

baltic outlook

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inflight magazine

Sofi Oksanen
the Gothic queen of literature

Ah! Paris
Street photography
from the City of Love

Warsaw's
new playstation

Alsace

a gourmet's paradise



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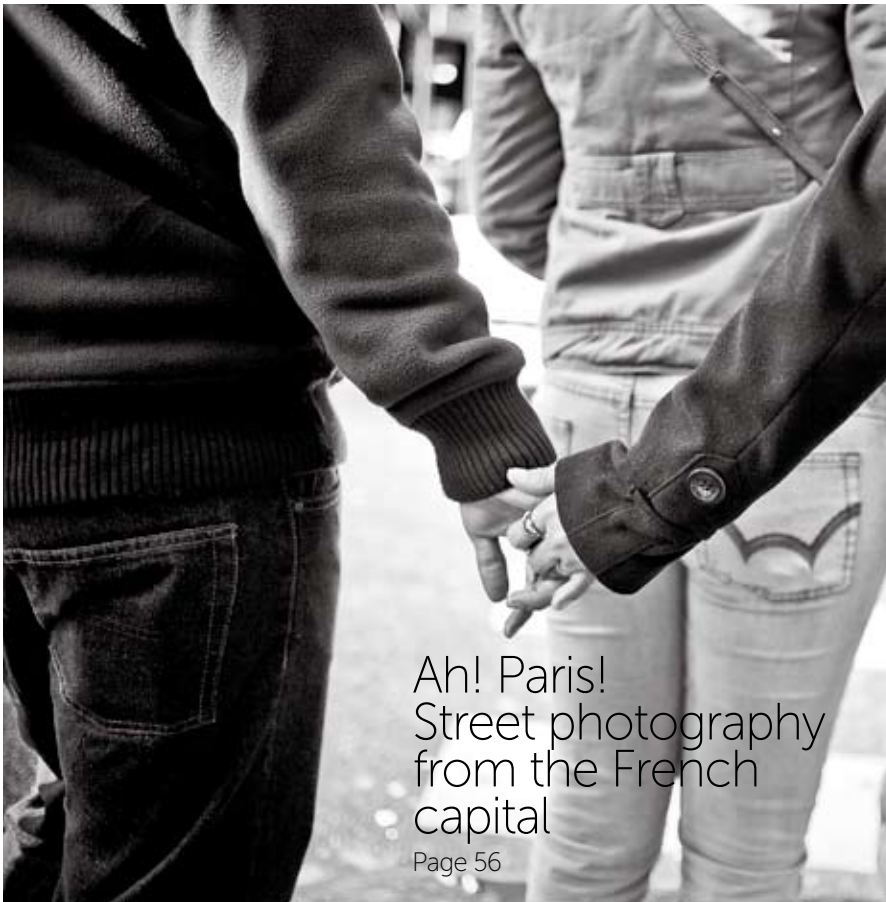


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Street photography
from the French
capital

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baltic Outlook

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Melon kebabs with bacon-cheese dip

Serves 4

- 1 melon
- 150 g of a light cheese
(goat's cheese is great for this)
- 3 slices of bacon
- salt and ground pepper

In a frying pan with a little olive oil, fry the bacon on both sides until it is crispy. Put the bacon in the blender with the cheese and blend until mixed.

Add salt and pepper to taste.

Cut the melon in two and scrape out the seeds with a spoon, take off the skin. Cut the melon slices into rectangles and put each rectangle on a wooden skewer.

Serve with the bacon-cheese dip.



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Bertolt Flick,
President & CEO,
airBaltic

Dear Passenger,

Low unit cost and affordable tickets for our passengers have been the focus of airBaltic for the past ten years. By offering lower fares to leisure travellers and business people, also in regional centres, airBaltic continues to demonstrate that passenger growth is possible in the Baltic markets and Scandinavia despite the recent recession; this strategy of affordable tickets to regional customers is today copied by new players in the North Europe.

Today's reality in the aviation industry of high fuel prices and relentless cost pressures means that we cannot rest on our past achievements, and need to make further improvements to our efficiency. We will do that by modernizing our fleet and retiring ten Fokker 50 aircraft earlier than originally planned.

In the past twelve years, the Fokker 50 has served airBaltic very well. It has been our main workhorse for regional flights that today bring transit passengers to North Hub Riga for their onward journeys to destinations like Paris, London, Tel Aviv, or Kiev. It is an excellent aircraft. However, the increasing fuel prices and maintenance cost for the out-of-production aircraft require action. As part of airBaltic's fleet modernisation plan, we introduced the state-of-the-art Bombardier Q400 Next Gen aircraft last year. We clearly see the impact of the introduction of the modern aircraft on the efficiency of the airline and operating costs helping us to maintain affordable ticket prices in the world of rising fuel costs.

With the retirement of the Fokker 50s, airBaltic will operate larger aircraft more intensively, and at a lower per-seat cost. The number of seats available on flights from and to Europe, Scandinavia, Middle East, Russia/CIS via North Hub Riga will also be the same as in the previous winter. It means that we will also adjust our internal functions, as part of this cost-cutting exercise to save 30 million LVL (over 45 million EUR), for the benefit of our customer who wants to fly at affordable prices. Regrettably this will also require us to reduce staff numbers, which we are not celebrating like the shareholders of banks or other publicly traded companies. These are tough and decisive steps, but we are convinced that our passengers will greatly benefit from more convenient, efficient and newer aircraft, improved service and punctuality at an affordable price.

Bertolt Flick

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bertolt Flick', written in a cursive style.



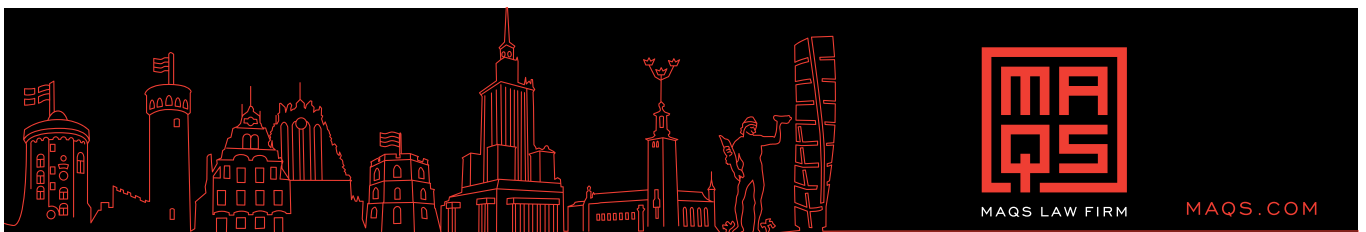
bookshops and concert halls. Stuff didn't come to you. You had to find it. Now you can pull in anything that you want, wherever a wi-fi connection is available. Which has led me to one of the greatest rediscovered pleasures of my advancing years: indie rock. I thought I was done with popular music around 1979. That was when *Led Zeppelin* split, I got my first serious job and I stopped listening to the radio. When you stopped listening to the radio in those days, your tastes ossified. You fell behind and the music moved on. I never did get into synthesiser bands or rap. Yet now, more than three decades later, the musical bit of my brain is coming back to life. For which I have *iTunes* to thank. It's not just a delivery mechanism. It's a discovery mechanism. I can sample things for free, I get nudged along towards other stuff that I'm probably going to like, and I usually do. All I needed was a kick-start. That came when I heard *Arcade Fire's* second album, "Funeral". I hadn't realised people still make that kind of music. It was a short hop from there to discovering *Vampire Weekend*, *Cat Power*, *Feist*, *Mount Desolation*, *The National*, *East River Pipe*... Well, I won't bore you. Except to say that this feels to me like another musical golden age. I've read plenty of pieces in the past year or two, arguing that the internet is making us lazy and stupid. I don't agree. I think that if you want to be lazy or stupid, then the internet makes it easier, that's for sure. If, on the other hand, you want to be intellectually energetic and adventurous, then the internet makes that easier too. That's a very fair trade-off. **BO**

Rediscovered pleasures

TEXT BY ROBERT COTTRELL, A BRITISH JOURNALIST AND ENGLISH BOOK SHOP OWNER IN RIGA | PHOTO COURTESY OF F64

One thing about turning 50 is that it gives you a new insight into the phrase "the right side of 50". Which is to say, I feel that I'm on the right side of 50 now – even though it's the side that scared me to death just a few years ago. So what's gone right? Well, good health has a lot to do with it. But that's true of life at any age. The next most important factor, I would say, is the internet. It is a great shrinker of distances. Everyone

knows that. But what strikes me as less obvious, and perhaps more interesting, is that the internet is also a great leveler of ages. A generation or two ago, keeping up with culture and ideas was physically exhausting. Only the young had the energy for it. If you wanted a busy social life with scores of friends and acquaintances, if you wanted to know about the latest books and films and news and chat, you actually had to go somewhere – to parties, cafés, cinemas,



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Warsaw's new Playstation

The Copernicus Science Centre, Warsaw's newest architectural landmark, charts scientific and technological frontiers

To shoehorn the grandeur and excitement of scientific discovery into a museum, Warsaw needed a cutting-edge sci-tech centre that would impress and inspire in equal measure. The newly-opened Copernicus Science Centre, an interactive educational and cultural institution perched elegantly on the edge of the Vistula River, certainly delivers. Named after the Polish astronomer who revolutionized science by asserting that the Earth revolves around the Sun, Copernicus pushes the innovation envelope, with its futuristic architectural design and tech-tactic exhibits that

empower curious minds to explore and embrace the wonders of science. From a distance, the three-storey riverside structure, with its wave-like form and subtly zigzagging volumes, looks like a large, abstract rock formation. Remaining in dialogue with the natural surroundings, local architects Jan Kubic and Magdalena Gilder of the *RAR-2 Architecture Laboratory* infused features of dynamism and motion throughout the multi-functional facility – including a patchwork of stained fibre cement sheets that covers the façade, and a boulder-shaped side wing that houses the planetarium. Moreover, the undulating roof garden is filled with crater-shaped skylights that flood the exhibition spaces with light and boost the building's eco-credentials by regulating the temperature and internal ventilation.

The museum's exterior may channel cool modernism, but inside, creativity and innovation kick into high gear. With an eye to the future, RoboThespian, a chatty and wildly animated humanoid robot, greets visitors at the door by singing a song, reciting a poem or even mimicking their movements. The central atrium, with its giant Foucault Pendulum showing the Earth's rotational movement,

MUSEUM'S EXTERIOR MAY CHANNEL COOL MODERNISM, BUT INSIDE, CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION KICK INTO HIGH GEAR

connects the six interdisciplinary galleries. These are packed with over 400 interactive devices and hands-on activities – all of which demonstrate the scientific principles and natural phenomena that influence our lives.

The natural sciences are spotlighted in *Roots of Civilisation*, a ground-floor zone where youngsters get to carry out archaeological excavations, learn ancient mathematical calculations and explore the ways in which wind and water energy have been harnessed. Upstairs, high-tech displays are clustered around themes such as the human body, light and movement, while robots encourage audiences of all ages to investigate and play. Clearly, Copernicus continues to push the boundaries of modern science and imagination from his new home in Warsaw. **BO**

Copernicus Science Centre
ul. Wybrzeże Kosciuszki 20,
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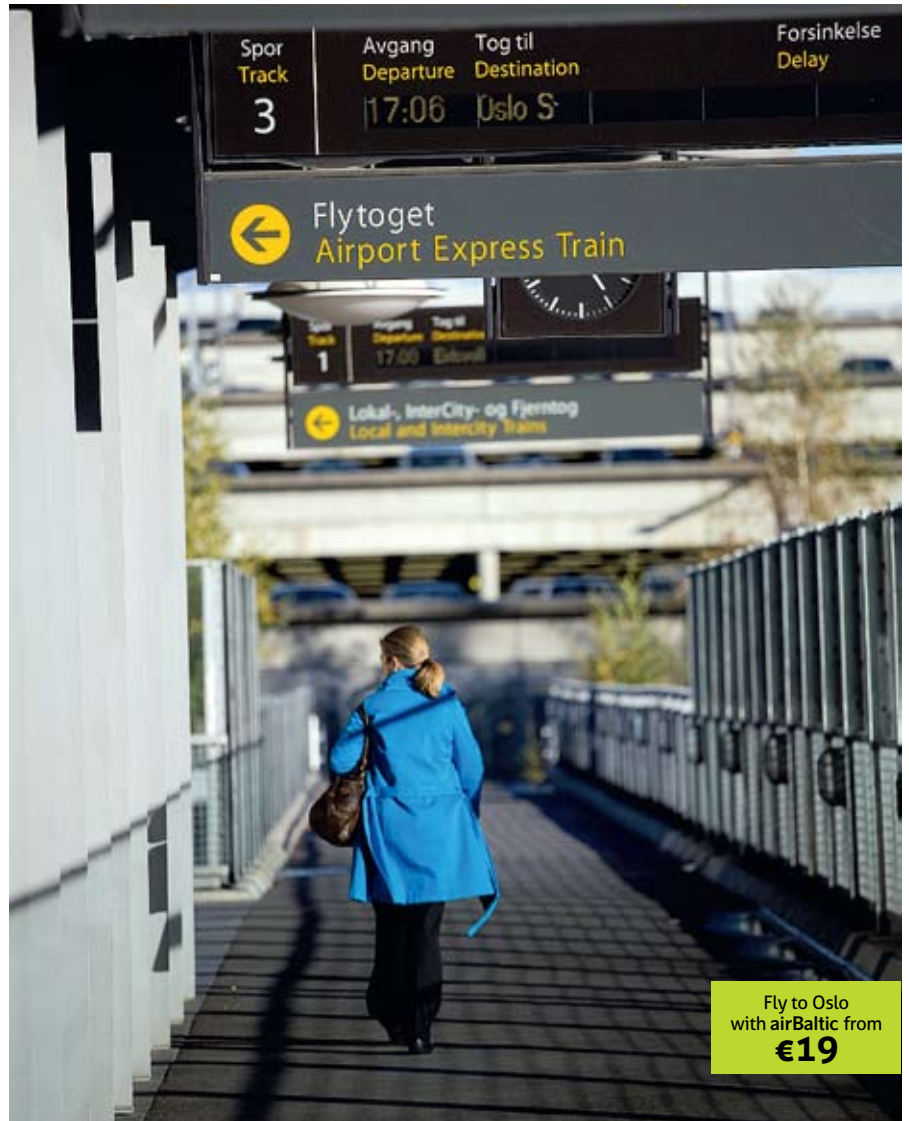
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Changing the spelling

A 12.5-billion-NOK (1.6 billion EUR) extension project will turn Oslo's I-shaped Gardermoen Airport into a T, ensuring that Norway's aviation capacity is taken care of for at least for the next two decades

Fresh local seafood, ice-cold sparkling wine and marine blue chairs. This divine combination at the Seafood Bar is the best-kept secret at Gardermoen (OSL), Norway's largest airport. (The bar actually has two outlets, both of them difficult to find, at opposite ends of Terminal 1, near both the domestic, and international gates). The airport's other trump cards – light and functional Nordic architecture, a user-friendly infrastructure, as well as fast check-in and security screenings – have been plain to see at Gardermoen since the airport opened its doors 12 years ago. During this relatively short time, the I-shaped airport has attained the limits of its capacity (17 million passengers per year). A small expansion will permit Gardermoen to continue its operations until 2017, by which time the airport will have acquired a T shape, as well as the ability to serve up to 28 million passengers per year. As is typical in Scandinavia, the airport has developed detailed, long-term plans until at least the 2030s. Tracts of farmland and forest space have already been booked for a third runway, should there be a need to build one. All of this growth is due to both international and domestic flights. Unlike the capitals of other European countries, Oslo hosts a high proportion of domestic flights, which account for nearly a half of Gardermoen's air traffic. The reason is simple – Norway is shaped like a tadpole,



and a very long one at that. If you were to turn the country's northernmost point at Nordkapp southward, it would reach Rome, Italy. And due to the lack of railways, people in the middle and northern part of the country rely heavily on air traffic. As passenger numbers increase, OSL, like other growing airports, has had to face a certain degree of opposition from its surrounding inhabitants. Even though it is 10 km from the nearest village and there are very few households in the airport's immediate vicinity, OSL is determined to maintain a good relationship with its neighbours. Noise pollution is high on the airport's agenda, which is why its specialists are determining the optimal placement of air corridors to produce the least possible decibels in neighbouring villages. The airport is acting like a good neighbour in another sense as well. Instead of sponsoring the national football league,

it is supporting the neighbouring seven communities' children's sport teams. This probably brings OSL less fame, but more pleasure out of the feeling that a seed for the future is continually being planted. **BO**

Facts on OSL
 Built in 1998
 Lies 50 km north of Oslo
 Connected to the city with shuttle busses and a high-speed train
 Employs a total of 13 000 people (OSL alone provides jobs for about 500 persons)
 Houses the SAS Museum of aviation and the Norwegian Armed Forces Aircraft Collection (for opening hours and location, consult www.sasmuseet.net and www.akersmus.no)

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SEPTEMBER / 2011



The Festival, a performance by Lone Twin of the UK
 Photo by Francis Loney

Homo Novus 2011 International Festival of Contemporary Theatre, Riga / September 3 – 9

Taking place every other year, *Homo Novus* has gained international recognition and has been placed among the most important and innovative theatre festivals of the Baltic region. The festival presents both new talents and established artists, showcasing contemporary theatre, dance, circus and film. It will also be hosting a series of workshops, lectures and debates. Since 1995, eight festivals have been organized, with a total of more than 70 performances being shown in Riga and Daugavpils, featuring companies from almost all of the European countries, as well as from Georgia, Russia, Argentina, Lebanon and other parts of the world. This year's guest performances range from a British avant-garde theatre and a French new circus to Finnish men performing in a tent. In addition, the festival will feature a joint project by Lithuanian theatre stars and a German performance artist, in cooperation with local Latvian schoolchildren.

Full program available at www.homonovus.lv



Baltic Pearl (Baltijas Pērle) film festival, Riga / September 15 – 25

Following in the tradition of former *Baltic Pearls*, this year's international film festival includes the most intriguing and award-winning films of 2010 and 2011, which have already thrilled the public at the Cannes, Berlin and Venice film festivals. Also featured is a parade of retrospectives,

including "Hollywood Legends – the Era's Film-symbols" (Greta Garbo, Rita Hayworth, Marlene Dietrich, Vivien Leigh, Audrey Hepburn), "Return of the Masterpieces" (Orson Welles' *The Magnificent Ambersons* and Terrence Malick's *Days of Heaven*), as well as "Film and the Classics: Looking for Lost Time". A special "Film and Fashion" program will invite viewers to a look behind the scenes of fashion houses and into the lives of the greatest masters of couture, while an evening of provocative film will feature a high quality program of erotic movies, encouraging discussion on the borders of art. The directors featured in the festival include Orson Welles, Pedro Almodóvar, Lars von Trier, Luchino Visconti, Woody Allen, Kim Ki-duk, Aki Kaurismäki, Terrence Malick, Robert Altman and Andrei Zvyagintsev, among many others.

For further information, consult www.balticpearl.lv
 Tickets available at www.bilesusersiv.lv

7th Tallinn Chamber Music Festival, Tallinn / September 11 – 25

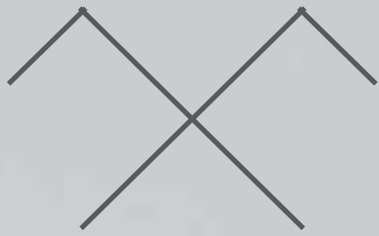
Tallinn's annual Chamber Music Festival is a major event in Estonia, giving audiences the chance to enjoy and take pride in the country's most outstanding singers and musicians. Its broad-ranging program will be offering chamber opera for the first time, as well as a wide variety of fantastic music, with performances by the Tallinn Festival Orchestra conducted by Jonathan Brett (UK). Also performing will be the *Ensemble Martinu* (Czech Republic), the *SaxEst* saxophone quartet, the *Artimus Ensemble* (Poland–Lithuania–Estonia), violinist Hugo Ticcianti (UK/Sweden), pianist Aksel Kolstad (Norway) and many others. The artistic director of the festival is the opera singer Pille Lill.

Tickets available on www.piletilevi.ee | Full program at www.plmf.ee



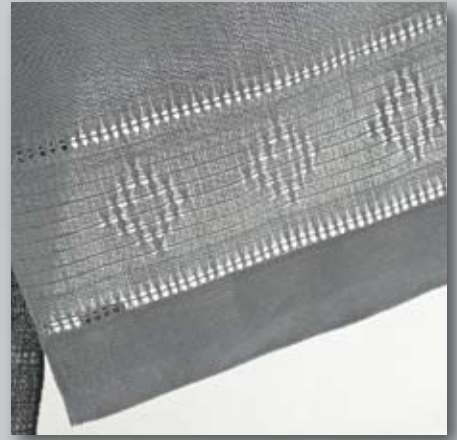


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Jay-Jay Johanson

Rock Café, Tallinn / September 17

Swedish singer and songwriter Jay-Jay Johanson is known for his melancholic voice and emotional lyrics. He started composing when just a teenager, but only in August 1996 did he release his first album, *Whiskey*, recorded at Break My Heart Studios in the Stockholm archipelago. The instant success of this debut album, characterized by jazzy vocals over trippy, *film noir* arrangements, took Jay-Jay out on his first of many world tours. His discography includes eight albums, of which the latest, *Spellbound*, was released earlier this year. Jay-Jay Johanson will be performing in Estonia for the first time in his career. His concert at the *Rock Café* on September 17th will be his only gig in the Baltics this year.

📍 Tickets available at www.piletilevi.ee and www.rockcafe.ee



Midnight in Paris (2011)

Arsenāls international film festival

Riga / September 10 – 18

The 1986 *Days of Film* festival was the jumping-off point for the now-famous *Arsenāls* international film festival, the biggest film festival in Latvia for a quarter of a century. This year, the program's focus is on films from Southeast Asia. Considerable attention, however, will also be devoted to musicals, 3D films by renowned masters (Wim Wenders, Werner Herzog and others), Flemish films and the newest movies from Russia. As always, there will also be panoramic views and special events, evening film showings and competitions – including an international film competition and a unique Baltic film showcase, which will screen the latest productions from the Baltic countries.

📍 Tickets at www.bilesuserviss.lv, *Kino Riga* and *K-Suns* ticket offices. | More at www.arsenals.lv

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London

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Degas and the Ballet: Picturing Movement Royal Academy of Arts / September 17 – December 11

This is the first ever exhibition dedicated solely to the famous Impressionist, Germain Edgar Degas, and his life's passion – dance. Photographs and early films depicting dancers – both of which the painter actively used in his work, are displayed alongside the artist's creations. From the very beginning of his creative life and all the way up to the end of it, Degas devotedly created images of dancers. He became renowned for his representations of the moving body, with ballerinas emerging as his best-known subjects.

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Moscow

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Rewriting Worlds, Fourth Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Arts ARTPLAY Design Centre / September 23 – October 30

Moscow's first biennale, which took place in 2005, drew acclaim not only in Russia, but also in the rest of Europe. It placed Russia's capital on the map of European art, alongside such cities as Lyon (France), Venice (Italy) and Thessaloniki (Greece).

The commissar of this year's biennale, Joseph Backstein, is one of the brightest personalities

in the Russian art scene. The biennale's concept takes root in the assertion that art is a room in which something new is constantly being created. With the help of their works, which are saturated with new ideas, artists "rewrite" the current reality. Participants (many of whom will be showing works in Russia for the first time) include Isaac Julien, Elmgreen & Dragset, Neo Rauch and Rebecca Horn, amongst others.

ЦУМ Art Foundation (ul. Petrovka 2) and the ARTPLAY Design Centre (ul. Nizhnaya Syromyatnicheskaya d. 10)
<http://4th.moscowbiennale.ru>



Munich

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Dürer–Cranach–Holbein. The Discovery of Man: German Portraiture around 1500, Kunsthalle der Hypo-Kulturstiftung / September 16 – January 15

Approximately 170 works of art, including paintings by Albrecht Dürer, Lucas Cranach the Elder and Hans Holbein, represent the bulk of German portraiture at the end of the 15th century and the beginning

of the 16th century. The exhibition is an introduction to the works of artists at the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Renaissance. Along with paintings, the collection also features sculptures, drawings and graphic prints.

The exhibition clearly demonstrates the quality of German portraiture, which was based upon a realistic portrayal of the subject. In their own way, the works depict the society of that period, since the portraits are also testaments to the social status of each subject.

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Copenhagen

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Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Statens Museum for Kunst (National Gallery of Denmark) / September 17 – February 19

The works of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901), the famous Bohemian, painter, graphic artist, illustrator and chronicler of his times, are set to go on display in Copenhagen. His works are vivid commentaries on life in the Montmartre of his time, and were received with great joy by his contemporaries, who then impatiently waited for more. Regardless of gender and social standing, Parisians quenched their passions in theatre and the circus – and sometimes in bordellos and dance halls as well. As can be seen from his work, Toulouse-Lautrec loved these places just as much as his contemporaries.

Sølvgade 48-50

www.smk.dk



La Clownesse, seated, Mademoiselle Cha-U-Kao (1896)



Paris

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L'Opéra restaurant

The recent restaurant opening at the *Palais Garnier*, a gorgeous, Late Empire-style building, took place 136 years behind schedule. Architect Charles Garnier laid the foundations of the building in 1861 and in his last sketches, he had envisioned a restaurant as well. The project was not carried out and two subsequent attempts to complete it failed to materialize. Now Garnier's dream has finally come true. The new *Opéra Garnier* restaurant designed by French architect Odile

Decq features a bold fusion of the legendary past and modern-day design. The name of the chef was kept a secret for as long as possible, giving rise to numerous rumours and intrigues. However, the cat is now out of the bag. Christophe Aribert, the recipient of two Michelin stars, has been appointed to run the show in the kitchen of the new restaurant. Most likely, creativity will now triumph on two stages instead of one at the *Palais Garnier*.

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www.opera-restaurant.fr



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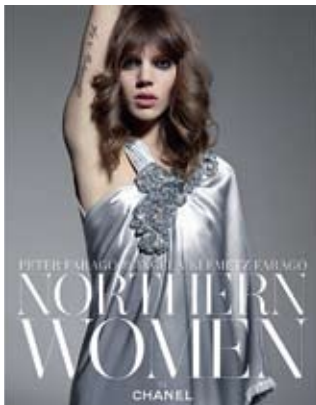
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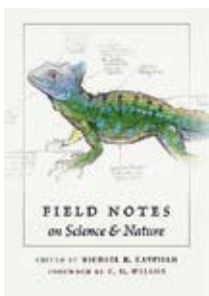
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🔴 **Northern Women in Chanel**
By Peter Farago and Ingela Klemetz Farago
Farago Publishing, 2011



This newly released coffee-table book is an ode to the beauties of Scandinavia and the Baltic countries, as well as to the creations of *Chanel*. It has come to see daylight thanks to a creative couple – the Hungarian born photographer Peter Farago and his wife, stylist Ingela Klemetz Farago – who spent a year travelling through the landscapes

of Northern Europe with *Chanel*-packed suitcases. In the process, they photographed local beauties wearing *Chanel* creations dating from the 1920s to the present. The 380-page portfolio includes about 300 photos that celebrate the beauty of such super models as Freja Beha Erichsen, Helena Christensen, Isele Steiro, Carmen Kass, Edita Vilkevičiūtė, Suvu Koponen and others, including three Latvians: Ginta Lapiņa, Ieva Lagūna and Ingūna Butāne. The introduction is written by Mademoiselle Coco’s successor, Karl Lagerfeld. In line with *Chanel*’s principle of exclusivity, Farago is printing only 2112 copies, selling those in a short list of selected stores worldwide. The price is about 155 EUR. While this may seem expensive, console yourself with the thought that all proceeds will go to the *Save the Children* foundation.



🔴 **Field Notes on Science and Nature**
Edited by Michael R. Canfield
Harvard University Press, 2011

Every Tom, Dick and Harry has a camera in their mobile phone by now, and many have smart phones. That’s why it is becoming more alluring to depict the surrounding world with something different. For instance, a traditional pencil or watercolours, and real paper on a real sketch pad. In this new book, historical field drawings, sketches and notes by various naturalists have been appealingly compiled for the modern-day reader. Inspirational reading material before heading out on your own excursion, be it near or far.

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ECM NEW SERIES

🔴 **All in One Box**
Lockenhaus CD Box Set
ECM, 2011

In honour of the 30th anniversary of the annual chamber music festival that is held in the Austrian village of Lockenhaus (organized by Gidon Kremer, with the help of Pastor Josef Herowitch), the *ECM* music label has issued a grand box set of five CDs containing the event’s finest recordings. Since the festival’s inception, the concert performances have been recorded, thus facilitating the birth of *ECM*’s sub-label, *Edition Lockenhaus*. Many of the older recordings were unavailable for many years, making this new box set a real gem.

🔴 More about the festival can be found at www.kammermusikfest.at



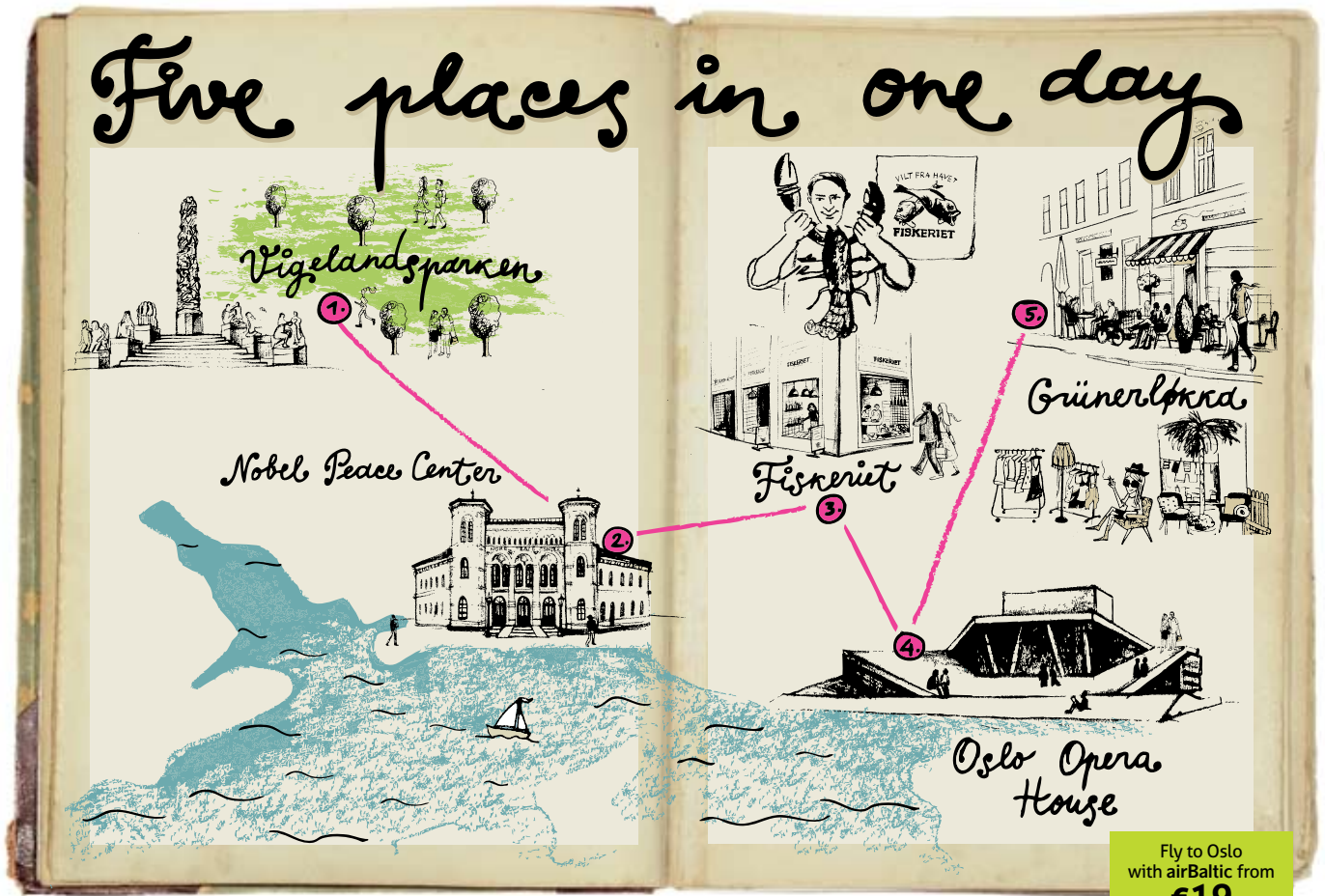
🔴 **Tiny houses**
<http://tinyhouseblog.com>

The bursting of the real estate bubble in 2008 also had its pluses – quite a few people who were impacted by the world economic crisis turned to activities that they otherwise would probably have dismissed. Most likely, the tiny house movement wouldn’t have spread so widely had not the dreams of so many – to live in a big house – been dashed by unsustainable mortgages. It turns out that to be legally classified as a house, there is a minimum size requirement that a structure must meet. If it is smaller, then it is not considered a house. Consequently, a building permit is not required and, at least theoretically, the structure can be moved about and placed wherever one desires. Skeptics will point out that these tiny houses are nothing more than trailer homes (to which there is some truth, since they usually are built upon trailer platforms), but the owners of these small residences would probably disagree.



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Oslo

The close proximity of forests and islands is an admirable trait that sets Oslo apart from most other European capitals. Wildlife awaits you within a half-hour public transport ride by tram, train or boat. Here is a plan for enjoying Oslo the Norwegian way, without entering the main shopping street (Karl Johans gate) or Aker brygge, another central tourist spot.

> 1 Vigelandsparken or Frogner Park

Make sure that you've had a good breakfast and then head straight to the park that has been one of Oslo's facets since the 1930s. Take someone with you to share in the admiration of various emotional compositions that feature – among other things – rounded buttocks and torsos. Having been set up in the 1940s, these statues were probably scandalously explicit in their day. Warm weekends turn the park's 32 hectares into a popular BBQ spot, creating a genuinely *koseleg* (Norwegian for "cosy") atmosphere. The most famous figure of all can be found on the bridge and you'll recognize it by a queue of tourists waiting to take a photo.

> 2 Nobel Peace Centre

Nobody knows exactly why, but Alfred Nobel clearly stated that he wanted the Nobel Peace Prize to be awarded in Oslo. The city has taken advantage of the wish of the world's richest man (at the time) and we should thank him for it. The prize is awarded each December and the Nobel Peace Centre provides a great place for researching war, peace and conflict resolution issues. Furthermore, the centre does so in a smart and light manner. Shaped around the life and ideals of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Fridtjof Nansen, this is the right place to widen your horizons and get inspired. Particularly suitable for kids.

Open Tue.–Sun. 10:00–18:00. Closed on Mondays
Admission: 80 NOK (for adults over 16). Children under 16 can enter free of charge | Rådhusplassen
📍 www.nobelpeacecenter.org

> 3 Fiskeriet

There must be something special that *Fiskeriet* adds to its unique fish soup. Perhaps it's the wine, which is also sold at the store. The secret is probably much more simple – *Fiskeriet* focuses on local seafood, which has taken the least amount of time and travelled the shortest possible distance to get into our soup. Apart from the *fiskesuppe*, fish and chips is also a good choice. Order a takeaway, as that might save you some queuing (there are very few tables in the bistro part of *Fiskeriet*), as well as some money,

since takeaway orders are about 30% cheaper. If the weather allows, then have your meal by the fountain in the square.

Youngstorget 2b | 📍 www.fiskeriet.com

> 4 Oslo Opera House

Norway had witnessed pro- and anti-opera discussions for decades until 2008, when the oil-rich country finally inaugurated its first opera house, to the tune of 520 million EUR. More than five million people have since visited this architectural wonder, whose 8000 m² roof has become a socializing hot spot. Critics of this project are now few and far between. Take a guided tour to catch a glimpse from an insiders' viewpoint and then have a walk on the popular rooftop. You'll be accompanied by numerous admirers, be they families with kids, office workers having lunch or joggers.

Tickets online or at the box office. Price for a tour: NOK 100 | 📍 www.operano.no

> 5 Grünerløkka

A vibrant and happening place for young and not-so-young partygoers and beer drinkers. It is crammed with artsy and independent clothing stores that are frequented by day, as well as with restaurants and bars that are popular with the night crowd. Be sure to check out the now legendary – and free – concerts at *Blå* (Brenneriveien 9c) by the Akerseleva River every Sunday night. **BO**

Special thanks to Maren Deildok, Ingvild Mathiesen Rosenlund and Audun Solli.

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Skating up a storm

Having mastered an array of jaw-dropping antics in his home country of Latvia, skateboarder Madars Apse (21) moved to Spain three years ago. With his gentlemanly manners and *tweets* about finance exams, Apse seems to break the clichéd reputation of skateboarders as happy-go-lucky, immature youngsters. At the same time – just ask him about this summer’s activities and you’ll get a passionate outburst about riding walls and jamming poles throughout the USA and Europe. *Baltic Outlook* spoke with Apse in his current home city of Barcelona.

For someone so young, Apse exudes a maturity and subtle wisdom beyond his age. After trying out various sports in his hometown of Ventspils, the allure of dominating the asphalt while rolling upon a board was too tempting to avoid and he has now racked up around 10 years of skateboarding experience. Citing Barcelona as one of the top three skateboarding destinations in the world, Apse has spent the last few years in this Spanish city, dividing his time between his board and his studies. Far from the clichéd stereotype, Apse has an intelligent head upon his shoulders and has immersed himself in the world of international business. With an imminent move to London to finish his last year of school and graduate, summer is spent participating in competitions and appearing in documentary films such as Element Skateboards’ *Get Busy Living*.

“I don’t get back to Latvia as much as I’d like to. I really miss my family and friends. Luckily, skateboarding always presents me with new things to learn and keeps me busy. Every city is full of exciting challenges and interesting people”.

Quite an adventure for a small-town boy with big dreams and a penchant for rolling fast.

“I see skateboarding opportunities where people see benches, parks and garage entrances, normal structures that can be the start of a new challenge, a way to push myself and create something out of nothing”.

If that all sounds somewhat stressful, then Apse also finds the time to indulge in his other passion, which is playing acoustic guitar. In addition, he enjoys swimming:

“It’s really good to spend time in the water. It loosens up my joints after all the skating”.

It seems that Apse’s mind, soul and body are all taken care of. Yet skateboarding still seems to have a bad reputation, often lumped together with graffiti and other forms of vandalism.

“I believe that attitudes have been changing in recent years. People see that we try to respect others and the street as much as possible. Skateboarding breathes new life into cities, It can be really great for everyone, especially young kids. There is no need for a common language, skateboarding unites cultures. It creates positive feelings. Every time I skate with my friends, I can feel the energy levels rising and sometimes things seem to happen magically. Skateboarders express their positivity and I think that people are starting



© ANTTON_MIETTINEN

Madars Apse has gained quite a reputation as the winner of various national and international competitions, including a silver medal in the Vans Downtown Countdown (2009). He is currently passing on his skills to future skateboarders within the framework of *Red Bull Local Hero* tours.

He has appeared twice on the cover of *Kingpin*, Europe's most prominent skateboard magazine.

Featured in the recently released film *ELEMENT. Get Busy Living* and in the Vans skate movie *1966*.

Sponsored by *Element*, *DC Shoes*, *Red Bull* and *Perus* wheels.

to appreciate that. It also helps that there are more sponsors who truly understand and believe in skating. They are bringing the sport closer to the general public". Maintaining an open mind, Apse seems to have hit upon the perfect blend for his life so far, something that many of us struggle with on a daily basis. "Skateboarding is a lifestyle, it has given me so much. I'm curious to see where this will take me. I'm anxious to visit new cities and be faced with new challenges. I really feel thankful to everyone who supports this beautiful sport, this moving art form". **BO**

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January, 1956. Prince Rainier III of Monaco helping his fiancée Grace Kelly out of a car. Kelly holds the style of Hermes handbag that was named after her

TEXT BY ALEXANDRE VASSILIEV, FASHION HISTORIAN AND COSTUME DESIGNER (WWW.VASSILIEV.COM) AND IEVA NORA FIRERE | PHOTO CORBIS



A collectable icon

Origins

The *Kelly* bag was originally created in 1935 by the legendary French luxury house *Hermès International S.A.* Today, one *Hermès* scarf is sold every 20 seconds. However, back then the fashion house had just launched its first accessories in an ultimately successful attempt to widen its profile – having established itself during the previous 100 years as a harness workshop dedicated to serving noblemen. For the following two decades, the bag retained its original name, which was *sac à dépêches*, until Grace Kelly, the Princess of Monaco, was caught on the cover of *Life* magazine holding a

crocodile *sac à dépêches* in front of her to hide her pregnancy from a crowd of paparazzi. While that attempt at concealment didn't work out well, the world did get a new name for a bag that can easily be described as the mother of all iconic bags.

Price

Kelly is the eldest sister of the *Birkin* bag, the most sought-after bag ever created and known for the long waiting lists of clients who wish to own one. Or more precisely, for the waiting lists of waiting lists... In that sense, it's much easier with a *Kelly*. A vintage crocodile *Kelly* from the 1960s now costs a mere

2000–3000 EUR. Simple, new leather *Kellies* with basic colours start at around 3000 EUR, running up to six figures for particularly exclusive skins and hardware.

Simplicity – the root of all genius

This axiom certainly applies to *Kelly* bags. In the book *Zerlegt*, which was published earlier this year, Swiss journalist, designer and tailor Jeroen van Rooijen shows how he cut up various classic garments and accessories, including a pink *Kelly*. The laconic outcome is striking: just a few high-quality leather pieces of a simple and classical cut, six metal

details, a waxed linen thread and that's it!

Anatomy

Made of either crocodile, alligator or ostrich skin, or plain leather, the *Kelly* comes in five different sizes. It takes two alligators to make one *Kelly*, as only the jowls and belly skin are used. Each bag takes about 18 hours of a single artisan's work to be made. The final touch involves ironing the bag to get a skin without wrinkles.

Famous wearers

Ingrid Bergman, Marlene Dietrich, Grace Kelly, Victoria Beckham, Kate Moss. **BO**



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📍 www.flos.it



∧ *Bicycle-inspired furniture*, Design by RuiAlves (*My Own Super Studio*), Portugal

The designer created this furniture after a year-long bicycle trip. The pieces of the set are named after the most recognizable European bike races – the *Tour de France* chair, the *Vuelta a España* side table and the *Giro d'Italia* sunbrella.

📍 www.myownsuperstudio.com

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Autumn leaves, autumn songs

Six classic albums by illustrious singer-songwriters

VAN MORRISON *ASTRAL WEEKS*



Van Morrison
Astral Weeks, 1968

A 23-year-old Irish rocker from Belfast shows up in New York and along with some jazz musicians that he has never met before, records an album in just two days. It has since acquired a mythical reputation over the years and is one of the most moving albums of all time.

Nick Drake
Five Leaves Left, 1969

Due to his extreme shyness, Drake couldn't perform in front of a live audience, but he did record three albums, and this was his first. Unfortunately, his recordings – like his premature death at age 26 – were barely noticed at the time. Rarely has a young man's melancholy sounded so compelling.



Vashti Bunyan
Just Another Diamond Day, 1970

When these pastoral and beautiful songs were drowned out by the roar of contemporary rock, Vashti completely devoted herself to family life. Until, three decades later, she was surprised to discover that vinyl issues of her only album were selling on eBay for 2000 USD apiece. In 2005, Vashti released her second album and today's songwriters still honour her as a youthful matriarch. Her debut album remains a real treasure.



Joni Mitchell
Shine, 2007

Joni's early albums are still classics, but this one is more contemporary – created after an almost ten-year hiatus, when the queen of the 1970's California canyons declared her retirement from music. Luckily, that was a premature assertion with which she couldn't follow through. A serene, quiet and irresistible shine.



Richard Hawley
Lowedges, 2003

The Sheffield-based troubadour earned wider acclaim a few years after releasing

this album, but his ability to combine American influences with the traditions of British music, night-time romanticism and the despair of broken hearts was already visible in perfect form back then.

Devendra Banhart
Rejoicing in the Hands, 2004

Born in Texas, raised in Venezuela and later settling in California, Devendra Banhart is a modern hippy who writes and performs funny, and sometimes truly silly, songs with a psychedelic flavour, anarchistic charm and the poetics of a hooligan.



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TEXT BY UNA MEISTERE, WWW.ANOTHERTRAVELGUIDE.COM
PHOTOS BY AINARS ERGLIS

Alsace

a gourmet's paradise



Bad luck, somebody has already taken the Anothertravelguide brochure about Alsace, but don't worry, all the information is also available at ANOTHERTRAVELGUIDE.COM in cooperation with airBaltic.

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The view from Andlau Abbey



Eguisheim, one of the most beautiful spots in Alsace, is often nicknamed the "flower village"

Once you've finished eating and drinking wine, a sense of indolent satiety is bound to steal over you

"Robbers once set upon those who wandered here... and fairies and elves dwelled in these woods, too, it's said," a good friend who grew up in Alsace tells my seven-year-old daughter in a deep, dead serious voice as we stroll through the forests around Lembach, near the border between France and Germany. He didn't need to exaggerate much; in the sudden twilight among the ancient trees, the landscape seemed like a fairy tale come to life. Coming across Hansel and Gretel wouldn't have been much of a surprise. We didn't meet them, however – passersby were merely people out picking berries. At the end of the road we didn't find a gingerbread house. Instead, we made our way to Gimbelhof, a renowned inn that is one of the magnets that draws discriminating gourmets to Alsace. It could be that the fairy-tale road could tell many a story about those who have dined here – of generation after generation of epicures and hedonists, intoxicated by the pleasures of the table, wending their way homeward in the wee hours. Indeed, Gimbelhof seems to be a place where time stands still. The ruins of a castle loom picturesquely in the distance, horses and cattle graze, and when night falls the stars glimmer in timeless silence. "What?! You've no *baba au rhum* any longer?" My friend is shattered by the disappearance of his favourite dessert, one he has savoured since childhood. It must be said, though, that that's pretty much the only change in the menu, even if the chef is now the son of the previous chef. The passage of time has barely affected what's on offer here – simple, reliable country cooking, Alsatian style. The bouquet of tastes is augmented by the rustic atmosphere. Meals are served on dishes bearing painted scenes of rural life in bygone days, and once you've finished eating and drinking wine, a sense of indolent satiety is bound to steal over you. In the morning you can recover by taking one of the innumerable hiking trails through the North Vosges nature preserve. Time may continue to deceive you –

three days might pass without your noticing.

I don't know why, but Alsace kept calling to mind an exhibit I recently saw in Hamburg, "Mon Dieu, Depardieu!" – a photography exhibit with Gerard Depardieu, the actor who is the most famous of French gourmets, in the leading role. In the photo museum, it was created by Jonas Unger, formerly with the magazine *Zeit*. Rolling along on a simple scooter that seemed far too small for his massive frame, dressed in a grease-spotted T-shirt, his hair windblown, Depardieu savours country food and red wine, very apparently not his first glass of red wine that day. Not many places on earth offer such a bouquet of pleasures as Alsace does. You don't need wine to get intoxicated here – the scenic vineyards, the sun and the shades of green in the fields do the trick. Steeples and storks' nests complete the picture... and if nature isn't enough, there are more restaurants with Michelin stars here than anywhere outside Paris, making this a gourmet's paradise with an imprimatur.

A pastoral idyll at the crossroads of cultures

Alsace is the smallest of France's regions, a stretched-out rectangle in the very east of the country, sandwiched between the Vosges Mountains in the west and the Rhine in the east. It's divided in two with reference to the great river – *Haut-Rhin*, the Upper Rhine, in the south, and *Bas-Rhin*, the Lower Rhine, in the north. Alsace has a 1.6 million inhabitants, and each of its three major cities is a prima donna on her own stage. Strasbourg* can be considered the region's capital – the city is also the seat of the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights. The regional capital for oenophiles, however, is certainly Colmar, where one can also find one of France's most famous provincial museums, the Musée d'Unterlinden, located in a former monastery that dates to the 13th century. The piece de resistance here is the Issenheim altarpiece, an masterpiece by Matthias Grünewald that remains as remarkable as when it was created in 1512. There are numerous other outstanding works in the unique collection of art from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The industrial capital of Alsace is doubtless Mulhouse – it draws automobile lovers with its well-known Musée Nationale de l'Automobile; there are over 500 cars on display here. The museum's heart is the inimitable private collection of the



The Musée Unterlinden in Colmar is most famous for Matthias Grünewald's Isenheim Altarpiece (1506–1515), a chef d'oeuvre that people flock to see from all over the world



Strasbourg can be considered as the region's capital. The city is also the seat of the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights

Schlumpf brothers, which includes a 1930 Rolls-Royce Phantom III and more than 120 Bugattis. By the way, though its founder was Italian, the birthplace of the Bugatti is actually in Alsace – in the little town of Molsheim, not far from Strasbourg.

The pride of Alsace, however, is the wine route that begins in Marienheim, not far from Strasbourg, and leads to Thann, near Mulhouse. This road may well offer one of the most beautiful and atmospheric trips through wine country one can take anywhere in Europe. Narrow and winding, the road leads through romantic, picture-perfect villages and endless vineyards. Level fields give way to hilly countryside, the landscape seeming a fairy-tale world suffused with culinary and aesthetic pleasures. I once read an article that included a sentence that distills the essence of a journey here: the worst that can befall you here is you might accidentally happen upon a bad bottle of Riesling. Nearly every vineyard has its guardian angel – Jesus hanging on the cross. Even if lightning strikes and rain comes down so heavily that the downpour resembles a white curtain, you feel immune to any misfortune. I realized this just as the sun emerged from the clouds and cast two rainbows across the sky, one end seemingly planted in a distant vineyard. A deer leapt across a nearby meadow whilst a fox ran off on the other side of the road. My pastoral idyll was as complete as could be.

It's said that the more ordeals grapevines suffer, their roots growing ever deeper in search of water and nutrients, unbelievably deep in the soil, the better the wine. In Alsace, this must be true – the sweet wine (and Alsatian wine is noted for its sweet notes, to be sure) that draws gourmets from near and far to this region is the product of a tortured history and a cross-fertilization of cultures. This *terroir* has long passed between rulers and empires, a juicy morsel that was fought over by the French and the Germans. In the 12th and 13th century it was ruled by the German Hohenstaufen dynasty, but with the Peace of Westphalia, in 1648, it came under French rule and flourished. In Strasbourg in 1792, Rouget de l'Isle composed the legendary Marseillaise, now the French national anthem. Along with wine, fermented here since the time of the Roman Empire and favoured by Julius Caesar, hops and tobacco were also major crops. The old tobacco road can still be explored along with the routes that take you through the vineyards, past the renowned producers of various local cheeses, and from one

ancient castle ruin to another, tourist maps show the former tobacco plantations. With the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, however, everything changed once again. Alsace came under German rule again, and all of those who considered themselves French had to take on a new identity. The language in the schools shifted to German, and the newspapers were printed in German. In 1918, France regained Alsace... but in 1940, during the Second World War, lost it to Nazi Germany. At the end of the war it was once again retaken, with heavy bombing. Even now, there is a feeling of being between two languages and cultures here, and the sense of both being inextricably intertwined. Many local people know both languages and both are spoken with a distinct Alsatian accent. The great humanist and Nobel Prize winner Albert Schweitzer was born in Kaisersberg in 1875, and both France and Germany considered him their son (though he spent the latter part of his life in Africa). When Schweitzer was born, Alsace and his town were part of Germany, but when Alsace-Lorraine was returned to France at the end of the war, he took French citizenship. The complexity of history and the difficulty of neighbourly relations can also be noticed in Alsatian wines. Though their origin, classification and style makes them French wines, they also bear a distinct German accent. The bottles are narrow and tall, reminiscent of flutes – rather like bottles of German Moselle. One of the most well-known varieties of Alsatian grapes, Riesling, is a star in German vineyard, too. Gewürztraminer is another popular variety here, closely followed by Pinot Gris, Muscat, Pinot Blanc, Sylvaner and Chasselas.

The cuisine, too, has a German accent. Its cornerstone is pork with slow-cooked sauerkraut, and the region is famous for its delicious ham, various casseroles from offal, ears and tails, prepared in the local iron and ceramic pots, *foie gras* and *escargots*. Fried potatoes here are mouth-watering, and the onion tarte shouldn't be missed. It's not possible to demarcate a clear border in Alsatian architecture, either. At first, crossing from Germany into France between vineyards that lie on both sides of the frontier, it's actually rather hard to tell what's changed. The same quaint villages with half-timbered, picturesque historic buildings dot the countryside. The style dates to the 16th century and is rooted in a very practical aspect – the Rhine frequently flooded, and the timbers simplified



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YOUR NEXT DESTINATION



The newly opened Lalique Museum in Wingens-sur-Moder

shifting houses to new locations. Some of the wooden beams are still numbered. The pattern of the beams also had various meanings – protection (in the form of a cross), fertility (in the form of precious stones), etc. The red roof tiles are patterned after a beaver's tail. Houses in the southern part of the region are more colourful but less decorative, whilst the decoration of houses in the Vosges and along the wine road are more intricate. Despite the influence of two great European cultures, when you wander the wine road you cannot help but feel that the region is in some sense its own country – it's quite difficult to put into words, but Alsace has a unique character that is all its own.

The heart of culinary art

It may well be that the best place to sample the soul of Alsace – in gastronomy, in wine, and in aesthetics – is the *Winstub*. The *Stube*, a multi-functional space, was always the central element of the traditional Alsatian home, serving as a living room, a dining room, a place to receive guests, and sometimes even as a bedroom. The centrepiece was the Alsatian stove, on which food was prepared. The *Stube* was always more than a room, however – it was synonymous with cosiness and hominess, the incarnation of comfort, trust, peace, security and harmony. The *Winstub* is

essentially its public equivalent. Though you might easily draw parallels to taverns, bistros, French *brasseries*, or certain cafes, none of the parallels will be exact. Like Alsace itself, the *Winstub* is in a class of its own, a unique institution. The home-like aesthetic the alchemy of comfort come into play. The interior is somehow more than an interior space, but as soon as you step across the threshold you will feel as though you have entered an oasis of good cheer. One element that is never missing is wooden panelling. The walls are in a warm tone and there are always chequered tablecloths and curtains. There's enough clutter or disorder for the place to not seem overly sweet. A real *Winstub* shouldn't offer sophisticated service and shouldn't be forward in its interior design. There shouldn't be crystal chandeliers or silver tableware. Food is served in simple ceramic or stone dishes. Even the wine glasses should be rustic. Like the famed *Heurigen* in the vicinity of Vienna, the traditional Alsatian *Winstub* serves the local wine. There is always the sense of the inkeeper's presence, which determines the individual character of each *Winstub*. In Strasbourg, you should definitely visit Chez Yvonne, which opened in 1873. It is one of the oldest such institutions in the city and in some sense summarizes all of the features that characterize a proper,

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Vases, perfume bottles and design objects serve as a hymn to Lalique's brightest sources of inspiration – the female body, flora and fauna

authentic *Winstub*. Chez Yvonne is in the heart of the Old Town, in a typical Alsatian dwelling, but it is also well hidden in a narrow street, so that it won't exactly force itself upon you. In some ways it resembles a museum, a sort of memorial house to the nature of such inns. The floors creak, the tables and chairs are of wood, the curtains are chequered red and white, and the tablecloths bear a floral print. The aroma is of the good old days, and the sense of the heirloom is everywhere, accentuated by the black-and-white photographs of past customers on the walls. The former proprietor, Yvonne Haller, who ran the place from 1954 to 2001, was herself a legend. In her day, this really was a guest room – climbing the stairs to the second storey, you can see the politicians and artists she attracted immortalized, from Jacques Chirac to other well-known statesmen and actors. As friendly as she was to honoured guests, she had a reputation for giving the cold shoulder to those who wandered in or were unwelcome. It's said that "face control" is still practiced here, though that may be only part of the mystique at Chez Yvonne. The clientele is still colourful, though one does also see ordinary tourists. The menu is a distillation of everything typically Alsatian, from pigs' legs to sauerkraut to three types of sausage and the famed Alsatian ham. There's even *Coq au Riesling*, a pearl

hen in a fabulous Riesling sauce. Riesling itself is served in glasses that look tiny but don't seem so after you've had a few – be forewarned!

The concept of unhurried enjoyment

In Alsace, slow pleasures have been cultivated to the extreme. Though there may often be fewer than ten kilometres between villages, each kilometre along the road seems to have been designed to make you dally. There will be a *Winstub* or a gourmet inn or a guest house to draw you in. This trinity is as carefully tended as the flowers in the flower-boxes. Kayserberg, which means Emperor's Hill – where Albert Schweitzer was born – is famous not only as the humanist's birthplace but also as the home of Olivier Nasti, a culinary star whose establishment is a veritable oasis for lovers of fine food. There's a 32-room hotel, a spa, a *Winstub* and a refined gourmet restaurant all under the same roof. *La Winstub du Chambard* is a true find for those who have had their fill of the traditionally Alsatian – though there are the usual classic elements (the chequered tablecloths and wooden panelling, for example), this place also offers something of the new. The kitchen is visible, behind glass – in it, meals for both the *Winstub* and the neighbouring Michelin-starred restaurant are prepared. The

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The pride of Alsace is the 170-km-long wine route that begins in Marienheim, not far from Strasbourg, and leads to Thann, near Mulhouse

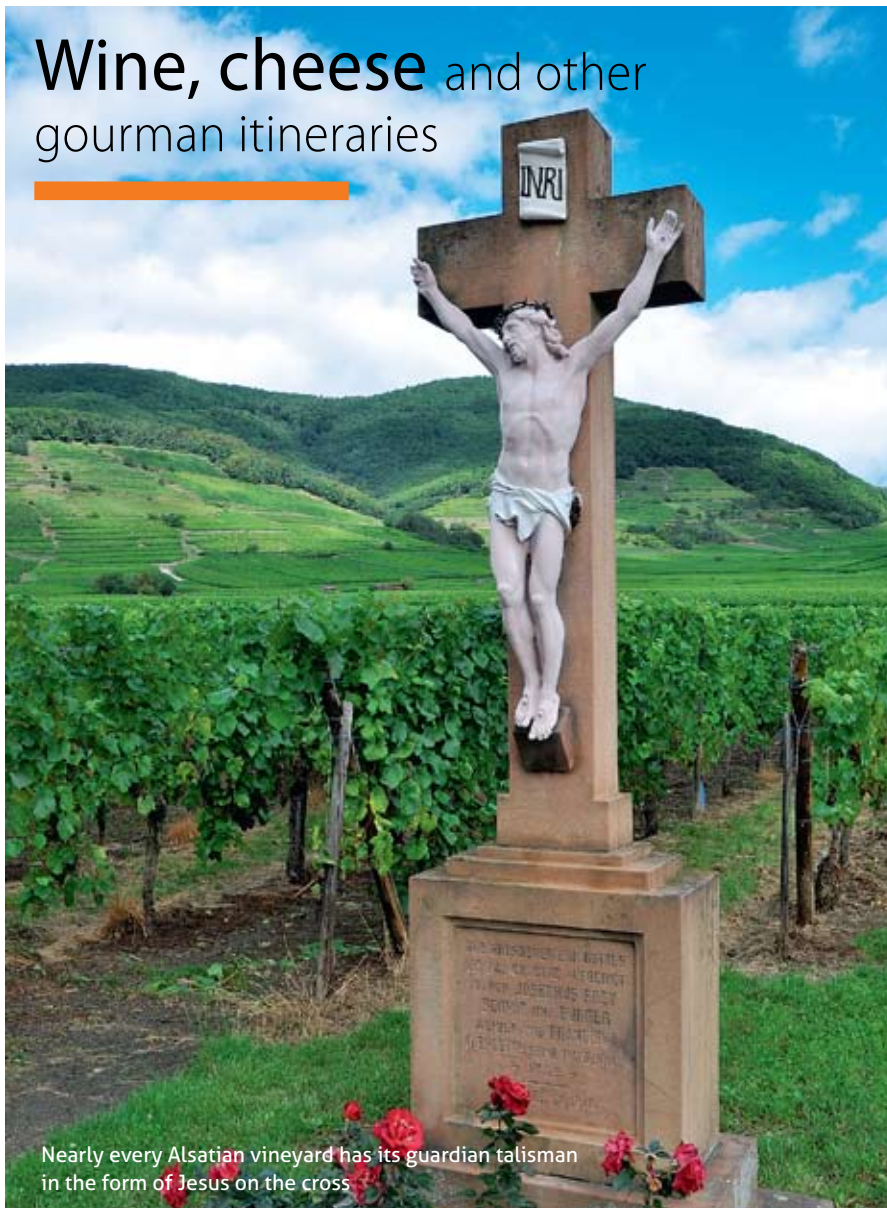
chef flamboyantly cooks the food for both, and the menu at the *Winstub* offers some experimentation in addition to traditional dishes. You can certainly get a classic *choucroute* – sauerkraut with sausages and ham (but be prepared for the fact that in Alsace, sauerkraut truly is sour!). But you can also get a Chambard lobster soup. Then there are fried potatoes that melt in your mouth and cause you to drop any preconceived notions about potatoes at the door.

In terms of sensations, however, the most modernistic offering is probably in Riquewihr, a village that draws many tourists because of its exquisitely photogenic charm. There's a bit of a Disneyish element to the quaint village – one shop sells Christmas-oriented products all year round, so you can hear "Jingle Bells" even in the middle of the summer. Riquewihr is so quaint because it barely suffered in the war – the historic 16th-century buildings are everywhere in evidence, unscarred. The cobblestones of the street named after General de Gaulle happen to host one of the most exclusive B&Bs in Alsace – Le B. Espace Suites. Opened in 2006 with only four rooms, it has now added luxurious space on the second storey. The same building contains Brendelstub, a *Winstub* that blends the traditional and the modern in a manner that may confuse or even irk some – crystal

chandeliers in a *Winstub*?! The items on the menu are most certainly worth sampling, however. One of the specialties is Alsatian "pizza" – called *tarte flambée*, it's prepared in a special oven and is quite remarkable. Riquewihr is also one of the most important villages in the wine world, famous for its Grands Crus and especially for the cellars of Sporen and Schoenenbourg. Directly across from Brendelstub, you'll find Hugel – it's one of Alsace's legendary wineries, in the same family for more than 350 years. Though it is so small (you can traverse the entire region thoroughly in about three days), or perhaps because of that, Alsace somehow offers a feeling of total freedom. Nothing limits you – access to the roads and paths is uninhibited, there are almost no fences anywhere, and if you feel like it, you can wander into a vineyard. Getting lost isn't really possible – no matter where you go, you will doubtless find yourself in a postcard village with a charming winery. You'll end up sitting at a cozy wooden table behind windows with chequered curtains, a waiter uncorking yet another tall, narrow bottle of wine. The boot of your car will somehow have yet another case of wine in it when you depart. Considering the fact that September is harvest time, that's certainly not the worst thing that can happen to you!

* Strasbourg is 172 km from Frankfurt-am-Main, about a two hours' drive.

Wine, cheese and other gourman itineraries

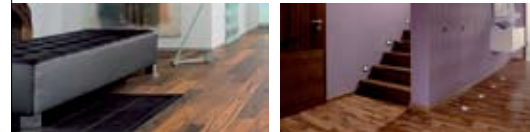


Nearly every Alsatian vineyard has its guardian talisman in the form of Jesus on the cross

Along with the famous wine route that stretches for 170 km, it's possible to enjoy lesser-travelled wine trails in Alsace, not to mention cabbage, cheese and chocolate routes. Altogether, there are about 40 wine trails in the region. Well-marked and easily found, they wind through vineyards, small villages and wineries. All that you need are suitable walking shoes (each of the trails is an approximately two-hour hike) and the insatiable curiosity of a pleasure-seeker. Then you'll be able to soak up the area's colours and aromas and, of course, the wine – which is superb and plentiful! However, bear in mind that the wine trails are closed during the grape harvesting season, which lasts from the beginning of September through the beginning

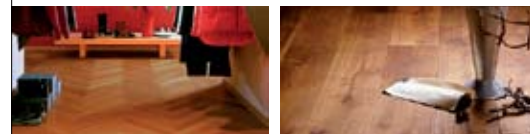
of November and coincides with the height of the tourist season in Alsace. September is also the time for various festivals, including the *Harvest Festival* and the *Vin Nouveau (First Wine) Festival*, which usually take place during the second half of September in various cities and towns. For more information, consult www.alsace-wine-route.com. One indispensable component of Alsace cuisine is sautéed sauerkraut (*choucroute*), whose methods of preparation are honed as diligently as those of wine. Actually, the pioneers in making sauerkraut are said to be the Chinese, who allocated it as a daily food ration to workers building the Great Wall. Historians still argue whether sauerkraut was brought to Europe by

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the Mongols and Tatars or Marco Polo. Whatever the case may be, it first arrived in the Balkans and then Alsace. Small wonder that alongside Alsace's wine route, one can also follow a "cabbage route", which, hugged by cabbage fields, begins in *Erstein* and goes through the official "cabbage capital" of *Krautergersheim*. Naturally, such a trip includes eateries, sampling places and restaurants, where everything can be tried on the spot. The Alsace Cabbage Producers' Association has 60 members, so this is no joke! In addition, cabbage festivals take place every September in various Alsace villages. Alsace is also one of France's largest exporters of chocolate, being home to

over 40 chocolate producers. A chocolate museum (*Musée Les Secrets du Chocolat, rue du Pont du Péage*) was opened in 2007, when a special "chocolate route" was established. Its map and main stops can be found on the museum webpage: www.musee-du-chocolat.com. The Alsace cheese route is also legendary among gourmand circles. It winds through the Munster valley and does not lag behind the wine route one bit in terms of colourful landscapes. The most famous cheese of Alsace – Munster – is still produced here according to recipes created in the 10th century, and which have been scrupulously handed down from generation to generation.

One day in Alsace



Riquewihr village

Start the morning with a walk through *Eguisheim*, one of the most beautiful spots in Alsace and often nicknamed the "flower village". Winding your way through the postcard villages of Alsace's wine route – whose windowsills, courtyards and street corners are practically awash in geraniums, lobelias and petunias – you might get the impression one could hardly do more to make one's surrounding more colourful. However, in *Eguisheim*, flowers literally take over the cityscape during the warmer months. Over 30 wineries also make

their homes here, including *Eichberg* and *Pfersberg*, which are well worth visiting. Proceed onward to *Husseren-les-Châteaux*, a small mountain village with a brilliant, panoramic view of the surroundings. Not far from the village church are a few more wineries of note. And then, to Colmar, the wine capital of Alsace. This picturesque city is also home to one of France's best-known regional museums, the *Musée Unterlinden (1 rue Unterlinden; www.musee-unterlinden.com)*. Founded in 1853, this museum is most

famous for two things, one of them being Matthias Grünewald's Isenheim Altarpiece (1506–1515), a chef d'oeuvre that people flock to see from all over the world. The second is the museum's unconventional location – the 13th-century Unterlinden ("under the lindens") Dominican religious sisters' convent, whose medieval interior remains well-preserved to this day. Besides the Isenheim Altarpiece, Martin Schongauer's Orlier altarpiece and Caspar Isenmann's altarpiece devoted to the Passion of Christ are also highly regarded works of art. In addition, the museum has an impressive collection of modern art, which includes works by Claude Monet, Pierre Bonnard, Pablo Picasso and other well-known early 20th-century artists, as well as many notable examples of abstract art from the period that followed the Second World War. You may then wish to stop for a delicious lunch at one of Colmar's best restaurants – *La Maison des Têtes* (19 rue des Têtes; www.la-maison-des-tetes.com), in a historical, Renaissance-style dining room that is located in a small hotel of the same name. For an extra special gastronomic experience, head to the *Le Maximilien* gourmet restaurant (19a route d'Ostheim, Zellenberg; www.le-maximilien.com) in the village of Zellenberg, about a half-hour's drive from Colmar. It is located in a small building by a vineyard. On warm and sunny days, you can also enjoy your meal on the terrace, which is surrounded on all sides by endless rows of grape vines, as in a forest, with the village rooftops and church steeple visible in the distance.

Interested in uncovering a secret of Alsatian cuisine? Some of the world's best chefs (including *Paul Bocuse* and *Alain Ducasse*) rely on *Staub* enamelled cast-iron pots and pans in their kitchens. These are a gastronomic "life investment", for the more you use them, the better they become. The *Staub* factory is located in Alsace, and its retail shop can be found in the small village of *Turckheim* (2 Route de Saint-Gilles). Here, you will be able to purchase the renowned manufacturer's products at a slightly lower price than at classical kitchenware stores. (Of course, they will still be fairly expensive here, as well.)

And then, if you still have the energy, head on to nearby *Kaysersberg*, the native town of humanist Albert Schweitzer. There, a museum devoted to the Nobel laureate has been set up in the house where he first lived. Minutes away lies *Riquewihr*, a 16th-century architectural pearl that is certainly one of the most beautiful villages in Alsace. Complete the day in the neighbouring village of *Ammerschwyr*, which is home to a timeless, Alsatian gourmet classic – the *Aux Armes de France* (www.armesfrance.fr) restaurant. Opened in 1920, this refined eating establishment is traditional to the core, both in terms of its cuisine and décor. **BO**

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TEXT BY ROGER NORUM | PUBLICITY PHOTOS

Married to language

What is black and white and read all over? If you've been paying any attention to the world of literature over the past two years, you'll get the answer easy: Sofi Oksanen. The fact that this self-described Gothic queen of literature dresses in PVC, seamed pantyhose and a wily jumble of dark dreadlocks has not deterred thousands of Finns from calling on her to run for President of Finland. Following her recently-published novel *Purge*, Roger Norum talks to the remarkable and eloquent woman to discuss fame, aesthetics and the politics of contested histories.

While Finns may have known Sofi Oksanen's remarkable writing from her two previous novels, *Stalinin Lehmät* (*Stalin's Cows*) and *Baby Jane*, the world at large learned of this unique voice when her novel *Purge* burst onto the international literary scene in 2010, after becoming an immediate bestseller in her native Finland. The gripping book revolves around the tragic experiences of Aliide, an elderly woman on an Estonian farm whose encounter with a young Russian woman, Zara, compels her to confront her own dark past – namely a betrayal that sent her sister to a Siberian work camp. Zara, the granddaughter of Aliide's sister, ends up trafficked by the Russian mafia into the sex trade. Through a series of flashbacks, Zara learns of the life of Aliide and of Estonia's tragic past. The book explores the experience of resistance, elucidating how a nation's history lives on in its people. It also touches on the limits of individual behaviour and political responsibility under repressive rule. Constructed in short chapters and regularly shifting chronologies, this lyrically-told story opens wide to the page the detailed experience of rape, torture and murder, aiming to give a human face to these inexplicably brutal events. Now published in three dozen languages, *Purge* won the Finlandia Prize in 2008, the Runeberg Prize in 2009 and three awards in 2010, including the Nordic Council Literature Prize, the Prix Femina and France's coveted

FNAC prize in 2010. That was the first time that the French prize had been awarded to a foreigner, selected from some 300 books published in France. *Purge* will be released both as a feature film and as an opera next year. The novel has become a watershed for modern Finnish literature, putting this nation and its one of its youngest, most unique authors on the stage for all the world to see. And read.

Despite being such a young author (34), you've had some astounding successes. Your most recent book ranked Number One on the Finnish bestseller list as soon as it was published. How has all this success changed your life as a writer? Has the popularity become a burden?

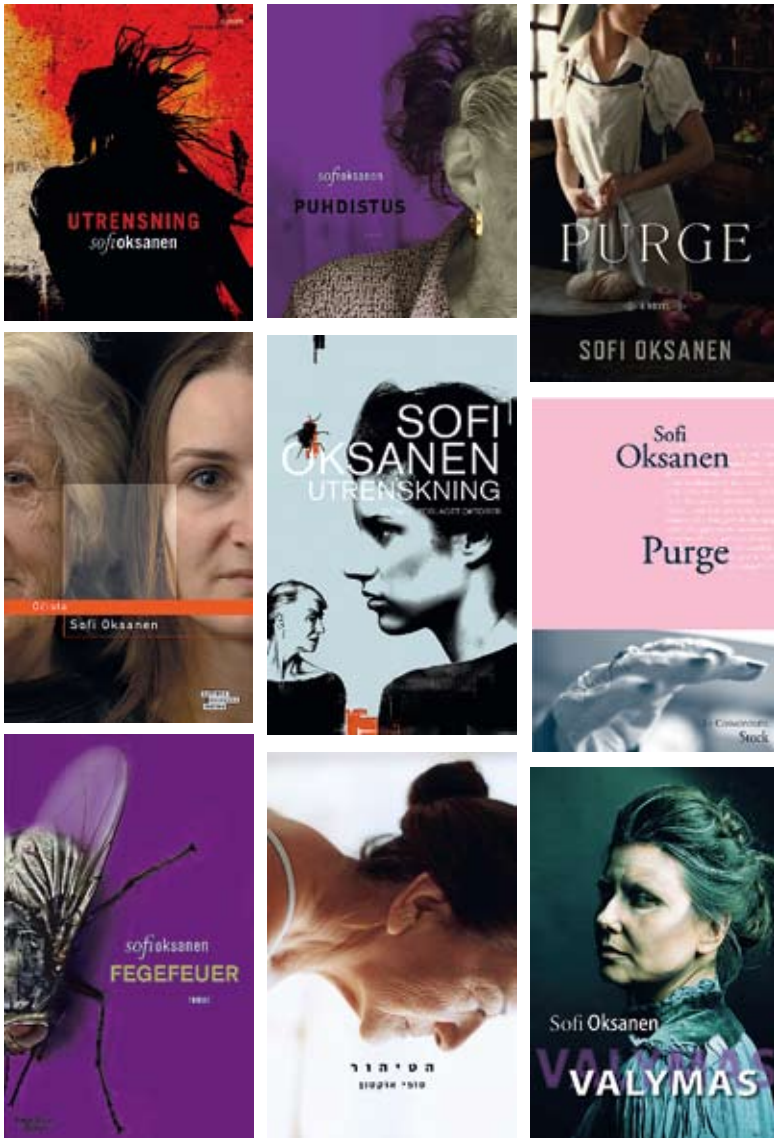
The lack of time is the biggest change and this is a problem for me. Unfortunately, I just cannot say yes to all of the interesting invitations and trips that come up.

When did you first know that you wanted to become a writer?

At the age of 6, when I learned how to write.

Many of those who have read the book find the language of *Purge* simply riveting. Do you feel that the English translation of your book does justice to your Finnish?

Finnish and English are very different tongues. They



Oral history – and its tantamount influence on written history – is key to the book. What is the significance of oral history to you?

I'm acquainted with oral memory for reasons of history. During the Soviet occupation, the "official history" of Estonia was a political tool used to justify the occupation. For example, back then you couldn't find books about themes such as deportation – even though stories on deportation and literature on the Gulag describe a crucial aspect of Estonia's history, which has also affected the people's identity. Those are themes that were consequently dealt with orally. Quite often in totalitarian systems, propaganda tries to erase the real history of the nation, while facts and other elements are kept alive through oral memory. In the West, there were books on deportation even during the Cold War, but not many attempts to smuggle them into the Soviet Union. And in any case, people in the East weren't in need of them, because everyone knew what had really happened in the Soviet Union.

What was it like to write about a history that is "contested"?

When it comes to researching the meaning of oral history, it is different in the East and the West for the same reasons. Western histories often take into account that the memory of human beings is fragile. In Eastern, or formerly totalitarian countries, the only reliable truth could often be found in that fragile human memory. So actually, memory is sometimes much stronger than the written word. But of course, the written word has more meaning in Western countries. And the written word can be disturbed by propaganda too, so one needs to be very careful when reading something written originating in a totalitarian state.

are from different language groups, the syntax is totally different and the metre of the *Kalevala* [the Finnish national epic], for example, cannot be translated – although I do like to use it to spice up the language in my works. Alliteration, which is typical of the *Kalevala's* metre, is also very difficult to translate. Still, I trust my wonderful translator to find the best solutions.

Physical trauma is a central theme in the novel, and a number of scenes in the book are extremely explicit. Have you received any harsh criticism from readers or critics about this?

I haven't received any flak, but it does seem that the English-speaking world has been paying the most attention to those scenes. Many English-language reviews have focused strongly on these scenes, which has led me to see that reviews are not always cross-cultural.

***Purge* began its life as a stage play commissioned by the Finnish National Theatre in 2007. How would you compare writing for the stage as opposed to writing for the page?**

The novel is a solo project, while the play is for a collective form of art. Therefore, you have to take entirely different aspects into account. For example, there can't be too many details on stage, whereas a novel can be filled with them. When you write a novel, you do not think about the limitations of the stage.

Do you have a routine for writing?

Unfortunately, my life at the moment doesn't allow for routines.

Many authors feel a certain level of pressure after coming out with a bestseller. Do you feel at all constrained by this when you try to write now?

I guess every author tries to write in a better way



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all the time, and this has nothing to do with success. Success is always related to culture, and the innovations that an author might make in her work are not necessary considered innovative by her readership – no matter how big a change it might be for the author.

You've said that one of your influences is Marguerite Duras. What other writers do you admire?

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Anna Akhmatova, Sylvia Plath, the Brontë sisters, Sarah Waters, Kenzuo Ishiguro, Djuna Barnes and Jean Rhys, among others.

Does thinking about other great authors' works inspire or paralyse you at all when you are trying to write?

Not really.

In the international literary world, modern Scandinavian authors are best known as crime fiction writers. Why do you think crime books are so popular in Scandinavia?

I'm not any expert on crime writing. Scandinavian crime is not that hip or popular in Finland – and I'm not sure if it is very hip and popular in other Nordic countries, either. We have lots of books from other genres as well, which sell much better and are much more widely read. But they are not translated into other languages.

Well, that may be true, but international readers consume Scandinavian crime

fiction like there's no tomorrow.

As for the popularity of Scandinavian crime books outside Scandinavia, I cannot say why this is so. Swedish agencies are the ones to thank for the availability of Nordic books in other countries. As for the prevalence of translators, one can thank the departments of Swedish and Scandinavian languages in foreign universities.

What is your favourite Finnish word?

Rakkaus ("love"). But the use of *rakkaus* in Finnish is quite different from *love* in English. It's something of a severe word, so one cannot say "I love you" in Finnish in the same way that one might use the same phrase in English (i.e. "I like you"; "I'd love to see you", etc.).

And your favourite word in English?

I don't have a favourite word in English, but the British accent is certainly my favourite accent.

You live in Helsinki, but have done a lot of travelling recently thanks to your book tour. Is there anywhere else that you could see yourself living?

I am married to my writing language and language is a very sensitive tool. It's always changing – it's on the move all the time – and so being separated from Finnish-speaking surroundings would affect my language. So I have no plans to move abroad. And besides, Helsinki is a nice city to live in. **BO**

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Ieva Krūmiņa *Rust (Rūsa)* 2008, author's technique.
Paper 75 x 110 cm

TEXT BY ANETE KUKITE | PUBLICITY PHOTOS

Tekstils.lv project

Tekstils LV, the 50-year anniversary project of the textile department of the Art Academy of Latvia

The organizers of the *Tekstils LV* project invite the public to discover Latvia's fine arts through the world of textiles at a series of exhibitions.

More than just a tapestry

Any textile work is much more than just a rug that has been woven upon a loom or a woollen wall decoration. Textile art is not restrained by a picture frame. It can be created not only by weaving, but in a myriad of different ways that involve the combining of various fibre materials. It can be an installation, or an element of interior design that gives a room a fresh accent. Offices, banks and other public institutions are particular to paintings, but



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textile art could decorate their walls just as well.

“Yes, textile art is not really a common art form these days,” admits Elina Ģibiete, head of International Relations and Exhibits at the Art Academy of Latvia in Riga, and the curator of *Tekstils LV*.

“The audience for textile art is also relatively narrow, so we’ll be happy if these exhibits introduce textiles to those who haven’t yet had any contact with this art form,” she continues. While the works on display will be individualistic, all have been created in Latvia. “To the artist, the process itself is often times unforgiving,” says Ģibiete, as she describes the hidden side of textile art. “It requires great patience because it is not possible to produce large quantities in a short time.”



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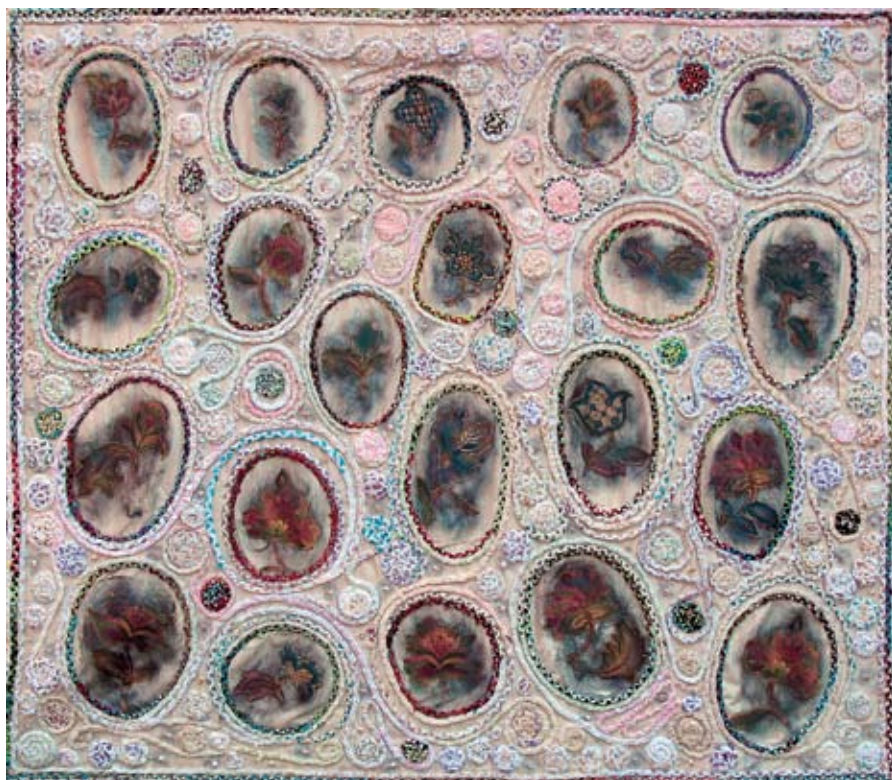
The Tekstils LV project

Fifty years ago, the Department of Textile Art was formed at the Art Academy of Latvia. In recognition of this anniversary, a conference and several exhibitions are planned, a catalogue on textile art will be published, and a homepage containing an extensive database of Latvian textile artists and their works has been created, all within the scope of *Tekstils LV*.

"At the time when the department was founded, textile was just a technical

project," she adds.

Textile artist Jānis Bankovičs elaborates: "The initiative by the Department of Textile Art was immediately supported by the Academy's governors. We put together a group of about ten people, including art experts and other people with ties to textile art, and created a project plan that would interest not only textile artists, but society – the consumers of culture – as a whole. We'd love to show foreign visitors the differences and characteristic features of our textile art."



Elīna Veilande-Apine
Springtime (Pavasaris) 2008, author's technique. Cotton, synthetic fibres, linen and pearls 160 x 180 cm

medium for any kind of art form. But then, Rūdolfs Heimrāts, the founder of professional textile art in Latvia, brought textile art into the forefront, creating a professional educational program for it," says Ķibiete.

"Traditionally, textile art is associated with tapestries, but its application is much wider. We sleep on textiles, we dry off with them after a morning shower, we wear textiles, they are found in architecture, in technology, in science and elsewhere. These are the ideas that we're trying to popularize with the help of the *Tekstils LV*

Three exhibitions

The first of three exhibitions – *Cut in Gold (Zelta griezumš)* – will be on display from October 7 through November 20 in the *Arsenāls* museum building. The first hall of *Cut in Gold* will hold Latvia's "golden fund" of textile art, while the second hall will exhibit works created by various textile artists during the last three years. Works selected for this exhibition are the winners of a competition specially organized for this purpose. The exhibition hall's vestibule will feature an interactive map, or schematic drawing, that will help visitors understand what



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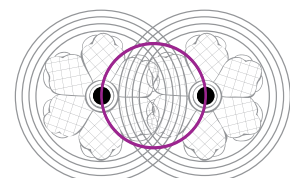


Edīte Pauls-Vīgnere
Indescribable beauty (Nenosakāms skaistums) 2007, mixed
technique. Cotton, wool and glass beads 196 x 130 cm

textile art actually is, where it comes from and how it is connected to design, technologies and other forms of art and craftsmanship. The second exhibition – *How Does One Become a Textile Artist?* – will be displayed in the auditorium of the Art Academy of Latvia. It will reflect the process of studies one must go through to become a textile artist and will feature the creative works of students. Meanwhile, the conceptual exhibition *What is the Identity of Latvia's Textile Art?* will attempt to answer this question. "One part of the exhibition will feature the works of textile artists, while the second will show the oeuvres of painters, graphic artists, media representatives and art experts," explains Ģibiete. "But everyone will try to identify what it is that characterizes Latvian textiles and the stereotypes that Latvians associate with it." If a shortage of time prohibits you from seeing these exhibitions, then there are other ways to familiarize yourself with Latvian textiles through the *Tekstils LV* project. A catalogue featuring 140 works of art, along with a number of articles on the world of textiles, has been published. Then there is the website www.tekstilslv.lv, which will post visual information and artist profiles.

Capturing history

Elīna Ģibiete explains: "When I was compiling the catalogue and the artist profiles, a very interesting picture of art history and societal life came together. The Soviet era is especially prominent, when artists were commissioned to create huge-format works. Two-thirds of the artists worked in state-run cooperatives and received all sorts of state-wide prizes. The first years of independence were a time of crisis, when artists had to start everything anew. It's also interesting to look at the works of new artists. The art scene is constantly changing, because there are no more boundaries separating the different forms of art." Textile artist Jānis Bankovičs adds that "traditional textile works are still highly regarded in the cultural centres and schools of Latvia's cities, where the walls are decorated with tapestries made decades ago." All in all, the series of exhibitions within the framework of *Tekstils LV* is a hereto unprecedented event in Latvia. **BO**



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Building value from data

If you have it, then use it!



Here in Riga, the summer holidays have just ended. We are taking our last swims in the sea and preparing for the transition to fireplaces and raking leaves. While the beach is still tempting, we are continuing to tackle the exciting challenges of technology and moving our businesses forward. In this edition of *TechnoCrunch*, we bring you articles that will reveal how technology can help you to consolidate the data that you already have and use it to your best advantage. In the news section, read about performance management, women on the web, the challenges facing *Google+* and more.

Our calendar has an interesting range of IT and knowledge conferences. We particularly recommend visiting Riga in October for the 10th International Conference on Perspectives in Business Informatics Research. Our colleagues and friends at the Riga Technical University promise a wide-ranging list of issues and lots of inspiring ideas.

Wishing you a successful early autumn,
 Maksims Jegorovs,
 Accenture Latvia DC Lead

The second quarter of 2009 ended with Latvia suffering a nearly 20% decline in its GDP, compared to the same period a year earlier. At that rather difficult time, *Inspecta Latvia* was creating its long-term development strategy. Partners from its Finnish headquarters and local consultants helped the company to examine its data and look for ways to capitalize on it. "When we began our strategic process, we seriously explored the data that we had gathered by both design and by accident. Our analysis led us to restructure our marketing and create an approach that has been successful in very difficult times," says *Inspecta Latvia* CEO Pēteris Druķis. Whether we are in a boom, crisis or stagnation period, finding value in our businesses is a must. Starting with good ideas, products, people and lots of energy is great, but it is never enough. Value comes not by having all of the building blocks, but by putting those blocks in an effective order and arranging them dynamically. We won't make optimal use of our assets if these blocks aren't where they need to be. Furthermore, many of us ignore a key place for finding value: our own data.

NGOs need data as well

It is not only just for-profit organisations such as private enterprises that can find value in data. According to Aleksandrs Molokovskis of HIV.LV (www.apvienibahiv.lv) in Riga, data from *Google Analytics* allows this NGO to target its website messages more accurately. Even more, it can see which government agencies are looking at which pages and tweet messages to convey the ideas that it wants.

What data do you have?

We collect data every day – cash receipts, delivery route information, records of calls to customers and much more. The data sits in our computers, sometimes in databases, mostly to be used for our reporting. The amount can range from hundreds of cells (spreadsheet-appropriate) to millions of cells (ERP-appropriate volumes). And much value can be found there.

The value in one's data can sometimes make the difference between success and failure. *Accenture Analytics* CEO Dave Rich says that "high performers are more likely than their competitors to view analytical capabilities as core to their business." Rich says that many firms take a first step by viewing analytics as a backward-looking tool to understand what happened, but few go further to use it to make informed decisions, create strategies and predict internal and market trends.

In global business, *BostonCoach*, a global executive ground transportation company, has collected and stored terabytes of data about its fleet. By implementing a data-analysis system and acting on the results, it was able to confidently offer real-time guarantees for on-time service, optimize fleet use by 10 to 20 percent and push costs below those of competitors.

Your data is unique

As many firms have discovered, an important first step is simply to understand that your data is unique. A survey of 600 blue-chip companies revealed that 88 percent believed that their data was only on par with that of their competitors. They failed to understand that their data has a usefulness and significance to them, simply because it is uniquely theirs. After realising how important your data is, you need to understand what is unique about it and

put it to work. Sometimes that means creating new metrics to measure customer relationships or internal relationships. After analysing its member data, *Best Buy* in the USA created unique metrics for itself. The company established that 7 percent of its loyalty programme customers were responsible for 43 percent of sales. It then used this knowledge to create hierarchies of customers and tailor offers to them. By using its unique data, it created a win-win situation for itself and its customers.

Drive to an integrated enterprise

Creating an enterprise-wide focus on data is essential in using data effectively. Most firms use analytics in only in one or a few functions – usually business process or marketing, but few think about data and analysis in an integrated fashion. This is especially important, as markets become more complex and companies operate in multiple markets for customers, employees and finance.

If you operate in multiple markets, you should consider what data should be shared between operating units, administrative units and the firm as a whole. Always consider how the following critical questions might be answered in your unit or by different units and think about whether your answers should be known elsewhere in the company:

- What happened?
- What is happening now?
- What will happen?

If your answers have broad applicability, then it is probably critical that you have an integrated system to be sure that answers are being shared with those who can take action.

Where will you get your data insights?

Your data insights come from your answers to the above critical questions. Insights into how and why come from understanding what happened. From this you learn how to frame and respond to your successes or failures. Making recommendations and creating actionable insight comes from understanding what is happening now. Finally, predictions of the results of your actions come from using

your data to understand what will happen. When you get those insights, the results can flow in as they did for Dutch insurance giant *ACHMEA*. It started by streamlining its ledger and accounting systems. When those systems had been rationalized, it was able to create a united data base of financial and customer data that, within year, led to 11 million EUR in cost savings. When the benefits became obvious, the company set a goal of a 75 percent efficiency-improvement in accounting and is determined to achieve it.

7 PERCENT OF ITS LOYALTY PROGRAMME CUSTOMERS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR 43 PERCENT OF SALES

How broadly should you share?

Obviously, creating organisation-wide, integrated systems means cultivating a sharing culture. Silos in firms lead to the situation where organisations undervalue their own data. Information firewalls can be reasonable if confidential data (from a customer perspective) is being held, but most often data walls

just prevent creative views of data. Sometimes it even is important to dissolve the borders between companies. A company that is committed to customer service may share data and analytics with suppliers and customers in all parts of its value chain. This kind of sharing can lead to unique insights and new and effective ways to drive value to customers and extract value from transactions. Establishing how much data and analytics to share and with whom is sometimes a key strategic decision.

How can you dive in to your data?

In addition to answering the critical questions above, you should be ready for the decisions and actions that create the ability to have good analytics. One important soft decision is to build a culture that questions its data. That could mean bringing in business analysts, but more importantly, simply encouraging people to ask and discuss the important questions that lead to discovery. Finally, you will need to have the supporting enterprise information systems that really allow you to store, understand and question your data. There are recognised market leaders in this area (*Oracle, SAP*), but it is most important to establish your true needs before you dive in. **BO**

IT NEWS

Don't be afraid of free things

Netscape, lots of *Google* products, *Craigslist* and many more free services have driven consumer perceptions of how much the internet costs – it's free. But what if you are on the other side of that free product? A company suddenly faced with a market entrant offering a free service, for example. Writing in the June 2011 *Harvard Business Review*, David Bryce, Jeffrey Dyer and Nile Hatch say that, of course, you should act, but carefully and with analysis. After looking at companies that successfully compete against free entrants, they suggest that if the threat is deemed to be real, then you should consider these strategies: Create your own free service – a tough strategy due to the fear of line cannibalisation, but it can help you to keep your customers. Rethink profit centres – a great idea in normal times, the profit centre idea keeps managers focused on their own service or product, rather than thinking of it as part of the portfolio of services that the company offers. Reconfigure them into revenue centres that push toward maximising revenue and see profit as part of a portfolio. So, don't be afraid of the free – just watch carefully.

Boys and girls are different

Men and women are different, and this is reflected in the way that they use the internet, as indicated in a report by *ComScore Research* (www.comscore.com). Ten years ago, men were primarily downloaders and new tech hunters, while women were already using the web to improve their personal productivity. Today, women drive the social network revolution and growth in user-generated content through blogging, photosharing and social networking sites. Of real importance to marketers

is the fact that women dominate web purchasing categories (as visitors, purchasers and decision-makers) in a wide range of products ranging from household goods to clothing. If you want to get more women customers, then remember that women join and spend more time on social networking sites than men and that they organise and connect more of their real-world social connections that way. Even specific services have different gender profiles for penetration and use. *Twitter*, for example, is nearly split between male and female users, but female users are considerably more likely to use *Twitter* to follow promotional offers. So, whether you are recruiting or selling, it is good to keep these differences in mind.

Bug bounties spreading

Facebook will be paying "bug bounties" to hackers and others who find vulnerabilities in *Facebook* and notify it. On July 28th, it announced that it will pay for this information from a base award of 500 USD. *Facebook* joins *Google*, *Hewlett Packard* and others in this practice. *HP Tipping Point* (the largest vendor-independent buyer of vulnerabilities) said that *Facebook's* payment lags behind others. Nevertheless, specialists say that *Facebook* is smart to introduce this practice. Having a relationship with the security community is important when problems arise. This works for both sides, because *Facebook* gets free analysis of its system and researchers get access. Cameron Camp from *ESET*, a San Diego antivirus vendor said, "Taking a proactive stance to avoid possible future exploits seems like money well-spent. It also sounds like a potential recruiting tool, with a little bit of asweetener for hackers to stay away from the 'dark side.'" In a polite reminder that "we were here first," *Google* and *Mozilla* welcomed *Facebook's* decision to join them in working closely with the security community.

BOOK

The Unboss

Have you ever thought "I should write a book"? Lars Kolind is offering you exactly that chance. Okay, maybe not the whole book, but to give your insight and input into his new book *The Unboss*. Lars Kolind led and learned from one of the most studied turnarounds in Danish history. His success and learning in turning around the hearing aid manufacturer *Oticon* gave birth to a number of widely used business cases and to Kolind's 2006 book, *The Second Cycle - Winning the War Against Bureaucracy* (Pearson Prentice Hall). In that book, he identified four keys to avoiding the death cycle in mature organisations: meaning, partnership, collaboration and value-based management. As Kolind has continued to drive these ideas, he has realised that a management and leadership revolution is underway and that it is leading to a new non-manager that has been dubbed the Unboss. To put his own ideas to work, Kolind created an online collaboration to writing *The Unboss*. There is an executive summary online (www.unboss.com) and Kolind announced the collaboration on *Twitter* earlier this year. Kolind's most important assertion in *The Unboss* is that leading means creating value with other people. If leaders need others to create value, then they require a more collaborative and value-based management system. The book draws from case and other research to make a strong argument that the Unboss can create extreme value for those courageous enough to try it.

📌 If these ideas interest or excite you, join the ranks of authors at www.unboss.com

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📌 centeris.eiswatch.org

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Ah! Paris

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY WILL LEW,
A PHOTOGRAPHER FROM MONTREAL, CANADA
WHO NOW MAKES HIS HOME IN AMSTERDAM

Many words spring to mind when I think of Paris, the city that inspires visitors and locals alike. History, culture, art, love, food, wine, fashion, architecture.

It's one of those cities that you have to experience once in your life. It's one of those cities that gives you shivers when you see their iconic landmarks in person. There are a few places in Europe that do this to me. I feel the same way about London and Rome just to name a couple but Paris is different, at least for me.

The Eiffel Tower was where I proposed to my girlfriend. Yes, cliché. I know but love is cheesy sometimes (she said yes by the way). As a photographer, it's arguably one of the birth places of documentary street photography. The art of street photography will always hold a special place in my heart. It lured me into the world of photography and still inspires me to this day.

Photographers like Robert Frank, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Robert Doisneau and many others sparked my interest to become a photographer. These photos are part of a larger series called "Paris Streets" and are dedicated for all who enjoy and love street photography.

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Tourists at the upper level Eiffel Tower



Some say Paris is the "City of Love"



A couple on the metro/subway trying to figure out their route





A waiter enjoying a smoke break



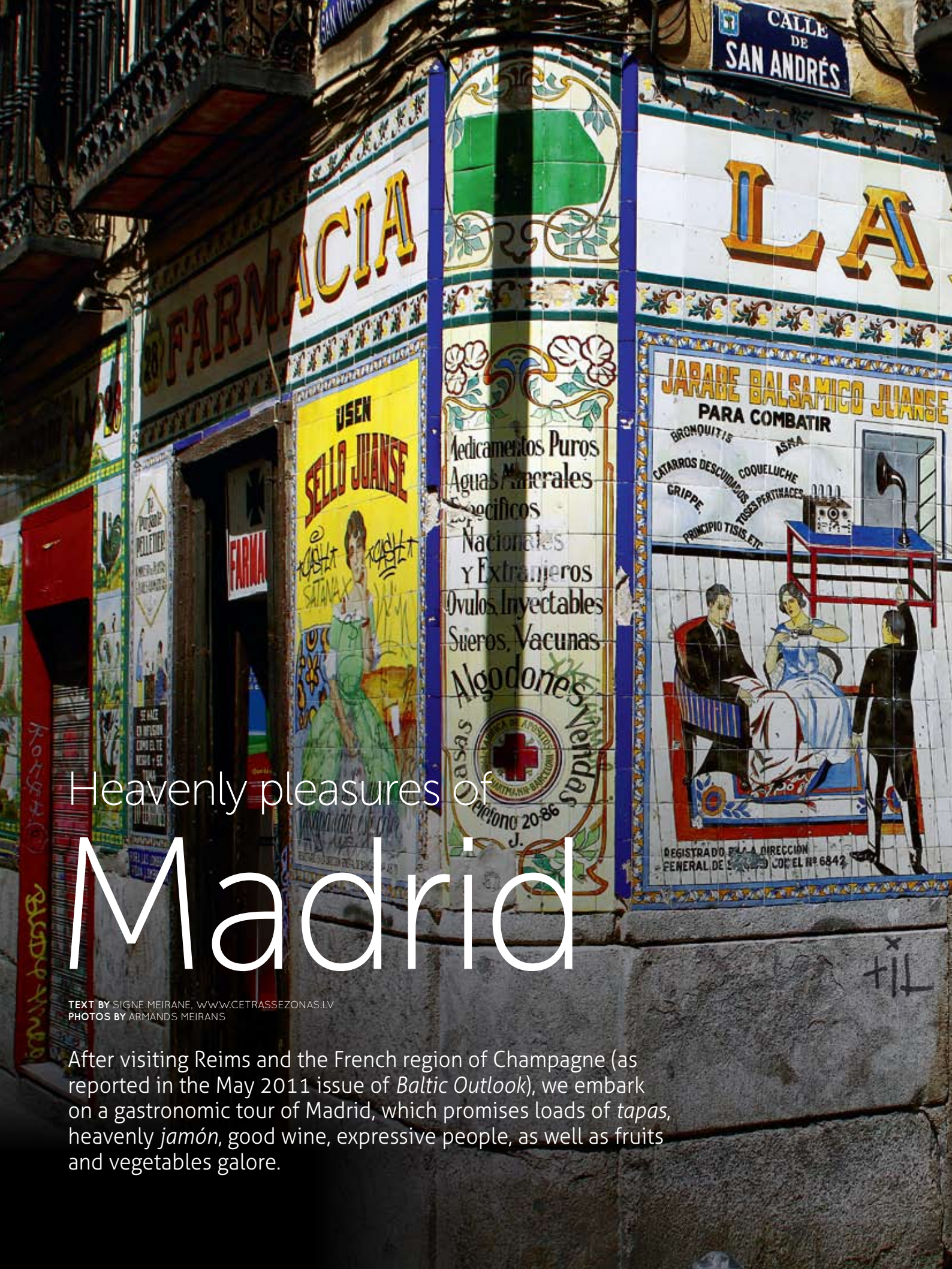
A man reading his newspaper at the Jardins du Luxembourg



Cigarette smokers are a common sight and smell



Group of teenage girls walking home after school



Heavenly pleasures of Madrid

TEXT BY SIGNE MEIRANE, WWW.CETRASSEZONAS.LV
PHOTOS BY ARMANDS MEIRANS

After visiting Reims and the French region of Champagne (as reported in the May 2011 issue of *Baltic Outlook*), we embark on a gastronomic tour of Madrid, which promises loads of *tapas*, heavenly *jamón*, good wine, expressive people, as well as fruits and vegetables galore.

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Madrid is beautiful. Even without taking into account all of its gastronomic pleasures, it's as noble as a swan. The city lies more than 600 metres above sea-level and has a population of three million. Since the summers are very hot and the winters unusually cold for such a southern destination, the best time to visit is either the spring or the autumn.

Madrid is the richest city of all, in terms of *tapas* bars, restaurants and other eating establishments per person.

We spend the first evening of our gastronomic expedition in the *La Castellana* quarter, where our first stop is *El Maño* (Calle de la Palma 64), a lovely but messy place. It turns out that's the way it's supposed to be – in classic *tapas* bars, people have traditionally thrown their refuse onto the floor, and as we have just found out, they still continue to do so in some places. So don't be surprised if upon leaving a *tapas* bar, you have shrimp shells or dirty napkins stuck onto the soles of your shoes. Here, we order a classic: *croquetas* and *pimientos de padrón*.

Today, the art of eating *tapas* is called *tapeo*, and the main part of the process is to gather together as many people as you can. According to one legend, *tapas* came about thanks to a Spanish king who, during an illness, could only eat very small meals with his wine. Then there's the version that is associated with the name *tapas* itself – in Spanish, *tapa* means cover. Bartenders used to put slices of bread on top of customers' glasses to keep out the flies. Later, additions were put on the bread – such as cheese, lettuce, meat and many other edibles, to munch along with the bread.

Tapas can be either the evening meal itself, or an appetizer before heading to a restaurant. *Tapas* vary among the regions, but one of the classics, which we have ordered in this bar (and from which you can gauge the quality of the bar itself, the locals say), are *croquetas* – deep-fried, oval snacks made from a béchamel sauce. They can be served alone or with accompaniments such as *jamón* (ham), mushrooms or tuna, among others. The softer the inside and the crunchier the outside, the better.

Pimientos de padrón, on the other hand, look like chillies – small, green peppers.

Tempting treats

There are all kinds of *tapas* – such as olives and nuts, among many others. They can be cooked and served plain or with sauces, cheese or meat platters. They can also be fried or marinated. Along with your *tapas*, order a



La Dichosa



El Maño

glass of vermouth from the tap, or *caña* – a glass of beer in the smallest size available. No matter the beer or which bar you're in, the name is the same. When you order a drink, you'll also get a complementary appetizer from the bar – this time we get a baguette with Russian salad.

After we've cleaned off the bottoms of our shoes, we head to *La Dichosa* (Calle Bernardo López García 11) which, unlike other *tapas* bars, offers a really good choice of Spanish wines. For *tapas*, we start with *huevos rotos con patatas*, which are fried pieces of potato topped with two eggs, sunny side up. *Tapas*

means sharing. Usually one, or several different kinds, are ordered for a group of people, among which everyone generously shares. Although we thought that this dish would be our only starter, we see that we underestimated our appetites. With a nice aftertaste and yearning to try something else, we head to *La Palma 60*, a small *tapas* bar that often features jazz music. Even the wine list has a taste of jazz in it. When you order wine here, you're also brought a small, succulent tortilla, typical of northern Spain.

Vermouth has always been a staple of *tapas* bars and always will be. The question, of course, is what kind to drink. In many bars, they still maintain that their vermouth on tap is made according to an old family recipe. The vermouth tastes different in every bar – the nuances of taste vary from lightly fruity to that of dried fruit; the colour – from almost clear to inky.

This evening, the streets seem so very calm and warm. My husband and I, two strangers in Madrid, hold a map in our hands while searching for our hotel, not really knowing where we are. Yet we feel completely safe, almost like locals who have just been away from the city for a short time.

We get up early and, although the curtains are still drawn, we can tell that the streets are teeming with life. We can hear rubbish containers being emptied and sidewalks being swept clean. I open the curtains – the sun is shining and there isn't a cloud in sight. You can't even tell it's a weekday. The only give-away is that people are briskly walking by, but they just as well could be taking a quick Saturday morning walk to the local market or to get a loaf of fresh bread. I wonder how there can be so much peace in such a big city. We go



Casa Labra



Casa Mira

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outside and already know that this is going to be a beautiful day – thanks to the bright Madrid sun, the lively street cafés – which are already full – and all of the events that we have planned.

Heavenly ham

Our first stop this morning is a *jamón* store with a long name: *López Pascual. La Casa del Jamón Ibérico*. The owner himself, Alberto, tells us that every year in Spain there's a *jamón* slicing competition, which he won in 1994. Winners cannot compete again. Now it's his apprentice's turn. Alberto gives us several different varieties of *jamón* to taste and explains their differences. He suggests enjoying the *jamón* as they do in the south – with sherry or a dry, white wine or, as in Seville – with pizza. If you want the best, buy your *jamón* in a speciality store. That's the first rule. The second rule is that the best *jamón* is called *jamón ibérico de bellota*. This ham comes from free-range Iberian pigs, which are fed only acorns. The most expensive of all *jamón*, its meat is dark. The most popular kind is *jamón ibérico*. Of course, ham is not the only gastronomic speciality in Madrid. Another delicacy is

A classic *turrón* shop is *Casa Mira*, where the *turrón* is handmade and all-natural – quite expensive, but delectable. Spaniards, however, usually buy and eat *turrón* only around Christmas time. The shop also



La Violeta



López Pascual

turrón, a candy that has been known in Spain for 500 years and that is an obligatory Christmas dessert. It is made from honey, egg whites and sugar, with the addition of either almonds or other nuts. It is then sorted into differing levels of quality, the highest of which is *Suprema*, while *Extra* is the second-best.

carries marzipan, candy and baked goods. My purchase – two rather large pieces of *turrón* and a box with ten traditional candies – costs 32 EUR. Along our route, we find a small candy store named *La Violeta*, which opened in 1915, and in which everything – including lozenges, chocolates and other sweets – is either

flavoured with violets or looks like violets.

It is only 7 PM, which means that in Madrid, the evening hasn't even started yet. We begin with a look at *Plaza Mayor*, which has to be seen despite the large number of tourists. That doesn't mean, however, that you have to eat there. As in many places that cater to throngs of foreign visitors, the *tapas* on offer can be of poor quality and overpriced. That is definitely not what you should expect from Madrid. We spend the evening checking out the city's most popular jazz bars – *Café Jazz Populart* and *Café Central Madrid* (Plaza del Ángel 10). Both are near our hotel and both serve food, have live jazz performances and reasonable cover charges. Later in the evening they become packed with people.

The next day, we wander the small streets that lead to the central *Gran Vía*, over to the *Plaza de España* and then to the beautiful *Campo de Marco* park. Along the way, the *Calle de Novicado* is full of small specialty shops. Number 20 is a meat and cheese shop, number 9 is *Congelados Pescadería*, a fresh fish shop, and next door is the *Fruitería* fruit and vegetable shop. It's a street where everyone seems to know everybody else and every stranger is immediately noticed. On the corner of *Plaza de Toreno* and *Calle de Amaniel* is one of the few wine shops in Madrid. We also visit the oldest department store, *El Corte Inglés*. The food department has an impressive fish counter – from the smallest to the biggest, all kinds, whatever your heart fancies.

Cod and vermouth

Right at the store's exit is a place that you must visit – the *Casa Labra* bar. It is both revolutionary and historic – its interior has



remained unchanged since the 19th century and it is said to be the birthplace of momentous ideas spawned by Spanish revolutionaries. For generations now, *Casa Labra* has had two house specialties – *bacalao* (breaded cod) and *croquetas de bacalao* (cod and béchamel sauce in a crispy breading). After visiting so many *tapas* bars, I can assuredly say that this place has the best cod in town and the tastiest vermouth, too. The practice of ordering and eating is simple. Come in, order at the register, take your assembled plate and pay. Drinks – wine, *caña* or vermouth – are ordered at another counter, then pay and enjoy your meal. The vermouth here was the best I had had in four days. Standing

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tables are available inside and out – just go and find yourself a spot. You can either join others or stand and eat without a table. We can't get rid of the idea of cooking ourselves, so we end up moving to the *La Latina* quarter, where we rent a tiny, 15-square-metre apartment. However, I quickly come to realize that I won't be able to cook very much here. The kitchen is much too small for my liking, with just two burners and a small work-space. We are planning to make *gazpacho* and *tortillas* the following day, together with Margit, an American who has lived in Spain for a long time. As it turns out, the only things that we consume in our small apartment that evening are cheese, cherries and dried meat. And wine, of course.

It goes without saying that a gourmand, while in Madrid, can simply not avoid a trip to Madrid's gastronomic pride, the *Mercado de San Miguel*. It is one of the most famous and most touristy marketplaces, but also happens to be highly regarded

by the locals. We decide to have lunch at a *tapas* bar in the market and order a bag of Spain's famous *Marcona* almonds, a plate of canned beans and glass of fresh white wine. There is so much food that we can't even eat it all, and it costs just 5 EUR. After letting a lunch dominated by salt and marinade settle in, we go try something else from the classic Spanish cuisine – *churros* with hot chocolate. A *churro* is a flaky, long, sweet and crunchy baked good that melts in your mouth. It is always served with hot chocolate, whether it's 4 AM (after the parties) or breakfast time. Even though it is neither of these times at the moment, we head to Spain's oldest chocolate factory café, *Valor* (Calle Mayor 26). We dip our *churros* into the chocolate and lazily eat them up. One portion usually contains four *churros* – enough for two people. Even though *tapas* are always tempting, three nights in a row is a bit too much for us, so in the evening we return to the *Mercado de San Miguel*, which is open until

The tortilla (Spanish omelette)

BY MARGIT SPERLING, MADRID, SPAIN



The tortilla is one of the most widely known forms of Spanish *tapas*, and every home has its own, true recipe. In some places it is made soft, elsewhere a bit harder. Some make it with baked, others with boiled potatoes. Whatever the method of preparation, the ingredients are the same – onions, eggs and potatoes.

Ingredients

½ large, peeled onion
5 eggs
3 average-sized, peeled potatoes
sea salt, to taste
olive oil

Preparation:

- Boil the potatoes in salted water, until almost soft. Drain and cut into thick slices.
- While the potatoes are boiling, thinly slice the onion.
- Heat the oil in a skillet and using a small flame, cook the onions and salt for about 15 minutes, stirring often. Add the sliced potatoes, stir and cook for 5 more minutes.

Remove from pan.

- In a bowl, lightly beat the eggs with a bit of salt.
- Pour a generous amount of oil into the skillet and heat it. Put the potatoes and onions back into the skillet and pour the eggs over them. Lightly stir and allow everything to cook for a couple of minutes.
- Carefully scrape down the sides of the skillet (freeing

the egg from the sides of the skillet) and very slightly, stir a little bit. Cook on one side for 10 minutes.

- Take a large plate, place it over the skillet and turn the tortilla over. Carefully slide the tortilla, raw side down, back into the skillet. Cook for 5 more minutes. Serve after 5-10 minutes, when the tortilla has firmed up.

midnight. At around 11 PM, the market is even fuller than it was during the daytime. Squeezing alongside a counter, we order an enticing salad enveloped in a thin crust, along with some fish and wine. The next group over is celebrating a birthday, while the people on the other side of us are laughing. The feeling is simply wonderful and easygoing. Before we go, I grab another bag of *Marcona* almonds. Tired but happy, we are back in our tiny apartment by 1 AM.

Home cooking

We begin Saturday morning with a cappuccino and pastry at *DELIC* (Plaza de Carros), a spot favoured by the locals, and then go on to the marketplace frequented by the inhabitants of *La Latina*, the *Mercado de Antón Martín*. We're determined to go ahead with our plans to cook two Spanish classics this evening – *tortillas* and *gazpacho*. Our guide suggests trying some cheeses that she likes – *idiazabal* (made of sheep's milk from the Basque country) and *queso de cabra con pimentón* (goat's milk cheese

with paprika from *Extramadura*). Both cheese and meat can be bought right there in the market, or in the specialty shops next door. We then go searching for *El Capricho*, place where one of the tastiest breads in Madrid can be found, and then home, to start cooking. While I thoroughly enjoy cheese and meat, I have never tasted cheese quite like this before. It's a new discovery, and discovery is one of the reasons we go on trips like this. The sun is shining and we realize that tomorrow at this time, on our flight home, we will so very much want to enjoy the feeling of a Saturday in Madrid again. So, for a second time, we enter the small *tapas* bar *Casa Labra* (Calle Tetuán 12) next to *El Corte Inglés* to eat breaded *bacalau* and *croquetas*, to drink vermouth and a small *caña*. **BO**

📍 In half an hour's time, you can easily get from the airport to the centre of Madrid by metro. Some hotels (new and modern ones) are closer to the airport and cheap, but if you want to enjoy dinner with at least three *tapas* bars and some city strolling in between, then they just won't do. It's the late nights that give Madrid its special charm, and they should be enjoyed to the maximum.

Tips on *tapas* bars:

- When entering a bar or store, say "Hola". When leaving, say "Hasta luego" or "Adios", even if no one is listening.
- *Tapas* should be ordered by the person with the loudest voice.
- When ordering an aperitif – in this case, a vermouth or a small beer – the waiter will bring something to eat as well, even a very small *tapas*.
- Many locals gauge the quality of a *tapas* bar on the merits of its *croquetas*.
- Madrid's tap water is of very high quality and is served free of charge in all bars and restaurants. When ordering, specify tap water.

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Next year will mark the tenth anniversary of the arrival of extravagantly adorned cows in Ventspils. Thanks to the arts patronage project COW PARADE, they have become rightful citizens of the city. Don't miss seeing the LATVIAN BLACK, LONDON COW, TRAVELLING COW and other cows in the streets of Ventspils.



A brand new inhabitant of Ventspils is the bronze red deer that has found its home on top of the man-made skiing hill. The sculpture symbolizes 100 years since the introduction of the first red deer in the woods near Ventspils. A local legend tells that touching the corresponding part of the deer sculpture may help improve your love life and ensure luck in having a baby.



Wherever you look in Ventspils, you will see flower beds, flower pots and even flower sculptures. One of the most beloved flower sculptures is the Duck family situated in Children's Town, but the most recent flower sculpture is the amazing Rabbit family situated near the Adventure Park.



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Driven: the *Opel Ampera*

Meet the future – the *Opel Ampera*. It is a five-door, four-seat hatchback driven by a 150-hp electric motor powered by a lithium-ion battery pack. But that is not all: it also has a 1.4-litre petrol engine from a *Corsa*.

The car

The *Ampera* is not a hybrid like the *Toyota Prius*, because the two power sources never work together to drive the car. The petrol engine acts purely as a generator to power the electric motor.

It all works like this. Normally, the charging time takes about three hours. This gives you a range of around 60 km on battery power. What if you need to go further, or have to make an unexpected trip when the batteries are flat? That's where the petrol engine comes in, generating electricity on the move and allowing you to cover an extra 500 km.

The efficiency is incredible. The official figure is 1.6 litres/100 km and 40g/km of CO₂. That's significantly better than the figures you'll get from the hybrid section of the market.

The drive

The first thing that strikes you is how quiet the *Ampera* is. In full EV mode, you don't hear anything from the powertrain, and even when the petrol engine is called into



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up, while Sport mode sharpens accelerator responses even further. Mountain mode conserves extra minimum battery charge to help with steep inclines, while Hold mode allows you to immediately switch to extended-range capacity – where the engine kicks in to power the motor – so you can save your battery power for when you need it most.

The interior

Inside you will find suitably high-tech features, like a digital driver information display behind the steering wheel and a touchscreen system to operate many of the car's functions.

The dashboard doesn't have conventional buttons, either. Instead, it has touch-

Electric Engine	150hp/370 Nm
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Combined range	More than 500 km
Price	42 900 €

same flexibility of use as a normal car or a hybrid, with much more impressive fuel and emissions figures.

Granted, you'll still have to pay for petrol occasionally, but with an average of around 1.6 litres/100 km, that won't be too often. **BO**



The *Ampera* gives all the benefits of an electric car, but with none of the drawbacks

action, it stays impressively quiet. Road noise is extremely well-isolated, too, which also helps make the *Ampera* a refined cruiser. There's some wind noise, but it's noticeable only because there's so little sound from elsewhere. The soft suspension also contributes the car's relaxed, easy-going nature. It's brilliant at smothering nasty bumps and potholes at all speeds, and the car feels smooth and settled on the motorway. Granted, it can feel floaty over undulating roads, but in most situations, the *Ampera* is a comfortable and composed way to travel. The suspension's softness does mean a fair amount of body lean in bends, but there's plenty of grip, so it always feels secure. The steering is a little light and a bit slow to react, which means you find yourself making small adjustments to keep the car going in a straight line. Performance isn't a problem, though. The torque is available as soon as you touch the accelerator and the sprint to 100 km/h feels instantaneous and brisk, making it in around 9 seconds. There are four driving modes. Normal is the default mode that's selected when you start

sensitive markings on the fascia panel that do the same job. There are a lot of them, but they're spread out enough that the dash doesn't feel cluttered. Granted, the hard cabin plastics don't feel particularly tactile, but they look reasonably smart and the assembly feels solid.

There are lots of adjustments for the seat and steering wheel, so it's easy to get comfortable. Rear visibility isn't the best, though, because of the small rear screen and thick pillars.

You get only two seats only in the back, too, but they're surrounded by plenty of head- and legroom, so a quartet of adults will travel comfortably. Also, the boot is a half decent size at 300 litres.

Verdict

If you're one of those people who fancies an electrical vehicle but whose lifestyle isn't quite regimented enough to allow one, then the *Ampera* could well be the answer. It provides regular EV strengths over short distances (zero tailpipe emissions, zero fuel consumption), but gives you the



Haapsalu, a small American town

PHOTO BY MARKO OLDERMANN, RIHO RAND
AND OLEV TOOM

The nice little resort town of Haapsalu in the northwest corner of Estonia is famous in many ways. About two hundred years ago, composer Peter Tchaikovsky enjoyed his holidays here.

It makes me wonder whether celebrities of a similar calibre can be found among today's tourists, as Haapsalu is always teeming with life in the summer.

One Friday in July, a magician arrives into the town. As he strikes his magic wand, Haapsalu leaves Estonia to land in the United States of America. The thundering voices of big V8 engines can suddenly be heard in the courtyard of the old Episcopal Castle and around its walls. Massive Buicks, Cadillacs, Chevrolets, Chryslers, Fords, Lincolns, Pontiacs, Oldsmobiles – yes, even some DeSotos and Corvairs – appear on the narrow streets. These cars are so rare in

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Europe that usually passers-by turn their heads when they see one. The cars' age does not matter. Well, actually, it does matter a little. The older they are, the happier the faces of their passengers. The engines gurgle, the paint shines and the chrome glitters. You can see a lot of American cars from the 1950s in Haapsalu. From this – possibly the most appealing time and place in the history of car-making – originate the most stylish, most winged and most chrome- and stainless-steel-decorated specimens. Old acquaintances meet, all united by a passion for "American iron". No matter whether they last met yesterday or the year before, their talk goes on into the night. Late on Friday evening, a procession of retro vehicles will roll through Haapsalu. But this will be no ordinary trip, as only female drivers are allowed to participate. For some reason, no one is talking about sexual discrimination.

**PEOPLE ARE
 STANDING
 ON BOTH
 SIDES OF
 THE STREET,
 CLAPPING
 HANDS,
 SHOUTING
 GREETINGS**

Saturday will pass mostly in the courtyard, looking at the exhibited cars (and motorcycles too), taking photos and sharing impressions with friends. On stage, several bands perform the appropriate music – most of it rock'n'roll or rockabilly with some country – warming people up for the main performer. In 2006, for example, this was the brand new Eurovision song contest winner, the Finnish group *Lordi*. Saturday ends with the main concert.

Parades and drag races
 On Sunday morning, the owners get to work on their cars. Some polish their beauties to make them shine even brighter, while others struggle under the hood, tightening the last nuts and bolts. Shortly before noon, all of the cars make another parade through Haapsalu, ending at the nearby abandoned airfield of Kiltsi. It seems as though the entire town of Haapsalu has come to see the parade. People are standing on both sides of the

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CARS

street, clapping their hands and shouting greetings. Passengers are also waving and shouting. Horns are honking away, and some sportier cars are making burnouts by spinning their rear wheels, rumbling onward in a mighty cloud of smoke. (Yes, of course, the real American cars have rear wheel drive!)

At the airfield, most of the shining machines are parked at the beginning of the runway, while others line up for the drag race – also an American sports event. Traditionally, this race is held on quarter-mile track, which the fastest Estonian has completed in 8.311 seconds.

Then the wizard reappears and strikes his wand again. Suddenly, Haapsalu has returned to Estonia. But next summer, for the twelfth time in a row, the magician is



bound to reappear.

The main organizer of this event is *American Beauty*, a Tallinn-based automotive maintenance and repair company, which mainly deals with U.S. cars. Fuelled primarily by their hobby and passion, the owners organize the Haapsalu festivities – named the *American Beauty Car Show* – as a non-profit event. This year, for example, they donated the income to the Haapsalu Neurological Rehabilitation Centre for the purchase of a specialized vehicle that would improve patients' ability to travel.

Thanks to the magician's annual appearance, many good things have happened in Haapsalu and hopefully, the power of his magic wand will not disappear any time soon. **BO**



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The new *LG Optimus 3D* smartphone was first released

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Golden Score – Latvia's judo calling card

The Golden Score international judo tournament has been drawing increasing crowds since it was first held in Riga in 2006. Athletes from Latvia's capital city, where a number of masters of this Japanese martial art grow and train, are now preparing full-force for the 2012 Olympic Games in London.

Golden Score has implemented special adaptations to the basic rules of judo. For example, each match lasts no more than three minutes. This means that a bout can end in seconds, as soon as the referee calls the first score. This also makes the competition more dynamic and the results more unpredictable, particularly if one of the competitors on the tatami is a world champion or an Olympic medal-winner. Latvian athletes have participated in the tournament since its first year, but the road to medals has been gradual. They received their crowning glory

last year, when the Latvian team created a sensation on their home tatami by taking first place. In the final, our team beat Uzbekistan 5:0.

TEAMS ARE EXPECTED FROM CANADA, UKRAINE, BELORUSSIA, RUSSIA, FINLAND, UK, FRANCE AND, OF COURSE, LATVIA

This year's tournament will take place on September 24. Teams are expected from Canada, Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Finland, the UK, France and, of course, Latvia. Our team consists of young and talented athletes, with particularly high hopes being placed on Deniss Kozlovs and Jevgēnijs Borodavko – European Championship, World Cup and Grand Prix tournament medal- and place-winners. Latvian Olympic champions in different sports are also scheduled to attend the sporting event.

This Golden Score tournament will be the last in Latvia before the Olympic Games in London.

"From a medal at Golden Score to a medal at the Olympics!" is the tournament's motto,

given by its director, Vladimir Shestakov. Let's hope that the motto comes true in London next year! **BO**

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TEXT AND PHOTOS BY PAULS BANKOVSKIS

Brittany's oyster capital



The low tide reveals only part of Cancale's extensive oyster "plantations"

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Cancale initially seems like a typical seaside town of Brittany, barely differing from similar populated areas in nearby Normandy or even Devon and Dorset on the other side of the English Channel. After driving past a number of 20th-century buildings and the typical, modern urban amenities – such as a shopping mall, petrol station and concrete water-tower – you notice that the streets become increasingly narrow until they finally flow into one, the oldest vein of the city. It quickly drops downward along the steep shore of grey stone buildings, hitting the water's edge. As in many similar towns at the edge of the sea, the residents of Cancale have worked for centuries to

protect their bay from the Atlantic's fierce storms with massive, stone breakwaters. Nearly all of the buildings that face the shore on the bay house restaurants on their first floors and hotels on the second and third floors. People leisurely stroll along the seaside street and pier, which is lit up by lanterns at night. I arrive at a time when the tidewaters have receded beyond the end of the pier, leaving a number of yachts lying partly on their sides in the temporarily dry port, alongside strange, flat, boats of welded steel, the likes of which I have never seen before. The mainstay of this town is oysters. In one direction along the promenade, pedestrians stroll empty-handed, while many of those returning are carrying large oyster boxes. Right at the end of the pier, at six or seven stalls near a small lighthouse, brisk sales take place from early morning until late at night. Those who haven't arrived with the intention of purchasing oysters can choose to eat them on the spot. Vendors will be glad to shuck the samples that you have selected and will also provide you with a lemon if needed. The empty shells from such sales form a giant pile on the nearby shore. Alongside German and Japanese tourists and curious gourmards on culinary expeditions, the stalls are also a habitual destination of the locals themselves. Many walk their dogs along the pier and stop to enjoy a few fresh oysters before heading back home. Prices begin from 2.50 EUR per litre, which for some reason is the common unit of measure for oysters. Of course, the price depends on the oysters' size and shape. Oyster size is designated with a number – a higher number labels smaller oysters,



while the largest oysters are designated by two zeroes (00). Flat oysters are a bit more expensive – the bottom shell is rounded out like a bowl, while the top shell is nearly flat. In Cancale, oysters have been esteemed for centuries. The town's oyster growers and sellers often refer to the ancient Romans, along with French kings and Russian tsars, as connoisseurs of oysters.



Oysters are brought ashore by tractor at low tide



A seafood market



The short path from the ocean to the table

Life-giving tidewaters

The residents of Cancale and its surroundings can thank the fluctuating tidewaters for making their oysters taste so delicious. Here, the daily changes in the seaside water level between high and low tides are among the largest in Europe and can reach up to 14 metres. Oysters enjoy this type of environment and have thrived here in the wild – on the at-times dry, at-times sea-drenched rocks – for thousands of years. The 17th century brought about the first commercial endeavours to gather wild oysters, which led to their cultivation, and in the 19th century, the first oyster farms or parks appeared on Cancale's shores. Today, the small bays and coves of Cancale

and its neighbouring villages are managed by *Parcs Saint Kerber*, whose beginnings date back to 1930, when François Louvet established the company's predecessor, *Glacière Cancalaise*. After the end of the Second World War, he turned his focus on oyster growing and since then, the small family business has grown into an established exporter of various types of seafood. Its branches and affiliates are engaged in all sorts of shellfish cultivation and fishery. During the low tide, the company's oyster plantations can easily be seen from the shore and piers, taking up a territory of almost 7.5 square kilometres. From this small town of approximately 5000 permanent residents, approximately 25 000 tonnes of shellfish are brought to oyster lovers' tables every year.

It is around 8 AM on the last day of my visit, and the high tide is approaching its peak. Consequently, the small beach in the centre of town is bustling with activity. A tractor with a large trailer drives in, while an amphibious vehicle roars into life. Welded from shiny, stainless steel sheets, it is equipped with retractable wheels. A built-in crane lifts boxes of small oysters from the tractor onto its deck. Then the amphibian rolls into the water, engages its propeller and disappears behind the cape to release the boxes into the deep. *Parcs Saint Kerber* is proud of its deepwater method for growing oysters, which supplements the farming activities on the shore's low-tide zone. After a couple hours, when the tide has retreated further, a few more tractors appear. They drive into the oyster park that was just recently underwater, where, on long pillars, mesh bags full of oysters sit in rows. The shellfish farm uses a rather expensive oyster growing method, which is also the most environment-friendly – manual labour. Oysters are regularly hand-picked during their growing cycle and placed in batches with those of a similar size. As they grow in size, the number of oysters per batch decreases from 1000 to 180. Once they have reached maturity, they are removed and packaged for selling. Then the bags are augmented with smaller oysters and returned to their pillars. Even without taking into account the unique nutritive qualities of oysters or the aphrodisiacal properties attributed to them, they truly are something that must be tasted at least once. And Cancale is one of the prime spots for the start of a wonderful, new relationship. **BO**

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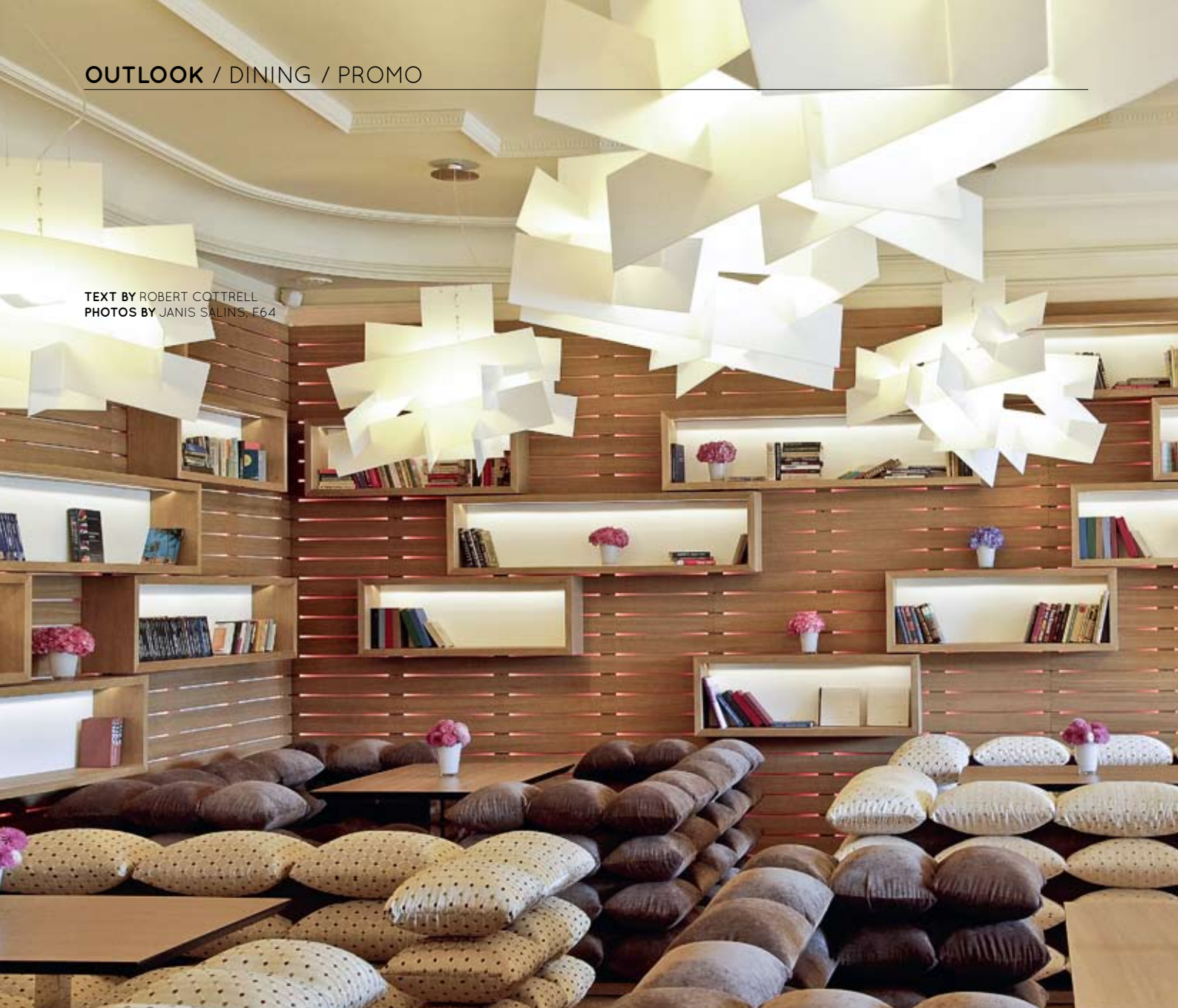
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TEXT BY ROBERT COTTRELL
PHOTOS BY JANIS SALINS, F64



Cooks, books and stunning looks

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Monday–Sunday 11:30–24:00;

Thursday, Friday and

Saturday – 11:30–2:00

www.restoransbiblioteka.lv

Let's get one thing straight. There is Mariss Jansons, and there is Māris Jansons. Mariss Jansons is a Latvian conductor. Māris Jansons is a Latvian chef. Mariss has often conducted *La Bohème*, an opera by Puccini. Maris used to be head chef at *La Bohème*, a restaurant in Riga.



for “library” – fills it out beautifully with formal tables in the front, sprawling couches in the back, oversized light fittings everywhere, and a long, central cocktail bar. No coincidence that one of the venture’s backers is Oskars Skara, a well-known Latvian interior designer.

Best of all is a wide terrace facing out over the park, populated with wicker tables and deep-padded chairs. It must be one of the most beautiful eating spots anywhere in Riga.

There are also – as you might expect, given the restaurant’s name – lots of books on shelves around the walls. Art books, travel books, cookery books, and more to come. Do not fear to eat here alone. There will be plenty for you to read.

Chances are, however, that you will be coming here to eat, not to read.



Māris Jansons

More on Mariss Jansons another time. Here we take up the story of Māris Jansons, and his continuing trajectory into the top rank of Baltic chefs.

He started his career at *Vincents*, the mothership of modern Latvian cooking, working for nine years under the masterful Mārtiņš Rītiņš.

This summer, after three years at *La Bohème*, Jansons has launched a stunning new restaurant, *Bibliotēka N°1 restorāns*, in a huge pavilion that opens onto the Vērmanes Garden (*Vērmanes dārzs*), a pretty public park just behind the University of Latvia. The premises used to be occupied by a café that never seemed quite grand enough for the soaring ceilings and panoramic windows. *Bibliotēka* – the Latvian word

Māris Jansons is also one of the patrons of the Contemporary Latvian Cuisine movement, which urges chefs to buy their produce fresh and locally from trusted farmers, foragers, hunters and fishermen. Buying locally implies changing with the seasons. Jansons expects to overhaul his basic range of dishes four times a year. Right now, he’s sizing up his mushrooms and pumpkins in preparation for autumn. What you see on your plate at *Bibliotēka N°1 restorāns* tends towards Scandinavian simplicity. The food speaks for itself, but not too loudly.

Sous-vide cooking lends itself well to Jansons’ style. Vacuum-packed cuts of meat and fish are poached for hours in warm water, locking in the flavour and maximising

the tenderness. The result is lamb and pork that you can cut with a fork.

The portions are generous, without being overwhelming. The restaurant strikes a happy compromise between the Latvian tradition of huge piles of food, and the modernist tradition of tiny squiggles in the middle of your plate.

One striking feature of the *Bibliotēka N°1 restorāns* menu is that the prices are relatively accessible. There has clearly been an effort to offer a wide range of price-points, even though the menu is relatively short.

Dinner for one starts at about 25 LVL. Starters include a green salad with smoked trout (4.50 LVL); herring escabeche (4.50 LVL); fish soup (5.00 LVL) smoked lobster tails (9.20 LVL) and quail with goose–liver pate (12.60 LVL). Main courses include chicken breast (6.00 LVL); gnocchi with ricotta (6.50 LVL); pork belly (6.80 LVL); duck breast (9.70 LVL); leg of lamb steak slow-roasted in meadow hay (12.00 LVL) and entrecôte steak (12.00 LVL). This is cooking of a serious international quality, and by that measure these dishes are indeed bargains. There may be bigger bargains to come: Jansons expects to add a daily lunch special soon.

The same light touch has been applied when pricing the wines, which are almost all drawn from Italy (with the exception of champagne). True, the list tops out at 189 LVL for a bottle of *Gaia & Rey Larghe DOC 2008*, a Chardonnay from Angelo Gaja, often said to be Italy’s greatest ever winemaker. But there are also plenty of perfectly decent, middle-priced whites and reds – starting with a Pinot Grigio, a Soave and a Valpolicella at 14 LVL a bottle, and many more options at well under 30 LVL.

This kind of give-and-take on pricing makes a lot of sense, when Latvia is only just now staggering out from under a crippling economic recession. For the past couple of years, far more restaurants have been closing than opening. It is to be hoped that this arrival signals a turning-point in confidence. The trick will be to keep people coming back. *Bibliotēka N°1 restorāns* is a big venue, and Riga is a small city. To add a bit of diversity, they plan wine nights on Thursdays, a five-course testing meal on Fridays and live music on Fridays and Saturdays. That is just as well, for frankly, the place is big enough for an orchestra. If only Mariss Jansons could be persuaded to put in an appearance alongside Māris Jansons one weekend. **BO**



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Piens bar and night club, Rīga

The popular *Piens* (which means "milk" in Latvian) is well-hidden in an industrial-looking building, which once housed the *Stritzky* beer and porter brewery during the late 19th century. The arrival of *Piens* on Riga's club scene also coincided with the revival of the part of Riga where the establishment is located, a few kilometres away from city's Old Town. The comfy vintage sofas in the tastefully decorated club are often occupied by creative souls from the Latvian arts and music scene, as well as their followers, as can be noted in the hipster attributes of their clothing. *Piens* has made a point not to advertise itself and its owners have scrupulously sought to avoid publicity about the club in the mass

media. The reason becomes evident on evenings when DJs perform. Anyone who wishes to enter *Piens* will first have to undergo *face control*, and many potential patrons fail to gain admittance. Don't even bother standing in line if there is a chance that you might be branded as an "overly intoxicated tourist". Ease off on the drinks and try again another evening, when you are reasonably sober. If you are still unsure about your "milkness", then you will have no problem gaining entry for lunch or an early dinner, as *Piens* is known not only for its swinging night life, but also for its very decent food.

Hours: Mon.-Tue. 09:00-01:00,
Wed.-Thu. 09:00-05:00, Fri. 09:00-06:00,
Sat. 12:00-06:00, Sun. 11:00-01:00
Aristida Briāna iela 9, Riga



Fontaine Delisnack, Rīga

Unofficially named the rock'n'roll sheriff of Liepāja (a seaside city in western Latvia), Danish entrepreneur Steen Lorenz or "Louie Fontaine"

has now expanded his club empire to Riga. *Fontaine Delisnack* is a perfect pit stop for late-night refuelling as you cruise Riga's bars and clubs. It is also an excellent lunch spot, for everything on the menu - including the burgers, pizzas, Chinese and Mexican dishes - is tasty, despite falling into the "fast food" category. That is because the French fries, onion rings and many other items are cooked homemade-style right on the spot, in accordance with a number of great recipes that Fontaine has accumulated over the past years.

Hours: Mon.-Tue. 10:00-24:00, Wed.-Thu. 10:00-04:00, Fri.-Sat. 10:00-07:00, Sun. 11:00-24:00
Aristida Briāna iela 9A, Riga



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Just as for many other Swedes, Södermalm is my favourite part of Stockholm. Having had a long history as a working-class neighbourhood, Södermalm has become more alternative and Bohemian than downtown Stockholm. It houses a plethora of galleries, fashion and design boutiques and vintage merchandise shops, but more importantly – Södermalm's numerous cafés, bars and restaurants are great spots for people-watching. Getting to this slightly different part of the city takes just a couple of metro stops.

Mosebacke

Start your stroll through Södermalm with a coffee at the Mosebacke terrace. Even though you have to climb some steep streets to reach the terrace, your reward will be a stunning view of practically all of Stockholm. Mosebacke is an outdoor café that is very popular among the locals. On a lazy afternoon, you'll see it packed with families and their baby strollers, as well as party-goers warming the evening up with a bottle of rosé wine. Menu-wise, it's traditional Swedish cuisine, meatballs included. The lighter end – salads and sandwiches – is well-covered.

Mosebacke torg 1–3

Hours: Sun. – Thu. 11:30–22:00, Fri. – Sat. 11:30–23:00
(weather permitting)

www.mosebacke.se



© ANNA HUERTA

Texas Longhorn Steakhouse



This is the ultimate spot for steak in Södermalm, if not all of Stockholm. Over the years, the *Texas Longhorn Steakhouse* chain has expanded greatly, with nine restaurants in Stockholm alone. It's the ideal place to get a proper dinner, with excellent home-made sauces and Texas-style décor. Space-wise, this particular *Texas Longhorn* is quite small, with about eight tables serving not much more than 20 people at a time. Make an effort to come before 7 PM, otherwise small queuing is guaranteed.

St. Paulsgatan 4a

www.texassteakhouse.se

Snaps

There is practically no way you can miss *Snaps*, as it is located in the very central square of Medborgarplatsen, a place where everybody inevitably passes by when exploring Södermalm. It's the perfect spot for resting your feet and doing some people-watching in the middle of your city exploration tour. *Snaps* serves as a magnet for fancy Swedes who feel a need to "go alternative" every once in a while. Have an apéritif or stay for a few hours longer, as every evening *Snaps* features a DJ. Friday and Saturday nights are devoted to rock music. By the way, the terrace of *Snaps* is famous for being the first to open in the spring and the last to close in the fall.

Götgatan 48

www.snapsbar.se



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Adrián Toledo, captain on Bombardier Dash 8 Q400

A cheese quest

Like many Spaniards, I have always been crazy about gastronomy. Luckily, my job as an airplane pilot allows me to travel a lot, for work and for pleasure. Whenever I get the chance, I visit the local market in my quest to find the best cheese, or at least to try out as many brands as possible. I was born in the Canary Islands and part of my family is originally from La Gomera. Locals from this tiny island, more often than not, make cheese at home, Almogrote being

a very popular recipe. My mother frequently makes the spicy paste, even though she left the island long ago. It is very easy to produce: you need some hard, smoked goat cheese, some slightly spicy peppers, garlic and olive oil. Mix everything until you get a pasty texture. It makes an ideal bread spread and can be enjoyed as an appetizer. On a trip to the Spanish region of Extremadura, I discovered one of my favourites: Torta del Casar, frequently used by haute cuisine chefs

for a variety of dishes. It has a very strong smell that may easily stink up your refrigerator, but don't let the peculiar aroma confuse you, as it has a very characteristic taste. When you talk about cheese, you cannot fail to mention France. What a rich gastronomy indeed, with delicious food and wine that can effortlessly be found. Years ago, when I was flying for a Swiss airline, I travelled to Strasbourg. There, in a small marketplace, I discovered Munster-Géromé, made with cow's milk from the Alsatian mountains. It is soft and enriched with caraway seeds to make the digestion lighter. It also forms an excellent marriage with Pinot Gris wines. If your mouth is already watering, then get ready to travel to gourmand Italy, the home of Parmesan cheese. In the heart of Parma, I decided to swim against the current and purchase not Parmesan, but Grana Padano. In a local marketplace, farmers displayed about 40 kilograms and had a diameter of a half a metre. After trying a number of vintages, I recommend the one that has been cured for 12 months: it is milder and easier for the palate to enjoy. So if there are any good cheeses in your town and good food in general, just let me know and I might very well catch the next flight out. **BO**



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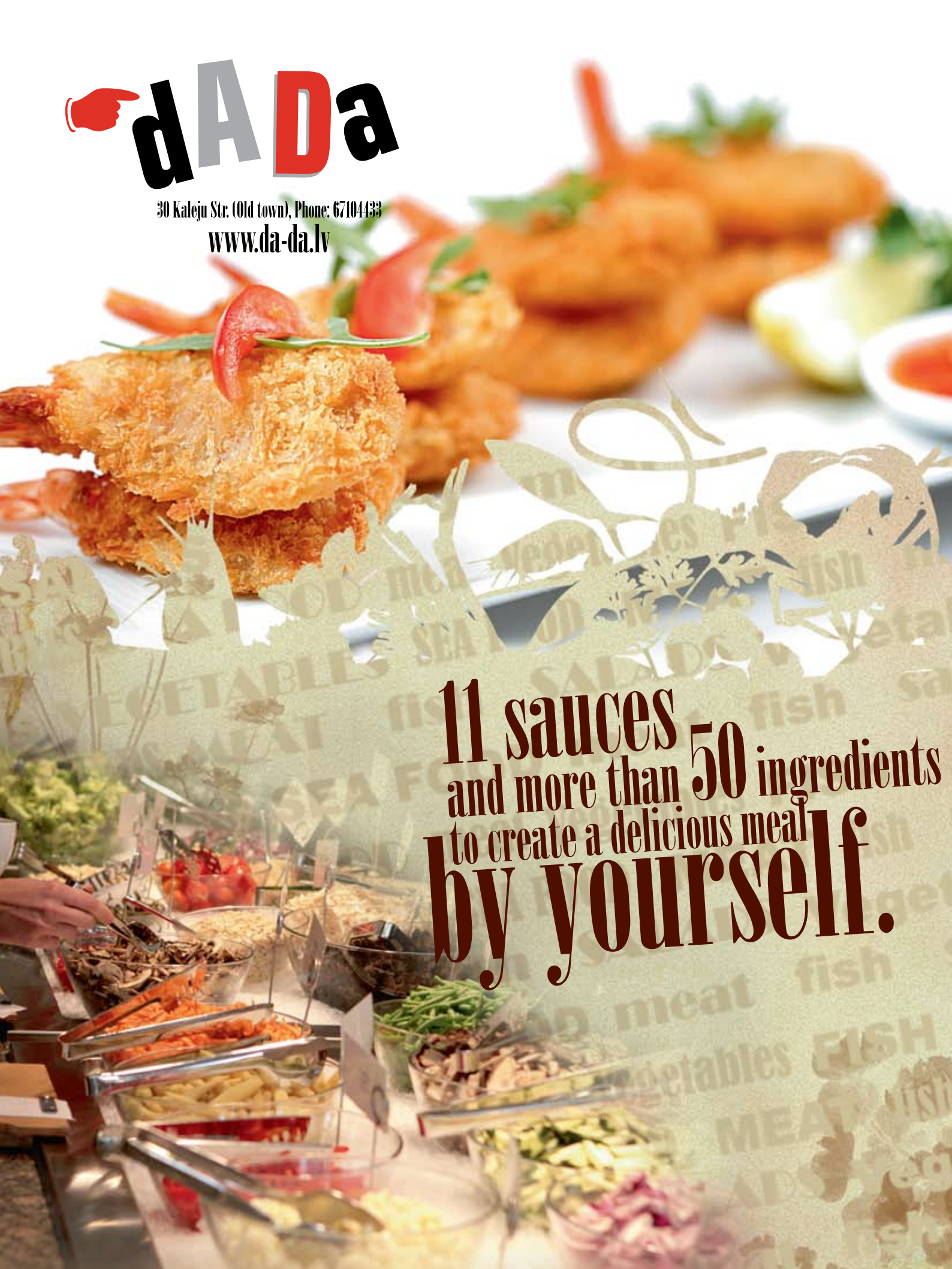
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Restaurant *Blue Cow* is housed on Meistaru iela 21, in an architectural landmark that was completed in 1823. Some of the building's original structural elements have been preserved, including its wooden ceilings and stone walls, parts of which date back to the 13th century. The interior itself was designed by a local artist, who added custom-made wooden tables and iron chandeliers to the interior. The stone walls have been covered with a layer of white plaster and decorated with painted designs. These embellishments combine to brighten the space and conjure an aura of old-fashioned charm. However, the main focus at the *Blue Cow* is on the food, which the

**THE
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 PRODUCERS**

chef calls "modern interpretations of traditional Latvian cuisine." Not surprisingly for a restaurant with a cow as its mascot, the main dish is steak, consisting of the finest prime beef that has been dry aged for 25-40 days in the restaurant's onsite meat locker. Thankfully, the menu keeps the selection process as simple as possible, by presenting each cut of steak with its weight and thickness alongside the price, as well as a handy ruler underneath to give diners a sense of proportion. Although steak is the focal point of the menu, it certainly isn't the only dish. As the sign above the door announces, the restaurant

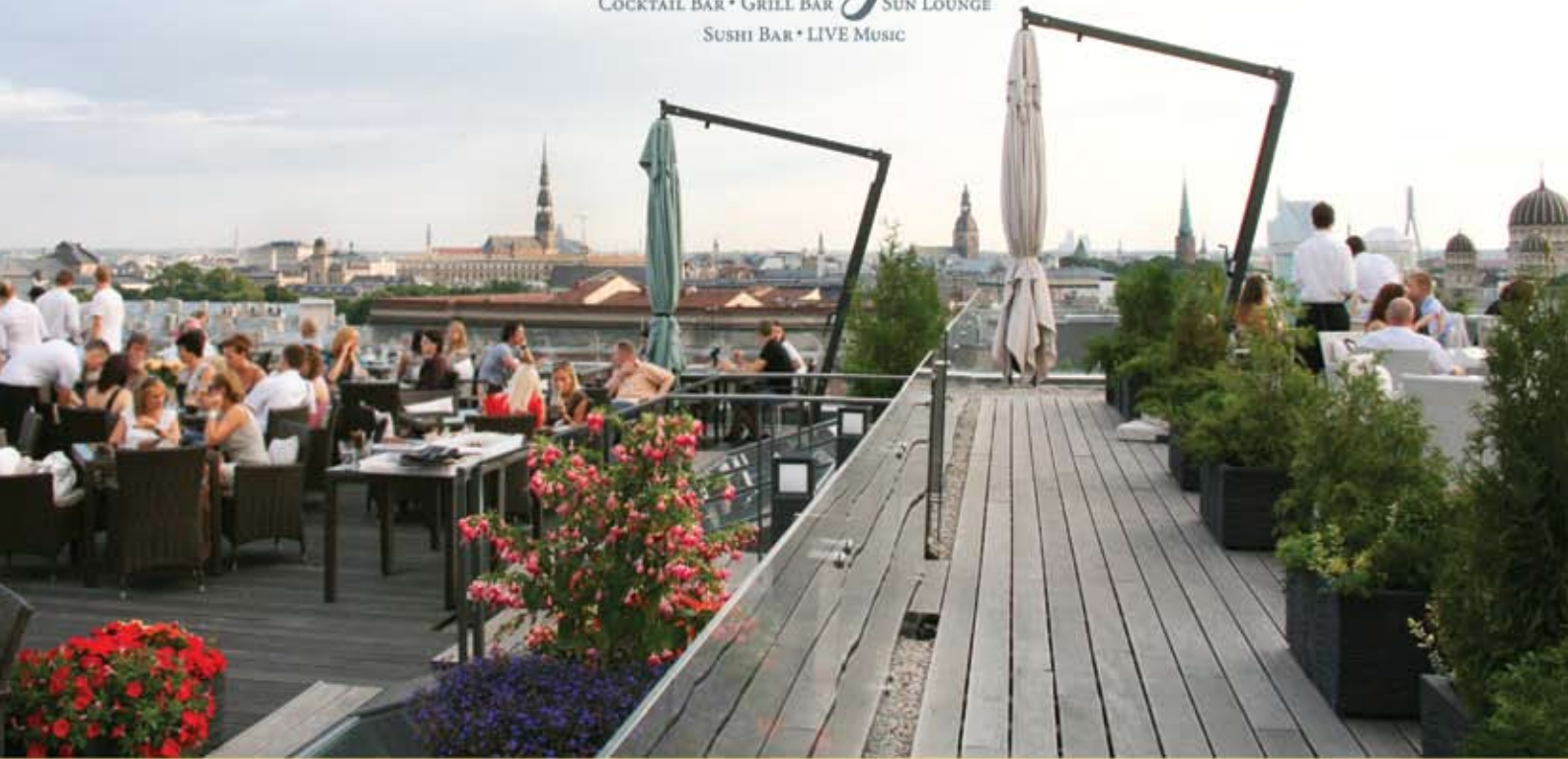
also specializes in fish. Therefore, the menu offers such regional delicacies as smoked salmon and crayfish terrine wrapped in blanched spinach and served with fresh homemade cheese and citrus sauce. An entire section is devoted exclusively to dishes that use locally grown and organic products, such as the potted rabbit and rack of lamb. The ingredients are purchased directly from Latvian farmers and producers, including a family farm in the parish of Aizpute, which is close to the native home of the blue cows on the Kurzeme coast. **BO**

The *Blue Cow* is also a perfect spot for banquets and private parties, as the restaurant can seat up to 80 people in its large back room, with a view of the castle-like Small Guild next door. The front room, for its part, has a pair of cozy banquettes beside the windows looking out onto the bustling *Līvu laukums*.

TERRACE

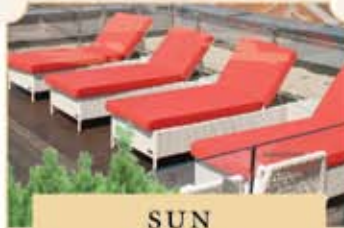
Riga

COCKTAIL BAR • GRILL BAR • SUN LOUNGE
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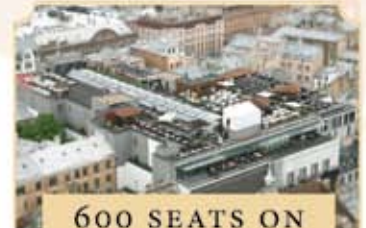
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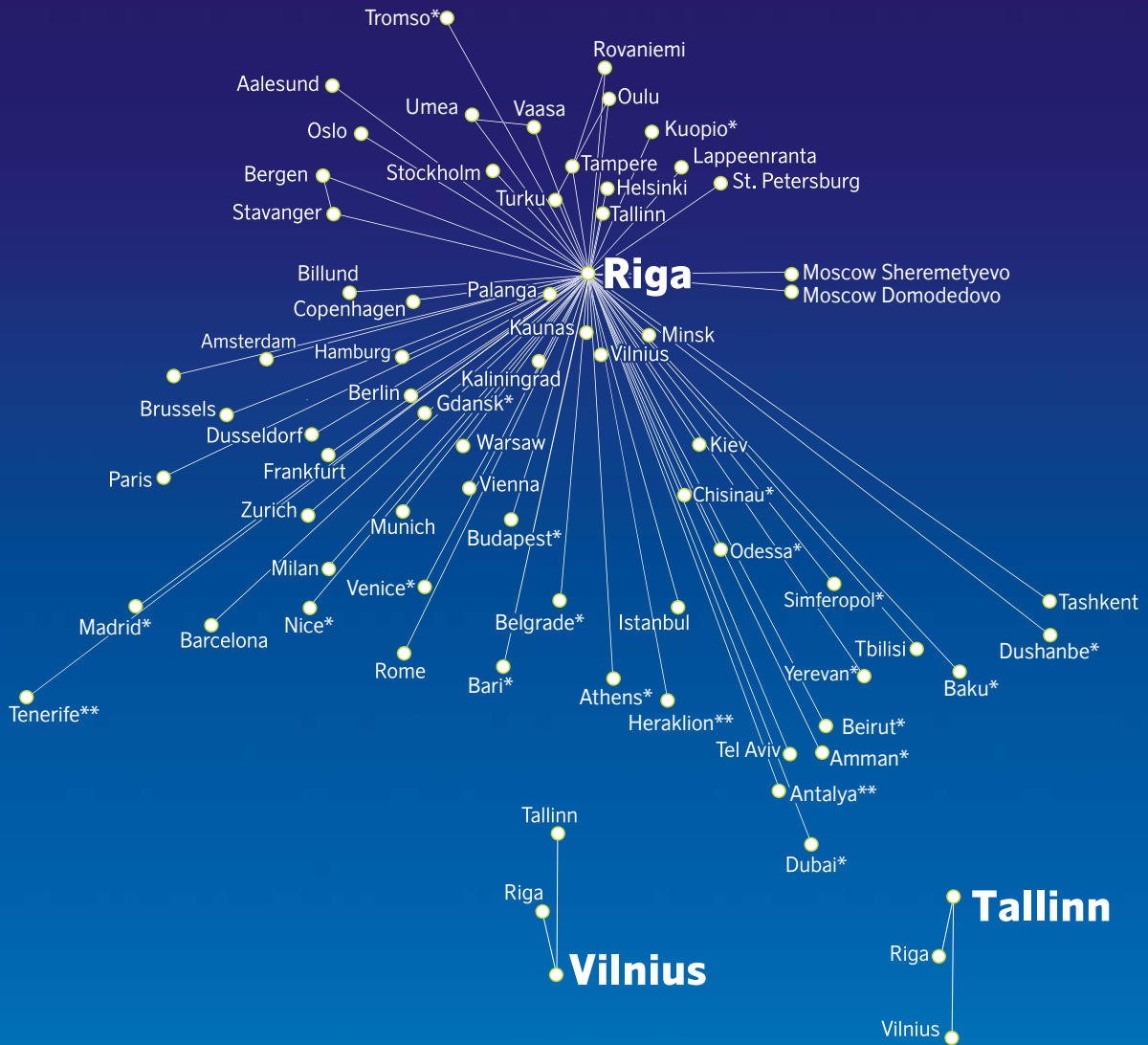
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- 1/ Buy early and save in Business Class
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- 3/ Choose from our online extras to make your travel more enjoyable
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Robertas Javtokas

4/ airBaltic is the official carrier for Eurobasket 2011

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Keeping the aircraft fleet safe and operational

TEXT BY ANETE KUKITE
PHOTOS BY JANIS SALINS, F64

Gatis Ābelīte may be only 24 years old, but he's already accumulated a number of years of experience working at *airBaltic* as an aircraft technician.

Gatis Ābelīte,
aircraft
technician,
airBaltic



Tell us about yourself and how you ended up working with airplanes. Why not cars, for example?

I have been fascinated by aviation since my childhood – much more than by cars – and came to *airBaltic* four years ago. After graduating from high school, I studied IT at university. The following summer, *airBaltic* advertised a vacancy for which I applied, along with about 150 other people. Fifteen potential technicians were selected from the applicants. During the interviews, our English-language skills were tested, as well as our ability to translate texts, plus our knowledge about aviation and airplanes in general. I had prepared for the interviews and read up a lot about planes beforehand, which is why the questioning went well for me. Then for a whole year, we attended lectures from 9 AM to 4 PM on weekdays at the airline's technicians' training centre, and engaged in on-the-ground praxis under the supervision of instructors.

What was the greatest challenge in your studies to become an *airBaltic* technician?

Initially, the hardest thing for me was the English language. Technical English with its specific terms – that was the biggest challenge, but otherwise, the studies were fairly easy and straightforward. The subjects that we had to learn were taught consecutively and after each was completed we took the relevant exam. We studied mathematics, then physics, followed by subjects like aviation law, the human factor and aerodynamics. During our training, we were taught how to install tires and other aircraft parts. We worked on airplanes from 10 PM until 2 AM under the supervision of an instructor. The instructor familiarized us with the aircraft and provided us with the relevant documentation for each model. The next time we met, he made us recount what we had learned about a specific plane or specific aspects of our job. We are always being reminded that we don't have to

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memorise everything and make sure not to confuse one airplane's parameters with those of another. That means that when we are dispatched to an airplane, we first go to the computer, find the airplane's documentation and print it out. Only then do we go and work on the plane. We can't just rely on our memory.

A technician has to be able to work nights. One has to be prepared to work no matter what the weather conditions, for not all of the planes are inspected and maintained within the convenient shelter of a warm hangar. Some planes are also out on the runways, and testing sometimes has to be done even when it's pouring rain or in the midst of a blizzard. You have to be able to withstand loud noise and not be afraid of heights. You have to be able to concentrate. You can't be thinking about the previous day or the next. Everything else has to be put aside.

How many people are in your group of technicians?

Usually there are about ten of us on a day shift and about 30 on a night shift. The team is much smaller during the daytime, as nearly all of the airplanes are flying in the air, so we have less daily checks to do. Sometimes we respond to special dispatches. The comprehensive checks are carried out at night, as then most of the planes are on the ground, at the base. The shift supervisor writes up the required work on a board and then we divide up the work among ourselves.

Tell us about the newest model in the airBaltic fleet – the Dash Q 400.

The Dash Q 400 definitely uses less fuel and is much more economical than other aircraft that I have seen. Of course, the larger the airplane, the more fuel you can put into

Usually there are about ten of us on a day shift and about 30 on a night shift

How do you start the airplane inspection?

Airplane inspections take place according to a previously developed plan. The planes undergo a visual check every 32 hours, as well as a few tests to verify their safety. I work with the Fokker - 50 and Dash Q 400 airplanes, giving them a daily check. An additional check is conducted every three days, when we inspect the interior and external lights, fill up the oil and do a number of other things. At specified intervals, the engineers send the technicians to do more involved checks, in which all of the airplane's electronics are carefully verified. It's not like the technician can just decide what he wants to check. Checks are also done if the pilot has noted something specific in his report. Our communication with airplane pilots takes place through a special journal, in which the pilots give the technicians certain notes. If everything is in order, then the pilot can choose not to mark anything, but if the pilot wants a particular part of the plane to be specially checked, he'll make a special note. The technician, on arriving for his shift, takes this into account and makes the check, ensuring the safety of the next flight.

it and the further it can fly. Nevertheless, even though the Dash Q 400 is not a large plane and is used mainly in the Baltic and Scandinavian routes, it can also be used for longer flights. While technicians are responsible for the technical details, each airport also has its loading staff, who ensure that the baggage weight in the plane doesn't exceed the maximum technical parameters. Then there are those who fill the plane with fuel and many other people involved with other tasks. With everyone doing their job, a unified mechanism is developed, which guarantees the safety of the flight.

How do you feel when you fly in a plane as a passenger?

Since becoming an aircraft technician, I have felt extremely confident about flying on commercial flights, because I now know how the planes operate and how they are maintained. I know what goes on during a flight – why specific noises can be heard at specific times, including at takeoff and landing. Knowing how much work the technical employees have put into the plane, I feel completely safe when flying. BO

Seatbelts

TEXT BY MIKE COLLIER
PHOTO BY ULDIS PELNA
WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO ULDIS PELNA



It's hard to believe today, but on the first airliners, seats were basically armchairs placed in the cabin with no restraints at all. But it didn't take long for airlines to realise that first the chairs themselves needed to be fixed in place and then that if the chairs weren't going to move around the cabin any more, the people in them might unless they held on tight, making seatbelts a rather good idea!

airBaltic's seatbelts are manufactured by US company AmSafe which is now the world's largest supplier of pilot, crew and passenger restraints equipment to the aviation industry. Commercial aviation seatbelts trace their real birth to 1955 when AmSafe's predecessor, Cummings & Sanders, was granted the first patent for metal-to-metal safety buckles. The design was an ingenious classic and remains largely the same to this day thanks to its ease of operation, resistance to jamming and reliability. Imagine how many times your seat buckle is opened and closed each year and then consider that if the seatbelt isn't working properly, the seat simply cannot be used, costing the airline lots of money.

The current industry standard for the strength of passenger lap belts is 16g – that is 16 times the force of gravity – a huge figure when you consider that Formula 1 pilots will experience a maximum of around 5g and that Apollo 16 astronauts endured forces of just over 7g when they re-entered the earth's atmosphere!

The nylon webbing used to make the actual belt portion is just as important as the buckle. The minimum rated strength of an airBaltic lap belt is 1,500 kilos – about the weight of the latest Ford Mondeo car. Lap belts are self-tensioning and self-blocking giving the possibility to lean forward if required during the flight.

Though the classic seatbelt continues, new innovations are also entering the market. The first seatbelt airbags – similar to the airbags in your car steering wheel – were introduced as early as 2001 and are gradually spreading through the aviation industry. Advances in the materials industry means the all-important webbing fabric that makes up the actual belt can now be unbelievably strong.

If further proof of the airline seatbelt's iconic status is needed look no further than the SkyBelts company which actually sells authentic belts and buckles for use not on seats but to keep your jeans from falling down. They even sell a model covered in rhinestones – though wearing one of their belts while you take a flight might prove confusing for both you and the cabin crew! **BO**

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2/ Travel Lounge – your one-stop travel shop in Riga, Vilnius and Tallinn

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in Tallinn and Rakvere


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Find out more at: www.restoransostasskati.lv.

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 **Pinot – upscale**
restaurant in Old Riga



Fashions change but style is eternal. Elegant and sophisticated like pinot wines, this restaurant offers a superb nouvelle French / Italian inspired menu in a contemporary classical interior. The impressive wine list is similarly inspired by these countries and is personally chosen by *Pinot's* sommelier.

A small delicatessen in the brick cellar downstairs offers takeaway gastronomic delights from cheeses, meats and fresh pastries to restaurant's fine wines. Enjoy live music on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday evenings from the restaurant's white piano.

Find out more at: www.pinot.lv/ and book your table by phone: +371 6722 5616 or +371 2888 1889 or email: pinot@pinot.lv.

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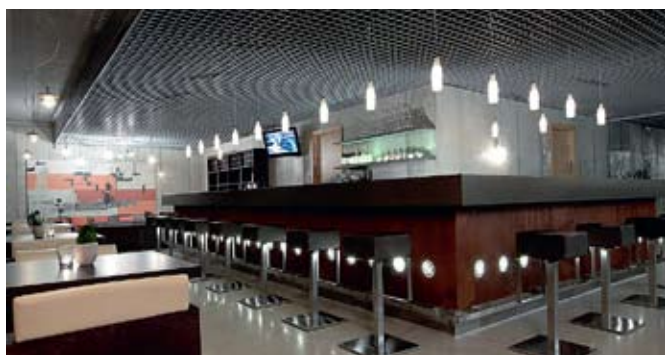
 *Indian Raja* – authentic Indian cuisine in Riga



Add some spice to your life. *Indian Raja's* Indian chefs use 100% authentic herbs and spices to create mouth-watering dishes that pack just the right punch. Indian interior design, music and costumes for the staff will transport you to the Asian subcontinent. With an excellent location in the Old Town, *Indian Raja* is the ultimate spot for fine Indian dining in Riga.

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Experience cafe

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Rumours
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Agita Krastiņa,
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answers passenger enquiries about
onboard meals, shop and entertainment

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The amount of items on board is restricted due to the limited space on each aircraft. That's why we recommend visiting our online shop at www.airbalticshop.lv. Here you can purchase the items that you desire already before your flight at even more attractive prices. You can choose to have your purchase delivered either onboard or to an address that you may indicate when you order.

? How do you choose the movies that you show on airBaltic flights?

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? Is it possible to arrange a special surprise for a friend on his birthday during a flight?

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? I fly regularly with airBaltic and have always enjoyed the onboard meals. What's new for the autumn season? Any plans to include Latvian traditional dishes on the menu?

For more than two years, we have been

cooperating with Riga star chef Mārtiņš Rītiņš, who places special emphasis on seasonal products obtained from Latvian farmers and who has created the menus for Business Class passengers. Starting from September, we are offering new meals in our pre-order menu, and one of these is a typical Latvian dish: grey peas with bacon. The fruit platter and shrimp provençal are new additions in the pre-order menu, while a costumer favourite – crispy carrots – is once again back on our onboard menu.

Check the pre-order menu at www.airbaltic.com and order your flight meal either while booking your ticket or afterwards by clicking on the *Manage booking* option.



iPad 2 on board

INFLIGHT

ENTERTAINMENT

On flights longer than 2 hours 30 minutes, passengers can rent iPad 2 tablet computers pre-loaded with movies, cartoons, serials, music and games.

TV serials: House | How I met your mother | The Big Bang theory | Grey's Anatomy | Top Gear | CSI Miami

Cartoons: Looney Tunes | The Batman | The Simpsons | Family Guy | Puppet animation

The Lincoln Lawyer




Crime, Thriller

Director: Brad Furman

Cast: Matthew McConaughey, Marisa Tomei, Ryan Philippe, William H. Macy

Mickey Haller is a Los Angeles criminal defense attorney who operates out of the back of his Lincoln Continental sedan. Haller has spent most of his career defending garden-variety criminals, until he lands the case of a lifetime: defending a Beverly Hills playboy accused of murder. But this case develops into a deadly game.

17+ 118 min 



Source code



Sci-Fi, Mystery

Director: Duncan Jones | Cast: Jake Gyllenhaal, Michelle Monaghan, Jeffrey Wright

When soldier Captain Colter wakes up in the body of an unknown man, he discovers he's part of a mission to find the bomber of a Chicago train. He learns a government program that enables him to cross over into another man's identity in the last 8 minutes of his life. Colter re-lives the incident over and over again, until he can solve the mystery of who is behind the bombs.

13+ 93 min  

Something Borrowed





Comedy, Romance

Director: Luke Greenfield

Cast: Kate Hudson, Ginnifer Goodwin, John Krasinski

Rachel is a talented attorney at a top New York law firm, a generous and loyal friend and, unhappily, still single. After one drink too many at her 30th birthday party, Rachel unexpectedly ends up in bed with the guy Dex, who just happens to be Darcy's fiancé. Rachel and Darcy's lifelong friendship leads to unexpected complications.

13+ 112 min  



Pirates of the Caribbean 4



Action, Adventure

Director: Rob Marshall | Cast: Johnny Depp, Penelope Cruz, Geoffrey Rush, Ian McShane

When Captain Jack crosses paths with a woman from his past, he's not sure if it's love – or if she's a ruthless con artist who's using him to find the fabled Fountain of Youth. When she forces him aboard the Queen Anne's Revenge, the ship of the pirate Blackbeard, Jack finds himself on an adventure in which he doesn't know who to fear more: Blackbeard or the woman from his past.

13+ 136 min  

Thor





Action, Fantasy

Director: Kenneth Branagh

Cast: Anthony Hopkins, Natalie Portman, Rene Russo, Chris Hemsworth

Exiled to Earth after his arrogance, The Mighty Thor of Asgard discovers the meaning of humility when a powerful old foe dispatches a destructive force to crush humanity. Only when the banished prince has defeated an opponent capable of crushing him in battle will he learn what it takes to be a true leader.

13+ 115 min  



Kung-fu panda 2



Animation, Comedy

Director: Jennifer Yuh
Cast: Angelina Jolie, Jackie Chan, Gary Oldman, Dustin Hoffman, Seth Rogen, Jean-Claude Van Damme, Jack Black, Lucy Liu

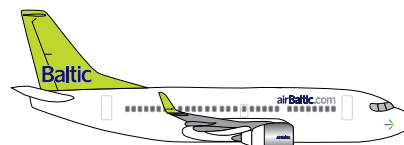
Po's awesome new life is threatened by the emergence of a formidable villain, who plans to use a secret, unstoppable weapon to destroy kung fu. It is up to Po and The Furious Five to journey across China to face this threat and vanquish it. But how can Po stop a weapon that can stop kung fu? He must look to his past and uncover the secrets of his mysterious origins.

8+ 91 min  



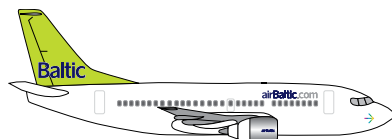
Boeing 757-200

Number of aircraft	2
Number of seats	200
Max take-off weight	115.7 metric tons
Max payload	25 metric tons
Length	47.3 m
Wing span	41.05 m
Cruising speed	850 km/h
Commercial range	6888 km
Fuel consumption	3900 l/h
Engine	ROLLS ROYCE RB211-535E4



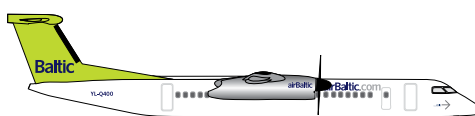
Boeing 737-300

Number of aircraft	8
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



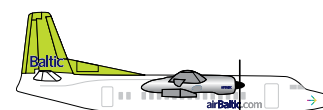
Boeing 737-500

Number of aircraft	6
Number of seats	120
Max take-off weight	58 metric tons
Max payload	13.5 metric tons
Length	29.79 m
Wing span	28.9 m
Cruising speed	800 km/h
Commercial range	3500 km
Fuel consumption	3000 l/h
Engine	CFM56-3



Q400 NextGen

Number of aircraft	8
Number of seats	76
Max take-off weight	29.6 metric tons
Max payload	8.6 metric tons
Length	32.83 m
Wing span	28.42 m
Cruising speed	667 km/h
Commercial range	2084 km
Fuel consumption	1074 l/h
Engine	P&W 150A



Fokker 50

Number of aircraft	10
Number of seats	46/50/52
Max take-off weight	20.8 metric tons
Max payload	4.9 metric tons
Length	25.3 m
Wing span	29.0 m
Cruising speed	520 km/h
Commercial range	1300 km
Fuel consumption	800 l/h
Engine	P&W 125 B

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