



PRESS KIT
FOR
THE BRUSSELS
BOURSE



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SEE YOU AT THE BRUSSELS BOURSE!

On the weekend of 9 September 2023, the Bourse will open its doors to the people of Brussels for the first time in its history. The Bourse is opening 12,000 m² of renovated space to the public. These 12,000 m² are spread over five floors. Three are accessible free of charge and two are fee-paying: Bruxella 1238 and Belgian Beer World.

The restoration of the Bourse, which began in 2019, was supported by several levels of government: the City of Brussels, the Brussels-Capital Region, the Federal Government via Beliris and Urban as well as the European Union via the European Regional Development Fund and the Recovery and Resilience Facility as part of the European recovery plan NextGenerationEU. The aim of this project is to give the Bourse a public and civic vocation. Most of it is open to the public free of charge. The building's central nave acts as a freely accessible gateway between the Brussels pedestrian walkway and the Grand Place.

Above all, the Bourse is one of the city's most iconic buildings. Built between 1868 and 1873 to enhance the boulevards of the city centre, and the brainchild of architect Léon-Pierre Suys, its aim was to embellish an expanding capital. At a time when financial markets were flourishing all over the world, the Palais de la Bourse, its full name, became a temple to finance. A temple that has lost its lustre in recent years, even more so when the last six Euronext agents abandoned the premises in 2014. Few Brussels residents are familiar with its rooms and corridors, as the Bourse has gradually turned in on itself. By opening up the building to the people of Brussels, the City wants to turn it into a new meeting place.

The building's most economic activity is upstairs, with Belgian Beer World. This interactive museum tells the story of the art of brewing in Belgium. In other words, the history of Belgian beer from the Middle Ages to the present day, through all kinds of revolutions, wars and so on. And it looks at the diversity that surrounds Belgian beer. Proud of their brewing heritage, around a hundred Belgian brewers are involved in Belgian Beer World. This world-renowned brewing expertise will be accessible to the public.

You can find the press kit outlining the features of this legendary Brussels building below.

THE BOURSE: MUCH MORE THAN HERITAGE

After several months of reflection, plans, dreams, challenges and work, the Bourse is once again opening its doors... to the general public in Brussels, Belgium and abroad. Beyond this event, which will give rise to many popular festivities, this inauguration is the starting point of a new history for this iconic site, whose essence is to become 'much more than a heritage site'.

'Rendez-vous à la Bourse!': a meeting place once again

For generations, the people of Belgium and Brussels in particular have used the Bourse as a place to come together. They meet in the surrounding area, on the forecourt or on the stairs.

Now that the Bourse is open to all, 'Rendez-vous à la Bourse!' is taking on a new dimension, with a range of exciting new features and a brand-new project: citizen participation.

The Bourse will provide the building with new facilities to welcome the public.

1. Memory spaces
2. Creative socialisation spaces
3. Museum and experiential spaces (BelgianBeer World)
4. Dining spaces
5. Work spaces
6. Museum shop space

1. Memory spaces

The history of the Bourse goes back long before the Bourse itself:

- The basement of the Bourse is full of remains dating back more than 800 years. This archaeological site, carefully preserved by Bruxella 1238, will be open to visitors thanks to new museum facilities.
- The Bourse building itself is a splendid piece of architecture that bears witness to the intense financial activity in the centre of the capital for two centuries. Now open 7 days a week from 9:30 am to 6:00 pm., the Bourse has become an open-air museum.

2. Creative socialisation spaces

From 9 September 2023, people will be able to cross the Bourse freely from one end to the other: from the pedestrian precinct to the Grand Place. This is now possible thanks to a monumental opening created in the building, on the 'Grand Place' side. As well as being a place for people to pass through and meet, the Bourse will also be a place for socialising.

People will be able to stop for a few moments and take advantage of the urban furniture installed throughout the interior of the building. The people of Brussels – from the youngest to the oldest – are invited to occupy the Grand'Hall to make it a living space, through spontaneous or more organised events, to make it the new heart of Brussels for meetings and debates, a place to dance or listen to music.

Visitors will also be able to stop for longer to work or enjoy the facilities (Madame Café brasserie, shops, temporary exhibitions, coworking or conference spaces, and of course a visit to Belgian Beer World).



Priority to Citizen Participation!

From the outset, the BourseBeurs has been an innovative project that listens to all. Each stage of its development has been punctuated by discussions with various local and regional stakeholders: residents, shopkeepers, associations, political representatives and institutions, scientists, town planners and architects, schools, artists, intellectuals, etc.

This Citizen Participation initiative has produced a result that takes concrete account of the needs, expectations and desires of the population.



A graphical representation of the needs expressed by the public at the numerous public Citizen Participation meetings.

Four workshops were held, with the conclusion that numerous events, exhibitions and conferences could be organised throughout the year. As part of the Citizens' Initiative, the Bourse will be welcoming the people of Brussels with a truly engaging programme. It's also up to them to bring this place to life by becoming friends or volunteers of the Bourse.

3. Museum and experiential spaces

The Bourse is now home to two museums and an original experience space.

As well as the archaeological remains to be found in its foundations, the Bourse is itself a museum, which in turn houses a unique experiential space: Belgian Beer World.

Restoration and enhancement of the 'La Bourse' building

Constructed between 1868 and 1873 by the architect Léon-Pierre Suys, the 'Palais de la Bourse' bears architectural witness to the finest hours of the 19th century. Built on the former Marché au Beurre (butter market) and the arches of the Senne, it borrows from the Neo-Renaissance and Second Empire styles.

In order to restore it to its former splendour and make it accessible to the general public, a number of different trades have been working to restore it and highlight its assets, such as the bas-reliefs by Rodin on the façades.

A witness to the glorious days of industrialisation in 19th century Belgium, the Bourse is now a museum in itself to be discovered and experienced, day after day.

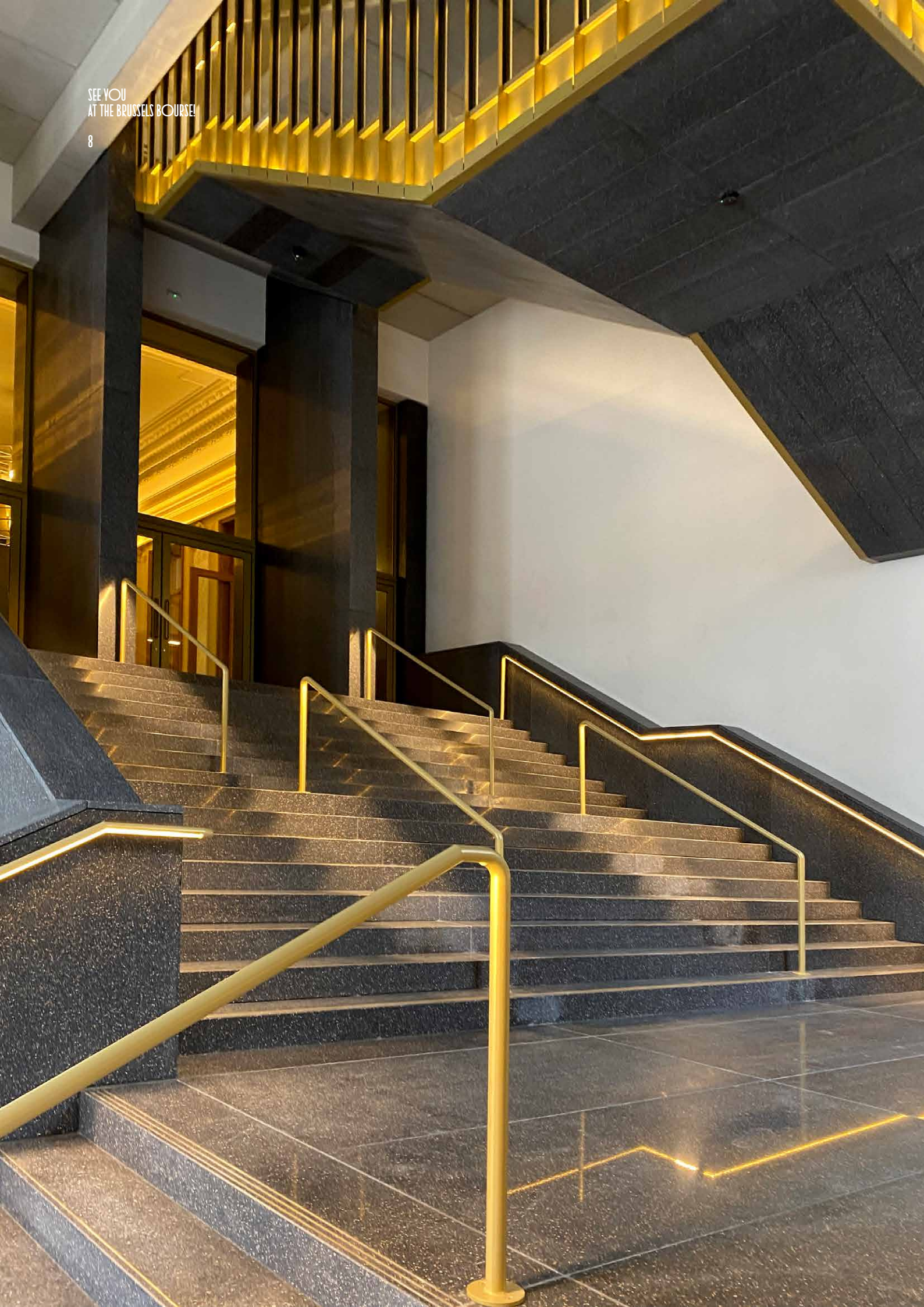
New access at the rear of the building

While the restoration of the building has been rigorous and respectful of the original architectural heritage, the design office has succeeded in transforming certain areas in order to change the way they are used. We can cite two examples:

- A new monumental entrance at the rear of the building: the desire to transform the Bourse into a gateway between the Grand Place and the 'lower' part of the city meant that an entrance had to be cut into the rear façade of the building. The result is a truly daring architectural achievement by the BORSA consortium, entirely at the service of visitors.
- The Sky bar: a brasserie, a terrace and a unique viewpoint over the centre of Brussels on the roof of the Bourse.

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Belgium Beer World

Beer is one of Belgium's most famous industries. To highlight the genius of Belgian brewing, a unique area has been created on the 2nd floor: Belgian Beer World. With the support of around a hundred Belgian brewers, this space has been conceived and designed so that every visitor can discover the history of beer through time and the prism of Belgian culture. Belgian Beer World takes visitors on a journey designed by museum experts, offering a truly sensory experience of beer culture.

Six young artists from the Brussels Royal Academy of Fine Arts, the City of Brussels higher institution of art, took part in the building's scenography. They were able to create a permanent work of art based on brewing culture on panels in the main hall of the Bourse. These three students and three alumni (former students) took part in the project, selected from a panel of scenographers on the basis of their portfolios: Arthur Mille – Diego Herman – Eve Vilain – Jamal Merawa – Laura Dauchet – Niknaz Khalouzadeh.

The visit to Belgian Beer World concludes with a magnificent finish on the roof of the Bourse, a Sky bar: the BEER LAB offering an unrivalled view of the rooftops of central Brussels and the spire of the Hôtel de Ville. Visitors to the museum can round off their experience with a beer or soft drink.

Belgian Beer World will be open from 9:30 am to 6:00 pm every day.

For more information: <https://www.belgianbeerworld.be/fr>

Then, on the way back to the exit, they can visit the Boutique de la Bourse, a shopping space dedicated mainly to Belgian brewery products.



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4. Dining spaces

In addition to the rooftop brasserie (the Sky bar), occasional or regular visitors will have access to a restaurant called Madame Café on the first floor, for informal or business meals. The restaurant will offer a menu featuring Belgian specialities. Respectful of the architecture of the site, the restaurant can be described as an elegant brasserie, while at the same time being Brussels-style, friendly and open to all social classes in the capital and well beyond.

5. Professional spaces in the Bourse

Around its monumental central space, the Bourse is equipped with numerous rooms and bays. Some of them have been fitted out for the Bourse to also be a business centre; rooms have been equipped to be modular and meet different professional needs such as occasional or extended offices (co-coworking), meeting rooms, conferences, seminars, etc.

6. Museum shop space

Located on the ground floor of the building, the retail area is the last stop for visitors to Belgian Beer World. This space will be a place to display and sell a selection of beers, as well as original gifts as souvenirs of the visit. While this space is open to Belgian Beer World visitors, it will also be accessible to anyone passing through the area, whether local residents or tourists.

Similarly, the Sky Bar at the Bourse will be open to everyone from 7:00 pm, after BBW closes.

Half of the space will be devoted to supporting Brussels' SMEs. They can organise seminars, presentations of their products or services, and so on. The Bourse will be organising a call for interest in the autumn.



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THE PARTNERS:

The BourseBeurs project would not have been possible without the support of:



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PRESS CONTACT:

Nel Vandevannet
Director of the Bourse
+32 (0)475 40 00 77
Nel.Vandevannet@brucity.be

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