

DEC 2025/JAN 2026 • GOLDEN GIRL: IN LONDON WITH ATHLETICS SUPERSTAR FEMKE BOL • THE UNIQUE CHARACTER OF SHANGHAI • BALI GUIDE • 24 HOURS IN ATHENS • YOUR FREE COPY TO TAKE HOME

HOLLAND HERALD

*"Hurdles is as much
a mind game as it is a
physical performance"*

DUTCH ATHLETE FEMKE BOL


KLM
Travel Well



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Steltman

ATELIER - JEWELRY - WATCHES



BY APPOINTMENT TO THE COURT
OF THE NETHERLANDS

Welcome

Marjan Rintel

PUSHING BOUNDARIES



Cover Story

Dutch runner Femke Bol has been a powerful presence on the track-and-field stage since the age of 16. Now, nine years later and with multiple medals, Olympic wins and world-breaking times under her belt, she is closing the chapter on her 400m hurdles career and stepping into a new one. Bol tells us all about her running, her perfectionist nature and what writing does for her (p. 26).

As we fly towards the end of 2025, the horizon of 2026 comes into view. This is the perfect moment to reflect, and make new plans for the coming year. Travelling offers the opportunity to recharge, gain new perspectives and literally push your boundaries.

It is currently the height of winter in the Northern Hemisphere. I love this season. On the one hand, there's the warmth and cosiness indoors with family and friends during the holidays. And on the other hand, the wonderful cold outside, preferably in snow-covered landscapes (see p. 53). Whether it's the tranquillity of the northern lights in Kittilä, Finland – our new winter destination – or the energy of a vibrant city such as New York: every place comes alive in its own way this season. And don't forget our own KLM capital, Amsterdam. This time of year, strolling along Amsterdam's canals – lined with their iconic houses – is especially rewarding. Locals quietly hope for a cold snap that will freeze the waterways, turning the city into a magical skating haven.

This issue of *Holland Herald* features an inspiring interview with Dutch icon and

child exploitation and human trafficking demonstrates the power of individual action, such as with her #5KtoFreeaGirl campaign. On 1 June 2025, SkyTeam became the first global airline alliance to sign a groundbreaking Anti-Human Trafficking Declaration. As KLM's CEO, I am proud that we are using our unique position to take the lead in this area. When you connect people all over the world, you also encounter the less agreeable sides. With this promise, we want to contribute to a world in which everyone can be safe and free.

Welcome on board. We wish you all an inspiring 2026.

Marjan Rintel
KLM President & CEO



**“I am proud we are using
our unique position to take
the lead in this area”**

track-and-field star Femke Bol (p. 26), who won her second World Championship gold medal in the 400m hurdles at the World Athletics Championships 2025 in Tokyo. She constantly pushes her own boundaries. Her drive to be the best in the world combined with her incredible ability to accelerate at the end of a race can only be achieved through careful preparation and a good training programme. Bol is also an ambassador for Free a Girl; her fight against



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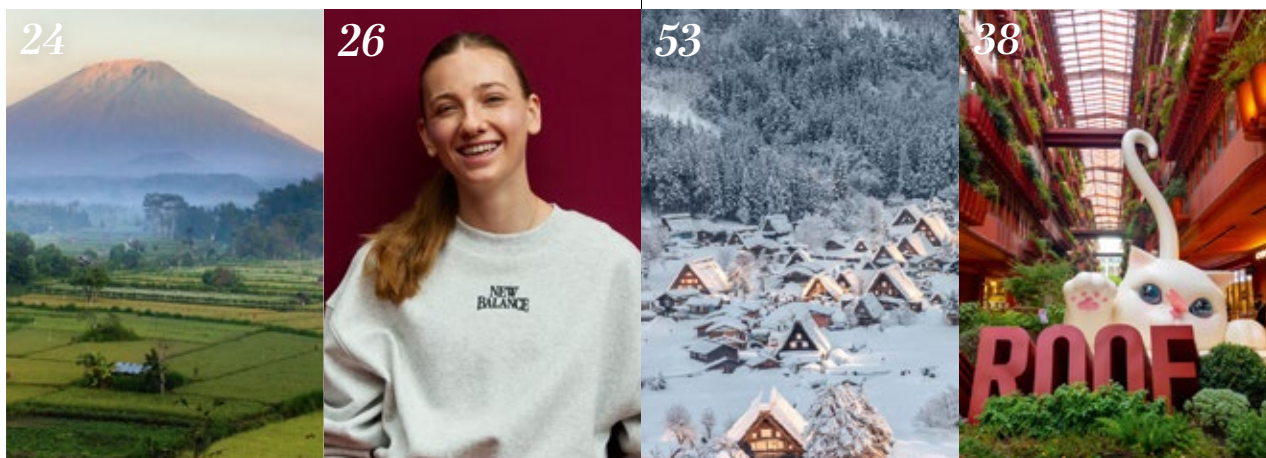
Also available in stainless steel

"For me, the beauty of our watches
is the result of well-balanced design in which no element dominates.
Precise manufacturing techniques are applied in combination
with the use of high-quality materials. Attention is devoted to every single detail.
Driven by perfection without compromise."

Wybe van der Gang



VAN DER GANG
WATCHES



December 2025 • January 2026

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Your Next Destination

Building the case for a journey to **Catania**

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MEET THE TEAM



Marloes van Wijnen

Marloes is a freelance journalist who writes for magazines such as the Dutch editions of *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*. She loves to travel to new destinations and write about the highlights worth visiting. In this issue's Happy Places article (p. 53), Marloes dives into snowy places, some of which may most likely not be on your travel bucket list already.

Marloes' travel tip: "I love visiting the Pitti Palace in Florence. For the ultimate cultural afternoon in this amazing city, wander through the beautiful palazzo and the fabulous surrounding Boboli Gardens."



Anouk Bowman

Anouk became our Content Creator after studying journalism and then working as an intern for (Dutch) *Cosmopolitan* magazine. She writes *Bon Appétit* (p. 23), *Through Your Lens* (p. 8) and the KLM pages, among others. With a healthy dose of curiosity, Anouk enjoys finding interesting angles for every story.

Anouk's travel tip: "I was in Japan during the sakura (cherry blossom) season. I loved cycling through Kyoto and along The Philosopher's Path, a trail that runs between the temples of Ginkaku-ji and Nanzen-ji. It was covered in pink blossoms – an absolute must-see."



Julia Gorodecky

Julia is a freelance copywriter, subeditor, proofreader and translator who works for various international companies and publications, one of which is *Holland Herald*, which she edits and proofreads. Julia spent her youth in the hustle and bustle of London and 20 years in the buzz of Amsterdam, before finding herself in the serenity of rural Ireland.

Julia's travel tip: "Take a road trip in my part of the world, West Waterford. You'll enjoy cliff walks, the stunning Copper Coast drive, Japanese Gardens, waterfalls, magnificent mountains, top-notch food and a fine Irish welcome."

Colophon

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THROUGH *your lens*





Venice
Italy



BRIDGE WITH A VIEW

THANKS TO A TIP FROM A LOCAL,
DAVID PALACIOS RUBIO WAS
ABLE TO CAPTURE VENICE'S ESSENCE.



At the end of 2022, I visited Venice in Italy for work. I'm a travel- and fine-dining journalist, and I was really looking forward to exploring the floating city and its various culinary establishments and hotels. As expected, it did not disappoint. I recommend anyone visiting Venice to take a long stroll around the canals and piazzas and enjoy an aperitif, all while engaging in some people-watching. To commemorate my trip, I wanted to take a photo that would encapsulate the essence of Venice and its boats and canals. I asked around a bit, eventually settling for the tip the hotel concierge gave me, which was to visit Ponte dell'Accademia. This bridge is one of the most popular spots in Venice, and it's easy to see why. The view from it is incredible. The continuous stream of people caused the bridge, which is made of wood, to creak, but

despite the crowds, I was able to capture this 'quintessential Venice' image, which I'm fairly happy with. I went back to the city not long ago; this time it wasn't for work but simply to explore and enjoy it for myself. Naturally, I was still as impressed.

Your Photo

If you'd like to have your travel photo featured in this section, email an image (300dpi; landscape mode) to: hollandheraldhome@hearst.nl.

Monthly Prize

If we publish your travel photo, we'll send you a copy of Jimmy Nelson's latest book *Between the Sea and the Sky*, which is about traditional Dutch communities.

Some of the images are also available as fine art. jimmynelson.com/fine-art-intro





We co-own five unique holiday homes

WE SPOKE TO LENE ESPERSEN (FORMER MINISTER OF JUSTICE IN DENMARK) AND HER HUSBAND DANNY, WHO'VE BEEN WITH 21-5 SINCE 2013.



Lene & Danny, a 21-5 family

When did you join, and what made you choose 21-5?

We joined the first 21-5 group at the beginning of 2013, so we have been co-owners for over 12 years. At the time, we had been looking for a home of our own in Southern Europe for years, but we couldn't find anything suitable at a reasonable price. When we came across 21-5, we

could instantly see the advantages and eventually decided to join – a decision we have never regretted.

What do you like most about 21-5?

We love the concept of not having to think about all the practicalities and repairs that come with owning a property. When we are on holiday, we are on holiday! For a large family,



it's perfect to be able to choose between a skiing holiday, a city break, or simply relaxing in a warmer location. On top of that, we get to treat our family to great holidays. We often lend our homes to family members - we have enough weeks for everyone.

**What about planning your holidays?
Can you travel when you want to?**

We enjoy planning our holidays well in advance, but we also travel at short notice. If we want to book specific weeks during the school holidays, it's best to plan ahead, but we almost always get the weeks we want.

What has been your experience with the 21-5 team?

Without them, it simply would not work. They are always engaged and quick to respond. They have

a remarkable eye for design and combine this with very practical solutions. Put simply, our homes are great, and even after 12 years, they are still in very good condition. We recently updated our Paris apartment with a new kitchen and an extra bathroom.

Has 21-5 been a good investment for you?

We never joined 21-5 for the money; for us, it was about improving our quality of life. Joining 21-5 has certainly done that. The freedom we feel when we return to our beautiful five homes is a great privilege, and, as mentioned earlier, our homes also allow us to travel with grandparents, siblings and friends. On top of that, 21-5 has also proven to be a very good financial investment - our share has more than doubled since we joined!

FACTS ABOUT 21-5

- Since 2012, over 1,400 families have joined 21-5
- Over 300 homes have been purchased for our families
- Over €540 million has been invested through 21-5
- 21-5 is the world's leading model for families sharing homes in small groups
- The average resale profit is 50%



For more information:

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The SELECTION

Holland Herald presents a global selection of things to see, do, taste, meet & wish for.



Amsterdam

ERWIN OLAF'S LEGACY

Known for his perfectly staged photographs that combine seemingly flawless beauty with a sense of unease, the late Dutch photographer Erwin Olaf was one of the country's leading and pioneering visual artists. Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum honours Olaf's broad and diverse body of work with the exhibition *Erwin Olaf: Freedom*, celebrating his undeniable legacy. Until 1 Mar; stedelijk.nl

TO *see*

Q&A I+Y Interiors

INTERIOR DESIGN TRENDS

DUTCH I+Y INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE SHARES INSIGHTS ON HOW TO MAKE YOUR HOUSE A HOME.



How can you give your home a personal touch? The most beautiful expressions of your personality are art and colour. In terms of trends, we notice that more and more colour and decorative patterns are reappearing in interiors. There's also a growing trend towards contrasts, rough versus high gloss, colour versus neutral, and metal versus stone or earthenware.

What's important when designing? We believe the design of a home starts with how you live, questioning how you start the day or where you relax. If you enjoy an active environment, it makes sense to place the kitchen on the street side. A natural flow with clean sightlines is essential, and make sure to include plenty of storage space to create a sense of calm and allow personal objects to stand out.

Any design inspiration tips?

Get offline, visit new cities and museums, and be inspired. Search Google maps for interior design spots and galleries, and be surprised by what you find.

iplusy.nl



Madrid

A TALE OF TWO MASTERS

Spanish painter Pablo Picasso and Swiss-German painter Paul Klee were contemporaries and although they only met on a few occasions, they were admirers of each other's work. The Thyssen-Bornemisza National Museum in Madrid presents a selection of fifty masterpieces by the painters that were part of a private collection, and examines the similarities and differences between the two. Until 1 Feb; museothyssen.org



Leiden

MYSTERIES OF ANCIENT EGYPT

The mysteries of Ancient Egypt will forever fascinate, and the exhibition *Discovering Ancient Egypt* at the RMO in the Dutch city of Leiden dives into the many magnificent objects and stories from the ancient civilisation.

Until 15 Mar; rmo.nl

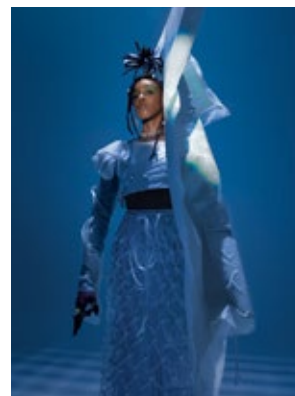
Amsterdam

Into the blue

From its colours and culture to its shapes and residues: the sea is a major inspiration in the world of fashion.

Amsterdam's National Maritime Museum celebrates this with the exhibition *Oceanista – Fashion & Sea*.

Until 15 Apr; hetscheepvaartmuseum.nl



The Ancient Egyptians worshipped more than **2,000 deities**

London

WES ANDERSON'S WONDERLAND

If you've ever seen a film by American director Wes Anderson, such as *The Grand Budapest Hotel* or *Isle of Dogs*, you know that every frame is like a small work of art. One can only imagine how the props for his incredibly detailed and unique sets are collected. The Design Museum in London is now offering some insight into Anderson's world of wonder with the exhibition *Wes Anderson: The Archives*, showcasing more than 600 objects from his personal and film archives.

Until 26 Jul; designmuseum.org



Oysters and arches

A timeless institution



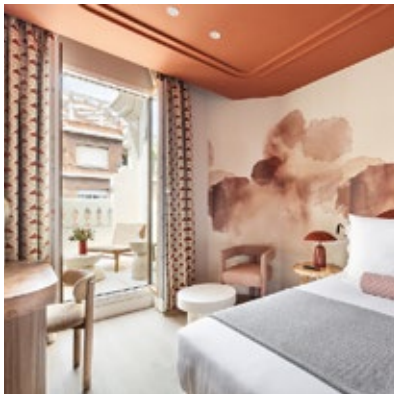
Originating as a small fishmonger in the Dutch province of Noord-Brabant, we are proud to have grown into a highly acclaimed seafood restaurant, with locations in Amsterdam, Utrecht and London. Known for our dedication to quality, craftsmanship and hard work, we welcome more than 500,000 visitors to our restaurants each year. Our commitment has been recognised by The Guardian and the Financial Times, and reflected in our 4.8-star rating on Google.

TO do

Valencia

BOUTIQUE DREAMS

Named the European Green Capital in 2024, the Spanish city of Valencia perfectly blends culture, nature, history and gastronomy. Boutique hotel One Shot Puerta Ruzafa is located on the central and vibrant Calle Colón. With a focus on natural materials, soft textures and organic shapes, each floor of this stylish hotel is inspired by a fundamental stage of the natural cycle. The rooms all feature calming colours and a unique design. oneshot-hotels.com



Optical illusions use **colour, lights and patterns** to trick and mislead the human brain



New York City

STEP INSIDE AN OPTICAL ILLUSION

From mind-bending illusion rooms to deceiving interactive installations: New York City's Museum of Illusions will challenge, trick and puzzle you in the funnest way. The museum is accessible for all ages and can also host groups or corporate events. Not in NYC anytime soon? Not to worry, as Museum of Illusions is a global network, with more than 60 locations in 28 countries around the world. museumofillusions.com

Amsterdam

BRIGHT LIGHTS, WATERY CITY

THE AMSTERDAM LIGHT FESTIVAL ONCE AGAIN LIGHTS UP THE DUTCH CAPITAL THIS WINTER WITH BRIGHT INSTALLATIONS.



Each year in December and January, the city of Amsterdam invites international interactive and light artists to create unique installations on and around the city's waterways. The theme of this year's edition (the festival's 14th) is 'Legacy', exploring the theme in a societal, historical and personal context. What do we want to leave behind for the next generation? Which stories do we pass on and how do we want to be remembered? Visitors can explore the festival by foot or bike (with the help of the dedicated app) or on the water via a boat tour.

Until 18 Jan; amsterdamlightfestival.com

TO meet

Wristwatches were first created as **decorative pieces for women**, while men traditionally used pocket watches

Q&A Wybe van der Gang

TIMELESS DESIGN

WITH HIS LUXURY WATCH BRAND VAN DER GANG WATCHES, FOUNDER WYBE VAN DER GANG AIMS TO CREATE THE PERFECT WRISTWATCH. HIS LOVE FOR WATCHES BORDERS ON OBSESSION, HE ADMITS.

How and why did you start making wristwatches? As a child, I already had a fascination for mechanics and repairing things. My grandfather ran a mattress factory and my father had a motor scooter factory, so becoming an entrepreneur was something that ran in the family. While I was studying at the Leiden Instrument Makers School, I started my first business repairing Italian mopeds in a little workshop in the centre of the city. When I moved back to my hometown Dokkum in Friesland in 1990, I decided to focus on precision mechanics with my business Exakt Fijnmechanika. The company grew very fast and before I knew it, my team and I were producing precision mechanics for big companies in the medical industry, the military and astronautics. Think of night vision equipment for the military or tiny cannulas used by surgeons during eye surgery. In 2002, I decided to make my first wristwatch for two reasons. Firstly, I wanted to challenge myself and make something beautiful for myself to wear, and secondly, I felt there was a niche market for wristwatches made from a precision mechanics expertise instead of a marketing or jewellery perspective.

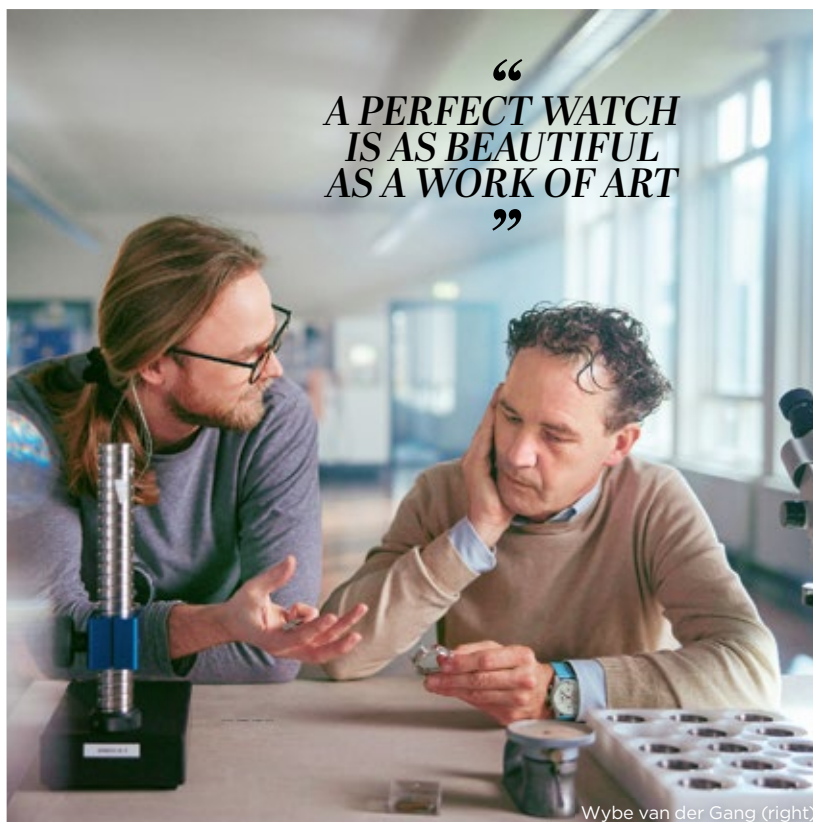
What sets Van der Gang Watches apart? Our incredible attention to detail, use of the highest-quality materials, and super-specialised manufacturing techniques. Where most watch brands are focused on maximal production, we prefer to use machines and techniques that only allow us to produce about 170 watches a year. We're not interested

in making flashy watches; a Van der Gang watch is understated elegance. I have an obsessive desire to make a perfect product and can have an emotional response when a watch is finalised. To me, a perfect watch is as beautiful as a work of art in a museum.

Are you working on anything new? We're launching Sportiv, our first sportive and highly water-resistant watch. It's made of white ceramics, and is something I came up with when I was on holiday by the sea with my family. I often get ideas when I travel, but

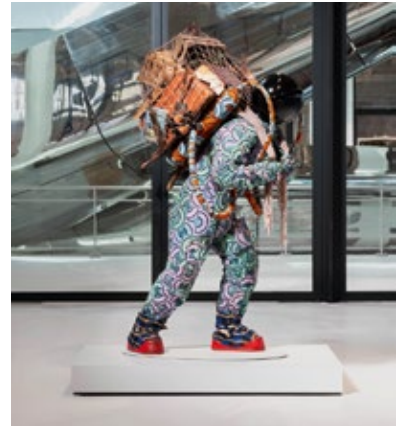
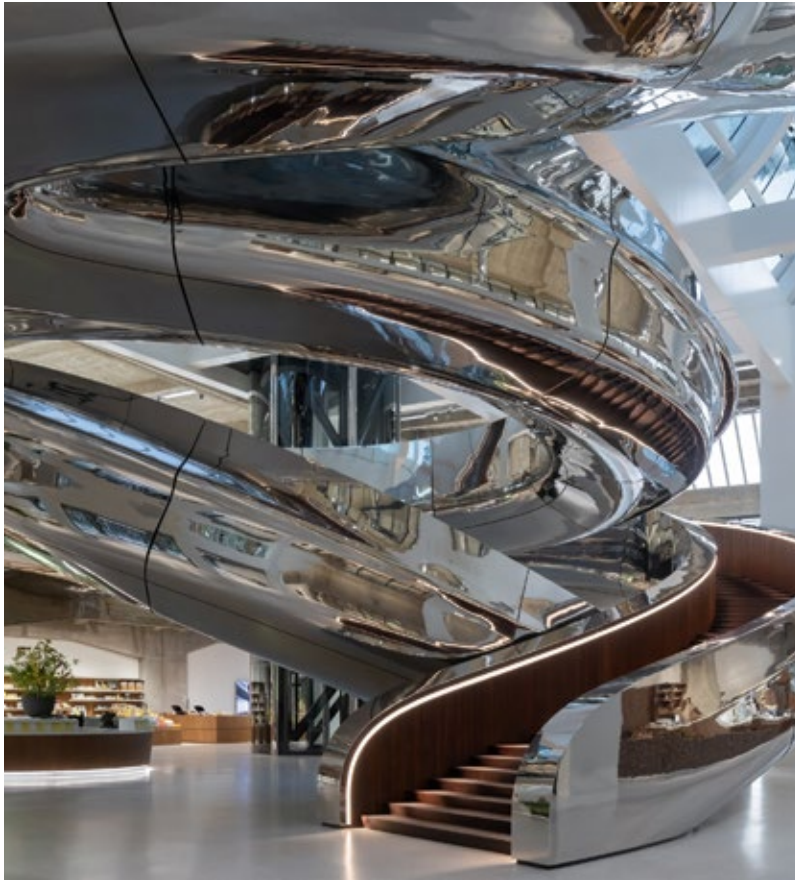
inspiration also comes from reading industry magazines and staying up to date on all the latest technology. Or when I'm walking my dog, whose curiosity and intuitive way of exploring the world always moves me.

Who's your dream co-passenger for a long flight? This is a personal one for me, but it would have to be my twin sister, who passed away at the age of 37. The twin bond is something that's hard to explain unless you have one. I would just like to catch up and hear where her journey took her. vandergangwatches.nl



“
A PERFECT WATCH
IS AS BEAUTIFUL
AS A WORK OF ART
”

Wybe van der Gang (right)



Always on the move

THE NEW ART MUSEUM ABOUT MIGRATION

From the quays around the Fenix warehouse in Rotterdam, millions of emigrants once departed by steamship to the other side of the world, in search of a better life. Many also arrived here from places such as China and Cape Verde. At this place of departure and arrival, in what was once the largest warehouse in the world, Fenix now tells stories about migration.

From all directions

In the exhibition *Alle Richtingen* ('All Directions'), you can view migration through the eyes of more than a hundred artists worldwide. The collection ranges from video

projections to installations and from paintings to sculptures and historical objects. You can take a seat in a fabric New York City bus created by artist Red Grooms, view a 3.6m-high fragment of the Berlin Wall and discover a tiny portrait of Desiderius Erasmus, painted by Hans Holbein the Younger in the early 16th century. Together, the works depict countless migration stories from the past and present.

The world in one warehouse

You will also encounter these migration stories in other places. Such as in *The Suitcase Labyrinth*: an installation of thousands of

suitcases where you can listen to the stories of the suitcase owners. Or the exhibition *The Family of Migrants*, a collection of almost 200 photographs proving that people have always been on the move. In the heart of the building, the largest artwork, *Tornado*, takes centre stage as a double, twisted staircase that rises above the museum. Stories of migration truly come to life at Fenix in Rotterdam.

Plan your visit

Address: Paul Nijghkade 5,
3072 AN Rotterdam
Schiphol Airport to Rotterdam:
26 minutes by train
Tickets at the museum or online:
tickets.fenix.nl/en/tickets

HEUVELLUCCI

ROTTERDAM



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For your next trip to the holiday resort, be sure to take the **SAFARI** or **FLAMINGO** Silk Kaftan with you. Designed to be worn open as a cape or tied at the waist with the belt as a kimono. It offers a luxurious addition to your destination wardrobe. Wear it over your favorite swimwear or over a Heuvelucci nightgown. Feel luxurious every day. Made from pure Italian silk.

Available online and in the boutiques in the hotels Grande Roche, Paarl, South Africa and Shanti-Som, Marbella, Spain.

HEUVELLUCCI.COM



TO *wish for*

Beauty

WORK OF MERIT

Overwhelmed by all the promises and complex products on offer in the beauty industry, American Katherine Power decided to start her own brand, Merit Beauty, in 2021. With a focus on simplified, well-designed products, all vegan and free of harmful ingredients, Merit's philosophy is to make a polished yet natural makeup-look easy to achieve. meritbeauty.com



The word 'denim' comes from **Serge de Nîmes**, the twill fabric first woven in Nîmes, France



Wahts

ANY-WEATHER ESSENTIALS

Dutch brand Wahts fuses luxury menswear and contemporary sportswear with a collection of high-end essentials suitable to be worn year-round and for every occasion. Using its own technical fabrics and natural materials, such as extra-fine merino wool and super-soft premium cotton, Wahts aims to make garments that you won't want to take off. wahts.com



Cybex

STROLL OUT IN STYLE

MORE THAN ESSENTIALLY PRACTICAL, PUSHCHAIRS CAN ALSO BE A FASHION ACCESSORY, AS THE BRAND CYBEX SHOWS.

The history of the pushchair goes all the way back to 1733, when English architect William Kent designed a shell-shaped carriage to be pulled by a pony or goat for the Duke of Devonshire's children. Nowadays, pushchairs are as much a fashion

accessory as they are a practical way to carry your little ones around. Known for creating award-winning pushchairs, car seats and other baby accessories, German brand Cybex now has a line made of denim, called Rebellious Luxury. cybex-online.com



Kobo

E-reading in colour

Made of recycled and ocean-bound plastic, and Kobo's first e-reader in colour, the new Clara Colour is your sustainable and lightweight reading companion. You can also highlight sections in different hues. kobo.com

Column

Freek Vonk

SHARKS HAVE AN ELECTRIFYING SIXTH SENSE

FREEK, A DUTCH BIOLOGIST WHO STUDIES AND FILMS UNIQUE ANIMALS WORLDWIDE TO INSPIRE A LOVE FOR NATURE, TALKS ABOUT A SHARK'S HIDDEN SENSE.

“The little shark glides right past my mask”



Lying on my stomach, I glide through the crystal-clear waters of a Bahamian mangrove. Below me stretches a bed of fine white sand, sprinkled with silt and tiny shells. From it rise the slender aerial roots of the mangrove trees, reaching upward like crooked fingers clawing at the sky. Between those roots, the water comes alive: crabs scurry into their burrows, shrimps toil busily in the sand, and small fish streak past me in quick, silver flashes.

Then it happens. A little further on, a tiny, grey dorsal fin appears and silently slices through the almost glassy surface. And it's heading straight towards me – a lemon shark pup, only a few months old. A baby!

For sharks this young, mangrove forests are vital. Adult females seek out these extremely shallow waters (so shallow they sometimes nearly strand themselves) to give birth, all to give their pups the best chance of survival. At high tide, the roots vanish beneath the water, turning into a maze of hiding places where the pups can slip away from larger predators. At the same time, the mangroves overflow with food, a lavish banquet for hungry young sharks. These nurseries-cum-dining halls sustain the pups until they are strong enough to face the open sea.

The little shark glides right past my mask. I take in its tiny streamlined, torpedo-shaped body, the two pointed dorsal fins, the catlike eyes, the narrow snout. A soft yellowish glow

across its skin reveals why it's called a lemon shark. When the curious pup circles back and slips past my face again, a thought grips me: what would it be like to experience the world as a shark? For them, there is a whole other dimension, hidden from us. In addition to seeing, hearing, smelling, feeling and tasting, sharks possess a sixth sense: the ampullae of Lorenzini, tiny pores around their snout that allow them to detect electric fields. Without electricity, there is no life: every cell in every living organism carries an electrical charge. Every heartbeat is sparked by an electrical signal, every muscle movement begins with one. Sharks have the incredible ability to detect even the faintest of these currents. A fish lying motionless beneath the sand may believe it's invisible and safe, but to a shark it glimmers like a star in the night.

And that's where the magic lies. Sharks remind us that entire worlds exist, forever hidden from our limited senses. While we cling to what we can see, smell and hear, sharks spend their lives gliding through a universe of electric waves. For me, it's a lesson in humility. We humans like to think our perception of the world is complete, but that is an illusion. No matter how clever or technologically advanced we become, vast parts of reality will always escape us, yet are vividly experienced by other creatures. Perhaps the deepest lesson nature has to offer is her reminder of how small and narrow our perception really is.

EAT *out*



Rickenbach
Switzerland



RAW, ROUGH AND REGIONAL

If you're looking for proof that age doesn't equate to wisdom, look no further than Magdalena in Rickenbach. The restaurant may well be run by a young team, but they have a clear direction and vision in mind. The cornerstone of their cuisine is 'raw, rough and regional', and is clearly evident in their upscale vegetable-based dishes, the beauty of which almost overshadows their unpretentiousness. This radish pickled in beer with lamb's lettuce, cream made of egg and a buttermilk horseradish sauce is just one, perfectly mouthwatering, example.

restaurant-magdalena.ch

My

BALI

BALINESE-AUSTRALIAN SOPHIA LA GREW UP IN BALI, AND AFTER STUDYING AND WORKING IN SYDNEY AND LONDON, SHE RETURNED TO THE ISLAND WHERE SHE NOW LIVES WITH HER FAMILY AND RUNS HER CHILDREN'S CLOTHING BRAND, INDIGO KIDS. @INDIGO_KIDS



What do you love about Bali?

I love my island for its deep-rooted culture, community spirit and beautiful daily rituals. Every morning, the Balinese place offerings of rice, flowers and incense at sacred locations across the island as a form of devotion. Living in Bali encourages us to slow down, reflect and truly connect: with our surroundings, with others and with ourselves.

Best parts of the island?

Candi Dasa and the area around it is a hidden gem on the east coast and a great place to unwind. It offers timeless, tranquil seaside villages and lots of nature and heritage attractions. You'll find incredible snorkelling and diving sites here, the iconic Lotus Lagoon, historic water palaces such as Tirta Gangga and Taman Ujung, and Tenganan Village which showcases Balinese cultural traditions. With its high-end dining scene, great shopping, surfing and wellness spa

options, Pererenan is a more relaxed yet sophisticated alternative to busy Canggu. Sanur is a great option for families, and Munduk is a haven of waterfalls, hiking paths and misty hills. Lastly, as the island's cultural hub, Ubud is the place to go for culture, yoga, jungle river experiences, galleries and craftsmanship.

How do we respect the local culture?

The local vibe is warm, tolerant and welcoming. We encourage visitors to respect local customs, and to observe etiquette at temples and sacred sites.

What are the must-sees/dos?

For cultural experiences, I recommend booking a cooking class and market tour at Bali Asli (East Coast), browsing local crafts at the Art Market ❶ and attending a dance performance at the Ubud Royal Palace (Ubud). For sports- and nature lovers, I suggest snorkelling with

manta rays around Nusa Lembongan island ❷, surfing on Seminyak or Uluwatu beaches ❸, trekking the rice fields of Sidemen ❹, or doing a sunrise climb up Mount Batur volcano.

Where should we eat?

The intimate Fed by Made (Seminyak) offers elevated modern bistro cuisine that showcases local produce and flavours. For a truly local experience, Warung Melati (Legian) is a local lunchtime gem for home-style Indonesian dishes. And Locavore NXT ❺ (Ubud) focuses on local, often foraged, ingredients in its 20-course tasting menu.

Any shopping tips?

Tulola Jewellery (Ubud) uses Balinese techniques to create refined contemporary pieces inspired by Indonesian music, literature and heritage. Threads of Life (Ubud) sells original handwoven textiles and crafts to support indigenous peoples. And Jenggala (Kuta) has incredible

handcrafted tableware and home decor.

Favourite places to stay?

For beachfront nostalgia, Tandjung Sari (Sanur) is a boutique hotel with lots of charm. Surrounded by jungle and rice fields, Soulshine ❻ (Ubud) balances wellness, music and design beautifully, and offers farm-to-table dishes. And The Menjangan, located within the West Bali National Park, is a great off-the-radar resort for nature lovers longing to combine jungle wilderness with snorkelling and diving.

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Surfers at Uluwatu beach ③



Nusa Lembongan ②



*Bali life encourages us
to slow down, reflect
and truly connect*

Sidemen ④



Soulshine ⑥



Locavore NXT ⑤



Art Market ①



Femke Bol

GOLDEN GIRL

Known and praised for her positive mindset, athletic versatility and incredible finishing speed, Dutch track and field athlete Femke Bol (25) is on a winning streak. We meet the Olympic champion at the iconic London Stadium.

Text Marieke Verhoeven Photography Dennis Branko



Rain has been lashing over London Stadium in the city's eastern district of Stratford all day, and the track is slippery wet for the women's 400m hurdles at the London Diamond League 2025. Yet, starting in lane six – her favourite position – with American Jasmine Jones on one side and Jamaica's Andrenette Knight on the other, Femke Bol doesn't seem fazed by the less-than-perfect conditions, nor by her fierce competition. After flashing her big smile and blowing her signature kisses to the cameras, Bol quickly puts on her game face and prepares for the start. She then jumps over each hurdle with extreme focus, elegance and deceptively effortless ease, finishing first at 52.10 seconds and leaving her competition more than one second behind. It's Bol's 28th consecutive win at the Diamond League, which is considered the Champions League of athletics and takes place every year in main cities around the world.

Body as an instrument

We meet the four-time Olympic medallist the next morning at the same location, where the surface of the gigantic, multi-purpose stadium is being covered by turf trays and converted into a grass pitch to prepare for a match of its football club, West Ham United. The 1.84m-tall, long-legged Bol has the same sweet and humble demeanour she displays when she's being interviewed before or after one of her races. Despite being tired from the physical exertion and a late-night dinner with her parents, who try to be present for as many of her races as possible, Bol is in good spirits. Though she informs us politely but firmly that her body now needs rest, so she won't do any sprints for the camera, must keep her body consistently warm and needs to eat at a specific hour. "It's a bit of a hassle at times," she says. "But I'm used to it. My body is my instrument; I must protect it and care for it as well as I can." Although Bol is happy with yesterday's victory, she's not 100% content with her performance. "I'm obviously pleased that I won, but I feel like I could have done better," she explains with a shy smile. "The previous race in Monaco went a little more smoothly and consistently. But my parents always remind me to celebrate every win and never take it for granted. Plus, I love this stadium and the British supporters; athletics is huge here and I always feel a lot of love from the crowd."

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I MYSELF
KNOW HOW
SPORTS CAN HELP
BOOST YOUR
SELF-CONFIDENCE
”

Over the past few years, Bol has established herself as one of the most dominant athletes in the international track and field world. Since 2022, she has secured multiple European and World Championship gold medals in the 400m, the 400m hurdles and relays, setting championship records along the way. She has broken the world indoor 400m record twice, most recently in 2024, and has continued to dominate the Diamond League circuit with consistently fast times throughout 2025. After winning a bronze medal at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics held in 2021, she won three more medals at the Paris 2024 Olympics, including gold in the 4x400m mixed relay. A few months after this interview, Bol retained her world title in the 400m hurdles at the 2025 World Athletics Championships in Tokyo with a world-leading time of 51.54 seconds.

All this aside, Bol recently decided to close the book on the 400m hurdles and open a new chapter in her athletics career: the 800m. "The 400m hurdles has given me unforgettable memories and shaped me into the athlete I am today," she says. "But I'm driven by the need to push my boundaries. The 800m is a completely new challenge – one that excites me as it will require fresh strengths, strategies and resilience. My ambition is not just to compete but also to reach, and be successful at, the highest level."

Bol's versatility, consistency and incredible finishing speed have made her a standout force in »





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I LOVE TO
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AND REFLECT
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global athletics. In 2023, after her double gold at the World Athletics Championships 400m hurdles and 4x400m women's relay in Budapest, Jamaican athlete Usain Bolt even sent her a text message to congratulate her. "That was pretty cool," Bol reflects. "He also sent me a video message to congratulate me when I won Dutch Athlete of the Year. It's really special getting recognition from such a legendary icon."

Shooting star

Bol is becoming somewhat of an icon in her own right, being on a winning streak since she first stepped on the international athletics stage in 2019. Growing up in the Dutch city of Amersfoort with her parents and older brother, she initially joined a local athletics club at the age of eight. "I was an active child and had already tried different sports, but hadn't really found something that I loved," she says. "When you first join an athletics club as a junior, you try out all the different disciplines. But when I was 15, my coach noticed that I was a good runner and encouraged me to try the 400m. I fell in love with it and wanted to train every day."

Her talent and drive didn't go unnoticed and just one year later, Bol was already competing in the European Youth Championship. After she added the 400m hurdles and relays to her skills, Bol's star started to rise even faster. At the age of 19, she reached the semi-finals in the 400m hurdles of the World Championships in Doha. "What I like about hurdles is the fact that it's very technical; you can exactly measure out your steps between each hurdle and calculate the best running speed. It's as much a mind game as it is a physical performance. And the relay always appealed to me because of the team element."

Even though Bol enjoyed school and spent two years at university, she decided to quit after the Tokyo Olympics and focus on sports full-time. "When I enjoy something, I want to do it all the time and become the best at it – I'm a perfectionist," she says. "And it proved too hard for me – in a good way – to be the best at both my studies and my athletics."

Visualising the race

Bol's ability to accelerate in the last stretches of a race is something that keeps fans and sports press alike on the edge of their seats. "Femke Bol turns on

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**I'M NOT
SATISFIED
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the jets!" commentators of American news network NBC exclaimed during the dramatic finale of the 4x400m mixed relay at the Paris 2024 Olympics, where Bol left her competition behind in the final metres of the race. There's no real secret to this ability, Bol says, but what certainly helps her is writing down a race plan before each one, from the focus points for each hurdle to the curves on the specific tracks, so she can visualise the whole race. Together with her sports psychologist, Bol has developed an additional visualisation technique that she uses before a big competition. "It's almost like a meditation-style visualisation," she explains. "We go through the entire day, from the moment I wake up and what I eat for breakfast to every detail of the actual race. This helps me to not get distracted when something unexpected happens. For example, if my competition sprints off faster than I expected, I can stay focused on my own race and balance my energy. That way, there's enough left in the tank for the final metres."

Bol thinks her perfectionism is one of the driving forces of her success, but is also something that she struggles with at times. "I'm the type of athlete who wants to give 110% during every training too; I'm not satisfied until every muscle in my body aches. Sometimes, it can get a little excessive." Bol's psychologist also helps her to deal with this perfectionistic nature. "I used to get quite upset »



when my pick-up was late or the wind had turned from tail to head wind. But I'm getting better at letting go of things that are out of my control. Now, I also use my notebook to write down things that went well and that I'm grateful for. I love to write; it's a great way for me to release and reflect."

Giving back

Bol has launched a series of fictional children's books titled *Go Femke!* in which a young girl discovers her talent for running during a summer camp and goes on different adventures with her friends. "These books are not only meant to inspire kids to do sports, but also to encourage them to find their own passion and be proud of themselves despite the difficulties they might encounter. As athletes, we have a big platform, and I think it's important to explain that life isn't always easy and we struggle sometimes too."

Another way in which Bol tries to give back is as an ambassador of the non-profit organisation Free a Girl, which focuses on freeing children from sexual exploitation. "I was raised in a safe and encouraging home, and unfortunately that's not the case for many children around the world. Every child deserves to grow up in a secure and loving environment."

Golden era

Bol also believes that every child deserves to experience the joy of sports. "I myself know how sports can help expand your horizons, boost your self-confidence and build your social skills. I've made some beautiful memories and great friends along the way." One of these friends, Belgian pole-vaulting athlete Ben Broeders, became her boyfriend and is now her fiancé. The fact that they both perform at the highest level in sports really helps them understand each other, Bol says. "It's nice to analyse competitions together, but we're also great at relaxing together."

When asked how she would describe this chapter of her life, Bol doesn't need much time to respond. "I don't want to jinx it, but I feel like I'm in my golden era. I've won all the titles I've dreamt of, I'm engaged to the love of my life, my parents are happy and healthy, and I have a group of wonderful friends around me. And all this at the age of 25. I kind of hope this chapter of my life will never end." «

London
UK



Femke's Favourites

London

I've always had a soft spot for England and London in particular. Whenever I have some time to spare during a visit to London, I love to stroll through Notting Hill, or shop at Camden Market and around Oxford Circus – it's the most hectic part of the city, but is also the ultimate metropolitan experience.

Rituals

I'm not very superstitious, but I do have some rituals for every big competition. I always tie my hair in two braids to the back, wear the same pair of earrings and use two gold-coloured pins to attach my race pinnie. These are simple ways for me to maintain consistency and feel like myself.

Allison Felix

The (now retired) American athlete Allison Felix is the most decorated track and field athlete in history, and has been such an inspiration for women in sports and also for me personally. She really uses her platform to

motivate and inspire others. I would love to meet her.

Islands

I'm fairly easy when it comes to holiday destinations, as long as it's by the sea. That's why I love visiting islands. Sicily and Sardinia are two of my recent favourites, also because of the delicious local cuisine. I love being in the water. Or simply lying on the beach, reading or staring at the waves coming in. It's the ultimate relaxation for me.

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ATHENS *by day*

Greece



AGES-OLD HISTORY, A THRIVING ARTS AND CULTURE SCENE AND PRISTINE BEACHES CLOSE TO THE CITY CENTRE: ATHENS HAS EVERYTHING TO OFFER FOR AN UNFORGETTABLE CITY TRIP.



Plaka ❶



Hyper Hypo ❸



Asterisque ❹



Street art in Psyrri ❷

Old and new

Walking through Athens is a little like flipping through the pages of a history book. One moment you're standing in front of the iconic Parthenon temple, atop the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Acropolis, the next you could be admiring ancient treasures at the National Archaeological Museum (28is Oktovriou 44). But in Athens, history goes hand in hand with modernity, thanks to a flourishing arts and culture scene, colourful street art and a young, hip vibe. In some circles, Athens has even been promoted as 'the new Berlin' and a paradise for solo travellers and digital nomads.

Where to go

While Athens has numerous neighbourhoods, certain areas are particularly

popular. Plaka ❶ is the postcard-perfect historic area with cobblestones, neoclassical architecture and scenic squares. For a taste of genuine Athenian life, head to the residential Koukaki. Psyrri ❷ has an edgy vibe with its street art and trendy bars. And centrally located Monastiraki is famous for its flea markets and historic sites such as the Tzistarakis Mosque (Areos 1) and Hadrian's Library (K, Areos 3).

Fuel stops

There's an abundance of cafés and bakeries, both traditional and contemporary, all over the city. The cool Williaww (Kerkiras 69) serves tasty treats, including *babka* (a sweet, braided bread); Asterisque ❹ (Charvouri 2) is a gluten-free bakery, known for its pastries, bread and

sleek interior; and Bel Ray Bar (Falirou 88) is a popular spot housed in a repurposed former car wash. Meanwhile, the coffee menu at Foyer Espresso Bar (Vriaxidos 2) won't disappoint as it's been designed by an award-winning team of baristas. Their frappé (Greek ice coffee) is arguably the best in town.

Indie stores galore

Athens is teeming with independent shops run by creative Athenians. At It's a Shirt (Asklipiou 67), you'll find high-quality, handmade unisex shirts, often cut from dead stock fabrics, that you'll want to add to your wardrobe at once. Ere (Erechthiou 30) is a stylish and aesthetically pleasing concept store and, if you're into art and design, it's hard to walk out of Hyper Hypo ❸ (Voreou 10) bookshop

In Athens, history goes hand in hand with modernity

empty-handed as their (photo) books and magazines focusing on contemporary visual culture are irresistible.

Beach getaway

Leave the bustle of the city by heading to one of the beaches along what's known as the Athens Riviera. Edem Beach is close and easy to reach from central Syntagma Square; Astir Beach in Vouliagmeni is the ultimate beach club experience; and the rocky Limanakia offers an adventurous coastal escape.

ATHENS *by night*

FROM ROOFTOP BARS OVERLOOKING THE ILLUMINATED ACROPOLIS TO INNOVATIVE RESTAURANTS REDEFINING GREEK CUISINE: AT NIGHT, THE ANCIENT STREETS OF ATHENS BUZZ WITH MODERN ENERGY.

Athens city view



Isandsia ⑥



Pharaoh ⑥



The Stanley ⑦

Dinner time

The food scene in Athens is thriving, thanks to a younger generation of Greek chefs opening exciting restaurants. Housed in a former candle-making workshop, Isandsia ⑥ (Melanthiou 2) serves Greek and Mediterranean cuisine with an emphasis on organic ingredients; visit Seychelles (Kerameikou 49) for local dishes with a modern twist, plenty of veggie options and a great wine list; and no-frills restaurant Atlantikos (Avlition 7) offers excellent, fresh seafood that won't break the bank.

Cocktail hour

Athens has a lively after-hours scene with plenty of rooftop bars, casual pubs and clubs. If you like to mix your drinks with fine tunes spun by top DJs, take a seat at

Pharaoh ⑥ (Solomou 54). Known for its natural wine collection, it boasts more than 400 labels to choose from, so you'll be spoilt for choice. Rooftop cocktail bar A for Athens (Miaouli 2-4) might not be the most affordable place for a late-night drink, but the stunning view of the Acropolis and Monastiraki square is definitely worth it.

Live entertainment

It's fair to say that Athens has a vibrant live music scene, and there are many places where you can experience traditional Greek bouzouki performances, for example at authentic taverna Klimataria (Pl. Theatrou 2) or, for a more modern approach, concert hall and live music venue Kentro Athinon (Pireos 142). Housed in a former industrial

warehouse, cultural hub Gazarte (Voutadon 34) hosts musical performances by all kinds of artists, both local and international. And highly acclaimed by jazz-loving Athenians for decades, the cosy Half Note Jazz Club (Trivonianou 17) is a great spot for lovers of jazz, blues and soul.

Where to rest your head

Close to Syntagma Square, Electra Metropolis Hotel (Mitropoleos 15) offers a five-star experience with personalised concierge services, modern amenities, and a rooftop bar and infinity pool, as well as energy-efficient practices and recycling programmes. Also known for its eco-friendly practices is The Stanley ⑦ (Odiseos 1), a historic 374-room property that

boasts the largest hotel rooftop terrace in town, with spectacular views of the Acropolis and Lycabettus Hill. For a more intimate experience, the Herodion Hotel (Rovertou Galli 4) is a family-run boutique hotel with a prime location in the historic centre and can organise a tailor-made guided tour through the city for you upon request.

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HAIPAI IN SHANGHAI

Historic culture, peaceful teahouses and shaded gardens nestle beside elegant boulevards and futuristic skyscrapers. Iris van den Broek reveals the magnetic charm of Shanghai.

Text and photography Iris van den Broek



Shanghai
China

At 74km/h, I shoot up in one of the world's fastest lifts and feel my ears pop. When I reach the 118th floor, I step out. I'm in the Shanghai Tower, which, at 632m, is one of the tallest buildings on the planet. Below me stretches a sea of lights and a futuristic skyline, leaving the impression that this is a city years ahead of the rest of the world. But there's another side too, one of century-old teahouses and serene gardens. Strolling the streets of this dynamic metropolis, you can still sense echoes of the 1920s and '30s, Shanghai's Golden Age, when the city became a vibrant blend of East and West, earning it its nickname, 'Paris of the East'. This mix of modern and traditional is called *Haipai*, literally 'Shanghai style', a cultural identity born in the late 19th century, when, thanks to its position as a global trade hub, the city became a crossroads of Chinese tradition and Western influence. Once criticised as flashy and too commercial, *Haipai* today proudly represents Shanghai's unique character, and is exactly why it remains one of my favourite cities in Asia.

Green city

The next morning, with my feet firmly on the ground, I venture into the buzzing metropolis. This is my third time in Shanghai, but what strikes me immediately is how clean and green the city has become since my last visit almost 10 years ago. Every motorbike is electric, and at times it even seems like all the cars are. As a result, the traffic is surprisingly silent. What's more, the pavements are filled with bikes from bike-sharing schemes that the locals use intensively. But the 'green' is not only evident in Shanghai's sustainable character; it's also visible in every corner of the city – from the parks and immaculate landscape designs to the exteriors of buildings, such as The Roof, a bright-red Instagram sensation designed by architect Jean Nouvel, that has taken vertical gardens and living façades to the next level. Walking along the streets, I also encounter motorway pillars and classic buildings wrapped

in ivy in an almost apocalyptic way. Shanghai is letting nature take over, and it sure looks good.

I make my way to Tianzifang, an excellent example of how *Haipai* culture exists in the city. This residential area was built in the 1930s and consists of traditional *shikumen* ('stone-gate') houses – a hybrid of Western townhouses and Chinese courtyards. Nothing would give Tianzifang away from the outside but behind the simple façades, I dive into a maze of alleys, filled with shops, teahouses and art galleries. The beauty of this hidden world is that people still live here. I peek into side streets where laundry hangs from the balconies and old ladies sweep their doorsteps. The contrast with the hipster matcha latte cafés and cute boutique shops right around the corner is like nothing I've ever seen anywhere else. I sit down with a perfect white jasmine tea and watch the people go by, caught up in their daily business.

Food, glorious food

After I finish my tea, I continue to the charming Former French Concession (FFC), Shanghai's prettiest neighbourhood, with lush trees, classic streetlights and European architecture. Behind elegant wrought-iron gates, stately mansions stand proudly amid decades-old plane trees and tropical palm trees. I meet up with Li, a guide with UnTour Food Tours, which organises culinary tours of the city, and he greets me with, "I hope you came hungry."

Haipai is also very evident in Shanghai's food culture, which is a tasty fusion of traditional Chinese fare and Western influences. Li takes me through Xiangyang Park, where people are dancing and water calligraphers show off their skills; it's the weekend and locals flock here en masse. Our first stop is to sample a traditional Shanghai breakfast dish: *youtiao*, Chinese fried dough sticks served with sweetened soy milk. To counterbalance the sweetness, I also have *cifantuan* – balls of sticky rice stuffed with pork and pickled vegetables. After that, we're off to the next stop for a *jianbing*. Inspired by the French crêpe, this is China's most popular »

Previous pages

The Former French Concession (left); a pocket of green with the Shanghai Tower in the background (right)

Right page, top (from left to right)

Jing'an Temple in Shanghai's city centre; a beautiful door in Xintiandi; a water calligrapher in Xiangyang Park
Bottom The Former French Concession



**HAIPAI TODAY PROUDLY REPRESENTS
SHANGHAI'S UNIQUE CHARACTER**



SHANGHAI IS LETTING
NATURE TAKE OVER,
AND IT SURE LOOKS GOOD





Above The Roof, a bright-red 'living' building designed by architect Jean Nouvel
Left page The ancient water town of Zhujiajiao



THE SO-CALLED 'WATER TOWNS'
SEEM UNTOUCHED BY TIME



street breakfast. Before my very eyes, a woman prepares one at lightning speed. She spreads the batter, covers it with egg, and tops it with some chopped coriander.

We continue to meander along noodle shops and street markets, and I happily sample my way through the tour, although I am feeling pretty full. “Don’t worry, we’re almost done,” Li reassures me. “All that’s left is *xiaolongbao*.” Ah *xiaolongbao*, an almost religious institution in Shanghai. The ultimate street snack, these popular dumplings stuffed with soup and meat are sold everywhere. You don’t want to bite into these though. “The soup is piping hot. It’s better to bite into the tip of the dumpling so that the soup can cool off. Then you slurp out the filling,” Li advises. They taste delicious, and I get why this snack is such a core food here.

A hidden oasis

I thank Li for the tour and head off on my own once again. After immersing myself in the city for more than an hour, it’s time for a coffee. In the FFC’s narrow side streets, hidden behind anonymous doors, there’s a host of bars and cafés that are unknown to most people. Li tipped me off about a place called Makoo Café tucked away in a side lane off the busy Changle Lu. After some toing-and-froing, I find the right lane and head down it. Not long after, I come across a heavy wooden door with a sign that reads ‘Makoo Café’ and as I walk through it, I step into an oasis of green. The owner tells me that his wife is an avid gardener; the walls are covered with drawings of plants and even the menu features many natural elements. I’m immediately drawn to the Pink Sakura Soda and order it along with a slice of grapefruit cheesecake. Cherry blossoms line the glass, making this the most photogenic drink ever. Maybe it’s my imagination, but this exclusive location makes everything taste even better.

Water towns

The next day, I venture out of the city. Shanghai sits at the mouth of the Yangtze River, at the

heart of its vast delta. Scattered across this watery landscape are the so-called ‘water towns’ that seem untouched by time. Laced with rivers, lakes and canals, and only two hours from the city, they offer a striking escape from Shanghai’s modern skyline into a world of stone bridges, narrow waterways and centuries-old charm. My first stop is Wuzhen, one of the most scenic water towns, and with two separate parts: the East- and West Scenic Areas. The former is the most authentic and is home to numerous artisans and crafts. My visit includes a stop at the Sanbai Wine Workshop, which produces 200 litres of Sanbai rice wine a day. Wuzhen is also famous for its production of indigo blue fabric, which is still dyed by hand, and you’ll see this blue fabric billowing everywhere across the town. Wuzhen West is larger and, in my opinion, much more beautiful. Xizha, a charming main street that lines a canal, is packed with shops and restaurants, and I take the opportunity to sample some rice cookies and sip tea in one of the tea pavilions along the water.

Just a short drive away is Nanxun. Not often visited, this 1,400-year-old town is a bit of a hidden gem despite its strong connection to the silk trade in the 12th century, from which it acquired its wealth. As I stroll along the quay, a boatman waves and motions to his gondola. Naturally, a water town is best seen from the water, so I take my seat in his vessel, and we glide along the weeping willow-lined canals, past the former homes of wealthy silk merchants before I disembark at the Little Lotus Garden. Designed as a quiet and peaceful haven, this garden was the private property of Liu Yong, who was one of the richest men in Nanxun during the Qing Dynasty. From the tea pavilion, I gaze out over the gigantic pond with water lilies and feel very zen indeed.

Another beautiful spot in Nanxun is Baijianlou. Also known as the ‘100 houses complex’, it’s a 400m-long stretch of traditional houses that line a canal and as it’s off the beaten path, even Chinese tourists are absent. »

Left page, top
Wuzhen, one of the most scenic water towns
Bottom (from left to right) The Former French Concession; a bar in Nanxun; Zhujiajiao

**THIS IS A CITY YEARS AHEAD
OF THE REST OF THE WORLD**



Left page
Shanghai skyline

Which is just fine with me as I find only the locals doing their laundry, taking a nap or painting along the shore. Little has changed here in the 400 years since it was built.

I make my way back to the city via Zhujiajiao, a water town that is on Shanghai's extensive metro network, line 17 to be exact. This is an advantage if you want to visit from the city, but it also makes the town busier, and less sleepy and authentic than Wuzhen or Nanxun. Nevertheless, if you want to get a glimpse of what water town life is like and aren't feeling too adventurous, this is by far the easiest option.

All that jazz

Back in Shanghai, night has fallen and I'm ready for a musical outing. Beyond the neon-drenched glamour of the skyline lies a jazzy world of soulful melodies and improvisational rhythms. The jazz scene is a testament to the city's enduring cosmopolitan spirit, a legacy from its days as the Paris of the East, and it's everywhere. I've already passed quite a few bars that sound melodically tempting, but tonight I'm seeing something really special: one of the world's oldest (by seniority) jazz bands, who play at the Fairmont Peace Hotel seven nights a week. Most of these men, donning bow ties and suits, performed in prestigious ensembles, playing for presidents and royalty all over the world. Built in 1929 as the Cathay Hotel, the Fairmont Peace Hotel remains the crown jewel of the Bund waterfront area, and the Jazz Bar was once the gathering place for Shanghai's elite. As soon as the band starts to play, the chatter in the audience stops and everyone listens in awe. Despite their age, these men have no problem dazzling the crowd with their skills. Listening to the music and sipping the colourful cocktail that the bartender just mixed for me, I realise Shanghai is also a cocktail: a wonderful blend of cosmopolitan energy and nostalgia where tradition and modernity do not compete, but co-exist, giving the city its irresistible character. *Haipai in optima forma*. And I'll be back for more. For sure. «



IRIS VAN DEN BROEK IS A DUTCH PHOTOGRAPHER AND (TRAVEL) WRITER/STORYTELLER. HERE ARE HER TOP TIPS FOR SHANGHAI.

To see

Yuyuan Garden

Shanghai has many parks and gardens, but my favourite remains the famous Yuyuan Garden, an extraordinary example of a traditional Chinese garden. Nestled within it is the enchanting Huxinting Teahouse with a legacy that dates back several centuries. I love getting a cup of exquisite Chinese tea here.

The Bund

When night falls, go for a walk along the Huangpu River on Shanghai's Champs Élysées: the Bund. Rows of elegant Art Deco trading houses from the past are now hotels and restaurants with epic views of the futuristic skyline on the other side of the river, which forms quite a contrast.

Ferguson Lane

I love this little courtyard in the FFC. The entrance is covered in plants and leads you to an oasis of specialty boutiques, flower shops and cafés. Don't miss C'est Si Bon, a carefully curated homeware shop with designs by some of Shanghai's best local talents.

To eat

Jia Jia Tang Bao

To try the infamous *xialongbao*, go to Jia Jia Tang Bao, near the busy People's Square. This simple restaurant has been around since 1986 and is nothing fancy, but they serve some of the best *xialongbao* in town. 90 Huanghe Rd

Hakkasan

Hakkasan is hands down my favourite place to eat in Shanghai. It has a cool style and energy, serving up modern Cantonese food that still respects the classics. The menu takes inspiration from local flavours, and the cocktails are next-level, mixing Eastern and Western influences. Whether you're in the mood for Crispy Peking Duck with a touch of caviar or just want to dig into a delicious dim sum spread, you'll be impressed by both the taste and the presentation. 5F, Bund 18, 18 Zhongshan Dong Yi Rd

To stay

Moller Villa

Located on the edge of the FFC, the Moller Villa hotel is my go-to when in

Shanghai. With its wooden floors and staircases and tranquil garden, it's a historic and peaceful haven in the city.

30 South Shanxi Rd

Hotel Indigo Shanghai on The Bund

If you want a room with a view, nothing beats a hotel on the Bund, and Hotel Indigo is a perfect example. Their indoor pool has views over the Huangpu River and the rooms feature murals inspired by the Yuyuan Garden and traditional *shikumen* bricks. At night, the rooftop bar is the place to be for a cocktail while overlooking Shanghai's skyline.

585 Zhong Shan Dong Er Rd

Book this story



KLM operates six nonstop flights per week to Shanghai Pudong Int Airport from Amsterdam Airport Schiphol.

Book your flight on klm.com.

Jim Taihuttu

“
**AS A DIRECTOR,
 I ASK A LOT OF
 MYSELF, MY TEAM
 AND MY ACTORS**
 ”

Diving deep into complex history, sub-cultures and the psychology of his protagonists is essential for Dutch-Moluccan film director Jim Taihuttu (44). He counterbalances this when he's pursuing his other passion: touring the world as a DJ. Text Marieke Verhoeven Photography Ester Gebuis

What role did cinema play in your childhood? My father is a huge cinephile, so, growing up, we were always watching films together. I remember seeing quite serious ones such as the German classic *Der Blechtrommel* (*The Tin Drum*) and the dystopian *Blade Runner* at a young age and being completely invested in them. When I saw a documentary on how *Back to the Future Part II* by Steven Spielberg was made, I thought: I want to do that too someday. Luckily, my parents always supported me when it came to following my dreams and never expected me to choose a 'safe' career path. They were very young when they had me and raised me with a lot of freedom; it took them another 12 years before my sister – and, then later, my brother – were born. Being

a single child for the first decade of my life never bothered me; I was a dreamer, playing with LEGO, watching TV and travelling to different worlds in my mind. Music always played a big role in our home as well; both my father and brother are professional musicians.

You became an entrepreneur in your early twenties. Why and how? At the HKU University of Arts in Utrecht, where I was studying Media, I met fellow student Victor Ponten and we became close friends. In 2004, we decided to start our own creative agency, Habbekrats. The early 2000s were a golden age for Dutch ad agencies such as KesselsKramer and 180 Amsterdam, and we saw a niche creating content in the music industry and more specifically

Dutch hip-hop, a scene that was also blooming at the time. Since I was also DJing under the name Jim Aasgier, I already had a large network in that world. We began making music videos for upcoming Dutch artists such as The Opposites and De Jeugd van Tegenwoordig, which led to bigger commercial assignments. Making music videos was a great way for us to test cinematic techniques and creative ideas, which eventually led to our first feature film in 2011, called *Rabat*. It's essentially a story about friendship as it follows three Dutch-Moroccan friends during a road trip to Morocco. But it also tells a larger story about what it means to grow up between two different cultures and feel like you don't really belong to either one of them. »



coffee break

49



Is that something you've experienced yourself too, being Dutch-Moluccan?

I certainly felt like an outsider as a child, growing up in a segregated environment in the city of Venlo in the south of the Netherlands. I've always felt strongly connected to my Indonesian heritage in a positive way, and I've travelled to Indonesia often. While making my film *De Oost* ('The East'), a film about the battle for independence in Indonesia, on Java, my wife and I decided to stay in Bali with our four sons, because it was easier to travel back and forth from there. We enjoyed it so much that we decided to move there full-time. The Molucca Islands, where my grandfather is from, are also part of the Indonesian archipelago, which is why I experience a deep connection to my roots there.

Is there a common thread in your oeuvre? I pondered that question recently and realised that my main characters are all young men who are searching for themselves and have a complicated relationship with their father. I personally have a great relationship with my dad and my sons, but I've seen the negative impact of



a distorted or absent bond between sons and fathers in my surroundings. My next project, however, is a series for Dutch TV that centres on a Dutch-Indonesian woman who inherits a family home in Indonesia and decides to move there with her daughter. I'm excited to tell a story from a woman's perspective for a change.

What kind of director are you? One who asks a lot of himself, his production team and his actors. I take my research very seriously, work long hours and require my actors to do the same. Marwan Kenzari, for example, who played a professional kickboxer in my film *Wolf* and who's also a close friend, trained every day for a year to perfect his boxing moves and became super fit. Jim Deddes lost a lot of weight and worked tirelessly on his Rotterdam accent for *Hardcore Never Dies*, a film about the Dutch hardstyle music scene of the 90s. I don't like to order people around or to push them to do things they're not comfortable with; it's more about getting them as excited as I am to give it their all. And in general, I prefer to work on small and more intimate sets, so I have more flexibility to make last-minute changes.

You're also part of Yellow Claw, a successful DJ duo with fans around the world. How did that come to be?

I formed Yellow Claw in 2010 together with my two friends Bizzey and Nils Rondhuis, initially as a theme DJ-night at Amsterdam's Jimmy Woo club. We shared a love for trap, hip-hop, dubstep and hardstyle music, and our unique blend of these genres became a hit, first by making remixes for other artists and later in our own tracks. Bizzey left the group in 2016 to pursue his solo career, but I still tour the world with Nils in between film projects. In general, I'm a very calm person, but I'm a sucker for hardcore music and I love being on stage, hyping up a crowd. We have a very

“
I'M EXCITED TO TELL A STORY FROM A WOMAN'S PERSPECTIVE FOR A CHANGE
”

loyal fan base, especially in Asia and the US, for which we're incredibly grateful.

How do you maintain a healthy work-life balance?

Living in Bali certainly helps. The first thing I do in the morning is go for a walk on the beach with my dog. I still travel quite a bit, but thankfully, I'm a great sleeper and not easily stressed. When I'm home, I try to be fully present with my family. Being surrounded by nature automatically calms me and for my sons, it's such a blessing being able to grow up here. For them, it's simply their everyday reality, but I try to remind them frequently that they're very lucky to be living in paradise. «



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MR MARVIS' Autumn/Winter 2025 collection has arrived, with the perfect trousers, tops and outerwear for the colder months. Try a new look with The Fine Cords or discover signature cold-weather styles, such as The Coolerdays, The Flannels and The Cords. Complete the look with our timeless shirts and pullovers, and sophisticated jackets. Made in Portugal. Shop the collection now on mrmarvis.com





Stillness in the Storm

AT MUSEUM VOORLINDEN



Museum Voorlinden's Director, Suzanne Swarts, on the new collection exhibition: *Stillness in the Storm*.

A sculpture of a figure dressed in hiking gear appears to trek through a distilled snowscape. This solitary wanderer, by the artist duo Elmgreen & Dragset, seems detached from the world – surrounded only by the white

landscape, and accompanied by the sound of his own footsteps, and his own thoughts. Amid the turmoil, uncertainty and chaos of our time, he may not be the only one seeking rest, reflection and inner strength. The exhibition, *Stillness in the Storm*, is an invitation to pause and find a moment of introspection, contemplation and hope together – through this work and others by artists such as Anish Kapoor, Marina Abramović, Massimo Bartolini

and Arturo Hernández Alcázar. They reveal how becoming silent, thinking together and listening to one another can be a resilient and powerful response to the storm we all face.

Where and when?

Exhibition: until 17 May, 2026

Address: Buurtweg 90, 2244 AG Wassenaar

Opening times: museum (11am-5pm);

restaurant (10.30am-6pm)

To Wassenaar by car: The Hague (20 mins); Schiphol (25 mins); Amsterdam (45 mins)

Buy your ticket at the museum or online: tickets.voorlinden.nl

GREAT WINTER ESCAPES

Instead of chasing the sun, try embracing icy temperatures and white landscapes this winter. Travelling has never been so magical.

Text Marloes van Wijnen

Lapland, Finland

WINTER WONDERLAND

For the ultimate winter wonderland trip, Finnish Lapland is the place to go. Enter a world blanketed by a thick layer of snow, and where snowmobiles and husky- or reindeer-drawn sleighs are the only proper mode of transport across the icy landscapes. Another popular activity is skiing, for which the village of Levi is the most famous as, with more than 38km of slopes on offer, it's Finland's largest ski resort. And those who dare to dive into temperatures well below freezing – on or off the slopes – may well be rewarded with one of Mother Nature's greatest spectacles, the northern lights. **Top tip:** Visiting Finnish Lapland during New Year's Eve is a unique experience, as you may get to see fireworks and the northern lights at the same time on the same horizon.



Amsterdam, the Netherlands

FLOATING ON ICE

The canals of Amsterdam are beautiful in every season, but in winter, they're theme park-worthy.

Illuminated boats glide through the water, overlooked by glittering pavements and warmly lit canal houses. If it's cold enough, the canals sometimes even freeze over, and visitors can enjoy watching (or partaking in) some ice skating. Alternatively, with the historic Rijksmuseum as a backdrop and a recreation of the iconic *Magere Brug* ('Skinny Bridge') in situ, the skating rink on Museum Square is a picture-perfect alternative for a spin on the ice. And when you're done, you can step inside any of the famous museums that flank the square. **Don't miss:** The Amsterdam Light Festival lights up the city's waterways with illuminated artworks every winter.

An aerial photograph of a village in Shirakawa-go, Japan, during winter. The village is nestled in a valley, surrounded by dense, snow-covered evergreen forests. The houses are traditional gassho-style farmhouses with steep, thatched roofs covered in a thick layer of snow. The roofs are illuminated from within, casting a warm glow. The ground is covered in a deep layer of snow, and a few small figures of people can be seen walking in the lower right area.

Shirakawa-go, Japan

HEAVENLY BUILDINGS

Located in the Japanese mountains, the village of Shirakawa-go is famous for its *gassho*-style farmhouses. The steep thatched roofs of these historic buildings are designed to withstand heavy snow, and resemble hands clasped in prayer. The *gassho*-style architecture dates back centuries, and Shirakawa-go, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is one of the few places in Japan that keeps it alive. It literally takes a village to maintain the houses' condition as the roofs must be repaired every 50 years. This process is carried out by the villagers, based on the concept of *yui*, which means that individuals help each other out. **Good to know:** Shirakawa-go is one of the world's snowiest regions, so be sure to pack proper winter boots or you'll get stuck in the snow.

Switzerland

**THE
SNOWY
EXPRESS**

Switzerland is well known for skiing, but it also provides some of the world's most beautiful train journeys. The routes of the Glacier Express, Bernina Express and GoldenPass Line take you right through the Alps, with panoramic carriages providing the ultimate views. You'll traverse through tunnels and across bridges, including the famous Wiesen Viaduct (pictured), while experiencing the most beautiful icy scenery. From snow-covered pine forests to frozen lakes and mysterious, misty skies: you can see it all from the comfort of your cosy seat – it's the ultimate winter trip without the shivering.

Top tip: The SBB Saver Day Pass allows you to travel throughout Switzerland on all routes in the GA area for an entire day at a discounted price (but you still need to book a seat in advance).







Cappadocia, Turkey

FAIRY-TALE FLIGHTS

A pink-tinted sky, hot air balloons and Cappadocia's 'fairy chimneys': it's a scene that appears regularly on social media feeds. People from all around the world travel to Turkey's popular mountain region to witness this phenomenal view, but only a small number have seen the famous rock formations under a fine layer of snow. The 'winter edition' of this ultimate sky-high activity may be less popular, but it's no-less astonishing as you get to experience the beautiful scenery in a completely different way, with the light reflecting magically on the snow-covered peaks at sunrise.

Good to know: February is the best of the winter months for this experience, not only because there's more snowfall, but also because the weather is less turbulent.



Big cat sanctuary meets eco-retreat

SCHRIKKLOOF PRIVATE NATURE RESERVE

Just two hours from Johannesburg, in the malaria-free Waterberg region of Limpopo, you will find Schrikkloof Private Nature Reserve – a 10km² haven where wildlife conservation and eco-luxury come together.

Alongside giraffes, antelopes, zebras and buffalo, the reserve is home to The Lions Foundation,



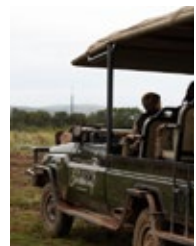
a sanctuary founded by Dutch-based Stichting Leeuw.

Wildlife conservation

The Lions Foundation offers a forever home to rescued lions and tigers from circuses, war zones and private ownership. After rehabilitation in the Netherlands, the animals are relocated to South Africa. Here we also run a volunteer programme open to everyone who wants to contribute to the animals' wellbeing.

Eco-luxury

By staying at Schrikkloof Lodge, guests directly support this mission, as all proceeds are used for the big cats' care, food and medical needs. The lodge blends comfort with nature, offering panoramic views and golden-hour safaris. It's a meaningful travel experience that truly gives back.



Schrikkloof
• PRIVATE NATURE RESERVE •

Book a holiday at Schrikkloof
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Support The Lions Foundation
thelionsfoundation.com

Welcome
on board



KLM NEWS

KLM House

NO. 69: KEIZERSGRACHT 319



Amsterdam's Herengracht, Prinsengracht and Keizersgracht canals are lined with numerous beautiful old buildings. This house, located at Keizersgracht 319, is special for one reason: we know who the master builder was. Most of the (now) heritage canal-side houses were built by anonymous masons and carpenters. Every now and then, however, a drawing or symbol reveals who the master builder was, as was the case with this house. It was built by architect Philips Vingboons, a fact that was discovered in 1958 during a restoration of the building. A beam, imprinted with the text 'this was built on 23 November 1639' was also found. The house has a grand historic entrance hall and an enclosed garden.

Mark Wagtendonk (left)



Updated à la carte meals

SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE

ECONOMY-CLASS PASSENGERS ON INTERCONTINENTAL FLIGHTS CAN ENJOY UPGRADED À LA CARTE MEALS, INCLUDING THE 'JAPANESE DELIGHT' MEAL, ACCOMPANIED BY EXCLUSIVE DRINKS.

Italian meal

This delicious menu treats the customer to a selection of antipasti, a main course of cannelloni with ricotta and arrabbiata sauce, and a classic tiramisu for dessert, accompanied by an Aperol Spritz.

Indonesian meal

This journey for your tastebuds begins with *bami goreng* (noodles) and tempeh, and is followed by *rendang* (beef stew) with rice, sambal and fried onion, a side dish of *roedjak* (fruit and veg salad), and a dessert of coconut/pineapple and *spekkoek* (spiced layered cake). Accompanied by a Heineken beer.

Vegetarian meal

Enjoy this mouthwatering veggie experience: beetroot and goat's cheese salad followed by a biryani with grilled vegetables, cranberries, tahini and extra-virgin olive oil, and

lemon cheesecake. Accompanied by a kombucha (fermented tea) drink.

Celebration meal

This party starts with prawns in a tomato sauce with a dash of cocktail dressing, followed by a beef, truffle and asparagus main course, a cheese platter and a raspberry and champagne dessert, with side dishes of a Jacob's Table Cracker, extra-virgin olive oil and a Ferrero Rocher. Accompanied by a glass of cava.

Japanese Delight meal

Enjoy roasted aubergine with lightly smoked tuna before indulging in a beef sukiyaki with miso rice and mushrooms. A mandarin/yuzu bava-rois and a bottle of Pinot Grigio complete this new menu.

Order your meal now via My Trip or 'manage my booking' before your flight. Prices vary from €19.95 to €32.95.

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KLM NEWS

Memorable flight

“We blew kisses to each other through the windows”

MARIA STELA D'ESCRAGNOLLE KLEIN DESCRIBES THE COINCIDENTAL MEETING WITH HER HUSBAND AT SCHIPHOL.



It wasn't the particular flight on 27 September 2025, but the events leading up to it that made it so extraordinary. My husband, who's an executive in a Danish company, was in Lyon, France, on business. After his meeting, he was due to make his way back to Sønderborg in Denmark, where we live, via a flight to Billund airport. Due to delays, he had to stay an extra night in Lyon and took the next flight home the following day. I was also flying that day, from Billund, to attend a conference in Zurich,

Switzerland, in my role as a leadership coach. As luck would have it, both itineraries had Schiphol airport as a stopover. My husband sent me a text saying he would try to meet me at my departure gate at Schiphol before taking his flight back home. And that's how I spotted the tall, handsome figure that is my husband enthusiastically waving at me as I made my way to my gate. It was such a funny experience. To make things even funnier, I received another text from him after boarding

my plane, asking what side I was sitting on. As it turned out, our gates were next to each other, and we found ourselves waving and blowing kisses to each other through the windows of our respective planes, much to the enjoyment and amusement of the passengers around us. It was a wonderful experience, and a memory we'll treasure forever.

Have you had a special flight? Share it at hollandheraldhome@hearst.nl and your story might be featured in the next issue of *Holland Herald*.

Ask the expert



PURSER MICHAEL DE VOS
ANSWERS YOUR
BURNING QUESTION.

Why do so many people drink tomato juice on board



Feeling a sudden craving for some tomato juice? You're not alone. Why does this craving suddenly appear during a flight? "Simply put: our taste perception changes up in the sky. We're suddenly more sensitive to umami flavours. The tomato juice therefore tastes more vibrant and satisfying at cruising altitudes, compared to what we're used to on the ground. It also has a lot of benefits, such as the fact that it's filled with healthy antioxidants, minerals and vitamins, such as vitamin C and potassium."

Do you have a burning question for the experts at KLM? Email us at hollandheraldhome@hearst.nl and your question might be featured in the next issue of *Holland Herald*.

Support tool



A SPECIAL FLOWER

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower lanyard allows people with (hidden) disabilities, such as autism, epilepsy and long COVID, to discreetly ask for help in whatever shape or form they need at various airports around the globe. This can include extra time at security or a hand during boarding. Those affected by a hidden disability can request a lanyard at the Assistance desk in the departure hall, or order one via the website. hdsunflower.com

TRAVEL WELL



**“Meaningful change
is happening, but
progress is gradual”**

Zita Schellekens

A FUTURE OF TRAVELLING WELL

HOW DO WE TRAVEL BETTER AND MORE SUSTAINABLY IN THE FUTURE?
AS KLM'S SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF STRATEGY, TRANSFORMATION & SUSTAINABILITY,
ZITA SCHELLEKENS TRIES TO ANSWER THAT COMPLEX QUESTION.

Can you introduce yourself and explain your role at KLM? I'm responsible for developing and driving the company's overall strategy when it comes to making KLM ready for a future in which we can service people as well as we possibly can, while trying to reduce our negative impact on the planet. Working at KLM means we are always focused on doing everything we can to bring our passengers to their destinations, on time and with their luggage. At the same time, as a company, we need to look ahead. Where are we headed? How do we combine growth and sustainability? People will always want to travel, but the way they travel might change. And that's where my team comes in and tries to anticipate that.

Do you have a concrete example? Take the train, for instance. We know a lot of people would like to travel more by train or combine rail services with long-haul flights. But making that happen is quite complex. So, we've used a method called design-thinking, which is a creative, collaborative approach to problem-solving. We brought together people from different departments of the company and sat down with Eurostar, the Dutch Railways (NS) and Amsterdam Airport Schiphol. We then posed the question: what's preventing us from offering more train services? For instance, by replacing flights with train options.

Then we asked: What are the biggest bottlenecks and what's holding us back the most? And we started tackling those, one by one. My department also focuses on decarbonising the company in all its operations and making it more environmentally responsible.

What does that decarbonisation process look like? KLM focuses on four key areas to make our operations more sustainable. Firstly, there's our fleet renewal. The latest aircraft models are around 25% more fuel-efficient than their predecessors, which makes a huge difference. That's why we're investing billions of euros over the next few years in new planes. But there are challenges: there are delays in aircraft deliveries. It's not possible to replace our entire fleet in one go. Plus, an aircraft typically operates for 25 years, so you want to use it efficiently and not discard it prematurely. It's about finding the right balance. Then there are operational improvements; implementing 42+ projects to reduce CO₂ through smarter flying, lighter loads and efficient ground handling. The third lever is investing in Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF). SAF reduces CO₂ emissions by at least 65% but is scarce and expensive. KLM is a major user and is investing in production, but scaling up is slow. Lastly, it's about future innovation: exploring electric and hydrogen

aircraft, though heavy regulation means these technologies will take years to become viable. So, in short, meaningful change is happening, but progress is gradual due to industry constraints and technological limits.

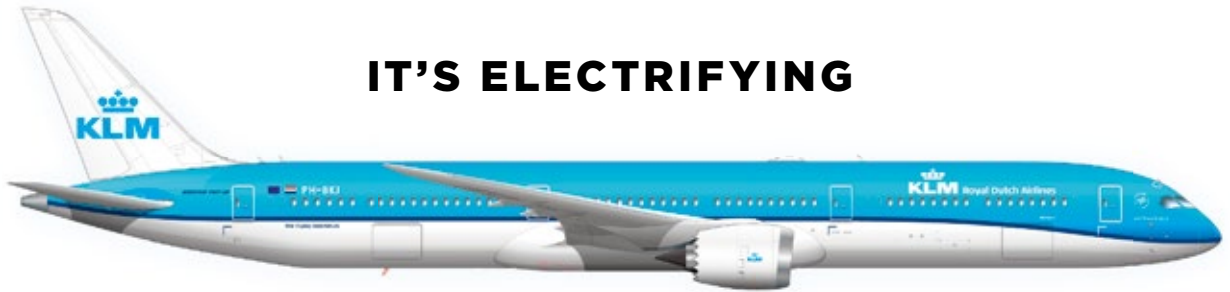
What drives you personally? I have a background in business and politics, and what excites me about working at KLM now is being out in the field, where it's possible to make concrete changes. I strongly believe that big corporations can be a force for good. When it comes to a more sustainable future of aviation, we often get stuck on what's not possible, but I like to focus on what *is* possible. An initiative such as The Aviation Challenge, an annual friendly competition between 27 airlines of the SkyTeam Alliance trying to fly as sustainably as possible, is a great example of a positive development in our industry. It won't happen overnight, but the willingness to invest and share knowledge is there.

Left page (clockwise from main picture): Zita Schellekens, KLM's Senior Vice President of Strategy, Transformation & Sustainability; awards from The Aviation Challenge; refuelling at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol

KLM FLEET

Specifications

IT'S ELECTRIFYING



The Boeing 787 Dreamliner has always been at the forefront of commercial aviation technology. An example of this is its bleed-less system, which means that the 787 uses electrically powered compressors for systems such as cabin pressurisation and other environmental systems instead of drawing compressed air (bleed air) from the engines.



Boeing 747-400ER Freighter

Number of aircraft: 3
Cruising speed (km/h): 920
Range (km): 11,500
Max. take-off weight (kg): 412,800
Max. freight (kg): 112,000
Total length (m): 70.67
Wingspan (m): 64.44

Boeing 787-10/9 Dreamliner

Number of aircraft: 15/13
Cruising speed (km/h): 920/920
Range (km): 9,900/11,500
Max. take-off weight (kg): 254,000/252,650
Maximum passengers: 318/294
Total length (m): 68.30/62.80
Wingspan (m): 60.10/60.10
Personal inflight entertainment
Wi-Fi on board



Airbus A330-300/200

Number of aircraft: 5/6
Cruising speed (km/h): 880/880
Range (km): 8,200/8,800
Max. take-off weight (kg): 233,000/233,000
Maximum passengers: 292/264
Total length (m): 63.69/58.37
Wingspan (m): 60.30/60.30
Personal inflight entertainment
Wi-Fi on board



Boeing 777-300ER/200ER

Number of aircraft: 16/15
Cruising speed (km/h): 920/900
Range (km): 12,000/11,800
Max. take-off weight (kg): 351,543/297,500
Maximum passengers: 408/320
Total length (m): 73.86/63.80
Wingspan (m): 64.80/60.90
Personal inflight entertainment
Wi-Fi on board



Boeing 737-800/700

Number of aircraft: 31/6
Cruising speed (km/h): 850/850
Range (km): 4,200/3,500
Max. take-off weight (kg): 73,700/65,317
Maximum passengers: 186/142
Total length (m): 39.47/33.62
Wingspan (m): 35.80/35.80
Wi-Fi on board



Boeing 737-900

Number of aircraft: 5
Cruising speed (km/h): 850
Range (km): 4,300
Max. take-off weight (kg): 76,900
Maximum passengers: 188
Total length (m): 42.12
Wingspan (m): 35.80



Airbus A321neo

Number of aircraft: 11
Cruising speed (km/h): 876
Range (km): 7,400
Max. take-off weight (kg): 89,000
Maximum passengers: 227
Total length (m): 44.51
Wingspan (m): 35.80
Wi-Fi on board



Embraer 190/175

Number of aircraft: 20/17
Cruising speed (km/h): 850/850
Range (km): 3,300/3,180
Max. take-off weight (kg): 45,000/36,500
Maximum passengers: 100/88
Total length (m): 36.25/31.68
Wingspan (m): 28.72/28.65



Embraer 195-E2

Number of aircraft: 25
Cruising speed (km/h): 876
Range (km): 4,815
Max. take-off weight (kg): 56,700
Maximum passengers: 132
Total length (m): 41.5
Wingspan (m): 35.12



Airbus A321neo

YOU'RE DISCHARGED

“These little rod-like devices are called ‘static dischargers,’” explains Aircraft Maintenance Technician, Anas Ouazzani Touhami. “Here, we see the static dischargers belonging to an Airbus A321neo. You can tell it’s an A321neo because the winglet is quite high. Although, the type of plane doesn’t really matter as these tiny carbon sticks are placed in the same location on any aircraft. They’re fastened to the tips of the wings and the tail and provide a pathway for accumulated charge to be safely released into the atmosphere, without any sparks. The reason this is important is because the built-up charge could potentially mess with electrical systems, such as radio frequency which would in turn disrupt communication.”

TRAVELLERS



Angel & Freya

“It gives off such a peaceful vibe, which is so nice”

ANGEL AN, FREYA ZHOU, BYE AND SHARK TRAVELLING TO SHANGHAI ON FLIGHT KL895

Reason for travel? Angel: “We’ve just graduated from our studies in London and are moving back home to China. I was doing fashion design, and I’ll probably continue that further.”

Freya: “I studied economy and management, and might apply for a master’s degree. I haven’t decided yet.”

Still on your travel bucket list?

Angel: “I’d love to travel around Africa; I don’t have a particular place in mind, as long as I can go on safari and see lots of animals.”

Freya: “The nature in Switzerland really appeals to me. It always looks so beautiful online. It gives off such a peaceful vibe, without any conflicts, which is so nice in times like these.”

Who’s your dream passenger to sit next to? Freya: “My mum. I’d love to take her to see the world; she hasn’t been able to travel much.”

Angel: “Most of my friends, to be honest. I want to share my experiences of travelling with them.”

Robert & Dorothy

ROBERT AND DOROTHY HERNQUIST TRAVELLING TO CHICAGO ON FLIGHT KL611

Reason for travel? Dorothy: “We’re heading home after spending about 10 days in Budapest and Prague. We also went on a river cruise along the Danube River during that time, which was very memorable. We’re not big cruise people, but the fact that we got to see so many places was great – and really convenient too. Budapest was probably our favourite city.”

Still on your travel bucket list?

Dorothy: “Maybe China. We’ve been there before, and it was really special. Or Vietnam. There’s still so much to see.”

Who’s your dream passenger to sit next to? Robert: “A good choice would be whoever is the United States Secretary of State. They’d know what’s going on in the world and could inform us accordingly.” Dorothy: “And travel writer Rick Steves, to round it up. I’m sure he could give us some good tips.”



Carl

CARL JONES TRAVELLING TO SAN DIEGO ON FLIGHT KL639

Reason for travel? “I’m going back home. I was in the Netherlands for the TwitchCon game convention and to meet up with a few streamer friends. I’d never actually been to Europe before, so this was a great opportunity. I did a lot of walking around in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Utrecht. They’re beautiful cities, and very different from the US. I hope to come back again one day.”

Still on your travel bucket list?

“Japan and Australia are high on my list: Japan mostly for the food, which always looks incredible – the sushi, the meat, all of it – and Australia because I have some other streamer friends who live there. I don’t know too much about the country, but I’m sure it’ll be fun.”

Who’s your dream passenger to sit next to? “My friend Zara. She’s such a cool person, and she’d be fun to travel with. I’d love to take her with me if I get to go to Australia.”



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My Miles



“I kept it a surprise until they boarded the plane”

THANKS TO HAROLD SIEBEN'S JOB, HE CAN SAVE UP MILES FOR BUSINESS CLASS TICKETS TO WONDERFUL DESTINATIONS.

As a senior vice president of finance & IT in the flooring industry, I often have to travel abroad for work, and have reached platinum-for-life status. My travels usually take me to destinations such as São Paulo, Shanghai and New York. Shanghai is one of my favourite places – the speed at which that city advances technologically is unheard of. The last time I used my Miles was for four business class tickets to Curaçao,



Curaçao

in celebration of my father's 80th birthday. My parents don't travel that much anymore and feel that flying has become increasingly difficult for them. To keep them in the dark, I didn't announce the destination of our flight until a few weeks before departure, and I kept the business class seats a surprise until they boarded the plane. They thoroughly enjoyed the experience, and had a great two weeks in Curaçao,

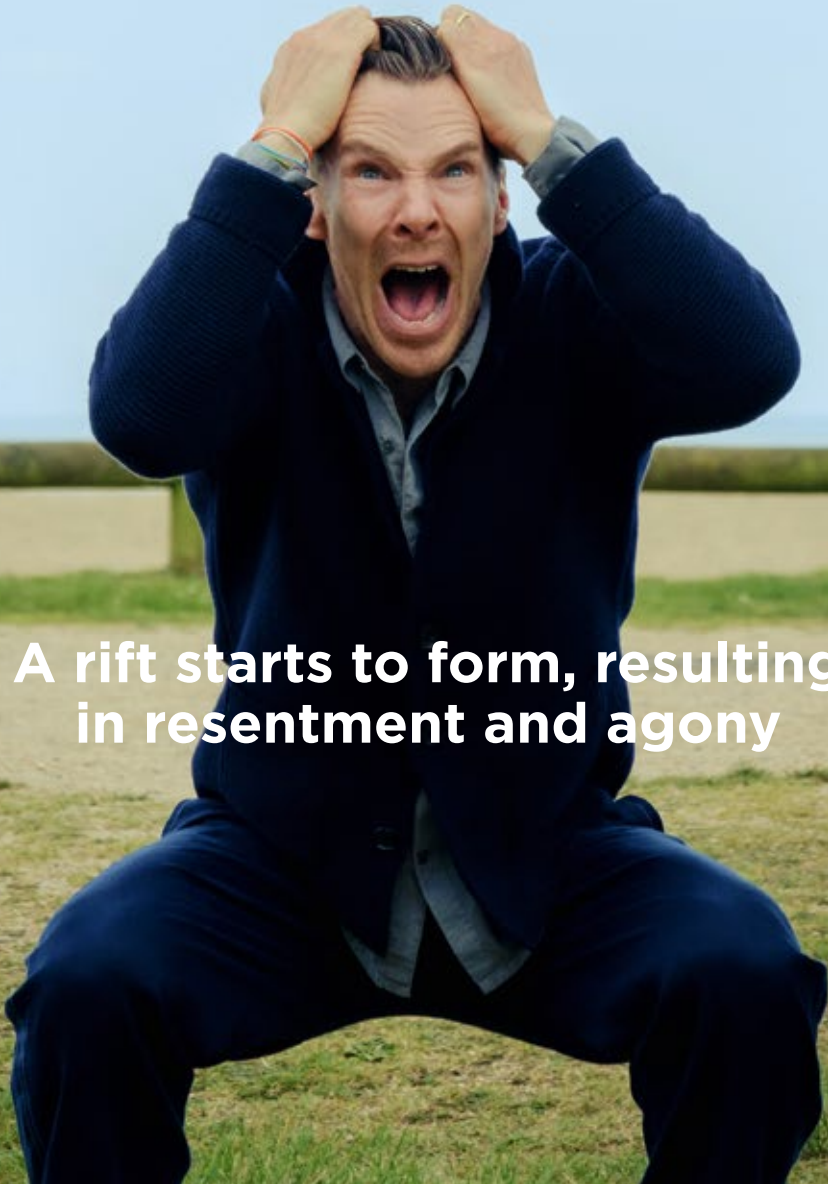
during which we also travelled to Bonaire to visit relatives. I'm now saving up Miles for tickets to Alaska for my partner and myself, where we'll spend our next holiday driving through the wilderness in a camper van.

Do you have a Miles-related story to tell? Send it to hollandheraldhome@hearst.nl and your story might be featured in the next issue of *Holland Herald*.

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AIRFRANCE KLM

Sign up now! There's never been a better time to sign up for free. Flying Blue is, in fact, your ideal travel companion: earn Miles and spend them on flights, hotel stays, car rentals and more. For more info, please check flyingblue.com.

ONBOARD ENTERTAINMENT

A full-page photograph of Benedict Cumberbatch in a crouching position on a grassy field. He is wearing a dark blue cardigan over a light blue shirt and dark blue trousers. His hands are pressed against his temples, and his mouth is wide open in a scream or shout of agony. The background shows a clear blue sky and a distant horizon line.

**A rift starts to form, resulting
in resentment and agony**

Watch, listen or play

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Dive into a world of cinematic wonder with more than 300 films from around the globe. Enjoy 400 TV programmes spanning various genres to suit every taste, and immerse yourself in our vast audio library, featuring more than 1,000 albums, playlists, podcasts and audiobooks. Challenge yourself with our selection of games and set Parental Controls for the Kids Only section. Stay ahead of the curve with our constantly updated catalogue. Each month, we refresh almost 20% of our video content. Check entertainment.klm.com for the full listing before your next trip. For now, sit back, relax and enjoy your journey.

Our pick



THE ROSES

Adapted from the 1981 novel *The War of the Roses* by Warren Adler – which was first turned into a film in 1989 and starred Kathleen Turner and Michael Douglas – this version follows the everyday life of happily married couple Ivy (Olivia Colman) and Theo (Benedict Cumberbatch). When a tragedy causes Ivy's restaurant business to skyrocket in popularity and Theo's naval history museum to be destroyed the dynamic of their marriage changes as well. A rift starts to form, resulting in resentment and agony. Will they be able to rekindle their relationship?

Drama/Dark Comedy, 1h45min

Films

WATCH IT NOW



A Girl named Willow

Kids, 1h40min

This German film follows the story of Willow (Ava Petsch), a young girl who inherits a forest and magical powers from her great-aunt Alwina. But, there is a catch: Willow needs to find three others who can accept the other powers of the elements.



Turning Red

Comedy, 1h40min

13-year-old Mei Lee (Rosalie Chiang) does her best to be the perfect daughter according to the rules of her strict traditional mother (Sandra Oh). One night, Mei dreams about red pandas and is shocked to find the next morning that she's actually turned into one.



Thor

Action, 1h54min

After action that causes war, the god Thor (Chris Hemsworth) is banished to Earth by his father, the god Odin (Anthony Hopkins). Meanwhile, Thor's brother Loki (Tom Hiddleston) uses his absence to try and gather an army and gain control over the kingdom.

Games

CHOOSE YOUR PLAYER

Angry Birds World Tour

The birds are back! Much of the new gameplay is based on the Angry Birds Classic game. There are 30 available levels, which are split into five episodes of six.

Trivia Tournament

Test your general knowledge by answering questions from a wide range of topics. You can play alone or compete against other players. Challenge yourself and learn something new.

Golf Open

Live all the excitement of a professional golf game. With its accurate physics and stunning 3-D graphics, this golf version will give you all the thrills of the game in the comfort of your own seat.

TV

IN CASE YOU MISSED THEM...



An Update on Our Family

Documentary, 49min

This three-part documentary series takes a look at the phenomenon of family vloggers, who make lucrative content about their kids. An example of this is the Stauffer family, who come under scrutiny after their son Huxley disappears.



Brooklyn Nine-Nine

Comedy, 22min

It's the eighth season, and the gang is back. But their situations have changed due to the pandemic and George Floyd protests. Holt struggles to maintain his relationship with Kevin, Rosa quits the force, and Jake and Amy find it hard to balance their family-work life.



The Sandman

Fantasy, 54min

When the god of sleep and dreams, Morpheus (Tom Sturridge) is captured by occultist Burgess (Charles Dance) to bring his dead son back to the world of the living, the world falls into ruin. After a century, Morpheus is finally released, but is it too late?

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SKYTEAM

The Aviation Challenge

HOW SKYTEAM MEMBERS ARE UNITING TO MAKE CHANGE

THE AVIATION CHALLENGE (TAC) IS A GLOBAL SKYTEAM INITIATIVE THAT IS DESIGNED TO HELP ACCELERATE SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION AND KNOWLEDGE-SHARING ACROSS THE AVIATION INDUSTRY.



About TAC

Through friendly competition, participating airlines challenge each other to reduce the impact of their operations on the environment. Each year, they organise showcase flights on which they test and implement solutions in key areas such as emissions reduction, energy efficiency and waste management.

Driving impact

The 2025 theme for TAC – which is now in its fourth year – is ‘Impact’, reflecting the challenge’s commitment to tangible, measurable outcomes. While early editions focused on generating ideas,

TAC now emphasises putting solutions into practice – showing how they can be effectively adopted, scaled and rolled out across the wider industry.

Airlines compete not only to innovate but to demonstrate verifiable progress, sharing data and lessons that benefit the sector. Participants compete for awards across 18 categories, including flight operations, sustainable aviation fuels, cargo and more, recognising diverse areas of innovation and achievement.

Industry collaboration

TAC brings together airlines, sustainability leaders and global

innovators, fostering collaboration to help accelerate the aviation sector’s transition towards a more sustainable future. Participating airlines commit to sharing knowledge and best practices to promote industry-wide change. The challenge serves as a platform where solutions are developed, implemented, tested and showcased for wider adoption.

Since its launch in 2022, TAC has engaged 28 airlines. In recent editions, participants from outside the SkyTeam alliance have also joined, broadening the initiative’s reach. Collectively, these airlines have developed and implemented more than 500 solutions, from operational improvements to technological advancements, helping participants make measurable, scalable progress.

By providing a platform to test and implement solutions, TAC supports airlines in taking meaningful steps towards more sustainable aviation. Through competition, collaboration and a shared commitment to measurable results, TAC is helping chart a course towards a more responsible future for the industry.

SkyTeam is the 18-member airline alliance. Find out more about news, services and upcoming events at skyteam.com.

HOUSE RULES

Electronics on board

On board the aircraft, electronic devices, such as smartphones, tablets and e-readers, may be used at all times. If they include wireless functionality, they must be set to **airplane mode** before the aircraft doors are closed and remain so throughout the flight. You may use an electronic device's Bluetooth mode (e.g. a Bluetooth headset) at all times as long as you enable **airplane mode** before you switch on Bluetooth. If the aircraft offers Internet onboard, Wi-Fi mode may be used at all times as long as **airplane mode** is enabled first. Before connecting to the onboard Wi-Fi, switch off any VPN services on your device. Larger electronic devices (e.g. laptops) must be stowed during taxiing, take-off and landing. If in doubt, check with the cabin crew.

Cabin crew may request that all electronic devices are switched off completely if it is deemed necessary.

Drinks and smoking

Alcoholic drinks are served **one** at a time to passengers seated in their assigned seats. For safety reasons, the purser may close the bar. Passengers are not permitted to drink alcoholic beverages brought

on board with them. **Smoking**, including artificial cigarettes such as 'SuperSmokers', **is strictly forbidden** at all times on KLM flights.

Privacy

KLM respects the privacy of its customers and staff. Taking a **photo** or making a **film recording** of any person on board without their explicit consent is not allowed.

Lithium batteries

Mobile phones, laptops and other **electronic devices** contain lithium batteries, which can catch fire if they are damaged or if they short-circuit. Please make sure that you keep an eye on your device while it is charging, and do not charge it while sleeping. Please check 'restricted articles' on klm.com for more information.

Hand luggage at EU airports

To increase passenger safety, security rules for hand luggage are in place for all flights in accordance with European Union regulations. When passing through security control, you are required to present liquids, gels, pastes, lotions and aerosols separately, and in individual containers of no more than 100ml

and packaged in a resealable, transparent plastic bag (maximum volume 1 litre, 1 bag per person).

Animal products

To prevent the spread of animal diseases, you are prohibited from entering the EU with meat, meat products, milk and milk products. Small quantities for personal use are permitted on arrival from Andorra, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, San Marino and Switzerland. For further information, visit europa.eu.

Airport shopping

In the EU: Within Europe, you can travel with your tax-free liquid purchases. They will be packed and sealed for you. The seal is valid for 24 hours. You may not break the seal until you have reached your final destination, even if your journey includes a transfer.

Outside the EU: Transfer at an EU airport? You may bring liquids and gels from non-EU airports. They will be checked at Schiphol. Travelling to the US? Only bring liquids on board bought and sealed at Schiphol. Transfer in the US or Canada? Pack your liquids in your check-in luggage.

Wi-Fi & free messaging

STAY IN TOUCH ON BOARD

Our entire ICA fleet has Wi-Fi, and more and more of our European aircraft are being equipped with it. If there's a Wi-Fi logo on your aircraft, you can use Wi-Fi. Just follow the instructions to the right and select a package of your choice. As a Flying Blue member, you can send basic texts with our free message package. Non-members can enrol for free during the flight via the Onboard Portal and make use of the Free Messaging pass. If you'd like to surf the Internet, send & receive emails, listen to music, use social media or stream a film, you can buy a Wi-Fi pass for the full flight or 1-hour (ICA-only).



1

Switch off any VPN services and then set your device to airplane mode



2

Go to Wi-Fi settings and choose **KLM_WiFi** from the network list



3

Follow the steps on your device Or go to **connect.klm.com** Or scan the QR code

ELEVATE YOUR SENSES

Ask your
cabin crew
to order





Bountiful Barbados

A CARIBBEAN JEWEL OF CULTURE, WARMTH AND WONDER

Barbados, a vibrant island in the eastern Caribbean, is a captivating blend of rich history, Afro-Caribbean heritage and modern island living.

Once the world's largest sugar producer, Barbados' past is deeply rooted in agriculture, British colonial influence and African traditions. Today, it stands proudly as a progressive, independent republic characterised by rhythm, resilience and unmistakable Bajan pride. Barbadians are the heartbeat of the island; welcoming, spirited and deeply connected to their cultural roots.

In 2021, Barbados made history when it transitioned from a constitutional monarchy to a parliamentary republic, led by Prime Minister Mia Mottley. As Barbados' first female Prime Minister

and a global voice on climate action, Mottley focuses on sustainability, innovation and inclusion.

Culinary and natural delights

The island is also known as the Caribbean's culinary capital. From flying fish and cou-cou to sizzling street food and gourmet seaside dining, every meal is a celebration. Don't miss a visit to a rum shop or a tour of Mount Gay, the world's oldest rum distillery. Nature lovers will be enchanted by Barbados' diverse landscapes, from the tranquil white sands of the west coast to the surf-ready waves of the east. Explore lush gardens, limestone caves and the Graeme Hall Nature Sanctuary, a haven for birds and eco-tourists alike. Adventure awaits at every turn; cruise the coastline by catamaran,

snorkel with turtles or dive into the island's vibrant art and music scenes. Sports are also big here: cricket reigns supreme, but golf, sailing, polo and motorsports draw international fans too.

Perfect winter escape

With more than 80 beaches, and accommodation for every budget, Barbados offers the perfect escape. And getting here is easy: this winter, KLM offers three direct flights per week to Barbados from Amsterdam Airport Schiphol. Whether you come for culture, cuisine, nature or simply to relax: Barbados welcomes you with open arms and a heart full of Caribbean soul.

BARBADOS

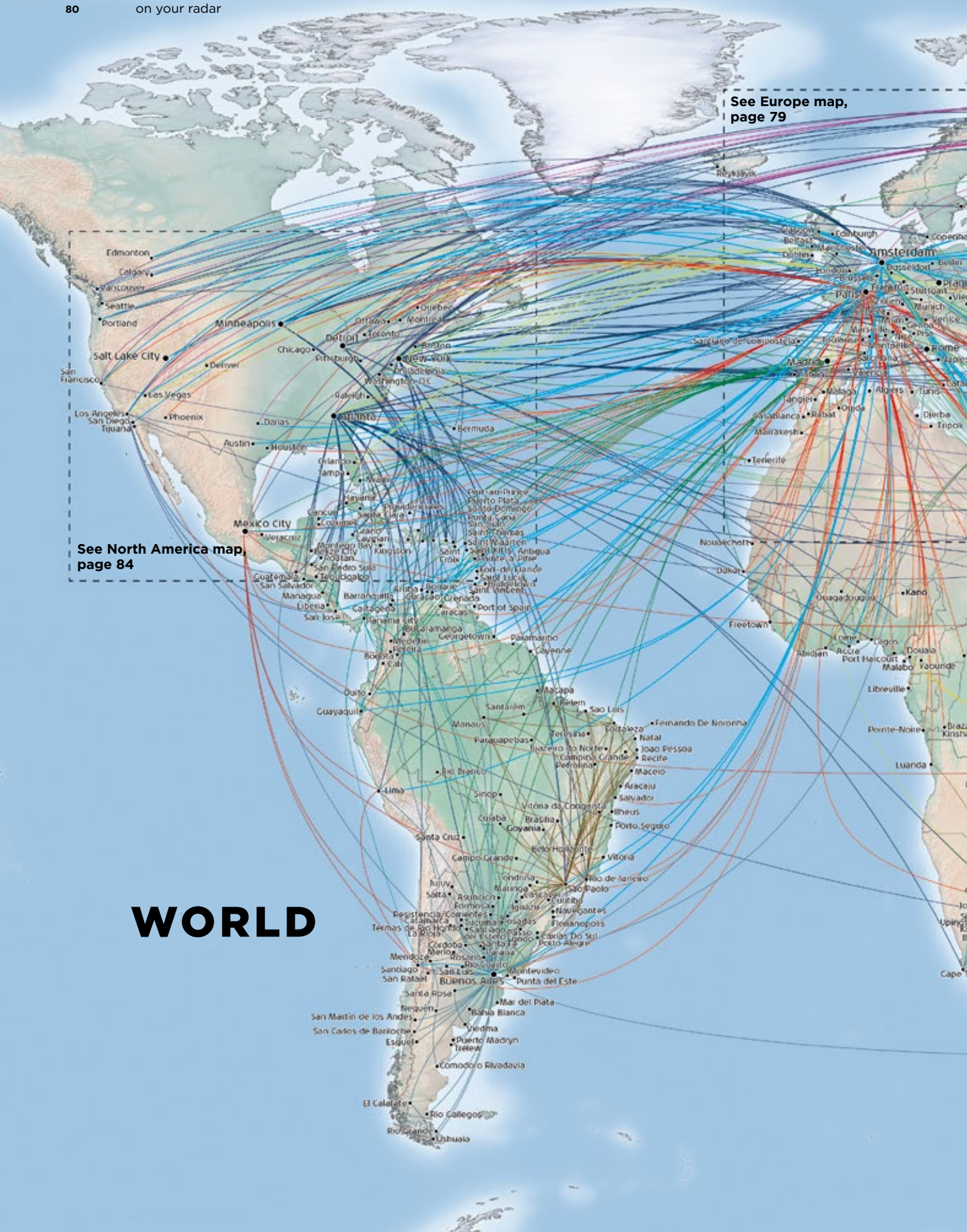
EUROPE

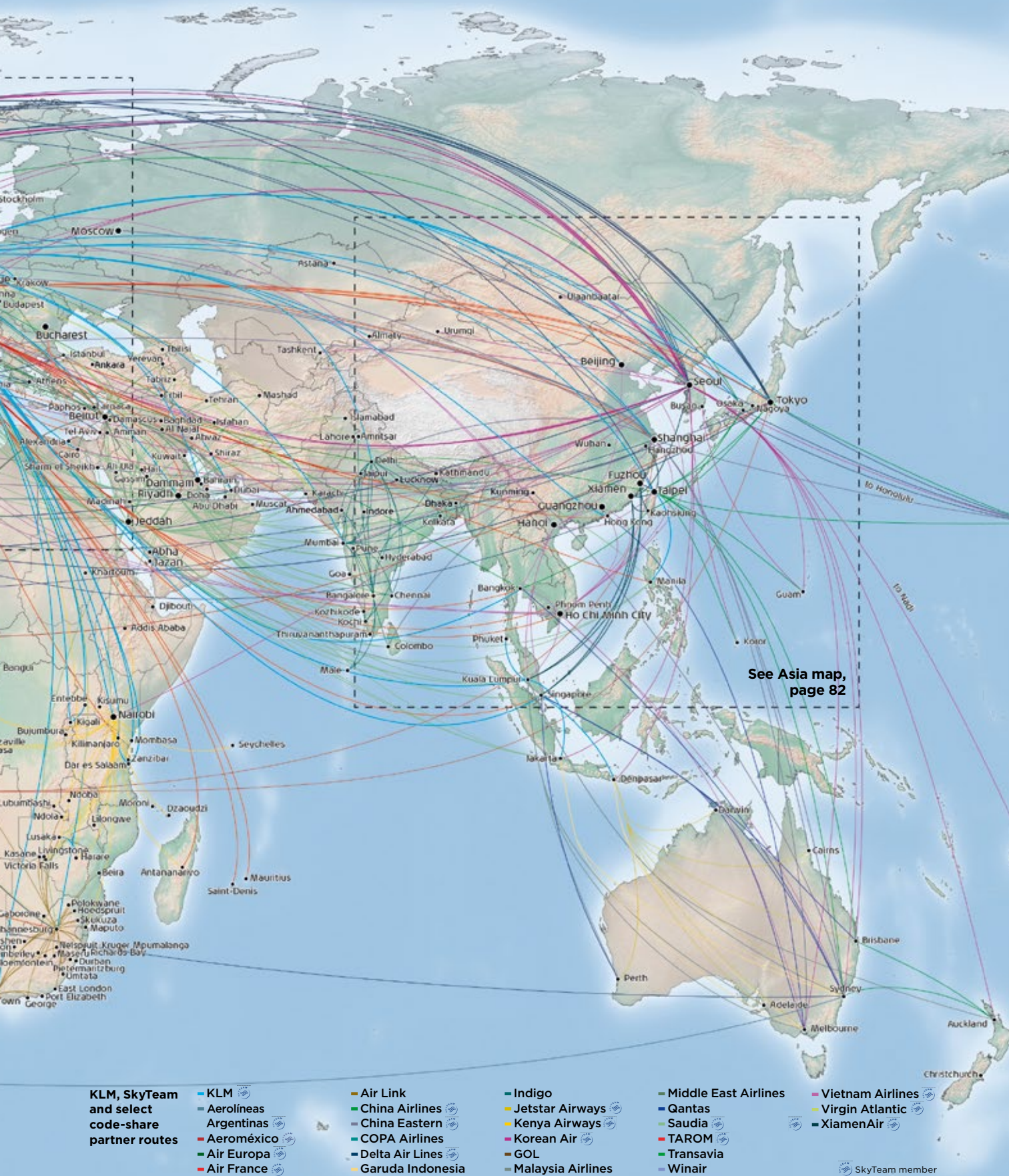


See Europe map,
page 79

See North America map,
page 84

WORLD





The lines are illustrative and do not represent the actual routes taken by the aircraft.

We do not currently fly over Russia or Ukraine.

We continuously adapt our network to changing circumstances, such as geopolitical developments.

Please check klm.com for the current schedule and routes.

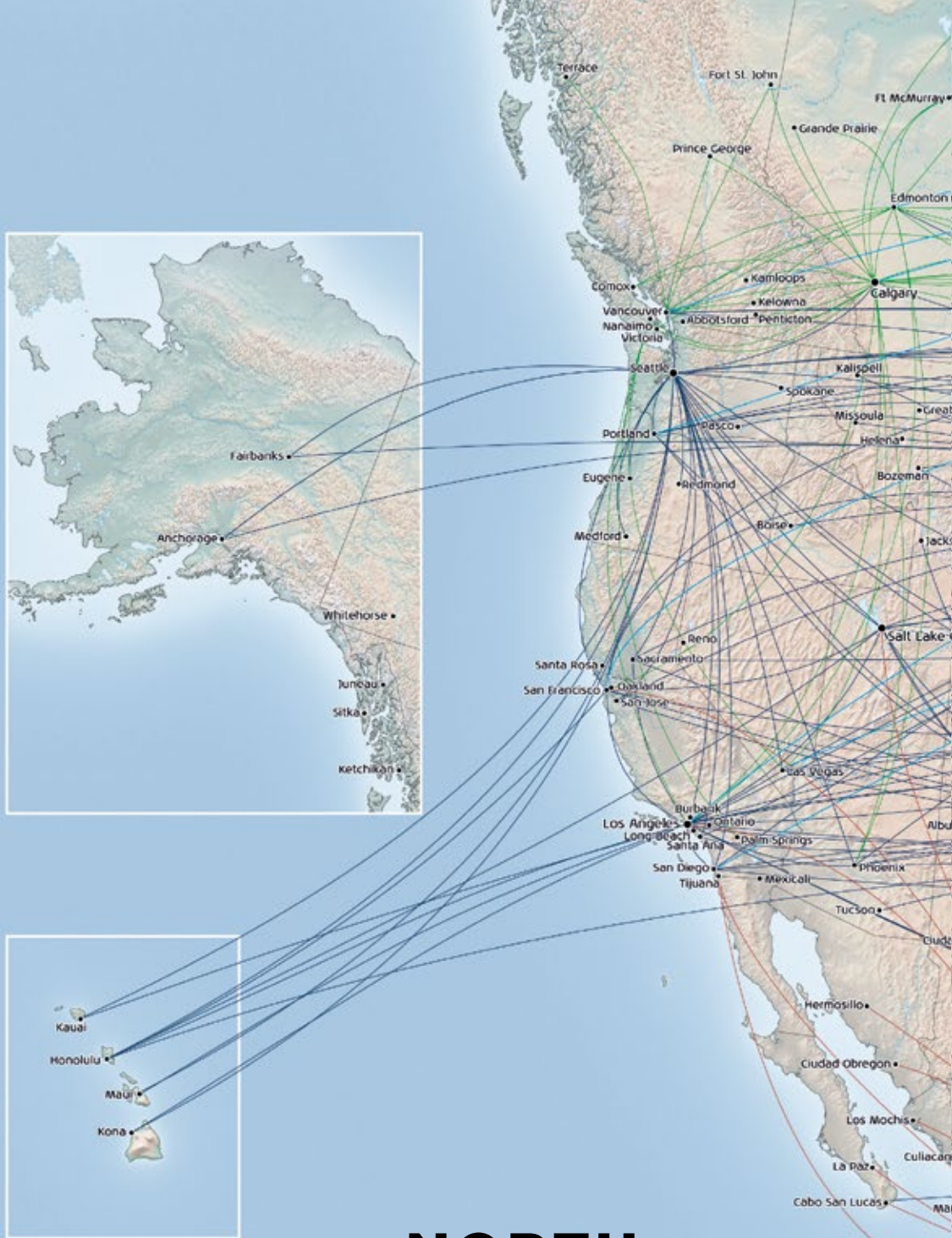


ASIA



 **Vietnam Airlines**
 **XiamenAir**

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We do not currently fly over Russia or Ukraine.



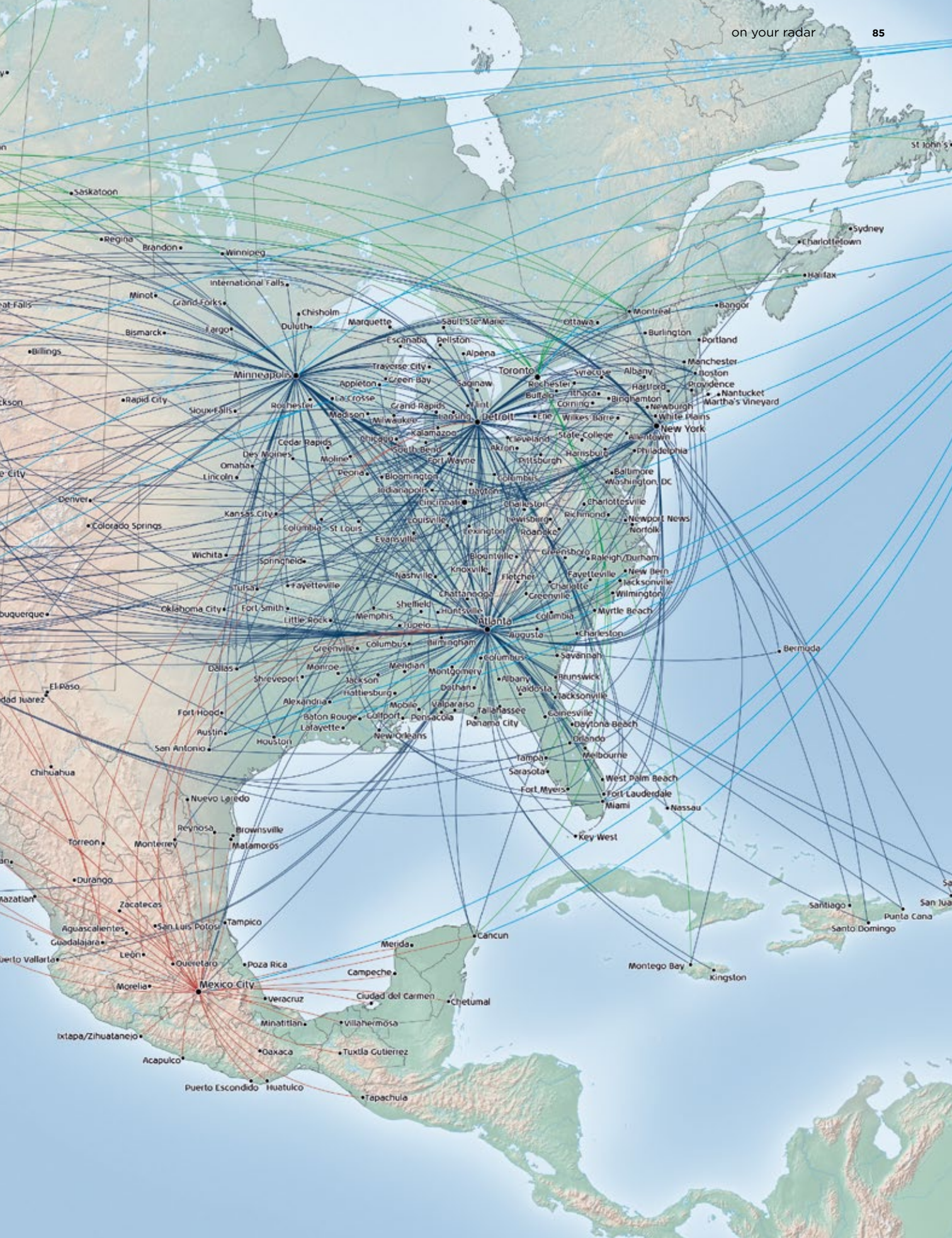
NORTH AMERICA

KLM routes, KLM code-share routes and other SkyTeam destinations in North America.

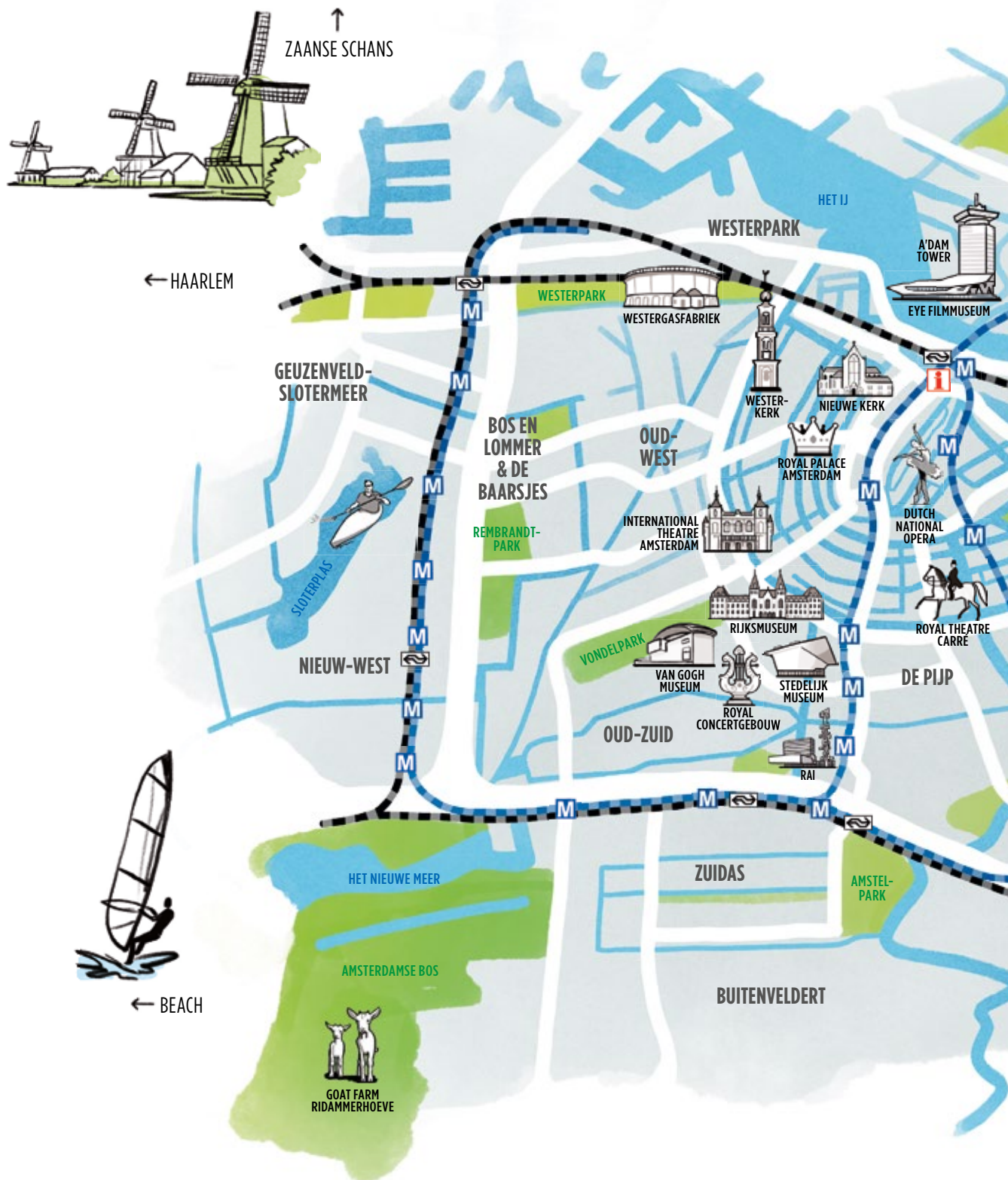
 SkyTeam member

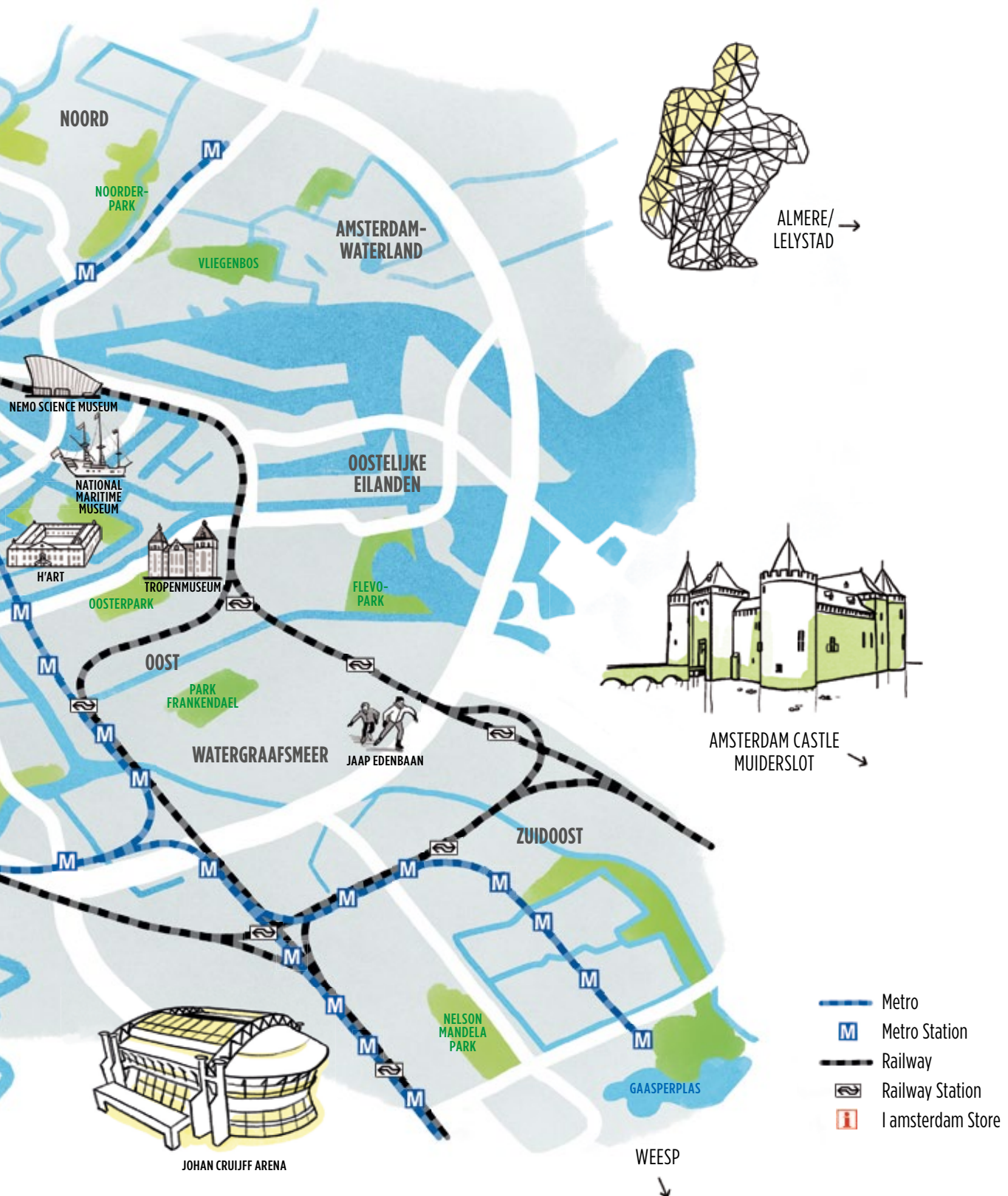
 KLM
 Aeroméxico
 Delta Air Lines
 WestJet

The lines are illustrative and do not represent the actual routes taken by the aircraft.



AMSTERDAM

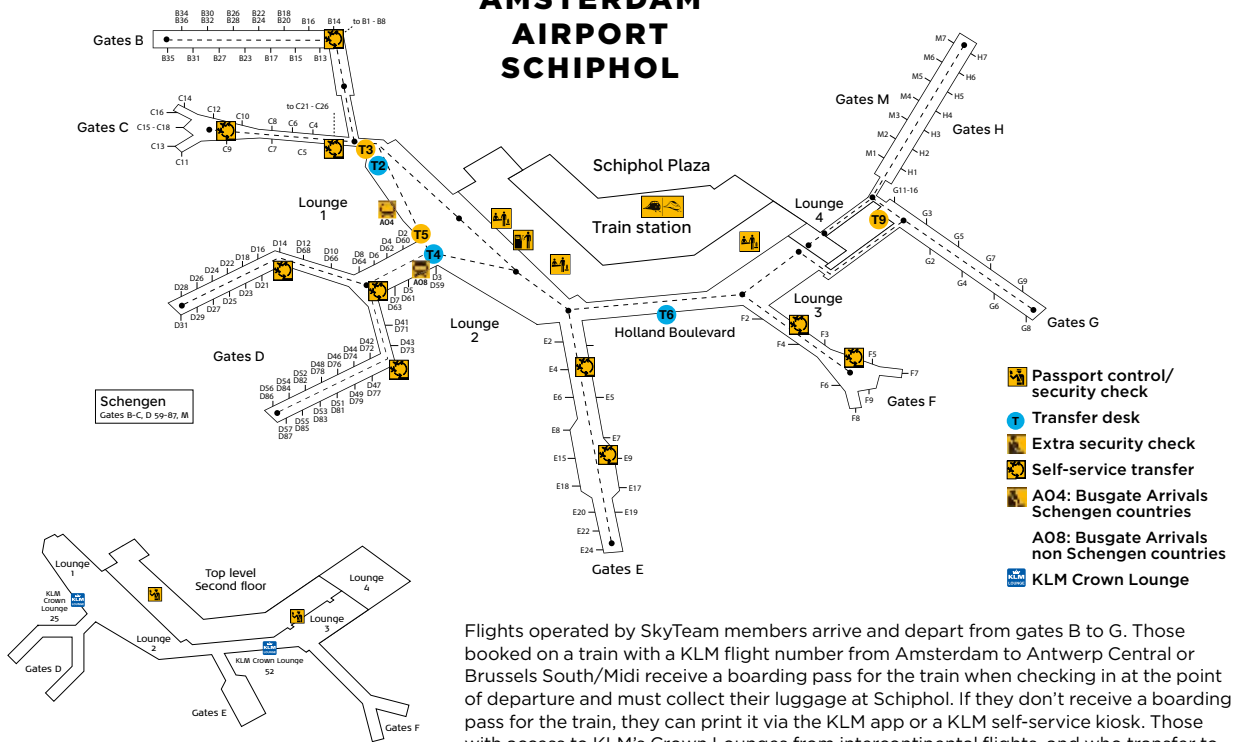




AIRPORT MAPS

The Netherlands

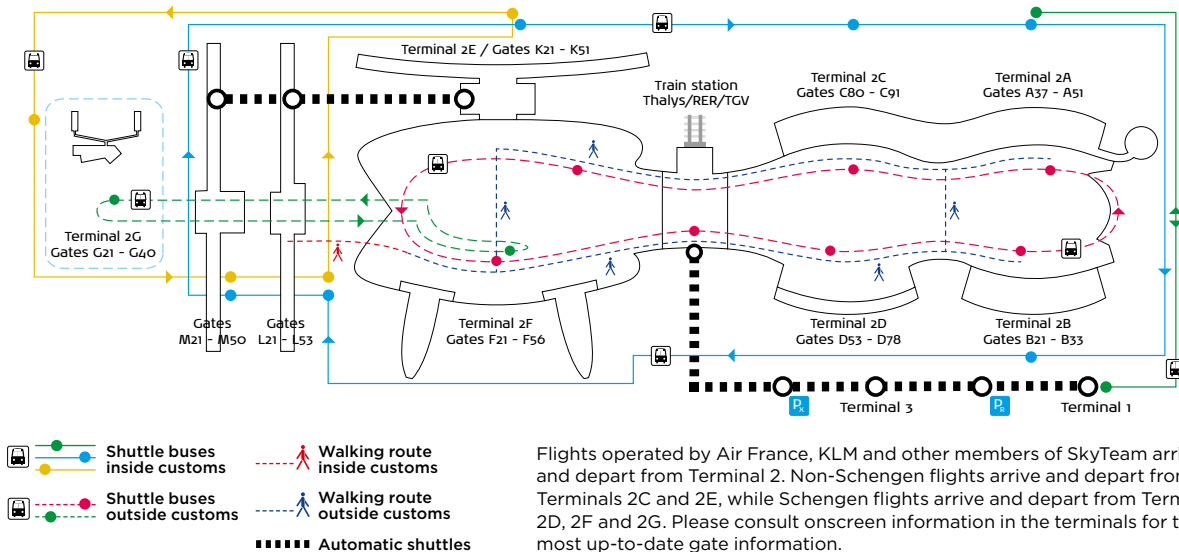
AMSTERDAM AIRPORT SCHIPHOL



Flights operated by SkyTeam members arrive and depart from gates B to G. Those booked on a train with a KLM flight number from Amsterdam to Antwerp Central or Brussels South/Midi receive a boarding pass for the train when checking in at the point of departure and must collect their luggage at Schiphol. If they don't receive a boarding pass for the train, they can print it via the KLM app or a KLM self-service kiosk. Those with access to KLM's Crown Lounges from intercontinental flights, and who transfer to European (Schengen) flights, can use Crown Lounge 25, beyond passport control.

France

PARIS CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT, TERMINAL 2



Flights operated by Air France, KLM and other members of SkyTeam arrive and depart from Terminal 2. Non-Schengen flights arrive and depart from Terminals 2C and 2E, while Schengen flights arrive and depart from Terminals 2D, 2F and 2G. Please consult onscreen information in the terminals for the most up-to-date gate information.

OUT OF THE BLUE

Gregory Melfor

AS SHIFTEADER OPERATIONAL WAREHOUSING, GREGORY MELFOR KEEPS AN EYE ON THE LOGISTICAL PROCESS BEHIND THE PRODUCTS USED ON BOARD.

What does your job entail?

I oversee a team of 30 to 40 people, who work in either the north or central warehouses at Schiphol. These are where all the important on-board cargo, such as food, drinks, blankets and pillows, gets delivered. Together, we ensure all these products find their way to the right department as quickly as possible, so that they get sorted and loaded on board in time for their flight. I also keep an eye on our schedules, and plan everyone's time off, for example.

Did you always want to work in the aviation industry? When I was a child, I wanted to become a pilot. And later, as a teenager, my dream changed slightly: I wanted to be an F-16 pilot in particular. I even applied to train but changed my mind at the last minute – the long periods away from home didn't appeal to me. After obtaining a degree, I got a job as a shift leader at a mail company. In 2022, I moved to KLM Catering Services. I like being a shift leader; I meet all kinds of people, and no two days are ever the same.

What do you like about working at KLM Catering Services?

If you're looking to try your hand at something different or for a new challenge, the opportunities are always there.



“No two days are ever the same”

CATANIA

Sicily, Italy



Museums

As the second-largest city in Sicily, Catania is a central hub that can cater to every kind of art connoisseur. Must-sees include the Museum of Contemporary Art Sicily, which displays a wide selection of modern artworks within a historic building.

15°C

With temperatures ranging from 6°C to 15°C, the weather is moderately chilly and breezy, which makes Catania fairly pleasant during the winter months. And it doesn't impede on what you can see and do.

1500

As one of Europe's largest Benedictine monasteries and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Benedictine Monastery of San Nicolò l'Arena deserves a visit. With continual construction since 1500, it's an architectural gem of different styles through different eras.

3,320

At ca. 3,320m high, Mount Etna is the largest active volcano in Europe. It can be visited in many ways, e.g. via guided and 4x4 tours, cable car, and hikes (which are strictly regulated due to risks). Note: temperatures can be freezing up there in winter.

Alla Norma

Due to its Italian heritage, Catania's cuisine is filled with pastas. Most notably is Pasta alla Norma, made with fresh basil, fried aubergine, tomato sauce and ricotta. And let's not forget Sicily's most famous street food: arancini - fried rice balls, often with a cheese filling.

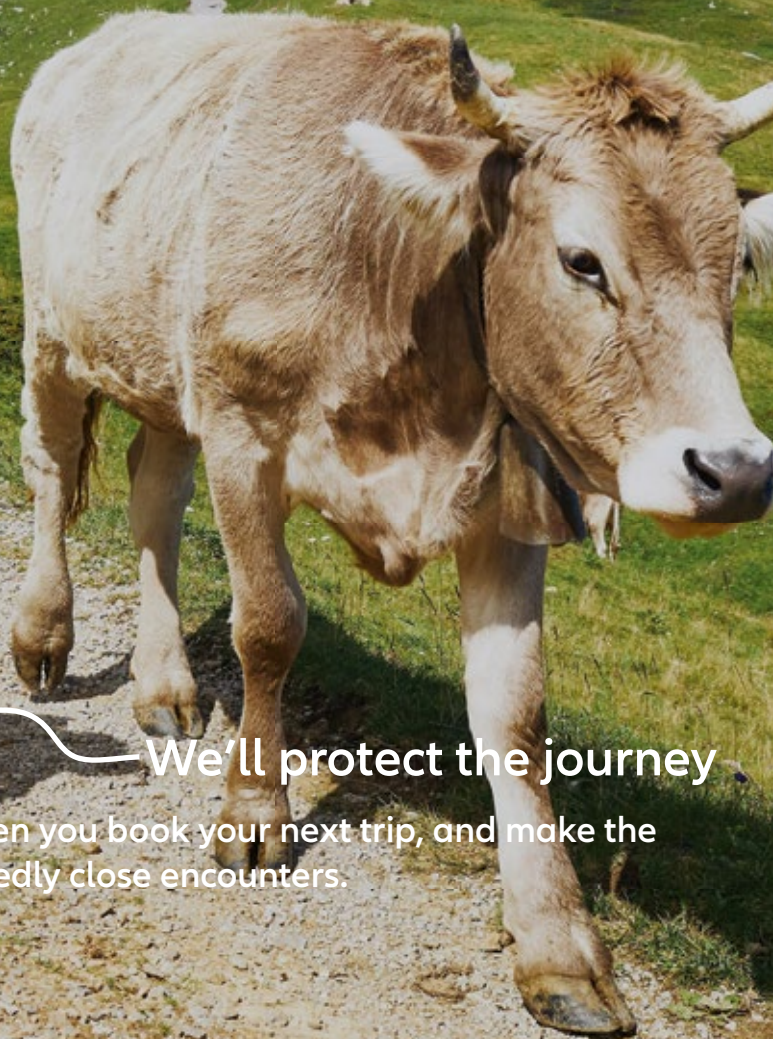


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Look for Allianz Travel Insurance when you book your next trip, and make the most of unexpectedly close encounters.



Seamaster
PLANET OCEAN

A collection without limits, the Planet Ocean embodies OMEGA's passion to explore. For the latest evolution, this Co-Axial Master Chronometer model follows the ocean's call with a design that is entirely transformed. Featuring a sharper and more angular case in stainless steel, it echoes the styles of Seamaster heritage, while offering an overall look that feels contemporary and invigorated.

Ω
OMEGA