

**Trendy Antwerp**

# *Fashion*

## **Antwerp, city of fashion-makers**

How is it that these days Antwerp is known as a city of fashion far beyond its borders?

Well, it all started back in the eighties, when a few particularly talented and enterprising students graduated from the Fashion Department of the Antwerp Academy of Fine Arts. They clubbed together to rent a van and crossed the Channel to London to take part in the British Designers' Show. That was the beginning of a great adventure for Dries Van Noten, Walter Van Beirendonck, Dirk Van Saene, Dirk Bikkembergs, Marina Yee and Ann Demeulemeester. To everyone's surprise, they were the indisputable revelation of this international event and they were soon labelled the "Antwerp Six".

Martin Margiela also deserves a mention: having completed his fashion course in Antwerp, he took the first train to Paris where he became assistant to none other than Jean-Paul 'enfant terrible' Gaultier. At the end of the eighties Margiela decided to go it alone. World fame was his reward.

New names followed hot on the heels of the Six (or should we say Seven?). More graduates of the by now famous Fashion Department of the Antwerp Academy of Fine Arts. But more importantly: more talent. Names like Véronique Branquinho, Lieve Van Gorp, Raf Simons, Jurgi Persoons, Stephan Schneider, Anna Heylen, Wim Neels, A.F. Vandevorst, Bernhard Willhelm, etc. have long been familiar on the international catwalks. Moreover, these young, up-and-coming designers have chosen Antwerp as the fashion capital of Belgium and most of them have their atelier, showroom and shop here. What makes these designers so successful? Their spunk? Their drive? Their creativity? Suffice it to say that their collections have that certain *je ne sais quoi*. And it is not only the Japanese who are mad about the Antwerp designers. Fortunately, we can still admire (and buy) their creations in Antwerp. Some shops sell lots of different Antwerp labels, other shops are exclusive to the one designer. The Nationalestraat and surrounding area are the hub and heart of fashion and it is here that building work is currently under way on the Modenatie.

## **Modenatie**

As of September 2002 Antwerp has had its own fashion centre. The Modenatie on the corner of Drukkerijstraat/Nationalestraat will house the vzw Flanders Fashion Institute, the Modemuseum (MoMu) and the Fashion Department of Antwerp's Royal Academy of Fine Arts.

The building has a large central staircase leading to all floors. The glass roof allows light and air to stream into the various spaces. The central staircase links the different parts of the building, from café through museum to school. A large doorway will provide access to a new covered street between Nationalestraat and Drukkerijstraat, a kind of ground-floor tunnel running through the building. The historic entrance hall will accommodate a grand café. On the ground floor there will also be an 800-square-metre events hall, where the FFI plans to hold fashion shows, exhibitions, conferences, etc. And finally on this floor, a bookshop specializing in fashion and art.

## **Flanders Fashion Institute (FFI)**

It is not always easy for young designers and new graduates to make a name for themselves. That is where the Flanders Fashion Institute comes in.

The story of the FFI began in 1996, the year the vzw Mode Antwerpen was created. The inspiration came from Linda Loppa, head of the Fashion Department at the Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp, from Geert Bruloot, owner of the fashion store 'Louis' and from Patrick De Muynck, fashion designer and lecturer at the Royal Academy. A year later the title 'Cultural Ambassador of Flanders 1997' was bestowed upon Mode Antwerpen and it was given the task of creating an organization that would help and support these young fashion designers.

The idea was well received both in the private and public sector, with the result that very early on a number of adjustments were made to accommodate that interest. When the Flanders Fashion Institute was officially launched on April 1<sup>st</sup> 1998, sitting round the table were representatives from the Government of Flanders, the Province of Flanders, the City Council, the Hogeschool Antwerpen and the private sector. Today they are part of the Modenatie.

The FFI's number-one objective is to provide professional support to all students and young designers in Antwerp and, indeed, in Belgium as a whole. It will provide a platform where creativity and productivity meet to promote Belgian fashion and the textile industry.

## **Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp - Fashion Department**

It is thanks to the Fashion Department of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts that Antwerp has become an international magnet for lovers of fashion and culture. Moreover, Antwerp is a place that fosters its budding young designers as well as those designers who already have a firm foothold in the international world of fashion.

Founded in 1663, the Royal Academy of Fine Arts is one of the oldest in Europe. In the 1960's the general attitude to the 'Applied Arts' began to change and they were

no longer regarded as inferior to the 'Fine Arts'. Following the example of the fashion departments of the St Martin's School and the Royal College of Arts in London, Mary Prijot set out to create a fashion department in Antwerp. She gave the fashion course an international dimension and was extremely demanding when it came to creativity. One of her first students, Linda Loppa, took over from Prijot in 1982. From autumn 2006 the director has been Walter Van Beirendonck.

The international press first began to take an interest in Antwerp designers in the eighties. From then on the Fashion Department has been a focus of international interest, partly because of the enduring quality of famous former students like Véronique Branquinho, Bernard Willhelm, AF Vandevorst and Jurgi Persoons.

[www.momu.be](http://www.momu.be)

[www.modenatie.be](http://www.modenatie.be) ([www.ffi.be](http://www.ffi.be))

## **What makes Antwerp fashion unique?**

Arriving at a beautifully finished product involves experimentation, improvisation and the use of many different forms. At the Antwerp Academy these three elements are considered of paramount importance. The fashion course covers a variety of art forms: art history, costume history, cinema, literature and music and students study other cultures and civilizations as well. In the year 2000 the Academy's Fashion Department launched a shoe-making workshop for students and other interested parties. This serves as a test case for a new postgraduate course in shoe design.

The lecturers attached to the Fashion Department see fashion as the expression of different - in fact the whole gamut - of emotions, and they pass on this vision to their students. The work climate in Antwerp's fashion industry is intense, totally dedicated and 'no nonsense'. It is to this way of working and to the single-minded attitude of the designers that it owes much of its success. It is not an attitude that panders to glamour, shows and top models but, rather, the artisanal approach always takes precedence with the designers. The fact that fashion is approached as a craft and traditional methods are employed is one reason Belgian fashion excels internationally.

## **On the Antwerp fashion trail**

Shopping teamed with a dash of culture. That's perfectly possible in the heart of Antwerp's fashion district. Walking distance from each other in the area around the famous fashion academy's new home, you'll find the highly original shop windows of the biggest names in Antwerp fashion design. And it's not just the clothes that are fashionable; the shop interiors also shout art and design. From Walter Van Beirendonck's garage gallery via Dries Van Noten's Modepaleis to Ann Demeulemeester's 'artist's studio'. Belgian fashion starts here...

### **Dries Van Noten**

#### **Het Modepaleis - Nationalestraat 16**

For more than ten years Dries Van Noten's store with its marble floors, eye-catching chandeliers and soft music on the corner of Kammenstraat and Nationalestraat in the heart of Antwerp's fashion district, has provided the backdrop for his men's and women's collections.

Dries Van Noten now has his headquarters in the Godefridus Warehouse on the Godefriduskaai 36. This former port warehouse was renovated and turned into a showroom and storage area for all the merchandise which had previously been scattered around the city for want of large enough premises. Some 80 people work at this new headquarters. An enormous showroom is being built on the roof, where Van Noten will receive his international clientele.

### **Stephan Schneider**

#### **Reyndersstraat 53**

This tiny but charming shop on the Reyndersstraat has housed this German-born Antwerpenaar's men's and women's collections for several years. Schneider's rather more classic and highly wearable range spells timeless class.

### **Ann Demeulemeester**

#### **Verlatstraat 38**

In the autumn of 1999 Ann Demeulemeester opened her first very own shop in Antwerp. The complete ladies' and men's collection, shoes, accessories and even tables are shown to their best advantage in the 600-square-meter building that once housed the Ministry of Agriculture. The interior is conceived as an artist's studio with wooden floors and white canvases on the walls. The fitting rooms are unusually spacious and, as a bonus, provide a view of the little inner courtyard. Since 1985 Demeulemeester has had her own label, characterized by avant-garde designs which timelessly withstand the trends. At the same time as she opened her new shop, Demeulemeester equipped the Leopold De Waelplaats with a bench of her own design.

### **Walter Van Beirendonck and Dirk Van Saene**

#### **Sint-Antoniusstraat 12**

These two gentlemen have occupied a garage converted into a trendy shop cum gallery for two years now. 'Walter, Window, Wonder' stands for the collection in the shop, for the gallery that opens its doors to contemporary artists and for the shop's own fashion magazine.

### **Anne Sophie De Campos Resend's**

#### **Kammenstraat 69**

Women who like elegant-casual clothes with striking little details should make a beeline

for this shop belonging to the Antwerp designer with Portuguese-German roots. As well as a complete women's collection, De Campos also produces a range of handbags.

### **Anna Heylen**

#### **Lombardenvest 44**

For the last three years Anna Heylen has had her own shop on the Lombardenvest, which is conspicuous for its striking and idiosyncratic interior and attention to detail rather than for its size. The women's clothes are characterized by lively accents and lots of little symbols. In recent years Anna Heylen, who graduated from the Antwerp Fashion Academy in 1988, has become known mainly for her sexless and faceless little dolls. These have become real collector's items and for a while even overshadowed the fashions. Before starting her own range, she designed the clothes range for the Belgian fashion label Kipling.

### **Louis**

#### **Lombardenstraat 2**

The Louis store has always been a fervent promoter of Antwerp fashion. Collections by newcomers hang alongside items by some of the biggest names in the industry, like Véronique Branquinho, Raf Simons and AF Vandevorst.

### **Cocodrillo and Verso**

#### **Schuttershofstraat 9 and Huidevetterstraat 39**

Both these shops stock collections by various Antwerp designers including Dirk Bikkembergs. He divides his time between his fashion house in Milan and his Antwerp outlet. His ranges of clothes for men and women and his shoes are distributed worldwide. Bikkembergs is still identified by many with his shoe collections, with which he initially made his breakthrough. The remarkably sturdy boots that he produced together with the manufacturer Monaca, brought him world fame, but his clothes have long since proved their ability to hold their own against the success of the shoes. Here, too, Bikkembergs has a preference for metal accessories such as tie rings and chain and leather belts.

### **Martine Decruyenaere**

#### **Lombardenvest 4**

This Limburg lady has been designing the collections of the ZNJ label, the former Zino&Judy, for the last eleven years. During the course of the '80s and '90s she made a name for herself with the fashion house Gruno&Chardin, later Zino&Judy. In time her city line, strongly feminine with a sophisticated bias, took the brand name ZNJ, while Zino&Judy's more sporty range has only been called ZNJeans since last summer. The use and the combination of different materials has always been a characteristic of the house style. Martine Decruyenaere likes to combine materials. The identity of her collections lies in the detail: special buttons, fastenings, zips, pockets, etc.

**Christoph Broich**  
Steenhouwervest 28

**Other Belgian labels:**

**XSO**  
Eiermarkt 13-17.  
Eva Lacres, Kaat Tilley.

**Anne Zellien**  
Kammenstraat 47  
Jewellery.

**Anvers**  
Leopoldstraat 53  
Lombardenvest 17

**Astoria**  
Nationalestraat 11  
A.o. Rudy De Boyser.

**Bellerose**  
Lombardenvest 34

**Chine**  
Lombardenvest 37

**Christ Janssens**  
Lombardenstraat 10

**College**  
Komedielaats 17

**Delvaux**  
Komediplaats 17  
Leather bags and accessories.

**Dialogue**  
Leopoldstraat 5

**Hilde van Belleghem**

Nationalestraat 22  
Jewellery.

**Gigue**

Komedieplaats 15  
Jo Wyckman.

**Gozo**

Steenhouwervest 63  
22 Octobre etc.

**I Am**

Huidervettersstraat 42b

**I&NS (Ines Raspoort)**

Steenhouwervest 36

**Kipling**

Lombardenvest 13

**Knapp**

Korte Gasthuisstraat 32-34  
Xandres, Hampton Bays etc.

**Kyuso**

Lombardenvest 53-55  
Designed by Joke & Edigio.

**Lena Lena**

Steenhouwervest 44  
Sizes from 38 to 50.

**Long Island**

Schutterhofstraat 9c

**Miss & Mister**

Huidevettersstraat 31

**Nadine Wynants**

Nationalestraat 14  
Kloosterstraat 26  
Jewellery.

**Natan**

Schutterhofstraat 5

**Olivier Strelli**

Hopland 6 B

**Rue Blanche**

Leopoldstraat 10

**Romy Smits**

Sint-Jorispoort

[www.romysmits.com](http://www.romysmits.com)

**Scapa of Scotland**

Huidevettersstraat 16

**Scapa World**

Hopland 26-30

**SN3**

Frankrijklei 46-48

Kipdorpest 35-37-39

Dirk Bikkembergs (also Chanel, Jean-Paul Gaultier, Sonia Rykiel...)

**Wouters & Hendrix**

Het Modepaleis, Nationalestraat 15.

Jewellery.

**ZNJ**

Lombardenvest 4

**International designers:****A la mode**

Nationalestraat 27

Paul Smith, Etro, Fake, Jade Jagger, Viktor en Rolf, Jeremy Scott, Julien MacDonal, Jean Colonna, Chloë, Marc Le Bihan...

**Alexis**

Frankrijklei 31-33

Dolce & Gabbana.

**APC Homme**

Lombardenvest 12

**Balieri/Lange**

Quellinstraat 23

Rene Lange, Jil Sander...

**Closing Date**

Korte Gasthuisstraat 15

Vivienne Westwood, D2, Marithé & François Girbaud, E-Play, Sabotage, Andrew McKenzie, Firma, Amaya, Arzuaga, Whistles London...

**Comme des Carçons**

Yohji Yamamoto

Junya Watanabe

Maria Theresialei 19

**Dany May**

Teniersplaats 5-7-9

Ralph Lauren, Prada, Iceberg, Tod's...

**DKNY**

Korte Gasthuisstraat 7

Donna Karan...

**Emporio Armani**

Hopland 16-22

**Fish & Chips**

Kammenstraat 36-38

**Gianni Versace**

De Keyserlei 3

**Guru**

Kammenstraat 18

[www.guru.it](http://www.guru.it)

**Hermes**

Schutterhofstraat 19

**Kenzo**

Meir Square 28-30

**Laundry Industry**

Huidevettersstraat 23

**Marlboro Classics**

Leysstraat 20

**Max Mara**

Huidevettersstraat 23

**Mercken**

Schutterhofstraat 21

**Oxford**

Huidevettersstraat 55

Ralph Lauren, Tod's...

**Park Avenue**

Frankrijklei 123

Yves Saint Laurent, Kenzo...

**Picass**

Frankrijklei 64

Mosquino, Bazaar/Lacroix, Rifat Ozbek, Thierry Mugler, Claude Montana, Roberto Cavalli...

**Princess**

Meir 51-55

Marc Jacobs, Burberry, Victor & Rolf, Donna Karan, Ralph Lauren...

**Princess Blue**

Schrijnwerkersstraat 7

McQueen, Evisu, Helmut Lang, Polo Ralph Lauren...

**Step by Step**

Oudaan 15

Helmut Lang, Martine Sitbon, Joseph...

**Sur+ by Monar**

Lombardenvest 76

[www.monar.be](http://www.monar.be)

## **Y's**

Steenhouwervest 46

Yohji Yamamoto...

This is only a small part of the fashion offer in Antwerp. There are several other boutiques with both Belgian and International designs.

## **Second hand shops with design clothes:**

### **Francis**

Steenhouwervest 14

### **Naughty 1**

Kammenstrat 65-67

### **LabelInc.**

Aalmoezenierstraat 14

## **Fashion shows etc.**

### **1. Vitrine**

Vitrine is the annual Antwerp fashion event organized by the Flanders Fashion Institute. Several designers dress different shop windows. A score of fashion students put their own work on display in the windows of large stores on the Meir. The first evening is devoted exclusively to a young designer. The FFI chooses one designer from some twenty young hopefuls, all of whom are taking their first steps in the international world of fashion. The chosen designer is given a free rein to shape the entire concept of the opening evening in the old Commodity Exchange (Handelsbeurs).

Vitrine also publishes a guide to the Belgian designers.

### **2. Fashion Show**

Young designers go out of their way to impress at the annual Fashion Show, which is held over three successive evenings in June. And who wouldn't! The event is attended by more than 6,000 people from all over the world. They judge and/or admire the students' collections, but many come just to soak up the atmosphere. The show is financed entirely by the sale of the entrance tickets, the catalogues, the proceeds from the bar and occasionally by the generosity of a sponsor.

### 3. Laundry

This small-scale fashion event takes place every year in September. Music and dance groups perform on squares around the Nationalestraat. The Kammenstraat with its reverberating music, exotic food stalls and, above all, its fashion parades, is the real focus of attention. Non-professionals model the autumn fashion trends for the benefit of the public. The shop windows in the Kammenstraat are decorated with bright colours and ... box upon box of Coral washing powder. New this year was the Laundry Night held in the port sheds belonging to the Waagnatie on the Rijnkaai.

This event has helped make the Nationalestraat and the surrounding streets a hip area. Some years ago things were very different. Many of the shop premises on the Nationalestraat were empty, many had fallen into a state of disrepair and most were of poor quality. The turnaround began in 1997. In the magical year 2000 no fewer than twenty-four new businesses opened here in the space of seven months. Most of them are trendy fashion shops, cafés and restaurants, some highly original and even exotic in character. As a result, the area attracts a new type of public: the sort of people who are into new trends. Many of the street's fashion shops, cafés and restaurants are designed to appeal precisely to that public.

If you are out and about in this groovy fashion area, look out for the following addresses:

- **Sushi Factory**, Nationalestraat 54: tuck into Japanese delicacies in the brand-new La Gazetta; the name recalls the old printing works of the *Gazet van Antwerpen* newspaper which used to occupy this site.
- **Ilé Afrik**, Aalmoezenierstraat 13: may people feel at home in this the whitest café for West Africans.
- **Centre Ville**, Nationalestraat 114: ideal for a quick snack or a full-scale Franco-Belgian meal.
- **Huis De Colvenier**, Sint-Antoniusstraat 8: aperitifs are sipped in the enormous wine cellar, then the five-course festive Sun Symphony menu is served in the colonial winter garden.
- **Nadine Wijnants**, Nationalestraat 14: stylish jewellery that is fresh and fanciful; the cat label is her trademark.
- **Anne Zellien**, Kammenstraat 47/1: her jewellery designs exude simplicity and balance; they are also artistic, exciting and contemporary.
- **Huis A. Boon**, Lombardenvest 2-4: Antwerp's oldest glove shop dates from 1884. Even today hundreds of gloves are neatly stowed away in the original little art deco drawers.
- **HIT**, Kammenstraat 43: young girls looking for really hip outfits shouldn't miss this crazy shop!
- **Naughty I**, Kammenstraat 67: in this vibrant second-hand shop you'll find gear that

- **Fish&Chips**, Kammenstraat 26-38: the supermarket for life-styles of the day after tomorrow. On the top floor DJs play trendy music, young people can get the latest look and sample food and booze.

## ***AREA BY AREA***

### ***Het Eilandje (The Little Island)***

#### **History**

A turbulent history behind it, 'het Eilandje' - or the Little Island - has recently started to enjoy something of a revival.

Its story began in 1550 when a small plot of urban land was first developed as a new and modern port area complete with inlets, warehouses, companies and breweries.

When the Spanish conquered Antwerp in 1585, thousands of Antwerpenaars fled and the city sank into economic decline. There were few buildings in the area now known as the little island until the eighteenth century. During French rule (1803-1813) Napoleon had the Bonaparte and Willem docks excavated and the port became an important marine base. After the fall of Napoleon, advantage was taken of the Napoleonic infrastructure and commercial establishments were added, bringing economic prosperity to the port. Both the size and number of ships grew constantly, necessitating a new dock, the Kattendijkdok, which was constructed just to the north. The area around the docks was developed and it was not long before port activity and urban life began to interact. The mix of blocks of buildings and docks made it look as if the buildings were located on 'islands'.

Further expansion followed to the north even before the end of the nineteenth century. The siting of these new docks had the effect of producing a fissure between port and city with the result that eventually the port areas closest to the city (i.e. the little island) were abandoned and gradually decline set in.

Yet in recent years the area has started to enjoy a new lease of life. Several cultural institutions have moved into empty warehouses. Het Eilandje's residents now include the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Royal Ballet of Flanders. In autumn 2000 the Godefridus warehouse on the Godefriduskaai 36 became the headquarters of fashion designer Dries Van Noten. And the historic St Felix depot has been restored to provide a new home for the Antwerp City Archive. In November 2004 a new centre for

contemporary art "Extra City" was opened in an old corn silo on Mexicostraat on the old Kattedijkdok. [www.extracity.be](http://www.extracity.be). On the other side of this center will there in September 2005 opened a new museum "Museum aan de Stroom", where collections of three actual museums will be moved: National Maritime museum Het Steen, Museum for archaeology, history and art industry Vleeshuis and Folklore museum. See text later: MAS. <http://museum.antwerpen.be/museumaandestroom/>.

'Het Eilandje' has something for everyone. You can take in a little history and culture, admire the architecture of the warehouses, go for a leisurely stroll past the docks and inhale the brackish water, enjoy a drink and a snack and, to round off the day, let your hair down in one of the 'in' night clubs.

Let's start with a little history and culture, as reflected in some of het Eilandje's numerous buildings.

## Saint Felix Warehouse

Many of the warehouses are in urgent need of renovation or are being bought up by real estate agents. Yet there are two large depots that have withstood the test of time. One is the **St Felix** warehouse on the Oude Leeuwenrui.

This warehouse was built for the 'Compagnie des Magasins généraux et Entrepôts libre' in 1858. The City of Antwerp was in need of storage for the thriving port and purchased the warehouse in 1912. The building consisted of seven storeys (including cellar and loft) and was the first warehouse in Antwerp to be fitted with cast iron columns and a good fire protection system. Between 1922 and 1940 the St Felix was used for storing coffee, hops and grain. After World War II Parmesan cheese, wine, honey, painted glassware and shoes were stored here. Later on the City of Antwerp let the whole complex to the Tabak Natie, which used it for storing tobacco. With the decline in port activity and the departure of most of the port-related companies to the left bank and to the north of Antwerp, activity at the warehouse came almost to a standstill. The City had difficulty letting the space. In 1975 the Port Authorities had little choice but to begin dismantling the hoisting equipment.

The run-down St Felix remained empty for more than twenty years until in 1998 the City Council decided to renovate the building and to find a new use for it.

In 2003 it became home of Antwerp City Archive.

The first to fifth floors inclusive are used for preserving archival records. These floors are compartmentalized and the areas equipped with the last word in climatization and fire protection systems; also, very importantly, they are protected against excess light. The staff occupies the second floor. There are workplaces where the documents are restored and duplicated, downloaded onto the Internet or undergo some other process. The public have access to the sixth floor, where there is a reading room with 130 seats

and a reception area. Large skylights provide plenty of daylight. Linking the Godefriduskaai and the Oude Leeuwenrui, there is a covered street and a few small, select shops, dealing for example in antique books or art, plus of course restaurants, cafés and wine bars.

The façade of the building is 57 metres long, it is 78 metres deep and it covers an area of 3,870 m<sup>2</sup>. It provides 23,081 m<sup>2</sup> of usable storage space.

## Saint Felixhouse Pump Room

The Spanish restaurateur Federico Martin has been keen to restore the dilapidated St Felixhouse pump room. The building at no. 27 Oude Leeuwenrui with its robust door and tower looks was in quite good shape from the outside, but the interior was very run-down and the rain came in. The original pumping mechanism, used to drive port equipment, was removed years ago. It was replaced by a series of robust tanks and presses, which now belong to the city's department of industrial archaeology.

## Hessenhuis

On the other side of the Oude Leeuwenrui is the Hessenhuis.

This depot was built in 1564 at the instigation of a number of merchants and forwarding agents. It served to better guard and preserve goods brought in over land and at the same time provided the merchants with overnight accommodation. The new building soon became known as the 'Hessenhuys', very probably after the famous Hessen wagons that came from the Hessen region of Germany. The former depot displays renaissance features, but the outside walls were erected in the Brabant-Gothic (so-called 'brick and sandstone') style.

Over the centuries the building has served many different purposes: it has been a Lutheran temple, a barracks, fire station, city warehouse and workshop.

Between 1958 and 1962 a group of young Antwerp artists known as the G58 held a series of sensational avant-garde exhibitions, theatre performances, concerts and film screenings, as well as debates on the second floor. Artists from Belgium and abroad took part in these events, which caused quite a furor. The Hessenhuis then disappeared from the public eye again until 1975 when a part of the ground floor was temporarily converted into an exhibition area and the educational department of the municipal museums started organizing annual exhibitions here. In 1979 restoration and renovation projects got under way. The restored building reopened as a permanent exhibition complex in 1985, since when the Hessenhuis has been able to programme scores of international exhibitions.

The building benefits from a sophisticated climatization system, modern fire prevention and security systems, including closed circuit security, and new lighting.

In addition to the two large depots, there are a number of smaller buildings on het Eilandje that certainly merit a brief visit.

## Brewers' House

On the Adriaan Brouwerstraat you'll find the Brewers' House ('Brouwershuis'), formerly also called the 'Waterhuis' or Water House.

The Brewers' House was built by architect Gilbert van Schoonbeke in 1553. He devised what was then an ingenious system to channel the incoming water to the surrounding breweries. Animals operating the treadmill on the lower floor set in motion a kind of dredging machine. The forty metal buckets scooped up water from a container below and then emptied it out into other receptacles on the floor above. From there it was distributed via a network of pipes to the surrounding breweries. Those breweries no longer exist, but visitors can still follow the whole process quite easily. They can also visit the Council Chamber of the Brewers' Guild. This room is beautifully decorated with (among other things) a gold leather wall covering made in Malines (Mechelen) in the seventeenth century, the original patterned tile floor restored at the beginning of 1994, and paintings by Antonio Pellegrini.

## Bourlahuis

Cross the old bridge between the Willem and Bonaparte docks and you come out in Nassastraat, where specialized shops serve the needs of skippers and yacht owners. There are also two art galleries in the street. The first is Art Forum, the second, on the corner, is called Bourlahuis. Run by Bie Wellens, wife of architect Richard Foqué, this 400 m<sup>2</sup>-art gallery opened in 1993. The building is part of a larger complex designed in 1819 by the architect Bourla for the Nassauplein, as the city's northerly 'demarcation line'. The rectangular structure of storeys and porticoed galleries is echoed in the nearby St Felix warehouse. The building used to be a mechanical repair centre for diesel engines, but it was sympathetically renovated so as to preserve the building's historic character.

## Theater

Immediately to the north, on the Kattendijkdok, stands the **Theater 't Eilandje**, the headquarters of the Royal Ballet of Flanders.

Though it had to wait a long time for this its new home, the company has been able to perform in its own auditorium since the 1998/1999 season. Theater 't Eilandje on the Kattendijkdok can seat 302 persons and has a pleasant foyer and attractive exhibition area. The intimate atmosphere serves to strengthen the link between the company and

the public. The warm red furnishings and comfortable seats (with plenty of leg-room) contribute to the auditorium's conviviality and comfort.

At the back of the same building (entrance Braziliëstraat) is **Filharmonisch Huis**, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of Flanders' new home.

The new theatres are easily accessible by public transport. Bus numbers 1 and 9 stop approximately 300 metres away (Rijnkaai stop).

## Marina

Thanks to the renovation of warehouses and other buildings, het Eilandje is an attractive area once more. The brand-new marina on the Willemdok has provided an additional boost to het Eilandje's revival.

Since April 29<sup>th</sup> 2000 there have been 120 moorings, spread over five floating jetties. A port pavilion has been erected at a second stage. It is a pile building standing on ten stilts in the dock and at the same level as the jetties. The construction, which slopes gently so as to make it accessible to wheelchair users, consists of two box-like units placed crosswise one on top of the other. The lower girder is clad with cedar wood on the outside. The lower unit provides shower and toilet facilities, a separate washing area for vegetables and a place for sorting waste. The top unit, which has an aluminium appearance on the outside, is the location of offices.

Most of the visiting boats come from the Netherlands. They are usually spectacular 20 to 25-metre motor boats, which give the port on het Eilandje an almost 'Monte Carlo feel'. River cruisers regularly tie up here as well. The success of the marina is reflected in the fact that some 1,200 craft have called at the port over a period of four months. Moreover, several real estate agents have taken options on berths here with a view to selling them with lofts or apartments that are still at the drawing-board stage.

The construction of the marina is just one of many projects the City of Antwerp has in the pipeline.

## MAS

The city is building a new museum, **Museum on the River, MAS** for short, which stands for **Museum Aan de Stroom**. The Antwerp-Rotterdam firm of architects Neutelings-Riedijk has designed a museum for the Hanzestedeplaats, located between the Willem and Bonaparte docks. The MAS will tell the story of the city of Antwerp, its port and shipping. It will house the collections from existing museums: the Folklore Museum (objects relating to popular cults, witchcraft and recreational culture), the Maritime Museum (ships, models, designs), the Butchers' Hall - 'Vleeshuis' - (the applied arts) and the Industrial Heritage (currently divided between several sheds in the city).

Architects Neutelings-Riedijk designed a 53-metre tower standing on a new public

square with gift shops. The tower concept was inspired by the surrounding warehouses. In fact the tower volume represents a storehouse of giant stone boxes each of which is turned a quarter turn to form an upward spiral. Each stone box will be dedicated to a specific period in Antwerp's history. Escalators take visitors right up to the collections. The monumental 'stairwell' thus created provides visitors with a 360° panoramic view of the city. The top floor comprises a municipal reception centre, which is directly accessible by fast lift. There is a magical view over the whole city to be had from the large room for functions, congresses and lectures as well as from the restaurant and bar. The hollow spaces between the stone boxes have glass walls forming enormous showcases in which the larger museum pieces can be displayed, ever visible to the outside world.

The permanent exhibition forms the backbone of the new museum. But the MAS intends to be much more than a traditional museum. It will be a meeting place for the city's inhabitants, it will use the latest multi-medial devices and temporary exhibitions will ensure an on-going dynamic. Multimedia, audio-visual presentations, image banks, video clips and interactive programmes of virtual city walks will enable the MAS to provide information at several different levels. Acc. to the builders the museum should open at 2010.

## Protected

All the already made projects and several planned projects clearly show that the area around het Eilandje is being given a new lease of life and is once again becoming an attractive place to live and work. Moreover, in September 2000 het Eilandje was provisionally made a listed monument. Protected quay walls, pump rooms, locks and bridges are now protected from demolition or alteration. Once het Eilandje is effectively protected, the owners will receive grants from the Flemish Region and the Province of Antwerp to renovate the buildings.

## Places to be

The following list of cafés and restaurants shows that there is still plenty of action on het Eilandje even in the evenings.

- **Transat**, Sint-Pietersvliet 3: the highest restaurant in terms of location, Transat affords a superior view of the River Scheldt.
- **Fly Inn**, Bordeauxstraat 7c: this former warehouse on the Willem dock has been turned into a restaurant decorated with aeroplanes, rockets and unidentified flying objects.

- **L'Ile perdue**, Amsterdamstraat 33: the first hip restaurant on the island: at lunchtime it tends to be the haunt of business people, after performance by the Ballet of Flanders you can eat lobster here.
- **Chez Fl'Eau**, Tavernierskaai 1: this Parisian brasserie in a former lockkeeper's house seats a hundred.
- **Jailhouse**, Bordeauxstraat 12: French bistro with Moroccan influences; the listed building used to be a police station, which explains the name.
- **Café d' Anvers**, Verversrui 15: the former local Ritz cinema was converted into a very trendy disco in the early nineties. [www.cafe-d-anvers.be](http://www.cafe-d-anvers.be).
- **The Fill Collins Club**, Lange Schipperskapelstraat 11: break beats clash with funky bass sounds, commercial tunes are brought down by heavy techno beats.
- **Le Beau Zoo**, Sint-Godefriduskaai 50: up-market party-goers hang out in this warehouse; vaulted cellar holds 300.
- **Diamond Princess hotel boat**, Bonapartedok: a novel way to spend a night in Antwerp is to rent a cabin on board this luxury ship. The floating hotel has 53 cabins of different categories, a piano bar and restaurant. On Fridays and Saturdays the Bateau d' Eau discotheque opens its doors to everyone. The ship also caters for staff and family parties, meetings, seminars, etc.
- **Stuurboord, Hangar (shed) 26-27**: on the quay to the left this complex houses the De Kaai restaurant, which has a terrace overlooking the River Scheldt. After 11 o'clock at night the tables and chairs are pushed to one side and you can let your hair down to the sounds of contemporary dance music  
On the quay to the right, the regional television channel ATV has its studios. There are also offices and function rooms available for hire here.

## *Het Zuid (The South)*

### **Introduction and history**

To the south of the historic centre lies Antwerp's museum area: '**het Zuid**' (**the South**). 'Het Zuid' is home to a number of interesting museums, art nouveau buildings and classical monuments such as the Zuiderpershuis.

In the mid-eighties the area around the Vlaamse Kaai and the Waalse Kaai was a desolate dockland and the hundred-year-old mansions and harbour sheds around the Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp stood empty. In recent years its development has gathered momentum. The better art galleries, fashion houses and trendy restaurants are driving rental and purchase prices sky high. The renovated warehouses are attracting a young, new population.

The turning-point came in 1985 and in 1987 when the Museum of Photography and the

Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp made their homes in old harbour sheds here.

The history of 'het Zuid' dates back to the World Fairs of 1885 and 1894. With the arrival of the Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp in 1890, the area with its wide avenues and round squares à la parisienne became the focus of attention. The Rubens temple by architects Winders and van Dijck can now be seen to its best advantage following the successful relaying of the Leopold de Waelplaats in 1999. The sculptures on socles in front of the museum are by Rodin.

## KMSKA

The Vlaamse Kaai and the Waalse Kaai are a good base from which to explore 'het Zuid'. A network of streets leads from there to the numerous museums and other buildings, restaurants and cafés.

'Het Zuid' is dominated by the **Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp** (Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen, or KMSKA). The museum has a magnificent collection of works of art from fourteenth-century old masters through to modern art. The collection of old masters on the first floor spans Flemish painting from ca. 1360 to the end of the eighteenth century. The Flemish Primitives are represented by Jan van Eyck, Rogier van der Weyden, Dirk Bouts, Hans Memling, Gerard David and many anonymous masters. The sixteenth century is well represented by (among others) Quinten Metsijs, Frans Floris and the Breughel family. And there is no shortage of seventeenth-century art on show: Peter Paul Rubens, Jacob Jordaens, Anthony Van Dyck and David Teniers. By way of Dutch seventeenth-century artists, we should mention Frans Hals, Jan van Goyen, Van Ruysdael and Rembrandt.

The modern art department is on the ground floor and includes work by Constantin Meunier, Henry Van de Velde, James Ensor, Gustave Van de Woestyne, Rik Wouters, Paul Delvaux, René Magritte, Karel Appel and Vic Gentils.

[museum.antwerpen.be/kmska](http://museum.antwerpen.be/kmska)

## MUHKA

A rather different collection of works of art is on show at the **Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp** (MuKHa). [www.muhka.be](http://www.muhka.be).

This former grain silo dating from the 1920s was converted by architect Michel Grandsard, who preserved the art deco façade and behind it created the perfect venue for displaying art.

Extended in 1993, the Muhka now has more than 4,000 m<sup>2</sup> of exhibition space. The Muhka's exhibition and purchasing policies are directed first and foremost at the period from 1970 to the present day. In addition to the permanent collection, the Muhka mounts some ten exhibitions each year geared to one-man shows or theme exhibitions. Since 1994 it has also shown work by young, lesser-known artists by means of the smaller so-called 'Practice' exhibitions. These exhibitions give the chance to young artists to introduce their works to the art-world. Works by Belgian and foreign artists active in disciplines such as painting, sculpture, installation art and photography illustrate important trends in the contemporary art world. The permanent collection is complemented by works given to the Gordon Matta-Clark Foundation since 1978 by artists from all over the world.

## Photography

Very close by you'll find the **Museum of Photography**.

The idea of setting up a photography museum first took root in 1965 after the tremendous success of the exhibition '125 years of photography' mounted at Sterckshof Museum in Deurne. Several members of the work committee, all employees of Agfa-Gevaert n.v., continued to operate as a work group called 'Photo and Film' and laid the foundations of the collection that was to lead to the inception of the Museum of Photography.

On May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1968 the Permanent Deputation of the Province of Antwerp decided to set aside several rooms within Sterckshof Museum for Decorative Arts and Crafts to house a permanent exhibition dedicated to photography. By 1984 the collection had grown to such an extent that larger premises were urgently needed. The provincial authorities of Antwerp bought the 'Pakhuis Vlaanderen' warehouse on the Waalse Kaai in 'het Zuid'. After renovation and conversion work, the museum moved into the warehouse in 1986. However, before long even that was bursting at the seams as a result of all the exhibition activities, the success of the education department and the fact that the collections were expanding apace.

In 1993 the provincial authorities purchased two adjoining buildings in the Lakenstraat. Major building work was carried out to link these with the existing part of the museum.

A totally new Provincial Museum of Photography opened on October 27<sup>th</sup> 1994.

In 2000 a new wing designed by architect Georges Baines was erected behind the existing building on the Waalse Kaai, thereby creating more spacious exhibition rooms, a cafeteria, a small bookshop and new workshops for the education department.

From the year 2002 the Museum of Photography has also housed the Film Museum, currently located on the Meir.

It is hoped that the wonderful new projection room and impressive auditorium will draw

the public in larger numbers. A great deal is happening behind the scenes as well. The collections have been made digitally accessible to the public, the descriptions have been rewritten and the exhibits rearranged.

The Museum of Photography is divided into three main parts: the library, the equipment department, one of the most complete in Europe, and the photographic collection, which covers 150 years of photography with prime examples from the different periods. Special attention is paid to Belgian photography, of course, starting with its early achievements. The museum covers all aspects of the medium through to the most recent developments. What makes it unique is the way equipment and photographic image are correlated. [www.fotomuseum.be](http://www.fotomuseum.be).

It's also worth taking a looking at other buildings in 'het Zuid' , like the imposing former hydro-station known as the **Zuiderpershuis**, the baroque **Water Gate**, the art nouveau **Liberaal Volkshuis** and 'the Boat'.

## Zuiderpershuis

Built in 1882, the Zuiderpershuis used to serve as the hydro-station for the lock gates between the old port basin and the River Scheldt. De Zuiderdokken or South Docks were filled in 1968 but the Zuiderpershuis was still needed to operate the Nassau bridge and remained in use until 1977.

In no time at all, the large auditorium with its high glass cupola and gallery can be converted from a theatre and concert hall into an impressive venue for congresses and receptions. The small adjoining room with high, bare brick walls and restored antique glass doors is equally unique. The multipurpose room on the first floor houses a permanent exhibition about the monument and its artistic activities. The photographic gallery gives travel photographers a chance to display their work. Exhibitions, workshops, etc. are organized in the newly-renovated sheds.

The spacious foyer, in a contemporary design by Bob Van Reeth, has a wonderful, exotic inner courtyard, leading to a second terrace along the former Zuiderdokken. All these rooms are available for hire.

Today the Zuiderpershuis is a culture centre that presents theatre and music productions and other performing arts from Africa, America, Asia, Europe and Oceania.

## Volkshuis

Another noteworthy 'huis' - or 'building' - is the **Liberaal Volkshuis** on the Volkstraat (no. 40). It was built by the architect Jan Van Asperen in 1901 for a cooperative known as 'Help u zelve' (Help Yourself). In the 1950's Bell Telephone turned the interior into a factory where it produced radio and television sets. A preservation order was placed on

the façade twenty years later.

The wrought iron which was used for the balcony decoration under the influence of Victor Horta, has been left the original greeny-grey colour, rather than being painted black. A mosaic agricultural scene draws the eye up to the third floor. It almost seems to be draped around the wooden terrace door, which is framed in steel and wrought ironwork.

Bob Van Reeth designed the - needless to say - attractive interior of the Volkshuis. The building was awarded the Europa-Nostra Prize in 1995 and a few years ago it was taken over by the Steiner School.

## Boat

Now go and take a look at the building on the corner of the Schildersstraat and Plaatsnijdersstraat, where a wooden boat, complete with anchor chains, protrudes from the façade, stopping passers-by in their tracks! Officially called 'de Vijf Werelddelen' or 'The Five Continents', the complex is a fine example of art nouveau.

## Water Gate

The baroque Water Gate on the Gillisplaats takes us much further back in time. The triumphal arch was probably based on Rubens' 'Porte Regia' or 'Royal Gate', which he designed in 1624 in honour of King Philip IV of Spain. The gate was built as a Roman triumphal arch in Flemish baroque style. Before the quays of the River Scheldt were straightened, it stood near the Vlasmarkt in the historic city centre. It was later moved southwards, to the Sint-Jansvliet. When the pedestrian tunnel was built at Sint-Jansvliet, it was moved again, this time to its present location. Little wonder then that the people of Antwerp have nicknamed the gate 'de wandelende poort' - 'the walking gate'!

## Galleries

'Het Zuid' can certainly be described as the artistic heart of Antwerp. Art lovers will be unable to resist its many **art galleries**.

Ronny Van de Velde's on the Ijzerenpoortkaai is probably the most famous.

It was designed by the architect Georges Baines. The gallery has a predilection for retrospectives of modernism from the first half of this century. However, in November 2000 an advertising agency is taking over this building and Ronny Van de Velde is moving his national art dealing activities to no. 202 Amerikalei. He will continue to run his successful international art business from no. 34 Cogels Osylei, where he plans to show nineteenth-century photography and twentieth-century art.

Micheline Szwajcer in Verlatstraat is the most international of Antwerp's galleries. In

addition to works by Belgian artists, you will also find New York art, Italian arte povera, minimal art and concept art.

The arrival of scores of other contemporary art galleries in the area around the Vlaamse Kaai and the Waalse Kaai have contributed to its upward mobility. You'll find DB-S photography at no.76 Vlaamse Kaai and the Stella Lohaus Gallery at number 47, Roger Vandaele at no.31 Waalse Kaai and Ruimte Morguen at number 22 and the Zeno X Gallery at no.16 Leopold de Waelplaats.

Het Zuid is enjoying a new lease of life, thanks to the three museums, the art galleries and numerous entertainment spots. But real estate agents are also investing in this fashionable area and a number of **building projects** are under way.

## Luxe

For example, building work on **25 luxury apartments** close to the Water Gate, on the corner of Verschansingstraat and the Vlaamse Kaai, began in February 2000. The new streamlined development project will be built in brownny-orange brick with lots of glass and steel. The majority of the flats and lofts have already been snapped up, mainly by two-income families and investors.

The new building will have five floors and an underground car park with 27 parking places. The part of the building on the Verschansingstraat consists of two-bedroom flats from 93 m<sup>2</sup> upwards. The corner with the Vlaamse Kaai contains five lofts of up to 270 m<sup>2</sup>.

The ground floor is divided into two commercial areas; a well-known design furniture shop will occupy 300 m<sup>2</sup> of it.

## Places to be

In recent years het Zuid has been described as trendy, hip, young and contemporary. Cafés and restaurants have mushroomed. If you're looking to go out on the town, these days 'het Zuid' is definitely **the place to be!**

- **Café Hopper**, Leopold De Waelstraat 2: customers are regularly treated to jazz sessions at this the cultural café of het Zuid, plus a close-up view of the KMSKA (Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp).
- **L'entrepôt du Congo**, Vlaamse Kaai 42: this former brewery has been turned into one of the trendiest cafés in het Zuid and was the meeting place for cultural Antwerp for several years.
- **Camu**: the KMSK café - but you don't have to visit the museum to go inside; it has become a meeting-place for journalists and artists.
- **Den Artist**, Museumstraat 46: this brasserie in *Jugendstil* has an extensive wine list

- **Bar Tabac**, Waalse Kaai 43: the fashionable gather here; the interior is sparse: a few rusty 50's chairs and three red lamps over the bar; otherwise, strains of jungle, acid, jazz and trip hop provide the ambience.
- **Table d'Anvers**, Vlaamse Kaai 43: Western dishes with Eastern influences.
- **Comte Charbons**, Vlaamse Kaai 6: one of the first bistros in het Zuid is housed in a former coal bunker.
- **Farine's Food and Future**, Vlaamse Kaai 40: healthy breakfast with techno music, southern lunch with hip hop and dinner to the sounds of drum 'n bass.
- **Cargo**, Leopold De Waelplaats 24: in the Hippodroom building, this is the flagship of the Belgian design bureau Appart. The name Hippodroom (or Hippodrome in English) is a reminder that in the 1960's this was the site of a circus building.
- **Hippodroom**, Leopold De Waelplaats 10: this restaurant is a model for the south new-style with fusion cuisine; the interior ingeniously respects the old building.  
[www.hippodroom.be](http://www.hippodroom.be).
- **Bar Room**, Leopold De Waelplaats 24: DJs give drive to this 'bar-resto' and when mannequins are not on the catwalk, this is where you'll find them.
- **Fair Food**, Graaf van Egmontstraat 60: besides the delicious chicken breast and lamb, there are many vegetarian dishes on the menu.
- **Funky Soul Potato**, Volkstraat 76: as the name suggests, here you can tuck into filled jacket potatoes.
- **Bar Italia**, Graaf van Egmontstraat-Leopold De Waelplaats: cooks from Bari, the heel of Italy, prepare typical Italian food that makes no concessions to Belgian taste. So, Italian at its best.
- **Bangkwok**, Leopold De Waelplaats-De Burburestraat: new and successful Asian restaurant, where the cooks provide the spectacle.
- **'t Pakhuis**, Vlaamse Kaai 76: cool restaurant of enormous dimensions in a harbour warehouse with gigantic beer barrels.
- **Café Local**, Waalse Kaai 25: salsa and merengue set the tone in a Cuban décor.  
[www.cafelocal.be](http://www.cafelocal.be).
- **Club Geluk**, Luikstraat 6: on the ground floor a lively yuppie restaurant; dancing in the cellar. [www.clubgeluk.be](http://www.clubgeluk.be).
- **Zillion**, Jan Van Gentstraat: this, the largest dance hall in Belgium with four rooms, attracts a youngish public of 18 to 25 year olds.
- **Zuiderkroon**, Vlaamse Kaai: brand-new venue for shows with revue for groups.

# *Scheldekaaien (Scheldt quays)*

## **Introduction**

Walking along the quays is rather like leafing through a magazine of contemporary architecture. However different the façades may be in terms of colour and form, the maritime world has clearly influenced many of the buildings. Lots of people have already discovered the attraction of the Scheldt quays and made the riverside their home.

The Scheldt quays provide the link between north and south, between the up-and-coming Eilandje and the gentrified Zuid. One side of the three-kilometre esplanade is lined with apartments and offices in different architectural styles interspersed, of course, with cafés and restaurants. It's well worth taking a stroll through this less busy part of Antwerp.

## **Upstream**

Begin your walk along the Scheldt quays at the south end, on the Cockerillkaai, where the Upstream flats provide one of the first examples of fine architecture. It was architect Conix's solution for an empty space behind the MuHKA. The low, closed volume of the museum contrasts with the high transparent block of flats, giving the impression that the building is suspended between the museum walls.

## **Zebra**

You certainly won't miss Antwerp architect Bob Van Reeth's 'zebra house', called the **Huis van Roosmalen**, further along on the corner of Sint-Michielskaai and Goede Hoopstraat. The design was the starting signal for the renovation of the quays. The black and white pattern is Van Reeth's tongue-in-cheek reference to a design for a house commissioned by the singer Josephine Baker (though not built).

## **Apartment complex**

Still on the Sint-Michielskaai, but then on the corner with Sint-Michielsstraat, is another striking building. The **all-grey apartment complex** alludes to the port and shipping. The untreated iroko wood on the façade is a reference to the last remaining wooden sheds opposite the apartment block. Notice the undulating line of the façade.

## Sint-Jansvliet

There is much to be admired on the next quay, the Plantinkaai, around Sint-Jansvliet. Children gather enthusiastically on this little square every day to play basketball, though on Sundays they have to give way to the flea market. This square used to be an inlet. Smaller boats came here to discharge or take new cargoes on board. At low tide the boats simply lay on the bottom of the inlet.

## Pedestrian tunnel

The most prominent construction has to be the building that ventilates and provides access to the **Sint-Anna pedestrian tunnel** constructed between 1931 and 1933. It runs under the River Scheldt to the left bank. The official opening took place on September 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> 1933 in the presence of King Leopold III and Queen Astrid. The pedestrian tunnel is 572 metres long, almost 4 metres wide and it lies at a depth of 34.37 metres under the coping of the quay wall. You can take the wooden escalator or the art-deco lift down into the tunnel. On the other side you are rewarded with a splendid view of the Antwerp road. You are allowed to cycle through the tunnel but there is a speed limit of 5 km/hour in force!

## Entrepot du Congo

A nineteenth-century warehouse called the Entrepot du Congo still stands on the corner of Sint-Jansvliet and the Plantinkaai. In the nineteenth century the building was a depot for colonial goods. The name refers to the famous Congo boats that loaded and unloaded at the quayside. Such events always attracted large crowds of Antwerpenaars, who would watch and comment on the goings-on from the esplanade. Years later the building was used as a storehouse for small items of furniture and the like, which were shipped in containers to America. Entrepôt du Congo was converted into apartments and studios at the end of the 1970's but before that the artist Floris Jaspers had his studio here for many years.

## Esplanade

The esplanade is located across the road from Sint-Jansvliet.

On the Zuiderterras you'll find a café cum restaurant of the same name. The architect Bob Van Reeth drew up the plans for this building. On the south side it makes clear references to the maritime world with its gangways and round windows, as does the whole of the interior. You'll find a similar building at the end of the Noorderterras.

## Hansa Building

Yet another eye-catching architectural gem stands on the corner of the Suikerrui and Ernest Van Dijckkaai: the **Hanzahuis** or Hansa Building. This neo-baroque structure was one of the first office buildings in the city. The mythological figures represent the god of trading Mercury. They were made by the sculptor Jef Lambeaux, the man who designed the Brabo fountain on the Grote Markt.

## Cruises

In addition to being an industrial port Antwerp is also one of the fastest growing cultural cruise destinations in Europe. Modern cruise ships moor in the historic city centre, where a brand new cruise terminal welcomes the passengers. At the height of the Zuid walking terrace at Quay 20 you can often admire huge modern cruise ships.

Get a taste of the typical atmosphere of the Antwerp waterfront from the Noord walking terrace along the main entrance of the Steen fortress. Those visitors who take a walk along the river quays will notice a lot of new buildings. Contemporary architecture along the quays often refers to the maritime aspect of the city - Antwerp is very clearly facing the water again. At sunset the colours of the Scheldt change. The signals on the water, the lights of the ships and the port installations make for a surprisingly enchanting spectacle.

## Pilotage service

Right at the northern end of the quays, on het Eilandje, you'll come to the **Belgian pilotage service (Belgisch Loodswezen)**. The river pilots work in this neo-Gothic building - popularly termed 'gingerbread style'. A figure of Brabo adorns the stepped gable. The 'Monument to Seamen' with its purple-blue light on the River Scheldt pays tribute to the seamen who lost their lives at sea during the two World Wars. From this quiet little vantage-point you have a fine view of the modern city on the other side of the river.

## Projects

Living on the waterside with a view of the River Scheldt has become a privilege and one that the real estate agents were quick to grasp. Offices, flats and houses have sprung up like mushrooms all the way along the riverside. Herewith a summary of the building projects on the various quays.

### 1. Gerlachekaai

- Architect Guido Driesen has designed a sober block of flats next to the Belgica office complex on the Gerlachekaai/Verviersstraat. The ten apartments were completed in the autumn of 2000.

### 2. Cockerillkaai

- Brabo real estate firm commissioned the cube-shaped Cockerill residence on the Ijzerenpoortkaai, opposite Hangar (shed) 15.
- The largest building project on the quays is located between Luikstraat and Wapenstraat. This flat and office complex are designed by Christine Conix for Himmos.

### 3. Sint-Michielskaai

- The old Don Carlos restaurant has been demolished and is being replaced by luxury flats. The former top restaurant has disappeared and its place taken ten apartments and a duplex called the Kaai de Goede Hoop (Quay of Good Hope).
- On the corner of Sint-Michielsstraat, Giovanni Scatorchia is building a five-floor designer pad with a glass wall and a lift that is visible from the outside.

### 4. Plantinkaai

- Spacious corner apartment at the Rijkenhoek designed by architect Christine Conix for the property developer Himmos. The apartments Conix has designed for wealthy customers have a 32-metre frontage, a record for the quays. On the ground floor there are a brasserie and garages, on the first floor offices.

### 5. Ernest Van Dijckkaai

- Jo Crepain's Albatros residence next to 't Oerwoud café is finished at last after a long planning and construction period.
- The large-scale De Rede project, next to La Rade restaurant and opposite the Steen, has also been finished. The building comprises six alternate storeys of flats and offices.

In recent years the quays have become a hive of activity at night. Salsa lovers, street music enthusiasts and foodies are all in their element here.

- **Hangar 41**, Sint-Michielskaai 41: new and highly popular among hip types; attractive interior, much sought-after terrace, stiff cocktails and sometimes live jazz music.
- **Zuiderterras**, Ernest Van Dijckkaai 37: the best place to enjoy the Scheldt and the Lange Wapper fountain. [www.zuiderterras.be](http://www.zuiderterras.be).
- **Café Beveren**, Vlasmarkt 2: the Decap organ doesn't drown the sound of people laughing, singing and generally whooping it up.
- **No Problem**, Ernest van Dijckkaai 26: Jamaican cuisine in a Jamaican interior.

- **La Bodeguita**, Ernest Van Dijckkaai 21: this café is entirely responsible for the salsa rage in Belgium.
- **'t Oerwoud**, Suikerrui 2: frequented mainly by young people who like going out but don't like 'alternative'.
- **Yokohama**, Ernest van Dijckkaai 11: possibly the biggest Japanese in Belgium with three gigantic conveyor belts stacked with sushi dishes.
- **La Rade**, Ernest van Dijckkaai 8: this classy restaurant in a nineteenth-century freemasons' temple has been the culinary star of the quays for fifty years.
- **Dock's Café**, Jordaenskaai 7: this chic baroque-style bistro won itself a place in the French *Gaul-Millaut* and is famous for its fish and oyster bar. [www.docks.be](http://www.docks.be).
- **Transat**, Sint-Pietersvliet 3: this the highest restaurant in terms of location affords a superior view of the River Scheldt.

### Other trendy and stylish restaurants:

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Coco C                      | <a href="http://www.coco-c.be">www.coco-c.be</a>                       |
| Ferrier 30                  | <a href="http://www.ferrier.be">www.ferrier.be</a>                     |
| Brasserie National (i MoMu) | <a href="http://www.brasserienational.be">www.brasserienational.be</a> |
| Het Pomphuis                | <a href="http://www.pomphuis.be">www.pomphuis.be</a>                   |
| Pier 19                     | <a href="http://www.pier19.be">www.pier19.be</a>                       |
| Dam Central                 | <a href="http://www.damcentral.be">www.damcentral.be</a>               |
| Adriaan                     | <a href="http://www.adriaan.be">www.adriaan.be</a>                     |
| On Stage                    | <a href="http://www.on-stage.be">www.on-stage.be</a>                   |
| Grand Café Horta            | <a href="http://www.grandcafehorta.be">www.grandcafehorta.be</a>       |
| De Foyer                    | <a href="http://www.defoyer.be">www.defoyer.be</a>                     |
| La Luna                     | <a href="http://www.laluna.be">www.laluna.be</a>                       |
| Velvet Lounge               | <a href="http://www.velvetlounge.be">www.velvetlounge.be</a>           |
| Bassin                      | <a href="http://www.bassin.be">www.bassin.be</a>                       |
| LaRiva                      | <a href="http://www.lariva.be">www.lariva.be</a>                       |

### Rustic and/or frites:

De Reddende Engel  
Tofburg 3

Fruithuur No 1  
Hoogstraat 1

### Jazz

De Muze  
Melkmarkt 15

## Stylish clubbing:

Industria [www.clubindustria.be](http://www.clubindustria.be)  
De Kaaiman [www.kaaiman.be](http://www.kaaiman.be)

## Flemish Interior designers

Maarten Van Severen is probably the most well-known Flemish designer. But there are several.... Have a look at [www.designflanders.be](http://www.designflanders.be).

## Indoor and outdoor furnishing shops in Antwerpen:

Designcenter De Winkelhaak [www.winkelhaak.be](http://www.winkelhaak.be)

Flamant Home Interiors  
Lange Gasthuisstraat 12/14, Antwerpen  
[www.flamant.com](http://www.flamant.com)

Ab-Interieur  
Prins Albertlei 33 Bus 12, Berchem  
Kitchen, bathroom.

Divani  
Vlaamse Kaai 35/39, Antwerpen  
[www.divani.be](http://www.divani.be)

Auping  
Vlaamse Kaai 55, Antwerpen  
[www.auping.nl](http://www.auping.nl)  
Everything for interior.

Boffi  
Prins Boudewijnlaan 142, 2610 Wilrijk  
Kitchen, bathroom.

Deco Drôme  
Wijnegem shopping center Beddenstraat 2, Antwerpen (the biggest shopping centre in Belgium)  
[www.decodrome.be](http://www.decodrome.be)

Dille & Kamille

Vleminckstraat 9, Antwerpen  
[www.dille-camille.be](http://www.dille-camille.be)

Euro Comfort Design  
Tweemontstraat 297, Deurne

Halla-Finnish Design  
Leopoldstraat 18, Antwerpen  
[www.halla-antwerpen.com](http://www.halla-antwerpen.com)

Harbo Ijzerlaan 9, Antwerpen

Hot and Cold  
Kloosterstraat 66, Antwerpen

Huis Verstraeten,  
Turnhoutsebaan 204, 2100 Deurne

Vanhie In Side Out  
Vaamse Kaai 57, Antwerpen

Verlichting Pierre Withaekx  
Frankrijklei 148, Antwerpen  
Lighting.

Vimmo  
Ferdinand Verbieststraat 7B, Antwerpen  
Kitchen, bathroom.

Walt  
Frankrijklei 868, Antwerpen

Waterl'Eau T.A.V. Meur i Tap  
Schuttershofstraat 47 2000 Antwerpen 1

Wrthaekx Constant  
Anselmostraat 20, Antwerpen

XVL Home Furniture  
Vlaamse Kaai 49/50, Antwerpen  
[www.xvl-project.com](http://www.xvl-project.com)

## **Art and Antiquities shops in Antwerpen**

There are more than 200 art and antiquity galleries in Antwerpen. The list can be seen on <http://www.antiek.com/directory/cities/antwerpen.htm>.

## **Hotels/Bed & Breakfast in Antwerpen**

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| De Witte Lelie   | <a href="http://www.dewittelie.be">www.dewittelie.be</a>         |
| 't Zand          | <a href="http://www.hotel-sandtbe">www.hotel-sandtbe</a>         |
| Julien           | <a href="http://www.hotel-julien.com">www.hotel-julien.com</a>   |
| Slapen Enzo      | <a href="http://www.slapenenzo.be">www.slapenenzo.be</a>         |
| House of Porters | <a href="http://www.houseofporters.be">www.houseofporters.be</a> |
| Camesina         | <a href="http://www.camesina.be">www.camesina.be</a>             |
| The Grace        | <a href="http://www.thegrace.be">www.thegrace.be</a>             |

## **Other in Antwerpen:**

De Gulden Bock  
Schutterhofstraat  
Home made delicacies.

Del Rey  
Appelmanstraat 5  
Chocolate.

Proximus Diamond Games tennis competition every year, [www.proximusdiamondgames.be](http://www.proximusdiamondgames.be).

## **Useful addresses:**

### **PROSPEKTRA VZW**

Cultural information desk, which sells tickets for theatre performances and concerts, is located in the same location than the tourist information desk of Tourism Antwerpen, Grote Markt 13. [www.prospekta.be](http://www.prospekta.be).