

Post



Scott Farnsworth

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Zwolle to Amsterdam - May 3, 2022

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We're up at seven, close to our normal time. We think we're finally on local time. We relax in the room and eventually shower and pack. Walking to the front desk to leave our luggage we're able to see inside a single room (i.e. a room for just one person). It's small! There's room for a single bed, and a chair, and we're sure a small bath, but that's about it. Whew!

Today we leave Zwolle for Amsterdam! With our luggage left with the cheerful people at the front desk we head over to the Fundatie Museum. All we know about it is its name, that it has a bizarre growth-looking thing on the roof, that's its closed on Mondays, and that the museum marketers think it's one of the best museums in the Netherlands. With today's visit we add to our knowledge that the museum only exhibits the works of a single artist: Rob Scholte. Ergo, if you're not a huge Rob Scholte fan, this is not the museum for you. Mike measures that we were there for 57 minutes and we're sure we're never getting that time back.

For lunch we head back to Brasserie Jansen and the four of us split two Jansen burgers. They do a good job with their burgers and fries. Thankfully they're not overly generous with their fries. We ask again about how to make the delicious Jenever cocktail we had the evening before. Alas between their limited English, and our limited Dutch we didn't make much headway.

We hike to our hotel, retrieve our luggage, and hike the 600 feet back to the train station. We upgrade our passes to 1st class, just for the day. This doesn't cost us any money but does mean any swipes we do will use up the funds on our travel cards more quickly, but also it'll entitle us to sit in the 1st class section. It is nicer, for our hour-and-a-quarter-long ride back to Amsterdam. We have room for our luggage and after we pass the second station, we're the only ones in our first class cabin. We do see some fields of tulips that aren't already cut, that is, ones that are a blaze of red or yellow. Alas the train is going so fast we are not able to get any good pictures. Maybe we can find some on the internet and pretend we took them.

One thing we did get on the train was “controlled”, that is, a conductor used his/her phone to validate that our ticket confirms we are supposed to be on that train, in that class of service. This is the second time that’s happened during this trip. Once again we are all good, whew. Eventually we get to Amsterdam, through the bustle of the central station and finally out front to find the tram that will get us, and our heavy luggage, close to our hotel. The same card that got us from Zwolle to Amsterdam also gets us around Amsterdam itself. The tram cars are clean, well maintained, and comfortable. With so many pedestrians and bikes zipping around we’re shocked that there aren’t more accidents and incidents, but we didn’t see any evidence of any while we were there.

Between the tram stop and our hotel there's wasn't much distance but they were tearing up the road, something fierce. It's like they were doing massive invasive surgery into the body of Amsterdam and all the entrails etc. were just lain bare for us to see. Thankfully they had fences and elevated walkways enabling transit over the construction. Unfortunately, it was rush hour and seemingly much of Amsterdam also wanted to traverse this area, hauling their bikes in one direction as we were lugging our luggage the other. Soon that was behind us, we were checked in and headed to our rooms.

We think that you can tell how big a hotel is by the number of digits the room numbers have. A hotel with a room 2817 likely has a lot of rooms. Scott and Karen were in 003. We weren't sure what this meant (with the leading zeros).

Mike and Liz's room was 1/2 of a floor above the hotel reception and Scott and Karen's room was 1/2 a floor below. There is an elevator (to transport you and your luggage the 1/2 floor). Most elevators have a floor, a ceiling, and four walls. This one only had a floor. And you had to hold the button continuously, if you wanted the elevator to move. We got used to it but always found it amusing.

Arrived and settled we head out to walk to canals to get the 'lay of the land'. Well, maybe not land but water and polder. We check out the flower market, which is touristy and which Karen thinks should be labeled the Bulb Market, since they do sell bulbs and don't really sell that many flowers. This is much more of the touristy part of town and the litter and products on offer makes that painfully obvious. We find a bar for drinks and a table around which we can plan our attack on Amsterdam over the coming days. Beers and wine are ordered as well as a glass of Jenever (Jen-AY-ver), a local precursor to gin. It's served very cold in a small, shapely glass. The trick for the waitress is to pour the small glass in front of you, and to fill it just one drop shy of what it would take for it to overflow. The patron (Scott) then has to take a sip without touching the glass to defuse the situation. We all sample it and agree it's quite tasty.

For dinner we have a reservation at a very well thought of 'Rice Table' Indonesian restaurant, Sampurna. Again we get a fixed menu and once again we're not disappointed. The food is great and we eat more than we should. Scott almost leaves his scarf there but realizes it's missing before we get to the door. They're already chasing after us with it.

Back at the hotel we think we haven't done enough damage and perhaps one more beer is in order. The girls want nothing to do with this and head to the room. Scott and Mike negotiate with the lone young lady at the front desk, who seems inclined to break the rules and sells us some beers, even though the bar is officially closed and it's her first week, she's still in training. Her English is sufficiently good that it's easy to plan shenanigans. Her looks betrays what she tells us of her Caribbean origins. Karen guesses the Dutch island of Sint Maarten.

The receptionist knows it would be illegal for her to take money for selling alcohol while the bar is closed so she asks if we'd be OK to pay her under the table. We're shocked but honored that she'd do that for us. She goes to check and quickly informs us that all alcohol has been cleaned out from the bar. Obviously they're no dummies. Oh, well, we didn't need anymore for sure, so it's all for the best. Tomorrow's another day to get into trouble.

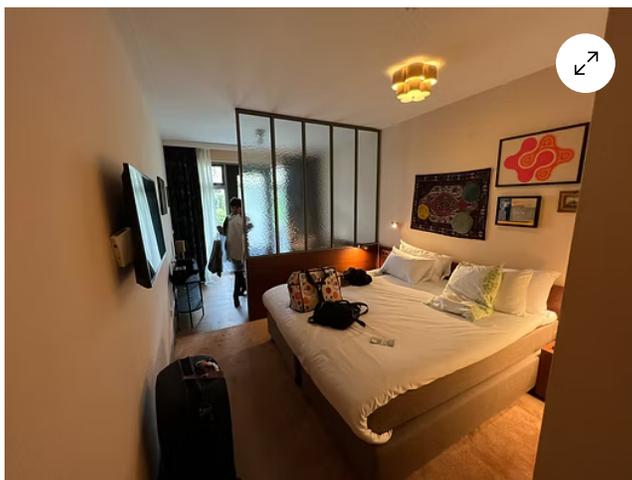
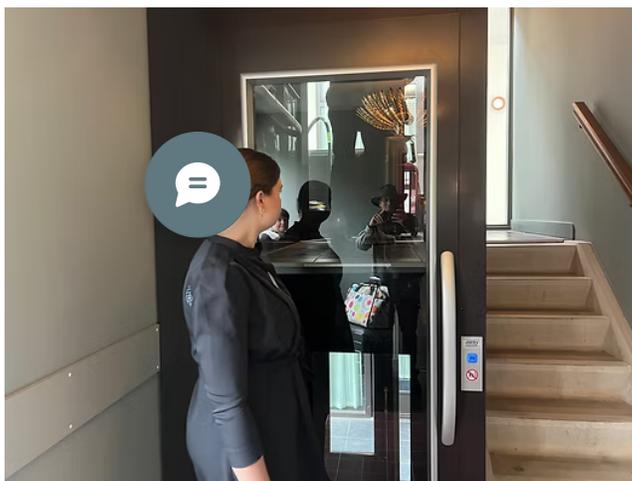
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