress to impress

Carine Gilson's couture lingerie mixes old-school craft and contemporary chic

By Clodagh Kinsella



© Maison Carine Gilson



© Maison Carine Gilson



© Fashion & Lace Museum



© Fashion & Lace Museum

Since graduating from the fashion department of Antwerp's Royal Academy of Fine Arts in 1988, Brussels-based designer Carine Gilson has become synonymous with the market of couture lingerie, turning out one-of-a-kind garments from the finest French laces and silks.

"Lace has been a passion of mine ever since I was thirteen," says Gilson. "I like its precious side and the fact it's made by hand." A turning point came soon after her graduation when she came across a small vintage lingerie manufacturer, Maille France, near Gare du Nord in Brussels. "At the atelier I had this real coup de foudre for the artisanal nature of lace, this incredible savoir-faire," she says. She bought the atelier and launched her own brand in 1990.

Gilson's day- and nightwear draws on top-quality Lyon silk and Caudry lace from the Calais region. She's particularly known for her painstaking work with lace inlays, which run over kimonos, lingerie, gowns, jackets and camisoles, combining with shimmering silks to create an ethereal, decadently feminine mood. "My inspirations at the start were all the rituals of déshabillé: for me that was about silk garments, and I've always loved the sensual side of the 1930s and the 50s. I did a collection about the early 20th-century couturier

Paul Poiret that had this whole orientalist influence. It's from there that I started working with kimonos – but creating ones with a more Western influence."

Other obsessions – Art Deco, the designer Madeleine Vionnet – have resurfaced over the years, as Gilson's brand has expanded to take in beachwear and swimwear lines, as well as boutiques in London's Belgravia and Saint-Germain, Paris. Her garments are also stocked in high-end multi-brand shops in more than a dozen countries and regularly worn by celebrities including Nicole Kidman.

Gilson has recently opened an office in the Middle East, where she sometimes creates entire trousseaux for brides. "It's a market I've been familiar with for a decade and we have a very loyal customer base there," she says. "They're collectors, working women, above all people attracted to exclusive things."

Last year saw the launch of an intimate, boudoir-style flagship on Boulevard de Waterloo in Brussels, masterminded by crafts-oriented architectural duo David Raffoul and Nicolas Moussallem. Meanwhile, until next April, the capital's Fashion and Lace Museum is paying tribute to the designer and charting her label's evolution in its exhibition Beautiful Lace &

Carine Gilson. "Above all it was important to show the style and vision of the label, and this dialogue with lace that I've had for nearly thirty years," she says.

Today, Gilson's team produces 8,000 pieces a year, all handmade by artisans in her Brussels atelier with no recourse to outsourcing. "It's a niche market because we work on the lingerie like haute couture," she says. "There's a lot of work that goes into it and each piece is unique, which is what makes it true Belgian luxury."

Starting in the early Renaissance, when Emperor Charles V decreed that lacemaking was compulsory for girls in convents and béguinages, Belgium developed a thriving lace trade. Even in the early 20th century the country had, by some estimates, 47,000 lacemakers but the craft has now dwindled despite the efforts of hobby clubs.

"There aren't many artisans working with lace today," says Gilson. "It's this craftsmanship that I want to protect. Not by actually making the lace, but by the way we work with it and give it a contemporary signature. I'm proud to say that, in Belgium today, I'm the guardian of the temple of this kind of savoir-faire."

carinegilson.com

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Lace has been a passion of mine ever since I was 13





A HAPPY HALF-CENTURY

Chevetogne provincial park is holding a host of celebrations to mark 50 years since the province of Namur bought the site out of private hands and turned it into a family-friendly public space. The 550-hectare domain, between Rochefort and Ciney, is now home to Japanese pagodas, a nature museum, open-air swimming pool, petting zoo, mini-golf and many more attractions. And until October this year, it's adding a host of new celebratory activities to its calendar: jazz in the gardens, encounters with horticultural specialists, a garden party, themed guided tours, a new bridge and a giant garden gnome.

domainedechevetogne.be



3

© 1990 CongSA Suisse



2

© City of Bastogne



4

© Michael Roud



4

© Olivier Monnard



1

© Belga/Michel Krakowski

FOLKLORE LES FÊTES DU 15 AOÛT 1

Liège mixes folklore and religious ceremony every Assumption day to quirky effect in the Outremeuse neighbourhood. Children's activities take centre stage on the first day, while on the night before Assumption, concerts and food stalls line the streets, with the traditional drink, pékèt, flowing like water. Finally, on Assumption day, the Vierge Noire statue is carried through the streets, and a Mass in Walloon dialect takes place. A parade follows, with Liège's famous giants, and then... another party. Don't miss the final day, when black-clad women wail at the sight of Matî l'Ohê – literally a ham – being led to its grave.

12-16 AUGUST
visitezliege.be



EVENT

BELGIUM REMEMBERS

2

Belgium is busy commemorating the 75th anniversary of the end of World War Two. The country's liberation began in 1944, so many of the events look at the specifics of that momentous year. There's Art Liberty, a free outdoor exhibition of works on fragments of the Berlin Wall at the Bastogne War Museum. And don't miss the new permanent exhibition War, Occupation, Liberation at the Royal Museum of the Armed Forces in Brussels.

UNTIL SEPTEMBER 2020
belgiumremembers44-45.be

EXHIBITION

LES CHEMINS DU REVE

3

Comic creator and graphic novelist Hugo Pratt was born in 1920s Venice, spent the war years in Ethiopia and later moved to South America before coming back to Europe, hopping from the UK to Italy to France and, finally, Switzerland. His travels in between are too numerous to count, and it all influenced his work, rooted in mythology and meta-reality. The wonderful Fondation Folon, in an old farmhouse in La Hulpe, is hosting Les Chemins du Rêve, an exhibition dedicated to Pratt's exquisite dream sequences in his comics and graphic novels.

UNTIL 24 NOVEMBER
fondationfolon.be

FESTIVAL

GOUVY JAZZ

4

Madelonne Farm, tucked away in the Ardennes close to the border with Luxembourg, is the bucolic site of an internationally renowned and much-loved celebration of jazz. Each year since 1978 the farm has hosted an impressive roster of names – this year's lineup includes Mongolian-Bulgarian-French combo Violons Barbares, Ioannis Vafeas Trio with Vasilis Xenopoulos, and the Ana Popovic Blues Band. Pitch your tent on the farm for free, crack open one of the beers brewed on site and settle in for two days of jazz and a lazy, bluesy Sunday.

2-4 AUGUST
madelonne.be

SUMMER 2019

VOYAGE TO A WORLD OF DREAMS

Patrizia Zanotti is co-curator of Les Chemins du Rêve at Fondation Folon, an exhibition of the work of Italian graphic artist Hugo Pratt.

"Hugo Pratt is a novelist who drew his stories and wrote his drawings. That might seem a contradiction, but it explains how his graphic and pictorial artistry is supported by deep narrative content. Pratt, through his characters, explored the vast universe of both physical and mental travel, covering the exotic routes of the South Seas, the African deserts and the Amazonian forests. With his best-known character, the sailor Corto Maltese, he revolutionised how comic adventures were narrated, introducing quotations, themes and sequences from his vast knowledge of cinema, literature and poetry.

The themes that appear most frequently in his stories are the classic ones of the 'great adventure', a curiosity to discover the new while maintaining a profound respect for other cultures. Pratt grew up in an extremely heterogeneous environment, in contact with various beliefs and religions. The horizons of his stories are always open to knowledge. His watercolours immerse us in exotic Caribbean atmospheres or among the poetry of the Celtic world, they make us savour the intense sounds of Macumba or the delicate minuets of Boccherini, bringing us into a rarefied and distant world of magic realism.

The atmosphere of the Fondation and the works of Jean-Michel Folon exhibited there suggested to me and to Cristina Taverna, the co-curator of the exhibition and a friend of Folon, the theme of dreams, because the alternation between dream and narration is always present in Pratt's work. My favourite piece is Morgana, an almost monochrome watercolour that shows all Pratt's skill in portraying a world using simple brushstrokes that create movement and nuanced emotions.

Pratt left us a great gift: learning to explore the world with curiosity and open-mindedness. Corto Maltese is a modern traveller who doesn't fit the usual stereotypes of the adventurer. He seeks the chance encounter; he knows that for a sailing ship there is never a single route. The journey depends on the wind. He also knows how to wait, because he knows that time and space sometimes cancel each other out to give us a different view. Entering Pratt's dream world is a voyage in itself."

fondationfolon.be



“The horizons of Pratt's stories are always open to knowledge”

Feel inspired



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_____ in 14 years

400 M CONSUMERS
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6 COMPETITIVENESS
_____ CLUSTERS in
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**QUALITY
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WORKFORCE 

70% _____ of business
turnover comes
from **EXPORTS**



Wallonia.be