

LIFE IN Estonia

SPRING 2008

The Power
of Black
Bread

Birgit Õigemeel

the First
Estonian
Pop Idol

Portrait Painting

SPECIAL!

The Republic
of Estonia - 90!

The Joy of Joining Schengen

Hearts and
Minds of Estonian
Scientists

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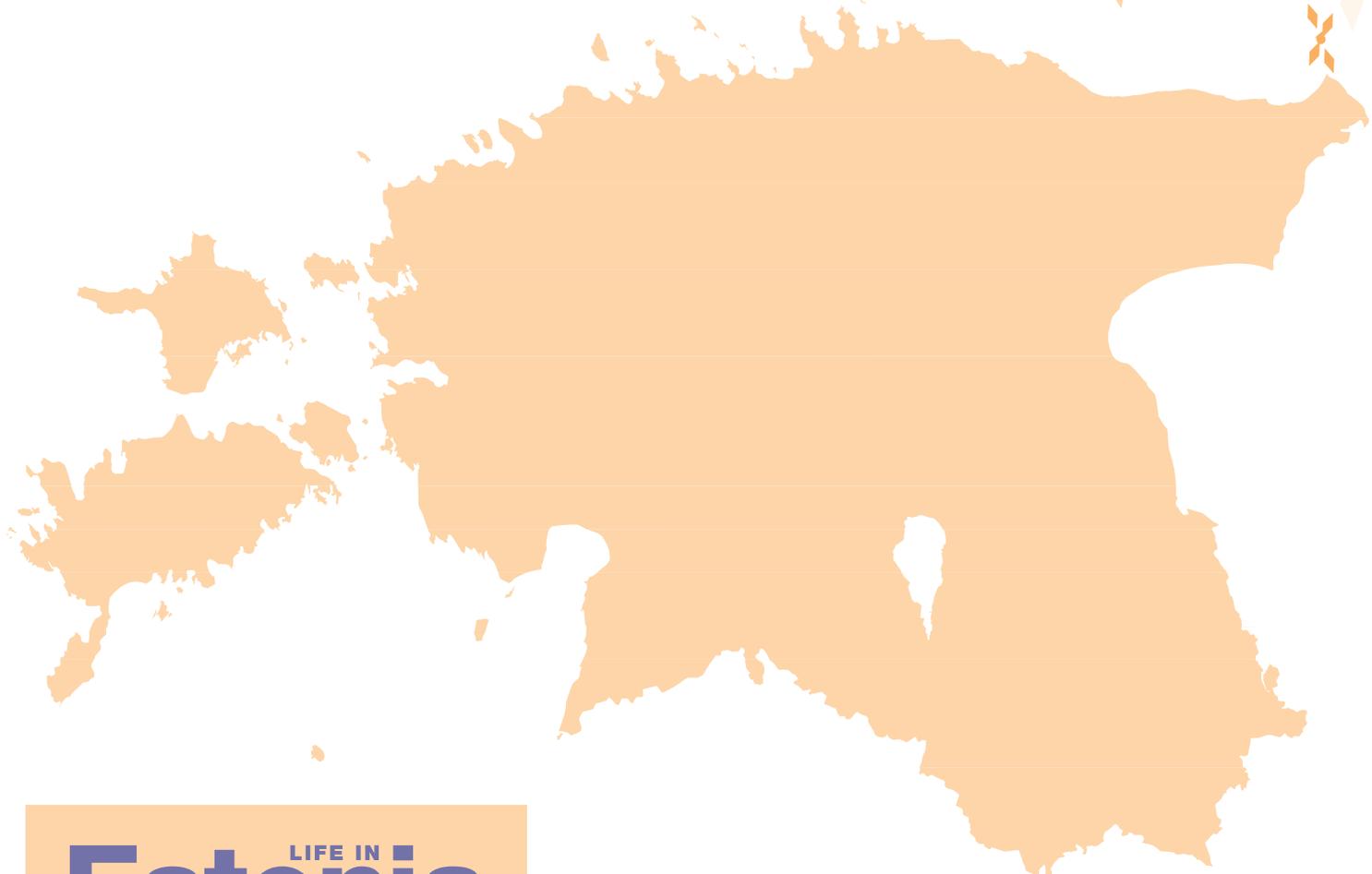


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Enterprise Estonia
Lilivala 13/15 10118 Tallinn, Invest@eas.ee
www.investinestonia.com



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Executive publisher
Lifestyle Publishers
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Editor
Reet Grosberg
reet.grosberg@ambassador.ee

Translation
Ambassador Translation Agency

Language editor
Richard Adang

Layout
Positive Design Ltd.

Printing
Reusner Ltd.
Lõuka 10
13521 Tallinn, Estonia

Partner



Cover
Model: Birgit Õigemeel
Photo: Kalle Veesaar



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To mark the anniversary, many museums all over the country are taking a look at the various sides of life, lifestyle and character of Estonians. This issue focuses on two exhibits – "The Will to be Free", an exhibition at the Estonian History Museum, and "Freedom Square", the annual Artists' Association exhibition.

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GALA OF THE INTERNATIONAL DANCE DAY

Performances: 29 April and 3 May 2008

Estonian National Opera celebrates the International Dance Day with a splendid gala performance. The first part of the gala features ballet soloists of the Estonian National Opera Ballet Troupe and guest performers from Finland, Sweden, Germany and Latvia. The second part presents a short ballet *Before Nightfall*. The ballet will remain in the repertoire of the theatre.

Before Nightfall

Music:

Bohuslav Martinů

(Czech Republic)

Choreographer:

Nils Christe (Holland)

Designer:

Keso Dekker (Holland)

The ballet *Before Nightfall* was completed in 1985 on the commission by Rudolf Nurejev. It premiered at the Paris Opera. A well known Dutch choreographer Nils Christe set the choreography to the music of Bohuslav Martinu, which was written on the eve of the Second World War. The choreography reflects the feelings that the approaching war creates in people.
www.opera.ee



Tristan And Isolde

An opera by Richard Wagner

Premiere: 17 May 2008

Performances: 24 and 31 May, 7 June 2008

Music Director: **Arvo Volmer**

Conductors: **Arvo Volmer, Jüri Alpernten, Mihhail Gerts**

Stage Director: **Neeme Kuningas**

Choreographer: **Oksana Titova**

Title roles: **Heikki Siukola**

(Finland), **Peter Svensson**

(Austria), **Irmgard Vilsmaier**

(Germany), **Heli Veskus and others**

Tristan and Isolde, a beautiful example of the new form of music drama that strives for a continuous flow of music and an opposite of Italian number opera, premiered in 1865 in Munich. Besides Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, the story of *Tristan and Isolde* is the greatest love drama of all ages. The tense music drama of Wagner is inspired by the love affair the composer had with Mathilde Wesendonck, the spouse of his patron. Since its premiere, the opera has been accompanied by great success and it is frequently performed all over the world.
www.opera.ee

PUCCINI-GALA

May 15th 2008 at 7 PM -

Endla Theatre, Pärnu

May 16th 2008 at 7 PM -

Russian Theatre, Tallinn

Puccini gala is dedicated to the 150th anniversary of Giacomo Puccini. Soprano **Ewa Biegas** from Poland, tenor **Ji-Min Park** from South-Korea, baritone **Laimonas Pautienius** from Lithuania, baritone **Ilya Silchukov** from Belorussia, soprano **Veronika Dzhioeva** from Russia and soprano **Tatyana Romanova** from Estonia will perform arias from Puccini's operas „La Bohem“, *Tosca*“, „Manon Lescaut“, „Turandot“, „Madama Butterfly“ etc..

Soloists will be accompanied by **The 21st Century Orchestra**

and **Nargen Opera Chorus** conducted by the

Artistic Director of PromFest **Erki Pehk**.

Tickets: 250 / 200 / 150 www.promfest.ee



FESTIVAL SUMMER NIGHT STARS

From 3-15 June, the Estonian National Opera

will host the traditional festival Summer Night Stars. Widely recognized ballet and opera stars from our own theatre and from around the world will delight our theatre goers in the following performances:

Frederick Loewe's

popular musical

My Fair Lady

on 3 and 10 June

ballet **Cassandra**

on 4 June, music by

Mario Schiavoni

Tchaikovsky's ballet

Swan Lake

on 6 June

Richard Wagner's

Tristan and Isolde

on 7 June

children's ballet **Snow White and the 7 Dwarfs**

on 8 June, music by Tibor Kocsak

Giacomo Puccini's **Tosca**

on 11 and 13 June

ballet **Don Quixote**

on 12 June,

music by Ludwig Minkus

Verdi's **Rigoletto**

on 14 June



The festival will be closed by the gala performance of the Tallinn Ballet School (on 14 and 15 June).
www.opera.ee



Kumu Art Museum

Permanent Exhibitions:

Classics of Estonian Art from the Early 18th Century until the End of the Second World War **Treasury.**

Estonian Art from the End of the Second World War until the Restoration of Estonia's Independence **Difficult Choices.**

Exhibitions:

A Trip to the Country. Ethnographic Types in Photography **UNTIL 14.09.2008**

The "Free Art" Workshop in Moscow 1957.

Archives in Translation **UNTIL 25.05.2008**

North by North-East: The Continental Unconscious. Contemporary Art and the Finno-Ugrian World. **UNTIL 18.05.2008**

The Golden Age of Finnish Art. Masterpieces from the Turku Art Museum **UNTIL 8.06.2008**

Paul Kondas **UNTIL 7.09.2008**

Gerhard Richter **6.06-17.08.2008**

Degree Works from Estonian Academy of Arts **7.06-22.06.2008**

Weizenbergi 34 / Valge 1, Tallinn, Estonia

Tel (372) 602 6000, Fax (372) 602 6002

museum@ekm.ee, www.ekm.ee

Open: Oct 1-Apr 30 Wed-Sun 11-18

May 1-Sept 30 Tue-Sun 11-18





From 16-27 April, jazz musicians from sixteen countries will give 52 concerts in Tallinn, and other Estonian towns: Tartu, Pärnu, Viljandi, Narva, Rapla, Türi, Paide, Haapsalu, Valga, Rakvere, Võru, Keila, and Kuressaare. At Jazzkaar each concert is special. Find your own favourites from our homepage www.jazzkaar.ee where you can also listen to videos of the performers and hear samples of music.

Leny Andrade & Sambop Band

(Brazil)

Probably the Jazz Diva of Brazil. After rising into fame in the 1960's in her native Rio de Janeiro, Andrade continued to mix samba and bossa with jazz in the next decades. Although she has maintained quite a low profile in Europe, Leny Andrade is well-known in USA. Recently her album "Ay Vivo" won the Latin Grammy.



Al Di Meola

(USA)

One of the top jazz guitar players! A virtuoso whose playing has influenced many others on that instrument. Di Meola's music, based on Latin traditions, brings together different music from around the world. Year by year his compositions has developed towards concentration and he manages to convey his message with lesser and lesser notes and decibels. The band Al Di Meola plays with at Jazzkaar has a line-up of two guitars, percussions and an accordion.



Tommy Emmanuel

(Australia)

A really good guitarist has always something more to his performance than just flashing fingers or fireworks of techniques. Just listen to Tommy Emmanuel play and feel how the multi-stylistic virtuoso is able to capture your attention. Throughout his career Emmanuel has performed with many notable artistes including Chet Atkins, George Martin, Eric Clapton and John Denver.



Gino Vannelli

(Canada)

In the 1970's, Vannelli became famous and successful on the international pop music scene with his hits that combined pop rhythms and intonations of jazz. Later on his inclination towards jazz got stronger and even some hints to classical music appeared. In mid-nineties Vannelli recorded two albums for Verve Records. At Jazzkaar the world-famous singer will be accompanied by the Dutch jazz pianist Bert van der Brink.



Angélique Kidjo

(Benin)

One of the most distinctive voices of African music! The West African singer's current record "Djin Djin" was honored with Grammy Award for Best Contemporary World Music Album in 2008. Kidjo fuses Afro-funk, salsa, reggae, gospel, jazz and more with shades of classic American rock, pop and soul. Meet one of the most popular artistes on the current world scene!



Avishai Cohen Trio

(Israel)

The Israeli bass player is eagerly awaited back in Tallinn after his trio's successful concert at Jazzkaar a couple of years ago. His poetic-melodic fusion of Mediterranean sounds, Middle-Eastern rhythms and American jazz is highly impressive. This time the ex-Chick Corea group bassist arrives in Tallinn as Jazz Ambassador of Jazz Appreciation Month 2008.



Roy Ayers

(USA)

Raised from the soul jazz of the 1960's, the American vibraphone player's music helped to bring into world the British Acid Jazz of the late 1980's. Ayers loves when people dance to his well-spirited music, he is funky, he knows how to groove and younger generation of DJ's love to mix his music with modern dance rhythms. Many of the famous soul musicians and hip-hopppers have admitted Ayers' influence in their work. He is a modern jazz legend.



This is the best Estonian jazz in the World

As always, the best Estonian jazz musicians play at Jazzkaar. Many of them collaborate with colleagues from neighboring countries. There is the Siim Aimla Group, Kadri Voorand's new quartet, Tõnu Naissoo ensemble and Sofia Rubina's D'Orange with Lithuanian musicians, sax Player Villu Veski plays with Fulvio Paredez from Argentine, guitar player Ain Agan duets with Teemu Viinikainen from Finland, poet-singer Tuuli Taul greets Spring with her friendly band. And there are many others...

Jazzkaar Midnight Club

When you find your way to the restaurant Clazz, you are at the right place. Besides the on-spot concert programme, midnight jam sessions are also something to look out for.

Puurmani arch bridge elected the Concrete Building of the Year

The annual competition to elect the best building made of concrete, which was organized for the eighth time this year, was brought to life in order to introduce the general public to the wide-ranging ways of using concrete and to acknowledge the people who have used this local building material in executing their ideas. There were 25 entries to this year's competition. The competition was open to concrete buildings and constructions and methods used within them which were handed over to the contracting authority in 2007.

The jury selected the Concrete Building of 2007 to be the arch bridge in Puurmani (crossing the Pedja River on the 148th km of Tallinn-Tartu Road).

The Main Prize – designers Siim Idnurm, Juhan Idnurm. Award to the contracting authority

– Estonian Road Administration. Builder Award - Merko EhitusLtd. Concrete Supplier Award - Rudus Ltd.

Head of the Jury Aadu Kana: *"The arch bridge which fits harmoniously into the surrounding environment is made even more beautiful by the high-quality concrete surfaces."*

Heiki Meos, Member of the Jury: *"What is beautiful, is right."*

Emil Urbel, Member of the Jury: *"What is right, is beautiful!"*

Toomas Laur, Member of the Jury: *"A good configuration which can be taken in with the eye and a good casting of concrete."*

Estonian Association of Concrete (founded in 2004) is an association promoting the use of concrete as a local building material. The association comprises 53 businesses, organisations and private persons.

An online-poll organised by the daily "Eesti Päevaleht" selected the readers' favourite from the nominations, which went to the Estonian Virtual Embassy on Second Life.

The editorial board of the magazine "Ehitaja" awarded a special prize to the architecture bureau Nord Projekt Ltd for the twin towers of Tornimäe (Tornimäe 3, Tallinn).

The newspaper "Äripäev" readers selected the Tallinn Synagogue as their favourite in an online-poll.



Glaskiek has the largest wooden window factory of the Baltics in Tartu

On 22 November, Glaskiek Plc opened the biggest wooden window factory of the Baltic States in Tartu, which cost over 100 million kroons.

The surface area of the new factory is 8,000 sq m; there are 80 mem-

Estiko Plastar's packages that talk back

Estiko Plastar, one of the Baltic market leaders in plastic packaging is planning to launch a line of new so-called active and intelligent packages. Some of the applied research funding comes from Enterprise Estonia.

According to Meelis Jürgens, head of product development and quality, the so-called active packages will keep the product in shape and good, monitoring and optimizing the relevant conditions, while the so-called intelligent packages will be able to switch on and off different functions as well as "communicate" with the consumer if needed.

"In food industry, for example, the main purpose of packaging is to prevent bacterial or chemical contamination of food, but also to keep out oxygen, moisture, external smells, light. The active package will react to unwanted changes in the environment, controlling the product's quality and shelf life," Jürgens said. The "wise" package will inform the user about spoiled food or allow enough air in or out if needed. Packages like these will, Jürgens said, cut the need for preservatives and reduce the risk of consuming spoiled food.



BLRT Group receives NATO standard

BLRT Group has been announced to comply with NATO quality standard AQAP 2120, which gives the official go-ahead to the repair and modernisation of navy ships. At the same time the 9-month turnover of BLRT Group grew 26.5% in 2007 in comparison to the previous year, growing to nearly 3.2 billion kroons. The profit of three quarters totalled nearly 455 million kroons, thus growing by 32.5%.



bers of staff and 250 wooden windows are made every day (this is five times more than before). The production unit is mostly oriented to export.

Founded in 1992, Glaskiek is a company based on Estonian capital, which is active in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Russia. The company has 2 glass package-, 5 plastic window-, 2 wooden- and wooden aluminium window- and 5 aluminium construction factories.

In 2006, Glaskiek's consolidated turnover was 922 million kroons.

A novel control panel for bathtubs by Aquator

The Estonian designer bathtub company Aquator has developed and manufactured a unique touch-screen control system LEAF for massaging jet bathtubs. This year, the company is introducing its innovative product in six countries abroad.

According to Sven Lõhmus, Aquator's designer, the idea had its origin in real life and plain common sense. "People wearing glasses always have a problem how to cope when they need to remove them. From my own experience I know that I can still always distinguish between different colours," he said. "Hence the solution – to use colourful icons on the screen instead of text. This type of panel will soon become an integral part of all massage tubs."



Estonian fishskin – a new wow for the fashion industry

In the city of Pärnu, a company named Skinnova plans to open a tannery where fishskins discarded by fisheries are processed into a durable and high quality product for the fashion and footwear industries.

According to Marina Kaas, executive of the company, expertly treated fishskin is virtually indistinguishable from high priced and exclusive reptilian hides. Basically, Skinnova is recycling the waste product of the fishing industry in the most sophisticated and value-adding way.

The Pärnu Tannery will start by giving an extreme makeover to salmon, trout and pike skins. The subtle tanning process consists of treating them with various chemical substances, after which they are dyed. The outcome is a beautifully patterned hide three times as strong and durable as animal hide – and indeed much more expensive.

The fishskins produced in Pärnu are marketed in Southern Europe. From there, via Italian fashion accessory workshops, they may return to the shelves of Estonian boutiques. Skinnova is also open to cooperation with any Estonian handbag, belts, footwear and *haute couture* manufacturers.



Sledge-bed for an environmentally friendly furniture company

Contracted by the furniture brand Greenhand, the youthful product design company Taikonaut has designed a bed which resembles a sledge.

"We came up with our ideas on the basis of the terms of reference and Greenhand chose the ones which appealed to them the most," says the Manager of Taikonaut, Kristiina Tuubel. "In addition to the sledge-bed, we produced a very simple and cleanlined bedroom- and living room set," she adds.

The eco-furniture brand Greenhand is used by the company GH Holding. One of the owners is Pirko Konsa, a board member of Tehnopol.

In addition to the sledge-bed the inventive engineers, designers and artists of Taikonaut have created a silicone mat which is meant to keep the beer bottles in place in the fridge and notify when the beer is running out. This invention was sold to the Danish brewery Tuborg. Other creations of the company include the ethnic swimming costume based on print graphics of Estonian national jewellery, a fridge with foam-plast drawers and much more.



A New Webpage Creator

This spring the software studio Fraktal, partnered by the former Skype head engineer Toivo Annus, will launch a new web-based service that enables everyone regardless of their skills to create webpages for their business without specialist help.

According to Fraktal's CEO Tõnu Runnel, there will be a global market for the product, whereas the main target will be small and medium-size businesses in Europe and the USA. "We'll launch it somewhere in the second trimester of 2008, after a test period – it'll be tested mainly by the local clients in Estonia, of course," he said.

The studio was founded last autumn by four Estonian web programmers and software engineers, Toivo Annus and Märt Kelder among them, to develop the product.

The basic idea of the product was to radically simplify creating and managing of webpages. It guides a layman through the steps of creating a well designed webpage either for a home user or a small to medium-sized business. With the new tool, the job will be quick and the comprehensive solution will include a package of design and photo uploading applications as well as web hosting and e-mail.



Webmedia's revolutionary invention hits the markets

An Estonian company Webmedia has developed and patented a programming solution that helps programmers save a lot of time, and has now made it commercially available for users worldwide.

With complicated programming languages like Java, it takes at least 30 seconds to see the results. On the average, it takes 2-3, sometimes up to 10 minutes, depending on the technology used and the size of the project. The lengthy process is known as 'deploy' – for programmers, it is a sheer waste of time.

Whereas novice Java developers usually deploy after every two or three lines, the advanced ones perform the check a couple of times per hour. "Our invention cuts the deploy time down to just a couple of seconds," said Taavi Kotka, CEO, Webmedia.

The product was named JavaRebel. The very first online comment to the article about the invention perfectly summed up the fascination of the whole Java community: "This can't be true..."

WebMedia's JavaRebel can be downloaded from the Internet without restriction: a non-exclusive licence costs \$ 100 per user. Up to now, most of the downloaders have been from the US, China and Germany.



Position yourself via a cell phone

Nutiteq, the software company founded by Regio's former head engineer Jaak Laineste, offers self-positioning services via cell phone.

According to Laineste, the three pillars supporting Nutiteq's products are mobile phone software, maps, and global positioning. The company, employing five product developers altogether, used the solution by MgMaps.com as a base, enhancing it by mobile positioning and the detailed maps of Estonia drawn by Regio. The outcome is a free test version of a positioning service, downloadable by whoever has a cell phone with Java support from Nutiteq's web page www.nutiteq.com. The next step will be launching of the commercial application. Efforts are underway with Estonian network operators as well as other potential partners.

"Nutiteq's application will let you check the map via your cell phone, to locate yourself and your friends, look up place names, shortest routes and places of interest like Wi-Fi areas, restaurants, hotels, filling stations, etc," Laineste said.

Automated self-positioning doesn't even require a built-in GPS in the phone, it can be done via a relatively cheap external Bluetooth-GPS module. The data will be uploaded via mobile datalink or Wi-Fi.

By the year 2012, an estimated 28 million people in Europe and 15 million in North America will have used mobile navigation services at least once per year. Laineste and Nutiteq are out to bite a significant piece of that market. The application has already met with interest in Europe, the USA and Africa. The best known international partner of Nutiteq is MgMaps.com, in Estonia the company is teaming with Regio, Positium LBS and Mobi Solutions.



Mobi's m-business goes to Scandinavia

In October, the do-it-yourself mobile business platform created by the Tartu-based Mobi Solutions expanded to the Finnish, Swedish, Danish and Norwegian markets. In Scandinavia, the website launched under a new name, Fortumo.com.

"Fortumo enables everyone to set up his or her mobile business in five minutes, regardless of technical skills," said Rain Rannu, a partner of Mobi.

Signing up with Fortumo is free. Members providing their services earn 40-60% of revenue, depending on the country, from every text message requesting their service.

Fortumo enables the users to create three types of mobile business services regardless of their tech skill: info message, text message campaign, and web page text chat. Also, Fortumo lets owners of the web pages program their text message based pay services.



Monitoring radioactivity via the Internet

A radiation monitoring system forwarding real-time data over the Internet has been developed by Englo, a company based in the Tehnopol technology park.

The system created by Englo consists mainly of small sensors and a software solution that makes the relevant data readable online. The system allows recording of different types of radiation to eliminate any potential danger.



Software which helps to control weight

A unique piece of software - the Weight Navigator will be introduced for the first time on the Estonian market. Without the need for a food diary, the device measures whether you have consumed more or less calories than you have used up. The Weight Navigator knows the direction of fat metabolism—whether fats are burning or accumulating—, gives daily advice on diet and exercise and thereby aids more efficient weight loss. The solution is based on the newest weight measurement technology and mathematical analysis.

According to Indrek Saul, management consultant to the method's author, the Weight Navigator enables to make daily calculated decisions: to pig out or to cut back on food, to exercise or not. "The software is intelligent and self-educating - it understands the most significant eating mistakes made by an individual, what should be avoided and what tested measures prove to be most effective," he explains.

Saul adds that the software is based on the observation of changes in fat mass, as the latter is the main reason for obesity. "For example it is a big mistake not to eat after six o'clock in the evening if one is very hungry," he says. "It has also been scientifically proven that for example consuming sports beverages before, during or after training significantly decreases the efficiency of fat-burning."



The Estonian way

Estonian history has not been trouble-free. Due to its location on the east-west and north-south trade routes, Estonia has served as a battleground of great European powers throughout history. In the early thirteenth century, Estonia was occupied by the armies of German and Danish knights; in the centuries which followed, the Estonian territory was also ruled by Poles, Swedes and the Russian Empire. Despite this, Estonians managed to maintain their language and mentality and to survive as a people. During the national movement which began in the nineteenth century, Estonians organised themselves into a force which began to demand the right to be masters in their own land.

An opportune moment came in 1917. The First World War significantly weakened the Russian Empire and the Revolution broke out in February 1917. Czar Nikolai II was forced to relinquish the crown and a double rule came into existence in Russia, whereby executive power was exercised by both Councils made up of workers and soldiers and by the Temporary Government which steered the country towards

Text: Mart Laar,
historian and MP

Photos: private collection, Estonian Film Archives, Estonian National Broadcasting

democracy. Estonians used the February Revolution to unite Estonia into one administrative territory and achieve autonomy. When the Temporary Government delayed their decision, Estonians organised a powerful demonstration in St Petersburg on 26 March 1917. As a result, on 30 March 1917, the Temporary Government decided to grant Estonia autonomy. The elections to the Land Council (*Maapäev*) in May were won by nationalist parties, which brought the Land Council into conflict with the Councils which were increasingly under Bolshevik control. However, the position of the Land Council was strengthened by the formation of the first Estonian national army units.

In September 1917, German troops, having already conquered most of Lithuania and Latvia, occupied the Estonian islands. The collapse of Russia was becoming more and more imminent. This led Estonian politicians to think about setting independence as the ultimate goal. At the same time, the chaos in Russia was deepening. Supported



People in front of the Endla Theatre listening to the reading of the independence manifesto on 23 February 1918. *Estonian Film Archives*



Elections to the Founding Council at the front of the War of Independence on 5 April 1919. *EFA*

by German intelligence money, Bolsheviks had increasing influence, and this was also true in Estonia. One of the mediators of German funds to the Bolsheviks was an Estonian man named Aleksander Keskküla, who hoped thus to destroy the Russian Empire and win independence for Estonia. In October 1917, Bolsheviks grabbed power in Tallinn and elsewhere in Estonia. Officially this was executed by the Estonian Military Revolutionary Committee led by Viktor Kingissepp but, in reality, the orders came from St Petersburg. Ignoring the ban, the Land Council gathered on 15 November 1917. The Council did not accept Bolshevik rule and declared itself the highest power in Estonia. Although the Land Council was disbanded on the same day, its decisions had a decisive impact. Foreign delegations began work abroad, looking for support for Estonia from Western nations. The idea of independence was also spreading in Estonia, despite Bolshevik counter-efforts. By the beginning of 1918, all Estonian parties, with the exception of the Bolsheviks, were in support of Estonian independence.

An opportune moment to declare independence arrived in February 1918 when, as a result of the attack by imperial German forces, the Bolsheviks left Estonia. Nationalist circles used the

confusion thus created and took power in many areas even before the German army arrived. On 24 February 1918, Estonia declared itself to be an independent democratic republic. The Council of Elders of the Land Council formed a Rescue Committee led by Konstantin Päts, which in turn appointed the Temporary Government. But the German forces who had invaded Estonia did not acknowledge the Republic of Estonia. Several government members were imprisoned; a member of the Rescue Committee, Jüri Vilms, who had fled to Finland, was killed there, together with his companions. The Germans enforced a tough occupation regime, which aimed to form a Baltic empire under a German protectorate. The national movement went underground, preparing to start activities again in more suitable times.

The right moment arrived in November 1918, when Germany, having lost WWI, was forced to take its forces out of the Baltic States. The

departing Germans transferred power to the Temporary Government, whose position, at first, remained uncertain. The biggest threat to Estonia now was the Red Army, which was moving westwards with Lenin's order to wipe the independent states off the map and light the flame of revolution in Europe.

On 28 November 1918, the Estonian War of Independence began, with the Red Army attacking Narva. Heavily outnumbering the Estonian forces, the Red Army conquered most of Estonia by the beginning of January 1919, reaching 30-40 km from Tallinn. Many Estonians did not believe that Estonia could stand up to powerful Russia; the defence

Armoured car Kalewipoeg.



Private collection

of Estonia rested mostly with volunteers who joined the army, especially school kids. However, in early 1919, there was an unexpected turn of events in the war. The Estonian forces had managed to organise themselves, they were guarded from the sea by the British navy, and the public morale was boosted by the arrival of Finnish volunteers. Led by the Head of the Estonian Defence Forces, General Johannes Laidoner, Estonians went on the offensive and forced the Red Army almost out of Estonia by the end of January. The success of the Estonians made Bolshevik leaders nervous. Red Latvian hunters who were moving westward were given orders to stop and attack Estonians, but the Estonians demolished them. During the offensive which began in spring 1919, Estonian units occupied Pskov and northern Latvia. As the German expedition corps led by General van der Goltz was moving up from the south, this meant the liquidation of Bolshevik power in Latvia. In June 1919, in the 'Landeswehr War', Estonian-Latvian forces met van der Goltz, who was aiming for conquest of Latvia. German forces were beaten in heavy battles and the national government was restored in Latvia. The victory over the Landeswehr in Võnnu on 23 June 1919 is celebrated as Victory Day in Estonia.

In the autumn of 1919, following in the wreckage of the withdrawing Northern Corps, the Red Army once



Throughout January 1920, intense negotiations were held with the Russian delegation in Tartu. The negotiations ended with the signing of the Tartu Peace Treaty in the night of 2 February. *Estonian History Museum*

again reached the Estonian borders. Fierce battles broke out in the Narva region but, despite heavy losses, the Red Army did not manage to break through the Estonian defence. However, the war had also taken its toll on Estonia. Interested in breaking through the blockade of the Western states, the Soviet Union made a proposal to Estonia to begin peace negotiations. Although the Western states opposed such negotiations with the Soviet Union, Estonia decided to proceed according to its national interest and end the war. The negotiations which began on 5 December 1919 in Tartu were difficult. The Estonian delegation was led by Jaan Poska. Even during the peace negotiations, the Soviet Union repeatedly tried to break through the Narva front. Only after the attacks failed did Russia agree to stop military action. Military action was halted on 3 January

1920 and on 2 February 1920 the Tartu Peace Treaty was signed, under which Russia acknowledged the independence of Estonia.

Thus Estonia had won independence. In the next few years, most of the states in the world granted de jure recognition to Estonia. The beginning of independence was difficult for the country. Estonia's economy had been closely linked to the Russian economy, and adapting it to the needs of an independent state was no easy task. There was a lack of experience in governing a state, and several institutions needed to be built which had not previously existed. All of this required resources which could have been spent elsewhere. Despite problems and setbacks, Estonia experienced rapid progress during the independence period and developed into an average European state, and looked boldly to the future.

Estonia's peaceful development was brought to a halt by the start of the Second World War in 1939. With the secret protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact made between Nazi Germany and the Communist Soviet Union on 23 August 1939, Estonia was assigned to the Soviet sphere of influence. The Soviet Union occupied Estonia in 1940. From 1941-1944, Estonia was occupied by Nazi Germany, and in 1944 the Communist system returned. The Communist occupation left a heavy imprint on Estonia. Nearly a third of the population suffered repression, with a loss in population amounting to 20%. The number of Estonians in Estonia has still not reached the pre-war level today.

Although after Stalin's death the situation in the Soviet Union somewhat improved and the economy started to develop again, the nature of the occupation did not change significantly. Colonisation and Russification continued, reaching its peak at the end of the 1970s.

Jüri Vilms (1889-1918)

was a member of the Estonian Salvation Committee and the first Deputy PM of the Republic of Estonia. Empowered by Maapäev the Salvation Committee issued the Estonian Declaration of Independence on February 24, 1918. The German forces taking over the country didn't recognize the independence of Estonia. The Salvation Committee went underground, Jüri Vilms fled to Finland where he, according to official version, was captured and executed by German troops in Helsinki.



The percentage of Estonians in the Estonian population decreased rapidly. While at the end of the war Estonians made up 90% of the population, by the end of the 1980s the percentage was just above 60%. The quality of life in Estonia was a little bit higher than in many other parts of the Soviet Union, but it remained well below that of other countries which had been developing in the meantime. This was especially obvious in comparison with Finland, which before the Second World War had been at more or less the same development level as Estonia.

Despite the pressure, Estonians did not stop resisting foreign rule. Immediately after the war, this was expressed through an armed resistance group known as the Forest Brothers, which the Soviet authorities managed to suppress only in the middle of 1950s. The last Estonian Forest Brother, August Sabbe, was caught only in 1978. After the movement had been stifled, resistance was taken up by associations of people who thought beyond the status quo. Although the number of people actively participating in public resistance was not high, it was founded on the

passive resistance of the general public, which was mainly demonstrated through the preservation of Estonian culture, language, memory and mentality. Culture became a kind of weapon for Estonians against the Communist system's wish to control each and every aspect of life.

All of this laid the foundations for the resurgence of the resistance movement in the second half of 1980s, when setbacks caused by the Cold War and consequent reforms began to eat away at the Soviet Union with an ever increasing force. Estonians immediately took advantage of the weakening Soviet rule and started to push the borders of their freedom, carefully at first and then ever more actively. On 23 August 1987, former political prisoners organised demonstrations in the capitals of all three Baltic states demanding the annulment of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Unexpectedly, a large number of people participated, which was a sign of the weakening of the environment of fear. Several people's movements were born, including environmental and heritage movements and the Popular Front. The real breakthrough came in 1988 with the



Masses / Singing Revolution.
Private collection.



March with torches during Tartu Heritage Days in April 1988. In front row Lauri Vahtre, Indrek Lass, Trivimi Velliste, Aivar Kriiska.
ETV Archives

On August 23, 1939, Molotov-Ribbentrop treaty was signed which affected the fate of Europe for half a century. This pact and the secret clauses it contained destroyed Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. 50 years later the three nations living by the Baltic Sea got back on their feet and took hold of each other's hands. The 600 km human chain reached from the foot of Toompea in Estonia to the foot of the Gediminas Tower in Lithuania, crossing River Daugava in Latvia on its way.



Estonian Film Archives

Baltic Chain.

“Singing Revolution”, during which hundreds of thousands of people sang themselves free of the burden of occupation. On 20 August 1991, Estonia restored independence. On 17 September 1991, the Baltic states were accepted into the United Nations – they had returned to the family of free nations.

Independence had been restored, but the situation of the Baltic states remained extremely difficult. Fifty years of occupation had had a devastating impact. The economy was in a catastrophic state, and both the environment and the Estonian soul were polluted. In many ways, while the Baltic states were independent on paper, they were dependent on Russia in almost all aspects of everyday life. Faced with this situation, Estonia decided to choose the path of radical reforms, which decisively tore the country away from the Soviet past. A new Constitution was adopted and a new Parliament and President were elected. In 1992, a radical fiscal reform was carried out, followed by other eco-

nomical reforms. In the first half of the 1990s, Estonia made a dramatic turn from the East to the West. An important landmark was the removal of Russian armed forces from Estonia on 31 August 1994. In the second half of the 1990s, Estonia ensured that this turn was irreversible by becoming a full member of the European Union and NATO. Estonia has become known throughout the world as one of the most successful transition states.

At the beginning of the new millennium, we can say that Estonia has successfully completed the transition period. However, joining the European Union and NATO has brought new challenges for Estonia. We have become part of the large world and, in order to be successful, Estonia has to set new goals while not forgetting her roots. The key to success for Estonia and for many other countries lies in finding a balance between openness and remaining true to itself. How we manage to make use of the opportunities open to us is now solely up to Estonia.

Come and see beautiful Estonia!

Answer 12 simple questions about Estonia, pack your things and board a plane. You will have a wonderful summer holiday.

The Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is happy to announce that its new Estonia Quiz 2008 is opened! You will find the quiz at <http://quiz.mfa.ee>.

The quiz is in two languages, English and Russian. It consists of 12 multiple-choice questions covering different aspects of Estonian life. With the help of the different Internet links provided on the quiz page, it should be fun and easy for everyone to discover something new about Estonia.

The grand prize is a free trip to Estonia for two, including airfare, accommodation, meals, city tours and more. Other prizes include tour packages of Estonia. The quiz will officially close on May 31 and the winners will be announced on June 5.

This Quiz is already the Ministry's thirteenth Estonia-themed quiz. Interest in the quiz is constantly rising: 4895 people from 74 countries took part in the 2007 Christmas Quiz.

The main prizes of Christmas Quiz 2007 went to Tom Leyden from Belgium and Svetlana Kravets from Russia. Consolation prizes went to contestants from Spain, France, Finland and Russia.

Svetlana Kravets's impressions of Estonia:

'I have participated in various quizzes in the past, but the Christmas Quiz 2007 was particularly engaging, since the emphasis was not on utilising one's knowledge, but rather on learning new facts.

We really enjoyed Tallinn's Old Town. We would have loved to spend more time just walking around, but of course that gives us a good reason to come back!....

The people were kind and helpful. Estonia is a country that I would like to return to again and again—the country has left only good impressions. It seems like tourists feel at home in Estonia because they are welcomed so very warmly!'

Good luck and see you in Estonia!

Information: vminfo@vm.ee



Foreign Minister Urmas Paet drawing the winners.



The winner of one of the prizes, Sergei Veremeenko, in Tallinn with his wife Tatiana.

Special thanks to all the sponsors of Estonia Quiz 2008:

Estonian Air; SAS, Ammende Villa Hotel & Restaurant; Arensburg Boutique Hotel & Spa; Baltic Hotel Promenaadi; Baltic Hotel Vana Wiru; Barclay Hotel; Bern Hotel; Domina Hotel Group; Dorpat Hotel; Grand Hotel Viljandi; Karu pesa Hotel; L'Ermitage Hotel; Meriton; Grand Hotel Tallinn; Nordic Hotel Forum; Oru Hotel; Pirita Top Spa Hotel; Radisson SAS Hotel; Sagadi Manor Hotel and Restaurant; Savoy Boutique Hotel; Schlössle Hotel; Hotel St. Petersburg; Strand Spa and Conference Hotel; Tallink Hotels; Three Sisters Hotel; Hotel Telegraaf; Uniquestay Mihkli Hotel; Hotel Victoria Grand Hotel; Hotel Ülemiste; Restaurant Bonaparte; Restaurant C'est La Vie; Restaurant Clazz; Restaurant Fahle; Restaurant Gloria; Restaurant Maikrahv; Restaurant Moskva; Restaurant Olde Hansa; Restaurant Senso; Restaurant Sisalik; Restaurant Vertigo; Restaurant Ö; Art Museum of Estonia; Baltic Silver Tours; Citybike; Estonian Open Air Museum; Estravel; Veskimetsa Riding Centre; Tallinn City Tourist Office & Convention Bureau; Kuressaare City Government; Tartu City Government; Viljandi City Government

Estonia — full member of the Schengen legal area

Since 21 December 2007, it has been possible to hop in a car in Estonia and drive through Europe all the way to Portugal without a single border check, because Estonia, together with Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia and Malta have joined the Schengen member states. You can now travel to Helsinki or Riga from Estonia just like you travel to Tartu or Tallinn, and all citizens of third countries who are legally in the Schengen area are free to visit Estonia.

Also, third country nationals with an Estonian residence permit, who used to need visas to travel in Europe, can now travel visa-free as tourists in Schengen countries, but they definitely have to check the regulations which exist for them and abide by them.

Text: Piret Lilleväli
Schengen coordinator,
Ministry of the Interior
Photo: Jaan Rõõmus,
the Border Guard

First, the border control was stopped on land- and sea borders; since 30 March 2008 it has also been abolished at airports.

In 2006, nearly nine million passengers went through the Port of Tallinn. For most of them, the border-crossing will now become invisible and this is bound to please those who often travel to Finland and Sweden. Of course, there will also no longer be checks of boat passengers in the Helsinki and Stockholm ports. For passengers on cruise ships in the summer, certain formalities of border-crossing will remain. Travellers on small boats, whose first or last stop in the Schengen area is Estonia, need to contact the Border Guard and specify their requirements for border control.

In accordance with Schengen regulations, the Schengen and non-Schengen areas have been separated in airports. The Tallinn Airport opened its new terminal on 30 March, and it fulfils those requirements by providing comfortable conditions for all passengers. If you are flying to, or arriving from, a non-Schengen state, you will go through the border control; if you are travelling inside the Schengen area, you will not. Definitely the security control will remain in the airports and airline companies will continue to check iden-



21 December saw celebrations at the Port of Tallinn to mark Estonia's ascension to the Schengen area. Visiting the country to take part in the event was a delegation of European Union and Schengen state government representatives, led by Portuguese Prime Minister José Socrates. Also present were European Commission President José Manuel Barroso and the representatives Siim Kallas and Franco Frattini.



tity documents in order to confirm that the traveller is the same person as the person whose name is on the ticket.

The eastern border of Estonia, i.e. the border with Russia, is the outer border of the Schengen area and there the border control takes place according to Schengen regulations which apply on all outer borders.

According to Schengen regulations, in certain cases of national security, it is possible to re-establish border controls for a limited duration. This is done in very rare circumstances, but it is useful to know when the change is in effect.

For example, Germany restored temporary border controls during the last World Championships in football.

It is often asked whether people can now travel without documentation. Certainly people should not travel without identification documents, as you never know when it might be necessary to prove identity. This can happen when you pay with a bank card or need medical help. Also, you must be able to prove to legal authorities that you have the right to be in Schengen territory (you are a citizen or resident of a Schengen state or you have a valid visa). Without a doubt,



national legal authorities have the right to stop you, for example, if you are violating traffic regulations.

It is worth emphasising that the border controls have been abolished in order to simplify travel, but this is in no way related to the right of employment. Estonian citizens may work in those EU countries which have opened their labour markets to us (e.g. Finland and Sweden), but they cannot work without work permits in states which haven't done so (e.g. Austria and Germany). European Union citizens may work in Estonia. Third country nationals, both those who come here with a visa and those who have residence permits in other Schengen countries, have to ask the Labour Market Board for information on the right of employment.

In order to limit risks linked to border control, there are various compensation mechanisms, including national migration surveillance, which functions in every Schengen state. Illegal migration doesn't usually begin with a secret border crossing in the forest; rather, people arrive in the state legally (for example with a visa), but do not leave according to the visa regime. In order to discover such persons, there are migration officials in Estonia and the police also have the task of discovering illegal migration.

An important compensation mechanism is the Schengen information system, which in Estonia has been used since September by the police, Border Guard and the Citizenship and Migration Board. Although it has long been possible to check a person, documents or vehicles through our own databases, today this opportunity is significantly broader. The Schengen information system contains very many different

categories (varying among all Schengen states) from stolen motor vehicles and documentation or document papers to wanted persons, missing persons or persona non grata. For example, if the police stop a speeder on an Estonian road and check his or her car documents, the Schengen information system will show if the car has been stolen in Spain or the person is wanted in Germany. As most police patrols in Estonia have access to online databases, the likelihood of catching criminals is quite high. Estonia has been using the Schengen information system since September 2007 and from the first weeks we have caught cars which have been stolen in Europe and have discovered wanted persons.

It must also be remembered that there is a list of persons who are prohibited access to the Schengen states. Hence, if one state has declared a person a persona non grata, as a rule another Schengen state will not issue that person a visa or allow them to cross the Schengen border.

As a rule, the Schengen visa is issued by the embassy of the state where the person wants to travel. Consular officials check documentation, and talk to visa applicants in order to clarify the purpose of the trip and to be assured that the stated purpose corresponds to the real purpose. Therefore, it makes no sense to go to the Italian consulate in St Petersburg in order to get a visa to visit your granny in Narva. Estonia has a modern and efficient visa register, and no visas have been forged since the system was introduced. In the process of preparing to join Schengen, the register was renewed and now also the biometric data of the visa owner has been added.

The borders of the Schengen legal area do not exactly correspond to the borders of the European Union. Of the EU countries, Ireland and the United Kingdom are not part of Schengen. Cyprus, Bulgaria and Romania are also not ready to join. At the same time, Norway and Iceland are part of Schengen, although not part of the EU; the next country that wishes to join Schengen is Switzerland.

People witnessing the ceremonial removal of the border crossing barrier in Valga/Valka.



On 29 March, controls at the Estonian air border were abolished.



Welcome to Schengen!

Text: Signe Matteus,
Consular Department,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

"No more passport, just pass the port!"

This was the greeting to people arriving at the Port of Tallinn on 21 December 2007. It was the day when the principle of the free movement of people became fully applicable for Estonian citizens: Estonia joined the Schengen area and Estonian citizens finally got the opportunity to travel freely through a borderless Europe. Passport control queues on the internal EU borders became a thing of the past.

The expansion of the Schengen common area was not only long awaited by Estonian citizens, but also by those of other new EU member states. It was an important event also for visitors to Europe who still need a visa. Whereas before they had to apply for different visas to visit different European states, from 21 December it is sufficient to have a visa for one Schengen country, which allows entry to 24 countries.

With visas issued at Estonian embassies, it is now possible to travel to all Schengen member states, just as visas issued in those states are valid for entry into Estonia. Nonetheless, one must bear in mind that, when entering the joint European visa area, a visa should be applied for from the country which is one's main destination. Hence, one cannot apply for a visa at a French embassy if the real aim of the trip is to visit friends in Estonia.

Although Estonia plans to increase the number of its representations abroad

in the near future, our representation in the world will remain limited. Before Estonia joined the Schengen area, the visa application process was quite troublesome, as in general the application had to be submitted in person and this meant a long and expensive trip to some other country if an Estonian representation did not exist in the home country. In order to make the visa application process more accessible, the system allows for one Schengen state to represent another when issuing visas, in other words to issue visas in the name of the other state. For example, Estonia does not have an embassy in Tunisia, but from 17 March Tunisian citizens can apply for an Estonian visa from the Finnish embassy. Finland also issues visas in the name of Estonia in the United Arab Emirates, the Philippines, Indonesia, Namibia, Peru, Serbia, Syria, Thailand and Tanzania, and will in the near future also represent Estonia in Egypt and Iran. Since January 2008, Hungary has represented Estonia in Moldova. Latvia has also agreed to represent Estonia in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan; Germany in Angola, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Botswana, Ivory

Coast, Cameroon, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Jamaica, Madagascar, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Trinidad and Tobago; and Slovenia in Macedonia. As there are many countries where Estonia does not have a representation, there are ongoing negotiations with several countries who will hopefully agree to issue visas in the name of Estonia in the future.

Estonia itself has limited opportunities to represent other states, but we try to do so whenever we can and in the near future Estonia will issue Schengen visas for travel to Finland in Minsk and Pskov.

The new visa policy also implies new responsibilities for our consuls, who have to consider the threat of illegal immigration and security not just in regard to Estonia but also taking into account the interests of other Schengen member states.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs continues to do its best to offer improved services to visa applicants, to develop cooperation with other Schengen member states, and to ensure that those interested in traveling to Estonia will experience a simpler visa application process.



Modern Estonian Border Guard on the road of positive change

Text: Kaisa Pungas,
public relations specialist, the Border Guard
Photos: Jaan Rõõmus, the Border Guard

Recent years have brought two major changes to the Estonian Border Guard: its structure has been optimised and the Border Guard Service Act has entered into force, which brought along a change in the status of the Border Guard as an organisation. The process of optimisation, which began in 2005, has been completed, resulting in the establishment of well-functioning border guard institutions: the Northern Border Guard Region, North-eastern Border Guard Region, South-eastern Border Guard Region, Western Border Guard Region, Aviation Group and the Board of the Border Guard.

The entering into force of the Border Guard Service Act means that the Border Guard made a transition from a military structure to a department with a civil structure. Organising service and career-planning according to the new legislation is much improved for border guards, as the law takes into account the special nature of the Border Guard.

Just recently, one of our most serious challenges was finding suitable personnel. The Border Guard implemented all possible measures to meet this challenge. A significant motivating factor was a decision regarding salaries, according to which border guards working on the eastern border earn up to 30% more wages beginning this year. The average monthly salary of a border guard in the north-east can reach 16,200 kroons with premiums, the average salary of non-commissioned officers 18,750 kroons.

Joining Schengen means the recognition of work

The Border Guard was re-founded following the example of the best practice in Europe. Hence, the Border Guard was

developed with the aim of being ready to join the Schengen visa space. In the early stages of development, the Estonian Border Guard followed the example of the Finnish Border Guard, which is one of the best border guard institutions in Europe. Therefore, joining the Schengen visa space went smoothly for the Estonian Border Guard.

Preparations to join Schengen began with the process of joining the European Union. The Estonian Border Guard worked continuously for years in order to fulfil the Schengen requirements. The first concrete steps to join the Schengen visa space were made in December 2005. During the merging process, the Border Guard had to be prepared to comply with the Schengen requirements. A big achievement was the harmonisation of the legal side, all of the documentation, with the Schengen requirements. The same can be said about the training of personnel. Our border guards know in detail how to use the technology which has been purchased with Schengen funds and which is a part of the working methods of a contemporary border guard in Europe.

The Border Guard received a lot of assistance from the Schengen Facility Programme, which was set up to

Floating vessels are used for guarding the sea border, but also for sea rescue and pollution control.





In winter, motor-sleighs enable to move fast in areas without road

cated 77 million Euros (1.2 billion Estonian kroons) to Estonia in the framework of the Schengen Facility Programme. The Border Guard received 776.7 million kroons.

The eastern border, as the outer border of the European Union, has been a priority of the Border Guard for years. In the framework of the Schengen Facility Programme, the eastern border received new cordons, radar positions and a modern surveillance camera system. The Border Guard used the Schengen Facility Programme in order to improve infrastructure, enhance surveillance capacity, improve reaction to events and enhance the effectiveness of inspection at border points. These measures developed the professionalism of border guards.

Joining Schengen not only meant more opportunities to travel for our citizens, but it was also a clear recognition of the structures guaranteeing our national security. Through Schengen assessments, Europe gave a positive evaluation to the capacity of the Estonian Border Guard.

New challenges

On 21 December 2007, it became much simpler for Estonians to travel to other Schengen states. What did joining Schengen change in the daily work of the Border Guard? For the Border Guard, joining the common visa area brought a new challenge, because when the Schengen agreement came into force and border guarding and checks stopped on internal borders, the implementation of compensation measures became important. In order to prevent



Kuressaare sub-unit of Maritime Rescue and Co-ordination Centre.

help finance activities of new member states on the new outer border of the European Union, in order to prepare them to join the common visa space. The European Commission allo-

cross-border crime and illegal immigration, a great deal of emphasis is put on gathering and analysing information, cooperation with local residents, and local governments and national departments guaranteeing national security and international structures. In order to reduce the risk of illegal immigration, border guards cooperate closely with the border guards of neighbouring states and with national partners. The risk of illegal immigration is further reduced by the joint information system of the Schengen countries. Instead of the passport control which previously took place on the border, the legal basis of staying in Estonia is checked more actively throughout the entire country. Mobile units have been put into operation for this. This means that, as a compensation mechanism, there are joint patrols of the police and the border guard which check documents and cars in the country with the aim of discovering illegal migration.

Thanks to resources from the Schengen Facility and proper working conditions, the capacity of the Border Guard has been significantly enhanced. The Border Guard continues to aim to be an equal partner with the organisations responsible for the surveillance of outer borders in the European Union. The goal of the Border Guard is to create a feeling of security for Estonian and European Union citizens. We would like to be among the best border guards in the European Union.



ATVs are also used for guarding the border.



Founding the Estonian Border Guard:

On 30 May 1922, the Estonian Parliament adopted a law which assigned the Border Guard to the administrative capacity of the Ministry of Interior Affairs. On 20 September 1922, the governing body for the Border Guard was formed on the basis of a proposal made by the Minister of Interior Affairs, Karl Einbund. A well-known Lieutenant Colonel from the War of Independence, Ants Kurvits, was assigned as the Head of the Border Guard and entered office on 1 November 1922. This date is considered to be the birthday of the Estonian Border Guard.

Re-founding of the Border Guard:

On 22 October 1990, the Supreme Council of Estonia adopted the Economic Borders Act. To organise control, the economic border defense service headquarters, led by Andrus Öövel, was founded. On 1 November 1990 the Government of the Republic determined the permanent control points of the economic border and this date is considered to be the date of the re-founding of the Estonian Border Guard.

Total length of the border controlled:

1448,6 km (territorial sea border + land borders)

Estonian-Russian land border (control line):

338,6 km

Estonian-Latvian land border:

343,0 km

Sea border:

767 km

Personnel:

The Border Guard employs 1,814 people.

The Chief Director of the Board of the Border Guard is Border Guard Colonel Roland Peets



The secrets of the heart lie in a systemic approach

Text: Tiit Kändler
Photos: Pressifoto

“Welcome to the site of the Laboratory of Systems Biology. The Laboratory of Systems Biology is a part of the Centre for Nonlinear Studies in the Institute of Cybernetics, Tallinn University of Technology.”

Thus reads the opening sentence on the webpage of the laboratory led by Marko Vendelin. The lab is still quite new and it was opened largely owing to the fact that Vendelin received the Wellcome Trust's International Senior Research Fellowship. First and foremost, the aim of the grant is to discover the secrets of how the heart muscle works, more precisely to discover how the cardiac cells are divided into micro-compartments and how this influences energy fluxes in the cell.

“In the last few years, several new things have been discovered about the interplay between the intracellular structures of the heart muscle and a lot of further research is needed. The decision of such a large and reputable international foundation as the Wellcome Trust to finance Marko Vendelin's planned research into the structural and functional relationships of heart cells demonstrates the high level of scientific research done in the Centre for Nonlinear Studies of the Institute of Cybernetics at the Tallinn University of Technology. Furthermore, it is a tribute to the research potential of the

leagues work in the field known as systems biology. With a systemic approach, they try to discover, for example, how the heart muscles work. “As we have no clue about how much we do not understand about the working of the heart, I cannot answer how much we already do know. A lot is known, but there are always surprises,” says Vendelin.

Vendelin began to mathematically model the work of the heart when he started his job at the Mechanics Department of the Institute of Cybernetics after graduation from

whole research group,” confirms Mati Kutser, Research Secretary of the Institute of Cybernetics.

“The main aim of the laboratory is to study the regulation of intracellular processes and to understand the functional influences of intracellular interactions. For this, a mixture of experimental and theoretical approaches is used,” the new lab explains on its webpage.

The heart can't be turned off

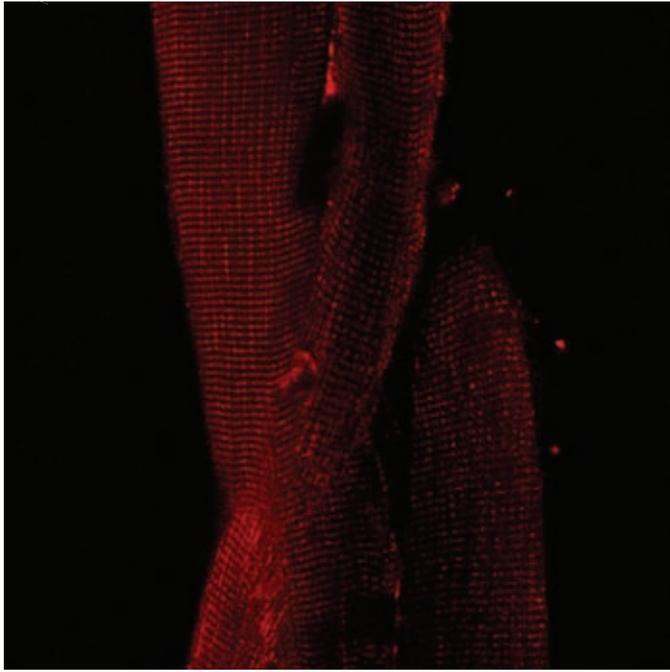
But what does it all mean? It means that Vendelin and his col-

leagues work in the field known as systems biology. With a systemic approach, they try to discover, for example, how the heart muscles work. “As we have no clue about how much we do not understand about the working of the heart, I cannot answer how much we already do know. A lot is known, but there are always surprises,” says Vendelin.

university. The department is led by the academician Jüri Engelbrecht. At the age of 27, Vendelin received his PhD in “The mechanoenergetics of the heart in silico”. All of this took place thanks to cooperation with the working group at the Chemical and Biological Physics Institute led by Valdur Saks. There was also co-operation with Enn Seppet's research group at the University of Tartu. “They carried out experiments, while my task was to create the mathematical model on the basis of experimental data,” explains Vendelin.

In March 2006, the Journal of Physiology published an article by Valdur Saks and his Swiss, French and American colleagues on the bioenergetics of the heart, and the article has already had an impact. Marko Vendelin was also one of the authors. After publication, the article became the most read in the journal. The work of heart muscles, more precisely the question of how they get their energy, is still a mystery and therefore of interest.

But mathematical modelling in itself quickly becomes a computer game if there is no serious experimentation going on. The huge advantage of Vendelin and his colleagues was that they have a very good experiment underway in many labs, accompanied by serious modelling. For example, they thoroughly research systems of enzymes, describe and see what the computer says and afterwards test the predictions on the hearts of rats and mice.



Confocal image of mitochondria (red) in skeletal muscle.

The heart muscle is special. It needs to work all the time. It cannot be switched off for even a second. You can hold your breath, but you cannot will your heart to stop. You can rest your arm, as the work of this muscle is controlled by the central nervous system. You think - you move. But the heart muscle is autonomous. It is not controlled by the brain, only modulated. The heart has a small group of cells, the pacemaker, and this is like a battery which automatically polarises and depolarises all the time. The heart cells are connected to each other very efficiently, so that an electric signal spreads almost instantly across the whole heart.

But the modulation provided by the brain, for example, shows the heart that when you see a wolf you need to run fast. A throbbing heart gives more blood and power to the muscles. Near the heart there are baroreceptors which provide information to the central nervous system. When blood

pressure becomes too high, the heart lowers it by itself by starting to beat more slowly.

Under maximum strain, the heart muscles are able to provide twenty times more blood for the body than during rest. Such an increase in capacity is guaranteed by the mechanisms inside the cells. Pathological changes in the whole system always lead to cardiovascular disease. Therefore, the achievements of scientists help medicine. When the energy transfer systems break down, the mechanoenergetic synchronisation is interrupted, the heart's ability to contract decreases and the result is heart rhythm disturbance or arrhythmia.

If the ion channels of the cell membrane, through which calcium flows in, close faster than necessary, there is less calcium and the cooperation breaks down. The rhythm is disturbed. Therefore the reason for arrhythmia and the decline in the performance of the heart is energetic. That is the first

explanation for this problem – why, with some diseases, the heart loses its power; this is also called heart deficiency.

The triumph of the systemic approach

It is not enough to know all the elements. It is necessary to know the integration of elements. There has been talk of systems biology for at least 30 years, but it was always considered mostly theoretical. There was talk but no action. There have been numerous drawings of circles, boxes and triangles. But now it has become a reality.

Only a very few people bought into the philosophy of integrated systems. Most were reductionists, who claimed that it was vital to know the structure of a gene, to take a cell apart and investigate it. To date, most of the effort of scientific circles has gone into studying the structure of elements. After systems biology institutes were founded in Seattle and New Zealand and the journal *Science* published a short overview of systems biology by the Japanese scientist Hiroaki Kitano four years ago, all of a sudden all attention turned to systems. And thus the study of systems moved from one camp to another. Everyone who used to laugh suddenly started to talk about the same thing.

In short, systems biology helps to understand the function of biological systems, in order to predict and, if necessary, manipulate their behaviour. The final aim is to help human health.

Systems biology measures and maps biological interrelationships in cells, tissues, organs and organ systems and predicts how systems which are made up of many components that influence each other behave. Systems biology then looks for regularity where at first there only seems to be chaos.

Recently an unexpected link was discovered between the relatively large structures called cell organelles. “Through indirect experimental proof and mathematical analysis, we demonstrated that the energy supplier molecule ATP is trapped between the producing and consuming parts of the cell,” says Vendelin. In order to find answers confocal microscopy, mathematical modelling and biochemical data analysis are used. It is interesting that Vendelin and his colleagues experiment on rats but also on the heart cells of the trout. The heart of the fish helps to cut down on the number of lab rats and look into differences of the cellular energetics between cells of different species. This is definitely a systems biology approach. It means that the term “systems biology” is not just empty philosophical lingo. It has mathematical, physical and biological content and this approach has yielded interesting results which help to understand life.

Life is based on energy. Just as societies need energy in order to maintain production and daily life, the heart needs energy. Therefore, it is extremely important to understand the energet-

ics of the heart. At the moment, it seems that systems biology is a big step towards that understanding. Marko Vendelin has written an article about the central issues in the transfer of energy in the heart in the publication “Molecular System Bioenergetics: Energy for Life”. The article was co-written with his former tutors and older colleagues, the academicians Valdur Saks and Jüri Engelbrecht. Of course, the equations and graphs describing energy transfer in the heart are complicated. But this poses no problem for scientists. “Scientists are happy people,” believes Vendelin, “because we get to do what we like. If an exciting topic is also funded, so much the better.” This opinion is probably also an example of a systemic approach.



Marko Vendelin

Career

Institution and position held

08/01/2007 - ... Tallinn University of Technology, Institute of Cybernetics at TUT; Wellcome Trust International Senior Research Fellow
 2006 - 07/31/2007 Tallinn University of Technology, Institute of Cybernetics at TUT; Senior Researcher
 2005 - 2005 INSERM Postdoctoral Fellow, INSERM U446, Faculté de Pharmacie, Université Paris-Sud, Châtenay-Malabry, France
 2003 - 2005 EU Marie Curie Postdoctoral Fellow, INSERM E0221, Laboratory of Fundamental and Applied Bioenergetics, Université J. Fourier, France
 2002 - 2003 senior researcher, Institute of Cybernetics at Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia
 1997 - 2002 researcher, Institute of Cybernetics at Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia

Education

1997 - 2001 PhD studies (technical physics), Institute of Cybernetics at Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia

Administrative responsibilities

2007 - ... Head of Laboratory of Systems Biology, Institute of Cybernetics at Tallinn University of Technology
 2006 - 2007 American Journal of Physiology: Cell Physiology, associated editor, Special call on the Systems Biology of the Mitochondrion

Research activity

Degree information

Marko Vendelin, Doctor's Degree, 2001, (sup) Jüri Engelbrecht, Cardiac mechanoenergetics in silico, Tallinn University of Technology
 Marko Vendelin, Master's Degree, 1997, (sup) Jüri Engelbrecht, Modelling of electrical activation of the myocardium, Tallinn University of Technology

Honours & Awards

2008, Yearly Award, Biosciences and Environment - Enn Seppet, Jüri Engelbrecht, Marko Vendelin, Valdur Saks; National Science Award 2007, Marko Vendelin; Wellcome Trust International Senior Research Fellowship
 2002, Marko Vendelin; Marie Curie Fellowship of the European Community
 1997, Marko Vendelin; Fellowship of the Netherlands organization for international cooperation in higher education (NUFFIC)

Ago-Erik Riet

— our own Archimedes

An Estonian studying to become a mathematician, supervised by the brilliant professors at Memphis and Cambridge.

Text: Toivo Tänavsuu, Hei
Photos: private collection

The young and talented mathematician Ago-Erik Riet dreams of an academic career or a mathematical research post in a corporation such as Skype or Microsoft. Last year the 23-year-old won a Skype scholarship to embark on doctoral studies at Cambridge in the UK and the University of Memphis in the US.

It is Thursday night; the clock in Estonia has just ticked past midnight. Riet is sitting in the doctoral students'

common room at Memphis and giving an interview via MSN. His companions in the room are a Brazilian, an Indian and two Americans. With the air conditioner on, the temperature in the room is 17C. Outside it is only 20C. The clock on Riet's desktop shows six and the sun has already set – it is almost time for the dark night characteristic of the South.

"I am not a genius, perhaps just talented," says the brainy Riet. Yet he is as comfortable as a fish in water when it comes to maths and he can get by in ten foreign languages. Mathematics – a nightmare for many – has been Riet's great passion throughout his life. It is so simple for him!

Today the young mathematician is studying combinatorial mathematics at Memphis and Cambridge. The list of the previous institutions where

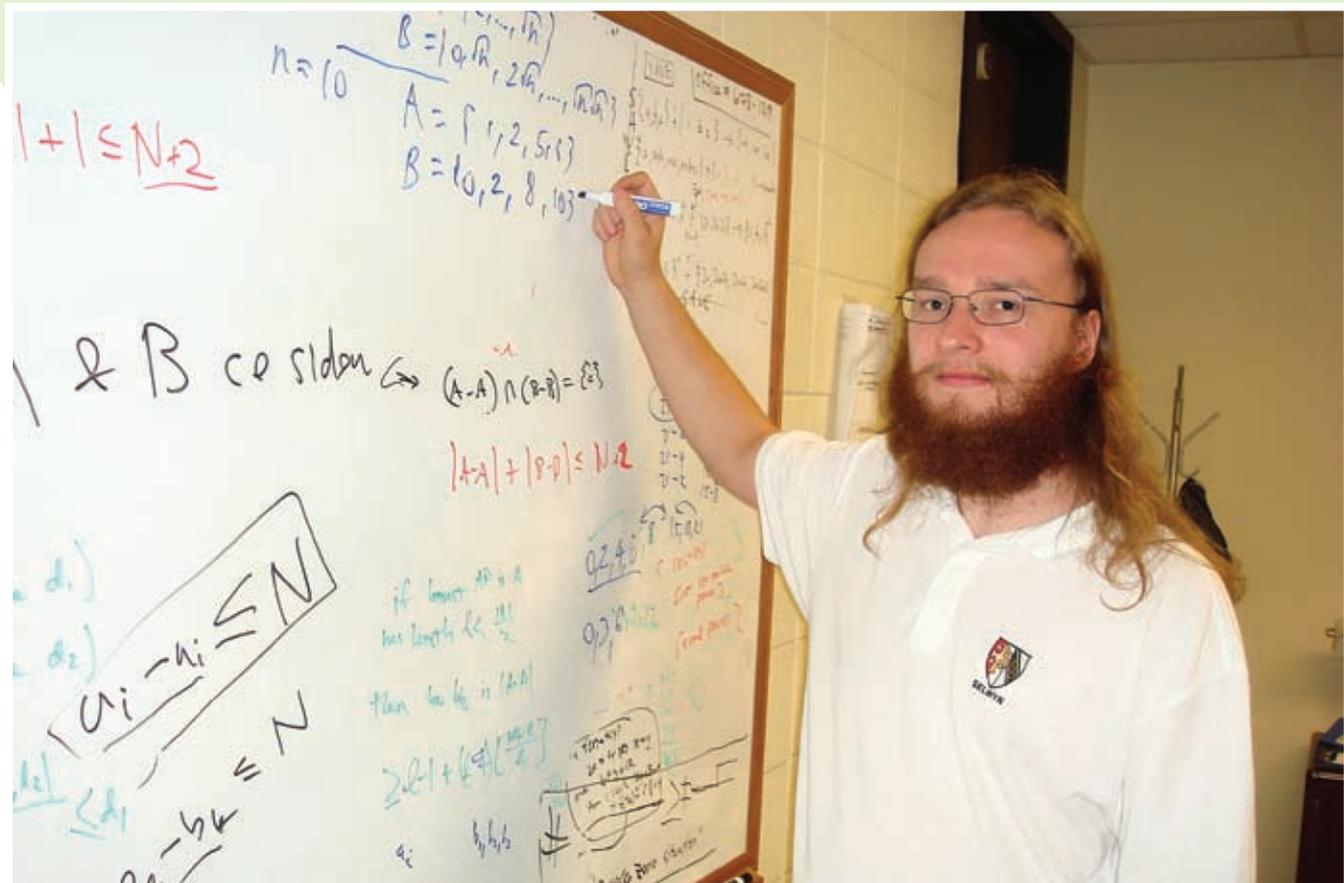
he has studied is remarkable: Tallinn Kuristiku Gymnasium, English College, the University of Tartu and its Science School, the University of Uppsala in Sweden, and Cambridge University in the UK.

Already a quick learner before school

"According to my mother I knew the alphabet and started to read before I went to school – at the age of four," says Riet.

Since sixth grade he has participated in maths competitions, including national championships. Since high school he has never missed such an event. The young lad has achieved good results in competitions in Estonia, Finland, Norway, Scotland and Japan.

On the Estonian tournament scene, his top achievement during school was first prize in a four-science-subject—maths, physics, chemistry and



informatics—tournament. Today the young man is deeply grateful to his first maths teacher, Annela Valdi.

But why did he choose mathematics if he has also practiced aikido, rowing, dancing and swimming, has sung in the school chamber choir, studied piano for six years and likes to improvise with jazz even today?

“Mathematics and informatics are my favourite subjects, as they require concentration and a creative approach,” explains Riet. “In maths my deeper interests lie in combination, algebra, probability theory and its applications, such as cryptography and error correcting codes. Combinatorial mathematics offers unsolved problems and challenges. I like to challenge myself and to attain my goals!”

Maths helps with language learning

According to Riet, understanding the

sign system of mathematics helps to comprehend other sign systems, such as music or languages. Therefore it is easier for those who like maths to learn languages.

“A language or music consists of a vocabulary which is based on rules. In order to better understand such rules, it is useful to have very organised logical thinking, which is developed through maths,” he claims. On a conversational level he can manage in ten foreign languages: he is good at English, Swedish, French and Russian but can also get by in Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Finnish, German, and Japanese.

Little things seem insignificant to Riet. He gets excited by big stuff like the latest news about the creation of a better quantum computer by a Canadian company, which makes it possible to better practice quantum cryptography, or developments in material science and nanotechnology.

Riet explains that combinatorial mathematics is a branch of science which has practical applications in other sciences: computing, physics, especially quantum physics, and biology, especially bio-informatics and genetics. Combination is a part of mathematics which researches final structures. Riet offers some combination problems:

- 1) There are N number of towns in a country. A tradesman wants to pass through them all on his journey. What is his shortest route?
- 2) How can you use existing machinery in a factory to produce products in the most effective and secure way?
- 3) How can you classify molecules consisting of certain atoms and their symmetries in chemistry?
- 4) In how many different ways can medals be allocated in a hundred-metre race final?
- 5) How large can the amount of num-



Last spring Ago-Erik Riet studied maths at Selwyn College in Cambridge.

bers in the form $A + B$ be, where A and B respectively are elements from the range of natural numbers A and B ?

Or something from graph theory, a branch of combinatorial mathematics: How many edges can a graph with a given number of nodes have, if it does not include a cycle consisting of n edge (and n node)?

You would be mistaken to think that Riet is excellent in doing calculations off the top of his head. Mathematical research, he says, has less to do with numbers than with the interrelationships of abstract objects.

“At the moment, for example, I am taking a course in graph theory. A graph is nothing but a finite number of points, some of which are connected. The Internet is a graph of computers and servers with cable connections in

between. One can pose various questions. For example, about the connectedness of the graph: what is the maximum number of computers or servers that can be down, in order for the rest of the computers to retain the ability to communicate between themselves?” explains Riet.

Career choice between university and Microsoft

Working on such problems, Riet’s aim is to attain his PhD in the next four years. At both Memphis and Cambridge, his tutor is the world-renowned mathematician and professor of combinatorics, the Hungarian Béla Bollobás, who is also the author of several textbooks.

“Ben Green, Imre Leader, Tim Gowers

and Andrew G. Thomason,” Riet lists the artillery of tutors with whom he has been fortunate to work at Cambridge. Each one of them has his own famous theories, the study of which not only offers a great systematic overview of mathematics, but also illustrates the thought-world and attitudes of top scientists.

In the more distant future, Riet would like to become a university tutor or undertake mathematical research for a corporation, for example Microsoft. It is incomprehensible why the company has not head-hunted Riet yet.

“Half-jokingly I promised the Archimedes Foundation scholarships board that I would found my own school in Estonia. We will see; there is still some time left,” says Riet.

What about business? “There is not much of a businessman in me,” he admits but adds that perhaps his knowledge will enable him to make some money some day, although that would not be a goal in itself.

“Some famous computer scientists have earned money with patents. Of course, it would be exciting to find a solution to some major problem of mathematics. For example, in 1900 the mathematician David Hilbert established ten mathematical problems and there is a million dollar prize out there for each solution,” says Riet. Currently Riet is not busy trying to solve fundamental mathematical problems. He says that first he has to study in order to understand things at all.

No chance of a Nobel prize

As mathematicians cannot compete for the Nobel prize (because Alfred Nobel hated mathematicians), Riet will not be a laureate of this reputable award in the future. However, he could receive the acclaimed Fields mathematics prize or the Turing computing

prize. “One either has to work very hard in order to be successful or to be the first to notice the usefulness of something,” says Riet, admitting that developments in science are more important to him than fame.

He thinks there are too few people with doctoral degrees in Estonia and more people should think about a career in exact- and natural sciences. As a young person who has travelled the world, he often sees the village-mentality, egoistic world-view and emphasis on the importance of minor things in Estonia. “It is a commonly held view that mathematics, physics and informatics are difficult subjects. Perhaps it does really require more of an effort, but the rewards are also greater. It is no secret that there is a lack of young people educated in maths and physics in Estonia,” says Riet.

The young mathematician would like his future to be in Estonia. For him, interesting work is more important than a concrete salary.

“Work should enable one to live with dignity,” says Riet. “To live with dignity means having food, a place to live and the opportunity to interact with colleagues in any corner of the world.”

Blood sausage and ‘kama’

Riet sometimes offers his foreign colleagues black bread, blood sausage, herring and ‘kama’ (*the traditional Estonian grain and yoghurt based drink –ed.*). He teaches basic maths to students from other disciplines, and after a tiring day of studies he likes to swim, or play badminton or basketball.

He values the experience of meeting people from different cultural backgrounds. “This is how you learn to be tolerant and attentive. For example, if you share an apartment with an Indian who is a Buddhist and a vegetarian, you will not put your sausages or ham

into the same fridge with his food.”

In Memphis, Riet rented a flat together with his Brazilian maths colleague a ten-minute walk from the university. “Usually people drive here. We were also forced to buy a car as without one you cannot even go food shopping.” Of course Riet is not averse to the numerous blues cafes in Memphis.

Who is Ago-Erik Riet?

- Born on 10 July 1984 in Tallinn.
 - Since last autumn, he's undertaken doctoral studies at the University of Memphis, with a scholarship from the Archimedes Foundation.
 - Before going to the US, he studied for a Certificate of Advanced Study in Mathematics at Selwyn College, Cambridge University in the UK, on a Kristjan Jaak Scholarship (*given by the Open Estonia Foundation –ed.*) and Skype scholarship for Masters studies.
- Received his BSc in Mathematics and Informatics from the University of Tartu. Has studied the same subjects at the University of Uppsala, Sweden on scholarships from the G. Thelin and EMT Foundations.
- Attended high school at the Tallinn English College and attended the Tallinn Kuristiku Gymnasium English-biased class in primary and basic school.
 - Speaks 11 languages at different levels: Estonian, English, Swedish, Russian, French, Italian, Spanish, Japanese, Portuguese, German and Finnish.
 - Has worked as a specialist at the cryptography research group at the University of Tartu.
 - Was a consultant for the national distance-learning programming course offered by the Science School of the University of Tartu; lectured in mathematics and informatics and coached gifted students at the same School; helped to organise national mathematics and informatics championships.
 - Attended numbers training programmes, including Integers Conference 2007 in Georgia, USA; Intensive Programme on Information and Communication, Security (IPICS) summer school at Leuven in Belgium; Eurocrypt 2006 conference in St Petersburg, Russia; computing theory days at Koke, Estonia; Estonian Computer Science winter school in Palmse and summer school in Pedase. In addition, he completed mathematics and informatics studies at the Science School in Tartu.

Significant research:

- “Generalized Quasi-random Graphs”, Masters dissertation at the University of Cambridge 2007, tutor Andrew Thomason, 38 pages.
- “Conditional Disclosure of Secrets”, BSc dissertation, the University of Tartu, 2006, tutors Helger Lipmaa and Kalle Kaarli, 31 pages.
- “Testing Primary Numbers”, research, the University of Tartu, Tartu 2005, tutor Ain Isotamm, 36 pages.
- “The Impetus for International Mathematics Competitions”, Tallinn English College, Tallinn 2003, tutor Uve Nummert – Head of the Jury of Estonian Mathematics Championships, 38 pages.

Results from mathematics and informatics championships:

- 2003 bronze at the Baltic Olympics in Informatics (BOI), Tartu
- 2001, 2002 and 2003 first prize at the Estonian national mathematics championships
- 2003 participation in international mathematics championships in Tokyo
- 2002 certificate from international mathematics championships in Glasgow
- 2001 sixth place for the Estonian team at the mathematics competition Baltic Way in Tartu
- 2000 third place for the Estonian team at the mathematics competition Baltic Way in Oslo.

At the end of our two-hour MSN interview, I ask Riet, who has travelled throughout Europe, Turkey, Japan and America, what he misses most while far away from home. “My people”, he says, as there are no other Estonians at the University of Memphis. “And the public transport in Memphis is not really up to scratch either.”

Estonia and Finland - the twins that grew apart, but met again

Text: Anneli Reigas
Photo: EE

When Estonia launched year-long international festivities to celebrate the 90th anniversary of its declaration of independence in February 1918, it was highly symbolic that Finland and the southwestern town of Turku were picked up as the opening venue for a programme of events that will take place in 37 countries across 2008.

The festivities in Turku on February 2 included a history seminar and concerts of beautiful Estonian music, performed by Estonians in Turku Cathedral. Turku had been the capital of Finland until 1812. That year Russia, which had taken over as ruler of Finland from Sweden, moved the capital from largely Swedish-speaking Turku to Helsinki. In 2011 Turku will hold the title of capital again - togeth-

er with the Estonian capital Tallinn, it will share the title of Cultural Capital of Europe.

Divided by the sea, Estonians and Finns share a close-related language and over the centuries have had also strong cultural and economic ties. The two nations have even fought for each other's independence. Thousands of Finns came voluntarily to Estonia to fight for Estonia during the Estonian

independence war in 1918-1920. And thousands of Estonians volunteered for the Finnish army during World War II to fight the Red Army that at the end failed to occupy Finland, but remained in Estonia for almost 50 years thereafter.

Some, like 83-year old Estonian Raul Kuutma who joined Finnish army in 1943 at just 19 years old, believe that Finland managed to remain independent by the end of World War II partly because of Estonians. "The months of heavy fighting by Estonian soldiers against the Red Army at the Estonian-Russian front near the Estonian town of Narva in the spring and summer of 1944 were very exhausting for the Red Army and the Soviets realised they had to reach peace at least with the Finns," he says. "When the Finnish Commander-in-Chief Carl Gustaf Mannerheim became president and agreed a peace treaty with Soviets in

the summer of 1944, the fate of Estonia was decided - Red Army troops from Finnish-Russian battle front were relocated to battle Estonians," adds Kuutma, who is Honorary Chairman of the Union of Estonians who fought in the Finnish army.

During the Soviet era, Estonians had a privileged status in the Soviet empire, which was cut off from most of the globe's news broadcasting - thanks to their similar language, Estonians living in North Estonia, including the capital Tallinn, managed to follow Western news and films via Finnish TV and radio channels that the regime failed to block.

To some extent, the Soviet brainwash ideology even reached Finland. As the decades passed, memories of the horrors of war and the loss of part of Finland's territory in Karelia to Russia became less painful. Trade with the Soviet Union boosted the Finnish economy in the 70s and 80s and for many Finns, especially at the top of the state, the Soviet empire started to seem much less evil than for Estonians, who could not forgive the Soviets' post-war atrocities, including the deportation of tens of thousands of Estonians to Siberia.

Ordinary Finns remained close to Estonians, with many of them visiting their Estonian friends, presenting them often with good Finnish coffee, which, like many other things, was hard to get hold of for many years in the Soviet empire. The strong personal contacts between the two nations also went through some controversial times when Finnish president Mauno Koivisto failed to support the singing revolution - the drive for independence - of Estonians.

When Estonia regained its independence in August 1991, two Finnish Prime Ministers - Esko Aho and Paavo Lipponen - did a lot to help

Estonia through the hard times. Aho decided to provide Estonia with emergency help in the winter of 1992, when Moscow cut off the traditional gas and oil supply, and Lipponen became a strong voice for Estonia at various international meetings, being one of the first statesmen to strongly support Estonian aspirations to join the EU. With such history and ties, it was natural that the 90th anniversary of Finnish independence on December 6, 2007 was celebrated in Estonia more than probably in any other foreign state - with dozens of special events organised in Tallinn and many Estonian counties.

Being the only country in the world that every five years brings together 19,000 singers in one choir under the baton of just one conductor at the national song festival in Tallinn, it is also no wonder that Estonia is celebrating its own independence anniversary this year with concerts in 37 states.

"The strong and long music culture in Estonia is definitely one of the best trademarks of our nation," says Paavo Järvi (45), Estonian conductor who is the chief conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra in the United States, Germany's Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie and is scheduled to become lead conductor of the Orchestre de Paris in 2010. Paavo Järvi - who can without hesitation be called a global cultural ambassador for Estonia - is one of the Estonian conductors who will lead concerts marking Estonia's independence anniversary. Järvi, who emigrated to the United States from Soviet Estonia in 1980 with his parents, is also one of many Estonian musicians who have strong connection to Finland. Järvi often includes Nordic composers in his programme and says the Finnish composer



Valdar Liive and Toomas Tärk who work at the Helsinki mission of Enterprise Estonia regard one of their most important tasks finding new perspectives on both shores of the Gulf of Finland.

Jean Sibelius is one of his favourites. Some Estonian composers like Veljo Tormis in turn have written beautiful music for Finnish lyrics. When the "Estonian music days" festival ended in the spring of 2007, organisers had picked songs in Finnish to end the festival of Estonian music - with the Estonian Philharmonic Choir singing

poetry from the Finnish epic Kalevala for which Tormis had composed great music already during Brezhnev era.

The main Estonian musical event in Helsinki this year - a concert for Estonian friends in Finland - will be arranged on April 14, 2008 at Finlandia House. The Tallinn Chamber Orchestra will be led by Estonian conductor Eri Klas, who himself has worked in Finland for many decades. With culture uniting both nations deeply at the grass-roots level, the economic ties started to boom soon after Estonia regained freedom.

"Finland is the main investor into Estonian industry and trade, 25% of all foreign direct investments made into Estonia are from Finland. There are over 3800 companies in Estonia with Finnish capital - no other country is so heavily involved in the Estonian economy," says Valdar Liive, the head of the Helsinki mission of Enterprise Estonia.

"15 years ago most Finnish investments went to industry - Finns bought up some of the Soviet era industry but also started to build new factories. The biggest Finnish investments have been made into electronic companies like Elcoteq, Efore, Incap, into mechanical engineering industry (Cargotec, Metalliset), telecommunication (Elisa), timber industry (Stora Enso). Finns have also invested a lot into food industry in Estonia. Nowadays Estonia is no longer seen as attractive just for its cheaper labour force and foreign investors invest more to increase productivity. Instead of simple products more sophisticated products are produced. More Finnish investments are made into the IT sector but also into real estate projects and highly valued products design sector in Estonia," Liive adds.

"Finnish investors often turn to our

office in Helsinki to seek advice and first assistance. We try to find them partners and goods they seek, explain the business-making options in Estonia etc. Even though we are very alike by cultural background, some differences should be taken into account. Finns spend much more time and resources to consider and prepare their plans. Estonians in turn - probably because of our historic background - want to act more quickly and are more ready to face all kind of changes. Finnish investors are also keen to find out what kind of resources they can seek from EU structural funds that Estonia can use like other EU states," Liive says.

Enterprise Estonia's mission in Helsinki also collaborates with Invest in Finland and Finpro, organising seminars and business promotion trips. In addition to helping Finnish investors, the mission also assists Estonians looking for trade partners in Finland or seeking to establish their own business in Finland.

"Together with the Estonian Embassy, Estonian Institute, Tuglas Society and Union of Finnish-Estonian friendship societies we have opened a website www.viro90.fi with detailed info about Estonian independence festivities in Finland that we organise together," Liive says.

"For many Finnish companies Estonia is often the first step to enter international markets and also to coordinate the local branches of Finnish companies in other Baltic states, also in Belarus and Ukraine. For many Finnish companies Estonia is the place where from to order and produce goods for the European market," Liive adds.

Finns make also up the biggest share of tourists visiting Estonia. "Nearly 49% of foreign tourists who stay overnight in Estonia come from Finland.

With one-day visitors, over 6 million passengers cross the Gulf of Finland between Helsinki and Tallinn annually. Finns have started to stay longer during their visit and are more eager to visit also other Estonian towns and countryside," says Toomas Tärk who promotes Estonian tourism in Finland and works like Liive at Enterprise Estonia.

"Estonia has changed so rapidly over the last 10-15 years that someone who visited it years ago might have very different opinion about Estonia than someone who has been in Estonia recently. That is why we consider the ongoing marketing of Estonia and Estonia's image in Finland to be very important. As Finns are often very sensitive to customer service level and compare it with Finland it is also our challenge to guide them to restaurants and other places that always offer a good service," Tärk says.

In order to attract even more Finns to visit Estonia, various events are organized. "Estonian days" are being held in seven Finnish towns and will include a cultural programme as well as enterprise and tourism promotion. A bigger Finnish audience will have a chance to see nine TV programmes "Travel in Estonia", commissioned by Enterprise Estonia. Estonia as a tourism destination will be also promoted in Helsinki on May 9-10 at the Estonian days, organised in front of Kamppi trade centre," Tärk adds.

In addition to many ongoing projects, Liive and Tärk are, together with some Estonian-Finnish institutions, promoting a plan to establish an Estonian House in downtown Helsinki in order to provide even better ground for all those seeking to strengthen economic and cultural ties between Estonia and Finland, which for many often seems like a twin-nation already.

...käed räägivad rohkem kui sõnad





Rye bread – the staple of the Estonian diet

Text: Estonian Association of Bakeries
Photos: Andres Teiss, KÖÖK

There is not a single Estonian in the world who does not miss black bread when away from home for a long period of time. Time and again, people say that there may be good food and a better climate abroad but, without black bread, meals are not complete.

For centuries, rye bread has been one of the most important foods for Estonians; it is no coincidence that all other foods, with the exception of porridge, are called *leivakõrvane* (lit. 'side dish of bread' – ed). Rye bread was part of the daily staple diet which accompanied most foods. Its role in a meal became so important that its absence from the table, even when other food was there, was seen to signify extreme poverty and hardship.

In time, bread came to symbolise all food and income. The importance of bread in our ancestors' lives is illustrated by the fact that bread was credited with supernatural qualities and even used in witchcraft. Many beliefs were also linked to bread. One was never allowed to complain about bread, whether it was chaffy or baked of clean rye flour in later days. For almost a thousand years, rye bread has accom-

panied Estonians from cradle to grave. Farmers paid close attention to the growth of rye, as the rye fields gave us our daily bread.

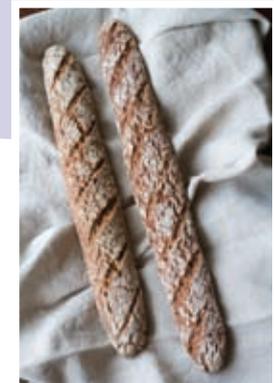
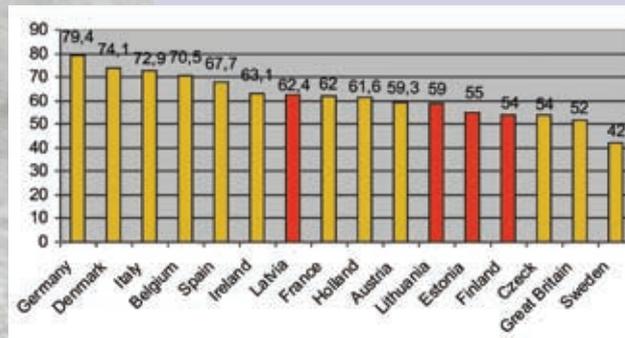
The arrival of bread brought two significant innovations. At first, people had to learn to make the sour or leavened dough needed for the bread and, in this process, the baking oven was developed. Baking bread from leavened dough considerably influenced the development of the oven in the early second millennium. At that time, bread was baked in ordinary stone ovens, with additions to the construction made whenever necessary. The stone oven remained predominant as a baking oven and room oven in the following centuries in Estonia.

In the more distant past, the most common bread grain in the Baltic countries was barley. At first, barley flour was used to bake barley-cakes and later on scones or barley bread. Barley-cakes were tasty when warm, but hard and crumbly when cold and became bitter when leavened.

Rye bread replaced barley bread relatively late in Estonia, most likely at the beginning of the second millennium, when rye cultivation started to develop. Since then Estonian bread has been black bread – rye bread. Rye turned out to be the most persistent and stable grain for the local climate, and therefore rye cultivation increased from the 11th century onwards. It is no wonder that rye became the main grain culture and bread grain in Estonia in the centuries that followed.

Due to the broad spread of rye cultivation, leavened rye bread became more common in the daily diet. This was also

Bread consumption in Europe (kg / person / annual)



one of the first innovations in using the grain. Leavened rye bread spread mainly in Northern Europe during the time of the Vikings. This bread remained strange to continental Germanic peoples at first, only spreading amongst the rural folk in the 12th–15th centuries. Also the Mediterranean peoples – the Greeks and the Romans – did not know bread made of sour dough. Leavened rye bread, which is baked as a large loaf from porous dough, is eaten by Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, eastern Finns, Carelians and other small Finno-Ugric peoples, Russians, Byelorussians and northern Ukrainians.

Although the words “bread” and “dough” existed in Uralic languages even before the introduction of the Anno Domini dating system, “bread” came to mean bread made of leavened dough only at the end of prehistoric times, when the predominant grain culture became winter rye. It is probably not a coincidence that, at the same time, the quern was introduced as a new tool, and was mostly used to mill bread flour.

For most of the Finno-Ugric peoples and the Slavs, the word “bread” has common roots. Linguists consider the Estonian word “leib”, the Finnish “leipä”, Carelian “leibä”, Vepsan “leib”, Livonian “lēbā”, and Votic “leipā” to be Germanic loans. The word was also lent to Slavic languages (Russian “хлеб”, Polish “chleb”). The Lithuanian “kliepas” and Latvian “klaipe” are considered to belong to the same word group. Even in Baltic German, a loaf of bread is “Klaipe” (Brotlaib).

In the course of centuries, sour rye bread became the staple

diet of peasants. It was baked in the threshing barn oven to last for several weeks. To continue the old tradition, barley-cakes were also baked in the mouth of a heated oven.

It is interesting that, in comparison to other foods, Estonians never tire of bread. It is especially tasty when one has spent a longer period of time away from home. Bread is such a staple part of our daily diet that we cannot really imagine going without it.

Rye bread has fed Estonians for ten centuries; therefore it truly deserves to be called our national food. Yet often when we talk of national food, we unjustifiably forget rye bread.

Bread has been known for a very long time. The ancient Egyptian art of bread-making was copied by the Hebrews, then by the Greeks and about 170 BC by the Romans. From there it spread elsewhere into Europe. Either barley or wheat flour was used for baking. It was only after the “large population migration” (in the 4th-7th centuries AD) that rye flour was introduced. Rye bread became the most widespread type of bread until the 18th century.

Then, however, many great nations began to prefer white bread. From the 9th century onwards, bread-making became a profession in medieval European towns. Bakers’ guilds were born. On Estonian dining tables, barley bread was probably replaced by rye bread at the beginning of the second millennium. Under the rule of foreign invaders, Estonians had to eat chaffy bread but, from the beginning of the 19th century, proper rye bread became common. Water mills were built beginning in the 13th century and windmills from the 12th–13th centuries onwards.

For centuries, baking bread involved difficult manual labour. The first mechanised bread baking factories were created only in the middle of the 19th century. Rye was grown in Estonian fields; wheat was imported from Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan.

Leibur – 245 years of baking tradition and experience

Bread production in Estonia has its own history, which has coincided with the history of the whole nation. There are similar trends in the development of all branches of production. Hence, we will talk about different eras in order to give an overview of how bread-making developed in Tallinn.



In the chronicles, the Tallinn bakers were first mentioned in 1312, in connection with the development of guilds. Over time, there have been very many bread-shops and bakeries in Tallinn. Three of them - Julius Valentin Jaeksch's bakery, the Rotermann bakery and bread factory no 2 - can be directly linked to the development of today's "Leibur". The merging process of the enterprises was complicated. Through centuries they have merged, some units have been liquidated and then restarted, and names have been changed – therefore the history of this industry is long and complex. Many bakeries played their own role in the development of "Leibur".

The beginning of "Leibur" can be dated back to 2 November 1762 – a date which is also considered to mark the beginning of industrial bread production in Estonia.

Bakery-shop in the Old Town

On 2 November 1762, a new citizen of Tallinn, the baker Julius Valentin Jaeksch, purchased a plot of land with a two-floor building on the corner of Lai and Vaimu Streets

in the Tallinn Old Town and founded a bakery there. The newspaper advertisements from back then show that the baker baked rye bread and simple white bread. The above date is considered to be the birth-date of industrial bread-making in Estonia.

In 1881, this bakery acquired steam-operated equipment and in 1914, in a second baking unit in Tallinn, production was based on electricity. For decades, the bakery produced rye bread, wheat bread and pastries. There was also a cafe on the site for years.

In 1912, a bread factory was founded in the Rotermann quarter (Hobujaama 1), which meant the second coming of the Dethloff bread factory, which was bought in 1886. The population of Tallinn was growing very rapidly. In 1897 the population of Tallinn was 58,810 and in 1911 it had grown to 96,219. Urbanisation was intense and this, in turn, was the impetus for the founding of a new bread factory. The city government acquired the Rotermann Bread Factory in August 1919 and renamed it the City Bread Factory.

In 1940, there was increasing talk of large bread-production

factories. In this way, it was hoped to merge all the smaller bakeries (or baking units). In 1976, the company was renamed “Leibur”. In 1991, the state common stock company “Leibur” was founded. The company was privatised in 1993, when the food conglomerate Cultor and Cerealia group became the new owners of “Leibur”. Since 1998, “Leibur” has been owned by the Finnish Vaasan & Vaasan group, which also owns the biggest Latvian baking company “Hanzas Maiznicas” and Lithuania’s biggest baking company “Vilniaus Duona”.

Today “Leibur” is not only the leading and oldest bakery industry in Estonia, but also the oldest in the Baltic States and most probably in the whole Nordic region. “Leibur” is carrying on and developing the Estonian bread traditions, by linking centuries of experience with modern skills and technology. The result is bread which has long been familiar to consumers, but also innovative products which lead the market and consumer habits.



Estonia's biggest bakery, “Leibur”, introduced crust-bread type Rukkipala to Estonian consumers five years ago. Today Rukkipala is the top-selling crust bread in Estonia.



German type fine rye breads tend to have a sweeter taste than other breads. “Leibur’s” Tallinna Peenleib is the best-selling bread in Estonia.

Fazer — 117 years of taste sensations

Fazer

Young apprentice

The story of Fazer begins with a little boy, Karl, born in Finland to Swiss parents. Much to his father’s dismay, Karl wanted to become a confectioner. St. Petersburg was the best training location for the young confectioner-to-be, so Karl trained at the G. Berrin’s confectionery in St. Petersburg and later went to work in Berlin and Paris.

The first outlet opens in 1891

At the age of 25, Karl returned to Helsinki. He opened his

French-Russian café in Helsinki on 17 September 1891, combining a confectionery and a 30-seat café, separated by a velvet curtain.

The family business really took off when Karl started manufacturing chocolate in 1894 and the company moved to bigger facilities. A few years later, the company had grown in size and stature, selling marmalade and chocolates to Scandinavia, Germany, Belgium, Holland and England, and even to America, Africa and Australia. Karl Fazer also paid great attention to packaging and hired well-known

artists such as Akseli Gallen-Kallela to meet his high standards.

In 1924, Fazer started manufacturing biscuits and moved its operations to Vantaa. By 1967, Fazer's facilities were four times the size of the Finnish Parliament House.

Fazer Bakeries

Finnish wholemeal rye bread became an important part of the company's bakery operations in 1958, when Fazer acquired the Oululainen bakery. The most successful products were traditional rustic rye bread and rye crisp, which still are among the best-known and best-selling brands. In 1966, Fazer was the first to launch toast bread on the Finnish bread market. This was a savvy move, as toasters made a desired wedding gift for young couples at the time.

Leader in the bakery industry

Finland's rich bread culture and Fazer's technology and know-how have also been transferred to other markets. The company runs bakeries in Sweden, Russia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and exports to almost 20 countries. In St. Petersburg, Fazer is the market leader in the bread industry – which is fitting, considering that it was in this city that Karl Fazer's career began.

Fazer in Estonia

Fazer Estonia was established in 1993 and employs 370 people. In 2007, they produced 9,700 tons of bakery products. Today Fazer Estonia produces around 40 different product lines, of which the most popular are Kodusai (white loaf bread), Pööripäeva (dark bread with seeds), Rännumees (the oldest Estonian portion bread) and Must leib (black bread). Recently Fazer's black bread was also voted as the best Estonian product by the consumers of Selver, one of the biggest retail stores in Estonia.

In addition, Fazer Estonia is famous for their on-the-spot freshly baked products in 42 baking sites across Estonia. The assortment includes over 100 products.

Despite dramatic growth over a century, the formula used in the first Karl Fazer café still guides us. The Fazer values – passionate concern for the customer, excellent quality and team spirit – are still as valid today as they were a hundred years ago.



Fazer's Black bread was recently voted as the best Estonian product by the consumers of Selver, one of the biggest retail stores in Estonia.

The rejuvenated look of Fazer's Rännumees, the oldest Estonian portion bread.



Fazer



Fazer's Black bread



The 90th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia in exhibition halls

To mark the 90th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia many museums in parishes, counties and towns all over the country are taking a look at the various sides of the life, lifestyle and character of Estonian people. Excursions into the past increase our understanding of how the past is related to today's society and help us become more open to a better and more harmonious future.

This issue focuses on two exhibits – “The Will to be Free”, an exhibition at the Estonian History Museum in Maarjamäe Castle, which concentrates on the Estonians' desire for self-determination, and “Freedom Square”, the annual Artists' Association exhibition at the Tallinn Art Hall. The latter exhibition is not part of the official state anniversary programme but as many artists bring out a deep relationship to statehood, we decided to introduce it in this context.



The Will to be Free. 90 years of the Republic of Estonia

Text: Mariann Raisma
Photos: the Estonian History Museum

How do you write the history of a country? Should one talk about the state or the people, about rupturing events or lasting ideas? Estonian history has undergone an incredible number of drastic changes in the twentieth century, the key concepts being independence, shaping the identity of the Estonian nation and state, and attempts to destroy it, maintain it and recreate it. During this short period of time Estonia and her people have had to experience extremely dramatic upheavals.



The aim of the History Museum was to celebrate the anniversary of the Republic by creating an overview of the most important century – the century of freedom – in the history of the Estonian state. Indeed, Estonians had dreamt about self-determination for centuries, but only the twentieth century can truly be called our century of freedom. If the conditions are favourable, the desire for self-determination can move mountains and change the map of the world. In this way, a number of new states were born out of the ruins of the war-ravaged Russian empire, among them, on 24 February 1918, the Republic of Estonia.

This display recounts the story of the creation and endurance of the state and of the people who live here. More specifically, the exhibition tells the story of the freedom of Estonia and Estonians – about inner and outer, spiritual and material freedom, because this is the basis of the strength and vitality of the individual and the country.

The exhibition is organised around four themes – rule and government, the good life, strength of spirit, and struggle and resistance. These four themes reveal the desire for self-determination of the Estonian people – whether through creating the state and power structures, dreaming of an ever better life, maintaining the strength of the spirit, or sustaining resistance to existing authority and rule.

Through their life-stories and the items which have

belonged to them, the exhibition also reveals the vibrant people who have displayed the desire for self-determination. Certainly one of the rarities at the display is the engraved goblet which belonged to the first President of the Republic of Estonia, Konstantin Päts. The chess-board inside which Lithuanians smuggled Konstantin Päts's letters out of prison is an even more exceptional item at the exhibit.

There are perhaps too many topics touched upon at the exhibition. But all these pieces reveal the desire for self-determination of Estonia and Estonians. An example of this is the Estonian language – nobody doubts the vitality of the Estonian language today, but it became a language of science and culture only in the first decades of the twentieth century. The strength of spirit is more broadly contained in the strength of culture, and the strongest symbols of that are perhaps language and music. The Estonian language and the tradition of song festivals have an important place at the exhibition. An interesting, and not very widely known, example of the desire for self-determination is shown in the 'Estonianisation' campaigns of the 1930s, which tried to depict a modern Estonian, changing people's names into Estonian names and valuing the Estonian household and the national flag.

The fight for freedom has spurred Estonians to participate in great wars. Undoubtedly the War of Independence,



which laid the foundations for Estonia's independence, was one of the most significant expressions of the desire for self-determination. In WWII, where Estonia was caught between two bad choices, the belief in the restoration of a free Estonian state did not disappear. The memories of resistance to Soviet rule live on in the stories of the Forest Brothers. Throughout the Soviet period, there was resistance in different forms. But the brightest symbol of resistance was the unique, all-uniting power of the Singing Revolution at the end of the 1980s, as a result of which the Republic of Estonia was restored on 20 August 1991.

How much the understanding of the good life has changed during the twentieth century! At the beginning of the century, the rural folk could not even dream of the changes which happened in just a couple of decades in the life of contemporary Estonians – home appliances working on electricity, new means of communication, tourism etc. Another good example of “the good life” is the notion of “deficit” during Soviet times, which ended with the decline of the economy in the late 1980s, when inflation operated in days, not weeks. Most Estonians still remember the food coupons which were part of our everyday life just two decades ago and which are now on display at the museum. In addition to history, we need to ask people today what our state means to us. Everybody can answer that question, but the exhibition also illustrates the opinion of young people today – what they think about the state and its purpose.

What is your own contribution to the creation of freedom? We can only be ourselves when we are free – in Estonia, in Europe, in the world and in ourselves. The exhibition can be considered a success if it makes you think about these questions. For it is the desire for self-determination which carries and inspires us.

**“The Will to Be Free.
90 years of the
Republic of Estonia”
Estonian History Museum,
Maarjamäe Palace.**

The exhibition is arranged into four topics, which open the different levels of self-being – “Power and government”, “Spiritual power”, “Fighting and resistance” and “Good life”. Besides plentiful photo displays one can see unique items and historical materials. Rare movies, audio-visual programmes and interactive details should open the past to all friends of history.

*The display will be open until 2010.
The exhibition is in Estonian, English and Russian.
Museum is open Wed-Sun 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.*

Freedom for what -freedom from what?

Annual Artist's Association exhibition at the Tallinn Art Hall

Text: Joosep Mihkelson
Photos: Jaanus Heinla, the Tallinn Art Hall, Scanpix



Exhibition view (foreground – Krista Leesi „Our trade mark/stamp“, middle distance – Signe Kivi „Costume“, background Simm Tanel Annus „Manifesto“ – „...like red carpet before the queen of the ball“

Against such a background, the idea of staging an exhibition called „Vabaduse Välgak“ (Freedom Square) in the Tallinn Art Hall overlooking Freedom Square itself seemed inspired. But as the annual show for members of the Estonian Artist's Association, the question of intent was left, lingering – is this just another survey show from

The timing was perfect. The Estonian art community had just recovered from the excitement of the 14th Tallinn Print Triennial Political/Poetical, debate was raging and continues to rage about a controversial monument to commemorate the Estonian War of Independence, the republic was about to celebrate its 90th anniversary and, if that was not enough, there was also just a hint of apprehension as we approached the first anniversary of the violent politically motivated riots now known as the Pronksiöö (Bronze Night), when mostly Russian-speaking youths ransacked the city in protest over the government's decision to remove a bronze monument to the Soviet “liberation” of Tallinn.

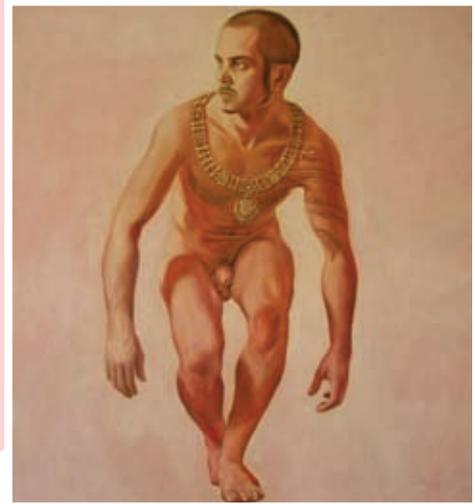
the artists association or a carefully phrased curatorial statement? The artists association has traditionally been the hub of the local art scene and its annual exhibitions have a certain reputation, attracting a broader audience than most of the shows staged here. These days, in spite of the fact that its counterparts abroad are mostly viewed as the musty bastions of conservatism, never venturing much further than tasteful exercises in modernism, the Estonian Artists Association still manages to keep some of its many and varied feet in the world of the here and now.

As you ascend the stairs into the exhibition, the first thing that confronts you is a large conceptual piece by Raul Meel. Red texts on a blue ground express a simultaneously clear and ambiguous message about the artist's hopes for the ultimate values of the Estonian republic. As you rise further up the stairs and turn to see the rest of the work, smaller framed pieces using the same blue ground and repetitious red texts create a kind of capitalist or liberal mantra for a Western ideal. The large wall in front of you as you reach the top of the stairs is decorated ceremoniously in the blue, black and



Tiina Sarapu, „Blue, black and white ceiling“ – like a cathedral window behind the altar.

Rauno Thomas Moss, „Reliberation“ – descending into a squat or rising to meet his maker?



white of the Estonian flag, and placed strategically on this tri-colour, like a badge of honour, we find a painting by a virtually unknown young artist from Tartu, Rauno Thomas Moss. The work, „Reliberation“, presents a nude male in his early twenties in a strange semi-crouching position. Is he descending into a squat (to empty his bowels) or rising to stand (before his maker)? Then we notice the ceremonial chain of the first president of Estonia, Konstantin Päts, hanging pendulously over his naked chest. The actual chain is a cultural relic that to this day remains in the hands of the Russian authorities in Moscow despite Estonia’s repeated requests for its return. The positioning of the work

also refers back to the Soviet era, when a sculpture of comrade Lenin always stood on that very spot with a wreath of flowers arranged in a similarly ceremonial fashion.

Then, as you turn to enter the main hall at the rear of the gallery, what greets you is a careful arrangement of sculptural elements and columns reminiscent of a chapel of worship. The centre piece – as if the bride before the altar – the „Eesti“ dress by Signe Kivi with Krista Leesi’s plush black and white rug based on a pre-soviet postage stamp, like the red carpet before the queen of the ball. A fitting reference to the fact that Signe Kivi wore this very dress to the presidential reception some years earlier when she was minister of culture. By now you have the impression that this is an exhibition of „views“, of carefully placed pieces and strategic gestures. And while this is true – there is, in fact, a sense of drama and staged-ness – this does not last, since after entering each of its rooms one comes away with a clearer picture that this exhibition is actually rather mixed.

When asked, Heie Treier, the curator of the show, conceded that the show is a compromise. „In some ways, I can’t even say that I am the curator in the strictest sense, since the show is both automatic and curated – automatic in

the sense that the participants are simply drawn from among our members, but also curated in the sense that there was a theme and a title to work with, and this theme or departure point was actually taken from an exhibition called „Freedom of Choice“ that I organised exactly ten years ago with Anu Liivak.“

So it is not surprising that the show includes such disparate works as Mare Tralla’s provocative and slightly unsettling cyber-feminist video piece „Unforgettable Hits“ as well as the ultra traditional post-Impressionist view of Freedom Square by Adamson Eric from 1936 (part of another set view involving two contemporary pieces beside the actual view over the square itself). But once you notice these seemingly irreconcilable elements it seems that comparison and contrast appear everywhere – the delicious painterly works by current students of the Tartu school (Eda Lõhmus, Meiu Münt, Maris Palgi and Veikko Klemmer) and the striking neo-formalist paintings by their teacher Jaan Elken pitted against the cool precision and detachedness of painters such as Maarit Murka from Tallinn. Another polarisation can be seen when we look at the placement of the cynical and even sardonic humour of the sculptures in the front room – „Pendulum of Freedom“ by Jaak Soans

Ilmar Kruusamäe, „My own footsteps in front of me...every day“ – a portrait of Tõnis Mägi, one of the leading voices in the singing revolution.



and „Free Listener“ by Erki Kasemets – against the defiance of Signe Kivi’s dress in the back room.

Liina Siib’s documentary video brings us back to the events that form the background to this year’s show. It seems that since her studio upstairs looks out over Freedom Square, she had a front row seat on those awful nights in April 2007, and so armed with her handi-cam; a video document was the obvious response to what she saw unfolding below her. But was it as she began editing the material or was it as she was shooting the original footage that she saw the similarity between what she was doing and what Adamson Eric had done with his pointillist daubs in the first republic between the wars? She was clearly aware of his work, since it had been hanging in Kumu since it opened in 2004. And she wasn’t the only one – Malle Nukke was also inspired to create a work in response to the same piece from more than seventy years earlier. So when Heie Treier suggested actually including this historical reference „...they both agreed to putting their works next to Adamson-Eric...” and the result – realist reportage by Siib and a kind of neo pop collage by Nukke as interpretations and comments on where we have arrived both in terms of social and political stability as well as artistic intent.

In response to the controversy over the monument to the War of Independence, Heie Treier considered whether the exhibition should somehow contribute specifically to the debate, so strongly does she feel that the monument is a mistake. But in the end she decided against this because, „...I didn’t want the artists to feel they were being drawn into this thing against their will.” As with other similar conflicts in recent years the main camps are represented (so it seems) by the arts com-

munity on the one hand and Tallinn City Government on the other – a polarity that is often expressed in terms of culture versus business. Since the monument is destined to be installed in Freedom Square, it seemed reasonable to expect someone in the show to rise to the fore and use this opportunity to present the art community’s position through an intelligent and eloquent gesture – a sign of some kind that the Estonian public would recognise and that would bring everyone to their senses. But such a singular statement is conspicuous by its absence.

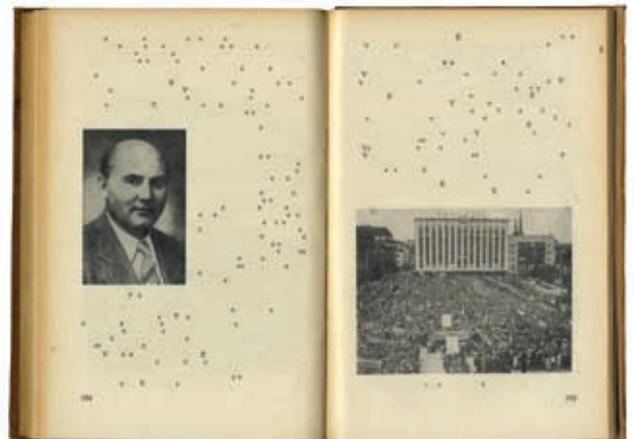
„Vabaduse Väljak“ is indeed a compromise, but the buzz of energy on opening night and the surprisingly constant stream of visitors of all ages are a testament that this show has managed such a compromise. It was never going to be a watershed landmark exhibition like some kind of Baltic *wild beast*, since it needed to fulfil too many roles. Nevertheless, it manages to engage with the issues of the day as well as deal intelligently with some ghosts from the distant and not too distant past. I am particularly thinking here of works like Siim Tanel Annus’ large formalist “Manifesto” based on the recently unearthed original text for the Estonian Constitution, Ilmar Kruusamäe’s hyper-real portrait of Tõnis Mägi, a key figure from the *sing-*



Malle Nukke, „Still-life with Freedom Square“ – like a modern pop assemblage commenting on our consumerist heaven.

ing revolution of the 80s and also Ulvi Haagensen’s excerpts from a handbook on “How to be free”, based on photographs taken by her father’s family as they escaped through Germany to the uncertainty of the “free” West after the war. But perhaps, the crowning piece is one that is hidden away at the back of the main hall – Eve Kask’s sensitive and deeply personal conceptual piece „EV“. In its simplicity and modesty it manages to gather together so much of the poetry of our current social and political situation through its introspective and otherwise self-referential sideways glance at Estonia’s history. Worth the effort, this piece will reward the persistent visitor – making you smile and laugh and cry.

Eve Kask, “EV” (detail) – from a Soviet encyclopaedia showing rallies „celebrating“ the communist liberation of Estonia.



PORTFOLIO

EN FACE AND PROFILE

In the festive atmosphere of anniversaries, it is always appropriate to glance backwards, to create a retrospective in order to relate better to the present day. The little roadmap we are seeking could reach us through national portrait painting. Can it help us sense the passing of time, and separate holidays from working days and performances from genuine confessions?

Without a doubt the most captivating, intimate and deepest part of the portrait genre is the self-portrait. Spellbound by a purely personal vision, the creator flirts with characteristic techniques of form inside his or her own image of the whole. We learn about the social nerve of the author and about the aesthetics of the era. Appearance, attire, atmosphere, colour, composition and style – all of these blend into a convincing image through the means available to the art of painting.

The above is also valid in situations where the artist decides to depict a colleague, also a painter, whose attitudes and inner life he presumably knows well. Perhaps it is even more complex, as the choice between en face or profile, semi- or full figure is merely a generalisation. The masterpiece in its genuineness, uniqueness and tension should enchant: this is the holy goal of every sensitive creator.

Inevitably, the development of Estonian national portraiture in general has been helped by the influence of Baltic-German masters. A strong role has been played by the French and West-European schools, as well as by the Estonians who studied in Düsseldorf and at the St Petersburg Academy of Art. Due to our rural roots and the young age of our state, our painting tradition is distinguishably “home-made”, rich in colour and diverse in content. We can also be proud that we perceive the role of the artist in society. Our story of independence shows that, in shaping a well-functioning civil society, creative types have time and again stepped onto the stage at critical moments and shown us spiritual light on the winding road of self-determination.

In order to accompany this hopefully interesting and thought-provoking collection of pictures, it is apt to quote the grand old man of Estonian theatre Voldemar Panso, who in his memoirs *Portraits in me and around me* (1974) says, “How many of us are there then? How many of them were there in ancient Athens? Every hundredth man is in an encyclopaedia. More important than the number of men is the choice of men, their spirit, culture and common feeling.”

PORTFOLIO



NIKOLAI TRIIK.

Portrait of the artist Ants Laikmaa. 1913.

Oil on canvas. 110 x 85. The Art Museum of Estonia

PORTFOLIO



JAAN VAHTRA.

Self-portrait. 1923.

Oil on canvas. 102 x 72. The Art Museum of Estonia

PORTFOLIO



JUHANI MUKS.

Portrait of Eduard Viiralt. 1925.

Oil on canvas. 96.6 x73. The Art Museum of Estonia

PORTFOLIO



EERIK HAAMER.
Self-portrait. 1988.
Oil on canvas. Private collection.

PORTFOLIO



EVALD OKAS.

Portrait of Jüri Okas. 1974.

Oil on canvas. 195 x 130. The Art Museum of Estonia

PORTFOLIO



TIIT PÄÄSUKE.

Portrait of Aili Vint. 1981.

Oil on canvas. 114 x 146. The Art Museum of Estonia

PORTFOLIO



ENN PÕLDROOS.

Self-portrait with a jester's hat. 1983.

Oil on canvas. 90 x 80. The Art Museum of Estonia

PORTFOLIO



JÜRI ARRAK.

Conversation of self-portraits. 1977.

Oil on canvas. 144 x 180. The Estonian Art Fund

Chin down, nose up or face cut in half

Text: Enriko Talvistu,
art historian

Photos: Stanislav Stepashko,
the Art Museum of Estonia

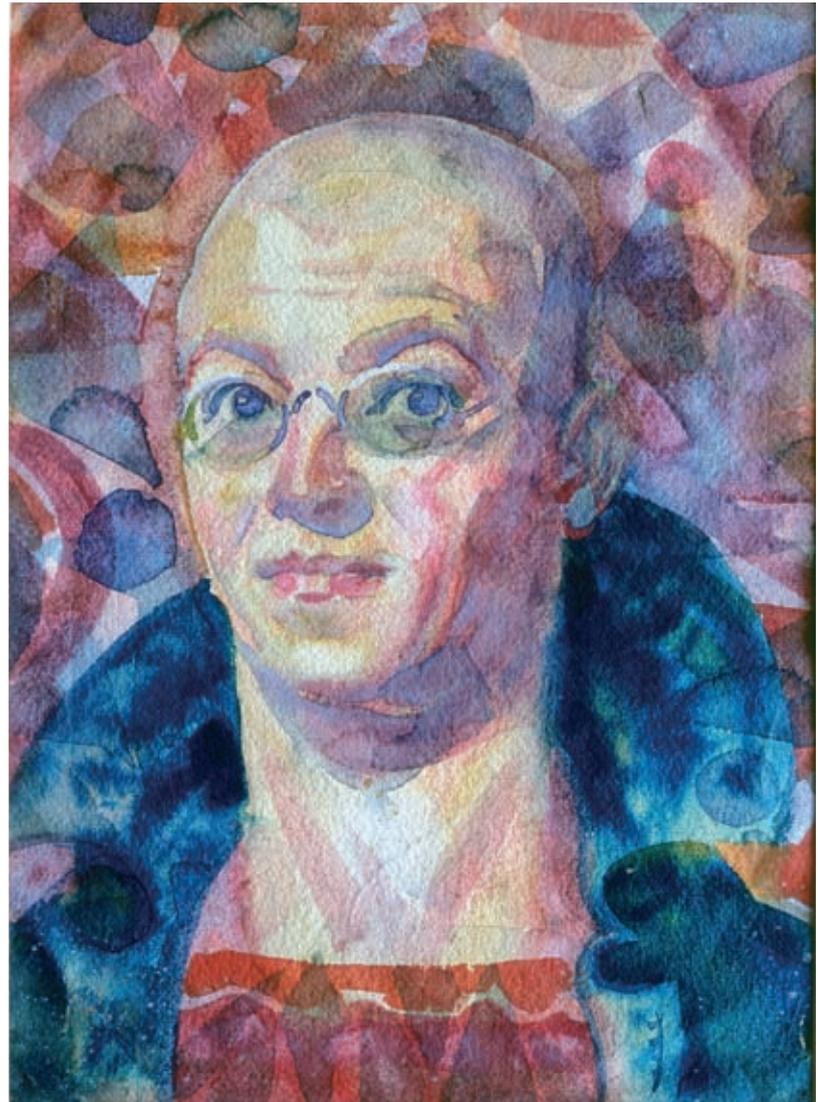
Throughout time, portraits have formed a substantial part of art exhibitions. This has been true until recent times. In earlier days, the importance of portraits could be partially attributed to the absence of photography but, even in more modern times, portraits have played an important role at more traditional art exhibitions.

This is also true of Estonian art. Take for example Jaan Toomik's video of Peeter Mudist, which represented Estonia three years ago at a curated exhibition at the Venice Biennale. What else was this interview if not a portrait?

In itself, showcasing portraits which haven't been made to order equals financial suicide for contemporary artists, or they just fill the gaps at exhibitions. Who else would buy portraits besides the person depicted or museum collections? The latter may pay generously but they set quite specific demands in terms of the artistic maturity of the piece and the person portrayed and, thereby, also of the relationship between the person portrayed and the artist, hence serving as a cultural historical symbol in the subsequent presentation of the collection.

I myself own a twenty-five-year-old portrait of the well-known Estonian poet Hando Runnel by Andrus Kasemaa. I cannot say that it is one of my favourite pieces of art

Eduard Wiiralt. Self-portrait. 1920. Water colour.
The Art Museum of Estonia.



at home, even though I know both of those people well. Rather, it is an investment and a bow to our cultural story as a whole.

At the same time, museums make a safe bet when they acquire portraits, as they become some of the most interesting works in later expositions, both for the curator and the audience. I am not here referring to literature museums, which have various images of writers in their storage, or music museums with their numerous portraits of composers and performers. I am specifically referring to art museums, where portraits are increasingly important as works giving an overview of a bygone era in comparison to paintings of flower arrangements or landscapes, especially the further back the era happens to be. It is enough to recall any museum exhibition from the Christian world to illustrate the point.

There is one interesting factor where personal exhibitions of artists are concerned. Namely, as humans acquire 70% of their sense of the world through the sense of sight, it is obligatory to see, in addition to the works of art at an exhibition, what the artist who created those works looks like. This may just be in the form of a passport photo. Artists listen to my long experience as an observer and curator – the visitor's relationship to the exhibits becomes much more concrete and memorable if they see the creator. Many artists don't provide photographs of themselves, as they are too modest or, even worse, too famous. Such an approach is not right.

Indeed, it is a bit boring to see numerous portraits of made-up customers and rulers at medieval and contemporary art exhibitions. Most merchants from the Netherlands are more interesting in terms of human type and fine lace, hence more of an illustration of the history of fashion. Their names

are only remembered because they are connected with that artist and posed for him. Who would remember the Duchess of Alba without Francisco de Goya? History has a somewhat different relationship with state rulers. There are many grand names among them, but also those who tend to merely highlight the name of a specific artist. Let us recall Diego Velázquez, a well-known Spanish artist. Most people don't recall the little princess being dressed up for her birthday, but they do know that the artist depicted himself painting the picture.

So why did artists in the 19th century start to portray other artists, writers, actors and composers, in addition to self-portraits? This is a much more exciting question. It reflects the values of the time, which artists played a role in shaping. The artist's ego arises. No longer is he a substitute for the camera

or just someone messing with paints. He forms part of the social block with the bohemian intelligentsia who increasingly shape public opinion. He cares about the opinions of those he portrays. Those are interesting people to portray, as there is something to talk about during the painting process; the nature of the person portrayed opens and the end result is lively and discursive.

Another reason is the concentration of the modern art story into streams, groupings and friendship communities which continually negate or modernise each other. There are hundreds of well-known group portraits where writers, artists, musicians and architects pose together in front of the camera as citizen groups which possess a certain self-assurance and mentality and consider themselves to be public opinion leaders.



Adamson-Eric. *Self-portrait II (with a sling)*. 1929. Oil on canvas. The Art Museum of Estonia.

In Estonia in the first decades of the 20th century and even in the 1960s-70s, various leaders in creative fields together were pulling the same cart. It is interesting that, in times of societal historical or political crises, they find each other. In other times, they are more alienated from each other or even fighting. There are several contemporary examples of such co-operation and acts of drawing attention to social problems.

The artist as a creator of the portrait first and foremost believes in himself. This character is the most familiar to him and he thus depicts it most often, most honestly and realistically. This is true of art beginning with Johann Köler, Elmar Kits, Evald Okas and Ülo Sooster and continuing up to Jaan Toomik and Kaido Ole.

From the viewpoint of a realist, the reason why artists tend to have stuck-up noses in self-portraits is because they are facing a mirror at a certain angle

which is being supported by a window or some item of furniture in front of them, with the exception of photo realism, such as Ilmar Kruusamäe's large format face images which try to copy a photograph as accurately as possible without wasting time posing. Of course the stuck-up noses in self-portraits also reflect a sense of self-esteem.

On the other hand, other artists visit the studio and such visits are mostly not just a continuation of a party. The visiting artist sits there and studies the

most recent paintings arranged on the floor, chin down in thought - whether it be Konrad Mägi being painted by the suffering Nikolai Triik, the entire art council of the Union of Artists

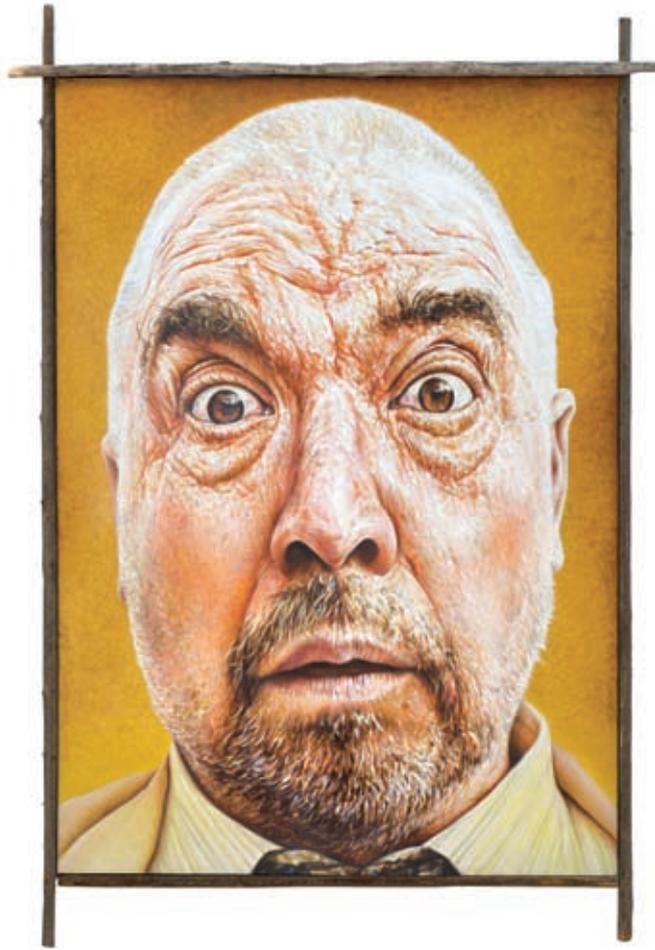
other among the crowd greeting the 'liberation army' of Soviet soldiers, a scene which adorns the ceiling of the Estonia Opera Theatre.

It makes no sense, nor is it possible, to judge artists earning their daily bread on the basis of who they paint, for what money and when. It is, after all, their everyday work. At the same time, we cannot help but feel a certain respect for those artists whose incomes suffered, but who remained true to their ethical values in their creations or in whom they portrayed. This is just a dry comparison of an art critic, which creates internal evaluations but does not justify more general comparisons.

Fortunately, on the wall above my computer, I am watched by a graphic self-portrait of one of the grand old men of Estonian art, the artist, critic and publicist Märt Laarman, from a time which was very difficult for him – the year 1959.

This solemn bald head in the wood engraving is half in the light and half in shadow – with the face split in two. Being split in two is one of the paradoxes of artists as artisans. By showing yourself you are naked, and at the same time you would like to remain in shadow, as much as your honesty allows.

In order to understand different eras in one or another culture of art, one of the most valuable materials for viewers is a self-portrait or portrait of a friend or comrade, regardless of how distant that person might seem at first.



Ilmar Kruusamäe. Old Man (Portrait of Andrus Kasemaa). 2000/2001. Oil on canvas. The Art Museum of Estonia.

analysing the works of Elmar Kits, or the colourist Enn Põldroos behind the easel of another contemporary grand old man, Olev Subbi.

Most experts are able to view such portraits in terms of the triangular relationship between the artist, the person portrayed and the time of the creation. Who, why and when? The artist has a certain intention each time a work of art is created. Evald Okas painted a hundred artists in a parade portrait of the Union of Artists. Okas, Kits and Richard Sagrits painted each

Birgit Õigemeel creates beauty when she sings



Text: Laura Sinijärv
Photos: Kalle Veesaar, TV3

Like a comet, one gentle-voiced beautiful girl who resembles Snow White has shot up to our music heaven. Just a year ago, the general public knew nothing about Birgit Õigemeel, but today we can hear her on every radio station and see her performing on stage. Last year, the Estonian audience kept their fingers crossed for Birgit during the Estonian version of “Pop Idol” (Estonia Seeks A Superstar – ed). The winner surprised the judges and television audiences all over Estonia with her powerful singing. This spring, Estonia is looking for its next superstar. Although Birgit thinks that perhaps the search for a new superstar is coming a bit too soon—Estonia is so small after all—she keeps her fingers crossed for the new winner. “This time the Superstar could be a young man,” she says.

At the moment, Birgit is not studying, as she is unsure of which direction to go in. The show began in February and ended in spring, at the same time that Birgit was graduating from school. “I couldn’t even think about what to do next. After I won the show, there were so many offers that I didn’t have time to go anywhere. Now I can see that it wouldn’t have worked anyway! But everything I do in the future will be connected with music. When my music career comes to an end, I would like to become a singing teacher,” she says. The stardom and glory which Birgit experiences have not made her behave like a star in the negative sense of the word. Rather, the singer, who released her debut album at the beginning of the year, gives all she’s got to music and allows the audience closer to her activities and thoughts.

How did you come to be on “Pop Idol”?

It was thanks to my older sister, who saw the commercial

and said I should try. As I had just finished the G. Ots music school in pop-jazz singing and I had sung for years at a music studio and had been closely involved in singing and music all my life, I thought I was ready to try.

What were your impressions on the first day?

I went to the first round together with my girlfriends. When I saw the masses of people there – all queuing, practising, singing – I got quite frightened. I was pretty self-critical back then and I didn’t like reality show type things. But because I hadn’t participated in the Estonian TV competition for young singers two years earlier, as I had considered myself to be too young, this was my chance.

How did you handle the critical comments from the judges?

The judges didn’t hold anything back. Everybody got some bad comments and everybody was nervous. I thought the jury wouldn’t like me and that everybody else was better than me. I didn’t have any self-confidence. When I was selected among

the top 30, I began to believe that there had to be something in me and I started to make an effort to win.

What do you remember from the finale?

I remember that I didn’t eat anything all day, as I was too nervous. There was also some mix-up with costumes or shoes or something. I was not satisfied with myself at all and I felt really bad after my performance. Looking back, those seem like good times, although Luisa and I didn’t become girlfriends. We are competitors and we are constantly compared with each other.

Did you have to make any sacrifices for the competition? Like give something up?

No I didn’t have to give up anything; the competition gave me a lot.

I still have a supportive family and all my friends, and

Birgit Õigemeel

was born on 24 September 1988 in Rapla.

She started violin studies at the age of five in Rapla. Later, when her teacher moved to Tallinn, Birgit continued studying violin by commuting from Kohila to Tallinn. She was also a member of the Estonian Television Children's Choir. Birgit spent her first seven school years in Kohila Gymnasium. From 8th grade, she continued her studies at the Old Town School, from where she graduated in 2007.



nobody thinks I have become stuck-up. Perhaps I had to give up my simplicity in some sense; now my self-control is a bit bigger than before. Being famous has changed my life more than anything.

How did the show influence your studies at school?

I was surprised that I managed quite well. All the schedules suited my schoolwork and I could change my singing lessons. School was almost finished by April; there were just the sub-

jects in which there were exams and I did well on those! They say that if you do a lot you manage a lot as well.

What was the competition like? What happened there to you? Did you change in that time?

I think the competition was quite tough; all the finalists were very unique and sang very well. I definitely became more self-confident; each performance gave me more courage and will power. And many new experiences.

What impetus did this experience give for the future?

One of my dreams came true – I am a singer now and I get to perform. I have always felt that I wanted to sing. Before the show, I didn't really think that I wanted to become a singer. But now I am suddenly a singer! At the same time, I still need to develop a lot to become a better singer who is more in demand.

How badly did you want to win the show? Are you competitive?

Of course I wanted to win but if I hadn't I would still have gained a lot from the competition. First and foremost, I went there to put myself to the test. I had been in the finals of the Estonian Television children's singing competitions, but I had never won. I was mediocre. Hence, to be the best at something was the greatest experience for me. I wasn't used to it. And since I placed third in the Estonian Eurovision song contest, I believe I know how to win and how to accept defeat.

This was your first Eurovision experience. Can the Eurovision competition be compared to "Pop Idol"?

Yes I think so. Eurovision was easier for me – it didn't take as much time as "Pop Idol" and wasn't as draining men-

tally. Then again, Eurovision was more difficult in the sense that I wasn't just performing for me but for the authors of the song and for something bigger: if I had won I would have represented Estonia. This experience taught me a lot.

Who is your singing teacher?

My first teacher was my mother. When I was small, I went to Sunday school and since the age of three I have sung in church every Sunday. All of my teachers have been important to me. I learned how to use my voice under Aarne Saluveer. The basics of pop-singing I got from Elo Toodo. My voice coach was Anu Aimla, who taught me to sing correctly and has supported me in every way. Anu is such a fantastic person – she gives me confidence and pushes me.

Do you enjoy being a star?

I can enjoy fame a bit, but from time to time I'd like to feel freer. There are situations which make me realise that fame can also be tiring and there are moments when I want to escape it all. But this feeling is rare and, fortunately, it passes quickly. Media interest is not too big in a small country like Estonia. But I like it when little girls ask me for my autograph on the street.

How much of your time do singing and performances take up?

I don't do much else at the moment. Rehearsals, performances and other things connected to the life of a singer take up all my time. There are rehearsals during the week and performances on weekends.

How do you relax? What do you use to recharge your batteries?

I try to be at home a lot or with my parents and just relax and rest. I went snowboarding in the winter. I like to

Others about Birgit:
Heidy Purga, Chief Editor of
Raadio 2 and judge of the
Estonian "Pop Idol"



As one of the judges of "Estonia seeks a Superstar", I find it quite difficult to write about Birgit. I don't know her as a person, as judges don't relate to participants like that. I saw her changes, growth, effort and development only from behind the judging panel. I was probably the only judge who, until the very end, was not completely satisfied with her. She seemed to have it all, yet that little something was missing.

Birgit was definitely not the type who stuck out in the early rounds. Compared to many others, she was more modest and, as I remember, she very nearly did not make it to the second round, the theatre round. But once there it was an explosion. Birgit came into her own there and was way above many other participants. In other words her journey through the different rounds was quite chaotic, searching for the way forward. She probably grew tired in the middle. There was also this rapid pace which all the Superstar finalists had to go through.

Birgit left the impression of being a decent and modest girl who, nonetheless, has her own opinion. This decency didn't, as far as I'm concerned, let her properly open herself in the middle of the competition. There was a sense that there was something more to her, something hidden that she was keeping locked up, afraid to face her own power. Today we can say thank God that she chose a song by Evanescence for the final round. I think she herself did not expect such power, anger and determination, nor did she expect such a strong performance. The rest is history, as they say.



invite friends over and to visit them. I also go to parties with friends. I really like to dance.

What else do you do besides singing? Do you have any other hobbies?

Singing and music used to be my hobbies, but now I can call them both work and hobby, as I really enjoy them. I also like theatre and acting, which I even studied in school. I work out and swim. I would really like to travel. When I was younger, I travelled a lot with the Estonian Television Children's Choir. I hope that this year I get to go to a warm country for a holiday.

How do you handle difficult situations? Who do you turn to for help?

It depends on the situation, but I believe I can remain calm in difficult situations. I am surrounded by people who help me – my family, girlfriends, my boyfriend and colleagues who always help me.

How are you involved with charities?

It is a noble thing to give to a charity and it has become very popular recently. After the show, I started to get many invitations to perform at charity concerts. I thought that perhaps my

charity work could be channelled in one direction and I talked to my producer about it. He had already joined the charity Dharma, and I joined at the beginning of this year. I chose disabled children, as I think they need this help the most, although I come from a large family and know that large families also need help. A special fund has been opened for the Old Town School and a certain sum per album sold is given to that fund.

What are you doing at the moment?

I am performing with my band, which was recently put together. Soon our

new single will be released. We are planning a summer tour also.

What are your immediate and more distant dreams?

My biggest dream is to reach the international arena as a singer, that in the future I will sing even more and will be able to live purely on income from singing. A more distant dream is the time when I can start my own family.

Have you ever experienced problems with self-discipline and will power?

Yes of course. From time to time I have to push myself. I have will power, but it could be better. Sometimes I feel that I give up too easily or I'm not confident enough in my abilities.



The hugely popular worldwide TV-show "Pop Idol" reaches Estonian viewers through TV3

In the first season of "Pop Idol", which in Estonia is called "Estonia Seeks A Superstar", in spring 2007, 1,500 young people tried out for the show. The decision on who made it to the second round was made by the judges – the musician and journalist Mihkel Raud, radio editor Heidi Purga and composer and musician Rein Rannap; from then on the choice was with the TV audience. Nine young singers made it to the final last season and two of them – Luisa Värk and Birgit Õigemeel - made it to the Superfinal. Birgit became the Superstar.

In the opening trials of the second season of "Estonia Seeks A Superstar", in winter-spring 2008, there were almost 2,400 singers, which is a thousand more than in the first year. According to the judges, the level of those dreaming of stardom was higher this year than last year.

"On the basis of the first rounds, we can say that this year there were more bright, interested and musically talented singers than last year," commented Rein Rannap. The Estonian Superstar for 2008 will be chosen at the beginning of June.

Do you have a supportive family?

Any siblings?

I have a very loving family, a mom, dad, three sisters and their three kids, and soon there will be a fourth one. My mother is a music teacher in a kindergarten, and my sisters and mother sing. My dad has never been involved in music, but he is my biggest fan. In the car he always listens to my album.

Do you yourself write poetry or songs?

I think I am not a very talented poet, although my mother writes some poetry and I hope I will get the bug soon. I have the occasional tune in my head, but I don't write songs yet. I would like to start writing my own songs some day, but I am not ready yet. Perhaps I will do it when I learn how to play the guitar.

How do you handle jealous people, if you have encountered any?

I have only seen jealousy in online comments and I don't really read them or notice them anymore. Fortunately, I haven't met a jealous person yet.

Who are your role models?

I try to learn something from various famous singers and actors, but I don't have one specific favourite. Each wise person teaches me something.

You seem modest and balanced.

Is it really so or do you have a hidden stronger side?

I am indeed quite balanced, but I show my character if there is a need. I establish myself more and more each day. But I try

Over 5,000 copies of the first album of last year's winner, Birgit Õigemeel, have been sold in a month. The success has taken the young singer's debut album to No 1 in the Estonian charts.

"I am very satisfied," said Birgit Õigemeel, admitting that she did not expect such great success so soon. "I am really pleased that people like the music I make," she said, with obvious delight. The album is mostly in Estonian. "In Estonia, I want to sing in my native language and I believe that the local audience prefers music in Estonian," said Birgit.

From each album sold, ten kroons will go to Birgit's former school, for the building of an elevator for disabled people. In a month, the Dharma Foundation collected more than 50,000 kroons for the Old Town School.

to do it politely, as I don't want to say anything bad to anybody.

In what kinds of situations do you show backbone and character?

When I see that someone wants to do injustice to me, in any sense. I am quite critical when it comes to music and therefore I try to perform very well. And when, for the sake of a great concert, I have to put my foot down in rehearsal, I do.

It seems like you always give 100%?

Where do you get your strength from?

I try to commit myself, but it doesn't always work. I like to sing and to be on stage and I try to share this pleasure with the audience, and the audience, in turn, gives me the strength to perform well.

What other professions would you consider besides singing?

Perhaps something to do with media, radio or theatre.

How and where do you see yourself in five years?

I hope to still be on stage and singing.

Are you a patriot?

I am. I really love Estonia!



The most international small town in Estonia

The trump card for Otepää and the surrounding area is nature. There are dozens of cupola-shaped hills, ideal landscapes for cross-country skiing.

Text: Urmas Vahe,
SL Õhtuleht
Photos: Pressifoto

Otepää is situated near the Latvian border in South Estonia. The town got its city rights quite recently – according to its population size it could still be classified as a borough. Otepää also carries a proud second name, the Winter Capital of Estonia. It has every right to the title, as Otepää is Estonia's Lahti in Finland, where splashes of white can be seen up to midsummer.

It is almost impossible to calculate the exact population of Otepää. Just like in Davos or Oberstdorf, each winter the number of people in the town doubles or even triples. There are more and more visitors during other seasons as well, as there is always something exciting to do here. Every month some event attracts thousands of spectators or participants.

The natural trump

The trump card for Otepää and the surrounding area is nature. No, there are no snow-capped alpine mountains



“Money has not disappeared from the world; if we really want to, we can pick it up,” Alar says, already seeing Otepää as the site for the World Championships.

here, nor endless skerries as in Norway. There are only dozens of cupola-shaped hills, ideal landscapes for cross-country skiing and car rallies.

Little lakes are scattered between the hills, offering the kind of tranquillity ideal for fishing in summers and even ice-fishing in winters. And there are plenty of fish to catch. Romantic boat rides in the dusk are also a possibility.

The charms of Otepää have not gone unnoticed and are enjoyed in all seasons. The place has its own value for professional sports. One of the main magnets of the annual skiing calendar is the cross-country FIS World Cup event. The skiing teams of many countries arrive in Otepää in early summer, right after the end-of-season holiday. And they stay here to practice on the roller-skating tracks, which are claimed to be the best in the world and open to all summer skiers. The other highlight of the calendar is the Tartu Ski Marathon. This event, which goes back fifty years, starts in Otepää. In proper winter conditions, thousands of participants come from all over the world. Only the weatherman is able to strike a blow at this sweaty idyll. This is precisely what happened this year when there was no snow whatsoever on the tracks, mirroring the snow-less conditions in the rest of Europe.

All of the above have lured business to Otepää and each

year another new hotel or top-notch restaurant is opened. Local residents have also changed as more and more businessmen have moved here, bringing their own demands and ways of life, which has helped develop the entire area.

But despite all of the fun and games, the real pearls of the sporting world – the title championships – remain out of reach, although lower-level events—junior and summer versions of winter sports—have been held in Otepää. It is pointless to even dream about hosting the Winter Olympics. We are light-years from this, as Estonia is such a small country and we do not have the appropriate natural conditions. We have no opportunity to organise Alpine events, which is true within a 500 km radius of Otepää. It would be different if we were to cooperate with well-known Scandinavian ski resorts.

Estonia also has no reason to build new ice halls, seating thousands, for speed skating, curling and hockey. After the games, those halls would inevitably remain empty, as we just do not have any traditions in those sports, or they are represented only marginally (Estonia, by the way, has an Olympic winner in speed skating). The same is true for sledging, skeleton and bob-sled tracks. We might find a couple of enthusiasts, but in essence these are unfamiliar fields for Estonians.

In a country the size of Estonia, not even those with the wildest fantasies could imagine how to accommodate the thousands of people connected to the Olympics and tens



The Tehvandi 90-metre ski jumping hill was completed at the end of 2007.

of thousands of tourists in the 100km area surrounding Otepää. Let us therefore not dream the impossible dream. Let's dream the possible one.

Perhaps in the next decade, but surely in the decade after next, the World Championships in winter sports should become a reality in Otepää, granted of course that we want this to be true and that the state can afford it. Estonians are already fanatical about winter sports. How such a miracle could turn into reality is explained by the Manager of the Tehvandi Sports Centre, Alar Arukuusk, a man of bold ideas and, more importantly, bold deeds, who was granted the annual award of the Estonian Cultural Endowment this year.

"I am not afraid of the black scenario"

"Recently Otepää has taken continuous, albeit sometimes small, steps to develop. We have reached the point where the world's skiing elite is not afraid to come here. On the contrary, they come and when they leave they are pleased, because the conditions are at a world level. I am not bragging in saying that, in some respects, we even exceed that level.

Due to this fact, we have been offered competitions on every level. The only thing we haven't had really is the World Championship for adults and juniors. We hope to fill this gap in the near future. The Estonian Skiing Union has submitted an application for Otepää to host the 2011 Junior

World Championships. We could even do it earlier, as our real shortcoming to date – lack of a 90-metre jumping hill – has now been eliminated. Currently we are grappling with the thorough renovation of the ski stadium, which dates back to the worst decades of the era gone by, when all work was done half-heartedly. Ski track formats also need to be renovated, although they are not in such a poor state."

Another challenge is building the 120-metre ski-jump tower, but this is not an insurmountable obstacle. After this, all World Championship requirements for hosting adult winter events will be fulfilled.

Alar Arukuusk continues even more boldly, "With the big ski-jumping hill, Tallinn will not be completed. (This is a well-known Estonian legend according to which once the city leaders say that Tallinn is completed, the Old Man of the Ülemiste Lake will come and flood the city. Hence we must never say that something is finally completed). Estonia has not yet decided whether to try for the big games: the Winter World Championships; the complete picture also requires 50-metre and 70-metre ski jumps. In principle, those exist already, but they are old and will need some work. It is an expensive and slightly utopian project, but not impossible. Estonia just has to want it very much. We know what the stakes were when Val di Fiemme, Holmenkollen and Lahti went to the negotiating tables: 100 million Euro is not the upper limit. Money has not disappeared from the world; if we really want to, we can pick it up," Alar says, already seeing Otepää as the site for the World Championships.

Off the track

It is one thing to dream, but in reality there are other things which hold us back from the big championships. One of those is the lack of accommodation facilities.

Next to Otepää is the quiet summer resort of Elva, a sleepy oasis under pine trees offering heavenly peace in the summers. It is the ultimate relaxation spot for a family holiday: the natural surroundings are a pleasure. In summer everyone who wants to can find a rented room somewhere with

We have reached the point where the world's skiing elite is not afraid to come to Otepää. On the contrary, they come and when they leave they are pleased, because the conditions are at a world level.

the local residents, and there are some cottages for rent as well. But Elva does not have quality hotels large

enough to carry the burden of a large sports event. And it is unlikely that Elva really would want to – with the arrival of masses, the forest paradise would disappear.

Forty kilometres away is the second largest town in Estonia, Tartu. There are numerous top hotels in Tartu, but they are not skyscrapers. They are good in terms of quality, but not in terms of space available.

At best, Otepää and the surrounding resorts could house up to 1,500 guests. That would mean fully packed houses. There is talk in town of plans to build another hotel accommodating 300 to 400 people. Then the capacity would reach nearly 2,000.

“With Elva and Tartu also, the picture starts to take shape. At least those connected with the competition – athletes,

“The Estonian Skiing Union has submitted an application for Otepää to host the 2011 Junior World Championships. For that, the ski stadium and ski track formats need to be renovated,” explains the Manager of the Tehvandi Sports Centre, Alar Arukuusk, a man of bold ideas and, more importantly, bold deeds



assisting personnel, journalists - could be accommodated. But what to do with the hordes of Norwegian tourists? That's a tough nut to crack. And experience tells us that there would be thousands of fans. The capital, with its numerous accommodation facilities is 220 kilometres away and that is too far for the World Championships," says Arukuusk.

Fortunately, organising the large championships is not a burning question; no major decisions will be made in the next decade. Today the construction of hotels has become a very simple job. If there is demand, they will spring up overnight.

The more money is accumulated, the better it gets

The money circulating in South-Estonia does not pass Otepää by. There is always something exciting to do here. The money, in turn, has a snowball effect, which leads to ever new undertakings. As a top level shooting range was built next to the ski stadium, Otepää has become one of the favourite spots for biathletes. This is a very popular sport throughout the world and is fast becoming a traditionally popular ski event in Estonia. The range was automatically placed in the B-category, which means that it can host all events with the exception of the Olympic Games. In the first year it was opened, the summer World Championships in biathlon were held here. By 2012-13, at the latest, we hope to organise the World Cup stage in biathlon. "This will be possible only if we start organising today, as the competition between biathlon centres all over the world is very tough. We recall that stadium attendance at the World Championships in Östersund was 40,000," says Alar Arukuusk.

Otepää is the only place in Estonia where it is possible to participate in downhill skiing. There have been tracks and ski-lifts in place for years. Conditions are excellent for snow-mobilers and even the World Championships in cross-country skiing have already been held here. Recently the Estonian landscape archery European Championships took place in Otepää. The hilly, curvy and exciting landscape of Otepää makes it hugely popular for the South-Estonian rally.

The first thing to be renovated in Otepää is the ski stadium. "It might look good on television when the

additional grandstands are in place, but this is all temporary, a mirage. In reality the stadium is in a dire condition. The plans foresee a stadium building with a permanent grandstand meant for 3,000 spectators, which can be doubled in size when necessary. Of course we need additional space for journalists as well. The ski museum will also move into the new building. In principle, Otepää will become the small brother of the Lahti ski stadium," says the most competent specialist in the winter capital.

But what will happen if the snow stays up in the sky, as it did this year? "Well, we managed to gather about 8,000 cubic metres of snow during a practically snow-less winter and had sawdust underneath. Until next November we will make do with that," says Alar, laughing.





Listen to the sound of nature and the song of birds

Text and photos: Judith Lewonig

Birds were probably the first creatures to arrive in the area of today's Estonia, after the last glacial period. Since then Estonia has become a paradise for birds. Today Estonia is home to 357 bird species – about half of them forest species – according to the Estonian Ornithological Society.



Due to Estonia's favourable geographical location in the eastern Atlantic fly-way, millions of birds pass through Estonia every spring and autumn. The first winged guests, the common starling, northern lapwing and rook, arrive in March, and the last, including the reed warbler, reach Estonia in the second half of May. April to July is a period

of bird high life in the smallest Baltic country. At some locations, you can see and hear migrating birds in spring and fall, and breeding birds in summer. When was the last time you listened to the song of a bird? The song of a living bird in the open air, not a digital one?

In this era of paperless offices, people, even those who still remember mechanical typewriters, may have forgotten natural sounds. The young generation, growing up with the Internet and mobile phones, may have never learnt to discover Nature's marvel. The high-tech generation has displaced the nature generation, and cyberspace and cyber-communication have replaced the the natural environment and social intercourse. For the cyber-generation, seeing cows and hearing bird calls in digital form is more common than meeting a real cow in the green countryside and listening to live bird calls in nature. Today's hip teenager and up-to-date manager may not imagine that bird watching can be more thrilling than the newest and highest-tech computer game. An overhead circling flock of storks or the unexpected appearance of a noble white-tailed eagle in the sky can leave an unutterably deep impression. These are enthralling encounters.

Estonia today is well-known as a country of previously unimagined e-possibilities and e-voting, but it is largely unrecognized as a bird paradise – for birds, as well as pro-

fessional and amateur bird-watchers. Bird-watchers can go to more than 50 bird areas of international importance in Estonia, complemented by more than 60 national important localities. One of the most important nesting, moulting and migration sites for birds is the Matsalu Nature Reserve (in western Estonia) with its observation towers (the highest is 21 metres) and platforms for bird watching – mostly reachable by car without an excursion through wilderness. Most of the Matsalu Reserve was founded in 1957, primarily to protect nesting, moulting and migratory birds. As bird-watching tourism becomes more popular in Estonia, especially in the Matsalu region, the deep-rooted tradition of respect for Mother Nature and its creatures will continue to protect the unique natural heritage of Estonia. Fairly strict limitations on access have been established in the nature reserves and nature parks throughout the country. Some zones are closed to visitors during the breeding season of birds. So far there are still more birds than birders.

Today I invite common townspeople to leave the sound of the town behind and to go as adventuring individuals into the wild to experience the peace and quiet of nature and to hear the flapping of wings and the songs of birds. You will experience not only bird watching, but also “bird hearing”. To be with the birds is an exciting life experience. Go east from Tallinn not more than 50 km and you will find yourself in the oldest and largest Estonian national park, Lahemaa National Park, with its more than 220 registered bird species and its pure nature. Although it is the most visited national park in Estonia, you will have no problem finding your own individual place in seclusion with nature in this area of more than 700 square kilometres, which contains typical Northern Estonia landscape, where forests – pine and mixed pine and spruce forests and dry wooded heath-land – cover about 70 percent of the park. Ten percent of the park is covered by mires and bogs. The bogs and the several hundred bog-pools offer shelter to various quadrupeds and many of our feathered friends. Not less than two-thirds of the bird species in Estonia have chosen to live in Lahemaa National Park. Capercaillie and corn-crake are quite common here, as is the white stork. Hear the flap of wings! Not a white angel, but a black stork! Both are admittedly very rare. The total population of black storks in Estonia is estimated at about 150-200 pairs. Feel free in harmony with nature and its habitants – and don't limit yourself by the notion that it will be monotonous. In



The Haeska observation tower in Matsalu is considered the best of its kind in Northern Europe by Finnish ornithologists. Not less than 128 different bird species were registered here during 24 hours in May 1997.

this timeless peace of mind, merged with the elemental force, you are able to hear the flowing of your own blood, the silence between earth and heaven - and you are able to hear a bird singing. Listen to the silence, listen to the bird song. Silence your thoughts, and let your brain and soul fly with the wind. Inhale the fresh air and experience the scenery. The present becomes eternity. Be patient, and you will be surprised by glimpses of hidden bird life and by your own hidden life (the subconscious is an enigma).

When the silhouettes of graceful cranes, with the gentle stroke of their wings, fly above the vast misty meadow, you will feel the freedom of spirit. When, during the migration period, the sounds of thousands of Bewick's and Whooper swans can be heard kilometres away and their whooping make the air quake, you can lose yourself in the sound – and your soul and mind will waft away.

In this spirit: Do not forget to smell the flowers and do not forget to hear the songs of the plumed vocalists in your daily life.

CLAZZ

Restaurant & Club

The menu is truly international and has been combined to have something for every taste. As Clazz is open from 12.00-03.00 daily, and sometimes even longer, the menu also has its specific time schedules. The a la Carte menu is offered from 12.00 until 23.00, when the special night menu replaces the regular menu. A special lunch offer is available daily from 12.00 until 16.00 and it is a nice experience to listen to music that is not mainstream and maybe not heard every day, and it could even happen that, during the day, there are musicians on the stage either getting ready for night performances or playing for some special occasion.

Clazz was the idea and dream of Auri Hakomaa, who is also the owner of Olde Hansa, the most successful restaurant in Tallinn. Auri is a person full of ideas. Clazz was originally created as a restaurant with a variety of European food and random blues and jazz music, a place where musicians from different backgrounds could meet and enjoy good food, music and company. Time brought changes and new energetic people with original ideas that helped to create the new image and face of Clazz and add much more that really makes Clazz unique.

The love for music among the people in Clazz has helped create the Clazz Restaurant & Lounge & Club. The result is a place completely unique in Tallinn and in Estonia, where people with flexible and sophisticated musical tastes can relax and savour a live show or carefully chosen music by the DJ; where the food is very good and good service greets you from the moment you walk in the door. A new phase started in December 2007 when Keysha, together with the

Every decent town needs a place where good food, good music and great people can get together. In Tallinn, the Clazz Restaurant is definitely the place. Clazz offers high level European cuisine without being snobbish, carefully chosen music to go with it and warm and friendly service. One hour before midnight, the main menu is replaced by the night menu, but as long as the doors are open there is food served. And these doors are open till the early hours. As a bonus you can experience good live music. Clazz has plenty of niches and corners to offer a suitable atmosphere for every taste.

piano player Robertone, was brought from California. Their two-week engagement lit up Clazz. It was proof that Clazz could exist as a club as well and have a regular program.

As ideally located as a downtown music hub could be, Clazz has definitely already become a popular spot for music lovers and people who enjoy friendly service. The place is big and has different rooms for a la carte dining, two long bars, which stretch through two halls, and two cozy lounges, one of which is usually occupied by musicians. Yes, musicians are definitely the center of attention here. There have been many evenings when the planned program has been enhanced by surprise guests, who happened to be in town with some big and famous artists, joining in. At the two longest bar counters in Tallinn, you will always be able to meet somebody interesting. The fact that at least four different nationalities are represented among the Clazz team makes it even more fun to watch the smooth and funny communication in many different languages that goes on.

Clazz has made agreements with the two big international events in Estonia – the jazz festival Jazzkaar and film festival PÖFF (the Black Nights Film Festival). During Jazzkaar, Clazz is the official jam site and restaurant for all the famous guests from around the world. For two weeks in April, Clazz has Jazzkaar concerts as well and this year has also invited the blues and soul singer Tia Carroll from California. Jazzkaar guests, such as Gino Vannelli, Angelique Kidjo, Aldi Meola and the Avishai Cohen Trio, will be dining in Clazz and will also be included in jam sessions. This is one of the most exciting times in Estonia



for jazz lovers. With the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival, Clazz has signed a contract to establish the PÖFF Film Club twice a month to show silent films with live music every first and third Tuesday. Also the opening party of the film festival in December will be in Clazz and Olde Hansa, also involving the old Market Place right between the two buildings, where tents and gathering spots will be set up for people who will be sharing film ideas and experiences.

The slogan "Food, music, and wonderful people like You!" fits Clazz like a glove. Clazz has something going on every single night of the week. Monday is a night for restaurant and hotel business people, Tuesday is the twice-a-month PÖFF Film Club, with live music, and the other two Tuesdays will feature Piano or Guitar Bar. Wednesday is the night for more alternative events, such as once-a-month reggae night, and twice-a-month jam sessions for young musicians from the Ots Music School. This is an evening when it is possible to see three or four saxophone players waiting their turn and young musicians having fun playing from 21.00 without a break for up to four or five hours. Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights there are various high level live performances, often visiting guests and local talented musicians playing jazz, blues, lounge and other styles. Sunday night there has long been a tradition of having

Latin music for hours of good dancing. It is a good feeling to walk through the empty Old Town and hear hot rhythms coming from Clazz, where over 100 people are enjoying the music and celebrating it with dancing.

The colourful array of performers has spiced up Clazz so that there is always something interesting going on there. The program for Clazz can be found at the link: www.clazz.ee/CLUB and on the Jazzkaar site www.jazzkaar.ee. There are still many ideas waiting to be realised. A completely new concept would be a comedy club, which would perfectly fit the Clazz atmosphere.

The best in Clazz is You!

We are easy to find – only a couple of steps from Raekoja plats, opposite Olde Hansa.

CLAZZ RESTAURANT, LOUNGE, CLUB
open every day 12.00-03.00

VANA TURG 2
+372 6279022
clazz@clazz.ee
www.clazz.ee



Estonia in brief



Official name:

Republic of Estonia

State order:

Parliamentary republic

Area:

45,227 sq kilometres (17,500 sq miles)

Population (2000 Census):

1,356,045 inhabitants:

68% Estonians

26% Russians

and 6% others

Population density:

35 people per square kilometre.

Over 70% reside in urban centres

Capital:

Tallinn (400,378 inhabitants)

Other major towns:

Tartu (101,169)

Narva (68,680)

Kohtla-Järve (47,679)

Pärnu (45,500)

Administrative divisions:

15 counties (*maakond*), divided further into 202

rural municipalities (*vald*)

Official language:

Estonian, a member of the Finno-Ugric group.

Russian is widely spoken. Many Estonians speak

English, German, Finnish or Swedish

Alphabet:

Latin

Religion:

Predominantly Protestant (Lutheran)

Currency:

Estonian kroon (EEK),

divided into 100 sents;

1 euro = 15.65 EEK

Driving:

Right hand side of the road. Speed limits in town

50 km/h, out of town 90 km/h. International driv-

ing licence required

Weights and measures:

Metric system

Electricity:

220 volts, 50 Hz

National flag:

Blue-black-and-white

National holiday:

24 February

(Independence Day)

National anthem:

Mu isamaa, mu õnn ja rõõm (My fatherland, my

joy and happiness)

National flower:

Cornflower

(*Centaurea cyanus*)

National bird:

Chimney swallow

(*Hirundo rustica*)

Practical information for visitors



For more travel details, please consult the sources below:

www.visitestonia.com

(Estonian Tourist Board),

www.esto.info,

www.estonica.com,

www.riik.ee/en

Tourist information centres are located in all larger towns.

The Tourist Information in Tallinn is located right in the heart of Old Town - at 4 Kullassepa street no more than 10 steps from the Town Hall Square (telephone: + 372 6457 777, e-mail: turismiinfo@tallinnlv.ee). A wide selection of maps, brochures and publications in several languages (largest selection in English) can be found at local bookstores and tourist information centres.

Visa

Citizens of the EU, the United States, Australia and New Zealand and a number of other countries do not need a visa for Estonia. For detailed information on visa requirements and entry rules, please consult the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website at www.vm.ee/eng and the Estonian Border Guard website at www.pv.ee/eng/index.html.

Arrival

By plane: Recently renovated, the Tallinn airport, just 3 km from the



city centre, is welcoming, modern and user-friendly. Among other amenities, travellers have access to a WiFi area (wireless fidelity) in the transit zone. The airport's 24-hour customer service telephone is +372 6058 888.

The easiest way to get to town is by taxi. A ten-minute ride to the city centre costs approximately 60 Estonian kroons. A hotel transfer minibus meets all incoming flights and takes visitors to downtown hotels for just 25 kroons (€1.60 or \$1.90). City bus #2 connects between the airport, the centre and the harbour. The bus schedule is posted at the bus stops in these places, and tickets can be purchased from the driver (15 kroons, €0.95 or \$1.16 USD per ride).

Regional airports are located in Kuressaare (Island of Saaremaa),



Kärdla (Island of Hiiumaa), Pärnu and Tartu; these provide no regular international connections. A regular helicopter connection is available between Tallinn and Helsinki, with the centre-to-centre "hop" made in 20 minutes.

By ship:

With over 6 million passengers annually, the Port of Tallinn is undoubtedly Estonia's main gateway. Large passenger ferries arrive from and depart for Helsinki and Stockholm regularly. The 85-km Tallinn-

Helsinki line is served by ferries that make the journey in 3.5 hours; hydrofoils and catamarans make the trip on 1.5 hours and operate Between April to November or December, depending on weather conditions. Travellers should note that different ferry lines depart from different terminals and harbours. The City Port with its four terminals is a 10-15 minute walk from Tallinn Old Town; the Paldiski-Kapellskär line uses the Port of Paldiski, about 50 km from Tallinn.

By car:

Border checkpoints greet travellers entering or departing the country by way of the Estonian-Latvian border points at Ikla (the Tallinn-Riga highway) and Valga, as well as on the Estonian-Russian border at Narva (the Tallinn-St. Petersburg highway),

Luhamaa, Koidula and Murati. When travelling to Estonia from Latvia by car, visitors can drive through the Latvian border but must stop for a passport and customs check on the Estonian side. On the Estonian-Russian border, all traffic is subject to border formalities on both sides.



By bus:

Not only is travel by bus the fastest and most convenient mode of international public transportation in the Baltic states, it also offers excellent value for your money: Tickets to Riga and St Petersburg are available for 200 kroons (€12.80, \$15.50) and 350 kroons (€22.30, \$27.13) to Vilnius. The trip from Riga to Tallinn takes approximately five hours and there are four daily departures; Tallinn to Vilnius is ten hours, with two departures daily; to St Petersburg is eight hours with five daily departures. Regular connections also service Germany, Kaliningrad, Moscow and Kiev. A useful tip: Regular passenger buses have priority at the border checkpoints, so travel is smooth. For more information and timetables, please contact Eurolines at tel. +372 6800 909 or visit their website at www.eurolines.ee/eng/index.html.

By train:

There are only two international trains: one to St. Petersburg and one to Moscow. Both are overnight trains.

Customs

We suggest travellers consult with the Estonian Customs Board (tel. +372 6967 435 or www.customs.ee) for details. If you plan to carry currency valued at more than 80,000 Estonian kroons (foreign currency in cash,

Estonian kroons, traveller's cheques), you are required to declare the amount upon entry into and departure from Estonia. The limit on import of alcoholic beverages from outside the EU is one litre for beverages over 22% alcohol content, and two litres for beverages up to 22%, and two litres for wine. Import of tobacco and tobacco products from non-EU countries is limited to 200 cigarettes or 100 cigarrillos or 50 cigars or 250 g of tobacco products. Counterfeit goods, including pirated CDs, video and audio tapes, are prohibited by law. A special export permit is required for specimens of plants and animals of endangered species, protected species and hunting trophies (please contact the Nature Conservation Department, Ministry of the Environment for details). Articles of cultural value produced in Estonia more than 50 years ago also require special permits (please contact the National Heritage Board).

Getting Around Estonia

Inter-city public transportation

Public buses are the easiest, cheapest and most convenient solution for visiting Tartu, Pärnu or any other of the larger towns. Buses from Tallinn to Tartu depart every 15-30 minutes, to Pärnu every hour. On weekdays, seats to these destinations are almost always available even immediately before departure (watch out for special events). For weekend travel or trips to more remote locations with fewer connections, it is advisable to buy tickets in advance. It is possible to travel Estonia border-to border for approximately 100 kroons (€6.40, \$7.75). The Tallinn Bus Terminal is located at Lastekodu 46. The timetable is also available online at www.bussireisid.ee/index.php and ticket information is available at telephone +372 6800 900.

Travelling by car

Travellers hoping to see more of the country and the rural areas it would be best advised to travel by car. The roads are quite good and traffic is light. Crossing Estonia from north to south or west to east by car takes approximately three to four hours. All major car rental agencies have offices in Tallinn. It is also possible to rent the car in Estonia and drop it off at a rental agency in Latvia or Lithuania, or vice versa; however, rental agencies do not permit rented cars to be taken into Russia. The speed limit in rural areas is 90 km/h and in cities 50 km/h. In some areas the highway speed limit is increased during the summer months. Headlights and seatbelts (front and back) must be on at all times. Driving under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicating substances is punishable by law. The Sober Team Leader campaign has been in effect in recent years during major festivities. The service makes it possible to call a volunteer for a safe and sober ride home.

Local transport

Taxis: Taxis must clearly display their fares, driver's taxi service licenses, and a meter. The initial charge for entering a cab ranges from 15 to 25 kroons. Different taxi companies have different rates, but the average charge per kilometre is 7 kroons. In Tallinn, a short ride within the city centre usually costs around 50 kroons. A ride to the suburbs may cost about 100 kroons. There is no additional charge for ordering the taxi by phone, and it usually takes the cab just five to ten minutes to arrive. All taxi drivers must give you a receipt (in Estonian, ask for "Kviitung, palun"). Locals usually give the exact fare and no tip. As in most major cities, some dis-

honest drivers attempt to overcharge unsuspecting passengers. If in doubt, note the taxi company and license plate number.

Public transportation: Tallinn has a public transport network of buses, trams and trolley-buses. Other Estonian towns have buses. Schedules are posted at bus stops. Tickets are available at newsstands (the yellow and blue "R-kiosks") and from the driver. A pre-purchased ticket (10 kroons, €0.64, \$0.76) must be validated upon boarding and is valid for one ride. A pre-purchased one-hour ticket costs 15 kroons and two-hour ticket 18 kroons. Check the time schedule for Tallinn bus lines for any bus stop at www.tallinn.ee/eng

Accommodations

All major hotels in Tallinn have been newly built or completely renovation





in recent years. Despite annual additions to the number of hotels and rooms, it can nonetheless be difficult to find a hotel room on short notice (particularly over the week-end). For the best selection, we urge visitors to Tallinn and the rest of Estonia to book hotel rooms in advance. For more details, see the Tourist Board website at www.estonica.com.

Money

The Estonian kroon is pegged to the euro (1 euro=15.6466 kroons; 1 kroon=100 cents). Currency exchange services are offered at banks and at exchange stands. Neither charge commission, and no major differences should exist in the rates. Banks are open on workdays from 9:00-17:00 or 9:00-18:00. Select branch offices also open on Saturdays from 10:00-15:00. Many large shopping centres include a bank office that is usually open seven days a week. Major credit cards are widely accepted. Large credit card transactions usually prompt the staff to request an ID; the threshold varies by shop but it usually starts around 200 kroons. The sales staff will note your passport or driver's license number on the receipt. Travellers' cheques are not accepted in shops and should be exchanged for cash at a bank. ATMs (automated teller machines or

cash points) are conveniently located around town; instructions are in English, Russian and Estonian.

Telephones

The country code of Estonia is 372. Dial 00 for outbound international calls. Public payphones only accept prepaid phone cards, which can be purchased at newsstands. As with ATMs, phone instructions are offered in English, Russian and Estonian.

Emergencies

112 is the emergency number for ambulance, police and fire department. The police can also be reached directly at 110. Emergency numbers can be dialled free of charge and without a phone card from any public telephone. Select pharmacies are open 24-hours-a-day in many major towns. The one in Tallinn is located at Pärnu mnt 10 (opposite the Estonian Drama Theatre); the one in Tartu is located in the Town Hall building (Town Hall Square).

National Holidays

Estonians celebrate January 1 as New Year's Day, a rather slow and quiet day as people recover from the festivities. Shops open late and banks are closed. February 24, Independence Day, is celebrated with a parade of the Estonian Defence Forces at Vabaduse väljak (Freedom Square). May 1 is a bank holiday, similar to Good Friday and May Day. June 23 is Victory Day in commemoration of the 1919 Battle of Võnnu, and June 24 is St. John's Day (Midsummer). June 23 is the biggest holiday of the year as Estonians celebrate Midsummer Eve: It is said that even grass does not grow in Estonia at that time. August 20 is the Day of Restoration of Independence (1991). December 25 (Christmas Day) and December 26 (Boxing Day) are usually

spent at home with families.

Food

Traditional Estonian cuisine consists of simple peasant food, such as cottage cheese, potatoes and bread, all of which are still important components of the local diet. The Estonian dark bread is the main staple missed by Estonians abroad. Typical Estonian dishes do not feature prominently on restaurant menus, and traditional home cooking is more likely to appear at small eateries in remote areas. Still, a few establishments have made Estonian specialties their niche; to sample Estonian cuisine, try the Kuldse Notsu Kõrts, Vanaema juures (At Grandmother's), Eesti Maja (The Estonian House) and Kolu Tavern (Open Air Museum) in Tallinn, and the highly recommended Lümända söögimaja on the Island of Saaremaa.

Of meat dishes, pork is the favourite and most common in Estonia; Baltic herring is the most common local fish. A typical, heavy Estonian meal is a pork steak with sauerkraut and potatoes. Soups are also a mainstay in the local diet, with tasty samplings ranging from broth with dumplings and meatballs to delectable vegetable purees.

At local restaurants, appetizer prices start at approximately 40 kroons (€2.55, \$3.10) and main courses start from about 80 kroons (€5.11, \$6.20). A three-course restaurant meal with coffee will usually cost upwards of 200 kroons (€12.70, \$15.50). A glass of house wine or beer is usually 30-40 kroons (€1.90-2.55, \$2.32-3.10). Cafeterias offer main course for 30-45 kroons (€1.90-2.88, \$2.32-3.40) and 100 kroons (€6.40, \$7.75) will buy a full meal. Pleased customers usually leave a tip of 10% of the bill.

Drinks

The main drinks in Estonia are beer,



wine and vodka. While many young city residents opt for beer or wine, the older generation and rural folk tend to prefer vodka. In the 1930s Estonian vodka made it into the Guinness Book of Records as the strongest vodka in the world (96 °). Local brands of beer enjoy a very strong market position in Estonia. The two main breweries are Saku and A. Le Coq. Saku is Tallinn-based, and its corporate colour is navy blue while, A. Le Coq is brewed in Tartu, and its colour is red. There are also many smaller breweries. A full list of Estonian beers is posted at www.BeerGuide.ee. One glass of beer at bars or restaurants costs 25-30 kroons. A bottle of beer sells at supermarkets for 9-10 kroons.

Spirits also include some traditional liqueurs. The famous Vana Tallinn (Old Tallinn) has a 45 ° alcohol content, and is coincidentally made from 45 ingredients - the recipe is known only to a handful of people. Indeed, the legendary 19th-century kristallküm-mel (caraway liqueur) has made its long-awaited comeback.

Estonian wines, made from currants or other local berries, are rather sweet. Wine lovers usually prefer imported wine, of which there is an ever-increasing selection at stores and vinoteks. A very popular and refreshing non-alcoholic drink is kali, made of bread,

malt, rye or oats flour and yeast; it has a characteristically dark brown colour. It was with this drink that the Estonians forced the Coca-Cola company into submission, or at least into a business deal. Kali was enjoying phenomenal sales, while Coke was not selling up to expectations. It was then that Coca-Cola decided to broaden its horizons by buying one of the local kali trademarks in order to make a profit on the stubborn Estonians

Entertainment

The entertainment scene in Estonia is vibrant year-round, providing visitors and locals alike with a long list to choose from. Concerts, festivals theatre, street raves, DJ competitions – Estonia has it all. It is not by chance that both Tallinn and Tartu have their own opera and ballet theatre. Tickets are an excellent value for the money; concert tickets start around 80 kroons, and best seats at the opera are yours for as little as 200 kroons. For more information on the concert schedule see www.concert.ee; the programme for the national opera is posted at www.opera.ee. Tickets can be bought at the box offices or via ticket agencies located in the larger department stores. A useful site for information on cultural events is www.culturepoint.ee.

Even the most sceptical museum-goer is bound to find something intriguing in Estonia's large selection of museums, which feature everything from history, art, photography to toys, chocolate, musical instruments, even wax figures and many other topics. Most museums are closed on Tuesdays and many on Mondays as well.

It is advisable to have cash on hand as many museums do not accept credit cards.

Tallinn is also bustling well into the night with booming and blooming club scene. Clubs are usually open and packed with energised vibes from Thursday to Sunday, with Friday and Saturday drawing the liveliest of crowds. In addition to local and resident DJs, clubs frequently present guest performers from London, the US and other club hubs. For those looking for a more mellow night on the town, Tallinn's street are brimming with pubs, vinoteks and bar-restaurants, many of which offer live music even on weekdays. Rather take in a movie? Films in cinemas are shown in the original language with subtitles.

Shops

Souvenir shops in Tallinn and most other tourist locations are open seven days a week, 10:00-18:00 or 19:00. Big supermarkets and hypermarkets are open seven days a week from 9:00-21:00 or 10:00-22:00. Department stores close a few hours earlier on Sundays or, in smaller towns, may be closed on Sundays. Smaller food shops may have shorter opening hours. Some 24-hour shops can be found as well. Other shops usually open at 9:00 or 10:00 and close at 18:00 or 19:00; they often close early on Saturdays and are closed on Sundays. The majority of shops accept credit cards, with the exception of smaller stores and stores in rural areas.

Souvenirs

Souvenir and shopping preferences vary hugely but there are certain souvenir gifts that have gladdened many a heart. Estonian handicraft comes in many forms. There are woollen sweaters and mittens with local ethnic patterns, linen sheets and tablecloths,



crocheted shawls and veils, colourful woven rugs, handmade jewellery and glassware, baskets, and an array of wooden spoons and butterknives made from juniper. Fine and applied art for show and purchase is on display at art galleries around the country, featuring graphics, glass, ceramics, hand-painted silk scarves and leatherwork. Various herbal teas from wild plants are available at pharmacies. Local honey – pure or flavoured, e.g. ginger, is another delicious treat. In rural areas, you may find hand-milled flour. And those who keep coming back swear by the Estonian black rye bread. To bring home local spirits, popular choices include Vana Tallinn or kristallkummel liqueur or local beer. And there is no place better than Estonia to buy Estonian music.

Crime

Although common sense is advisable in all destinations, Estonia gives no particular reason to be excessively worried. Do not walk the unlit and abandoned areas alone at night. Do not leave bags or items of value in the car, as not to tempt car thieves or robbers. Pickpockets may operate at crowded tourist destinations in Tallinn, so make sure your wallet and documents are stored safely.

Language

Estonian is not widely spoken in the world, so Estonians do not expect short-term visitors to master the local language. Still, local people are thrilled and pleased to hear a foreigner say “Tere!” (Hi!) or “Aitäh (Thank you) in Estonian. Knowledge of foreign languages is naturally a must for hotel staff and numerous other professions in the service sector. Many people are fluent in English, particularly the younger urban generation, and a great number of people also speak Finnish, due to Finnish TV, Finland’s close proximity to Estonia and the great number of Finnish tourists. German is less widely spoken in Estonia, although previous generations have often studied German, not English, at school. Russian-language use has dropped to a point where older people no longer speak the language well and the younger generation have already chosen other languages to learn at school. Studying French has become more popular over the last few years but the number of people who speak French is still quite small. An English-Estonian dictionary is available online at www.ibs.ee/dict.

Estonians

Estonians are typical Nordic people

– they are reserved, not too talkative and speak rather monotonously, with very little intonation. All this may give one the impression of coldness bordering on rudeness. But rest assured, this is not the case, and the speaker may actually be extremely well-meaning, even excited. There are several well-known Estonian sayings, such as “Think first, then speak”, “Weigh everything carefully nine times before making a move”, and “Talking is silver, silence is gold”. It is, therefore, no wonder that the people are not very good at small-talk, do not waste too much time on grand introductions, and usually come straight to the point. This is why Estonians’ English may sometimes sound shockingly direct. There is, however, often a subtle irony involved in Estonians’ utterances – delivered with a serious face and just the slightest twinkle of the eye.

Estonians are relatively individualistic. There is a saying that five Estonians mean six parties. Even though people agree on the final objective, they insist on reaching it in their own ways. Estonians also value their privacy. In the old days, it was said that the neighbour’s house was close enough if you could see the smoke from the chimney. Modern, tight-packed urbanites flock to remote countryside on the week-

ends to enjoy more space and privacy.

Even though guests at birthday parties and concerts are rather quiet and subdued in the onset, they warm up eventually and turn into a direct opposite of their day-character, as you are likely to see in Tallinn’s clubs.



TALLINN

just a few hours away



For best fares and reservations:

- < www.estonian-air.com
- < Call Centre on +372 640 1163
- < Estonian Air offices and representatives
- < Travel agencies



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