

amsterdam marketing

PRESS FEATURE

Scandinavia in Amsterdam

Scandinavia and the Dutch capital have age-old ties. From the end of the Middle Ages, a brisk trade grew between the area around the Baltic Sea and Amsterdam, of which the Sint Olofskapel is testament. In the 17th century in particular, the relationships between Sweden, Denmark and Norway and Amsterdam grew to be important. Amsterdam ships transported large amounts of grain from the Baltic countries, making Amsterdam the granary of Europe. Prominent merchants had interests in Sweden. Remarkable buildings that are a reminder of that period are, for instance, Huis met de Hoofden and the Trippenhuis. Today, Amsterdam remains a favourite destination for Scandinavian visitors.

Sweden in Amsterdam

Swedish copper for the Ronde Lutherse Kerk

The beginning of Het Singel is dominated by the copper dome of the Ronde Lutherse Kerk at Singel 11, dating from 1668. The Lutheran parish thrived in the 17th century because of the arrival of immigrants from the Baltic area. The Swedish king granted free toll for the export of copper roof sheets. The building costs of the church were partly paid by Lutherans living abroad. The building costs amounted to 320,000 Dutch guilders, an immense sum of money at the time. Since 1975 the church has been used as a conference centre for the Renaissance Hotel.

House with the Heads owned by weapons dealer Louis de Geer

Keizersgracht 123 is a beautiful double residence from 1622 in Dutch renaissance style. In 1634, merchant Nicolaas Sohier sold these valuable premises to banker, weapons dealer and iron mogul Louis de Geer, who had built a true trade empire for himself in Sweden. He immigrated to Sweden in 1629, mainly to avoid having to pay toll in the Sound. The Geer was granted the monopoly on the copper and iron trade by the Swedish king. He introduced the Walloon blast furnace in Sweden and was the first to build a large-scale business complex.

When De Geer moved to the Huis met de Hoofden (House with the Heads) in 1634, this house turned into a welcoming meeting point for the freethinkers of the day who had found a safe haven in tolerant Amsterdam.

In 1641, De Geer was ennobled by the Swedish king. The title allowed him to buy three quarters of the lands he had leased. His house in Stockholm now houses the Dutch embassy.

The Huis met de Hoofden in Amsterdam was built after the design of architect Hendrick de Keyser. The six heads represent Roman gods, from left to right: Apollo, Ceres, Mercury, Minerva, Bacchus and Diana.

The King of Sweden

At Keizersgracht 149 the house D’Koning van Zweden is located. The 18th century façade with a straight cornice is four windows wide. There used to be a statue of a king, presumably Gustaaf Adolf, in the façade, but that has disappeared. Here, the oldest mail-order company in the world was located (since 1857), called ‘De Koning van Zweden’, which was dissolved in 1982.

Trippenhuis

At Kloveniersburgwal 29 is a mansion with the widest façade of all canal-side houses. It was built in 1660-1662 as the residence for the iron and weapons dealers Louis and Hendrick Trip. They had spent a few years in Sweden during their childhoods where their uncle Louis de Geer (1587-1652) had gained a strong position in the weapon trade and industry. After they had taken over a large iron foundry in the Swedish town of Julethabruk the trade flourished and allowed them to build their own residence at the Kloveniersburgwal. It was designed by Justus Vingboons in Dutch Classicism style. The richly sculptured façade was unparalleled for Amsterdam residences and emphasises the importance of the (weapons) trade for peace and prosperity: canons and cannonballs, chimneys as mortars, olive and palm branches under a window. Their message: ‘From War Comes Peace’. Today it is the seat of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Decorative stone tablet Sweeden

It was not until the beginning of the 18th century that the houses in Amsterdam were provided with numbers. Before that time, the addresses of the houses were marked by their names, depicted on decorative stone tablets on their façades. Of the thousands of stone tablets from the 17th and 18th century, over eight hundred have remained. Residents often chose a name that referred to their profession, or the city or country they were originally from or traded with. At Nieuwe Uilenburgerstraat 1 warehouse Sweeden is located with a stone tablet from 1716. In the 18th century, the house next to it was occupied by the brothers Jan en Jacob Bolten, who traded in Swedish bar iron and copper. Their warehouse,

D'Witte Leeuw (the White Lion) located at number 3 burnt down in 1929, but was later rebuilt.

Norway in Amsterdam

Sint Olofskapel

The medieval Sint Olofskapel is the second oldest church in Amsterdam. The chapel was built in 1450 as a 'schipperskerkje' (little skipper's church), a church for Norwegian seamen. The name of the chapel refers to the Norwegian King Olof, who was canonised and is the patron saint of seamen. Since 1992, the chapel has been used as a conference centre. Of the original furniture, the 'herenbank' – the pew Admiral De Ruyter always used when he was in Amsterdam – remains. The chapel can be accessed by an underground tunnel from hotel NH Barbizon Palace, Prins Hendrikkade 59-72.

Statue of Sint Olof

When the Norwegian king Haakon VII visited Amsterdam in 1954, a wooden statue in honour of Saint Olof was unveiled in the side wall of the house at Zeedijk 16. It was unveiled when the king passed the Oudezijds kolk in a canal boat. The amusing statue – that looks as if it has been there for ages – was sculpted by Anton Witzel.

Anslo's Hofje, founded by Claes Claeszoon from Oslo

One of Amsterdam's most beautiful 'hofjes', courtyards with alms-houses around it, is the Claes Claeszhofje, or Anslo's Hofje, at Eerste Egelantiersdwarstraat 1-5. It was founded in 1626 by Claes Claeszoon Anslo (1555-1632), who was born in Anslo, better known as Oslo. He emigrated from Norway circa 1580 and settled in Amsterdam, where he became a wealthy cloth merchant. In those days the courtyard was meant for elderly Mennonite women. Nowadays, music students from the Amsterdam conservatory live there.

Denmark in Amsterdam

Whalers of the Noordse Compagnie

In 1614, merchants from Amsterdam and the town of Hoorn founded the Noordse- of Groenlandse Walvisch Compagnie (the Northern or Greenland Whaling Company). From that year on the whaling trade was almost completely controlled by Dutch whalers. At Keizersgracht 40-44 three identical warehouses with stepped gables from 1621 bear the inscription 'Groenland'. These warehouses were built for the Greenland Whaling Company. Brick wells were used to store the whale oil in.

17th century granaries

In the 17th century, Amsterdam ships transported large amounts of grain from the Baltic countries, making Amsterdam the granary of Europe. This grain was stored in warehouses. Because there was not enough room in the existing city, three islands were created to the northwest of the harbour, where various warehouses can still be found, particularly on the Prinseneiland. The Amsterdam merchants took products such as cloth, salt and wine with them on their sea voyages to Denmark, Sweden and Norway and sold them here. The products to be sold came from the South of Europe and ensured the holds of the ships were always stocked during the voyage.

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About Amsterdam Marketing

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