



New independent initiative puts Dutch top locations in the picture

Nationale Meeting Award 2015

The Dutch MICE sector includes quite a few locations that have something special to offer. An award can then be a means to put this specialty more in the picture. And yet the MICE trade magazine Meeting Magazine's team found that the industry lacked a general, independent prize. It is for that reason that the Nationale Meeting Award was launched in October 2015.

The Nationale Meeting Award is an initiative of MeetingReview.com, EvenementContact, the 'Congres- en Vergaderclassificatie' and Meeting Magazine. This general, independent prize is meant to praise the best meeting and event venues in

the Netherlands. The Nationale Meeting Award comprises five categories: three industry jury prizes for the 'Best meeting and event location in the Netherlands' in the categories Small, Medium and Large, plus two public prizes for the 'Warme Deken' (warm blanket) for the best host(ess), and the 'Meest Bijzondere Locatie' (most special location).

JUDGEMENT

The judgement of the nominated locations consists of four different elements. First, the participating locations must gather 10 or more reviews via MeetingReview, and score points according to the list of criteria of the 'Congres en Vergaderhamerclassificatie' (see box). The three loca-

THE PARTICIPATING PARTIES BEHIND THE NATIONALE MEETING AWARD

Meeting Magazine is a trade magazine for the Dutch MICE industry which aims to inform meeting and event planners of the latest developments in locations and trends. Meeting International, the English-language spinoff from the magazine, promotes the Netherlands as destination for business meetings. The magazine is published twice annually at the trade fairs IMEX and ibtm. www.meetingmagazine.nl

MeetingReview offers a platform on which meeting locations and meeting services can present themselves. On MeetingReview, testimonials can be published, and a guest can post a review. Elements that can be judged include the booking process, the meeting location, the function room with the

facilities, the catering and the meeting service. Apart from that, meeting locations and meeting services can also respond to the reviews, and a review method was developed to guarantee an optimal reliability. www.meetingreview.com

'Congres- en Vergaderclassificatie' (congress and meeting classification) is a hallmark for locations and PCOs in the Netherlands and Belgium. As the participating enterprises are checked on a regular basis, the quality is guaranteed. The Vergaderhamer (meeting gavel) is intended for meeting or congress accommodations. The more gavels, the higher the quality of the facilities; from parking to the toilets. The hallmark 'Erkend Congresbedrijf' (Qualified congress

enterprise) is awarded to independent enterprises specialized in organizing (inter)national congresses and meetings on a professional basis. www.vergaderhamer.nl

EvenementContact is a transparent one-day trade fair concept in which each standholder is allotted a uniform-sized stand. Thanks to this uniformity, the story is what counts, instead of the stand size. The eighth edition of this trade fair was held on 18 February 2016 in the RAI exhibition center in Amsterdam. Here, some 350 parties presented themselves on 8,000 square meters of fair surface. Next year, the event will be held at Rotterdam Ahoy. www.branchecontact.nl/evenement-contact



deVLOER, Almere
(winner Category Small)



Conferentiehôtel Kontakt der Kontinenten,
Soesterberg (winner Category Medium)

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tions with the highest combined score in the categories Small, Medium and Large are then visited by an independent trade jury and judged. The trade jury includes

Michiel Smilde of Eventerim, Wieteke Lemmen of WietWeetWaarheen.nl and Trees Overkamp of Cygnea. They all have many years' experience in organizing business meetings. The nominees also try to win as many public votes as possible. The locations with the highest combined total score per category eventually win the Nationale Meeting Award.

FIRST PRESENTATION

On Thursday 18 February, during the Dutch Meeting trade fair EvenementContact, the winners of the

Nationale Meeting Award 2015 were announced. The nominees were:

Category Small - capacity max 50 persons

1. deVLOER, Almere (winner)
2. geWoonboot, Amsterdam
3. Villa Oldenhoff, Abcoude

Category Medium - capacity from 51 to 250 persons

1. Conferentiehôtel Kontakt der Kontinenten, Soesterberg (winner)
2. Hotel Ernst Sillem Hoeve, Den Dolder
3. Bouw & Infra Park, Harderwijk



HAPPY TO WIN

Each of the jury members was responsible for a specific category. Jury member Wieteke Lemmen, responsible for the category Small, personally found this the nicest category to judge: "You just feel that these entrepreneurs are passionate for their location and trade." Anne Kien of deVLOER is extremely happy with the award: "Apart from the fact that this is a perfect marketing tool for a location, it forces you, also because of the jury assessment, to take a good look at your location at at your facilities and service level. The Award now has a place of honor on the mantelpiece!"

Jury member Michiel Smilde (Eventerim), responsible for the category

Medium, was full of praise for the nominees. "Although I have quite a few years' experience in this sector, I did not know any of the three locations. I must admit I was impressed during my personal visits. The locations are completely different from each other, each has its own distinguishing identity." René Giel, director of Kontakt der Kontinenten, considers winning the award as "a wonderful appreciation of the work we do every day, as an enthusiastic team. It is also an absolute confirmation that the special global concept which we translate every day into an experience in the congress hotel, is appreciated by our guests."

In the category Large, jury member Trees Overkamp (Cygnea) was respon-

sible for judging the nominees: "These are completely different, but very professional locations which obviously have invested in their images and facilities." For Maarten Markus, Managing Director of NH Hotel Group, the Nationale Meeting Award is very special: "We are honored to be awarded this prize by a leading trade magazine like Meeting Magazine. Our hotel team is 24/7 ready to ensure that the guest has a memorable stay at the NH Collection Grand Hotel Krasnapolsky. The Nationale Meeting Award is their achievement!"

Category Large - capacity for over 250 persons

1. NH Collection Grand Hotel Krasnapolsky, Amsterdam (winner)
2. Postillion Hotel Utrecht-Bunnik
3. Radisson Blu Hotel Amsterdam Airport, Schiphol

For the 'Warme Deken Award' for the best host(ess) the public could cast their vote for their favorite. In the end the award was won by Gerard Oude Nijeweme, working at Bilderberg Hotel de Keizerskroon in Apeldoorn. The

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award for the 'Meest bijzondere locatie' was won by Art Centre Delft. This location was also chosen by the public. The entire amount of the entrance fees for the competition was presented to

CliniClowns. This is the Dutch branch of clown doctors, originally an American organization which sends specially trained clowns to seriously ill children in hospitals to make their stay there a bit more bearable.

Next year, the Nationale Meeting Award will be presented again. More information (in Dutch) can be found at www.nationalemeetingaward.nl.