

# amsterdam marketing

## PRESS FEATURE

### **Belgium in Amsterdam**

**Amsterdam has age-old ties with Belgium, known as the Southern Netherlands until 1830. After the fall of Antwerp in 1585 – when this city was ruled by Spain – many citizens from the Southern Netherlands fled to the free north. Amsterdam was popular among them, because it rapidly developed into an important merchant city.**

**The tradesmen of the Southern Netherlands, who were often rich and had a wealth of experience, were more than welcome here. Amsterdam's prosperity in the 17th century (the Golden Age) can be attributed to the fall of Antwerp and the immigrants from the Southern Netherlands to a large extent. Amsterdam is still very popular with visitors from Belgium.**

### **Belgian merchants and map makers on Dam square**

Important merchants, originally from Belgium, used to live on the Dam Square in the 16th and 17th centuries. For instance the family of cartographers and bookstore keepers Hondius. Jodocus Hondius (1563-1612) was born as Joos D'Hondt in the town of Wakken, in West-Flanders. After a stay in London he came to Amsterdam in 1593 and opened his shop 'De Wackere Hondt' (The Awake Dog) in the Kalverstraat. The tablet with inscription and depiction of a dog still remains on the façade of clothing store Peek & Cloppenburg at Dam Square. Together with his brother in law Petrus Kaerius and his friend Petrus Plancius (1552-1622) from the West-Flemish town of Dranouter, he turned Amsterdam into the centre of the map making and atlas industry. In fact, Plancius was not only a renowned Calvinist minister, but also played an important role as geographer and navigation expert. He was one of the most important advisers of the 'Compagnie van Verre' during their preparations for the navigation of the first Dutch voyages to the East Indies and China. He was also involved in the voyages of his student Willem Barentsz, who would become famous later.

### **Flemish immigrants in the Oude Kerk**

The Oude Kerk, of which building started in 1300, is the oldest church in Amsterdam. This was the most significant church of Amsterdam until well into the Golden Age. The interior of this late-gothic cross-basilica is very picturesque. In the Oude Kerk, many Flemish immigrants are buried, for instance painter Carel van Mander (1548-1606), born in Meulenbeke, and

the Vingboons family. There is a special website dedicated to the many who found their last resting place there: see [gravenopinternet.nl](http://gravenopinternet.nl) and [oudekerk.nl](http://oudekerk.nl)

### **Sculptures by Quellien in Paleis op de Dam**

The Royal Palace on Dam Square, designed by architect Jacob van Campen, was built between 1648 and 1655 and was to be the new city hall. It symbolizes the enormous power Amsterdam had in those days. Artus Quellien (1609-1668) from Antwerp was asked to create the sculptures for both the interior and exterior. At the time, Quellien was the most esteemed sculptor north of the Alps. His name has been immortalised in the Quellinstraat in Antwerp and the Quellijnstraat in Amsterdam.

[paleisamsterdam.nl](http://paleisamsterdam.nl)

### **Philips Vingboons, designer of the ring of canals**

In his time, architect Philips Vingboons (1607-1678) was one of Amsterdam's most important master builders. The son of Belgian painter David Vingboons from the town of Mechelen, he himself was born in Amsterdam. His houses in classicist style still adorn the canals, such as the Cromhouthuizen at Herengracht 364-370 (1660-1662), Odeon at Het Singel 460 (1662), Huis Bambeeck at Kloveniersburgwal 77 (1650) and the 'Poppenhuis' at Kloveniersburgwal 95 (1642). Owner Joan Poppen was the wealthiest man in Amsterdam at the time.

### **Belgian cities on the Entrepotdok**

Directly behind Amsterdam Zoo Artis are the former bonded warehouses: the Entrepotdok. It was built between 1827-1839 and comprised a total of 98 warehouses: the longest row of warehouses in Europe. They were named after Dutch and Belgian cities. In alphabetical order, From West to East the names of nine Belgian cities are: Cortrijk, Dinant, Diest, Ghent, Leuven, Luik, Mechelen, Namur, Ostend. It is not at all strange that Belgian names are also included in the names, seeing that both countries were united in one kingdom during a time in which the capital would alternate between Brussels and Amsterdam. During a major renovation from 1980-1985, the warehouses were converted into apartments with various shops, restaurants and other companies on the ground floor.

### **Coats of arms of Antwerp and Brussels on the façade of the Centraal Station**

The façade of Amsterdam's Central Station is adorned with the coats of arms of fifteen European cities, each depicted on colourful enamelled tiles of about 1 x 1 metre wide. Between Paris and London you will find

Brussels and Antwerp. The coats of arms are all part of the lavish decorations of the station that opened in 1889, which was considered to be a 'triumphal arch of transport' at the time.

### **Statues by Louis Royer**

The Mechelen artist Louis Royer (1793-1863) sculpted two statues of famous Amsterdam artists. Since 1852, the statue of Rembrandt has been on the square, named after him. To Belgians, the fact that the people of Amsterdam considered bronze to be too expensive back then will be seen as typical Dutch stinginess; the cast-iron statue has a coat of bronze-coloured paint. The statue of the 17th century poet and playwright Joost van den Vondel is, however, a true bronze. This statue by Louis Royer has adorned the Vondelpark since 1867.

### **Mozes and Aäronkerk on Waterlooplein**

Since 1841, Waterlooplein has been the location for the famous Mozes and Aäronkerk, designed by architect Tieleman Franciscus Suys (1783-1861) from Ostend. The church, build in neo-classicist style is a prominent landmark on this popular square. The interior, including the altar has stood the test of time beautifully. Suys also rebuilt the Ronde Lutherse Kerk at the Singel.

### **Flemish Arts Centre De Brakke Grond**

Since 1981, Flemish Arts Centre De Brakke Grond has been located at Nes 43. It aims to promote the Flemish cultural identity in the Netherlands. There are regular exhibitions, concerts and performances, and not just by Flemish artists. It also has a café-restaurant that serves predominantly Flemish dishes. On the terrace the Flemish beer is popular among the people in Amsterdam. Its name 'de Brakke Grond' refers to the boggy area that it once was.

### **Buildings by Belgian architects**

In Amsterdam several buildings by Belgian architects can be admired, for instance by Bob van Reeth of the Antwerp firm AWG. He used to be the supervisor of the Zuidas with the objective to make this a prime European location for international companies. Luxury apartment building Detroit at the Veemkade (2008) and a number of residential buildings on the Java island have also been designed by him.

A striking apartment building on the KNSM island is Barcelona from 1993. It was designed by Belgian architect Bruno Albert. The gateway, of colossal proportions, was designed by Antwerp artist Narcisse Tordoir (1954). It consists of 48 square pieces of artwork that look like widows

with the curtains pulled to the side, behind which shapes can be seen, such as noses, faces, flowers or a pipe.

Nine bridges from Belgian artist couple

Java island, east of Amsterdam Central Station, is divided by four narrow canals. The separate parts of the island can be reached across nine bridges for cyclists and pedestrians. They each have their own style and imagery. They were designed by Belgian artist couple Guy Rombouts and Monika Droste in 1994.

Java island is part of what used to be the Oostelijk Havengebied, the eastern docklands. From 1990 it has been developed as a residential area with unique architecture. It is now considered to be one of the most attractive places to live.

### **Belgian restaurant Lieve**

For over twenty years, Belgian restaurant Live has been located at the Herengracht with its signature lavish hospitality. There are three ways of dining to choose from: gastronomic, baroque or living room style.

[restaurantlieve.nl](http://restaurantlieve.nl)

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**About Amsterdam Marketing**

Amsterdam Marketing is the city marketing organisation of the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area, active in the fields of promotion, information, research and services. Our ambition is to put this region on the map as one of the five most attractive metropolitan areas in Europe for its residents, visitors, businesses and influential groups. Under the motto "I amsterdam", we present the region as a dynamic place to live and work, an attractive travel destination and a test market for innovation.