

PRESS RELEASE

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The 2014 MICHELIN guide Belgium & Luxembourg rewards an increasingly gourmet dining scene

By awarding a second star to two restaurants and a first star to nineteen others, Michelin confirms the wealth of fine dining opportunities in Belgium and Luxembourg, led by a culinary scene in Brussels that ranks among Europe's most dynamic.

Unveiled today, the MICHELIN guide Belgium & Luxembourg selection reveals the vitality of a gourmet dining scene in both countries that is increasingly open, constantly evolving and never fails to take advantage of new influences, ever since the guide's first edition in 1904.

Illustrating the richness of the culinary landscape, especially in leading Belgian tourist cities, the MICHELIN guide selection features two new two-star restaurants: Bon-Bon in Brussels, where chef Christophe Hardiquet offers creative cooking, remarkable technical skills and very high-quality products, and Bartholomeus, in Knokke-Heist, whose chef, Bart Desmidt, combines blends and savors in an especially harmonious manner to offer his customers highly refined dishes.

In Belgium, 18 new one-star restaurants were included in the 2014 edition, of which 12 in Flanders, 2 in Brussels and 4 in Wallonia. One of the award winners is Villa Lorraine, a *grande dame* of fine dining in Brussels, which won back its star thanks to a new chef, the talented Alain Bianchin. Two other restaurants that were promoted from last year's "rising star" category are The Glorious in Antwerp and De Kristalijn in Genk, each of which received its first star in the new edition.

Many of these newly starred restaurants deliver excellent value for the money, such as Vous lé Vous in Hasselt, La Menuiserie in Waimes and Becher Gare in Bech, Luxembourg. All three offer distinctive, gourmet cooking, characterized by bold yet simple flavors. At Au Gré du Vent, in Seneffe, the talented Walloon chef Stéphanie Thunus serves refined, imaginative dishes.

The new edition of the MICHELIN guide Belgium & Luxembourg features 132 starred restaurants, more than ever before.

Lastly, the guide's three-star establishments – De Karmeliet in Bruges, Hof van Cleve in Kruishoutem and Hertog Jan in Sint-Michiels – once again received the highest honors, ranking them among the world's most outstanding restaurants.

Travelling through Belgium and Luxembourg throughout the year, the MICHELIN guide inspectors were keenly aware of the chefs' commitment to refocusing on the product itself. While a few years ago, chefs devoted much attention to the choice of side dishes and to the presentation to create carefully studied dishes, today they leverage their skills to enhance the main ingredient of each dish, drawing out its taste and all the flavors.

Commenting on the selection, Michael Ellis, International Director of the MICHELIN guides, said: "The new selection is especially interesting because it perfectly reflects what is happening on the culinary scene in Belgium and Luxembourg and especially the vitality of Brussels. With 18 starred restaurants, including one new two-star establishment, Brussels has more starred restaurants than cities like Berlin, Rome and Milan, and is gradually establishing itself as one of Europe's leading fine-dining venues.



The 2014 edition also features 155 Bib Gourmand restaurants. Indicated in the guide by the 🍷 symbol, the Bib Gourmand label is presented to high-quality restaurants that offer a complete three-course meal for no more than 35 euros (36 euros in capital cities), regardless of the type of cooking. Enthusiastically embraced by restaurateurs and the general public in both countries, Bib Gourmand restaurants are increasing in number every year. The 2014 edition added 28 new Bib Gourmands, of which 23 in Belgium and 5 in Luxembourg.

Thanks to a uniform, rigorous selection process applied in 23 countries, the MICHELIN guide is an international benchmark for gourmet dining. All of the restaurants featured in the selection were selected by the MICHELIN guide's famous inspectors who, following a demanding training period, anonymously travel the roads of Europe in search of the best addresses. They apply the same methods used for decades by MICHELIN guide inspectors throughout the world to ensure a uniform, international standard of excellence. Stars are awarded on a consensus basis according to five criteria that are the same everywhere around the world: product quality, preparation and flavors, the chef's personality as revealed through his or her cuisine, value for money, and consistency over time and across the entire menu. These criteria are adapted to each type of cuisine. As a guarantee of complete objectivity, Michelin inspectors pay all their bills in full.

The 2014 MICHELIN guide Belgium & Luxembourg **goes on sale on November 21** for €19.95 in Belgium and €19.38 in Luxembourg. The new edition features 1,796 establishments, with 688 hotels (including 127 guesthouses) and 1,081 restaurants, of which:

- 132 starred restaurants:
 - ✓ 3 🌟🌟🌟 restaurants
 - ✓ 17 🌟🌟 restaurants (2 new)
 - ✓ 112 🌟 restaurants (19 new)
- 155 Bib Gourmand 🍷 restaurants, of which 28 newly awarded the label

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