

The Missive

<http://gb.asterix.com>

A MAJOR EVENT IN BRUSSELS*



THE LAUNCH OF THE 33^{ème} ASTERIX ALBUM WILL TAKE PLACE IN BELGIUM

More discreet than the IOC, more friendly than some G8 who would have omitted to invite hard-headed Britons such as Sir Bob Geldof (a former Boomtown Rat) and Bono (a bard who stopped worrying about his blacksmith a long time ago), we, the citizens of the Gaulish Village, have decided to travel to the northeast of Europe to organise the launch party for the new Asterix opus.

Away from the pressure of the modern centurions who try to enforce political correctness across the planet, our very own chief, Albert Uderzo, believed that, "*Brussels, and Belgium as a whole, would be a fabulous location*" in which to announce the publication of his latest work. Had Julius, the great Julius, not already named this people, located north of Gaul, as the bravest of all the Gaulish peoples?

Indeed, to hold Albert Uderzo's only press conference, scheduled for 22 September at 11:00 am, we needed a truly international arena with the capacity to welcome Druids and other messengers from around the known world. In addition, we had to clearly choose what side we were on, comrade, in this magnificent tectonix movement (I'm not really sure about the spelling...) that is growing in amplitude in the field of comics. Is Brussels not the comic book capital of the world?

Lastly, René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo met and prospered in the fifties, modestly but fruitfully nonetheless, thanks to Belgium and those Belgians working in the industry. Just imagine! Without the Belgians, Asterix and Obelix may never have existed! And that would have been unbearable. We really had to pay tribute to the country.



It is this wealth of reasons that led us to choose Brussels to organise the festivities and to announce the Gaulish Village's good news to the Global Village (the known world, that is): "Asterix 33" will see the light of day on 14 October 2005 in all good stores, well, almost all anyway (indeed, one place has always resisted the might of Asterix: the United States, who

Obelix thinks is a land of gobblers anyway).

In the land of beer, mussels, chips and multiple governments, the Editions Albert René will therefore be reminding everyone of the flavour of roast boar. Book your seat for the banquet!



* (footnote) Bruocsela: a name that stems from both Celtic (bruoc) and Latin (sella) and which, in fact, means the "temple of the marshes". Although I'm not sure Valueaddedtax or Getafix had anything to do with it.

EXHIBITION : «THE MIRROR WORLD OF ASTERIX»

One of the main events of this unprecedented launch will be an exhibition covering a surface area of almost 2,000m². The Asterix exhibition, the largest of its kind in the Christian era, no less, is intended to update the comic book world's usual museographic codes.

Asterix stepped outside the confines of his genre many years ago. And it is perhaps because his authors created him as a sort of anti-hero, short, ugly and irreverent, that he became such a cultural phenomenon as early as the sixties (last century), a symbol of France's heritage on the international scene and an unlikely hero. Asterix is the product of the counter-culture that emerged in the fifties and sixties, and his colossal success, which is unequalled anywhere in the European publishing world, has managed to obscure the main themes that underpin the character's values.

Issues, values and, some might say, a philosophy (one that is humorous but also serious at times), which readers aged 8 to 88, in over 100 languages and dialects from around the world, have identified with for over forty-five years now. I remind you that our very own chief, Albert Uderzo, carries his 78 years lightly and, as he is now excluded from reading Tintin (ages 7 to 77), it was quite natural for Asterix to be given a wider readership! Because everybody, or almost everybody, has read, reads, or will read Asterix at some point. I refer you to Caesar's famous slogan: "veni, vidi, vici". The idea behind this exhibition was to share the essential oils of the Gaulish magic potion thanks to a totally new recipe (in any case, Albert refuses to give me the actual recipe, so, you know how it is).

Is Asterix not first and foremost a reflection of our societies, of ourselves, of our differences, our shortcomings, our deepest aspira-

tions and our reserved sense of humour, behind which a spark of common sense often hides? It is this common sense that has driven the world since the dawn of time and which we would do well to exercise now in order to preserve it and to prevent the sky from falling on our heads one day. Asterix is all this and much more for every one of us, from a child's laughter, to a grown-up's

wink of complicity, the smell of the paper when you first open a book, our *madeïnes de Proust* (a famous cake named after the novelist and signifying a memory trigger), the row of comic books on the bookshelf that we would never part with (unless a hefty pile of sesterces was offered, and even then, it would be hard).

The exhibition, entitled "The Mirror World of Asterix", is intended to trigger all these magical feelings to enchant visitors in the same way as Getafix enchants for a living! The visit will be designed for people with different reading levels, to satisfy children, collectors and fans (those already acquainted with our hero, and who therefore obviously have good taste) from wherever they may come. Asterix's guiding values will be staged in dramatic fashion and will be accompanied by the most beautiful and the most unusual historic objects, books from around the world (Asterix in Urdu or Mandarin, etc), documents on the Gaulish saga never before assembled toge-

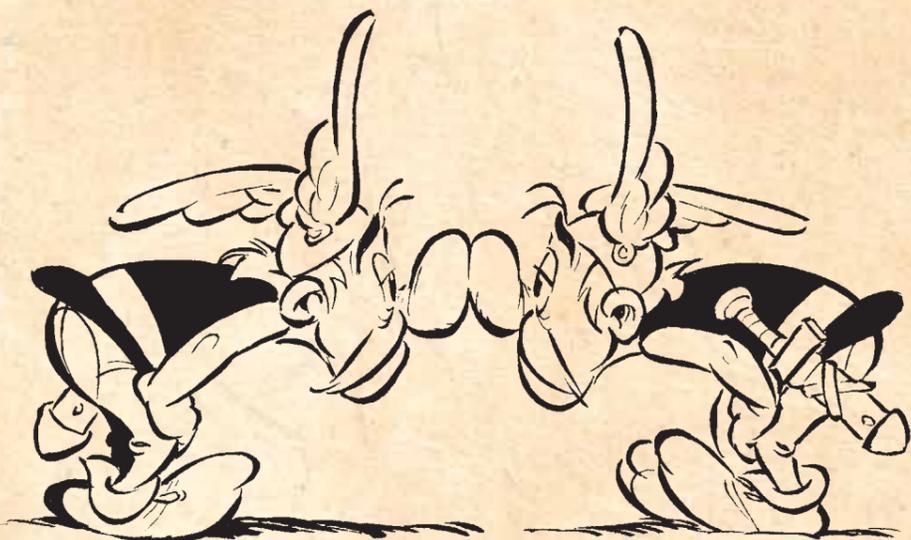
ther in one place, and lastly, the pinnacle of the show: 44 original plates and covers by Albert Uderzo himself, which will be exhibited for the first time.

To reach this druidic Valhalla, visitors will pass through the "Resistance", "Caricature", "Friendship", "Tolerance", "Courage", "Utopia" and "Freedom" sections, and many others, one after the other.

The Tour and Taxis site in Brussels will be hosting this world exclusive exhibition as of 22 September 2005 and, if all goes according to plan, until 15 January 2006. Ask for the programme! Book your tickets! No Sir, you won't be able to see it before the inauguration date of 22 September, and even then you'll need to be "superquix" on that particular day! Pardon me? No, I don't particularly like raw fish... Especially if it isn't fresh... Slap! Actually, I love the sushix they serve in Japanese restaurants, no I do... but that's where I draw the line, yuk! No, Sir, you'll still have to wait until 22 September... are these people crazy or what?



- UDERZO - 2002



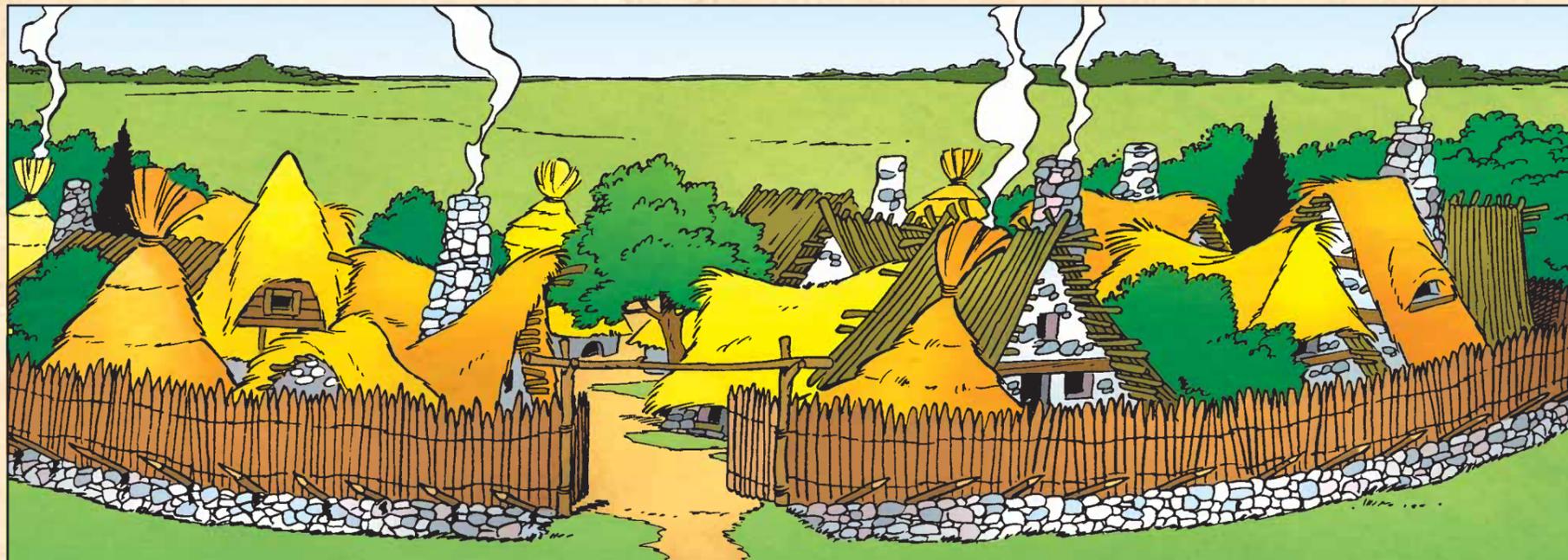
THE GAULISH VILLAGE IN BRUSSELS WILL BE*:

On 23, 24 and 25 September, the Gauls and all the Celts will revert to their ancient ways of life to experience what the Gauls will soon be referring to as the “Three Glorious Gaulish days” (the 3GG): three days of festivities to pay homage to our elegant ancestors, at the heart of the Brussels pentagon, on the *Grand Place*, the

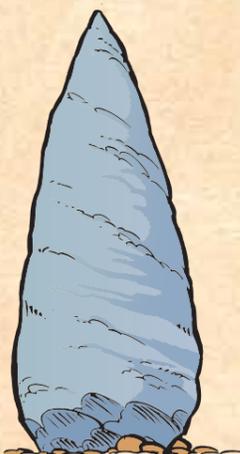
- 1 - THE GAULISH VILLAGE ON THE GRAND PLACE SET UP WILL BE
- 2 - A MENHIR IN HONOUR OF OBELIX THERE WILL BE
- 3 - THE MANNEKENPIS AS OBELIX DRESSED UP WILL BE
- 4 - A FRESCO OF ASTERIX UNVEILED WILL BE
- 5 - ON THE GRAND PLACE GIANT GAULS WILL DANCE
- 6 - FINALLY, THE MAGIC POTION DISHED OUT WILL BE
- 7 - A “GAULISH ROLLER PARADEË ” IN TOWN THERE WILL BE



* Clip from an audio recording of a Jedix, a small Druid with pointed ears



market square. A village enclosed by a fence, craftsmen from 50 B.C., moustachioed warriors, Roman acrobats who'll be getting smacked about all day, mouth-watering stalls offering tastings, and so on. Thus, a universe that we already know and love will be set up in front of the famous façades that surround the *Grand Place*.



The inauguration is planned for the early afternoon of the 23rd, the moment at which the blue stone menhir from the quarries of Belgium will be erected and at which Albert Uderzo will cut its ribbon. You know, like the ribbons Obelix usually ties around his little gifts. In partnership with the city of Brussels, this unique and festive event will be held so that the great Gaulish party can be shared with all the Belgians and their cousins from neighbouring worlds.



Nearby, a little lad will be dressing up as Obelix Junior, to please his favourite hero. In accordance with the great Belgian tradition, Obelix's costume will then be moved to the museum devoted to the Mannekenpiss... sorry, the Mannekenpiss. A Gaulish banquet will then follow, to celebrate and top off this exceptional festival. The burgomaster Thielemans and his deputy, Philippe Decloux obviously want to tinge their city with the atmosphere of the comic book, and they are going to prove it, throughout Brussels, with the presence of Asterix and his frail companion, Obelix!

Another inauguration will also be taking place on this day, that of

the Asterix fresco in the Brussels pentagon. This huge drawing will depict our Gauls, led by Asterix and Obelix, launching an assault on the Romans, to the joy of the children of the school located at 33, rue de la Buanderie.



Destiny had spoken, we really couldn't say no to such an address for the festivities surrounding the 33rd album.

As night falls, Gauls will come from every part of Brussels dressed up in plaits, helmets and breeches for the very first Gaulish

Roller ParadeË in history, on the streets of the comic book capital of the world!

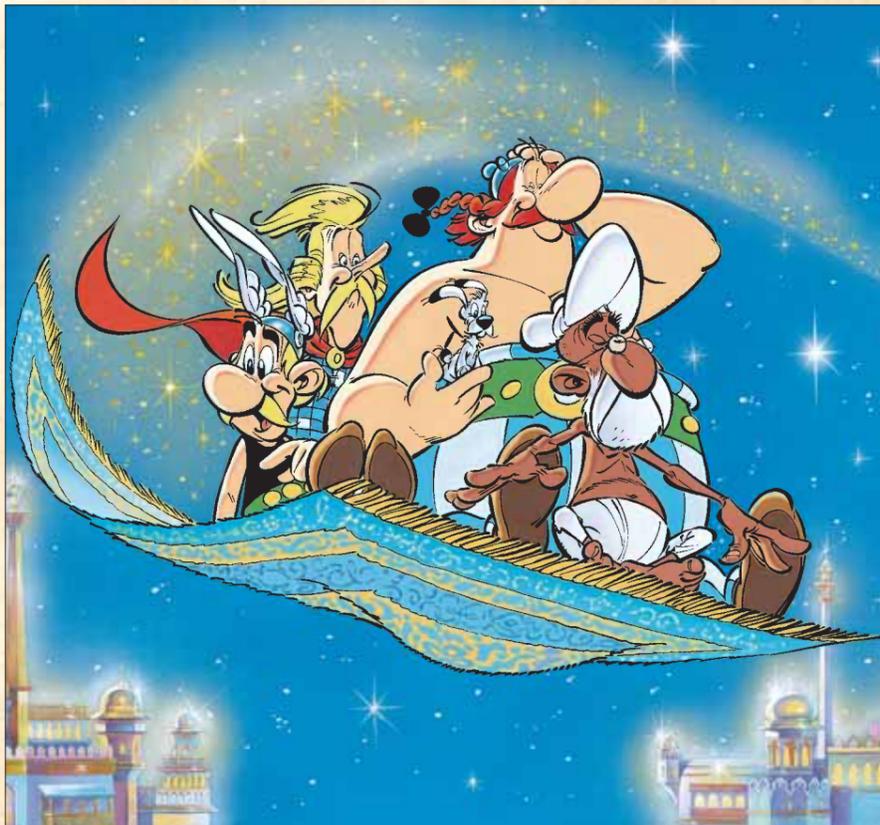
First thing on Saturday morning, giant characters – 3 metres tall in the case of Asterix and 4.5 metres tall in the case of Obelix – will come and dance to Celtic Galician melodies on the Grand Place, and will spend a large part of the day there. Most exciting, though, will be the dishing out of a magic potion (!) in the afternoon, but only to the bravest Gauls. Made according to an ancestral recipe of the Celtic druids on the other side of the Pyrenees, and known as *quemada*, this authentically magical potion is said to have properties that is sure to warm the cockles of the Belgians and their guests.



ASTERIX AND OBELIX PLANES IN EUROPEAN AIRSPACE !

Incredible! Only Getafix could have foreseen it. Not only has the sky not fallen on the heads of our favourite Gauls, but they will now be gliding among the clouds and probably a (Roman) cumulus or two, in the skies of Europe! No, you're not dreaming! It's going to happen, my friend! Thanks to the great enthusiasm of those crazy Celts who run SN Brussels Airlines, the impossible will take place during the Three Glorious Gaulish Days (3GG). Today, the debate revolves around the locations set aside for the drawings of the famous Gauls created by René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo in 1959. To the left of the door, or to the right? Above the windows, or below? Druids with diplomas from the Polytechnic are devoting all their spare time to the project. And all this makes Albert Uderzo chuckle. Flattered but slightly mocking at the same time - our very own chief!

A plane in honour of Asterix and another in honour of Obelix will therefore be gracing our skies as of 25 September 2005, to protect European airspace from Roman invasions. These will be greeted with official receptions in seven of the main European capitals before the end of 2005! Are these Belgians crazy or what? In fact, after an in-depth personal and non-representative study, but a study nevertheless, our neighbours appear to be greedy, but also extremely cunning. An example that is to be followed, reckons Getafix!



But an internal debate is raging at the Editions Albert René, the Village's legal institution! Indeed, our lovely manageress, Sylvie Uderzo, really hates taking the plane. However, each of the trips (of which there will be at least seven) will require our chief or his descendants to lead the ceremonies somewhat. And, while we await these planes, the fish, at least, will continue to fly around the Village, as Albert 1er and Sylvie have no intention of letting its supply of fish run dry! Whatever happens, the Gaulish Village will never forget that it became part of the global village via the capital of Belgium! "The festivities in Brussels could well be one of the greatest moments of our lives", Anticlimax was heard saying to Valueaddedtax, the famous Belgian Druid, during a recent congress devoted to the origins of the magic potion. But is it made from brewer's yeast or cherry liqueur, hiccup!?



AN ASTERIX STAMP AND A HOST OF EXCEPTIONAL BOOKS FROM THE CBBB



The Belgian Postal Service is to produce a series of magnificent Asterix stamps, with which the country's citizens and guests will be able to adorn their envelopes. The Belgian messenger-druids are currently designing a set of stamps in the utmost secrecy. Advance sales will take place at the Belgian Comic Book Centre (CBBB), with a special postmark that will make even the most ardent collectors green with envy. Several million Asterix stamps will be enhancing Belgian envelopes over the year 2005/2006.

Not to be outdone, the CBBB will be making the most of this initiative to publish a range of its exceptional mini books, in which unique treasures and documents are compiled. In total, over 8,000 of these will be produced in several different editions and languages, expanding the already superb collection held in this Comic Book Centre, for which Belgium is envied the world over!



Doubleclix