



BOXWOOD TOURS
QUALITY GARDEN HOLIDAYS

A Special Garden Tour to the Gardens of Netherlands & Belgium



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HIGHBROW GARDENS OF THE LOWLANDS

10 to 16 July 2016

The Low Countries of Europe now form three distinct nations: The Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. In this tour we concentrate on the coastal regions bounded by the North Sea from Amsterdam in the Netherlands to Bruges in the eastern Flanders district of Belgium. This region is justly famous for horticultural excellence. Our tour takes us to the best known, classic Dutch and Belgian gardens as well as to more recent private creations. We start the tour in the province of *Gelderland* to see gardens of manors and castles. We then head south to our base in historic Antwerp where we find that Belgian gardens are like Belgian chocolates, intricate, delicious and exclusive. Onward to Amsterdam, focusing on the canal gardens, travelling by boat from one town house to another, ending at our hotel on the Keizersgracht. This is a very beautiful part of Amsterdam, full of small shops, canals, bridges, elegant leaning town houses and so very many bicycles. Throughout the tour we are introduced to the leading names in Dutch and Belgian horticulture and garden design with works by *Mien Ruys*, *Michael van Gessel*, *Piet Oudolf* and *Daniel Ost* to name but a few: all dedicated designers and horticulturists who have changed and are changing the backyards of the world. We have carefully selected three fine hotels: *The Dylan, Amsterdam* is a 17th century town house on the Keizersgracht with individually designed rooms offering a haven of style and tranquillity; *Kasteel Engelenburg*, a colonial style country house surrounded by parkland and woods; and *Hotel 't Sandt*, a stylish 17th century town house hotel within walking distance of all the main highlights of the vibrant city of Antwerp. The tour is located in the Netherlands where Dutch is spoken and in Flanders, the northern half of Belgium, where Flemish, a dialect of Dutch, is spoken. *Dr Sophieke Piebenga* who resides in England is appreciated by all for her charm and professionalism and will be our local, Dutch speaking guide to this fascinating region.

AIA credits are available for all ICAA tours.

Register by February 5th to secure your place on this tour and receive a complimentary copy of Axel Vervoordt's *Living with Light* or Piet Oudolf's *Planting: A New Perspective*.

ITINERARY UPDATED 01.18.16

Day 1: Sunday 10 July

Purchase your own flights to the tour start in Amsterdam. The coach will pick up in central Amsterdam at 09:00 and at Schiphol International Airport at 10:30 (to meet both Delta and KLM flights). We then travel by a small coach into rural Holland and the garden rich region of Gelderland. Our first visit is to The Royal Palace Gardens of *Het Loo*: beautifully restored 17th parterre gardens; a remarkably compact tapestry of colour and form. Our visit will include lunch and a tour of the gardens and a special tour of the of the Palace interior led by an architectural guide. We then arrive to a warm welcome at *Hotel Engelenburg* where we will dine together this evening. Meals included: lunch at Het Loo; evening meal at hotel.

Day 2: Monday 11 July

Firstly, a special private visit to the gardens of *Piet Oudolf* where the influential Dutch garden designer, nurseryman and author lives and crafts ideas that have subsequently appeared in designs throughout the world. Then to *De Wiersse*, a remarkable historic garden owned by the same family for 300 years. The current owners, *Peter & Laura Gatacre*, invite you to visit the gardens and to have lunch in the restored *Great Hall of Victor de Stuers* with 17th and 18th century furnishings. Laura Gatacre is the driving force behind the development of the gardens over the last 25 years. Peter's grandfather, Victor de Stuers, was one of the founders of the Rijksmuseum and an instigator in setting up the mechanisms for protecting the arts and monuments of the Netherlands. Later in the afternoon, we visit *Kasteel Middachten*; a chance to explore the fine formal gardens surrounding the 17th century castle. Return to Hotel Engelenburg where we will dine together. Meals included: lunch in private home; evening meal at hotel.

Day 3: Tuesday 12 July

Journey southwards to cross the border into Belgium to visit a private garden designed by the famous *Jacques Wirtz* before visiting the unusual Art Nouveau, *De Wintertuin van de Ursulinen*, a beautifully stained glass conservatory where a light lunch will be provided. In recent years, garden culture in Belgium has evolved greatly, largely due to a wave of first class designers including *Daniel Ost*. We are privileged to be invited to view his work at *De Uil*, the former residence of artist *Karel Aubroeck* (1894-1986), now occupied by interior designers *Marc Massa* and *Roger Liekens*. The garden was designed by renowned floral artist and garden architect *Daniel Ost* and includes a beautiful wild shade garden to the north and very stylized garden to the south. We then drive into the heart of Antwerp for a short visit to the home of the 17th century artist *Peter Paul Rubens*, now a museum with adjoining garden inspired by the Rubens painting, 'The Walk in the Garden'. Check-in to the stylish *Hotel 't Sandt* where we reside for the next two nights bed and breakfast accommodation. Dine together this evening at a local restaurant. Meals included: lunch; evening meal at local restaurant.

Day 4: Wednesday 13 July

A special invitation this morning to visit the garden of landscape architect *Chris Ghyselen*. Known for his use of fine grasses and perennials, we are led down narrow paths through billowing borders that softly blend into the surrounding countryside. We then head into *Bruges* for a special architectural walking tour with a light lunch included. In the afternoon, we visit the private garden of *Kasteel van Oostkerke* just north of Bruges. The Dutch landscape architect *Mien Ruys* had a strong hand in the design of this garden, so today we find the 14th century castle wrapped in a series of flower-filled gardens, moats and polder meadows. Following a special invitation by the Countess to a high tea in the castle, we then return to Antwerp. This evening we enjoy a culinary highlight at the famous restaurant, *Sir Anthony Van Dijck*, located in the shadow of the cathedral on one of the oldest streets of the city. Meals included: light lunch in Bruges; evening meal at local restaurant.

Day 5: Thursday 14 July

We start the day with a special visit to the rarely visited private garden of *Axel Vervoordt*. We then head north and drive to the historically rich region of the Langbroekerwetering lying to the East of Utrecht and a cluster of houses dating back to the 13th century, most of which are still in private hands. At *Ridderhofstad Hindersteyn*, our enthusiastic and charming host has invited us to lunch and to view the collection of restored glasshouses and flower-filled garden. We then drive into Amsterdam to *The Dylan Hotel* to check-in. Following a short architectural walking tour of the area around the hotel, you have a free evening. Meal included: lunch at a private house.

Day 6: Friday 15 July

Step out of the hotel to board a boat to visit a selection of the finest gardens of the *Keizersgracht, Herengracht & Prinsengracht Canals*, the main arteries of this area, famous for the floating gardens on the roofs of houseboats. We meet *Tonko Grever* who has researched and written about these special canal gardens and is the curator of *The Van Loon Museum* with its own fine early 17th century garden. We also visit *Michael van Gessel's* garden at the innovative museum of the Canals. This evening you will dine at the renowned *De Kas Restaurant*, a stylish restaurant created from the ruins of a 1920s municipal glasshouse: a set meal of wonderful locally grown seasonal vegetables and organic produce. Meals included: light lunch on the boat; dinner at local restaurant.

Day 7: Saturday 16 July

The tour includes transfers back to Amsterdam Schiphol International Airport in time to check in and to take the 10:30 (Delta) or 13:30 (Delta & KLM) return flights to JFK, New York for those who require them.

How much & what's included

The tour price is **£2650** per person. A single supplement of **£450** is levied by the hotels.

Please note that these figures are based upon a minimum of 15 paying passengers. If any less Boxwood will need to discuss the viability of the tour with the US organisers. If the tour is cancelled by Boxwood then all payments will be returned in full.

The price includes:

Bed & Breakfast accommodation for 2 nights at *The Dylan Hotel*, Amsterdam;

Dinner, Bed & Breakfast for 2 nights at **Kasteel Engelenburg**, Brummen, Netherlands; Bed & Breakfast for 2 nights at **Hotel 't Sandt**, Antwerp, Belgium;

Meals as stated in the itinerary: 6 lunches and 5 evening meals;

Entry to all gardens listed itinerary with guided tours wherever possible;

Coaching throughout the tour, including driver's accommodation where required;

Boxwood Tours Services to set up and confirm all visits mentioned in the itinerary and to manage the tour on a daily basis and to check that the tour as described runs successfully.

Tour Leader: The tour will be accompanied throughout by Dr Sophieke Piebenga

On Tour Management: Boxwood staff will be on hand 24 hours every day for the duration of the tour and will be in communication with the Tour Leader.

This price does not include flights:

Please note that the tour starts at Amsterdam Schiphol International Airport at 10:30 on Sunday 10 July and finishes at Amsterdam Schiphol International Airport at 10:30 on Saturday 16 July 2016.

Also not included: Travel Insurance (this is strongly recommended to protect traveller payments in case of last minute cancellations and must be taken out in your Country of residence), drinks with meals or any other extra services at hotels.



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Please ensure that you have been given the appropriate certificate(s) at the time of booking.

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