



MARCH 2016

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ECCENTRIC

AMSTERDAM

Plus:

ROMANTIC WEEKEND GETAWAYS

PARIS' SECRET CHARM

A LOOK INTO MODERNIST CUISINE

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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.

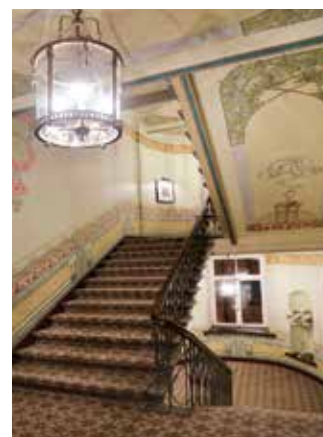
Для продажи доступны несколько квартир разных площадей и планировок, в том числе – 2-уровневые квартиры с террасами на крыше, а также в аренду офисные помещения с полной отделкой. Здание находится в лучшей части города, в окружении скверов и парков, в непосредственной близости сосредоточены главные рижские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



"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.

"PARK RESIDENCES"

Jurmala, Dzintari
Apartments areas: 115 m² to 178 m²
Price upon request

"Park Residences" is an exclusive housing estate located in a pine park at the seaside.

The estate consists of 3 buildings each of which offers a wide choice of 3- and 4-room apartments with grey trim. Panoramic windows, spacious balconies and terraces will allow to enjoy beautiful views over a rich surrounding landscape. Round-the-clock concierge service located in the hall of each building is accessible to ensure full comfort to tenants. The housing estate has an underground car park, in the territory of which there are also utility rooms for each owner of the residence.



Real Estate in Jurmala and Riga
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www.ordoag.com

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Welcome aboard



MARTIN ALEXANDER GAUSS
Chief Executive Officer *airBaltic*

Dear Customer,

Spring is arriving with warmer weather and the awakening of nature. This season of growth is also heralding the blossoming of *airBaltic's* future fleet and network. *Bombardier* has already started to manufacture our all-new jet aircraft, which will gradually enter service starting from the second half of 2016 and replace our current planes until the entire fleet is modernised in 2018.

Our CS300 jets will offer unmatched traveller comfort, and their operational efficiency will lead to more affordable tickets along with new destinations, as the aircraft can reach such distant locations as western China, the Canary Islands and the United Arab Emirates. Naturally, these state-of-the-art jets will initially service our main routes to Paris, London, Amsterdam and Brussels. Then, with additional aircraft joining the fleet, they will increasingly be used for our direct flights out of Tallinn and Vilnius.

As the days are getting longer, so is our list of available routes. For the new travel season, we are launching flights between Riga and Reykjavik in Iceland, and we are linking Tallinn directly with Vilnius and Amsterdam. A number of warm-weather and beach destinations will return to our schedule for your spring and summer escapes, such as Rhodes and Thessaloniki in Greece, Dubrovnik in Croatia, Burgas in Bulgaria, Nice in France and Olbia in Italy. We are confident that our upgraded network will create new business and leisure opportunities, generate additional jobs and, above all, make your travel more convenient.

Did you know that this spring, we are celebrating the 20th anniversary of *airBaltic* flights from Riga to Copenhagen, Kiev, Minsk, Warsaw, Tallinn and Vilnius? Today, the number of travellers on some of these routes is more than 20 times higher than it was during *airBaltic's* first year of operations.

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

Yours,
Martin Alexander Gauss



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ABOUT THE **MARCH** ISSUE

One thing that gave rise to frequent and spirited discussions this month at the editorial office of *Baltic Outlook* was the interview by Ilmārs Līkums – the former editor-in-chief of the Latvian version of *Top Gear* magazine – with extreme sports practitioner Ingus Augstkalns. Ingus first surprised the world with an air acrobatics show at the closing ceremonies of the 2006 Winter Olympic Games in Turin. This display helped to turn *Aerodium* vertical wind tunnels into a renowned export product.

Lately, Ingus has been captivated by BASE jumping (parachuting or wingsuit flying from a fixed structure or cliff), an

extreme sport that is prohibited in some places due to the relatively low altitudes of the jumps. Last November, Ingus joined only a few dozen people who have flown in a wingsuit through the dangerous “Crack” gorge in Walenstadt, Switzerland.

Of course, a meeting with such a unique personality could not take place predictably and under “normal” circumstances. As a result, the author of the interview set off with Ingus on a clandestine male initiation-type expedition, becoming a witness to an adrenaline-filled event on a dark winter evening that he decided to share with the readers of this magazine (page 62).



Ingus Augstkalns enjoying the sunrise in the mountains of Italy

baltic_{outlook}

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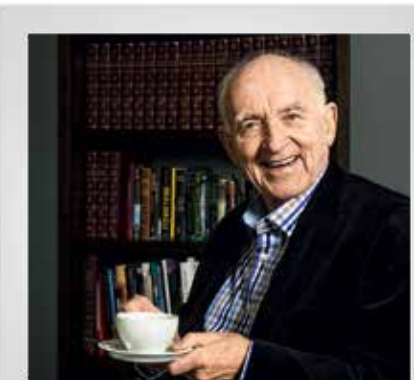
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Writing in Paris cafés

Writers are persnickety about where they do their writing. “Persnickety” is a word that I treasure but have never used before in my writing. Why now, why here? Choosy might have been as good. But not quite. Persnickety adds the extra effort demanded to make something fine, such as in writing an essay or a story. In this case, an essay about the choice of places for writing. Writing involves imagination, which in part is dependent on the writer’s surroundings. Writers are known to use all sorts of places to stimulate their imagination. Michel de Montaigne, the French creator of the essay, made famous the tower in which he wrote. There, he had a library and a view of the countryside. Sir Walter Scott wrote in a tower with one odd step, which warned him when someone was coming. Bruce Chatwin, a nomadic 20th-century soul, had two towers to pin him down to writing: one in Tuscany, the other on the Welsh border.

As with other writers, the places where I write are important. I already wanted to be a writer at a young age. In third grade at our Latvian grammar school, we sat in pairs by wooden desks that sloped downward toward us. My desk had a big crack through which it was possible to read in order to stem the boredom of some classes. At that time, American-style rolls of toilet



In Riga, taking a break between trips

The choice of Parisian cafés as good places to write became paramount for me

paper appeared and ball point pens became available. One day during a boring English-language lesson, I began to write the day’s history on a roll of toilet paper. It made for a perfect scroll. I kept this up until tiring of it after several days, having learned that history or a story cannot include everything.

That was the first of many places I chose to write. Paris became another favourite. Two writers in particular inspired me to write in that city. One was André Gide with

his *The Counterfeiters*, which recounts the story of two boyhood friends, Bernard and Olivier, who explore Paris and life together. The other was Ernest Hemingway with *Paris, A Moveable Feast*. Together with Latvian writer Kārlis Skalbe, Hemingway has been an inestimable force in my writing. I read Hemingway as a university student and have re-read his books all my life long. My imagination is still captured by his writing style, what he wrote about, and where he wrote – including Paris cafés. Thus, the choice of Parisian cafés as good places to write became paramount for me. There have also been other places: Tyrol, the Åland Islands, Berkeley, Riga, London. I even wrote two books at my family’s kitchen table, with wife, child, dog and cat as constant company. I was lucky then to enjoy domestic bliss.

Nevertheless, nothing surpasses a Parisian café on the Left Bank as an enjoyable place for a writer. Writing always means being alone. In a Parisian café, it is being alone and not being alone. One is among strangers. You feel that no one is looking over your shoulder. You are alone, but with the warmth of life embodied in all of the people around you, their voices, the sounds of chairs being moved, glasses tinkling and the never-ending din of the street. You are at the centre of the city’s and century’s pulse. **BO**



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SPOTLIGHT ON THE SPRING AWAKENING

Five things that you should do in Latvia in March

1/ On sunny mornings, write down your observations of the first signs of spring.

2/ Attend *Riga Wine & Champagne*, the largest champagne and sparkling wine festival in the Baltic States (March 4-6, rigawinechampagne.lv).

3/ Obtain a panoramic view of the Latvian capital from the Riga Radio and TV Tower, which stands at 368 metres in height and is the tallest structure in the European Union (tvornis.lv).

4/ Look into the recently created internet catalogue of musical works by Latvia's most famous living composer, Raimonds Pauls (b. 1936). Here one will find the lyrics, music and recordings of many songs that Pauls has composed (raimondspauls.lv).

5/ Make a timely hotel reservation for a summer vacation by the sea.

ON THIS MONTH'S MENU

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

Food In order to combat early spring fatigue, add some frozen berries to your diet. When properly frozen, they lose only a small part of their nutritional value. Berries can be added to healthy cocktails, delectable desserts and spicy sauces, providing a nice accent to chicken and fish dishes.



© tripb



THE TREND:

Jewellery While northern Europe will still have to wait a while for the blossoming of cherry trees, it may be worth boosting one's spirits with a symbolic reminder of this beautiful spring event. The feminine *Cherry Blossoms* brooch from

Michael Michaud's latest collection is cast in oxidised bronze and accented with white keshi pearls and pale pink freshwater pearls. This jewellery collection and others can be seen in Riga at the *1.61 Jewelry* store. 161agency.com

Design The Latvian design company *RIIJA* has woven a cosy Baltic feel into its new collection of *Ziemeļnieks* (Northerner) wool and jute floor mats. Designed by textile artist Kristīne Rāmāne and made by professional weavers, the floor mats will fit equally well in a city apartment or country home. riija.lv

PINE POWER

Now is an ideal time to get an extra dose of energy through young pine or spruce tips (shoots). These are loaded with vitamin C and other nutrients that can do wonders to revive winter-weary bodies. The tips are best eaten fresh and uncooked. Eat about 10-15 of them per day – either alone, in salads or blended in green cocktails. Incidentally, it's been scientifically proven that a walk through a pine forest has a positive effect on the nervous system, boosts metabolism and stimulates the heart.

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

READING LIST



Thomas Pierce. *Hall of Small Mammals*

Somewhere between fantastically absurd and extremely touching, this collection of stories takes readers through the worlds of protagonists ranging from fossil-hunters to hot-air balloon pilots to cloned, dwarf woolly mammoths – characters who help us understand the significance of existing in the world today. Pierce's language is original and appealing. EUR 13, penguin.com

Magnus Nilsson. *The Nordic Cookbook*

Swedish star chef Magnus Nilsson (of *Fäviken* fame) has come out with a compendium of cookery perfection, with an astounding 700 recipes (across 768 pages) from all over the Nordic region, including Greenland and the Faroe Islands. The book features gorgeous photographs of landscapes and people – all of them taken by Nilsson himself. A must on the kitchen shelf of any fan of the North. EUR 30.95, phaidon.com

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

LEVITATION
(*LEVITĀCIJA*)
INTERACTIVE
EXHIBITION BY ELITA
PATMALNIECE

Putti art gallery, Riga

March 4-23

Elita Patmalniece is a well-known Latvian fashion designer and painter, whose creative design of dresses, dishware and interior objects has earned her a cult following. This time, the artist is presenting a monochromatic drawing-mandala of a woman flying over a 21st-century metropolis. Visitors can add colour to the artwork – which will be drawn onto a wall of the gallery – with paint and brushes specially left for them to use.

① putti.lv

Peitavas iela 5

MARCH 2016



**VILNIUS
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
SPRING CINEMA
(KINO PAVASARIS)**

Forum Cinemas, Vilnius

March 31 - April 14

Established more than 20 years ago, *Spring Cinema* is one of the largest and most successful annual film events in Lithuania. More than 200 movies are shown, but for a visitor to Vilnius, we recommend catching a Shakespeare-related film, since this year the world commemorates the 400th anniversary of the writer's death. Don't miss a rare opportunity to watch renowned British actor Laurence Olivier on the big screen in 1948's *Hamlet*.

Tickets at forumcinemas.lt
Savanorių prospektas 7



ORCHID EXHIBITION

Tallinn Botanic Garden, Tallinn

March 4-13

March is the peak flowering month for numerous exotic orchids, and this orchid exhibition at the Tallinn Botanic Garden is showcasing both natural and human-bred varieties, including the familiar moth orchids (*Phalaenopsis*) and other tropical exemplars.

① tallinnbotanicgarden.org

Kloostrimetsa tee 52



**EWERT AND THE TWO
DRAGONS CONCERT**
Saku Suurhall, Tallinn
March 22

Ewert and The Two Dragons recently won an Estonian Music Award for Best Rock Album with last year's *Circles*, and this month the band will play its biggest solo show to date. This will be the first time in over a decade that an Estonian pop group plays an arena show in its own homeland! The *Dragons* will be backed up by a fantastic support act named *Yukon Blonde*, which hails all the way from Canada. A must-see concert this month!

Tickets at piletilevi.ee
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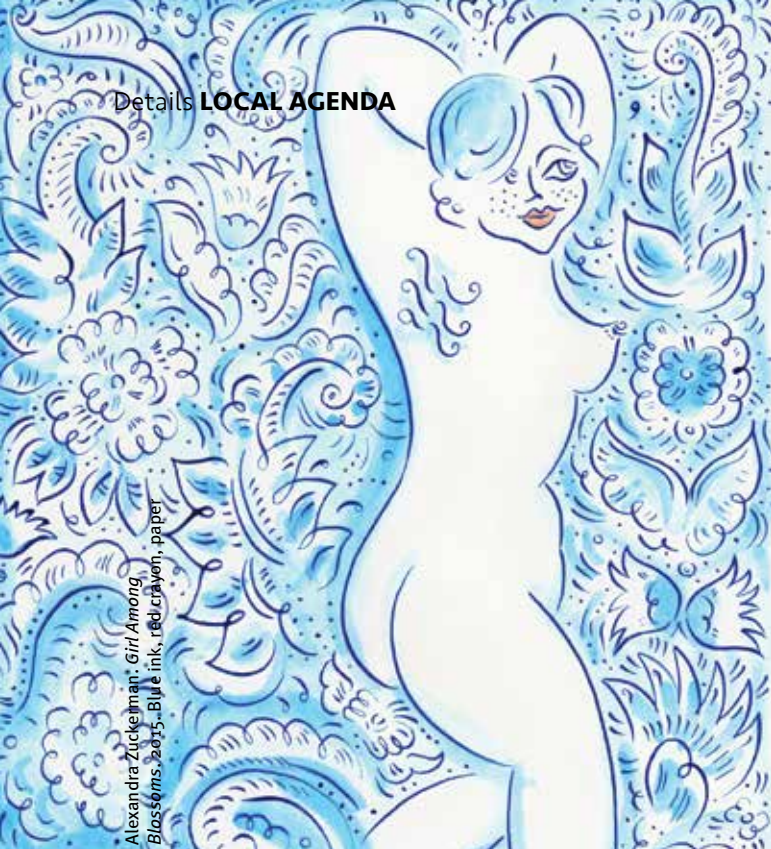
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Alexandra Zuckerman: Girl Among Blossoms, 2015. Blue ink, red crayon, paper

SOLO EXHIBITION BY ALEXANDRA ZUCKERMAN

THREE BEAUTIES UNDER THE WINDOW (TRI DEVICI POD OKNOM)

Museum of Decorative Arts and Design, Riga
Until April 3

Israeli artist Alexandra Zuckerman (b. 1981) excels in painting and drawing, through which she depicts an imaginary world that is based on childhood memories of Russian dachas, Eastern European illustrations and folk art. Naked female figures, fire birds and mermaids are just some of the imaginary beings in her enchanted fantasy world. The tapestries exposed together with Zuckerman's works have been woven by renowned Latvian textile artists.

① Inmm.lv

Skārņu iela 10/20



MARIO BIONDI CONCERT

Compensa Concert Hall, Vilnius
March 16

Italian soul, funk and jazz star Mario Biondi has played onstage with many artists, including the legendary Ray Charles and Greg Porter. His husky voice and groovy tunes have led to platinum-selling albums in his home country. This month in Vilnius, he will be presenting a solo show. Expect intense emotions, both on the stage and in the audience.

Tickets at biletupasaulis.lt

Kernavės gatvė 84



Outstanding Italian flautist Massimo Mercelli is on the lineup to present a guest performance in Riga as part of *Bach Music Week*. The musician regularly plays in the world's largest concert halls and has performed with such world-famous artists as Philip Glass and Michael Nyman. This month, Mercelli will take to

the stage together with Latvian harpsichordist Aina Kalnciema in Riga, where the two will play sonatas for flute by Johann Sebastian Bach and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart as well as works by Joseph Haydn.

Tickets at bilesuparadize.lvs

Doma laukums 6



FRIDAY, MARCH 4 EAT DRINK VOTE BY ELECTROLUX

19.00 | Restaurant "Bibliotēka No 1"

A wine and food matching event – a four-course dinner accompanied with 12 fine wines selected by the leading Latvian sommeliers.

SATURDAY, MARCH 5 THE GREAT BUBBLE PARADE

10.00, 14.00 and 18.00 | Restaurant "Bibliotēka No 1"

A unique walk-around tasting with more than 100 champagnes and their noblest "cousins" – Franciacortas, Cavas, Cap Classiques, Cremants, Proseccos - all for your enjoyment.

SUNDAY, MARCH 6 CHAMPAGNE GALA DINNER

16.00 | Restaurant "Bibliotēka No 1"

A festive multicourse champagne dinner with Peter Liem and Champagne's leading winemakers. Special bottles are brought and shared by the attending guests.

Tickets: www.ekase.lv | www.rigawinechampagne.lv

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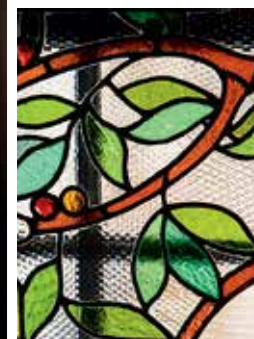
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Fragile history



Stained glass windows at the Riga Art Nouveau Museum

Incomparable stained glass windows from the Art Nouveau era

Riga stands out as one of the few European cities with a large concentration of Art Nouveau buildings. The area around Alberta, Elizabetes and Antonijas streets in the Quiet Centre is home to numerous stately edifices bearing stylised plant motifs, sculptures of mythical beings and bright accents of colour. However, in admiring the exterior beauty of these Art Nouveau gems, it is easy to overlook the stained glass windows that are still on display in some buildings.

During Riga's Art Nouveau period (circa 1899-1914), skilled Baltic German and Latvian artists created decorative stained glass windows for numerous edifices. However, due to the

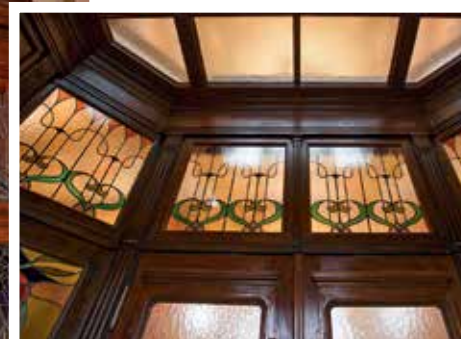
destruction caused by two world wars and other factors, many of these fragile glass masterpieces no longer exist.

Riga is home to approximately 800 Art Nouveau buildings, including the Latvian Academy of Art, which also displays Neo-Gothic elements. The academy's staircase boasts one of the most colourful stained glass windows in the city. Decorated in floral motifs and other stylised architectural details, this window was crafted in the early 1900s by Baltic German artist Ernst Tode (1859-1932). The stained glass workshop that he headed was considered to be the best in Riga and operated in the Latvian capital from 1895-1909.

Those who appreciate this artwork should definitely pay a visit to the Riga Art Nouveau Museum, which is an authentically

restored apartment filled with early 20th-century objects and furniture. Experts in the field can provide guided tours, while in the dining room one will find one of the best-preserved (and, no less important, publicly accessible) stained glass windows from that era in Riga. According to museum director Agrita Tipāne, this particular work of art contains various tones of fine, hand-blown glass.

"In addition, the symbolism of the trees is quite important. The leaves of a chestnut tree are intertwined with those of a laurel, which is a symbol of immortality and victory. Irises were among the most widely depicted flowers in the Art Nouveau era, and here they can be seen growing on a green lawn," she says. The water lily, for its part, can be seen as a symbol of Latvian Art Nouveau craftsmanship, representing fullness and perfection. **BO**



One of the most colourful stained glass windows in the city can be seen at the Latvian Academy of Art



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



Tali design store

Tallinn



Fabrik



President of Estonia
Toomas Hendrik Ilves attending
Tallinn Music Week in 2015

Get ready for the eighth edition of **Tallinn Music Week** (tmw.ee), which will dominate the Estonian capital's cultural events from March 28 to April 3 and during which nearly 240 musicians from 33 countries will implement a broad programme of various musical genres. Brendan Jan Walsh of Belgium will kick off the opening party on March 31 with a classical music concert at the Tallinn Creative Hub or *Kultuurikatel*. Another event to attend at the *Kultuurikatel*'s newly opened Black Box is the *Turntable Concerto* by London-based cross-over composer Gabriel Prokofiev. This piece will be performed by the *Glasperlenspiel Sinfonietta* chamber orchestra of Tartu (Estonia) and DJ Mr Switch of the UK. The conductor will be Estonian-born American Kristjan Järvi.

A number of the festival's performances will take place at some very unusual venues. The Seaplane Harbour's maritime museum, for example, will be filled with electronic soundtracks by leading Moscow beat scene musician Pixelord and Polish house music band *Matat Professionals*. Make sure to visit the *Club of Different Rooms* in the Telliskivi quarter, Tallinn's current epicentre of creative activity. The huge hall of this unconventional club is divided into several rooms, each with a different interior. Great live concerts take place there on a regular basis, while during the festival, the *Estonian Funk Embassy* will curate a night of goodtime funk and soul.

Those who wish to bring home truly meaningful souvenirs from Tallinn and gain an insight into Estonia's design scene should visit the new **Tali** design store (Kotzebue tänav 33, Põhja-Tallinna linnaosa). It is located in the Kalamaja district, which is otherwise known as Tallinn's "hipsterville". The store owner is a designer and, although the place is small, it feels quite cosy. Here one will find carefully selected interior objects, toys, textiles, accessories and amusing design trinkets. A similar note of light-hearted humour also permeates the interior. In any case, your face is bound to light up in a smile once you enter the store, even if the weather outside happens to be cold and rainy.

Fabrik (Vabriku 6; fabrik.ee) is another new place to visit in the Kalamaja district. The restaurant has been popular among locals since its opening day and that is hardly surprising, since this establishment boasts excellent food, friendly prices and a Scandinavian interior that gains an added sense of personality from strategically placed vintage accents. *Fabrik* places emphasis on local and seasonal products, while its sumptuous cakes have justifiably gained fame and recognition. However, it's advisable not to count your calories in this case!

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Musée de l'Homme

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Following a six-year-long reconstruction, one of Paris' most legendary museums, the **Musée de l'Homme** or Museum of Man (17, place du Trocadéro; museedelhomme.fr), has reopened. It is located in the Palais de Chaillot, right across the Seine from the Eiffel Tower. The rather rare museum of anthropology has been a source of inspiration to many artists. Pablo Picasso used to visit it often, as he was fascinated by African art and particularly by tribal masks, which he viewed as masterpieces. A whole pleiade of surrealist and modern artists, including Henri Matisse and Constantin Brâncuși, were also frequent guests.

The Galerie de l'Homme (Gallery of Man) is one of the museum's most impressive spaces, covering two floors and following the history of human evolution with anatomical and anthropological precision. The exposition has been arranged to fit with three questions that Paul Gauguin asked in one of his paintings: "Who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we headed?"

Paris' hotel scene, for its part, has just received a new addition with an intriguing name – **C.O.Q** or **Community of Quality** (15, rue Edouard Manet; coq-hotel-paris.com). The owners say that they wanted to unite the best boutique hotel service with the feeling of being at home. In terms of comfort, staying at this establishment is indeed just as pleasant as stepping into a pair of home slippers after a busy day. Each guest room has a different interior that combines contemporary design with vintage accents found in the city's flea markets. Some of the old paintings on the walls, for example, could just as well be family heirlooms. The vestibule looks like a stylised sunroom where one can watch evening movies on a big screen or play board games. C.O.Q also houses a café and a shop where only French-made souvenirs are sold.

The *Amour* hotel, a favourite of style-conscious guests, has now been joined by a younger and more passionate sister named **Grand Amour** (18, rue de la Fidélité; hotelamourparis.fr). Larger than its older sibling, the 43-room hotel is located in a historical five-storey pre-Haussmann-era structure in the 10th arrondissement. With an interior that features sensually provocative photographs by Helmut Newton and Guy Bourdin, along with artwork by Keith Haring and Dash Snow, lovers' passions are sure to be stirred at this hotel. Furthermore, each item, as in an ancient love story, has its own story to tell. The trio of proprietors – graffiti artist André Saraiva, restaurateur Emmanuel Delavenne and hotelier Thierry Costes – set up the *Grand Amour* with the verve and care of true collectors, having spent countless hours combing Paris' flea markets, antique shops and auction houses.

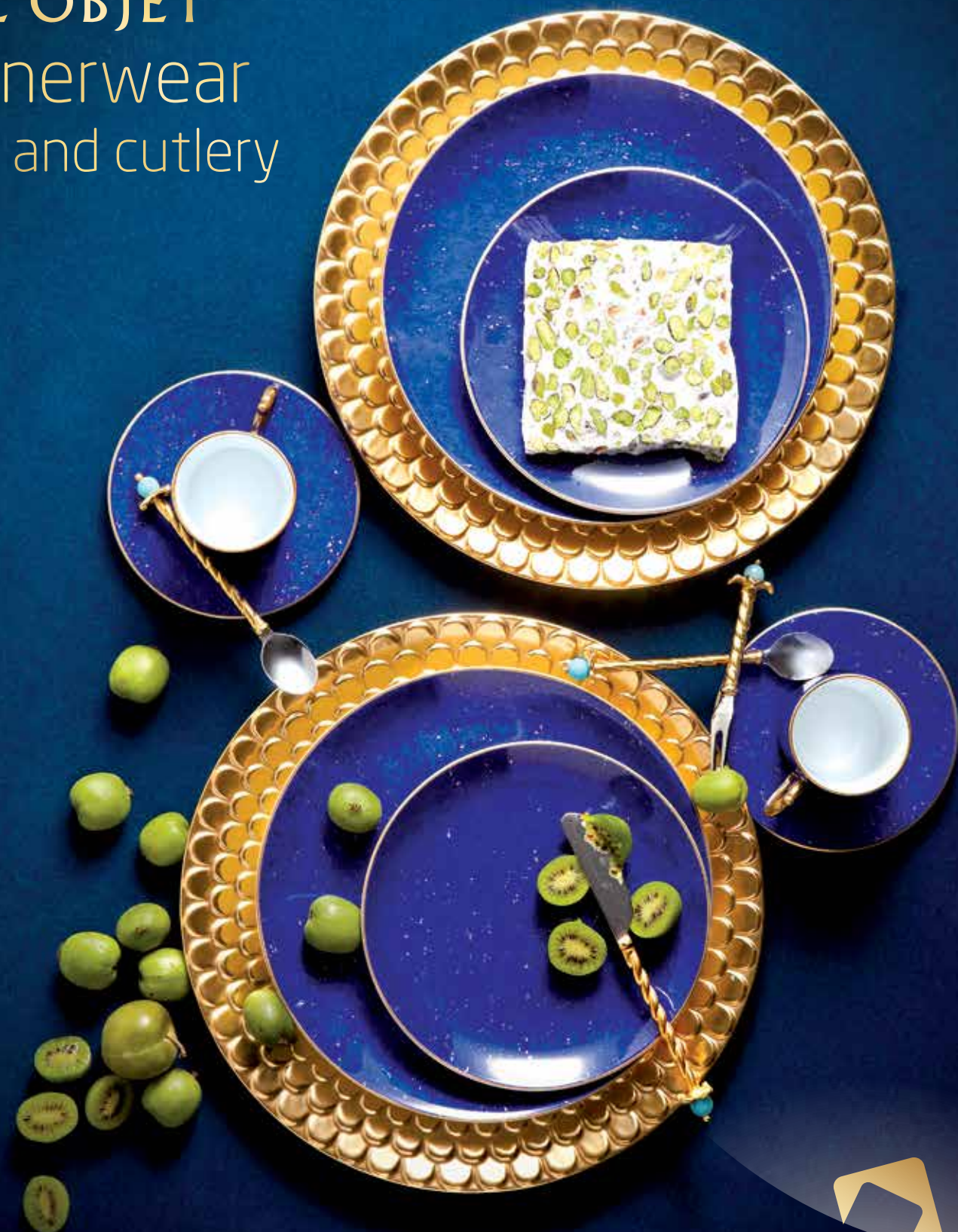


C.O.Q Hotel



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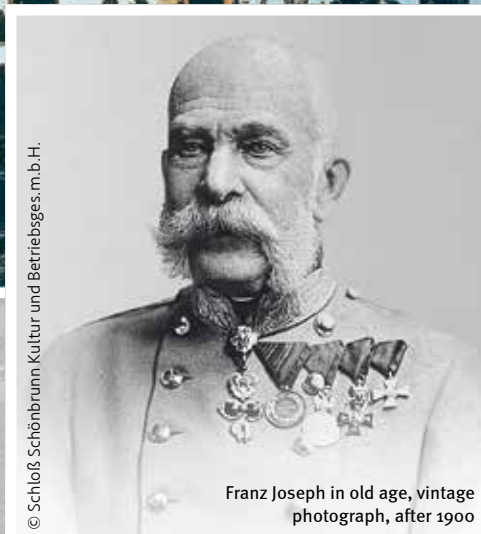
Grand Ferdinand Hotel

Vienna



Photo by Peter Ertl and Olga Rohankova

Anselm Kiefer,
The Rhine, 1993



© Schloß Schönbrunn Kultur und Betriebsges.m.b.H.

Franz Joseph in old age, vintage
photograph, after 1900

It is hard to imagine any other contemporary artist, aside from **Anselm Kiefer** of Germany, whose retrospectives would be shown for three years in a row and in three of Europe's most prestigious art spaces, like pearl beads in a necklace. The three institutions that have recently held retrospectives of Kiefer's works are the Royal Academy of Arts in London (2014), the Pompidou Centre in Paris (2015) and now the Albertina in Vienna (Albertinaplatz 1). All three of these expositions can be described in one word: monumental, for in Kiefer's case monumentality applies to everything from the format of his works to their scope and scale, including the sheer number of cultural-historical references within them. Kiefer is considered to be one of the most influential artists of his generation. Over the course of more than four decades, the paintings, sculptures, installations and drawings that he has created can be found in the world's most prominent public and private collections. He is an artistic alchemist who virtuously manipulates with cultural-historical myths, the Old and New Testament, the Kabbalah, philosophy and poetry. From March 17 to June 19, more than 30 of Kiefer's works will be on display at the retrospective in Vienna.

This year, from March 16-November 27, several museums in the Austrian capital are marking the **100th anniversary of the death of legendary Austrian emperor Franz Joseph I** (1830-1916). The emperor almost perished more than six decades earlier during an attempt on his life in 1853, but was saved from the knife of his would-be assassin by the rigid collar of his uniform. Franz Joseph ruled over Austria – and later, the Austro-Hungarian Empire – for 68 years, passing away at the age of 86 in Schönbrunn Palace, the place of his birth. This month, the palace begins hosting *Man & Monarch*, an exhibition focusing on the ruler, his family tree and most important life events. The Imperial Carriage Museum, for its part, will be showcasing *Majesty & Modesty*, where visitors will be able to see some of the carriages that the emperor used for transport and clothing items from his era. Interestingly, due to the technological advancements of the early 20th century, Franz Joseph became the first emperor to appear in moving pictures and sound recordings (franzjoseph2016.at).

Vienna's newest luxury, the **Grand Ferdinand Hotel** (Schuberting 10-12; grandferdinand.com), can also be associated with Franz Joseph, at least in terms of its location on the famed Ringstraße, which celebrated its 150th birthday last year and which Franz Joseph inaugurated in 1865. Although the décor of the 188-room hotel draws inspiration from the glamorous boulevard outside, one does not feel like one has been transported back into the past. The hotel's motto is beauty, which in its deepest essence cannot be found through money or design elements or other exterior manifestations, but rather through one's attitude toward life – as in the ability to enjoy the time that one has been given on this Earth and all that it offers. **BO**



Photo by Gryffindor



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Violets in Vienna

A very special spring story

Text by **AGRA LIEGE**
Photo by *Alamy*

"If ifs and buts were candy and nuts"... this Christmas rhyme is what comes to my mind when I think of the candied violets of Vienna. If only we were empresses sneaking out for some violet-shaped heavenly sweets, the thought of which has kept us up at night... if only we were in Vienna in spring to see the little blue wonders bloom as far as the eye can see in Prater Park... that's better than Christmas every day!

Few other European empresses have been as popular as Vienna's Sisi (Elizabeth, 1837-1898), who moved to Austria's capital from Bavaria after marrying Emperor Franz Joseph I. Sisi liked to indulge in sweets that were made at *Demel's* – the Imperial and Royal Court Confectionery Bakery. The empress, who didn't take a liking to life in the Austrian court, sometimes snuck out of the palace and walked to *Demel's* to buy candied violets and purple-coloured violet ice cream. Nowadays, less royal visitors to the famous pastry shop and

chocolaterie – which still stands in its original location – can enjoy a variety of different products that have been poured, filled and formed by hand for over 200 years (the shop was established in 1786).

Demel's pretty, candied violets taste light and sweet, like nectar to a hummingbird, and are probably among the prettiest of foods to look at. They are a reminder of the forests in Vienna's large parks, which break out in purple as the end of March approaches. The sight of spring violets blooming in these parks is worth no less than the candies' nectar-like aftertaste. The violets' delicate petals are also a reminder of another era, when the city's park forests were the place to be once the tender warmth of spring arrived. There, life would be lived like there was no tomorrow – secret lovers' meetings, cheerful picnics and dances, privately organised horse races... and if you looked closer, I bet that you might have seen Sisi there, too, the empress who always tried to escape. **BO**

① demel.at



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Text by **AGRA LIEGE**
Photo by **SHAWN FREDERICK, Corbis**

Boxing fever

Private boxing gyms have become all the rage in Europe during the past few years. Countless CEOs, bank managers and even fashion models have become addicted to this fitness trend.

They say that being in shape and being in *fighting* shape are two different states of being, yet boxing – which since its very beginnings has been regarded as one of the most violent sports and could be called anything but playful – is gaining popularity among those seeking creative and less monotonous ways of staying in shape than walking on a treadmill and lifting weights in a fitness training room.

That may in part be thanks to *The Fighter* – the massively popular 2010 docudrama about aspiring boxer Micky Ward, who fights his way out of endless family feuds and eventually wins the world title – and to the more girly *Million Dollar Baby* (2004), in which a working-class woman (played remarkably well by Hillary Swank) puts as much vigour into getting accepted by her mentor and trainer as into the fight itself.

How could boxing seem appealing to those of us who would never dream of (or might even dread) stepping into an actual ring to face a pounding in the glare of bright lights and surrounded by screaming spectators? What makes one decide that aerobics, though active enough, is a bit too repetitive, or that yoga, while soothing and effective, might not cut it when it comes

to instant stress-release? Boxing presents a challenge for the whole body, providing a combination of cardiovascular, strength and endurance training.

Various supermodels have hit the gym, including Brazilian fashion model Gisele Bündchen and Gigi Hadid, whose athletic facility of choice, the *Gotham Gym*, is a favourite among the fashion elite. Another Brazilian model and actress, Adriana Lima, is also no stranger to boxing, and the same goes for Australian supermodel Nadine Leopold. In fact, many more names could be added to this list.

However, before you hit the ring supermodel-style, here's what experienced boxing trainers believe you should be able to accomplish before you start your boxing workouts. You probably won't be tested, but you should be able to run 5-8 kilometres without getting too tired, jump rope for 30 minutes straight and hit a heavy bag for 15 minutes nonstop.

Boxing trainers also like to say that the sport is 90 percent mental and only 10 percent physical. But (there is always a "but"!) that 10 percent requires 100 percent of your physical capacity. Therefore, boxing will likely do a much better job at taking your mind off of other things than many other physical activities. **BO**

THE TREASURES OF ITALIAN HISTORY

BOSCA


Since 1831 **Bosca** secrets are being guarded in the *Cattedrali Sotterranee* wine cellars, that stretch under the Canelli town in Italy and are inscribed on UNESCO cultural heritage list.

ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION MAY HAVE ADVERSE EFFECTS

PARIS' secret charm

Mysteriousness, self-confidence, individuality and irresistible appeal are terms that could be used to describe French women in Paris, the city for lovers. The secret to the seductiveness of French women is simple – they don't try to follow the latest fashion trends, but dress playfully and flirtatiously, wearing sexy underwear, high heels, red lipstick and *Chanel* perfumes.

Charming Frenchmen, for their part, are often creative and free-thinking personalities of the kind that can be seen in the artistic Montmartre district. They don't try to look perfect like Italians do, but prefer retro styles and wear eyeglasses that make them look intriguingly intelligent. Frenchmen adopt an imaginative approach in forming their image. Bohemian musician Serge Gainsbourg, for example, liked to wear seemingly incompatible clothes such as snakeskin boots together with jeans, a sports jacket and a white shirt – and looked extremely stylish.

French fashion is associated with such luxury brands as *Christian Dior*, *Yves Saint Laurent*, *Louis Vuitton*, *Balmain* and *Hermès*, but is perhaps best represented by the combination of simplicity, elegance and luxury in *Chanel*. A number of iconic items designed by Coco Chanel – such as a small black evening gown, tweed costume, 2.55 stitched handbag with chain, two-toned black-tipped shoes that optically reduce the size of the wearer's feet, and pearl necklaces – have become symbols of elegance and remain fashionable to this day. Coco Chanel's fashion philosophy was "always remove, never add", resulting in the company's clean and refined style. The *Chanel N°5* perfume, which Coco Chanel created in 1921, continues to be among the world's best-selling fragrances and is still seen as a symbol of success. **BO**



Christian Dior

Text by **DACE VAIVARA**
Publicity photos, courtesy of the Paris Tourist Office and by Corbis



Sunglasses by *Dior*, EUR 430, Lornete



Chanel N°5 perfume, eau première 35 ml, EUR 69.90, nocibe.fr



Bag by *Valentino*, EUR 2400, stylebop.com



Monsieur Dior book, EUR 76, yoox.com



Shoes by *Christian Louboutin*, EUR 650, net-a-porter.com



Jeans by *Balmain*, EUR 729, stylebop.com

Blouse by *Red Valentino*, EUR 409, stylebop.com

Store addresses in Riga: Lornete, Berga Bazārs, Dzīrnavu iela 84

SHOPPING IN PARIS

Azzedine Alaïa

Tunisian-born French fashion couturier and shoe designer Azzedine Alaïa has dressed royalty and celebrities for decades. With a provocatively open and aristocratically chic style, he dictated fashion trends during the 1980s. The distinctive interior of one of his newest boutiques features stylish shoes and leather accessories, which are displayed like museum artworks on round marble walls. A separate section is devoted to outstandingly tailored clothing.
7 rue de Moussy
① alaia.fr

Louis Vuitton

Even if you are not a fan of this French luxury brand, it is worth visiting the world's largest *Louis Vuitton* store. Designed by American architect Peter Marino, the premises boast an impressive

crystal ceiling and a large selection of bags and clothing. Usually crowded with shoppers, the store serves champagne to its customers, while art aficionados can take an elevator lined with black velvet to the rooftop *Louis Vuitton* art gallery.
101 avenue des Champs-Élysées
① louisvuitton.com

Christian Louboutin

This shop is a veritable paradise for those with a penchant for shoes. Known for its trademark bright red soles, the seductive luxury footwear by French cult designer Christian Louboutin has been favoured by many show business stars, including Madonna, Jennifer Lopez, Gwyneth Paltrow and Blake Lively. It is said that when he opened his first shoe salon in 1991, Louboutin's first client was Princess Caroline of Monaco.
68 rue du Faubourg Saint Honoré
① christianlouboutin.com



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Subtle beauty

Porcelain tiles have traditionally been associated with kitchens and bathrooms, but not anymore, thanks to Italian tile manufacturer *Mutina*. The company's catalogue reads like an anthology of the world's best contemporary designers, each of whom was given complete artistic freedom to think up new creations.

Text by
KRISTĪNE BUDŽE, *Pastaiga*
Photo courtesy of *Mutina*



WHAT ARE THEY?

At a time when most tile manufacturers are obsessed with creating tiles that look like wood, metal or even leather, *Mutina* is discovering new features and reviving forgotten characteristics of porcelain, rather than trying to turn the material into something that it isn't. Although the Italian company is only ten years old, it has generated a veritable revolution in the tile market through its innovative approach to tile design.

WHY ARE THEY SPECIAL?

Mutina's revolution was made possible largely thanks to the company's cooperation with the world's most talented and respected designers. The *Phenomenon* collection by Japanese designer Tokujin Yoshioka was one of *Mutina's* first unconventional tile series. When applied over a large surface, these small tiles of different shapes create an uneven surface that appears to have depth. Yoshioka is known as a demanding illusionist who

seems to transgress all of the laws of physics. He can grow a chair out of crystals and turn a tiled wall into an optically vibrating and shimmering surface.

A completely opposite disposition is displayed by the British duo Edward Barber and Jay Osgerby, the diehard rationalists who designed the torch for the 2012 Summer Paralympic Games in London. This was one of the few times when an item created for a sports competition also became widely discussed among fans of design objects. The delicate play of tones in the British duo's *Mews* collection of *Mutina* tiles was inspired by the London city atmosphere. Spanish-born Patricia Urquiola, for her part, has designed several collections for the Italian tilemaker. One of these is *Tierras*, which bases its concept on sedimentation and Mediterranean craft traditions.

French designer Inga Sempé has also worked with the company and excels at making seemingly mundane items look interesting. The patterns on one collection

of her wall tiles, for example, look like they were drawn with coloured pencils. *Mutina's* latest collection, *Numi*, was created by German designer Konstantin Grcic. In these tiles, the contrasts between shiny and matted surfaces are maximally played out.

HOW DO THEY FIT INTO INTERIORS?

Grcic says that tiles represent a transition between a two- and three-dimensional space. This is particularly evident in *Mutina* tiles, which are either extremely textured in their appearance or create the optical illusion of surface depth. Fortunately, these unique creations do not demand the viewer's full attention, and surfaces covered with *Mutina* tiles can remain as background elements. The tiles are made in nuanced tones, which means that the interior in which they appear should be well planned out so that these delicate tiles are not completely overshadowed by other items and so that their subtle beauty does not remain unnoticed. **BO**

① mutina.it


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KATRĪNA REMESA-VANAGA
Photo by **GATIS GIERTS** (F64)

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Text by **ILZE POLE**
Photos courtesy of
IGNATZ DEN OUDEN

IGNATZ DEN OUDEN (48),

from the Netherlands,
captain of *Bombardier Dash8 Q400* aircraft
Hours flown: 9,700



SNAPSHOT TO SHARE

This photo was taken on a flight from Riga to Helsinki. If I am not mistaken, then this is the island of Naissaar, just north of Tallinn over the Gulf of Finland. I remember reading somewhere that just six families live there.

FAVOURITE RESTAURANT

I fancy good food and I like to cook. Luckily, Riga has a lot of very good places to eat. I like to go to *Ala*, *Innocent Café*, *Dome Steak House*, *Kolonāde*, *Kabuki* and *Rienzi* near the national opera for a good cappuccino and the best chocolate.

BEST THING ABOUT BEING A PILOT

Of course, being in the sky, but also everything connected with that – my colleagues, the working environment, and being responsible for a safe and smooth flight.

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

All of the buttons and lights on the control panels. Once I also heard a passenger saying: "Help! Can you see? It's all white!" when we were in the clouds.

This is your captain speaking

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

HOW IT ALL **BEGAN**

I grew up in the eastern, more rural part of the Netherlands. As a kid I was mad about airplanes. I remember sitting in a car and imagining being a pilot flying low over the ground. When I was 16, I visited a German glider club not far from my home with my younger brother and best friend. We flew as guests on a flight and were all deeply impressed, so my brother and I joined the club for a couple of years. A pilot's education costs a lot of money, and at the time I thought it would be far too expensive for me. Still, at the age of 26 I decided to go for it and fulfilled my dream of becoming a pilot. After that I flew for two Dutch companies. I spent a lot of time in Spain and Nigeria with the last one, *Denim Air*. Then the airline went bankrupt and I applied for a position at *airBaltic*. I started here five years ago and do my job with great pleasure. The *Q400* is a marvellous airplane! I am also about to become an instructor on the flight simulator, something that I am looking forward to very much. And by the way, my brother and my best friend have become pilots as well!

LAST **DESTINATION** FLOWN TO AS A PASSENGER

Valencia, for a short holiday together with my wife, who is still living and working in the Netherlands. It's one of my favourite cities in Spain because of the beautiful historic buildings and the *Las Fallas* festival held there in March.

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

It's boring but it's the truth: my wallet, my keys and my phone.

FAVOURITE **BOOK**

I don't read a lot of books, but I did read the book *Baltische Zielen (Baltic Souls)* by Dutch author Jan Brokken with a lot of interest. I learned a lot about the history and people of the Baltic States during the past century.

HOBBIES

Computers. I confiscated my father's brand new computer when I was 14, and since then I have had a lot of different computers. Alpine skiing. I love being in the mountains and I like the snow. Cycling. I am Dutch, so I have ridden bicycles since the age of four. I still go to the airport by bike whenever I can.



FAVOURITE **RUNWAY**

The runway in Ålesund. It is on an island just before the beautiful Norwegian fjords.

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Text by **ROGER NORUM**
and **KATE ŠMITE**
Publicity photos

Cooking up a storm

Home kitchen gadgets that will revolutionise meal time

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Lunchbox

Try this easy Thai-inspired take-your-lunch-to-work recipe.

Ingredients (single portion)

For the salad:

100 g rice noodles
1 tsp. sea salt
4-5 mushrooms (preferably organic)
50 ml rice vinegar
1 tsp. brown sugar
1 carrot, grated into narrow strips
4-5 radishes, cut into thin slices
1/2 short cucumber, cut into sticks
1 tbsp. chopped herbs of your choice (spring onions, coriander or parsley)
1 tsp. sesame seeds
2 chicken legs

For the honey-lime marinade:

1/2 lime (juice)
1 tbsp. olive oil
1 tbsp. rice vinegar
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
1 tsp. honey
1 pinch sea salt and ground pepper

For the Thai sauce:

1 tbsp. honey
1/2 tbsp. soy sauce
1 tbsp. rice vinegar
1 tbsp. vegetable oil
1/2 tsp. sesame seed oil
1 garlic clove
1 tsp. lime juice
1/2 tsp. finely grated fresh ginger
1/2 tbsp. natural peanut butter (optional)
1/2 tsp. sweet chilli sauce (optional)

Preparation

Take all of the ingredients for the honey-lime marinade and mix them together. Put the chicken legs into the marinade and set aside for 30 minutes. Then place the chicken legs into a baking pan and bake in an oven at 200°C for about 25-30 minutes.

Cut the mushrooms into thin slices and pour the rice vinegar over them. Sprinkle with the brown sugar and 1/2 tsp. salt. Let stand for 15 minutes and then drain.

Boil the noodles in salt water, in accordance with the instructions on the packaging. Drain the water and rinse the noodles with clean, cold water. Mix in the sesame seed oil so that the noodles don't clump together.

Make the Thai sauce by blending all of the ingredients together. The sauce can be prepared for several portions and kept in the fridge for a week.

Arrange the noodles, deboned chicken, drained mushrooms, vegetables and herbs into your takeaway food container and sprinkle with sesame seeds. The Thai sauce can be poured over the meal as well, or you can bring the sauce along in a separate container and pour it over your lunch shortly before you eat it.

Tip

Prepare this meal in the evening and leave it in the fridge overnight. Then all that you will have to do the following morning is put the lunch into your takeaway container before heading off for work. **BO**

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andasstuff.wordpress.lv
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Modernist cuisine

Four major food trends set by intellectual foodies

Dear restaurant chefs, please let us **take a breather from thick sauces**, purées and similar creamy pastes. In their place, spoil us with oven-fried vegetables that have been sprinkled with olive oil. Carrots, pumpkins, beets and potatoes are wonderful vegetables and sumptuous in their natural form. Don't blend and press them, but serve them in wholesome pieces and you will make us happy. The same applies to main courses like meats and fish. These nourishing foods do not need experiments with peculiar shrimp sauce garnishes.

It's also time to hold off eating brunches or rich buffet type meals that leave you with a heavy stomach and with the guilty conscience of having overeaten. Let's **enjoy breakfast** in the true sense of the word. I will never forget the mornings that I spent in Melbourne, Australia, where one can savour a breakfast of avocado toast with eggs Benedict and superb coffee at practically every café. Enjoying such fortifying and fresh meals is a beautiful ritual in itself, the modern-day definition of a perfect breakfast.

Buying groceries from a local supplier and not in a supermarket should be on everyone's daily agenda. Think about France, where they don't say: "I'm going to the bakery," but rather: "I'm going to the baker's." Seek out trustworthy salespeople at food markets and at small, quality food shops. Once you do, your food purchases will become better thought-out and the meals that you prepare at home will be healthier. Knowing where the food that you put on your plate has come from is a wise investment into your health and well-being.

The preparation of meals at home has already become a subject of interest for socio-anthropologists. Having eaten countless fast-food meals by our television sets, many of us are once again appreciating the chance to sit at our dining tables with our families and friends. I can imagine few better things than a long and unhurried dinner filled with lively conversation and laughter. So, what should we put onto the table? Fresh, sliced vegetables that can be dipped in olive oil and salt, a simply baked main course and a cake prepared according to grandma's recipe, because that still remains the tastiest dessert of all! **BO**



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Text by **LIENE PĀLĒNA**
 Photos courtesy of
INGUS BAJĀRS
 Interior architect:
ANNA BUTELE, annvil.lv

Eclectic taste

Baltic Outlook takes a tour inside a gorgeous house in Riga, where one will find an eclectic mix of family treasures, travel souvenirs and gems of contemporary design



They say that a home is a mirror of its owner. That is certainly true in this colourful private residence, tucked away at the edge of a sprawling Riga housing estate. The house's owner, Jānis Peide, is an inveterate world traveller and a co-owner of the *Imagehouse* interior salon. Both of Jānis' passions – travelling and design – are manifestly evident in his 230 m² home.

"I wanted a house where I have chosen everything, starting from the floorboards and ending with the décor. It was important for me to create an environment with the highest possible degree of natural materials such as wood, metal, stone and

glass. I am the product of two nationalities and this is reflected in the space that surrounds me. For example, hardwood boards were used for the flooring and represent Latvia to me, while natural slate was skilfully incorporated into the bathroom. Slate is used a lot in Tallinn's Old Town and elsewhere in Estonia, where I was born," Jānis explains.

The result is a dream home in an exciting eclectic style, where ethnic items from various parts of the world are shown prominently. Jānis has vivid childhood memories of his grandparents' apartment in Tallinn, which was full of ethnic souvenirs that they had brought back from various countries and looked like a museum.

"I was brought up in that atmosphere, which is why I really like a mixture of styles that incorporates modern furniture together with Oriental and ethnic elements."

◀ PLAYS OF LIGHT

Since the home interior is relatively dark due to the dark grey walls and selected materials, artificial lighting is an important interior element, appearing in various forms and degrees of brightness.

"I actually enjoy the slightly dark ambience of the premises, but whenever I want more light or whenever I have guests visiting, then all of the lighting is turned on. Each room has at least two areas with technical and decorative lighting. I have dimmers installed in many places, which lets me conveniently set the light intensity to the level that I want and lets me use all of these lights efficiently," says Jānis.

▼ VARIATIONS OF ONE COLOUR

Jānis calls his bedroom the Green Room. Green is the colour of life and the owner's favourite colour as well. One can see it in the leather tiles on the walls, the bedspread, the chair and the curtains. The Oriental carpets, for their part, add a special aura to the entire house. Incidentally, one of the things that you immediately notice is the sense of tidiness and order in all of the rooms. Practically all of the surfaces, including in the kitchen, are bare. Jānis says that this was a conscious choice, because he doesn't like cluttered spaces.



▲ THE **MOST COMFORTABLE SOFA** IN THE WORLD

In the living room – right under the roof windows that let in natural daylight and a *Tom Dixon* lamp that is two metres in diameter – the place of honour has been accorded to what Jānis says may be the most comfortable sofa in the world. The *Flexform* sofa is so comfortable that once you sit down on it, you won't want to get up for a long time. The sofa is also quite convenient for reading one of the many literary classics that line the walls of the family library.

► **KITCHEN ADDICTION**

To Jānis' own surprise, the kitchen with a view of the garden has become his favourite spot in the house. The owner spends a lot of time in that room because he enjoys cooking meals there and using the kitchen counter as an office desk.



◀ **HEIRLOOM FROM MOTHER**

This *Singer* sewing machine once belonged to Jānis' mother and has been transformed into a bathroom sink base.

"My mother also used it as a design element, so I decided to continue the tradition and revive this historic object."



▲ **EVERY LITTLE THING**

Jānis obtained many of the design objects for his home at world design fairs. One of these is the golden hand-painted ceramic *Hope Bird*, which represents an optimistic approach to the future and which was designed by Jaime Hayon. Along with great works by famous designers, the house is full of souvenirs from Jānis' many trips abroad, including a statuette of the Indian goddess Lakshmi, which symbolises prosperity. After haggling at length with a shrewd Indian antique salesman, he managed to get the price down from 200 US dollars to 30. **BO**

Text by **UNA MEISTERE**,
anothertravelguide.com
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ECCENTRIC AMSTERDAM

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Even though the March sunshine is already luring the first people to sit out on the terraces of Amsterdam's cafés, this is the best time of year to enjoy both faces of the city – that is, its street life and the part hidden to casual passers-by. In fact, the more hidden part of the city is full of all sorts of mysteries, oddities and eccentricities. Long famous for its tolerant attitude towards everybody and everything, Amsterdam remains so to this day. It's difficult to imagine better proof of this tolerance than the current *Easy Virtue* exhibition at the Van Gogh Museum. Created in cooperation with the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, the exhibition is dedicated to the world's oldest profession – prostitution – and its visual representation in fine art from 1850 to 1910. A version of the same exhibition, titled *Splendour and Misery: Pictures of Prostitution, 1850-1910*, could be seen at the Parisian museum late last year, where it sparked a substantial uproar and stirred up a storm of passions. In any case, this is the first time such an extensive exhibition has been dedicated to this controversial form of employment.

The exhibition brings together over 100 paintings and drawings made by such geniuses as Edgar Degas, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Vincent van Gogh, Edvard Munch, Édouard Manet and Pablo Picasso. Set among the artworks are various intriguing objects connected to the ancient profession, including an extravagant 19th-century bed, bordello maps for tourists, a wax figure of a syphilis-infected priestess of love and a police register containing photos of convicted prostitutes, making the exhibition's very layout one of its strengths.

Prostitution was quite the popular theme among artists in the mid-19th century. The profession prospered and flourished across the board, from the highest-ranking courtesans basking amongst the privileged classes and often

Photo by Ossip van Duivenbode



Tassenmuseum or Museum of Bags and Purses



Belle bronze sculpture on Old Church Square (Oudekerksplein), made in honour of prostitutes all around the world



The Client by Jean-Louis Forain can be seen at the new Easy Virtue exhibition in the Van Gogh Museum. The exhibition reveals the world's oldest profession through the eyes of famous 19th-century artists

serving as muses to artists, all the way down to the women of ill repute working in the bordellos. At the same time, society was passionately discussing the adverse effects of prostitution. Together, all of this lustre and destruction is reflected in that era's artwork, from the salons of wealthy courtesans to the prisons where prostitutes with venereal diseases were sent.

Of course, the world's oldest profession is still with us today. While the Van Gogh Museum, which was visited by 1.9 million people in 2015 (when it marked 125 years since the famous artist's death), is the unparalleled flagship of the city's tourism industry, a no less popular destination among tourists, although probably not as widely advertised, is Amsterdam's so-called Red Light District. It is located in De Wallen, the city's oldest district. The crowds of people who wander into its network of narrow streets and occasionally fall victim to its nimble pickpockets are most likely not there for the architecture or history, nor are they drawn by literary works or the melancholy melody of Jacques Brel's legendary hit *Le Port d'Amsterdam*. This soulful anthem to the seaman's life in Amsterdam was adapted by David Bowie for his *Pinups* album in 1973. The recently deceased superstar sings the well-known lyrics in the slightly raspy voice of a bard:

...In the port of Amsterdam, there's a sailor who drinks,
And he drinks and he drinks and he drinks once again.
He drinks to the health of the whores of Amsterdam
Who have promised their love to a thousand other men...

Even though Amsterdam has since lost the port-city feeling that Brel sang about, the Red Light District continues to exist despite the lack of sailors who were formerly such loyal clients. In other words, as long as there's a demand, there will be a supply. Prostitution has been decriminalised in the Netherlands since 1830, and it was officially declared a legal profession in 1988. Official regulations adopted in 2000 require prostitutes to register as independent entrepreneurs and pay taxes. After all, the Dutch believe that prohibiting the trade will not make it disappear, only make it more difficult to control.

Amsterdam is also the only city in the world to have a statue honouring prostitution displayed in a public space. Former

prostitute Mariska Majoor provided the initiative, and the small sculpture created by Dutch artist Els Rijerse was erected right across from Oude Kerk, Amsterdam's oldest church, in 2007. Named Belle, the bronze female figure in high-heeled platform shoes flaunts her bosom in a typical streetwalker pose by a doorway at the top of some granite steps.

"Respect sex workers all over the world" is written on a plaque at the base of the sculpture. Majoor has also established the Prostitution Information Centre (PIC), a welfare organisation that informs the public about prostitution, publishes literature devoted to the theme and organises an hour-and-a-half-long Red Light Tour for curious tourists every Wednesday and Saturday. The Amsterdam tourism website amsterdam.info, for its part, provides visitors with practical information on how to approach a prostitute.

As can be seen at the *Naked Truth* exhibition at Amsterdam's Rembrandt House Museum, the venerable Renaissance genius also used prostitutes as models for his artwork. During the 17th century, Rembrandt and his assistants embraced the new trend of using live models, but his approach differed greatly from that of other artists. Rembrandt chose natural and realistic models, deliberately straying from contemporary ideals of beauty. He did not hide their wrinkles or sagging breasts or bulging stomachs, which elicited sharp criticism from others. The *Naked Truth* exhibition contains over 50 of the master's paintings and drawings, along with books drawn from various European and American museums and private collections. These are supplemented with photographs by Dutch artist Carla van de Puttelaar, who is known for her portraits, nudes and refined sense of light and shade and thus sometimes likened to a modern-day Rembrandt.

Museums devoted to cats, eyeglasses, pipes and funerals

The fact that Amsterdam is home to a variety of human foibles and eccentricities is also reflected in its offering of museums. It's hard to find a more diverse and intriguing concentration of exhibition spaces anywhere else in the world. True, the word

"museum" might not be the correct description; instead, they are "cabinets of curiosities". But there is a very rational explanation for their origins. You see, collecting is more or less in the blood of the Dutch. Since Amsterdam was (and still is) an important port, aristocrats and travellers living there in the 16th and 17th centuries competed with each other in collecting the most exotic finds from around the world. They brought home stuffed animals, rare plants, sea creatures and much more

Amsterdam has recently gained a new epicentre of gastronomy in the form of the **Foodhallen** (Bellamyplein 51; dehallen-amsterdam.nl), a vast indoor food market. Located in a former tram depot at the western edge of the city, it houses countless eateries of all sorts and styles. The huge industrial hangar also has a movie theatre (*Filmhallen*), a hotel, several design studios, a library/reading room and – as could be expected in the Netherlands – a bicycle repair shop. The place is a self-sufficient microcosm where one could spend an entire day, and even a night after one's feet have given out.

Ask any Amsterdamer what a visitor should definitely do in the Dutch capital, and you will be told to take a boat cruise along the city's canals, which extend for 75 kilometres and whose 400th anniversary was marked in 2011. The **Het Grachtenhuis** (Herengracht 386;

from the far corners of the earth, and some of these collections were, naturally, turned into small, private museums.

For example, in a historical 19th-century building in the heart of the city you'll find a museum devoted exclusively to cats and their depiction in art over the course of several centuries. Called De KattenKabinet (The Cat Cabinet), this small sanctum to cats occupies a 17th-century-style apartment, with the interior design and aura alone contributing at least half of the museum's charm. There's good reason parts of the thriller *Ocean's Twelve* (2004) was filmed in the museum. Cats observe visitors from posters, paintings, sculptures and drawings in every nook and cranny. And they're not all the friendly, furry type of feline.

After all, over the course of history, cats have often been shrouded in mystery and superstition. Their independent nature has at times taken them far from the cuddly image that leads many a modern-day cat owner to post cute kitty pictures on the Internet. But possibly the biggest surprise in this museum is some of the artwork you'll find gracing the walls, which includes such classic names as Rembrandt, Picasso and Toulouse-Lautrec. And, oh yes, the several "real-life exhibits" inhabiting the museum.

A former banker named Bob Meijer (who lives on the upper floor of the building) established the cat



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museum in memory of his dear pet, John Pierpont Morgan. Meijer's relationship with his tomcat was so close that every year he gave him a work of art as a birthday gift. Each artwork was cat-themed, and eventually the collection grew into the present museum. J. P. Morgan lived to the ripe old age of 17, which meant that he left quite an inheritance when he passed away. But cats have played a significant role in Amsterdam's history as well, serving as a natural form of pest control and thinning the ranks of rats living in the city's canals.

Continuing on the route of unusual stops through Amsterdam, we come across a museum where people are allowed to smoke...but only pipes. Considering the city's widely known propensity towards all types of intoxicating substances, the fact that one can smoke there is actually not surprising. The Pijpenkabinet, or Pipe Museum, is located in a 17th-century canal-side building and covers 2,500 years of smoking history. Here you'll find a pipe made of crab legs, South American Indian pipes and 4,000-year-old pipes found in a burial ground in Laos. You'll see pipes made of clay, wood, porcelain and metal as well as a colourful, decorative Chinese opium pipe – in all, over 2,000 objects.

During the 17th century, smoking a pipe was a mark of status, indicating the social and material position of the pipe's owner. The longer a man's pipe, the more influential he was thought to be, and only the lowest-class workers did not smoke. As often happens in such situations, the idea for this unusual museum grew out of one man's great passion. Amsterdam native Don Duco began collecting pipes in 1969, and his collection (containing over 20,000 objects) is now considered to be the largest in Europe.

The Museum of Bags and Purses, for its part, houses the largest collection of its sort in the world, thus proving that the people of Amsterdam at least do not lack for self-confidence. The museum has over 5,000 bags and purses dating from the 15th century to classics of modern design. The private museum resembles a small luxury purse shop and is based on the private collection of antique dealer Hendrikje Ivo. In a moment of weakness 30 years ago, Ivo bought a purse made in 1820. Later, the collecting bug spread to

her whole family, and her husband and son also began collecting. When their collection reached 3,000 items, the family decided to open it to the public.

At first, the museum was located in a private villa on the outskirts of Amsterdam, but it moved to its present location in 2007. The original 17th- and 18th-century ceiling paintings can be still seen in two of the museum's rooms. One of the museum's newest acquisitions is a handbag once owned by Margaret Thatcher and bought late last year at *Christie's* in London. According to the auction house's records, it sold for 22,000 euros. Thatcher was known for her handbags, and this particular exemplar is made all the more valuable for being at the British prime minister's side when she met with Ronald Reagan in 1984.

The Brilmuseum (Museum of Spectacles) is also the fruit of a single passionate family of collectors. Located in another of Amsterdam's historical buildings, it provides an exciting journey back in time and into the bowels of the Negen Straatjes (Nine Streets) neighbourhood. The owners of the museum are a family of passionate eyewear collectors who have been practicing their hobby for four generations. Enter the museum through a 1930s-style optician's shop, where you can buy never-worn 100-year-old eyeglass frames, replicas of various celebrities' glasses and the newest high-tech eyewear styles. The museum covers two whole storeys and educates visitors about the last 700 years of eyewear history. Probably the most extravagant items in the museum are the carnival masks containing eyeglass lenses, which allowed wearers to remain anonymous but continue to observe others without hindrance.

But can any of the above-mentioned museums compete with...a funeral museum? The Dutch Funeral Museum is located right by the entrance to De Nieuwe Ooster cemetery, which was founded almost 100 years ago. And, although the imagination conjures plenty of creepy scenarios, the museum is actually very modern and laconic. In an ascetic and intelligent manner, it tells about that inescapable aspect of each and every person's life, which we usually try to avoid thinking about if at all possible. Opened in

2007, each of the museum's four rooms is devoted to various rituals related to death and burial. For example, one room contains information about the burial traditions of different religions and cultures, from Protestants, Catholics, Jews and Muslims to the Chinese and Creole.

A list of Amsterdam's strange museums must also definitely include the tattoo, sex, torture and human deformities (Museum Vrolik) museums. Also the Hash, Marihuana and Hemp Museum, which recently opened a branch in Barcelona. This museum's founder, Ben Dronker, began collecting items related to cannabis after smoking the herb for the first time at age 19, and he turned his hobby into a museum in 1985. The exposition tells about the age-old relationship between humans and this unique, multifaceted plant – about the use of cannabis in medicine, the fashion industry, agriculture, science, art and, of course, its consumption in the forms of hashish and marijuana.

Did you know that cannabis was the second most popular ingredient in medicines up until 1937? The museum has an impressive collection of cannabis medicine bottles dating back to the 19th century and various other artefacts related to cannabis use. It also has unique pieces of 16th- and 17th-century Dutch artwork depicting the smoke houses (*rookhuizen*) of that era – the equivalent of today's "coffee shops" – and a watercolour of hemp spinners by Piet



March marks the beginning of the famous tulip season in Amsterdam, which runs until early May

hetgrachtenhuis.nl) is dedicated to this network, offering a fantastic exhibition about the history of Amsterdam's canals in five interactive rooms. One of the rooms, for example, brilliantly illustrates how millions of piles were driven into a swamp that lay below sea level to create what is now Amsterdam's historical architecture.

For a special gastronomical experience, go to **Kas** (Kamerlingh Onneslaan 3; restaurantdekas.nl). The

Mondrian, all alongside a variety of psychedelic and political posters and clothing, shoes, accessories, oils and even automobile door panels made of hemp.

Tulip mania, microbes and Europe's building

And don't forget the tulips – especially considering that "tulip mania" strikes Amsterdam this month. According to legend, the Netherlands' fetish for tulips came from the Ottoman Empire. The first tulip bulbs are said to have arrived in Amsterdam from Constantinople, now known as Istanbul, in the 16th century. The tulip business quickly gathered steam during the Netherlands' 17th-century economic boom, when growers competed with

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one another regarding who could grow the most beautiful flowers. People were willing to pay unimaginable amounts of money for a single tulip bulb, and the flower became an obsession of the aristocracy. The flowers have yet to shed this privileged status.

A tulip bourse was established in 1636, and people parted with land, homes and even heirloom jewels in order to invest in tulip bulbs. By 1637, however, the market bubble had burst and the term “tulipomania” had entered the Dutch language, which to this day refers to any absurd, risky business. Nevertheless, the Dutch (and tourists) still love tulips. Learn more about the tulip madness of the past at the small tulip museum in Amsterdam’s Jordaan neighbourhood.

The newest addition to the city’s museums is *Micropia*, the first microbe museum in the world. The *Micropia* project, which cost 10 million euros and opened its doors to the public in 2014, is an initiative by Haig Balian, the director of *Artis*, who is said to have nurtured the idea for 12 years. He likes to call the museum an “interactive microbe zoo” and believes that, as opposed to the world of animals and plants, the world of microbes, which also plays an essential role in the survival of our planet as well as ourselves, has been undeservedly short-changed.

Even though the words “microbe” and “bacteria” are stereotypically associated with illnesses, the creators of the museum wish to show the positive side of these beings and their integral part in the chain of life. Equipped with countless microscopes, projectors and interactive installations, the museum feels more like a scientific research lab. Visitors are even scanned in the elevator and told how many microbes live on their eyelashes. It turns out that each of us, on a daily basis, carries not only a certain amount of clothing relative to the weather conditions and our social status, but also

restaurant is located in a former greenhouse built in 1926 in the middle of Frankendael Park. It doesn’t have a menu, so visitors are in for a surprise every day. In addition, everything takes place without a hurry. This means that while your food is slowly being prepared, you can take a walk through the rest of the greenhouses, where many of the restaurant’s ingredients grow lush and green.

Not only is the giant and opulent **Tuschinski cinema house** (Reguliersbreestraat 26-34) one of Amsterdam’s favourite buildings, it is also one of the most beautiful movie theatres in the world. Jewish tailor Abraham Icek Tuschinski, an immigrant from Poland, commissioned the building in 1921, with the determination to employ only the best people, ideas and materials in the construction. The façade and interior feature a successful blend of Art Deco, Neo-Gothic and Amsterdam School styles that reflected Tuschinski’s personal taste. The imposing façade is adorned on both sides by tall towers, while inside, the main auditorium seats 740, including on sofas and in private boxes where wine and snacks are served.

1.5 kilograms of microbes. If that were not the case, we would have little chance of survival.

Finally, Amsterdam is the home of one of today’s most revolutionary ideas involving future museums – the 3D Print Canal House, which is at once a museum and an experimental laboratory. An initiative of the Dutch architectural firm *DUS*, the ambitious goal of the project is to study how 3D printing technology can be used in the construction of buildings. Currently, they are building a life-size house – a real and authentic Amsterdam-style canal house – with 3D-printed components. Visitors can observe the process in the 3D Print Canal House’s improvised exhibition hall as well as outside in the courtyard, where completed sections of the house are being set up. At first, the project took up relatively little space, but the improvised museum was enlarged last year and now occupies about 3,000 square metres.

The 3D Print Canal House and *DUS* recently created another large project, namely, the Europe Building. This large, 20x30-metre construction was built for the Netherlands as it took over the European Union presidency this January. The gigantic structure partially made using 3D printing technology stands on the grounds of the National Maritime Museum, which is the official site for EU meetings during the Netherlands’ presidency. It is estimated that 17,500 people will visit the structure as they gather there for at least 135 meetings over the six months of the presidency. On the outside, the European Building resembles stylised sails, and the “green” structure is equipped with solar batteries. Intended as a temporary object, the building is made of bioplastics and can be recycled after the country’s presidency ends. This is the first time in the world that a 3D-printed building of this size has been publicly exhibited. Don’t miss the opportunity to see it!

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Could you name three highlights of this year's Holland Festival programme that are absolute must-sees and why?

The Hour We Knew Nothing of Each Other (Die Stunde da wir nichts voneinander wussten) by Austrian novelist Peter Handke. This is the opening performance of the Holland Festival 2016, directed by Ene-Liis Semper and Tiit Ojasoo and produced by the Thalia Theatre in Hamburg. It's a play with no words but a lot to say about contemporary Europe (June 4–6, Stadsschouwburg Amsterdam).

The Syrian National Orchestra for Arabic Music with Damon Albarn and guests. Reunited for the first time since the civil war broke out in Syria, this inspiring night will celebrate the richness of Syrian culture and Arab music (June 22, Royal Theatre Carré).

The Encounter by Simon McBurney and Complicite. In an imaginative narrative form and

A gorgeous city for everybody

Start getting ready for the Holland Festival, which Amsterdam will be hosting from June 4 to 26. Established in 1947, the festival is the leading performing arts festival in the Netherlands and a veritable parade of excellence in opera, theatre, dance and music. The programme usually incorporates works created especially for the festival and features several world premieres, while providing an opportunity to experience exciting art events from elsewhere as well. With a focus this year on Europe, the 2016 edition is subtitled *Edges of Europe*. It will examine the continent's history, increasing diversity and

using innovative sound technology, McBurney tells a moving story about the encounter between two worlds, about brotherhood and solidarity and, in the end, about love.

Artist Marlene Dumas once said in an interview that Amsterdam is a wonderful place for artists. What do you think?

Amsterdam is a gorgeous city, for everybody. It has a lot to offer for artists: good museums, galleries, theatres and, of course, the Holland Festival!

What do you love most about Amsterdam?

It just being Amsterdam – a not-too-big metropolis with a historic city centre, a modern atmosphere, great neighbourhoods outside the city centre (be sure not to miss at least one of those), nice people (most of the time) and a no-nonsense mentality.

Is there anything about Amsterdam that bothers you?

It should not become the "Venice of the North", meaning a city that is like an open-air museum for visitors. Instead, it should remain a city for both residents and tourists: lively, open-minded and with great cultural diversity.

What are real Amsterdamers like?

Is there such a thing as a real Amsterdamer? There are so many different Amsterdamers, but I like to think that most of them are tolerant, kind and lively, although they can be a bit morose.

Describe a perfect day in the city.

A sunny but not-too-warm day, which starts with a run in the Flevopark, a coffee on Javastraat, a nice day at the office, drinks with friends and a great performance at the Stadsschouwburg at night.

specific points of tension, the most central of these being, of course, the current refugee crisis.

Several favourites will return to the festival this year, including British director Simon McBurney with his newest show, *The Encounter*. World-famous dancer and choreographer Akram Khan, whose style blends ancient Indian dance with contemporary Western dance, will take to the ballet stage with *Until the Lions*.

Annet Lekkerkerker, the managing director of the Holland Festival, was happy to share some of her thoughts about Amsterdam with *Baltic Outlook*.

What are your favourite architectural landmarks in Amsterdam?

You can and should not miss the canals – walk the Prinsengracht from the Amstel to the IJ, turn left or right once every 500 metres to walk one of the other canals for a while, do some nice shopping, and visit the Museum Willet-Holthuysen on Herengracht to get an impression of 17th-century living for the rich (willetholthuysen.nl). To really get to know the Amsterdam School style of architecture, visit the Het Schip museum (hetschip.nl).

What are your favourite restaurants/cafés and why?

Wilde Zwijnen on Javaplein and *Bar Basquiat* and *Bedford-Stuyvesant* on Javastraat – great food and/or coffee, nice atmosphere, local produce, pleasant neighbourhood.

If Amsterdam were a perfume, which notes would come to mind?

Air, water, stone and a light touch of something dark. **BO**



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DANGEROUS

Text by **ILMĀRS LĪKUMS**
Photos courtesy of
INGUS AUGSTKALNS



Ingus Augstkalns (36) of Latvia is best known in the Baltics as the founder of the *Cube* interactive media agency. He is also known for surprising the world with an air acrobatics show at the closing ceremonies of the 2006 Winter Olympic Games in Turin. This display helped to turn *Aerodium* vertical wind tunnels into a renowned export product. Lately, Ingus has been captivated by BASE jumping (parachuting or wingsuit flying from a fixed structure or cliff), an extreme sport that is prohibited in some places due to the relatively low altitudes of the jumps. Last November, Ingus joined only a few dozen people who have flown in a wingsuit through the dangerous “Crack” gorge in Walenstadt, Switzerland.

Maybe we are in Riga, but maybe not. That shall remain our secret. Having left our cars at the edge of an access road, we continue along a footpath toward a canal. After walking a couple of hundred metres, we brush some reeds aside and continue our expedition along the frozen ice surface. At 8:30 in the evening in early February, the city is enveloped in darkness. A few minutes later, we head back towards dry land and file past a red warning sign, which I don't

bother to read but which probably says something like “entry is forbidden”. Then we trudge for a while through the snow before returning to the ice. It's spooky and calm in the deceptive way that you see in the movies, right before something terrible happens.

There it is! In front of us stands a 100-metre-high tower, whose summit is almost invisible in the darkness. We have reached our goal.

“You can climb up on top of that platform,” says my travel companion, pointing to what looks like

an observation deck that is very difficult to see, approximately 80 metres above the ground. He shows me his parachute bag and small pilot chute, which he will throw out into the airstream at the end of his free fall.

“No, I don't wear a helmet, because that looks suspicious,” he adds, straightening out a hat that looks like a wolf's head.

We step onto the tower's concrete base and start clambering up its metal frame, with Ingus leading the way. In order to reach the tower's vertical stepladder, we first have to navigate its base supporting struts. Even with a hefty dose of adrenaline flowing through my veins, I probably look like a slow-moving, sedated sloth. My knees get banged up and the vibrations that ring through the seemingly monolithic structure unnerve me. I stop at a tiny “balcony” that covers approximately one square metre, 18 or maybe 20 metres above the ground. That's high enough for me. I decide to stay put and wait there.

For what seems like a very long time, absolutely nothing happens. Ingus yells at me from above, but I can't understand what he's saying. I certainly don't want to miss the moment when he plummets past me towards the ground, so I stand motionless like a statue, my head craned back and my mouth wide open, probing the darkness with my eyes and keeping my ears pricked to catch any sound that differs from the whooshing of the wind.

Finally! Through the criss-crossing support struts against the backdrop of the dark night sky, I spot Ingus' straight figure falling downward for one...two...three seconds, followed by an unbelievably loud thwack. A colourful parachute snaps open halfway down the tower and drifts down onto the ice of the canal.

I freeze up for a moment. Like a chameleon, I stare with one eye at the spot where Ingus has landed, while scanning the surrounding area with my other eye to detect any movement by unwanted visitors. It seems that nobody has spotted us. Of course, we're not criminals, and we're abiding by the unwritten BASE jumpers' code of ethics, which stipulates that nothing should ever be broken or damaged in carrying out a jump.

I start my way downwards. My hands break out into cramps about halfway into my descent, but eventually I reach *terra firma*. It's hard for me to describe my feelings when I catch up with Ingus on the ice. I begin to doubt whether I should even share with others what we have just experienced, because I have just witnessed something extremely intimate – like a birth or a death, although of course nobody planned on dying this evening. I have just taken part in an exceptional ritual, and the person who took me along this evening is feeling very special right now.

On our way back to the car, I feel more relaxed, freely swinging the long wooden staff that is supposed

to help me get out of the water in case I fall through the ice. Ingus tells me about different BASE jumping techniques, about a hair-raising experience during an attempt to climb up a jumping platform in a neighbouring country, about cultural differences in various lands, about the special feeling of seeing everything on a different scale from the jumpoff point, and about the few seconds that pass between the start of the jump and the opening of the parachute.

Still pumped up with adrenaline, we drive around the highest buildings in the centre of the city. I learn that in order to carry out a BASE jump, you have to conduct various preparatory procedures that could be compared to secret service operations. The jump will be very brief, but the work involved in setting it up will take much longer. I can't help feeling that it isn't worth taking the immense risks to feel like Superman for a few short seconds. But that's not important. After we part for the evening, I still feel elated, as if I have visited a sacred temple. Since I can't think of anything



In a free fall over Latvia at a height of four kilometres. At this high altitude, one can even play with the clouds

Still pumped up with adrenaline, we drive around the highest buildings in the centre of the city

better to do, I down part of a vodka bottle that I find lying in my freezer.

About a week later, we meet again under completely mundane circumstances. The aura of magic and wonder has gone. Ingus seems slightly apathetic and I'm convinced that it's not only because “we had a party after work the night before last.” In any case, from this point on I'll let him speak for himself.

The first thing that comes to my mind when thinking about jumping with a parachute or wingsuit is the need to overcome a powerful feeling of fear. Most of us try to avoid situations that bring on a fear of dying...

You know, as a child I was afraid of the dark. I lived



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in Imanta [*a residential district at the outskirts of Riga – ed.*] and went to school in Old Riga. At that time, the streets were not nearly as well-lit as they are now and Old Riga after sunset seemed like a pretty dark and sinister place. I loathed that restrictive feeling of fear, so I forced myself not to avoid dark places when I was out of the house.

At one point, something snapped, and then I almost started to enjoy the darkness that had previously been such a source of fear. Since then, I've overcome other types of fear in a similar manner. Once you overcome a fear, you obtain a new handle on life and expand your playing field. The gains are always proportional to the investment, and the emotions and sensations that you obtain from a parachute jump are so powerful that I'm ready to take the risk and overcome my fears.

When our paths first crossed 13 years ago, you were a young lad who hosted a TV show about motorcycle road racing. I remember you being obsessed with the thought of beating a particular gentleman in a motorcycle race, because he had started to date a girl whom you had set your eyes on. How did you progress from motorcycle road racing, which is one of the world's most dangerous sports, to skydiving? Wasn't there already enough speed and adrenaline in motorcycle racing?

My extremely limited access to financial resources was one reason. I didn't have as much money as other racers, and in such a situation I couldn't progress. When you're speeding along a racecourse, you have to seek out your own limits and those of your bike. If you're afraid of falling because you might damage your bike and you don't have the money to repair it, then you can only go so far.

That wasn't the only reason. During the time that I was racing, Jānis Turks [*a promising motorcycle racer – ed.*] died in a traffic accident and Pēteris Neilands got killed during a motorcycle race. However, the main reason was a lack of aggression on my part during races, despite having good qualifying results. I wasn't convinced that the risks and possible injuries were worth the fight. I felt that physical confrontations with others, like violence in general, were pointless.

In the fall of 2004, I had begun to host the *Risk & Race* TV show and got to know the *Freefly Peppers* skydiving team. I saw positive emotions and the joy of being in an adventure together, rather than cutthroat competition. I realised that I wanted to be a part of that. I didn't waste any time in buying the equipment and took a skydiving course the following spring.

Thanks to the TV show, I also got to know Ivars Beitāns of the Bungee Jumping Club (*Gumijlēcēju klubs*). In my interview with him, he also talked about *Aerodium* [*a Latvian company that makes vertical air tunnels and teaches air acrobatics – ed.*] and its work. After a while, I became an air acrobatics instructor at *Aerodium*. On weekdays I worked at my own company, while on weekday evenings and Saturdays I taught at *Aerodium*. On Sundays I drove to Jelgava to go skydiving. I also went to training camps in Russia, where it was possible to jump on a much more intensive scale. Then we started to perform air acrobatics shows in different places around the world and obtained the right to perform at the closing ceremonies of the Winter Olympics in Turin.



Ingus (at left) together with his flying mates Alex and Sergio from Estonia. The ties of friendship that form while practising BASE jumping are particularly strong.



In sunny Italy by Lake Garda. Wingsuit proximity flying entails passing very close to cliff faces at 200km/h

It all sounds so simple, but how did you go on to BASE jumping?

My colleague recommended it to me, because he thought that it suited my character. BASE jumping really is an extreme activity. If you want to jump safely, then you have to devote a lot of time and energy to the sport.

In 2010, we helped to set up the Latvian pavilion at the EXPO world fair in Shanghai. [*One of the pavilion's main attractions was an Aerodium wind tunnel – ed.*] We had educated a new generation of instructors, and I saw that these young guys had actually surpassed me in their level of air acrobatics skills. It was time to hand over the reins to them. I decided not to travel anymore to present air acrobatics shows and to devote more time to myself. I couldn't afford to spend at least three months per year away from *Cube* doing acrobatics shows, as I had up until then, along with another two months doing BASE jumping.

In 2011, I went to Norway, which is the only country where BASE jumping courses are taught. The jumps take place from a cliff on a fjord that overlooks the water. The jumpers land on a small island and are taken back to the mainland by boat. In three jumps you learn the proper technique for jumping off that particular cliff, but they don't tell you anything about jumping from skyscrapers, towers or antennas. Also, before you can even take part in these courses, you need to have at least 300 skydiving jumps to your



Hellesylt, Norway.
Three seconds after the start of a jump, the flier has accelerated sufficiently for his wingsuit to fill with air and for its flaps to be transformed into sturdy, intuitively guidable wings

During a free fall, time really does slow down

credit. At the time, I had already made 450 jumps from a plane and flown for 100 hours in an air tunnel. When you make a standard skydiving jump from a plane, the free fall usually lasts for about a minute. Compare that to 100 hours in a wind tunnel!

Out of the 13 people who took that BASE jumping course in Norway, only two of us are still jumping. And on average, only one skydiver out of 100 will decide to practice BASE jumping as well. Regarding the finer details of BASE jumping, you can “fly” at a 45-degree angle and reach a maximum horizontal speed of 90 km/h when wearing regular clothing, while with a wingsuit you can fly at approximately 200 km/h. Theoretically, one can make a BASE jump from a height of 50 metres, but I like jumping from 84 metres or higher because then you can enjoy a longer free fall.

Is free falling the best feeling that you have ever experienced in your life?

[After a long pause.] It certainly has been the most intensive experience. During a free fall, time really does slow down. You vividly feel the popping of every clip when the parachute is released, you feel the canopy open over your head and you feel it start to break your fall. A free fall during a BASE jump might last only a few seconds, but during that time all of your senses are super sensitive. The intensity of colours, sounds and smells increases dramatically. And secondly, you have a special feeling of controlling what’s going on. It’s like replacing an old computer processor with a new one that is much, much more powerful.

BASE jumping demands a lot of physical exertion. How do you stay in shape? Do you exercise regularly and eat special foods?
I haven’t adopted a particular diet, I just try to eat balanced meals. To keep in shape, I work out once a week at the gym of the Olympic Sports Centre in Riga so that I can spring out with sufficient power from my jumping spot, control my body during the first three seconds of my descent and execute a trick or two. After the workout, I play table tennis with my friends because that helps you to concentrate and improves your reaction time. Once a week I play basketball, because I find regular jogging to be too monotonous. I also go swimming once a week and practice body art yoga once a week. Every day I do push-ups, sit-ups and chin-ups.

Five years have passed since you made your first BASE jump. Where else have you jumped since then?

For the first three years I went to Norway, because in the beginning you have to jump from relatively simple and safe locations. After gaining a certain degree of experience, you can start to improvise. In parallel with my jumps in Norway, I began to jump in Italy. Later, I jumped from the TV tower in Tallinn and various buildings in and near Riga.

Then I became acquainted with professional jumpers and started to look for new jumping platforms together with them. That might involve four-hour climbs in the mountains, when you never know where you will find the right “exit” spot. You take a stone, throw it outwards and count the number of seconds that it

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To mark the 10 millionth e-signature in Latvia, Ingus took part in the making of a colourful video clip, flying through the cliff-lined Sass Pordoi mountain pass in Italy and enjoying a bird's-eye view of the alpine forests

You take a stone, throw it outwards and count the number of seconds that it takes to reach the ground

takes to reach the ground. Five and a half seconds are 100 metres. You evaluate how much time you need at the start of the fall and how much reserve time you have left. When you jump off of a high cliff, a free fall with normal clothing lasts about 20 seconds, while with a wingsuit you can fly for several minutes.

I have driven through much of Norway to practice BASE jumping. I've been in the Dolomite Mountains in Italy and in the mountains near Lake Garda. I've been to the Lauterbrunnen Valley in Switzerland, where writer Hans Christian Andersen lived for a time and which, incidentally, feels like a real fairy tale land. When you climb in the mountains there, the scenery changes very quickly. One minute you are walking through a mountain meadow, then you're in a forest whose trees have gigantic, deformed roots, and then suddenly a waterfall appears before you.

But returning to BASE jumping, there are many suitable places for practising this sport in Europe, and many are within a few hundred kilometres of each other: Chamonix in France, Walenstadt in Switzerland, and lots of dams and bridges in between. Overall, Europe is favourably disposed to this extreme sport, which is forbidden in other places, such as US national parks. Of course, even there, people find ways to get around the restrictions.

If we forget for a moment that BASE jumping is illegal in some places, then what is the most extreme place that you have jumped from?

From the chimney of a disused but ferociously guarded factory in St. Petersburg. That was in the winter, when it was minus 18 degrees Celsius outside, and we were being pursued by aggressive security guards. However, the night-time view of the city's districts was magnificent. I've made many jumps in Riga. The views from the top are really magical. It's got something to do with the scale of things, when you see more than you usually do on the ground, and when you feel like a first-person shooter in an action computer game. Whenever I make a jump, I can feel the pulse of the city, especially in the morning, when I see it gradually waking up. I feel thrilled and grateful to be alive.

You have made many jumps from manmade structures. Do you really feel calm jumping from dangerous places like towers?
Yes, absolutely. I still feel fear, but I am able to control it. Once I am at the point of jumping off, the fear no longer influences me.

Is the transition to jumping in a wingsuit the natural order of things for a BASE jumper?
Not always. Many stick to parachute jumping, because flying in a wingsuit demands much more experience and years of specific training. The "jumping off" is different; you need a new set of skills to fly close to various objects like trees and cliffs.
When I first saw a video by Jeb Corliss, I realised that jumping in a wingsuit would open up new horizons for me. In 2012, I began to practice wingsuit jumping seriously.

Last November, you became the first person from the Baltic countries to fly in a wingsuit through the "Crack" gorge in Walenstadt, Switzerland...

Svarstote, kokią stogo dangą pasirinkti? Juk stogas – bene svarbiausia namo dalis.

1 ČERPINIS
2 SKARDINIS
3 ŠIFERINIS

Stogas ne tik apsaugo, stogas vainikuoja namą, suteikia jam puikų vaizdą. Todėl čia kompromisų būti negali.

Jūsų gyvenimo šventovei netinka prasta kepurė. Katės užjuoks.

Beje, apie kates ant įkaitusio skardinio stogo. Apie karštį. Ir apie triukšmą. Patikėkite, tikrai girdėsite, kaip katės šėlsta. O per čerpių stogą, nors ir devynios katės lakstys, nieko nesigirdi.

Čerpių stogas sveria kaip dramblys. O žiemą pasnigus jo svoris – kaip trijų dramblių. Bet jūsų namo sienos išlaikytų daug daugiau. Patikėkit.

Štai kodėl dauguma Vakarų Europos gyventojų renkasi čerpinius stogus. Netrukus Lietuva prisijungs prie jų.

O jums bus kuo džiaugtis. Jūs padarėte teisingą sprendimą, užauginusį namo vertę, bet ne kainą.

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Kjerag, Norway. A 20-second free fall, followed by the opening of the parachute at 70 metres and a landing at the shore of a fjord

Yes, that was an interesting experience. Walenstadt is considered to be the most beautiful BASE jumping route in the world, and fewer than 100 people have completed it. For a long time, I didn't even let myself dream about it. On the day of the jump, I was sitting there alone, the wind was picking up, and I had a 38-degree temperature. I made a trial run in the morning and realised that either I would succeed that day, or I would have to come back again a year later.

And so I sat there, waiting for my friend to take the right position to film me flying into the gorge, while visualising the flight path in my head. My friend wanted to experience the feeling of seeing someone whoosh right over his head like a plane, at 200km/h. The whoosh is quite loud and sounds similar to that of a jet aircraft.

The entrance of the gorge is about 20 metres wide, bordered by forest trees at both edges. Flying about seven metres above the ground, you have to dive into the "Crack" between the trees and then conduct several additional manoeuvres to exit it safely.

That was my third trip to Switzerland. The jump didn't materialise during my two previous visits because the gorge was enveloped in clouds both times and the visibility was very poor. Things like that teach you to be patient. This time, the weather conditions were good.

I left my nervousness and fear up on the cliffside, loosened up completely and felt the smallest nuances of the trip down. Several months have passed, but I still remember every second of that jump.

Incidentally, how do you travel to your jumping locations?

By plane or by car.

You have said before that BASE jumping has no connection with your everyday life. Nevertheless, during your career as the head of a company, have there been situations when you have thought: "Should I take the plunge, or shouldn't I"?

Of course, because I am no different from any other person. I should mention one thing, though. The heightened intensity of emotions that I feel through BASE jumping conflicts with the more down-to-earth situations in my daily life. It's not always easy to make the transition. But, yes, I do feel free in situations where I have to react quickly, so BASE jumping has helped me in that respect.

Listening to everything that you've said, I can only ask: what's next?

I haven't yet come up with another major goal since my BASE jump in Switzerland. For now, I'll just continue travelling around the world, enjoy new jumps and flights, and take in new impressions. Actually, one of my biggest dreams is to travel to outer space, and I'm convinced that I might still manage to do that during my lifetime. **BO**

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 Tourism, warsawtour.pl and
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ROMANTIC WEEKEND GETAWAYS

Paris might be considered the City of Love, but more and more travellers are beginning to appreciate smaller, more intimate European cities. Here are some inspiring destinations for a romantic weekend getaway.



© Liam Norris, Corbis

CHARMING **VILNIUS**

A thriving dining scene and stylish shopping spots make Vilnius a perfect option to those for whom romance means a date at a restaurant and a lovely gift.



© aivas14

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Stebuklai restaurant

With such an ambitious name for a restaurant, *Stebuklai* (which means 'miracles' in Lithuanian) must always deliver, right? Indeed, invite your date for a dinner and you'll be entirely satisfied. *Stebuklai* is a mecca for admirers of contemporary cuisine, providing unexpected flavour combinations and surprising spins on classic dishes. All this without fashionable dots and dashes on the plates.

Gynėjų gatvė 14

① stebuklai.com



► **Crème de la Crème Haute Parfumerie boutique**

Perfume is probably one of the most intimate and luxurious presents that you can give to your loved one. Why not choose it together? Shopping for fragrances at *Crème de la Crème* is nearly as pleasurable as actually wearing perfume. The store in Vilnius' Old Town is part of a chain of *hautes parfumeries* in the Baltics and offers rare and sophisticated fragrances. The conceptual interior design of the store has been featured in some of the world's leading design publications.

Didžioji gatvė 28

① cremedelacreme.lt



◀ **Shakespeare Boutique Hotel**

Shakespeare's approach to storytelling makes it one of the most charming hotels in Vilnius. Each guest room is dedicated to a literary hero – from Aristotle to Hemingway – and reflects the life stories of literary classics. Choose the Romeo & Juliet for a romantic night or the Oscar Wilde for a truly lavish stay. The hotel is located in a Baroque building on a quiet street in the very heart of the Old Town.

Bernardinų gatvė 8

① shakespeare.lt



© Laura Nėlė

▲ **Bernardine Garden (Bernardinų sodas)**

Vilnius has plenty of greenery, most of which consists of rather wild parks. So, once the former Sereikiškių Park was transformed into the splendid Bernardine Garden a few years ago, it became a default strolling destination for both locals and visitors alike. The garden is surrounded by the Vilnia River bend, featuring a few fountains and French landscaping. Perfect for romantic spring walks.

Maironio gatvė



▼ **Atostogos dessert café**

Sometimes you need a holiday even during your holiday. That is exactly what *Atostogos* ('holiday' in Lithuanian) provides. French tarts covered in dunes of pistachios and almonds, pastries with natural tropical fruit jam, fluffy eclair islands and various cookies beckon invitingly. A sumptuous escape from walks along the classic tourist trails.

M. K. Čiurlionio gatvė 8

① facebook.com/desertinesatostogos

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VIBRANT WARSAW

Warsaw is full of green spaces, and recent efforts to inject new life to the banks of the Vistula, the river flowing across the city, make the Polish capital an excellent choice for hand-in-hand romantic strolls. A place to see and to be seen.

► Fryderyk Chopin Museum

Aside from being one of Poland's most famous sons, Fryderyk Chopin was also one of the most famous composers of the Romantic era. Dedicated to Chopin's life from start to finish, the museum is an immense monument to romance. One intriguing section is even devoted to the women who made the man. The edifice's four storeys are full of interactive displays and the sound of music. ulica Okólnik 1
① chopin.museum



▲ Saxon Garden (Ogród Saski)

Warsaw is one of the greenest capitals in Europe, and therefore a hand-in-hand walk with your better half in one of the city's many parks is a must. The sentimental Saxon Garden facing Piłsudski Square is one of the first publicly accessible parks in Europe. The Saxon Palace was destroyed during the Second World War, but the exquisite fountain, rows of dainty statues and sculpted flower beds make the garden one of Warsaw's most atmospheric spots for people-watching and parading yourself. Marszałkowska



◀ Vitkac

The most exclusive department store in Poland, *Vitkac* caters to true fashionistas, offering the latest trends from luxury brands. The attention-grabbing building will not let you pass it by too easily. It is named after eccentric artist Stanisław Witkiewicz, who lived at this address. Like all great department stores, *Vitkac* also has a number of fine eateries and bars. The top-floor restaurant is a great spot for observing the magnificent panorama of Warsaw. ulica Bracka 9
① vitkac.com

▼ Rialto Hotel

Allegedly the most beautiful hotel in Warsaw, the *Rialto* is also the first boutique hotel in the Polish capital. The premises are authentically finished in Art Deco style, and much of the furniture was sourced from auction houses across Europe. Decorative elements contribute to replicating the wonderful atmosphere of the 1920s, making this establishment the only place of its genre in Warsaw. Perfect for old-fashioned glamour seekers. ulica Wilcza 73
① rialto.pl



▲ Vistula Boulevard

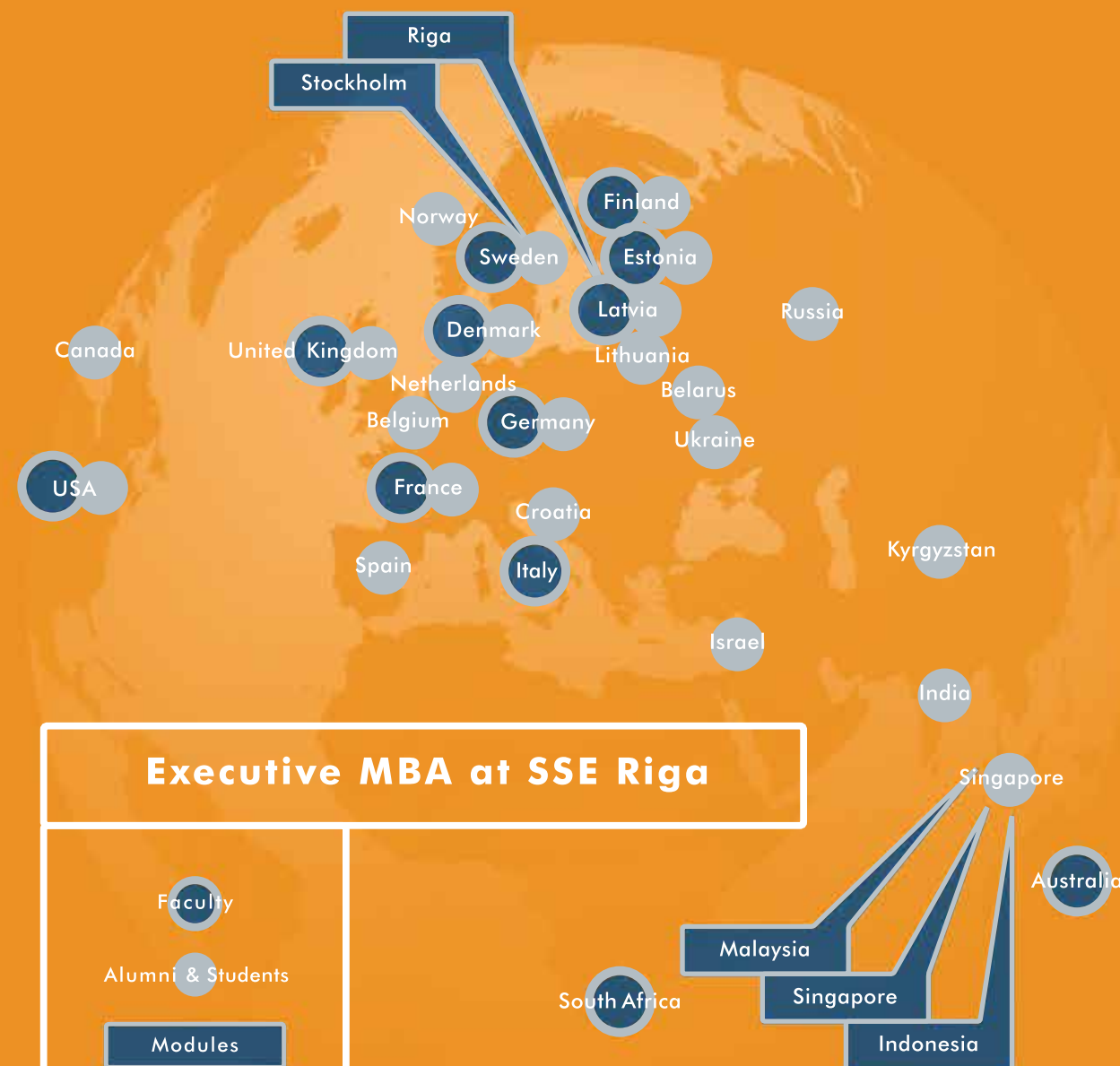
Even though Warsaw's cultural life is concentrated around its squares, Vistula Boulevard has been attracting more and more locals since its recent regeneration. The boulevard is a place

for observing picturesque sunsets, rollerblading, or just hanging out at one of the open-air bars. There is also a viewing desk for checking out the boats, barges and water trams sailing down the river.

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ROYAL BUDAPEST

Budapest is a city of flows: the decisive Danube between Buda and Pest, thermal waters from the depths of the earth, and delicious Hungarian wine. Put everything in the right order to catch the spirit of this royal city.

► Doblo Wine

There are two big reasons to drop by at *Doblo*. The first one is Hungarian wine, which may not be as famous as others but is just as good nonetheless. And *Doblo* carries possibly the widest variety of the fermented Magyar grape juice. Here you will find top-notch wines from notable wineries, artisanal and bio-wines, and products by lesser-known young Hungarian winemakers. The second reason to visit is the bar's ambience. Nearly every weekday, live jazz sessions and electroswing DJs provide mood music, while country-style tapas platters offer local flavour. Dob utca 20

① budapestwine.com



▲ Aria Hotel

The *Aria Hotel's* rooftop terrace has a view to die for, as the spires of St. Stephen's Basilica are practically within arms' reach. Imagine cocktails under a starry sky and Budapest's nightlife under your feet. Furthermore, the bar and restaurant aren't the only places with a wow factor. The rooms at the *Aria* are soaked in elegance and luxury, with marble tabletops and multimedia entertainment systems. And there is a spa on site. One might want not to leave this place at all. Hercegprimás utca 5

① ariahotelbudapest.com

► Thermal baths

Budapest proudly calls itself the city of spas, with 188 springs and a number of magnificent baths to visit, some of which resemble royal residences. So, grab your lover and a swimsuit (some public baths have recently changed their policy about nakedness and now require you to cover your modesty) and experience what the natives have done since Roman times. The most majestic are the Art Nouveau Gellért Baths, complete with majolica tiles and Roman columns, and the enormous, palace-like Széchenyi Baths.

① spasbudapest.com



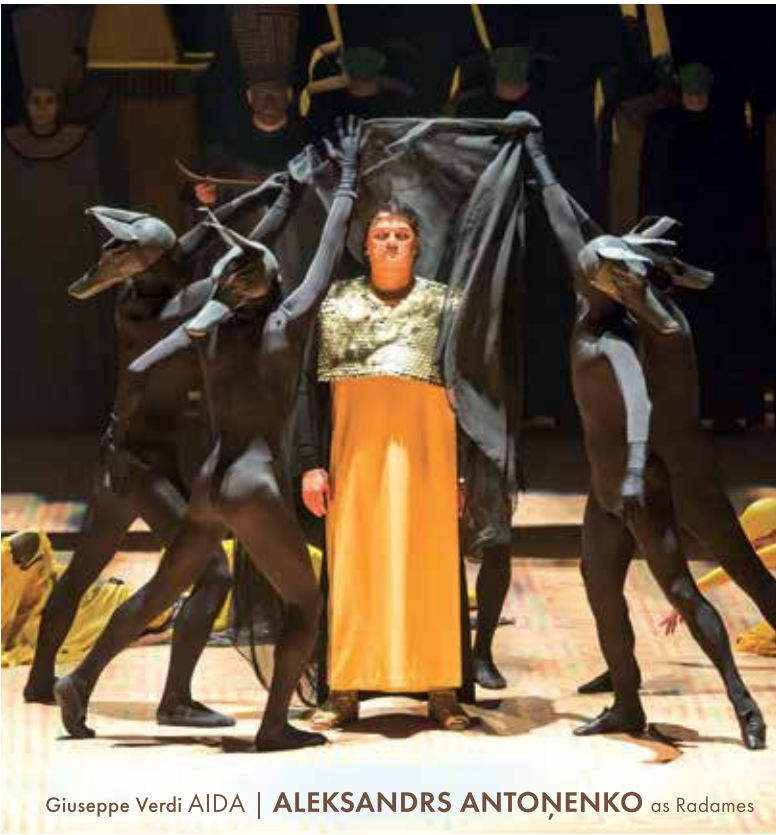
▼ Hungarian National Gallery

Lose yourself in the seemingly never-ending rooms of this magnificent art gallery in the Buda Castle. The national collection covers Hungarian art of all genres and includes the works of many 19th- and 20th-century Hungarian artists who worked in Paris and other locations in the West. If not the art itself, then the gallery's chambers and impressive exterior are worth seeing. Buda Castle (Budavári Palota), Buildings A, B, C, D Szent György tér 2 ① mng.hu



◀ Gerlőczy Hotel

At *Gerlőczy* one can feel like a true Budapest and a romantic Parisian at the same time. The hotel has a Parisian atmosphere, as each room on the upper floors is beautifully fitted with parquet flooring, large windows and lofty ceilings. A terrace café on the ground floor is favoured by locals, who engage in a never-ending flow of conversation. V Gerlőczy utca 1 ① gerloczy.hu



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| 09 | O | LA TRAVIATA | |
| 10 | B | THE FOUNTAIN OF BAKHCHISARAY | |
| 11 | O | MANON LESCAUT | |
| 12 | B | THE SLEEPING BEAUTY | |
| 16 | B | ROMEO AND JULIET | |
| 17 | O | MADAMA BUTTERFLY | |
| 18 | B | DON QUIXOTE | |
| 19 | O | THE LITTLE MAGIC FLUTE | Premiere |
| 19 | O | AIDA | Special Cast |
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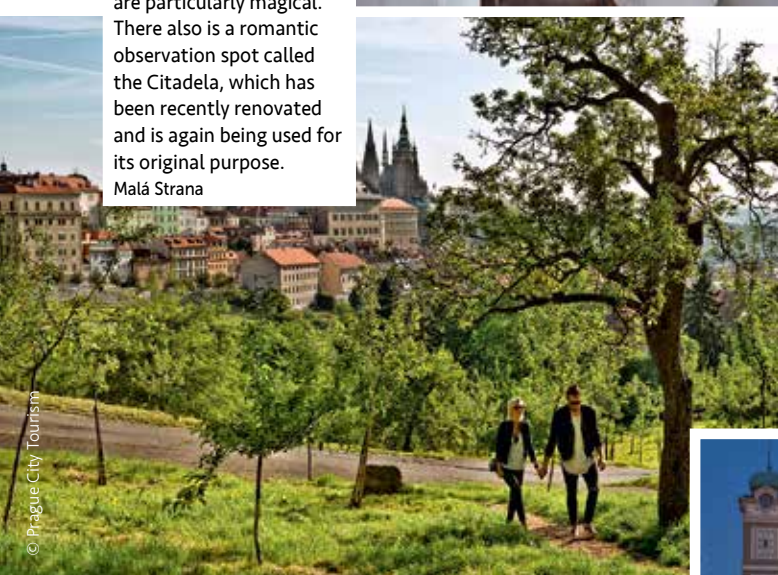


BEAUTIFUL PRAGUE

The City of a Thousand Spires, as Prague is known, asks to be observed from the top. Let Prague take your breath away.

▼ Petřín Hill Gardens (Petržinské sady)

Lose yourself in this piece of nature in the centre of the city. The slopes of Petřín Hill are a true oasis of calm. The Rose Garden or rosarium at the top of the hill, Kinsky Garden and the Seminary Garden with more than 2,100 fruit trees are particularly magical. There also is a romantic observation spot called the Citadela, which has been recently renovated and is again being used for its original purpose. Malá Strana



► Křižík Fountain (Křižíkova fontána)

Dancing water and lights to a medley of both classical and popular tunes make Křižík Fountain a unique experience in Europe. Set against the background of a beautiful palace, the vast fountain reacts to the music, and the plays of water are accompanied by a magical play of lights and projection images. Křižík Fountain is ideal for those who enjoy romance in its classic definition.

U Výstaviště 20

① krizikovafontana.cz



▼ Jazz Boat

An activity that has it all – see, hear and taste the delights of Prague. In two and a half hours on the Vltava River, you will take in the main sights of the Czech capital: Charles Bridge, Kampa Island, the National Theatre and Vyšehrad, Prague's second castle. All this while live piano music is playing and your taste buds are tantalised by an authentic Czech meal.

Dvořákovo nábřeží

① jazzboat.cz



◀ Ginger & Fred restaurant

The Dancing House on the riverfront created controversy once it was finished in the mid-1990s. Its non-traditional design stands out among the Baroque and Art Nouveau buildings for which Prague is famous, but today it is one of the city's landmarks. The top-floor *Ginger & Fred* restaurant boasts a luxury contemporary décor and breathtaking views of Prague Castle and the Lesser Town.

Jiráskovo náměstí 6

① ginger-fred-restaurant.cz



▲ Estates Theatre (Stavovské divadlo)

The natural reason to visit the Estates Theatre is a performance of great opera. Watch the actors sing out their hearts for their loved ones – a truly romantic way to say 'I love you'. Even if you are not an opera lover, the Estates Theatre is worth a visit for its opulence and rich history. This is where Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart premiered his opera *Don Giovanni* in 1787 about a womaniser who does not take women's feelings seriously and ends up in Hell. Ovocný trh 1



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Text by **DACE VAIVARA**
Publicity photos, by Corbis, Alamy
and dailyshopwindow.com

THE ART OF WINDOW DISPLAYS

Impressive and inspiring decorations that resemble theatre sets beckon from appealing store windows in such fashion metropolises as Paris, Milan and London. *Baltic Outlook* goes behind the scenes to find out the secrets behind shop window-dressing.



Stella McCartney, London, January 2016

Refined luxury brand stores know how to please the eye with artfully and imaginatively set up shop windows. Window display designers are artists who create dreams and know how to sell them. In Europe's main fashion cities, many people habitually go window-shopping on weekends, unhurriedly admiring creatively designed shop window displays.

As innovative combinations of art, fashion, design and marketing, window displays aren't made only to attract the attention of passers-by and to draw them into retailers' stores. The displays are also made to inspire, educate and help to consolidate a brand's image. With increasing frequency, shop window displays are incorporating wondrous art installations and fantastic movie scenes. One can only guess how much time, effort and money has been invested in the concepts, planning, preparation and installation of these mini exhibitions.

Realising the sales potential of professionally set up window displays, retailers invest considerable resources to enhance the image of their stores through enticing shop window displays. An effective and imaginatively designed shop window is an instant means of communication that attracts even the most distracted passers-by like a magnet and transforms them into potential buyers. A good window display designer has the required artistic abilities and skills for transforming the items that have been displayed in a shop window into desirable and necessary must-haves.

Looking back in history

The display of one's wares to entice potential buyers goes back thousands of years. The basic idea has been the same throughout the ages – to present one's products in an attractive manner and induce passers-by to buy them. Initially, items were arranged on cloth backgrounds at market stalls. Nomads placed their wares in front of their tents, a precursor to the shop window principle.

During the 6th century BCE, the Phoenicians, who were known as skilled traders, exhibited their best and most attractive products at the threshold of their shops, sometimes fastening them to door jambs or headers. The Romans then followed their example. During the Middle Ages, products were displayed on small wooden benches or counters, but with the growth in the range and quantity of goods, traders gave preference to outdoor spaces, loudly advertising their wares while keeping a close watch over them to avoid being subject to theft.

The introduction of glass permitted the construction of transparent display coverings, which greatly reduced the risk of theft and protected the most valuable objects. Store spaces became larger,

better lit and cosier during the Renaissance, and their exterior appearance also improved at the turn of the 18th century. The first shop windows with displays in the current understanding of the word appeared during the 19th century, with the products being lit by petroleum lamps.

Radical changes in the setting up of shop window displays took place at the end of the 19th century, with



Christian Dior, Paris, January 2016



1930s window display in New York

the introduction of electric lighting and the opening of the first department stores in Paris, including the *Louvre*, *Printemps*, *Galleries Lafayette* and *Samaritaine*. This spawned revolutionary changes in the art of window-dressing elsewhere in the world. The first specialised schools in this field came into being in around 1925, but since there were no established conventions on shop window design, display designers adopted the artistic styles that were in fashion at the time, such as Art Nouveau (Liberty style), Cubism, Futurism and Surrealism, followed by simpler and less elaborate displaying styles.

Secrets of the trade

Nowadays, the skills of shop window designers must extend to setting up other parts of a store's interior as well, along with stages for fashion shows and stands for exhibitions and trade shows. Representatives of this profession must be very creative, with an understanding of aesthetics and good taste. They must master such fields as marketing, communications, sales psychology, advertising, set design and the significance of colour. A working knowledge of carpentry and electric circuitry is an added plus. Window display designers must be artists in a variety of fields, using every means at their disposal to make sales items visually appealing and raise their perceived value.

Shop window design is a powerful form of visual communication. Italian specialists in the field are among the world's most creative and most sought-after. Their services are in high demand not only in their native country, but also in the Middle East, the USA and Eastern Europe. In Manhattan, for example, luxury fashion boutiques insist on having Italian display artists set up their shop windows. In Italy, the demand for the services of these image-makers far exceeds the supply. The pinnacle of one's career is reaching the level of art director, after starting out as an assistant, then moving up in the hierarchy to window display designer and decorator.

The work on setting up a shop window begins at the planning phase, where ideas are put onto paper and sketches are drawn. The decorators must then ensure that passers-by take the time to stop and look at the display with an attention-grabbing feature, because it takes only a few seconds to walk by a shop window. This entails knowing what part of the display the viewer will first notice. That "hotspot" lies slightly below eye level at the horizontal midway point of the display. This is where a signboard or a noticeable sales item will be placed to draw the viewer in.

Another important element of shop window design is lighting, particularly in Northern Europe, where the days are generally dark and cloudy. The sources of light will determine what colours stand out in the display. Bright displays are more prone to draw the attention of pedestrians, and strategically placed shadows can also work to enhance a wow effect.

Then come the mannequins, of which Italian, Danish, and English-manufactured models are said to be the best. These are stylishly made and can be adjusted in various poses to give them a more lifelike and dynamic appearance. This season, cloth-covered mannequins have become fashionable.

Passers-by tend to pay greater notice to unusually designed shop displays. In choosing the layout of the display, designers also take the target audience into account. Displays that seek to address women should be modern, elegant and effective, while those that are geared toward men should be simple, with well-defined geometric shapes. In addition, the age of the desired clientele and current fashion trends must be considered.

Shop windows herald the imminent arrival of an upcoming holiday or season and showcase the latest fashion trends. In order to ensure that they consistently draw viewers' attention, they should be changed no less than twice a month, except for seasonal shop windows, which are given a complete makeover every two or three months. Some products, though, might remain on display throughout the seasons.

LEGEND.

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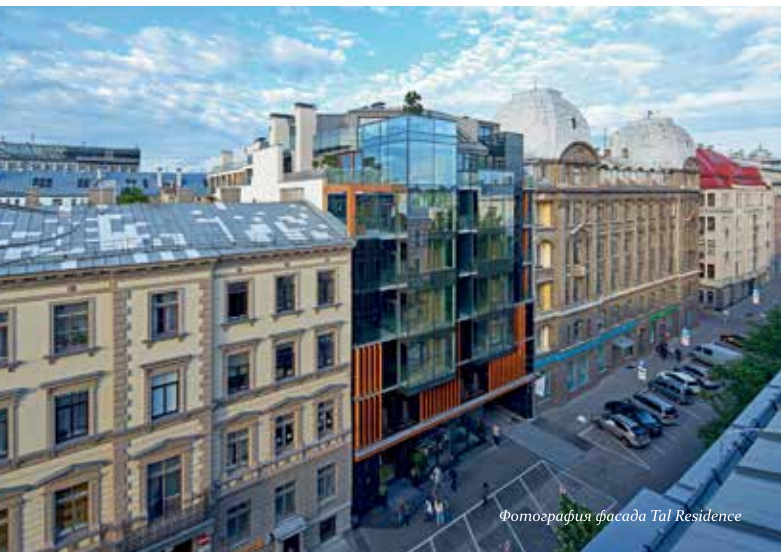
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MUST-SEE **SHOP WINDOW** DISPLAYS IN FASHION METROPOLISES



◀ ▲ **Selfridges, LONDON**

London's iconic fashion department store has been in operation since 1906, when Harry Gordon Selfridge arrived in London from Chicago to open his dream store. The revolutionary and creative spirit of this charismatic personality has been retained to this day and is reflected in distinctive shop window displays that *Selfridges* regularly sets up in cooperation with famous artists. One noteworthy project was carried out in 2012, when *Louis Vuitton* created a collection with polka dot patterns in cooperation with Japanese painter, poet and performance artist Yayoi Kusama. The collection was displayed in 24 shop windows of the department store and was complemented by red-and-white polka dot figurines that the artist had made.

▼ ▶ **Harrods, LONDON**

Harrods' history began in 1849, when Charles Henry Harrod opened what is now known as the Terracotta Palace to expand his grocery and tea business. The world famous luxury department store continues to abide by the philosophy that "anything is possible". This also applies to *Harrods'* window displays, which never cease to surprise their viewers. Last year, the British company *Justso*, which works with luxury brands, implemented one of the world's most complicated interactive projection campaigns for *Fabergé*. This installation was displayed in a *Harrods* shop window. London graphic artist Emily Alston, for her part, created an unforgettable and extremely appealing art installation for the *Vertu* concierge service in another shop window.

Harrods' latest shop window and charity project is a toy art collection for children all across the world. With the advent of the Chinese New Year, *Harrods* and *Papinee* are offering the *Harrods Happy Monkey*, a symbol of happiness and good fortune. Embroidered *Happy Monkey* sculptures created by a seven-person team can also be seen in the store's window displays.



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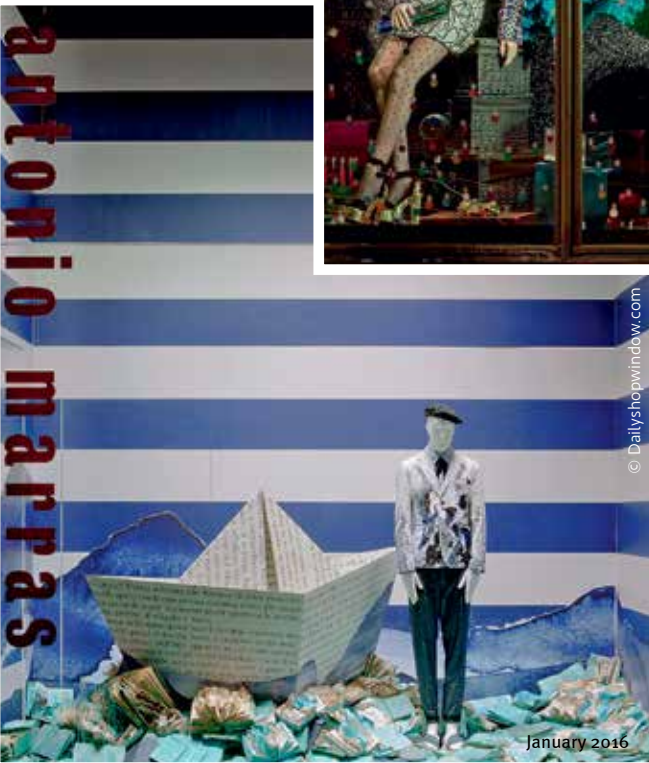
year

► **Harvey Nichols**, LONDON

Harvey Nichols started off in 1831 as a humble linen shop on the corner of Knightsbridge and Sloane Street in London. At the end of last year, the store featured a particularly colourful and impressive series of shop window displays devoted to the 1970s disco era and New York's famous *Studio 54* nightclub. A gigantic 3D face made of gift boxes was the central exhibit in each of the 13 displays. A record number of props were used to make the Christmas windows, including one million flakes of glitter, 620 mirror balls and 15,000 gift boxes weighing 11 tonnes. The remarkable exhibitions were set up in cooperation with *Global Display*.



November 2015



January 2016

▲ **La Rinascente**, MILAN

This historic department store in Italy's fashion capital is more than 150 years old and its shop window displays are designed in cooperation with the store's brand partners. During the 1950s, Giorgio Armani worked there as a window display designer, before moving on to become Italy's most successful fashion designer. Armani now owns one of the largest fashion empires in the world and his personal fortune is worth approximately 6.1 billion USD, according to *Forbes* magazine. Born into a poor family in Piacenza, Armani studied medicine before getting a job at *La Rinascente* as a window dresser and menswear buyer. His six years at the Milan store (1954-1960) and its Office of Fashion and Style gave him valuable experience, which he used to found his own design company in 1974.

▼ **Dolce & Gabbana**, MILAN

In 1985, Domenico Dolce and Steffano Gabbana founded what is now one of Italy's largest fashion houses. The diverse and colourful beauty of Italy, and particularly of the fashion duo's native Sicily, shines forth in *Dolce & Gabbana*'s fashion shows and window displays. During Milan's fashion weeks, the company's richly decorated thematic shop windows occasionally turn into live art performances. Last year at their fashion boutique on the Via della Spiga, the designers surprised viewers with an exposition of historical stage costumes worn by Italian opera diva Renata Tebaldi (1922-2014). Instead of the usual display of *Dolce & Gabbana*'s latest clothing lines, the shop windows featured regal dresses from Verdi's *Aida* and Puccini's *Tosca*, along with authentic accessories from performances at Milan's La Scala opera theatre.



Dolce & Gabbana store window display in Mayfair, London

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▲ ► **Hermès, PARIS**
Opened in 1937 on the Rue St. Honoré in Paris' Faubourg district, *Hermès'* flagship store carries clothing and accessories by one of the premier luxury brands in the world. A veritable paradise for fashion gourmants, the store also stands out with unusually arranged shop window displays, including wondrous expositions by *Zim&Zou* with animals, birds, marine life and other curiosities. Founded by

Lucie Thomas and Thibault Zimmermann, *Zim&Zou* specialises in the creation of colourful handmade design objects and sculptures of paper, leather, wood and other materials. In 2014, *Zim&Zou* assembled small pieces of leather to make a unique sculpture of a fox for a display named *The Fox's Den*, accompanied by interior objects made of paper. The installation was first displayed at the *Hermès* store in Barcelona.



◀ **Printemps, PARIS**

Printemps (meaning "spring" in French) was founded in 1865 by Jules Jaluzot and Jean-Alfred Duclos. In 1888, it became the first department store to use electric lighting, a fundamental element of modern-day shop window displays. *Printemps* adopts a creative approach to its shop windows and last year, to mark its 150th anniversary, the store recruited French choreographer, theatre director and writer Philippe Decouflé to set up a series of window displays. In creating the design for the displays, Decouflé treated each shop window like a small theatre stage, bringing in spring flowers during the winter months (in tribute to the name of the store) and brightening up the historical store façade with a light show.



► **Galeries Lafayette, PARIS**
Les Galeries Lafayette is one of the largest department stores in Paris and has been open since 1912. In 2009, the store invited famous American movie director, screenwriter, painter and composer David Lynch to design 11 shop windows under the theme *Machines, Abstraction and Women*. The cinematographic displays were depicted as labyrinths, street museums and transparent doors that lead out into the unknown. The exclusive window display performances, complemented with stage lights and musical effects, drew many viewers, and not only movie buffs. In another connection with the movie industry, at the end of last year, a cosmic-style window display was devoted to the film *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* and set up in cooperation with *Walt Disney Studios*. **BO**



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Publicity photos



First drive: the new *Kia Sportage*



The outgoing *Sportage* was a game-changer for *Kia*. The Korean brand's line-up had long featured worthy cars with lengthy warranties, but it seemed that there was precious little to get excited about. Then, out of the blue, a handsome SUV that you could be proud to park on your driveway arrived in 2010. Predictably, it flew out of showrooms and helped *Kia* more than double its sales over the next six years. Which brings us to its replacement – a car that not only has big shoes to fill, but faces even fiercer competition in the wider SUV arena. Prices for the new *Sportage* start at 17,990 euros for the 2WD, 132 hp and 1.6-litre petrol version. The car is also available with a 177 hp 1.6-litre turbo petrol

engine as well as 1.7 (115 hp) and 2.0-litre diesels (132 and 185 hp). Most versions are offered with 4WD.

What's it like to drive?

Small SUVs don't need to be sharp to drive, but it's certainly no bad thing that the *Sportage* keeps body lean neatly controlled through corners. It stays more upright than a *Nissan Qashqai* and grips well, too, although the steering is rather vague. At least it's light enough to take the effort out of parking.

The stiff suspension does make the ride a bit choppy at low speeds, though this small problem is only amplified if you venture higher up the trim levels, because doing so brings larger alloy wheels. The *Sportage* doesn't crash over potholes and sharp ridges like a *Honda HR-V*, but neither does it smooth over imperfections around town as adroitly as a *Qashqai*.

What's it like inside?

The new *Sportage* has grown in length compared with its predecessor, which means more legroom all round and a bigger boot. Rear space is roughly on par with the *Qashqai*, but the *Kia*'s reclining seats are a handy feature that isn't even available on most rivals.

Officially, the *Sportage* has a bigger boot than the *Nissan*. However, the load bay is narrower due to intrusion from the wheel arches. Still, 60:40 split-folding rear seats are standard and, when folded, leave an extended load area that's virtually flat and free from bothersome steps.

Getting comfortable in the driver's seat is easy enough. As you'd expect, you sit high up so there's a great view of the road ahead,

It looks stylish. It's good value for money. It's on trend, being a crossover. And it's safe to buy because it comes with the back-up of a seven-year warranty

while the dashboard is neatly ordered with chunky, clearly marked buttons.

One of the biggest improvements over the outgoing model is the quality of the interior; the new *Sportage* is really quite



smart inside. True, you'll find some hard plastics where rivals use softer materials – such as on the face of the dashboard – but the gloss black centre console on the pricier trims looks and feels properly premium.

Should I buy one?

Make no mistake: this is a better car than the one it replaces in almost every respect. It's bigger, more practical, plusher inside and, although slightly pricier to buy, compensates with more standard kit and stronger resale values.

And if you like the styling of this latest *Sportage* as much as the last, then the reasons for shortlisting it have just lengthened. **BO**

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WHY CHOOSE A HEIGHT-ADJUSTABLE TABLE?

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BENEFITS FOR PEOPLE

- Reduced causes of discomfort.
- Increased job satisfaction.
- Improved concentration and focus on productivity.
- Improved team communication.

Modern, elegant, functional office furniture of high quality

office furniture

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

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

One of the best solutions is a height-adjustable sit-stand table that can be raised or lowered to any height between 65 and 126.5 cm as often as needed. The table's adjustable legs serve to raise or lower the table surface, thus permitting the user to sit or stand in various positions throughout the working day. The resulting freedom of movement is one of the main features of quality ergonomic furniture. Changing the table height electrically is quite simple: all you have to do is choose the button with the up or down symbol on the control panel, and the desk will either rise or descend within an accuracy range of one centimetre.

When sitting, it is also important that the table height corresponds to a person's body proportions. The average table height (75 cm) is not ideal for everyone, because people can be very different – one

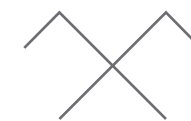
person may be 160 cm tall, while another is 190 cm tall. Therefore, a table with an adjustable height is the perfect solution. People also tend to stand in different positions, so an adjustable-height table is the best option.

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

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

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

Prepared in association with ROL ERGO®. **BO**



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Master chefs Kristaps Sīlis, Kristaps Jauja
and Andrejs Bojarčenko

Steiku Haoss. The best steak restaurants in Riga

Meat is only meat and nothing more if one prepares it simply. However, if it is cooked up by true masters, then it becomes a culinary work of art. When it comes to preparing outstanding steak, one doesn't have to look far in Riga. The kitchens at three *Steiku Haoss* restaurants are run by talented young chefs who don't look at food as a mere means to satisfy one's hunger. 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 12 years old. Aside from serving outstanding steaks, the *Steiku Haoss* establishments in Riga also stand out with pleasing interiors that could come straight out of 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. He performed quite well at this year's *Sanpellegrino Young Chef* competition and is determined to fare even better at future cooking events.

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

STEIKU HAOSS

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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. Sīlis adds that while working outside of Latvia, he became convinced that every dish and ingredient within it has to tell a story.

Vita Zeltzāke manages the *Steiku Haoss* brand and is proud of the fact that all three restaurants have gained a loyal following of customers. In fact, the lifestyle magazine *Riga Now!* recently deemed them to be the best beef restaurants in Riga. According to Zeltzāke, that is largely thanks to the professionalism and creativity of *Steiku Haoss*' illustrious chefs, who make regular changes to the menu several times a year and who excel at coming forth with special new steak dishes. 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.

But of course during the winter season, one should not forget the classic dish for which *Steiku Haoss* is best-known: steak. The restaurant chain even has its own meat processing plant, securing complete independence when it comes to setting one's own standards of quality.



The new menu also features venison obtained from local hunters, another popular winter treat. For true meat-lovers, Zeltzāke recommends the unmarinated Argentinean steak, cooked rare to really bring out its unique flavour.

Incidentally, the *Steiku Haoss* menus aren't the only things that will soon be adjusted to bring in the spring season. The interior at the restaurant on Tērbatas iela has been expanded to accommodate even more visitors, while the team at the *Steiku Haoss* on Meistaru iela is ready to

set up its summer terrace as soon as the weather gets warmer. One might add that this restaurant terrace is among the largest and the most beautiful in all of Riga. Admittedly, visitors will still have to wait a while before they can enjoy leisurely dinners on this outdoor terrace, but in the meantime, they might want to warm up indoors and treat themselves to a tender Angus steak while listening to live music, which can be heard at all three *Steiku Haoss* restaurants on weekends. **BO**

A contemporary taste of Latvia

Photos courtesy of *Kaļķu Vārti* and by **MĀRIS ZEMGALĪETIS**



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



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

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

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

Kaļķu Vārti's trademark feature is modern Latvian cuisine, to which Zommers is passionately devoted. "My goal is to be different from other chefs, to see further and think more expansively than usual. I want my dishes to be based on local ingredients as much as possible and to work with foods that are not always widely used. At the same time, I never permit the level of quality to suffer in my continual experimental quests," says Zommers.

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

"For the new spring menu, I have chosen to emphasise Latvian-raised ostrich meat," says Raimonds Zommers. "Ostriches are raised on farms in many places around the world, but I want to support our local producers and highlight the fact that Latvian ostrich meat is also of the highest quality." Zommers obtains his ostrich meat from the *Mazzariņi* ostrich farm near the city of Jelgava. The meat is quite wholesome, as it contains almost no fat or cholesterol, but is rich in iron and protein. When the tenderest cuts are chosen, the meat can be prepared in just a few minutes, which helps it to retain its nutritional qualities.

The restaurant's main courses are complemented with various healthy greens, including watercress, radishes, chicory, mustard seeds, red cabbage, chives and arugula. *Kaļķu vārti* also makes use of various sprouts from a variety of nutritious plants, including wheat, beans, radishes, lucerne, lentils, onions and broccoli. These sprouts have no unwanted calories and can contain up to 50 times more vitamins and minerals than ripened fruits and vegetables, which means that one can forget about using synthetic vitamin tablets as dietary supplements. *Kaļķu vārti* gets its greens and sprouts from the *Vecapēni* vegetable farm near the city of Pļaviņas. **BO**

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Restaurants, bars and cafés

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



GASTROBĀRS T73

How about breakfast?

To get inside *Gastrobārs T73*, you have to walk through a casino lobby, which might make you wonder if you have indeed come to the right place. (Those who like casinos, for their part, will probably relish the chance of combining a meal with a game or two). In any case, *Gastrobārs T73* is not named after a future *Terminator* sequel, but after the house number and first letter of *Tērbatas iela*, the street where it's located – about 20 minutes by foot from the Old Town. For those who prefer wheeled transport, a tram line also passes close by on *Krišjāņa Barona iela*.

The restaurant itself is super cosy – not as in “the sofas are comfortable and the place is dimly lit,” but cosy as in: “you walk inside at 9:30 AM carrying your laptop and sink into the sofa (which is, by the way, very comfortable!), order a latte and start scrolling through your e-mails while lazily selecting one of 20 different types of breakfast eggs (which, apparently, represent typical breakfasts of various countries) from the Foodgasm menu. Then comes lunch, then dinner, and then you might as well stay for cocktails after a long day of work at your laptop and see what the night brings, because *Gastrobārs T73* is open 24/7.”

What I'm trying to say is that it is very easy to stay at *Gastrobārs T73* and lose a bit of the stress that many city dwellers tend to be plagued with for most of the working day. The atmosphere is simultaneously celebratory, casual and fun in a simple interior with lots of warm colours. The restaurant is not consciously trying to be cool, but offers many different moods and modes based on where you choose to drop yourself.

So, what's on the Foodgasm menu, you might ask? The breakfast covers several time zones: from chia pudding with almond milk and fruits (EUR 5.90) and eggs *en cocotte* with fresh greens, mushrooms, bacon and cream cheese (EUR 4.00) to Israeli *shakshouka*, or eggs in spicy tomato sauce with chilli peppers, onions and spices (EUR 5.90), as well as a vegetarian tower of eggplant, courgette, mozzarella, basil and cherry tomato salsa (EUR 6.50). There are lots of nice meat and fish dishes on the main menu as well and the cocktails are well thought-out. Remember, start with breakfast first and then take things further from there...

Address: *Tērbatas iela 73*
Open: Mon.-Sun.: 00:00-24:00
① t73.lv



KEY to RIGA

RESTAURANT

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!



www.keytoriga.lv

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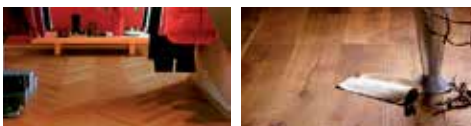


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Outlook FOOD & DRINK



VILL-AMOR

Possibly the most stylish WC in town

Vill-Amor sits nicely on the busy corner of Blaumaņa and Pērses streets. However, a bit of corporate cannibalism is taking place there. That's because *Vill-Amor* is right next to *Mio* – the first gastro-nurseling of *Vill-Amor's* owners. This coupling is advantageous, as anything that's missing in one place can be speedily fetched from the other. Most propitiously, any surplus visitors at the smallish *Mio* can be kindly guided towards the more spacious *Vill-Amor*.

When it comes to the newly-opened *Vill-Amor*, people have been talking quite a bit about its ornate WC, which is without a doubt among the most lavish in the city. Like anything that has to do with taste, this statement is, of course, debateable, but I can see what the patrons are getting at. To be honest, I am not sure why this part of any public dining establishment would need to compete with others for stylishness (spacious, comfortable, clean, well-lit and stocked are at the top of my requirement list), but in any case, the WC is quite extravagant and will have you thinking about the Moulin Rouge while you're doing your... ah... business.

Naturally, a fancy bathroom alone would not cut it. The whole place is very similar in style to its older neighbour *Mio*, which (for those of you who haven't memorised my restaurant reviews of the last couple years by heart) is the most cake icing-like place you'll have ever seen. The main difference is that *Vill-Amor's* interior has been painted in darker colours than at *Mio*, for fear of scaring away its target clientele of heterosexual males. Sure, *Vill-Amor's* is different from its neighbour, but I probably wouldn't go as far as the confident restaurant staff in announcing that this is primarily a spot "for men".

To me, it seems that *Vill-Amor's* owners might have decided to conceive another "child" because the first version presented some perceived faults, like being too small or catering mainly to women, or perhaps just to make some extra money, which is fair enough. However, in

my opinion, the new arrival should have been opened further away from its older sibling.

What about the food, then? Well, this establishment seems to have everything (including most things from the other restaurant), from a guacamole starter (EUR 8.00) and Jerusalem artichoke cream soup (EUR 7.90) to truffle papardelle (EUR 11.50) and a substantial meat and fish section. While you're there, don't forget to check out the WC!

Address: Blaumaņa iela 28
Open: Mon.-Thu.: 11:00-23:00
Fri.-Sat.: 11:00-24:00
Sun: 12:00-23:00



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LIDO Alus sēta
Tirgoņu street 6,
Riga

LIDO Vērmanītis
Elizabetes street 65,
Riga

For other locations refer to www.lido.lv



Welcome aboard airBaltic!

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Follow us on:





Nice

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- 5/ *airBaltic* teams up with *Iberia*
- 6/ *airBaltic* blog
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1/ Flights to Mediterranean holiday destinations are back

With wintertime ending soon, *airBaltic* will be switching back to its summer flight schedule at the end of March, signalling the return of many seasonal holiday destinations.

On March 29, flights will resume from Riga to Nice in the French Riviera, operating three times per week.

For those who wish to discover the wonders of Ancient Greece, flights to Athens will take place twice a week from the beginning of May. Later in June, we will operate two flights per week to Thessaloniki and one flight per week to Rhodes.

Starting from the end of May, *airBaltic* will fly twice a week to Dubrovnik and Rijeka in Croatia, to Burgas in Bulgaria and Venice in Italy. For island holiday lovers, we will also operate weekly flights to Palma de Mallorca and Olbia (Sardinia).

Plan your summer holidays now at airbaltic.com, book early and benefit from low prices that start at EUR 79 for a one-way ticket.

2/ Direct links between Tallinn and Vilnius

The Baltic States will soon be fully interconnected by air, as *airBaltic* is happy to announce a new direct flight between the Lithuanian and Estonian capitals.

From April 18, flights between Tallinn and Vilnius will operate 10 times per week, or twice per working day, which is perfect for same-day business travellers or tourists who merely wish to see the beauty of another Baltic capital.

Book your ticket online at airbaltic.com. One-way ticket prices start at EUR 75.



Iceland

3/ New flights to Reykjavik

airBaltic will launch a new route between Riga and **Reykjavik** on May 28, with direct flights to the capital of Iceland operating twice a week.

Iceland is the second largest island in Europe after Great Britain and an absolute must for nature-lovers and adventure-seekers. Being one of Europe's most exotic destinations, Iceland is famous for its dramatic landscapes with multi-coloured mountains, extensive lava flows, thermal springs, glaciers, waterfalls and clear blue lakes.

Take a swim in natural lagoons under the open skies, where the water temperature is 39°C. Explore the mind-blowing natural scenery during a hiking or horseback-riding trip or go whale-watching.

One-way ticket prices from Riga to Reykjavik start at EUR 139.

4/ Fly to exotic Baku and see a Formula 1 race

Following a break for the winter, flights between the Latvian and Azerbaijani capitals will be back on the *airBaltic* schedule and will take place twice per week beginning May 29.

Baku is an oil-rich city with a cosmopolitan character, featuring both historical and contemporary monuments. You might drink the best

tea that you have ever tasted with a view of the beautiful Caspian Sea, because tea is even more popular in Azerbaijan than in England.

Looking for adrenaline and speed? One of the greatest events for car race fans, the Formula 1 Grand Prix of Europe, will take place in Baku from June 17-19.

One-way ticket fares from Riga to Baku start at EUR 129.



Heydar Aliyev Centre, Baku

© Visit Azerbaijan

5/ *airBaltic* teams up with *Iberia*

airBaltic and the Spanish airline *Iberia* have implemented a cooperation agreement that is already providing convenient flights between Riga and Madrid via various major European airports such as Brussels, Paris, Munich, Frankfurt and Amsterdam.

Thanks to this partnership, Baltic travellers can discover southern Europe with *Iberia* flights that connect through Madrid, while Spaniards will be able to fly with *airBaltic* to the Nordic region through Riga.

Book your ticket to Madrid online at [airBaltic.com](http://airbaltic.com).

6/ *airBaltic* blog

Visit airbalticblog.com whenever you wish to find inspiration for your next trip. You can find information about our destinations as well as interesting facts related to shops, music, accommodation and food for all tastes.

Do you want to go to the place where your favourite Oscar-nominated movie was filmed? Or perhaps your favourite food is French or Italian, but you are not good at making it? Go to airbalticblog.com and you'll not only be able to read about these subjects, but also feel other nations' presence in your home.

7/ Save time and money with online check-in

Check in online at airbaltic.com up to one hour before your flight and save EUR 10 on the airport check-in fee.

If using a tablet or smartphone you don't even need to print the boarding pass. Just save your boarding pass in the Passbook (Apple) or PasWallet (Android) and, if you have no checked baggage, head straight to security control. Otherwise leave your baggage at the drop-off counter first.

If you decide to check in some baggage shortly before your flight, then you can still do so while checking in online, up to one hour before your departure, and pay less than at the check-in counter at the airport.



Text by **EGITA KRASTIŅA**
Photo by
LAURIS VĪKSNE (F64)

Great teamwork!

Earlier this year, *airBaltic's* cabin crew members Anna Stola and Mihails Iputins won a gold medal in the prestigious international competition International Sales Person of the Year. Competing together as a team, they were awarded for the quality of their onboard service in the *Sales as a Service* category. The competition took place in London and was organised by ISPY International.

The duo's first-place showing does not come as a surprise, as Anna and Mihails are open, humorous and intelligent professionals with a great love for their job and the people around them. This was the 15th edition of the annual competition, which aims to raise the level of service in aviation all across the world, and which saw the participation of flight attendants from nearly 30 airlines.

First of all, congratulations on your victory! What made you decide to take part in the competition?

Mihails: In this competition, flight attendants were evaluated on how well they work as a team. But before that, there was also an internal competition among the cabin crew members of *airBaltic*. We had to put forth the candidacy of those colleagues who we felt were best suited for the competition.

Anna: The news that I had been selected to take part came so unexpectedly! For several years in a row, I had won the product advertising competitions at our airline's annual service training sessions, but I never thought of myself as a suitable candidate for a competition of this scale. I even considered turning down the offer to participate, but Mihails was extremely supportive and a real driving force.

Mihails: This year, *airBaltic* took a strategically wise step and let us choose our own teammates. During the vetting process, Anna and I realised that we wanted to take part in the competition together as a team.

Anna: Immediately after being evaluated for the competition at *airBaltic*, I felt that we would be chosen to represent the airline. We formed a natural and harmonious team, we worked well together and communicated easily, both with each other and with our clients.

Mihails: We worked so well together that we were finishing each other's sentences already during the evaluation phase at *airBaltic*!

What did you have to do at the competition?

Mihails: We were evaluated under various categories such as brand awareness, product knowledge, features and benefits, and unique selling points. Of course, we were afraid of failing. Everybody was in a very positive frame of mind. There was no sense of rivalry and we all did our best to support each other.

One of the tasks, for example, was to create an onboard menu card based on the airline's profile and products. There was a really interesting workshop about the history of perfumes and the basics of perfume classification. We had a great opportunity to participate in a celebrity customer workshop conducted by Geoff Ramm. That was an inspirational seminar about making service outstanding at any time.

Anna: Despite being very well-prepared, we won due to factors that you can't really learn beforehand: through teamwork, humour and empathy. For example, two of our colleagues from Turkey even booked a single hotel room together before the competition so that they could get to know each other better. We didn't have to do anything like that. We just did what we usually do every day and acted naturally. We didn't even realise that we can be such good people and learned a great deal not only about the service sphere, but also about ourselves. For

example, previously I had almost never joked around with the passengers, because I had been afraid of being misunderstood or unintentionally offending somebody. At this competition, however, it was our natural openness and sense of humour that got us that gold medal.

How long did the competition last?

Mihails: It lasted for four very intensive days. Already on the second day I said: "Anna, I don't think that we have had a breath of fresh air for the past 48 hours!" Every day from 8 AM until 11 PM, we underwent training, evaluation and had events to attend. Only on the fourth day did we get the chance to go out on an excursion together for two hours.

Incidentally, how did you prepare for the competition?

Anna: I'm a real bookworm! I read the materials that they gave us and didn't even let them out of my hands on the flights. It was a huge challenge for both of us, because we also had a very heavy workload at *airBaltic*. We were working a lot and also had to get ready for Christmas and the New Year. I'm a perfectionist and once I have set out to do something, I put everything that I have into it. I remember calling Misha [*the affectionate diminutive term for "Mihail" in Russian – ed.*] and asking him if he had read over what we still had to learn. He was always either sleeping or had just woken up or was just about to go to sleep!

Mihails: We had completely different approaches to the study process. My method was to place the books under my pillow so that I could absorb the knowledge better! [*Laughs.*] I knew that if I wouldn't be able to get a handle on something, then I could rely on Anna 100% to help bail me out.

Going back to the beginning of your careers, how did you both wind up at *airBaltic*?

Mihails: I joined *airBaltic* in 2010 and I remember stumbling upon an *airBaltic* junior cabin crew vacancy on a boring winter evening. I'm not one of those who has dreamed about flying since their

childhood. I've always liked to work with people. My previous jobs were also in the service sphere, but I wanted to take a step upwards and literally ended up climbing higher than I had planned!

Anna: I worked for two years in Oxford, England, and upon my return to Latvia I took a one-year break. Once that year had passed, I suddenly realised that I definitely want to work somewhere at the Riga airport. Already while I was at school, the psychological tests showed that I should work with people. It's hard to imagine a setting with a greater flow of people than a busy airport. And so I went to the airport and said that I would like to work there. They immediately told me that they don't need any workers, but suggested that I

We won due to factors that you can't really learn beforehand: through teamwork, humour and empathy

try my luck at *airBaltic*. I returned home disappointed, but I went onto *airBaltic's* website, where I saw the announcement for a junior cabin crew vacancy. My knowledge of Latvian wasn't perfect at the time, but I decided to take a risk and apply for the position. The job interview went very well. I still remember what we talked about and what simulations we went through. Soon Misha and I will mark our sixth year at *airBaltic*. Working as a stewardess really was "love at first sight" for me. I can't imagine myself in any other sphere outside of aviation or working for any other airline but *airBaltic*.

Mihails: I feel the same way. Over the past few years, *airBaltic* has become like a second home and my colleagues like a large international family.

What do you like most about your job?

Anna and Mihails in unison: Our work colleagues! We are really fortunate to be with such a fantastic and supportive group of people. Many of our work relationships have turned into life-long friendships.

Anna: Every day at work is different. The passengers change and so do the colleagues we work with on the flights, not to mention the aircraft and the flight destinations. This is a beautiful and dynamic job. Every flight has its charm.

What do you like to do during your free time?

Anna: Since I have lived by the seaside all of my life, I really enjoy walking along the beach, especially with my dog. I also like spending time together with my husband and young daughter. On top of that, I love to read books!

Mihails: While everybody was out shopping in London, Anna came back with a whole library and forced me to buy some books as well! My favourite hobby is sleeping. [*Laughs.*] I like to spend my free time with my friends or go visit my parents.

What did you gain from the competition?

Anna: This competition definitely raised my self-esteem. No matter how hard things sometimes get, one has to face the challenges and break them, rather than letting them break you.

Mihails: We were one of the smallest teams in the competition, and during the introduction evening I spoke with a stewardess from *Air Canada*, who said: "It's not about the money or the size of the company; it's all about what's inside of you!" That provided a very powerful emotional boost and made us think: "Why shouldn't we succeed?" Despite being from a small country and a small airline, we are no less friendly and caring. Quite the contrary!

Anna: We would like to express our special thanks to a number of people at *airBaltic*, and particularly to service training manager Skaidrīte Bulmeistere. For years, she has been teaching us to treat each passenger like someone special, to fear nothing, to interact with the passengers, to give and to receive positive emotions. We would also like to thank Ilze Arkliņa and Aleksei Romanov for their support. **BO**



Which ticket type is the best for you?

What are your priorities when you travel? Knowing these can make planning your next trip a lot easier. Take a look at the three *airBaltic* ticket types and choose the one that best suits your individual needs.

		BASIC	PREMIUM	BUSINESS
		Are you a budget traveller looking for the cheapest option to get from point A to B, and to whom no extra services are important? Just a nice flight at a nice price! In that case, the Basic ticket is the right choice for you.	Do you take frequent business trips and is your top priority smooth and easy travel in order to arrive at your destination well-rested? Choose a Premium ticket for a worry-free trip!	Are you the absolute luxury type, who expects exceptional service and care throughout the whole journey and who values privacy and flexibility? In this case, nothing less than a high-flying Business Class experience is acceptable!
BAGGAGE	Hand baggage	✓ 1 bag (8 kg) + 1 personal item	✓ 1 bag (8 kg) + 1 personal item	✓ 2 bags + 1 personal item
	Checked baggage	€29.99 per 1 bag (20 kg) if booked online	✓ 1 bag (20 kg)	✓ 2 bags (total 40 kg)
	Sports equipment	€34.99	€34.99	✓
CHECK-IN/ AT AIRPORT	Web check-in	✓	✓	✓
	Airport check-in	€10	✓	✓
	Priority check-in + Security fast track at Riga airport	€20	✓	✓
	Priority check-in outside Riga	€14.99	✓	✓
	Business lounge	⊘	⊘	✓
ON BOARD	Advance seat reservation	from €2.99	✓	✓
	Meal and drinks	Pre-order at airbalticmeal.com or buy on board	Pre-order at airbalticmeal.com or buy on board	✓
	Free seat next to you	⊘	⊘	✓
TICKETS	Flight date/time change	⊘	€50*	✓
	Name change	⊘	€50*	✓
	Cancellation with refund	⊘	€100	✓
	Date change warranty	€49.99*	⊘	✓
LOYALTY PROGRAM	Collect PINS	1 PIN per €	2 PINS per €	3 PINS per €

* If there are no tickets left in the original booking class, the passenger must cover the costs of the upgrade to the next available booking class.



Onboard menu

This month, we are offering our Economy Class passengers a new Food & Drinks spring menu, in which our wide selection of best-sellers has been supplemented with many additional treats.

Chef Andris Vasiļonoks of *LSG Sky Chefs* has developed new freshly made meals that are delivered to the aircraft straight from the *LSG* kitchen. These include:

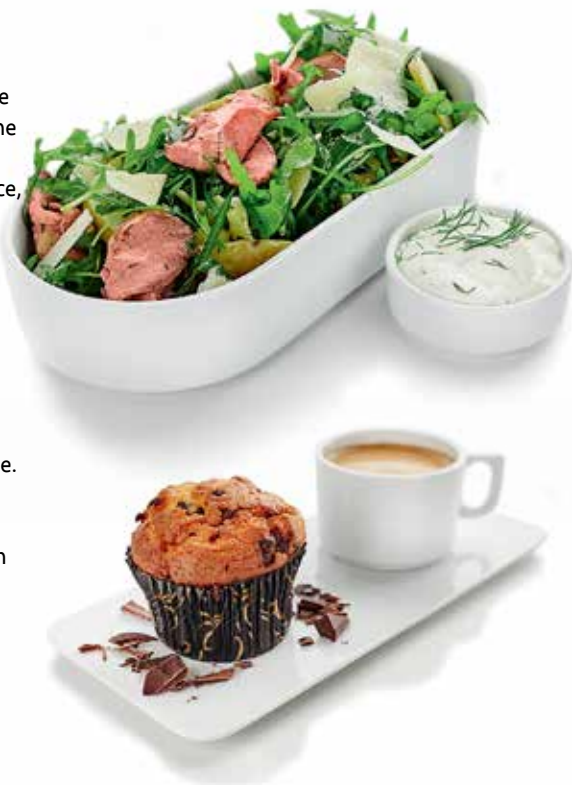
- A bagel with chicken, green salad, tomatoes and pesto sauce;
- Roast beef salad with *Parito* cheese, potatoes and horseradish dressing.
- Our passengers' most popular choices – and for good reason, at that – are still on offer, including a Scandinavian-style salmon sandwich, hot and tasty chicken and cheese panini, a snack platter of cheeses and

olives, and a tapas selection that can be enjoyed with a glass of white or red wine or Prosecco.

For a more subtle onboard experience, the exquisite *Moët* champagne is now available on our flights!

To savour a nourishing hot meal, Economy Class passengers can choose from two options: goulash of beef and vegetables with potatoes, or the new coconut curry with chicken and rice. These can be combined with tea or coffee and a sweet snack of one's choice.

If you are in the mood for just a cup of coffee and a sweet snack, then try our coffee combo options with a muffin or zephyr. The *Maigums* vanilla zephyr is a new addition to our menu, but most Latvians have known this airy, chocolate-covered sweet since their childhood. Also perfect as a souvenir from Latvia!





Join *airBaltic's* loyalty programme pins

About the programme

PINS is the *airBaltic* frequent flyer loyalty programme, 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 programme 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 2 are issued with a special *airBaltic* PINS Young Pilot card, which also allows children to collect PINS.

If you aren't a pins programme member yet

Join the programme 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

pins Friends and Family Account

The PINS programme allows joining several accounts into a group. Creating a Friends and Family account and adding new members is done on the PINS website www.pinsforme.com under the My Account section. You can merge up to eight accounts in a single Friends and Family account and collect PINS together. The member who creates the Friends and Family account also becomes its administrator and is entitled to add other account holders to the Friends and Family account. By creating a Friends and Family account, you as the administrator

of the account undertakes the responsibility for any actions taking place within the account, including actions done by other members of the group. You can spend PINS from any account within the group. The other members of the Friends and Family account can only spend PINS located in their respective accounts. You can also allow any member of the group to spend PINS from the Friends and Family account.

Enjoy collecting PINS for your dream rewards together with your friends and family!



How to spend

Spend PINS by choosing your dream reward from a great selection of *airBaltic* flights, products and experiences at spend.pinsforme.com.

Spend on *airBaltic*:

- ➔ Exchange your PINS for flights from just **4 200 PINS**;
- ➔ Upgrade your ticket to Business Class from just **8 000 PINS**.




Prices are reflected for airBaltic economy class, one-way flight tickets. Airport taxes and fees are not included, seat availability is not confirmed, restricted and subject to change. Please read full terms and conditions at pinsforme.com

* Seasonal flight

It's pins birthday this month so let's celebrate together!


Check out these amazing rewards picked for special occasions from our Rewards shop.

airBaltic Flights




from **4 200 pins**
or 100p + 62.43€

Smart Watch




from **10 505 pins**
or 100p + 62.43€

SPA Treatments



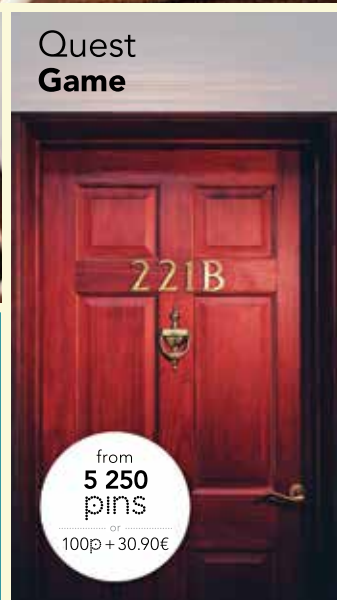
from **2 850 pins**
or 100p + 16.50€

Entertainment Gift card




from **1 580 pins**
or 100p + 8.88€

Quest Game




from **5 250 pins**
or 100p + 30.90€

Drone




from **44 625 pins**
or 100p + 267.15€

Cinema Tickets




from **1 020 pins**

Candy floss Maker



from **10 395 pins**
or 100p + 61.77€

Lego Toys



from **2 255 pins**
or 100p + 12.93€

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

and many more at spend.pinsforme.com

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

114 | AIRBALTIC.COM

Fly to *la bella Italia*

During the summer season, *airBaltic* is operating non-stop flights from Riga to four cities in Italy: Rome, Milan, Venice and Olbia.

In order to offer travellers a wider choice for their Italian holidays, *airBaltic* has teamed up with Italy's number one airline *Alitalia* since 2010. Thanks to this cooperation, you can fly all across Italy via Rome Leonardo da Vinci-Fiumicino airport at great prices. Such destinations as Palermo, Catania, Cagliari, Brindisi, Pisa, Lamezia Terme and Naples are especially popular among Baltic travellers.


Book your Italian flights in one go at airbaltic.com or alitalia.com.

Why book connecting flights together?
Booking connecting flights together in one ticket is the safest and most reliable

way 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 or missed 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 luggage, airport check-in and fast-track security control; and Business Class with a full range of services and flexibility.







Transit via Rome Fiumicino Airport
Rome Fiumicino Airport is one of the busiest airports in Europe by passenger









Alitalia BASIC FACTS	
Founded	12 March 1999
Alliance	
Slogan	Where the journey meets the destination
Hub	Rome-Fiumicino Airport
Fleet	110 aircraft
Destinations	102









● *airBaltic* direct flight destinations
● *Alitalia* destinations for transit via Rome

traffic. However it's convenient for travellers since the terminals are connected to each other by walkways. Just follow the signs and maps. The connecting time between international and domestic flights is 45 minutes.

airBaltic codeshare partners







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

Flights from Riga						Flights to Riga					
Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival
PRAGUE						PRAGUE					
BT 481	RIX	PRG	1234567	12:50	14:00	BT 482	PRG	RIX	1234567	14:35	17:40
ROME Leonardo da Vinci Fiumicino						ROME Leonardo da Vinci Fiumicino					
BT 631	RIX	FCO	----45--	07:40	09:45	BT 632	FCO	RIX	----45--	10:30	14:40
BT 633	RIX	FCO	1-----7	15:15	17:20	BT 634	FCO	RIX	1-----7	18:15	22:25
SALZBURG / till March 19						SALZBURG / till March 19					
BT 437	RIX	SZG	-----6-	12:25	13:35	BT 438	SZG	RIX	-----6-	14:25	17:30
STOCKHOLM Arlanda						STOCKHOLM Arlanda					
BT 101	RIX	ARN	1234567	07:30	07:45	BT 104	ARN	RIX	1-----	06:40	08:55
BT 105	RIX	ARN	1-4567	12:20	12:35	BT 102	ARN	RIX	1234567	08:40	10:55
BT 119	RIX	ARN	1-4---	18:05	18:20	BT 118	ARN	RIX	-2--5--	09:30	11:45
BT 109	RIX	ARN	1234567	19:30	19:45	BT 106	ARN	RIX	1-4567	15:15	17:30
BT 103	RIX	ARN	-----7	23:15	23:30	BT 110	ARN	RIX	1234567	20:15	22:30
ST-PETERSBURG						ST-PETERSBURG					
BT 442	RIX	LED	1-3456-	07:45	10:05	BT 447	LED	RIX	12-4-6-	06:25	06:45
BT 444	RIX	LED	12-4567	18:40	21:00	BT 443	LED	RIX	1-3456-	11:00	11:20
BT 446	RIX	LED	1-3-5-7	23:25	01:45+1	BT 445	LED	RIX	12-4567	22:00	22:20
TALLINN						TALLINN					
BT 311	RIX	TLL	123456-	07:50	08:40	BT 362	TLL	RIX	123456-	05:50	06:40
BT 313	RIX	TLL	1234567	14:00	14:50	BT 312	TLL	RIX	1234567	10:35	11:25
BT 317	RIX	TLL	1234567	18:30	19:20	BT 314	TLL	RIX	1234567	15:15	16:05
BT 361	RIX	TLL	1234567	23:15	23:59	BT 318	TLL	RIX	1-----	19:55	20:45
						BT 318	TLL	RIX	-2345-7	21:40	22:30
						BT 1364	TLL	RIX	----5--	22:00	22:50
TBILISI						TBILISI					
BT 722	RIX	TBS	----5-7	23:05	04:35+1	BT 723	TBS	RIX	1----6-	05:20	06:55
TEL AVIV						TEL AVIV					
BT 771	RIX	TLV	-2---6-	13:00	17:20	BT 772	TLV	RIX	--3---7	11:20	15:50
TURKU						TURKU					
BT 359	RIX	TKU	1-3-5-7	23:15	00:25+1	BT 360	TKU	RIX	12-4-6-	05:45	06:50
VIENNA						VIENNA					
BT 431	RIX	VIE	1-3456-	07:15	08:35	BT 432	VIE	RIX	1-3456-	09:45	13:05
BT 433	RIX	VIE	12345-7	16:30	17:55	BT 434	VIE	RIX	12345-7	19:00	22:20
VILNIUS						VILNIUS					
BT 341	RIX	VNO	123456-	07:50	08:40	BT 350	VNO	RIX	123456-	05:50	06:40
BT 343	RIX	VNO	1234567	12:45	13:35	BT 1354	VNO	RIX	--3---	06:20	07:10
BT 347	RIX	VNO	-234567	18:30	19:20	BT 342	VNO	RIX	1234567	10:35	11:25
BT 347	RIX	VNO	1-----	21:10	22:00	BT 346	VNO	RIX	1234567	16:40	17:30
BT 1353	RIX	VNO	--3----	22:55	23:45	BT 348	VNO	RIX	12345-7	21:40	22:30
BT 349	RIX	VNO	12345-7	23:15	23:59						
VERONA						VERONA					
BT 625	RIX	VRN	-----6-	12:15	13:50	BT 626	VRN	RIX	-----6-	14:30	18:00
WARSAW						WARSAW					
BT 461	RIX	WAW	1-3456-	07:40	08:10	BT 462	WAW	RIX	1-3456-	09:00	11:25
BT 467	RIX	WAW	-2-4-7	18:40	19:10	BT 468	WAW	RIX	-2-4-7	19:55	22:20
ZURICH						ZURICH					
BT 641	RIX	ZRH	1-3-567	12:10	13:40	BT 642	ZRH	RIX	1-3-567	14:15	17:45
Flights from Tallinn						Flights to Tallinn					
Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival
BERLIN Tegel						BERLIN Tegel					
BT 203	TLL	TXL	1---5--	15:20	16:40	BT 204	CDG	TXL	1---5--	18:10	21:25
PARIS Charles de Gaulles						PARIS Charles de Gaulles					
BT 689	TLL	CDG	-2-4-7	07:20	09:20	BT 690	CDG	TLL	-2-4-7	18:50	22:45
VIENNA						VIENNA					
BT 205	TLL	VIE	1---5--	06:35	08:30	BT 206	VIE	TLL	1---5--	09:45	13:35
Flights from Vilnius						Flights to Vilnius					
Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival
AMSTERDAM						AMSTERDAM					
BT 609	VNO	AMS	---4567	08:55	10:55	BT 610	AMS	VNO	---4567	11:45	15:30
BT 609	VNO	AMS	1-----	14:00	16:00	BT 610	AMS	VNO	1-----	16:50	20:35
BERLIN Tegel						BERLIN Tegel					
BT 215	VNO	TXL	-2--5-7	16:10	17:10	BT 216	TXL	VNO	-2--5-7	18:05	20:50
BRUSSELS						BRUSSELS					
BT 605	VNO	BRU	12-----	05:50	07:55	BT 606	BRU	VNO	12-----	09:00	12:50
BT 605	VNO	BRU	---4---	17:00	19:05	BT 606	BRU	VNO	---4---	19:35	23:25
PARIS Charles de Gaulles						PARIS Charles de Gaulles					
BT 701	VNO	CDG	-2-4-7	15:25	17:10	BT 702	CDG	VNO	-2-4-7	10:05	13:40
STOCKHOLM Arlanda						STOCKHOLM Arlanda					
BT 111	VNO	ARN	-2--5--	08:20	09:00	BT 114	ARN	VNO	1-4---	18:50	21:30



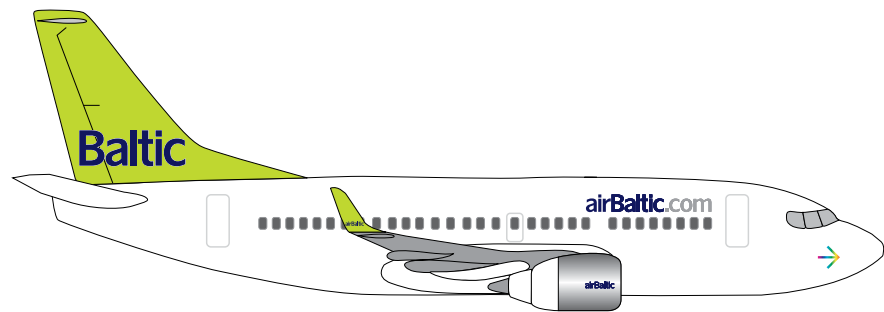
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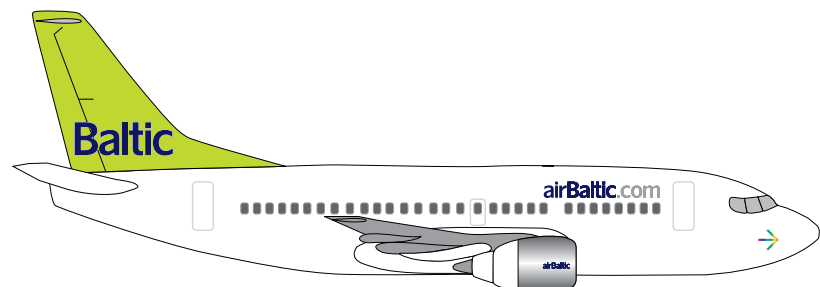
* Charter flights in cooperation with Tez Tour





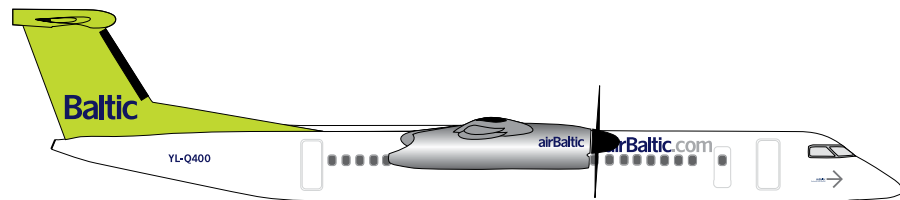
Boeing 737-300

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

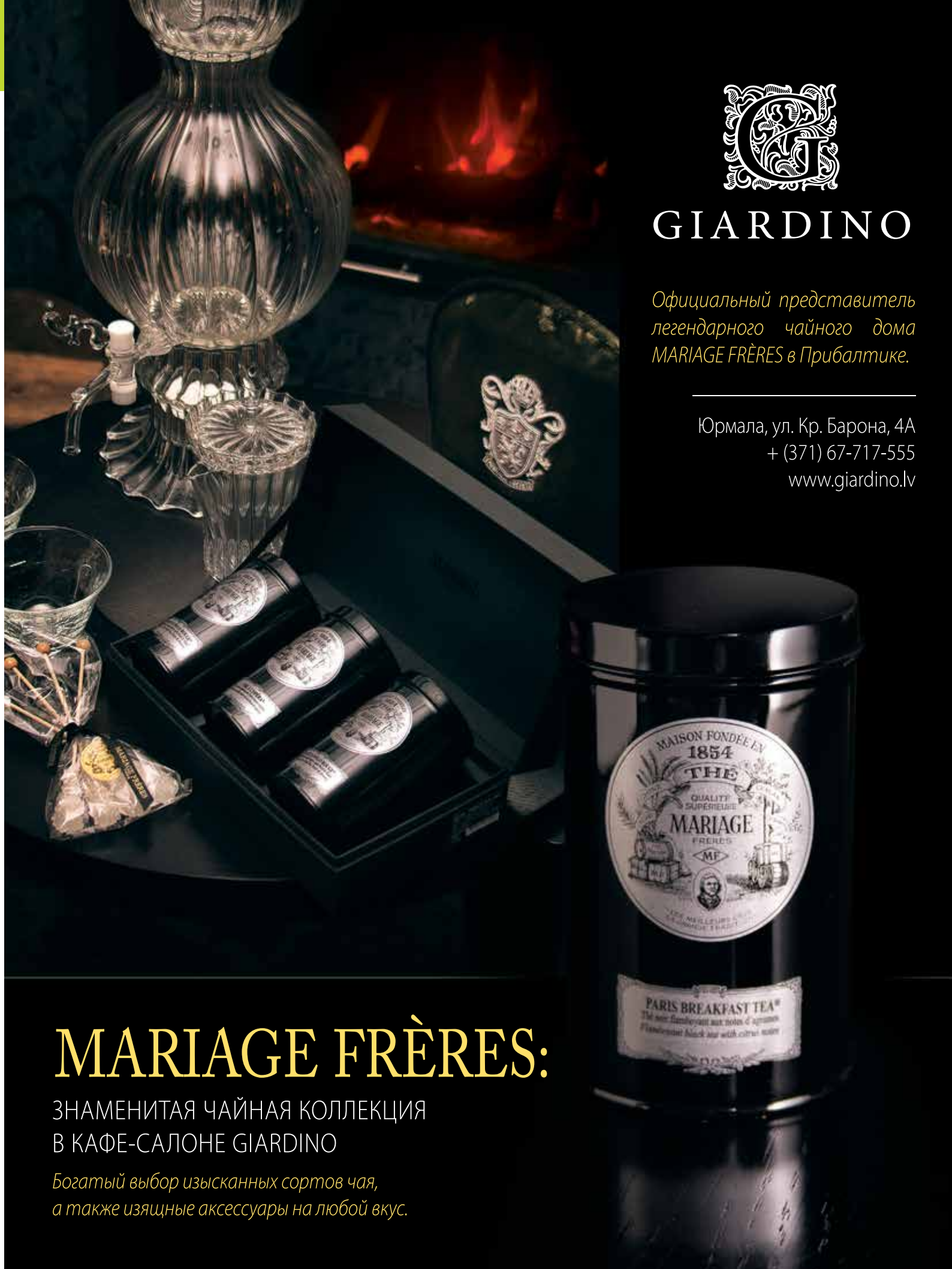
Number of seats	76
Max take-off weight	29.6 metric tons
Max payload	8.6 metric tons
Length	32.83 m
Wing span	28.42
Cruising speed	667 km/h
Commercial range	2084 km
Fuel consumption	1074 l/h
Engine	P&W 150A



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