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JUNE 2016

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"ELIZABETH"

Рига, улица Элизабетес
Площадь квартир от 31 м² до 460 м²
Цена по запросу

"Elizabeth" – жемчужина югендстиля, один из значимых памятников архитектуры, в тихом центре Риги.

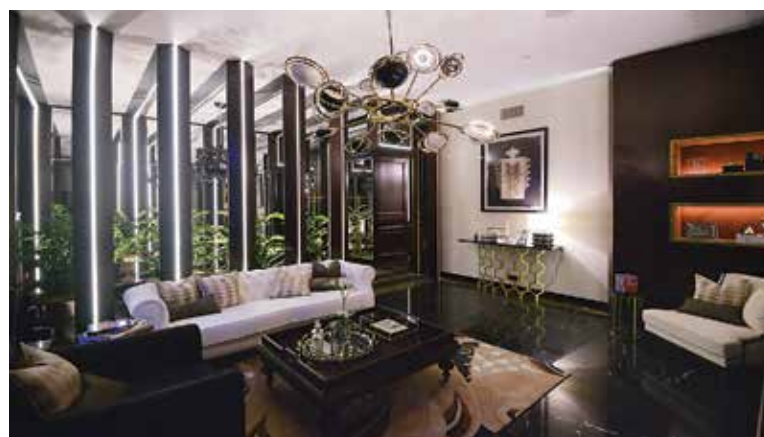
Для продажи доступны несколько квартир разных площадей и планировок, в том числе – 2-уровневые квартиры с террасами на крыше, а также в аренду офисные помещения с полной отделкой. Здание находится в лучшей части города, в окружении скверов и парков, в непосредственной близости сосредоточены главные рижские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

"ELIZABETH"

Latvia, Riga, Elizabetes Street
Apartments areas: from 31 m² to 460 m²
Price upon request

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

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



ЖИЛОЙ КОМПЛЕКС "PARK RESIDENCES"

Юрмала, Дзинтари
Площадь квартир от 115 м² до 178 м²
Цена по запросу

"Park Residences" – эксклюзивный жилой комплекс, расположенный в сосновом парке на берегу моря.

Комплекс состоит из 3 зданий, каждое из которых предлагает широкий выбор 3- и 4-комнатных квартир с серой отделкой. Панорамные окна, просторные балконы и террасы позволят наслаждаться прекрасными видами на богатый окружающий пейзаж. Для обеспечения полного комфорта жильцам комплекса доступен круглосуточный консьерж-сервис, расположенный в холле каждого здания. Жилой комплекс оснащен подземной автостоянкой, на территории которой также предусмотрены подсобные помещения для каждого владельца резиденции.

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Chief Executive Officer *airBaltic*

Dear Customer,

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A brand new fleet of Canadian-built *Bombardier CS300* jets will soon become a defining feature of our airline, as we will be the world's first operator of this aircraft. Most importantly, these state-of-the-art planes will offer a much better travel experience to you, our customer. You will immediately notice more space in the cabin, more light due to larger windows, larger overhead bins for storing your hand luggage and wider middle seats – all in all a more pleasant environment. It is also likely that you will spend less time travelling to your dream destination, as due to the improved range of the *CS300*, you may no longer need to connect via a hub airport, but will be able to take a direct flight.

Our airline's investment in the *Bombardier CS300* jets means that we will be consuming up to 20% less fuel. This aircraft is also of the right size for *airBaltic's* routes, helping us to reduce operating costs per traveller by around 25%. The capability of the aircraft and its new engine, combined with *airBaltic's* robust fuel conservation programme and green navigation initiatives, will reduce CO₂ and NO_x emissions by 20% and 50%

respectively. At the same time, airport neighbourhoods will be up to four times quieter than before the introduction of this state-of-the-art aircraft.

We are delighted that, along with significant economic benefits, the *CS300* will help to reduce your personal environmental footprint in Europe, the Middle East, the CIS and other regions where *airBaltic* operates. We have decided to boost that effect by ordering seven additional aircraft, bringing the total number of *CS300* jets in our fleet to 20. We have also been very satisfied to learn that major global carriers are following suit by placing unprecedented orders with *Bombardier*, or publicly supporting this unique technology, which did not exist just a few years ago.

Meanwhile, multiple teams and professionals at *airBaltic* are undergoing specialised training to prepare for the *CS300's* entry into service. This is a 100% new aircraft in the way that you fly it, maintain it and enjoy it as a passenger. We truly hope that you share in our enthusiasm once the jets enter service later this year.

Did you know that during the past six years, our *airBaltic* Training Centre has offered almost 30,000 hours of flight simulator training to pilots from 50 countries around the world?

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

Yours,
Martin Alexander Gauss



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Contents **JUNE**

ABOUT THE JUNE ISSUE



There is no doubt that Croatia is on its way to becoming a trendy destination for independent travellers. It offers gorgeous scenery, historic cities, impressive architecture, charming villages, great food and wine, sparkling clean waters, and plenty of hiking, sports and activities for people of all ages. Some have even compared Croatia with the Italian coastline of former years, before millions of tourists started to flock there each year.

Baltic Outlook author Liene Pālēna let herself be seduced by Croatia's charms and spent a vacation exploring that country's Adriatic coast. You can

read about her experiences in this issue's "Road trip in Croatia" (page 90).

We had the privilege to hear about Liene's very first impressions, which she recounted with the gleaming eyes of a happy traveller.

"The waters of the Adriatic really are just as incredibly blue as they look in the pictures. The historical legacy is so charming that even at the most grandiose monuments, such as the amphitheatre in Pula (which, incidentally, is the sixth largest in the world), one just wants to sit down, grab a book and relax for a few hours. And then, the seafood! Oh, the seafood! For seven days, my menu consisted primarily of pasta with seafood, fish soups, shrimp, mussels and (for a more international flavour) seafood pizza." In other words, the picture on this magazine page isn't lying.

Regarding practicalities, the largest demand for services, the biggest crowds and the highest prices are from the last week of July to mid-August. Travel costs in Croatia drop significantly from September to May.

baltic^{outlook}

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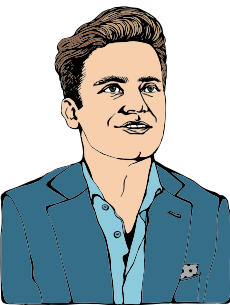
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Tired of another meeting in Frankfurt? Try Riga instead!

If you are a doctor, researcher or businessperson, then you are likely to have participated in a conference or congress somewhere in the world. These gatherings of hundreds or thousands are typically organised by an international association of professionals in a certain field, notably medicine or IT. Most international associations bring delegates to a different city each time. Now they may well say to their members: "Tired of another meeting in Frankfurt or Brussels? Let's meet in Krakow or Riga next time!" There is no scarcity of international organisations. The

Union of International Associations lists more than 68,000 international associations as its members. Besides organisations in established fields, one will find the International Federation of Cheerleading, the Association of French-Speaking Dermatologists, the International Blackcurrant Association and – my personal favourite – the International Headache Society. The latter is no joke, since approximately ¾ of the world's population experiences occasional headaches and approximately one person in five suffers from migraines. The variety of international associations suggests that people really want to share knowledge and socialise with like-minded souls.

International meetings are very important for cities. According to the International Congress and Convention Association, more than 6,000 international conferences with around 7 million delegates take place annually in Europe alone, creating a direct market of more than 5 billion euros. These figures exclude corporate and domestic events.

What sets conference delegates apart from other tourists is the money that they spend. If leisure travellers rarely spend more than 100 euros per day, this number may easily reach 800 euros for conference delegates, including participation fees, hotel and dining expenses. Perhaps even more important

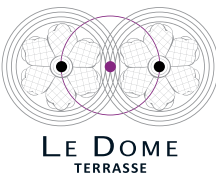
than the euros left in hotels and restaurants are the ideas, knowledge and contacts that are generated. That is why many cities now consider conference tourism as part of their economic development strategy.

Almost every city in Europe is trying to draw in money and knowledge-bearing delegates. In terms of conference numbers, Paris, Vienna and London top the list with newcomers such as Prague following suit. The Baltic capitals are moving up with new conference centre projects and strategies to attract international events.

With prices more than 30% lower than in Scandinavia and keen participants in various fields, Riga, Tallinn and Vilnius are emerging conference destinations. I am personally involved in the Conference of Concert Centre Development in Riga, and it is really exciting to see how the tourism industry is working together with various decision-makers to bring more international events to Riga. All three Baltic capitals are worth considering when deciding where to organise your next event, particularly if you have grown tired of the main Western European venues. To many people, Vilnius, Tallinn and Riga are destinations that remain to be discovered – and I can assure you that there is a unique mix of history and architecture, vibrant urban life, smart people and innovation in each of them. **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 SOLSTICE

Five places for catching the mystical magic of the summer solstice celebrations in Latvia

- 1/ Latvian Ethnographic Open-Air Museum in Riga (brivdabasmuzejs.lv)
- 2/ Beautiful and historical Turaida Museum-Reserve (turaida-muzejs.lv)
- 3/ Pedvāle Open-Air Art Museum in the scenic valley of the Abava River (pedvale.lv)
- 4/ Kolkasrags – where the open Baltic Sea meets with the Gulf of Riga (kolkasrags.lv)
- 5/ Andrupene Farmstead, an open-air museum consisting of early 20th-century Latgalian log buildings (visitdagda.com)

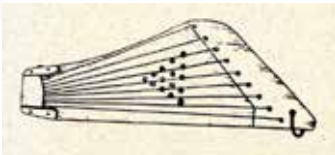
ON THIS MONTH'S MENU

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

MIDSUMMER ESSENTIALS



Pastalas Although Latvians once wore *pastalas* (footwear made of a single piece of leather) on a daily basis, nowadays *pastalas* are worn mainly at folklore festivals and other celebratory events. Even Riga's most urbane hipsters have taken to wearing *pastalas* on Midsummer's Eve (*Līgo vakars*). Among the most beautiful commercially available *pastalas* are those sold by lindaleen.com.



MUSIC The kokle is the most frequently mentioned musical instrument in Latvian folk songs and tales. If previously this sonorous string instrument was played mainly by men, then nowadays a great number of women have taken to playing it. One of the best-known young kokle players is Laima Jansone, who mixes traditional kokle sounds with modern-day improvisations and has gained international recognition. ① laimajansone.com

Fire One of the most important Latvian summer solstice rituals involves the lighting of a bonfire (*Jāņuguns*), which must be kept alight from sundown (on June 23) until sunrise (on June 24). Many revellers light up such bonfires on hilltops, as according to one tradition, the bonfires will spread forth

blessings for as far as their light can be seen. Some city dwellers have supplanted this tradition by lighting candles. Incidentally, the soy wax candles decorated with Latvian wildflowers by *Munio Candela*, a local candle manufacturer, make for tasteful and practical souvenirs to bring home. ① muniocandela.com



HISTORICAL LEGACY

Jāņi (June 23-24) is the celebration of the summer solstice and is the Latvian festival that has retained the largest number of ancient traditions, including the weaving of wreaths and garlands; decorating the home with freshly picked flowers, herbs and grasses; singing *līgo* songs, lighting bonfires and preparing special foods. When German crusaders arrived on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea in the 12th century, they were surprised at the scale of the festivities taking place around bonfires on Midsummer Night.

Latvian *līgo* songs are sung on Midsummer's Eve (*Līgo vakars*) and the refrain that you will constantly hear is "līgo, līgo" ("lee-gooah"). The word *līgot* in Latvian means to sway back and forth rhythmically. *Līgo* allegedly comes from a word that means "let it grow/happen!" in Livonian (Liv), a now nearly extinct language. Men and women dress in elaborate, traditional costumes, gather around a bonfire, hold hands in a circle and sway back and forth as they sing *līgo* songs.

Text by **ZANE NIKODEMUSA**
Photos by **LĪNA SPROGE** and from publicity materials

FOOD LIST

Must-have food for Jāņi (Midsummer) celebrations

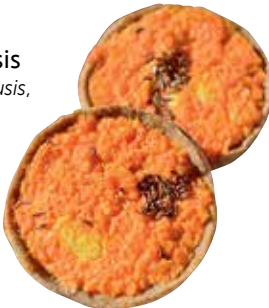
Jāņi cheese (Jāņu siers)

Beer and Jāņi cheese are an integral part of Jāņi celebrations on Midsummer's Eve (June 23). The half-cooked and half-curdled cheese is prepared by heating cow's milk but never letting it boil and adding whole eggs, salt and caraway seeds. The cheese is made in the kitchen of practically every farmhouse, and there are numerous variations of the basic recipe. Jāņi cheese is pressed into round blocks (wheels) and eaten together with other round-shaped foods during the Jāņi celebrations as a symbolic representation of the sun.



Sklandrausis

The *sklandrausis*, a dish from Kurzeme, the westernmost part of Latvia, has been deemed a Traditional Specialty Guaranteed by the European Commission. This rye flour pie with a carrot and potato filling is eaten cold with tea or milk. The roundness represents the sun and the world. By eating a *sklandrausis*, each person symbolically takes in a part of the sun's energy.



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① instagram.com/annaledstudio

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Neo Rauch. *Lake*. 2000.
Oil on canvas. Wolfsburg Art
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Arsenāls exhibition hall, Riga
June 17 – August 21

This grandiose exhibition is the largest
ever retrospective in Riga of German
contemporary art from the late 1960s until
the present. The works of 53 significant
German artists will be shown, revealing
which subjects were topical at particular
time periods and demonstrating that many
societal issues are often addressed most
openly through art.

① Inmm.lv
Torņa iela 1



SEA (Jūra) exhibition of paintings BY DACE LIELĀ

Daugava art gallery, Riga
Until July 2

Dace Lielā (b. 1957) is one of Latvia's most outstanding
contemporary painters. She observes her objects of inspiration
carefully and for long periods of time, sensitively grasping
the interplay of light and shadow. For this reason, the figural
compositions, landscapes and seascapes that she paints are a feast
for the eyes. The works by Dace Lielā address the viewer tenderly
and existentially, bringing to mind thoughts of eternity. A must-see
for lovers of expressive art.

① galerijadaugava.lv
Ausekļa iela 1

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

ART VILNIUS international contemporary art fair

**Lithuanian Exhibition and Congress
Centre LITEXPO, Vilnius**
June 9-12

For the seventh time, art lovers will
gather to check out the latest in the
contemporary art world at *Art Vilnius*, the
largest such fair in
the Baltic States. This
year, the fair is placing
special emphasis on
art from Poland. Ten
Polish art galleries
will be represented,
including a selection
from MOCAP in
Cracow, which
counts works by
such celebrated
artists as Marina
Abramović and
Ai Weiwei amongst
its collection.

Tickets at the door
① artvilnius.com
Laisvės prospektas 5

OPEN KITCHEN FOOD FESTIVAL

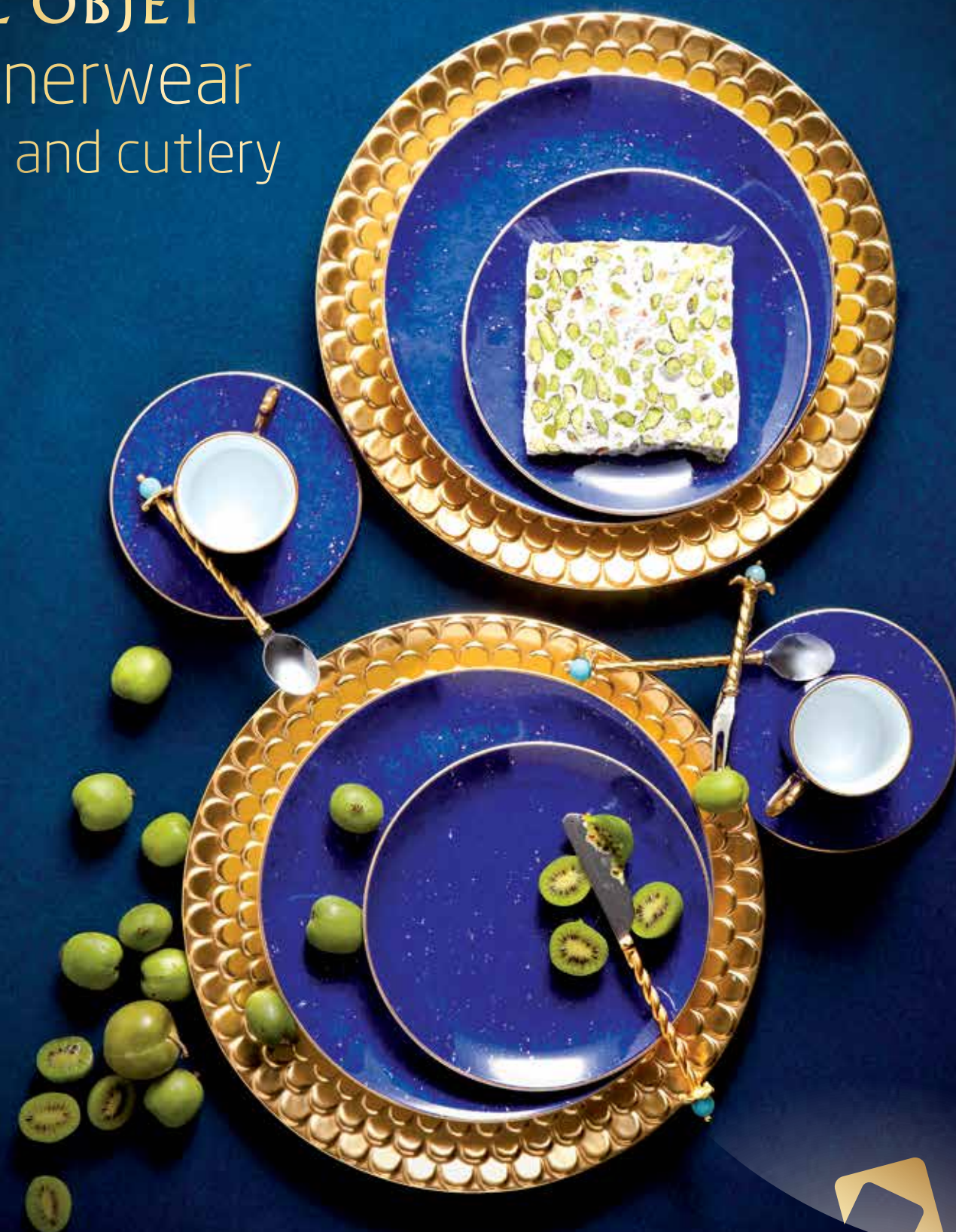
Tymo Market, Vilnius
Every Friday throughout summer

Vilnius knows how to
enjoy its short summer. Eating
out under the sky is an important
part of this enjoyment, and
outdoor terraces are booming
in the Old Town. For a special
vibe, visit *Open Kitchen*. Every
Friday throughout the summer, a

different selection of 15 restaurants
will offer mouth-watering street
food. Foodies are bound to find
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while a DJ and a fashionable crowd
will ensure a laid-back atmosphere.
① openkitchen.lt
Maironio gatve



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Details **LOCAL AGENDA**



PHOTOREALISM. 50 Years of Hyperrealistic Painting exhibition

**Kumu Art Museum, Tallinn
Until June 12**

At the end of the 1960s, photorealist painters were seeking their own independent form of artistic expression by producing realistic depictions of everyday objects and scenes. Photorealistic painting is an interesting process: photographs are projected onto a canvas and traced in detail. The motifs range from close-ups of car bumpers, polished paintwork and candies of every possible colour, to diner interiors and scenes of urban American life. You are in for a very impressive exhibition for sure!

① kumu.ekm.ee
Valge 1



MARKY RAMONE'S BLITZKRIEG CONCERT

**Rock Café, Tallinn
June 14**

On June 14, punk legend Marky Ramone will perform on stage at the coolest rock club in Tallinn, the *Rock Café*. Marky is best known as the drummer of the legendary punk rock band *The Ramones*. In a video greeting to his fans, he promised to play all the band's best-known songs. Imagine hearing *Blitzkrieg Pop*, *Sheena Is a Punk Rocker*, *I Wanna Be Sedated* and other smash hits live!

Tickets at piletilevi.ee
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Riga Opera Festival

**Latvian National Opera and Ballet, Riga
June 1-12**

The Riga Opera Festival, founded in 1998 as the first festival of notable size and scale in Eastern Europe, has already become a beloved tradition. This year, the repertoire will be dedicated to the works of brilliant Italian romanticist Giuseppe Verdi. There are five Verdi operas on the programme: *Aida*, *La traviata*, *Rigoletto*, *Il trovatore* and *Macbeth*, which premiered in Latvia only at the beginning of this year. The festival will offer performances by Latvian stars such as soprano Marina Rebeka, tenor Aleksandrs Antonsenko and bass-baritone Egils Siliņš, who have been warmly welcomed in the most famous opera houses worldwide.

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① opera.lv
Aspazijas bulvāris 3



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Details **RIGA CLOSEUP**



Venus of
Willendorf 21st
Century



Still Life



The Edge

Still lifes with Venus, a hare and ducks

Three large sculptures by Brigita Zelča-Aispure are among the most powerful symbols of Riga's modernity. Her works are especially loved by children, but they bear a far deeper meaning than appears at first glance.

The *Venus of Willendorf 21st Century*, one of the most noticeable sculptures in central Riga, is one of the first large works by Brigita Zelča-Aispure, who was born in 1986. The sculpture symbolises a woman who can multi-task with aplomb and always gets everything done. The work seems to have found a permanent home by the entrance of the Latvian Academy of Art (Kalpaku bulvāris 13). It was originally meant to be there only temporarily, but within a year, this modern Venus had accustomed herself to her urban surroundings and become an organic part of them.

"The disco ball effect of the sculpture is symbolic of a basic truth – you are reflected in others and they are reflected in you; that is the nature of the female," the artist explains.

The 4.5-metre high sculpture was Zelča-Aispure's bachelor's thesis project, created six years ago when she was finishing her studies in glass arts at the academy. It's made of polystyrene and reflective plastic.

"As is typical of an art student, I had limited means. Whenever I earned some money, I headed for the hardware store to get glue," she recalls.

The three works that she has put on public display are located in different parts of the Latvian capital, because the artist

wanted to show that Riga isn't only about its centre. The other two sculptures, *Still Life* and *The Edge*, were funded by the Boris and Ināra Teterev Foundation under the *Art in Public Space* programme.

Still Life, a collaboration with the sculptor's husband, Sandis Aispurs, can be seen at the University of Latvia's Botanical Garden (Kandavas iela 2). It's a golden hare that symbolises joy and resurrection. The work recalls both the chocolate bunnies that children love so much and the still lifes of 17th-century Dutch artists. As the sculptor points out, the hares in those still lifes tended to be dead.

Still Life is a response to Joseph Beuys' famous performance, in which he coated his head with honey and gold leaf and then explained the meaning of his exhibition pictures to a dead hare. Zelča-Aispure and her husband created their three-metre-high golden hare in a relatively short time, during a year-long stay in China, where there are better facilities for the creation of such large works. When the sculptor and her husband initially set off to work in China, their child was only five months old. They then had *Still Life* transported to Latvia by ship.

Zelča-Aispure's third large work, *The Edge*, was also made in China. The main role in this bronze, stainless steel and cement sculpture is played by ducks. Viesturdārzs (Viesturs' Garden), the park where the artist's ducks make their home, is a place where both the very old and very young congregate.

"Riga for me is first of all about its people – about the kids who clear the snow from the ducks in the winter and the young people who pass their summer evenings there," says the artist. **BO**

Text by **LIENE PĀLĒNA**
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Another travel guide to Jūrmala

Photos courtesy of
anothertravelguide.com
Illustration by
ĢIRTS MUIŽNIEKS



Last month, *Baltic Outlook* author Una Meistere and her team at anothertravelguide.com published *Another Travel Guide. Jūrmala*, a new book about Latvia's most beautiful resort town. Rich in history, culture, architecture and natural resources, Jūrmala truly is a pearl on the shores of the Baltic Sea.

The creation of the guidebook turned into a genuine information-gathering journey, during which the authors experienced the whole gamut of emotions, from the joy of discovery to helplessness and even rage. In writing the book, they saw Jūrmala from the most diverse viewpoints, exploring the town by car, bicycle, train, on foot and even from up in the sky.

The authors also met with countless residents of Jūrmala to learn as much as they could from people who actually live there. Afterwards, they compared what they had seen and heard with their own ideas and stereotypes.

Jūrmala is undeniably contradictory. Dusty memories of the spa's heyday during the late 19th and early 20th century are still visible in places. Huge concrete sanatoriums, some of which are still operating but which remain stuck in the 1980s, serve as reminders of the time when Jūrmala was one of the most popular resort towns in the Soviet Union. Now, the capitalism of the current era has turned parts of Jūrmala into a platform for ostentatious displays by the nouveaux riches. Even though history has not always been kind to the city, in its sometimes chaotic development Jūrmala has managed to avoid turning into an impersonal health resort with identical hotels and cafés serving as backdrops to likewise mundane holidays.



36. LĪNIJA RESTAURANT

Even though 36. *līnija* opened during the middle of the recent financial crisis, it has become Jūrmala's biggest success story on the gastronomy scene. Popular among local residents and Rigans alike, the restaurant offers great food, service and wine in a pleasant ambience. Well-known local chef Lauris Aleksejevs manages the kitchen. His cuisine can be described as modern classic, with a menu that features local tastes and products in combination with those from other seaside locations, particularly Mediterranean dishes. Situated seemingly in the middle of nowhere, 36. *līnija* lies at the end of a street bearing the same name. During the summer, the leaves on the willows growing in the sand dunes obscure the sea from the restaurant. But in the late autumn, winter and spring, guests can gaze at the sea through the restaurant's windows and marvel at the ever-changing landscape. The restaurant also opens an impressive terrace in the summer, where a glass wall protects visitors from the wind.

36. līnija, Lielupe
Phone: (+371) 22 01 06 96
Open daily from 11:00 to 23:00

DZINTARI CONCERT HALL

The Dzintari Concert Hall successfully combines the contributions of several architects and eras, and is a Latvian cultural landmark. During the summer months, the concert hall is one of the epicentres of concert life in Latvia. Built in 1936 in the Neo-eclectic style, the building's National-Romantic façade facing Turaidas iela is one of the best-known landmarks in Jūrmala. The interior features paintings by legendary Latvian artist Ansis Cīrulis. In addition to the original indoor concert hall, the Great Hall, an open-air space designed by architect Modris Ģelzis that can be used only in the summer, was added in 1962. To this day, summer evenings at the Dzintari Concert Hall are events to remember. Performances begin while it is still light outside and end when the nearby pines are already surrounded by darkness. The waves on the beach can be heard in the distance. Here, music and nature are in absolute harmony, and audiences relish the symbiosis of these two phenomena. Turaidas iela 1, Dzintari
① dzintarukonzertzale.lv

AMBER COAST SANATORIUM

The Amber Coast (*Jantarnij Bereg*) sanatorium opened in 1973 and was considered to be one of the best resorts in the entire Soviet Union. Today, it still retains the aura of days gone by. As soon as you pass the gate by the guard's house and continue along the paved road through a pine forest to the sanatorium's main building, you embark on a field trip back to the old Soviet Union.

Yes, time has not been kind to the façade of the multistorey concrete monstrosity, but inside it's still like it was in the old days. A winter garden with a barely operating fountain, a dance hall with a freshly waxed parquet floor (Tuesday and Thursday evenings are still dance nights), a cafeteria with a samovar in the place of honour, treatments and procedures (including mud and sulphur baths) befitting any spa worth its salt and even a museum of its own.

The small exhibition hall devoted to the history of Jūrmala as a health spa contains photographs and other informational materials as well as medical equipment from the 1970s and 1980s. Only guided tours of the museum are available, which take place at 15:00 on Tuesdays. The tour includes a visit to Brezhnev's dacha, otherwise known as Government dacha No. 2, a summer home reserved for only the highest-ranking Soviet officials in the 1970s and 1980s. Today, the Bauhaus-style house is poetically called the Baltic Breeze Cottage. Set deep among the pines, the cottage is usually closed to the public, so this tour is definitely recommended if you wish to experience one of Jūrmala's most exotic museums. Having hardly changed over the years, the dacha's interior serves as a monument to another era.

Zvīņu iela 2, Ķemeri
① sanatorij.lv



HOTEL MAMA

Hotel MaMa is the spice of Jūrmala. With tongue-in-cheek kitsch, *MaMa* reminds us of the "golden age" of design hotels. As at the *Sanderson* in London, feathery curtains flutter and mark the boundary between the bedroom and the bathroom and entry hall, while sensual black-and-white photos of anthuriums reminiscent of Nobuyoshi Araki's artwork decorate the walls above the beds. The Lielupe River flows past just across the street, and if you wake up early, you can even watch the sun rise from your bed. The establishment has only six rooms and, unlike other places in the city, the *Hotel MaMa* also welcomes four-legged friends. To be more precise, they are just as welcome as their owners. In fact, the hotel restaurant even has a separate menu for dogs. True, it only offers two dishes to choose from, but both are apparently delicious. Tirgoņu iela 22, Majori
① hotelmama.lv



MOST AUTHENTIC NEIGHBOURHOOD OF MAJORI

The neighbourhood between Tirgoņu, Pilsoņu and Jūras iela and the beach is located in Majori, the most popular section of Jūrmala, with various forms of recreation available and a relatively high level of development. The buildings in this small neighbourhood are some of the best-preserved cultural landmarks in the city. For example, the wooden houses at Jūras iela 29, 31, 33 and 39 are all protected national architectural landmarks. Jūras iela 35 is a historical summer home protected by the city, while Jūras iela 37 is a modern summer home that fits into the neighbourhood but does not copy historical architectural forms.

DUBULTI ART STATION

The Dubulti Art Station is a new contemporary art venue in Jūrmala. Located in the Dubulti railway station building, which is a fine example of modern Soviet architecture, it offers an international programme of contemporary art curated by well-known and experienced Latvian curator Inga Šteimane. Here, through installations, paintings, sculptures, photography, video art and interdisciplinary projects, visitors can become acquainted with processes and phenomena in today's art world. Dubulti Station, Dubulti

La Biennale di Venezia

Well-known Italian art critic and curator Angela Vettese once said that the Venice Biennale is like an infectious disease that causes the whole city to be covered in spots of artistic fervour.

Only some of the art-related events that take place all around the world are considered to be monumental, and the Venice Biennale (*La Biennale di Venezia*) certainly falls into that category. For over a century, it has been one of the planet's most prestigious cultural events, attracting more and more visitors each time. The previous biennial, for example, was attended by over half a million art enthusiasts. *La Biennale* is a leading force in contemporary art trends and holds events in various sectors, including art, architecture, cinema, dance, music and theatre.

The history of the biennial goes back to 1895, when the first International Art Exhibition was organised. The event became increasingly international in the first decades of the 20th century. Several countries, including Germany, France and Russia, installed their own national pavilions. During the First and Second World Wars, the Biennale was cancelled, but since then it has been one of the world's best-known international art events.

The International Architecture Exhibition, for its part, was established in 1980 under the auspices of the Biennale. It is now one of the world's most prestigious and important forums for contemporary architectural

discourse. *La Biennale* addresses the academic and theoretical side of architecture, while also providing a meeting place for the industry's most renowned architects and designers. It is a place where people come to present the most exciting architectural developments in their countries.

This year for the 15th International Architecture Exhibition, Chilean architect and recent Pritzker Prize laureate Alejandro Aravena has called on each country to define its own "front line of architecture", changing the focus from architecture as a mere building to architecture as the fulfilment of a social function. *Reporting from the Front* features works from 88 participants and 37 countries. The works address such themes as segregation, inequality, suburbia, sanitation, natural disasters, housing shortages, migration, crime, traffic, waste, pollution and community participation.

For the first time in the history of the International Architecture Exhibition, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have collaborated to create a joint Baltic Pavilion, which is occupying 1,600 square meters in the Palasport Arsenale Giobatta Gianquinto. As a shared space of ideas, the Baltic Pavilion is exhibiting more than 100 works in different categories. For more information, visit balticpavilion.eu. **BO**

▲ The Baltic Pavilion floating down a Venetian canal towards the Palasport

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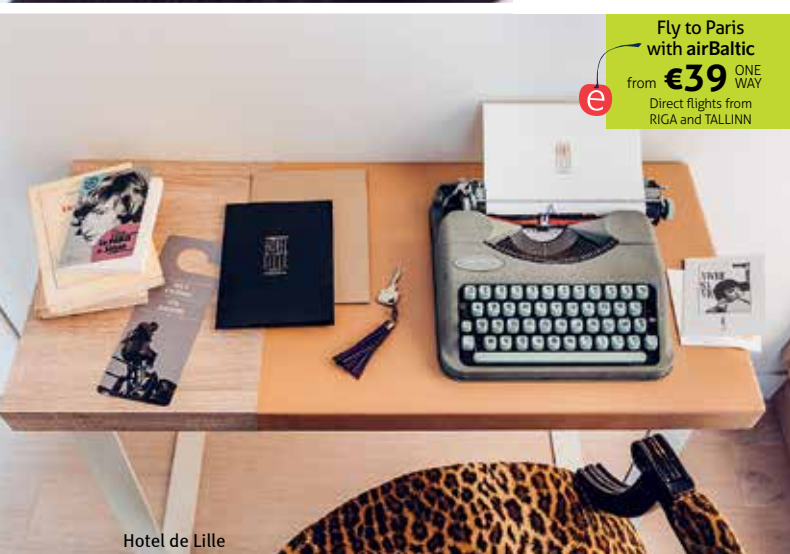
ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION MAY HAVE ADVERSE EFFECTS

Voyage à Tokyo (Tokyo Story), Nobuyoshi Araki, 1989

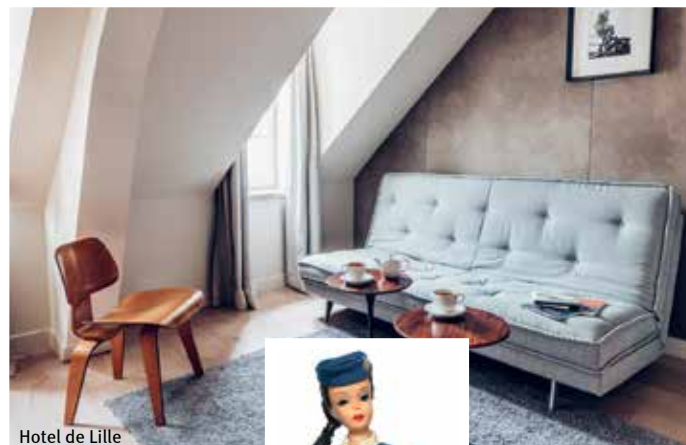
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Barbie air stewardess, 1961

Among the cultural offerings in the City of Light this summer is an exhibition for adults only, and another showing that should thrill girls of any age. The first is dedicated to the daringly sensuous photographs of Nobuyoshi Araki. Although the Japanese photographer's career has already spanned 51 years – a period during which Western society has cast aside almost every taboo – he is still considered to be one of the most radical contemporary photographers. Not only do curators warn visitors that Araki's works may be inappropriate for children, pregnant women are also asked to consider whether this is something that they want to see.

In the early 1980s – the boom years of the Tokyo sex industry – Araki explored the city's red-light district, immortalising the goings-on in the nightclubs and sex shops. The project came to an end in 1985, when changes in Japan's laws put an end to the industry's heyday. Sexuality and women's bodies haven't vanished from Araki's photographs, though. They continue to serve as expressions of romantic feeling and as explorations of the dark side of urban life. The **Nobuyoshi Araki retrospective** at the *Musée Guimet* (6, place d'Iéna; guimet.fr – until September 5) offers more than 400 Araki photos that cover the entire spectrum of his favourite themes: flowers, photography as autobiography, eroticism, desire and death.

Les Arts Décoratifs, meanwhile, is invoking the unsurpassed icon of both the toy and fashion industries: the **Barbie doll** (107, rue de Rivoli; lesartsdecoratifs.fr – until September 18). Barbie has reached a respectable age – she turned 57 this year, having been born in the workshops of the American toy manufacturer *Mattel* in 1959, and her wardrobe has become quite extensive over the years. The exhibition has at least 700 dolls on display and presents some of Barbie's most striking outfits. Nearly every great fashion house has had a hand in dressing her, including *Thierry Mugler*, *Jean-Paul Gaultier*, *Chanel*, *Maison Martin Margiela*, *Carven* and *Yves Saint Laurent*. One section of the show is devoted to modelling, since that is Barbie's favourite activity – her Instagram account has more than 1.3 million followers.

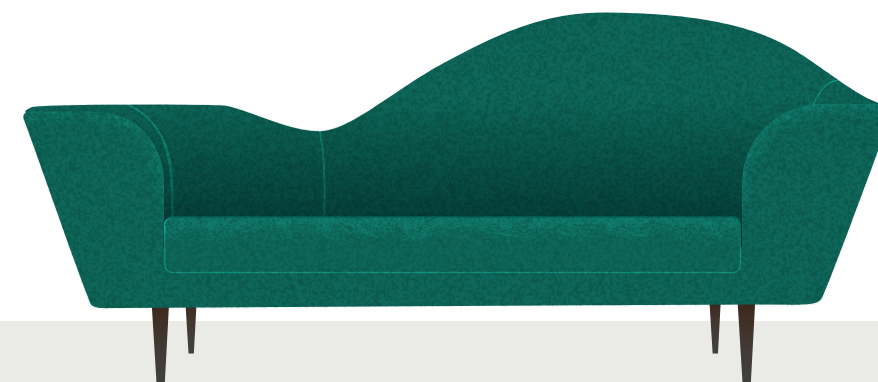
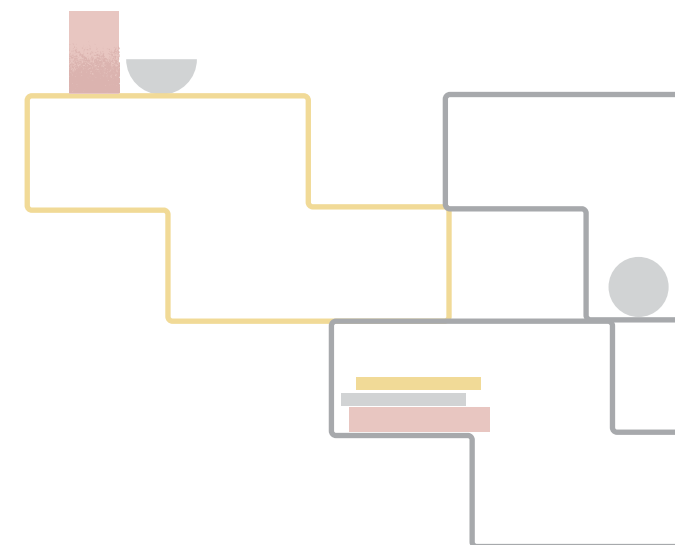
Paris now has a new hotel that's perfect for a trip focused on culture – the **Hôtel de Lille** (40, rue de Lille; hoteldelille.com). It's located in Saint-Germain-des-Près, a neighbourhood renowned for its intellectual history. Françoise Sagan once lived at number 73 on the same street, and Serge Gainsbourg enjoyed frequenting *Bistrot de Paris* at number 33. It's said that he always sat at the same table – number 46, directly across from the bar. Each of the hotel's 15 rooms is dedicated to a luminary associated with Saint-Germain-des-Près, from François Truffaut, Françoise Sagan, Juliette Gréco and Marguerite Duras to Henry Miller and Ernest Hemingway. You'll find Sagan's original typewriter in her room, while Hemingway's room is as blue as the sea he so loved.

Photo by Juaneidc

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Autor Rooms

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Building of the Nowy Teatr



Photo by Roland Krauss, courtesy of the artist and Galerie Martin Janda, Vienna

Maja Vukoje, *1 Kölner*, 2015, acrylic, sugar, coffee on burlap

Those who were born in the former USSR or in the Soviet Bloc might experience a sense of time travel at Zachęta, Warsaw's National Gallery of Art (pl. Małachowskiego 3; May 14 – August 21; zacheta.art.pl). There, **The Travellers** exhibition is focused on the not too distant past. Although it seems almost unbelievable today, travel to other countries before 1989 was a privilege and restricted mainly to those who were close to the corridors of power. The sudden fall of the Iron Curtain was like a heady dose of oxygen, with people suddenly free to make trips abroad and to express their views publicly. The showing at Zachęta brings together 23 artists from 15 countries and tells of the exotic destinations that they have visited, touching upon subjects like the interaction between earlier generations of emigrants and post-Soviet travellers, souvenirs taken abroad and brought back, means of travel from hitch-hiking to trains, busses and airplanes, and the meaning of borders – both physical and cultural.

Warsaw also has a new cultural space, the **Nowy Teatr** (Madalińskiego 10/16; nowyteatr.org). Its artistic director is one of the most eminent theatre directors in Poland, Krzysztof Warlikowski. A true luminary, his work is often seen on Europe's greatest opera and theatre stages. Aside from hosting theatrical productions, the Nowy Teatr will be a site for exhibitions, concerts, master classes and workshops. The space will be open to experimentation in new forms of communication, with its audiences an integral part of the dialogue. Warlikowski has compared the scope of the Nowy Teatr to that of the Centre Pompidou in Paris.

No one knows a city like its residents. This simple truth has motivated Warsaw's creative and graphic arts agency **Mamstudio** to open a small guest house named **Autor Rooms** (Lwowska 17/7; autorooms.pl). The studio has dubbed it "the keys to the city". The small, four-room guest house is located in a 19th-century building designed by Polish architect Mateusz Baumiller. The interior is an eclectic mix of contemporary and retro Polish style, with artworks by local artists used as decorative elements. The works are available for purchase, so the guest house doubles as an art and interior design showroom. All four rooms adjoin a common living room and kitchen. Thus, guests can prepare meals together and share their discoveries and adventures in the Polish capital.



Photo by Marek Krzyżanek

The Travellers

skitterphoto.com



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Text by **AGRA LIEGE**
Photos by Alamy and
courtesy of Dd studio

Baku Boulevard

Baku

Two years ago, the Latvian company *Dd studio* set up a museum exposition in the **Maiden Tower**, Baku's best-known symbol and locally known as *Giz galasi* (visitbakuazerbaijan.com). Using both traditional and 21st-century media, the exposition gives a view into the history of the legendary tower and the city that surrounds it. Located in the Old Town, right in the heart of Baku, the tower and its exposition have been popular attractions among both locals and foreign guests, and they are definitely worth seeing if you wish to learn about the Azerbaijani capital's past. No one knows for sure when the tower was built or how it came to acquire its name. According to the most famous legend, a maiden chose to jump to her death from the tower to avoid marrying a rich suitor. Both the legends about the tower and the structure have inspired numerous artists, poets and composers. Incidentally, in 2013, *Dd studio* received a special prize from EMYA (European Museum of the Year Award) for the permanent exhibition at the Petroglyph Museum of the Gobustan National Historical-Artistic Preserve in Azerbaijan. This paved the way for the company to create the current exhibition in Baku's Maiden Tower.

When you are in Baku, be sure to pay a visit to the legendary **Baku Boulevard**. Its history goes back 100 years to when the seafront was gradually built up. Even if you've walked down this promenade before, which is also known as the Seaside National Park (*Danizkanari Milli Park*), it will keep surprising you with its ever-changing face. The exquisite boulevard, which runs parallel to Baku's seafront, has recently been extended, and the *Little Venice* along one portion of it has also been freshened up. It now has wider canals, clear and sparkly water, and slightly bulky gondolas ready to take on passengers.

To see Baku in all of its glory, take a ride in the funicular, another well-known symbol of the city. It first became operational in 1960, and it was opened again in 2012 after a thorough restoration. The funicular will take you from the city centre to Upland Park, the highest point in the Azerbaijani capital, from which a magnificent view of the whole city and the bay unfolds. Looking down over the sea, you can really get a sense of the shape of the historical city. And then, apart from the striking view, the final stop of the funicular also gives you a chance to visit the nearby Martyrs' Lane and see the Eternal Flame Memorial. **BO**

Interior of Maiden Tower

Maiden Tower in
Baku's Old Town

The Mosque of the Martyrs (Shhidler Mescidi
Mosque) with the Flame Towers skyscraper

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An aerial photograph of a beach with vibrant turquoise water and white waves crashing onto a sandy shore. Numerous blue umbrellas are scattered along the beach, and several people are visible in the water and on the sand. The overall scene is bright and summery.

Details **TREND**

Text by **AGRA LIEGE**
Photo courtesy of **TIM GOUW**

New
mindful
beach
life

We are at our happiest when we are not confined to small spaces and endless staring at computer screens – and the sea reminds us of that.

Text by **AGRA LIEĞE**
Photo courtesy of **TIM GOUW**

We are at our happiest when we are not confined to small spaces and endless staring at computer screens – and the sea reminds us of that.

Sure, the usual bunch of restaurants was lined up along the edge of the beach, complete with deck chairs and sun beds, but the vibe that dominated was unique. Yoga and meditation classes took place early in the morning, while throughout the day individuals could be seen either silently meditating in the sand or practicing mindfulness as they walked along the seashore.

I've said this many times before, and I'll say it again: you don't have to go to India to find peace of mind (although if you can, then that's fantastic!). But wherever you are, a beach can really help, and not in the customary beach holiday sense, where you take a break from your life to spread out in the sand and sip cocktails for two weeks. A beach can charge your batteries much more substantially than that, if you go to it... mindfully.

Europe has plenty to offer in the beach department – there is no shortage of wonderful beaches to put on your to-do list. Whether you sign up for a yoga retreat on a beach in Croatia or a meditative weekend session on a beach in the Netherlands, you will probably not be disappointed. You can choose one of the usual holiday destinations like Mallorca, where the abundance of beaches will ensure that you find the unique and secluded spot that you are seeking if you wish to be alone. Or it can be gems like Sylt in northern Germany (fly to Hamburg to reach it), a genteel and sophisticated, fabulously long stretch of immaculate sand. If you feel more daring, then perhaps the black sand beaches of the harsh but undeniably magnificent island nation of Iceland will be suitable places for finding yourself. **BO**



It's festival season, SO what are you waiting for?

Why you should
attend a music
festival this season

Text by
ZANE NIKODEMUSA
Photo courtesy of the
Secret Solstice festival

One warm May afternoon, I was thinking about the most inspiring events that I have experienced during my summer vacations. I was surprised to find that many of my best memories from the past few years are associated with music festivals of various kinds – both small and intimate gatherings in ancient castle gardens, and grandiose events such as Roskilde.

Like marathon races, music festivals have been drawing an increasing number of attendees. What a difference from a few decades ago, when such festivals were associated with rebellion and anarchy. Psychologists stress that festival-going has become a popular pastime among those who lead active lifestyles and illustrates an increased desire to spend money on experiences rather than things. Many festival-goers, for their part, enjoy the

opportunity to see several of their favourite bands perform within a short weekend, and to get acquainted with the sound of groups that they have never heard of before. Another attribute of contemporary festival-goers is their desire for a greater degree of physical comfort. A survey by International Music Festival Trends of more than 2,700 festival-goers from all around the world found that in 2013, 8% of them stayed in a luxury hotel, while in 2014, 80% of those polled planned to travel in style and stay in a luxury hotel.

Not surprisingly, music festivals have begun to provide increasingly exclusive experiences. This month, the *Secret Solstice* festival in Reykjavik, Iceland is offering one of the most intriguing packages ever. Running from June 16-19 and featuring *Radiohead* as a headliner, the festival is sure to tempt million-dollar ticketholders,

who will be treated to the use of a private chartered jet for up to six people, a party in a 120-year old lagoon (including a helicopter ride there), the world's first ever volcano concert, another event taking place inside a glacier, exclusive performances at the places where they are staying, a private whale- and dolphin-watching tour, and a personal engraved and framed ticket made from Icelandic lava rock, among dozens of other perks.

Yes, this may be the most expensive festival ticket in the world. Of course, regular weekend passes are available too. They cost 24,900 Icelandic krona (approximately EUR 175). So, don't miss the unique opportunity to enjoy brilliant music under the midnight sun right before the summer solstice, and combine that with a tour of Iceland's incredible natural sights! More information at secretsolstice.is. **BO**

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Milan

the capital of men's fashion

Milan is obsessed with fashion. Everyone observes everybody else, and showing off is an integral part of the city's culture. Perhaps more than anywhere else on Earth, you will find men who take great care of their personal appearance and who dress in accordance with the latest fashion trends. *Milano Modo Uomo*, or Men's Fashion Week, takes place twice a year, in January and June. Renowned fashion houses like *Armani*, *Prada*, *Gucci* and *Versace* present their newest collections, as do classic suit brands such as *Ermenegildo Zegna*, *Brioni* and *Pal Zileri*.

The custom-tailored suits by *Brioni* are known for their high quality and are favoured by politicians and actors – both Pierce Brosnan and Daniel Craig wore *Brioni* when playing James Bond.

If you're not going to the fashion shows, then you can still gawk at the latest fashion collections in the streets, especially along the famous Montenapoleone shopping thoroughfare and the nearby Via della Spiga and Via Sant'Andrea. These are streets where the shops of famous brands stand cheek to jowl. Although the main fashion colour in Milan is black (regardless of the season), Italians also like to blend beige and brown tones. They have a strong attachment to shoes and sunglasses, and – of course – *la dolce vita*. **BO**

Dsquared2

A cult brand beloved by show business stars, this store is a real treasure for those who like the extravagant style created by Canadian twins Dean and Dan Caten. The flagship store hints of Canada with the scent of trees and natural interior elements. The sounds of bird calls blend with chandeliers made of antlers, and there's a unique champagne bar. The shop is like a thrilling labyrinth, with a new surprise around every corner. Via Pietro Verri 4
① dsquared2.com

Pirelli

The well-known Italian tyre company went way beyond tyres long ago to create fashion items as an offshoot of its main business activities. Designed by *Pirelli's* artistic director Renato Montagner, this modern shop sports a fresh interior. A unique display of Formula One video walls shows off rare cars like the *Lamborghini Miura* and various *Maseratis* as well as *Yamaha* and *Ducati* racing bikes. There are no tyres for sale – instead, one will find a vast array of men's and women's clothing as well as shoes made with high-tech materials. Corso Venezia 1
① pirelli.com

Dirk Bikkembergs

Those who are into a sporty style should definitely check out this men's fashion mecca by Belgian fashion designer Dirk Bikkembergs. Its three floors with 15 display windows are like a football museum, with an impressive interior and decorations that include footballers, footballs and trophies. Clothing from Bikkembergs' four clothing lines are available, as well as underwear, sunglasses and football-style shoes. Via Manzoni 47
① bikkembergs.com



Ermenegildo Zegna



Hat by Giorgio Armani, EUR 310, armani.com



Sunglasses by Italia Independent, EUR 177, Optika Italiana



Shirt by Brioni, EUR 260, mrporter.com



Gucci Guilty pour Homme, 50 ml, EUR 58.95, douglas.it



Shoes by Giorgio Armani, EUR 520, armani.com



Jacket by Giorgio Armani, EUR 1545, armani.com



Bag by Emporio Armani, EUR 813, armani.com



Tuxedo jacket by Brioni, EUR 4180, mrporter.com

Store addresses in Riga: Optika Italiana, Sky & More shopping centre, Dunties iela 19A

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Madam BonBon

**Handbag with geometric
pattern** by Max&Co,
EUR 249, *Max&Co*

Wooden sunglasses by
Ivo Nikkolo, EUR 159.90,
Ivo Nikkolo

**Shoes with imitation
snakeskin pattern** by
ELCHE, EUR 79.99, *ELCHE*
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and-blue heel application**
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Madam BonBon

**Blue handbag of imitation
crocodile skin** by ELCHE,
EUR 64.99, *ELCHE*

Store addresses in Riga
ELCHE, Galerija Centrs shopping
centre, Audēju iela 16
Madam BonBon, Alberta iela 1
Max&Co, Spice shopping centre,
Lielirbes iela 29
Ivo Nikkolo, Galleria Riga shopping
centre, Dzirnau iela 67



IDW ESPERANZA RESORT & SPA ★★★★★

Flying to Vilnius and looking to make some special memories? The Lithuanian capital is gorgeous, but a mere half-hour's drive away, and well worth the trek, is a place offering an experience quite different from the city's bustle. IDW Esperanza Resort, Lithuania's only 5+ star residence, is close to the historic town of Trakai, and much like Trakai's famed castle, sits by the water: Ungurys, a beautiful sparkling lake framed by the untouched nature of Aukstadvaris Regional Park.

For those hoping to find true relaxation and fresh Lithuanian air without sacrificing the benefits of modernity, there is no better place than Esperanza, whose impressive range of amenities only complements the serenity that embraces you upon entering this beautiful natural oasis. After working up an appetite strolling through the surrounding woods — likely sharing the path with a rabbit or doe — take your pick of three gourmet restaurants, one of which will have you sitting literally on the water of the lake.



Having recently renovated its SPA center, Esperanza is now a proud pearl of the Baltics, offering such exciting innovations as the nurturing Amphibia bed or the womblike Cloud9 device, one of only a few in existence. The unmatched experience of deep relaxation will make your visit a real treat. Enjoy a beauty procedure while surrounded with impeccable design and an exquisitely peaceful ambience. A few laps in the gorgeous pool and a visit to the saunas will refresh your mind as well as your body.

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Text by **KRISTĪNE BUDŽE**,
Pastaiga
 Publicity photo

The famous *Aalto vase* turns 80

One of the 20th century's best-known glass vessels, the Aalto vase, celebrates its 80th birthday.

WHAT IS IT?

The vase created by Finnish architect and designer Alvar Aalto (1898-1976) is perhaps the most famous vessel to be designed in the 20th century. Since its creation in 1936, millions have been made. In fact, the vase has long been one of Finland's most successful exports. *Aalto* vases continue to be produced in the glass workshops of *littala* and are still partially hand-crafted.

WHY IS IT SPECIAL?

Alvar Aalto was one of the most influential designers of his era. His impact during the 1950s was so great that the national airline, *Finnair*, delayed any flights that the star architect was late to board. There were even rumours that Aalto was sometimes late on purpose. His oeuvres include many well-known buildings and furniture designs, but Aalto's best-known creation outside

architectural circles is the vase that bears his name.

In a sense, the vase actually has three birthdays. The first was in 1936, when Aalto created a ten-dish set for a competition run by *littala*. He submitted his designs under the Swedish name *Eskimåkvinnans skinnbyxa* – Eskimo woman's leather trousers – inspired by Inuit female dress. Only one vessel became well known – the vase. Then in 1937, Aalto chose the vase for the *Savoy*, Helsinki's most fashionable restaurant at the time. The interior was designed by Aalto and his wife, Aino Aalto, and the famous vase stood on every table. The vase's international fame dates to that same year, when it was exhibited at the Paris world's fair. This is considered to be the vase's third birthday. At first the vase was produced at a height of only 140 mm, but it was immediately available in five

different colours. Since then *littala* has created many more variations. This year, the vase is being released in a bright grass green in honour of its 80th birthday. The most popular are still the transparent and white versions. It's said that if Aalto had known how difficult the production of his streamlined design would be, he would never have offered it for manufacturing. Early versions often had flaws and were not of uniform height, and the quality of the glass varied. However, true aficionados of design seek out these early examples.

HOW DOES IT FIT INTO INTERIORS?

Nowadays, the *Aalto* vase can be found in many styles of interior. Even so, it probably looks best in a room designed with Nordic simplicity, and when the vase is filled with meadow flowers rather than fancy or overly colourful blossoms. **BO**

© aalto.com

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Text by **ILZE POLE**
Photos courtesy of **DARJA DOMOGATSKAJA**

This is your captain speaking

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

DARJA DOMOGATSKAJA (35),
from Lithuania, captain of *Dash Q400* aircraft
Hours flown: 3,800

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

During most of my childhood and young adult life, I was a professional gymnast and then a dancer-choreographer for the Lithuanian national basketball team. Thus, I travelled all over Europe and spent a lot of time away from home. Afterwards, I expanded my academic horizons at the aviation institute in Vilnius. There I was selected for a government-sponsored training programme. I obtained my master's degree in aviation engineering combined with the practical part of CPL (Commercial Pilot License) training. A lot of my colleagues from *airBaltic* went along the same path, initially serving as first officers on *Fokker 50* or *Boeing 737* aircraft.

FAVOURITE RESTAURANT

Nothing compares with a delicious homemade dish and a bottle of wine in good company at home. Outside of my kitchen, I like small and cosy restaurants or cafés like *Brown Sugar* in Jūrmala during the spring and summer. We go there quite often and afterwards we feed the birds on the beach, which is just around the corner.

THREE THINGS THAT I NEVER LEAVE HOME WITHOUT

Wallet, keys and a hug.



SNAPSHOT TO SHARE

I managed to take a picture of a cumulonimbus lenticularis cloud when flying over Lithuania in June of 2009, when I was still a first officer on *Fokker 50* aircraft.

HOBBIES

Being a pilot and a mother doesn't give me a lot of free time for myself. My daughter Sofija, her education and spending quality time with her are my hobbies.

BEST THING ABOUT BEING A PILOT

For me personally, the most rewarding element is to see the pride of my parents and especially my daughter. Moreover, this profession prevents life from being boring and assures a dynamic lifestyle.

FAVOURITE BOOK

I am very fond of books and published articles about psychology and interpersonal relationships between kids and parents as well as between men and women. *Happy Children: A Challenge to Parents* by Rudolf Dreikurs and Vicky Soltz was an important guide for me as a young mother.

FAVOURITE RUNWAY

Riga, Runway 18. It's always nice to come back home after a long work trip. The city layout from above has become very familiar and I can use it for a very nice and short visual approach and landing. That also keeps my flying skills razor sharp.

LAST DESTINATION FLOWN TO AS A PASSENGER

Vilnius. Very often I fly as a passenger to visit my family and friends.

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

Well, that's an easy one! A female pilot serving as the commander of a commercial aircraft! It's amazing how people still react when they see a female pilot, especially when the whole crew consists of women whose average age is 30.

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Text by **ROGER NORUM**
Publicity photos

Cure for the summertime blues

Pack your bags with these hot tech gadgets to keep your summer cool



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This compact, waterproof speaker boasts a unique design and has extremely good sound for its size. It comes with an integrated bungee cord and even a small inflatable life preserver that enables it to float in water. Lay it flat, stand it up or hang it – even in your shower. The speaker can be immersed in liquid up to one metre deep for as long as 30 minutes. The speakers blast out a panoramic sound with decent bass, and the *Bluetooth* has a 65-foot wireless range. A fully charged battery gives you nine hours of music. Comes in several funky colours.

EUR 127 | ① ultimateears.com

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EUR 68 | ① coldfront26.com



WAKAWAKA POWER+

A light charge

This compact, lightweight solar charger can fully charge a smartphone in under two hours. The device can be flexibly positioned almost anywhere, and features a built-in emergency beacon that provides up to 150 hours of light (from 5 to 75 lumens). The battery takes around 12 anywhere and hours of sunlight to fill up. Purchases benefit Typhoon Haiyan survivors in the Philippines through a buy-one-give-one program (for every device you buy, another is sent to a Filipino family in need).
EUR 70 | ① waka-waka.com



LIQUID IMAGE 305 – HYDRA SERIES HD 720P

The diving bell and the shutter guy

Finally, James Bond style reaches the masses. This snorkeler's dream looks like a high-tech dive mask but is in fact an HD camcorder.

The mask shoots wide-angle (120°) footage in full 720-pixel high definition at 30 fps with audio. The entire thing is waterproof (well, obviously) up to 40 metres so it works great for scuba diving, too. The camera shoots decent stills, and the lever style buttons are fairly simple to use with diving gloves.

Micro SD/SDHC card slot.
Takes four AAA batteries.

EUR 105 | ① liquidimageco.com



THE DASH

Look ma, no hands!

These extremely ambitious smart in-ear phones were funded by a wildly successful *Kickstarter* campaign. Finally on the market, they offer you real freedom of movement with excellent sound output, employing Near Field Magnetic Induction technology that really penetrates your head. Controls for volume and ambient noise reduction are all carried out by light swipes on each of the buds. The best part: receive an incoming call while listening to music, and all you have to do is nod your head to answer. The future is now.

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This pair of aromatic dips will help you to prepare for any summer gathering

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

Basil and avocado dip

Ingredients

1 avocado, peeled and pitted
1 handful basil leaves
1 garlic clove, pressed
Zest of ½ lemon, grated
½ cup walnuts
1/3 tsp. sea salt
2 tbsp. cream cheese
1 tbsp. natural yoghurt

Preparation

Blend the avocado together with the other ingredients in a food processor until they have reached a uniform consistency. Add some more sea salt if necessary. Serve the dip together with fresh vegetables or crackers.

Curry dip

Ingredients

1 cup sour cream
1 tbsp. mayonnaise
1 tsp. curry powder
1 tsp. lemon juice
1 tsp. Dijon mustard
1 tsp. agave syrup
1/3 tsp. sea salt

Preparation

Blend all of the ingredients together until they have reached a uniform consistency. Serve the dip together with fresh vegetables or crackers. **BO**

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Fine wines

for a beautiful summer

Top choices by
respected wine expert
Aigars Lukstiņš

Text by **LIENE PĀLĒNA**
Photos by *Alamy* and
GATIS GIERTS (Picture Agency)



Although wine-making trends don't change nearly as quickly as fashion styles, wine specialists have noted two significant developments during the past few years: an increased interest in wine made from organically grown grapes, and a resurgence in the popularity of sparkling wines.

"The consumption of sparkling wines is increasing and the range of varieties on offer is expanding. Prosecco, for example, has been experiencing great success on all fronts. It has been the world's number one sparkling wine since 2013, when it surpassed champagne in terms of consumption," says Latvian wine expert Aigars Lukstiņš, one of the most recognisable personalities on the Baltic sommelier scene.

The wine expert notes that up until recently, large corporations dominated the sparkling wine market, but that small producers have been gaining inroads with new production methods and with wines made from alternative grape varieties. The result has been a more diverse selection of unique sparkling wines to choose from.

Incidentally, many people incorrectly use the terms "sparkling wine" and "champagne" interchangeably. Champagne is a sparkling wine produced exclusively in the northeastern French region of Champagne and prepared in accordance with traditional methods, mostly from Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay grapes. It now accounts for about eight percent of the world's sparkling wine market. **BO**

WORTH TRYING

At a garden party with friends: SAINT CLAIR Vicar's Choice Sauvignon Blanc Bubbles 2014 – New Zealand/Marlborough (retail price: about EUR 18).

A wine with a surprisingly intense and rich bouquet of flavours, bearing joyful notes of papaya and gooseberries.

On a summer afternoon by the sea: CLARENDELLE Rose 2015 – France/Bordeaux (retail price: about EUR 16).

This delightful crimson-rose-petal-coloured wine will complement your outdoor festivities with its pronounced raspberry and lychee aroma.

At a gourmet dinner: MARQUES DE CACERES MC 2008 – Spain/Rioja (retail price: about EUR 45).

Replete with a rich and diverse bouquet of aromas and flavours, this wine will make a great accompaniment to a skilfully prepared lamb roast.

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Island living

The Mediterranean island of Mallorca is widely known for its beauty. *Baltic Outlook* takes a tour inside a captivating villa that overlooks the sea at Puerto de Andratx. Located on the southwest part of the island, this wonderful fishing village and natural port is one of the most picturesque holiday destinations in Spain.

Text by **AGRA LIEGE**
Photos courtesy of Jaime Salvá
Architecture & Interior Design



The villa at Puerto de Andratx in Mallorca underwent a refurbishment by Jaime Salvá Architecture & Interior Design and came out as a dream holiday spot. The villa is only three minutes away from the harbour, and fantastic panoramas unfold from all around the structure. On the east side of the villa, a full harbour view dazzles the eyes with its shining lights at nighttime, for the island is so full of life and fun, while fabulous open sea vistas can be enjoyed to the west. On clear days, one can even see Ibiza on the horizon.

The villa was built on a 754-square-metre plot and covers an area of 325 square metres. This includes approximately 30 square metres of covered terraces and 100 square metres of open terraces. It has four bedrooms and three bathrooms, with one bedroom and one bathroom added during the refurbishment.

The villa previously had an overly complex geometry that was devoid of right angles. The result was a seemingly random space separated into different levels. The porch was separated from the outdoor terrace with steps, while elsewhere, steps had been placed between the kitchen and dining room. Architect Jaime Salvá wanted to give the villa a true Mediterranean character through the use of local materials and by evening out the space.

Since it was impossible to extend the area due to restrictions in planning regulations, the greatest challenge was to redefine most of the interior spaces. Shelves, cabinets and other objects were put in to hide the lack of parallel lines and to unify levels by eliminating steps. The architects also removed a pillar and arches from the outdoor porch, which was situated close to the pool.

All of the materials used were selected in neutral colours, including

Gris Balear aged limestone on the ground floor (both indoors and outdoors) and oak flooring on the second floor. Outside, the old balustrades were replaced by glass or metal railings to allow for better views of the sea. The exterior walls are mainly white to smooth out the space and give it additional lightness.



◀ A fabulously blue open sea beckons on the west side. The glass sections allow for a full unrestricted view.

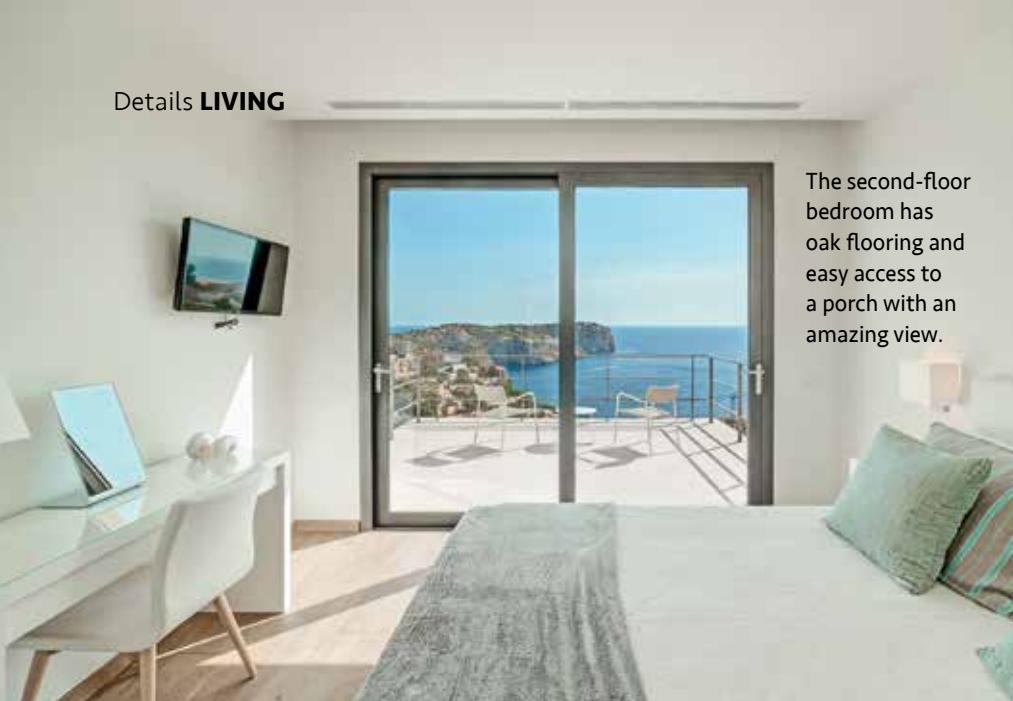
Arches were removed and some openings were extended to obtain as much natural daylight as possible and to allow for greater enjoyment of the outside views. Several windows were made into balconies that lead out onto terraces, thus creating a better internal-external connection.



◀ The east side of the villa offers a full view of the harbour. The lights shine beautifully at night and you see the city life buzzing happily below you during the day.

► Random angles were removed in the living area by installing a circular dining table that does not align with any of the axes. Instead, it acts as a “roundabout” in the space that connects the kitchen and living area. This has simplified the geometric complexity of the original house.





The second-floor bedroom has oak flooring and easy access to a porch with an amazing view.



ABOUT ARCHITECT **JAIME SALVÁ**

Salvá was born in Palma de Mallorca to a family that had engaged in construction and interior design for decades. He studied architecture at the University of Barcelona and later worked for renowned architecture bureaus in Barcelona, such as the office of Robert and Esteve Terradas. He then moved to San Francisco, USA, and served as a junior architect at *Korth Sunseri Hagey Architects*, where he helped to design the house of a film director and several office buildings. Upon returning to Spain in 2006, Salvá opened his own studio at Paseo del Borne in the heart of Palma. Aside from completing many private projects, he has also embraced such large-scale Mallorcan assignments as the CAEB offices in Parc Bit and the renovation of *Fitness Centre Body Point*.



An en-suite bathroom was added with a great view through the shower window (never a dull moment!).



Although the architects had to work with a restricted space, the new plan has turned both the interior and exterior of the villa into a spacious and light haven, with the most striking nature and city life all around. **BO**



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AINĀRS ĒRGLIS

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Your **NEXT DESTINATION**



The new Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Centre (SNFCC) building designed by Renzo Piano. Photo: Yiorgis Yerolympos



If at all possible, try to arrange your summer travel plans so that you can be in Athens from June 23 to 26. That's when the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Centre (SNFCC), Greece's new temple to culture and soon-to-be home of the Greek National Opera and the National Library of Greece, will open its doors to the public with a four-day programme of cultural events titled *Metamorphosis: the SNFCC to the World*. Located about four kilometres from the city centre on the site of a former hippodrome in the Kallithea district, the SNFCC is a gigantic complex with 210,000 square metres of space that also includes a specially created park.

Italian starchitect Renzo Piano designed the centre, which has already been deemed one of his recent masterpieces. In addition to being a striking example of architecture, the centre emphasises environmental friendliness and sustainability and has an unconcealed ambition to qualify for Platinum Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification – the highest distinction in the

A visit to the **Acropolis** is a must! And not just because it's the sort of thing that one does in Athens. There are no words to describe the view of the city from there. Alright, so you are not going to be the only living souls there – the Acropolis is, of course, one of the most visited archaeological landmarks – yet some things are above and beyond all of that. The best time of day for a trip to the Acropolis is in the afternoon: the place is open until 7:30 PM. Afterwards, seek out a quiet spot close to the museum and share that bottle of wine that you have had the foresight to bring along. Enjoy the view of the whole beautiful city at your feet with a few fellow romantics.

green building niche. If it is recognised with this certification, the SNFCC will become not only the first such building in Greece, but also the first in all of Europe.

Faliro Bay in the Kallithea district was one of Athens' first ports, and Piano wanted the presence of the sea to be felt also in the new opera house and library. However, because the sea was not actually visible from the site, he planned for an artificial hill to be built in one corner of the park, upon which the building now sits. The complex's 40-metre-high canopy resembles a giant sail pulled across the building and suspended in mid-air like a floating baldachin.

Even though visually the canopy is light and airy, it is constructed of two three-centimetre-thick layers of ferrocement supported by 30 steel columns, covering an area of 10,000 square metres and weighing more than 4000 tonnes. The canopy not only provides natural shade to the building, but also serves as a source of energy – it is covered with 5678 photovoltaic cells that generate almost all of

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View of Athens from the Acropolis



Artwork by Stelios Kallinkou currently on view at *The Equilibrists* exhibition in the Benaki Museum



Ghost Relief by Malvina Panagiotidi at *The Equilibrists*, Benaki Museum

the energy required to operate the entire opera and library. As an example of architectural and engineering virtuosity, the canopy also serves as the project's main visual accent. Under it is a glass-enclosed "Lighthouse" offering a 360-degree view of Athens and the sea.

The cultural centre's opera wing will feature two halls, one with seating for 1,400 and the other with seating for 450 people. The library, for its part, will house 700,000 books. The two institutions will be symbolically separated by an open public space called the Agora, where various events and performances will be held. The Agora's floor is covered with Dionysos marble, the same material used in the construction of the Parthenon.

The park surrounding the SNFCC, which contains over 1,500 trees and 200,000 shrubs, will be one of the largest green spaces in all of Athens. Almost like a labyrinth, countless paths criss-cross the park, and along one edge a 400-metre-long and 30-metre-wide canal filled with sea water protects the site from flooding during heavy rains. After desalination, water from the reservoir is used to water the plantings in the park.

The entire project, which is estimated to have cost 566 million euros, was initiated by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, one of the world's largest philanthropic foundations, and is a gift to

the Greek state. The charitable foundation is named after Greek shipping tycoon Stavros Niarchos (1909-1996) and was established after his death. Like his no less famous rival, Aristotle Onassis, Niarchos' business flourished thanks to the Suez Crisis and the growing global demand for petroleum. In the 1950s, Niarchos' fleet had the world's largest oil tankers.

Meanwhile, the competition between Niarchos and Onassis – both in business and in their private lives – was one of the media's favourite topics. When Onassis unveiled a 30,000-tonne ship, Niarchos outdid him with a 31,000-tonne ship. This rivalry extended further as well, to yachts, properties and even wives. Niarchos married five times. His third wife, Athina Livanos, who died of an overdose of sleeping pills, had been Onassis' first wife. But Niarchos was also a passionate art collector whose collection of Impressionist and modern art was one of the most valuable in the world. After his death, his oldest son, Philip Niarchos, inherited the collection and has since added a number of "trophy" to it.

Even though the Greek National Opera and National Library of Greece will begin operations only next year in the new quarters, the public will be able to walk through both the park and the building during the *Metamorphosis* event. The four days will be filled with concerts, performances and art installations by

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musicians and artists from Greece and abroad. Special events are also planned for children and families. Well-known American singer and performance artist Laurie Anderson is the artistic director of the *Metamorphosis* programme, and her own show will be one of the highlights of the event. Considering that the SNFCC can host up to 32,000 visitors, the scope of *Metamorphosis* will surely be grand.

This summer also marks the 33rd anniversary of the DESTE contemporary art foundation, initiated by art collector, industrialist and philanthropist Dakis Joannou, one of the most exciting personalities on the Greek contemporary art scene. The DESTE Foundation for Contemporary Art is a non-profit organisation that popularises the work of both established and new, unknown artists and also operates a publishing house. Joannou established the foundation in 1983, before he even began collecting art.

"I've always been interested in art, and it was important for me to be involved in a dialogue with the processes of contemporary art," he says. And, despite being well into his seventh decade of life, Joannou participates in this dialogue with a passionate and tireless interest and intensity, all the while remaining a simple and humble man.

"Deste" in Greek means "look", so even the name of the foundation invites people to observe and take note. Joannou is one of the most active supporters of Athens' and Greece's art scene, so it's only natural that one of the foundation's main events this year – *The Equilibrists* exhibition from June 17 to October 9 – is dedicated to Greek art. Not its past, but its future. The exhibition will feature 33 Greek artists in their 20s and 30s (from both Greece and Cyprus), who are a part of the so-called "young precariat" generation, having grown up in a time of political and economic instability, an instability that has only increased in the past decade. *The Equilibrists* is a story about their world view and the challenges they face.

The project is being realised in cooperation with the New Museum in New York and the Benaki Museum in Athens, and it will take place in the Benaki Museum's new building, which opened in 2004, the same year as the Olympic Games in Athens. The building, a renovated 1960s industrial complex, was once an auto manufacturing plant.

As it does every June to August, the Greek capital will again host the traditional Hellenic Festival, this summer for the 61st time. It is one of the world's grandest summer cultural celebrations, not just because of its size (three full months of theatre, dance, music, cross-genre events, exhibitions and creative workshops), but also due to the quality

Among the countless open-air cinemas in Athens, **Zefyros** (*Troon 36, Petralona*) holds a special place, largely due to its location in Petralona, one of the most exquisite neighbourhoods in Old Athens. The quiet and serenely beautiful place, far from the usual noise and crowds of the multiplexes, makes it possible for cinema-lovers to indulge in a specially pleasurable experience of film-watching. Besides, the cinema enjoys quite a serious reputation thanks to its repertory policy. Two excellent tavernas across the street are perfect for a delicious meal before or after the film.

Do tour the **Kolonaki** area and climb Lycabettus Hill, the highest vantage point (222 metres) in the whole of Athens. The best time for that is early in the morning, while the sun is still not too hot. Kolonaki is a different Athens altogether: expensive and pretentious, it is the spot where the cream of Athens fashion and style shops is concentrated. The tiny narrow streets all lead uphill, and the stylish bars and restaurants are popular hangouts among trendy folk. You won't regret taking a walk along Anagnostopoulou and Voukourestiou Streets. The Milioni pedestrian street, for its part, is lined with bars and restaurants, all of them always jam-packed and buzzing with chatter.

On a cultural-mood-day, pay a visit to **Gazarte** (Voutadon 34, Athens; gazarte.gr), a multiplex art house where you can enjoy your wine in the company of a nice book or movie, or taste a variety of dishes in a relaxing green rooftop garden among the alternative industrial buildings at Gazi Technopolis.

of events and selection of artists. Over its history, the Hellenic Festival has showcased the best in contemporary art, and practically all the stars of their age have performed on its stages, from opera diva Maria Callas to legendary ballet dancer Rudolf Nureyev.

Nothing has managed to stop the festival, be it a military junta (1967-1974) or the current Greek economic crisis, which has, admittedly, made the festival considerably tighten its belt. And this year, the festival has stirred some truly Greek passions. To wit, the festival's artistic director, Belgian multimedia artist Jan Fabre, resigned from his post shortly after being confirmed to curate the event for the next four years. He incensed the Greek public already at his first press conference, when he announced that he planned to turn this year's festival into "a tribute to Belgium" and devote eight of the ten new festival productions to artists from his homeland.

In this time of economic crisis and a shrunken cultural budget, Fabre's ambitiousness outraged Greece's creative classes and, as the locals joke, it was quite the scandal, because finally something other than refugees and the soap operas revolving around Greece's debt crisis showed up in the news. Fabre was accused of cultural colonialism and seven other deadly sins, until finally he was forced to resign.

"I do not want to work in a hostile artistic environment in which I came with an open mind and heart," stated Fabre. "I accepted the invitation by the Greek minister of culture on the condition that I could do my artistic choices under a regime of freedom. This is not possible any more in Greece."

Fabre's successor will be 63-year-old Athens-born director Vangelis Theodoropoulos, who must plan this summer's festival programme with a limited budget and in a very short period of time. But, despite all of the above, the festival will go ahead as usual – at an impressive 51 venues at that. In addition to the famous Epidaurus Theatre, where Ancient Greek tragedies were performed as soon as they were written, festival events will also take place at such unusual locations as the Korean Market, Piraeus Port and Kolonos Park.

City streets as a tonic for the soul

As in any southern city – especially one with an explicitly cosmopolitan soul – life in all of its splendour takes place right out on the street. If you wish to fully experience a taste of this, then it's best to put away the guidebooks and simply dive into Athens' small cross streets and narrow lanes. Just follow your nose, and every once in a while turn into one of the many small cafés or taverns,



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New Acropolis Museum

many of which are difficult to even notice at first glance. Meander through Plaka, the city's oldest district, and if you can get away from the crowds of tourists heading towards the Acropolis, you'll soon come across the maze of narrow, winding streets that feel more like one of the Greek islands than the metropolis.

Even though Plaka is the very heart of Athens' tourism business, this really only applies to a couple of its streets. Wander a little ways off the tourist route and you'll find practically empty streets, crumbling building façades, time-worn steps, balconies covered in geraniums and bougainvillea and cats lounging lazily in the sun. This used to be a working-class neighbourhood, and in the 1950s and 1960s it served as a backdrop to many

classic Greek films. Plaka is also the district of classic Greek taverns, where true Athenians came to enjoy retsina, that Greek white wine whose unique bouquet originated thanks to the fact that the vessels in which the wine was stored were historically sealed with pine resin. The most charming taverns can be found along Plaka's steep streets, where small tables perch at various elevations and people teem like ants, all speaking loudly, as is the custom in Greece. Athens is bursting with an energy for life, and this energy also rubs off on the shiest and northern-most of visitors like a tonic for the soul.

If you wish to get even closer to Athens' untamed soul, head to the *Café Avissinia*. A legend among local Athenians, it is located in the heart of the Monastiraki

neighbourhood, on the square of the same name that's also famous for having one of the most delightful flea markets in the city. On Sundays, one musician after another sits down at the piano and accordion on the café's first floor, while Greek families animatedly sing along. Sometimes, upon leaving, they might break a few plates as well. The boudoir-like interior is full of paintings from the café owner's collection, with not an empty spot to be found on the walls. A beautiful view of the Acropolis opens up from the second-floor windows and terrace.

To experience a full range of sensations, hike from the hilly and snobbishly elegant district of Kolonaki, known for its fashionable shops, over to anarchistic Exarchia, the city's epicentre of graffiti and bohemian life. Exarchia once had quite the extreme reputation, with some embassies even advising their citizens to avoid the

area. That's now all in the past, but you'll still feel a definite glimmer of anarchy there. There's much more graffiti than elsewhere in Athens, with entire walls having become spontaneous canvases displaying everything from naïve expressions to genuine masterpieces of graffiti art.

With the University of Athens nearby, Exarchia is home to many students and a vibrant mix of immigrants and local families from a variety of social strata jumbled in among the many second-hand stores, CD-sellers, stray dogs, clubs and bars. The cafés are full of young people and representatives of various subcultures, while the prices in them are at least three times lower than the prices at the restaurants in Kolonaki. Exarchia Square marks the centre of the neighbourhood, from which small, narrow streets full of little shops, cafés and free-thinking residents radiate outward.

The most charming taverns can be found along Plaka's steep streets, where small tables perch at various elevations



Streets of the Plaka neighbourhood

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It is often said that the market is the true heart of any city. Athens has several markets, although the best known is definitely the Agora Fish Market on Athinas Street. Commerce begins early in the morning, with sellers trying to out-shout each other with their trombone-like voices. Some of the stands have been in the same family for several generations, offering the freshest that the Aegean Sea has to give. All kinds of smells combine to form an elusive bouquet, and the floors are rinsed off regularly with a generous wave of water. The market is located in the Monastiraki neighbourhood, where its Neoclassical-style glass-roofed building was opened to the public in 1886. Generations of local families as well as immigrants man the many market stands – a true microcosm of this city of millions. Approximately 30,000 people – tourists and locals, the poor and the rich – pass through the market on any given weekday. This is a superb place to see Athens in motion, electrifying each who arrives in the city.

Life on the rooftops

A great way to get to know Athens in a slightly more epicurean way is to take a summer evening tour of the city's hotel rooftop terrace bars. The bars compete with one another not only in terms of which serves the best cocktails and hosts the best nightlife, but also in terms of panoramas...of the Acropolis, of course. One of the hottest addresses is in the new *AthensWas Hotel* in the Plaka neighbourhood. Located in a former apartment building, the hotel is an ode to classic modernism, and its interior – featuring design objects by Le Corbusier, Ettore Sottsass, Michael Graves, Jacob Jensen and Konstantin Grcic – is practically a museum. From its rooftop terrace, the iconic Parthenon



Exarchia neighbourhood

Commerce begins early in the morning, with sellers trying to out-shout each other with their trombone-like voices

seems just an arm's length away. In other words, here you can convince yourself that Le Corbusier, the godfather of Modernism, was quite serious when, having headed to Athens on an architectural pilgrimage, stated, "It's the Acropolis that made me a rebel."

But the nearby *Electra Palace Hotel* also offers just as stunning a view of the Acropolis. Even though the hotel itself is designed as a classic business accommodation, its rooftop garden bar, which even features a swimming pool, is worth a visit. The youthful, pastel-coloured *Fresh Hotel* in the Psiri neighbourhood offers a slightly different view of the Acropolis from its ninth-floor rooftop bar named the *Air Lounge*.

And if, in this age of exhibitionism, you just cannot refrain from taking a selfie with the Acropolis in the background, the real place to go is the rooftop

bar of the legendary *Grand Bretagne* hotel. Established in 1874, this grand dame of hotels, which has provided accommodation for the Kennedy clan as well as Maria Callas, has lost none of its sharpness – there's a corner just off of the bar marked as the "selfie spot". True, if you come at sunset, you may have to wait in the "selfie line" for a little while.

Of course, most people know that it's best to just stick all the gadgets back into one's bag and enjoy the sunset with only one's eyes. The setting Greek sun colours the Acropolis in blue and pink tones, the light is magical and – even though there's nothing that seems more banal than the sunset, and you can be sure there are thousands of other people across the city gazing at the same sight that very same moment – an Acropolis sunset is truly unique and unforgettable. For the umpteenth century.




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Three Greek itineraries



DEST Project Space on Hydra Island. An old slaughterhouse is turned into a contemporary art space during the summer



Port of Hydra

RHODES – SUN, HISTORY AND GASTRONOMY

Aside from being Greece's fourth largest island, Rhodes is one of the sunniest locations in all of Europe. With an average of 300 sunny days a year, that's much more than many other places. The summer season lasts from May until the second half of October, and sometimes the sea is still warm enough for swimming in November. About 37% of the island is covered in pine and cypress growth, earning it the nickname of the "Emerald Isle".

Rhodes also boasts one of the oldest continually inhabited Medieval-era Old Towns in the world, which was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1988. This part of the island has a population of approximately 6,000 and about 200 streets, many of which are unnamed. Cobbled with small black-and-white stones and sometimes even overgrown with grass, they lead visitors on a journey into the past. The 600-metre-long Street of Knights, the Old Town's main street, is one of Europe's best-preserved medieval streets.

Rhodes prides itself in the Lindos Acropolis, which is the second-most-visited Ancient Greek site after the Athens

WEEKEND IN HYDRA

The island of Hydra, about a one-and-a-half-hour ferry ride from Athens, is one of the most special Greek islands. Also considered to be one of the country's most romantic places, Hydra has long been a favourite relaxation spot for Greece's aristocracy. Its popularity grew during the 1950s, when *Boy on a Dolphin* (1957), with Sophia Loren in the leading role, was filmed there. It was the first film in which Loren spoke English and also the first Hollywood film to be filmed in Greece.

A trip to Hydra is like travelling back in time. There are no automobiles on the small, rocky island, nor are there any bicycles, due to the steep and cobbled roads. The only forms of transportation are walking, riding a donkey (there are over 500 of these animals on the island) or water taxi. Nevertheless, it usually takes visitors only a short while to adjust to the much slower and calmer rhythm of life. Because the island's historical heritage is carefully preserved, there are also no new, modern buildings on Hydra, and life mostly centres around the marble-paved port and the quaint nearby streets. Most of the houses are not numbered, because there's simply no need for it. And it's almost impossible to get lost in Hydra town – everyone here knows each other, and visitors feel like they've arrived into a large Greek family.

Because Hydra has few sandy beaches, it also has few large hotels and, as a result, no mass tourism. This makes it an ideal destination for those who wish to escape the hustle and bustle of the city. Despite the fact that everything on the island is charmingly simple (including the hotel and restaurant prices, which are surprisingly friendly), the array of fine and fashionable swimwear in the shops along the seaside promenade as well as the yachts moored in the blue-green harbour give the island an unmistakable glamour and a feeling of being specially favoured.



St. George's Chapel in Lindos

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THE CHANGING FACE OF LUXURY

Famous interior architecture specialists Peter Joehnk and Corinna Kretschmar-Joehnk, founders of *JOI-Design* in Hamburg, have designed more than 100 luxury and design hotels all over Europe, from Moscow to Mallorca. In an exclusive interview with *Baltic Outlook*, they reveal how luxury has changed over the years.

The first thing that I notice when meeting the founders of *JOI-Design* at their head office by the Osterbek canal is their contrasting appearances. While Corinna looks fragile and elegantly urban, Peter, tall and bearded, looks more like an outdoors guy. Despite their packed schedule and being in between business trips to Paris and Las Vegas, the married couple is relaxed and friendly.

The open-space office for the 40 creatives who work at the company is full of patterns and material samples, as *JOI-Design* has been among the leading European hotel designers for about 30 years. Their designs reflect the shift in the hospitality industry from either purely functional, soulless chain hotel rooms or old-fashioned, stiff, off-hook grand hotels to a more authentic guest experience. Aside from hotels, the company's employees also design furniture, office spaces, restaurants, spas, yachts and apartment interiors. *JOI-Design* has received numerous awards, and the fourth volume of *101 Hotel Rooms* is the latest of six books about the company's work.

How would you describe JOI's design style, maybe giving the example of one your latest projects, such as *Mercedes Benz Living* in Singapore?

Corinna: My husband tends to say that we do not have a style, and "style" is a word that doesn't appeal to me, either. In each project, we try to create a hotel that reflects the local history and culture as well as the brand – and of course, the expectations of its future guests. We work like a marketing agency. First we persuade our clients to agree on a specific profile for their hotel, then we create a unique character for it.

Mercedes Benz Living @ Fraser reflects the approach that *Mercedes Benz* takes when designing a car. The company's cars are high-tech and convey a special feeling of luxury.

We recently developed a new concept with UK-based *Premier Inn* for the German market. We convinced the company to fill a market niche with a more authentic approach, so we created a young "British" concept, which was very well-received.

You've renovated and redesigned old establishments like the *Reichshof Hotel Hamburg* and the *Steigenberger Davos*. You've also designed innovative new hotels like the *Hilton Frankfurt Airport*. What is the thrill for each type of assignment as a designer?

Peter: Indeed, they are very different from each other. While an old grand hotel already has a certain character and atmosphere, you have to create one from scratch in a new hotel.

The great thing about redesigning old hotels is the contrast between the old buildings and the introduced modern elements. You make something look fresh and new without losing the historical and local context.

The best thing about designing new hotels is the fact that they are literally "blank sheets of paper". You can develop new concepts, something completely original and unexpected. But this is more challenging and comes with the risk that something previously unseen and with no obvious historical and cultural associations could make guests feel uncomfortable.

You have received lots of prestigious awards for your work. If you had to pick your top three projects yourself, then which would they be?

Peter: Actually, the most recent projects always seem to be the most interesting. But to pick my top three... one of my all-time favourites is my private library at home. I have designed a special shelf system in leather and aluminium, with Michelangelo on the ceiling. I also like our *Organic Trace* hotel room study, which

The best thing about designing new hotels is the fact that they are literally "blank sheets of paper"

we designed eight years ago. It was a sculpture that contained the functional elements of a guest room (bathtub, desk and bed), with only the toilet being separate. My third pick is *Le Méridien Hamburg*, which we originally built 12 years ago with *Real Studios* and *PYR*, and which we renovated just recently.

What materials do you best like to work with?

Corinna: I personally prefer smooth materials – surfaces with a soft touch. They have a calming effect in our increasingly digital and demanding lives. I also prefer materials that improve acoustics. If you're invited to a nice dinner, then it can be very disturbing when you are not able to communicate properly with your dining companions.

Peter: I love to select contrasting products: soft materials in contrast to hard surfaces, high gloss



The brand-new *Capri by Fraser* in Frankfurt reflects a contemporary interpretation of a modern hotel room

© Simone Ahlers

Women long for more privacy, to feel safe and to have plenty of surfaces to put things on

coatings next to super-matt finishes or natural materials contrasted with artificial ones. All are interesting.

Mr. Joehnk, you studied ecological building already in 1983. How important is sustainability for your work and how far has the industry come in that approach?

Peter: Ecological issues are increasingly important and new projects nowadays seek green building credentials. There clearly is a trend towards locally produced, handcrafted furniture. But then again, most things are still manufactured in Asia and shipped across the world, which reduces the environmental credibility.
Corinna: We favour natural materials, such as oiled wood, wool, cotton and natural stone.

You've made some projects in Russia. Was it a very different experience to working in Western Europe?

Peter: Personally, I like to work in Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and other countries in that region. I usually enjoy the hospitality, and I like to eat and drink!

It is different because we are, compared to the income levels in such countries, rather expensive and so we automatically have a "star" image. Our Russian clients are more interested in building representative hotels, while the hotel operators are more concerned with achieving an atmosphere where guests can feel at home.

What are the must-haves for persuading guests to choose a hotel?

Corinna: Nowadays, good hotels attract guests by touching them emotionally. Hotels with a special character that tell a holistic and authentic story have more potential to be successful, rather than simply trying to please everybody. Guests like to be welcomed with comfort, but this should be seamlessly integrated and not

look overburdened with pomp and glamour. Understated luxury is the focus. Also technical innovations should be there, but hidden in order to achieve a warm atmosphere and not remind you of constantly being surrounded by digital technology. Of course, there are absolute must-haves such as connectivity and free Wi-Fi everywhere, nice cosy and inspiring public spaces for relaxed social get-togethers, a good bed and a big shower. And women also have some specific requirements: they long for more privacy, to feel safe and to have plenty of surfaces to put things on – and last but not least, good lighting to apply their make-up!

Many guests are looking for an authentic local experience. How does that influence your hotel design?

Peter: A very nice example is our recently opened *Hapimag City Resort in Hamburg*. There, guests can really dive into an authentic northern European, Hamburg world. They get a feel of the harbour and its old tradition of maritime flair, with the "Speicherstadt" (warehouse district), the Elbe River and Alster Lake in the immediate area. It is all about feeling the neighbourhood and getting into the spirit of the city. We are currently planning another *Hapimag* resort in Venice, and there the story and the experience will definitely guide you into another world.

Many people no longer wish to travel as tourists and want to immerse themselves in the local life. How can you as hotel designers help travellers to feel like locals?

Corinna: A current fashion is the "non-hotel look", with lobbies designed to feel like living rooms and guest rooms appearing more apartment-like instead. At the brand-new *Capri by Fraser* in Frankfurt, we designed a lobby that reflects a younger interpretation of a modern living room. Apartments are equipped with pantries for a longer stay and a more home-like atmosphere. We also created a special living room at the *JW Marriott* in Cannes for the high society clientele as "the" place to meet, to see and be seen – but in a casual, relaxed, mixed chic way, like you might find in a stylish home. Restaurants should be inspiring, too, and reflect the spirit of the house. They ought to offer an authentic and corresponding menu.



Capri by Fraser in Frankfurt

© Simone Ahlers

There's a big buzz about the prospects for the hotels of the future. Some predict that robots will do the basic services and that guests will be able to manage most services themselves via apps. How do you see the hotel of 2050?

Peter: We have done a lot of research on this in the past. Already 20 years ago, when we designed the first *McDonald's* hotel in Switzerland, we discussed the possibility of introducing robots for room services or for carrying guests' luggage, and we subsequently received interest from prospective manufacturers. But today we think that even in 2050, because of the immense digitalisation happening in our daily lives, guests will long for even more personal touches in a hotel, rather than being faced with yet another impersonal experience.

Which is your favourite place or room at a hotel?

Peter: The library, where I can unwind with an interesting book and a glass of good red wine.
Corinna: A room where I can practice yoga and meet and get to know like-minded people, or just the lobby where I can watch and study different cultures, people and their behaviours.

Where do you find inspiration?

Peter: I find my inspiration while reading a good book, preferably a crime or detective story. I also love to go to museums and inhale the art of former eras. Or I get inspired during my travels around the world. I always try to stay interested and observe different people and different cultures.
Corinna: In nature, while going for a walk in the forest with my young niece, or at a good concert or while enjoying a ballet on stage – or just while shopping in the supermarket and watching other people's habits.

Which designers, architects or other artists have influenced you?

Corinna: I do like the grand Italian architects like Andrea Palladio or Carlo Scarpa. In the architecture of Palladio I've learned a lot about zoning and proportions, whereas the buildings of Carlo



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For business reasons we travel a lot, and I have to admit that we often forget to travel for vacations

Scarpa play with geometrical forms, combining them in a very elegant way.

If you weren't designers, then what other profession would you take on?

Peter: When I went to school I dreamt of being a lumberjack, then I wanted to study chemistry, then I wanted to study art (but my father refused), then I finally did an internship for mechanical engineering

and sadly learned that it wasn't about tuning mopeds. Interior design is perhaps an ideal compromise between my artistic and technical preferences.

But still I love to imagine that I could be a scientist, artist, photographer, archaeologist or writer. Sadly, I am now too old to become a lumberjack in Canada! **Corinna:** I am a very communicative and social person, so I can very well imagine running my own little hotel, or working with children or elderly people, but I am quite happy to be an interior designer!

What project are you still dreaming of realising one day?

Peter: The bigger, the better! A dream project, one which I can easily imagine, would be to create a complete designers' world in miniature – that is, a luxury resort on a small island, where we design everything including the salt shakers, the landscape, the buildings, the uniforms and the sunshades – every detail! It would be for guests who like design and a client who has no budget limits and is not looking for a return on investment.

Corinna: My own hotel, perhaps?

What is your favourite travel destination?

Peter: For business reasons we travel a lot, and I have to admit that we often forget to travel for vacations. But when we do, I prefer northern latitudes because of the colder climate, which I love, as well as the peace and quiet. I find remote destinations calming and relaxing because from day to day I am surrounded by constant communication and the



The design of *Le Méridien Hamburg* takes inspiration from the myriad waterways, canals and rivers in the city

© Christian Kretschmar

noise of city life. Because of my lumberjack dream it might be Canada. Admittedly, I haven't yet had the opportunity to go there, but I should at least once. I imagine relaxing and getting inspired in the loneliness of the woods.

Corinna: I am the opposite. The warmer the climate, the better! I love the sun and I would love just to hang out at a beach one day again! However, my favourite place to be inspired and to refuel my batteries is New York City. My aunt used to live there, and my grandma often told me stories about the special spirit of the city. Every time I go there I feel freshly regenerated with new ideas – and I also just love to walk in the streets, hearing, smelling, watching, feeling....

You've designed lots of dream luxury apartments. What does your own home look like?

Corinna: Our home is a permanent construction site. We love to experiment, we love to change and we like to design our home in a way that is different from how we do things for others. It is very relaxing not to plan every detail in advance and to just do things more spontaneously at home.

You've been working together for 23 years now. Is it always a blessing to be a married couple and business partners at the same time or sometimes a curse?

Peter: I would love to make the joke that it can be a mixed blessing! But it works smoothly



Le Méridien Hamburg

© Christian Kretschmar

I imagine relaxing and getting inspired in the loneliness of the woods

and harmoniously and it is not boring, because we allow ourselves the freedom to have individual interests as well.

Corinna: I couldn't imagine anything better!

What moves you in your work and private life?

Peter: We both love our job, and our profession is our hobby. Therefore, there is no question about how to drive ourselves forward, but maybe rather a question of when to stop. **BO**

Text by **UNA MEISTERE**
Publicity photos, by **AINĀRS ĒRGLIS**
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THE MOST SUMMER-FRIENDLY EUROPEAN CITIES

It's +30°C and the cobblestones are reflecting the scorching heat of the sun. You feel as if you are walking on top of a frying pan. Time to seek cover in the shade for a while. Undeniably, one criterion for defining a city's quality of life is its suitability to summer conditions. Where can people go to seek relief from the sweltering heat and recharge their batteries? How many parks and green zones does a particular city have? How many fountains (including drinking water fountains)? How many bodies of water – like beaches and outdoor swimming pools – are there for taking a refreshing plunge? How bicycle-friendly is the place that you are visiting? How active is its outdoor cultural life? How much roof-top living is there and how many shaded courtyards and cafés are accessible? *Baltic Outlook* is nominating its top four summer-friendly European cities.

© Zürich Tourismus

ZURICH

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If a day goes by without a summer swim in Zurich, consider that it hasn't been a good one. At any rate, there aren't many cities in Europe with such a refined and advanced swimming culture as in Zurich.

Lake Zurich, the Limmat River and untold numbers of outdoor pools become focal points of Zurich's city life in the summer. Zurich residents even have a special name for these swim spots – Badis. It's not uncommon even for respected bankers to hurry off at lunchtime for a plunge into a nearby body of refreshing water. Moreover, in the evening, some of the most popular Badis transform into Badi-Bars, with activities continuing well after sunset. The oldest Badi and the only one with a sandy beach (250 m) is *Mythenquai*, which opened its doors in 1922. One of the architectonically most beautiful is *Frauenbad*. Opened in 1837, it was later rebuilt in the Art Nouveau style and from its very beginnings has catered exclusively to women. The *Utoquai* wooden swimming palace on the banks of Lake Zurich, for its part, is more than 120 years old.

In a symbolic manner, Europe's largest art event this summer, the *Manifesta 11* travelling biennial (June 11 – September 18) has found its swimming spot in Zurich for 2016. A floating pavilion has been specially built for the event in Lake Zurich, serving simultaneously as an exhibition space, a venue for art projects and a functioning swimming pool. German artist Christian Jankowski is the curator, while this year's slogan is: *What People Do For Money* – quite appropriate in a land of luxury and secure safes, so to speak.

Art will be everywhere in Zurich during the hundred days of the biennial, with *Manifesta 11* events taking place at the Migros Museum of Contemporary Art, the Kunsthalle Zürich, the former *Löwenbräu-*

Unterer Letten river bath



Seebad Enge



Seebad Enge



Cabaret Voltaire



Rendering of Pavillon of Reflections

© Zürich Tourismus



Areal brewery complex and the cradle of Dadaism, the Cabaret Voltaire.

Zurich's urban Badis are just as popular as the lake and river swim spots, with the former concentrated mainly in the city's Wild West, or fashionable Kranz 5 district. *Frau Gerold's Garden*, also wittily called "an urban Garden of Eden", is a must-visit destination. The atmosphere is a cross between a beer garden and a beachside bar, but instead of a beach, there are railway tracks. The little tables are placed right above on a top-floor terrace made of planks. The midday sun bakes you directly overhead, while at your feet, an uninterrupted flow of train wheels races by, which in time comes to remind you of the breaking of waves.

Zurich is as friendly to bicycles as it is to water activities. Two thirds of the city's residents own their own bicycle and this is indisputably the most comfortable way of getting around. Marked cycling paths can be found almost throughout the city, and it is worth using a special bicycle route planner, which can be found at stadt-zuerich.ch/routenplaner. Throughout the year, one can hire a bike for free opposite the National Museum of Zurich or by the Postbrücke bridge. The only thing required of you is an ID document and CHF 20 as a deposit. This will be returned to you once you have brought the bike back to any point of hire. However, if you want to keep a bicycle overnight, then you will have to pay CHF 10.

Small ships are an integral part of the city's transport and simultaneously a good way of seeing Zurich from a different vantage point. You just have to select the most suitable route. Cruises that last 1.5, three, four or even seven hours can be taken in the vastness of Lake Zurich (zsg.ch).

- Swimming spots:** more than 40 (including lakeside, riverside and outdoor pools)
- Average summer temperature:** +19°C
- Total length of bicycle paths:** 340 km
- Water fountains:** 1,224 – all with crystal-clear drinking water
- Forests:** 26.5% of the city's territory
- Must-visit lakeside terrace restaurant:** QUAI 61
- Most notable rooftop swimming pool – B2** boutique hotel spa
- Frau Gerold's Garden –** Frau Gerold's Garden
- Most hedonistic terrace bar – Eden au Lac's Sky Bar**

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A mild Mediterranean climate, lots of sunshine, beaches, mountains, status as Catalonia's gastronomic capital, a carefree atmosphere and complete tolerance towards everything and everyone – Barcelona is an almost ideal summer holiday destination.

National Geographic magazine has named Barcelona as “the best beach city” in the world, though up until 1992, when the city hosted the Summer Olympic Games and experienced substantial gentrification, few people had even dreamt about the joys of the beaches on the city's coast. Before the Olympics, the beaches were industrial territory, with all of the consequences that this entailed. Now Barcelona boasts seven fine beaches, all of them artificially created with sand dug up from the depths of the sea, while the palms on their promenades were imported from Malaga.

The most popular and lively city beach is *Platja de Bogatell*. It can be found on the site of a former fishing village. Actually, fishermen haven't gone out to sea from Barcelona for ages, but there are now fashionable restaurants where the beach shacks or *xiringuitos* used to be. A number of artworks bask among the holidaymakers on the beach at *Platja de Bogatell*, including a 50-metre-long goldfish created by architect Frank Gehry and a seemingly

Municipal beaches: 7

Total length of beaches: 4.5 km

Beach season: from May to September

Average summer temperature: +25° to +31°C

Total public green space: 1,100 ha

Parks: 68 (10% of the city's territory)

Most notable hotel rooftop swimming pool: *W Hotel*

Trendiest summer drink: Vermouth (yes, vermouth is once again experiencing a revival in popularity)

Yacht clubs: 5

© Design hotels



Grand Hotel Central

haphazardly piled 10-metre-high steel cube tower by German artist Rebecca Horn. Named *L'Estel Ferit*, the tower is fondly referred to by locals as *The Cubes*.

The calmest sea is at the 600-metre-long *Platja de Bogatell*, where the average age of the beachgoers is the highest on the Barcelona beach scene – 36 years. But the newest and consequently the least frequented is the 375-metre-long *Platja de Llevant*, which was created by clearing away the concrete blocks that lined its shores.

Along with leisurely sun tanning, Barcelona's beaches also offer all types of water adrenaline-rush activities, including flyboarding, or jumping with a hoverboard that throws you 12 metres into the air above Barcelona's waters. One can also try out a cruise along the city's

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Barcelona is a favoured destination for yachtsmen and stands out from other cities due to the fact that its yacht harbours can shelter the world's largest super yachts. If you don't own one yet, then you can skip a hotel and diversify your Barcelona accommodation by spending a night on a yacht. You'll get an authentic maritime experience at the *B&Bs* that have been set up in various yachts docked in the harbours.

Barcelona is also home to one of the most breathtaking public open-air swimming pools in terms of views. Built in 1929, it is located on Montjuïc, a hill that gained its fame during the 1992 Olympic Games, when the diving and water polo competitions took place here. The slopes of Montjuïc host the largest park in Spain (more than 500 acres).

Right up until 2011, Barcelona was a city where you were also allowed to walk around naked. It even had its own *nude legend* – an old grey-haired man whose classic summer suit was innumerable tattoos, sandals, a little hat and... a gigantic penis. However, as a result of political bunfights, the city adopted a by-law to restrict nudity. Namely, one is no longer allowed to wander the streets nude, semi-clad or in bathing costumes in summer. The fine for breaching the *nude law* can even reach 500 euros.

The most popular meeting place in the city during the heat of the summer is *La Font de Canaletes* – a drinking fountain on La Rambla. Its history extends over centuries, but today it is famous for two reasons. One is sentimentally romantic – a local legend states that if you drink the fountain's water, you'll definitely return to Barcelona. The second embodies going wild, bearing in mind that the fans of Barcelona's most popular football team, *FC Barcelona*, go there specifically to celebrate their victories.

Countless rooftop bars (often together with swimming pools) are typical of Barcelona's summer life, with the city being a record-holder in terms of their number. The most magnificent bar/pool is located on the roof of the 473-room giant *W Hotel*. The 26-storey glass tower, designed by Catalan architect Ricardo Bofill (he was also the designer of Barcelona's airport), which opened its doors in 2009, reminds one of a full sail and is considered to be one of the city's new symbols. The hotel is located at the southern end of *Platja de Barceloneta*.

There are only two drawbacks for a complete happy summer holiday in Barcelona. Its public bicycle hire system *Bicing*, recognised as one of the most outstanding in the world, is still only accessible to the locals. And perhaps only Rio de Janeiro can rival Barcelona in the ingenuity of its pickpockets. Therefore, the most important thing that you shouldn't forget during your overall euphoria is – watch your bag!



Vienna is a city that offers people every opportunity to spend as much of the summer as possible in a bathing suit. It could easily be called Europe's capital of urban beaches. Sunbathing in Vienna is particularly spectacular, because you are surrounded on all sides by some of the world's greatest art.

Vienna's municipal government came up with a plan in the 1960s to transform the venerable Austrian capital into a "city of baths". Every neighbourhood would have its own swimming pool. The 1970s oil and financial crises forced those plans to be scaled back, but nonetheless there are many pools that can be visited in Vienna. You can pick from a pool with a view (Döblinger Pool, Schafberg Pool, Krapfenwald Pool) or a 30-metre pool on a barge anchored in the Danube (Badeschiff), a 1920s-style pool (Neuwaldegger Pool) or thermal baths (Therme Wien). Vienna also has one of the largest pool complexes in Europe – Stadium Pool, with 150,000 square metres of swimming space. Another summer ritual is taking a dip in the Danube. The water at officially sanctioned swimming places is clean and refreshing, and there's an Internet service that gives you details on water quality and temperature even in the most out-of-the-way places.

The beach boom in Vienna dates back to the so-called "Red Vienna" period (1918-1934); once

the Hapsburg monarchy and Austro-Hungarian Empire came to an end, power went to the Social Democrats. In the interests of the proletariat, many a swimming place came into being. The most legendary is Gänsehäufel, or "Pile of Geese", the creation of eccentric nudist Florian Brendl. According to legend, Brendl rented the islet with the alleged intention of planting willows for profit. However, his real purpose for growing the trees was to hide his nudist community. The island was officially opened in 1907. It suffered severe damage during the Second World War but was later restored. Nowadays, Gänsehäufel has three natural beaches as well as pools and 266 showers. It's among the largest swimming-places in Europe... and in honour of its founder, it still has a separate nudist section.

Another popular place to relax is Danube Island. It's 21 kilometres long and easily reached by metro on the U1 line. If you count indoor pools, then Vienna has more than 30 places to swim.

Summer in Vienna wouldn't be complete without a picnic. A classic picnic could be in the Prater. This famous park has many a meadow to beckon the romantically inclined. If you're in the city centre, then you could also try Sigmund-Freud-Park, between the University and the Votive Church. It offers 100 sunbathing chairs free of charge in the summertime, from



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First and Second Districts meet, on the Danube Canal. The restaurant is inside a glass building that doubles as the Wien-City ferry terminal, and its architecture recalls a sailing vessel. You can pass a lazy afternoon there or come before sundown, when the setting sun colours the Danube and the majestic panorama of Vienna in the distance.

Even in the summer, Vienna does not lose her imperial stance. You can be a hedonist whilst sunbathing, but this is a city of art – the Museum Quarter is the eighth largest cultural space in the world, taking up 60,000 square metres. The space itself, with gigantic blue easy chairs, is an oasis for relaxation in the very heart of the city. Summer also means *Summer in the MQ*, a special programme of visual art and concerts meant exactly for a truly Viennese summer.

There are also two open-air movie theatres in Vienna – *Cinema under the Stars* and the *Volxkino* travelling cinema. And if you're in the Austrian capital this summer, make sure to catch *ImpulsTanz*, one of the biggest and most important dance festivals in Europe. This year, it will take place from July 14 to August 14.

Total urban green area: 41,487 ha or 120 "green" square metres for each of the city's 1.7 million inhabitants
Total area covered by water: 1,913 ha
Average summer temperature: +33°C
Total length of bicycle paths: 1,300 km
Citybike rental points: 121
Total length of urban beaches: 50 km
Most notable outdoor pool: The Badeschiff
Most popular beach: Danube Island
Trendiest terrace restaurant: *Motto am Fluss*
Must-visit roof bar: *Dachboden* bar and lounge (25 Hours Hotel Vienna)
Drinking fountains: over 900
Monumental and memorial fountains: 54



Motto am Fluss

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MUNICH

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English Garden



Restaurant Brenner Grill

Munich may be located almost 600 km from the Mediterranean Sea, but during the summer, sitting at a terrace café on Maximilianstraße, drinking an *Aperol Spritz* and watching the *BMW* cabriolets driving by, the feeling of a resort city springs up on its own. What's more, the healthy suntans of the city's residents belie Munich's considerable distance from the sea. There's good reason why Munich is known as Italy's northernmost city – Münchners love the sun, and it's hard to imagine a metropolis more open to enjoying the summer.

Even though Munich isn't Sydney, one often comes across athletic people in its centre, sometimes wearing wetsuits and with surfboards in their hands. Munich is much more than the *Oktoberfest*, countless beer gardens and the home of *BMW*. It's also the only European metropolis where you can surf almost right in the centre of the city – right next to the *Haus der Kunst* art museum, at that.

However, as opposed to the ocean, Munich's legendary 12-metre-wide *Eisbachwelle Wave*, just like the 2-kilometre-long Eisbach River itself, was artificially created. People have been surfing there since the 1970s, although this activity was considered illegal right up until 2010 and at one moment, in light of a string of accidents, the city even wanted to get rid of the wave. *Eisbachwelle* is meant only for experienced surfers, whereas the nearby *Floßlande* (50 cm) is fine for beginners.

The Eisbach River is located in the *Englischer Garten* or English Garden, also



Parks: 16% of the city's territory
Beer gardens: 180
Total length of bicycle paths: more than 200 km
Water fountains: 500
Open air swimming pools: 8
Open air cinemas: 5
Average summer temperature: +24°C
Municipal beaches: 4
Urban Naked Zones for nude sunbathing in the city's parks: 6
Most notable rooftop terrace: *Blue Spa Terrace* at the *Hotel Bayerischer Hof*
Most popular terrace restaurant: *Brenner Grill*
Drink of choice: *Aperol Spritz* (and beer, of course)

known as "the lungs of the city". Occupying 4.17 square kilometres, it is one of the largest city parks in the world. With the Isar River flowing past on one side, the *Englischer Garten* is perhaps the best place to get lost during the summer in Munich. Münchners themselves often escape there, not just on weekends, but also during lunch breaks during the working week. Many go to sun themselves and catch a quick tan, or just to read a good book on the spacious lawns. The park has 78 kilometres of the most diverse paths winding through it for both runners and walkers.

Since 2014, Munich's city centre has had six official zones where nude sunbathing is officially permitted, although this revealing activity had already been taking place undisturbed in many places since the 1960s. In this sense, the nudist *Schönfeldwiese* or "Beautiful Meadow" in the southern part of the *Englischer Garten* is legendary.

Much of Munich's beach life – in all of its possible variations, takes place all along the banks of the Isar River, which becomes one big beach during the summer. You'll also find many outdoor public swimming pools, but those

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Isar Strand in Munich

Photo by Sigi Mueller

who follow a green lifestyle are best off heading to *Naturbad Maria Einsiedel*. The water in this pool flows from the Isar Canal, is naturally clean and is free of chlorine and other cleansing chemicals.

Munich is a record-holder in terms of its fountains, of which there are 500! These are of varying sizes and with different stories about them. Many are dedicated to famous city residents or critical episodes in Munich's history. On Neuhauser Straße, for example, you'll find a fountain commemorating composer Richard Strauss, who was born in Munich in 1864. Plus, this is no ordinary fountain. A stylised vessel decorates the top of the six-metre-high column, with water pouring over the sides and the spray swirling about as determined by the wind. The column itself is decorated with images from Strauss' opera *Salome*.

The little *Fischbrunnen* or "Fish Fountain" in a corner of the Marienplatz square is also woven in legend. A fish market was once located there, and traders dunked their fish in the cold waters of the fountain. Later on, young butchers were initiated into their profession there, and there was even a belief that the waters of the fountain had the power to bring wealth. In other words, if you wash your money purse there on Ash Wednesday, then it will never be empty. The city mayor also carefully maintains this tradition, ensuring that the city's treasury is always full of money. And, bearing in mind Munich's prosperous state of affairs, you can't deny that the legend is powerful!

Munich is also one of the friendliest German cities for cyclists, with bicycles forming 17 per cent of the city's traffic. In this sense, Munich surpasses even Berlin, allowing itself to be honoured with the title of Germany's bicycle capital. Statistics reveal that 80% of Munich's residents have their own bicycle.

As can be expected in this citadel of prosperity, summer in Munich also provides rooftop terraces for all occasions. Weary shoppers, for example, can take a breather on the roof of the *Karstadt/Oberpollinger* department store. And those who yearn to see the famous city panorama with the peaks of the Alps in the background in a trendy atmosphere should reserve a table in good time for the *Meadows Bar* terrace at what is currently the most fashionable Munich nightspot – *The Flushing Meadows Hotel & Bar*. **BO**



Surfing on the Eisbach

Photo by Sigi Mueller



The Flushing Meadows Hotel & Bar

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ROAD TRIP IN CROATIA

Text by **LIENE PĀLĒNA**
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Is there a foolproof recipe for the perfect vacation? Yes – two best friends, a rented car, a 1500-kilometre journey along the Adriatic coast and countless beaches!

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WAY

Croatia is a destination that you should definitely put on your list of must-visits. This especially applies to one of its most popular regions, Dalmatia, which is bathed by the turquoise blue waters of the Adriatic Sea. These are warm enough to swim in even up until the end of September. We picked a picturesque itinerary with four seaside towns: *airBaltic*'s destination Rijeka; Zadar, a city with the most beautiful sunsets on the planet; Split, the largest city on the Croatian coast; and Pula, a port bearing a rich history. Seven days, two best friends, a rental car, delicious seafood for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and a fresh adventure at every step – that's the summary of our Croatian experience.



The coastal town of Rijeka has numerous beautiful beaches



Rijeka's well-to-do come to cool off in Opatij

© Hrvoje Serdar

Once the owner of a small place sees our desperation, he opens his doors just for us



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Everyone's bucket list should include eating oysters in Croatia



© Damir Fabijanić

Seafood is an important part of the Croatian culinary world

Seafood for breakfast and dinner

We arrive in Rijeka as the sun sets. The city's small airport greets us with a scene that could be out of a movie – people up on the balcony wave at us. They've gotten nice tans during their vacations and are waiting for the plane back to Riga. It seems that they've not only lost their Baltic pallor – they've also left behind their northern European reserve. Warmed by the friendliness at the airport, we obtain our rental car there and set off on a seven-day journey.

Rijeka is not a very large city and we're hungry after the flight, so we decide to eat even before we look for our lodgings. Our decision to spend our vacation along a beautiful coastline lessens the difficulties of deciding what to have for dinner. We want seafood, and we are in luck! Practically the first restaurant we come across, by sheer accident, turns out to be one that both locals and tourists hold in high esteem. We later realise that *Konoba Feral* (Ul. Matije Gupca 5B; konoba-feral.com) had already been suggested to us by other travellers who have visited Croatia. It's been recognised as one of the best fish restaurants in Rijeka by users of *TripAdvisor*. And how could it not be, when the owner himself occasionally serenades the diners with his guitar. Unfortunately, we don't hear him sing that evening, but the fabulous seafood risotto makes up for the lack of musical entertainment. This marvellous first experience with Croatian seafood inspires the remainder of our diet. For seven days, our menu will consist primarily of pasta with seafood, fish soups, shrimp, mussels and (for a more international flavour) seafood pizza.

Determined to diversify our acquaintance with Croatia, we decide to spend each night in a different place. We pass our first night at the *Botel Marina* (Riva 1; botel-marina.com), which is actually a ship located alongside Adamić Pier in the centre of Rijeka. It's only a few minutes' walking distance from the Korzo promenade, the bus and train stations, the famous marketplace, theatres, cinemas, museums and galleries. Spending the night aboard the *Botel Marina* is indeed like being at sea. Not only do you hear fish leaping, but you must also accustom yourself to the humid heat, with only a little porthole in the place of a window.

Our last night in Croatia is also unforgettable. We spend it in the suburb of Lovran, about 20 km from the city centre. Like the entire Adriatic seaboard, Lovran stands out with wonderful beaches. Arriving after nightfall, we are sorely disappointed to discover that all of the restaurants have closed. However, Croatians are a very hospitable people. Once the owner of a small place sees our desperation, he opens his doors just for us and cooks up yet another delightful seafood risotto.

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The walls of Zadar's charming Old Town are surrounded by small harbours



Spectacular poppy fields can be seen along the Dalmatian coast



Croatians and their fig trees – a delicious obsession

The most beautiful sunset in the world

Since one of the goals of our trip is to get to know the wondrous beaches, we don't spend much time in Rijeka. Our next task is to find and purchase some beach footwear. Anybody embarking on a journey to the Adriatic needs beach sandals or slippers. Everybody along the coast has them – you really don't want to step on a sea urchin when barefoot.

We find what we need in the second-oldest town in Croatia, Zadar (the oldest is Nin, called the King's City; it was founded more than three millennia ago). Zadar has long been a cultural centre for both Dalmatia and the country. We buy our beachwear from a local merchant and head for nearby Bibinje Beach. The water is warm, but empty beachside chairs hint that the tourist season is coming to an end (our trip takes place in early September).

The timing of our visit would be perfect for people who prefer emptier beaches, and the local merchants confirm that. Zadar itself, however, can't complain about a dearth of tourists. The restaurants are packed, their proprietors ready to find ingenious ways to draw crowds. One has a pianist playing popular romantic tunes, and another offers free fig wine to those waiting for a table. Fig wine, by the way, is a must-have souvenir best obtained from the local women at Krka National Park.

Zadar offers proof that nature is the greatest artist and man is an artist if he knows how to make use of it. In 1964, Alfred Hitchcock watched the setting sun illuminate the Roman and medieval architecture from his hotel room window on the town's promenade. "Zadar has the most beautiful sunset in the world, more beautiful than the one in Key West, in Florida, applauded at every evening," he subsequently said.

Seeing the sun set from a vantage point close to Hitchcock's, one almost wants to genuflect to the power of nature. Local architect Nikola Bašić probably had the same feelings when she created the *Sun Organ* and *Greetings to the Sun* on the promenade. The first has become a symbol of Zadar. Every day, hundreds of people gather to listen to the different levels of this architectural marvel make music, the sounds of the waves producing meditative melodies. *Greetings to the Sun*, for its part, is built from large solar panels. At night, the installation offers a psychedelic light show.

Split: the perfect break

On our way to Split, the main city in Dalmatia, we are able to take in one of the most vibrant nature sites in Croatia – Krka National Park, which boasts some impressive waterfalls. The largest are Roški slap and Skradinski buk. These are places where tourists take a dip and snap many a picture against the dramatic backgrounds of the falls. There are throngs of visitors,



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Diocletian's Palace is one of the most imposing Roman ruins in existence



Breathtaking Adriatic coast near Split



Baltic Outlook author Liene Pālēna tries a Jet Ski for the first time in her life

so do be careful with your belongings. We witness an unpleasant travellers' mishap when some nature-lovers return from their swim to find that they have lost everything, including the keys to their rental car.

If you have enough time, then I highly recommend a visit to Krka Monastery. It's located on a small island and is still in operation – hens and monks wander the islet as if it were a forgotten corner of Paradise.

My friends and I have more of a sketch than a firm plan of what to do when visiting Croatia, leaving us a couple of "happy days," as we call them – days when we can go wherever we want on a whim. Indeed, not planning in detail turns out to be a good plan. That's how we end up in Split, arriving in the late evening with the thermometer still at +29°C. The water is as warm as mother's milk, and the city possesses a unique charm.

The water is as warm as mother's milk, and the city possesses a unique charm

Split is definitely a place that I want to return to. The largest city on the Adriatic (and the second-largest city in the country), it is bursting with energy even on what might seem to be a lazy afternoon. At the same time, it has a carefree attitude. Its ancient heritage gets along quite well with modernity, and whenever you want to escape from the urban scene, you are less than a quarter hour from a beach embraced by picturesque slopes.

The ruins of Diocletian's palace make a deep impression on me. They are a UNESCO World Heritage Site that has become one of the prime tourist attractions in Croatia. The city itself was born along with the palace, and the complex is still very much alive, with innumerable restaurants, bars and shops within its walls.

We spend our first evening in Split at one of its oldest cafés, *LVXOR* (Ulica Kraj Svetog Ivana 11). The apple strudel and coffee are truly mouth-watering, though the prices are higher than elsewhere. However, people don't really go there for the coffee or strudel – the main attraction is the café's fantastic setting. Peristil Square offers scenery that lets you travel back in time across seventeen centuries. Beginning at eight in the evening there's music, too. Grab a pillow and make yourself comfortable on the steps. The offerings are diverse, from *Beatles* hits to Italian romances. Whenever a danceable tune is played, people get up and dance. Don't be surprised if you get asked to dance as well. That's how we meet Igor, who seems like an archetypal Croatian to us. He is

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Pula's most famous and imposing sight is this 1st-century amphitheatre



Pula's beach is known as a paradise for diving enthusiasts



Underwater beauty



Adriatic blue

loud, perhaps a bit crafty, and appears to know practically everybody. Igor recommends some fish restaurants and beaches that we are able to explore the next day.

Split's beaches, where we spend much of our time, are even more picturesque and crowded than the other Adriatic beaches that we have visited, as the climate in Split is warmer. Despite the crowds, I try a *Jet Ski* for the first time in my life, loving the salty spray and burst of speed.

Split is not a place for bargaining. If you've been to a Turkish market and learned that art, it probably won't work in Croatia. The Croats know that summer is tourist time, and they're determined to take full advantage of the business. I find a hat that I like (and that unfortunately only one merchant is selling) and spend an hour or so trying to talk the silver-haired seller's price down. I fail despite using all the tricks in my book, including walking away and coming back. He calls me a "model" and a "princess," but the 25 euros stay 25 euros, which is a lot compared to the other hats. Thus I am out 25 euros, but now I have a nice hat. I've only worn it twice, but I retain fond memories of the sea of compliments the hat-seller paid me.

Exploring real wonders

Driving more than 300 kilometres along the coast of Croatia, we reach our final destination before returning home – Pula, a port city known for its massive amphitheatre, among the largest and oldest in the world. To be precise, it's the sixth largest and was once able to accommodate 20,000 spectators. Though only part of the seating survives, the amphitheatre is still used as a concert venue in the summertime – both Elton John and Luciano Pavarotti have performed here. It's also the venue of the world famous Pula Film Festival. We spend a lot of time there, wandering around and simply relaxing with the books we've brought with us. Later we head for the beach, which is known as a paradise for diving enthusiasts.

Pula confirms what we have learned on our road trip. Croatia's 1800-km coastline offers great diversity, the beautiful blue waters of the Adriatic are mesmerising and the beaches are surprisingly immaculate and alluring. We also realise that one visit is not enough. There's so much that we don't get to see, including fabled Dubrovnik (where *Game of Thrones* was filmed), the sandy beaches of the islands, and... and... and... My recommendation, then, is to find more than seven days for your road trip. The Croatian coast is magical and unforgettable! **BO**

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GARDENS TO VISIT

Text by **AGRA LIEĖ**
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RONALD VAN DER HILST

Looking for a great escape?
Dutch-born landscape architect,
artist and designer Ronald van der
Hilst recommends four beautiful
gardens that are significant in the
history of gardening.



JARDIN DES PLANTES, Paris, France



Three garden ideas to borrow from France

1/ The cornerstone of French gardening is symmetry and the imposition of order on Nature. Flowerbeds are created in geometric shapes and laid out in symmetrical patterns. Fountains and cascades are also used to animate such gardens.

2/ To soften the striving for perfectionism, public gardens also tend to be full of surprises such as small



The *Jardin des Plantes* (Garden of Plants) is France's main botanical garden and is run by the French National Museum of Natural History. It covers 24 hectares and sits on the Left Bank of the Seine, in Paris' 5th arrondissement. Although it was founded back in 1626, the garden gained wider importance when famous French naturalist Georges-Louis Leclerc became its curator in the 18th century. Under his sound supervision, the territory was greatly expanded. Leclerc added the Labyrinth, which has reminded an integral part of the green space to this day.

In 1792, the Royal Menagerie was moved to the garden from Versailles. It is the second oldest zoological garden in the world and takes up about one third of the garden. While it doesn't host very large animals such as elephants, it does house many rare medium-sized and smaller mammals as well as reptiles and birds. Within the first three decades of the 19th century, it grew to have the largest exotic animal collection in Europe.

The grounds of the garden include museums of mineralogy, palaeontology and entomology. A botanical school on the

grounds exchanges seeds to maintain the garden's biodiversity. The Alpine garden section contains 3,000 plant species from all over the world, while specialised sections such as the large Art Deco winter garden and Mexican and Australian hothouses display plants not native to France. The Rose Garden, which came into existence in 1990, has hundreds of species of both roses and rose trees. Every year, gardeners get together and share their knowledge in meetings held from April to October. These meetings are open to all who wish to gain more knowledge about planting and gardens.

fountains and intimate, reclusive spaces.

3/ Use Mediterranean plants such as iris, lavender and acanthus mollis (bear's breeches) to recreate the atmosphere of a French garden. Bear's breeches are an especially common sight when travelling in the Mediterranean area. The stylish plants sit equally well in both highly structured and more exotic, jungle-style gardens.

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KEW GARDENS, London, United Kingdom



Three garden ideas to borrow from the United Kingdom

1/ While the Kew Gardens are so large as to almost defy comprehension, separate sections reflect typical British contemporary gardening. British cottage gardens are small and compact, full and brimming with flowering plants. Pathways through plants replace lawns, and climbing roses and wisterias will usually be in sight.

2/ British gardening is not low-maintenance. It will appear easy and informal, but in fact, a lot of effort will have to be put in to make sure that the garden always blooms.

3/ Think poppies, cornflowers, delphiniums, lavender and erigeron daisies. And don't forget the spring bulbs, which will give you joy when Nature is just waking up from her winter slumber.

The origins of Kew Gardens can be traced to the merging of the royal estates of Richmond and Kew in 1772. In 1840, the gardens were extended considerably.

The Palm House, which was built between 1844 and 1848, is the world's most important surviving Victorian glass and iron structure – its glass panes were all hand-blown – while the Temperate House, which is twice as large as the Palm House, is now the largest Victorian glass house in existence.

Kew Gardens have a lot to offer to visitors, including an 18-metre-long treetop walkway, the stunning Sackler Crossing pedestrian bridge of granite and bronze, and numerous plant houses. The Alpine house is for plants that usually grow above the treeline. The Princess of Wales Conservatory contains ten computer-controlled microclimatic zones for large numbers of orchids, water lilies, cacti, carnivorous plants and other flora. The Temperate House accommodates Kew's expanding collection of hardy and temperate plants. There is also a Waterlily House, a Rose Garden and much more to see.



Kew Gardens, located in the London borough of Richmond upon Thames, were founded in 1840 and house the world's largest selection of living plants – over 30,000 different species. The herbarium is also one of the largest in the world, holding over 7 million preserved plants. An extensive library contains more than 750,000 volumes, and the illustrations collection has more than 175,000 prints and drawings of plants. In 2003, Kew Gardens were added to UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites.

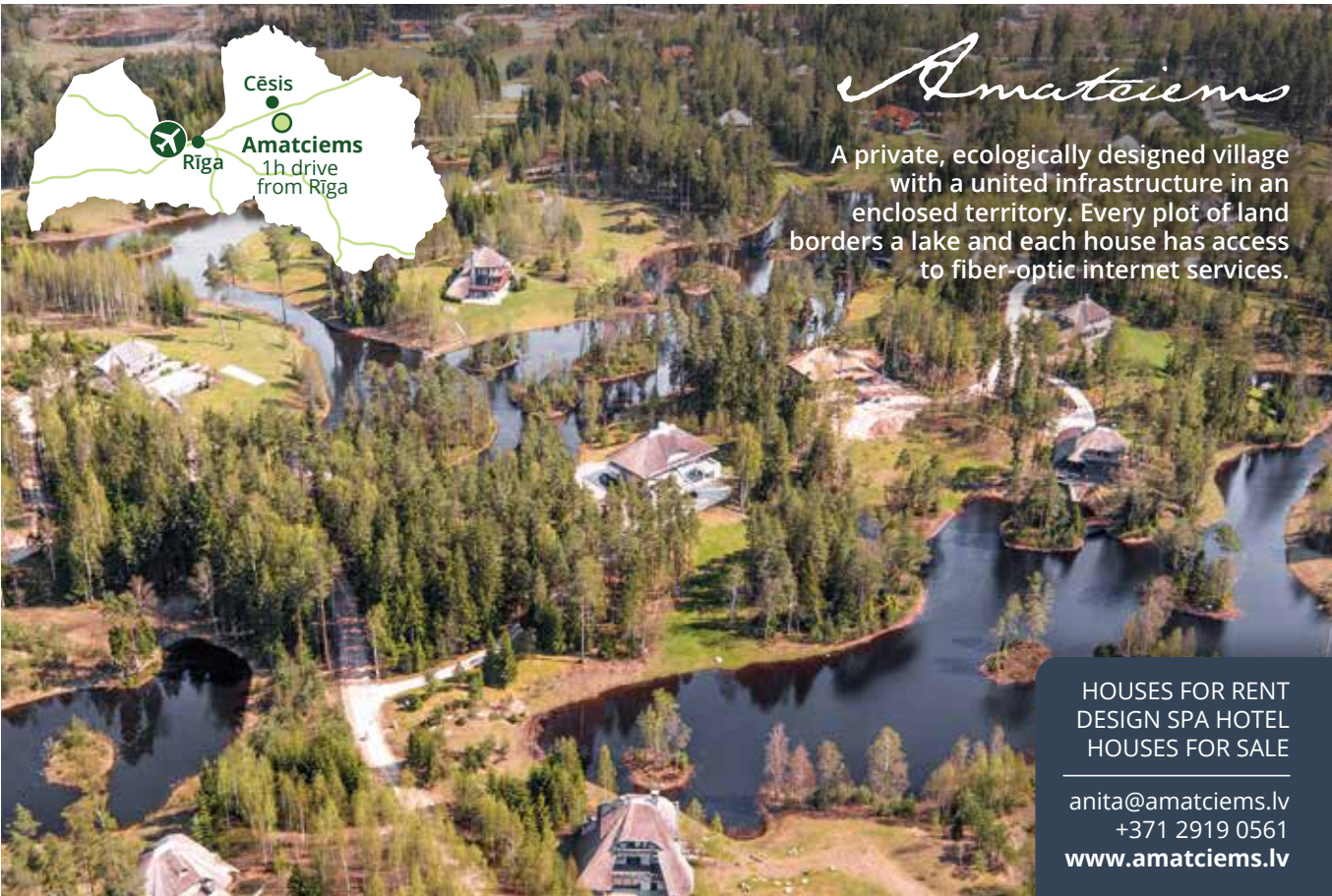


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ORTO BOTANICO, Padua, Italy



The *Orto Botanico di Padova* (Botanical Garden, Padua) is located in the northeastern part of Italy. It was founded in 1545 by the Venetian Republic, and it is the world's oldest academic botanical garden to remain in its original location. The garden is affiliated with the University of Padua, covers around 22,000 square metres of land and has striking historical elements.

Like so many now world-famous public gardens, the *Orto Botanico* was initially

A circular wall was built to protect the garden from frequent night thefts

devoted to the growth of medicinal plants. These were used in the production of natural remedies and were also grown to help students distinguish genuine medicinal plants from mere lookalikes. A circular wall was built to protect the garden from frequent night thefts, as the continuing addition of plants from all over the world was drawing increased attention to its natural riches.

Padua became a leader in the introduction and study of exotic plants. Eventually,

fountains, laboratories, greenhouses, three sundials, a library, a botanic theatre and a herbarium were added to the premises. The garden's management strives to preserve rare plant species. In 1997, the grounds were listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

At the centre of the garden, a pool of water for the aquatic plants is fed by a continuous jet of hot water that comes from 300 metres below the ground. Most of the garden's 6,000 plant species are located outdoors, as there are very few greenhouses. The collection is concentrated in the four largest flowerbeds. The garden still houses numerous medicinal plants, which are all labelled with their scientific names and principal therapeutic properties. Recently, a poisonous plant collection was set up in the medicinal plants section, since many of these can also be used to treat illnesses.

Other collections include insectivorous plants, which live in nitrogen-poor soils and must use the proteins of the insects that they capture to avoid nutritional deficiencies. Another section is devoted to the collection, preservation and study of plants in danger of extinction. In addition, there are plenty of orchids (in the greenhouses) as well as aquatic, Alpine, Mediterranean and succulent plants, to name a few. The latter live in a reconstructed desert habitat that can be viewed in the spring and summer.

Three garden ideas to borrow from Italy

1/ Traditional Italian gardens are green with few flowers. The plants are mainly evergreens that have been manicured into geometrical hedges or topiaries. Italian cypress, boxwood and juniper trees are commonly used to delineate different parts of a garden. Other green plants are massed within the borders of the geometric beds.
2/ There will always be pergolas with fragrant climbers such as jasmine, wisteria and roses. These are often under-planted with scented herbs such as rosemary and lavender.
3/ Daphne, holly, summer jasmine, bay tree, myrtle, fragrant olive, cotton lavender, star jasmine and laurustinus are just a few of the typical Italian garden plants that you should consider – and why not throw in some Roman garden urns and statues to complete the look!

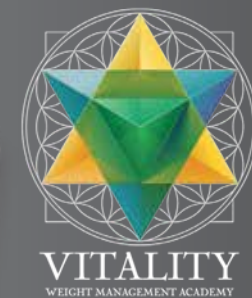
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NORRVIKEN, Bastad, Sweden



Three garden ideas to borrow from Sweden
1/ Swedish gardens are rather informal, taking inspiration mostly from Nature herself and adding a practical aspect. Such gardens will have fruit trees and strawberries. Sure, there will be some roses in the midst, too.
2/ Many Swedes own one-room wooden shacks with small gardens around them. Located in or near the cities,



Situated on the slope of Hallandsåsen in Skane County, the Norrviken Gardens overlook Laholmsbukten (the Bay of Laholm). The grounds consist of seven gardens set around the Villa Abelin, which is the main building. Norrviken is a place for silent contemplation as well as concerts, theatre performances, fairs and exhibitions, and it regularly hosts wedding celebrations.
Norrviken was founded by Rudolf Abelin, who came to Bastad in 1906 to create a “living garden museum”. He had already attempted to build a garden at the end of the 1800s near Norrköping, but a new railway line was to be built right over it, making him seek a new place for materialising his vision.

Abelin planted fruit orchards partly for the purpose of sustaining the further development of the garden. By 1922, there were 5,000 trees, including 200 different varieties of pear and apple trees, as well as a significant number of hazelnut trees. During the Second World War, the garden took a significant blow and some of Abelin’s projects were not implemented. He had planned for a chapel and a forest cemetery, which were not built. The water garden became the last of Abelin’s projects in Norrviken. Inspired by Italian Renaissance gardens, he made it in such way that the surrounding natural environment could take care of the water supply for the garden plants.

Norrviken is a place for silent contemplation as well as concerts and theatre performances

After a lengthy period of decline, the garden has lately begun to look again like its former glorious self. It was deemed to be the most beautiful public garden in Sweden in 2006 and the second most beautiful in Europe that same year.
There are many hydrangeas in the water garden, and rhododendrons grow in the part of the garden that is called *Kungen’s ravin* (King’s Ravine). About 30,000 boxwood hedges grow in the Renaissance Garden.

these are places that Swedes love and nurture and prefer over public spaces. However, during the summer, public gardens and parks are also packed full of visitors.
3/ Classical Swedish gardens have a *lusthus*, or pavilion, for hosting tea parties and providing a bit of shelter from the sun, wind and rain.

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- living room
- children’s room
- home office
- bedroom
- kitchen





Known predominantly for his antiques in six-figure-priced sports cars, Harris a.k.a. the Monkey is an accomplished journalist and no stranger to driving (quite well) in endurance races.

He has driven a wide variety of race cars and finished fourth at the 24 Hours of Nurburgring in 2010. This year, he is taking part in the revamped *Top Gear* show and plans to demonstrate his driving skills in the Blancpain Endurance Series Cup. The cars in these races include top brands like *Bentley*, *McLaren*, *Lamborghini*, *Mercedes-Benz*, *Ferrari*, *Audi* and *Jaguar* – a dream for any car enthusiast.

Harris is racing a *Bentley Continental GT3*, sharing his car with two other British racers. We met with Chris for a quick chat just before one of the series' races.



Chris Harris: “I want to have fun”

World-famous British motoring journalist and *YouTube* celebrity Chris Harris (his videos have had more than 27 million views) talks to us about – you guessed it – cars and racing!

“The car is fantastic,” said a smiling Harris after achieving one of the fastest qualifying times. “The *Continental GT* is not the perfect basis for a race car,” he added, “but the amount of work that *M-Sport* has done is astonishing. The car is stable and has good traction. I feel quite happy.”

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

Which is your favourite track?

Of course Nurburgring, and also Spa. These are the two best tracks, I think. Monza is very different and I like the challenge there as well. It is all about hitting your braking points, being accurate and trying not to punish yourself by overdriving the car. If you do that, the car punishes you until the end of the lap. You have to be really careful before the two big straights, otherwise you're in trouble and someone is going to overtake you.

Which is your favourite everyday car?

I do drive some everyday cars, but I'm not going to talk about really ordinary cars. If you gave me an *Audi RS6* and said, “This is your car for the year,” I'd be happy, because that is what *Audi* did. I have a *BMW M3* at the moment, which I really enjoy. My next car is the new *Porsche 911 Turbo*, the facelift one, which is a good everyday car, I guess.

What was your first car?

A *MINI*. It was my pride and joy. A 1.6-litre carburetted engine, racing seats, roll cage, you know. But someone stole it and wrecked it. I was mortified. I cried.

Which car should every petrolhead drive at least once?

Everyone should drive a rear-wheel-drive car with a front engine and not so much grip. Either a *Mazda MX-5* or – I don't know – something that moves around even at low speed, so they know what a chassis does. Because these days with modern electronics, all new drivers think that they can just whack their foot down and the computer



will take care of the rest. That is not a good thing. So everyone should have a go in a car that can move around.

Now back to the racing. What are your goals this year?

Most of all, I want to have fun. We are all

getting old, these are long weekends away from home, but it is a great privilege to race a *Bentley*. W.O. Bentley went to the same school as my grandfather and was there at the same time as my grandfather, so I feel there is a link between my family and *Bentley*. I am really pleased to do this. **BO**

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



Army Economic Store,
February 1943. View from
Valņu iela

III GALERIJA CENTRS

FASHION SHOPPING CENTRE
SINCE 1938

Audēju iela 16, Old Riga
Opening hours: 10:00-21:00
① galerijacentrs.lv

The site where the *GALERIJA CENTRS* is located has historically hosted active trade. From the 13th to the 16th century, a commercial port was located there on the banks of the Rīdzene River, which is now covered by the cobblestones of the Old Town. The shopping centre's own origins date back to the autumn of 1919, when the *Army Economic Store* was established to supply goods to Latvia's soldiers, who were still fighting to consolidate the country's newly won independence. Another goal was to help combat rampant speculation.

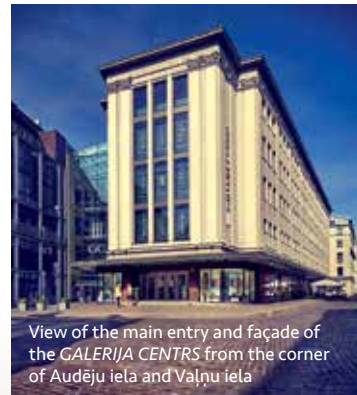
Following the cessation of hostilities in 1920, the store's popularity soared. Its turnover increased rapidly, and eventually it

GALERIJA CENTRS – a shopping palace

The *GALERIJA CENTRS* is the only shopping centre in Riga that boasts a tradition-rich history and a location in the very heart of the Latvian capital – the Old Town. For almost a century, this has been a place to indulge in the elegance and charm of the latest fashions. The *GALERIJA CENTRS* regularly hosts exhibitions and also houses a permanent photo display on its history.



Historic
grand
staircase



View of the main entry and façade of
the *GALERIJA CENTRS* from the corner
of Audēju iela and Valņu iela

outgrew its premises. Thus, in 1936, construction commenced on a new and larger building. Since that store's opening in 1938, the *GALERIJA CENTRS* – which has borne various other names over the past decades – has not just been frequented by residents of Riga, but has also become a shopping mecca for visitors from all over Latvia and other countries.



Portal of a former building
on Rīdzenes iela 15/17, dating
from 1902

GALERIJA CENTRS RĪDZENES IELA EXHIBITION PROGRAMME FOR 2016

May 11–29
Croatia From Above
Photo exhibition

May 30 – June 11
The Only Way – Love
Exhibition of paintings by
Ukrainian artist Tatjana
Gavrilenko

June 13–26
Kitty Mine
End-of-year exhibition
by students of Svetlana
Semjonova's Quilt
Sewing School

June 27 - July 17
Ethnography – Our Ancestors
Folk costume exhibition

August 1–14
Rendezvous in the Portal
Photo exhibition by
Maya Petrovska (Latvia) and
Roman Yakushin (Russia)

September 8–25
Survival Kit 8
International Contemporary
Art Festival

September 27 – October 23
Janis Streičs' Cinema Year:
Films, People, Era
80th anniversary exhibition
devoted to the beloved
Latvian film director

November 21 – December 3
Awaiting the Anniversary Year
Herman Braun Foundation
Photo exhibition

Most modern store in the Baltics

By 1940, the building housed the most extensive and modern department store in the Baltic States, with the first escalator in Riga, climate control, heated floors and many other innovations. In terms of contemporary architecture and fittings, the store ranked among the best in Europe. Even back then, visitors could avail themselves of beauty treatments in addition to everyday goods, and the upscale *Astoria* restaurant occupied the top floor. The store employed more than 800 people, for whose convenience a canteen, a dispensary, a sick bay and even a dental clinic had been set up. The store was so ahead of its

time that even in the 1950s, a Czech trade delegation, seeking an appropriate socialist equivalent to the main department store in Prague, travelled throughout the European part of the Soviet Union without finding anything better.

Shortages and queues

During the postwar Soviet era (1945-1991), large numbers of people from other parts of the USSR flowed into Latvia and Riga became an economic tourism destination. This situation led to discontent among the local population, which faced a shortage of goods that were being bought by visitors. Queues formed at the store's entrance early in the morning and lists of customers were even drawn up. Struggles to obtain coveted products almost descended into brawls. Even though people had money, there were not enough goods to go around. There were also restrictions – the cheapest products were sold in limited numbers, while more expensive items gathered dust on the shelves.

Development for the future

In 1997, *Linstow Centre Management* took over as operator and developer of the store. In 2006, after extensive reconstruction works, Rīdzenes iela became the unifying axis of both new and historic buildings, and the *GALERIJA CENTRS* became the first shopping gallery in the Baltics with a glass roof. A unique photo exhibition that presents events over a period of more than 75



Riga Central Department
Store. Women's hats and
perfume department, 1972



A view of Rīdzenes iela from the
third-floor passage, 2016



Pilaster capital with a caduceus, symbol
of Hermes, protector of merchants

years can be seen on the four flights of the original building's historic stairs. The exhibition features photographs from both private and public archives, starting from the laying of the building's foundation stone to the present day. The exhibition devotes particular attention to the building's architectural and interior elements. This gem of Riga's retail trade sector remains a significant historical landmark, and the fact that it is still open continues to delight numerous customers. **BO**

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 and Prime Minister Kārlis Ulmanis attends the foundation stone-laying ceremony on September 26.

1938

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

1940

The AES is renamed the *Riga Department Store*.

1941-91

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.

Galleria Riga.

Life gives you wings!



Publicity photos and by
EDMUNDS BRENCIS
(Picture Agency)

of the building, providing a broad selection of items. Here you'll find necessities for both daily life and celebrations.

At the *Galleria Riga* you can purchase items by such famous brands as *MAX&Co*, *Marella*, *iBlues*, *Stefanel*, *Ivo Nikkolo*, *Monton*, *Suitsupply*, *Springfield*, *Cortefiel*, *Women'secret*, *Reserved*, *Mohito*, *Elche*, *Loyd*, *Ecco* and many more.

In addition, a number of talented Latvian designers are also making their mark on the fashion scene. Thanks to their refined sense of style, good taste, lively imagination and high-quality craftsmanship, they have gained international recognition in a short period of time. The latest collections of clothing and accessories by some of Latvia's best designers are available at 8 rooms and other shops at the *Galleria Riga*.

With over 24,000 square metres (258,300 square feet) in gross leasable space, the centre also has one of the largest restaurant roof terraces in the Baltic States, from which visitors are treated to a 360-degree panorama of the city.

To better serve its customers, the shopping centre has a built-in parking garage and special stands for bicycles. Other useful services at the *Galleria Riga* include umbrella rental, free stylist's services, dry-cleaning and beauty salons. A favourite resting spot is the centre's fountain, which offers a great view of the building's elegant architecture. **BO**

Galleria Riga
shopping centre
Dzirnavu iela 67
Entrances from Dzirnavu
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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Regardless of whether you are in the centre of Riga to shop for the latest holiday clothes, go out for a sumptuous dinner or enjoy life and the sun on top of the city – or all three, for that matter – you will find everything that you need at the *Galleria Riga*.

Since opening in 2010, the *Galleria Riga* has found its place in the hearts of Riga's residents and visitors as a convenient shopping centre that also provides opportunities for relaxation and entertainment.

The *Galleria Riga* is located in a thriving business area in the centre of the Latvian capital and a mere five-minute walk from the Old Town. A wide variety of shops lines the seven storeys



Terrace Riga, Galleria Riga, 8th floor

TĒRBATAS STREET QUARTERS FASHION & DESIGN & DINING



The *Galleria Riga* is located near a key Riga shopping area, the Tērbatas Street Quarters.

Only a five-minute walk from Riga's Old Town, the historic cobblestone streets of the Tērbatas Street Quarters are easy to reach by any means of transport. The thriving

business and commercial area houses numerous stores, restaurants and entertainment venues that offer plenty of shopping and dining opportunities to suit all tastes.

A stroll through verdant Vērmāne Park and its adjacent flower market, followed by a movie at the beautiful

Splendid Palace theatre is just one of the many ways that one can enjoy the sounds and sights of the Tērbatas Street Quarters.

See a detailed map of Tērbatas Street Quarters' stores, restaurants and cultural attractions at terbataskvartali.lv.



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Birštonas

where Earth, Air and Water meet



and sanatoria, including amber therapy and mud baths. In the pump rooms of these establishments, one can even taste the non-carbonated mineral water straight from the depths of the ground.

Most procedures offered in Birštonas are based on the Kneipp philosophy. Sebastian Kneipp was a German priest who in the 19th century perfected an approach to health and

well-being that was based on five premises: water therapy, exercise therapy, plant therapy, balance therapy and proper nutrition.

An open mineral water evaporation tower with a mineral water fountain and a salt gallery has recently been built in

the town's central park and has quickly become a popular attraction. As mineral water flows down the tower, it naturally evaporates due to the impact of sunshine and wind, resulting in a salty mist. The healthy sea-like air enriched with minerals can then be inhaled inside the tower itself and around it. Breathing air saturated with salts is not only beneficial for people with various respiratory diseases; it also has a positive effect on the skin, making it smoother, brighter and more elastic.

Just an hour away from Vilnius, Birštonas is a destination of choice for those who seek peaceful natural surroundings and healthy relaxation for both the mind and the body. **BO**
① birstonas.lt

Surrounded by lush forests on the banks of the Nemunas River, Birštonas is one of Lithuania's oldest resort towns. It has been known as a place for rest and relaxation since 1846 and is celebrating its 170th anniversary this summer with various exciting events. During a festival to mark the town's jubilee on June 10-12, concerts, performances and other attractions will be presented on the ground, on the water and up in the sky.

Birštonas has a soft spot for air-related activities, having hosted hot-air balloon events during the last 25 years. This summer, on July 4-10, the town will be the site of the FAI Women's World Hot Air Balloon Championship. Hot air balloons will rise up into the sky twice a day – early in the morning and late in the afternoon. Weather permitting, the balloons will soar upward right from the town's centre, making this ascent a true visual feast.

Those looking for peace, harmony and a unique natural environment can visit the resort at any time of the year. Birštonas is famed for the rejuvenating mineral water and various treatments at its spas



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► Info: AGRICULTURE LAND/FOREST | Total area: 599.31 ha | ID: 3443

Description: Well-structured and cultivated agricultural land for sale in western part of Latvia (KURLAND). Object includes an area for the development of a new farm base/family house in beautiful surroundings, and an area for silos next to the main road (A9). Property includes a newly renovated (EU-standard) apartment (72.6m²) for the new owner or manager.

► Info: OPERATING Organic Beef Cattle FARM | Total area: 395 ha | ID: 4404

Description: Operating organic beef cattle farm for sale; with fully equipped machinery park and technical equipment, operational buildings, machinery storage facilities, workrooms, cellars, garages, and a residential house.

► Info: AGRICULTURAL LAND | Total area: 647 ha | ID: 5674

Description: Agricultural land for sale in eastern part of Latvia (2000 EUR/ha). Object includes an area with the necessary infrastructure for the development of a new farm base.

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Kolekcionārs — a crown of jewels



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Sat. - Sun. 10 AM – 11 PM

Address:
Blaumaņa iela 7, Riga

Website:
① kolekcionars.com

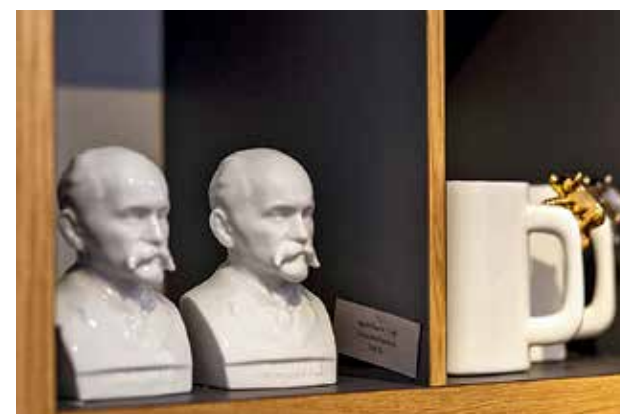
Publicity photos

So, you've come to Riga and jotted down the basics (Art Nouveau, Old Town, etc.). Now you're wondering if there's an easy way to access the local art and design scene apart from doing the obvious – going to a museum. You want to feel the vibe of sophistication without the stiffness, but where should you look? Well, look no further than *Kolekcionārs*.

Kolekcionārs (The Collector) is located on Blaumaņa iela, which will take you a bit outside of the Old Town and right into where much of the local city life takes place – definitely take a stroll along the length of this street. Blaumaņa iela is quiet but perfectly connected to the busiest arteries of the city, making it a perfect oasis when you start to feel tired and want to take a break.

Kolekcionārs is like a crown of jewels that appeals to all of the senses, for it also showcases the finest works by newly successful designers and artists from Latvia. These items can be viewed, bought and even eaten out of (*Kolekcionārs* focuses mostly on crockery and design objects). Although the owners are extremely discerning in choosing what they put on display at this new platform for art and design, this in no way detracts from the joyous and light atmosphere in the premises.

While art is definitely all around you when you enter *Kolekcionārs* (which hosts a continually changing exhibition of paintings), it is gentle and not overbearing. If you are seeking a meal or a glamorous-looking spot for evening cocktails, you'll find it here. If you wish to meet like-minded art admirers, then you'll also find them here. If you want to combine a great meal with a look at the finest Latvian handiwork (it's worth mentioning that *Kolekcionārs* has no relation with the ethnography-rich souvenir shops scattered around the Old Town), then you will also find that here, and all of your senses will be pleased.



The restaurant interior features items by the Latvian design brands *Rijada* (tables, chairs and coat hangers), *Mint* (shelves and bar stools), *Flo* (cement tables and bar) and *Grīziņkalna stikls* (lamps).

At *Kolekcionārs*, you can literally try something out before purchasing it. I'm talking about the items from which you will be eating and drinking. Having had a meal served to you on a beautiful plate or enjoying a coffee from an exquisite cup might tempt you to recreate this experience again at home. What's more, *Kolekcionārs* continually replaces its crockery with ever-new collections, which means that the next time you come back to visit, you might be eating off of a new set of designer plates from *Malka porcelain* or *Laima ceramics*.

The menu comes in the form of a newspaper, with new issues periodically

coming out to replace the previous ones. As if the menu was not already versatile enough, information about the current exhibition of paintings can also be found in it.

Kolekcionārs' creator and co-owner Edijs Eihmanis had been in the restaurant business for quite some time, even though his education had more to do with crockery design. Therefore, the idea to combine the best from both worlds was not hard to come upon. Knowing that functional design pieces are always pricier than mass-produced objects, Eihmanis wanted to give people a chance to experience first-hand the difference between the two.

The nod to local values is also reflected in the food and drinks part of the menu, although *Kolekcionārs* occasionally does source ingredients from other lands in

order to maintain high quality and keep prices accessible. While the restaurant's artistic calling might seem high-brow at first glance, *Kolekcionārs* is exceptionally user-friendly with its chilled-out vibe, inviting both refined connoisseurs and those who have not yet developed a deep-seated interest in art and design to enjoy the finer things in life during an afternoon, an evening or just a quick lunch.

Regarding what they might serve you on those artsy plates, it could be creamed sweet potato soup with blue cheese, turkey in curry and peanut sauce, salad with spinach, trout and cherry tomatoes or a slice of goat cheese cake – all of them quite good. There is also a brand-new summer terrace made exclusively for *Kolekcionārs* by *Rijada*, so drop by and treat yourself to a wonderful aesthetic and culinary experience! **BO**





Steiku Haoss.

The best steak restaurants in Riga

Publicity photos and by
EDMUNDS BRENCIS
(Picture Agency)

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

Riga's *Steiku Haoss* restaurants are part of a noteworthy restaurant empire that also includes the *KID**, *MUUSU* and *Ribs&Rock* establishments, each with its own specialty and message to deliver. The *Steiku Haoss* chain is the oldest of the four, and the oldest *Steiku Haoss* restaurant on Meistaru iela is already 13 years old. Aside from serving outstanding steaks, the *Steiku Haoss* establishments in Riga also stand out with pleasing interiors that could come straight out of classic Western movies.

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

Kristaps Sīlis is the head chef at the *Steiku Haoss* restaurant on Tērbatas iela. His colleague Kristaps Jauja runs the kitchen at the *Steiku Haoss* on Audēju iela. And last, but not least, Andrejs Bojarčenko is the master at the *Steiku Haoss* restaurant on Meistaru iela.

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

restaurants, as well as at the *Michelin*-starred *Tom Aikens Restaurant* and *Texture Restaurant* in London, bringing home innovative ideas and a powerful wish to deliver the absolute best. They say that their experience abroad has enabled them to apply the world's foremost cooking traditions at the restaurants that they now run in Riga.

The chefs' savoir-faire is reflected in the three restaurants' new seasonal menus, which were introduced in May and which now offer nine types of steak in portions of various sizes and origins. This concept permits patrons to try out more than one variety of steak during a meal.

"Our clients are getting better at distinguishing the differences between one steak and another, so we want to serve them the highest-quality meat cuts from various places, including Australia, Argentina and the Baltic States," says Sīlis, who recommends the superb T-bone steak from Denmark and the entrecôte from New Zealand on the new menu. Also worth trying is the tasty local deer leg steak.

Incidentally, most of the steaks served at *Steiku Haoss* are not marinated, but aged for 28-45 days, which is why the chefs recommend complementing them with herb butter, bone marrow, garlic pesto, smoked pork fat or cod liver for an even greater variety of tastes.

However, those who are not into meat will also be pleased, as according to quite a few die-hard vegetarians, the *Steiku Haoss* restaurants also offer some of the tastiest meatless dishes in the city. One recent addition is the wine list at all three *Steiku Haoss* establishments. If you aren't sure which wine will suit your meal, then don't be afraid to ask the professional waiters for advice. A number of them have been working at *Steiku Haoss* for nearly ten years, and all of them regularly update their oenological knowledge at special wine courses.

For years, the three restaurants' cosy outdoor summer terraces have unofficially been deemed to be among the classiest in Riga. And on weekend nights, you can enjoy your meal to the tune of pleasant background music (and live music at the *Steiku Haoss* on Audēju iela). Indeed, the world's best steaks in combination with carefully selected wines and great tunes make for a perfect summer evening! **BO**

STEIKU HAOSS

Meistaru iela 25, Rīga | (+371) 67222419
Tērbatas iela 41/43, Rīga | (+371) 67272707
Audēju iela 2, Rīga | (+371) 67225699
① steikuhaoss.lv
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Publicity photos

Where all the world's seas meet

GASTRONOME SEAFOOD RESTAURANT

Riga's *Gastronome* is known to be the best seafood restaurant in the Baltics, and anyone who's set foot in it will agree.

Priding itself with the most extensive offer of fresh seafood from all over the world, *Gastronome* has set its standards as high as they can go. It is not uncommon for restaurants to offer fish dishes and identify themselves as Mediterranean restaurants, but some of the seafood at *Gastronome* really does come from that vast inland sea, as true connoisseurs will discover. The owners go to great lengths to ensure that patrons have a similar experience to sitting on an outdoor seaside terrace in Nice or Lisbon, because fresh fish, molluscs and crustaceans are delivered to the restaurant practically every day from France, Canada and other seafood havens.

Since *Gastronome* houses both a restaurant and a deli that is cherished by gourmands, visitors can either enjoy a fantastic seafood meal at the restaurant, or purchase the fresh ingredients at the shop and attempt and recreate the magic that distinguished chef Jevgenijs

Ponomarjovs – a valued member of the Latvian Chefs' Club – brings to the table. He is modest, however, in his assertion that all one has to know about cooking seafood perfectly is how to bring out its natural flavour – which is exactly what *Gastronome* does. You will not be served a heavily seasoned fish, hidden under sauces and piles of vegetables, as might happen in places where seafood is just a tick-off on a list of what should be represented in the menu. No, you will enjoy the pure and true flavour of the highest-quality natural ingredients.

It's common to keep seafood in the freezer, but this is not something that *Gastronome* considers acceptable. The chef believes that if you cannot offer fresh seafood, then there is no point in serving it at all! Truth be told, there are two exceptions to this rule. The black cod and Chilean sea bass arrive in Riga frozen, but this is unavoidable because they live so deep in the water that there is no way for them to be transported anywhere

without freezing them first. They are shock-frozen the moment they are taken out of the water, but this is a small compromise when compared to the opportunity to taste a truly exotic fish for which you'd otherwise have to travel very far. *Gastronome* does everything for you.

know that the oyster season is over in the summer months, but *Gastronome*, like all high-class seafood restaurants, offers the specially grown new Four Seasons variety, which will take oyster-lovers through the empty months well-satisfied.



The menu is exquisite, with monkfish, snappers, ray's wings and 14 types of oysters, as *Gastronome* offers the largest selection of these shellfish in the city. On top of that, the staff is highly educated in the subtleties of all the items on the menu. You might wonder how a Muirgen oyster differs from the well-known Tsarskaya, for example. The waiter serving your table will know not only about the origins of these foods but will also be able to tell you about the flavour nuances and will help you select exactly what you are seeking.

The same goes for the extensive wine list, which is really huge, but which doesn't include all of the wines available, as these number approximately 500! The waitstaff will be happy to guide you through the wine selection and help you to find the perfect wine for your meal.

Thursdays are special days at *Gastronome*, when every week a special large fish is brought to the restaurant (such as a 20-kg shark – in fact, different types of sharks have already been offered). As for oysters, connoisseurs

Gastronome also has a special offer to those who know exactly what they want beforehand. Anyone craving a specific seafood can have it ordered and brought to *Gastronome* in advance, and enjoy the best customised seafood dinner that one can dream of. Sure, guests do keep coming back for such classics as octopus, red king crab and the restaurant's specialty seafood platter. In addition, one will always find various types of salmon, caviar and lobsters right out of the tank, and *Gastronome* welcomes guests with vegetarian and meat preferences as well.

It would be sinful not to mention the – for lack of a better description – royal Sunday brunch. For a very reasonable price, you can enjoy as much seafood and sparkling Spanish wine as you wish on Sundays from 12 to 4 PM. That always includes oysters and shrimps, and the waiters always offer to call for a taxi after your meal. **BO**

Address: Brīvības iela 31, Rīga.
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Restaurants, bars and cafés

Culinary hotspots in Riga

A guide to the best restaurants, cafés and eateries

Text by **AGRA LIEĢE**
Photos by **DMITRIJS SUĻŽICS** (F64) and
MĀRTIŅŠ ZILGALVIS (F64)



BETTY'S CORNER

Bring your whole family

Betty's Corner feels like an entirely new kind of place for Riga – the kind where you have to explain to first-timers that yes, this is a bakery section with brioches, croissants, warm hearty loafs of bread and *sklandurauši* (a Latvian pastry) to take home; this is a salad bar; and yes, they also serve anti-brunch every evening from 5 to 9 PM. OK, the last one is something that the owners came up with themselves, but the rest is straight out of *Le Pain Quotidien* (you've probably been to at least one such bakery – they're in many of the world's largest capitals).

Betty's Corner is also part of a chain of sorts, with sister locations like *Madam Brioš*, *Čaika Blue* and the seasonal beach spots *Čaika* and *Čaika Slow* set in the Latvian seaside town of Jūrmala.

However, this particular locale seems special because of the surprisingly large amount of space inside, something that one is not used to seeing in the Riga city centre. Perhaps that is an illusion and the available space is just really well used (a big round of applause to the designers), but either way, the result is a light and pleasant interior. Bring your kids along and they will really be able to run around the place. The establishment even has a play area and an

entertainer of sorts for the weekend brunches (not just the usual piece of paper with a hollow shape drawn on it plus a bunch of crayons).

Each of the parts that make up this establishment is simple and you've seen it before (so, no robata grills in sight there), but once you enter you'll wonder why somebody didn't put all of this together earlier (like *Le Pain Quotidien* did 25 years ago!), because there's loads of fun and chillaxation on offer. The bread is tasty, the prices are surprisingly modest, and they have a cute retail section, too. Oh, and the cakes! I can't believe I'm only bringing them up now – the chocolate cake is heartbreakingly good.

It's kind of sad that you have to position yourself as a family establishment in order to avoid seeming stuck up and sterile, but if that's what it takes, then family restaurant it is! A great spot for all of those who live around the corner and feel like having some anti-brunch on a nihilistic Monday evening!

Address: Krišjāņa Valdemāra iela 21
(entrance from Elizabetes iela)

Open:

Café section:

Mon.-Fri: 8:30-21:00

Sat.: 10:00-21:00

Sun.: 10:00-18:00

① facebook.com/bettyscorner.lv

Restaurant section:

Mon.-Fri: 11:30-21:00

Sat.: 10:00-21:00

Sun.: 10:00-18:00



KEY to RIGA

Every city has its key. It is the city's guardian.

It is used to open the city gates when guests are welcome.

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

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

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

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COD

Breakthrough in Riga's culinary scene

With its gentle but determined insistence on perfection, detail and authenticity, *COD* ensures that once you step over its threshold, you will be convinced that this is more than just a newly arrived hotspot. Overly dramatic as this may sound, *COD* represents a shift in Riga's culinary paradigm, and not only the culinary one. It's hard to say this in a way that doesn't sound condescending of Latvia's beautiful capital city, but the best way to describe the ambience of the place is: it feels like you're somewhere else. Like London or New York, and in a good way.

Riga is small, and most of the time (at least when it comes to hang-out spots), its new establishments sport the same kind of new cool as a 16-year-old who has dressed up and is trying so hard to look over 18 that the 16-ness literally pours out of every cell. *COD*, however, breaks this mould. It is like the Audrey Hepburn of restaurants – giving a damn in the right place, not giving a damn in the right place, and everything is so damn good!

But now, back to the cuisine. What they're doing really right is not catering to the mainstream demand. Instead, they're uplifting the whole culinary scene. It's incredibly easy and tempting to slack off a bit and cut some corners, just because you can. When you're in high-end dining, which a large portion of the public is relatively new to, you might feel like quitting after a month of trying to order a small amount

of magnolia leaves right from Japan, purely for presentation purposes. Wholesalers are hard-pressed to comply with such an order, but you don't quit and eventually, you set everything up exactly as you had imagined. As a result, people can feel this overpowering sense of... well, somebody giving a damn.

But – back to the cuisine (let's try again). The main accent is on robatayaki cuisine (i.e. meals that are slow-grilled over hot charcoal on skewers). Most of the dishes at *COD* are cooked on a robata grill, and you can easily tell that this is not your common barbeque. High-end world-famous Japanese restaurants have been using robata grills as one of their main techniques for ages, and finally we've got one here, too (a first in Latvia!).

The menu includes traditional Japanese starters like tataki, gyoza and tempura, as well as a small but sophisticated selection of sushi and sashimi. But go for the grilled foods! The menu was created by Uvis Janičenko, who gained valuable experience at one of the top restaurants in Tokyo. His enthusiasm and willingness to contribute this gem to his hometown of Riga before setting off to new ventures is purely due to his deeply instilled sense of Latvian patriotism.

Address: Tērbatas iela 45
Open: Mon.-Wed.: 12:00-23:00
Thu.: 12:00-24:00
Fri.-Sat.: 12:00-02:00
Sun.: 12:00-22:00
① cod.lv



N I G H T C L U B



SEASON 9

JUNE

3. FIRST PRESENTS - KOLOMBO (NOIR MUSIC/KOMPAKT/2DIY4/WARUNG) (BELGIUM)
4. AVG (ST. PETERSBURG)
10. FIRST LIVE - IOWA (ST.PETERSBURG)
11. FIRST PRESENTS - JAY MEDVEDEVA (BLUE MARLIN) (IBIZA)
17. KARTEL - TOMMY U & TOB LUI (LV)
18. FIRST PRESENTS - K.I.M (ARTEL BESSONNICA) (MOSCOW)

JULY

- 1.DEEPLOMACY - SUPER FLU (MONABERRY) (GER)
2. FIRST PRESENTS - PAJI (KITTBALL RECORDS) (GER)
8. FIRST PRESENTS - JAY MEDVEDEVA (BLUE MARLIN) (IBIZA)
9. FIRST LIVE - HANNA (MOSCOW)
15. KRYSHA MIRA 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY (MOSCOW)
16. KRYSHA MIRA 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY (MOSCOW)
22. NUDE - ME&MYMONKEY (MINOO) (GER)
23. ORIGAMI - K.I.M (ARTEL BESSONNICA) (MOSCOW)
29. FIRST PRESENTS - FEDOR FOMIN (MOSCOW)
30. KARTEL - TOMMY U & TOB LUI (LV)

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Bombardier factory in Mirabel Montreal, Canada, airBaltic CSeries on final assembly line

1/ New CSeries joining the airBaltic fleet

Later this year, *airBaltic* will receive its first factory-delivered *Bombardier CSeries 300* aircraft. *airBaltic* will be the first airline in the world to fly this brand-new model, which will be the world's leanest and most economical aircraft within its class.

Built for unrivalled passenger comfort and significantly improved in-flight crew working conditions, the *Bombardier CSeries* sets new

standards in economy and environmental sustainability with its state-of-the-art technologies. Reduced emissions, noise and fuel burn open up possibilities that are much more than just technical tick boxes, including flights to airports that other aircraft cannot reach from Riga.

airBaltic has ordered 20 *CSeries* aircraft, which will gradually replace the current *Boeing 737* fleet.

Read more about how the planes are being built at airbalticblog.com.

2/ Save by planning your winter travel now!

Book flights for the winter of 2016-2017 now and benefit from special early bird rates of EUR 69 for round-trip tickets.

The offer applies to such amazing European cities as **Berlin, Milan, London** and more. However, in order to get a good price, your round-trip flight has to be booked in advance.

Check out the flight schedule for next winter and book at airbaltic.com.

3/ Get more with a Group ticket

If you are planning to travel with a group of friends or family, then consider buying group tickets. The offer applies to groups of eight people or more and provides a lot of privileges.

- You can book group tickets **without the passenger names** and add these later, up to 24 hours before departure.
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Book your group tickets at airbaltic.com or contact our dedicated group team at groupsbt@airbaltic.lv and they will help you to find the most suitable flights.

4/ Online check-in extended

Now you can check in online for *airBaltic* flights up to five days before your departure. This is especially handy for those who plan a short trip and want to check in for both their departing and return flight in one go.

Tablet and smartphone users do not even need to print out their boarding passes, because they can save the mobile boarding pass in their Wallet App and head straight to the security check with their device in their hands. If you have bags to check in, then just leave them at the drop-off counter first.

Online check-in is available up to one hour before departure and saves you both time and money, as checking in at the airport with Basic tickets costs EUR 30.

5/ Charters to holiday resorts with Tez Tour

In cooperation with leading tour operator *Tez Tour*, *airBaltic* is offering charter flights to a number of sunny holiday destinations such as **Rimini** (once a week), **Heraklion** (twice a week) and **Antalya** (up to five times per week).

Charter passengers are offered an onboard meal in Economy Class as well as the possibility to travel in Business Class with additional privileges and greater comfort, including exclusive meals and drinks on board.

To find out more and book a charter holiday, visit teztour.lv.



6/ Summer flights to Europe's best beaches are back

Summer is almost here and *airBaltic* is relaunching flights to many holiday destinations. These will continue until the end of October.

For the cheapest rates, book your trip now 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.

**Sanita
Aišpure-Dronka,**
Clinical
Psychologist at
airBaltic

Fit to fly

Sanita Aišpure-Dronka is one of only two psychologists in the Baltic States who have been certified by the European Association for Aviation Psychology. Ten years ago, she helped *airBaltic* to set up psychological tests for evaluating airline pilot candidates during the recruitment of new employees. In this interview, she outlines the stringent pilot selection process and reveals how to overcome a fear of flying.

Text by **EGITA KRASTINA**
Photo by **GATIS GIERTS**
(Picture Agency)

The first question is pretty straightforward. How did you come to join *airBaltic*?

It was the result of an interesting and unexpected job opportunity. Since I enjoy taking on new challenges, I jumped at the chance. At the time, I was still working in a psychiatric clinic, where I conducted court-ordered mental health evaluations. A colleague called me up and recommended that I apply for a particular vacancy at *airBaltic*. The first assignment was a project to conduct psychological tests on six pilots. I worked out a concept for conducting the tests and presented it to the airline's top executives, despite not having any previous experience in aviation. A few days later, I received a phone call and was told that the green light had been given for me to continue with the project. Currently, prospective *airBaltic* pilots are selected not only on the basis of their flying skills and knowledge; their mental work capacity and personality traits are also evaluated. There are a lot of educated people with pilot's licenses, but not all of them have what it takes to be a reliable and competent commercial airline pilot. And during the past ten years, we have raised the bar in the standards that we expect our pilots to fulfil.

What exactly is an aviation psychologist?

I am actually a clinical psychologist by education, but I have been certified by the European Association for Aviation Psychology. In evaluating a pilot, I have to spot existing or potential risk factors that, when summed together, might reveal the small tip of a dangerous iceberg. I have to get a feel for whether something invisible and potentially hazardous lies underneath the surface, such as undesirable personality traits

that might compromise safe commercial air travel.

Can you describe a typical work day for you, and what are your responsibilities?

Most of the time I am involved in the selection of pilots for the airline. The personnel department announces pilot vacancies and conducts the initial screening process. It also organises the interviews. The selection takes place in several stages. In the first stage, the candidates are put into a flight simulator together with an instructor. They undergo a simulated flight with all kinds of complications such as bad weather and engine failure. That's followed by a technical interview, which is conducted by experienced pilot instructors; then another interview with an HR pilot selection specialist. The last hurdle is an interview with a psychologist.

How does a psychological evaluation take place?

All day long, in parallel to the evaluations of their technical knowledge, the prospective pilots are given tasks that they have to continually fulfil. That's part of a test to establish their personality profiles. This is followed by a meeting with a psychologist that lasts several hours and is divided into two parts. In one part, we try to establish the candidates' cognitive efficiency and mental work capacity. How good is their short-term memory? Do they think logically? How do they make decisions? How good are their visual-spatial orientation skills? How do they fare in mathematical logic, long-term memory and attention assignments? How observant are they and how long does it take them to process information?

Commercial airline pilots have to be among the most

psychologically healthy people around, which means that they have to perform almost perfectly. The second part consists of an interview, tests, questionnaires and various other methods to establish the candidate's personality, ability to withstand stress, character traits, ability to work in a team, emotional stability, ability to withstand fatigue, etc. Through all of these indicators, we establish the suitability of the candidate. Whenever people go to a job interview, they of course want to leave a good impression and try to come prepared. However, for the most part, one can prepare oneself only for the technical part of the evaluation. We've had candidates perform brilliantly in the flight simulator but fail to pass the psychological tests. The psychologist must get the candidates out of their comfort zone and feel out potential risk factors. It takes an entire work day to evaluate a single pilot candidate.

So, what qualities must a commercial airline pilot possess?

Regardless of all the instruments and gadgets in the cockpit, the most important factor for a safe flight is the flight crew itself. This means that they must be more than just good at flying a plane. They must be psychologically balanced, flexible and largely satisfied with their lives. That includes their personal lives, relationships, free time and physical fitness, because then there's a greater chance that they will have the resources to deal with the stresses of their job successfully. Many people come here with their entire life's focus on flying a commercial aircraft. They ignore other aspects of their lives, and this is dangerous in the long term.

So in other words, some candidates might succeed in the technical part of the tests, but fail in the psychological part?

Yes, that's happened on more than one occasion. I don't have the final say in this respect; that's the prerogative of those who are in charge of the pilots. We've come across such risk factors as unstable personality traits, insufficient cognitive abilities, behavioural deficiencies and

inadequate handling of stress. Any of these might present a risk that is unacceptable in this line of work. It's not good enough to have the required technical skills and enthusiasm for the job.

This is a tough profession that involves a continually changing schedule, night flights, long work hours, extended periods of absence from home and many other factors. From what I have seen, the most successful and stable pilots are those who have found a balance between their private and professional lives. They have a large resource base that they can rely on to stay fit for their work duties. We subconsciously choose professions that correspond with our values and personality types.

How would you rate the overall psychological condition of *airBaltic*'s pilots?

Our recruitment concept and standards are in line with those of the world's leading airlines

First of all, I'd like to give my colleagues and myself a pat on the back for everything that we have achieved in the pilot selection process. Our recruitment concept and standards are in line with those of the world's leading airlines. Often candidates who apply for a pilot's position are surprised at the rigorous standards that we apply. Some people from abroad still see Latvia as a post-Soviet country with a lower quality of life and inferior work ethic. They're in for quite a shock when they come here. We've had candidates cancel their applications after they find out what they will have to go through in order to be selected. We also have candidates who openly admit that they have found the recruitment process to be extremely difficult, but who nevertheless thank us for the experience, which they say will help them in their future careers even if they don't end up being hired by *airBaltic*.

Following such a rigorous pilot selection process, it seems that nobody should be afraid of flying anymore. Yet a fear

of flying is one of the most prevalent phobias in the world. How would you explain that?

This fear has been around ever since people started to fly. At its basis is a complex combination of several other phobias. Fear is irrational and hard to control with one's mind. Each of us possesses a psychological construct that takes form from the moment that we are born. Either we feel a secure attachment to this world or we don't. In the case of an insecure attachment, we feel fear and discomfort in situations that we cannot control.

What should people do to overcome a fear of flying?

Even if you feel that things are beyond your control, you can always control your breathing! Whenever we feel afraid, we start to breathe more quickly and shallowly. Our heart rate quickens and we activate an alarm system in our bodies. Don't be afraid to ask the cabin crew for an explanation about what's behind an unfamiliar sound or why air turbulence occurs. If you have a fear of flying and know about it already before you step onto a plane, then you have to work on managing it before the flight to prevent a panic attack from setting in. There are various computer apps and support programmes for those with a fear of flying.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

Something completely different from what I do at work. Since my work demands a high degree of mental concentration, I like to spend my free time in the countryside. I have studied the art of conducting a proper *pirts* [Latvian sauna – Ed.] ritual and like to do so with my friends. I prepare the bunches of tree twigs for the massages, the herbal teas and the scrubs beforehand. I spend several hours in the *pirts*, without any hurry; it's like a rejuvenating ritual. During the summer, I like to go to arts *plein-air* sessions and make pottery, draw and take photographs. I also have a group of female friends with whom I do various women's things, like singing songs of strength and meditating. **BO**

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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

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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.



New summer menu

Check out our new Food & Drinks summer menu for Economy Class passengers, which has retained some popular dishes and features great additional meals to buy on board.

For example, the light and fresh chicken salad with Parmesan cheese and yoghurt or oil dressing is back by popular demand. This salad, as well as the snack platter of

cheeses and olives and the tapas selection, can be combined with a glass of white or red wine or Prosecco for a good price.

Try the Scandinavian-style salmon sandwich (our all-time bestseller) or one of the latest additions, such as the hot and tasty chicken tortilla with vegetables, or the fresh bagel with chicken, green salad, tomatoes and pesto sauce.

The drinks section also has some new items. Enjoy a refreshing mojito cocktail, wild berry cider or blonde ale by the *Lielvārdes* Latvian brewery. These can be combined with different snacks such as Parmesan snack cigar sausages, salted peanuts or chips. For an even more subtle experience, the exquisite *Moët* champagne is now available on our flights!



Win free *airBaltic* flights with Pilot Teddy

Meet Teddy, the newest pilot in our crew. He is a passionate traveller and, most importantly, he loves to fly!

Show us where Pilot Teddy has taken you this summer, snap a photo together with him, share the photo through the hashtag *#airBalticTeddy* or e-mail it to airbalticteddy@airbaltic.lv by August 31 and participate in a competition to win a free flight for two!

Find out more at airbalticshop.com/teddy.

**SAVE UP TO 50%
ON WINTER FLIGHTS
WITH OUR CHERRY DEALS!**


FROM **69€** ROUND-TRIP

airBaltic.com

The prices apply to round-trip Basic tickets which are booked at www.airbaltic.com for travel from October 1, 2016 until April 30, 2017. Prices are subject to availability. Special conditions apply.



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 |

TOPO CENTRAS in Lithuania has joined pins!



- Collect 5 pins/EUR with PINS card at TOPO CENTRAS
- Get discounts at TOPO CENTRAS with pins card up to 99% and more benefits
- Visit other partners and collect for your discount faster



More information at pinsforme.com

The charming way to fly via Vienna



| Austrian BASIC FACTS | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Founded | 1957 |
| Alliance | STAR ALLIANCE |
| Slogan | The charming way to fly |
| Hub | Vienna International Airport |
| Fleet | 80 aircraft |
| Destinations | 130 |

airBaltic is proud to cooperate with Austrian Airlines, the flag carrier of Austria and a Star Alliance member.

Fly non-stop from Riga or Tallinn to Vienna with airBaltic, or from Vilnius to Vienna with Austrian Airlines.

At Vienna International Airport, you can connect further to over 130 Austrian Airlines destinations. The most popular are Bucharest, Chisinau, Sofia, Luxemburg and Ljubljana, as well as many Austrian cities, including Salzburg, Linz, Innsbruck, Graz and Klagenfurt.

Book your whole journey with both airlines at airBaltic.com or austrian.com.

Why book connecting flights together?
Booking connecting flights together in

one ticket is the safest and most reliable form of air travel. Both airlines assume the responsibility for your connection and for taking you to your final destination, which means that you don't have to worry about delays, missing flight connections that are an airline's fault or getting your luggage from one flight to the other.

Two ticket types for your convenience
When booking connecting flights with airBaltic's partner airlines, you can choose between two ticket types: Premium Economy with one piece of checked baggage, airport check-in and fast-track security control at the Riga airport; and Business Class with a full range of service and flexibility.

Transit via Vienna International Airport
airBaltic flights arrive in Vienna at Terminal 3 and depart from Terminal 1. All Austrian Airlines flights arrive and depart from Terminal 3, which is the airport's newest facility. Because the terminals are located in close proximity to each other, it is easy to transfer between airBaltic and Austrian Airlines flights. Just follow the signs for "Connecting flights" and the signs for "Terminal 1" or "Terminal 3".

The standard connecting time between flights is 30 minutes. However, if you are travelling to or from a non-Schengen country, then you should count on having to go through additional security checks and customs inspections.


airBaltic codeshare partners

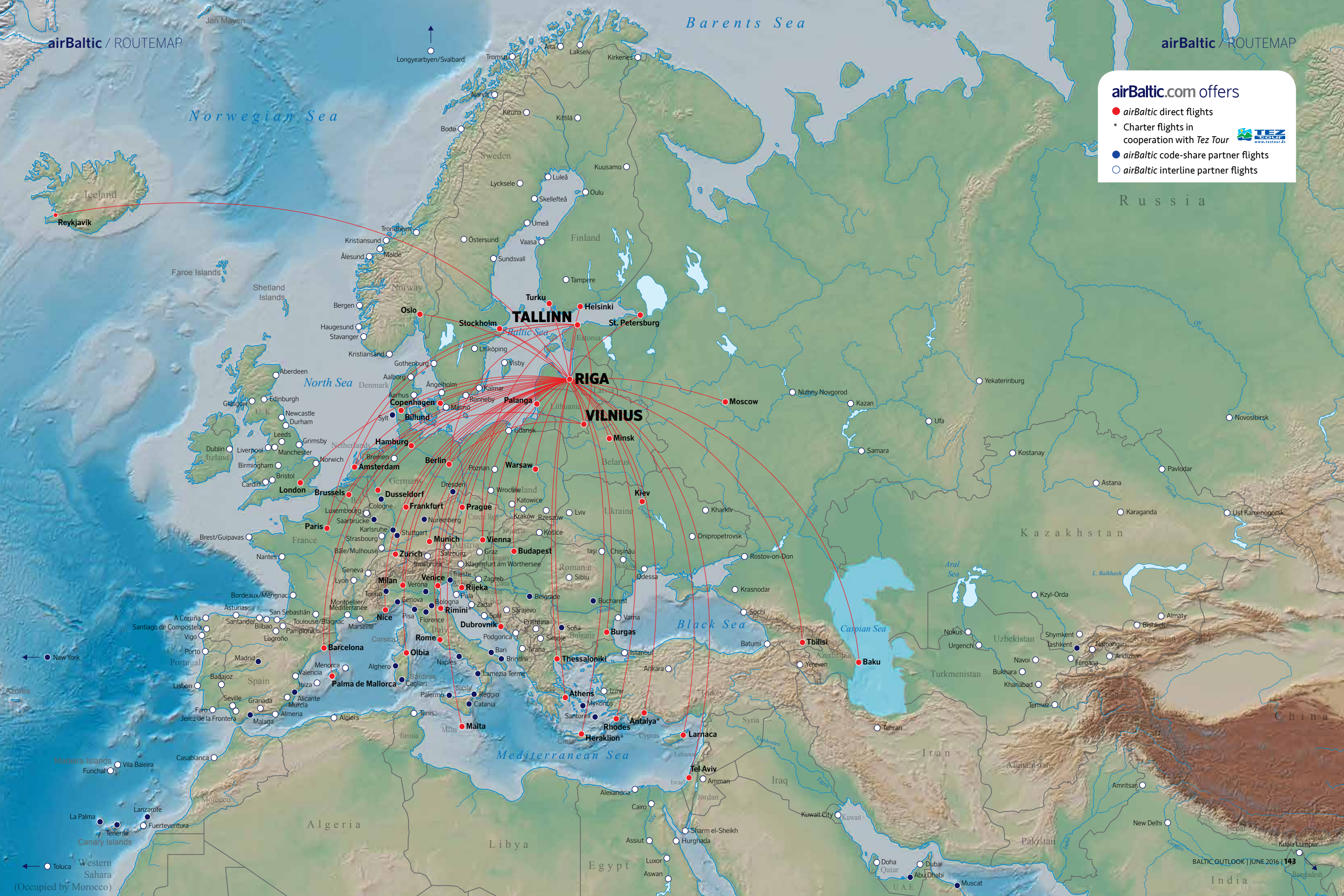


| Flights from RIGA | | | | | | Flights to RIGA | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|------|-----|---------|-----------|---------|---------------------------------|------|-----|---------|-----------|---------|
| Flight No | From | To | Days | Departure | Arrival | Flight No | From | To | Days | 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---7 | 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 | 12345-7 | 16:25 | 18:20 | BT 604 | BRU | RIX | 12345-7 | 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 | | | | | |
| BT 400 | RIX | KBP | 12345-- | 07:20 | 09:10 | BT 401 | KBP | RIX | 12345-- | 09:40 | 11:35 |
| 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 | 1234--- | 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 | 9:05 | 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 | | | | | |
| BT 695 | RIX | NCE | -2-4-6- | 15:45 | 17:50 | BT 696 | NCE | RIX | -2-4-6- | 18:25 | 22:25 |
| 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

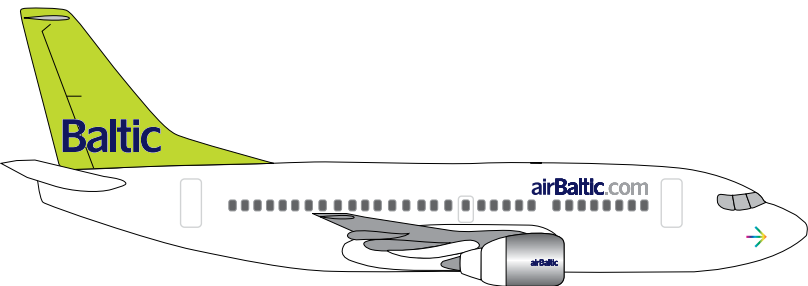
- airBaltic direct flights
- * Charter flights in cooperation with Tez Tour 
- airBaltic code-share partner flights
- airBaltic interline partner flights





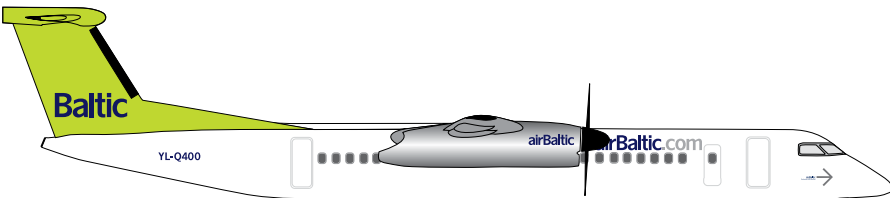
Boeing 737-300

| | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| 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 |



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- » Latvian cuisine in a traditional farmhouse-style interior
- » Live Latvian music every evening, an amusement park and recreation at the LIDO Leisure Centre

- » Enjoy **tasty Latvian meals** made from natural, fresh, high-quality ingredients, served quickly at an affordable price.
- » Spend a day at the **LIDO Leisure Centre** - one of the largest and most beautiful log buildings in Europe.
- » Welcome at the Family Garden, the biggest amusement park in Riga with **30 different attractions**, including the biggest inflatable maze in the Baltics.



WELCOME TO LIDO!

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+371 67700000

LIDO Spice
Spice Shopping Centre,
Lielirbes street 29, Riga

LIDO Alus sēta
Tirgoņu street 6,
Riga

LIDO Vērmanītis
Elizabetes street 65,
Riga

For other locations refer to www.lido.lv

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