

BIG PICTURE | Sonaca takes flight
FOCUS | Belgian Economic Mission to
California
BUSINESS | Enersol, 20 years of sunshine

editorial

INNOVATION, RE-IMAGINATION



Innovation is a quintessential challenge for any entrepreneur. It entails providing a better solution to meet existing needs, turning a promising present into a new future. Its key lies in taking others into consideration, from business prospects to clients and partners, as well as one's own DNA, and the way it influences ongoing projects. It demands that something new be brought to the table, endlessly. These are the lessons we have learnt from our featured companies, be they industry giants or SMEs ranging across diverse sectors, including businesses like Sonaca, Enersol, Neobulles, or the ones flocking over to the US West Coast. But the key question is: how do we reinvent ourselves for you?

While this magazine is doing well, it could still do better. There is room for improvement in its ability to inspire, its presentation, and even in establishing a more human connection between international audiences and companies. We will discuss their results, but we will especially focus on why and how they got there. We will also feature the information shared by their CEOs, including not only the challenges encountered but also the achievements celebrated. The captain helms the ship alone, but not without support from their teams and advisers. You will discover all this and more through our completely revamped digital version. We would like to propose a whole new journey into entrepreneurship by making your reading experience easier, be it on your tablet or smartphone.

So, are you ready to join us?

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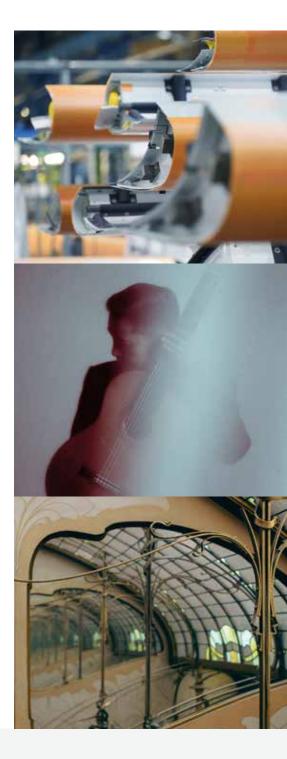
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WAB contact www.wallonia.be

LOUIS LELOUP, A TIMELESS LEGACY

Belgian master glassmaker Louis Leloup has passed away at the age of 96. Born in the town of Seraing in 1929, Leloup made a major contribution to the art of glassmaking through his innovative creations and global fame. A museum dedicated to his work is set to open in Brussels in 2026.









ENGIE: A WORLD FIRST

The energy company has successfully switched on its new combined cycle gas turbine in Flémalle for the first time. The biggest in the world by size (875 MW), the plant will begin operating on 1 November 2025 and will supply power to a million households. As a flexible source of power, it will complement wind and solar sources.

MORTEX®: FROM NAMUR TO OSAKA

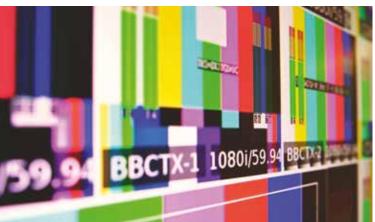
Family business BEAL International has coated a 900m² public rest space with its MORTEX® mineral flooring. Chosen for its durability and aesthetic, this coating exemplifies Walloon expertise and has strengthened the company's presence on the Japanese market.

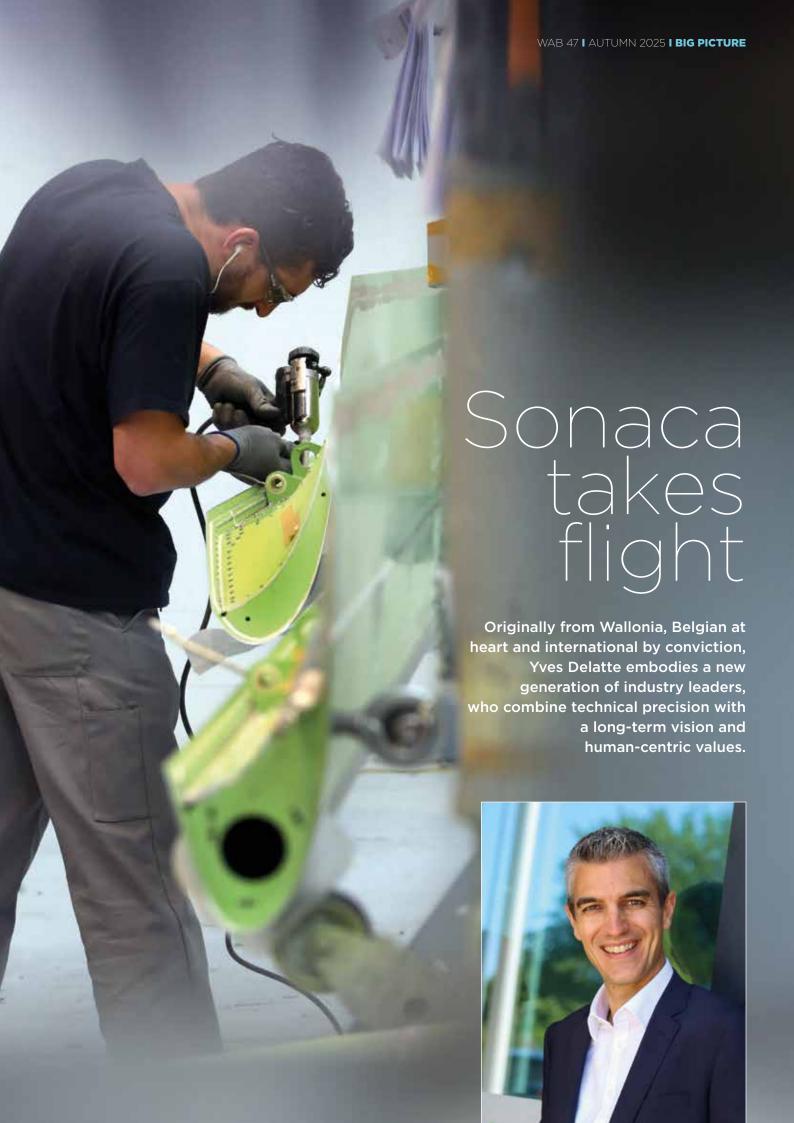




EVS GAINS US FOOTHOLD

Liege-based business EVS has bought Telemetrics, an American company that specialises in robotic cameras. This acquisition will enable EVS to assemble products locally and circumvent high import duties, while also consolidating its position in video technologies for sport and broadcasting.









After working at Glaverbel Building and McKinsey & Company, Yves Delatte joined Sonaca in 2012. Having trained as a civil engineer, he climbed the ranks and in 2021, aged 40, he took over as head of the company. This passing of the torch from Delvaux to Delatte took place at a time of great change, in the uncertainty of a post-Covid world. But Delatte's ambition is clear to all: "to make Sonaca an innovative and resilient player on the global scene." His sights are set on aeronautics, defence, space... and sustainability. "Now isn't the time to keep a low profile. Valuing sustainability may seem counterintuitive, given the pollution emitted by the aviation sector. But we aim to be leaders in the field. We won't change the world alone, but we can take responsibility and be pro-active in decarbonisation within aviation."

Yves Delatte's approach relies on having both a clear strategy and trust in the people around him. He provides perspective, takes responsibility for his choices, and gets people on board. "Everyone rolled up their sleeves!" he says, with pride in his workforce. Today, Sonaca is back to making profits, and has just seen its second-best year ever.

A discreet visionary, Yves Delatte has established a culture of high standards, responsibility, self-reflection and, most of all, a search for meaning. "We're about to reach the strategic vision we created in 2021: becoming the 3rd largest player globally, achieving €1 billion in turnover, and diversifying."

It is this dynamic that has made Sonaca a key player worldwide.

"In Wallonia, we have great companies and institutions, as well as solid training programmes. It's also important to give back to the ecosystem which has given me so much," he says. Delatte is also the president of two Walloon federations in the sector, both of which are under GIWAS, the Walloon grouping of the aeronautics and space industries. Their end goal is to attract young people to the sector.

https://www.sonaca.com/



ADVICE

Dare to dream!
Dare to have ambition and take on projects!

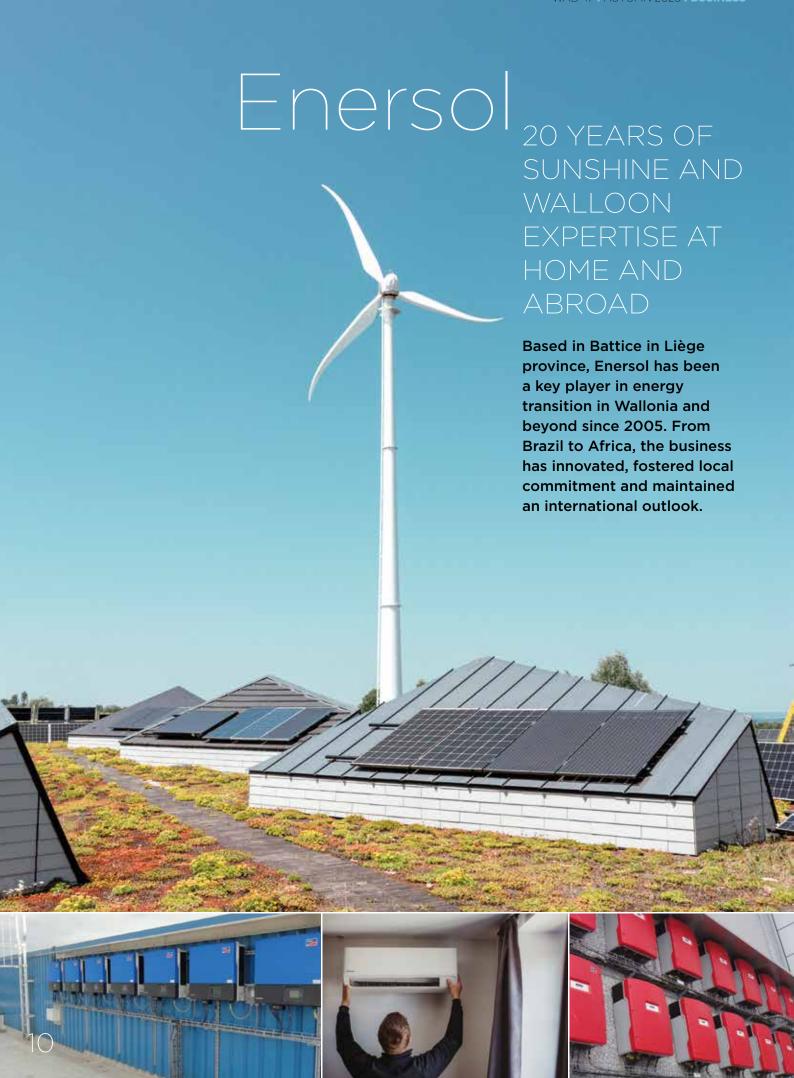


SONACA TODAY

Sustainability: designing 3 innovative and high-performance wings to help reduce aircraft fuel consumption.

Diversification: landmark projects, notably for the defence sector.

International expertise: the recent acquisition of 51% of Spanish group Aciturri will enable us to become the world leader in designing the aircraft of tomorrow.



Twenty years ago, when solar panels were a rare sight on Walloon roofs, Samuel Bragard and André Jacquinet wanted to get involved in energy transition and founded Enersol. Today, the business employs more than 120 people, has a turnover of more than €30 million and deploys its renewable energy solutions far beyond Belgium's borders. "We like to see ourselves as pioneers; we're not the biggest, but we are the most agile, the most innovative," said Pieter Demandt, the company's financial manager who has been with Enersol since 2019.

Agile, innovative and, above all, resilient, Enersol diversified its operations in 2013, and began offering its services to SMEs and manufacturers, in addition to private individuals. Their range expanded: photovoltaic systems, storage, electric transport, heat pumps and more. Even with this booming growth, the business stuck to its core values: "Staff are recruited from within the company, drawn from the local region; more than half of our staff are shareholders, and the Enersol Academy is training electricians and technicians in the professions of tomorrow."

In 2013, a Brazil branch was set up in a market that was still in its early stages. "We had to be bold: for 6 years, we provided the project with financial and technical support. The boom

began in 2019." Their businesses solutions were provided with a Walloon expertise that had been adapted to local needs. In Africa, a different approach was taken: instead of direct involvement, there are local partnerships, which provide electricity to schools, medical centres and business premises, from Burkina Faso to Mozambique. "The impact is real. Together we are creating sustainable jobs."

Enersol proudly emphasizes its Walloon roots in its flagship industrial collaborations, such as the solar canopy and hundreds of charging points at the Safran Aero Boosters site in Herstal, in Liège province. It is also present in the tailored support the company provides to its clients, featuring responsive service and after-sales teams.

In the coming years, the business aims to continue providing local solutions and growing at the international level, while solidifying its status as a trailblazer.

"Our ambition is to contribute to energy transition, wherever our expertise can make a difference."



PROBIOTIC SPECIALIST TAC



© Michael Oredsson directeur général

ACQUIRED BY DANONE

With 20 years of research behind it, gut health specialist The Akkermansia Company (TAC), part of the VIVES Funds investment portfolio, was recently acquired by Danone. This acquisition highlights VIVES Partners' robust investment strategy and marks a major milestone for the VIVES Partners start-up fund in the successful transformation of research into strategic market value.

VIVES Partners, a fund management company supported by UCLouvain and the Walloon Region via Wallonie Entreprendre, manages the VIVES II funds by investing into innovative companies, especially ones in their start-up phase.

Our strategy is to transform research (...) into thriving commercial enterprises







Since 2016, the year of TAC's launch, VIVES Partners has pooled together a strong consortium of stakeholders, including €18 million in funding from Seventure Partners and Innovation Industries in 2018, along with VIVES Funds and Wallonie Entreprendre. This collaboration fed into TAC's success and growth by optimising the production process and conducting numerous scientific and clinical tests.

VIVES Partners plays a key role in connecting academic research and innovative projects with public and private

investors. The acquisition of TAC by Danone is a major achievement for them. "TAC exemplifies our strategy of transforming cutting-edge European academic research into thriving commercial enterprises through the founding and growth of pioneering spinoffs," says Philippe Durieux, Managing Partner at VIVES Partners.

Founded by Prof. Willem M. de Vos of Wageningen University, the Netherlands and Patrice D. Cani of UC Louvain, TAC develops products based on the unique properties of a naturally occurring bacterium that plays a crucial role in reducing inflammation and mitigating metabolic disorders.



Modello Architectes:

AIMING TO EXPORT ITS EXPERTISE

With over 25 years of experience, Charleroi-based Modello brings together a multi-talented team of architects. The company has built a formidable reputation in the hospital and pharmaceutical sectors, further specialising in a cutting-edge field: radiopharmaceutical architecture. This is a rare expertise that the company now intends to export.

Modello Architectes' true strength lies in their capacity to combine architectural design while integrating advanced technical solutions.

After their first successful project in the radiopharmaceutical sector, Modello Architectes went on to specialise in the construction of nuclear medicine facilities. In the last few years, the hospital and radiopharmaceutical sectors have become one of their specialities, especially after having taken part in a trade delegation dedicated to nuclear medicine organised by AWEX in the USA and Canada. This signals a diversification strategy that goes hand in hand with the arrival of Gordian Roussel, an architect with significant experience in the hospital sector.

In 2020, Modello acquired a company working in collaboration with the Institute of Radioactive Elements (IRE, based in Fleurus) and decided to submit a tender for constructing a building to house a cyclotron, which is a particle accelerator. Needless to say, Modello's bid was successful, and involved challenges with regards to materials, techniques, building stability and team expertise.









"Thanks to our first project, we have now gained comprehensive experience in this sector", says Hubert Clausse, Managing Director.

CHALLENGES TO TACKLE ABROAD TOO

This new expertise has opened the doors to new, ambitious projects, such as the design of a building to house a linear particle accelerator. This has given rise to a future beyond Belgium, because Modello Architectes aims to export its know-how and its expertise in this niche sector, and to contribute to the development of essential infrastructure for nuclear medicine at the global level. We wish them luck!

https://modelloarchitectes.be/

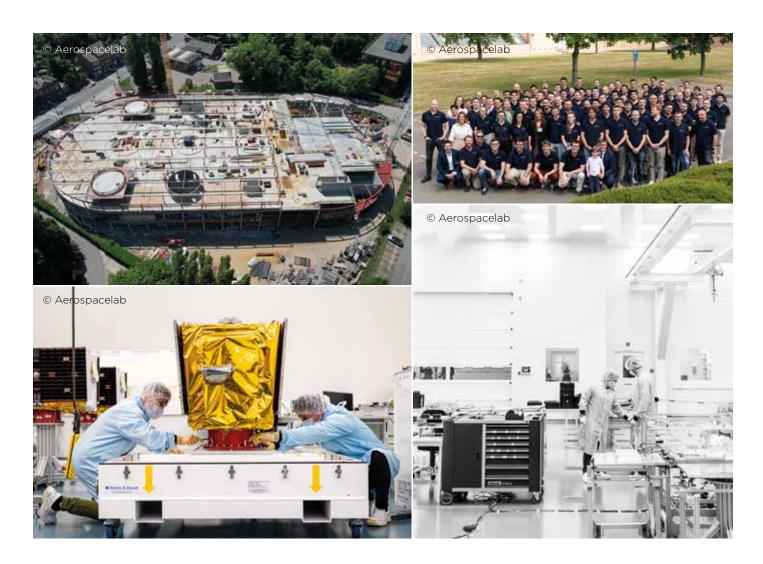
Belgian Economic Mission to California:

AN ACCELERATOR OF INTERNATIONAL GROWTH

HRH Princess Astrid of Belgium will lead a high-level Belgian delegation, involving over a hundred companies, to the US West Coast. The Belgian Economic Mission has been organised by the Wallonia Export & Foreign Investment Agency (AWEX) in collaboration with the Belgian Foreign Trade Agency (BFTA), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and two other regional agencies: hub.brussels and Flanders Investment & Trade. "Belgium creates more than 80,000 direct jobs in the United States and punches above its weight in terms of foreign direct investment, with more than \$73 billion flowing into the US. Walloon companies play a key role in this story, bringing technological and industrial expertise to California that complements the local innovation ecosystem," stated the American Chamber of Commerce in Belgium. Among the participating companies, there will be six standouts that will highlight Wallonia's innovation, resilience and diversity.

KEY FACTS:

- Duration: From 4 to 12 October 2025
 - Location: San Francisco and Los Angeles
 - Multi-sector participation
 - B2B meetings, company visits and sector-based seminars



#AEROSPACE

AEROSPACELAB: WALLOON TRAILBLAZER



"This will be the perfect opportunity to showcase our vision for our satellites."

Established in 2018, Aerospacelab has become a key European player in the space industry and a heavyweight in the making. It boasts of a strategic site in Louvain-la-Neuve, a Megafactory under construction in Charleroi, sites in Switzerland and France, and its latest location opened recently in California. The Megafactory will become the first satellite-producing plant in Europe, with the capacity of producing up to 500 satellites every year. For Célia Berlemont, Senior Communication, Marketing & PR Manager, the Californian mission is "a promising nod and a key opportunity to raise awareness among our American partners and to consolidate our projects with them." Having already signed deals with clients such as Xona Space Systems and the prestigious Japanese company JAXA, Aerospacelab features a dynamic model involving 300 employees and €94 million in recently raised funding, and is valued at almost half a billion euros. "This is the perfect opportunity to prove that we are pioneers capable of providing a European solution to global satellite needs."

https://www.aerospacelab.com/

#10

TONOMIA:

SOLAR ENERGY POWERING AI



"With our innovative products, we are going to sign multi-million dollar contracts with American giants."

A young start-up founded in 2023 in Battice, Tonomia transforms parking lots into smart solar power plants which can power not only EVs but also AI data centres. With their eParking and eCanopy solutions, Tonomia has already become a part of the Nvidia Inception programme and is also collaborating with Supermicro and MiTAC Computing. "Our mission is to offer innovative solutions that enable our clients to tap into renewable energy," says founder Mustapha Belhabib. Having established themselves in China and the Silicon Valley, "this Belgian Economic Mission is a great occasion for us to not only sign new industrial and economic partnerships, but also to strengthen the credibility of our model and offer solutions that can be deployed in just a few days." With over 30 employees and numerous patents, Tonomia was honoured with an invitation to the Cannes Film Festival by Forbes Magazine to tell their inspiring story to the world. The Liègebased start-up is currently in the process of finalising its Series A fundraising round based on a valuation of approximately 300 million euros, a first in Belgium for such a young start-up.

https://tonomia.com/





#MEDICAL

eCLINICA:EXPERTISE IN DIGITISING CLINICAL TRIALS





"Safer and simpler clinical trials, thanks to our intuitive software that complies with international standards."

Established in 2009 in Waterloo, eClinica are specialists in the digitisation and optimisation of clinical trials for the pharmaceutical, biotech, veterinary and academic sectors. Thanks to its extensive expertise, the company has developed several specialised software programmes that have been used in more than 165 international clinical trials, especially in the field of vaccines. Their technology uses AI "to predict side effects to improve patient safety," says CEO Vincent Wautelet. "It also includes a secure blockchain that guarantees data integrity." In collaboration with Google, eClinica hopes to increase its visibility and enter into trustworthy partnerships, with the longer-term goal of carrying out its first pilot projects in the USA.

https://eclinica.eu/

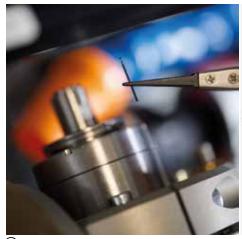


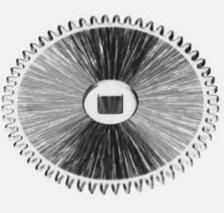
LASEA: USING LASERS TO INNOVATE

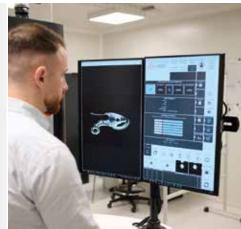
Created in 1999 in Liège, LASEA has established itself as Europe's leader in femtosecond laser micromachining. Their machines are used in the medical, electronics and luxury watch industries, replacing environmentally unfriendly processes and offering the possibility to miniaturise with precision. "Our technology has paved the way for increasingly sustainable and efficient production methods," says founder Axel Kupisiewicz. With 180 employees spread over 6 sites, including one in San Diego since 2016, the USA is LASEA's second biggest market. Their goal during the upcoming Belgian Economic Mission will be "to consolidate relationships with prestigious Silicon Valley clients and to showcase new products. Innovation is in our DNA, as it is the only way to make our excellence stand out in a globalised market."











#FOOD & DRINK



Neobulles: FESTIVE

NON-ALCOHOLIC DRINKS!

Based in Herve, Neobulles unsurprisingly, Europe's top producer of non-alcoholic drinks, thanks to its brands Vintense and Bière des Amis. Owned by the Stassen family whose expertise traces its roots back to 1895, Neobulles sells festive drinks in over 40 countries. "California is a strategic market, as it is a wellness pioneer," says Anne Stassen, who co-founded the company along with her father and brother in 2014. With a turnover of 18 million euros and 6 million bottles sold every year, Neobulles is developing increasingly innovative products. "During this mission, we aim to strengthen our good relations, meet up with other partners, retailers and importers, and gain a better understanding of the market."

https://neobulles.be/

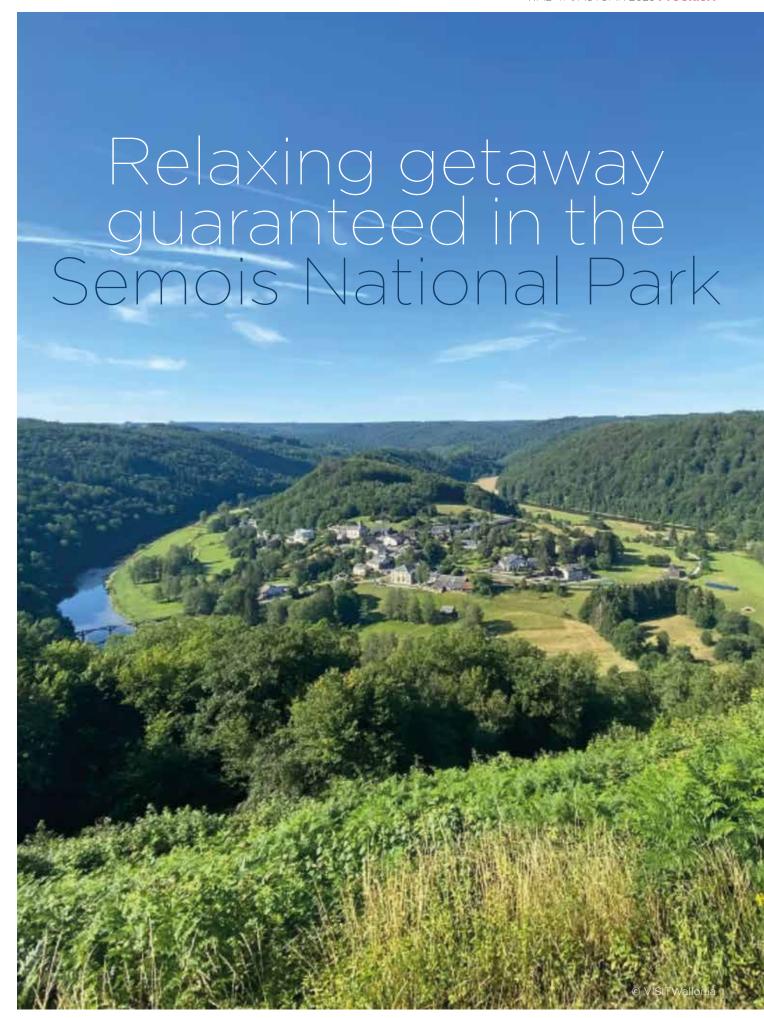
Dely Wafels: BELGIAN WAFFLES IN CALIFORNIAN STORES

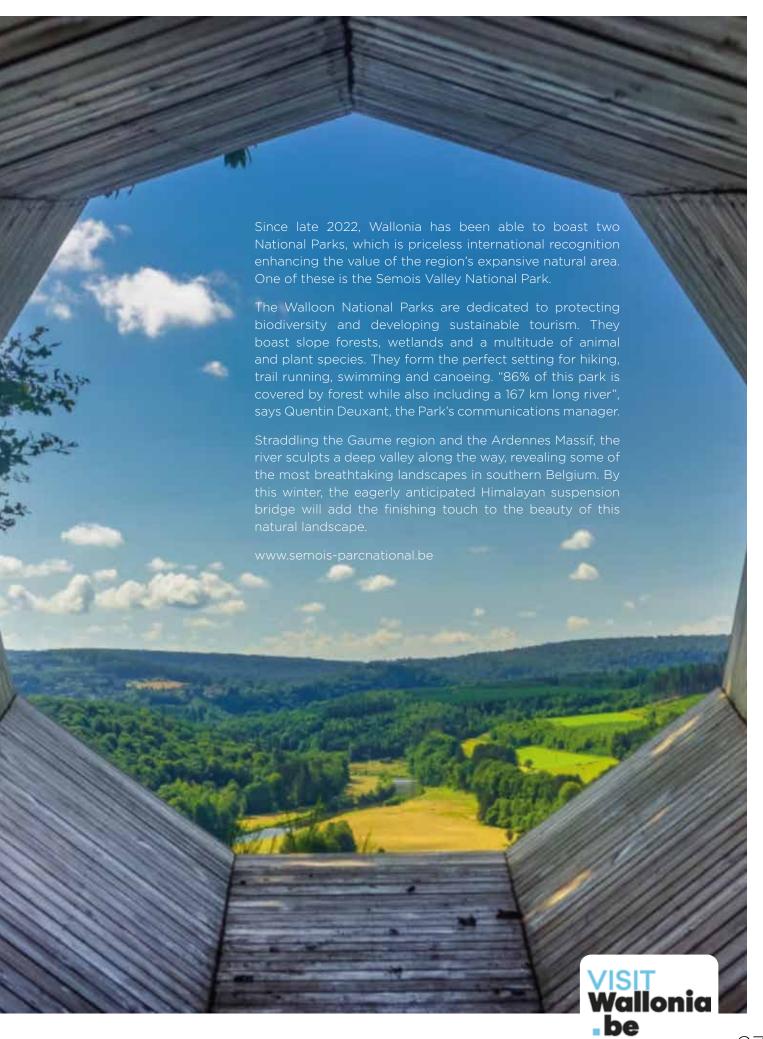


"We hope to share our know-how and bolster our excellent business relationships."

Based in Estaimpuis, the Dely Wafels factory produces 1 million frozen Brussels waffles every day. Now a worldwide leader, this family-owned SME has been present in the American market for over 15 years. "This Belgian Economic Mission will enable us to bolster our relations with our long-standing clients and attract new partners," says CEO Thibault Lacroix. "Our secret recipe? It is the authentic taste and the high quality that makes all the difference," says Davy Van Poucke, founder and CCO.

https://delv.be/





A TASTE OF WALLONIA, CRAFTED TO DELIGHT THE STARS

While preparing for his mission aboard the International Space Station, Raphaël Liégeois wanted to sneak a reminder of home into his space luggage: the *boulet liégeois* (Liége-style meatball). Specifically speaking, he meant a boulet devised by Frédéric Lambert, head chef at l'Amirauté in Tilff, who recalls, "He was such a dedicated student that he would cycle all the way here."

This soon-to-be space food, now successfully added to the list of recipes authorised by NASA, was not without its own fair share of technical challenges. "The sauce, which is the true signature of the boulet

liégeois, was particularly challenging." In zero gravity, liquid spatters must be avoided. "This gave birth to the idea of encapsulating the sauce within the centre of the meatball, which is still under consideration."

Frédéric Lambert is also signing off on something that is "above all, the result of extensive collaboration with other Belgian and European chefs and gastronomical experts." They all shared a common goal: to promote the Walloon region all the way to space, as well as wanting to keep one foot back on Earth, even when being pulled away from it.



Denis Sungho:

MUSIC BETWEEN WORLDS

Born in Korea but adopted by a Walloon family, classical guitarist Denis Sungho deftly blends cultural influences.

Based in Seoul for the last 15 years or so, he has delighted audiences at the greatest international venues. He has blazed his own musical path, inspired by European and Asian traditions, and has even brought his keen understanding of melody and silence to pop music, particularly when collaborating with the Korean pop star Insooni. He has performed at Carnegie Hall, the Berliner Philharmonie and the Seoul Art Centre, and has recorded an album for Universal. "Being a modern musician means synthesising what you are, what you have taken in, and what you want to pass on."

His deep attachment to Wallonia comes from his years spent at the Conservatoire de Huy, the *discobus* (a travelling media library), the impact of his teachers, and the powerful influence of singer-songwriter Pierre Rapsat. "Wallonia taught me to nurture my curiosity, to look for beauty in simplicity."

Asked if he considers himself an ambassador, he hesitates. "I do not want to embody anything; I want to connect."

Would you like to forge links too? Become an ambassador for the] wallonia.be [brand.



Sarah Levy Accessory to success

Winner of the Prix
ANDAM Accessoires,
which provides a
€100,000 grant and a
one-year mentorship
under Sophie
Delafontaine, artistic
director at Longchamp,
designer Sarah Levy is
levelling up.













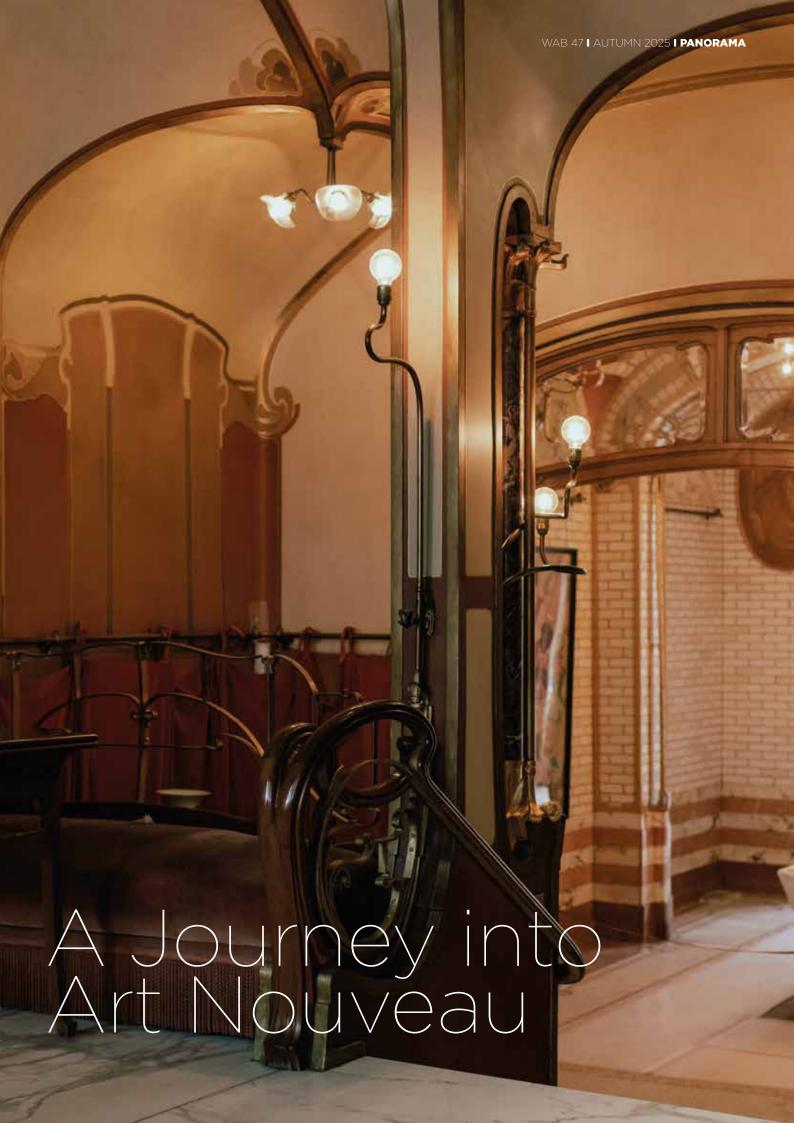


A grant from WBDM's Fashion Programme 2025 will also help her reach the international market and enable "consistent and controlled growth, with a focus on storytelling, high quality craftsmanship, upcycling and local production."

In September, she launched a nylon capsule — her first foray into blending upmarket quality with affordable prices. She hopes her creativity will reach a wider audience. A trendsetter worth following!





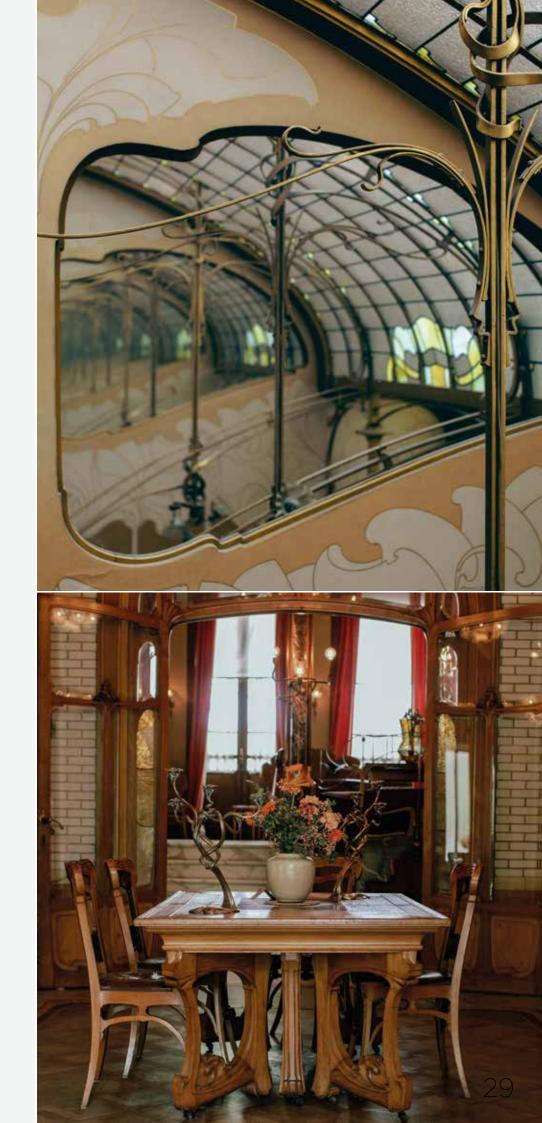


Victor Horta's former home and studio in Brussels celebrate the legacy of Art Nouveau. Curves unfold like vines, light dances across marble and wood, iron entwines with glass—every detail crafted in the pursuit of beauty and harmony.

At the turn of the century, innovation embraced elegance, leaving behind a timeless legacy. Restored furniture, original décor, and rare details invite visitors to immerse themselves in a total work of art.

"By restoring a house to its original state, creating a space that is relevant to people now, and with a role for the future, the Horta Museum aspires to keep Horta's work alive today." Benjamin Zurstrassen, Curator

www.hortamuseum.be



The man who gives the dead a voice



Forensic pathologist, storyteller and author. It is in that order that Philippe Boxho describes himself, a man who has turned real cases into thrilling stories. Methods and motives naturally feature too, but his aim is to bring legal medicine to the forefront, to show how fundamental it is in establishing the facts of a case.

His fourth book, *La mort c'est ma vie* (Death is my life), includes fascinating new tales, plenty of dark humour, lessons and surprises, and even a scientific analysis of the Shroud of Turin and the Sistine Chapel ceiling.

His bestselling books have been translated into more than 15 languages (including English) and his talks have attracted audiences from around the world. This success led him to develop "Boxho In Vivo", a non-profit organisation which organises and manages his talks, and uses the proceeds to support medical charities.

A PASSIONATE
AND HUMANISTIC
FIGURE, **BOXHO**TALKS ABOUT
DEATH TO HELP
US BETTER
UNDERSTAND
LIFF

www.kennesles3as.com www.boxhoinvivo.com



A NIGHT DEDICATED TO NOTRE-DAME

15 APRIL 2019

• Notre-Dame de Paris catches fire

16 APRIL 2019

- 2:00 pm Patrick Vanhorenbeeck receives an urgent call
- 3:00 pm Emergency production of ten 20m beams begins
- 11:00 pm A convoy, escorted by the French police, departs from Étalle for Paris

17 APRIL 2019

- 5:30 am The beams arrive in Paris
- 10:00 am They are hoisted up 70m to reinforce the cathedral

"It was essential for us to show up, produce the beams urgently over the next few hours, all without thinking about the costs," says Patrick Vanhorenbeeck, managing director. The mission was centred around a heritage emergency, which required a discreet but critical response. Artbois' contribution that day ultimately became the foundation for subsequent restoration work. Walloon expertise once again played a vital role in history.

Wallonia, the land of

SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION

Circular materials eco-design, industrial symbiosis, encouraging the reuse and repair of these materials within the economy, recycling innovation, etc.

Innovations for **enhanced health** biotechnologies, medical equipment, eHealth, mHealth, silver economy, prevention, etc.

Innovations for agile and safe **design** and **production methods** (IoT, 3D printing)

Sustainable energy systems and housing

Agri-food chains of the future and innovative management of the environment

At the heart of Europe



"Dare to dream! Dare to have ambition and take on projects!

Yves Delatte, CEO of Sonaca Group

Wallonia.be

welcome@investinwallonia.be

CONTACT US TO EXPLORE GREEN OPPORTUNITIES IN WALLONIA











