




Belgium: Art, Architecture & Garden Design 2026

27 MAY – 11 JUN 2026

Code: 22619

Tour Leaders **Sandra McMahon, Diane Perelsztejn**

Fitness Level 

Level 2 - Intermediate

For people with energetic lifestyles and very good mobility

Combining world-class art collections, Gothic and Art Nouveau architecture, with visits to private gardens by leading Flemish landscape designers including Jacques Wirtz, Chris Ghyselen & Erik Dhont.

Overview

Led by horticulturalist and landscape designer [Sandra McMahon](#), and native French and Flemish speaker, [Diane Perelsztejn](#), this tour is a feast of splendid classic and contemporary private gardens, great museums and natural landscapes of Belgium.

- In Antwerp, Brussels and Bruges visit world-class art collections; we view works by Peter Paul Rubens, Jan van Eyck, Rogier van der Weyden, Hans Memling, Frans Hals, Peter Bruegel, Jan Brueghel the Elder, Anthony van Dyck and René Magritte.
- Explore the Art Deco home of [David and Alice van Buuren](#); the house and studio of Art Nouveau Architect, [Victor Horta](#) and the UNESCO-Heritage listed [Hôtel Van Eetvelde](#) and [Hôtel Solvay](#).
- Visit Gothic churches, town halls and merchant palaces in Brussels, Bruges, Ghent and Antwerp.
- View the work of leading Flemish landscape architects including [Erik Dhont](#) and [Piet Blanckaert](#); and meet [Chris Ghyselen](#), known for his use of fine grasses and perennials, who will show us a number of his projects including his own garden.
- Explore the private garden of [Jacques Wirtz](#) featured in Monty Don's [Around the World in 80 Gardens](#).
- Visit the [Arboretum Kalmthout](#), the former private garden of Robert and Jelena de Belder designed with the support of their close friend, Russell Page.
- Visit the gardens of the 14th-century [Kasteel van Oostkerke](#), restored with the aid of Mien Ruys; and Morishof, the private garden of landscape designer [Marc Moris](#).
- View the famed rose collections at Lens Roses nursery and the traditional 'kasteel' [gardens of Hex](#).
- Dine at the 2-star Michelin [Le Chalet de la Forêt](#) and enjoy an aperitif in their vegetable garden designed by Erik Dhont.

Overnight Antwerp (4 nights) • Bruges (5 nights) • Brussels (6 nights)

Leaders



Sandra McMahon

Horticulturalist, landscape designer and lecturer at the Burnley Horticultural Campus, University of Melbourne. Sandra, who also holds a BA degree majoring in French and German, brings her profound knowledge to ASA garden tours in Belgium, Germany, the UK and Australia.

Sandra graduated with a BA from the University of Melbourne, majoring in French and German language and literature. She taught both languages for a number of years, and travelled extensively, living in Germany in the late seventies. She is a fluent speaker of German and has a deep interest in German history and culture.

In 1998 she graduated from Burnley Horticultural College. Since then she has operated her own successful and rapidly expanding landscape design business out of Melbourne. She designs in a variety of styles, but a constant theme in all her work is the use of plant material for structure. She has a very broad plant knowledge. Her work has been featured regularly in the print media and on television, and her gardens have been open to the public through various open garden schemes, and in the biennial *Garden Designfest* since its inception.

Sandra lectures in landscape design and plant selection at the Burnley Horticultural Campus of the University of Melbourne, and is currently President of the Friends of Burnley Gardens. She also runs a landscape studio called 'Gardenscape Design' which was established in 1998. Her designs may be viewed at www.gardenscapedesign.com.au



Diane Perelsztejn

Educated in Brussels, Diane is a native French and Flemish speaker. A multi award-winning independent film-maker, she has travelled extensively throughout Europe, Asia and the US to produce documentaries about history, art and music.

Raised in Brussels, Diane, a native French and Flemish speaker, migrated to Melbourne in 1996. She is a multi award-winning independent documentary film-maker, having graduated in 1981 from the Institut des Arts de Diffusion, in Louvain-La-Neuve, Belgium. Diane has been fortunate to travel extensively throughout

Europe, Asia and the US to produce her documentaries about history, art and music. Her films have been widely broadcast and distributed around the world. Her documentary *Kathleen Ferrier* (2012), on the British contralto singer, narrated by Charlotte Rampling, has been released worldwide on Decca. Her latest documentary *The Paper Brigade* (2019) tells the moving story of how a small band of Jewish poets and writers saved priceless collections of books and manuscripts from destruction during the Nazi occupation of Lithuania, and then again during the Sovietisation of the Baltic states.

Diane also pursues a passion for singing. She graduated in 1994 in classical singing from Académie de Musique in Anderlecht, Belgium, and has taught French for singing and French opera at the Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne. Diane has been working with ASA since 2013 and is taking tours throughout Europe.

Combine this tour with

Iceland, Land of Ice and Fire: Myths, Legends & Landscapes 2026

13 JUN – 30 JUN 2026

Great Monuments and Gardens of Spain 2026

5 MAY – 24 MAY 2026

Spring Garden Masterpieces of England and the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2026

13 MAY – 22 MAY 2026

Great Monuments, Art and Gardens of the Côte d’Azur, Provence and the Cévennes 2026

6 MAY – 23 MAY 2026

Bulgaria & the Black Sea: Painted Towns, Byzantine Monasteries & Thracian Treasures 2026

6 MAY – 20 MAY 2026



Itinerary

The following itinerary includes a range of private gardens and houses which we plan to visit. Several are accessible to the public, but many require special permission which may only be confirmed closer to the tour's departure. The daily activities described in this itinerary may change or be rotated and/or modified in order to accommodate alterations in opening hours and confirmation of private visits. The tour includes breakfast daily, lunches & dinners indicated in the detailed itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch and D=dinner.

Antwerp - 4 nights

Day 1: Wednesday 27 May, Arrive Antwerp

- Tour commences at 1.30 pm in the foyer of the Hotel 't Sandt
- Welcome Meeting
- Plantin-Moretus Museum
- Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekathedraal (Cathedral of Our Lady)
- Short Orientation Tour
- Welcome Dinner at the Sir Anthony Van Dijck Restaurant

Meeting Point: Tour commences at 1.30pm in the foyer of the [Hotel 't Sandt](#) located in the historic centre of Antwerp.

After a short welcome meeting we visit the renovated Plantin-Moretus Museum, a stately town house with period rooms that chronicles 300 years of the process of printing. French printer Christopher Plantin established his famous printing and publishing house in Antwerp in 1555. His successors, the Moretus family, maintained the Officina Plantiniana until the 19th century. The museum displays typographic material, a library, paintings including a Rubens and an impressive graphic collection. It also owns the world's oldest extant printing press (c.1600). The Print Room holds prints and drawings by Antwerp masters from the 16th century to the present including botanical and medicinal works. We spend time in the

museum's enclosed garden, an oasis planted according to the 16th-century style. It is the only museum in the world to be UNESCO World Heritage listed.

We take a short walk to the Grote Markt (main city square) and visit the Cathedral of Our Lady. Four of Rubens' most important paintings, including the *Raising of the Cross* and his *Descent from the Cross*, embellish this vast seven-nave UNESCO-listed Gothic cathedral.

Tonight we enjoy a welcome dinner at the Sir Anthony Van Dijck Restaurant located in the medieval quarter of Antwerp. (Overnight Antwerp) D

Day 2: Thursday 28 May, Antwerp – Berlaar-Gestel – Haacht-Wespelaar – Antwerp

- 'Morishof': private garden of Marc Moris, Berlaar-Gestel
- Private garden designed by Jacques Wirtz, Berlaar-Gestel
- The Potager, private garden of Sybille de Spoelberch, Haacht-Wespelaar
- Art Nouveau's Zurenborg district

Flanders was once the leading horticultural nation in Europe. Sixteenth-century Antwerp was a centre for the study of botany. In the 18th and 19th centuries dozens of fruit varieties were created and the rarest plants grown and improved. In recent years a remarkable revival of gardening has created beautiful new gardens.

Landscape designer, Marc Moris, designs simple, mature, 'timeless' gardens. His nursery cultivates naturally developing trees and large shrubs which are up to 100 years old. We begin today with a visit to 'Morishof', Moris's private 3-hectare garden which includes a vegetable garden, a meadow, natural swimming pool and a flower garden.

Nearby, we visit a garden designed by the famous Belgian landscape architect Jacques Wirtz, recently restyled by Marc Moris. We end the morning with a lunch prepared by Jasmin, Marc Moris's daughter.

This afternoon we drive to Wespelaar. Philippe de Spoelberch's house is surrounded by 9 hectares of botanic gardens. An extension to the garden has become the Arboretum Wespelaar, with 2,000 different species and cultivated varieties in the 20-hectare grounds. The main focus is on trees and shrubs, with many varieties of oaks, maples, magnolias and rhododendrons.

Adjacent to the Arboretum is The Potager, previous kitchen garden of Château de Wespelaar. By special invitation, we visit this 10 hectares private garden of Sybille de Spoelberch. In 1983, the old kitchen garden was partly re-designed by landscape architect Jacques Wirtz. Hedges of *Carpinus*, *Taxus* and *Buxus* provide structure. Lemon trees in pots decorate both sides of a path and walls are covered with *Ceanothus*, roses and other climbing plants. The site has an Italianate water garden, a Japanese garden and contemporary garden of blue stone rocks. The garden has many perennials, a collection of old roses and choice shrubs, with antique garden ornaments and Baroque decorations. A new woodland garden under the canopy of oak trees holds a collection of remarkable trees and shrubs.

We return to Antwerp. A stroll down the Cogels-Osylei, in the Zurenborg district, allows us to admire its wonderful houses built in styles including Art Nouveau, neo-Gothic, and Greek. We stop to view the façade of the Art Nouveau house *de Zonnebloem* designed by architect Jules Hoffman in 1900. (Overnight Antwerp) B

Day 3: Friday 29 May, Antwerp – Schoten – Antwerp

- Private garden of Jacques Wirtz, Schoten – featured in Monty Don's *Around the World in 80 Gardens*
- Private garden designed by Jacques Wirtz (*to be confirmed*)
- Museum aan de Stroom (exterior only) and Antwerp's historic port

This morning we visit the private garden of the late Jacques Wirtz, the world-renowned Belgian landscape architect who, in his innovative gardens, enhanced his sculptural treatment of boxwood and yew hedges by drawing on his deep knowledge of plants and flowers. Jacques' son, Martin, who is now CEO of Wirtz International, has kindly agreed to show us the family's private garden. Nearby we visit another private garden designed by his father.

After a light lunch we return to Antwerp where we view the impressive exterior of Museum aan de Stroom (MAS) an extraordinary ultramodern tower, composed of great blocks separated by undulating glass walls. It was designed by the acclaimed Rotterdam firm Neutelings-Riedijk Architecten. Across from the MAS is Antwerp's new Port House designed by Zaha Hadid Architects, and the Red Star Line Museum designed by New York architects Beyer Blinder Belle. A short visit to the rooftop of the MAS provides panoramic views of the city and its historic port. (Overnight Antwerp) BL

Day 4: Saturday 30 May, Antwerp

- The Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp (KMSKA)
- Arboretum Kalmthout

This morning we visit the recently reopened KMSKA, whose collection of paintings, sculptures and drawings includes work by Jan van Eyck, Rogier van der Weyden, Hans Memling, Frans Hals, Jan Brueghel the Elder, Peter Paul Rubens, and Anthony van Dyck.

After lunch at leisure we depart for Kalmthout. The history of Arboretum Kalmthout goes back as far as 1856, when the Antwerp dendrologist Charles Van Geert started a nursery in Kalmthout. In 1952, the brothers Georges and Robert De Belder bought the site to create their private botanical garden. Under the inspiring leadership of Robert and his wife Jelena De Belder, and with contribution by internationally renowned garden designer Russell Page, Arboretum Kalmthout grew into one of the world's most prestigious botanic collections. Instead of the severe formality of traditional botanic gardens with their collections laid out in straight lines, the De Belders favoured a natural-looking garden with perennials, creepers, shrubs and trees. They collected seeds in the wild and also selected a great number of new varieties, in particular *Prunus*, *Malus*, *Pieris*, *Hamamelis* and *Hydrangea*. (Overnight Antwerp) B

Bruges - 5 nights

Day 5: Sunday 31 May, Antwerp – Temse – Ghent – Bruges

- De Uil (The Owl), Temse (*to be confirmed*)
- Orientation walk, Ghent
- Cathedral of St Bavo, Ghent

Daniël Ost is arguably the world's leading floral artist. His design team is highly sought after for projects, from roof terraces in Tokyo to public and private gardens all over Europe. This morning we head for Temse where we visit De Uil, the garden of interior designer Marc Massa. This garden originally designed by Daniël Ost is noted for its beautiful wild shadow garden and a stylised south garden.

Then we travel to Ghent. The Medieval and Renaissance trading city of Ghent was the stronghold of the counts of Flanders. This city was established among numerous islands between the Lieve, Leie and Scheldt rivers and is therefore traversed by picturesque canals. We take a short orientation walk through the cobbled streets of Ghent. After lunchtime at leisure, we view the huge 24-panel altarpiece, the *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb* in Ghent's Cathedral of St Bavo. Begun by Hubert van Eyck (c.1390-1426) and completed after his death by Jan van Eyck in 1432, it is the greatest painting of the Northern Renaissance. St Bavo's other treasures include Rubens's *Conversion of St Bavo* (1623).

We continue to UNESCO World Heritage listed Bruges, one of a few canal-based northern cities. (Overnight Bruges) B

Day 6: Sunday 1 June, Antwerp – Hooglede – Bruges

- Walking tour: Beguinage and Bruges' secret gardens
- Private city garden designed by landscape architect Piet Blanckaert, Bruges (*to be confirmed*)
- Private garden designed by landscape architect Piet Blanckaert, Hooglede (*to be confirmed*)

This morning we take a walking tour of Bruges and its famous Beguinage. A beguinage or begijnhof was a medieval housing complex for women who devoted themselves to prayer and charitable works, but did not care for the constraints of a convent. A wall usually surrounded a group of houses in which the women lived. These houses could be disposed around courtyards and the precinct would include a chapel and infirmary. Most Belgian cities have these precincts, and they are all UNESCO heritage listed. Bruges' Beguinage was founded around 1245. Most of its extant houses, grouped around a pretty garden, are from the 17th and 18th centuries. We explore the atmospheric Beguinage and some of the city's secret private gardens.

With internationally acclaimed landscape architect Piet Blanckaert, we visit one of his townhouse gardens in the historic centre of Bruges, where Blanckaert made the most use of limited space. Then, to contrast we transfer to Hooglede to view one of his largest private gardens. Blanckaert's recent projects include the Flanders Fields Memorial Garden, London.

We return to Bruges and conclude the day with a visit to the enclosed garden and gothic art studio of artist David De Graef, along Bruges canal. (Overnight Bruges) B

Day 7: Tuesday 2 June, Bruges

- Groeninge Museum, Bruges
- Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk (Church of our Lady), Bruges
- Saint John's Hospital & the Hans Memling Museum, Bruges
- Afternoon at leisure

The small canal city of Bruges reached its apogee between the 12th and 15th centuries when it was an economic powerhouse to equal Florence and Venice. The city's fair was established in 1200 and it burgeoned as a centre of textile manufacture. The great Burgundian Duke Philip the Good (1419-67), one of the wealthiest men of his time, established his court here. In the later Middle Ages cities' economies and cultural production were determined by the conspicuous consumption by the rich and Bruges benefited from the presence of the Burgundian court, nurturing artists like Jan van Eyck and Hans Memling.

This morning we visit the famous Groeninge Museum with its excellent collection of Flemish masters. A highlight of this museum is Jan Van Eyck's stunning *Madonna with Canon van der Paele* (1436), one of the most important works of the Northern Renaissance.

Then we visit the Church of Our Lady, a treasure house of art such as the gilt-bronze tombs of Charles the Bold, last Valois Duke of Burgundy, and his daughter, Mary. The most celebrated treasure of the church is, however, Michelangelo's Bruges *Madonna* (1504).

We next visit the St John's Hospital Complex, which includes the recently reopened small Hans Memling Museum. The German Hans Memling (1430-1494) worked in Bruges from 1465. His late masterpiece, *The Shrine of St Ursula*, is a carved and gilded wooden reliquary containing panel inserts painted by the master. Lunch and the remain of the day are at leisure. (Overnight Bruges) B

Day 8: Wednesday 3 June, Bruges – Damme – Bruges

- Kasteel van Oostkerke, Damme
- Medieval village of Damme
- Bonemhoeve, Damme
- Restaurant: Le Chef et moi

Until around 1600, Bruges was an important Hanseatic League port city linked to the sea by the Zwiyn canal. Canals were dug to facilitate the passage of goods to this canal and thence to its commercial outpost, the harbour at Damme. Today we drive to Damme and visit Oostkerke Castle. Allison Campbell-Roebling and her husband Baron Joseph Van Der Elst restored ruined Oostkerke Castle, aided by the great Dutch landscape architect Mien Ruys. The result is an idyllic combination of intimate spaces and grandiose avenues. Separate gardens include a private courtyard, a Maria garden and a rose garden. Footpaths run along the foundations of the old ramparts, and the ancient moats have been excavated and planted.

After our visit, we transfer to Damme where there will be time for lunch and to explore the picturesque medieval town of Damme, its magnificent Gothic Town Hall, impressive Church of Our Lady, and canals lined with poplars.

Then we visit Bonemhoeve. The history of the farm Bonem goes back to the 13th century. Bonemhoeve is located on a mound completely surrounded by water. In 2005 the restoration of the farm, the garden and the surrounding landscape (16 ha) started. Landscape designer Erik Dhont implemented an innovative contemporary vision with respect for the intimacy and history of the farm and the surrounding polder. Since 2012, renovation works have been overseen by the head gardener Gijsbert Smid with whom we visit the farm. Pools and a pond have been constructed, there is an orchard, a vegetable garden, hay meadows with grassy paths and old roses.

This evening we dine together at a local restaurant in Bruges. (Overnight Bruges) BD

Day 9: Thursday 4 June, Bruges – Zedelgem – Oedelem – Beernem – Bruges

- Private garden designed by Wim Van Wassenhove, Zedelgem
- Private garden of landscape designer, Chris Ghyselen, Oedelem
- private garden of 't Groot Kerkegoed, designed by Chris Ghyselen, Beernem

This morning we visit a private garden designed by Wim Van Wassenhove, the son of well-known landscape architect the late André Van Wassenhoven.

In the rural municipality of Beernem Chris Ghyselen will show us his own private garden with playful hedges, water features, and a double border of high and small perennials. There is also a swimming pond and a flower meadow.

We visit a renovated farm 't Groot Kerkegoed, another project by Chris Ghyselen. The inner courtyard of the farm offers a contemporary and sober look. There were originally some fruit trees in the central lawn, which with the redesign of the space became more prominent. There are wide flower borders and under a large walnut and apple tree masses of spring bulbs. To the south of the house itself, there is a spacious terrace. Wide joints allow flowers and herbaceous plants to grow. There is also a wide flower border with a large colour palette. Finally, there is a large flower meadow that leads to a meandering stream; a nature reserve in itself. (Overnight Bruges) BL

Brussels - 6 nights

Day 10: Friday 5 June, Bruges – Oudenburg – Ename – Brussels

- Nursery Lens Roses, Oudenburg
- Huis Beaucarne and garden, Ename, with Julien Fornari and Lena Vastesaegeer
- Brussels: Orientation walk

This morning we are travelling to village of Oudenburg. Founded in 1870, the 'Louis Lens Tree Nursery' was first a general tree nursery, but rose cultivation soon took over. There are more than 800 different species on display; from elegant old shrub roses to climbing roses, liana roses, ground-covering roses, musk hybrid roses, English (Austin) roses, botanical roses, hybrid teas, cluster roses, and standard tree roses.

Then we travel to the village of Ename. Huis Beaucarne has been inhabited by the same family for more than 250 years. A few years ago, Julien Fornari and his partner Lena Vastesaegeer, took on the task to restore the family home and its historical gardens. The first garden was designed in the 18th century and took its inspiration from the local tradition of 17th-century French geometric gardens. Later-on, in the 19th century, under influence of English Romanticism, winding paths and mixed borders were added. In the 19th century, the garden was considered as one of the most extraordinary gardens in Flanders. The Beaucarne family were passionate plant collectors. Some of the old plantings brought back from long distant journeys to Asia and the Americas still remain in the gardens today. A genus of flowering plants native to Mexico and Central America, *Beaucarnea*, was named after the Beaucarne family. In the second half of the 20th century, a flower-garden was added to the domain, designed by the renowned Belgian landscape architects Brigitte de Villenfagne and her son Michaël de Villegas.

At the end of the visit we travel to Brussels. We spend six nights based in a charming boutique hotel in the historic centre of Brussels. There will be a short orientation walk to Brussels' Grand Place. (Overnight Brussels) BL

Day 11: Saturday 6 June, Brussels

- Musée Victor Horta
- Hôtel Van Eetvelde (by special appointment)
- The Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium: Musée Magritte

Brussels was the cradle of Art Nouveau. Victor Horta, who developed the style, inspired architects like Hector Guimard, France's most important Art Nouveau architect, who applied Horta's whiplash design in his work for the Paris Métro.

Today, we first visit the Musée Victor Horta, located in Horta's private house and studio (1898 – 1901). Both have utterly exquisite, finely detailed interior decoration that has largely been retained, with the mosaics, stained glass, and wall decorations forming a harmonious and elegant whole.

Then we visit an exceptional Art Nouveau townhouse that has recently been reopened to the public. The UNESCO World Heritage-listed Hôtel van Eetvelde was designed by Victor Horta for Edmond van Eetvelde, administrator of Congo Free State, and built in 1895. Hôtel van Eetvelde actually consists of two buildings with the corner town house constructed later to house the office of Baron Edmond van Eetvelde. One of the recent restoration highlights is the monumental glass dome of the winter garden, an emblematic example of Horta's preoccupation with introducing natural light into buildings. For the elegant and stylised interior, Horta used materials from Congo, while several motifs reference the former colony, such as mosaics adorned with vines, and the depiction of plants and flowers in the structure of the dome and its stained glass windows.

We end the day with a guided tour of the museum devoted to displaying works by Brussels' most famous modern artist, the Surrealist painter René Magritte. The Musée René Magritte displays some 200 original paintings, drawing and sculptures, mostly donated by his wife Georgette and by his principal collector, Irène Hamoir Scutenaire. This is the world's largest collection of Magritte's work. (Overnight Brussels) B

Day 12: Sunday 7 June, Brussels – Wépion – Brussels

- Le Sous-Bois, Wépion
- Gardens of Annevoie

We spend the day in the Meuse Valley visiting a private garden and the garden of a beautiful château.

Outside Wépion we visit Le Sous-Bois, a private garden designed by owners Philippe Taminiaux and Karine Fonsny. It includes an English garden and over 100 varieties of climbing roses and affords sweeping views of the Meuse Valley. It includes expanses of shade-loving plantings and long, lushly planted mixed borders that lead the visitor deep into the garden. These borders mingle perennials with shrub roses and a huge variety of other colourful shrubs.

Our second visit is to the Jardins d'Annevoie in the Haute-Meuse, a region of forests and rivers. Annevoie's gardens combine the splendour and majesty of the French formal style with English romantic whimsy and Italian refinement. These 250-year-old water gardens comprise cascades and fountains, majestic hundred year old trees, trimmed hornbeam lanes and false grottoes. (Overnight Brussels) BL

Day 13: Monday 8 June, Brussels

- Arboretum Kreftenbroek Foundation
- Chalet de la Forêt: Lunch & vegetable garden designed by Erik Dhont
- Hôtel Solvay (by special appointment), Ixelles

We begin this morning with a visit to the Arboretum Kreftenbroek. Etienne and Rose-Marie Van Campenhout transformed an old farm and adjacent land into a magnificent series of gardens. The 'natural garden' focuses on a small pond. The classical garden behind the house features a canopied alley of apple trees linking two large Louis XVI urns. Intimate green 'rooms', an alternating serpentine pond and an elegant staircase then lead to the 'Valley Garden' designed by Jacques Wirtz.

We eat lunch at the 2-star Michelin restaurant, Chalet de la Forêt, located at the edge of the Sonian Forest of European beeches and oaks. With Erik Dhont, we take an aperitif in the structured vegetable garden that he designed for chef Pascal Devalkeneer. It features local varieties such as Mirabelle plum and apple trees.

By special appointment, this afternoon we view the interiors of the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Hôtel

Solvay, designed by Victor Horta. On avenue Louise, the Hôtel Solvay is a luxurious residence built by Victor Horta in 1894 for the Solvay family. The 33-year-old architect was given complete freedom and unlimited funds to design the interior and furnishings. This is generally considered the most ambitious and spectacular work of Horta in the Art Nouveau period. It features a decorated staircase, mosaic floor, painted walls, wrought iron work and custom furniture. (Overnight Brussels) BL

Day 14: Tuesday 9 June, Brussels – Heers – Haacht-Wespelaar – Brussels

- Kasteel van Heks (Hex Castle) and lunch, Heers
- Herkenrode, private garden of Philippe de Spoelberch, Haacht-Wespelaar

This morning we visit Hex Castle to view its world-famous rose collection. The 18th-century castle was originally a hunting pavilion surrounded by formal gardens including a rose garden, a Chinese garden, and an exceptional vegetable garden. A landscape park inspired by Capability Brown was added later. The original formal Renaissance garden includes a nut garden and a walled vegetable garden. Its celebrated rose garden contains a unique assortment of about 250 varieties. We enjoy lunch in the castle, guests of the Count and Countess d'Ursel.

This afternoon we return to Wespelaar to visit Herkenrode, the private garden of Philippe de Spoelberch. From 1796, the brewing family Artois, founders of the Park of Wespelaar, created one of the first English landscape-style gardens in Belgium. It also included an orangery. In the early 1970s, their direct descendant Philippe de Spoelberch started a tree collection in his private garden Herkenrode, which he built up with plant material that he brought back from his many travels abroad. Soon, however, the garden became too small and he conceived the idea of setting up a real arboretum in the woods and meadows behind his domain. An extension to the Herkenrode garden was redesigned by Jacques Wirtz in 1979 to create a vegetable garden, hide a swimming pool and structure plots of regular parkland. (Overnight Brussels) BL

Day 15: Wednesday 10 June, Brussels

- Musée David et Alice van Buuren: House and garden
- The Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium: Old Masters
- Time at leisure
- Farewell Dinner

We start the day with a visit to the extraordinary house of the banker and art patron David van Buuren. Its interior decoration presents a feast of Art Deco by Belgian, French and Dutch designers. He and his wife Alice Piette collected rare furniture, carpets, stained-glass windows, sculptures and masterpieces of painting from the 15th to the 19th century. The collection includes two Brueghels and works by Fantin-Latour, Ensor, van Gogh, Signac and Max Ernst. Its gardens were initially designed by Jules Buyssens, proponent of the Belgian Picturesque Garden movement. His geometrical 'Picturesque Garden' reflected the Art Deco style of the house. It includes a wild garden, water and bog gardens, a rock garden, a walled garden, a fernery and herbaceous border. In 1969 the Brussels designer, René Pechère, added the 'Garden of the Heart' and the 'Labyrinth'.

Then we return to the Royal Museum of Fine Arts and visit the old masters' section exploring the vibrant artistic traditions of south Flanders. Artists represented include Rogier van der Weyden, Hans Memling, Hieronymus Bosch, Lucas Cranach, Gerard David and Pieter Brueghel the Elder, whose *Fall of the Rebel Angels* and *The Census at Bethlehem* are collection highlights. Other later masters to be seen include Flemish Peter Paul Rubens, Anthony van Dyck and Jacques Jordaens, and works from the Dutch, French, Italian and Spanish schools including masterpieces by Rembrandt, Vouet, Claude, Ribera and Tiepolo.

This afternoon will be time at leisure. Tonight we enjoy our farewell dinner at a local restaurant. (Overnight Brussels) BD

Day 16: Thursday 11 June, Brussels

- Tour concludes in the morning
- At leisure/Check out

Our tour ends in Brussels after breakfast. In the morning you will be required to check out of the hotel. Please contact ASA if you require assistance with a transfer to Brussels Airport. B

Accommodation

ASA has selected 4-star hotels that are themselves historical buildings and/or are located in historical centres. All hotels provide rooms with en suite bathroom.

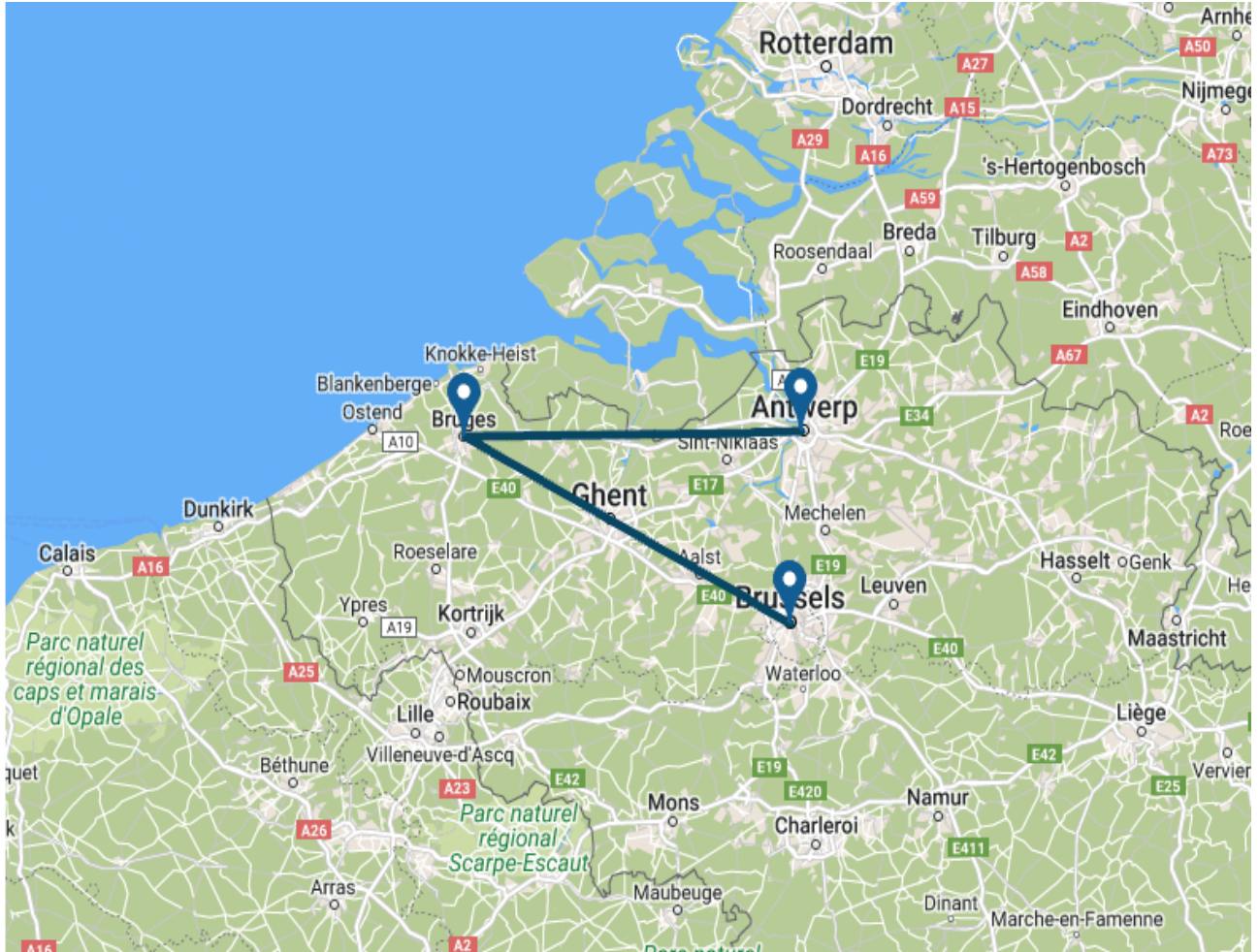
- Antwerp (4 nights): 4-star [Hotel 't Sandt](#) – housed in an elegant 17th-century neo-Rococo mansion located in the historic centre.
- Bruges (5 nights): 4-star [Grand Hotel Casselbergh](#) – housed in three former 18th-century residences located in the historic centre.
- Brussels (6 nights): 4-star [Hotel Le Dixseptième](#) – a charming boutique hotel situated in the historic centre, 240m from the Grand Place.

Note: Hotels are subject to change, in which case a hotel of similar standard will be provided.

Single Supplement

Payment of this supplement will ensure accommodation in a double (or twin) room for single occupancy throughout the tour. The number of rooms available for single occupancy is extremely limited. People wishing to take this supplement are therefore advised to book well in advance.

Tour Map



Tour Price & Inclusions

AUD \$11,780.00 Land Content Only – Early-Bird Special: Book before 30 June 2025

AUD \$12,180.00 Land Content Only

AUD \$2090.00 Single Supplement

Tour Price (Land Content Only) includes:

- Accommodation in twin-share rooms with private facilities in 4-star hotels
- Meals as indicated in the tour itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch & D=dinner
- Drinks at welcome and farewell meals. Other meals may not have drinks included
- Transportation by air-conditioned coach
- Porterage of one piece of luggage per person at hotels
- Lecture and site-visit program
- Entrance fees
- Tour Notes
- Use of audio headsets during site visits
- Tips for the coach driver, local guides and restaurants for included meals

Tour Price (Land Content Only) does not include:

- Airfare: Australia-Brussels, Brussels-Australia
- Personal spending money
- Airport transfers
- Luggage in excess of 20kg (44lbs)
- Travel insurance
- Visas (if applicable)



Fitness Criteria & Practical Information

Fitness Level



Level 2 - Intermediate

For people with energetic lifestyles and very good mobility

You must be able to:

- manage at least five to six hours of physical activity per day with ease.
- walk at a regular to moderate pace to explore towns and gardens extensively on foot. Some days include walking tours of at least 5-7kms. Many walks include uneven terrain, cobbled streets and steep ascents/descents.
- keep up with the group at all times.
- climb a few flights of stairs without duress.
- stand for one to two hours during visits to galleries and museums without the need to sit.
- cope with a daily schedule which generally involves an early-morning departure (between 8.00-8.30am), concluding in the late afternoon (between 5.30-6.30pm).
- board/alight coaches or public transport (eg. in Brussels) with steep steps unassisted.
- contend with a shower over a bath; walk-in showers may not be available at all hotels.
- manage your own luggage at some hotels.

Fitness Levels

Please also view the fitness criteria required for our tours, graded from Level 1 to Level 3, at www.asatours.com.au/fitness-level/

All ASA tours are active programs suitable for people with a good level of mental and physical fitness and good mobility. They are not suitable for people who lack stamina, have difficulty walking at the group's pace or who have mobility issues. An unavoidable aspect of every tour is the need to manage walking, stair-climbing and standing for long periods of time.

It is a condition of travel that all participants agree to accept ASA's directions in relation to their suitability to participate in activities undertaken on the tour, and that ASA retains the sole discretion to direct a tour participant to refrain from a particular activity on part of the tour. Before enrolling on an ASA tour please read the fitness requirements carefully.

Booking Conditions

ASA RESERVATION APPLICATION FORM

Please complete the ASA RESERVATION APPLICATION and send it to Australians Studying Abroad together with your non-refundable deposit of AUD \$1000.00 per person payable to Australians Studying Abroad.



Reservation Application

TOUR NAME _____
TOUR DATES _____

Please complete **one application, per person in block letters and sign**. Parental signature is required for participants under 18 years of age. Please mail this form with the appropriate deposit to: **P.O. Box 8285, ARMADALE, VICTORIA, 3143**. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation.

Applicant Details (as in passport)

TITLE Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Ms ☐ Miss ☐ Dr ☐ Other _____
FIRST NAME _____ Preferred FIRST NAME _____
MIDDLE NAME _____ SURNAME _____
POSTAL ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ COUNTRY _____ POSTCODE _____
TEL. (AH) () _____ TEL. (BH) () _____ Mobile Tel: _____
EMAIL address _____
Date of birth / / GENDER Male ☐ Female ☐

Passport Number _____ Expiry date / / Nationality _____
☐ Colour copy of my current valid passport enclosed ☐ I'm renewing my passport ☐ ASA has a colour copy of my current passport

Covid Certificate ☐ A copy of my current international certificate enclosed

Travel Plans

☐ I plan to leave Australia before the tour commences. Planned departure date / /
☐ I will be arranging my airfare independently and taking the Land Content Only option.

Tour Accommodation (rooming preferences)

I/we would like: ☐ a twin-bedded room ☐ a double-bedded room ☐ a room for sole occupancy
I am travelling: ☐ on my own ☐ with a friend/family member Travel Companion _____

Meals

☐ I do not have any specific dietary requests

Please **X** the box if you **CAN NOT** eat any of the following:

☐ fish ☐ poultry ☐ red meat ☐ dairy products
☐ eggs ☐ pork ☐ nuts
☐ Other _____

Allergies: Refer to the Medical Information

Correspondence

Your preferred method of correspondence ☐ Postal Mail ☐ Email Address _____

Emergency Contact Details

Note: this person **MUST** be available by telephone and be present in Australia for the duration of your tour with ASA

Name _____ Relationship to Traveller _____
Address _____
TEL. (AH) () _____ TEL. (BH) () _____ Mobile Tel: _____
EMAIL address _____

The purpose of seeking this information is to assist ASA to determine, where necessary, whether ASA is able to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate your specific needs and whether your health and safety (or that of your fellow travellers) is likely to be compromised given your choice of tour. It will also assist you and ASA if you fall ill or have an accident whilst travelling.

- ASA reserves the right to decline your Reservation Application if this Medical Information section is not completed properly and may reject or cancel your reservation, or terminate your participation on any tour, if ASA subsequently learns that you have failed to make full and proper disclosure.
- ASA is committed to protecting the privacy of your personal information. ASA's privacy policy is available for viewing at www.asatours.com.au
- If ASA has any concerns about the information you have provided, it will contact you to request clarification before considering your Application.
- ASA requires you to consider carefully your limitations in light of ASA's Physical Endurance Star Rating System in ASA's Brochure and Itinerary when choosing your tour.
- If you are not likely to satisfy ASA's Participation Criteria (see below), ASA, in its sole discretion, may reject your Reservation Application.
- It is a condition of your tour that you agree to accept the directions of ASA's Tour Leaders in relation to your suitability to participate in activities planned on tour.
- ASA reserves the right to cancel your participation on a tour if your behaviour is in ASA's opinion causing undue distress or damage to any person or their property.
- If your participation is discontinued during a tour, ASA will assist by arranging your onward travel (if required) at your own cost, but you will not be refunded for forfeited parts of the tour.
- ASA tour groups are not accompanied by a medical practitioner. ASA recommends that you see your doctor for advice about your specific needs while overseas. You may also wish to contact a travel and vaccination clinic for advice. www.traveldoctor.com.au tel: 1300 658 444; www.travelvax.com.au tel: 1300 360 164.
- Travel insurers require you to declare all existing medical conditions.
- Please carry a complete list of medications with you during the ASA tour. Include **generic names** of each medication (consult your local pharmacy for information).

Please mark **X** in the YES or NO box to every question below and provide details where necessary:

Participation Criteria

To participate in an ASA tour, you must be reasonably fit, in good health and able to participate in all activities without assistance from Tour Leaders or other tour members. **You must also be fully vaccinated against Covid-19.** If you require assistance, a fit and able travel companion must undertake to accompany and assist you with all tasks for the duration of the whole tour. The responsibility of the Tour Leader is to ensure that the larger group enjoys a relaxing and informative journey, and he or she cannot be relied upon to provide ongoing individual assistance to any one guest.

- | | YES | NO |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Can you walk and stand unassisted for at least 2-3 hours a day in hot, humid conditions? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Can you walk unassisted on and over uneven surfaces? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Can you climb at least 3 flights of stairs and/or walk up and down steep slopes unassisted? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. Can you walk at a steady pace and no less than 1km every 15 - 20 minutes unassisted? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. Can you organise, manage and carry your own luggage? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. Can you follow and remember tour instructions and meet punctually at designated times and places? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. Can you administer your own medication? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. You do NOT have impaired vision or hearing which may impact your capacity to participate on this tour? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Mobility and Fitness

As many of ASA's international sites do not provide access to wheelchairs or similar mobility aids, we regret that ASA tours are not suitable for people who require the use of a walking frame, wheeled walker, wheelchair or motorised scooter.

1. Do you suffer from any medical conditions that may compromise your mobility and/or fitness to participate on this program? YES NO ☐ ☐
- If yes, please specify

If yes, how will you manage this on tour?

Allergies and/or Food Intolerances

ASA will make reasonable endeavours to organise meals to suit you, provided that you give ASA adequate notice of your specific dietary requirements or allergies. You may be required to research dietary alternatives, as not all destinations may be able to offer suitable food substitutes.

1. Do you have any food allergies or intolerances? YES NO ☐ ☐
- If yes, please specify

2. Have you ever had an anaphylactic reaction to anything? ☐ ☐
- If yes, please specify

Do you carry an epipen? ☐ ☐

3. Do you have any other allergies or reactions to anything, including medical drugs? ☐ ☐
- If yes, please specify

Existing Medical Conditions

You alone are responsible for managing any existing medical conditions, your medication and any medical equipment that you may need when on your tour. Please plan for contingencies and take extra medication, dietary supplements and/or fully charged batteries for medical equipment if your health and safety depends on these. You should take into consideration that power sources at some destinations may be unavailable, inadequate, inconvenient or unreliable.

1. Have you any significant medical conditions that may impact your capacity to complete this tour? YES NO ☐ ☐
- If yes, please specify

If yes, how will you manage this on tour?

2. Do you require some form of powered medical aid, such as a CPAP machine? ☐ ☐

These machines may not be operable on certain international flights, modes of transport, in remote or other areas with inadequate or unreliable power sources without a fully charged independent long life battery or batteries.

Diabetics: You may be travelling and sightseeing for many hours at a time. Insulin dependent diabetics must carry extra supplies of insulin (as this medication cannot be obtained in some destinations), regulators, applicators, storage and refrigeration equipment, as well as any necessary supplements. Accommodation may not provide refrigerators in rooms.

3. Are you diabetic? ☐ ☐
- Are you insulin dependent? ☐ ☐
4. Do you suffer from travel sickness? ☐ ☐
- Remember to use an appropriate medication while on tour.

Declaration

I declare that: I have read and understood the ASA Tour Itinerary, Reservation Application and Booking Conditions. I am aware of ASA's terms as relating to refunds, cancellations, responsibility and liability. I understand that ASA relies upon this declaration when considering this Application. I accept the inherent dangers, risks and uncertainties in travel and those beyond ASA's control and understand they may occur before or during any tour. I have made full and complete disclosure and have not knowingly withheld any medical information about myself from ASA. I have completed this Reservation Application honestly and accurately. I warrant that I am able to participate independently in all activities described by ASA in the itinerary without assistance from any person.

I will advise ASA in writing if any aspect of my fitness and or health conditions change materially at any time before my departure date. I understand and accept that the itinerary, accommodation and lecturers scheduled for this tour may change.

I agree and consent that ASA may give my personal information in this Reservation Application to tour service providers and relevant authorities as required by law, but only for the purpose of making bookings with and engaging services associated with the tour. I understand that if I do not consent to the use of my personal information for this purpose, ASA will decline my Reservation Application.

In consideration of ASA's acceptance of my Reservation Application, I irrevocably release and indemnify ASA from all claims that I, or any other party, may have against ASA its employees, invitees, agents and contractors, however arising in respect of any loss, damage, injury, death or expense incurred in the course of booking, preparing for, travelling to, on and from or cancelling any tour.

I release and indemnify ASA with respect to:

1. Every general risk to which I or my personal belongings may be exposed in the course of preparing for, travelling to, on or from any ASA tour;
2. Every special risk, in particular medical risks, to which I may be exposed in the course of preparing for, travelling to, on or from any ASA tour arising from, including, but not limited to:
 - a. intermittent power cycles and/or the temporary or permanent loss of power (beware CPAP or any other medical machine users);
 - b. dietary, food or other allergies (ASA cannot guarantee that traces of items to which you are allergic are not present in food or drink you are served, medication you are administered or other substances with which you may come into contact);
 - c. any event or situation that may compromise the administration of necessary medication or my health, safety and wellbeing generally; and
 - d. any event or happening beyond ASA's control
3. All claims arising as a result of my or ASA's cancellation or termination of any tour, part of a tour or of my continued participation on a tour for any reason (subject to ASA's refund conditions below).

Limitation of Liability

ASA is not a carrier, event or tourist attraction host, accommodation or dining service provider. All bookings made and tickets or coupons issued by ASA for transport, event, accommodation, dining and the like are issued as an agent for various service providers and are subject to the terms and conditions and limitations of liability imposed by each service provider. ASA is not responsible for their products, services, terms and conditions. If a service provider cancels or does not deliver the product or service for which you have contracted, and does not give a refund, your remedy lies with the service provider, not ASA.

ASA will not be liable for any claim (e.g. sickness, injury, death, damage or loss) arising from any change, delay, detention, breakdown, border closures, cancellation, failure, accident, act, omission or negligence of any tour service provider or authority however caused (contingencies). You must take out such travel insurance as is available against such contingencies.

ASA's liability in respect of any tour cancelled or changed will be limited to the partial refund of amounts you have paid, less an administration fee of \$500 and other costs and charges of third party service providers. No compensation will be payable to you by ASA where ASA cancels or changes a tour, or any part of a tour.

ASA reserves the sole discretion to cancel any tour or to modify itineraries in any way it considers appropriate and in the best interests of health, safety and wellbeing of tour participants. Tour costs may be revised, subject to unexpected price increases or exchange rate fluctuations.

Booking Conditions

DEPOSITS

A non-refundable deposit of \$1000.00 AUD per person is required to reserve a place on an ASA tour.

CANCELLATION FEES

If you cancel your booking the following charges apply:

More than 75 days before departure: your initial deposit of \$1000.00 is non-refundable.**

75-31 days prior 50% of total amount due

30-0 days prior 100% of total amount due

**\$500.00 of this amount (ie 50% of your deposit) may be credited to another ASA tour departing within 12 months of the original tour you booked. We regret, in this case early-bird discounts will not apply.

We take the day on which you cancel as being that on which we receive written confirmation of cancellation.

UNUSED PORTIONS OF THE TOUR

We regret that refunds will not be given for any unused portions or services of the tour, such as meals, entry fees, accommodation, flights or transfers.

WILL THE TOUR PRICE OR ITINERARY CHANGE?

If the number of participants on a tour is significantly less than budgeted, or if there is a significant change in exchange rates ASA reserves the right to amend the advertised price. We shall, however, do all in our power to maintain the published price. Occasionally circumstances beyond the control of ASA make it necessary to change airline, hotel or to make amendments to itineraries. We will inform you of any changes in due course.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

ASA requires all participants to obtain comprehensive travel insurance. A copy of your travel insurance certificate and the **reverse charge** emergency contact phone number must be received by ASA no later than 75 days prior to the commencement of the tour.

FINAL PAYMENT

The balance of the tour price will be due 75 days prior to the tour commencement date.

PLEASE READ THE ABOVE CAREFULLY, PRINT AND SIGN BELOW

☐ I accept the conditions on this booking form ☐ I have read the information about the physical requirements of the tour in the detailed itinerary and confirm that I am able to meet these requirements

Applicant's Signature

Print Full Name

Dated

Tour / Course Name _____

Name of Traveller 1 _____

Name of Traveller 2 _____

I have enclosed a payment to the value of \$ _____ (including CC or bank fee if applicable) for this tour

The above amount is payable for:

- ☐ Intention to Travel ☐ Tour Deposit
- ☐ Balance of Payment ☐ Upgrade from Intention to Travel to a Deposit
- ☐ Travel Insurance ☐ Other (eg. Airfares, Accommodation) _____

International Payments

Welcome to our international travellers! If you are making a payment and do not have an Australian bank account/credit card, we can only accept payment as follows:

- via credit card with the applicable fee - the credit card company/bank will set the exchange rate
- via bank transfer; please give your surname and tour code (eg. Smith 21705) as a reference and ask your bank to allow for all charges.

Bank cheques or personal cheques will not be accepted.

By Cheque (accept Australian cheques only)

Please make cheques payable to *Australians Studying Abroad*

Direct Deposit or Internet Banking

You will need to:

1. Provide your bank with ASA's bank details (see below) and the amount you wish to transfer OR make a direct deposit through any ANZ branch
2. Include any fees levied by the banks
3. Provide a reference number (Mobile or last name recommended).
4. Complete section below, including confirmation no. (given when transaction completed).

Australians Studying Abroad bank details

Bank ANZ
Branch 420 St Kilda Road, Melbourne Vic
Swift Code ANZBAU3M
BSB 013-423
Account No 3472-32759

Bank confirmation No. _____

Reference used: Mobile or last name recommended _____

Date Money Transferred _____

Credit Card Payment

Credit card fees apply: Mastercard, Visa & American Express 2%

Please debit my: ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ American Express

I authorise ASA to debit my credit card for the amount due plus the applicable fee as above

Credit Card Number _____

Expiry Date _____ Security Code (CVC) _____

Bank the Card is linked to (eg. NAB or ANZ) _____

Cardholders Name _____

Cardholders Billing Address _____

Postcode _____

State _____ Country _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Cardholders Signature _____