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Flanders Bulletin

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Could summer really be here? The sun is now shining and you can now finally start to look forward to those long awaited summer holidays! And there has never been a better time to visit easily accessible Flanders this coming month. Please read on for further details of some exciting events that are happening across the region this season and from all of us here at Tourism Flanders-Brussels. Enjoy the warm weather!



Beer passion Antwerp

Fun is certainly brewing in Flanders; from 26th to 28th June, celebrate the delights of Flanders' best malts, hops and barley in a three-day Beer Passion festival that will take place in **Antwerp's** Groenplaats in the heart of the Old Town. This isn't your average Oktoberfest-like beer festival but a more delectable event where food stalls and a large beer tent will be dotted around the square selling countless varieties of delicious nibbles. With over 150 different beers to sample, fans of the world's oldest and most widely consumed alcoholic beverage can indulge in Flemish, German and Czech brews over the course of the weekend.



Last year, several thousand visitors flocked to the event and sampled well over 10,000 different beers and this year's boozy festival promises to be just as exciting! The customary brass bands and live music suggest that the atmosphere is going to make the festival a huge success. Entry to the event is free but there is a compulsory 2 € Beer Passion glass purchase to be made at the door. All beers are then 1.50 € a glass which are paid for in the form of tokens. [more»](#)



Brussels Jazz Marathon - 3 days of Jazz craziness

Have you got the blues? If so, a visit to Flanders will do the trick! From 29th until 31st May 2009, jazz fans can enjoy modern and traditional jazz, blues and Latin either indoors or at one of the many open-air concerts that will take place during the annual **Brussels** Jazz Marathon. Local and international groups and artists will fill the main squares, bars and theatres of the Flemish capital.



Throughout the city, over 50 venues will host musical celebrations, which draw in crowds from all over Flanders and beyond. An astonishing 125 concerts will be given by up to 400 artists and outdoor gigs will be held at the Grand Place, Place du Grand Sablon and also Place Sainte-Catherine. And, as an addition to this year's event, a 'European Jazz @ Brussels' stage will be held on the Place d'Espagne where you can discover a range of new groups ranging from Hungary, Spain, Italy to Estonia, Holland, France and Bulgaria.

Entry to the event is free so make the most of Eurostar or the low airfares to Brussels and blow your trumpet in a musical weekend extravaganza. [more»](#)

Tickets on sale for Rogier Van Weyden Exhibition in Leuven

Calling all art aficionados! Tickets are now on sale for the long awaited opening of the Rogier van de Weyden exhibition, which will take place this autumn in **Leuven**. Considered by many as the most influential painter of 15th century, Rogier van de Weyden is undoubtedly the master of passion and subdued emotion and the first artist to depict genuine people with real emotions.



From 20th September to 6th December, the prestigious exhibition about the master painter will be held at Leuven's M Museum, the city's new-look municipal museum. His originality and influence will be illustrated by more than 100 masterpieces on loan from major North-American and European collections, some of which will have returned to Flanders for the first time in six centuries. These will offer visitors a unique opportunity to discover, or rediscover, the artist's pictorial language.

Although 20th September may seem a long way off, now is definitely the best time to buy a ticket as a large turnout is expected and a maximum number of tickets will go on sale each day during the exhibition. However, if a ticket is purchased now you will have the best of both worlds as, not only will it ensure that you beat the queues at the museum, but you will also get to choose at which time you wish to visit. The same applies to guided tours, which must in any case be booked no later than three weeks before the date of the visit. Ticket sales for the Rogier van de Weyden exhibition are on sale now and can be purchased online. Prices start at 7 €. [more»](#)



Trade - Ommegang 2009 in Brussels

On the first Thursday of every July and the Tuesday before, the Ommegang takes over the magnificent city centre of **Brussels** with a majestic parade that re-enacts the legend of Beatrice Soetkens. Since the first pageant in 1549, the Ommegang, which literally means 'walk about', has become one of the city's major local folklore and heritage events.



This year, the Ommegang of Brussels will take place on Tuesday 30th June and on Thursday 2nd July and will enchant all with a new display of magical animations and recitals of old folklore tales. More than 1400 performers will help you relive history in the incomparable setting of the Grand Place and, at the Place du Sablon, an equestrian jousting event will take place with free entry for everyone. Three teams of Belgian, French and English riders will meet head-on in this first leg of European tournaments.

To witness this spectacular event tickets must be booked in advance; V.I.P covered seats along 'Les Ducs de Brabant' will cost 67.50 € and all front row seats range from 45 € to 32.50 €.

Tickets will be available from 22nd June and can be purchased at Brussels' Tourist Office located at the Town Hall on the Grand Place. However, it is already possible to make reservations by post, fax or e-mail. For more information on ticket sales please call +32 2548 0458 [more»](#)



Norfolkline launch Rosyth to Zeebrugge route

On 19th May, ferry services between Flanders and Scotland will recommence with the much anticipated launch of Norfolkline's new Rosyth to Zeebrugge route. As the only continental ferry link between Scotland and Flanders, the new route will make it easier than ever for Scottish passengers to discover the latter's eclectic mix of cities and 67km of golden coastline.

Norfolkline has announced new pricing packages for both foot and car passengers; the brand new vessel, Scottish Viking, which boasts lower fuel consumption and CO2 emissions will offer travellers 107 four-berth cabins and 57 reclining seats, providing a cost-effective option for travellers on a budget. The new pricing packages starts from £70 one-way for foot passengers with one reclining seat, and £165 single fare for a car and one reclining seat. Additional prices are available for those travelling with motorbikes and bicycles.

On board facilities include a restaurant and a bar, shop, cinema, free Wifi zone, gaming tables, a children's play area and evening entertainment. A pet licence is pending and Norfolkline will introduce pet tickets at a future date, as and when the licence is granted. [more»](#)



Opening of Magritte museum

On 2nd June, the Magritte Museum will open its doors to the world. Located within the building of the Royal Museums for Fine Arts of Belgium on the Place Royale in the centre of **Brussels**, the museum will pay homage to the life, times and work of the internationally renowned artist. Visitors will be able to discover the world's largest collection of Rene Magritte's works; approximately 170 oeuvres will be displayed, amongst which we'll find his most important masterpieces, which are mainly from the legacies of Ir'ne Scutenaire-Hamoir and Georgette Magritte. Acquisitions made by the Royal Museums for Fine Arts of Belgium, completed with works on loan from private art collectors, will also be exhibited. The museum will be open between 10:00 and 17:00 local time from Tuesdays to Sundays and guests will be able to visit until 20:00 local time on Wednesday evenings. Guided tours, catalogues and tape-guides are also available in English. [more»](#)



Festivities at the Coast

With summer holidays peeping around the corner, there is a huge variety of activities on offer along the **coast** for all ages. From 30th May to 1st June 'Scapa Sport's Beach Polo' is taking place in Knokke-Heist as well as the 'Blessing of the sea' in De Panne on 28th June. There will be 'Concerts in the Park' in Blankenberge throughout July and August too. So, whichever activity it is that tickles your fancy, there is sure to be something for everyone!

If you're looking for further information, why not download a brochure from [our website](#)? For further information on the Coast itself and all the activities click on the link to for futher information. [more»](#)



Brussels Gay Pride

Brussels Pride was born as 'Pink Saturday' in the 1980's and now marks the starting point of the gay and lesbian summer in Flanders. On 16th May, around 20,000 people will march through the Flemish capital in the main parade, which starts from the Bourse at 2pm.

Pride in **Brussels** is an event open to all; it's considered by many, not only a festive event, but more importantly a political statement as it offers a platform for the LGBT community to put their legal rights in the spotlight and thank the Flemish government for being so supportive of the gay community throughout the region.

Events supporting the parade include a Gay and Lesbian Village in and around rue St Jacques, followed by the Rainbow Party at Ancienne Belgique during the evening.

For more information, please visit the [Belgian Gay and Lesbian Pride website](#) for full details of the programme. [more»](#)

Antwerp Bruges Brussels Ghent Leuven Mechelen Ostend & the Coast Ypres & Battlefields



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