



Belgium and The Netherlands: Art, Music & Architecture of the Low Countries 2022

1 SEP – 19 SEP 2022

Code: 22232

Tour Leaders **John Weretka**

Physical Ratings 

Join music and art historian John Weretka for a journey from Brussels to Amsterdam, through history, art, architecture, music and design from the 14th century to the present.

Overview

Join [John Weretka](#) to explore the art, architecture and music of Belgium and the Netherlands. Trace the region's history from the economic powerhouse-days of medieval Flanders, through Holland's golden age to masterly Art Nouveau and contemporary architecture in Brussels and Antwerp.

- Explore the great Gothic churches, Town Halls and merchant palaces of Brussels, Bruges, Ghent and Antwerp.
- View masterpieces by Northern Renaissance painters such as Jan van Eyck, Rogier van der Weyden, Hans Memling, Hieronymus Bosch, and Lucas Cranach in some of Europe's greatest museums, including Amsterdam's [Rijksmuseum](#) and The Hague's [Mauritshuis](#).
- Feast your eyes on hundreds of masterpieces like van Eyck's *Adoration of the Lamb*, a host of Brueghels, Rembrandt's *The Nightwatch*, and Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, *View of Delft* and *The Milkmaid*; and Michelangelo's *Bruges Madonna*.
- Trace the career of Belgium's great Surrealist artist, [René Magritte](#), in his Brussels museum.
- Take special Art Nouveau tours of Brussels and Antwerp, visiting seminal masterpieces such as Victor Horta's UNESCO-listed Hotel Solvay (by special arrangement).
- Explore music through the ages in the Netherlands and Belgium, with an exclusive evening piano performance by Daniel Blumenthal, in Brussels Art Deco [Musée David et Alice van Buuren](#). Take delight in a specially arranged Baroque music performance by lutenist Wim Maesele, in Bruges, and a performance at Amsterdam's [Concertgebouw](#).
- Visit the neoclassical [Château de Seneffe](#), designed by Dewez, with its remarkable silver collection and the neo-Gothic [Château de Loppem](#), designed by the 'Pugin of Belgium', Bethune.
- Explore the magnificent architecture of St Rombout's cathedral, the world's only carillon school and the Royal Manufacturers of Tapestry De Wit in picturesque Mechelen.
- Visit the newly re-opened [KMSKA](#) Antwerp Royal Museum of Fine Arts and [The Snijders & Rockox House](#). View paintings by Frans Snijders, Rubens, Van Dyck and Jordaens.
- Immerse yourself in the world's greatest van Gogh collections, the [Van Gogh Museum](#) in Amsterdam and the [Kröller-Müller Museum](#).
- Drive and cruise through verdant Netherlandish and Belgian landscapes dotted with castles and palaces. Visit the majestic gardens at [Annevoie](#) and take a tour with the owner of Freÿr Castle.
- Take a tour of the very latest in European architecture in Rotterdam to see works by masters like Renzo Piano, Piet Blom and Rem Koolhaas.
- Enjoy lovely bourgeois houses from the 17th to 20th centuries, like Rubens' and Rembrandt's houses and the revolutionary de Stijl [Rietveld Schröder House](#).
- Steep yourself in the quiet spaces of the beguinages of Antwerp and Bruges and absorb the spirituality of the 15th-century spiritual movement, the *Devotio Moderna*.

Testimonial

Belgium is a largely undiscovered jewel; history, culture and the people were wonderful. Susan, TAS

The tour was a great holiday. It was varied, fun, interesting, stimulating. Entertaining and informative. What more could anyone want! Adele, WA

19-day Cultural Tour of Belgium & the Netherlands

Overnight Brussels (5 nights) • Bruges (3 nights) • Antwerp (4 nights) • Delft (2 nights) • Amsterdam (4 nights)

Leaders



John Weretka

Musician and Melbourne University musicology and art history teacher with degrees in medieval history, musicology, art history, theology and Latin. John brings a broad, deep knowledge to ASA's tours to Belgium and the Netherlands.

John Weretka holds undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications in medieval history, musicology, art history, theology and Latin. He is currently pursuing an MPhil at the University of Divinity under the supervision of Dr Callan Ledsham and Rev Dr Christopher Shorrock. His Masters thesis is a translation of and commentary on the *Liber Primus* of the *De Mitrale* by the twelfth-century bishop and theologian, Sicard of Cremona, with an examination of its position in the tradition of the liturgical commentary of the Middle Ages and its links to works such as Jean Beleth's *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, *Honorius of Autun's Gemma Animae* and Hugh of St Victor's *Speculum de Mysteriis Ecclesiae*.

John has taught subjects on the history of music in the Renaissance and Baroque period and harmony and counterpoint for the Faculty of Music at the University of Melbourne and currently co-teaches a performance subject on the music of the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

He has given public lectures and talks for bodies including the Johnston Collection and the National Gallery of Victoria, and for over ten years has worked as a preconcert speaker for the Australian Chamber Orchestra. His published work includes examinations of the depiction of the guitar and musette in the paintings of Watteau and the iconography of the lirone in a painting by Roman Baroque painter Pierfrancesco Mola, an article on traditions of design in the Roman church facade in the early eighteenth century, and an article on constructive principles of the urban prints of Piranesi's teacher, Giuseppe Vasi. An article on the iconography of Bernini's *Ecstasy of St Teresa* is soon to appear. Active as a performing musician, John has appeared as a singer or viola da gambist in festivals and concerts throughout Australia, in New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

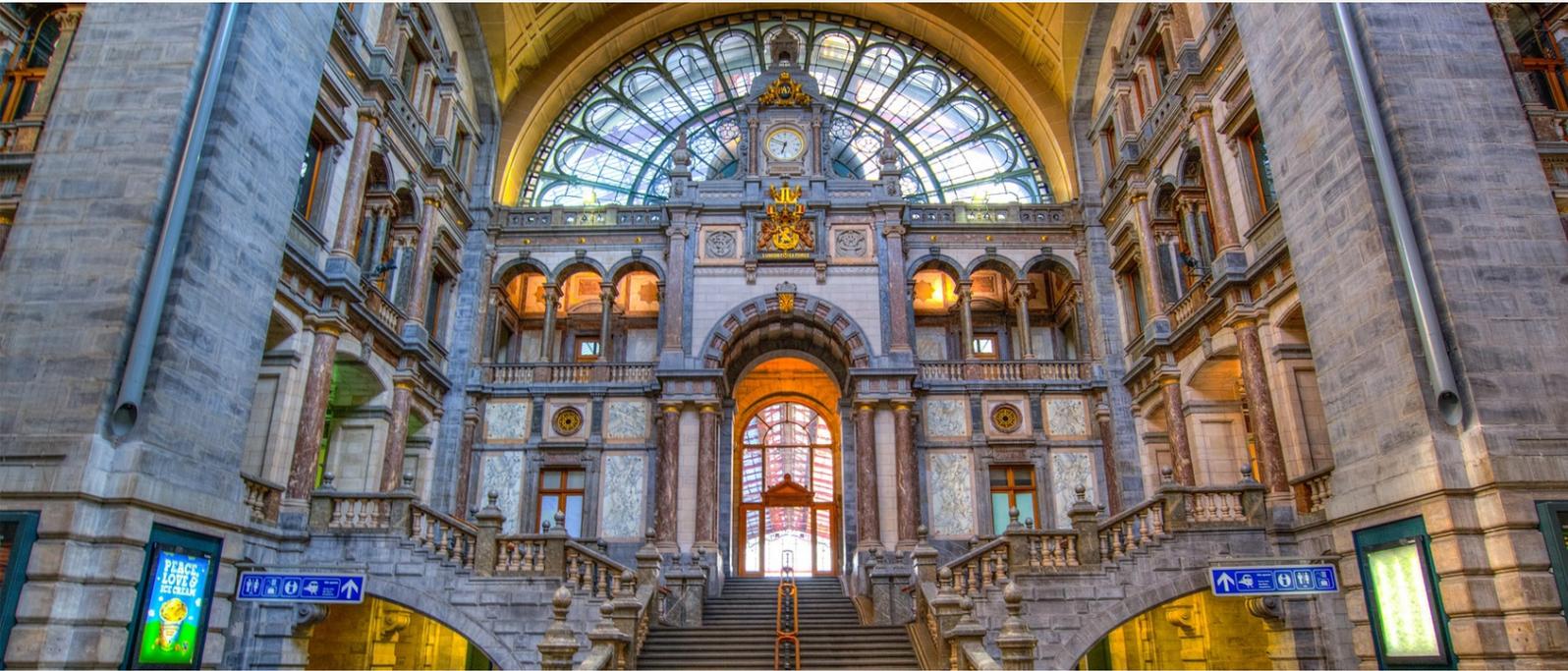
Combine this tour with

Cultural Landscapes of the Midi-Pyrénées & the Dordogne 2022

20 SEP – 5 OCT 2022

Art and Culture in Spain 2022

23 SEP – 13 OCT 2022



Itinerary

The following itinerary lists a range of museums, galleries, churches, etc. which we plan to visit. Many are accessible to the public, but some require special permission, which may only be confirmed closer to the tour's departure. The tour will also include a number of musical performances which are not currently listed in the schedule below. The daily activities described in this itinerary may change or be rotated and/or modified in order to accommodate alterations in museum opening hours and performance schedules. Participants will receive a final itinerary together with their tour documents prior to departure. The tour includes breakfast daily, lunches and dinners as indicated in the itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch, and D=dinner.

Brussels - 5 nights

Day 1: Thursday 1 September, Arrive Brussels

- Arrival transfer for participants travelling on the ASA 'designated' flight
- Welcome Drinks
- Optional Orientation walk

Our tour commences in Brussels. Those arriving on the ASA 'designated' flight will be transferred to our hotel after clearing customs. If you are arriving independently please make your own way to the [Hotel Le Dixseptième](#), which is ideally located in the historic centre, 200 metres from the Grand Place (Grote Markt). Following some time at leisure there will be a welcome meeting followed by an optional short orientation walk to the Grand Place in which good restaurants will be pointed out to you. (Overnight Brussels)

Day 2: Friday 2 September, Brussels

- Walking tour: Palace of Justice and Church of Our Lady of Sablon
- The Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium: Musée Magritte

- Orientation tour: Coudenberg, Cathedral of St Michael and St Gudula, Galerie Royales Saint-Hubert and Grand Place
- Welcome Dinner at Le Belga Queen

This morning we walk to the Palace of Justice, the world's largest courthouse. Commissioned by King Leopold II, it was built between 1866 and 1883 by architect Joseph Poelaert in a neoclassical/eclectic design. We briefly visit *la salle des pas perdus*, the vast and impressive hall where magistrates and members of the public gather prior to entering the courtrooms. Then, we visit the nearby Church of Our Lady of Sablon Church.

After a coffee break we move to the museum dedicated to Brussels' most famous modern artist, the Surrealist painter René Magritte. The Musée René Magritte, displaying some 200 original paintings, drawing and sculptures mostly donated by the artist's wife Georgette and by his principal collector, Irene Hamoir Scutenaire, holds the world's largest collection of his work. We explore all phases of Magritte's oeuvre, especially that in which incongruous, fantastic subject matter is presented in a style of crisp realism.

We spend the afternoon on a walking tour of Coudenberg, visiting the Cathedral of St Michael and St Gudula and the Galeries Royales Saint-Hubert. This arcade is one of the earliest in Europe. Its twin façades were probably modelled on the façades of the Uffizi, Florence.

We finish our walk at the Grand Place, centre of Brussels life, to view its great Gothic Town Hall. The oldest part of the present Town Hall is its east wing (1402 -1420). A second wing (1444) was added when craft guilds were admitted into the traditionally patrician city government and the building needed extensions. By 1455 the high tower was added, dominating the building and its precinct. It rises to a lavish pinnacle of octagonal openwork and atop its spire stands a gilt metal statue of the archangel Michael, patron saint of Brussels. The façade below is decorated with numerous reproductions of original statues representing nobles, saints, and allegorical figures. The Town Hall interior burnt during a French bombardment in 1695 but was soon rebuilt, and the addition of two rear wings transformed the L-shaped building into its present configuration. The Gothic interior was restored in 1868 in the style of Viollet-le-Duc. We remember the court of the Archduke Albert and Archduchess Isabella, which welcomed refugee English Catholic composer Peter Philips and who patronised Rubens and Frans Pourbus. This evening there will be a welcome dinner at a local restaurant. (Overnight Brussels) BD

Day 3: Saturday 3 September, Brussels

- The Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium: Musée d'Art ancien (Museum of Old Masters)
- Afternoon at leisure
- Musée David et Alice van Buuren
- Private evening piano performance by Daniel Blumenthal, in Musée David et Alice van Buuren.

This morning we celebrate the wonderful world of Brussels' Royal art collections. After a short introductory lecture, we walk to the Royal Museum of Fine Arts and begin in the old masters' section exploring the vibrant artistic traditions of south Flanders. Artists represented include Rogier van der Weyden, Petrus Christus, Dirk Bouts, 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. Through [digital interactive screens](#) we delve into Brueghel's world and discover unexpected elements in these paintings that constitute the pinnacle of the Flemish master's craft. We also encounter Hieronymus Bosch's lovely *Crucifixion with a Donor* and one of the most important works of the 15th century, the Master of Flémalle's *Annunciation*. We explore the exquisite forms of these extraordinarily detailed works, their sophisticated symbolism hidden beneath the representation of everyday things, and the immense wealth of

the society that produced them. 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.

After some time at leisure, we visit the extraordinary house bought in 1928 by the banker and art patron David van Buuren. While its exterior is typical of the so-called Amsterdam School, its interior decoration presents a feast of Art Deco by Belgian, French and Dutch designers. Van Buuren and his wife Alice Piette collected rare furniture, carpets, stained-glass windows, sculptures and masterpieces of painting from the 15th to the 19th century. Along with a historical collection including two Brueghels there are works by Fantin-Latour, Ensor, van Gogh, Signac, Van Dongen and Ernst. Van Buuren was also the only patron of van de Woestyne, the precursor of surrealism and the house possesses 32 of his paintings. We complete our day with a concert.

Alice van Buuren was a major patron of the arts and was known to be close to Queen Elisabeth of Belgium. In her house Alice used to host a concert for the laureates of a music competition which bears the Queen's name, still today the most important annual event on the Belgian musical calendar. On this occasion, the winners were invited to play on her piano. Brussels-based American pianist Daniel Blumenthal, a former laureate of the Queen Elisabeth Competition who has also served on the Competition's jury, will give us an introduction to the Belgian music scene and perform a selection of works including Claude Debussy's *Children's Corner*, Francis Poulenc's *Suite Française*, Erik Satie's *Croquis et Agaceries d'un Gros Bonhomme en Bois* and *Toccata* by Belgian composer David van de Woestijne (who was the son of painter Gustav van de Woestijne). (Overnight Brussels) B

Day 4: Sunday 4 September, Brussels

- Musée Victor Horta
- Art Nouveau walking tour, including exclusive interior visit to the Hotel Solvay (by special arrangement)
- Musée Fin-de-Siècle

Brussels was the cradle of Art Nouveau, which spread across the world in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. John Julius Norwich has described its Belgian inventor and most famous exponent, Victor Horta, as "undoubtedly the key European Art Nouveau architect". Horta, for example, inspired Hector Guimard, France's exponent of Art Nouveau, who applied Horta's whiplash design in his work for the Paris Métro.

We first visit the Musée Victor Horta, located in Horta's private house and studio. Built between 1898 and 1901, the two buildings making up the museum exemplify Art Nouveau at its height. Their utterly exquisite, finely detailed interior decoration has largely been retained, with the mosaics, stained glass, and wall decorations forming a harmonious and elegant whole.

We next follow an Art Nouveau trail through Brussels. We visit an exceptional townhouse that has recently been opened to the public. Victor Horta designed the UNESCO-listed Solvay town house in 1894. It is a resplendent example of how he saw architecture as a total art form. The revolutionary iron structure creates a luminous space, into which light filters through from everywhere, softened by the carefully arranged coloration of the walls, the floor coverings and glasswork. We see the masterpiece of another major Art Nouveau architect, Paul Hankar. His Ciamberlani House displays a stunning *sgraffito* façade.

This afternoon, we visit the Musée Fin-de-Siècle, which celebrates the important flowering of art in Belgium at the turn of the 20th century. Well-known artists represented include James Ensor, Fernand Khnopff, Victor Horta and Henry van de Velde. You will, however, be surprised by the number of excellent artists of

whom you may not have heard. (Overnight Brussels) B

Day 5: Monday 5 September, Brussels — Dinant — Brussels

- Gardens of Annevoie
- The provincial town of Dinant
- Bateaux de la Meuse (Boat tour from Dinant to Freÿr Garden)
- Freÿr Castle and Gardens

We spend the day in the Meuse Valley visiting two magnificent châteaux and the lovely provincial town of Dinant, and cruise the Meuse. Our first visit is to the Jardins d'Annevoie in the Haute-Meuse, a region of forests and rivers. The gardens of Annevoie combine the splendour and majesty of the French formal style harmoniously with English romantic whimsy and Italian refinement. As we walk through these 250-year-old water gardens they will reveal their great diversity of cascades and fountains, majestic hundred-year old trees, trimmed hornbeam lanes and false grottoes.

From Annevoie we journey to the pretty, historic riverside town of Dinant, home of figures as diverse as Adolphe Sax (inventor of the saxophone) and Joachim Patenir (the 'inventor' of landscape painting in Western Europe). Here we will have time at leisure for lunch and to explore the village. You may wish to visit the Collegiate Church of Our Lady or the Citadel, walk across the Charles de Gaulle Bridge with its giant futuristic saxophone sculptures, or even visit the Adolphe Sax House Museum.

From Dinant we take an early afternoon cruise on the Meuse to Freÿr Castle and Garden where Monsieur Bonaert, the château's owner, will guide us on through his property. Originally a keep given in fief by the Count of Namur to Jean de Rochefort Orjol in 1378, in 1410 it came into the hands of the Dukes of Beaufort-Spontin, who have owned it ever since. Charles V destroyed the keep in 1554 and Freÿr was eventually rebuilt as a grand summer residence. The château, which stands on a dramatic site across the Meuse from high cliffs, is surrounded by vast walled terraced gardens, in the French formal style of Le Nôtre. They include babbling fountains, 350-year-old orange trees and 6 kilometres of hedged mazes. Above the garden stands a delightful Rococo pavilion. We stroll through the garden and visit the grand baroque interior with its wall paintings by Frans Snyders and its Louis XIV ceiling frescos; the family has preserved much of the house's original furniture. We then return to Brussels for the night. (Overnight Brussels) B

Bruges - 3 nights

Day 6: Tuesday 6 September, Brussels — Seneffe — Loppem — Bruges

- Domaine du Château de Seneffe, displaying one of Europe's most beautiful collections of antique (mainly 18th century) silverware
- Lunch at the Brasserie de L'Orangerie, Seneffe
- Loppem Castle

This morning we drive to the Château de Seneffe. Surrounded by both a magnificent restored formal garden and an English park, this typical 18th-century French country palace was designed by Belgium's principal exponent of Neoclassicism, Laurent-Benoît Dewez. Among its treasures is one of Europe's most beautiful collections of antique silver. Another of its delights is a small theatre that nestles in the garden. The famous architect Charles de Wailly designed this pretty neoclassical building, the interior of which retains its fixed scenery in the form of a *trompe l'oeil* gallery. After the visit of the château, we enjoy a group lunch at the Brasserie de l'Orangerie.

Just outside Bruges, we visit Loppem Castle (1859-1862), designed by the famous English architect Augustus Pugin's son Edward, together with the 'Pugin of Belgium', Jean-Baptiste de Béthune, in 1856 for Baron Charles van Caloen. It is a masterpiece of civil Gothic Revival architecture and is remarkably well preserved, with a richly decorated and furnished interior and houses a collection of paintings, stained glass and statuary. A romantic park with ponds and a maze surrounds the castle. (Overnight Bruges) BL

Day 7: Wednesday 7 September, Bruges

- Morning orientation walk of Bruges, incl. Gothic Town Hall, Basilica of the Holy Blood, Grote Markt and Belfry
- Groeninge Museum
- Time at leisure; Optional visit to the Arentshuis (Brangwyn Museum)
- Canal Cruise of Bruges
- Group Dinner at Le Chef et moi
- Carillon Concert (Optional)

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.

After a short lecture on the painting collection of the Groeninge Museum, we commence with a walking tour of Bruges' well-preserved historic core to view some of the most beautiful Gothic architecture in Europe; this area was inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2000. We begin by visiting the city's two town squares. The larger of the two is the Grote Markt (Large Market), the commercial hub of medieval Bruges. The second square is called the 'Burg', the heart of the Bruges' administration. The masterpiece we visit in the Burg is the exquisite Gothic Town Hall (1376), one of the first monumental town halls in the Low Countries. Its façade is punctured by six large Gothic windows and displays weapons of the cities and villages that were under administrative rule from Bruges. In 48 niches are statues that replaced the originals destroyed after the French Revolution. Within, a large staircase leads to the Gothic Hall (1386-1401), decorated in 1895 with neo-Gothic wall paintings illustrating the most important events in the history of Bruges.

We also visit the Basilica of the Holy Blood, which contains a vial of blood reputedly washed from the body of Christ. The relic appears to have arrived in Bruges in the 1250s and may have been loot from the Fourth Crusade. The chapel in which it is held is a masterpiece of Belgium's leading neo-Gothic architect, Bethune.

The Belfort, a huge tower and belfry once used to store the city statutes, dominates the adjacent Grote Markt. Most Flemish cities had a high tower that acted as a signifier of the city's identity; its bells were vital to communicating all kinds of information to citizens. Bruges' belfry was first built around 1240 and rebuilt after a devastating fire in 1280. The octagonal upper stage of the belfry was added between 1483 and 1487, and was once capped by a wooden spire bearing an image of Saint Michael, banner in hand and dragon underfoot. This spire was destroyed and rebuilt in 1493 and then fell victim to flames in 1741 and never rebuilt. Instead, the present Gothic openwork style was added to the rooftop in 1822. The belfry houses a municipal carillon comprising 48 bells. The city still employs a full-time carillonneur to give free concerts on a regular basis.

After lunchtime at leisure we shall 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. You may wish to visit the Arents House (Arentshuis) a fine, late-18th-century townhouse houses a museum of works by Anglo-Welsh artist Frank Brangwyn, one of the leading print makers of the 20th century.

We conclude the afternoon with a short canal cruise. 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. Bruges' canals were immortalised in Rodenbach's novel *Bruges-la-Morte*, one of the first novels to use photography as an integral part of the storytelling, and itself the inspiration for Hitchcock's immortal *Vertigo*.

Tonight we gather for a dinner at a local restaurant. On our way back to the hotel we will enjoy a carillon concert at the belfry we visited this morning. (Overnight Bruges) BD

Day 8: Thursday 8 September, Bruges

- Beguinage of Bruges
- Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk (Church of our Lady)
- Saint John's Hospital & the Hans Memling Museum
- Afternoon at leisure
- Sint-Annakerk (Church of St Anne)
- Private Baroque music performance by lutist Wim Maesele

We begin this morning by walking to Bruges' 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 of Bruges in the company of literary texts of the *Devotio Moderna*. Perhaps the most important religious movement in the Low Countries in the 15th century, it produced spiritual classics such as Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*, a work treasured by figures as diverse as St Thomas More, St Ignatius of Loyola and John Wesley.

We next visit the St John's Hospital Complex, which also includes the small Hans Memling Museum. Hans Memling (1430-1494), who was born in Germany, worked in Bruges from 1465, and was closely associated with the Knights Hospitaller. One of this museum's treasures is his late masterpiece, *The Shrine of St Ursula*, a carved and gilded wooden reliquary containing oil on panel inserts painted by the master.

We visit the Church of Our Lady, the interior of which is a treasure house of art. In the choir behind the high altar are the tombs of Charles the Bold, last Valois Duke of Burgundy and his daughter, Mary. Their gilt bronze full-length effigies lie on polished slabs of black stone. The most celebrated treasure of the church however, is Michelangelo's *Bruges Madonna* (1504), a marble sculpture of the Virgin and Child probably meant originally for Siena Cathedral.

At the end of an afternoon at leisure, we visit the splendid baroque Church of St Anne and walk by Bruges four remaining windmills. We complete our day with a unique and specially arranged performance by Baroque lutist Wim Maesele. (Overnight Bruges) B

Antwerp - 4 nights

Day 9: Friday 9 September, Bruges — Ghent — Antwerp

- Museum of Fine Arts MSK, Ghent
- Orientation walk including Ghent's Town Hall, Ghent
- Cathedral of St Bavo, Ghent

Today we drive to Antwerp via Ghent. We begin in the Museum of Fine Arts MSK, Ghent, the masterpiece of which is Hieronymus Bosch's *Christ Carrying the Cross*, but which also has an interesting collection of works by James Ensor and masterpieces of the 'Flemish Primitive' school of the 15th and 16th centuries.

Following some time at leisure for lunch, we visit the recently fully restored 24-panel altarpiece in the Cathedral of St Bavo in the centre of Ghent. *The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb* was begun by Hubert van Eyck (c.1390-1426) and completed after his death by Jan van Eyck in 1432. Commissioned for the chapel in which it remains today by a wealthy alderman in 1420, the painting is arguably the greatest work of the Northern Renaissance. It is a triumph of the use of thin oil glazes to bathe scenes in a rich luminous atmosphere and in the naturalism that represented a giant step forward from the rigid style of Gothic religious art. This vast, intricate masterpiece is spellbinding. St Bavo's other treasures include Rubens's recently restored *Conversion of St Bavo* (1623) and the magnificent funerary monument of Bishop Anton Triest by François and Hieronymus II du Quesnoy. The romanesque crypt holds a wealth of religious antiquities, vestments, sculptures, and paintings.

We also see the Ghent Town Hall. One of the grandest buildings in the city, the Town Hall was built in the late Gothic style and added to in the Renaissance style. Its sumptuous interiors in both styles reflect the vast wealth of the city and its citizens' civic pride. The Church of St Nicholas is the next monument we visit, a masterpiece of the Scheldt Gothic style. It was built in the 13th century near the city's bustling Wheat Market and was popular with the nearby guilds, who decorated chapels in the church. We then drive to Antwerp where we spend the next four nights. (Overnight Antwerp) B

Day 10: Saturday 10 September, Antwerp — Mechelen — Antwerp

- The Royal Manufacturers De Wit, Tongerlo Refuge, Mechelen (by special appointment)
- Royal Carillon School Mechelen
- Cathedral of St Rumbold, Mechelen
- Church of St John, Mechelen
- Museum aan de Stroom (MAS), Antwerp (Exterior)

Mechelen was the seat of an important medieval archbishopric. Abbots from surrounding monasteries built sumptuous houses here like the Tongerlo Refuge (1484) in which to reside whilst attending the archbishop. Here, we shall take a private guided tour of The Royal Manufacturers De Wit, the world's leading restorer of antique tapestries, including the exhibition halls and a workshop.

Next, we have a short tour of the Royal Carillon School of Mechelen. The carillonneur's art has been a point of reference in musical life in the Low Countries for centuries, and was the subject of Rodenbach's atmospheric novel, *The Bells of Bruges*, a story of fateful and obsessive love that plays out against Rodenbach's evocation of the still canals of the city. Following time at leisure for lunch, we next visit the Cathedral of St Rumbold, which dominates Mechelen's central Grote Markt. This grand cathedral has Anthony van Dyck's *Crucifixion* and other fine artworks and stained glass but is famous for its gigantic 15th-century tower that has an impressive 49-bell carillon.

Nearby we visit the Church of St John and its famous Peter Paul Rubens triptych *Adoration of the Magi*. We

also admire the recently discovered 14th-century wall paintings depicting St Christopher and St George.

We return to Antwerp and visit the impressive exterior of Museum aan de Stroom (MAS). This extraordinary ultramodern tower, composed of great blocks separated by undulating glass walls, was designed by the acclaimed Rotterdam firm Neutelings-Riedijk Architecten. (Overnight Antwerp) B

Day 11: Sunday 11 September, Antwerp

- Orientation walk of historic Antwerp including the Grote Markt
- The Snijders & Rockox House
- Rubens' House
- The Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp (KMSKA) (subject to reopening in 2021)
- Group Dinner at Restaurant RAS

We begin this morning with a short orientation walking tour of Antwerp. We walk from the medieval fortress, Het Steen, largely rebuilt by the Habsburg Emperor Charles V, and the riverbank (Scheldt) through the Vlaeykengang (alley near city hall), the Grote Markt (market square) to the newly opened museum housed in 17th-century Snijders and Rockox houses.

Nicolaas Rockox and Frans Snijders were key figures in Antwerp during the Baroque era. Each made his mark on the city's cultural and social life – Rockox as burgomaster and Snijders as a brilliant painter of animals and still lifes. They were also neighbours for 20 years, occupying adjacent patricians' houses. Rockox was a prolific art collector and patron and friend of masters including Peter Paul Rubens. The interior of these two lovely town houses is a treasure trove of masterpieces by artists such as the Bruegels, Peter Paul Rubens, Anthony Van Dyck, Frans Snijders, Jacob Jordaens, Clara Peeters, 16th- and 17th-century furniture, rare music instruments and artefacts.

Then we visit the house and studio that Rubens built for himself. Rubens was not only an extremely popular painter, but also a great humanist and a diplomat. Extremely wealthy, he built this palatial house, living here and working in his adjacent studio. He entertained Europe's aristocracy and royalty in the house and displayed his impressive art collection in a beautiful art room. We visit the house, the workshop and Rubens' charming garden.

In the afternoon we visit KMSKA, a world-class museum due to open in 2021 after extensive renovations. The collection of paintings, sculptures and drawings, dating from the 14th to the 20th centuries, includes work by Jan van Eyck, Rogier van der Weyden, Hans Memling, Frans Hals, Jan Breughel the Elder, Peter Paul Rubens, and his pupil Anthony van Dyck. We finish the day with a group dinner at Restaurant RAS overlooking the river Schelde. (Overnight Antwerp) BD

Day 12: Monday 12 September, Antwerp

- Coach tour of Antwerp including the Central Station and Art Nouveau's Zurenborg district
- The Beguinage of Antwerp
- Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekathedraal (Cathedral of Our Lady)
- Time at leisure

Antwerp is not only famous for its early architecture but also a treasure house of Art Nouveau and contemporary architecture. We shall take a tour of the city, focusing upon architecture since the late 19th century. We begin at the Central Railway Station, the grandest railway station in Belgium. The station is the work of Louis Delacenserie; it constitutes a major example of the kind of architectural eclecticism typical in

the last decades of the 19th and the first decades of the 20th century. 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 Revival.

We end the morning strolling through the beautiful, secluded Antwerp Beguinage. The Antwerp Beguinage was founded in 1234, but its extant buildings were constructed in the 16th century. Exquisite small brick houses, many with picturesque gables, line the small alleyways of this quiet precinct.

Following time at leisure for lunch we visit the Cathedral of Our Lady. Four of Rubens' most important paintings, including the *Raising of the Cross* and his *Descent from the Cross*, belong to this vast seven-nave Gothic cathedral, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Besides the art of Rubens, the cathedral played host to musicians including Johannes Ockeghem, the enigmatic master of the mid-Renaissance, and John Bull, a keyboard composer from England who may have fled his home country because of Catholic persecution in the Elizabethan age. The cathedral has a 123-metre steeple that took 169 years (1352-1521) to complete. The rest of the day is at leisure (Overnight Antwerp) B

Delft - 2 nights

Day 13: Tuesday 13 September, Antwerp — Rotterdam — Delft

- Plantin-Moretus Museum, Antwerp
- Walking tour of Rotterdam's cutting edge architecture

Our first visit for the day is to 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. It is the only museum in the world to be UNESCO World Heritage listed.

Late morning we depart Antwerp for Rotterdam, a city that is famous for its modern architecture and dramatic skyline dominated by the ultra-modern Erasmus Bridge over the River Maas. On a walking tour we see cutting-edge buildings by Renzo Piano, Piet Blom, and Rem Koolhaas. We encounter the life-size green light-emitting matrix at Toren op Zuid (South Tower), the hypermodern New Luxor Theatre and Montevideo, the tallest residential tower in the Netherlands. The city is home to many architectural and design firms, some of which are among the most progressive in the world, having designed famous buildings and bridges in many other major cities. (Overnight Delft) B

Day 14: Wednesday 14 September, Delft — The Hague — Delft

- Mauritshuis, The Hague
- Optional visit to Prince William V Gallery, The Hague
- Time at leisure in Delft

This morning we travel to The Hague to visit one of Europe's finest art collections in the recently renovated Mauritshuis. This includes a Rembrandt *Self Portrait* and his famous *Anatomy Lesson of Dr Nicolaes Tulp* (1632), Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (c.1665) and his *View of Delft* (1660-1661), Frans Hals' *Laughing Boy* (1625), and Hans Holbein the Younger's *Portrait of Robert Cheeseman* (1533).

After lunch, you may wish to visit the recently opened Prince William V Gallery, which was originally built in 1774 in order to exhibit the Prince's collection. It formed the basis for the collection of the Mauritshuis. More than 150 masterpieces from the Mauritshuis collection (including works by Rembrandt, Steen, Rubens and Potter) are once again here on display, surrounded by crystal chandeliers, silken wall coverings and lavish curtains. (Overnight Delft) B

Amsterdam - 4 nights

Day 15: Thursday 15 September, Delft — Utrecht — Vechtstreek — Amsterdam

- Cathedral of St Martin & Church of St Willibrord, Utrecht
- Rietveld Schröder House – UNESCO landmark of 20th-century architecture, Utrecht
- Cruise along the Vecht River, Vechtstreek

Today we drive to Amsterdam via Utrecht and its surrounding countryside, where medieval lords and merchants built castles and estates. From the 8th century, Utrecht was the focal point of Catholicism in the Netherlands, and although it joined the Calvinist Dutch Republic, it retained many of its Catholic values. We visit the 13th-century Cathedral of St Martin, a magnificent French Gothic building and the largest cathedral in the Netherlands; and Church of St Willibrord, a neo-Gothic church featuring stained-glass, beautiful woodcarvings and lavishly painted walls and ceilings. We also walk through courtyards, the Dom Square, narrow alleyways, canals and wharves of this famous city.

Following our visit to the Cathedral of St Martin we explore one of the masterpieces of the early 20th century, the Rietveld Schröder House (1924), inscribed as a UNESCO landmark of 20th-century architecture and truly a high point of the De Stijl movement. Its clean, rectilinear lines, picked out by primary colours, are reminiscent of a Piet Mondrian painting.

In the afternoon we take a cruise along the Vecht River in the Vechtstreek region between the villages of Oud Zuijlen and Nieuwersleuis. The river banks are dotted with beautiful castles and lovely country houses from the 'Golden Age' that reflect the immense wealth generated by 17th-century Dutch maritime trade. (Overnight Amsterdam) B

Day 16: Friday 16 September, Amsterdam

- Van Gogh Museum
- Canal tour of Amsterdam
- Portuguese Synagogue
- Rembrandt's House
- Evening concert (*program to be confirmed in 2022*)

This morning we visit the Van Gogh Museum. Its permanent collection includes more than 200 paintings, drawings and letters by van Gogh and provides an intimate documentation of the artist's life and artistic development. Besides the work of van Gogh, the museum has a rich collection of other 19th-century art, including Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masterpieces.

We follow our visit to the museum with a canal cruise, the best way to appreciate Amsterdam's lovely canal houses with their large windows and distinctive gables that were to influence residences across Europe. These houses are glimpsed through the foliage of trees that line the canals. Some scholars believe that it was the tree-lined canal-side thoroughfares of Amsterdam that gave the French the idea of tree-lined boulevards.

Then we visit the landmark Portuguese Synagogue. Expelled from Spain by Isabella and Ferdinand in 1492, Jews settled in neighbouring Portugal. Fleeing forced conversion many fled Portugal at the end of the 17th century. Once in Amsterdam, they returned to Judaism openly and publicly. They called themselves Portuguese Jews, even those who came directly from Spain. They wanted to avoid being identified with Spain, which was at war with the Dutch Republic at the time during the Eighty Years' War. Construction for the Portuguese Synagogue started in 1670. The building is free-standing and rests on wooden poles. The interior of the synagogue is a single, very high rectangular space retaining its original wooden benches. Even today, the Portuguese Synagogue is lit by candlelight only.

We visit a grand residence, Rembrandt's house, where the artist lived, worked and entertained patrons between 1639 and 1658. At the height of his success Rembrandt became an avid collector, but was forced to sell his extraordinary collection, which even included a Japanese suit of armour, when he lost popularity. The house now contains carefully researched items, giving a powerful sense of what it would have been like when the artist lived there. It has one of the world's largest collections of his etchings, some of which are on display.

We complete our day with a concert. (Overnight Amsterdam) B

Day 17: Saturday 17 September, Amsterdam — Apeldoorn — Otterlo — Amsterdam

- Kröller-Müller Museum & the Hoge Veluwe National Park, Apeldoorn
- Gardens of the Palace Het Loo, Otterlo

This morning, we drive to the Hoge Veluwe National Park. Here we tour the collection and sculpture garden of the Kröller-Müller Museum. Located amid the scenic woodland of the Hoge Veluwe, the Kröller-Müller Museum sits beautifully in its garden and surrounding woods. The museum collection focuses upon an extensive range of 275 works by Vincent van Gogh, including such famous works as his early *Potato Eaters* and his *The Cafe Terrace on the Place du Forum* (1888). You will also see works by Seurat, Redon, Braque, Picasso, Gris and Mondrian. The museum is surrounded by one of the largest sculpture gardens in Europe, with works by Marta Pan, Barbara Hepworth, Rodin, Jacques Lipchitz, Marino Marini, Moore and many others.

Afterwards, we enjoy a light lunch in the former garage of the Palace Het Loo constructed by King William III at the end of the 17th century. The Palace is surrounded by a lovely formal garden, a fine feature of which is a large group of impressive fountains. After exploring the gardens and fountains we return to Amsterdam where the evening is at leisure. (Overnight Amsterdam) BL

Day 18: Sunday 18 September, Amsterdam

- The Rijksmuseum
- Afternoon at leisure
- Anne Frank Museum (Optional)
- Farewell Dinner at Restaurant d'Vijff Vlieggen (The Five Flies)

Today we explore the newly renovated Rijksmuseum, considered one of the most important museums in the world. The focus of our visit is, of course, the Dutch 17th century. We explore the huge Rembrandt collection, including such revolutionary works as *The Night Watch*, as well as masterpieces by Vermeer like *The Milkmaid* and *View of Houses in Delft* and Frans Hals portraits such as the so-called *Merry Drinker*. This collection also includes Jan Havicksz. Steen's (c.1625-1679) genre scenes and the world's greatest collection of Dutch landscapes, including masterly works by Jacob Isaacksz van Ruysdael (c.1668-c.1670)

and Salomon van Ruysdael, which were of fundamental importance to the development of English landscape and seascape artists like J.M.W. Turner and John Constable.

Our last afternoon in Amsterdam is at leisure. You may wish to visit the Anne Frank House, dedicated to the Jewish wartime diarist. Anne Frank's diary has been translated into 70 languages. The place where Anne hid from 1942 to 1944 is known as the secret annexe and is part of the museum.

This evening we gather for a farewell dinner at the restaurant d'Vijff Vlieghe (The Five Flies), based in five pooled 17th-century little houses, decorated in Old Dutch style with four original etchings by Rembrandt on the wall and beautiful gold leather wallpaper. (Overnight Amsterdam) BD

Day 19: Monday 19 September, Depart Amsterdam

- Airport transfer for participants travelling on the ASA 'designated' flight

Our tour finishes in Amsterdam. If you are travelling on the ASA 'designated' flight, you will be transferred to Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport. If not, you may decide to take a taxi or arrange a transfer with ASA, or stay on to explore more of Amsterdam. Please contact ASA if you require further assistance. B

Accommodation

All hotels are rated 4-star locally and are comfortable and conveniently situated. All rooms have en suite bathroom. Further information on hotels will be provided in the 'Tour Hotel List' given to tour members prior to the departure.

- Brussels (5 nights): 4-star Hotel Le Dixseptième – situated in the historic centre of Brussels, a few steps from the Grand Place and the fine arts museum district, housed in a renovated 17th-century building. www.ledixseptieme.be
- Bruges (3 nights): 4-star Grand Hotel Casselbergh – housed in three 18th-century residences located in the historic centre. www.grandhotelcasselbergh.com
- Antwerp (4 nights): 4-star Hotel 't Sandt – situated in the historic centre of Antwerp, housed in an elegant 17th-century neo-Rococo mansion. www.hotel-sandt.be
- Delft (2 nights): 4-star Best Western Museum Hotel – housed in three fully restored 17th-century houses overlooking one of the most beautiful canals in the historic centre. www.museumhotels.nl
- Amsterdam (4 nights): 4-star NH Amsterdam Museum Quarter – located near the Rijksmuseum and the Concertgebouw, overlooking a canal. www.nh-hotels.com

Note: *Hotels are subject to change. In this instance a hotel of similar standard will be provided.*

Single Supplement

Payment of this supplement will ensure accommodation in a single occupancy throughout the tour. In all hotels on this tour, this will be a double/twin room for single occupancy. The number of rooms available for single use is extremely limited. People wishing to take this supplement are therefore advised to book well in advance.

Tour Map



Tour Price & Inclusions

AUD \$TBA Land Content Only – Early-Bird Special: Book before 30 Sep 2021

AUD \$TBA Land Content Only

AUD \$TBA Single Supplement

For competitive Economy, Business or First Class airfares, please contact ASA for further information.

Tour Price (Land Content Only) includes:

- Accommodation in twin-share rooms with private facilities in 4-star hotels
- Buffet breakfast daily, lunches & dinners as indicated in the 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 as outlined in the itinerary; use of public transport in some cities
- Airport-hotel transfers if travelling on ASA's 'designated' flights
- Porterage of one piece of luggage per person at hotels (not at airports)
- Lecture and site-visit program
- Entrance fees to all sites
- 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:

- International Airfare: Australia-Brussels, Amsterdam-Australia
- Personal spending money
- Airport-hotel transfers if not travelling on the ASA 'designated' flights
- Luggage in excess of 20kg (44lbs)
- Travel Insurance



Physical Endurance & Practical Information

Physical Ratings 

The number of flags is a guide to the degree of difficulty of ASA tours relative to each other (not to those of other tour companies). It is neither absolute nor literal. One flag is given to the least taxing tours, seven to the most. Flags are allocated, above all, according to the amount of walking and standing each tour involves. Nevertheless, all ASA tours require that participants have a good degree of fitness enabling 2-3 hours walking or 1-1.5 hours standing still on any given site visit or excursion. Many sites are accessed by climbing slopes or steps and have uneven terrain.

This 19-day cultural tour of Belgium and the Netherlands involves:

- Extensive walking (usually 9.00am-5.00pm), use of city public transport, and standing during museum and other site visits.
- Walking on uneven terrain, cobbled streets, and up and down hills and/or flights of stairs.
- 4-star hotels with four hotel changes.
- You must be able to carry your own hand luggage. Hotel portage includes 1 piece of luggage per person.

It is important to remember that ASA programs are group tours, and slow walkers affect everyone in the group. As the group must move at the speed of the slowest member, the amount of time spent at a site may be reduced if group members cannot maintain a moderate walking pace. ASA tours should not present any problem for active people who can manage day-to-day walking and stair-climbing. However, if you have any doubts about your ability to manage on a program, please ask your ASA travel consultant whether this is a suitable tour for you.

Please note: 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. For further information please

refer to the ASA Reservation Application Form.

Prior to departure, tour members will receive practical notes which include information on visa requirements, health, photography, weather, clothing and what to pack, custom regulations, bank hours, currency regulations, electrical appliances and food. The Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade website has advice for travellers: www.smartraveller.gov.au

Booking Conditions

Making a Tentative Reservation before the tour price has been published

ASA INTENTION TO TRAVEL APPLICATION FORM

Some ASA tours fill almost immediately. Don't miss out! You can register your 'Intention to Travel' by completing this application and returning this to ASA with a AUD \$100.00 per person deposit. Once the tour price has been published, the itinerary and ASA Reservation Application Form will be sent to you. From the time you receive the itinerary you will have two weeks to either:

- Send us a completed ASA Reservation Application Form together with an additional deposit of AUD \$400.00 per person. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation. At this time your deposit of AUD \$500.00 is subject to the tour's Booking Conditions.

Or

- CANCEL your Intention to Travel in writing. ASA will refund your AUD \$100.00 per person deposit, less a \$33.00 service fee (including GST).

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. 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. ASA's ability to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate your specific needs, your health and safety and the health and safety of other tour members, is of paramount importance to us. For this reason the ASA Reservation Application includes a Medical Information section. As a general guideline, you must be able to accomplish each of these activities without assistance or support:

- walk and stand unassisted for at least 2-3 hours a day in hot, humid conditions
- walk confidently on and over uneven surfaces
- climb at least 3 flights of stairs
- embark and disembark from ferries, buses and trains
- walk up and down steep slopes
- walk at a steady pace and no less than 1km every 15-20 minutes
- organise, manage and carry your own luggage
- follow and remember tour instructions
- meet punctually at designated times and places

- administer your own medication.

Passport Details

All participants must provide no later than 75 days prior to the commencement of the program a photocopy of the front page of their current passport.



Intention to Travel Application

TOUR NAME _____

TOUR DATES _____

Booking before the tour price is available

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- Send us a completed ASA Reservation Application Form together with an additional deposit of AUD\$400.00 per person. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation. At this time your deposit of \$500.00 AUD is subject to the tour's Booking Conditions.

OR

- Cancel your Intention to Travel in writing. ASA will refund your AUD\$100.00 per person deposit, less a \$33.00 service fee (including GST).

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

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 _____

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- walk confidently on and over uneven surfaces
- climb at least 3 flights of stairs
- embark and disembark from ferries, buses and trains
- walk up and down steep slopes
- walk at a steady pace and no less than 1 km every 15 - 20 minutes
- organise, manage and carry your own luggage
- follow and remember tour instructions
- meet punctually at designated times and places
- administer your own medication.

Applicant's Signature _____

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

Payment by (please indicate): Cheque Direct Debit (see below) Credit Card (see below)

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
