



BELGIAN BLUES

Belgium is not renowned for its blues scene but this is something artist Guy Verlinde aka Lightnin' Guy is working hard (like only a blues guy can) to remedy. He talks music with Jenny McNeely

"Society nowadays is a lot different from life in the American south where the blues began, but we have the same triggers. We work hard every day, we want to have a drink, dance, be liberated. When you go to a concert and jump on the blues train it's a way of escaping from real life. I think it's better therapy than going to a psychiatrist.

People who hate the blues say 'it's always the same'. People who love the blues say 'it's always the same'. In blues you have a basic rhythm, over which you sing about things that happen to you, what you feel – it's all about the rhythm.

Blues has a lot to do with travel; hobos riding the trains searching for new adventures and a better future. In the 1960s, performers such as Eric Clapton and the Rolling Stones brought the blues to Europe. There's not much of a blues scene in Ghent where I live, and this is one of my big frustrations. In Belgium, the blues scene is more alive in small towns and villages you won't have heard of. If you want an authentic night out in Belgium go to a blues club or festival. This is what travelling is about – going to a bar, full of locals who have lots of stories to tell."

BLUES CLUBS IN BELGIUM

■ **Banana Peel Blues Club**
Ruiselede, bananapeel.be
 The most legendary blues club in Belgium. Top international artists have played here every

Monday evening since 1966.

■ **Crossroads Antwerp,**
crossroadscafe.be

The hangout of most Antwerp blues musicians. Live music every Sunday afternoon.

■ **Le Grain d'Orge Brussels**
 The best jukebox joint in

Brussels, live music every Friday evening.

■ **Spirit of 66 Verviers,**
spiritof66.be Located in an old cinema with live music daily.

■ **'t Goor Gooreind,**
goorblues.com Small club, big vibes, blues on Sundays.



Lightnin' Guy gigs throughout August

12 Les Fêtes du 15 Aout, Liège

13 Hôtel 'Ol Fosse d'Outh, Houfalize

16 Naaldwijkse feesten, Naaldwijk

18 Drijf In Blues, Giethoorn

25 Roode Haan, Warfhuizen

31 Prinsenhof Feesten, Ghent



TICKETS PLEASE

Where to board the blues train this month in Belgium

Gouvy Jazz & Blues Festival
3-5 August, gouvy.eu/madelonne

Since the 1960s this has been the most prestigious Jazz & Blues festival in Belgium, located in an old farm in the Ardennes.

Oetsloven Blues
4 August, oetslovenblues.be

A small blues festival in the east of Belgium in the middle of apple orchards.

Swing Wespelaar
17-19 August, swingwespelaar.be

The biggest free festival in Belgium takes place in the main square of the village of Wespelaar.

(Ge)Varenwinkel Blues Festival
24-25 August, gevarenwinkelfestival.be

A cosy blues festival in the centre of Belgium. All the profits from this festival go to charity.

SHANE SHOOTER