



| Coralie Boulez |

BRINGING OUT THE BEST IN PEOPLE

EXPORT

Wallonia International
Business Awards 2024

FOCUS

The Walloon gaming scene
enters multiplayer mode

PANORAMA

Uhoda
Beauty and gesture

HUMAN TALENT!

Out on the field, ten medals, and back at the Belgium House, some tempting propositions. While it would be tempting to rest on one's laurels, that would be tantamount to ignoring the three core lessons of these 2024 Olympic Games: the importance of mental fortitude, the value of teamwork, and the drive to go beyond one's limits. Or, as we say in the business world, the need for long-term strategy and vision, the willingness to build on human talent, and the importance of cultural diversity.

The first thing that springs to mind is sports-related companies, always so innovative and cutting-edge, such as EVS, Equicty, Myocène, Bounce, Boogle. But let's not forget the video-game sector, which has seen incredible creative talent with the likes of Fishing Cactus and Fire Falcom. And our Business Awards 2024 are also honouring Dream Donuts, Telix, N-SIDE, and Transurb. These companies certainly have the support of the public sector, but their success lies above all in the determination shown by their managers, who have turned them into true flagships of determination, resilience, and openness to the world.

Sometimes, it's when you're putting in the most effort that you start taking off. And if you fall a bit short, just look to these new Venus de Milo, an ode to the paralympic games, or think of Victor Borge's famous quote—also a nod to the Liège International Comedy Film Festival—"Laughter is the shortest distance between two people."

Welcome back to earth, everyone, and let's keep our eyes on the stars.

Pascale Delcomminette



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SUMMARY

WORK

- 04 NEWS**
- 06 BIG PICTURE**
Coralie Boulez : bringing ou the best in people
- 10 BUSINESS**
Wallonia International Business Awards 2024
- 14 INVESTMENT**
Holcim want to decarbonise the cement sector
- 16 INNOVATION**
Our Walloon businesses are sport innovators

FOCUS

- 20 FOCUS**
The Walloon gaming scene enters multiplayer mode

LIVE

- 26 TOURISM**
Discover the castles of Wallonia

- 28 GASTRONOMY**
The excellence of Rochefort

- 29 AMBASSADORS**
David Van Wynsberghe and UBFE

INSPIRE

- 30 DESIGN**
Mademoiselle Jo: Beautiful objects designed to last

- 32 PANORAMA**
Beauty and gesture, from Paris to the world

- 34 CULTURE**
FIFCL: An international event than brings people together

- 35 UPCOMING EVENTS**

Discover the autumn issue of WAB magazine | Wallonia.be



WAB contact
www.wallonia.be

BRAINE L'ALLEUD LIGHTS UP

Millions of viewers around the world watched the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games, and in particular the spectacular light and laser show at the Eiffel Tower. The show had links to Wallonia: it was staged by a company from Braine l'Alleud, LES by Laser System Europe. The company also organised the light show for the last two celebrations of the Belgian national holiday, and was responsible for lighting up the Burj Khalifa last New Year's Eve.



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN WALLONIA BENEFITS FROM 86.5-MILLION-EURO INVESTMENT

Wallonia and a number of telecoms operators have signed an investment agreement worth up to €86.5 million to improve mobile coverage and the process of helping local authorities to go digital. This partnership, which is set to run until 2026 (though it may be extended), provides for annual investments to boost connectivity in underserved areas and to promote the digital transition.



SYNCHRONO, THE LEADER IN COMPLEX E-COMMERCE SITES

Every year, 120,000 entrance tickets to the Belgian F1 Grand Prix need to be managed, and Synchrono, a company based in Blegny, has been doing this successfully for more than 10 years. The numbers are staggering: 400,000 QR Codes are created, and the site welcomes more than a million visitors. Synchrono, Wallonia's leader in complex e-commerce sites, runs a sophisticated ticketing system, among other things by buying more than 400 different types of ticket, and by managing personal spaces and a platform that is optimised for conversion and live tracking.



1,001 MORE BUSINESSES IN WALLONIA IN TWO YEARS

Wallonia welcomed 1,001 additional companies from the beginning of 2021 to the end of 2022, mainly from Brussels (822) and Flanders (179), according to Statbel, the Belgian national-statistics office. These companies have found more space, more attractive mobility solutions, and greater security in Wallonia.



MONDO SPECHIM'S CORALIE BOULEZ

BRINGING OUT THE BEST IN PEOPLE

Putting people first, no matter what: it's not always easy to put that principle into practice when you're heading up a global company such as Mondo Spechim. But that's exactly what Coralie Boulez does.



"I've always had it in my blood. It runs in the family", says Coralie Boulez as she looks back on her career at Mondo Spechim, a Gembloux-based company that makes custom cleaning agents and specialised organic, natural, and chemical products. When she took over management of the company 27 years ago, with dynamism, charisma and passion, Coralie inculcated in the company something she regards to be of paramount importance: the human factor. "That's what's at the heart of the solutions that we provide. We try to make the work people do easier, and to nurture both people and the environment." And people are also at the heart of the company's operations. "We can all stumble or make bad choices sometimes. The key thing is to surround yourself with people who are smarter and more highly skilled than you are, and who have the right drive. I act like an orchestra conductor, making sure everything runs like clockwork and that people communicate—that they get each other." But she wields her baton with great humility: "I'm always learning more about myself, and I tell myself that, all in all, I'm more effective than I'd realised." No surprise, then, that she's called on by people in high places around the world to negotiate major deals and partnerships. And her secret? "I have an optimistic, fighting spirit", she says. But even more importantly: "Being upbeat is key—having the drive, and sparking it in others. I take life one step at a time, and above all I value sharing as a principle. We're driven by the dedication of others. We all need to feel motivated. And my colleagues motivate me as much as I do them." And Coralie's son, who has already joined the company, will no doubt be taking the reins, when he does, with the same fire in his belly. "He brings a lot to the table. I'd like to give him a bit more time, since I'm planning on keeping at it for a few more years yet."

For the last 50 years, Mondo Spechim has specialised in making custom cleaning agents and specialised organic, natural, and chemical products. It is actually a group of companies, known as Bechems, with three main hubs : first there's Chembo Bevil, which is based in Tournai, and is the industrial and distribution arm. Then there's Mondo Spechim, in Gembloux, which makes industrial products under its own brand name. And finally there's R&O Lab, which straddles both sites and focuses on research and development. The company was set up by Coralie's father in 1973. She took the reins in 1997.



CORALIE BOULEZ



CORALIE: A DAY IN THE LIFE



Wake up



Get updates on the other business (in construction and renovation)



Start the workday with visits to sites and company factories



Dinner with colleagues and others involved in Mondo Spechim, or relaxing (going to the theatre, visiting museums, going to a show, going on outings)



Bedtime (or "now and then go to a fun party")

WALLONIA INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AWARDS

WALLONIA IS BURSTING WITH TALENT

Since 1991, the Wallonia Business Awards have been recognising the efforts and achievements of Walloon companies in foreign markets, thus enhancing not only the reputation of these companies but also the brand image of the products, services, and know-how that they promote globally. Here are the winners for 2024.



Ilyass Aoussar



WALLONIA START AWARD 2024: DREAMS DONUTS

After discovering donut bars during a trip to the United States in 2017, Ilyass Aoussar opened the first Dreams Donuts in Belgium in 2020, with a strong, “instagrammable” identity.

What makes it special? It is a franchise that “built on the success of our first 3 shops in Belgium. We opened 89 shops in just 4 years, in Belgium as well as abroad. We launched an American-style business model.”

Its values? Transfer of know-how. “Our headquarters has a training centre—our ‘donut capital’—a 500-m² training centre in Quaregnon that trains every new franchisee in a replica shop.”

And what does the future hold? “We want to become the European market leader, with over 300 branches across Europe.”

Receiving a Business Award is: “A great honour, and a source of pride. But nothing can be taken for granted, so we must keep hard at it.”

www.dreamsdonuts.com



Philippe Chevalier
© Thomas Beauduin

WALLONIA INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AWARD 2024 AND WALLONIA'S PEOPLE CHOICE AWARD 2024 : N-SIDE

N-SIDE helps companies make informed decisions, manage risks, and optimise the use of critical resources. The company, which was founded by Philippe Chevalier, is “the missing link between scientific research and practical innovations that transform industries.”

What makes it special? Its global reach has a major impact on the pharma and energy sectors. “It is a global leader in optimising the logistics of clinical trials.

In 2022 it helped bring a third of the world’s candidate drugs to the international market. Similarly, in the energy sector, it helped improve the efficiency of electricity-transmission networks for over 2 billion people.”

Its values? Sustainability. “By the end of the century, every individual, anywhere in the world, should be able to enjoy the same standard of living. And we have to use 10 times fewer resources to get there—a challenge

that every company will face.

And what does the future hold? “We will be broadening our expertise and our efforts in the sectors we are now operating in, even as we stay open to opportunities in others.”

Receiving the Wallonia International Business Award is: “Really gratifying! We’re proud to win this recognition in Wallonia, a region rich in intellectual resources.”

www.n-side.com



FOREIGN INVESTMENT AWARD 2024: **TELIX**

Telix Pharmaceuticals is an Australian biopharmaceutical company specialising in targeted molecular therapies for treating cancer. It opened its radiopharmaceutical facility in Seneffe in early June.

What makes it special? "It is located in the heart of 'Radiopharma Valley'", says Raphael Ortiz, CEO of Telix International.

Its values? Passion. "Developing and distributing radiopharmaceutical products is a challenge, but knowing that we are able to help patients live longer and have a better quality of life gives us the strength to move mountains."

And what does the future hold? Telix would like to join forces with "R&D in collaboration with universities, do clinical trials, and operate a production site, set up a radiopharmacy business to meet the needs of the surrounding hospitals, and set up a radiopharmacy hub in Seneffe."

Winning a Business Award is: "A source of pride! I see the investment in Belgium as a partnership first and foremost. Wallonia was a winning choice."

www.telixpharma.com

Raphael Ortiz



SPECIAL PRIZE OF THE JURY 2024 : **TRANSURB**



Gauthier Van Damme

Transurb, a company based in Brussels and Namur, develops rail and urban-mobility solutions, particularly by installing its ultra-realistic driving simulators, which are specialised in all types of transport options, the world over.

What makes it special? The simulators, which range from full-scale models to mobile versions, are used for training "25% of drivers on five continents", says CEO Gauthier Van Damme.

Its values? "We have an in-house culture of calling things into question, continual improvement, and transparent communication. The same goes for our partners, to whom we offer solutions through a process of co-creation."

And what does the future hold? "We want to broaden out into tools, such as for industry processes"—like their majority shareholder, John Cockerill, with whom Transurb developed a simulator "for training in the maintenance of hydrogen electrolyzers."

Winning a Business Award is: "A source of great satisfaction! It's a reward for the efforts we made in the aftermath of the pandemic, and for establishing roots in the region."

<https://www.transurb.com/en>



▶ [Relive the Business Awards on video](#)



HOLCIM WANT TO DECARBONISE THE CEMENT SECTOR

Holcim's GO4ZERO project is a 500-million-euro investment that aims to turn the cement sector, and the construction sector more generally, into a model of sustainability.

Vincent Michel, GO4ZERO Programme Director at Holcim Belgium, has made the announcement: "From 2029, the goal is to produce 2 million tonnes of decarbonised cement by capturing and storing over 1 million tonnes of CO₂." The project will be carried out in two phases, the first of which is already underway.





The first stone in the future cement plant in Obourg was laid in June this year, in a ceremony attended by Prime Minister Alexander De Croo and the European Commissioner for Climate Action, Wopke Hoekstra. The ceremony highlighted the EU's involvement in the project, notably through two financial-support programmes that are crucial to making it happen: the Just Transition Fund, which is providing more than €100 million to finance new-generation facilities, and the Innovation Fund, which is providing €230 million in investment aid and support, with operational surcharges to accelerate the decarbonisation of the production line that is envisaged.

While Holcim has secured a new deposit of over 100 years' worth of limestone, the primary ingredient in cement, it has also been focusing on preserving resources through circularity, for example by using construction waste as a substitute for natural raw materials. The new facilities are slated to go into operation by 2027, and "Holcim is aiming for a 30% drop in its CO₂ emissions, primarily by using nearly 100% non-fossil fuels and over 30% alternative raw materials."



[Discover more in video](#)



-  **Over 500 million euros invested in the Hainaut**
-  **80 GWh of decarbonised energy produced locally**
-  **Over 95% of thermal energy supported by alternative fuels**
-  **Over 30% of raw material requirements covered by alternative materials**



The second part of the project will focus on combustion with an oxygen furnace, which will allow for CO₂ to be captured, purified with cryogenics, and stored in liquid form in carbon sequestration well under the North Sea. "This is a revolution for the cement sector", as much because of its technical complexity and the length of the contracts (15 to 20 years), as because of the risks involved, particularly in terms of financing. As Vincent Michel is keen to point out: "Carbon-neutrality is a genuine business strategy."



OUR BUSINESSES ARE SPORTS INNOVATORS!

In July, the Paris Olympics highlighted athletic performance. Both the athletes who train every day, and the many Walloon businesses that are innovating in the world of sports, are performing well.

Athletic performance also depends on managing training and the athletes' environment, especially for professional horse riders. And that's why Samir Brahimi created **Equicty**, "an all-in-one management tool that you can customise with modules" as a replacement for whiteboards, which are still all-too common in stables. "This platform makes it easier for everyone to work together, simplifies admin, and facilitates access to information." Equicty, which is used by athletes such as Grégory Wathélet and Jérôme Guéry, manages 75,000 horses and has 9,000 users in around 30 countries.

www.equicty.com



Liège-based company **EVS**, which was founded in 1994 and which specialises in live video production, is a key player on multiple fronts. Known for its live-action-replay footage, EVS plays a crucial role in broadcasting many sporting events. "If all our equipment across the world were to be turned off, we would be left with fewer than 10% of the live sporting events we can watch today", says CEO Serge Van Herck. EVS is pushing the limits of innovation by listening to its clients and operators around the world, and by creating the products and features they ask for. "With over 300 people on our R&D team, EVS is continuing to invest in its future."

<https://evs.com/>



Resting after training is key to improving performance, says Jean-Yves Mignolet, CEO of **Myocène**. "If muscle fatigue builds up, your performance is going to decline, and you run a greater risk of over-exerting yourself and getting injured." This Liège-based company has perfected a light and portable device to measure muscle fatigue. It serves as "a decision-making aid in planning training, and helps track athletes' energy levels." It's already in use in Europe, notably by the Paris Saint-Germain football team, and the company is now ready to take on the American market.

<https://www.myocene.com/>



Sports is also becoming a matter of sustainability. Antoine Wouters and his team at **Bounce** are tackling the pollution created by tennis and padel, the fourth most-polluting sports. Each year, 500 million balls are produced around the world, and fewer than 1% of them are recycled. In 2019, Bounce launched a pressuriser to “triple the lifespan of tennis balls”, given that “80% of players change their balls due to a loss in pressure.” In addition, the Bounce Circular project is putting recycle bins in clubs to collect old balls. These are then recycled into new products, such as sports flooring, horse-racing tracks, and sound insulation. Bounce aims to become “the eco-friendly partner of all Federations worldwide, and to make tennis and padel less harmful to the planet.”

<https://bouncesports.co/>



© Bounce



© Bounce



© Bounce



© Boogle

Finally, sport is also about warmth and human connection, as shown by **Boogle**, which creates indoor and outdoor portable pétanque pistes. “You can set up a piste in 10 minutes”, says founder Patrick Neuville, who showcased the produce in the German House during the Paris Olympics. “The idea is to give pétanque a better image” by bringing it to families, companies, and business events. “And to bring it to our Boogle House in Herve”, where one can have a drink or organise a seminar about the world of pétanque. “The goal now is to find distributors in various countries.”

<https://boogle.eu/>



© Boogle



© Boogle



digital wallonia .be

THE WALLOON GAMING SCENE ENTERS MULTIPLAYER MODE

The Walloon video-game industry is booming. With new talent, skills, public and private grants, passion, and training, it is set to become a global benchmark.

THE ADVENT OF THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY IN WALLONIA

Today, gaming is the world's leading cultural industry, with its varied offerings ranging from entertainment and creating social links to education and therapeutic uses. It's moving out of living rooms and into schools and nursing homes, and helping support disabled and autistic individuals. It has also become widespread on social media and even TV shows.

In Wallonia, gaming studios such as Art & Magic and Appeal signalled the beginnings of the industry in the 90s. Despite these success stories, the Walloon gaming scene was still in its infancy, driven by a handful of enthusiasts, often labouring in the shadow of international giants. "Belgian gaming studios couldn't hold their own against this intense international competition, and that led to a major brain drain from the sector", says Bruno Urbain, founder of one of Wallonia's pioneering studios, Fishing Cactus. It was only in the 2010s that the industry really began to come into its own structurally and professionally.



CRUCIAL STRUCTURAL SUPPORT BY WALGA, WALLIMAGE, AND TAX SHELTER

As part of its Digital Wallonia strategy, the Agence du Numérique (AdN) launched two institutional initiatives, with a view to supporting existing and upcoming projects, making them viable and capable of getting others involved and collaborating. Pascal Balancier, a Senior Expert at AdN, says the aim here is "not only to bolster existing skills, but also introduce new ones, such as marketing, communication, and general entrepreneurship."

Since 2011, then, the Wallonia Game Association (Walga) has been encouraging collaboration and the sharing of experience between Walloon players and foreign publishers. And alongside that, since 2013, the Wallimage initiative has worked to offer financial support to the sector, in the form of financing mechanisms for businesses, through loans and equity investments.

Nevertheless, it took Walga and Wallimage Gaming a few years to secure the public funding they needed. Both have been fully operational only since late 2021, and with promising results. "Thanks to a government subsidy of 4 million euros, combined with our own investment in gaming studios, we've supported 33 projects developed by 25 companies, and 90% of these have been our own creations", says Sophie Augurelle, who heads up the Gaming department at Wallimage. "This has helped us create a gaming ecosystem in which studios work together and specialise in certain skill sets." Pascal adds: "The number of gaming studios has doubled, and around 20 more have been set up this year."

This ecosystem has been further boosted by Tax Shelter, a fiscal mechanism backed by the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles (FWB) and the Service Public Fédéral Finances. Having already proven its worth in the film industry, this mechanism was adapted for the gaming sector in 2023. It combines the private financing of projects with fiscal advantages for investors. It has got off to a modest start, not only because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but also because "most of the projects are run by young people who are not yet familiar with the mechanism", says Gracia Naranjo, Head of FWB's Tax Shelter for Gaming programme, "while others are apprehensive about applying, for fear of the risks."

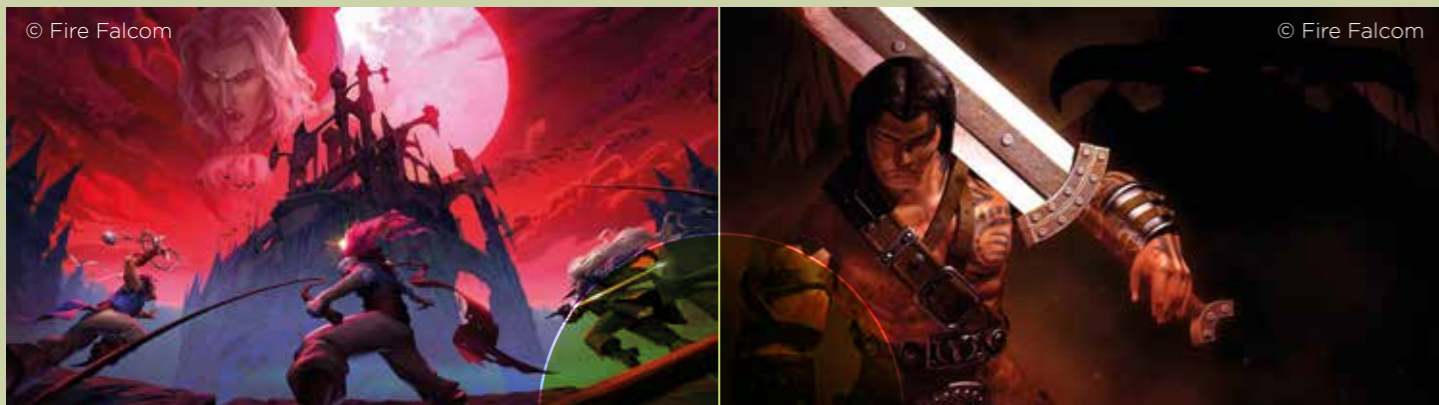
TRAINING AS A KEY RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGES FACING **WALLOON GAMING**

Training is playing a crucial role in the professionalisation of the Walloon gaming industry, starting with the region's renowned institutions, whose increasingly specialised, world-renowned courses are attracting a growing number of students. In 2022, the well-known Haute Ecole Albert Jacquard, in Namur, introduced a master's in video gaming, which was an instant hit. "From 100 students in 2022, we have gone to 600", says Christophe Laduron, who co-created the programme, and who is also a member of the board at Walga. These students, he says, are future market players "who have picked up cutting-edge skills in the field and in entrepreneurship." Christophe is well acquainted with the challenges facing the gaming industry: he is also the founder, with four colleagues, of Polygon Valley, an independent game-development studio. That also means he can hire his students when they graduate, "thanks to a successful Wallimage call for projects, which will allow us to keep talent here in Belgium."



It seems that all the ingredients needed to make the Walloon gaming sector a success are there: public and private funding, an ever-growing number of projects, a wealth of talent, and cutting-edge training. Sophie Augurelle points out that it is "too soon to draw precise conclusions from the support that has been put in place", even though the industry appears to be on the right track. This year, it will still have to tough it out in a market that has yet to get over the effects of the pandemic. And it is already looking to the future, as the sector continues to consolidate. As Virginie Nouvelle, General Manager of Wallimage, puts it, "We must promote our skills abroad, and showcase Wallonia's dynamism. That is our 10-year vision." The gaming ecosystem needs to be complemented by policies supporting exports, "with, for instance, the beginning of co-productions, which are currently in development and which we support", adds Sophie. While the gaming industry's competencies need to keep pace with technological developments (virtual reality, AI, blockchain, and so on), they can also be combined with those in other sectors, making for opportunities for economic development and job creation.

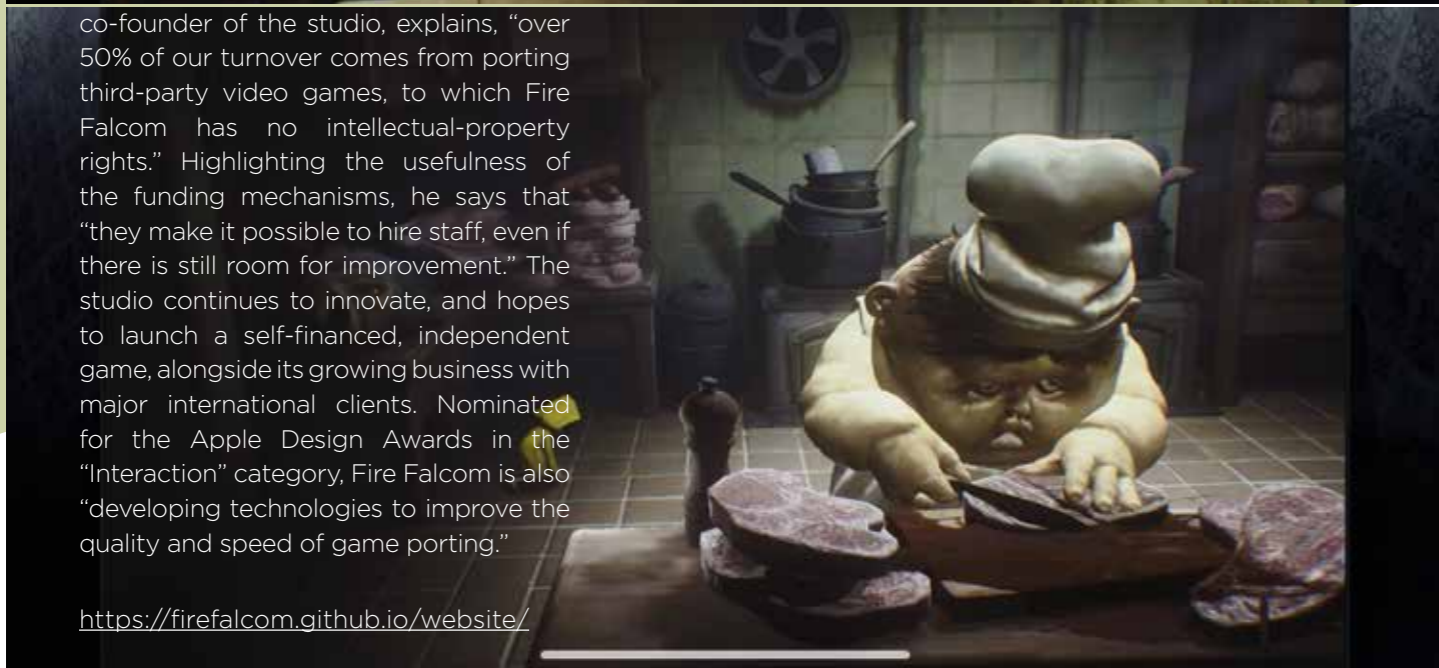
WALLOON GAMING: A GLOBAL FORCE SOON TO BE RECKONED WITH?



FIRE FALCOM: THE EXCEPTION THAT PROVES THE RULE

Fire Falcom, which was set up in 2017 and is based in La Louvière, is a fine example of a studio that all but set itself up. Specialised in game porting and remastering, it won the Pegase Award for adapting the game Little Nightmare for mobile phones. Despite the available financial-support mechanisms, Fire Falcom did not qualify for Tax Shelter benefits, because, as Nicolas de Kerchove, co-founder of the studio, explains, “over 50% of our turnover comes from porting third-party video games, to which Fire Falcom has no intellectual-property rights.” Highlighting the usefulness of the funding mechanisms, he says that “they make it possible to hire staff, even if there is still room for improvement.” The studio continues to innovate, and hopes to launch a self-financed, independent game, alongside its growing business with major international clients. Nominated for the Apple Design Awards in the “Interaction” category, Fire Falcom is also “developing technologies to improve the quality and speed of game porting.”

<https://firefalcom.github.io/website/>



A PIONEERING STUDIO AND AN INDUSTRY PLAYER: FISHING CACTUS

Fishing Cactus is a video-game-development studio that was founded in 2009 in Mons, Belgium. It is best known as a specialist in the development of independent and bespoke games for various platforms. The studio is also well known because of its founder, Bruno Urbain, an industry stalwart who has worked tirelessly to professionalise it by “lobbying the authorities”. According to Urbain, who is also a Walga Board Member, “there were many individuals in the industry

who were technically competent, but who didn't want to become CEOs or industry representatives, or individuals who wore several hats but who couldn't always keep up. And that's why Walga was created.” Bruno was also the one who pushed for the establishment of Tax Shelter. He also pushes hard for training for young students through cooperation among institutions. And he is actively involved in local and international gaming events such as Game Jams.



<http://fishingcactus.com/>

DISCOVER THE CASTLES OF WALLONIA

Whether they're situated on the plains or perched on a rocky outcrop, Wallonia's nearly 1,500 castles are steeped in history and are among our must-see tourist attractions. From a castle fit for a princess to a medieval fortress, they span the ages. There's always something going on, whether visits, events, or stays. As the VISITWallonia website tells us, you can discover these castles on the walks that are suggested in the 13 guidebooks it has published on castle routes and itineraries. You can check out this cultural and historical heritage for yourself, from the Ardennes to the Borinage, via the Condroz, the Gaume, and the Ourthe valley.



© WBT — Denis Closon—Chateau de Walzi



© WBT—JP Remy—Castle—Durbuy



© Fabrice Debatty—Château de Bioul

WITH OUR
13
 INFORMATIVE LEAFLETS

There are plenty of castles to choose from, such as the neo-classical Château de Seneffe, which boasts one of the country's finest collections of works by goldsmiths and silversmiths; the Château de Modave, which was the inspiration for the Château de Versailles; the romantic towers of Vêves; the Château de Chimay and its new escape room; and Bouillon, with its thousand-year history. It is Belgium's oldest medieval fortress, where you can now watch falconry displays.

VISIT
Wallonia
 .be

www.visitwallonia.be/chateaux

THE EXCELLENCE OF ROCHEFORT

La Brasserie Trappiste de Rochefort, a brewery nestled within the 800-year-old Rochefort abbey, is keeping its unique and invaluable expertise alive. "The 10 monks here live in silence, according to the rule promulgated by St Benedict", explains François Mathy, the brewery's director. Each bottle represents centuries of unbroken tradition, and embodies the values of "respect for the environment, charity, excellence, and sobriety."

The meticulous attention paid to every detail is reflected in the complexity of the flavours: "A Rochefort perfectly balances bitterness, sweetness, complex flavours, and a beautiful head. Each mouthful reveals the depth of the ingredients, enhanced by our unique yeasts, which are carefully harvested and tended on site. "They are our pride and joy, and they give our beers its true signature."

Away from the commercial side of operations, the brewery remains faithful to the principles of a Trappist abbey. "Independence and sparseness are deliberate choices." The brewery puts excellence first. That makes for an unforgettable tasting experience, where every mouthful tells the story of a living heritage.



UFBE: THE SAFETY NET FOR BELGIAN EXPATS

David
VAN WYNSBERGHE



Ever heard of the *Union Francophone des Belges à l'Etranger* (French-speaking Union of Belgians Abroad, UFBE)? For over 60 years, it has been defending the interests of Belgian expats, and helping them settle in many countries. "The UFBE steps in to help out with any issues our members may face before, during, or after they move abroad, from social security and administrative procedures (insurance, dual citizenship, voting rights, etc.) to education (recognition of qualifications, benefits, scholarships) and employment", says Managing Director David Van Wynsberghe.

The UFBE also serves as a legal watchdog by defending expats' interests in their dealings with Belgian authorities. In May 2024, for instance, "we lobbied Minister for Economy Pierre-Yves Dermagne in connection with a law to curb the closure of Belgian expats' (and companies') bank accounts", says David Van Wynsberghe.

The UFBE also helps expats keep in touch with the country, thanks to the *Journal des Belges Expatriés électronique* (JBEE.BE) and an online bulletin. In this way, the UFBE's services complement diplomatic services. For more information, visit www.UFBE.be or www.JBEE.be.

MADemoiselle JO

BEAUTIFUL OBJECTS DESIGNED TO LAST

Mademoiselle Jo, alias Joan Bebronne, has always had a passion for architecture and design. She trained in fashion design at La Cambre, and was drawn to object design after more than 20 years in the fashion industry. Her intuitive, creative vision breathes life into collections of everyday objects: she rethinks their overall aesthetics—and sometimes their function, too. “I am drawn to materials. I wanted to design something beautiful, something different that combines design, technology, and respect for know-how—useful objects that will last.” Think origami tables, tables suspended from the ceiling, stools adorned with pictures or words, quirky glass coat hooks, and futuristic consoles. Her creations are shining examples of her skills as a goldsmith and a designer. Metal, wood, and leather are combined with finesse, conveying the passion of a master at the height of her craft. A home becomes poetry; its furniture, romance. Her collections, which are right on trend, are produced on the company’s premises and elsewhere in Europe.



www.mademoisellejo.com

**BEAUTY AND GESTURE,
FROM PARIS TO THE
WORLD**

La Beauté et le Geste, an art installation by Laurent Perbos, is made up of six modern re-imaginings of the Venus de Milo sculpture, one of the crown jewels of the Louvre Museum in Paris. They are an ode to the beauty of gesture, representing six sports from the Olympic and Paralympic Games: basketball, boxing, javelin, para-archery, surfing, and tennis. Together, they make a rainbow of colour, thus symbolising equal rights and the fight against discrimination.

The installation, which was sponsored by the Uhoda group, was exhibited in front of the National Assembly in Paris during the Olympic and Paralympic Games. The sculptures are set to travel the world for a limited time, after which they will return to Liège, where they will also be put on display. Limited-edition reproductions of these statues are available for purchase online, in two versions, one 30 cm tall, the other 60 cm: www.venus.uhoda-collection.com.



© Collection Uhoda

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THE FIFCL, EDITION 9: AN INTERNATIONAL EVENT THAT BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER

Since 2016, the FIFCL has met one challenge after another, attracting more prestigious chairs and actors each year as the size of its audiences has grown, along with the number of teams and facilities it boasts. With its high-quality films and programmes, this festival has grown into the pride and joy of Liège. Indeed, it gathers festivalgoers and entrepreneurs

under one umbrella, on Belgium's own Walk of Fame, which is bursting with life.

"The FIFCL is a unique place. It hosts the the CineComedies Lab writing residency sponsored by Victoria Bedos, the "Co2médie" professional meetings focused on environmental issues, a coproduction forum held in

partnership with Wallimage, and the 'Espace Pro Uhoda', where industry professionals can meet and exchange knowledge", says Adrien François, the festival's artistic director. "Carole Bouquet will be chair of the International Jury, and Sara Stern will chair the jury for short films. Want to be in the spotlight? Well, why not become a partner?"

FIVE INITIALS TO REMEMBER: FIFCL!



F Festival: a party, with inspiring encounters and productive meetings



I International: all over Europe—and across the pond



F Film: the cinema, where we share the excitement and the laughter



C Comedy: all genres, played above all with feeling



L Liège: in the heart of Europe, and a great place to be



www.fifcl.be
Watch the 2023 aftermovie
https://www.fifcl.be/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/FIFCL_2023-2-1.mp4



18/11/2024-21/11/2024: Belgian Economic Mission to Mexico

The fast-growing Mexican economy is attracting foreign investment, thanks in particular to nearshoring. In 2022, Belgian exports there grew by 56%. This mission will introduce Walloon companies to Mexico's potential, with meetings in Mexico City, Monterrey, and Guadalajara, in order to promote industrial and technological solutions.

22/11/2024-29/11/2024: Belgian Economic Mission to Brazil

AWEX is organising an economic mission to Brazil from 22 to 29 November 2024, in collaboration with several other agencies and under the presidency of Princess Astrid. The mission will focus on several key sectors such as aeronautics, health, and sustainable technologies. The schedule includes B2B meetings and official events.



28/11/2024: Belgian Fashion Awards 2024

The Belgian Fashion Awards have been celebrating the creativity and diversity of Belgian fashion since 2017. Every November, an international jury of industry presents awards to designers in 7 categories, thus highlighting the innovation, personality, and sustainability of Belgian fashion, which is well-known for its avant-garde and surrealist nature.

08/12/2024-13/12/2024

Belgian Economic Mission to Saudi Arabia: Gaming/Entertainment.

This mission will focus on the gaming and entertainment sectors. It will run parallel to the "Kingdom of Tomorrow", an exhibition in Riyadh that will showcase cutting-edge technologies in areas such as artificial intelligence, smart cities, renewable energies, and space exploration.



01/03/2025-08/03/2025: Belgian Economic Mission to India

AWEX is organising an economic mission to New Delhi and Mumbai from 1 to 8 March 2025, under the presidency of Princess Astrid. It will focus on sectors such as renewable energy, health, and aeronautics, and will feature B2B meetings, visits, and networking events.



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- ✓ **Circular materials** eco-design, industrial symbiosis, encouraging the reuse and repair of these materials within the economy, recycling innovation, etc.
- ✓ Innovations for **enhanced health** biotechnologies, medical equipment, eHealth, mHealth, silver economy, prevention, etc.
- ✓ Innovations for agile and safe **design** and **production methods** (IoT, 3D printing)
- ✓ Sustainable **energy** systems and **housing**
- ✓ **Agri-food** chains of the future and innovative management of the **environment**

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