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MARTIN ALEXANDER GAUSS
Chief Executive Officer *airBaltic*

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please share your feedback with one of our team members, and it will go right into upgrading our existing and designing new products.

We are also very delighted to see that growth in the number of travellers goes up hand in hand with their satisfaction. We have seen a double-digit increase in the number of passengers for the first part of the year, and this trend is very strong in Estonia and Lithuania. In Tallinn, we achieved No. 1 position for yet another month in May, recording 47% more travellers, while our Vilnius operation grew by 36%. We sincerely thank our Estonian and Lithuanian customers for choosing *airBaltic* as their home carrier!

Did you know that our new *Bombardier CSeries* jets have achieved another milestone as *CS100* aircraft has been awarded Type Validation by EU and US regulators following a comprehensive testing programme? This paves the way for *CS300* entry in service with airlines around the world!

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

Yours,
Martin Alexander Gauss



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Contents **JULY**

ABOUT THE JULY ISSUE



Baltic Outlook
correspondent
Inga Kalniņa, her husband
Māris and daughter Grēta
are avid travellers

Summer is a time for family vacations and travel. Research studies show that well-planned holiday trips can strengthen family ties and provide invaluable learning experiences to children, who discover how exciting and diverse our world really is.

Baltic Outlook correspondent and popular parent lifestyle blogger Inga Kalniņa agrees entirely with that view. In this issue, she offers recommendations on how to plan an unforgettable family trip and how to make it interesting for the kids (page 94).

Inga, her husband Māris and daughter Grēta love to travel together.

“Grēta’s first foreign trip was to Paris. She was six months old at the time. That was her first flight on a

plane and the first time that she slept overnight outside of our home.

“Judging by the pictures from that trip in our family photo album (in which almost all the photos are of Grēta), our priority was making sure that our daughter felt fine. We chose to go to Paris because we know the city very well and have very fond memories of the French capital. We spent a great deal of time there at the beginning of our relationship, when our romance was in full bloom.

“In preparing for the flight, I was thinking mainly about practical things like what to bring onto the plane so that Grēta remained happy and calm. I also tried to book flights that corresponded to our daughter’s sleeping and eating schedule. The smaller the child, the better it is to take a short and direct flight.

“Now Grēta is three years old, so I tell her beforehand about where we will be going next and what we will be doing at our destination. Our daughter likes it when I tell her about our upcoming trips and is interested in what I tell her. Therefore, whenever we board a flight, all three of us are happy and excited about our trip.”

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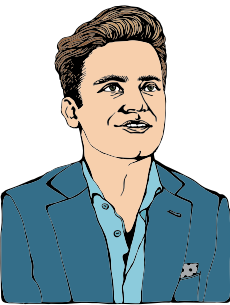
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Move to the Baltics

According to *Eurostat*, more than 15 million employees in Europe are citizens of another country – that is, not the one in which they work. This number is close to the combined population of Sweden and Denmark. Globally, the International Labour Organization reports more than 150 million migrant workers, which is roughly ¾ of the working population of the United States.

We often hear about global companies having equally global “talent acquisition” strategies to support their growth. Experts also cite the importance of qualified

foreign workers to the economies of London, Scandinavia and Germany, to name just a few places. Hardly any expert doubts that during the past decades, the influx of migrants and London’s openness to the world has helped to turn the UK capital into Europe’s only global city. In Scandinavia and Germany, migrant workers are doing jobs that natives are not willing or qualified to do.

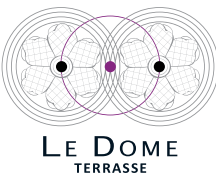
America with its melting pot culture is perhaps the most telling example of immigrant contribution to the economy. Former New York mayor Michael Bloomberg likes to point out that 40 percent of *Fortune 500* companies were founded by an immigrant or by a child of immigrants and that immigrants are twice as likely as native-born Americans to found companies. This is because, says Bloomberg, they are “dreamers” and “risk-takers” and today “capital follows talent”.

It is no surprise that successful cities in Europe, from Helsinki to Amsterdam, are implementing strategies for attracting talented and educated people from elsewhere. The real competition is not for “investment” but for employees, researchers, entrepreneurs and other people who are the real generators of economic productivity. Estonians

have created a start-up called *Teleport* for prospective foreign residents. It helps people to find the “best place to live and work” based on criteria that they select. Sten Tamkivi of *Teleport* reported at the recent Reputation Time conference in Riga that most people want to live in a place with little pollution, low living costs, low levels of crime, an inclusive and tolerant atmosphere, low rental costs, high health care quality, a growing economy and good airport connections, among others. Tamkivi also said that not everybody wants to live in London or New York. Baltic cities, I think, are quite competitive according to *Teleport*’s criteria. If you have a middle- or high-paying office job in London, then you can probably afford to live in a match-box type apartment in the city centre. In the Baltics, you will be able to rent much more spacious accommodations and live quite comfortably. Today, Vilnius is working hard to create shared service and research centres for global companies. Tallinn is luring educated people with its *Work in Estonia* campaign. Riga is also well-suited to receive qualified immigrants, but it is still considering its options. Perhaps the Baltic capitals should start a joint *Move to the Baltics* campaign? **BO**

Text by
MĀRTIŅŠ VANAGS
Illustration by
INGA BRIEDE

Mārtiņš Vanags is the managing director of the Skanste Development Agency in Riga. He has served as an advisor to Latvian ministers of the economy, foreign affairs and culture, and as a consultant to leading Latvian companies. He holds a bachelor’s degree in philosophy from the University of Latvia and a master’s degree in social and political thought from the University of Chicago.



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SPOTLIGHT ON THE SUMMER

Five things that you should do in Latvia in July

- 1/ Have an afternoon nap in an outdoor hammock.
- 2/ Eat raspberries and blackberries.
- 3/ Go to a city or town festival in one of the country's smaller municipalities.
- 4/ Rent a room in a guest house by the sea.
- 5/ Attend a music festival.

ON THIS MONTH'S MENU

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



Design Latvian designer Erlands Celmiņš has created *City Dew*, an original series of waterdrop-shaped glass cupolas that hang from the ceiling. These can be used to grow spices, display cut flowers and even as aquariums for small fish, freeing up windowsills in the process. The vessels can be seen, touched and purchased at the *Rijja* interior salon (Tērbatas iela 6/8) and the *Xcelsior* summer house (Kalnciema iela 37) in Riga.



Beauty What can be better than a beautifully clean, crisp and fresh scent in the sweltering summer heat? *Marc Jacobs'* new *Splash* series has arrived just in time. Try the *Cucumber Splash* after a shower for a sheer and refreshing scent. Light, not overly sweet, and the cucumber tone says that it really is summer.



Music The classical music world doesn't slow down during the summer, and this season, operas by Giuseppe Verdi will be performed in several Baltic locations. Next month, the Latvian National Opera in Riga will put on a grandiose performance of *La Traviata*, while on July 28, the Wrocław Opera will present *Otello* at the Saaremaa Opera Festival. Other featured works over the four-day Estonian festival include *The Pearl Fishers* by Georges Bizet and the premiere of *Swan Bone City* by Ūlo Krigul. ① saremaaopera.eu

THE TREND:

CHARMING OPEN-AIR CONCERTS



Those who don't feel like rubbing shoulders with thousands of other music enthusiasts at large-scale festivals like *Positivus* can head out to pleasant smaller-scale open-air events in Latvia this summer. The ruins of a medieval castle in Sigulda provide the perfect backdrop for a concert on July 3 by Irish singer Damien Rice and on July 6 by British alternative rock group *James*. But that is not all. At the end of July, the beautiful hilly town will host its annual Sigulda Opera Festival, during which viewers will be treated to an open-air performance of *A Masked Ball* by Giuseppe Verdi on July 30. On the following evening (July 31), don't miss the chance to hear Latvian opera diva Marina Rebeka sing. She has previously performed at numerous prestigious opera houses all around the world, including the Metropolitan Opera in New York and the Teatro alla Scala in Milan.

Text by **ZANE NIKODEMUSA**
and **ROGER NORUM**
Publicity photos

READING LIST



Kate Bolick. *Spinster*

This erudite, non-fiction bestseller looks at the joys of staying single and shows why hundreds of millions of women around the world choose to remain unmarried. Bolick juxtaposes her own life with mini-biographies of five historical spinsters, showing that these women's decision to remain single is less about marriage or relationships and much more about deciding to live life on its own terms.

Elena Lappin. *What Language Do I Dream In?*

A multilingual upbringing – native fluency in Russian, Czech, German, Hebrew and English – along with birth into a family of consummate writers led Lappin to try the craft herself. In this moving and scholarly work, the author explores what it feels like to write, speak and think across different languages, and what this means for identity and memory. The perfect read for language-lovers and anyone else who has ever wondered whether language comes before or after thought.

INSTAFASHION



Elīna Dobeļe

① instagram.com/elina_dobeļe



LATVIJAS KONCERTI



July 7 - 9, 2016 12TH INTERNATIONAL EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL

RIGA RUNDALĒ

- Thursday, July 7, 8:00 PM, Riga Cathedral
LATVIAN RADIO CHOIR AND PETER PHILLIPS
- Friday, July 8, 8:00 PM, St. John's Church
ELĪNA ŠIMKUS AND COIN DU ROI ORCHESTRA (ITALY)
- Saturday, July 9, 1:00 PM, White Hall, Rundale Palace
THE CHILDREN'S CONCERT "FROG BECOMING PRINCESS"
- Saturday, July 9, 4:00 PM, White Hall, Rundale Palace
SERGEJS JĒGERS AND COLLEGIUM MUSICUM RIGA
- Saturday, July 9, 6:00 PM, Gold Hall, Rundale Palace
ANCIENT MUSIC ENSEMBLE LA CETRA D'ORFEO (BELGIUM)
- Saturday, July 9, 8:00 PM, White Hall, Rundale Palace
MASTERPIECES OF GERMAN, RENCH AND ITALIAN BAROQUE
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**SILVER / GOLD
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EXHIBITION OF
ARTWORKS BY
BORISS BĒRZIŅŠ**

**Latvian National Museum of Art, Riga
Until August 28**
Boriss Bērziņš (1930-2002) was one of Latvia's best-known 20th-century artists,

and this retrospective of his works has been an eagerly awaited event in Riga. He created dense compositions that revealed an imaginative way of looking at things. Written notes in some of his oeuvres clarify the purpose and reveal the significance of one detail or another. Like the sun, art is eternal and no words can fully express its allure.

Tickets at the door
① lnmm.lv
Kr. Valdemāra iela 10

ÕLLESUMMER FESTIVAL

**Song Festival Grounds, Tallinn
July 6-9**



More than 100 artists will perform at a music festival that is taking place for the 23rd time this year. The line-up includes the electronic music group *Prodigy* (UK), singer John Newman (UK), local electronic music superstar *Cartoon* and many more brilliant acts from Estonia and abroad. *Õllesummer* is also known for its wide variety of drinks (mainly beer) and street food. Family members of all ages are sure to find something to their liking, and possibly new musical favourites as well.

Tickets at piletilevi.ee
① ollesummer.ee
Narva maantee 95

**TAMED NATURE
(PIERADINĀTĀ DABA)
FASHION HISTORY
EXHIBITION
BY ALEXANDRE
VASSILIEV**



**Museum of Decorative
Arts and Design,
Riga
July 14 - October 16**

For the past several years, acclaimed France-based fashion historian Alexandre Vassiliev has treated Riga's inhabitants with annual summer exhibitions of unique clothing collections. This season is no exception. In the scrupulously assembled *Tamed Nature* exhibition, Vassiliev will display plant and animal motifs that appear on more than 100 previously unseen clothing items and 300+ accessories from all over the world. The objects span 400 years of history, dating from the 18th to the 21st century.

Tickets at the door
① lnmm.lv
Skārņu iela 10/20

TALLINN MARITIME DAYS

**Various harbours in Tallinn
July 15-17**

This annual summer event will take place at the Seaplane, Old City, Noblessner and – for the first time – also at Pirita Harbour. The programme features numerous concerts, sailing opportunities, workshops, activities for kids and much more. One of this year's headliners is local band *Ewert and the Two Dragons*, which will perform right by the seaside. The traditional *Night Song Festival* will take place on a warm summer night, during which you might even encounter some friendly Vikings!

① tallinnamerepaevad.ee


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TANGO FROM BUENOS AIRES CONCERT

St. Catherine's Church, Vilnius
July 28

They say that it takes two to tango, but at this concert, the stage will have more than 20 performers. Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992), a legendary Argentine tango composer, revolutionised the traditional tango into a new style termed nuevo tango, incorporating elements from jazz and classical music. Piazzolla's regular pianist was Pablo Ziegler (b. 1944, Argentina), who will perform Piazzolla's and his own pieces together with Vilnius' St. Christopher Chamber Orchestra.

Tickets at bilietai.lt
Vilniaus gatvė 30

LAIMA VAIKULE JŪRMALA RENDEZ-VOUS MUSIC FESTIVAL

Dzintari Concert Hall
(Dzintaru koncertzāle), Jūrmala
July 5-8

For the second year in a row, internationally renowned Latvian singer Laima Vaikule is inviting her friends to take part in a three-day musical festival at one of the most beautiful resort towns on the Baltic Sea. Joining her on stage will be popular musicians from both Latvia and abroad, including Intars Busulis, Marija Naumova, Grigory Leps, Maxim Galkin, Valery Meladze and Kristina Orbakaite.

Tickets at bilesuserviss.lv
① jurmalarandevu.lv
Turaidas iela 1



POSITIVE IMAGES FOR FIELD AND FOREST

PHOTOGRAPHY
EXHIBITION BY
SHARON YA'ARI

National Gallery of Art, Vilnius
Until September 4

Contemporary Israeli photographer Sharon Ya'ari (b. 1966) creates large-format and carefully thought-out photographs of his homeland. He sees Israel as a country with a complicated and multi-layered history, and as a place to explore. This perception is reflected in his images of fields and forests of the Holy Land.

Tickets at the door
① ndg.lt
Konstitucijos prospektas 22



Sharon Ya'ari. *Iris Hermona*. 1969 / 2016.
Courtesy of the artist and the Sommer Contemporary Art Gallery, Tel Aviv



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Attēls: Gerhards Rīhters, *Sarkans, 1982. Audeklis, elļa, Sammlung Hoffmann, Berlīne, 260x400cm* / Image: Gerhard Richter, *Rot, 1982. Oil on canvas, Sammlung Hoffmann, Berlin, 260x400cm*

Jūrmalas Festivalis

11-16
July



11. 07. 20⁰⁰

Festival opening
Vestards Šimkus
Sergei Nakariakov



12. 07. 18⁰⁰

Ivars Kalniņš
"MovieTheatre"



12. 07. 20⁰⁰

Georgian ethno
jazz band Egari



13. 07. 20⁰⁰

Ksenija Sidorova
Carmen



14. 07. 18⁰⁰

Aleksandrs
Antoņenko
Solo Concert



14. 07. 20⁰⁰

Intars Busulis
& The Abonementa
Orchestra &
Liepāja Symphony
Orchestra



15. 07. 20⁰⁰

Broadway Night
Wonderful Town
West Side Story
The King And I
Jesus Christ Superstar
and others



16. 07. 20⁰⁰

Gala Concert
"Viva Italia"
Aleksandrs Antoņenko
Alisa Zinovjeva
Egīls Siliņš
Marlēna Keine



www.jurmalfestivals.lv





The first window of Latvia

Latest Riga hotspot

Text by **LIENE PĀLĒNA**
Photos by **EDMUNDS BRENCIS**
(Picture Agency) and courtesy of the Latvian National Museum of Art



The refurbished building's first visitors quickly generated a surprising and unexpected trend. More than 19,000 people visited the museum during the first few days that followed its reopening, and many of them posted photos of a round window on the top floor. There are, in fact, three such windows in the building's former attic space, tastefully enclosed in gleaming white wooden boards.

Two of these windows, however, are unfortunately covered in black to protect the artworks on display from the rays of the sun.

In any case, during the first century of the museum's existence, these windows and the entire top floor were off limits to the general public. Now, for the first time, ordinary mortals can enjoy a stupendous view of the city from the lone unobscured window, with the Latvian Academy of Art, the Nativity of Christ Cathedral, the National Library of Latvia and other Riga landmarks presenting a picture-perfect panorama. Many visitors were so impressed that they spontaneously presented the museum with a new symbol of its rebirth: an *Instagram* profile named @thefirstwindowoflatvia, in honour of the museum's new "*Instagram window*". **BO**

Kr. Valdemāra iela 10, Rīga

① Inmm.lv

Following an extensive and costly three-year-long reconstruction, the Latvian National Museum of Art reopened to the public in May. A popular tourist attraction, the museum is housed in one of the most impressive Historicism-style buildings in Riga. Designed by Baltic German architect Wilhelm Neumann, the edifice was completed in 1905 and was the first structure in the Baltic States to be built specifically for a museum.



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SOSTENA Ukmergės street 280, Vilnius
LAUTRA MOTORS J. Kubiliaus street 23, Vilnius



Brigitte Bardot,
*A Very Private
Affair*, 1962

unacceptable. Beaches often employed wardens who carried rulers at their side. If a woman's swimsuit was shorter than permissible, she could be banished from the beach and forced to pay a fine. By the 1930s, however, bathing suits had shortened yet further and resembled corsets.

The appearance of Réard's two-piece swimsuit had the effect of an explosion. He presented the skimpiest swimsuit on Earth a few days after the first American nuclear test at Bikini Atoll in 1946, and accordingly named his new creation the bikini. Initially, Réard had trouble finding someone who would model the shocking swimwear for his presentation. Since respectable models refused to wear it, Réard hired Micheline

The revealing clothing item was popularised by film stars who made it a fashion statement

Bernardini, an 18-year-old striptease dancer from Paris, to model the bikini at a press conference on July 5. Nevertheless, appearing on beaches in bikinis was risky at first, with wearers facing the risk of getting arrested and fined. It took a full decade for bikinis to come into fashion and lose their shock value, and even longer for bikinis to be accepted in the United States.

The bikini first appeared on the Riviera at the *Union des créateurs de la mode Côte-d'Azur* fashion show in Saint-Tropez in 1947. Although rarely seen on the beaches in the 1950s, the revealing clothing item was popularised by film stars who made it a fashion statement. Brigitte Bardot sunbathed in Cannes and demonstrated it in Roger Vadim's 1952 film *The Girl in the Bikini*. Grace Kelly wore one in Alfred Hitchcock's *To Catch a Thief* (1955). The bikini was seen as a symbol of freedom and hedonism, as reflected in Federico Fellini's famous film *La Dolce Vita* (1960) and by the jet set on the Riviera. Indeed, the skimpy swimsuit enhanced the Riviera's mystique – paparazzi shot countless photos of famous women cavorting in bikinis, from Jacqueline Kennedy to princesses Caroline and Stephanie of Monaco (the latter even designed her own line of swimwear).

And of course, who can forget the bikini that sex symbol Ursula Andress wore in the James Bond movie *Dr. No* (1962). It was as effective a weapon as Agent 007's pistol. **BO**

The naked truth

Text by **DACE VAIVARA**
Photos by *Alamy*

This is why the bikini is a summer fashion must-have on a French Riviera beach. The modern bikini transformed beachwear from the moment that it first appeared on the French Riviera in 1946.

"A bikini isn't a bikini if you can't pull it through a wedding ring," the bikini's creator, French auto engineer Louis Réard, once said.

Up until the early 20th century, bathing suits were quite conservative and resembled street clothes, making swimming quite cumbersome. During the 18th century, women went swimming in long trousers and woollen dresses. The costume was modernised a bit in the 19th century and shortened to the knees, but bare legs were nonetheless covered by half-length stockings.

After the First World War, women's bathing suits were raised above the knees, but showing the belly was most definitely



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Photo by Peer Lindgreen

Text by **UNA MEISTERE**,
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The new Tate Modern



Gavin Turk, Ajar (taupe and cream), 2011



By William Kentridge

This summer, the UK capital is literally bubbling over with exciting cultural events. The highlight, of course, is the recent opening of the **new Tate Modern building** (Bankside, London; tate.org.uk). Designed by the *Herzog & de Meuron* architects' bureau, the ten-storey-high edifice reminds one of a pyramid that has begun to twist in on itself. The new addition to London's skyline has added 60 percent more space for visitors to explore and will permit the museum to place greater emphasis on cinema, performance art and other forms of expression that have not been widely represented there to date. The museum will also be able to showcase artists from a greater number of countries, thus providing a more complete picture of current trends in the world of contemporary art.

Taking place for the sixth time this year, **Sculpture in the City** (June 28 - May 2017, cityoflondon.gov.uk/sculptureinthecity) has become an established summer tradition in London. During the event, contemporary works of art are put on display in unusual places in the city. This time, the project is being implemented on a larger scale than before, with an unprecedented 15 artworks being shown in close proximity to existing architectural icons. For example, a seven-metre-high installation by Catalan sculptor Jaume Plensa can now be found opposite the famous Gerkin building that was designed by Sir Norman Foster, while a bright red six-tonne sculpture by Anthony Caro offers a visual contrast to the *Lloyds* bank building designed by Richard Rogers. Among the other internationally recognised artists participating in this year's installation project are Sarah Lucas, Ugo Rondinone and William Kentridge, along with lesser-known talents.

Design aficionados, for their part, should head to the **new showroom and store by the Dutch brand Moooi** (23 Great Titch eld Street; moooi.com) in the Fitzrovia district. Once frequented by Charles Dickens, Oscar Wilde, Virginia Woolf and other intellectuals, this part of the city has gained a new life as a place where avant-garde ideas in art, design and fashion are taking form. The founder of *Moooi* is the Dutch enfant terrible of design Marcel Wanders, who aims to sell "a collection of everything possible" in a climate of "rebellious harmony". Indeed, the store is a platform for the craziest design ideas and an ideal place to purchase unconventional items if you are in the mood for implementing revolutionary changes in your home interior. This design showroom truly is inspiring, in its own quirky way.



Photo by LepoRello

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G-Spud

This year, the Belgian capital is hosting its sixth **Summer of Photography biennial**, and consequently during the next three months (June 17 – September 4; bozar.be), photography will dominate the city's exhibition halls, galleries and museums. The theme for this biennial is Urban Vibes, focusing on the relation between people and spaces. How do we live together in the city and what crucial roles do public spaces play? As usual, the main exhibition will take place at the Brussels Centre for Fine Arts, but accompanying events are scheduled throughout the city. On Thursday evenings, for example, the Summer Bar will be a pulsating centre of social life, hosting lectures, discussions, meetings with the photographers and other events.

If you're looking for lodgings to suit the mood of the biennial, then a perfect choice is the recently opened **DRUUM** (Rue du Houblon 63 Hopstraat, Coin du Diable, druum.be). The six-room contemporary B&B is an artistic adventure in itself. No two guest rooms are alike, because each guest room was assigned to be decorated by a different artist or group of artists. Thus, surprises are guaranteed! *DRUUM* is located in a historic 19th-century building in the Coin du Diable, or "Devil's District", once an industrial and merchants' quarter.

As to dining during the photography biennial, the most exciting eatery right now is **G-Spud** (Rue Jourdan 9; g-spud.com). Its motto is "deliciously healthy", and the potato has pride of place on the menu. Potatoes, as most everyone knows, are a Belgian obsession. However, you won't find chips at *G-Spud*, as the vegetables are instead prepared in the healthiest ways possible and in combination with fresh greens, meat or fish. The stylishly Scandinavian interior features unstained wood, light grey pillows and birch trunks used for decoration. The prices, for their part, are quite friendly, unless you plan on splurging – a wholesome lunch will cost about 10 euros.



© Eleanor Antin / The SAMMLUNG VERBUND Collection, Vienna
Courtesy the artist and Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York

Eleanor Antin, *100 Boots*, 1971-1973



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Visit Montblanc Boutique Riga, 69 Elizabetes str., tel.: +371 67506677

www.montblanc.com

Many things are not as they might initially seem, and this is particularly true at Helsinki's Esplanadi Park, where 20 tree trunks have been wrapped in a red-and-white polka dot fabric. The colourful installation by famous Japanese artist **Yayoi Kusama** reminds one of psychedelic fly agaric mushrooms and will be on display until the month of October. Born in 1929, Kusama is an extravagant contemporary artist and has never hidden the fact that art is a way for her to combat her own inner demons.

"I transform my hallucinations and obsessions into sculptures and paintings," she says. After experiencing psychiatric problems, Kusama voluntarily admitted herself to a mental hospital in Tokyo in 1977, where she has lived ever since, while passionately pursuing her artistic endeavours. Her trademark is polka dots, which she applies in all colours through various media. According to Kusama, individual people, the Earth, the Sun and the Moon are each just small dots in the vast expanse of space, and together they all make up the universe. Her own life is also like an insignificant dot, lost among many thousands of others.

Another installation by Kusama is made of 1,000 mirror-surfaced steel spheres and can be viewed in the Palm Room of Helsinki's Winter Garden (Talvipuutarha) until September 4. Symbolically named the **Narcissus Garden**, it is devoted to the Greek mythological youth who fell in love with his own reflection and to countless other individuals who have been obsessed with their self-image over the generations. The work was first exhibited at the Venice Biennale in 1966 and has continued to be displayed around the world in modified versions.

Both of Kusama's temporary installations in the Finnish capital are a prelude to a comprehensive retrospective of her works, which will be displayed at the Helsinki Art Museum (HAM) in October (hamhelsinki.fi).

Those who are fond of Scandinavian design, for their part, should check out the **Samuji House** (Erottajankatu 9; samuji.com), the new home of the well-known Finnish *Samuji* design studio. Spread out across two floors, it showcases *Samuji* fashion and interior design products. *Samuji* propounds a philosophy of sustainable or long-term design, with the premise that it is simply foolish and irresponsible to change one's wardrobe and interior decorations simply to be in line with continually changing fashion trends.

Another ode to sustainable design can be found not far away at the recently opened **Bier Bier** beer bar (Erottajankatu 13; bier-bier.fi). Its interior was created by one of Finland's best-known designers, Joanna Laajisto, who also designed the *Story* restaurant interior in the Old Market Hall. The historical Art Nouveau building in which the bar is located is being preserved by the Finnish National Board of Antiquities. Thus, the original interior of the bar's three rooms has been faithfully restored, including the ceramic tile wood stoves, ceiling decorations and wooden floors. The space's colour palette conjures up distant associations with an English pub that bears distinct elements of Nordic design, with dark wood, brass details, leather chairs and contemporary artworks on the walls all making for elegant and cosy premises. And although beer is obviously the drink of choice at this bar, those who don't fancy that bitter fermented beverage can have a cup of tea or a glass of wine instead. **BO**

Helsinki

Samuji House

Bier Bier

Samuji House

Installation by
Yayoi Kusama at
Helsinki's Esplanadi Park

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Text by **AGRA LIEGE**
Publicity photo

Tube reincarnation

More and more European cities are giving a new life to old underground stations

While some of us engage in Neil Gaiman-esque fantasies of *London Below* and its avant-garde population when pondering the fate of the British capital's discontinued Underground stations, others are actively working towards transforming these derelict spaces into something new (and to which *London Above* folk are most welcome).

The Tube's ghost stations exert something of an enigmatic pull. Anyone who's travelled on the London Underground has felt it – your train carriage sweeps past a disused, dimly lit platform without stopping, offering glimpses of the odd faded sign, which once informed hordes of travelers of their whereabouts back in another era. Such stations conjure up thoughts of Harry Potter's Platform 9¾ and the like.

These former stations would slowly deteriorate if not for a number of refreshing ideas to turn them into useful and cool places. *Transport for London* has looked into the prospect of leasing parts of unused sites to innovative businesses, which would bring additional revenue to the transport network. In any case, a lot is already going on.

Brompton Road was bought before the Second World War by the Ministry of Defense, which, in turn, sold it last year to a property developer for 50 million pounds. Obviously, this station will not be left to deteriorate further. In the meantime, television chef Michel Roux Jr.'s company *Zero Carbon Food* has been growing rocket and Thai basil for London's delis under Clapham North, while the old Shoreditch station building in East London is now a café and bar. If you hanker for a more active use of long-unused space, then you can now visit an indoor skate park that has been set up under Waterloo station, while Down Street station in Mayfair now hosts a minimarket. Previously, it housed a bunker for Winston Churchill's War Cabinet during the Second World War.

Old stations can play parts in new movies, too. The old Jubilee Line platforms at Charing Cross were featured in *Skyfall*, while a significant episode of the *Sherlock* TV series was filmed in the Kingsway station tram tunnels.

London isn't the only city to be following this new trend. Ghost stations in another metropolis, Paris, have literally been reborn with a splash. One is now hosting a public swimming pool, while another is home to a nightclub. Surely, a *Floating Market* is up next? **BO**



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Text by **AGRA LIEĢE**
Publicity photos

You will never in a million years see a Parisian buying an Eiffel tower figurine or a cheesy black cloth bag that screams I LOVE PARIS, but there is one thing that bonds tourists with the notoriously discriminating locals. It's *Berthillon*, a luxury ice cream and sorbet.

First of all, who can imagine a summer without ice cream? As soon as the sun comes out and the temperature rises, the idea of stopping by an ice cream shop inevitably pops into one's head. Countless *Instagram* models can be seen holding this magical treat in their hands. But now, back to Paris.

To Parisians, the best this-or-that is quite obviously made in Paris, and in the case of *Berthillon* they will certainly be speaking the truth. In Paris, everyone knows about this treat, which is like the James Bond of the ice cream world. Although not the cheapest summer food, it connects people of all social classes. Everyone has tasted it and everyone views it as something special.

The experience starts with a queue. There is a magic about people standing and waiting in a queue, like outside *Monmouth* coffee shops on Saturday mornings in London. You say to yourself in amazement: "These people are all prepared to wait in a long line just to taste a great cup of coffee?" Then the next thing you know, you're standing in it, too. Queuing is part of the *Monmouth* experience, and the same

goes for *Berthillon* in Paris. It gives you the chance to choose the flavour of the ice cream *boule* (or two – but more than two is considered ludicrous or, alternatively, for Americans only) and to complain a bit about the queue.

Once you get your coveted *Berthillon*, you should go for a stroll and savour it. (A good thing about the French is that they have a healthy relationship with good food. They usually don't overeat and have a guilt trip, and they enjoy their *Berthillons* to the fullest extent.) The Parisian will then ask his co-Berthilloner: "C'est bon?" (Is it good?) The answer will always be "Super bon!"

Having a *Berthillon* is practically the only situation in which a Parisian will be happy to behave in a touristy manner. There is a certain pride in having a *Berthillon*. Buying a *Berthillon* makes you very chic and in-the-know. Over the course of a conversation, Parisians will readily namedrop and mention that they recently had a *Berthillon* – in a very casual manner, of course. So, go and try a *Berthillon* the next time you're in Paris and feel like a true local! **BO**

29-31 rue Saint-Louis en l'Île, 75004 Paris
① berthillon.fr



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Text by **DACE VAIVARA**
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SHOPPING IN MALTA

Charles & Ron

The flagship store of the well-known Maltese lifestyle brand *Charles & Ron* carries designer women's clothes, bags and accessories with Maltese cultural elements. Charles Borg from Malta and Ron van Maarschalkerweerd from the Netherlands, who jointly founded what is now the country's leading fashion house, have created a unique style inspired by the retro glamour of Hollywood divas combined with the colour schemes of the Mediterranean region. 58 D Republic Street, Valletta
① charlesandron.com

Carla Grima Atelier

Carla Grima's fashion studio specialises in original and artistic clothing for women made of natural fabrics. The airy and

feminine summer one-size-fits-all clothes flatter the figure and include dresses, caftans and kimonos of painted silk and chiffon. The designer likes to experiment in the combination of watercolour techniques with photography and textile printing. 12 Giorgio Locano Street, Iklin
① carlagrima.com

Gagliardi

The *Gagliardi* flagship store offers superior classic men's suits and accessories in an elegant 1950s Italian gentlemen's style. Founded in 1964 in Malta, this *sartoria*, or tailors' enterprise, stands out with extremely high-quality linen jackets in a rich variety of colour tones, blazers, dinner jackets, elegant three-piece suits with vests, shirts, classical shoes and suede moccasins. Tigne' Point, Pjazza Tigne'
① gagliardi.eu

Store addresses in Riga: *Take a Look*, *Strabu iela 30*

The rich historical legacy that Malta has inherited through the settlement of the island nation by various civilisations has left a lasting mark on the country's cultural manifestations, including the arts, architecture, craftsmanship and fashion.

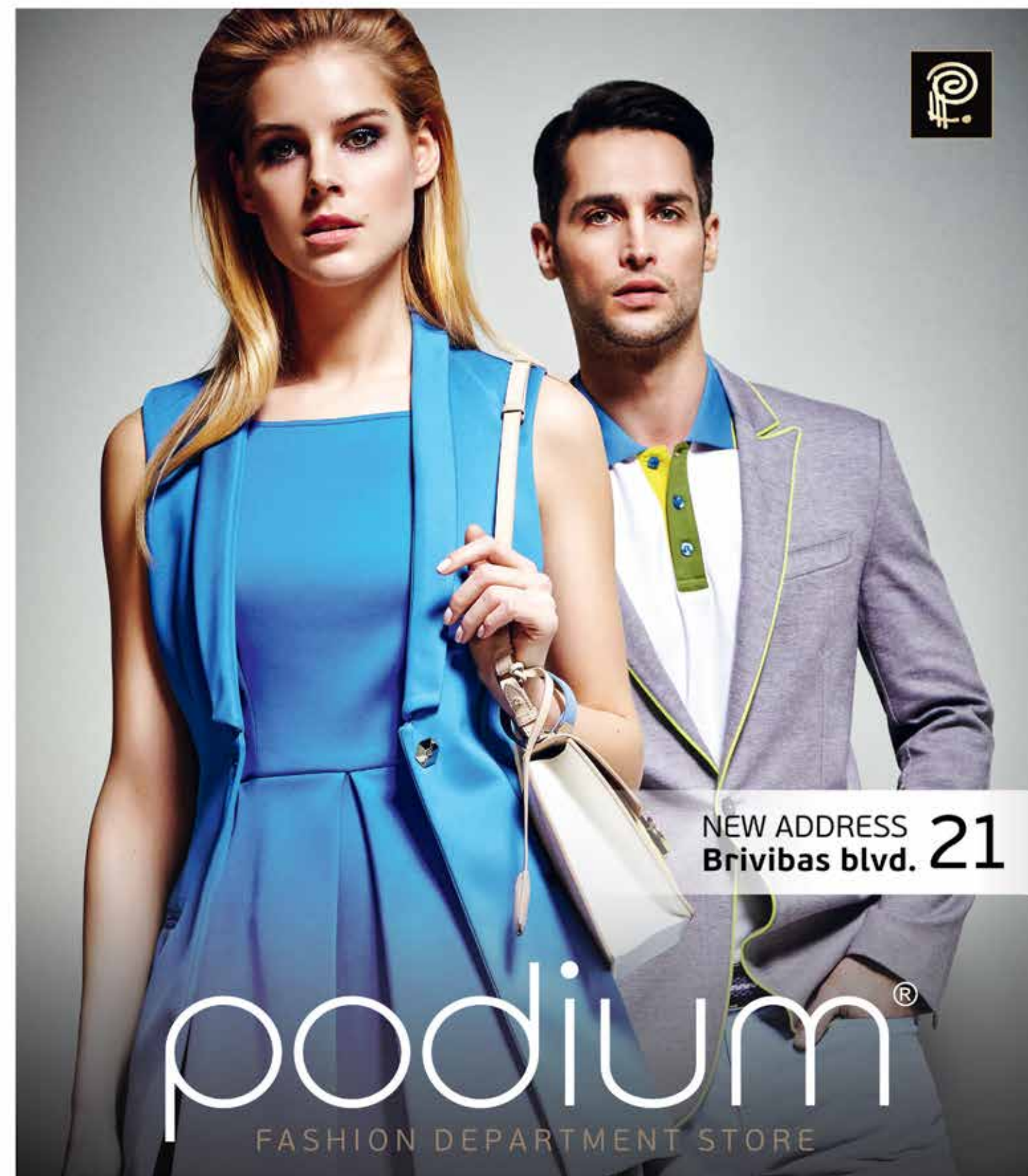
Since 1997, the capital city Valletta has hosted Malta Fashion Week, which showcases the latest creations by local fashion designers and which culminates with the Malta Fashion Awards. Among the best-known Maltese fashion houses and designers are the *Charles & Ron* creative duo, the refined *Carla Grima*, the wedding and evening dress virtuoso *Caroline Hili*, the swimwear brand by popular model *Tiffany Pisani*. Lithuanian-born Maltese designer Rosita Gasiunaitė, for her part, stands out with artistic clothing collections by the *RG Silk Sensation* brand.

Handicrafts are quite popular, and fashionistas will appreciate delicate Maltese lacework, woven textiles, knitwear and filigree jewellery, which are sold at authentic open-air *Malta Artisan Markets*.

The Maltese usually dress casually in jeans and coloured sneakers, with young people highlighting their individuality by choosing distinctive clothing items, dyeing their hair and displaying tattoos. However, at nightclubs and lively summer parties (which are an integral part of life on the islands), one should rather dress to impress. **BO**



Charles & Ron
Photo by Carlton Agius



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Enjoy the **sea** life

Just in time for the height of the beach season, our stylist reveals her favourite sun protectors and tan enhancers for this summer.

Style by **ANNA KUSTIKOVA**
Photo by **GATIS GIERTS**
(Picture Agency)

Sun protection cream for face, neck and hands (SPF 30) by *Lovea* (50 ml), EUR 11.80, *ekokosmetika.lv*

Sun protection lotion for sensitive skin (children, SPF 50) by *Shiseido* (100 ml), EUR 48, *Kolonna*

Monoï sunbathing oil (SPF 15) by *Lovea* (125 ml), EUR 13.20, *ekokosmetika.lv*

Gleamtone powder by *M.A.C Cosmetics*, EUR 28, *Stockmann*

Highlighting and contouring face palette by *Giorgio Armani*, EUR 70, *Stockmann*

Mineral sunscreen fluid for face (SPF 30) by *Clinique* (30 ml), EUR 19, *Kolonna*

Store addresses in Riga: *Kolonna*, *Galerija Centrs* shopping centre, Audēju iela 16; *Stockmann*, 13. janvāra iela 8



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Text by
KRISTĪNE BUDŽE, *Pastaiga*
Dimd publicity photos

The Swiss watch of audio

Latvia, “the land that sings”, takes great pride in the accomplishments of its musicians, opera singers and composers. The Latvian brand *Dimd* is now joining them on the world stage with its first entry into the audio playback equipment market – the *Dimd PP10* vacuum tube amplifier.



WHAT IS IT?

The *Dimd PP10* is a vacuum tube power amplifier – a significant link in the chain that brings sound from a playback device to the ear. The aim is to replicate music with the least possible loss of quality. Vacuum tubes were used in nearly all electronics until the mid-20th century, after which they were gradually replaced by cheaper transistor technology. Nevertheless, vacuum tubes are still considered the best means for maintaining high fidelity, as they amplify sound in a way that’s most suitable to the human ear. The creators of *Dimd* are Edgars Spārniņš, a doctor of engineering (PhD) and Gusts Rutkis, a philosopher with decades of experience in advertising. They draw a parallel between amplifiers that use vacuum tubes and cameras that use film, also alluding to sailing yachts as opposed to motorboats and to the ever-practical Swiss mechanical watches. In short, the vacuum

tube isn’t just about technical quality – it’s a matter of lifestyle. You can best experience the superior sound quality of *Dimd* if you listen to acoustic recordings of jazz, blues or classical music.

WHY IS IT SPECIAL?

Dimd is an effort to blend superb technical quality with cutting-edge design. Its creators adhere to the Bauhaus principle that “form follows function”. The beauty of *Dimd* lies in the aesthetics of the mechanism and its functionality. For example, there is no decorative cover. The slick aluminium surface also serves as an indispensable electromagnetic tube cage and chassis, while the elegant curve of the oak base makes the amplifier easier to lift and carry. Instead of superfluous decorations, the design relies on the retro charm of the vacuum tubes. Aside from being beautiful, this arrangement is also

practical. Vacuum tubes grow hot when in use, and the design provides for the perfect air flow to cool them. The distance between the tubes isn’t random, but integral to the quality of the sound, and the amplifier comes with removable screens for safety. In another example of attention to detail, the technical information is etched into the aluminium, which means that the amp’s specifications will always be at hand.

HOW DOES IT FIT INTO INTERIORS?

While the creators of *Dimd* like the functionalism of Scandinavian design, the amplifier’s subtle appearance easily blends into any environment. The back of the device was made with design in mind as well, for the *Dimd PP10* can be placed in the middle of a space and admired from all sides. **BO**

① dimd.eu

PS: Incidentally, dimd in Latvian means “to resound”.



Главный фасад здания, вид с ул. Элизабетес



Интерьер холла



Лифтовой холл



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В красивейшей части тихого центра Риги, в окружении жемчужин югендстиля, занесенных в культурный фонд UNESCO, возведено здание TAL RESIDENCE – будущий памятник архитектуры XXI века.

TAL RESIDENCE – дань уважения великому гению, шахматисту, рижанину Михаилу Талю, традициям и истории города Риги. Исключительность месторасположения и архитектурных решений, подземный паркинг – уникальные преимущества проекта.

Авантюризм, бескомпромиссность в принятии решений, неиссякаемый оптимизм и энергия, которые сопровождали Михаила Талья на его жизненном пути, стали источником вдохновения для создателей TAL RESIDENCE и нашли отражение в архитектурных решениях. Современная архитектура здания с ее открытостью и прозрачностью позволит жителям TAL RESIDENCE из панорамных окон и с просторных террас наслаждаться изумительными видами на исторические здания квартала.

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Details **CREW**

Text by **ILZE POLE**
Photos courtesy of
YEGOR SCHUKIN

This is your captain speaking

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

YEGOR SCHUKIN (34),

from Latvia, captain of *Boeing 737* aircraft, Approved Training Organisation (ATO) type rating and ground instructor for *Boeing 737s*
Hours flown: 5,500

HOW IT ALL **BEGAN**

I grew up in an atmosphere of aviation from my childhood, as several of my family members were involved in the field: my uncle, my grandfather and great grandfather, and now my cousin and myself. At the age of 15, I took the controls of a glider in my hands for the first time and was really impressed with the feeling of how great it is to fly! After that, I spent a lot of time flying different kinds of aircraft. At the age of 18, I packed my bags, caught a flight to South Africa and took my first steps to establish a professional career in aviation. I spent a year and a half there and received a commercial pilot's license. Several years later, I was back in school again at the Oxford Aviation Academy in the UK, where I received my airline transport pilot qualifications. That is the highest level that a commercial airline pilot can obtain. After that, I joined *airBaltic*.

BEST THING ABOUT BEING A PILOT

To be in the air; to be able to take this amazing machine off the ground and up into the sky, and to get satisfaction from the work that I do. Of course, there are other things that I like, such as the opportunity to explore the world and meet a lot of professional people. There are challenges that flight crew members meet daily and to which we must respond professionally.

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

My pilot's license, my watch and my cell phone.

HOBBIES

I try to spend all of my available free time with my kids, but I do enjoy different sports activities. Lately, I have taken quite a liking to wakeboarding.

FAVOURITE BOOK

I don't have any specific book that I can name as my favourite one. I read different kinds of books and most of them are related to my profession.

FAVOURITE RESTAURANT

I like restaurants where you can try and taste different types of food. I give preference to Mediterranean dishes.

LAST DESTINATION FLOWN TO AS A PASSENGER

It was to Moscow together with my beautiful wife. We wanted to celebrate New Year's at Red Square. We purchased our plane tickets at the last moment, as it was a last-moment idea.



SNAPSHOT TO SHARE

This snapshot was taken on a flight from Copenhagen to Riga, while I was flying a *Fokker 50* aircraft.

FAVOURITE RUNWAY

My favourite "runway" is my home sweet home in Riga, where I can do a perfect "landing" at the end of a working day and in any meteorological conditions.

BEST THING ABOUT BEING AN INSTRUCTOR

The greatest satisfaction is from seeing the positive results of your work.

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

The mere opportunity of entering the flight deck would be a surprise to most passengers! They would certainly be surprised by the amount of buttons, switches, lights and instruments in the cockpit.

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EUR 120 | [fitbit.com](#)

FITBIT BLAZE **Watch this space**



This smartwatch by wearable tech company *Fitbit* is a winner when it comes to comfort, features and price. The watch covers all of the standard fitness monitor functions that you'd expect: number of steps taken, distance travelled, heart rate, hours of sleep, etc., while also automatically recognising when you are actually exercising (as opposed to just walking). The *Blaze* comes with some smarter functions, too: it receives texts, shows incoming phone calls and controls music playback from your phone. Features a solid four-day-plus battery life.
EUR 177 | [fitbit.com](#)

These wireless headphones – among the world's first multisport biometric monitors that operate from your ears – have a biometric sensor that gives you realtime data and feedback about your performance. The accurate in-ear sensing technology has an integrated heart rate sensor and accelerometer. A linked app lets you download various fitness plans for running, cycling, swimming and marathons, which will ensure that you're getting the right workout. Seven-hour battery life and waterproof up to three metres.
EUR 220 | [kuaikwear.com](#)

KUAIWEAR
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BELTY **Worth the waist**

Yep, it's finally here: a belt that reminds you that you really should be eating less and working out more – as if you didn't already know this. The French-made device is a (relatively) fashionable accessory with sensors within the belt buckle to track your activity – plus a nice regular friendly vibration to remind you to get up and walk

the dog (and yourself). It's less packed with features than most arm-based bands, but then none of those say "Bling" like this one does. Starts shipping later in 2016; pre-orders available now.
Price TBA | [wearbelty.com](#)

GARMIN **VIVOSMART HR**
Band aid



The best competition to *Fitbit's Charge HR* has arrived in the form of *Garmin's* second-generation personal fitness device – a lightweight, black design that is sleek and won't snag on clothing. The 160x68-pixel screen does a decent job of keeping text readable, allowing for 24/7 heart-rate monitoring, smartwatch-style notifications and workout tracking of steps, sleep and stair walks. It also lets you control your mobile device's music.
EUR 152 | [garmin.com](#)

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Beat the heat

Cool down with these
iced summer drinks

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



Raspberry – rose drink

Ingredients (for 2 glasses)

2 cups raspberries
2 cups still water
1/2 cup sugar
1 tbsp. rose water
Juice of 1 lemon
Ice

Preparation

Boil the raspberries
and sugar for about
10-15 minutes in one
cup of water until the
raspberries have broken
up. Cool the mixture
and strain through a
sieve. Add the rose
water, lemon juice and
remaining water. Mix well.
Put some ice into a jug or
directly into the drinking
glasses and pour in the
prepared drink.

Strawberry – rhubarb drink

Ingredients (for 4 glasses)

3-5 rhubarb stems
2 tbsp. sugar
2 tbsp. strawberry syrup
Fresh strawberries
4 cups still water or lightly
carbonated mineral water
Ice

Preparation

Cut the rhubarb stems
into slices, put them into
a bowl, sprinkle with
sugar and let the rhubarb
juice seep out. Pour the
homemade rhubarb
syrup, strawberry syrup
and water into a jug.
Then add some fresh
strawberries and ice. **BO**


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Getting back to the basics

Text by **MERLIN JOBST**
Photo by *Alamy*

Organic orange apple cider
with cinnamon and spices

Some traditions never really die. While foodie fads such as cronuts, cupcakes and gourmet burgers come and go, the trends that stick are the ones that come from something deeper.

Fading arts of food preservation are starting to reappear on the scene after taking a back seat over the 20th century, and fermentation – the delicious, bubbling, bacteria-laden trend that’s taking the food scene by storm – is perhaps the most intriguing.

Fermenting is, without getting too scientific, what happens when carbohydrates in food are left open to natural bacteria and yeasts, which effectively consume the food’s sugars and starches and break them down into alcohol, acids and gas. These organisms open new worlds of flavours, textures, and health benefits to those with a taste for fermented foods.

Even if we don’t know it, that would include most of us, because fermented products are everywhere. Through fermentation, we leaven proper bread, turn plain

old cabbage into fiery Korean kimchi or tart sauerkraut, make miso from soy, and create such ubiquitous fare as chocolate, yoghurt, wine and beer. In fact, we’ve been fermenting grapes and grains to create booze and bread for longer than our own history can tell us.

But while fermentation may be all around us, food-transforming bacteria are starting to become cool again in foodie cities across the West, and Berlin is a perfect example. Fermentation in Germany is obviously best known in the old-school form of sauerkraut. Lately, however, more and more people in the capital’s hippest boroughs are harnessing the yeasts in the air around them in new and exciting ways, from truly filthy kimchi fries in Kreuzberg to bars featuring cocktails based on the acidic kick of kombucha (fermented tea).

In trendy Neukölln, for example, the *Home* café is truly flying the fermentation flag, thanks to its Australian owner having fallen in love with its flavours and digestive benefits, and teaching herself the techniques. The soul of *Home* sits in the jars of krauts and pickles lining its walls, which lift a breakfast of poached eggs and avocado, or modest lentil salad, to new heights, with a deeply satisfying sourness and kick of good bacteria that the human digestive tract craves.

The possibilities for fermentation are endless. Whether it’s soured oats or milk kefir on a brunch plate, or a thick, tangy slice of sourdough from a San Francisco bakery that does things the old-fashioned way, fermentation is bringing back some of what’s been lost through industrial food production and is rightly reclaiming its place in our diets. **BO**

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Celebrity living on the Adriatic coast

Text by **AGRA LIEGE**
Publicity photos

Poised on a peaceful clifftop and overlooking the crystal-clear Adriatic Sea, the *Villa Scheherazade* in Dubrovnik reveals little about the prominent guests who have stayed there to casual passers-by. Among the famous stars who have sojourned at the villa are former Hollywood couple Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton.

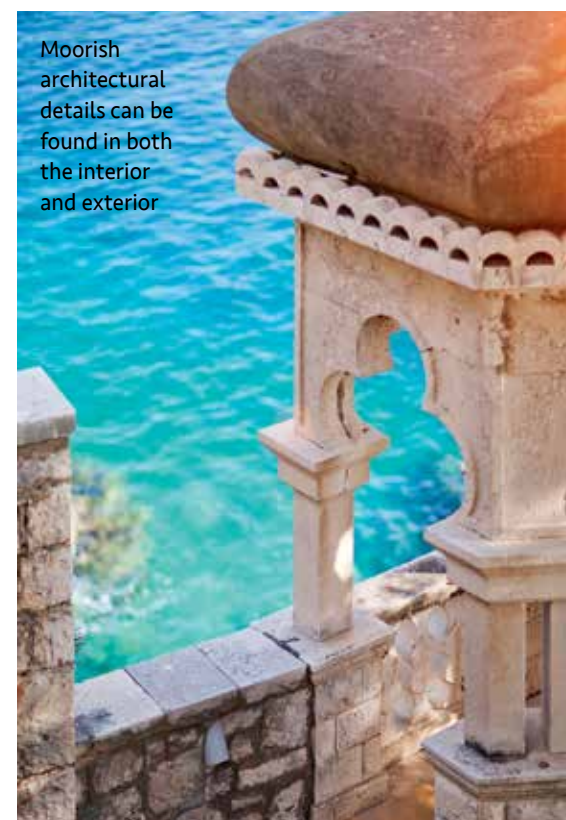
Spread over 4,200 square metres and three floors, the *Villa Sheherezade* is a world of striking yet soothing luxury. The dazzling, domed, white-stone palace offers thrilling views of the sea. Probably one of the most exclusive spots on the Croatian Adriatic, its sweeping high ceilings, hidden alcoves, Moorish architectural features and amazing works of art represent the ultimate destination for anyone who wishes to enjoy life to the fullest.

The *Villa Sheherezade* stands on a beautiful clifftop at the southeast end of the Dalmatian coast. It faces both the paradisaal island of Lokrum and Dubrovnik's famous fortress walls, which are easily accessible from the villa on foot. The villa has its own pier and beach, and incredible cinematic vistas greet you everywhere you go. One of its terraces has been transformed into a large and secluded outdoor pool with a whirlpool right next to it.

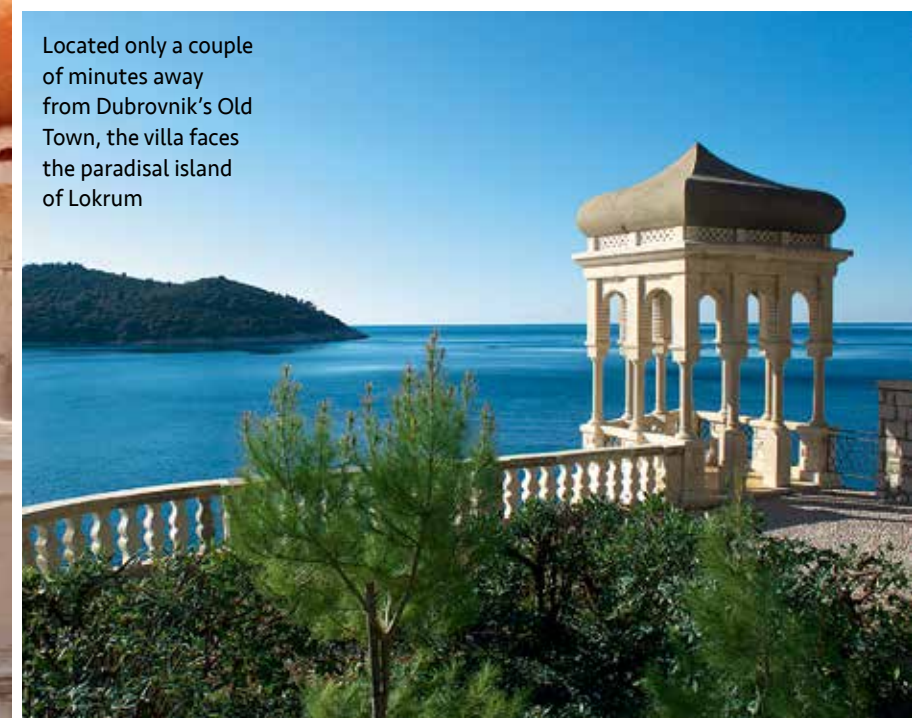
The history of the villa is no less intriguing. Apparently, a Lithuanian-Jewish entrepreneur who had fled Russia's October Revolution commissioned the villa during the 1920s. It was built in a Moorish Revival style to accommodate his mistress, whom he called Sheherezade. No expense was spared to fill the love nest with the best that the world had to offer. That included bespoke furniture, rare objects and works of art. Today, the villa is still called the Taj Mahal of the Adriatic. Its luxurious furniture and inventory came from all parts of the world; the bathroom was purchased in the United States, while the organ arrived from St Petersburg.

Whatever the palace's actual history, it has been inextricably bound with romance. Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton stayed there while shooting a movie in Dubrovnik. The *Villa Sheherezade* has continued to be a popular film location and has drawn numerous celebrities, including tennis star John McEnroe.

Moorish architectural details can be found in both the interior and exterior



Located only a couple of minutes away from Dubrovnik's Old Town, the villa faces the paradisaal island of Lokrum



The villa has five deluxe bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms





One of the original white-stone terraces has been transformed into a large secluded outdoor pool with a whirlpool right next to it

► The villa is surrounded by 4,000 square metres of white-stone terraces, two of which are located on the building's roof

▼ The villa's peaceful and lush gardens feature mature palm and cypress trees



A wood-paneled hallway leads into a graceful living room at the heart of the villa. The view of the turquoise Adriatic Sea will take your breath away, and visitors are invariably tempted to admire it from the upholstered armchairs and sofas



▲ The exquisite dining hall, or Grand Salon, has a large dining table that is perfect for entertaining

► Architect Alfred Keller designed the *Villa Scheherazade*. Inspired by Moorish architecture, he also gave the building an Art Deco appearance. **BO**



CYPRUS

AN ISLAND FOR ROMANTICS

Text by **UNA MEISTERE**,
anothertravelguide.com
Publicity photos and by
AINĀRS ĒRGLIS

Bad luck, somebody has already taken the Anothertravelguide brochure about Cyprus. But don't worry, all the information is also available at [ANOTHERTRAVELGUIDE.COM](https://anothertravelguide.com) in cooperation with *airBaltic*.

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Lefkara village



Apostle Peter and St. Helen the Martyr Chapel in the coastal town of Paphos

I recently saw on the Internet that the Japanese Association of Travel Agents (JATA) has included Lefkara, one of Cyprus' most charming villages, on its list of 30 most beautiful towns in Europe. This is of particular significance now, when disenchantment in various global phenomena is rising. Long-forgotten trades, culinary arts and handicrafts are slowly, slowly becoming popular once again. Unbelievable as it may seem in this time of digitalisation and modern gadgets, for over 1,500 years, the main industry in Lefkara has been lace-making.

Although lace had already been made there much earlier, the craft became truly refined during Cyprus' Venetian period (1489 – 1571). Back then, wealthy Venetian ladies seeking refuge from the harsh coastal sun went up to the hills of Lefkara, where they transferred their knowledge of sewing and embroidery to the local women. The resulting mix of Cypriot and Venetian lace-making styles even has its own name – *lefkaritiko* – and is now known worldwide. The ancient traditions are still handed

Do visit the **Chrysorrogia Monastery** in the coastal city of Paphos. It was built in 1152 and restored in the late 18th century. Famous for its collection of icons and treasures, the monastery also houses one of the oldest working wineries in Cyprus. The monks there still make wine, and the quality of the wine is outstanding.

The small mountain village of **Omodos** (population just over 300) is the symbolic centre of the Cyprus wine region. Located at an elevation of 810 metres, it is surrounded by vineyards and apple, plum, peach, pear and

down from generation to generation, with each new crop of lace-makers adding their own, new accents to the craft. According to legend, when Renaissance genius Leonardo da Vinci visited the town in 1481, he acquired a tablecloth sewn by one of the local women, which he later memorialised in *The Last Supper*, his famous fresco on the wall of the Santa Maria delle Grazie Church in Milan.

The main motifs used in Lefkara lace are inspired by the local flora and fauna, and the needle work is so fine that the pieces look identical from both sides. The cobbled streets and low buildings of Lefkara seem untouched by time; shops selling lace line the main street, and their owners – most often elderly women – sit just outside the door, sewing. The women gladly chat with any visitor who shows an interest in their work, and it is plain to see that the tourism industry has not robbed them of their dignity.

One of these women quietly invites us inside her workshop; she wants to show us a unique photograph. Its edges slightly worn, the photo is



Bath of Aphrodite on the Akamas Peninsula



Latchi village



Latchi village

from 1986, the year that the Milan Cathedral celebrated its 600th anniversary. In honour of the occasion, the Cypriots presented the cathedral with a tablecloth that is identical to the one in Da Vinci's painting. Measuring 10.5 by 2.5 metres, it took three women a year and a half to sew. Our host was one of those three women.

Nearby, I see an older, black-and-white photo of at least eight women sitting around a single table. "They've all since passed away," says our host calmly and goes back to her chair to resume sewing. As I observe the calmness in her face and the precision with which she sews the complicated design, I get the feeling that she's lost in the lace, completely at one with her work. Lace is her life and her daily meditation, and the routine peace of this creative process fills the entire village. No hurry and no hubbub – it's as if Lefkara still lives in a different century.

Anogyra, a village on the southern side of the Troodos Mountains, offers a similar journey back in time and a peek into long-lost values. It has a population of only some 200 people and is surrounded by carob plantations. Carob trees are the "black gold" of Cyprus, and Anogyra was historically the centre of this industry. A member of the legume family, the tree's pod-like fruits and seeds contain a high concentration of carbohydrates as well as calcium (three times more than milk), iron, phosphorus

and other minerals. They are also considered to be powerful natural antioxidants. The pods and seeds are used to make syrups, liqueurs and a variety of sweets.

Cypriots enjoy carob as a substitute for chocolate. It is even said that the term *carat*, a unit of weight used by jewellers for weighing and evaluating precious stones and metals, may possibly derive from the Greek word κεράτιον. The assumption being that long ago, gold and gems were weighed using carob seeds. Of course, the system was later standardised, and today a carat is equal to 0.2 grams (200 milligrams).

In the early 20th century, carob was one of Cyprus' main exports. The island once boasted more than 2 million carob trees, and it produced 53,000 tonnes of carob products per year in the 1960s. By 2012, however, this number had fallen to only 9,000 tonnes. It turns out that carob trees have two enemies in modern times: urbanisation and rats. A special conservation programme has been established in Anogyra to fight the rodent pests, which gnaw at the bark and hasten the trees' early demise. As a part of this programme, barn owls and black snakes are being introduced to the area. A barn owl can kill up to 3,000 rats a year, thereby providing a natural form of protection for carob plantations. A special museum has even been opened in Anogyra



Anassa luxury boutique hotel



Latchi fishing harbour
on the Akamas Peninsula



Streets of Lefkara village

for Cyprus' "black gold". The museum was founded by the sisters Yiota Hadjikyriakou and Andri Vasiliou and is located on their family's property, which has produced carob for many generations.

Journey into history

Cyprus is the third largest Mediterranean island after Sicily and Sardinia and is located at the crossroads of three continents: Europe, Asia and Africa. As one British newspaper aptly wrote, Cyprus is a place for romantics and lovers of history, legends and tales. The Phoenicians, Assyrians, Venetians, Ottomans and Europeans have all left their mark there, and thus a trip to the island can be compared to the pages of a three-dimensional history book. The architecture reflects influences from the Byzantine Empire, Greek temples, Roman theatres and villas, Crusaders' castles, Moorish and Venetian buildings, and the British Colonial style.

During the Classical period (480 BC – 330 AD), Cyprus found itself in the middle of the Greco-Persian Wars. It became a part of the Persian Empire for a time, but nevertheless retained a great amount of independence. During the Roman period (30 BC – 330 AD), the island was famous for the copper mines on the northern slopes of the Troodos Mountains. In fact, the name of the island became synonymous with *cuprum*, the Latin word for copper. The English word *copper* is also said to have derived from *Kupros*, the Greek name of the island.

The Kourion Theatre, a Greco-Roman amphitheatre overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, was one of the most vivid witnesses of that era. Built in the 2nd century BC, the

apricot orchards. At its centre stands the Holy Cross Monastery with its ancient icons. The main exhibit in the nearby miniature Linos Museum is an old grape press. Even though the press ceased being used about a decade ago, the ancient stone walls surrounding it still seem seeped in the aroma of wine.

The small resort town of **Platres**, located on the southern slopes of the Troodos Mountains, is known for the nightingales immortalised by poet and Nobel Prize winner Giorgos Seferis: "The nightingales won't let you sleep in Platres." In winter the town's population is only 250, but tourism sometimes brings that count up to over 10,000 in the summer.

The Troodos mountain area is famous for its **Orthodox churches**, which are decorated with Byzantine frescoes and which were built between the 11th and 16th centuries. The churches are located mainly in three mountain regions – Pitsilia, Solea and Marathasa. Ten of these houses of worship have been included on UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites.



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theatre can seat 3,500 people, has superb acoustics and is still used today for summertime concerts and operas. Even though it was originally built as a theatre, there are legends that the Kourion was at first actually used more for gladiator fights. In any case, if you happen to be in Cyprus in the summer, it is definitely worth experiencing an open-air concert at the Kourion Theatre.

The silver and gold industries blossomed on Cyprus during the Byzantine era (330 – 1191). The Byzantine-style Angeloktisti Church is unique in that it contains a rare 6th-century mosaic of the Virgin Mary and Child between the guardian angels Michael and Gabriel. Mosaics from this time period have survived only on Cyprus and Mount Sinai. The majestic olive tree in the church’s yard is also impressive and estimated to be at least 400 years old.

Legendary English king Richard the Lionheart is also associated with Cyprus. Driven by strategic territorial motives, he invaded the island in 1191. There he married Berengaria of Navarre, who loyally accompanied him on his crusades, and crowned her the Queen of England. However, he later sold the island after realising how difficult it was to control.

Cyprus has also served as an extravagant gift. Unable to surprise his mistress Queen Cleopatra of Egypt with jewels, Roman general Marcus Antonius is said to have given her some islands as gifts, including Cyprus.

In Greek mythology, Aphrodite emerged from the sea along Cyprus’ coast, and, in honour of the goddess, a popular tourist site is the Baths of Aphrodite, a natural, spring-fed mountain pool surrounded by century-old fig trees. The Greek goddess of love and beauty is said to have enjoyed bathing at that spot, where



Loukia and Michael Zampela
Art Museum in Nicosia




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she also met her love, the god of fertility Adonis. As is often the case in such places, the water is reported to have countless magical qualities and it is unbelievably clear; even the backs of the eels swimming between the rocks can be seen in full detail.

The Troodos Mountains in the middle of the island, for their part, were created by the colliding of the Asian and European tectonic plates or, as told in mythology, by the island of Cyprus slowly rising out of the sea.

The Akamas Peninsula, one of the largest areas in the Mediterranean untouched by civilisation, is named for Akamantas, an Athenian warrior who arrived there after the Trojan War. The landscape is breathtaking, with cliffs, gorges, the blue-green sea, miniature islands, carob trees, flowers in all possible colours, orange trees and the aroma of thyme in the air. Today, part of the peninsula is a national park with several hiking trails as well as bicycle paths. Lara Beach, one of Cyprus’ most beautiful, is also there. Secluded and wild, it is a place

where sea turtles come to spawn.

Another special destination is Cedar Valley, one of the few places in the world where – if you’re lucky – you can still see wild sheep, or mouflons, wandering about. In some way similar to antelopes, with curved horns that can measure up to 85 centimetres long, mouflons are considered to be the ancestors of the domesticated sheep. Likewise, Cedar Valley itself is quite rare, with similar environments being found only in Lebanon and the Himalayas.

In fact, cedars may have been introduced to Cyprus from Lebanon. There are thousands of them in Cedar Valley – about 200,000 in all – their green crowns intertwining to virtually form a carpet of trees. This area also has three Venetian bridges, built between 1489 and 1571 as a part of the ancient camel road once used to transport copper from the Pera Pedi mines. Up until 1965, about 90 camels still lived on the island.

Cyprus is also the birthplace of one of the world’s oldest wines, Vin de Commandaria. Templar crusaders began making the dark-yellow, saturated and

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Omodos village



Loukia and Michael Zampela
Art Museum in Nicosia

Chora, the city's old centre, is surrounded by 16th-century Venetian walls and exudes an Eastern vibe

slightly port-like dessert wine there in the 14th century, and the ancient tradition is still carefully maintained to this day. Richard the Lionheart is reported to have called it “the wine of kings and the king of wine”.

The island is the site of the only divided capital in the world, Nicosia. The city's “Green Line”, which divides the Republic of Cyprus from the territory occupied by Turkey in 1974, vaguely reminds one of the Berlin Wall. Although in some places the line is marked by just a pile of metal barrels and barbed wire. A 20-metre-wide “dead zone” with abandoned houses and streets lies between the two territories. The most popular point to cross the Green Line (bring your passport!) is at the end of Ledra Street, a shopping area in Nicosia. However, considering the recently renewed peace negotiations between the Greek and Turkish sides of the island, we can hope that Nicosia's Green Line will soon fall, just like the Berlin Wall.

Nicosia has been the capital of Cyprus since the 11th century, that is, since the Byzantine era. Chora, the city's old centre, is surrounded by 16th-century Venetian walls and exudes an Eastern vibe, with countless shops and cafés swirling in smoke from water pipes. History buffs will want to visit the Cyprus Museum, the largest archaeological museum on the island. The museum building was constructed between 1908 and 1924, when Cyprus was still a British colony.

Lovers of contemporary architecture, for their part, will want to see the recently opened 67-metre-tall Tower 25, designed

by French starchitect Jean Nouvel. The building's snow-white perforated walls visually resemble the lace designs made by the women of Lefkara, while the balconies bring to mind the island's many green gardens. The motivation behind the design, however, is not only decorative but also functional. In the heat of summer, the lush wall-gardens provide natural protection from the hot Mediterranean sun for the building's residents, offices and shops. In the autumn, when most of the plants lose their leaves, the sun provides welcome heat to the indoor spaces. Although standing only 18 storeys high, Tower 25 prides itself in being Nicosia's tallest skyscraper.

Last autumn, Cyprus acquired another example of contemporary architecture – the Apostle Peter and St. Helen the Martyr Chapel in the coastal town of Paphos, designed by local architect Michail Georgiou. Inspired by traditional Byzantine architecture, the chapel's form is quite unusual and resembles the hump of a camel's back. But the chapel is also a minimalist gem, with the structure containing not only a laconic sanctuary, but also a bell tower.

In a contemporary architectural language, Georgiou has also masterfully united two characteristic elements of Cypriot churches, namely, an angular roof construction (common in the mountainous region of the island) and a barrel-vaulted single-aisle style of church (encountered more often in coastal regions). The miniature sanctuary has a 5.5-metre tall door, which allows the interior to almost completely merge with the exterior and the nearby almond trees, whose shadows create surreal designs on the chapel's façade. As your eye moves across the angled façade from the foundation up to the very top of the roof for what must already be the third time, you will likely agree that “less is more” in this particular case.

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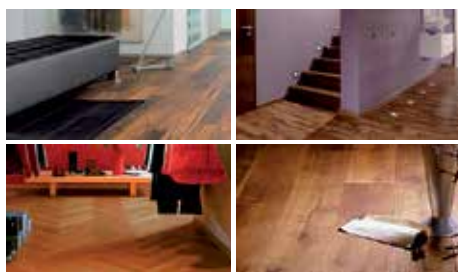
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Cyprus' western spa town of Paphos, inhabited since the Neolithic period and later associated with the cult of Aphrodite, is also a gem for lovers of history. It served as the capital of the island for a short time in the distant past, but today the town is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Coffee ritual and seafood meze

Even though Cyprus is relatively large, it still mostly feels like a village. The small mountain villages rarely have more than 300 residents, and life there runs at its own pace, seemingly untouched by the rest of the world. The houses are usually centred around a church in the middle of the village, and socialising takes place at the *kafenio*. These coffee shops are the real place to learn what's going on in the village. This tradition has remained unchanged since the early 17th century, when coffee was introduced to Europe.

Even the avowed afternoon-tea-loving British were unable to eradicate the Cypriot ritual of drinking coffee. A genuine *kafenio* is usually nothing more than a large room with simple tables, chairs and a fireplace. *Kafenios* are most often located in the very centre of the village, and they are usually frequented only by men. In former times, when the men worked out in the fields all day, a visit to the *kafenio* was obligatory at lunchtime, in the evenings after work and on Sundays after church. On days when the weather was too poor for outdoor work, the coffee shops stayed open all day. In between the coffee ritual and the news of the day, games of backgammon, or *tavli* in Greek, are a ubiquitous element of the *kafenio*.

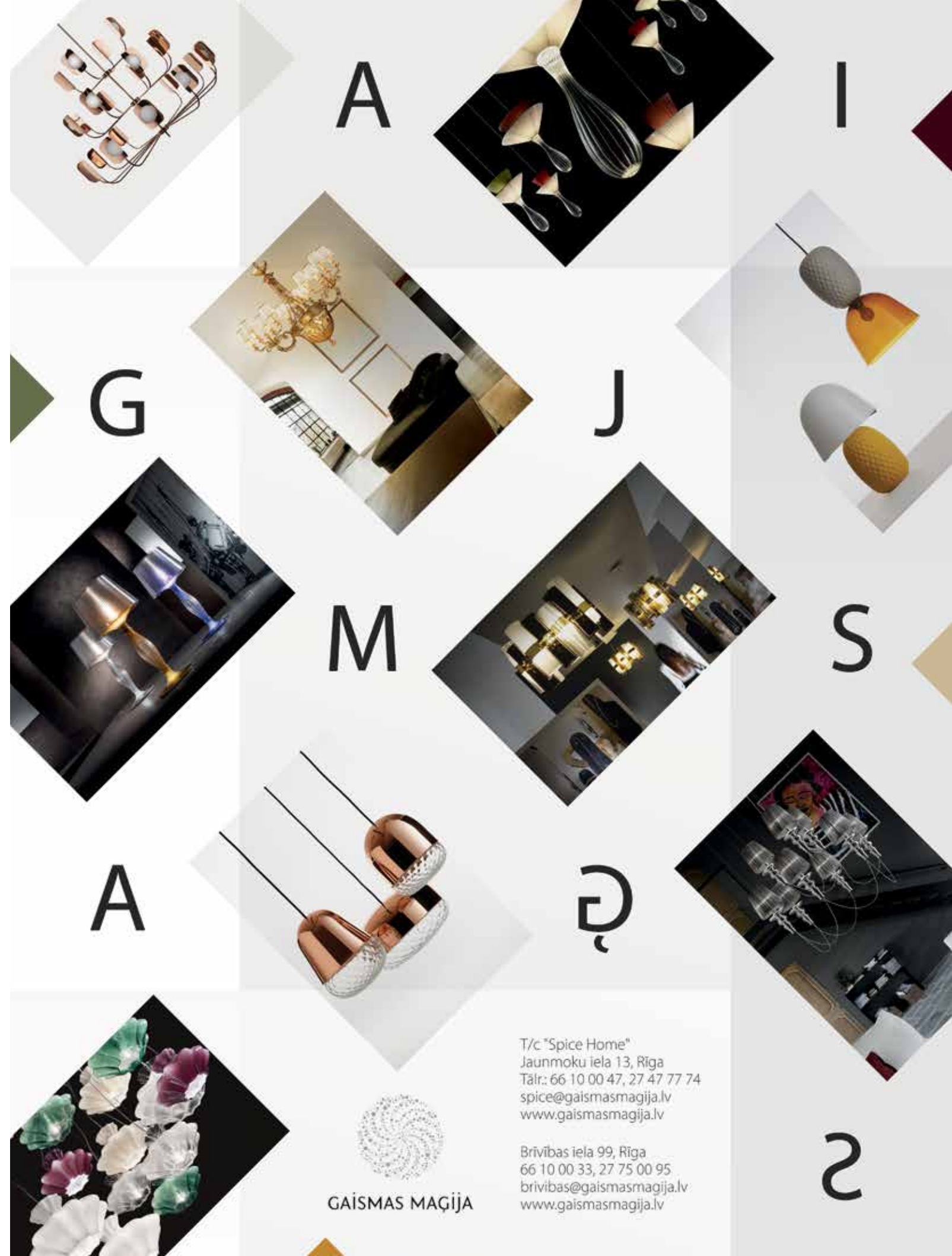
The drink itself is brewed slowly on hot sand, similarly to Turkish coffee. There are three types of coffee to choose from: *sketo* (with no sugar), *metrio* (medium sweet) and *glyko* (sweet). Drink it without sugar for a real shock of energy. But no matter which type you choose, it is always served with a glass of cold water. A don't be surprised if, after finishing your coffee, someone turns the cup upside down – reading coffee grounds to predict the future is also a Cypriot tradition. As befits an island known for its hospitality, most restaurants serve a complimentary coffee following a large dinner.

Cyprus also has its legends about coffee. For example, the small village of Kathikas

(population 333), located halfway between Paphos and Polis on the edge of the Akamas Peninsula Nature Reserve, once served as a rest stop for travellers and merchants. Interestingly, there are three coffee shops in the centre of this small village – to this day, each of them is patronised by supporters of a different political party. One could say it's the local solution to avoiding any open confrontation that might otherwise traumatise one's mood.

The cuisine of Cyprus is just as wonderful as the nature, sea and cultural history that one encounters there. Like the Greek Cypriot dialect – which the locals joke that not even the Athenians can understand – the island's food reflects a great variety of cultural influences and traditions. In a way, it could be considered a combination of the best of Greek food and Lebanese meze. In addition, as one might expect in a country where everything grows so well (such lush and peppery rucola is almost impossible to find in European grocery stores) and the sea is all around (and still full of fish, unlike in some of the neighbouring countries), the bouquet of flavours and freshness is downright intoxicating.

A full table is a thing of honour in Cyprus, and portion sizes are at least as generous as the sun, which pampers the island 330 days a year. If you wish to experience a true Cypriot-style lunch, take a drive to the small fishing village of Latchi at the eastern end of the Akamas Peninsula on a Sunday. The atmosphere is relaxed and lazy, colourful fishing boats and yachts float in the small harbour, a few men unhurriedly tend to their fishing nets, and there's seafood meze on virtually every Cypriot table in the nearby restaurants: calamari, octopus, cuttlefish, mussels, shrimp, two or three types of fish, the ubiquitous fresh tomato-cucumber-lettuce salad, hummus, tsatsiki, bread roasted with olive oil and garlic and herbs.... One's head begins to spin just at the sight of all of this wonderful food. By the way, Cypriots grill and serve cuttlefish uncleaned, because the innards help to retain the taste of the sea. If you start carefully cleaning the fish on your plate, do not be surprised if an astonished Cypriot exclaims, "How can you not eat that? That's the best part!"



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GAISMAS MAĢIJA

“Cypriots have some of the most complex and rarest DNA codes on the planet”



Michalis Georgiou is a Cypriot architect who has designed one of the most exciting pieces of contemporary architecture in Cyprus, the Apostle Peter and St. Helen the Martyr Chapel. The miniature sanctuary, which occupies only 60 square metres, is located in the coastal town of Paphos, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

How did the idea of the Apostle Peter and St. Helen the Martyr Chapel project start, and why was Paphos chosen as its location?

The project was a tribute to a beloved person who has passed away, and a private donation to the Church of Cyprus. We were commissioned by someone who comes from Paphos, and the chapel was built on the same plot of land where his house is located.

What do you love most about Cyprus?

It's a safe place with fabulous weather, authentic Mediterranean food and rare natural beauty. Cyprus' long history has shaped its rich and diverse architectural heritage. One can immediately sense this unique imprint by strolling down the alleys of the historic urban centres.

How would you characterise Cypriots as a people?

Interestingly enough, Cypriots have some of the most complex and rarest DNA codes on the planet. That's simply because of our geopolitical location, which has historically attracted many suitors. Nevertheless, we have survived, remaining very friendly and hospitable!

What should visitors to Cyprus be sure to do?

Definitely NOT try to tick the boxes! Make sure that you enjoy the lovely weather, food, sun and sea. You are on a holiday after all! Try to blend in! Renting a car wouldn't be a bad idea. An open-air evening concert at the Kourion ancient amphitheatre is a MUST. An evening swim at a beach can be very rewarding.

What are your favourite places in Cyprus?

The Akamas Peninsula with its small villages and the Troodos mountain region.

Which villages/cities must one include in an itinerary in order to feel the cultural soul of Cyprus?

One can easily visit all four main cities (Nicosia, Limassol, Larnaca and Paphos) in a relatively short time. Latchi and Polis can be very interesting destinations in the summertime. I would specifically recommend the medieval village of Fikardou as well as Omodos and Lefkara villages.

What is the most unique tradition in Cyprus that is still alive today?

Wine-making has a long history in Cyprus, dating back to the Hellenistic and Roman periods. The tradition continued and thrived during medieval times with famous wines like Commandaria. Cypriot wine is re-emerging nowadays, with

younger wineries and winemakers starting to invest in new and forgotten varieties. You could actually plan a very interesting route through the mountain region by visiting wineries.

What favourite restaurants/café would you recommend for the gourmet traveller in Cyprus?

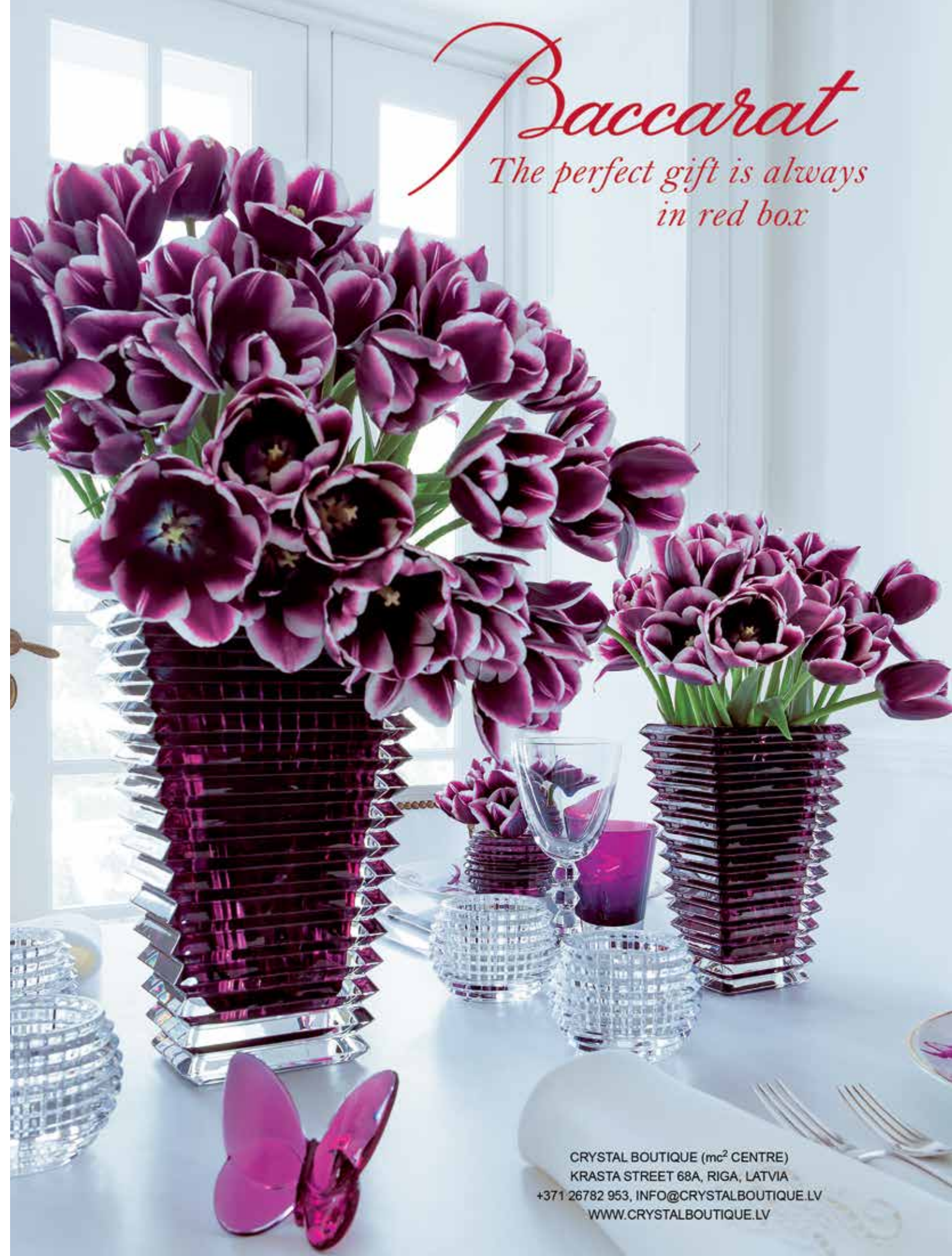
Traditional meze and *souvla* (pork, chicken and lamb) are a must when visiting Cyprus. I would recommend the *Viklari* tavern in the Akamas area for souvla, the *Mousikos* tavern in Sotira village in the Famagusta district and also *Pangratios* in Miliou village in the Paphos district for meze. There are plenty of modern healthy eateries in Nicosia. For a traditional Cypriot lunch, I would suggest *Siantris* in the old city of Nicosia. You can enjoy a nice sunset cocktail at the *Oneiro Café* in Coral Bay by Paphos.

Which places would be better to avoid as tourist traps when travelling around Cyprus?

There are many places dedicated to tourists, because we are a tourist destination. We even have entire areas labelled as tourist areas! In urban centres, make sure you stay where the locals are – you can't go wrong in a place full of locals. Away from the main centres, things are much more relaxed and everyone kind of blends together.

What is the biggest stereotype about Cyprus, and is it true or not?

I believe that someone visiting Cyprus expects a holiday destination primarily offering the sun and sea. While this can be entirely true and very relaxing, those who wish to search beyond stand a very good chance of discovering the real island of Aphrodite. **BO**



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A place where pilots grow wings

Text by ILMĀRS LĪKUMS
Photos by GATIS GIERTS
(Picture Agency)

Six years have passed since *airBaltic Training* began its operations. Within this short time, the aviation specialist training centre has become a modern educational establishment that offers internationally recognised and marketable skills at very reasonable prices. The reputable training centre has acquired a solid reputation far beyond Latvia's borders, and its graduates have found employment not only at *airBaltic* but also at other respectable airlines all across the world.



If you look at the operations of an international airport for a few minutes, then you will realise that the main asset in this line of work is... knowledge. Commercial air flights involve huge numbers of people up in the sky and on the ground, super complicated technologies, logistics that are hard to grasp, a global service structure, as well as risks and responsibilities. In order to maintain a sense of control in this multi-layered system, all kinds of knowledge and skills need to be put into use every second of every day.

In addition, once aviation specialists receive their educational diplomas or degrees, they cannot afford to slack off in self-satisfaction and forego further studies. No matter what line of aviation one works in, one has to continually maintain and upgrade one's skills, as that is the only way to guarantee safe flights and quality service to commercial flight passengers.

When *airBaltic* set up its training centre, the airline wanted to create an environment where aviation specialists could increase their qualifications and be competitive on the job market, no matter what country they come from. In six years' time, several thousand aviation workers have completed various courses at the training centre. This year alone, nearly 150 potential airline pilots will have graduated from the centre's *Boeing 737* flight training programme.

More than just a pilots' flight school

Obviously, one of the main functions of the state-of-the art training centre – which stands just a stone's throw from Riga International Airport – is to train future airline pilots and flight attendants. However, the centre also trains various other airline industry professionals who work on the ground, rather than at an altitude of 10,000 metres. Special training programmes have been created

This year alone, nearly 150 potential airline pilots will have graduated from the centre's *Boeing 737* flight training programme

for flight management specialists, airport technical staff and other airline employees who need to raise their work qualifications.

In fact, *airBaltic Training* can offer an education to anyone who wishes to embark on a career in aviation, or even continue working in their current line of employment. For example, courses on customer service (a sphere of crucial importance for airlines) provide knowledge that graduates can use in many other



WOULD YOU ALSO LIKE TO TRY YOUR HAND AT FLYING?

Although commercial airline flights are an everyday occurrence, people continue to be fascinated by airplanes and flying. Many would be happy to learn what it's like to fly a real airplane.

For most of us, that will remain a distant dream. However, *airBaltic Training* does offer a series of exciting corporate events, including the opportunity for company staff members to try out the *Boeing 737* flight simulator.

Sometimes company employees become especially united in crisis situations. How well would your company's staff members work together if they had to make quick decisions in the simulated role of flight attendants? This can all be done at the *airBaltic Training* centre!

professions. One might add that all of the training centre's teaching staff have years of practical experience in the subjects that they are teaching.

Taming the world's most popular aircraft

It should hardly come as a surprise that pilot training programmes are among the most requested at the centre. *airBaltic Training* does not train people who have just recently begun learning to fly, which means that prospective airline pilots must already have previous flying experience and an educational background in aviation. Only those with the required preliminary qualifications can then enrol in the *airBaltic Training* centre to learn how to pilot two types of aircraft: the *Boeing 737*, which is the world's most popular commercial passenger aircraft, and the *Bombardier Dash 8 Q400*, which is flown on many *airBaltic* flight routes.

The first part of this training programme involves a ten-day-long computer-administered course, which the student can also complete without being physically present at the centre. That is followed by a three-day on-site programme, during which the trainees learn about the planes' operating principles and flight procedures.

Since commercial airline cockpits are full of dials, buttons and switches, and since airplane pilots must know the purpose of each and every one of them, the students then train in somewhat simplified model cockpits until they have become familiar with the location of each item and can find it at a moment's notice in any situation.

Only after they have completed these three training modules can students proceed with the most exciting part of the ground-based training – further instruction in an incredibly realistic *Boeing 737* flight simulator. The prospective pilots go through nine simulator sessions, each of them four hours long. During these sessions, the candidates learn to deal with various emergency situations such as engine failure and bad weather. The students' pilot skills are then tested in an exam, which consists of another four-hour session in a flight simulator.

If the flight simulator exam goes successfully, then the candidates move on to flights with actual aircraft for a further six landings in real aircraft, where again, they must show that they are capable of implementing various manoeuvres and procedures. This whole process takes about a month and a half, after which the graduates are considered sufficiently qualified to pilot commercial passenger aircraft.

Active pilots among the teaching staff

The *airBaltic Training* centre stands out with an extremely competent teaching staff. The instructors are actual *airBaltic* pilots who have accumulated a great deal of practical experience over the years. Their ability to explain and analyse real-life situations is invaluable to the students. Other flight training centres do not employ active commercial airline pilots and, although such a policy is expensive to the training centre, it is well worth the investment.

The same policy applies in the education of prospective flight attendants and airport technical personnel, who are taught by actively working airline staff in their respective fields. It is hard to imagine anyone more competent in cargo transport, for example, than someone who engages in this activity on a daily

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basis. Incidentally, *airBaltic*’s employees are themselves continually upgrading their skills and qualifications, often under the guidance of specialists from abroad who are regularly called in to impart their knowledge at the training centre.

Feeling right at home on a plane

Although it is possible to drive a car without knowing much about its mechanics, the pilots and flight attendants of commercial passenger aircraft must have an intimate knowledge of the aircraft on which they are serving. Knowing how an aircraft works and the purpose of each item allows the “umbrella principle” to be implemented. Thanks to this principle, emergency situations are extremely rare. By strictly following set guidelines and procedures, aviation professionals can prevent potentially risky situations from arising at all. The advanced infrastructure at the *airBaltic Training* centre permits students to practically implement their

theoretical knowledge about the structure of an aircraft or about passenger service. The students are trained to recognise potential risks and act appropriately in the most critical situations. How should one put out a fire that arises in the cabin? What kinds of sounds arise in particular situations? The prospective flight attendants learn about these and many other things by training on an actual airplane and by learning how to use its emergency life-saving equipment. This combination of an education in the theoretical aspects of flying, real-life examples given by the instructors and extensive practical training (which is available in several languages) ensures that the *airBaltic Training* centre’s students graduate as highly qualified aviation specialists, and that they will be valuable employees to their airlines. **BO**

Further information about the *airBaltic Training* courses, schedules and tuition fees can be found at airbaltictraining.com.

LAURA PÄRNASALU,
AIRBALTIC TRAINING
SALES MANAGER



“Thanks to our experience with *airBaltic*, we know the airline’s strong sides, which we incorporate into our training programmes to promote the growth of our clients. Aviation is a strictly regulated sphere, and that’s why it’s important for airline employees to be certified. However, it’s even more important for them to receive high quality training, because nobody will be hired simply on the basis of the documents that they have acquired to demonstrate their qualifications. In order to fly a commercial aircraft, pilots have to go through all kinds of tests that determine their practical skills and knowledge. “Looking back on the first six years of the training centre’s work,

I’m pleased to say that quite a lot has changed. If at first we had to advertise Latvia and the centre, now people all over the world are talking about us and come looking for us themselves. We are enjoying the fruits of our labour. “The aviation industry is very global. Most of the students at *airBaltic Training* currently come from all over Europe – mainly from Italy, France and Scandinavia. Even Riga’s relatively distant location from these countries is not an obstacle, because the training centre provides everything that the students need during their stay: a place to live, transport to the places of study and information about extracurricular activities.

And since *airBaltic* operates several direct flights to France and Italy, most students can reach Riga easily and conveniently. Often the pilot candidates are quite young and with little “out-of-home experience”. We are pleased to provide them with all of the support that they need. “Another important advantage of our training centre is that the best students can work at *airBaltic* after graduating. That’s because the airline usually needs to hire additional pilots during the active summer flight season. This is a major plus and an enticing factor. “In short, we offer high-quality studies for relatively low tuition fees. Furthermore, Riga is a nice place to live.”

**GONZAGUE CALMET AND
SÉBASTIAN LANNAREIX,**
AIRBALTIC TRAINING STUDENTS



“We flew today from Copenhagen to Copenhagen,” Gonzague Calmet says half-jokingly. He is one of two French pilot candidates that *Baltic Outlook* meets after a session in a *Boeing 737* flight simulator. Seeking to consolidate the skills that they acquired the day before, both students have decided to take an additional “flight” on their free day. “In France it is not possible to increase one’s qualifications by training with this type of flight simulator. After doing a bit of market research, we learned about the training centre in Riga. It has a very good reputation, so here we both are!” says Sébastien Lannareix in explaining why he decided to enrol at *airBaltic Training*.

Both French students plan to spend three weeks in Riga. What are their plans after that? “The situation in the job market isn’t bad for people like us and it is possible to find work. Of course, that isn’t easy if you haven’t accumulated a sufficient number of actual flight hours in the cockpit of a *Boeing 737*. Once you do so, there are vacancies that can be filled,” says Lannareix, who is optimistic about his job prospects as an airline pilot. “We don’t know what the future holds, because globally the situation is changing all of the time,” adds Calmet, “but we are convinced that we will manage to find work. Otherwise, we wouldn’t be here!”



Text by **FLORIAN MAAß**
Publicity photos



THE SCREAMING EAGLE OF SOUL

American singer Charles Bradley, aka the Screaming Eagle of Soul, is one of the best performers of our day. He will be among the headliners at this year's *Positivus* music festival, which is taking place this month in Salacgrīva, Latvia. *Baltic Outlook* met with Bradley before the festival for an exclusive interview.

Truthfulness and authenticity are two words that come to mind when describing soul singer Charles Bradley. This is a man who doesn't need any PR tools to make him look "real". His story is simultaneously sad and great. He wanted to be a soul singer since the age of 14, when his sister took him to a James Brown concert at the legendary Apollo Theatre in New York in 1962. Shortly after, he ran away from his home in Brooklyn and lived on the streets.

Bradley tried hard to get into the music industry, but for a long time, he led a life of hardship instead. However, thanks to a project for the underprivileged and despite his illiteracy, he finished a chef's apprenticeship in Maine. His first permanent position as a chef at a hospital for the mentally ill took him to a small town in upstate New York for nine years. After being harassed by local police, Bradley hit the road and hitchhiked across the country, working on and off as a short-order cook in Alaska and elsewhere.

He then lived in California for 20 years, cooking and playing music on the side at small gigs. After becoming seriously ill and losing another job, he returned to Brooklyn, came to terms with his mother (from whom he had been estranged for decades), and quit being a chef to focus on music. He started to perform under the artistic name *Black Velvet* as a James Brown impersonator in small clubs but couldn't make ends meet, so he lived again in abandoned buildings or in public housing projects, where shootings were common. At times, he didn't dare leave his own room, afraid of the violence on the streets, especially after a robber killed his brother.

In 2002, he learned that a group of young musicians had founded a soul music record label in his neighbourhood, named *Daptone Records*. At about the same time, Gabriel Roth (one of *Daptone's* founders) and Thomas Brenneck (a musician and composer) went to Bradley's James Brown show in a small, hidden club. They exchanged contacts, but that was the extent of their first meeting.

During the following years, Bradley continued to moonlight as *Black Velvet* while working as a handyman and taking care of the plumbing work at the record studio. He stayed in contact with Brenneck, who let him record some minor singles. When young English singer Amy Winehouse hired *Daptone's* house band, the Dap Kings, to record her album *Back to Black* at the label's analogue studio, *Daptone* found itself at the centre of a worldwide soul revival. Later, two of *Daptone's* own singers, Lee Fields and Sharon Jones, came to international fame.

In 2011, when Brenneck had just formed the Menahan Street Band, he invited Bradley to record his

own album. *No Time for Dreaming* was soon critically acclaimed and became an international success among soul fans.

The documentary *Charles Bradley: the Soul of America* was filmed that same year. Another documentary about *Daptone Records* and Bradley with an electrifying show at the legendary Apollo Theatre has just been finished.

This year, Bradley released his third album, *Changes*, his greatest success so far. Since the release of his debut album five years ago, the Screaming Eagle of Soul, now 67, has been touring like crazy. It's hard not to be taken by his performances. Bradley sings with sandpaper in his voice. He screams and cries and howls. He jumps and falls onto his knees. He likes to step down from the stage and hug people in the audience. Sometimes, he even gives out roses to his female fans. Besides his energetic performances, he's famous for his colourful retro-styled outfits.

He then lived in California for 20 years, cooking and playing music on the side at small gigs

When I spoke with the singer, he had just finished a US tour and was back in Brooklyn. He speaks with a very warm voice and melodic Southern accent, as he was born in Florida. During our conversation, Bradley seemed completely humble, honest, warm-hearted and authentic.

You decided to become a soul singer at the age of 14, when your sister took you to a James Brown concert at the Apollo Theatre in 1962. What do you remember of that concert?

James Brown was wearing a light purple suit and straw-coloured brogues, and his show was fantastic. I'll never forget that evening! From the moment when I saw James Brown singing that night, I knew that I wanted to be a singer myself.

Are you still designing and sewing your own clothes, inspired by James Brown's style?

Yes, I am. A lot of people in Brooklyn and Manhattan are now asking me to wear what they have in stock, but I know how I want my clothes and I know how to sew them, except that I duplicate my stage costumes now.

It took you 62 years of hardship to finally record your first album as a singer. That's five years ago, and in the meantime you've become an international star. Does late success taste even sweeter, or is it rather bittersweet?



**I don't use hatred to win.
I use my heart to win. I always
try to see the light**

It has a bittersweet taste. I've done everything – things that I don't even want to speak about – to get this chance since I was a child. I was begging and praying to get my chance in life! And then when I was 62, somebody finally heard my cries. That was Thomas Brenneck [who became Bradley's producer, guitar player and composer – Ed.], Gabriel Roth [a bass player and co-founder of Daptone] and Neal Sugarman [a sax player and co-founder of Daptone]. I have to prove to them that I'm worth the chance, and that's what I try to do.

Your brilliant version of *Changes* by Black Sabbath is the title track of your new album. Is it true that you didn't even know the original version?

Yes, that's definitely true! I didn't know much about the band at all.

You turned *Changes* into your very own, personal song, didn't you?

I've got part of me in that song. The song itself is so

deep that you've got to fill it out with your own story. I'm talking about my own life, my childhood, and I put my own soul into it. I sing it as a farewell for my mom, who sadly passed away when we were working on the album. The last part spoke out of my heart: "It took so long to realise, that I can still hear her last goodbyes, now all my days are filled with tears, wish I could go back and change these years."

Doesn't it hurt to sing that song every night and be reminded of your loss?

My mom asked me to sing it, so I sing it, to let her know how my heart feels without her.... [Bradley's voice is breaking, and we take a little break.]

***Why Is It So Hard?* is a rather bitter song about America from your debut album. *God Bless America* on your new recording sounds quite friendly compared to it. Is it your personal reconciliation with your home country?**

Why Is It So Hard? was my answer to all that I've been through in America – all of the hardship. But I don't use hatred to win. I use my heart to win. I always try to see the light. And when you travel around America, you see beauty as well. People of all races and colours

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come to America to live together, and they all have their own personality and their story to tell. But once they are here, they are all Americans and they all share the same space to live in. And when they all come together, they become a whole. That’s also America.

You’ve just finished a successful US tour, and soon we’ll see you on stage in Latvia and other places in Europe. You’ve been among the singers with the most concerts over the last two years. How do you manage to put on such intense and powerful shows at each concert?

When I sing, I sing from my heart, like it’s my last show. I’m a loving person, and if I can reach you with my music and give you something good; touch you, stimulate you to look into yourself to find out who you really are; help you with your own personal life; for me, that’s what it’s all about! I finished my US tour only yesterday. Now I’m trying to relax and to be ready for Europe this summer. I really give my best at all of my concerts. I couldn’t do it any other way. When I’m on the stage, I can be who I really am. I always wanted to show love and honesty to the people. The people pick it up and give it back. And the young people have a party at my concerts, and that makes me happy. I think that people all over the world like to see me because they know that it’s gonna be a real “life show”; I give them all of me. And, they know that after all I’ve been through, I always stay down to earth.

Audiences in Europe really love you. Didn’t you have successes there before you started to become big in the United States?

Absolutely, that’s true. Europe gave me an opportunity when America didn’t. My legs turned to jelly when I first went to Europe. But as soon as I was on stage in Germany or France, they got wild. They opened their arms and hearts to me and wanted to hear my story! And I just thought, “Wow! Whatever happens now, it was you people in Europe who put me on the bill!” Back home, it was in Texas where they first opened up to me. Now, on the American tour it was especially nice in Buffalo last week. It was scheduled to be a concert for 2,000 people, but when I went on stage, there were more than 10,000 in front of me. Wow, that stuck to me.

You play club concerts, but you’ve also played Glastonbury and Roskilde, Europe’s biggest festivals. We’ll see you at the *Positivus* music festival in Latvia very soon. Does it make any difference for you to play a large or smaller crowd?

It doesn’t matter how many people are there, as long as I can reach their souls. I open up to each individual; I try to reach each individual’s heart. I’m not saying I’m perfect, but I really try my very best on stage. I always put the same energy into it. I like to see a large crowd when I go on stage, but if there are five people, they also want to see my show – they deserve that I give my very best. And the people know that. That’s why they like to come to my concerts.

You’ve been through such a lot of misery. You’ve witnessed racism, lived on the streets and in housing projects, your brother got killed. How can you still open up to everybody? You seem to love



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everybody at your shows, and it doesn't look like you've become hateful or cynical.

My grandma told me when the world was extra mean and evil: "Keep your heart clean and follow Christ! Keep love in your heart, and honesty, and warmth, and soul! Then somewhere, there will always be an honest person who will help you out. If other people are doing you wrong, try to forgive them. Only then you can grow as a person. Or, do you want to be like them?" Let me tell you a story. When I was moving to another place and my old *Ford* broke down, I hitchhiked. A driver picked me up. A state trooper stopped us. He asked me about another person who I had never heard about. For no reason, he pushed me out and slammed me onto the car and told me that he would beat me up and bring me into the woods and leave me there. He eventually let me go, and I was sitting in this small restaurant in the middle of nowhere and had really had enough. Then a man came and put a quarter in the jukebox and played "Take It To the Limit" by the Eagles: "When there's nothing to believe in (...), put me on a highway and show me a sign, and take it to the limit, one more time." I really thought God was talking to me!

What's changed since then? Racism is still a problem in everyday life, even at the end of the first presidency of an African-American, isn't it?

It is! Look at the news about the police violence against black people. Racism is more quiet now, but it's still there. I try to stay away from that, to keep my own mindset. It's a time to change for all of us, no matter if you are black, green, blue, white or yellow. And I want to use my voice to encourage change, as I have been through a hell of a lot of changes in life. Even now, I don't like to go out that much, because I've been mistreated so often by the police. But I feel safe to go out on the streets and see other places and meet people when we tour.

How is it being a *Daptone Records* artist? Does it feel like work being at the studio, or more like a family gathering?

Oh, it's like a family for me. They help me to grow, personally and spiritually.

I suppose that Thomas (Tom) Brenneck – your guitar player, producer and composer – is a very special person for you?

Tom is the one who really and truly gave me a chance! Tom saw me in 2002 at a small club singing my James Brown tribute. I had heard about *Daptone* and was trying to get in contact with Gabriel Roth, the *Daptone* boss, around that time, so it was kind of going both ways when we found each other. Tom said: "Sorry, I don't have much for you, but you can do a 45" [*a*

record single]. I did it and kept coming back to him. And finally, Gabriel Roth let me record my first full album in 2011.

How does the composing work with you and Brenneck?

We have very good communication together. Sometimes, we disagree in the studio, but that's part of the creative process, and we always come to a solution afterward. Usually, he calls and says: "Hey, Charles! I put something in the library for you!" Then I listen to it. And when I like it, the words come instantly to me, and Tom tapes it. Some songs like *Heartache and Pain* came naturally to me, I didn't have to get into them. It was about the death of my brother. That was clear the moment that I first heard Tom's music for the song. *Loving you baby?* also came to me. It is things I feel in my soul when I hear the right music: the love that wants to get out. When you see me singing love songs, that's when I'm the most hurt inside. Hurt brings the deepness of a love song out of me.

So is the cliché true that artists have to be sad and unhappy to create their very best art?

I can agree with that to 80%, as I sing about the world how it is today, with all the problems and about all the bad things that happened to me in my life. The remaining 20 percent are the things that helped me.

Your first profession was being a chef. What's your favourite dish?

Everybody loves my lasagne! They say "Charles, please make your lasagne for me" all the time. So my lasagne is pretty good. But I don't only do Italian cuisine. I can also do Spanish or Chinese food, and seafood. I've been a chef for 35 years, so I can cook basically all kinds of food.

In soul music, a lot of cooking terms are used for making music. Is it just word-play, or do you see similarities between your two professions?

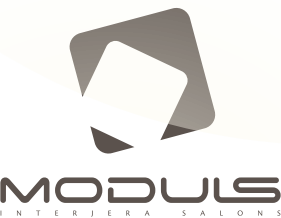
Yes, because you have to know how to put it together – choosing right the elements and putting them together. They're both an art, I'd say. You have to do it whole-heartedly. You have to give your best, no matter what you do in life!

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Outlook **INTERVIEW**



POSITIVUS MUSIC FESTIVAL

One of Europe's most relaxed and laidback gems among the continent's top festivals is celebrating its 10th anniversary with a fantastic lineup this summer. *Positivus* is taking place from July 15-17 on a picturesque beach in the Latvian fishing town of Salacgrīva, a bit less than two hours north of Riga on the Via Baltica highway.

Charles Bradley will perform on Sunday, July 17, as will "wild child" Iggy Pop (USA). Among the other headliners are chartbreaker Ellie Goulding (UK) and leading French smooth sound masters Air and M83, along with lovely British soul and blues diva Joss Stone.

Festivalgoers will also be treated to a DJ set by Mark Ronson (UK), who produced Amy Winehouse's *Back to Black* and his own first album at *Daptone Records*. Many more acts will perform during the three-day festival, including Hot Chip (UK), John Newman (UK), Grimes (CA), Richard Hawley (UK), Mercury Rev (US), Wolf Alice (UK), Oh Wonder (UK) and The Japanese House (UK).

Alongside the international superstars, a vibrant Latvian music scene will be

very present. Songwriter Ainars Mielavs (Latvia's answer to Leonard Cohen) will sing his beautifully melancholic works, while Carnival Youth (Latvia's band of the hour) will deliver a perfect set for a summer night on the Baltic seaside.

Among the other Latvian acts will be pagan-metal veterans Skyforger, Dzelzs vilks, Alise Joste, Rīgas Modes, DaGamba, Satellites LV, Ozols, Židrūns and Irving Ark. Aside from loads of great music, there will be improvisation theatre, poetry, fashion shows, giant living dolls by *Transe Express* and movies.

To get to the *Positivus* music festival: *Baltic Taxi* offers special rates from Riga International Airport. There's also a shuttle bus from the Latvian capital, but tickets have to be booked in advance through the festival website: shop.positivusfestival.com/en.

Festival ticket prices start at EUR 50 per day, while discounted three-day-tickets will cost EUR 90 (EUR 98 including camping) until July 10. After that, the three-day tickets will go for EUR 100 (EUR 108 including camping). **BO**

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CATCH THEM IF
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Baltic Outlook headed out to catch the untamed waves of the North Atlantic Ocean at five amazing cold-water surfing spots in Iceland. Getting to these destinations can be a real challenge, but once you reach them, you will be rewarded with breathtaking views and a rare opportunity to surf virgin beaches.



**Southern Peninsula
(Suðurnes)**

The shores of Iceland are continually battered by some of the fiercest waves that can be surfed at such a close distance from the North Pole, although upon landing in Reykjavik, we were the only ones who had brought their surfboards along. The other passengers seemed to have come with plenty of warm clothing, and some of them were carrying their skis as well.

My determination to have my first proper surfing experience in Iceland was strengthened by an advertising slogan on the airport wall, which read: “Look! There is almost no snow. Let’s go camping!” The last time that I had tried surfing was eight years previously on a sweltering beach in Panama. The Reykjavik airport slogan promised a completely different experience.

Our first surfing stop in Iceland was one of the quieter beaches in Suðurnes, also a rare beginners’ spot, but there, too, the waves can at times be quite ferocious. Our guide was Heiðar Logi Elíasson, Iceland’s first and only professional surfer. Nobody knows the North Atlantic winds and waves better than he does. He recently starred in *The Accord*, a new documentary film that depicts his relationship with the country’s harsh but unbelievably beautiful surfing environment. Heiðar agreed to show us one of his favourite surfing spots and so, as soon as we landed in Reykjavik, we received a text message informing us of the name of the beach and the time when we should arrive there.

On our way to the beach at Suðurnes, we passed through some incredibly sparse terrain. Surrounded by a black lava field that stretched all the way to the horizon, we drove along a twisty road leading seemingly to nowhere. Iceland is a place where one has to pay a heavy price to see some of the most spectacular nature scenes imaginable. One has to be ready to drive on very bumpy unpaved roads, walk across lava fields, climb mountains,



get chilled by the cold and drenched by the rain.

We experienced this first hand at Suðurnes. Luckily, Heiðar's extensive experience of surfing in Iceland's chilling waters was reflected in the vehicle that he had chosen to drive. What looked like

have to be like a hunter, and when you do manage to catch some ideal surfing waves, then you will feel as happy as a kid in a candy store.

At Suðurnes we also learned a costly lesson about Iceland's rapid tidal swells and ebbs. The waters of the high tide came upon us so quickly that they swallowed up our car keys, which we had left on the sands of the beach. We were left standing on the shore in our dripping wetsuits, holding our surfboards under our arms. However, we were even more disappointed when we saw that this tidal swell was reducing the strength of the waves to practically nothing. In Iceland, the mood of the waves changes just as quickly as the weather. There are times when Iceland is very favourably disposed to surfers and even overly generous, but one has to be patient and ready to explore. We felt really lucky when, after spending a day in the cold ocean water, we could warm our bodies up in the hot springs of Gunnuhver on the way back to Reykjavik. Definitely go and check out these hot springs if you happen to be close by.

The waters of the high tide came upon us so quickly that they swallowed up our car keys, which we had left on the sands of the beach

an ascetic minivan from the outside was actually a warm and cosy sanctuary. We appreciated its true value when we had the audacity to take off our wetsuits right on the beach, directly facing a brisk North Atlantic wind after a surfing session.

During our first evening at Suðurnes, we asked the locals if the weather could change completely within 15 minutes' time. They corrected us and said that it could change in as little as five minutes. This means that wind and wave forecasts are approximate, and that the reality might be completely different once you arrive at your chosen surfing location. You



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Vik

The beach at Vik is considered to be one of the ten most beautiful beaches on Earth, according to *Islands Magazine*. Since no surfing waves were predicted near Reykjavik over the next couple of days, we decided to take the 170-kilometre drive eastward along the popular Golden Circle route to Vik. This beach is located at the island's southernmost point and attracts the slightest hint of swell. Out beyond the shore is a wilderness of waves. The water level difference between a tidal ebb and flood can exceed five metres, and there are only a few safe spots when the high tide rolls in.

spot from the highway. Sitting all alone at the foot of such a waterfall, you will sense the immense power of freshly melted glacier water rushing over a cliff face.

Vik's black sand beach is dotted with spindly rock formations that look like they could have been made by humans. It's hard to imagine how they could have materialised naturally, but Iceland is a place where one shouldn't seek rational explanations for things. Also, when standing on a lava field that extends out as far as the eye can see, it is really hard to estimate distances and the size of objects that are further away.

Since there is no land mass between Vik and Antarctica, the Atlantic rollers can attack with full force. According to folklore, these waves are former trolls who try to drag boats out to sea. Trolls or no trolls, you can surf these waves while enjoying an amazing view of the coastline.

Just make sure that you are extra careful in choosing where to pitch your tent for the night, because up on those cliffs, Iceland's untamed and unpredictable winds have the force to lift up a tent together with all of its occupants. We only found this out *after* spending a night out on top of the cliff. The locals said that we had been lucky and that it is better to camp out closer to the beach, or to find a sheltered place that the wind can't reach. Seeing the great respect that the locals hold for the powers of Nature, we had no reason to doubt them.

According to folklore, these waves are former trolls who try to drag boats out to sea

Local surfers say that good waves can be caught, but one has to be very careful, and the beach can be quite risky. Crashing waves have claimed the lives of several tourists during the last couple of years. In any case, the road to Vik was full of beautiful sights, including countless waterfalls, steep basalt cliffs and sea stacks where rare puffin birds make their homes.

If you want to take a closer look at some waterfalls along the way, don't go only to the ones that appear in tourist brochures. Try walking up to any solitary, unlisted and possibly still unnamed waterfall that you



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Snæfellsjökull

In Reykjavik we met another local surfer, named Kristian, at the *Gangleri Outfitters* camping gear rental shop. He pointed to two beaches further north, so we filled up our fuel tank and headed northwest to Snæfellsjökull. It is at the end of the Snæfellsnes Peninsula in western Iceland and can be easily reached from the capital city in one day.

However, like a magician, the weather in this area was revealing all of the tricks that it had hidden up its sleeve. We were initially greeted by a strong wind and pounding rain. Then, within the short time that it took us to stop our car, turn it around and drive back towards a house that we had spotted on the side of the



The wind was so strong that it would probably have lifted us all up into the air, together with our camping tent

road, our car was enveloped in fog and we couldn't see more than ten feet in front of us.

Regarding that foggy road, we had become tired from driving in zero visibility and were eager to jump into a hot spring, so we stopped at the *Kast Guesthouse* by the side of the road to ask for advice. I hadn't even opened my mouth when the guesthouse's chef, whose name is Mark, asked us about the waves. He was calmly sipping a coffee on the outside terrace in the wind and the rain. He had noticed the surfboards on the roof of our car, and it turned out that he also likes to surf on the beach right by the hotel.

"There are other beaches ahead on this road as well, all the way to the national park. Just make sure to observe the swell and wind direction."

Although the beaches were incredibly beautiful (some of them even had white sands and turquoise blue waters), there were no surfable waves. A storm was raging and it was making each wave come from a different direction. We returned to spend the night in the guesthouse, as the wind was so strong that it would probably have lifted us all up into the air, together with our camping tent.

That evening, someone knocked at our door. Mark the chef had called up his best friend – also a surfer – on the northernmost part of the island and told us where we should go the following morning. The weather at the Snæfellsnes Peninsula would probably remain stormy for the next couple of days, he said. However, not long after, Mark knocked on our door again and called us out onto the porch. We could hear the distinct sound of waves breaking in the distance.

"It will be fine in the morning," he said. And he was right. I didn't go into the water, because hidden rocks posed a danger under the waves. The others spent about an hour in the ocean. Although this wasn't a world-class session, it was still a good surf. After a post-surf swim in freshwater to rinse off the wetsuits, we left, hoping to see the sun and bigger waves further north in the West Fjords.

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Westfjords

If you are thinking about surfing in Iceland, then forget about swim shorts and sexy bikinis. Think neoprene. It's the material that they use to produce wetsuits and, yes, rocket fuel as well. The water temperature bottoms out at around 3-4°C in the wintertime. By late summer, it can warm up to 12°C, but that still requires a neoprene wetsuit, boots and gloves. And don't forget the hat, which could be a lifesaver when the North Atlantic wind chill factor is on.

Wearing all of that equipment, you will seriously look like a seal, so it was no surprise that on one beach in the

throw away, we had to drive around a mountain. Only in Iceland have I seen deadly serious road signs warning that further passage can only be made with 4x4 vehicles, or that no more gas stations will be found on the road ahead. The latter sign is extremely useful and shouldn't be ignored. You *don't* want to find yourself in the middle of a distant fjord with an empty fuel warning light flashing on your dashboard, as you pray and count every kilometre that brings you closer to the next town. Been there, done that!

Iceland can generously fulfil one's most ardent desires, but it can also alter visitors' travel plans and lead one to unexpected destinations. I recommend not being too strict when planning a trip around the island. Drive wherever your eyes lead you. And yes, if not your eyes, then that flashing empty fuel tank warning light will definitely lead you on to friendly towns and villages, where you will be able to talk with the locals and ask them what's worth seeing.

Thus, on our way to the 400-metre-high Látrabjarg bird cliff at the westernmost point of the island that some locals had recommended (just make sure not to pitch a tent there, OK?), we accidentally came across a breathtakingly beautiful beach with a lone guest house standing at its edge. The owners gave us some hot tea to drink as well as jam for our porridge, let us take hot showers and took our wetsuits into their laundry room to dry. What more could one ask for after a spending an event-filled day in the frigid waters of the North Atlantic Ocean?

In Iceland, forget about swim shorts and sexy bikinis. Think neoprene

Westfjords Peninsula that is known for its curious seals, these cute animals actually came out to greet us. I went back into the pounding waves and cold water again and again, just to see their sweet black faces popping out of the water to look at me.

Here we were on a desolated white sandy beach with brilliant blue waters and seals swimming around us. A small sheep farm stood at the foot of a waterfall, and snow-capped mountains completed the picture in the background. What a sight! The waves were rolling in pretty chaotically, so I am not sure if my awkward performance on the beach that day could actually be called surfing.

In any case, to get to the other side of the beach, which seemed only a stone's

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Reykjanes Peninsula

Southwest of Reykjavik, the Reykjanes Peninsula is covered in ancient lava flows, so most of the waves break over volcanic reefs or basalt rocks. This doesn't matter if you are sure that you won't fall. But if you are like me and not so confident about your abilities in the water, then you might get scratches on your board, or worse. Nevertheless, despite the abundance of hidden underwater rocks, the Reykjanes Peninsula is one the most popular surfing destinations in Iceland.

One reason is the peninsula's relative proximity to the capital city. It is also the place where we found the best surfing waves, right at the end of our eight-day jaunt across the island.

The most courageous and experienced surfer between the two of us donned his wetsuit and plunged into the water. I decided to stay on shore and watch the action, together with a mysterious fellow who sat silently beside me for a long time, just staring out at the ocean.

Eventually, my beachside companion spoke and asked us where we are from. I told him what we had done and pointed to my friend in the water, whose radiant smile was visible even from our distant vantage point on the shore. My conversation partner just nodded his head and asserted that the best was yet to come. He put on his wetsuit, grabbed a surfboard from seemingly nowhere and went out into the ocean. Right at that moment, as if on call, huge surfing waves started rolling in. The mysterious surfer deftly rode one wave after the other and didn't seem concerned about the sharp rocks, which exposed themselves each time that a wave retreated. He didn't fall once, and it seemed that he knew the beach, the tidal changes and the weather conditions so well that they were helping him out rather than working against him.

After a while, the surfer stepped out of the water, and he said that his name is Robert. I later learned that American army troops started surfing on the Reykjanes Peninsula in the 1980s and that local Icelanders followed in the early 1990s.

"There is still just a small group of locals surfing in these waters, because it is difficult to learn in such harsh conditions," Robert added.

As our first guide Heiðar Logi Elíasson says in the movie *The Accord*, there are no surf shops, no guide books about surfing in Iceland or web cams. Many have learned to surf at lower latitudes and higher temperatures, then brought back surfboards and wetsuits for Iceland's conditions. My mysterious companion Robert is one of them. He learned how to surf in Namibia and then moved back to Iceland. He is a fisherman, and this probably explains why he knows the ocean so well. **BO**

ADVICE BUCKET

Winter is the most consistent swell season with excellent waves, but the main setbacks at that time of year are a lack of daylight, literally mind-blowing winds, chilling temperatures, snowstorms and large tidal mood swings. September to November can be good months, with enduring air and water temperatures. May to August can be flat in the southwest (well, for non-spoiled surfers there is always something to do) and are a good time to explore the east and the north coasts for Arctic wind swells.

Make your first surfing trip to Iceland during the summer and get to know the island when the days are long. Some roads can be closed during the winter. It will also be very dark due to the polar night, and most people will be hiding in their homes.

When you rent your 4x4, let the car rental company know that you will need space on the roof to attach your surfboards.

If you are up for some surf, then take all – I mean *all* – of your equipment

with you. There are no surf shops and no places to rent or borrow surfing equipment.

However, you can rent everything that you need for outdoor camping at *Gangleri Outfitters*. Order the equipment before your trip through the company's website (outfitters.is), and it will be ready when you arrive.

Don't plan too much. Let people and Nature bring you to the right places.

Don't camp on top of the cliffs!

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THE BEST HOLIDAYS WITH

KIDS

Text by **INGA KALNIŅA**, lepetitpot.lv
Photos by Alamy, visitBerlin and publicity

Everyone loves a family vacation, but when travelling with children, one of the major concerns is how to keep them happy and going. *Baltic Outlook* asked parent lifestyle blogger Inga Kalniņa to share her best travel experiences. Pack up and take your kids on a trip to one of her top-rated family vacation destinations!



PARIS: FROM DELIGHTFUL OLD CAROUSELS TO BEAUTIFUL PARKS



Fly to Paris with airBaltic from €39 ONE WAY Direct flights from RIGA and TALLINN

Despite the daunting size of what might be Europe's most beautiful capital city, Paris is a fabulous destination for travel with children. You can enjoy it either with infants or older kids who are full of lively curiosity. Disneyland is by no means the only point of interest on the map for children. Those who perceive Paris as a city for lovers and a couples' paradise will be surprised to learn how welcoming and fascinating the metropolis is to families on vacation.

Our daughter's first trip abroad was to Paris. She had just turned six months old. We chose Paris because we already knew the city and I knew that I could maintain her accustomed rhythms of eating, strolling and sleeping.

Experienced family travellers know that one of the absolute requirements for a good vacation with a small child is selecting the right place to stay, which includes the surrounding neighbourhood. A perfect part of Paris for children is the Marais (in the 4th *arrondissement*) because it has superb access to public transport but is also within walking distance to many attractions. Two other good areas are around the Arc de Triomphe (8th *arrondissement*) and in Passy (16th), a neighbourhood far quieter

and less touristy than other parts of the city. Passy also has a scenic park that delights kids, and the Impressionist art at the Musée Marmottan Monet will thrill even the youngest visitors.

Paris has the advantage of being home to an abundance of parks, leafy squares and inviting streets

When looking for lodgings, we have searched for apartments via *Airbnb* during the last few years, and for good reason. First of all, apartments are a better deal if you have several people travelling together. Secondly, it's far easier to deal with kids in an apartment, where you can make your own meals or heat the milk bottle. Thirdly, maintaining the children's usual rhythms of rest and sleep is much easier in an apartment than in a hotel.

We found that it's better to move around Paris on foot if your child is still in a baby carriage. The metro and buses also



come in handy. We took taxis only when absolutely necessary, as hailing a cab in Paris isn't the easiest thing in the world.

In comparison to many other large cities, Paris has the advantage of being home to an abundance of parks,

leafy squares and inviting streets where you and your children can spend many a pleasant day. The fact that there's a café, bakery or pastry shop on nearly every corner adds to the pleasure.

Children will definitely enjoy the Tuileries Garden (*Jardin des Tuileries*) by the Louvre Museum, where a huge fountain and a natural maze will occupy their interest. The Luxembourg Garden (*Jardin du Luxembourg*) is another park that shouldn't be missed, as it has a large playground. Not far away is the Garden of Plants (*Jardin des Plantes*), where the National Museum of Natural History (*Musée National d'Histoire Naturelle*) is hidden. The museum has a children's gallery, called the Galerie des Enfants in French, that the kids will love. Infants will be content with the park, while older children will be fascinated by



the impressive stuffed animals, marine creatures and dinosaur skeletons in the museum.

The recently opened Parc Zoologique de Paris is also worth a visit. The recently renovated zoo is located slightly outside of the city centre, but is easily reached by metro or rapid train.

If your children dream of hot air balloons, then take them to the Parc André Citroën. It's a fine place to play with other children and picnic, and you can also take a balloon ride. In addition, the park is a paradise of fountains – perfect on those hot summer days.

To see the city from a different vantage point, I would recommend getting into a *bateau-mouche* together with your little traveling companions. The boats cruise along the Seine from the

Eiffel Tower to the other end of the city, providing an opportunity to see many of Paris' tourist sights on a single trip. The boats are open or closed-top to suit all tastes.

Once the boating excursion is over and you've returned to the Eiffel Tower, the children will be thrilled with the nearby retro carousel and musical horses, which are a permanent fixture, as well as the sweet fairy floss and toasted waffles with whipped cream that are available at the adjacent kiosk. Among other things, in the heat of the summer, the fountains and the city pool at the Trocadero Gardens (*Jardins du Trocadéro*) across the river become a favourite spot for children to play. The impressive Aquarium of Paris (*Aquarium de Paris*) is also located in the same gardens.

A visit to the museum at the Pompidou Centre can be an experience shared by all. However, on a warm and sunny day, you may not make it further than the centre's Stravinsky Fountain. Not to worry, as a variety of performances that will interest people of all ages frequently take place by the centre's entrance.

On a trip to Paris, the City of Sciences and Industry (*Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie*) and adjacent Parc de la Villette, where you can see a real submarine, conduct scientific experiments and watch open-air films, is a great spot for older and more curious children.

Overall, Paris is a very child-friendly city. However, one should remember that the French have a particular character and temperament. The pace of life of the Parisians won't stop just because you've arrived at their restaurant with a small child. Although practically all of the museums, public venues, shops and parks take the little ones into consideration (with rooms for feeding and separate activities), you shouldn't expect these extras at the cafés and restaurants. Nevertheless, the attitude will almost invariably be one of consideration and understanding.

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SARDINIA: FROM FAMILY-FRIENDLY BEACHES TO DELICIOUS PIZZA AND ICE CREAM



Fly to Olbia with **airBaltic** from **€99** ONE WAY

If you want to show your children the real, authentic Italy, then I recommend heading for the island of Sardinia. It delights travellers with its quiet, uncrowded beaches, warm summer sea and unforgettable natural scenery. Besides, since Sardinia is small, it is easy to explore comfortably with a rental car. The price is quite affordable if you hire your car in advance from a local rental company. You will also find opportunities to hire child seats within the rental offer.

In Italy, compact cars are the norm, but you may not be able to fit the children's seats and your baggage into a car that is too small. However, with a decent-sized vehicle you'll have a great family trip around Sardinia.

It is about 350 kilometres to cross Sardinia from north to south. Part of the route will be very scenic, but the mountain roads are narrow and could be a real test for those in the back seat, who might get car-sick. Regular breaks will make the journey more pleasant. Wear free-flowing, light clothing around the neck, and give the kids some sour rock candy and refreshing drinks. Roadside gas stations and cafés are a rare phenomenon in Sardinia, so buy your snacks and drinks in advance at a supermarket for your road trip. An ice box will be useful for storing perishable items, and can be hired as well.

On one occasion, however, it's better to leave your car and take the train instead. One of the most captivating experiences in Sardinia is a trip with an ancient steam train, the Trenino Verde (treninoverde.com). It offers a number of different routes and takes

Sardinia delights travellers with its quiet, uncrowded beaches, warm summer sea and unforgettable natural scenery

you past the island's most beautiful and impressive places.

As to spending time on this charming Italian island, there are a number of options, such as making your base at a particular hotel, resort or rental home (apartment or house) and travelling wherever you fancy each day. Alternatively, you can travel from one hotel or camping ground to another every few days, as there are countless numbers of these on the Mediterranean coast, both close to and further away from the water. Sardinia has many beautiful nature parks,

where you can camp overnight in tents, cabins or trailers.

Staying overnight at one of the local farms can provide an unforgettable experience. You should search for *agriturismo* accommodation, which is actually a guest house combined with a farm. The farm might house an olive oil press or cheese factory or winery, for example. Aside from residing on site, you will find out everything about the farm and be able to purchase its products right on the spot.

During our travels around Sardinia, we made our base at one site for 10 days and explored the island from there each day. If you adopt a similar plan, then you should reckon on the fact that you will be based in a single region for the entire trip.

Even the largest towns in Sardinia are small enough not to tire out the children too much, which is one of the island's main advantages for families with kids. In addition, you can escape to a beach



or nature park at any moment, which will satisfy your children's natural desire to explore new places. Although Sardinia has fewer museums and amusement parks than other places in Italy, it is a great place to enjoy your holidays in a natural environment. The bigger children will enjoy climbing hills, swimming, boating down mountain streams, exploring large and small mountain caves, dolphin-watching in the Mediterranean, and perhaps even diving and snorkelling. In turn, the youngest travellers will enjoy searching for seashells and building sand castles together with their parents on the island's countless beaches.

Sardinia is undeniably popular due to its beautiful beaches, of which there are many right up by Olbia. The most well-known is Cala Battistoni Beach, where a variety of water sports and amusements can be enjoyed. If that isn't enough, then head for the Bay of Sardinia (Baia Sardinia), where the *Aquadream* waterpark is located. Those who practice an active lifestyle should try out some windsurfing or kiting on Porto Pollo Beach to the north.

Not far from Olbia is a protected marine area – the Area Marina Protetta di Tavolara Punta Coda Cavallo. One of its main aims is to inform adults and children about issues relating to the protection of the natural environment, so a day spent there will be an educational experience. This park is popular with those who enjoy diving, which is allowed in the park's territory.

With respect to dining and eating out, restaurant hours in Sardinia are similar to those in most other southern European countries. The Italians eat lunch until about 2 PM, and then all restaurants and cafés close until at least 7 PM (except for the most popular tourist sites). Therefore, meals should be planned ahead of time, especially if you are travelling with children. On the positive side, Italian cuisine is very child-friendly and the food is sure to appeal to children at practically any restaurant or café. Sardinia is also a pizza, pasta and ice cream paradise!

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LEGOLAND BILLUND RESORT: FROM LEGO BRICKS TO UNFORGETTABLE ATTRACTIONS



Fly to Billund with airBaltic from €39 ONE WAY



Land, Pirate Land, Imagination Zone, Adventure Land and others. Each of these park zones has a variety of attractions as well as cafés and restaurants. For example, at Polar Land one can ride in a roller coaster, pilot special polar planes and even see real penguins!

The popularity of Legoland Billund is on par with Disneyland in Paris. I have learnt that visits to these types of amusement parks should take place when children are at least four or five years old, and when *Lego* bricks are among their favourite toys.

When heading to amusement parks like Legoland, it is important to do some research beforehand and learn about other families' previous experiences. This will make it easier to choose which amusements to visit, as there are a great many on offer. The amusements and rides tend to have age or height restrictions, which is why some advance preparation should prevent you from unnecessarily tempting your little travellers with activities that aren't suited to their age group.

A lot of hotels can be found near Legoland Billund, which is located away from the city centre. The opportunity to spend one's holidays at lodgings based on particular themes could be particularly interesting for kids. At Legoland Holiday Village, which is about 450 metres from the park, one can stay at the *Pirates' Inn Motel*, at small cowboy-style *Wild West Cabins* or spend the night in real Indian wigwams. This camping venue

also has a trailer park with all of the required amenities.

When planning your family trip to Legoland, it is worth looking at package deals that incorporate visits to the amusement park together with accommodation and transfers to and from the airport.

Legoland is divided up into nine different zones, the names of which will be familiar to real *Lego* lovers

At Legoland, even the smallest children will be entertained. They even have their own zone at the park – Duplo Land. There, together with their parents, young children can enjoy various attractions made out of huge *Lego Duplo* blocks.

Legoland is divided up into nine different zones, the names of which will be familiar to real *Lego* lovers – Ninjago World, Polar

In the Imagination Zone, one can go to 4D movie sessions at the largest 4D cinema theatre in Scandinavia and wonder at our planet's diverse marine life at the impressive aquarium, where sharks can be seen swimming about. Researching the Legoland home page is highly advisable, as the home page is the best way to obtain amusement park tickets. There are various packages from which to choose, taking into account the number of days planned at the park as well as the age of your children. You will save money if you purchase your tickets in advance, rather than at the last minute.

Travel in Denmark is quite expensive compared to other European countries, which is another reason for checking into special offers, both when purchasing your amusement park tickets and when booking accommodation and transport. The Be Happy Pass, for example, provides entry to other amusement and entertainment spots in the city outside of Legoland.

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BERLIN: FROM WONDERFUL PLAYGROUNDS TO KINDERCAFÉS



Berlin is yet another gem on the map of family destinations. Since the city is huge, it's important to be strategically clever in choosing the district where you'll be staying. If you are seeking a suitable apartment for children and families in Berlin (or elsewhere in the world), I'd suggest a look at the kidandco.com home page, which offers apartments suited to travellers of all ages.

In our travels up till now, we've chosen to stay in the Zoo neighbourhood, from where it's easy to get to the most active parts in the centre of the city. The metro, or U-Bahn, is the most convenient and easily comprehensible form of public transport. Prior to travelling, one can check the U-Bahn map on the Internet to plan one's route and to purchase public transport tickets as well (berlin.de).

Cycling is very popular in Berlin, so if you are keen on an active lifestyle, then it's worth getting to know the city by bike. The German capital offers many opportunities for hiring a bicycle, along with children's seats and helmets. There's a lot of information on the Internet about bike rentals and cycling routes – you just have to look. One of the most popular sites is Berlin Bike Tour (berlinbiketour.eu).

If you've decided to include museums and other classical venues favoured by tourists in your tour of Berlin, then



There really are a lot of children's playgrounds in Berlin

one of the most child-friendly sites is the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin, a natural history museum with interesting permanent and temporary expositions. The Computerspielemuseum (Computer Games Museum) should be of interest to older children, while the Berliner Fernsehturm – Berlin's TV tower – is a must-visit venue for those who are not afraid of heights and wish to see some breathtaking views.

Both big and small children need entertainment and free time for running around as much as they want. Therefore, an important item on family trips should be the inclusion of visits to children's



playgrounds. There really are a lot of these in Berlin, and almost all of them are dedicated to one theme or another. You'll find a pirate playground, a Snow White playground and a park dedicated to the Tales of the One Thousand and One Nights. On the way to one of these, you should stop off by the World Clock at Alexanderplatz. A trip to Tempelhof Airport, which was closed down in 2008, could also be a great experience. In addition to recreational opportunities for children and adults (bicycles for hire, basketball and baseball, mini-golf, etc.), there are also gardening allotments for city dwellers and small symbolic nature reserves.

Germany's dramatic history is an indelible component of the city, which is why you should definitely visit the Berlin Wall (or what's left of it), which is decorated with colourful murals. Then head over to a *Kindercafé* or particularly child-friendly establishment, where you can go over what you've seen. A comprehensive list of child-friendly restaurants and cafés can be found at berlinforallthefamily.com.

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TIPS FOR TRAVELLING WITH KIDS

If you're flying together with children, then you know that planning ahead is key. We have prepared some tips to make your boarding process much easier.

A family of four is sitting on a bench in an airport terminal. The mother is on the left, holding a young girl. The father is in the center, holding a young boy. They are all looking at a map or brochure that the father is holding. A pink child's suitcase is on the left, and a black suitcase is on the right. In the background, a large window shows an airplane on the tarmac.

Infant or child?

Let's clear up any uncertainties about how airlines define an infant and a child. If your child is under two years of age, then you can categorise your little one into the infant group. This means that you get a 90% discount off the regular adult fare (excluding taxes) for your infant's ticket. Airlines generally consider a "child" to be aged between 2 and 11. Children in this category receive a 25% discount off the adult fare. And remember – all passengers aged 12 and over are subject to the regular adult ticket fare!

Your children might feel stressed when boarding an airplane and, if the flight is a long one, then they might get bored. Even if it's not a long flight, time passes slowly for kids. Forget about your tablet or smartphone! Our cabin crew will gladly help your children pass the time with a calming chat and a complimentary "kid entertainment" activity set. It includes a colouring book with cute pictures to keep little ones occupied. If you're worried that this might not work with your children, then bring along some of their favourite toys from home. If these options have been exhausted, try bringing your children's attention

If your children are hungry, then they will surely let you know! To stay on the safe side until the inflight meal is served (it can be either pre-ordered online while booking your ticket or during the flight), bring along some favourite snacks in your carry-on luggage. Of course, infant food and drinks (including water and juice) and medications are permitted on board in the quantities that you need. Nothing is more important than your children's health!

Grandma, who lives abroad, wants to see her grandchild this summer, but you don't have the time to accompany your child? There's a solution to that: our Unaccompanied Minor Service! If your kids are travelling alone, you can be sure that they will be safe on their journey with *airBaltic*. The airline crew will take care of your little ones from the time of their check-in to the moment that they meet their parent or guardian at the arrival destination. This service is available for children aged five and over. If two children are travelling on

Make sure that your kids have all of the necessary travel documents: the flight ticket or a printed-out reservation, a valid passport, and a notarised child travel consent form. Once your children have arrived at their final destination, please make sure that their designated caretaker shows up on time so that the “little passengers” do not needlessly become nervous or scared.

Take the opportunity to pre-board.
Families with children are always
allowed to board the plane before all
other passengers.

Infants can travel with one piece of checked baggage (up to 10 kg in weight) free of charge. You can combine your adult 20 kg checked baggage allowance with that of your infant, which amounts to a total checked baggage allowance of 30 kg.

Worried about how you're going to make it to the departure gate with your children and all of your carry-on bags? Or wondering if you will need to pay an extra baggage fee for a stroller, car seat or collapsible pram? We will accept one fully-collapsible stroller/pram or car seat as checked baggage at no additional charge if you are travelling with an infant. These types of "baby transport" items can be transported free of charge on top of the free 10 kg checked baggage allowance.

You can register your collapsible stroller at the check-in counter and have it immediately loaded as checked baggage, or you can inform the check-in agent that you will be taking your stroller through security and to the gate yourself. Before boarding the aircraft, leave your stroller by the door of the airplane. The airline staff will load it into the cargo hold for you along with the checked baggage. Once you arrive at your destination, your stroller will be waiting for you either right by the plane or at the gate. **BO**

VIBRANT LIVING

Four influential healthy lifestyle gurus with large numbers of *Instagram* followers reveal their formulas for healthy living to *Baltic Outlook*, as well as their favourite nature spots.

Text by **AGRA LIEĢE**
Photos by *Alamy*
and publicity





MADELEINE SHAW
@madeleine_shaw_ on Instagram, has
239k followers
Describes herself as a “health coach, yoga
teacher, bestselling author”

Madeleine Shaw says that food is the most powerful drug, impacting how we look, think and feel. Through her *Instagram* account, website, books, classes and sessions, she seeks to show that healthy food can be delicious, nutritious, affordable and simple to make.

The book author wasn't always healthy. As a young girl, she had a rather torturous relationship with food and her body. Her life was a cycle of depriving and bingeing, which made her skin dull, her hair lank and her energy levels low. Eventually, Shaw realised that her destructive ways needed to change. She moved to Australia, began reading about food and learned to give her body what it needed. Gradually, she fell back in love with food, life, and, most importantly, herself. The 4 PM energy slump was eliminated, her skin started to glow, calorie-counting went out of the window, and giving her body what it really needed brought a permanent smile to her face.

While working in Sydney, Shaw learned how to properly source, prepare and cook food. Her diet is like that of “a cave woman” and includes anything that can be hunted, gathered or picked. Her approach to eating well is flexible, with

the emphasis on crowding things in rather than cutting them out – the latter of which often puts people off from trying to eat healthily. Shaw doesn't encourage people to go on fad diets, but rather to focus on eating balanced meals. And yes, you can also eat chocolate! She teaches people to live in accordance with her three pillars – Move, Munch and Meditate. This means that healthy living is not just about nutritious food but also about exercise and meditation.

Most of Shaw's followers on *Instagram* are women

who wish to keep healthy, though more and more men are thinking about their health, too! She loves to provide inspiration for daily meals, offer different ways of exercising and share what she's up to. The book author has no doubt that it's easier to stick to a healthy eating regime when you're watching someone else do it, too. Her followers can also see that she is no saint. Shaw has a weakness for freshly baked almond croissants and hearty granola, but at least she's honest about it!

How to be happy

“SMILE A LOT, SURROUND YOURSELF WITH LOVING, SUPPORTIVE PEOPLE AND TRY TO FIND WAYS TO SEPARATE WORK AND LIFE SO THAT YOU CAN ATTAIN A BALANCE.”

Favourite health food

Eggs and avocados. Shaw suggests packing in nutritious foods rather than cutting things out. “Be adventurous in the kitchen. Cook a new meal each week and experiment. Create new recipes. Often we find ourselves bored with healthy eating simply because we always cook the same meals!”

Favourite green spot

Battersea Park in London, which is close to where she lives. “A wonderful place for spending an afternoon and strolling through its gardens.”

Favourite movie

Grease. Shaw probably knows every word to every song, and can watch the movie over and over again. “It never gets old!”



airBaltic





DEE ELNAJJAR
@deemoi on Instagram, has 46.2k followers

She describes herself as an “artist, yoga teacher, traveller, climber, cyclist, mother, master procrastinator, liberal user of the f**k word, lover of love and all things bright”.

Dee Elnajjar, known to her followers on *Instagram* as Dee Moi, posts pictures of her fit and flexible body in unconventional poses against all kinds of backgrounds. The photographs are both appealing and thought-provoking.

Based in London, Elnajjar worked at *Yahoo* for seven years before leaving the corporate world to found *Cool Mummy Studios* (coolmummy.co.uk). With the help of freelance artists, she ran art workshops for children of all age groups in the British capital. She also embraced various art projects – including one that mixed graffiti with fine art – but then decided to devote herself to the study of yoga, which she had already been practicing for 10 years. Elnajjar states that this opened up many painful doors, but allowed her to inspire others through her personal experiences. The yoga teacher uses *Instagram* as a platform for self-expression and to encourage others to live in harmony with themselves. Currently she is writing a book and teaching at workshops all around the world.

Elnajjar practices yoga as a celebration of her imperfections, which makes it easier for her to find compassion towards others and accept them as they are. She is fascinated by the human body and its mechanics. She believes that her followers are attracted not just to her visual creations, but also to the texts that often accompany her photos, as she shares her personal challenges truthfully and this often helps others overcome their own challenges.

The yoga teacher has no doubt that life is an incredible gift. She chooses to believe this at all times, even when things look dark, and this belief has engendered



a strong sense of gratitude in her. She also believes in love in the universal sense, which moves us to act with compassion and which can take many different shapes. She tries never to forget that everyone we meet is in some way also our teacher.

How to be happy

“LIVE IN THE NOW.”

Favourite yoga pose

Inversions. Being upside down makes Elnajjar happy, because it is empowering, playful and fun. It provides a different perspective of things, which truly do look better upside down! Inversions also remind the yoga teacher of the time many years ago, when she watched someone do a handstand for the first time and didn’t think that she could do one herself. After many failed attempts, she succeeded, learning to enjoy the journey of discovery and not to focus on the need to master a certain task.

Favourite green spot

The Highlands in Scotland. “There is something almost sacred about them, perhaps because they have a light human footprint.” Her favourite country and spiritual home, though much more densely inhabited, is India.

Favourite quotation

“It is what it is” is even tattooed onto her left ribs. The quotation reminds her that the only thing she can change about the things out of her control is her reaction to them.

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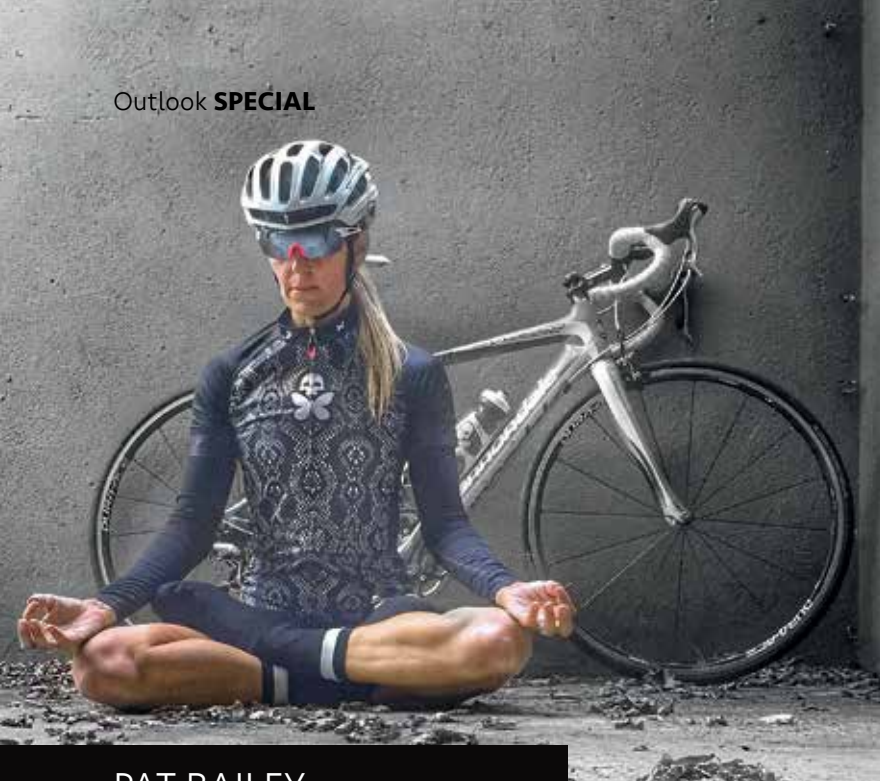


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PAT BAILEY
@patbailey on Instagram, has 91k followers
Fond of “Yoga. Cycling. Travel”

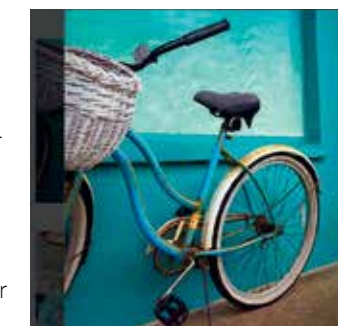
American-born yogi and cyclist Pat Bailey divides her time between the USA and Europe. She began practicing yoga early in her childhood, which was fraught with difficulties. Nevertheless, she always maintained a solid sense of self-worth and first felt able to connect to a source that is larger than herself early in her life. Bailey attended three high schools, was the first in her family to graduate from college and spent her early professional years trying to change the world. Then she started to study yoga, left the corporate domain and learned enough about yoga to begin teaching it on her own. She has also learned to slow down and to live “here and now”.

Bailey practices “pretty straightforward Vinyasa” yoga and Bhakti, which means devotion. She focuses on spiritual, inward journeys and teaches a *Yoga for Cyclists* class, which combines two things that she loves – yoga and cycling.

The yoga instructor began her *Instagram* journey with daily yoga challenges and spent time engaging with yoga enthusiasts. Many of her followers have become close friends, and through *Instagram* she has met interesting people from all over the world. According to Bailey, people are drawn to her because the content that she posts is inspirational, thoughtful and authentic.



Bailey stresses honesty and integrity as values, not just in interactions with others, but also regarding her own personal development – something that takes courage and humility. As a spiritual person, she believes in love and in leaving a light footprint. She is also grateful for her human experience.



How to be happy

“SIMPLY DECIDE TO BE. WE FORGET HOW EASY IT IS TO BE HAPPY AND LOOK TOO OFTEN OUTSIDE OF OURSELVES FOR SOLUTIONS OR APPEASEMENT. HAPPINESS IS A CHOICE. WHEN YOU ACTIVELY CHOOSE TO BE HAPPY, THEN YOU ARE. IT’S THAT SIMPLE.”

Favourite yoga pose

Resting poses that require settling in, paying attention to one’s breathing and to the parts of the body that are touching the earth. Bailey especially loves the Supta Buddha Konasana pose, in which she puts her right hand on her heart and her left hand on her belly, focusing on syncing her intuition with her courage.

Favourite nature spot

Although Bailey is a “land creature”, she loves the activation of the five senses that takes place at the beach. “It’s a full sight, sound, touch, taste and smell experience.” That’s why she often goes to meditate and practice yoga on the beach.

Inspiration

Bailey is writing her first book of poetry, *These Words*. She has taught English and loves many, many authors. She is inspired by powerful words, art and fashion. She also owns a mala collection and a rosary collection, as these are the “gadgets” that she uses daily in her meditation practice.

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VIKTOR INGEMARSSON
@rawchefviktor on Instagram, has 25k followers
Describes himself as an "award-winning chef, author and lecturer"

Known by his fans on *Instagram* as Raw Chef Viktor, the Swedish-based raw food guru has been working with food since he was 14 years old, when he got his first job at a vegetable store. At 15, he washed dishes in a restaurant until he got the chance to help out in the kitchen, because after six months, one of the chefs quit and he was accepted as a replacement. At 16, Ingemarsson was making starters for 150 guests every evening on his own and had to learn everything as he went along.

Following a summer in that restaurant, he moved to Iceland and worked there for two years, after which he moved on to London for another two years. He returned to his native Sweden full of knowledge about different cuisines, working in prominent establishments across the country. However, years of hard work and bad eating habits started to take their toll on his body. Ingemarsson developed gastritis and needed to take a six-month break from work. He visited India, and during this trip his vision of cooking changed completely.

Ingemarsson took in the huge vegetarian cooking scene, which led him to become a vegan. He embraced meditation and yoga, too, and practiced every day for months. His gastritis eventually disappeared and he felt better than ever! Upon returning to Sweden, the chef turned his establishment into a pioneering health

food spot to inspire others. That was the beginning of something bigger than he could ever have imagined.

The vegan chef's idea of healthy eating is simple – try to keep your food plant-based. At the same time, there is no point in being too strict in seeking the perfect meal each and every time, which can cause a lot of stress. According to Ingemarsson, that could be more harmful than having a fast-food meal, say, once every two weeks.

The Swedish chef seeks to inspire his followers to new ways of thinking when it comes to food. He pays attention

to both the taste and the presentation of his dishes, finding beauty in the vegetables that he serves. His *Instagram* posts also include photos from his adventures outside of the restaurant world. Although large companies and well-known chefs from all over the planet are among his followers, mostly they are people looking for health tips and nutrition facts, which Ingemarsson is glad to provide.

Ingemarsson's principle is that one must find one's passion and live it. "Then you don't ever need to feel that you're working – you're simply fulfilling your dreams."



How to be happy

"JUST ACCEPT YOUR LIFE AND TRY TO LIVE IT CONSCIOUSLY. THERE IS SO MUCH BEAUTY IN THE WORLD, AND IT IS IN YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE AS WELL! IT IS SO EASY TO LOSE ONESELF IN THE PAST OR THE FUTURE, TO THE EXTENT THAT WE DON'T NOTICE THE AMAZING THINGS THAT ARE HAPPENING AROUND US RIGHT HERE AND RIGHT NOW. BREATHE IN, BREATHE OUT. OPEN YOUR EYES. SEE."

Favourite food

"It will surely be plant-based and raw." Ingemarsson can no longer live without such foods, which "make so much sense. The best thing that beginners can do is to buy a nice blender and start with some luscious green smoothies in the morning, a couple of times a week. After some time, one inevitably starts craving for more. It's a bit addictive, but it's an addiction of the good kind!"

Favourite green spot

As a climber, Ingemarsson enjoys the mountains and forests of Norway and the west coast of Sweden. "It is truly remarkable to see a massive wall appearing through the trees when you're closing in on it."

Inspiration

Chill-out music, especially when working in the kitchen. The chef's favourite gadget is (no surprise there) his blender! **BO**

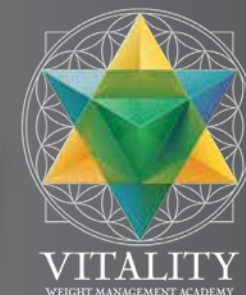
“ Now I realize that anything is possible! ”

Astra Dreimane / entrepreneur and singer



“ Теперь понимаю, что все возможно! ”

Астра Дреймане / предприниматель и певица



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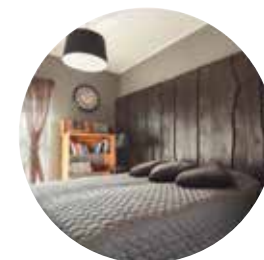
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Used high-performance convertibles: a buying guide

Looking for a flash drop-top? Here's a guide to the market for used performance-focused convertibles.

In association with car buyer's guide **WHATCAR.LV**
Publicity photos



◀ BENTLEY CONTINENTAL GTC (2006-PRESENT)

If you want to waft effortlessly across continents in great style while soaking up the rays, the car in which you should do it is the fast, refined, beautifully finished and elegant *Continental GTC*.

Performance is as you'd expect from something with a 560-hp 6.0-litre twin turbo W12 muscle to flex, with a 0-100 km/h time of just 4.8 seconds and a top speed of 310 km/h. The *GTC* will whisper around town and growl out on the open road, if you want it to. It also rides and handles surprisingly well, aided by four-wheel drive, while the leather and wood interior is suitably cossetting, with room for four.

Buy a 2007 car now for around 70,000 euros and point it towards the south of France. Expect monstrous fuel bills, though.

▶ AUDI R8 V10 SPYDER (2010-2012)

While the *R8 V10* may lack the draw of a top-notch supercar, it has the heart and soul of a super quick and well-balanced sporting convertible.

It's thrilling, too, thanks to a mid-mounted 525-hp 5.2-litre V10 engine that's related to the one in the *Lamborghini Gallardo*. The engine drives all four wheels, providing enough thrust and traction to hit 100 km/h from a standstill in 4.1 seconds and a breezy 300 km/h flat out. A canvas roof keeps weight low, and the handling is rear-biased for fun. You can choose either a six-speed manual or an automated R-tronic transmission.

Quality is first class and problems are few, but you'll need deep pockets to buy such a thing. Prices start at 80,000 euros for a 2011 model.



◀ MASERATI GRANCABRIO (2010-PRESENT)

If you desire a fast and luxurious four-seater convertible carrying one of the most iconic badges in motoring history, then this *Maserati* will be right up your alley.

The eye-catching *GranCabrio* sports a 440 hp 4.7-litre V8 that gives it significant speed via a six-speed automatic gearbox, namely 0-100 km/h in around five seconds and a top speed of 280 km/h. It sounds magnificent, too, with a charismatic burble to complement the elegant styling. The interior is suitably opulent, with plenty of room for four.

Alas, it's no lightweight, and the suspension is firm, but corners can be approached with confidence, if not the speed of some Italian thoroughbreds. But, as with all used cars of this calibre, service history is a must.

▶ JAGUAR XKR (2006-2015)

The sky is blue, the sun is dipping towards the horizon, and you're driving through lush green countryside in a convertible *Jaguar* with the wind in your hair. Not only that, but a 4.2-litre V8 with 420 hp is at your beck and call, ready to send a throaty roar through its quad exhausts when you mash the accelerator. You'll be treated to rewarding handling, a well-judged ride and a luxurious interior.

Be prepared, though, to dig deep to keep it on the road, because running costs are pretty steep. Before you buy, check the electrics and roof operation thoroughly, too.

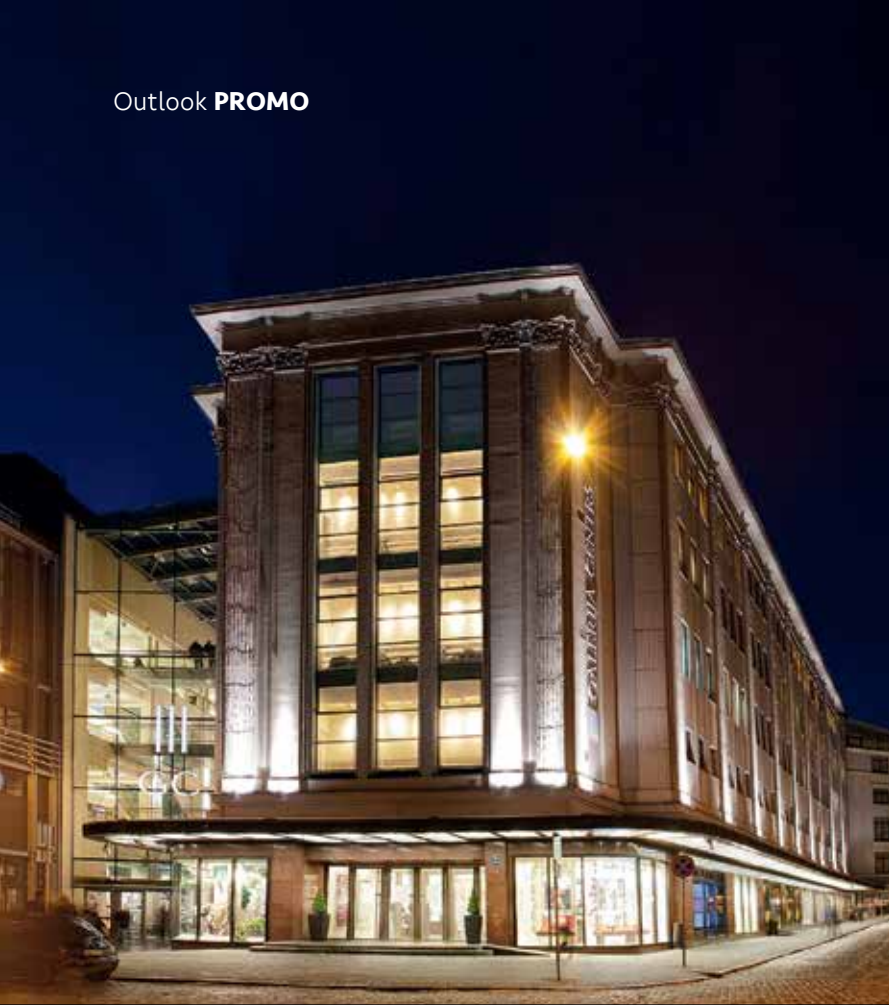


◀ PORSCHE BOXSTER (2004-2012)

Open-top motoring rarely gets better than in a *Porsche Boxster*. The *Mk2* model offers spectacular driving and head-turning good looks in a reliable package, and it can now be had for the same price as a new *Dacia*. Both engine options are powerful enough, but the 3.2-litre S model is the enthusiasts' favourite. However, the 2.7-litre version hardly leaves you feeling short-changed and can sprint from 0-100 km/h in around six seconds. Few things go wrong on the *Boxster*, but make sure that your prospective purchase has a full service history. **BO**

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





Elegance and enchantment in the heart of Riga *Galerija Centrs*

III

GALERIJA CENTRS

FASHION SHOPPING CENTRE
SINCE 1938



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WWW.GALERIJACENTRS.LV

The *GALERIJA CENTRS* is as sophisticated and elegant as the Latvian capital in which it is located. Traditionally associated with good taste, this modern shopping centre has a rich history that dates back to the 1930s. There is hardly a more suitable place for leisurely shopping right in the historic centre of Riga.

SHOPPING CENTRE TIMELINE

1919

The *Army Economy Store* (AES) – now known as the *Galerija Centrs* shopping centre – is founded by the Latvian army to supply goods to its soldiers.

1928

The *AES* is opened to the public.

1936

The conversion of the *AES* to a modern five-storey department store is initiated. Latvian president Kārlis Ulmanis attends the foundation-laying ceremony in September.

1938

Reconstruction works are completed. For a long time, the building houses the largest and most modern store in the Baltics.

1940

The *AES* is renamed the *Riga Central Department Store*.

1944-91

The *Riga Central Department Store* operates during the Soviet era, with restrictions on the sale of goods and shortages inherent to that period.

1997

Renovations. The lower two floors open their doors to the public in December, while the top three floors open in May of 1998.

2006

The building undergoes another large-scale reconstruction and extension. An annex is built, and Rīdzenes iela is turned into a glass-covered arcade. The complex also gets a new name – the *Galerija Centrs* shopping centre.

2008

The *Galerija Centrs* is recognised as the second-best shopping centre in Europe. It is the first time that a Latvian shopping centre receives a European Shopping Centre Award from the International Council of Shopping Centres.

In tribute to the store building’s eventful past, the grand staircase of the *GALERIJA CENTRS* features a fascinating exhibition of more than 60 photographs. Both privately owned and taken from public archives, the photos cover nearly eight decades of history, from the laying of the building’s foundation stone to the present day.



Today, Rīdzenes iela has become a popular public open space for various cultural activities, including exhibitions. Photo by Dmitrijs Mokejevs



Main staircase. Interior designer Kārlis Plūksne. Photo by J. Brūveris, taken from his private collection



Pilaster capital with ornament depicting Hermes’ staff, a symbol of commerce. Architect A. Galindoms

LITTLE OLD TOWN MARKET



RĪDZENES
TIRDZIŅŠ

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September 9 and 10
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LITTLE OLD TOWN MARKET
Foodstuffs from Latvian farmsteads and artisan handicrafts. Latvian culture and traditions from antiquity to the present day. All visitors are welcome!
Open: Fri.: 14:00-19:00
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The exhibition places particular emphasis on the edifice’s architecture and interior details, some of which are unique in Europe.
The exhibition also reveals extracts from 13th-century chronicles about the historical significance of the store’s location. Up until the 16th century, the current site of the *GALERIJA CENTRS* was a commercial port on the banks of the Rīdzene River, which was quite wide and navigable by sizeable ships. The well-preserved wreck of one of these water craft was uncovered during archaeological excavations in 1939 and is now on display at the Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation. Fragments of clothing, jewellery, coins, package seals and game paraphernalia were also uncovered in the diggings, and photographs of these artefacts are part of the exhibition.

Since 1936, when Latvian president Kārlis Ulmanis and the building’s architect, Artūrs Galindoms, laid the foundation stone, this location has seen many changes. Initially known as the *Army Economy Store* during Latvia’s first period of independence, it was later renamed *Riga Central Department Store* and is now known as the *GALERIJA CENTRS*. This background has made the centre a continual nexus of Riga shopping to the present day. The most recent renovation and expansion of the *GALERIJA CENTRS* has been acknowledged as an outstanding design accomplishment, both in Europe and globally.
Linstow Center Management took over the operation of the department store in 1997. Following extensive reconstruction works in 2006, Rīdzenes iela became an axis that highlighted the building’s history, while incorporating modern-day attributes. Today, the *GALERIJA CENTRS* is a popular shopping location with 110 shops, cafés, restaurants and other service providers. **BO**



Drapery department, Riga Central Department Store. Photo by J. Brūveris, taken from his private collection



Army Economy Store, view across the ground floor. Interior designer Kārlis Plūksne. Unknown photographer, Latvian Museum of Architecture



View of the shop windows from Vaļņu iela. The *GALERIJA CENTRS* proudly continues the tradition of making works of art out of window displays



Chocolate with a winning taste

When Spanish conquistadors brought an Aztec chocolate drink back to their homeland in the 16th century, it quickly became popular, particularly among the noblewomen. Today, the magic of chocolate is accessible to just about everyone, and anyone who has tasted *Pobeda*• chocolates and truffles will agree that these provide a truly sublime taste experience.

72% cocoa, 100% family-owned
At first glance, one might get the impression that the confectionary industry is in the hands of large corporations. That is true to a large extent. For example, *Ferrero Rocher* and *Ritter* started out as small family companies, but later expanded to become global structures. The Russian *Pobeda* chocolate producer, for its part, continues to be a 100% family-operated enterprise. During the 15 years since its foundation, the company has grown to produce 220 tonnes of chocolate per day.

As part of its continued expansion, *Pobeda* opened a new, modern and high-capacity production plant in Ventspils, Latvia, in February of this year, becoming the only Russian chocolate maker with a factory in the Baltic States and the European Union (EU).

Company president and co-owner Vitaly Muravyev recounts how *Pobeda* came into being. “My wife Olga and I got married when we were very young. I was studying biophysics, while Olga was a teacher of physics and mathematics. However, we both wanted to change our career paths. During the late 1990s, we bought sweets abroad and sold them in Russia. We also learned how to make chocolate in Germany. Then in the year 2000, we decided to stop selling other companies’ chocolates and to make our own. In the beginning, we were personally involved in all stages of the production process. My sister and both of Olga’s sisters also worked together with us.”

Vitaly and Olga are the proud parents of five children. Their oldest son, Andrei, is heading the *Pobeda* production plant in Ventspils, where he has lived for the past year and a half. He is also responsible for *Pobeda* sales in the Baltics and the EU as a whole.

“Our remaining four children are still too young to take on such serious responsibilities, but they do help us out in other

ways. They’re happy to taste our products and to recommend new flavours and advertising ideas,” says Olga, the company’s general director.

“They also enjoy visiting our production plants on weekends. They feel right at home there, driving around in the pallet trucks, going into the laboratories and pretending to be grownups.”

Pobeda chocolate plant in Ventspils
“We looked at several investment opportunities in the Baltic States, but decided to build our new production plant in Ventspils, which offered good infrastructure, logistics, factory space and a qualified workforce,” Vitaly continues.

“Believe it or not, but one important factor that influenced our choice was the quality of the air in Ventspils, because chocolate absorbs surrounding odours. This means that we couldn’t set up a production facility in a polluted area.”

The establishment of a new chocolate factory in an EU country was an important strategic step for the company. The Ventspils plant has paved the way for an increase in exports of *Pobeda* products to Europe, the USA, Canada, Mexico, Peru, Australia, China and other countries.

Olga is the family member with the most knowledge about the intricacies of chocolate- and candy-making. Regarding the production plant in Ventspils, she says: “Our state-of-the-art facilities can ground sugar crystals up into a fine powder, which permits us to reduce the fat content in our chocolates. The shelf life of chocolate depends on the strength of the crystal structure inside of it. We can extend the shelf life of chocolate up to 24 months without adding any preservatives by using modern high-speed and high-precision tempering machines.”

To ensure a balance of tastes drawn from natural raw materials, *Pobeda* uses cocoa beans from several countries. Those that come from the Ivory Coast add a fruity note, while those that come from Venezuela have a strong cocoa taste. Cocoa beans from Ecuador add a touch of bitterness. To make sure that the cocoa beans have no artificial additives, the company avoids buying them from intermediaries and deals directly with the producers.

The Muravyev family adopts a very personal approach toward the company’s clients. According to Olga, “Everyone who eats our chocolates is like a special family guest. Would you offer your visitors artificial colours and flavour enhancers? I don’t think so! Instead, you would try to please them with something tasty and natural. That’s why we use only natural flavour enhancers, and preservatives are forbidden. Incidentally, do you know how to establish whether the chocolate that you are eating is natural? First, place a piece into your mouth. If it melts and becomes soft gradually, then the chocolate is natural.”

Pobeda chocolates, truffles and candies
Pobeda makes various types of sweets, including dark chocolate, products with a reduced sugar content and even sugar-free treats for the increasing number of health-conscious customers. The company’s chocolate, truffles and candies can also be bought at stores in Latvia. As in Russia, the most popular *Pobeda* products among Latvian consumers are the *Natural* bitter chocolate with 72% cocoa content and the sugar-free chocolate made with stevia. Children have a strong liking for wafer sweets, while women enjoy chocolate truffles with various fillings.



In Russia, *Pobeda*’s *Natural* bitter chocolate is the best-selling product in the category of chocolates with a high cocoa content. This particular delicacy is made with a mixture of cocoa beans from the Ivory Coast and Ecuador and is appropriate for those who need the energy to lead an active lifestyle.

Pobeda’s exclusive line of sugar-free chocolates with stevia has 12% fewer calories than other chocolates. As the only natural alternative to sugar, stevia is a plant of the sunflower family that is native to parts of Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina. The plant’s active components have up to 300 times the sweetness of sugar in the same concentration and zero calories and glucose, which means that products with stevia can be used by diabetics and those who suffer from muscle spasms (hypertonia). Products with stevia are particularly popular among fitness activists and food bloggers.

Pobeda’s *Premium* truffles with marzipan contain soft chocolate cream with grated almonds and a marzipan cushion. This series also includes varieties with dark cocoa, grated Italian mascarpone cheese and the traditionally refined tiramisu dessert.

Those with a penchant for established traditions and who enjoy drinking coffee together with their family and friends will like the chocolates and wafer candies, whose filling of milk chocolate and crunchy wafers provides a mild and harmonious taste. The wafer candies are available with caramel, condensed milk, grated almond or hazelnut praliné fillings. Bon appétit! **BO**

① pobedavkusa.com
• *Pobeda* means “winning” in Russian



FACTS ABOUT THE POBEDA CONFECTIONERY COMPANY

- The two original production plants in Russia cover a total area of 42,000 m²
- The company produces 220 tonnes of chocolate per day
- *Pobeda* exports chocolate to 20 countries
- The *Pobeda Confectionery* daughter company was founded in Ventspils in April of 2014
- The company’s Ventspils plant began to produce chocolate in February of 2016



Gastronome – meet the Harrods of the Baltics

Photos by
GATIS GIERTS
(Picture Agency)

Everyone knows of *Harrods* in London – the luxury department store that excels in first-class service and high-quality products. But if you're visiting the Baltics and are looking for *Harrods'* culinary equivalent, then look no further, as *Gastronome* is king in the fine food department.

Located in Riga's *mc*² centre – one of the best retail spaces in northern Europe – *Gastronome* offers over 5,000 food items that have been carefully selected and brought in from all over the world. For the most part, these specialty foods will not be found in ordinary supermarkets, their exquisiteness standing apart and speaking for itself.

Gastronome is not exactly a food shop, nor is it a supermarket. The term *delicacy market* suits it best. The freshness and accessibility of the produce (for you can smell, see and even taste many of the items that you might wish to purchase) and the friendly atmosphere are the first things that one notices upon entering the premises. In their drive for perfection and serving the absolute best to their clients, the owners have hired professional and knowledgeable salespeople who will gladly help visitors find exactly what they need. The products at *Gastronome* are natural and unspoiled by attempts to artificially prolong their shelf life or make them cheaper at the expense of quality. Here you get the best that money can buy, and you will probably want to keep coming back for more!

Gastronome is divided in a number of enticing sections, the dried fruit and nut section being an absolute hit for the growing number of health-conscious eaters, vegetarians, vegans and regular folk who know the benefits of stocking up on energy-rich and healthy

snacks. The selection of dried goods in this section is by far the widest in town and includes several different kinds of apricots, sugar-coated pieces of aloe, dried mangoes and freeze-dried strawberry crisps, to name just a few. These products come from all parts of the globe, with each food item being sourced from the country in which it is at its freshest and best.

The growing demand for nutrition-rich ingredients that suit vegetarian meals is satisfied also in the grains and pulses section. At *Gastronome* you will find a vast choice of different varieties of rice, lentils, couscous, bulgur and much more.

Gastronome offers over 5,000 food items that have been carefully selected and brought in from all over the world

The assortment of teas on offer at *Gastronome* is impressive. Here you can try out tangerine leaf tea and green jasmine tea in its truest sense (not merely infused with jasmine essence). Along with numerous amazing loose-leaf teas, you can also purchase beautiful tea sets in which to serve them, as well as different types of sugar and honey – not to mention coffee.

Gastronome's sweets section could come straight out of a fairy tale, bringing together the tastiest treats from Italy, Spain, Germany, Belgium and France. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to say that *Gastronome* provides the best offer of confections in the country. A large selection of truffles – including white, with cocoa, sugar-free and dark – is available, along with natural

Belgian chocolate and chocolate-coated fruits such as cherries, plums, mangoes and orange peel. Other highlights include superb handmade French marmalade with edible gold sprayed on it, and probably the best marzipan in the world from Lübeck, Germany. A good choice of Eastern sweets is available as well, and for hardcore fans of pure dark chocolate, there is also a variant made of 100% of cocoa up for grabs.

Since the *Gastronome* delicacy market is owned by *Reaton*, the leading wholesaler of fresh fish in the Baltics, it has a privilege unavailable to most retailers – the ability to offer a vast choice of fresh fish and seafood from all of the Seven Seas. Everything that you see in the showcase can be grilled on the spot – and not at restaurant rates – but with only a small surcharge added to the price of the fish.

The selection of fresh meat that *Gastronome* offers has increased considerably as well – think veal, rabbit and guinea fowl as well as marbled and premium beef from Australia, Brazil and Argentina. In some cases, the labels indicate what the animals have been fed, which is important for connoisseurs who know the difference in taste that this can bring. *Gastronome* also has a great selection of superior dairy products and a substantial gastronomy section of fresh, tasty and nutritious salads, including low-fat varieties for the fitness conscious. These dishes are prepared in small quantities so that they appear on the store shelves for no longer than the day on which they are sold.

The market vibe is particularly strong in *Gastronome's* oil and spices section. Since the best quality olive oils are fairly expensive, they can be tried out before purchase, and the spices are also accessible to both the eyes and nose.

Gastronome's dairy and cheese section is also worth travelling a long way to visit. All of the classics are there, including large selections of hard, soft and melted cheese made out of cow, goat or sheep milk, and the locally-sourced soured milk products are unparalleled. The fresh and soft cottage cheese, sour cream and kefir (fermented milk drink) deserve special places of honour on your daily summer table!

And last, but not least, are the ready-made gift baskets, along with individual items that can serve as great presents not only for others but also for yourself! **BO**



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Galleria Riga — a shopping centre that inspires



Terrace Riga, Galleria Riga, 8th floor

The Galleria Riga shopping centre has been operating at Dzirnau iela 67 in downtown Riga since 2010. It is home to more than 60 stores, restaurants and cafés that take up 23,300 square metres of retail space. The main part of the shopping centre spreads across seven floors, not counting the two-storey heated underground parking garage. During the spring and summer months, the 8th floor is the site of the largest rooftop terrace in the Baltic countries. There, several fine restaurants offer great food and drinks, along with a fantastic 360° panoramic view of the Latvian capital.

The first-rate stores and restaurants at the Galleria Riga – along with a wide array of services, a personal approach and a special atmosphere – inspire visitors to develop their personalities and enjoy life.

One will find practically everything that one needs at the Galleria Riga, including clothing, shoes and accessories, books, children's items and household goods. Each store in the shopping centre is special, allowing buyers to follow the latest fashion trends and express themselves in various creative ways.

The Galleria Riga is home to such internationally renowned fashion brands as *Lloyd*, *Ivo Nikkolo*, *Monton*, *Baltman*, *MAX&Co*, *Marella*, *Ecco*, *Cortefiel* and *Mohito*, as well as popular stores like *Suit Supply*, *Reserved*, *Danija* and many more. Smart concept stores like *8 rooms*, which sells clothing by Latvian fashion designers, create a special ambience. Furthermore, a stylist is on hand at the Galleria Riga to ensure an exciting and valuable shopping experience.

The Galleria Riga is a place where one can quickly and easily meet various everyday needs, with a bank branch, a post office, a sewing atelier and a dry cleaner's conveniently accessible on the premises.

The Zinoo Riga scientific centre, for its part, provides wonderful recreation and entertainment opportunities for families with children, while grownups can relax and replenish themselves at a beauty salon, hairdresser's, solarium and yoga studio. One can hardly think of something more invigorating than a yoga session out in the fresh air on the summer terrace.

A wide array of cosy cafés, restaurants and bars can be found on all eight floors of the Galleria Riga, including *Gan Bei City*, *Il Cibo del Papa*, *The Trinity Bar*, *Oyster Bar Medusa*, *Coffee Inn* and a branch of the legendary *Lido Ķirsons* restaurant chain, which serves Latvian-style dishes made with local food products. Hence, the Galleria Riga is perfect for enjoying a satisfying lunch with business partners, drinking a refreshing afternoon coffee, and going out for dinner together with friends.

Inspiring shopping, delicious meals and a pleasant meeting location right in the city centre make the Galleria Riga an ideal place for spending quality time. Consequently, it should come as no surprise that the Galleria Riga's slogan is *Life gives you wings!* **BO**

Galleria Riga shopping centre
Dzirnau iela 67
Entrances from Dzirnau iela 67
and Blaumaņa iela 10 (between
Brīvības bulvāris and Tērbatas iela)
Tel. (+371) 67307000
info@galleriariga.lv

① galleriariga.lv/en
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Gourmet spots

Places to enjoy life and the sun on the eighth floor of Galleria Riga



Terrace Riga

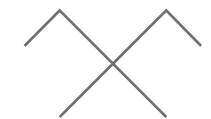
Opened in 2011, Terrace Riga immediately became a "must visit" spot for both locals and tourists. The trendy restaurant boasts the largest terrace in the Baltic States, from which visitors are treated to a 360-degree panorama of the city. Terrace Riga can be found on the 8th floor of the Galleria Riga shopping centre, right in the centre of the Latvian capital and a mere ten-minute walk from the Old Town. The splendid outdoor setting coupled with delicious cuisine (take particular note of the oyster and sushi menus) are bound to make you fall in love with this top-notch dining spot, which can seat 450 and which has three bars (*Martini*, *Bacardi*, *Stoli*). Smokers have the option of enjoying a relaxing after-meal water pipe, while during the warm summer evenings, music and dance events take place on a regular basis.

① terraceriga.com



D'arte Terrace Lounge

Stop in for an Italian cappuccino and a quick bite to eat or for a leisurely meal with friends and family at the D'arte Terrace Lounge, which offers great panoramic views of Riga in a warm and friendly atmosphere. The establishment serves fine Italian cuisine with a modern twist and delicious fresh sushi. It is also known for its extensive drink list. In addition, hookah pipes are available to those with a penchant for the exotic.



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Photos by
ĢIRTS OZOLIŅŠ
(Picture Agency)

Summer elegance at Riga's **MUUSU** restaurant



Chef Kaspars Jansons

If you're looking for a warm, homey feel in Riga's Old Town, then head straight to the *MUUSU* restaurant (the name means "ours" in Latvian). *MUUSU* is not only a lovely place for gourmands to enjoy a refined meal, it is also a wonderful experience for those seeking a pleasant atmosphere. The feeling of being welcome is strengthened by the elegant wooden dressers, unpretentious linen accessories, exposed original brick walls and tasteful shades of grey in the restaurant's convivial interior. And, as in every welcoming home, *MUUSU* also has its keeper of the hearth – head chef Kaspars Jansons.

Jansons' name requires no further introduction in Latvia's restaurant scene. He is

one of the leading chefs in the country, having participated (and won) in many international chef competitions and subsequently serving as a judge at such events. Jansons has also interned at the three-*Michelin*-starred *Schwarzwaldstube* restaurant at the *Hotel Traube Tonbach* in Baiersbronn (Germany) and at the one-*Michelin*-starred *L'Atlantide* in Nantes.

Jansons truly loves what he does. His eyes sparkle and his voice becomes more spirited when he talks about preparing foods, experimenting in the kitchen and wishing to please customers.

"*MUUSU*'s clientele are educated gourmands who know what they want. They know how food should taste and are not



afraid of experimenting and trusting a chef's sense of creativity. We're always on the side of the client, because the client is the one who needs to leave the restaurant happy and satisfied. Our job is to read a person's wishes, so our waiters always try to get to know each customer," explains the talented chef.

While *MUUSU* belongs to the same people who founded three other popular Riga restaurant chains – *Steiku Haoss*, *Ribs & Rock* and *KID** – it carries a slightly different message than its kin, offering modern interpretations of classic European cuisine. Within a short time, *MUUSU* has consolidated its identity and become one of the best lunch and dinner spots in the Old Town.

The restaurant's head chef Jansons explains that *MUUSU*'s goal is to define its own place among the wide array of restaurants and eateries in the Old Town. He and his team have been using high-quality local products as much as possible in the preparation of delicious meals with a Scandinavian accent.

Judging by the response of the restaurant's guests, the efforts by the *MUUSU* team have paid off handsomely, as *MUUSU* was named the third best restaurant in Latvia in 2015. What's more, three different summer menus – a daytime, evening and dessert version – have been available since the month of April.

"The dishes on the daytime menu are simpler and more 'raw', while the evening menu presents exciting and intricate meals that have been put together with surprising combinations of ingredients to create memorable gastronomic experiences," says Jansons. The head chef recommends trying the Latvian ostrich with compressed melons, mature wheat grains and raspberry sauce. For dessert, he suggests the berries in red wine and vanilla jelly, together with a slightly chilled local black currant dessert wine by the *Abavas* winery.

July heralds the arrival of a new drinks card, which highlights a variety of Latvian wines and beers by small local microbreweries. Delicious lunch specials remain a steadfast feature, with the dishes corresponding to the ingredients of the changing seasons.

MUUSU is also a great choice for a weekend breakfast, business lunch or special event with dear friends. The cosy third-floor dining room is perfect for such events and can be reserved for private functions such as wedding celebrations. In addition, the restaurant's special degustation dinners have become quite popular, providing Jansons with the opportunity to step out the kitchen, meet with his guests and tell them about the exquisite dishes that he has prepared.



Indeed, *MUUSU* is a place for being together with people one loves and feeling the warmth of home – especially now, at the start of the summer season, with two of Old Riga's most beautiful outside terraces beckoning right by the restaurant entrance. By the way, the small romantic courtyard terrace on the second floor is also quite appropriate for those who wish to undertake a culinary journey in a subdued and intimate setting.

Small wonder that those who have discovered *MUUSU* keep coming back. And that's exactly what the founders of the restaurant hoped for when they launched the enterprise. **BO**

muusu
RESTORĀNS

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① muusu.lv
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Equus



Svetlana Riškova

It has been over a month since the *Pullman* hotel opened its doors in Riga and the first visitors had a chance to try out its sparkling new facilities, but *Equus* – the hotel’s restaurant – may very well have left the most memorable impression.

The restaurant’s head chef and co-creator Svetlana Riškova has been with the project from day one and has poured all of her heart into it. She also serves as the Chairman of the Board of the Latvian Chefs’ Club and has been promoting the growth of many other now well-known local chefs.

Equus, meaning “horse” in Latin, was chosen to mark the history of the restaurant’s location. The fabled Baron Munchausen, who was keen to tell embellished tales about his adventures

around the world, allegedly kept his horse stables right where the hotel restaurant stands today. The subtle and elegant interior is thoroughly Scandinavian, combining warm wood, sober brick walls and neutral natural colours in a chic tribute to local patterns. The adaptable restaurant rooms, for their part, are divided by glass doors, which can be closed for small, intimate gatherings or left open for larger events.

Although *Pullman*, as a well-known international hotel chain, provides guidelines that its restaurants have to follow, it gave Riškova sufficient leeway to introduce unique concepts and ideas. One of these is the *Tea Daily* tearoom, in which guests are offered around 20 exclusive types of tea. Special tasting sets are available for some of the most popular teas, which are

served in beautiful crockery and matched with specially selected appetisers. The different types of teas come from various parts of the world and were chosen with the help of a competent specialist. *Equus* also serves “tapestries” of small snacks and appetisers in line with the popular Spanish tapas. These are served on unique tableware that was created in collaboration with an established local ceramics company, *Raunas Ceplis*.

The restaurant offers a set menu on evenings, providing patrons with the opportunity to take part in small and informal tasting sessions with the chefs in an open kitchen before settling down at their tables.

As a hotel restaurant, *Equus* has made sure to provide the best breakfast in town, both in the form of a buffet meal and an item on the set menu. During the day, diners can indulge in a *Power Lunch*, which features a delicious soup and sandwich accompanied by a light salad and dessert. The *Power Lunch* is a perfect option at large conferences, which can be held right next door in the hotel’s

extensive conference space. More traditional and heftier “meat and potatoes” style dishes are also available to those whose working day is coming to an end.

Equus has a separate entrance to its wine bar for those who are not staying at the hotel. The building’s central location means that non-residing guests drop in frequently, sometimes to purchase high-quality wines by the bottle. The carefully chosen predominantly French wines are affordable, ranging between restaurant and shop prices, and the selection is substantial.

Next door, a special bookshop is bound to become a mecca for foodies and art lovers. Its culinary section was personally selected by Riškova, with useful tomes from the USA, Germany, Scandinavia and elsewhere for both amateur chefs and professionals.

You will feel warmly welcomed whichever section you choose to visit at the *Pullman*, be it the sophisticated bookstore, relaxing wine bar, cosy tearoom, two cigar rooms, lobby bar with a DJ or fabulous *Equus* restaurant. **BO**



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Text by **DOVYDAS KIAULEIKIS**
Publicity photos

Culinary hotspots in Vilnius
A guide to the best restaurants, cafés and eateries



VERANDA

Best summer terrace in town

When visiting Vilnius, there are two reasons to leave the beautiful Old Town and step across the Neris River to the district of Žvėrynas. The first is the neighbourhood itself. Surrounded by a river bend and the lush Vingis Park, Žvėrynas is like a picturesque village in the middle of the Lithuanian capital, with gems of old wooden architecture all around. The second reason is *Veranda*, a gastropub in one of those wooden houses.

Even though it's only a stone's throw from the heart of Vilnius, Žvėrynas has felt like a remote settlement for most of its existence. What today is one of the most desired districts of Vilnius, only 150 years ago was mainly farmland and forests. Then at the beginning of the 20th century, an enterprising merchant named Vasilii

Martison had a bridge built to connect Žvėrynas with the rest of the city, carved up the land into patches and sold them at a handsome profit.

Veranda is an important part of this history, as Martison's office was located precisely where *Veranda* can be found today. Since opening in 2005, *Veranda* has become a hub of the local community. Businessmen have private meetings there, families come for lunch and couples go out on dates. The feeling from this eclectic mix is that everyone fits in, and this atmosphere of belonging is one of *Veranda*'s main attractions.

Another summer attraction is the large garden terrace with elegant black umbrellas beside a green lawn and willow trees. The child-friendly place also has a large playground, ensuring that kids can engage in all kinds of activities while

the adults dine and drink in relative peace and quiet.

The king of the menu is the open fire grill, which together with the garden makes *Veranda* one of the best places in town for lunch or dinner under the open sky. Grilled pork with caraway (EUR 9.50) and catfish with hemp and garlic (EUR 12.50) are the two Lithuanian specialities on offer next to the grill classics of beef steak and chicken breast. There is also an extensive menu of salads and pancakes for lighter meals.

A plan for a day outside Vilnius' Old Town: after a stroll around charming Žvėrynas, have an *al fresco* dinner in the garden of *Veranda*.

Address: Kęstučio gatvė 39, Vilnius
Sun.-Wed.: 11:00-24:00
Fri.-Sat.: 11:00-01:00
① veranda.lt



KEY to RIGA

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

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

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

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LIVE MUSIC DAILY



DUBLIN

Innovative take on seasonal cooking

Deivydas Praspaliauskas, a young, ambitious chef, walked a long road before opening his *Dublin* restaurant. Following culinary studies in Denmark, he had a few attempts at creating a place with the wow factor on your plate in Vilnius. His "final attempt" (which is the meaning of *dublin* in Lithuanian) is a solid addition to the Lithuanian capital's fine dining scene.

Dublin has a large, lively brasserie and a smaller, cosier restaurant that both serve innovative, Scandinavian-style food. Each meal is a culinary improvisation of seasonal products. Think of Copenhagen's famous *Noma* transported to Vilnius.

During my early summer visit, we were treated to a five-course feast of lush greenery and pasture freshness. The

degustation menu (EUR 50 per person) contains seemingly simple ingredients like goat cheese, spinach and lamb shank. Cooked and presented in a creative way, these become culinary masterpieces. Each plate is presented by the chef with a little introduction to his improvisation. Because the food is mostly seasonal, you may notice a repetition of familiar flavours in different meals. For example, beetroot dominated in autumn, while asparagus was prominent in May.

The experience of a full dinner at *Dublin* takes a few hours. It's perfect for a romantic dinner, as there is plenty of time between the courses to talk love in the intimate space of the restaurant. This subdued atmosphere contrasts sharply with the animated bustle next door at the brasserie, where

diners order slightly simpler versions of the à la carte meals.

Amongst the stars of the brasserie menu are grilled duck breast with yellow beetroots and lingonberry sauce (EUR 18), and risotto with quail breast (EUR 8). It's also worth trying *Dublin's* homemade black currant ice cream with berry jelly and hazelnut – definitely one of the best in town.

"The bar and the kitchen are like a theatre stage where new performances take place every day, where you can improvise and demonstrate your wit. I like to be the director in the kitchen, while the main stage is all yours," Deivydas explains his approach to cooking. Accept the invitation and let him direct – your taste buds will submit easily.

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Milan Cathedral

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1/ Fly for EUR 69 round-trip this autumn

Even if most of us don't look forward to autumn, it will arrive anyway, so why not make the most of it and brighten up the cooler months with a nice city break or shopping trip?

airBaltic is offering specially low-priced tickets for travel during the autumn and winter to the biggest European metropolises like **London, Berlin, Milan, Copenhagen** and many more.

Look for flights at airbaltic.com with the **double cherry symbol** now and fly to Europe's greatest cities starting from October for as little as **EUR 69 round-trip**.

2/ Get inspired at airbalticblog.com

The best ice cream spots in **Rome**, family-friendly holidays in **Berlin** or tips for *Game of Thrones* fans in **Croatia** – all of these and more can be found at airbalticblog.com whenever you wish to find inspiration for your next trip. Be it information on *airBaltic's* travel destinations, tips for trip-planning and packing, interesting facts related to shops, music, accommodation or food for all tastes, it's all in airbalticblog.com.

3/ *airBaltic* is now the No. 1 airline in Estonia

This spring for the first time, *airBaltic* became the No. 1 airline in Estonia, servicing more passengers than any other airline out of Tallinn Airport.

In April, *airBaltic* carried more than 28,000 passengers travelling to and from Tallinn, or 64% more than during the same month last year. In May, the number of passengers exceeded 32,000, making *airBaltic* the leader at Tallinn Airport for the second month in a row.

***airBaltic* offers six direct routes from Tallinn to Berlin, Paris, Amsterdam, Vienna, Vilnius and Riga, with one-way ticket prices starting at EUR 19.**



Photo by Kadi-Liis Koppel / © Tallinn City Tourist Office & Convention Bureau

Tallinn, Viru Gate

4/ New flights to Reykjavik

This summer, *airBaltic* launched a new and direct route between Riga and **Reykjavik**. Flights to the Icelandic capital operate twice a week and have already proven to be extremely popular among Baltic travellers.

Iceland is second largest island in Europe after Great Britain and an absolute must for nature-lovers and adventure-seekers. Famous for its dramatic landscapes with multi-coloured mountains, lava flows, thermal springs, glaciers, waterfalls and clear blue lakes, the island is a truly fascinating travel destination.

Flights will operate until September 25, with one-way ticket prices starting at EUR 139.

5/ Fly *airBaltic* to Europe's best beaches until late autumn

During the summer season until the end of October, *airBaltic* is offering direct flights from Riga to many attractive holiday destinations on the Mediterranean and Black seas. Check out the deals and prolong your summer at airbaltic.com.



NICE

The French Riviera is known for its picturesque scenery with snow-capped mountaintops, a turquoise sea, sheltered bays, sunny beaches and legendary parties. No wonder that famous artists such as Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso made the region their home and drew inspiration there.

***airBaltic* flies to Nice three times per week, and one-way ticket prices from Riga start at EUR 95.**



ITALY – Venice and Olbia

While ordinary pasta and pizza can be eaten throughout Italy, Sardinia stands out with particularly good seafood. Visit the turquoise beaches on the north coast, which are especially popular among jet-setters. If you prefer the Italian classics, then Lido Beach in Venice is always a good choice.

***airBaltic* flies to Venice twice a week and to Olbia once per week. One-way ticket prices start at EUR 95.**

Photo by shutterstock, i-stock



MALTA



PALMA DE MALLORCA

Great restaurants, regal buildings, wild parties and a beautiful seacoast are typical features of this Spanish Balearic city. A wide range of relaxation options will suit all tastes, from more active sports like kitesurfing and yachting to just sitting in cosy beach restaurants with a glass of sangria.

Flights to Palma operate once a week, with one-way ticket prices starting at EUR 115.



BURGAS

Bulgaria has its own Riviera, which encompasses the Sunny Beach Resort on the Black Sea and is comparable to the famous party heaven of Ibiza with lots of nightlife possibilities and value-for-money hotels. Get ready for fine golden sand, natural dunes and a clean and gently deepening sea. A large variety of restaurants right on the Black Sea coast offer fantastic sunset views.

***airBaltic* flies to Burgas twice per week, with one-way ticket prices starting at EUR 109.**

Plenty of wellness and spa facilities provide a whole array of affordable beauty and body treatments, while Valletta's impressive Rococo architecture reflects just a small part of the island nation's intriguing 7,000-year human history.

***airBaltic* flies to Malta once a week. One-way ticket prices start at EUR 99.**



CROATIA – Dubrovnik and Rijeka

Game of Thrones' fans will enjoy seeing actual filming locations in the historic city of Dubrovnik, which is known for its marble streets, shimmering waters and entertaining street performers. The port city of Rijeka further north is a great place for starting an exploratory road trip.

Flights to Dubrovnik and Rijeka take place twice per week, with one-way ticket prices starting at EUR 95.



GREECE – Athens, Thessaloniki and Rhodes

Yes, places like those seen in *Mamma Mia* really do exist in Greece! The country is full of romantic and quiet beaches, some of them surrounded by steep cliffs and wild scenery, both on the islands and the mainland. Relax while snorkelling in crystal-clear blue waters or exploring some of Greece's many ancient sites.

Flights to Athens and Thessaloniki operate twice a week and to Rhodes once a week. One-way ticket prices to Greece start at EUR 59.

Jouni Juhani Oksanen,
senior vice
president of
e-commerce



Walking a mile in a customer's shoes

Although Jouni Juhani Oksanen has been with *airBaltic* for only four months, he has already begun to revolutionise the airline's e-commerce and make it even more customer-friendly.

Text by **AGRA LIEGE**
Photo by **GATIS GIERTS**
(Picture Agency)

Tell us a little about your background. What brought you into the airline business?

I worked for another airline before joining *airBaltic*. My previous career path had more to do with media and telecommunications. I worked at *Nokia* for many years and acquired experience all over the world. This meant that I had to fly a lot, so I first came in contact with aviation from a customer's point of view. I joined the airline when they asked me to help it change its in-flight entertainment system. This type of work was related to my previous positions in the media business.

How does your current position at *airBaltic* relate to your past experience?

When you look at the telecommunication business all over the world, whether you work for a mobile operator or a fixed network company, the competition is incredibly fierce and price wars are taking place everywhere. Countless marketing tactics are used to influence customers'

choices. I have worked in the TV business as well and am familiar with the sales and marketing methods that are used, so I do have quite extensive experience in a comprehensive, consumer-based approach to sales.

What do you hope to achieve at *airBaltic*?

airBaltic has a very good website for selling plane tickets but, like most airlines, it has adopted a "one size fits all" approach until now. The website is not very personalised when it comes to selling tickets. For example, if a 70-year-old grandmother is looking to buy a ticket, then the purchasing process for her will be pretty much the same as for an 18-year-old teenage lad. We have a good universal product, which needs to be used as a solid base for making the service more personalised.

What will you do to provide more personalised service on the *airBaltic* website?

I believe in a customer-centric approach, which means that we need to consider how to make it easier for customers to do business with us. Advanced technologies are good tools, but we can't stop there. First of all, the process of buying a ticket needs to be simplified. Nowadays, when you go to buy a plane ticket on an airline website, there is usually a myriad of questions to answer – both sensible and redundant – and forms to fill in. This all needs to be cleared out a bit, and the decision-making needs to be parcelled up so that you don't have to make five decisions all at once. A customer should not have to make more than one decision at a time, and the layout of the web page has to be clear, simple and transparent. It might seem that numerous options give one more freedom, but in reality the abundance of information can be frustrating for someone who wants to get something done easily and painlessly. If the process of purchasing a ticket is too much of a hassle, then the customer might end up calling the customer service line or seeking out help from a travel agent, which would mean that our work has not been done well.

So, simplification is the key!

Yes, we want to simplify the process and make it more personal. A personalised approach means that some choices can be automatically deduced while the customers are typing in their information. This leaves the customers with less to worry about, while creating a pleasant experience and the sense that they are being taken care of. If you were purchasing a ticket to sunny Mallorca, then it would not make sense for me to offer you a set of business services. On the other hand, a nice complementary chilled drink might suit you just fine. Or, if you are travelling with a small child, then a toy or some form of children's entertainment could be pre-prepared for your flight. Things like these matter. We need to offer the right things to the right people at the right time, and make the whole travel experience, starting from the ticket purchase, easy, simple and flawless.

In other words, technology can be used to simplify and personalize the customer experience. Do these advancements have any other applications?

First of all, we want to help people find what they are looking for. Instead of receiving useless and annoying information, our customers should navigate our website effortlessly and successfully. If people type "cheap flights to Berlin" in the search engine, then they should be taken directly to the page that offers the cheapest flight option to Berlin. If other customers type "best beaches in Thailand", they should be taken to a more inspirational section on our website that will help them to navigate easily towards the next step.

Apart from putting the customer at

Marketing is becoming a one-to-one conversation

the centre of our focus, technologies help us to keep track of the information flow at all times. For example, if someone's luggage has been misplaced, then we are very likely to know about this before the customer has been made aware of it, and we are in a position to initiate what I call "service recovery", which means resolving the problem before it has become an issue to the passenger.

What tendencies have you noticed in aviation of late?

Changes of all kinds are taking place very quickly. Various aspects of marketing are changing rapidly, and this affects aviation as well. People are spending more and more time with their digital devices, which is why marketing communication has to be established on a very individual level. The major shift is from mass marketing to an individual approach. If previously the marketing motto was "one to all", now it has become "one to a moment", which means that you

have to look at specific moments in time where different marketing actions might be needed. With regard to airline ticket sales, at one moment people might just dreamily be pondering travel without a specific destination in mind. At another moment they will choose their destination, and at yet another still they will be ready to purchase their ticket. Each situation requires a different approach from a marketing point of view. Marketing is becoming a one-to-one conversation. In most cases, airlines have not reached the same level in e-commerce as other service providers, such as clothing retailers, but we are catching up.

You are in a perfect position to use your past experience at *airBaltic*. What made you make the move from one airline to another?

The offer from *airBaltic* was an exciting prospect for me. It is not the size of a company that matters as much as the opportunity to create something new and make a difference. *airBaltic* gave me an exciting playground with lots of interesting toys, so to speak. The support of the top-level company management is there, which means that our ideas are being taken into account and I have a chance to implement them.

We have learned a bit about your professional life and ideas, but not much about your personal preferences. What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I absolutely love cycling! I now live in Riga, so I often go cycling in the neighbourhood. I bring my bike with me whenever I visit my home country, Finland, and I cycle there. I have really grown to like Riga, and many small things have surprised me here. Compared to Finland and also large cities all around the world, Riga's drivers are very polite on the road. They let other cars in during traffic jams and say "thank you" when they have been treated courteously by other drivers. It's small things like this that count! **BO**

We offer more than just a flight!

Make your travel more enjoyable with our customisable extra services. Save money by booking these options together with your flight ticket or anytime later up to shortly before takeoff.

Pre-order your meal

Combine your own meal set at airbalticmeal.com and be among the first to be served on board. A wide choice of freshly made meals is available up to 24 h before departure starting from just EUR 8 for salad and breakfast offers and EUR 12 for three-course sets. Free drink included!

Business FREE

Take your pet with you

Enjoy your vacation together with your pet. We will carry your small pet in the cabin or transport it in an animal-friendly container in the cargo hold area. Book this service through the *airBaltic* Ticket office or Call centre.

Save time at the airport with priority service

Hate waiting in line? Save time with airport priority services that start at just EUR 14.99. Depending on the airport, you may be able to check in at the Business Class counter, use the priority baggage drop-off point or avoid the security lines with fast-track service. **Business** **Premium** FREE

Add checked baggage

Pay for your checked bag in advance and save up to 50% on the baggage fee at the airport. Book your bag together with your flight for just EUR 29.99 per direction, or order later at airbaltic.com and pay EUR 34.99 per direction.

Business **Premium** FREE

Reserve your favourite seat

Whether you prefer a window or aisle seat, or if you just want to disembark quickly from the front row, you can select your preferred seat starting at EUR 2.99. Prices may vary depending on the seat and the length of the flight.

Business **Premium** FREE

Stay worry-free with a flight change warranty

To protect yourself against a sudden change in your travel plans, for EUR 29.99 together with the Basic ticket you can buy a warranty to change your departure date and time once (a ticket fare difference may apply).

Business FREE

Bring your sports equipment

Take along your favourite sports equipment to avoid the high costs of renting on-site. Your bicycle, snowboard, skis or golf clubs can all be transported for just EUR 34.99 per piece per direction if you book this service together with your ticket.

Business FREE

Block the neighbouring seat

If you need a bit more room to catch up on work or relax comfortably, then consider booking your neighbouring seat for upcoming flights. Block the extra seat in your same flight class for the net fare and save on airport taxes. Book this service through the *airBaltic* Call center or Ticket office. **Business** FREE

Shop for in-flight surprises

airbalticshop.com offers a wide array of high-end products for your in-flight experience. Celebrate a special occasion on board with roses, cake and champagne, or take advantage of incredible deals on fragrances, jewellery and souvenirs. Your items will be delivered during your flight, allowing you to carry them on to your destination.

Pre-order a tasty meal for your flight!

Your vacation starts already from the moment that you step on board the aircraft, so why not make your flight even more enjoyable with a tasty meal and drink? Choose from over 70 different meal options and pre-order up to 24 hours before departure at airbalticmeal.com. You will be among the first to be served and will get exactly what you want, rather than what's left in the trolley once the flight attendant gets to your seat row.



Breakfast offers

For morning flights, the breakfast menu offers fresh and nutritious meals that start at EUR 8. Try pancakes with fresh berries and jam, omelette with ham and goat cheese, fresh seasonal fruit plate or set of hot oatmeal, muesli and pancakes. All of these are served with a croissant and a choice of drink.



Lunch and dinner meals

A wide range of wholesome meat and seafood meals is available. Among our passengers' favourites are the Latvian-style chicken breasts, the grilled tiger prawns with pasta, and the pork medallions with potatoes, to name just a few. These can be ordered together with a starter, a dessert and a drink of your choice, with prices starting at EUR 12.



Salads

Our salads section contains nine fresh and summery choices to suit different tastes, such as the Salade niçoise, the Caesar salad with chicken or prawns, and the countryside salad. These can be combined with water, juice or wine, and prices start at only EUR 7.



Kids' menu

Our youngest passengers can choose healthy and fun meals such as chicken nuggets in the sky, happy forest or funny pirate fish sticks from the special kids' menu. These are served together with a Barni biscuit, a Kinder Surprise egg, a yoghurt and juice.



Dietary and special meals

airBaltic offers a wide selection of specially prepared meals for different dietary and religious requirements, including gluten-free, low calorie, diabetic, low cholesterol, raw, vegetarian, Hindu and vegan dishes.






Celebrate during the flight

For special occasions, pre-order one of three delicious cakes and add to the festive feeling with sparkling wine or champagne that will be served while you are flying at 800 km/h. Or surprise someone special with a bouquet of roses that will be presented by our flight attendants during the flight.

Want more comfort?

Reserve your favorite seat from just 2.99€

-  Window seat
-  Front part for fast exit
-  Sit with your friends and family

airBaltic.com





Join *airBaltic*’s loyalty program pins

About the program

PINS is the ***airBaltic* frequent flyer loyalty program**, which uses the loyalty currency PINS.

You can collect PINS while flying with *airBaltic*, shopping at airports, staying in hotels, renting cars, dining out and even by using the ***airBaltic* Payment Card** or the **PINS MasterCard**. It is also possible to collect PINS by doing your everyday shopping, with more than 700 local, global and online partners represented.

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

the most loyal *airBaltic* customers and ensure various benefits, which include a **free baggage allowance, priority check-in, reserved seats** and much more to make traveling more pleasant. The youngest members, starting from age two, are issued with a special ***airBaltic* PINS Young Pilot card**, which also allows children to collect PINS.

If you aren’t a pins program member yet

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



airBaltic PINS card



airBaltic PINS Executive card



airBaltic PINS VIP card



airBaltic PINS Young Pilot card

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

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

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

security check, go **straight to the dedicated Fast Track lane** and save time.

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

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

Nordea

Collect PINS every time you use a Nordea PINS Credit Card



**Free
Travel
Insurance**

**Apply by calling +371 67 096 096
or visit Nordea branches!**

Spend 1.50 EUR and get 1 PINS. Exchange your PINS for free flights, hotel stays, car rentals and many other items. You can collect PINS at more than 700 partners worldwide. Find out more at pinsforme.com

Flying across the North Atlantic Ocean



New York City, Queensboro Bridge

Uzbekistan Airways and *airBaltic* have extended their cooperation and now provide the unique opportunity to fly from Riga with a non-stop flight not only to Tashkent but to New York City as well.

New York City needs no introduction, being an epicentre of everything that is trendy in culture, sports, shopping and dining. The Empire State Building, Rockefeller Center, Madison Square Garden, Central Park – the city is brimming with attractions!

Uzbekistan is mentioned among 20 countries with the most promising travel routes, being a real archeological, architectural and cultural gem of Central Asia. The Uzbek capital, Tashkent, is rich in museums and serves as a portal to many treasures in Central Asia. Those familiar with the tales of the *One Thousand and One Nights* will appreciate the magic of other Uzbek cities such as Bukhara,

Samarkand and Khiva. These are home to beautiful mosques, minarets, palaces, gardens and other impressive historic monuments that reveal a charm of centuries past.

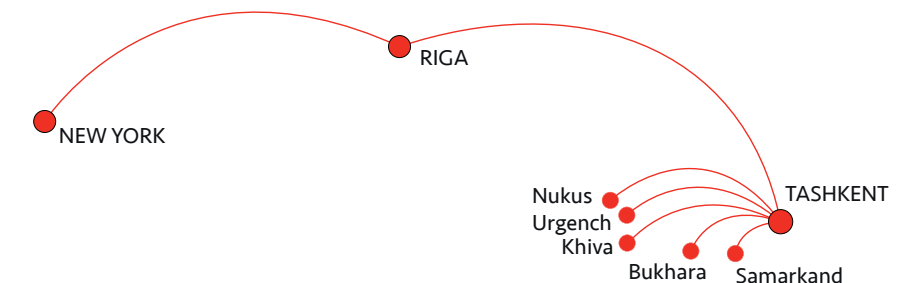
Book your journey at airbaltic.com in one step, choosing between two ticket types for your convenience (Premium Economy and Business).

Just choose your next adventure between North America and Central Asia!



BASIC FACTS

Founded	28 January 1992
Hub	Tashkent
Fleet	29 aircraft
Destinations	58



airBaltic
codeshare partners

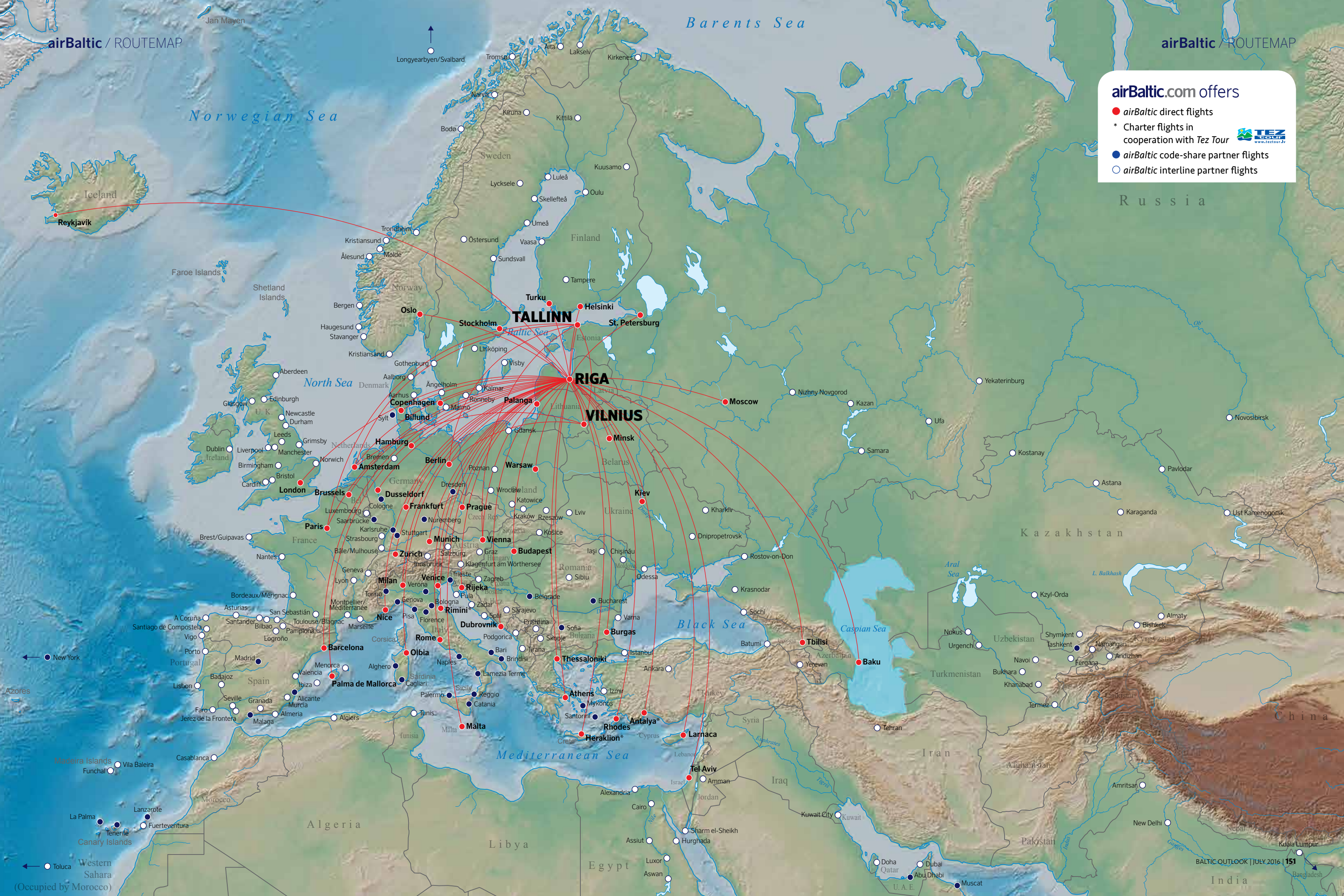


Flights from RIGA						Flights to RIGA					
Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival
AMSTERDAM						AMSTERDAM					
BT 617	RIX	AMS	123456-	07:40	09:05	BT 618	AMS	RIX	123456-	10:20	13:35
BT 619	RIX	AMS	12345-7	16:25	17:50	BT 620	AMS	RIX	12345-7	18:55	22:10
ATHENS						ATHENS					
BT 611	RIX	ATH	1--5--	23:15	02:35+1	BT 612	ATH	RIX	-2--6-	03:15	06:35
BAKU						BAKU					
BT 732	RIX	GYD	--3---	23:55	04:50+1	BT 733	GYD	RIX	1-4---	06:05	09:15
BARCELONA						BARCELONA					
BT 681	RIX	BCN	-----7	06:10	9:00	BT 682	BCN	RIX	-----7	09:35	14:15
BT 683	RIX	BCN	-2-4-6-	12:45	15:30	BT 684	BCN	RIX	-2-4-6-	17:20	22:00
BERLIN Tegel						BERLIN Tegel					
BT 211	RIX	TXL	123456-	07:40	08:35	BT 212	TXL	RIX	123456-	09:40	12:30
BT 213	RIX	TXL	12345-7	18:05	19:00	BT 214	TXL	RIX	12345-7	19:35	22:25
BILLUND						BILLUND					
BT 147	RIX	BLL	12345-7	12:20	13:20	BT 148	BLL	RIX	12345-7	14:40	17:30
BRUSSELS						BRUSSELS					
BT 601	RIX	BRU	12345--	06:25	08:20	BT 602	BRU	RIX	12345--	09:05	12:50
BT 607	RIX	BRU	-----6-	12:10	14:05	BT 608	BRU	RIX	-----6-	14:35	18:20
BT 603	RIX	BRU	1..4..7	16:25	18:20	BT 604	BRU	RIX	1..4..7	18:50	22:35
BUDAPEST						BUDAPEST					
BT 491	RIX	BUD	12-45-7	12:20	13:45	BT 492	BUD	RIX	12-45-7	14:15	17:30
BURGAS						BURGAS					
BT 755	RIX	BOJ	--3--6-	16:00	18:40	BT 756	BOJ	RIX	--3--6-	19:25	22:00
COPENHAGEN						COPENHAGEN					
BT 131	RIX	CPH	123456-	07:30	08:10	BT 132	CPH	RIX	123456-	08:50	11:25
BT 135	RIX	CPH	1234567	12:30	13:10	BT 136	CPH	RIX	1234567	14:55	17:30
BT 139	RIX	CPH	12345-7	18:25	19:05	BT 140	CPH	RIX	12345-7	19:40	22:15
DUBROVNIK						DUBROVNIK					
BT 497	RIX	DBV	-2---6-	15:30	17:10	BT 498	DBV	RIX	-2---6-	18:15	22:00
DUSSELDORF						DUSSELDORF					
BT 233	RIX	DUS	-----7	12:00	13:40	BT 234	DUS	RIX	-----7	14:10	17:40
BT 233	RIX	DUS	12345--	15:10	16:50	BT 234	DUS	RIX	12345--	17:25	20:55
FRANKFURT						FRANKFURT					
BT 243	RIX	FRA	-----6-	08:00	09:25	BT 246	FRA	RIX	1234567	18:45	22:20
BT 245	RIX	FRA	12345-7	16:25	18:10						
HAMBURG						HAMBURG					
BT 251	RIX	HAM	12345--	07:15	08:20	BT 252	HAM	RIX	12345--	08:50	11:45
BT 255	RIX	HAM	-----6-	12:20	13:25	BT 256	HAM	RIX	-----6-	14:25	17:20
BT 253	RIX	HAM	12345-7	18:05	19:10	BT 254	HAM	RIX	12345-7	19:40	22:35
HELSINKI						HELSINKI					
BT 301	RIX	HEL	123456-	07:40	08:45	BT 326	HEL	RIX	123456-	05:40	06:40
BT 303	RIX	HEL	12345-7	14:55	16:00	BT 302	HEL	RIX	1234567	10:20	11:20
BT 307	RIX	HEL	1234567	18:20	19:25	BT 304	HEL	RIX	12345-7	16:30	17:30
BT 325	RIX	HEL	1234567	23:05	00:10+1	BT 308	HEL	RIX	1234567	21:10	22:10
KIEV						KIEV					
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BT 402	RIX	KBP	-----6-	12:30	14:20	BT 403	KBP	RIX	-----6-	15:15	17:10
BT 404	RIX	KBP	12345-7	18:15	20:05	BT 405	KBP	RIX	12345-7	20:35	22:30
LARNACA						LARNACA					
BT 657	RIX	LCA	1---6-	23:55	03:45+1	BT 658	LCA	RIX	-2---7	05:15	09:15
LONDON Gatwick						LONDON Gatwick					
BT 651	RIX	LGW	--3----	06:30	07:20	BT 652	LGW	RIX	--34-6-	09:30	14:15
BT 651	RIX	LGW	---4-6-	07:55	08:45	BT 652	LGW	RIX	12--5--	10:10	14:55
BT 651	RIX	LGW	12--5--	08:35	09:25	BT 654	LGW	RIX	12345-7	17:30	22:15
BT 653	RIX	LGW	12345-7	15:55	16:45						
MALTA						MALTA					
BT 739	RIX	MLA	-----7	22:50	01:30+1	BT 740	MLA	RIX	1-----	02:10	06:50
MILAN Malpensa						MILAN Malpensa					
BT 629	RIX	MXP	1234-6-	07:30	09:15	BT 630	MXP	RIX	12345--	10:05	13:45
						BT 630	MXP	RIX	-----7	18:20	22:00
MINSK						MINSK					
BT 412	RIX	MSQ	1-3---7	12:50	14:00	BT 413	MSQ	RIX	1-3---7	14:35	15:45
MOSCOW Sheremetyevo						MOSCOW Sheremetyevo					
BT 424	RIX	SVO	123456-	07:25	09:05	BT 427	SVO	RIX	123456-	04:50	06:35
BT 428	RIX	SVO	12345-7	13:00	14:40	BT 425	SVO	RIX	123456-	09:50	11:35
BT 422	RIX	SVO	12345-7	18:20	19:55	BT 429	SVO	RIX	12345-7	15:35	17:20
BT 426	RIX	SVO	12345-7	23:15	00:55+1	BT 423	SVO	RIX	12345-7	20:40	22:25
MUNICH						MUNICH					
BT 221	RIX	MUC	123456-	07:45	09:25	BT 222	MUC	RIX	12345--	10:10	13:40
BT 225	RIX	MUC	-----6-	12:15	13:55	BT 226	MUC	RIX	-----6-	14:45	18:15
BT 223	RIX	MUC	12345-7	17:35	18:50	BT 224	MUC	RIX	12345-7	19:30	22:35
NICE						NICE					
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OLBIA						OLBIA					
BT 655	RIX	OLB	-----6-	15:25	17:40	BT 656	OLB	RIX	-----6-	18:20	22:35
OSLO						OSLO					
BT 151	RIX	OSL	123456-	08:05	09:00	BT 152	OSL	RIX	123456-	09:25	12:15
BT 159	RIX	OSL	1234567	12:30	13:25	BT 160	OSL	RIX	1234567	14:30	17:20
BT 153	RIX	OSL	12345-7	18:05	19:00	BT 154	OSL	RIX	12345-7	19:25	22:15
PALANGA						PALANGA					
BT 035	RIX	PLQ	1-3-5--	12:20	13:05	BT 032	PLQ	RIX	123456-	05:55	06:40
BT 033	RIX	PLQ	12345-7	23:05	23:50	BT 036	PLQ	RIX	1-3-5--	13:35	14:20
PALMA DE MALLORCA						PALMA DE MALLORCA					
BT 687	RIX	PMI	-----7	08:00	10:50	BT 688	PMI	RIX	-----7	11:40	16:20
PARIS Charles de Gaulles						PARIS Charles de Gaulles					
BT 691	RIX	CDG	123456-	07:30	09:25	BT 692	CDG	RIX	123456-	10:10	13:55
BT 693	RIX	CDG	1-3-5-7	16:00	17:55	BT 694	CDG	RIX	1-3-5-7	18:40	22:25
PRAGUE						PRAGUE					
BT 481	RIX	PRG	1234567	12:30	13:40	BT 482	PRG	RIX	1234567	14:30	17:35
REYKJAVIK						REYKJAVIK					
BT 169	RIX	KEF	--3--6-	08:30	09:35	BT 170	KEF	RIX	---4--7	08:10	14:55
RHODES						RHODES					
BT 597	RIX	RHO	-----5--	07:25	11:00	BT 598	RHO	RIX	-----5--	11:40	15:20

Flights from Riga						Flights to Riga					
Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival
RIJEKA						RIJEKA					
BT 495	RIX	RJK	1-----	08:00	09:25	BT 496	RJK	RIX	1-----	10:05	13:30
BT 495	RIX	RJK	----5--	16:55	18:20	BT 496	RJK	RIX	----5--	19:00	22:25
ROME Leonardo da Vinci Fiumicino						ROME Leonardo da Vinci Fiumicino					
BT 633	RIX	FCO	1-----	13:00	15:05	BT 634	FCO	RIX	1-3-5--	17:50	22:00
BT 633	RIX	FCO	--3-5--	13:35	15:40						
STOCKHOLM Arlanda						STOCKHOLM Arlanda					
BT 101	RIX	ARN	123456-	07:10	07:25	BT 102	ARN	RIX	123456-	08:00	10:15
BT 105	RIX	ARN	12345--	12:05	12:20	BT 106	ARN	RIX	12345--	12:50	15:00
BT 107	RIX	ARN	1234567	14:50	15:05	BT 108	ARN	RIX	1234567	15:35	17:45

airBaltic.com offers

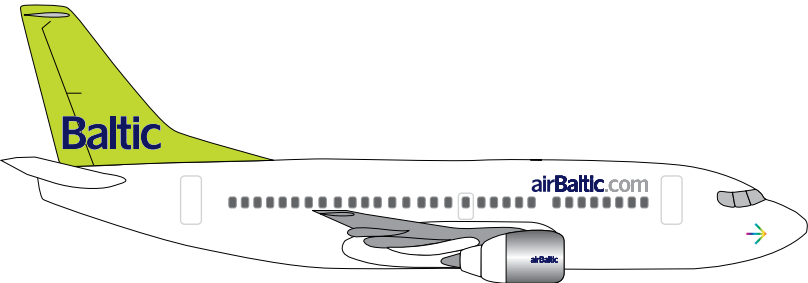
- **airBaltic direct flights**
- * Charter flights in cooperation with Tez Tour 
- **airBaltic code-share partner flights**
- **airBaltic interline partner flights**





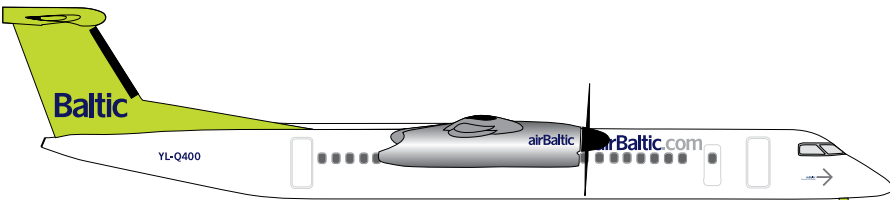
Boeing 737-300

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 Bombardier

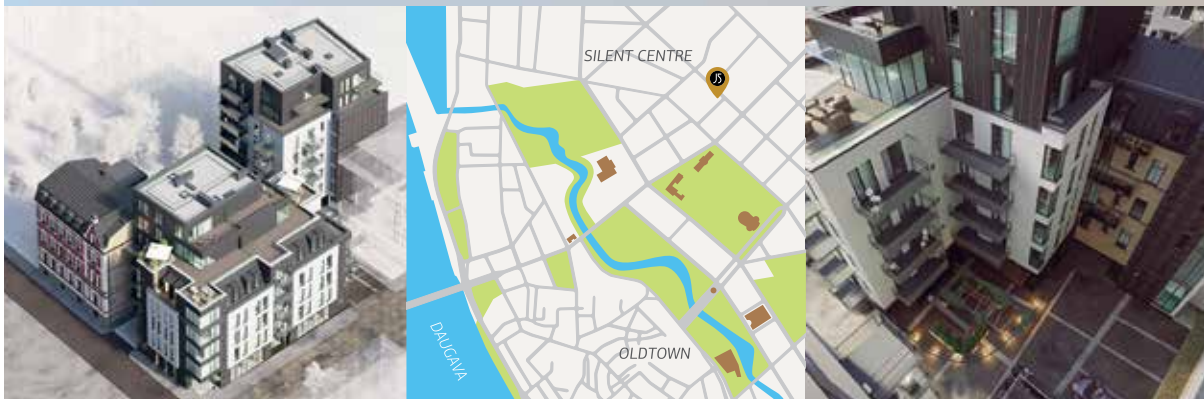
Number of seats	76
Max take-off weight	29.6 metric tons
Max payload	8.6 metric tons
Length	32.83 m
Wing span	28.42
Cruising speed	667 km/h
Commercial range	2084 km
Fuel consumption	1074 l/h
Engine	P&W 150A

HARMONY INCLUDED

J5
APARTMENTS



In the heart of the business center of Riga residential complex J5 – is a high-end flats for rent or for sale.
В самом сердце делового центра Риги жилой комплекс J5 – это квартиры высокого класса на продажу и аренду.



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HAPPY SPORT
Chopard