

CUTE young Eurobods and Flemish lads well and truly pout and sprout in Brussels' bijou café-bars around the Old Town and Grand Place. Paris minus the bustle, this intimate city has all that phallic Gallic continental charm, but on a very human scale.

Traditional pub **Le Belgica** (rue du Marché au Charbon 32) is the old boy in town but still one of the most popular to get the night a buzzing. Or equally atmospheric, you might sample **Tels Quels** (rue du Marché au Charbon 81; Tel:

2 514 74 93) is one of the oh-so-busiest and **The Smart** (rue des Pierres 28; Tel: 0032 2 513 32 13) is as it says – stylish and with good music – though with staff occasionally more interested in themselves than their poor punters.

Yet more variety on the scene, this time for those all leathered or booted up with nowhere to go! Manly men head for the all-male likes of **Le Gémeau** (rue de Laeken 12; Tel: 0032 2 219 23 26) or – for the truly hard-core - **Duquesnoy** (rue Duquesnoy 12; Tel: 0032 2 502 38 83)

ad lib - check their website - about once a month. It attracts Belgium's finest from the surrounding lowlands, not to mention beauty boys from across Europe – a rare little white party Eurotrash. Good DJs fill the large main space whilst horned-up Euroboys troll the maze of upper rooms kept quaintly dark above. The club's popularity spills over into all the other gay venues in town that weekend and the capital's gay population swells manifold. So go-boys-go!

Also, **Rapido** hold occasional parties in a stunning old brewery location in the heart of the city with top international DJs and excellent performances and shows. Check the website for up to date info, www.clubrapido.com

If you still fancy letting off steam day or night, **Macho 2** sauna (rue du Marché au Charbon 106; Tel: 0032 2 513 56 67) is the most central and established, though newer **Spades 4our** (rue Bodeghem 23/25; Tel: 0032 2 502 07 72) gets good word-of-mouth. But why pay when there's fresh outside fun in the **Parc de Bruxelles** - especially along the central promenade and by the ponds facing the Palace?

Dolores (rue du Marché au Charbon 40; Tel: 0032 477 65 12 15) is one of the best gay-run and patronised eateries in town with a simple, wholesome menu and walls lined with silver screen divas staring down as you eat amidst flickering candles. Or try **Comptoir** (place de la Vieille Halle aux Blés 26; Tel: 0032 2 514 05 00) for more haughty cuisine with prices to match. And **Les Ecrins** (rue due Rouleau 15, 1000 Bruxelles, Tel: 0032 2 219 3657; www.lesecrins.com) is a comfortable and well-positioned little gay hotel that will cater to your every need - though it does get full damn quick.

SWALLOW THAT FLEM!

From mussels with chips to muscles with zips, ADRIAN GILLAN enjoys his Euroboys in Brussels.

0032 2 512 45 87), a queer cultural centre by day that magically transforms into an ambient if not overly raucous café-bar by night. There are a whole load of other little snug gems to taste the true soul of gay Brussels too, like bashful little **L'Incognito** (rue des Pierres 36; Tel: 0032 2 513 37 88).

There's also a nice clutch of more continental cabaret-focused venues like **Cou Cou Bar** (rue Jardin des Olives 8; Tel: 0032 2 511 33 36), **Le Can-Can** (rue des Pierres 55; Tel: 0032 2 512 97 75) or **Chez Maman** (rue des Grandes Carmes 7) for a camp concoction of nightly 'spectacles' or DIY karaoke. And two bars down the road from each other are the real style brace vying for gay pretensions: saucily-named **L'Homo Erectus** (rue des Pierres 57; Tel: 0032

or even the **Slave** (Plattestein 7; Tel: 0032 2 513 47 46)!

After all these years, **Why Not** (rue des Riche-Claire 7; Tel: 0032 2 512 63 43) is still the main club staple in town. Although no bigger than a medium-sized London bar, it gets cruisey enough with predator sorts - gazing down from the gallery above onto shirtless young Flemish fops posing and pouting for Belgium on rostra beneath!

Belgian Lesbian and Gay Pride is on Saturday 7th May this year and attracts a huge variety of international gay boys from across Europe. Celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, the Lesbian and Gay festival has come along way since its first steps in 1969 when repressed lesbians and gays took police officers hostage and demonstrated on the streets. Now, a heady mix of discussions, religious celebrations and street parties, the focal point of Pride is a flamboyant parade, dubbed this year 'A Family Affair'. Pride attracts over 15,000 and takes place in one of the most beautiful squares in Europe, The Grand Place.

It is also well worth planning your entire Brussels weekend around **La Démence** (rue Blaes 208; www.lademence.com; Tel: 0032 2 511 97 89) – the country's biggest gay club night that materialises



▶ BELGIAN PRIDE DEAL
SHORTBREAKS gives you the chance to party at Belgium's Lesbian and Gay festival. Stay at the opulent 5* Hotel Le Plaza in the heart of Brussels from just **£139 per person***, departing May 6th 2005.
 The price includes return Eurostar travel, hotel accommodation for two nights with breakfast based on two sharing.
 To book call **ShortBreaks** on 0870 027 6076 and mention 'Belgian Pride deal' & 'QX magazine'.



10th Belgian Lesbian and Gay Pride

07/05/05
Brussels

£129 pp

includes admission
to Pride Party, return
Eurostar and 2nights three
star hotel accommodation
in central Brussels.



- 13.00-22.00: Streetparty Bourse –
Bd Anspachlaan – Lombard
- 14.00: Procession
Bourse – Bd Anspachlaan
- 16.30-19.45: Pride Show
Ancienne Belgique
- 21.00-6.00: Pride Party
Ancienne Belgique

0870 027 6061
www.short-breaks.com



GoGay.com



GOING AWAY? GoGay.com

With annual travel insurance,
including free ski cover, from only
£34.27, and single trip cover as
low as £4.44, it's hard to beat
GoGay.com for travel insurance.

GoGay was designed with the gay
and lesbian community in mind.

There's no automatic exclusion for
HIV and GoGay's insurance policies
recognise same-sex partners as
equal, so in the event of illness or
injury a partner's costs will be covered.

Buying from GoGay.com is quick, easy,
secure and cheap.

Simply buy online at www.GoGay.com
or call 0870 458 3230

RELAX WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED!

GoGay.com

travel insurance

GoGay.com is a member of the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) and is authorised by the Financial Services Authority (FSA) as a travel insurance broker. GoGay.com is a member of the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) and is authorised by the Financial Services Authority (FSA) as a travel insurance broker.