

2/2018



f focus



Promoting
a Healthy Lifestyle



**focus
met:**

Katrin Bats

Communication Manager
at RIMI Estonia

Photo: RIMI

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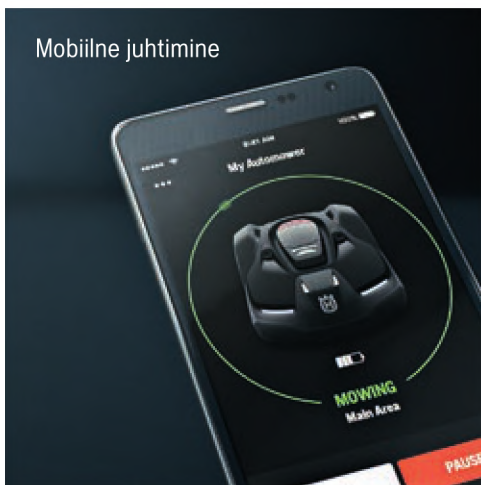
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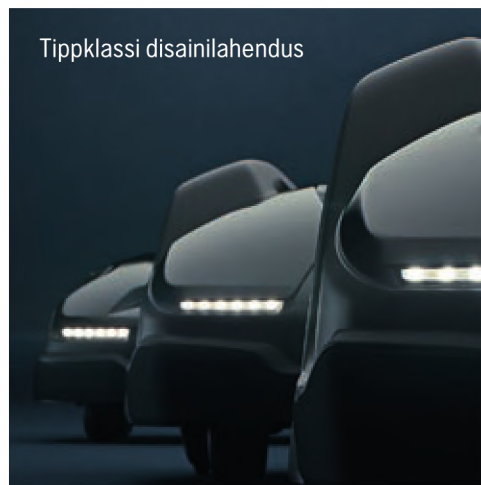
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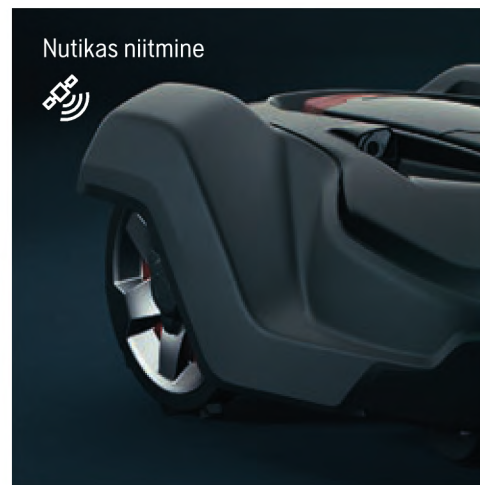
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Karolina Ullman
SCCE Chairman

Dear Reader,

I am writing this column in May and this year,
May has delivered! If this is the only summer we get,
I am still grateful as winter lasted too long this year.



Being the chairman of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce has its advantages as I get invitations to many interesting conferences and meetings. During this spring I have represented SCCE at the Nordic-Baltic Migration Conference in March, the Rail Baltica Global Forum in April, and a meeting together with FICE (Foreign Investors' Council in Estonia) with the Minister of Entrepreneurship and IT. I would like to share some of my reflections from these meetings with you.

At the **Nordic-Baltic Migration Conference** learned that although the quota for working permits for persons within non-EU citizenship in Estonia is still there (maximum 0.1% of the population, hence some 1.300 working permits per year can be given) the number of exemption to this rule are now so many that in reality there were some 5.000 permits issued last year.



In addition, I also learned that there is interesting research on cultural values to predict ethnic identity (like if you are asked 100 questions regarding your values, this information can in some cases also predict where you are from, meaning that in one country there are common values that the vast majority share). Among the highest correlations were South Africa with 84% (despite having many different ethnical groups and languages they share cultural values), Iraq with 82% and Estonia with a high score of 70%, while countries like Sweden had only a predictability of 22% (the same as Norway and almost the same as Finland with 23%), while Poland was down at 6%.



At the **Rail Baltica Global Forum**, the different ministers and secretaries of infrastructure participated in a panel debate. For some reason, Sweden was also represented although Rail Baltica is no-where near Sweden or its borders. As a panel debate, it was quite useless because each speaker had its own agenda so there was little of a debate. But in general, it was interesting to listen to what each country emphasised, what are the most important things for each of our countries. Here follows a summary (warning – this is my interpretation):

Kadri Simson, Estonian Minister of Economic Affairs and Infrastructure, went on and on about how important it is

to include Finland into the Rail Baltica project and have Finland to be a shareholder in the three-state company. Interesting enough, there was no Finnish representative there to agree or disagree.

Rokas Masiulis, the Lithuanian Minister of Transport and Communications, saw the Rail Baltica project mostly as a question of security and a way to quickly transport NATO troops around our area.

The Polish Undersecretary of State of Ministry of Infrastructure, Andrzej Bittel, was very filled up with the idea that once again Poland will be the centre of the Universe (I guess he meant Europe) as Rail Baltica will make Poland the hub of everything.

Mattias Landgren, State Secretary of Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, however, stayed focused on union rights and the safety for the workers who will build the Rail Baltica railway.

(The Latvian Minister of Transport, Uldis Augulis, was there too. He looked young, around 40-ish, but for unknown reason spoke in Latvian and not English as all the rest, which made his remarks quite incomprehensible. There were interpreters, but as you know, most of them have no idea what they are translating and taking headphones on and off every time he was talking did not help either.)

My conclusion: It is a true wonder, that there can ever be anything achieved in an international environment where all politicians have their own agenda, and no-one listens to the other!



The **FICE meeting with Urve Palo, Estonian Minister of Entrepreneurship and IT**, can be summarized this way: As Estonia's productivity has not increased in 10 years, the Government does not rely on the market to adjust on its own but will make sure that salaries are increased so that

companies understand that they must invest in R&D and machinery instead on relying on "cheap" labour.

With these conclusions, I wish you all a prosperous summer and see you again in the autumn!

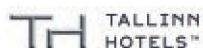
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Chairman of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Estonia

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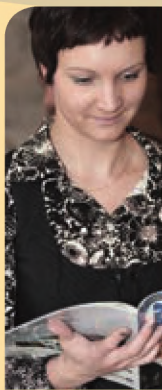
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Please contact SCCE's Ombudsman Kristiina Sikk for further information: kristiina@swedishchamber.ee

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The Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Estonia

The Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Estonia, SCCE, is a non-profit association registered in Estonia. Since its start, the SCCE has grown considerably and today the Chamber unite around 130 member companies and organizations headquartered in Estonia, Sweden, as well as other countries.

SCCE is in many ways a mirror of the intensity in Swedish-Estonian commerce, trade and investments. Sweden is the biggest foreign direct investor in Estonia, and Sweden is also a major export market for Estonia.

A main task of SCCE is to create an environment for networking and exchange of information. The Chamber acts as a meeting place by arranging seminars, business lunches, company visits, meeting business delegations, as well as arranging social events for the members.

Following a SCCE initiative, FICE – Foreign Investors' Council in Estonia was founded in August 2008. FICE is a lobby group acting through contacts with the Estonian Government and Estonia's Governmental bodies. Together, the eight countries represented in FICE account for an impressive 70% share of the foreign direct investments in Estonia.

Special and unique SCCE member benefits include opportunities to further market their businesses in the News from Members section of the Chamber's website, as well as taking advantage of a steady flow of Member Bonuses.

The fee for Basic Membership in the Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Estonia is 449€ consisting of : a) Basic fee 200€, b) Service fee 249€ + VAT.

The fee for Royal Membership is 1.349 € consisting of: a) Basic fee 200€, b) Royal Members' extended service package: 1.149€ + VAT. Membership is only granted to legal entities.

For more information about SCCE, please visit www.swedishchamber.ee. You are also welcome to take a direct contact with SCCE's Ombudsman Kristiina Sikk: kristiina@swedishchamber.ee , tel: (+372) 501 9813.



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Promoting a Healthy Lifestyle



Katrin Bats
Communication Manager
at RIMI Estonia

- Last year, we celebrated our 20th anniversary on the Baltic market and we could look back at a period where we have become one of the fastest growing retailers in the Baltic countries, said Katrin Bats, Communication Manager at Rimi Estonia, as focus met her for a talk.

- We are fully owned by Rimi Baltic which in its turn is fully owned by the Swedish ICA Gruppen. ICA is one of the Nordic region's main players in grocery retail with 2.085 fully-owned or retailer-owned stores and pharmacies at the end of 2017. In Estonia, we currently have 82 stores,

our share of market has grown to 17% and we employ 200 people in our central administration and another 2.700 persons in our stores, continued Katrin Bats.

- In 2016 we decided to streamline the brand concepts of our stores. Consequently we phased out the previous Säästumarket concept, and today we operate with Rimi Hypermarkets, Rimi Supermarkets, as well as Mini Rimi and Rimi Express stores.

- Health and a healthy lifestyle have become more and more important for Estonians. We have focused on that trend and consider people between 18 and 30 years of age to be a major target group of ours since they very often represent the trendsetters on the market. Our top priorities in this respect include promoting a healthy lifestyle by making it easy for our customers to make sustainable and healthy choices, and to encourage an active lifestyle.

- We are promoting a healthy lifestyle through a number of campaigns. For example, *Healthy Friday* where we offer discounts on fruits and vegetables every Friday. ►►►



"Currently, we have 82 stores in Estonia"

►►► Furthermore we offer *food recommendations* from Rimi's nutrition advisor, we run *anti alcohol campaigns* focusing on young people, and we have frequent campaigns on themes like *Don't waste food* and *Save energy and the environment*.

- Our healthy lifestyle promotions have been appreciated and last year Rimi was recognized with the Estonian Corporate Social Responsibility Award, set up by Enterprise Estonia, the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Estonian Employers' Confederation.



Photo: Rimi

"We are honored to receive this award, as this means that our efforts in the social responsibility field have been recognized," said Vaido Padumäe, Managing Director Rimi Estonia.

- The introduction of our line of private labels has become a success story. For example *I love eco* from our Swedish owner ICA. It is a range of high quality ecological products with excellent taste. *I love eco* has a broad product range and the assortment is constantly refreshed with new products.

- Additional brands from ICA include *ICA Basic*, an assortment line with good quality everyday items to a low price, and *ICA Cook & Eat* and *ICA home*, our widest assortment lines with a wide variety of trustworthy household utensils.

- Rimi's own range of private labels include Selection by Rimi, a line of specially selected food products with exceptional quality and exquisite taste, and Rimi Basic, a complete assortment with basic food products for the everyday life.

Photos: Rimi



"The introduction of private labels has become a success story"



Photo: focus

- Looking at consumer behavior, there are still some differences between Estonians and Swedes, even if these differences have decreased through the years.

- Estonians tend to shop more often than Swedes, mainly because Estonians generally spend more time at the stove cooking basic food. However, sales of semi-finished food have increased in Estonia and it seems to be an ongoing trend.



Photo: focus

"The trick is to mobilize the we-can-do-it spirit"

- The content of a Swedish and an Estonian shopping cart also differs a bit. The Swedish cart contains more big economy packages and more spicy food than the Estonian one. Here, you will instead find more basic food like bread, potatoes, sausages, chicken, pork and vegetables in the shopping cart.

- We put a lot of attention to the people making up Rimi as a consumer driven organization. They need to be open-minded, curious, showing a passion for the tasks and responsibilities ahead, as well as having a talent for coping with the challenges on a market like ours.

- Facilitated in cooperation with SCCE's member the Stockholm School of Economics in Riga, the *Rimi Business School* program is designed for members of management teams and potential successors to senior leadership positions. It is a successful initiative and last year, twenty leaders graduated after having completed the program.

- We have indeed a tight labor market in Estonia, but despite the challenges, we are able to find the people we want. The trick is to mobilize the we-can-do-it spirit, and look for them and train them in the right way, concluded Katrin Bats.

focus

on legalities

Intellectual Property in Business: How to Increase Company Value Through Careful Strategic Planning?

Evelin Simer, Lawyer, Associate, NJORD Law Firm, Tallinn and Liisi Jürgen, Attorney at law, NJORD Law Firm, Tallinn



Today, the foundation and biggest asset of any smart business is intellectual property (IP). Through the protection of intellectual property, a company creates its competitive advantage and ensures its market position, which in turn increases the value of the company. Therefore, IP protection is neces-

sary not only for the proper management of the company's assets, but also for maximizing the benefits from these assets.



When considering different intellectual property protection strategies, it should be noted that IP can be protected by several types of intellectual property rights. The

most appropriate defence strategy must therefore be chosen in accordance with the company's economic and marketing strategy.

IP is the greatest asset of any smart business

During the times of the industrial revolution, a typical company owned land and labour and, through production, benefitted from them. Looking at companies today and with future developments in mind, they no longer own large expanses of land or massive labour forces; instead, a company's fixed assets are its intellectual property. Future companies will gain value from how well they are able to use their intellectual property and benefit from it. Looking at some of the most successful

companies in Estonia, such as the world-renowned Taxify and Skype, it is clear that they are not traditional companies with a large fleet of vehicles, but they create value through IP and their strategy for using it.

How to make your business make money on IP?

It is definitely not easy to manage the entire company's IP and establish a sustainable strategy for the future that would make profits. IP commercialization is a process for improving one's products and services, making them commercially viable and value-generating. The success of this process depends on several internal and external factors, such as business objectives, intellectual property type, economic nature, and intellectual resources used. Additionally, intellectual property may be marketed either by its owner through direct transfer or through development in a business partnership. The choice of the most appropriate tool is often difficult, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises.

Instructions for successful IP agreements

Firstly, we should establish the origin of the IP that we wish to manage by the contract – whether it be internal (e.g., transfer of knowhow between worker and company) or external (e.g., transfer of knowhow between different project partners). When entering into a contract, we first have to determine the exact need for the conclusion of the contract and the wishes of the parties. For example, technology transfer is required to provide a new and improved product or service. In addition, we should consider the desired result of cooperation: (joint) research and development agreements, licensing agreement, (custom-made) production contract, consultancy or brokering services, labour or agency contracts, etc.

Keep your ideas secret

Patents/utility models or designs can only protect

inventions or designs that are not publicly disclosed. Business ideas that do not include inventions or technical solutions cannot be thus protected. Therefore, it is important to keep your ideas secret, so as to maximize the benefits of your own business idea and avoid copying by competitors. One option is to add confidentiality clauses when entering a new business relationship. It is therefore important to verify the conditions under which the parties have entered into an NDA (non-disclosure agreement), as well as how long and under what conditions it is valid. Agreements with similar content and their parts must not be contradictory. NDA contracts are somewhat like handshakes that are signed automatically. In practice, when preparing the main contract, it is sometimes forgotten that the NDA may have an effect on the main contract or vice versa: by concluding the main contract, the NDA ceases to apply and appropriate confidentiality agreements must be set out in the main contract.

The following measures can help businesses keep their trade secrets in the company:

- Make sure that employees, researchers and co-authors have signed confidentiality agreements and occasionally remind them of the importance of fulfilling their obligations
- When disclosing information to the public (e.g., technical publications or communication with potential partners), make sure that disclosure notices do not contain confidential information
- Signing confidentiality agreements with partners and testers; before conception and technical testing and partner negotiations.

These tips for concluding IP agreements are definitely not exhaustive and their main goal is to direct companies' attention towards the importance of concluding IP agreements. Regardless of the company's industry, be it manufacturing or services, it is important to understand that each company is to a greater or lesser extent engaged in the creation, development and sale of its intangible assets; effective contracts and IP strategy may make profits.



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Reaching the Peak of the Growth Cycle



Photo: Wikimedia

Eesti Pank in Tallinn

“The Estonian economy is still going strong, however it is reaching the peak of the growth cycle,” writes Eesti Pank, Estonia’s Central Bank, in a press release and continues: “The economy will grow more slowly in the years ahead, as the strong growth in foreign markets is fading and available production capacity in the economy is becoming exhausted.”

- Having grown strongly until the end of 2017, the euro area economy is now showing the first signs of weakening and the European Central Bank has forecasted slower growth ahead. As exports provide around 80% of Estonia’s GDP, a cooling in the economy of the euro area would also affect the Estonian economy, said Eesti Pank’s Economist Rasmus Kattai at a recent conference in Tallinn.



Photo: Eesti Pank

Rasmus Kattai

- The Estonian economy grew by around 5% last year and this growth was driven by growth in the export-oriented industrial sector as well as by domestic demand. A cooling of growth in the Estonian economy is to be expected as our economy is already running above its average sustainable level, concluded Rasmus Kattai.

The European Commission agrees with Rasmus Kattai and in their 2018 Spring Economic Forecast, the



Photo: Wikimedia

The European Commission in Brussels

Commission writes: “GDP growth in Estonia is set to ease gradually to 3,7% in 2018 and to 2,8% in 2019.”

“Real GDP growth in Estonia hit 4,9% in 2017, on the back of a surge in investment and a recovery in external demand. Although growth was broad based across all areas of activity, the main contribution came from investment, which grew by slightly more than 13% as a result of a number of sizeable one-off projects and

focus on the ECONOMY

increased absorption of EU structural funds,” continues the Commission.

“Labor supply pressures in Estonia are expected to gradually build up, reflecting structural factors such as skills mismatches and an overall decline in the working age population. As in the past, Estonian human capital will remain the key to sustaining competitiveness in the coming years,” concludes the European Commission.

There is a consensus among macro-economists that labor productivity and investments are crucial for a sustainable continued growth of the Estonian economy.

“Last year was successful for Estonian businesses as labor productivity increased more than labor costs for the first time in many years,” wrote Orsolya Soosaar, an Economist at Eesti Pank, in a recent press release.

“The growth of the Estonian number of employees has accelerated in most fields of business activities. However, the share of employed people in Estonia is very high and among the EU countries last year, it was only in Sweden where the employment indicator was higher than in Estonia.”

“Considering the low level of unemployed people, it is likely that the Estonian wage growth will accelerate and profit growth will decelerate when labor demand increases, concluded Orsolya Soosaar.



Photo: Eesti Pank

Ülo Kaasik

- Companies have indeed been making investments in recent years, but not enough, said Ülo Kaasik, Deputy Governor at Eesti Pank, at a spring finance conference in Pärnu.

- The low level of companies’ investments has been compensated for by increases in the number of employees. This cannot continue for long, as 70% of the working aged people in Estonia already are employed. If we want to catch up with the wealthier countries, more investments by the private sector will be needed, concluded Ülo Kaasik.



Photo: Riksbanken

Stefan Ingves

Despite a decrease in the building construction area, the Swedish economy is also still going strong, now to a great extent supported by the industrial sector. At a spring European seminar on economic policy, Riksbanken’s, the Swedish Central Bank’s, Governor Stefan Ingves addressed the contemporary economic times in a presentation headlined *Monetary Policy in a New Environment*.

- Given the crises and recession we have experienced, it is difficult not to describe the future as brighter. But over the last ten years, a transformation of the economic landscape has occurred, throwing down new challenges to both monetary policy and other policy areas, said Stefan Ingves.

- First of all, we must expect low interest rates to last for some considerable time to come, due mainly to global real interest rates being lower than before. This means that policy rates will also be lower [edit: the current Swedish >>>

The Riksbank celebrates its 350th anniversary



Photo and illustration: Riksbanken

In 1668, the Riksdag, Sweden’s parliament, decided to found Riksbens Ständers Bank (the Estates of the Realm Bank), which in 1867 received the name Sveriges Riksbank. The Riksbank is thus the world’s oldest central bank and this year, the Riksbank celebrates its 350th anniversary.

The Riksbank is Sweden’s central bank and its main tasks include ensuring that money retains its value and that payments can be made safely and efficiently. The Riksbank also issues banknotes and coins.

This jubilee year, the Riksbank will put public attention to the important role the bank has played over 350 years. A lot of activities aimed at a broader public will take place, with the aim of disseminating knowledge about the Riksbank’s role in the Swedish economy and the important future issues in the central bank field.

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►►► policy rate is -0,50%], providing central banks with less scope for using interest rate cuts to tackle future recessions.

- One conclusion of this is that complementary monetary policy measures of the type used by many central banks in recent years, such as the purchasing of various assets, direct lending to companies via banks and foreign exchange interventions, may become more common in the future.

- Secondly, households are more heavily indebted than ever before and thus are sensitive to interest rate hikes. It is therefore very difficult to say exactly what impact monetary policy will have on households and their consumption when the interest rate gradually starts to be raised, but the effects will probably be greater than in the 1990's.

- Thirdly, the supply of labor has increased, which is fundamentally a positive development given Sweden's greying population. Both the labor force and employment are on a historically high level and the expansionary monetary policy has contributed to this.

- But there are clear signs that the matching of job-seekers to vacancies is not working well, primarily when it comes to foreign-born persons. However, monetary policy cannot solve structural problems on the labor market. Measures within other policy areas are needed to do this.

- Once normalisation of monetary policy gets under way, it will happen in an environment that is, in many ways, different from the one we have operated in over the last ten years. How we face up to the challenges before us will of course be a deciding factor in how bright the future will be in practice, concluded Stefan Ingves.

Swedish elections to the Riksdag (the Parliament), Counties and Municipalities will take place on Sunday 9 September this autumn. Published in SEB's Economic Insights and headlined *Spring budget – more campaign kick-off than actual policy*, Håkan Frisé and Daniel Bergvall, both Economists at SEB Economic Research in Stockholm, comment on the current Swedish Government's (a coalition between the Social Democrats and the Green Party) spring budget proposal.

"A booming economy and solid central government finances have created room for an expansionary election budget; the "krona-by-krona" principle has been replaced by a splurge mentality," writes Håkan Frisé and Daniel Bergvall.



Photos: SEB
Håkan Frisé and Daniel Bergvall

"These stimulus measures will arrive rather late in the economic cycle, but given the many urgent needs in Swedish society and the Riksbank's leading role in coordinating stabilisation policy, an aggressive fiscal policy is reasonable."

"After eight years of weak minority governments, however, it is becoming increasingly vital to adopt fresh approaches in such areas as labour market, immigrant integration, housing and taxation policies. Yet given the prevailing public opinion situation, it is difficult to see how a strong and decisive government can take over after the September 2018 election."



Photo: regeringen.se
Sweden's current Minister for Finance, Magdalena Andersson, presenting the spring budget proposal

"The election campaign is likely to be dominated by confrontation and tactical positioning, thus providing little guidance on how to manage Sweden's structural challenges," concludes Håkan Frisé and Daniel Bergvall.

Research: Megazine, Tallinn

Insure your company's most valuable asset

According to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Estonian Health Insurance Fund in 2016, 73% of people subject to state health insurance find the quality of medical care good but only 42% are satisfied with the availability of care. The most problematic is the availability of specialised medical care but the follow-up care service also has shortcomings.

There is a new insurance product to alleviate such shortcomings – health insurance for company employees which allows an employee to:

- Quickly see a medical specialist without a referral;
- Use paid private medical services which are subject to compensation;
- Receive other health and rehabilitation services.

Employer health insurance nicely complements the employee motivation package which adds value for employees and is also a so-called bonus for the company due to lower sick day expenses. As of 01.01.2018, the fringe benefit tax exempt limit for health insurance is up to €400 a year.

Various types of compensation that can be chosen from to compile a package suitable for company employees are:

- Outpatient family and specialised medical care;
- Hospitalisation;
- Rehabilitation;
- Dental care;
- Critical illnesses insurance;
- Glasses and contact lenses expenses;
- Prescription medication expenses;
- Prophylactic medical checks;
- Recreational sport expenses.

To reach the best insurance solution you should compare offers from different insurance companies and ask for advice and relevant explanations from an insurance broker.

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The Swedish Golf Tour came to Pärnu Bay Golf Links



Pärnu Bay Golf Links

PRO-AM is an exciting competition form in golf. Each team, or ball as it is called in golf, is typically made up of three amateur players and one professional player. In the PRO-AM Pärnu Bay Golf Links Challenge 2018, the professionals were assigned by the Swedish Golf Federation, and the competition was hosted by SCCE's Royal Member Wendre, one of Europe's largest producers of bedding products.



The PRO-AM players gathering outside Pärnu Bay Golf Links' Club House

For the first time, the Swedish Golf Tour came to Pärnu Bay Golf Links – voted as Estonia's Best Golf Course in 2016 and 2017 by World Golf Awards – for a three-day tournament. Named Pärnu Bay Golf Links Challenge 2018, this tournament is part of the professional Nordic Golf League.

A day prior to this main competition, the tournament was commenced with the one-day PRO-AM Pärnu Bay Golf Links Challenge 2018, a competition **focus** had the opportunity to follow.



Peter Hunt could welcome 21 PRO-AM teams totaling 84 players from Estonia, Sweden, Finland and Russia

Full playing handicap is applied for the amateurs and scratch in playing handicap for the professionals. The two best scores on each hole count and in case there will be equal results for the first place by two or more teams, the winner is the team who's score was lowest at the last 9 holes. If the result will be equal again, the last 6, last 3 and last hole will be counted.

Pärnu Bay Golf Links had put together an attractive golfing package for the PRO-AM competition players and could welcome an impressive 21 teams totaling 84 players from Estonia, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Estonian teams took the first, second and third places, with the Swedish teams Pärnu Bay Golf Links / Swedish Golf Union on a shared eleventh place, followed by Tallink Sweden II on seveneenth, and Tallink Sweden I on eighteenth place.



Multi-levelled greens guarded by sand bunkers and waters offer interesting challenges at Pärnu Bay Golf Links

The Swedish Golf Tour was established in 1984 and the men's tour is included in the Nordic Golf League, where

the top-5 players on the Order of Merit earn a full card to the Challenge Tour the following year. This was the first time the Tour came to Pärnu Bay Golf Links and 120 professionals from the Nordic countries and the Baltics participated to compete for the win and prize fund €40 000 provided by Wendre.

- Pärnu Bay Golf Links have signed a three year collaboration agreement with the Swedish Golf Federation which means that we will see this tournament take place next year again as well as in 2020, said Kaira Kivi, head of marketing at Pärnu Bay Golf Links.

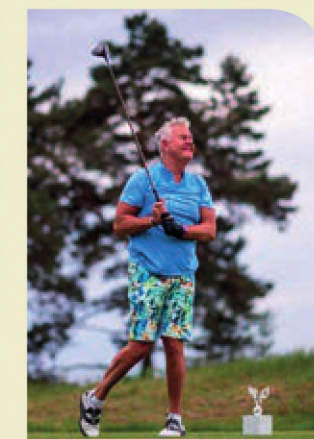


"We will see this tournament take place next year again as well as in 2020," said Kaira Kivi

"Top golf was played at the first round of the Swedish Golf Tour's new competition, the Pärnu Bay Golf Links Challenge. Estonia's first professional competition got a nice premiere with good golf weather and light winds. Pärnu Bay Golf Links is already in good condition even though it is only spring and it is a course where the challenges are determined by the wind," wrote the Swedish Golf Federation after the first tournament day.

- As I could officially open Pärnu Bay Golf Links on 25 September 2015, ten years had passed since the work with the course started, said Peter Hunt, owner and CEO of Trading House Scandinavia, the parent company of a textile group, including Wendre in Pärnu. Additionally, Trading House is also the owner of Pärnu Bay Golf Links and Saare Golf, next to Kuressaare on Saaremaa.

Pärnu Bay Golf Links is a seaside golf course located to Tahkuranna just by Pärnu Bay. This is where the forest meets the sea and Tahkuranna's rich flora and fauna is unique. Rare species of orchids are found here and there are approximately some 200 pairs of ospreys nesting in the area. It is not a coincidence that an osprey is included in the golf course's logo.



Peter Hunt

- For obvious reasons, I am very happy that we now can host the Pärnu Bay Golf Links Challenge as part of the Swedish Golf Tour and the Nordic Golf League, said a very pleased Peter Hunt.



When back pain strikes, know what you're doing and keep physically active

Lower back pain is one of the most common reasons for seeing a doctor. 80 to 90 per cent of people have experienced it at least once in their life. One in three people have recurring pain, and chronic pain is one of the most common factors for work disability. That's why one should speak up about back pain, says Dr. Eve Sooba, a rehabilitation physician at the Clinic of Medical Rehabilitation at the East Tallinn Central Hospital.

Back pain has different causes but the most common type is non-specific lower back pain where the onset of pain isn't linked to a specific anatomical structure but several different mechanisms. As the pain intensifies, it is often accompanied by muscle spasms, and even local inflammation.



Back pain can be unleashed by lifting too much weight, repetitive movements or tense muscles caused by a rigid posture. "Clinical guidelines don't mention wind. But some people say that being exposed to a draught can trigger back pain," says Sooba.

As anatomical structure is not of primary importance when it comes to treating non-specific acute lower back pain, often additional investigations are skipped in first-time patients who don't show signs of another serious illness, such as pain at night, leg paralysis, problems with bladder or bowel functions etc.

"Sometimes very severe pain and incapacitation are caused by problems with the discs of cartilage between vertebrae – it may be a slipped or herniated disc. If a disc is compressing a nerve root so that the pain courses down the leg in the form of sciatica, or you have lost movement in a leg or you have bladder or colon problems, you should see a doctor at once. If you don't have the above problems, a conventional approach will suffice," says Dr. Sooba.



"Inflammatory diseases of the back are seen more rarely – they're seen especially in younger people, more so in men. Doctors consider such a diagnosis if patients have their sleep interrupted by pain in the early morning and the pain goes away once the person starts moving around. The lower back is stiff and there may be pain in the buttocks, reminiscent of sciatica, except the pain doesn't radiate into the toes or heel or cause loss of motor function in the leg," says Dr. Sooba.

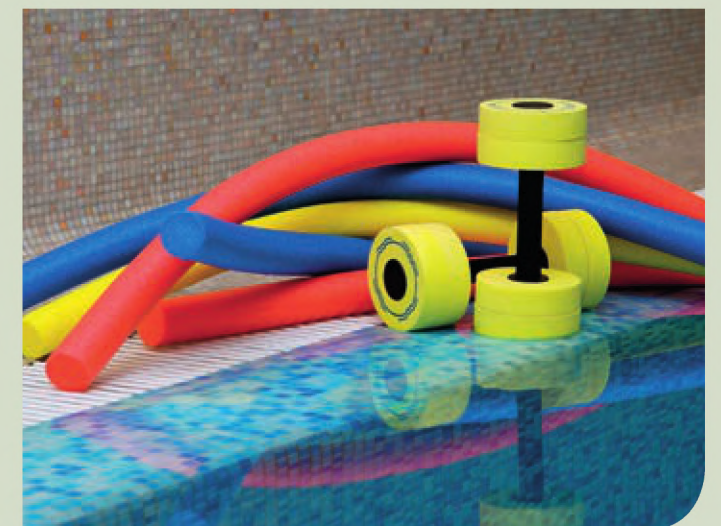
"Back pain can be intense and frightening but one shouldn't fear – you have to know what to do," she says. If the pain is acute, it's not a good idea to stay in bed for long, instead return to activity and work quickly. Pain relievers help. The first treatment for pain is paracetamol and topical gels and creams, but topical treatments may not penetrate deep enough into tissue in the case of stout people with strong musculature.

If the pain is very intense, paracetamol may not be enough and this is not a time to wait, otherwise the pain will become persistent. "I recommend taking pain-relieving medications as much as needed for regaining mobility," says Dr. Sooba. The doctor advises against taking other medications for an extended period, however.

Pain and anti-inflammatory drugs like ibuprofen, diclofenac and dextetoprofen are available in pharmacies and are effective medications, and they can

be combined with paracetamol, but it's important to remember some caveats governing their use.

Sometimes these medications are taken for too long or in the wrong doses. These medications may have side effects that can cause stomach upset, ulcers and kidney damage. If you need to take these medications for more than 3-5 days, you should consult a physician for a recommendation on which medication to take. "In the case of acute and persistent pain, see your general practitioner or nurse," the rehabilitative care doctor recommends. >>>



►►► But still, what do you do with a stiff and painful back to keep life from coming to a standstill?

If the pain is intense, first you should relax your back, favour pain-relieving positions that help the tense muscles relax. Aquatic therapy is recommended, especially in a swimming pool that can be entered by going down the stairs. "You walk on the pool bottom on your toes and heels, take a few easy steps forward and to the side, bring a knee up against your chest, stretch your legs, glide through in the water, let yourself relax, glide or lie on a kickboard," Sooba coaches.

Rehabilitative care and spas offer great opportunities for aquatic therapy for those with back pain. Sooba recommends this method to everyone as a component of therapy.

When the pain starts to go away, rehabilitation and physical therapy are beneficial. General practitioners can refer patients directly to a physical therapist or first to an appointment with a rehabilitative care physician, at which point the patient will be referred to a physical therapist for finding and performing appropriate exercises. "The right exercises are very important, and it's wise to learn them from a physical therapist."

To keep back pain from becoming chronic, the patient should go to physical therapy for at least 3-4 weeks, starting with a light load and gradually increasing it, with a heavier load to be performed as home therapy. "At the outset, the exercises should be continued for at least 1.5 to 2 months 4-5 times a week and from there on, 2-3 times a week in addition to daily aerobic exercise," says Sooba.

Exercises are supported by device-based treatment prescribed by the rehabilitative physician for relieving pain. The TENS device is highly recommended for pain relief because it can be purchased or rented. Other electrical nerve stimulation devices have a similar effect. For example, diadynamics sends electrical impulses into the nervous system so that the body no longer feels the actual pain impulse. There are also other devices such as magnet therapy and lasers,



designed to reduce swelling, relax muscles, improve blood flow and suppress pain. "I myself have also used cupping therapy (massage with suction cups) as a supportive measure for lower back pain," notes Dr. Sooba.

Sooba recommends manual therapy only if the back's condition is precisely known. "Manipulation of soft tissues to relax the muscles can be very beneficial but if the patient has osteoporosis, it can cause a vertebral fracture. Traction and manipulation are also contraindicated in case of an inflammatory disease in the back," says Sooba.

Yet, the doctor says, manual therapy – massage originating in ancient India – helps improve circulation in the tissues and promotes metabolism. Massage also normalises the nervous system and muscle function, which in turn helps rid the patient of muscle tension. Massage is also used for stress relief and to boost and maintain the capacity for work for a longer term. The Clinic of Medical Rehabilitation at the East Tallinn Central Hospital provides classical medical therapeutic massage that focuses on a single problem area. Massage is performed on various parts of the body based on patient request or doctor's orders: shoulder, back, legs or arms. Various types of massage are also available: honey massage, pressure point therapy and cupping therapy. The procedure lasts 30 minutes with a few minutes of relaxation in a supine position afterwards to reinforce the effect of the massage. If you have health problems, we recommend consulting your general practitioner or rehabilitative care physician before choosing massage procedures. Dr Sooba emphasizes that massage isn't good for everyone. Besides back problems, massage is contraindicated for acute skin disease, heart diseases, high blood pressure, bone diseases, cancer, acute immune deficiency, illnesses accompanied by colds or fevers, and varicose veins.

People should have a mindful attitude towards their body and address lower back pain the first time it occurs, which will make recovery easier. Rehabilitative care helps nip the problem in the bud and can also be used to support later medical treatment. "Pay attention to how you stand, sit and lift heavy objects – this way you can prevent the pain from recurring. If you have chronic back pain, seek out the best possible exercises and active training for your body," Dr. Eve Sooba recommends.

You can register for massage and other PT procedures to help rid yourself of back pain at the East Tallinn Central Hospital customer service, telephone 6661900.

Follow the clinic on Facebook (Ida-Tallinna Keskhaigla Taastusravikliinik) for information on available massage times and other news on rehabilitative care.

Text and photos: East Tallinn Central Hospital



Mastering the Grill

On a beautiful, warm and sunny mid-May evening, members of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce in Estonia gathered at Foodstudio in Tallinn for an After Business Hours session dedicated to the art of Mastering the Grill.

focus has taken a further look at some of the tips we got and the tricks we learned.



Firing Up



Pending the amount and quality of the charcoal, calculate with some 20 – 30 minutes preheating time to make sure that the grill reaches cooking temperature.

When firing up there is a smart alternative to the common lighter fluids. It's called a chimney starter – essentially a small chimney you stuff with crumpled newspaper pages in the bottom and

charcoal on the top. Light the newspaper and it will eventually ignite the charcoal. When the charcoal begins to turn grey on top and has begun to ash over, it is ready to dump in the grill.

It's easier to remove debris when the grill is hot, so after preheating, you can use a long-handled wire grill brush on your grill rack to clean off charred debris from prior meals. Scrape again immediately after use.

However, even on a clean grill, lean foods may stick when placed directly on the rack. You can reduce sticking by oiling your hot grill rack with a vegetable oil-soaked paper towel, hold it with tongs and rub it over the rack.



The Right Grill Temperature

When the charcoals are covered with gray ash, the grill should be ready for cooking. However, the right temperature varies from high heat to low heat pending what you are about to cook.

First, a few words about how to gauge the temperature of a grill without a thermometer (also known as the caveman's method); Place your open palm about 13 centimetres above the grill rack, it's high heat if you have to move your hand in 2 seconds, medium if you have to move your hand in 5 seconds and low if you have to move your hand in 10 seconds.

Direct and Indirect Heat Zones

By creating different heat zones on the grill, you can effectively use your entire grilling surface while making different dishes at the same time. The easiest way to create a direct and an indirect heat zone is to move your charcoal to one side, thus taking up about half of the grilling area and forming the direct heat zone.



With direct heat grilling, the food cooks in mere minutes, suitable for filet cuts of meat and sliced vegetables.

Indirect heat is used for larger pieces of meat like roasts, very thick steaks, and whole fish. Furthermore, if the food is cooking too quickly on direct heat, you can easily put it on indirect heat so it will continue to cook without getting burned.

The Grilling

Anything else than high quality ingredients is not an option



Anything else than high quality ingredients is not an option when mastering the grill

when mastering the grill. However, there might be only a minute or two between a moist and tender chop, and a dry, tough shoe leather. Timing is everything. So, check for doneness at the approximate time given in the recipe. And be aware that two seemingly identical cuts of meat will often cook at different times, depending on exact thickness, texture, age, and temperature of the raw meat.

Cut the fatty edge of steaks and chops to prevent curling by slicing through the fat at 5 centimetres intervals, cutting just to the meat.

Season correctly and do not salt far in advance. Salt drains the liquid, which makes the meat dry and boring. Instead, salt just before or after grilling.



If your meat has been marinated it is recommended that you wipe off the marinade from the meat surface before grilling. It's the meat you want to grill, not the marinade. And, if you want to glaze your food, wait until it is almost ready-made since glaze often contains sugar that is easily burned.

Do not turn the food unnecessarily. The food must have a nice grilled surface before turning, otherwise it becomes dry and dull.



Good necessities: Grill tongs...



...Grill Basket and...

When handling meat on the grill, use a good pair of grill tongs instead of sharp and fork-like tools. You don't want to puncture the surface and drain the meat of the delicious juice. And, when handling fish, vegetables and fruits, a grill basket is highly recommended.

If flare-ups occur, taming the flames is important. Keep a squirt bottle of water near the grill to quickly douse any unexpected flare-up.



...an Instant Read Thermometer

For bigger pieces of food, it is important to know the inner temperature to find out when it is ready. An instant read thermometer is a good tool for this; Insert it into the thickest part of the meat, away from the bone, to measure the internal temperature.

As for beef, 55 - 70°C is recommended as the temperature interval between rare and well-done. Pork should be around 70°C and whole fish 56°C. Last but not least; Let the meat rest for a few minutes before serving, so it can suck the meat juices properly. This is especially true if you are grilling beef that may be a little bloody.

Only the Sky is the Limit

In terms of creativity, only the sky is the limit when grilling. And, this goes for making the side dishes as well.

At SCCE's cooking session at Foodstudio, we made a couple of salads based on vegetables in season as well as a couple of woks; one made up of vegetables and one with prawns as the main ingredient.





Only the Sky is the Limit

focus wishes our readers a nice and sunny summer and Bon Appétit!



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Jaan Tõnisson, Potatoes and a Hotel in Stockholm



At the very end of December 1917, the Estonian Council of Elders of the Provincial Assembly confirmed that a declaration of independence was essential as soon as possible. Continued steps towards independence accelerated in January 1918 and included seeking international support for Estonia's upcoming Declaration of Independence 24 February 1918.



The Estonian Foreign Delegation 1918, from left: Ants Piip, Mihkel Martna, Karl Robert Pusta, Jaan Tõnisson, Karl Menning, Eduard Virgo

Given the task of establishing direct contacts abroad with foreign diplomats, present the political situation in Estonia, and return with responses from the contacted countries' governments, an Estonian Foreign Delegation started to take shape.



On 31 January 1918 the Provincial Assembly approved the final composition of the Delegation with Ants Piip, Mihkel Martna, Karl Robert Pusta, Jaan Tõnisson, Karl Menning and Eduard Virgo appointed as delegates.

In addition to Jaan Tõnisson and his fellow delegates in the Estonian Foreign Delegation, Potatoes and a Hotel in Stockholm came to have a part in this quest for international political support.

Diplomacy abroad requires funds covering costs for travel, accommodation and daily expenses, money that Estonia simply didn't have. However, an extraordinary potato selling operation in Finland made it possible for Estonia's six Foreign Delegates to be given 10.000 Russian roubles to cover the initial costs in their quest of seeking international support for an independent Estonia.



An extraordinary potato selling operation in Finland contributed to finance Estonia's Foreign Delegation in their quest of seeking international political support for an independent Estonia

As the Estonian Foreign Delegation took shape, a search for a suitable first outpost of a foreign representation started. World War I was still ongoing, the Russian October Revolution had happened just a couple months earlier and in Finland, the Civil War had just started. Stockholm in neutral Sweden became a logic choice for the location of Estonia's first foreign representation.



Photo: Wikimedia

Jaan Tõnisson, appointed the leader of the Estonian Foreign Delegation, got the task of setting up Estonia's first representation abroad. Since he was staying at Hotel Regina on Drottninggatan in downtown Stockholm and used his hotel room as an office, Hotel Regina became a predecessor of sorts to the Estonian Legation, and later on Embassy, in Stockholm.

← Stockholm in 1962: Hotel Regina at Drottninggatan 42



Hotel Regina also seems to have had an attraction to other foreign representations during these early years of the 20th century. In addition to Jaan Tõnisson, and among several other countries, representatives of Romania and Georgia lived at and worked from the hotel.

And in April 1917, Hotel Regina got a booking request from the Swedish leftist politician Fredrik Ström asking for ten rooms for "a big group on an urgent journey". One of the members in the group was a certain Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov. Later on known as Vladimir Lenin, he was on his way to Moscow from exile in Switzerland to take part in the Russian Revolution.

Today, nothing remains of Hotel Regina. Together with 750 other buildings in the nearby quarters, the hotel was demolished during the early 1960's in connection with the redevelopment of Norrmalm (Norrmalm-sregleringen), a major revision of the Norrmalm and Klara quarters in central Stockholm. Whether the final outcome of this city revision became an aesthetic success or not is still a hot discussion topic among Stockholmers being old enough to remember how it looked like during the days of Hotel Regina.



Jaan Tõnisson

During the autumn of 1917, Jaan Tõnisson was among the first Estonian politicians who started to demand full independence for Estonia. He was arrested by Bolshevik forces on 4 December 1917 for organizing a pro-Provincial Assembly meeting in Tartu and was subsequently forced out of Estonia on 8 December.

Via Finland, he managed to reach Stockholm and Hotel Regina on 26 January 1918, and thus became Estonia's first representative abroad. At the time of Estonia's Declaration of Independence on 24 February 1918, Jaan Tõnisson was still the leader of the Foreign Delegation.

On 18 November 1919, Jaan Tõnisson, now back in Estonia since a couple of days earlier, became the Prime Minister of Estonia. Already the next day, the government decided that Estonia would start peace negotiations with Russia and on 2 February 1920, the Tartu Peace Treaty was signed, ending the Estonian War of Independence.

Later on he was Estonia's Head of State 1927 – 1928 and



Stockholm in 1928: Jaan Tõnisson and King Gustaf V in connection with the King's 70th birthday

in 1933. Not only being a statesman, Jaan Tõnisson was also a journalist and the owner of the Postimees newspaper from 1896 to 1930 and the editor-in-chief of the Postimees from 1896 to 1935.

Jaan Tõnisson was born on 22 December 1868 and grew up during the Estonian national awakening. He was inspired by nationalist ideas already in his childhood and remained an Estonian nationalist fighting to defend and preserve Estonia's independence throughout his life and political career.

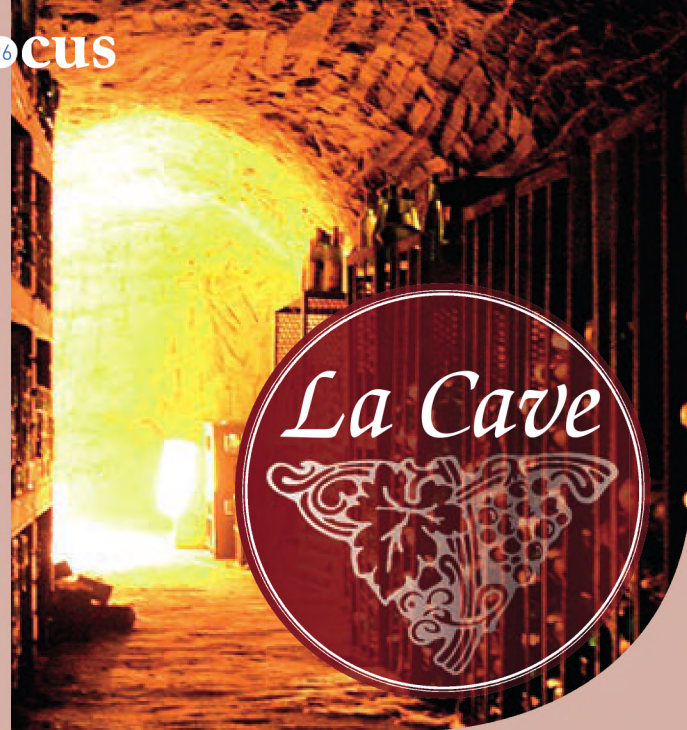
In the autumn of 1940, occupying Soviet authorities arrested Jaan Tõnisson and put him on trial for opposing the Soviet regime. The exact whereabouts of him after the trial and the circumstances of his death remain a mystery. One of the most credible speculations about his death centers on him being shot dead in Tallinn during the first days of July in 1941. His place of burial is unknown.



The monument to Jaan Tõnisson in Tartu

Jaan Tõnisson was made an honorary citizen of Tartu in 1939, and a monument to him was erected close to the University of Tartu in 1999.

Research: Megazine, Tallinn



The Seven Rules of Wine



Anders Hedman and Gustaf Hertsius at one of the Swedish Chamber's Wine Academy sessions

The general path surrounding the drinking of wine has for long been: The preserve of those in the know, who can make friends and influence people by demonstrating their understanding of complicated flavour notes, the need for excessive swirling, and the role of fancy glasses and decanters.... Pretty much myself and my friend Gustaf Hertsius.

However, a recent video by the American Chemical Society explored seven key wine-related rules, and claimed to expose some surprising truths.

Together with researchers from the University of California, the experts came to the conclusion that wine shouldn't always be allowed to breathe, that the traditional pairings with fish and meat are not set in stone, and that a bottle of red can benefit from some time spent in the fridge.

CHECK or UNCHECK – The Seven Rules of Wine

1. A wine's taste is altered by the shape of the glass: CHECK

The shape of a wine glass is an important factor in bringing out the drink's full flavour, a long-standing view upheld by the video. But can the average person really tell?

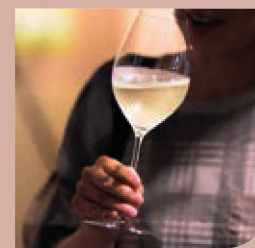


The reason wider glasses are used for reds is because of the increased surface area, which allows more oxygen in, helping to release the aromas. The reaction between the wine and other compounds also adds layers to the drink's aroma.

New York sommelier Mandy Oser said in the video: "The style of glass wear is helping to release the aromas which help to enhance your experience of the wine."

White wine doesn't require so much room, and therefore is usually drunk out of a smaller glass.

2. Swirling and slurping improves flavor: CHECK



Similar to the shape of a wine glass, swirling and slurping allows more oxygen in, which helps to release flavor compounds.

In the video Ms Oser explains: "You're just introducing the liquid to oxygen and what it's doing is releasing those flavor compounds into the air, so you can perceive and experience them."

Slurping is another technique, which can enhance our experience of a wine. When we slurp the liquid, more oxygen is introduced to the wine, and the molecules are directed to the passageway connecting the back of the mouth to the nose. This provides a more rounded flavour.

It may not look or sound appetizing, but it can help to fully experience a wine.

3. Pair red wine with red meat and white wine with fish: UNCHECK

It is generally accepted that dark meats go better with



ings is to look at the type of sauce or garnish you have with the dish."

For example, if a meatier fish such as a halibut is served with a red wine sauce, it would overpower an accompanying white wine. "You'd probably want to choose something like a Pinot Noir", she says.

Wine expert Victoria Moore agrees. "It's only in England as far as I can see that people think there might be a problem about having red wine with fish. It's just a matter of not putting a big, heavy red wine with a delicate-flavored white fish."

4. Leave wine to breathe: IT DEPENDS



The common view is that a bottle of wine, particularly red, should be opened and allowed time to breathe.

This was certainly the case when red wine was filled with sulphur dioxide, which leaves an off smell in wine that evaporates as the wine breathes. However, sulphur dioxide is used more sparingly these days.

Waiters and wine buffs often insist on breathing wine before drinking, and though it can add to the theatrics, it is not always necessary. According to Moore, letting a wine breathe or not all depends on the wine. "If you have an old wine, you don't want to decant that, because it will fall apart, sort of like taking a granny on the back of a motorbike, it gets knackered."

But letting a wine breathe can also be a good thing. "If it's a wine that's very young and can withstand a bit of age, it might become a little more complex.

"It's very hard to make a generalization on when is best to decant and when not to. What I always say is, you be the judge. Open the wine, pour some into the glass, taste it, come back five or ten minutes later. If you think the wine has got better you might want to pour it into a jug for a while."

5. Red wine at room temperature, white wine cold: UNCHECK

The common perception is that white wine should be

consumed ice cold. This can of course mask the imperfections of a cheap bottle, but according to the experts, it is preferable to remove a bottle of white from the fridge around 15 minutes before drinking. At a slightly warmer temperature, the delicate flavors of a white wine are allowed to shine.



Red wine on the other hand doesn't always have to be served warm, as its flavor can become overbearing. The video suggests popping a bottle of red into the fridge 15 minutes before drinking.

"Again, it is down to personal preference", says Moore. "A lot of people really like that really cold feel of the wine in their mouth.

"In the summer I won't drink a red wine that hasn't been in the fridge. If a red wine is too warm it just tastes really soupy. It loses its definition."

6. Expensive wine is better than cheap wine: IT DEPENDS



It seems obvious, and mostly it's true. More expensive wines are made with better quality, healthier grapes, handled more carefully and stored in superior barrels. As with anything it's a matter of personal preference. If you prefer a cheaper wine there's no reason to fork out on a pricier bottle.

7. Flavor notes are actually present in the drink: CHECK

It's a situation we all know well: a wine expert, perhaps at a vineyard or fancy restaurant, is explaining a glass of wine as if it were a food hamper. We nod compliantly when informed of the hints of blackberry, cherry, vanilla or grapefruit while struggling to detect the flavor notes.

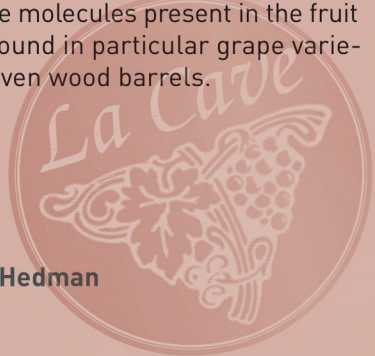


But they are actually there. While grapefruit, for example, is not actually used in the wine-making process, some of the same molecules present in the fruit can be found in particular grape varieties or even wood barrels.



Cheers!

Anders Hedman





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Digital Single Market Progress

Sweden ranks second and Estonia ninth in the EU in terms of progress towards a digital single market according to the latest Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) published by the European Commission.



Andrus Ansip

Estonia retains its position as a leading country in the EU when it comes to digital public services, with highly-skilled, often early adopters of technology according to the report.

However, Estonia's progress as a whole has slowed up in recent years, in part due to poorer broadband and ultra-fast broadband coverage across the country, something partly compensated for by a wide mobile data coverage.

- As a whole, the EU is making progress but not enough yet. In the meantime, other countries and regions around the world are improving faster. This is why we should invest more in the digital society and also complete the digital single market as soon as possible; to boost Europe's digital performance, provide first-class connectivity, online public services and a thriving e-commerce sector, comments Estonia's former Prime Minister Andrus Ansip, since 2014 European Commissioner for the Digital Single Market.

newsflashes

Better, But Not Good Enough

Back in 2007, the number of people killed in traffic accidents in Estonia ended up at 146, putting the country at a not so flattering 24th place on the list of traffic accidents' victims in the 28 EU countries. The corresponding figure for Sweden was 52 deaths, putting the country at 4th place on the list. The EU average was 87.



Things have improved. Last year, and ten years later, 36 people were killed in the Estonian traffic, putting the country at a 6th place on the EU list. Sweden climbed to first place in terms of the least number of people killed in traffic with 25 deaths, and the EU average decreased to 49 deaths. However, the improvement is not good enough.

- In 2010, the EU countries agreed to decrease the number of people killed in traffic with 50% by 2020. I'm afraid that it now seems like we will not reach that goal, comments Violeta Bulc, the European Commissioner for Transport.

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Strong Support

Almost 90% of the Baltic people consider Nordic-Baltic cooperation important and a majority would like to see an even more intense and enlarged cooperation, says a recent survey from the Nordic Council of Ministers.



The interest for the Nordic region is biggest in Estonia, where 91% of those who participated in the survey stated that cooperation with the Nordic region is important or very important. In Lithuania 89% considered the cooperation important or very important and Latvia's corresponding figure was 84%.

It is primarily the geographical proximity and the need for small countries to cooperate that underpin the Baltic interest for the Nordic countries. Economy, education and science as well as tourism are on top of the list of areas where the Baltic countries find it important to cooperate.

- The survey shows a very strong interest in cooperation with the Nordic countries. This is a gratifying result and means that there is a high demand for joint projects and for the work of the Nordic Council of Ministers in the Baltic States, comments Christer Haglund, Head of the Nordic Council of Ministers Office in Estonia.

A New Trend?

For the first time, exports to China from companies in the Stockholm County exceed the export volumes to USA, says a recent report from the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce.

In 2017, export of goods from the Stockholm County to China totaled 16 billion SEK, while the corresponding



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figure to USA was 15 billion SEK. Ten years ago, it was 4 billion to China and 26 billion to USA, notes the report.

- Swedish companies, not least those in the Stockholm County, have navigated according to the new trade landscape and China's very strong growth, comments Andreas Hatzigeorgiou, Chief Economist at the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce.

Whether or not this is a new trend, and whether or not it will have an impact on Estonia's potential role as a transit country for export shipments to China, remain for the time being open issues

Foreign ICT Specialists Needed

The Estonian Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications wants to bring in 2.000 Information and Communications Technology (ICT) specialists via a €4 million program.



The program is part of the Work in Estonia project and aims to support Estonian employers with the additional expenses involved in the recruitment of the foreign ICT specialists they need.

- The support program is open to all employers who need people with ICT skills. However, it is important to note that the foreign recruitment support is an investment on the part of the state which we will earn back to the state treasury from taxes from each recruited specialist within a minimum of two months. Therefore, the gross monthly salary of the recipient of support must be at least €2.000, said Urve Palo, Minister of Entrepreneurship and Information Technology.

Estonia's National Animal

After some months of intense debate and competing with the hedgehog, the wolf was chosen as Estonia's national animal this spring by a jury made up of some 20 nature conservation and cultural organizations.



"The wolf is a symbol of wild and untouched nature and has been ruling our marshes and forests for hundreds, even thousands of years. It is also a universal indicator species as it measures the forest's condition and reflects Estonians' understanding of the entirety of nature. If we understand the wolf's position in the forest, we understand how nature works," commented the jury.

In terms of Estonian national symbols, the wolf now joins the cornflower as the national flower, the barn swallow as the national bird, the grey limestone as the national stone, and the Baltic herring as the national fish.

Increasing

- The Estonia – Sweden route's first-quarter revenue 2018 increased by 6,2% compared to the same period last year. The growth was supported by a 5,7% rise in the number of passengers and a 15,9% increase in transported cargo units, reports Tallink.



And state-owned Port of Tallinn reports a similar trend:

- In the first quarter of 2018, the total freight volumes of our ports increased with 0,3% to 5,01 million tons, while the number of passengers grew 0,2% to 1.92 million.

- The decline in freight volumes has stopped and is even showing a slight growth, which is first and foremost the result of the growth in the rolling stock and solid bulk goods that have been carried through the ports. The increase in the number of passengers served at the ports was mainly from the Tallinn – Stockholm route, comments Port of Tallinn.

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Boosting the Finances

Companies, fully or partly owned by the Estonian State, are doing good and will contribute with €159,3 million in dividends into the State budget in 2018.



A main contributor is Port of Tallinn (AS Tallinna Sadam) with the lottery company AS Eesti Loto, the road maintenance company AS Eesti Teed, the pilotage company AS Eesti Loots and the postal services company AS Eesti Post as other major contributors, according to Estonia's Ministry of Finance.

Last year, the dividends paid by companies in which the State has at least the required interest was €136,2 million.

newsflashes

Up 7,6%

The average Estonian gross monthly income per employee ended up at €1,155 in 2017, up 7,6% year-on-year, according to Statistics Estonia.



The number of persons earning gross income last year increased by approximately 9.000 and ended up at 528.735 persons.

- 52% of the income recipients were women, and their average monthly gross income was €1.019, while the same sum for men was €1.305. As the data does not enable distinguishing between full-time and part-time employees, the complete reasons for the difference in men's and women's monthly gross income do not appear from the data, says Statistics Estonia.

newsflashes

On the Top List

For the first time, Estonia has a place on the Top 20 List of the most popular destinations for Swedes traveling abroad on vacation. Estonia went in on 18th place, ahead of Hungary and Cyprus.

Spain remains the most popular vacation destination for Swedes, followed by Germany and Denmark according to the top list survey made by the Swedish travel magazine Vagabond in cooperation with Sweden's Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the travel insurance company Europeiska.

Last year, Swedes made 11,7 million vacation trips abroad and spent some 180 billion SEK on their holiday journeys.

In total, a bit more than one million foreign tourists

visited Estonia during the first quarter of 2018, more or less the same number as last year. The number of tourists from Finland dropped 8%, but accounted for 37% of the total number of tourists, while the number of visitors from other EU countries increased 6%, according to a Bank of Estonia press release.



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More or less in the middle of Estonia's Centennial Jubilee Year, I am probably not the only one reflecting and thinking on my own memory lane every now and then.

Quite a number of years ago, I asked my Swedish friend if there was anything he didn't like about Estonia and, in that case what. He didn't even had to think and immediately answered; "The traffic, salads and the ma ei tea-/I don't know-attitude!"



The Estonian traffic at that time was indeed a tragically sad chapter in our history – and as long as people get killed in the traffic, it remains a tragic failure. However, things have improved through the years. Several of our main roads have got comprehensive makeovers and speed limit surveillance has increased, both physically by the police and by speed cameras along many roads. Last year, the outcome was 36 people being killed in the Estonian traffic, which can be compared to 146 people being killed in 2007 (see the Newsflash section in this issue of **focus**). Indeed an improvement, but still far from being good enough.



Salads? Well, a nice salad as an appetizer or a side dish is always a good idea. But years ago, and looking at his salad just being served, caused my friend to put up a very sad face and

asking; "Where is the salad?" At that time, it was more of a rule than an exception that salads were mixed with sour cream, thus effectively hiding the vegetables. This has changed dramatically. Today, we have an impres-

sive number of very good restaurants serving delicious gourmet meals, including salads. As far as Tallinn is concerned, the trick to find them is to avoid the tourist traps where the major business idea seems to be to serve as many as possible in as short time as possible.



My friend's first negative experience of the ma ei tea-/I don't know-attitude also goes back to a restaurant visit. He pointed at a white wine on the menu and asked the waitress whether that was a dry wine (this happened way before

SCCE's Wine Academy was launched ;-). "Ma ei tea," said the waitress and disappeared. "Well, she is a waitress and not a sommelier so she obviously went away to find out whether it is dry or not," assumed my friend. She didn't. As she returned, she just asked whether we had made up our mind about the wine. The whole thing ended up with us ordering a Sancerre, a very safe choice in terms of white wines. The ma ei tea-/I don't know-attitude still exist, but in terms of good restaurants, it is almost like a new world. Regardless of the staff being a waitress, waiter or sommelier, their willingness and interest in discussing the choice of wine pairing the food is just fantastic.

Good food and equally good wines have been the theme at two SCCE events this spring.

In mid-April, we gathered for this year's first Wine Academy session in the Top Floor Private Room at Swissôtel's Restaurant Horisont in Tallinn. Welcomed by a glass of Cava, we took on this evening's challenge; Accompanied by sparkling wines only, selected by Prike's Sommelier Hannes Aedla, we enjoyed a Spring Gourmet Dinner, specially composed for us by Horisont's Chef de Cuisine Marko Sömer.



And, on an unusually beautiful and warm mid-May evening, SCCE gathered at Foodstudio in Tallinn for an After Business Hours session dedicated to the art of Mastering the Grill. A report from the event, focusing on



the tips we got and the tricks we learned, is published in this issue of **focus**.

Teamwork and skilled leadership are essential keys to success in every business, and also form the themes in many SCCE events and business seminars.

Towards the end of April, we gathered in Tallinn's Tondiraba Ice Hall to do some curling. As we went from the introductory practice to competition, we divided in four teams with teammates from AJ Tooted, Ericsson, Rödl & Partner, Stoneridge, Embassy of Sweden and Ilyashev & Partners Law Firm. And, just like it is in business, we experienced that teamwork is the key to success in curling!

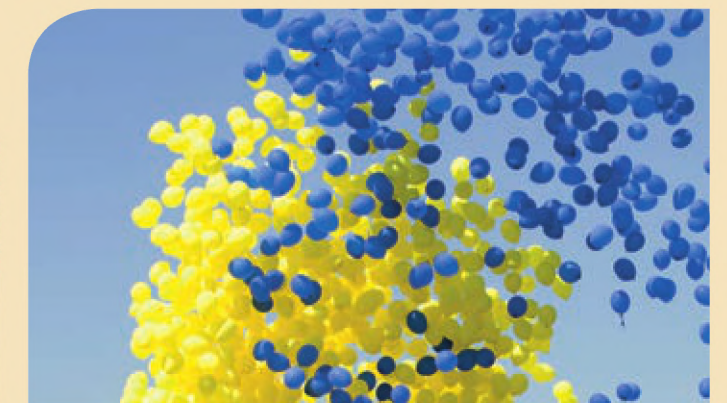


And, this spring's Business Seminar in Tallinn with SSE Riga – the Stockholm School of Economics in Riga, focused on leadership and the fact that some things function better when they are open. "Good leaders keep

an open mind, because minds are like parachutes. They function better when they are open!" said SSE Riga's Peter Zashev in his presentation.

As I write these lines, just a couple of weeks remain until it is time for SCCE's traditional Summer Party.

For the first time, it will coincide with Sweden's National Day 6 June, and this year we will gather at Hotel Telegraaf's Summer Terrace in Tallinn's Old Town. Spiced with celebrating Sweden's National Day, SCCE's Summer Party 2018 will as usual include a Summer Party Buffet, wines and nubbe, all with a touch of Sweden and Estonia, as well as singing, high spirits and cozy togetherness throughout the evening.



I hope you enjoy reading this summer issue of **focus** and as usual, latest news on SCCE events to come and reports on events passed are always found at www.swedishchamber.ee.



Sincerely,
Kristiina Sikk
SCCE Ombudsman

Contributions to **focus** from the members of SCCE, both in terms of editorial content and advertising, are welcomed.

If you haven't already done it, please do put us on the mailing list for press releases, articles, as well as your point-of-view on issues of general interest for the commerce, trade and investments between Estonia and Sweden.

As for advertising opportunities in **focus** and on our website www.swedishchamber.ee, I will be happy to provide information on sizes, prices and technical requirements. Welcome to contact me at: kristiina@swedishchamber.ee or by phone: [+372] 501 9813.

Latest news on SCCE events to come and fresh reports on events passed are always found at www.swedishchamber.ee, and you can reach me for further information on email: kristiina@swedishchamber.ee or by phone: [+372] 501 9813.





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