

New in town? Come to InterNations!

By Celia Thaysen

Monthly get-together of foreigners in Denmark gets people talking

ON A COLD, snowy evening last week, over 80 people braved the snowstorms to join an InterNations Copenhagen get-together at Barock, a Nyhavn bar. After the customary warm welcome by Tobias Fuchs, name tags were handed out and members mingled and chatted as they lounged on Chesterfield sofas down in

the cosy and charming basement bar.

Stela Amaral, a Brazilian, working in HR for Novo Nordisk, who attended her first InterNations event a year and a half ago, says she 'looks forward to our monthly get-togethers like a child waits for her birthday party'.

She adds of her experience: 'I had been in Denmark less than six months when I joined. I knew only a few people from work and I desperately needed more friends. I had the gift of meeting two fantastic women via InterNations - one from Iceland and another from Denmark

- who became my best friends.'

Fuchs, 33, Co-Ambassador for InterNations Copenhagen, is German, a product manager for Volkswagen and has lived in Copenhagen since 2005. He says of InterNations: 'The purpose of our events is to bring expats together. Having lived in several different countries myself, I know that it can be hard to adapt to your new life abroad. InterNations serves as a valuable source of support for newcomers to get in touch with other people in a similar situation.'

InterNations Copenhagen now has 1625 registered mem-

bers. Part of InterNations.org, one of the biggest global networking services for expats worldwide, it has been running since September 2007. Founded by two young German entrepreneurs, it was originally intended to provide online services for expat communities, but has since expanded to include regular meet-ups hosted by so-called 'ambassadors', in response to the huge interest from its members for real-life networking opportunities.

INCopenhagen - InterNations Copenhagen's social arm - hosts casual events every month, plus various cultural and social

excursions in between. The group is largely made up of expat professionals, foreigners living in Denmark long-term and students. According to Fuchs, about 50 percent who attend the monthly functions are first-timers, and the rest include a core group of regulars and people who float in and out. Fuchs and Co-Ambassador, Thomas Gasienica, a Swiss Account Manager at Kunde & Co advertising agency, try to keep the events socially-oriented and make an effort to introduce new members with others who have things in common or who share similar interests.

Brian Keith, a technical writer for Nangate and a long-time member of InterNations, thoroughly enjoyed the Barock event: 'It had a good turnout, the venue was really nice and I thought the number of members who showed up was a good testament to the club's continuing strength.'

Fuchs is keen to welcome new members to their growing club.

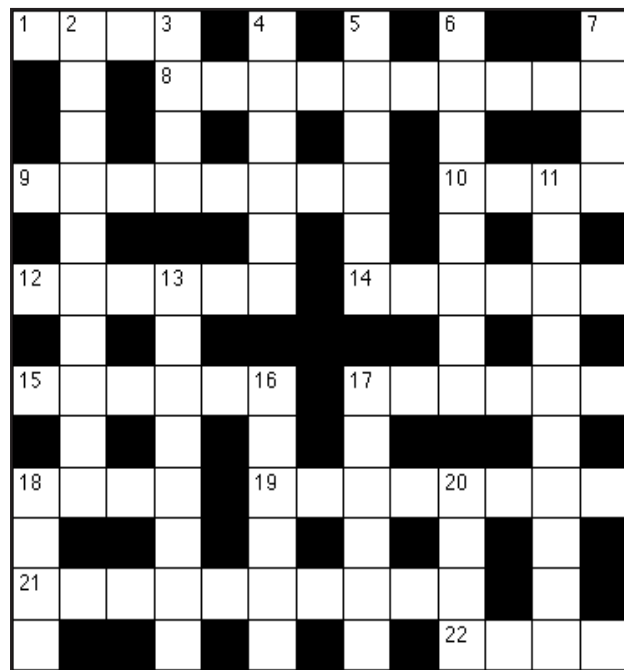
He says: 'InterNations is by invitation only, but anyone who is interested should email me at tf@smc.dk or just come along to one of our events. The next one is at Barock on Nyhavn on 18 March.'



A good time was had by all at the get-together in Nyhavn's Barock



No 297



Across

1. Overlook (4)
8. Intermittently (3, 3, 4)
9. Whole (8)
10. Mislaid (4)
12. Hate (6)
14. Laboured (6)
15. Not present (6)
17. Inborn (6)
18. Side (4)
19. Irreverent jesting (8)
21. Not likely (10)
22. Rave (4)

Down

2. Impracticable (10)
3. Sharp break (4)
4. Proprietors (6)
5. Purpose (6)
6. Male horse (8)
7. At one time (4)
11. Loud-voiced (10)
13. Always (8)
16. Pulsates (6)
17. Drink in (6)
18. Stumble (4)
20. Ogle (4)

Post Quick Crossword No 296

Across: 7 Craft; 8 Terrain; 9 Undergo; 10 Grind; 12 Licentious; 15 Nonchalant; 18 Error; 19 Vaunted; 21 Channel; 22 Green.

Down: 1 Occurrence; 2 Tardy; 3 Stir; 4 Stroke; 5 Brighten; 6 Janitor; 11 Despondent; 13 Inherent; 14 Entreat; 16 Lively; 17 Strew; 20 Urge.

Heartfulness the key to happiness

By Celia Thaysen

Benjamin Williamson lived a varied and colourful life before becoming a life coach nine months ago, which may help to explain why he can empathise with the challenges people face in their lives

WILLIAMSON, aged 35, still has traces of a Mancunian accent, but the accent is soft, perhaps mellowed by ten years of living in Denmark.

In his CV, he describes how he has been 'a millionaire, a cleaner, a Buddhist, a businessman, bankrupt and even homeless'.

On further investigation, it transpires that Williamson was born into wealth, walked away from his parents and their money, met a Danish girl while at university and had a daughter with her.

They moved to Denmark and he set up a magazine here. Shortly after, his girlfriend met someone else and kicked him out, leaving him homeless. He found a new girlfriend, built a house, and the magazine eventually went bust. At the same time, he opened three shops - a delicatessen, a bike shop and a record shop, of which only the deli and bike shop are still going today. After all these

upheavals, it comes as little surprise to hear that he was once a life coaching client himself.

Now a life coach at Heartfulness working for his former life coach (she apparently saw that he had a natural talent for coaching and offered him a job), Benjamin speaks enthusiastically and very quickly about the work they do.

'Our method -Spiritual Life Management (SLM) - is to find the best way possible for you, with growth and personal development being foremost in our minds. SLM is interactive cognitive therapy combined with structured linguistic programming and life coaching, to increase the objective understanding of the client's psychological process.'

Williamson believes that people are turning to life coaching because it fills a personal need to believe in something which many people don't have, leaving them feeling lost and alone.

'Coaching is a new way to bring people back to their centre and get in tune with their hearts and feelings. God (if there is one) is not a thing; it's a feeling of connectedness - a vibration of love - that flows through the universe. If you become in tune with it, then you will find your own happiness.'

He continues: 'For example, one of the most difficult things for an expatriate, when moving to another country, is integration. Without a clear under-



Benjamin Williamson: the coach with the right approach

standing of 'societies' cultural expectations it can sometimes become a very isolated and unhappy experience being in a foreign culture. Finding harmony in your life when you're unhappy about your surroundings is sometimes a very difficult challenge. Heartfulness can help people to understand these cultural demands and the challenges of integration.'

Benjamin is currently coaching a few individual clients and is busy developing more courses for Heartfulness to help com-

panies and individuals with the challenges of being in harmony with oneself. He is also hosting a series of talks, each an introduction to the issues facing modern Danish culture. The next one, to be held at Sundby library in Amager on March 16, is dedicated to belief, and what it means to believe in Denmark today.

For more information, go to: www.heartfulness.dk/english; benjamin@heartfulness.dk; 3115 5327.