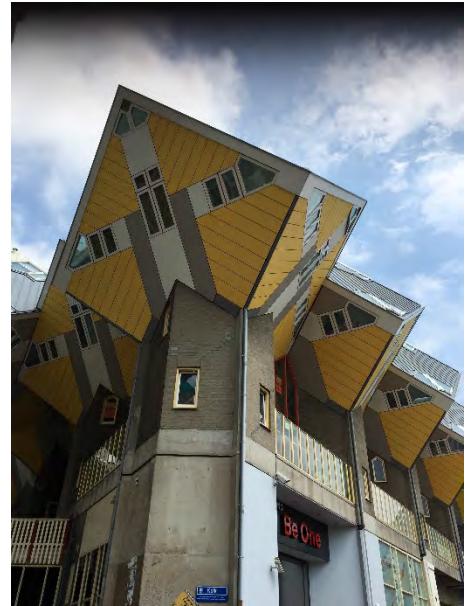


My Vacation to Rotterdam, Netherlands

We just went on a vacation and one of our stops was Rotterdam. When Tom suggested it, I was lukewarm on the idea. However, I am happy to report that it is a great place to visit. When you think of the Netherlands, Amsterdam comes to mind. Nothing against it, but it is overrun with tourists. Even though I am a tourist, I do not want to hang out with a bunch of other tourists. Rotterdam is not a tourist magnet.

Rotterdam is the second largest city in the Netherlands. It is Europe's largest port and is known for reclaiming land that is under water. It also has odd or should I say unusual architecture. An example is the cube houses (see pictures below). Can you imagine living in one of these?



Everyone bikes. Unlike Houston where riding a bike is taking your life in someone else's hands and way too risky, Rotterdam has dedicated lanes for bikes. It doesn't matter your age, you bike. (See pictures below) I saw women in 3 inch stilettos riding a bike.



We stayed at the Mainport Hotel. It gets an A+. It came with a giant Jacuzzi in the room as well as a sauna. The bathroom mirror has a TV in it.



Mainport Hotel



Bathroom mirror with TV



Jacuzzi in our room

Everyone speaks English so that is no problem. In fact, the Dutch were super friendly. I used my handy ATM card whenever I needed Euros. The only problem there was I seemed to convince myself it was Monopoly money and not real money. At least that is one excuse to explain my shopping purchases.

The weather was perfect, in the low 70s in the day and high 60s at night.

Restaurants were good. The Zeezot was my favorite. Zeezot is Dutch for seasalt. We sat outside. One of their specialties is the onion dip. I quizzed the waiter on how they make it. They bake the onion, core out the middle, smoke it, then add mayonnaise and other secret ingredients. The smoking part—who can go to that kind of trouble—gives it an unusual taste. I think it would be worth a try to experiment to see how this could be copied—in a much easier way. I will report back if I succeed with this.



Zeezot Restaurant



Smoked Onion Dip

Rotterdam loves art. This is a picture with Andy Warhol's famous line—In the future everyone will be famous for 15 minutes. I also highly recommend the Museum Boymans Van Beuningen. It was small but had a nice selection.

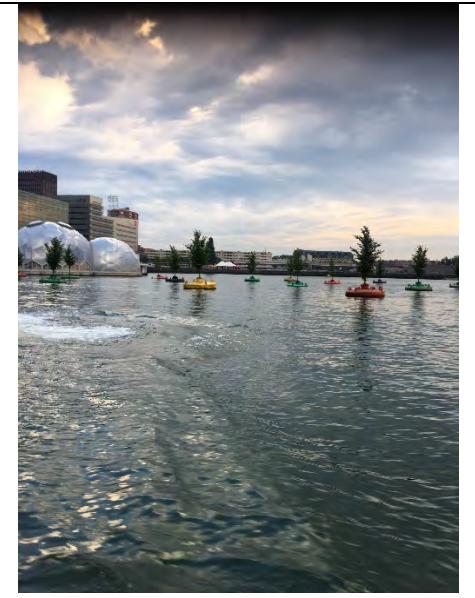


“In the future everyone will be famous
for 15 minutes”

We took a water taxi to dinner one night. The driver was a speed demon. Notice the way the trees are floating in the water.



Water Taxi



Floating trees

The reason we came to Rotterdam in the first place was to see the private museum Voorlinden.

Joop van Caldenborgh, a Dutch industrialist, chemical company owner and art collector, built Voorlinden for his private art collection. Contemporary art can get way out there but his collection was fun.

There was the cube art. The black one is real, the clear one is ice, slowing melting. I am not sure how they keep that going. I guess there is a big fridge somewhere behind the scenes to store those big cubes so they can be replaced as they melt.



Cube Art

There was the desk full of clocks. When you feel like time is running your life think of this. One artist created trash bags made of bronze. They looked like the real thing.



Clocks on a desk



Trash bag art

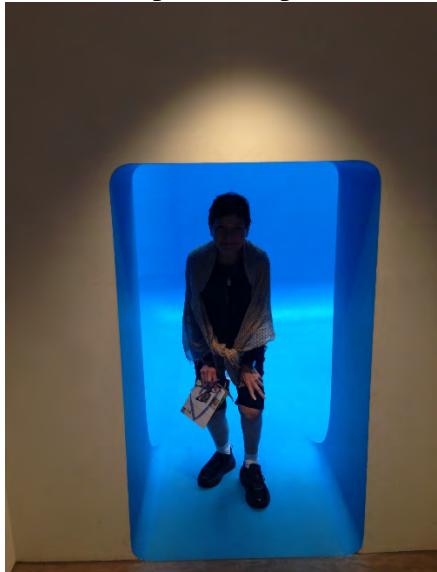
The best was the swimming pool. When I first saw it, I thought, "Here we go again with crazy contemporary art. How is a lap pool art?" Well, I found out. The lap pool looks exactly like a lap pool that is installed in the middle of a room in a museum. When I looked into it, I saw a pool, with a ladder and a drain in the bottom. Then all of a sudden, a person was underneath it, walking around. I thought, "How clever! The artist, Leandro Erlich, figured out a way to make it appear someone is under the pool." Then the person turned and was gone. Wow, even more clever. Then more people were under the pool, walking around. A light bulb went off in my head. Something else is going on. When we investigated, we found a stairway below that led to a door to get under or "inside" the pool. Very clever indeed!



People under pool



The door under pool

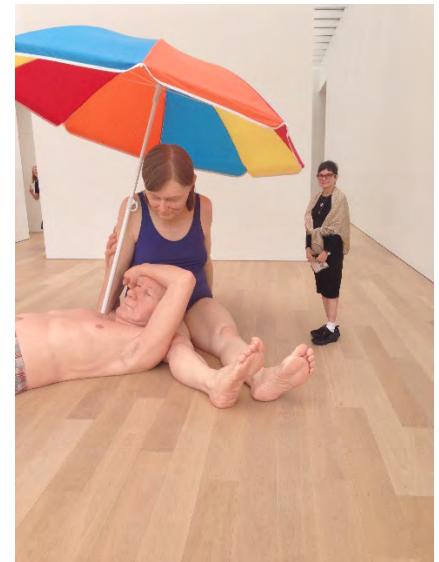


Carla in doorway under the pool



Tom under the pool

My other favorite was work by Ron Mueck called "Couple Under An Umbrella". This couple was so life-like, down to the wrinkles and hair. Only thing was, the couple were giants.



Next to the giant couple were five inch tall elevator doors that worked. Elevators for mice or people under five inches tall.



The next stop was the beautiful Voorlinden restaurant. And yes, I had to partake of some wine and bread and dessert. Heck it is a vacation.



I always like to seek out markets. This big structure behind me is a food market. They were selling everything you could imagine. Some vendors specialized in olives and some in cheese and donuts and on and on.



Rotterdam was great. I miss their weather and I wish we had dedicated bike lanes like they do. Oh well, we love our Houston. It's back to reality and I am officially in wine and bread rehab.

