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CITY HALL > GRAND PLACE > BRUSSELS





## PRESS FILE

# FLOWERTIME 2019

*“The history of Brussels, the Grand Place and flowers is a tale of love and passion. Over the decades, countless flowers have brought a splash of colour to the Grand Place. Every other year, the square is bedecked with its famous flower carpet, while in the intervening years the City Hall hosts Flowertime.*

*For 2019, it is Flowertime’s turn again. This floral art festival in the heart of our beautiful capital never ceases to charm. Brussels will welcome florists from Belgium and beyond who will tastefully adorn several rooms in the City Hall, including the Wedding Hall and the famous Gothic Hall, with their wonderful flowers. The event is a unique opportunity to discover the little-known treasures of this iconic heritage site. The fourth Flowertime runs from 14-18 August. See you there!”*



**Delphine Houba**

Aldерwoman for Culture, Tourism and Big events of the City of Brussels

President of the Brussels Flower Carpet non-profit association

## FLOWERTIME 2019

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## Bumper crop of international florists descends on Brussels City Hall

Gothic gem and UNESCO World Heritage Site Brussels City Hall will be given a floral facelift from 14 to 18 August 2019 as its most stunning rooms are decorated by the *crème de la crème* of Belgian and international florists.

Flowertime is being run jointly by the **organisers of Brussels Flower Carpet and the Floraliën** and aims to cement the city's reputation as the floral capital of Europe. First launched in 2013, the event has since become a must for absolutely anyone with an interest in architecture or horticulture, whether aged 5 or 95.

Held every two years so as not to clash with the Grand Place being covered in its Flower Carpet, Flowertime lets you see Brussels City Hall as you've never seen it before.

For five magical days, the entrance hall, corridors, reception rooms and more will be bedecked in unusual, surprising floral arrangements that transform the magnificent building into an idyllic, enchanted world of captivating scents and dazzling colours.

### A fresh look at a little-known architectural gem

It may be instantly recognisable, but few members of the public have ever had the chance to cross the threshold of Brussels City Hall and explore the mysteries that lie beyond. Flowertime is the perfect occasion to discover 13 of its most beautiful rooms, decorated floor to ceiling by around 30 internationally renowned florists.

For **Delphine Houba, president of the non-profit that also runs the Flower Carpet event**, Flowertime is a unique opportunity to see Brussels City Hall from a whole new angle. *“Everyone knows its façade, but few people, locals included, know what's hiding inside this wonderful Gothic building. By opening some of its most beautiful rooms, which would normally be closed to the public, Flowertime gives people a behind-the-scenes glimpse of its little-known splendour.”*

### 2019 goes international

This year, the artistic direction is once again in the green-fingered hands of the folk from Floraliën, who have chosen **“A World of Floral Emotions”** as 2019's theme. Established artists and budding newcomers from all over the world will pour their talent, creativity and expertise into making this venerable building sing with the universal language of flowers.

*“The idea came about because we wanted to bring different cultures together. More than 30 artists – some new to Flowertime and some old hands – will show off the latest floral trends from their own countries: Belarus, China, Indonesia, Japan, Romania, Estonia, France, Portugal, Netherlands, Sweden, Mexico, United States... and of*



course, Belgium. In total, over 30 florists from 13 countries are taking part in Flowertime,” says **Pieter Toebaert**, director of the Floraliën festivals.

### A floral gateway to an enchanted world

As always, the flower-lined route will start in the Grand Place. This year, though, to access the building, visitors will pass through a stunning flower arch composed of 500 fuchsias.

Every evening between 6 pm and 10 pm, visitors will be serenaded by the **Jose Luis Montiel Moreno** trio, who have put together a floral playlist especially for the occasion. Jose Luis Montiel Moreno is a great supporter of Brussels’ summertime events, having composed the soundtrack for last year’s Mexican Flower Carpet sound and light show. Don’t miss out on this unique experience!

### Useful info to help you plan your visit:

- **Opening hours**
  - 14 August, 1 pm to 7 pm (last entry at 6:30 pm)
  - 15-18 August, 10 am to 10 pm (last entry at 9:30 pm)
- **Price: 8 euros (free for children under 10)**
  - On-the-day tickets available at the Brussels City Hall entrance
  - Advance tickets available on [www.flowertime.be](http://www.flowertime.be) and in the Visit Brussels shops (located at Brussels Grand Place and Rue Royale 2-4, 1000 Brussels)
    - With an advance ticket, you can take the fast lane at the Grand Place. Please note that there are only a limited number of advance tickets available.
  - Discounts for groups of 15 or more: please contact [karel.goethals@flowercarpet.be](mailto:karel.goethals@flowercarpet.be)
  - You will find all the info you need on [www.flowertime.be](http://www.flowertime.be).

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More information and high-resolution photos are available from our newsroom: <https://flowercarpet.prezly.com>



## A WORLD OF FLORAL EMOTIONS

Flowertime's regular partner, the Floraliën, is something of an institution in Belgium, whose first plant-and-flower show was held in 1808 in a hotel in Ghent. Ever since then, it has truly flourished. We chat to Pieter Toebaert, director of the Floraliën flower shows and Flowertime curator.



**This is now the fourth Flowertime. What can we expect this year?**

Our recipe has proven a real hit and we don't plan on changing it, although we're constantly working to improve it. The artists' choices make each show a surprise. There's always something different. This year, as ever, we've brought together a bumper crop of top international florists. These established and emerging artists from all four corners of the globe will decorate Brussels City Hall's most important rooms with creations that reflect the very latest trends.

**This year's theme is "A World of Floral Emotions". Can you tell us a bit more about this choice?**

It's a tribute to the sensitivity and universality of emotions. Flowers have long been used to express our most intimate feelings; this is known as the "language of flowers". In this floral lingua franca, every flower represents an emotion. And whether expressing joy or sadness, it's emotion that guides our artists. What they will do during Flowertime is express their feelings, in harmony with the colours of these hallowed halls.

**How do you select the artists?**

I meet with them and ask them about their vision for their art. The most important thing is to ask them what they plan to create for Flowertime. If their response sounds interesting, there's a good chance we can take things further. Our role is to build bridges between our organisation and floral artists to make the impossible possible. It's all about innovating and leaving people amazed.

**Next year, the Floraliën will once again be taking place in the city of Ghent. Why are these flower festivals so popular?**

Yep, the Floraliënhal will be hosting the most beautiful creations from the biggest floral artists from 1-10 May 2020. As green spaces become an increasingly rare sight in our cities, I think it's important to recreate a green environment for people to experience. That's what we try to do with both Flowertime and the Floraliën.



## What is it exactly that makes Flowertime so special this year?

Plants and flowers are an integral part of an enjoyable lifestyle. They aren't there to be displayed in drab, boring rooms. The City Hall will give them the backdrop they deserve. Having these splendid, opulent rooms decorated by floral artists brings together the best of both worlds: the magnificent interior of the City Hall and world-class floral design.



## 7 THINGS YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT BRUSSELS CITY HALL

Nowadays, everyone in Brussels knows that the weekend of 15 August is the date of the Flower Carpet and Flowertime. But 15 August also marks the anniversary of the bombardment of Brussels by the troops of Louis XIV of France in 1695. Almost a third of the city was destroyed by the cannonballs that rained down upon it. All that remained of the Grand Place was City Hall, whose miraculous escape was perhaps thanks to the protection of its patron saint, the archangel Michael.



### Saint Michael: guardian angel of Brussels

Perched some 90 metres above the ground, the statue of the archangel Saint Michael, patron saint of Brussels, stares steadily across the cityscape. To reach the top, you're facing a 400-step climb. The current gilt metal statue on the top of the spire is actually a 5-metre-high replica of the 1455 version by Martin van Rode. Visitors can see the original, together with the original statues from the façade, at the Museum of the City of Brussels, which is also in the Grand Place. Housed in the striking Maison du Roi building, the statue was installed there to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Grand Place achieving UNESCO World Heritage status.

© Museums of the City of Brussels – City Hall

### The courtyard's mysterious star

Legend has it that the star marks the spot where the architect responsible for the façade's famous lack of symmetry leapt to his death. In reality, he died of old age in 1485. The centre of the star in fact serves as “point zero” for measuring Public Works plans in Belgium. It is the official centre of the country. The current star, which was installed in 1717, is a copy of the marble design that decorated the Piazza del Campidoglio in Rome, the square Pope Paul III commissioned Michelangelo to design in 1538.

### The Maximilian Room and its Brussels tapestries

This room, which is also known as the Salle du Collège, is where the mayor and aldermen meet each week. Its stunning tapestries tell the story of the life of Clovis I, king of the Franks, and in particular his conversion to Christianity. Long before the Flower Carpet, Brussels was known around the world for its quality tapestries and their close attention to detail. It took about six weeks to weave one square metre of tapestry! The tapestries in this room were made during the early 18th century by the Vanderborcht tapestry workshop, based on designs by French painter Charles Poëron.





## The Antechamber to the Mayor's Office

This room is well worth a visit to see its series of paintings depicting the capital before the Senne was covered over. They offer an invaluable insight into the Brussels of yesteryear. The works to cover the Senne gave rise to the city's wide boulevards and created the Brussels that we know today. One of the paintings on display shows the old view from the Place de la Bourse to the Gare du Midi, while another depicts a rural landscape where the Stock Exchange now stands.

## The Gothic Hall and its treasures

This hall was completely destroyed during the bombardment of 1695. It owes its current décor, dating from the late 19th century, to architect Victor Jamaer, a keen proponent of the Gothic Revival movement. Before the bombardment of 1695, the room was said to house, according to certain sources, the Justice of Trajan by painter Rogier de la Pasture, also known as Rogier Van der Weyden. This masterpiece was famous throughout the Western world, with cultural tourists flocking to see it for two whole centuries. Sadly, the Justice of Trajan and the majority of the city's precious collections, which included works by Van Dyck and Rubens, went up in smoke in the fire that followed the bombardment. Luckily, though, there are plenty more wonders to discover as a number of collections were able to be saved or rebuilt over the following centuries.

## The Wedding Hall

This hall was once the courtroom. Since 1792, the room has been used for civil marriages where at least one of the couple lives in the City of Brussels. It famously hosted the wedding of Princess Astrid of Belgium, while the weddings of her two brothers, Princes Philippe and Laurent, took place in the Gothic Hall. This room is where you will find the door to the City Hall's famous balcony.

## The first-floor balcony above the Grand Place

Overlooking the Grand Place, the balcony is the elevated position from which sovereigns, VIPs and other distinguished guests make public appearances. Several sportspeople have also been accorded this honour, including Eddy Merckx (1969), the Belgian national football team (1986 and 2018), Justine Henin (2003) and the Belgian national hockey team (2018).

**These fascinating facts about Brussels City Hall were compiled in collaboration with Brigitte Bocken of GBB (Guides for Brussels and Belgium).**

**Info and bookings: [www.guidesbrussels.be](http://www.guidesbrussels.be)**



## FLOWERS MEET HISTORY

Throughout the five-day Flowertime exhibition, Brussels City Hall's most beautiful rooms and riches will be blooming with magnificent floral creations from all over the world. Paintings, sculptures and tapestries tell the story of Brussels in the language of flowers. The route devised by the organisers is the perfect chance to (re)discover Brussels City Hall, offering a true floral, artistic and architectural treat that takes in all of the treasures hiding inside this 15th-century masterpiece of Gothic architecture.

### The Grand Place

As always, the flower-lined route begins in the Grand Place, “the most beautiful public square in the world”. Your eye will instantly be drawn to the stunning floral arch, made from 500 fuchsia plants, that forms the entrance to the building. These superb plants come from De Nachtwaker, the nursery run by **Geert Bonte**, a former farmer whose passion for flowers and fuchsias led him to set up his own business in Moortsele.



© Tom Paulussen – Grand Place – Flowertime 2013

### The entrance and the courtyard

The way into the building is through a Gothic arch doorway crowned with carvings of the patron saints of the city's old military guilds: Saint Michael (swordsmen), Saint Sebastian (archers), Saint Christopher (arquebusiers), and Saint George (crossbowmen). Legend goes that Saint Gaugericus built a church on Saint-Géry Island (the current Place Saint-Géry) in the year 580, hence why he appears alongside the other saints. On each side stand statues of the four cardinal virtues: Prudence, Justice, Courage and Temperance.



At the end of the passageway leading to the inner courtyard, you can admire a floral creation by **Richard Mos**. Richard Mos is a Dutch florist who draws his inspiration from nature, architecture and the visual arts. His detailed, sophisticated work reveals something new every time you look at it. His creations have featured in numerous books and articles in Belgium, the Netherlands, the UK and Russia.

The courtyard is famous not only for its star, which marks “point zero” - the official centre of Belgium -, but also for its two fountains representing the River Meuse and the River Scheldt. The dates inscribed on the ground refer to the City Hall’s major stages of construction: 1402 -1444 for the two Gothic wings of the main façade, and 1715 - 1717 for the building behind.

All along the route, **PUP** - a pop-up store selling "pleasant and exceptional plants" - added a green, urban jungle touch with its magnificent plants.

Only a few steps away, Fred Verhaeghe and his pupils from the PTI Horticultural School in Courtrai have decorated the corridor that runs along the courtyard. **Fred Verhaeghe** teaches floral art and has produced many remarkable works, not least the decorations in the Federal Parliament for the King’s Feast (15 November 2012) and King Philippe’s oath-taking ceremony (21 July 2013).

### Entrance hall, landing and staircase

The entrance hall transports visitors to the tropical paradise of Indonesia. **Ana Riana and her team** have shone the spotlight on the *janur*, a young palm leaf with multiple uses that is one of the basic ingredients in numerous artistic creations, particularly on Java and in Bali.

For Flowertime, Riana is pairing her *janurs* with creations by **Ness Klorofyl**, a Belgian florist whose company, Klorofyl, provides floral decorations for the events industry. Klorofyl is a regular at Flowertime, and her 2017 creations in the Grangé Gallery received particular praise.

### The Gallery of the Sovereigns

The walls of the first-floor hallway are hung with portraits of the sovereigns who have ruled over the territories that make up present-day Belgium, including Charles II of Spain, Maria Theresa of Spain, Napoleon Bonaparte, William I of the Netherlands and Leopold I of Belgium.

This gallery has been decorated by six talented young artists: Javier Atila and Alfredo Hernandez, Aymeric Chaouche, Jolien Vanderstappen, Arnauld Delheille and Max Hurtaud.

**Javier Avila** is a Mexican based in Brussels, where he runs an events company specialising in decorating weddings and special occasions. Together with his fellow countryman **Alfredo Hernandez**, a floral designer who runs floristry workshops in Linares (Nuevo León, Mexico), he has created an extraordinary work that pays tribute to the monarch butterfly.



**Aymeric Chauouche** hails from Vichy, France. He has been a florist for six years and won the 2019 Worldskills Belgium competition. His work is inspired by ecology and recycling.

Young and ambitious perfectly sums up **Arnaud Delheille**. He has previously worked with organisations such as Upcoming Florists, and has won numerous competitions. Arnaud runs his own floral studio and recently published his first book. He's definitely one to watch!

**Jolien Vanderstappen**, from Brussels, has already proven herself in several competitions. In 2016, she won the Belgian Junior Cup and, in 2017, she represented Belgium at Eurofleur. You can hardly call it a coincidence: five generations of Jolien's family have been active in the flower sector!

Last but by no means least, **Max Hurtaud** is French by birth but now lives in Brussels. He leads an international career and won the bronze medal at the Belgian Junior Cup 2016. He is also an ambassador for Floral Fundamentals, a cooperative group of international florists who share practical information about flowers, plants and the products used in the floral industry.



© Tom Paulussen – Flowertime 2013

## The aldermen's offices

On your right are the two aldermen's offices.

**Room 1:** Art teacher and Floral Fundamentals Ambassador **Yulia Medvedyeva** has been producing her stunning floral creations for over 20 years. She was crowned Estonian champion in 2012 and 2014, and has picked up awards in both Russia and Italy. She runs her own floral studio, Artishok, where she plays with forms and textures to make her compositions innovative and thought-provoking.

**Room 2:** We are delighted to welcome a Romanian florist to the festival for the first time this year. The Romanian floral arts industry is only in its infancy, but master florist **Nicolae Agop** is no rookie. He has staged numerous floral demonstrations in more than 40 cities around the world, winning several international prizes. He is also the founder of the AGOP floral design academy, which has trained his assistants Beatrice Stoicovici, Oana Lamba, Ștefan Dițu and Mircea Gheța.

## The council chamber

This ornately decorated Louis XIV room boasts impressive tapestries depicting the coronations of Philip the Good and Charles VI, as well as the abdication of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. The ceiling, by local painter Victor Honoré Janssens, shows Jupiter surrounded by an assembly of the gods.

Today, this room still hosts sessions of the city council. During Flowertime it is home to creations by **Agna Maertens** and her team, which includes **Sara-Lisa Ludvigsson**. These two Floral Fundamentals Ambassadors have pooled their talents for the occasion.

Maertens, a chemistry, physics and biology teacher, has moved into the world of flowers to bring together her two greatest passions: floral art and teaching. She enjoys using natural materials in her creations, with her highly detailed work incorporating artisan techniques.

## The Maximilian Room

This room, where the Board of Aldermen meets, owes its name to the portraits of Maximilian I, Holy Roman Emperor and his wife Mary of Burgundy. Its 18th-century tapestries depict the most important events in the life of Clovis I, king of the Franks.

**Haruko Noda** is a Japanese florist who lives in Belgium. After gaining her degree in Germany, Haruko honed her floral skills in Munich and Vienna. She runs workshops and also works for magazines in Belgium and Japan. Her vision of floral art is fun and packed with surprising elements. Haruko also enjoys table decoration, which she does using her own ceramics.





© Wim Vanmaele – Maximilian Room – Flowertime 2017

### The Antechamber to the Office for Public Education

This little room sits between the Maximilian Room and the Grangé Gallery. Nowadays, it serves as the antechamber to the office of the alderman for public education. For Flowertime, it is being decked out by **Françoise Weeks** and her team, with backup provided by **Sheryl Tynes**. The vegetal mannequins in this room were created by **Lena Mertens**.

They have worked together to conjure up an original atmosphere in a relatively austere room. Weeks' singular style pins down the quintessence of nature and flowers. She is known around the world and her work has appeared in international magazines.

## The Grangé Gallery



© Wim Vanmaele – Grangé Gallery – Flowertime 2017

The Grangé Gallery, on the first floor, offers a captivating view of the 96-metre-high tower and the courtyard's star. It takes its name from Louis Grangé, the painter who, in the 18th century, produced the six full-length portraits of the sovereigns who ruled the Duchy of Brabant over the course of two centuries: Philip I of Castile, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, Philip II of Spain, Albert and Isabella, and Charles II of Spain. More recently, busts of King Leopold II and his wife Marie Henriette were added to the gallery, along with those of King Albert I and Queen Elisabeth.

**Anne Guns**, who teaches in Flanders and the Netherlands, has taken over the space to share her passion for flowers. Her creations are inspired by music, art and nature. At a time when mobility is a key concern among residents, Anne has put together, in collaboration with the non-profit association **CyCLO**, a breath-taking display of bicycles adorned with flowers.

## The Antechamber to the Mayor's Office

Once the administrative office, this room is now a waiting room for the mayor's visitors. Its walls are covered with oak panelling dating from the 19th century. There is also a series of paintings by Jean-Baptiste Van Moer depicting the neighbourhoods surrounding the Senne, before the river disappeared beneath Brussels' grand boulevards.

During Flowertime, **Stéphane Brassart** is using this room to reveal his typically innovative, emotional and authentic works marrying different materials, unusual lines and varied colours. A baker's son, Brassart has long been immersed in the world of craftsmanship and has been consumed with a passion for flowers ever since he was very young.

## The Staircase of Honour

The staircase and landing are decorated with busts of the mayors of Brussels from 1830 to today, with the paintings on the walls and ceilings depicting "The Glorification of Communal Power". The inscription, "A peste, fame et bello, liberamos Maria pacis" (Free us, Mary, from plague, famine and war) was originally on the facade of the King's House before the current museum was built. In just a few words, it sums up all of the evils that afflict humankind.



The team that has dressed this area hails from the **Cohim Flower School**, a vocational floristry school and branch of the famous fashion school Cohim, which is based in Beijing and Shanghai. Cohim focuses not only on techniques, but also on the perception of art. Its staff, which includes **Tina Liu**, are recruited from all over the world and are all recognised in the global floral industry. In May 2018, Liu's work *Dye* was exhibited at Beijing Fun, while in September 2018, *People Embracing the Future* was awarded "work of the year" at Beijing Design Week. Floral Fundamental Ambassador **Cao Jiang** joins her team for the occasion.

## The Gothic Hall

The Gothic Hall, which is reserved for grand receptions and ceremonies, is decorated with tapestries from the Belgian City of Mechelen that depict ancient trades. The bronze statues are mainly of the mayors of Brussels between 1386 and 1500. Once decorated with other splendid tapestries, paintings and priceless treasures, this room was sadly reduced to cinders during the bombardment of 1695.

The hall provides the backdrop for **Natalia Sakalova**, who has unleashed her passion for plants and flowers. Originally from Belarus, it was in Belgium that she discovered this passion. She trained in floristry and opened her own boutique in 2009. She has made a name for herself with her magnificent bridal bouquets, but here in the Gothic Hall of Brussels City Hall she will dazzle your senses with her blend of ambiance, scents and colours.

As a Floral Fundamentals Ambassador, Natalia has produced a stunning display of balls that calls to mind another symbol of the city: the Atomium.







© Tom Paulussen – Gothic Room – Flowertime 2015

## The Wedding Hall

The Wedding Hall is nowadays used for civil marriages, but once upon a time it served as a courtroom. Its ceiling paintings bear witness to its past as a meeting room for the city guilds, or *neuf nations*, hence why it is also known as the *Chambre des Nations*. The 1881 triptych by Charles-Léon Cardon represents the City presiding over marriage, framed by Justice and Law who are both personified by the archangel Saint Michael.

It therefore just had to be a couple who received the honour of decorating this fascinating room. **Maria Sofia Tavares and Marc Noël** jointly run a boutique, Moments Subtils, in Bastogne. Maria trained in Luxembourg and won second prize at the Concours des Apprentis in Saarlouis, Germany. Marc is intrigued by art, nature and experimentation and trained in home décor, followed by floral art, in Gembloux, Belgium. Together, they have twice won the Amaryllis competition run by the Château de Belœil.

## The Lion staircase



This is the staircase that takes newly-weds out onto the Grand Place. Once outside, stop for a moment to admire the lions adorning the building's exterior.

In the 15th century, this staircase had only one handrail. During restoration works in 1866, Pierre-Victor Jamaer designed a new set of steps outside with an openwork balustrade and two small columns, each topped with a seated lion sporting the Brussels coat of arms.

It is the perfect stage for **Sébastien Dossin**, a landscape architect who is fascinated by historic gardens. Dossin is a keen painter and is particularly sensitive to different shades of colour, which is certainly felt in his compositions. As a fan of flowers, he has taken on many a challenge and has already participated in several competitions and major floral events, including Fleuramour.

**Extracts about Brussels City Hall from the book *Toute la lumière sur la Grand-Place de Bruxelles* by Lillo Chiarenza, Valérie Paelinck and Philippe Denis, published by Éditions Queen II 2013.**



## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### AGENDA

#### 11, 12 and 14 August 2019: exhibition set-up

Upon request (journalists only): interviews with the organisers and floral artists, possibility to cover the final preparations being made for the exhibition.

#### 14 August 2019: press day – afternoon public opening of the exhibition

- **From 9 am to 12 noon:** press opening. The floral artists will put the finishing touches to the exhibition. Journalists and photographers are invited to meet the organisers and florists. Please confirm your attendance and send your interview requests to: [press@flowercarpets.be](mailto:press@flowercarpets.be).
- **1 pm:** the exhibition opens to the general public until 7 pm (last entrance at 6.30 pm)

#### 15, 16, 17 and 18 August 2019: exhibition open to the public

- **Opening hours:** 10 am to 10 pm (last entry at 9:30 pm). Visitors can enjoy several small concerts throughout the evening, from 6 pm to 10 pm.

### TICKETS

- **Price: 8 euros (free for children under 10)**
- On-the-day tickets available at the Brussels City Hall entrance
- Advance tickets available on [www.flowerstime.be](http://www.flowerstime.be) and in the Visit Brussels shops (located at Brussels Grand Place and Rue Royale 2-4, 1000 Brussels)
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More information and high-resolution photos are available from our newsroom:  
<https://flowercarpet.prezly.com>

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- the participating florists
- the City of Brussels and its services
- Brussels Capital-Region
- Koninklijke Maatschappij voor Landbouw en Plantkunde
- Floraliën
- Visit Brussels
- the Embassy of Mexico in Belgium
- the Belgian National Lottery
- Interparking
- Hotel Amigo
- Chocopolis
- Fintro
- JCDecaux/Villo!
- retailers in and around Brussels' Grand Place and Fish Market
- its photographers Gaston Batistini, Wim Vanmaele and Labo River
- the Royal Saint-Hubert Galleries
- RTBF – La Première, Viva Bruxelles, OUFtivi
- VRT Radio 2
- The Brussels Times

... and all the partners that contribute to the success of this event.





## PRESS FILE

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Alderdwoman for Culture, Tourism and Big events of the City of Brussels

President of the Brussels Flower Carpet non-profit association

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For five magical days, the entrance hall, corridors, reception rooms and more will be bedecked in unusual, surprising floral arrangements that transform the magnificent building into an idyllic, enchanted world of captivating scents and dazzling colours.

### A fresh look at a little-known architectural gem

It may be instantly recognisable, but few members of the public have ever had the chance to cross the threshold of Brussels City Hall and explore the mysteries that lie beyond. Flowertime is the perfect occasion to discover 13 of its most beautiful rooms, decorated floor to ceiling by around 30 internationally renowned florists.

For **Delphine Houba, president of the non-profit that also runs the Flower Carpet event**, Flowertime is a unique opportunity to see Brussels City Hall from a whole new angle. *“Everyone knows its façade, but few people, locals included, know what's hiding inside this wonderful Gothic building. By opening some of its most beautiful rooms, which would normally be closed to the public, Flowertime gives people a behind-the-scenes glimpse of its little-known splendour.”*

### 2019 goes international

This year, the artistic direction is once again in the green-fingered hands of the folk from Floraliën, who have chosen **“A World of Floral Emotions”** as 2019's theme. Established artists and budding newcomers from all over the world will pour their talent, creativity and expertise into making this venerable building sing with the universal language of flowers.

*“The idea came about because we wanted to bring different cultures together. More than 30 artists – some new to Flowertime and some old hands – will show off the latest floral trends from their own countries: Belarus, China, Indonesia, Japan, Romania, Estonia, France, Portugal, Netherlands, Sweden, Mexico, United States... and of*



course, Belgium. In total, over 30 florists from 13 countries are taking part in Flowertime,” says **Pieter Toebaert**, director of the Floraliën festivals.

### A floral gateway to an enchanted world

As always, the flower-lined route will start in the Grand Place. This year, though, to access the building, visitors will pass through a stunning flower arch composed of 500 fuchsias.

Every evening between 6 pm and 10 pm, visitors will be serenaded by the **Jose Luis Montiel Moreno** trio, who have put together a floral playlist especially for the occasion. Jose Luis Montiel Moreno is a great supporter of Brussels’ summertime events, having composed the soundtrack for last year’s Mexican Flower Carpet sound and light show. Don’t miss out on this unique experience!

### Useful info to help you plan your visit:

- **Opening hours**
  - 14 August, 1 pm to 7 pm (last entry at 6:30 pm)
  - 15-18 August, 10 am to 10 pm (last entry at 9:30 pm)
- **Price: 8 euros (free for children under 10)**
  - On-the-day tickets available at the Brussels City Hall entrance
  - Advance tickets available on [www.flowertime.be](http://www.flowertime.be) and in the Visit Brussels shops (located at Brussels Grand Place and Rue Royale 2-4, 1000 Brussels)
    - With an advance ticket, you can take the fast lane at the Grand Place. Please note that there are only a limited number of advance tickets available.
  - Discounts for groups of 15 or more: please contact [karel.goethals@flowercarpet.be](mailto:karel.goethals@flowercarpet.be)
  - You will find all the info you need on [www.flowertime.be](http://www.flowertime.be).

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More information and high-resolution photos are available from our newsroom: <https://flowercarpet.prezly.com>





## A WORLD OF FLORAL EMOTIONS

Flowertime's regular partner, the Floraliën, is something of an institution in Belgium, whose first plant-and-flower show was held in 1808 in a hotel in Ghent. Ever since then, it has truly flourished. We chat to Pieter Toebaert, director of the Floraliën flower shows and Flowertime curator.



**This is now the fourth Flowertime. What can we expect this year?**

Our recipe has proven a real hit and we don't plan on changing it, although we're constantly working to improve it. The artists' choices make each show a surprise. There's always something different. This year, as ever, we've brought together a bumper crop of top international florists. These established and emerging artists from all four corners of the globe will decorate Brussels City Hall's most important rooms with creations that reflect the very latest trends.

**This year's theme is "A World of Floral Emotions". Can you tell us a bit more about this choice?**

It's a tribute to the sensitivity and universality of emotions. Flowers have long been used to express our most intimate feelings; this is known as the "language of flowers". In this floral lingua franca, every flower represents an emotion. And whether expressing joy or sadness, it's emotion that guides our artists. What they will do during Flowertime is express their feelings, in harmony with the colours of these hallowed halls.

**How do you select the artists?**

I meet with them and ask them about their vision for their art. The most important thing is to ask them what they plan to create for Flowertime. If their response sounds interesting, there's a good chance we can take things further. Our role is to build bridges between our organisation and floral artists to make the impossible possible. It's all about innovating and leaving people amazed.

**Next year, the Floraliën will once again be taking place in the city of Ghent. Why are these flower festivals so popular?**

Yep, the Floraliënhal will be hosting the most beautiful creations from the biggest floral artists from 1-10 May 2020. As green spaces become an increasingly rare sight in our cities, I think it's important to recreate a green environment for people to experience. That's what we try to do with both Flowertime and the Floraliën.



## What is it exactly that makes Flowertime so special this year?

Plants and flowers are an integral part of an enjoyable lifestyle. They aren't there to be displayed in drab, boring rooms. The City Hall will give them the backdrop they deserve. Having these splendid, opulent rooms decorated by floral artists brings together the best of both worlds: the magnificent interior of the City Hall and world-class floral design.



## 7 THINGS YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT BRUSSELS CITY HALL

Nowadays, everyone in Brussels knows that the weekend of 15 August is the date of the Flower Carpet and Flowertime. But 15 August also marks the anniversary of the bombardment of Brussels by the troops of Louis XIV of France in 1695. Almost a third of the city was destroyed by the cannonballs that rained down upon it. All that remained of the Grand Place was City Hall, whose miraculous escape was perhaps thanks to the protection of its patron saint, the archangel Michael.



### Saint Michael: guardian angel of Brussels

Perched some 90 metres above the ground, the statue of the archangel Saint Michael, patron saint of Brussels, stares steadily across the cityscape. To reach the top, you're facing a 400-step climb. The current gilt metal statue on the top of the spire is actually a 5-metre-high replica of the 1455 version by Martin van Rode. Visitors can see the original, together with the original statues from the façade, at the Museum of the City of Brussels, which is also in the Grand Place. Housed in the striking Maison du Roi building, the statue was installed there to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Grand Place achieving UNESCO World Heritage status.

© Museums of the City of Brussels – City Hall

### The courtyard's mysterious star

Legend has it that the star marks the spot where the architect responsible for the façade's famous lack of symmetry leapt to his death. In reality, he died of old age in 1485. The centre of the star in fact serves as “point zero” for measuring Public Works plans in Belgium. It is the official centre of the country. The current star, which was installed in 1717, is a copy of the marble design that decorated the Piazza del Campidoglio in Rome, the square Pope Paul III commissioned Michelangelo to design in 1538.

### The Maximilian Room and its Brussels tapestries

This room, which is also known as the Salle du Collège, is where the mayor and aldermen meet each week. Its stunning tapestries tell the story of the life of Clovis I, king of the Franks, and in particular his conversion to Christianity. Long before the Flower Carpet, Brussels was known around the world for its quality tapestries and their close attention to detail. It took about six weeks to weave one square metre of tapestry! The tapestries in this room were made during the early 18th century by the Vanderborcht tapestry workshop, based on designs by French painter Charles Poëron.



## The Antechamber to the Mayor's Office

This room is well worth a visit to see its series of paintings depicting the capital before the Senne was covered over. They offer an invaluable insight into the Brussels of yesteryear. The works to cover the Senne gave rise to the city's wide boulevards and created the Brussels that we know today. One of the paintings on display shows the old view from the Place de la Bourse to the Gare du Midi, while another depicts a rural landscape where the Stock Exchange now stands.

## The Gothic Hall and its treasures

This hall was completely destroyed during the bombardment of 1695. It owes its current décor, dating from the late 19th century, to architect Victor Jamaer, a keen proponent of the Gothic Revival movement. Before the bombardment of 1695, the room was said to house, according to certain sources, the Justice of Trajan by painter Rogier de la Pasture, also known as Rogier Van der Weyden. This masterpiece was famous throughout the Western world, with cultural tourists flocking to see it for two whole centuries. Sadly, the Justice of Trajan and the majority of the city's precious collections, which included works by Van Dyck and Rubens, went up in smoke in the fire that followed the bombardment. Luckily, though, there are plenty more wonders to discover as a number of collections were able to be saved or rebuilt over the following centuries.

## The Wedding Hall

This hall was once the courtroom. Since 1792, the room has been used for civil marriages where at least one of the couple lives in the City of Brussels. It famously hosted the wedding of Princess Astrid of Belgium, while the weddings of her two brothers, Princes Philippe and Laurent, took place in the Gothic Hall. This room is where you will find the door to the City Hall's famous balcony.

## The first-floor balcony above the Grand Place

Overlooking the Grand Place, the balcony is the elevated position from which sovereigns, VIPs and other distinguished guests make public appearances. Several sportspeople have also been accorded this honour, including Eddy Merckx (1969), the Belgian national football team (1986 and 2018), Justine Henin (2003) and the Belgian national hockey team (2018).

**These fascinating facts about Brussels City Hall were compiled in collaboration with Brigitte Bocken of GBB (Guides for Brussels and Belgium).**

**Info and bookings: [www.guidesbrussels.be](http://www.guidesbrussels.be)**



## FLOWERS MEET HISTORY

Throughout the five-day Flowertime exhibition, Brussels City Hall's most beautiful rooms and riches will be blooming with magnificent floral creations from all over the world. Paintings, sculptures and tapestries tell the story of Brussels in the language of flowers. The route devised by the organisers is the perfect chance to (re)discover Brussels City Hall, offering a true floral, artistic and architectural treat that takes in all of the treasures hiding inside this 15th-century masterpiece of Gothic architecture.

### The Grand Place

As always, the flower-lined route begins in the Grand Place, “the most beautiful public square in the world”. Your eye will instantly be drawn to the stunning floral arch, made from 500 fuchsia plants, that forms the entrance to the building. These superb plants come from De Nachtwaker, the nursery run by **Geert Bonte**, a former farmer whose passion for flowers and fuchsias led him to set up his own business in Moortsele.



© Tom Paulussen – Grand Place – Flowertime 2013

### The entrance and the courtyard

The way into the building is through a Gothic arch doorway crowned with carvings of the patron saints of the city's old military guilds: Saint Michael (swordsmen), Saint Sebastian (archers), Saint Christopher (arquebusiers), and Saint George (crossbowmen). Legend goes that Saint Gaugericus built a church on Saint-Géry Island (the current Place Saint-Géry) in the year 580, hence why he appears alongside the other saints. On each side stand statues of the four cardinal virtues: Prudence, Justice, Courage and Temperance.



At the end of the passageway leading to the inner courtyard, you can admire a floral creation by **Richard Mos**. Richard Mos is a Dutch florist who draws his inspiration from nature, architecture and the visual arts. His detailed, sophisticated work reveals something new every time you look at it. His creations have featured in numerous books and articles in Belgium, the Netherlands, the UK and Russia.

The courtyard is famous not only for its star, which marks “point zero” - the official centre of Belgium -, but also for its two fountains representing the River Meuse and the River Scheldt. The dates inscribed on the ground refer to the City Hall’s major stages of construction: 1402 -1444 for the two Gothic wings of the main façade, and 1715 - 1717 for the building behind.

All along the route, **PUP** - a pop-up store selling "pleasant and exceptional plants" - added a green, urban jungle touch with its magnificent plants.

Only a few steps away, Fred Verhaeghe and his pupils from the PTI Horticultural School in Courtrai have decorated the corridor that runs along the courtyard. **Fred Verhaeghe** teaches floral art and has produced many remarkable works, not least the decorations in the Federal Parliament for the King’s Feast (15 November 2012) and King Philippe’s oath-taking ceremony (21 July 2013).

### Entrance hall, landing and staircase

The entrance hall transports visitors to the tropical paradise of Indonesia. **Ana Riana and her team** have shone the spotlight on the *janur*, a young palm leaf with multiple uses that is one of the basic ingredients in numerous artistic creations, particularly on Java and in Bali.

For Flowertime, Riana is pairing her *janurs* with creations by **Ness Klorofyl**, a Belgian florist whose company, Klorofyl, provides floral decorations for the events industry. Klorofyl is a regular at Flowertime, and her 2017 creations in the Grangé Gallery received particular praise.

### The Gallery of the Sovereigns

The walls of the first-floor hallway are hung with portraits of the sovereigns who have ruled over the territories that make up present-day Belgium, including Charles II of Spain, Maria Theresa of Spain, Napoleon Bonaparte, William I of the Netherlands and Leopold I of Belgium.

This gallery has been decorated by six talented young artists: Javier Atila and Alfredo Hernandez, Aymeric Chaouche, Jolien Vanderstappen, Arnauld Delheille and Max Hurtaud.

**Javier Avila** is a Mexican based in Brussels, where he runs an events company specialising in decorating weddings and special occasions. Together with his fellow countryman **Alfredo Hernandez**, a floral designer who runs floristry workshops in Linares (Nuevo León, Mexico), he has created an extraordinary work that pays tribute to the monarch butterfly.



**Aymeric Chauouche** hails from Vichy, France. He has been a florist for six years and won the 2019 Worldskills Belgium competition. His work is inspired by ecology and recycling.

Young and ambitious perfectly sums up **Arnaud Delheille**. He has previously worked with organisations such as Upcoming Florists, and has won numerous competitions. Arnaud runs his own floral studio and recently published his first book. He's definitely one to watch!

**Jolien Vanderstappen**, from Brussels, has already proven herself in several competitions. In 2016, she won the Belgian Junior Cup and, in 2017, she represented Belgium at Eurofleur. You can hardly call it a coincidence: five generations of Jolien's family have been active in the flower sector!

Last but by no means least, **Max Hurtaud** is French by birth but now lives in Brussels. He leads an international career and won the bronze medal at the Belgian Junior Cup 2016. He is also an ambassador for Floral Fundamentals, a cooperative group of international florists who share practical information about flowers, plants and the products used in the floral industry.



© Tom Paulussen – Flowertime 2013

## The aldermen's offices

On your right are the two aldermen's offices.

**Room 1:** Art teacher and Floral Fundamentals Ambassador **Yulia Medvedyeva** has been producing her stunning floral creations for over 20 years. She was crowned Estonian champion in 2012 and 2014, and has picked up awards in both Russia and Italy. She runs her own floral studio, Artishok, where she plays with forms and textures to make her compositions innovative and thought-provoking.

**Room 2:** We are delighted to welcome a Romanian florist to the festival for the first time this year. The Romanian floral arts industry is only in its infancy, but master florist **Nicolae Agop** is no rookie. He has staged numerous floral demonstrations in more than 40 cities around the world, winning several international prizes. He is also the founder of the AGOP floral design academy, which has trained his assistants Beatrice Stoicovici, Oana Lamba, Ștefan Dițu and Mircea Gheța.

## The council chamber

This ornately decorated Louis XIV room boasts impressive tapestries depicting the coronations of Philip the Good and Charles VI, as well as the abdication of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. The ceiling, by local painter Victor Honoré Janssens, shows Jupiter surrounded by an assembly of the gods.

Today, this room still hosts sessions of the city council. During Flowertime it is home to creations by **Agna Maertens** and her team, which includes **Sara-Lisa Ludvigsson**. These two Floral Fundamentals Ambassadors have pooled their talents for the occasion.

Maertens, a chemistry, physics and biology teacher, has moved into the world of flowers to bring together her two greatest passions: floral art and teaching. She enjoys using natural materials in her creations, with her highly detailed work incorporating artisan techniques.

## The Maximilian Room

This room, where the Board of Aldermen meets, owes its name to the portraits of Maximilian I, Holy Roman Emperor and his wife Mary of Burgundy. Its 18th-century tapestries depict the most important events in the life of Clovis I, king of the Franks.

**Haruko Noda** is a Japanese florist who lives in Belgium. After gaining her degree in Germany, Haruko honed her floral skills in Munich and Vienna. She runs workshops and also works for magazines in Belgium and Japan. Her vision of floral art is fun and packed with surprising elements. Haruko also enjoys table decoration, which she does using her own ceramics.







© Wim Vanmaele – Maximilian Room – Flowertime 2017

## The Antechamber to the Office for Public Education

This little room sits between the Maximilian Room and the Grangé Gallery. Nowadays, it serves as the antechamber to the office of the alderman for public education. For Flowertime, it is being decked out by **Françoise Weeks** and her team, with backup provided by **Sheryl Tynes**. The vegetal mannequins in this room were created by **Lena Mertens**.

They have worked together to conjure up an original atmosphere in a relatively austere room. Weeks' singular style pins down the quintessence of nature and flowers. She is known around the world and her work has appeared in international magazines.

## The Grangé Gallery



© Wim Vanmaele – Grangé Gallery – Flowertime 2017

The Grangé Gallery, on the first floor, offers a captivating view of the 96-metre-high tower and the courtyard's star. It takes its name from Louis Grangé, the painter who, in the 18th century, produced the six full-length portraits of the sovereigns who ruled the Duchy of Brabant over the course of two centuries: Philip I of Castile, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, Philip II of Spain, Albert and Isabella, and Charles II of Spain. More recently, busts of King Leopold II and his wife Marie Henriette were added to the gallery, along with those of King Albert I and Queen Elisabeth.

**Anne Guns**, who teaches in Flanders and the Netherlands, has taken over the space to share her passion for flowers. Her creations are inspired by music, art and nature. At a time when mobility is a key concern among residents, Anne has put together, in collaboration with the non-profit association **CyCLO**, a breath-taking display of bicycles adorned with flowers.

## The Antechamber to the Mayor's Office

Once the administrative office, this room is now a waiting room for the mayor's visitors. Its walls are covered with oak panelling dating from the 19th century. There is also a series of paintings by Jean-Baptiste Van Moer depicting the neighbourhoods surrounding the Senne, before the river disappeared beneath Brussels' grand boulevards.

During Flowertime, **Stéphane Brassart** is using this room to reveal his typically innovative, emotional and authentic works marrying different materials, unusual lines and varied colours. A baker's son, Brassart has long been immersed in the world of craftsmanship and has been consumed with a passion for flowers ever since he was very young.

## The Staircase of Honour

The staircase and landing are decorated with busts of the mayors of Brussels from 1830 to today, with the paintings on the walls and ceilings depicting "The Glorification of Communal Power". The inscription, "A peste, fame et bello, liberamos Maria pacis" (Free us, Mary, from plague, famine and war) was originally on the facade of the King's House before the current museum was built. In just a few words, it sums up all of the evils that afflict humankind.



The team that has dressed this area hails from the **Cohim Flower School**, a vocational floristry school and branch of the famous fashion school Cohim, which is based in Beijing and Shanghai. Cohim focuses not only on techniques, but also on the perception of art. Its staff, which includes **Tina Liu**, are recruited from all over the world and are all recognised in the global floral industry. In May 2018, Liu's work *Dye* was exhibited at Beijing Fun, while in September 2018, *People Embracing the Future* was awarded "work of the year" at Beijing Design Week. Floral Fundamental Ambassador **Cao Jiang** joins her team for the occasion.

## The Gothic Hall

The Gothic Hall, which is reserved for grand receptions and ceremonies, is decorated with tapestries from the Belgian City of Mechelen that depict ancient trades. The bronze statues are mainly of the mayors of Brussels between 1386 and 1500. Once decorated with other splendid tapestries, paintings and priceless treasures, this room was sadly reduced to cinders during the bombardment of 1695.

The hall provides the backdrop for **Natalia Sakalova**, who has unleashed her passion for plants and flowers. Originally from Belarus, it was in Belgium that she discovered this passion. She trained in floristry and opened her own boutique in 2009. She has made a name for herself with her magnificent bridal bouquets, but here in the Gothic Hall of Brussels City Hall she will dazzle your senses with her blend of ambiance, scents and colours.

As a Floral Fundamentals Ambassador, Natalia has produced a stunning display of balls that calls to mind another symbol of the city: the Atomium.





© Tom Paulussen – Gothic Room – Flowertime 2015

## The Wedding Hall

The Wedding Hall is nowadays used for civil marriages, but once upon a time it served as a courtroom. Its ceiling paintings bear witness to its past as a meeting room for the city guilds, or *neuf nations*, hence why it is also known as the *Chambre des Nations*. The 1881 triptych by Charles-Léon Cardon represents the City presiding over marriage, framed by Justice and Law who are both personified by the archangel Saint Michael.

It therefore just had to be a couple who received the honour of decorating this fascinating room. **Maria Sofia Tavares and Marc Noël** jointly run a boutique, Moments Subtils, in Bastogne. Maria trained in Luxembourg and won second prize at the Concours des Apprentis in Saarlouis, Germany. Marc is intrigued by art, nature and experimentation and trained in home décor, followed by floral art, in Gembloux, Belgium. Together, they have twice won the Amaryllis competition run by the Château de Belœil.

## The Lion staircase



This is the staircase that takes newly-weds out onto the Grand Place. Once outside, stop for a moment to admire the lions adorning the building's exterior.

In the 15th century, this staircase had only one handrail. During restoration works in 1866, Pierre-Victor Jamaer designed a new set of steps outside with an openwork balustrade and two small columns, each topped with a seated lion sporting the Brussels coat of arms.

It is the perfect stage for **Sébastien Dossin**, a landscape architect who is fascinated by historic gardens. Dossin is a keen painter and is particularly sensitive to different shades of colour, which is certainly felt in his compositions. As a fan of flowers, he has taken on many a challenge and has already participated in several competitions and major floral events, including Fleuramour.

**Extracts about Brussels City Hall from the book *Toute la lumière sur la Grand-Place de Bruxelles* by Lillo Chiarenza, Valérie Paelinck and Philippe Denis, published by Éditions Queen II 2013.**



## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### AGENDA

#### 11, 12 and 14 August 2019: exhibition set-up

Upon request (journalists only): interviews with the organisers and floral artists, possibility to cover the final preparations being made for the exhibition.

#### 14 August 2019: press day – afternoon public opening of the exhibition

- **From 9 am to 12 noon:** press opening. The floral artists will put the finishing touches to the exhibition. Journalists and photographers are invited to meet the organisers and florists. Please confirm your attendance and send your interview requests to: [press@flowercarpets.be](mailto:press@flowercarpets.be).
- **1 pm:** the exhibition opens to the general public until 7 pm (last entrance at 6.30 pm)

#### 15, 16, 17 and 18 August 2019: exhibition open to the public

- **Opening hours:** 10 am to 10 pm (last entry at 9:30 pm). Visitors can enjoy several small concerts throughout the evening, from 6 pm to 10 pm.

### TICKETS

- **Price: 8 euros (free for children under 10)**
- On-the-day tickets available at the Brussels City Hall entrance
- Advance tickets available on [www.flowerstime.be](http://www.flowerstime.be) and in the Visit Brussels shops (located at Brussels Grand Place and Rue Royale 2-4, 1000 Brussels)
  - With an advance ticket, you can take the fast lane at the Grand Place. Please note that there are only a limited number of advance tickets available.
- Discounts for groups of 15 or more: please contact [karel.goethals@flowercarpets.be](mailto:karel.goethals@flowercarpets.be)
- **You will find all the info you need on [www.flowerstime.be](http://www.flowerstime.be).**



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More information and high-resolution photos are available from our newsroom:  
<https://flowercarpet.prezly.com>

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- the Belgian National Lottery
- Interparking
- Hotel Amigo
- Chocopolis
- Fintro
- JCDecaux/Villo!
- retailers in and around Brussels' Grand Place and Fish Market
- its photographers Gaston Batistini, Wim Vanmaele and Labo River
- the Royal Saint-Hubert Galleries
- RTBF – La Première, Viva Bruxelles, OUFtivi
- VRT Radio 2
- The Brussels Times

... and all the partners that contribute to the success of this event.

