

# TULIPS & CHOCOLATE PLAYBILL CRUISE

APRIL, 2023



A river boat cruise through the Netherlands during Tulip time.



We begin our marvelous journey in **Brussels**, where we meet up with Judi Laganga and Susan Dougherty. We enjoy a hot chocolate at the Mocafe on the Galleries Royales Saint-Hubert, near our hotel.



Exploring quirky Brussels on our first day, and having a marvelous first Belgium meal at the Brasserie Ommegang.



(We joked that this meant "The Death of Subtlety", which kind of applies to Brussels.)





A day trip on a train to the magical town of **Bruges** (Brugge), where we first took a wonderful river boat ride through the canals.



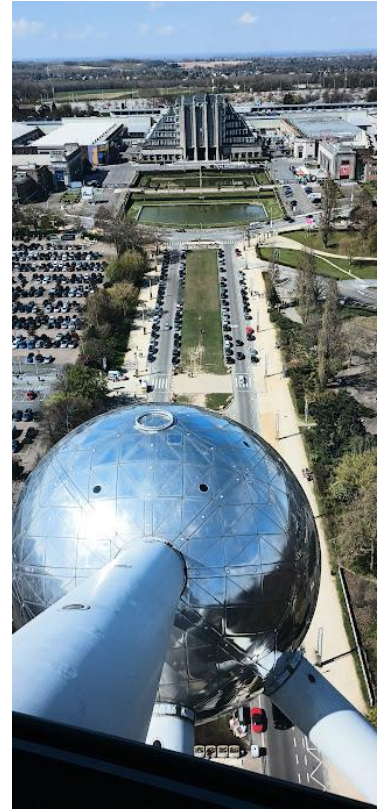


I titled the statue of the 2 monks, "Brokeback Monastery"

Exploring more of the beautiful city, Brugge, with it's the medieval history, mixed with the modern.



After a long bus ride and a long walk, we dined on top of the Atomium. While we were there, the immigration police carted off several of the kitchen staff.



Judi and Susan discovered this magnificent square one night. We visited it the next morning.





Our last day in Brussels was a Monday, so most museums were closed. But Munro found two that were open, Auto World and a house museum.





JOHN MCDANIEL



BETH LEAVEL



KEN PAGE



JESSIE MUELLER



MATT DOYLE



MAX CLAYTON

The night before we had boarded the **RIVER QUEEN**. We were extremely excited to see these Broadway super-stars who would each perform a concert. The first was the amazing **Jessie Mueller**.

Her rendition of “Adelaide’s Lament” was brilliant!



Because the boat was so small, the performers were close-up and personal. We got to chat with each of them at some point.





Our first stop was in **Antwerp, Belgium**, a city of beauty and medieval legends.



Nello and Patrasch, a poor boy who froze to death, but was warmed by the sympathetic dog.



This statue depicts Lange Wopper, a giant who supposedly stomped on drunks.

Just a cute cat.



Silvius Brabo is an Antwerp folklore figure. According to the legend, he would have been a Roman soldier who killed the giant Druon Antigoon, chopped off his hand, and threw it into the River Scheldt.



Artist **Rubens** was an Antwerp citizen. Many of his paintings are displayed in the Antwerp Cathedral



The builders of the cathedral.



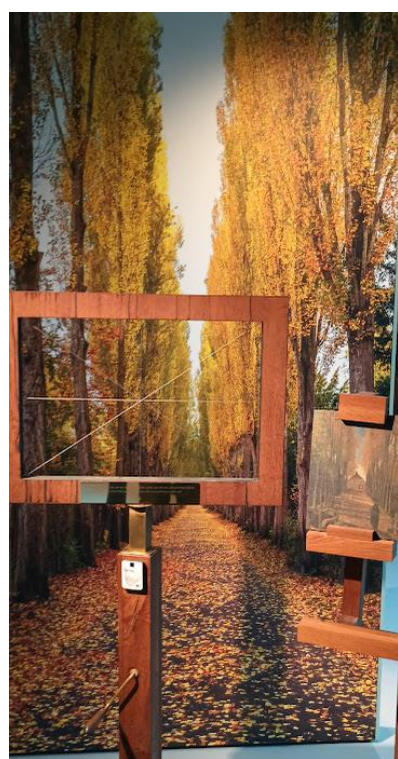


Our next port-of-call was **Maastricht**, Netherlands. A cute little town, but the best part was a fun lunch in a local pub, with friendly and handsome waiters.





The new Van Gogh Museum



The site of one of Vincent's drawings.

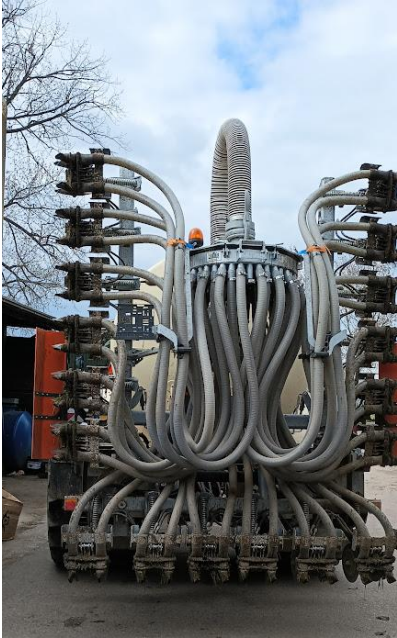
Our next stop was unusual. We were all taken off the ship in Cuijk, Netherlands and put on a bus that took us to **Nuenen**. This is a town where Vincent van Gogh lived and the whole town celebrates the time he lived and painted there.



Here the 4 of us are trying to replicate the "Potato Eaters", which was the only famous painting that Vincent painted in Nuenen.



Then the bus drove us to **Huesden**, where Munro took a bike tour, Judi and Susan took a walking tour, and I went to a cheese-making farm.



Finally, we were brought together for a scrumptious meal.



The cows were smelly, the Gouda cheese abundant, and of course, on sale.



We were then taken to a new town where our boat was waiting for us.



**Ken Page**, who I had the honor of seeing in *The Wiz* and *Ain't Misbehavin'*, gave a powerful and moving concert (and of course, he sang "Your Feet Too Big".)

And of course, every night on the boat was a concert by a different one of these wonderful artists.



**Matt Doyle** (Tony winner for *Company*) was beautiful, in every sense of the word.

**Max Clayton**, who went on for Hugh Jackman in *The Music Man*, was surprisingly good. As an encore, Jessie Mueller came up and played Marion to his Harold. It was an improv and hilarious.



PS: Matt and Max are partners and got engaged on our cruise.



All these concerts were accompanied by the amazing musical director, **John McDaniel**

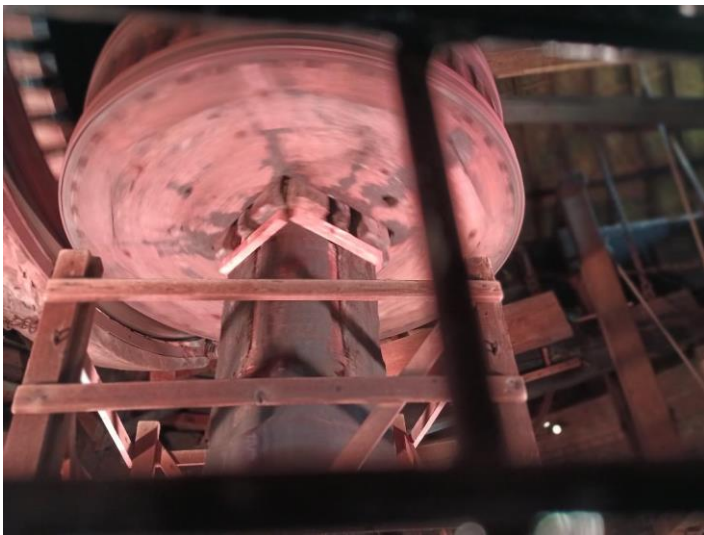




Our next stop was in **Schoonhoven**, where we took a tour of working windmills.

We learned from our excellent guide that the abundance of windmills in the Netherlands were for draining out the water, so there could be dry land. She was brought up in one of them.

Of course, we had to have these silly photos.



The Davids climbed up into a working windmill. Fascinating!





We were extremely lucky to have a sunny morning to visit the breathtaking **Keukenhof Gardens**. Because of a tulip parade that day, there were around 40,000 visitors in this huge park. And millions of flowers. Here are a few of the dozens of pics we took. Just as we were leaving the rain came! Judi and Susan toured the Anne Frank House, the Davids went back to the ship.



We went through this maze.  
It was a bit scary; but we got out.







Two Drowsy Chaperones!  
"Oh, please."



The last night on the ship was the dynamite concert by **Beth Leavel**.

After it was over, Matt and Max announced their engagement.



The day we left the ship, these super-stars personally signed a copy of this poster for everyone.





The next morning, we disembarked and went to a hotel. We all took a canal boat tour and explored some of the fascinating city of **Amsterdam.**



This is a view of the roofs from our hotel.



This is the smallest house in town.





Our last day, before we trained to Brussels for our flight home, was to the marvelous **Rijksmuseum**.

We got tickets to the sold-out Vermeer exhibit.





And thus, we four happy travelers ended our glorious **Tulips and Chocolate Playbill Cruise.**

