

LIFE IN Estonia

AUTUMN 2008

**Night Song
Festival**

"Time to
Take Notice"

Creative Tandem of

**Semper-
Ojasoo**

Rakvere

A Town Full of Vigour

Portfolio:

Aavo Ermel

**New Era
in the
Rotermann
Quarter**

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A fifth of all scanning microscopes in the labs of research institutes and corporations across the world contain the micro needle created by Estonia's most successful nanotech company, Mikromasch.

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The town of Rakvere is the administrative, economic and cultural centre of Lääne-Viru County.

There is a lot to do and see in Rakvere, from historical sight-seeing to relaxing at a spa. Welcome to Rakvere!

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 EESTI KONTSERT**RUDOLF TOBIAS****Oratorio DES JONA SENDUNG****Conductor NEEME JÄRVI**

**Estonian National Symphony Orchestra | Estonian National Male Choir | Oratorio choir
Chamber Choir Voces Musicales | Estonian National Opera Boys' Choir**
choir master Risto Joost
Piret Aidulo organ

MARINA LAPINA soprano, Russia, MERLE SILMATO mezzo soprano, JUHAN TRALLA tenor, RAUNO ELP baritone, JOHANN TILLI bass, Finland

Fri 21 November at 19:00 Estonia Concert Hall ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ **Sat 22 November at 19:00 Vanemuine Concert Hall**

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WILHELM TELL

Concert performance of Gioachino Rossini's opera
 12, 18 and 20 December 2008, Estonian National Opera

Libretto: Victor-Joseph Étienne de Jouy and Hippolyte-Louis-Florent Bis after the play Wilhelm Tell by Friedrich Schiller
Music director and conductor: Arvo Volmer
Soloists: Rauno ELP, Mario Zeffiri, Nadia Kurem, Angelika Mikk, Helen Lokuta, Priit Volmer, Mart Laur, Leonid Savitski, Oliver Kuusik, Urmas Põldma, René Soom, Aare Saal

Sung in Italian, with Estonian and English subtitles

Wilhelm Tell is the last masterpiece of the world renowned Italian composer Gioachino Rossini that premiered in 1829 at the Paris Opéra. The most well-known part of the opera is the programmatic overture with its unmistakable motive of a galloping cavalry.



Mario Zeffiri

Rossini is first and foremost known for his comic operas, such as The Barber of Seville, Cinderella, The Thieving Magpie etc. but his operas include also serious operas – Wilhelm Tell being the most outstanding. It has not been produced frequently, because the demanding tenor part and the length of the opera have made it fairly difficult to cast and stage. Estonian National Opera is glad to please its audiences – the demanding part of Arnold Melcthal will be sung by Mario Zeffiri, whose wonderful voice thrilled the Estonians in Bellini's The Puritans and Verdi's Rigoletto in 2007.

www.opera.ee

THE FORMULA OF LOVE

Opera by Mari Vihmand

World premiere: 17 October 2008, the Estonian National Opera

Libretto by Maimu Berg and Mari Vihmand after the novel The Mathematics of Nina Gluckstein by Esther Vilar

Music Director and Conductor: Arvo Volmer
Concept and dramaturgy: Mari Vihmand, Liis Kolle
Stage Director: Liis Kolle
Designer: Ann Lumiste
Lighting Designer: Airi Eras
Choreographer: Ana Mondini
Soloists: Helen Lokuta, René Soom, Riina Airene, Angelika Mikk, Janne Shevtshenko or Kristina Vähi, Juuli Lill, Andres Köster, Priit Volmer
Estonian National Opera Symphony Orchestra and Opera Chorus

Sung in Estonian, with Estonian and English subtitles

Buenos Aires in the 1950s. A well-known Argentinean writer Roberta Gomez retells the love story of Nina Gluckstein and a popular tango-singer Chucho Santelmo. The opera meditates on issues, such as to whom belongs a beloved artist and his love; is there such a thing as eternal love and what is the formula? Nina finds the formula but loses her life. Will eternal love survive?

Argentinian-German writer Esther Vilar is the author of 14 plays. She is best known in the UK for The Manipulated Man, her internationally bestselling analysis of sexual politics. Published in several languages, The Mathematics of Nina Gluckstein has become a bestseller in France, Spain and Germany, where it has become a cult book.

www.opera.ee





14. September at 6 pm
KUMU Hall

15. September at 7 pm
Tartu Athena Centre

Chris Gall Trio feat. Enik (Germany)

Chris Gall Trio combines jazz with pop music elements. Unlike old-time fusion, their brave mixture contains surprising turns and 'the group has its own European identity' as German jazz critics have noted. The concert features the multi-talented singer/actor/film-maker Enik.



18 September at 7 pm,
Tallinn Art House

From Thelonious Monk to the Saaremaa Waltz Duo Tiit Paulus- Jaak Sooäär (Estonia)

Two guitarists, two different generations and backgrounds. Paulus-Sooäär describe their programme as 'from Thelonious Monk to the Saaremaa Waltz'. That is meant to give hints to the wide variety of influences and music they play. Be prepared to hear old and new, urban and pastoral from those two masterful players.



24 September at 9 pm, Club von
Überlingen

Ma'Cheri Freshlyground

(South-Africa)

After playing in Tallinn first time almost two years ago, the South-African band is eagerly awaited back. They have made a similar impression everywhere they have played at. Freshlyground's music is a joyful mixture of African rhythm and harmonies, jazzy improvisations, and lively rock music.



4. October at 5 pm, KUMU Hall

5. October at 5 pm,
Viljandi Folk Music Barn

Andrea Marcelli Italian Trio feat. Raul Sööt & Ain Agan (Italy-Estonia)

That's the reason why jazz always has an international touch. The nationality of musicians doesn't matter, what counts is music. Estonian sax player Raul Sööt and Italian drummer Andrea Marcelli became friends during their studies in Copenhagen. Now their groups strive towards a new modern jazz language while attempting to preserve traditions in their music.



16 October at 9 pm,
Von Krahl Bar

Ajavares (Estonia)

The Estonian group of young musicians play tunes from their recent debut album "A Love Song to the Migratory Bird". They sing in Estonian, integrate music they love into their compositions and play with enthusiastic energy. If you want to hear good and original Estonian jazz, be there.



20 October at 7 pm, KUMU Hall

The Romanian- American Jazz Summit Sam Newsome & Lucian Ban Sextet (USA-Romania)

The American sax player Sam Newsome and the Romanian-born pianist Lucian Ban explore complex, somewhat unorthodox rhythms and non-western modes with their group. The Transilvanian musical heritage meets jazz and, judging by the high-level musicianship of the participants, it seems only natural that the result is vibrant and interesting.



27 October at 7 pm,
Russian Theatre

Krakauer's Klezmer Maddness! (USA)

The internationally acclaimed clarinetist David Krakauer embraces a myriad of styles into the music of his band. There you can hear ecstatic klezmer music and madly avangardistic improvisation with hints to classical music and rock, funk and hip-hop. The group has played at Venice Biennale, BBC Proms and WOMEX among many other places. Their "new wave of klezmer" shows us where world music and jazz meet.



4 November at 7 pm,
Tartu Athena Centre

5 November at 7 pm,
Salme Cultural Centre

All You Need Is Love - Brian Melvin 50 BeatleJazz (USA), East-West, Drum Prana

To celebrate his 50th birthday, the Tallinn-residing percussion player Brian Melvin invites his closest co-musicians on stage to play with him. We'll hear internationally known BeatleJazz with the pianist David Kikoski, we'll learn more about Brian's orientalism with East-West Project and Drum Prana, and finally the Geografix will show us his affinity to modern club rhythms.

www.jazzkaar.ee

Home doctor doc@home in Great Britain

Rainer Nõlvak's company Docobo, which created the home-based health monitoring system doc@home, is developing step by step in the UK and has its eyes on Germany as the next potential market.

The Manager of Docobo, Ardo Reinsalu (above), admits that the development of doc@home, which five years ago received the title of the best European e-health solution, has been slower than expected, but that it is certainly not a failure. Currently the company is using its own assets to grow. Additional capital of approximately 40 million kroons would be needed for faster development.

"More products could be in use in Great Britain, but we have not had the time to work on sales. The market is large and not very open, but the company is small," he explains.

Another obstacle for Docobo in several countries, including Estonia, is the fact that, although the operating costs of hospital networks are increasing, many countries do not value prevention enough. "All due respect should be given to the UK, where their health policy is focusing on reducing the number of hospital bed days and on tele-medical solutions," says Reinsalu.

Half of Docobo belongs to Nõlvak's investment company Curonia Research. The company has 1,500 customers in the UK who use doc@home, subsidised by the local health authority.



Greek dogs will eat Estonian "Actimel"

A pro-biotic dog food brand developed by the Estonian company Bacterfield has been available in the Baltic States, Finland, Portugal and Greece since this spring-summer.

"We are currently in the process of finding distributors in markets with greater potential, and beginning in the autumn we are looking to add another 10-15 countries. The feedback on the product has been really positive and promising," says the Executive Director of Bacterfield, Vygantas Kirejevas. In the next five years the company's goal is to capture five per cent of the global 'Super Premium' segment of the dog food market.

Kirejevas had the idea for Bacterfield some years ago. Considering the general popularity of probiotic bacteria in products meant for humans, such as Actimel and Gefilus kefir, as well as their scientifically proven properties in preventing illness and maintaining good health, the idea was conceived to create Actimel for dogs, or dog food containing pro-biotic bacteria.

Bacterfield started the necessary research and development work, which led to the application for a patent and international registration of the brands.



Oskando breaks into Europe

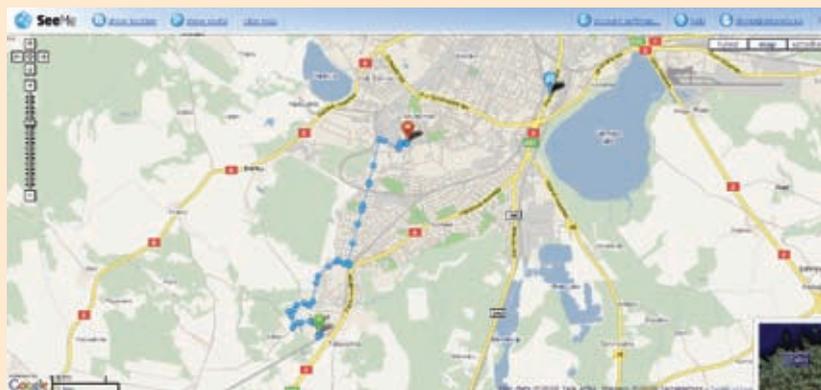
Oskando, the leader of the Estonian telematics market, started activities in Bulgaria and plans to move into the markets of Byelorussia, Croatia, Azerbaijan, Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia.

In March, the company signed a partnership agreement with GPS Bulgaria, which buys GSM/GPS controllers from the Estonian company. These appliances connect geographical positioning technology with mobile connection services. Oskando's appliance enables car owners to determine location, fuel usage and other important indicators from a distance. The service is used by corporate clients, mostly transport-, insurance- and service enterprises, totalling over 10,000 in Bulgaria.

According to the Manager of Oskando, Kristi Hakkaja, GPS Bulgaria is undoubtedly a local market leader in its field. "Moving together with an experienced partner into the rapidly developing Central European market gives Oskando the opportunity to

multiply its production volumes in the next few years," she says.

Oskando offers vehicle monitoring and operating systems which work all across the world. The positions of vehicles are determined via the global positioning system GPS and displayed to the user with the help of Google maps.



Night Song Festival

“Time to Take Notice”

or

“The world had
never seen such
a birthday bash
before”

Text: Rein Sikk / *Eesti Päevaleht*
Photos: Mihkel Maripuu / *Postimees/Scanpix*

Such is the wonderful gift which Estonians have of drawing spiritual strength from singing in unison that nearly 100,000 people gathered on one dusky night in August and sang for more than six hours, celebrating the 90th birthday of the state. Has the world ever seen such a birthday bash before?

Estonians have sung together at their own song festivals since 1869. They take a break for four or five years and then gather again for the national singing event. Through song, we have said what we did not dare to say otherwise. There have been songs about love. But we have sung against the Russian Empire, the German nobility and the Soviet occupation. Most of all we have sung in favour of being our own selves, being independent. And to nourish our souls. For Estonians, singing together is like a rite to strengthen the spirit and mind. Estonian song festivals have been included on the UNESCO World Heritage list. But Estonian mothers even sing to their babies while they are still in the womb, waiting to come into this world.

Songs instead of weapons

In 1988, just before the Soviet Union collapsed, the Estonian singing tradition gained two new terms: “night song festival” and “singing revolution”.

The night song festival stood for the joint singing events which emerged, on the grassroots level, at the Tallinn Song Festival Grounds, one of the most important locations in Estonia. The crowds gathered in the evening, took out previously hidden blue-black-and-white flags and sang,

Different bands turned up and played for free to accompany the people. During those nights in June, many songs were sung which had been banned during the half century of Soviet occupation.

People not only sang at night. A wave of mass meetings and singing swept over Estonia on its route to freedom, from villages to towns, from smaller to larger festival grounds. People spoke honestly about their history and the dark future as part of the empire; they spoke of their wish to proceed with Gorbachev’s policy of *perestroika*, so that Estonia could once more become independent. But above all they sang. They sang national melodies close to the heart of the people, forbidden tunes with patriotic messages which had been created specifically for the singing summer of 1988. It was the time of the rebirth of the nation and the state in people’s souls, although real independence was still some years away.

The artist and freedom fighter Heinz Valk called the sequence of events “the singing revolution”. Its unofficial hymn was the newly created song which





Freedom is not self-evident
 Extract from the speech of the President of the Republic of Estonia, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, at the Night Song Festival:

Many of us have started to consider the things around us—our own state, our freedom, our firm rights—to be something self-evident. But today, ten days after the abhorrent news and images from Georgia, we once more realise that freedom is not self-evident. Freedom is not a simple word or statement which we can look down on or smirk at. Freedom—of both the state and of people—must be cared for and protected day in and day out. Freedom demands that we notice what is happening in the world. It demands that we see ourselves as part of this complicated and changing world. Exactly forty years ago on this day, on 20 August 1968, Czechoslovakia stood alone when foreign tanks entered Prague. Today, forty years later, we did not leave Georgia standing on its own, and international pressure will force the foreign tanks to leave. We can proudly say again that no land is on its own. But only if we have the courage to stand up for our friends.

includes the words: “ ... to deny one’s ethnicity is just as bad as selling oneself into slavery. I am an Estonian and will always be so, since this is how I was created. I feel good and proud to be an Estonian...”

Whereas in other parts of the world revolutions which have freed countries and peoples have been organised with weapons in hand, in Estonia it took place with singing, eyes filled with tears of joy, and worry in the heart. Many tourists who happened to first come to Estonia in those days were amazed – how could there be so many happy singing people in the grey Soviet world?

At the end of this summer of song, on 11 September 1988, over 300,000 people gathered at the Tallinn Song Festival Grounds. The first

public demand to restore the Republic of Estonia was voiced at this event, called “The Song of Estonia”. Together, the people sang all the songs of that passionate summer. And the promise was made – if there is no independence and the Soviet Union will not let us go, we will always remember this bright summer of singing. We will have the memory of the Singing Revolution, which we will pass on to our children.

Twenty years on

In 2008, the Republic of Estonia is celebrating its 90th anniversary. As twenty years have passed since the night song festivals and the Singing Revolution, it was decided to organise another song festival for the birthday – a night song festival – and to call it “Time to Take Notice”. The name refers to the need to be aware of others around us and to notice what today seems so obvious – that Estonia is an independent state.

Just before the festival, the war started in Georgia and on the day of the festival the Estonian athlete Gert Kanter won the gold medal in the discus throw at the Olympics in Beijing. Both events were on people’s minds. On the evening of 19 August, as the gates of the Tallinn Song Festival were opened at 8pm, the organisers had just one question on their minds – will people turn up?

And they did - on foot, by car and by bus. They came from Tallinn and also from hundreds of kilometres away. Many noticed the high number of pregnant women and mothers



with prams. People also came on crutches, with walking sticks and in wheelchairs. The organisers had asked that all alcoholic beverages be left at home. There was no alcohol sold on the festival grounds. This was quite an exception in a country with such a liberal alcohol policy. But the people followed instructions. If they were high on something, it was on the happiness of being and singing together.

The crowds filled up the festival grounds and suddenly it resembled a sea. Gently flowing waves, then stormy, with stripes of foam made of blue-black-and-white flags on top of each wave.

The best choirs and bands were on stage. They had come as volunteers, not demanding a fee. The songs which have been important to the people of Estonia for centuries—from the *regi*-verses which are a couple of centuries old to contemporary national rap—were sung, with all the people singing along at the top of their voices.

There were also songs which people used to sing during their service in the Soviet army, while hiding from the occu-

piers in the woods, and while taking a swig of vodka in the tiny rental apartment of an apartment block, not to mention the legendary repertoire of the night song festivals.

Grandfather's flag

Many people admitted that they had never seen so many national flags as during the night song festival. Perhaps the reason for this national demonstration was fear of the events in Georgia repeating themselves in the Baltic States and the question posed by the organisers: “When did you last notice that Estonia is free?”

There were new flags and historical flags, many from the time of the War of Independence. For example, Janek, a lad from central Estonia, arrived even before the gates opened. He was wearing a hat in national colours and carrying the national flag, having bought it just the day before especially for this occasion. Before he came to the party, he had watched Estonia get Olympic gold on TV and then hurried to Tallinn feeling a great sense of joy. After the festival,

Janek got home at five in the morning. Even a day later, his voice shook when he described his feelings: “Amazing, unbelievable”. He was charged up with new energy.

Urmas, a construction worker, brought his whole family along to the festival from a hundred kilometres away in northern Estonia. He had very personal memories of the Singing Revolution twenty years before. Urmas had been mobilised into the Soviet army back then and he was serving his time in the far north, above the polar circle. His girlfriend, today his wife, used to write the poor soldier long letters about the Estonian fight for freedom. That it was so beautiful and powerful to sing together with other Estonians and to yearn for independence. Urmas was heart-broken while reading those lines, because he had to be so far away and was serving a foreign state. Now finally, twenty years later, he could experience the night song festival and sing national songs for six straight hours. The next day, when they were talking about this experience together with their three children, the young people said: “Now we feel like real Estonians, as we feel how many of us there are and how friendly and idealistic we all are.” Their parents were incredibly happy to hear this.

Fred, a student, stuck a large national flag through the hatch on the roof of his car and drove through Tallinn with people smiling and waving and cars tooting their horns. Fred’s flag is special, handmade in the days when one could go to prison or lose one’s job for owning the tricolour. It was sewn in Fred’s grandfather’s home during the Soviet occupation. Despite the ban, Grandpa used to secretly hoist the flag in the quiet fishing village where he lived. Fred felt very proud to sing and wave his grandfather’s historical flag at the festival. A day later, he said that people had got a very important dose of idealism from this event. Perhaps, in building up their own country, people had become mentally lazy and had started to think too much about money. “But now they have experienced the feeling of being together, which is important for a small nation, and which cannot and should not be measured in money,” said Fred.

People left the night song festival happier, stronger, more thoughtful, purer, more Estonian. The sky, after the storm of singing, became overcast and the usual grey Estonian rain started to pour down.

Memories of this birthday party remain. They will help us hang on in today’s economic recession.

PS. If you are curious about what the event looked like, you can benefit from modern technology and visit youtube: just type in “Night Song Festival” and you will have a chance to see the event with your own eyes.

Chronicles of the Singing Revolution

1988

On 1-2 April, the Estonian creative intelligentsia demanded the widening of political rights, cultural and economic independence, an end to immigration, and the resignation of the government.

In spring, during the Heritage Days in Tartu, the blue-black-and-white colour combination, though as three separate flags, was brought out for the first time. A month later, at a rock festival, many were carrying the flags, which were still officially banned.

During the Tallinn Old Town Days in June, night song festivals took place at the Song Festival Grounds, where young people sang national songs together. The wave of singing events swept across Estonia.

On 17 June, the artist and freedom fighter Heinz Valk called the events “The Singing Revolution”.

On 11 September, nearly 300,000 people gathered at the Song Festival Grounds in Tallinn to make political demands and to sing national songs at the event called “The Song of Estonia”. For the first time, the demand for the restoration of Estonia’s independence was made in public.

On 16 November the Estonian Supreme Soviet adopted the Declaration of Sovereignty, which was annulled by Moscow.

On 7 December the Estonian Supreme Soviet amended the constitution to recognise the Estonian language as the language of the state.

See also:

Singing Revolution – Laulev revolutsioon.

Mountain View Productions’ (USA) 92- minute documentary about Estonia becoming independent. Directors: James Tusty and Maureen Castle Tusty.

More information:

www.singingrevolution.com



Estonian Development Co-Operation and Humanitarian Aid

Text and photos: Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Since 1998, Estonia has dealt with development co-operation as a foreign policy field. We have become a donor country, who, alongside other democracies, are contributing at the international level to the growth of overall global stability, in spite of Estonia's modest contribution in monetary terms.

Development co-operation and humanitarian aid are integral parts of Estonian foreign policy and thus hew to the same purposes as overall foreign policy. Estonia's foreign policy is active and aimed at achieving and ensuring democracy, stability, security and prosperity in Europe and elsewhere in the world (Foreign Ministry's Vision 2005). Development co-operation and humanitarian aid are directly targeted at enhancing prosperity, at strengthening democracy and at supporting human rights in partner countries, for development co-operation as well as the whole world. Through development co-operation, we make a con-

tribution to peaceful development and stability on the regional, as well as global, level, which in turn will enhance Estonia's own security.

The underlying document for Estonian development co-operation is "Principles of Estonian Development Co-operation", approved by the Riigikogu on 15 January 2003. The document defines the priorities of the development co-operation policy across the countries/regions and across various fields, as well as different ways of conducting development co-operation.

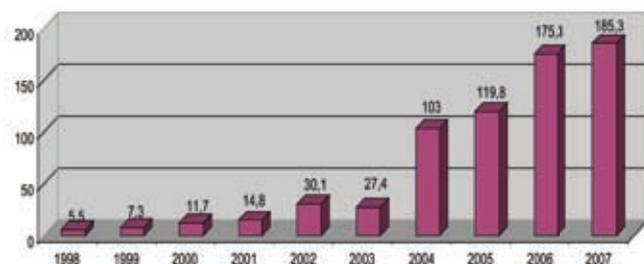
To make Estonian development co-operation more transparent and productive, as well as to determine the corresponding courses of action, the Foreign Ministry drafted "Estonia's Strategy for Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Aid 2006-2010", approved by the Estonian Government in the spring of 2006.

As of 2004, funds for conducting development co-operation are earmarked in the Foreign Ministry's budget. The funding has gradually been increased and this year the sum administered by the Foreign Ministry is 60 million EEK.

According to the report to be presented to the OECD Development Assistance Committee, which also consolidates projects implemented from the budgets of other ministries and considered to be development co-operation projects, in 2007 the aggregate amount for Estonian development co-operation was 185.2 million EEK or 0.08% of the Gross National Income (GNI).

Estonia intends to increase its official development assistance by 2011 at least up to the level of 0.17% of the GNI.

Estonian Official Development Assistance (ODA) 1998-2007



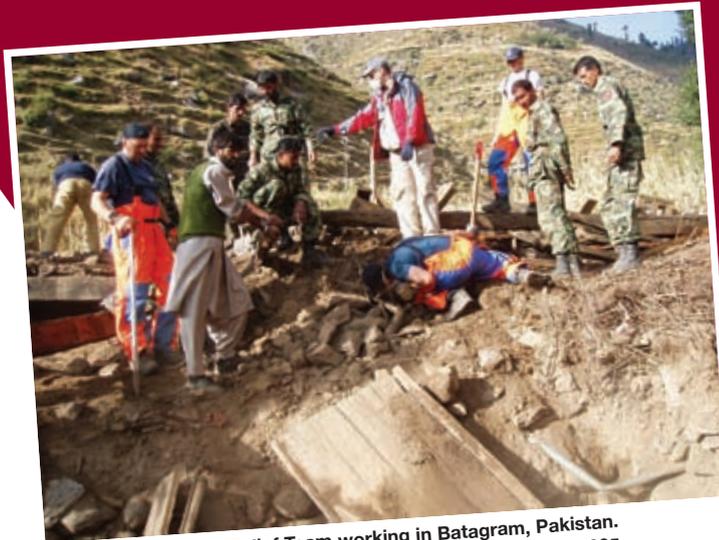
Estonian development co-operation is based on partnership between different states and on mutual interest, and its overall objective is to contribute to achieving global development goals. To attain those goals, Estonia mainly offers technical assistance or know-how to its co-operation partners. We have been successful in building up our state and structures and, for that reason, we possess a relative competitive advantage in distributing know-how in this field, compared with other donor countries. As a result, countries carrying out similar reforms at present are very interested in Estonia's corresponding experiences in, for instance, implementing economic reforms, in a wide launch of information technology, in integrating into international organizations and in the development of the general democratic order of society. In addition to imparting know-how, another important subject is issues connected with indigenous people.

In its development co-operation projects, Estonia, first and foremost, focusses on its four partner countries, which are Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova and Afghanistan.

The growing number of requests for co-operation from our partner countries attests to our activities being necessary and effective. Positive experiences and assessments acquired while participating in projects arranged by us have been disseminated rapidly. Those who sought our assistance have become more active themselves, and the range of issues we are able to deal with has grown as well. Our partners have greatly appreciated Estonia's neutral approach and open attitude in the implementation of development co-operation projects. We have, no doubt, also reached enhanced mutual understanding, due to the fact that it was only recently that we ourselves were in the role of recipient of active aid and knowledge. Now, in rendering assistance to others, we try to proceed from the experiences we acquired.

Civil associations, which carry out the majority of projects, are important partners in drafting development co-operation policy, as well as in implementing development co-operation projects. Estonian civil associations interested in contributing to development projects are united by the Estonian Round-table for Development Co-operation.

In addition to supporting the economic and social development of partner countries, Estonia, within its means, renders assistance to the countries of the world afflicted by natural disasters or armed conflicts. Granting humanitarian aid is the most authentic form of solidarity between people and countries, and is also an integral part of Estonia's development co-operation policy. We have recently sent humani-



Estonian Disaster Relief Team working in Batagram, Pakistan.
October 2005

tarian assistance to the victims of the armed conflict in Georgia, helped refugees and displaced persons in Lebanon through the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and, through UNICEF, we have supported the improvement of conditions for children in the Democratic Republic of Congo, just to name a few activities in this field. In 2005, for the first time, the Estonian Disaster Relief Team participated in relief efforts, after the tsunami in Indonesia and earthquake in Pakistan.

Supporting the activities of different international organizations active in development co-operation and humanitarian assistance (e.g. UN bodies and the International Committee of the Red Cross) through budgetary payments has become a tradition.

Along with providing development assistance and humanitarian aid, we consider it very important to inform the Estonian population about the activities we pursue and global events in general. Public awareness enhances the solidarity of the society, as well as increasing support for our set goals. An information folder on development co-operation has been published. The Foreign Ministry also supports different third-sector projects aimed at raising the awareness of the population and funds the working of Estonian volunteers in developing countries. At the beginning of 2008, a public opinion poll on the topic of development co-operation was conducted, the main aim of which was to learn about the awareness of the population as regards development co-operation and about the attitude towards the necessity thereof. The results of the poll form a basis for the planning of long-term activities in the field of disseminating information, including in the field of world education. The results of the poll are available on the Foreign Ministry's home page.

Additional information: www.vm.ee/est/kat_425

Training Georgian law enforcement officers in Estonia

Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova and Afghanistan are the priority partner countries of Estonian bilateral development assistance. However, recent dramatic events in Georgia have led the world donor community to shift its attention from development to relief of the humanitarian crisis that has developed in the country. Estonia, aside from its commitment to helping the Georgian population affected by the armed conflict, will try to continue to support numerous development cooperation projects already being implemented. Among several projects carried out to support the transition and successful reforms in Georgia, the training of Georgian law enforcement officers can be considered to be one of most outstanding examples.

The training courses organised for instructors of the Academy of the Ministry of the Interior of Georgia and police officers from the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region (bordering Abkhazia) have been organized by the Estonian Public Service Academy since 2005. These courses are being supported, on a continuing basis, by quite a remarkable circle of donors, such as the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iceland and the Ministry of the Interior of Finland.

Estonia has gone through major transitional changes in its recent past of restored statehood and, as a result, substantial know-how has developed. Cooperation with Georgia is directed to the development of the training of its police, by introducing to Georgian colleagues the organization of the Estonian police and by helping them to acquire practical know-how to implement modern police work based



Graduation of Georgian law enforcement officers' training in summer 2006.



Georgian police officers acquiring new knowledge at the Estonian forensic examination laboratory in 2006.

Estonian Public Service Academy

on democratic values and the principles of a constitutional state.

During the courses, theoretical and practical basic principles of modern police work are taught, along with the structure of the Estonian Police, tasks, methods of work and basic principles of law, new methods of work organization and the training of patrol police, traffic and constable services, forensics, principles of international cooperation by identification of stolen cars and fighting against narcotics, and the role of Interpol and Europol in these processes. Theoretical knowledge evolves into practical knowledge during the training. The feedback of the Georgian police officers who have taken part in the courses has been very positive. In their assessments of the programme, they have highlighted the care of highly professional instructors and mentors, as well as their warm attitude towards Georgian officers. Participants have indicated that the newly acquired education and experience will influence their future duties in adopting modern tools of policing, and as many colleagues as possible will be acquainted with the received knowledge.

In March 2008, the Estonian Public Service Academy and the Academy of the Ministry of the Interior of Georgia signed a Cooperation Agreement, setting up an even more solid basis for Estonia's dedication to sharing its experience and Georgia's willingness to benefit from it.

Estonia supports Afghanistan's Helmand province's central hospital

Since October 2006, the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has supported the Bost civilian hospital in the town of Lashkar Gah with necessary means for basic health care.

The first development assistance project delivered portable oxygen generators and warming cribs for underweight and premature newborns to the paediatric section of the hospital. This equipment is essential in reducing the infant mortality rate. Medical equipment with a value of 70,500 EUR was delivered to the Helmand provincial hospital, in co-operation with the Estonian Red Cross.

In January 2008, the Estonian Foreign Ministry helped to supply the Helmand central hospital with electricity during the winter period. The necessary supply of diesel fuel was obtained to power the hospital's electric generators. There are serious problems involved in supplying electricity to the hospital during the winter, as electricity from the city's grid is only guaranteed for a few hours each day. The rest of the time, a separate electric generator must be used to light and

heat the hospital rooms, as well as keep medical equipment running.

Since March 2008, an Estonian medical expert from the Estonian special mission to Afghanistan has been working in Lashkar Gah as part of the international Provincial Reconstruction Team. His activities have focussed on improving the health care sector's technical capabilities, in order to provide better services for the local population in the Helmand region.

In the future, Estonia will continue to assist the provincial hospital by donating medical equipment necessary to provide comprehensive health care services. According to the Estonian strategy on development, co-operation and humanitarian assistance for 2006-2010, special attention will be paid to improving the situation of children and women in developing countries.



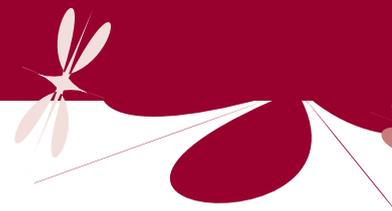
Sister nursing her brother in the Bost Hospital's paediatric section. 2007.

- The death rate of newborns and infants is very high in Afghanistan, reaching up to 20 percent.
- According to the head physician of the Helmand central hospital, Enaytullah Ghafary, one out of four babies born at Bost Hospital dies before his or her first birthday.

- The Bost civilian hospital in Lashkar Gah is the largest and best hospital in Helmand province.
- The hospital was built and equipped by the US government in 1965, and most of the hospital's equipment dates from that time.
- The hospital employs 34 doctors, who treat, in addition to hospitalized patients, about 90 ambulatory patients a day. There are about 100 practicing doctors in the province.
- The population of the province is 1.4 million and the percentage of children is about one third of the population.

The Bost Hospital in Lashkar Gah, Helmand province, Afghanistan. 2007.





The State Visit of Their Majesties King Albert II and Queen Paola of the Belgians to the Republic of Estonia

10 – 12 June 2008

Photos:
Erik Peinar
Ministry of Foreign Affairs



The Official Welcoming Ceremony at the
Presidential Palace in Kadriorg.



His Majesty King Albert II and Her Majesty Queen Paola.



HM King Albert II meeting with Prime Minister Andrus Ansip in Stenbock House. Prime Minister Andrus Ansip introducing Estonia's e-government.



Signing the guestbook in the Estonian Parliament *Riigikogu* following a meeting with Speaker of Parliament Ene Ergma.



Dinner hosted by the President of the Republic and Mrs. Evelin Ilves in honour of Their Majesties King Albert II and Queen Paola at the House of the Brotherhood of the Blackheads. HM King Albert II gave a speech at the dinner.



HM King Albert II, HM Queen Paola, President of the Republic Toomas Hendrik Ilves and Mrs. Evelin Ilves exchanging decorations and gifts.



Their Majesties visiting Rocca al Mare Open Air Museum.



HM Queen Paola visiting Vodja School.

Estonian company spoils the evil plans of Iraqi terrorists



Photos: Tiit Blaas / Hei

Rantelon, a spin-off company of the Tallinn University of Technology, has supplied Estonian soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan with radio scrambler devices, or jammers. Now the company wants to get its foot in the door of the US defence industry.

The owners of Rantelon, the engineers Andres Taklaja (in photo) and Priit Kinks, can spend hours talking about the antennas, amplifiers and filters which the company sells to large Estonian telecom companies. But Rantelon has one special product which is so secret that it's not even mentioned on the company's homepage – its jammer.

Taklaja is careful when selecting his words to describe the device, as it is produced on the basis of a special license. The appliance is shielded in the veil of state secrecy. The work takes place according to the requirements of the customer, the Estonian Defence Forces, through the state-owned company E-Arsenal.

“We do not sit in the ivory tower of academic freedom, generating arbitrary ideas which we cannot sell to producers

– that would be frustrating. People come to us with ideas, after which we agree on what is possible through physics and, if the price and the result are satisfactory, we create the appliance,” he explains.

The jammer is a radio scrambler device which looks like a box with antennas and which interferes with the evil plans of terrorists. A jammer is attached to a patrol convoy car or a soldier attaches a smaller version to his back.

The appliance creates a safe “umbrella”: should someone attempt to explode a bomb by using a car or garage key or some other radio appliance as a trigger, the jammer blocks the radio frequencies. There is no explosion until the convoy has passed and the interfering signal has become weaker. There are currently dozens of different types of jammers produced by Rantelon in use by Estonian soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan.

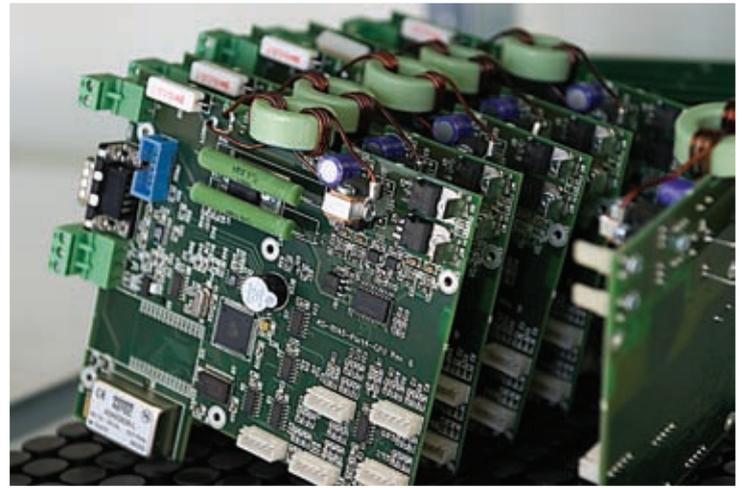
When a soldier leaves a car, he wears a jammer weighing ten kilograms on his back. There is an additional signalling device which notifies the soldier when he is out of range of the shielding “umbrella” on the vehicle. Rantelon is not allowed to say what the radius of the jammer is. It is a state secret, just like the exact number of jammers in existence.

It took engineers only two weeks to get from the idea of the jammer to creating the first prototype. It was urgently needed in Iraq in 2003, and it worked very well. Since then the Estonian Defence Forces have contracted with the company to develop the product and to create additional devices and new jammers.

As the next step, Rantelon plans to break down barriers, with the help of E-Arsenal, and sell its jammers to protect the soldiers of other countries. According to Taklaja, Estonian coalition partners are often supported by US financing, which means that the first preference is for military technology made by US producers.

“There have been cases where there has been no explosion when the Estonian convoy passes, but there has been one when a convoy of another state passes,” says Taklaja. This is proof of the reliability and competitiveness of the Estonian product, which is a strong sales case with countries that have a long experience of participation in various war zones.

Rantelon has “cast its nets in the water” through its partner E-Arsenal and is waiting for a breakthrough with new



It took engineers only two weeks to get from the idea of the jammer to creating the first prototype.

customers. Until the efforts start to bear fruit, Rantelon will keep developing its jammers, as bomb-makers too are becoming more and more cunning.

“The producers are ready to make and sell jammers at any price, as long as customers don’t buy them from producers of some other country. But, for soldiers, it is important to stay alive, regardless of which producer’s product they are wearing. This is the kind of battle we’re in!” explains Taklaja.

Rantelon’s advantage is its small size and flexibility: they know the Defence Forces well, they produce and develop equipment fast and even the protection of state secrets is not as time- and effort-consuming as with the large bureaucracy of the USA.

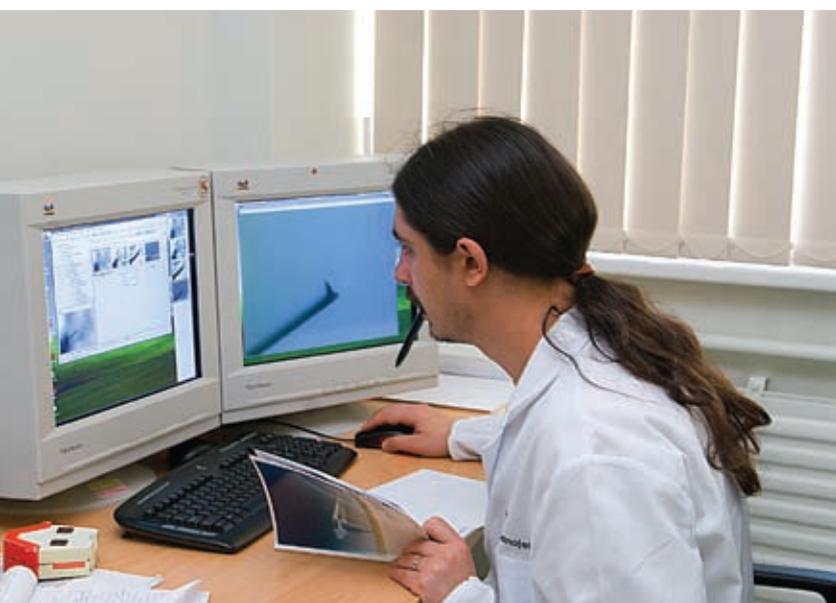
Rantelon’s jammer meant for civilian use is currently successfully being used in the Rummu prison, where it blocks the mobile transmission of inmates in certain places. This has solved the problem which used to give management a headache – throwing mobile phones over the fence, and the prohibited interaction with the outside world has been significantly reduced.

Estonian company Mikromasch holds a fifth of the world market

A fifth of all scanning microscopes in the labs of research institutes and corporations across the world contain the micro needle created by Estonia's most successful nanotech company, Mikromasch.

Text: Toivo Tänavsuu / *Eesti Ekspress*

Photos: Tiit Blaht / *Hei*



A micro needle is the most important part of a scanning microscope. It is a minuscule—just 0.3 micrometers in diameter—diamond-shaped silicone point which resembles a gramophone needle. It moves like a sensor across molecules in a microscope, making it possible to analyse the contents and structures of molecules on a computer.

The Manager and owner of Mikromasch, Pavel Kudinski, says that its 15-20% global market share and its couple of thousand customers sound great, but it is a very narrow niche market – Mikromasch produces only about twenty thousand micro needles a year. Those are primarily purchased by research institutes, microscope producers like Seiko, or corporations like Bayersdorf or Daimler Benz. Mikromasch produces a selection of about a hundred different micro needles.

With its headquarters in Estonia, sister companies in Spain

and the US, a large part of the production in Zelenograd in Russia and a smaller part in Tartu, and subcontractors in South Korea and the US, the global structure of Mikromasch is so complex that Kudinski says even he has difficulties getting his head around it. In addition, Mikromasch is one of the few Estonian companies with a representation in the Silicon Valley. Hence, it is a very knowledge-intensive enterprise, with a large part of the brain situated in Russia, not Estonia.

According to Kudinski, it is not important where you produce – it is about having the right conditions. There is a good laboratory in the historical electronics centre of Zelenograd. Creating one like it in Estonia would cost about 100 million dollars, which is beyond the company's means.

Scientists in physics-, chemistry- and biology labs all over the world use scanning microscopes. It is a common research method which has an advantage over electron microscopes, because it does not damage the objects under study and it also costs less.

Kudinski claims that the small size of Mikromasch is an advantage over competitors. Larger companies such as Samsung focus on mass production. "We are stable players on the market and time is on our side. We have a strong brand and customers find their own way to us. At the same time, we have to constantly bring new products onto the market. Otherwise, we couldn't be successful in this business – someone else would come up with a cheaper offer and force us out of the market," explains Kudinski. In the future, Kudinski would like to turn Mikromasch into a service enterprise and not just limit itself to producing needles. "We have already been active in this market for ten years. We have an excellent network of partners and customers, which means that a lot of information on what is needed in the market or who has the solutions to offer passes through us," he says. According to Kudinski, Mikromasch needs to become a channel for researchers through which they can take their solutions onto the market, a partner for students and an effective innovator for customers. As an example, Kudinski refers to the existing collaboration with the University of Stanford, through which they will find out

Mikromasch is one of the few Estonian companies with a representation in the Silicon Valley.

how to research the magnetic and electrical properties of molecules, with the help of micro needles.

Mikromasch is also continuing its focus on product development which goes beyond the field of micro

needles. In the future, the tiny needle points will have strong and flexible nanotubes fixed to them, which will allow better analysis of the molecular structures and contents of liquid or jelly-like substances.

In Estonia, Mikromasch collaborates with the Institute of Physics at the University of Tartu and the nanotech company Evikon MCI, where Ambient Sound Investments (the investment group of the Skype founders) also have invested. Evikon develops measurement appliances which make it possible to identify toxic and flammable gases. Mikromasch adds sensors to such measurement tools.



Pavel Kudinski with a scanning microscope which contains the micro needle produced by Mikromasch.



Andres Sevtsuk changes life in the world's metropolises

Text:
Toivo Tänavsuu / *Eesti Ekspress*

Andres Sevtsuk, a young Estonian architect and urban planner, is active at one of the most productive and innovative research environments in the world, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the USA.



The latest version of the project, called the City Car, is a light, electrically powered two-seater vehicle, designed to avoid many of the constraints that traditional cars impose on cities. It has attracted worldwide attention, and was chosen as one of the inventions of the year 2007 by Time Magazine. Image: Franco Variani.

Although young, Sevtsuk—who is studying for his PhD at MIT—has managed to start a career as an architect both in Estonia and France. In Paris, he was a co-author of the Renault Communication Centre and various other projects. He has managed to be heard in the lobbies of the world's car and moped industries, charmed numerous technology journalists from media channels, such as CNN and The New York Times, and travelled half of the world.

“He is very determined and very talented. And when such persistence and talent meet, anything can happen,” says the Head of the Estonian Union of Architects, Ülar Mark. He continues, “Sevtsuk is bold enough to think, talk less and do more. The whole world is full of talented people. But it's also necessary to be able to do the dirty work.”

Water pavilion and City Car

At times, Sevtsuk creates or researches unbelievably strange and unexpected things which do not really seem to have a common denominator. When *Time* magazine chose last year's most impressive innovations, six MIT projects were recognized, including two projects that Sevtsuk participated in. MIT is a school where lack of funding doesn't usually hold good research ideas back.

In the architecture category, *Time* chose the Digital Water Pavilion, with walls made of water curtains, where water is released by computer-operated nozzles, shaping it into texture and patterns. Sevtsuk worked as a research assistant on the initial project, and on the operation of the actual building. The pavilion, opened this summer, can be admired at the EXPO 2008 in Zaragoza, Spain. “Some people look at a waterfall and see water. Other people—people who work at MIT's SENSEable City Laboratory—see a building material or a computer display,” wrote *Time*.

The other innovation which the magazine noted was the electric City Car, co-designed by Sevtsuk, which can be stacked like an airport trolley and left at any station in a city. Such a car requires six times less parking space than an ordinary vehicle.

The development of this Smart-size eco-car is funded by General Motors, but the company does not have exclusive rights to the prototype. There are plans to introduce the vehicle at the EXPO in Shanghai in 2010. “As long as we still depend on large oil reserves in the world, such a car might not seem necessary. But its opportunities are very real.

We just need to find the right company to really invest in it and a city which will promote its sustainable use on the streets,” says Sevtsuk, who thinks that the car would be most suitable for China and India.

An analogous folding electric motor scooter, the RoboScooter, which was introduced at the moto-show in Milan in November, was also co-designed by Sevtsuk at MIT. Two months ago the New York Times ran a story called “Unfold and ride” about this wonder machine equipped with a navigation and trip information system. The customer, the Taiwanese scooter producer Sanyang Motors, will do wonders with this piece of equipment, which reminds a popular old foldable Russian bicycle model. Special rental spots will be opened in Asian cities, thereby making it possible to alleviate parking load by up to 80 per cent.

Sevtsuk joined both the RoboScooter and the City-car projects due to his desire to change urban life. “In the 20th century, the development of cars had a strong impact on the nature of cities. To date, cities have been built to accommodate cars. Is it possible to invent a car which would fit into the city where we want to live?” wonders Sevtsuk.

Mobile phone helps in city planning

Currently supported by a US state scholarship, Sevtsuk's goal is to get his PhD. He is also keen to get involved hands-on in the planning and development of solutions for the world's metropolises. Interest in urbanism is his real passion and this is what he is writing his doctorate on. But while writing his dissertation, he is also collaborating with the SENSEable City Laboratory led by the Italian professor Carlo Ratti, where he is participating in research using mobile phone positioning for urban planning.

His team could bring a new, immeasurably important potential to data which mobile phone operators have been collecting for years for other purposes, like optimizing their networks. Data mining of mobile network traffic- How many users are located in which part of the city, where are they coming from or headed to? – is enormously helpful in city planning for avoiding traffic jams, locating shops or valuing real estate, and even planning a city evacuation in a worst case scenario. If we couple this with real-time information on the movement of public transit and other services, we come up with a valuable tool for building more effective and sustainable cities.

Sevtsuk's team has constructed 3-D computer graphics from massive amounts of anonymized data, which make it possible to read the dynamics and daily rhythms of a

city. The information is collected either historically or in almost real-time, and updated every fifteen minutes or so. “The sample of data is large in many countries, including Estonia, where everyone has a mobile phone, which makes the analysis interesting for urban planners,” says Sevtsuk.

He considers there to be three significant beneficial factors in such data processing. First, city planners will become aware of things that happen in a contemporary city which are otherwise not visible. Second, there is an opportunity to optimize traffic flow or services, and accommodate demand in real-time. Third, even individual opportunities are enlarged: people can check on a Google-like map on their mobile device what is happening in the city, or when the bus will arrive, which could ultimately lead to their own behavioural changes in daily commuting.

In the last two years, data from mobile communication networks has been collected in several cities. The first one was Graz in Austria, where the partner was Mobilcom Austria. The next city was Rome, where the partners were Telecom Italia, Google and local bus- and taxi companies.

In 2006, MIT participated in the Venice Biennale with the Real Time Rome project, which was based on data from Rome. Sevtsuk had the responsibility of being the curator. The exhibition was shown on seven large screens, one of which showed an animated display of the movement of the residents of Rome, the second the movement of all buses and taxis, and the third the activity of the city's inhabitants during the world football championships and the annual “Notte Bianca” festival. There were also displays of the movement of tourists in Rome and car- and pedestrian flows.

Sevtsuk believes that the use of technology in urban planning has a great future. The old ways of planning often continue in a peaceful routine until they become ineffective, or their consequences intolerable- traffic jams or no more fresh air for instance. “Inertia and habit are very strong forces in city life. But intelligent changes are just a question of time,” he believes. “Good technology does not make things more complicated, but solves a problem in a more simple and effective manner.”

Having travelled extensively, Sevtsuk's is fascinated by cities like San Francisco, Los Angeles, Shanghai and Hong Kong. But he also appreciates the architecture of the Tallinn city centre and the wooden houses of the Kalamaja district.

In Estonia, mapping urban life dynamics is also being explored by Rein Ahas at Tartu University and Ülar Mark, whose company Urban Mark Ltd deals with architectural

planning. Sevtsuk says that city planning in Tallinn is fragmented, and based on detailed plans which too often look no further than a given plot of land. General plans in the city are too abstract or standard based rather than performance based, and can be changed based on a whim. But capacity to handle rapid change makes Tallinn a globally exemplary city.

Sevtsuk was already working on his first social positioning projects at MIT in 2005. The US technology media, and CNN, wrote about how electronic maps at the Institute showed where people were 'online' in real-time using laptops or mobile phones. If people logging on allow it, their identities can be shown.

Thus students can find out whether there is space in the school cafeteria for instance, or whether a the library is crowded. Research on the WiFi usage patterns at MIT demonstrated that, instead of spending as much time in academic spaces as in the past, students prefer to spend more time in cafes or lounges, where the environment is more comfortable. The concern was privacy: many students protested against being observed, and the system was thus built respecting everyone's anonymity and sharing individual data only at the user's request.

Values the environment

Although his friends often notice his crazy ideas, Sevtsuk does not think that a good architect must do anything out of the ordinary. Rather s/he should sense the more general social environment and see solutions to issues from a spatial perspective not shared by ordinary people. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but Sevtsuk expresses his measurement of architectural beauty in the following: if the environment where a building has been built is better after the building is completed, then the architect has done a good job.

Having studied in the US since 2004, Sevtsuk says that it was his clear destination even at the time when he was studying for his BA in Paris and working there as an architect. He considers some of his most influential architectural works to date to be two projects in Estonia: the planned joint building of the Tallinn Music School, Tallinn Ballet School and G. Ots Music School in the Tallinn city centre, co-designed with Maia Tüür and the Italian Gabriel Evangelisti; and the competition entry for the courtyard stage of the Tallinn City Theatre, which was also a collaboration with Tüür and Evangelisti. "Although neither of these works won the respective competitions, they gave us several long lasting new ideas," says Sevtsuk.

According to his friend, the architect Kalle Komissarov, Sevtsuk is greatly interested in things belonging to the

Andres Sevtsuk

Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Department of Urban Studies & Planning
PhD candidate in City Design & Development / Urban Information Systems

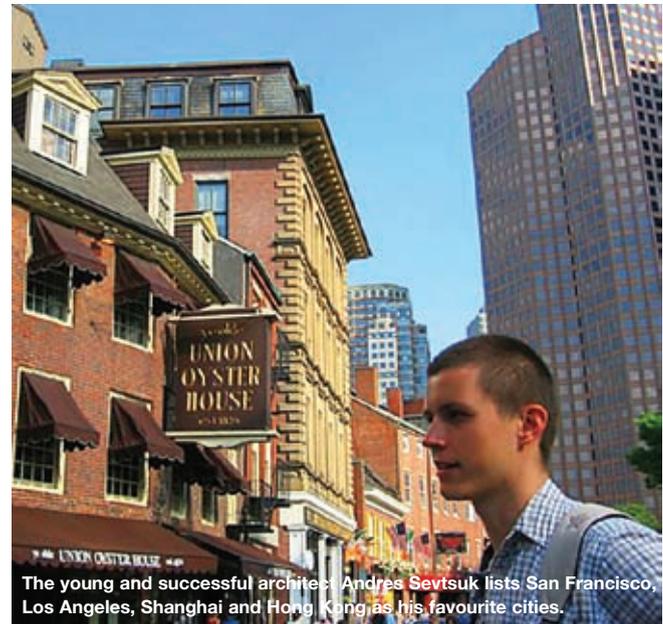
Education

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, U.S.
Phd Candidate in City Design & Development / Urban Information Systems, 2010

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, U.S.
Master of Science in Architecture and Urbanism, 2006

School of Architecture de la Ville et des Territoires, Paris, France
Bachelor of Architecture, 2003

Estonian Academy of Arts, Tallinn, Estonia
Faculty of Architecture and Town planning, 1st and 2nd year studies, 2000



The young and successful architect Andres Sevtsuk lists San Francisco, Los Angeles, Shanghai and Hong Kong as his favourite cities.

realm of fantasy, and MIT, unlike local universities, has enough money to work with things which do not seem to be feasible today.

Komissarov still cannot understand what suddenly spurred Sevtsuk, whose French was not very good, to leave the Estonian Academy of Arts for an architecture school in France which had a tough entry competition. "This step surprised the local architects, because his French was really only adequate for buying bread in a shop. He has the courage and initiative to jump into unknown waters," says Komissarov.

Many people who know Sevtsuk believe that Estonia is too small for him. He has just over two years of studies at MIT left, and then the world will be his oyster. There have been several interesting job offers, but there are no concrete plans for this man yet.

Ten straw-bale houses are just a start

UNITE, a company which designs and builds environmentally friendly module houses, has built around ten straw-bale houses in Estonia. As environmental consciousness develops, this is bound to be just the beginning.

Mikk Suursild and Rene Valner built the first straw-bale house in Estonia in 2002. It was a sauna in the Soomaa area. Previously, Suursild worked at an ecological construction company in the United States, from where he brought the idea of straw-bale construction to Estonia.

“Six years ago most architects and builders considered the idea of straw as building material more than strange, but for us it was a new and contemporary way of creating a simple living space,” says Valner.

Since then, the two men have tested different alternatives, built straw-bale homes for themselves and also sold them to customers.

At the moment, most of UNITE’s activities focus on energy- and environmentally efficient design; they are very selective about the materials they build with.

The idea of building a home from straw bales instead of stone or wood may make some people laugh. Let us recall the fairytale of the three pigs and what material they used to build their houses and what became of those houses.

Suursild and Valner believe that eco-houses have several advantages, for example the low energy content of the materials and low carbon dioxide emissions, the healthy interior climate, and low heating costs due to the efficient heat containment and capacity. In addition there are low production costs, reusability and independence due to the general building market situation of the materials – wood, straw, “celluwool”, wood chips, clay, lime and sand. The main drawback is the relatively labour intensive plastering process and the related long finishing time.

“It is the same story with houses made of straw bales – mostly

the dangers are not linked to a concrete material, but to mistakes made during the design and construction process,” says Valner. “A straw-bale house which has been built correctly is better and more risk-free in terms of fire safety, interior climate, energy consumption, humidity of the walls and protection from rodents than a regular carcass building.”

In order to illustrate that straw-bale houses should be taken seriously, it should be noted that thousands of such houses have been built in the United States and they have often survived forest fires because a thoroughly finished plaster coat does not let through oxygen and hence the house does not catch fire.

Suursild and Valner consider smallness and efficiency to be the cornerstones of cost-cutting. “Extravagance is rare in nature. In order for organisms to stay alive, the only important thing is the vitals – nothing more, nothing less. Houses with optimal size and designs which have been thoroughly thought through preserve natural resources, lessen human impact on the environment and

ensure sufficient resources for future generations and other species,” they note.

An eco-house has a smaller “ecological footprint”, it requires minimal care, has a functional spatial solution, is well insulated and makes maximum use of daylight, consumes little ground water and uses renewable energy sources to function. In addition, such a house uses the properties of the landscape,

sun, wind, rainwater, green areas, soil, daylight and building materials instead of fossil fuels.

UNITE’s owners have invested a couple of million kroons in development, but they do not view their company so much as a business project as a mission to promote eco-houses through seminars, workshops and other methods of knowledge transfer.

“Development work is more interesting than just working in the name of profit,” says Valner.

In the US, straw-bale houses often survive forest fires, as the plaster coat does not let through oxygen and hence the houses do not catch fire.



Goodbye to bar-codes

Estiko Plastar, Estonia's largest packaging manufacturer, on the brink of a revolution

Text: Toivo Tänavsuu / *Eesti Ekspress*
 Mart Raudsaar / *Hei*
Photos: Lauri Kulpsoo



Estiko Plastar, a wholly owned subsidiary of Estiko, has more than survived the restructuring of the Estonian economy. There is a lot of activity in the 12,000 square metre production area of the company: some machines are producing plastic, other machines are processing and printing it, and yet others are spinning the ready-made product into huge rolls. This happens day and night, seven days a week. The machines come to a halt only twice a year: for two weeks in July and for two weeks over Christmas, when the staff takes collective leave and the equipment undergoes maintenance.

Estiko Plastar earns the bonuses that come with larger added value

Estiko Plastar is no longer the company it was twenty years

How is a package made?

MAKING PLASTIC:

- Polyethylene granules are mixed together, and different chemicals, according to the colour, strength, smoothness or other characteristics of the packaging, are added. If necessary, "intelligent" characteristics, which allow degrading or biodegrading, plus RFID magnetically active substances, are added.



- The mixture is melted at 200 degrees, after which a machine "blows" it into plastic which then needs to be cooled down in order to avoid sticking. Estiko Plastar has the capacity to produce up to 1,500 kilograms of plastic per hour. Its thickness may range from 20 mikrons to 200 mikrons and its width from 20 centimetres to 5.4 metres.



PRINT:

- The printing plates and sleeves are prepared in order to print each colour separately onto the correct location on the package. There are thousands of different colour- and design combinations; production takes place on the basis of a production plan.



- Specific shades of colour are mixed together in a special paint mixing station, which is controlled by a computer. Up to eight colour tubs fit into the printing machine simultaneously. New, top quality automated printing machines spread photo quality print onto the plastic. Printers follow the quality on computer screens and if there are any problems they halt the machines.

ago, when it produced film for greenhouses, plastic combs and some pressure cast toys. According to the Manager of Estiko Plastar, Triin Anette Kaasik, the company still produces film and there is some machinery at work producing various nostalgia goods like plastic buckets and small plastic bowls. However, this forms an insignificant part of the total volume of production, a mere 2-2.5%, and Estiko Plastar has not concentrated on the production of greenhouse plastic or polyethylene film for some time.

"Our main direction is goods with added value," confirms Kaasik. "This part of our production is more complex, of higher quality and requires more flexibility from producers."

Estiko Plastar concentrates on producing the kind of plastic which has ten times more added value in comparison to greenhouse film, according to the Manager. This is not rocket science – for example, we come across plastic produced by Estiko Plastar in the supermarket when buying milk. A carton of milk is a helpful example of where added value is created: the average consumer does not know that, technologically, the carton has several layers, with the outer and inner layers having different qualities. The inner layer

helps keep the milk fresh and the outer layer has qualities which allow colourful printing for marketing purposes and create a good grip on the production line.

Hundred per cent cooperation with customers

It is one thing to produce multilayered plastic and print on it—the equipment of Estiko Plastar allows photoprinting in eight shades—but another, equally important, task is to produce the kind of plastic which is well suited for the packaging machines of customers. In other words, Estiko Plastar has to offer a custom-made quality service at a reasonable price and in a reasonable time. This may mean reacting fast and re-tuning the equipment in order for customers to produce products which have unexpectedly run out, such as ice cream or beer in hot weather.

"We could order plastic packaging more cheaply from China," says the Manager thinking about the cost of production in that part of the world, "but, if we did, it would not be possible to react quickly to the special needs of customers."

It is precisely this fast and flexible relationship with custom-

**COMPLETION:**

- A laminator glues two or more sheets of plastic together in order to achieve the necessary barrier characteristics.
- Layers of plastic are put together with a plastic welding machine in order to make spatial packaging.
- The packaging reaches the customer, according to need, as a roll, cut into pieces or welded into a package.



ers which has been one of the biggest changes for Estiko Plastar. The three main principles of the company – investment in people, product development and technology – are nothing new, but their details have changed over time. Although the products of Estiko Plastar have nothing to do with what the Manager calls “sophisticated nanotechnology”, the company increasingly uses the help of information technology in producing its products.

Estiko Plastar wants to create a revolution on the US market

Packages around us are developing at an incredible speed. No longer just colourful and pretty, they can conduct air, observe temperature, provide alerts about expiration dates and be totally degradable. As a leader in the Estonian packaging market, but small globally, Estiko Plastar wants to take a forceful leap into the future and overtake the competition in the race for intelligent packaging.

In cooperation with Mati Karelson and the University of Tartu, Estiko Plastar is developing packaging which will use radio frequencies to give information about a product and its volume in a foodstore. If successful, the RFID (*Radio*

Frequency Identification) technology created by Estonians will set an industrial standard in the world and thoroughly change consumers’ understanding of what makes shopping comfortable.

Goodbye to the bar-code?

Today the system of bar-coding is used to identify products and manage the storage of products. The bar-code makes it possible to recognise the product in the warehouse and at the cash register. Estiko Plastar and its partners have set an ambitious goal – to forget all that and record the information about the product in the packaging itself.

“Everyone is trying to develop something which would differentiate them from others. At the moment, nothing differentiates us from our Finnish and Latvian competition,” says Triin Anette Kaasik. “This means we must make the effort to gain a competitive edge by doing something that others are not doing, or get them to do it with our license.” Licensing is a profitable business, and a part of knowledge intensive production.

According to Kaasik, Estiko Plastar is participating in a race with competitors to offer large trading giants such as Wal-Mart the best working RFID solution. The winner of this race will have its name recorded in the history of technological standards, next to the bar-code or the VISA-card.

Farewell to queues

The development work on “smart” RFID-packaging is currently underway in Mati Karelson’s company MolCode Ltd and in the chemistry lab of the University of Tartu.

The unique molecular design software of MolCode makes it possible to predict molecular structures which correspond to the value intervals of pre-given characteristics. These are comprehensive and complex calculations which use the methods of modern quantum chemistry.

According to Mati Karelson, Estiko Plastar’s development work to date has yielded information on classes of magnetically active substances which could be suitable additions to packaging materials. Scientists are trying to synthesise those substances in the laboratory, in order to add them to the raw material of packaging. If radio frequencies are directed onto such packaging, the different absorption spectres of

substances are emitted. According to the shape of the spectre, the computer will read what product it is and how much of it there is.

To put it simply, the multilayered plastic package would contain a magnetic layer which includes product information. This layer, which is invisible to the eye, could unite the functions of the bar-code and the anti-theft marker which today are glued onto products.

The invention would be revolutionary, because it would get rid of the need for cashiers. Consumers would put their goods in a shopping trolley and pass through a radio field at the cash register, which would automatically register their purchases and the cost. Perhaps the payment for the purchases could also be automatised. Any consumer who has ever queued at the supermarket will recognise the benefits of this invention.

Absorption spectre – the new bar-code

“Substances must have absorption spectres in a specific area, and they must be chemically stable, harmless and congruent with the basic packaging material,” says Karelson. An absorption spectre is similar to a bar-code but it is a different data carrier and it cannot be harmed physically. There are 10^{10} absorption spectres and various codes of substances, and all of them have been brought together in a database, just like bar-codes.

Such packaging would radically change shopping for consumers. No longer would they need to stand in a queue with their trolley. You would merely walk through the till with your purchases and it would take a few seconds for the bill to come through. Anything from sausages to floor mops could be packaged “smartly”. The information can also be recorded in a bio-degradable package.

There would be no need for cashiers. The goods could be paid for at a payment machine.

Chances of success 50:50

Estiko Plastar is not a pioneer of RFID technology in the world; many companies are developing it. As far as Kaasik is aware, however, Estiko Plastar is the only company trying to include RFID inside plastic. Competitors tend to work on putting it either on the plastic or around it.

The company wants to start product testing of RFID packaging in the next year. “If we don’t hurry, someone else will beat us to it,” says Kaasik.

Developing the solution will cost 5 million Estonian kroons, 2.35 million of which was received as support from

According to the Manager of Estiko Plastar, Triin Anette Kaasik, the plan is to go to the American market.



Packaging in our shopping basket

Active packages help to maintain the shape and quality of a product, observing and optimising important parameters. In the food industry, the main task of the package is to protect food from microbic or chemical damage, oxygen, moisture, odor and light. Active packages react to unfavourable environmental changes in order to influence the characteristics and life of the product.

For example, the package may have a spot which is green in the beginning and turns black when it reaches its expiration date, thereby making it clear that the food has gone off. Or the package may have the ability to draw in or release the necessary amount of air.

Such packages cannot be found in Estonian shops, but they are in use in the USA, for example.

Intelligent packages are somewhat similar to active packages. They can turn certain functions “on” or “off”, according to need. They recognise decay or change in the temperature of a product. A special sub-type of intelligent packages are RFID packages, which signal the nature and volume of the product.



Enterprise Estonia. According to Kaasik, this support from Enterprise Estonia to companies working on development was a good opportunity which they couldn't ignore. Without this support, they would have needed to find financing from other sources.

Triin Anette Kaasik confirms that companies all around the world are currently actively looking for similar solutions. But probably only one such solution will become the standard – it will be the solution with the best possible relationship between quality and cost and which has already been marketed sufficiently. “Our plan is to go to the American market,” she says. “We will find a local partner as, in terms of marketing, our own voice would not be heard and we don't have sufficient know-how.”

Both Kaasik and Karelson consider the risk of failure to be fifty per cent. They are a hundred per cent positive, though, that the company will be able to record the information into the packaging. It is more a question of whether the ready-made solution of Estonians will be the best and whether it will be taken into mass use as a standard.

“I think that Estonian companies do not lack the courage; what we lack are good ideas and generators who will approach us with their good ideas,” says Kaasik.

How degradable is degradable?

The price rise in crude oil and the issue of environmental protection in recent years make it necessary to pay increasing attention to the harmfulness of plastic bags. This, in turn, has spurred the development of “environmentally friendly” bags.

However, according to Kaasik, people often confuse biodegradable and degradable plastic packaging. For image

reasons, traders pull the wool over the eyes of consumers. “An average consumer cannot tell the difference – but biodegradable and degradable are two completely different things!” says Kaasik.

She explains that biodegradable packaging is made of granules based on corn starch and does not contain a drop of oil. In the environment, such packaging will show signs of decay within a couple of weeks and will decompose completely into water and carbon dioxide. In the case of degradable packaging, polymers produced on the basis of oil are mixed with substances which speed up decay, such as flax fibre dust. In contrast with regular plastic, this plastic decomposes into small pieces and mixes with humus.

“If I threw an ordinary plastic bag into the forest, it would still be there ten years from now. If I threw out a degradable plastic bag, in ten years there would be pieces of plastic and most of them would be mixed with humus,” explains Kaasik.

Kaasik says that price plays a large role in the use of plastic. A biodegradable bag is three times more expensive than a regular bag and hence it is not affordable for the masses. “It is a niche product in chain stores. At the same time, I am convinced that, thanks to science, the situation will improve in the next few years. Although biodegradable bags are not a unique product, we are working on our own brand at the moment,” says Kaasik. The first tests in producing biodegradable plastic have been done and the company is preparing to bring its own product to the market. According to Kaasik, negotiations with refuse companies interested in offering biodegradable bags to their customers in order to reduce household waste in regular plastic bags are currently ongoing.

“Growth has come too easily for Estonia!”

Text: Toivo Tänavsuu / *Eesti Ekspress*
Photos: Ingmar Muusikus / *Hei*

According to Kitty Kubo, Head of the Foresight Division at the Development Fund, the Estonian economy has grown comfortably in the last few years without the need for smarter economic policy from politicians or innovation from entrepreneurs. But now that the party is over, new growth should come from innovation and service export.



What is the task of the Head of the Foresight Division?

In the Development Fund, the Head of the Foresight Division is a person who creates the strategic framework or the “big picture” for the fund’s monitoring work. After which, the task is to motivate the team and include experts in reaching this vision. It’s very exciting work!

Considering the current situation in Estonia, economic policy vision takes centre stage in this “big picture”. It is something we have neglected during the rapid success of the past few years, but without which we cannot take our economy on a qualitatively new ascent.

How much do people know about development monitoring in Estonia?

For most people in Estonia, development monitoring is a relatively unknown term, often equated with research gathering dust on some shelves. This view is further enhanced by the word “monitoring” itself, which in Estonian evokes an image of a pensioner who is observing life from the ninth floor of an apartment block and asking: what’s it got to do with me?

In reality, development monitoring is a very intensive working method which makes it possible to identify future opportunities in a structured and constructive way and to make choices between them. Development monitoring is not the home territory of researchers only – a very wide circle of opinions is included in the discussion.

Future-oriented thinking is vital in developing and implementing long-term strategies and policies. It creates the ability to pro-actively react to the constantly changing challenges and opportunities stemming from the external environment. Of course, it does not replace decision-making, but it leads to well-founded decisions and thereby increases decisiveness.

Considering the fact that people don’t yet expect much from monitoring in Estonia, the fund has the role of promoting this useful strategy-making tool among its potential beneficiaries – strategic decision-makers.

You have a lot of myths to break!

People may recall that there were years of debates and indecisiveness before the creation of the Development Fund. Among other things, the topic of whether such an obscure field as development monitoring should be attached to the venture capital function was discussed; there was a tendency to focus on concrete investments which create new jobs.

In Estonia, *anno* 2008, the situation is completely the opposite – several opinion leaders who we have met with see the

value of the Development Fund to lie precisely in development monitoring, which can be used to escape the confusion which characterises the current economic-political situation.

Hence, myths and prejudices about development monitoring are best destroyed through need, and I think there is no better time for monitoring than today. I didn’t take up this post during the blissful economic boom, as nobody would have been interested during the general euphoria. Today, something can be done.

Estonia indeed needs a vision, now that we have achieved the goals of joining the European Union and NATO.

The European Union and NATO were visions which were fed to us and, hence, they were comfortable.

Today, when the time has come to start thinking on our own, we realise that we have a deficit in vision. There seems to be nothing to strive for.

What can we learn from other countries which have developed a very clear economic political vision?

Last year, the Harvard Business Review published a piece of research which compared the competitiveness and future-orientation of states and found a strong correlation: the states that are more future-oriented are also more competitive.

Estonia has underestimated the power of a unified vision. It is thought that a vision is something put on paper by bureaucrats in some office and approved by the government or the parliament. There are already hundreds of visions in the form of development plans and strategies in Estonia. Altogether, they form a very disjointed picture of the future Estonia. It is an image without an author and, hence, no sense of ownership.

In the Development Fund, we consider giving meaning to the vision of economic policy to be an activity as a result of which a critical mass of people who influence our economy will speak the same language about the future values of Estonia and, furthermore, that they will be prepared to make decisions today in order to reach this desired future. This may concern the economic policy of the state or the strategy level of a company.

Finland is a good example. They don’t have a bible of industrial-, economic- or innovation policy, but whoever you speak to, whether it be a top public official, scientist or an ordinary citizen, they all say very similar things. They know that the strong values in the state are education, research



and technological products and services, and they believe that precisely those are important and create wealth for the country and well-being for the people.

What's wrong with us in Estonia? Everything was going so well...

Growth has simply come too easily for Estonia in recent years. There has been no need to look further. We haven't had serious problems, the general macro-economic framework has been favourable and an "invisible hand" has led the economy to where we are today. At the moment, there's a witch-hunt going on in Estonia. But it will not take us anywhere, as there is no-one to blame – simply, a stage of economic development is about to end and entering the next phase means big changes, economic restructuring again. If we want this to be as painless and fast as possible, it makes sense to help it along with economic policy. If we keep using the old political elements, there will be no success. More intelligent and targeted activity will lead us to new growth. Estonia is a small country with an open economy. Hence, growth will come if we export something. And this something has to have sufficient added value in order to make us richer as a country.

People are afraid to make ambitious and radical decisions in Estonia, as it is not popular to look to the future. The future is the unknown. The bigger this unknown factor, the more difficult it is to choose between different options, which is why people in Estonia tend to postpone large decisions or avoid

them. Yet, today we must make painful decisions which will be useful in the longer perspective.

At the beginning of the year, the Development Fund published a piece of research, contracted from a research group at the University of Tartu, which describes the four potential future scenarios of the Estonian economy. According to the conclusions reached by the research group led by Professor Urmas Varblane, we could face a long period of drying up, as well as a fast crash. How far has monitoring reached today?

That piece of research fulfilled its objective: at least we have reached a consensus about things being bad. That what has made us richer today, can no longer feed us. And even if we do the same things just a little bit better, it won't help. We need to be doing completely different things. Monitoring work on the basis of this research in the processing industry – "Industrial engines 2018" – is currently underway and by autumn has to answer the question of what those activities, sectors or clusters are that will lead to economic growth in a decade, and what we need to be doing now in order to make it happen.

Prime Minister Andrus Ansip is still convinced that generally all is well in the Estonian economy.

Nothing can shake his optimism.

The Development Fund is fortunate to be in a position where we are away from everyday politics, which means we are more neutral and keep an eye on the longer-term hori-

zon. We can talk about things primarily in terms of their importance for Estonia in the more distant future.

How will the Development Fund achieve the new economic policy vision of Estonia?

We will not do it on our own. We just offer a platform to reach it: we create the analytical input, invite people to physically or virtually meet and discuss, and then gather valuable information. We will carry out the monitoring process in three fields: the processing industry, exportable services and ICT. Those are the usual suspects, if we want to look for opportunities for new growth without abandoning the current structure of the economy. Once this is done, we can talk about putting together the “big picture”, the vision of economic growth.

The Development Fund must prove its worth – does this add tension?

We have been given five years to prove our worth. Of course, there is a tendency to be impatient and want results immediately, especially in a situation in which the sky above the competitiveness of the economy is overcast. When we were created, we received a general legal framework for our activities. According to this, we need to express clearly what we will do and how we will do it, because the more disjointed the expectations are towards us, the less likely it is that we will be successful. Hence, for starters we must synchronise expectations!

How can we guarantee that the monitoring done by the Development Fund will be put into practice?

This is guaranteed by the monitoring process: by including people, creating a sense of ownership, and creating shared visions. We do not deal in everyday politics; we can only make recommendations. Recommendations, however, often tend to just smear paper. Our goal is not to create paperwork in order to shove it in front of politicians at the right moment. We want to create a coherent picture of the future of Estonia's economy.

What might the next Estonian growth cycle be based on?

We would like to rely on the smoking chimneys of indus-

try. But, with increasing labour costs, this is not possible. Standard, routine jobs will move into Asia and will probably never return. Only those will survive in industry who are at the beginning of the value chain, in other words developing the product, or at the end of the chain, in marketing and branding. The first presupposes a high level of research and education and creativity, and the other a good feel for the global market, good interaction- and language skills.

Production itself will not create wealth. Some examples: an iPod costs about 300 dollars in the US, and of that amount just 7 dollars is the cost of production or assembly; you can buy a cup of coffee costing 50 kroons in Starbucks, which includes a value of 20 cents of coffee beans and 2 kroons of grinding and packaging.

I don't know whether it's any consolation that even those better than us are not doing as well at the moment: globalization has resulted in a situation where even rich, innovation-based countries have no guarantee of success. The power lines and rules of the game in the global economy are changing. Whereas some time ago national clusters and production systems took centre stage, today the value chains of industry are globally dispersed: different functions are carried out where they can be done better or faster, and nationalism no longer plays a role.

In other words, we should be developing more services?

To date, not much attention has been paid to observing the export potential of the service field in Estonia. When speaking of services, people think of shops and bakeries, without seeing any export potential. We need to look a bit further, in order to see opportunities where they are not usually seen, or where we have been used to seeing dangers.

Just one example – the ageing population. By 2020, a quarter of all Europeans will be pensioners. We are talking about a 100 million people. Those new pensioners will be radically different from traditional pensioners – the stereotypical elderly lady with a hair bun who lives in near poverty. They will be crazy consumers who value quality, who travel and who are technologically “literate”. And most importantly,

Kitty Kubo

- Since January 2008, Kitty Kubo has worked as the Head of the Foresight Division at the Estonian Development Fund. Her tasks include starting the monitoring activity of the fund and putting together a well-functioning monitoring team.

- Kitty is a fan of innovation policy and has dedicated the last seven years of her career to shaping Estonian innovation policy. During this time, strategies, concepts and programmes have been developed at the Division of Technology and Innovation, started and led by her at the Estonian Ministry of Economy and Communications, with the single goal of building the foundations of innovation-based Estonia.

- Her input in developing literacy on innovation policy should also be noted: a whole school of people have come out of the Ministry who understand the complexity of innovation and who today work in other institutions, providing their input to develop Estonia's innovation system.

- Kitty has international work experience in the Chief Directorate of Enterprise at the European Commission and in the Finnish technology and innovation agency TEKES. In addition, she has represented Estonia in several international working groups and in the Innovation Policy Council at the European Commission.



- Kitty graduated from the Tallinn University of Technology in economics.

- Since 2002, Kitty has been a visiting lecturer at the University of Tartu, where she has taught "Technology and Innovation Policy" as part of the MA degree in Technology Management.

- In addition to her job at the Development Fund, Kitty is participating in the development project of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs helping Georgia to build up its innovation system and policy.

- Kitty has three children between the ages of 3 and 15.

this demanding group of people will also be solvent. It is estimated that European pensioners today have about three trillion Euro in capital put aside. This growing group of consumers creates new market opportunities for all sorts of services, from health care to the entertainment business. Taking into account that ageing trends are stronger in the Nordic countries, it will bring potential consumers right to our doorstep.

I am not talking about theoretical possibilities – we already have good examples of how our dentists work on the teeth of Scandinavians, how our eye surgeons carry out

laser operations and surgeons use tele-medical appliances to view broken joints. To sum up, we have been complaining about the lack and poor quality of our engineers, without seeing the potential we have in our doctors and nurses and biotechnologists.

Estonians like to compare themselves to others. For a long time it was Ireland. Do we need a role model?

Role models are necessary. It is a question of ambition: do we want to be just as good, or much better? For years, the positive for us has meant Finland, Ireland and Singapore. On the other end of the scale have been Latvia and Poland. Yet a copy is always inferior to the original: for years Finland tried to emulate ABBA at Eurovision, before they came to the stage with Lordi. And it was a success! Hence, regardless of role models, it is vital to find our own way.

A favourable tax environment has been considered our advantage.

Unfortunately it is no longer our advantage.

Taxes related to the labour force are quite high in Estonia. If we dream of a knowledge-based economy which has a human being with his or her knowledge as its main resource, then this resource is taxed very highly at the moment. New innovative enterprises where the main cost is people, and profit is somewhere at the end of the tunnel, are hence, not very favoured in the Estonian tax environment. Unfortunately, this is one of those closed topics in Estonian economic policy – one is not even supposed to think about taxes. At the same time, other countries are looking precisely at that in order to promote innovation.

How can we improve the entrepreneurial spirit and productivity of Estonians?

I think things are not too bad with entrepreneurial spirit in Estonia. Apparently, our Nordic neighbours consider Estonians to be fast and entrepreneurial busybodies. During the time that they are thinking and looking for consensus, Estonians have already decided and already done it.

Enterprise is vital for innovation. The results of the innovation research of companies in 2006 showed that more than half of Estonian companies consider themselves to be innovative. This is a higher indicator than the European Union average. Certainly the result would not be as good if we were not entrepreneurial.

Enterprise cannot be learned, and an attitude which promotes it has to be injected more widely into society, emphasizing values which are connected to it. And this always needs to be balanced with a knowledge-based approach. Otherwise, we will just promote the development of businessmen who have not succeeded in school.

Who are the monitoring people in the Development Fund?

Our office is in the Tornimäe business centre, which is not an ivory tower. We have a small team of economic experts and, in each monitoring case, we have created an external network of experts as well, including opinion leaders in specific topics from Estonia and abroad.

A problem we are faced with is the fact that there is no proper base of people who can carry out proper economic, educational and innovation research in Estonia. This is due to the poor funding of such research, as well as limited demand by users.

You used to work at the Ministry of Economics and Communications on developing the innovation policy of Estonia. How different was that from your current job at the Development Fund?

The really exciting times at the Ministry were when the centuries changed. It was a time when the cadre of public officials changed completely and when enthusiastic young Estonians created genuine awe in their young European colleagues.

When I started at the Ministry, only a few forward-looking representatives of academia were familiar with the term innovation. There was no policy. In the first few years, all of our efforts went into explaining and creating a 'window of opportunity' to bring this topic to the attention of politicians.

The situation is different now. The Lisbon process has brought innovation to the forefront. Policies, from Sweden to Greece, are the same. But success will only come to those who understand what they have written down during the Lisbon campaign and who are truly able to implement it. In this sense, Finland has been, and still is, ahead – they were the first to implement politics based on national innovation systems. Today, they are the first to realise the third-generation innovation policy.

The Development Fund holds the same attraction for me as the Ministry at the end of the 1990s: the opportunity to be where things are built, to shape it according to my own handwriting.

Why are you interested in topics such as economics and innovation?

I haven't managed to explain to my children what I do yet!

I came across the topic of innovation by chance. During my final year at university, a professor of economics at Tallinn Technical University was looking for students to take part in a project which aimed to evaluate the results of applied research projects financed by the Estonian Innovation Fund. Some years later, I was already at the Ministry of Economics with the definite goal of reorganising the Innovation Fund. The Estonian Technology Agency ESTAG was born, and it lived an independent life until the birth of the giant Enterprise Estonia.

I have always looked in awe and fear at people who know exactly what they want in their lives and careers until the end of their days. I am not one of them. I want to do things which captivate me right here and now. And I have a good indicator to judge it: as long as I have professional literature on the table next to my bed, instead of women's magazines, everything is well. At the moment, my heart belongs to development monitoring!

Estonian athletes in Beijing Olympics



Photos:
Raigo Pajula, Liis Treimann / Postimees / Scanpix

A reception party was held at the Tallinn Town Hall Square, where Estonian officials and fans welcomed Olympic heroes Gerd Kanter, gold medalist in the men's discus, the double sculls team of Jüri Jaanson and Tõnu Endrekson, who won a silver medal, and their trainers.

Estonia took its largest delegation ever – 45 athletes – to the Olympic Games in Beijing. Estonian athletes competed in thirteen fields: badminton, beach-volleyball, cycling, fencing, rhythmic gymnastics, judo, rowing, sailing, shooting, swimming, tennis, track & field and triathlon. Track-and-field and swimming were the fields with the largest number of Estonian athletes in the Chinese capital – there were 12 and 9 athletes respectively in our Olympic delegation.

Estonian athletes won medals in two fields: with a throw of 68.82 m, Gerd Kanter became the Olympic champion in the discus throw and, in rowing, Jüri Jaanson and Tõnu Endrekson took silver in men's double sculls.

Although there were hopes for more medals, many Estonian

athletes delighted their supporters. For example, Kaire Leibak finished the women's triple jump in 10th place. Leibak's high achievement is one of the more pleasant surprises from the Beijing Olympics.

Many Estonian records were broken by Estonian athletes – one of the more significant achievements was perhaps Tiidrek Nurme's time of 3.38.59 in the 1,500 m race, in which he came in 27th. The previous Estonian record had been in place for 42 years, when Mart Vilt ran the distance in London in 3.39.0.

Swimmers set Estonian records in five distances:

Triin Aljand, in the women's 100 m butterfly, achieved the highest ranking among Estonian swimmers (21st) in Beijing.

Elina Partõka in the women's 200 m freestyle, Vladimir Sidorkin in the men's 200 m freestyle, and Martti Aljand in the men's 100 m breaststroke. Miko Mälberg fulfilled his childhood dream in Beijing by breaking the 50 m freestyle Estonian record held by his idol Indrek Sei. Although Sei, in his time, was one of the best in Europe, Mälberg had to settle for a place in the top thirty. Unfortunately, we must admit that Estonian swimming lags about 20 years behind the most successful countries in the world.

There were even more personal records. In decathlon, Mikk Pahapill collected 8,178 points, which placed him 11th. Andres Raja, with 8,118 points, came in 13th. For both men, those were new personal bests.

In the general medals table of 81 countries, Estonia, with one gold and one silver medal, shared 26th position with Belgium, the Dominican Republic and Portugal. Considering our population of 1.3 million, this is a very good result.



TÕNU ENDREKSON

Men's double sculls

Time and place of birth: 11 June 1979, Pärnu
Measurement: 198 cm, 106 kg
Club: SK Pärnu
Coach: Tatjana Jaanson
Place of study/profession: Lance Corporal in the Tallinn Single Guard Battalion
Achievements: World Championships bronze in double sculls (2007), World Championships bronze in quadruple sculls (2005, 2006), Olympic Games 4th place in double sculls (2004), World Cup winner (2007), and World Championship gold in up-to-23-year-olds (2001)

JÜRI JAANSON

Men's double sculls

Time and place of birth: 14 October 1965, Tartu
Measurements: 192.5 cm, 96 kg
Club: SK Pärnu
Coach: Tatjana Jaanson
Profession: athlete
Achievements: Olympic Games silver in single sculls (2004), World Championships gold in single sculls (1990), World Championships silver in single sculls (1995), World Championships bronze in single sculls (1989), World Championships bronze in double sculls (2007), World Championships bronze in quadruple sculls (2005), Olympic Games 8th place in single sculls (1988), Olympic Games 5th place in single sculls (1992), Olympic Games 18th place in single sculls (1996), Olympic Games 6th place in single sculls (2000), World Cup winner in single sculls (1990), and World Cup winner in double sculls (2007)

GERD KANTER

Men's discus throw

Time and place of birth: 6 May 1979, Tallinn
Measurements: 196 cm, 125 kg
Club: Tallinn Kalev
Coach: Vesteynn Hafsteinsson
Place of study/profession: Estonian Business School, student
Achievements: World Championships gold (2007), World Championships silver (2005), European Championships silver (2006), Universiade gold (2005), European Championships 12th place (2002), World Championships 25th place (2003), and Olympic Games 20th place (2004)



Quality that lasts

An expensive gamble or a draw card for the Rotermann quarter?

Text: Joosep Mihkelson
Photos: Kaido Haagen

In terms of new architecture, Tallinn can only be described as eclectic. In the context of the catch-up economy and regulatory freedom of recent years, architects have had ample room to explore their own desire to “catch up” with the exciting world of contemporary architecture. The result has been a mixed bag of buildings that are innovative, courageous and beautiful, but also some less inspired and less successful attempts at bringing Tallinn’s cityscape into the twenty-first century.

This eclecticism has resulted from, among other things, the flurry of building projects in development clusters in and around the city. For example, the Maakri district around Tornimäe Street, Ülemiste City and the Fahle complex towards Tallinn's airport in the south and the harbour and Rotermann quarter in the north all represent ambitious examples. But with the economy in decline, what future do these projects have? Or is the recession just a small hiccup in otherwise solid business plans?

This question is of particular relevance for the Rotermann quarter – partly because the other developments have

either already run their course (e.g. the Maakri district in the city centre) or have sufficient funds regardless of the state of the economy (e.g. Ülemiste City), but partly because the Rotermann quarter is better placed than any of these to contribute something of lasting value. There are actually a number of sites to the north of the city with enormous potential in addition to the Rotermann quarter – I am thinking of the old power station destined to become a design centre and the harbour foreshore itself running all the way from Kadriorg in the east round to the Maritime Museum in the west and beyond. But the problem that dogs most of these projects is the fact that many of them



are reliant on public funding, which in the current environment is fast drying up. This is not the case for the Rotermann quarter, which now has a single owner with a clear concept and a well-considered business plan, who is determined to persevere regardless of the economic climate.

The Rotermann quarter is situated within a trapezium-shaped block bounded by Mere Boulevard to the west, Ahtri Street to the north, Hobujaama Street to the east and Viru Square in the south. This area also includes a number of existing new and old buildings that sit mostly towards the southern shorter side of the block. Unfortunately, the large multi-screen cinema complex known as CC Plaza, built at the end of the 90s, and before any clear ideas had been proposed for



the remainder of the district, forms a large white wall that makes it almost impossible for the city to interact with the rest of the block. In spite of such problems, the core of the project immediately behind this white wall already appears to have the potential to make a substantial contribution to Tallinn's cityscape.

So how has this project developed over the years? The mid 90s marked a period when developers had a relatively free hand. During this period, the old limestone buildings along Mere Boulevard were refurbished and turned into restaurants, nightclubs and offices. Immediately behind these, a strange ensemble of buildings went up housing hotels, cheap restaurants and more nightclubs. After CC Plaza was built on Hobujaama Street behind the central post office, the remainder of the block just sat, and no comprehensive development solutions were proposed. Architecture critic and editor of Maja magazine, Triin Ojari, explains, "the next stage was when the Alver Trummal Architecture Bureau drafted a design for the entire area in 2005, and thus the remainder of the area was spatially surrendered to this scheme to keep it uniform. But this uniformity also needed diversity – the houses should be quite different in form, reflecting the layers of history and various eras, and the zones between the buildings should permit more spacious squares as well as smaller nooks and crannies. The existing historical environment obviously remains the foundation here."

The area then experienced a change of ownership and with this, Andres Alver's broad plan was also looked at with fresh eyes. The new owner decided to proceed slightly differently and has since organised competitions among carefully selected architects for each of the subsequent stages, all the time still more or less following Alver's original draft as a guide. The most recent stage to reach completion involves a daring interpretation of the plan by the architecture bureau Kosmos – *new kids on the block* in an architectural community thrumming with new kids. Up until winning this competition, Kosmos had completed only a handful of projects, the largest being the town square for Rakvere, where they also offered a rather curious and daring solution. In the Rotermann quarter, they took a previous idea for a large building on the site between CC Plaza and the Soolaladu (Salt Store), which houses the architecture museum, and instead of designing a single structure, divided the site into four and created four quite distinct buildings. "The spatial solution here is definitely inspired by the character of the

Rotermann quarter, as well as by our vision of city life," explains Villem Tomiste of Kosmos. "All the buildings look different by design so that they each generate a different effect, and so that the surroundings are full of variety and diversity." (*MAJA no. 4, 2007*)

Now affectionately referred to as the white building, the black building, the red building and the brown building, since each are clad in distinct tones, this ensemble has set the standard for the rest of the quarter. Not only do they represent a daring solution and confront visitors with a rather unique experience of architectural and urban space, but they also set high standards in terms of the use of materials. "The bricks in the black [building] came from a factory production line and their pattern was moulded by a specially designed bronze rolling press. The bricks for the red building were moulded by hand, and for the whole building 12 different moulds were used," explains Ott Kadarik also from Kosmos. This attention to detail and the custom production of materials really sets these buildings apart in Tallinn, and walking among them visitors can immediately appreciate that these are not like other recent developments. While other projects have attempted to wow the public with shimmering ostentation – often with the over use of glass and stainless steel – the Kosmos facades have a quiet confidence in their own aesthetic purity. The red building for instance, is just a red brick building, albeit with an unusually shaped footprint dictated by the shape of the block in the previous plan. But on closer inspection visitors notice that these red bricks have little triangular motifs stamped onto them, giving them and the building a touch of warmth as if from human hands. Once you notice this, other details appear from the other three buildings and from the streetscape and surroundings, hinting at the degree to which everything has been considered – from the bricks to the shape and placement of the windows, and from the street paving to the guttering and downpipes.

"The decision to lift the free space between the buildings to the height of the first floor is also driven by a desire to create two active levels – the ground floor business level can be accessed both from the street and from the storey above," Tomiste continues. Such an innovative approach has to be seen to be fully understood, since the split level nature of the internal arcade and external pedestrianised street space are quite challenging concepts for visitors. But the attention to detail and use of quality materials and solutions throughout means that visitors, tenants and indeed even

residents are offered an environment with some dignity and respect – an environment that makes no apologies and pulls no punches.

Unfortunately, this group has stood alone for most of the last 12 months or so, like an island among the derelict old industrial buildings waiting their turn. The Heritage Society has stipulated that all the existing facades on the historical buildings that remain must be left intact, and the next project, although satisfying this condition with its conversion of the limestone warehouse immediately behind CC Plaza, has offered perhaps the most challenging statement so far. I am referring to the pile of steel boxes by Hanno Grossschmidt nestled between the four buildings by Kosmos and the eastern end of CC Plaza. Perhaps it is a little unfair to describe this building in such terms because it is in fact a remarkable building, and one that rather than upstaging Kosmos, manages to match their level of innovation rather well. Grossschmidt has essentially designed an office building with areas for shops or showrooms on the ground floor, but what is distinct about his design is the way the façade has been broken up by the internal space. Rooms, in the form of glass and steel boxes, push themselves through the facades on all sides, cantilevering into the street. Visitors walking around the white wall of CC Plaza find themselves wondering whether it is in fact a building or a huge public sculpture of glass and partly rusted Corten steel. Interacting with it continues this ambiguity, since it offers us none of the usual clues about how to get inside or what the boxes may indeed turn out to be once you do find your way in. It finally communicates effectively with the rather sensitive warehouse conversion behind it via a glassed-in passage, so that the two very different buildings sit together as quite a successful pair of twins – not in the least identical or even similar, but nevertheless from the same family thanks to the use of materials.

Other projects due for completion in the coming months include a warehouse conversion to the west of CC Plaza, where KOKO Architecture Bureau have installed three huge tetra-shaped silos on top of an otherwise sedate old warehouse in a design that pushes the industrial conversion exercise to its limit. The success of the final design both as a building in its own right and in terms of how it suits its immediate surroundings, is very much hanging in the balance. The conversion project by older generation architect, Emil Urbel, situated between the KOKO tetra towers and the Kosmos four, will also soon be open to the public. It is

indicative of his generation and experience since it has none of the ambitious daring of the other projects, but rather makes good use of a broad open-pitched roof reminiscent of old Estonian farm buildings, ultimately destined to be the new home for retailer Hugo Boss. On the whole, this area towards the west currently has the feeling that any day the pavers will come through, and the furniture and lighting will be installed to announce its completion, while the builders and rubbish skips hastily disappear.

This only leaves the eastern edge of the block along Hobujaama Street to be resolved. This area has also involved a number of architects, and over the course of competitions run by the owner there has been some love lost. Architects have come and gone leaving projects half started or not started at all. Hanno Grossschmidt seems to have done quite a good job of picking up at least some of the crumbs of this process, so that he is now responsible for a number of the remaining developments there. But the question here will be whether the residential elements of this stage will finally attract people to live in the Rotermann quarter. Can this eastern end match the level of formal innovation thrown down like a gauntlet by Kosmos, KOKO and Grossschmidt, while also creating solutions that can be used with equal ease and enjoyment? Grossschmidt has certainly displayed his mettle, to coin a pun, with his exciting use of glass and steel, so it will be interesting to see what he comes up with next.

Since the owners have a clear vision and a solid business plan, even economic downturn may not be enough to threaten the ultimate success of the project. The economy will of course play its part, and there have already been some casualties. The restaurant Dada, which itself had a rather daring concept that seemed to fit the location perfectly, has unfortunately had to close its doors. But Boost Juice, on the other hand, is confident, since in July contrary to all expectations, the Rotermann store outsold their usually stronger outlet in the Kristiine shopping centre. Robert Tohver, owner of the chain of juice and smoothie bars, explains, “Boost Juice remains positive about the future of the Rotermann project, and its business potential owing to the quarter’s unique architecture, strategic location and retail diversity. As an anchor tenant of Rotermann Kaubamaja, we are pleased to see the ongoing increase in foot traffic as consumers continue to discover [...] Rotermann”

Whereas people once spoke of completion in years, it is



now possible to start thinking in terms of months. The Rotermann quarter in many ways continues the eclecticism of most of the new architecture in Tallinn. But this small area between the city centre and the harbour is also emerging as a rather unique architectural experiment, utilising new local talent only too happy to challenge convention, and in particular to surprise us with a whole range of new solutions to the industrial conversion exercise. Innovative design and quality materials clearly sets this area apart from anything else that Tallinn has had to offer in recent years, and as the district comes together and the right mix of retail tenants attract our attention away from the Viru shopping centre just across the road, the Rotermann quarter could indeed emerge as a contemporary version of city living with a warmth and style to rival even the Old Town, just as the architects at Kosmos had originally envisioned. An expensive gamble indeed, but one that just might be its draw card.

Aavo Ermel: the artist who does not fit inside a pictogram

Text: Villu Kangur, poet

Often full of surprisingly fresh ideas, Aavo Ermel is undoubtedly one of those creative people who is convinced that a piece of art does not necessarily need to be liked by everyone, but that it should never be depressing.



Not many people know that Aavo is a qualified interior designer, with the emphasis on the first word. However, at first sight it is quite difficult to talk about him in relation to space – Ermel's viewpoint can either be much wider or much more narrow than that of your average person. He has the extraordinary ability to notice the

PORTFOLIO

AAVO ERMEL



Photo courtesy of Jason Antony

Dress
diggraphie 2008

PORTFOLIO

AAVO ERMEL



Photo courtesy by István Benedek

Dance of the People
digigraphie 2008

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Photo courtesy by David Romualdo

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Photo courtesy by Alim Nan

Yellow Joy
digigraphie 2008

PORTFOLIO

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Photo courtesy by Alim Nian

Blue Time
digigraphie 2008

PORTFOLIO

AAVO ERMEL



Photo courtesy by Bob Smith

Home Door
digigraphie 2008

PORTFOLIO

AAVO ERMEL



Photo courtesy by Karin Lindström

Home Window
digigraphie 2008

PORTFOLIO

AAVO ERMEL



Photo courtesy by Katrina Rice

Boat
digigraphie 2008



Twins. digigraphie 2008

most minute details around us and their functional interconnectedness. This does not rule out the possibility that Ermel interprets the world in a way which is uniquely visible to him. The result is amazingly clear and unspoilt by taboos. And astoundingly beautiful in its genuineness!

Estonians have the expression "to admire one's own belly-button". It means that one evaluates one's surroundings from the perspective of self. Sometimes Aavo is quite concrete in the way he expresses himself vocally - he does not beat around the bush. But those close to Ermel know that he has already dissected you down to the tiniest fragments inside your body, or whatever is bound to form there every now and then (don't tell me it is different with you!), because he sees systematic beauty in everything living.

Hence you can argue with him, as your viewpoints may not often be shared, but... he is bound to be right. His works are the outcome which makes one envious in a good sense: why have I not noticed the beautiful moment in which I live and how fleeting it is? This is where his schooling suddenly comes to the fore - with his works he places you - the viewer - at a certain spot where you've never been before, either due to your own ignorance or idleness, because you have just passed it by or stepped over it, or at best run through it.

The door opens yellow!

When Ermel was studying interior design, he managed to spoil one of his finished pieces. By "spoil" I mean that he coloured the directions in which the doors opened yellow, the windows blue, the furniture green and so on. The tutors were astounded - what's that all about!? But Ermel, exhausted from a lack of sleep in the previous weeks, had completed his work an hour before deadline and, in order to kill time, he started to approach the finished piece from the perspective of a graphic artist.



Martha. digigraphie 2008

This happened back in those days in socialist Estonia when no-one had even dreamed of using a computer. True, Steve Jobs had just made his dream a reality in the USA, but back then nothing could be done in multiple colours. It is difficult to say what Ermel was thinking about, but back then, when projects were designed in China ink, on paper and only in black-and-white, this is how he saw things. But the talented ones are forgiven! They simply told him to redo the project.

It is no secret that today, like most artists in the world, Ermel works on an Apple computer. But he is convinced that no work looks like the equipment which was used to create it. He merely adds,

"Today, all life is a computer, the tool does not matter, and the main thing is that the outcome works!"

Ermel handles the so-far invisible, but always familiar life scenes with such elegance that nobody remembers that he was one of the pioneers of computer graphics in Estonia in the 1980s. It doesn't matter that most of those works were

During the Soviet era, it was categorically forbidden to take pieces of art outside the country. Almost the only opportunity to participate in international exhibitions was to rely on an acquaintance to smuggle your work across the border. In 1987, during perestroika, I managed, through some miracle, to travel to Austria. I took four of Ermel's colour linol cuts with me, which had to reach the graphic art triennale in Baden-Baden. We cut them down to the size of an LP (those were still in use back then) and hid the art in a record cover. Of course, the Russian customs officials discovered them immediately. "What are those?" they enquired. "It is part of the LP design," I replied. "But what is on the record?" It was the poems of the late Juhan Viiding (let him forgive me). "Poems and.... on record? You Estonians are such idiots! Records are for music." This was followed by long cursing of Estonians, who with their stupid ideas wanted to undermine the Soviet Union from the inside, and they let me go with all of my goods. This is how Ermel's works reached the free world.



The Right Wing on the Left. digigraphie 2008



The First Primary Matters. digigraphie 2008



The Left Wing on the Right. digigraphie 2008

semi-handicraft from today's perspective. But the word "handicraft" is not meant to be derogatory here. I have heard Ermel say, "Why not create a picture of a sail boat for a sailor if it makes him happy!?" I myself have some furniture made by him and some graphic art and books designed by him in my home. But, most importantly, everything he has created in life seems to be unique, and organised so well that it makes you wonder how you managed to get by without it until now.

Too large for the system he himself created

Ermel is convinced that each one of his pictures should tell its own story. As is fitting for an intelligent person, he does not comment on his works. He just says that today the journey from the desire to the result is shorter and much more precise than ever before. Therefore it is not surprising that he seems to become more novel as the years go by.

In the works created in his digigraphie (giclée) technique, he uses photo fragments of his own and, whenever he has

permission, of other authors. This is because today's interactive media has reached the point where art can be born out of other pieces of art.

"Whoever and wherever you are, you cannot capture it all, as you will, fortunately or unfortunately, only ever be in the moment, just here and now," he says. At the same time, with his effortless elegance, he discovers something right next to us and starts to work on this scene. Viewers cannot imagine the length of the journey to the end result, because they open their eyes only when they see the result.

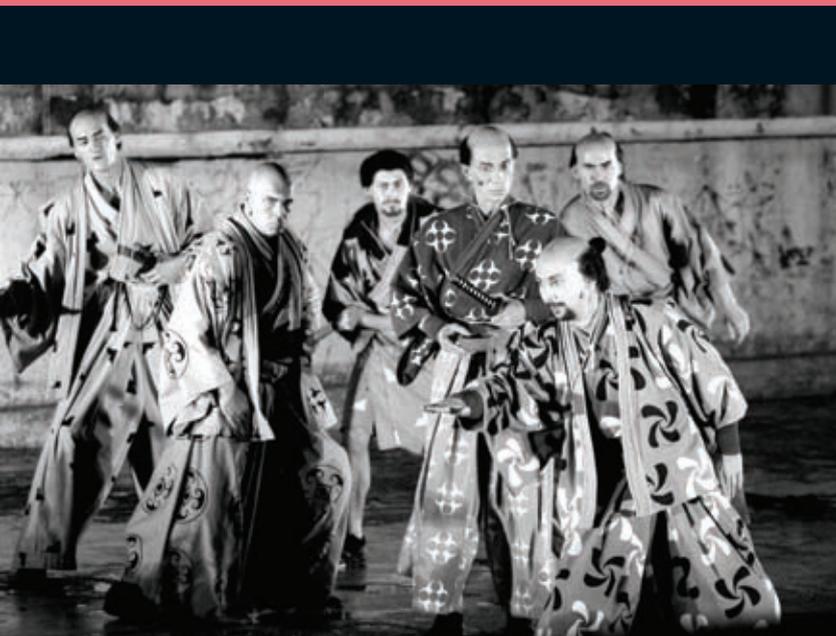
Back when Ermel worked as a city designer, he created a wonderful system of pictograms, into which the whole world could be placed. Of course, it was never applied, as it was more than some men can achieve in a lifetime. I wonder what kind of pictogram he would fit himself into? As the author of this article, and as a poet, I have a hard time even finding adequate words to describe him.

You can find out more about Aavo Ermel's works at:
www.printube.com

Excerpts from the diary of Theatre NO99

Text: Eero Epner
Photos: Sven Tupits





Saturday, 7 July
2004

Had a meeting with Tiit Ojasoo and Ene-Liis Semper. They told me they want to found a new theatre company, perhaps with a small manifesto, but definitely without making any artistic compromises. It could have sounded almost arrogant, but it sounded genuine instead. If they didn't have the experience they do, it would have been arrogant. I had just seen their "Robert Zucco" for the second time: pure and radiant. I like that they are not ashamed of catharsis. Talk of a new theatre is a bit suspect; I cannot imagine it working financially or technically or at all. We'll see. They have the moral self-confidence. The name is supposed to be NO99 – the number would decline with each new production. Such imagination.



"Seven Samurai" (Kurosawa/Ojasoo/Semper, NO96, 2004). Photos by Tiit Ojasoo.

Monday,
15 August 2006

Today a check of "Seven Samurai" before opening night. I stood somewhere above a canopy and stared at the empty outside swimming pools in the middle of the park. In half an hour, seven samurai were supposed to start fighting to protect the

village people. I recall asking Tiit and Ene-Liis why they had chosen this story. Why Japan, why samurai, why all this in an empty swimming pool? The pool gives the dimension, they said. It helps to think big and one should only waste one's time on thinking big. And Japan because it has to be. And samurai because those were men who were passionately, self-destructively and sublimely dedicated to their cause. They probably said something about "the coexistence of the beautiful and the strong" – that is close to their hearts. Okay. Let's see. Grand battle scenes with rubbish bins and the love of the young samurai were equally gentle today. It is a good sign.

Friday, 3
September 2006

The opening of Ene-Liis' exhibition at the Tallinn Art Hall. Installations and video. In the large hall, she has created a video which is the most, khm, feminine and fragile that I know: she herself (as always) in a white bunny costume, expressing pain and emotional emptiness and disappointment. The shooting video, where the voice behind the scenes (Tiit's!)

asked Ene-Liis to pose more prettily and then shot her, was stylish. Concrete, clean, without excess symbolism, but still metaphorical. Like González-Torres. Tiit showed me his works once in a private Berlin collection (next to Ene-Liis'); we talked about them, and he liked them. I nodded.

A little drink after the exhibition. Ene-Liis seemed tired, prepared the exhibition until the last minute, in order to have all the details just right. I think I got the difference between creative perfectionism and numb correctness. The other artist, Marco Laimre, asked Ene-Liis why she had left fine arts for the theatre. Hello? What kind of a question is that?

Monday,
9 October 2006

Tiit's place in the countryside. He is digging a hole for the well. In half a day, we had dug twenty centimetres. Fucking earth. I took a leak in the bushes, hands shaking; almost had an accident. In the evening, we talked theatre. Tiit is seriously concerned about NO99. The need to reach some new level. Thinking has to change, to grow. The goals are too small. The biggest danger is becoming enclosed in a capsule, settling for what you've achieved. The manifesto which was declared two years ago – that each show should be made like



"King Ubu" (Jarry/Ojasoo/Semper, NO91, 2005). Photos by Ene-Liis Semper and Tiit Ojasoo.



it's one's last – has to remain valid. They have the energy and the thoughts with Ene-Liis, but I see that they have doubts; they want to be completely certain that this is the right one. Afterwards, he said that theatre is the art of emotions. But perhaps I invented that; I cannot remember.

Sunday,
7 January 2007

Ene-Liis showed her designs for the opera “Wallenberg”, which she is working on at the Estonia Theatre. In the national opera theatre. Completely crazy. Baroque costumes, moving stage levels, bold colours. I thought of asking for one of the designs as a present, but Ene-Liis would definitely object. Stage design without the show and its idea is completely pointless, she once said. It is just empty posing by the set designer. Oh well. They already get it in Estonia. But what is not understood is something equally pointless: a director's good idea without the conceptual hat of the designer is simply a bare idea, funny but with goose-bumps.

Sunday,
19 February 2007

NO99 just celebrated its second birthday. Appropriately, there was a party. One critic got pissed and came to talk to Tiit. “You are our avant-garde,” he blathered. “Keep the flag of the arts up high!”

he yelled. Freak. /.../
 Afterwards in Tiit's and Ene-Liis' office, I asked what they liked most about the two years. They talked about "The Seven Samurai" and "Pillow Man" and how great it was that top Germans staged "Stalker" here. But what is closest to their hearts is their first work in the theatre: "Sometimes it feels like life is over and there was no love". A performance by a non-existent theatre: there were no actors, there was no material, no money, just a vague understanding that it had to express the existence of a high idea. That a higher idea needs to exist which ennobles existence.

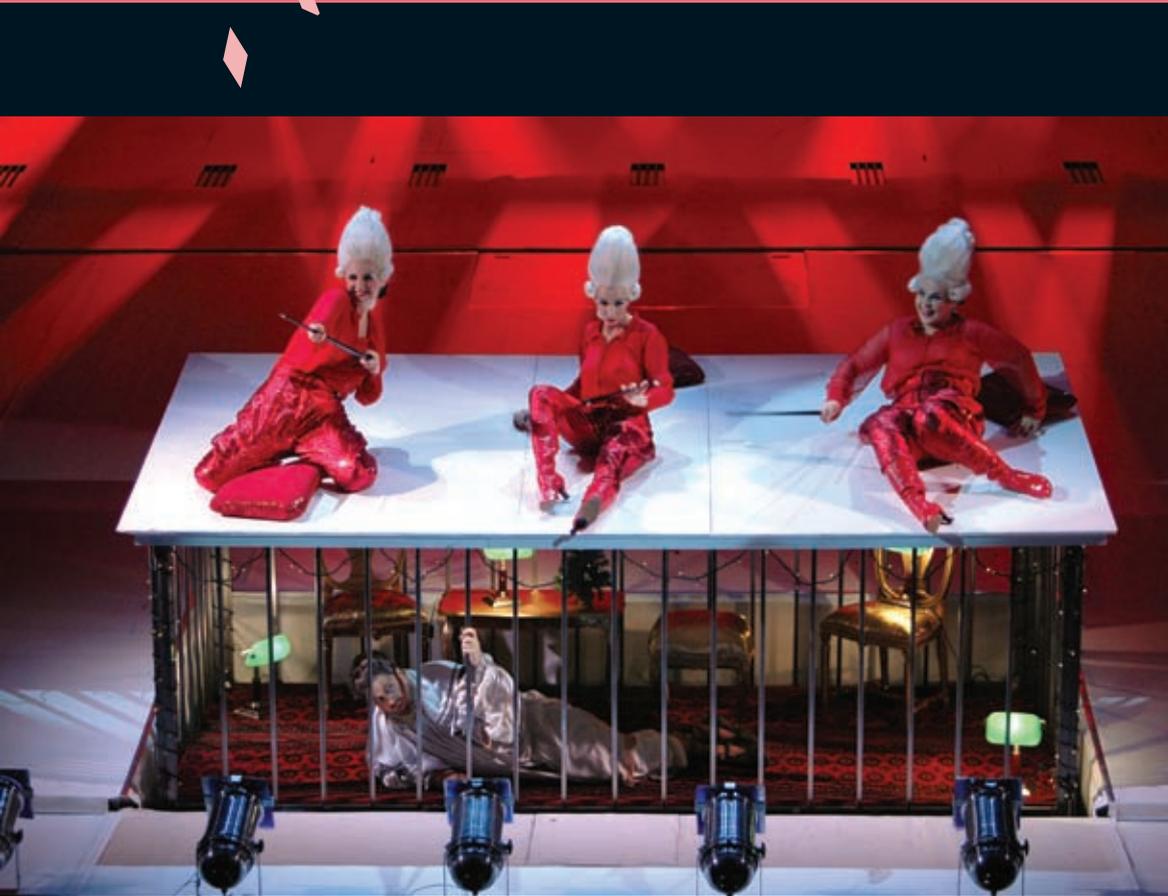
A text-message from Tiit in the evening saying that in the summer we ought to do "King Ubu" at the old air field. Crazy.

Monday,
 8 March 2007

Opening night of "Wallenberg". Ene-Liis's set design even grander than on paper, but also more accurate. After the show, Ene-Liis talks about how the director was, due to political reasons, prevented from coming to direct from Russia to Estonia. You have three guesses to come up with who got the role of the director. Tiit says that NO99 should do something about Estonia. Estonia is really getting on his nerves lately. "The more you love some people, the more it



Erki Sven Tüür's opera "Wallenberg", Estonia National Opera, 2007.
 Directed by Dmitri Bertman, designed by Ene-Liis Semper. Photos by Harry Rospu.



hurts when those people behave badly,” he said in a letter. He is referring to Estonians and Estonia.

Tuesday, 8
November 2007

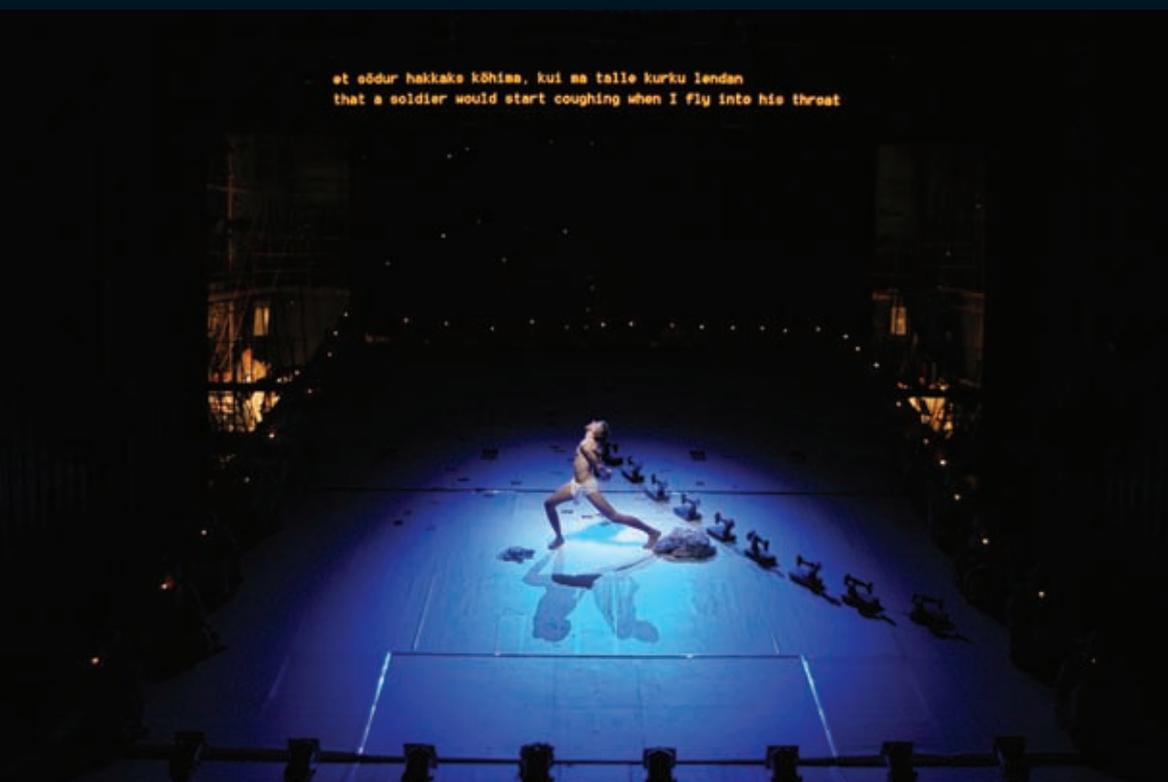
In Berlin. Guest performances of “Oil!” at HAU2. Tiit and I sit by the Spree and drink some weird mineral water. We talk about the show. He says that they wanted a show which would express the backwardness of Estonian societal thinking, but it turns out that the show is much more understandable and says more abroad than in Estonia. “More communicative,” he says. The actors agree that the reactions they have received in Switzerland and Germany are more precise and smarter than they usually are in Estonia. Tiit seems to be satisfied. Talks a bit about German theatre, about the daring craziness of the best of it and their mad readiness to question themselves. The actors cross borders, not to provoke, but in order to perfect.

Saturday,
27 March 2008

Text message from Ene-Liis: “I hate social theatre.”

Sunday,
10 April 2008

Opening night of “Pericles”. The first Shakespeare at NO99. The cast looks tired, but they perform with amazing energy. I saw Ene-Liis’



notebook before the show; it was full of scribbling from margin to margin. "It's my second one," she said. Mostly notes about how the actors are doing. /.../ Tiit slightly edgy. Talking to the stage technicians about some technical trick, laying down the trajectory. Then a meeting with the troupe. It takes a long time. Talks about the general idea of the show: that it is time to tell a fairy-tale. To offer solace to the sad ones and to help the poor to forget. This is why those Indian-ish songs and dances are in the show. It is about solidarity, sticking together, noble goals. Asks the actors to give a hundred per cent from the start; there is no time to accelerate later. The more he talks, the more carried away he gets. Sometimes I think that, although everyone calls him an avant-gardist, he is sometimes a true conservative: the good old acting stuff really gets him going. It is the same with Ene-Liis. I wouldn't be surprised if they had posters of famous actors under their bed at home.

Monday,
23 August 2008

The new season is about to begin. /.../ Tiit and Ene-Liis have just finished in Tartu; they staged the rock-opera "Ruja" there. Very picturesque in the widest sense of the word

and again many large and strong images. I looked at the video shots and thought about Laimre's words: that Ene-Liis has gone missing from fine arts. It seems Laimre doesn't go to the theatre. After the opening night, Tiit says it was very good to direct this one: the actors were present, and everyone did their thing with passion and desire. The only way to do theatre, he said. Okie-dokie, I got the hint.

Wednesday, 10
September 2008

I saw a journalist I know. He said he is working on a story about Tiit and Ene-Liis. "What are you writing about," I asked. He replied: "about how they live and work together. What their division of labour is like, whether Tiit is more of a director and Ene-Liis more of a designer. Do they fight? Do they make up? Do they keep a level head? Who has more ideas? How do they direct NO99? Why do they also work in other theatres? What are important topics for them? Do they bring work home? Is Ene-Liis a video artist or a performance artist? Is Tiit an avant-garde man or some other kind of man? What is going on in the world?"

Well that's great, isn't it.

*Excerpts were chosen
by Eero Epner, dramaturg*



"GEP" or "Hot Estonian Guys"(Ojasoo/Semper, NO88, 2007). Photos by Tiit Ojasoo.



Ene-Liis Semper

Ene-Liis Semper was born on 4 April 1969. In 1995, she graduated from the Estonian Academy of Arts in scenography, and since then she has created over seventy set designs, and numerous costume designs in theatres all over Estonia. In addition, Semper has been active in the fine arts since 1994. She has been one of the most internationally renowned Estonian artists in the last decade, and has, mostly through her video creations, participated in over 100 exhibitions in Europe, including the Venice Biennale, in the USA and Japan. Her works are presented in the collections of many modern art museums. In addition, Semper is the author of several performances. Since 2005, Semper has been the chief designer of the NO99 Theatre.

Since graduating from the Academy of Arts, Semper has created set designs in many theatres, working with many directors, working with many directors. She has cooperated, more long-term, with directors who are known for their innovative language: Mati Unt, Hendrik Toompere Jr. and Tiit

Ojasoo. Semper has received the "Best Theatre Designer of the Year" award on four occasions, the latest in 2005 and 2006 for her work in the NO99 Theatre (the plays "Pillow Man" and "King Ubu"). In 2007, she received the best set design award at the Baltic theatre autumn festival for "GEP". She has also received different prizes in the fine arts. Together with Tiit Ojasoo, she was named the best director of the year in 2004 and the author of the best performance and the best director awards at the DRAAMA festival (for "Juliet"). In addition, Semper has directed "Orlando" (with Kristel Leesment), "Sometimes it feels like life is over and there was no love" and "The Seven Samurai" (both with Tiit Ojasoo).

Today we can see Semper's directing in the critical musical "Oil!" (together with Tiit Ojasoo), and in the plays "Deer Hunter" and "GEP or Garjatsiye estonskije parni" (Hot Estonian Guys). Her newest work is "Death of the Communist", with Hendrik Toompere Jr. and Shakespeare's "Pericles", with Tiit Ojasoo.



Tiit Ojasoo

Tiit Ojasoo (born in 1977) graduated from the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre Drama School in 2000. He subsequently worked as the director of the Estonian Drama Theatre. In 2004, he was elected the new Artistic Director of the Vanalinnastudio Theatre, which changed its name to NO99. Ojasoo has served as the Artistic Director of the NO99 Theatre since 2005.

Ojasoo has thus far staged more than twenty productions in various Estonian theatres (NO99, Von Krahl, Drama Theatre, Vanemuine and Endla). Among the authors he has staged are Shakespeare ("Juliet" based on "Romeo and Juliet", "A Winter's Tale" and "Pericles"), Bernard-Marie Koltes ("Roberto Zucco"), Akira Kurosawa ("Seven Samurai"), Martin McDonagh ("The Lieutenant of Inishmore" and "Pillow Man"), and Alfred Jarry ("King Ubu"). In several of his productions, he has used texts by Yukio Mishima and Sarah Kane. He has also written some parts of the text of his own productions ("Oil!" and "GEP"). In addition to drama productions, he has staged musicals ("Blood

Brothers" and "Evita").

Ojasoo works closely with the stage designer Ene-Liis Semper, who in some cases has been the co-author and co-producer of productions ("Juliet", "Seven Samurai", "King Ubu" etc).

In 2005, Ojasoo was awarded the prize of Best Producer of the Year, together with Ene-Liis Semper. The international jury of the DRAAMA Theatre Festival has selected Ojasoo twice as Best Producer (for "Juliet" in 2005 and for "GEP" in 2007). In 2006, Ojasoo was awarded the Ants Lauter Prize for his remarkable productions staged after his graduation. His "Roberto Zucco" won two prizes at the Turin Theatre Festival and "GEP" won the main prize at the Baltic Theatre Festival in Lithuania in 2007. Several actors have won prizes for their roles in his productions (Tambet Tuisk, Mait Malmsten, Jaak Prints, Mirtel Pohla, Rein Oja et al).

His productions have participated in several festivals in Berlin's HAU, Hamburg's Schauspielhaus, Bern, Turin, Moscow etc.



Rakvere: sumo city of the world 2008

Rakvere is one of the main sites of interest in Northern Estonia, the heart of Lääne-Viru County and the seventh largest town in the country (17,000 inhabitants and 10.64 sq km in area). Although a settlement existed here earlier, the birth date of Rakvere is considered to be 1302, when the ruling Danish king granted Lübeck Rights to the town then known as Wesenberg. For two centuries, Rakvere lost its city rights and belonged to the manor, until the Russian Empress Catherine II restored the rights as a result of citizen lobbying. The theatre house was completed in 1940 and, two years later, Rakvere Theatre became a professional acting company and continued to operate in spite of foreign rule and circumstances. It played a role in maintaining the cultural potential of the city throughout the Soviet times, when Rakvere in all other senses was considered an unimportant province. Having lost its self-governing status during the Soviet era, Rakvere restored its status on 24 January 1991 and has become an attractive hub of cultural activity.



Via road or rail

The bus to Rakvere takes you straight to the city centre. When approaching the town from the Haljala road or from the direction of Paide and Pärnu, visitors will already spot one of the city's symbols – the Rakvere Castle. Guests might be slightly startled when entering the town, for there seems to be a giant ox standing on the roof of a building staring at everyone. In truth, this animal stands on the slopes of the hill called Vallimägi. Tarvas – the symbol from Rakvere's coat-of-arms – was created by the sculptor Tauno Kangro for the town's 700th birthday in 2002. Next come several important sites – the county government building and the theatre, the beginning of the oldest street in Rakvere (Pikk Street), the exhibition house and the city hall (both buildings, built in the 18th century, are heritage listed). You will not be able to miss the central square, which was completed in 2004, with its oldest buildings dating from the early years of the 20th century and the newest buildings just a couple of years old.

An approach from the south reveals residential areas with their unique milieu and plenty of greenery. Actually, a whopping 14% of Rakvere is covered in forest! The most famous area is the oak wood, which is a conservation site. From the road, you can also see the Palermo woods (not the only place in the county to be named after a foreign town!). You will reach the city centre from the direction of Narva, through Sõmeru, with a view of the silhouette of the city and the castle avenue.

Those coming to Rakvere by train will first spot the recently renovated railway station. Currently, three rail

lines stop in Rakvere (Tallinn-Rakvere, Tallinn-Narva and Tallinn-St Petersburg). Hopefully the station building will be opened in the near future. It is not really a historical site, but it is one of the few buildings in Rakvere which was constructed during the Stalinist era. The historical wooden station building was destroyed in the fire of 19 September 1944, when the Soviet Air Force demolished a quarter of the city, which had already been deserted by the Germans. As a result, at least twenty citizens, including two children, were killed.

The bombs, however, missed the water tower which stands on the other side of the railway, almost opposite the station building. The Germans tried to blow it up during their retreat, but were stopped by local citizens. The water tower is not in use today and the city is looking into interesting ways to put the building to use.

A special tourism attraction is the nearby Rakvere Grain Storage elevator tower, which is visible from far away. What gives this site historical value is the fact that some years ago the scandalous theft of the century was discovered here – the state's grain reserve had been stolen! There are plans to erect a sculpture of the Iron Rat, who will guard the grain reserve. For the Year of the Rat, this sculpture was made by the sculptors Seaküla Simson from Estonia and Edvins Kruminš from Latvia, and at the moment it stands on the central city square.

The city centre and the main visitor sites are situated a couple of kilometres south and south-west of the station building.

Where to go, what to see

Since 2002, the Rakvere Castle has become truly popu-

lar with tourists, as it was at that time that a true Order castle atmosphere was created here with various medieval attractions. You can visit the torture chamber and the death chamber and “accidentally” get locked in; you can try your hand at archery, eat food prepared according to medieval recipes, see copies of swords from different lands, and much more. If you are lucky, you will hear the blast of the “Nightingale” cannon. Starting this season, there are also two smaller cannons in the castle and, in addition, visitors can test front-loading guns and pistols.

The Foundation Virumaa Muuseumid, which has turned the castle into a lively tourism magnet, has created many “different” exhibitions at the Exhibition House (Näitustemaja) as well. The exhibition “Estonia from Birth”, which was installed for the 90th anniversary of the Republic, turned visitors into “actors” who had to go through the different stages of Estonian history playing different roles.

As you come out of the Exhibition House, you will see the oldest street of the town, Pikk Street, which is perfect for a quiet stroll. The street leads to the Oak Wood conservation site. The Trinity Church, visible in the distance, has been a lively concert site recently. Therefore, classical music lovers should check out the programme. The street also houses the Citizen Museum, which gives an overview of the life of citizens in days gone by. To the right, across Tallinn Street, lies the Theatre House and the old manor building, which is a remarkable example of the art of renovation, with its black-and-white façade.

If you turn left at the Exhibition House and follow Tallinn Street, you will reach the Russian Orthodox Church. It is unique among its kind, and in the Baltic States, for the holy remains of the Orthodox Priest Sergius Florinski are stored here. Florinski was one of the people to be murdered by Bolsheviks during the mass murders which took place in the Palermo Woods between December 1918 and the liberation of Rakvere in 1919. The church was also affected by WW II – this year renovation workers found a German grenade in the bell tower. It is assumed that it ended up there in the summer of 1941, when battles took place in Rakvere.

South of the church lies the city centre. The Central Square, with large yellow bell-shaped lights, is one of the newest and most modern in Europe and attracted positive responses from architectural critics immediately after its completion in 2004. To the south-west lies the contemporary sports complex, which was completed in the same year and has become an internationally renowned sports and cultural arena.

The tourism information centre in the former market build-



ing on the Central Square gives more detailed information to visitors. For Estonian speakers, there is the new “Guide to Walkers” which makes finding one’s way around much easier, with information, photos and maps. You can also just take a stroll, see the city and discover something by chance. In the summer, don’t forget that the seaside is only twenty kilometres away, although water activities are now available in Rakvere all year round.

Aqva pleasures in Rakvere!

This spring saw the completion of the new hotel and leisure complex “Aqva”, which has received praise for its interesting architectural solution and is considered to be one of the most luxurious resorts in Estonia. It is no longer necessary to drive to the other side of Estonia to visit a spa and Rakvere pupils no longer need to go to Vinni or Kadrina for their swimming lessons. This complex was long awaited in Rakvere. The centre was born on the initiative of a private entrepreneur and is run in collaboration with the local government.

“Aqva” visitors can swim in the ordinary swimming pool or choose to bob in the waves, stand under the waterfall or have an underwater bubble massage. There is also a colourfully lit slide and an open air pool where you can swim even on colder days. Visitors can choose between different saunas, and those going to the Finnish sauna can also jump into the cold water tub. Emeraude Spa offers various body treatments. The complete list of services is available at www.aqvahotels.ee.

For those who overnight in “Aqva”, there is no need to take off the comfy robe in between visits to the treatments and the water attractions. The hotel has 75 rooms and 150 places. In addition to the fact that tourists in Rakvere have more rooms now, the town also has two new eateries – the posh restaurant “Mezzo” and the pirate-ship-style pizzeria “Arabella”.

That this place is important for Rakvere is also demon-

strated by the fact that it was the first site to be opened in the city after the Tarvas sculpture, which was visited by the President of Estonia.

Where to and when?

The most eventful time in Rakvere is usually June. Rakvere City Days, which mark the birthday of the town, take place then. It is, first and foremost, a celebration for local people, but all visitors who want to see how Rakvere people live and party are most welcome.

At the time of publication, the City Days and the first Punk Song Festival in Estonia (and the world) will have already taken place and the city has a new sculpture welded from scrap metal and titled "Punk Freedom Statue". But we invite you to Rakvere City Days in 2009, where you will be able to see an original musical about the recent history of the town.

Rakvere's image as the Crazy City is now engrained. It has been like this from the early days. Another tradition is the biannual international "different" theatre festival Baltoscandal. This year is a "scandalous" one and the theatre world from Estonia, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Austria, France and Turkey will come to Rakvere. At the same time, young theatre lovers will organise their own "Baltoscandal" for the second time, the B'Off Festival.

Sumo World Championships and the Japanese Week of Culture

Another eventful period this year will be October, when the world, more specifically the world of sumo and Japanese culture, will convene in Rakvere. In 2006, the first ever Junior World Championships in sumo wrestling to be held outside



This summer Rakvere hosted the first World's Punk Song Festival.



Japan took place in Rakvere. This is largely due to Baruto, one of the most successful professional sumo wrestlers in the world. He comes from the county, from Laekvere, and his real name is Kaido Hõovelson. The Japanese and the sumo world liked Rakvere and the elegant sports complex so much that this year the Sumo World Championships will take place in Rakvere on 11-12 October. The event will be for juniors, men and women, and for the first time in history there will be a competition for girls. This sporting highlight is preceded by the Japanese Week of Culture from 6-10 October, with numerous concerts, exhibitions and workshops. A lecture series on Japanese culture is already running in Rakvere. Each lecture is followed by a film, seminar or demonstration of martial arts.

Serious symphony, serious rock

In November, youth orchestras from several countries will be celebrating the anniversary of Jaan Pakk, the legendary music teacher and the first teacher of the world famous



composer Arvo Pärt. While this event is meant for those who like symphonic music, just before Christmas there will be a real international treat for rock lovers at the Rakvere Sports Hall. The biggest winter rock festival in the Baltics, Green Christmas, will bring together rock stars from Estonia and the world. Past performers at the festival include Paradise Lost, Anathema, Die Krupps, Dead Next Door, Callenish Circle... and of course the best Estonian heavy rock, metal and punk performers.

The biggest fireworks in Estonia

No doubt Rakvere will not give up on the dream of having the biggest fireworks in Estonia as we enter the year 2009. Therefore, it is worth going to Rakvere even if it is only for half an hour on 31 December, in order to see the fireworks, and then you can continue your journey in the new year.

Theatre, Philharmonic Chamber Choir

There is much more on offer in Rakvere, including several activities under the umbrella of the Jubilee of the Republic of Estonia this year. The theatre has become so popular with visitors all over Estonia since it was renovated that it may be difficult to get tickets, as they are sold out months in advance. Concert lovers should check what's on at the Trinity Church, especially during Christmas. Also don't miss the seasonal opening concerts of the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir, as traditionally those take place in Rakvere.

Entertainment

There's plenty for every taste – for disco lovers (the nightclub Lokaal), for dancing to live music or karaoke (Virma and Katariina Kelder), and for more traditional live rock (Kära Kants). For chamber music lovers there are regular performances in Hagari Pitsa, and occasional shows in Art Café and elsewhere.

Have a good time in Rakvere!

5 October 2008

5th National Music Day for Teachers

Although it is usually the pupils who perform, on this day it is the teachers who show how good they are at music.

+372 322 3833

rakmuusika@hotmail.ee

www.rakveremuusikakool.edu.ee

6-10 October 2008

Japanese Cultural Week

A week presenting Japanese culture before the 16th Sumo World Championships.

+372 322 5870

linnavalitsus@rakvere.ee

www.rakvere.ee

11-12 October 2008

16th Sumo World Championships in Rakvere

A large-scale international sports event in a small Estonian town.

+372 322 5888

inge.peebu@rakvere.ee

<http://sumo.rakvere.ee>

1 November 2008

Wha!?

Festival of new music and culture.

+372 555 90031

remi@lejalgenes.com

<http://lejalgenes.com/wha>

21-23 November 2008

Orchestra Forum of the 7th Jaan Pakk Young Musicians Days

Youth Orchestras perform beautiful music over three days.

+372 322 3833

rakmuusika@hotmail.ee

www.rakveremuusikakool.edu.ee

1 October – 15 December 2008

Youth Film Days in Rakvere

+372 322 3464

athenakool@hotmail.ee

www.athenakool.ee

19-20 December 2008

Green Christmas 2008

The biggest winter rock festival in the Baltics!!

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info@bem.ee

www.greenchristmas.ee





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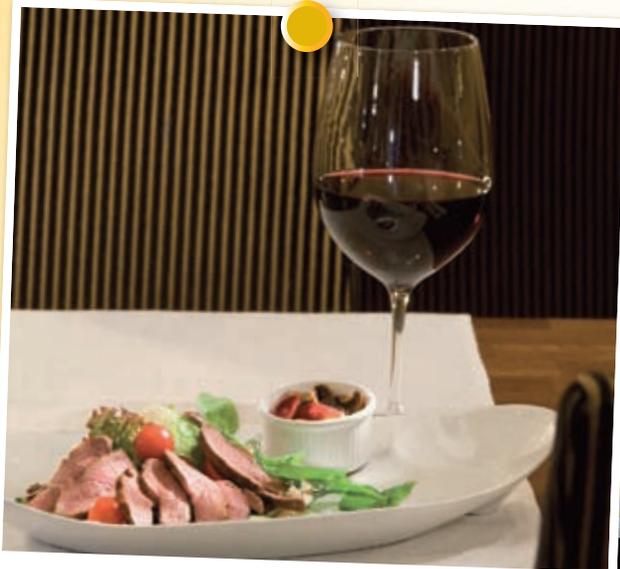
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Practical information for visitors



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.



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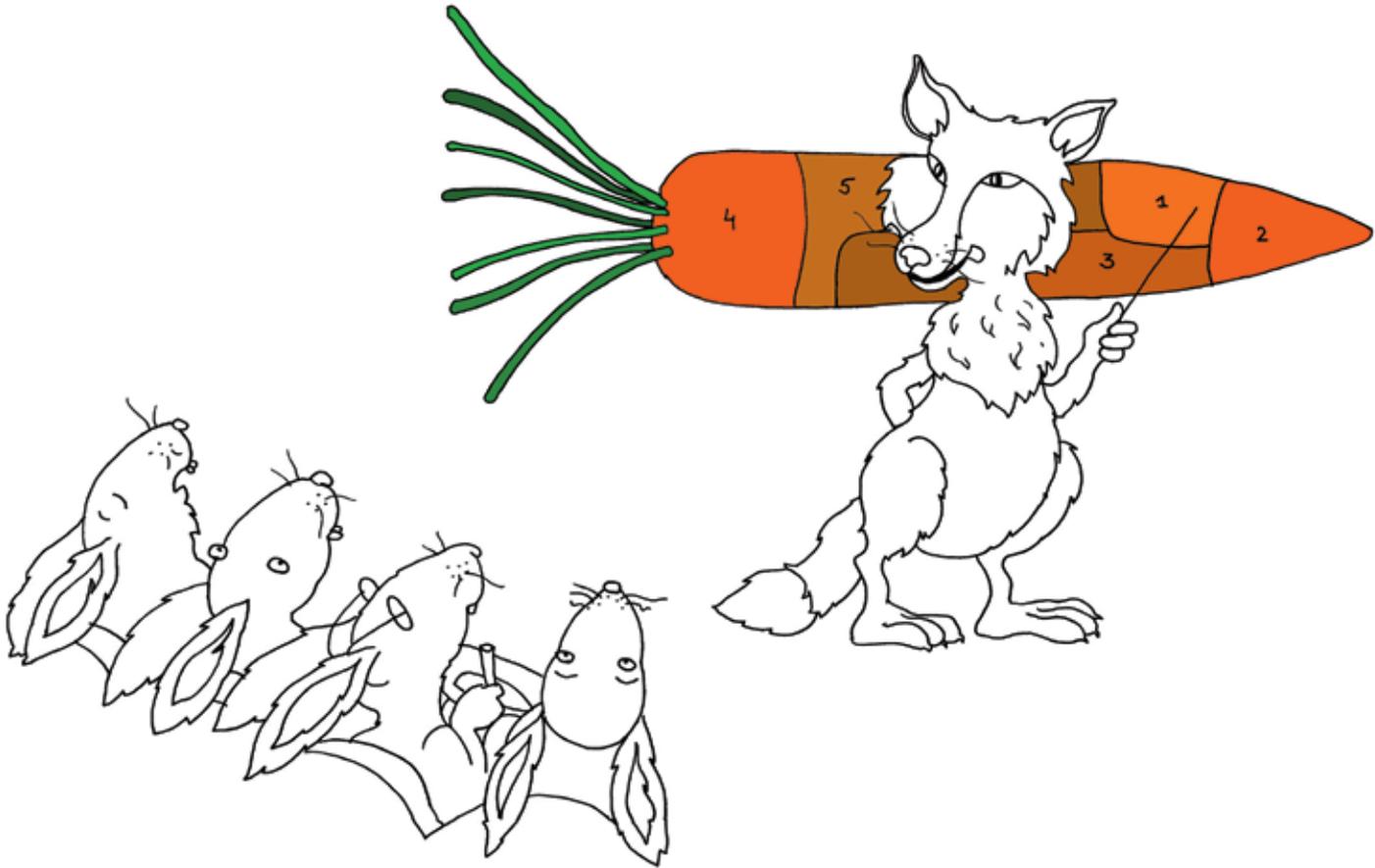


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