

Amsterdam (/propertynews/amsterdam)

# A view from Amsterdam, The Netherlands

An insider's guide to the city by Saskia Albrecht, garden designer

4 DAYS AGO



By **Saskia Albrecht**

Garden designer [Saskia Albrecht](http://www.saskia-albrecht.nl/) (<http://www.saskia-albrecht.nl/>) is the founder of Amsterdam's annual [Tulp Festival](https://www.tulpfestival.com/?lang=en) (<https://www.tulpfestival.com/?lang=en>). The event, currently running until April 30, brings thousands of blooms to the city under the banner "A tulip for every citizen of Amsterdam".

## Favourite view

My favourite view in Amsterdam is of Sloterpas, a lake in Nieuw-West to the west of the city centre. It is not well known but certainly deserves to be. You can relax on the spotty black and white lakeside terrace. During this year's Tulp Festival, you can walk a tulip-lined route all the way from the palace on Dam Square to Sloterpas. We call it the "[From Palace to Pond](http://www.tulpfestival.com/locaties/?lang=en)" (<http://www.tulpfestival.com/locaties/?lang=en>) route.

The area has protected heritage status and it's easy to see why, as you look out over the lake with its splendid trees and, in April, the tulips. The neighbourhood is part of the cultural legacy of Cornelis van Eesteren (1897-1988), the Dutch architect and urban planner who drew up the blueprint for Amsterdam's expansion after the first world war.



## Where to discover culture and history

The Van Eesteren Museum (<http://vaneesterenmuseum.nl/en/home-en/>) by Sloterplas contains exhibits on the establishment in the mid-20th century of the Amsterdamse Tuinsteden (Amsterdam Garden Cities), which became internationally renowned. It also shows how Amsterdammers lived in the 1950s. Next to the museum there is a display of yellow, newly christened Cornelis van Eesteren tulips.





## Where to relax

After a pleasant walk, the Hotel Buiten (<https://www.hotelbuiten.nl/>), also by Sloterpas, is a lovely place to take a break. The name is a little misleading, because you can't stay there, though you can sit on the terrace with a local craft beer and organic food. It always has a fire on the go, in the stove, the fireplace or on a barbecue.

## Where to live



*Bric a brac shop on Overtoom*



The place where I live combines the best of two worlds: it's a hidden gem of an alley, squeezed in between the liveliness of the Overtoom - a bustling street - and the green space of the Vondelpark. From my house I can see the statue of our famous 17th-century poet laureate, Joost van den Vondel, under which, in April and May, 30,000 tulips bloom. They are planted by children from a local primary school, with help from neighbours and employees of local companies. The way we get along, you'd think we lived in a village, instead of a bustling city.

## Where to stroll



Vondelpark

Fortunately, Amsterdam is very compact: everything can be reached on foot or by bike. During Tulp Festival I often walk from my home near the Vondelpark to a favourite spot for coffee, the [Conservatorium](https://www.conservatoriumhotel.com/) (<https://www.conservatoriumhotel.com/>) hotel. The walk takes me down Cornelis Schuytstraat, an upscale shopping street lined with tulips. I also like to admire the amazing tulip arrangements by florist Menno Kroon (<https://www.mennokroon.nl/>), who provides the arrangements for the hotel. From there it's a stone's throw to nearby Tulp Festival locations: the Museumplein, the [Van Gogh Museum](https://www.vangoghmuseum.nl/en) (<https://www.vangoghmuseum.nl/en>) and the gardens of the [Rijksmuseum](https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en) (<https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en>).

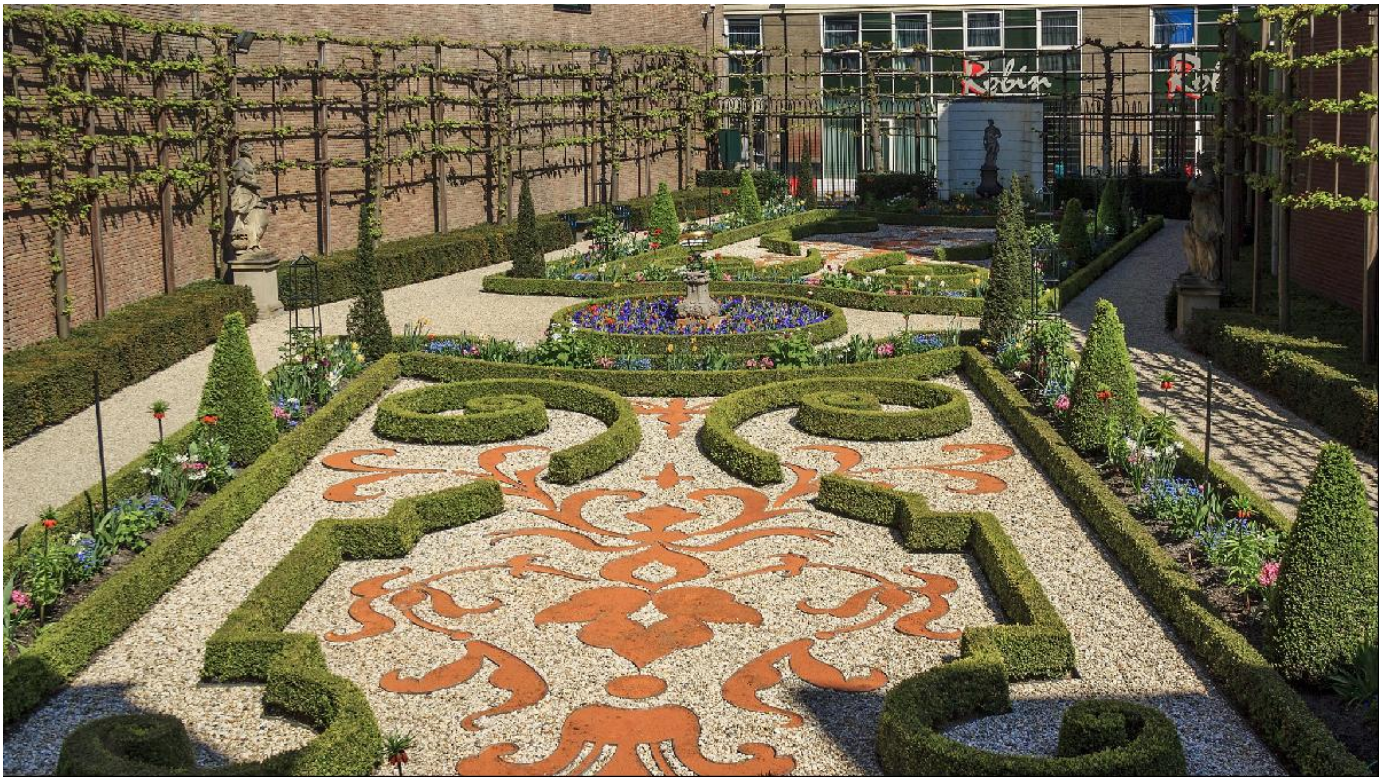


*The Museumplein*

## **What more to explore**

Amsterdam's canals are a World Heritage Site: the houses on Herengracht and Keizersgracht are like palaces, with park-like courtyard gardens, all dating from the Dutch Golden Age around the 17th century. During the Tulp Festival the museums and hotels in the area open their gardens to the public. Visitors can gain a glimpse into the daily lives of the patricians of the period in the former houses — now museums — of noble families such as the Willet-Holthuysens (<https://www.willetholthuysen.nl/en>) and Van Loons (<https://www.museumvanloon.nl/>).





*Formal gardens at the Willet-Holthuysens museum*

It is fascinating to immerse yourself in the 17th century — an age of so much progress but also one when things sometimes went awry. Take Tulipmania, when envoys would bring back tulip bulbs from the palace gardens of Constantinople that would be sold in Amsterdam before they had seen daylight. The trade proved very lucrative but soon got out of hand, and in 1637 three bulbs were sold for the price of an Amsterdam canal house — 3,000 guilders, or about €2m in today's terms.

The bulb market collapsed and some merchants went bankrupt, but the tulips survived. That is why I get such pleasure from sitting with my friends in the private courtyard of the Waldorf Astoria

([https://waldorfastoria.grandluxuryhotels.com/en/h/574/waldorf-astoria-amsterdam?](https://waldorfastoria.grandluxuryhotels.com/en/h/574/waldorf-astoria-amsterdam?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIrYyQ9pmK2gIVAxwbCh2hmgsUEAAYAiAAEgLoYPD_BwE)

[gclid=EAIaIQobChMIrYyQ9pmK2gIVAxwbCh2hmgsUEAAYAiAAEgLoYPD\\_BwE](https://waldorfastoria.grandluxuryhotels.com/en/h/574/waldorf-astoria-amsterdam?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIrYyQ9pmK2gIVAxwbCh2hmgsUEAAYAiAAEgLoYPD_BwE)) hotel on Herengracht, enjoying afternoon tea while looking out over a sea of tulips.





The Waldorf Astoria hotel

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