THIS IS AN INVITATION TO FIND OUT ABOUT TREASURES OF LATVIA AND OUTSTANDING EXPORT BRANDS OF LATVIA
Discover Latvia the way it is – eclectic and nuanced, rich in contrasts. Its land lush with green, rich in berries and flowers, at the same time, its people thorough, knowledgeable and talented; a country with the east, west, north and south in its heart and mind.
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Protector of Hockey’s Little Brother

Blindsave exports its clothing for floorball goalkeepers to 30 countries - to almost all the nations where floorball is played at a more or less serious level, including, to Singapore, Australia, Malaysia and the USA. Andis Blinds, the founder of Blindsave, is particularly proud of the fact that Blindsave equipment is also used by the goalkeeper of the best team in the world - the Swedish national team. After all, Latvia itself is one of the world’s leading floorball nations, because both of its teams – the men’s and women’s - are among the world’s top six teams.

Main export countries:
Czech Republic, Switzerland, Sweden, Germany, Austria
“We have a lot of lakes in Latvia. My favourite is my local lake, Lake Ciecere, which is near my home. By the way, it’s the longest in Latvia and is more reminiscent of a river than a lake, which explains why it’s often used for sport – Latvia’s rowers train here. I know every corner of the lake. When I visit other lakes, I’m fishing blind - I have no idea whether I’ll catch anything. But I’ve plied my own lake from childhood and know what to expect of it.”

Andis Blinds, Blindsave’s owner, with his favourite hobby instrument – a fishing rod – near one of the lakes near Riga.
Latvia is known as the Green Land due to its many forests. In turn, the Latvian region of Latgale is known as the Land of Blue Lakes due to its numerous lakes. Anyone who has not seen the sun rise over a lake, eaten smoked eel from Lake Rāzna or thrashed oneself in a Latgale bathhouse on a lakeshore, has not been to Latvia. Even our capital city of Riga is surrounded by lakes, and half an hour after a tough day at work, you can be on the water on skis or a wakeboard.
Evopipes’ offers a diverse range of pipes for any infrastructure solutions below ground that need to be protected with pipes. The Evopipes factory is one of the most modern in Europe in its sector and is driven by an innovative and entrepreneurial team.

Evopipes’ motto is “Increase Efficiency” – the company continually develops new effective innovations, which make life easier for builders. “Our pipelines create additional added value for our clients, because they can save on building and labour costs,” says Edgars Viļķins, explaining the company’s motto.

Main export countries: Sweden, Lithuania, Estonia, Denmark, Finland
“As patriots of Latvian winter sports, the bobsleigh is the sport we pin our greatest hopes on. Latvia is known around the world for bobsleighing – although perhaps in narrower circles, since bobsleigh is an exclusive pastime. In the markets in which we operate, nobody has had such success in bobsleighing, so when clients visit Latvia, we take them to Sigulda and launch them down the track. Guys definitely get a real thrill out of this.”

Edgars Viļkins, Evopipes Board Chairman and Māris Melderis, Evopipes Export Manager, at one of Europe’s leading bobsleigh, luge and skeleton tracks in Sigulda, Latvia.
Silver in the four-man bobsleigh, silver in the men’s skeleton, bronze in the men’s luge doubles, bronze in the luge relay – four sets of medals at the latest Winter Olympics in Sochi made Latvia the absolute champion among the Baltic States. This is all thanks to the ice track in Sigulda, a picturesque town not far from the Latvian capital of Riga, which has been forging world and Olympic champions from Latvia for the past three decades.
Grindeks produces more than 100 effective and safe forms of medicinal products, including various cardio-vascular, psychotropic, anti-cancer, gastroenterological, painkilling and antipyretic medicines. Behind every product, there are several years or even decades of rigorous intellectual scientific work. “In the area of active pharmaceutical substances, we can offer complex products created through multi-level synthesis” says Kirovs Lipmans, Grindeks Council Chairman.
“As the general sponsor of the Latvian national hockey team, Grindeks is proud of the opportunity to support professional sportsmen who wear Latvia’s name with pride in competitions around the world. Not only the achievements of the Latvian national hockey team, which plays in an elite group, are noteworthy. So are Latvia’s loyal hockey fans who are ever-present and highly visible at all the games played by our national team.”

Krovs Lipmans, AS Grindeks Council Chairman, a passionate patriot of Latvian hockey and the President of the Latvian Hockey Federation
There are countries around the world where ice hockey is viewed as exotic, and there are countries where it is a religion. Latvia falls into the second category. Even though Latvia’s all-time best achievement competing in the world championships is 7th place, among the global hockey elite little Latvia is considered to be one of this sport’s mightiest major nations. To a great extent, this is thanks to Latvia’s hockey fans. No matter which corner of the globe the Latvian team is playing in, our fans, if not present in greater numbers, will invariably be louder than their local counterparts. If you want to truly discover the passions and traditions of seemingly reserved Latvians, you should find the time to visit a hockey game in Latvia – you won’t regret it!
In Porsche seats and on Mercedes-Benz floors. On the stage of the Queen of pop music, Madonna and on the world’s biggest LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) tanker, Mzah - these are just a few of the places where the often outwardly invisible Latvian birch is used – transformed into plywood by Latvijas Finieris. Latvijas Finieris manufactures plywood from birch timber and exports its products to more than 60 countries around the world. Latvijas Finieris has become one of the biggest and most profitable companies in Latvia, clearly underlining Latvia’s status as Europe’s richest country for forestry.

Main export countries:
United Kingdom, Germany, France, Finland, Turkey
The forest is at its most colourful in autumn, and in Latvia, the most colourful autumn is in Sigulda. Alongside manicured tourist trails, visitors can still find slopes where the forest remains as it was a thousand years ago – with fallen trees, pieces of rotten wood and a carpet of fallen leaves. It’s a wonderful place to go for a walk or take a bike ride and enjoy the beauty of nature’s transformations.

Valdis Kulpe, AS Latvijas Finieris Sales Director, clearly demonstrates how monumental and beautiful autumn in Latvia can be.
Every year in August, Latvia’s Catholics embark on a pilgrimage to the beautiful basilica of Aglona for the celebration of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven. A couple of months later, in October, believers from all of Latvia’s confessions (as well as those who don’t believe at all) complete a pilgrimage to Latvia’s autumnal “basilica” - Sigulda. For the Latvian population, this annual obsession with strolling through autumnal leaves in Sigulda is almost as holy a tradition as Christmas or the summer solstice of Jāņi. Just 50 km from the capital, the vicinity of Sigulda and the ancient Gauja river valley are also breathtaking sights for visitors to Latvia. The Guardian newspaper recently ranked this place first among the world’s Top 10 autumn destinations.
PET Baltija has become the biggest PET bottle recycler in the region, and its goal is to become the industry leader throughout Northern Europe. PET Baltija’s success story is rooted in continual innovations and a healthy ambition to be the leader in this industry. “Finding value in everything is the key to success,” says Māris Simanovičs, Chairman of the Board “What’s waste for others is a raw material for us.”

One Man’s Waste is Another Man’s Business

Main export countries: Denmark, Lithuania, Finland, Romania, Poland
“Latvians have a lot of folksongs; it is said that there is one for each member of the population, i.e. about one and a half million. But then one mad Latvian, Krišjānis Barons, recognizing the value in every song, collected them all and put them into one cabinet. In a way, this resonates with our idea of finding value in everything.”

Māris Simanovičs, Eco Baltia Group Board Chairman, at the Krišjānis Barons’ Museum, next to one of the largest Latvian national treasures – the so-called Cabinet of Dainas (or folksongs).
Latvian folksongs (which we call Dainas) are a rarity by global standards. It’s rare for any other country of such small size to have such a huge and idiosyncratic folklore heritage. Dainas are special four-line poems and in days gone by Latvians composed them about everything: from nature and religion to domestic life and sex. During the 19th century, Dainas were collated, classified and written down on tiny sheets by folklore expert Krišjānis Barons, who placed the sheets in a special cabinet with hundreds of sections created for this purpose. Today, the Latvian Cabinet of Dainas has been registered on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register. Moreover, it is ingrained in the heart of every Latvian.
Cans to Meet NATO’s Standards

Two of Valpro’s main products are absolute opposites – fire extinguishers and petrol cans which are also known worldwide as NATO cans. Valpro exports its products to 30 countries, from where they are distributed in countless directions. Aivars Flemings, the Chairman of the Board, doesn’t hesitate to declare: “We are among the biggest manufacturers of metal cans in the world, but as far as quality goes, we are the best!”

Main export countries: Germany, United Kingdom, Italy, Australia, USA
“We are a Valmiera company, and Valmiera has more than just a BMX track hall of fame. Valmiera IS the BMX track hall of fame for Latvia. We are proud that many excellent BMX riders, who are famous not only in Latvia or Europe, but throughout the world, are from Valmiera.”

Aivars Flemings, Valpro Chairman of the Board. The famous BMX track in the company’s home town, Valmiera.
BMX was included as an Olympic sport for the first time in 2008 in Beijing. When Olympic gold was won by the World Champion that year Latvian Māris Štrombergs, sceptics from the big countries were allowed to think that it was some kind of coincidence. When four years later at the London Olympics, the by now two-time World Champion Štrombergs won gold again, there was no longer any doubt – the biggest nation of all in BMX is Latvia.
Pasta from the Baltic Granary

One of the seeds of Dobeles dzirnavnieks’ success can be found in its geographical location. “As we say – we’re located in the middle of a cereal field. A high-quality raw material in the form of the best Latvian grain is available right next to us,” explains AS Dobeles dzirnavnieks’ Board Chairman Kristaps Amsils.

Main export countries:
Estonia, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Thailand, Ireland
“The Latvian people’s peaceful, non-violent and intelligent resistance to the Soviet regime in the early 1990s should be written into the history of Latvia, the Baltics and the whole world in capital letters. This was a time when people didn’t think about their private problems, various plights or disagreements. At that point in time, everyone was united and the most important thing of all was idea of re-establishing their independent country.”

Kristaps Amsils, AS Dobeles dzirnavnieks Board Chairman, in the Riga Dom square, which over 20 years ago was central to the people’s non-violent barricade movement.
The comparatively peaceful liberation of the Baltic States – Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia – from Soviet occupation in the late 20th century is a genuine geopolitical miracle. In turn, in the context of global history, the Baltic Way campaign in August 1989 remains an unrivalled example of peaceful resistance.

Two million people (25% of the population of all three countries!) held hands and formed an unbroken 600 km chain, demanding freedom from their Soviet occupiers. Two years later, the USSR collapsed in answer to their prayers.
Laima is one of Latvia’s oldest brands with roots dating back almost a century and a half. Laima’s recipe for success involves three main ingredients – tradition, uniqueness and a focus on achieving its goals. Production of Laima chocolate dates back to 1870; moreover, right from the outset it operated with a full production cycle, and this unique production process is still followed today.

“We’re one of the rare producers who process the cocoa bean into the ready product,” explains Laima’s Export Sales Director Ieva Johnsson. “We know what’s inside our chocolate from A to Z.”

Main export countries:
Russia, Germany, Israel, USA, China
“The farmyard, morning dew, fresh milk and warm rye bread. This is where Latvia begins and this is where love is born to live for an age. With its genuineness and truth. This is our treasure. From the farmyard – real milk; from Laima – real chocolate.”

Ieva Johnsson, Laima Export Sales Director, at the Latvian Ethnographic Open Air Museum in Riga, which even in the metropolis can still conjure up an authentic sense of the Latvian rural landscape.
Latvians are farmers. Even though nowadays, the vast majority of the Latvian population lives in cities (and one third in the capital city of Riga), almost every one of us has a place in the countryside where we can find sanctuary from the hustle and bustle of the city during hot summer or snowy winter weekends. For some, this is property they own, for others it belongs to their grandparents, parents or maybe even godparents. For people from urbanised Europe, the Latvian countryside is a unique and joyful experience – almost a half an hour drive from the capital, authentic rural farms and landscapes remain just as they were hundreds of years ago.
Even though *Latvijas balzams* was founded in 1900, the history of several of its products dates back even further, right back to the 17th and 18th centuries and beyond. As an example, the company’s Commercial Director Valters Kaže mentions the unique beverage *Riga Black Balsam*, which officially dates back to 1752 “We have the honour of working with one of the oldest brands in the global alcohol industry”.

Main export countries:
USA, United Kingdom, Canada, Russia, Norway
“Can you imagine that somewhere in the middle of Europe there is an equal abundance of untouched nature which has been preserved in its original form? The hunting rifle is not the main focus. You can exchange it to a photo camera. This becomes an enjoyable process, a wonderful switch to a completely different world, which also provides a tremendous dose of aesthetics and revelation.”

Valters Kaže, Latvijas Balzams Commercial Director, in one of Latvia’s many wild deer parks.
Latvia’s unique unblemished nature and almost half of its territory, covered with forests, is a source of consummate pleasure not only for those who enjoy nature trails and fresh air, as well as berry and mushroom-pickers, but also for hunters. Latvia’s forests are full of wild animals, and there are also hundreds of hunting farms, which offer high-quality service in the so-called realm of hunting tourism. Hours of hunting with dogs in dense forests and the satisfaction of catching game successfully, followed by cold vodka sipped in the company of one’s fellow hunters on the edge of the forest, culminating with a hot countryside sauna – this is the essence of hunting in Latvia.
Not only does Pure Chocolate produce high quality chocolate truffles – it offers its clients previously unheard of taste sensations in countless combinations. Every truffle has three flavours: a natural filling that Pure Chocolate makes themselves, real Belgian chocolate – the best in the world and the decoration – natural fruit and berry pieces.

Main export countries:
China, Russia, Estonia, Romania, Saudi Arabia
“Brainstorm is Latvia’s most popular group performing at a European level. You won’t regret attending their concert because the group gives it everything they have. In Europe they sing in English, in Russia – in Russian, but to hear them singing in Latvian, in Latvia, is a very satisfying, warm feeling. This is Latvian quality.”

Pēteris Žimants, Pure Chocolate Managing Director In the Brainstorm rehearsal studio with the group’s soloist Renārs Kaupers.
These guys are pushing 40, but they have already played together for more than 25 years, released more than 20 albums, still attract more than 40,000 people to their concerts and perform for every possible taste and age group – from an emotional granddaughter to her schlager music loving grandfather. In Latvia this is not just a pop group, it’s a social phenomenon.
A Juicy Business, Grown in a Marsh

In order to become one of Latvia’s rising export stars, they had to wade through marshes for almost a decade – both in the metaphorical and most literal sense – because Very Berry grows its main product, large cranberries, in one of Latvia’s marshes, in the very north of the country. International clients are surprised by the uniqueness of Very Berry, which stems from the fact that its products are 100% natural.

Main export countries:
Poland, Estonia, Germany, England, Russia
“Latvians do two things with mushrooms – they pick and eat them – and both are equally important. The process of picking mushrooms helps me to completely relax. Whereas others visit psychotherapists, I go to the forest. You walk and completely forget everything – work, home, absolutely everything. You’re all alone in the forest, picking your mushrooms. In turn, mushroom eating... Well, for example, eating porcini mushroom soup made from porcini mushrooms you’ve picked yourself would constitute a high class of delicacy anywhere in the world. But for Latvians, it’s a classic; the standard.”

Ilze Sauškina, Very Berry Managing Director, is a passionate mushroom picker and wants to introduce visitors to Latvia who’ve never picked mushrooms before to this ancient but still popular pastime.
Elsewhere in Western Europe, environmental activists are fighting for society’s right to reclaim the unblemished environment with wild flora and fauna. In Latvia, this is still taken for granted. Half an hour from the capital city, you can pick mushrooms in an ancient forest, then return home and pickle them in jars for winter, smarten yourself up and in the evening go to the opera.
Latvia’s Export Circulation

Direct flight connections with 50 final destinations make airBaltic a leading channel for Latvia’s export circulation. A couple of years ago, airBaltic was listed in the top 10 of The World’s Most Innovative Airlines in a report compiled by a prestigious agency that tracks airline trends. airBaltic has no intention of putting a stop to its innovations: “Now, we’re going to be the first in Europe to offer green flights with turbo propeller planes,” says Jānis Vanags, airBaltic Vice-President, Corporate Communications.

Main export countries:
Finland, Russia, Germany, Norway, Lithuania, Estonia
“It is just 150 kilometres across the Baltic Sea from Latvia to Gotland, and 300 to the rest of Sweden. However, even in Sweden, many people don’t know that the whole coast of Latvia is one long, beautiful, white sandy beach. Moreover, Latvia is one of the rare places in the world where you can ski on the beach in winter. Just think how unique and unbelievable this is – skiing on the beach! Ordinarily, you would only associate the beach with sunbathing in summer. Each of Latvia’s four seasons can be enjoyed to the fullest, so our beaches are never dark or melancholic.”

Jānis Vanags, airBaltic Vice-President, Corporate Communications, on the coast of the Baltic Sea in late autumn.
Latvia’s Baltic Sea coastline is 500 km long. And our exclusive and continuous sandy beaches are equally long – 500 km. Moreover, the sand on Latvia’s shores is really fine and white. And to top it off – there are no paid or private beaches in Latvia. All 500 km of white sand are at your disposal!
DEAC is the founder of Latvia’s data centre sector and its export flagship company. Over 5 years, DEAC has successfully established itself in Russia and CIS countries serving customers who value the security and service quality offered by DEAC. Now DEAC is continuing to work on conquering new export markets, moving in the direction of Western Europe and the USA. DEAC’s speed will be its most attractive attribute when actively entering European markets, says Andris Egliitis, Chairman of the Board.

Main export countries:
Russia, Ukraine, USA, United Kingdom, Germany
“Riga’s geographical location has historically facilitated its renown and growth. The city is like a bridge between the East and West. It is at the crossroads of culture, economics, logistics and technology. Today, visitors to the capital city of this relatively small country can enjoy one of fastest Internet connections in the world, which confirms the high development potential of the IT sector and the ability to provide quality services at an international level. Riga is the business centre of the Baltics; the city is characterised by proactive movement, and therefore we are proud that we can not only utilise these advantages for our own growth, but also that of Riga.”

Andris Gailītis, DEAC Board Chairman, speaking proudly of the potential of his capital city Riga.
Latvia’s capital city Riga is the biggest city in the Baltic States. It is home to one tenth of the region’s population, and twice as many people as the capital cities of the neighbouring countries of Estonia and Lithuania. Riga’s development and dominance have historically been determined by economic activity in a favourable location – right in the centre of the Baltic region and next to the sea. Therefore, it’s logical that nowadays many global corporations want to open their Baltic representative offices in Riga. In turn, economic growth has always gone hand in hand with the city’s aesthetic development. Thanks to its wonderful ancient architecture and rich culture, Riga is also the most often visited tourism destination in the Baltics.
Hi-Tech from the North

HansaMatrix has become one of the most modern producers of electronic systems in the Nordic Countries. HansaMatrix has a wide network of clients – ranging from the industrial sector through data transmission networks and information communications technology companies.

Main export countries: Sweden, Finland, Norway, Great Britain
“In terms of its political development, Latvia is part of Eastern Europe. Yes, we mainly work for the Western European market, but the basic manufacturing mass is in the East. Latvia has positioned itself in the middle, declaring that it can create quality added value. Know-how versus incompetence – this is one of the crossroads resulting from our country’s geographical position. A second is the attitude towards work and work culture. A Latvian is a ploughman, not a cowboy. Mentally, this gives us an affinity with the tough nations of Northern Europe.”

Imārs Osmanis, HansaMatrix’s Chairman of the Board, at the Riga airport which, with its rapid growth, demonstrates Latvia’s geopolitical importance within the Baltic Sea region.
Latvia’s geographical position is simultaneously a curse and a blessing. Long ago, the Russian Tsar Peter the Great carved a bloody “window to Europe” here. A couple of centuries later, German Nazis tried to execute the deadly operation “Drang nach Osten” (“Thrust towards the East”) through Latvia. In the relative calm of the present day, Latvia’s strategic dislocation ensures the country’s growth as the centre of the Baltic region – with the most central offices for international companies and rapidly growing infrastructure.
A railway is not just endless kilometres of rails and rows of freight cars. It represents tradition, quality and fantastic work. In Latvia, the railway employs 12,000 staff who ensure first-class service and handle tens of millions of tonnes of freight a year. The State Joint Stock Company Latvijas dzelzceļš is a mighty machine. “Our product is an exporting service,” explains the Director of Latvijas dzelzceļš, outlining the company’s main field of operations – freight transportation from East to West. About 90% of its freight comes from Russia and Belarus.

Main export countries:
Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Estonia
“Song festivals in Latvia are personified by one big, multivocal and perfectly conducted choir. It’s easy for tens of thousands of people to come together and start belting out. However, to get all of these voices to sound harmonious and musically complex is a unique feat. You can see a singing ‘wall’ of almost 20,000 people in only two places in the world – Latvia and Estonia. Singing inspires a feeling of togetherness. Song festivals have a quality that meshes with our core values.”

Uģis Magonis, VAS Latvijas dzelzceļš Board Chairman and President, visiting one of Latvia’s holy shrines – the Song Festival Grand Stage, which is fascinating even when empty.
The Latvia Song and Dance Festivals are so unique and unprecedented in global terms that it’s hard to do them justice when describing them to people who haven’t experienced them. Can you imagine 20,000 women and men standing together on one grand stage and singing extremely complex musical scores? Or 10,000 dancers dancing perfectly choreographed folkloric patterns? The effect is scintillating and exhilarates not only Latvians, but any citizen of the world who happens to experience it.
If all of the 26 million books produced by Livonia Print in 2013 were gathered in one place, the resulting mountain would occupy one sixth of the world’s biggest library, the US Library of Congress, and would exceed the collection of the Latvian National Library six times over. Over the course of 8 years, Livonia Print has become a leader in its field in Northern Europe employing over 300 people with sales offices across the Nordic markets. Livonia Print only produces books. “We have chosen the most complicated product to print,” admits Janīna Blūma, the Livonia Print Managing Director.

Five main export countries: Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Finland
“I visit Latvia’s castles and mansions with my grandchildren and they are really interesting. The castles constitute an opportunity for Latvia’s youngest generation to reflect on their ancestors and history. Moreover, in recent decades high-quality restoration of art in castles and mansions has been undertaken. For example, Rumene Mansion, Ventspils Castle (an authentic Livonian period castle) and Rundale Castle – although they differ, both terms of their enormous historical and artistic value and outstanding restoration quality.”

Janīna Blūma, Livonia Print Board Chair, in front of another exemplary monument of Latvia’s history – medieval Turaida Castle, which stands like a fairytale castle on a steep bank in the picturesque Gauja river valley, just 30 minutes’ drive from the capital city, Riga.
Despite its history – numerous wars and the nihilism of the Soviet occupation towards its historical heritage, Latvia is still adorned with hundreds of castles and mansions from diverse epochs. Within a mere 100 km of the capital city are well-preserved medieval stone castles dating to the early 13th century, Livonian fortresses (Livonia was a stately entity governed by the Roman Catholic Church and Teutonic Knights in the territory of contemporary Latvia and Estonia from the 12th-16th centuries), architectural pearls of Tsarist Russia, as well as out-of-town residences, which the local aristocracy built during the modern age – at the end of the 19th and at the start of the 20th century. Unrivalled in scale and splendour is Rundale Castle, designed in the 18th century and based on the best examples from Versailles, by the Russian court architect and architect of the unique St. Petersburg Winter and Peterhof castles, Francesco Bartolomeo Rastrelli.
A Technological Guarantee for the Survival of Small Languages

Tilde’s mission is to create good quality machine translation for smaller languages. Approximately 60 languages are widely used in Europe, of which 24 are official EU languages. They are Europe’s treasure. According to the most optimistic predictions of the future, small languages can be saved from extinction by technology, and it is here that machine translation will be of major significance.

Main export countries: USA, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland, Lithuania
“All over Latvia, there are monuments that have been built to consumer culture – enormous supermarkets that celebrate consumer culture. Therefore, in my opinion, it is great that, despite all the debates, it was possible to gain public support for the idea that there is also a need for temples celebrating the culture of knowledge. The Latvian National Library’s new building or Castle of Light is such a temple. It is a beautiful symbol visible from afar that will be a perennial reminder. It symbolises an uphill battle with oneself; the constant striving for new knowledge.”

Andrejs Vasiljevs, Tilde Board Chairman, at the new Latvian National Library building, which at the time of the publication of this book has already been completed, ensuring that the library has become an integral element of Latvia’s cultural life.
Latvians have an ancient legend about the Castle of Light or knowledge, which it is said will sink if the people are condemned to slavery, and will only rise again if the people regain their freedom. At the same time as Latvia regained its freedom from Soviet occupation, this very idea – in the form of the Castle of Light – was embodied in a design for the new Latvian National Library building, created by world famous US-based Latvian architect Gunārs Birkerts. There is no doubt that the library’s Castle of Light will become as important a symbol for Riga as the Opera House is for Sydney, the Eiffel Tower is for Paris or the Statue of Liberty is for New York.
VSŠ is a manufacturer of technical products – this means that the glass fibre fabrics produced in Valmiera are used as raw material for its customers’ end products. VSŠ clients are all kinds of mechanical engineering companies. You always have to insulate something in the mechanical engineering equipment, providing insulation for thermal radiation, neutralising the aggressive impact of the external environment, etc.

Main export countries: Germany, USA, Italy, Poland, Russia
“Clay is the strength of Latvian soil, which we Latvians know how to transform into both artistic and household items. Every Latvian family has something made from clay, including pitchers, cups, candlesticks and bowls. Clay has a permanence and robustness. And it’s also useful in cooking: a clay bowl retains both heat and cold, depending on which you require. It’s the day-to-day porcelain for Latvians.”

Andris Oskars Brutāns, a/s Valmieras stikla šķiedra President, is proud of his fellow company in the district: a ceramics company on the outskirts of Valmiera, Vaidavas keramika.
The Chinese can boast that they invented porcelain, a wonderful discovery which is now known throughout the world. In turn, Latvians, even if they cannot refer to themselves as the innovators of clay ceramics, can justifiably be proud of the fact that Latvia is one of the rare countries in Europe where clay is still as revered as it was 1,000 years ago. Latvia has very strong ceramics traditions in “high art”, in the form of its folk crafts manifested through the production of artistic and household items. Thousands of tourists from all over the world leave Latvia with carefully packaged, fantastically beautiful candlesticks or cups from the Latgale region. In turn, at least once a year – at Christmas – it’s a matter of honour and a cherished tradition for every Latvian to eat grey peas with bacon from a clay bowl.
Brain Games has not only shaped board game culture in Latvia, but it has also become a serious player in the global board game business. Nowadays, dice and moving backwards and forwards across a board no longer cuts it. “To stand out internationally, you have to be as original as possible; you must have an original idea. With every game, we are reinforcing our reputation for quality and originality” says Egils Grasmanis, Brain Games Managing Director.

Main export countries:
Estonia, Lithuania, France, Russia, Poland
“Riga’s Central Market is definitely one of the must-see attractions for tourists. It has assorted cultural layers, interesting people, unique architecture... Markets in many places around the world are attractive end destinations for tourists and our capital city’s biggest market is definitely one of the most noteworthy in Europe.”

Egils Grasmanis, Brain Games Managing Director, in one of Europe’s largest markets, Riga’s Central Market.
The Latvian capital city’s biggest market – Central Market – is a wonderful example of how buildings can change with the times. Originally, these huge edifices served as Zeppelin hangars until the 1920s when Riga’s powers-that-be had the wonderful idea of rebuilding them as market pavilions, thus creating what was then the biggest and most modern market in Europe. Moreover, each of these hangars was adapted to its own group of products – here there are meat, fish, dairy, vegetable and gastronomy pavilions. Riga’s Central Market is one of the most stylish shopping venues in Riga; a visit to it is an absolute must!
Furniture born from the nature of a child and the daring of parents

Architect Aija Priede-Sietiņa and her husband, designer Daneks Sietiņš, started a children’s furniture brand KUKUU only 4 years ago. Very soon they understood that there is a demand for tasteful interiors for kids not only in Latvia, but also internationally. Today, you can buy KUKUU beds, cupboards and other furniture and accessories in 14 countries and they have been featured in several international design magazines alongside well-known design furniture brands.

Main export countries:
France, Australia, Netherlands, Germany, China
“Latvia is a small country, but in terms of treasures, we’re a rich one. One of the biggest is Riga’s Art Nouveau, which vividly outlines the face of the Latvian capital city. I’m particularly fond of it, because during my architecture studies I lived on Alberta iela, the very quintessence of Riga’s Art Nouveau, where tourists used to arrive in buses every day to view this wonder of our small country. The feelings of that period stay in one’s heart forever.”

Aija Priede-Sietiņa, kukuu Creative Director, together with her husband, designer Daneks Sietiņš, outside the Stockholm School of Economics in Riga building, one of the loveliest of Riga’s Art Nouveau pearls.
Riga is among the European metropolises which have the greatest concentration of Art Nouveau buildings, as well as the greatest variety of Art Nouveau forms, which never cease to surprise even the most casual student of Riga’s architecture. Riga has a total of about 800 Art Nouveau buildings, ranging from examples of Latvian national romanticist architecture right through to almost psychedelically romanticised building façades designed at the start of the 20th century by Riga architect Mikhail Eisenstein, the father of world famous Russian film director Sergei Eisenstein. A century ago, his buildings were decried as the pinnacle of nouveau riche tastelessness, but nowadays they are celebrated as the apex of the architect’s fantasy and the inimitable beauty of the great city of Riga.
Lauma Fabrics can fulfil the visions of lingerie producers in hundreds of different tones, textures and structures. Moreover, the company has a product solution that can now bring manufacturers’ designs to life in one place, with the assistance of one raw material supplier, without the need to travel half way around the world.

Main export countries: Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Estonia
“Every country possesses beauty, and for every people their favourite land is their native land. For me it’s Latvia. I would be bored living in countries further south. Now, for example, in Southern Europe – okay, there are long hot summers, but awful rainy winters. Up North it’s quite the opposite – beautiful winters, but damp and short summers. In contrast, Latvia is located in a place where all four seasons are wonderful and enjoyable.”

Edijs Egļņš, General-Director, Lauma Fabrics, would be ready to present this very corner of a park in Liepāja as the most beautiful in the world not only when it is blossoming in spring, but at other times of the year too.
The Latvian mentality has a special element – an eternal feeling of longing. We yearn for each coming season, but when it comes, we’re soon complaining about it and longing for the next. Latvia’s unique geographical location means that for us all four seasons are equally colourful and memorable. Hot summers. Autumn typified by explosions of colour. Cold and snowy winters. And springs – when everybody walks around as if they’re in love. This is why both the summer resort season and winter sports are equally popular in Latvia, which is one of the smallest countries in Europe. Visiting Latvia is always exciting.
The special nature of candles is celebrated by the Munio Candela company, which tells magical stories with its candles. Each of Munio Candela’s candle collections really does have its own story: the Naturella collection’s story is about nature, while the folklore collection is about Latvian ethnographic symbols and their significance. “We look at candles slightly differently. In addition to light and warmth, they must also confer other qualities,” sums up Elina Čīma, the founder of Munio Candela. “On our shelves, there are no ordinary candles.”
“In Latvia, we have a lot of theatres, but there is one that stands out from the rest – the New Riga Theatre. I’m extremely proud of it. It is a genuine contemporary jewel in the Latvian cultural environment and stands out with its plays and style of communication. It is a true pearl among theatres.”

Elīna Čīma, Munio Candela’s owner and board chair, in the seemingly unprepossessing hall of the New Riga Theatre, which is made special by the theatre’s achievements.
The New Riga Theatre and its director, the most sought after Latvian theatre director in Europe, Alvis Hermanis, are a wonderful testimony to the fact that even the most local “products” can be a global success story. The theatre performs plays in Latvian, but they earn plaudits on countless stages around the world. Unintentionally, the New Riga Theatre’s directors and actors have become Latvia’s loudest emissaries of the modern global concept of glocalization.
Positivus’ Positive Adventure

Positivus has become the major music festival in the Baltic States attracting not only local, but also international visitors. Positivus takes place right on the coast of the Baltic Sea. Both the location and the atmosphere are unique. To genuine music fans, this region with its slightly alternative audience, culture and experience offers a captivating experience. “The key to success is very, very simple – we’re doing something we really enjoy.” All the evidence suggests that with its passion, the Positivus team has also succeeded in captivating the festival’s fans and musicians.

Main export countries: Estonia, Finland, Lithuania, United Kingdom, Russia
“I’ve always been proud of the fact that Latvia’s pine trees look much more upright and colourful. They’re our palms. The pine forest is like a gigantic park, like a fairytale. And, if it also happens to contain mosses and dunes, it almost seems as if it’s an artificially created beauty – it’s so perfect.”

Ģirts Majors, founder of Positivus Music and the Positivus festival, together with his colleagues in the fantastically beautiful Ķemeri marsh surrounded by Latvian forests.
Latvia is the greenest European country – almost half of its territory is covered by forests, and the forest is truly Latvia’s gold in all aspects. For centuries, timber has been one of Latvia’s most important export goods – once upon a time in the form of tall masts for German, Russian and Swedish sailing vessels, and today as high quality building materials and home design objects for virtually the whole of Europe. In turn, for Latvians themselves, the forest provides an inviolable link to nature and inspires pride in their unblemished country.
For Hat Fashion Shamans

Originally the idea of shamanic hats was merely a spontaneous job – a bit crazy and irrational, not to mention contrary to all the laws of business. However, the unique and extraordinary nature of the concept, a surprising mix of expression and practicality and a wild garment that can be worn every day, turned out to be utha’s lucky lottery ticket. Today, the headscarves created by utha can be found all over the world, including at the iconic art and costume festival Burning Man.

Main export countries:
USA, Canada, Australia, Germany, France
“Graves and celebrations – sounds like a mad combination, doesn’t it? For Latvians though, cemetery festivals are one of the most important celebrations of the year. I’m from Alūksne, a small town in the north of Latvia, and there the cemetery festival is even combined with the annual town festival. It’s a genuine three-day event! Not only the small town that I come from, but all of Latvia, becomes an über cemetery festival capital! It’s that serious.”

Irita Tīlane-Pakalnina, utha brand founder, speaking during the celebration of remembrance of the dead or Candle Day, which every year beckons hundreds of visitors to cemeteries throughout Latvia.
Latvian cemeteries are unique. People not only visit them to remember their deceased loved ones, but also... to relax. The dead are laid to rest in grounds that are lined with lots of trees, shrubs, natural knolls and greenery and thus bear more resemblance to a forest than a cemetery. In late autumn, when thousands of candles are lit on the traditional day of remembrance for the dead, cemeteries are transformed into surreal sanctums for dead souls.
Biosan’s goal is to become a global leader in the preparation and analysis of life science samples. Biosan’s equipment can be found in hospitals, food and water laboratories, dairies and wherever samples must be prepared for further analysis. “Continuous product improvement as well as mindfulness of the need to simplify and speed up laboratory procedures is one of the keys to Biosan’s success”, says founder and Managing Director Svetlana Bankovska.
“In our scientific work, we are committed to the pursuit of excellence. That is why we are also able to recognize excellence in other fields. Without a doubt, in Latvia this is our National Opera - a Latvian treasure that gives spiritual delight to people throughout the world.”

Svetlana Bankovska, Biosan’s Managing Director, at the Latvian National Opera.
If you were to measure it statistically, based on an opera star per 1,000 inhabitants – then Latvia, not Italy would be the leader of European opera. Without a doubt, in Latvia this is our national opera - a Latvian treasure that gives spiritual delight to people throughout the world.
Cube Systems is a multi-sector IT company, which focuses all its efforts on perfection in the usability of technology. Working with the biggest brands in the Baltic region, they have introduced new standards for Internet banking, transformed the “virtual face” of Latvia’s biggest mobile communications operator and improved the ticket reservation system for the airline airBaltic. Cube Systems has its own approach on how to connect people’s needs with the capabilities of technology, delivering it in a convenient and pleasant way that people understand.

Main export countries:
Denmark, Finland, Russia
“Riga’s wooden architecture has a discernibly robust and eminently rational quality. Run your hand over the old logs and rafters, and you’ll feel how genuine and rational this building is. In every wooden house, you can feel the energy of its creation and work process.”

Renārs Jansons, Cube Systems Managing Director

On Ķīpsala – an isle in the middle of the River Daugava only five minutes’ walk from Riga’s Old Town, where you can still sense the fragrance of the countryside and the aura of ancient fishermen living by the shore.
Although Riga is a modern European metropolis; thanks to its idiosyncratic historical development, the city centre has managed to retain its unique and rich 18th and 19th-century wooden architectural heritage, which is protected by UNESCO. There really is no other view like it anywhere else in Europe: coexisting in breathtaking harmony in the city centre are new 21st century glass and concrete buildings, impressive Art Nouveau rental buildings from the early 20th century, and one from the 19th century - and two-storey wooden houses formerly inhabited by workers, as well as romantic suburban wooden mansions of an even earlier vintage.
Primekss has invented a way of preventing concrete from cracking. Concrete production is responsible for seven per cent of the total global CO2 emissions. Primekss alternative solution can reduce this amount of emissions by half. Primekss has become a unique company in a global context serving global giants like IKEA and Volvo.

Main export countries: Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Iceland
“The summer solstice, which we call Jāņi, is a very important festival for Latvians. The most important of all. It’s a festival in which Latvians, sitting around bonfires and singing together, seemingly blend in with their forefathers. This process of spending time together in a circle around a bonfire gives rise to a mystical experience, and one can sense this.”

Jānis Ošlejs, Primeks Group Board Chairman, who, being a Jānis himself, enthusiastically enjoys the Latvian summer solstice celebration named after him.
Few peoples around the world celebrate the summer solstice as grandly as the winter solstice of Christmas is celebrated. For even fewer peoples has this tradition transformed from a ritual honouring their ancient habits celebrated by a small community of folklorists into a genuine mass celebration on a national scale. Every year, for two days, from 23-24 June, Latvia’s cities are all almost completely deserted, whereas the countryside is full of bonfires, resonant with song and fragrant with smoke, meat cooked over coals and beer flowing out of barrels. Visitors to Latvia who’ve experienced this only really understand the true nature of Latvia and Latvians the next morning.
SAF Tehnika’s main operating profile is microwave data transmission solutions, whose classical application is in mobile communications. However, this technology is used much more extensively – ranging from secret and top secret realms to state and private data networks, Internet service providers and much more. Excellence in the contemporary wireless communications technology field, a creative approach to technical solutions, a pedantic attitude towards design development, precision in production and logistics are the things that make SAF Tehnika a unique microwave data transmission solutions producer.

Main export countries:
Canada, USA, Brazil, Nigeria, Germany
“Undoubtedly, Latvia has lots of things to be proud of: in culture, business, traditions, in our country’s natural environment... But none of these assets would be worth anything without people to take care of and nurture them. Latvian people are tough, patient and resilient. Perfect evidence of this came during the latest crisis in 2008. Compared with the chaos in Greece and elsewhere in Southern Europe, where strikes, window smashing and debilitating riots prevailed, we endured the crisis with great patience and organisation, which has earned us admiration throughout the world.”

Didzis Liepkalns - Technical Director and SAF Tehnika Board Member – just as there are no obstacles or boundaries to the distribution of SAF Tehnika’s products, there are no limits to the flight of thought of open-minded, educated and creative people.
Globally, there are not many nations as small as Latvia, there are just two million of us, which, despite the merciless windmill of history, have managed to preserve and nurture a blossoming independent country. The Latvian State was founded at the start of the 20th century, but the last century turned out to be our biggest test. During the course of wars and the genocides of occupation, the intellectual and economic potential of Latvians was eroded to its bare bones, but through grit and industriousness, we got back up and built our country anew in 20 years.
UPB has grown from a small firm of architects into an international industrial holding company. In the opinion of UPB’s management; clarity of goals, appreciation of its place, strengths and weaknesses, geographical and segmented diversification of risks, synergy between the holding company’s enterprises, integration into Europe, as well as the belief that, “He who changes survives”, while at the same time remaining loyal to core values, are the main factors behind the company’s successful growth.

Main export countries:
Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Iceland
“The UPB holding company’s art collection, which includes more than one hundred works, is mainly drawn from the brightest epoch in contemporary Latvian art: the 1980s and early 1990s. We’re not classic collectors. This means that we’re not forming our collection according to conscious and precise principles; the emotional component is of great importance in the formation of our collection. Essentially, it’s an extension of our own heart – the way in which we subjectively grasp the world and how we perceive the treasures around us created by our contemporaries. The works in our collection are exhibited in UPB company production premises; they exist alongside our technical-engineering and logistics specialists, thus certifying the ability of good art to fit into the contemporary environment.”

Uldis Plēns, UPB Board Chairman, in the studio of outstanding contemporary Latvian artist and set designer, Ilmārs Blumbertzs.
The fact that the Latvian population is small is no pitfall. Small nations have just as many opportunities as larger ones, but the fulfilment of them demands much more intelligence and belief in our abilities, regardless of whether it’s business, art, architecture or literature. Latvian art has excellent potential. For those newly discovering it, Latvian 19th, 20th and contemporary art will be just as surprising as Latvia itself: deep, nuanced, authentic and infinitely diverse.
The Brain of a Coffee Machine

A modern sales point or vending machine is intelligent enough to let its owner know that it needs to be filled. This procedure is managed by a small box - a telemetry device produced by the Latvian company, Vendon. Telemetry equipment stores data about the operation of vending machines. Moreover, it's even possible to connect online to a vending machine fitted with this device.
“I’ve always associated rye bread with a source of strength. Eat it and you have power and energy. Moreover, rye bread is difficult to spoil. I’ve seen all sorts of white bread – each ‘sponge’ bigger than another, – but it’s harder to make inanimate rye bread. Rye bread is not in the least bit extroverted; the loaf is what it is. It’s like a symbol of truth and the purity of the product.”

Mārtiņš Grandāns, Vendon Chairman of the Board, in one of Latvia’s typical small bakeries in Svēte (tellingly, the name of the small village is reminiscent of the Latvian word “svēts” which means holy).
Latvia is one of the few countries in the world where bread is baked from pure rye flour. Moreover, in Latvia rye bread is even more popular than bread made from other grains. Rye bread has rooted itself so deeply in the Latvian mentality that it can safely be considered one of Latvia’s most iconic symbols. Everybody who visits Latvia should sample rye bread with cottage cheese, garlic or pickled Baltic herring. Otherwise, you will have not tasted Latvia.
Lauma Lingerie can be considered to be the leader of ladies' lingerie fashion in the Baltics. Through their own and franchised retail stores, Lauma Lingerie pleases women from more than fifteen countries around the world.
“Just as the tradition of expansively celebrating name days is a uniquely Latvian phenomenon, so our calendars are unique, because several people’s names are entered on each day – in honour of which, people bearing these names are congratulated on the relevant day. Lauma is a lady’s name, and Laumas celebrate their name day on July 2nd. Therefore, it’s also a celebration for our company.”

Linda Matisone, Lauma Lingerie Board Chair, visiting her neighbourhood florists, where Latvians not only come to buy flowers to celebrate the birthdays of their nearest and dearest, but also on their name days.
Who wouldn’t want to celebrate two birthdays a year! Some Latvian names are particularly fortunate, because historically these name days have become national celebrations. For example, on the summer solstice – the biggest Latvian celebration besides Christmas – the celebrations last for two days in a row on June 23rd and 24th, and on these days, ladies by the name of Līga and men by the name of Jānis are especially feted. Jānis is the most popular male Latvian name; it is the equivalent of John in England, Johann in Germany and Ivan in Russian.
Top quality products and the company’s values, harnessed by its united professional team, have turned Madara Cosmetics into one of the most recognizable and popular cosmetics brands not only in Latvia, but also becoming increasingly popular throughout Northern Europe. In collaboration with Latvian scientists, Madara Cosmetics continues to study many plants that can be found in Latvia and the surrounding region. “We have discovered that these plants are often unexpectedly chemically active and valuable” says Lotte Tisenkopfa-Ilnere, the founder and co-owner of Madara Cosmetics.

Main export countries: Finland, Japan, Denmark, Switzerland
“Birch sap is a local product, which has long been used in Latvia, Estonia, Finland and Northern Russia as a nutritious health drink. It cannot be found elsewhere in Europe, because birch sap simply doesn’t exist there. In winter, a birch needs to withstand freezing temperatures of up to minus 20–30°C, and only then does its sap start to circulate in spring. If a birch grows in a warm climate, then it produces hardly any sap.”

Lotte Tisenkopfa-Ilnere, founder and co-owner, Madara Cosmetics, in a grove of birch trees, which is managed by Sula (renowned for its Libertu brand), one of Latvia’s biggest producers of birch sap and related products.
It is justifiably said that people tend to be toughened by hardship. The diligence, adaptability and rich powers of innovation of Northern peoples when it comes to making the most of less than abundant natural resources are often attributed to their ability to overcome the difficulties caused by the harshness of nature in the region. Canadians have learned to make syrup from maple sap and have turned it into one of Canada’s most popular export products. Latvians have let their imagination run even further and not only drink sap from various trees (mainly the maple and birch) in pure form – fresh or lightly fermented, but also process them to make syrups, lemonades, wines, spirits and even high quality cosmetic products.
The greatest pearl of marketing wisdom is not to reflect the typical woman, but rather to understand how truly different, unusual and unique women are. Parallel to the expansion of its retail network, New Rosme also continues to identify new market niches like swimsuits, sports and the corrective underwear segment.

Main export countries: Russia, Ukraine, Germany, Kazakhstan, Baltic States
“For foreigners who have never been to Jurmala, it’s hard to believe that we have a spa resort. However, once they see it, they are pleasantly surprised, because it has endlessly long beaches, white sand, hot sunny summers, lots of happy people and extensive leisure opportunities. Moreover, this is all available for relatively little money. In Italy, all the beaches charge from eur 20 – 25 a day. In Jurmala, you pay a couple of euros for an entrance pass for access to any place on the beach, which is much more extensive and cleaner.”

Edgars Štelmahers, New Rosme Chairman of the Board, in Jurmala, the biggest spa resort in the Baltics, which even during the cold season is the chosen destination of many local and foreign vacationers.
Spaniards and Italians might smirk about the possibilities of sunbathing in the small Northern country of Latvia, but Swedes, Finns and Russians probably genuinely envy us. Jurmala is the queen among spa resorts in the Baltic region, a city offering breathtaking nature and architecture just 20 minutes’ drive from Latvia’s capital city. Here, one can sunbathe on beaches, where you can still sense how they looked in ancient times when they were fishermen’s villages with clean sand and unblemished pine bluffs. And beyond the bluffs, you’ll find lots entertainment and partying in the resort’s glamorous restaurants and hotels.
Baths for Peace and Relaxation

PAA is genuinely more than just a leader among Baltic manufacturers of plumbing supplies. A successful combination of outstanding design and ergonomics, accompanied by professional sales and service, mean that PAA can justifiably be described as a class act. It’s a player in the highest league of the industry.

Main export countries:
Sweden, Ukraine, Lithuania, France, Russia
“I’m proud of Latvia’s church organs, which are world famous. The organ, it seems, is one of the oldest and definitely one of the biggest musical instruments. I admire contemporary Latvian craftsmen who restore old masterpieces and build new ones throughout Europe with such care and historical knowledge. You don’t have to come from a large country to create something big.”

Pēteris Treicis, PAA Board Chairman and owner, in Riga Cathedral, which boasts one of the most valuable historical organs in the world.
There are hundreds of churches and hundreds of organs in Latvia. You only need to listen to some of the most outstanding examples to appreciate the unique traditions of Latvian organ-building:

Riga Cathedral – one of the world’s most valuable and beautiful organs, for the consecration of which at the end of the 19th century, Franz Liszt himself dedicated a special composition entitled Nun danket alle Got;

Liepaja Holy Trinity Cathedral – home to the world’s biggest historical mechanical organ;

The organ of Ugale – one of the oldest instruments in Europe, dating back to the Baroque era in the 17th century, which has not been rebuilt. It’s the dream of every world famous organist to play it. Moreover, it inspired Latvian organ builders to create an impressive organ-building workshop, which over a 20-year period has already built 30 new instruments throughout Europe – in the Baltics, Scandinavia, France and Italy.
A handbag for a Lady With a Camera

The surprise comes at the point of opening what looks like a typical woman’s handbag, revealing the usual padding and accessory compartments of a camera bag. Pompidoo bags are exported to 27 countries, including for Northern Europe, such exotic markets like the United Arab Emirates, Australia and New Zealand.

The remarkable painter Mark Rothko is known throughout the world, but only few know that he was born in Latvia, in Latvia’s second largest city, Daugavpils.

Main export countries:
USA, Great Britain, Germany, Norway, Australia
“The remarkable painter Mark Rothko is known throughout the world, but only few know that he was born in Latvia, in Latvia’s second largest city, Daugavpils. This is also my ‘private relationship’ with Rothko because I also am from Daugavpils. Looking at Rothko’s paintings I always try to see this symbiosis – the author’s individual courage, operating with bright colours and original forms, unifying them with a kind of global recognition.”

Irina Kuzmina, Pompidoo Owner and Director In the recently opened Mark Rothko Arts Centre in Daugavpils, Latvia.
Mark Rothko, one of the most famous 20th Century painters is primarily associated with America for that is where he has spent the greater part of his life. That’s why The Mark Rothko Arts Centre in Daugavpils will be an even greater surprise for visitors to Latvia, for it is his birthplace. This is one of the few places in Europe with a significant number of Rothko original works and reproductions.
Stenders is one of the biggest body care product manufacturers in Northern Europe. It is the first Latvian company to establish and successfully sell its franchise outside Latvia. The brand’s products were on sale in over 225 stores in 21 countries around the world, but Stenders’ management does not yet feel that it’s made it; that the business has finally taken off.

Main export countries: China, Russia, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Estonia
“All three of us, that is, the owners of the company, run. We run a lot. Half marathons, marathons and even ultra marathons. In Latvia, running is becoming increasingly popular. I see more and more people who enjoy running – in the morning and in the evening, the air in Riga is excellent, and I can advise our overseas partners to bring their running shoes with them - you can have a really wonderful time running here. There has also been an impressive increase in the number of runners in the Nordea Riga Marathon from both Latvia and overseas. Why should you run at all? That’s easy - to avoid getting rusty. There has to be movement, and, in my opinion, the Nordea Riga Marathon embodies movement.”

Jānis Bērziņš, Managing Director of the cosmetics production company Stenders, a passionate runner and Nordea Riga Marathon fan.
Globally, Latvia’s capital city of Riga is renowned for its many attractions and it really does offer something for everyone. For music lovers – opera, for connoisseurs of architecture – Art Nouveau, and for fans of an active lifestyle – one of the most popular marathons in Northern Europe. The Nordea Riga Marathon is an excellent illustration of Latvia’s rapid development during the past two decades. There was a time when the Riga Marathon was run by a few hundred participants somewhere on the outskirts of the city. Now, it is one of the city’s biggest festivals with more than 20,000 participants from almost 70 countries around the world.
THE FOUNDERS OF THE RED JACKETS:
GatewayBaltic, DDB Latvia, 
Brand incubator Matka, Latvian 
Chamber of Commerce and 
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ART DIRECTION AND DESIGN
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