

BRUSSELS Revealed

Brussels is not the staid city it was once reputed to be; a closer look at the compact capital unveils some notable Belgian treasures that are very right now.

By Kimberley Lovato



Bar-Plattestein in the Saint-Jacques district

// DRINK

Beer is a must in Belgium, and **A La Mort Subite** is the most famous beer café in Brussels. The name means "sudden death," and the family-run pub serves an impressive variety of beer. It's also rumored to have been a favorite haunt of the late Belgian crooner Jacques Brel. alamortsubite.com

Lambic is the only spontaneously fermented beer in the world, and it's found right here in Brussels. Visit the **Cantillon Brewery**, the last lambic brewery in the capital, where beers such as Kriek and Gueuze are still brewed in the traditional style. cantillon.be



Who can forget **The Smurfs**, those little blue characters who charmed children in the '80s. The Smurfs (*Les Schtroumpfs* in French) was originally a comic strip created by Belgian cartoonist Pierre Culliford (aka Peyo) in 1958. The series is being made into a movie (reportedly with **Katy Perry** as the voice of Smurfette) that's slated for release next year.



Belga Queen

A serving of Belgian frites

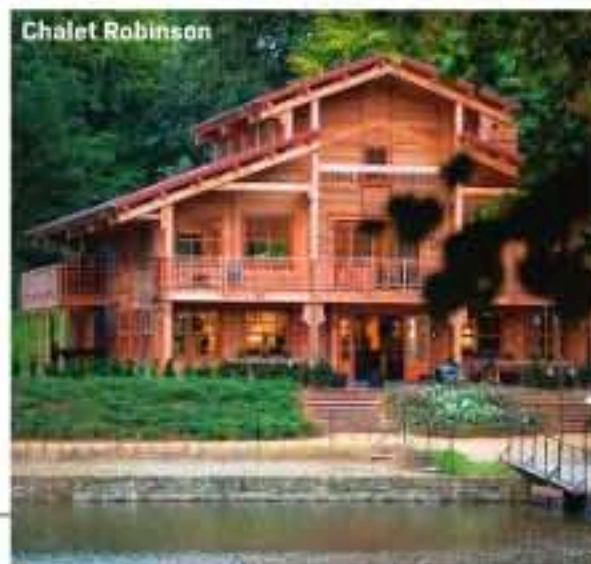


// EAT

Belga Queen is the grande dame among Brussels restaurants, and locals and visitors alike pack into its stunning dining room, once the Crédit du Nord bank. The menu highlights ingredients sourced from Belgian artisans around the world, and an attractive fixed-price lunch draws the weekday business crowd. Then there are the bathrooms, which you'll just have to see for yourself. belgaqueen.com

After an almost 20-year absence from the Brussels dining scene, the landmark **Chalet Robinson** is delighting anew from its island perch in the Bois de la Cambre. The outside terrace has views on the lake and maintains that on-vacation-in-the-city feel that has charmed Brussels residents and visitors since it first opened in 1877. chaletrobinson.be

Served in a paper cone with a side of sauce (mayonnaise preferred), French fries (*frites*) are a true Belgian specialty. Order a cornet at **Chez Antoine** on Place Jourdan or one of Brussels' other many *friteries*.



Chalet Robinson

// SHOP

Brussels is a city of markets, and somewhere in the city there is one in full swing. The oldest is the daily (7 a.m. to 2 p.m.) flea market on the **Place du Jeu de Balle** in the Marolles quarter. Bring a bag and hunt for Belgian treasures among the piles at this 100+-year-old institution.



Dandoy

Rue Antoine Dansaert is the main artery for Belgian fashion, and the busy street is home to many local names. **Stijl** (Antoine Dansaert 74) is a one-stop shop for big names, including Dries Van Noten, Ann Demeulemeester and Cathy Pill, among others. Farther up the road, step into the feminine universe of **Mademoiselle Jean**, where Belgian beauty Aurore Jean handcrafts alluring clothing inspired by the past. mademoisellejean.com

There are enough high-end names (Gucci, Chanel, Louis Vuitton) along the Boulevard de Waterloo to excite your exchange rate, but no trip here should conclude without a stop at **Delvaux**. The 180-year-old leather-goods maker is synonymous with Belgian luxury. Though it's the oldest luxury leather-goods maker in the world, Delvaux leather is rarely found outside of Belgium, which makes it a perfect memento from Brussels. delvaux.com

Sweet teeth head to the **Place du Grand Sablon**, one of the most delectable (and beautiful) squares in Brussels. The chocolate shops of **Pierre Marcolini**, **Godiva**, **Neuhaus** and **Wittamer** are all found here, as is **Dandoy**, Brussels' best-known cookie maker.



After buying your Wittamer chocolates, step into the café upstairs for a macaroon with a view.



Odette en Ville

// SLEEP

Located in the chic Châtelineau quarter inside a renovated 1920s mansion, **Odette en Ville** (Odette in the City) is one of Brussels' newest boutique hotels. With eight rooms and cozy common areas, it seamlessly marries ease with elegance. Belgians are no strangers to Odette: During WWII, a café (now a boutique hotel) situated just across the Belgian border in tiny Williers, France, bore the name of its eponymous proprietor, who served kirsch and bitter to border-breaching Belgians. Though she may have taken her name to the big city, Odette en Ville still harbors the warm spirit that made visitors to her country café want to stay awhile. chez-odette.com

White (obviously) is the *couleur du jour* at this cool hotel on Avenue Louise, but what's hot at **The White Hotel** are the objects by Belgian designers that fill the 53 rooms and common areas. To stamp a little Belgian style on your home, take a look at the hotel's e-shop, where you can buy many of the design accents. thewhitehotel.be



The White Hotel



Brussels' music scene is being noticed, and local bands, such as **Garner** (right), can be heard strumming sensational sounds around the capital and beyond. **MusicBrussels** shines the spotlight on these talented performers with the most up-to-date concert news and band info. musicbrussels.com



// SEE

Belgian architect Victor Horta was the master of art nouveau, and his style and contribution can still be seen in many parts of Brussels. Four of his buildings are UNESCO World Heritage sites, including Horta's former house and atelier, now the **Horta Museum**. hortamuseum.be

