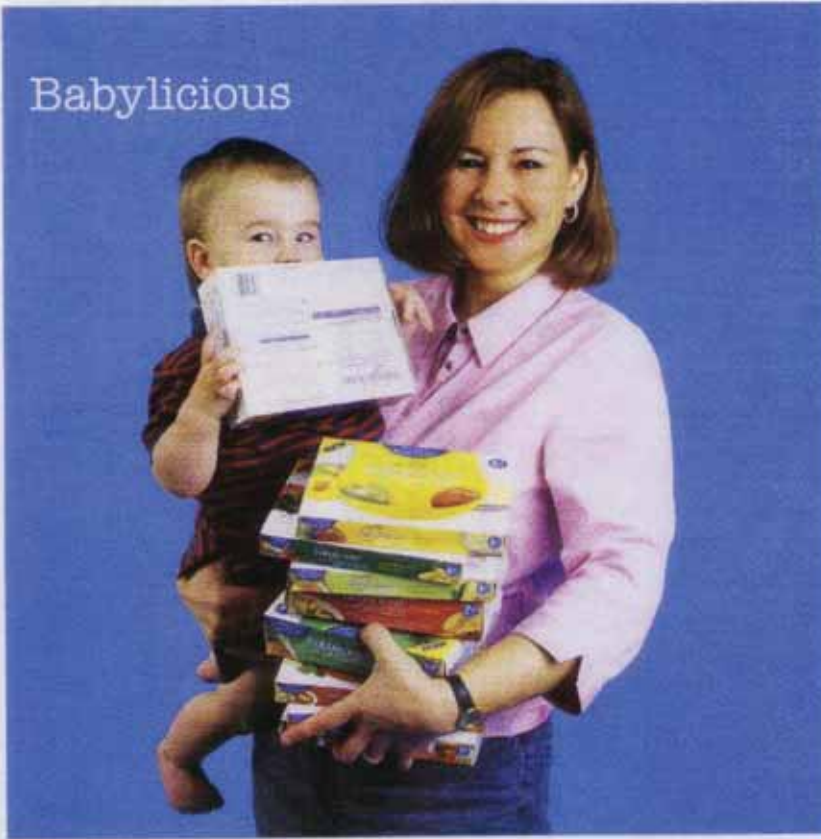


people with a passion.

Babylicious



Oliver, with Sally Preston, can't wait to sink his teeth in.

WHEN SALLY PRESTON first set up her business, she advertised for staff in the local paper, saying, "We want help but don't know what the job is; we don't really know the hours and the pay will be poor and there are no perks. But you can work round children being at school." That last sentence meant they were flooded with applicants.

Sally's understanding of child-friendly working practices comes from being a working mum. She has two children, Hannah, 9, and Jack, 6, and it was in the early days of juggling a job and babies that she realised the need for decent baby food. "I did make my own baby food for Hannah but then I went back to work – that's when I turned to jars and cans because there was no alternative."

She feels the baby food market has become a cheap commodity. "Every time you look at the baby food aisles it's 'three for two'. Why don't we accept they need good-quality, wholesome food and pay for it?"

Sally's background is in food science. She worked for Marks & Spencer for 11 years, then left to start her own food consultancy.

Sally came up against a string of setbacks – acrimonious divorce, leaving the marital home, skin cancer – but they didn't stop her. "I ended up remortgaging the house for £55K and off we went," she recalls.

Babylicious was launched in September 2001 to provide blended, frozen baby food in 'ice cube trays' – just like you'd do at home. "We copied what mums did. We designed a unique piece of packaging – you pop out as

many portions as you want. At the moment people either force-feed the baby until the jar's empty or job food away."

The Babylicious range is aimed at babies from four to 12 months, and includes Chicken Casserole; Lasagne; and vegetarian options such as Leeks, Peas and Potato. "We've never used fillers or bulking agents," says Sally. "When we say our ingredients are leeks and peas, it's leeks and peas – not leeks and peas and a bucketful of starch."

Only the fruit and vegetable purées are fully organic, but Sally says recent changes to regulations mean "non-organic baby food has to comply with such strict regulations that it's almost the same as organic".

Babylicious, tel: 020 8231 6840;
www.babylicious.co.uk

Emilia-Romagna – where rivalry reigns

Looking for a taste of Italy, but not prepared to battle through the crowds in Venice, traffic in Rome or pay the prices in Milan, **LAURINE SUMMERS** invested in a phrase book and set off to the undiscovered region of Emilia-Romagna to discover what turned out to be Italy's best kept secret

ANY advocate of good living should know Emilia-Romagna. It is the birthplace of good living and a centre of excellence in culture, art and gastronomy. Stretching from the Appennine mountains to the Adriatic coast, Emilia-Romagna can lay claim to many of Italy's most famous modern day exports



► **HISTORY SURVIVES** – the Rocca Bentivoglio

including Ferrari, Lamborghini, Pollini, Prosciutto di Parma, Parmesan Cheese and Balsamic Vinegar di Modena, to name a few. For the inhabitants of Emilia-Romagna, superlatives are a way of life and quality is quintessential in all aspects of living. The region is truly in a class of its own in terms of architecture, classical art, fashion and even fast cars. As the natives of the region bustle through their daily lives; sunglasses clad even in winter, they seem too suave to be approachable. Yet, under layers of Prada, Pollini and Versace, the warmth and hospitality these people extend to visitors is remarkable to the extent that during my visit one restaurant owner opened up his restaurant on his day off to accommodate. Although the benevolence of the people in Emilia-Romagna towards visitors is striking, perhaps even more extraordinary is their sense of rivalry towards one another. This is particularly evident between neighbouring towns and villages where a school of

thought more befitting the ancestors of the region's inhabitants – the Farnese, Estense and Medici families, who battled for supremacy up to 600 years ago, is still prevalent today. Each state in Emilia-Romagna is fiercely proud of its own art, history and cooking to such a degree that the local people from Ferrara will not eat bread made in Reggio-Emilia, only a few kilometres away, while the inhabitants of Reggio-Emilia believe the people of Ferrara have square heads! This rivalry between towns stems from the Renaissance period, where noble families of each region fought each other with art and architecture attempting to out do their rivals with prestige – leaving their mark on the region's towns and the lives of people who today still jealously guard their own region's culture. The wealth of art and history borne from hundreds of years of fierce competition, has attracted some of Europe's finest painters, architects, poets and musicians to Emilia-Romagna, many of whom have



► **A GRAND PLACE TO STAY** – the Grand Hotel Regina in Salsomaggiore

left their mark, including Byron and Hemingway. The Cathedral of Saint Dominic in Bologna is touched by the unmistakable hand of Michelangelo and amid the magnificent coloured mosaics left by the Byzantine era in Ravenna, the last capital of the Roman empire, lies the crypt of Dante. It is perhaps not surprising that the capital of this region, Bologna, has been chosen as the European Capital of Culture for the year 2000. For anyone who loves the built environment, Bologna is fantasy material. Its red stone walls and maze of medieval streets network their way through to magnificent piazzas which cradle some of Europe's oldest and best preserved cathedrals and monuments. Fortices are plentiful in the city – there are almost 23 kilometres of

ancient arcades which is why locals say you never need an umbrella in Bologna! Bologna's chequered history is borne out in the face of her buildings, the 15th century medieval towers which dominate the city's skyline are constant reminders of the aggression of past dynasties. Another of Bologna's greatest historical treasures not to be missed, is housed in the Duomo of St Dominic, where the wooden choir stools carved by the hand of Fra Damiano da Bergamo during the Renaissance still maintain their glory. This work is claimed to be the 'eighth wonder of the world'. Feeling self conscious in M&S among a parade of lofty Italy designer clothes, shopping was a priority on this trip and with the current exchange rate for lire, bargains were not hard to find. Markets are

central to life in all of Emilia-Romagna's towns. However, for me the designer market at Ravenna topped them all. The market has all the designer labels with brilliant bargains to be had – especially for clothes and shoes. Although Emilia-Romagna is one of Italy's largest states, it is still a well kept secret. Tourism is sparse and the region has remained undiscovered, literally in some instances as only in recent years frescoes dating back to the 14th century have been unveiled. ■ For a free copy of a new book on Emilia-Romagna 'The Wonderful Four' please contact: Russell Stenhouse / Lauraine Summers / Rachael Webb Millennium Public Relations, Tel: (0171) 401 7470 Fax (0171) 401 7472 E-mail mpr@millennium-pr.com



Lunch box

Hurrah! Two new food concepts for lunchtime treats have arrived that don't involve a mechanically-recovered-meat burger slapped between a soggy bun. Both brands aim to open fifty stores around the UK over the next five years.

WRAPID!

21 Albion Place, Leeds LS1 (0113 246 9266)

Wrapid is all about flatbreads – hot or chilled and stuffed with flavour. Choose from chicken fajita, chilli beef, stir-fried veg, Moroccan lamb or plump for the local dishes – a Beef 'n' Yorkshire or Toad 'n' Hole wrapped in a flat Yorkshire pud. New stores are slated to open in York, Wakefield, Sheffield and South Kensington later this year.

Casualties predicted in battle for the skies

Ryanair's dramatic price cuts have intensified the no-frills fight. Paul Norris reports

AIR FARES cheaper than a round of drinks will get customers flooding in, but these offers are expected to create a huge headache for the budget airline industry.

Ironically, it is the no-frills carriers themselves which warn this kind of fare slashing will lead to failures.

Ryanair chief executive Michael O'Leary, who has unveiled fares as low as £16.99 one-way to Dublin and destinations in France and Italy, claimed only two European no-frills carriers will be left by 2003.

"The market is booming for low fares, especially when compared to British Airways, Air France and SAS," he said.

"The challenge is who will survive when there is an economic downturn, as there is not room for everyone."

Industry experts say Debonair and even Virgin Express are vulnerable because of previous losses, while BA has been touted as a future buyer of EasyJet. BA almost bought the Luton carrier two years ago.

O'Leary said Go was likely to survive because of support from its parent, BA.

Debonair responded to Ryanair's sale by offering 100,000 seats for between £39 and £69 return on its European network, including its new daily Gatwick-Barcelona flight starting October 25.

EasyJet - backed by the wealthy Greek Haji-Ioannou family - insisted its sound business plan would ensure its survival. An EasyJet spokesman claimed Ryanair's latest fare saver was in part a reaction to EasyJet's Internet sales - which opened last month with £9.99 fares - and its promotions in national newspapers.



Cost-cutting: O'Leary goes on the promotional offensive as part of what he described as "the fare war to end all fare wars"

"The Ryanair sale would appear to be aimed at selling seats it can't fill, but it is hard to see how they can make a profit by offering 70% of seats at the cheapest prices," the spokesman added.

ABTA chief executive Ian Reynolds said the low-cost carriers should take a cautionary look at the deregulated US market. "Clearly it is a very competitive area and margins will be squeezed more," he said. "In the US there were many new entrants and not too many survived."

But budget airlines do not appear to be taking heed of their own warnings and there seems to be no end to drastic discounting.

O'Leary has pledged to give airlines, especially main rival BA, the fight of their lives. He is spending £500,000 on promoting Ryanair's rock-bottom ticket rates. "We are going to smash BA on price and give them the fare war to end all fare wars," he promised.

EasyJet chairman Stelios Haji-Ioannou on why he doesn't need travel agents. See Viewpoint, page 11



Air fare cuts 'to lead trend towards fees

PRICE slashing by airlines could only speed up the widespread implementation of service charges, according to ABTA.

Chief executive Ian Reynolds welcomed ticket deals such as Ryanair's because they allowed agents to increase sales volumes, but he argued it was reasonable for agents to charge extra fees.

He said: "As the proportion of low fare sales increases agents will consider service fees more and more. Agents condemn me to selling these fares may have to make a charge to cover costs."

A typical commission on the latest Ryanair tickets will only reach between £2.55 and £4.55 taking into account the carrier's 7.5% rate for agents.

"These deals can be attractive to agents, but only if they can get add-ons such as hotel or car hire bookings," added Reynolds. He considered service charges from £5-10 to be reasonable, but said if more work was carried out because

Ryanair's cut-price fare offers

	One-way	Return
Luton-Dublin	£16.99	£33.98
Liverpool-Dublin	£16.99	£33.98
Stansted-St Etienne	£16.99	£33.98*
Stansted-Rimini	£16.99	£33.98*
Stansted-Kristianstad	£16.99	£33.98*
Stansted-Prestwick	£16.99	£33.98
Other UK airports		
(excl Gatwick, Dublin and Manchester)	£19.99	£39.98
Stansted-Dublin		
(Knock, Cork, Kerry)	£19.99	£39.98

* Airport tax of the destination country must be added to the price

X-RYANAIR

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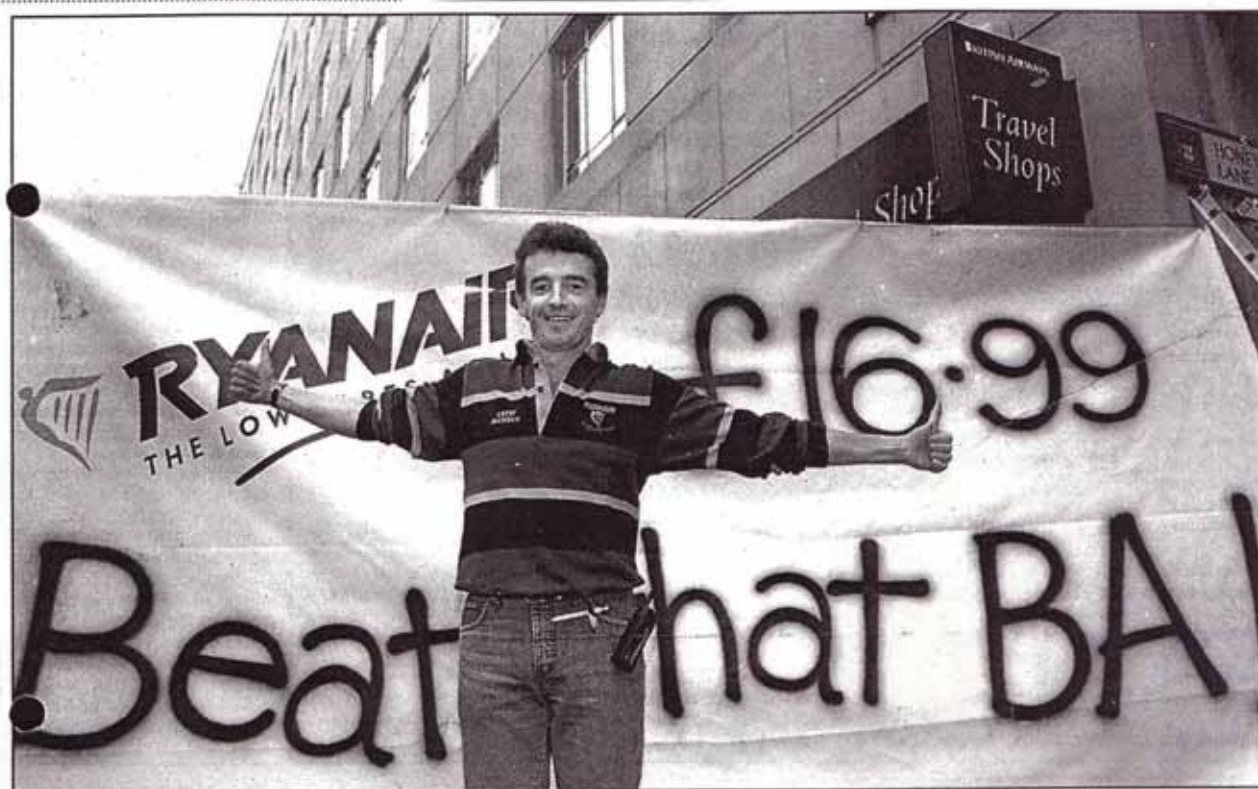
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■ Michael O'Leary spreading his wings

Europe for £17 in flight fare sale

LOW-cost airline Ryanair yesterday offered rock-bottom fares, including one-way European flights for less than £17.

The Irish carrier is making a million seats available at the low prices across 26 European routes for travel between September 22 and December 16.

The seat sale, available since yesterday, will extend to 12 days, over two weekends.

The sale is Ryanair's response to a recent British Airways offer

which lasted for 36 hours over one weekend.

The £16.99 one-way fares will be on offer for flights from Stansted to Rimini in Italy, to Kristianstad in Sweden, and to St Etienne in France.

There will also be £16.99 one-way flights from Luton to Dublin, from Liverpool to Dublin and from Stansted to Prestwick.

In addition Ryanair is bringing in £19.99 one-way fares from all its regional airports to

Dublin. Sale fares also include flights to Pisa in Italy, Stockholm, Carcassonne in France and to Oslo — all for £29.99 one-way.

Ryanair's chief executive, Michael O'Leary, said in London: "British Airways' attempt at a seat sale was a non-event — with no low fares, impossible to book and very little availability.

"Yet again Ryanair will have to show BA how a low fare seat sale should be run."

Mr O'Leary said: "There's probably only room for two major low-cost carriers in the market.

"We will be one of them and time will tell who the other will be."

He said he was unconcerned about the arrival of BA's low-cost carrier, Go.

He added: "You must realise we carry 5million passengers a year and Go will be lucky to reach 400,000 in its first 12 months."

Tube buys ticket to ride fashion fast track

By Angela Jameson

It is one of the best-recognized brands in the world, and as London Underground is moving to exploit its international appeal by launching a fashion label. The range, called "Underground", will make its debut at spring and will target 16-24 year olds who already own the likes of the designer's iconic Miss Sixty and coat. The collection will include feature jeans, jackets, cardigans and T-shirts. In time, London Underground hopes to extend the subterranean brand even to accessories, which would open another frontier in European and Asian cities. The Underground streetwear range will feature on buttons and logos subtle use of a Tube's world-famous roundel — the red circle with a bar — as far as the London Underground logo means. The collection, launched re-

cently at a leading fashion industry show in Florence, features 200 items of menswear and womenswear and will also be extended into homeware, sunglasses and cosmetics. David Ellis, head of intellectual property development at the London Transport Museum, said that he was negotiating with agents in several European countries to find retailers to sell the spring range next year. "This is one of the key British brands that is still controlled by a British organisation," Mr Ellis said. "This is a unique opportunity to promote a British brand, which has the recognition of something like Gucci or Chanel." The launch of a fashion collection has been achieved after a lengthy campaign by London's transport authority, Transport for London, to ensure that it has full licensing rights to the London Underground logo means. Mr Ellis has also been cracking down on manufacturers



Underground fashion: an artist's impression of a pair of Underground jeans. The Tube roundel is familiar all over the world

and retailers that exploit the Tube logo around the world, including operations to expose those behind fake "Tube" T-shirts, mugs and merchandise. An Italian fashion company is licensed to design, make and distribute the range in Italy, Spain, France and Germany. It will also be in charge of wholesale distribution in the UK, where Mr Ellis is

negotiating with stores, including Debenhams and Selfridges, to stock the brand. In the next six to eighteen months Mr Ellis hopes to see Underground stores open in Asia and Europe, the first of which is likely to be in Poland. Other key markets include Scandinavia and North America. London Transport's symbol has had many different names throughout its history,

including bullseye, bar and circle and roundel. The roundel, created by Frank Pick and Lord Ashfield, a chief executive and chairman of London Transport, was first used on station platforms in 1908. Attempts to replace it in 1913 and again in 1924 failed. While London Underground is a newcomer to the fashion scene, it has long been associated with classic design,

including bullseye, bar and circle and roundel. The roundel, created by Frank Pick and Lord Ashfield, a chief executive and chairman of London Transport, was first used on station platforms in 1908. Attempts to replace it in 1913 and again in 1924 failed. While London Underground is a newcomer to the fashion scene, it has long been associated with classic design,

Getty Images has \$400m for a bigger picture

By Nic Hopkins

GETTY Images, the largest provider of stock photography, has set aside a \$400 million (£230 million) war chest to expand its business into Europe and Asia over the next 18 months, The Times has learned. The company's co-founders, Mark Getty and Jonathan Klein, want to look up the category's presence in markets such as Germany, Italy and Spain through acquisitions and partnerships.

"We want to give internationally, outside the English-speaking world," Mr Getty, the chairman, who is one of 59 heirs to the Getty oil fortune, said. He was an investment banker before founding Getty Images with Mr Klein in 1995. Getty Images sells images of everything from stars at film premieres to gas bottles in Iraq. Created more than a decade ago, the company initially grew rapidly through acquisitions, but the pace has slowed in recent years to allow for integration of its diverse assets.

"We bought 40 companies in quick succession and we had to learn around and consolidate ourselves. If we had bought another 40 companies in the next five years it would have been a much more difficult process," Mr Getty said. The plan for the expansion is to hire a full-time staff at Getty Images to focus on other tasks, which include helping to manage his family's investment portfolio and establishing a fledgling media investment firm, Boston Place Managers.

Mr Klein, the chief executive, added: "Within 12 months we will be doing something significant in India and China, as well as putting down some deeper roots in other parts of the Far East. We see China as being full of opportunity, but it's not necessarily going to happen overnight. China is a big economy but advertising there is still in its infancy.

The terms of growth there's much lower-hanging fruit in parts of Europe, and we will either be acquiring or finding partners there. It will happen soon, and Germany will be first for obvious reasons — we opened in Sydney ahead of the Olympics." Mr Klein said the company could use coverage of local sports, such as the Premier League in Spain and Italy's Serie A, as a springboard into local markets. The company wants to beef up its coverage of live events such as the upcoming Olympic Games in Athens as it seeks to secure more media firms as customers.

Mr Klein said that Getty Images, which holds most of its images to commercial clients such as advertising agencies, was "underdone as a global business" and was hoping to increase its 83 per cent share of the estimated \$1 billion global editorial images market. To fund the expansion Getty Images could dip into its cash resources of more than \$420 million, or seek debt-financing using shares as its monthly cashflow of about \$52 million.

Mr Getty recently stepped back from a full-time role at Getty Images to focus on other tasks, which include helping to manage his family's investment portfolio and establishing a fledgling media investment firm, Boston Place Managers. Mr Klein, the chief executive, added: "Within 12 months we will be doing something significant in India and China, as well as putting down some deeper roots in other parts of the Far East. We see China as being full of opportunity, but it's not necessarily going to happen overnight. China is a big economy but advertising there is still in its infancy.

Venturing where others have reached end of the line

By Sarah Butler

HE extension of London Underground into fashion is not of a long tradition. For all known brands — from Burberry, the industrial digger company, to Coca-Cola. It appears that there are no firms governing the type of and that will attempt to con-

vert its popularity into something wearable, although success is far from guaranteed. Notable outliers include those by Coca-Cola, Lego and Virgin, which launched Virginware to great acclaim in 1998. Two years later the Virgin clothing range were withdrawn. The brand was too expensive for the young shoppers it was aimed at and suffered from unflattering associations with Sir Richard Branson, the wealthy-jetsetter owner of Virgin. Virgin returned to the shops in 2001 with a range of lingerie produced by Unique Connection, a company backed by Hightown Hold-

ings, whose other interests include cricket, the low-cost airline. This time around, the brand appears to have found more success, with cheaper prices aimed at a young market who associate Virgin with music stores and mobile phones. In contrast, the footwear of Caterpillar, the industrial ve-

hicle manufacturer, has become ubiquitous. Although the company that owned the licence to the Caterpillar footwear brand fell into receivership in 2002, the label has since been taken up by new owners and continues to be a household name in Britain. Klade Miran of Deapers, the fashion trade magazine,

says that Caterpillar's advantage was the close link with the original product. He says: "It helps if the brand has the same kind of heritage that can be adapted in some way. Trucks are sturdy, hard-wearing and dependable so there is a natural affinity with Caterpillar's boots."

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CRÉATEUR D'AUTOMOBILES

RENAULT

Mégane Hatch Dynamique DCI 80
Consumption Cycle: £175 per month



Scénic Expression LA 10V
Consumption Cycle: £189 per month



Laguna Hatchback Extreme LB 10V
Consumption Cycle: £220 per month

