

Royal
TRAVEL CENTER
making dreams a reality

Presents

Holland in Bloom



And hidden gems

April 15 – 25, 2020

Small Group Limited to 16 Participants

MAASTRACHT

Oldest city in the Netherlands



*Herenhof Gardens *Valkenburg and the Velvet Cave

*Margraten and the American War Cemetery

THE HAGUE

*Mauritshuis Museum (Girl with a Pearl Earring, The Goldfinch)

*Panorama Mesdag Museum



OTTERLO

*Kroller-Muller Museum (extensive Van Gogh collection)



OOSTERBOOK

*Airborne Museum (A Bridge Too Far)

DELFT

City of Vermeer

ROTTERDAM

*Architecture Tour

ALSMEER

*Flora Holland (World's largest flower auction)

LISSE

*Keukenhof Gardens



AMSTERDAM

*Rijksmuseum



*Private Saloon Boat for lunch *Private garden and mansion

*Zaandam for Zaanse Schans *Walking tour of Edam

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ITINERARY



VIRTUOSO MEMBER.
SPECIALISTS IN THE ART OF TRAVEL

Independent affiliate of McCabe World Travel

15 Wed Amsterdam/Maastricht

Welcome to Holland. Your English-speaking guide meets you at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport for your private motor coach journey to historic **Maastricht**.

It is the oldest city in the Netherlands and has ripened well with age with complex and lively cultural overtones added over centuries by the Romans, Germans and French. This rich cultural palette is the secret behind the city's attractiveness, drawing visitors to the historic city center and a wealth of museums and festivals – making each visit a fascinating new experience. Also, it is the hometown of the famous violin player Andre Rieu.

Upon arrival in Maastricht you will check in at the **Kruisherhotel**, one of the most spectacular hotels in the Netherlands. The building from the 15th century was the former Kruisher cloister. Together with the monumental gothic church, this complex has been transformed into a very special designer hotel.

www.chateauhotels.nl/kruisherhotel-maastricht/home

Welcome dinner tonight at **Restaurant Petit Boneur**.

Accommodation: Kruisherhotel (D)

16 Thu Maastricht

This morning's walking tour includes all the highlights and some lesser trodden paths. The center of Maastricht is compact and easy to explore on foot. The numerous (art) museums, historic churches, historic buildings, culinary delights, and shopping- it's all there and close at hand. There is the restored Stokstraat quarter, the old ramparts, the various parks and the famous Vrijthof Square. Maastricht is the art of fine living where you never feel lost but very much at home.

www.vvv-maastricht.eu/city.html

This afternoon at **Heerenhof Gardens** we have a guided tour with the owner followed by lunch. The long, narrow garden of Heerenhof has been divided into several separate spaces that flow into each other. It unites many different styles of garden design: a landscape garden in which the visitor walks along the curved path, a round garden - the so-called "green room" and a symmetrical linear garden, in which the observer becomes the center.

Evening at leisure.

Accommodation: Kruisherhotel (B, L)

17 Fri Maastricht

This morning we visit **Valkenburg**, the charming historical little village also known as the Marlstone Town (Lime stone). Notice the typical yellow marlstone throughout the town, on the surface (houses) and underground.

Your highlight is an exclusive private visit to the spectacular and surprising **Velvet Cave**. It accommodates numerous mysteries and a treasure of impressive charcoal mural paintings dating between 100 and 150 years old! Additionally, there are some exceptional marlstone sculptures and a romantic refuge chapel dating back to the French occupation period.

In September 1944 during World War II, for 6 days and six nights the cave served as a hospital for American soldiers and a shelter for Jewish and local people. There is a large section in the Velvet Cave where American soldiers left charcoal reflection paintings from their faces on the walls, including their names and hundreds of other names of soldiers who stayed in this cave. www.kasteelvalkenburg.nl

Following lunch at Restaurant Haselderhof, we drive through picturesque villages on the way to Margraten and the World War II **American War Cemetery**, the second largest American cemetery in Europe. Omaha Beach in Normandy is the largest.

The tall memorial tower can be seen before reaching the cemetery, which covers 65.5 acres. The walls on either side of the Court of Honor contain 1,722 missing soldiers who gave their lives in the service of their country and who rest in unknown graves.

Beyond the chapel and tower is the burial area. Here rest 8,301 American soldiers including 6 Medal of Honor.

www.abmc.gov/cemeteries/cemeteries/ne.php

The journey includes a visit to the Three-Country Point located on top of the Vaalserberg. The Vaalserberg is a hill with a height of 322.7 meters (1,059 ft.) above NAP, the highest point in mainland Netherlands and the location of the tripoint between Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands. Its summit is therefore called the Drielandenpunt ("three country point") in Dutch.

Dinner at leisure.

Accommodation: Kruisherhotel (B, L)

18 Sat The Hague

After breakfast and morning checkout we head for Otterlo and the **Kröller-Müller Museum** and Sculpture Garden located in the National Park Hoge Veluwe. The museum houses a world-famous collection of fine art, mainly from the 19th and 20th centuries to include Monet, Picasso, Isaac Israel, Mondrian, Latour, Toorop. The focal points are the extensive range of works by **Vincent Van Gogh** and the amazing sculpture garden covering 50 acres with works by Rodin, Moore, Jean Dubuffet, Hepworth, Serra, Pan and others.

Lunch is at local **Restaurant De Waldhoorn** in the picturesque village center.

Our tour continues to nearby Oosterbeek for a guided tour through the off the beaten path **Airborne Museum** (A Bridge Too Far). The Airborne museum, located in Villa Hartenstein reopened in September 2009 after a large renovation. It shows the course of events during the Battle of Arnhem, which took place in September 1944. The “Battle for the Rhine Bridge” was part of the operation “Market Garden”. British, American and Polish airborne forces were to capture the bridges over rivers and waterways from the Belgian border to Arnhem. The awarded underground Airborne Experience showcases the war in all its intensity.

Late afternoon arrival in The Hague, the “Royal City”.

Dinner tonight in your hotel.

Accommodation: **Carlton Ambassador Hotel** (B, L, D)

19 Sun The Hague

Your morning’s scenic walking tour stops at the famous **Mauritshuis Museum** for a guided tour. The museum reopened in 2014 after an extensive renovation and is home to the very best Dutch Golden Age paintings. The compact, yet world-renowned collection is housed in a 17th century building. Masterpieces such as Vermeer’s Girl with a Pearl Earring, The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp by Rembrandt, The Goldfinch by Fabritius and The Bull by Potter are on permanent display in the intimate rooms. More than two hundred top works from Dutch and Flemish masters are on display in the historic yet intimate interior, with its silken wall covering, sparkling chandeliers and monumental painted ceilings.

Genre paintings by Jan Steen, landscapes by Jacob van Ruisdael, still lifes by Adrian Coorte and portraits by Rubens offer a rich and varied representation of the best 17th century Dutch and Flemish painting. www.mauritshuis.nl

Our next visit is the spectacular **Panorama Mesdag Museum**. The Panorama is a cylindrical painting, more than 14 meters high and 120 meters in circumference. The vista of the sea, the dunes and Scheveningen village were painted by Hendrik Willem Mesdag in 1881. His wife Sientje Mesdag and several other painters of The Hague School also worked on this amazing painting. It is the oldest 19th century panorama in the world in its original site. Amazing and for sure a must-see in The Hague. www.mesdag.nl

Afternoon at leisure.

Tonight’s dining experience is aboard the **Hoftrammm**. A local tram journey (2-hours) through The Hague and a 4-course dinner including wine served by famous chef Pierre Wind. www.hoftrammm.nl/en

Accommodation: **Carlton Ambassador Hotel** (B, L, D)

20 Mon The Hague

This morning we travel by coach to the medieval city of Delft known for its manufacture of Delftware. We visit one of the two original remaining manufacturers of authentic **Delftse Pauw**. The tour through the small family company shows the process of making Delftware and the painters room. www.delftpottery.com

The city center of Delft is one of the best-preserved examples of a medieval Dutch town. It is a city with rich historic and cultural heritage. It is the city of the painter Johannes Vermeer and the burial ground of members of the Royal family in the crypt of the **New Church**. In the **Old Church** are the graves of Johannes Vermeer and great ocean commanders Piet Hein and Maarten Tromp and the spectacular stained-glass windows by the famous artist Joep Nicolas. www.nieuwekerk-delft.nl

From Delft it is a short drive to Rotterdam, where lunch is served at Brasserie **NRC**.

Our **Architecture Tour** highlights the ins and outs of Rotterdam’s architecture and its amazing sights of the renewed architecture in the period right after World War II. In the 80s and 90s, the city received its definite status with the Cube Homes of Piet Blom, the Art Hall Museum (Kunsthal) by Rem Koohaas and the Netherlands Architecture Institute.

Remainder of the day at leisure.

Accommodation: **Carlton Ambassador Hotel** (B, L)

21 Tue Amsterdam

Today you will see Holland in bloom. It begins with a guided tour of the **Flora Holland** flower auction in Aalsmeer. The auction compares in size to the Principality of Monaco. You will see how the auction process works as it sends about 35 million cut flowers of 15000 varieties each day around the world. www.floraholland.com.

Next visit is **Keukenhof gardens** which cover 70 acres on which roughly 8 million bulbs are planted every year. Every garden has a specific design and character. See the exhibition of some 30 sculptures and other objects d'art throughout the park. www.keukenhof.nl

A typical homemade Dutch lunch is at the private home of the Verhoef Family located in a residential area close to the Keukenhof. exhibit.

Mid-afternoon hotel check-in with leisure time to explore Amsterdam on your own.

Accommodation: Hotel Pulitzer (B, L)

22 Wed Amsterdam

After breakfast our art historian guide takes you on a scenic walk to the famous **Rijksmuseum** for a guided tour of this national museum of Dutch art and history.

Your guide will introduce you to a period known as the Dutch Golden Age, a time of great wealth and prosperity but also of unbridled cultural and artistic growth.

In the Eregerij (Gallery of Honor) is a large selection of paintings dedicated to this period, the renowned Dutch artists such as Vermeer (The Milkmaid), Rembrandt, Hals, Steen, but also Ruisdael, Heda and others. The Gallery of Honor extends to a room that was specifically created to display Rembrandt's most famous painting, The Night Watch. www.rijksmuseum.nl

Lunch is aboard the private historic **Saloon Boat**. Following the two-hour lunch cruise through the Amsterdam canals we have a special walking tour through the city center with sights which go unseen by most tourists and even local people.

Discover the hidden treasures behind the facades of Amsterdam's most impressive mansions and gardens. See and learn more about 17th - 20th century gable architecture, interiors, garden history and how the merchant families lived. The huge gardens behind some of the (private) mansions are Amsterdam's best-kept secret! We visit the 17th century Van Loon mansion, as well as an almshouse in the Golden Bend, the best area in Amsterdam. You also visit the Beguines Court with the oldest wooden house in Amsterdam and the famous Red Light district. www.museumvanloon.nl

Remainder of day at leisure.

Accommodation: Hotel Pulitzer (B, L)

23 Thu Amsterdam

This morning we are off to the **Zaanse Schans** with its traditional characteristic green wooden houses, charming stylized gardens, small humpbacked bridges, tradesmen's workshops, historic windmills and engaging little shops, The Zaanse Schans gives the feeling of stepping back into the 17th and 18th century. It is a colorful living and working neighborhood on the banks of the river Zaan. www.zaanseschans.nl

The tour continues with a short drive to the historical and picturesque village of **Edam** in northwest Netherlands in the province of North Holland. Combined with Volendam, Edam forms the municipality of Edam-Volendam. Edam is famous as the original source of the cheese with the same name.

After the guided walk through the historical city center, lunch is served at Restaurant L'Auberge.

Remainder of the day at leisure.

Accommodation: Hotel Pulitzer (B, L)

24 Fri Amsterdam

This morning we travel by coach to nearby Loenen **aan de Vecht**, where we board a historical private saloon boat for a 2.5-hour cruise on the Vecht River. The scenic cruise encompasses rich mansions in the direction of Slot Zuylen Castle and ending in the picturesque village of Oud Zuylen, where lunch is served at Brasserie La Sauciere.

An exclusive guided tour through **Castle Zuylen** follows. It is situated on the river Vecht in the tiny village of Oud-Zuilen near Utrecht. Whilst retaining many of its medieval castle like features it was converted into a country mansion in the 18th century.

Farewell dinner tonight at **Restaurant/Nursery De Kas**.

Accommodation: Hotel Pulitzer (B, L, D)

25 Sat Amsterdam/USA

Transfer included to Schiphol Airport for your return flight. (B)

Cost per person based on double occupancy: 4900 Euro

Single occupancy- 5920 Euro

Inclusions

- English-speaking guide throughout the tour..
- Transfers by luxurious private coach (30-seater).
- Entrance fees and special / exclusive sights.
- Three nights at the Kruisherhotel in Maastricht (deluxe room for single use and prestige room for double use) including breakfast and all taxes.
- Three nights at the Carlton Ambassador Hotel in The Hague (signature room for both single and double use) including breakfast and all taxes.
- Four nights at the Pulitzer Hotel in Amsterdam (classic room for both single and double use) including breakfast and all taxes.
- Dinner including beverages at Restaurant Petit Bonheur in Maastricht.
- Dinner including beverages at the Carlton Ambassador Hotel in The Hague.
- Dinner including beverages at the Hoftramm in The Hague.
- Dinner including beverages at Restaurant De Kas in Amsterdam.
- Lunch including beverages at the Heerenhof Gardens in Valkenburg.
- Lunch including beverages at the Haselderhof in Valkenburg.
- Lunch including beverages at Restaurant De Waldhoorn.
- Lunch including beverages at NRC Café in Rotterdam.
- Lunch including beverages at local home in Lisse.
- Lunch including beverages at L'Augerge Dam in Edam.
- Lunch including beverages at Restaurant La Sauciere in Oud Zuylen.
- Two hours cruise by private historical saloon boat including lunch with coffee and tea.
- Cruise by historical saloon boat over the Vecht River.
- Parking fees and gasoline.
- 21% VAT as well as local taxes.

Exclusions

- Meals and beverages not mentioned.
- Personal expenses.
- Gratuities.
- Airline tickets
- Travel Protection

Terms and Conditions

Deposit - 1000 euro non-refundable.

Final Payment - March 4, 2020 . 100% cancellation penalty. Trip insurance is highly recommended.

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