



DID YOU SAY FAMOUS BELGIANS?!



When a Belgian arrives in the UK for the first time, he or she does not necessarily expect the usual reaction of the British when they realise they are dealing with a Belgian: "You're Belgian? Really?... Ha! Can you name more than five famous Belgians?." When we then start enthusiastically listing some of our favourite national icons, we are again surprised by the disbelieving looks on the faces of our new British friends.... and we usually end up being invited to the next game of Trivial Pursuit they play with their friends and relatives!

We have decided to develop from what appears to be a very British joke a means of introducing you to our lovely homeland. Belgium can boast not only really fascinating famous characters, but also genius inventors whose revolutionary inventions changed the world forever.

The Famous Belgians we are introducing to you in this booklet are the first (almost) random selection from a long list we will be

delighted to complete in the near future (hence Episode I in the title). We Belgians are a colourful, slightly surreal people. We invented a literary genre (the Belgian strip cartoon) whose heroes are brilliant ambassadors of our vivid imaginations and of who we really are. So, with this Episode 1 of Did you say Famous Belgians!? and, by presenting our national icons in the context of the places they are from, or that better illustrate their achievements, we hope to arouse your curiosity about one of Belgium's greatest assets – apart, of course, from our beautiful unspoilt countryside and towns, riveting lifestyle, great events, delicious food and drink, and world-famous chocolate and beer - : our people! We hope that the booklet will help you to become the ultimate well-informed visitor, since... for those in the know, Brussels and Wallonia - the South of Belgium – are the places to go!

For more information on Brussels and Wallonia, please visit www.belgiumtheplaceto.be

Front cover image:
The Walloon's fresco - Namur City Hall - Painted by L'Atelier Cité de la Création
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BRUSSELS

According to legend, Brussels was founded in AD 79 as a Roman settlement on an island in the River Senne. A town grew up around the fortress and its position at the crossroads of European trading routes ensured the development of Europe's largest market for cloth and luxury goods.

The city outgrew its walls already in the 13th century and the present boulevards show the limits of the new town as it spread. Skilled craftsmen made the city a trade centre. Monumental buildings from the 13th century such as cathedrals bear witness to the golden era. From that period on, Brussels would be one of the most successful towns in the Duchy of Brabant, especially renowned for her fabrics and tapestry industries.

In the 1430s, Brussels became the capital of Burgundy (allied to the King of England), giving the city an unprecedented rank on the geopolitical map of that time.

In 1695, the French king Louis XIV attacked the city and destroyed over 4000 houses, including the Grand Place, which would be quickly and flamboyantly rebuilt as a defying statement to the French ruler.

The 18th century marks the beginning of Austrian rule over Brussels after the Utrecht peace treaty ended the War of the Spanish succession between France and Austria with its allies. The city was rebuilt and came back into flourishing business.

Brussels became the capital of Belgium when it gained independence from the Netherlands in 1830. In the nineteenth century, the crisis in agriculture and rapid industrialisation saw the city's population explode, reaching 2.5 million by 1939. The city's wealthy middle-

classes commissioned spectacular buildings and other works of art from innovative artists and architects, and the city became a centre of Art Nouveau, Art Deco and Surrealism. After 1945, a decline set in, and the population fell to under 1 million in the 1980s. Today many parts of the city are being gentrified and its population is rising again, boosted by the presence of many of the institutions of the European Union, which has attracted many international organisations to the city. Brussels has also become a leading venue for business and academic conferences and trade shows as well as a transport hub, served by two international airports and with high-speed rail links to London, Paris, Cologne and Amsterdam.

DON'T MISS...

The Grand'Place (the world's most beautiful stage according to Cocteau), the upper town Art Nouveau district of Ixelles and Uccle, the Ixelles Ponds, the Sablons, the antiques and flea market district of the Marolles, the hip and trendy Dansaert District, the boho Châtelain and the Congolese Matongué area in the laid back St Boniface districts, the bubbly St Jacques area. Also the Magritte, Natural Sciences and Musical Instrument museums, the BOZAR, the Cantillon Brasserie or the Delirium café and its 2010 beers, Mini-Europe, the Atomium and the many yearly festivals such as the weekend long Brussels Jazz Marathon in May. For a list of the most exciting events, please visit www.belgiumtheplacetobe



View of the Town Hall, Brussels - © Oliver Knight/BTO

© Belga Pictures



Jacques Brel (1929-1978)

Brel was a singer-songwriter, actor and director. He was born in Schaerbeek in Brussels, but lived most of his adult life in Paris, and later in the Marquesas Islands in the South Pacific. He died of lung cancer in Paris and his body was returned to the Marquesas Islands for burial. Most of his songs were in French, and the quality and style of his lyrics were highly regarded by many popular music critics from all around the world. In the English-speaking world, his songs are less well-known, although English cover versions have been recorded by Scott Walker, Marc Almond, David Bowie, Sting, Dame Shirley Bassey and Dusty Springfield. Brel appeared in several cult films and wrote and starred in the French-language version of the musical "Man of La Mancha."



Victor Horta (1861 - 1947)

Horta was born the son of a Spanish immigrant shoemaker, and was originally destined for a career in music. However, he was expelled from the Ghent Conservatory for bad behaviour and so accepted an offer from a local builder who offered to pay for his architecture studies if he would work for him afterwards. Horta proved to be a brilliant designer and draughtsman and won a scholarship to the Royal Academy in Brussels. He also won a prize enabling him to study interior design and furniture-making in Paris. On graduation from the Academy, he was appointed an assistant to Alphonse Balat, King Leopold II's favourite architect. He worked with Balat on the construction of the Royal Museums of Ancient & Modern Art and the innovative iron-and-glass greenhouses at the Royal Château at Laeken, just north of Brussels. His flamboyant house for Professor Tassel in Brussels, completed in 1893, is usually considered as the first Art Nouveau building in the world. Horta's innovative use of iron and glass and the sophisticated furniture and decoration, all designed by the architect, created a sensation in critical circles and was reported widely, bringing him international fame and influencing many other architects, including Hector Guimard, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Frank Lloyd Wright.

Horta went on to design many private houses in Brussels (four of which are now UNESCO World Heritage Sites) and elsewhere, as well as public buildings such as hospitals, art galleries and concert halls. During his time as Professor of Architecture at the Free University of Brussels, he made changes to the curriculums that were taken up by universities worldwide, contributing greatly to the professionalisation of architecture. He was made a Baron in 1932 and died in 1947. His last building, the Art Deco Brussels Central Station, was completed after his death and opened in 1952.



Manneken-Pis

This bronze statue, about 50cm high, has stood on a street-corner in central Brussels since 1619, and has come to symbolise the independent spirit

of the city's inhabitants. The first record of a similar stone fountain on the same site goes back to 1388, when it was known as "Le petit Julien". The first reference to the statue as "Manneken Pis" is in a document dated 1452. In 1619, the current bronze statue was commissioned by the City of Brussels from the local sculptor Jérôme Duquesnoy the Elder (1570-1641) and used to replace the stone version. The original bronze was smashed by a lunatic, its replacement was stolen by foreign troops twice and its replacement was stolen by students in the 1960s. Today, the Manneken has a wardrobe of some 800 costumes, which is kept in the City of Brussels Museum, and looked after by his Official Dresser. As well as many national costumes, the collection includes sporting, military,

fashion and musical outfits. The water supply is replaced with other liquids on many occasions, including milk, beer and Beaujolais wine. The Manneken's family of statues now includes the Jeanneke-Pis (a girl) and the Zinneke-Pis (a dog).



Eddy Merckx (b 1945)

Merckx is regarded as the greatest and most successful cyclist of all time. Between 1961 and 1977, he set several world cycling records, some of which remain unbroken to this day. He won the Tour de France, the Giro d'Italia and the Liège-Bastogne-Liège races five times each, the Milan-San Remo Classic race seven times, the Paris-Roubaix race and the Tour of Wallonia three times each, the Tour of Belgium and the Tour of Lombardy twice each, the Tour of Spain and the Tour of Switzerland once each, plus 32 other International Classic races. He won the Cycling World Championship four times, plus 17 six-day time trials. Following his retirement from competitive cycling, Merckx was made a Baron and a member of the Belgian Olympic Committee. He coached the Belgian national cycling team for a period in the 1990s. He now owns a bicycle factory and is much in demand as a commentator at cycling events and an adviser on the setting-up of new events, such as the Tour of Qatar, which has featured on the UCI tour calendar since 2002.



Peyo (1925 - 1992)

"Peyo" is the pen-name of Pierre Culliford, who was born in Brussels to an English father and a Belgian mother. "Peyo" was how one of his English cousins pronounced "Pierrot," as he was known to his family. He studied art at the Royal Academy in Brussels and joined the CBA animation studio after graduating. Here he met the cartoonists André Franquin, Morris and Eddy Paape. His first strip cartoons appeared in the Belgian daily press in 1950: "Johan" (later "Johan et Pirlouit") in *La Dernière Heure* and *Poussy in Le Soir*. It was in 1950 that a "Johan et Pirlouit" strip included the "Schtroumpfs" ("Smurfs") for the first time. The Walloon editor of the cartoon magazine *Le Journal du Spirou* persuaded Peyo to produce some Smurf supplements in 1960 and they were hugely successful, both in their own albums and in a range of merchandised products, including the cult music album *The Smurfs with Father Abraham* (the Dutch musician Pierre Kartner) in 1977, and a series of television cartoons and a feature film by the American studio Hanna-Barbera in 1982. The demand for Smurf material led Peyo to set up a drawing studio in the early 1960s and he delegated almost all the design and drawing work to the studio's members, retaining an involvement in the story planning. In the early 1980s, he set up *Cartoon Création SA* to run what had become a worldwide business. He died suddenly of a heart attack in 1992, but the Smurfs' success continues.



Plastic Bertrand (b 1954)

He was born Roger Marie François Jouret in Brussels on 27 February 1954, to a French father and a Ukrainian mother. Aged nine, he became the singer and drummer in the "Buffalo Scouts Band", a pop group he formed with some friends from his Scout troop, who performed covers of Rolling Stones songs. He later formed bands called "The Pelicans", "Passing the Time" and "Hubble Bubble", as well as working as a DJ for pirate radio station *Radio Veronica*. In 1977, he launched his solo career as punk singer "Plastic Bertrand" and had an international hit with "*Ça plane pour moi*". This led to stints as the presenter of television music programmes and appearances in films and music programmes for children. He set up his own record production company MMD, which released several albums for other artists. In 1997, he was voted "Most Wanted Comeback Artist" in an MTV poll, and his comeback album went platinum. He has continued touring, recording and appearing on television since.



Andreas Vesalius (1514 - 1564)

He was born in Brussels, the son of Emperor Charles V's apothecary, and began his medical studies at Louvain University in Belgium before moving to the Paris Medical School in 1533. He quickly developed an interest in anatomy, for which he had a special talent. In 1543, he published his seven-volume masterpiece *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*, a treatise on anatomy, magnificently illustrated by a Dutch pupil of Titian. The book is now recognised as one of the greatest scientific works ever written. In its 600 pages, Vesalius describes in minute detail the human body's bones, joints, muscles, heart, blood vessels, nervous system, internal organs and brain. Initially, his work met with virulent criticism, but this soon turned to acclaim and he deposed Galileo from his pedestal to become the new authority on anatomy. His book remained the standard text on anatomy until the nineteenth century.

Jean-Claude Van Damme (b 1960)

"The Muscles from Brussels," as he jokingly calls himself – better known to us as Jean-Claude Van Damme, or "JCVD" – was born Jean-Claude Camille François Van Varenberg in

the Brussels suburb of Berchem-Sainte-Atithe. His parents ran a floristry business, and as a boy he showed an interest in classical music, ballet, painting and curling. His parents encouraged him to take up karate when he was 11, and he left school at 16 to become a full-time bodybuilder and martial-arts specialist. He gained his black belt aged 18 and travelled to Hong Kong to meet his idol Jackie Chan. He participated in professional kick-boxing and wrestling contests. Inspired by Gold's Gym in the USA, he opened his own "Californian Gym" in Brussels. By 1982, he had saved up \$10,000 and set off to Los Angeles to try his luck in the film industry. He took a number of short-term jobs, including pizza-deliverer, carpet-fitter, chauffeur, and personal trainer. He managed to get a few bit parts in films and changed his surname to Van Damme. In 1988, he made his breakthrough in the film *Bloodsport* which was an international success. Further successes followed, including many "tough-guy" roles and some comedies. In 1996, he directed his first film *The Quest* for which he also wrote the script and in which he also acted. His films enabled several Asian directors, including John Woo, to break into Hollywood. After overcoming his drug addiction, he was diagnosed with bipolar disorder in 2000. Van Damme began to specialise in so-called "direct to DVD" action films, including the *Universal Soldier* series. However, more recently he also proved to be an excellent comedian, in the eponym film 'JCVD', in which, as a semi-fictional character he performed one of the most moving scenes in his career, establishing him as a more "serious" actor to a much wider audience.



ARLON

Arlon stands at a crossroads, close to Belgium's borders with France and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. There were Celtic, Gaulish and then Roman settlements here, and the artefacts from these eras discovered by archaeologists are displayed to visitors in the town's museum. The town is a regional shopping centre, welcoming visitors to its narrow shopping streets, its shopping centre, its charming restaurants and its Hydrion Adeps Sports Centre. From the terrace next to St Donatus' church, where the castle of the Counts of Arlon once stood, there are spectacular views over the surrounding countryside, which is particularly popular with walkers and cyclists. Gourmets will love the variety of gastronomic treats available in Arlon derived from the traditional cuisines of the Ardennes, Gaume and Luxembourg regions. Local specialities include pâté gaumais (a type of pork pie) and maitrank, a local apéritif flavoured with the herb sweet woodruff.

DON'T MISS...

The Archaeological Museum; the old city centre with its large Lotharian farmhouses; the Museum of the sculptor Jean Gaspard; the Saint Donatus Hill and its Church which dominates Arlon's landscape; the neo-gothic Saint Martin church; the nature reserves; the Celtic folk music festival (March); the refreshing Maitrank - a locally produced aperitif; and its dedicated festival; the amazing village of Torgny and its vineyards and great local restaurants.

For more creative ideas, don't hesitate to visit our website www.belgiumtheplaceto.be



Arlon Town Centre © jeanmart.eu/belgiumtheplaceto.be



Jean-Joseph Etienne Lenoir (1822 - 1900)

Lenoir was born in Mussy-la-Ville, near Arlon, and studied electrical engineering in Paris. He went on to make improvements to the electric telegraph, and is best-known for inventing the first internal combustion engine, a single-cylinder, two-stroke engine fuelled by a mixture of coal gas and air. The engine was fitted into three-wheeled cars made by Gauthier in France and Lenoir Gas Engines in London. He launched a petrol engine with a primitive carburettor in 1863 and fitted it in a car which he drove from Paris to Joinville-le-Pont (on the River Marne south-east of Paris) and back in 11 hours. Lenoir's demonstration resulted in an order for several cars from the Tsar of Russia, but most of his engines powered printing presses, water pumps and machine tools in factories. His designs were rendered obsolete by the rapid development of petrol and diesel engine technology and he died in Paris.

BELOEIL

Beloeil is a town in the Belgian Province of Hainaut. Its name comes from the Picard beuleul which means a fort or a barrier. The town grew up around a castle, seat of the Prince de Ligne, whose family demolished the old castle and replaced it with an elegant château and extensive formal French-style gardens in the eighteenth century. Today, the 14th Prince still lives in part of the château with his family: the château's state rooms and gardens are open to the public. Among the many events held there each year are the Amaryllis Festival held in the state rooms in May, and the "Musical Night" a large-scale open-air concert held in the gardens in August. Near Beloeil, at Aubechies is an open-air archaeological museum.

DON'T MISS...

The Castle with its gardens and fantastic art collections; the open-air Museum at Aubechies, for a trip from the Neolithic Period to the third century AD; the Museum of Stone and Marble; the Church of Saint Martin; the Natural Reserve of the Sea of Sand; the Musical Nights Festival at Beloeil during the summer.

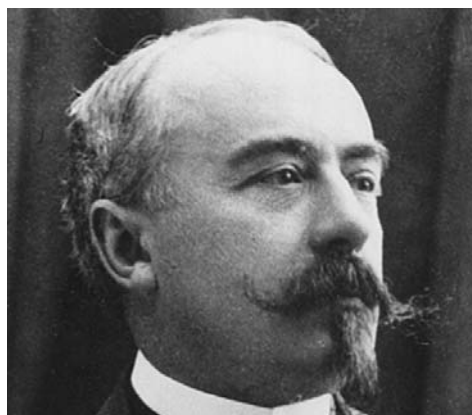
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Beloeil Castle © OPT-Kouprianoff



Concert at Beloeil Castle © jeanmart.eu/belgiumtheplaceto.be



Baron Edouard Louis Joseph Empain (1852 - 1929)

Empain was born in Beloeil, the son of a school-teacher. He paid his own way through his university studies in engineering and set up a steelworks with his brother. He anticipated, and was able to amass huge profits from, the enormous demand for railway rails and rolling stock as the European rail network expanded rapidly. He was also an

early developer of electric railways and tramlines, and his company built the Paris metro and the tram systems in Brussels, as well as undertaking numerous projects in China, Africa and Russia. Disappointed by the services offered by his bankers, he founded the Empain Bank in 1892. He also built power stations to supply many of his electric railways and tramways with their own electricity. In 1904, he travelled to Egypt to supervise a railway-building project and became passionately attached to the country, purchasing 25 km² of desert outside Cairo to build the luxury model town of Heliopolis, complete with facilities such as a horse-racing track, a golf course and a luxury hotel (now the Presidential palace). He was a keen amateur Egyptologist and financed several Belgian archaeological digs and purchased many Egyptian artefacts for Belgian museums. He returned to Belgium at the outbreak of the First World War, where the government gave him the rank of General with responsibility for the manufacture of arms for the Belgian army in France. He died in Brussels and was buried at Heliopolis.

BOUILLON

Bouillon is a town in the Belgian Province of Luxembourg. Its most famous inhabitant was Duke Godfrey of Bouillon, who sold his duchy to the Prince-Bishop of Liège to finance his participation and leadership in the First Crusade in 1097. Bouillon Castle occupies a strategic site high above the Semois valley and the Duke was protector of the nearby Saint Hubert's Abbey. In the seventeenth century, it was captured by the French and fortified by the great military engineer Vauban. Its fortifications were demolished in the nineteenth century and today it is the administrative capital of the Belgian Province of Luxembourg and a centre for tourism.

DON'T MISS...

The medieval castle with its falconry demonstrations during the summer; the Archeoscope and the Ducal Museum; the Medieval market and Camp (April and August); a nocturnal visit of the castle; the Abbey of Cordemois; the arboretum; the panoramic landscapes of the Giant's tomb at Frahan; the Witches Jump panorama in Les Hayons.

For further tips on what to do in the area, don't hesitate to visit our website:
www.belgiumtheplaceto.be



Bouillon Castle © Jeanmart-OPT



Godfrey of Bouillon (c1058-1100)

Godfrey was born at Baisy-Thy, near Nivelles (in the modern Province of Walloon Brabant). He inherited his father-in-law's duchy and substantial lands, but was inspired by a sermon preached by Peter the Hermit at Huy (near Liège) to sell them to the Prince-Bishop of Liège and finance his participation in the First Crusade, on which he was accompanied by his brothers Eustace and Baldwin. The crusader army left in 1096 and made its way via Constantinople, Nicea and Antioch to Jerusalem, where the Saracens were defeated in 1099. Godfrey was elected King of Jerusalem, but, ashamed of the pillaging by the crusaders, he preferred to use the more humble title of "Defender of the Holy Sepulchre". In 1100, his army defeated the Saracens at the Battle of Ascalon, but he then fell ill and died in Jerusalem after a long illness on 18 July. (It is rumoured that he was poisoned by fruit sent from the Emir of Caesarea). His brother Baldwin was subsequently crowned King of Jerusalem on 25 December 1100. An equestrian statue of Godfrey by the sculptor Eugène Simonis was unveiled in the Place Royale in Brussels in 1848.



DINANT

This natural site of beauty was first occupied by the Celts before becoming a Roman settlement on the Roman built road joining Bavay and Trier. The Prince-Bishop of Liège had an Episcopal residence here and the town became part of the Principality of Liège in 1070. Its main development took place between the 13th and 15th centuries due to its remarkable copperware industry known at large as “Dinanderie”. Dinant held an important strategic position on the River Meuse and has thus been the site of many battles over the years. The first major attack dates back to 1466 by Charles the Bold. It was again pillaged and occupied in 1554 by the troops of the Duke of Nevers and subsequently occupied by the French between 1675 and 1697 before being returned to the Prince-Bishop of Liège. It's was during the Dutch reign (1815-1830) that it became part of the province of Namur, and it has remained such ever since.

It suffered bombardments and other atrocities during the First – In 1914, it sustained 17 sieges – and Second World Wars. Today the imposing citadel still dominates the skyline, as does the curious pear-shaped belfry of the Collegiate Church of Our Lady. Its population is less than 15,000 and its main source of revenue is tourism, with river cruises along the Meuse and its famous “La Merveilleuse” cave highly popular. To celebrate its most famous son, Adolphe Sax, the town organises an international saxophone festival every year.

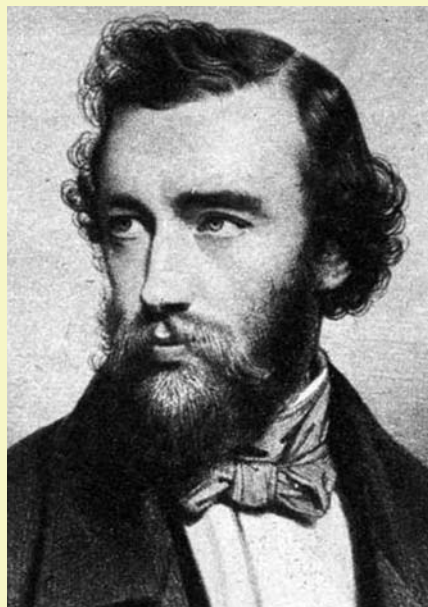
DON'T MISS...

La Maison de Monsieur Sax or Mr Sax's house - museum dedicated to this genius inventor. The Collegiate Church of Our Lady and its characteristic bell-tower; the Citadel, the spectacular Bayard rock, site of legends but also of many historical events, the most recent being during the WWII battle of the bulge; the impetuous River Less; the Abbey of Saint-Hubert; the Mont-Mosan theme park; The Cave of Dinant La Merveilleuse; the Saxophone Sundays during the summer; the Castle of Vêves; the Annevoie Gardens.

For more information please visit
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Cruising along the Meuse
© jeanmart.eu/belgiumtheplaceto.be



Adolph Sax (1814 - 1894)

Sax was born in Dinant and, despite being one of the greatest inventors of the nineteenth century, has largely been forgotten today. A genius whose fertile mind generated idea after idea, he was unfortunately the object of numerous court cases where his contemporaries unfairly accused him of plagiarising their inventions. Any money he made was spent on lawyer's fees, and he was ruined several times. Originally trained as a violin-maker, his lasting legacy is the family of instruments including the sax-horn, the sax-tromba and the saxophone, nowadays seen as the most modern of instruments and widely used in contemporary and jazz music. However, at first, the saxophone generated little interest among musical instrument manufacturers, composers and musicians, and Sax had to train the makers and players himself!



The pretty town of Dinant
© jeanmart.eu/belgiumtheplaceto.be

HUY

Huy is a town on the River Meuse, about half-way between Liège and Namur. It has been an important centre of river-borne commerce and boat-building for centuries, and used the river for the supply of raw materials to, and the distribution of products made by, tanners, metal-founders, carpenters and silversmiths.

It was a flourishing and wealthy manufacturing and trade centre in the Middle Ages and held its independence from its powerful neighbour, the Prince-Bishopric of Liège until 985.

The town was then part of the Prince-Bishopric of Liège until 1789.

A modern and impressive fortress was built on the site of its dismantled castle in the nineteenth century. It served as a German military prison during the First World War and a Gestapo prison during the Second World War.

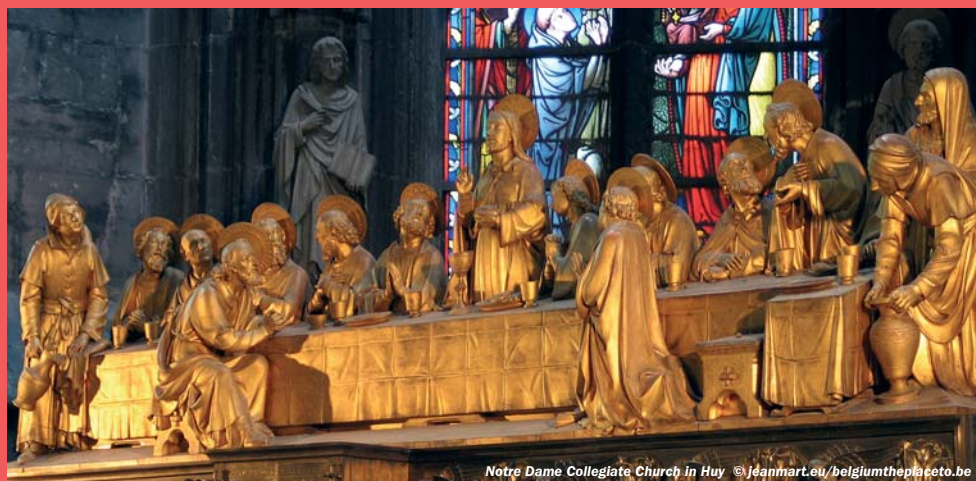
Today the town is a centre for river tourism.

The landscapes of Huy and its surrounding area, along with those afforded by the town of Dinant, featured among some of Turner's favourites.

DON'T MISS...

The Collegiate Notre-Dame with its prestigious treasure, The Grand Place, The Museum of Resistance and Concentration Camps which is based in The Fort of Huy overhanging the valley, mini-cruises on the river Meuse, the cable-car offering a wonderful panorama of the area, The Castle of the Counts of Marchin, and the vast number of mediaeval buildings and bridges.

For more information, feel free to visit www.belgiumtheplaceto.be



Notre Dame Collegiate Church in Huy © Jeanmart.eu/belgiumtheplaceto.be



Arlette de Huy (1013 - 1050)

Arlette (also known as Herleva) was born in Huy. Her father was a humble tanner, but her mother was said to be Doda of Andenne, the estranged and abandoned grand-daughter of King Malcolm II of Scotland.

At 16, she became the mistress of Robert the Magnificent, Duke of Normandy, bearing him a son, William, in 1028, who, although illegitimate, was named by Robert as his heir and succeeded him as Duke of Normandy in 1035.

Arlette subsequently married twice, and two of the sons of her later marriages, Odo, Bishop of Bayeux and Robert of Mortain, became the principal supporters of Duke William's successful invasion of England in 1066, which led to William "the Conqueror" becoming King William I of England.



John Joseph Merlin (1735 - 1803)

Merlin was born in Huy and trained as a clockmaker. A rather eccentric character, he was also an accomplished maker of stringed-instruments and organs. His imagination led him to adapt a pair of ice skates for use on land by replacing their blades with metal wheels around 1760, thus inventing the roller-skate. An anecdote recounts how he was invited to demonstrate his invention at a society gathering in London: he skated into the room while playing a violin and promptly crashed into a large, valuable mirror, almost killing himself in the process (this may be the first recorded fall in the history of roller-skating). Roller-skate breaks would be added later.



LA ROCHE-EN-ARDENNE

La Roche-en-Ardenne sits astride the River Ourthe 70km from Liège and 20km from Marche-en-Famenne. The town is overlooked by its pretty mediaeval castle. High above the river, the Diester belvedere offers visitors superb panoramic views of the town and the Ourthe valley. The town has a rich history of folklore, which is celebrated at the Bandas Festival, the Carnival and the Ghost Festival. Markets are held in La Roche-en-Ardenne and its surrounding villages, where you can buy craftwork and delicious local produce, including Pâté gaumais (a type of pork pie), Ardennes smoked ham, Ardennes pork & liver pâté and the famous local La Chouffe beer. The castle was originally built on the site of a Roman fort and became the seats of the powerful Counts of La Roche. In the twelfth century, the county passed to the Counts of Luxembourg, who gave the town a Charter and fortified it. In the seventeenth century, the castle was captured by King Louis XIV of France's army. To improve its defences, the French military engineers covered its mediaeval walls with thousands of tons of earth. The town went into decline in the eighteenth century and the locals stole much of the stone from the castle walls to build their own houses. The town was briefly part of France under the Revolutionary regime and then became part of Belgium. It escaped major damage in the First World War, but was severely damaged by an American artillery bombardment during the Von Rundstedt offensive in the winter of 1944-45, better known as the Battle of the Bulge. In the post-war period, the town developed as a major tourism centre.

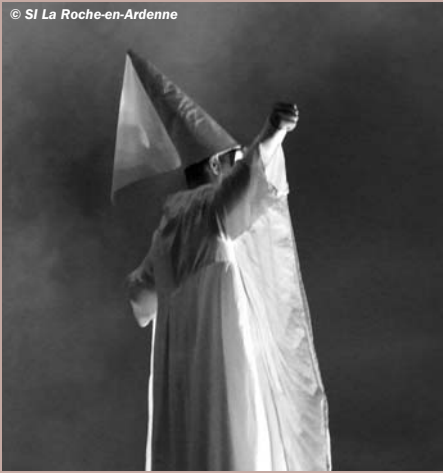
DON'T MISS...

The remains of the Feudal Castle;
the History of Stoneware Museum;
the Milling Museum; The Battle of the
Ardennes Museum; The Wild Game Park;
the Diester panorama; the White lady
of La Roche Show (In Summer); kayaking
on The River Ourthe.

For more tips, please visit our website
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La Roche-en-Ardenne © Flémal - OPT



Berthe the White Lady of La Roche

In the 11th century, the Lord of La Roche-en-Ardenne had a daughter called Berthe whose beauty was famous for miles around. Her father wished to marry her off, and decided to offer her hand in marriage to the winner of a jousting tournament. Waleran, the eldest son of the Count of Montaigu, fell in love with Berthe at first sight. However, he was already engaged to be married to Marie de Salm, who had him followed and noted

his frequent visits to Berthe. When Marie found a lock of Berthe's hair in Waleran's hat, she lost her temper and angrily broke off the engagement. At the tournament, Waleran defeated all his opponents and was about to claim Berthe's hand when he was challenged by a knight in black armour, who knocked him from his horse and thus won the tournament and Berthe's hand in marriage.

After Berthe's marriage to the Black Knight, the newly-weds were led to the nuptial bedroom. On the stroke of midnight, a dreadful scream was heard, followed by a loud splash. Berthe's father discovered her body in her white night-dress floating in the river with a dagger through her heart. For the Black Knight was none other than Marie de Salm, who had sold her soul to the devil to obtain her revenge. Having killed her rival and thrown her body into the river, she had been dragged down to hell by the devil. Today, when the night is dark and the wind howls around the Castle of La Roche, you can still hear Berthe's pitiful screams and see her ghost walk around the castle ramparts before throwing itself into the river below.



Kayaking in La Roche-en-Ardenne
© jeanmart.eu/belgiumtheplaceto.be

LESSINES

Lessines is a town in the Belgian Province of Hainaut that dates back to the pre-Roman Saxon era. Most of the land forming the modern town was given to Gembloux Abbey in 946 AD. Its temporal Lord was the Count of Alost, a vassal of the Count of Hainaut.

Nowadays it is well known for its open-air porphyry quarries and the medieval Hospital Our Lady of the Rose, and for being the birth place of one of Belgium's greatest surrealist painters, René Magritte.

DON'T MISS...

The amazing Hospital of Our Lady with the Rose and its cloister garden; The penitents' parade; the Historical Festivities of the Banquet of 1583; The Watterman Park; The Brewery of Jean Tout Seul; the Mahy car Museum with the biggest classic car collection in Belgium; the Giant's House in Ath; walking in the countryside of "The Country of Hills"; the Pairi Daiza animal Park.

For a list of the most exciting events and places, please visit our website:
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Hospital Our Lady of the Rose © Notre Dame a la Rose



René Magritte (1898 - 1967)

Magritte was born at Lessines, the son of a tailor and a dressmaker. The family moved to Gilly, then to Châtelet, where René began to study art.

His family's financial problems forced them to move house frequently and his mother drowned herself in the River Sambre in 1912. René and his two younger brothers were then educated by a governess in Charleroi before René won a place at the Royal Academy in Brussels.

After graduation, he worked in the studio of the Cubist-Futurist painter Flouquet, and the first exhibition of his paintings was held in Brussels in 1920.

Magritte then did his two years' military service, married and took a job as a wallpaper designer.

In 1924, he was introduced to the Dadaist painters and the works of Giorgio De Chirico. In 1927, he founded the "Brussels Group" of Surrealists, whose first exhibition was held in 1928.

From 1927 to 1930, Magritte worked in an artists' colony at Perreux-sur-Marne in France, before returning to Brussels, where he set up an advertising agency. Further exhibitions of his paintings were held in Brussels (1933), New York (1936) and London (1938).

Having fled to Carcassonne following the German invasion of Belgium in 1940, he returned to Brussels a few months later.

In 1948, his series of 40 gouache paintings created a scandal when exhibited in Paris, and he settled down to life in Brussels as a successful artist, fulfilling many large-scale commissions for murals in public buildings.

His first retrospective exhibition was held in 1954.

He died of cancer at the age of 69.

In 2009, a museum dedicated to his work opened in Brussels, proving a huge success.



Musée Magritte in Brussels
© OPT-JP Reiny



LIÈGE

During the prehistoric era, a small number of people settled at the confluence of the rivers Meuse and Legia, now occupied by the Place Saint Lambert and the Prince-Bishops Palace. Much later, during the 2nd century AD, a vast Roman Villa was built on the same spot and a large population attracted by the proximity of the rivers settled around it. The inhabitants became Christian believers, and thus the settlers soon built a chapel in which Lambert, bishop of Tongres-Maastricht, was assassinated in 705. As a result, more and more pilgrims were attracted to the place of Lambert's death. The little village grew into a town.

Liège became the centre of a vast independent Principality – spreading from southern Holland to Burgundy – whose Prince-Bishops were electors of the Holy Roman Empire. Its proximity to coal and iron-ore fields and to the River Meuse for water-power and transport led to it becoming a major manufacturing base whose skilled miners and blacksmiths exported their know-how beyond the Belgian borders to countries like Sweden, whose Walloon settlers created the famous Swedish steel industry.

By the nineteenth century Liège had turned into the industrial powerhouse of Belgium and the city expanded as its rich industrialists built themselves spectacular houses and farm labourers flocked there to work in the factories. The Cockerill-Sambre conglomerate became one of the world's largest manufacturers of railway rails, locomotives and rolling stock and other iron and steel products. Liège was also the centre of the Belgian firearms and armaments

industry. However, competition from abroad led to the collapse of much of the region's heavy industry after WW II, leading to mass unemployment.

In the 1990's the city council decided to reinvent Liège as a regional shopping and cultural centre, investing in high-profile projects such as the spectacular new Calatravas railway station and the Médiacité, designed by UK-based Ron Arad. Despite all the recent changes, the traditional rebellious nature of the inhabitants of the city, especially of the Outremeuse district, is still celebrated with gusto on 15 August every year, along with the famous street parties organised by the many international students attracted by the highly-regarded syllabus of the University of Liège.

DON'T MISS...

The Prince-Bishops' Palace and St-Lambert Square, the Hors-Chateau and Burennes street staircase, the Violette square opposite the town hall, the treasure of the St-Paul Cathedral, the St-Jacques Basilica Church and the St Barthélémy church. The Carré district and its bipolar life (great shopping by day, buzzing night clubs and cafés by night), the Curtius Museum, the Museum of Walloon life; the Gallic Village (open between 1 and 14 July); the Christmas Village and the Ardente Music Festival. For more tips and for the most exciting events, please visit our site www.belgiumtheplaceto.be



Ambiorix (c 77BC - c 44BC)

Ambiorix was Chief of the Eburones and the Atuatuca, two of the tribes which inhabited what is now Belgium before the Roman conquest (his name means “double-chief”). Their ferocious resistance to the Romans gained

the tribes the nickname of “Belgae” (“warlike”). In his account of the conquest of Gaul *De Bello Gallico*, Julius Caesar commented “*Horum omnium fortissimi sunt Belgae*” (“Of all the Gauls, the Belgae are the bravest”). Ambiorix is recorded in Caesar’s book as tricking a Roman legion into marching into a valley in the Ardennes forest where a whole legion was massacred by the Belgae in 54 BC. As a matter of fact, the harshest defeat in Caesar’s career was inflicted by this cunning and brave warrior and his men.

Roman revenge was swift and bloody - eradicating almost all the Eburone people - and the revolt was brutally suppressed. However, Ambiorix managed to escape across the Rhine, through the thick Ardennes forest that he knew so well, and died among his allied Germanic tribes.

Following Belgian independence in 1830, historians promoted Ambiorix as a Belgian national hero: an epic poem was written about him in 1841, and a residential square in Brussels (now near the European district) was named after him in the 1880s.



Charlemagne (c742-814AD)

Charlemagne was born in the royal palace at Herstal (near Liège), grandson to King Charles “The Hammer” Martel and son to Pepin the Short.

He became King of the Franks in 771 and expanded his kingdom into an empire covering most of Western Europe. After his conquest of modern-day Italy, he was crowned Holy Roman Emperor by the Pope. His imperial palace and seat of government was at Aachen, in modern-day Germany. His reign saw a renaissance of art, religion and culture, and he is often cited as the “father of Europe.”

Georges Simenon (1903 - 1989)

Simenon was born in Liège. He worked as a newspaper reporter for *La Gazette de Liège*, before moving to Paris in 1922 to seek his fortune as a writer. Within five years he had established himself (under various pseudonyms) as a writer of popular fiction. In 1931, he published the first novels using his own name. His creation Inspector Maigret first appeared in a novel launched on 20 February, 1931 at a huge ball (the ‘*Bal anthropometrique*’) that was reported in the French national press and secured Simenon’s popular fame. Simenon lived in France until 1945 and then moved to the USA for a



decade, before returning to Europe and settling in Switzerland, where he died. During his career, he produced on average four or five novels a year, alternating between the much-loved Maigret detective novels and other works. He enjoyed critical and commercial success, and was elected a member of the Belgian Royal Academy, President of the Mystery Writers of America Association in 1952 and President of the Jury at the 1960 Cannes Film Festival.

Many of his novels were adapted for cinema and became blockbusters. He was also made a member of the French Légion d'honneur.

Simenon's estimated 450 novels and short stories have been translated into 55 languages and have sold approximately 1.4 billion copies.

The pipe-smoking Inspector Maigret has also appeared in 55 feature films and a staggering 279 television dramas, making him a familiar figure to millions, including many who had never read one of the original 75 novels or 28 short stories.



Zenobe Gramme (1826 - 1901)

Gramme was born in a village near Liège and moved to France to work as a cabinet-maker in the workshops of Christofle, the silversmith.

Overcoming his lack of education and knowledge of mathematics, he invented the "Gramme machine" in 1869, to speed up the silver-plating of cutlery using electrolysis.

Unknown to Gramme, this machine was the first electric dynamo.

Following the intervention of Hypollite Fontaine, who had noticed that the dynamo spun round when the current was reversed, Gramme patented his machine in 1873 and it became the world's first successful electric motor on an industrial scale, as well as the first machine capable of generating high-voltage electricity as a challenge to the monopoly of steam power.

Gramme died in 1901.

Statues of him were erected in Paris and in Liège, where the Training College for Electrical Engineers was renamed the Gramme Institute in his honour.



Georges Nagelmackers (1845 - 1905)

Nagelmackers was born in Liège into a wealthy banking family, whose bank had been founded in 1747. In 1867-8 he travelled extensively in the USA and was impressed by the luxury Pullman carriages, sleeping-cars and restaurant-cars that were used for many long-distance railway services there. On his return to Europe, he started to develop links with the national rail operators, and in 1874 he founded the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits ("CIWL") (International Sleeping-Car Company).

Nagelmackers had a fleet of luxury carriages built that were used to form complete trains or attached to other trains.

CIWL was a huge success and its long-distance express services included the legendary Orient-Express (Paris-Istanbul), Nord-Express (Paris-St Petersburg) and Sud-Express (Paris-Lisbon).

CIWL also provided carriages for the Trans-Siberian Railway in Russia, and built luxury hotels for its passengers, including the Pera Palace in Istanbul, the Terminus Hotels in Bordeaux and Marseilles, the Hôtel de la Plage in Ostend and the Grand Hotel in Beijing. The company's glamorous reputation was boosted by the publication of *Murder on the Orient Express* by Agatha Christie, a frequent traveller on the train and guest at the Pera Palace

Hotel. CIWL took over Thomas Cook in 1927 and became part of the Accor group in 1991. Today the company's name lives on in CarlsonWagonLit Travel, a business travel agency, and the restored luxury Orient Express private train. The Nagelmackers Bank is now part of Delta Lloyd.



André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry (1741 - 1813)

Born in Liège, the son of a violinist, Grétry studied singing and composition and won a scholarship to study opera in Rome between 1761 and 1766. His first opera, *Isabelle et Gertrude*, was premiered in Geneva in 1766. He married the painter Jeanne-Marie Grandon in 1771 and went on to write more than 50 comic operas by 1803. He was appointed Director of Music to Queen Marie-Antoinette and then to Emperor Napoleon, who awarded him the Légion d'honneur. One of the arias from his opera *La Caravane du Caire* became a marching song of Napoleon's army. He was appointed to the Académie Française in 1795 and retired to Rousseau's former house in Montmorency. His body was buried at the Père-Lachaise cemetery in Paris, but his heart was interred inside his statue outside the Royal Opera House in Liège.



Elvis Pompilio (b 1961)

Born in Liège, the son of Italian immigrants, he studied fashion design in Liege and in Brussels and set up a millinery workshop in the Sainte-Catherine district of the city in 1987. He was commissioned by leading fashion houses, including Dior and Valentino, to design hats for their shows, and he also produced one-off hats for private clients. In 1990, he opened shops in Antwerp and Brussels, selling ready-to-wear hats for men and women, and was awarded the Belgian fashion industry's Victor Award. He works closely with well-known designers, including Ann Demeulemeester, Dirk Bikkembergs and Véronique Leroy. He has expanded his range to include spectacle frames, sunglasses, handbags and umbrellas, which are sold in department stores worldwide, particularly in the USA (Barneys, Saks Fifth Avenue, Bergdorf Goodman and Nieman Marcus), Japan (Takashimaya) and Europe. He opened a boutique in Paris in 1992, and, three years later, a second shop in Brussels and one in London. He designed the accessories for collections by Chanel, Thierry Mugler, Céline, Hugo Boss and Ocimar Versolato, and some of his famous clients include Joan Collins, Harrison Ford, Madonna, Yannick Noah, Axelle

Red, Mickey Rourke, Amélie Nothomb, Etienne Daho, Mauranne, the Duchess of York, Lady Linley, Queen Sonja of Norway, Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands and Queen Paola of the Belgians. In 2002, he decided to close all his shops and to concentrate on the design side of his business. He celebrated this change with a huge fashion show, recorded in a book published by Luc Pire. Since then, Elvis's designs have included a "designer can" for Coca-Cola, a range of paint for Boss Paint and a collection of terracotta vases. He is also involved in the work of the charity Dessine l'espoir ("Draw hope"). He was created an Officier de l'Ordre du Roi Léopold by King Albert II in 2006. The waxwork of Amélie Nothomb in the Musée Grévin in Paris wears one of his hats, and he also provided hats for the Louvre Museum's exhibition *L'homme paré: du 18e au 21e siècle*. He also designed the hats that were presented as official gifts by the Belgian government to Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands during her state visit and by the Province of Liège to Queen Paola of the Belgians. On 1 April 2010 he opened a new Boutique Atelier on the Grand Sablon in Brussels.



LOUVAIN- LA-NEUVE

Built on farmland 30kms East of Brussels, the university town of Louvain-la-Neuve was created in the 1960's after French-speaking students and teachers were requested by the Flemish political movement to leave the ancient university of Leuven in Flanders. The transfer of students to "New Leuven" began in 1972, and the new university's medical school was established in the Brussels suburb of Woluwé-Saint-Lambert. By 1981, the resident population of Louvain-la-Neuve had risen to over 10,000. The plan is for this to rise to 30,000, of which 15,000 would be students. It is the only new town in Europe built solely to accommodate a university.

In 2009, the outskirts of Louvain-la-Neuve saw the opening of the Hergé Museum in an unusual building designed by the French architect Christian de Portzamparc. The museum has 8 rooms containing a permanent exhibition of Tintin memorabilia and a room for temporary exhibitions. It was funded by Nick and Fanny Rodwell, the literary executors of Hergé's estate and Directors of the Hergé Foundation. Fanny was Hergé's second wife. The land for the museum was donated by the University and is only a few kilometres from the village of Céroux-Mousty, where Hergé had a country house. The surrounding countryside even inspired some of his comic strips, and in the mid 1990s the street where his country house was located was renamed "Hergé Street." Every year the main square of Céroux-Mousty, one of the largest in Wallonia, is the setting for an Apple festival and also the take-off point for many hot air balloons.

DON'T MISS...

The Hergé Museum; the Justine N1 Tennis Club founded by Justine Henin; walks in the Woods of Dreams; the Woods of Lauzelle, through guided or marked tours; the Louvain-la-Neuve Museum (art and civilisation); the biggest student event of the year in Europe: the "24 hour bike ride" (in October); the shopping district in the Esplanade or the Saint-Hubert Galleries.

For more about this area, feel free to visit our website:
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A squirrel in Bois des Rêves forest © OPT-JLFlemal

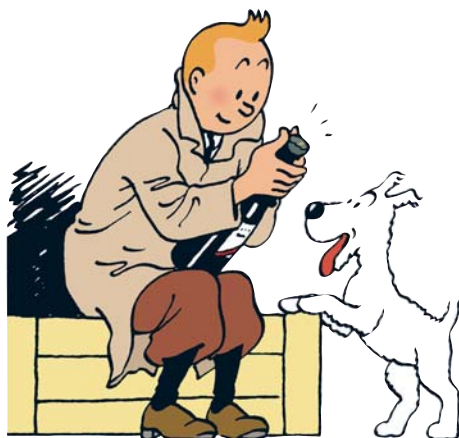


The Hergé Museum © Nicolas Borel Atelier de Portzamparc 2009

Hergé (1907 - 1983)

Georges Prosper Rémi, better known by his pen name Hergé, was a Belgian strip-cartoon writer and artist. "Hergé" is the French pronunciation of "R.G.", his reversed initials. His best-known and most substantial work is *The Adventures of Tintin*, a series of twenty-four albums which he wrote and illustrated between 1929 and his death in 1983, when he left the twenty-fourth Tintin adventure, *Tintin and Alph-art*, unfinished.

His work strongly influenced, and continues to influence, other strip-cartoon artists, particularly in Europe. He was inducted into the Comic Book Hall of Fame in 2003. The Tintin stories are notable for their vivid humanism, their realism (the result of meticulous and wide-ranging research), and



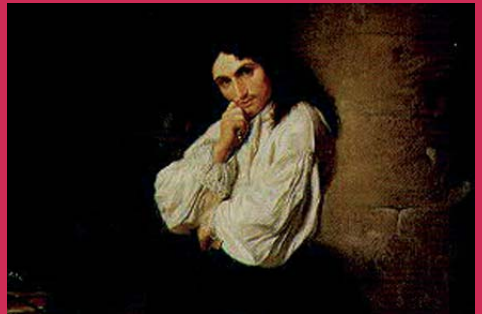
© Hergé-Moulinsart 2010

Hergé's *ligne claire* drawing style. A museum dedicated to Hergé's work was opened by the Hergé Foundation in a specially-commissioned building in Louvain-la-Neuve in 2009.

CHATEAU DE MODAVE

Count Jean-Gaspard of Marchin started building this extraordinary residence in 1658, on the site of a mediaeval fortress. Its design incorporates mediaeval-style towers, as well as features that were completely new at the time. The interior is decorated with exceptionally beautiful sculptures, paintings and Brussels tapestries, as well as many pieces of eighteenth-century furniture. The château is surrounded by extensive formal French-style gardens. In 1688, the count called in Rennequin Sualem, a carpenter from Liège, to find a solution to the problem of raising water from the River Hoyeaux to the gardens 50m above.

Sualem designed a series of connected wooden water-wheels that accomplished this task with such success that he was summoned to Versailles to build a similar machine there for King Louis XIV of France. The original machine has now been replaced by electric pumps and the château is owned by Vivaqua, the Brussels water company, which extracts water from wells on the site for use in Brussels.



Rennequin Sualem (1645 - 1708)

Sualem was born in Jemeppe-sur-Meuse (now a suburb of Liège), and qualified as a master carpenter. Around 1668, he was commissioned by the Count of Marchin to build a mechanism to raise water 50 metres from the River Hoyoux to the courtyard of the Château de Modave. He achieved this remarkable feat by designing an innovative series of water-wheels, which came to the attention of King Louis XIV of France, who summoned him to his newly-built palace at Versailles to solve the inextricable challenge of bringing water to his water features gardens and made him Royal Engineer in charge of providing pressurised water for the fountains and ponds in the palace gardens. Sualem achieved this by linking 14 of his “Modave wheels” to raise water to a height of 163m, thus providing sufficient pressure to distribute it throughout the gardens. The delighted King Louis ennobled Rennequin and asked him where the idea for the machine had come from. Rennequin replied in his native Walloon mother tongue “Tot tuzant, sire” (“By thinking hard, Sire”).



Modave Castle © FTPL





View of Collegiale St Waudru © jeanmart.eu/belgiumtheplaceto.be

MONS

Mons was the capital of the County of Hainaut, and is today the administrative centre for the Belgian Province of Hainaut. Its location, 70km South-West of Brussels, 75km East of Lille and 180km West of Aachen makes it an important crossroads on the European motorway network. When Emperor Charles V became Count of Hainaut in 1515, the city's population was around 9,500, and included many tanners, weavers and shoe-makers.

The city was besieged and captured several times during the Eighty Years' War between the French and the Spanish Habsburgs, and was the capital of the Spanish Netherlands between 1580 and 1584. During an epidemic of plague in 1615, the city council asked the City of Ghent to lend them the relics of Saint Macaire, reputed to ward off the plague. The relics were installed in the Collegiate Church of Sainte Waudru in Mons and soon after the epidemic ended. To celebrate the city's deliverance, a splendid new silver reliquary was made for the relics, which were returned in it to Saint Bavo's Cathedral in Ghent. The city remained a target in the wars in the region in the seventeenth century, falling under French control between 1691 and 1697 and between 1701 and 1713. Following its reintegration into the Habsburg Netherlands, its fortifications were demolished. During the French Revolutionary period, Mons was the prefecture of the French département of Jemappes. Following Belgian independence in 1830, canals and railways were built which boosted the city's economy. The poet Paul Verlaine was imprisoned in Mons from 1873 to 1875 and wrote part of *Romances sans paroles* and *Sagesse* there. Mons was the

scene of one of the major battles of the First World War in August 1914, which gave rise to the legend of the "Angel of Mons" and in 1944 local residents helped the allies face a very dangerous German offensive, which was thwarted in the battle known as the "Mons Pocket".

In 1967, the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Powers in Europe (SHAPE), the operational headquarters of NATO, moved from Paris to Casteau near Mons. From the 1980s onwards, the city has promoted its cultural heritage under the enthusiastic leadership of its mayor, Elio Di Rupo, the leader of the Francophone Socialist Party.

Mons will be the European City of Culture in 2015.

DON'T MISS...

The magnificent Collegiate Church of Sainte-Waudru and its treasury; The François Duesberg Decorative Arts Museum; the St-Calixte's Chapel, The Town Hall; the Grand Place with its very ancient statue of a diminutive monkey, symbol of the city; the UNESCO listed belfry, the nearby Castle of Havré and its gardens, the peaceful WWI St Symphorien cemetery; the "Doudou" annual street festival, a popular UNESCO listed feast dating back to the Middle Ages.

For more, visit our website:
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Philippa of Hainaut (1311 - 1369)

Philippa was the daughter of William I, Count of Hainaut, and his wife Jeanne de Valois, grand-daughter of King Philip III of

France. She was born in Valenciennes, grew up in Mons, capital city of the counts of Hainaut, and was married to King Edward III of England at York Minster in 1328. She accompanied Edward on his military campaigns in Scotland and Flanders. Today, she is chiefly remembered for her dramatic intervention at Calais in 1346. After a long siege, Edward had offered not to destroy the town if six of its leading citizens would strip to their underwear, place nooses around their necks, and come out of the town gate to surrender the keys to him before being hanged. Philippa, who was pregnant, persuaded Edward not to execute them, saying it would bring bad luck for the child. The incident was later to inspire Rodin's monumental 1888 sculpture *The Burghers of Calais*. Philippa bore Edward fourteen children, of whom nine survived infancy, including Edward the Black Prince and John of Gaunt leader of the Lancastrian faction in the Wars of the Roses. Queen's College Oxford is named after Philippa. She died at Windsor and is buried at Westminster Abbey.



Louise of Stolberg, Countess of Albany (1752 - 1824)

Louise was born in Mons, which was then in the Austrian Netherlands. She was the eldest daughter of Prince Gustav Adolf of Stolberg-Gedern, a well-connected, if poor aristocrat who was an officer in the Austrian Imperial army. After her father's death in battle, she and her sister were sent to Sainte Waudru's Convent in Mons, whose nuns specialised in educating the daughters of poor nobility.

In 1771, Louise's sister married the son of the English Duke of Berwick, whose family, under pressure from King Louis XV of France to ensure the continuation of the Jacobite Stuart

line, arranged the marriage of the 20-year-old Louise to the 55-year-old Charles Edward Stuart, the former “Bonnie Prince Charlie” then living in exile in Rome.

For two years, Louise lived with her husband in Rome. Although the couple were happy together, Louise was unable to have a child and Charles resumed his heavy drinking.

They moved to Florence in 1774 using the titles “Count and Countess of Albany”.

In 1778, Louise began a secret affair with the Italian poet Count Vittorio Alfieri, and left her husband two years later, claiming he had physically abused her.

She was supported financially by the Pope, via Charles’ brother, Cardinal York.

She obtained a legal separation from her husband in 1784 and lived openly with Alfieri from 1786.

Her husband’s death in 1788 led to her receiving a pension from the King of France, which enabled her and Alfieri to live comfortably, first in Paris then in Florence.

In both cities she hosted literary and intellectual salons.

Following Alfieri’s death in 1803, she lived with the artist François-Xavier Fabre, who painted a famous portrait of her in her old age.

She died in Florence and was buried in the Santa Croce Basilica Church there, not far from Alfieri.





NAMUR

The modern city of Namur is located on a site that has been inhabited since Neolithic times, 63km south-east of Brussels at the point where the River Sambre joins the River Meuse. Over its long history, the city has been besieged many times and occupied by almost all the great European powers. It gained a bishop and a cathedral in the sixteenth century, when it was part of the Habsburg Netherlands. The area around the city was the scene of many battles during the War of the League of Augsburg between the Habsburgs and Louis XIV of France. Following the conquest of the Austrian Netherlands by Napoleon, Namur became the prefecture of the French département of Sambre-et-Meuse. After Belgian independence in 1830, Namur became an important administrative centre, boosted in 1986 when it was chosen as the capital of the newly-created Walloon Region. Today the regional parliament sits in Namur

and many of the regional ministries are based there. Regional funds have renovated many of the city's historic buildings.

DON'T MISS...

The citadel; the Guy Delforge perfumer's workshop; the Groesbeeck-de-Croix Museum, a journey back in the 18th Century, the Felicien Rops Museum dedicated to the controversial artist of the same name; the city centre shopping district and its fabulous shoe shops; the river trips between Namur and Givet; Namur in May, a festival of travelling art; The nearby Water Gardens of the Château d'Annevoie; the "du Bocq" brewery; the underground caves; the Maredsous Abbey, famous for its beer and cheese, and much more to be discovered on www.belgiumtheplaceto.be



Namur riverside © jeanmart.eu/belgiumtheplaceto.be



Cécile de France (b 1975)

Born in Namur, Cecile de France showed an early talent for acting, and started theatre lessons aged 15. Two years later, she left for Paris, where she worked as an au pair (and performed fire-eating tricks in the street) while studying drama with Jean-Paul Denizon. She passed the entrance exam for the Ecole nationale supérieure des arts et techniques du théâtre (the French national theatre academy) in 1995 and spent three years studying at its sites in Paris and Lyon. Her student performances had come to the notice of the “agent to the stars” Dominique Besnehard, of the Artmedia agency, who signed her on her graduation (and who still represents her). Her film career began meteorically with the role of Laure in Richard Berry’s romantic comedy *L’art (délicat) de la séduction* opposite Patrick Timsit, then in Cédric Klapisch’s *L’Auberge*

espagnole, where she played the French-speaking Belgian lesbian student who befriends Romain Duris. The film was nominated for six Césars in 2002, but in the end won just one: Best Female Newcomer for Cécile de France. In 2004, she made her Hollywood début as Monique La Roche in the Disney remake of *Around the World in Eighty Days* starring Jacky Chan, Steve Coogan and Arnold Schwarzenegger. In 2005, she won the Romy Schneider Prize for the Best Female Newcomer and was Mistress of Ceremonies at the Cannes Film Festival. She worked with Klapisch on *Les poupées russes*, the sequel to *L’Auberge espagnole*, and won the 2006 César for Best Supporting Actress for her performance. In her latest role she stars alongside Matt Damon in Clint Eastwood’s *Hereafter*, released in the US in October 2010.



Benoît Poelvoorde (b 1964)

Benoît Poelvoorde was born in Namur in 1964. His father (who died when he was still a child) was a lorry-driver and his mother ran a

grocer's shop. After his education at the Jesuit School in Namur, he went to study applied arts in Brussels, specialising in acting, drawing and photography. He played a role in a 13-minute film made by two of his fellow-students, Rémy Belvaux and André Bonzel in 1987 called *Pas de C4 pour Daniel Daniel*, which was shot in Brussels and Paris. The film was well-received at specialist festivals, and, in 1992, Poelvoorde agreed to appear as the serial-killer Ben in Belvaux and Bonzel's first full-length film *C'est arrivé près de chez vous - Man bites dog*, a « mockumentary » which parodied the famous Belgian documentary series *Strip Tease*. To save money, the film was shot on 16mm black-and-white film and then transferred to 35mm film when it was selected for the Cannes Film Festival. It was the surprise hit of the Festival and went on to become a cult film among French-language or world independent film fans and, according to Martin Scorsese would change the history of filming for ever.

Poelvoorde's performance led to his own comedy sketch series on Belgian television (*Jamais au grand jamais* and *Carnets de Monsieur Manatane*) and to parts in 25 more films over the next 20 years, including Alain Berberain's *Le Boulet* (2002) where he played an escaped convict who teams up with his former guard to chase the guard's wife who has run off with their lottery winnings, and Yann Moix's *Podium* (2004) where he played a manic Claude François impersonator, reached stardom status in the French-speaking world. Poelvoorde was awarded the Jean Gabin Prize for Best Actor in 2002 and was a member of the jury (chaired by Quentin Tarantino, a big fan of *C'est arrivé près de chez vous* [Man bites dog]) at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival.

In more recent years, he has extended his acting experience to more dramatic roles.



Namur street © jeanmart.eu/belgiumtheplaceto.be

REBECQ

Rebecq is a town in the Belgian Province of Walloon Brabant, 27km South-West of Brussels in a district of green valleys known as the “Roman Country”. It is on the River Senne, and can date its foundation back to a Charter issued by King Charles the Bald in 877 AD. In the Middle Ages, the town came under the authority of two feudal lords: the Lord of Trazegnies and the Lord of Enghien. The powerful Arenberg family inherited the Lordship of Enghien in the seventeenth century and did much to develop Rebecq as a centre for milling grain. In the nineteenth century, it was the birthplace of the brothers Ernest and Alfred Solvay, who founded an industrial company that would become the biggest in Belgium, based on Ernest's patented process (“the Solvay process”) for

making sodium carbonate, for which many industries generated huge demand. The Solvays' birthplace is still standing in Rebecq.

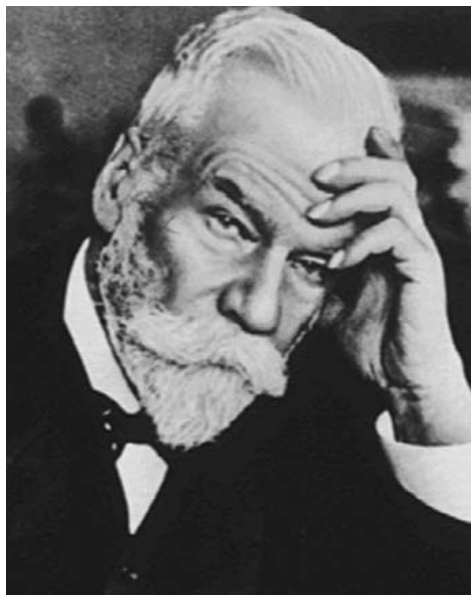
DON'T MISS...

The Great Mill of Arenberg; the Porphyry Museum; the Little Arenberg Mill; the Beer House; The “Iron and Fire” Mediaeval camp and market (in August); A ride on the tourist train ; a walk to the Saint-Roch Chapel, the nearby Park of Enghien and its rose garden (in June).

For more information on what to do in this region, visit our website www.belgiumtheplaceto.be



The town of Rebecq © Flémal – OPT



Ernest Solvay (1838 - 1922)

Born at Rebecq, Solvay was prevented by illness from going to university, and so began work in his uncle's chemical works aged 21. He used his self-taught knowledge of chemistry to make many improvements to the processes used in the factory, and, in 1861, he discovered the process for manufacturing industrial soda (sodium carbonate) that today bears his name. In the Solvay process, limestone is mixed with sodium chloride solution (brine) and ammonia to obtain industrial soda much more cheaply than using the old Leblanc process. Industrial soda is used in manufacturing glass, steel and detergents. Solvay patented his process in 1861 and opened his first factory at Couillet in 1863. Demand was huge, and his business grew rapidly. By 1900, the Solvay process was used to manufacture 95% of the world's industrial soda, and Solvay's business empire spanned the Atlantic, with factories in Europe and the USA.

Today, around 70 Solvay-process plants are in operation worldwide.

Solvay used much of his considerable personal fortune for philanthropic purposes, including the establishment in 1894 in Brussels of several scientific institutes (of Sociology, Physics and Chemistry among others) as part of a plan for a technical university.

He later shelved this plan, and instead endowed the Solvay Business School at the Free University of Brussels.

In 1911, he held the first of several influential Solvay Conferences on Physics, whose participants and speakers included such luminaries as Max Planck, Ernest Rutherford, Marie Curie, Henri Poincaré, Niels Bohr and Albert Einstein.

He was twice elected to the Belgian Senate and served as a Minister of State from 1918 onwards.

He helped to co-ordinate food relief in Europe during and after the First World War and ensured that workers in his factories enjoyed unusually-advanced conditions and benefits.

He set up the Solvay Foundation to build low-cost social housing in Belgium's cities. The town where his first US factory was built was even renamed Solvay (NY)! He died in Brussels and is buried in Ixelles Cemetery.



ROCHEFORT

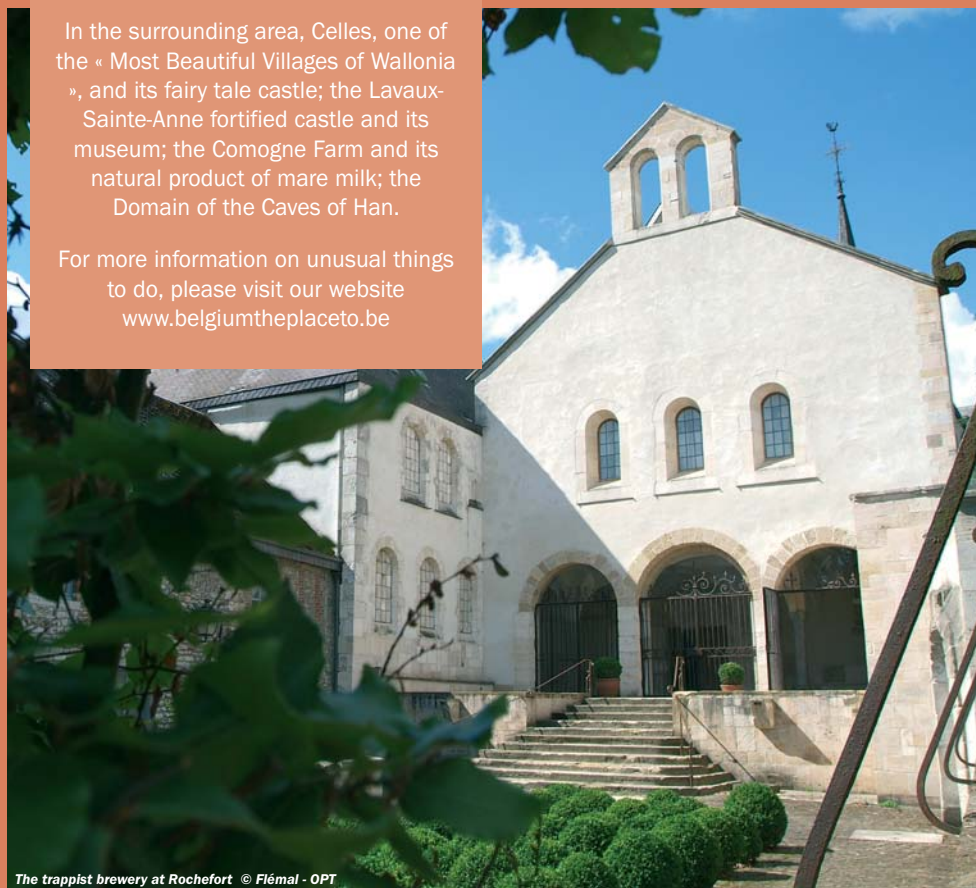
DON'T MISS...

The Remains of the Castle of the Counts; the mysterious Cave of Lorette; the Gallo-Roman Archaeopark of Malagne - a flashback to the second century; walking trails in the delightful and relaxing nature; tasting one (or more) of the local trappist beers.

In the surrounding area, Celles, one of the « Most Beautiful Villages of Wallonia », and its fairy tale castle; the Lavaux-Sainte-Anne fortified castle and its museum; the Comogne Farm and its natural product of mare milk; the Domain of the Caves of Han.

For more information on unusual things to do, please visit our website www.belgiumtheplaceto.be

Rochefort is a town on the River Lomme in the Belgian Province of Namur, 105km from Brussels. It is home to our Lady of St Rémy's Abbey, where the famous Rochefort Trappist beer is brewed. Tourist attractions include the ruined castle and the Lorette and Han caves nearby. Each year, the town hosts an International Comedy Festival.



The trappist brewery at Rochefort © Flémal - OPT



ranked 69th in the world. In 2001, she reached the semi-finals of the French Open, being knocked out by fellow Belgian Kim Clijsters, and was ranked 7th in the world. In 2003, she won her first two Grand Slam titles, by beating Clijsters twice and taking over from Clijsters as World N°1. She and Clijsters went on to dominate the women's tennis circuit, despite missing some tournaments due to illness or injury. She won the gold medal for women's singles tennis for Belgium at the 2004 Olympics. To general disbelief, she announced her retirement from professional tennis in 2008, the first reigning N°1-ranked player to do so. Having developed her own tennis academy and done charitable work for UNESCO, Justine returned to the professional tennis circuit in 2010, reaching the final of the Australian Open on a wild card, but being knocked out of Wimbledon in the third round by Clijsters. She has also had an asteroid named after her!

Justine Henin (b 1982)

Justine was born on 1 June 1982 in Liège and grew up in Rochefort (Province of Namur). She began playing table-tennis when she was four, and lawn tennis the following year. Despite being short and slight, her powerful technique caught the attention of tennis coach Gabriel Gonzalez who started giving her individual lessons. Justine won her first tournament aged 6, and began training with Carlos Rodriguez when she was 13. She has often attributed her own strength, and her ability to push herself to the edge, to the memory and everlasting presence of her mother, whom she lost at the tender age of 12. In 1994, she won the Belgian Junior Championship and in 1997 the Junior Championship at Roland-Garros in France. She turned professional in 1999, beating the then world n°35 in Antwerp and being knocked out by Lindsay Davenport in the second round of the French Open Championship, and finishing her first year



CHATEAU DE SENEFFE

Very close to Charleroi and to the tiny village of Liberchies where Django Reinhardt was born, stands a sumptuous Louis XVI-style country house, which was built between 1763 and 1768 for Julien Depestre, a rich businessman and banker, who was created the first Count of Seneffe. The architect was Laurent-Benoît Dewez. After changing hands several times, the buildings were acquired by the Belgian French-speaking Community, who decided to house its magnificent collection of gold and

silver-plate there. Most of the collection was bequeathed to the Community by the collectors Claude Dallemagne and his wife, Baroness Juliette Rémy, and it includes pieces by Godefroy de Huy, Hugo d'Oignies, Jean Jacobs, Philippe van Dievoet, Balthazar-Philippe Vandive, Jacques Roettiers and Joseph-Germain Dutalis, among others. The château also hosts regular temporary exhibitions of the goldsmith's and silversmith's art by contemporary artisans.

Gardens at the Chateau de Seneffe © OPT-JL Flemal





Django Reinhardt (1910 - 1953)

Jean “Django” Reinhardt was a Sinto Gypsy jazz guitarist. He was born in his family’s caravan at Liberchies in Belgium, but spent most of his adult life in France. At the age of 10, he taught himself to play his uncle’s banjo, and played the violin for a while before finally setting on the guitar. At 13, he was already playing his banjo in bars and cafés, and the

first record he made in 1928 is of him playing the banjo. In 1928, he was on the point of leaving for an engagement with the Jack Hylton orchestra in London when he was badly burned when his caravan caught fire, and never fully recovered the use of two fingers on his left hand. He adapted his guitar technique to suit his handicap, and in 1931 he met the violinist Stéphane Grappelli, with whom he founded the Quintette du Hot Club de France, whose success was interrupted by the Second World War. At the end of the war, the group re-formed and became one of the leading European jazz ensembles, absorbing the bebop and other influences from the US, and in turn influencing a generation of American jazzmen. On his return from a tour in the US in 1946, Django bought a house in Samois-sur-Seine, near Fontainebleau in France, and continued to make recordings. He died suddenly from a brain haemorrhage shortly after completing a recording session. Reinhardt was one of the first prominent jazz musicians to be born in Europe, and one of the most revered jazz guitarists of all time. His greatest hits include “Nuages”, “My Sweet”, “Minor Swing”, “Tears”, “Belleville” and “Djangology”.



The town of Spa has given its name to water-therapy establishments all over the world. Its hot-water springs were renowned for their curative properties in Roman times already, and treatment centres were built here from the sixteenth century onwards. Following the visit of Emperor Joseph II in 1781, the town acquired a fashionable reputation and the nickname “Café of Europe”. Other famous visitors who came to “take the waters” were Tsar Peter the Great, Casanova, Alexandre Dumas père, Meyerbeer, Victor Hugo, Agatha Christie and the Belgian royal family, in particular Queen Marie-Henriette, wife of King Leopold II. Stanley Kubrick’s film *Barry Lyndon* is set among Spa high society in the eighteenth century. Spa acquired an opera house, a casino, a horse-racing track and theatres to entertain the visitors. During the First World War, Spa was the operational headquarters for the German army on the Western Front. New water-treatment centres were built in the 1960s as Spa became a centre for mass-tourism and the Belgian Formula One Grand Prix motor races were held at the nearby Spa-Francorchamps racing circuit. In 1983, the Spa spring-water-bottling company celebrated its 400th anniversary with a visit from King Baudouin. In 1994, the first “Francofolies de Spa” French-language music and theatre festival was held and became a huge success, attracting 150,000 visitors in 2007. The former abbey buildings at Stavelot have now been converted into the Spa-Francorchamps museum, housing many artefacts and mementos linked to what is often called “the driver’s favourite Formula One circuit.”



Spa Casino and spring © Jeanmart – OPT

DON'T MISS...

The fountains of Tzar Peter the Great in the centre of the town, the natural springs of Spa deep in the forest, the Ville D'Eaux Museum telling the story of the city, the Church of St Remacle, the Casino of Spa which is the oldest in the world, the most beautiful and legendary racing circuit of Spa-Francorchamps, the F1 Museum in Stavelot, the many outdoor activities (hiking, mountain biking, golfing, skydiving, paragliding). For more discoveries, please visit our website: www.belgiumthelaceto.be





Hercule Poirot

The creation of English crime novelist Agatha Christie, who came on regular writing visits to Spa in Belgium, Poirot appears in 33 novels and 51 of her short stories, published between 1920 and 1975. In the cinema and on television, he has been played by Charles Laughton, Albert Finney, Peter Ustinov and David Suchet (who was voted 2010 Honorary Famous Belgian), among others. In reading the novels, we learn that, in 1920, he was the retired head of the Belgian CID who had fled to England as a refugee during the First World War, and had settled in the village of Styles St Mary, where the first novel in which he appears, *The Mysterious Affair At Styles*, was set. In the subsequent Christie stories he acts as a private detective. He is described as short, with an egg-shaped head, dyed hair and a waxed moustache, always impeccably dressed in a fussy, dandified manner. He observes crime-scenes meticulously and takes a psychological approach to understanding the suspects, treating cases almost like jigsaw puzzles. His investigations always end with an exposition and explanation of the case before all the assembled protagonists. Christie described her Poirot stories as “whydunnits as well as whodunnits”. Unusually for a fictional character, Poirot’s death in the novel *Curtain*: Poirot’s last case published in 1975, led to the publication of his obituary in the *New York Times*, beginning “Hercule Poirot, a Belgian detective who became internationally famous, has died in England. His age was unknown...”



Jacky Ickx (b 1945)

Born on 1 January in Brussels, Jacques Bernard Ickx, known as “Jacky”, went on to become arguably the best endurance motor-racing driver of all time, as well as a Formula 1 motor-racing star. His versatility was shown at an early age, when he beat Roger De Coster to win the Belgian junior motorcycle trials championship. He then made the switch to racing-cars and won the two-litre European touring car racing championship in 1966. This was followed by a string of titles, including European Formula 2 champion in 1967, eight Formula 1 Grand Prix wins and 25 podium finishes, runner-up in the Formula 1 world championship twice, winner of the 24 Hours of Le Mans endurance race six times, World Endurance champion twice, Can-Am champion in 1979, over 50 other victories in major endurance races and wins in several rallies, including the gruelling Paris-Dakar Desert Raid rally, in which he still competes. He was also voted “Le Mans driver of the century”.



SAINT-HUBERT

Saint-Hubert is a town of around 5,700 inhabitants in the Belgian Province of Luxembourg. It takes its name from the shrine of Saint Hubert, a former Bishop of Liège, whose relics were transferred in 825 AD to the Benedictine Abbey of Andage, subsequently renamed Saint Hubert's Abbey. The abbey was closed and its land and property sold at auction in 1797. The Abbot's palace was used as government offices. Today, it is a quiet market town that mostly comes alive on Saint Hubert's day on 3 November each year. Saint Hubert is the patron saint of huntsmen, many of whom gather in the town to attend a special mass to bless their weapons and hounds and then loudly celebrate to the sound of hunting-horns.

DON'T MISS...

The Town Hall; the Hurtebise Monastery; the maladrerie, an ancient place for diseased people and its washhouse; the Bastogne Door; the Basilica, the Arboretum of the Fourneau-Saint-Michel's, Saint Hubert's Day and the blessing of the animals (November), and the many wonders of nature.

For more information please visit our website www.belgiumthelaceto.be



St Hubert day celebration –
blessing of the animals
© Flemal – OPT



Pierre-Joseph Redouté (1759 - 1840)

Redouté was born in the Ardennes town of Saint-Hubert and died in Paris. He was a painter who became best-known for his watercolours of flowers, especially roses, which led to his being nicknamed “the Raphael of flowers”. He moved to Paris in 1782 to live with his brother Antoine-Ferdinand and met the artists Charles Louis L’Héritier de Brutelle and René Desfontaines, who

suggested that he become involved in the then-burgeoning world of botanical illustration.

Pierre-Joseph followed their advice and went to Kew Gardens in London in 1787 to study the plants there.

Returning to Paris a year later, he was presented at Court by L’Héritier and Queen Marie-Antoinette became his first patron, appointing him Painting and Drawing-Master to her Privy Chamber.

In 1792, he left Versailles to work at the Academy of Sciences, moving in 1798 to become Official Painter and Painting-Master to Napoleon’s first wife, Joséphine de Beauharnais, and then, in 1809, to Napoleon’s second wife, Empress Marie-Louise. Following the fall of the Napoleonic regime, Redouté joined the teaching staff at the National Museum of Natural History, where he counted many royal and aristocratic ladies among his pupils (including the future Queen Louise-Marie of Belgium).

His long career demonstrates his extraordinary capacity for “work as normal” through the violent upheavals of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Empire that followed it. Working closely with the leading botanists of the period, he produced over fifty volumes of illustrations.



THEUX

Theux's roots go back to prehistory. The pleasant and fertile region of Theux welcomed Mesolithic hunters (7000 BC) and Neolithic farmers (at Becco, Jevoumont and Juslenville are sites that have been inhabited since the Iron Age). Many Gallo-Romans settled there (cemeteries, potters' kilns, metal-smelting furnaces, temples) and named their settlement "Tectis".

The discovery of tombs and a funerary monument dating from the 6th century demonstrates that the Merovingians also lived there.

Under the Carolingians, the district of Theux was a huge royal hunting ground and became a parish in 814AD. A royal palace was built around 820AD.

In 898 and 915AD, the village was given to the Bishop of Liège, who remained the Lord of the Manor until 1794.

In the 11th century, Theux became a part of what would become the Marquisate of Franchimont in the sixteenth century with the addition of Verviers, Sart, Spa and Jalhay. At around the same time, a castle was built on a hill, from where, in 1468, 600 local men marched to drive Charles the Bold out of Liège: they were all slaughtered and the region laid waste. Shortly afterwards, the metal-smelting industry began to grow and kitchen utensils made in Theux were sold all over Western Europe.

Until the nineteenth century, Theux was famous for the black marble extracted from its quarries. More recently it has become the "Crayfish Capital of Wallonia".

The city centre boasts some seventeenth-century houses and the eighteenth-century town hall. The town's main church was built in the seventeenth century, next to a thirteenth-century defensive tower, almost unique in Belgium.

DON'T MISS...

The local covered market, the fantastic Franchimont Castle, the Carolingian covered-market church, the Church of Saint Hermes and Alexander, the Franchimont mines, the Perron Place and the architectural centre of the city.

For more information, please visit our website: www.belgiumthelaceto.be



Castle of Franchimont in Theux
© jeanmart.eu/belgiumthelaceto.be



Charles “the Hammer” Martel (AD 688 - 741)

founder of the Carolingian dynasty

Charles was born in Theux (near Spa and Liège), the illegitimate son of King Pepin II. His nickname came from his impressive height and strength, and redoubtable skills on the battlefield. He was a brilliant soldier, gaining control of the Frankish kingdoms of Austrasia, Neustria and Burgundy, covering most of modern France and the western part of Germany. His most famous victory was at the Battle of Tours in 732 when the Franks defeated the Moors and ended Moorish expansion into France from Spain. The Carolingian dynasty of Frankish kings is named after him, and his successors would go on to become Holy Roman Emperors.



TOURNAI

Tournai is one of the most important cultural sites in Belgium and, with Arlon, is one of the country's oldest towns. It became a bishopric in 496 AD and the mixed Romanesque-Gothic Our Lady's Cathedral and the Civic Belfry are both UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The cathedral's treasury contains many fine mediaeval artefacts, including the Châsse de Notre-Dame flamande (Reliquary of Our Lady of Flanders) whose extraordinarily ornate twelfth-century design bears witness to the city's wealth in the Middle Ages, when it was a member of the powerful Hanseatic League. The thirteenth-century Pont des Trous ("bridge of holes") still crosses the Escaut River and some of the city's mediaeval gates and houses still stand and have become tourist attractions. At the city's heart is the beautiful Grand'Place with its series of fountains, surrounded by bars and restaurants. The first Capital of the Frankish kingdom, the city would struggle and often fight to maintain its independent status from its powerful neighbour, the Count of Flanders, and from the King of France. It was briefly part of England under King Henry VIII from 1513 to 1519. In the nineteenth century, its cloth and lime-kiln industries boomed but then went into decline. Today the City of Tournai is the largest local authority by area in Belgium, covering over 213km².

DON'T MISS...

The Cathedral of Our Lady; the Belfry (both UNESCO listed); the Military History & Weapons Museum; the Natural History Museum and Vivarium; the Palace of Fine Arts which was designed by Art Nouveau "father" Victor Horta; the Saint-Brice Romanesque district; The Red Tower; The Pont des Trous, a mediaeval water bridge; the Saint George Tower, a stroll in one of the beautiful park of the city and along the Escaut by night.

For more tips and ideas on what to do and see in Tournai, visit our website:
www.belgiumtheplaceto.be



Tournai town centre © Jeanmart - OPT



Rogier de la Pasture also known in Dutch as *Van der Weyden* (c1400 - 1464)

Rogier was a pupil of Robert Campin in Tournai from 1427 to 1432. He is considered by many to be one of the greatest Northern European fifteenth-century painters, on a par with the better-known Jan van Eyck. His work shares a stylistic kinship with works ascribed to the so-called “Master of Flemalle”, now acknowledged by scholars to have been Campin. This similarity is typical of the “workshop” or “school” tradition that prevailed in the 15th century. Following the completion of his apprenticeship, around 1436, Rogier moved to Brussels and was appointed Official City Artist. He became a wealthy man with an established reputation due to the paintings commissioned from him by the Dukes of Burgundy, the Kings of Spain and the Medici, Visconti and Este princely families in Italy. None of his works are signed or documented, but many works have now been attributed to him, including the famous Deposition of Christ in the Prado in Madrid. His largest paintings, four huge panels for Brussels Town Hall, were destroyed in the bombardment of 1695. Rogier used rhythmic lines and rich colours to evoke deep emotions in his paintings, and he influenced an entire generation of European

painters. In 1450 he visited Italy and probably painted his Madonna with Four Saints in Florence for the Medici family, as the picture bears the coat-of-arms of Florence, and the four saints represented are St Cosmas and St Damian (the family's patron saints) and St John the Baptist and St Peter (after whom Cosimo (the Elder) de Medici's two sons were named). In compositional terms, it is very similar to the Florentine *sacra conversazione*. Rogier then returned to Brussels, where he died.



King Clovis I (c466 - 511 AD)

Clovis was born near Tournai. Through a series of successful wars against neighbouring Frankish tribes, he united Frankish-controlled territory into a single kingdom around 509 AD. At the instigation of his wife, Clotilda of Burgundy, Clovis was baptised by St Remigius at Reims Cathedral, where his successors would be crowned Kings of France. At his death, his kingdom had roughly the same borders as modern-day France. He was the first of the Merovingian dynasty, that went on to rule the Franks for 200 years.



Hélène Dutrieux (1877 - 1961)

Dutrieux was born in Tournai. Her brother was a professional cyclist and ran a circus, and Hélène developed a music-hall act as a trick-cyclist. She married a Frenchman and moved to Paris, where she became a semi-professional cyclist, holding the world women's speed record from 1897-99 and the European women's speed record in 1898. King Leopold II of the Belgians awarded her the Grande Croix avec Diamants de l'Ordre de Saint-André in recognition of her success. She developed an interest in motorcycles, and was the first woman to ride a "wall of death" and to do a full summersault on a motorbike. As soon as flying lessons became available to non-soldiers, she enthusiastically took them and flew solo for the first time in 1908, being among the first women in the world to obtain a pilot's licence. She was the first woman pilot to fly with a passenger in 1910 and was the first winner of the Femina Cup (women's altitude and endurance flying record). She won the Cup again in 1911 and was awarded the French Croix de la Légion d'Honneur in 1913, being

the first female pilot to receive this honour. After retiring from active sport, she became the Vice-President of the women's section of the Aero-Club de France and set up the Hélène Dutrieux-Mortier Cup, with a prize of 200,000 francs for the longest distance flown by a woman without landing.



WAVRE

Wavre is the capital of the Belgian Province of Walloon Brabant and is located on the River Dyle, in the tourist area known as the “Brabant Ardennes”. The town’s mascot is a little boy called Maca, immortalised in a statue erected in 1962 which depicts him climbing the wall of the Town Hall. The local legend says that whoever rubs his bottom will have a year’s good luck. During the French Revolutionary period, it was a cantonal capital in the French département of Dyle. The first paved road from Wavre to Brussels was built in 1769, and other roads were built to Namur, Nivelles and Leuven. Initially by-passed by the railway which went to Ottignies instead, Wavre’s own station opened in 1855, and it acquired its own motorway junction in 1969. In 1977, Wavre was merged with Bierges and Limal.

DON'T MISS...

The Adventure Park; Statues of “Le Maca et la Crapaude” close to the Town Hall; the basilica church Our Lady of Basse-Wavre; the Fresco by Roger Leloup; Walibi Theme Park; the shopping district in the Christ’s Bridge Street; relaxing walks in the pedestrians streets.

For more discoveries, please visit our website www.belgiumthelaceto.be



Statue of Maca,
Wavre's Mascot
© OPT-JP Remy



Maurice Carême (1899 - 1978)

Carême was born in Wavre. His father was a painter & decorator and his mother worked in a grocer's shop.

After leaving school, he trained to be a primary-school teacher and was appointed to his first post in Wavre in 1917. The following year, he was elected mayor of Wavre.

He had started writing poetry aged 13, and he continued to write in his spare time. After a brief flirtation with Futurism between 1928

and 1932, he returned to his previous simple style, that was particularly appreciated by younger readers.

In 1937, he moved to the "White House" in the Avenue Nelly Melba in Anderlecht, Brussels, where he was to live for the rest of his life.

By 1943, he was earning enough from his poetry and his articles for literary magazines to be able to give up his teaching job.

In his old age, he became something of a cult figure among French students, who elected him a "Prince of Poetry" in 1975. His poems have been translated into several languages and he received many literary awards.

He also translated the poems of several Dutch-language poets into French.

He set up a charitable foundation, which inherited his house, now the Carême Museum.

His former secretary, Jeannine Burny, is now President of the foundation and her book "The days always pass too quickly: in the footsteps of Maurice Carême" ("Le jour s'en va toujours trop tôt: sur les pas de Maurice Carême") was published by Editions Racine in 2007.



Street life in Wavre © OPT-JP Remy

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Sunrise in Wallonia © Jeanmart - OPT



