

- Top tips for what to do when the business day is over
- Go green with the best eco-conscious venues and services
- Get physical with great active options for team-building and incentive trips

Meet you in Holland



From converted factories to luxury heritage castles, the Amsterdam metropolitan area has the perfect venue for your MICE event





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In partnership with
Time Out Amsterdam

Editor Nina Siegal
Project Editor Megan Roberts
Design Karen Willey

Affordable luxury 06

Want five-star amenities without the five-star price tag? From stately homes to castles, the Amsterdam metropolitan area boasts plenty of venues and services that are heavy on luxe and surprisingly light on the wallet

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Raise your pulse a little with active incentives galore, including – of course – that most Dutch of pastimes: cycling. Let's get physical!

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If you want to be in the middle of it all, surrounded by award-winning contemporary architecture side by side with historical buildings, head to Amsterdam or Utrecht for your perfect MICE experience

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The Dutch live by and on the water so it's no surprise there are plenty of aqueous options for your MICE event, from dinner in an operational pumping station to venues with wonderful watery views

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From ancient manor houses and not-so ancient castles through converted warehouses to a former gasworks, if you're looking for the perfect hybrid of historic grandeur and modern convenience, look no further

Successful support 21

Because there's no 'I' in team, we've rounded up the best professional conference organisers, destination management companies, support staff, translators and more to make your corporate event a complete success



AMRÁTH HOTEL MAARSBERGEN
 WOUDEBERGSEWEG 44
 3953 MH MAARSBERGEN
 TEL. +31 (0)343 47 55 22
 INFO@HOTELMAARSBERGEN.NL
 WWW.HOTELMAARSBERGEN.NL



PARTNER IN MEETINGS

Uw vergadering centraal in Nederland, dicht bij de snelweg, maar toch in een groene, rustige omgeving en met voldoende gratis parkeermogelijkheden? Het nieuw gebouwde Amrath Hotel Maarsbergen, begin 2010 geopend, is een uitermate geschikte locatie voor al uw zakelijke bijeenkomsten.

91 kamers/rooms
 8 vergaderzalen/
 meeting rooms:
 - daglicht/day light
 - privé buitenruimte/
 private outdoor space
 - draadloos internet/
 wireless internet
 - 2-170 personen/
 persons

Your meeting in the middle of the Netherlands, near the highway, but with green, peaceful surroundings and its own parking space? Then the new Amrath Hotel Maarsbergen, opened in 2010, is the perfect venue for all your business meetings.

Meet you in Holland

Whether you're organising a meeting (M), arranging an incentive trip (I), planning a conference (C) or coordinating an event (E), the Netherlands is the perfect place to do it

Given its compact size and compact nature, it's almost no surprise that every square metre of the Netherlands is loaded with possibilities for unique experiences. Past and present literally sit side by side: 17th-century warehouses rub shoulders with cutting-edge modern architecture; bustling metropolises give way to unique polder landscapes within just a few kilometres.

Home to one of the world's most modern and efficient airports, the Netherlands is particularly accessible. Some 90 airlines serve Amsterdam Airport Schiphol (voted the best airport in Europe), travelling to 153 European and 109 interconti-

ental destinations. High-speed rail networks serve dozens of destinations on a daily basis, including Brussels (2 hr), Frankfurt (4 hr) and Paris (3 hr 20 min). Fast and efficient public transport across the compact country means you never need waste valuable meeting time travelling to your final destination.

With centuries of experience in international relations, the Dutch population is almost without exception multilingual, with English the unofficial second language. Having been a top-ten conference destination for many years, the Netherlands boasts a plethora of suitable MICE venues, from basic to blow-out, all equipped

with state-of-the-art communication and audiovisual facilities – not to mention a multitude of pragmatic professional organisers.

But all work and no play makes for a very dull conference. Luckily, the Netherlands offers plenty of unique down-time activities perfect for an incentive trip or post-meeting wind-down. Cruise Amsterdam's historic canals by night, take a guided bike tour further afield or check out many a world-class cultural institution.

Given its small size and compact nature, it's almost no surprise that every square metre of the Netherlands is loaded with possibilities for unique experiences

In short, Amsterdam and Utrecht – where MICE Meets Metropolis – have everything you need for a successful business event and more. Now all you need to do is choose.



It is our pleasure to welcome you on board!

Whatever ship or destination you choose... the crew of "Rederij Belle" will make sure you'll feel good. They'll plan your route, the sightseeing along the way and arrange the catering in an optimal way. They'll make sure you and your guests are well taken care of. We have an extensive sailing area, including the river 'de Veete' and the Amsterdam canals. Give it a try and call us for an idea or an offer!

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Kastanje - Hoeve



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- Lunch with products from the region
- Cow-hugging workshop
- Happy Hour

Info & Boekingen:
www.kastanje-hoeve.nl



The Pre-Financing and Guarantee Fund

Given its particularly stable political and economic climate, planning your conference in the Netherlands is very low risk. But those Boy Scouts were on to something when they adopted the motto 'always be prepared', and for unexpected eventualities that could reduce attendance numbers at your event (a pesky Icelandic volcano springs to mind...) the Dutch Pre-Financing and Guarantee Fund (VGF) offers conference organisers insurance at non-commercial rates. And that's not all. This unique instrument in the international world of conventions also offers interest-free loans to finance the initial costs of staging an international conference. Certain conditions apply. Please visit www.holland.com for more information.

Affordable luxury

Wow factor without the 'ow'

A little bit of luxury goes a long way, but you don't have to pay through the nose to get it. Whether you want a historical dinner, a glimpse of the luxe life or an über-decadent, all-inclusive manor-house getaway, the Amsterdam and Utrecht metropolitan areas have great options for less than you might think. So settle back and enjoy the good life – it's all too easy to become accustomed to it.

Amrâth Hotel Maarsbergen



Amrâth Hotel Maarsbergen

Looking for a MICE location near Utrecht? The four-star Amrâth Hotel Maarsbergen is ideal. Situated in the beautiful Utrechtse Heuvelrug National Park, Amrâth Hotel Maarsbergen has eight function rooms, which can accommodate meetings for up to 170 people, and various sporting, educational and cultural trips can be arranged upon request. *Woudenbergseweg 44, 3953 MH Maarsbergen (+31 [0]34 347 5522/hotelmaarsbergen.nl).*

Grand Hotel Karel V

The monumental five-star Grand Hotel



Grand Hotel Karel V



Lead the luxe life at Landgoed Eikenrode

NH Schiphol Airport

The four-star NH Schiphol Airport is conveniently located just ten minutes from Amsterdam Schiphol Airport, offering great connections to the rest of the country by car and public transport. The hotel has 419 modern air-conditioned rooms and fifteen fully equipped, multifunctional conference rooms, which can accommodate five to 500 people. With innovative modular walls, rooms can be separated or joined together in numerous configurations. The hotel offers complete conference services, from registration staff through translators to custom catering. *Kruisweg 495, 2132 NA Hoofddorp, Amsterdam (+31 [0]20 655 0550/nh-hotels.com).*



NH Schiphol Airport

Karel V sits in beautiful landscaped gardens in the centre of Utrecht. A former medieval monastery, the hotel oozes history yet boasts every imaginable modern convenience. The Michelin-starred restaurant offers superlative food, while the informal brasserie is perfect for more relaxed dining. You can choose one of the 13 beautifully refurbished meeting rooms, with a capacity up to 120 guests, all with state-of-the-art audiovisual equipment and optional catering. *Geertebolwerk 1, 3511 XA Utrecht (+31 [0]30 233 7555/karelv.nl).*

Golden Tulip Hotel Lion d'Or Haarlem

Service, style and comfort all abound at the four-star Hotel Lion d'Or, located in historic Haarlem. With 32 rooms, two junior suites, a bar and a brasserie, Lion d'Or also has three multifunctional meeting rooms, suitable for conferences, seminars or receptions, as well as for private luncheons and dinners for groups from six to 120. Easy and frequent public transport to and from Schiphol Airport. *Kruisweg 34, 2011 LC Haarlem (+31 [0]23 532 1750/hotelliondor.nl).*



Golden Tulip Hotel Lion d'Or

Country estates



A magnificent manorial estate with an über-luxe country-house feel

Nestled among the ancient trees and lush ponds of the 3,800 hectare Zuid-Kennemerland National Park – just a stone's throw from Amsterdam – you'll find the Landgoed Duin & Kruidberg estate.

These days, it's one of the country's pre-eminent luxury hotels, combining heritage charm with a Michelin-starred restaurant, state-of-the-art meeting rooms, informal brasserie, dedicated Nespresso coffee bar and 75 deluxe bedrooms. In a sense, it feels as if the estate is finally fulfilling its destiny.

In 1895, tobacco baron Jacob Theodoor Cremer, later liberal politician, then Dutch ambassador to Washington, combined Kruidberg, the former hunting retreat

of William III, with the neighbouring Duin & Berg estate to create one enormous parkland. Cremer

wasted no time in ordering the construction of the largest single residence in the Netherlands. His British wife, Annie, took inspiration from the English country house tradition, and each bedroom had its own designated dressing room and private

bathroom. From its inception, then, Landgoed Duin & Kruidberg was uniquely suited to the luxury hotel experience it provides today.

The house has, of course, been

sensitively modernised since, and it now boasts a purpose-built conference centre, nine meeting rooms

and a dedicated business centre. But in a perfect union of the traditional and the modern, the sense of history remains, and the five period rooms on the ground floor retain a sense of old-world luxury that is the perfect backdrop for everything

from a gourmet seated banquet to a product launch or informal afternoon tea.

We defy you not to fall in love with this place.

From its inception, Landgoed Duin & Kruidberg was uniquely suited to the luxury hotel experience it provides today

Active options

As we all know, all work and no play makes for a very dull conference. There's so much to raise your pulse in Amsterdam and Utrecht, it'd be a crying shame not to partake.



Fun Forest Amsterdam

Let's get physical...

Fun Forest Amsterdam

The Amsterdamse Bos (Amsterdam Wood) is a large woodland park out beyond the Olympic Stadium, with plenty of space for the hyperactive to let off some steam. Near the main entrance you'll find the Fun Forest, a high ropes adventure park which has eight different rope courses through the trees, ranging in height and difficulty. Perfect for team-building, arrangements can be made for catering, too. *Bosbaanweg 3, 1182 DA Amstelveen (+31 [0]20 642 9683/funforest.nl).*

Scoter Experience

Looking for a unique way to explore the city and its surroundings? Look no further. Hire a scooter (with or without a guide) and explore the chocolate-box villages surrounding



For aqueous activities, see **WATER WAYS** page 17



Overleekerhoeve

Amsterdam. Suitable for groups of up to 40, this is a quirky approach to sightseeing, whether it's an incentive trip or part of your conference social programme. *Noordeinde 54a, 1121 AE Landsmeer (+31 [0]20 482 0008/scootereperience.nl).*

Active spots

Be A Team Evenementen



Offering complete team-building services, Be A Team helps you work better with your colleagues by placing you in unique situations that make you reassess the way you relate to one another. With options including boat trips, overnight culinary sailing and cycling trips, survival tours, yoga, GPS and compass tours, or moving silently in a boat through stunning nature, you'll find the perfect solution for your incentive trip, social programme or team-building event. *Zuideinde 15c, 2421 AA Nieuwkoop (+31[0]6 156 51544/beateam.nl).*

Kastanje-Hoeve

Kastanje-Hoeve is a working farm with a self-contained conference room with its own entrance, toilets and kitchen – not to mention an exquisite bar upstairs.

The views across the countryside are breathtaking, but if you want to get a little closer to nature, you can always get up close and personal and try cow-hugging. They'll provide you with coats and boots to slip on over your suit so there's no excuse. Other programmes and workshops can easily be arranged, and full catering is available as well. *Beets 100, 1475 JH Beets (+31 [0]29 940 3487/kastanje-hoeve.nl).*

Overleekerhoeve

Nestled in the pretty village of Monnickendam, conveniently close to Amsterdam but a world away, you'll find fully-renovated period farmhouse Overleekerhoeve. With ample, luxurious space for 26 guests in four apartments and located in the picturesque Waterland region, Overleekerhoeve is the perfect choice for an incentive trip or intimate brainstorming trip. There are plenty of activities to keep you busy, from walking and cycling tours to watersports, and Amsterdam is just 16 kilometres away. *Overleek 25, 1141 PE Monnickendam (+31 [0]20 436 1387/overleekerhoeve.com).*



Kastanje-Hoeve

Wheels for hire

In the market for a way to break up a meeting? Let us help you sort through the rainbow of options: yellow, orange, red and more.



Mac Bike



Probably the most famous bike rental shop in Amsterdam. If you're a little nervous on two wheels, the branding warns cyclists around you that you may be a newbie. *Stationsplein 5 and various locations throughout the city (624 8391/macbike.nl).*

Mike's Bikes



Open 364 days a year; super-friendly, helpful service; well-maintained bikes; great central location; English-language tours throughout the year. *Kerkstraat 134 (622 7970/mikesbiketours/amsterdam.com).*

Orange Bike



One of the cheapest rental places in town, with numerous and varied tour options. You get a lot more for your money. Bikes are new and cool and less conspicuously touristy. *Singel 233 and various locations throughout the city (528 9990/orangebike.nl).*

Rent-a-Bike



The bikes function well and they're more discreet than some other options, although they still have the telltale branding. Regardless, it's another great cheap option. No guided tours. *Damstraat 20-22 (625 5029/bikes.nl).*

Star Bike



You can grab a coffee and a panini at the snack bar of this rental shop before cycling around the city. Bikes are trendy and comfortable and aren't tagged in any way. The best option for quick sightseeing, since it offers a four-hour rental deal. *De Ruyterkade 127 (620 3215/starbikesrental.com).*

Laag Catharijne



A good option if you just want to rent for a couple of hours or a few days in Utrecht. Laag Catharijne has enough bikes to host large groups. *Catharijnesingel 34, Utrecht (030 231 6780/laagcatharijne.nl).*

Join the chain gang



AMSTERDAM TOERISME & CONGRES

Cycle into the past, at Marken

We've road-tested a perfect biking route out of the city to the eastern Waterland region. It might be just 20 minutes by bike from the city centre, but it's like cycling back through time into a 17th-century Dutch landscape painting

START: Central Station, Amsterdam
DESTINATION: Marken (and beyond – if your legs allow)
DISTANCE: Approx. 40km (roundtrip)
DURATION: A leisurely 3-4 hrs

Starting at Amsterdam Central Station, catch the free Buiksloterweg ferry (departures every five-ten minutes throughout the day), and then follow the packs of competitive road cyclists (and the signposts when they become tiny luminous dots on the horizon) through the beautiful countryside to **Durgerdam**.

Riding into the tiny former fishing village is like taking a step back in time. Painted wooden houses line the narrow cobbled street, pet rabbits graze in their runs at the side of the road and hundreds of bobbing masts dot the IJmeer skyline.

Durgerdam consists of little more than this one perfect street, and halfway along it is the village's only

brown café, the **Oude Taveerne** (Durgerdammerdijk 73, 490 4259/ deoudetaveerne.nl), straddling the road: café to the left, deck to the right. With its old-world charm and breathtaking stepped terrace projecting out into the tranquil water, it's the perfect place to stop for a generous portion of *ontbijt* to prepare you for the journey ahead.

If you're lucky enough to find the farthest terrace seats unoccupied, brave the gangway-like wooden jetty that leads to them, settle back and let the gentle sea breeze and lapping water do more to relax you in half an hour than a whole day of yoga ever could.

Appetite temporarily sated (we hope), set off to the north past the numerous former sea inlets home to scores of bird colonies. Just beyond the village of Uitdam, turn west on to the 2km causeway – the *Verbindingsdijk* [Connection] – that has joined the former island of **Marken** to the mainland since 1957. It's perfectly peaceful, bar the occasional whirring of a neon-clad cyclist zooming past.

The village itself, with its clusters of traditional green houses built on piles, is chocolate-box quaint. Cycle lazily around the perimeter, taking in the sturdy lighthouse (nicknamed *het paard* – 'the horse' – for its shape) dating from 1700, and head out on to the Strekdam, an unfinished causeway stretching towards, though not quite meeting, Volendam, to admire the uninterrupted views.

Riding back up the Strekdam and then keeping the IJmeer to your right, complete the circuit of the 'island' to arrive back at the harbour with its myriad cafés, restaurants and bars, just in time for a late lunch.

Don't be surprised if a lady walks past wearing an intricately embroidered bodice, stiff lace cap and wooden clogs, looking like she's just stepped out of a postcard: the traditional dress is a legacy (along with the distinct Marker dialect) of the pre-causeway isolationist days.

Your legs may be aching, and if they are, now's the time to consider your options. You could catch the ferry to the perfectly preserved 'theme park' village that is Volendam, or if your legs are up to it, you could venture as far as the cheese Mecca of Edam. But whether you make it all the way to Edam or turn back at Durgerdam (40km is no walk, or cycle, in the park), this bike ride into the past gives a hint of what the Netherlands has to offer.



AMSTERDAM TOERISME & CONGRES

Going green



Going Green

Orange may be the Netherlands' official hue, but the Dutch MICE sector has a distinctly green tinge

It's a common misconception that a 'green' meeting means inconvenience and expense; that sustainability and economy do not make good bed fellows.

But the Dutch have always been progressive, and so in September 2010, the Netherlands became the first European country to acknowledge the importance of incorporating environmental considerations into its thriving MICE industry by founding a chapter of the Green Meetings Industry Council. The council's aim is to transform the global meetings industry through sustainable practices, minimising environmental impact.

Which is all very noble, you may be thinking, but what's the catch? Well, it turns out there isn't one. It stands to reason that conserving resources saves you money in the short-term, but it's harder to put

a price on the positive impact of such an open display of corporate responsibility – not to mention the potential for tapping new and niche markets.

But in the immortal words of Kermit the Frog, it ain't easy being green – or at least, it didn't used to be. All that changed in autumn 2009, when the Netherlands Board of Tourism and Conventions introduced a CO2 calculator, allowing you to accurately assess the emissions of your event – including the impact of making meeting-related brochures and so on.

But what of the travel considerations? Well, they've got that covered, too. With carbon-offsetting options de rigueur among airlines, Amsterdam Airport

Schiphol aiming for CO2 neutral status by 2012 and the acknowledged efficiency of (inter)national

rail travel, the Netherlands' transport specs are pretty flippin' green. And that's not all: with water literally everywhere around Amsterdam and Utrecht (and boat travel more environmentally sustainable than coaches, taxis or cars), getting an electric boat to your MICE event not only gives you a unique perspective on your city of choice, it also seriously ups your green credentials.

Of course, the really eco-conscious among you will go truly Dutch and hop on a bike when you get here.



In the immortal words of Kermit the Frog, it ain't easy being green – or at least, it didn't used to be



Casa 400 electric scooters

The most eco-friendly way to get around a city may be under your own steam, but hours of walking or biking can leave your legs feeling like lead and your spirit broken. Hiring a car is expensive and impractical in a compact city like Amsterdam or Utrecht, and sightseeing from a packed tram or bus isn't exactly practical. But there is a convenient alternative: Casa 400, a hotel located near Amstel Station and the Amstel Business Park, now rents eco-friendly, easy-to-ride electric scooters. The day rate is just €40 and that's all you pay – no need to fill the petrol tank – and the scooters can legally use the bike paths, meaning you can zip comfortably and silently throughout the city and beyond. The electric charge should last all day, though it depends on your speed: ride sensibly and you can cover up to 50km. If you get caught out, though, don't panic: the forward-thinking, eco-conscious city of Amsterdam is fully supportive of electric transport, and so you'll find free electric charging points dotted about the city – which, it goes without saying, are powered by green electricity.

Eerste Ringdijkstraat 4, 1097 BC Amsterdam (+31 (0)20 665 11 71/hotelcasa400.nl).

The key to going green

Green Key accreditation unlocks the door to sustainable MICE practices

Even with the best of intentions, it isn't always easy to be sure of the eco credentials of your MICE venue. That's where the Green Key eco-rating programme comes into its own. An internationally recognised graduated classification system, Green Key rewards hotels and resorts that show genuine commitment to minimising their environmental impact. Analysing water, energy and chemical usage as well as waste management, Green Key grades each venue from one to five, then offers feedback on how they can further improve their sustainability – a win-win situation. Currently, some 450 Dutch companies operating within the tourism and MICE industries have achieved 'Green Key' status – many attaining the highest level. The award is valid for just one year, and during which time control



visits are made to ensure the rating is justified, so green credentials are guaranteed. To make things even easier, you can do a specific search for Green Key venues at holland.com/meetings/en/green-meetings. Eco-a-go-go. For more information, log on to greenkey.nl.

Eco Venues

In the area around Amsterdam and Utrecht are many off-the-beaten-track locations, all within 60 kilometres of the international airport and all specialising in environmentally-friendly MICE events.

Antropia

Capacity of largest space: 250
Distance from airport: 54km
Parking: 200 spaces
Restaurants: 1

Working on the 'triple P' principle – people, planet, prosperity – Antropia is the first climate-neutral culture and conference centre in the Netherlands, and has been rewarded with a coveted golden Green Key accolade. A special arrangement with NS rail service means delegates can travel to Antropia from anywhere in the Netherlands for just €16. The charming restaurant serves freshly prepared organic, macrobiotic cuisine, and you can offset your carbon emissions from as little as €0.24 per

delegate. All that, plus a beautiful location. **Hoofdstraat 8, 3972 LA Driebergen-Rijsenburg (+31 [0]34 353 1818/antropia.nl).**

Het Venster op Waterland

Capacity of largest space: 50
Distance from airport: 34km
Parking: 50 spaces
Restaurants: catering available

Tick two green boxes in one, at Het Venster op Waterland. Not for nothing is it called 'The Window on Waterland': the charming wooden building typical of the region looks out across the beautiful meadows of peat marsh that make up the Waterland area. You'd be hard pushed to find a more idyllic green getaway, but that's not all that makes Het Venster op Waterland the ultimate green MICE venue. Heated and cooled geothermally using the energy retained within the earth since its formation and thus minimising dependence on the national power grid, a further percentage of Het Venster op Waterland's electricity is provided by solar panels. Addition-



Agri Experience

ally, all the catering is completely organic, using many products from the organic dairy farm next door. You can't get much more macrobiotic than that! **Overlekergrouw 1, 1151 CX Broek in Waterland (+31 [0]20 403 3508/vensteropwaterland.nl).**

Going green

Bezoekerscentrum IJperveld



Bezoekerscentrum IJperveld lies in one of the greatest natural landscape areas of North Holland, in 900 hectares of peatland. Located conveniently close to Amsterdam, in the charming Waterland region, beautiful historic towns and villages are just a stone's throw away. Bezoekerscentrum IJperveld has two well-equipped meeting rooms, suitable for up to 40 delegates. Packages are entirely customisable, with options including lunch, barbecues in the gazebo and much more. **Kanaaldijk 32a, 1121 NX Landsmeer (+31 [0]20 482 5520/landschapnoordholland.nl/het-ijperveld).**

meeting or training opportunities. With capacity for ten to 150 people and loads of typically Dutch workshops – clog making, cheese-making, clog decorating and fish smoking included – Simonehoeve is the perfect place for an incentive trip, social programme and even a business meeting. **Wagenweg 2, 1145 PW Katwoude/Volendam (+31 [0]29 936 5828/simonehoeve.com).**

De Weesper Koe



Agri Experience

Agri Experience operates tours that'll take you to places the average tourist never sees. Organising excursions to visit Dutch agricultural companies, Agri Experience will take you behind the scenes to witness what goes on at companies normally closed to visitors. Each farmer or grower talks about technique, growing and marketing of the products he grows. For guests coming from other countries, Agri Experience offers complete 'meet and greet' services at the airport, and will organise hotels, meals and transportation. **Venneperweg 150, 2153 MA Nieuw-Vennep (+31 [0]25 262 1458/agriexperience.nl).**

Simonehoeve

This cosy, family-run farm makes superlative cheese – not to mention authentic clogs – and offers various workshops, day-trip programmes and

This superb rural location near Amsterdam is luxurious, attractive and ideal for meetings or multi-day trainings. A beautiful place to experience the congress in a comfortable living-room style. **Gastenverblijf De Weesper Koe** will provide lunch and diner and great breaks during the sessions. A lovely living room with a fireplace provides a perfect spot to eat, read, talk and even to make your own dinner. Don't miss the view from the terrace where you can watch the cows and sheep. Sleeping rooms are all provided with luxe box springs and private bathrooms. In addition, there's a small living room where breakfast is served and this space can be used as extra space for trainings. **Dammerweg 3, 1383 HT Weesp (+31 [0]611 236 8162/deweesperkoe.nl).**



Simonehoeve

Urban experience



The Heineken Experience

Modern, urban, cutting-edge and undeniably cool

The Netherlands breathtaking beauty was put beyond doubt when Amsterdam's Canal Rings achieved UNESCO World Heritage status in late 2010. But sitting alongside the 17th-century merchants' houses are regenerated industrial buildings and some of the most forward-looking modern architecture in the world, all combining to make a truly modern urban experience.



Aristo Accommodations

Urban experience

Aristo Accommodations Amsterdam

Outside the bustle of downtown, but withing walking distance from Station Sloterdijk in Amsterdam, is Aristo. This professional conference and meeting facility offers 43 meeting rooms, two restaurants, a grand café and a private garage. Aristo Amsterdam easily com-

bines pleasant ambiance and business functions together. Are you planning a conference for 200 people with an extensive lunch or a small meeting for 8 people with a nice dinner? It is all possible Aristo Amsterdam; they've even been awarded four conference gavelts for event quality. *Teleport Boulevard 100, 1043 EJ Amsterdam (31 (0) 900-235 27 47/www.aristo.nl).*

Hotel Casa 400



This brand new hotel is conveniently located on the outskirts of the city centre. The hotel offers 520 comfortable rooms, a spacious lobby with beautiful indoor garden, restaurant and bar. The conference centre has 13 modern, state-of-the-art interconnecting rooms, with natural light and capacity for up to 435 delegates. There's on-site parking, and the hotel is conveniently close to Amsterdam's Amstel train station. *Eerste Ringdijkstraat 4, 1097 BC Amsterdam (+31 [0]20 665 1171/hotelcasa400.nl).*

The Heineken Experience

If you are looking for limitless options for a meeting or event, The Heineken

Experience is the right choice! This unique meeting location in the centre of Amsterdam offers incredible views of the city and the opportunity to combine any event with a tour of the old Heineken Brewery. The authentic meeting rooms are equipped with the latest technology and offer a variety of spaces – from seating 150 people or hosting a party for 750. *Stadhouderskade 78, 1072 AE Amsterdam (+31 [0] 20 523 9222/heinekenexperience.com).*

Park Plaza Utrecht

Located in the centre of Utrecht, Park Plaza Utrecht offers superior and deluxe executive rooms, all 120 of which are air-conditioned and have free WiFi. Modern accommodation, state-of-the-art meeting facilities, a fitness centre, sauna, restaurant and bar make Park Plaza Utrecht the ideal base for business and leisure travellers. The 11 versatile, well-equipped meeting rooms accommodate up to 120 delegates and feature natural daylight, audio/visual equipment and WiFi access. *Westplein 50, 3531 BL Utrecht (+31 [0]30 292 5200/parkplaza.com/utrecht).*



Art throbb

Fancy getting to know the capital a little better while upping your cultural credentials? Let *Catherine Somzé* be your guide

In a city as eclectic as Amsterdam, it's never easy to pinpoint any cultural scene, but in the past few years, the contemporary art world here has crystallised around a handful of streets in the Jordaan, with the hub of the district just below the centre of the canal belt, from the Prinsengracht to the Lijnbaansgracht, and from Rozengracht to Leidsegracht.

Gallery owner Diana Stigter's space on Elandsstraat constitutes the district's epicentre (Elandsstraat 90, 624 2361/dianastigter.nl). Not only is Stigter famous for her high heels and cool demeanour, but more so for her extensive local network of buyers and curators, capable of fast-tracking careers with a few stabs at her speed dial.

Among her young lions are Dutch figurative painter Tjebbe Beekman, whose cityscapes have hung at the GEM (Museum voor Actuele Kunst) in Den Hague. The gallerists in her orbit include Martin van Zomeren (Prinsengracht 276 hs, 420 8129/gmvz.com), who is dedicated primarily to conceptual sculpture and installation art, and Grimm (Keizersgracht 82, 422 7227/grimgallery.com), who attracts artists who work with more traditional brush and paint.

A second, more loosely organised network has galvanised around the Torch Gallery (Lauriergracht 94, 626 0284/torchgallery.com). Founder Adriaan van der Have, who was something of a local art-world guru and made a name for his gallery through controversial shows, including a Leni Riefenstahl retrospective, and for representing international cutting-edge artists such as the Sanchez Brothers, may have sadly passed away in 2009, but his son, Mo, carries the torch forward.

Galerie Gabriel Rolt (Elandsgracht 34, 785 5146/gabrielroлт.com) includes such luminary 'lowbrow' artists as Ray Caesar, Mark Ryden, Tim Biskup, Joe Sorren and Glenn



GRIMM Gallery

The Jordaan is the most appealing place to leisurely experience world-class contemporary art

Barr on its roster, while Galerie Wouter van Leeuwen (Hazenstraat 27, 06 5203 1540/woutervanleeuwen.com) presents excellent contemporary and historic photography.

The Jordaan started to emerge as a contemporary art district in the 1980s. It wasn't cheap rents that drew the first gallerists – although the Jordaan happened to be a heavily subsidised neighbourhood with plenty of social housing, rents for gallery spaces weren't especially inexpensive – rather, the advantages of geographical proximity were much too obvious to overlook. A posh address near the Prinsengracht favours business and excites jealousy and competition.

Change started to accelerate when the Stedelijk Museum opened its smaller contemporary art project space, the SMBA (Rozenstraat 59, 422 0471/smba.nl) in 1993. Other art dealers wanted to be situated nearby to attract its patrons. In the last five or so years, no fewer than six galleries have

opened up.

But the migration isn't just one way. The 17th-century houses in the neighbourhood, and the preservation laws that protect them, can limit the size and shape of exhibition space. Contemporary art, which tends to be massive, sometimes needs more sprawling spaces.

Juliette Jongma, Stigter's former assistant, decided against staying in the Jordaan when she opened her own gallery a couple of years ago. Instead, she chose De Pijp, which was less of a competitive atmosphere. So did Nieck de Bruijn, owner of Upstream Gallery. A few years ago Paul Andriess also moved out of the area after more than 20 years, and last year Motive Gallery headed north of the IJ for the almost limitless space on offer. But these exodus aside, for now, the Jordaan, with its genteel shopping, quaint cafés and design-oriented restaurants, is the most appealing place to leisurely experience world-class contemporary art.

Reaching for the sky

The rich history of Utrecht is reflected in its abundance of historical churches



Domkerk

One of the oldest cities in the Netherlands, Utrecht was a religious centre for hundreds of years. At one point, there were around 40 houses of worship in the city, all with dramatic towers and spires jutting into the skyline, reaching towards the heavens.

The most famous of these churches still standing is the Romanesque **Domkerk** (Domplein), with its spectacular cathedral tower, the **Domtoren**. At over 112 metres, it's the highest tower in the country, and the panorama is worth the 465 steps: vistas stretch 40 kilometres to Amsterdam on a clear day. The space between the tower and the Domkerk was originally occupied by the nave of the huge church, which was destroyed by a freak tornado in 1674; the exhibition inside the Domkerk shows interesting 'before' and 'after' sketches.

The Domkerk stands at the centre of a geographical cross of churches, designed by Bishop Bernold in the 11th century, of which only the Janskerk (to the north) and the Pieterskerk (to the east) have survived.

The **Janskerk** (Janskerkhof) is a mishmash of the original nave and transepts (built of tufa stone from the Eiffel region in Germany) and later additions. Clever restoration means you can see the shape of the church's former incarnations on the floor. Don't miss the monolithic red sandstone pillar on the north wall, one of a number that lined the building's nave in the 11th century.

The **Pieterskerk** (Pieterskerkhof 5), built 1040-1048 on the ground of a small Roman settlement dating from 47 AD, has been beautifully preserved, although it too lost its towers in the storm of 1674. Look out for Bishop Bernold's sarcophagus in the crypt; the original mosaic floor in the Gothic chapel dating from around 1310; and the four stone reliefs to the sides of the steps to the high choir stall.

The four medieval parish churches – the **Buurkerk** (now

a museum housing a collection of automatically playing musical instruments), **Nicolaikerk** (Nicolaaskerkhof), **Jacobikerk** (St Jacobsstraat 171) and **Geertekerke** (Geertekerkhof 22) still stand, and are well worth a visit; as are **St Catharinakathedraal** (Lange Nieuwstraat 38), the only church to be returned to the Catholics after the 1580 Reformation, and the classic revival-style

St Augustinuskerk (Oudegracht 69), the city's first newly built Roman Catholic church post-Reformation (dating from 1840).

And that's far from all of them: there are many more churches all within walking distance of one another in the medieval heart of Utrecht, including former clandestine churches, the city's second cathedral and 19th-century Utrecht School Gothic revival churches. To find your way to them, just look to the skies and head for the spires.

Just look to the skies and head for the spires

Water ways



Reederij Loosdrecht

Water, water everywhere!

Water is at the heart of the Netherlands, and the Dutch live harmoniously next to the water, with a staggering 25 per cent of the country lying below sea level and another quarter just keeping its head above water; at a single metre above sea level. The country's famous dikes remain the first defence against the sea, and the ubiquitous windmills were used to drain lakes to create a third Dutch cliché: the polder.

It's no surprise, then, that there are plenty of fantastic watery options for your corporate event, from perfect waterside venues through floating restaurants to aqueous incentive activities

Amstel & Vecht Charters



Amstel & Vecht Charters is a unique company with five party ships. Each of the boats is unique with its own special character, and the expert professional crew will take you around the beautiful inland waterways of the Netherlands, in-

cluding the Vecht (from Utrecht to Muiden) and the Amstel. Whether you want to go sightseeing by day or celebrate by night, full catering is possible and special business arrangements are available, including everything from farmers' golf to cheese-tasting. *HJE Wenckebachweg 180, 1096 AS Amsterdam (+31 [0]88 567 3226/amstelenvechtcharters.nl).*

Living Story



Add a different kind of excitement to your meeting with Living Story. Living Story offers unique city activities and adventurous GPS games for groups of all sizes. Your team will discover the city with a goal or solve the mysteries of a GPS murder mystery. These games offer immersive experiences, unique sightseeing, and are great for team building. *Postbus 498, 3500 AL Utrecht (+31 [0]30 707 8299/livingstory.nl).*

Reederij Belle

The exclusive atmosphere of luxury salon boats Adeline, Belle van Zuylen and Dame van Amstel is ideal for presenting your product, signing a business contract or hosting a special meeting, with space for up to 60 delegates. With all tours tailor-made around Amsterdam's canals, the Amstel, the Vecht and Loosdrecht Lakes, professional skippers and hostesses will quietly provide for all your needs,

including lunch, high tea and the excellent champagne dinner cruise. *Herengracht 65, 1398 AC Muiden (+31 [0]29 426 1433/rederijbelle.nl).*



Reederij Loosdrecht

Sailing on the Loosdrecht Lakes and the River Vecht 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, 't Stockpaerd is a luxuriously opulent classic Dutch salon boat. With capacity for up to 58 passengers, an excursion on the River Vecht is especially atmospheric, whether it's for a business incentive, to wine and dine potential clients or to reward your staff for their hard work. The customisation options are almost endless. *Oud Loosdrechtsedijk 165, 1231 LV Loosdrecht (+31 [0]6 2960 8608/rederijloosdrecht.nl).*

Het Vechthuis



Located at the banks of the Vecht river in Utrecht, the party and congress venue Het Vechthuis is an attractive and stylish venue for your event. You can choose from nine meeting rooms, each with its own very special atmosphere. Each meeting room has a separate entrance, its own wardrobe, private toilet and a cozy bar. In addition, Het Vechthuis offers a large private car park, with free parking. With Het Vechthuis you are guaranteed an exclusive location, superb cuisine and excellent service – all you need for a perfect meeting. *Jagerskade 13-15, 3552 TL Utrecht (+31 [0]30 261 3543/vechthuis.nl).*

Heritage highlights

The past and the future sit side by side

The Amsterdam metropolitan area has a long and notable history – artefacts of which are evident everywhere you look. But far from being frozen in time, the area's historical buildings are embracing the future and finding new leases of life through new uses, so you get the best of both: modern amenities in venues with heritage histories.

Hotel Ernst Sillem Hoeve



Conference Hotel Ernst Sillem Hoeve is located in the beautiful forest of Lage Vuursche, 15 kilometres from Utrecht, in a former coach house dating from 1880. Today, the grandeur of the past is combined with all the modern amenities you could need. Featuring 20 modern and traditional meeting rooms for up to 175 people, Hotel Ernst Sillem Hoeve also has 86 comfortable bedrooms, a restaurant and two bars, a swimming pool, sauna and gym, plus seven acres of parkland, secure parking and free shuttle service from Den Dolder station. *Soestdijkerweg 10b Lage Vuursche, 3734 MH Den Dolder (+31 [0]35 666 8541/esh.nl).*

De JansZalen



These two beautiful period reception rooms within the oldest church building (dating from the 14th century) in the heart of historic Haarlem are available for hire separately or together, for meet-

ings, receptions and more. Both rooms feature all modern AV equipment and wireless internet, plus optional theatre-style seating, lecterns, U-shape or round tables, and the capacity ranges from an intimate seated meeting for ten to a stand-up reception for 330 when both rooms are combined. *Jansstraat 36 & 40, 2011 RS Haarlem (+31 [0]6 1062 5552/dejanszalen.nl).*

Beekestijn



At a stone's throw from Amsterdam and a fifteen minutes drive from Schiphol Airport, you will find Beekestijn, an estate of exceptional beauty, with 18th century buildings and a 40 hectares ornamental garden. The main building harbours a unique permanent exhibition on garden and landscape culture on the ground floor, combined with complete conference facilities on the first floor. *Rijksweg 134, 1981 LD Velsen-Zuid (+31 [0]6 4300 5681/beekestijn.nl).*

De Nonnerie



De Nonnerie, a stunning mansion dating back to 1724 and located on the beautiful river Vecht, is the ideal location for your conference, seminar, private dinner or side meeting from 5 to 100 people. De Nonnerie is easily accessible, offers plenty of free parking facilities, provides excellent service and high quality cuisine, and even has an option for boats to dock right in front of the entrance. With the classic design, trendy furnishing and versatility of spaces, De Nonnerie distinguishes itself as a unique business location. *Langegracht 51, 3601AK Maarssen (+31 [0]34 656 2201/nonnerie.nl).*

Het Portiershuisje



Located next to Amsterdam's Olympic Stadium, 'The Porter House' is a great venue for meetings, training sessions, parties (up to 80 people), dinners and workshops. The temporary post office for the 1928 Olympic Games, it then became the gatehouse (hence the name). It is easily accessible and comfortably decorated, full catering is available, and various workshops can be arranged upon request, including a GPS tour of the city and a leisurely boat tour. *Stadionplein 18, 1076 CM Amsterdam (+31 [0]20 675 2900/hetportiershuisje.nl).*

De Tafel van Muiden & De Tafel van IJburg (Amsterdam)



In three monumental buildings in Muiden are three meeting rooms and a lounge with a fireplace, all connected by a courtyard, for meetings from 2 to 16 people. Surrounded by ever-changing and inspiring artwork and with free-flowing refreshments and freshly-baked cookies and cakes, the board table and comfortable chairs are the perfect place for meetings and brainstorming sessions. Full catering is available – you can even have a chef prepare a bespoke meal especially for you at your table – and various sailing packages can be arranged. In De Tafel van IJburg (Amsterdam), up to 22 people can meet with a view over the Markermeer and the same atmosphere and quality as in Muiden. *Amsterdamsstraat 1, 3, 5, 1398 BK Muiden and Krijn Taconskade 432 Amsterdam (+31 [0]29 426 5059/detafelvanmuiden.nl).*

MICE Locations Top 10

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Westergasfabriek

Amsterdam's former gasworks is now one of its liveliest creative spaces, set in glorious, lush, green meadows – and all within five minutes of the city centre

When is a gasworks not a gasworks? When it's a culture park with multiple restaurants, art galleries, a cinema, a clubbing venue (home to the legendary Awakenings parties) and much, much more.

When it ceased operating back in 1981, Westergasfabriek's industrial buildings and 13 hectares of land were designated recreational space. Thirty years later, Cultuurpark

You could literally spend days here

Westergasfabriek (westergasfabriek.nl) is a triumph of radical regeneration, with woodlands, water gardens and an events field with a capacity of 10,000. You could literally spend days here.

The cultural credentials of Westergasfabriek as an internationally-respected venue have been firmly established by annual events including the Picnic Cross Media Conference, renowned theatre spectacle the Holland Festival, Amsterdam International Fashion Week, the Affordable Art Fair and many more.

But when the business day is done, Westergasfabriek truly comes into its own. Here are our top picks of the best ways to spend your downtime.

De Bakkerswinkel

This bakery-cum-tea room has an international menu where you can indulge in lovingly prepared and hearty sandwiches, soups and the most divine slabs of quiche. We also recommend



WestergasTerras

their homemade cheesecakes and over-the-top high teas. *Regulateurshuis 1, Polonceaukade 1 1014 DA Amsterdam (+31 [0]20 688 0632/bakkerswinkel.nl).*

Het Ketelhuis

Het Ketelhuis ('The Boiler House') cinema is a platform devoted to screening and debating Holland's finest flicks and television productions alongside high-quality European art-house films, as well as playing host to regular festivals and events. There's also a pleasant café with sunny terrace. *Pazzanistraat 4, 1014 DB Amsterdam (+31 [0]20 684 0090/ketelhuis.nl).*

Pacific Parc

In an expansive industrial space on the Westergas site is Pacific Parc. This informal and trendy restaurant, with

large fireplace in the middle, serves agreeably priced dishes. On Fridays and Saturdays the chairs are pushed aside after dinner and the restaurant turns into an open club, with regular live band performances, too. *Polonceaukade 23, 1014 DA Amsterdam (+31 [0]20 488 7778/pacificparc.nl).*

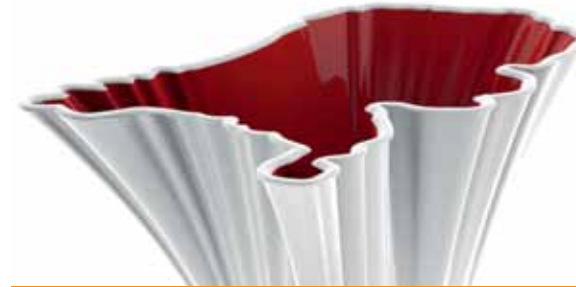
WestergasTerras

Where else can you sit by a babbling brook next to a former gas tank, see great blue herons and mallards fly by while sitting in a lawn chair, sipping a koffie verkeerd? At the centre of the Westerpark is one of the city's most inviting cafés. The wooden picnic tables outdoors are perfectly inviting and the seasonal sandwiches and salads are fresh and delicious. *Klönneplein 4-6, 1014 DD Amsterdam (+31 [0]20 684 8496/westergasterras.nl).*



Het Ketelhuis

Successful support



Thinking of Holland

You've found the perfect venue, the hotel's booked and the caterers are ready to go. But the devil, as the saying goes, is in the details. Need a translator? Specialist audiovisual services? Help organising down-time activities? A network of experienced multilingual professionals is here to help take the agony out of organising. All you have to do is turn up and enjoy yourself.

Dagjemaken.nl



Ever fancied being a movie director for a day? Or how about shining on stage in a theatre? Or seeing your newspaper article on the front page? Dagjemaken.nl can make it happen. If you're looking for a fun incentive trip, a day of team-building or just a nice day out for your team, dagjemaken.nl is happy to create an original programme completely tailored to your needs at their base in Hilversum, where they have a specially designed studio that can host up to 1,000 people. *Sumatralaan 45, 1217 GP Hilversum (+31 [0]35 626 7040/dagjemaken.nl).*

JvN Congress Management



JvN Congress Management is a professional congress organiser (PCO) combining rich experience with a creative, results-oriented approach. With an open, honest and critical focus, JvN guides and advises clients, without fuss, but with a surprising, future-oriented vision of the world for meetings, incentives, conferences and events (MICE). The agency is a strong team with experienced professional partners and freelancers, and they also provide training and workshops in the hospitality industry. *Postbus 1578, 3800 BN Amersfoort (+31 [0]33 479 9998/jvncongress.nl).*

Thinking of Holland

If you're looking for über-stylish, original gifts and souvenirs – all with a distinctly Dutch sense of design – Thinking of Holland is an absolute must-visit. Located in the Passenger Terminal Amsterdam, the shop's founders both have experience in the business world, and are completely familiar and comfortable with the sort of gift you might be looking for – whether it's a token for the office staff back home or a present for your partner. When planning your meeting, contact Thinking of Holland for VIP presents, speaker gifts and giveaways. Whether you fall in love with Dutch design mavericks Droog Design, handbag queen Hester van Eeghen, product designer extraordinaire Marcel Wanders, or other designers, we defy you to leave empty handed. *Piet Heinkade 23, 1019 BR Amsterdam (+31 [0]20 419 1229/thinkingofholland.com).*

Social programme organisers

All work and no play, as they say, makes for a very dull conference. You've made the decision to host your corporate event in the Netherlands (congratulations – excellent choice!), but if all your delegates see is the inside of a charmless conference centre, you've kind of missed the point (and wasted a ton of money on airfares). But don't panic: from Cordon Bleu meals to stay-away incentive trips, a professional excursion planner can create a tailor-made programme especially for you.

Destination management companies

Looking for unique group excursions, social programmes and pre-and post-conference gatherings to round out your corporate event? As well as undertaking prosaic organisational issues such as sourcing catering services and providing hotel and transportation support, DMCs use their extensive local knowledge to create distinctive, custom-tailored experiences for conference delegates, assuming all the preparation and planning.

Professional congress organisers

Specialising in complete and personalised conference management services, PCOs act as both consultants (offering advice) and project managers (acting as your link to suppliers and service providers). Utilising their extensive local knowledge and experience, PCOs can organise every element of your event, and are especially useful if you need specialist resources, time or expertise. For more information, contact the International Association of Professional Congress Organisers (AIPCO): iapco.org.

What is MICE Meets Metropolis?



Your ultimate meeting partner

The MICE Meets Metropolis project supports local businesses in Amsterdam, Utrecht and the region with their first steps towards the market for congresses, seminars and other business meetings (the MICE market).

MICE Meets Metropolis helps entrepreneurs to expand their knowledge about the MICE market, supports network building and helps improving visibility for potential clients. For this purpose, every entrepreneur can make a unique company profile on the project website.

For International and national meeting planners and organizers

of business meetings, the project offers an effective way to find these new venues and activities in Amsterdam, Utrecht and the surrounding region.

MICE Meets Metropolis also offers advantages for meeting planners and organizers. With the MICE Meets Metropolis search engine, finding new locations and enjoyable activities in the Amsterdam/Utrecht region is easy.

For more information about MICE Meets Metropolis please send an email to:
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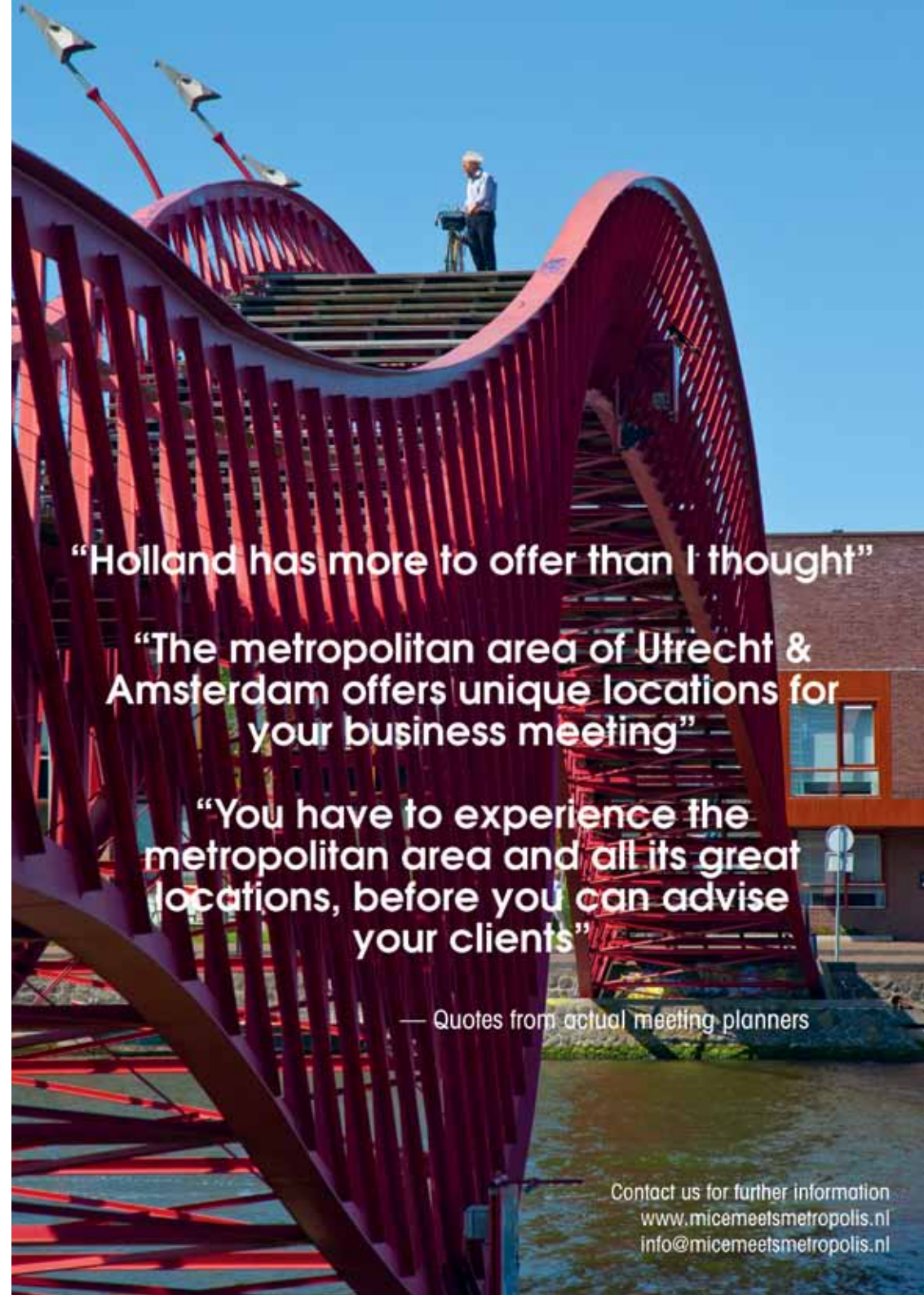
Be in touch...

The Amsterdam Convention Board (ACB), which is part of the Amsterdam Tourism & Convention Board (ATCB), is your one-stop shop for guidance and advice on planning your corporate event in the Amsterdam metropolitan area. For more information, see the website iamsterdam.com or contact the ACB directly by email at acb@atcb.nl or telephone on +31 (0)20 551 2570.



Utrecht Toerisme & Recreatie (Utrecht Meeting & Events) has accumulated considerable knowledge in the area of venues and other relevant organisations in the province of Utrecht, about which they can provide you with service and concrete advice for various types of business gatherings. You will find most suitable locations in Utrecht region on: www.utrechtyouway.nl

Part of Utrecht Toerisme & Recreatie (Utrecht Meeting & Events) is now split into Toerisme Utrecht for the city of Utrecht and several regional offices. If you have any requirement for the Utrecht region, please do not hesitate to contact Toerisme Utrecht (tel.: +31 (0)30 236 00 00 or mail info@toerisme-utrecht.nl).



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— Quotes from actual meeting planners

Contact us for further information
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Meetings & Events Heineken Experience

The former Heineken Brewery in Amsterdam, a historic building listed on the European Route of Industrial Heritage, is an exciting venue for meetings and events. The brewery has been completely renovated and transformed into the Heineken Experience: a tourist attraction and meeting centre. The Heineken Experience, visited annually by hundreds of thousands of visitors, takes you on an interactive journey through the magical world of Heineken. On the top floors of this historic building, five meeting rooms have been created, varying in size from 60 to 350 m². They can host groups of up to 650 people. Every meeting room has its own unique character. The largest meeting room has a spacious balcony that offers a breathtaking view over the heart of Amsterdam. All meeting rooms are equipped with state-of-the-art facilities.

Catering

We have selected the finest catering companies to serve you. Try our Bière à Table lunches or dinners. Here, the traditional accompanying wine has been replaced by beer, and several components of the menu have been prepared with beer as an ingredient.

Easy to get there

The Heineken Experience can easily be reached by public transportation. Adjacent to the Heineken Experience is a public parking facility with a capacity of 250 cars. Arriving by boat? Disembark right in front of the brewery at the Heineken Experience landing stage.

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