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BBT Online's favorites - Nicolas' Words

Restaurants

A Quick Bite:

I'm not one for fast food and quick bites. I prefer to take my time and enjoy. If I don't have the time, I'm fortunate enough to be able to go home, disconnect from work for a few minutes and prepare myself a simple dish.

Another good option is a Vietnamese or some sushi.

A Serious Tete a Tete:

A great favourite: "De la Vigne à l'assiette" -

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/belgium/brussels/restaurants/404840> -. I'm lucky to be close by one of the best quality/price restaurants in Brussels ... and we are spoiled for choice. Eric the chef prepares some exquisite (but not ostentatious) French cuisine and Eddy the sommelier always has a bottle of wine to discover.

Business, Business, Business:

See above. Another option would be "Rouge Tomate" -

<http://www.rougetomate.com/restaurants/brussels/brussels.php> -, especially if accompanied by a lady or "Notos" - <http://www.notos.be/> -, one of the best Mediterranean restaurants of ... not only Brussels.

Good Value for Groups:

Unfortunately, practical reasons will often be a priority. You need to look at capacity, exclusivity of space, location, ...

There are plenty in Brussels, but I'll go for a venue in Ghent, where we were kindly welcomed, well served, and the group was very satisfied with the meal: "Pakhuis" - <http://www.pakhuis.be/Index.aspx>

When I travel abroad:

First reflex, is to ask local friends or business partners. Every city has its cafés, restaurants and brasseries that deserve to be discovered. One of the greatest pleasures of travelling in fact!

Some other favorites:

British hotels and B&B for their huge breakfasts, “Le train bleu” (another great place for groups) - <http://www.bestrestaurantsparis.com/en/restaurant-paris/detail/le-train-bleu.html> - and “Au Pied de Cochon” - <http://www.pieddecochon.com/> both in Paris and finally, in Brussels, but restricted to meat offal amateurs “Viva M'boma” - <http://www.brussellife.be/E/detail/id/3934> - .

Hotel:

a few, in no order whatsoever: Hilton Athens - http://www1.hilton.com/en_US/hi/hotel/ATHHITW-Hilton-Athens/index.do - , Tiara Park Lisbon - <http://www.tiara-hotels.com/lisboa/luxury-lisbon-hotel-default-en.html> -, Damai Lovina Bali - <http://www.damai.com/> .

City:

London, but I might be a little bit biased.

Country:

Impossible to single one out but it would be France for the sheer variety. Indonesia for the beauty of the landscapes and the kindness of people.

Incentive Destination:

You'll understand I change that to Meeting Destination. A couple of years ago, we organized a conference in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Everything went perfectly and the next year we handled a smaller meeting. Each time we were impressed with the quality of service and the attention to details from every supplier. The city is not big but has a lot of charm.

Editor's note: read more on the destination, click here

http://www.bbtonline.eu/newsletter/slovenia_052009/index.html

Airline: I could give you a couple of my least favorite! Unfortunately flying is not nearly as much fun as before. Security hassle, lack of service from most companies, reduced legroom all mean that unless you spend quite a lot of money to upgrade, you are just flying to get from one point on the globe to another. I was on an A380 last year and was rather disappointed.

Best kept MICE secret: It's not a real MICE venue – although you can accommodate ten to 15 guests: “le Pas de l’Ane” - <http://www.pasdelane.com/> -, my mum's B&B in the South of France, close to Avignon. A true haven, un ‘petit coin de paradis’ in the middle of the vineyards. Several Belgian MICE personalities also love going there: ask Milo, Sam, Werner or Hugo. The whole of our team (Destrée Organisation) is going for a long week-end ‘mise au vert’ at the beginning of September.

MICE personality:

Another tricky one. I'll go for two. First, my Belgian MICE personality: Sam van de Kerckhof, Managing Partner of Meeting Time and President of Bapco - <http://www.bbtonline.eu/Library/interviews/interview112006.php> - . A true friend. A great professional, devoted, with a real sense of duty. Those who don't know him well are not aware of how funny he can be.

And, second, my European MICE personality, Julio Abreu, retired owner of PAP Congresos in Madrid and Honorary President of EFAPCO. One of the shrewdest minds I have met in our industry. Very determined, speaks perfectly in a number of languages, and with an incomparable knowledge of the business. Always a pleasure to spend an evening in his company, too.

5 Likes, 5 Dislikes

Likes:

- an evening of wine and dining with friends and family
- globetrotting with my wife
- playing games with my sons
- all sorts of sports, and golf in particular
- Brussels and Ixelles in particular

Dislikes:

- intolerance
 - people with hidden agendas
 - queues
 - slow computers
 - cold frites!
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Top 5 People I would Like to Meet or have Dinner with...

Five guests for dinner? I would want to invite my five best mates for a guaranteed fun evening.

Otherwise:

- Leonardo da Vinci, we'd speak about art and his inventions.
 - Albert Einstein, to discuss humankind, and he would explain physics in a simple and humble way, as he was. We'd also discuss family, as he was my Great-Grandmother's cousin!
 - Jean-Anthelme Brillat Savarin, epicurean, author of 'The Physiology of Taste' who wrote some amusing quotes such as: "Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are" and "A meal without some cheese is like a beautiful woman with only one eye". One of my favourite cheeses was named after him.
 - Philip Roth, the American novelist or Iris Murdoch, to have a lady at the table. She would bring her wit and lyricism to the evening.
- And for a bit of fun - André Franquin, the Belgian Comic Strip artist, father of Gaston Lagaffe and author of "Les Idées Noires (Dark Thoughts)"

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To read more about Nicolas,
<http://www.bbtonline.eu/Library/interviews/interview062008.php>

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