



The American Club of Brussels News & Events

An International Club with an American Heart



September 2011

Dine-Out at Cose Cosi

Wednesday, September 21



The American Club of Brussels starts off its new season of Dine-Outs with everyone's favorite cuisine – Italian. Cose Cosi in the heart of Ixelles gets rave reviews for the quality of its food, its refined atmosphere, and its impeccable service. Join other ACBers at Cose Cosi on Wednesday, September 21, where we will discover all this and more for ourselves.

Unfortunately, Cose Cosi is closed for vacation until September 1, so it's not possible to present the menu or give the price at this time. Bear with us, and we will let you know all the details as soon as we can. In the meantime, save the date and we look forward to seeing you on the 21st.

Cose Cosi
Chaussée de Wavre 14-16 (near Porte de Namur)
1050 Brussels (Ixelles)
Tel: 02.512.11.71

Guided Visit to the Villa Empain

The ACB has planned a very special visit to the Villa Empain, one of the most beautiful Art Deco jewels in Brussels. Commissioned in 1930 by the 21-year old Baron Louis Empain as his private residence, and built by the Swiss architect Michel Polak, the villa has had a colorful history. In 1937, the baron donated it to the Belgian State with the intention of creating a museum of decorative and contemporary art. Unfortunately, it was requisitioned during World War II by the Germans, and then by the Allies. It later served as the Soviet embassy, and even as a home to the Belgian TV station RTL.



After languishing in disrepair for a number of years, the 55-acre property was acquired by the Boghossian Foundation in 2007. In the same year it was classified by the Brussels-Capital Region. The Boghossian Foundation has painstakingly restored the Villa Empain and grounds to their former elegance. Indeed, it recently won a European Union prize for Cultural Heritage for the quality of the restoration, as well as for its new use as a center for art and dialogue between Eastern and Western cultures.

The Boghossian Foundation recently opened this architectural gem to the public. Our guided tour will focus on this supreme example of Art Deco architecture, as well as on its history and current purpose.

For those who would like to stay on and have lunch following the tour, there is a pleasant café/restaurant in the former caretaker's lodge where we could enjoy a meal and share our impressions of the visit.

Event Details

Date: Sunday, September 25

Time: 11:00 a.m. (guided tour in English lasts 1.5 hours)

Place: Villa Empain, Avenue Franklin Roosevelt 67, 1050 Brussels (Ixelles)

Price: €15 for ACB and AWCB members; €18 for non-members

Sign up: Reservations are due by noon on Tuesday, September 20 by email (info@americanclubbrussels.org), online at www.americanclubbrussels.org, or by telephone to the ACB Office Manager (02.219.58.08). Payment to ACB at 427-9195881-44 will confirm your reservation. Be sure to mention "Empain" in the communications section of the virement. Cancellations are possible until noon on Tuesday, September 20. Participants canceling after this time, as well as no-shows, are charged the full cost of the event.

Young Members Progressive Drinks Evening

Are you new in Brussels and would like to meet new people 35 and under? Join us on Saturday, October 1 for a progressive drinks evening. The idea is to meet lots of new people in one night and kick-start your social and business network here. The event will be equally helpful to those who have been here for a while and just feel like having a good time.

The group will meet at precisely 7:00 p.m. in the center of Place Flagey in Ixelles. We will then proceed to split everyone up into small groups and head off to various different pre-determined bars. We will mix the groups every hour until everyone has been to each location and has met the whole group. At the end, everyone will come back together to finish out the evening partying.

The event will be limited to 50, so sign up as soon as possible either via Facebook (American Club of Brussels – Young Members) or by emailing Niev Gallagher (niamh.a.gallagher@gmail.com). More specific information will be sent upon registration.



Event Details

Date: Saturday, October 1

Time: 7:00 p.m. (please be on time as it is a time-based event)

Place: Center of Place Flagey, 1050 Brussels (Ixelles)

Price: €10 (free for ACB members)

Let's start the back-to-school/work year off in style.

Final Friday Cocktails

Friday, September 30
6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Renaissance Brussels Hotel
(ground floor behind the restaurant)
Rue du Parnasse 19, 1050 Brussels (Ixelles)
(walking distance from Place du Luxembourg)

Cash bar open to all. Newcomers to Belgium and prospective ACB members are especially welcome. Complimentary nibbles will be offered. No reservation is required. Bring a guest or two.

Pioneers' Dinner

The Pioneers' Club is pleased to announce that its next dinner will be held at the Château Ste.-Anne on Tuesday, October 4. Our special guest speaker will be the former American ambassador to the Czech Republic, Richard W. Graber. The subject of Ambassador Graber's talk will be "Reflections of a Former Ambassador: The Czech Republic, Central Europe and Beyond."

Ambassador Graber is currently vice president at Honeywell International in Brussels, with responsibility for government relations in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

Ambassador Graber served as the United States ambassador to the Czech Republic from September 2006 to January 2009. Among his many accomplishments while ambassador, he helped remove the requirement that Czech citizens must have a visa to travel to the United States. The change helped improve bilateral relations with the countries of Central Europe, and advanced inbound and outbound business initiatives. He worked extensively on judicial reform and other issues to improve the business environment in the Czech Republic. He also worked on missile defense treaties and surrounding issues.

So mark the date and plan on joining us for a memorable evening of camaraderie, good conversation, and fine dining in an elegant and historic environment.

Event Details

Date: Tuesday, October 4

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place: Château Ste.-Anne, Rue du Vieux Moulin 103,
1160 Brussels (Auderghem)

Price: €70

Dress code: Black tie

Sign up: Reservations are due by noon on Thursday, September 29 by email

(info@americanclubbrussels.org), online at www.americanclubbrussels.org, or by telephone to the ACB Office Manager (02.219.58.08). Payment to ACB at 427-9195881-44 will confirm your reservation. Be sure to mention "Pioneers" in the communications section of the virement. Cancellations are possible until noon on Thursday, September 29. Participants canceling after this time, as well as no-shows, are charged the full cost of the event.



Dates to Remember

- Tuesday, September 13: Antwerp Expat Welcome Party, Radisson Blu Park Lane Hotel, Antwerp
- Wednesday, September 14: Joint Gala Dinner with AmCham Belgium with Ambassador Howard W. Gutman
- Wednesday, September 21: Dine-Out at Cose Cosi
- Sunday, September 25: Guided visit to the Villa Empain in Brussels
- Friday, September 30: Final Friday cocktails
- Saturday, October 1: Young Members Progressive Drinks Evening
- Tuesday, October 4: Pioneers' Dinner with Richard W. Graber, former American ambassador to the Czech Republic
- Sunday, October 23: Guided visit to the MAS museum and the Rockoxhuis in Antwerp
- Friday, October 28: Final Friday cocktails
- Thursday, November 24: Thanksgiving Dinner at the Sheraton Hotel, Brussels
- Friday, November 25: Final Friday cocktails
- Thursday, December 15: Christmas cocktail party

Upcoming Events

Guided Visit to the MAS Museum and the Rockoxhuis in Antwerp

Mark your calendars for Sunday, October 23, when the ACB will enjoy a guided tour of the exciting new Museum aan de Stroom (MAS) with its fine collections and exhibits that focus on Antwerp's history and culture. The day will include a leisurely lunch followed by an afternoon visit to the 17th century architectural jewel, the Rockoxhuis, where we have been invited for coffee and cake. Sign up for this event as soon as details are announced, as it is limited to 20 participants.



Thanksgiving Dinner

Leave the cooking and the dishes to somebody else and enjoy your Thanksgiving meal in one of Brussels' finest restaurants. Treat your family and friends to the ACB's bountiful Thanksgiving Day feast held on Thanksgiving Day itself, that is, on Thursday, November 24 at 7:00 p.m. at the Sheraton Hotel on Place Rogier. Don't miss this extremely popular social event. Look for details in the next issue of *News & Events*.

Christmas Cocktails

The ACB will host its annual Christmas cocktail party on Thursday, December 15 in an elegant private reception room at the restaurant La Maison du Cygne on the Grand'Place in Brussels. This promises to be a very special treat. Join us in raising a glass to a wonderful Christmas season and to a happy ending of 2011. More details to follow.

Messages for U.S. Citizens

Closure of Federal Benefits Unit Brussels

Effective July 20, assistance for Federal Benefits/Social Security for persons living in Belgium and Luxembourg is now provided by the London Federal Benefits Unit. Federal Benefits includes Social Security, Medicare, Veterans' Affairs, Office of Personnel Management, and Railroad Retirement.

Many common questions are answered at the Frequently Asked Questions section of the London Federal Benefits Unit website http://london.usembassy.gov/cons_new/acs/fbu/index.html. This website also provides an online form to ask additional questions and to report changes, and gives other methods to contact the London Federal Benefits Unit.

Applications and documentation for Social Security numbers can be submitted at the embassy in Brussels by making an appointment at http://belgium.usembassy.gov/online_appointment_system_for_acs.html. Online appointments are required for all public services. Walk-in service is no longer possible.

You should review the London Federal Benefits Unit Social Security Numbers (SSN) section on their website to ensure you understand the documentation required for the processing of requests for assignment of Social Security numbers, verification of Social Security numbers that have already been assigned, and name changes due to marriage or divorce.

New Immigration Rule

A worrying change in U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) procedure recently came into effect that makes it more difficult for Americans to return to the U.S. with a foreign spouse and/or non-American family members.

Effective August 15, most Americans can no longer use the U.S. Consular Section in their country of residence for immigration matters. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services now require that you petition directly with the USCIS in the United States to bring your non-U.S. dependents with you when you choose to return to live in the States.

It has always been the case that Americans living overseas returning to the U.S. could bring their non-American spouse and children with them by filing an Immigrant Petition (I-130, Petition for Alien Relative) form at either the Embassy/Consulate where they lived or at the local USCIS office, if there was one in their country of residence.

The process usually took between one and three months to get the immigrant visas (i.e., Green Card), and it was always easy to expedite, if need be. For petitions filed in the USCIS office in the U.S., the process often takes one to three years or more.

If you are not living in a country that has a USCIS office in its embassy – and most countries, including Belgium, do not – you will have to send your petitions to the U.S., and your petition will be treated the same as if you live in the U.S., instead of overseas.

Because of this rule, U.S. visitor visas will be difficult to get – consular officers will suspect that overseas married couples will use visitor visas to immigrate to get around the one- to two-year wait.

Community News

Soirée au pub / Canadian Pub Night

Every first Friday of the month, members of the Canadian Club of Belgium meet at a pub for friendly conversation and a few beers. No reservation is required. This is an open event and everyone is welcome.

Join us this month for a casual get-together at Cook & Book (Place du Temps Libre 1, 1200 Brussels) on Friday, September 2 starting at 7:00 p.m. We will be in Block A, Music Section, where you will find a restaurant and bar (www.cookandbook.be).

The Brussels Bookswappers Club

Every fourth Wednesday of the month, booklovers get together to swap books that are gathering dust on their shelves. All you have to do is come along with any number of books you wish to exchange with other titles left at the club by its members. Fiction as well as non-fiction is welcome, and there is a special section for children's books. You are encouraged to bring books in English as well as in all other major languages.

A team of Meeters & Greeters will welcome you and explain how the system works. There is no membership fee. The venue is the brasserie Les Enfants Terribles (Chaussée de la Hulpe 190, 1170 Brussels), near the International School of Brussels. The next meeting is on Wednesday, September 28 from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. If you wish to receive further information or to be put on the club's mailing list for future meetings, contact Karen at abkginfo@skynet.be.

Tuesday September 13 at 18.00
Radisson Blu Park Lane Hotel

The Antwerp Expat Welcome Party 2011

Exclusively for CEOs, HRD & HRM, Corporate Mobility Managers and newly-arrived and resident expatriates.*

Honorary guest
Jonkheer Michael C.E. Röell,
Owner of RÖELL Diamonds & Jewels.

Looking for: a new home, living tips, expat clubs and associations, contacts in Antwerp's community, international schooling, news and information, ideas on what to do.

Enjoy: a welcome buffet party, live entertainment, practical information, tombola, meeting expats and locals / all for free.

Register on www.antwerpexpatparty.eu before September 8, 2011

Radisson Blu Park Lane Hotel
34 Van Eycklei in 2018 Antwerp
Villa d'Este Ballroom

* Others wanting to attend will be charged €50/p.p."

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The American Club of Brussels
c/o Renaissance Brussels Hotel
Rue du Parnasse 19
B-1050 Brussels
Phone: 02.219.58.08
info@americanclubbrussels.org
www.americanclubbrussels.org

The American Club of Brussels is one of the oldest American clubs in Europe, founded in 1921 to foster Belgian-American relations. Although our members comprise more than 20 other nationalities from all walks of life, the ACB retains its American flavor. Some of us are long-time residents in Belgium. Many of us are newcomers. We all enjoy ourselves and the club's wide variety of social and cultural activities.

The ACB is a great way to expand your circle of friends and to discover more of the delights of Belgium. Try us.