DECEMBER 2013 outlook airBaltic inflight magazine



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Латвия, Юрмала, Приедаине, Саласпилс 9

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Латвия, Рига, Площадь Републикас, 3

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Martin Alexander Gauss CEO of airBaltic

Dear Customer,

December is the month of returning home, and we are very much a part of it. As your airline, we are delighted to fly you to your family for Christmas, to help you complete all your year-end business travel before the period of celebrations, to reunite you with your friends for a New Year's party or to bring someone special to see you.

December is also a time to reflect on the past 12 months. For *airBaltic*, it has been a very good year. We achieved a 27-million-euro improvement of *airBaltic*'s net profit already in the first nine months of this year, thus demonstrating that our business turnaround plan has been a success story. We continued our foresighted cost controls, rapid adaptation to changing markets, which also required the reduction of the size of our business, and downsizing our fleet.

However, we also made major improvements to our flight schedules, switched to state-of-the-art turboprop aircraft and improved the efficiency of our fleet by 15%, which is helping us to serve you better as our customer and make flying more affordable. We also introduced six new routes in the summer to warm-weather destinations, and this month will see yet another major launch – the new route between Riga and Abu Dhabi in a code-share partnership with *Etihad*. Towards the end of the year, we continued to improve on our punctuality, keeping *airBaltic* among the very top performers in Europe. This is a solid basis for continued success and profitability next year.

Did you know that *airBaltic* carries over 50,000 kilograms of mail every December for the world's major postal companies? That is the equivalent of 2.5 million Christmas greeting cards being sent to our destinations in Europe, the Middle East, Russia and the CIS.

Thank you for flying *airBaltic*! If you are returning home, then welcome back, and have a great holiday!

Yours, Martin Alexander Gauss

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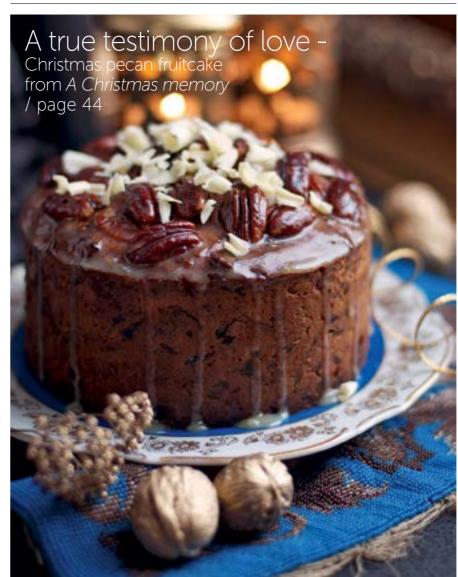








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December

- Your next destination Istanbul – between modernity and nostalgia
- Interview Latvian fashion designer Katya Shehurina
 - Travel Foods from the fjords



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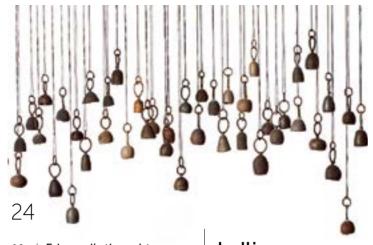
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in Riga

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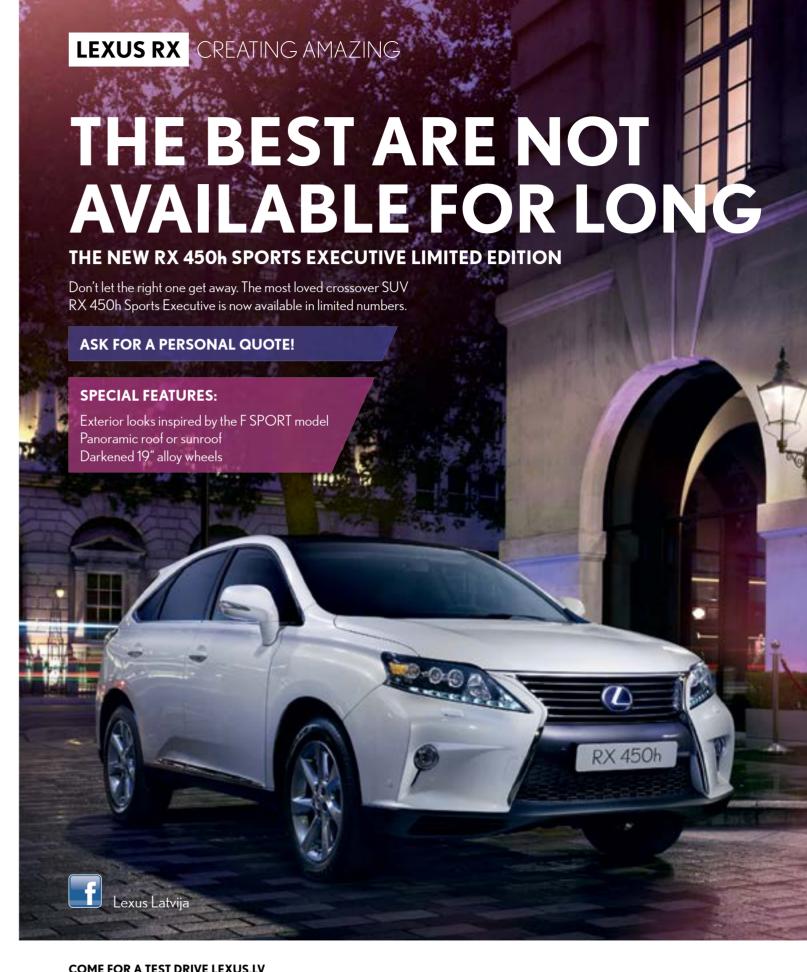
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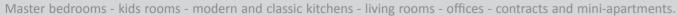
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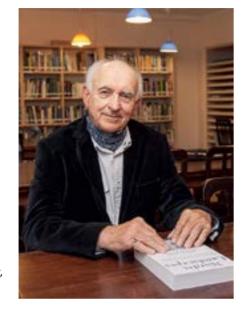


A Christmas goose

The defroster of the old orange VW Beetle cabriolet could not keep up with the increasing cold. Occasionally, we had to blow on the two round openings in the ice on the windshield, which made it possible to steer the car through the snowy forest landscape. At one point, my fiancée Elizabeth exclaimed: "There is no smoke coming from the chimneys!" All of the summer people had retreated south. Spoken by a stout-hearted Scot from Edinburgh with a good sense of humour, this revelation of concern came as a surprise. I was seized by an ominous feeling about our whole venture.

There were very few houses around. We were heading north on the road that led to Quebec City, Canada. Just before the border, we left the highway and drove to a cottage by a lake in the North Woods of Maine. This was to be our first Christmas together. An English couple was also on its way to join us. In the *Beetle's* tiny luggage compartment was our Christmas feast – a frozen goose. My idea for a Latvian Christmas.

The cottage, built by a fur trapper, was charming, with simple farmhouse windows, weathered cedar shingles and pine board walls. The wintry view over the lake, distant



MIDNIGHT NEARED, BUT THE GOOSE WAS NOT COOKING VERY WELL

low mountains and ice flowers on the windows gave us the feeling that we were much further north, in the Yukon. There was electricity but no running water, so we had to chop through thick lake ice to get it. A simple, inexpensive trapper stove provided heat and a cooking surface, with plenty of "hard rock maple" stocked in the woodshed.

Our English friends, Mick and Nicky, eventually arrived. Both were hardy, having circumnavigated the earth in their steel ketch (a type of sailboat). It was early in the afternoon when we started cooking the unfortunate bird, by then thawed out, on top of the stove. A brilliant chemistry professor, Mick helped with advice. We duly filled the goose with apples, placed it in a large pan meant for cooking turkeys and wrapped the lid in plenty of tin foil, thus hoping to overcome the problem of lacking a baking oven. We settled in around the stove, the warmest place in the cottage. As it has been since time immemorial around a fire, we too started telling stories. There was a good supply of wine. Midnight neared, but the goose was not cooking very well. More maple wood and more wine followed, interspersed with treks out onto the lake ice to watch brilliant stars and the Milky Way. By four in the morning, the goose was finally done - a wretched, driedout bird with scrawny legs. Did we enjoy it? Well, yes. BO







Trendy meatpacking district

Copenhagen's upscale Meatpacking District can be found right in the heart of the Danish capital. Today, this new creative quarter – with hip nightclubs, new art galleries and lots of high-quality restaurants – is one of Copenhagen's most popular leisure spots

The history of the city's Meatpacking District or Kødbyen (which means "meat town" in Danish) goes back to the second half of the 17th century, when court butcher Niels Olufsen set up a cattle-trading square at the border of two prominent city districts. Each morning, he ceremonially heralded the opening of the market with the beating of drums. Although nowadays cattle are no longer sold in this part of the city, the banging of drums and the throbbing of bass guitars is louder than ever. That is because Kødbyen has become home to countless art galleries, cafés, bars and restaurants.

The rebirth of this formerly industrial quarter

actually began fairly recently. For centuries, the district had served as the country's main meat-processing centre and had played an important role in Denmark's economy. With the larger meat-processing plants moving to more modern facilities in outlying parts of the city, the area risked deteriorating and becoming a ghost town. Therefore, in 2005, the Copenhagen city council gave the green light for city residents to populate this historical district.

Among the most prominent Meatpacking District establishments is *Fiskebaren*, a restaurant founded by one of Copenhagen's top chefs, Anders Selmer. Starting from 5 PM every day, Fly to Copenhagen with airBaltic
from €75 ROUND TRIP

patrons are treated to fresh fish and other seafood, with an emphasis on modern Nordic cuisine. Another unique institution is the *Karriere* contemporary art and social activity centre, which incorporates an art gallery, restaurant and cocktail bar, and which is open practically 24 hours a day in one form or another.

Hidden without any bright signs to indicate their presence among the district's historical buildings are two of Copenhagen's trendiest night spots. One is the Jolene bar, which is run by two Icelandic women and which is popular with both locals and visitors alike - so much so, that it occasionally experiences run-ins with the police and neighbouring residents due to the loud noise that emanates from the premises. The other is the laid-back Kødboderne 18 (KB18) night club, located in a former warehouse and featuring authentic 1970s Scandinavian design.

The appeal of this compact, lively and welcoming part of the city – which is only a few minutes by foot from the central railway station – lies not only in its small art galleries, cafés and bars, but also in the fact that although the district is praised and promoted by Denmark's national tourism agency, it is not overrun by foreign visitors and remains a favourite hangout for locals as well. BO



SPOTLIGHT ON THE HOLIDAY SEASON

Five things that you should do in Latvia (Melngalvju nams) and Riga City Hall. Riga's in December

- Check out the fabulous artworks by students of the Art Academy of Latvia. which are on sale at the annual Jarmarka (www.lma.lv) market from December 18-30 (except for three days at Christmas from December 24-26). A perfect occasion for buying interesting and unusual presents.
- Subject yourself to a rejuvenating whisking ritual (pēršana) by a professional bathhouse attendant (pirtnieks) in a Latvian wet sauna (pirts) and cool off in a snowbank or ice hole. Unforgettable!
- See the giant Christmas tree at the square by the Blackheads' House

ON THIS MONTH'S MENU

Celebrate life in all of its splendour with some tips by *Baltic Outlook*



Beauty

The makers of MÁDARA. Latvia's first and best-known natural cosmetics brand, came out with a new brand earlier this fall -MiLOMiLL – a joyful collection of soaps made from organic ingredients and imbued with natural fragrances. The new product's packaging design was created in cooperation with one of Latvia's most talented artists. Kristīne Luīze Avotina. MiLOMiLL soaps can be bought at MÁDARA, Stockmann and Douglas stores and cost LVL 3.51 / EUR 5.





Splendid Palace is not only the oldest movie theatre in Riga, it was also the first in the Baltic countries to show films with sound. On December 30, the venerable movie house will celebrate its 90th birthday. Splendid Palace still stands out in the Latvian capital with its historical and ornate interior and for its screening of top-rated European films. The atmosphere is made even more unique by the fact that patrons are allowed to drink wine while watching

www.splendidpalace.lv

Design

TREND:

If you wish to stress your individuality in the decoration of your home, then it is worth looking at the MINT furniture collection, which has won numerous Latvian design awards. The laconic forms and natural wood lines contrast with the playful colour palette, resulting in a harmonious and balanced interior space

www.mintmebeles.lv

first Christmas tree was decorated with paper flowers more than 500 years ago. back in 1510. This year's Christmas tree is

also a must-see!

eiropasziemassvetki.lv).

- Attend a splendid concert performance under the auspices of the European Christmas (Eiropas Ziemassvētki) music festival at one of the many participating concert halls and churches in Riga and other parts of Latvia (www.
- Catch the Olympic spirit by taking a ride on a genuine bobsleigh at speeds that can reach 120 km/h. Where? At the Sigulda luge and bobsleigh track (www.bobtrase.lv).



Lynda Klich and Benjamin Weiss, The Postcard Age (19.99 EUR, www.thamesandhudson.com)

A glorious, nostalgia-rich book that celebrates the nearly-extinct pastime of postcard penning and posting. It features some 400 vivid cards by European and American artists from the last century, all arranged by theme (e.g. celebrity, technology and urban life). Real art within.

films in the rococo-style premises.

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Cabaret performance

Palladium concert hall, Riga December 6, 7, 26, 27, 28, 29

The annual Cabaret performance, which will gather some of Latvia's best musical artists for the tenth year in a row, has become a legend in itself. It incorporates the splendour and spaciousness of 1930s American cabaret with the bohemian atmosphere of the Moulin Rouge in Paris. Traditionally, the cabaret evening continues well after the official programme has ended, with talented singers performing some of the world's most popular songs – including tango, jazz and Oriental pieces and patrons taking to the dance floor until as late as 3 AM.

Tickets at www.bilesuparadize.lv.
Price: LVL 40–50 (EUR 56.91–71.14)
(admission includes a seat at a table,
a glass of wine and snacks)
Marijas iela 21

vellery exhibition by Andris Lauders – **Chess fo** • **Diamond Queen** (Šahs briljantu karalienei)



Putti art gallery, Riga December 6–21

Andris Lauders is one of Latvia's best-known jewellery makers. His latest exhibition will feature 64 works of art, which correspond with the number of squares on a chess board. The functional silver and gold jewellery pieces also play on the black-and-white colour scheme of a chess board, showing only occasional accents of colour. Viewers of the exhibition will come across various cultural references. For example, one of the rings depicts a side view of the Roman Colosseum in miniature.

More information at www.putti.lv Mārstaļu iela 16

DECEMBER 2013

Teatro Verdi di Trieste chamber orchestra concert

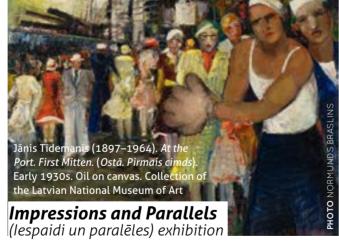


Riga Congress Centre December 13

World-famous conductor Fabrizio Ficiur and the Teatro Verdi di Trieste chamber orchestra are on tour with a special holiday concert programme, *Baroque Christmas*, which they will present in

a guest performance at the Riga Congress Centre. The orchestra specialises in musical numbers performed by the best Italian orchestras during the late 19th and early 20th centuries and excels at stirring up the concert atmosphere of the fin de siècle era. This time, the orchestra will be playing classic pieces from various periods, including the 20th century, combining a deep respect for the composers with a passionate Italian temperament.

Tickets at www.bilesuserviss.lv. Price: LVL 11–25 (EUR 15.65–35.57) Kr. Valdemāra iela 5



Art Museum Riga Bourse Until February 2

During the late 1920s, Latvian art was subject to a Belgian influence, which grew during the 1930s, generating a "Belgian school" in local painting. In order for viewers to fully appreciate this captivating synergy, the Art Museum Riga Bourse has set up a unique exhibition, which features the paintings of both

Latvian and Belgian artists from that period. Fine works by such Latvian master painters as Jānis Tīdemanis and Eduards Kalniņš are being shown along with the oeuvres of various prominent Belgian artists, including Isidore Opsomer, Albert Saverys, Valerius de Saedeleer and Albert Servaes.

More information at www.lnmm.lv Doma laukums 6

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Mozart's piano concerto and Prague Symphony



The dance of bubbles in champagne glasses, hot-air balloons rushing higher and higher.. Mozart is passionate, vivacious and so welldisposed. The party will be conducted by Günter Pichler, the founder of the legendary Alban Berg Quartet and its first violin and an expert of Mozart's scores. The solo part in Mozart's last piano concerto is entrusted to Diana Ketler, who was born in Riga and now lives in London. Mozart's crystalline passages seem just right for such a delicate pianist.

New Year's Gala

The Great Guild Hall December 28, 29 and 30

This year the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra will celebrate New Year's Eve in a New York style. To charm the audience with melodies from musicals by Bernstein and Gershwin the beloved American diva Angela Brown will make her stop in Riga again. Joyfully sparkling excerpts from music by Gershwin and Ravel are to be performed by Andris Poga, a Latvian conductor working in Boston.

(i) www.lnso.lv

Latvian National Opera From December 7

Sergei Prokofiev's *The Love for Three Oranges* is one of the gems of 20th-century opera, combining comedy and tragedy, poetry and the grotesque, romantic tales and philosophical satire. It was premiered at the Auditorium Theatre in Chicago, Illinois, on 30 December 1921. The Latvian National Opera production, directed by Alexander Titel, artistic director of Moscow's Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theatre, is based on the street theatre aesthetic and

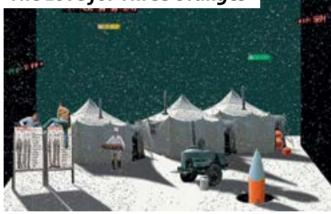
boasts the light-hearted humour and vitality characteristic of Titels' directing style. The premiere is on December 7th.

The King of Clubs is in despair – his son is a hypochondriac. Though it turns out his son could be cured by laughter, not everyone at court is eager to see the prince well again... Those who would wish harm on the heir to the throne poison him with tragic prose and old, banal poems; the presence of wizards, devils and witches only adds to the intrigue. However, good prevails in this phantasmagorical chaos.

(i) www.opera.lv

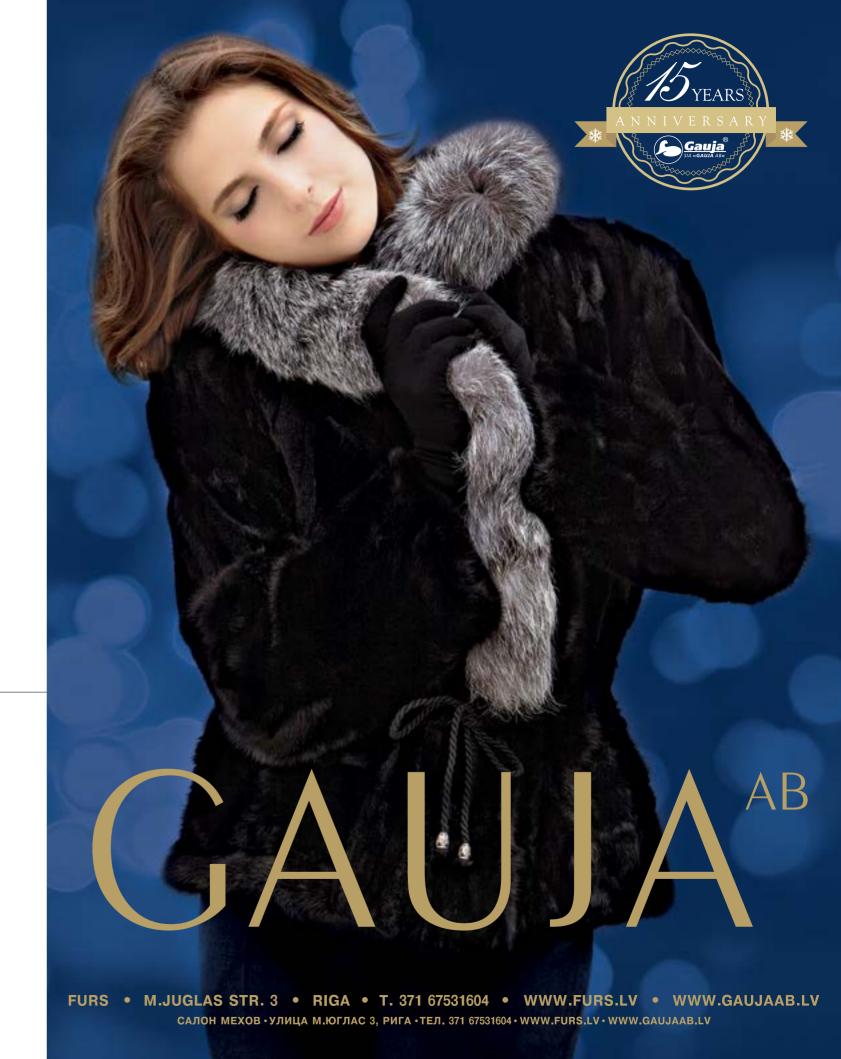
The Love for Three Oranges

(i) www.sinfoniettariga.lv











ondon



Henry V Noël Coward Theatre Until February 15

Although British actor Jude Law is best known for his work on film, he also enjoys stepping up onto the theatre stage at least once a year, where his performances are much different than on the silver screen. The actor has said that he views theatre as a form of "high art" and that he finds the Early Modern English spoken by Shakespeare to be particularly appealing. He thus strives to make the language of that period come alive on the stage, as he did in 2009 with a successful performance of Hamlet. Even for the British, this older form of their native language is not always easy

to understand and sometimes a dictionary comes in handy when reading plays by the renowned 17th-century author.

Londoners have been waiting a year for Jude Law's return to the stage, this time as *Henry V*, in another famous play by Shakespeare. The work recounts how the English king led his nation to victory over the French in the battle of Agincourt in 1415, at a time when European monarchs wielded much more power than they do nowadays.

85-88 St Martin's Lane

(i) www.noelcowardtheatre.co.uk

From the Coolest Corner Design Museum Helsinki Until January 12

Mythology, literature, music and technology; ecology, "green" living, politics and art – you name it, contemporary jewellery artists have drawn inspiration from practically every field under the sun. Hence, the travelling exhibition From the Coolest Corner, now on show in Helsinki, presents some of the latest and most radical jewellery to be fashioned in the Nordic countries.

In the current age of globalisation, viewers will be left to decide whether countries or regions can still retain any distinguishing features that separate them from other territories in the field of the arts, including jewellery-making. More than 60 jewellers from the Nordic countries and Estonia are taking part in this exhibition, which is displaying nearly 160 jewellery items.

Korkeavuorenkatu 23 (i) www.designmuseum.fi







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Montre-bracelet Tank, Cartier Paris,1920

Paris

Cartier: Style and History Grand Palais

December 4 – February 16

It is hard to imagine a more appropriate exhibition for the Christmas season than one about Cartier, the iconic French iewellerymaking firm that bears a legendary mystique, like that of a brilliant diamond. The story began in 1847, when Louis-François Cartier took over the Paris workshop of his teacher Adolphe Picard and became one of the first iewellers to work with platinum. In 1904, Cartier became the official jeweller of British monarch Edward VII and Spanish king Alfonso XIII, followed by such royal and aristocratic clients as Tsar Nicholas II of Russia. In 1917, Cartier made its first women's watch, which was adorned with onvx and diamonds in a panther's motif. The panther later became a Cartier symbol. Among Cartier's 20th-century classics is the Tank Watch for men (1917), which was inspired by the Renault battlefield tanks of the First World War; the Trinity ring of three-coloured gold (1924) and the Love Bracelet (1969), which, according to legend, can only be undone with a special screwdriver by the wearer's loved one.

3 avenue du Général Eisenhower

i www.grandpalais.fr

Vienna





Winter im MQ Until December 23

Along with the legendary Christmas markets, the celebration of winter's arrival at Vienna's Museum Quarter (*Museumsquartier* - MQ) has now become an established tradition in the Austrian capital. A special *Winter im MQ* holiday programme is being presented until December 23, transforming the Museum Quarter into an open-air venue for holiday concerts and other

performances, with cafés and designer markets set up in specially constructed ice pavilions. As the darkness of night sets in, a light show proudly projects out onto the walls of the city's most notable museums. Located in the former court stables of the imperial Habsburg family, the Museum Quarter, which opened to the public in 2001, has become a defining feature of today's "New Vienna".

Museumsplatz 1/5

i www.mgw.at

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Teatro alla Scala
December and January

Dmitri Tcherniakov is one of Russia's most unconventional opera directors. He has received the country's highest theatre award, the *Golden Mask*, on several occasions and is in high demand at Europe's best opera theatres. However, providing a fresh take on Giuseppe Verdi's *La Traviata*, one of the most widely performed operas in the world, and doing so in the composer's own homeland really is a complicated task. While writing *La Traviata* (*The Fallen Woman*), Verdi was living together with an unmarried woman, in violation of the conservative social mores that prevailed in Italy at the time. The couple eventually married more than ten years later. Perhaps it is no coincidence that Verdi's opera was about a liberated woman who chose to live her life as she saw fit. In any case, the performance of this venerated opera in Tcherniakov's new interpretation promises to be full of surprises.

Via Filodrammatici 2

① www.teatroallascala.org



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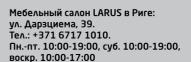












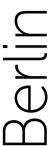
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Little Black Book



Five new addresses in Berlin



▲ Cordobar

Having opened its doors only this fall, Cordobar is a great place for a glass of good wine or a light dinner. On the wine list, which is actually more like a thick book, you will find only superior Austrian and German wines to suit all budgets and tastes. The menu, for its part, is the responsibility of Lukas Mraz, an innovative and expansive 23-year-old chef who has worked at a number of Michelin restaurants and is now applying his experience here. It is definitely worth ordering the meat tartar, which is served on paper that looks like a nostalgic red-chequered tablecloth and is laid out into a small bowl, combining a dash of humour with a fantastic bouquet of tastes.

Große Hamburger Straße 32 | (i) www.cordobar.net



Eisenbahnstraße 42/43, Pücklerstraße 34

were transformed into uncongenial department

farmers' products in a rustic, home-kitchen style,

with main courses costing EUR 8-10. Fresh, filling

and delicious!

▲ Body Pressure Hamburger Bahnhof **Until January 12**

Up until mid-January, the Historic Hall of the Hamburger Bahnhof – the home of Berlin's Museum of Contemporary Art – is assuming the role of a surreal sculpture garden, revealing

many different approaches to the human figure in contemporary sculpture from the 1960s to the present. During the past few decades, figurative sculpture has become more multifaceted than ever before. It no longer expresses demonstrations of power, religion and mythology. It no longer serves as a monument. It has become a performance of sorts. One of the exhibition's most powerful works is Bruce Nauman's Body Pressure (1974), which invites each visitor to participate in its implementation. Grab a pink sheet of paper from the stack that has been placed on a robust wooden pallet in the room; follow the instructions and press yourself against the bare, white wall; blend in with the wall and lose yourself in it; feel yourself struggling with your alter ego, which seems to be pushing back from the other side..

Invalidenstraße 50-51 i www.hamburgerbahnhof.de



▲ La Soupe Populaire

Currently one of Berlin's most talked about restaurants, La Soupe Populaire is the brainchild of star chef Tim Raue. Located in a former 19th-century brewery, it is open only three days a week, on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. The establishment presents a unique symbiosis between fine dining and art, as its 54 table seats are located right inside the Studio House art gallery, where the exhibitions on display change every seven or eight weeks. The menu is inspired by classic German dishes, with the food being served in white porcelain bowls. According to Raue, La Soupe Populaire was set up as a tribute to the "people's cuisine", serving simple dishes made from the finest quality ingredients.

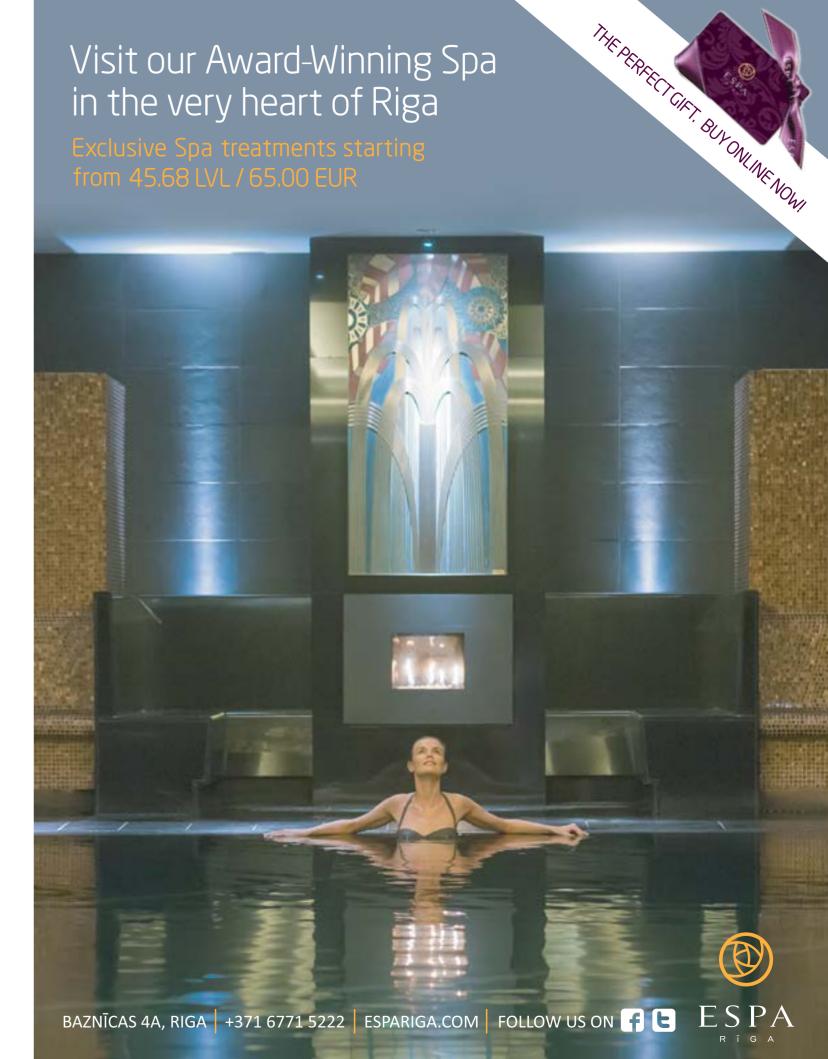
Prenzlauer Allee 242 (i) www lasoupepopulaire de



▲ Five Elephant

Berlin has been in the midst of a coffee craze for some time now. One coffee shop, The Barn, has attained cult status in the Mitte district, serving outstanding coffee grown by specially selected small producers and roasted in such places as London, Oslo, Copenhagen and Portland, Oregon, A similar "in" spot in the Kreuzberg district is Five Elephant, whose story began with a chance meeting between a baker named Sophie and a coffee-lover named Kris. It didn't take long for both of their passions to fuse together in the form of a café. The small and cosy place is furnished with wooden tables, the windowsill is covered with piles of newspapers and magazines. The most important coffee-growing regions are highlighted on a map of the world on the wall. However, one of the main reasons for coming here is the Philadelphia cheesecake, said by locals to be the best in town, which is baked in accordance with a time-tested recipe that Kris inherited from his grandmother. These claims are probably not an exaggeration, as the cake really does taste great!

Reichenberger Straße 101 (i) www.fiveelephant.com





A true Christmas story from the forests of Thuringia

Christmas decorations are part of the magic of December. The first hand-blown glass Christmas tree balls or baubles were made in Lauscha, a mountain village in the central German forests of Thuringia. They continue to be produced there to this day, making Lauscha a destination for thousands of visitors every year, particularly at Christmas time.

Several propitious circumstances made Lauscha the perfect site for this particular activity, mainly the village's proximity to sand for glassmaking and timber for firing up the glassblowing ovens. The first glassworks were set up in Lauscha more than 400 years ago, starting a tradition of excellence in glassmaking that has been maintained over many generations. The village became known as a producer of superior quality glass items, including drinking glasses, flasks, bowls, pharmacy tools and glass beads called *Glassperlen*.

However, one of the most famous stories about Lauscha is the legend about how the first Christmas tree baubles came to be made. Glassblowing has always been a physically demanding task but not always a well-paying one. In 1847, one glassmaker, realising that

he did not have enough money to buy nuts and apples – the traditional Christmas tree decorations at the time – decided to make some ornaments in these shapes out of glass. Luckily for the glassmaker and his village, these glass works of art sold like hotcakes and helped the region to recover from an economic downturn.

With the unexpected success of the new Christmas tree decorations, Lauscha recovered quickly, its glassblowers struggling to keep up with the growing demand. By the end of the 19th century, the United States had become one of the largest markets for the village's glass Christmas tree ornaments.

For decades, Lauscha remained the world's main producer of Christmas tree baubles. The company was eventually privatised in the 1990s and sold to *Krebs*, a glassmaking giant based in the western part of the country. Since then, Lauscha's best-known Christmas tree baubles have been inscribed with the words *Krebs Glas Lauscha*.

On a positive note, the new owners wiped the dust off of Lauscha's glassmaking

archives and revived the tradition of handcrafted glass art. *Krebs Glas Lauscha* has also made the most expensive Christmas tree bauble ever, in the form of a delicate 12-carat gold ornament that is covered with 120 diamonds. Worth about 20,000 euros, this bauble turned out to be more than just

THE FIRST

GLASSWORKS

WERE SET UP

IN LAUSCHA

MORE THAN

400 YEARS

a showpiece for the company to display at exhibitions. The expensive and ornate decoration has been sold in several exemplars, bringing in a fair bit of revenue to the company. By comparison, the cheapest glass baubles made by *Krebs Glas Lauscha* cost only one euro.

Along with Krebs Glas Lauscha, many small glassmaking workshops also operate in the village, each specializing in a specific Christmas decoration segment, drawing inspiration from the region's established traditions. Not surprisingly, Lauscha is also home to a glassmaking school. One of the best times to visit the village is during the first two weekends of the Advent, when Lauscha closes its streets to motor traffic in order to host the village's famous Christmas ball market. BO









предлагает подарки, которые без слов рассказывают о приближении рождественских праздников напоминают о достижениях и свершениях, угадывают Ваши сокровенные желания, пробуждают большие надежды и теплые воспоминания об уютном доме.







A beautiful gesture

Make your loved ones happy during the holiday season with these Latvian design treats









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OSKA

Marina Rebeka's electrifying renditions of 16 classic opera arias by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart display surprising contrasts in tone, range and in the characters represented. The soprano's voice rings out in all of its glory – all the beauty of Mozart! In the CD, Marina portrays a wide range of heroines from five Mozart operas: Idomeneo, The Mariage of Figaro, The Magic Flute, The Abduction from the Seraglio and of course, Don Giovanni, in which she sings the role of the spurned lover Donna Anna. It is as Donna Anna and as Violetta in Giuseppe Verdi's La Traviata that she has wowed audiences in Europe and North America.

Critics often describe Marina's voice as being clear, powerful and resonant. I would add another word: velvety, as when I listen to her voice, I get a feeling that is similar to stroking a piece of warm, soft velvet. Perhaps that is not a comparison used by most professional critics, but her voice is very enchanting in the execution of both high coloraturas and lower notes.

A couple of months ago, Marina was singing the role of Donna Anna at the Zurich Opera House. Not long after, I accompanied her to a show of Vincenzo Bellini's La Straniera. As we watched the performance, I asked her if there is anything in particular that one should pay attention to when listening to opera music. Marina gave me some very valuable advice and

answered: "Nothing! The main thing is to feel comfortable with the voice and its sound."

Whenever Marina is on stage, she performs with a heightened sense of responsibility, for there will always be people in the audience who are witnessing their first ever opera performance. "I can either



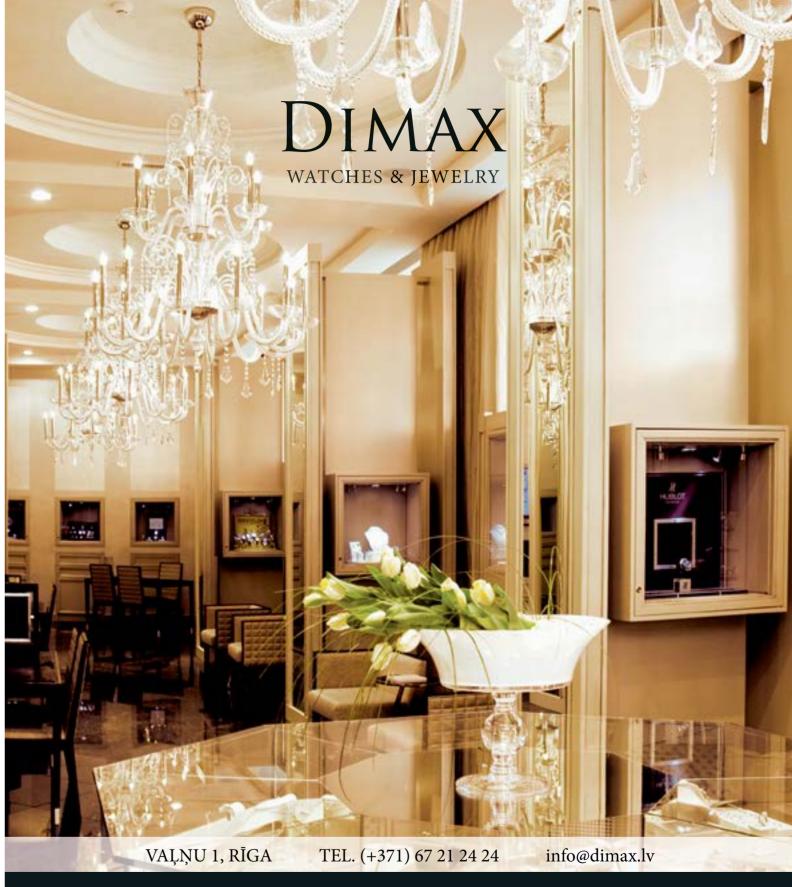
draw people in and give them a sense of the magic of opera music, or I can turn them off and make them swear that they will never attend another opera showing. I certainly don't want to do the latter," she explains.

It's quite possible that this new CD might even make converts of those who aren't particularly fond of opera music, as the combination Marina's extraordinary vocal timbre with some of Mozart's most beautiful works makes for a wonderful album.

The thought of releasing a solo CD had been with Marina for the past couple of years, and came to fruition this Easter, when the opera singer teamed up with conductor Speranza Scappucci and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra to make the recording. It took five days, which is considered to be a relatively short time. It was recorded in the former Church of St. Mary of the Angels, which has since been converted into a rehearsal and recording venue and is now known as Liverpool Philharmonic at the Friary.

"I really wanted to record this disc with Mozart's arias, because Mozart was a very special composer. His music in combination with voice, orchestra and words makes it very real, something I feel and understand very deeply and would like to share," says Marina.

Marina says she is surprised that it took only five years for her to be singing at such prestigious venues as the Metropolitan in New York, La Scala in Milan and the State Opera in Vienna. "I thought that it might take maybe ten years for me to advance to this level, but it all happened so quickly!" With her magical voice, boundless energy and sheer determination, it actually couldn't be any other way. If you do catch Marina on an airBaltic flight, then don't be surprised to see her eating marmalade while studying the musical score for an upcoming performance. BO





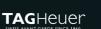






















< Enjoy the moment in Nuremberg and forget about your worries for a while



There are few better places to get into a festive mood for the Advent season than a traditional German Christmas market or Weihnachtsmarkt

CHRISTMAS

MARKETS IN

GERMANY,

AUSTRIA AND

SWITZERLAND

WILL SUIT

PRACTICALLY

EVERY TASTE

When twilight settles over Nuremberg's cobblestone streets, it's time for locals and

visitors to meet at the medieval Hauptmarkt. Tempting aromas of cinnamon, roasted almonds and grilled sausages fill the air as a brass band plays Silent Night. It's hard to resist the charm of German Gemütlichkeit or congeniality.

While Nuremberg's Little Town from Wood and Cloth wasn't the first (Vienna started the tradition

in 1264), it did serve as a role model. Today, the yearly settlement of wooden huts is lit

up with fairy lights and reflected by glitter balls. Traditional decorations, along with

> such handicrafts as nativity figurines, ornaments, toys and beeswax candles are the main things on offer. In addition, warm drinks and food are sold at various stalls to make sure that one doesn't get cold. Not much seems to have changed since the days when painter Albrecht Dürer roamed the streets of the city

in the 16th century. And you can still get some of the best Christmas treats around in Nuremberg. Try the delicious

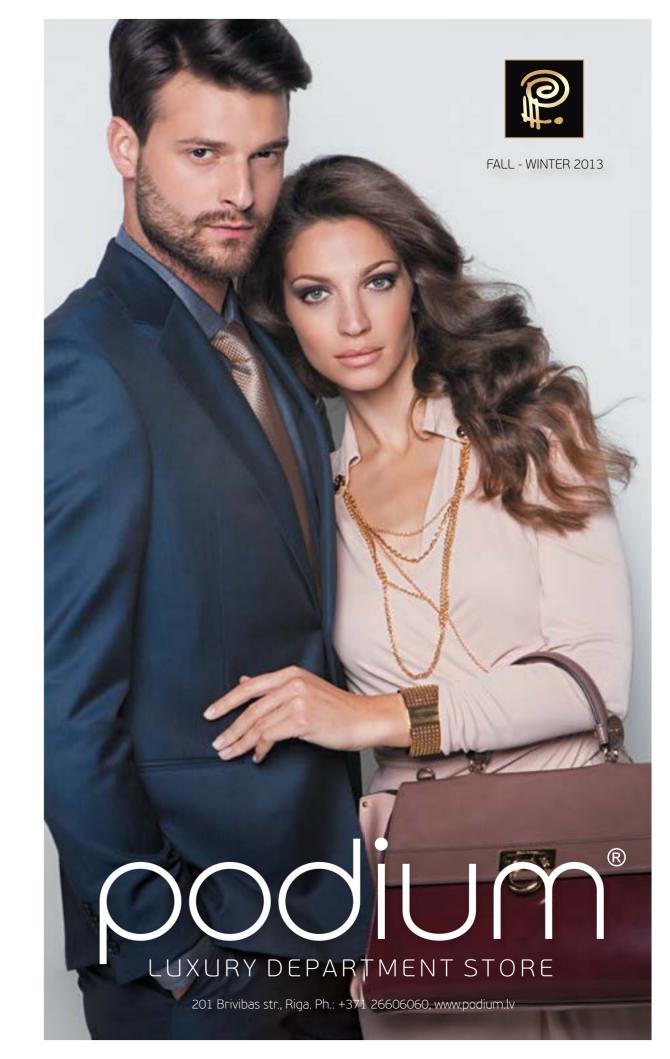
small Rostbratwürstchen sausages or the Elisen-Lebkuchen cakes.

The 2,500-plus Christmas markets in Germany, Austria and Switzerland will suit practically every taste. Dresden's Striezelmarkt around a 14-meter-high wooden Christmas Pyramid, along with the markets at Munich's Marienplatz and Frankfurt's Zeil are other classics with a beautiful atmosphere. The smaller markets in Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Bautzen or scenic Lübeck are well-kept secrets, while the more party-like market in Cologne attracts larger crowds. The deepest market is in a defunct mine at Porta Westfalica, while the highest takes place in Pilatus Kulm (2132 m), Switzerland.

If the traditional markets seem too oldfashioned and kitsch, then you might feel right at home in the urban design version at Holy.Shit.Shopping (www.holyshitshopping. de), which will take place in four German cities this year. There, a DJ plays smooth club sounds while a trendy crowd looks for handmade wooden iPhone cases and the latest in urban fashion from 200 upcoming designers. If all that sounds too commercial, then go to Munich's alternative Tollwood Festival and Market, which focuses on sustainable products and Third World charity projects. At the funky Santa Pauli market on Hamburg's Reeperbahn, loving your neighbour can take on a very straightforward meaning.

Outside the German-speaking countries, more and more cities are hosting their own Christmas markets. Frankfurt's affiliate market in Birmingham alone attracts 3 million visitors per year. Budapest's Vörösmarty Square, Venice's Campo Santo Stefano (where only local products are sold) and the Old Town Square in Prague are among the most scenic spots in Europe. Even Abu Dhabi hosts a Swiss Christmas market.

Wherever you visit a Christmas market, just follow the traditional opening words of Nuremberg's Christkind: "Be a child again and get excited as they do." BO





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Pāvels Timofejevs, Jānis Krištops and Jānis Kolontajs

Rock'n'Roll, camaraderie and city lights airBaltic pilots run the Las Vegas Night Marathon

This year, three airBaltic pilots – Jānis Krištops, Pāvels Timofejevs and Jānis Kolontajs – celebrated Latvia's Independence Day by taking part in the Las Vegas Night Marathon. Held on November 17, this 42-kilomtere race of the Rock'n'Roll series sported the punned headline Strip at Night, as its course took the participants down Las Vegas' famous Strip – a 4.2-mile stretch of Boulevard South.

Two of the pilots, Jānis Krištops and Pāvels Timofejevs, were still on a well-deserved holiday in New York right after the marathon but were happy to share their impressions and their running stories with *Baltic Outlook*.

Jānis Krištops, who ran the marathon in 3 hours and 39 minutes, has been into various kinds of sports since childhood, frequently running short distances. However, he only got into longer distances upon entering the Latvian Police Academy. The stamina and willpower that such races require have convinced Jānis that long-distance running should be taken on once you've reached a certain level of maturity – say, around the age of 25.

He began competing later, encouraged by a friend and professional athlete. However,
Jānis says that races are only a fraction of what being a runner is all about. "Running is a drug," Jānis says, "and one that you need on a daily basis." Jānis starts feeling restless if he's gone without running for more than three days. "Then my feet drag me outside all by themselves."

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Jānis runs a full marathon no
more than once or twice a year,
beginning a serious marathontraining program about three
months before each race. He likes
competing both in Latvia and
abroad, having also participated in
the classical Athens marathon together with
his fellow airBaltic running mates.

A DRUG,
AND ONE
THAT YOU
NEED ON
A DAILY BASIS

One of these mates is Pāvels Timofejevs, who took an interest in running in 2010, shortly after becoming friends with his fellow pilot Jānis. That year, Pāvels ran the mini marathon distance of 5 kilometres at the Nordea Riga Marathon. This experience opened up the world of running to him and got him to start running longer distances, at a time when even a short 3-kilometre run seemed difficult enough.

In 2011, Pāvels ran the half marathon (21 kilometres) at the Nordea Riga Marathon, followed by the full Athens marathon later that same year, along with his *airBaltic* colleagues. He has also participated in other running competitions in Latvia, but the respectable result of 4 hours and 45 seconds

at the Las Vegas marathon is the best indication of how far Pāvels has managed to go.

Both Pāvels and Jānis had thought about running in the USA last year and had already registered for the New York marathon. However, the race was unexpectedly cancelled in the

wake of hurricane Sandy, which had wreaked much damage upon the city. By then it was too late for them register for the same marathon this year, so they picked the Las Vegas Night Marathon. Where else would you be running through the night with the city lights shimmering around you, enjoying rock music played by bands on the sidewalks, watching the fountain show as you run and listening to Elvis Presley's *Viva Las Vegas*? The exciting race was every bit as interesting as they had imagined! **BO**



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The Latvian bobsleigh crew at the Olympic Games in Vancouver, 2010

sochi-ru

In 1980, when Latvia was still under Soviet occupation, a very special turn of events was in store for the bobsleigh – a speed-celebrating winter sport in which teams of two or four sportsmen ride down twisting and turning ice-covered tracks in gravity-powered sleds, known as bobs

Here we go again!

The bobsleigh, which has now been practiced as a sport for over 130 years, was losing its momentum at the time, and heavyweights in Soviet sports circles decided to stir up the waters a bit. The bobsleigh was the only sports discipline that had not been represented by the USSR in the Olympics until then, and Latvia was chosen as a home base for the new Soviet bobsleigh team.

Latvia already had a reasonably well-developed skeleton sports tradition (in which an individual rides face down on a small sled) and plenty of winter sports enthusiasts. Jānis Skrastiņš, a renowned coach who has trained, among others, the US men's bobsleigh national team and who now serves as the director of the Technical

Centre for Bobsleigh in the Baltics, was there from day one. He was among the first sportsmen to ride bobs for the Soviet Union, and bobsleigh – be it as a participant in the sport, coaching or playing a part in the technical development of bobs – has been the air that he breathes ever since.

a first-person insight into the history of the bobsleigh in Latvia and into the more exciting aspects of the sport's technical side. As Jānis explains, Rolands Upatnieks became the first bobsleigh coach in Latvia in 1980, and under his guidance technicians and a bobsleigh production team were brought together. At the same time, sportsmen were being tested and selected from all over the Soviet Union. The

Soviet team bought its first bobs in Italy, which was the most popular and accessible distributor of the special sleds and which sold competition bobs to many countries. The Latvian crew didn't stop at that and, as Jānis admits, had only bought the Italian bobs to examine them and "see what they are all about". Then the technicians started to manufacture vehicles of their own.

The Latvian crew came up with various structural advancements for the bobs and had developed the technology to such an extent that in the next Olympics, which took place in Sarajevo in 1984, the twoman crew representing the Soviet Union – Zintis Ekmanis and Vladimir Aleksandrov – brought home a bronze medal. This achievement shook the whole bobsleigh

world and challenged the status quo, where the technology used in bobsleigh-making had remained largely unchanged for decades.

According to Jānis, other countries immediately started to present their own technological solutions for making bobs run faster. Germany was a bobsleigh superpower, but the Soviet team was now following closely behind. Its non-conformist thinking and creativity had brought it an Olympic medal, and the team sought to hold its ground as other countries also invested in technological developments.

In the meantime, the International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation sensed that the technologically improved bobs beginning, absorbing all of the information shared by coaches and technicians. In 1987, he became a coach at the VEF sports centre in Riga and began to delve into technical solutions for making bobs run faster. His skills propelled him to the position of assistant coach of the Soviet Olympic bobsleigh team in Calgary in 1988. Four years later in Albertville – at the first Winter Olympics that Latvia participated in after regaining its independence – Jānis served as the head coach of the Latvian national team, which has taken part in all of the following Winter Olympic Games and which has won two European championships.

To this day, one of Jānis' greatest passions is solving technical riddles and figuring out

composite material. Some parts, such as the frame, are metallic and heavy by necessity, but other parts can be experimented with.

Jānis, who has trained his fair share of sportsmen, says that bobsleigh athletes are getting bigger and heavier, which has to be taken into account when making a bob so that it doesn't exceed current weight restrictions. More emphasis is being placed on the navigating abilities of the sportsmen as well as on their physical fitness, strength and speed. They might not to have to push the bob very far, but those first 30 metres count for a great deal.

This season, Latvia is placing high hopes on its bobsleigh team, which is busily preparing for the rapidly approaching



that various countries were bringing in for competition had become perhaps a notch too advanced – to the extent that the federation found it difficult to assess whether the new bobs conformed to set rules and restrictions. The bobs began to look like little spaceships and eventually the regulations became increasingly strict, making it more and more difficult to gain an extra edge by technical means.

Although Jānis Skrastiņš was an active bobsleigh rider from 1980 to 1987, he was no less interested in the technology behind the sport. He had studied the construction and development of bobs from the very how to make bobs as efficient as possible. At the bobsleigh technical centre that he runs, he and his team work tirelessly, building world-class bobs for many national bobsleigh teams. He talks of various tricks that can be used in shock absorption and aerodynamics for increasing the speed of a bob. Because there are weight restrictions – a two-man bob including the crew can weigh no more than 390 kg, while the maximum weight for a four-man bob is 630 kg – the Latvian technicians have been looking into lighter materials. A lot of carbon-based and glass-fibre materials are used and the aerodynamic body is always made out of a



Winter Olympics in Sochi in February.
The team, now led by another champion bobsleigh runner, Sandis Prūsis, showed very good results in last year's world championships. Its members are physically fit and strong and have been training in Lillehammer, Norway, for the past several months. Most likely, eight of the 13 sportsmen who are currently preparing for the games will take part in them. Jānis is confident that they will be able to put Latvia's name onto the world map of bobsleigh once again. BO

42 / AIRBALTIC.COM



Christmas pecan fruitcake

There is hardly a more beautiful and more poignant story about friendship and Christmas than Truman Capote's holiday classic *A Christmas Memory*, in which the two protagonists give out freshly baked pecan fruitcakes as a true testimony of love

Ingredients

Cake (20 cm in diameter):

200 g pecans

100 g roasted hazelnuts

100 g dried figs

100 g dried cranberries

100 q dried apricots

100 g golden raisins 50 g white chocolate

100 g quince in its own syrup (i.e. sliced quince pieces preserved in sugar)

100 g butter (room temperature)

4 eggs

1/2 cup light brown demerara sugar 1/2 cup light brown muscovado sugar

1 1/2 cup flour

1 1/2 tsp. spice mix (nutmeg, cinnamon, cloves, allspice)

150 ml Grand Marnier liqueur (or rum)

Icing:

1 tbsp. quince syrup (without the fruit pieces)

1 tbsp. Grand Marnier liqueur

1 tbsp. butter

1 tsp. honey

Preparation

- Chop the dried fruit into small pieces. Put into a bowl and pour the Grand Marnier over the fruit mixture. Cover with plastic wrap and leave to steep for at least 24 hours.
- Heat an oven to 150° C. Chop up the chocolate and pecans, leaving a handful of pecans for the garnish. Pound the spices with a pestle (if you are using ground spices, then stir up the spice mixture). Whip the butter together with both sugars, then add in the eggs, one by one.
- Add the quince pieces and syrup to the liqueur-soaked fruit and mix in the flour, followed by the whipped mixture of butter, sugar and eggs. Mix well and pour into a cake pan that has been greased with butter. Even out the mixture and press it down lightly. Garnish with the remaining pecans.
- Bake in the oven for 90 minutes.
- Remove from the oven and let the cake cool completely.
- Prepare the icing. Heat up the quince syrup, liqueur and butter until the latter has melted.
- Place the cake onto a serving plate and evenly pour the icing over it.

 Sprinkle with grated white chocolate.

Recommendation

This Christmas cake can also be matured by basting it every day for a month with alcohol (traditionally rum or whisky). The tastes will have blended in well and the cake will keep without spoiling for several months.

INGREDIENTS

4 TBSP POWDERED GELATIN 1 CUP (240ML) WARM WATER

660g Caster Sugar
1 1/3 cups glucose syrup
2/3 cup water, extra
3 tablespoons dried edible lavender
200g confectioners' sugar, sifted

35g (ABOUT 3 TABLESPOONS) CORN STARCH

DIRECTIONS

PLACE THE GELATIN AND WARM WATER IN THE BOWL, STR WELL TO COMBINE AND SET ASIDE, PLACE THE SUGAR, GLUCOSE AND EXTRA WATER IN A SAUCEPAN OVER MEDIUM HEAT. BRING TO A BOIL AND COOK FOR 5-6 MINUTES. WITH THE MIXER FUNNING, GRADUALLY ADD THE HOT SYRUP TO THE GELATIN MIXTURE, ADD THE LAVENDER AND BEAT UNTIL THICK AND FLUFFY. POUR INTO A LIGHTLY GREASED 25x35cm baking dish lined with non-stick baking paper, Cover with non-stick baking paper and refrigerate overnight. Place the King Sugar and Corn Starch in a Bowl and Stir to combine. Turn the marshmallow onto a surface lightly dusted with a little of the ICING SUGAR MIXTURE AND CAREFULLY REMOVE THE PAPER. CUT INTO 5cm Squares. Dust with remaining icing sugar mixture.



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Of course, the taxi driver who takes us from the airport speaks no English. That's no surprise. The last time we were here, our taxi driver didn't even know where the airport was and took us to the cargo terminal instead. But this is all a part of the Istanbul experience. This taxi driver is a real one-actor play. And he's an actor who's well-versed in the newest high tech, at that, because we communicate through the translation app on his phone. With one hand on the steering wheel, he loudly speaks into the telephone in Turkish about why he will not be taking the most direct route (there are supposedly traffic jams everywhere), and then he triumphantly hands the phone to us to read the translation. Nor does he forget to remind us he's the best taxi driver in Istanbul. He's a Google polyglot. The seats in his taxi are covered in gaudy fabric. Actually, I could write a whole novel just about the seats in Istanbul's taxis – they're different in each cab: fabric, leather, imitation leather, fuzzy, smooth, ascetic. I remember reading somewhere that Turks have two obsessions: food and clothing. There's no question about the latter with Istanbul's taxi drivers... and they don't skimp on the spices.

"If there are two cities in the world with a truly 24-hour buzz, then one of them is Istanbul. No matter how you arrive – whether by road, train or air (best of all is on the water, with the most fabulous view in the world as you approach the Golden Horn and the mouth of the Bosphorus) – it hits you. All your senses are attacked by an incredible surge of energy, colour, aromas and sensations that is utterly captivating. Oh, and the second city is Istanbul's much smaller cousin, New York," says an acquaintance of mine from Istanbul when asked why he loves the city. As I cross the bridge that connects Europe to Asia, I can only agree with her.

But Istanbul requires some time. In today's chaotic world, its 2000-year history does not immediately open itself up like a book. You could spend weeks and even

YOUR **NEXT DESTINATION**



Istanbul can shock and jar the visitor. But it can also irrationally inspire. It all depends on the vibe and emotion you've allowed yourself to follow

months discovering bits and pieces of history in Istanbul's oldest district (Sultanahmet) alone, and you'd still only have just scratched the surface. Hagia Sophia, Topkapi Palace and the Blue Mosque are all places that must be seen at least once in a lifetime, for even though their images are published in a million tourist guides, they have not lost one ounce of their magic. The same is true with the Spice Bazaar, where despite being pulled along by the river of people constantly moving through the market, at some point you notice an almost unbelievable sense of peace coming over you and you realise that you're taking part in something like a collective therapy session. You emerge from the bazaar feeling inspired and even spiritual...even if you've managed to not buy a single item.

Istanbul can shock and jar the visitor. But it can also irrationally inspire. It all depends on the vibe and emotion you've allowed yourself to follow at any given moment. A 15-minute walk along crowded Istiklal Caddesi can make a person completely crazy. But all you need to do is turn into one of the small side streets and sit down in a tearoom, and suddenly Istanbul feels like a different planet and you instantly fall in love with it.

Like a frenzied race between modernity and the nostalgia of the past, Istanbul is a true shower of contrasts that keeps its visitors in a continual state of the tingles. Because, just as it is impossible to plan how long it will take to get from point A to point B in this mega-metropolis, it is likewise impossible to anticipate the stories that each visitor will take away from the city.

Speaking of nostalgia, I once saw a Henry Cartier-Bresson photo in a Parisian antique shop and could not get it out of my mind.

It was a 1964 photo of the *Camondo Stairs* in Istanbul. The very form of the steps – like a multifaceted Art-Nouveau-style cascade of stone – contained something so strangely magical that I could hardly turn my eyes away from the picture. Four people can be seen in the photo: a man leaning on the stone edge of the steps, a woman shielding her face at the centre of the steps and two random passers-by. When I asked our hotel concierge in Istanbul to show me where to find the *Camondo Stairs* on a map, he just shrugged. He had never heard of such a place. But upon seeing the image, he recognised it immediately. He has sat there often himself, sipping a beer.

The neighbourhood where I find the Camondo Stairs is one of the oldest in Istanbul and was one of the city's financial centres during the Ottoman Empire. The steps, built in the 19th century by a prominent banking family, connect Bankalar Caddesi (Bank Street) with the Galata neighbourhood above it. Later, the steps were named after the family. According to legend, the steps were built so that the banker's children could get to school more easily. Their curved form was to ensure that the children did not trip as they ran up and down the steps, or rather, that they would not roll too far if they fell. An apartment building now stands where the school once was and a tree has taken root at the top of the steps, but the place still retains its strange pull. Especially in the evening, when the steps are lighted in a slightly ghostly way, they remind the visitor of a time capsule. All that's missing is Woody Allen, who could turn this place into Midnight in Istanbul as easily as he did with Paris.

A mausoleum to love

But, actually, Woody Allen is not even necessary. All you need to do is walk a little ways further up the hill to the *Museum of Innocence* – one of the most unusual museums I've ever been to. Nobel-Prizewinning Turkish author Orhan Pamuk came up with the idea for the museum, which is a visualisation of his novel by the same name. More precisely, the museum and book evolved simultaneously. This is the first such museum in the world. It is a mausoleum to a love that was allowed to blossom, but remained unfulfilled. The

museum is situated in a red 19th-century building in the bohemian neighbourhood of Çukurcuma. In keeping with the mythology of the novel, this was once the home of Füsun, the girl whom the hero of the book, Kemal, loved. Their story takes place in 1970s Istanbul. This was a time when wealthy residents of the city tried to define themselves according to Western values and, just as today, Istanbul was at a crossroads – a crossroads between Europe and Asia, a crossroads between new, modern trends and the social and moral restrictions of Islam.

Kemal represents Istanbul's new *haute bourgeoisie*, while Füsun is his poor cousin, a store clerk who dreams of becoming a movie star. Kemal meets her as he is buying a purse for his girlfriend of the moment. After a passionate two-month-long relationship, Füsun finds out about Kemal's engagement and disappears from his life. Later, fate does bring them back together once more, only to separate them forever. Unable to recover from the loss of this love, Kemal spends the rest of his life compulsively collecting everything associated with Füsun. Everything she has ever touched: hair

clasps, shoes, half a cup of coffee, movie tickets, watches that no longer show the correct time, newspaper clippings, lottery tickets, salt shakers, keys, can openers, family photographs, plastic models of foods.... He becomes so obsessed that he even begins stealing things from her house.

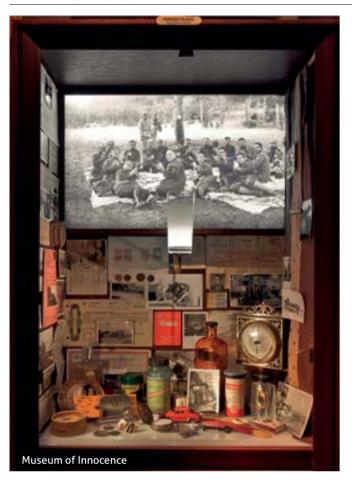
The museum begins with a gigantic glass case containing 4213 of Füsun's cigarette butts, painstakingly collected by Kemal from 1978 to 1984 and each carefully pinned to the wall, almost like Damien Hirst's famous butterflies. In addition, each cigarette butt is labelled with a date and either the place it was collected or some keyword associated with it. Some are smeared with lipstick or Füsun's favourite cherry ice cream; others have coffee stains. This first exhibit serves to break down any remaining borders between reality and fiction. Altogether, the four-storey museum contains 83 wooden display cases, each dedicated to a separate chapter of the novel. Each case is a small, saturated staging of a life that once existed and can therefore also be looked upon as a story in and of itself. As you climb higher up the narrow staircase, you feel

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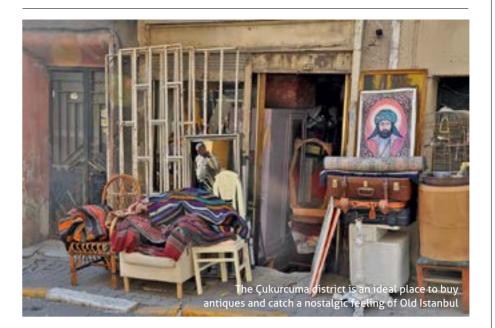
increasingly pulled into a story that does not belong to you, but nevertheless seems so credible that it could very well have actually taken place. And, really, there is no reason to believe it did not take place, because the objects are all very real.

"Well, this relies on the mastery and artistic accomplishment of Pamuk himself," says museum director Esra A. Aysun. "His way of infusing the fiction and reality was to create the museum as a big cabinet of curiosity that hosts 83 other cabinets of curiosities in itself. In the meantime, I see our museum both as a piece of art and as a kind of city museum [of which the city has none – ed.]. We display objects that lived in this very city from the 1950s to the 1980s and, just as they are witnesses to the story of the novel, they are also witnesses to the life of Istanbul during that specific span of time. Hence, they become both artistic installations and, as objects of cultural heritage, carriers of a past life along with its lifestyle and daily habits."

Pamuk's novel was published in 2008 and the museum opened in April of 2012. But the whole saga began considerably earlier, in 1999, when Pamuk bought the house in Cukurcuma. Once known as a Greek, Armenian and Levantine neighbourhood, Cukurcuma still has a cosmopolitan feel. The small streets running straight uphill are full of colourful little shops and antique stores. I'm told there are at least 150 antique stores here, and their wares reflect the many cultures that have resided in Istanbul: Ottoman, Turkish, Greek, Jewish.... Many of the shop owners display their antiques – old chairs, furniture, antique toys - right out on the street.

By and large, antiques from the surrounding streets form the basis of the museum's unusual collections. Pamuk began collecting





Cukurcuma is ideal for nostalgic walks through Old Istanbul. The neighbourhood is surprisingly quiet

items in the late 1990s. Often he first acquired an object and only later found a place for it in his novel. Other objects never managed to find their way into either the museum or his novels – their stories are different. In all, the museum is said to have cost the author the equivalent of his Nobel Prize award: 1.5 million dollars.

On the top floor of the museum is an ascetic bed and chair upon which Pamuk is said to have sat as the already elderly Kemal told him his story. Sit on the nearby bench and you, too, will feel as if you are sitting in the presence of both men. The room has a low ceiling, and under the bed you'll find a suitcase apparently from the time Kemal travelled to Europe together with Füsun. He hoped that after her divorce from her husband the two would finally be together again...but Füsun died in an accident on the way to Paris. The inscription on the wall reads: "Kemal first told me what he had been through over the course of three hours in a restaurant. When I decided to write a novel about his love for Füsun, we inevitably became friends. On many a night over the seven years between March 2000 and February 2007, I sat in the attic on the chair to the right and listened to his story."

Here you'll also see pages of the

manuscript from the novel with countless crossed-out passages and Pamuk's own illustrations. As you descend the staircase, it seems the air in the museum has become saturated with an endless sorrow. As Pamuk declares in his Manifesto of Small Museums. "The future of museums is inside our own homes." Museum director Aysun agrees: "I, too, believe that people want museums to be more individualistic now. We are all tired of alienating ourselves from the art objects. We want to experience and know their individual stories."

But Aysun admits that finding reminiscences of Kemal and Füsun's time in today's Istanbul is becoming quite impossible. "This becomes a harder mission to accomplish with each passing day, as the city is built over and over again, especially now, as the traits of past lives are being covered up with a vengeance. A few small restaurants in the back streets of Old Istanbul could be the only place to still experience this...."

Of *keyifli*, or, the enjoyment of life From this point of view, Çukurcuma is ideal

for nostalgic walks through Old Istanbul. The neighbourhood is surprisingly quiet even in the middle of the day, and men sit in the





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YOUR NEXT DESTINATION



It seems that life here revolves around the joy of simple, small things: conversations, a glass of pomegranate juice, a rooftop bar known only to the locals

coffeehouses along the small streets, drinking tea, discussing life and playing *nardi* (backgammon). Here everything comes together: East and West, the past and the present, modernity and the vestiges of a past splendour. It seems that life here revolves around the joy of simple, small things: conversations, a glass of freshly squeezed pomegranate juice, a rooftop bar known only to the locals with a view of the Bosphorus at least as amazing as that from the glamorous restaurants, but with a much smaller bill to pay.

The Turkish language even has a special word for this sort of enjoyment of life: keyifli, which is the equivalent of la dolce vita in Italian or joie de vivre in French. "Turks use the word keyif to denote a particular sense of taking pleasure in life. Funnily enough, the Romanian word chef, which has the same meaning, is derived from it. And from the Balkans to the Middle East keyif is the Ottoman version of joie de vivre. The Arabo-Persian word keyf implies a state of drowsiness or dreamy intoxication, an enjoyment of idleness. Turks use it in conversation a lot; to describe someone as keyifli is a great compliment, indicating a sense of style and taste as well as a self-indulgent enjoyment of the City of the World's Desire, as Istanbul used to be called," says Hasan Arslanyuregi with a smile.

Arslanyuregi is an author for *anothertravelguide.com* and the marketing manager at one of Istanbul's newest private clinics, *LiV Hospital*, whose futuristic image was inspired by the 1966 science fiction movie *Fantasic Voyage*. Having taken me on a fast, winding tour through the small side streets near Istiklal Caddesi, Arslanyuregi pulls me into a doorway, up a flight of narrow stairs and onto another of Istanbul's wonderful rooftop terraces. This is the *Galata Konak Café*, which has been here since 1975 and is famous for its crispy cakes, baked right on the premises. The cakes, however, are not the main attraction at the *Galata Konak Café*;

instead, it's the breathtaking 360-degree view. From here you can see everything: the Golden Horn, Galata Bridge, *Topkapı Palace*, *Yeni Cami*, *Hagia Sophia* and *Süleymaniye Mosque*, with a seagull or two swooping down gracefully between the sights.

"The same buzz that gives Istanbul its character has a downside, too. If you're not in the mood, it's a struggle through dense traffic, aggressive taxi drivers, people shouting and gesticulating everywhere and the feeling that one's head is just going to explode. Then you need to take a break!" says Arslanyuregi with a laugh. Maybe that's why the Turks developed this idea of *keyifli*.

In any case, there is no lack of terms for the rituals of enjoying life. For example, another popular term is a *raki conversation*, in which you drink raki (anise liqueur) and talk about everything under the sun, from politics to love. Such conversations usually take place in *meyhanes*, the special cafés or bars that serve alcohol and snacks (*meze*). Raki is traditionally mixed with water, which turns the drink a milky colour. A couple of ice cubes are also usually added. In order to enjoy the full taste of raki, some people add only a few drops of water for colour. The drink is usually served with snacks, although they're more for looks than to fill the stomach. Veteran raki drinkers don't even touch the snacks.

Music is an integral part of a *raki conversation*, and in order to experience that part of the tradition to the fullest, head to the area around Nevizade Street. Full of bars, nightclubs and fish restaurants, the narrow street in the Beyoğlu district is one of the most colourful and lively streets in the whole city. It's best to come here in the evening, when the area fills with people from the widest spectrum of society.







YOUR NEXT DESTINATION Fishermen on the Galata Bridge



Right next door is the fish market, where a local ritual involves eating stuffed mussels straight from the huge pans in which they are prepared. And the fishermen on Galata Bridge – what else are they doing if not enjoying life? On a sunny day there are so many of them that they can hardly keep their fishing poles from getting tangled. Many of the fishermen are pensioners fishing just for the pure joy of the activity. Sometimes they do catch something – a small or medium-sized fish – but that's not the main goal. The main thing is the process. And an obligatory part of the process is a glass of raki. Some of the fishermen play music, some chat with each other and some just sit and watch the ships passing back and forth along the Bosphorus.

to the Riga airport, 30 min. to Jurmala.

Luxury and the fish market

Right there on one side of the Galata Bridge is the Karaköy fish market, which is a wonderful opportunity to experience the chaos, charm and contrasts of Istanbul's food culture and famous street food scene. You can eat your meals in fancy rooftop restaurants with views of the Bosphorus, but the food down at street level and in the markets is twenty times cheaper and usually just as tasty. The stalls at the Karaköy fish market are full of that morning's catch, and you can taste it all right there at the plastic tables and chairs set out along the waterfront. Here, a sandwich with fresh baked or grilled mackerel costs a mere five liras (about two euros). The seagulls caw all around, and boats offering trips out onto the Bosphorus regularly stop at the wooden dock of the small port.

Sometimes it seems like two different worlds that never meet: those who allow fish juices to run down their chins as they feast at the wobbly market tables and those who dine at Istanbul's panorama restaurants dressed in suits and accompanied by young women in tight-fitting dresses teetering on stilettos. Although by European metropolis standards, Istanbul's restaurants are not extremely expensive, prices are high enough to create the illusion of being locally exclusive. But at least one such indulgence is recommended, because these restaurants also play their role in Istanbul's magic of dizzying extremes. The best restaurants are usually located on the rooftops of hotels and skyscrapers and offer 180- or 360-degree views of the city. Take a glass of wine out onto the terrace, and it will seem as if you have been satiated on wine alone.

Although hotel owners admit that the current political situation and the widespread protests in May of this year (which still reverberate here and there, thus making some parts of the city less safe) have in the short term left their mark on the tourist industry, development nevertheless continues at a fast pace. Luxury hotels are popping up like mushrooms after the rain. The Asian giant *Shangri-La* recently opened a hotel in Istanbul, and the *Mandarin Oriental* will soon follow. *Bulgari* is also looking for a property in the city

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Istanbul is churning and swirling. It sucks us in and simultaneously inspires us. Maybe that's why we always wish to return there?

"There are very many rich people in Istanbul, and Turks like to share their wealth," says Yesim Ozmen, the marketing director of the Istanbul Edition Hotel. "For example, the owner of our hotel recently built a new port in the resort city of Bodrum on the Aegean Sea. And one of Turkey's most wealthy families, the Sabancı family, invests very much in art and culture." The 65th anniversary of the bank owned by the Sabancıs will be marked this year by a grandiose retrospective of the London-based Indian artist Anish Kapoor at Sakip Sabanci, one of the most beautiful museums in the city. The exhibition is open until January 5.

Even though locals admit that the majority of Turks still prefer to watch television over attending an art exhibition, the percentage of people in this metropolis of 13.9 million inhabitants who are interested in contemporary art is growing. The number of art collectors is also growing. "Some of the new collectors may not have large budgets, but they are beginning step by step. Many galleries organise educational courses and creative workshops," explains Saliha Yavuz, one of the founders of *GriZine*, a Turkish website devoted to contemporary art. We meet at the *Bej Cafe*, currently one of the most

popular cafés among Istanbul's creative intellectual crowd. The café is located in the Karaköy district, which has grown immensely in popularity in just the past two or three years.

Karaköy is one of Istanbul's oldest districts; the Genoese had a port here in the Byzantine era, and at that time Karaköy was similar to a traditional 15th-century Italian city. During the Ottoman era Karaköy was the city's financial centre and the home of Istanbul's largest banks. Italians, Greeks, Armenians and Jews all lived here side by side, but many of them were forced to leave Turkey during the political unrest of the 1950s. Some of the historical buildings they left behind still stand empty, but others have in recent years been turned into art galleries, cafés and design stores.

Karaköy is the "must-be" area of Istanbul right now. "I think everything will just become bigger and bigger here in the coming years. Then it will all collapse and everything will change again. How long until then? I don't know, and I don't want to lose hope. But right now it seems like everything is going well," says Yavuz. Istanbul is churning and swirling. It sucks us in and simultaneously inspires us. Maybe that's why we always wish to return there?

Insider's advice

If you have three days in Istanbul



Sami Cankaya is one of the greatest hotel concierges we've ever met. If Istanbul can be compared to a patchwork guilt made of colourful and textured pieces of fabric – namely, its exotic mix of cultures and history – then Cankaya knows each patch. Sometimes it seems there's nothing he doesn't know. Çankaya works at the city's new luxury Edition Hotel Istanbul, which was set up in cooperation with hotel and New York City night club guru Ian Schrager. Because the Hagia Sophia, Blue Mosque and other sites are obvious must-sees in Istanbul, we asked Çankaya to plan a three-day tour that brings the visitor closer to the city's soul, and closer to the city that the locals know and love.

Day 1 10 AM: Breakfast at the Kale Café

The Kale Café is a cosy spot in the Rumeli Hisarı neighbourhood along the Bosphorus. It serves up a bountiful Turkish breakfast. Along with standard items such as olives, tomatoes and cucumbers, the upgraded serpme kahvalti (breakfast spread) includes an assortment of cheeses, including fried helumi (a pleasantly rubbery and salty cheese from Cyprus), several types of börek and gozleme, fried eggs with sausage and, of course, very tasty kaymak topped with honey.

www.kalecafe.com

2 PM: Visit the new face of the city

Ortaköy is located right on the shores of the Bosphorus. It used to be a small village that was home to Turks, Greeks, Armenians and Jews. Historical architecture can still be seen along its small streets, which are full of charming cafés and stores that sell a great variety of jewellery. Most of the wares are made by local women. The locals are especially fond of the Ortaköy Sunday market, where you can find some true gems.

Kumpir (baked potato) with a variety of sauces is another

speciality of Ortaköy. It's definitely worth a try! The symbol of this neighbourhood is the majestic Neoclassical-style *Ortaköy Mosque* right on the edge of the water. It can easily be seen from Istanbul's so-called sea route.

After Ortaköy, you can also stop by Bebek, one of the richest districts of Istanbul. Walk along the shore and through Bebek Park or sit on the banks and enjoy the beauty and silence. If you like sweets, then try a delicious Turkish dessert at Bebek Badem Ezmecisi.

8 PM: Dinner at the *Köşebaşı* Restaurant in Nişantaşı

This restaurant is a true paradise for kebab lovers; everything from shish kebabs to chicken wings is on offer here! Voted one of the 50 best restaurants in the world and the best kebab house in Istanbul by *Time* magazine, *Köşebaşı* surely won't disappoint you.

www.kosebasi.com

Day 2 10 AM: Boat trip along the Bosphorus

There are several excursion options and many small boats run along the Bosphorus, but I





recommend the regular ferry. Total travel time, including the return trip, will take five to six hours. We call this ferry the Beggar's Ferry because it stops for passengers at almost every port along the Bosphorus waterway.

3 PM: Explore Beyoğlu, Taksim Square and Istiklal Caddesi

Taksim Square is the nucleus of Istanbul's modern European side, which many tourists unfortunately miss. In the southwest corner is the Monument of Independence, where the busy Istiklal Caddesi starts and cuts through the Beyoğlu district. This 1.4-km pedestrianised boulevard is lined with shops, cinemas, markets and restaurants and is always very crowded, especially at night – almost three million people cross the boulevard every day.

In a way, Istiklal Caddesi best embodies the soul of Istanbul and its multicultural mosaic. The boulevard was created in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the architecture along it reflects almost the whole spectrum of styles popular at that time: Neogothic, Neoclassical, Art Nouveau and Art Deco. Highlights include the stained glass windows at the entrance to Çiçek Pasaji (Flower Passage), the imposing Galatasaray Lisesi (High School) and various contemporary art galleries (Misir Apartment Building).

6 PM: Enjoy the view from Galata Tower

The balcony at the top of *Galata Kulesi* (Galata Tower) has an unforgettable view of the city. Built in 1348 by the Genoese as part of their fortifications, this distinctive 62-metre tower with its conical roof is visible from most of the city. On a clear day, the view is spectacular and it is possible to see the main monuments of Istanbul and even the Princes' Islands. It's a good way for visitors to get a feel for the surroundings and there are several charming tea gardens at the foot of the tower.

8 PM: Dinner at Karaköy's Lokanta Maya

Lokanta Maya is located in the currently fashionable district of Karaköy. It's just a 20-minute walk from Galata Bridge and the Karaköy fish market. The restaurant interior features the clean and simple lines popular in the West, as well as a "wall of walnuts" decoration. Definitely try the plate of appetisers! Its highlights are the artichokes in olive oil and perfectly cooked anchovies. Lokanta Maya's speciality – mucver, or fried zucchini balls in a yogurt sauce – is so popular that the chef has posted the recipe on the big mirror in the dining room because she got so tired of explaining to customers how the dish is made.

www.lokantamaya.com

10 PM: Enjoy baklava sweets at Karaköy Güllüoğlu

Karaköy Güllüoğlu is a legendary sweets shop located just a short distance from Lokanta Maya. Here you can find all the traditional Turkish snacks, including baklava and börek. The shop is always full of people and there are also tables set outside on the pavement, so it's almost impossible to ignore the place.

www.karakoygulluoglu.com

Day 3

10 AM: Feel the history at Samatya

Have breakfast at Samatya Square, which was voted as one of the best little squares in Istanbul. The local breakfast or *Simit & Tea* is ideal. This is an unbelievably calm area – a completely different feeling of Istanbul.

12 PM: Samatya walking tour

Samatya is located on the European side of Istanbul and was one of the best districts of the city up until the 1950s. It's a multicultural area that was once home to a peaceful mix of Turks, Armenians, Greeks and Jews. Conversations could begin in Turkish and then suddenly switch to Greek or some other language. But this situation changed after the 1950s due to the political atmosphere. Still, Samatya's history can be felt in the small side streets lined with homes built by Greeks and Jews. There are also many old taverns here. Samatya is definitely the place to go to feel the soul of Old Istanbul.

2 PM: Lunch at Samatya Balık Evi

Samatya Balik Evi (Samatya Seafood Lodge), run by Naim Akça of Kuleli Meyhane fame, is right in the heart of Samatya Square. It has many clients from different backgrounds. Some of its patrons are doctors from the nearby Samatya Hospital, journalists and lovers of Istanbul in search of the nostalqic taste of Samatya.

www.samatyabalikevi.com

8 PM: Dinner on the streets

Beginning from Karaköy and up the hill to Galata and Taksim, there are many options for street food, which is cheap, tasty and safe, not to mention very popular. All you need to do is decide what you crave most: stuffed mussels, fried fish and mussels, döner kebab, kokoreç (roasted sheep's intestines), kumpir (baked potato) or fish sandwiches, which are usually made of mackerel. The best sandwiches and stuffed mussels are in the area around Karaköy Ferry Station and at Eminönü. Also recommended in your search for street food are Kemenkes Street (Karaköy), Bankalar Street (Karaköy), Isiklal Caddesi (Taksim) and Ortaköy Square, where you must try kumpir (baked potato), waffles and traditional Turkish tea on the shores of the Bosphorus

Istanbul makes you alive



Saliha Yayuz is one of the founders of GriZine. Turkev's contemporary arts portal. Last vear, she and a like-minded group of people began a new initiative called ArtWalkIstanbul (www.artwalkistanbul.com). which offers art and design fans four inspiring walking tours of neighbourhoods that are home to Istanbul's most exciting art and design galleries. Yavuz has an education in art management, has worked at Istanbul Modern and also lived in New York City for a-vear-and-a-half, so it is natural that she leads most of the tours herself. "The art scene here has changed immensely since 2010, when Istanbul was a European Capital of Culture. There are now about 60 art galleries in Istanbul. But due to the size and sometimes complicated layout of the city, they are not always easy to find. That's why we began this project."

Which neighbourhood is currently the epicentre of Istanbul's art scene?

Just a few years ago, most of Istanbul's art galleries were located in Taksim and Nişantaşı. Then some of them moved to Tophane, the home of *Istanbul Modern*. But Tophane was still a very conservative neighbourhood at that time, and many of the galleries there were attacked on the opening day of exhibitions in 2010. Windows were broken and several people were hospitalised for exposure to pepper spray. The alcohol served at the exhibition opening events supposedly provoked the locals. Several galleries moved to the nearby Karaköy district after this incident. Just two or three years ago, there was nothing in Karaköy, but now it has at least 13 art galleries. And not just art galleries, but also restaurants, bars and cafés. You could say that the arrival of art galleries has in large part changed the feel of the whole district.

What are the five most exciting art galleries in Istanbul right now?

Elipsis (Karaköy), which always has good photo exhibitions. The Empire Project (Karaköy), which focuses on all the regions historically associated with Istanbul. Galeri Nev, which is one of Turkey's oldest art galleries, having opened in 1984 in Ankara. Its Istanbul affiliate is located in the Misir Apartment Building in the Beyoğlu district. Galeri Nev represents significant, established Turkish artists. Two other great galleries are Galerist (Pera) and Pi Artworks (Misir Apartment Building), which recently opened an affiliate in London.

What places would you recommend for those who are interested in design?

Aponia has beautifully designed T-shirts. The whole design and concept of the shop belongs to its owner, Fatih Dağlı, who previously worked in advertising and as a tour quide.

Kağıthane, or House of Paper, has beautiful designs mostly made of paper or inspired by the texture of paper or the shape that paper can take. The stores present the work of many different designers.

Milk Gallery & Design Shop. It's both a gallery and design shop, and it's



nice to see both in one place.

Building – not only ecstatic but also effective! That's what I love. The raw interior of Building is packed with up-and-coming Turkish designer wares: clothes, accessories, jewellery, etc.

Hane78. Everything is made of wood and the designs are ingeniously simple.

Why do you like living in Istanbul?

I love this city. This is also where my friends and family are. All sorts of people live in Istanbul – people with varying levels of education and a great variety of skills. And they are all together here. I live on the Asian side and take the ferry to the European side every day, but the skyline of Istanbul still fascinates me. I often read a book or e-mails on the ferry, but when I raise my eyes I always notice something new.

Is there anything that you hate about Istanbul?

The traffic jams. And sometimes the police. I'm not that familiar with European cities, but compared to New York City, Istanbul has hardly any opportunities for free recreation. In New York you can go to a park and just sit and listen to wonderful music. There are hardly any parks or benches to just sit in Istanbul. It's also quite difficult to be a woman in Turkey. For example, I cannot go out in the evening and just sit by the sea. Of course, I can physically sit down, but most likely someone will be watching me, checking on me. That's one of the things that I hate. But at the same time, this city has an unbelievable amount of energy. It drives you crazy. And – maybe more than any other city – it makes you feel alive. That's why I love Istanbul.

How would you describe the people of Istanbul?

That's difficult. Istanbul is huge. I live in Kadıköy, which has a completely different feel from other parts of the city. People here are mostly very relaxed. The bars and nightclubs close at two in the morning. Everything is quiet and calm. The sea is nearby and so are the parks. This area does not have the crowds that Taksim has. I used to live in another part of the Asian side of the city, and that was completely different, too. It's impossible to describe the character of Istanbul's people. The city is a big mix. Historically, a great variety of cultures have existed here side by side, and that's still the case. There are a

lot of immigrants from the East as well as from other parts of the world. In a way, Istanbul is a bit schizophrenic.

If someone has only three days in Istanbul, what would you suggest doing to get a feel for the city?

Three days is very little time for Istanbul. I think one should definitely see the Grand Bazaar and Hagia Sophia. I like those places myself. They are magical places and I visit them at least three times a year. I always tell my friends to experience something of the local life. On the Asian side that means the small cafés and coffee shops in Kadıköy. In addition, it's always great to spend a few hours by the sea. And, of course, Karaköy, which is Istanbul's "must-be" place at the moment. It's definitely worth having dinner at Safa Meyhanesi, which is one of the oldest meyhanes la café or bar that serves alcohol and meze - ed.] in Istanbul and has been owned by the same family for over 130 years. Or, have dinner at Giritli, a fish restaurant that is held in high esteem by the locals. The restaurant serves cold appetisers from various regions of Turkey, and it also has a beautiful garden. It's definitely worth trying some of the fish dishes and, of course, the rakia.

What are the currently most popular restaurants/cafés in Istanbul among the art scene?

Delicatessen (Niṣantaṣi) serves both Turkish and international cuisine, and it has over a thousand bottles of wine in its wine cellar. Young intellectuals often go to the Karabatak coffeehouse (Karaköy), which is located in an old warehouse. Karabatak has vintage Meinl posters on the walls, and the name of the establishment is inspired by the cormorant, the symbol of Istanbul. Artists and intellectuals also like going to the Şimdi Café near Istiklal Caddesi, the main artery in Beyoğlu.

It seems that everybody in Istanbul has their favourite viewing spot. What's yours?

Moda in the Kadıköy district. Moda is a small, village-like neighbourhood right by the sea that was once an Armenian and Greek neighbourhood. The whole waterfront is just tables and chairs. Although it does get crowded in the summer, you're nevertheless sure to find a place to sit. They only serve tea, Turkish coffee and small snacks, but the peace and panorama are fantastic. Here you can just sit, read a book or gaze out at the sea. **BO**







TEXT BY ZANE NIKODEMUSA
PHOTOS COURTESY OF KATYA KATYA SHEHURINA

Among brides and lacework

Katya Shehurina is the only designer from Latvia whose dresses are regularly seen in the world's most influential fashion magazines. Singer Nelly Furtado and actress Mischa Barton are just a few of the celebrities who appreciate her unique cocktail of Russian and French style. However, during the past year, Katya has taken the fashion world by storm with her bridal dress designs, which have become a very hot commodity. In this interview with *Baltic Outlook*, the talented designer recounts her path to international stardom.

How would you define "fashion" and why do people care about it so much?

Fashion is a reflection of the times. People either want to be in the mainstream or want to be different from others, so in both cases they do care about fashion. One time I was at a dinner in Japan with people who don't work in the fashion business. They asked me what the current fashion trends are, and I answered that there aren't any. Well, a number of people are trying to highlight some trends, but in reality it's a big mish-mash.

I told my dinner mates that the only person who has really surprised me and who I truly admire is fashion designer Alexander McQueen. Then the following morning, someone told me that he had died [he committed suicide in 2010 – ed]. That was a huge professional trauma for me. I really saw him as someone who was creating new things. Some people might say that his clothes are impossible to wear and that they are too expensive, but when it comes to high fashion, he really managed to surprise me, and in the positive sense of the word. I think it is very important to surprise people in the positive sense, rather than to simply shock them.

What made you get into fashion? When did you realize that you wanted to become a fashion designer?

I have been interested in creating clothes for as far back

as I can remember. The first article of clothing that I designed was a piece of fabric with holes that I had cut out for the arms. This creation was attached to my dolls by wrapping a belt around it and was very practical. I could alter the appearance and colour by simply changing the fabric. I was about three years old. So finishing the Ecole Supérieure des Arts et Techniques de la Mode (ESMOD) in Paris was a logical step in my professional life. I first studied at the fashion school's branch in Lyon for two years and then spent the third and final year of my studies in the French capital.

How did you come to start your own line and brand *Katya Katya Shehurina*?

I began to work on my own brand of clothing in 2007, immediately after graduating from the ESMOD fashion school. My path was unusual, because most young designers choose to start their careers by working in a well-known fashion house to gain experience. I had already decided during my studies to follow a different path and took a calculated risk. It turns out that this was a wise decision, because when you are young and inexperienced you are not afraid, and when you are not afraid you believe in your ideas and trust your instincts.

In order to find out about the world you have to draw on your own experience. Once you get your fingers burned, you won't touch that hot clothes iron again. If you work under somebody else, then you

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Katya tries to design things that people will actually wear

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start to conform to that person's style and way of thinking. This is only natural, because established fashion houses with a long history have developed their own philosophy and traditions about the way that things should be done. But once you've adapted to someone else's style, it's hard to revert to your own feelings and outlook on life.

How would you describe your design aesthetic?

I try to design things that people will actually wear. That is a dream come true for a designer. I was absolutely overjoyed the first time I saw a complete stranger wearing a dress that I had designed. I could see that she felt beautiful and self-confident.

In addition, I always think about comfort when designing new clothes. That is very important, especially with wedding dresses. You want to feel free and comfortable on your special day, so that you can truly enjoy it. We also offer a transformation of sorts through our underdresses. These come separately and in different colours, so you can easily change your look and appearance just by changing the colour of the underdress. This means that you can wear your wedding dress as an evening option for other occasions as well!

What do you like best about designing clothes?

I like the fact that I can use my imagination, thinking up whole stories and surreal worlds to use as inspiration.

And what do you dislike about designing clothes?

I also have to think about the economic aspect of my work and I don't like that so much. Sometimes I design items for my own personal pleasure, just to fuel my creative ego, but most of the time the dresses are made to be sold. After all, I want people to wear what I make.

Where do you go for inspiration?

I don't go anywhere specifically to get inspired, as inspiration comes when you don't try to catch it; it is a kind of magic. One



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very important aspect is rest. If you want to get inspired, then you have to clear your mind. That's why I try to not even think about work at least one day a week. If your thoughts are in a jumble, then you don't know which end to start from. I make sure to plan out everything very strictly, including time for rest.

have different fashion sensibilities?

We are very flexible and it is easy for us to respond to our clients' needs. For example, we can add sleeves and lengthen our dresses for Middle Eastern customers. However, I have observed that women usually fall into one of two categories, regardless of where they are from. Those who work in the business sphere, with busy



Katya and her husband Mark with guests on their wedding day. Naturally, Katya designed her own bridal dress

If you want to get inspired, then you have to clear your mind. That's why I try to not even think about work at least one day a week

How much does travel influence your designs?

Travelling and seeing different places and cultures makes your brain work harder and faster. You can draw inspiration from new places. I would love to go to India, as I think it is an excellent place to learn about colour.

I also get inspired by the emotional aspects of travel, by the positive feelings that I get in certain places. For example, I really like St. Petersburg and am always happy to return there. The city has an unusual feel to it – a mixture of the old and the new, somewhat as in Paris. It is obviously Russian, but simultaneously Western and Baltic.

You are a global brand. How do you accommodate the needs of women from all over the world, who might

schedules and a no-nonsense attitude – they want everything, including their clothes, to be made in accordance with a set and clear pattern. They don't want any creative flourishes in their dress. Everything should be straightforward and simple. On the other hand, women who are more creative and who have more free time on their hands like to wear clothes that can be transformed and combined with other items.

How did you come to be based in London and what keeps you there?

I have always liked London – its cosmopolitan atmosphere, its openness, its vibrancy. I wanted to live and study there from the very beginning. We decided to open our first boutique in London due to the qualities that I just mentioned, particularly the city's open-minded people,



ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION MAY HAVE ADVERSE EFFECTS





Katya Katya Shehurina S/S 2014

OUTLOOK / INTERVIEW

who are generally ready to accept new brands and different points of view. We have a PR agency helping us a lot in relations with the press and celebrities. We participate in wedding exhibitions for brides in London to inform them about our boutique, which we are planning to move to a bigger location in January. This means that next month our London clients will be able to feel even more comfortable and have a bigger range of dresses to choose from.

Can you tell us about your Spring/ Summer 2014 collection?

Our Spring/Summer 2014 collection is very romantic and delicate. I was inspired by fashion elements from the 17th century and adapted them to the present day. This collection has a beautiful range of colour and is accompanied by refined accessories such as brooches and belts, which are made of handmade embroidery in the Atelier Lesage technique.

How do you choose the colours for your collections? Are they based on the season that you have in mind?

It is a magical process, based on my sensibilities and intuition of future fashion developments.

What types of textile do you use?

We use premium French lace for the upper dresses and a very comfortable microfibre of silk for the underdresses.

Do you consider lace to be the most feminine fabric? Why?

Lace is definitely one of the most feminine and sensual fabrics, as we can play with its transparency. Lace is also associated with lingerie and has a special feeling to it.

What woman do you have in mind when you design something?

I do not have any particular woman in mind when I am designing a new collection. I think of active, working women capable of combining their successful careers with a happy motherhood and private life.

What piece of clothing should every woman have in her wardrobe? A little black dress.

What should a woman wear at a Christmas dinner? And on New Year's Eve?

Something that makes her feel beautiful.

If you could dress anyone, who would it be? Who are your style icons?

I am very happy to see such beauties as Miroslava Duma, Elena Perminova, Ulyana Sergeenko and others – perfect women from Russia, real modern fashion icons who have shown the rest of the world how fashionable, creative and progressive women from Eastern Europe can be. I believe that this helps young designers like me from the former USSR to promote our brands abroad. I would love to see one of these women wearing a dress of mine!



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What is on your winter shopping list?

Lots of things, as throughout almost the entire year 2013 I was and still am carrying a baby. I miss regular clothes for women who are not pregnant.

What other designers and brands do you like?

I love *Vivienne Westwood* for her daring, I love *Valentino* for loyalty to its style, I love *Chanel* for being so different and stable at the same time, I love *Prada* for its unpredictable ideas.

How would you describe your personal fashion style?

On routine working days I appreciate comfort a lot. It is a mix of romantic and casual, with a touch of statement accessories.

How do you recover from a long day at work? I have a good dinner together with my family and watch a good movie afterwards.

What does a typical work day look like for you? Up until now I worked from 10 AM to 7 PM or later, followed by a time of recovery with my family and friends. I guess that will change soon for a while.

Fashion is a competitive industry. Have you ever wanted to guit the business?

Several times, but after getting over these moments of doubt, I've had a stronger will to move on.

What is the best career advice that you have ever received?

Don't think about others. Concentrate on the best possible result. I don't know how, but thoughts really can materialise. If you want something enough, then it will happen. That's why I try to really want things

with all of my heart. I wanted to live in London and I wanted to open up my own boutique. Now both of these things have actually happened!

You have been described as one of the leading wedding dress designers of Northern Europe. How does that feel?

I hadn't heard that, but even if it was 1/1000 true, I would feel great!

What do you like about brides?

I like the sparkle in the eyes of a bride if she is wearing the right dress. I love the fact that I can be a part of her special, emotional and memorable day.

What was the theme of your wedding and how did you choose it?

We did not have a special theme. We just wanted the day to be relaxed, with lots of special moments. We wanted to be surrounded by people we love. It turned out to be a perfect day!

What moves you most in life right now – your family, your friends, your career?

A mix of family and work – the usual cocktail in my life.

What is the one thing that you can't live without?

My family. One of the reasons that I founded my own brand was because I didn't want to work according to a fixed schedule. When you work for other people, you belong to them. Nobody cares about your private life, especially in the fashion business. 'So you want to have a kid? OK, good bye! I'll find somebody else who doesn't. Today, for example, I won't be working at all. Tomorrow I might spend half of the night at work, but that will be my own personal choice. **BO**





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OUTLOOK / SPECIAL **OUTLOOK** / SPECIAL

TEXT BY AGRA LIEGE PHOTOS COURTESY OF IÑAKI ALISTE LIZARRALDE

Houses of cards

Have you ever been so devoted to a TV show that you memorized the layout of the characters' apartment? Artist Iñaki Aliste Lizarralde has done just that, providing extremely detailed aerial views of TV's most adored and desired apartments

Holly's apartment in

Breakfast at Tiffany's"Christmas would most definitely be a complicated time for Holly Golightly. She is not a girl to give much thought to family festivities, as too many sad memories from her past surely haunt her at a time like this. The question is: would Holly nevertheless pay her respects to the holiday tradition and place a small tree by her window? Erratic as she can be, the classic image of her in a neat black dress wearing sparkling jewels chosen tastefully to fit her outfit somehow makes you envision her Christmas Eve in New York – maybe not holy and silent, but certainly vibrant and buzzing, with diamond rings, glasses of champagne and a sparkle in everyone's eyes."



72 / AIRBALTIC.COM BALTIC OUTLOOK / DECEMBER 2013 / 73 OUTLOOK / SPECIAL OUTLOOK / SPECIAL



Chandler/Joey's and Monica/Rachel's apartments in *Friends*

"Christmas is no small matter for Monica, the 'mother hen' of the group. The Christmas tree will undoubtedly be placed in a spot of her preference, which is in front of the window. The others can give decorating the tree a shot, but Monica does it better. She does not hold back and shows the others how it is really done! In the meantime, no one can keep Phoebe from singing Christmas carols."



Sporting an exotic-sounding name. Iñaki is based in a no less exotic-sounding town called Azpeitia in the Basque Country of Spain, where he was born. His hobby is also unique and shared by few, if any, others. Iñaki, an interiordesigner-turned-artist, draws incredibly detailed and fully accurate floor plans of living spaces that appear in sitcoms and films. His first such drawing saw daylight five years ago. It was the apartment of the TV series *Frasier*, which Iñaki watched enthusiastically every week. Things might have stopped there if it wasn't for a sworn Sex and the City fan, who, aware of Iñaki's special "interior design meets art" skills, asked him to draw the apartment of Carrie Bradshaw With that, the cat was out of the bag. More friends came to him with additional requests (undoubtedly, one of them was to draw the apartment in the series Friends). Iñaki complied and uploaded the images of his drawings online.

In choosing the settings for his drawings, Iñaki opts for long-running sitcoms in which the central apartment will be familiar and easily recognized by fans of the series. In the case of films. Iñaki looks for iconic interiors that could almost be perceived as film characters in themselves. Such was the home in Alfred Hitchcock's Psycho, which also presented Iñaki with a considerable challenge. The interior turned out to be very hard to draw. In fact, only the hall, the staircase and part of the basement of the house were built for the set. The drawing process was thus a mixture of re-creation and creation.

When drawing a full floor plan of an apartment in a

series, Iñaki gives preference to finished spaces that appear in many episodes. Unfortunately, sitcoms usually have moveable sets that change occasionally and have different "rooms" built in different parts of the studio, sometimes causing them to differ from the main set. Most of the action takes place in the living rooms, while the bedrooms and bathrooms are a lot harder to pin down. Other series like Sex and the City are shot in a movie-like fashion on closed sets, making them easier to reproduce.

Iñaki can catch the basic

in a couple of hours by

layout of a TV show's apartment

rewinding and fast-forwarding

the episodes. He starts by drawing a rudimentary layout, upon which he adds a second laver of furniture in finalised proportions. Further details appear along with the third layer. Then come the colours, based on Iñaki's notes of the materials that the items are made of. The artist uses his experience as an interior designer to calculate proportions, distances and dimensions. This sense of space allows him to "translate" all of the elements in the apartment from the screen to a sheet of paper, which is actually a sheet of dense white cardboard on which Iñaki draws with ink. markers and specially selected coloured pencils. While he uses a 3D software program for work, Iñaki believes that the personality of each apartment can only be captured through "the warmth and imperfection of a handmade drawing".

The link to the online store where Iñaki's drawings can be found and purchased is: https://www.etsy.com/shop/TVFLOORPLANSandMORE



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Sheldon/Leonard's and Penny's apartments in *The Big Bang Theory*

"In Sheldon and Leonard's apartment, Christmas – or, as Sheldon calls it, the ancient pagan festival of Saturnalia – is, unsurprisingly, a time of conflict. Nevertheless, the two manage to come to an agreement (undoubtedly based on the nothing short of holy "Roommate Agreement") and place the tree behind the coach next to the DNA "sculpture". But Penny, instead of fussing about getting her own tree, would probably crash the Christmas celebrations next door, just as she has done with countless other gatherings in order to get free food."





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Carrie Bradshaw's apartment in Sex and the City

"Carrie lives in a one-room studio apartment and while she has a unique sense of fashion, she might not be the most practical and conscientious person when it comes to fixing up her apartment. Is Christmas even in fashion? Instead of putting up a Christmas tree at her place, Carrie is more likely to be out and about celebrating, dressed up a little bit like a Christmas tree herself."

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The family apartment in *The* Simpsons

"This dysfunctional middle-class American family would not miss Christmas for anything. The buffoon Homer, the caring housewife Marge and their children who are nothing like one another might all be a bit messed up, but they truly care for each other. They usually put the Christmas tree in their living room between the arched entrance and the bay window, coming together to once again awkwardly celebrate this time of forgiveness. Do you remember how Bart once burnt the plastic tree, which melted and almost ruined everyone's Christmas? Forgive that!'



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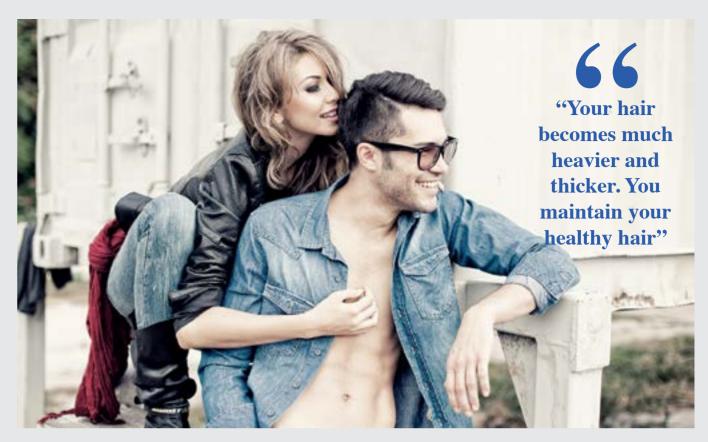
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Bergen Fish Market

Food from the Fjords

The new Norwegian cuisine

TEXT BY DAVID NIKEL | PUBLICITY PHOTOS

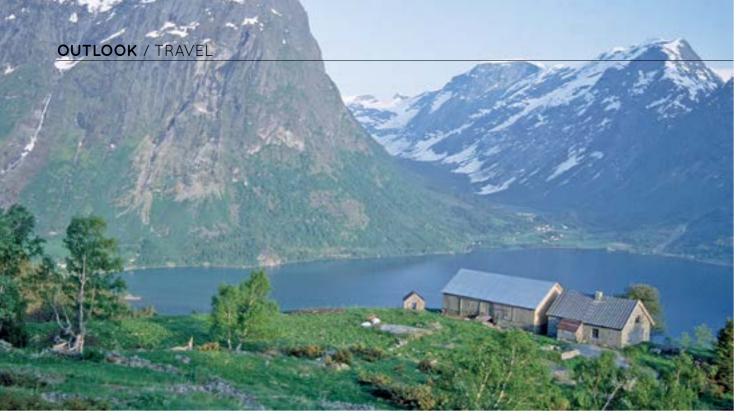
Surrounded by crystal-clear fjords, icy mountains and endless sky, western Norway is unquestionably a jewel on the rugged Scandinavian coastline. However, it is not just the landscape that deserves mention. The country's most exciting restaurants are forging a new and exciting path for Norwegian cuisine

To many, Norwegian food evokes images of family and tradition, with a focus on simplicity and preservation. Rightly so, as salted meats, dried fish, canned foods, bread and boiled potatoes still form the bulk of the diet for many older Norwegians. Mutton remains popular, especially in such traditional dishes as fårikål (stew with cabbage) and pinnekjøtt (smoked ribs), as do the matured fish dishes lutefisk and rakfisk. This diet harks back to the pre-oil days, when Norway was a poor country and when preserving, salting, drying and canning food was the only way to sustain a family through the harsh winters. Such traditional fare is a frequent turn-off for tourists, many of whom prefer fast-food chains and kiosk hot-dogs.

However, a number of restaurants in the fjords are spearheading the development of a new Norwegian cuisine, and visitors to the country are taking note. The reason for the change, at least in part, is Norway's thriving oil and gas industry. Not only does it bring in talented engineers and their families from all around the world, it's also responsible for Norwegians being able to travel several times per year.

Sven Erik Renaa, owner of Stavanger's popular *Renaa Restaurants*, agrees: "Stavanger has been an internationally oriented city since the late 1970s, so the locals have learned to appreciate both foreign cuisines and inventive cooking. Norwegians have greatly expanded their food habits and interests over the years. They are also interested in locally sourced ingredients and in the history behind the food. Diners enjoy hearing about the farmer who has chosen to use a horse to plough his potato fields, and they love to discover the pleasures of high quality, hand-picked ingredients. The taste for local drinks, be it beer or fresh juices, has also developed a lot."

Renaa is a popular figure in Stavanger. His restaurant complex offers visitors something to eat at any time



of day, whatever their budget. Top-billing in the restaurant is *Circus Renaa*, a nine-course showcase of local produce that features crab, squid, lobster, sweetbreads, deer and plums, while at the *Xpress* outlet, freshly-baked focaccia and home-made smoothies fly out of the door.

"I'd been competing for years, with my team winning the Culinary Olympics in 2008. That very evening, in Erfurt, I was approached by the owner of a really nice venue, who suggested that we join forces. By then I was ready to start my own restaurant, so the timing was good. It's no secret that a fine dining restaurant is costly to run. You need supporting activities to create a financially sound business. As they say in Sweden, you need a bakficka, a place where your guests can enjoy simpler, high-value cooking on the days when a gourmet meal isn't part of their plans. With three different eateries, we cater to all segments, from the quick and easy at *Xpress* to the advanced but relaxed bistro Matbaren and all the way to the exclusive, sometimes extreme cooking at the restaurant. The city of Stavanger has done a lot to develop local interest in food as well, particularly with the annual *Gladmat* festival," says Renaa.

Happy Food Festival

The literal translation of *Gladmat* is Happy Food, a fitting name for Scandinavia's leading food festival, held every year in July. Over 100 exhibitors, the vast majority from around Fjord Norway, showcase their wares to an international audience of over 250,000. The *Best of Gladmat* awards are a festival highlight and Renaa took home the "best restaurant" prize for 2013.

Food blogger Whitney Love from www.thanksforthefood.com writes: "Over four days,

I ate at nearly every stand at *Gladmat*. I heard farmers tell me passion-filled stories about their products. The festival reminds us that we are in the 'bread basket' of Norway. Much of the country's food is produced right in this region. *Gladmat* gives producers the opportunity to mix traditional Norwegian food with more modern flavours. This isn't a bad thing. It's all about how creative chefs can make their dishes. At this year's *Gladmat*, Anders Berg Marcussen, the head chef at *Straen Fiskerestaurant*, used homemade kimchi with oysters. Kimchi is a fermented vegetable side dish from Korea, which goes particularly well with oysters, and is one of my favourite foods. His dish was delicious."

In recent years, many Norwegian chefs have won global awards. Of the 14 winners of the prestigious *Bocuse d'Or*, four were Norwegian. The most recent Norwegian winner was chef and restaurateur Geir Skeie, who grew up in the fjords south of Bergen and now runs the *Brygga 11* restaurant in nearby Leirvik. The menu is typical of modern Norwegian cuisine, with a strong focus on high-quality fresh seafood cooked simply, such as oysters with a lemon and shallot vinaigrette, or the pan-fried catch of the day flavoured with thyme and served with pumpkin puree, pickled pumpkin, fried onion and brown butter chicken jus. How does he ensure the freshness of the food? There's a fishmonger right next door.

Fresh from the fjords

Combining the freshest natural ingredients with cooking styles and flavours from around the world seems to be the hallmark of modern Norwegian cuisine, so it's no surprise that the fjord region leads the way, with fresh fish, mountain cattle, forest berries and garden herbs all available in abundance.

Smak av Kysten (Taste of the Coast) is a network of 42 restaurants in Norway, where you can "experience the gratifying results of innovative cooking in an intense encounter with the treasures of the sea". Among the network's members is the Lothes Mat & Vinhus restaurant in Haugesund, which also manages the kitchen at the stunning Høyevarde lighthouse hotel, where it owns sheep, chickens, a bakery, beehives and an herb garden.

Unsurprisingly, many Taste of the Coast restaurants are in Bergen, Norway's second-biggest city. One of them is the *Fløien Folkerestaurant*, where you can dig into a fresh shellfish casserole packed with chilli and garlic, while enjoying an unbeatable view of the city from atop Mount Fløyen.

Elsewhere in Bergen, *Lysverket* has added a stylish twist to gourmet seafood. Co-founded by Fredrik Saroea, frontman of the popular Norwegian electronic music group *Datarock*, the bar regularly welcomes live bands and DJs to play on weekends, adding a funky ambience that's extremely rare in Norwegian dining. The atmosphere created by Saroea – together with the taste combinations served up by executive chef Christopher Haatuft and the cocktail creations of Joar Nicolaysen – has attracted the attention of the world's media and arguably done more to promote the Norwegian food scene than anything else.

Both Bergen and Stavanger are blessed with modern fish markets, offering the freshest possible produce in the heart of these cities. However, seafood is only one aspect of the new Norwegian cuisine. Local meats are popular too, particularly lamb and veal. Ingvild S. Bøge, head chef at Bergen's *Spisekroken*, loves veal so much that she wrote a whole book about it. Her veal is sourced from nearby Sogn and served with stout sauce, smoked pears and

chestnut purée, another great example of traditional Norwegian produce offered with a modern twist.

A word of warning to visitors – Norway remains one of the most expensive countries in the world to visit. Having said that, the price you can expect to pay for a gourmet meal for two is no more than the equivalent at fine dining restaurants



elsewhere in Europe. The price differential is much more noticeable at the lower end, where a simple coffee-shop sandwich and cappuccino will set you back around 15 euros, while a main course at a run-of-the-mill chain restaurant comes in at about 25 euros

While Fjord Norway still lacks a name to compete with the world-famous *Noma* restaurant in nearby Copenhagen, Norwegian chefs are continuing to innovate. Perhaps it's only a matter of time?

Love agrees: "Although the restaurants here aren't as famous as elsewhere in Scandinavia, the region has produced some of the world's best chefs and cookbooks. Wider global recognition for the food culture here is definitely on its way." **BO**

БЫТЬ ИЛИ НЕ БЫТЬ?



ЭКСПЕРТИЗА • СМЕТА • СТРОИТЕЛЬСТВО

Norwegian restaurant reviews

Baltic Outlook offers some short reviews of restaurants, cafés and gastropubs in Bergen and Stavanger.



BERGEN



1877

Set in the old market hall in the historical centre of Bergen, 1877 is Bergen's must-visit restaurant. Each season, the popular set menu – featuring shellfish, fish, meat, cheese and desserts – changes based on the availability of local ingredients. Book well in advance to enjoy simple Norwegian ingredients brought to life.

Spisekroken

Local food dominates at *Spisekroken*, another restaurant where advance booking is essential. Try the popular *Aquavit* plate, a selection of three small starters accompanied by three appropriate shots of *Aquavit*. If veal, the house speciality, isn't to your taste, then try the reindeer from Jotunheimen or the smoked lamb ribs from Evanger.







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Lvsverket

Covered extensively in local media thanks to its celebrity owner, the "neofjordic" Lysverket doesn't disappoint. Enjoy the various tasting menus in the stylish atmosphere at the heart of Bergen's cultural centre. Regular live music and a wide selection of locally-brewed beers are another plus. Rasmus Meyers alle 9

Bergen, Marken or Victoria.

Zupperia

Popular with locals, the expanding Zupperia now offers its extensive menu from three city-centre outlets. The creative soup menu features such exciting combinations as creamy chicken with saffron and reindeer with mushrooms and berries. Possibly the best-value restaurant in Bergen, although service is often slow. Vaskerelven 12

Brazil Churrascaria

All the way from Rio Grande do Sul, the Brazilian passion for churrasco, or grilled meat, has come to Bergen. A meat-eater's dream, the restaurant offers various types of churrasco that are brought to your table on request, while the vast side buffet includes the delicious feijao (black beans), fried bananas and asparagus. Olav Kyrresgate 39

Pingvinen

Pingvinen provides hearty servings of meat, fish and potatoes in an informal bar setting. The selection of craft beers is impressive, so expect a lively atmosphere in the evenings. For party animals, a night menu of soups, stews and cured mutton is available up until 2 AM. Vaskerelven 14



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Kėdainiai FEZ – New Prospects

in 2012, the fourth largest Fine Economic Zone was established in Kedainiai in an area of 130.55 hectures. promising great new prospects for the Kedainiai district, its residents, and investors who have chosen to development businesses in this particular area.

A free economic zone, or special economic zone (FEZ), is a territory for economic-commercial and financial activities in which there are special statutory economic and legal functioning conditions for economic

Significant economic benefits

FEZ laws create favourable conditions for investors, and therefore it is a convenient place to not only build and develop their own businesses, but to also create new jubs. IEZ development of international freight, tradeand production operations are subject to various tax incentives. The laws govern that companies that have evested one million euros or more are free from paying income tax, which usually goes up to 15 per cent for the first skyears, and are allowed to pay only half of it for the next ten years. In addition, a FEZ is fee from real estate tax and the divide of tax that is applied to foreign investors in Lithuania, which can reach up to 20 percent. Due to the tax incretives in the free economic zone, the state's budget will not receive part of its usual ncome, which is why conditions have been made to attract new investors and to create new jobs which will rad to a greater income to the state's budget. Hence, the benefits of the FEZ will be experienced by various. offerent parties – investors, the state, and its residents – who will be given new jobs.

Comfort pays off

raddition to tax incercives, the FEZ proposes simplified land sublease arrangements. Another advantage is the developed influstructure and the Zone's convenient location — the Kedainiai Free Economic Zone is in the middle of Lithuania, with the "Via Baltica" highway only 5 kilometres away and the railway of the trans-European tail carrier "Rail Babica" passing through the city of Kedainia, providing convenient ommunication and cooperation conditions with Littuanian, as well as foreign, cities.

In addition, the Redainias FEZ was established on the outskirts of the city, near the bypass, and therefore, access to the area is not only convenient, but also fast. It is expected that this logistical potential will continue to encourage investments in the Redaintal district and will ensure direct foreign investments in industrial and commercial development.

The Kestamiai FEZ covers an area of 130.55 hectares. Currently, the zone ready for lease to investors covers a territory of over 97 hectares, of which about 21ha have already been leased. With the help of the European Union's Structural Fund, more than 23 million LTL have been invested into the Kedainiai FEZ, All lots have. already been equipped with all necessary infrastructure — water and gas supplies, sewage and drainage water networks, and roads. On a lot so fully prepared for construction, a factory can spring up over one year's time, which is very important when investing into graduction and manufacturing processes, and when

The Kedamus HEZ offers plots of any size, and enables many types of activities. Since the HEZ is located in a small region, starting a new business can be negotiated very quickly.

A promising place for high aspirations

The Kedamiai FEZ was established in order to increase the attractiveness of the city to investors by increasing orporate competitiveness asserts other districts, improving the business emiranment, greating a conety of usiness services, and developing an engineering infrastructure. It is expected that due to the established FEZ in the Kirchanial district, it will be easier to attract more firrign investors.

The municipality of the Kedalnia district is always ready to offer the best solutions for interested investors, and we will do our best to make the Kedainiai district the regional centre of Middle Lithuunia for industries treating high added-value and knowledge-based economic development," says Rimantas Dillionas, the nayor of the crunicipality of Kedainias, as he highlights the main goals behind establishing the FEZ.

The Kedamial district is one of the largest and strongest in Kaurias County, with the largest industrial base, traditionally strong agricultural production, a large commercial services network, a formative business support infrastructure, and the proven ability to attract the most direct investments in the county.

Data from the Lithiaanian Department of Statistics shows that, in terms of amount of foreign investment per capita, the Kedainiai district has the highest rate of Kauras County, and it is 1.6 times higher than the average for Lithumia. These figures testify to the economic stability of the Kedamiai district and its strong foreign. investment appeal. For these wasons, the Kedainiai FEZ is certainly a great and extremely attractive place for visitment and business development.

















RESTAURANT PIZZA SUSHI BAR



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STAVANGER



▲ Mogul India

After just one taste of this restaurant's bold, distinctive flavours, it becomes clear that the chefs at Mogul India possess a deep knowledge of Indian cuisine. The recently modernised menu features Shorshe Machhi, the local fish of the day simmered in a Bengali onion and tomato broth with mustard seeds. Verksgata 9



Renaa

Three restaurants in one. Snack on a BBQ burger at the express bar or settle down for the nine-course taster menu in a fine dining setting. If you have a sweet tooth, then be sure to try the Smash sandwich, a corn-chip and chocolate parfait covered in caramel popcorn and Coca-Cola sauce. Breitorget 6

Fisketorget

For seafood lovers, Stavanger's fish market is an absolute must. The fabulous setting overlooking the harbour is home to a seafood bar, where you can buy crab, shrimp and fresh homemade fish cakes. Nearby is an informal harbour restaurant, where chefs create simple tasty dishes based on the day's catch.





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▲ Sabi Sushi

This place serves the best sushi in Stavanger, thanks to its incredibly fresh fish and creative flavour combinations. Along with sushi, be sure to try the seaweed salad and jalapeño sauce. The Pedersgata location is primarily a take-away, but it's possible to dine in, too. Order online at www.sabi.no. Pedersgata 38

Sjokoladepiken

Not a restaurant as such, but no list of Stavanger eateries could be complete without *Sjokoladepiken*. Its colourful exterior reflects what's on offer inside, from a fresh chocolate mousse with passionfruit cream to the spicy Mexican hot chocolate – a perfect winter warmer. While the place can be quite busy, chocoholics will be willing to put up with the wait!

Ovre Holmegate 27

Tango Bar & Kjøkken

Situated in an old yet airy building in Stavanger's old town, *Tango* offers a limited set menu. However, the menu does change daily and special requirements are catered for. You can enjoy steaks, fish, and smaller dishes in the bar, while a popular champagne lunch is offered every Saturday.

Nedre Strandgate 25



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Ведущий латвийский архитектор Угис Заберс в «The Home» соединил в единый ансамбль блистательный ар-деко с фасадной мозаикой, классическую Юрмальскую архитектуру с кружевной резьбой и современный стиль с его открытостью и прозрачностью. Главный вход в здание украшен резными деревянными дверьми ручной работы. Резные деревянные двери открывают просторный холл от Заны Тетере, с дизайнерским камином (модель Gala) длиной 2,5 метра изготовленным специально для «The Home» голландской компанией «Vero design». На стенах 3D панели из opexa (впервые представлены на выставке Saloni Milano в 2011 году). Пол и лестницы - мраморные плиты «White Snow». Дом оснащен двумя бесшумными панорамными лифтами. На улице под стеклянным навесом велосипеды 30-х годов английской компании «Pashlev».

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If Christmas fairs are just not your thing, then perhaps a glass of champagne in the French capital might be. Paris in December has become a holiday staple, with that end-of-the-year magic blowing in the air. Paris and champagne – as clichéd as it sounds, the two really do belong together. *Baltic Outlook* has selected eight notable places for imbibing this legendary French beverage

Le Bar Long

This bar is located in one of Paris' most admirable and self-indulgent hotels, which was graciously redesigned by Philip Starck just a few years ago to become a place where luxury is a staple and the air is literally electric.

The hotel's Le Bar Long is a modern-day temple of opulence and abundance – a place that meets the highest standards of life-enjoying hedonists. People stop in to have a light lunch by day and then come back for an apéritif later at night. The Fashion Week crowd basically lives here and celebrities on both sides of the pond have this place at the top of their travel list.

The main bar consists of a central counter and a sleek frontal section, which together form the letter T and generate an exceptionally intimate atmosphere. A minute earlier you arrived alone, and the next you have a Parisian (who could well be an ex-president of France) greeting you from the opposite side of the counter and offering you a glass of champagne.

Speaking of glasses, the head bartender says that Mr. Starck hand-picked the whole selection of interesting and colourful pieces by himself in the flea markets of Paris. That's for the adventure part, but if you really want to devote most of your attention to champagne, then take a look at the menu - the selection by the glass is respectable and tasteful. You can go classy and have a glass of Veuve or take a more decadent turn and choose Piper-Heidsieck Cuvée Rare, both of which will give you a true moment of pleasure together



with an irresistible "something in the air" feeling.

Head sommelier Manuel Peyrondet knows a great deal about wine and this shows in the upscale and refined wine list, which will suit even the most demanding tastes. The bar menu features light snacks and gourmet tapas as well as the world-famous Pierre Hermé macaroons and desserts, something not to miss! Hôtel Le Royal Monceau – Raffles Paris, 37 avenue Hoche ① www.leroyalmonceau.com

Bar 8



The sleek elegance of the *Mandarin Oriental* is captivating and majestic, especially when you enter the lobby straight from an exhausting fashion run on the rue Saint-Honoré. This is exactly what you need after shopping (or window shopping) for *Chanel, Saint Laurent Paris* and other French design icons. If a day of designer brand shopping has not already thinned your wallet, then this place will, but it is totally worth it.

The Bar 8 counter is made entirely of Spanish marble (a huge nine-ton piece) and surrounded by chic leather barstools. The rest of the place has smaller chocolate-coloured sofas and tables overlooking an inner garden straight in front of you, behind the huge glass walls. The inner walls are dark and decorated with tiny pieces

of coloured crystals that look like summer raindrops in the dim light of the bar.

The intimate atmosphere makes you sink into the seductive effervescence of Bollinger Rosé, which is available by the glass, along with other great choices of Bolly Grande Année and Dom Périanon. As James Bond, the "ambassador" of Bollinger, would say, "bloody gorgeous"! The menu offers more then 70 champagnes, including some real classics from Taittinger Comtes, Billecart-Salmon Elizabeth, Salon and others. David Biraud, who is known as one of France's best sommeliers, is the man in charge here. As for the food menu, gourmet tapas and other basics will make sure that you do not go hungry. Hôtel Mandarin Oriental 251 rue Saint-Honoré (i) www.mandarinoriental.com

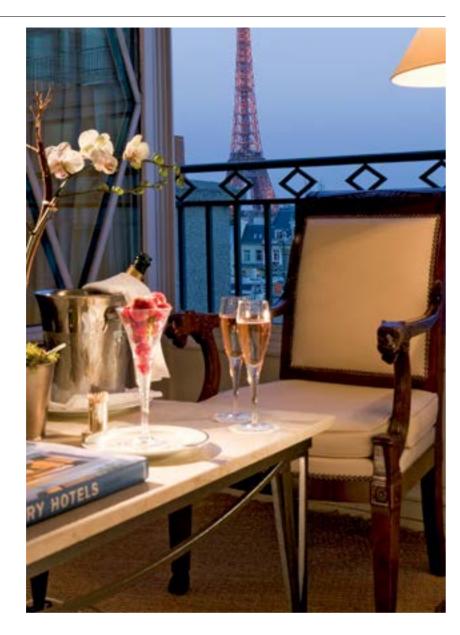
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Le Dokhan's

This former 18th-century residential building now hosts a cosy boutique hotel with neoclassical furnishings, a legendary Louis Vuitton suitcase elevator, remarkable art works (including engravings by Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso) and probably the only real (and the very first) champagne bar in Paris. The bar's décor has elegant celadon wood panelling with a touch of gold leaf highlights, magical antique mirrors and romantic chandeliers that create an exceptional atmosphere for enjoying champagne.

Le Dokhan's serves over 70 champagnes. many of them rare and exceptional, as well as an impressive selection by the glass. You actually get to choose the glass, as they will ask you which form you prefer. The wine list features only top selections, starting with Françoise Bedel's organics to Jaquesson Grands Crus, Egly-Ouriet, Philipponnat, Selosse, Bérèche and many others. Each week, the head sommelier introduces three different cuvées from his personally selected producers a brut, a rosé and a vintage – providing a great opportunity to taste wonderful and unusual brands.

If you feel like splurging even more, then there is a good choice of magnums as well as a caviar and champagne tasting option on the menu. Le Dokhan's also hosts monthly live jazz events to which you have to book in advance (sign up for a newsletter to know the latest) if you want to get a table and mingle with the most sophisticated champagne crowd of Paris. Hôtel Radisson Blu Le Dokhan's, 117 rue de Lauriston (i) www.radissonblu.com









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OUTLOOK / TRAVEL

Le Ou4tre Lounge bar

A recent and still hot Parisian spot with a lavish and luxurious décor of precious Japanese-style lacquered panels and seductively silky fabrics, along with an intimate atmosphere and live DJ playing an exceptional signature-style music selection every night. This place was very crowded during Fashion Week and still is for Friday apéritifs, which can be followed by anything later on. The ambience is perfect for starting a great weekend. The bar counter is not very long, but sitting there is fun, especially when you come by yourself. The DJ is right in front of you and so is a super friendly bartender, who will shower you with loads of attention and flawlessly chilled champagne.

Order the Ruinart Blanc de Blancs – the Chanel Nr 5 of champagne – a classic, creamy and opulent chardonnay served by the glass. Of course, there are more brands on the list and the bar also offers light snacks as well as a decent cocktail selection if your company is not into champagne. This is also the place to meet the city's dazzling



fashion crowd, since the *Ritz* and *Plaza*Athénée are still under reconstruction and will remain so for quite some time.

Buddha Bar Hotel Paris, 4 rue d'Anjou

① www.buddhabarhotelparis.com



Bar 228

Since the *Plaza Athénée* just closed for reconstruction, Paris has temporarily lost one fine champagne drinking place. Luckily, we have the *Plaza's* sister hotel *Le Meurice*, which offers one of the most exquisite hotel bar experiences that you can possibly have, including impeccable service by almost invisible personnel. This bar once served as a library, but since Philippe Starck stepped in, it has become a completely new place,

while retaining its sophisticated dark wood and tobacco-coloured leather chairs, a beautiful handpainted evening sky on the ceiling and loads of gilt. You would not expect anything less from a favourite hangout of Salvador Dalí. who used to be a regular guest here. Glamorous and charismatic like a British gentleman,

the place captures your attention and senses without asking permission, but you don't mind anyway. In a locale like this, you should choose a timeless classic like a *Krug* or *Bollinger*, although the list of champagnes is quite refined and you might also be enchanted by a rare and fascinating gem. The same refers to the dress code – classy will get you anywhere!

Hotel Le Meurice, 228 rue de Rivoli

① www.dorchestercollection.com



SANDIS OZOLINŠ NO LONGER USES HIS TELEVISION AS A 'LULLABY'

Ice hockey player Sandis Ozoliņš admits that sometimes his TV has acted as an obligatory night-time 'lullaby' without which he could not get to sleep. However, since he has equipped his living room with the latest Samsung UHD TV, which stands out with its unprecedented image quality, sleep is the last thing on his mind when watching TV.

"When choosing TVs, quality and screen size have always been important for me in order to get the most enjoyment out of watching films and programmes at home. When travelling to away games, the first thing I do when I get to my hotel room is turn on the TV. Often, the screen is so small and so far away that the picture is almost impossible to make out, whereas on an UHD TV, it's like you are holding the picture in the palm of your hand," reveals Sandis.

HE FINALLY TAMES SMART TV

To date, the ice hockey player has owned several Smart TVs, but he had never gotten beyond channel switching and sound tuning because he had never familiarised himself with all of the TV functions. Ozoliņš discovered how to easily and practically use the menu and diverse features of Smart TVs through learning more about his new Samsung UHD TV.

"Voice and gesture control are not all that important to me, but I do sometimes play around with these features. But I was amazed that a computer keyboard can be connected to the TV! Now, watching *Youtube* videos is so much more convenient, and picture quality is definitely better than on the computer," says Sandis with a smile. In the sportsman's view, the enhanced remote control with touch-pad is also an excellent innovation. The TV set's restrained and elegant design also appeals to Ozolinš.

REDISCOVERING HIS FAVOURITE FILMS

The ice hockey player admits that he does not watch programmes and films that glorify violence or create a gloomy mood. He favours programmes about science and nature as well as entertaining comedies or truly classic films.

"As reluctant as I was, to the point of almost having to force myself to take the children to the cinema to watch Avatar, I was thrilled and inspired at having watched it. I was astounded by the animation, storyline and quality. Until now, I thought that such emotional depth could only be enjoyed at the cinema, but since getting the UHD TV, I am

considering watching all of my favourite films again, so that I can enjoy them at a higher quality," says the sportsman.

HE DOES NOT FEAR RAPID

TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS

Just as on the ice hockey rink, where Sandis is experienced and does not skate after every puck, but plans a number of moves ahead, so does he make rational decisions in daily life. The ice hockey player is well aware that in this day and age, modern technology becomes rapidly outdated, but that doesn't mean that he has to buy a new TV every year. That is why Sandis was pleasantly surprised by the Samsung Future Proof solution, which enables the TV's 'brain' to be updated every year. He also highly rates the little black box, called One Connect, which makes it easy to connect other devices to the TV with just a single cable, thus removing annoying cable tangles forever. "I think that this TV will be a pleasant discovery for anyone who values good quality and ease of use, both for leisure and work needs".





Le Mathis Bar

As scary as Champs-Élysées shopping might sound in December, there are some very nice stores to hit as well as plenty of good restaurants and bars where you can rest after a frenzied shopping experience. One place to check out *après dîner* is the most private hangout of Paris – *Le Mathis Bar*.

Opened by Gérald Nanty in 1996 with the help of Françoise Sagan, *Le Mathis* has always been the preferred choice of Paris' intellectual élite. A discreet door hides a sultry and voluptuous boudoir-type interior of red velvet sofas and dimmed lights. If you drop in at around 8 PM, the place looks dead empty and boring, but just a couple of hours later it becomes the hottest spot in town, with sparkling drinks and an exuberant Parisian vibe.

This is the perfect place for those who want to run into celebrities in a surprisingly convivial atmosphere. *Le Mathis* embodies Parisian cool and is a favourite place of seriously famous people from both the local and international fashion and movie scenes. You could spot Leonardo DiCaprio or French actress Isabelle Adjani chilling in the lofty and intimate sofas. This is also the place where Madonna was once famously left on the other side of the entrance. Champs-Elysées, 3 rue de Ponthieu

Le Bar

A definitive Paris classic that enthrals the visitor right from the start. Step into the breathtaking, white orchid-filled lobby to the distant sound of *The Girl from Ipanema* on a piano from a further corner of the hall. The *George V* conveys a timeless magic, just like in the movie *Casablanca*, providing you and your significant other with an unforgettable moment that seems to last forever. Plush and abundant red velvet sofas, Old World charm and a slight touch of Belle Époque glamour make this place cosy and comfortable.

However, once you get your hands on the solid book-sized wine list, you're in trouble. There are quite a few things besides champagne that are tempting enough to order. Why not have a bottle of decent burgundy after you are done with your champagne? Perhaps this voluminous wine "bible" is part of the reason for *Le Bar's* staying power. The menu of "snacks" that are not really snacks looks good and the food tastes even better, especially after a proper apéritif. A ladies' favourite is *Laurent Perrier Rosé* by the glass. What can possibly go wrong here? Four Seasons Hotel George V, 31 avenue George V









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OUTLOOK / TRAVEL

Restaurant Le Georges

Not to fear that this restaurant is located in the most tourist-crowded place after the Eiffel Tower. The crowd here is more artistic and therefore easier to handle, and you will only need to handle it for the short time that it takes you to ascend the imposing escalator of the Pompidou Centre's outer wall. *Le Georges* boasts a spectacular view of Paris and its glorious monuments, along with a huge terrace that is the best after-hours place in the summer and even late fall, thanks to the outdoor heaters. If you wish to look up at the stars, then you should definitely catch a moment outside.

The interior is as avant-garde as the building in which it is located, and the pure steel furniture goes well with the sensuous red roses on each table at any time of the year. Enjoy the architecture of Dominique Jakob and Brendan MacFarlane, and don't forget that there's a world-class art collection right beneath your feet. *Le Georges* is like an enduring lovers' classic – couples keep coming back again and again. It's a place you can never forget because the aftertaste lingers on for years to come. Champagne consumption is an obvious must.

Centre Georges Pompidou, 19 rue Beaubourg

① www.beaumarly.com



For your address book

For the most authentic champagne experience that also turns out to be educational, head to the Wine Museum of Paris, a place that is surprisingly interesting even for wine professionals. The premises' 14th-century walls were once used as cellars by the abbey that stood above them when the area, Passy, was covered in vineyards. During the mid-1900s, they served as cellars for the Eiffel Tower. If you are interested in learning something new, then take one of the tours (a guided tour of the museum includes one exhibit devoted entirely to *la méthode champenoise*); if not, then just have a look around and sign up for a tasting and lunch. This is possible even if you just stop by. www.museeduvinparis.com



CARS IN ASSOCIATION WITH CAR BUYER'S GUIDE WHATCARLY | PHOTOS BY GATIS ROZENFELDS, F64



infotainment controller.

F Sport cars add 19-inch alloys, a deeper front bumper, swivelling LED headlights and sportier chassis settings, including a lateral damper system that improves stability.

What's it like to drive?

Move off gently and the *RX450h* is in full electric mode. When you ask for more surge, the petrol engine kicks in seamlessly, with the electric motor helping out at higher speeds, too. Progress is generally hushed, although under hard acceleration the standard CVT auto gearbox holds the engine at high revs, making it sound a bit strained.

The new Sport mode sharpens the throttle and steering responses, making the stability and traction control systems less intrusive. The RX feels more taut in this mode, but there's still some body roll and the steering feels a little bit vague.

The trick dampers are designed to improve ride comfort by absorbing small vibrations. While they mostly do a pretty good job, bigger bumps and broken



CARS

Lexus' F Sport specification takes on BMW's M Sport and Audi's S-line

Driven: the Lexus RX450h F Sport

The Lexus RX450h F Sport is the sporty, attention-grabbing version of the company's recently updated hybrid SUV

The Lexus RX450h F Sport uses a 3.5-litre V6 petrol engine mated to an electric motor, which helps it accelerate from 0-100 km/h in 7.8 seconds. It also averages a claimed 6.3 litres/100km.

All new *RX450h* models get a 'spindle'-shaped front grille and redesigned tail-lights. Meanwhile, the interior features more equipment and an upgraded version of *Lexus*' Remote Touch









surfaces sometimes thud into the cabin. This is not much of a problem though, considering that the ride comfort is noticeably better than in a *BMW X5* with *M Sport* suspension and when there's little wind or road noise to disrupt the peace at speed.

What's it like inside?

The *RX450h* has a luxurious and well-built cabin, and it's easy to find a comfortable driving position because there's a huge range of electric adjustments. *F Sport* cars get leather seats and a handsome new steering wheel, as well as drilled aluminium pedals that continue the sporty theme.

The infotainment screen is large and easy to read. However, the mouse-like Remote Touch controller is still too fiddly to use on the move. There's plenty of headand legroom for front and rear passengers and the boot is large enough for most buyers' needs.

Should I buy one?

Sporty 4x4s may be something of a contradiction, but that hasn't stopped them from selling in increasingly large numbers to an increasingly image-conscious customer base. The *RX450h F Sport* is a good car – beautifully made and well-equipped, and it will be fairly cheap to run as well. Contrary to the *F Sport* moniker, it is not particularly sporty to drive, with other better examples in this category. However, it offers a real luxury feel and appearance that most of the buyers in this segment will highly appreciate. **BO**





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Stocking stuff

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Ostrich Pillow

Sleeping around

It might make you look ridiculous, but we think it's downright brilliant – a saviour of an accessory that makes it easy to catch some Zs while you're waiting for your flight. Slide your head into this gargantuan diving-bell-as-pillow and power nap anywhere you want, thanks to a breathing hole in front that keeps you alive and holes for your hands. Available in several colours and kids' sizes. Just make sure that the check-in staff knows you're a passenger and not an alien life form. EUR 80 | www.ostrichpillow.com





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OUTLOOK / GADGETS

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EUR 46 | www.alcosense.com





HoodiePillow

Hip nap

This ingenious invention is the perfect way to get a great night's sleep on your next flight, and it's rather less obtrusive than the *Ostrich*. Though it looks like a sweatsuit hoodie, just inflate the c-shaped collar and it morphs into a comfy travel pillow. The drawstrings let you block out external light – to say nothing of the guy in the middle seat who wants to talk your ear off. Plus, who doesn't look cool in a hoodie?

EUR 15 | www.hoodiepillow.com



Since opening in 2010, the Galleria Riga has found its place in the hearts of Riga's residents and visitors as a convenient shopping centre, which also happens to provide opportunities for relaxation and entertainment





GALLERIA RIGA shopping centre Dzirnavu iela 67 ntrances from Dzirnavu iela 67 and Blaumana iela 10 (between rīvības bulvāris and Tērbatas iela) nformation centre Tel. (+371) 67307000 info@galleriariga.lv

The Galleria Riga is located in a business area in the centre of Riga. A wide variety of shops line the seven storeys of the building, providing visitors with a broad selection of items. Here you'll find necessities for both daily life and celebrations.

At the Galleria Riga you can purchase items by such famous labels as iBLUES, MAX&Co, Tommy Hilfiger, Guess, Stefanel, women'secret, Cortefiel, Springfield, Karen Millen, Oasis, Parfois, Ecco, Mango, Marella, Gino Rossi, Suitsupply, Baltman, Diesel, Pierre Cardin and many more.

To better serve its customers, the shopping centre has a built-in parking garage (free parking for two hours on Sundays) and special stands for bicycles. Guests have use of free Wi-Fi and can take full advantage of Global Blue tax-free benefits. Those who are short on time, or who would rather place their trust in a professional, can shop with an English-speaking personal stylist who will help you find the most appropriate outfits, taking into account your style and needs as well as the trends of the season.

Other useful services at the Galleria Riga include a post office, dry-cleaning, currency exchange and beauty salons. A favourite spot for guests to stop for a moment's rest is the centre's fountain, which offers a great view of the building's elegant architecture. BO



Free stylist's services

A private stylist may sound like an unattainable dream, but now the Galleria Riga shopping centre is offering this service completely free of charge!

Besides working with you to create a confident image and select a new wardrobe, personal stylist Anita Altmane will also save you lots of time and help you to find your way among the wide range of clothing and accessories in the shopping centre.

At the Galleria Riga, you'll find both low-priced mass-market products and world brands of the highest class. Anita will ensure that you buy smart and avoid getting confused during sales, helping you to find stylish items that suit you personally and that are a great long-term investment.

The art of looking resplendent is now available to everybody. Thanks to Anita, you no longer have to be rich or famous to look great!

You can converse with the stylist in Latvian, English or Russian.

The style consultations take place in a cosy atmosphere in Anita's personal reception room on the 6th floor of the Galleria Riga. Make an appointment by telephone at (+371) 27543435.





If a woman was to write a letter to Santa Claus, then it would probably be very short and consist of one single word: spa. Baltic Outlook has compiled a dream gift list together with Taka Spa and the British skincare brand Elemis, Taka Spa has earned many international acknowledgments, such as getting included in the Taschen and New York Times travel guide 36 Hours: 125 Weekends in Europe. Therefore, even if you have only 36 hours to spend in Riga, a visit to Taka Spa is well worth the trip and will not leave you disappointed.

Gift list for those worth spoiling





1/ Honey massage

This new *Taka Spa* massage is a perfect gift, and nobody deserves it more than you do. After spending an hour-and-a-half enveloped in the fragrant aroma of honey, you will not only have soft and tender skin but will also feel wonderful. Honey has been used for thousands of years as a beauty treatment due to its beneficial properties - it contains many vitamins and minerals, of which the skin takes only as much as it needs. The natural honey used in this massage treatment has been gathered near Vecpiebalga in central Latvia. It is applied onto the skin with a special technique and then massaged all along the body. Honey works wonders at warming the muscles and at loosening up such problem areas as the neck and shoulders.

2/ Taka Spa head massage

This will be the perfect massage for those who suffer from tension and stress, as it brings forth peace, equilibrium and a burst of energy. The pleasant and relaxing treatment focuses on the scalp, neck, face, shoulders and back, using the appropriate oil for your specific needs. When asked how they feel after this procedure, Taka Spa's clients often mention that it helps to "clear away the cobwebs" and to free the mind of unwanted thoughts and emotions.

3/ Frangipani Secrets -**Exotic Bodycare**

This kit contains frangipani monoi shower cream and body oil, which will render your skin soft and silky. Elemis is also offering a wide array of other gift sets for spoiling your loved ones this Christmas, including a new kit for men, The Adventurer. As an added plus, the purchase of Elemis product kits can lead to savings of up to 40 percent off regular retail prices.

4/ Scent of Spa Candle

Containing essential oils of cinnamon, orange and vanilla, this aromatic bouquet of scents is packed into a candle that burns for 40 hours but needs to be lit for no more than three hours a day to make your room smell wonderful.

5/ Mask before the ball

Elemis' Fruit Active Rejuvenating Mask contains strawberries, kiwis, white clay, macadamia oil and shea butter - a magical mixture that makes the face blossom in an instant. A ten-minute treatment cleanses and fortifies the skin, renewing its natural, vibrant shine.

6/ Gift vouchers

Provide an unforgettable spa experience to your friends and family members with Taka Spa gift vouchers, which are available in various sums to suit all budgets. The staff at Taka Spa will be glad to help you choose the best spa ritual for each of those whom you wish









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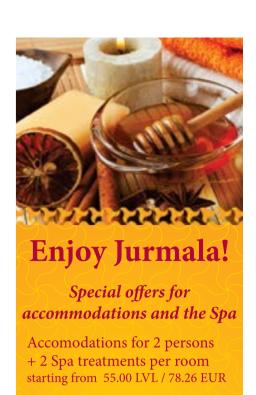
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OUTLOOK / PROMO PUBLICITY PHOTO



Breathtaking Sigulda

Sigulda Sports and Active Leisure Centre Puķu iela 4, Sigulda Hours: Mon.-Sun. 10:00-21:00 i www.tourism.sigulda.lv

Sigulda Tourist Information Centre Itinerary planning, tourist information, hotel reservations and excursions: Ausekla iela 6, Sigulda (+371) 67971335 i www.tourism.sigulda.lv



FISCHERA

Less than an hour's drive from Riga, Sigulda is one of Latvia's most beautiful cities and serves as a popular downhill skiing destination during the winter months. Located in the Gauja River Valley, Sigulda also offers adrenaline junkies the opportunity to ride down its luge and bobsleigh track at speeds that can reach 120 km/h.

This year, Sigulda opened the only cooled cross-country ski track in Eastern Europe to begin operations already starting from the month of November. The unique track boasts top-notch facilities, including a fully lit 1.25-km-long frozen section. Furthermore, it has been built in accordance with the high standards of the International Ski Federation and has already

begun to host a number of notable crosscountry ski races for the winter season.

Anyone wishing to try out the new track will be able to rent Fischer ski equipment or get their own skis sharpened and waxed at the Sigulda Sports and Active Leisure Centre, followed by the opportunity to unwind in a Latvian sauna after an exciting session of skiing. Experienced crosscountry ski instructors are also on hand to teach skiers who are just beginning to learn the ropes.

Any trip to Sigulda will be made all the more pleasant by the wide range of restaurants, cafés, hotels and cosy guest houses that beckon in the city and its surroundings. In short, Sigulda is an ideal destination for an active and unforgettable day or weekend trip. BO































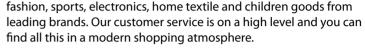






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OUTLOOK / PROMO / DINING

OUTLOOK / PROMO / DINING



The journey of a gourmet

Food connoisseurs should always reserve time for a meal at one of Riga's top gourmet restaurants and discover the sheer pleasure of premium groceries offered by the city's best gourmet shop

GASTRONOME RESTAURANT

"The best seafood restaurant in Riga" is an evaluation that Gastronome has received more than once. The restaurant is located in the very centre of the city and is popular with the local business elite, as well as Riga's foodies. Gastronome's original interior design and comfortable zoning of space make it perfect for private or formal meetings, as well as banquets of up to 20 people. The restaurant's expert waiters provide for a pleasantly relaxed atmosphere, maintaining the right balance between giving courteous attention and letting everyone feel undisturbed

Gastronome aims high, with a tremendously wide variety of oysters and other treats from the sea. The restaurant is owned by a company that has been a leading supplier in the Baltics of seafood and other delicacies for 20 years. It guarantees the variety and freshness of all products and gives the restaurant's chef free reign to create fabulous and tasty culinary improvisations. If you are in a mood for true lobster, for example, then Gastronome is the place to visit, as you can select your live lobster straight from the restaurant's aguarium for further processing by the chef and his skilled staff. The menu and the wine card is impressively broad and changed on



a regular basis according to the novelties of the season. The chef also knows how to bring out the best features of each component in the dishes through a masterful and harmonious combination of different products. Try, for example, the variety of carpaccios and see for yourself!

Live music is often a pleasant accompaniment to a meal and therefore themed events with tasteful live music are held at the *Gastronome* restaurant every month. And if you need a wonderful break from your daily routine, then remember that each business day from 12:00 to 16:00, *Gastronome* offers a Business Lunch with a menu that is updated on a regular basis.

Opening hours: Mon.–Sat. 12:00–23:00, Sun. 12:00–22:00

Address: Brīvības iela 31

Phone number for reservations: (+371) 67152080

GASTRONOME SEAFOOD BAR

This is really one of the most stylish places for social gatherings in the very centre of the city. Friendly service and a magnificent interior create a comfortable and cosy ambience. As a result, the bar is popular both as a place for formal business dinners and as a pre-party location for youths to gather before they go to nightclubs.

The Gastronome seafood bar differs from other bars in the city, focusing on sophisticated seafood snacks with a very attractive price and a rich selection of wines (about 400 different names). Tartare with shrimps or salmon, fried Canadian lobster with tomato salsa, Spanish-style octopus and other exclusive

snacks are always there for you to choose, as well as 10 different sorts of oysters – from the royal Tsarskaya to the famous Belon and Creuses. Even during the off-season, when enjoying this delicacy used to be a rare occasion, *Gastronome* customers can now allow themselves the special treat of some specific oyster delights.

This is a place where time flies, conversations flow and the mood invariably improves.

Opening hours: Mon.–Sat. 12:00–23:00, Sun. 12:00–22:00

Address: Brīvības iela 31

Phone number for reservations: (+371) 67152080



GASTRONOME GOURMET SHOP

The Gastronome gourmet shop is run by professionals who are passionate about showing what they can do. They select the highest quality ingredients, an objective set by Gastronome right from the start. The deli store offers premium groceries and dishes made by the best producers, ranging from the world's leading companies to the smallest local farms that have been developing their unique and tasty foods for decades. Gastronome is especially proud of its environmentally friendly dairy products that come from the best Latvian farms.

Are you thinking delicious thoughts yet? Gastronome's gourmet shop assistants know a great deal about the amazing world of delicious food. Why is the smell of that white chocolate-covered truffle so tempting? What is the true colour and taste of an apricot that has not been chemically processed? Would you like to try a Scottish wild salmon cooked in Scotch whisky? The Gastronome gourmet shop assistants will



help you to pick the right sort of cheese out of more than 200 possible choices and will advise you on the most suitable wine from more than 400 varieties!

If you work long hours and are planning a candlelight dinner at home, then *Gastronome* can help you to arrange the culinary details. In addition, *Gastronome* has developed a business partnership programme, under which it offers special menus for business lunches and dinners, as well as deliveries of fresh products, cooked

meals and pastries. The gourmet shop also services corporate events, organizes themed suppers and holds educational workshops featuring *Gastronome's* chefs and sommeliers.

When you visit the *Gastronome* gourmet shop, take a look at the beautiful gift baskets with delicacies that can be a great present for your employees and partners. You can also order gift cards for use at *Gastronome's* stores, bars and restaurants, as well as privilege cards for your employees, clients and partners. For your convenience, *Gastronome* offers the option to pay through direct transfer or deferred payment.

The Gastronome gourmet shop is like a trap, but a pleasurable one, with a stylish and cosy cafeteria waiting for you. Harmoniously fused with the Gastronome delicatessen, it is a great place to have breakfast or enjoy a relaxed conversation, whether you are taking a lunch break or spending some quality leisure time on a holiday. You can have a tasty French ice cream or natural fruit sorbet with classic and exotic flavours, various kinds of desserts, milkshakes and soft drinks.

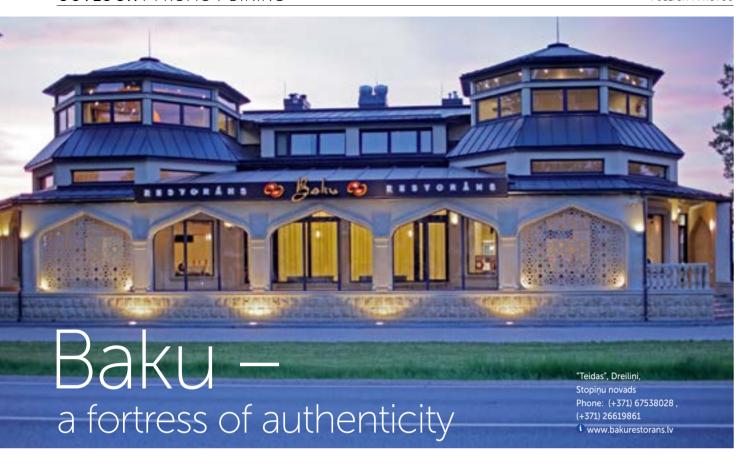
It is impossible to ignore the *Gastronome* pastry shop, which has been recognized as one of the best in the city and which serves the unique Italian *Chiaroscuro* coffee from Florence (20 varieties), as well as more than 100 various kinds of tea. Its pastry masters bake more than 200 different kinds of pastries: pies and cakes, biscuits, cupcakes and Swiss rolls, macaroons and fruits with chocolate icing, marmalade and marzipan, sweet and savoury French croissants, traditional French tarts and authentic Italian desserts that will send a sweet tooth into raptures of delight!

Treat yourself and pay a visit to *Gastronome* – right next to the *Radisson Blu Hotel Latvija* and a fabulous place for great food, drinks and celebrations.

Opening hours: Mon.–Sat. 08:30–21:00, Sun. 10:00–19:00 Address: Brīvības iela 31 Phone number: (+371) 67152050

120 / AIRBALTIC.COM

BALTIC OUTLOOK / DECEMBER 2013 / 121



This spacious restaurant does not bear the name of the vibrant capital of Azerbaijan, the city of winds, for nothing – it is the largest restaurant in Latvia to offer authentic Azerbaijani cuisine. According to the owners, everything about the establishment was thought out to the tiniest detail, so as to give those who are unfamiliar with Azeri culture a comprehensive and unforgettable experience, while making those who seek a

familiar meal feel truly at home.

Situated in Dreilini, a short drive away from the Riga city centre, *Baku* stands alone and kinglike in its quiet surroundings. The stately edifice was planned and built for three years, in accordance with the strict specifications of the enthusiastic men behind it. Grandiose but tasteful and elegant yet simple, the premises provide a memorable backdrop to a wonderful dining experience that visitors will certainly want to repeat.

While authenticity may bring to mind the image of crammed eateries, *Baku* is the complete opposite – genuineness here goes together with scope and grandeur. The restaurant's two storeys host a number of smartly designed areas that can receive

up to 150 guests. The large and brightly lit main hall on the ground floor stands next to a smaller and more intimate fireplace room, which seats 30 people, while a ceremonious VIP hall on the second floor provides the



SITUATED IN DREILIŅI, A SHORT DRIVE AWAY FROM THE RIGA CITY CENTRE, *BAKU* STANDSALONE AND KINGLIKE

perfect space for meetings and other occasions that require more privacy. *Baku's* large terrace is a great place to dine during the warmer months, as are its balconies,

which are appended to separate dining rooms. A convenient and spacious car park is right beside the premises.

Still, nothing speaks louder about Azerbaijani traditions and customs than the country's distinctive cuisine, which is appreciated the world over. Having tasted a thoughtfully prepared dish by a knowledgeable Azerbaijani head chef, you will know exactly why.

Baku offers a wide selection of one of the most traditional Azerbaijani dishes – plov, which consists of rice, fried meat, dried fruits, eggs or fish and aromatic herbs. Try the shah plov, with chestnuts and lamb, or the agdasha plov, in which apricots and raisins complement chicken and home-made curdled milk.

Another signature dish is sadj, a traditional dish served in a special flat pan of the same name. It consists of grilled meat covered in eggplant, potatoes, chilli and many other types of spiced vegetables. And, of course, Azerbaijani cuisine cannot be imagined without a proper kebab, including the legendary chicken lyulya kebab, with onions and lamb's tail fat, or the kebab made of grilled quail. BO

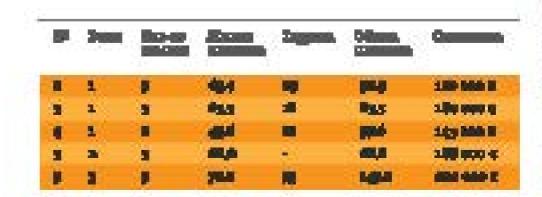


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Splendor of Onegin



Dzirnavu iela 57, Riga LV-1010 Phone: (+371) 67332599 E-mail: booking@onegin.lv

• www.onegin.lv Opening hours: daily from 12:00-02:00 (12 PM-2AM) When you arrive at the stately building that houses the restaurant-club *Onegin* and climb the broad stairway laid out with a red carpet, you might feel like you're paying a visit to Jay Gatsby himself; that is, until you reach the bar and main restaurant area at the top of the stairs. Then you are instantly transported to another era – a hundred years back from the time when the decadent fictional American was throwing his grand parties in 1922. It is easy to imagine oneself as a refined Saint Petersburg dandy of Eugene Onegin's kind.

An establishment like *Onegin* would have played the role of a social hub in the early 1800s, just as the current restaurant is doing today. It is a home base for socialite types whose days are

busy, whose evenings are calm and whose nights are full of splendour. *Onegin* offers a wide range of possibilities for going out, including a restaurant run by two young and ambitious sous-chefs, a cocktail bar with tasty drinks prepared by expert barmen, a cigar room and an elegantly designed VIP lounge for close-knit groups of friends or business partners. Adding to all this is a recently opened dance club area, where clients can enjoy themselves and celebrate with flair even after midnight.

The restaurant-club *Onegin* has a splendid interior, designed in accordance with the finest classical Russian traditions. While the tasteful gold-embroidered adornments and brocade drapes won't go unnoticed, the surroundings

don't feel pretentious at all, befitting the overall mood of calm and contentedness, and providing the perfect background for your thoughts and friendly conversations.

Alexander Pushkin, the author of the famous novel Eugene Onegin, after which this Riga establishment is named, once said that people are shaped by art, literature and cultural experiences. The latter would certainly include the enjoyment of the finest food and drink, good music and the opportunity to spend time with like-minded souls in splendid surroundings. Onegin provides a marvellous environment for practically all occasions, be it a business lunch (with two dishes on offer for only 4.57 LVL), a hearty dinner, light snacks and cocktails at the bar or just a quick coffee if you fancy taking a short break during your busy day. And of course, if a special occasion calls for Costa Rican cigars coupled with the best brandy, or maybe just a glass of refreshing beer while cheering your favourite sports team, then the cigar room at Onegin is the place to be. Onegin offers exclusive Russian cuisine with a French touch, harking back to the era when the finest restaurants in Saint Petersburg kept up with the latest innovations on the Paris dining scene. The two sous-chefs, Aleksandrs Cvetanovičs and Arnis Ansons, form a tandem, in a carefully considered decision to keep matters "fresh" and maximise the standards for self-perfection. While one of them takes most of the organisational matters in his hands, the other manages the busy work in the kitchen.

The chefs experiment with traditional and well-known Russian dishes, upgrading them in a truly creative fashion and with the assistance of the latest cooking technologies. The result is what could be called "modern Russian cuisine". Their take on the legendary Russian cabbage rolls involves the use of Romain leaves instead of cabbage to wrap the wine-sautéed minced rabbit, which in turn has replaced the traditional ground beef. The thick and meaty sauce of the traditional beef stroganoff is served with lightly salted cucumbers, onions and mashed potatoes, but in *Onegin's* kitchen the mash is replaced by a succulent potato pancake.

A Russian kitchen would not be worthy of its name if it did not offer *pelmeni*, or Russian dumplings, with various types of filling wrapped in thin, unleavened dough. At *Onegin* you will find *pelmeni* with venison and Kamchatka crab, among several other appetizing options. However, the obligatory starter of a proper meal in a Russian restaurant is soup, as you will discover once you've acquainted yourself with the selection of soups on offer, including sorrel soup with duck meat and, unsurprisingly, borsch.





While sous-chefs Cvetanovičs and Ansons like to experiment in the kitchen, they also adhere to traditional values, in accordance with the saying that "the best recipes go back the longest way", successfully mixing established practices with modern techniques and their own imaginations.

Onegin is no ordinary place, and where another establishment might fall short while trying to cover too much ground, Onegin manages with natural elegance, following customer demand and providing an ideal space for spending the highest quality free time – in its own unique style and manner.

On December 31, the restaurant will be hosting an exciting New Year's Eve party – 19th-century Russian style – with gypsies, fortune-telling, games and many other fun-filled events. **BO**



SMILGA'S

NEW DISHES

WILL

MAKE FOR

WONDERFUL

MEALS TO

MARK OFF

THE WINTER

FESTIVITIES

As the head

chef of the 1221 restaurant in Latvia's capital city, Roberts Smilga never seems to rest. This time, new wintery flavours are brewing in his near-magical kitchen. Always mindful of the nuances in his splendid dishes, the experienced man's attentive eye has also caught sight of a largely empty niche on the Riga dining scene.

"I do not yet see restaurants focusing on the king of the season – wild game", says Smilga. He has thus decided to turn most of his attention to this atypical food – at least for the next few months – pleasing both his regular clients and visitors to the capital.

Smilga expects game to be one of the most desired dishes for

Christmas and
New Year's meals
this year and has
already started
experimenting.
Knowing how
difficult it can
be to obtain top
quality game, he is
looking into both
land animals and
birds, expecting
to add wild boar

birds, expecting
to add wild boar
and doe as well as partridge
and black grouse to the beaver
and deer already on his menu.
A shipment of black grouse
is currently on its way to Riga
from France.

The chef faces a dilemma when introducing new dishes

into his menu. He says that even though he is eager to try out new ideas, he still has to remember his long-standing clients, each with their own favourite dish. "At the same time, I have the feeling that they trust me," Smilga says. "I think my customers would also enjoy taking part in my experimental

journeys. Some items on the menu definitely have to stay, but the rest can be played with!"

Asked about the direction where he is going with wild game, Smilga says that even

though he no longer reads for inspiration and relies on his senses when experimenting in the kitchen, there are rules about game that should not be breached. "All game goes well with sweet flavours," says Smilga. "It would make the perfect match with practically any fruit or berries, and I am not planning to interfere with this long-standing truth!" he laughs.

Still, the new dishes will not lack Smilga's special signature details, making for surprising and wonderful meals to mark the winter festivities. Remember to book a table for your Christmas or New Year's dinner at 1221 well in advance! BO



Steak and fish restaurant



BLUE COW Meistaru iela 21, Līvu laukums, Riga (+371) **67223307**





restaurant

FISHERMAN'S SON

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www.zvejniekadels.lv



FOOD&DRINK

TEXT BY AGRA LIEGE PHOTOS BY GATIS GIERTS AND EMILS DESJATNIKOVS, F64

Restaurants, bars and cafés

Fly to Riga with airBaltic €109 ONE

International S.V., Riga

This restaurant is situated at the beginning of Hospitālu iela, a five-minute tram ride from the city centre. It has successfully navigated between luxury and complete accessibility, offering an intimate atmosphere with partially segregated tables within spacious premises that give off a friendly, cheerful vibe. The interior is varied and dominated by black and white with quirky, edgy details, skilfully moulding an ascetic and non-intrusive layout with unconventional decorations and frescos.

The main attraction, however, is the manner in which this restaurant serves its thoughtful selection of foods from different cuisines. Although not specifically focusing on Greek and Spanish recipes, the men behind International S.V. – owner Viktors Ravdive and head chef Andrejs Šmačenko – have made their Mediterrranean-style dishes nothing short of

The traditional Greek mezzes and Spanish tapas, with their savoury pastes and dips, are simply divine. The smallish portions offer diners the chance to taste a larger variety of delicious foods that you would be hard-pressed to manage as mains, yet would be happy to nibble on. These can also be shared within a larger group of friends or family

Among the mouth-watering meaty dishes is the classic Beef Wellington (beef fillet, mushrooms and Parma ham served in small, flaky pastry rolls) and the popular lamb rump steak with goat cheese and garlic-rosemary sauce - both of British origin. One can also try the typically Russian beef fillet Stroganoff served with the obligatory mash.

The seafood dishes are wonderful as well. Take the slow-cooked salmon with avocado mash and yellow tomato ice cream or the Japanese king



crab tempura roll with mango-chilli sauce. All this and a lot more can be found at International S.V., a hop, skip and jump away from the Riga city centre.

Mon.-Sun. 12:00 – 24.00 Hospitālu iela 1. Riga Tel. (+371) 67491212 • www.internationalsv.lv



Portofino Ausekla iela 7, Riga, Phone (+371) 6713370 www.porto-fino.lv Portofino – the subtle frame for your perfect experience Portofino – it's gentry, stylish, luxurious. It's hospitality at its' finest, and Portofino's team, who are all ardent and non-compromising enthusiasts for service and food excellence, know the value of a loyal guest. Warm and welcoming, it is a place to return to, tomorrow or in a couple of years. It offers classical Italian cuisine, though thoughtfully adjusted to local dining customs, and is appreciated by those who know themselves to be true gourmets. Perfection is known to be in details, in the little things which come together to create the atmosphere, which at Portofino is so elusive that you are left to purely enjoy. This place is the subtle frame for your perfect experience.



Portofino – изысканное место яркого гастрономического приключения!

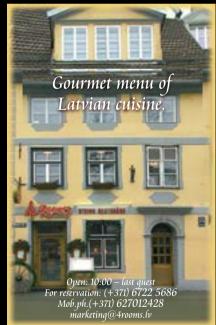
Portofino – красочный, изысканный ресторан – пример настоящего гостеприимства. Команда Portofino – мастера поварского искусства и обслуживания, знающие, насколько значимо доверие гостей. Это тот ресторан, в который возвращаются и на следующий день, и через продолжительное время. Portofino предлагает классическую итальянскую кухню, которая продуманно приспособлена к местным гастрономическим традициям, ее способны оценить настоящие гурманы. Истинное удовольствие кроется в деталях особой атмосферы, которая дарит возможность по-настоящему насладиться моментом.



Queens is a British pub and restaurant with a gorgeous Victorian atmosphere and delicious food. More than 18 draught beers to choose from, including local and imported brands, a wide range of steaks, burgers and other meat dishes.

Kaļķu iela 2, Riga (+371) 67800001 Antonijas iela 9, Riga (+371) 67331130 www.queens.lv





A first-rate Latvian restaurant with fine European cuisine. Banquet hall with a perfect view of Līvu Square on the 2nd floor. After your meal, enjoy a hookah in a relaxing atmosphere in one of the basement rooms.

Meistaru iela 23, (Līvu laukums), Riga (+371) 67225686



FOOD&DRINK



32. augusts, Mārupe

This light, bright and spacious establishment, which has already been dubbed the cultural centre of Mārupe since opening in September, does indeed live up to its name. Despite the fact that it is now late autumn, a joyful, summery feel is present in both the upbeat and colourful interior and in the beautiful series of paintings portraying summer flowers by artist Kristīne Luīze Avotiņa, not to mention the name of the establishment itself, 32.augusts (August 32nd). Situated in Mārupe on the outskirts of Riga, 32.augusts is well worth visiting, and not just when leaving the Latvian capital or driving back to it. The locals have rapidly come to favour the place, happy at no longer having to drive into the centre of Riga for gastronomic pleasures. Though elegant, the place is hardly stiff or austere and is especially welcoming towards families with children of any age. A nanny (several of them over the weekend) is always present to entertain the youngest ones in a special section designed for kids. The tasty pizzas, which many children have come to adore, are prepared in a real firewood stove and take only six minutes to bake.

32. augusts serves soups that are cooked on an open fire and pancakes baked on a stove in the dining area. Both the products and the cooking techniques used are fresh and innovative. Most of the menu's dishes are prepared with local produce, offering various types of local game and fish, which fully suit the season.

The restaurant also serves a business lunch daily and a popular weekend brunch, which is patronized by a large number of regular customers. The brunch is hearty and classical, including a large variety of egg dishes along with the likes of oysters and a naughty early afternoon class of prosecco.

Even more lies up the sleeve for grown-ups: on Friday and Saturday nights, a DJ plays funky tunes, allowing a pleasant and lazy afternoon to turn into an up-beat evening, with everyone celebrating their weekend to the fullest, almost as if it still was a carefree summer outside!

Mon.-Sun. 8:00 – 23:00 Sēļu iela 12, Mārupe Tel. (+371) 29327272

• www.facebook.com/32augusts



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- More at www.actusQ.lv

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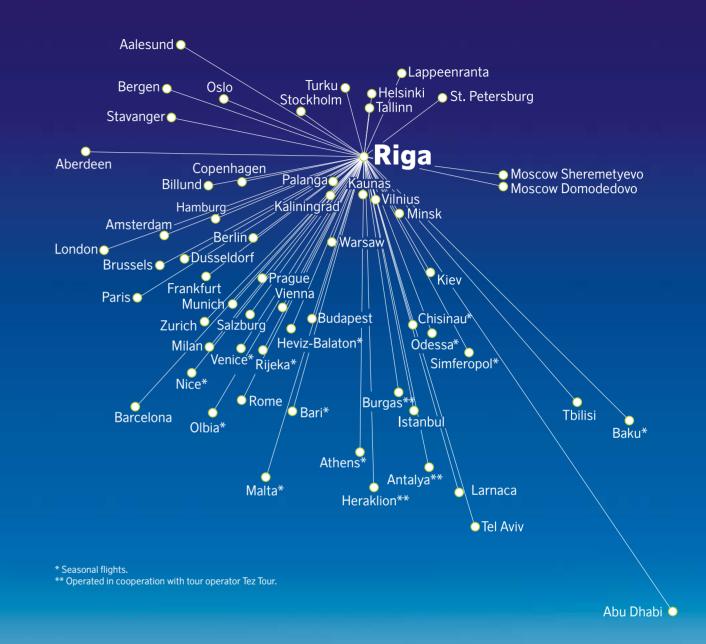




www.lido.lv

Ask at tourist information centres or hotels for directions to the nearest LIDO catering center. The largest ones are:

LIDO leisure centre – Krasta iela 76, reservations: +371 67 700 000 LIDO Spice – trade centre Spice, Lielirbes iela 29 **LIDO Airport** – Riga International Airport, departures area, 2nd floor



Welcome aboard air Baltic!

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2/ Rent a car with Sixt

Complete your trip and rent a car with our trusted partner, the leading car rental company Sixt. As a pre-Christmas gift, Sixt is offering a special deal: Get a discount of up to 15% in the Baltics or up to 10% off in other countries, if you book your rental car now and travel between January 15 and February 15. In addition, you will earn 500 BalticMiles Points per rental.

Now you can rent a car while booking your flight at www.airBaltic.com.

3/ New terminal at St. Petersburg's Pulkovo airport

If you are planning to travel to or from St. Petersburg's Pulkovo airport, then please take note that starting from December 7, all airBaltic flights will operate from the new Terminal 1. One can get there conveniently by taking city bus no. 39, a minibus taxi or a regular taxi.



1/ New route to dreamy Aberdeen 2/ Rent a car with Sixt 3/ New terminal at St. Petersburg's Pulkovo airport 4/ airBaltic and TezTour team up to give you a sun-filled vacation in Egypt 5/ Fly airBaltic to the best ski slopes 6/ Special Airport Express offer

IN BRIEF 1/ New route to dreamy Aberdeen

Discover the Scottish seaside city of Aberdeen, known as the oil capital of Europe and famous for its breathtaking views, impressive architecture and many more wonders to make your trip unforgettable. With mountains, forests, heaths and lochs, Aberdeen is a paradise for nature lovers, climbers, hikers, cyclists, fishermen and even winter sports enthusiasts.

Flights from Riga will operate four times per week, starting in April 2014.

4/ airBaltic and TezTour team up to give you a sun-filled vacation in Egypt

This winter, airBaltic is again linking up with leading tour operator TezTour and offering holidays to the Egyptian resorts of Sharm el-Sheikh. Flights will be operating throughout the winter on Sunday mornings to Sharm el-Sheikh.

For further details, contact TezTour at www.teztour.lv.



5/ Fly airBaltic to the best ski slopes

Oh, the joys of winter – the skiing season has now begun! airBaltic can bring you close to practically all of the best ski slopes in Europe. For example, the airline offers regular flights to Munich, Germany's getaway to the Alps. From there, you can easily reach a wide range of resorts. Daily flights to Vienna make all of Austria's best skiing slopes conveniently accessible. On the other side of the Alps, you can fly to Milan, which lies within striking distance of the mountain range's sunny southern slopes.

You can also choose charter flights to your preferred skiing spot with our partner tour operator, TezTour.

6/ Special Airport Express offer

Welcome to Riga! The airBaltic shuttle bus will take you straight to the city centre in no time and with no worries. Book Airport Express from December 16 to January 15 and pay only 3.50 EUR instead of 5 EUR for any ride that takes place before June 30.

You can buy Airport Express tickets when booking your flight.

airBaltic / BEHIND THE SCENES airBaltic / BEHIND THE SCENES



TEXT BY ILZE POLE
PHOTO BY GATIS GIERTS, F64

Christmas dreams

This isn't really a story about how to make your dreams come true. It is rather about how life can occasionally present you with the best gift of all, by helping you to realise what your dreams are and by giving you the means to fulfil your true calling.

Darja Domogatskaja (31) is a first officer on *Dash Q400 NG* aircraft, but initially she had never thought about flying as a profession. She started her career in sports as an accomplished athlete. She has been the rhythmic gymnastics champion of Lithuania several times, taking part in European and world championships, as well as other competitions. She was also a member of the NEBL dance group, which took part in the entertainment programme during the

basketball competitions of the summer Olympic Games in Athens in 2004. Later on, Darja and a friend became choreographers of the *Amber* dance group, but this happened after she had already become an airplane pilot at *airBaltic*.

"When I was at school, my dream was to have a job with the possibility of sleeping a bit longer, as I ended up spending 12 years waking up very early in the morning," Darja says. "After school, I went straight to training sessions that ended at about 11 PM and sometimes even lasted until midnight. Then I had to do my homework, sleep a bit, wake up the next morning and go back to school again. I was in a constant state of sleep deprivation and dreaming about sleeping. I can't say that things have changed a lot since then, as with my current job I sometimes have to get up at 3 in the morning." (Laughs.)

Darja is one of *airBaltic's* seven female pilots. After the photo session and interview for *Baltic Outlook*, we walked through the narrow, foggy streets of Old Riga, heading towards Riga Castle. That evening thousands of people were gathering there to light candles and place them by the castle's outer wall, as they do every November 11 to commemorate those who have fallen for Latvia's independence. Throughout the evening, I felt Darja's sensitivity and refinement, but most of all, her inner strength.

As Darja said herself during our interview: "Everybody thinks that I'm very sensitive, very feminine. At some point, they find out that I can also fly an airplane. Then come the oohs and the aahs! Now I am used to it."

"It's quite a change to switch from gymnastics to airplanes," I say. Darja laughs and explains that it was more like an accident. At the time when she had to pass her final exams in high school, Darja was taking part in a gymnastics world championship abroad. She passed the school exams later, but by that time it was too late to take the country's university enrolment exams for the upcoming fall. However, Darja's coach mentioned a good school for flight attendants. And so a new chapter in her life began, which led Darja step by step to another profession that has since become a part of her blood.

"I thought, 'OK, I'll spend a year there and after that I will try to enrol in a school that I really want to be in," Darja recalls. "So I started to study at that school and I really liked it! My studies went very well and later I graduated with distinction. One of the subjects that we had to learn about was aircraft and airport customer service, and the teacher noticed that I was very keen on studying it, even though it was such a hard topic. He told me that they would be happy to have a student like me at the Vilnius Aviation Institute and encouraged me to enrol there. I thought: why not? Becoming a flight dispatcher sounded quite good.

"As luck would have it, that year they didn't manage to assemble enough students for the flight dispatcher programme. There were only two of us and they transferred us to the pilot group. That's how I started taking aircraft pilot courses. My plan was to study in that group for a year and then continue with my intended flight dispatcher courses. But after spending a year there, I understood that I didn't want to leave. During my first flight with an instructor on a *Cesna*, I fell completely in love with flying!"

Darja trained to become a pilot for five years. "It took a long time and it was very serious business," she adds. Her first job was at *airBaltic* as a flight attendant, while continuing her studies at the Vilnius Aviation Institute. She remembers that her last day as a flight attendant was on February 14 and that already two days later, on the 16th, she started her career as a pilot, but it took more than two months before her first flight on a *Fokker 50* later in April. She had to finish a few courses, training for ditching, fire fighting and the most important – simulator training – and then aerodrome training. That was in 2008.

"My maiden flight was from Vilnius to Stockholm's Arlanda airport," Darja remembers. "The controls were in my hands for the entire duration of the flight. The instructor was a bit apprehensive, but I managed it well and was very happy after landing. It turns out that my hands are extremely sensitive from the training that I had as a gymnast. In rhythmic gymnastics, you have to do all kinds of intricate things with ropes, balls, hoops and ribbons. I can feel the controls of an airplane very well with my hands. Landing is the part of the flight that I enjoy the most."

It's hard to say why one falls in love with someone or something, be it one's future husband or future profession. "With regards to flying, I think that something clicked when I realised that I could do it. Everybody was so proud of me and still is – my parents, my husband. Now it's just a bit more complicated, as we have a little daughter, Sophie, who is only two years old. She is currently living with my husband in Vilnius, and every time I get some time off from work I go home to be with my family.

"I miss my daughter a lot, and sometimes it hurts so much when she doesn't call me mummy, but the name of her nanny instead. Nevertheless, Sophie has already said that she wants to be a pilot. Once she took my insignia, put them on her shoulders and told me that she's going to fly up into the sky like me. Every time she sees an airplane, she points at it and says: 'Look, mummy is flying!', even when I am standing next to her. 'I'm here, Sophie,' I say. 'No, mummy is there!', she points. Sophie has already been on a few flights and likes flying, she feels very comfortable in airplanes."

Darja's passion and devotion to flying is evident and amazes me. "It has become such a big part of me that I can't turn my back on it," she says. "I spent such a long time preparing for this job, even though it is very demanding and challenging. I can't imagine just giving it up. I must say that my sports background helps me a lot. The world of sports is very tough. I've always wanted to be the first and to go for it!"

No matter what, Darja makes sure to spend every Christmas with her family. As an Orthodox Christian, she'll be celebrating the holiday at the beginning of January. "For that reason, I have asked for maximum duty at Christmas in December. That will let my colleagues spend some time with their families. Then I'll have my holiday in January."

Darja notes that the Christmas season is a very special time. "Even the flights are different," she says. "There is a unique atmosphere. People smile more and strangers wish each other a merry Christmas. It's very nice. Everyone – the cabin crews, pilots and passengers – seems to be in a more uplifted frame of mind." **BO**



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airBaltic / MEALS airBaltic / TRAVELLING PHOTOS CORBIS/SCANPIX AND ALAMY

Onboard menu

Business Class

We aspire to provide individual service and an excellent dining experience on all airBaltic flights. Our Business Class menu features traditional and seasonal dishes, blending Latvian and international cuisine. **Business Class customers** enjoy a complimentary full meal tailored for the time of day when they are flying, together with carefully selected beverages.

Passengers with particular religious, health or dietary

preferences may order special meals up to 24 hours before departure.

As always during Winter Holidays we offer special menu with traditional winter celebration meals.

Economy Class

Economy Class passengers can choose from our airBaltic café menu, which offers hot meals. sandwiches, paninis, croissants and sweet snacks, as well as a broad selection of hot and cold drinks.



Order your meal before the flight

Festive winter holiday dishes can also be enjoyed in Economy Class, so if you want to make your flight experience even more exciting, then order a gourmet meal while book your flight ticket or any time later, up to 24 hours before departure, under the Manage my booking section at www.airbaltic.com.

Indulge yourself and your travel partners with customized meals by creating your own meal set at www.airbalticmeal.com. Choose from more than 70 dishes and a wide variety of drinks.



"Without new experiences, something inside of us sleeps. The sleeper must awaken." - Frank Herbert After a long winter slumber, nothing wakes you up better than a nice vacation. Here is a list of airBaltic's top three spring destinations for 2014.



Nice

There are 101 reasons for going to Nice, and those reasons have been bringing visitors to the city for hundreds of years. Nice is a place of incredible diversity. A holiday in this

jewel on the Riviera can be taken as a city break, a beach vacation, a family outing and an activity-filled event. It's a cultural voyage, a trip back in history and a shopper's paradise; it's every holiday that you can imagine, all rolled up in one destination.



Book your flight now to obtain the best possible price for your spring/summer vacation. Warning: travelling can be addictive!

Venice

Whether you've been to Venice twice or 20 times, there's always more to discover, but if you have never been there before, then now is the time to book your flight! Don't miss your chance to travel around the city in a romantic gondola while enjoying the one-and-only Venetian gelato (ice-cream). Wonder through the tiny streets and experience the inspiring aura of centuries past.



Aberdeen

Have you ever dreamt of playing golf? Or perhaps you're already a seasoned golfer? Either way, a visit to the place where golf originated is quite an adventure. Aberdeen is like a fairytale land, with more than 300 castles and museums to visit, along with whiskey tastings and other pastimes to keep you busy.

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airBaltic / BOOKING CLASSES airBaltic / BalticMiles

A class to suit your needs

Each passenger is unique and each has different demands. In order to help you better design a trip that suits your individual needs, we are offering five different ticket types on airBaltic flights. Compare the travel conditions and services offered and choose the class that suits you best.



	Basic	Economy Smart	Economy Elite	Business Smart	Business Elite
Travel date/time change	8	EUR 50 per direction		EUR 50 per direction	w.
Name change	EUR 35 per ticket	EUR 35 per ticket			
Cancellation with refund	0	EUR 100 per direction		EUR 100 per direction	
Advance seat reservation	from EUR 2.99	from EUR 2.99		.	
Hand baggage	✓ 1 piece up to 8 kg	✓ 1 piece up to 8 kg	✓ 1 piece up to 8 kg	✓ 2 pieces up to 8 kg each	✓ 2 pieces up to 8 kg each
Checked-in baggage	EUR 19.99 per piece per direction if purchased together with flight ticket at www.airbaltic.com	✓ 1 piece up to 20 kg	✓ 1 piece up to 20 kg	✓ 3 pieces, 30 kg total	✓ 3 pieces, 30 kg total
Sports equipment	EUR 29.99 per piece per direction if purchased at www.airbaltic.com	EUR 29.99 per piece per direction if purchased at www.airbaltic.com	EUR 29.99 per piece per direction if purchased at www.airbaltic.com	✓ 1 piece	✓ 1 piece
Airport check-in	EUR 10 at the Economy Class desk, EUR 14.99 at Business Class desk	EUR 10 at the Economy Class desk, EUR 14.99 at Business Class desk	✓ At the Economy Class desk EUR 14.99 at Business Class desk	At the Business Class desk	At the Business Class desk
Security Fast track	8	8	0		
Business Lounge	0	0	In Riga only for BalticMiles Executive card holders		Z
Meals and drinks	from EUR 9 for hot meal, preorder or buy on board	from EUR 9 for hot meal, preorder or buy on board	Economy Class menu	✓ Business Class menu	✓ Business Class menu
Seating	Economy cabin	Economy cabin	Economy cabin	Front cabin	Front cabin
Free seat next to you	from EUR 50	from EUR 50	from EUR 50		
BalticMiles Points earned from ticket purchase	1 Point for each EUR spent	5 Points for each EUR spent	5 Points for each EUR spent	10 Points for each EUR spent	10 Points for each EUR spent

✓ Available free of charge Not available

Ask the flight attendant for your BalticMiles card

and start collecting straight away!



Register your card online after the flight at register.balticmiles.com and get 50 bonus Points. Keep collecting Points for everyday things like shopping, eating out, travelling, and having fun and **spend** them on flights and other great rewards – it's that easy!

BalticMiles is the airBaltic frequent flyer program and the leading multipartner loyalty program in Northern and Eastern Europe.

Fly airBaltic and collect Points

- → 10 Points for each EUR spent on a **Business Class ticket**
- → **5 Points** for each EUR spent on an **Economy Class ticket**
- → 1 Point for each EUR spent on a Basic Class ticket

Claim Points later

If you have forgotten to show your card, or maybe didn't know that you've shopped at a BalticMiles partner, BalticMiles offers you the option to retroactively claim your Points – even get Points for flights you've flown up to 30 days before becoming a member! Just contact BalticMiles Member Service and we'll sort everything out.

Membership levels

- → Basic
- → Executive
- \rightarrow VIP

The more you fly, the greater the privileges, which include a free luggage allowance, no queues, reserved seats and much more to make travelling easier.

Collect Status Points and enjoy a whole new world of comfort and convenience!

Spend Points on airBaltic flights

- → Exchange your Points for **flights** from just 4200 Points
- → Upgrade your ticket to **Business** Class from just 8000 Points
- BalticMiles Member Service In Latvia: (+371) 6728 0280 In Estonia: (+372) 630 6660 In Lithuania: (+370) 7005 5665 info@balticmiles.com www.balticmiles.com

Applying and participating in the BalticMiles program is completely free of charge, and anyone from 2 years of age is welcome to become a BalticMiles member. A separate BalticMiles account and specially designed Young Pilot card will be created for children.

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Easy to collect

You can collect Points at over 270 BalticMiles partners at 30 000 places throughout the world. **New partners in December:**

Red Cab Taxi



The leading taxi service in Riga since 1948, Rīgas Taksometru parks, now also known as Red Cab, is fast and reliable, its fleet is specially selected to provide the most comfortable journeys, and all cars have free Wi-Fi.

5 Points for each EUR 1,42 / LVL 1 spent



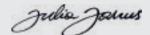
Julia Janus concept stores





Julia Janus is a fashion and lifestyle brand that offers clothing, accessories and a home line. The brand follows a relaxed yet confident Baltic aesthetic characterized by clean lines, pure forms and soft intensity.

1 Point for each LTL spent





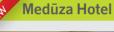


1 Point for each LTL spent on stays

or a townhouse









1 Point for each LTL spent on stays



Property management





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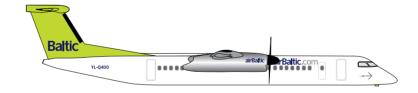
Boeing 737-300

Number of seats	142/144/146		
Max take-off weight	63 metric tons		
Max payload	14.2 metric tons		
Length	32.18 m		
Wing span	31.22 m		
Cruising speed	800 km/h		
Commercial range	3500 km		
Fuel consumption	3000 l/h		
Engine	CFM56-3C-1		



Boeing 737-500

Number of seats	120
Max take-off weight	58 metric tons
Max payload	13.5 metric tons
Length	29.79 m
Wing span	28.9 m
Cruising speed	800 km/h
Commercial range	3500 km
Fuel consumption	3000 l/h
Engine	CFM56-3

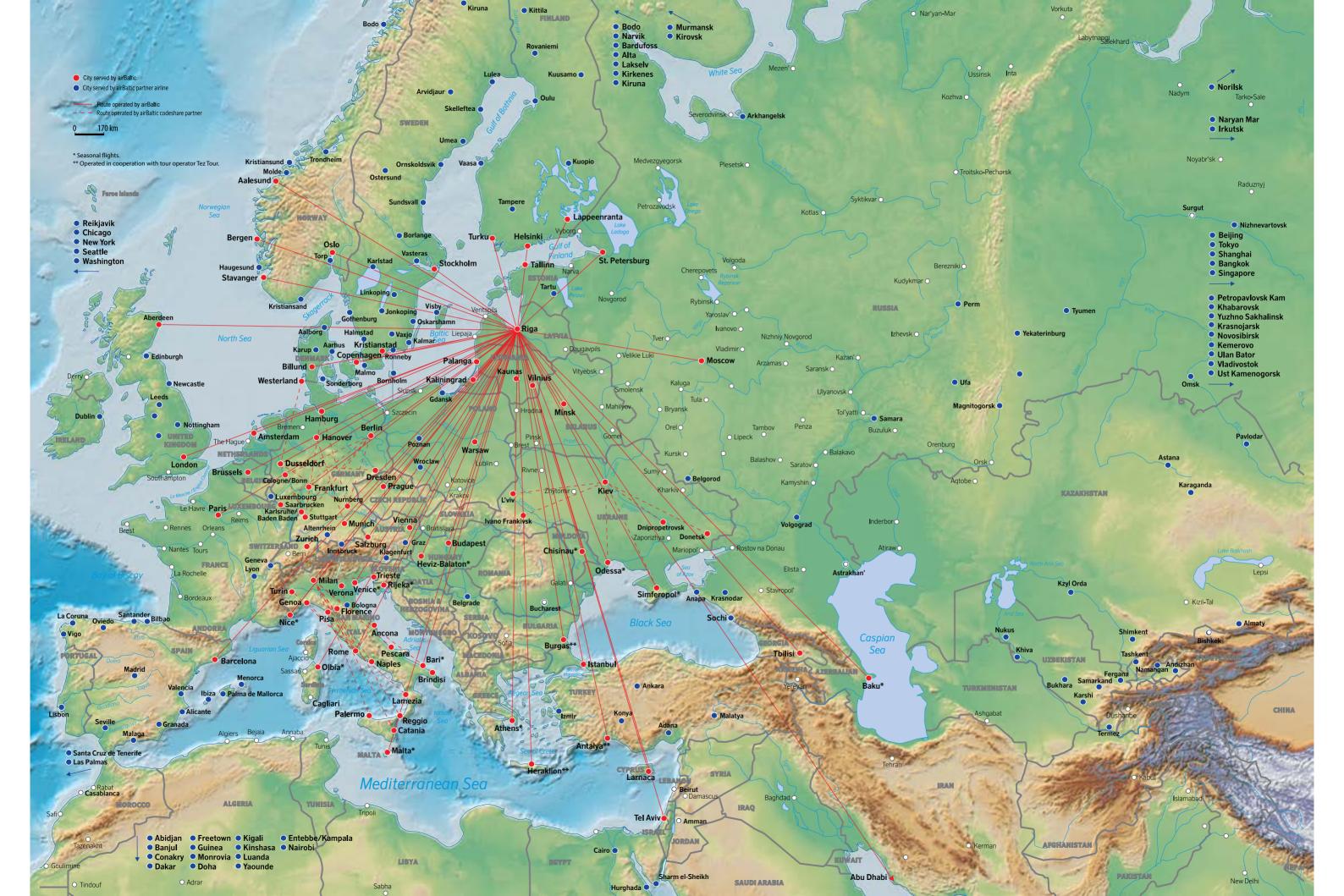


Q400 NextGen

Number of seats	76		
Max take-off weight	29.6 metric tons		
Max payload	8.6 metric tons		
Length	32.83 m		
Wing span	28.42 m		
Cruising speed	667 km/h		
Commercial range	2084 km		
Fuel consumption	1074 l/h		
Fngine	P&W 15ΩΔ		

airBaltic codeshare partners





airBaltic / CONTACTS

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