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JULY 2013

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sailing ship

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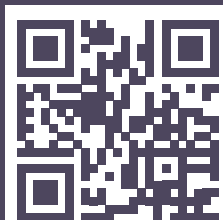
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What remains unchanged with the new airBaltic.com is our focus on affordable prices for customers who book their trips well in advance. Our price leadership in the markets we serve stems from the relentless

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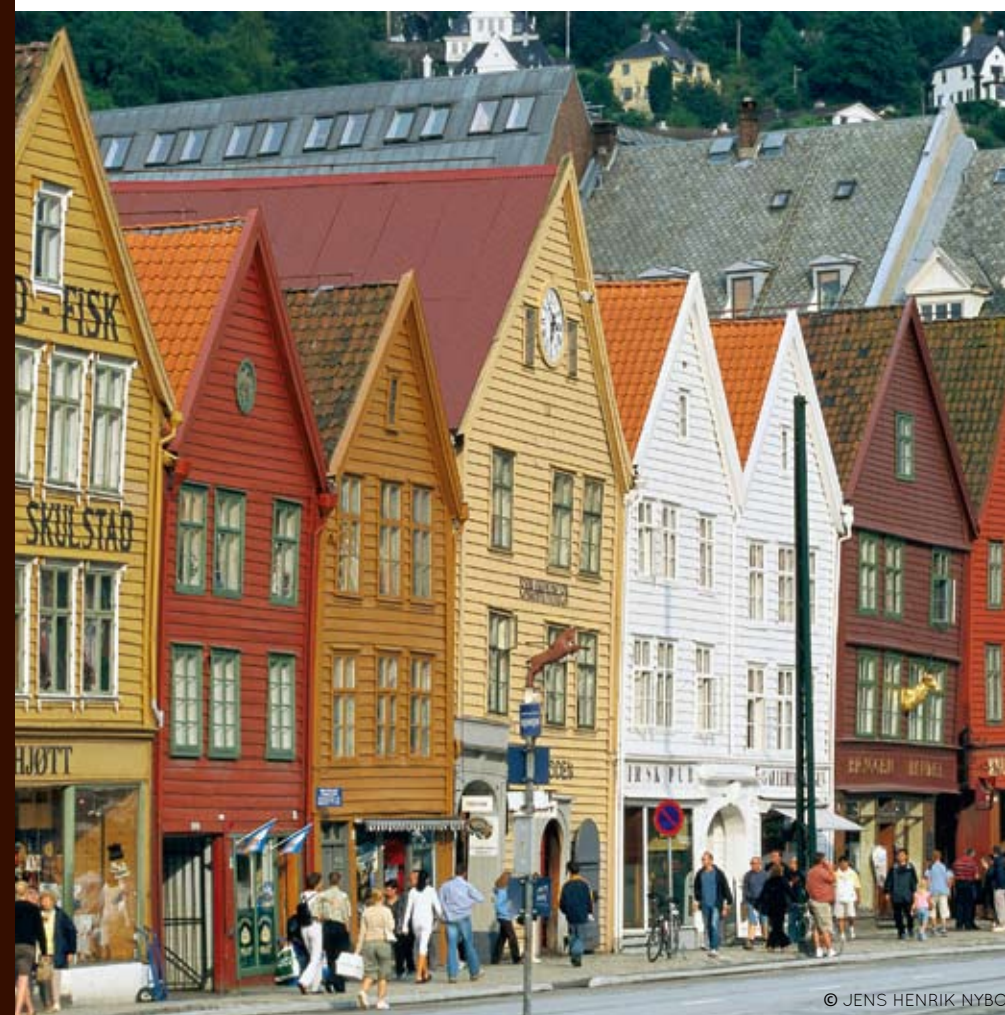
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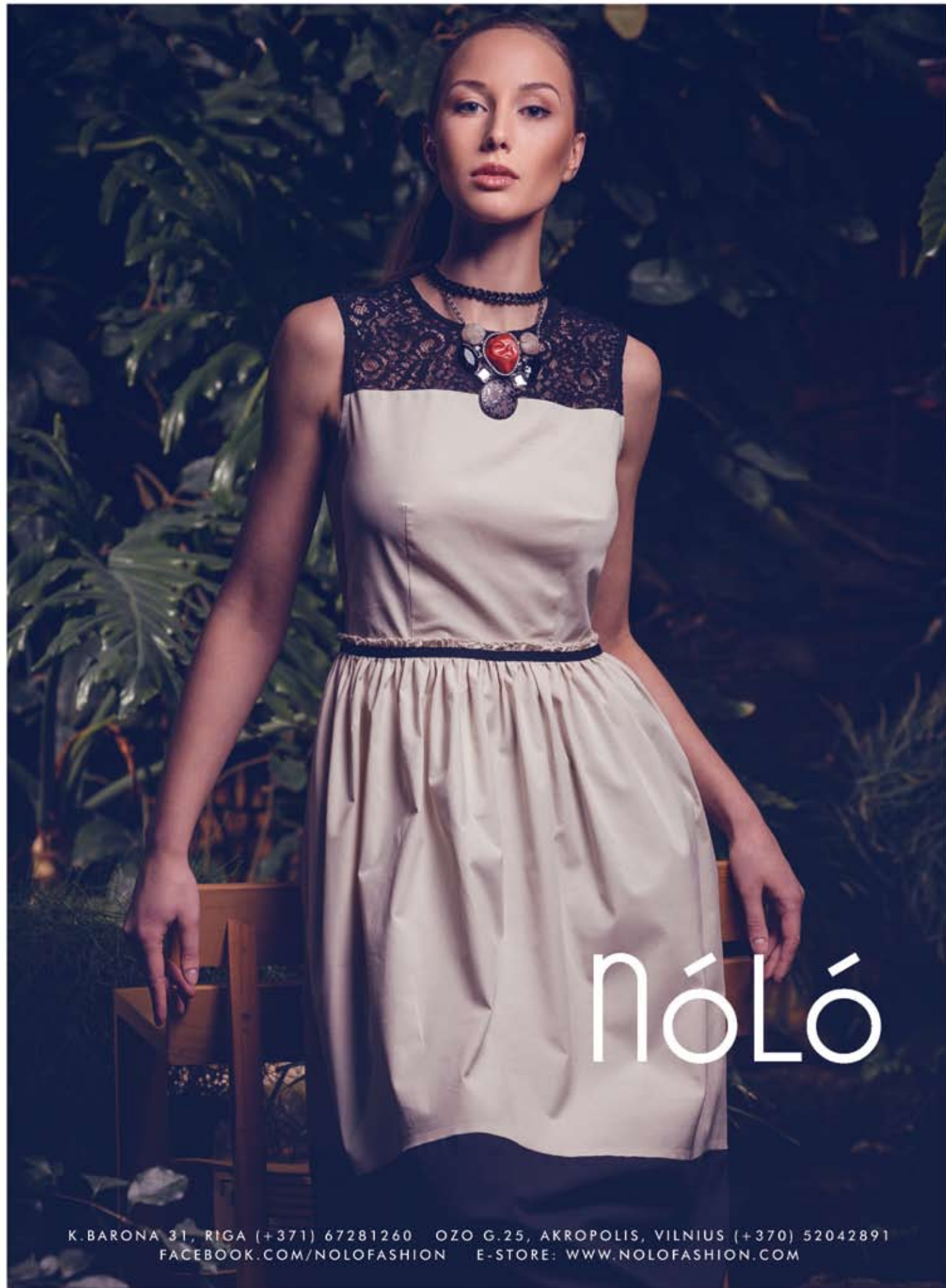
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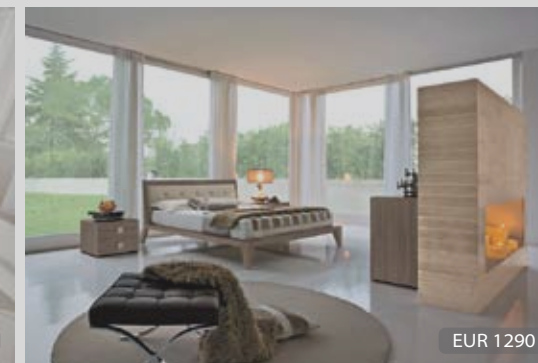
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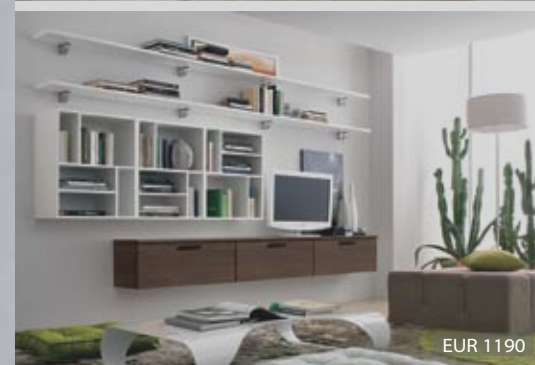
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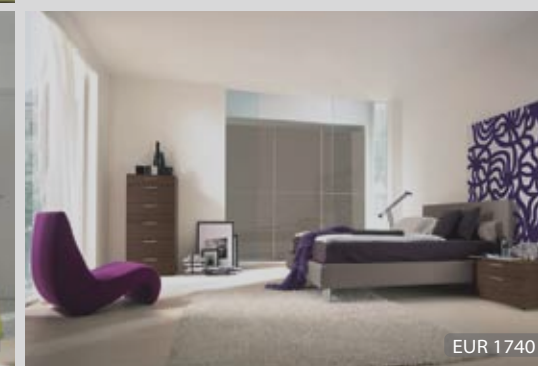
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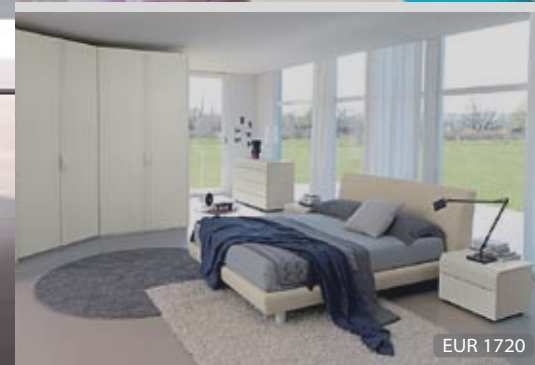
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JULY

Back to 1913

If you had return ticket for a time machine and you could spend a year in another era, which year would you choose? A few brave souls might choose to go forward and live in the future: but who knows what they would find? Some would decide that the present was plenty good enough and throw the ticket away.

Most of us who chose to travel would go into the past, I suspect. We might pursue such elusive historical figures as Jesus, Buddha, Shakespeare or Confucius. We might sample life among the Vikings or the ancient Greeks, or life in the reign of Henry VIII.

I probably would use the ticket and go back in time, but not that far. Until recently, I'd have opted for 1968. I was growing up then and there was lots going on that I wouldn't mind enjoying again with the wisdom of hindsight. I could see the Beatles live, which I never did. Catch the Rolling Stones in their twenties rather than their seventies. Grab a copy of Arthur C. Clarke's *2001: A Space Odyssey* hot off the press.

Just lately, though, I've been reading up on the newspapers for 1913. I wanted to know how we lived 100 years ago, and the answer is: pretty well. OK, the doctoring and the dentistry weren't up to much. But what shines through in the newspapers of 1913 is the optimism, the sense of adventure, the



I WANTED TO KNOW HOW WE LIVED 100 YEARS AGO, AND THE ANSWER IS: PRETTY WELL. OK, THE DOCTORING AND THE DENTISTRY WEREN'T UP TO MUCH. BUT WHAT SHINES THROUGH IN THE NEWSPAPERS OF 1913 IS THE OPTIMISM

confidence that the future will be better than the present and that even so, the present is pretty darn good. The motor car was spreading fast: cities were discussing whether they needed

speed limits and ways to control cars at junctions. Aeroplanes were still for adventurers, but it was clear they would soon play an important part in the world. Women were fighting for the vote in England and America, and visibly making progress towards getting it.

The Marconi telegraph was up and running, carrying news from one side of the Atlantic to the other. Americans could read in the *New York Times* what had happened in Paris the previous day: a scandalous aristocratic divorce, say, or an equally scandalous exhibition of the new Cubist art. Europeans could read about American wealth and power – the trans-continental railroads, the grain trade, the steel barons and the Morgan Bank.

What nobody knew then, in the summer of 1913, was that they were only a year away from the Great War, the war that devastated Europe for four years and ruined it for another century.

Perhaps the two are not unrelated – the ebullience of 1913, the catastrophe of 1914. Everybody was getting overconfident. Everybody overestimated their strength. If I had my chance at the time machine today, I think I'd choose 1913. I'd like to share the ebullience. But I'd want to be very sure that my return ticket was going to work one year later. **BO**

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The gondola is an icon of Venice and one of the city's most recognizable features. However, if you are not on your honeymoon or together with a group of friends who can share in the cost, then you'll certainly think twice before opening your wallet for a ride along the city's charming canals. You might even ask yourself if anything at all can be obtained for a bargain in Venice. The answer is yes, in the form of the *traghetto*, a close relative of the gondola. What's more, it's a water craft the locals prefer.

In Venice, you usually realize that you are lost when the street you are walking on abruptly ends at a canal, even though the map says that it should continue uninterrupted for a long time after the fact. Anyone strolling through the city will end up needing to cross one of its many canals sooner or later. For that reason, various bridges – large and small, ornate or purely functional – have become just as ubiquitous as the pre-eminent gondolas that dot the landscape. Up until as late as 1854, the famous Rialto Bridge was the only crossing over the Grand Canal or *Canale Grande*. Since then, only three more bridges have been built across it, which means that in order to cross Venice's most prominent barrier, tourists usually opt for a short ride on a *vaporetto* or waterbus. These boats link both sides of the canal at "bus stops" that line the canal approximately every 200 metres.

Most *traghetti*, however, are actually older gondolas that have been stripped of their decorative elements and refurbished to carry more passengers, usually up to 14. Locals who know the shortest way to get from one place to the other use this form of transport every day. Most trips on a *traghetto* are short, as the goal is not to show the sights and entertain, but simply to get passengers across the canal. Nevertheless, you can experience something akin to the exhilaration of riding in a gondola by hopping onto its scaled-down *traghetto* version, particularly at mid-day, as you watch your craft deftly manoeuvre between the large hulks of *vaporettos*, barges and quick-moving water taxis.

The black *traghetti* used to connect practically all of the important spots on both sides of the Grand Canal until

relatively recently, but nowadays only seven such connections remain. Although all of the *traghetto* routes are marked in dotted lines on every good map of Venice, the signs marking the landings in the city itself are pretty unobtrusive and hard to spot. In addition, some of the routes operate only during the morning hours.

The Santa Sofia stop is open all day from 7:30 AM to 8 PM. Go there just before lunchtime after a morning stroll in the Cannaregio *sestiere* (district). Step into a glistening black *traghetto*, pay a fare of 50 euro cents to one of the two oarsmen and take a short but thrilling trip across the Grand Canal to the Pescheria or Rialto Fish Market. Imbibe a refreshingly cool glass of prosecco and snack on your favourite seafood at one of the market's many food stalls. Ah, la dolce vita! **BO**

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Cēsis 2013 festival of the arts
Cēsis / June 28 – July 20

This festival in the northeastern Latvian city of Cēsis features 32 events in visual art, music, cinema, theatre and even gastronomy. Running for the seventh year, its programme includes three exhibitions presenting the works of 19 artists from ten countries, as well as four theatre performances, of which three are directed by

Vladislav Nastavshev – a young, provocative director who is based in Latvia and who has launched a successful international career.

Also on the programme are two interesting performances – one in contemporary art, the other in gastronomy – along with 13 British cinema classics. The nine music events range from intimate chamber music for solo instruments in the 150-seat Cēsis Granary, to popular Italian music for cinema at the open-air stage of the Cēsis Castle, which is expected to draw an audience measuring in the thousands.

The festival aims to showcase Cēsis as a centre of active cultural life, offering high-quality arts events for both local residents and foreign visitors.

Detailed program at www.cesufestivals.lv
Tickets at www.bilesuparadize.lv



Kremerata Baltica

Kremerata Baltica
Rundāle Palace garden / July 13

"Gidon Kremer and his string orchestra, made up of extraordinary young players from the Baltic States...are special. They animate everything their bows touch," announced the *Los Angeles Times*. As one of the world's leading violinists, Latvian-born Gidon Kremer founded the *Kremerata Baltica* chamber orchestra in 1997 to foster outstanding young musicians from the three Baltic countries. Since then, Kremer has been touring extensively with the orchestra, appearing at the world's most prestigious festivals and concert halls.

On July 13, Kremer and his Grammy Award-winning chamber orchestra will perform at the Rundāle Palace garden near Bauska, Latvia. The palace complex is among the most outstanding monuments of Baroque and Rococo architecture in the Baltics. It was designed by Italian architect Francesco Bartolomeo Rastrelli, who also designed the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. The Rundāle Palace's French-style park with its rose garden and fountain is a popular summer venue for great outdoor concerts, including the enchanting evening of Baroque music with *Kremerata Baltica* on July 13.

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LMT Summer Sound Festival
Liepāja Beach / July 12–13

LMT Summer Sound is one of the biggest rising summer festivals in Latvia – a two-day musical adventure of versatile genres with more than 100 bands, stage artists and DJs performing at the seaside and at various other picturesque locations in the coastal town of Liepāja.

This year's *LMT Summer Sound* will feature the most renowned Latvian bands, as well as celebrated foreign acts, creating the greatest line-up in the history of the festival.

Among the international headliners are famous British pop singer Mika and American soul and funk singer Aloe Black.

LMT Summer Sound is a place where people from all walks of life – including lawyers, bankers, artists and students – can mix like one happy family; where one can put on fancy clothes or funny shorts and celebrate life together with thousands of like-minded music fans.

Detailed program at www.summersound.lv.
Tickets at www.ekase.lv or www.ticketservice.lv.

Tall Ships' Races 2013
Riga passenger terminal
/ July 25–28

After a hiatus of ten years, the magnificent Tall Ships' Races are returning to Riga. For four days, you will have the chance to see more than a 100 water craft moored in the port of the Latvian capital, visit some of the world's largest tall ships, enjoy concerts and fireworks, witness the unforgettable Parade of Sail and be treated to other surprises.

The event gathers young people together in friendly competition, regardless of their gender,

nationality, skin colour, religion or social background. During the voyages, experienced sailing instructors make sure that the trainee crew members – who might not have previous experience in sailing – are able to enjoy the sea, the trip itself and their watch duties. At the ports, participants can regain the feel of solid ground under their feet and be swept away by the carnival atmosphere. Visitors can also take a closer look at most of the ships when they are docked in port.

Detailed program at www.liveriga.com
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Cindy Sherman, *Untitled Film Still #32*, 1979, Gelatin silver print, Astrup Fearnley Collection
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Oslo

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Cindy Sherman. *Untitled Horrors*
Astrup Fearnley Museum / Until September 22

Diverse labels have been applied to American photographer Cindy Sherman (b. 1954), including “the most influential contemporary artist” and “sworn feminist”. Additional intrigue is undoubtedly added by the fact that she herself is the model in the majority of her work. Provocative and shocking – while at the same time playing out countless situations in life along with clichés, illusions, neuroses, dreams and worst nightmares in a comical way – her works knowingly or unknowingly enter people’s heads from time to time. It’s not possible to forget Sherman’s photographs, just as it’s not possible to predict their “aftershock” in the mind of the viewer. Often the chain of emotions that a work might trip off has little in common with the specific image itself. Sherman once said that “I try to get others to see something of themselves in these photographs, not me.” It is specifically the grotesque, nerve-tickling and provocative aspect of Sherman’s photography that has been highlighted in the *Untitled Horrors* exhibition, which has come about in collaboration with the Astrup Fearnley Museet Oslo, the Moderna Museet in Stockholm and the Kunsthau Zurich. Here one will find works ranging from the early part of her career in the 1970s up until the recent past.

Strandpromenaden 20252
www.afmuseet.no

Warsaw

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Mark Rothko - Paintings
from Washington's
National Gallery of Art
National Museum
/ Until September 1

The National Museum in Warsaw is concluding its 150th anniversary celebrations with a broad exhibition dedicated to Mark Rothko’s (1903-1970) creative work. The Latvian-born artist was one of the most striking and iconographic exponents of American abstractionism, although Rothko himself always opposed the description “abstract artist” and denied belonging to that category

of painters. Rothko’s creative life extended over half a century. He was known for an intense interest in such formal elements as colour, line, depth, composition, balance and format. The current exhibition in Warsaw is like a comprehensive review of the artist’s work, starting from his beginnings with early figurative paintings and right up to the Rothko who cannot be confused with anybody else. The artist is estimated to have produced about 800 paintings during his lifetime.

Aleje Jerozolimskie 3
www.mnw.art.pl



Mark Rothko, *No. 2*, 1947
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Paris

Michelangelo Pistoletto, Année 1, le paradis sur terre, Musée du Louvre / Until September 2

The comprehensive exhibition at the Louvre by legendary Italian artist Michelangelo Pistoletto (b. 1933) has been described as being soulful and ornamental, as breaking down barriers between art and society, and as mixing art and life into a single whole. Pistoletto is known as a striking representative of conceptualism, under which utopian concepts have always held a significant place. For him, art is the centre and stage for exploring the development of civilization. Pistoletto's presence in Paris can also be noticed outside the walls of the Louvre. For the first time in more than 30 years since the

construction of architect I. M. Pei's glass pyramid in the museum's courtyard, someone has been allowed to manipulate the modern structure's visual image. A triple loop of mirrors placed on the pyramid's western face, which faces the *La Défense* business district, is like a protest against capitalism. That seems only fitting, as mirrors have traditionally been a significant instrument in Pistoletto's creative work. At the end of the 1960s, he began what would become an infatuation with pop-style collages on the surfaces of mirrors. His first *Quadri Specchianti* (mirror picture) series was created in 1962 and was shown to the public a year later at the *Galatea* gallery in Turin.

99 rue de Rivoli
www.louvre.fr

London

Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2013, designed by Sou Fujimoto / June 8 – October 20

Each year, the design of the Serpentine Gallery Pavilion in Kensington Gardens gets entrusted to a leading contemporary architect, which has made the pavilion a major London attraction during the summer. The pavilion serves both as an architectonic experimental space and as a litmus paper of the newest trends in architecture. Frank Gehry, Rem Koolhaas, Jean Nouvel, Zaha Hadid, Peter Zumthor, Herzog & de Meuron and others have been among the past designers of the pavilion.

This year's starchitect – the thirteenth overall, is Sou Fujimoto



**Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2013
Designed by Sou Fujimoto**

of Japan. Being only 41 years old, he is also the youngest pavilion architect to date. Inspired by natural structures like forests, nests and caves, the buildings designed by Fujimoto occupy a space between nature and artificially made items. His pavilion is light and almost transparent in a fragile way, reminding one of an imponderable cloud of mist that settled in a verdant park. The structure takes up 350 m² and was created from 20-mm-thick steel pipes. It has two entrances, with a café located in the very centre. As during previous years, lectures, performances and various other activities will be held there.

Kensington Gardens
www.serpentinegallery.org

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Zurich

Martin Parr. Souvenir Museum für Gestaltung Zurich / July 12 – January 5

Martin Parr (b. 1952) is not only one of the most outstanding British documentary photographers, but also a biting critic of contemporary society and its neuroses. For more than 30 years, he has been documenting society and its everyday behaviour – be it consumer culture, global tourism, plebs or the world of luxury – and there is nothing complimentary in his work. A member of the *Magnum* photo agency, Parr has held countless solo exhibitions,

with over 30 books to his name and with many of his photographs on display at prestigious international collections. In addition, he is an avid collector of unusual objects. Now, alongside his photographs, films made by Parr and films about him can be viewed at the *Souvenir* exhibition in Zurich, together with a number of strange objects from his collection. One of the exhibition's highlights is a completely new series of photos that Parr has dedicated to Switzerland, with an emphasis on the country's traditions and clichés.

Ausstellungsstrasse 60
www.museum-gestaltung.ch

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Martin Parr, West Bay, England

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Henry Hitchings

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23 EUR | John Murray
📞 www.johnmurray.co.uk

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11.50 EUR | British Library Publishing
📞 www.publishing.bl.uk

🔴 **Daughter of Empire: Life as a Mountbatten**
Pamela Hicks



A moving autobiographical account that offers an insight into both a unique family and an era long gone. The daughter of Lord Mountbatten (and lady-in-waiting to Queen Elizabeth) pens a colourful, engaging story of being raised by governesses into a life of books, pet wallabies and family friends such as Winston Churchill and Noel Coward.

23 EUR | Orion
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Word of the month

TEXT BY ADAM JACOT DE BOINOD, AUTHOR OF *THE MEANING OF TINGO AND OTHER EXTRAORDINARY WORDS FROM AROUND THE WORLD*, PUBLISHED BY PENGUIN BOOKS | ILLUSTRATION BY INGA BRIEDE



Ka-otaba (Gilbertese) to preserve the beauty and freshness of a daughter-in-law

The Meaning of Tingo is a compilation of extraordinary words and expressions from around the world that have no equivalent in English. Adam Jacot de Boinod's passion is scouring the planet for language oddities and every month, *Baltic Outlook* features one of the many amusing terms that he has come across in his travels.



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Riga, Latvia

Little Black Book



▲ Riija

Riija is one of Riga's finest ambassadors of Latvian design. Located at the beginning of Tērbatas iela, it can be seen as a mood-setter for the creative street – a place that showcases renowned Latvian design and lifestyle brands, as well as creations by local craftsmen. Here one will find a wide array of pottery, a linen collection by Natālija Jansone, lamps by Rijada, leather accessories by Buduart, cosmetics by the MADARA ecobrand and wooden sunglasses by MARA. The ascetic Scandinavian interior is rendered a bit more playful by the recently added lampshades of Mājas Deko. Tērbatas iela 6/8 Mon.–Fri.10:00–19:00, Sat.10:00–17:00 ① www.riija.lv

▼ Paviljons

When it started in 2009 as a pop-up store inspired by a graduating fashion students' runway show at the Latvian Academy of Art, hardly anyone predicted a long life for Paviljons. Now it appears that the store for local labels is destined to stick around for some time yet. Earlier this spring, the first Latvian fashion ambassador at the Domina shopping centre was joined by a second branch on Tērbatas iela.

The 142-m² concept store has a tastefully and creatively designed interior that would suit cities like Berlin or London. Here you will find a fresh look at men's, women's and even children's fashion, big-city style and unisex hipster clothing, as well as gifts and accessories. Among well-established local brands like Žanete Auziņa, One Wolf, QooQoo and Salt are Paviljons' newcomers like Elina Dobeļe's shoes, along with such foreign brands as April Look (Lithuania), Heavy Mental (Estonia) and Sweet Pants (France).

Tērbatas iela 55 ① www.paviljons.lv



Stretching out for a kilometre, the cobble-stoned Tērbatas iela is lined with business establishments and the rhythm of life here is faster-paced than in Old Riga. However, this does not mean that the creative establishments on this street have forgotten how to celebrate – be it in the form of architecture, design, fashion, food or wine

▼ Vīna Studija / Restaurant Elmaro

Vīna studija is a place where Riga's intellectuals and wine-drinkers gather – in the good sense of both words. Located at the invisible but palpable boundary that marks the end of the city centre, this is the third bar in the Vīna studija chain. The city's evangelist of vino-culture is a true veteran, having managed through the years to convey a true local feel, though universal enough not to scare away first-timers.

To end the evening with a feel for Riga's darker Soviet past, take your nightcap about 20 metres further at Tērbatas iela 56, where the Gauja buffet is decked out in an authentic Soviet-era style.

Stabu iela 30 (entrance from Tērbatas iela)

① www.vinastudija.lv | (+371) 6726010



► Two spots for things with a history

Like a rich and poor brother living side by side, two shops selling antiques and other old items can be found right next to each other on Tērbatas iela. The **second-hand store** on Tērbatas iela 33/35 (Mon.–Sat. 10:00–17:00) reminds one of a garage sale, where valuable old finds are hidden in a sea of more contemporary junk. The most valuable items are behind a counter deeper in the store and include crystal chandeliers, centuries-old porcelain, silver and gold objects, and fur coats.

A much smaller and more neatly organized **pawn shop and antique store** stands next door on Tērbatas iela 37 (Mon.–Fri. 09:00–19:30, Sat. 09:00–19:00). It serves a wealthier and lazier clientele of people who are not ready to dig for their big catch. A recently sold painting by a little-known Dutch



artist left the premises in exchange for 5000 LVL (over 7100 EUR). Among the items still waiting for an owner is a 150-year-old Meissen porcelain teacup (215 LVL or 300 EUR).



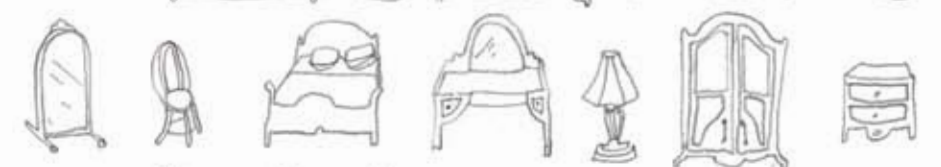
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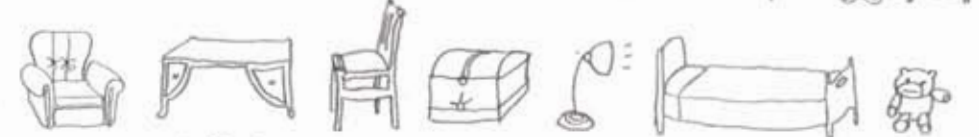
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Addresses in Riga:
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Pasaules Optika, Tērbatas iela 37; 4DecorAsian, Tērbatas iela 53;
Paviljons, Tērbatas iela 55;
ZoFA, Antonijas iela 22;
Kolonna, Brīvības iela 55

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Light nights

Dispensing

with typical views of what a lantern should look like, Italian company *Foscarini* has reinvented the notion of outdoor lighting through the use of archetypal imagery and shapes – including pebbles from the riverside, solar eclipses and simple outlines that are set in various colours and forms to brighten any mood.

Warm, leisurely summer nights on terraces and verandas, in gardens, at beaches and at summer cottages. These are special places for gathering with friends, or for enjoying a peaceful evening of solitude and doing nothing in particular. *Foscarini's Solar* lamp will be the perfect companion for a patio, a garden or an outdoor terrace.

This original outdoor source of lighting has a dual function – its surface can be used as a small table that is just asking to hold a glass of wine or two, while the body of the lamp provides a soft and glowing light.

Solar is available in two versions – indoor and outdoor, differing in the surface finish and shape. The lamp's luminous hemisphere is made of unbreakable hermetic polypropylene, guaranteeing high quality and a long period of service. The tastefully designed item will not only provide lighting, but also brighten up the interior as an original

and elegant design object. Its retractable base gives various choices for adjusting and changing the mood of the lighting.

The creator of *Solar* is Jean-Marie Massaud, a French architect, designer and inventor

**THESE ARE
SPECIAL PLACES
FOR ENJOYING
AN EVENING
OF DOING
NOTHING IN
PARTICULAR**

with an almost magical touch when it comes to lighting. From his extensive experience in various fields, he has come to see design objects as organic parts of interiors or exteriors.

Several of Massaud's creations have earned distinctive awards and some are included in the collections of design museums in Amsterdam, Chicago, London,

Lisbon, Paris and Zurich.

In 1994, he established his own studio in Paris, specializing in industrial and interior design for such European and Japanese companies as *Yves Saint Laurent*, *Renault*, *Cappellini* and *Toyota*.

The *Foscarini* lighting design company, for its part, was founded in 1981 on Murano Island in Venice, and in just over 30 years has become a leading company in its field. Check out the video on the *Solar* lamp by *Foscarini* in *Youtube*. Even if you don't speak French, you can see how passionately designer Massaud is talking about his creation and appreciate the ingenious manner in which these lamps can fit into practically any interior or exterior garden and terrace. **BO**

① www.foscarini.com

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Both doors open

Northern Ireland's indie pop band *Two Door Cinema Club* will be performing at the *Positivus* festival in Salacgrīva this month

Last year the *Festival Guide* (UK) awarded *Positivus* the title of Europe's Best Festival, citing its location, musical choices and relatively low prices as its most attractive features. This year's festival in the Latvian fishing village of Salacgrīva will take place from July 19 to 21, and on Sunday, its closing day, the aforementioned group from Northern Ireland will be taking the stage.

Kevin Baird from *Two Door Cinema Club* remembers band's first gig at *Positivus* in 2009 very well. "*Positivus* was the festival where we understood that we were actually quite popular," says Kevin. "We were in Riga later on, walking down the street and somebody came up to us saying: 'Are you from the *Two Door Cinema Club*?' Then he started to sing one of our songs! It was a great feeling! The atmosphere was great, the party was crazy and the place itself was amazingly beautiful – blue sea and pine trees."

Two Door Cinema Club will be returning to *Positivus* this year as one of the festival's headliners. At the 2009 festival, the band played its first gig outside of the UK and as a completely new group. It came out with its first album,

Tourist History, only the following year (2010). Loaded with energetic indie-disco tracks, that debut album received Ireland's Album of the Year award. A follow-up album, *Beacon* (2012), has only strengthened the band's reputation.

Over the past few years, the group has held numerous concerts and has gone on tours throughout the world. It has also played at the Glastonbury and Coachella festivals, and headman Alex Trimble even performed at the opening ceremony of the London Olympics last year.

"You create a special relationship with every festival you play. To play for the first time in Glastonbury was very special, and now we're doing it again in *Positivus*," Kevin says.

The band members were still in school when they founded *Two Door Cinema Club*, playing anywhere they could and taking whatever gig they were handed.

"We didn't have a drummer then and we fit almost everywhere. We played in pubs in Belfast, in bars... we even played in church halls." BO

1 www.positivus.com

1 www.twodoorcinemaclub.com

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Loom at a linen workshop

If Fitzgerald's Great Gatsby lived in Latvia, then on hot, sultry July nights he would likely be dressed in light linen pants and an elegant linen jacket, looking out across the bay at the home of Daisy, his inaccessible love. Daisy, for her part, would sleep soundly in soft linen sheets in the spacious bedroom of her stately home, blissfully unaware of the man who secretly longed for her.

Traditionally, linen has been the most widely used fibre in Latvia. It has been woven into cloth not only for clothing and home and interior textiles, but was also once used to make ship sails and cloth bags. During the 18th and 19th centuries, linen was one of Latvia's main exports.

Today, Latvia's linen products remain highly regarded the world over. Take fashion great Giorgio Armani, who began cooperating with Latvian designers and linen weavers ten years ago, when his representatives spotted some items designed by Laima Kaugure, the founder of *Studio Natural*, at an international textile fair. Later, Armani personally asked Kaugure

to weave him another linen beach blanket, for his previous (and favourite) one had come to fade in the bright Mediterranean sunlight. Nowadays, *Studio Natural* is a regular stopping point for VIPs visiting Riga during the informal sightseeing part of their programs.

July is a special month in Latvia, for that is when the flax plant breaks out into bloom. The hardy annual flower blossoms in all shades of blue. On clear and warm summer mornings, the plant's blossoms can be seen for only a few hours, from approximately 6 AM to 10 AM. Flax grows well in Latvia's temperate climate, but of late has been cultivated almost exclusively in the eastern region of Latgale.

If you had to choose only one linen item for your personal use, then the most appropriate choice for the summer months would be bed linen. Not only does linen stay fresh and cool all night long, permitting the skin to breathe, it also has therapeutic

effects. Even dermatologists recommend sleeping in linen pyjamas because they readily absorb moisture, don't stick to the skin and are ideal for people who suffer from allergies.

Fashionistas will also appreciate linen as an ideal textile for elegant summer wardrobes. Light, comfortable shirts and bright flowing dresses are just some of the linen variations created by such popular Latvian designers as Anna Led and Natālija Jansone. Modern-day dying technologies now allow for a greater variety of colour to supplement linen's

natural greyish tones, resulting in fuchsia pink scarves, fiery red linen tablecloths and mustard-yellow linen curtains. In Latvia, handmade linen items are still seen as unique and exclusive. They are often passed on from generation to generation, testifying to the refined aesthetic tastes of our predecessors and to the fact that some values remain timeless. **BO**

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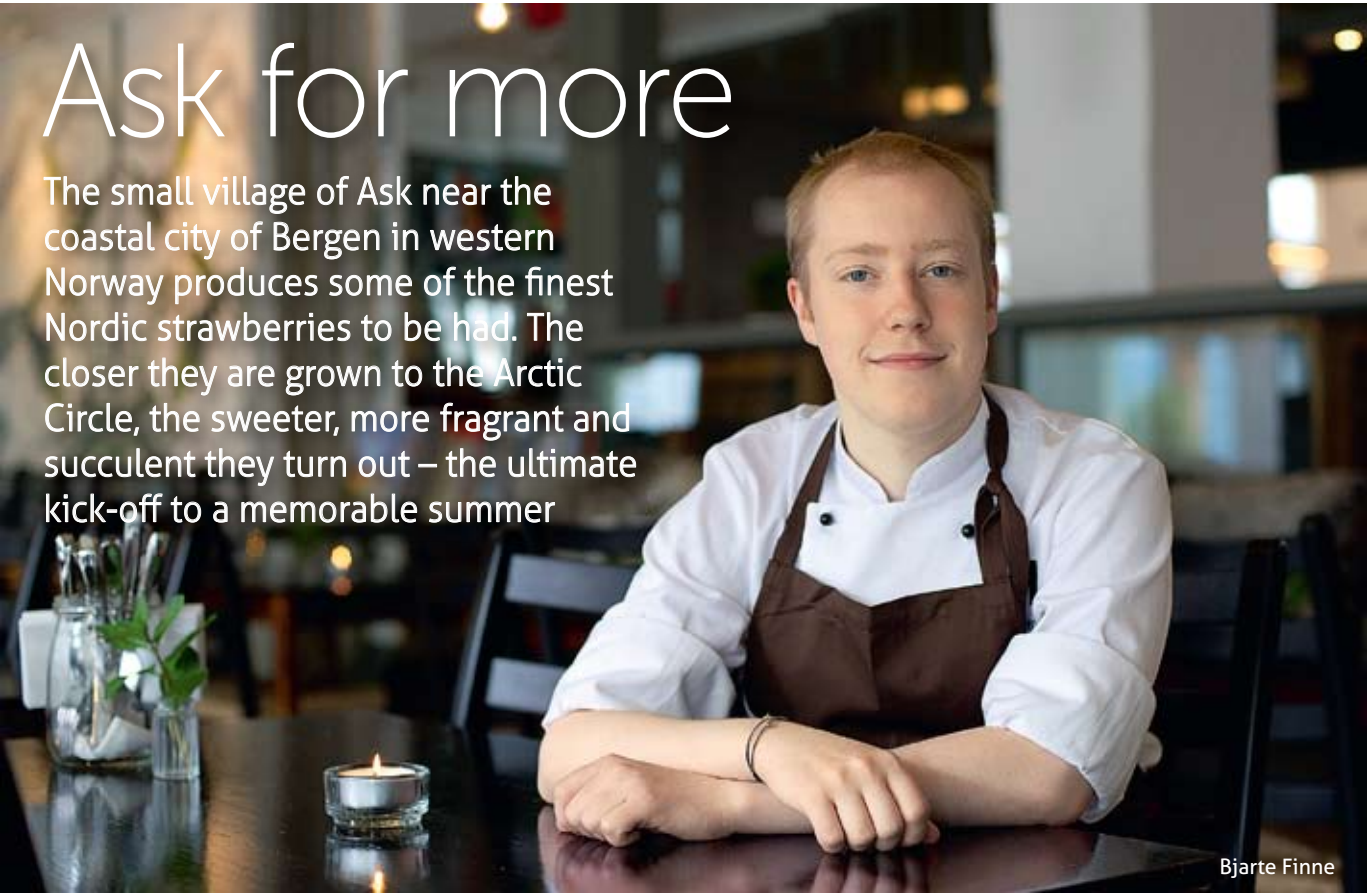
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Ask for more

The small village of Ask near the coastal city of Bergen in western Norway produces some of the finest Nordic strawberries to be had. The closer they are grown to the Arctic Circle, the sweeter, more fragrant and succulent they turn out – the ultimate kick-off to a memorable summer



Bjarte Finne

For two years, I went to an international school near Bergen on the western coast of Norway. It's a place where one forgets how to use an umbrella – since be it fall, winter or spring, the sky is practically always imbued with something cold and moist. It's not really fog, and neither is it rain or snow.



Bergen is also a place where mid-May comes with hours of daylight so long that you can easily read a book outside throughout the night, and the lack of getting a solid night's sleep begins to bother you. The constant daylight seemed to drive my classmates

mad. They may have been of various exotic origins, but they all seemed to have entered the same complaint competition. But then June arrived, and with it, the first strawberries – the result of all those wet, cold and light-filled spring days. My classmates swore that they'd never be able to enjoy any other strawberries except for those grown in Scandinavia.

In a country whose northernmost point, Nordkapp, would extend all the way down to Rome if the country was turned upside-down, kilometres make a difference. The closer you get to the Arctic – where the summer sun never sets, but just dips closer to the horizon – the tastier the berries. Nature is on a short deadline and the strawberry season, which elsewhere lasts for months, is at its peak for just five or six weeks in Scandinavia. Interestingly enough, 1000 kilometres to the south of Bergen, in the Danish capital of Copenhagen, head chef René Redzepi of *Noma* (which has received the title of Worlds' Best Restaurant several times over), favours unripe strawberries.

BUT THEN JUNE ARRIVED. MY CLASSMATES SWORE THAT THEY'D NEVER BE ABLE TO ENJOY ANY OTHER STRAWBERRIES EXCEPT FOR THOSE GROWN IN SCANDINAVIA

Instead of full-flavoured ripe berries, Redzepi picks them a week or two before they would otherwise reach their prime of ruby-red sweetness. Despite *Noma's* international fame, I'm happy that this trend hasn't yet reached Bergen's renowned *Hanne på Høyden* restaurant, which also serves locally-grown and

self-foraged food. This restaurant's head chef Bjarte Finne favours the meaty and juicy berries produced by the handful of farmers living on the island of Askøy, and patiently allows the produce to reach its full ripeness.

At home in his own kitchen, the chef keeps to the maxim that strawberries are best enjoyed all on their own. At his cosy green-hued restaurant, however, he serves cold strawberry and rhubarb soup topped with tarragon-flavoured ice cream. The sweetness of the Nordic berries and the acidic accents of the rhubarb meet the strong flavour of the ice cream, making you wonder whether this combination has been made in heaven. **BO**



BOSCA

Taste of life



ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION MAY HAVE ADVERSE EFFECTS



Road warrior

If you've been hunting around like mad for the suitcase of the future, then you can finally stop losing sleep: the future has arrived. Amsterdam-based travel accessory company *Travelteq* has scrambled together some of the Netherlands' best industrial designers to create the ultimate, ultra-modern carry-on luggage case: The Trip

Crafted of reinforced burnished aluminium and sporting a honeycomb interior of heavy-duty nylon, the *Trip's* looks are properly out of this world – Tron or Bond, depending on your point of reference. Its smooth gliding wheels allow you to easily manoeuvre your way through airports and hotels. They are available in several colours, but definitely get them in red.

This case is all about efficiency and trouble-free travel. The marsupial mobile office pouch at the front zips open for easy access to items that can be stored in multiple padded compartments. Here you can place and quickly access your laptop, cell phone, wallet, magazines, notebook and pens. Two further zippered compartments and a small sealable laundry bag give you plenty of options for organizing your clothes and other personal items.

Where the bag really shines, however, is below the belt. First off, hidden inside is a built-in integrated speaker system, featuring two drivers that pump out a respectable 15 Watts of power. The removable,

rechargeable speaker will last for a good 10 hours on a single charge, featuring a 3.5-mm auxiliary input and USB port for charging your mobile device.

And who wants to *stand* while listening to music in the airport departure terminal?

WHERE THE BAG REALLY SHINES, HOWEVER, IS BELOW THE BELT

Push a button and pull out a small cord in the back; the suitcase instantly converts into a sturdy chair. The gas-spring operated legs pop out, the retractable, telescopic handle becomes a 51-cm-long backrest, and the top plate slides forward, fashioning itself into

a 20-mm-thick foam seat cushion. This revolutionary functionality means that you will no longer need to tire your back out as you wait for passport control or check-in.

Costing EUR 495 (or EUR 450 without the sound system), the bag weighs 6.25 kg, while its dimensions (55 x 25 x 35 cm) mean that it will easily fit the carry-on requirements of *airBaltic* and slide into the overhead luggage compartment. And in terms of conversation-starters while you're waiting for your flight, this baby really can't be beat. **BO**

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Malta –

a crossroads of cultures
and civilisations



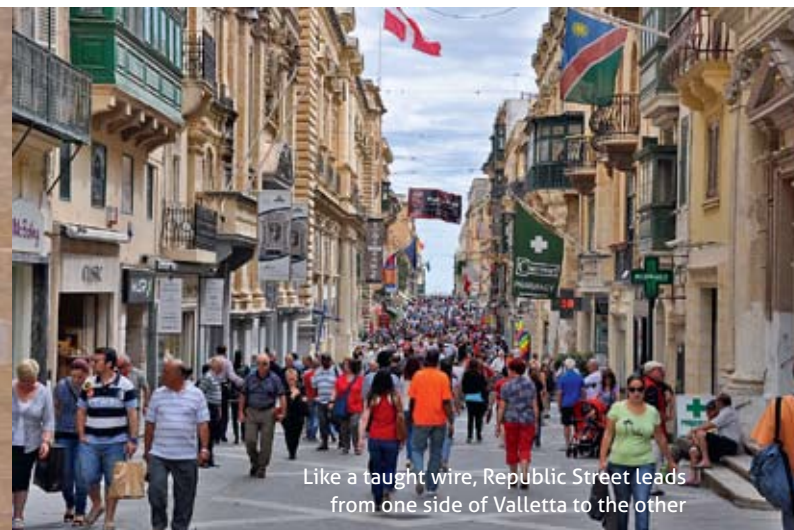
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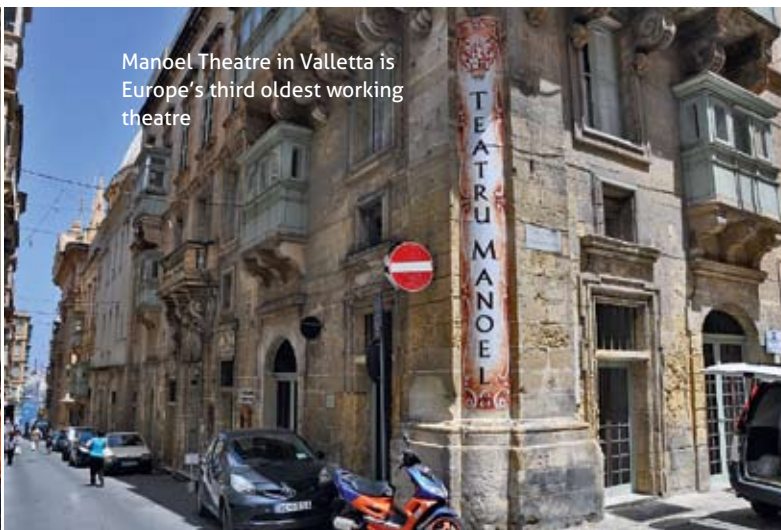
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Valletta



Like a taught wire, Republic Street leads from one side of Valletta to the other



Manoel Theatre in Valletta is Europe's third oldest working theatre



With only 600 seats, the Manoel Theatre is very small and intimate, but also luxurious, having a gilded ceiling

Valletta

– the Baroque, honey-coloured city-fortress of Malta – will be a European Capital of Culture in 2018. However, it will become a must on travellers' lists already this September, when starchitect Renzo Piano's megaproject encompassing a new city gate, parliament building, open-air theatre and cultural centre will be unveiled. Located right next to the legendary citadel built by knights and across from the *Phoenicia Hotel* and bus station (the latter of which emanates a strange cocktail of modern exhaust fumes and old-fashioned horse manure smells), the new complex stands on the site of the former opera house. Designed by the British architect Edward Middleton Barry, the old Neoclassical-style *Royal Opera* was almost completely destroyed by bombing during the Second World War. The goal of the ambitious new project is to make Valletta not only a place for historical nostalgia, but also to put it on the map in terms of contemporary architecture. But Piano has plenty opponents in the Maltese capital.

Piano's design for the open-air theatre, which will incorporate the ruins of the old opera into the new structure, has provoked the most intense debate. Many locals believe it would be more correct to erect a replica of the old opera. In interviews, however, Piano has stressed how important it was for him to respect the historical architecture and preserve Valletta's feeling of nostalgia. There are no exaggerations in his architecture, which is elegant and neutral.

The new parliament building with laser-cut sandstone designs is the same colour as the rest of the buildings in the Old Town. The 9th Marquis de Piro, one of the most respected people in Malta and a defendant of Maltese traditions, has said of Piano's project:

"I like modern art, but if I had had any say, I probably would not have entrusted Renzo Piano with Valletta's main gate, which has traditionally been a very symbolic site. Nevertheless, I think this project will attract many tourists to Malta. In addition, Piano is a big architect. He has accomplished very much and it would be foolish of me to criticise him. Chinese architect I. M. Pei's glass pyramid at the Louvre was also once entwined in controversy, but now everyone is happy."

Piano's project is not the only sign of contemporary design in Valletta. For three quarters of a century, the *Barrakka* lift transported people up from the waterfront along the city walls to the *Barrakka* Gardens above, thereby connecting the city with

the harbour. Opened in 1905, the lift was closed in 1973 due to financial and other constraints. The new lift cost 2.5 million EUR, is 58 metres high and has a 21-passenger capacity. The honey-coloured metal mesh now covering the outside of the lift matches the old city walls. The *Barrakka* Gardens provide an unbelievable view of the harbour and three cities on the other side of the water: Vittoriosa (Birgu), Cospicua and Senglea (L-Isla). A cannon resounds daily from the gardens at precisely 12 noon.

A trip in a time machine

When the Order of St. John arrived in Malta in 1530, only farmers and fishermen lived on the peninsula where Valletta now stands. The knights of the order found the strategically prominent location – a mountain with views of the port below – to be an ideal place for building a fortified city surrounded by stone walls. The cornerstone for the city was laid in 1566, and the new urban centre was named for Grand Master La Valette, who drew the first plan of the city. The plan was further developed by military engineer Francesco Laparelli. Valletta differs from many other cities around the world in that it was carefully planned from the very beginning and nothing has been constructed by chance.

Like a taught wire, Republic Street leads from one side of Valletta to the other. The other main streets and side streets are just as precisely laid, with small squares here and there for people to gather, chat and trade. With narrow cobbled streets leading straight uphill and then downhill, along with time-worn stone buildings adorned by decorative façades and charming balconies, Valletta makes one feel like one has entered a time machine. Think of Venice before the hordes of tourists began visiting there. One can only guess what stories each building in Valletta could tell. However, unlike Venice, which has since become more of a museum than a city, Valletta is still alive, pulsating and open to those who admire it.

A visit with the marquis

A noteworthy witness to the history of Valletta is the *Casa Rocca Piccola*, an outwardly ascetic two-storey palace on Republic Street with a history that stretches back over four centuries. The palace was named in honour of its first inhabitant, Don Pietro La Rocca,

who served as an admiral for the Order of St. John. During the second half of the 18th century, the palace was sold to a family of Maltese nobility that has lived there ever since. A little over 20 years ago, the present owner – Nicholas de Piro, Baron of Budach and 9th marquis of the family – decided to open a part of the palace to the public. When we ring the *Casa Rocca Piccola* doorbell at 9:30 AM as arranged, the marquis himself comes down the wide marble staircase, arms outstretched, and greets us. An energetic older gentleman, de Piro is also the author of six books. One of them, *The International Dictionary of Artists Who Painted Malta*, will soon be printed in a new edition. De Piro's parrot Kiko hangs upside down on his perch and watches us from his cage. The marquis and his wife, Frances, whose family is from Great Britain and Trinidad, lived in England for 14 years before moving into the de Piro family home.

"My father called me back. He was getting older and could no longer take care of the property himself. He said I was crazy when I told him I had decided to open the palace's doors to the public. At first, not too many people came. Maybe they were shy. But over the years, we've had around half a million visitors, locals and tourists alike. Ours is the only historical house in Valletta with a noble family that still lives in it. All of the other palaces have been turned into banks, offices and other establishments. You probably know the story of *The Leopard* (Il Gattopardo), the Prince of Salinas from Sicily. He forgot to write a will. Nine children inherited his house and everything fell to pieces. That can happen very quickly," says the marquis.

In addition to a unique collection of furniture, art and other artefacts, the marquis' family also has Malta's largest collection of costumes and lace. De Piro says that the idea behind opening the house to the public was continuity.

"I would like things to continue even after my death. I would like the property be cared for and remain whole. I don't want it to be divided. I have four children, and in a way I was forced to be unfair towards them. When I asked my oldest son, an architect, whether he wanted this house, he said no. 'Father, I am an architect. I cannot return to Malta and devote my entire life to one house.' I told him I understood, but in that case he would have to forfeit his part of the inheritance because nothing here could be bequeathed to

him. Everything will go to one person in order to ensure continuity. My second son was interested in the property, but my third son works for a charitable organisation in London and does not see his future in this house. My daughter is married to a lawyer in London and is happy where she is. Therefore, my second son will be my successor and he is already very involved with the house."

Like many other houses in Valletta, it is difficult to imagine just from looking at the façade what it looks like inside. Twelve of the rooms are open to the public, while the family lives in another wing of the palace. On Sundays and after 4 PM when the tourists have left, the family sometimes entertains guests in the public rooms.

The palace has been reconstructed several times over its history. The original 16th-century stone floor remains in only one room. "We are right in the middle of the city, and everything new always reached here very quickly," says the marquis.

The largest room in the palace is the *Sala Grande*, which has a late 18th-century Bohemian chandelier. One of the most impressive objects in the palace is an 18th-century secretary that is actually a painted, portable chapel. *Chinoiserie*, or Chinese-inspired art, was popular in Europe at that time, and the Maltese had to keep pace.

"Two people and at least a quarter of an hour are required to open it. But we use it very rarely, just like the chapel located in the house," de Piro explains. Such mini chapels were once pushed into the bedroom immediately after a birth in order to baptise the newborn child.

The most unique piece of furniture in the house, however, is a bookshelf made of Maltese wood. Hardly any trees grow on the island and therefore this bookshelf is quite a rarity. The whole bookshelf, including the insides of the drawers, is made of orange, olive, lemon and carob wood. Maltese wood was often used only on the exterior of furniture, with pine from shipwrecks used for the interiors. The bookshelf may have previously belonged to one of the Grand Masters of the Order of St. John, but it is unknown how the de Piro family acquired it. The marquis thinks that one of his predecessors may have bought it during the time of Napoleon, when the Grand Master's collection was stolen through the side door of his castle and sold.

Another unique room in the palace is the Blue Room, where a silver 18th-century collection of surgical instruments is displayed



Mdina,
Malta's
ancient
capital



The fishing village of Marsaxlokk

under the glass top of the coffee table. These are the only instruments to have survived from that era, because Napoleon and his descendants are said to have melted down the rest. The Maltese Knights (also known as the Knights Hospitaller and as the Order of St. John) was not only a religious and military order. Many of its members were also excellent surgeons. While building the city of Valletta, they decided that it should have a hospital – not just any simple, functional hospital, but one that would be the talk of all Europe.

De Piro explains: “They created one of the longest hospital wards in the world, with 600 beds, although under extreme conditions it could house up to 900 patients. Each patient, no matter how poor, had to be addressed with a bow and ‘My Lord’ because, as Jesus said: ‘Whatever you do to the least of these, you do for me.’ The Knights went even further in their refinement, serving meals to their patients in silver dishes. So, of course, everybody talked about this hospital in Malta, without even knowing that silver has disinfectant properties.”

The marquis is a natural storyteller and seems to have an encyclopaedic knowledge of Maltese history and social traditions.

“During the British period in the 19th century, Malta was for a short time a quaint curiosity, known as a romantic island of knights. People on grand educational tours of Europe liked to stop by the island in order to see this phenomenon for themselves. And we have always been very open towards new arrivals. Because, in truth, who are we ourselves? A mix. The population of Malta was very small – around 10,000 – when the Knights arrived here. Soon that number rose to 100,000 because people from all across Christian Europe began arriving. That is one of the reasons we often think more broadly than we really are. In addition, we’ve always been very self-confident. But one thing is true: we’ve been marrying each other on this island for hundreds of years. We have cousins all around. So it’s dangerous to gossip in Malta, because you never know who’s associated with whom,” he says with a smile.

Due to its strategic location, Valletta and its harbour were heavily bombed during the Second World War by the Italian and German air forces – even more so than London. Adolf Hitler had hoped to make Malta a base for his operations. On a single day in April of 1942, Valletta was the target of 15 air raids. The



LATVIAN DESIGN AND LIFESTYLE CONCEPT STORE. ADDRESS: RIGA, TĒRBATAS IELA 6/8, WWW.RIIJA.LV



St. Paul's Cathedral in the city of Mdina

population survived only due to bomb shelters. In fact, these shelters constitute a whole second city under Valletta. The *Casa Rocca Piccola* also had its own bomb shelter, which the grandfather of the present marquis began to dig already in 1935, when no one had any inkling of war yet. Back then, everyone thought he was crazy. After the war, all of the underground labyrinths were closed and the entry was hidden in an interior courtyard. But the marquis’ grandmother later revealed the secret by telling the marquis’ children, who then unearthed the labyrinths. Today, the former bomb shelter houses a small art gallery and is the last stop on the tourists’ route through the palace, the so-called cherry on the cake.

The marquis’ favourite place in Malta is St. John’s Co-Cathedral. “I have met many Italians. Italy has everything, and you can hardly impress a Roman with a church. But this church can impress, because it is completely one-of-a-kind. I always say that this is the most European place in Europe. The knights came from various lands, so each nation had its own side chapel: France, Germany, Spain, Portugal. In addition, there was fierce competition between the nations, with each trying to outdo the next in terms of ornateness and splendour.”

Two paintings by Renaissance genius Caravaggio are the pride of the cathedral. One of these, *The Beheading of St. John the Baptist*, is the largest work created by the artist and also the only painting he ever signed. Many differing theories exist regarding how Caravaggio arrived in Malta.

It is possible that he stopped on the island as he fled from Italy.

“Caravaggio’s contemporaries envied him greatly for the clear messages appearing in his works - a difficult feat for most artists of the era. The knights inducted him as a Junior Knight of the Order, a great honour for the artist. But then news arrived that he was wanted in Rome for murder. No one knows whether he was really guilty. Caravaggio was also later accused of being homosexual, provoking a huge scandal. The Grand Master is said to have locked up the artist, during which time he painted *The Beheading of St. John the Baptist*. In one interpretation of the work, the executioner is really a self-portrait of the artist, while the head is that of another knight with whom Caravaggio had a tense relationship. Caravaggio later escaped captivity, allegedly with the help of the Maltese Knights themselves. His escape, however, was a tragedy for the cathedral, because it was originally planned that he would paint the entire inside of the building,” adds de Piro.

Closing the door to the *Casa Rocca Piccola* is a bit like closing a book. In parting, the marquis says that his seventh book will soon be published: a photo album in which the family’s collection of lace is displayed by 100 prominent Maltese women, including the wives of the current prime minister and opposition leader. Despite bearing the title of marquis, maintaining a property like this is not easy and the decision to open it to the public has also been a means of survival.

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Casa Rocca Piccola

The third oldest theatre in Europe and the Corsair Castle

Valletta is also home to Europe's third oldest working theatre, which has run continuously since its foundation in 1732 by Portuguese Grand Master Antonio Manoel de Vilhena. The two older theatres are the *Hvara Theatre* in Croatia and the *Teatro Olimpico* in Vicenza, Italy. Except for the time-worn *Manoel Theatre* sign on the outside, it is almost impossible to

tell that the building is a theatre, much less imagine the ornateness of its interior. As the theatre's marketing manager Michael Mangion explains, the façade of the theatre was designed to be simple on purpose, so that enemies would not guess what treasures lay inside. The theatre was initially used by the knights, who were both actors and spectators. With only 600 seats, the *Manoel Theatre* is very small and intimate, but also luxurious, having a gilded ceiling. The box seats still have mirrors that once served as a part of the social stage, allowing audience members to see who entered the theatre. To see and be seen was often more important than the actual performance. The box seats were thus located across from each other, making it easier for spectators to see who had arrived and observe what others were wearing. The *Manoel Theatre* also has an impressive collection of 14,000 costumes, some dating as far back as the 16th century. That evening we enjoy a concert by an Austrian flautist, and the stage in the small theatre seems so close that we hear nearly every breath the musician takes.

As is typical in a city where everyone knows everybody else, speak with one person and you will soon arrive at the next. Thus, one evening we follow a recommendation to visit the apartments at *Palazzo Citta Valletta*, not knowing that the building belongs to a descendant of former pirates or corsairs. The ancestors of the present owner, Frank D. Dimech,

gambled the palace away in 1870 by playing cards. He managed to buy back his family's ancestral property only ten years ago. The 16th-century palazzo is one of the first buildings to have been built in Valletta. It is located on St. Paul Street in the former aristocratic neighbourhood. St. Paul's Catholic Church, which holds the largest collection of silver in Malta, stands nearby. When Napoleon arrived in the city with invading French forces, the locals buried all of their silver underground in coffins. Nevertheless, the French stole and plundered extensively during their occupation of the territory.

Dimech is a restorer who has scrupulously tried to give the palace back its former glory. The ground floor was once so spacious that a carriage could drive into it. The horses were led to the basement level while the servants remained on the ground floor, where they also lived. Servants were not paid salaries; instead, they worked only for their food and clothing. At the end of the hallway is the kitchen, which was once painted blue according to a local belief that the cool colour scared off insects. Next to the kitchen is a narrow stairway chiselled into stone. It was used by the servants to carry food up to the masters. The aristocratic family usually lived on the upper floor, the *piano nobile*, because the smells of the street did not travel up that high. Dimech also lives on the upper floor. The six-metre ceilings in his apartment are original and once served as a natural air conditioner. Windows were situated only along the street, while the walls facing the courtyard were open. The hot air flowing in rose to the ceilings and kept the rooms cool.

Before Dimech bought the palazzo, it had been divided up into communal apartments and for a time was also an office building. Each new tenant painted the walls a different colour, and it took Dimech a long time to finally reach the original masonry surfaces. The house contains many pieces of antique furniture, some of which have been in the family for many years. Dimech admits, however, that many treasures were also lost, because until recently people were very eager to get rid of anything old. Now times have changed. Just ten years ago, no one was interested in the old *palazzo*, but today real estate prices

in Valletta have soared. An authentic corsair dagger is displayed on the wall next to other family relics. In Dimech's youth, many boys had daggers like it and played war with them out in the street.

Dimech lives alone, but in order to maintain the building, he rents out some of the palazzo apartments to guests. This is definitely one of the most authentic accommodations in Valletta. Because he has no heirs, Dimech is not concerned about what will happen to the palazzo once he is gone. In any case, he is not interested in opening a museum.

In parting, Dimech jots down his favourite restaurants on a slip of paper. One of them is *Ambrosia*, a local institution whose chef and owner, Chris Farrugia, has been in the business for over 30 years. Whatever one's opinion of Valletta, one must admit that it has an ideal balance between a history-saturated backdrop and a densely packed gastronomy scene. These two aspects alone make Valletta a supreme destination.

Beyond the gates of Valletta

Beyond the gates of Valletta, Malta is definitely not a traditional Mediterranean sun-and-sea holiday destination. Even though the waters here are a dizzying shade of turquoise and the classic tourist route includes the obligatory stop at the Blue Grotto, Malta today still feels more like the educational tours of long ago, as referred to by the marquis. That is, of course, if you deliberately avoid St. Julian's and Sliema, which are the hub of nightlife, shopping and other 21st-century resort activities.

Mdina, Malta's ancient capital before Valletta, is definitely worth a visit. With a history stretching back 4000 years, Mdina was once a city of aristocrats. Today, however, it is called the "silent city", and in one sense it really is quiet, especially when the hordes of tourists leave in the evening. Lights shine in only a few windows because nowadays hardly anyone lives in Mdina anymore. During the daytime the city seems like an open-air museum, but restoration work has unfortunately cleaned off any interesting original patina.

The charming fishing village of Marsaxlokk lies right on the sea. As at most Maltese villages, a church is at its heart.

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YOUR NEXT DESTINATION



The island of Gozo is a 25-minute ferry ride from Malta

However, this church has a classic relic from the British era standing next to it: a red telephone box. The small harbour is full of colourful fishing boats. The eyes painted on the bows of the boats protects them from the “evil eye” and other misfortunes – an ancient custom that arrived along with the Phoenicians in the 9th century B.C.

Various fish restaurants line the promenade, but the locals’ favourite *Tartarun* is the real place for excellent fish. The name of this restaurant comes from a special type of local fishing net. The *Mosta* church boasts one of the largest domed roofs in Europe, having miraculously survived the air raids of the Second World War. One shell landed on the roof but did not explode, merely rolling off. A replica of it can be seen inside the church.

The island of Gozo is a 25-minute ferry ride from Malta. About 14 kilometres long and seven kilometres wide, Gozo feels like a completely different world. Donkeys still roamed its streets a mere 30 years ago. Today, cars have replaced the donkeys, but the sea around Gozo is still crystal clear and the pace of life is so slow that one must pinch oneself to believe that something like this is still possible in our chaotic, modern world.



Insider’s view

Living in Valletta is back in style

Brian Grech is a photographer and designer from the creative young generation of Maltese who are bringing new life to the historical capital of Valletta. In 2006, he and his partner established *Valletta Suites*, a stylish non-hotel consisting of three luxury apartments in historical buildings. For the interiors, Grech has successfully combined respect towards the island’s centuries-old traditions with a shot of contemporary design.

What do you like best about Malta?
The weather here is beautiful all year round. It’s true that the summers tend to be very hot, but the rest of the time the climate is very pleasant. And I am definitely drawn by the island’s history. The influence of Baroque architecture in Valletta is simply fascinating.

And what don’t you like about the island?
Sometimes it feels like everything here is too small, because Malta is an island and every once in a while one feels like escaping, just for a change of scenery. But there are undeniably positive things about living on an island, too. Because of its small size, it’s possible

to get everywhere simply and quickly. It hardly takes more than half an hour to get anywhere.

Living in a city like Valletta, which is so saturated with history, do you not sometimes get the feeling that you are becoming a part of that history yourself?
Yes, possibly. Valletta is indeed permeated with history. Many of the locals have been living here for generations. However, many have also left Valletta and moved to Sliema, for example. Before the war, Valletta was considered a very prestigious place to live; people dressed up to stroll along Republic Street. Unfortunately, the city lost some of its earlier splendour

MELON AND PROSCIUTTO SALAD WITH PARMIGIANO-REGGIANO

INGREDIENTS

- 3 CUPS CUBED HONEYDEW MELON
- 3 CUPS CUBED CANTALOUPE
- 2 TBS. THINLY SLICED FRESH MINT
- 1 TBS. FRESH LEMON JUICE
- 1/4 TBS. FRESHLY GROUND BLACK PEPPER
- 50 G. THINLY SLICED PROSCIUTTO
- 50 G. SHAVED PARMIGIANO-REGGIANO CHEESE
- CRACKED BLACK PEPPER
- MINT SPRIGS

COOKING

SALAD:
COMBINE FIRST 5 INGREDIENTS, TOSSING GENTLY. ARRANGE MELON MIXTURE ON A SERVING PLATTER. ARRANGE PROSCIUTTO EVENLY OVER MELON MIXTURE; SPRINKLE WITH PARMIGIANO-REGGIANO. GARNISH WITH CRACKED BLACK PEPPER AND FRESH MINT SPRIGS.

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when the so-called national housing was built after the war. Valletta was no longer considered a prestigious place to live and in one sense the city was no longer even considered the capital. Now everything is changing again. Much is being renovated and renewed. A new generation of architects, designers

and other members of the creative industries is conspicuously moving to the city, thereby giving a breath of completely fresh air to Valletta.

What are your favourite restaurants in Valletta?
In the morning, I like to have coffee at the historic *Cafe Cordina*. True,

it does fill up with tourists later in the day, but around the bar it's mostly locals. Another good place for coffee or a glass of wine is the *Charles Grech* café on Republic Street. It's also open late on Friday evenings. Meat-lovers and those who wish to try *fentaka*, the classic local dish of stewed rabbit, should go to *Rubino*. I also suggest the *Leggin* wine bar, both for its wine and its interior design. I believe the ratio of price to quality is very good in Valletta. Compare that to Venice or other touristy cities, where you pay way too much for food of poor or mediocre quality.

Where do you head to when you want to escape from Valletta?
Sometimes I go to Sliema, just for a cup of coffee and a change of scene, to escape from the hurry of the capital. In the summer I go to *Baia Beach*, a fairly secluded place on the north shore of the island. I also like the *Palazzo de Piro* café in the old town of Mdina.

A lot of Maltese like the island of Gozo because it's quieter and greener. But I guess it's too quiet for me; I'm a city person.

Where are the so-called "tourist traps" that you would avoid?
Personally, I do not like Buggiba, which is more like a tourist resort.

And what about St. Julian's?
It's definitely better than Buggiba, but is nevertheless touristy. However, if you know where to go, then it's still OK. In any case,

I would much rather choose Valletta. Compared to St. Julian's and Sliema, Valletta has managed to preserve its authenticity. Even though it does have more tourists than before, it is not overrun by souvenir shops like Venice.

Speaking of souvenirs, what should one bring home from Malta?
We are currently developing our own line of design, but until that is finished...Maltese glass. The Maltese tradition of glass-blowing is very old and interesting. Gold, silver and lace. Admittedly, it's much harder to find traditionally-made lace nowadays, but not impossible. And, of course, *bajtra*, which is a sweet wine made from the prickly pear.

And wine?
I prefer red wine to white wine. The Maltese climate is quite harsh and therefore more suited to red wines. There are a few good-quality wines here, but production volumes are not very large. That's why Maltese wines might be a bit more expensive than Sicilian wines.

How would you characterise the Maltese as a people?
I think that the Maltese are friendly in general. Outsiders usually consider us to be very helpful and generous. The Maltese were also once very religious and that's why you'll find churches all around the island. But, like elsewhere in the world, much has changed along with the new generation.



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Insider's view

Gozo and the simplicity of life



Having spent nearly 40 years in the fashion business, Patti and Giuseppe Piazzi left it several years ago and moved to Gozo Island. Giuseppe's passion is old houses, and when they first came there in the 1990s, he bought a 400-year-old property to use as a summer home. Today *Thirtyseven* is one of the most charming accommodations in Gozo. The non-hotel, as the owners like to call it, has only four rooms, each with its own distinct character and story rooted in Gozo, but inspired by the Piazzi's travels and eye for fashion.

Patti serves breakfast every morning, while Giuseppe takes guests for rides in his boat to see the local bays and visit the best places for snorkelling and diving. The couple understands how lucky they are to live there, especially after the long years of frenetic work in their former profession. The calm pace of life and feeling of being

at an oasis of peace are the main values that Patti and Giuseppe now strive to provide for their guests. Over the years, they have explored much of the island and have some great suggestions for people who wish to enjoy a destination rather than rush through it, or to observe instead of just notice. Some of Patti's suggestions follow:

"Gozo is a very small island. People who come here want complete rest and relaxation, or else they're interested in water and boats. Gozo does not have many sandy beaches, but it does have a great number of small bays. The natural environment here is very harsh but beautiful. The island is ideal for eco-tourists, hikers, trekkers and bicyclists. And the unbelievably clear water is a paradise for divers.

"For a wonderful two-hour hike you can walk all the way to Xlendi Bay, where a new promenade has just been opened. The nearby Sannat cliffs are very beautiful and located within a nature park, where birds stop on their migration routes. Below is the small Kantra Bay, an inlet with turquoise-coloured water. A fantastic place!

"I believe that the most beautiful beach on Gozo is San Blas Beach. In order to reach it, one must walk five to seven minutes down a cliff and through an orange grove. In the springtime the trees bloom and bear fruit at the same time. The water at San Blas is crystal clear. I like to go there with a book, sit with my back against the cliff and read. There is a small eatery on the beach, where a guy named Steve serves very tasty hot dogs.



"Xwenji Bay is also very beautiful. That's on the other side of the island, where the salt pans begin and the cliffs have flat tops. It's a great place to hike. Many yoga masters have come to practice on Gozo. They say the island has a special healing energy.

"One of the island's best secrets is Mgarr ix-Xini, a small bay and inlet. There Noel and Sandra, a charming couple, have opened a restaurant called *Rew Rew*, where they serve fresh grilled fish and seafood, including lobster. The bay itself is also very beautiful. Go there to enjoy the sun, take a swim and then have lunch with a glass of wine.

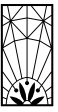
"Another 'secret address' is the *Gleneagles* bar on the way to the harbour. The atmosphere reminds one of Hemingway's books. Here you can drink a cocktail while watching the ships, ferries, boats and yachts come into the harbour. The best fish soup in Gozo is served at *Ta Karolina*, a small restaurant in Xlendi with only 12 tables. Although the menu is very simple – grilled fish, salad and so on – everything tastes delicious and the

place never disappoints.

"Meat-lovers should head to *D Bistro* in Qala, which serves the best rib-eye steak on the island. The atmosphere is funky and the owner, who also makes great pizzas, is always on-site.

"By living on a small island, one learns to notice and appreciate the beauty of small things. Everything on Gozo is small. Even the plants are small because of the strong winds, especially in February. I like to observe the wind, because there is something cleansing about it.

"I believe the greatest gift of Gozo is the simplicity of life, the opportunity to live and do things without a hurry. When you go to the post office, everyone there is happy and says good morning. If you've accidentally forgotten your purse at the grocery store, someone will definitely call and tell you not to worry because the purse has been found. There is almost no theft on the island and many locals leave their doors unlocked. It's a wonderful way to live and it's something we've long forgotten in our big-city lives." **BO**



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Архитектура

В «The Home» ведущий латвийский архитектор Угис Заберс соединил три разных по архитектурному стилю здания, сложив их в единый ансамбль. Блистательное ар-деко с фасадной мозаикой, играющей на солнце всеми оттенками янтара. Классическая архитектура Юрмалы с кружевной резьбой. И современный стиль с его минимализмом, открытостью и прозрачностью. Деревянные детали фасада здания изготовлены из сибирской лиственницы, обработанной по немецкой технологии. Торжественное настроение создает главный вход в здание, украшенный уникальными резными деревянными дверьми ручной работы – настоящим произведением искусства.

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TEXT BY AGRA LIEGE
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Let the wind carry us

Allan Palmer is the captain of the *Tre Kronor* (Three Crowns) sailing ship, an exclusive tribute to the almost extinct Scandinavian trading brigs of the mid 1800s. The ship seems to carry the charisma and inspiration that characterize the enigmatic captain himself, who is passionate about promoting the sustainable development of the Baltic Sea. Natural beauty, historical values and traditions aside, Allan also cares a great deal about bringing people to the sea, and through the sea, back to themselves. With the *Tre Kronor* and dozens of other sailing ships preparing to dock in Riga this month as part of the Tall Ships' Races, *Baltic Outlook* headed to Stockholm to spend an unforgettable day onboard the venerable Swedish brig

The *Tre Kronor* is a two-masted sailing ship, square-rigged on both masts, and breathtakingly beautiful at that. It is usually docked in the waters by Kastellholmen, a tiny island at the very centre of Stockholm. I get off the bus in Skeppsholmen, which is as far as land transport will go, cross the bridge and walk uphill to the water's edge, where the *Tre Kronor* awaits. The ship and the people who bring it to life are remarkable – not only through the projects in which they participate, such as the Sustainable Seas Initiative or the Tall Ships' Races, which Allan will later talk about – but also through the manner in which the members of the crew relate to each other, the way in which they have built their lives around this very special brig.

When I ask for Allan, a bit of a legend here, I get directed towards a slender man with a sharp look in his eye. He exhibits a quiet and stern air of authority – a crucial trait for someone who leads others and expects them to follow him at sea. Yet there is nothing cold or formal about either him or any of his crew members, who are eating lunch crouched in various places on the deck.

"This is a happy ship," says Allan, and I have no reason to doubt his words. I get a bowl of the tastiest spinach and potato soup pressed in my hands ("We have a lot of vegetarians here," someone explains when



Captain Allan Palmer

I compliment it), along with some wholesome crusty bread, and the journey can begin. I talk to Allan seated outside on the deck of his vessel, a place that is home to him and many others.

How did this majestic brig come to be?

I come from Mariehamn, the capital of Åland, which has strong sailing traditions and which was the last place where sailing ships were used in commerce. Big sailing vessels were heading out as far as Australia



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Tall Ships' Races in progress

FACTBOX

2013 Tall Ships' Races

Start on July 4 in Aarhus, Denmark, and finish on August 6 in Szczecin, Poland

Organized by Sail Training International, a UK-based non-profit organization set up to educate young people of various backgrounds through the sailing experience

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Over 7000 trainees representing 31 different nationalities

OUTLOOK / INTERVIEW

until the Second World War. My father was a mate on one of these ships until 1947, so this tradition runs in my family. As I grew up, it started to look like the old school of sailing would soon be dead and buried. I didn't think that sailing would have a chance of being revived, so I figured that I would be working in a different profession. However, it turned out that people still have an interest in learning how to sail and in this way of living, of travelling and seeing the world, of going to far-away places in a ship powered by nature.

In mid 1990s there was not even one square-rigged ship around, so I decided to build one from scratch, along with three other gentlemen who still work together with me at the *Tre Kronor* office. We started in 1997 and finished eight years later. The ship is based on the design of an old transport and cargo brig of the mid 1800s. I wanted it to be built in the tradition of civilian vessels, not military ones. It is not an exact copy, since I designed the rig myself, but it is still faithful to the original. Sailing a ship with as many rigs as the *Tre Kronor* requires a lot of skill and cooperation among the crew members. Somebody is doing something pretty much all of the time while on board. People today seem to have forgotten how crucial such abilities used to be.

Had you already decided to stay on as the ship's captain?

Not at all. I worked on the design, but hadn't considered staying on the ship after its construction was completed. Then the idea of using it for sail-training came. I was entrusted with the temporary position of captain and have remained there to this day. I felt right from the beginning that such a complex and exclusively built vessel should be used in a meaningful manner. Besides sail-training, we also started doing passenger cruises, but even then we always had trainees on board. We offer sailing trips with different sorts of activities, where we teach our guests basic sailing skills. People usually have quite a lot of interest in that.

However, we still felt the need for a bigger project. Quite soon, environmental issues related to the pollution of the Baltic Sea and its deteriorating state came to our attention. We realized that a handmade wooden sailing ship like ours could serve as the perfect symbol for a cleaner Baltic Sea, for lots of initiatives related to an environmentally conscious way of living.

A couple of years ago, we arrived at a project that is now known as the Sustainable Seas Initiative. It was launched on 2011 with Swedish Crown Princess Victoria naming the ship and breaking the champagne bottle, so to speak. She has been involved in the initiative ever since and is the "godmother" of the ship.

What exactly is the ship's role in this initiative?

The *Tre Kronor* is a symbol for the initiative. We cannot really produce anything concrete as such. What we can do is influence public opinion. We can raise awareness about crucial issues and get other people involved. We have managed to attract quite a bit of attention so far, and lots of environmental organizations have now joined us in our work.

The way you run the vessel, with sails, is environmentally friendly by definition. However, unlike more automated



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OUTLOOK / INTERVIEW



Parade of sail out of berths on the town quay in Lisbon, 2012

Åland has strong sailing traditions and was the last place where sailing ships were used in commerce. Big sailing vessels were heading out as far as Australia until the Second World War

ships, it surely takes a lot more skills and physical effort to operate.

Yes, I wanted it to be this way because sailing traditions have more to offer than just an environment-friendly way of travelling. The way ships like this are run involves a lot of teamwork, a lot of human contact. Working in an environment like this, the ship's crew becomes a family. There is, of course, a chain of command and everyone respects it, but under our circumstances, people try their best to make each other's lives easier. We talk and make decisions together. While living in such close proximity can be challenging, everyone tries really hard and those who end up on this ship love being with other people. This concept of cooperation is crucial in the idea behind the Tall Ships' Races.

The *Tre Kronor* will be moored in the port of Riga soon as part of the Tall Ships' Races.

Yes, this year there are three legs to the race. The first one starts at Aarhus in Denmark and goes up to Helsinki, Finland. After a few days of festivities in Helsinki, the ships sail off to Riga, Latvia. This second leg of the race is not an actual race, though.

It's more like a cruise, where all the ships sail together.

Quite often in this setup the ships change crews several times in mid-journey and take on guests from other ships. The reason for this is that the Tall Ships' Races are considered to be an international gathering of young people first and foremost.

The third leg of the race proceeds from Riga to Szczecin in Poland. But even here, the race differs from what you would imagine a sports-related competition. For one, the ships are very different and not easy to compare at all. Therefore, winning this race is not the most important thing.

So in your view, the Tall Ships' Races are actually a sailing-themed celebration of being young?

Well, the way that we at the *Tre Kronor* approach this event is slightly different from what might be seen as its general purpose. We have a personalized take on it. We work together with an organization called *Fryshuset* here in Sweden, the aim of which is to help young people who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Some of these youths have run into trouble previously and don't have other interests. Many are immigrants or second-

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OUTLOOK / INTERVIEW



I purposefully wanted it to be complicated and hard to operate. You need perfect teamwork and a great deal of knowledge to successfully run a square-rigged sailing ship

generation immigrants, a very international group of people. This makes them suitable participants of the Tall Ships' Races, which bring people together from different countries. So this is an important event for young people and also a cornerstone for international understanding.

The Tall Ships' Races were also nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize some five years ago, and I think I wouldn't be wrong to say that they have been an especially important event for the Eastern European countries, an additional way for them to connect with other parts of Europe. For those who lived in the Soviet Union, the race was an especially meaningful way of getting out and into contact with people from other countries, and, of course, the other way around as well.

How long have you been participating in these races?

The Tall Ships' Races started off in the 1950s and I had taken part in quite a few of them already before I became the captain of the

Tre Kronor. This ship, being relatively new, has sailed in only one of these races before.

What characteristics must a sailor have?

My crew is very young and most are not sailors by profession. Since many of them are trainees, we always have three professionals on board, the so-called able-bodied seamen. They stay with the ship for the entire season, from May until November. They work on the deck, teaching the trainees and volunteers who come to learn the trade.

As for the kind of person one has to be, it is a matter of being dedicated and willing to work hard. It is also about social skills, since one needs to work together with people which are likely to be very different from one another. It is about being ready to do all kinds of things, because we do everything that needs to be done ourselves. That includes repair works, cooking and cleaning. If one is ready to do all this, then fitting in is never really a

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can be appealing to go against the trend to simplify everything, and it can be exciting to see the result of accomplishing more complex tasks. I would definitely find it more motivating to pull up a sail than to drive my car to the gym, which many people do (*laughs*).

How do you maintain such a large and beautiful vessel?

The maintenance before, during and after the sailing season is done fully by our crew. The *Tre Kronor* has a rather large group of volunteers who don't actively sail with us, but are willing to do quite a lot of good work for the ship. We have a workshop operating just at the dock here, and its members are mainly retired elderly men. They do a lot of important work for the *Tre Kronor*, especially during the wintertime. They take and repair every single item used on the deck and when needed, they even make things anew based on sketches that I have drawn.

When we were building the ship, we had lots of volunteers cleaning and sweeping every day, we had people participating in the construction. A significant social life centred on the creation of this ship, and it has remained that way ever since.

What are the most exciting places you have sailed to?

I really enjoy what we will be doing again next week, participating in a big festival in St. Petersburg called the Scarlet Sails. They hold a magnificent parade where we are the main attraction, and it ends with spectacular fireworks. I've also sailed to the Caribbean and to Australia, but that was many years ago. When it comes to sailing, these kinds of ships are not really so much about the places we go to, but more about the life on board and the sailing itself; about learning to make the wind take you where you want to go.

I think that the best sail I have ever had was last year, when I sailed from Riga to my hometown of Mariehamn in Åland. We had very strong winds working for us that time and it took us only 32 hours, which is, I have to say, pretty impressive. **BO**

problem, because a ship's crew is very much a family, a very tight bunch. Since we are in such close proximity at all times, that happens naturally. Some people come and see that it is not really for them. Sailing a ship has a lot to do with character-building, much of which comes from immersing oneself in purposeful physical activity.

This appears to be in rather stark contrast with the transportation industry, which is becoming increasingly automatic and dependent on modern technology, rather than manpower.

Exactly. That is why it's important to offer people the opportunity to learn how to do things with the power of their own hands, to work with others, to not make everything as easy as possible. It might sound strange, but even during the process of building this type of sailing vessel with rigged sails, I purposefully wanted it to be complicated and hard to operate. You need perfect teamwork and a great deal of knowledge to successfully run a square-rigged sailing ship. We also teach our guests some basic lessons in the navigation of a square-rigged ship, and most are very excited. It

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Jūrmala, a beachfront pearl on the Baltic Sea



Jūrmala, Majori

You must go to Jūrmala by train. This is the way that holidaymakers headed to the Baltics' oldest, most beautiful and largest resort town at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries – as well as after the Second World War, when Jūrmala was one of the most popular resort complexes in the Soviet Union. This is also the method of transportation that most Rigans use today to get to the city's majestic white beaches

Ways of getting to the resort town

Bathers headed to Jūrmala even before 1877, which is when the railway line connecting the cities of Riga and Tukums was inaugurated. At first, transportation between Riga and Jūrmala was ensured by stagecoach, and later by steamboats. With the introduction of railway transportation, the number of holidaymakers heading to Jūrmala increased exponentially and their habits also changed. The convenience of the train made it possible for people to return back to their homes in Riga as evening set in. An indication of how famous and prodigious the

resort area had become at the beginning of the 20th century was the establishment of a direct railway line between Moscow and Ķemeri – the section of Jūrmala renowned, even today, for its sulphur springs and healing traditions. Trains coursing from Jūrmala to Russia also carried strawberries grown along the shores of the Baltic Sea, arriving in the markets of St. Petersburg by the following morning. Indeed, along with the rooming and entertaining of seasonal holidaymakers, strawberry-growing was another traditional source of income for the inhabitants of Jūrmala.

The many faces of Jūrmala

Jūrmala became an official city only in the 1920s, at which time it was officially called Rigas Jūrmala (literally meaning Coast of Riga) – an indication of its close ties with the capital city. In 1959, the city acquired its current name, Jūrmala. It is made up of what was once a line of fishing villages along the coast. Along with development, their borders merged, but the various neighbourhoods of Jūrmala are still quite distinct, each having its own type of inhabitants and character. Those who value peace and solitude choose Melluži, Asari or Vaivari. Bulduri is known for its domesticity and fancy villas. The local high-society-types favour Dzintari, while Majori is a favourite of those who like to enjoy themselves outside of their homes.

Every section of Jūrmala has had its shining time-in-the-sun, as well as of periods of relative tranquillity, but the city's historical centre has always been Dubulti. Even the city's architecture, usually grouped under one heading – Stereotypical Characteristics of Buildings in Jūrmala – is, upon closer look, quite nuanced. The summer houses built of wood and ensconced among the pine trees in the furthest end of their plots could be called stereotypical. Many have lacy woodcut trim and verandas encased by coloured or etched-glass windows, arranged in varying degrees of complexity. This is the architectural image of Jūrmala that has remained to the current day, and which is actively being preserved by both national and local cultural heritage institutions so that it remains the status quo for future generations as well.

Holidaymakers in fishermen's houses

The first buildings in what is now known as Jūrmala were the private homesteads of fishermen, and because many of the oldest streets in the city used to connect these homesteads, the roads in these areas of town are apt to be winding. All of the newer buildings were built for the comfort of the summer people, since from the middle of the 19th century (and up to the current day), they have been and are the lords of Jūrmala. They dictate the city's character, direction and pace of development. The summer residents also played the role of creditor, financially supporting the fishermen's plans of erecting new buildings, which the creditors then used as their summer homes. Old fishermen's houses were renovated and outfitted with additions, verandas and attic rooms to increase the amount of space that could be rented out, thereby increasing the number of summer guests that could be taken in.

During the summer months, the owners themselves moved into one of the outbuildings. This also explains another of Jūrmala's architectural features – the somewhat odd layout of having several buildings located in one residential plot. These are summer cabins meant to house families summering in Jūrmala, with the ultimate goal of putting some extra money into the pockets of their owners.

Jūrmala's cream of the crop

As the development of the city's resort traditions continued, the requests of the summer holidaymakers grew correspondingly. With increasing regularity, Rigans and city-dwellers from elsewhere who wanted to relax by the pine forests and seaside began to buy their own plots of land, building seasonal homes according to their

own means and tastes. Although one of the first to build his own holiday home was Russian Imperial Field Marshall Prince Barclay de Tolly, and many of Latvia's notable artists, musicians and scientists spent the warmest part of the year there, Jūrmala has always displayed a bourgeois sense of charm, rather than an aristocratic or pompous atmosphere.

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the Russian Imperial Court and its circle, followed by the upper echelons of Latvian society during the first period of independence (1918-1940), chose to take their holidays at Western European resorts that had more famous names. The development of Jūrmala occurred at the same time that Riga flourished as a centre of industry for Imperial Russia (up until the First World War) and then again during the first independence period. This is why many architectural features visible in the capital can also be seen in Jūrmala. However, there is one exception – the historical styles seen in the brick houses of Riga have been expressed in the form of wooden houses in Jūrmala. Practically all of the neo-style features of the end of the 19th century – neo-Gothic, neo-Classical, neo-Renaissance – can be seen in the shapes, décor and aesthetics of Jūrmala's architecture.



The Majori beach in Jūrmala

Jugendstil or Art Nouveau masterpieces can be found not only on the façades of the apartment buildings on Riga's Alberta iela, but also at many a summer house in Jūrmala. The style can be discerned in the asymmetrical shapes of the buildings, complete with verandas and little towers, as well as in the characteristic ornamentation of winding vines and other flora in the woodcuts and coloured glass of the verandas. Nevertheless, even the most grandiose villas hint at the root of their evolutionary path, which lies in the simple homesteads of the local fishermen. For example, the open porch of the fisherman's house first transformed into an open veranda, then into a veranda with large and intricately arranged panes of glass.



Big-time entertainment

The inhabitants of Jūrmala have continually considered how to entertain their guests. Festivals and celebrations have always been good sources of income. At the end of the 19th century, there were so many festivals being held in Jūrmala that Riga's rulers issued a decree to strictly limit their number. Hotels and guesthouses designated special areas in which the guests could socialize, play music and dance. Dance halls were built and gardens for open-air concerts were erected. Entertainment venues vied for the public's attention, competing with each other by featuring the most surprising and modern features (like revolving floors), by drawing the best orchestras and most famous conductors, and by playing the loudest music. Latvia's first symphony orchestra concert was held in Jūrmala. The event was a direct result of the race to be the best and attracted so many people that many of today's pop music groups would be thrilled to get such a large audience.

The most resplendent and impressive building in Jūrmala is the Ķemeri Hotel, designed by Eižens Laube, who was Latvia's official state architect in the 1930s. Ķemeri is distinctly different from the rest of Jūrmala – it is a boggy area located six kilometres from the sea, but the healing properties of its natural spring waters and medicinal peat mud baths have made Ķemeri renowned both far and wide since the first half of the 19th century. Consequently, it was chosen in the 1930s as the site for a particularly grand hotel, in the manner of Europe's best resorts and spas. Known as the White Palace, it was owned by the state until the end of the 1990s, when it was unsuccessfully privatised. The hotel embodied the spirit of “the good old days” and had been seen as a national treasure, with many of its interior elements produced locally in Latvia. For example, the furniture had been made by local carpenters and the carpets had been woven in Latvian textile mills.

Soviet Pioneers in the villas

Wooden houses have always been a fire hazard and Jūrmala has seen its share of fire emergencies. While the Second World War saw little harm coming to Jūrmala, particularly destructive fires

Полугар – отец водки, брат виски

Полугар – это историческое хлебное вино, прародитель современной водки, выпуск которого был прекращён в 1895 году. Историк русской водки Борис Родионов по старинным книгам воссоздал рецептуру традиционного русского напитка 18 века.

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The old concert hall in Dzintari

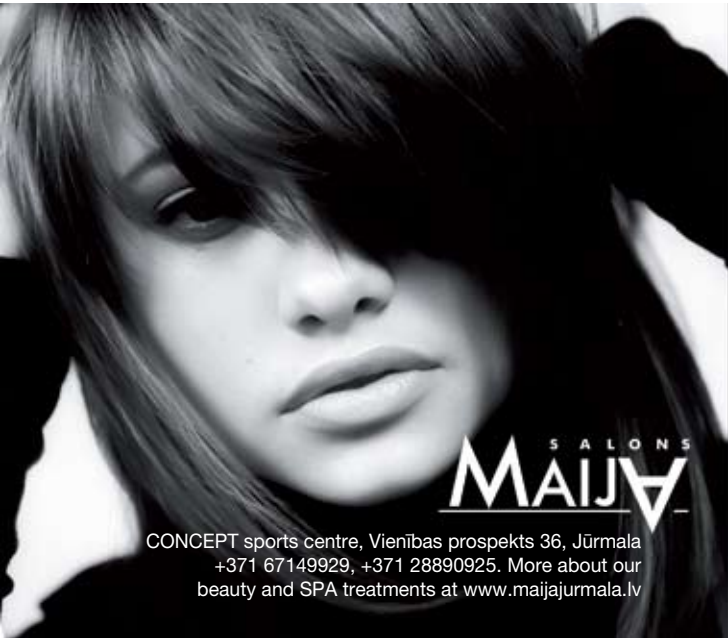
raged there during the First World War. The biggest impact of the Second World War turned out to be the change in the political and economic systems, and this altered the bourgeois face of the city irreparably. The lavish summer homes were nationalized and some

of them served as barracks for events like Pioneer youth camps. The formerly colourful and verdant gardens of the villas were razed to make room for barn-like buildings that serviced the camps, or for ideological parade-fields.

Other houses, bereft of their caring owners, simply succumbed to the ravages of time. The architecture of the villas and summer homes was seen to be of no value, and it followed that there was no point in preserving them. Everything was to be torn down to make room for a new Jūrmala. Many of the buildings, especially the older summer homes, had been designed only for seasonal occupation, meaning that maintaining them required especially meticulous care. Due to the lackadaisical attitude under Soviet rule, the buildings that did survive the 50-year communist occupation emerged in their structurally original but heavily deteriorated state.

Jūrmala does not have many examples of Stalinist-Baroque architecture. In the first post-war years, attention was mostly given to the areas that had been damaged by the war, such as the new Bulduri train station and the *Majori* sanatorium for the Soviet army's Baltic division, which was built on the site of the old *Marienbad* sanatorium. The vestibule and steps of the Majori train station are one of the few Stalin-era interiors that have been designated as a National Cultural-Historic Heritage Site by the modern-day Republic of Latvia. Many inhabitants of Jūrmala do seem to have forgotten when the current landscape architecture of the Dzintari beach area was installed, believing that it was already there before the war. In truth, the viewing area and steps leading down to the beach at the end of Turaidas iela were built in 1955. An additional feature, consisting of impressive figural sculptures, was also planned, but that never panned out.

After the end of the Second World War, with Latvia firmly under the control of Soviet decision-makers in Moscow, new methods of urban planning and development were conceived. In the 1960s, these were executed as a peculiar mixture of international modernism and Soviet ideology. In the most radical of these plans, the new Jūrmala was to be one of skyscrapers looming above the pine trees, with the eradication of all non-communal buildings



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ПРОДАЕТСЯ КОММЕРЧЕСКАЯ НЕДВИЖИМОСТЬ



Рига, бул. Бривибас, 19

Коммерческое помещение расположено в самом начале одной из главных торговых улиц Риги с очень высокими пешеходным и транспортным потоками, в престижном здании постройки 19 века. Напротив здания находится памятник Свободе — главный национальный памятник Латвии. Рядом — Старый город, парк с Городским каналом, а также другие достопримечательности Риги. 1 этаж и подвальное помещение общей площадью 672 м². Стоимость — 2 950 000 EUR.

Рига, Карля Улманя гатве, 114

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Рига, улица Краста, 60

Строение оригинальной архитектурной формы расположено в одном из самых престижных торговых районов Риги. Рядом находится автомагистраль с интенсивным транспортным потоком. Рядом располагаются развлекательный центр LIDO, автосалоны Porsche, Lexus, Bentley, Mercedes-Benz. Здание идеально подходит под торговый центр, универмаг или автосалон. Площадь помещения: первый этаж — 9 000 м², второй этаж — 4 200 м². Площадь склада — 2 260 м². Площадь административных помещений — 880 м². Парковка на 230 автомобилей. Стоимость — 7 000 000 EUR.

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The Dzintari Concert Hall

that could still be found in the city centre. While this policy was not carried through to completion, the building traditions of Jūrmala were broken, and the character of the city changed. The building of new private homes, including summer houses, was not permitted. Beginning with the 1960s, many wooden summer houses were torn down, one by one, and replaced with huge sanatoriums and hotels. It looked as if massive ships of white concrete had run ashore, coming to a stop among the once-pristine sand dunes and pine forests of this seaside town.

Forced to follow ideological obligations, Latvian teams of architects did try, however, to adhere to the principles of modern aesthetics, and came up with some individualistic solutions of remarkably good quality for the time. In his book of photographs highlighting architectural monstrosities of the former USSR, *CCCP: Cosmic Communist Constructions Photographed*, photographer Frédéric Chaubin included only one building in Jūrmala – the *Rīgas Jūrmala* sanatorium, built in 1977 in Majori and designed by architects Modris Ģelzis, Viktors Valgums and Normunds Pavārs.

Other prime examples of Soviet modernism can be seen in smaller buildings, such as the Dubulti railway station, built in 1977 and designed by the architect Ilya Yavein. Its concrete, arc-shaped platform alludes to a wave of the sea and is said to have been inspired by Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer, a communist whose works were well-known among architects throughout the Soviet Union. During the Soviet years, the resort and dancehalls in Bulduri were replaced by the *Jūras pērle* (Pearl of the Sea) restaurant, designed by architect Josef Goldenberg. Holidaymakers of the time still remember the impressive 18 metre-long, glassed-in wing of the restaurant that hung over the sand dunes, as well as the venue's variety and burlesque shows with dancing girls.

Jūrmala as part of Latvia's cultural heritage

The hosting of the resort-town's theatre and musical performances has now been taken over by the Dzintari Concert Hall, which is one of the few buildings erected in the 20th century to have been inducted into the Architecture and Design Division of the Latvian Cultural Canon. Built during the Soviet era, the open-air concert hall is an addition to the wooden concert hall that was built there in 1936 by architects Aleksandrs Birznieks and Viktors Mellenbergs. The original part of the venue faces Turaidas iela, and its valuable interior murals were painted during the first independence period by artist Ansis Cīrulis in the fashionable ethnographic style of the time. In 1959, a young architect named Modris Ģelzis – now considered Latvia's best architect of the late 20th century – was invited to transform the hall into an open-air venue. Inspired by Scandinavian and particularly Finnish Modernist architecture, Ģelzis designed the most prominent example of this architectural style in all of Latvia.

After Latvia regained its independence in 1991, the ensuing political and economic changes affected Jūrmala as well. The nationalized summer houses were given back to their rightful heirs. It was thought that Jūrmala would regain its pre-war ambiance, but as the Latvian saying goes – you can't step in the same river twice – and reclaiming Jūrmala's original character would prove to be very difficult.



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The Majori Primary School Sports Hall

Today, day-trippers visit Jūrmala not only to enjoy its white sandy beaches and swim in the Baltic Sea, but also to view some of the best contemporary architecture in Latvia. Respectable architects are designing striking villas – not only as seasonal homes, but as permanent housing, too. Architects from the younger generation are creating public structures that stand out in Jūrmala and elsewhere in Latvia as examples of truly excellent architecture. One of these is the *Dzintaru mežaparks* (Dzintari Forest Park), a boardwalk, pavilion and playground complex designed by the *Substance* architectural firm. Every detail of the park complex seamlessly fits into the surrounding landscape,

both functionally and visually. Substance is also responsible for the magnificent Sports Hall of the Majori Primary School, located on the grounds of the old market that was adjacent to the Majori train station. The hall's expressive metal structuring, covered by panes of polycarbonate glass, is an especially captivating sight at sunset. The Sports Hall has gained recognition not only from Latvia's professionals, but on an international scale as well, gracing the "best-of" pages of high-profile contemporary architecture magazines. Another primary school in Jūrmala also boasts a new and highly-acclaimed, although architecturally different, sports hall. Designed by the architectural offices of *Lejnieku Projektēšanas Birojs* and *8 A.M.*, the Dubulti Primary School Sports Hall is an extension of Jūrmala's traditional wooden architecture, but in a decidedly contemporary manner, and has been called "a masterful example of contextual construction" by experts in the field.

One of the most interesting projects planned for the near-future in Jūrmala is the diploma work by young architect Pauls Gibze, who graduated just this year from the Riga Technical University's Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning. Gibze's plan concerns the territory outside of the glamorous resort locales of Bulduri and Dubulti, and is an invitation to remember that Jūrmala's waterfront extends not only along the Baltic Sea, but also along the banks of the Lielupe River. At the core of the young architect's plan is a system of boardwalks that he has named *Palienes skatuve* or Stage of Floodlands – a platform for viewing the banks of the Lielupe River when they overflow every spring. The spring floods may seem exotic to the guests of Jūrmala, but for the city's inhabitants, they are a fact of life that demonstrates nature's majestic power. **BO**



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TEXT AND PHOTOS BY ELINA RUKA

Good traditions make for good rules

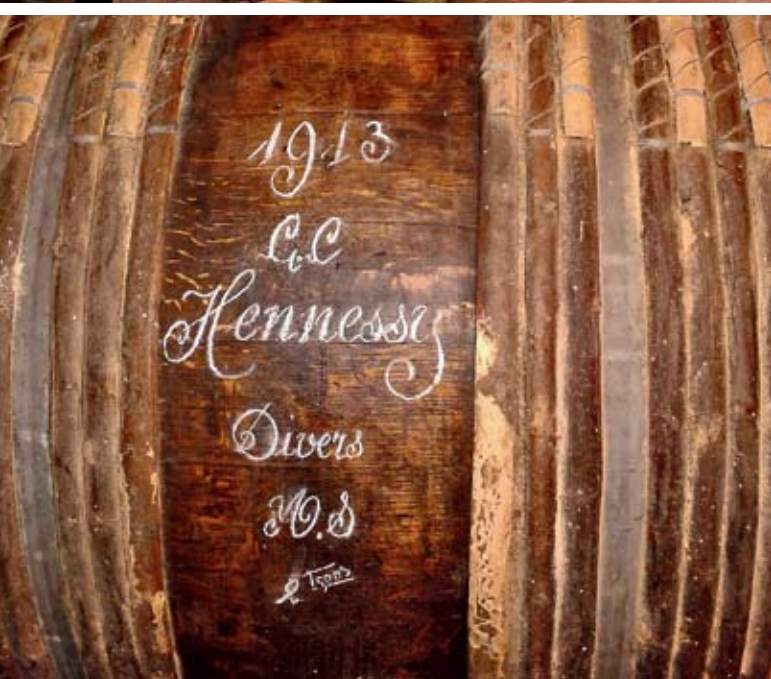
A short course on the enjoyment of cognac

In our developed, technology-led world, some things still require human knowledge, skills and hands. One of these is the making of cognac – a delicate, time-consuming and tradition-rich process. Just as nothing can replace a handmade oak cask that will later bear a label (handwritten in chalk) indicating the type, source and year of the wine within, so no computer can come up with the ideal blend of *eaux-de-vie* to make a cognac of consistently good quality – and that has the same taste – year after year.

Baltic Outlook had the opportunity to visit the *Hennessy* distillery in the French region of Cognac, which is also the namesake of the famous beverage. For two days, the erudite Jean-Michel Cochet – brand ambassador of *Maison Hennessy* and employee of the company for over 20 years – shared his experience and stories with visitors from Latvia.

As anyone who has studied French knows, people who speak this language are fonder of the exceptions to the rules, rather than the rules themselves. One rule of pronunciation is that the letter “h” is always silent, yet the pronunciation of *Hennessy* is an exception that everyone diligently adheres to. This is because the founder of the house, Richard Hennessy, was Irish. Born to an aristocratic family in 1724, at 21 years of age he enlisted in French King Louis XV’s Irish Brigade. Shortly after having fought in the Battle of Fontenoy, he discovered the Charente region of France.

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Having tried his hand at distillation, Richard Hennessy founded his own *maison*, or house, in 1765, in Cognac. A far-sighted entrepreneur who understood the meaning of quality, he decided that the distillate must be allowed to age. He refused to sell any cognac that had been aged for less than ten years, resulting in the establishment of a stable reputation for his *maison*. Later, with his son James working at his side, Hennessy developed the brand into the successful and prestigious label that it remains to this very day.

Since the father had fought in battles and the son had literally conquered a new market, James approved the firm's logo – an armoured forearm – which still graces the bottles today. In the first decades of the 19th century, *Hennessy* became the official purveyor to European royalty; Tsar Alexander I, King George IV, the Duke of Norfolk and Prince Talleyrand were all loyal customers. In 1814, James began another family tradition – politics; James himself served six terms as an elected local government official.

A fourth-generation Hennessy, Maurice, implemented the star system: one star was given to cognacs aged for two years, two stars to cognacs aged four years, and three stars to cognacs aged six years. Even older cognacs – still a Hennessy specialty – were given special names: V.O.P. stands for Very Old Pale, V.S.O.P. stands for Very Superior Old Pale, whereas X.O. means Extra Old.

As the family's resources grew, the first boxes of *Hennessy* cognac were shipped to Japan in 1868, signalling that the final continent had been conquered. Sales rose especially steeply in America, and *Hennessy* managed to get a foot in edgewise even during the prohibition era by convincing the US government of the "medicinal properties" of cognac. Today, Maurice Richard Hennessy, an eighth-generation Hennessy is the brand's ambassador to the world.

The process (as it is called by the House of Hennessy) of creating cognac consists of several stages, and it's a bit hard to say which of these is the most important. Each stage has a role to play in the creation of the final product, but it is absolutely essential to start with good grapes. The area that provides the kind of grapes necessary (and the only kind permitted) for the making of cognac spans 75,000 hectares – from the Atlantic Ocean to Angoulême. The Romans had discovered the conducive qualities of limestone for the growing of grapes back in the 3rd century. The light-coloured soil reflects sunlight, allowing for the grapes to ripen more evenly.

While *Hennessy* owns a few vineyards, it buys most of its grapes from local farmers. The overwhelming majority (at least 90%) of wine for cognac is made from the Ugni Blanc variety of grapes. The rest comes from Folle Blanche and Colombard grapes. The grapes used in making cognac are grown in six zones, or *crus*, but Hennessy uses grapes that come from four of these regions: Grande Champagne, Petite Champagne, Borderies and Fins Bois.

Although a single grape vine can produce fruit for up to a century, the House of Hennessy replaces them every 25 to 30 years, with 3-5% of its vine stock being replanted every year. The reasoning behind this is due to the amount of sugar in the grapes. The older a grape vine, the less fruit it produces, but the grapes that do grow have a higher sugar content. Sugary grapes produce a higher alcohol content, and although it may sound strange at first, the production of cognac requires wines with relatively low levels of alcohol.



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Once the grapes have been harvested, their juice is extracted. *Hennessy* does not need the grape skins – these are given away to make ethanol, which is then used to make bio-fuel. Adding only natural yeast, the grape juice becomes white wine with a low alcohol content of 8.5 - 9.5 %. The next step is distillation. The *Maison Hennessy's* Le Peu distillery is the largest in the region, housing ten red copper stills that make *eaux-de-vie* by the double-distillation method. As the gigantic stills boil the wine, the steamed alcohol rises into onion-shaped *chapiteaux*, then proceeds along curved swan's-neck pipes and further into serpentine pipes where it cools, emerging, at last, as a liquid known as *brouillis*, which has an alcohol content of 27-30%.

This distilling process takes more than ten hours. The *brouillis* is distilled a second time, after which only the "core" distillate (which now contains 70% alcohol) is reserved and filled into oak barrels or casks for aging. The process must be carefully controlled throughout, because a poorly made distillate will still be bad after 50 years, even if it is aged in the best casks.

Once the carefully distilled wine has become an *eaux-de-vie*, it is poured into casks made from oak. The oak not only

softens the alcohol, but also gives it a particular aroma and colour. The making of the casks is a story in itself, with its beginnings found in the forest. Specialists from *Hennessy* select oak trees with wood that has a low amount of resin in it. These sorts of oaks grow only in the region of Limousin, in the Tronçais Forest, which was established in the 17th century for the needs of the French navy.

When the cask-maker, or cooper, has been supplied with the best oak wood (sometimes even hundred-year-old wood), he begins his craft. Using only a couple of tools, he makes a cask that is held together with just hoops – without the use of any glue or nails – and that can last for up to 50 years. There are no magic tricks involved, only the hands of a skilled craftsman. The cooper starts by placing the precisely-cut oak slats along the inside of the upper hoop. Once these are held in place, he adds a couple of more hoops and then places the cask over a fire made from old casks that have already seen their time.

The fire softens the wood and allows it to take the shape of a rounded cask, which is made by hammering the hoops down along the length of the slats. Another feature gained from the fire is the light

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OUTLOOK / TRAVEL



Château de Bagnolet

singing of the cask's interior, which causes the wood to release a wide spectrum of scents into the *eaux-de-vie* during the aging process. The oak wood gives off tannins and the scent of smoked wood, cinnamon and cloves, while the lignin in the timber adds a trace of vanilla. When both ends of the cask have been put on, it weighs 70 kg. When knocked upon, the finished cask should sound like a drum.

The *Maison Hennessy* currently employs seven coopers, each of whom must train for two years before starting work. The company hopes to double its number of coopers over the next few years. Every year, *Hennessy* makes and purchases around 10,000 new casks, repairing just as many used ones, since some *eaux-de-vie* are so valuable that they can only be aged in old casks. It might actually be more correct to say "potentially valuable", since, as Jean-Michel Cochet explained to us, you can't put a price on an *eaux-de-vie* until it has been blended and transformed into cognac.

The *eaux-de-vie* are kept in different casks for varying lengths of time. Just-distilled *eaux-de-vie* is usually kept in a new cask so that it can absorb the aroma of the oak; then it is poured into another cask. If a *Hennessy* specialist deems that a certain *eaux-de-vie* has the potential to be aged for a very long time, it is stored in an old cask. Occasionally, an *eaux-de-vie* that has been kept during one generation will be opened for use only by the original generation's grandchildren, or even great-grandchildren.

Upon entering one of the company's 42 warehouses, you catch a light smell of

cognac in the air. This is called "the angel's share", since two to four percent of the alcohol evaporates through the pores in the wood of the casks. The distillates that have aged sufficiently and reached their potential peak are poured into large glass containers called demijohns. Especially old samples of *eaux-de-vie* – some going back to the year 1800 – are stored in the Founder's Cellar. These are used only to blend the finest cognacs, such as the *Richard Hennessy* collection.

Hennessy only applies the term "cognac" to an *eaux-de-vie* after has been correctly blended with other *eaux-de-vie*. And "correctly blended" means using proportions that result in a consistency of style and taste for every cognac in the collection, year after year. Every *eaux-de-vie* is different because the grapes from which it came are a natural product that develops under the influence of a variety of factors. Nevertheless, before X.O. is bottled, it must taste the same as the previously bottled X.O.

V.S. cognac is a blend of 40 different *eaux-de-vie*, V.S.O.P. is made up of 60, and X.O. can contain up to 100 different *eaux-de-vie*. To find the correct proportions, the blending process can go on for months, sometimes even years. And over the centuries, this process has not changed; it is truly a ritual. Every day at 11:30 at the *Hennessy* headquarters in Cognac, seven men come together to smell, taste, discuss and decide how to deal with every *eaux-de-vie*: leave it to age some more; change its cask; pour it into a glass demijohn



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OUTLOOK / TRAVEL

but not yet use it for blending; or add it to a product still in the blending stages.

From May to September, the committee decides which casks and cellars the new *eaux-de-vie* will be sent to. Then, during the regular tasting sessions, they either continue with or change the started process of development. Specialists follow every *eaux-de-vie* that has been put to age in a cask and decide on its best “marriage time” – the time of its first mixing. This is what is known as the “first blend”. Then the cognac is poured back into a cask. Later, it is blended again, which is then called “the mother blend”. The “mother blend” reaches its harmony of flavour after several months and only then is it ready for bottling.

In charge of this whole process is the cellar master, or master blender. The master blender must be intimately familiar with the history of *Hennessy* beverages and must have an excellent sense of taste, as well as an iron-clad memory of these tastes. Suffice it to say, his responsibility is immense. In 1800, when the founder of the company, Richard Hennessy, passed away, Jean Fillioux joined the House with the goal of making only the best cognacs. Seven generations later, his descendant Yann Fillioux still holds the same position that his ancestor once did, and with the same ambition of constantly improving the product. This position, like many in the *Hennessy* company, has been handed down from one generation to the next, and the potential successor must spend up to ten years in the cognac cellars at the methodical tastings before he can wear the cloak of a master. The current master blender has set an ambitious objective indeed: “The blend must be perfect.”

Something to share

Lily Bollinger, the famous purveyor of champagne, once said: “I only drink champagne when I’m happy and when I’m sad. Sometimes I drink it when I’m alone. When I have company, I consider it obligatory. I trifle with it if I’m not in a hurry, and drink it when I am. Otherwise, I never touch the stuff, unless I am thirsty.” In a sense, the same can be said about cognac. Some are more suitable for sharing with company, some are used in foods by adventurous cooks, but some special cognacs must be enjoyed together with other connoisseurs.

The principles of cognac-tasting are similar to those of wine-tasting. The *eaux-de-vie*, or cognac, is first sniffed in order to embrace the first sensations. Then it is swirled, its colour is observed, and it is sniffed again. After that, it is sipped. When tasting an *eaux-de-vie*, the sip must not be too big so that the senses are not dulled; it consists of 70% alcohol. The taste is analysed only after the distillate has been spit out. A young *eaux-de-vie* is full of the scent of flowers and grass. It should feel “round”; it is not aggressive and does not burn. After aging, oaky and spicy nuances will have attached themselves to the scent. The distillate becomes increasingly mild and more balanced. Its bouquet of flavours continues to expand. Notes of vanilla, tropical fruits, almonds, chocolate and dried fruits appear.

One of the most beautiful places to enjoy cognac is the Château de Bagnolet, which has belonged to the *Hennessy* family since 1841, when Auguste Hennessy bought it for his wife Irène. The family moved to Bagnolet and lived there until Irène’s death.

Later, the heirs took over the care of the building and expanded it. A large winter garden was constructed in 1876 and in 1910, a 100-hectare park was established – full of fruit trees, oaks and cedars. Roses, which can be seen on all of *Hennessy*’s properties, were also planted. In truth, roses are planted at the ends of rows of grape vines because they have a practical, rather than romantic, purpose. If the roses begin to show signs of disease, then one must immediately get to work on saving the grape vines.

Auguste’s grandson, Francis Hennessy, sold the chateau to the company in 1963. It now serves as a guest house where the *Hennessy* firm can receive friends, good customers and, during special events, visiting celebrities. The rooms are decorated with family portraits, fine antiques and cognac bottles. It is a place for the enjoyment of food in a calm atmosphere, to take in the scents of summer, and, of course – to drink good cognac.

It would be nearly impossible to come up with a shorter description than this about the making of cognac. The next time you get yourself a snifter of cognac, remember all of the work and time that has been put into making it. **BO**

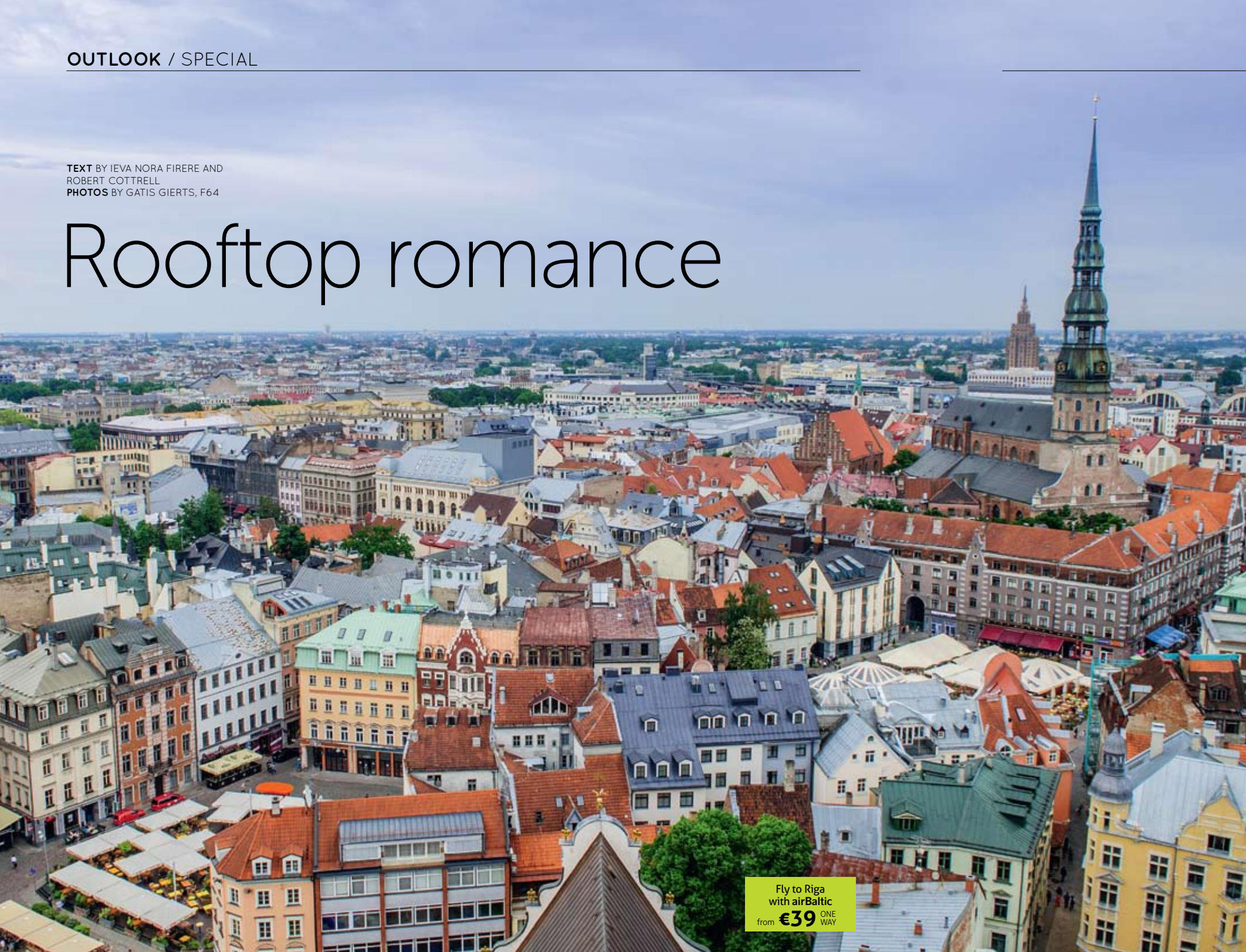


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TEXT BY IEVA NORA FIRERE AND
ROBERT COTTRELL
PHOTOS BY GATIS GIERTS, F64

Rooftop romance



Just like Barcelona, the amazing rooftops of Riga's Old Town deserve their own Pablo Picasso. One roof is made of sturdy tin, while another is of charming clay tile; some are ornate and pretentious, others shy and modest. These diverse rooftops have been silent witnesses to the passing of one era after another,

bearing a cache of different architectural styles, construction techniques, and of course, romance.

It is one thing to gaze at Riga's acclaimed skyline – most of it formed in the 16th century – from the left bank of the Daugava River, but it is much more magical to actually find yourself among the faded

spires of the Old Town's eight churches, remaining fortifications and even hoisting hooks – testaments to Riga's flourishing past as a city of trade that can still be seen in the pediments of some buildings.

The charm of the Old Town's uppermost level is not always easily spotted. A few attic windows can be seen high up in the

gabled roofs, but there aren't all that many terraces from which one can soak in the truly majestic view. We spent a week searching for our favourite high spots, captured their photogenic features and came up with this list for you to enjoy during the most sunlit months of the year.

A view of the views

Riga Dome Cathedral and St. Peter's Church

The Dome Cathedral is grand and majestic – its walls carry the weight of history and make us humans look small. It is the church of all churches in Latvia, and is the largest House of God in the Baltics. Over the span of eight centuries, the Dome has grown and changed, its current semblance having been acquired a century ago, and now it is the City of Riga's highest concern to preserve it so. The couple of million lats invested into renovating the Dome three years ago have brought its façade, roof and central nave to order. The thing most in need of repair, however, and practically invisible to the naked eye, is the spire that has shifted a whole four centimetres – this job is still on the agenda.

While the most suitable techniques for engineering the spire-repair are still to be settled upon, another sort of truly commendable activity has materialized in the Dome. The non-profit social organization *Mans Doms* (My Dome) has taken charge of bringing people closer to this majestic giant. Tours will become more

appealing, stepping out of the boundaries of the currently open zones – the back nave and garden – letting the public see not only the organ balcony and the heavily girdered central nave, but also the dark cathedral tower with its muffled urban soundscape.

Baltic Outlook, highly interested but slightly acrophobic, got a chance to try out the new route. This new tour is still in the final planning stages and the general public could probably hope for a preliminary starting date in the second half of the summer. The steep steps leading to the tower, which practically require the skills of a seasoned mountain-climber at present, will likely open to the public only in the year 2015. Nevertheless, the view from the 75 metre-high bell-tower is glorious – it's only rival being St. Peter's Church, whose 72-metre-high observation deck opened its doors to the public 40 years ago (the lift costs 3 LVL for adults and X LVL for kids, seniors and groups). It seems as if the staff at St. Peter's has also preserved the customer service level from the Soviet era, so be prepared for an indifferent demeanour.





Room with a view

Hotel Neiburgs

The *Hotel Neiburgs* is gorgeous. A cream-and-vanilla Art Nouveau façade on the outside, 55 spacious and bright rooms on the inside. A one-time upscale apartment house, it was built in 1903 by Ludvigs Neiburgs, a self-made entrepreneur from the countryside who came to Riga to (successfully) conquer the capital's construction industry. The high bourgeois-bohemian character of those early days of Riga's Art Nouveau boom still runs through its stones. The rooms are big and airy, with lots of Art Nouveau touches in the contemporary décor and views out over the Old Town.

Our advice: go for room 602. This isn't news to the regulars of *Neiburgs*, but this top-floor room, similar in size to the hotel's other studio apartments (i.e., rooms 305, 405 and 505), seems more spacious and is the only one with a bay window revealing a picture-postcard view of the Dome Cathedral, the Riga Bourse Art Museum and the neighbouring rooftops. To celebrate this truly presidential setting, ring down in the morning for a bottle of *Taittinger Brut* (50 LVL), scrambled eggs with salmon (3.80 LVL), and crepes with honey (3 LVL), and you'll have the makings of a hearty breakfast with which to face the day ahead.



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OUTLOOK / SPECIAL



Lunch with a view

The terrace of the Hotel Gutenbergs

The topmost roofs of the Old Town are covered in metal, as evidenced by the view from 5th-floor terrace of the *Hotel Gutenbergs*. Some are faded, some are covered in rust, others are so glaringly new that you have to shade your eyes. Lower your gaze a bit and you'll see the romantic clay-tiled roofs, and just out of reach – a wrought-iron weather vane sitting atop the hotel's little tower. Having just celebrated its 10th anniversary, the *Gutenbergs* terrace is a veteran viewing spot. Unsurprisingly, quite a few romantically inclined couples have tread there, selecting this spot for their first dates, marriage proposals and weddings.

Most of the city's oldest rooftop terraces are as narrow as the streets of the Old Town, but in this regard, *Gutenbergs* stands out as being quite roomy. Since it is able to take on 80 guests at a time, you can safely risk not making a reservation for lunch and still get a good table at which to enjoy a dish

from the refined, classic European menu, such as French Muscovy duck breast with blackberry sauce (11.50 LVL). The sturgeon steak served with pear-ginger chutney (12.50 LVL) has a local touch, as it originates from one of Latvia's oldest fish farms in Tome. Apart from the cheesecake with white cream glaze and lingonberry sauce (5.50 LVL), everything served is light and decidedly appropriate for summer dining.

Clearly, the view from the terrace of *Gutenbergs* calls for crémant or prosecco at the least, if not a sparkling bottle from the most bubbling region of France (prices for champagne range from 40 to 95 LVL). Cognac, calvados and armagnac might not seem the most obvious choice for a luncheon, but in case you get the itch, be assured that the selection here is the pride and joy of the establishment's owners.

On warm summer evenings, those who haven't reserved a table queue up in the lobby by the lift – a clear indication of how magnetic a *Gutenbergs* sunset can be.

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OUTLOOK / SPECIAL



Dinner with a view

The terrace of the Dome Hotel & Spa

A few minutes' walk from the Dome Cathedral on Miesnieku iela 4 sits an expensively renovated house, in front of which architectural students tend to gather and listen as their instructor gives them a lecture on this UNESCO World Heritage Site.

A charmingly narrow staircase (or the lift, if you're in a rush) leads to the 5th-floor rooftop terrace. Due to its small size, a lazy summer evening there feels almost like a private fine-dining experience, as conducted by Māris Astičs, the new head chef of the *Dome Hotel & Spa's* first-floor restaurant *Le Dome*. Booking in advance is recommended and not only for weekends, as 18 diners at a time is the terrace's absolute peak capacity.

Although Astičs' contribution to the menu is evident, the *Dome Hotel* can be praised for retaining a number of signature starters, such as locally-caught fish soup with root vegetables and tomatoes, or grilled herring

in herbed crust with bell pepper salad and herb dressing (9.20 LVL each). *Le Dome's* initial gastronomic focus was fish, and the fact that the new chef loves and masters the preparation of this food is still manifest in the menu. In any case, the grill-master in this elevated corner of paradise will also cater to sworn carnivores and picky vegetarians.

The view on the terrace of the *Dome Hotel* is not equally far-reaching in every direction. The slightly taller UN House of Riga lies to the north of the terrace, and the spire of the Dome Cathedral on the eastern edge seems close enough to reach out and touch. On the southern side, however, where the nearby buildings are shorter in stature, the view begins to open up, and to the west, the line of sight meanders through tiled roofs, almost stretching to the Daugava River. Nevertheless, this just could be the most intimate spot to celebrate the almost-white nights of Riga in the summer – along with a glass of bubbly and a dish of wild blueberry mousse with ice cream (4.20 LVL). **BO**

Much thanks to Juris Berže, our experienced guide to Riga, and Gatis Vectirāns of *Mans Doms*.



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TEXT BY ROGER NORUM
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Present perfect

The fjords of western Norway are easily among Europe's most captivating landscapes

There is a past participle in the Norwegian language, *bergtatt*, which doesn't exist in any other language. Literally, it means "taken by the mountain" and was popularised by playwright Henrik Ibsen, whose eponymous protagonist in *Peer Gynt* mulls over the likelihood of being kidnapped ("bergtatt") in the forest. Since Ibsen's time, the verb's literal meaning has been replaced by its metaphoric one, and today the word suggests something closer to "captivated". It's a term that expresses quite well what you feel after spending a few days exploring the fjords of Norway.

Norway's rugged and wild fjords are huge wedge-shaped clefts of land carved out of river valleys by glacial ice during the last Ice Age. Today, they rank among the world's most spectacular natural wonders. The fjords run the entire length of the country's 57,000-kilometre coastline – all the way up and around to the Russian border.

The most impressive fjords are found in the western region known, quite appropriately, as Fjordland. It was here that Viking king Harald Fairhair established Norway's first throne in 872 AD. Harald's defeat of local chieftains at the nearby battle of Hafrsfjord in 885 further cemented his control of the region, releasing him from a ten-year vow not to cut his hair.

Even in later centuries, the waters of Fjordland continued to attract their share of royalty: Kaiser Wilhelm II, a self-avowed *grosse Fanatiker* of fjord country, was sipping tea around these parts when World War I broke out. After the authorities politely asked him to leave, the Kaiser calmly sailed out of the fjord on his yacht.

I begin my exploration of coastal Norway in Bergen, the country's second largest city but a place that feels more like an oversized hamlet. Formerly a small fishing port, Bergen is set in a bay among seven different mountains and as many fjords. For centuries, Bergen's superb location made it Scandinavia's largest trading city, and it is today best known for the restored medieval fisherman's wharf, Bryggen. Here, Hanseatic-style buildings are coloured the same shades they were painted centuries ago, when ochre yellow and rusty red made from the residue of iron mining were long the cheapest tints available.

A few blocks away is *To Søstre*, my whitewashed, exposed oak floor guesthouse, and a place best known for its friendly owners (two sisters, hence the name), who make stellar breakfasts of homemade breads and jams, muesli and reindeer sausage.

My guide, Marie, and I sit for a meal of scallop and scampi medallions at *Einhjørningen*, Bryggen's top dining spot, a white-tablecloth restaurant whose absurdly high prices make me long for "expensive" meals back home. I remark to Marie that there seem to be more brunettes in Bergen than in other parts of Norway. Marie explains with a mischievous smile that the twenty-something

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OUTLOOK / TRAVEL

Hanseatic merchants in the 17th century were prohibited from fraternising with the native Norwegian population, but that accidents did happen. If a Hanseatic man got a Norwegian girl pregnant, his penance after admitting the incident to his superiors was taking time off work, then buying an entire cask of beer for his co-workers. As it stood, the prospect of a life in this winsome town surrounded by gorgeous Scandinavians didn't sound half bad to me. Cavort with a fair maiden and you get to take time off from your job, then buy a round for your mates? I was clearly born a few centuries too late.

Cavort with a fair maiden and you get to take time off, then buy a round? I was clearly born a few centuries too late

While this part of Norway is one of the centres for new Nordic cuisine, the area is known for other traditions as well, such as hiking in the great outdoors. As Yvonne, one of the *To Søstre* guesthouse siblings, explains, "The mountains are ever-present, even in the city centre, and you are never more than 15 minutes away from a mountain to climb. In a short hike you can go from the buzzing city to complete wilderness."

The hills around Bergen were home to Edvard Grieg, the country's most famous composer. Grieg made ample use of his country's folk musical traditions, borrowing motifs and ideas from fiddlers in order to give Norway a sound of its own. The composer built his modest Victorian summer villa, Troldhaugen, on a lake just outside Bergen, and today the building is adorned with his furniture, paintings and beloved Steinway grand piano, which is sometimes brought out for concerts. Grieg and his wife, Nina, are buried in a cliffside grotto on the estate.



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OUTLOOK / TRAVEL



The English aristocracy stayed here when
they first came to Norway centuries ago in
search of hunting and fishing grounds

On my way back from Troidhaugen,
the skies begin to open up. One
inhabitant of Bergen I met attempted
to put the city's weather plight in
diplomatic terms. "Bergen is the place
where it stops raining the least," he told
me. Indeed, Bergen is one of the wettest
cities in Europe. You know things are
bad when every shop you walk into sells
umbrellas at the counter throughout
the year. But Yvonne puts a positive
spin on the weather once I return to
the guesthouse, soaked through and
through. "Although the rain can be a
bit much at times, the wonderful thing
about Bergen is that *everybody* comes
out when the sun does appear," she
consoles me in her kitchen. "And if we are
lucky enough to get two beautiful days
in a row, everybody will have forgotten
that it ever rained. We are a very
optimistic breed!"

Waterworld

When it comes to picturesque landscapes,
though, there are few better waters in
the world. Bergen is the ideal point of
departure for an exploration of Fjordland's
inner stretches, which comprise a diverse
landscape of glaciers, valleys, mountains
and some of the greenest, most unpolluted
grasses on the planet. My transport vessel
for the day, a blue and white catamaran,
peels out of Bergen's harbour at 8 AM
sharp. We are bound for the mighty
Sognefjorden, Norway's deepest, longest
and most visited fjord.

The Norwegian coast is so rugged that it
was once easier to travel between villages
by boat than overland. The coast is lined
with outcrops of rock bedecked with small
mustard and vermillion cabins – spots
where the English aristocracy stayed when
they first came to Norway several centuries
ago in search of hunting and fishing

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OUTLOOK / TRAVEL



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A gust of wind above us and loud creaking
and groaning below, as blocks of ice collapse
into the green water with a deep thump

grounds. Today, these structures are still
known in Norwegian as *lordahytter* ("lords'
cabins"). Wealthy European travellers in the
mid-1800s toured the fjords by the shipload
to take in the lush summery landscapes
that they'd seen on the canvases of
Scandinavian Romantic painters.

Our hovercraft makes its way inland into
the UNESCO-ranked Nærøfjord, where
traditional farms hug mountainsides of
pine, alder and birch forests. Nærøy is one
of the world's narrowest fjords – spanning
a mere 250 metres in some parts – and has
been rated by *National Geographic* as the
world's number one natural destination.
High above, smooth-ridged peaks boast
glacial lakes. At the water's edge you
can spot billy goats ambling about and
catching some rays. Nearby Aurlandfjord
is best known for its panoramic Stegastein
lookout, a 640m-high amalgam of
gangplank, diving board and skater
ramp that calls to mind a bridge to a far-
off horizon.

The site is located close to two other
world-class experiences: the whopping
Lærdal Tunnel, at 24.5 km the world's
longest road tunnel, and the Flåm-Myrdal
rail journey, one of the world's most
dramatic and scenic train rides. This 50-
minute uphill journey from Flåm to the

mountaintop village of Myrdal ascends half
a mile from the fjordside at a 1/18 gradient
through two dozen twisting tunnels
that whorl in and out of the mountain.
Adventures around here include hiking,
kayaking, white-water rafting, mountain
biking and tandem skydiving.

However, I carry on in my exploration
of the fjord fingers to other settlements.
The seaside hamlet of Balestrand, backed
by towering mountains and edging up
against the Sognefjord, was originally an
overnight shelter for maritime merchants.
Today it features pretty 19th-century Swiss-
style buildings sprinkled about the hillside,
including the rustic, arts-and-crafts-style
Kviknes Hotel. Here, in the largest wooden
building in Scandinavia, is an enviable
collection of antique furnishings, coffered
timber ceilings and Viking-esque baronial
carvings that offer a real sense of history.

From there, the boat takes us north
to Fjærdal, a one-horse town whose
tiny wooden dock is surrounded by a
dozen odd bookshops filled with some
200,000 second-hand books. The settlement
was inspired by the success of the one-time
coal-mining Welsh settlement of Hay-on-
Wye, which became a booming literary
cosmopolis after a wealthy man bought a
local castle and filled it with books. Fjærdal

ORIGO

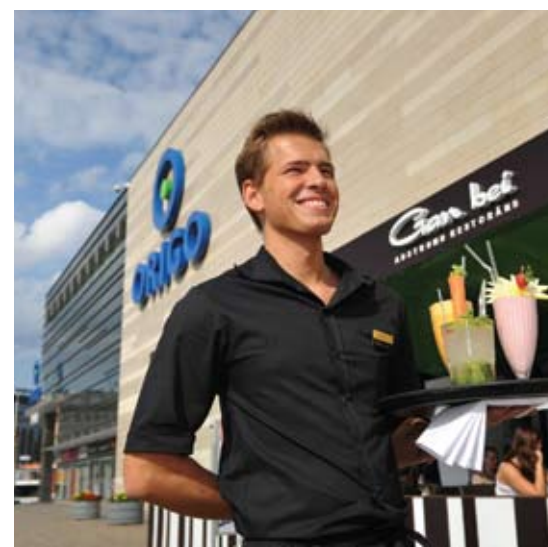
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Origo Summer Stage

Origo Summer Stage is a cultural spot
situated in the centre of Riga, and reflects all
of the cultural events and festivals taking place
in Latvia. It grants a unique opportunity to
observe Latvian music festivals like Rīgas Ritmi,
Saulkrasti Jazz and New Wave. It also gives an
opportunity to see high-class musicians and
their performances for free.

Open-air terraces

Visitors are welcome to chill-out and enjoy
summer evenings by tasting the delicious
cuisine of open-air restaurants with their
comfortable and vast terraces, or by just having
some drinks while listening to various jazz,
blues and rock'n'roll performances.

Large-scale gallery

Origo has also provided for your enjoyment
a 450 square-metre open-air photo gallery, filled



with large-scale photos of Latvian events and
everyday life that are sure to delight everyone.

Design object Sundial – Origo Universi

A new feature is the meeting place called
The Sundial – Origo Universi, which lies in front
of the Origo shopping centre. It is a 9 metre-
large interactive and educational design object
that invites one to determine what time it is,
as well as encourages exploration of Latvia's
medieval castles and major sights found in
other European cities.





makes a great stopover on the way to the Jostedalbreen Glacier, continental Europe's largest ice sheet. Along the waters ahead of me, I am entranced by the stark contrast between the blue-black fjord water and the jagged landscape of blinding white snow up above.

Ice (ice) baby

Some 8,000 years ago, Norway was completely covered in ice, submerged under a massive glacier several miles thick that spanned much of Siberia, America and Northern Europe. Today, the Jostedalbreen Glacier still stretches its white cape across some 770 square kilometres of peaks and troughs of the Jotunheimen Mountains, up to the Arctic Circle and out to the tips of Sognefjord's coastal fingers. These shards of ice tower more than a kilometre above gorgeous river valleys, while glacial arms drop off down steep verticals

into the Jostedal Valley below, forested with alder, birch and pine trees that invade as the glacier retreats. Glaciers are great indicators of climate change because they are so easily affected by shifts in temperature. Even a half a degree of difference will noticeably indicate whether a glacier advances or recedes (the Jostedalbreen Glacier was advancing until 1960).

To saddle up close with Mother Nature, I spend the afternoon glacier-walking along the Briksdal, the most accessible arm of Jostedalbreen. Glacier-walking demands alertness, knowledge and equipment – an organised chaos of straps, clamps, belays, crampons, belt harnesses, Gore-Tex outerwear and a helmet. As the Norwegians are fond of saying, “There’s no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing.” A group of us is led along the steep ascent across the ice, crunching along hardened flakes of snow and over slender, glazed caves, gingerly climbing higher.

Most of our planet has effectively moved on from the Ice Age, but up here you’d never know it. As we reach something of a summit, the silence on Jostedalbreen is occasionally punctuated by a gust of wind above us and loud creaking and groaning below, as frozen surface stones glide over the bedrock and blocks of ice collapse below into the green water with a deep thump. The light plays off the deep crevasses and gorges, as jade-coloured glacial water trickles down off the glacier’s arms, nourishing lakes below. I am struck by how breathtaking Europe must have looked when she was made of ice. *Bergtatt*, indeed. **BO**

FACTBOX

In Bergen’s centre, there is plenty of Nordic peace and quiet at the refined, central guesthouse To Søstre (www.tosostre.no). For more information on Norway, see www.visitnorway.com.



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A gentleman with a white convertible

TEXT BY GIRTS AVOTINS
PHOTOS COURTESY OF ARIS CEDERS, PANDA DESIGN

It's called an *Alfa Romeo Giulietta Spider*. When someone buys a new car like that, rarely does he think that he will spend the rest of his life together with his technical wonder, created by expert designers and engineers. Every automobile, just like every person, has its own life story, which is why it would be difficult to find another story like that of this particular gentleman with the white convertible

I have arrived in a small Latvian village by the sea and find myself in the living room of a fine-looking but reserved single-family home. Across from me sits a man whose face carries the lines brought on by the school of life, but his eyes twinkle with energetic joy. If I had met him at an international antique auto show, I'd likely have taken him for one of those Italian senior citizens who spend their afternoons at the local café, sipping tasty coffee and then chasing down it with a shot of local spirits. However, I am quite aware that this gentleman, who happily agreed to this interview as if it were just another quirk of fate, is a Latvian by the name of Māris Kasparovičs. Although this was my first meeting with Māris, I had already heard various legends and stories about him and his white *Giulietta* – *una bella macchina* (Italian for “beautiful car”).

Māris was born in Riga and spent his early childhood there, but with Soviet army forces approaching, his family decided to flee Riga – and ultimately, Latvia. On May 8, 1945, they boarded the last boat from the coastal city of Ventspils to Germany. War planes and submarines attempted to sink the craft full of refugees, but fate smiled upon the family and they arrived safely in Lübeck. Māris spent five years in Germany and then at age 15, he and his family emigrated to the USA, where Māris finished university and embarked on a promising career. And then, in the closing months of 2003, Māris packed all of his belongings into a shipping container and moved back to his homeland.

“When I was still young, my parents bought a 1955 Chevrolet for 2,500 USD. It was the newest car amongst any of those in my circle of friends, so we usually ended up using it for our group outings. That meant that all of the other guys could drink beer, but I had to stay sober. I thus came up with a revenge plan: I'd buy a two-seater, pick up my girlfriend and tell the guys: “See ya!””, Māris recounts the beginning of his driving days.

Taking into consideration the wide variety of choices, picking a suitable car wasn't all that easy. He even test drove a *Porsche 356 Roadster*, which he criticizes quite harshly:

“It sounded like a worn-out washing machine and when you raised the roof, you couldn't see anything!”

During our conversation, Māris removes a 1957 issue of *Road & Track* magazine from a neat stack of papers and continues:

“But then I got this magazine, and in it I read all about the *Alfa Romeo Giulietta Spider*. I decided to go see it. After the test drive, I knew that I liked this car,

and in April of 1958, I bought one for 3,100 USD.”

The *Alfa Romeo's* new owner could scarcely imagine that he'd spend the greater part of his life with this car, since at the time, it was usual for Americans to trade-up to new cars every three or four years. However, Māris was completely satisfied with his *Giulietta* and nothing could convince him to replace it with a new car.

“Whenever a newer *Alfa Romeo* model came out, I took a look at it but decided that even though it was similar to mine, it didn't look as good. My car ran well and didn't have any problems, so why buy something else?”, Māris explains.

His neighbours thought that American-made things were the best, of course, and they couldn't understand Māris' affection for the Italian *Alfa Romeo*. His friends, however, didn't even bat an eyelash. They had their own sports cars, some of them foreign-made, from makers such as *Austin Healey*, *MG*, *Triumph*, *Porsche* and *Jaguar*. They all participated in various races that tested their driving and navigation skills.

Māris practically had the girls standing in line to go for a ride in his beautiful white *Alfa Romeo*.

“There were a lot of nice girls, but some of them didn't like the fact that my car didn't have a radio. Two

Although Māris carries in his wallet a picture of his car, rather than that of a lady love, he says that the car doesn't even take up that big a part of his life

of the girls decided that they could sing while I drove and I ended up marrying one of them,” recounts Māris of his younger days.

Māris Kasparovičs looks upon driving as one of life's pleasures and sees no need for having an audio system in a car.

“The wind is whistling, the motor is roaring. What's the point of a radio? It just interferes with the enjoyment of the moment. I rarely even turn on the radio in my other car,” Māris admits.

As we continue our conversation, the grey-haired gentleman recalls that before he bought the

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CARS



In honor of the Giulietta model's 50th anniversary, the Alfa Romeo factory invited Māris to take part in the Mille Miglia rally

Alfa Romeo, he had thought about getting a motorcycle:

"I liked the *Ducati 175*. But then I thought about what would happen when it rained. If you're driving a convertible, there's always a roof that you can pull over your head, and for your passenger, driving in a car is much more comfortable than riding a motorcycle."

The owner of this car has two stories about the visible dent under his car's right headlight. One story sounds like a fisherman's tall tale, while the other one is closer to the truth. People always notice the defect in the car's body and ask him about it. So Māris tells them his favourite story of the two:

"I was driving the car in Italy's *Mille Miglia* rally. While heading in the direction of Rome, a *Ferrari* tried to pass me. He skidded as he was going into a curve and hit my car with his bumper."

People usually listen to this story with bated breath and then ask him, three times over, if he was really alright after the terrifying incident. Unfortunately, the real story isn't all that glamorous and the main character is not Māris, but his ex-wife. One day, to avoid bothering Māris, she decided

to run some errands herself with the *Alfa Romeo* that stood in the garage. As is wont to happen, she had a small run-in with another car. Māris remembers the incident without any hint of annoyance:

"We split up a bit later, but not because of the dent. That's a just a minor thing. I don't want to fix it because everything on the car, except for the retractable roof, is original. Even the dent has its own history."

Although Māris carries a picture of his car in his wallet, rather than that of a lady love, he says that the car doesn't even take up that big a part of his life.

"I am very fond of this car, though. In April we celebrated 55 years together. It's just too bad that I can't drive it around Latvia. The technical requirements for antique cars are the same here as those for new cars, which isn't right," reveals Māris on his relationship with the car, which he can maintain himself and on which he can even do some light repair work.

"I like to fix things and get my hands dirty, mainly because of the satisfaction of a job well done. There aren't that many service shops where I could take my car and where someone would know what to

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CARS

their cars, like the *Ferrari*. I've driven them, and now I'm thinking about getting one."

Māris gets up, takes a magazine from a bookshelf, and shows me an ad for a used *Ferrari 355 F1 Spider*. Chuckling, he continues:

"No, one sports car is enough for me, although I did look at a *Ferrari* before I bought my *Giulietta*. The *Ferrari*'s owner was divorcing his wife and wanted to sell his car for a low price so that his wife wouldn't get anything much. But replacement parts for *Ferraris* are much too expensive."

With its *Pininfarina* design and 1.3-litre, 80-hp motor, this 1958 *Alfa Romeo Giulietta Spider* convertible increases in value with every passing year. Right now, it's worth at least several tens of thousands of euros. The owner doesn't deny having received generous offers to buy the car, and more than once:

"Recently, a man from England asked me about it. Once, on a flight to Milan, I somehow started talking to my Italian seat-mates about *Alfa Romeos* and showed them the picture in my wallet. They took down my address and later wrote to me, saying that one of their friends wanted to buy my car. I'm not too sure if I want to sell it, though. After all, we've been together for 55 years already. My wife left me, the kids grew up, but the car has stayed. When I take it out, wash it off and take a drive along my service road, I remember the way that things used to be." **BO**

do. Sometimes, however, things pop up that I just can't fix by myself," he adds.

Māris likes to keep in touch with various automobile clubs based all over the world, sometimes even writing for specialized magazines and sharing his experiences with owners of similar cars. In honour of the *Giulietta* model's 50th anniversary, the *Alfa Romeo* factory invited Māris to take part in the *Mille Miglia* rally, but at the time, Māris and his car were still in the USA and an ocean away from the rally.

Māris admits that he has an affinity for Italy and Italian automobiles:

"I'd like to live in Italy by the lakes. I've been there. Italians are a happy-go-lucky people, and I also like



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Driven: the new LEXUS IS

Diesel models dominate the executive car class, but the stylish new *Lexus IS* is designed to change that, as it isn't available with any diesel engines

Instead, buyers can choose between a 2.5-litre petrol V6 (badged *IS250*) and an *IS300h* hybrid, which combines a four-cylinder 2.5 with an electric motor. Notably, the hybrid emits just 99g/km of CO₂ – less than any *Audi A4*, *BMW 3 Series* or *Mercedes C-Class*.

What's it like to drive?

All versions of the new *IS* get conventional springs and dampers as standard, but *F Sport* models have slightly sportier settings and can be specified with an optional adaptive damping system.

This adaptive set-up lets you switch between Normal and Sport+ modes, but the differences are subtle. In both modes, the *IS* grips well in corners, resists body roll and offers a pretty comfortable ride. On the Austrian roads where we tested the car, only poorly-surfaced stretches of motorway made things pattery.

In addition to the *F Sport* model, we tried cars with the softer, standard setup, but these aren't that different. The steering is the only thing that's significantly worse, feeling numb around the straight-ahead, although in both cars the wheel weights up to

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provide some reassurance in corners, without ever offering the precision that you get in a 3 Series.

The IS's engines lack the strong mid-range torque of turbocharged four-cylinder petrol units and modern diesels. This makes them feel weedy unless you floor the accelerator, and while the V6 does at least sound good when you do this, the hybrid responds with an annoying drone.

It can also be hard to brake smoothly in both cars due to a shortage of feel through the pedal. In addition, the IS generates some road noise over coarse surfaces. However, wind noise is always well-contained, and the hybrid can run near-silently on electric-only power at town speeds.

What's it like inside?

Rear space was pretty limited in the old IS, but this new model has a longer wheelbase and slimmer front seatbacks. You now get as much rear legroom as in a 3 Series – and more than in an Audi A4 or Mercedes C-Class.

Like its German rivals, the IS has a high transmission tunnel that makes life uncomfortable for a central rear passenger. However, there's lots of space and adjustment upfront, so drivers of most sizes should be comfortable.

The mouse-like Remote Touch interface in the high-spec cars we drove



Unlike its German rivals, *Lexus* has abandoned diesel engines altogether

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was more of a problem, because this controls all infotainment functions and is both fiddly and distracting to use on the move. Cheaper *IS* models get a simpler version of the system, but we weren't able to try this.

Perceived quality also leaves a little to be desired. While everything seems to be solidly built, some of the plastics in the cabin don't feel especially premium.

Meanwhile, the *IS*'s boot remains one of the smallest in the class, even though it's much bigger than its predecessor's and the rear seat backs now split and fold 60/40 to boost practicality.

Should I buy one?

The *IS250* model is best avoided because its engine is as inefficient as it is weak. Even in its most frugal form, it consumes more fuel than the 2.0-litre unit in the *BMW 320i* automatic.

It's much easier to make a case for the *IS300h*, which is a worthy competitor to a *BMW 320d Efficient Dynamics*.

If you're looking for the best all-rounder, then the *3 Series* remains the car to choose. It has a stronger engine, superior driving manners and a classier, more practical cabin. However, the *IS*'s tiny running costs mean it is really worth considering as an alternative to the *A4* and *C-Class*. **BO**



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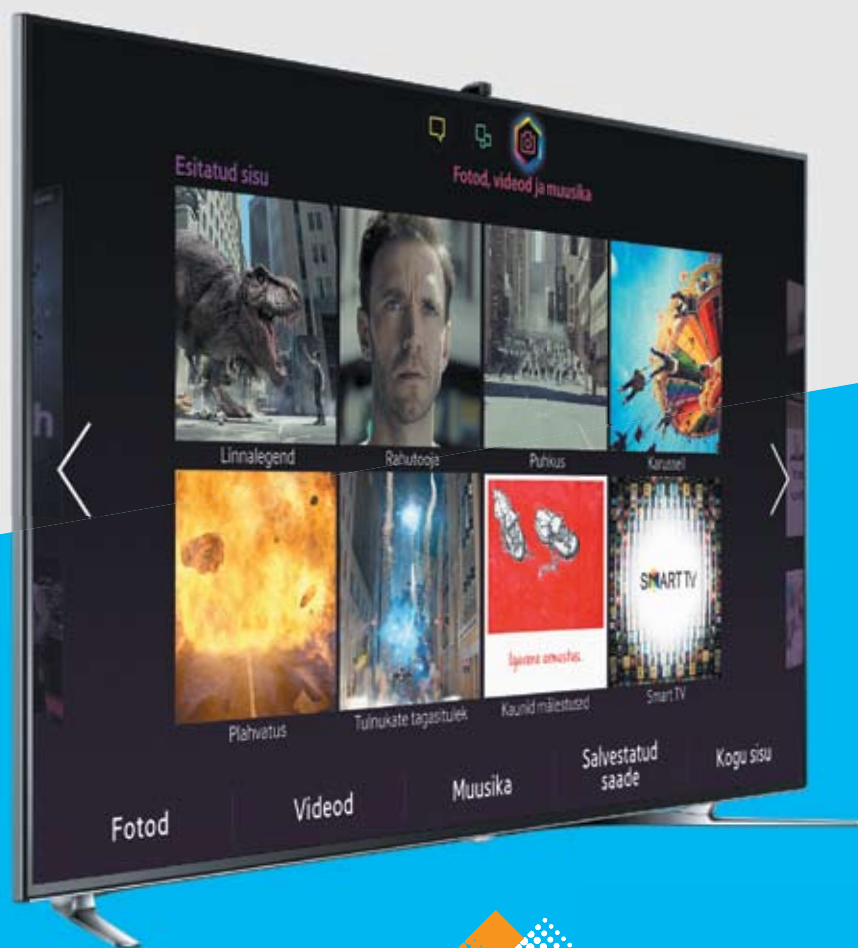
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113 EUR | www.oralb.com



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Even if it's not the first reason that most people give, a beautiful smile is what every dental patient wants most of all. *Dr. A. Butkēviča's Dental Practice* in Riga sees around 75 first-time patients every month, many from the USA, Canada, Israel and Western Europe. They are not in the search of cheap prices, but of proven expertise in solving bone and tooth-loss problems, as well as superb aesthetic results – which is exactly what this full dental treatment clinic has to offer

The clinic is a veritable international dental hub. In the waiting room – with Dr. Alēna Butkēviča's diploma for Doctor of Science in Dentistry from Boston University displayed on the wall – one hears Latvian, Russian and English. A UPS courier arrives with a dental prosthesis manufactured in Boston. Every so often, an appointment is made to see Dr. Laurent Guyllop from France or Dr. Kareem Akly from Greece.

"In this sense, I am like a dog in search of truffles and am glad to have found some of the best specialists in Europe to work with. In addition to providing full dental services, we specialize in restoring bone mass to missing teeth, always placing great importance on function and aesthetics. Complicated four- and five-hour-long surgeries are a daily occurrence, which is why our specialists and materials have to be the best," says Dr. Butkēviča.

The method of bone tissue regrowth used by *Dr. A. Butkēviča's Dental Practice* has been officially approved for the past four years. "You can, of course, do 'pure' science that is completely removed from everyday reality, but I'm interested in doing things that can make a real difference in life. Our method of operations stimulates natural bone growth. In many cases it is sufficient to stabilize compromised teeth that would otherwise have to be extracted. Nowadays, people are more and more aware of the value of natural teeth and want to keep them if at all possible," says the doctor.

For the last 15 years, dentists have been studying and developing the branch method of healing, which is necessary if dental implants are to integrate into the body and be viable for the long term.

Many patients coming to the clinic have experienced complete dental bone loss, severe jaw atrophy or periodontitis and loose teeth. "The once-popular solution of pulling teeth and replacing them with implants has proven to be lacking in durability. In today's method of restoring missing teeth so that they can serve for decades, the patient's own bone serves as the base. Frequently, this base is missing, which is why we grow new bone tissue in its place," explains the founder of the clinic. Among other advantages of her missing-bone-and-teeth restoration methods, Dr. Butkēviča mentions lower levels of pain because the new implant is accepted by the

body, as well as a shorter healing time.

Dr. Butkēviča's research in bone tissue is rooted in her scientific work on implant biomechanics, and the USA was an ideal place to expand upon it. "The School of Dental Medicine at Boston University is one of the most strongly developed in the USA, which is itself one of the most important players in the field of scientific dentistry," she explains. Her latest methodological presentation in the USA took place in Tampa, Florida, during an annual meeting of the Academy of Osseointegration, of

Dr. Alēna Butkēviča

Education: Riga Medical College, Boston University
DScD in Prosthodontics and Implantology
Has done more than 15,000 surgical procedures
Dr. A. Butkēviča's Dental Practice was founded in 1992. The team currently consists of six doctors and three hygienists



which *Dr. A. Butkēviča's Dental Practice* is an honorary member and the only one hailing from the Baltic States. Similar steps in dental science are being taken in Switzerland and especially Israel.

The greatest daily challenge is finding the perfect balance between running a dental practice and doing hard science. "In a way, it almost feels like a handicap. As a practicing dentist, I sometimes have to leave the healing arts to the wayside while I do the paper chase: defending and substantiating scientific ideas, working with an attorney on securing patents and so on," Dr. Butkēviča reveals. Roughly calculating, she spends about every fourth week devoted entirely to science – reading the latest research and documenting her own research, as well as communicating with other scientists

and the teaching staff who instructed her in Boston.

The doctor's biggest scientific revelations usually come to her as she walks the one-and-a-half-kilometre pathway from her horse stables to her house. Horses are what clear her head after work, which sometimes stretches into twelve-hour-long workdays. Two of her favourite horses are currently being ridden by Benjamin Robert – France's 10th best jockey – and are vying for top placings in international competitions. Sitting among the spectators aids the doctor in decompressing from her daily routine and gives her fresh inspiration for further work. "Watching a horse push itself to go faster and the jockey fighting for position really gives me a shot of energy," she says with evident enthusiasm. **BO**



Your summer holiday in sunny Bulgaria

Bulgaria has long been a dependable holiday spot on the map of Europe – a place for peaceful and pleasant relaxation on the shores of the Black Sea

Bulgarian summers are long and consistently warm (with average temps of 25-28° C), and are in full swing by July. Conveniently enough, the month of July is much drier than June, with clear blue skies practically guaranteed. The waters of the Black Sea are also warm enough for the wind direction to have no impact on their temperature. Of the many seaside resort towns, a handful have gained global recognition due to the advantages that Mother Nature has bestowed upon them.

Foremost of these is the glamorous and gilded Golden Sands resort, considered to be among the best on the entire Black Sea coast. It is the second largest resort complex in the country, a convenient 15 km from

Varna, Bulgaria's "capital on the sea". Covering nearly 180,000 square metres of parkland, the resort is blessed with a wonderful climate and gentle sea breezes that combine to make it one of the most delightful spots in all of Bulgaria.

Another of the big-name resort complexes is Sunny Beach. Besides its beautiful namesake beaches, it boasts a lively and exciting atmosphere with entertaining choices for every taste.

Smaller resort complexes also offer no less interesting options for rest and recreation. Nessebar – with its Thracian, Greek and Roman legacies – is one of the oldest cities in Europe, and this history is something

that sets its Obzor resort apart. The resorts in Pomorie, Saint Constantine and Helena, for their part, offer various mineral water therapies.

Bulgaria's resorts are also famous for their balneology centres. Many resort spas (such as the one at Albena) offer a variety of balneotherapies. Two balneology centres can be found in the colourful Sunny Day resort complex, where the beach is almost a kilometre long and up to 80 m wide in places.

Completely new resort complexes, such as Elenite, have also appeared along the Black Sea coast. Located at the foot of a mountain and ensconced by a centuries-old pine forest, the guests at Elenite enjoy a soothing cocktail of fresh sea breezes and oxygen-rich forest air. In addition, most of the resorts in the complex offer advantageous "all-inclusive" packages. Another newcomer to the resort scene is St. Vlas. Suited for holidays with children, it is peaceful, laid-back and family-friendly.

Beaches, of course, are at the foundation of Bulgaria's seaside resort complexes. However, many of the resorts also provide spaces and services for business meetings, conferences and even congresses.

In terms of accommodation, the resort complexes offer a wide choice of 2-, 3-, 4- and 5-star hotels, with numerous types of rooms for different needs. Hotels can be basic and simple or with international brand names. In general, the level of service and quality is guaranteed by the establishment's name. There is certainly no shortage of locally-owned quality hotels as well, complete with large and beautiful grounds.

If you choose to take a holiday in Bulgaria, then decide beforehand what sort of rest and recreation you want,

and what your priorities are. Once you're clear on that, your tourism agency won't have any problem booking you a room at a resort that is suited for you.

Those who enjoy physical activity can choose from a variety of water sports and hikes along mountainsides and nature parks, while tours of captivating historical sites are available to please the eye and soul. Bulgaria is an ancient bastion of Christianity, with many churches and old monasteries containing notable Christian reliquaries. The cave monasteries, literally hollowed-out in the mountainsides, are fascinating places to visit. The aforementioned municipality of Nessebar has 42 churches – the highest number of churches per capita, in the world.

Bulgarians, like many Southern Europeans, are warm and welcoming hosts. You'll be sure to experience this in the local restaurants and cafés, which offer the best of both international cuisine and local fare; and don't forget to try the locally-made wines and brandies.

Although many EU citizens have purchased advantageously-priced real estate holdings in Bulgaria (with holidays in mind), most people head to the resort complexes during the summer and end-of-summer seasons. Prices for travelling to these complexes are very reasonable and compared with other European beaches, they are very easy to get to. A flight with *airBaltic* lasts only two-and-a-half hours, and after a bit of a drive, you're already there.

In addition, representatives from the international tourism firm *Tez Tour* provide their clients with support throughout the entire holiday, so that you can totally give yourself over to enjoying carefree relaxation in sunny and summery Bulgaria. **BO**



airBaltic flights from Riga to Burgas, Bulgaria leave every Friday at 8:30 AM.

Tez Tour offers can be found at Latvia's best tourism agencies. **BO**



Prepare for your summer in Latvia at the *Spice* shopping centre



Iveta Lāce,
Managing Director of the *Spice*
shopping complex

This summer, Latvia will be hosting a whole series of events, including the Nationwide Song and Dance Festival, the New Wave (*Jaunais Vilnis*) musical talent contest in Jūrmala. Each of these events provides a fascinating glimpse into Latvia and its culture. Among the best places to obtain everything that you need for enjoying these and other summer activities is *Spice*. With over 200 stores and shops, *Spice* is one of the largest and best-equipped shopping complexes in the country

Hospitable welcome

"*Spice* is conveniently located – only five minutes by car from the Riga airport, or 10 minutes from both Jūrmala and the Riga city centre. Since it is the first stop-off point for many visitors arriving from the airport, *Spice* inevitably generates an impression of Latvia, especially to newcomers visiting the country for the first time. We realize the

importance of creating a good impression, which is why we make sure that our visitors feel good here," says Iveta Lāce, the director of the shopping complex. Hospitality starts by ensuring easy transport access. Visitors will have no trouble leaving their hired car at one of *Spice's* 2000 parking spaces, or coasting straight to one of the shopping complex's prominent entrances

in a taxi. Budget travellers can take Riga city bus No. 22 from the airport and get off right at the *Spice* bus stop. The shopping complex actually consists of two shopping centres: *Spice* and *Spice Home*, both right next to each other. *Spice* hosts 13 cafés and restaurants to sate visitors' thirst and hunger after a long flight, along with the *RIMI* Hypermarket food store. The *Lido* cafeteria, for example, offers traditional Latvian cuisine, including meat dishes, salads and desserts. Those in a hurry always have the option of getting a quick bite to eat at the ubiquitous *McDonald's*, while sushi fans and other gourmands can enjoy a slow meal at *Kabuki* or the *Gan Bei* Oriental restaurant.

Renowned brands

After a hearty meal, take your kids to Latvia's largest children's playground at the *Lido bērnu pilsētiņa*. They will love the 5D cinema, train, cars and other amusements, which occupy more than 2000 m² and which will keep them busy for quite awhile. That will give you the time to shop at your leisure, change money in a bank and spoil yourself with a new haircut or spa procedure. If you have to be somewhere later at a certain time, then bear in mind that the *Spice* shopping complex is only about 5 km from Riga's city centre and that a trip to the Old Town will take a mere 10 minutes. The stores and shops in the 77,000 m² roofed space at *Spice* offer clothing and accessories by such well-known brands as *Massimo Dutti*, *Tommy Hilfiger*, *United Colors of Benetton*, *PENNYBLACK*, *ALDO*, *Next*, *Zara*, *iBlues*, *MAX&Co*, *Marella*, *Ivo Nikkolo*, *Sandro-Ferrone*, *Oasis*, *Timberland*, *Nike* and *Ecco*. Among the latest additions to join the *Spice* family this spring are *Desigual*, *Marc Cain*, *Taste Latvia* and *women'secret*.

If you are curious about quality Latvian brands, then pay a visit to the new *Taste Latvia* fashion design concept store, which offers locally designed clothing and interesting souvenirs. Other internationally acclaimed products include natural cosmetics by *Madara* and *Dzintars*, fragrant soaps and bath products by *Stendera Ziepju fabrika* and chocolates by *Emils Gustavs*.

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The world for home

If you plan on spending a longer period of time in Latvia and have brought your pet along, or wish to purchase a photo camera then the 30,000 m² *Spice Home* shopping centre is definitely the place to visit. The shopping centre's wide range of furniture, interior and hobby stores will provide you with everything that you require to set up your home in both modern and traditional styles. With well-known brand stores as *Alan Deko* and *The Pier*, you should have no problem finding the right design objects for your interior. A number of stores also offer high-quality furniture that has been manufactured in

Latvia. These include *Čiekurs*, *Nakts Mēbeles*, *Eliza*, *Taps*, *Ripo* and *Wenden*. The *Salmo* store will provide anglers with fishing rods and other equipment, while *Dino Zoo* is a pet owner's paradise. You can even bring your furry friend along with you if you wish. Regarding festive events, *Spirits&Wine*, as the largest beverage store in Latvia more than 1000 m², offers drinks to suit all tastes and budgets.

Family holidays

On the way back from one of Latvia's many summer music festivals, you might even consider spending a magical night under the starry skies. At the *Jysk* and *Cenuklubs* stores, you'll find tents, sleeping bags, blankets, reclining chairs and even hammocks, along with other camping equipment. Stock up with food and drinks for your barbecue over an open fire at the *Rimi Hypermarket*.

To capture your trip on digital memory, step into the *Elkor Tehnika* store, where you will find not only photo and video equipment, but also a wide range of other electronic goods. Your kids will be thrilled to visit *Elkor Home*, which offers a diverse array of toys for children of all ages.

"We created *Spice* as a place full of surprises for the whole family, so that parents, their children and their pets feel at ease here. You can be sure that you'll find whatever you need, and that you won't have to leave empty-handed," says Iveta Lāce with evident pride. **BO**

Popular singer
Laima Vaikule:
„There is
always
something
beautiful,
exciting
and special
in *Spice*”





The feel of a weekend morning

The second stage of apartments at Riga's Gypsum Factory (*Ģipša fabrika*) has hit the bull's-eye, offering unique views of the city centre, along with upscale architecture and interior design – all just a few minutes' drive from the Old Town. Living in this environment is like eating in a fabulous restaurant, tasting fine wine or sipping real Italian espresso



Every apartment is created *prêt-à-porter*, which means ready for immediate habitation – fully finished with built-in furniture and accessories from the world's best brands.

"We made apartments that we'd be happy to live in ourselves. All of the materials – including wood, stone and brick – are authentic. Every detail of the interiors has been thought out," says Zaiga Gaile, the project's author and one of Latvia's most acclaimed architects.

The Gypsum Factory's has 58 apartments of varying sizes (from 44 to 250 m²) and floor plans, including airy lofts (some with two floors), studio-type apartments, penthouses and four fascinating villas right at the edge of the Daugava River, each with an area of 290 m². Directly beneath the apartment windows is a private marina for yachts and motorboats.

Added value every step of the way

The riverside building complex has been built entirely from scratch, right next to the Gypsum Factory's first stage of apartments, which arose as part of the complete reconstruction of an industrial factory site. The views from the English-type edifice of the project's first stage are also unforgettable. The glowing lights of the Old Town and their reflection in the river incontestably place the Factory in the list of the world's most romantic and appealing apartment complexes. Not surprisingly, the first-stage apartments were sold out within five months. Their residents, who hail from various countries, have created a friendly community, holding barbecues together and enjoying the cultural programs held in the Factory's courtyard.

In the second stage of construction at the Factory, the buildings' geographical location has been highlighted even more, with notably broad windows (and even whole walls made of glass in some places), as well as a maximum volume of terrace and balcony space. In fact, you won't find a more impressive view of the Old Town's panorama than the one that can be seen from the top apartments of the new complex's red brick building and riverside villas.

Manifestation of brick

The second stage of the Gypsum Factory complex is composed of four different buildings that surround a verdant centre courtyard and playground. Four adjoining villas of black brick (the Riverside Villas) form the river's side of the complex, functioning as three-story private houses with autonomous entryways from two sides and a private lift from the underground parking garage.

A similar building (the Black Coal House) lies opposite, parallel to Oglu iela (Coal Street), but with each stairwell providing entry to three smaller apartments.

The red brick building of the complex (Red Ship House) brings to mind a ship and fits in with the location's harbour theme.

Across the way stands an ochre brick



delicate interior nuances. The white ceiling panels, the built-in kitchen and various design accessories will ensure contrast," is how the architect describes the functional role of the finish.

A distinct architectural experience can be found in the exclusive penthouses on the roof of the Red Ship House. The structure's cylindrical shape organizes everyday life in a circular motion, breaking down all preconceived notions of a typical floor plan. The interior is an ode to Riga's panorama, which can be seen in its entirety from practically every spot of the apartments.

low-story wooden buildings, and as an industrialized part of the city. It has seen a renaissance in the last ten years, attracting people with its unique view of the Old Town, its wooden buildings, cobblestone streets and green zones. These create an aura of the countryside, or at the least, a small-town feeling, belying the island's true location in the centre of Riga.

"Everything is green and blooming, the cherry trees in the gardens are full of fruit," is how architect Zaiga Gaile, who lives in Ķīpsala herself, describes her feelings. "It's quite unbelievable that in just five



building with an industrial façade (the Old Production House), where the factory was once located. Bricks of various hues – not painted, but specially fired and processed at a factory in Belgium – were used in the construction of the new buildings. The black bricks have been used not only in the façades, but also boldly feature in the interiors of the apartments in the Black Coal House. They create an effect of the façade's continuation into the interior and add an industrial atmosphere.

"The black brick walls are like velvet, they absorb lights and shadows, and form

Not Riga, but a small town

The biggest bonus of the Gypsum Factory project is its location. Ķīpsala Island is a place of success stories, where deals of the century are forged, foreigners are taken on visits, emotions are revealed and engagement proposals are offered. Situations take on a life of their own, peacefully and unhurriedly. The closeness of the river, with its cries of gulls and its yacht pier, conveys a feeling of weekend mornings.

In previous centuries, Ķīpsala was known as both a fishermen's village with

minutes you're over the bridge and in the crowds of the Old Town."

Combining the best of metropolitan living with the relaxing ambience of a waterfront setting, the Gypsum Factory apartments invite you to live and enjoy. **BO**

Completion date: May, 2013. Model versions of fully-furnished apartments and a villa are available for viewing now.	Gypsum Factory sales office: Baznīcas iela 20/22 Rīga, LV-1010 Phone: (+371) 29440033 i www.gipsafabrika.lv
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IMAGEHOUSE

Imagehouse interior showroom
Brīvības iela 40
Rīga, LV1050
www.imagehouse.lv



A place to find harmony

"Things and events, each with their own story, create the feeling of being at home. A home is love, smells and sounds."

Vija Virtmane, philosopher

Do you agree that each house lives a life of its own? Some houses are full of the warmth of close-knit families, while others exude the cosmopolitan spirit of world travellers; in many, the spirit of love is overwhelming. Indeed, an invisible spirit inhabits every dwelling. Both the interior and the owner's personality make up this spirit. The ideal home is a fortress that lives in harmony with you.

Anyone who seeks out *Imagehouse's* services has the opportunity to enter

a world where people speak the language of smart design. We are committed to a special lifestyle, ideas and convictions and would like to share our rich international experience of setting up living spaces.

Imagehouse distinguishes itself from its competitors thanks to its comprehensive approach to interior design (and other projects) in houses, villas or apartments. Our architects and designers take into account our customers' preferences, needs and tastes when developing design projects for

living spaces. Even the most demanding and sophisticated clients will be satisfied. After developing a project, our decorating and lighting experts join with other specialists to make your ideas come to life. We are focused on creating purposeful and functional living spaces that convey the unique personalities of their dwellers and are in line with their lifestyle.

When furnishing dwelling places we use only the most highly recognized furniture and interior design items, which have shown their worth in Europe and across the world. Brands like *Giorgetti*, *Minotti*, *Dedon*, *Porro* and others speak for themselves. In addition to a wide variety of furniture, from classical



to modern, our selection includes kitchen equipment, light fixtures, household textiles and other interior design items like china and bedsheets from *Missoni Home*, *Ivano Redaelli* and *Furstenberg*. We have chosen the best works by world-renown designers like Rodolfo Dordoni, Piero Lissoni and Antonio Citterio. This demonstrates our commitment to persevering a perfectly consistent style.

Our approach is grounded on being innovative and achieving the best results in interior design combined with our unique set of skills. Every item and the interior as a whole is like a piece of art, embodying refined simplicity and elegant luxury all in one. We firmly believe that people who surround themselves with beautiful things and live in a harmonious space (obtaining aesthetic pleasure and well-deserved relaxation in the process) are truly happy.

Every interior designed by *Imagehouse's* experts has a consistent style, a highly functional space and a one-of-a-kind atmosphere. Our homes will become an inseparable part of your life and family history. Harmony with your inner self and your place in society will forever reign in your home. **BO**





The journey of a gourmet

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

GASTRONOME RESTAURANT

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

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



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

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

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

Address: Brīvības iela 31

Phone number for reservations: (+371) 67152080

GASTRONOME SEAFOOD BAR

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

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

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

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

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

Address: Brīvības iela 31

Phone number for reservations: (+371) 67152080



GASTRONOME GOURMET SHOP

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Opening hours: Mon.–Sat. 08:30–21:00,
Sun. 10:00–19:00

Address: Brīvības iela 31

Phone number: (+371) 67152050



Majorenhoff – on the hunt for the best

Jomas iela 42, Jūrmala
Mon.-Sun. 11:00 – the last guest
Reservations and inquiries:
(+371) 67764060
info@majorenhoff.lv
www.majorenhoff.lv



When thinking of the city Jūrmala, some key words are sure to pop into everyone's mind – sandy beaches, lively musical events, exciting recreational activities and, undoubtedly, the well-known Jomas iela. The latter is one of the most central and oldest of streets in the city Jūrmala, and a pedestrian street at that. To say that Jomas iela is generously populated with restaurants is putting it mildly – the street almost swarms with them. *Majorenhoff* is a restaurant situated close to where the famous street starts off, and regardless of its fairly

unassuming exterior, it is well worth walking into.

The abundance of restaurants competing to attract the attention of passers-by should be reason enough to put out a prominent sign and make oneself noticeable. And who could blame such an approach? However, upon arriving at *Majorenhoff*, one notices the modest word *pizzeria* added to the signboard. As it turns out, head chef Konstantin Grinov, the heart and soul of the place, has his mind occupied with other, more pressing matters – namely, the food. Food is all he wants to talk about and you

would be happy to listen in, because Konstantin has a lot to say about the subject. To say that he is an enthusiast and a perfectionist does not give him enough justice. He comes across more as a dreamy hunter – an unusual but appropriate combination.

Konstantin is a skilled and competent chef. He knows his menu like the back of his hand and has a story about each dish. He remembers every farm or village or town that has provided him with his carefully selected ingredients and can tell you why he chose them. And yet his eyes can glaze over, with a slight Italian accent sneaking into his speech when he speaks about an item in the menu or remembers an especially rewarding lesson in the art of food – having learned to perfect his craft in Italy as well as other countries. Konstantin is always on the hunt for the best when it comes to the ingredients for his mouth-watering dishes.

Yes, food is all he wants to talk about, and in all fairness, listening to him is almost as “delicious” as tasting the culinary wonders at *Majorenhoff*. Konstantin's specialty menu offers various light and cold starters such as selected mushrooms, pink tuna tartar, cold smoked duck's breast on crisp lettuce with Mozzarella and strawberries, as well as such classics as *burrata di bufala* with rocket salad, kumato tomatoes and pesto.

The scallops sautéed with ghee butter and lime, and served with fruit and vegetable tartar are absolutely exquisite, as is the grilled silver croaker sprinkled with scented salt and served with cheese gratiné. According to Konstantin, nobody else in the whole city of Jūrmala serves this dainty fish. Among the tangy ultra-light desserts on the specialty

menu, one will find mouth-watering sorbets made of fresh and fragrant mangoes, black currants or strawberries.

The main menu is quite varied, almost surprisingly so. On top of the specialty starters, it features some classical hot starters like potato crepes with lightly salted salmon and red caviar, tiger prawns in ginger

proving that sometimes one need not look too far for the right flavour.

The selection of hearty classical pastas features a new sedanini dish with Parma ham, as well as one with boletus mushrooms – again, a tribute to the locally appreciated goods from the woods. The pizzas alluded to in the restaurant

is also an exquisite *Toscana* with turkey ham and truffles, Prosciutto onions chips and pickled mushrooms.

The restaurant is rightly proud of its red wine selection and particularly those from the *Villa Rinaldi* in Italy, the signature sparkling wine being the *Barricaia Brut* – a mixture of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.



sauce, and mussels with fresh basil and tomatoes. The variety of meats in the selection of the main dishes is impressive, for they are brought to *Majorenhoff* from all around the world. You can try the lamb steak from New Zealand, the T-bone steak from Brazil or the premium-class beef flank steak from America. For Konstantin, each of the items on the menu has a precise way to be prepared and particular locations for its ingredients. Next to French Guinea fowl served with tender ricotta cheese are beef medallions with Latvian bacon in Madeira sauce,

signboard are yet another indication that the chef holds his fine Italian schooling in high regard. With the likes of the wholesome *Speciale e Prosciutto* swimming in mozzarella, onions, olives and Prosciutto ham, the pizza menu invites you to look for perfection in simplicity. Take the hearty *Speciale Petro Pollo* with mozzarella, tomatoes, grilled vegetables and smoked chicken as an example, or the wholesome *Marinara* with seafood mix and tiger prawns. As if that was not outstanding enough, there

Like the silver croaker, this wine can be found nowhere else in the vicinity of *Majorenhoff*, in neither restaurants nor specialty shops.

Overwhelming as the choice is, one must not neglect the specialty desserts, among them such time-tried delicacies as crème brûlée, cheese cake or chocolate fondant with ice-cream. The signature *Majorenhoff Ice Paradise* cake made with German *Luben* marzipan serves as a reminder to always leave some room for a little piece of heaven at the end of one's meal... **BO**

Eternal summer of Jūrmala

Usually people think that eternal summer can only be in hot countries. But you can enjoy many joys of recreation also where sun shines just 150 days a year and winter frosts sometimes reach 30 degrees below zero. Rain, and snow, and wind — all that is outside, but inside of Livu Aquapark, Jūrmala, everything reminds you of delights of tropical health resorts even in winter.

The first thing everybody sees when approaching Jūrmala from the side of 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 — Livu Aquapark.

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 Livu Aquapark, in summer they are supplemented by another dozen and an outdoor beach. Modern sophisticated equipment for those was ordered in Canada, Germany and Sweden.

To ensure safety and guarantee pleasure of amazing recreation to visitors, young people are on duty in aquapark, who are always ready to explain policy of the place or ensure everyone follow it... and no keys on ribbon — buying a ticket, each visitor gets a bracelet with chip — it is locker key, as well as data pool for paying for food, drinks, massage and multiple other services when you leave aquapark. The rest is included in ticket price.

Water recreation always attracts people, especially if water is warm and clean.

Livu Aquapark, occupying area of almost a hectare, combines three functional 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.

Few aquaparks in rich countries can offer its visitors twenty amusements of varied complexity for riding down in boats or without them, for extreme fans and kids alike.

Heart of Livu Aquapark is Paradise Beach at wave pool. From one side of it lies Captain Kid Land, from another — Spa Resort, place for relaxation admirers.

Have no doubt — Livu Aquapark 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. Don't miss the opportunity to visit Livu Aquapark, where summer doesn't end even in winter, when you come to Latvia.

ACCENTS OF DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Captain Kid Land

It's a true paradise for kids. The central object is impressive pirate ship with water cannons and slides. Walk over Lemon Bridge, Banana Bridge and pen-

dant Rope Bridge. Through the cave around Captain Kid Land meanders Orinoco River. In summer it is twice as long and flows outside. Every two minutes Land and river are washed away by huge five meter high waterfall.

Paradise Beach

Try to forget about European landscapes you crossed while driving here, and imagine that you relax in luxury hotel-park somewhere on distant ocean

island. Almost the whole territory of the Paradise Beach is occupied by the wave pool. Artificial wave generation system is even capable of creating "storms" with water crests of up to 1.5 m height. Pool floor

is sloping. This is where water aerobics exercises are held.

Lighthouse towers above the pool.

Walk up, and impressive view of almost the whole territory aquapark will open.

SPA

Created specially for leisurely recreation — swim for a drink to the bar right in the Bahamas Pool. Part of it inside, another — in the open, all year round. Cold

water pool next to it for the true fans of contrast hydrotherapeutic procedures. Jacuzzi and hot-houses with aroma and flower therapy — it's all here!

Surprise showers, powerful massage jets under water beds

and in pool walls tope up all your body pleasantly. After SPA renovation we offer to enjoy our novelties — Salt room, Turkish steam bath, Oxygen bath and foot reflexology path. Come and try everything yourself!



24 Viestura St., Jūrmala, Latvia
Phone: +371 67755636
www.akvaparks.lv



of centuries-old rooftops and streets, but also with its *dolce vita* atmosphere, in which even the most serious workaholics manage to unwind for a few relaxing hours.

The miraculous change in the demeanour of restaurant patrons is brought on not only by the terrace's unique view of the Old Town and the historical building's aesthetic appeal. Gourmets know 1221 as a restaurant that serves some of the best wild game in town. Think beaver ragout marinated in champagne, or tender venison loin steak, or baked pheasant with fennel seeds, or dove breast with sweet potato and orange juice sauce. These are just some of the dishes that the prime minister of Latvia and his most prominent guests have been able to choose from on a regular basis. One foreign VIP, after consuming a perfectly prepared steak and not wanting to leave without enjoying a delectable dessert, almost missed his flight home.

If game and desserts are not your thing, then 1221 also offers a wide choice of fantastic seafood dishes. Alongside skilfully prepared salmon, zander and catfish, the owners are proud to offer Osetra black caviar – one of the most prized types in the world – from Latvian-grown sturgeon. The waitstaff will help you to choose the right wine for your meal from exclusive



brands that sommelier Jānis Kalķis has selected himself and that can only be found at premium restaurants.

And 1221 really is an outstanding establishment, not least due to its location in a charming building that is more than 300 years old. Traces of the edifice's venerable history can still be seen in the wooden floors, beams and doors, as well as the original ceramic wood stoves and closed inner courtyard. The light-coloured textiles and tasteful choice of furniture impart a Provençal type of airiness and a Chekovian, relaxed feel to the place. And time will seem to stand still when you imbibe the legendary horseradish, cranberry or cherry liqueur that the wife of the owner has made herself – a practically perfect end to a practically perfect evening of fine dining and leisurely people-watching. **BO**

A restaurant for bon vivants

Restorāns
1221

Jauniela 16, Riga
Hours: Mon.-Sun.
12:00-23:00
(+371) 67220171
1221@apollo.lv
www.1221.lv

On warm summer evenings, when the steeples and cobblestones of Riga glow in the orangey hue in the setting sun, those in the know gather at a special spot right in the heart of the Old Town – the cosy rooftop terrace of the 1221 restaurant on Jauniela. Decorated in flowers, the terrace beckons not only with its picture-perfect view

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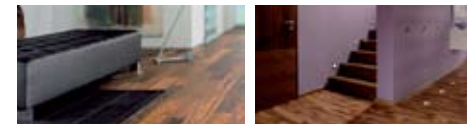


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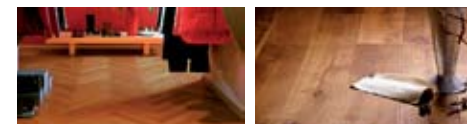
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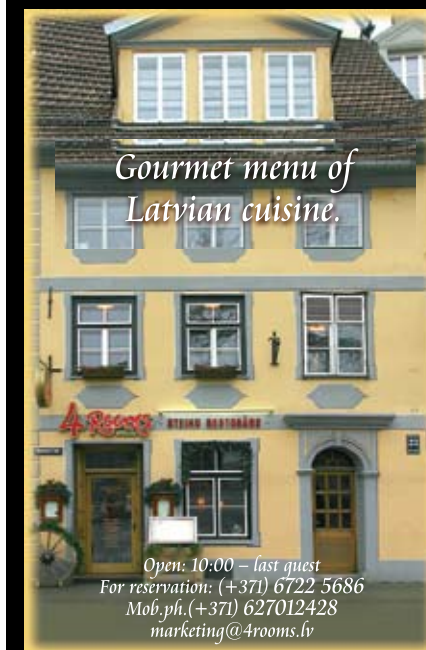
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An oasis in central Riga

Every time a new restaurant opens in the Latvian capital, Riga's foodies have cause to celebrate. The latest arrival recently opened its doors in the former port territory of Andrejsala, one of Riga's most interesting neighbourhoods and only a stone's throw away from the city's historical centre.

For over 100 years, Andrejsala was an industrial zone with a cargo port, railway network, warehouses and other storage facilities. The area was recently refurbished and regained a new life with its marina and creative industry centre. Andrejsala now houses a number of popular restaurants and night clubs, as well as the offices of successful designers, architects, artists and advertising specialists, who are turning this creative district of Riga as an increasingly significant business and entertainment centre, as well as an upscale residential area.

This summer, the rapidly developing territory was graced with the opening of the *Aqua Luna* restaurant, bar and lounge. Its owners have found a perfect spot for people to escape from the hubbub of Riga without leaving the city centre. *Aqua Luna* offers superb food, fine wine and great music in a pleasant atmosphere. The terrace on the shores of the Daugava River offers a unique view of the marina and passenger ships moored in the port, as well as the striking panorama of Riga's Old Town and modern new office buildings.

Aqua Luna places great emphasis on maintaining an enjoyable atmosphere, playing carefully selected lounge and soulful music on most occasions. Live music evenings with contemporary jazz, soul and funk are held on Thursdays, while Fridays and Saturdays are a time for party evenings with soulful house and nu-disco music by top-notch DJs. The joyful summer tunes sometimes keep patrons dancing until the wee hours of the morning, even those who usually don't lead an active night life.

Amid the tasteful interior and pleasant ambiance, chef Gints Aizupietis supplements his European-style dishes with Asian accents. Here, French and Italian culinary schools also mix with local traditions. Exotic Canadian lobster, Chilean perch and Indian mango are just a few of the superior products that the chef puts together to create tasty, light and balanced meals. Aizupietis set up the restaurant's menu in cooperation with renowned Belgian chef Kenny Bernaerts, who has years of experience



working at many *Michelin*-starred restaurants in Europe.

Aqua Luna is a wonderful spot for leisurely late breakfasts, business lunches, romantic dinners and festive nights out with friends or colleagues. The establishment's refined and tasty dishes, extensive wine list, wide choice of cocktails, light desserts and original appetisers – combined with great music in a contemporary and cosy interior – make *Aqua Luna* a very special Riga restaurant. **BO**



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FOOD&DRINK

TEXT BY AGRA LIEGE
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Restaurants, bars and cafés

Riga newcomers that need no advertisement



Koya, Riga

Koya is a controversial place in the best sense of the word. For one, it is a former boatshed sitting on the very edge of the water in Andrejsala – itself formerly a part of Riga's industrial port, on the margin of the so-called 'quiet centre'. Now Andrejsala houses a significant number of art, culture and leisure spots, of which Koya is probably the most noticeable newcomer. Opened in mid 2012, Koya was named Best New Restaurant by Riga NOW earlier this year, and has been experiencing a steady flow of appreciative guests.

The fact that not so long ago Koya was indeed a boatshed ('koya' meaning 'shed' in Japanese) is shown by the ceiling, which has been preserved as it was before to give the place an added sense of atmosphere. However, the restaurant is anything but shabby. The premises have been elegantly designed in dark colours, but are brightly lit by large windows facing the waterfront.

Koya's intriguingly controversial nature is also expressed by the different types of ambience that it offers. On evenings it is a most romantic dinner spot, with carefully selected music humming in the background. If you're lucky to have reserved a dinner table during the weekend, then you will most likely be listening to a well-known DJ setting the tune. On weekend mornings and early afternoons, the place will be crowded with families enjoying the weekend-only brunch. Koya is both classy and cosy, chic and informal, stylish and laid-back, with a growing number of regular patrons.

The kitchen is not hidden away, but sits up on a podium overseeing the floor, and the team of young and adventurous chefs includes a sommelier for oysters only! The restaurant offers a refined fusion of European cuisine, serving the likes of perch fillet with sea buckthorn-lemongrass sauce, artistically prepared lamb burger with caramelized onions, or risotto with cuttlefish ink, scallops and red caviar; not to mention the crème brûlée with rhubarb and a delectable selection of chocolate truffles. While the restaurant does not advertise much, you will be sure to find it when you ask for Koya – word of mouth has not let it down so far.

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FOOD&DRINK



Gaucho Steak House, Riga

It could very well be that the fine pieces of contemporary art at the Art Museum Riga Bourse have drawn you to the vast terrace of the *Gaucho Steak House*, for this restaurant is situated right outside the historic building. It could also be that the Dome Square – the largest and easily the most famous in Riga, which houses the Dome Cathedral and hosts numerous events all year round – has attracted your attention. But since you are faced with such a large choice of restaurants that sit on the edge of the legendary square, *Gaucho* knows what's at stake.

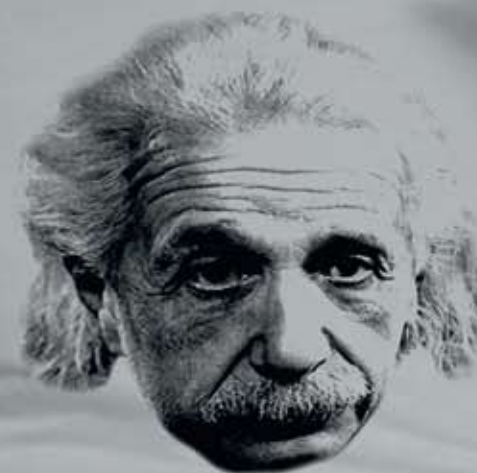
The *Gaucho Steak House* ("gaucho" being a word of Argentinean origin meaning "cowboy") will draw you to its tables for many reasons. The menu is heavily Argentinean – think lamb burritos with spicy onions and cheese, paninis with guacamole and chicken for breakfast. Try the Argentinean creamed panada soup with feta and balsamic cream or the classical gazpacho with calamari for a relatively light lunch.

However, the star of the menu is undoubtedly the steak. Among its seven different manifestations is a rum-marinated *asado* steak served with a red wine dressing; a lamb steak served with tomato chutney and a pork fillet steak with grilled tomatoes in a traditionally spicy sauce. The chefs here have given this king of meaty dishes quite a bit of thought.

Even those who have their eyes set on the seafood page of the menu can be treated to the likes of what *Gaucho* knows best: a salmon steak served with steamed cauliflower in mango dressing. Nevertheless, the dish that real steak lovers will come back for is the *Gaucho* steak, which is served on a heated stone and beats the size of your average meaty dish by two. A good selection of red wines is not missing either, along with tips as to which one of them would best complement your meal.

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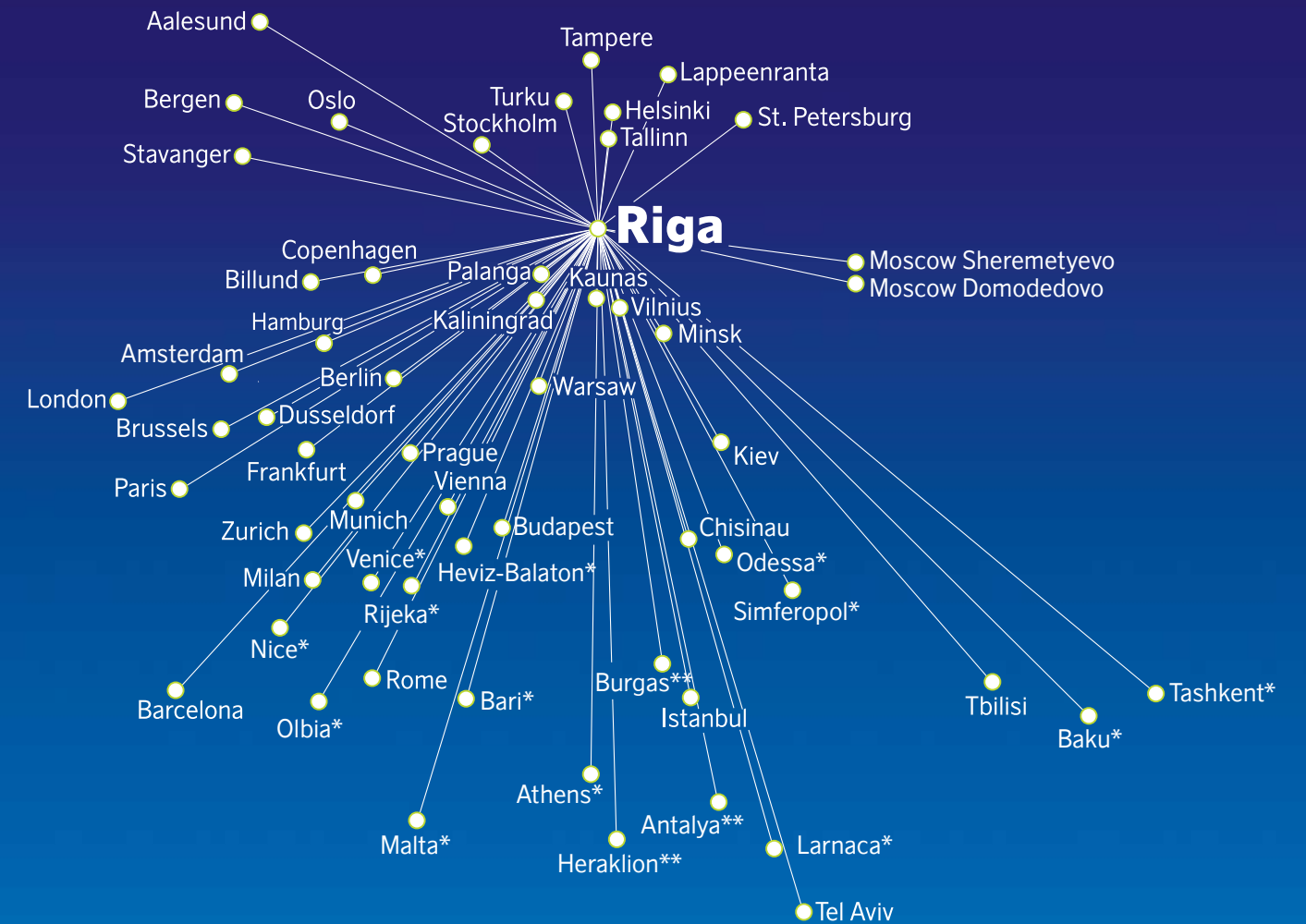
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IN BRIEF

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- 2/ Pay and save with an airBaltic Payment Card
- 3/ Purchase charity T-shirts and help the Latvian Children's Hospital
- 4/ Choose our online extras to make your summer travel more relaxed

1/ New destinations in Southern Europe

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Svetlana Malyuk,
Area Manager Russia,
Head of Representative Office

TEXT BY ELINA RUKA | PHOTO BY LAURIS VIKSNE, F64

Like an embassy

Svetlana Malyuk's choice of profession runs in the family. Hers is the third generation working in the field of aviation, as she has chosen to follow in the footsteps of her parents and grandparents. Since 2007, Svetlana has been *airBaltic's* Area manager in Russia, a position that she finds both challenging and rewarding. She now views Riga as her second home, which she visits not only on work trips, but also to take a break from the fast-paced life of Moscow.

What are your responsibilities as Area manager?

The representative office of an airline in a foreign country is often like an embassy. We are the ambassadors of the airline and the country. We carry out representative functions; we negotiate with different agencies, tour operators, customers and partners. We speak with a wide range of different parties. We also collect a lot of information about the market and communicate this information to our head office. We are like a go-between, a crossing point of different information and processes. In addition, we communicate with various other departments of the airline itself.

What are the particularities of the Russian market?

First of all, the Russian market is rather large, with 20 million people in Moscow alone! It incorporates different cultures, people and demands. We deal with a lot of rich and poor people at the same time, so our task is to provide a balance for all the target groups. Numerous companies fly out of Moscow, the market is developing and many more people have begun to travel. According to some estimates, only 5% of the Russian population engages in travel. You can imagine how many advantages and possibilities are out there! The distances in Russia are huge as well, but most of processes and activities are concentrated in Moscow. Passengers are ready to travel from all the regions, even for 10 hours, only to get to Moscow and then to take a flight to Riga, for example. It's an interesting market.

How important is this market for *airBaltic*?

We are among the top five markets for the airline. Last year Moscow was among the main destinations from/to Riga, according to passenger numbers. The customers are very demanding. In addition,

a number of Russian airlines operate from all main Moscow airports to Riga. And finally, Russia currently has no own low-cost carriers. People are not used to the specifics of budget airlines.

Who stands behind *airBaltic's* sales office in Moscow?

We are a small and very young team of only four people, with one of us working from St. Petersburg. Our fifth colleague, the only gentleman on the Russian team, is from the Ground Operations department in Moscow. We gladly collaborate and support each other in different situations connected to servicing our passengers at Russian airports. We spend a lot of time working together and often see each other more than our own families, so we have ended up feeling like a family of our own. That gives us no other choice but to be a happy team.

I split the tasks with my two colleagues in Moscow. One girl works more on the outside, communicating with agencies and prospective clients. Another girl takes responsibilities in the office. She has to solve multiple problems, from consulting a passenger with a dog to dealing with big group events. You have to be very knowledgeable about the airline and its products. At the same time, each of us can do everything and we all can replace each other if necessary.

What qualities are necessary to do this job?

At sales you need to be positive. You should be prepared to face challenges and take advantage of opportunities. You should take initiatives and always look for a solution instead of concentrating on problems. You have to be very fast and know a lot about the airline business, starting from check-in and ticket issues to products and strategic issues, and be smiling all the time.

What led you to this position?

I've been working with airlines for 15 years. *airBaltic* is my third airline, while SAS was my first. I started as a ticket agent right after graduating as a specialist in international transportation. Then I moved to finance and administration. I have also worked at airports with check-in, boarding and so on. I know *the whole kitchen*, as we say. Then I worked with *Emirates*, switching from Scandinavia to the Arabic and Indian cultures. That was something completely different and a very interesting five years, which I spent working mostly in finance.

After that I got the opportunity to join *airBaltic*, which was perfect, since I had always wanted to communicate more with people and do sales while still working with finance and marketing. In this position I can assume all of these different functions. I like Latvia very much. I also like the fact that *airBaltic* is a rather small airline. Thus, you can see more of the processes and be more

involved in different aspects. Decisions can be taken fast and many initiatives will be appreciated, your voice will be heard.

Is there any particular reason for your interest in aviation?

It runs in our family, as I'm the third generation to be involved in this business. My parents worked with *Aeroflot*, my grandparents from both sides also worked in aviation. In addition, my husband works with a Russian airline, so we have the opportunity to compare our experiences and sometimes to have arguments about the system. (*Laughs.*) We also graduated from the same university, so in a way, we compete with each other all the time.

What are the biggest challenges in your job?

The main challenge is to keep a balance among different functions and processes, to find an optimum solution that suits all parties. The airline business is challenging. We are dependent on

economic growth and political processes, the situation can change every day. We all remember the volcano in Iceland that hugely influenced our daily life, for example. You never know what will happen.

What gives you satisfaction at the end of the day?

Happy customers. If I've solved some problems and managed to make people happy, then I've completed my plan for the day.

What is your favourite *airBaltic* destination?

Definitely Riga! It is one of the quickest foreign destinations that can be reached out of Moscow. You fly for only one hour and 20 minutes and land in an absolutely different world. Often we leave the stressful, crowded and dirty megapolis of Moscow to enjoy Riga for a few days. Lots of my friends are here and it's always relaxing. Riga is my second home now. **BO**



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Go Blonde together with *BalticMiles*!

Marika Ģederte, president of Latvia's Blonde Association, tells us about the *Go Blonde Festival*, which first started in 2009 and which has been bringing together beautiful blonde bombshells from both far and wide for the fifth year in a row

The very first *Blonde Parade* attracted around 500 participants and has increased in size ever since, rapidly expanding into a full-blown festival. This year's event will have a new location and format, taking place on July 13 in Jūrmala between the beaches of Majori and Dzintari. A wide array of activities and sports events will be taking place throughout the day, including a windsurfing competition organized by *Port Manana*, an international beach volleyball tournament, a foam party and various dance events, with DJs from around the world spinning tracks on the beach all day long. The day before the festival, Riga's *Coyote Fly* club will host a *Harley Davidson* motorcycle parade and the third annual Marilyn Monroe look-alike contest.

"We're going for an Ibiza-style atmosphere," Marika explains. "People will also be able to take a break from the sun and sip their cocktails in the shade of special lounge tents. All of the events on the beach will be free of charge and open to everybody." The festival's closing event, the *Pink Party* (with Latin pop princess Loona as the special guest) is invitation-only, however, and will take place at the *Hotel Jūrmala SPA*.

Marika is a member of the *BalticMiles* loyalty program and says that she appreciates its versatility. The excitement of being able to collect Points and to spend them right away is what differentiates this loyalty program from others. Marika uses her *BalticMiles* card when filling up at *Neste* petrol stations. "So far, I've spent my Points on trips to Moscow and Venice," she adds.

Together with its program partners, *BalticMiles* is planning a number of activities during the *Go Blonde Festival*. The Blue Box tent will be the gathering spot for the *Miss and Mr. Australian Gold 2013* finalists, who will be handing out sunscreen lotion on the beach throughout the day. *BalticMiles* members will be able to sample *Australian Gold* products in the Blue Box tent, and with every purchase of *Australian Gold's* sun-series products, customers will collect *BalticMiles* Points, receive brightly-coloured *Australian Gold* sunglasses, beach balls and other surprise gifts.

Valdis Škutāns' dance school will be selling subscriptions for dance lessons, the purchase of which will give you twice as many Points as usual. Master classes in various Latin American dance styles will also be held by the tent.



Marika Ģederte

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARIKA ĢEDERTE

The *Sixt* car rental service supports the Latvian Children's Hospital and festival-goers will be able to donate to the cause, receiving *Sixt* souvenirs in return. *Sixt* will also be holding a charity auction, in which the three highest bidders will have the opportunity to drive an *Audi A1* for a weekend. All proceeds will go towards reconstruction of the hospital's hemato-oncology division.

The *Dr. Solomatina Eye Clinic*, for its part, will be offering free vision tests and giving out discount coupons for full eye exams and corrective services.

You will be able to meet *airBaltic* cabin crew members dressed in pink in the *BalticMiles* tent.

GO BLONDE®

Visit **BalticMiles** tent

at **Go Blonde** event in Jūrmala

on **JULY 13** and get **one of 30 free flights.**

Special offers from partners only at the BalticMiles tent

Easy to **collect**

You can collect Points at over 240 BalticMiles partners at 28 850 places throughout the world.
New partners in July:

New **Global Hotel Alliance**



The largest alliance of independent hotel groups including such brands as Kempinski Hotels and First Hotels, GHA offers you a great choice across a growing collection of properties, with each one reflecting local traditions, lifestyle and culture – altogether over 345 upscale and luxury hotels with over 85,000 rooms in 61 different countries.

Collect **500** Points for each stay



New **Seashells Resort**




Enjoy views over the Maltese Islands and the Mediterranean, amazing wining and dining possibilities, spa pleasures and a lot of water and underwater activities at Seashells Resort in Qawra, Malta.

Collect **500** Points for each stay




New **The Palace Hotel**



Stylish and unique five star luxury hotel in Sliema, Malta. Enjoy a stunning mix of contemporary décor and classic elegance in the very heart of Sliema, within easy walking distance of the bustling seafront, trendy bars and restaurants.

Collect **500** Points for each stay



New **The Victoria Hotel**



Victorian grace meets contemporary elegance in The Victoria; a classy four-star hotel in a quiet and peaceful neighborhood of Sliema, Malta. In addition to its excellent rooms, the guests can enjoy its luxury Spa facilities and indulge in fine dining at its refined restaurant.

Collect **500** Points for each stay



New **La Fontana**



La Fontana is a luxury ladies boutique in a charming old town quarter in Vilnius, Lithuania. La Fontana offers its customers the best Italian clothing brands, and personal stylists help choose the best clothes to complement your style.

Collect **1** Point for each 3 LTL spent



New **Via Montenapoleone Mediolanum**




Via Montenapoleone Mediolanum is a luxury menswear boutique in Vilnius, Lithuania. It offers its clients the best collection of outstanding Italian clothing, and its personal stylists will be happy to suggest the best clothes to fit your own style.

Collect **1** Point for each 3 LTL spent




New **ElegantLine**




The name of this shoe store says it all – this is where style connoisseurs find their elegant footwear from brands like Lacoste, Pepe Jeans, Hispanitas, Dumond, Rapisardi, Unisa, Solo Femme and Levi.

Collect **1** Point for each 3 LTL spent




New **Gamanta**



Situated right in the centre of Palanga, 4 star hotel Gamanta is an ideal place for any occasion. There are 35 cosy rooms at your service, a bar, a restaurant, a conference room and an on-site spa centre.

Collect **1** Point for each LTL spent for accommodation, at the restaurant and spa centre



Easy to **collect**

You can collect Points at over 240 BalticMiles partners at 28 850 places throughout the world.
New partners in July:

New **Saules Veselības centrs**



Saules Veselības centrs is a private outpatient health institution offering information on methods how to be healthy, medical advice from highly qualified professionals, diagnostics and individually developed recovery programs.

Collect **10** Points for each LVL spent



New **Restorāns Dārzs**



Restorāns Dārzs is a light-hearted, playful and creative restaurant in the very center of Old Riga offering modern interpretations of traditional Latvian cuisine in a cozy and welcoming atmosphere.

Collect **10** Points for each LVL spent




New **Kitchen, Brenzone**




Started by well-known restaurateurs from Riga, ristorante Kitchen in Brenzone by Lake Garda in Italy is both very Italian and very modern. Fresh produce and fish straight from the lake, exclusive regional wines and exquisite coffee make Kitchen a perfect place to dine in Brenzone.

Collect **5** Points for each EUR spent




New **Talentstouch**



Talentstouch is an online shopping platform for creative minds and those searching for a touch of uniqueness. Purchase unique and sophisticated fashion and jewelry products and accessories from exclusive fashion talents from around the world!

Collect **3** Points for each EUR spent



EXCLUSIVE OFFER THIS SUMMER



SHOP AT GS AND JEWELRY STORES AND FLY FOR FREE!



Get double Points for purchases from 50 to 350 LVL **2x Points**

Get 1 free flight for purchases of 350 LVL or more

Get 2 free flights for purchases of 700 LVL or more **x2**

Get 3 free flights for purchases of 1000 LVL or more **x3**

Get 4 free flights for purchases of 1300 LVL or more **x4**

A free flight is equal to 4200 BalticMiles Points

More info at balticmiles.com goldensaga.lv

Great to **spend**

There are more than 3000 rewards to choose from the shop.balticmiles.com and more than 400 000 digital records in BalticMiles Music shop.
In July we recommend:

Half-Day Ropes Park,
Lithuania



5 190 Points

Tandem Paragliding in
Latvia



6 752 Points

Go Karting at
Kartodrom Vilnius



2 308 Points

Fun on
Water Skis



4 072 Points

Day Sailing in Lysekil for
Two



26 056 Points

Taka Spa Joy-to-Live
Ritual



15 143 Points

! All the prices displayed include shipping costs to Latvia. Prices and availability of rewards are subject to change and may vary by delivery country.



Collect **2x** Points for purchases over **100 EUR**
at ATU Duty Free shops in Riga International Airport

Offer valid until July 31 at all ATU Duty Free shops except Fashion and Accesories store

КАРТА СМП
BalticMiles ↗

СМП БАНК

**ЗА ДЕНЬГИ
МОЖЕТ КАЖДЫЙ.
ПОПРОБУЙ БЕЗ!**

ОАО «СМП Банк» Рег. № 3368 от 18.06.2012



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Visa «СМП BalticMiles»! Оформи сейчас!**

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VISA



Onboard menu

Business Class

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

Passengers with particular religious, health or dietary preferences may order special meals up to 24 hours before departure.

On *airBaltic* flights to and from Barcelona, Istanbul, Helsinki, Lappeenranta, Palanga, Turku, Tallinn, Vilnius, Kaunas, Tampere, Bergen, Billund, Aalesund, Stavanger and Chisinau, customers are offered food and drinks from a special menu.

Economy Class

Economy Class passengers can choose from our *airBaltic* café menu, which offers hot meals, sandwiches, paninis, croissants and sweet snacks, as well as a broad selection of hot and cold drinks – including soft drinks, juices, wine, champagne, beer, coffee and tea.

Pre-order meals

If you wish to enjoy a gourmet meal or have special dietary requirements, then take a look at our special pre-order menu. By ordering meal before your flight, you will save money and will be served first on board.

You can pre-order your meal while you book your flight ticket or anytime later, up to 24 hours before departure, under the *Manage booking* section at www.airbaltic.com.



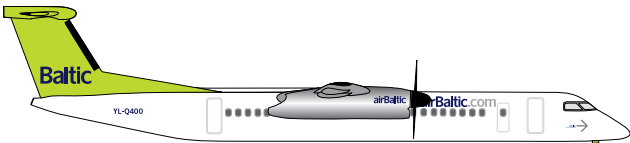
Boeing 737-300

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



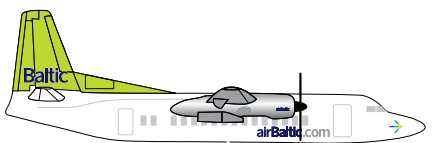
Boeing 737-500

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



Q400 NextGen

Number of seats	76
Max take-off weight	29.6 metric tons
Max payload	8.6 metric tons
Length	32.83 m
Wing span	28.42 m
Cruising speed	667 km/h
Commercial range	2084 km
Fuel consumption	1074 l/h
Engine	P&W 150A



Fokker 50

Number of seats	46/50/52
Max take-off weight	20.8 metric tons
Max payload	4.9 metric tons
Length	25.3 m
Wing span	29.0 m
Cruising speed	520 km/h
Commercial range	1300 km
Fuel consumption	800 l/h
Engine	P&W 125 B

airBaltic Payment Card

- International Visa card in Euro or Lats
- No bank account and credit check needed
- Save EUR 5.90 when booking a flight on airbaltic.com
- Every purchase earns BalticMiles Points

Special welcome bonus!
EUR 14 flight discount + 250 BalticMiles Points



airBaltic codeshare partners



airBaltic / FLIGHT SCHEDULE IN JULY

Flights from Riga						Flights to Riga					
Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival
VILNIUS						VILNIUS					
BT 341	RIX	VNO	1234567	09:45	10:40	BT 350	VNO	RIX	1234567	06:55	07:50
BT 343	RIX	VNO	1234567	13:05	14:00	BT 342	VNO	RIX	1234567	11:20	12:15
BT 345	RIX	VNO	1234567	16:25	17:20	BT 344	VNO	RIX	1234567	14:25	15:20
BT 347	RIX	VNO	1234567	19:30	20:25	BT 346	VNO	RIX	1234567	17:45	18:40
BT 349	RIX	VNO	1234567	23:05	23:59	BT 348	VNO	RIX	1234567	21:05	22:00
PALANGA						PALANGA					
BT 033	RIX	PLQ	12345-7	23:05	23:50	BT 032	PLQ	RIX	12345-6	07:00	07:45
KAUNAS						KAUNAS					
BT 041	RIX	KUN	12-4--7	23:15	00:05+1	BT 042	KUN	RIX	123-5--	06:55	07:45
TALLINN						TALLINN					
BT 311	RIX	TLL	1234567	09:45	10:40	BT 362	TLL	RIX	1234567	07:05	07:55
BT 313	RIX	TLL	1234567	13:05	14:00	BT 312	TLL	RIX	1234567	11:20	12:15
BT 315	RIX	TLL	1234567	16:25	17:20	BT 314	TLL	RIX	1234567	14:25	15:20
BT 317	RIX	TLL	1234567	19:30	20:25	BT 316	TLL	RIX	1234567	17:45	18:40
BT 361	RIX	TLL	1234567	23:10	23:59	BT 318	TLL	RIX	1234567	21:05	22:00
STOCKHOLM Arlanda						STOCKHOLM Arlanda					
BT 101	RIX	ARN	1234567	09:10	09:25	BT 104	ARN	RIX	1234567	06:25	08:40
BT 105	RIX	ARN	1234567	14:30	14:45	BT 102	ARN	RIX	1234567	09:55	12:10
BT 109	RIX	ARN	1234567	19:10	19:25	BT 106	ARN	RIX	1234567	15:10	17:25
BT 103	RIX	ARN	1234567	23:05	23:20	BT 110	ARN	RIX	1234567	19:55	22:10
COPENHAGEN						COPENHAGEN					
BT 133	RIX	CPH	12345--	06:25	07:25	BT 142	CPH	RIX	-----7	06:15	08:35
BT 131	RIX	CPH	1234567	09:40	10:25	BT 134	CPH	RIX	12345--	08:05	11:05
BT 139	RIX	CPH	1234567	18:20	19:05	BT 132	CPH	RIX	1234567	10:50	13:30
BT 141 ^{July 13-27}	RIX	CPH	-----6-	23:00	23:30	BT 140 ^{July 14-28}	CPH	RIX	1234567	19:30	22:10
BILLUND						BILLUND					
BT 145	RIX	BLL	1-34567	22:40	23:40	BT 146	BLL	RIX	12-4567	06:00	08:55
OSLO						OSLO					
BT 151	RIX	OSL	123456-	09:10	10:05	BT 158	OSL	RIX	1234567	06:00	08:30
BT 153	RIX	OSL	1234567	17:55	18:50	BT 152	OSL	RIX	123456-	10:40	13:30
BT 157	RIX	OSL	1234567	23:15	23:50	BT 154	OSL	RIX	1234567	19:15	22:05
BERGEN						BERGEN					
BT 172	RIX	BGO	123456-	05:35	08:55	BT 171	BGO	RIX	12345-7	23:05	00:05+1
STAVANGER						STAVANGER					
BT 178	RIX	SVG	1-34567	05:40	08:35	BT 177	SVG	RIX	-234567	22:45	00:05+1
ALESUND						ALESUND					
BT 175	RIX	AES	1--5-7	12:45	14:10	BT 176	AES	RIX	1--5-7	14:35	17:50
HELSINKI						HELSINKI					
BT 301	RIX	HEL	1234567	09:40	10:45	BT 326	HEL	RIX	1234567	07:45	08:40
BT 303	RIX	HEL	1234567	12:40	13:50	BT 302	HEL	RIX	1234567	11:15	12:15
BT 305	RIX	HEL	1234567	16:20	17:30	BT 304	HEL	RIX	1234567	14:15	15:20
BT 307	RIX	HEL	1234567	19:40	20:40	BT 306	HEL	RIX	1234567	17:55	19:00
BT 325	RIX	HEL	1234567	22:55	23:59	BT 308	HEL	RIX	1234567	21:15	22:10
TURKU						TURKU					
BT 355	RIX	TKU	-234567	22:55	00:05+1	BT 356	TKU	RIX	1-34567	07:25	08:30
TAMPERE						TAMPERE					
BT 357	RIX	TMP	1-34567	22:55	00:15+1	BT 358	TMP	RIX	12-4567	07:15	08:30
LAPPEENRANTA						LAPPEENRANTA					
BT 387	RIX	LPP	12345-7	22:45	23:59	BT 388	LPP	RIX	123456-	07:10	08:30
BERLIN Tegel						BERLIN Tegel					
BT 211	RIX	TXL	12345-7	09:20	10:15	BT 212	TXL	RIX	12345-7	10:40	13:35
BT 217	RIX	TXL	123456-	13:05	14:00	BT 218	TXL	RIX	123456-	14:30	17:25
BT 213	RIX	TXL	1234567	17:55	18:50	BT 214	TXL	RIX	1234567	19:15	22:10
HAMBURG						HAMBURG					
BT 251	RIX	HAM	1-456-	09:10	10:15	BT 252	HAM	RIX	1-456-	10:40	13:35
BT 253	RIX	HAM	123-5-7	17:30	18:45	BT 254	HAM	RIX	123-5-7	19:10	22:10
MUNICH						MUNICH					
BT 221	RIX	MUC	12-45--	09:45	11:00	BT 222	MUC	RIX	12-45--	11:50	15:00
BT 223	RIX	MUC	--34567	16:25	17:40	BT 224	MUC	RIX	--34567	18:45	21:55
FRANKFURT						FRANKFURT					
BT 243	RIX	FRA	1-3--7	09:10	10:25	BT 244	FRA	RIX	1-3--7	11:15	14:20
BT 245	RIX	FRA	1-4-6-	16:15	17:55	BT 246	FRA	RIX	---5--	18:30	21:35
BT 243	RIX	FRA	-----5-	16:40	17:55	BT 246	FRA	RIX	-2-4-6-	18:30	22:00
DUSSELDORF						DUSSELDORF					
BT 231	RIX	DUS	-2-4-6-	09:50	11:25	BT 232	DUS	RIX	-2-4-6-	12:00	15:40
BT 233	RIX	DUS	1-3--7	16:00	17:45	BT 234	DUS	RIX	1-3--7	18:20	22:00
BT 233 ^{From July 19}	RIX	DUS	-----5-	16:30	17:45	BT 234 ^{From July 19}	DUS	RIX	-----5-	18:50	21:55
VIENNA						VIENNA					
BT 431	RIX	VIE	123456-	10:10	11:10	BT 432	VIE	RIX	123456-	11:50	15:20
BT 433	RIX	VIE	1-3-5-7	16:35	18:10	BT 434	VIE	RIX	1-3-5-7	18:45	22:15
ZURICH						ZURICH					
BT 641	RIX	ZRH	1-4-7	11:10	12:40	BT 642	ZRH	RIX	1-4-7	13:30	17:10
BT 641	RIX	ZRH	-23-56-	16:10	17:40	BT 642	ZRH	RIX	-23-56-	18:20	22:00
MOSCOW Domodedovo						MOSCOW Domodedovo					
BT 416	RIX	DME	1-34567	22:45	01:55+1	BT 417	DME	RIX	12-4567	07:25	08:35
BT 418	RIX	DME	12345--	09:35	12:15	BT 419	DME	RIX	12345--	13:00	13:45
MOSCOW Sheremetyevo						MOSCOW Sheremetyevo					
BT 424	RIX	SVO	12345--	06:00	08:30	BT 425	SVO	RIX	12345--	09:20	10:05
BT 424	RIX	SVO	-----67	09:25	12:00	BT 425	SVO	RIX	-----67	12:45	13:30
BT 422	RIX	SVO	1234567	17:55	20:30	BT 423	SVO	RIX	1234567	21:15	22:00
ST-PETERSBURG						ST-PETERSBURG					
BT 442	RIX	LED	123456-	09:30	11:50	BT 443	LED	RIX	123456-	12:20	12:40
BT 444	RIX	LED	12345-7	18:50	21:10	BT 445	LED	RIX	12345-7	21:40	22:00

Flights from Riga						Flights to Riga					
Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival
KALININGRAD						KALININGRAD					
BT 428	RIX	KGD	1234567	22:50	23:50	BT 429	KGD	RIX	1234567	08:00	08:55
MINSK						MINSK					
BT 412	RIX	MSQ	1-34--7	14:10	15:20	BT 413	MSQ	RIX	1-34--7	15:55	17:05
KIEV Borispol						KIEV Borispol					
BT 400	RIX	KBP	1234567	09:20	11:15	BT 401	KBP	RIX	1234567	11:45	13:40
BT 404	RIX	KBP	1234567	18:00	19:55	BT 405	KBP	RIX	1234567	20:20	22:15
ODESSA						ODESSA					
BT 410	RIX	ODS	-2-456-	22:55	01:30+1	BT 411	OSD	RIX	--3-567	06:00	08:45
SIMFEROPOL						SIMFEROPOL					
BT 452	RIX	SIP	1-3-5--	23:10	01:35+1	BT 453	SIP	RIX	-2-4-6-	06:00	08:30
CHISINAU						CHISINAU					
BT 420	RIX	KIV	-2-4-6-	12:55	15:25	BT 421	KIV	RIX	-2-4-6-	15:55	18:35
WARSAW						WARSAW					
BT 461	RIX	WAW	-2345--	14:00	14:35	BT 464	WAW	RIX	1-4-6-	06:30	08:55
BT 463	RIX	WAW	--3-5-7	22:45	23:20	BT 462	WAW	RIX	-2345--	15:00	17:30
PRAGUE						PRAGUE					
BT 481	RIX	PRG	1-4---	09:20	10:25	BT 482	PRG	RIX	1-4---	10:55	14:00
BT 481	RIX	PRG	-----7	13:05	14:15	BT 482	PRG	RIX	-----7	14:45	17:50
BT 481	RIX	PRG	----5--	14:10	15:20	BT 482	PRG	RIX	----5--	15:50	18:55
BT 481	RIX	PRG	--3---	16:40	17:50	BT 482	PRG	RIX	--3---	18:25	21:30
BUDAPEST						BUDAPEST					
BT 491	RIX	BUD	1-345-7	13:05	14:35	BT 492	BUD	RIX	1-345-7	15:00	18:20
July 6-13 BT 491	RIX	BUD	-----6-	16:00	17:30	BT 492 July 23-31 BT 491	BUD	RIX	-----6-	17:55	21:15
HEVIZ-BALATON						HEVIZ-BALATON					
BT 493	RIX	SOB	-----6-	15:50	17:30	BT 494	SOB	RIX	-----6-	17:55	21:30
RIJEKA						RIJEKA					
BT 495	RIX	RJK	-----7	10:00	11:25	BT 496	RJK	RIX	-----7	12:00	15:25
BT 495	RIX	RJK	---4---	16:25	17:50	BT 496	RJK	RIX	---4---	18:25	21:50
BRUSSELS						BRUSSELS					
BT 601	RIX	BRU	1-3-5--	06:05	08:00	BT 602	BRU	RIX	1-3-5--	08:30	12:15
BT 601	RIX	BRU	-----6-	09:20	11:15	BT 602	BRU	RIX	-----6-	11:55	15:40
BT 603	RIX	BRU	-----7	15:50	17:45	BT 604	BRU	RIX	-----7	18:15	22:00
BT 603	RIX	BRU	12-4---	17:30	19:25	BT 604	BRU	RIX	12-4---	19:55	23:40
AMSTERDAM						AMSTERDAM					
BT 617	RIX	AMS	123456-	09:10	10:35	BT 618	AMS	RIX	123456-	11:20	14:35
BT 619	RIX	AMS	12345-7	16:50	18:15	BT 620	AMS	RIX	12345-7	18:50	22:05
LONDON Gatwick						LONDON Gatwick					
BT 651	RIX	LGW	123456-	09:20	10:10	BT 652	LGW	RIX	12-456-	10:50	15:30
BT 653	RIX	LGW	1-45-7	16:00	16:50	BT 654	LGW	RIX	--3---	17:00	21:40
						BT 654	LGW	RIX	1-45-7	17:30	22:10
PARIS Charles de Gaulles						PARIS Charles de Gaulles					
BT 691	RIX	CDG	-23-567	09:05	10:55	BT 692	CDG	RIX	-234567	11:55	15:35
BT 691	RIX	CDG	-----4	10:00	11:35	BT 692	CDG	RIX	---4---	17:35	21:15
BT 693	RIX	CDG	123-567	16:00	17:50	BT 694	CDG	RIX	123-567	18:35	22:15
NICE						NICE					
BT 695	RIX	NCE	-23----	10:40	12:50	BT 696	NCE	RIX	-23----	13:25	17:30
BT 695	RIX	NCE	---4-6-	15:10	17:20	BT 696	NCE	RIX	---4-6-	17:55	22:00
ROME Leonardo da Vinci Fiumicino						ROME Leonardo da Vinci Fiumicino					
BT 631	RIX	FCO	-23-567	09:20	11:25	BT 632	FCO	RIX	-23-567	12:10	16:20
BT 633	RIX	FCO	12-4-6-	15:05	17:10	BT 634	FCO	RIX	12-4-6-	17:55	22:05
MILAN Malpensa						MILAN Malpensa					
BT 629	RIX	MPX	-2-4-6-	09:35	11:20	BT 630	MPX	RIX	-2-4-6-	12:00	15:40
BT 629	RIX	MPX	1-3-5-7	15:50	17:35	BT 630	MPX	RIX	1-3-5-7	18:20	22:00
VENICE						VENICE					
BT 627	RIX	VCE	-2---6-	16:10	17:50	BT 628	VCE	RIX	-2---6-	18:25	22:05
BARI						BARI					
BT 623	RIX	BRI	-3----	09:20	11:15	BT 624	BRI	RIX	-3----	11:50	15:45
BT 623	RIX	BRI	-----6-	15:55	17:50	BT 624	BRI	RIX	-----6-	18:25	22:20
OLBIA						OLBIA					
BT 655	RIX	OLB	-----6-	09:30	11:40	BT 656	OLB	RIX	-----6-	12:15	16:30
BT 655	RIX	OLB	-3-----	15:10	17:20	BT 656	OLB	RIX	--3-----	17:55	22:10
ATHENS						ATHENS					
BT 611	RIX	ATH	----4--	09:35	13:00	BT 612	ATH	RIX	----4--	13:35	17:00
BT 611	RIX	ATH	-2---6-	14:35	18:00	BT 612	ATH	RIX	-2---6-	18:35	22:00
ISTANBUL Sabiha Gokcen						ISTANBUL Sabiha Gokcen					
BT 711	RIX	SAW	1-3-5-7	09:30	12:25	BT 712	SAW	RIX	1-3-5-7	13:00	15:55
BT 711	RIX	SAW	-2-4-6-	15:45	18:40	BT 712	SAW	RIX	-2-4-6-	19:15	22:10
LARNACA						LARNACA					
BT 657	RIX	LCA	-----6-	22:40	02:30+1	BT 658	LCA	RIX	-----7	04:35	08:40
BARCELONA						BARCELONA					
BT 681	RIX	BCN	-2--5--	09:25	12:10	BT 682	BCN	RIX	-2--5--	12:50	17:30
BT 683	RIX	BCN	-----6-	10:05	12:50	BT 684	BCN	RIX	-----6-	16:35	21:15
BT 683	RIX	BCN	1234--7	14:15	17:00	BT 684	BCN	RIX	1234--7	17:40	22:20
MALTA						MALTA					
BT 739	RIX	MLA	-----7	09:20	12:00	BT 740	MLA	RIX	-----7	12:45	17:25
TBILISI						TBILISI					
BT 722/724	RIX	TBS	-23-5-7	22:55	03:25+1	BT 723/725	TBS	RIX	1-34-6-	06:00	08:35
BAKU						BAKU					
BT 732	RIX	GVD	--3--7	22:55	04:50+1	BT 733	GVD	RIX	1-4---	06:00	08:10
TASHKENT						TASHKENT					
BT 742	RIX	TAS	1-----	19:10	02:10+1	BT 743	TAS	RIX	-2-----	05:20	08:40
BT 742	RIX	TAS	----5--	23:05	06:05+1	BT 743	TAS	RIX	-----6-	09:10	12:30
TEL AVIV						TEL AVIV					
BT 771	RIX	TLV	1234-6-	09:30	13:45	BT 772	TLV	RIX	1234-6-	14:35	19:05



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— Route operated by airBaltic
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AZERBAIJAN	
Baku Improtex Travel 16 S. Vurgun Str. Baku AZ1000, Azerbaijan ☎ +994 124989239 info@improtex-travel.com booking@improtex-travel.com	Heydar Aliyev International Airport Airport Ticket Office Silk Way Airlines North Terminal ☎ +994 124972600
BELARUS	
Minsk	Airport Minsk 2 2 nd floor Airport Ticket Office airBaltic ☎ +375 172792568,
BELGIUM	
Brussels Air Agencies Belgium 153 A Vilvoordelaan 1930 Zaventem ☎ +32 (0) 27126427 airbaltic@airagencies.be	Airport Zaventem Departure Hall ☎ +32 (0) 27230667 Airport Ticket Office Aviapartner
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Rijeka	Rijeka Airport Rijeka Airport Ticket office
CYPRUS	
Larnaca	Larnaca International Airport Airport Ticket Office airBaltic / LGS Handling
CZECH REPUBLIC	
Prague	Vaclav Havel Prague Airport Terminal T2 Airport Ticket Office CEAS ☎ +420 220117540
DENMARK	
Copenhagen	Airport Copenhagen International Terminal 3 Departure Hall Airport Ticket Office SAS
Billund	Billund Airport Departure Hall Airport Ticket Office ☎ +45 76505205
ESTONIA	
Tallinn ☎ 17107 (0.51 EUR/min, local calls only) tallinn@airbaltic.com	Airport Tallinn Main Terminal, Departure Hall Airport Ticket Office airBaltic /Tallinn Airport GH
FINLAND	
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Paris APG France 66 avenue des Champs Elysees Building E, 2 nd floor 75008, Paris ☎ +33 153892100 airbaltic@apg.fr	Airport Charles de Gaulles Terminal 2D Airport Ticket Office Swissport Services CDG
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Tbilisi Discovery Travel Ltd/airBaltic GSA 72 Palashvili st. Tbilisi ☎ +995 32 2 900900 airbalticgsa@discovery.ge	Airport Tbilisi Airport Ticket Office Discovery Ltd ☎ +995 32 2 900900
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Berlin airBaltic Germany Hauptstrasse 117, D-10827 Berlin ☎ 0900 124 7225 (EUR 0.69/min German landline – mobile calls may be different) service@airbaltic.de	Airport Berlin-Tegel Main Terminal Airport Ticket Office GlobeGround Berlin Opposite Gate 4/5
Dusseldorf	Airport Dusseldorf Terminal B Airport Ticket Office AHS ☎ +49 (0) 2114216275
Frankfurt	Airport Frankfurt Airport Ticket Office AHS Terminal 2, Hall E, Desk 939 ☎ + 49 69 690 61464

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GREECE	
Athens Tal Aviation 44 Ithous str. 17564 – P.Faliro ☎ +30 210 9341500 F: +30 210 9341620 airbaltic@tal-aviation.gr	Athens International Airport Airport Ticket Office Goldair Handling
HUNGARY	
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ISRAEL	
Tel Aviv Caspi Aviation Ltd. 1 Ben Yehuda st. Tel-Aviv 63801 ☎ +972 3 5100213 /4 F: +972 (3) 5108365 bt@caspi-aviation.co.il	Ben-Gurion International Airport Airport Ticket Office Lauffer Aviation GHI Level 3, Terminal 3 ☎ +972 39754076
ITALY	
Rome Tal Aviation Italy Via Adolfo Rava, 106, 00142, Rome ☎ +39 0654242544 F: +390654242534 airbaltic@talaviation.it	Leonardo de Vinci – Fiumicino Airport Terminal 3, Departure Hall A.R.E. Airline Representative Europe
Bari	Bari Airport Airport Ticket Office Bari Palese
Milan	Milan Malpensa Airport Terminal 1, Departure Level Airport Ticket Office A.R.E. Airline Representative Europe
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Riga ☎ 90001100 (0.37 LV/L/min, local calls only)	Riga International Airport Main Terminal Airport Ticket Office airBaltic
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POLAND	
Warsaw	Warsaw Airport Airport Ticket Office BGS

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St. Petersburg	Airport Pulkovo Terminal 2 Airport Ticket Office LTD North-West Transport Agency
Kaliningrad	Airport Khrabrovo Airport Ticket Office airBaltic / Aviapartner
SPAIN	
Barcelona	Airport El Prat de Llobregat Terminal 1 Airport Ticket Office Lufthansa Ticket Desk
SWEDEN	
Stockholm	Stockholm Arlanda Airport Airport Ticket Office airBaltic / Nordic Aero International Terminal 5
SWITZERLAND	
Zurich airBaltic Germany Hauptstrasse 117, D-10827 Berlin ☎ 0840600830 local calls service@airbaltic.de	Airport Zurich (Kloten) Departure Hall Airport Ticket Office CGS Terminal 2 ☎ +41 438166739
TURKEY	
Istanbul Aviarsps Havaçılı ve Turizm Miralay Selikbey Sok. No:9 D-5 Gümüşsuyu, 34437, Beyoğlu ☎ +90 212 297 48 53 F: +90 212 297 4854 bt.turkey@aviarsps.com	Sabiha Gökçen International Airport Airport Ticket Office Merkur ☎ +902165888800 F: +902165888801
UKRAINE	
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