



Press Kit

NEW OPENING MAY 2017



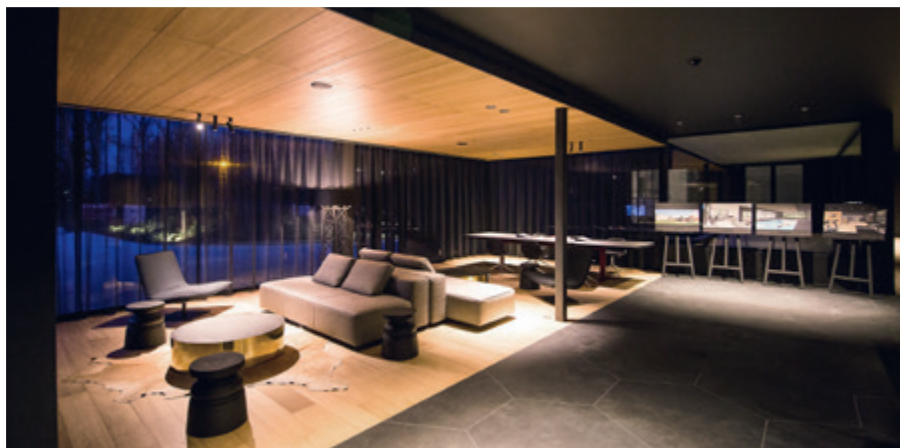




DOMAINE LA BUTTE AUX BOIS

Style and nature in harmony

An historic country estate, an award-winning gourmet hotspot and an eco-chic Spa Retreat, in perfect harmony. Uniquely situated at the heart of Europe in verdant woodland surroundings, yet close to vibrant centres of urban life and culture. Celebrated hospitality, excellent service, and cosmopolitan sophistication. Welcome, bienvenue, welkom – to a most exclusive address where Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands meet. Domaine La Butte aux Bois in Lanaken, Belgium: a treat for all the senses.



BOUNDLESS ENJOYMENT

5km to Maastricht, 25 minutes' drive to the German border, and 1.5 hours' drive to Brussels – the 'capital of Europe'. Domaine La Butte aux Bois in Lanaken is centrally located in the east of Belgium's Flemish province of Limburg. The language, culture and cuisine are influenced by the rich heritage of Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands.

Hoge Kempen, Belgium's only national park, also defines this exceptional lifestyle destination hotel. This historic country estate is surrounded by romantic heathland, pine forest and brooks, delightful walking trails, and elegant residential areas. The Domaine La Butte aux Bois nestles in 11 hectares of landscaped garden with mature trees, ponds and beautiful objets d'art. Its raison d'être is pleasure.

AS YOU LIKE IT

Over time, the Domaine La Butte aux Bois has grown and developed. The contrast between country and city, the interplay of architecture and nature, and an alluring combination of fine cuisine and innovative wellness cast a spell over guests from far and wide.

All tastes are catered for: extensive shopping and cultural attractions in Maastricht, Antwerp, Hasselt, Tongeren, Düsseldorf, Cologne, Aachen, and Liège; hiking trails, cycle routes, bridle paths and waterways; championship golf courses such as the Maastricht International Golf Course and the Spiegelven Golf Club at Genk.

La Butte aux Bois: the name alone is enough to whet the appetite of culinary connoisseurs. Restaurant La Source, the Domaine's 1 Michelin star / 3 Gault&Millau toques gourmet restaurant is complemented by 40 Michelin stars within 100km. This concentration of stars is matched only by the Alsace, earning the region a well-deserved reputation as a cross-border connoisseur's delight.



FROM COUNTRY ESTATE TO MULTIFACETED DOMAINE

La Butte aux Bois ('the hill in the forest') was built in 1924 as a stylish country estate for Belgium's noble Lagasse de Locht family. The Bullens family of Dutch entrepreneurs acquired the property in 1970, they transformed the house into a luxurious hotel and opened its doors in 1986.

Since then La Butte aux Bois has grown into a leading world-class hotel and restaurant, and is now one of Belgium's most decorated lifestyle and gourmet hotels. Under Manager Marc Alofs, it was designated Best Hotel Spa in Belgium at the Hospitality Awards 2015. Other accolades include successive TripAdvisor Awards in the *Best Romantic Hotels* and *Top 25 Hotels in Belgium* categories since 2015. Restaurant La Source, Chef Ralf Berendsen and his fine-dining team are the recipients of 1 Michelin star and 3 Gault&Millau toques (17 out of 20 points). The hotel joined the prestigious Relais & Châteaux hotel association in 2008.

TRADITIONS AND TRENDS

Following extensive refurbishment and renovation in 2009 and 2013, in 2016 the owners embarked on an ambitious development plan involving the construction of a 1,350sqm annexe of distinctive architectural character to house the exclusive Spa Retreat La Forêt. The result is a stunning Spa, Le Gym members only fitness club, and 20 rooms offering a luxurious loft-style ambience and spectacular views over the national park. The harmonious juxtaposition of new and existing is an architectural tour-de-force, embracing nature with great sensitivity. The modern, pure and unembellished design vocabulary of the Spa Retreat La Forêt sits comfortably in the magnificent natural setting of the domaine.

The construction work took more than a year, and also included relocating L'Entrée and lobby, as well as remodelling the Michelin-starred Restaurant La Source. All the Flamant style architectural and interior elements from the building's early days have been retained, and the magnificent tiled fireplaces and artistic wood panelling in the salons are as stunning today as when they were first installed.



A SANCTUARY FOR DIVINE DAYS AND HEAVENLY NIGHTS

The 59 rooms at Domaine La Butte aux Bois are spread across three buildings. The grand main building – Le Manoir – also houses the restaurants, salons and 23 Flamant style rooms. In ambience and layout, Le Manoir exudes classic elegance. Within 100m of Le Manoir, La Villa's 16 modern rooms are as luxurious as they are contemporary, set in a tranquil location with charming views of a small forest lake. La Villa is reached through the hotel's park via a covered and beautifully planted pergola.

Sophisticated spa guests have high regard for the Spa Retreat La Forêt's 20 new rooms where nature is living art. Suffused with light, the glazed Le Passage connects these spaces with Le Gym and the main building. The stylish La Forêt rooms are defined by a strong feeling for nature, creativity and unique design. With warm woods and soothing colours, La Forêt blends into the surrounding national park. This is a place for enjoying the serenity of the forest and the sweet music of the dawn chorus. The loft-style La Forêt Ambiance rooms on the ground floor feature open bathrooms with forest views from the floor-to-ceiling picture windows. On the first floor, La Forêt Expérience rooms contain free-standing beds and walk-in showers made for two. The views and proximity of nature distinguish these sophisticated rooms.

The rooms at La Butte aux Bois offer between 20.5sqm and 45sqm of space, depending on the room category chosen. All rooms are equipped with air conditioning, minibar, Wi-Fi, flat-screen TV and Nespresso coffee machine. All offer absolute tranquillity in natural surroundings.



HAUTE CUISINE AND CREATIVE REGIONAL COOKING

Fine dining in the Michelin-starred restaurant or a modern take on regional dishes? Guests tailor their meal to their mood by choosing either Restaurant La Source – the hotel's gourmet temple – or stylish Le Bistrot.

The day starts with a lavish breakfast buffet of freshly baked breads and cakes, warm patisserie, French cheeses and local sausage specialities, as well as muesli, dairy products and freshly squeezed juices. Le Bistro: perfect for a light business lunch or relaxing evening meal in casual surroundings. The cosy atmosphere suits the region's traditional cuisine, served here with a refined contemporary spin. Le Bistrot's bar is also a popular spot for a daytime cup of coffee or post-meeting snack, and in the evening, guests sip Champagne, Belgium's legendary beer or a digestif.

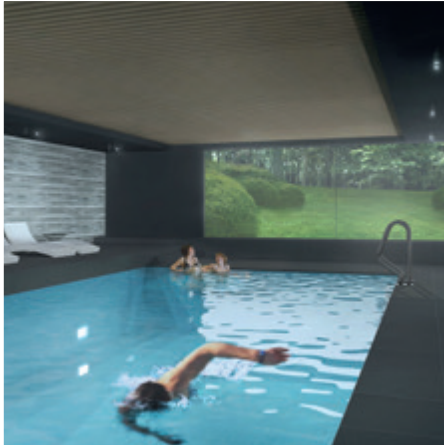
RESTAURANT LA SOURCE

a connoisseur's dream

The hotel's gourmet Restaurant La Source holds 1 Michelin star and 3 Gault&Millau toques (17 out of 20 points), and is one of Belgium's 40 best restaurants. Chef Ralf Berendsen serves the finest haute cuisine creations to prove that opposites attract, and that global culinary influences can come together in perfect harmony. Gourmets make regular pilgrimages to indulge in the Dutch chef's signature dishes such as *Trio of Langoustine with Tandoori Masala, Miso and Couscous* and *French Foie Gras with Chinese Yuzu Tangerine and Belgian Ginger Beer*.

Ralf Berendsen took charge of the kitchen at Restaurant La Source in 2011, and has been the guiding light in the success of this temple of culinary indulgence. Before coming to Lanaken, Berendsen worked at Schiffchen in Düsseldorf (3 Michelin stars) and Traube in Grevenbroich (2 Michelin stars) as well as other top restaurants and Relais & Châteaux hotels.

Restaurant La Source's exquisite wine list currently features around 400 wines. Maître and Sommelier Kevin Vondenhoff is the man responsible for the superb selection of fine wines. Visitors to Restaurant La Source eat and drink either with a view of the partially glazed kitchen and the landscaped garden, or in the elegant salon with its open fireplace. The Restaurant La Source terrace was named Belgium's most beautiful restaurant terrace by the Gault&Millau Guide in 2015, and in the warm summer months, this is the place to be.



SPA RETREAT LA FORÊT

ultimate wellbeing and style

Uniquely in touch with nature, Spa Retreat La Forêt – open from May 2017 – adds a new dimension to wellbeing, and confirms La Butte aux Bois' position as the region's leading luxury hotel.

Spanning 1,350sqm, the distinctive contemporary architecture of Spa Retreat La Forêt is set in a terraced garden that blends into the surrounding Hoge Kempen National Park, blurring the boundaries between interior and exterior. The landscape has been skilfully drawn into the building, transforming every stay into a rich experience of nature and wellbeing.

20 new rooms were integrated into the complex of exclusive spa facilities. They offer direct access to all wellness facilities – ideal for relaxing in the privacy of one's own room after a sauna, massage or workout.

On the ground floor, Le Spa boasts an indoor pool, relaxation area, panoramic sauna, Turkish bath, infrared benches and iced water area. It opens onto the La Forêt garden with a covered terrace, outdoor Jacuzzi, meditation and Yoga spaces as well as further outdoor relaxation areas. Guests with treatment appointments have access to the Spa Lounge where light meals, healthy snacks and smoothies are served, as well as fruit and vegetable juices designed to support the processes of skin rejuvenation and improvement.

Spa Retreat La Forêt is managed by Micha Soors, a cosmetics and wellness expert under whose guidance the hotel's former Aquamarjin Spa was named *Belgium's Best Hotel Spa* at the Hospitality Awards 2015.



CONCEPT

La Forêt's comprehensive treatment concept is based on the five principles of *Reenergizing*, *Reharmonizing*, *Refreshing*, *Regeneration* and *Recovering*, and tailored to the guests' individual requirements. The menu features specific programmes for women, men and teens that were developed in-house; there are eight treatment rooms for guests to enjoy a wide range of pampering sessions. Effective products, specific treatment techniques and relaxing rituals inspired by the power of nature ensure optimum results. Wellbeing, repose and individuality are at the heart of the La Forêt Spa signature treatments, specially created with the region's natural treasures.

Additional highlights of the spa menu are select Shiseido treatments using their Future Solution LX and Bio-Performance lines as well as signature treatments developed specifically for La Forêt. Anti-ageing, regeneration, skin improvement and dermatological consultations are further components of the sophisticated spa concept.

DOCTOR'S BRAND TREATMENTS

The first floor of the Spa Retreat La Forêt is where dermatologist Dr Yolande Bullens-Goessens' clinic is located. Dr Bullens-Goessens is one of Belgium's leading anti-ageing and skin improvement specialists, and runs her own dermatology clinic in nearby Genk. Working closely with a team of cosmetics experts, she developed her own Doctor's Brand range for Spa Retreat La Forêt. La Forêt by Dr. Bullens embraces four product lines: Anti-Aging, Anti-Acne, For Men, and Body Thalasso. These products are used in highly effective spa treatments, and are also sold for use at home. Dr Bullens-Goessens also performs minor cosmetic procedures such as Botox and Hyaluron injections.

WORKOUT WITH A VIEW: LE GYM – MEMBERS ONLY FITNESS CLUB

Another highlight of the Spa Retreat La Forêt is Le Gym: the exclusive fitness club for hotel guests and members is run by former professional athlete and top coach, Ingmar Harthoorn. The impressive gym is the first in Belgium to be fitted with TechnoGym's ARTIS line of high-tech apparatus. Personal coaching is available with TechnoGym's MyWellness cloud app. During workouts, the eye is drawn beyond the picture windows and out into the forest, giving the impression of being part of the landscape. Indoor activities include Yoga, Pilates, boxing and Tai Chi. Daily outdoor activities in the Hoge Kempen National Park include running, Nordic Walking, mountain biking and cycling, and boot camps with a personal trainer.



A SELECT AMBIANCE

for corporate events, meetings and celebrations

Extensive gardens, the gourmet restaurant and the hotel's many function rooms provide the perfect setting for corporate events, product launches, incentives programmes, weddings and business meetings, which explains why Domaine La Butte aux Bois is one of the region's most sought after luxury event venues.

The perfect location for product launches, conferences, training events and glorious celebrations, Domaine La Butte aux Bois is a long-standing specialist in the conception and implementation of all types of events. From private party to major corporate event – every one held at La Butte aux Bois commands an unforgettable experience. An area exceeding 1,000sqm with ten superbly equipped salons and meeting rooms is available for events.

The excellence of all aspects of service make La Butte aux Bois one of the region's most popular wedding venues, providing a romantic backdrop to around 40 marriages each year.

SO MUCH TO SEE AND DO

With its beautiful park, country house atmosphere and exceptional facilities, Domaine La Butte aux Bois is one of Belgium's finest hotels. However, it's also worth venturing further afield.

1. HOGE KEMPEN NATIONAL PARK

Pine forests, heathland, streams, canals and little lakes make Hoge Kempen one of Europe's most romantic national parks. A natural paradise on the hotel doorstep, best explored on one of the hotel's rental bikes, La Butte aux Bois adjoins the green oasis.

2. MAASTRICHT, A EUROPEAN CITY

Just 5km separate Lanaken (Belgium) from Maastricht (Holland). The border city of Maastricht is one of the country's oldest and boasts excellent shopping opportunities as well as a vibrant arts and cultural scene. The TEFAF antiques fair – the most important of its type – takes place annually, attracting dealers, collectors and high society figures from all over the world.

3. TONGEREN ANTIQUES MARKET

The nearby Sunday antiques and flea market in Tongeren may be less exclusive, but is equally atmospheric. The largest market in the whole of Benelux, it takes over half the old town with tempting items at affordable prices. Set off at 6am, pause for breakfast in a bistro and watch the world go by.



4. CULTURE IN THE COAL MINE

The Belgian province of Limburg was a major coal-mining area for many centuries. Although coal production has now ceased, the mines are still active – particularly the C-mine in Genk (www.c-mine.be), now home to a large arts and cultural centre with studios, a museum, an interactive mine and concert hall. Climbing the old shaft tower is highly recommended, as is a visit to porcelain designer Pieter Stockmans' showroom (www.pietstockmans.com).

5. OUTLET SHOPPING IN MAASMECHELEN VILLAGE

From B for Boss to V for Versace, a 10-minute drive from La Butte aux Bois to Maasmechelen Village (www.maasmechelenvillage.com) will wow fashionistas with its spectacular prices! Open every day, the village features around 100 top international labels...

6. HASSELT FASHION MUSEUM

Dedicated followers of fashion should head to Hasselt (20km from the hotel) for the world's largest collection of pieces by legendary Belgian designers, the Antwerp 6. Top-class special exhibitions are curated twice a year.

7. BELGIAN WINE

As well as consuming more Champagne than anyone else in the world, the Belgians produce exceptional wine. To try it for yourself, visit charismatic vintner Jaap van Rennes at his 'wine castle', Wijnkasteel Genoels-Elderen. His white wines are wonderful and a wine list must-have for all the top restaurateurs in Flanders.

8. INTERNATIONAL CITY FLAIR IN THREE NATIONS

A shopping spree along Düsseldorf's Königsallee? Trips to Cologne, Brussels, Bruges, Antwerp or Liège? A tour of Aachen's old town and its splendid houses? La Butte aux Bois is surrounded by attractive towns and cities that make easy day trip destinations.

9. CYCLING AND WALKING ALONG THE WATERWAYS

The canals of Limburg are a water sports paradise, and for those who aren't tempted by canoeing, kayaking or sailing, there are more than 2,000km of car-free, signposted paths alongside the waterways that are perfect for cyclists, joggers, Nordic Walkers and hikers.

10. CULINARY DELIGHTS

There are more Michelin-starred restaurants per capita in Belgium than in any other European country. Countless smaller cafés and restaurants serve local specialities that combine a down-to-earth quality with distinctly French inspiration. With more than 140 breweries around the country, Belgian beer is as varied as any in the world. It was added to the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2016 in recognition of its long history and outstanding quality.

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