



DECEMBER 2015

balticoutlook

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inflight magazine

IN SALZBURG,

music is everything

Plus:

WHERE TO FIND A REAL
CHRISTMAS FEELING?

WINTER SPA GETAWAYS IN
LATVIA

SPARKLING BALL SEASON
IN VIENNA

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Латвия, Юрмала, Майори, улица Театра
Площадь таунхауса: 253 м²
3 этажа, 5 комнат
Цена по запросу

Светлый, просторный, полностью меблированный таунхаус в самом сердце Юрмалы.

Уникальность проекту придает местоположение – тихая и спокойная улица Театра, и в минуте ходьбы – улица Йомас – главный променада города, на котором расположены уютные кафе, рестораны и магазины. Юрмальский пляж находится в 5 минутах пешей прогулки.

Latvia, Jurmala, Majori, Teatra Str.
Area of townhouse: 253 m²
3 floors, 5 rooms
Price upon request

Light, spacious, fully furnished townhouse in the very heart of Jurmala.

Uniqueness is added to the project by its location – the silent and quiet Teatra Street, and within one-minute from Jomas Street – the main promenade of the city with cosy cafés, restaurants, and shops. The Jurmala beach is only 5-minutes away.



Рига, улица Элизабетес
Проект «Elizabeth»
Площадь квартир от 31 м² до 460 м²
Цена по запросу

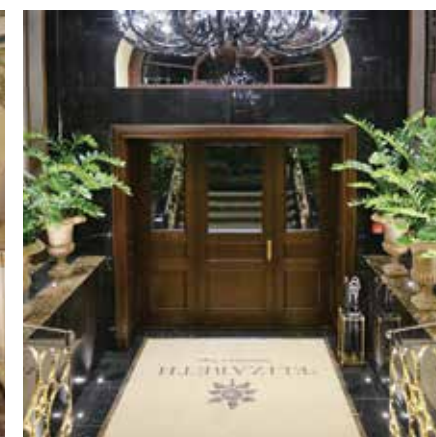
“Elizabeth” - жемчужина югендстиля, один из значимых памятников архитектуры, в тихом центре Риги.

Для продажи доступны несколько квартир разных площадей и планировок, в том числе – 2-уровневые квартиры с террасами на крыше, а также офисные помещения с полной отделкой. Здание находится в лучшей части города, в окружении скверов и парков, в непосредственной близости сосредоточены главные рижские достопримечательности.

Latvia, Riga, Elizabetes street
Project “Elizabeth”
Apartments areas: from 31 m² to 460 m²
Price upon request

“Elizabeth” is a Art Nouveau pearl, and one of the significant architectural monuments, in the silent centre of Riga.

A few apartments with different areas and layouts are available for sale, including 2-level apartments with roof terraces, as well as fully finished office premises. The building is in the one of the best parts of the city, surrounded by garden squares and parks.



Real Estate in Jurmala and Riga
Недвижимость в Юрмале и Риге

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Welcome aboard



MARTIN ALEXANDER GAUSS
Chief Executive Officer *airBaltic*

Dear Customer,

Aviation in the Baltic Sea region has changed fundamentally during the past month. Yet another airline in our home market has ceased its operations and *airBaltic* did its best to assist the stranded passengers.

These developments also signalled a turning point for *airBaltic's* new Horizon 2021 business development plan. As part of the plan, we will further improve customer services by adding new aircraft to our fleet, flying new direct flights out of the Baltic cities and improving existing connections. We will combine the power of the three markets of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, modernise our fleet and become even more efficient through economies of scale to lower our costs further and offer more affordable flight tickets.

Our new airbaltic.com website is one of the improvements that our customers can benefit from immediately. It now offers a more convenient flight booking process, as it automatically adapts to your preferred device, be it a laptop, tablet or mobile phone. We have simplified the choice of additional services and products, and also improved the way for you to track all of your purchases on our website at all times for better transparency and a faster process.

We hope that these improvements will make your Christmas and New Year's travels much easier so that you can focus on the important things – meeting your family and friends at this special time of year.

Did you know that *Bombardier*, the manufacturer of our future fleet, has completed its certification flight test programme for CS100 aircraft? This is excellent news for us at *airBaltic*, as we expect our *Bombardier CSeries* jets to arrive in late 2016.

Thank you for flying *airBaltic* and have a great trip!

Yours,
Martin Alexander Gauss




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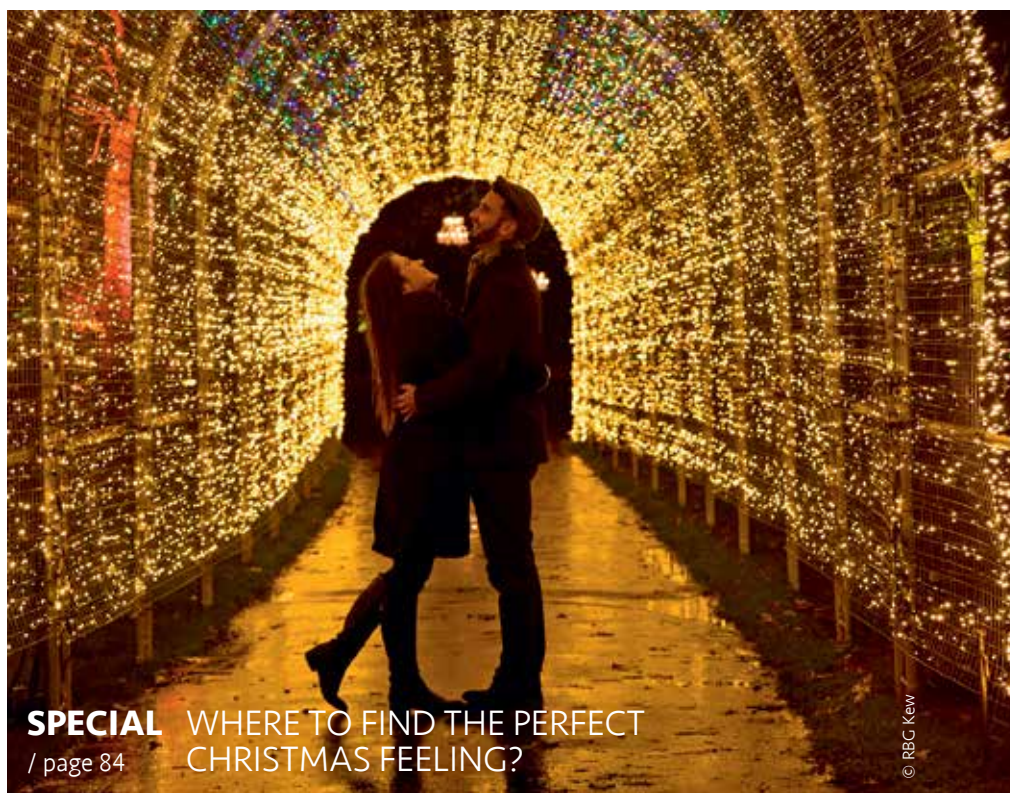
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CHRISTMAS FEELING?**

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About the December issue



airBaltic senior cabin crew member **Anete Vanaga** is very talented at drawing, which is why we invited her to create portraits of her colleagues for the *Christmas at airBaltic* article (page 50) in this issue of *Baltic Outlook*. Anete is also passionate about painting and held her second solo exhibition in Latvia this May. Her fellow *airBaltic* employees are among Anete's best customers and regularly buy her artworks.

Anete dreams of gaining recognition as an artist and opening her own art studio and gallery. She says that she would certainly like to paint much more often than she does at present. Interestingly, whenever she has attended art courses,

her teachers have told her that she doesn't really know how to paint. Anete has no problem with following set procedures at work, which strengthen a sense of discipline. In the field of art, however, she has never liked being told what to do.

Anete joined *airBaltic* eight years ago, when a classmate told her that the airline was looking for new stewardesses. At first she was sceptical about working in this profession, but soon after applying she was invited to a job interview. A week later, she began training for her new position. Anete is now a senior cabin crew member and, who knows, perhaps she will be serving you drinks on this very flight!

baltic Outlook

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Amoralle is a story about love, sexuality and femininity. Complimented by Vogue, Marie Claire Italy and other fashion editors for a high quality and world-class feeling, the label has gained international recognition. Amoralle welcomes customers in the biggest Latvian fashion brand store in Riga on 33 Brivibas Street.

HAND-MADE PREMIUM QUALITY

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AMORALLE FOR THE OPERA

Amoralle designs costumes for the Latvian National Opera, leading theatres and the Cabaret of Latvia.

AMORALLE FOR LABELS AND CELEBRITIES

Amoralle collaborates with world-known brands and celebrities, creating brand-inspired collections and outfits for the red carpet.

AWARDS

The company's success has been recognised by a number of awards, including the Latvian Style and Fashion Award "Designer of the Year 2013" and "The Most Daring Brand 2015".

EXPORT

Amoralle lingerie and nightwear are sold in 20 countries around the world.

Store address: Brivibas 33, Riga
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Magical Christmas

In some Nordic countries, psychologists study the emotional effects of the high latitudes' short, dark winter days. No doubt, such effects are also observable in Latvia. Nonetheless, culturally in Latvia, both November and December – two of the year's darkest months – are celebrated as months of light. November is a month of freedom declared (in 1918) and freedom won in a major battle against foreign tyranny. December is when the winter solstice marks the shortest day of the year, after which more light slowly returns.

Although Christmas is the popular focus of December celebrations, Latvia's pagan past remains in the people's national consciousness and is visible in the capital, when a Yule log is dragged up a steep hill next to the medieval city core and burned by people dressed as *budēji* (i.e. shape-shifters in animal costumes). The same also occurs at one of Europe's oldest and largest outdoor folk architectural museums in Riga. In schools, folk rhymes (*dainas*) with pagan motifs are taught. Often these rhymes refer to the sun as a goddess (*Saule*) and some Latvian poets still use ancient folk motifs in their poetry.

The above are but a few examples of Latvia's pagan past, which is also reflected



Under a Christmas spruce in a tiny, two-street lakeshore village outside Riga, 2015

The tree is decorated with wrapped candies, apples and tangerines

in the outdoor Christmas Eve celebrations of a tiny, two-street lakeshore village close to Riga. There, families with children and grandchildren gather in the nearby forest around a Christmas spruce that was already selected in the summer. (The forest next to the village consists largely of pines and a sizeable birch grove. Spruces are rare.)

The village's inhabitants begin to assemble at dusk, which sets in before 4 PM at this time of year. They bring food, drink, tree decorations, real candles and wood for a bonfire. Babies are part of the celebration and if the snow is too deep for baby carriages, the little ones are carried to a secure and comfortable place by the tree.

All is ready by the time that darkness has set in. The tree is decorated with wrapped candies, apples and tangerines. The bonfire and the candles are lit, wind permitting. The food is homemade and includes traditional ginger pastries, apple pies and bacon meat pasties (*pirāgi*). Sausages are roasted in the bonfire. Hot red wine in thermoses and champagne are the drinks of choice.

When a member of the younger generation asked if an exotic mixed drink or two could be added to this year's celebrations, the answer was: "Traditional." Although singing is an important facet of Latvian culture, not much of it takes place at this event. ("No decent voices here."). Nevertheless, older children are asked to recite folk rhymes, for which they receive candies in return. Later on in the evening, family members exchange gifts at their individual homes. There, too, the children are expected to recite folk rhymes.

Priecīgus Ziemassvētkus!
Merry Christmas! **BO**



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SPOTLIGHT ON THE WINTER

Five things that you should do in Latvia in December

- 1/ Buy a beautiful Christmas tree decoration as a souvenir.
- 2/ Try out grey peas and bacon, a national Christmas dish.
- 3/ Pour some molten lead into a bucket of cold water and see what the future might hold in the shapes that come out.
- 4/ Visit a small-town outdoor skating rink and skate to your heart's content.
- 5/ Go for a meditative walk along the seashore.

ON THIS MONTH'S MENU

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



THE TREND:

Design Stained glass windows have certainly risen in popularity over the last few years, adding an elegant and personal accent to interiors. If you don't want to change an entire window, then you can buy just a single panel and hang it by your window for a refreshing look at the outside world. A wide range of stained glass panels is available at etsy.com, an Internet portal for artists and craftsmen.



Gift *Baltic Outlook* correspondent Dovydas Kiauleikis has created a stylish notebook for bright ideas and dark thoughts. The book is divided into 12 white page sections (for the bright ideas) and one black (for the dark thoughts). It's been a great hit in Lithuania for over a year now.

EUR 16, ① 4moon.lt



Beauty Twelve years after the launch of *Miu Miu*, the fashion brand has officially unveiled its debut fragrance. The combination of lily-of-the-valley and spicy akigalawood makes the scent simultaneously earthy and floral. The eye-catching flacon was inspired by the famous *Miu Miu* matelassé bag.

COVER STAR

Latvian opera diva Kristīne Opolais couldn't hide her delight in a recent *Facebook* comment: "A really lovely surprise to be on the cover of the Metropolitan Opera's 2015/16 season book! I love you, New York!" Aside from being chosen as the cover girl for the opera's seasonal publication, the soprano singer has also been called the sexiest star at the Metropolitan Opera by several local media. This season, Opolais continues her successful collaboration with The Met, returning for an eagerly awaited new production of Giacomo Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*, with Opolais starring in the title role alongside German tenor Jonas Kaufmann. Opolais has become synonymous with *Manon Lescaut*, following appearances in two previous productions of the same work at the Royal Opera House in London and the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich in 2014.

Text by **ZANE NIKODEMUSA**
and **ROGER NORUM**
Photos by **EMĪLS DESJATNIKOVS** (F64)
and publicity

READING LIST



Karl Ove Knausgaard. *Dancing in the Dark*

The latest instalment in a series of six autobiographical novels details a year during which the author, aged 18, ventures to work as a school teacher in a cold, dark village in the Norwegian Arctic. The book takes a long look at drinking, sexual frustration and coming of age, all accomplished through Knausgaard's humorous, no-holds-barred prose. Reading that you can't put down. EUR 14, ① randomhouse.com

Phaidon Editors. *Map: Exploring The World*

Maps offer wonderful insights into our world and ourselves. The 300 handsome maps and atlases in this book cover some 5000 years of cartographic ingenuity, from navigation to astronomical maps, satellite and digital maps as well as works of art inspired by cartography. Includes an illustrated timeline of the history of mapmaking. EUR 39, ① phaidon.com

INSTAFASHION



Anita Sondore

① instagram.com/anita_sondore



EUROPEAN CHRISTMAS

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Thursday, December 10, 7:00 PM, Riga Congress Centre

LATVIAN RADIO BIG BAND AND FRAMEST

Programme: music from the New York Voices repertoire

Friday, December 11, 7:00 PM, Great Guild

HAYDN SYMPHONY AND MOZART NIGHT SERENADE

Enrico ONOFRI, violin
SINFONIETTA RIGA

Programme: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Charles Evison, Josef Martin Kraus, Giovanni Paisiello, Joseph Haydn

Saturday, December 12, 7:00 PM, Spīķeri Concert Hall

CHRISTMAS TANGO

Trio **ART-I-SHOCK**:
Māra BOTMANE, cello
Agnese EGLIŅA, piano
Elina ENDZELE, percussion

Programme: Rihards Dubra, Marina Gribinčika, Agneta Krilova, Linda Leimane, Kristaps Pētersons, Astor Piazzolla

Friday, December 18, 19:00, Riga St. Luther's Church

JOSEPH HAYDN "THE CREATION"

Elina ŠIMKUS, soprano
Lothar ODINTS, tenor
Rihards MAČANOVSKIS, bass
Riga Cathedral Boys Choir
SINFONIETTA RIGA
Conductor Mārtiņš KLISĀNS

Programme: Joseph Haydn "The Creation"

Saturday, December 19, 7:00 PM, Spīķeri Concert Hall

WINE AND MUSIC. SPAIN

Ieva PRUDNIKOVAITE, mezzo soprano
Fēlikss ZAKREVSĶIS, piano

Programme: Spanish songs, arias and melodies from zarzuelas

Tuesday, December 22, 7:00 PM, Riga St. John's Church

CHRISTMAS LIGHT

Jolanta STRIKAITE-LAPIŅA, soprano
Kristīne ADAMAITĒ, organ
Riga Saxophone Quartet

Programme: Johann Sebastian Bach, Dietrich Buxtehude, Louis-Claude Daquin, Rihards Dubra, César Franck, Philipp Nicolai, Georges Peléus, Imants Zemzaris

Wednesday, December 23, 7:00 PM, Spīķeri Concert Hall

The concert cycle "ARTURS MASKATS Welcomes You" The guest at the first concert – director MĀRA ĶIMELE

Conversations about art, life and music, with performers who will always be a Secret.

Saturday, December 26, 7:00 PM, Riga Cathedral

SERGEJS JĒGERS. AVE MARIA

Sergejs JĒGERS, counter tenor
Diana JAUNZEME, organ
Jānis PORIETIS, trumpet

Programme: César Franck, Georg Friedrich Handel, Giulio Caccini, Henry Purcell, Camille Saint-Saëns

Sunday, December 27, 7:00 PM, Small Guild

CHRISTMAS UNDER CANDLE-LIGHT

Piano quartet **RĪA**
Sandis ŠTEINBERGS, violin
Ilze KĻAVA, viola
Reinis BIRZNIĒKS, cello
Jānis MAČECKIS, piano

Programme: Gabriel Fauré, Gija Kancheli, Selva Menece

Wednesday, December 30, 7:00 PM, Riga St. Luther's Church

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH "CHRISTMAS ORATORIO" (excerpts)

Elina ŠIMKUS, soprano
Helen LEPALĀN, mezzo soprano
Oliver KUUSIK, tenor
Kalvis KALNIŅŠ, baritone

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Conductor Risto JOOST

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Text by **ZANE NIKODEMUSA**,
DOVYDAS KIAULEIKIS and **LIINA KARO**
Publicity photos

IITTALA – TOPICAL DESIGN SINCE 1881 EXHIBITION

Museum of Decorative Arts and Design, Riga
Until January 3

Alongside the comprehensive travelling exhibition *Finnish Glass Art 2005-2010*, which is being shown in the Great Hall of the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design, a parallel showing of works by the Finnish glassmaking company *Iittala* can also be seen in the 3rd-floor vestibule. This elegant representation of Finnish glass art design is a must for people who appreciate outstandingly designed glass objects.

① Inmm.lv

Skārņu iela 10/20



Oiva Toikka. *Red Cardinal*.
From the *Birds* collection.
1970s. Blown glass

DECEMBER 2015

CHRISTMAS MARKET IN THE OLD TOWN

Town Hall Square, Tallinn
Until January 8



If you visit the Estonian capital this month, then make sure not to miss the fairy-tale atmosphere at the Christmas Market in Tallinn's Old Town. Along with Santa and his reindeer – who are eternal favourites with the kids – is Estonia's most famous Christmas tree, surrounded by shopkeepers selling their wares in little huts at Town Hall Square. There, you will find handicrafts and other charming gifts for your loved ones as well as seasonal Estonian food and drinks.



RELOVEUTION MUSICAL SHOW

Palladium concert hall, Riga
**December 11, 12, 18, 19,
22, 23, 27**

The annual *Cabaret* performance, which has gathered some of Latvia's best singers, musicians, dancers and circus artists for the past 12 years, has become a legend in itself. This year, the organisers invite you to sense the magic of love. *ReLOVEution*, a musical show rooted in cabaret traditions, will be followed by a party after the official programme has ended, with talented singers performing some of the world's most popular songs and patrons taking to the dance floor until 3 AM.

Tickets at bilesuparadize.lv
Marijas iela 21

DAVI SINGS SINATRA CONCERT

Saku Suurhall, Tallinn
December 28



Robert Davi is familiar to all James Bond fans as the main villain in the movie *Licence To Kill* (1989), but he has also been winning the respect and admiration of fans, critics and fellow artists with his expressive singing. Davi was good friends with singer Frank Sinatra, and his album *Davi Sings Sinatra: On the Road to Romance* has received a lot of positive feedback. His performance in Tallinn will surely be a magnificent experience and a wonderful way to finish your year.

Tickets at piletilevi.ee
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Masku balle



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LOFTAS Art Factory, Vilnius
December 31
 Loftas, the main live music and clubbing venue in Vilnius, will be throwing a New Year's Eve party for the sixth year in a row. These parties have become legendary, and with this year's theme being George Lucas' *Star Wars*, the December 31 event should be no exception. Costumes are mandatory, with the only requirement being that they must fit through the entrance (take note, Jabba the Hutt wannabes!). The organisers' creativity explodes in the scenography of these happenings, so expect to celebrate New Year's in a spaceship or other unusual setting.

Tickets at [menufabrikas.lt](#)
 Švitrigailos gatvė 29



Compensa Concert Hall, Vilnius
December 26 and 27
 During the past few years, Martynas Levickis has changed the image of the accordion from something old and rusty into a trendier instrument. Since winning *Lithuania's Got Talent* in 2010, his career has taken off internationally and he has even topped album charts in the UK. He also regularly cooperates with the likes of the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Accompanied by an orchestra specially assembled for this concert, Levickis will put his spin on classic tunes to make them sound fresh and festive.

Tickets at [bilietai.lt](#)
 Kernavės gatvė 84

WINTER'S BREATH (ZIEMAS ELPA) CONTEMPORARY JEWELLERY EXHIBITION
Putti art gallery, Riga
December 8 - February 5
 If you are seeking a distinctive piece of jewellery for a friend or a relative, then make sure to visit *Winter's Breath*, an exhibition of contemporary jewellery by renowned Latvian and foreign artists. Featured artists share the common trait of drawing from nature for inspiration. If one artist might be inspired by a meditative walk through a wood, then another will be inspired by objects found outdoors. The result in each case is something precious and memorable.

Māris Šustīņš (1970) is considered to be one of the most romantic Latvian jewellers. His works are usually plastic creations of silver, precious stones, coral and pearls.

① [putti.lv](#)
 Mārstalu iela 16




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CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL
 December 16 - January 7



OPENING OF THE FESTIVAL LOS ANGELES GUITAR QUARTET

John Dearman
 Matthew Greif
 William Kanengiser
 Scott Tennant

Programme: Chet Atkins; Gerardo Giménez; Ian Krouse; Pat Metheny; Pyotr Tchaikovsky; Allan Willcocks; French Chansons

December 16, 7:30 PM



LATVIAN RADIO CHOIR NIGHT PRAYER

Latvian Radio Choir
 Riga Bell ensemble PRIMUS
 Conductor Sigvards Kļava

Programme: Arvo Pärt, Valentin Silvestrov

December 19, 7:00 PM



CHRISTMAS CONCERT FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY

Valters Pūce, cello
 Ralfs Eilands in the role of James Bond
 Karina Bērziņa in the role of the Boss of Agent 007
 Orchestra of the Latvian National Armed Forces Headquarters
 Conductor Guntis Kumačevs

Programme: Henry Mancini, Johan de Meij, John Williams and music from *Led Zeppelin*

December 20, 12:00 AM



CONCERT-STORY OF DOUBLE-BASS

Gunārs Upatnieks, double-bass
 Agnese Egliņa, piano
 Mārtiņš Meiers, actor
 Zane Kreicberga, stage direction

Programme: Giovanni Bottesini, Andris Dzenītis, Reinhold Glière, Richard Strauss, Pēteris Vasks, Quotations from the monodrama "The Double Bass" by Patrick Süskind

December 20, 5:00 PM



LATVIAN RADIO BIG BAND AND KSENIJA SIDOROVA

Ksenija Sidorova, accordion
 Latvian Radio Big Band

Programme: Johann Sebastian Bach, Pyotr Londonov, Artem Nyzhnyk, Sergei Voitenko, Astor Piazzolla, Vladimir Zubitsky, Leonard Bernstein

December 22, 7:30 PM



LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC

String Quartet lead by Raimonds Ozols
 Riga Dom Cathedral Boys Choir
 Conductor Mārtiņš Klišāns

Programme: Johann Sebastian Bach, Arcangelo Corelli, Georg Friedrich Händel, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Valts Pūce, Antonio Vivaldi, arrangements of Christmas carols

December 25, 7:30 PM



CINEMA MUSIC BY RAIMONDS PAULS AND GIYA KANCHELI

Raimonds Pauls, piano
 Latvian Radio Big Band
 Sinfonietta Riga String group

Programme: Hoagy Carmichael, Quincy Jones, Giya Kancheli, Frederick Loewe, Henry Mancini, Johnny Mercer, Raimonds Pauls, Nino Rota, Victor Young, Mārgeris Zariņš

December 26, 7:00 PM



VOICES OF ANGELS

Arsis Handbell Ensemble (Estonia)

Programme: Tomaso Albinoni, Leo Gillis, Georg Friedrich Händel, Edvard Grieg, Franz Grüber, Pietro Mascagni, Franz Schubert, Jean Sibelius, Jule Styne, Johann and Josef Strauss, Pyotr Tchaikovsky

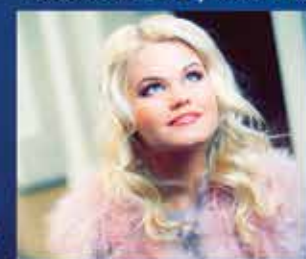
December 27, 5:00 PM



CONCERT FOR PRESCHOOLERS "CHRISTMAS IN THE CASTLE"

Annija Putniņa, soprano,
 Rūdolfs Bērtiņš, harpsichord,
 Ģetrūde Jerjomenko, clavichord,
 Lāsma Meldere-Šestakova, baroque violin,
 Kristīne Stumbure, recorder,
 Dancers from dance studio Grande,
 Music school students; Karina Bērziņa as the storyteller

December 28, 6:00 PM



RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTMAS

Latvian Radio Choir
 Conductor Sergey Ekimov

Programme: Dmitry Bortnyansky, Pavel Chesnokov, Stepan Degtyarev, Irina Denisova, Sergey Ekimov, Yuri Falik, Alexander Knafel, Sergei Prokofiev, Rodion Shchedrin, Georgy Sviridov

January 7, 7:30 PM



www.dzintarukonzertzale.lv

Tickets at "Bīlešu paradīze" box offices and at the Dzintari concert hall



Details **RIGA GLOSEUP**

The heart of Riga

What lies hidden in one of the oldest churches in the Baltic States?

Text by **LIENE PĀLĒNA**
Publicity photos and by
KASPARS KRAFTS, F64



Aside from being the largest medieval church in the Baltic States and the seat of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Riga Cathedral (sometimes called Dome Cathedral) is considered to be the very heart of the Latvian capital. Since the laying of its first foundation stone in 1211, the impressive structure has been witness to all of Riga's historical events.

Admittedly, few of Riga's own inhabitants know that the cathedral's roof covers the equivalent of seven football fields and that the remains of the first missionary in Latvia, St. Meinhard, have been buried within the church for centuries. During the 18th century, the cathedral experienced severe flooding on several occasions, with the water level rising up to the height of a man and fish swimming around inside the building.

If the Dome Cathedral can be seen as one of the foremost symbols of Riga, then the gilded weathercock and sphere on the tip of its spire can be seen as a symbol of the church itself. The prominent landmark was installed in 1595 not only as a decorative ornament, but also as a weather vane to show the direction of the wind, which was particularly important for seafaring merchants back in the days when sailing ships were the main form of maritime transport. This year, the legendary church rooster was restored and covered with a fresh coating of gold, as was the sphere, which now contains a new time capsule for future generations to open.

In 1959, during the Soviet occupation, the cathedral was turned into a concert hall. It still houses a remarkable church organ, which was the world's largest until the end of the 19th century and which remains a national showpiece. The impressive instrument boasts 124 registers and 6,718 different organ pipes, drawing the world's best organ players to the city. In addition, the acoustics in the Riga Cathedral are particularly propitious for the enjoyment of spiritual and religious music. **BO**

① doms.lv

TOP 3 things to do at the Riga Cathedral

Hear the cathedral's famous organ being played. This month, at least three organ concerts per week will take place there.

Take note of the ornate stained-glass windows, which recount the history of the cathedral, starting from the laying of its first foundation stone.

Have a closer look at the cathedral's first gilded weathercock, which is located inside the premises.

The author wishes to thank Guntars Prānis, the musical director of the Riga Cathedral, for the information that he provided for this article.

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Opernhaus Zürich



Hotel Atlantis by Giardino



Joan Miró working on
Oiseaux qui s'envolent
in Gallifa, 1971

Photo by Francesc Català-Roca, © Arxiu
Fotogràfic del Col·legi d'Arquitectes de Catalunya, COAC

Text by **UNA MEISTERE**,
anothertravelguide.com
Publicity photos

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WAY

The *Opernhaus Zürich* will present a performance of **Il viaggio a Reims** (*The Journey to Reims*), an opera by Italian composer Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868), for the first time on December 6 (with additional performances on December 11, 13, 16, 18, 23 and 27 and on January 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9; Falkenstrasse 1; opernhaus.ch). This is the latest cooperative effort between Swiss director Christof Marthaler and German stage and costume designer Anna Viebrock. *Il viaggio a Reims* is the last opera that Rossini wrote in Italian (his later works were in French) and was penned in honour of the coronation of French king Charles X in Reims in 1825. Vocally, the work is extremely demanding, requiring the highest level of technical virtuosity and acting skills on the part of the performers.

The *Kunsthaus Zürich* (Heimplatz 1; kunsthau.ch), for its part, is hosting the exhibition **Joan Miró – Wall, Frieze, Mural** until January 24, in honour of the great Catalan artist (1893-1983), who was one of the most prominent Surrealists and Modernists of his time. Miró always celebrated life in his works: passionately, spontaneously and at times with an almost childlike zeal. Having been fascinated by the scope, monumentality and urban “cloth” texture of murals since his early childhood, he created his first wall painting, *The Farm*, in 1921 at his family home. The exhibition encompasses more than 70 of Miró’s works, which have been displayed along nine thematic lines, thus illustrating the broad range of the artist’s forms of expression.

Zurich now has a new place for visitors to spend the night. Opened on June 1, **Atlantis by Giardino** (Dölschweg 234; atlantisbygiardino.ch) is perfect for those who wish to enjoy both the lively pace of the city and the peace of the countryside. Located right at the foot of Mount Üetliberg, the edifice is a Modernist architectural jewel from the 1960s, which was built from its inception to serve as a hotel. Some of the building’s most significant architectural features were retained during its recent restoration and have been skilfully complemented with contemporary design elements. The hotel houses 95 guest rooms as well as a spa that specialises in Ayurvedic procedures, along with a 25-metre-long swimming pool and two restaurants – one of which is headed by chef Rolf Fliegau, the recipient of two *Michelin* stars.

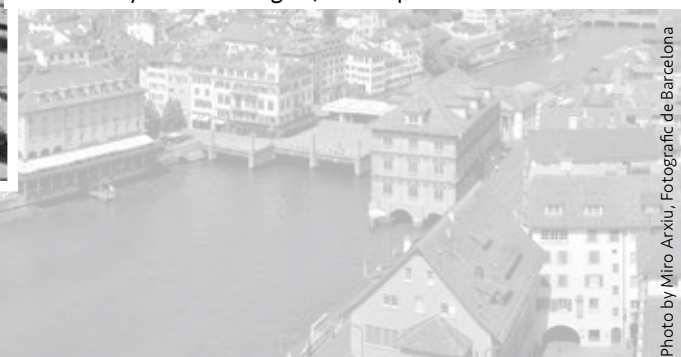


Photo by Miro Arxiu, Fotogràfic de Barcelona

Zurich

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Details **CITIES OF THE MONTH**

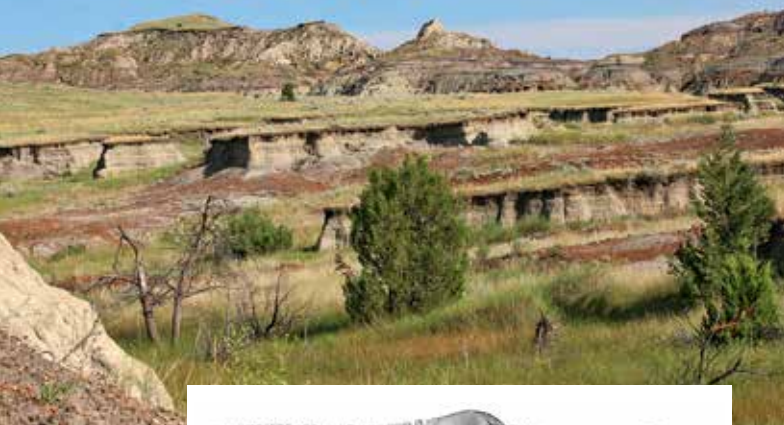
Acne Studios

Berlin



Installation view, Ed Ruscha, *Metro Mattresses*, Sprüth Magers

The site in Montana where the *Tyrannosaurus rex* skeleton was found



Tyrannosaurus rex

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RIGA, TALLINN and VILNIUS

Families with children will soon have one more reason for spending a holiday in the German capital. On December 17, the Berlin Museum of Natural History (*Museum für Naturkunde*; Invalidenstraße 43; naturkundemuseum-berlin.de) will unveil Tristan – the world’s best-preserved **Tyrannosaurus rex** skeleton – to the public. This is the real McCoy, and not a skilfully crafted reproduction, as at other places. It is also the only exemplar of its kind in Europe. The skeleton was discovered in 2012 in the US State of Montana and, due to the museum’s esteemed reputation in the field of dinosaur research, the fossil’s owner has agreed to loan it to the institution for a three-year period. Estimated to be over 70 million years old, Tristan will be studied in detail with the latest technologies to determine his exact age and the ailments that he may have suffered, among other things.

Another draw for art aficionados is the exhibition **Ed Ruscha: Metro Mattresses** at the Sprüth Magers gallery (Oranienburger Straße 18; spruthmagers.com). Born in 1937, American pop art pioneer Ed Ruscha is known for his depictions of Californian and Los Angeles landscapes (including mountains, gas stations, swimming pools and the famous hillside Hollywood sign) as well as word paintings. The artist’s photographs, drawings and paintings portray seemingly mundane things in a profound and sometimes witty manner. Abandoned mattresses on the streets of Los Angeles inspired his latest series of works, which will be on view until January 16 and which tell intimate stories about people’s dreams, passions and inevitable mortality. According to Rauscha, “the mattresses become not just litter in the landscape, but more like scary animals.”

Berlin’s new gallery district in the vicinity of Potsdamer Straße is home to a recently opened store by the Swedish **Acne Studios** fashion brand (Potsdamer Straße 87; acnestudios.com). The store’s laconic and minimalist interior is dominated by stainless steel, which serves both a functional and decorative purpose, as in the lamp cylinders by the ceiling. Here one will find the latest items from the company’s men’s and women’s clothing collections.

Photo by Thomas Wolf, foto-tw.de



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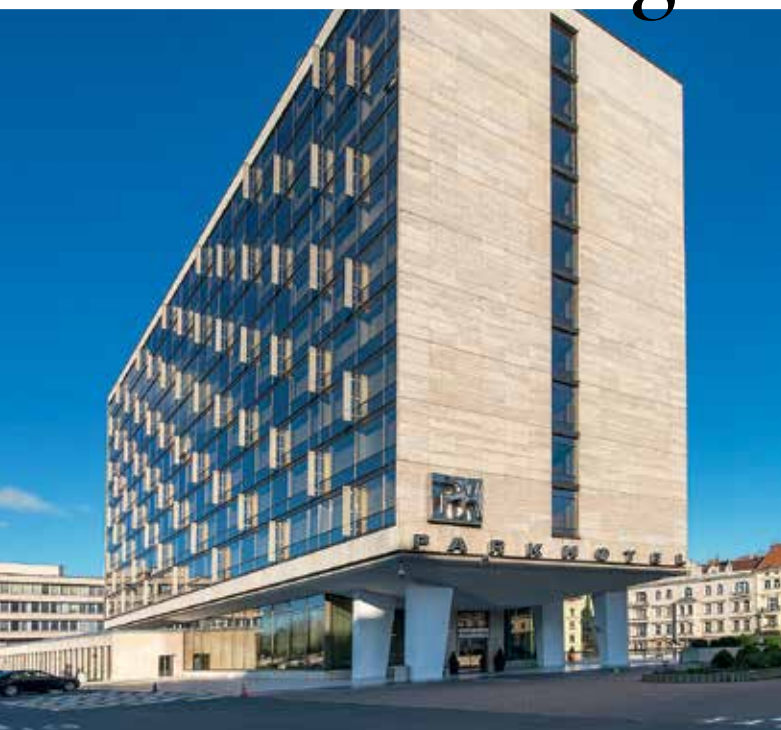
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Café Místo



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Flora by Titian

The opportunity to see some of the best paintings by Italian Renaissance genius **Titian** (Tiziano Vecellio, c. 1485-1576) in a single location is a memorable artistic event that can be experienced in the Czech capital until March 20. Titian is the most famous of Venice's 16th-century masters and was renowned also during his lifetime, drawing the attention of various monarchs. He was considered to be one of the best portraitists of his era, with aristocrats competing amongst themselves for the honour of having their portraits painted by the master. On one occasion, Holy Roman Emperor Charles V is said to have actually stooped to pick up a paintbrush that Titian had dropped, thus displaying a special degree of reverence for the artist. Currently, Prague Castle is hosting the retrospective *Titian Vanitas – The Poet of the Image and the Shade of Beauty*, where visitors will also be able to see *Flora*, one of the artist's most famous works and on loan from the Uffizi Gallery in Florence (Imperial Stables, Prague Castle; tiziano.cz/en).

If you are looking for a no less iconic place to stay, but with a more contemporary feel, then the recently reconstructed **Parkhotel** (Veletržní 1502/20; parkhotel-praha.cz) is a very appropriate choice. The hotel first opened its doors in 1967 and is a striking example of 1960s architecture. The building has appeared in many Czech films and, interestingly, one of its original architects, Zdeněk Edl, was asked to take part in its reconstruction. The hotel's interior has retained its Modernist look, but with an additional 21st-century feel.

Café culture has long been an important facet of life in the Czech capital, having been brought in from Vienna during the Austro-Hungarian period (1867-1918). The *Café Louvre*, for example, was a meeting place for philosophers and was occasionally visited by writer Franz Kafka (1883-1924). During the communist era, the *Café Slavia* attracted artists and intellectuals, including dissident Vaclav Havel. Prague's cafés have not lost their status as rebellious centres of vibrant social activity, drawing the brightest artists, writers and politicians, and keeping up with the latest advancements in the serving of one vital ingredient – coffee. One of the most recent arrivals on the Prague café scene is **Místo** (or “place” in Czech), which is located in a former ground-floor apartment in the Dejvice residential neighbourhood (Bubenečská 12; mistoprovas.cz). The owners are a trio of coffee connoisseurs who have united under the name Doubleshot Roastery and are well-known among local coffee-lovers. *Místo* specialises in filtered coffee from the best small plantations in Brazil, Ethiopia, Costa Rica and other places. **BO**



Photo by Chosovi

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Big city swing

With at least three swing dance parties every night, Berlin has become the European swing capital.

Text by **FLORIAN MAAB**
Photo courtesy of
Bohème Sauvage



For an increasing number of Berlin party people, there's a simple rule: "It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing." Groovy swing music and the Lindy Hop dance, which originated in 1920s Afro-American Harlem, fit very well in a city that loves to reminisce about its Golden Twenties.

When a Lithuanian student named Elena arrived in the German capital, she expected the nightlife to be all about electronic music. Then she went to *Clärchens Ballhaus* (Auguststraße 24; ballhaus.de), a swing scene hotspot where patrons were all dressed up in fedora hats, gangster suits and two-tone shoes. An acoustic band was playing a dynamic jazzy sound and everybody was dancing the Lindy Hop.

"The live music, vintage clothing, old-fashioned hairstyles, happy faces and fast-paced rhythm are the reasons that make Lindy Hop parties so attractive," says Elena. The Lindy Hop is a dynamic, sophisticated yet funny mix of solo and partnered dance moves, inspired by aviator Charles "Lindy" Lindbergh's solo "hop" across the Atlantic by plane in 1927. Elena was instantly taken and, together with her best friend Giedrė,

happily jumped into the scene, not only as dancers but also as the retro music duo *ElleG*.

Swing parties are open to dancers of all levels. Learning the basic step, the swingout, takes only an hour. A dozen specialised dance schools help you spice

Body contact is also necessary, but it must be kept in the right places

it up with lots of tricky steps like the swango or tuck turn and acrobatic aerials. Now the Balboa, an even faster-paced swing dance style, is gaining momentum. At the *Swingspiration* dance school (swingspiration.com) in the Kreuzberg district we meet Estonian expat Jekaterina. "I like the fact that the scene is so open," says the IT project manager. "Girls dance with girls and students with 60-year-olds and you see dancers of all social backgrounds."

Frenchman Clément is one of her teachers and an avid photographer of the dance scene (yourcremant.com). He says that "swing is easily accessible, as the basics aren't too complicated, but be careful – you quickly get hooked on it."

Parties at the *Bohème Sauvage* (boheme-sauvage.net) are the most stylish. No sneakers or jeans are allowed, and don't even think about coming with cheap carnival costumes. As a reward, you feel like you are part of a Marlene Dietrich movie.

Dress style is an integral part of swing. Stores like *Herr von Eden* (Alte Schönhauser Straße 14; herrvoneden.com) are a haven of stylish retro fashion. You can also borrow an authentic outfit at the legendary *Adlershof* film studios (Ernst-Augustin-Str. 7; fundus-adlershof.de), which offer 30,000 items to choose from.

One should behave in accordance with one's elegant look, so etiquette is crucial. Find a leader or follower for your dancing couple, always smile and maintain eye contact. Body contact is also necessary, but it must be kept in the right places. Most difficult to handle for the typical straightforward Berliner is the fact that you are not allowed to criticise other dancers. **BO**

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Text by **AGRA LIEĢE**
Photo courtesy of
AGRA LIEĢE

West goes East

Having spent almost a year in India, *Baltic Outlook* correspondent Agra Lieģe reveals her thoughts about meditation tourism

People who have returned from a trendy meditative destination – in the search of either a school of practice that suits them best, or simply with the goal of “finding themselves” (which basically means that they have no idea what they’re looking for but are not entirely satisfied with the current state of affairs in their lives) – will be asked particular questions, such as: “Did you find yourself? Did your life change?”

Sometimes, the answer to the latter is “yes,” but most of the time (surprise, surprise!) life eventually resumes the course that it had taken before. So, what to do if you wish to go zen and stay that way? What to do if you wish to remain enlightened on a quasi-permanent basis, even after you have returned to the treadmill of daily life, or at least for a bit longer than your designated holiday period?

When we think of meditation as primarily a technique-based activity, we are most likely to fall into the trap of a segmented life: crazy stressful job – meditation class – back to crazy stressful job. Technique-based guided meditation and yoga classes might provide you with an escape that nurtures you in a similar way that a pit stop helps a race car driver.

However, there is one major difference: the driver is probably getting a kick out of the race in which he is competing, while you may be less than thrilled with the stresses of your daily life. Now extend the meditation or yoga class to a week or more. That happens when you have accumulated sufficient funding (and time, and perhaps a healthy degree of despair or misery as well) to finally go and seek a sense of inner peace and to proudly pin the meditation tourist badge on your chest.

So, how to make your meditation trip work out? Unfortunately, there is no set recipe that works 100 percent for every person (again, surprise, surprise!). There is nothing wrong with retreats, but if you hope to preserve what you’re getting from them once you go back to the real world, then you should have some real-world practice of what you are learning. Use some of the time at your (probably exotic and mind-blowingly different from your homeland) destination to learn to deal with the (equally mind-blowingly different) approaches that some locals might have about the most basic everyday things, and try not to freak out about them. Go with the flow, put your new breathing and chanting techniques to use, and away you go! **BO**



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Text by **DACE VAIVARA**
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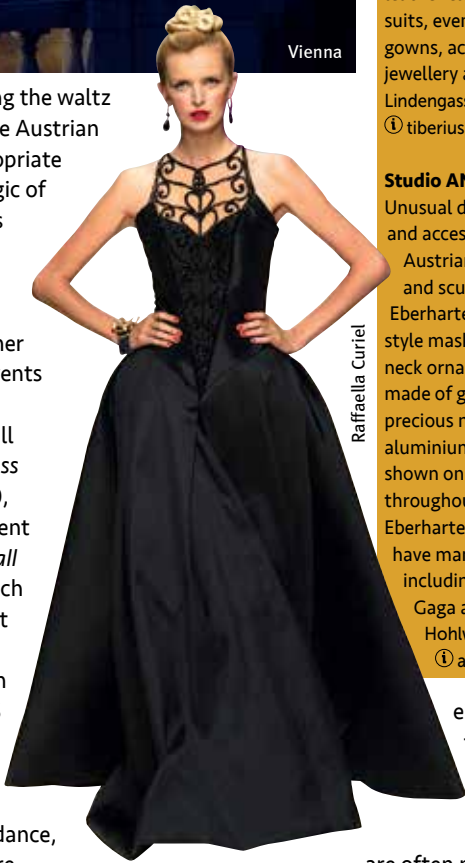
Sparkling ball season

Have you ever dreamt of dancing the waltz at a classical ball? If so, then the Austrian capital is one of the most appropriate places for experiencing the magic of a proud tradition that stretches back over four centuries. Each year, Vienna hosts more than 450 balls, from traditional formal dances to elegant summer galas and exuberant carnival events in February.

The upcoming ball season will kick off with the *Vienna Red Cross Ball* at City Hall on November 20, while one of the most magnificent events is the *Hofburg Silvesterball* (hofburgsilvesterball.com), which takes place on New Year's Eve at the Hofburg (Imperial) Palace. Entry tickets range in price from EUR 70 for students to EUR 665 for a gala dinner table seat.

The Polonaise (a slow stately dance of Polish origin) is traditionally the first dance, while a public quadrille (a square dance performed by couples) is the last. Illustrious opera and ballet stars put on various performances throughout the evening. At many similar events, the "belle of the ball" is also crowned.

These society dance events with live classical and contemporary music require elegant evening attire, and those who fail to abide by the strict dress codes might not even be let in past the front door. The ladies must be dressed in floor-length ball gowns, while gentlemen have the option of wearing



Raffaella Curiel

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① runwayvienna.at

Tiberius

This concept store carries sensuously provocative clothing for women and men by *Tiberius*, an Austrian brand established in 1992. Here one will find leather clothing as well as suits, evening and wedding gowns, accessories, jewellery and perfume. Lindengasse 2
① tiberius.at

Studio AND_i

Unusual designer jewellery and accessories by creative Austrian goldsmith and sculptor Andreas Eberharter. The futuristic-style masks, head and neck ornaments are made of gold and other precious metals as well as aluminium and have been shown on fashion stages throughout the world. Eberharter's products have many famous fans, including pop divas Lady Gaga and Beyoncé. Hohlweggasse 11/2
① and-i.com

either tailcoats, tuxedos, black suits or gala uniforms.

Ball gowns are often made by high

fashion brands in a colour of the season and complemented by jewellery, or they may be worn in a classical black shade. White gowns, for their part, are traditionally worn by young women and debutantes attending their first ball. Sleeveless gowns can be accompanied by shoulder shawls (stoles), bolero jackets or long gloves.

For gentlemen, black tie dress includes a black dinner suit or tuxedo together with a white dress shirt, black bow tie, black evening waistcoat or cummerbund and black dress



Dress by *Zuhair Murad*, EUR 8505, mytheresa.com

Earrings by *Freyville*, EUR 3525, freyville.com

Necklace by *Ugo Correani* for *Chanel*, EUR 3300, mytheresa.com



Clutch by *Freyville*, EUR 1415, freyville.com

Shoes by *Aquazzura*, EUR 695, mytheresa.com

Mon Jasmin Noir L'Elixir eau de parfum by *Bulgari*, 50 ml, EUR 98.95, douglas.at



shoes. White tie is the most formal evening dress code, according to which men wear black tailcoats over white starched shirts, waistcoats and bow ties. Black trousers with suspenders and black laceless patent leather shoes complete the outfit. Men can also wear military dress uniforms as an alternative to the tailcoat.

Other highlights of the Vienna waltzing season will include the *Confectioners' Ball* (zuckerbaeckerball.com) on January 14, the *Vienna Philharmonic Ball* (wienerphilharmoniker.at) on January 21 and the elegant *Opera Ball*, which will be held at the Vienna State Opera (wiener-staatsoper.at) on February 4. **BO**

Store addresses in Riga: Freyville, Valju iela 10



HOUSING ESTATE FOR SALE

Brīvības bulvāris 21, Riga

Located in the heart of Riga, this prestigious and historical building, including land property, is up for sale. A beautiful view of the park opens up from its windows. The building is located at the intersection of Brīvības bulvāris and Kalpaka bulvāris, and is just a few minutes away from the Old Town. The Freedom Monument - one of the most important national symbols of Latvia, is located nearby. The premises are best suited for either a hospitality business or premium-class apartments.

Land area – 1 467 m².
Site area – 1 148 m².
Gross site area – 5 625 m².

Price: **EUR 7 300 000**

COMMERCIAL PREMISES FOR SALE

201 Brivibas gatve, Riga



For sale: property with an active luxury department store at 201 Brīvības gatve in Riga, located near VEF. Brīvības gatve is the main street of Riga, and this area is surrounded by a well-developed infrastructure and public transport, ensuring a large flow of people on a daily basis. The five-storey building is fully equipped with everything required for a retail business, including storage facilities in the basement. Included is a parking lot for up to 60 cars. The exterior of the building can be redesigned in glass, and the inside can be adapted for office use.

Land area: 4343 m²
Gross site area: 10648 m²
Site area: 2274 m²
Commercial area: 7945 m²

Price: **EUR 8 900 000**

For sale: property with an area of 63500 m² at 201 Brīvības gatve in Riga, located near VEF. The land is suitable for a mixed development, including housing. Maximum building intensity – 220%. The property is strategically well-placed near the Elkor Plaza department store, a hotel, and the offices of various companies. Brīvības gatve is located nearby. The property is suitable for various business activities, including the construction of offices and housing.

Utilities: electricity supply, water supply, central heating.

Land area: 63500 m²

Price: **EUR 4 900 000**



Phone: +371-25863446. E-mail: e.zelenko@elkor.lv

Artistic jewellery in a Christmas tree

Aside from jewellery and silverware, some exclusive brands also make ornate Christmas tree decorations for the holiday season.

Christmas tree ornaments
from the *December Tales*
collection by the Danish
luxury brand *Georg Jensen*.



WHAT ARE THEY?

Swarovski and *Tiffany & Co.* are just two of the well-known luxury brands that offer collections of Christmas tree ornaments. Loyal brand customers are eager to buy such trinkets as elegant small-sized gifts and as enhancers of the Christmas spirit in their homes. Some of these brand collections are quite small and are not always supplemented with new items every season. Along with Christmas tree ornaments, the collections can also include other decorative items with Christmas images and symbols.

WHY ARE THEY SPECIAL?

The luxury brands' Christmas tree ornaments and other decorative Christmas items are generally of the same high quality as other products for which these brands are known. The ornaments are often made in a conservative, romantic or even sentimental style. In the manufacture of these Christmas products, the brands seek to maintain their own particular style while imparting a Christmas spirit with familiar images and symbols. While guest designers are occasionally invited to collaborate in the creation of new Christmas collections, usually the brands' own designers are involved, and they rarely engage in avant-garde experiments. Some collectors have a pastime of acquiring the Christmas tree ornaments released by particular luxury brands.

HOW DO THEY FIT INTO INTERIORS?

Not all home interiors are suitable for the Christmas tree ornaments made by luxury brands. For example, *Tiffany & Co.* Christmas tree ornaments look best in manor houses or stately apartments that have been decorated in a conservative style, rather than in rustic style country houses. The ornaments made by the Danish silverware brand *Georg Jensen*, for their part, will also fit well in modern, contemporary interiors. Besides serving as seasonal decorations, luxury brand Christmas tree ornaments are an investment that can be passed on to future generations. **BO**



**Excellent hotel in the
center of Riga**

You are welcome!



Text by **ILZE POLE**
Photos courtesy of
DALIUS UDRIS

This is your captain speaking

Baltic Outlook introduces you to some of the most important people at *airBaltic* – its flight crew members.

DALIUS UDRIS (40), from Lithuania, captain of *Dash 8-Q400* aircraft
Hours flown: 7000

HOW IT ALL **BEGAN**

As far as I can remember, I always had a dream of being a pilot. When I was a small boy, agricultural aviation was very popular in our country. The well-known *An-2 (Antonov 2)* crop dusters could often be seen flying like butterflies over the fields. It was the most beautiful scene, and the sound of their engines was the most beautiful music for me. Because they could fly, I thought that pilots were a kind of supermen!

Later, I started to build model airplanes and rockets. In 1999, I graduated from the Vilnius Aviation Institute and joined the Lithuanian armed forces to become a helicopter pilot. This gave me a chance to fly.

LAST **DESTINATION** FLOWN TO AS A PASSENGER

It was a flight to Stockholm's Arlanda airport this October. I prefer to fly as an active crew member and not as a passenger.

FAVOURITE **RUNWAY**

My favourite runway is my home base runway – RIGAAAAA! It is so nice to see it after a long, long day. It seems like even the weather then helps.

THE BEST THING ABOUT **BEING A PILOT**

The possibility to see the earth from a bird's-eye view and to see the sun more often than others.

SNAPSHOT TO SHARE

This picture was taken in March of this year while flying over the Lithuanian town of Šiauliai.



FAVOURITE **BOOKS**

My favourite writer is Erich Maria Remarque. I like all of his books, but my favourite ones are *The Black Obelisk* and *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

FAVOURITE **RESTAURANT**

I actually don't like restaurants very much. I appreciate a nice grilled meal together with my family and friends somewhere outdoors. But I could suggest *Vapiano* in Vilnius, because I love to see all of the food-making process.

THREE THINGS THAT I **NEVER LEAVE HOME WITHOUT**

I don't leave home without my ID, my watch and of course my good mood.

HOBBIES

A hobby is an activity that one is able to do during one's free time. At the moment, my hobby is my family and my home.

THINGS THAT MIGHT **SURPRISE A PASSENGER WHO STEPS INTO THE PILOT'S CABIN**

It probably depends on the passenger. Some might be surprised to see all of the instruments, lights and switches, while others would be surprised at the small size of the cabin. Practically everyone would be surprised by the amazing view out the window.

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Text by **ROGER NORUM**
Publicity photos

Ski tech

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EUR 589 | ① oakley.com



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EUR 316 | ① eddiebauer.com



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Happy feet
Made from waterproof ion-mask fabric, these boots are extremely light but will still keep your feet warm and dry. A thick, flexible *Thermolite* fabric offers extra insulation, while the soles are made from recycled material, with thick rubberised treads to ensure that you don't slip. The boots zip together for easy transport, and they are more comfortable than those outmoded moon boots in your closet.

EUR 132 | ① timberland.com



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The fall guy
This super reinforced ski and snowboard helmet will protect your head from on- or off-piste injury, especially when it comes to sharp object impact. Inside, the comfortable foam is lined with hypo-allergenic felt so it won't itch, and the built-in headphones let you listen to tunes that are accessible via remote control. A necessity for hardcore skiers and boarders.

EUR 195 | ① pocsports.com

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This is the 21st century, so who on Earth still makes their own snowballs?! This brilliant invention will provide hours of entertainment to the whole family – not least of all dads with an ice chip on their shoulder. The gizmo has a small cup for making snowballs and a scoop for launching them across the park – up to 150 feet in distance. The 50-cm blade is controlled by a rubber grip that fits comfortably as long as you're wearing gloves. Hey, Frosty! Duck!

EUR 15 | ① wham-o.com



LEGEND.

JURMALA



ЖИЛОЙ КВАРТАЛ, КОТОРЫЙ СТАЛ ЛЕГЕНДОЙ

В Латвии, в Юрмале, на первой линии моря, в центре «золотой мили» построен жилой квартал, уникальный по своей сути. Один из самых титулованных проектов мира – LEGEND. за 2014 год получил награды от FIABCI, журнала SPEAR'S, конкурса Luxury Lifestyle, ассоциации строителей Латвии и приз «Лучшая архитектура в мире» от International Property Awards.

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WWW.LEGEND.LV



Фотография фасада Villa Churchill



Фотография холла в Villa Churchill

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В красивейшей части тихого центра Риги, в окружении жемчужин югендстиля, занесенных в культурный фонд UNESCO, возведено здание TAL RESIDENCE – будущий памятник архитектуры XXI века. TAL RESIDENCE – дань уважения великому гению, шахматисту, рижанину Михаилу Талю, традициям и истории города Риги. Современная архитектура здания с ее открытостью и прозрачностью позволяет жителям TAL RESIDENCE из панорамных окон и с просторных террас наслаждаться изумительными видами на исторические здания квартала. Подземный паркинг, исключительность месторасположения и архитектурных решений – уникальные преимущества проекта.

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Colour wizard

Painter Kristīne Luīze Avotiņa's unique plays of colour charm the Latvian capital

Text by LIENE PĀLENA
Photo by LAURIS AIZUPIETIS, F64



Artist Kristīne Luīze Avotiņa (b. 1983) goes against oft-held preconceptions – at least in Latvia – that art should be imbued with sombre hues. She is one of the most talented Latvian painters of her generation and boldly ignores Northern Europeans' reticence to use bright colours. Avotiņa's works stand out in their splendour and brilliance, depicting flowers, birds, fruits and animals in an inimitable manner – much to the pleasure of the general public.

Not surprisingly, Avotiņa's paintings can be seen not only on the walls of private homes, but also as accents of colour in public spaces. Elements of her works, for example, have been printed onto three taxis

belonging to *Baltic Taxi*. Earlier this year, the artist painted a series of murals at the newly built Academic Centre for Natural Sciences of the University of Latvia in Riga, calling this project one of the greatest challenges of her career.

"Over the course of approximately four months, I painted murals on all eight floors of the building, or about 700 square metres in total," says Avotiņa, who says that she managed to complete the project thanks to sheer determination and a strict sense of discipline.

This month is also special for the artist, because it marks the tenth anniversary of her first solo exhibition. To commemorate that event, Avotiņa will be displaying

a retrospective of some of her most memorable works at the Riga Art Space (*Rīgas Mākslas telpa*). Named *River of Dreams* (*Sapņu upe*), the exhibition will be on display from December 1-10, during which a whole series of moving objects, sounds, lights, animation effects and modern digital technologies will contribute to the creation of a truly dreamlike atmosphere.

It is likely that at the opening of the exhibition, the artist will pay special tribute her family, as has become customary at events that she hosts. Avotiņa was born into an established line of artists. Her older sister Katrīna Avotiņa is also a painter, as is her mother, Ilze Avotiņa, and so was her grandfather, Harijs Kārklīšs.

After graduating from the Department of Painting at the Art Academy of Latvia, Avotiņa furthered her education at the *Escola Massana* in Barcelona and has actively taken part in exhibitions from the very beginning of her artistic career.

The artist draws a great deal of inspiration from nature and from her travels to other countries, which she uses as instruments for putting her feelings and reflections on human relations onto canvas. In addition, she finds it important to accent her femininity in her daily life.

"At the end of each work day, I clean the paint off of my face, remove my work clothes, take a nice dress out of the closet and go off to the city," Avotiņa reveals.

Along the same lines, she says that she always puts on a coat of lipstick before leaving home and goes to the hairdresser's at least twice a week. **BO**

① cristinaluisa.com

Avotiņa's TOP 3

destinations for the winter season

1. Saint Petersburg, Russia, and the New Hermitage, where a large collection of artworks by French Impressionists is on display.
2. The Belvedere palace in Vienna, which houses *The Kiss* by Gustav Klimt.
3. The Kröller-Müller Museum in Otterlo, the Netherlands. It is home to an impressive collection of paintings by Vincent van Gogh and has a wonderful park, where one can go bicycle riding even in the wintertime.

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The perfect eggnog

Christmas time is fast approaching, and there is hardly a better way to launch the holiday spirit than a hearty glass of classic eggnog.



Recipe, style and photo
by **ZANE JANSONE**,
gatavoza.lv

Ingredients (for the non-alcoholic version)
400 ml milk
100 ml sweetened condensed milk
1 tsp cloves
2 cinnamon sticks
100 g sugar
4 egg yolks
200 ml whipping cream
1/2 tsp. freshly ground nutmeg
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 pinch cinnamon as a garnish

Preparation
Pour the milk and condensed milk into a kettle. Add the cloves and cinnamon sticks. Heat to boiling temperature, but don't boil the mixture and remove from heat. Whip the egg yolks and sugar until they are light and airy. Slowly add the hot milk by the teaspoonful to the egg yolks, mixing it in lightly. Carefully pour the combined mixture back into the kettle. Heat over a low flame until the mixture starts to thicken (about 4-5 minutes). Add the whipping cream, vanilla and freshly ground nutmeg. Heat up the mixture again. Pour through a sieve and chill until the drink has completely cooled. Serve the eggnog with ice (on the rocks) and sprinkle with cinnamon.

Tip
For an alcoholic eggnog version, add about 100 ml of dark rum or brandy before chilling the mixture. **BO**

a passion to dream

BOSCA



ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION MAY HAVE ADVERSE EFFECTS

Christmas at *airBaltic*

Baltic Outlook asked some *airBaltic* staff members to recount how they celebrate Christmas and to share some of their most special moments.



Have you ever seen Santa Claus and his reindeer-driven sleigh flying through the skies?

Jānis Krištopš, captain of Bombardier Q400 NextGen aircraft



No, I have never seen Santa's sleigh anywhere near my plane. However, I have personally met Santa Claus several times in Rovaniemi, Finland, where he lives. Incidentally, if you land in Rovaniemi, then you can get a stamp in your passport that says "The official airport of Santa Claus".

Of course, I have occasionally flown on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day,

when the catering service and crew serve Christmas tea and gingerbread cookies to the passengers. The whole cabin smells like cinnamon and other spices. It's absolutely wonderful! Most of those who fly on that day also seem to be in a holiday mood. If the weather is clear and if you are flying at night, then you can see the Christmas lights lit up in the cities below, which look like fairytale lands from above.



How busy were *airBaltic* flights last Christmas?

Annija Mitenberga, junior revenue management performance analyst, loves all kinds of numbers and statistics

December 22 fell on a Monday and was the busiest day of Christmas Week. It had the **largest number of passengers (7529) flying on the largest number of flights (117)** between 34 cities and Riga.

On that day, the routes with the most passengers were between Helsinki and Riga (582), followed by Riga and Tallinn (513), Riga-Vilnius (398) and Riga-Munich (397). The fullest planes flew between Riga and Berlin (with a load factor of 87.8%) and between Kiev and Riga (87.6%).

The day before Christmas on December 24 was the quietest day during Christmas Week. On that day, slightly more than three thousand (3078) people boarded *airBaltic*'s planes. That day also had the smallest number of flights, when only 55 planes flew to 22 destinations. The most popular route was Riga-Moscow Sheremetyevo, with 353 passengers.

What is the tastiest Christmas recipe?

Gunita Lāce, senior cabin crew member and absolutely wonderful chef



Text by **ILZE POLE**

Photos courtesy of **JĀNIS KRIŠTOPŠ, JĀNIS VANAGS, LINDA STEPANOVA, NAURIS BRŪVELIS, DACE BĒRZIŅA-ZALPĒTERE, ANNIJA MITENBERGA** and **AIGA RĒDMANE**

Illustrations by **ANETE VANAGA**, senior cabin crew member



How do you celebrate Christmas with your family in Latvia?

Jānis Vanags, VP of corporate communications

a horse-driven sleigh to come in from the neighbouring horse farm. We sit the children into the sleigh and away they go!

We also practice the pagan tradition of dragging a log through the apple orchard and around all of the buildings to draw out the past year's troubles and misfortunes. Then we burn the log.

The thing that I enjoy most about Christmas is the opportunity to be

I celebrate Christmas outside of Riga at my country homestead in Latvia's westernmost region of Kurzeme. We are four families that gather there every year. We fire up the wood-heated stove, which we use to cook our meals, and we bake meat pasties (*pīrāgi*) in the oven. We also eat apples from orchard trees that I planted together with my brothers when I was six years old. We use these apples to cook apple pastries and drink apple juice that we press ourselves.

Shortly before the Christmas celebrations, we all go out into the forest together, trudging through the snow in search of the most beautiful Christmas spruce tree. Sometimes we also light up a bonfire and boil ourselves some tea. And sometimes we arrange for



together with my loved ones, as well as the lively sound of children's voices all around. I received the best present of all on Christmas Eve two years ago, when my third son was born.

HONEY CAKE WITH CHILI PEPPERS

Ingredients for the cake: 3 eggs, 150 g brown sugar, 200 g honey, 2 tsp. baking soda, 300 g flour, some cinnamon and chili pepper

Ingredients for the cream: 400 g sour cream, 500 g mascarpone cream, 150 g sugar, some lingonberries

Preparation: Beat the eggs, sugar and honey together in a bowl. Add the flour, soda, cinnamon and chili and whip

to a creamy mass. Cut out a piece of baking paper in the form of your baking mould and place it in the bottom of the mould. Bake three separate layers in succession, each about 1 cm thick, for 5-7 minutes at 180°C. Cool.

Whip together all of the ingredients for the cream. You can use different types of berries if you don't like lingonberries, or you can dispense with the berries entirely. Add the whipped cream mixture between the layers of the cake.



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What kind of atmosphere reigns in the office of airBaltic's CEO during the Christmas season?

Dace Bērziņa-Zalpētere, assistant to the CEO and the most cheerful face in the office

This will be my 12th Christmas together with

airBaltic. In the time leading up to Christmas, it seems that the atmosphere is a bit calmer and that my colleagues are even more friendly than usual with each other. Work assignments also seem to be easier to carry out.

Shortly before the first Sunday of Advent, I set up an Advent wreath in the CEO's office with real candles, making sure, of course, that they don't present a fire hazard.

I spent my first three years at *airBaltic* as a stewardess, and it seemed that passengers travel more with their children at this time of year. One could spot the occasional red Christmas hat, as well as nicely wrapped presents in the place of regular hand luggage. One had the feeling that joy and



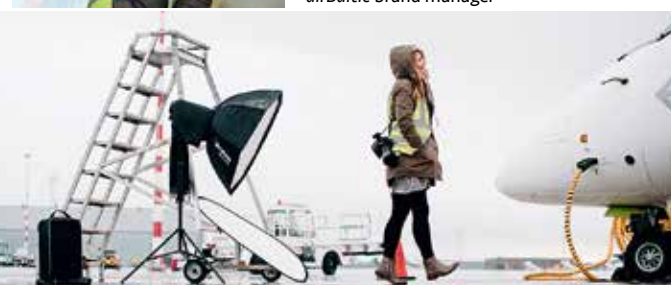
happiness were being passed on from one person to the other.

I wish all of our passengers a very merry Christmas of peace and love together with their family members. I hope that everyone experiences a small and wonderful Christmas miracle of their choosing, because up there, everything is possible!



Will the new airBaltic calendar for 2016 be on sale at Christmas time?

Linards Joniņš, *airBaltic* brand manager



Yes, it will be available in mid-December at *airBaltic* ticket counters at the Riga airport and through the Internet store at airbalticshop.com. In keeping with a longtime tradition, we chose *airBaltic* staff members as our calendar models. They had applied for the opportunity to be photographed in a professional setting, and we continued to highlight the beauty of women from the Baltic region. In

cooperation with photographer Aiga Rēdmane and stylist Anita Altmane, we wanted to create a reserved and northern yet simultaneously sensual ambience that contrasted with the technical and industrial background of the planes. Oh yes, about the Christmas season... Things gradually get a bit calmer once December sets in. In November, when preparations are made for the airline's holiday activities, you can really feel that Christmas will soon be upon us.



What is the most beautiful present that you have received and what do you usually give to others?

Linda Stepanova, *airBaltic* receptionist. She knows how to generate a true holiday spirit and is an expert at wrapping presents.

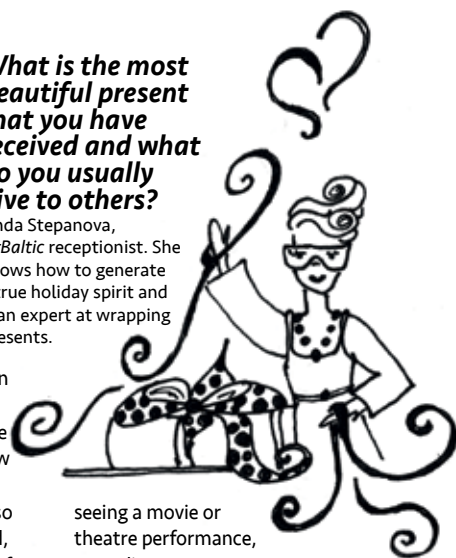
I really like the holiday season and the whole month of December, starting from the first Sunday of Advent until New Year's Eve and the morning of New Year's Day. My birthday also falls in the middle of this period, so December is one big month of celebrations for me.

In addition, I enjoy wrapping presents, which I do with the same degree of care as in the choice of the presents that I give. I always try to give something that I would like to receive myself. Lately, my presents have been connected with organic foods, or with natural and handmade items, as these tend to have been created with love and care.

I have a fantastic mother, whom I get to meet very rarely because we live in different countries. However, we are always together at Christmas, when we devote time for each other. We might do completely ordinary things, such as going out for dinner,

seeing a movie or theatre performance, attending an exhibition or simply doing nothing at all. The time that I get to spend with my mother is the best, most cherished and most beautiful present that I receive every year.

Every season, we try to generate a holiday atmosphere at our office. One doesn't need to give out lavish presents or stack huge piles of food onto the table. It's enough if you give your colleagues some gingerbread cookies and mandarin oranges, do up the office Christmas tree and have the movie *Home Alone* playing on the reception's TV set. That is sure to get your work mates smiling and you are guaranteed to hear the sound of laughter in the corridors.



Aside from performing on stage, have you also presented a guitar performance at home by the Christmas tree?

Nauris Brūvelis, international marketing manager, plays a Fender Telecaster electric guitar



No, because my family has already heard me practicing for hours on end at home and they are not very eager to hear me playing at Christmas as well. Also, with a few exceptions, the music that I play doesn't suit the Christmas spirit.

Some recordings sound so much better at certain times of the year, yet I don't have any particular favourite music to listen to at Christmas time. However, for the pre-Christmas period, the *Musica adventus* series by Latvian composer Pēteris Vasks does come to mind. When you listen to music like that, it is good to forget about the current season, the present time and the room that you are in.

Among the music that I have been listening to lately is Amon Tobin's *ISAM*, David Lang's *Cheating, Lying, Stealing*, the Swans' *The Seer*, Television's *Marquee Moon* and *Sala* by Pēteris Vasks. Some of these recordings have been a true discovery for me, while others have been favourites of mine for years and I still haven't got bored of them. **BO**

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A rooftop with grape wines



Tel Aviv-based architect
Neta Davidie

***Baltic Outlook* takes a tour inside a rooftop family apartment in Bitzaron, Tel Aviv**

Successful Tel Aviv-based architect Neta Davidie says that she has always wanted to do something creative and simultaneously useful. Immediately after finishing her architecture studies, she got her first job at a bureau and was asked to design a restaurant almost completely by herself.

"I got thrown into deep waters, but came out swimming," she says of her first project. Many years later, Davidie continues to enjoy taking on new and challenging assignments. In a conversation with *Baltic Outlook*, she reveals her most personal architecture story, namely, the history of her family's apartment.

Grandparents' gift

The building that houses Davidie's apartment is situated in the Bitzaron district of Tel Aviv. This area was built in the 1950s as a communal low-rise and low-cost project for the immediate habitation of immigrants, who arrived in Israel in large numbers after the Second World War. Davidie's apartment originally belonged to her grandfather's sister, who settled in Tel Aviv after arriving from postwar Poland. She didn't have any children of her own, so the apartment was passed on to Davidie's grandfather.

When Davidie moved in, the apartments in the neighbourhood were tiny and the streets were narrow – only about

six metres wide. Despite the district's high population density, each apartment had its own entrance and private garden. The flats on the top floor could be supplemented with a recessed half floor and roof balcony. Over time, the combination of affordable and extendable apartments with private gardens and rooftops together with their convenient location near Tel Aviv's business district turned Bitzaron into a popular and trendy area. Frequent apartment renovations were expressions of the personal style of their new owners. Davidie says that nowadays it's no longer easy to buy real estate in Bitzaron and that apartment prices there have skyrocketed.

▼ The entrance to Davidie's apartment is on the first floor. A flower motif is on the front door. The yellow plaster on the façade and the green windows were coordinated with the downstairs neighbour.



Davidie started working on her apartment right after getting married. She and her husband immediately fell in love with the neighbourhood, being charmed by its alleys, old folk and occasionally neglected houses. At the time when Davidie's grandparents gave her the apartment as a gift, Bitzaron wasn't exactly considered to be the best area of the city. Davidie's house was one

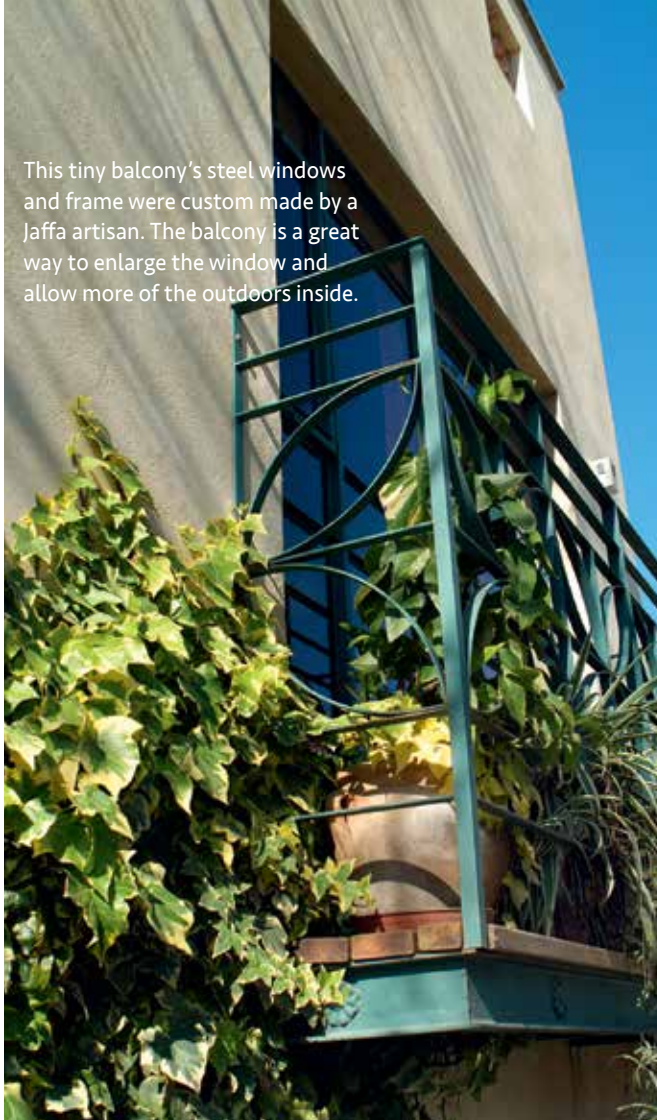
of the first on her street to be renovated completely, with a third floor and open roof balcony added during the reconstruction work. Davidie's neighbours on the ground floor renovated their apartment at the same time, and the house's residents chose its colour scheme together to make the building look complete and harmonious from the outside as well.

Details LIVING

The kitchen's bold orange laminate and stainless steel appliances go well with the green windows.



This tiny balcony's steel windows and frame were custom made by a Jaffa artisan. The balcony is a great way to enlarge the window and allow more of the outdoors inside.



The large roof balcony is the main area for entertaining. It has an olive tree, a lemon tree, plants and flowers, a barbecue and a jacuzzi. It is the family's outdoor garden and offers views of the skyscrapers that have started to appear in the vicinity.



Green architecture and flexibility

Like the city of Tel Aviv itself, Davidie's home is a symbiosis of the old and the new, with stainless steel in the kitchen alongside an antique piano and old-fashioned steel and glass cabinets. Shiny aluminium shutters coexist with green steel doors and windows. The grey terrazzo flooring in the bedrooms was made at a local factory about 200 metres from the house – a reminder of the original grey floor. A flower motif is used all over the apartment, including the iron railings, doors and pre-cast concrete blocks. Davidie first saw this quintessentially Israeli motif at her grandmother's old house and instantly fell in love with it. The flower is created by joining four half-circles in simple yet beautiful geometry.

Davidie and her husband planned their apartment for a growing family, which has doubled in size from two to four, and thus the master bedroom has been split in two with a sheet-rock wall. The room on the roof with its own private shower and toilet



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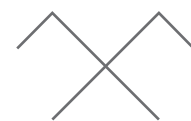
◀ The patio in the centre of the house provides Davidie with another area to plant greenery and flowers, and it brings lots of natural light into the house. The dining table is right next to the patio and two steps away from the kitchen.

▼ The living room has a wood stove as well as a custom-made cabinet and table of lacquered plywood. The sofas are old hand-me-downs, reupholstered in red and green.



can become a study, a guest room or another bedroom for the oldest child, depending on how it is furnished.

Natural light and ventilation were key design factors and dictated effective use of the fifth façade of the house – the roof. Thus, almost no electrical lighting is used in the house during the daytime. Even though no windows are allowed on the east façade and on half of the west façade, natural light comes in through the patio in the centre of the apartment, as well as from the skylight over the stairwell. The patio also serves as an airwell and naturally ventilates the inner bathroom. Surplus water from the roof watering system drips down to the potted plants on the ground level. The plants also serve as a visual barrier, screening the inhabitants from closely living neighbours while still allowing for floor-to-ceiling openings.



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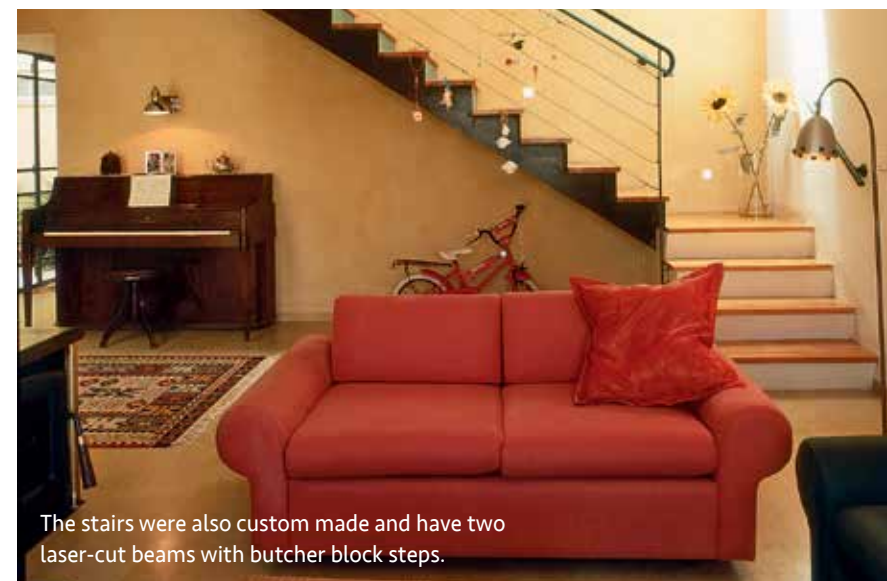
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Details **LIVING**



The stairs were also custom made and have two laser-cut beams with butcher block steps.



The room on the roof was formerly an office and is now a teenager's suite.

The transition from public to private space starts at the small entrance garden on the street level. A flight of outdoor stairs leads one to the house's outer walls near the front entrance. Inside, an orange wall gives way to the public patio, while a hallway leads to the private bedrooms. At the roof level, a private smaller area is accessed through a bedroom, while a bigger public area is accessed right at the top of the stairs.

The area on the roof is used to maximise the pleasure of outdoor living. Massive stone benches arch in a half-circle, leaving room at the corners for built-in plant basins in which trees, bushes and flowers are grown. A metal and wire frame holds grape vines that enclose the dining area outside, and a Jacuzzi is embedded into one of the roof corners with a view of the Tel Aviv skyline. **BO**

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IN SALZBURG, MUSIC IS EVERYTHING

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“Less is more” – no matter whether Mies van der Rohe or Coco Chanel first said this aphorism, it undoubtedly expresses one of the great truths in life – even now, during the weeks leading up to Christmas, which we tend to saturate with so much activity and stimuli. Because, despite all of the commotion, you’ve probably noticed that the real, genuine feeling of Christmas usually creeps up on us very quietly and unexpectedly.

In fact, it’s hard to imagine a more apt affirmation of “less is more” than the story of *Silent Night*. Did you know that the birthplace of that most famous and popular Christmas carol is a small and unassuming village near Salzburg? It lies directly on the border between Austria and Germany, with a river and bridge dividing the village in two, each side in a different country. It’s been that way since 1816, when, following the Napoleonic Wars, one half of the village was taken by the Kingdom of Bavaria and the other by the Austrian Empire. On the Austrian side, the village is called Oberndorf, and it is there where – thanks to a lucky coincidence – one of the most beautiful Christmas miracles was born. It’s a miracle that went on to change the ritual of this holiday worldwide.

Back in December 1818, local priest Joseph Mohr and teacher Franz Xaver Gruber, who also worked as the organist at the Oberndorf church, were deeply troubled by the fact that the organ had broken down right before Christmas. In this moment of crisis, Mohr remembered a poem he had written two years earlier. In order to somehow make do in the unfortunate situation, he asked Gruber to compose an appropriate melody for the poem – a melody in two parts, for tenor and soprano, choir and guitar. Thus, the premiere of *Silent Night* took place right on Christmas Eve in the small local church. That church no longer exists today, having suffered irreparable damage during the flood of 1890. But a miniature replica of



A view of Salzburg from the terrace of the Museum der Moderne, located on the top of nearby Mönchsberg

the church – a white sugarcube of a chapel – was erected on the site as a memorial in 1937. Located in a small, unassuming square surrounded by single-family homes, the chapel serves as a quiet sanctuary for the song that has since been translated into more than 300 languages and without which Christmas can no longer be imagined.

Mohr was born about 20 kilometres from Oberndorf, in Salzburg. In fact, the house that he was born in stood on Steingasse, one of the city's oldest streets. He was an illegitimate child of Franz Mohr, a mercenary soldier. His most famous poem is by now steeped in a number of legends, and one of these tells that Mohr may have dedicated the poem to the liberation of Salzburg from Napoleon's occupation. The priest was a social activist and defended the rights of poor peasants living on the outskirts of prosperous Salzburg. Although he later became a Catholic priest, he is nevertheless called one of the first Socialists.

Be that as it may, *Silent Night* has practically become the holy anthem of Salzburg's Christmas ritual. As the sounds of the organ die out towards the end of Midnight Mass, all artificial lighting is turned off, and the congregation sings *Silent Night* in candlelight. Even the lead-up to Christmas feels more genuine and authentic in Salzburg, the direct descendant of so many old Christmas traditions. After all, the city's most legendary Christmas market has operated in Cathedral Square since the 15th century. The market hosts a *Turmblosen* (brass instruments) concert every Saturday at 6:30 PM from November 19 to December 26.

After flying into Salzburg, it's worth not hurrying straight to the city centre. First, why not visit *Hangar-7* just on the other side of the airport (Wilhelm-Spazier-Straße 7a; hangar-7.com)? The glass wonder is the brainchild of billionaire Dietrich Mateschitz, owner of *Red Bull*. The giant, vaguely beetle-shaped complex unites three of his passions under one roof: the fine arts, the culinary arts and a love of flying. In between the bizarre flying machines (Mateschitz has an impressive collection of vintage aircraft) and *Red Bull* race cars, *Hangar-7* regularly hosts exciting exhibitions of artwork by new artists. After all, supporting new and crazy ideas is one of the priorities of the exhibition space. To that end, *Ikarus*, the centre's restaurant, is famous for bringing in a different top chef each month to run the kitchen. In any case, a visit to *Hangar-7* is always an experience, even if you just stop by for a coffee at the bar and a look at the current exhibition.

As you wander around Salzburg's Baroque-style Mirabell Gardens, pay

Mozart and *The Sound of Music*

Salzburg is one of the most special cities in Europe, and its silhouette alone likely has no rival. The majestic 11th-century Hohensalzburg fortress (the largest fully preserved fortress in Europe) and 507-metre Mönchsberg (now with the Museum of Modern Art at the top) define the city on one side, while at the foot of the hills stands the Collegiate Church, one of Austria's best known Baroque-style churches, built in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. In the distance is the Untersberg Massif, whose tallest peak, Berchtesgadener Hochthron (1973 m), was made world-famous by the film *The Sound of Music* (1965). Add this to the fact that Salzburg is Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's birthplace and also the home of Europe's most prestigious classical music festival (the Salzburg Festival), and one wonders what more a single city of approximately 150,000 residents can dream of. Salzburg, also one of Europe's richest cities, undeniably realises how special it is.

To begin with, the source of the city's prosperity is encoded in the name itself, as *Salz* is the German word for "salt". And salt has been Salzburg's "white gold" since the very beginning. The ancient Celts began mining salt long ago in nearby Dürnberrg Mountain. Today, the mines are open to the public and one of the oldest such tourist attractions in the world. "White gold" eventually also allowed Salzburg to gain impressive power and influence in the highest echelons of the Catholic Church, which it still enjoys to the present day.

This
is the time
for forgiveness,
for joy and happiness,
for hope and believe, but
most of all, this is the time for
LOVE!



WE WISH YOU A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Beyond Recall, an artwork by Brigitte Kowanz at the Salzburg Staatsbrücke, or City Bridge

Salt also helped finance the construction of the city's much-admired Baroque-style skyline, now included on the UNESCO list of world heritage sites. Even though Salzburg was granted official city status already in 1120, it came into its prime considerably later, in the 17th and 18th centuries, when prince-archbishops Wolf Dietrich von Raitenau, Markus Sittikus and Paris Lodron finally realised one of their greatest ambitions, namely, to turn the Gothic-style city into a "German Rome". This plan was entrusted to the Italian architect Santino Solari, under whose direction medieval Salzburg became a city of squares and fountains that on sunny summer days truly reminds one of Italy.

Despite being a dignified city, Salzburg has never shied away from showing its prosperity. The best time to see the city's extravagances at their height is July and August, when Salzburg hosts its annual summer festival. It's a time when heirloom jewels, otherwise kept hidden and under lock, are taken out and worn in public with pride and poise and often in combination with clothing inspired by traditional Austrian folk costumes. It's especially charming to see people riding around on bicycles, the men in suits and the women with the bottoms of their dresses pinned up. Naturally, in summer the hotel prices go up proportionately to the number of jewels seen in public. And not only in Salzburg itself, but in the whole surrounding area. The locals laugh that a couple of times a year, their little village turns into a metropolis, as the narrow, cobbled streets fill with international crowds. Photographers and fans flock at the entry to the Großes Festspielhaus,

attention to the strange dwarf sculptures. They're not characters from fairy tales! They were made in 1715 and are all based on real people living in the prince-archbishop's court at the time.

If you'd like to take a day trip outside the city, a fine destination is the *Riesnerhof* restaurant (Mondseeberg 6, 5310 Mondsee; riesnerhof.com), which is located in a village featured in *The Sound of Music*. More precisely, the wedding scene was filmed in the Mondsee church. *Riesnerhof* serves very good Austrian food, although the main draw is the fantastic view of the lake and surrounding mountains.

For those who like to combine skiing and other winter activities with an inspiring cultural vacation, we can suggest *Der Seehof* hotel about an hour's drive from Salzburg (Hofmark 8, 5622 Goldegg; derseehof.at). The owners are art collectors and the hotel interior boasts an impressive collection of works by Erwin Wurm, Peter Kogler, Tony Cragg, Franz West, Maria Lassnig, Gerhard Richter and other artists.



An artwork by Anselm Kiefer in front of Salzburg's Großes Festspielhaus



Hangar-7

because showing off and people-watching are no less essential parts of the festival than the music.

The Salzburg Festival was founded by a trio of famous artists: director Max Reinhardt, composer Richard Strauss and poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal. As the First World War was coming to an end, the three artists decided that people needed a celebration. And that's exactly what they created, opening the first Salzburg Festival on August 22, 1920, with a production of Hofmannsthal's morality play *Jedermann* (Everyman). The now classic play is performed in Cathedral Square (albeit in new interpretations) and has been a part of the festival ever since. Even though the festival includes theatre and concerts, it is best known for the operas performed by world-famous singers and musicians, including the Vienna Philharmonic.

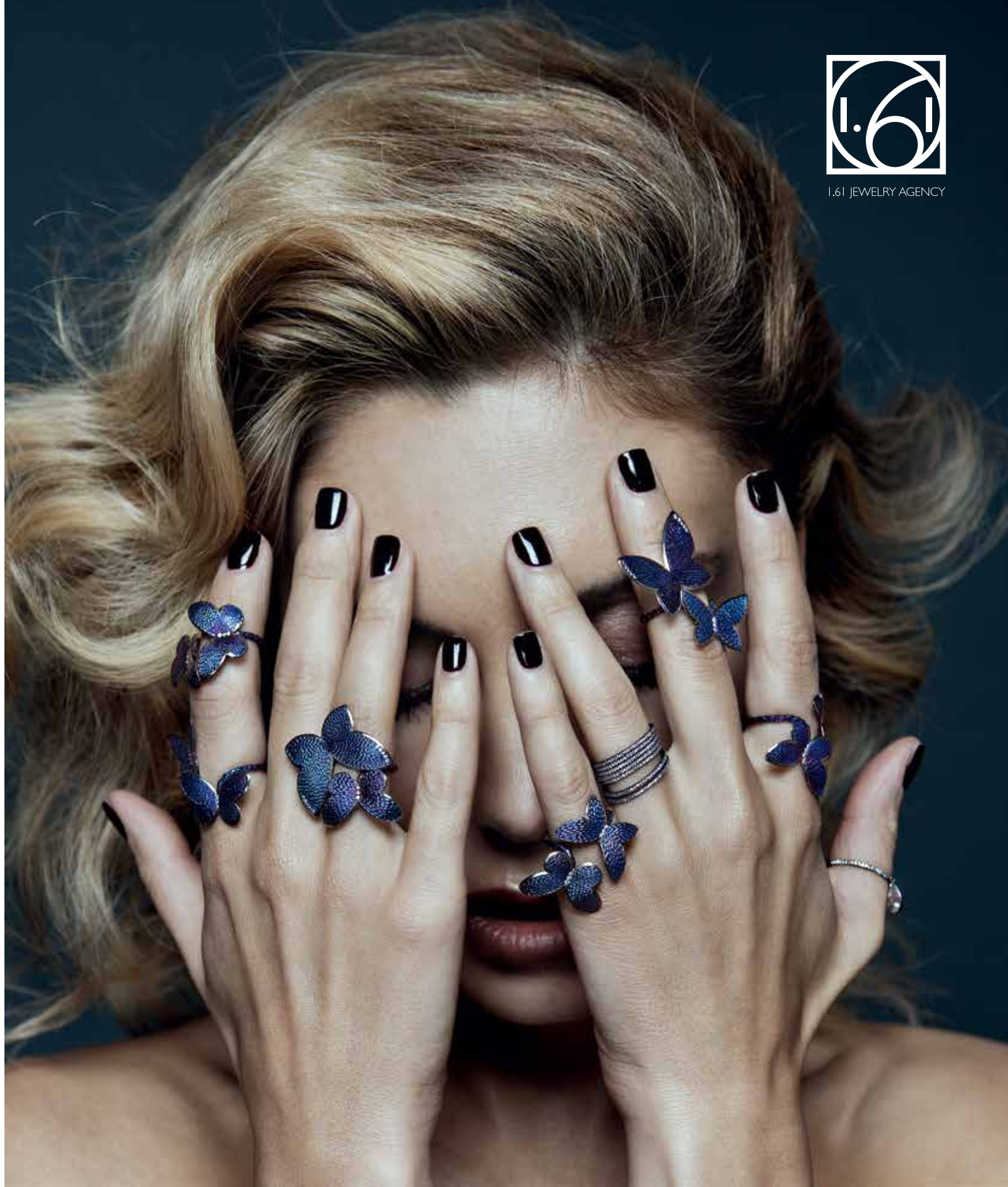
When it was decided in 1956 to build a special concert hall next to Mönchsberg, 55,000 cubic metres of rock were removed from the cliff wall to make way for it. The façade of the new building includes that of the former royal stables, which had been on the site before, and the horsehead motif in the mosaic floor also reflects the building's former purpose. The Großes Festspielhaus was opened to the public in 1960 with a performance of Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier* conducted by Herbert von Karajan and is one of the largest opera houses in the world.

Leopoldskron – an altar to enduring grandeur

The Salzburg Festival is also closely linked to one of the city's legendary palaces, the Rococo-style

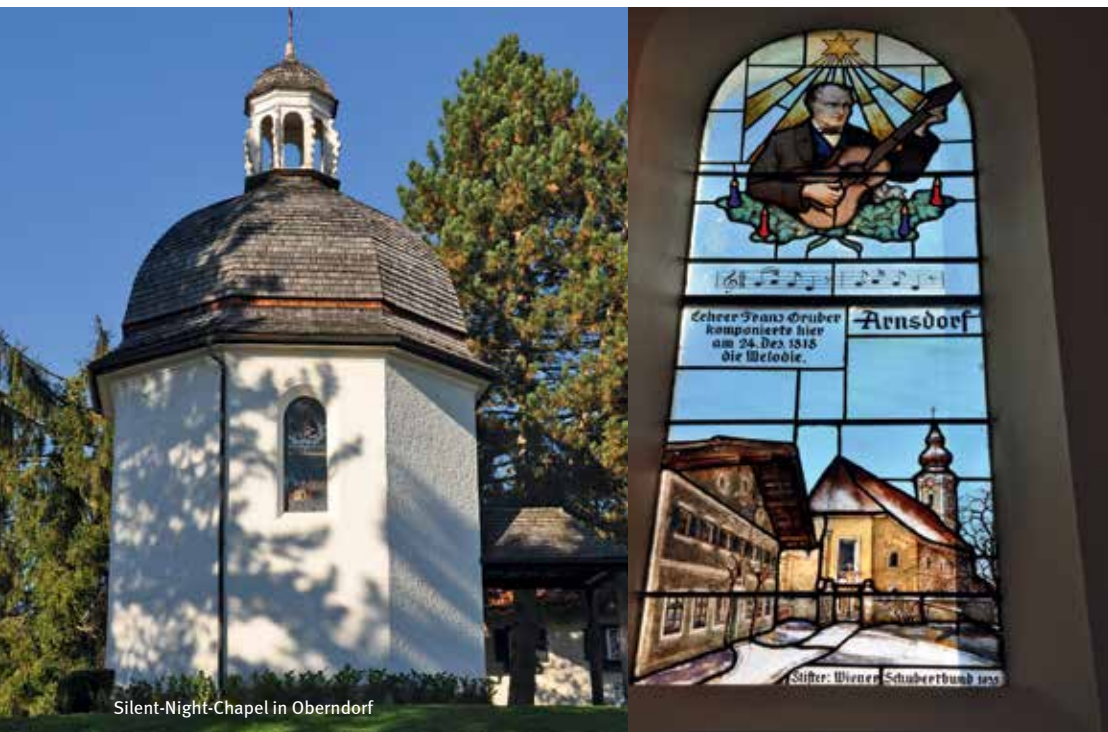


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The Schloss Leopoldskron is a Rococo palace that also houses a hotel

It was at Leopoldskron where the idea for the Salzburg Festival was born

Schloss Leopoldskron. The palace was originally built by Prince Archbishop of Salzburg, Leopold Anton Freiherr von Firmian (1679-1744) as a family property. Even though the archbishop was a well-known patron of the sciences and arts, his name is also associated with one of the darker chapters of the city's history, namely, the expulsion of more than 22,000 Protestants from Salzburg. The construction of the palace is said to have been an effort on his part to restore his own social standing.

Ownership of the palace changed hands several times over the years, until in 1918 – by which time it had fallen into disrepair – it was bought by Max Reinhardt, a theatre director known throughout Europe. He engaged Salzburg's best craftsmen to restore the prominent Grand Hall and Marble Hall, and Reinhardt himself added a library and Venetian Room to the building. He then turned the palace into a stage for his theatre productions, during which audiences often moved from room to room throughout the palace. The lake in front of the palace and its backdrop of mountains were also featured in the performances. And it was at Leopoldskron – where the best writers, directors, actors and composers of the day gathered – where the idea for the Salzburg Festival was born.

In 1938, however, the Nazi government confiscated the palace, deeming it a "Jewish property". Reinhardt himself emigrated to America and never returned to Europe. The palace was returned to the family in 1945, which offered it two years later to the Salzburg Global Seminar, an organisation founded by two graduates of Harvard University. The Seminar still owns the palace today.

However, most people know Leopoldskron from *The Sound of Music*. When Max Reinhardt's son, Wolfgang, bought the film rights to the story from Maria von Trapp in 1956, the palace became one of the main filming locations – the Trapp family's residence. Despite the popularity it has gained from the film, which is one of Salzburg's tourism "gold mines", Leopoldskron has not become a museum. It remains an active and functioning organism, serving both as the home of the above-mentioned foundation as well as the *Schloss Leopoldskron* hotel. Unfortunately, since the palace is a private property, the only way that you can get onto the balcony where Maria and the Captain danced is to reserve a room in the hotel. Otherwise, you'll just have to reconcile yourself to a walk in the palace park or around the lake, which, you'll have to admit, is truly beautiful.

It's definitely worth having a look at Reinhardt's library and the palace's ornate halls in another part of the building. The old wooden floor creaks profoundly, and the amount of wear and tear on the palace's opulence is exactly enough for you to believe that the place is still full of life and that the old traditions, carefully attended to by a small group of select people, are still as alive as can be.

As it happens, a new version of events has been released this year in honour of the 50th anniversary of the popular film. Created in Salzburg and titled *The von Trapp Family: A Life of Music*, the new film, which just opened in November, is based on Agathe von Trapp's autobiography. In addition, an exhibition of Austrian photographer Erich Lessing's photos from the set of the legendary Hollywood musical can be seen at Schloss Arenberg until April 30. Lessing, now 92 years old, had exclusive rights to photograph during the filming, and his camera captured many fine portraits of Julie Andrews, who played the main role, as well as countless other behind-the-scenes moments.

Considering the relatively small size of the city, the intensity of musical life in Salzburg is quite unbelievable. Each year,

approximately 4000 music-related events take place. The Salzburg Advent Singing performances in the Großes Festspielhaus have long become a Christmas tradition, as have the various concerts in the city's churches, most of which are free of charge. Every January since 1956 – in honour of Mozart's birthday – Salzburg resounds with Mozart Week, drawing lovers of the famous composer's music from all corners of the world. Ironically, although the modest house at Getreidestrasse 9 that was Mozart's birthplace on January 27, 1756, is now glorified in all sorts of ways – including chocolate – it was precisely in Salzburg where the composer spent his most difficult years, struggling to earn a living and never fully appreciated. "Salzburg is no place for my talents. In the first place, professional musicians there are not held in much consideration; and secondly, one hears nothing there – there is no theatre, no opera. And even if they wanted one, who is there to sing?" wrote Mozart in a letter in 1778 to a Jesuit priest and good friend of the family.

Back then, Mozart probably never dreamed that the city he was forced to leave in order to realise himself as a musician would later become a pilgrimage destination for music-lovers. Next month, Mozart Week will last from January 22 to January 31 and will feature choral and orchestral works by two geniuses: Mozart and Mendelssohn.

As art gallery owner Thaddaeus Ropac, one of the most notable characters on Salzburg's current cultural scene, once told me in an interview for *Arterritory*, "I live in a city where music means everything to the inhabitants. The people pay huge amounts of money for a musical education. Music at its highest expression. Salzburg is obsessed with classical music. It's a wonderful place and a wonderful feeling."

A citadel of conservatism

Always impeccably dressed in a suit and white shirt, the prominent Austrian gallerist has been a virtuoso of the art market for over 30 years, representing about 60 artists, including such illustrious names as Anselm Kiefer, Gilbert & George, George Baselitz and Alex Katz. Ropac began his career in Salzburg, where in 1983, at age 23, he opened his first gallery in the Mirabell Gardens – the romantic Baroque-style oasis first opened to the public by Emperor Franz Joseph in 1854 and later the site of Maria and the children singing *Do-Re-Mi*. Ropac's gallery is in the Villa Kast, a 19th-century villa partially hidden behind a green hedge. He opened a second gallery in Salzburg in 2010, the 4000-square-metre Salzburg Halle in an industrial building on the outskirts of the city. The active exhibition schedule at both galleries largely dictates the tone of cultural life in Salzburg at any given moment.



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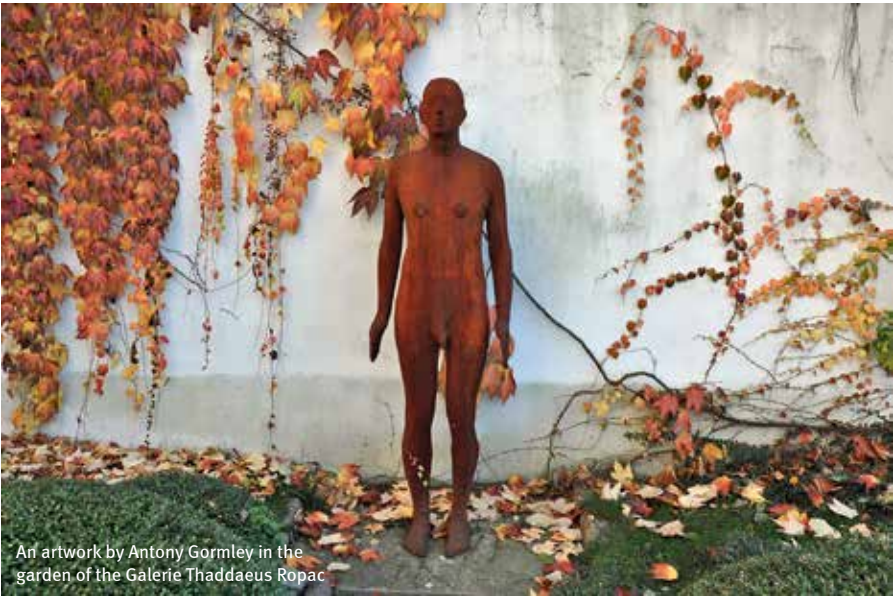
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An artwork by Antony Gormley in the garden of the Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac

The damage was estimated at 35,000 euros, and the protester had to appear in court

Since 2009, Ropac has been the president of the board of trustees of the Salzburg Foundation and, thanks in large part to his initiatives, Salzburg can today pride itself in a great urban project called the *Walk of Modern Art*. As a part of the project, 12 works of contemporary art have been permanently installed throughout the city. These include Marina Abramović's dedication to Mozart, James Turrell's iconic *Skyspace* next to the Museum of Modern Art, Jaume Plensa's *Dietrichsruh* (a gigantic girl's head made of Spanish marble) in University Square, Anselm Kiefer's installation right across from the Festspielhaus and others.

"We began this initiative with the Salzburg Foundation in 2002, and I think the project has been successful. But it wasn't at the beginning. The people were very much against it. They said that we already have so many churches and castles and, to top it off, we don't want contemporary art in the middle of it all, too. It was quite a struggle. But I think we've won, and people now like these sculptures very much. And we add one or two new ones every year," says Ropac, admitting that it's hard to implement new initiatives in places that are as conservative as Salzburg.

A sculpture of Mozart by German painter and sculptor Markus Lüpertz caused the biggest uproar. Created in 2006, it was the artist's personal homage to Salzburg's most famous son. The 2.95-metre-tall bronze figure is located in Ursulinenplatz and combines a female torso with a bust of Mozart, complete with his signature ponytail. Unfortunately, Lüpertz's noble idea of the relationship between an artist and his muse, between Mozart's character and the strength and fragility of his music, did not fall on sympathetic ears among the locals. In fact, shortly after the sculpture was erected, a passionate protestor smeared it with paint and feathers. The damage was estimated at 35,000 euros, and the protester had to appear in court.

"People were very much against the sculpture also because it was contemporary art, which they didn't understand at all. They just said that this is ugly because it doesn't look like Mozart on the Mozartplatz. I'm sure there are people who still hate it, but it creates a discussion, and cities need discussions to wake up. People in Salzburg are very proud of their city, and you really have to shake them up pretty hard to open up to new things. I think it's starting to be a little bit better



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now. For example, if someone took away the big golden *Sphaera* sculpture by Stephan Balkenhol at Kapitelplatz, I think people would be very disappointed. In the beginning they didn't know what to think about it, but now I think they see it differently," says Bettina Fischer, who three years ago opened the Madero Collectors Room, a design gallery specialising in vintage 20th-century furniture, together with Mexican-born and now Salzburg-based collector and dealer Alejandro Madero.

Steingasse was once the main salt road, which led from the salt mines at Hallein to Italy

of the people who come to that part of town are also heading up the hill to the Nonnberg Benedictine abbey, in which *The Sound of Music* nuns sang their famous song, *Maria*.

"I call it the orphan neighbourhood of Salzburg. It's one of the oldest areas of the city because of Nonnberg Abbey, but until recently it was largely abandoned. Here you can still find little shops, and the people living there all know each other. The rents, unlike in the city centre, are still affordable; artists are moving here, galleries are starting to move here. I think one of the reasons why they're moving here is that the neighbourhood has something of the Old World that has been lost elsewhere. Everything is here – the hairdresser, the dry-cleaner (the best in town), a fabulous bakery down the street, the butcher where you can chat about what's going on in the neighbourhood. We're all in contact, and every summer we do a party together with live music. And we all want to keep this atmosphere and nurture it," says Fischer.

This feeling of being a republic onto its own can also be felt across the river on Steingasse, Salzburg's oldest street. Located at the foot of Kapuzinerberg, Steingasse meanders parallel to the Salzach River and still bears a medieval charm. This was once the main salt road, which led from the salt mines at Hallein to Italy. Thanks to the proximity of water, many craftsmen also set up their workshops here: butchers, potters, tanners and so on. But a certain wildness has always ruled here, because thanks to the closeness of the river and mountains, the street often flooded in springtime and still does from time to time, leaving the owners



MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS

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Right across from the brothel's red lantern is *Köchelverzeichnis*, one of the most interesting addresses on the local gastronomy scene, named after the system developed in 1862 to catalogue Mozart's compositions. Climb a few stone steps and you enter a small living-room-like space with just a couple of tables and a separate kitchen area. On the stove is a steaming pot of the pasta-du-jour, and the cook doubles as the restaurant's host. All of the foods are prepared in front of the guests, as would happen at home – honestly and excellently. Sit by the window and you can take a curious look outside every once in a while at the “red light” house across the way. Just as in a real home kitchen, everyone here takes their time and there's no hurry, so it's the perfect place to enjoy a peaceful evening.

Karl's dream was to open a restaurant whose guests would become friends of the family, a part of *Maier's*. He personally introduces every guest to the day's menu, and it's no surprise that residents of Salzburg visit here repeatedly. The duck breast in raspberry sauce is simply superb, as is the ribeye steak, which is aged for a month in soda water. You might not be drawn into *Maier's* by just passing it on the street, nor does the classic and modest interior, where the only decoration is a pair of deer antlers on the wall, entice the unknowing.

Even though Salzburg seems like a small city, it does not lack for secrets. And if you think you'll discover them all on just a brief weekend visit, then that's also an illusion, which just proves once more that "less is more".





Alejandro Madero and Bettina Fischer

Small is beautiful

One of the best design dealers in the German-speaking countries – that's what the highly respectable *Architectural Digest* called Madero Collectors Room, a design gallery that opened three years ago in Salzburg. While the gallery specialises in 20th-century vintage design furniture, it also initiates a variety of design and art projects. The owners are well-known personalities on the Salzburg social scene: Mexican-born art collector and dealer Alejandro Madero, whose great-granduncle Francisco I. Madero served as Mexico's first democratically elected president, and Bettina Fischer, who is closely linked with cinema and theatre.

Fischer was born in Salzburg but left the city at age 19, "because I didn't want Mozart anymore." She spent 12 years in Los Angeles studying filmmaking and then headed to Paris, where she worked as a television producer. When she realised that she was ready for a change in her life, she moved back to her native city.

"I'm very attached to Salzburg. Everything that I ran away from I appreciate today," she says, sharing her thoughts about Salzburg with *Baltic Outlook*.

SALZBURG IS EXCEPTIONAL because it's a small town. I think we have no more than 150,000 inhabitants, but our music festival (the summer festival here is one of the best in the world) has always brought people from many countries. The locals joke that Salzburg is a village that turns into a metropolis a couple of times a year. Of course, that's coloured the thinking, and it's coloured the general atmosphere of the city. Salzburg is also a very wealthy town and very glamorous. People in other Austrian cities, especially Vienna, have a negative view of the cultural life in Salzburg, because from their point of view, it's too bourgeois. People get all dressed up to go to a concert or opera, but, honestly, I think it's fun. We don't have many occasions to put on glamorous jewellery and dresses and be creative in doing so. I think it's nice to have a festival that's not so pedestrian.

Of course, you can go to a concert in jeans if you wish, but the best artists in the world come here during the Salzburg Festival, and there's a festive atmosphere all around. I sometimes love to sit in a café when people go to the festival just to watch people and see how they're decked out, because that's saying something about who they are and who they want to be. And that's very fun.

Music is in Salzburg's blood. We often go to the Morzarteum, to concerts at the university, and they're fabulous. There you can hear music that doesn't necessarily make it to the big stage. You can experiment and you can discover new things. We have the Mozart Festival in January, and the Easter Festival founded by Herbert von Karajan. We have festivals all year round.

I'M VERY GRATEFUL TO LIVE HERE, because Salzburg has a certain quality and you can really enjoy the "small is beautiful" side of the city in everyday life. I lived in big cities for 25 years and I now feel that I'm done with that. I don't need all the business of the big city anymore, there's enough here. At the same time, though, you're

in the middle of Europe. One-and-a-half hours by car and you're in Munich, two-and-a-half hours by train to Vienna, four hours to Venice. Living in Salzburg, I have more time for the things that are important to me, because daily life isn't so exhausting. It's very easy to get things done here; you don't waste a lot of time standing in line at the post office or finding a parking space to do your shopping. It's more practical here, it's easier, like in any smaller town.

ONE OF MY FAVOURITE PLACES IS LAKE FUSCHL. There's a castle on the lakeshore that's now a hotel – *Schloss Fuschl*. And there's a path around the lake that's absolutely magical to hike (it takes approximately 2.5 hours). There are hardly any buildings around, and you can really enjoy the beautiful nature.

Gaisberg mountain is also a very special place. It's around 1500 metres high, which is why it's called the "balcony of Salzburg", and there are some fabulous inns up there. One of my favourites is *Erentrudis* (erentrudisalm.at). It's an old country inn that is owned by the nuns of the Nonnberg Abbey. There you'll find fabulous Austrian home cooking. It's very inexpensive and it has a beautiful atmosphere. I go there almost every weekend. It's a very nice walk – approximately two hours up and one hour down. But, of course, you can also drive there.

The presence of the Church is very powerful in Salzburg. We have 41 churches, and they make a very special atmosphere in the city, even if you're not religious. My favourite churches are Stiftskirche St. Peter and the Franziskanerkirche. To hear Mozart's *Requiem* in St. Peter's is one of the most beautiful experiences. I sometimes visit when nobody's there just to feel the atmosphere. Franziskanerkirche hosts concerts practically every Sunday and most of them are for free. It's very special to experience good, beautiful music in that kind of environment, especially at Christmas time. **BO**



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THE MULTI-MILLIONAIRE

WHO DIDN'T
PLAN ON MAKING
IT BIG



Text by **FLORIAN MAAß**
Photos courtesy of **VIJAY SAPRE**

Vijay Sapre (b. 1962) is the founder of one of Europe's first big Internet successes, the website mobile.de. Today, the website's German version alone sees about 10 million monthly visitors and over 1.4 million motor vehicles are on offer there, making it the continent's most popular online car market. But that's only one part of Sapre's professional life. He has been a musician, taxi driver, copy writer, publisher and restaurant owner. Now he is also an advertising character, being the face of *Nespresso's* current campaign and ousting actor George Clooney for a spell.

My meeting with Vijay Sapre takes place in a Hamburg café by the Elbe River on a foggy autumn afternoon. It later continues on the rooftop terrace of the adjacent white, ornate and turreted *Gründerzeit* house where Sapre lives with his wife, Karen, and their three children. The house is located directly above the city beach, offering a fine view of the river and a large part of the port. Like the rest of the neighbourhood, Sapre's home was built on a hill on the banks of the Elbe, which creates the feeling of being in a fishing village by the sea. A long time ago, this idyllic district was reserved for ship captains.

"In the summer it is very different here, quite turbulent in fact," says Sapre of the season when sunbathers, tourists and walkers swarm to what is one of Hamburg's most beautiful places.

As a student, Sapre jogged in this area and fell in love with the house. Eventually, he was able to buy it. His success wasn't planned, and one of his favourite quotes is by Bob Dylan: "Life just happens, you can't plan it."

Unforgettable experience

The son of an Indian engineer and German mother, Sapre spent several semesters studying rather aimlessly (including, of course, philosophy), like many other members of his baby-boomer generation. He also waited tables and followed the dream of a musical career with his post-punk band *The Gift*.

"I put a lot of energy into music," Sapre recalls. However, he failed to succeed commercially with the band, so he also worked as a taxi driver to make ends meet.

"I still benefit from what I learned about people as a taxi driver," says Sapre. Consequently, anyone who treats service staff in a condescending way loses all credit with the business magnate, for whom attitude is a key concept.

By chance, Sapre became a copywriter at one of Germany's leading agencies, *Scholz & Friends*. One of the agency's customers was a car dealer, while another was AOL. Very soon, Sapre became enthusiastic about a new medium called the Internet, which provided the potential for addressing a practically limitless public.

"The underlying protocol of www is brilliant," he says rhapsodically. That led to Sapre's big breakthrough. Seeking to be a part of this new and exciting communications platform, he and a friend

Sapre still has pangs of regret about selling his company to eBay in 2005

founded one of the first sales portals for used cars, mobile.de, in 1996.

"In those days, you could easily take on big themes," he says, admitting that he wasn't particularly interested in cars at the time. In fact, he didn't even have a car of his own. Initially, his goal was to create a website independently and to see if it worked. Like everything that he does, Sapre approached the task very thoroughly and even wrote much of the code that's used at mobile.de, despite the fact that the main responsibility for the programming lay with his business partner.

By 2001, mobile.de was operating in the black and employed more than 100 employees. Sapre still has pangs of regret about selling his company to eBay



Sapre initially followed the dream of a musical career with his post-punk band *The Gift*

After selling *mobile.de*, the Internet pioneer spent an idle period living in the lap of luxury

in 2005, a commercial move that made him very rich (he is shy to reveal the sum that he received) but deprived his children of the opportunity to inherit the website.

Food magazine

Without any specific tasks to do and with loads of money to spend, Sapre spent some time living in the lap of luxury, but that idle lifestyle soon began to taste rather dull. So, instead of coming up with the next big thing in online trading (as many people were expecting), he took on a cooking internship at a *Michelin*-starred restaurant, thus fulfilling a long-held dream. Cooking had been a secret passion of Sapre's for quite some time, partly because there had never been any ready-made food in his German-Indian family home.

The insights that Sapre gained while interning at a gourmet kitchen impressed him, but he felt too old to become a full-time chef. To turn his interest in food into a profession, Sapre ambitiously launched the food wiki *Kochpiraten.de*, investing a great deal

in advertising expenses to promote the site. He sought well-written articles about food, rather than straightforward knowledge databases.

Then, in 2008, when many other publishers were switching from printed magazines to an online format, Sapre bucked the trend and went to press with the food magazine *Effilee*. The themes covered ranged from articles about the everyday life of a dishwasher or waiter to the best currywurst stands. There were also visits to the kitchens of ground-breaking chefs and advice on how to make sausages and meat platters. According to Sapre, *Effilee* goes against our increasingly abstract relationship with food.

"Nowadays, we hardly know anything about industrially produced food. We eat products whose ingredients have been carted around from all over the world."

At the same time, more and more people have been defining themselves by what they do *not* eat. Is that a substitute for religion?

"Food taboos play a major role in all religions," says Sapre. "You practice renunciation and thus soothe your conscience. You forego certain foods to feel better about yourself. That concept doesn't make sense to me." Thus, a caption in the latest issue of *Effilee* reads: "Everything that makes you fat and happy," in a tribute to what is popularly known as "comfort food".

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“I’m not an elitist and never wanted to be”

He enjoyed working with a highly professional advertisement team after so long, adding that “I really like the taste” of Nespresso coffee. Sapre admits being surprised by some critical reactions in the food scene, because “I’m not an elitist and never wanted to be.” Today, he can still tell you where to get Hamburg’s best Döner kebab – useful knowledge back then as a taxi driver and now as a father.

During the two years that the *Mercier and Camier* was in operation (until August 1 of this year), it hosted readings by famous authors, being located in Hamburg’s foremost literary establishment, the *Literaturhaus*. That turned out to be detrimental to the business, because people don’t drink or eat while

listening to poetry readings. Eventually, Sapre shut down the restaurant, strongly refuting media images of him as a bored millionaire who likes to waste his money on his inclinations. *Effilee*, he counters, is the most sophisticated German food magazine. It has been awarded for its artwork and now has a solid readership of about 30,000.

Sapre has finally acquired an interest in cars and drives a 1965 *Bentley S3* as well as a *Volkswagen Bully*. Naturally, he bought both of these vehicles through *mobile.de*.

“It’s still the best vehicle market on the Internet,” he is convinced. As is typical for Internet pioneers, he behaves rather cautiously on the web and advises others to do so as well: “I would never post my vacation photos on *Facebook*,” he warns.

Sapre still plays music on the piano, and when he feels unobserved, he sings along to his pieces as well.

With his dandified appearance, measured answers to questions and talent for public speaking, Sapre would make a coveted guest speaker at leadership seminars, especially since he has a good sense for trends. However, he hardly ever addresses such events, because he doesn’t profess any specific business principles or great plans, other than being fair to others and keeping one’s feet planted firmly on the ground.

Sapre claims not to have any big dreams. Why so? Because his life is exactly as he wanted it to be. Well, almost. He would still like to visit Iceland one day.

Sapre’s eight-year-old son appears and wants some of daddy’s attention. Since it has become a bit chilly outside, we go into his house.

“Give me a few more minutes and I’ll prepare some sushi for you,” he says.

“Oh yes, that’s yummy!” his son answers happily. **BO**



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WHERE TO FIND THE PERFECT **CHRISTMAS FEELING?**

Baltic Outlook has found some places where the festive feeling of Christmas is definitely in the air, even it's not the 25th of December.

Text by **UNA MEISTERE**
Publicity photos and by *Corbis*



LONDON CLARIDGES

At a time when everything around us has become so unpredictable (including the winter climate), it is hard to imagine a more suitable person to decorate the legendary Christmas tree at the *Claridges* luxury hotel in London than Christopher Bailey, the creative director and CEO of the *Burberry* fashion brand. Bailey has decorated this year's version of the tree with more than 100 different-sized umbrellas, each of which has been finished in either gold or silver metallic fabric. The umbrellas pay a playful tribute to England's notoriously bad weather, and to the changes that *Burberry's* classical trench coats have experienced in both style and fabric since they first came onto the market in 1856.

Traditionally lit up on November 16, *Claridges'* Christmas tree has long symbolised the start of the festive season in the British capital, and

Bailey has decorated this year's version of the tree with more than 100 different-sized umbrellas

this is the sixth consecutive year that the tree's decoration has been entrusted to a famous fashion designer. British fashion enfant terrible John Galliano began the tradition in 2009, followed by *Lanvin* designer Alber Elbaz, John Galliano and Italian fashion duo Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana.

As at any respectable fashion show, Bailey is getting some serious competition this year from British ex-punk and new wave fashion diva Vivienne Westwood, who has bedecked another Christmas tree on the 31st floor of the Shard skyscraper in an extravagant array of colours and textures. The tree is part of a charity project by Westwood, the *Aqua Shard* restaurant and the *Cool Earth* fund. As part of the project to protect rainforests in Papua New Guinea, Westwood has also created a series of desserts for the *Aqua Shard*, including a chocolate mousse made with cocoa beans from Peru. Since half of the price that clients pay for these sinfully delectable desserts will be donated to the rainforest project, why not fall into temptation for a good cause during the Christmas season?



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VIENNA'S MUSEUM QUARTER

Along with its legendary Christmas markets, Vienna is also known for its grandiose winter celebrations in the city's Museum Quarter (*MuseumsQuartier Wien*). During *Winter im MQ* – which lasts for more than a month from mid-November until December 23 – the Museum Quarter is transformed into a veritable hive of winter activities, while cafés and markets selling designer items operate in specially constructed ice pavilions.

Then, with the onset of darkness (each evening from 16:00 to 23:00), a surreal play of light shines forth on the walls of the city's best-known museums in the form of installations by well-known artists. This year, the MQ's trees are also being illuminated for the first time, and the traditional ice pavilions have obtained a new look created by Anton Burdakov, a Ukrainian graphic designer based in London.

Located in the former Hapsburg imperial stables, Vienna's Museum Quarter is the eighth largest cultural space in the world. Aside from encompassing some outstanding art repositories (such as the prestigious Leopold Museum, the *mumok* museum of modern art and the *Kunsthalle Wien*), the quarter also serves as a platform for the birth and presentation of new and creative ideas. The spectrum of activities in the MQ ranges from architecture to music, visual and performance art, fashion, theatre, dance, literature, digital installations and children's events.

📍 mqw.at/winter

PARIS' CAKES

Paris and cakes... That in itself is a passion-filled love affair, especially now in the days leading up to Christmas. This is a time when the city's pastry chefs begin preparing the *bûche de Noël*, a special log-shaped dessert cake that the French put on their tables on Christmas Eve. During the past few years, Paris' luxury pastry and chocolate stores have even been involving famous designers in the creation of new variations of the *bûche*. The *Lenôtre* pastry and sweets producer has been a true pioneer in this regard, with such "guest designers" as Philippe Stark, Kenzo Takada, Karl Lagerfeld and Christian Lacroix having helped to design previous *bûches*.

This year, *Lenôtre* has entrusted Pascale Mussard – the director of the *petit h* creative laboratory at the French luxury *Hermès* brand – with this responsible task. She is also the great-great-great-granddaughter of legendary saddle-maker Thierry Hermès, who launched the brand in 1837. The result is a superb culinary version of leather, needles, thread spools and other instruments used by the iconic *petit h* workshop.

Hugo & Victor's renowned pastry chef Hugues Pouget (b. 1977), for his part, was inspired this year by Marion, a character that famous French actress Catherine Deneuve portrayed in *The Last Metro* (1980). At the beginning of his career in the 1990s, Pouget had been as happy as a child when Deneuve walked into the pastry shop where he worked. This year, Pouget got to meet with Deneuve again and invited her to take part in the design of the seasonal *Hugo & Victor bûche*. She accepted and the result is *Marion*, a crunchy



hazelnut powder meringue combined with a light hazelnut praliné mousse, a sweet coffee cloud and other sublime tastes and textures.

Another special *bûche de Noël* has been created by *Angelina*, a Belle Epoque-style pastry café not far from the Louvre Museum, in cooperation with the French perfume brand *Annick Goutal*. For this *bûche*, Annick Goutal's daughter Camille Goutal joined forces with *Angelina's* pastry chefs to interpret the perfume brand's classic fragrance *Eau d'Hadrien* in the language of food, replicating the fragrance's citrus notes with a combination of lemon, lime and yuzu-basil.

The *bûche de Noël* has been part of the Christmas traditions of practically all French adults since their early childhood, with each household eating its own version of the cake. This is manifestly evident in the diverse city of Paris, which offers countless variations of the *bûche* and numerous culinary ways to see in the Christmas season.



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LONDON KEW GARDENS

If you wish to experience some truly magical moments while seeing in the Christmas season, then the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew at the outskirts of London are an ideal place to visit. Apparently, Queen Charlotte – the founder of the gardens – decorated one of the first Christmas trees in England in 1790 and put it on display in one of the largest rooms in Kew Palace, to the great delight of the court.

In tribute to Kew's special part in the history of Christmas celebrations in England, a 1.5-kilometre sparkling trail winds its way through the garden territory. Every evening until January 2 from 17:00 to 22:00, clusters of illuminated fountains dance in an explosion of colour and tunnels of light spread below the trees against the backdrop of the iconic Palm House.

Built in the 19th century, Kew's glass and steel Palm House is one of the most majestic buildings in the gardens and has served as a source of inspiration for many other greenhouses all across the world. After you have marvelled at the flora within the building, the panorama of

Tunnels of light spread below the trees against the backdrop of the iconic Palm House

the cedar-lined Pagoda Vista is impressive at any time of the year, extending out for a great distance to the great Pagoda (completed in 1762). A rose garden next to the building, for its part, is awash with miraculously blooming Christmas roses.

Aside from housing the world's largest public botanical gardens (which occupy

121 hectares), Kew is a world in itself, combining a park and a garden in one place and illustrating the most significant gardening trends from the 17th to the 20th centuries.

The history of the gardens is a lengthy and complicated one, with their official beginnings extending back to 1772, when the royal properties of Richmond (now the western side of the gardens) and Kew (now the eastern side) were united. Then, in 1773, botanist Sir Joseph Banks – a travel mate of Captain James Cook – became the director of the gardens. With the support of King George III and Queen Charlotte, he began to collect exotic plant species from all over the world, sending the garden's botanists on voyages to the most distant lands and launching a scientific endeavour that has turned Kew into the world's largest collection of living plants.

① kew.org

① ew.org



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Where to spend Christmas?

Here are five places for spending a wonderful Christmas if you are looking for a change of scene

QUIET MEDITATION

Eremito Hotelito del Alma

PARRANO, Italy

For many urban residents, the pace of city life has become quite frenetic. Hence, the increasing popularity of "pilgrimages of silence" for regaining a sense of balance. This doesn't mean that one has to isolate oneself in a monastery, take a Vipassana meditation course or withdraw to a cave in the Himalayas. The *Eremito Hotelito del Alma* offers visitors the opportunity to spend some time in quiet contemplation without forsaking basic physical comforts and necessities.

Located in a secluded mountain valley in the Province of Perugia, about a two-hour drive from Rome, the *Eremito* looks like an ancient monastery but was actually built specifically to serve as a hotel/retreat. The single guest rooms are small (9 m²) and look very much like prison cells. If you arrive as a couple, then you will still have to sleep separately. Visitors eat dinner (great vegetarian food and very decent wine) at a long communal table in contemplative silence. Forget about using your telephone or the Internet. In the place of computer and TV screens, guests are treated to the stupendous view of a vast, green mountain forest, where they can go out for quiet strolls. Yoga classes, meditation courses and ascetic spa procedures are also available.



The contemporary retreat is the brainchild of fashion designer Marcello Murzilli, who harboured the idea of building it for nearly ten years, after visiting at least 50 monasteries and convents. After spending a couple of nights in one of the hotel's cell-like rooms, most guests probably won't make radical life-changing decisions, and that is not the goal of the *Eremito*. However, many will be pleased to rediscover how little is actually necessary to enjoy the pleasures of life, and that is truly a liberating experience.

Località Tarina 2, 05010 Parrano | ① eremito.com

FUN-FILLED WEEKEND

Inntel Hotels Amsterdam Zaandam

ZAANDAM, the Netherlands

Something like this could probably be done only in the Netherlands. The *Inntel Hotels Amsterdam Zaandam* can surely boast having the most extravagant hotel façade in Europe and possibly the world. The 40-metre-high structure is a lively 11-storey stacking of nearly 70 traditional wooden house exteriors from the Zaan region. Painted in all colours of the rainbow, the hotel looks like a veritable house of cards.

Needless to say, the edifice can be spotted from quite a distance, and it is impossible not to smile when one first sees it. A healthy dose of humour also fills the interior, as in the Craft Deluxe Room, in which guests can experience the crafts of times gone by. Designed by the Dutch *WAM Architecten* firm, the hotel has 160 guest rooms. It is a mere 12-minute train ride from the city centre and 18 minutes from Schiphol Airport.

Provincialeweg 102, 1506 MD Zaandam

① inntelhotelsamsterdamzaandam.nl



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ROMANTIC VIEW

Villa Honegg
HONEGG, Switzerland
The *Villa Honegg* is located in one of the most romantic settings imaginable. Perched on a mountaintop at an elevation of 914 metres, the small 23-room hotel provides a fantastic vista of lofty Alpine summits and Lake Lucerne. Peace and quiet reign all around in this isolated cocoon of luxury. If you decide to go for a relaxing swim in the heated outdoor pool (where the water temperature is +34°C) and watch the sun set over the mountaintops, you will have to pinch yourself twice to believe that you are

not watching a romantic movie or having a dream, but that you are undergoing a fabulous experience right here and now.
Incidentally, the *Villa Honegg* has been operating from its current location since 1905, when it started out as a small, family-owned bed and breakfast. During the First World War, it served as a peaceful place of recuperation for injured frontline soldiers. The hotel is continuing this role today, but in a different form, tenderly applying healing “bandages” on the emotional wounds of its weary visitors.
Honegg, 6373 Ennetbürgen
📞 villa-honegg.ch



A NIGHT IN AN ART GALLERY

The Thief
OSLO, Norway
Although displaying artists’ paintings on hotel walls is nothing new, the trend is spreading and gaining popularity. That being said, any night at *The Thief* hotel in Oslo will be a special experience. The hotel’s energetic owner, Petter Stordalen, is a consummate collector of contemporary art and an environmental activist. He sought not to merely decorate his hotel with artworks, but to create an art gallery where one can spend the night. Thus, hotel guests will be provoked, challenged and drawn out of their general comfort zone in a stimulating and colourful environment.

Stordalen says that art can change the world, based on his own personal experience of having been changed by art. Atypically, the architecture at *The Thief* was designed to complement the artwork, rather than the other way around, with Sune Nordgren – the former director of the country’s national art museum – being called in to set up what can only be called an art exposition.

Art is displayed everywhere in *The Thief*, including the hallways, the guest rooms and even the lift, where a video installation by British artist Julian Opie runs continually. If the 105 works on display at the hotel are not enough for you, then head across the street to the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, which was designed by Italian architect Renzo Piano and which houses an outstanding collection of contemporary oeuvres by world famous artists.
Landgangen 1, 0252 Oslo
📞 thethief.com



A TRIP TO NOWHERE

Kakslauttanen Hotel and Igloo Village
SAARISELKÄ, Finland
If you wish to take a year-end trip of a lifetime, then the *Kakslauttanen Hotel and Igloo Village* should fit the bill. The journey to the far-off hotel – about 250 km north of the Arctic Circle in Finnish Lapland – is a trip in itself. Once you arrive at the hotel, spend a night in one of its trademark glass igloos. Surrounded by a vast, snowy forest of pine trees, the igloos are equipped with all of the necessary amenities – including a sauna – for a pleasant stay in an otherwise extreme winter environment. Here, one can stare up through the glass walls at shooting stars and the aurora borealis from the

comfort of one’s own bed. Outside amid the silent winter environment, an endless expanse of white spreads forth.
Adventuresome types might opt to sleep in a genuine snow igloo, cocooned up to their eyes in a warm sleeping bag on a bed of solid ice. Outside, nighttime temperatures can dip to -40°C, while inside, the temperature never climbs above -3°C. The *Kakslauttanen Hotel* also boasts the world’s largest snow restaurant, in which the dining tables are made of pure ice. The hotel is open only during the northern lights season, which is from the third week of August until the end of April.
Kiilopääntie 9, 99830 Saariselkä
📞 kakslauttanen.fi



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Text by **ANCE ŠVERNA**
Photos by **KASPARS KRAFTS, F64**
and publicity



Piena muiža Berghof

WINTER SPA GETAWAYS

Long-established *pirts* (Latvian sauna) traditions, experienced beauty treatment specialists and a tasteful sense of design inherited from past generations are just some of the enticing features that make Latvia's spas worth visiting. *Baltic Outlook* takes you on a tour of some of the best places for leaving one's anxieties and winter blues behind.

During the pre-Christmas shopping rush, many would welcome the chance to shut off their cellular phones and shake off their worries about work and other considerations for at least a couple of hours. At Latvia's spas, you can treat yourself to a soothing massage, warm your tired body in an aromatic *pirts* and relax in a heated Jacuzzi bath with a view of the stars in a peaceful and quiet setting.

Latvia is a perfect location for such a meditative self-pampering vacation. Tourism statistics show that as a nation with a population density of only 31 people per km² and as one of the greenest countries on Earth, Latvia is well-suited to greet weary travellers from large, bustling metropolises. Moscow, London and Berlin are only a few of the major cities

from which people have come to spend replenishing holidays at Latvian spas.

Following a series of rejuvenating procedures during an autumn sojourn at a lakeside forest spa, famous Russian journalist Ksenia Sobchak posted an *Instagram* video in which she said:

"Receiving a real 'spanking' with a *pirts* switch and then jumping into a lake was a priceless experience."

Foreign visitors agree that the high level of service and relatively affordable prices make Latvia's charming spa residences well worth a visit. Of course, in order to take in vistas of the most beautiful natural scenery in a genuinely peaceful setting, one may have to travel a fair distance from the capital city. Here are some of the most noteworthy spas outside of Riga.

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MILK BATHS AGAINST A BACKDROP OF COUNTRY FIELDS

What? *Piena muiža Berghof* country spa and hotel
Where? Sieksāte, Skrunda Municipality (Skrundas novads)
How far? Approximately 157 km west of Riga along the A9 highway

The *Piena muiža Berghof* country spa and hotel definitely offers one of Latvia's most romantic winter escapes. Formerly a German baron's hunting lodge, then a school building and then a guest house for the employees of the Liepāja Dairy Plant, it is now a place where couples go out on their first dates, celebrate their weddings and spend their honeymoons. Those who have been to the *Piena muiža Berghof* once tend to return again and again, and one of the reasons for this is the establishment's unique focus on milk, both in the products served at the restaurant and in the spa treatments offered.

The owners say that milk has been used as a youth and beauty elixir since the times of Ancient Egypt and the reign of Cleopatra, which is why visitors even get the chance to bathe in the white liquid, which can also be combined with other ingredients such as honey, rose petals and amber. As the manor's administrator, Zane Muceniece, explains:

"The baths are filled with milk that we obtain from local farmers, along with water and our special ingredients, resulting in a fragrant liquid that softens the skin in a pleasant atmosphere."

One particular milk bath formula has been specifically created to cleanse and nourish the skin of children who visit the facility, while those who do not fancy milk can choose alternative baths with beer and rowanberries. In any case, this season's main attraction is a 2.5-hour relaxing ritual with milk and honey. After a milk bath, clients receive a skin scrub with rose petals and honey. That is followed by a relaxing honey massage, a body wrapping in a mask of aloe and whipping cream, and the application of beeswax on the hands and feet. At the end of this lengthy ritual, one finds oneself in a dreamlike state and feels as if one is walking on air. Back in the hotel room, one is lulled to sleep by the sight of milky-white snowflakes falling outside the window.

① pienamuiza.lv



Tip: Try to spend at least two days at the *Piena muiža Berghof*. On day one, treat yourself to a spa ritual and a leisurely dinner with locally grown vegetables and homemade ice cream. After breakfast on day two, pay a visit to the manor's interesting milk museum and to its deer and sheep enclosures.

PINE NEEDLE *PIRTS* AND BIOMECHANICS IN A MANOR

What? *Mārcienas muiža* spa and hotel

Where? Mārciena, Madona Municipality (Madonas novads)

How far? Approximately 161 km east of Riga along the E22 highway

Mārcienas muiža is an ideal destination for those who like winter sports, because one of Latvia's best cross-country ski courses is less than ten kilometres away. Named *Smeceres sils*, the course is quite hilly in places and is lit up at night. *Mārcienas muiža*, for its part, is considered to be one of the first rural spa residences in the country. For close to ten years, the former manor house has been housing a spa complex that offers beauty treatments inspired by the surrounding nature and up-to-date physiotherapy procedures. The spa centre is perhaps best known for its biomechanical stimulation machines, which have been designed by Riga Professor Vladimir Nazarov for the back, shoulders, face and other parts of the body.

Biomechanics deals with the mechanics of the human body. It postulates that through external vibrations that precisely correspond with the frequency of people's muscle vibrations, any part of the body can be stimulated to generate new muscle and nerve cells. This system helps to relieve pain, stimulate blood circulation and movement capacity, remove unwanted cellulite and even heal injured spinal discs. Biomechanics has been applied for more than 20 years at well-established spas and clinics in Switzerland, Austria and Germany. *Mārcienas muiža* is the only place in Latvia where the medical staff that operates of these special apparatuses has been taught by Professor Nazarov himself.

Those who stay at the *Mārcienas muiža* often combine biomechanics procedures with other treatments such as massages, wrappings and peeling. An increasing number of clients also wish to be treated with organically made cosmetics, and thus most of the spa's beauty procedures are performed solely with these products.

One of the most appealing procedures is the pine needle *pirts*, which works wonders to clear the bronchial passages and reduce feelings of stress. The best time to use the *pirts* is in the evening or shortly before retiring for the night, as the freshly picked pine and spruce needles have a calming effect. Another relaxing procedure is the hay chair, whose backrest is covered with pouches that are filled with grasses and herbs. These are heated with steam, warming the back and neck in the process, relaxing the muscles and relieving stress.

The eclectic interior of *Mārcienas muiža* incorporates both contemporary items and older objects that attest to the manor's past history, reflecting hotel owner Mairita Solima's vision of what a refurbished country house should look like. Incidentally, Solima can occasionally be seen preparing various foods in the manor's kitchen. Thus, some of the marinated products and jams served in the spa centre's restaurant may even have been made by the owner herself.

① marciena.eu

Tip: *Mārcienas muiža* is an officially registered medical institution and popular with guests seeking real improvements to their health. Visitors are advised to inform the spa complex about the procedures that they wish to undergo before their arrival.



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HERBAL RITUAL IN A FORMER WATER PUMPING STATION

What? *Līga Nature SPA*

Where? Rīgas iela 7, Valmiera

How far? Approximately 125 km northeast of Riga along the A3 highway

What a find! A former run-of-the-mill beauty salon in Valmiera, Vidzeme's largest city, has been transformed over a 20-year period into an atypical meditative centre. The first thing that struck me was the large selection of body treatments, massages and therapies available. However, I was in for an even bigger surprise when introduced to the beauty salon's latest project, the *Līga Nature SPA*, which has been set up in a former water pumping station about 20 metres from the Gauja River and which began operating only in November of this year.

"This small spa is a long-held dream come true. It took at least eight years for it to slowly and carefully come into being," says spokesperson Maira Pasīte. "We wanted our clients to be able to spoil themselves from the top of their heads to the tips of their toes," she adds.

The spa, whose charming interior displays elements of contemporary Latvian design, offers a whole array of procedures, including some that have been created for expectant mothers, loving couples and fans of East Asian philosophies. During the winter holidays, give an extra dose of TLC to your better half and try out the phyto aroma ritual with Latvian country herbs for two. This deeply relaxing procedure helps guests to replenish their energy reserves, regain their health and free themselves of stress.

The herbal ritual begins with an herbal foot bath and light foot massage, followed by a heating and cleansing in a wood-heated steam bath. The treatment ends with a relaxing body massage and facial beauty treatment.

Ancient Latvian songs about inner strength are an integral part of the ritual, along with specially prepared calendula-yarrow massage oil. At the end of the evening, relax as a couple in the outdoor tub. To make your meditative evening



complete, stay for the night in a mansard room, where the beds have been made with soft linen sheets. Then, for a tonifying "born again" feeling, take a lemongrass steam bath the following morning before reaching for your usual cup of breakfast coffee. The steam bath will refresh both your mind and your body.

① salonsliga.lv

Tip: The compact *Līga Nature SPA* can accommodate two to four people. All that you need to bring along are positive thoughts and your usual personal hygiene items. Everything else is provided. Indulge in the meditative music, herb and flower aromas and delicious meals that are served in the mansard tea room.



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What? *Jonathan Spa Estate*

Where? Amatiems, Amata Municipality (Amatas novads)

How far? Approximately 80 km northeast of Riga along the A2 highway

Opened two years ago in the residential community of Amatiems, the *Jonathan Spa Estate* is the brainchild of interior designer Oksana Telegina. She was immediately taken by the community's imposing complex of elegant log houses, many of which are inhabited by wealthy entrepreneurs. Originally from Belarus, Telegina decided to open a hotel in this picturesque location and moved with her family to the nearby city of Cēsis.

Amatiems is surrounded by three lakes and is criss-crossed with artificially created bodies of water so that each residence borders either a lakeside or pond. Some owners even have access to their own private islands. This is a place where people go to enjoy the peace and quiet of nature without foregoing modern-day conveniences. Telegina's spa centre and hotel fits perfectly in Amatiems' idyllic setting, drawing its name from Richard Bach's famous novel *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*.

Accordingly, she has had the hotel's 11 guest rooms decorated in a gracefully feminine fusion style. The spa centre on the ground floor, for its part, has been acclaimed not only for its tasteful design, but also for its competent staff of beauty and other specialists, some of whom hail from such countries as Belarus, Morocco and India. The massages alone are reason enough to visit the centre!

In the period leading up to Christmas, the spa's owner recommends trying a three-hour procedure that includes a warming period in a *pirts*, a skin peeling, a body and face massage, and procedures for the hands and hair. Those who lament the brevity of the past summer will enjoy swimming in the pool, which looks out onto the hilly landscape of Amatiems and Lake Veģi (*Veģu ezers*). During my own visit to the pool, I was pleasantly surprised to see a sign that read: "chlorine-free". When I asked how this was possible, a staff member smiled warmly and replied:

"We simply clean the pool very often and with great care."

Aside from a wonderful swimming pool and unforgettable feel-good procedures in the small but charming spa zone, the

Jonathan Spa Estate also houses a cosy coffee bar and cinema room with soft and comfortable pillow seats. But before heading there, it is also worth stepping into the shungite room, the Finnish and Turkish saunas, the mini waterfall and outdoor Jacuzzi, and the collagenarium, or anti-aging skin procedure cabinet with special lamps.

Jonathan Spa Estate owner Telegina admits that she is somewhat of a workaholic and that she occasionally feels the need to recharge her batteries. Hence, she regularly tries out her spa centre's services to experience first-hand how they work and can thus offer useful recommendations to her guests, depending on whether they are looking for stimulating or relaxing procedures.

① jonathanspahotel.com



Tip: It is worth spending three days at the *Jonathan Spa Estate* in order to make the most of the wide choice of spa services. Nothing beats slipping into a comfortable morning gown after awakening on day two and eating homemade waffles for breakfast. Rain boots, Nordic walking poles, fishing rods and skis are also available for those seeking a dose of fresh air in the great outdoors.

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AWARD-WINNING SPA RESORT

What? *Baltic Beach Hotel & SPA*

Where? Jūras iela 23/25, Jūrmala

How far? Approximately 45 km west of Riga along the A10 highway

Jūrmala became widely known for its swimming spots and healing centres during the 19th century, when the potential of the town's sulphur springs and medicinal peat mud began to be exploited. With its long, white sandy beach and fresh pine-scented air, Jūrmala remains a popular resort site to this day. The city's ornate hundred-year-old wooden villas and healing establishments provide a picturesque backdrop, together with the larger and more modern hotels and sanatoriums that have followed.

As one of the largest spa centres in northern Europe, the *Baltic Beach Hotel & SPA* was recently deemed to be *Latvia's Leading Spa Hotel* at the *World Travel Awards 2015*. The internationally acclaimed five-star hotel is located right at the edge of the seacoast, surrounded by sand dunes and a pine-tree forest. Unlike other high-quality hotels in Jūrmala, the *Baltic Beach Hotel & SPA* is a medically certified institution. Combining the city's best resort traditions with the latest spa technologies, it offers more than 400 spa procedures and relaxation treatments.

In order to get a better grasp of the many procedures available at the *Baltic Beach Hotel & SPA*, ask for the assistance of the spa's qualified doctors/rehabilitation specialists and cosmetologists. They will recommend the treatments that best suit your needs. If you are seeking to escape the winter blues, then you will certainly not be disappointed by a visit to *The Garden* water relaxation complex, which is designed to help visitors strengthen their health and sense of inner harmony. Here one will be treated to a two-hour *pirts* and water treatment session.

The Garden complex is equipped with an amber *pirts*, a eucalyptus-scented Turkish bath and a relaxing salt room where the session is concluded. Salt crystals naturally generate negative ions, which reduce stress and headaches and help to cure colds, asthma, allergies and bronchitis. A rejuvenating treatment session at *The Garden* is guaranteed to help visitors get through the long and dreary winter. Incidentally, the *Baltic Beach Hotel & SPA* houses the only



25-metre indoor swimming pool with warm seawater in Latvia, providing the opportunity to extend the summer swimming season in this cool, northern country. **BO**

① balticbeach.lv

Tip: When visiting *The Garden* complex, try out the *Amber Gold* body wrapping in a mask of gold extract, champagne, caviar and amber powder. When else should one celebrate life if not now, in December?

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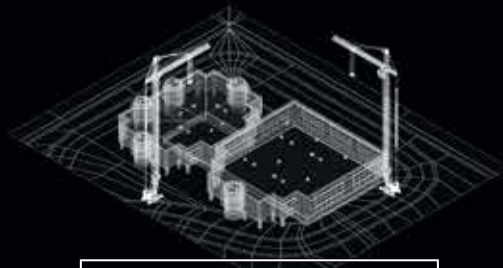
Store addresses in Riga: Ivo Nikkolo, Spice shopping centre, Lielirbes iela 29; Douglas, Dune and Kazene, Galerija Centrs shopping centre, Audēju iela 16; Mango and Karen Millen, Galleria Riga shopping centre, Dzirnau iela 67; Shishi, Tērbatas iela 50

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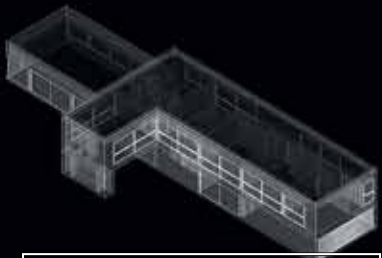
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EUR 890, *Laiks*
Belt, EUR 49, *Pietro Filipi*
Scarf, EUR 69, *Pietro Filipi*
Eau de parfum *Tom Ford Noir*

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Douglas
Transparent ball, EUR 5.01,
Shishi
Gold-coloured horn décor,
2 pieces, EUR 6.39, *Shishi*

Store addresses in Riga:
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Dzirnavu iela 67;
Shishi, Tērbatas iela 50
Pietro Filipi, *Laiks*, *Douglas* and *Massimo Dutti*,
Galerija Centrs shopping centre, Audēju iela 16
Jānis Roze, Kr. Barona iela 5



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AUSTRIA

Flight No	Days	Departure	Arrival
Riga – Vienna			
BT 431	1-3456-	07:40	09:05
BT 433	12345-7	16:30	17:55
Tallinn – Vienna			
BT 205	1---5--	07:10	08:30
Riga – Salzburg			
BT 438	-----6-	12:25	13:35
Flight No	Days	Departure	Arrival
Vienna – Riga			
BT 432	1-3456-	09:45	13:05
BT 434	12345-7	19:00	22:20
Vienna – Tallinn			
BT 206	1---5--	09:55	13:05
Salzburg – Riga			
BT 438	-----6-	14:20	17:25

Saalbach Hinterglemm Visitors should make sure that they are well-rested before they come to the Saalbach-Hinterglemm region of Austria. Colourfully named the Ski Circus, the region combines the slopes of one of the largest linked ski areas in Austria with the liveliest of après-ski activities. Saalbach is big and full of life, while Hinterglemm is more old-fashioned and down to earth. Both have great charm, a safe, car-free centre, plenty of après-ski events and all the traditional Austrian attractions.

Kitzbühel This is where it all began in Austria, and Kitzbühel is a dream destination for skiers. The small town in the Tyrolean Alps is home to the Streif Piste: surely the most iconic

2.6 km of snow on the planet. Since 1931, the brutally steep racecourse with its 80-metre jumps, tight corners and ferocious compressions has hosted the annual Hahnenkammrennen ski races,

which are among the most famous in the world. The Hahnenkamm slope is the most demanding on the World Cup downhill circuit and one that every accomplished skier wants to tackle.



Resort altitude: 800 m
Highest lift: 2000 m
Total piste length: 170 km
Black 13 | Red 26 | Blue 21
Longest run: 6 km
Snow parks: 2
Ski lifts: 51
Lift pass prices:
day EUR 51.00 |
EUR 25 (children);
week (6 days) EUR 248.00 |
EUR 124 (children)
Resorts accepting lift pass:
Kitzbühel
Season:
December 14 – April 7

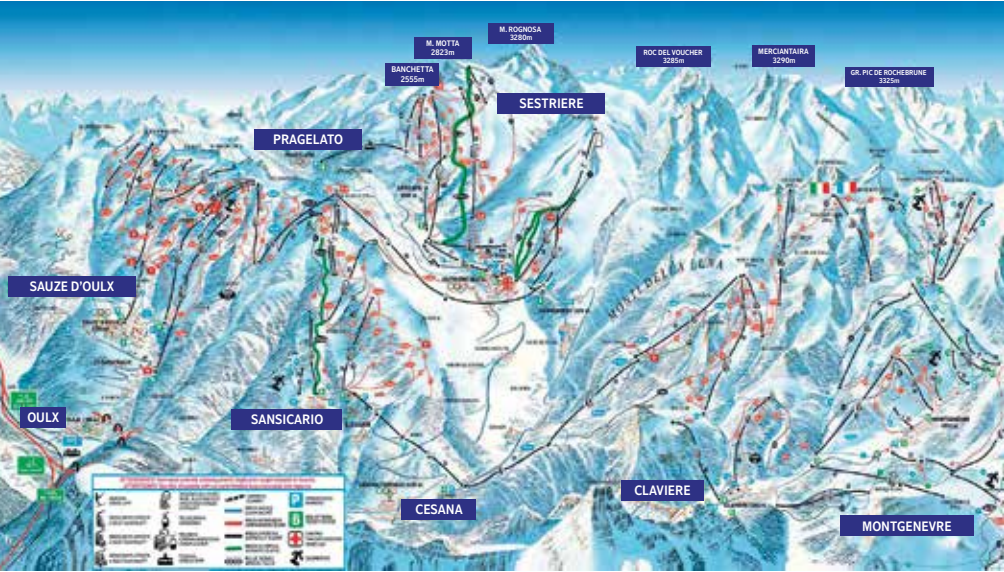
ITALY

Sestriere Sestriere is the highest ski resort in the extensive Via Lattea (Milky Way) linked ski area, boasting an impressive Alpine winter sports history as one of the world's first purpose-built ski resorts. A good choice for beginners and intermediates. Sestriere is also one of the few resorts where it is possible to ski at night on a floodlit run. During the

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summer months, it is a famous starting and arrival point in the *Tour de France* and the *Giro d'Italia* cycling races. Notably, it was the scene of a definitive moment in cyclist Lance Armstrong's now tarnished career. It regularly hosts FIS Alpine Ski World Cup events, and it was a main venue during the 2006 Winter Olympic Games.



Livigno Families and beginners can enjoy gentle slopes and fun areas suited for acquiring basic techniques and for learning by

playing. Furthermore, Livigno has a special tax status that dates back to Napoleonic times. There's no VAT, which means that drinks, fuel

and consumer goods are among the cheapest in Europe. Apparently, there is even a Latvian-run hotel that serves Latvian cuisine.



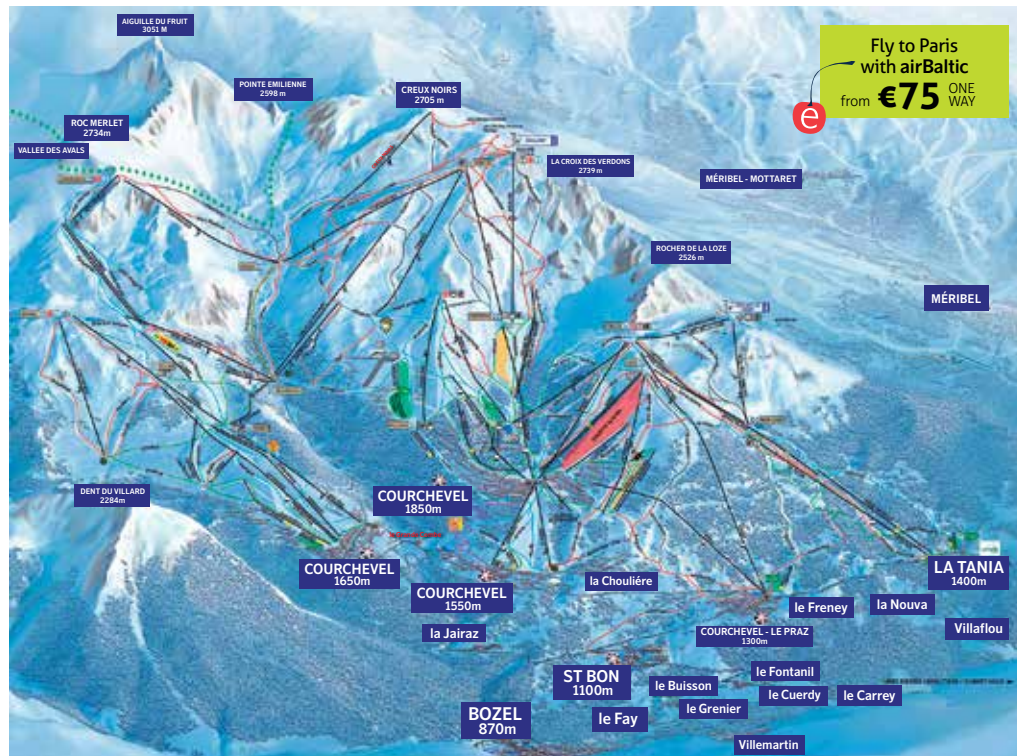
Resort altitude: 1816 m
Highest lift: 2800 m
Total piste length: 110 km
Black 13 | Red 37 | Blue 29
Longest run: 4 km
Snow parks: 10
Ski lifts: 31
Lift pass prices:
day EUR 40.00 |
EUR 34 (children);
week (6 days) EUR 190.00 |
EUR 133.50 (children)
Resorts accepting lift pass:
other Alta Valtellina ski resorts of
Bormio and Santa Caterina.
Season:
December 18 – April 09

FRANCE

Courchevel Considered the most glamorous and celebrity-filled ski resort in the world, Courchevel offers breathtaking views of Mont Blanc. If the first thing that you think about when you hear 'Courchevel' is skiing, then the second thing should be gastronomy, as Courchevel boasts many *Michelin*-starred restaurants and is a gourmet ski destination.

Flight No	Days	Departure	Arrival
<u>Riga – Paris</u>			
BT 691	123456-	07:30	09:25
BT 693	1--45-7	15:30	17:25
<u>Tallinn – Paris</u>			
BT 689	-2-4--7	07:05	09:05
<u>Vilnius – Paris</u>			
BT 701	---4--7	15:25	17:10

Flight No	Days	Departure	Arrival
<u>Paris – Riga</u>			
BT 692	123456-	10:10	13:55
BT 694	1--45-7	18:30	22:15
<u>Paris – Tallinn</u>			
BT 690	-2-4--7	18:50	22:45
<u>Paris – Vilnius</u>			
BT 702	---4--7	10:10	13:45



Resort altitude: 1850 m
Highest lift: 3230 m
Total piste length: 600 km
Black 10 | Red 42 | Blue 40 |
Green 27
Longest run: 7 km
Snow parks: 2
Total Lifts: 20
Lift pass prices:
day EUR 50.00 |
EUR 40.00 (children);
week (6 days) EUR 245.00 |
EUR 196.00 (children)
Resorts accepting lift pass:
Three Valleys ski resorts
of La Tania, Les Menuires,
Méribel, Saint Martin de
Belleville and Val Thorens
Season: December 19 -
April 16

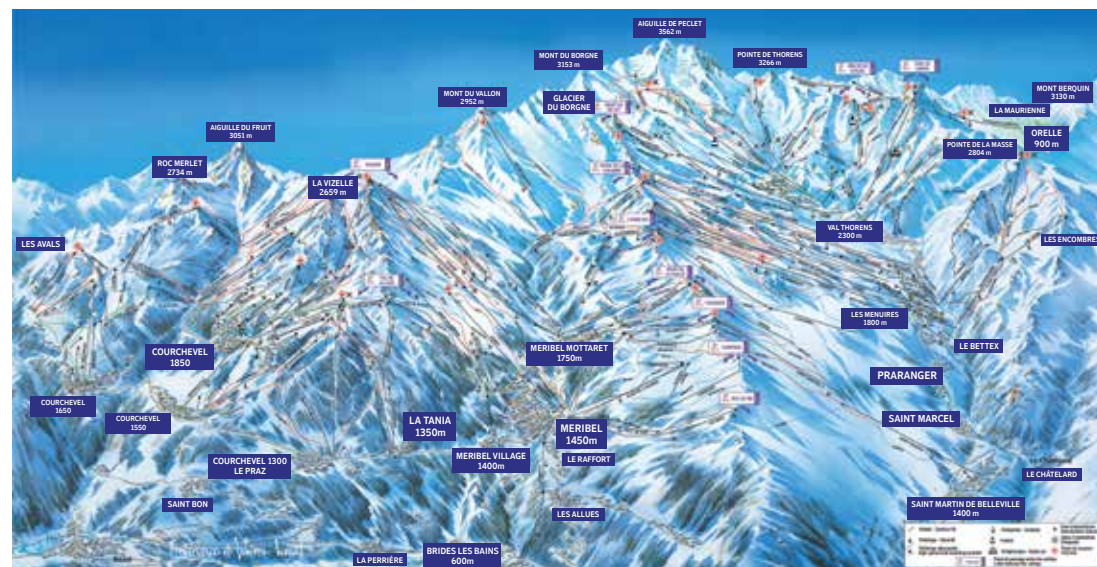
Meribel There are plenty of reasons to love Méribel aside from its chalet-style architecture, wooded surroundings and friendly, village atmosphere. The prime

reason is its central position within France's huge Trois Vallées ski area. The Olympic Centre built for the 1992 Winter Olympics is also open daily, offering a variety of non-

ski activities for the whole family. It's no secret that avid skiers Prince William and Kate Middleton have also checked in for a family vacation at Trois Vallées!

Resort altitude: 1450 m
Highest lift: 3200 m
Total piste length: 600 km
 Black 9 | Red 24 | Blue 34 |
 Green 10
Longest run: 5 km
Snow parks: 2
Total Lifts: 18
Lift pass prices: day
 EUR 46.40 | EUR 37.30
 (children); week (6 days)
 EUR 226.40 | EUR 182.40
 (children)

Resorts accepting lift pass: Three Valleys ski resorts of Courchevel, La Tania, Les Menuires, Saint Martin de Belleville and Val Thorens
Season: December 5 – April 17



Tignes Compared to its neighbouring resorts, sport comes first here and you're more likely to find visitors staying on the slopes as long as possible, rather than partying the night away. As for

accommodation, Val Claret is the highest village at 2100 metres and has easy access to the glacier. Together with Tignes-Le-Lac just down the road, it is the most convenient place to stay, with a large

choice of hotels, restaurants and shops. Slightly lower lie the cheaper and less convenient apartments of Le Lavachet, which are linked to the lifts by ski bus.



Resort altitude: 2100 m
Highest lift: 3450 m
Total piste length: 300 km
Black 26 | Red 41 | Blue 67 |
Green 20
Longest run: 10 km
Snow parks: 2
Ski lifts: 97
Lift pass prices:
Day EUR 54.00 |
EUR 43.50 (children
5 – 13 years)
Week (6 days) EUR 228.00
(adult 14 – 64 years)|
EUR 182.50 (children
5 – 13 years)
Resorts accepting lift pass:
Espace Killy ski resorts of
Val d'Isère. Tignes is directly
linked by Ski Lift to the ski
areas of Val d'Isère
Season:
November 28 – May 8

GEORGIA -

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GEORGIA

Gudauri Gudauri is a growing ski resort, enchanting visitors with a wealth of opportunities for an active holiday in the mountains, unparalleled views, amazing colours, a festive atmosphere and a warm welcome for its guests. Situated on a south-facing plateau of the Greater Caucasus Mountain Range, its skiable area enjoys maximum exposure to the sun, which makes Gudauri a magnificent year-round tourist destination. Georgian hospitality is another reason why you should consider Gudauri for your next ski trip.

Resort altitude: 2196 m
Highest lift: 3250 m
Total piste length: 57 km
 Black 10 km | Red 25 km | Blue 15 km
Longest run: 7 km
Snow parks: 1
Ski lifts: 9
Lift pass prices: day EUR 13.00 | EUR 9.00 (children); week (6 days) EUR 70.00 | EUR 47.00 (children)
Resorts accepting lift pass: Gudauri
Season: November 28 – April 17

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Flight No	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight No	Days	Departure	Arrival
Riga – Tbilisi				Tbilisi – Riga			
BT 722	----5-7	23:05	04:35+1	BT 723	1----6-	05:20	06:55



GERMANY

Garmisch-Partenkirchen

The two villages of Garmisch and Partenkirchen were merged into one when Germany hosted the Winter Olympic Games in 1936. However, even though they have been officially unified for nearly 80 years, unofficially they still compete with each other,

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Flight No	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight No	Days	Departure	Arrival
Riga – Munich				Munich – Riga			
BT 221	12-45--	07:25	09:05	BT 222	12-45--	09:40	13:10
BT 225	----6-	12:10	13:50	BT 226	----6-	14:25	17:55
BT 223	1-345-7	16:30	18:10	BT 224	1-345-7	18:50	22:20

sporting two of practically everything: two fire stations, two schools and so on. Partenkirchen is cute and cosy, with narrow streets and a centre filled with painted houses, while Garmisch's

more organised grid of streets is lined with new concrete buildings and upscale shopping stores. This summer, Garmisch-Partenkirchen also hosted the *BMW Mottorad days*.

Resort altitude: 720 m
Highest lift: 2830 m
Total piste length: 62 km
 Black 4 | Red 25 | Blue 10 | Green 3
Longest run: 4 km
Snow parks: 1
Ski lifts: 33
Lift pass prices: day EUR 39.50 | EUR 23.00 (children); week (6 days) N/A | N/A (children)
Resorts accepting lift pass: Garmisch-Partenkirchen
Season: December 12 – April 3



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SWITZERLAND



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Davos Davos prides itself on keeping good company. Alongside resorts such as Zermatt, St. Moritz, St. Anton and Kitzbühel, Davos is a member of *The Best of the Alps* association of 12 classic Alpine resorts. The

nearby resort of Klosters has long been a favourite haunt of Prince Charles and sometimes his sons as well. Hence, the main cable car that takes skiers to the top of Gotschnagrat is called the *Prince of Wales*.

Flight No	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight No	Days	Departure	Arrival
Riga – Zurich				Zurich – Riga			
BT 641	1-3-567	12:10	13:40	BT 642	1-3-567	14:15	17:45

Resort altitude: 1560 m
Highest lift: 3146 m
Total piste length: 320 km
Black 12 | Red 39 | Blue 31
Longest run: 12 km

Snow parks: 3
Ski lifts: 50
Lift pass prices:
day EUR 55.90 |
EUR 22.20 (children);
week (6 days)
EUR 272.93 |
EUR 109.34 (children)

Resorts accepting lift pass: Parsenn, Pisch, Jakobshorn, Rinerhorn, Madrisa and Gotschna
Season:
November 14 - April 19



St. Moritz St. Moritz is Switzerland's most famous exclusive winter resort. There are plenty of designer stores to keep

posh ladies busy after lunch, while other visitors come to watch the annual polo, horse racing and cricket competitions on

the town's frozen lake. You might even run into Ivana Trump!



Resort altitude: 1850 m
Highest lift: 3300 m
Total piste length: 350 km
Black 9 | Red 61 | Blue 18
Longest run: 10 km
Snow parks: 2
Number of ski lifts: 57
Lift pass prices:
day EUR 64.11 |
EUR 19.73 (children);
week (6 days)
EUR 294.27 |
EUR 100.28 (children)

Resorts accepting lift pass:
Corviglia, Corvatsch above neighbouring Silvaplana and the Diavolezza Glacier area
Season:
October 17 – May 22



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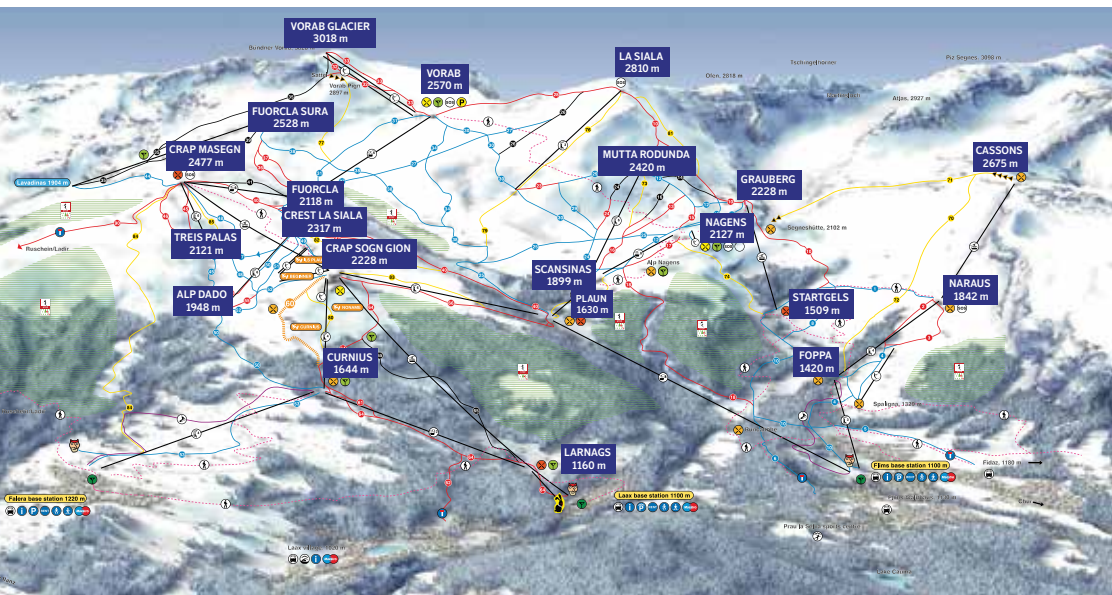
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Flims Laax Falera There's something to satisfy just about everyone's wishes here,

with a wide selection of services to choose from, including mountainside restaurants,

places for renting the latest ski gear and accommodation.



Resort altitude: 1100 m
Highest lift: 3018 m
Total piste length: 220 km
 Black 18 | Red 40 | Blue 45
Longest run: 14 km
Snow parks: 4
Ski lifts: 27
Lift pass prices:
 day EUR 76 | EUR 25.30 (children)
 week (6 days) EUR 427.00 |
 EUR 142.30 (children)
Resorts accepting lift pass:
 Flims, Laax, Falera
Season:
 December 19 – April 10

SLOVAKIA

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Flight No	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight No	Days	Departure	Arrival
Riga – Poprad				Poprad – Riga			
BT 485	-----6-	12:20	13:00	BT 486	-----6-	15:05	17:50
BT 1487	-2-4---	15:15	17:15	BT 1488	-2-4---	18:10	22:10

Jasna Low Tatras Jasna Low Tatras is one of the most popular skiing destinations in Slovakia, offering excellent slopes covered with man-made snow for five

months every year. Jasna Low Tatras was given five prestigious quality awards in the international Ski Area Test. The upcoming winter season will offer attractive new

products and innovations, such as a popular daily après-ski programme, night sledging, fresh track skiing, a Fun Zone, a snow park and others.



Resort altitude: 943 m
Highest lift: 2024 m
Total piste length: 46 km
 Black 7, Red 18, Blue 9
Longest run: 12 km
Snow parks: 1
Ski lifts: 30
Lift pass prices: day: adults EUR 38, children EUR 27;
 week (6 days): adults EUR 199, children EUR 139
Resorts accepting lift pass:
 Jasna Low Tatras
Season: December to late April

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CARS

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Publicity photos



Driven: the *Toyota Mirai*

The *Mirai* is the culmination of two decades of research by *Toyota*. The word *Mirai* means “future” in Japanese. In announcing the name of the car, *Toyota* boss Akio Toyoda proclaimed: “We are at a turning point in automotive history. All of us at *Toyota* believe in a future that will be safer, greener and easier for everyone. We imagined a world filled with vehicles that would diminish our dependence on oil and reduce harm to the environment. It was a bold but inspiring goal, and today it is a reality.” So we went to Hamburg, Germany, to try out one of the first commercially available hydrogen cars in the world.



How does it work?
The *Mirai* uses a single electric motor that delivers 154 hp and 335 Nm of torque for propulsion. It is essentially the same unit used in the *Lexus 450h* and is mounted transversely in the engine bay along with the power control electronics. From here, the motor provides drive to the front wheels via a fixed ratio gearbox.
The fuel cell stack, which uses a combination of oxygen captured from the air and hydrogen to create the electricity that powers the electric motor, is mounted underneath the front seats. It is housed in a titanium case that weighs just 57 kg, and can operate in temperatures as low as -30° C. The cell stack’s lifespan is claimed to be similar to that of a conventional internal combustion engine; it’s expected to last up to 500,000 km before requiring an overhaul.
Two separate carbon fibre and glass fibre tanks are used to store the hydrogen on board – one mounted under the front seats and the other behind the rear seats. Together, they provide a combined capacity of 122 litres, enough to allow the *Mirai* to hold up to 5 kg of hydrogen. This gives a claimed range of more than 500 km between refuelling, a process that takes between three and five minutes.
The relatively small 1.6 kWh nickel-metal hydride battery stores the electrical energy produced by the fuel cell stack. Some of this energy is also recuperated during the operation of the car. The battery sits above the second hydrogen tank at the rear.



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QUICK FACTS:

- 1 Price: 66,000 euros (before tax);
- 2 Engine: electric motor, hydrogen fuel cell;
- 3 Power: 154 hp, 335 Nm torque;
- 4 Acceleration: 0-100 km/h in 9.6 seconds;
- 5 Top speed: 178 km/h;
- 6 Economy: 0.76 kg hydrogen/100km;
- 7 Emissions: water vapour

How does it drive?

Given the complexity of the technology at play, the *Mirai* is extraordinarily straightforward to drive. As with the latest breed of battery-propelled electric cars, you press the start button, draw the stubby gear lever mounted high up within the centre console into "Drive", and set off down the road with a light nudge of the accelerator pedal.

Progress is ultra-smooth and, apart from a faint synthetically generated whine from the speakers under load, all but silent. Despite tipping the scales at 1850 kg, the car accelerates briskly from a standstill, making the *Mirai* well-suited to stop/start city traffic. However, the performance quickly levels off, resulting in a modest 0-100km/h time of 9.6 seconds and a top speed of just 178 km/h.

By locating most of the *Mirai*'s weighty elements, including the fuel cell stack, low down in its structure, *Toyota* has succeeded in providing the car with greater agility and back road poise than expected.

The steering is somewhat devoid of feedback, but it responds quite directly and the chassis has sufficient damping control to provide progressive body movements when you thread the car along more challenging roads.

The *Mirai* also handles quite well. Its ride is much improved over the *Prius*, being more supple, smoother and with better body control. Bumps

in the road don't disturb the smooth driving experience as much as in the *Mirai*'s hybrid sibling.

Aside from a noise-reducing device that helps to cancel out tyre roar, the *Mirai* also isolates its occupants from wind and road sounds. Thanks to this excellent refinement and the elastic nature of its power delivery, the *Mirai* is a genuinely relaxing car to drive, both around town and on the motorway.

What's it like inside?

The prominent visuals of the exterior carry over to the interior, where a modern-looking dashboard boasts two different TFT displays. One of these is tucked under the windscreen. It houses the speedometer, power display functions and other information. The other touch screen device is set atop the centre console for the infotainment system. Less contemporary-looking controls for the air conditioning and other switchgear have been sourced from other *Toyota* models.

The quality throughout the spacious cabin is similar to that of the outgoing third-generation *Prius*, with a variety of soft-touch and hard plastics as well as some less than dazzling graphics. It all feels solidly built if a little cheap, given the high price of the car. With the fuel cell stack located in the floor space underneath the front seats, you sit fairly high up, which makes for good all-round visibility.

The long wheelbase means that there is plenty of leg room in the back. However, the mounting of the battery and second hydrogen fuel tank behind the fixed rear seat backs compromises the boot capacity, which reaches no more than 361 litres, or 144 litres less than the *Prius Plus*.

Should I buy one?

Currently, you can't buy this model unless you live in Germany, Denmark or the UK, which are the car's primary markets. You also need a functioning hydrogen fuelling station infrastructure to use the *Mirai*, and it is too early to speculate if we shall get that in the Baltic States any time soon. Some kind of government incentives for buying such an environmentally friendly car would also come in handy, because the *Mirai* is expensive – around 66,000 euros before taxes.

To sum things up, the *Mirai* is sure to influence how car makers map out their electric car future. It delivers all the advantages of a traditional battery-powered car without the need to plug into mains power for extended periods. It certainly is an interesting proposition, especially for those who live near a hydrogen fuelling station, which for now is a pretty rare sight anywhere in the world.

As with the original *Prius*, the *Mirai* is going to appeal to both early adopters and businesses seeking to convey an eco-friendly image. **BO**

**BIGGEST AND BEST
CAR BUYERS GUIDE
IN THE BALTICS**



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Rain, and snow, and wind — all that may be outside the window, but at Līvu Akvaparks, Jūrmala, everything reminds you of delights of tropical health resorts even in winter.

The first thing everybody sees approaching Jūrmala from Riga is the odd structure on the bank of River Lielupe. Airplanes flying up to Riga International Airport also reveal view of sophisticated web of entwined motley pipes, which create remarkable architectonic form. To some it reminds road interchanges, to others — bundle of wires magnified a thousand times. But in fact it is favourite modern place of recreation for many people — Līvu Akvaparks. It's the biggest in the Northern Europe and is open the whole year round. There are 40 different rides and amusements on the three floors of Līvu Akvaparks, in summer add another dozen and an outdoor beach. Water recreation always attracts people, especially if water is warm and clean.

Līvu Akvaparks, spreading for almost a hectare, combines three zones for people of different age and temperament. Active amusements, e. g., slides and diving, are located on upper floors. This is where Tornado Lasens ride, third biggest in the world and the only European amusement of such type, is located.

Heart of Līvu Akvaparks is Paradise Beach at wave pool. From one side of it lies Captain Kid Land, from another — Spa Resort, place for relaxation. Have no doubt — Līvu Akvaparks is the place where you will quickly be in good mood. Because by organizing trip to this Kingdom of Eternal Summer for yourself, your kids or your friends, you actually organize great holiday for your family.

This can give you optimism, confidence and goodwill — things you lack sometimes for everything to be the way it ought to be.

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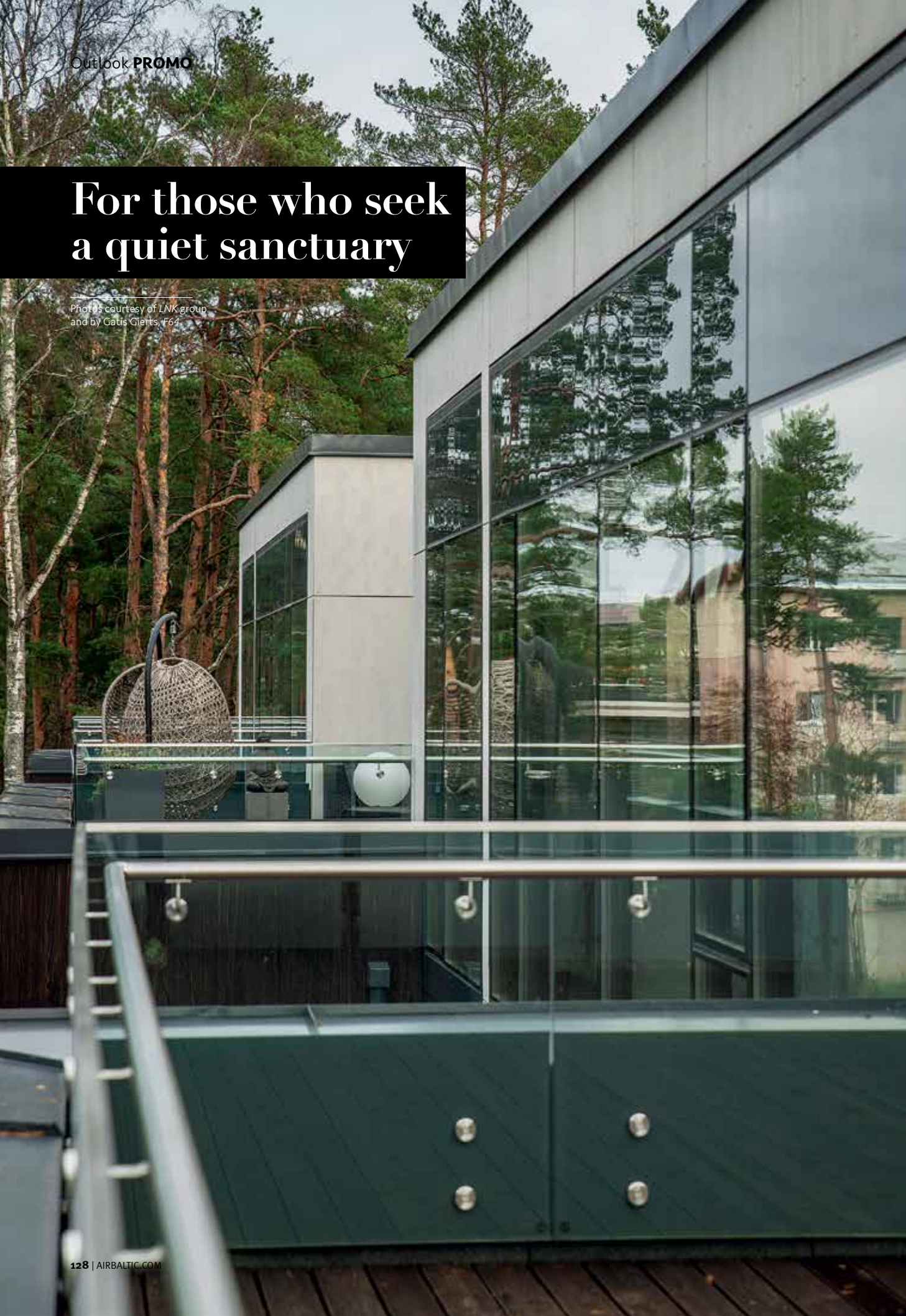
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For those who seek a quiet sanctuary

Photos courtesy of LNK group and by Gatis Cieris, F64



Lately, city dwellers have shown an increasing desire to get closer to nature – be it through small choices like eating healthier food, or larger choices like choosing an optimal place to live and making a real estate purchase. Aleksandra Strode, the residential real estate department head at *LNK Properties*, has noted that in opting for a residence in a natural setting, people also appreciate the proximity of an advanced infrastructure and a vibrant cultural environment. One of the most noteworthy cities in Latvia to fit these criteria is Jūrmala.

Often perceived exclusively as a resort town, Jūrmala offers much more than sunny seaside beaches during the summer months. The city is actually a year-round resort that provides a pleasant and safe environment, fresh pine-scented air and cosy restaurants that serve great food, not to mention specialised spa centres, swimming pools and tennis courts to help one keep in shape.

As Aleksandra Strode notes, these are some of the main reasons why foreigners are buying real estate in the Bulduri district of Jūrmala.

“For me, the atmosphere in Jūrmala is one of fairytale mornings when you wake up, step out onto your balcony with a view of the pine trees, take in a deep breath of fresh air and go out for a jog along the beach or a swim in an indoor pool. Then after breakfast, you hop into your car and 20 minutes later you are in Riga, a significant European centre of business and culture,” says Strode, who adds that the closeness of Latvia’s capital city to the country’s main seaside resort presents a unique advantage.

The advanced infrastructure in Bulduri, where the *Blueberry* residential complex by *LNK Properties* is located, has also drawn residents from other parts of Latvia. Consequently, Bulduri and other parts of Jūrmala retain a vibrant ambience all year round. The Bulduri market, cafés, restaurants and shops continue

operating regardless of the season and weather. Those who have moved to the *LNK Properties’* residential complexes in Jūrmala are pleased to have purchased their high-quality homes at an affordable price and in an ideal location.

“We have to be in tune with our clients’ needs. Our complexes are inhabited by families with young children and by pensioners from various countries, who want to live in a quiet setting with a good infrastructure. As the



Photo by Jānis Mednis

creators, builders and upkeepers of these complexes, we feel a great sense of responsibility toward those who have chosen to live in *Blueberry* and other residences. We want them to feel good over the long term and to justify the trust that they have placed in us,” Aleksandra Strode explains. **BO**

Blueberry ① blueberry.lv

The *Samsung Gear S2* smartwatch a device for all occasions



The *Samsung Gear S2* smartwatch is a progressive innovation in the wearables category of circular design. Aside from serving as a stylish wristwatch, its advanced features enable users to enhance, personalise and bring more fun to their mobile experience.

Through at-a-glance notifications, *Samsung Gear S2* smartwatch owners can check their calendars, e-mails, news and even send important texts directly from their wrists. New fitness functions encourage wearers to stay healthy and active, with 24-hour activity logs that let them view their daily activity patterns at a glance. The smartwatch also sends reminder updates to motivate users to stay on track with their fitness goals.

A mere 11.4 millimetres thin, the *Samsung Gear S2* brings a light and compact design to your wrist. Its high-resolution 1.2-inch circular screen offers a vibrant viewing experience, ensuring that applications can be seen with amazing clarity and that users don't miss notification pop-ups.

Also, with the latest *Tizen OS* and an optimised 1-GHz dual core processor, the *Samsung Gear S2* can perform tasks easily and efficiently in conjunction with all *Android* smartphones (4.4. version or newer and at least 1.5-GB RAM).

Here is what some users have to say about it. ▼▼▼

Jana Duļevska,
Latvian TV
star and
active mother
of two children



"THE *SAMSUNG GEAR S2* IS AN IDEAL SMARTWATCH FOR MY DAILY ACTIVITIES."

"I really enjoy the hustle and bustle of my daily life, which involves dashing from one video shoot to the other, dropping off my children at school or at hobby groups, and running to keep myself fit," says Duļevska.

Although she does not consider herself a technology expert, Duļevska likes to try out new things, preferring leading brands and ascetic design. She was drawn by the contemporary and minimalist look of the *Samsung Gear S2*, whose metal casing and wide range of strap colours permit it to be adapted for both evening and day-to-day wear.

"Even when my phone is in my bag, I can keep track of my calls and conversations," says Duļevska, adding that "with this watch, I can keep my finger on the pulse of everything that is going on, and the *Gear S2* is a perfect partner for that."

Gerd Kiili,
chairman of
the board
of *Sportland
Estonia*



"THE *SAMSUNG GEAR S2* IS AN IRREPLACEABLE PART OF MY BUSINESS LIFE."

"Since I am responsible for managing 34 stores all across Estonia, my days are always full of movement and communication. For this reason, smart technologies have become an irreplaceable part of my life. In the mornings, I can start work immediately thanks to my *Gear S2* smartwatch. This clever gadget alerts me about incoming calls, e-mails and other notices that are important to me. The *Gear S2* is especially useful during meetings, as I can discreetly refuse calls and send the caller a predefined message just by a single movement while my phone is in my jacket," says Kiili.

The manager jokes that the functionality of the *Gear S2* can even surpass that of smartphones.

"Whenever I forget about my phone and leave it somewhere in the office, I can make a special call with the *Gear S2* to find it. A smartwatch is an investment in an extra degree of comfort, while providing the confidence that no important information will stay unnoticed," emphasises Kiili.

Vlada Musvydaitė,
sports journalist,
coach and active
lifestyle promoter



"THE *SAMSUNG GEAR S2* IS A PERFECT TOOL FOR MAINTAINING MY ACTIVE LIFESTYLE."

"Due to my busy schedule, I count every second of my life and cannot imagine spending a single day without my smart devices. As sports are a significant part of my activities, the health monitoring options in this watch are very important to me. The *Gear S2* reminds me to stay hydrated, measures my heart rate and tracks the amount of steps that I take every day. It even recognises whether I am walking, running or cycling. I am glad to be able to check my daily activity statistics with this watch," says Musvydaitė.

According to Musvydaitė, the *Gear S2* also provides other benefits:

"When I am at a meeting or on the go, I do not have to look at my phone. I can look at the smartwatch and see who is calling, read text messages and manage e-mails. The *Samsung Gear S2* is very easy to operate by rotating its bezel. In addition, its circular and minimalist design makes it a very attractive device."

The *Samsung Gear S2* is available all across the Baltics at leading telecommunications operator shops and at the largest electronics stores.



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Staying healthy and productive

The continued development of technology has led to major changes in our work and rest habits. Many office workers now sit at their desks for lengthy periods of eight to ten hours per day, which can eventually lead to problems with posture and health.

The fact that many of us work as “sitters” rather than “standers” has led some employers to seek out the best possible office conditions so that their employees stay healthy and productive.

One of the best solutions is a height-adjustable sit-stand table that can be raised or lowered to any height between 65 and 126,5 cm as often as needed. The table's adjustable legs serve to raise or lower the table surface, thus permitting the user to sit or stand in various positions throughout the working day. The resulting freedom of movement is one of the main features of quality ergonomic furniture. Changing the table height electrically is quite simple: all you have to do is choose the button with the up or down symbol on the control panel, and the desk will either rise or descend within an accuracy range of one centimetre.

When sitting, it is also important that the table height corresponds to a person's body proportions. The average table height (75 cm) is not ideal for everyone, because people can be very different – one person may be 160 cm tall, while another is 190 cm tall. Therefore, a table with an adjustable height is the perfect solution. People also tend to stand in different positions, so an adjustable-height table is the best option.

There is no such thing as a “correct” body posture. The right thing to do is to move around from time to time and regularly change one's sitting or standing position. Static sitting can lead to back, neck and shoulder pain and cut blood circulation to the legs and feet. As a result, the muscles tire and we feel uncomfortable, which stimulates the need to move. The natural response to discomfort is an unconscious change of posture. However, this often has little influence on the intensity of blood flow to the muscles. Static muscle tension is removed only when muscles are moved. For example, switching between sitting and walking increases blood flow to tired muscles and “reboots” them. Also, standing for a long time can lead to leg pain and swelling, varicose veins, static muscle fatigue, a painful waist and neck and shoulder fatigue.

People are supposed to move, although we are lazy by nature.... And the longer we sit, the more strain we put on our backs, legs, feet and circulation. A sit-stand desk forces us into a standing position while working, which is a good thing for busy bees and lazy bones alike.

The height-adjustable tables at **KATE Ltd** have been ergonomically designed for maximum comfort. The main advantage of height-adjustable tables lies in the fact that their users can alternate between sitting and standing work positions and thus be in movement during the working day.

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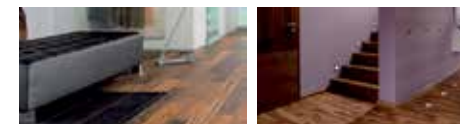
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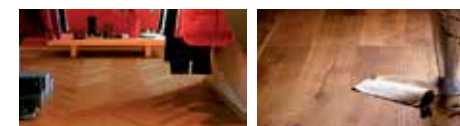
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Photos by
LAURIS AIZUPIETIS (F64)

Steiku Haoss. The best steak restaurants in Riga

Meat is only meat and nothing more if one prepares it simply. However, if it is cooked up by true masters, then it becomes a culinary work of art. When it comes to preparing outstanding steak, one doesn't have to look far in Riga. The kitchens at three *Steiku Haoss* restaurants are run by talented young chefs who don't look at food as a mere means to satisfy one's hunger. The dishes they cook up are masterpieces that are made to be enjoyed with relish.

Steiku Haoss restaurants are part of a significant Riga restaurant empire that also includes the *KID**, *MUUSU* and *Ribs&Rock* establishments, each with its own specialty and message to deliver. The *Steiku Haoss* chain is the oldest of the four, and the oldest *Steiku Haoss* restaurant on Meistaru iela is already 12 years old. Aside from serving outstanding steaks, the *Steiku Haoss* establishments in Riga also stand out with pleasing interiors that could come straight out of the best Western movies.



Master chefs Kristaps Sīlis, Kristaps Jauja
and Andrejs Bojarčenko

At *Steiku Haoss* restaurants, guests are treated to exceptional food and a wide selection of dishes to choose from, thanks to three talented local chefs. Having perfected their trade alongside the world's finest culinary masters, the chefs have a firm grasp of the potential in each product, be it a tender piece of beef or venison, a tangy chunk of cheese or an intensely flavoured seasonal root vegetable.

Kristaps Sīlis is the head chef at the *Steiku Haoss* restaurant on Tērbatas iela. His colleague Kristaps Jauja runs the kitchen at the *Steiku Haoss* on Audēju iela. And last, but not least, Andrejs Bojarčenko is the master at the *Steiku Haoss* restaurant on Meistaru iela. He performed quite well at this year's *San Pellegrino Young Chef* competition and is determined to fare even better at future cooking events.

Two of the chefs – Kristaps Jauja and Kristaps Sīlis – have spent substantial periods interning at *Noma*, the Copenhagen establishment with two *Michelin* stars that is considered to be one

STEIKU HAOSS

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of the world's best restaurants, as well as at the *Michelin*-starred *Tom Aikens Restaurant* and *Texture Restaurant* in London, bringing home innovative ideas and a more powerful wish to deliver the absolute best. They say that their experience abroad has enabled them to bring the world's best cooking traditions back home to the restaurants that they run in Riga. Sīlis adds that while working at world-class restaurants abroad, he became convinced that every dish and ingredient within it has to tell a story.

The skilled chefs say that they will have more culinary tales to recount next year, and that they are looking forward to new challenges in both their professional and personal lives in 2016. The upcoming birth of a child in Bojarčenko's family has given him inspiration for new recipes, while Sīlis is determined to gain still more professional experience outside of Latvia.

Until then, however, all three *Steiku Haoss* chefs will be producing the fine food for which their restaurants are known, as well as some additional dishes that made their appearance on the menus in November – think root vegetables, pumpkins, mushrooms and lingonberries from the fall harvest. Now, with winter setting in, dried and marinated products as well as cinnamon and cloves have been added to the list. Jauja vouches for the lamb neck cutlet with smoked parsley root, parsnip pie and chick pea puree at his restaurant on Audēju iela. He calls it a true winter dish and notes that it has been favourably received by those who have tried it.

Meanwhile, Sīlis recommends the slow-cooked duck breast with parsnip puree and root vegetables at the *Steiku Haoss* on Tērbatas iela. Bojarčenko, for his part, is also offering a meal with the same ingredients at the establishment on Meistaru iela. Nevertheless, although the ingredients may be quite similar, the dishes will taste different at each



restaurant because each chef has his own individual style of cooking. Another sure-fire bet is the lightly smoked duck breast, whichever restaurant you decide to try it at.

During the winter season, one should not forget the classic dish for which *Steiku Haoss* is best known: steak. The restaurant chain even has its own meat processing plant, securing complete independence when it comes to setting one's own standards of quality. The new menu also features venison obtained from local hunters, another popular winter treat.

A hearty steak – be it one of beef, venison or other high-quality meat – might also be in order to mark the end of the current year and the beginning of a new one in a pleasant atmosphere, which *Steiku Haoss* will be sure to provide at all three of its establishments on December 31. Starting at 20:00, *Just Duo@* will perform live music at the restaurant on Audēju iela, while *Marchello* and his band will hit the stage at Meistaru iela an hour later. In other words, fantastic food, excellent drinks and a good time are guaranteed throughout the evening. **BO**

Publicity photo

A contemporary taste of Latvia

The *Kaļķu Vārti* restaurant in Old Riga is one of the best places for an unforgettable dining experience with exquisite modern Latvian cuisine

The opinion of award-winning chef Raimonds Zommers is important to many foodies in Latvia. He runs his own TV cooking show and is regularly interviewed by glossy local magazines that consult him about the latest cooking trends. He serves sumptuous meals to visiting monarchs and other heads of state at Latvian presidential banquets. He is the author of *Zommers. Contemporary Latvian Cuisine* (*Zommers. Mūsdienai latviskā virtuve*) and a consulting expert at the prestigious *WorldSkills* and *EuroSkills* international competitions for young professional chefs. Yet there is one place where Zommers can be found almost every day of the week, despite his local popularity and busy schedule. For the past 15 years,

he has been the head chef at *Kaļķu Vārti*, one of Riga's best-known and most highly rated restaurants.

Anyone who goes for a leisurely stroll through the streets of Old Riga is likely to come across the legendary restaurant. *Kaļķu Vārti* has become such a fixture of life in the vibrant Old Town that some local inhabitants and tourists even see it as a symbol of the city.

Over the years, the restaurant has stood out with superb cuisine and outstanding service, along with the ability to change with the times and introduce bold innovations.

Kaļķu Vārti's trademark feature is modern Latvian cuisine, to which Zommers is passionately devoted. "My goal is to be different from other chefs, to see further and think more expansively than usual. I want my dishes to be based on local

ingredients as much as possible and to work with foods that are not always widely used. At the same time, I never permit the level of quality to suffer in my continual experimental quests," says Zommers.

The chef admits that he also sees an educational mission in his work, which he fulfils by offering new and seemingly unusual dishes to the patrons of *Kaļķu Vārti*. That is one reason why the restaurant's meals rarely repeat themselves in the regularly changing menu. The food on offer, which is based primarily on the highest-quality local ingredients – including those that are organically farmed and come from the forest – will suit the tastes of both refined food connoisseurs and those who are accustomed to classical fare.

Zommers is placing particular emphasis on venison in this winter's menu. As a hunter, he knows all about deer, and his restaurant is cooperating with other responsible Latvian hunters to make sure that only the best venison is served on his restaurant tables.

"As a chef, I want to bring out the full bouquet of tastes that venison provides, as it comes from an animal that has grown up in the wild and fed off the forest. During the spring, summer and fall, deer eat stemmed plants such as grass as well as fruit, berries, nuts and acorns, seeds, tree shoots, buds and leaves. During the winter, they feed on small bushes (including cranberry and bilberry bushes), tree branches and bark, and coniferous tree buds," explains Zommers.

"A deer can eat up to 30 kg of food per day during the summer season. The choice is much less varied during the winter, which means that large-sized animals must make do with a daily intake of only about 6 kg. Since the flora varies in each country's forests, Latvian deer taste different than they would if they were hunted elsewhere," he adds.

Making sure to follow the strictest handling and preparation procedures, Zommers offers his guests the finest venison available and heartily recommends the restaurant's grilled venison chop with beetroot tian, pumpkin, parsnip crisps and porter sauce. **BO**



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Restaurants, bars and cafés

Text by **LIENE PĀLĒNA**
Photos by
LAURIS AIZUPIETIS, F64

Culinary hotspots in Riga

A guide to the best restaurants, cafés and eateries



RESTORĀNS 3 Nordic forest foods

The first thing that came over me as I savoured a truly delicious lunch at *Restorāns 3* was a feeling of happiness. I felt happy to be at this gourmet hotspot in Riga's Old Town and happy to live in the Latvian capital. Not surprisingly, *Lonely Planet* has listed Riga as No. 5 on its list of must-visit destinations in 2016. Indeed, Riga is home to a considerable number of world-class restaurants, which is all the more remarkable considering the city's relatively small size.

Restorāns 3 is certainly one of these first-rate eating establishments. Its roots go back to the year 2011, when two of Latvia's most popular chefs – Mārtiņš Sirmāis and Ēriks Dreibants – opened the premium restaurant *Tam labam būs augt* (The Good Must Grow) together with a group of like-minded

investors. *Tam labam būs augt* united several talented and ambitious chefs in one kitchen, something that hadn't been seen in the Latvian capital before. Some time later, having become trend-setters in Riga's restaurant scene, the master chefs began to expand their business and to open still more eating spots.

The kitchen at *Restorāns 3* is run by the aforementioned Dreibants and by rising culinary star Juris Dukaļskis. They have chosen to serve Nordic cuisine, placing emphasis on food products that can be found in the Baltic States and Scandinavia. The restaurant offers daily lunch specials and an à la carte menu under the forest food concept of fresh vegetables from reliable farmers, freshwater fish from pristine rivers and lakes, as well as forest and seafood products that are prepared so as to maximally retain their natural energy and taste.

As a vegetarian, I selected the young wheat with Calais cabbage boiled in butter. That ended up being one of the most non-traditional but tasty and filling main courses that I have ever tried. In fact, *Restorāns 3* is a paradise for gourmets of all tastes, as its menu is extremely varied. When I was there, the restaurant offered Atlantic sea scallop, wild boar, venison, cloudberry, zander, heather-blossom honey, penny buns and many other foods. The restaurant can be commended for setting up four-course *Taste Nature* menus for both vegetarians and meat-eaters, at a modest price of 29 euros per person. That makes it much easier to choose from the establishment's wide selection of tasty dishes.

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KOLEKCIONĀRS

Wine, conversation and design

Although *Kolekcionārs* (*The Collector*) is a new spot on the map of Riga cafés, it's already clear that it will leave a lasting impression. The recently opened café's largest asset is its unique identity. *Kolekcionārs* is not simply a place to enjoy great tastes. The establishment offers so much more to enjoy, including glimpses into the latest trends in Latvian design and conversations about the latest events in the Riga arts and culture scene. For now, the most frequent breakfast, lunch and dinner guests at this design café are the owners' friends and acquaintances, namely, the capital city's creative intelligentsia and other young and successful types.

However, one shouldn't feel intimidated by this seemingly closed circle. Already during my first visit to the café, I was surprised by the genuine interest and warmth that Edijs the waiter (who also turned out to be a co-owner of *Kolekcionārs*) displayed towards every client, including myself. During my conversation with

Edijs, I established that he had wished to set up a café where he could also devote himself to the field of design. In that sense, *Kolekcionārs* is like an art gallery, displaying (and using) various items by young Latvian designers, including furniture, lamps, paintings and even tableware. Special design elements can also be found in the menu, which has been printed in the format of a large newspaper.

With regards to the cuisine, I chose a seafood and coconut milk soup and a fresh salad with flamed goat cheese. They both tasted great. One has to agree with Riga media specialist Artūrs Mednis, who tweeted that although the café "looks somewhat bourgeois", the prices are quite reasonable, with salads going for about 3.50 euros. However, *Kolekcionārs*' real charm can be found not in its tasty food, but in the friendly atmosphere and stimulating conversations over a glass of wine, especially on dark winter evenings.

Address: Blaumaņa iela 7
Open: daily from 10:00-23:00
① facebook.com/kolekcionars



KEY to RIGA

Every city has its key. It is the city's guardian.
It is used to open the city gates when guests are welcome.

We extend you a warm welcome and an invitation to Key to Riga where you can experience the atmosphere of ancient Riga, its hospitality and the flavour of its traditional meals. It is located in the very heart of Old Riga at Dome Square. Among our special features are genuine medieval interior decorations, the magnificent twinkling of candlelight and Latvian cuisine served in local clay tableware. In the evenings live medieval music is played by musicians in period costume.

The legendary Latvian film *The Devil's Servants*, which was produced by the Riga Film studio in the 1970s, served as the inspiration for the restaurant. The Key to Riga was an essential part of this cinema classic and an exact replica now holds a place of honour in the restaurant.

It is said that he who holds the key to Riga will unlock a world of wealth and happiness and we encourage you to pick it up and see what it feels like to hold the key to this ancient city. Take a photograph with the key and capture a timeless moment with one of Riga's most revered symbols!



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aboard
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PIN UP GARAGE PUB

BACK TO
THE 50'S





Verona

- 1/ New flights to skiing destinations
- 2/ Best connections between the Baltics and Scandinavia
- 3/ New partnership with Air Serbia
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- 5/ Fly between Russia and Ukraine via Riga
- 6/ Your ticket to affordable air travel is just a click away!
- 7/ Improved airBaltic website
- 8/ airBaltic's new calendar is out!

1/ New flights to skiing destinations

Those who long for a nice winter holiday in the Alps will be delighted to hear that starting on December 26, *airBaltic* will launch new direct flights from Riga to **Salzburg** and **Verona**.

The flights will operate once per week on Saturdays in cooperation with the leading Latvian tour operator *Tez Tour*.

Another skiing destination returning to the winter schedule is **Poprad**, a city in northern Slovakia at the foot of the High Tatra Mountains. Flights to Poprad begin on December 15 and will operate three times per week from Riga (on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays) and twice a week from Warsaw (on Tuesdays and Thursdays).

One-way tickets from Riga to Poprad start at EUR 59, while flights to Salzburg start at EUR 89 and Verona at EUR 99.

2/ Best connections between the Baltics and Scandinavia

airBaltic is proud to be the leading airline in connecting the Baltic States with Scandinavia and Finland.

There are up to five daily flights between **Riga** and the other two Baltic capitals (**Tallinn** and **Vilnius**) as well as **Stockholm**.

Up to four flights per day link Riga with **Helsinki** and **Copenhagen**. **Oslo** is connected with Riga up to two times per day.

There are also up to five direct flights per week between Vilnius and Stockholm as well as between **Palanga** and Riga. Riga is connected with **Billund** and **Turku** four times per week.

One-way ticket prices between the Baltics and Scandinavia start at EUR 29.

3/ New partnership with Air Serbia

In order to provide even better travel opportunities to our passengers, *airBaltic* has begun a new partnership with *Air Serbia*.

As a result, we are now able to offer more convenient and affordable flights from Riga and Tallinn to **Belgrade** and vice versa via such transit hubs as Vienna, Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Warsaw, Berlin, Stockholm and Brussels.

Check out the deals and book your flight at airbaltic.com.

4/ New airBaltic blog

We are proud to introduce our newest addition to the *airBaltic* family, the *airBaltic blog*.

Visit airbalticblog.com whenever you're seeking inspiration for your next trip. There will be plenty of information about the places that we fly to. The blog will give you tips about what to do, where to eat, where to stay and where to shop.

We will also give you lots of insight into the mysteries of flying and what happens behind the scenes at the airline.



Tallinn



Kiev

5/ Fly between Russia and Ukraine via Riga

airBaltic offers convenient flight connections between **Moscow** or **St. Petersburg** in Russia and **Kiev**, the Ukrainian capital, via Riga every day.

The total transit flight time is only four hours, and passengers do not need a Schengen visa, only a valid international passport.

One-way ticket prices between Moscow or St. Petersburg and Kiev start at EUR 99.

6/ Your ticket to affordable air travel is just a click away!

Subscribe to the *airBaltic* newsletter and you will be the first to hear about upcoming sales via the early-bird alerts. That way you can check out the deal, come up with a plan and grab a flight at the lowest price once the sale begins.

And only subscribers have access to our exclusive offers that are not available to the general public, so it's almost like being part of a secret club. Who wouldn't want to fly cheaper?

Sign up at www.airbaltic.com/sign-up

All flight prices mentioned in this magazine apply for one-way tickets in Basic class from Riga, Vilnius or Tallinn, which are booked in advance at www.airbaltic.com. Prices are subject to availability and not available for all flights or days. Transaction fee is not included in the prices. Special conditions apply.

7/ Improved *airBaltic* website

We are proud to present a new and improved version of *airBaltic*'s website, which has become even more enjoyable to use on the device of your preference. Just visit *airbaltic.com* through your tablet or smartphone, and feel the difference!



Here are a few more reasons for using *airbaltic.com*.

→ **Lowest price guaranteed**

Booking directly with us means that you get the lowest rate for *airBaltic* flights. Check our low-fare calendar for all flights to your chosen destination during a given week and immediately compare the prices to find the best deal.

→ **Over 300 destinations worldwide**

You'll find direct *airBaltic* flights to more than 50 cities, plus flights with our partner airlines to many other destinations beyond our Riga, Tallinn and Vilnius direct network.

→ **Secure payment options**

Choose from a variety of payment options, including

secure credit/debit card, direct bank transfer (in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Russia, Finland), *PayPal* and *Bitcoin*. Residents of Germany can also pay via *SOFORT Online Banking*, and residents of the Netherlands via *iDeal Online Banking*.

→ **Book now, pay later**

Split the total sum into several payments when you book at least a month before departure. Or freeze the price and postpone payment for up to 48 hours if you need a little more time to finalise your travel plans.

→ **Best price for extra services**

Get the best price on any extras that you need. Easily add options like checked-in baggage, an onboard meal or special seat requests, all at the time of your booking. Buying later offline will often cost more.

→ **Stay updated about your flight**

You'll receive a personalised online check-in invitation and any important updates about your flight in your e-mail. Save your boarding pass to your mobile device and enjoy paper-free travel.

→ **Quick and easy booking through your account**

Our modern and intuitive website lets you book your flight in five simple steps. Save your details in a *My airBaltic* account for even faster booking next time.

→ **Seven languages**

The *airbaltic.com* website is available in English, Latvian, Lithuanian, Estonian, Russian, Finnish and German.

→ **Exclusive deals from our partners**

Get special deals from our partners for car rentals, hotel rooms and travel insurance, and book them together with your flight.

8/ *airBaltic*'s new calendar is out!

airBaltic's gorgeous team members are on hand to welcome you with a warm smile each month of 2016. Yes, our new calendar has just come out! It has become a tradition for *airBaltic* to make an annual calendar, and who could present the company better than its own employees?

The photo shoot was a great experience for all of the participants and something different from their daily work. The 12 calendar girls got to be pampered by style expert Anita Altmane, professional hair stylists and make-up artists. They were photographed by a professional photographer and made to feel like real supermodels.

"It was a wonderful experience to be a part of the creative process and to work with the amazing crew that made it happen. It was quite scary to climb onto the wing and engine of one of our aircraft, but it was also a thrilling and unique experience," said our August model Kristīne, a senior cabin crew member at *airBaltic*.

This year's pictures were all taken at the Riga airport, *airBaltic*'s home base, and the creator of the images is talented Latvian photographer Aiga Rēdmāne. Don't miss your chance to purchase the new *airBaltic* calendar at *airbalticshop.com* in either wall or desk format.



Kristīne Jēkabsons-Nazarova,
Senior Cabin Crew



Diāna Maksimova,
Cabin Crew



Līga Lapinska,
Cabin Crew

Don't miss your chance to purchase the new *airBaltic* calendar at *airbalticshop.com* in either wall or desk format, as of the middle of December.

Photo by AIGA RĒDMĀNE

Discover the slopes of the Tatra Mountains!

→ **Poprad** from **59€**

2 flights weekly

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estravel

Merry Christmas and happy, adventurous New Year! We will do our best to fill your coming year with **travels full of fantasy.**
Estravel, Estonia



Have you already put **“travel more”** on your New Year’s resolution list? A wish becomes a reality if it’s on paper! Let 2016 be a year of travel – explore **new destinations** like you have always dreamed!
Kitija Reinfelde, Director of travel agencies Kolumbs and Averoja, Latvia



“We travel not to escape life but for life not to escape us.” (Anonymous)
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!
Kitija Tigule, President of the Association of Latvian Travel Agents and Operators



Oslo Airport wishes *airBaltic* and all your passengers a **Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year!** God Jul! Priecīgus Ziemassvētkus!
Jasper Spruit, Vice President of Traffic Development, Oslo Airport



We feel a **great sense of satisfaction** and joy at the successful cooperation that we have had with *airBaltic* for nearly ten years. Both of our companies were drawn by a number of common business principles that we continue to follow: working professionally and precisely, and focusing on development while providing the highest possible level of service and comfort. In this regard, we have succeeded. Since 2007, through active cooperation in the field of leisure holidays, we have opened 19 new seasons destinations together and don’t

May every flight open **new opportunities for you!**
Andris Liepiņš, Chairman of the Board of the Riga International Airport



Wishing you planes full of happy passengers and a wide network of punctual flights. We thank you for this special year of our partnership. May you have a cosy Christmas and a memorable New Year!
Jūratė Baltrušaitytė, CCO of Lithuanian Airports

plan on stopping there! In the very near future, we will be announcing one more summer route from Riga for the pleasure of our tourist clients. We wish all *airBaltic* team new accomplishments, new flights and new impressions!

Konstantins Palgovs,
General manager
in the Baltic States



Happy holidays and travels to our partner *airBaltic* and its esteemed passengers. We thank you for your loyalty to Munich Airport, and we look forward to a long and rewarding relationship between Bavaria and the Baltics. Wishing you a joyous and healthy holiday season!
Alexander Schroll,
Traffic Development Director of Munich Airport



Christmas is a time to be together, and we thank our partner *airBaltic* for helping circles of friends and family come together. On behalf of the world’s cosiest airport, **I wish everyone the cosiest Christmas ever!**
Eero Pärasmäe,
CCO of Tallinn Airport



No matter where your travels take you, no matter where you hang your hat, **you will always be home for Christmas!**
Margit Lõiv,
Baltic Tours Sales Manager, Estonia



During the New Year, **keep up the desire to perform miracles**, fulfil large and small dreams, carry out ambitious goals and maintain the conviction that each of us – at first on their own and then all together – are capable of achieving great feats that make the world a better place.
UPB Holding



Carlson Wagonlit Travel wishes you a wonderful Christmas time! May the coming year bring you **happiness, success and cloudless travel!**
Pauls Gusts, Director of travel agency Carlson Wagonlit, Latvia

May the magic and the wonder of the holiday season stay with you throughout the coming year! **Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!**
Ieva Keiša, Director of travel agency Latvia Tours, Latvia



Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success. We wish you to continue on this road built on teamwork up in the sky. May you reach new destinations, new horizons and new goals!
Vlad Koriagin, Chairman of the Board and Baiba Lūse, Head of Business Travel Department of Baltic Travel Group, Latvia

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About the program

PINS is the **airBaltic frequent flyer loyalty program**, which uses the loyalty currency PINS. You can collect PINS while flying with airBaltic, shopping at airports, staying in hotels, renting cars, dining out and even by using the **airBaltic Payment Card** or the **PINS MasterCard**. PINS can also be collected by doing your everyday shopping, with more than 700 local, global and online partners represented.

PINS program has various card designs from which you can choose, but if you are a frequent flyer, the most suitable one for you will be the green **airBaltic PINS card**. The more you fly with airBaltic the higher your membership level and the greater the privileges. **Executive** and **VIP levels** are reserved for the most loyal airBaltic customers and ensure

various benefits which include **extra baggage allowance**, **priority check-in**, **seat request** and much more to make traveling more pleasant. A special **airBaltic PINS Young Pilot card** is issued to the youngest members starting at the age of two, it allows also children to collect PINS.

If you aren’t a PINS program member yet

Join the program right away – just ask a flight attendant for your card. Register your card online after the flight at **register.pinsforme.com** and **get 10 bonus PINS**.



airBaltic PINS card



airBaltic PINS Executive card



airBaltic PINS VIP card



airBaltic PINS Young Pilot card

Benefits for Executive- and VIP-level members of the *airBaltic* PINS program

Those who travel regularly with airBaltic are entitled to receive a wide array of **extra privileges** as members of our PINS frequent flyer program.

For instance, **airBaltic VIP members** travelling on a Basic ticket can use **the Business Class counter to check-in** for a flight, or simply drop off baggage and then just breeze through Riga Airport security! Instead of joining the regular queue at the security check, go **straight to the dedicated Fast Track lane** and save time.

airBaltic's most loyal customers at the Executive and VIP levels can **receive various benefits**, including **priority check-in**, **advanced seat reservation**, and **Fast Track security screening**, to name just a few. For a complete list of privileges offered, please check the table below.

Rules and benefits	Status level		
	BASIC	EXECUTIVE	VIP
			
QUALIFICATION			
Based on Status PINS	registration	25,000 Status PINS	50,000 Status PINS
Based on the number of airBaltic segments flown	⊘	30 (or 15 round trips)	60 (or 30 round trips)
Qualification duration	⊘	1 year	1 year
Status PINS expiration	after 12 months	after 12 months	after 12 months
Reward PINS expiration	after 36 months	no expiration	no expiration
THRESHOLD FOR RE-QUALIFICATION			
Based on Status PINS	⊘	20,000 Status PINS	40,000 Status PINS
Based on the number of airBaltic segments flown	⊘	25	50
ADDITIONAL BENEFITS			
Advance seat request online	⊘	⊘	free
Seat Selection during online check-in	⊘	⊘	free
Business class check-in with basic class ticket type	⊘	✓	✓
Security Fast Track	⊘	in Riga	in Riga
Lounge access	⊘	⊘	✓ (plus one guest and children)
Flight segment upgrade	⊘	⊘	2 upgrade vouchers per year
BAGGAGE ALLOWANCE			
Total checked baggage allowance (free bags and total baggage weight)			
Basic ticket type (Economy class) – Second cabin bag free of charge	⊘	⊘	2 cabin bags (55x40x20 cm max. each)
Premium class ticket type	1 item up to 20kg	2 items up to 40kg	3 items up to 60kg; 1 piece of sports equipment with maximum weight 20 kg free of charge
Business class ticket type	2 items up to 40kg	3 items up to 60kg	4 items up to 80kg
			1 sports equipment set with the max. weight of 20 kg included

This **holiday season**, treat yourself and loved ones with **something special** from the pins **Rewards Shop!**

airBaltic Flights

from **4 200 pins**

JVC Headphones

3 445 pins
100p + 20.07€

Whithings Pulse O₂ Activity Wristband

16 020 pins
100p + 95.40€

Apple iPhone 6s

from **122 845 pins**
100p + 740.10€

Hugo Boss Jour pour Femme EDP 75 ml

7 085 pins
100p + 41.91€

Tucano Second Skin for MacBook

3 755 pins
100p + 21.93€

Pay with any combination of pins & money strating just **100 pins**

SPA Treatments

from **2 850 pins**
100p + 16.50€

Lego Toys

from **1 620 pins**
100p + 9.12€

Illy Coffee Machines

from **20 973 pins**
100p + 125.24€

and many more at spend.pinsforme.com

All prices include delivery to Latvia and are subject to change. The product range may change. Products are subject to availability.

Fly worldwide via Paris

airBaltic is constantly expanding its partnership network in order to offer our customers favorable connections to many worldwide destinations where direct flights from the Baltics are not available.

In cooperation with *Air France*, *airBaltic* is operating 10 weekly flights from Riga to Paris and three weekly flights from Tallinn and Vilnius to Paris.

Thanks to this, our passengers can benefit from attractive flight offers to the wide *Air France* network of 168 destinations in 93 countries via Paris.

Fly to Spain and Italy via Berlin

Aside from being a great travel destination in itself, Berlin is also an excellent transit point for further flights within Europe.

airBaltic operates direct flights from Riga, Vilnius and Tallinn to Berlin in cooperation with the German airline *Air Berlin*.

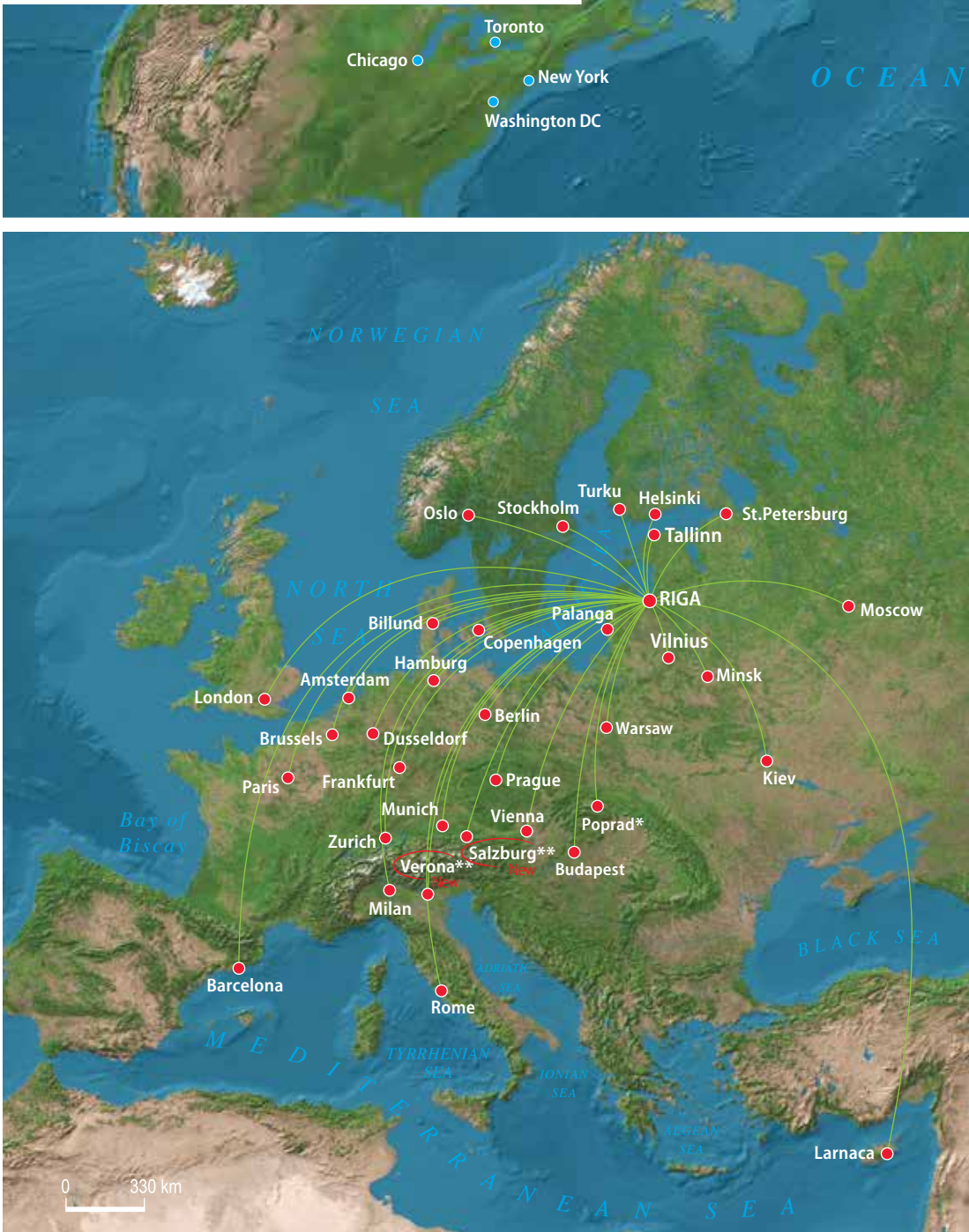
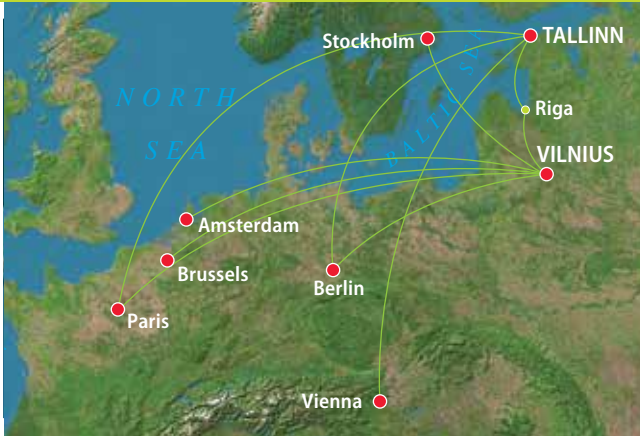
Now the partnership has been extended and you can book flights from all three Baltic capitals via Berlin not only to various cities in Germany, but also to many popular destinations in Spain and Italy at competitive prices.

Check out the deals and book your flights at airbaltic.com.

airBaltic codeshare partners

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airBaltic.com offers

● airBaltic direct flights

● airBaltic partner flights

* Seasonal winter flights

** Flights operated in cooperation with tour operator Tez Tour



Flights from RIGA						Flights to RIGA					
Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival
AMSTERDAM						AMSTERDAM					
BT 617	RIX	AMS	123456-	7:35	09:00	BT 618	AMS	RIX	123456-	10:20	13:35
BT 619	RIX	AMS	12345-7	16:30	17:55	BT 620	AMS	RIX	12345-7	19:00	22:15
BARCELONA						BARCELONA					
BT 681	RIX	BCN	-----5--	07:50	10:35	BT 682	BCN	RIX	-----5--	11:15	15:55
BT 681	RIX	BCN	1-----7	14:00	16:45	BT 682	BCN	RIX	1-----7	17:45	22:25
BERLIN Tegel						BERLIN Tegel					
BT 211	RIX	TXL	1234567	08:15	9:10	BT 212	TXL	RIX	1234567	09:50	12:40
BT 213	RIX	TXL	12345-7	18:20	19:15	BT 214	TXL	RIX	12345-7	19:45	22:35
BILLUND						BILLUND					
BT 147	RIX	BLL	1-3-5-7	12:20	13:20	BT 148	BLL	RIX	1-3-5-7	14:40	17:30
BRUSSELS						BRUSSELS					
BT 601	RIX	BRU	12345--	07:05	09:00	BT 602	BRU	RIX	12345--	09:55	13:40
BT 607	RIX	BRU	-----6-	11:50	13:45	BT 608	BRU	RIX	-----6-	14:15	18:00
BT 603	RIX	BRU	12345-7	16:35	18:30	BT 604	BRU	RIX	12345-7	19:05	22:50
BUDAPEST						BUDAPEST					
BT 491	RIX	BUD	1-3-5--	12:25	13:50	BT 492	BUD	RIX	1-3-5--	14:20	17:35
COPENHAGEN						COPENHAGEN					
BT 133	RIX	CPH	1234---	06:05	6:45	BT 134	CPH	RIX	1234---	07:20	10:00
BT 131	RIX	CPH	1234567	07:50	8:30	BT 132	CPH	RIX	1234567	09:05	11:45
BT 139	RIX	CPH	1234567	18:30	19:10	BT 140	CPH	RIX	1234567	19:45	22:25
BT 137	RIX	CPH	1-345--	20:45	21:25	BT 138	CPH	RIX	1-345--	23:00	01:40+1
DUSSELDORF						DUSSELDORF					
BT 235	RIX	DUS	1-3-5-7	12:10	13:50	BT 236	DUS	RIX	1-3-5-7	14:20	17:50
FRANKFURT						FRANKFURT					
BT 241	RIX	FRA	1-345-7	12:10	13:55	BT 242	FRA	RIX	1-345-7	14:25	18:00
HAMBURG						HAMBURG					
BT 251	RIX	HAM	-2-4---	07:20	08:25	BT 252	HAM	RIX	-2-4---	08:55	11:50
BT 253	RIX	HAM	1-3-5-7	18:05	19:10	BT 254	HAM	RIX	1-3-5-7	19:45	22:40
HELSINKI						HELSINKI					
BT 301	RIX	HEL	123456-	07:50	08:55	BT 326	HEL	RIX	123456-	05:50	06:50
BT 303	RIX	HEL	1234567	13:35	14:40	BT 302	HEL	RIX	1234567	10:25	11:25
BT 307	RIX	HEL	1234567	18:30	19:35	BT 304	HEL	RIX	1234567	15:05	16:05
BT 325	RIX	HEL	12345-7	23:15	00:20+1	BT 308	HEL	RIX	12345-7	21:25	22:25
KIEV						KIEV					
BT 400	RIX	KBP	123456-	07:30	9:20	BT 401	KBP	RIX	123456-	09:50	11:45
BT 404	RIX	KBP	12345-7	18:15	20:05	BT 405	KBP	RIX	12345-7	20:35	22:30
LARNACA						LARNACA					
BT 657	RIX	LCA	-----6-	12:45	16:35	BT 658	LCA	RIX	-----7	11:40	15:40
LONDON Gatwick						LONDON Gatwick					
BT 651	RIX	LGW	-----6-	07:45	08:35	BT 652	LGW	RIX	-----6-	09:20	14:05
BT 651	RIX	LGW	12-4---	09:20	10:10	BT 652	LGW	RIX	12-4---	11:05	15:50
BT 653	RIX	LGW	--3-5-7	15:55	16:45	BT 654	LGW	RIX	--3-5-7	17:30	22:15
MILAN Malpensa						MILAN Malpensa					
BT 629	RIX	MXP	--3-6-	07:55	9:40	BT 630	MXP	RIX	--3-6-	12:15	15:55
BT 629	RIX	MXP	1--5--	13:55	15:40	BT 630	MXP	RIX	1--5--	18:35	22:15
MINSK						MINSK					
BT 412	RIX	MSQ	1-3---7	12:45	14:55	BT 413	MSQ	RIX	1-3---7	15:50	16:00
MOSCOW Sheremetyevo						MOSCOW Sheremetyevo					
BT 424	RIX	SVO	123456-	07:35	10:15	BT 427	SVO	RIX	12-4-6-	06:00	06:45
BT 422	RIX	SVO	1234567	18:30	21:10	BT 425	SVO	RIX	123456-	11:00	11:45
BT 426	RIX	SVO	1-3-5-7	23:25	02:05+1	BT 423	SVO	RIX	1234567	22:00	22:45
MOSCOW Vnukovo						MOSCOW Vnukovo					
BT 418	RIX	VKO	-2345-- Dec 25-31	06:00	08:40	BT 419	VKO	RIX	-2345-- Dec 25-31	12:15	13:10
MUNICH						MUNICH					
BT 221	RIX	MUC	12--5--	07:20	9:00	BT 222	MUC	RIX	12--5--	09:40	13:10
BT 221	RIX	MUC	---4--- Dec 24-31	07:20	9:00	BT 222	MUC	RIX	---4--- Dec 24-31	09:40	13:10
BT 225	RIX	MUC	-----6-	12:00	13:40	BT 226	MUC	RIX	-----6-	14:15	17:45
BT 223	RIX	MUC	1-345-7	16:35	18:15	BT 224	MUC	RIX	1-345-7	18:45	22:15
OSLO						OSLO					
BT 151	RIX	OSL	123456-	08:05	09:00	BT 152	OSL	RIX	123456-	09:30	12:20
BT 153	RIX	OSL	12345-7	18:15	19:10	BT 154	OSL	RIX	12345-7	19:45	22:35
PALANGA						PALANGA					
BT 033	RIX	PLQ	1-345-7	23:15	23:59	BT 032	PLQ	RIX	12-456-	06:00	6:45
PARIS Charles de Gaulles						PARIS Charles de Gaulles					
BT 691	RIX	CDG	123456-	07:30	9:25	BT 692	CDG	RIX	123456-	10:10	13:55
BT 697	RIX	CDG	-----67 Dec 13-19	12:35	14:30	BT 698	CDG	RIX	-----67 Dec 13-19	15:15	19:00
BT 693	RIX	CDG	1-45-7	15:30	17:25	BT 694	CDG	RIX	1-45-7	18:30	22:15
POPRAD						POPRAD					
BT 485	RIX	TAT	-----6- From Dec 19	12:20	13:00	BT 486	TAT	RIX	-----6- From Dec 19	15:05	17:50
BT 1487	RIX	TAT	-2----- From Dec 15	15:15	17:15	BT 1488	TAT	RIX	-2----- From Dec 15	18:10	22:10
PRAGUE						PRAGUE					
BT 481	RIX	PRG	1234567	12:50	14:00	BT 482	PRG	RIX	1234567	14:35	17:40
ROME Leonardo da Vinci Fiumicino						ROME Leonardo da Vinci Fiumicino					
BT 631	RIX	FCO	---45--	07:40	9:45	BT 632	FCO	RIX	---45--	10:30	14:40
BT 633	RIX	FCO	1-----7	15:15	17:20	BT 634	FCO	RIX	1-----7	18:15	22:25
SALZBURG						SALZBURG					
BT 437	RIX	SZG	-----6- From Dec 26	12:25	13:35	BT 438	SZG	RIX	-----6- From Dec 26	14:25	17:30
STOCKHOLM Arlanda						STOCKHOLM Arlanda					
BT 101	RIX	ARN	1234567	07:30	07:45	BT 104	ARN	RIX	12-----	06:40	08:55
BT 105	RIX	ARN	1-4567	12:20	12:35	BT 102	ARN	RIX	1234567	08:40	10:55
BT 119	RIX	ARN	1-4---	18:05	18:20	BT 118	ARN	RIX	-2--5--	09:30	11:45

Flights from Riga						Flights to Riga					
Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival
BT 109	RIX	ARN	1234567	19:30	19:45	BT 106	ARN	RIX	1-4567	15:15	17:30
BT 103	RIX	ARN	1-----7	23:15	23:30	BT 110	ARN	RIX	1234567	20:15	22:30
ST-PETERSBURG						ST-PETERSBURG					
BT 442	RIX	LED	1-3456-	07:45	10:05	BT 447	LED	RIX	12-4-6-	06:25	06:45
BT 444	RIX	LED	12-45-7	18:40	21:00	BT 443	LED	RIX	1-3456-	11:00	11:20
BT 446	RIX	LED	1-3-5-7	23:25	01:45+1	BT 445	LED	RIX	12-45-7	22:00	22:20
TALLINN						TALLINN					
BT 311	RIX	TLL	123456- ---45--- Dec 4-11	07:50 12:45	8:40 13:35	BT 362	TLL	RIX	123456-	05:50	6:40
BT 313	RIX	TLL	1234567	12:45	13:35	BT 312	TLL	RIX	1234567	10:35	11:25
BT 313	RIX	TLL	---567 Dec 13-19	12:45	13:35	BT 314	TLL	RIX	---45--- Dec 4-11	14:00	14:50
BT 313	RIX	TLL	1-3456- Dec 23-31	12:45	13:35	BT 314	TLL	RIX	---567 Dec 13-19	14:00	14:50
BT 313	RIX	TLL	1234-67 Dec 1-9	14:00	14:50	BT 314	TLL	RIX	1-3456- Dec 23-31	14:00	14:50
BT 313	RIX	TLL	1234-6- Dec 12-17	14:00	14:50	BT 1364	TLL	RIX	-----6- Dec 19-26	14:45	15:35
BT 313	RIX	TLL	12-----7 Dec 20-27	14:00	14:50	BT 314	TLL	RIX	1234-67 Dec 1-9	15:15	16:05
BT 313	RIX	TLL	-2----- Dec 29	14:00	14:50	BT 314	TLL	RIX	1234-6- Dec 12-17	15:15	16:05
BT 315	RIX	TLL	---45--- Dec 4-11	15:20	16:10	BT 314	TLL	RIX	12-----7 Dec 20-27	15:15	16:05
BT 315	RIX	TLL	---567 Dec 13-19	15:20	16:10	BT 314	TLL	RIX	-2----- Dec 29	15:15	16:05
BT 315	RIX	TLL	1-3456- Dec 23-31	15:20	16:10	BT 316	TLL	RIX	---45--- Dec 4-11	16:40	17:30
BT 317	RIX	TLL	1234567	18:30	19:20	BT 316	TLL	RIX	---567 Dec 13-19	16:40	17:30
BT 361	RIX	TLL	1234567	23:15	23:59	BT 316	TLL	RIX	1-3456- Dec 23-31	16:40	17:30
BT 317	RIX	TLL	1234567	18:30	19:20	BT 318	TLL	RIX	12345-7	21:40	22:30
						BT 1364	TLL	RIX	-----5- Dec 4-11	22:00	22:50
TBILISI						TBILISI					
BT 722	RIX	TBS	----5-7	23:05	04:35+1	BT 723	TBS	RIX	1---6-	05:20	06:55
TEL AVIV						TEL AVIV					
BT 771	RIX	TLV	-2---6-	13:00	17:20	BT 772	TLV	RIX	--3---7	11:20	15:50
TURKU						TURKU					
BT 359	RIX	TKU	1-3-5-7	23:15	00:25+1	BT 360	TKU	RIX	12-4-6-	05:45	06:50
VIENNA						VIENNA					
BT 431	RIX	VIE	1-3456-	07:15	08:35	BT 432	VIE	RIX	1-3456-	09:45	13:05
BT 433	RIX	VIE	12345-7	16:30	17:55	BT 434	VIE	RIX	12345-7	19:00	22:20
VILNIUS						VILNIUS					
BT 341	RIX	VNO	123456-	07:50	08:40	BT 350	VNO	RIX	123456-	05:50	06:40
BT 343	RIX	VNO	1234567	12:45	13:35	BT 1354	VNO	RIX	-3--- Dec 2-16	06:20	07:10
BT 345	RIX	VNO	---4-7 Dec 24-27	15:20	16:10	BT 342	VNO	RIX	1234567	10:35	11:25
BT 347	RIX	VNO	1234567	18:30	19:20	BT 344	VNO	RIX	---4-7 Dec 24-27	14:00	14:50
BT 1353	RIX	VNO	--3----	22:55	23:45	BT 1354	VNO	RIX	-3--- Dec 23-30	16:20	17:10
BT 349	RIX	VNO	12345-7	23:15	23:59	BT 346	VNO	RIX	1234567	16:40	17:30
						BT 348	VNO	RIX	12345-7	21:40	22:30
VERONA						VERONA					
BT 625	RIX	VRN	---6- From Dec 26	12:15	13:50	BT 626	VRN	RIX	---6- From Dec 26	14:30	18:00
WARSAW						WARSAW					
BT 461	RIX	WAW	1-3456-	07:40	08:10	BT 462	WAW	RIX	1-3456-	09:00	11:25
BT 1487	RIX	WAW	-2----- From Dec 15	15:15	15:35	BT 1488	WAW	RIX	-2----- From Dec 15	19:50	22:10
BT 467	RIX	WAW	-2-4-7	18:40	19:10	BT 468	WAW	RIX	-2-4-7	19:55	22:20
ZURICH						ZURICH					
BT 641	RIX	ZRH	1-3-567	12:10	13:40	BT 642	ZRH	RIX	1-3-567	14:15	17:45
Flights from Tallinn						Flights to Tallinn					
Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival
BERLIN Tegel						BERLIN Tegel					
BT 203	TLL	TXL	1-5--	15:20	16:15	BT 204	TXL	TLL	1-5--	18:10	21:00
PARIS Charles de Gaulles						PARIS Charles de Gaulles					
BT 689	TLL	CDG	---6- Dec 19-26	07:05	9:05	BT 690	CDG	TLL	---6- Dec 19-26	10:10	14:05
BT 689	TLL	CDG	-2-4-7	07:20	9:20	BT 690	CDG	TLL	-2-4-7	18:50	22:45
VIENNA						VIENNA					
BT 205	TLL	VIE	1-5--	06:35	08:30	BT 206	VIE	TLL	1-5--	09:45	13:35
BT 205	TLL	VIE	-3--- Dec 16-30	06:35	08:30	BT 206	VIE	TLL	-3--- Dec 16-30	09:45	13:35
Flights from Vilnius						Flights to Vilnius					
Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival
AMSTERDAM						AMSTERDAM					
BT 609	VNO	AMS	--34567	08:55	10:55	BT 610	AMS	VNO	--34567	11:45	15:30
BT 609	VNO	AMS	1-----	14:00	16:00	BT 610	AMS	VNO	1-----	16:50	20:35
BERLIN Tegel						BERLIN Tegel					
BT 215	VNO	TXL	-2-5-7	16:10	17:10	BT 216	TXL	VNO	-2-5-7	18:05	20:50
BRUSSELS						BRUSSELS					
BT 605	VNO	BRU	12-----	05:50	07:55	BT 606	BRU	VNO	12-----	09:00	12:50
BT 605	VNO	BRU	---4---	17:00	19:05	BT 606	BRU	VNO	---4---	19:35	23:25
PARIS Charles de Gaulles						PARIS Charles de Gaulles					
BT 701	VNO	CDG	-2-4-7	15:25	17:10	BT 702	CDG	VNO	-2-4-7	10:05	13:40
STOCKHOLM Arlanda						STOCKHOLM Arlanda					
BT 111	VNO	ARN	-2-5--	08:20	09:00	BT 114	ARN	VNO	1-4---	18:50	21:30



Text by **AGRA LIEGE**
Photo by **LAURIS AIZUPIETIS, F64**

The route that leads to all routes

Wolfgang Reuss,
head of *airBaltic's* network
planning department

What does your new position at *airBaltic* entail?

Since September of this year, I have joined the airline's network planning department, which is responsible for everything from route studies to business plans. We make flight schedules and prepare them for operation; we do economic analyses on future potential destinations. We keep a close eye on how existing routes are performing, which means working in conjunction with the revenue management and sales departments. We monitor the competition provided by other airlines on the same routes, and we decide what measures to apply to keep our service competitive. The main underlying principle behind our work is to serve Riga and the Baltics as well as possible – to deploy aircraft to the destinations where people want to fly, when they want to fly and in the frequency that they want to fly, at least to the best degree that we can.

You have rather extensive experience in commercial aviation, don't you?

I have been in aviation since 1997, when I began my career at *Lauda Air* in Vienna (which was part of the *Austrian Airlines* group) during my studies. I started working in the marketing department, but two years later I was drawn into the network planning department and have stayed in it ever since, albeit at various airlines! Then I worked for the Munich-based *Deutsche BA* until 2004, followed by three years with the Abu-Dhabi-based *Etihad Airways*. That was a truly exciting experience, because I had the chance to be with the team that started the airline from scratch. For the past nine years before joining *airBaltic*, I worked for *Brussels Airlines*.

What tempted you to join *airBaltic*?

I had not planned to do so, but I got talking to people from *airBaltic* and it started to look like an increasingly interesting opportunity. My attraction to *airBaltic* and to Riga was threefold. Firstly, *airBaltic* is operating in a very dynamic area. Riga is a hub at the crossroads between East and West, and being in the planning

department of an airline that operates in such an area is extremely exciting.

The second reason that tempted me is *airBaltic's* upcoming fleet expansion plan. New aircraft will soon join the airline, and our department gets to take part in the fleet rollover from the planning perspective, which promises to be a huge enterprise. *Bombardier* series aircraft are very efficient, and their introduction will have a considerable effect on route planning, which I am looking forward to.

And, thirdly, I am very excited about moving to Riga. I am still commuting between Riga and Brussels, as my wife and two sons are still there, but they will be joining me in Riga fully early next year. We all already love Riga, which is a unique city in a very interesting part of Europe – a part that had been largely unknown to us until now. My family has already been here for a couple of weekends, and we've done a cycling trip from Riga to Jūrmala. We loved it!

When it comes to network planning, what principles operate behind closing some destinations and opening new ones?

If we talk about closing or consolidating existing routes, then it is obviously because they do not bring in sufficient profit. There are two types of routes, which we call local market relevant routes and seasonal routes. The local market relevant routes are supposed to bring in a sustainable profit. Of course, competing airlines also fly on most of these routes, because we are operating in a highly competitive market. Therefore, to make sure that our local market relevant routes remain sustainable, we have to give the best product to our customers.

While the transfer flow of passengers certainly is important, our main objective is to maintain and increase the offer to our home market. *airBaltic* has the most destinations out of Latvia by far. Right now, around 60 cities can be reached without switching a carrier, so preserving these routes and introducing new relevant ones is what we are all about.

If we talk about opening new routes, then the establishment of a new local market relevant route is always the biggest challenge. Such a route may not yet be operated at all or, more likely, a competitor is already operating it. In such a case, our offer must be better than that of our competitor. We have to conduct extensive research about whether it will be possible to attract a sufficient share of the market, whether we have the right aircraft for the area, and whether we can market and sell the new route in such a way that will bring us profit over time.

Each new route is a long-term investment, and we have to be ready to slowly build up our presence and market share over a period of time. Seasonal and niche routes can be opened more easily, because they don't require the deployment of such a large capacity from the airline. They are also "safer bets", because by following the seasonality curve it is comparatively easy to predict the passenger flow.

You have worked at various airlines for a long time. How has air travel changed in Europe?

Well, the largest change is that secondary destinations in Europe have become much more directly linked with each other during the last 10 to 15 years. Flights are not going through the main hubs as much as they did before. The destinations that attract the largest number of people have largely remained the same,

We deploy aircraft to the destinations where people want to fly, when they want to fly and in the frequency that they want to fly

only the flow has increased even more. People are travelling a lot more to Eastern Europe, now that these markets are open and new opportunities are available in many different fields. People who live in Eastern Europe travel much more as well, and more people from Western Europe go East to spend their holidays.

What are your favourite travel destinations?

My wife is from New Zealand and my parents and sister live in Vienna, so New Zealand and Austria are on our family's itinerary every year. I love to travel to France as well. We holiday in the French regions of Bretagne, Normandy and Corsica quite frequently. My favourite place in France is the Picardy region in the North with the peaceful Somme Estuary or Amiens with its cathedral and the Jules Verne Museum.

Apart from travel, how do you like to spend your free time?

I love spending time with my family as much as possible. And – perhaps a little unusual for an airline employee – I absolutely love trains! Wherever we go on holiday, we make time for special train trips such as steam train rides. We are already planning to try them out in Latvia. We also have a model railway at home – for kids only, of course! **BO**



Onboard menu

Winter menu in Economy Class

The new Food & Drinks onboard menu offers a delicious and wholesome selection of meals.

One newcomer is the oven-roasted free-range chicken breast with fried potatoes, mushrooms and vegetables. For an excellent dining experience, combine it with a glass of wine for a better price!

You can also choose from such passenger favourites as the beef and vegetable goulash with potatoes, the tasty hot chicken and cheese panini, the Scandinavian-style salmon sandwich, or the croissant with ham, cheese and pickled cucumbers, which goes perfectly with hot chicken soup.

Among the new additions to the snacks assortment are Latvian-made vitamin-rich black currant cookies and *Oloves* natural green pitted olives with basil and garlic.

For the festive season, we are introducing a new sparkling wine, the *Bottega Gold Prosecco Brut* in an exquisite golden bottle, as well as special *Riga Black Balsam* cocktails.

Festive meals in Business Class

airBaltic's Business Class menu combines different cuisines from all over the world, offering subtle and healthy dishes made with fresh, local ingredients. Settle back, relax and enjoy your flight at this special time of year with a gourmet meal, which you can complement with an exquisite wine from our carefully selected wine assortment or other beverage from the drinks menu.



Order your meal before the flight

Use one of our meal pre-order options to have a guaranteed tasty meal for your next flight and be among the first to be served on board!

Check out the menu and order your meal up to 24 hours before departure in the **Manage My Booking** section at airbaltic.com. Also available by phone (+371) 67006006 for international calls or 90001100 within Latvia.

Visit our innovative pre-order website airbalticmeal.com, where you can design your own menu from over 70 different dishes up to 24 hours before your flight.

Or pre-order your meal while checking in for your flight online from 72 hours up to one hour before departure for flights from Riga.

Now you can order a meal for your next flight while in the air! Check the last page of the Food & Drinks menu for the available meals or ask the cabin crew for assistance.



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