

SEPTEMBER 2015

balticoutlook

airBaltic
inflight magazine

THE SOUL OF **VILNIUS**

Plus:

THE FLAVOUR OF TEL AVIV
HELSINKI'S ART SCENE
WINE TOUR OF TUSCANY

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Недвижимость в Юрмале и Риге Real Estate in Jurmala and Riga



Латвия, Юрмала, ул. Юрас
Площадь земли 1 046 м²
Площадь здания 482,1 м²
2 этажа, 8 комнат
Цена по запросу

Великолепный, просторный дом, расположенный в живописном месте курортного города Юрмала, в двух минутах пешей прогулки от пляжа.

1 этаж: холл, большая, светлая столовая, объединенная с кухонной зоной, выход на благоустроенную террасу. Каминный зал, гостевая спальня.

2 этаж: холл, 5 спальных комнат, с выходом на террасу и балкон. Сауна, ванная комната.

Latvia, Jurmala, Juras Street
Land surface 1 046 m²
Floor area 482,1 m²
2 floors, 8 rooms
Price upon request

Spacious house located in a picturesque setting of the resort town of Jurmala, a few minutes's walking distance from the beach.

Ground floor: hall, large, bright dining room combined with kitchen area, access to well-furnished terrace. Fireplace hall, guest bedroom

1st floor: lounge, 5 bedrooms, with access to terrace and balcony. Sauna, bathroom.



Латвия, Балтээерс, ул. Крауяс
Площадь земли 3 690 м²
Площадь здания 685 м²
3 этажа, 7 комнат
Цена по запросу

Неповторимая Villa Fotinia в благоустроенном поселке Балтээерс. Дом спроектирован известным латвийским архитектором Модрисом Гелзисом.

1 этаж: прихожая, гардеробная комната, каминная гостиная, кухня, столовая.

2 этаж: холл, хозяйская спальня с гардеробной и ванной комнатами, кабинет, 2 спальни, библиотека, 2 балкона.

3 этаж: павильон, терраса.

Цоколь: бассейн, финская сауна, джакузи, а также подсобные помещения, прачечная, котельная.

Для полноценного отдыха на территории виллы предусмотрены детский городок, место для барбекю, территория для активного отдыха.

Latvia, Baltezers, Kraujas Street
Land surface 3 690 m²
Floor area 685 m²
3 floors, 7 rooms
Price upon request

Unique Villa Fotinia in Baltezers village with all amenities. The house was developed and built by the famous Latvian architect Modris Gelzis.

Ground floor: entrance hall, cloakroom, living room with fireplace, kitchen, dining room.

1st floor: lounge, master bedroom with dressing room and bathroom, study, 2 bedrooms, library, 2 balconies.

2nd floor: pavilion, terrace.

Semi-basement: swimming pool, sauna, jacuzzi, utility room, laundry room, boiler room.

Children's playground, barbecue area and area for outdoor activities are provided in the villa for complete relaxation.



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MARTIN ALEXANDER GAUSS
Chief Executive Officer *airBaltic*

Dear Customer,

In September the business season is in full swing. You will most likely see your fellow travellers in business dress and only their suitcases reveal their recent holiday experiences.

Our flying is also geared towards the corporate world in autumn. We have launched two direct services out of Stockholm Bromma airport, linking it to Riga and Vilnius, with Tallinn coming up next spring. This is an excellent addition to our prominent list of business destinations, and it also complements our four daily Stockholm Arlanda services. Furthermore, we have stepped up our flight frequencies to cities such as Brussels, Vilnius and Helsinki to offer more convenient travel options to our busy passengers.

September also brings excellent news for Lithuania as we start operations on our new routes to offer eight direct services to key airports in Western and Northern Europe. We are happy to further re-evaluate both our flying from the main economic centres across the country and the gradual introduction of additional routes. However, strong demand from both

outbound and inbound travellers is a prerequisite for future improvements. Overall, we aim at eventually offering 11 direct services out of Vilnius as part of our five-year Horizon 2021 business plan.

This month is excellent if you want to step out of your business attire for a moment and escape to the sun for a long weekend. Our destinations on the Mediterranean and Black Sea coasts have both convenient schedules and pleasant weather for such outings. In addition, we have upgraded our service and now allow two carry-on bags per passenger. This means that without much packing and hassle, you can head straight from your office to our aircraft...and the sun.

Did you know that Riga is a European capital of basketball this September? Latvia, along with three other nations, is hosting the FIBA EuroBasket 2015 championship. Join tens of thousands of fans to enjoy the games and the multiple sporting and street events surrounding the championship.

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

Yours,
Martin Alexander Gauss



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Contents **SEPTEMBER**



/ page 84

TRAVEL THE FLAVOUR OF TEL AVIV

- 18 **Edmunds' thought** Urban elegance
- 20 **Agenda** September 2015
- 26 **Riga Close up** The master's home
- 28 **Cities of the month** Amsterdam, Tbilisi, Milan
- 34 **City icons** Street life in Aalborg
- 36 **Trend** Fashion week
- 38 **Style** Olbia. Etno chic
- 42 **Design** Created for rest, used for work
- 44 **Crew** Captain Douglas Gordon
- 46 **Gadgets** Domestic Travel
- 48 **People** Inese Ozola
- 50 **Food** It's chutney time
- 52 **Food** Magic in the woods
- 54 **Living** The new life of the old pencil factory
- 60 **Your next destination** Vilnius
- 74 **Interview** Jānis Blūms, captain of the Latvian national men's basketball team
- 94 **Special** Helsinki's art scene
- 104 **Travel** Wine tour of Tuscany
- 114 **Cars** The new Honda HR-V
- 124 **Food and drink** Latest in Tallinn
- 129 **airBaltic** News



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THIS MONTH'S **CONTRIBUTORS**



VIESTURS KANČS
Street life
(page 34)

Career: My love of writing started early, when I was in school, and beginning with the essays about "What I did during the summer", and "Make up a funny story with an important message". Now I mostly write a travel blog – 10ToDiscover. in – and write freelance travel-related stories for various print media in Latvia.
Proud of: My ability to inspire people to travel with the help of my blog and *Instagram* account.
Must-visit city: The Pearl of the Adriatic – Dubrovnik, is a must in September. Wander through the marvellous little streets and discover the architecture of the Old Town. Enjoy a great Indian summer, Croatian style.
Life motto: Everything's possible, if only you believe in yourself.



EGITA KRASTIŅA
Avoiding all technologies
(page 142)

Career: I have loved reading and writing ever since I learnt how to do it. My first encounter with journalism was in high school, when I wrote for my local newspaper, and which I continued to do throughout university. I love talking to people, and I am happy to be the mediator between them and others whose eyes, ears and hearts they might reach.
Proud of: I have a passion for travelling and visiting new destinations. It has been beyond my wildest dreams to visit the places I've been. However, I find that, as time passes, my "to go and to do" list just seems to get longer!
Must-visit city: Tuscany in early autumn is pure magic, so I would suggest taking the chance to go to Pisa. September in Italy is the beginning of the grape-harvesting season, when vineyards are in full swing. And with the warm weather still in the air, you can enjoy your vacation without the volume of summer tourists.
Life motto: "There will come a time when you believe everything is finished; that will be the beginning." Louis L'Amour



DAINIS ĀZENS
With a basketball in mind
(page 74)

Career: I began writing in 2009, when I began working for the *Sporta Avīze* sports magazine. Since then, I've also published articles in the newspaper *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze*, the SA+ electronic version of *Sporta Avīze*, *Maratons* endurance sports magazine and also *Baltic Outlook*. I also help to popularise athletics in Latvia. I've enjoyed participating in sports since I was a child, but I've always been fascinated by personalities, so I like to interview people. I also enjoy travelling, and, if needed, I can also write a pretty good travel article.
Proud of: It's better if others are the judge of that.
Must-visit city: Tbilisi. Over 20 years ago I encountered Georgian hospitality through the acquaintance of one person, Gocha, and Georgian hospitality is really something special. I'm also fascinated by the ancient culture, the wine-making traditions and the Caucasus Mountains.
Life motto: While you're looking for a motto, life passes you by....

baltic
Outlook

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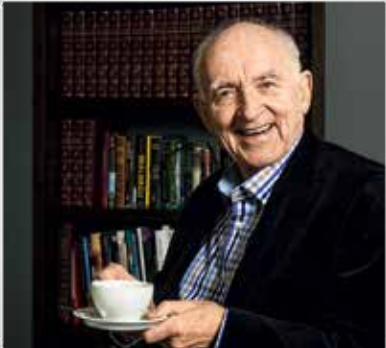
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Urban elegance

Situated on a steep-sided, rocky hill, the Acropolis of Athens is a brilliant white eminence of sacred ruins rising far above the landscape of Athens. Described by my Greek friend, Professor Theano Tarkelnli, as “seemingly floating over the urban sea”, the Acropolis has been for me and many others the epitome of urban elegance and human scale. As a professor of cultural geography, I long taught about the structure without ever having visited it. When I finally did, I at once grasped its mysterious white nature, as had Herman Melville, who knew the mystery of the white whale. On later visits I contemplated the Acropolis with a glass of wine from a café on a quiet, narrow street.

As I developed a course in urban cultural geography, a now-forgotten author claimed that the Greeks did not understand space at the Acropolis; he said the buildings there were scattered like “child’s play”. For him and others, urban planning began with the rational geometric grids designed by Hippodamus for Piraeus, Ephesus and Thurium.

In my studies, however, I came across persuasive evidence that the Acropolis exemplifies more sophisticated planning than that of any subsequent period in Western urbanisation. Buildings were sited first, and streets did not determine



*In Riga, taking a break
between trips, summer 2014*

Athens’ Acropolis is indirectly comparable to the small Zen Buddhist rock gardens of Japan

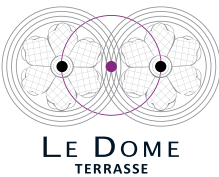
the location of buildings. The Acropolis thus represents nuanced sophistication in urban planning.

Buildings were situated in relation to the uneven site, to each other and to the surrounding distant mountains. In archaic times the Acropolis was a citadel. During the Golden Age of Pericles in the 5th

century BCE, it was a sacred place with sacred ruins that were respected when building new temples and sanctuaries. The Acropolis embodied sacred texts for the people of Athens. The Parthenon was dedicated to Athena. Together with the temple of Athena Nike, the sanctuary of Artemis and other structures and statues, they all told sacred stories. This is analogous in a distant sense to the Stations of the Cross in Medieval cathedrals, which could be read by the initiated. Unfortunately, the design of the Acropolis did not become a model for later Western urbanisation.

Experience of such a city landscape means that each person has the freedom to explore it in her or his own way, proceeding through it in any direction. A boulevard in Paris designed by Baron Haussmann allows only two directional choices. Except for the very tip of Manhattan, New York City is built on a grid pattern, thus restricting choice even more.

Athens’ Acropolis is indirectly comparable to the small Zen Buddhist rock gardens of Japan. With five small, differing clusters of rocks, set irregularly in a walled rectangle of fine gravel raked in wave patterns, the gardens are meant for contemplation, not for walking. In their imaginations, individuals are free to roam these little landscapes. **BO**



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* На фото – светильник Agnes от Roll & Hill

SPOTLIGHT ON INDIAN SUMMER

Five things that you should do in Latvia in September

- 1/ For lazy Sunday walks, visit the recently renovated Rundāle Palace, now sparkling in its full splendour, and its magnificent gardens.
- 2/ Or visit Jūrmala – the beach is still sunny, dahlias and sunflowers are blooming in the cottage gardens, and the restaurant terraces are still open for a delicious meal.
- 3/ The Latvian National Symphony Orchestra begins its new season at the Cēsis Concert Hall, and Riga is hosting the Autumn Chamber Music Festival and Baltic Pearl – international film festival (September 17–21).
- 4/ The European Basketball Championship takes place on September 5–20. Riga is hosting one of the qualification rounds on September 5–10, in which Latvia, Belgium, Lithuania, Czech Republic and Ukraine will play.
- 5/ If you happen to be in the countryside or in a small town, you might notice baskets of apples set out by a fence or house door with an invitation to enjoy. Take some and enjoy the fresh, dewy harvest from Latvia's apple orchards!

ON THIS MONTH'S MENU

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

THE TREND:

Design
PLASTER WALL CLOCK,
DESIGN BY
DMITRY DEMSKY,
RIIJA



Ukrainian artist Dmitry Demsky creates each clock individually, and thus each is an original. Each clock is a fine masterpiece and may differ in tone and texture. Demsky uses *Franz Hermle & Sohn* clockworks from Germany. One hardly hears any ticking at all.

Beauty

MISIA BY CHANEL

The latest addition to the *Chanel* fragrance collection *Les Exclusifs* is *Misia*, named in honour of Mademoiselle Chanel's friend Misia Sert and also the first fragrance created by the new Master Perfumer Olivier Polge. Even though *Misia* was already launched this past spring, it has a wonderful, light powdery scent that fits September very well. "With this fragrance I wanted to convey the atmosphere of the *Ballets Russes* and the smell of makeup from that time," says the creator of the perfume. Misia Sert introduced Mademoiselle Chanel to the legendary ballet troupe, a cultural icon of its day, and Chanel later created costumes for the dancers. Evoking the air of a theatre backstage, this exquisite scent features a feminine blend of May rose and violet, intertwined with a hint of leather.

① chanel.com



Book

KRISTINA SABALIAUSKAITĖ,
VILNIUS, WILNO, VILNA

Lithuania's most widely read author Kristina Sabaliauskaitė has a PhD in art history and is the author of three runaway best-selling novels (*Silva rerum*, *Silva rerum II*, and *Silva rerum III*), covering the history of a Lithuanian family of nobles from the mid-17th to the mid-18th century in the magical and little-known world of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

This collection of three short stories provides three perspectives (Polish, Jewish and Lithuanian) that open up Vilnius, three ways to see and understand this amazing multicultural Central European city. The book is a perfect small, beautiful gift for tourists or foreign friends.

Baltos lankos, 2015

INSTAFASHION



Elina Dobe

① [instagram.com/elina_dobe](https://www.instagram.com/elina_dobe)



Courtesy of Acme Film – Latvia

Movie

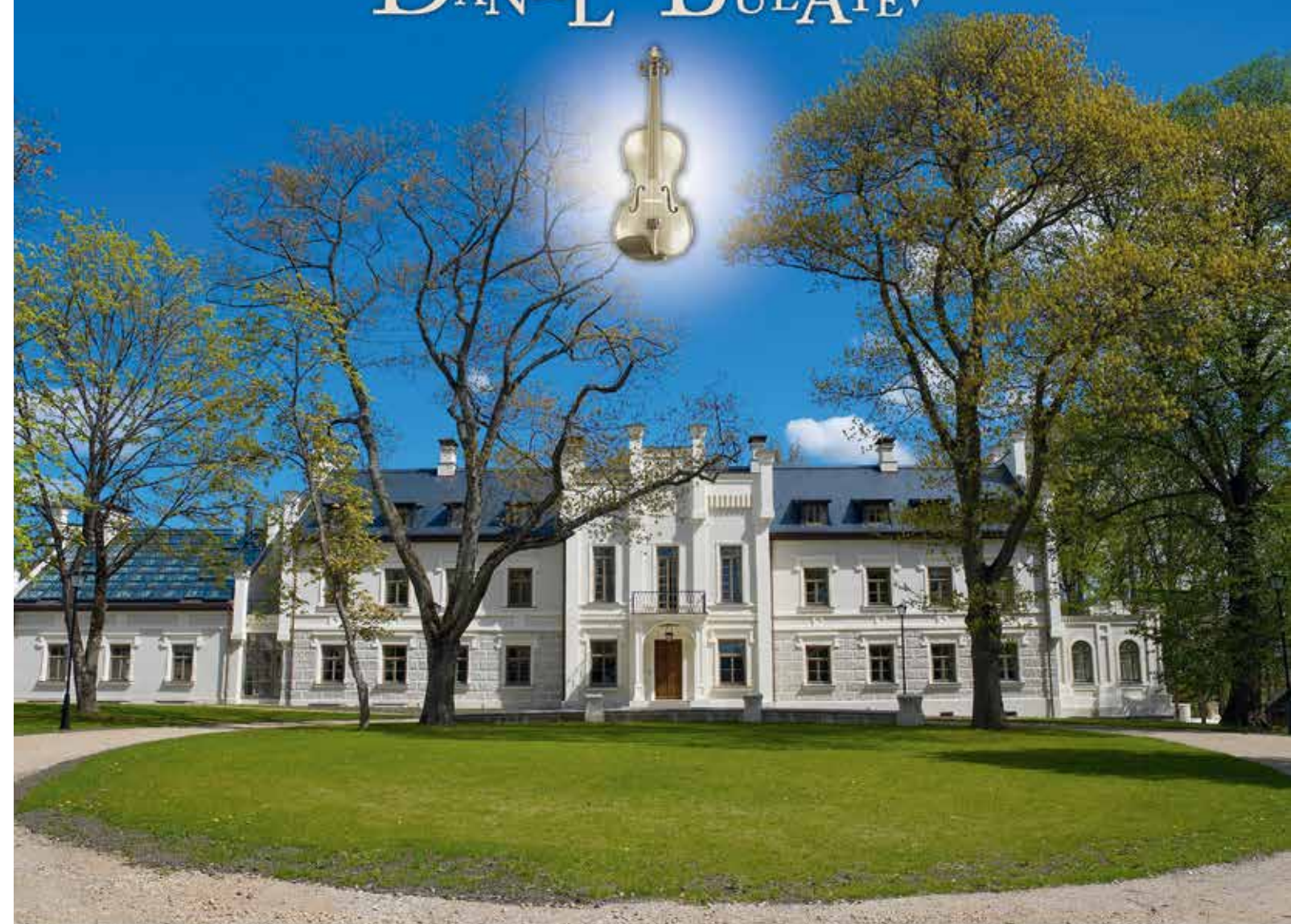
PAWN SACRIFICE

The true story of the American chess genius Bobby Fischer, as played by Tobey Maguire, who during the height of the Cold War was forced to challenge the Soviet Empire at the chess table. Fischer's adversary, Boris Spassky, is played by the American actor Liv Ullmann. The movie chronicles Fischer's terrifying struggles with genius and madness, his rise and his fall. Fischer spent his last years in Iceland, where parts of this movie were filmed. Released on September 18th

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

HOMO NOVUS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CONTEMPORARY THEATRE

Various venues in Riga
September 4 – 10

The prestigious *Homo Novus* International Festival of Contemporary Theatre is celebrating its 20th anniversary with performances about growing up and a special programme dedicated to stage design. The festival takes place every other year in Riga and introduces audiences to new and established artists from around the world whose work reflects an unceasing interest in and opinions about the contemporary world and people. This year *Homo Novus* is proud to offer many premiere performances.

① homonovus.lv

Tickets at bilesuparadize.lv

Price: EUR 5 – 20



© arvopartproject.com

ARVO PÄRT DAYS

Various locations in
Estonia and also Riga, Latvia
Until September 26

Composer Arvo Pärt is one of the most famous and respected Estonians in the world. His 80th birthday will be celebrated with a festival that takes place from August 28th to September 26th in various locations (mostly churches) in Estonia and also in Riga, Latvia. The festival is focused on *ECM New Series* recordings. To choose a concert to attend and read more about Pärt and his work, visit the Nargenfestival website at nargenfestival.ee.

CONTEMPORARY CIRCUS FESTIVAL NEW CIRCUS WEEKEND



Menų spaustuvė (Arts Printing House),
Vilnius

September 9–13

Contemporary circus is an unusual brand of arts – there aren't any dancing bears or scary clowns, but it is full of crazy juggling and acrobatics. For the tenth time, the Arts Printing House (Menų spaustuvė) in Vilnius is organising a mini festival over a long weekend to introduce this modern art genre to new audiences. An international taste of unconventional circus from France, Finland, Palestine and Canada, the mecca of circus, awaits.

Tickets at menuspaustuve.lt

Price: EUR 7.20 – 16.20

Šiltadaržio g. 6

XII BALTIC TRIENNIAL

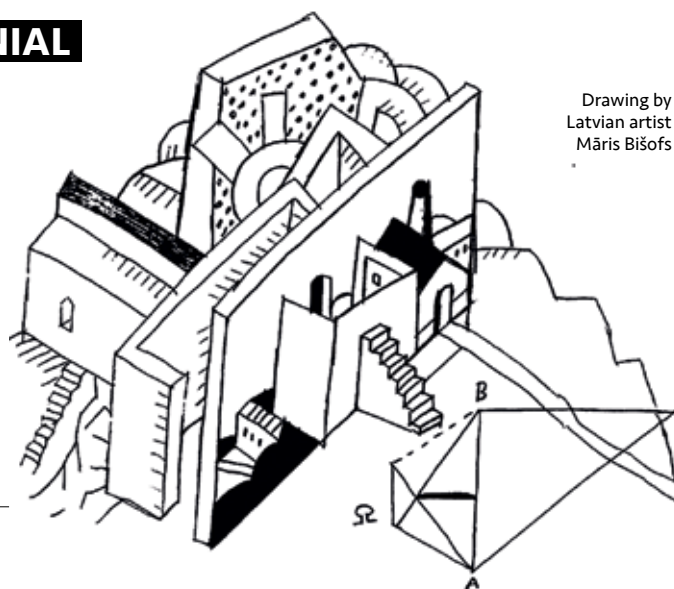
Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius
September 4 – October 18

The Baltic Triennial started as a showcase of the most avant-garde and innovative young artists from the Baltic States. Over time it became one of the most important contemporary art forums in the Baltics, and every three years the geography of participating artists is expanded. This year the event looks back to its origins and concentrates again on the Baltics, with local and foreign artists and their artwork discussing the theme "what is art today might be something else in the future".

① cac.lt

Tickets at the door

Vokiečių g. 2



Drawing by
Latvian artist
Māris Bišofs

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**ARTIST KRISTĪNE
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Gallery Daugava, Riga
Until October 3

"A space can describe a person, because, as one arranges one's surrounding environment, his or her personality is reflected in the space," says Latvian artist Kristīne Markus about the concept behind her exhibition. She

has used both traditional painting on canvas and also the more unusual technique of painting on glass to depict a wide variety of such places and spaces.

① galerijadagava.lv
Alksnāja iela 10/12

SEB TALLINN MARATHON
Streets of Tallinn
September 13



You've been working out the whole summer and would now like to put yourself to the test and push your limits? Here's your chance – the SEB Tallinn Marathon on September 13th. Sign up for either the full marathon (42.2 km), half marathon (21.1 km) or a 10K run, walk or Nordic Walk (with or without timing). Good luck!

① tallinnmarathon.ee



Olav Christopher Jenssen. *The Letharia Painting No. 24*. 2012. Oil and acrylic on canvas. Tønder Museum collection. Photo: John Solager

**CONTEMPORARY
ART EXHIBITION
AR SEPTINJŪDŽU
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MASONITE AND MORE**

Art Museum Riga Bourse, Riga
September 11 – October 25

This extensive contemporary art exhibition at the Riga Bourse introduces visitors to the impressive collection of the Tønder Museum in Denmark, which highlights trends in Northern European contemporary art in the 20th and 21st centuries. The collection includes works by such world-renowned artists as Per Kirkeby (Denmark), Georg Baselitz (Germany), Ian McKeever (Great Britain), Troels Wørsel (Denmark) and many others. A must-see for every Northern European!

① lnmm.lv
Doma laukums 6

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Details **RIGA CLOSE-UP**

Text by **LIENE PĀLĒNA**
Photos by **ANDREJS TERENTJEVS, F64**

The master's home

The place where
Latvian professional
theatre was born



Come September, Riga's theatres become a circus of activity following the quiet summer period – actors review their parts and lines, props are polished, and audience members return to watch comedies, tragedies and dramas. According to local legend, all of this is observed from the heavens by the watchful eye of Eduards Smiļģis, the founder of Latvian professional theatre and the country's most illustrious theatre director of the 20th century.

Those who were lucky to have personally experienced Smiļģis' penetrating gaze never forget it. In fact, that gaze has now become a part of modern-day Riga, because the director's portrait has been painted in all its dramatic, black-and-white glory on the entire wall of the New Riga Theatre (Lāčplēša iela 25) in central Riga. But to find out more about the talented and extravagant director, head to his former home at E. Smiļģa iela 37/39 in the Pārdaugava area of Riga. The building was reconstructed in the 1920s by the best architects and builders of the day and according to Smiļģis' own slightly irrational instructions. Like Barcelona's Basilica of the Sagrada Família, Smiļģis' home, too, was never completely finished.

The home, which now houses the Eduards Smiļģis Theatre Museum, even had its own stage and auditorium. These, however, were intended as the director's workshop and sanctuary instead of as a venue for public performances. The ceilings of the theatre room are richly painted with motifs from plays that were dear to Smiļģis. Even his office, which holds an impressive library, is theatrical and ornate. **BO**

TOP 3

things to do at the Eduards Smiļģis Theatre Museum in Riga

Inspect the impressive collection of costumes and jewellery from Latvian theatre performances.

Take a picture of the prestigious Volpi Cup from the Venice Film Festival, which Latvian actress Dzidra Ritenberga won in 1957 for her portrayal of the main role in the film *Malva*.

Relax in the wonderful garden just outside the master's home.

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Details **CITIES OF THE MONTH**



Joan Miró, *Personnage*, 1970, Foundation Marguerite Et Aimé Maeght

Photo by Olivier Middendorp

Until October 11, more than 20 sculptures by the legendary Catalan artist **Joan Miró** are on display in the garden of Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum (Museumstraat 1; rijksmuseum.nl). In fact, this is also the first time the sculptures have been exhibited in the Netherlands. In his artwork, Miró, who is considered one of the greatest surrealist artists and an icon of modernism, always celebrated life with a passionate, spontaneous and sometimes even childish ardour. The nearby Van Gogh Museum, for its part, is beginning the autumn season with a dedication to two other greats in the art world: Edvard Munch (1863–1944) and Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890). Both artists were some of the biggest innovators of their time, and both were men who suffered from bouts of passionate emotion. But their battles with the demons of the mind also resulted in unceasing creative unrest and searches for new forms of expression in painting. This is the first time Munch and Van Gogh meet in such a large exhibition, which promises to be an emotional, almost existential experience for viewers. The **Munch: Van Gogh** exhibition comprises more than 100 of the most significant works of art by the two artists, including masterpieces like *The Scream*, *Trinquetaille Bridge*, *The Sick Child* and *Madonna* (Paulus Potterstraat 7; vangoghmuseum.nl; September 24 – January 17). It is also the first exhibition in the Van Gogh Museum's recently reconstructed Exhibition Wing, designed by Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa.

Meanwhile, on the hotel front, everyone's talking about **The Hoxton Amsterdam** (Herengracht 255; thehoxton.com), the latest offspring of well-known British affordable luxury hotel chain *The Hoxton Hotels* and also its debut in continental Europe. Good design, friendly prices, healthy humour and a sense of belonging to a private club are the values that have made *The Hoxton Hotels* a favourite accommodation for creative people in all spheres of life. *The Hoxton Amsterdam* is located in four historical merchants' houses on the banks of the Herengracht and Singel canals. The interior design of its 111 rooms, in which specially made furniture is adeptly combined with vintage pieces from Amsterdam's legendary Noordermarkt market, was created by the local architecture office *Nicemakers*. Rooms are grouped into three categories – shoebox, cosy and roomy – and, if rumours can be believed, the colour palette for the rooms was inspired by the nearby Rijksmuseum.



The Hoxton Amsterdam

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

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Vincent van Gogh, *Starry Night Over the Rhône*, 1888, Musée d'Orsay

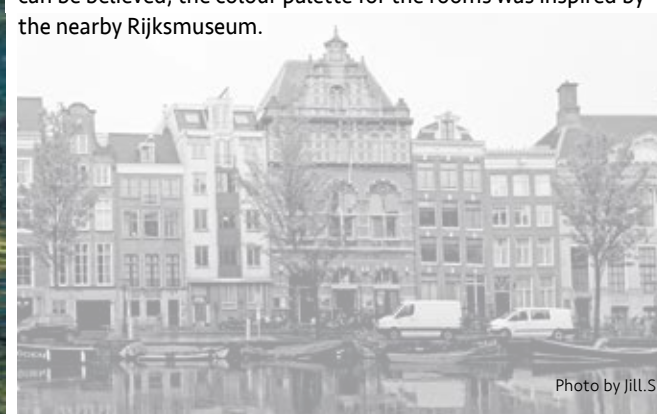
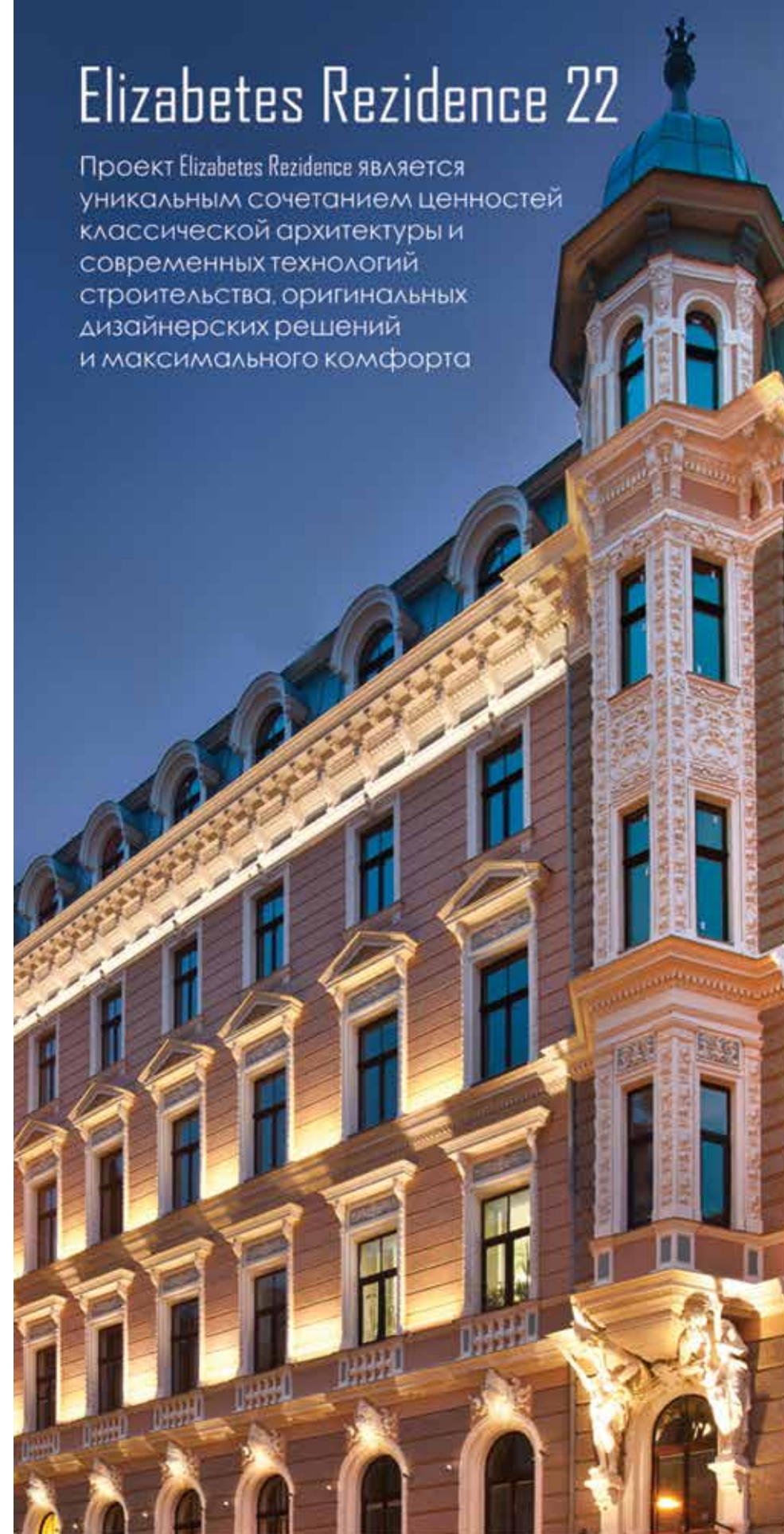


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Elizabetes Rezidence 22

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Tbilisi



Rooms Hotel
Kazbegi

Rooms Hotel Tbilisi (14 Merab Kostava Street; roomshotels.com) is the first design hotel in Tbilisi. It is located in the Vera neighbourhood, one of the oldest in central Tbilisi and long known for its intellectual aura. Nearby is the Javakishvili State University and the Tbilisi State Concert Hall. Fitting the mood of the surrounding neighbourhood, the *Rooms Hotel Tbilisi* has found a home in a former Soviet-era publishing house, in which the interior design now unites the nostalgia of Old Tbilisi with hints of 1930s New York. The eight-storey hotel is clad in wood, and the large glass atrium lets in plenty of natural light as well as the ambience of Tbilisi. The *Rooms Hotel Tbilisi* has 140 rooms, its restaurant *The Kitchen* features American cuisine, and the *Bar Room* currently serves the best cocktails in town and is popular with locals.

The *Rooms Hotel Tbilisi* is the second hotel opened in Georgia by the *Rooms Hotels* company; the first is in the small town of Stepantsminda (formerly Kazbegi) at the foot of majestic Mount Kazbek (5033 m), approximately 150 km from Tbilisi. In fact, due to its impressive location, the **Rooms Hotel Kazbegi** (Stepantsminda, roomshotel.ge/kazbegi) is often considered a destination in its own right. Where else can you sit on the balcony and gaze at snowy mountaintops to the tune of cows happily grazing below? A couple hours' hike away, on a slightly smaller mountaintop, is the Gergeti Trinity Church, which provides a breathtaking view of the surrounding area. Georgian designers Nata Janberidze and Ketil Toloraia created the interior design for the *Rooms Hotel Kazbegi*. For their main material they used wood, the warmth of which extends even to the bathroom floors. To make the most of the Kazbegi area's magic, reserve a room with a view of the mountains. Then, in the evening, select a book from the hotel's extensive library, get comfortable, and watch the outlines of the landscape lighted by the setting sun.

For those who enjoy the taste of Georgian *Borjomi* mineral water, definitely plan a trip to the town of Borjomi, located about 160 km from Tbilisi. The naturally heated spring water rising from the depths of the earth here has been valued for its medicinal properties for centuries. Also near Borjomi is a large national park known for great biological diversity, undisturbed mountain forests, mountain meadows and sulphur pools. The **Rixos Hotel Borjomi** (16 Meskheti St, Borjomi; borjomi.rixos.com) recently opened here and offers a wide array of therapeutic procedures, thereby letting guests enjoy the curative properties of Borjomi's waters to their fullest.



Photo by Nikoloz Panashvili
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The Rixos Hotel Borjomi

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Giotto, *Ascension of John the Evangelist*, fresco
in Basilica of Santa Croce in Florence

If you haven't yet managed to see it, Expo 2015 in Milan is open until October 31 and does not lag behind the city of Milan in terms of its extensive cultural programme. This month, the **Giotto, Italy. From Assisi to Milano** exhibition opens at the Palazzo Reale, offering a wonderful opportunity to see Giotto's masterpieces (Piazza del Duomo, 12, artpalazzoreale.it; September 2 to January 10). Giotto di Bondone (1266–1337) is considered one of the forerunners of the Italian Renaissance because his novel ideas served as inspiration for all later painters. As most artists of his day, Giotto also worked as an architect and sculptor, but the majority of his work was done in painting. His work can be found throughout Italy, from the frescoes in the Basilica of St. Francis at Assisi and the Arena Chapel in Padua to the altar paintings of the Santa Croce Basilica in Florence and Old St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City.

Legendary Italian master of fashion Giorgio Armani, for his part, is celebrating the 40th anniversary of his fashion house by opening a grandiose temple to fashion called the **Armani/Silos** (Via Bergognone, 40, 20144 Milano; armanisilos.com). Armani himself oversaw the reconstruction of the former grain warehouse, or silo. Built in the 1950s, the four-storey building has 4500 m² of space. Visually, the structure looks a bit like a bee hive, its shapes highlighted by a zig-zag line of windows along the top. With grey concrete floors, black ceilings and visible "seam-like" wiring, the windows are almost the only decorative element on this otherwise very laconically styled project. The opening exhibition honours the fashion designer's 40-year-long career, from the 1980s to today.

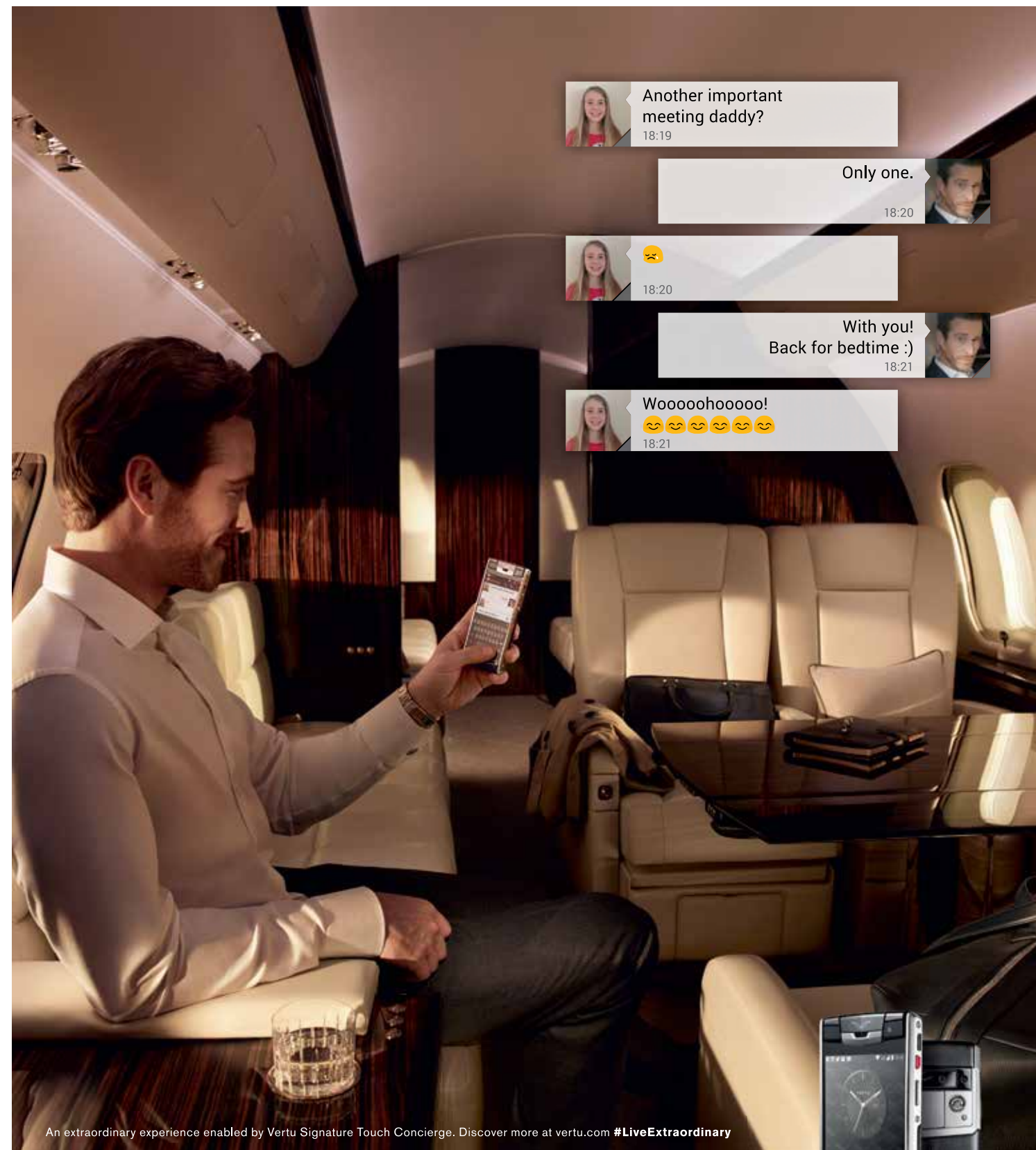
Although mired in a number of scandals, the new Museum of Cultures, or **MUDEC**, opened this year in Milan (Via Tortona 56; mudec.it). Designed by world-famous British architect David Chipperfield, the museum is located in Zona Tortona, a former industrial quarter that used to be the site of the Ansaldo production unit. MUDEC has now also become Milan's new gastronomic destination. On the third floor is the *Mudec* restaurant, the first gourmet eatery in this part of the city and the newest offspring of the Bulleri family of Milan-based restaurateurs of *Da Giacomo* fame. Running the kitchen at *Mudec* is 28-year-old Pasquale Frigoli, one of Milan's youngest and most talked-about chefs. Frigoli combines the classic menu of *Da Giacomo* with contemporary culinary experiments inspired by the exhibitions at MUDEC. The interior, with its wood-panelled walls and geometric decorative elements, is a modern rephrasing of Art Deco style. **BO**



Armani/Silos



Museum of Cultures



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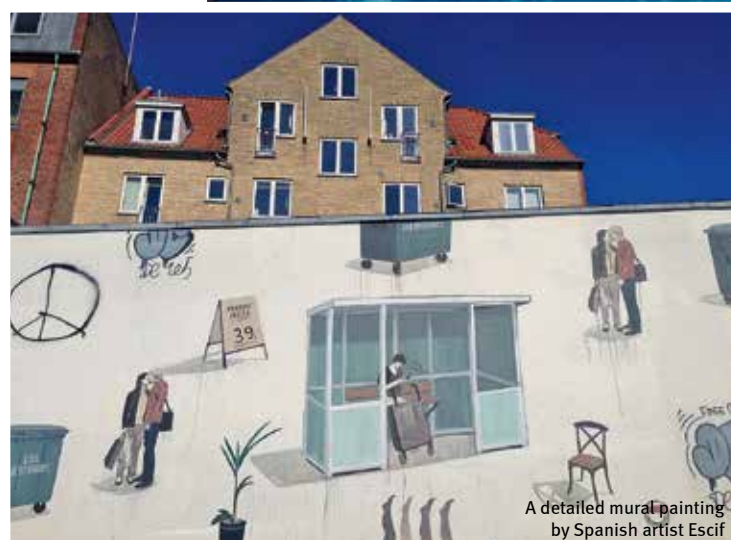
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Street life

Discover eye-catching graffiti and street art in Aalborg

Text by **VIESTURS KANČS**
Photos courtesy of
visitaalborg.com



"Was this mural painting created legally?" That was the first thought that struck me while wandering around Aalborg's city centre. Such a colourful masterpiece on the wall of a five-storey building is indeed an eyecatcher in a traditional and predictable neighbourhood of Denmark. While lingering on such a thought, I continued my journey along Nyhavnsgrde to search for the famous Musikkens Hus. Little did I know that on my way yet another impressive wall painting would stop me in my tracks. Amazing! *The Pyramid* by Fintan Magee, as I learned afterwards, was one of the first ten wall paintings in Aalborg.

Now, imagine a harbour city with an industrial history. Add some classic Scandinavian architecture, mix it with the youthful spirit of students, and throw in vibrant cultural events. Voilà, you have made a potion called Aalborg. What could a city like this be lacking?

Aalborg's Street Art Walk now includes more than twenty impressive mural paintings. It all started in 2014 with a movement called WE AArt, the goal of which was to find innovative ways of rethinking public space. Locals invited well-known international street artists to show their vision on ten different walls in Aalborg, one of the biggest industrial port cities in Denmark. Having gained the appreciation of onlookers, both locals and tourists, even more wall paintings were created in the central part of the city. Space was left around the murals to enhance the contrast between the artists' vision and the surrounding public space. While some of the murals are hidden between buildings, it is not hard to spot a big wall painting when walking around the city.

While I had no information about the paintings until I spotted some of them

myself, I could not miss them while visiting the Nordkraft cultural centre and going for a coffee at the *Café Friends*. Street art accompanied me as I continued on my way and discovered various parts of the city. With the addition of such colourful art, Danish architecture in this city becomes a neat mixture of contemporary art and freedom from the classical canons of Scandinavian order.

Whilst admiring *The Pyramid*, I remembered to continue on to Musikkens Hus. However, my plans for the evening to join Aalborg's famous Beer Walk had already been abandoned. In an unexpectedly bold decision for me, I just had to see most, if not all, of the street art paintings. Explore the streets of Aalborg and try to spot the mural masterpieces yourself! **BO**

Факторинг от Rietumu:
прогресс с регрессом и без

На фоне значительного роста торговых операций необходимость привлечения дополнительных финансовых ресурсов приобретает особо актуальный характер. Для решения этой проблемы банк Rietumu предложил своим клиентам эффективное комплексное решение – программу финансирования на условиях факторинга.

В условиях растущей конкуренции и для увеличения продаж, торговые компании сталкиваются с необходимостью предоставить отсрочку платежа своим покупателям. Недостающие оборотные средства международные и локальные торговые компании смогут привлечь, используя факторинг, предлагаемый банком Rietumu. Банк финансирует кассовый разрыв, возникающие при отсроченных платежах со стороны

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Fashion week

Burberry Autumn/Winter
2015-2016 womenswear collection
at London Fashion Week

Text by **DACE VAIVARA**
Photo courtesy of Burberry

In London, Milan, Paris and New York – the world's four most significant fashion capitals, together known as the "Big Four" – September is the time when the coming year's spring and fall collections for women are shown during each city's Fashion Week.

The prêt-à-porter, or ready-to-wear, women's fashion marathon takes place twice a year. It begins in New York, continues in London and Milan, and ends in Paris. Attending a fashion show is a prestigious event, and tickets to shows are not sold. Instead, invitations are sent personally to members of the international media, editors of glossy magazines, photographers, celebrities, owners of the most important fashion stores, and fashion buyers who buy collections for their stores six months in advance. In addition to the fashion shows and glamorous parties, other cultural events and exhibitions linked to fashion take place during the Fashion Weeks and are open to the public.

The first Fashion Week took place in Paris in 1973. It was followed in 1979 with the first Fashion Week in Milan and in London in 1984. Paris Fashion Week (Semaine des Createurs du Mode) is organised by the

French Fashion Federation, and its official venue is the Carrousel du Louvre. But the biggest names in French fashion, such as *Chanel*, *Christian Dior* and *Givenchy*, choose to parade their creations in their own houses and such iconic places as the Grand Palais or Espace Eifel. Around 100 fashion shows take place that week, every day on the hour.

Milan Fashion Week (Milano Moda Donna) is organised by the Camera della Moda Italiana. Experts have estimated that the Italian city's fashion shows together cost about 150 billion euros and that the term "Milan fashion" is more recognised than those of Paris' and London's fashion weeks. The most famous Italian designers – *Armani*, *Dolce & Gabbana*, *Versace* – hold their shows in their own houses. Other designers choose less traditional venues, such as constructing huge metal hangars in parks or next to ancient arches or renting out ornate halls in 17th-century palazzos. These are the sites of impressive shows and big parties, fusses over celebrities and top models, and crowds of curious fans at the doors of the best-known designers' shows. Guests at events of this level must adhere to specific dress codes and stand out with their style. Actually, the people-watching is the most interesting part, because here one spots fashion trends at their brightest and best. It almost seems that the real

fashion show takes place when guests begin arriving at the door, long before the models step out onto the runway. Police direct traffic, and the fashion-week traffic jams are unimaginable.

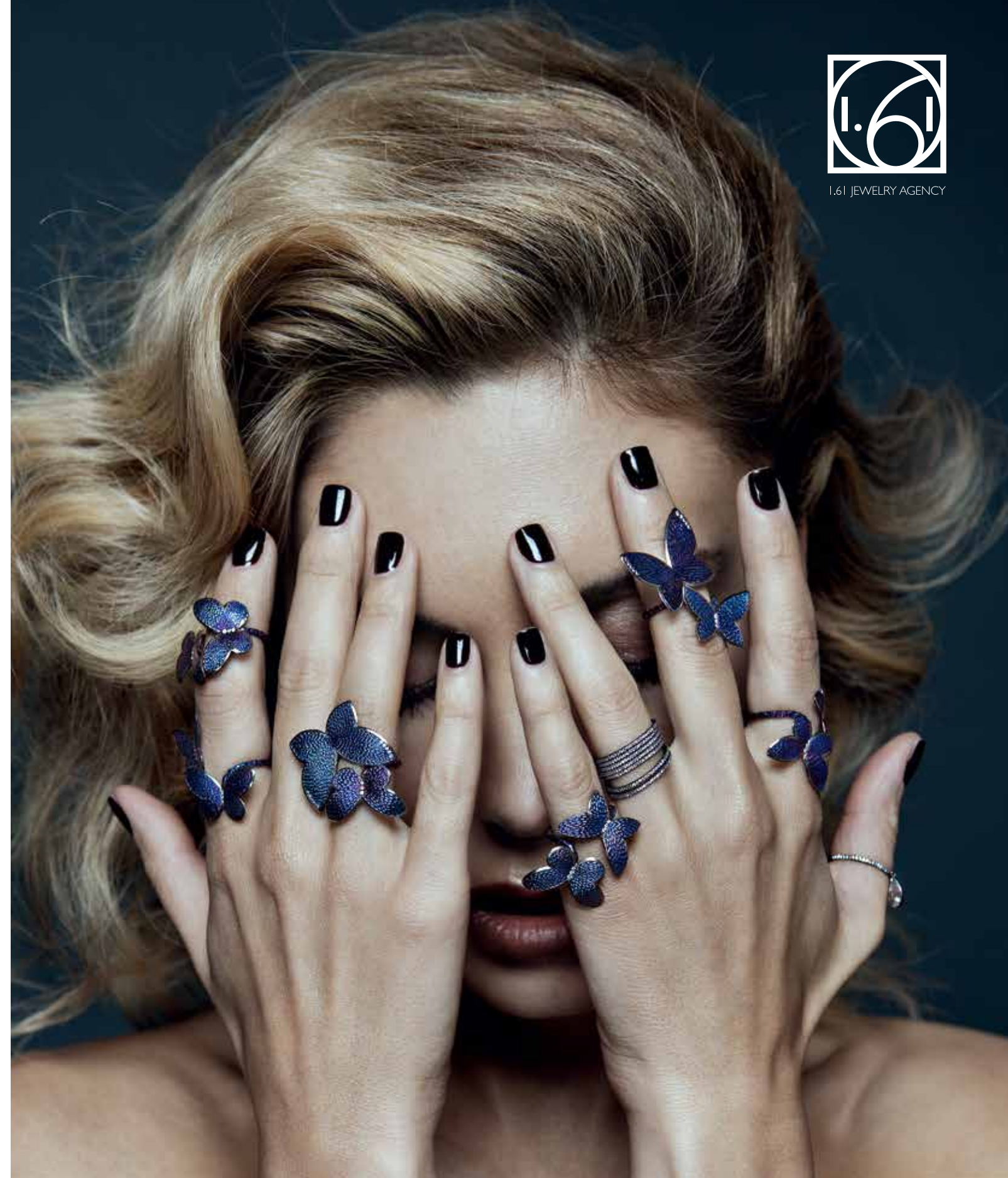
London, the newcomer to Fashion Week when compared with Paris and Milan, stands apart with a different kind of fashion identity, a more alternative style, and as providing many opportunities for new designers to show their talent. London Fashion Week is organised by the British Fashion Council (BFC), and centre stage is at Somerset House in central London. London Fashion Weekend, organised immediately following the official Fashion Week on September 24-27, offers a wide variety of fashion events for a much wider audience, including Trend and Designers Catwalk Shows. Tickets cost between GBP 20 and GBP 65 (lfw.seetickets.com/Tour/London-Fashion-Weekend). **BO**

Fashion week calendar in Europe:

London Fashion Week, September 18-22,
① londonfashionweek.co.uk

Milan Fashion Week, September 23-28,
① milanomodadonna.it

Paris Fashion Week,
September 29 – October 7,
① modeaparis.com



OLBIA

ethno chic

The Mediterranean island of Sardinia, with its beautiful beaches and mountains, wonderful cuisine, rich history and traditional crafts, is a true Italian national treasure. The northern Sardinian city of Olbia, called the “happy city” by the Ancient Greeks, lies next to the Costa Smeralda (Emerald Coast), which became popular as one of the world’s most elite and glamorous places for rest and relaxation in the 1960s.

Up until the mid-20th century, Sardinians regularly wore their colourful traditional costumes. These costumes still inspire modern fashion designers, for example, the ethnic collection by famous Sardinian designer Antonio Marras, which features a mix of embroidery designs, floral motifs and various ornaments and textures characteristic of the island.

In modern-day Sardinia, traditional costumes are worn at a variety of festivals and religious ceremonies, although in certain areas they can still be found as a part of everyday clothing. The costumes are colourful and richly decorated; they reflect Spanish, Roman and Oriental influences. Men’s costumes usually consist of white linen trousers, a short black skirt, a white shirt with gold or silver buttons, a fine velvet or brocade vest or coat, and a black or red hat. Women wear a long skirt decorated with fine lace and embroidery, a white linen or cotton blouse with silver or gold buttons, a richly embroidered vest or jacket, a scarf and jewellery made by local goldsmiths. Traditional Sardinian jewellery is often made of local coral and high-quality red gold, which experts consider to be one of the best kinds of the metal in the world.



Stella Jean

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Text by **DACE VAIVARA**
Photos by **Fabio Sartori**,
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① esmeraldabazar.com

Luxury Mall

Sardinia’s biggest luxury outlet, located near Olbia. Here you can find recent clothing collections (under six months old) by prestigious brands such as *Armani*, *Valentino*, *Dior*, *Bulgari*, *Dsquared*, and *Marc Jacobs* at 30-70% discounts. Strada Panoramica Della Costa Smeralda Km 0.900
① luxurymallitaly.com

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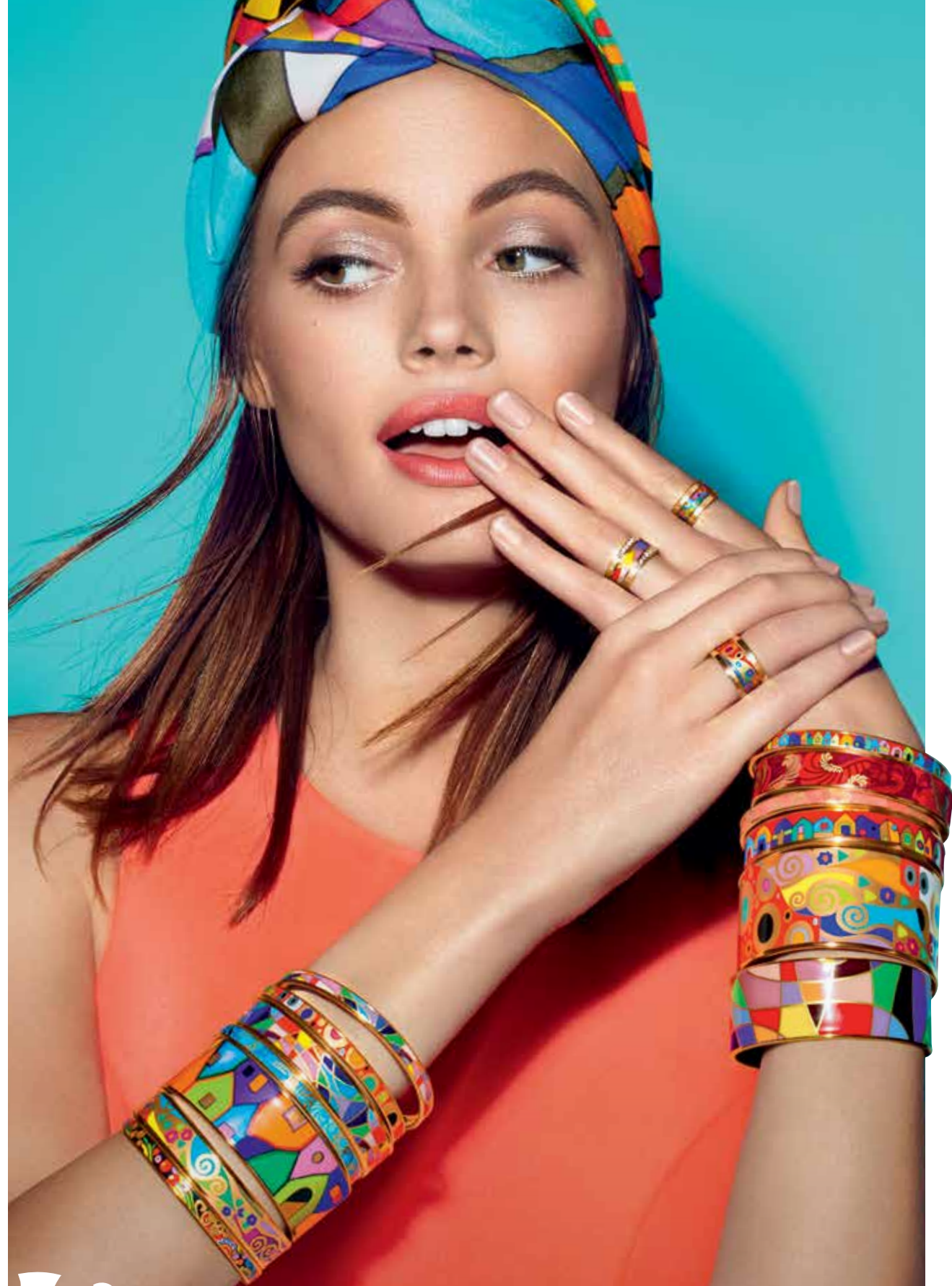
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PURE ART



For an autumn evening

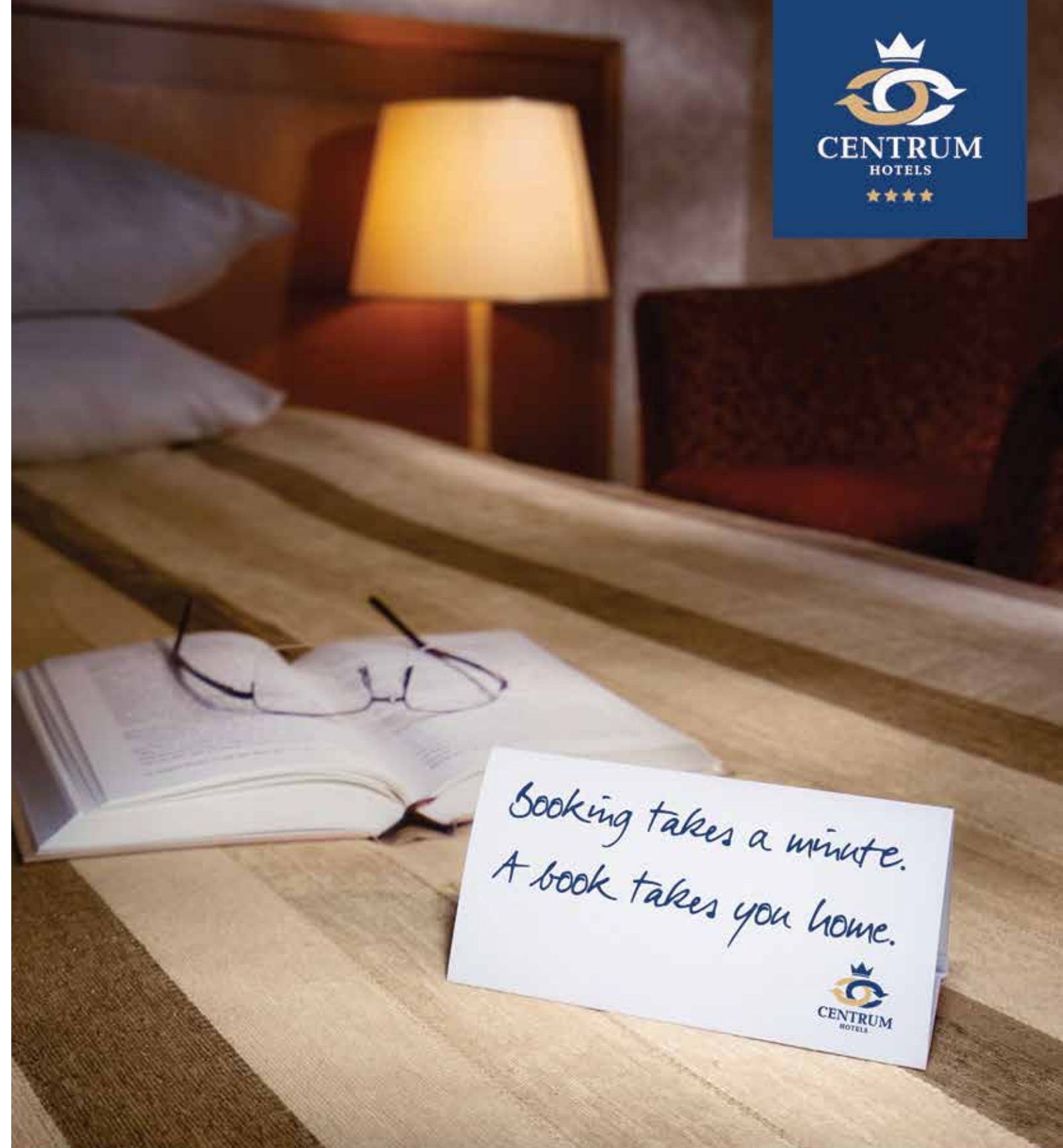


Style by **KATRĪNA REMESA-VANAGA**
Photo by **GATIS GIERTS, F64**

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A chair from Eames' *Aluminium Group* collection, manufactured by *Vitra*

Text by **KRISTĪNE BUDŽE**, *Pastaiga*
Photos Courtesy of *Vitra*

Created for rest, used for work



The *Aluminium Group* chairs by American designers Ray and Charles Eames were originally created for a private villa, but today they can most often be found in conference rooms and corner offices.

WHAT IS IT?

The multifunctional chair we now know as the *Aluminium Group* design by Ray and Charles Eames traces its beginnings back to 1958. Back then, the designers received a commission from American industrialist J. Irwin Miller to create furniture for his home in Columbus, Indiana, that could be used both indoors and outdoors. The designers experimented with a variety of chair constructions and chose aluminium as the most appropriate material for the chair's frame. The lightweight metal was the ideal material in terms of its physical properties as well as aesthetics, allowing for maximum strength from a minimal amount of the material. Fabric or leather could be affixed to the aluminium frame; both were comfortable materials and eliminated the need for extra upholstery.

Miller was pleased with the designers' work and relaxed in the chairs on the terrace of his villa. The Eames' used

the same types of chairs for their office, and a year after creating the design, the furniture began to be mass-produced. Today, *Aluminium Group* chairs are made by the American company *Hermann Miller* as well as *Vitra* in Switzerland. In the past, the two companies divided the market – *Hermann Miller* worked in the United States and *Vitra* concentrated on the European market – but now the boundaries have blurred. Nowadays, the *Aluminium Group* collection includes chairs for many uses and with a variety of modifications. They are a favourite in living rooms as well as offices, airports and other public spaces.

WHY IS IT SPECIAL?

In the world of design, time is divided into two eras: before Eames and after Eames. Even young designers today often wonder whether it is possible to create anything new anymore in the furniture industry. The Eames' worked during the mid-20th century, when optimism and the economy were

on the upswing. They experimented with plywood, fibreglass and aluminium to create completely new technological solutions. Today, Eames furniture can be seen in design museum collections around the world as well as design publications, and the manufacture of Eames furniture continues to be the main source of income for the above-mentioned companies even into the 21st century. It is commonly assumed that, along with a *Porsche* in the garage, Eames furniture in the home is a sign of success.

HOW DOES IT FIT INTO INTERIORS?

Eames-designed furniture is found in so many private homes and public interiors that you might think you risk banality by choosing it for your own home. But one can really never go wrong with an Eames chair. Of course, *Aluminium Group* furniture is more commonplace in an office or other public space, but it can also add an air of the Eames' elegance to a home. **BO**



HOUSING ESTATE FOR SALE

Brivibas bulvaris 21, Riga

Located in the heart of Riga, this prestigious and historical building, including land property, is up for sale. A beautiful view of the park opens up from its windows. The building is located at the intersection of Brivibas bulvaris and Kalpaka bulvaris, and is just a few minutes away from the Old Town. The Freedom Monument – one of the most important national symbols of Latvia, is located nearby. The premises are best suited for either a hospitality business or premium-class apartments.

Land area – 1 467 m².
Site area – 1 148 m².
Gross site area – 5 625 m².

Price: **EUR 7 300 000**

COMMERCIAL PREMISES FOR SALE 201 Brivibas gatve, Riga



For sale: property with an active luxury department store at 201 Brivibas gatve in Riga, located near VEF. It's an excellent choice for a good investment -- the object can be sold including cash flow (EUR 50000 per month excluding VAT) or without. Brivibas gatve is the main street of Riga, and this area is surrounded by a well-developed infrastructure and public transport, ensuring a large flow of people on a daily basis. The five-story building is fully equipped with everything required for a retail business, including storage facilities in the basement. Included is a parking lot for up to 60 cars. The exterior of the building can be redesigned in glass, and the inside can be adapted for office use.

Land area: 4343 m²
Gross site area: 10648 m²
Site area: 2274 m²
Commercial area: 7945 m²

Price: **EUR 8 900 000**

For sale: property with an area of 63500 m² at 201 Brivibas gatve in Riga, located near VEF. The land is suitable for a mixed development, including housing. Maximum building intensity – 220%. The property is strategically well-placed near the Elkor Plaza department store, a hotel, and the offices of various companies. Brivibas gatve is located nearby. The property is suitable for various business activities, including the construction of offices and housing.

Utilities: electricity supply, water supply, central heating.

Land area: 63500 m²

Price: **EUR 4 900 000**



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SNAPSHOT TO SHARE

This is the Tatra mountain range on the way back from Budapest. In the foreground you can just see the runway at Poprad, one of our winter destinations. Coming from Scotland, I love to see mountains from the air. Unfortunately, I don't get to see any mountains in Latvia.

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

Some people are over-awed by all the screens, dials and switches, but on modern aircraft all of the most important information is displayed on just one screen right in front of you. For others, it's the awesome view from the big windows. It's always nice to see someone take in the ever-changing scenery and beautiful cloud formations.



THREE THINGS THAT I NEVER LEAVE HOME WITHOUT

In my bag I always seem to have a flight atlas, because passengers often like to ask what city, river or country they can see; hand sanitizer, because you are in contact with hundreds of people every day; and, of course, a moustache on a stick. For some reason, I've had it since my wedding. You never know when you might need it!

This is your captain speaking

LAST DESTINATION FLOWN TO AS A PASSENGER

I took my family to Olbia in Sardinia in July, one of our new summer destinations. It was fantastic – hot weather with great food and really friendly people. We got a hire car and found lots of quiet, hidden beaches to have picnics and snorkel. The water was crystal clear and warm.



HOW IT ALL BEGAN

I was fascinated with flying from a very young age; it seemed to be the ultimate in personal freedom and independence. I thought it was amazing that something could break free from the bonds of gravity and be suspended by thin air. When I was 13, I started working at the local airfield, cleaning people's planes in exchange for free flights and helping at the gliding school so I could fly the tug plane. Later, I started getting into aerobatics and gliding between my duties refueling planes with avgas. One day I was very sick from the fumes from all the refueling. My mum was convinced it was from the aerobatics and forbid me from any more maneuvers. Heartbroken, I naughtily disobeyed her! Life got in the way of flying until my mid-twenties, when I made the decision to change careers and start flying commercially.

FAVOURITE RESTAURANT

Māja on Kalnciema iela in Riga. Great food, interesting location and friendly service.

FAVOURITE BOOK

For now, it's *Hidden Nature* by Viktor Schauberger. It's fascinating to see how much we still have to learn from the physics of nature.

FAVOURITE RUNWAY

Almost any runway along the west coast of Norway or Scotland. For *airBaltic*, that means Ålesund in Norway. The descent offers beautiful views of the mountains and fjords and amazing scenery all the way to the runway, whatever direction you are coming from. In bad weather, the approach can be challenging and very exciting.

HOBBIES

Like my dad, I love building things, especially for my 14-month-old son, who is already obsessed with planes and anything with wheels. I fly radio-controlled planes and helicopters, which he loves to watch.

THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING A PILOT

The moment you're airborne, there's an awesome sense of calm as you leave the chaos of the ground behind you. You are now in your element, yet you know that no two flights will be the same. As a pilot, every day is different, and I think that is one of the most important things in life.

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Domestic Travel

Text by **ROGER NORUM**
Publicity photos

This collection of new gadgetry for your home will give you plenty of excuses for staying in.



MUSICAL FIDELITY MERLIN 1

Playing musical flairs

Capitalising on the return of vinyl, this sexy home audio system melds a *Bluetooth* streamer, digital amplifier, record player and custom speakers. First, the design: a sleek and bold individual component system in glossy fire-engine red, with all-metal, elliptical-shaped loudspeakers. Next, the sound: rich, full of warmth and able to fill most rooms, whether you're spinning vinyl or digital tracks. Finally, the tech: two 24-bit 192KHz DACs and a single BMR (balanced mode radiator) driver that puts out 50W per channel. Opt for the non-turntable version and you'll save about EUR 700.

EUR 1846 | musicalfidelity.com

AIR AROMA AROMAX

Two scents worth

This contemporary designed, cold-air scent diffuser is made of recyclable anodised aluminum, sending into the air any number of essential oil scents to relieve stress, eliminate odors and fend off germs. The minimalist cone-shape design will look right at home in any jetsetter's living room. Silent operation. Comes in six different colours.

EUR 272 | air-roma.com



EPSON EH-TW6600

The dark crystal (clear)

Easily one of the most spectacular projectors that you can fit into your living room. Projecting in full HD 1080p, it features punchy, crisp images with bold colours and stark contrasts, an

easy-to-use menu system and integrated 20W speakers. The 3D system includes active RF glasses, and the bulb will last for 3000 hours, which translates into plenty of box-set marathons. The 6.7-kilogram box works best when positioned at least 2.5 metres away from a wall.

EUR 1699 | epson.com



STACK ALBA LED Next generation illumination

These new, wickedly smart BR30-sized lightbulbs, embedded with motion and light sensors, can modify colour and brightness depending on the time of day, location and who is present in the room. For example, you'll get cooler, natural whites as you're waking up, and then more relaxing warm colours later on in the day or if *Alba* senses lots of movement. No more fiddling around on your phone to adjust levels or colour temperatures—it's all automatic now. Cuts up to 80% of your energy consumption and has NEST integration, too. The kit includes two bulbs.

EUR 135 | stacklighting.com

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Toast of the town

OK, this gizmo is arguably not going to keep you inside *all* weekend. But what a better way to start your morning than by chomping down on your beloved, emblazoned onto a nice, buttery piece of toast? All you need to do is upload your favourite photo, and the company then etches it into a metal plate in the innards of the toaster before posting out the contraption to you. Bon App!

EUR 63 | burntimpresions.com

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Text by LIENE PĀLĒNA
Publicity photos

The power of a woman

Inese Ozola, the creator of the *Amoralle* fashion label, is one of the most promising new lingerie and nightwear designers in Northern Europe

The Latvian fashion brand *Amoralle*, which has gained considerable international exposure, is characterised by femininity, rich details and silhouettes that enhance the body. *Vogue Italy*, *Marie Claire Italy*, *Cosmopolitan Russia* and editors at other international fashion publications have all praised the brand's collections, and *Amoralle*'s clients include women from around the world – from Great Britain and Russia to the United Arab Emirates and Australia. And, let us be honest, *Amoralle*'s products have become an undeniable favourite among men wishing to please their women with something extravagant.

Successful fashion designer and confident woman Inese Ozola is the founder of *Amoralle*. She exudes both femininity and strength in business. In 2008, Ozola launched her own fashion house, and immediately a signature style of femininity, body silhouette, underlying tailoring, royal luxury and natural confidence was apparent in her first collection. The designer says that as she developed her business, she listened to her intuition and forged on ahead even when others around her expressed scepticism and lack of faith. "Stubbornness and the conviction that everything will turn out are the best ingredients for the

realisation of ideas," says Ozola, although she also emphasises that femininity is important out in the jungle of the business world. She believes that a feminine woman can inspire not only herself but also the man next to her to new achievements. "A feminine woman is at once strong and weak. She can inspire and fascinate and charm. People will always turn around to look at her," the designer describes her understanding of femininity. However, she believes a woman can only truly express her captivating nature in the presence of a responsible, masculine man.

Ozola gains inspiration from her family, work, her children's laughter and her own feminine dreams. As a designer, she transforms this inspiration into silk and lace. But for this fall's collection she wanted to try something unusual. That's why the newest *Amoralle* collection also includes cashmere, mohair and other warm fabrics. "Amoralle is no longer just a brand of lingerie and nightwear. We now also make clothing inspired by lingerie design for daytime and special moments," says Ozola. But that's not the end of her professional dreams. One of her biggest dreams is for *Amoralle* to help every woman rise above the mundane. **BO**

INESE OZOLA RECOMMENDS

Five things that should be in every woman's wardrobe this fall

- A long silk skirt with lace;
- Seductive lingerie;
- A garter;
- A multifunctional lace bodysuit for both work and boudoir;
- A regal dressing gown – every woman deserves to feel special when she arrives home after a long day at work.

① amoralle.com



This summer, *Amoralle* opened a large and tasteful store in Riga, at Brīvības iela 33

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It's chutney time

This month's recipes celebrate the best of our autumn bounty

Recipe, style and photo by
ZANE JANSONE,
gatavoza.lv



BAKED TOMATO JAM

Ingredients (for one 300 ml jar)
8 average-sized tomatoes
Juice and rind of 1 lemon
2 cinnamon sticks
200 g brown sugar
1 t. sea salt
1/2 t. paprika

Preparation

Prepare a deep baking dish and preheat the oven. Cut the tomatoes into thick slices. Grate the lemon rind and juice the lemon. Sprinkle a couple of tablespoons of sugar into the baking dish and cover with one layer of tomato slices. Sprinkle the tomatoes with a little lemon rind, lemon juice, salt, paprika and some more sugar. Continue the process until all of the tomato slices have been placed in the dish. Sprinkle the top layer of tomatoes with sugar and the rest of the ingredients. Insert the cinnamon sticks in the middle of the dish.

Bake at 200°C for one hour and 45 minutes to two hours. While still hot, fill and seal the jars. Cool, and keep in the refrigerator for up to one month.

TIP: Enjoy with toasted bread and cheese.

BEET AND ORANGE CHUTNEY

Ingredients (for one 300 ml jar)
3 average-sized beets
1 large red onion
2 T. dried cranberries
Juice and rind of 2 oranges
2-cm piece of ginger root
1 t. sea salt
150 ml balsamic vinegar
200 g brown sugar

Preparation

Peel and grate the beets. Chop the onion finely. Grate the orange rinds and juice the oranges. Finely chop or grate the ginger root. Place everything into a saucepan and add the cranberries, salt, sugar and vinegar. Simmer over low heat for one hour to one hour and 15 minutes, until the chutney begins to thicken. While still hot, fill and seal the jars.

TIP: Goes very well with toasted bread and cheese as well as oven-baked potato wedges and meat.

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to dream

BOSCA



ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION MAY HAVE ADVERSE EFFECTS

Text by **LIENE PĀLĒNA**
Photos by **GATIS GIERTS, F64**

One of Dzintars Kristovskis' newest masterpieces – hemp-smoked mackerel



Chef Dzintars Kristovskis

Magic in the woods

Foraged food, or “the new gatherer cuisine”, is showing up on menus at dozens of Riga restaurants

A very smart person once said that there are so many truths in the world that you can go crazy if you don't have your own truth. This rule certainly applies to food as well. In several Riga restaurants, the current truth is the new gatherer cuisine. Within this philosophy, chefs offer the most unusual bounty from the local forests, meadows, lakes and bogs. One of the most noticeable followers of this new trend is chef Dzintars Kristovskis at the culinary hot-spot *Valmiermuižas alus virtuve* in Riga (A. Briāna iela 9a).

In his masterpieces, Kristovskis makes almost exclusive use of the local natural bounty and organically grown produce. The talented chef believes that meals should be made from products that grow in the nearby area or are easily cultivated in the local region. For this reason, Kristovskis never shies away from sprinkling pine tips on a dish or even cooking up...a puffball! He often experiments with ingredients himself in order to create the most unusual dishes. Needless to say, he spends lots of time wandering forests, meadows and bogs, investigating and collecting various plants and other natural products. “Using local ingredients is becoming more and more

popular among chefs. To me, this philosophy seems the most logical of all. It's very important for me that I can prepare a meal from ingredients that are readily available in the region where I live. I try to avoid supermarkets and similar places, where the idea of seasonal differences is being destroyed,” says Kristovskis.

Therefore, he invites everybody to make use of September's abundance and head out of the city to pick mushrooms, berries and various herbs for teas. “When I walk through a forest or meadow, I try to taste everything I see. The Latvian countryside is especially suitable for this. But what particularly fascinates me is that nature still holds so many secrets. For example, put some fireweed blossoms in water for 24 hours, and they taste like strawberries. And hardly anyone knows that mugwort roots are edible. Of course, one must read and study a lot and talk to people to find out about these things. It's not like I've arrived here from who-knows-where and am doing supernatural feats. But, for example, from talking with older people I learned that before the Second World War the puffball was considered a normal, regular mushroom in Latvia. People used to marinate them, just like today we marinate champignons,” says the chef. **BO**

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The new life of the old pencil factory

A peek inside the home of Morten Bo and Kristina May in Copenhagen

Morten Bo Jensen and his partner Kristina May Olsen are a team – she is a designer and he is the chief designer at *Vipp*, one of the leading Danish design companies. They and their twin daughters, Anine and Merle, live in an apartment that is a remodelled pencil factory in the old industrial harbour of Copenhagen.

A New-York-style loft was crafted out of the former *Viking* pencil factory that operated in the 1900s. The family's home now reflects Morten's love for industrial details and timeless design patterns. Plus, it's only a stone's throw away from the couple's workplace.

The area, Islands Brygge, is an old industrial harbour area in Copenhagen that today is enjoying its second life as a private housing area mostly occupied by young families. But the industrial feel of the space still remains. Close to the water's edge, Morten's apartment also has something else to offer – there is a public bathing establishment designed by *BIG* (*Bjarne Ingels Group*) just a five minute's walk from their home, which is a popular hang-out for locals and not-so-locals in summer. On the way to his workplace, Morten also passes a steel workshop, a carpentry shop, a bike shop and numerous art galleries.

"The apartment was stripped to the bone, and we spent a great deal of time reflecting

on how we want to live. Our conclusion was quite simple – function and efficiency should be the starting point for both the architecture, the interior and the location. I am close to my work, to green areas and to the city centre. Being located here, we can minimise our use of transportation, make use of the city and spend time with our children," says Morten.

In the apartment, the family has furniture designed by *Vipp*. "I feel very fortunate to be living with furniture that I myself have designed," Morten admits. The centrepiece of the apartment is a *Vipp* kitchen island with three high cabinets. "It matches my old *Vipp* kitchen bin!" adds Morten (the



Family portrait of Kristina, Anine, Merle and Morten Bo

Text by **AGRA LIEGE**
Photos courtesy of **ANDERS HVIID**,
Hviid Photography

do professionally actually do work." Morten is confident: "I work with design ideas that personally reflect my style and that I myself find useful. Being surrounded by these values and using the products every day is, for me, a way to embody the idea that product design must start with a function in mind. That's why we don't have three different sofa arrangements but only one. Here we have surrounded ourselves with things that are meant to be used and that embrace the Danish concept of *hygge* (cosiness)," says Morten.

The optimisation of space

In their home, Morten and Kristina have prioritised open space, and one could say that open space is the central element of the apartment. The feeling of openness is reinforced by a big inflow of light, sliding doors and long *Dinesen* wooden planks crossing the entire main room of their home. "We wanted to make the space as useful as possible and open it up entirely. That is why we chose to install only sliding doors, a built-in space for firewood and an integrated book case, closets and cabinets. That way we could free up a lot of floor space and open up the room," says Morten.

The couple's love for details is obvious, and they have chosen elements carefully. Take, for example, the pencil-art piece, which adds colour and texture to the space and also celebrates the product that was once produced in the building. The desk is made of hundreds of pieces of cardboard, while the bookshelf is a fully integrated floor-to-ceiling and wall-to-wall piece that adds cosiness to the living space.



OFFICE SPACE

"My office space is directly connected with the rest of the living space, so I can still be with my family, even if I'm sitting behind the desk. We built the large bookcase in the wall to add some life to this space, and we had it installed from floor to ceiling to repeat the pattern of the long lines present in the other parts of our home. The bike is from *Biomega*, designed by Marc Newson," says Morten.



PENCIL ART

The pencil-art piece was inspired by the *Viking* pencils that were once produced in the building and is made out of 200 *Viking* pencils. Morten and Kristina had it made as a nod to the original function of their home.



DINING AREA

"The kitchen and dining area is probably my favourite area of our home," says Morten. "It is very special to me that I am able to live with the products I designed for *Vipp*, such as the kitchen and dining table. The dining table is my favourite piece of furniture here. It is made of a well-crafted aluminium frame with a reclaimed teak top. And, even though we have so many different activities going on at the table every day, the choice of

materials and the simple design ensures that we will keep the table for many years to come.

"The pendants over the dining table are vintage street lights that have been hanging in the streets of Copenhagen for decades. I always find joy in things of high quality that have been produced to fulfil a specific task, such as lighting up the streets of our city, instead of being elements of fading trends or styles."



Details LIVING



KITCHEN

"The black *Vipp* kitchen is another crucial element of our home. When we designed it at *Vipp*, we conceived of it as a piece of furniture designed down to the very last detail – we wanted to create a lasting *tool*, so to speak, for the home, and a well-functioning one at that. I often feel we face so many choices every day, and that this endless amount of choice and possibilities for customisation has, somehow, become synonymous with value in people's eyes. With this kitchen we have taken the opposite standpoint. It is a kitchen for which Kristina and

I just had to choose how we wanted to put together the separate modules, and then we could rely on the set design to do the rest. And this kitchen fits very well in our home because it brings an industrial look to the home. One feature of our kitchen that we really value is the stainless-steel table top. Unlike granite and other surfaces, stainless steel is non-porous, meaning that you can lay a raw chicken out on the counter and, as long as you clean it properly, you never have to worry about contamination."



BATHROOM

"We wanted the bathroom to be a place where we could spend private quality time, a space that is not merely functional but also devoted to pleasure and relaxation. So we kept the space very open and light, and we made sure to allow room for free-standing furniture, such as the bath module," says Morten.

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LIVING AREA

“Like rest of the apartment, we wanted to keep the living space bright and open. Along with the kitchen, we felt that the living area should be the centre of the apartment. We installed a small fireplace to add a bit

of the traditional Danish *hygge* (cosiness) to the room, and the tall compartment for firewood adds a natural touch to the home. Kristina came up with the idea of the large plant boxes, which not only function

as room dividers but also make room for a touch of green. The couch from *Engell* goes well with our minimalist aesthetics while still remaining very comfortable,” Morten laughs.



CHILDREN'S ROOM

“In the girls' room we wanted to keep it simple yet playful. We're very much about sticking to the essentials and giving our daughters room to play without too much clutter. The classic *Vipp* pedal bin and a simple cupboard are great for storing toys and knick-knacks. We built the dollhouse and the desk ourselves and added a few colourful elements,” says Morten. **BO**



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THE SOUL OF VILNIUS

Text by **UNA MEISTERE**,
anothertravelguide.com
Photos by **AINĀRS ĒRGLIS**

When I ask Lithuanian author Kristina Sabaliauskaitė where to go to find the soul of Vilnius, she tells me to climb to the top of the Church of St. Johns' bell tower. The church and its tower, built 400 years ago, are a part of Vilnius University. At 68 metres, the bell tower is one of the tallest buildings in the Old Town. Visitors can choose to either climb the old, worn wooden steps or zip to the top by more modern means, in a lift. But in order to reach the panorama balcony, everyone must climb the last 20 steps themselves. The stairs are narrow and allow no room for passing, and one must watch one's head on the curves, but all that just intensifies the feeling of authenticity that is still surprisingly strong here in the old centre of the city. A Foucault's pendulum demonstrating the rotation of the Earth is located on the second floor of the tower. The Church of St. Johns itself has witnessed the entire history of Vilnius – it has been the site of church services, theatre performances, royal and papal receptions, and seething student protests. It was used as a warehouse during the Soviet era and later as the university museum, but nowadays it is again rightfully fulfilling its original function.

The view from the tower is truly breathtaking – from here one sees all of Vilnius' turbulent history as if laid out on the palm of one's hand. The "onion domes" of Orthodox churches and Catholic, Medieval, Soviet and modern Vilnius. Although, if you want to get hold of the real keys to Vilnius, which are actually a large bundle of keys from various eras and cultures, there's no better guidebook than Sabaliauskaitė's recently published book, *Vilnius. Wilno. Vilne. Three Short Stories* (translated into English by Romas Kinka) – three stories told through Polish, Jewish and Lithuanian eyes about Vilnius and its soul, which has gone astray and been found again countless times. Sabaliauskaitė, who also has a PhD in art history, is currently one of the best-known contemporary Lithuanian authors. Born in Vilnius, she has been living in London since 2002 and until 2010 worked as foreign correspondent. Her 2008 debut novel, *Silva Rerum* (Latin for "the forest of things"), and its two sequels *Silva Rerum II* and *Silva Rerum III*, is the story of a noble family in the 17th and 18th centuries. It has won many awards and gained a popularity in Lithuania similar to that of the *Game of Thrones* series of books, though they are examples of more serious literature. Needless to say, *Silva Rerum*-themed tours of Vilnius are all the rage right now.



St. Anne's Church

In fact, the novel has awakened an interest in many Lithuanians in their own history.

"Vilnius has a very dramatic past. It has been called the Jerusalem of the North, not only because a very prominent Jewish community lived there, but also because, like Jerusalem, Vilnius historically consisted of four quarters: Polish and Lithuanian Catholic, Russian Orthodox, German Lutheran and Calvinist, and also Jewish. All those communities somehow coexisted until 1944-45, when the social and ethnic cleansing carried out by the Soviets started and all of the Polish-speaking natives were forced to leave. Vilnius was then colonised by Russians from the Soviet Union and newcomers from all over Lithuania. The social structure dramatically changed, and there are not many families left that have still been living there for generations. I felt that it was very important to tell about these living memories."

Sabaliauskaitė is charming and charismatic. We meet in her favourite café, *Ponių laimė*, and having ordered macaroons with a filling made of berries from the café owner's own garden, we move to the *Stikliai Hotel* right across the street. This was the first five-star hotel in Vilnius, and ownership of it has remained in the same family for 25 years already. It is located in the

city's historically Jewish neighbourhood, once home to Jewish craftsmen from Germany and Bohemia who had brought the knowledge of glass-blowing with them. Thus the name of the street, *Stiklių gatvė*, which means Glass Street. And it is precisely at the *Stikliai Hotel* that one of Sabaliauskaitė's characters, 85-year-old Samuel Vilner, stays when he returns after many, many years to the city of his birth. As a youth, he escaped the ghetto and later emigrated to New York City, where he became a well-known businessman. He is searching for what remains of an early love and his former life, when he, a poor Jewish boy, used to sell cooled water in glass bottles to thirsty people and thereby earned his first real income. His boyhood home was located just a few steps from the hotel, and the hotel was then a large apartment building in which a well-known Jewish tailor lived.

"From the Renaissance period onward, Vilnius has always been a refuge for people from all over Europe. German and Dutch tradesmen, Spanish lawyers, Italian artists and architects, French dressmakers and musicians. People who, for whatever reasons – wars, persecution, religion – have sought refuge from their own countries. And Vilnius always accepted them," says Sabaliauskaitė.

And that's possibly one of Vilnius' most distinct characteristics, that, no matter which direction your feet lead you, in a few minutes' time you may arrive in what seems like a completely different city. For example, as you walk along the Neris River from the Žvėrynas district towards the centre of the city, the dilapidated riverfront with Orthodox church domes glinting in the distance, for some reason, suddenly

Vilnius has always been at the crossroads of many cultures

brings to mind Pskov. Žvėrynas is one of Vilnius' oldest districts, which long ago used to belong to the Radziwiłł family of nobles who used the area to keep wild animals for their hunting needs. The district still feels a little wild – wooden houses covered in vines and hidden behind fragrant bushes, the houses having endured many eras and regimes and their inhabitants lingering on the front steps on warm evenings. One of Vilnius' currently most stylish restaurants, *Panama Food Garden*, has found a home in one such house, and the small tables are set between the greenery and herbs in the restaurant's greenhouse. "I think Vilnius has always been this way. It's the DNA of the

city. When I read the diaries of 17th- and 18th-century European travellers who visited Vilnius, they noted exactly the same things. People were saying it's probably not quite a town; it's rather more like a big village. And we keep saying this today. The interesting thing is that the banks of the Neris River haven't been urbanised very much. It's nature, the embankment, some grass.... You can still take your clothes off and jump in for a swim. It's amazing. I think one of the biggest problems of our time is that everything loses its individuality and character. You see the same chain stores everywhere and the same imitative approach to urban planning and so on. But everything must have its own character, and Vilnius has plenty of it," says Sabaliauskaitė.

Gediminas, Grand Duke of Lithuania, founded Vilnius in the early 14th century, and soon the city became a cultural centre in northeastern Europe. Its university was founded in 1579, and the city has always been at the crossroads of many cultures. In 1994, Vilnius' Old Town and its unique architecture – a blend of Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque and Neo-Classicism – was added to the UNESCO list of world heritage sites. At 3.5 square kilometres, it is the largest Old Town in Eastern Europe and has more than 20 churches built in the Eastern Baroque style. But Vilnius' Old Town is still alive; local life still thrives there, alongside the tourists. This is where the city's most popular

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Cathedral Square



The sculpture *Three Muses* by Stanislovas Kuzma at the entrance of the Lithuanian National Drama Theatre



Vilnius Old Town

A stroll along the street feels like entering a slightly nostalgic novel that cannot be read in a hurry

restaurants and most stylish shops are located, as well as countless “secret” courtyards that immediately transport you back in time to another world. A world in which the old wooden sheds have not yet been demolished, and in which one just might discover a sculpture overgrown in vines and local legend. The next courtyard, this one in a Renaissance style with a terrace opening up to a panorama of the presidential palace’s garden, may carry your thoughts to Italy.

Or, as you wander the labyrinth of small streets, you may suddenly come across the open-air art gallery that is Literatų gatvė (Literatu Street, or Writers’ Street). Here, the façades of the houses are decorated with more than a hundred ceramic, wood and glass plaques honouring well-known authors – Lithuanian and of other ethnic backgrounds – who have at one point or another in their lives been associated with Lithuanian culture. The project began in 2008 as a

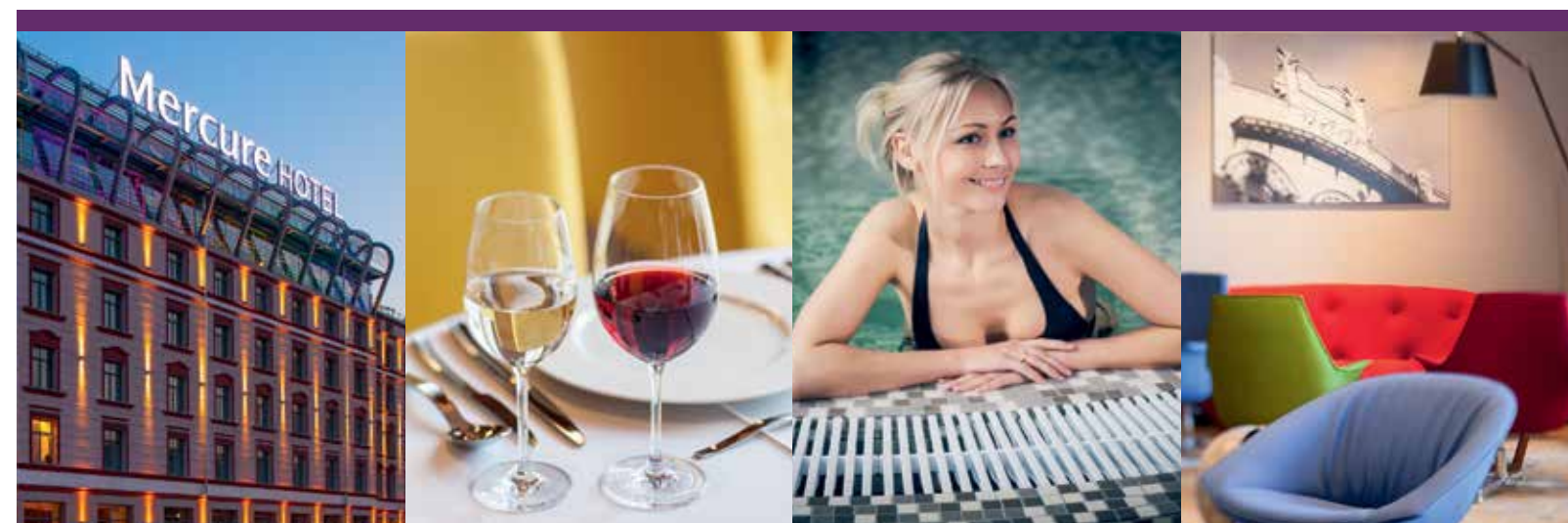
temporary exhibition, but today Literatu Street has become a trademark of Vilnius and is periodically supplemented with new pieces of artwork. Each plaque measures 33.3 x 33.3 centimetres, and a stroll along the street feels a bit like entering a slightly nostalgic novel that cannot be read in a hurry; instead, it must be read slowly, enjoying every word.

Republic of Užupis

There’s also a neighbourhood in Vilnius that’s unlike any other in Europe. It’s called Užupis (Across the River), and it’s located right next to the Old City, separated from it only by the small Vilnia River. Enter Užupis by crossing one of the romantic 16th-century or Tsarist-era bridges. The neighbourhood is bordered on the other side by hills that contain several cemeteries, including the Jewish Cemetery. In the 16th century, Užupis was a working-class neighbourhood. There were 14 mills along the Vilnia River, and leather-working was also a common industry here. Seeing as prostitution was legal during the Russian Empire era, this was also where the majority of the city’s “working girls” lived. Up until the 20th century, the low wooden and brick houses of Užupis were mostly inhabited



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by those down on their luck and brothel workers. During the Soviet era, the neighbourhood was known for its high crime rates, vagrants, prostitutes and shabby, neglected buildings. It even had a street named Death Street. Fortunately, thanks to the neighbourhood’s bad reputation, very few Soviet-style apartment buildings were built here in the 1970s, thereby preserving the historical aura of the place.

But the art academy changed everything. Many students, and even some of the faculty, chose to live near Užupis, partially due to the low rents. Gradually, the area attracted more and more artists. But the story of today’s Užupis began only 18 years ago, when neighbourhood activists decided to rename it the Republic of Užupis (Užupio Res Publika). The official date of the republic’s founding – its Independence Day – is April 1st. But, although Užupis is often compared to Paris’ Montmartre or Copenhagen’s Christiania, once you arrive here, you’ll understand that the comparisons are actually quite weak.

Užupis is a republic all its own, and in the most literal sense of this word. It even has its own calendar and constitution, which had been translated into 24 languages. You can see all of the versions side by side on separate plaques on Paupio Street. The unveiling of each new translation is a big event, and sometimes even an ambassador from that nation attends the ceremony. The constitution has 41 articles, including “A dog has the right to be a dog”, “Everyone has the right to be happy” and “Everyone has the right to be individual”. The newest language added to the bunch is Latvian. The Užupis symbol, or logo, is the palm of a hand with a hole in the middle, symbolising that the republic is open to all

St. Anne’s Church (Maironio gatve 8) is one of the most beautiful masterpieces of Gothic architecture in Vilnius. Its façade has remained almost unchanged for the past 500 years. It is said that Napoleon was so impressed by the church that he wanted to pick it up in his hands and bring it back to Paris.

Vilnius has churches of over 40 different faiths and denominations, and the locals joke that there isn’t a single street in the Old Town where one cannot see several churches. Not only do the many churches add significantly to the city’s architectural flavour; they also add aroma and sound to the air, especially in summer, when the smell of incense flows out the open doors and onto the street, along with cooled indoor air, choir voices and organ melodies.

Vilnius has another curiosity – the bust of American musician Frank Zappa, which stands in the city centre, west of the Old Town, at Kalinausko gatve 1, and is the world’s only monument to the

cultures and religions. Of course, it also has its own flag, in four colour variations representing the four seasons. But, as is typical of an anarchistic society, people often forget to change them as the months progress.

The Republic of Užupis celebrates the New Year on March 21st, and, while elsewhere in the world this day is called the spring equinox, in Užupis it’s known as the Day of Traps. Much like the New Year’s resolutions made in other countries, on this day Užupians invite everyone to get rid of their own “traps”. Because as we all know, you cannot grow as a person if you’re hauling around baggage from your past. Therefore, on March 21st everyone is invited to gather in the square across from the Užupis Parliament and burn their old “anchors” – in other words, furniture, diaries and anything else that acts as a cumbersome emotional trap holding the person back.

The day after Easter is celebrated as White Tablecloth Day, because this day is considered the only day of the year when nothing needs to be done or prepared. All you need to do is pack up some leftovers from the previous day’s Easter feast and bring it to Užupis. Seeing as Easter feasts in this part of the world are usually quite lavish, people are more than happy to share.

Užupis also has international cooperation partners. For example, Užupians feel a close connection with Ireland, so they celebrate St. Patrick’s Day, complete with pouring bright green dye into the Vilnia River. But the effect only lasts about half an hour...and, of course, the dye is ecologically friendly. That is to say, if a white dog takes a swim in the green river, his coat will remain white. The Republic of Užupis also has a Tibet Square, and – being a hotbed of activism –



Užupians naturally support Tibetan independence. The Dalai Lama himself is said to have visited Tibet Square when he was in Lithuania.

Nearby, on the banks of the river and surrounded by sculptures, is the Baltic States’ first incubator for artists. 17 years ago the abandoned building was inhabited by squatters. Today, rents in the building are still low enough for young artists to afford, and long-term rental contracts can be signed for only five euros per square metre.

The Republic of Užupis is quite small – it has a total area of only 0.7 square kilometres and a population of approximately 5000. About 100 of those citizens form the core of the activist group, and most of them live in the lower part of Užupis, closer to the old centre of Vilnius.

There is no lack of colourful characters in Užupis, including small shops, art galleries and cafés. Right across from the multilingual constitution wall is the small bookstore *Kleistoteka Knygynas*, which also serves as a book exchange and book rental site. It is the only bookstore in the neighbourhood, and it was opened just a year ago. We met and spoke with the owner, Gintarė Liočienė, who was one of the first true Užupians. Every now and then she wonders whether to press on or just give up, “Because the book business

There is no lack of colourful characters in Užupis

is not easy nowadays.” This past winter was very difficult, but now in the summer business has picked up again. “When I moved here 20 years ago,” says Liočienė, “the Užupis area was pretty ghastly. But then something like a wave began – due to the fact that so many people associated with art were living all in one place, the aura of the whole neighbourhood changed. Užupis became a kind of epicentre for creative energy. Today, a new generation has taken their place. For a moment there, it seemed like everything might be lost, but now I feel that a new wave has begun in Užupis, a wave that is being powered by very creative young people. Most of our clients now are young people, too. It turns out that they still read books. And very good books, at that.”

However, because new books tend to be expensive and one cannot always be sure one will like a book or not, the store has begun a system of book rentals. By paying one euro, clients can take a book home for ten days to “try it out”.

Nearby is another small shop with an interesting name: VDK (Visokių Daiktų Krautuvėlė, or, Shop of Many Different



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Things). The very charismatic owner collects all sorts of things linked with the history of Vilnius, from art books and photographs to home interior pieces. He also collects antique music boxes. We see one in very good condition, turn the small key, and the shop fills with a sentimental melody from an era long ago... The store also sells niche perfumes, which happen to be its main product and best seller.

We find a bakery located in a 19th-century building that was once an apothecary. The shelves along the walls are original and still give off a vague aroma of medicines and herbs. Visitors can read an account of the apothecary's history, hand-written during the Soviet era by a pharmacist who worked there for 58 years. In a hand that is already a bit shaky, the last page of the history tells that 17 of the employees are Communists, 10 are war veterans, and four are graduates of the University of Marxism-Leninism....

Almost every building and courtyard in Užupis has a story to tell. One of the courtyards resembles Old Tbilisi, with its old wooden buildings and crooked balconies – all that's missing are the lace-like details. In the late 19th century, all of the buildings facing the courtyard belonged to a wealthy Polish landowner who leased them out to various small businesses. Up until the mid-20th century, the courtyard was still full of small benches, hitching rails to tie up horses, and so on, as well as a large pear tree. Locals who are now well over the age of 70 tell that the landowner's own window was right by the pear tree. She was a vengeful woman and, in order to prevent the neighbourhood children from stealing pears, she poured manure on the tree from her window. Before the war, quite a few Jews lived in Užupis as well; in fact, several families lived in the houses facing this courtyard. Three of the families managed to hide out for the entire war in a secret attic room between two chimneys. As fate would have it, the 14-year-old son of one of the families later emigrated to Israel and was killed in the war with the Arabs.

Hidden in another Užupis courtyard between two modern buildings is Vilnius' smallest church, Bartholomew's Church. The current church was built in the late 18th century, but it replaced an earlier church on the same site that was destroyed by fire in 1655 during the war with Moscow. The church belongs to the Vilnius Belorussian Catholic Community and is the only church in Vilnius where services take place in the Belorussian language. The church was closed in 1949, and the building was used as a sculpture workshop during the Soviet era. It reopened as a church only in 1997.

A little further up the hill is Vilnius' oldest cemetery, the Bernardine Cemetery, established in 1810 by Bernardine monks. It also happens to be

legendary musician. Needless to say, Zappa never travelled to Lithuania – most probably not even in his dreams – and Vilnius has no formal connection to the musician at all, except for the fact that the anti-establishment lyrics of his songs were exceedingly popular in the years of the decline of the Soviet empire, which led to the musician achieving the status of something of a cult figure. The bust was erected in 1995, thanks to the efforts of the once-flourishing and active Frank Zappa Fan Club. The 4.2-metre monument, which weighs 150 kg, was created by sculptor Konstantinas Bogdanas, an artist who had previously been known to do politically commissioned work and produced likenesses of Lenin for Moscow bureaucrats.

Vilnius is one of the few cities in the world where one can enjoy the urban panorama by way of the oldest and most romantic mode of transportation – a hot air balloon (www.ballooning.lt).

Europos Parkas (European Park Museum), which symbolically marks the geographic centre of the European continent (as determined by the French National Geographic Institute in 1989), is a twenty-minute drive from the heart of Vilnius. It was set up in 1991 by the Lithuanian sculptor Gintaras Karosas; today it hosts an extensive permanent exhibition of contemporary sculpture featuring artists from different corners of the world, including Magdalena Abakanowicz, Sol LeWitt, and Dennis Oppenheim.

one of the city's most romantic cemeteries and – as long as you have no problem with strolling around cemeteries – is definitely worth a visit. Except for burials in established family gravesites, no new burials have been allowed in the cemetery since the 1970s. Here and there you'll find a grave that's been recently tended to, but mostly the cemetery has been left to its own devices. The gravesites were often vandalised during the Soviet era, and some of the inscriptions on headstones are no longer legible. However, one headstone tells of a veteran from the 1863 Polish and Lithuanian revolt against the Russian Empire. According to legend, weapons were hidden in the cemetery at that time. After the uprising, Lithuanian orthography was banned, and a law permitting only the use of Cyrillic was adopted. The Catholic faith was likewise banned, with churches and monasteries converted into Orthodox institutions. Along one edge of the Bernardine Cemetery stands a slightly spooky wooden house in which only an old woman and her dog are said to live. She's never worked in the cemetery; it's just her home.

In the 19th century there was a brewery on the other side of the gully. Later, it became a fur-coat workshop and, later yet, a manufacturing centre for calculators. Today the site is being cleaned up, and it will be turned into a new residential quarter in the near future. In 1990 the Lithuanian film director Arūnas Matelis made a film about Užupis called *Ten Minutes Before the Flight of Icarus* – a slightly ironic portrait of this truly one-of-a-kind neighbourhood in Vilnius.

Cinema at the airport

Cultural life is flourishing in Vilnius. In 2009 the National Gallery of Art (a branch of the Lithuanian Art Museum) was opened in the former Revolution Museum built in the 1980s. The museum's permanent exhibition is devoted to 20th- and 21st-century art and is said to contain 46,000 items. Vilnius' Contemporary Art Centre (CAC), the largest contemporary art space in the Baltic States, is also an active venue, hosting five or six large-scale art projects every year, as well as many smaller projects. The Baltic Triennial of contemporary art also takes place at CAC; this year marks the 12th triennial, which takes place from September 4 to October 18. But CAC also contains a very unique exhibit, namely, the George Maciunas Fluxus Cabinet. In 1997 the cabinet was donated to CAC as a gift from the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection – the world's largest collection of Fluxus works, curated by the influential historian of the Fluxus movement, Jon Hendricks. The room in which the cabinet stands is literally the size of a cabinet itself, and it provides a

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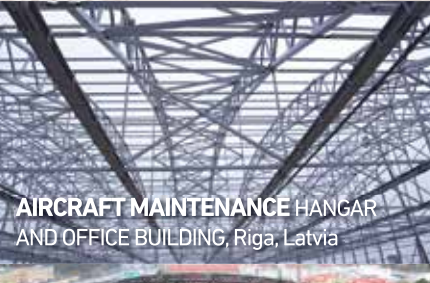
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The FilmBox movie theatre at the Vilnius airport passenger lounge

FilmBox is located in Vilnius airport next to gate A2 and seats 50 viewers

concise view into the activities of this legendary art movement.

The Lithuanian Film Centre recently began an unusual cultural project in cooperation with the Vilnius Airport. In May of this year, it opened the first movie theatre in an airport passenger lounge in Eastern and Northern Europe. *FilmBox* is located next to gate A2 and seats 50 viewers. Film times fit local flight schedules and, due to the particular nature of the small airport, only short films, documentaries, and animated films are shown. All films are free of charge,

and the theatre is open until the last airplane of the day takes off. The selection of films is also regularly changed. If you happen to fly through Vilnius often, *FilmBox* guarantees that you'll get a complete picture of what's current on the Lithuanian cinema scene, at least in the shorts genre. *FilmBox* plans to expand its repertoire this autumn to include films from neighbouring countries. Latvian shorts will be shown in October, European shorts (in cooperation with *Eurochannel*) in November, and Estonian shorts in December. Next year's programme will be devoted to the Nordic countries. So, it's worth heading to the Vilnius Airport well ahead of time just to catch a film or two! And it turns out that people are already doing so, with movies gradually becoming a regular part of the travel ritual....



Vilnius is like a chorus

Several years ago, when Kristina Sabaliauskaitė – author of the trilogy of best-selling historical novels *Silva Rerum*, and one of the best-known contemporary Lithuanian authors – was asked to describe in a few words how she feels about Vilnius, she chose to write about four of the city's neighbourhoods in four different seasons. The Catholic springtime, the German summer with its cafés and beer gardens, the nostalgic Jewish autumn, and the Russian Orthodox winter. "And that's really the way it is," she says. "Come to Vilnius and you'll find all of Europe in one town."

What do you think is the most characteristic thing about Vilnius?

I think it's the layering of all that history, which is the history of different nations and different communities. It's just not one story of a town. It's like a chorus. Vilnius' history can only be perceived when one listens to that complete chorus of different voices singing in different languages. Because you cannot read the history of Vilnius just in Lithuanian. You have to be fluent in Polish, German and Yiddish just to be able to explore all those layers and to complete that full image of the town. Nowadays we speak a lot about multiculturalism, and from the 17th century onward, Vilnius was very tolerant, and all these different communities and religions coexisted, which is a very modern thing. For example, four hundred years ago Catholic bishops initiated laws forbidding interference with Jews practicing their own rites. I think that was very progressive and

very democratic at that time. All those different communities and different ethnic quarters each had their own calendars at that time and different ways of counting time. But somehow they managed to coexist in one city. Historically, Vilnius was destroyed and damaged many times. For example, the Muscovite and Cossack attack in 1655, when the city burned for 17 days and most of the Baroque splendour was ruined. Then the three great fires in the middle of the 18th century, the rebuilding after the Tsarist occupation, wartime bombings and so on. Somehow the city always manages to rise like the Phoenix. I think it's this mosaic of different times, different styles, and different rules of the city that makes Vilnius unique.

Which neighbourhood do you personally love the most in Vilnius?

I was born and grew up on Gediminas Avenue, in a building where the famous violinist Jascha Heifetz performed for

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the first time in his life, and my husband is from Pilies Street. So my “love map” is small and limited to the central part and the Old Town, where my family was based for many generations and where, for me, each street has a personal history. There are many hidden corners in Vilnius that are accessible only by special appointment or request. For example, my family’s parochial church used to be the Church of St. George, founded by the Radziwill princes, which is now a book depository. The church is closed now, but with special permission you can visit it and see all the frescoes and books. It looks surreal, like something out of a Carlos Ruiz Zafón novel, or Roman Polanski’s The Ninth Gate. It’s hidden, but with a little effort you can still visit it. My advice is to find a like-minded local in Vilnius who can show you around. I absolutely adore the Old Town. When we were teenagers, it was all still in ruins, and we used to sit and smoke cigarettes and drink beer in those ruined monastery courtyards. And now I’m really happy that they are gradually being restored, but sometimes it’s maybe a bit too much for my liking. People sometimes are too zealous and want to cover old church stairs, that have been polished by hundreds of years of footsteps, with new tiles.

What is your favourite building in Vilnius?
The Church of St. Peter and St. Paul. It’s not just a coincidence that the covers of all three Silva Rerum novels show fragments of the church’s interior. Even if you are well-travelled in Italy, France or continental

Baroque Europe, you’ll find it really amazing. A real gem. Imagine Giacomo Serpotta’s chapel in Palermo, multiplied a hundred times.

Do the people in Vilnius enjoy life?

I think so, yes. Vilnius is small, green and very accessible. You don’t have the traffic and transportation problems you have in big cities like London, the real estate is not too overpriced in comparison with larger cities, and people are generally more relaxed and have much more time for their hobbies and leisure. Wonderful, unspoilt nature – picturesque woods and lakes – is just a few kilometers out of town. There’s also a very dynamic food scene. During the last five years we’ve experienced a huge change. Everybody is moving further away from the traditional Lithuanian cuisine as advertised by the tourist guidebooks. We have a super-energetic, dynamic generation of people in their thirties who have already finished the best cooking schools, have had work experience in London, Paris or Scandinavian countries, and have now come back home to open their own places. And the food there is absolutely amazing.

Which are three of your favourite restaurants/café’s in Vilnius?

Ponių laimė pastry shop (Gaono/Stikliu Street) – I usually bring my daughter there. The pastries are absolutely amazing, all locally sourced, using berries and apples grown on the owner’s farm in Dubingiai. I think this is the true luxury of our times.

Try the macaroons with fresh raspberries in summer, and the “Dubingiai” apple tart in autumn and winter.

St. Hubertus game restaurant on Vokiečių (German) Street – it’s on the expensive side, but if you like game (and, historically, in this part of the world we know a thing or two about it), it’s fantastic. It’s run by a man who is very passionate about what he does.

The third place constantly changes, but I am a steak person: each time I come back I find that some exciting new place has opened. One time it could be the Stebuklai restaurant for their Angus beef steak tartare, or it might be entrecote at the Town Grill, or a good old steak au frites at Cafe Montmartre, complete with a wonderful view of the Bazilian and Ostra Brama Gates. Another classic for poultry lovers is the Chicken Kiev at the Neringa restaurant, where you’ll feel transported to the stylish Swinging Sixties.

I think we are getting to the point in Vilnius where it’s like in Rome – the saturation of good restaurants is becoming so great that you’ll probably get good food, no disappointment, and affordable prices no matter where you go.

What is the sound of Vilnius?

Church bells ringing and sparrows chirping. And the smell of Vilnius would be intoxicatingly powerful church incense – we even have the internationally acclaimed Lithuanian perfume by Juozas Statkevičius, which perfectly captures it. **BO**

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WITH A BASKETBALL IN MIND

Jānis Blūms (33),
 captain of the Latvian national men's basketball team

70 years ago, Latvia won the first European basketball championship in Switzerland. Now, 70 years later, Riga is hosting one of the European championship qualification rounds. Jānis Blūms has been the captain of the Latvian national basketball team for several years, and, following a successful season with Athens' *Panathinaikos*, he has spent the summer training for the national team and playing friendlies.

Blūms is uncomplicated, hardworking and unpretentious. His professional manner and commitment have earned him the attention of team members and Europe's best trainers alike. When I meet with him, it is still summer and the national team's practices have yet to begin. We have breakfast together, after Blūms has taken his son to practice.

What sport does your son play?

Basketball, but in the summer he does a lot of athletics as well. Just this morning I took him to athletics practice – so he learns to run correctly and develops all his muscle groups. That's important for a child's posture and for his future.

How is he doing in sports?

For now, he's doing well. But I'm not pushing him. He should decide for himself whether he wants to go into sports more seriously.

Did your parents push you towards basketball?

No. I guess I was just a fanatic. We lived in a small town, in Saldus. The NBA game summaries were shown on TV on Sundays, and I always watched those. Afterwards, I played basketball for the rest of the day in our house. I had two baskets – one at either end of the room. I pretended I was Ainars Bagatskis or Roberts Štelmahers (now the head and assistant coaches of the Latvian national team, respectively – D. Ā.) or one of the NBA players, such as Michael Jordan. I made up my own teams, played and also announced the game myself. I could spend the whole day doing that.

When did you start playing basketball more seriously?

When I began attending Secondary School No. 1 in Saldus at the age of ten. I began going to basketball practices there and played in the Youth Basketball league with boys that were two years older than me. At first, though, I had no dreams of devoting my life to basketball.

What were some of the defining moments on your path to the Euroleague?

When I was 16 years old, I was invited to play on the Latvian U-18 team even though I was two years younger than the other players. When I first entered the locker room, everyone looked at me and began to giggle.... That hurt, but it made me realise that I had to practice hard on my own and grow a thick skin. I did everything the coach said and more. That helped. My brother, Arvis, was also a good role model – he was an athlete and didn't drink alcohol. When we played one-on-one at home, he let me win and kind of nudged me forward. In Riga, I lived together with three other guys. We had practice at six in the morning, then we went to school, and then back to practice.... I didn't go out at all and was sensible – I definitely got that from my parents and my teachers.

Has anyone else influenced you in a similar way?

Definitely my wife, Liene, whom I met when I was 19 years old. Before then, it was always my family who helped me forge on ahead; later, it was Liene. She didn't let me slack off. She said I needed to finish college, and I did so. The bar was always raised higher and higher, even though sometimes we didn't have enough money for bus tickets and wondered how we'd get home.

I was invited to Riga by Valdis Valters (a Latvian basketball legend – D. Ā.), who at the time oversaw all of the national teams. He invited a lot of guys to play. Some succeeded, others didn't. Most of them didn't succeed. Guntis Endzels invited me to play on the Latvian junior national team.

So, if Valters invited you, that means you definitely had some talent?

In Saldus, I had been a leading player on my team. We played in the Youth Basketball league, and I shot a lot of



I've survived all kinds of practices, and I haven't cried about any of them

three-pointers. When I began playing in Riga, my brother teased me, calling me "small and white" running around the field. I still remember that.... After all, when you're only 16, it makes a big difference to be playing with guys who are two years older. So I began training individually and lifted a lot of weights to increase my muscle mass so I wouldn't be so "small and white", as my brother had called me. I was always going the extra mile. I didn't party at all.

In other words, you learned the lesson that talent without work doesn't mean anything?

Yes. Although I did have good examples to follow. My father worked very hard, my brother and sister spent nights studying for university... Compared with Riga, there were fewer opportunities in Saldus. What was there to do all day? So I played ball. Of course, my parents made me work – I had to go out to the farm and help bring in hay and weed the fields. Now I feel bad that I don't have the opportunity to bring my own son out to a farm and show him how to weed the beet fields or harvest potatoes, bring in the hay and put it up in the haybarn. On the other hand, I see that the kids today are very talented. I visited my son at his summer camp, and all the boys there were tall and had a lot of talent. There are a lot of opportunities to become a good player. You just need to stick with it and work hard.

That made me think of what *Panathinaikos'* coach, Duško Ivanović, said about your work ethic and your professional attitude.

I consider Ivanović to be the top coach in Europe, the benchmark for coaches. I cannot even begin to describe the great respect players have for him, the way he presents himself both on and off the court. He's a real gentleman. He's very strict, but he treats everyone as equals, whether you're a superstar or a reserve player. And he treats everyone as equals off the court as well – he's genuine and open with everyone. Ivanović has won a lot of titles with *Barcelona* and *Laboral Kutxa* in Spain and in other countries, too. He was an excellent player himself. I was quite moved to hear him call me a true professional, even though I was already 33 years old.

When was it that you talked about it?

We had lost to *Olympiacos* the previous day, and Ivanović was dismissed from his job after that game. We had a practice the following morning, and he came to say goodbye to the players. He shook each one's hand and said something to each of us. To me he said, "Thank you for your work, you're a true professional. It was a pleasure working with you. Sorry if in some games you were on the court more, and in other games on the court less, but you were an important player for us."

Not everyone is pleased with coaches from the former Yugoslavia....

Yes, that's right. Some players now even have a clause in their contracts that they can leave a club if it hires a Yugoslav coach. I've played under five or six of them, and I played well. The more I train, the better I play. If I relax, I can't play well. I need discipline and a strict regimen. I've survived all kind of practices, and I haven't cried about any of them. Sometimes it's even good to, for example, have a two-and-a-half-hour practice after a bad game, because then you forget all of the bad moments. Plus, it's a good way to stay in shape.

What does work ethic mean to you?

I'm not your average person (*laughs*), because I'm always working with my body. I watch closely what I eat and what vitamins I take, and I regularly do blood tests to monitor how much iron and other necessary nutrients I have in my blood.

I've heard you're a pretty good cook....

Yes, I've learned a thing or two while living and playing in the south – in Italy, Spain and now Greece. Many of the people who've come to visit us over these six years – our parents, brothers, sisters – have returned home and begun to prepare healthier meals. They've begun to avoid heavy foods and, for example, eat a tuna salad or pasta with Bolognese sauce for lunch. For breakfast I always eat porridge or eggs. Everything is done with sports in mind, with my job in mind. Actually, everything I do has something to do with basketball. We live near a forest, and I often take the dog for walks so that I get fresh air in my lungs. I run in the mornings and take the boat out with my son in order to work different muscle groups. I hate it when someone exercises more than me! (*Laughs*) I don't mind if someone plays better than me, but if someone trains more than me, then I'm up at seven the following morning to train.



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Ivanović saw you in the Euroleague, but at first *Panathinaikos* only offered you a month-long trial contract. Did you think it over for a long time?

I was in excellent physical shape after playing on the Latvian national team in the European championship qualification rounds last summer. The call from *Panathinaikos* came as a surprise. Even though they only offered me a month, I figured that might be my last chance to play with the greats and I should accept it.

For the first month in Greece, I hardly left my hotel room because the practices were so merciless. I often even ordered meals in my hotel room. But I was totally concentrated on basketball, I played well, the team also did well, and so I was offered to stay another month. Again I played well, and they offered to extend my contract on a 1+1 year basis. We got into the top eight in the Euroleague and won the Greek Cup, but we lost in the Greek championship finals. If we had lost the cup and won the championship, both the coach and I might have stayed on the team. I think I played the best I could, and I enjoyed being on one of the best teams in Europe with such a long history. The team considered me one of their own, partly because Janis is also a very popular name in Greece. But in Greek it's written Yannis.

What surprised you about the Athens club?

Actually, everything. The way they deal with players.... One player becomes injured, and the next day they've got someone else to replace him. If you're injured, you're immediately taken to the hospital and they check everything. Even if it's something minor, because a big club has no time to waste. They need an immediate answer regarding a player's condition. They've got lots of support staff, too – about 30 in all, ten or so of whom are medical staff. And lots of people come to watch the games. They get audiences of about 13,000-14,000 for Euroleague games, but when they play *Olympiacos* the arena is always full, about 20,000 people. I was only there for nine months, but I was shocked that people recognised me on the street. I wonder what it's like for their best-known players, such as Dimitris Diamantidis or Vassilis Spanoulis (*laughs*).

Did Greece's economic crisis affect you in any way?

Until the beginning of June it wasn't really noticeable. We usually ate at a restaurant that belonged to a *Panathinaikos* fan. The place was usually full of people at any hour, every day of the week. When friends of mine came to visit to watch the finals, I took them out to the restaurant on Saturday evening. I thought it would be full, so I made a reservation. But when we got there, it was empty! The owner said that everyone in Greece was doing poorly now; everybody was watching TV and waiting for what the finance minister would say. No one wants to go out and spend money. It was the same at all the other restaurants and cafés, too – all empty. I was used to everything being full.

The life of an athlete also affects his familial relationships.

How do you handle being away from your family?

My family has always been with me. Except in the past two years, because our son began going to school in Latvia. It was hard being all alone, but last year I brought my trainer along to

Astana. And this year my wife visited me in Athens about ten times, so it wasn't so bad. Besides, *airBaltic* has a direct flight from Riga to Athens during the summers. People came to visit every weekend for the Euroleague games – my parents, my in-laws, brothers, sisters, friends. I had visitors for every game, so there was no time for boredom. And besides, we had a lot of training, too. It was definitely harder for our children, with their father being away. They need someone to take them to practices, meet them after school, give them a hug.... But they came to visit me eight times. My contract included paid visits home, but not eight of them (*laughs*).

And how did you like living in a city with such an ancient culture?

Greek history is impressive, and Greece and Athens is "God's land". They've got everything you could wish for: great food, a pleasant climate, islands, nature.... And so much sun....

Did you make note of any places you'd like to go on holiday?

Just recently I travelled to one of the islands, Mykonos, which is one of the world's most popular party places. After Midsummer in Latvia, I headed to Mykonos to the wedding of one of my best friends from abroad, Dimitrios Mavroeidis. We played together in Spain. I've been to Rhodes many times, but I presume it's impossible to see all of the Greek islands.

For the first month in Greece, I hardly left my hotel room because the practices were so merciless

Your fate, and that of the club's coach, were in large part decided by Athens' loss to its bitter enemy, *Olympiacos* of Piraeus. People say that games between the two clubs are like war. What was it like?

Up to a certain point, you can say that *Olympiacos* has been a working-class team, while *Panathinaikos* is a rich team. Now there are more *Olympiacos* fans, because historically there were more working-class people. The rivalry is insane. You cannot enter the *Panathinaikos* area of town with an *Olympiacos* shirt. *Panathinaikos* fans are from central Athens, while the *Olympiacos* area is down by the Piraeus port.

What does this rivalry mean to you personally?

I never went to areas of the city with a majority of *Olympiacos* supporters. When friends and family came to visit, I put them on the metro and told them where to go, but I never showed my face there myself. That would have been dangerous for my family.

And what were the games like?

Everything in the arena is fenced off with nets. It's like being in a circus. You enter through a tunnel, and no one can throw anything onto the court. At one time, there were no nets and players often got hit by firecrackers, lighters or coins. This year, we played against *PAOK* in Thessaloniki. There were about 10,000 fans in the audience, and someone threw a lighter, which

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whizzed by about 30 centimetres from my head. They've got some crazy fans there, too, but there are no nets in that arena.

When you join a new team, how do you make friends with your teammates? What's important when entering a new group?

There's the way you play, the microclimate in the team, your own personality.... Everything plays a role when creating a team. The coaches and managers usually call around to other clubs and coaches and ask them what the players are like. I've also been called and asked about former teammates. The compatibility of personalities is a very important element of success because sometimes a team that has talent, but lacks harmony amongst its players, can be beaten by a less-talented team with players that do get along with each other. I've been on good teams that just don't win because of interpersonal conflicts or misunderstandings. But I've also been on teams that aren't so talented, but we've played together well as a team.

How did you fit in at *Panathinaikos*, where practically every player is a star on the European level?

I got along well, because we're all professionals. Athens is a big city, we lived scattered about the whole city, and I didn't know anything about the other players' personal lives. They all just arrived at work,

did their job, and then each headed back to his own part of the city. There were a couple of other players who were in Athens without their families, and sometimes I went out to eat with them when my family wasn't visiting. But the level of professionalism was very high; everybody knew what kind of club we were in, and we all had similar goals.

Do you like flying?

I don't mind flying at all. Except the nighttime flights from Astana, when we had to travel long distances through Moscow to the VTB league games – those were very tiring.

Do you have a list of everything you need to take along when you travel?

My list is simple. Usually it's my *iPod* and headphones, a book or magazine. It depends. Sometimes I want to read, other times I want to listen to music or watch a film. But I can't fall sleep on an airplane.

Do you travel much when you're on holiday?

I like being at home the best – that's in Langstiņi near Riga. There I've got the forest, a lake and a large house. That's where I feel the best. I've travelled all around the world, but nothing beats being at home. That said, I've tried to see as much as I could in all of the countries I've played in. When my family was with me, we always travelled on vacation and tried to learn something new – islands, museums, zoos, city centres, local foods. You could call it a hobby of ours.

Every boy who's played basketball has dreamed of playing for the NBA. Have you as well?

I don't really like NBA basketball. I enjoy the Euroleague games, but I don't even really know what goes on in the NBA. Of course, I know the European players there and the biggest stars. But actually, *Panathinaikos* is my NBA. Europe does have some big teams – *Olympiacos*, *CSKA*, *Barcelona*, *Real* in Madrid, maybe *Maccabi* – and *Panathinaikos* is among them.

What are some other highlights of your career?

Definitely the four years I spent in Spain. Those were wonderful. We made it to the



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- Born in Saldus, Latvia, on April 20, 1982.
- Can play point guard, but prefers the shooting guard position.
- Has played in Latvia, Poland, Lithuania, Italy, Spain, Kazakhstan and Greece.
- Has won the Latvian championship twice, the Kazakhstan championship, the BBL championship, the Greek and Spanish vice-championships and also the Greek Basketball Cup. His teams have twice made it to the Euroleague quarterfinals and twice to the Eurocup Final Four.
- Has played the last four seasons in the Euroleague.
- Has a good reputation as a three-point shooter and had one of the highest three-point field goal percentages in the Euroleague in the 2013/2014 season.
- Has played for the Latvian national basketball team since 2002. As of summer 2015, has earned 954 points for the national team in 122 games.
- Participated in the European championship finals in 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011 and 2013.
- Captain of the Latvian national team since 2011.
- Blūms and his wife, Liene, have a son named Roberts (nine years old) and a daughter named Amanda (four years old).

Spanish Cup finals, where we lost to *Barcelona*. Spain broke my heart, and then it was hard for me to get used to any other place.

Are you superstitious?

I have my rituals before every game, but I don't talk about those publicly. Actually, I'm very superstitious.

What do you do before important games?

I have my regular schedule: I wake up, eat breakfast and go to practice. Then, if it's not an away game, I make myself lunch. For example, a salad and pasta with Bolognese sauce. Then I rest for a little bit, exercise a little, and I definitely go somewhere to have a cup of coffee before the game. I choose a special place for coffee in every country I've lived in. I like lattes and cappuccinos, but in Greece I drank a lot of freddo cappuccino – basically, a cold cappuccino. Then I head to the game.

In 2011 you became captain of the Latvian national team. What's the recipe for becoming a captain?

I've never said no to the national team. Unless, of course, I was having health issues. I've been with the national team since 2002. It's always been a joy, but it's also a responsibility. I don't think one can just refuse one's national team. I'm

33 now, and I want to play! And playing on my national team is a special honour for me as a professional athlete. We are not paid for it, but I've spent the best years of my career on the national team. There I meet all of the best players in the country, we unite under a common goal and enjoy the time we spend together. It's not like being in a club, where you get paid a salary. On the national team you're playing for your country and your family, and you're happy to be there.

A captain needs to set a good example, and he also needs to know that the other players trust him and respect his opinion. We're all equal, but the players need to know that if they need something, they can ask the captain and he'll do it; he'll help out, or he'll go talk with the coach and management. They need to feel they can depend on the captain. I've played on a lot of teams and have had the opportunity to analyse what a captain should be like and what he should avoid doing. I didn't seek out the captainship myself. But it's a great honour to be the captain of the national team, and I try to live up to it.

Do you have any other dreams for the basketball court?

Yes, I'd like to take part in the Olympic Games with the Latvian national team. That's definitely the big dream. **BO**



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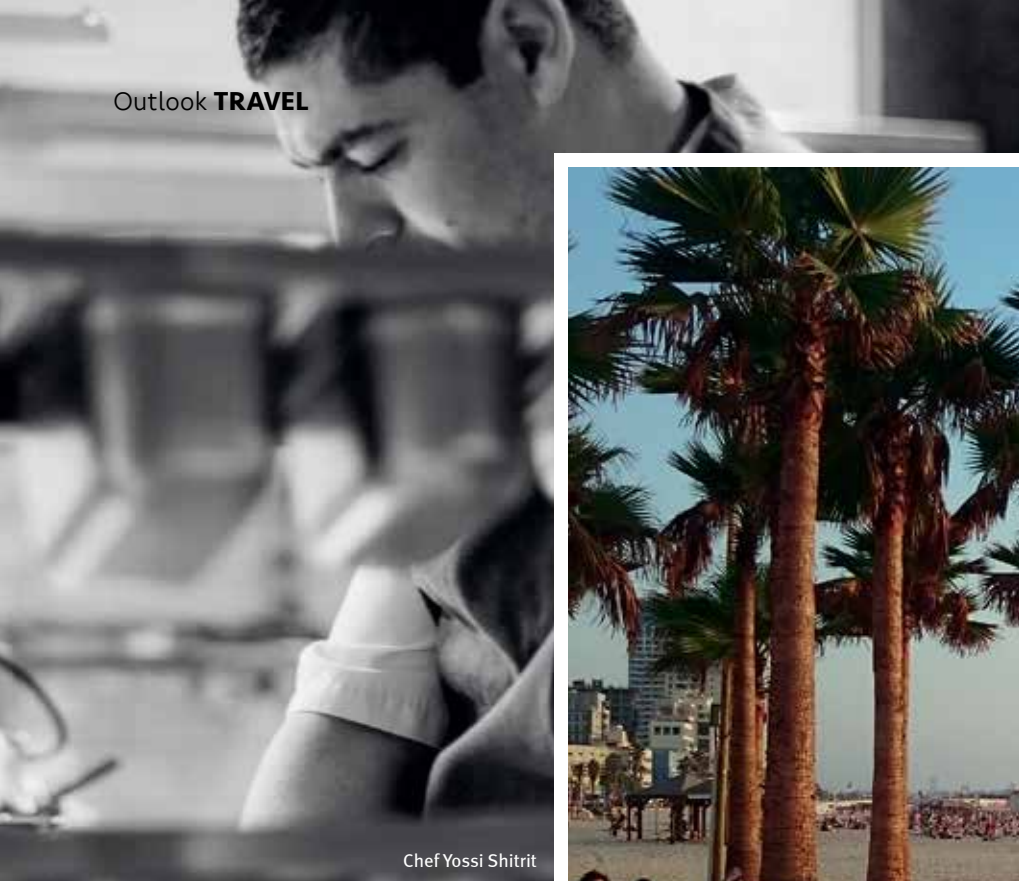
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Tel Aviv chefs are rising stars of the gourmet world. They know how to freely combine flavours and ingredients from the Middle East with classic European cuisine, which results in heavenly, original works of art that taste good, too. *Baltic Outlook* offers a hot new guide to the trendiest neighbourhoods and best restaurants in Tel Aviv.

It seems Tel Aviv has become this year's most desirable destination. This dynamic and creative city contrasts sharply with stereotypes about the Middle East and is building on its reputation as a European city. Even the U.K. edition of *Wired* tech magazine has chosen Tel Aviv as one of the top ten high-tech centres of Europe, even though the city is actually in Asia. "Tel Aviv is where the money is. The startup nation became the exit nation in 2014, with Israeli tech sales and IPOs hitting \$15 billion," *Wired* notes on its website. Meanwhile, Tel Aviv natives tend to emphasise that Israel has the highest concentration of engineers in the world and is now home to the greatest concentration of high-tech startup companies outside of Silicon Valley.

Orly Segal, a public relations specialist for various restaurants and hotels in the country, says that just ten years ago Tel Aviv was still a fairly boring city trying to copy Tokyo, London and New York. "But now the second and third generation of immigrants are in charge, and they've got immense passion and a desire to create instead of copy," she says.

In addition to rapid development and originality in the high-tech sector, the desire and talents of Tel Aviv's people to create is also very noticeable in architecture, design, food and wine. For frequent travellers who think nothing can surprise them anymore, Tel Aviv is nevertheless a pleasant surprise in the fact that the above-mentioned fields supplement each other in such a refined and nuanced way. This perfect synergy is most apparent in the city's countless restaurants. It is said there are more than 450 restaurants in Tel Aviv, and I don't dare to question that number, because restaurants dot Tel Aviv's streets from north to south. Here, then, are some of the current culinary hotspots in the city's most exciting districts.



Chef Yossi Shitrit



A culinary work of art at the *Mashya* restaurant



A culinary work of art at the *Mashya* restaurant



Tel Aviv's beaches are also perfect for carefree vacations in autumn and winter

Jewels on the beach

Travellers flock to Tel Aviv's beaches, and there are very many of them. Actually, the whole western edge of the city is one long Mediterranean seashore. It stretches for 14 kilometres, so I rented a bicycle already on my first day to get to know the city better. Some hotels offer bicycles to their guests, but if not, there's probably a *Tel-O-Fun* bicycle docking station nearby. The green bicycles are available 24 hours a day, all year round, in a self-service format (pay with your credit card at any station).

With the bicycle taken care of, it's time to discover Tel Aviv. The city claims to have over 70 kilometres of marked bicycle paths, but riding on the sidewalks is also acceptable. In fact, you can even ride around Tel Aviv in a dress and high heels, because

the terrain is flat and both pedestrians and car drivers are very tolerant of bicycles.

First I decide to get to know the beaches, and as I arrive on the main promenade, I find myself among sun worshippers and...joggers. Tel Aviv is definitely one of the healthiest cities in the world. Blenders and green cocktails have long been popular here, the residents make active use of the many exercise areas and swimming pools, and this summer witnessed the opening of the world's first paleo market. For those who don't know, the fashionable Paleo diet takes inspiration from the food habits of our caveman ancestors.

Once I've figured out how to manoeuvre around the many athletic people, I begin to notice other things about the Tel Aviv beach. I stop by a library on two wheels stocked with books in English, Hebrew, Arabic, Russian and French, which beachgoers are free to borrow while sunbathing, and I listen to several musicians giving free concerts at sunset. The beaches are very well-furnished, with lockers for belongings, comfortable showers, plenty of seating and bars. They also cater to a great many interests, from surfing, paddle surfing and kayaking, all the way to the gay-lesbian community. Nor have beach volleyball, meditation, families with young children, parties or even dog owners been forgotten. But there is one magical moment when everyone along the beach suddenly seems to quiet down – as the sun sets, almost every bench is full of people, all eyes on the colourful spectacle of the sun sinking into the Mediterranean Sea.

And, after the sun has set, it's time to see what's happening on Tel Aviv's food scene. Eating out is a daily ritual for most of the city's residents, whose average monthly salary is around 2500 euros per month. The cafés and restaurants are full all day long, leading one to wonder whether anybody in this city works at all. Tel Aviv Port in the northwestern part of the city is one of the locals' favourite places to dine near the beach. The neighbourhood has recently been restored and is now one of the hottest places in town. This is also where I find one of Tel Aviv's top restaurants, *Kitchen Market Restaurant* (kitchen-market.co.il; Henger 12, Shuk Hanaml, Tel Aviv Port), with charismatic and talented chef Yossi Shitrit at the helm.

The restaurant is named for its proximity to and use of fresh, locally sourced ingredients from the small but exquisite farmer's market one floor below it. Freshness and simplicity are the key words at *Kitchen Market Restaurant*. The chef calls the cuisine modern fusion with Mediterranean, French and Japanese influences. Shitrit has been working in Tel Aviv for only four years. Before then, he and his wife owned a highly regarded French restaurant in a small Israeli village, and many of his customers followed him to the big city. "We tried to be different and people appreciated that, but the restaurant's location was a problem. Back in the village, I prepared 50 meals a day; now I make 200 to 250 a day. I now have two restaurants in Tel Aviv and the *Onza* bar in Jaffa. My biggest challenge right now

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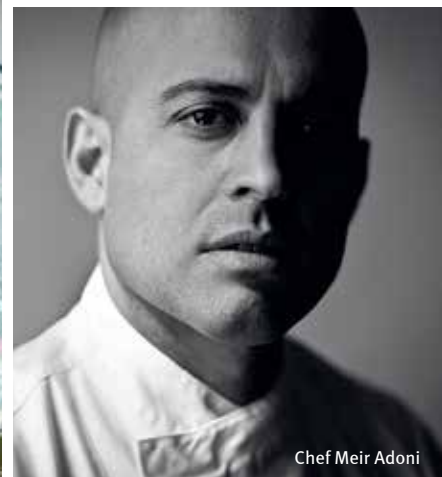
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Chef Meir Adoni

is opening my newest restaurant, *Mashya*. My next challenge might be opening a restaurant in Europe or America,” says Shitrit about his future plans.

Mashya restaurant (mashya.co.il; Mendeli Street 5), located in the *Mendeli Street Hotel* near Frishman Beach, received enthusiastic reviews already in its first week. I was first drawn to the wall covered in ferns and other greenery that cools guests after a day in the sweltering city, and the way in which the chefs behind the counter coordinate and prepare orders. The restaurant’s special breakfast menu is worth a try, as is the dinner salad with figs, arugula, labane, toasted sesame seeds, and avocado blossom honey (approximately EUR 11). It’s a light and superb combination of flavours. And, of course, the excellent Mediterranean fish with Jerusalem artichoke, freekeh, and buttermilk of herbs and yogurt (approximately EUR 26).

Back at the modernly elegant *Kitchen Market Restaurant*, chef Shitrit recommends the porcini crème brûlée. “Everybody’s talking about it. I’ve wondered why people like it so much, and I guess it’s the combination of sweet and smoky flavours,” he says.

And I must agree, the porcini crème brûlée is heavenly. Another thing Shitrit is known for is indescribably beautiful and creative service. In this sense, my favourite is the cheesecake with olive sablé (approximately EUR 10). I highly recommend it, and, as you look out across the sparkling Mediterranean Sea from the restaurant’s huge windows, allow yourself the childish pleasure of exploring, layer by layer, all the unusual ingredients of this dessert.



A culinary work of art at the *Catit* restaurant



Elegant Bauhaus architecture



The *Catit* restaurant – a Tel Aviv legend

The lustre and elegance of the boulevards

Do not make the mistake of limiting your visit to Tel Aviv to its beaches, impersonal beach hotels and beachside bars and restaurants. In fact, they’re the reason many people are disappointed with Israel’s Sin City. Other faces of the city reveal themselves when you step away from the crowds of tourists. I, too, did not heed the locals’ advice and had dinner one evening in a randomly selected restaurant on the beach that was full of tourists. I left with a stomach full of poorly prepared pasta and a feeling that Tel Aviv has no character or interesting secrets to reveal. But then I remembered what Ira Popov, an employee at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, said to me on my very first day: “The locals only go to the beach to have a beer, because many of the restaurants there concentrate on quantity instead of quality.”

So, for quality and more beautiful features, I recommend seeking out the legendary Bauhaus architecture. With over 4000 houses, Tel Aviv, nicknamed the White City, has the world’s largest number of buildings in the Bauhaus style. In particular, head to Rothschild Boulevard, the city’s oldest and most

ornate street. Declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2003, the White City was built largely by Jews fleeing Nazi Germany. The Bauhaus architectural style follows a few aesthetical ground rules, such as simplicity, clean cuts, white walls and no unnecessary decorations. One of the most obvious characteristics of the style is small, round balconies, which give the buildings a unique appearance.

I stroll along the aristocratic boulevards lined with noble white homes and realise that this is where the city’s soul lives. Tel Aviv is a new city (founded in 1909), and these buildings constructed in the 1930s-1950s give it its special story and character. That said, Tel Aviv is also a city of contrasts – it is not uncommon to find Bauhaus, modern skyscrapers and Middle Eastern heritage all on one street.

Art Deco and Great Gatsby themes fit well with Tel Aviv’s boulevards and Bauhaus buildings, especially in the evenings, when, in preparation for dinner, I feel like putting on my prettiest dress and painting my lips. Out on the street I find many others in the same joyous and radiant mood. The perfect place to begin such an evening of celebration is Tel Aviv’s first world-class boutique hotel, *Montefiore*



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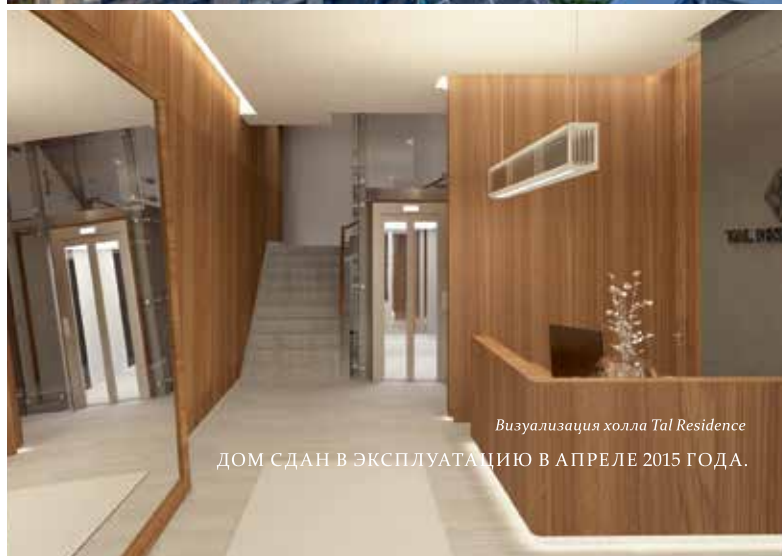
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Duo of chefs at *Milgo & Milbar*: Moti Titman (right) and Orr Michaeli



The trendy and lively *Milgo & Milbar* restaurant



A culinary work of art at *Milgo & Milbar*



A culinary work of art at *Milgo & Milbar*

(hotelmontefiore.co.il; 36 Montefiore Street). The restaurant in this beautiful Art Deco hotel is a favourite of Israel's rich and powerful, but we begin the evening in its elegant bar with a glass of Chablis against a background of jazz music.

Very near this cinematographic oasis is one of Meir Adoni's restaurants. Israel's most famous chef, Adoni is considered Tel Aviv's leader of elite epicurism. He takes part in television shows, writes books and initiates unique projects, such as *Foodography*, an elite Instagram-inspired course that teaches how to take good photographs of food with a cell phone. A visit to his restaurants is a matter of honour and self-respect for lovers of gastronomy.

At age 22, Adoni set off on a culinary journey around the world. First, he studied at Cordon Bleu in Sydney and later at La Maison Lenôtre in Paris. But his career really took off once he returned to Israel and opened his first restaurant, *Catit* (catit.co.il; 57 Nahlat Binyamin Street), in 2002. Adoni still considers

Catit his culinary temple, where he blends Moroccan and Israeli traditions with cutting-edge, state-of-the-art high technology.

We meet the creative and passionate chef at *Catit*'s whimsical younger sister, *Mizlala* (mizlala.co.il), which caters to guests only one door down from its more elite and even-tempered older sister. At first impression, *Mizlala* seems more like a hip and well-designed club than a restaurant. It has lower prices, a simpler menu and a freer atmosphere than its older sister. Adoni says he envisioned *Mizlala* as an Israeli brasserie, where Jewish food meets both Arab influence and the knowledge he brought from working and studying overseas. "It's more wild. It's not so much perfect painting on plates, as it is at my other restaurants," says Adoni.

When describing Israeli cuisine, Adoni believes its key to success is the expressive flavours. "We don't try to balance flavours like the Europeans. Fresh herbs and strong spices are our trump cards. We like powerful things

in food," he says. According to Adoni, one of *Mizlala*'s signature dishes is a boulangerie croissant filled with calf brain (approximately EUR 22). "My mother is from Morocco, and we've traditionally been taught to use everything, every last bit. A Moroccan woman will not allow any part of a cow to be left unused. For me, too, using just a fillet is boring. Some may like my approach, others not, but at least it's interesting. I like to be crazy in my creation. I like no limits, no borders. I cook for myself first, and only then for my customers. I've been in this profession for more than 20 years, and I work 16 hours a day, so I can't allow myself to be unsatisfied with what I create. If a chef is unhappy, you'll know it immediately on your plate," says Adoni.

I learn more about how important it is to love one's work and to fill it with one's own philosophy from Moti Titman, the chef at *Milgo & Milbar* (milgomilbar.co.il; Rothschild Boulevard 142), a seafood restaurant with a European atmosphere set in a classic Bauhaus-style building. Titman has spent many years in various kitchens across the country and explains, "My mission is to make foods from the best ingredients Israel can offer. And, of course, corresponding to the seasons. Even our seafood menu changes depending on what the fishermen offer us each morning. As in many places around the world, Israel, too, is struggling with decreasing amounts of fish in the sea." As a result, this vibrant and lively combination of a restaurant and bar that sits at one of the best corners in Tel Aviv offers a modern, precise culinary experience consisting of fish, fresh seafood and local organic produce. The bold wine list and the beautiful jazz and soul music (taken from the owner's private playlist) adds additional charm.



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Chef Yuval Ben Neriah



The interior at Taizu has won the acclaim of many design magazines



The great atmosphere at Taizu



A culinary work of art at Taizu

An oasis between skyscrapers

One of the newest, freshest and most happening places in Tel Aviv is the new Sarona complex, originally a German Templar colony, right in the heart of the city. Here, 33 original Templar buildings dating back more than 140 years have been painstakingly restored, and today they house boutique stores, artist galleries, quaint cafés and some of the city's hottest restaurants and bars.

Evening is the best time for a stroll through Sarona. The homey and intimate collection of two-storey houses surrounded by green lawns and narrow streets lighted with elegant strings of lights is tucked in between tall skyscrapers. At the centre of it all one finds families with children eating picnic-style dinners, couples on first dates playing games set out for everyone's use, and people tired of the hustle and bustle of the big city.

But the best thing about the Sarona complex is Sarona Market. Touted as the country's largest indoor culinary market, it reminds many of New York's Chelsea Market. Located underground, literally under the skyscrapers, this newly opened market is finer and more choice than Carmel Market, the city's main food and vegetable market. Sarona Market, with its captivating ethnic design, sells everything from fresh fruit, fish, cheeses and olive oils to wines, but the packaging here is fancier than in the city centre. Be prepared for countless tastings and the spending of many shekels, because this is not the cheapest market in Tel Aviv.

After having tasted Israel's best at the market – olives, hummus, halvah and honey – it's time to think about a more substantial meal, and right across the street we find the exciting and large-scale *Jajo Wine Bar* (jajotlv.com; David Elazar 27). This spectacular restaurant is located in a grand space, an

old sandstone winery built by the German Templars who settled in Palestine 150 years ago. The wine menu includes over 180 bottles. The promising chef, Adi Levi, is responsible for the elegant and delicious menu designed to complement the fine wines.

For those wishing to walk a little further for a truly heavenly dinner, I recommend heading down Menachem Begin Street towards Jaffa to one of Tel Aviv's best Asian cuisine hot-spots, *Taizu Asia Terranean Kitchen* (taizu.co.il; Derech Menachem Begin Street 23). *Taizu* is a new concept restaurant based on chef Yuval Ben Neriah's personal interpretation of street food in five Southeast Asian countries: India, China, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam.

Renowned Israeli architect Pitsou Kedem was partnered with the Baranowitz-Amit Design Studio to design the space, which must be the most well-thought-out restaurant in the city. The interior is rooted in the five elements of ancient Chinese philosophy (Fire, Water, Metal, Wood and Earth) and evokes a sense of Asia without being traditional or too literal. The five-element concept is also reflected in the menu, which is crafted as a culinary journey that goes from soft and delicate flavours to deep and bold ones. Definitely try the chef's recommendation of wild sea bass fillet with macadamia nuts, Brazil nuts, sweet potato leaves, ginger, shallots and lemon grass (approximately EUR 38), which is full of umami. "I wanted to create a completely new restaurant concept, so, when I allowed my fantasy to run wild regarding the menu, I realised that tastes – just like these five legendary elements of Chinese philosophy – differ from one another in terms of weight. Salty is very light, just like water. But umami is the heaviest, like metal. It's so self-sufficient and stays in the mouth for a long time," says Ben Neriah.

After spending a week with Tel Aviv's best chefs, I find that they – just like that elusive, wonderful umami taste – are themselves quite a self-sufficient and complete bunch. And also marvellously creative and enthusiastic. It's no wonder that tables at their culinary hotspots must be reserved well ahead of time, especially for evening meals. But believe me, there's no better way to end a day of enjoying the warm sunshine and gazing at the endless blue of the Mediterranean Sea. **BO**

The author thanks Ira Popov for helping her get to know Tel Aviv.

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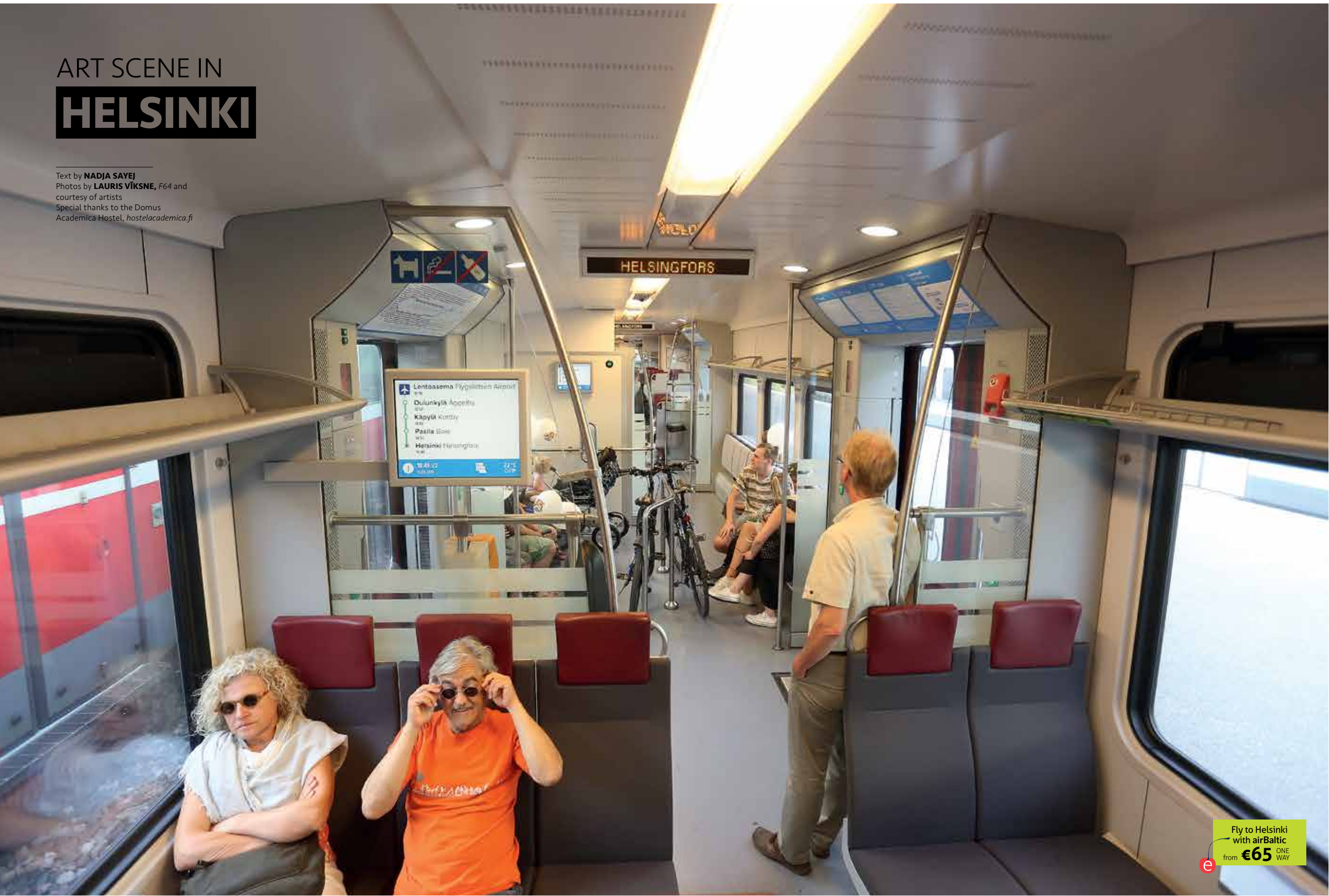
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ART SCENE IN HELSINKI

Text by **NADJA SAYEJ**
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The Helsinki art scene is vibrant and full of life. The city centre is home to a cluster of galleries, while artist-run spaces and converted-factory venues are busy with exhibitions, performances and studios for younger and established artists. With a comics festival, a contemporary art museum, a photo biennial, an art fair and world-renowned art museums, it's no wonder the Guggenheim came knocking on Helsinki's door. In a decision that has divided the local art scene, discussions continue around the potential of building a Guggenheim museum in the Finnish capital, which would add an international art museum to the city's already unique cultural fabric. With or without the Guggenheim cred, the local artists already have a lot to offer. In a tour of studio visits, here is a peek at some of the best Finnish artists today.

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HANNALEENA HEISKA

Known for her expressive brushwork and luscious colours, Heiska has painted everything from spirit animals to crying girls. She draws inspiration from music – everything from classical music to electronic – and animals in her work. Most recently, she has sketched a series of astronomical observatories and Nordic icebergs in charcoal. “I combine science, intuition and feelings together,” she says. “I love fantasy.” Heiska has a forthcoming exhibition in Norway.

① hannaleenaheiska.com

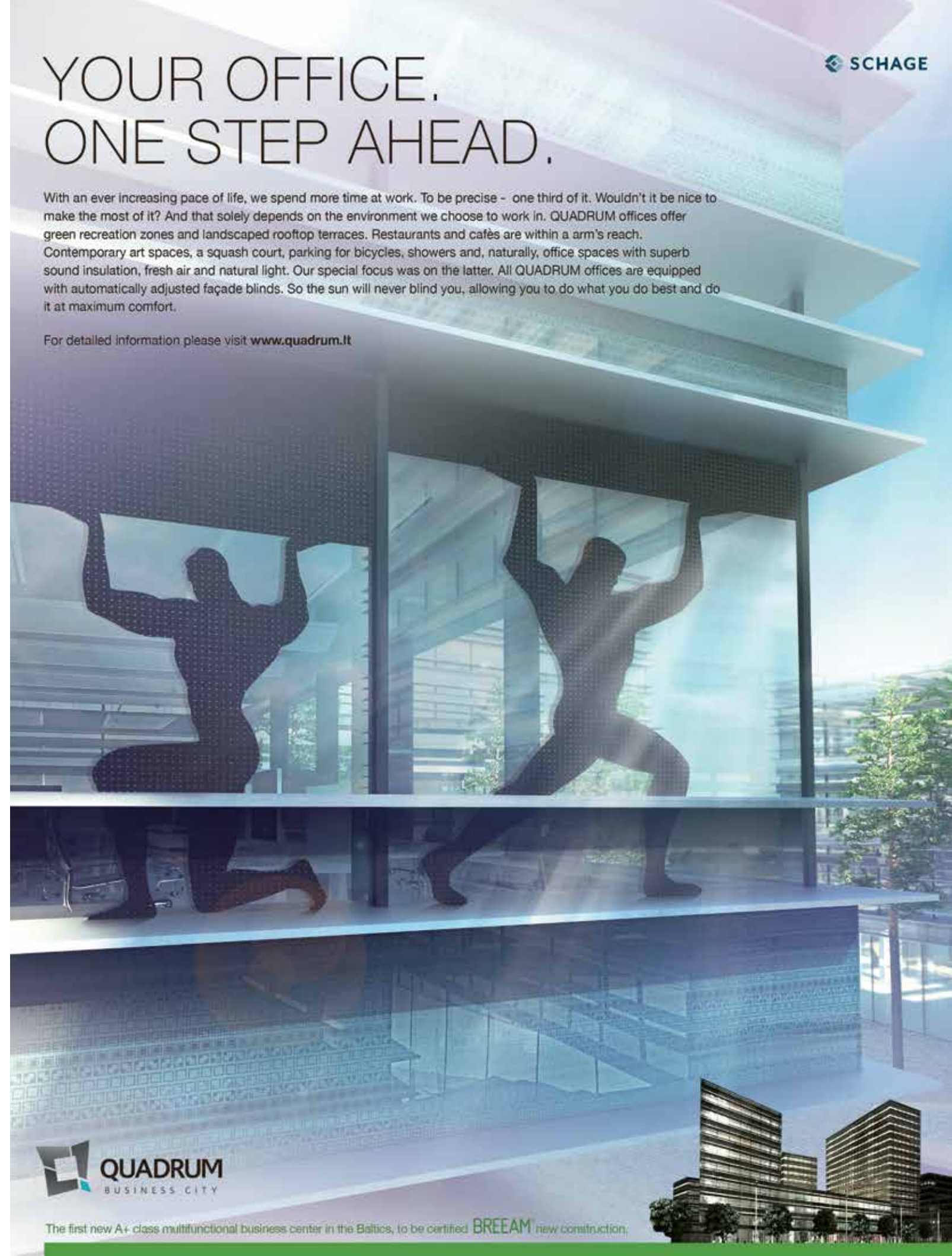


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TIMO VAITTINEN

One of the most psychedelic of artists, Vaittinen is not afraid of colour. A painter, sculptor and video artist known for his Technicolor universe, his multi-faceted work is inspired by 1980s nostalgia, counterculture and Finnish abstraction. He has shot videos on VHS, used tie-dye for wall works and painted scenes that look like figurines melting in a microwave. Vaittinen's most recent art book was made in a Turku prison. He is also a co-founder of Helsinki's artist-run SIC Space. "I wanted to make the biggest tie-dye canvas in the world, using a hippie teenager thing with patches," he says in his studio. Vaittinen shows next at SIC Space in October.

① sicspace.net/artists/timo-vaittinen

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PEKKA JYLHÄ

In Espoo, Jylhä makes large, fantasy-inspired sculptures in a studio surrounded by rabbits, pear trees and a greenhouse. With a taste for the vintage, a number of items in his studio – clay sunflowers, a toy horse, glass – are found, if not handcrafted. From a map of Ukraine made of Louis Vuitton crystals to a spilling handbag inspired by the Greek financial crisis, Jylhä's work is a take on news, politics and current events. The titles say it all: *Revelation* shows a deer overlooking the Finnish landscape atop a steep cliff, while *Windows to the Sky* is a chandelier in the Finnish parliament ("So they can do good thinking," he says). Jylhä shows at Helsinki Contemporary in February.

📞 pekkajylha.fi



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SUSANNA MAJURI

Majuri, who has a love of Nordic scenery, photographs female models underwater. Dreamy and poetic, her fairy-tale-like works also include various landscapes. Inspired by the fiction of Icelandic writer Vigdis Grimsdottir as well as motherhood, she describes her work as autobiography mixed with fiction. Represented by the Helsinki School, Majuri shows at Gallery Heino next year. She will

also take part in the Finnish Goldsmith Association's 110th Jubilee Year Exhibition *Brilliant!*, which will open on September 18th and feature jewellery from the 1960s onwards by 30 Goldsmiths of the Year and Majuri's photography art. In her sunny downtown studio and with her toddler nearby, Majuri says, "It's so much love, but it's the most serious thing."

① susannamajuri.com



SEPTEMBER 2015

04	concert	SEASON OPENING GALA CONCERT	
05	opera	IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA	
06	ballet	GISELLE	
18, 19	opera	THE BIRDS' OPERA	Premiere of Revival
20	concert	THE SUNNY CORNER	
20	ballet	LA BAYADÈRE	
24	ballet	ROMEO AND JULIET	
25	opera	IL TROVATORE	
26	ballet	SWAN LAKE	
27	ballet	UNKNOWN TERRITORIES	
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WINE TOUR OF **TUSCANY**

Text and photos by
ANDA KĀRKLINA,
andasstuff.wordpress.lv

Working hours adapted to meals and wine? That's nothing unusual. Welcome to Tuscany, the region of Italy where the enjoyment of food and wine, along with a good dose of joie de vivre and leisure, have been perfected to an art form.

Tuscany's convenient location lets visitors arrive without requiring them to spend many hours in a rental car. As one flies into Pisa Airport, wine country is already knocking at the door. However, seeing as the airport lies only a few minutes' drive from the centre of the city, it would be a sin to not first take a look at medieval Pisa's wonders.

It's lunchtime, and the sun at its zenith pampers us with a truly southern wave of hot weather. Pisa's small streets are quiet, in the courtyards dogs sleep stretched out in the shade, a woman is hanging out the wash, and a group of laughing teenagers passes by on mopeds. The fact that I'm in Italy is confirmed by the ornate Palazzo dei Cavalieri university building and the square in front of it. The palazzo was designed in the 16th century by Giorgio Vasari and is richly decorated with *sgraffito* (drawings scratched in wet plaster), while the square historically served as a meeting place for the people of the city and still today hosts numerous concerts and shows. It's hard to get lost in Pisa, because many of the streets lead to Palazzo dei Cavalieri. Unlike Florence, in Pisa it's possible to avoid the crowds of tourists as long as one stays further from the city's main symbol. Instead of visiting the leaning tower, have a lazy lunch at *Nonna Rosa* (Via l'Arancio, 23), a small family restaurant specialising in lasagne – just a couple of tables and a few local patrons as well as the owner herself behind the counter, who describes the day's specials with such mouth-watering detail that it's difficult to choose what to order. A perfect Italian-style afternoon!

But a hot afternoon demands one more thing – gelato! Do not give in to the temptation of the cafés displaying gelato in all colours of the rainbow; they no doubt contain practically the entire periodic table of chemical elements. Instead, head to *La Bottega del Gelato* (on Piazza Garibaldi, you can't miss it), which uses only natural ingredients to make the best gelato in town. Melon, apple, whipped cream...so many flavours! All with a very soft and light aftertaste, as it should be.

And finally, an espresso. After all, what would a vacation in Italy be without the famous pick-me-up? *Caffè Federico Salza* (Borgo Stretto) has become something of a legend in itself and really does seem to serve the best espresso in the city. The outdoor tables between the porticoes offer pleasant shade on even the hottest of summer afternoons. Sit down, enjoy a coffee, and soak up the leisurely spirit of Italy.



Wine tasting in the old cellar at *Salvadonica*



Grapevines are a symbol of Tuscany



Breakfast place at the *Salvadonica* guest house

In the shade of grapevines

Seeing as this trip to Italy is devoted to the art of enjoying wine, I focus on the Chianti region. Outside Pisa, the scenes are mostly of carefully tended fields with factory chimneys rising on the horizon. The *autostrada* to Florence leads through a gradual change in the landscape – economic activity surrounding the large city is slowly replaced by idyllic country scenes with fields of grapes protected by lazy rows of cypresses. Towns are replaced by small villages, straight roads by hilly serpentine, and, the further I drive, the more it starts to feel like the Tuscany we know from literature and cinema – stone buildings bathed in sunlight and drowning in flowers, herbs, vines and a fascinating sense of calm.

Most beautiful of all is the realisation that it really is possible to stay in one of these oases of peace and calm. For example, the *Salvadonica* (salvadonica.it; Via Grevigiana, 82 - 50020 San Casciano Val di Pesa) guest house and winery is located only an hour's drive from Pisa. Its restored buildings speak of history

stretching back to the 13th century and, thanks to the Baccetti family, who lovingly restored the property in the 1980s, *Salvadonica* now not only embodies a deep history but also provides plenty of modern accents. The owners make small batches of wine and olive oil from their ten hectares of grapes and five olive gardens, which they serve to their guests and also sell to local restaurants. I take a wine-tasting tour of *Salvadonica* and we wind our way down to a secret centuries-old cellar. Collections of select wines line the shelves, their labels covered in a fine layer of dust. The cellar was carved out of natural rock, and the moist air and even temperature is ideal for storing wines.

In the evening, as I enjoy a glass of Chianti Classico in *Salvadonica's* wonderful little restaurant, my eyes rest on the grapevines growing just a few steps from where I sit. These Sangiovese grapes are almost ready to harvest. And it is precisely this variety of grape that dominates the wines from the Chianti region and gives them their astringent, typically Tuscan red-wine flavour.

The mightiness of a spaceship

Anyone who considers himself or herself a wine lover should prepare to spend a whole day at the spaceship-like facilities of the *Antinori* wine magnate in Bargino (Antinori, Cassia per Siena 133 Loc. Bargino 50026 San Casciano Val di Pesa). As I near it on the highway, a hill of grapevines rises on the left, at the top of which stand a few small, sand-coloured buildings. But don't let this first impression fool you – the complex designed by Florence-based *Archea Associates* is cleverly situated within the hill itself, and one only sees its true dimensions upon arriving in the car park. As I leave the sun behind and enter the dark and quiet centre, I lose all sense of time and space. It seems that the designers purposefully engineered this effect on the visitor in order to enhance the feeling of being inside a space ship.

It took more than ten years and more than 100 million euros to build the grandiose project. In addition, the Antinori family, who has been making wines for 26 generations, was present for every planning and construction decision. After

colourful stays

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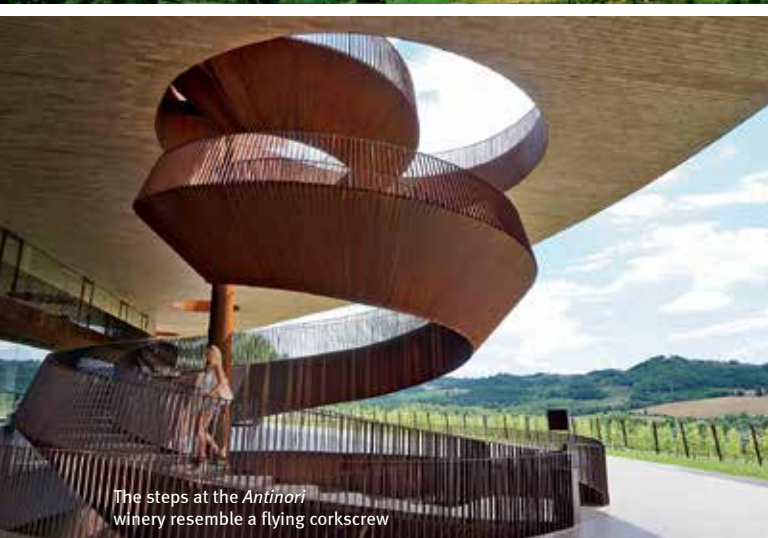
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Tuscany's beautiful landscape



The steps at the *Antinori* winery resemble a flying corkscrew



Even the wine barrels embody *Antinori's* philosophy of perfect design



It's time to enjoy the wine

just a few first steps inside the *Antinori* kingdom, only one word comes to mind – perfection. The only other place that might look and feel similar...is the *Apple* headquarters. Everything at *Antinori* is huge, impressive and breath-taking – and, of course, perfect – beginning with the 21-metre-deep wine cellars that resemble sanctuaries (wine is, after all, the drink of the gods). This is one of the largest and most modern wineries and wine storage facilities in all of Italy, where everything has been thought through in the most minute details. For example, wine bark juice has been used to paint an area around the spigots so that the barrels look clean even after wine has dripped onto the oak surface during testing of the wine's readiness. And the impressive stairs that lead up to the grape fields and restaurant resemble a giant corkscrew. When I re-emerge into the sunny outdoors between rows of grapevines, my senses have been on such a merry-go-round that the only way to cool off my mind is, of course, with a glass of wine. I strongly suggest the three-wine tasting; for a very affordable price, one can try *Antinori's* most characteristic wines and listen to the sommelier tell about the winery's best vintages.

Paradise for wine lovers

One of the biggest discoveries on my trip is the delightful *Fattoria di Rignana* (rignana.it; 15 50022 Greve in Chianti). The gravel road meanders through forests and up a hill, and I begin to wonder whether this is the right road to the guest house. But then, the dust settles and I see an avenue of cypresses and bright green grapevines, the idyllic scene completed by the beautiful Tuscan-style villa. A stunning silence reigns here, broken only by the hypnotic buzz of cicadas. As I enter the villa, I am immediately surrounded by the atmosphere of a real country home; there is a huge hearth in the kitchen, a sturdy wooden table and chairs and a large, friendly dog. The home smells of herbal teas, and the wooden floor creaks pleasantly, thereby attesting to its honourable age. My suggestion is to reserve Room No. 4. The room is flooded in sunlight, and the window opens onto a monumental view of the surrounding hills. Watching the sunset from Room No. 4 is like gazing at a painting by one of the grand old masters. I never do close the window, because I don't want to miss out on the refreshing country air full of the aroma of lavender, warm earth and freshly mown grass.

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Antica Macelleria Falorni sells the best meats in Tuscany



View from the Fattoria di Rignana villa



Enoteca Falorni is one of the most impressive wine shops in the world



Fattoria di Rignana also has a small winery

Fattoria di Rignana also runs a very small winery, and, as I take a peek at their facilities and wine cellar, I feel like I've finally landed back on dear old Earth after the inter-galactic flight at Antinori. With its location seemingly in the middle of nowhere, Fattoria di Rignana offers such a feeling of genuineness, of Italian sincerity, that I immediately forget the big cities, work, responsibilities.... My mind switches to a different mode of living. And when I walk through the garden

and then jump into the cool swimming pool, I'm in paradise. In the evening, I take a bottle of Super Tuscan wine from the cooler (wine is sold on an honour basis – just write your room number in the notebook next to the cooler) and watch the sun set behind the hills, only to be woken the next morning by the hot Italian sun and the heavenly smell of coffee. For breakfast, Fattoria di Rignana serves juicy tomatoes with olive oil and ricotta cheese that melts on the tongue. It's easy to adjust to the leisurely tempo of life here, and morning coffee naturally stretches on for several hours.

After the hottest part of the day has passed, I drive 20 minutes to the town of Greve. This is the town where wine is drunk everywhere and at all times. Among the countless wine shops in Greve, it's impossible to miss the impressive Antica Macelleria Falorni (Piazza Giacomo Matteotti, 71). The shop sells all sorts of meat delicacies, tempting salamis and large prosciuttos. Dine in, or if you prefer, Tuscany's finest butchers will gladly wrap up your purchase to take along.

But the most surprising turns out to be Enoteca Falorni (enotecafalorni.it, Piazza delle Cantine, 6), one of the largest and most impressive wine shops in the world. As I enter, I receive a card that can be inserted

I take a bottle of Super Tuscan wine from the cooler and watch the sun set behind the hills

into any of the self-serve machines at Falorni. Then I choose the size of my drink – anything from just a taste to a whole glass. The machines store the wines in perfect conditions, thereby allowing visitors to taste many different great wines. A true paradise for wine lovers, Enoteca Falorni offers dozens of Tuscany's best wines: Chianti Classico, Super Tuscan, Montalcino and others. Visitors talk with each other about wines, and the aroma in the air alone is enough to make one's head swoon. The shop is located in a large cellar and the time passes quickly, so be forewarned – it may already be nighttime by the time you leave.

As I return to Fattoria di Rignana, there's no need to worry about dinner. Just a few steps from the villa – up the hill and behind the vines – lies La Cantinetta (lacantinettadirignana.com), an outstanding restaurant filled with Italian atmosphere. As I arrive, the scene opens onto a huge terrace full of guests – families, couples and even their four-legged friends lying lazily under the tables. There's music in the air, and the waiters joyously make their way between the tables, balancing platters full of food like acrobats. And the aromas! A large wood-fired stove in the



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Here, the stone houses
drown in flowers



Breathtaking views from Panzano



A meal at the *Officina della Bistecca* restaurant



Pick a bouquet of lavender as a souvenir

kitchen prepares delicious roasts, but vegetarians feel just as pampered with selections of local vegetables, grilled artichokes and hearty cheeses. There's a bottle of Chianti Classico on every table, everyone is talking, and after a while I realise I feel like I'm... at home. The last guests leave late, late in the evening, and finally the waiters can take a deep breath, sit down and play a game of cards. Of course, accompanied by some Chianti.

The romance of the past

Chianti is full of the romance of small Medieval villages. I begin the day in Badi di Passignano, a small village centred around an ancient abbey. Here, the monks have been making fine wine for centuries, and nowadays travellers can slake their thirst at the *Osteria di Passignano* restaurant in the former monastery. The approach to wine-tasting at the modern, *Michelin*-starred restaurant is more than serious – guests are brought an entire Bible of wines, its thick pages offering wine from all corners of Italy. Afterwards, wander the village's small streets, and, on the way out, experience a bit of Italian-style adrenaline when meeting oncoming traffic on the very narrow road.

The road leads further to Panzano, whose hilly location is a favourite for beautiful panoramas. The Santa Maria Assunta Church, built on the ruins of a former castle, now serves as a

Finally the waiters can take a deep
breath, sit down and play a game
of cards

sort of central point from which to gaze at the most beautiful views. But the climb up to it is steep and quite taxing on the legs. I reward myself afterwards with a visit at Dario Cecchini's, one of the best butchers in Italy. Right across from his store, he's opened the *Officina della Bistecca* restaurant (Via XX Luglio, 11), which has gained something of a cult status in the region. The host shows me to a table and sets a big bottle of house wine and a large basket of fresh vegetables in front of me. A tasting of delicious meats follows. One should come here only on a very empty stomach! But nor should vegetarians avoid the place, because the grilled vegetables and barley risotto are also delicious. Again, Tuscany proves it is the grande dame of gastronomy.

I end the day with sunset in Volpaia, one of the most beautiful villages in Tuscany. Located 617 metres above sea level at the heart of the Chianti region, it is simply unforgettable. With its cobbled streets and city walls, it seems nothing has changed here since the 11th century, and citizens dressed in Medieval clothing may come around the next corner at any moment. A leisurely stroll around the village takes a mere 15 minutes, but the views contain all the beauty of Tuscany. Here I feel like whispering "under the Tuscan sun" to myself. And these words really do express the essence of this region – a symbiosis of natural beauty and the heavenly human-made drink. This land demands hard work, but the sun and the grapevines pay the people back with the fruits of their labour, fruits any of us can enjoy when sipping on a glass of heavenly wine. **BO**

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First drive: the Honda HR-V

Honda's new rival to the Nissan Qashqai enters a class brimming with choice. Will it make an impact? We drive the manual diesel version to find out.

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

The HR-V is a no-brainer for Honda. Chunky, small SUVs like the Nissan Qashqai and Škoda Yeti are all the rage at the moment, so it's no surprise to see the Japanese brand entering this lucrative arena.

At 4.3 metres long, the front-wheel-drive HR-V has a similar footprint to a Ford Focus or Honda's own Civic. That means it's slightly smaller than a Qashqai but considerably larger than a Mazda CX-3 or a Nissan Juke. It's available with a 1.5 litre petrol engine or a 1.6 diesel, which is the one we tried in this test drive.

What's it like to drive?

The HR-V drives more like a jacked-up hatchback than an old-school 4x4. Swing it into a corner and the body doesn't sway around too much, while the light steering

weights up just enough to give you confidence. It could do with being a bit more accurate, however. A Mazda CX-3 is more agile, and a Nissan Qashqai steers with more precision, but the HR-V doesn't disappoint.

The diesel engine has plenty of punch, and it provides an even build of acceleration as you climb the rev range, making the Honda feel satisfyingly nippy in most types of driving. There's not much urgency at very low revs, though, which means you can find yourself swapping gears quite frequently around town. Fortunately, the six-speed manual gearbox is always a delight to use.

What's it like inside?

The first thing that strikes you when climbing aboard is that you don't sit quite as high as you do in a Qashqai. Mind you, the elevated driving position still gives a good

QUICK FACTS:

- 1** Exterior dimensions place it in the same league as the Nissan Juke and Škoda Yeti.
- 2** Boot capacity trumps that of the Qashqai in terms of seats-up space.
- 3** A CVT gearbox is only offered on the petrol version.
- 4** Honda claims the diesel variant can return up to 4 liters/100km on a combined fuel economy cycle.



view out of the front, and you sit altogether higher than in a CX-3.

There's plenty of adjustment in the seat and steering wheel, so it's easy to get comfortable. The straightforward instrument dials are easy to read, and the 7-inch touchscreen and touch-sensitive climate controls keep the dash looking refreshingly minimal. There's also a good blend of textured materials, which all feel solidly assembled.

The touchscreen remains easy to read even in direct sunlight, but it's a shame that some icons are small and hard to hit precisely. Also, the integration with a smartphone is hit-and-miss, particularly given that you can't yet link an iPhone with the Mirrorlink system, which allows you to "mirror" an app running on your phone through the car's display.

There's plenty of leg room in the back, even for tall adults. Overall, the HR-V isn't quite as accommodating in the back as a Qashqai or a Yeti, but far more so than a CX-3.

Still, the HR-V gets Honda's "magic" rear seats, which flip up cinema-style to leave enough room in the back for a bicycle. There's

The HR-V drives more like a jacked-up hatchback than an old-school 4x4

also a big boot – bigger even than a Qashqai's, although the 470-litre capacity does include some underfloor storage.

There's loads of safety kit, too, including automatic city braking and, on some trim levels, traffic sign recognition and a system that helps you reverse out of your driveway onto a busy road.

Should I buy one?

You certainly shouldn't discount it. The HR-V is well-equipped, comfortable and practical, and while it won't have the Nissan Qashqai worrying about its crossover crown just yet, it does show plenty of potential in what is already a crowded market. In styling terms alone, Honda has done enough to separate itself from the chasing pack. The Honda is predicted to hold onto its value well, too, which adds further appeal. **BO**

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



Effective heating, tiny living:

Local construction companies offer energy-efficient alternatives

Publicity photos



The environment is something that engulfs us all the time; we spend our entire lives within this thin layer of earth, water and atmosphere, without which our existence would be impossible. The human impact on this precious layer can be damaging, as shown by global climate change, but also positive and caring for our common home.

One of the easiest ways to boost the latter is to look at one's own lifestyle. We note that European households have increased their energy efficiency, but still the final energy consumption of households has increased by 8% over the period 1990-2009. And, issues of efficiency have often been set aside since the economic crisis. However, the European Union (EU) has set a common target to increase energy efficiency by 20% and increase usage of energy from renewables by 20%, all by 2020.

Does the EU plan sound ambitious? Yes, indeed. But it is feasible, if we try together. Have you ever thought about

how efficient and sustainable your own dwelling is? And what imprint does it leave on the environment in the long run? Trying to diminish your negative impact on the natural environment does not mean having to go back to the woods and living as our ancient forefathers did. Construction companies are already offering solutions that are both palatable for humans and kind to the environment. Your personal home can fully be in harmony with our common home.

Effective heating is often mentioned as the right way to go. But, the whole process of constructing a house significantly impacts its so-called CO₂ footprint, so this must also be taken into consideration when trying to minimise ineffective use of energy. BYKO-LAT uses wood for their constructions, as it is one of the most environmentally friendly materials available. But the material is just the beginning. Every single project is unique,

and before creating each closed-panel timber frame house, a detailed 3D model is designed using advanced software. Simultaneously, BYKO-LAT's team of experienced engineers work on the best solution regarding energy efficiency for each particular house project. All the elements of the houses are produced in a closed factory, which guarantees no impact from the outside environment. In addition, the house is then checked with a so called "blower door test". This reveals if there are any spots that leak air and heat, and these can then be eliminated. In this way the energy consumption for heating during the cold months of the year can be minimised. For these reasons, the houses produced by BYKO-LAT are undoubtedly a step closer towards lower CO₂ emissions and increased energy efficiency.

Tiny living is another concept that is gaining popularity. Basically, tiny living is an architectural and social movement that advocates living simply in small homes. Smaller homes tend to be less expensive than larger ones in terms of taxes and construction, heating, maintenance and repair costs. Moreover, small houses may encourage a more environmentally friendly lifestyle and reduce the ecological impact of their residents. VUDIS specialises in tiny living modular construction. The company's guiding principle is to increase energy efficiency by engineering all aspects of the building. VUDIS also achieves high results in "blower door tests", and the overall energy consumption of its buildings is low. Moreover, the buildings are delivered as a whole directly to your property and positioned right where they should be. This diminishes the effect on nature and the surrounding environment, because no construction takes place on your property. Normally, there is no need for a fixed foundation; the buildings can be placed on wood blocks. In order to become even more environmentally friendly, VUDIS buildings can be equipped with solar panels.

Similar technologies can easily be incorporated into larger residential properties and other types of commercial construction developments. The student housing project shown on these pages was



Hope/Myrtle Street Liverpool, United Kingdom
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The Cubitt, Battersea, United Kingdom
Five-story, 38-apartment building (2014)



St Augustine, Plymouth, United Kingdom
Six-storey building with 89 student apartments (2013)



Fully finished building delivered on site – ready for use



VUDIS
vudis.lv

manufactured in a factory environment using high-quality structural timber-framed modules that were delivered to the site fully finished, including decoration, all services and built-in furniture. The company that designed and developed this method of construction is Nordic Homes. Timber frame modules produced by Nordic Homes are designed with a minimum life expectancy of sixty years. The whole manufacturing process guarantees quality and cost certainty, and it also keeps on-site time to a minimum. Construction time is around 30% to 40% faster than traditional construction. The modules are highly sustainable, as they are all made from certified FSC timber. They are functionally highly efficient due to excellent levels of insulation, which results in low energy costs and high levels of acoustic performance. This combination makes a Nordic Homes modular building an entirely pleasant place in which to reside.

We are indeed part of the "next big thing". We are approaching the point in history where people understand that the amount of resources on Earth is limited and we need to preserve what we have. Because the construction industry is responsible for a significant share of the CO₂ produced and resources spent, we believe that things can be done differently. Wood is a renewable resource, and the energy efficiency achieved with a timber frame structure comes with much less material and energy spent. We are serving the market of 2020 today.

The Latvian Wood Construction Cluster was founded in early 2012 by uniting more than 20 manufacturers of wooden houses as well as educational and research institutions. **BO**



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Staying healthy and productive

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

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

One of the best solutions is a height-adjustable sit-stand table that can be raised or lowered to any height between 65 and 126,5 cm as often as needed. The table's adjustable legs serve to raise or lower the table surface, thus permitting the user to sit or stand in various positions throughout the working day. The resulting freedom of movement is one of the main features of quality ergonomic furniture. Changing the table height electrically is quite simple: all you have to do is choose the button with the up or down symbol on the control panel, and the desk will either rise or descend within an accuracy range of one centimetre.

When sitting, it is also important that the table height corresponds to a person's body proportions. The average table height (75 cm) is not ideal for everyone, because people can be very different – one person may be 160 cm tall, while another is 190 cm tall. Therefore, a table with an adjustable height is the perfect solution. People also tend to stand in different positions, so an adjustable-height table is the best option.

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

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

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

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Photos by **LAURIS VĪKSNE** (F64)
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More than just sushi

If you are in the Latvian capital and in the mood for some superb Japanese-style food, then head straight to the *Planeta Riga* restaurant.



In order to enjoy truly outstanding Japanese cuisine, one doesn't have to travel to Asia. *Planeta Riga* in the heart of the Old Town has become the Latvian leader in Japanese-style casual dining. The restaurant is frequented by business people who appreciate its large lunch selection as well as by tourists seeking the best sushi in town.

The atmosphere at *Planeta Riga* changes with the seasons. During the summer months, patrons enjoy sitting on the beautiful terrace that offers a splendid view of Dom Square, while during the winter, they can dine in a cosy and pleasant interior. Both floors of the restaurant are decorated in light and classical tones highlighted by various historical elements, such as the exposed original brick walls.

The summer season has also arrived with a new menu, and the restaurant is particularly busy on weekdays between 12:00-16:00, when guests can choose from six different lunchtime specials. These will suit practically all tastes, including those of vegetarians, who have not been neglected. The lunchtime specials include miso soup, a main course, salad and sushi, and a choice of tea or coffee. It's worth mentioning that the portions are quite sizeable and that both the salmon and sushi melt right in one's mouth.

On weekends, also between 12:00-16:00, a particularly lazy atmosphere reigns as Rigans and visitors to the city enjoy the opportunity to have a late all-you-can-eat breakfast or brunch, which includes a variety of starters, main courses and desserts along with tea, coffee, homemade lemonade and a complimentary glass of sparkling *Prosecco* – all of this for one fixed price.

Of course, the sushi (classical maki, premium and even hot and tempura-baked rolls) is in a class by itself and parades under an array of impressive names, including famous Japanese manga artists and film directors. Among the most requested are the refined Kanto and Tohoku maki with seafood fillings.

However, *Planeta Riga* offers much more than just outstanding sushi. If the restaurant's menu has a star performer, then it is definitely ramen, the traditional

Japanese soup-like noodle dish. This involves preparing a special broth that is boiled for several hours to achieve an extremely rich taste. Head chef Staņislavs Gurjanovs has gone out of his way to perfect his ramen preparation technique, which he learnt from Japanese master chef Kanji Furukawa (also known as Ramen Boss) at the *Shoryu Ramen* restaurant in London. Not surprisingly, that restaurant has been recommended in the *Michelin Guide 2014*.

This summer, *Planeta Riga* has also set up a special menu that is devoted entirely to scallop. Make sure to try the refreshing De-Livrona Maki with scallop, cream cheese, cucumber, iceberg salad and parsley, or the rich Hotate Grill, which consists of grilled scallop with nut sauce and fresh vegetables. Those who appreciate spicy dishes will love the Yum-Yum Hotate Noodles, which incorporate a perfect bouquet of Oriental tastes with scallop, udon noodles and coconut sauce. Yum Yum!

Another dish worth trying at *Planeta Riga* is dim sum, which Gurjanovs mastered while working under a renowned chef in Moscow. Dim sum is a Chinese delicacy, with little packages of mushrooms, veal, chicken, lamb, Peking duck, salmon and more served in a traditional steamer basket. *Planeta Riga's* dim sum are handmade and offer a truly unique taste experience.

One of the most popular desserts, whose fame has spread to the extent that guests come in specifically to try it, is the Asian Planeta Sphere – a specially made chocolate sphere that the chef has filled with homemade ginger ice cream, cashew nuts and blueberries. When melted chocolate is poured over it, the sphere opens up and releases its contents, just like a lotus blossom – a true delight for the eyes and for the taste buds of the most discriminating gourmet.

Planeta Riga's high standards of quality have ensured that many of the restaurant's guests keep returning on a regular basis. Some have also obtained a *Planeta Special* client card, which gives them extra privileges and the opportunity to enjoy discounts of up to 70 percent as well as special offers. The client card can be obtained at the restaurant from the waitstaff. **BO**



Planeta Riga
Šķūņu iela 16 (entrance
from Tirgoņu iela)
Tel. (+371) 67223855
E-mail: planeta@rrg.lv
① www.planetariga.lv





Heading on a journey of flavours

"Symphony of Fish" – tuna, salmon and a tiger prawn wrapped in nori with a soy-honey sauce; Kamchatka crab claw tempura roll with a chilli-mango sauce and paprika tapioca; classic Beef Wellington; zander fillet with mustard-honey mashed potatoes and a sauce of red wine and shallots. These are just a few of the foods on the menu at the *International* restaurant. There, guests can head on a journey of flavours around the world and enjoy both international and local foods, all prepared with contemporary, extravagant and original nuance.

The restaurant's name says it all and conveys its philosophy – an international menu, small portions and high-quality design and service, which together create a new culture of public catering. Even though *International* is located outside the city centre, it has become a favourite in the three years since it opened. Because here the gourmards find what they've been looking for – high-class, elegant food and fine service. But *International* also tries to change restaurant industry stereotypes in the sense that it offers refined food and luxury service at affordable prices.

International in Riga is one of the first restaurants opened by the *Restau-Rateur* group. Since then, they've also opened *International* in Jūrmala, *Melnā Bīte*, the *Sezona* club-restaurant, and the *BakeBerry* bakery in Old Riga as well as the *Wooden*

Villa hotel-apartments in Jūrmala. Each has its own image and philosophy, and it is precisely the details at *International* that set it apart. The black-and-white interior, the world map and photographs on the walls, the light fixtures installed in hats and, of course, the details in the menu: select ingredients, high-quality products and chef Andrei Shmatchenko, who has the skill to unite everything and prepare simple yet elegant foods. Each mini food demands careful attention from the chef as well as knowledge in the preparation of foods and serving traditions from various countries around the world as well as the creativity to add a successful contemporary touch.

International is not large; it can accommodate only 40 guests at one time. Because of this, it has become a favourite place for business lunches and dinners as well as special celebrations. Guests enjoy the pleasant and homey atmosphere, but the foods are what draw them back again and again. Among these is the *International's* cheesecake, which may be the best of its kind in all of Riga. And now, in autumn, the chef will also begin preparing specialties from this time of year, as always, balancing the ratio of prices and small portion sizes so that guests can try several foods at one meal and discover the ancient truth that good food is one of life's greatest pleasures. **BO**



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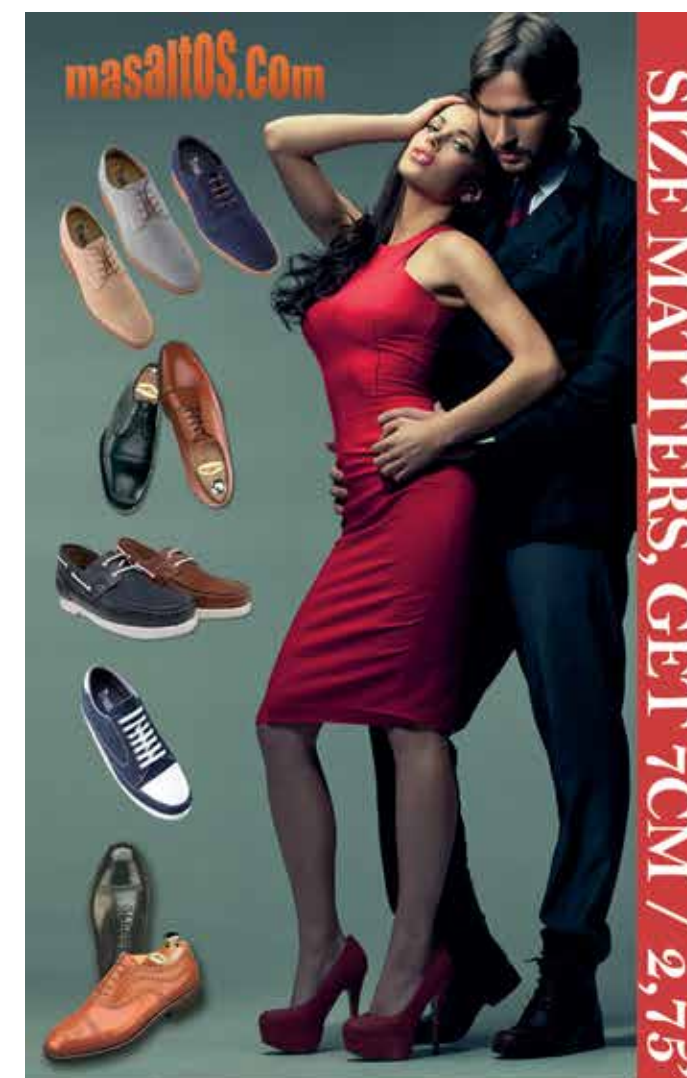
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Restaurants, bars and cafés

Text by **LIINA KARO**
Publicity photos

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



KALAPALA

Hotspot for seafood lovers

Summer 2015 brought an interesting addition to Tallinn's seafood restaurant scene: *Kalapala* is a brand-new restaurant right by the seaside. It may be a little bit difficult to find at first glance, but once you notice the *Balloon Tallinn*, you won't miss it, because the restaurant is situated literally right next to this very popular attraction. There is also a helicopter landing pad next to the restaurant's sunny terrace, which gave our restaurant experience a hint of an action movie. But, instead of blowing everything off our table (which I kind of expected, you know – because this is what happens in action movies!), I only felt a slight breeze.

In order to serve truly fresh seafood, *Kalapala* prefers local Estonian products and operates only from May until the end of September. So, this month is your last chance this year to book a table and enjoy what it has to offer. For starters, I tried crispy squid snacks with three different sauces, which I absolutely loved. Mussels in white wine sauce were also a delicious choice. For the main course, I boldly chose the *risotto negro* with squid and squid ink sauce. The word "ink" already refers to how the dish is going to look, and I would think twice before ordering it on a romantic first date due to the ink's ability to change the look of your teeth. The black colour of the dish was a bit unusual, but the taste was

good. I did expect a little more seafood inside the risotto, instead of just on top of it, but in general I was happy with my choice. So was my friend, who tried the octopus. Everything else on the menu also looked appealing to a seafood lover such as myself, but if you are not that into seafood, then *Kalapala* offers some meat dishes and salads, too.

The meal ended on a sweet note – smooth dark chocolate cake with walnuts, complemented by a fresh white Portuguese wine from Madeira. Sounds like an absolutely lovely summer evening, doesn't it?

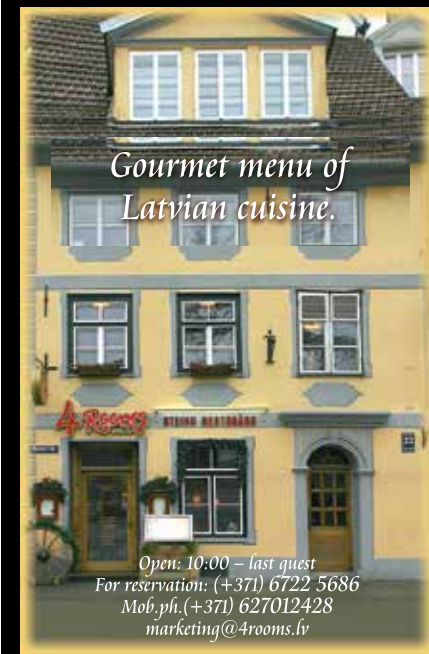
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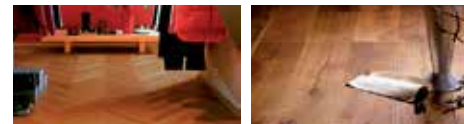


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TRÜHVEL

Always a safe choice

Telliskivi Creative Centre in Tallinn is a place where anyone can find something to his or her own taste. One of the newest additions to the restaurant scene there is a place named *Trühvel*. I must start with the fact that the big orange building where *Trühvel* is located is rather unappealing and visually stands out from the rest of the area (and not in the best way). Then again, looking on the bright side, you'll have no trouble finding the right place.

The restaurant is inspired by Mediterranean tastes, and, having now visited it several times, the winner on the menu for me is definitely the seafood risotto. It tastes heavenly, and I know I am not the only one to think that way – people in town are spreading the word about it. However, I was a little disappointed with the pasta; the pappardelle in mushroom bouillon was somehow too average. But maybe I felt that way only because my expectations were very high due to the risotto.

If you are into desserts, *Trühvel* is the place for you. The coffee-flavoured cheesecake goes perfectly with a fine cappuccino or an espresso, and the dessert made of egg whites, berries, basil ice cream and strawberry sauce is simply amazing.

The service at *Trühvel* is very professional. Their employees are true coffee experts, and, if you wish to have a glass of wine with your meal, they also know exactly what to pour into the glass to make the perfect combination. All in all, visiting *Trühvel* has always been a very nice experience, and I would not hesitate to recommend it to my friends and *Baltic Outlook* readers.

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📞 truhvel.ee



Raimonds Zommers is one of the hottest chefs in Latvia right now, and can often be seen sharing his skills and recipes on TV and in the pages of popular magazines. His real home, however, is where he has spent most every working hour of the last 15 years – at the restaurant *Kaļķu Vārti*. This is a place that symbolises the heart of Riga's Old Town, and with its quality, innovative menu and most of all – excellent and delicious food, has been upholding a tradition of fine dining for almost twodecades.

Everyone who has been in Riga's Old Town has passed by *Kaļķu Vārti*. It fits so perfectly into the urban environment of Old Town that it has virtually fused with its surroundings. It is one thing to endure, but to change is altogether different. And that is what the team of chefs at *Kaļķu Vārti* do – they are constantly changing things to ensure that they are providing the city's guests with the absolute best dining experience.

The menu is based on locally grown and produced food: the bounty of Latvia's forests and the goodness of local and organic farms. "As a chef, my goal is to differentiate myself from the rest. You could say – to see farther and think more broadly. Nevertheless, the main criterion in cooking is quality. When I'm making food, I want it to contain ingredients that people usually don't eat on a daily basis – whole grains, Jerusalem artichoke, pike, wild duck and hare, conifer shoots, wood sorrel and fava beans are just a few," says Zommers.



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Raimonds Zommers

For many years now my conviction and philosophy has been to give our guests the opportunity to experience long-forgotten ingredients, but to also discover completely new ones, as well as new ways of cooking with them. This autumn, the food that we're focusing on is pike. "Why?", you may ask. Because I myself am an angler, and I know how wonderful it can taste. I also have fond childhood memories of celebrations where we ate

pike, battered and fried to perfection. Of course, we go along with the times and use new and different methods of cooking so that our guests can experience and enjoy flavours and meals that are both contemporary and unique. When you come to *Kaļķu Vārti*, we recommend you try our **Baked pike fillet with homemade pike sausage, chanterelles, wild broccoli, and cucumber-dill sauce.**



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	Advance seat reservation	from €2.99	✓	✓
	Meal and drinks	Pre-order at airbalticmeal.com or buy on board	Pre-order at airbalticmeal.com or buy on board	✓
TICKETS	Free seat next to you	⊘**	⊘**	✓
	Flight date/time change	⊘	€50*	✓
	Name change	⊘	€50*	✓
	Cancellation with refund	⊘	€100	✓
LOYALTY PROGRAM	Date change warranty	€49.99*	⊘	✓
	PINS Collect PINS	1 PIN per €	2 PINS per €	3 PINS per €

* If there are no tickets left in the original booking class, the passenger must cover the costs of the upgrade to the next available booking class.
** Limited availability, please request service at Riga Airport check-in staff or confirmed extra seat via call centre staff.

Seven direct routes from Vilnius!

As of this month *airBaltic* is operating new direct flights from Vilnius, Lithuania, to five European capitals. In addition to the previously existing routes to Amsterdam and Riga, the airline is now operating five flights per week to **Stockholm** and **Helsinki**, and three flights per week to **Berlin**, **Brussels** and **Paris**. For residents of the Baltic countries, this means even more convenient leisure and business travel connections.

The new flights are available for booking at airbaltic.com, with one-way ticket prices to these destinations starting from EUR 59. A full schedule of airBaltic flights can be found at www.airBaltic.com/timetable



BALTIC PASS

THE BEST WAY HOW TO TRAVEL WITHIN THE BALTICS

BASIC PASS
STARTING FROM
30€
PER FLIGHT

FLEXI PASS
STARTING FROM
50€
PER FLIGHT

Choose the best option for your travels and buy 10 or 20 one-way flights between Baltic States for a fixed price per flight

BASIC PASS	10 tickets 40€ per flight
	20 tickets 30 € per flight
FLEXI PASS	10 tickets 60 € per flight
	20 tickets 50 € per flight

Find out more www.airbaltic.com/baltic-pass

airBaltic.com



About the program

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

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

the most loyal airBaltic customers and ensure various benefits which include a **free baggage allowance**, **priority check-in**, **reserved seats** and much more to make traveling more pleasant. The youngest members starting from age 2 are issued with a special **airBaltic PINS Young Pilot card** which allows also children to collect PINS.

If you aren't a PINS program member yet

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



airBaltic PINS card



airBaltic PINS Executive card



airBaltic PINS VIP card



airBaltic PINS Young Pilot card

PINS Friends and Family Account

PINS program allows joining several accounts into a group. Creating the friends and family account and adding new members is done in the PINS webpage www.pinsforme.com under *My Account* section. You can merge up to 8 accounts in a single Friends and Family account and collect PINS together. The member who creates the Friends and Family account also becomes its administrator and is entitled to add other account holders to the Friends and Family account one has created. By creating a friends and family account, you as the administrator of account undertake responsibility for any actions taking place within the account, including actions done by other members of the group. You can spend PINS from any account within the group. The other members of the friends and family account can only spend PINS located in their respective accounts. You can also allow any member of the group to spend PINS from the friends and family account.

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

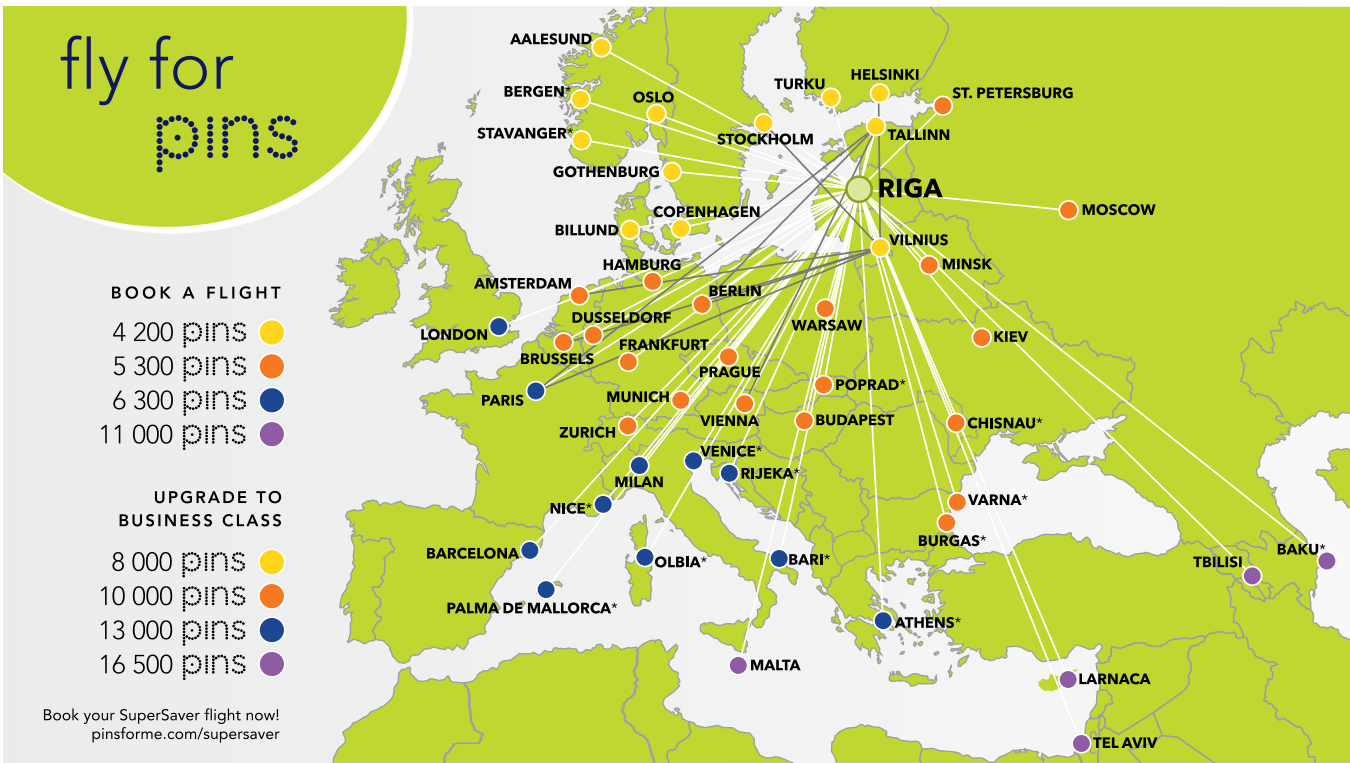


How to spend

Spend PINS on airBaltic flights, electronics, gift cards and more than 2000 other rewards available at the PINS Online Rewards Shop. Explore specially selected rewards for this autumn in the airBaltic PINS Rewards Collection onboard catalogue.

Spend on airBaltic:

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



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

NEW pins REWARDS EXPERIENCE

As part of our ongoing mission to improve the pins loyalty program and make it even more rewarding for pins members, we are completely **reinventing the pins Rewards Shop this September!**

➤ Visit **PINSFORME.COM**

and take full advantage of the completely new rewards experience which has been developed taking into account your feedback and suggestions.

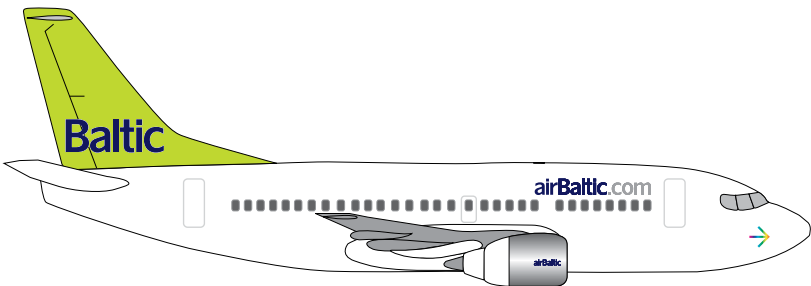
<p>3 832 pins</p> <p>4smarts Universal Bluetooth Selfie Stick</p>	<p>Dolce & Gabbana Dolce EDP, 50 ml</p> <p>9 658 pins</p>
<p>3 165 pins</p> <p>Genius Power Bank</p>	<p>Beats Solo2 On-Ear Headphones</p> <p>33 667 pins</p>
<p>airBaltic flights</p> <p>starting from 4 200 pins</p>	<p>Solier Leather Laptop Case</p> <p>5 492 pins</p>
<p>Philips Radio Watch</p> <p>4 998 pins</p>	
<p>Apple iPad mini</p> <p>starting from 50 333 pins</p>	

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



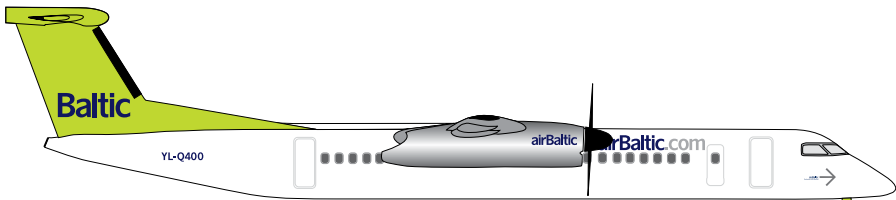
Boeing 737-300

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



Boeing 737-500

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



Q400 NextGen
Bombardier

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

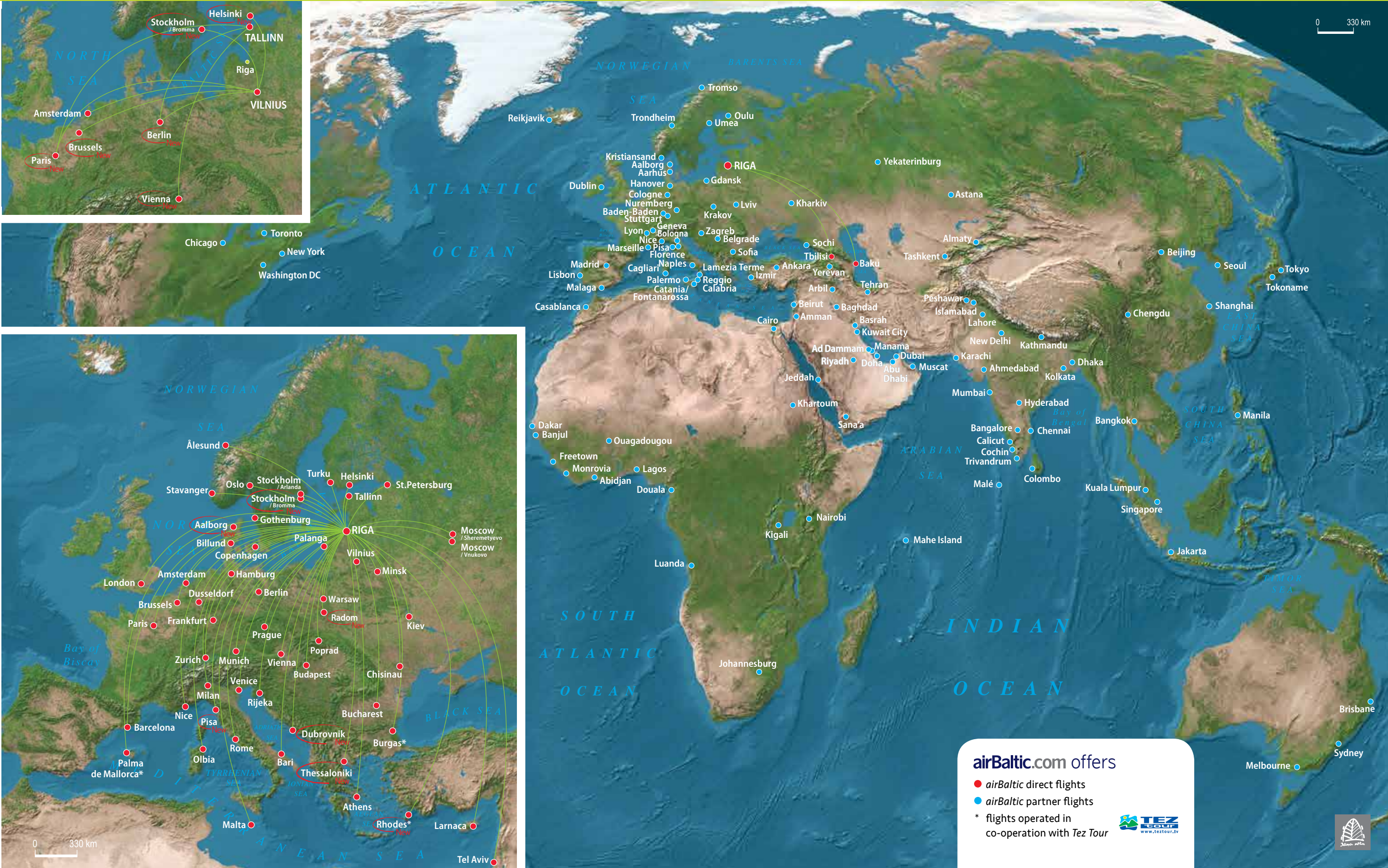
Fly worldwide from Vilnius in cooperation with partner airlines

This September *airBaltic* will start operating several new direct flights from the Lithuanian capital to Stockholm, Berlin, Brussels, Paris and Amsterdam, as well as the partner flight to Vienna, operated by *Austrian Airlines*. The flights to Paris and Amsterdam are operated in cooperation with codeshare partners *Air France* and *KLM*, which serves 316 destinations in 115 countries through their hubs at Paris-Charles de Gaulle and Amsterdam Schiphol airport.

The new flights to Berlin are served in cooperation with *Air Berlin*, giving *airBaltic* passengers the chance to explore over 92 further destinations within the partner's network, while *Brussels Airlines* offer convenient connections to 76 destinations in Europe, Africa and USA through their hub in Brussels. The partner for the Vienna flights is *Austrian Airlines*, allowing our passengers to benefit further from great connections and prices to more than 130 worldwide destinations through Vienna.



airBaltic
codeshare partners



Flights from RIGA						Flights to RIGA					
Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival
AALBORG						AALBORG					
BT 149	RIX	AAL	-----6-	12:35	13:15	BT 150	AAL	RIX	-----7	15:00	17:30
ALESUND						ALESUND					
BT 175	RIX	AES	----5-7	13:20	14:45	BT 176	AES	RIX	----5-7	15:15	18:30
AMSTERDAM						AMSTERDAM					
BT 617	RIX	AMS	1234567	08:30	09:55	BT 618	AMS	RIX	1234567	11:30	14:45
BT 619	RIX	AMS	12345-7	17:10	18:35	BT 620	AMS	RIX	12345-7	19:55	23:10
AMSTERDAM flights from VILNIUS						AMSTERDAM flights to VILNIUS					
BT 609	VNO	AMS	12-4567	08:35	10:35	BT 610	AMS	VNO	12-4567	12:30	16:15
ATHENS						ATHENS					
BT 611	RIX	ATH	-3----	09:30	12:50	BT 612	ATH	RIX	-----7 Sep 13	03:30	06:50
BT 611	RIX	ATH	-2---6- Sep 1-8, 15-29	15:30	18:50	BT 612	ATH	RIX	-3----	13:25	16:45
BT 611	RIX	ATH	-----6- Sep 12	23:35	02:55+1	BT 612	ATH	RIX	-2---6- Sep 1-8, 15-29	19:25	22:45
BAKU						BAKU					
BT 732	RIX	GYD	-----7 Till Sep 6	21:30	03:25+1	BT 212	GYD	RIX	1----- Till Sep 7	04:20	06:30
BT 732	RIX	GYD	-3----- Till Sep 2	23:45	05:40+1	BT 218	GYD	RIX	-4----- Till Sep 3	06:30	08:40
BARCELONA						BARCELONA					
BT 1681	RIX	BCN	-----7	06:05	8:50	BT 1682	BCN	RIX	-----7	09:30	14:10
BT 683	RIX	BCN	1-456-	14:40	17:25	BT 684	BCN	RIX	1-456-	18:10	22:50
BARI						BARI					
BT 623	RIX	BRI	-2-----	08:00	09:55	BT 624	BRI	RIX	-2-----	10:30	14:25
BERLIN Tegel						BERLIN Tegel					
BT 211	RIX	TXL	123456-	07:50	08:45	BT 212	TXL	RIX	123456-	09:40	12:30
BT 217	RIX	TXL	1234567	14:00	14:55	BT 218	TXL	RIX	1234567	15:25	18:15
BT 213	RIX	TXL	12345-7	18:15	19:10	BT 214	TXL	RIX	12345-7	19:45	22:35
BERLIN Tegel flights from TALLINN						BERLIN Tegel flights to TALLINN					
BT 201	TLL	TXL	1-4----	05:50	07:10	BT 202	TXL	TLL	1-4----	08:00	11:15
BT 203	TLL	TXL	-3-5--	18:20	19:40	BT 204	TXL	TLL	-3-5--	21:55	01:10+1
BILLUND						BILLUND					
BT 145	RIX	BLL	12345-7	23:45	00:45+1	BT 146	BLL	RIX	123456-	05:50	08:40
BRUSSELS						BRUSSELS					
BT 601	RIX	BRU	12345--	06:15	08:10	BT 602	BRU	RIX	12345--	08:45	12:30
BT 607	RIX	BRU	-----6-	12:25	14:20	BT 608	BRU	RIX	-----6-	14:50	18:35
BT 603	RIX	BRU	1-4-7--	16:35	18:30	BT 604	BRU	RIX	1-4-7--	19:05	22:50
BRUSSELS flights from VILNIUS						BRUSSELS flights to VILNIUS					
BT 605	VNO	BRU	12-----	06:00	07:55	BT 606	BRU	VNO	12-----	08:45	12:35
BT 605	VNO	BRU	--4-----	17:00	19:05	BT 606	BRU	VNO	--4-----	19:35	23:25
BUCHAREST						BUCHAREST					
BT 503	RIX	OTP	1-4-6-	23:45	02:30+1	BT 504	OTP	RIX	-2-5-7	03:50	06:40
BUDAPEST						BUDAPEST					
BT 491	RIX	BUD	1-345--	13:00	14:25	BT 492	BUD	RIX	1-345--	14:55	18:10
BURGAS						BURGAS					
BT 755	RIX	BOJ	-3----- Till Sep 9	09:30	12:10	BT 756	BOJ	RIX	-3----- Till Sep 9	12:50	15:25
BT 755	RIX	BOJ	-----6- Till Sep 19	17:10	19:50	BT 756	BOJ	RIX	-----6- Till Sep 19	20:35	23:10
COPENHAGEN						COPENHAGEN					
BT 133	RIX	CPH	12345--	06:45	07:25	BT 134	CPH	RIX	12345--	08:05	10:40
BT 131	RIX	CPH	1234567	09:40	10:20	BT 132	CPH	RIX	1234567	10:55	13:30
BT 139	RIX	CPH	1234567	19:00	19:40	BT 140	CPH	RIX	1234567	20:15	22:50
BT 137	RIX	CPH	1234-7	21:40	22:20	BT 138	CPH	RIX	1234-7	23:00	01:35+1
DUBROVNIK						DUBROVNIK					
BT 497	RIX	DBV	--4----- Till Sep 17	09:20	11:00	BT 498	DBV	RIX	--4----- Till Sep 17	11:40	15:25
BT 497	RIX	DBV	-2----- Till Sep 22	16:35	18:15	BT 498	DBV	RIX	-2----- Till Sep 22	18:55	22:40
DUSSELDORF						DUSSELDORF					
BT 235	RIX	DUS	1234567	12:30	14:10	BT 236	DUS	RIX	-234567	14:45	18:15
						BT 236	DUS	RIX	1-----	15:00	18:30
FRANKFURT						FRANKFURT					
BT 243	RIX	FRA	-----6-	07:50	09:35	BT 242	FRA	RIX	12345-7	15:00	18:35
BT 241	RIX	FRA	12345-7	12:40	14:25	BT 246	FRA	RIX	-----6-	19:35	23:10
GOTHENBURG						GOTHENBURG					
BT 121	RIX	GOT	1-4-7--	23:45	00:30+1	BT 122	GOT	RIX	12-5--	06:00	08:35
HAMBURG						HAMBURG					
BT 251	RIX	HAM	12345--	07:50	08:55	BT 252	HAM	RIX	12345--	09:25	12:20
BT 255	RIX	HAM	-----6-	13:15	14:20	BT 256	HAM	RIX	-----6-	14:50	17:45
BT 253	RIX	HAM	12345-7	17:55	19:00	BT 254	HAM	RIX	12345-7	19:40	22:35
HELSINKI						HELSINKI					
BT 301	RIX	HEL	1234567	09:20	10:25	BT 326	HEL	RIX	1234567	06:00	06:55
BT 303	RIX	HEL	1234567	14:00	15:05	BT 330	HEL	RIX	-----6-	07:40	08:40
BT 307	RIX	HEL	1234567	19:00	20:05	BT 302	HEL	RIX	1234567	10:55	11:55
BT 329	RIX	HEL	-----7	23:05	00:10+1	BT 304	HEL	RIX	1234567	15:35	16:35
BT 325	RIX	HEL	1234567	23:35	00:35+1	BT 308	HEL	RIX	1234567	21:30	22:30
HELSINKI flights from VILNIUS						HELSINKI flights to VILNIUS					
BT 323	VNO	HEL	12345--	22:15	23:45	BT 324	HEL	VNO	12345--	06:25	07:55
KIEV Borispol						KIEV Borispol					
BT 400	RIX	KBP	123456-	09:15	11:05	BT 401	KBP	RIX	123456-	11:35	13:30
BT 404	RIX	KBP	12345-7	18:40	20:30	BT 405	KBP	RIX	12345-7	21:00	22:55
LARNACA						LARNACA					
BT 657	RIX	LCA	-----6-	23:55	03:45+1	BT 658	LCA	RIX	-----7	04:30	08:30
LONDON Gatwick						LONDON Gatwick					
BT 651	RIX	LGW	12-456-	08:35	09:25	BT 652	LGW	RIX	12-456-	10:10	14:55
BT 653	RIX	LGW	--45--	16:00	16:50	BT 654	LGW	RIX	--4-----	17:35	22:20
BT 653	RIX	LGW	1-3---7	16:30	17:20	BT 654	LGW	RIX	-----5--	17:55	22:40
						BT 654	LGW	RIX	-----7	18:05	22:50
						BT 654	LGW	RIX	1-3----	18:10	22:55
MALTA						MALTA					
BT 739	RIX	MLA	-----7	23:30	02:10+1	BT 740	MLA	RIX	1-----	02:50	07:30
MILAN Malpensa						MILAN Malpensa					
BT 629	RIX	MXP	-----6- Till Sep 19	09:20	11:05	BT 630	MXP	RIX	-4----- Till Sep 3	14:45	18:25
BT 629	RIX	MXP	-4----- Sep 3	12:20	14:05	BT 630	MXP	RIX	1-3-5--	14:45	18:25
BT 629	RIX	MXP	1-3-5--	12:20	14:05	BT 630	MXP	RIX	-----7 Sep 6-27	19:25	23:05
BT 629	RIX	MXP	-----7 Sep 27	17:00	18:45						
MINSK						MINSK					
BT 412	RIX	MSQ	1-3---7	13:55	15:05	BT 413	MSQ	RIX	1-3---7	15:45	16:55
MOSCOW Sheremetyevo						MOSCOW Sheremetyevo					
BT 424	RIX	SVO	123456-	07:55	09:35	BT 425	SVO	RIX	123456-	10:25	12:10
BT 422	RIX	SVO	12345-7	18:45	20:25	BT 423	SVO	RIX	12345-7	21:10	22:55

Flights from Riga						Flights to Riga					
Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival
MOSCOW Vnukovo						MOSCOW Vnukovo					
BT 416	RIX	VKO	1---5-7	23:55	01:40+1	BT 417	VKO	RIX	12---6-	04:45	06:40
MUNICH						MUNICH					
BT 221	RIX	MUC	123456-	07:20	09:00	BT 222	MUC	RIX	123456-	09:35	13:05
BT 223	RIX	MUC	1-345-7	17:20	19:00	BT 224	MUC	RIX	1-345-7	19:35	23:05
NICE						NICE					
BT 695	RIX	NCE	----4- Till Sep 3	16:30	18:35	BT 696	NCE	RIX	----4- Till Sep 3	19:10	23:10
BT 695	RIX	NCE	-2-----	16:30	18:35	BT 696	NCE	RIX	-2-----	19:10	23:10
BT 695	RIX	NCE	-----6-	16:35	18:40	BT 696	NCE	RIX	-----6-	19:10	23:10
OLBIA						OLBIA					
BT 655	RIX	OLB	-2---6-	16:00	18:10	BT 656	OLB	RIX	-2---6-	18:45	23:00
OSLO						OSLO					
BT 151	RIX	OSL	1234567	08:05	09:00	BT 152	OSL	RIX	--34-7	05:50	08:40
BT 159	RIX	OSL	12345-7	13:55	14:50	BT 158	OSL	RIX	1234567	09:25	12:15
BT 153	RIX	OSL	1234567	18:35	19:30	BT 160	OSL	RIX	12345-7	15:20	18:10
BT 157	RIX	OSL	-23--6-	23:45	00:40+1	BT 154	OSL	RIX	1234567	20:00	22:50
PALANGA						PALANGA					
BT 035	RIX	PLQ	1-3-5-- Till Sep 16	14:25	15:10	BT 032	PLQ	RIX	123456-	06:05	06:50
BT 033	RIX	PLQ	12345-7	23:45	00:30+1	BT 036	PLQ	RIX	1-3-5-- Till Sep 16	15:45	16:30
PALMA DE MAYORCA						PALMA DE MAYORCA					
BT 687	RIX	PMI	-----7	08:05	10:50	BT 688	PMI	RIX	-----7	11:40	16:20
PARIS Charles de Gaulles						PARIS Charles de Gaulles					
BT 691	RIX	CDG	1234567	07:30	09:25	BT 692	CDG	RIX	12345-7	10:10	13:55
BT 693	RIX	CDG	1-2-4-7 Sep 3-28	16:30	18:25	BT 694	CDG	RIX	1-2-4-7 Sep 3-28	19:20	23:05
PARIS flights from TALLINN						PARIS flights to TALLINN					
BT 689	TLL	CDG	12-4567	09:35	11:35	BT 690	CDG	TLL	12-4567	12:30	16:25
PARIS flights from VILNIUS						PARIS flights to VILNIUS					
BT 701	VNO	CDG	-3---7	09:50	11:35	BT 702	CDG	VNO	-3---7	12:30	16:05
BT 701	VNO	CDG	1-5--7	14:25	16:10	BT 702	CDG	VNO	1-5--7	16:55	20:30
PISA / Till Sep 12						PISA					
BT 637	RIX	PSA	-----6-	09:00	10:50	BT 638	PSA	RIX	-----7 Sep 6	08:00	11:50
						BT 638	PSA	RIX	-----7 Sep 6	19:10	23:00
PRAGUE						PRAGUE					
BT 481	RIX	PRG	1234567	13:15	14:25	BT 482	PRG	RIX	1234567	14:55	18:00
RADOM						RADOM					
BT 459	RIX	RDO	-2-4-6-	14:05	14:45	BT 460	RDO	RIX	-2-4-6-	15:25	18:00
RHODES / Till Sep 4						RHODES / Till Sep 11					
BT 597	RIX	RHO	----5-	07:25	11:00	BT 598	RHO	RIX	----5-	11:40	15:20
RJEKA						RJEKA					
BT 495	RIX	RJK	-3-5--	17:05	18:30	BT 496	RJK	RIX	-3-5--	19:05	22:30
ROME Leonardo da Vinci Fiumicino						ROME Leonardo da Vinci Fiumicino					
BT 631	RIX	FCO	-3-5-7	09:20	11:25	BT 632	FCO	RIX	-3-5-7	12:10	16:20
BT 633	RIX	FCO	1-4---	15:50	17:55	BT 634	FCO	RIX	1-4---	18:50	23:00
STAVANGER / Sep 10-13, 24-27						STAVANGER / Sep 11-14, 25-28					
BT 177	RIX	SVG	----4-7	23:35	00:55+1	BT 178	SVG	RIX	1-5--7	05:25	08:40
STOCKHOLM Arlanda						STOCKHOLM Arlanda					
BT 101	RIX	ARN	1234567	07:50	08:05	BT 104	ARN	RIX	1234567	06:20	08:35
BT 105	RIX	ARN	1234567	14:15	14:30	BT 102	ARN	RIX	1234567	08:40	10:55
BT 109	RIX	ARN	1234567	19:00	19:15	BT 106	ARN	RIX	1234567	15:00	17:15
BT 103	RIX	ARN	1234567	23:35	23:50	BT 110	ARN	RIX	1234567	20:15	22:30
ST-PETERSBURG						ST-PETERSBURG					
BT 442	RIX	LED	1-34567	09:20	10:40	BT 447	LED	RIX	1-4-6-	05:20	06:40
BT 444	RIX	LED	12-45-7	19:00	20:20	BT 443	LED	RIX	1-34567	11:15	12:35
BT 446	RIX	LED	-3-5-7	23:55	01:15+1	BT 445	LED	RIX	12-45-7	21:20	22:40
TALLINN						TALLINN					
BT 319	RIX	TLL	12-4567	07:20	08:10	BT 322	TLL	RIX	1234567	06:00	06:50
BT 311	RIX	TLL	1234567	09:30	10:20	BT 362	TLL	RIX	-2-6--	07:50	08:40
BT 313	RIX	TLL	1-345--	12:55	13:45	BT 312	TLL	RIX	1234567	10:55	11:45
BT 313	RIX	TLL	-2-6-7	13:55	14:45	BT 314	TLL	RIX	1-345--	14:35	15:25
BT 315	RIX	TLL	1-345--	14:25	15:15	BT 314	TLL	RIX	-2-6-7	15:15	16:05
BT 317	RIX	TLL	1234567	19:05	19:55	BT 316	TLL	RIX	1-345--	15:50	16:40
BT 321	RIX	TLL	-3-7--	23:00	23:50	BT 320	TLL	RIX	12-4567	16:55	17:45
BT 361	RIX	TLL	1234567	23:35	00:25+1	BT 318	TLL	RIX	----4-	20:25	21:15
						BT 318	TLL	RIX	123-567	21:40	22:30
TBILISI						TBILISI					
BT 722	RIX	TBS	1----- Till Sep 14	23:25	03:55+1	BT 723	TBS	RIX	-2----- Till Sep 15	04:40	07:15
BT 722	RIX	TBS	----4-- Till Sep 24	23:25	03:55+1	BT 723	TBS	RIX	-----5- Till Sep 25	04:40	07:15
BT 724	RIX	TBS	-3-5-7	23:25	03:55+1	BT 725	TBS	RIX	1-4-6-	04:40	07:15
TEL AVIV						TEL AVIV					
BT 771	RIX	TLV	-3--6-	13:00	17:20	BT 772	TLV	RIX	-3--6-	18:20	22:50
THESSALONIKI						THESSALONIKI					
BT 595	RIX	SKG	----5-7	23:55	02:50+1	BT 596	SKG	RIX	1---6-	03:45	06:40
TURKU						TURKU					
BT 359	RIX	TKU	12345-7	23:45	00:55+1	BT 360	TKU	RIX	123456-	05:45	06:50
VIENNA						VIENNA					
BT 431	RIX	VIE	1-3-5--	07:20	08:45	BT 432	VIE	RIX	1-3-5--	09:25	12:45
BT 431	RIX	VIE	-2-4-6-	07:30	08:30	BT 432	VIE	RIX	-2-4-6-	09:25	12:25
BT 433	RIX	VIE	12345-7	17:40	19:05	BT 434	VIE	RIX	12345-7	19:50	23:10
VIENNA flights from TALLINN						VIENNA flights to TALLINN					
BT 205	TLL	VIE	----5-	06:25	08:20	BT 206	VIE	TLL	----5-	10:40	14:20
BT 207	TLL	VIE	1-4---	17:40	19:35	BT 208	VIE	TLL	1-4---	20:35	00:35+1
VILNIUS						VILNIUS					
BT 351	RIX	VNO	1234567	07:20	08:10	BT 350	VNO	RIX	1234567	06:00	06:50
BT 341	RIX	VNO	1234567	09:30	10:20	BT 342	VNO	RIX	1234567	10:55	11:45
BT 1343	RIX	VNO	1-5--7	12:50	13:40	BT 1354	VNO	RIX	12-----	13:00	13:50
BT 343	RIX	VNO	1234567	13:55	14:45	BT 344	VNO	RIX	1234567	15:15	16:05
BT 1345	RIX	VNO	-3---7	17:20	18:10	BT 352	VNO	RIX	-23-67	16:55	17:45
BT 347	RIX	VNO	1234567	19:05	19:55	BT 348	VNO	RIX	1234567	20:25	21:15
BT 349	RIX	VNO	1234567	23:35	00:25+1	BT 1344	VNO	RIX	1-5--7	21:50	22:40
BT 1353	RIX	VNO	1-----7	23:05	23:55	BT 1346	VNO	RIX	1-345--	23:50	00:40+1
VENICE / Till Sep 7						VENICE / Till Sep 7					
BT 627	RIX	VCE	1-4---	17:05	18:45	BT 628	VCE	RIX	1-4---	19:30	23:05
WARSAW						WARSAW					
BT 461	RIX	WAW	123-56-	07:50	08:20	BT 462	WAW	RIX	123-56-	09:20	11:45
BT 467	RIX	WAW	-234-7	19:05	19:35	BT 468	WAW	RIX	-234-7	20:05	22:30
ZURICH						ZURICH					
BT 641	RIX	ZRH	1-4-6-	07:40	09:10	BT 642	ZRH	RIX	1-4-6-	09:45	13:15
BT 641	RIX	ZRH	-3-5-7	17:30	19:00	BT 642	ZRH	RIX	-3-5-7	19:35	23:05



Kaspars Kapenieks,
Head of System
Administration

Avoiding all technologies

Kaspars Kapenieks is a man of contrasts. Devoting his working days to information technologies, he tends to escape all technologies in his free time. With this interview he allows us to take a peek into his life, starting from an ordinary working day to such extreme events as escaping a bear attack.

How did you end up at *airBaltic*?

Before then, I was working at the Riga City Council. My work responsibilities and the technologies used there were very similar to what I'm doing now, but the business environment and demands were completely different. Three-and-a-half years ago the *airBaltic* IT director invited me to apply for a job as the head of system administration. Already at my first

interview he warned me that the dynamics at *airBaltic* are probably unlike those at any other business in Latvia. I had been looking for a new challenge around that time, but it turned out that the challenge found me instead; all I had to do was accept it. Already on my first day at work I knew this was the right thing for me!

What are your responsibilities?

My team is responsible for ensuring

Text by **EGITA KRASTIŅA**
Photo by **MĀRTIŅŠ ZILGAVIS, F64**

operations of all the centralised IT systems. We provide for the public systems, the most important of which is the *airBaltic* website, and also many of the internal systems, from accounting to flight planning systems, but we also manage the network and Internet connections and communication channels used 24 hours a day by our dispatchers, load controllers, technicians and many others. Almost every department has something specific, and we're here to ensure that these systems work. We're the people no one sees as long as we're doing our job well. If everything's going well and our colleagues ignore us, that means everything is in order. But as soon as something goes wrong, we always need to be ready to react.

How important is IT to a company's growth and development?

I believe the importance of IT in a business' development is rapidly increasing. Even now it's hard to find a business process that doesn't use IT systems. Mobile devices are playing an increasingly bigger role in our everyday lives. Almost all business systems now need servers to provide data. And the users themselves are demanding more, too. If in the past IT systems used to be just supplementary aides, today we cannot imagine daily life without them. Most of our systems still have backup procedures that can be performed without computers, but that would mean major chaos and flight delays. The significance of IT is felt most when it doesn't work.

How does IT differ in the aviation sector?

At first, my job was very exciting, because I had to learn a lot of new things linked with aviation, from the countless abbreviations to how data is transferred between the many branches, like airports, airlines, air navigation services, travel agencies and many others. The systems differ, too. Some systems need to work 24 hours a day, while others are used only during working hours. If maintenance is needed on a system, we need to find the right time to do it, for example, when all the evening flights are finished and the morning flights have not yet begun. Plus, we need to do it in a matter of a couple of hours. We have IT people on duty 24/7 and who are available at any time. I've also been woken up in the middle of the night and had to go in to work to solve problems. My colleagues and I have worked out an "on-call" system amongst ourselves for weekends and vacations. When I began this job, one of my goals was to streamline

and coordinate everything so that any member of our team could take a whole month off and go on vacation, turn off his or her phone and be sure that his or her colleagues could take care of any problems that arose during that time. The desire to rest and relax on one's time off is a powerful motivator to work conscientiously and ensure that all the systems work smoothly.

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

I really like going away and turning off all technologies. That could be hiking, boating or bicycle riding right here in Latvia. There are so many wonderful things to do out in nature here in Latvia – the forests, the fields, the rivers. Of course, if we've got more time, my friends and I like to travel further and experience "a different reality". For example, take a couple of weeks to boat the rivers of the Far North, where you don't meet a single other person and there's no cell phone coverage. All you've got is what's in your backpack and in the forest – fish, berries, mushrooms. I really like the wilderness and nature. However, it's hard to return to the reality of technology after a vacation like that.

What did you do on your last vacation?

A year ago my friends and I boated the rivers of the Ural Mountains. That was really beautiful. The rivers there were a little different than the ones we'd been on before – there were lots of cliffs and rapids. Some rapids were up to Class IV in International scale and were a real test for our skills. We also met a bear while walking in the mountains. We had stopped to drink by a stream and heard branches breaking. Then we saw the bear, which began running towards us. Such experiences make one reevaluate not only one's specific actions, but life in general.

Why do you like that sort of vacation?

I've also gone on regular guided tours, but, to be honest, I like more freedom. It's



River Balbanju, August 2014

hard for me to accept someone putting time limits on my vacation, say, how long I'm allowed to take a walk or look at a landscape. I prefer to plan my own time and not adhere to a strict schedule. Of course, boating on a river presents its own time limits, for example, we have a week to travel 200 km on this or that river. We, too, have days when we don't feel like doing anything, but then that's our own responsibility, because we know we'll have to row twice as much the next day.

What do you think are the biggest advantages to travelling that way?

First of all, you really get to know yourself well. At such moments you sometimes surprise yourself when you discover what you have inside of you, what you like and don't like. You've got time to contemplate things, arrange your priorities and

then return home and to work with a completely different level of energy and outlook on life. And, of course, all those experiences! Sometimes I like to pack up my bicycle, hop on an airplane, arrive at any destination and just spend a weekend riding around there. Georgia is great for that. I take my tent and bicycle and fly *airBaltic* to Tbilisi on a Friday evening, I spend a couple of days riding my bicycle around Georgia, and then I get back on the airplane early Monday morning and am back at work by 8:30 a.m. Trips like that sure make the weekend seem longer and fuller. If you've got a little more time, another great destination for something like that is Cyprus, because the island is fairly small and easy for bicycle riding. Ride just a few minutes beyond the beach resorts, and a completely different landscape opens up! **BO**



Onboard menu

Autumn menu in Economy Class

The new Food & Drinks onboard menu offers a delicious and wholesome selection for the autumn season. For those still enjoying their vacation and our warmest destinations, there is a light and fresh chicken salad with Parmesan cheese, a snack platter of cheeses and olives, and a selection of Spanish tapas that can be combined with a glass of wine. In the Sandwiches section you can find our passengers' favourites: the Scandinavian-style salmon sandwich, the hot and tasty chicken and cheese panini, as well as the hearty croissant

with ham and cheese and pickled cucumbers that goes perfectly with chicken soup. For a more hearty meal, choose one of our hot meals: goulash of beef and vegetables with potatoes, or Penne Bolognese (pasta in a smooth tomato sauce with minced meat and veggies), which is a novelty on the onboard menu. For a quick energy boost, pick something from our Snacks page. You can get better deals by combining the chocolate drop muffin or oatmeal porridge with sweet cream, raspberries and blackberries or mango and orange smoothie with tea or coffee!

Something special from the Baltics

Now you can try out or take with you traditional liquors and sweets from the Baltic States. Latvian herbal liqueur *Riga Black Balsam*, Lithuanian mead nectar *Suktinis* or Estonian rum-based liqueur *Vana Tallinn* – take these three, supplement them with the delicious Latvian blueberry truffles by *Pure*, and create your own Baltic taste set!



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airBaltic's pre-order menu can be accessed through the **Manage My Booking** section at airBaltic.com. Also available by phone at (+371) 67006006 for international callers or 90001100 within Latvia; up to 24 hours before departure.

More than 70 dishes are available at our innovative pre-order website airbalticmeal.com, where you can create your individual meal on a virtual tray up to 24 hours before your flight.

Our online check-in system allows passengers to pre-order their meal **during online check-in**, from 72 hours up to one hour before departure for flights from Riga.

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