



AMSTERDAM RENEWED
THE RIJKSMUSEUM, THE VAN GOGH MUSEUM,
THE STEDELIJK MUSEUM AND THE CONCERTGEBOUW

TUESDAY 15 OCTOBER TO FRIDAY 18 OCTOBER
NICHOLAS FRIEND

We are thrilled to announce a long-anticipated journey to Amsterdam, Tuesday 15 to Friday 18 October celebrating the newly restored Rijksmuseum, the newly renovated Van Gogh Museum, and the Stedelijk's sleek new extension. At the adjacent Concertgebouw, one of the world's best concert halls, now proudly celebrating its 125th birthday, we attend an evening performance by the Sitovetsky Trio, the young ensemble whose perceptive musicianship was recently compared by the Independent to that of 'the Beaux Arts Trio in its heyday', playing three piano trios, by Haydn, Brahms and Dvorak respectively. We join as well as affirm a palpable national mood of celebration, leaving no stone unturned on Museum Square!

News of the completion of the 10-year, £320m renovation of the Rijksmuseum has lit up the international cultural conversation! Despite delays caused by a catastrophic tendering process, flooding, asbestos and a cycle route controversy, the long awaited results are so spectacular that the museum will no doubt be forgiven and will prove an inspiring model in the years to come. It has been hailed a complete triumph, the museum now a "palace of dreams" as the magic of the original building has been revealed and combined with modern-day technical wizardry.

Renewal of architect Pierre Cuypers' original splendour of 1885 has been the main goal of Spanish architectural firm, Cruz y Cruz, joined by restoration architect Van Hoogevest and Jean-Michel Wilmotte, the architect responsible for the renovations at the Louvre, Paris. Over the years, the Rijksmuseum had been divided up into galleries built-within galleries, its decorative features obscured. Inhibiting walls have now been removed, the space opened up, and beautifully lit. Cuyper's elaborate frescoed walls and terrazzo floors have been painstakingly reinstated.

Every aspect of the museum has been rethought, every inch updated. Arched galleries boast non-reflective cases, state-of-the-art LED lighting, and contemporary grey walls. A new curatorial approach sees the whole collection, regardless of object type, laid out in a single chronological sweep with each section devoted to a different century in the life of the nation. Only the Rijksmuseum "altarpiece" Rembrandt's luminous masterpiece, the *Night Watch*, has kept its hallowed position in the magnificent Gallery of Honour.

The Telegraph

Never has a national museum reopened to such scenes of fervency. The restored, extended and rejigged Rijksmuseum is a triumph of curatorial intelligence and sensitivity. Once again - at last - the world can experience the richness of the greatest art tradition ever produced by a tiny, sea-hemmed nation: from Vermeer to Van Gogh, Rembrandt to Mondrian.

The Independent

The Rijksmuseum will reach places that other art collections do not, such as your heart. The long winter of discontented tourists is over. The Night Watch is back in its rightful place at the head of the Gallery of Honour.

The Wall Street Journal

After 10 years of comprehensive renovations, the Rijksmuseum-the Dutch national museum of art and history, where masterpieces by Rembrandt van Rijn and Johannes Vermeer mingle with 17th-century blunderbusses and Delft blue pottery-triumphantly reopens its doors in the Dutch capital to reveal a profoundly transformed institution...

MUSEUMPLEIN ITINERARY

TUESDAY 15 OCTOBER

08:04 Eurostar, arrives Brussels and train to Amsterdam

13:41 Arrive Amsterdam, private transfer to the Ambassade Hotel

Architectural walk through the Jordaan neighbourhood through hidden courtyards, beautiful canals and 17c and 18c architecture

Group dinner at Toscanini Restaurant

WEDNESDAY 16 OCTOBER

Rijksmuseum Part 1, lunch break, Rijksmuseum Part 2,

Early group dinner at Brasserie de Keyzer followed by performance at Concertgebouw

THURSDAY 17 OCTOBER

Van Gogh Museum and Exhibition, lunch break, Stedelijk Museum, return to hotel, free evening

FRIDAY 18 OCTOBER

Free morning with optional visit to Spui Square Friday Book Market

12:19 Train from Amsterdam to Brussels, Eurostar to London

16:10 Arrive London

The **AMBASSADE HOTEL**, situated on the Herengracht, one of Amsterdam's oldest canals, is an extraordinary and luxurious private hotel created from twelve 17c canalhouses. Of special appeal to authors and artists, the hotel features an extensive library with hand-signed works from world famous writers as well as an outstanding art collection of oil paintings, sculptures and ceramic objects made by key members of the international Cobra movement, 19c Dutch Impressionists, and others.

COST £1430 SUPER DELUXE ROOM, £115 SRS, £150 deposit, including Eurostar and train, transport in Amsterdam when necessary, accommodation, breakfast, two evening meals with wine, entry fees, concert ticket and gratuities.