



Muiderslot

Castles with a (hi)story

The Netherlands has over 700 castles and country estates, from defense citadels to luxurious manors. In the seventeenth and eighteenth century these estates were the stately homes of wealthy merchants and nobility. The stories behind these historic premises are still cherished. We compiled a shortlist of the most interesting stories.

Photography Holland-mediabank

AMSTERDAM CASTLE MUIDERSLOT

At a stone's throw from Amsterdam lies the Muiderslot. The castle probably dates back to the thirteenth century, when around 1285 Count Floris V of Holland had a stone

keep built at a strategic location on the estuary of the Vecht river. The story of count Floris and his fortress did not have a happy ending. In 1296 during a falcon hunt he was abducted by his own nobles and brutally murdered. The castle was destroyed by enemy troops. In the seventeenth century the castle, which was rebuilt and expanded from 1370 and strengthened in 1576, was inhabited by Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft (1581–1647) the namesake of the P.C. Hooft street - the most exclusive shopping street of Amsterdam. He was 'drost' (sheriff) of Muiden and 'baljuw' (bailiff) of Gooiland, but was best known for his many poems, sonnets, letters and plays. After a period of decay, the Muiderslot was saved from the wrecker's ball in 1825. Nowadays, the rooms and gardens of the castle once again recall the Dutch Golden Age. The castle is a very popular site for films and photos, for example as the location for the castle of 'Sinterklaas' (the Dutch version of Santa Claus) in the children's television show 'De Club van Sinterklaas'. Various rooms in the castle, including the impressive Knight's Hall, can be booked for business meetings.

www.muiderslot.nl/en



Museum Huis Doorn

MUSEUM HUIS DOORN

Originally, Huis Doorn was a thirteenth-century moated castle. The present shape of the house was mainly established during the renovation in 1796, when the surrounding gardens were also laid out in British landscaping style. The most famous inhabitant of Huis Doorn is the German former emperor Wilhelm II who, after the Germans were defeated in the First World War, fled to the neutral Netherlands. In 1919 he bought Huis Doorn for half a million guilders and had it thoroughly converted. Electricity, modern sanitary fittings and heating were introduced to the buildings. The castle was decorated with over 30,000 objects from the imperial palaces in Berlin and Potsdam, including furniture, paintings, silverware and carpets. These days Huis Doorn is a museum. Visitors can take a guided tour of the original furnishment of Wilhelm II, comprising three floors and twelve rooms. The emperor lies buried in the mausoleum on the estate (according to his last will, Wilhelm II was to be interred only after the restoration of the German monarchy). The museum can be booked for meetings, on demand combined with lunch, drinks, dinner and various leisure activities.

www.huisdoorn.nl/en

CASTLE DE HAAR

At the end of the nineteenth century, not much was left of De Haar. When baron Etienne van Zuylen van Nijvelv inherited the castle ruins, he decided to have the family castle rebuilt as homage to his glorious ancestry. His marriage with the wealthy baroness H el ene de Rothschild provided him with ample financial means to realise this. Architect Pierre Cuypers, well-known from his designs of the Rijksmuseum and the Amsterdam Centraal Station, made significant changes to the castle. At that time, Castle De Haar was a very luxurious residence with hot and cold running water, central heating, electricity, a Turkish bath, a state-of-the-art kitchen and a passenger lift. The baron and his

guests used De Haar as a country estate mainly in August and September. In the eclectic interior the neo-gothic style dominates in the form of sandstone sculptures, the painted and stenciled decorations and the leaded windows. The furniture also comes from Cuypers' workshop. Apart from that, Castle De Haar boasts a varied



Castle De Haar

Seven reasons to meet at a castle

- Each and every one is an extraordinary location with a unique atmosphere.
- Participants experience a seminar as an 'outing'.
- The peace and quiet of the surrounding gardens offer a great opportunity for a team building or brainstorm session.
- The coffee breaks and lunches or dinners in the historic vaulted rooms or wonderful castle grounds have a calming effect on every visitor.
- The manager not only works at the estate, but often also lives there. This ensures a more personal service.
- A castle is usually run by a small organization; large hotels often have several meetings at the same time, whereas at a castle, you have the place to yourself.
- The venue has an 'old world' atmosphere, but offers all 21st century comforts.

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Paleis Het Loo



collection of art objects, antique Chinese and Japanese earthenware, three sixteenth-century wall hangings, a seventeenth-century tapestry, various paintings and panels with religious motifs and even a palanquin from the court of one of the last Japanese shoguns. De Haar is available for congresses, receptions and dinners.

www.kasteeldehaar.nl/english

PALEIS HET LOO

In 1684 'stadhouder' (stadtholder, viceroy) Willem III purchased the medieval hunting lodge Het Loo (now called 'Het Oude Loo' (the old Loo)) including the surrounding buildings, woods, estates and watercourses. At this location he had built the new hunting lodge and summer residence Paleis Het Loo for his wife Mary Stuart (later Queen Mary II) and himself. In the course of the centuries the palace was inhabited by the Dutch royal family. Queen Wilhelmina welcomed Winston Churchill there as a guest. Since 1984 Paleis Het Loo has been a museum. The wonderful wall paintings and ceiling decorations, as well as the collection of 160,000 objects (including paintings, sculptures, furniture, art objects, textiles and costumes, drawings, prints and photos, orders and decorations, books and carriages) show how the Oranje families lived here. The garden behind the palace has been restored to the layout it had in the

days of Willem III and Mary II. The west wing of the Paleis Het Loo has function rooms for business meetings. In 2021 the business possibilities are extended further. The renovation which will be started in 2018 will then be completed. During the renovation the palace gardens, stables and museum restaurants will remain open to the public. www.paleishetloo.nl/en

SLOT LOEVESTEIN

Castle Loevestein was built around 1357 by order of knight Dirc Loef van Horne. The building was used as residence and as base of operations for his forays and the levy of illegal toll. Later the castle became the property of the lord of Holland and he used it as a defensive work. At the end of the sixteenth century, after a thorough renovation, the castle was used as state prison. One of the best known prisoners was writer and lawyer Hugo de Groot. His most famous work *De iure belli ac pacis* (On the law of war and peace) from 1625 constitutes the basis for the modern international law. In 1619, in a period in which religious wars were mixed with political powerplays, he was sentenced to life imprisonment. After two years he managed to escape from Slot Loevestein hidden in a book chest, an idea from his wife. Dressed in mason's clothes he fled to Antwerp. Later the castle became a part of the Nieuwe Hollandse Waterlinie (new

Dutch water line of defense). This line consisted of forts and fortified cities and was designed to protect the western part of the Netherlands. The lands lying in front of these forts could be inundated to repel any possible enemies. These days, Loevestein is a museum. In the castle, the outer ward and the soldiers' village visitors can learn more about Hugo de Groot, the Middle Ages and the Hollandse Waterlinie. The castle and the fortress offer various possibilities for business meetings.

www.slotloevestein.nl/en/business

CHÂTEAU ST. GERLACH

Originally, Château St. Gerlach was a place of pilgrimage for Gerlachus, a hermit from the middle of the twelfth century. After his canonization, near his grave a monastery and a minster were built which also housed a mausoleum. After the French invasion in 1795 a notary public bought the monastery and had it renovated into a château (he considered 'castle' too common). The minster was donated to the municipality of Houthem and was used as the new parish church. After 1979 the castle and a number of its outbuildings fell into serious disrepair until Camille Oostwegel, a hotel owner from the province of Limburg, bought the estate in 1994



Château St. Gerlach

and had it renovated. These days Château St. Gerlach is a hotel, restaurant and congress venue, and quite a few distinguished guests have already enjoyed its hospitality. During a short visit to Limburg for the 60th commemoration of the end of the Second World War, the American president George W. Bush and his wife spent the night at the hotel. In February 2002 twelve European bank presidents gathered here. One year later the Euro monument,

made by the Benedictine friar Leo Disch, was unveiled. In 2014 The Rolling Stones spent a night at the hotel when they played at the Pinkpop music festival. It is said that the rock and roll legends also visited the minster and Gerlachus' mausoleum then. www.oostwegelcollection.nl/en/chateau-st-gerlach



Slot Loevestein