

Flanders Bulletin

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Dear Reader,

Spring is finally here; flowers have suddenly burst into colour across the countryside, fruit trees are exploding pink and white and poppies that have lain dormant throughout the winter have finally begun to bloom bright red across Flanders Fields. There has never been a better time to visit Flanders and with Easter just around the corner, we hope that this month's bulletin will tempt you to take advantage of Flanders' easily accessible location and focus on its easy-to-reach cosmopolitan cities.

Read on for details of a few events happening this season and from all of us here at Tourism Flanders-Brussels, enjoy the sunshine!



Choco-Laté Festival

In a country that is synonymous with fingers covered in chocolate it is little wonder that [Bruges](#) dishes up its fair share of decadent surprises from 1st – 4th May 2009 at the biannual Choco-Laté festival, held in the city's medieval heart Oud Sint-Jan.

The self-proclaimed Belgian chocolate capital goes a step further with chocolate sculpture contests, body painting, children's activities and a "chocolate walk", taking in the city's landmark chocolatiers such as Leonidas and Godiva.



Brushing aside all chocolate's sinful connotations, the festival reveals the health benefits of cocoa in massage, beauty therapy and skin products – so there is no reason to feel guilty about a little sweet indulgence! Visitors can expect a wide range of activities including presentations and demonstrations that will make mouths water and waistlines expand.

Opening hours of the festival are 10am - 6pm and entry fee is €10 for adults, €4 for under 12's and it is free for under 6's. [more»](#)

Flower Market - Ghent

With Spring in mind, the eclectic city of [Ghent](#), Flanders' hidden gem, holds a traditional flower market every Sunday morning on the Kouter, one of the city's many squares. Here, you'll come across life with the real locals whilst ambling through the stalls of exotic flowers, where you will find a stunning collection of plants, azalea, orchids, seeds, and bulbs.



For centuries, the Kouter has been the true meeting place for the people of Ghent; in the Middle Ages it was the site of military parades and jousting tournaments and later of horse fairs and archery competitions. In the 19th century, the affluent residents of the city chose this square for their regular Sunday strolls as they were serenaded by a burst of fine music from the bandstand. And that's how it still is today!

Most locals use their time at the weekly flower market to catch up with each other over

coffee. However, if you're feeling slightly more tempted to spoil yourself, you can delight in fresh oysters and champagne at the Kouter's famous Blauwe Kiosk which is located within the market.

The flower market on the Kouter is open to visitors every Sunday morning between 7:00 am – 1:00 pm. [more»](#)



Festival of Short Films

If, like us, at times your attention span is limited and celluloid epics tend to send you to sleep, the Brussels festival of short films is the ideal cinematographic event for you. Held in the Cinema Vendôme in Ixelles from 24th April - 3rd May 2009, the festival will present an intriguing, snappy collection of short films from all over the world and allow one to discover a wealth of cinema projects from the Flemish region and beyond.



The event will also be an opportunity for professionals in the business to network and see what's currently being produced. Don't miss the Kino Kabaret which involves the directing of an entire film and its premiere before the end of the festival.

Entry fee to the event is €12 and opening hours will vary from day to day so be sure to check the website before you visit the event.

The festival's website will release full details of this year's programme as soon as they are readily available. [more»](#)



DOCVILLE 09 Leuven

DOCVILLE 09, the annual international documentary film festival held in Leuven, will take place this year from 2nd to 9th May. As a broad genre festival, this year's DOCVILLE program reflects several trends in the documentary film world. Last year, we witnessed a deluge of films concerning the food crisis and ecological themes. This past year inspired stories relating to economic themes such as the global financial crisis and poverty. A second group of films worth noting is made up of excellent artist portraits; the lives of writers, visual artists, musicians and street performers clearly fire one's imagination. Thirdly, there is the increasing popularity of funny films toeing the line between documentary and fiction. Acknowledging, but not limiting itself to these three trends, the DOCVILLE program remains a kaleidoscopic panorama of the very best the genre has to offer.



Following the success of previous years, DOCVILLE has organised a national and international competition. Two DOCVILLE-juries will award the SCAM Jury Award for Best Belgian Documentary and the CANVAS Jury Award for Best International Documentary so why not head to Leuven to see the results for yourself? [more»](#)

Art Brussels

Art Brussels was first organised in 1968 and has fast developed in to a highly respected international art fair, widely acclaimed for its excellence and cutting-edge profile. From 24th-27th April 2009, at Brussels Expo, the annual fair presents 150 galleries and 30,000 art lovers, professionals and collectors are expected to attend.



Top galleries from around the world have been selected to participate including the Buchmann Galerie from Germany, Galeria Senda from Spain, Simon Lee Gallery from Britain and Galerie Rodolphe Janssen from Belgium. Also, so-called "one-man shows" take pride of place at this exhibition. Galleries have an opportunity to promote a particular artist, whether already established or a young talent, and it is in this way that the fair hopes to present the latest trends in contemporary art.

Entry price is €15 and the fair will be open to visitors from 11am - 7pm. [more»](#)



BEAUFORT 03 at the Flemish Coast

Last, but certainly not least, it is important to remember that this spring, artists from every corner of the globe will be making their way to the [Flemish coast](#) for the third triennial for contemporary art by the sea. With more than 67km of wide open sandy beaches, each artist will be intent on finding the perfect place to showcase their work at Beaufort 03. The sea has already been enticing artists for centuries, and this year, with artists such as Liam Gillick and Thomas Houseago, Beaufort 03 promises to be an event not to be missed. Undoubtedly, it will offer a unique insight into art and the seaside.

Why not make the most of the fine weather and flock to the Flemish seaside to soak up the sun, sea breeze and culture! [more»](#)

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