

# Introduction

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Ten years ago, I first posted an ugly house to my website *Ugly Belgian Houses*, which has since become internet infamous. I was young, enthusiastic and angry, raving against a phenomenon that really made my blood boil: the chaos also known as Belgium, with its awful *fermette*-style houses, rectories and post-modernist pyramids, which are all built slap-dash next to each other.

If you had told me ten years ago that my webpage would go on to acquire cult status, I would have thought you were crazy. If this book is your first introduction to *Ugly Belgian Houses*, you should know it all got a bit out of hand. I published the first version of this book in 2015. In 2019, it became a weekly feature in the Belgian TV show *Iedereen Beroemd*, called ‘Hannes says sorry’, in which I visited the houses that were featured on my website in the past years and apologised for the nuisance that my post may have caused.

Ten years ago, I could have never guessed that I would become so fond of these ugly Belgian houses and their owners, with their great stories. The rage has since turned into love. Love for the chaos that rules our tiny country. I am dead certain that the innate creativity of Belgians is determined in part by the way we have shaped our country.

Ten years later, *Ugly Belgian Houses* has become a concept, with hundreds of thousands of online followers and 1,000 contributors who help shape the pages with their submissions. It has become a fun case study in architecture lessons up and down the country and dozens of *ugly houses* accounts have since sprung up around the world. But the houses mainly owe it to themselves. They are the meme of our country. And many more have popped up, in spite of all the predictions about a generalised construction stop.

## Introduction

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Ten years later, it seemed right to publish a new edition of my book called *More Ugly Belgian Houses*, mainly because I met so many people in the past five years: architects, architecture critics and, above all, home owners. My intro was always the same: ‘Hi, my name is Hannes, did you know that your house is featured on the ugly Belgian houses website?’. It’s a really great way to start a conversation.

Ten years later, Ugly Belgian Houses is no longer about me. It has far outgrown me. It has become something that belongs to all of us, it has become part of Belgian culture. Surrealism is ingrained in our DNA, *ceci n’est pas une maison. C’est un Ugly Belgian House*.

Have fun and next time you take a walk, take a good look around our towns and municipalities. Because if you pay attention, there are ugly Belgian houses everywhere. Please be so kind to share them with the world!  
#uglybelgianhouses

Hannes Coudenys  
#uglybelgianhouses

# The Never-ending Story

Ik was er altijd van uitgegaan dat ik ooit weleens klaar zou zijn met dit project. Een recente zoektocht naar het aantal huizen in ons land deed me beseffen dat ik waarschijnlijk eeuwig kan doorgaan. Er staan 4,5 miljoen huizen in ons land. Als daar maar 10% lelijk van is, moet ik nog steeds 450.000 huizen documenteren. Maakt niet uit. Blijf jullie vondsten doorsturen, ik probeer er een grappige quote bij te verzinnen.

Tijd voor de huizen! Want die zijn het allerbelangrijkste.

# The Never-ending --- Story

I always figured that one day I would be done with this project. After a recent search to find how many houses there are in Belgium, I now realise that I can probably go on forever. There are 4.5 million dwellings in our country. Let's say that just 10% of them are ugly. This means that there are still 450,000 houses to document. Oh well. Continue to send me your discoveries and I'll try to come up with a funny quote.

But now it's time for the houses! Because that is what it's all about.



# Huizen Houses

# Piramidable

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Ik heb niet echt iets tegen piramides, maar doorheen de jaren zijn ze wel een fenomeen geworden op mijn blog. Toen ik er eentje had gepost, kreeg ik plots een heleboel inzendingen van mensen die ook piramides hadden gespot.

*Ugly Belgian houses* telt intussen ongeveer twintig piramides en ze blijven me verbazen. Ik ben tot op vandaag actief op zoek naar deze driehoekige parel in het Belgische landschap. Tips over piramides zijn dus altijd welkom, over *mastaba's* (de afgeknotte broertjes van de piramides) trouwens ook. Zulke huizen zijn niet alleen vanbuiten, maar ook vanbinnen ontzettend interessant. Het eerste dat ik me altijd afvraag, is: hoe zet je hier in godsnaam een kast tegen de muur? De bewoners slagen daar echter wonderwel in.

# Pyramaniac

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I don't really have anything against pyramids per se, but they have become a bit of a thing over the years on my blog. After I posted a pic of one, I started receiving lots of submissions from people who had spotted pyramids in the wild.

*Ugly Belgian Houses* now has twenty pyramids and they never cease to amaze me. I continue to actively scour the Belgian landscape for this triangular gem as a result. Tips about pyramids are always welcome, *mastabas* (the flat-roofed versions of pyramids) too while we're at it. These kinds of houses are extremely interesting from the outside, but the interior is just as remarkable. The first thing that I always wonder is how do you place a cabinet against a wall in this kind of house? Funnily enough, the occupants always seem to pull it off.

**Whenever it's cold and  
my nipples go hard**





**Houston,  
we have a house**



# Hieroglyphitecture