

Post



Scott Farnsworth

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Zwolle - May 2, 2022

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Up at 7:30. Our smartphone says it's 36 degrees out and on inspection we see a beautiful blue sky. The weather today is projected to be mostly sunny with a high of 62 degrees. The coffee maker in the room is the Nescafe style with the cylindrical pods, smaller than US K cups. We brought some that we had left over from the French islands of our Caribbean vacation earlier this year. Yay. We can use them up, finally!

We have a relaxing morning in the room while Mike and Liz go out for a light breakfast and coffee. We convene later and head out to see the city. First order of business is to circumvent the city on foot, walking its external perimeter, just beyond the surrounding canal. There are a few boats lazily passing. We admire the house boats moored permanently on the banks with nice gang planks and mail boxes. We pass or cross a number of draw bridges, where streets go in and out of the inner city.

The sky is blue and the sun is out in force. The 36 degrees is quickly more like 63 degrees. We don't make it all the way around but at some point we head into the old city, proper, looking for a church that's been converted into a bookstore. Along the way we see what appears to be a gymnasium, something labeled a Lyceum, and some professorial-looking accommodations. We're told this is a college town and we're believing it. The trees and plants are very green and the flowers seem to be in peak bloom. It's a workday, it would seem, but there are a number of people out getting their vitamin D.

Before we find the church/bookstore, Liz and Karen duck into a small beauty shop to buy nail polish. Their favorite brand is sold there and they find some good colors. They accept it's going to cost more than in the states, but buying \$7 worth of polish for 20 euros seemed excessive. Oh well, the nails must look good.

Eventually we find the church cum bookstore. Regardless of whether you're judging the building interior and exterior for being a church, or for being a bookstore, it seems you're bound to give it very high marks. Someone went to a great deal of effort to make every last detail perfect. The windows at either end of the church are visible, and there are about four floors of books. Most books are in Dutch, but there is half of one floor in English. Liz buys a book for a friend and Scott and Karen find an English version of the menu from the associated café. It's lunch time and there are tables outside, under some towering trees.

We park at a table outside and try to ignore the construction noise across the street. It's lunchtime for us, so we're hopeful it'll be lunchtime for the construction workers soon, as well. We order sandwiches, salad, and a couple of beers and people watch as we wait for our lunch. It's the second week of spring break which helps explain the number of idle people milling about. The drinks and food quickly appear. We're reminded how seriously the Dutch take their bread. It's seriously good.

Filled up, rested, and paid, we head back out. Liz has a point by point walking tour to take us on. We see a very nice hotel with a Michelin Star restaurant that used to be a women's prison. We walk by a fancy restaurant that used to be a house for people with the plague. We wonder if such provenance works against people's desire to eat there.

We see the remains of the city walls. The place was very well protected. We like the area very much, so can imagine the English and Spanish of centuries ago wishing to make this country their own. I guess the locals had to protect their city any way they could.

We walk down a busy shopping street with very new store fronts under very old (but well maintained) buildings with interesting histories. Our last stop is the famous art museum in town, supposedly one of the best in the Netherlands. Alas it, like so many of the local restaurants, is closed today. Tomorrow we'll be checking out and riding the rails 75 minutes to Amsterdam, but that will give us time to tour the museum and have lunch before we leave.

Back at our hotel we relax in their stately sitting room with its imposing bar as we exchange photos from the trip so far. We head up to our rooms to relax until our next appointment with a knife and fork.

We arrange for, and have dinner at Brasserie Jansen. The place is a hoot with lots of pictures of The Rat Pack, James Bond, Liz Taylor, John F. and Jackie Kennedy at their wedding, and on and on. The food is great and we discover a delicious, refreshing drink made with the local Jenever ("Jen-AY-ver"). They used to serve a drink called a Moscow Mule. The "Moscow" is crossed out and now it's called a Kiev Mule. Way to go. We agree we should come back tomorrow for lunch.

Photos







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