

DOMAINE
LA
BUTTE
AUX
BOIS

Press Kit







DOMAINE LA BUTTE AUX BOIS

Style and nature in harmony

An historic country estate, Belgium's first 5-star superior hotel, a 2-Michelin-starred gourmet hotspot and an eco-chic Spa Retreat in perfect harmony. Uniquely situated at the heart of Europe in verdant woodland 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, defines the ambiance at this exceptional lifestyle destination hotel. The historic country estate is surrounded by romantic heathland, pine forest, streams, delightful walking trails and elegant residential areas. The 5-star superior 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

The Domaine La Butte aux Bois has grown and developed over time, offering a pleasant contrast between country and urban styles. The interplay of architecture and nature and an alluring combination of fine cuisine and innovative wellness casts 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 sufficient to whet the appetite of culinary connoisseurs. Restaurant La Source, the Domaine's 2-Michelin-starred gourmet restaurant with 4 Gault&Millau toques is just one of around 30 Michelin-starred establishments within 100km. This stellar concentration has earned the region a reputation as a cross-border connoisseur's delight and is matched only by Alsace.



FROM COUNTRY ESTATE TO MULTIFACETED 5-STAR SUPERIOR 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, transforming the house into a luxurious hotel that opened in 1986.

Since then La Butte aux Bois has grown into a leading 5-star superior hotel and award-winning restaurant and is now one of Belgium's most accoladed lifestyle and gourmet hotels. Under Director Marc Alofs, it was nominated the Best Hotel Spa in Belgium at the Hospitality Awards 2015. Other recognitions 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 2 Michelin stars and 4 Gault&Millau toques (17/20). The hotel became a member of 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 extension of distinctive architectural character to house the exclusive Spa Retreat La Forêt. Opened in 2017, the result is the stunning Le Spa, Le Gym members-only fitness club and 20 new rooms offering a luxurious loft-style ambience. 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 included relocating L'Entrée and lobby, as well as remodelling 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.

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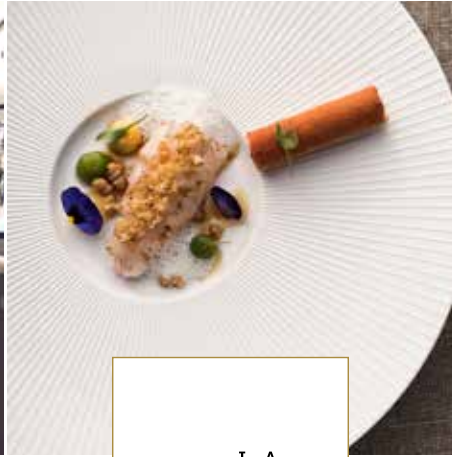
A SANCTUARY FOR DIVINE DAYS AND HEAVENLY NIGHTS

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 ambiance 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 will appreciate 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 room category and 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 2-Michelin-starred restaurant or a modern take on regional dishes? Guests tailor their meal to their mood by choosing either hotel's gourmet temple Restaurant La Source 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 Bistrot: 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 coffee break or post-meeting snack, and in the evening, guests sip Belgium's legendary beers and locally-produced wines or a digestif.

RESTAURANT LA SOURCE

a connoisseur's dream

The hotel's gourmet restaurant, La Source – 2 Michelin stars and 4 Gault&Millau toques (17/20) – is one of Belgium's best restaurants. Chef Ralf Berendsen serves the finest haute cuisine creations, proving that opposites attract and that global culinary influences can come together in perfect harmony. Gourmet pilgrims return regularly to indulge in his signature dishes including *Trio of Langoustine with Tandoori Masala, Miso and Couscous* and *French Foie Gras with Chinese Yuzu Tangerine and Belgian Ginger Beer*.

Ralf Berendsen came to Restaurant La Source in 2011, gaining his first Michelin star just two years later. The Dutchman is considered the driving force behind the success of this temple of culinary indulgence. Before coming to Lanaken, Berendsen worked at Im Schiffchen in Düsseldorf (3 Michelin stars) and Zur Traube in Grevenbroich (2 Michelin stars), as well as other top restaurants and Relais & Châteaux hotels. The second star, awarded in November 2017, elevates Chef Ralf Berendsen into the elite circle of 2-Michelin-starred chefs, and places Domaine La Butte aux Bois amongst Belgium's very finest restaurants.

The exquisite wine list currently features around 400 wines. Sommelier Thijs van Sambeek is 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

Opulence, nature and wellbeing

Spa Retreat La Forêt – opened May 2017 – defines a new dimension of wellbeing, confirming 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 exclusive Spa complex, offering 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 offers an indoor pool, relaxation areas, panoramic sauna, hammam, infrared duo seats, iced water area and sunbed. It opens onto the La Forêt garden with a covered terrace, covered outdoor Jacuzzi, meditation and Yoga spaces plus outdoor relaxation areas. Guests who book treatment appointments enjoy exclusive access to the La Forêt Lounge where they can enjoy light meals, healthy snacks and beauty foods designed to support the processes of skin rejuvenation and improvement.

Spa Retreat La Forêt is managed by Rachel Buddemeijer and Sofie Schrijvers.





CONCEPT

Spa Retreat La Forêt's revolutionary treatment concept focuses on the five principles of *Reenergizing*, *Reharmonizing*, *Refreshing*, *Regeneration* and *Recovering*, and is tailored to individual requirements. Spa highlights include exclusively developed La Forêt signature treatments, select Shiseido treatments with their Future Solution LX and Bio-Performance lines, and specific programmes developed in-house for women, men and teens.

Eight treatment rooms are available for guests to enjoy treatments from the extensive spa menu. 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.

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 runs her own dermatology clinic in nearby Genk and is one of Belgium's leading anti-ageing and skin improvement specialists. 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-Ageing, Anti-Acne, For Men, and Body Thalasso. These products, which result in highly effective spa treatments, 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

Run by former professional athlete and top coach, Ingmar Harthoorn, Spa Retreat La Forêt's Le Gym offers an exclusive fitness club for hotel guests and members. The impressive gym is the first in Belgium to be fitted with the TechnoGym's ARTIS line of high-tech equipment. Personal coaching is available with TechnoGym's MyWellness cloud app. During workouts, the eye is drawn to the forest beyond the picture windows, allowing guests to feel like 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.

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LES
SALONS

A SELECT AMBIANCE FOR CORPORATE EVENTS, MEETINGS AND CELEBRATIONS

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

A superb location for product launches, conferences, training events and glorious celebrations, Domaine La Butte aux Bois offers expert event planning and implementation. From private party to major corporate occasion, events held at La Butte aux Bois are always memorable. Over 1,000sqm with ten superbly equipped salons and meeting rooms are available for events.

Service excellence makes La Butte aux Bois one of the region's most popular wedding venues.





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. It's also worth venturing further afield. **Ten unforgettable excursions:**

1. HOGE KEMPEN NATIONAL PARK

Hoge Kempen's pine forest, heathland, streams, canals and small lakes make it one of Europe's most romantic national parks. A haven of unspoilt nature on the hotel's doorstep, it is best explored on one of the hotel's rental bikes.

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 art, design and antiques fair – the most important of its kind – 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, shop for bargains and watch the world go by.

4. CULTURE IN THE COAL MINE

For many centuries, the Belgian province of Limburg was a key coal-mining area. Coal is no longer produced here, but the C-mine in Genk (www.c-mine.be) is 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 of Flanders’ top restaurateurs.

8. INTERNATIONAL CITY FLAIR IN THREE NATIONS

Fancy a shopping spree along Düsseldorf’s Königsallee? Or perhaps trips to Cologne, Brussels, Bruges, Antwerp or Liège? How about 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 paradise for water sports enthusiasts 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: 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.



Images: <http://bit.ly/2Cz8wgU>

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