

amsterdam marketing

PRESS FEATURE: DENIM in AMSTERDAM

Indigo Amsterdam: The heart of the global denim industry

There are many famous characteristics associated with Amsterdam, be it the hundreds of thousands of bicycles in the city, its centuries-old canals, bridges and buildings, or even its renowned liberal attitudes. But there's another major characteristic that may yet surprise many: Amsterdam has the highest concentration of jeans brands in the world. Figures actually show that Amsterdam's inhabitants own and wear more jeans than those of any other city, and that they're willing to spend more money on them, too.

Setting trends with denim

The City of Amsterdam's department of Research & Statistics (O+S) conservatively estimates that the denim cluster in Amsterdam is worth an estimated €500 million, but Mariette Hoitink of innovation and creativity platform House of Denim – a think tank formed to support emerging R&D facilities, develop craftsmanship and encourage sustainability in the denim industry – believes the real number is even higher.

"Don't call Amsterdam a fashion capital; it's a title we can't live up to yet. But we're a denim capital for sure," she says. "When Dutch fashion designers make it big they go abroad – just look at Viktor&Rolf or Iris van Herpen. The denim industry, on the other hand, comes to us. That's our strong point. We're obviously doing something right."

Bold beginnings

It all began in the 1990s when Pepe Jeans moved its headquarters from London to Amsterdam and Dutch brand G-Star conquered the international market. It wasn't long before these two brands were the front runners in the denim industry. In time, some of their most talented employees started their own denim labels, like the eco-conscious K.O.I. and Blue Blood. Now Tommy Hilfiger and Levi's Vintage Clothes reside here too, as well as exciting Dutch brands such as Amsterdams Blauw – the dedicated jeans label of Scotch & Soda.

As one of the founding fathers of Blue Blood, the appropriately named Jason Denham was a pioneer of high-end jeans. The Brit moved to the city 18 years ago while working for Pepe Jeans and immediately spotted its potential. From Blue Blood, he went on to launch his own creative label, Denham the Jeanmaker.

Cutting-edge initiatives

With all this in mind, it's no wonder the city is home to some of the world's most exciting denim initiatives. For example, the House of Denim has launched the Jean School, which hosts technical programmes in denim design. Then there's Amsterdam Denim Days, a denim-specific fashion convention bringing together brands, producers, consumers, press and designers, which took place in May.

Green is the new blue

Every self-respecting jeans brand has one eye on the environment and the Amsterdam denim industry is a leader in sustainable production. "Consumers are critical and well-informed when it comes to their food; we want them to apply this attitude, starting with denim, to clothing," says Hoitink.

Early in 2014, G-Star launched a collaboration with singer Pharrell Williams and Bionic Yarn to create a denim line using thread made from recycled plastic collected from the ocean. And while Swedish brand Nudie may be widely recognised as the most durable denim brand, Dutch company Kuyichi was the first to use 100% organic cotton and wood pulp from eucalyptus trees.

In De Hallen a group of companies and organisations collaborate under the name '[Denim city HQ](#)'. It is a meeting point for denim education, aimed at innovation and sustainability.

Amsterdam Denim Days

Last spring (11 – 17 April) Amsterdam was the centre of attention for everyone with a heart for denim. For six days the city will have a public program with presentations of new products and the Blueprint event in the Westergasfabriek. [Amsterdam Denim Days](#) hosts 3 events: Kingpins, a trade show for denim professionals (invite only), Blueprint, the consumer event with workshops and exhibitions, and City Center, the public program (free entrance). Amsterdam Denim Days is a Dutch initiative and will be launched for the very first time at New York in 2017 as New York Denim Days.

Check out these denim specialists in Amsterdam

Pepe Jeans London
Kalverstraat 88-90
www.pepejeans.com

Denham The Jeanmaker
Hobbemastraat 8 / Prinsengracht 495 (M) / Runstraat 17 (F) /
Prinsengracht 531 www.denhamthejeanmaker.com

G-Star
PC Hoofdstraat 24-28
www.gstar.com

Hilfiger Denim
PC Hoofdstraat 125
nl.tommy.com

Amsterdams Blauw
Huidenstraat 3-5 / Heiligeweg 34-36 / Berenstraat 15
www.scotch-soda.com

K.O.I.
de Bijenkorf, Dam 1
www.kingsofindigo.com

Blue Blood
PC Hoofdstraat 142 / Cornelis Schuytstraat 18
www.bluebloodbrand.com

For additional information:

House of Denim (www.houseofdenim.org) – a think tank formed to support emerging R&D facilities, develop craftsmanship and encourage sustainability in the denim industry.

MODINT (www.modint.nl) – a large trade association of manufacturers, importers, agents and wholesalers of clothing, fashion accessories, carpet and (interior) textiles.

Dutch Fashion Foundation (www.dutchfashionfoundation.com) – a non-profit Dutch fashion incubator for upcoming Dutch fashion designers.

Premsele (www.premsele.com) – the Netherlands Institute for Design and Fashion.

Modefabriek (www.modefabriek.nl) – national and international fashion event at Amsterdam RAI.

Mercedes-Benz FashionWeek Amsterdam (www.fashionweek.nl) – Twice-yearly event bringing together the cream of the international fashion scene, as well as reaching out to the general public.

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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 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.